



Drummers (ink on paper) by Tilak Samarawickrema

An unveiling, an advent of a contemporary culture in the art scene, pieces by the best of Sri Lankan artists and an international exhibition that will take the Sri Lankan spirit of 'contemporary art' to the world.

Words Sonali Kadurugamuwa

Sri Lankan contemporary art has come of age and in March of this year, an exhibition at Asia House at London's Mayfair district will attest to just that - reaching Asian-art-loving

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audiences worldwide, and opening new doors for Sri Lankan contemporary artists. Along with candidates from other galleries, 15 of these artists, both established and upcoming, represented by the Saskia Fernando Gallery, will present about 25 works of art at Asia House.

With the art exhibition on the horizon, Gallery Director, Saskia Fernando says that preparations for the international event began early, "Over the last year my co curator in London, Josephine Breese, and I, came together with the final list of artists and coordinated with them to begin making arrangements for the show." According to Saskia the event will encompass a grander dimension into what we see as contemporary Sri Lankan art in the 21st Century, without the limitations of conforming to allotted themes and expressions.

The variety of contemporary art presentations from Sri Lanka is said to "potentially include," 2D and 3D pieces such as painting, scrap metal sculpture, and work on paper.

Imagine being immersed in a surrounding of artwork from a country renowned for its exotic pleasures, steadfast culture, unspoilt sceneries and strength of will that withstood wars and great waves. The variety of contemporary art presentations from Sri Lanka is said to "potentially include," 2D and 3D pieces such as painting, scrap metal sculpture, and work on paper.

An acclaimed Sri Lankan artist, Anoma Wijewardene, says that her work, through media and new media will portray, "Man's interaction with Nature." "This will be a new experience for me and my work," says Prageeth Manohansa an artist/sculptor who plays with the concept of 'assemble art'. "Through this exhibition I hope to express my point of view to the world of art," he continues.

The co-curator of the Sri Lankan Contemporary Art exhibition, Josephine Breese, was invited to speak at the Sri Lankan High Commission in London on contemporary art in October 2010 and a follow up on March 10 will take place where both Sri Lankan artists and curators are to present their views on the works in the event spaces of the gallery. Along with the comprehensive catalogue, the exhibition is geared to offer opportunities such as 'discussions and debates' and interactions with 'experts and enthusiasts' in the arenas of art.

The event, which is the first of its kind to showcase internationally, will focus on

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the finest of Sri Lankan contemporary artists along with their characteristic works of art.

The '43 Group' of Sri Lanka, known of such a name as their movement in the promotion of modern art began in 1943, has been an inspiration to the generation of contemporary art brewing in Sri Lanka today, according to Saskia Fernando. She believes, with emphasis on the contemporary art exhibition in London, that we are looking at the beginning of what is going to be an art scene, which emerges, in a stronger sense, into the international art field. "Sri Lanka is now experiencing a revival of artistic expression which we must present to the world," she adds.

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The Event

From March 1-12, 2011, the exhibition is to run through a series of interests from the 'press and private viewings' on March 1 and on March 10 an educational event; a presentation by Jagath Weerasinghe on art in Sri Lanka at Asia House, 63 New Cavendish Street, London W1G 7LP.

The Artists

Jagath Weerasinghe
Muhanned Cader
Jagath Ravindra
Anoma Wijewardene
Prageeth Manohansa
Vajira Gunawardene
Saskia Pintelon
Kingsley Gunatillake
Sanjeewa Kumara
Sujeewa Kumari
Pala Pothupitiye
Tilak Samarawickrema
Druvinka
Dumith Kulasekara
Chandraguptha Thenuwara

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