LALIT KALA
Contemporary
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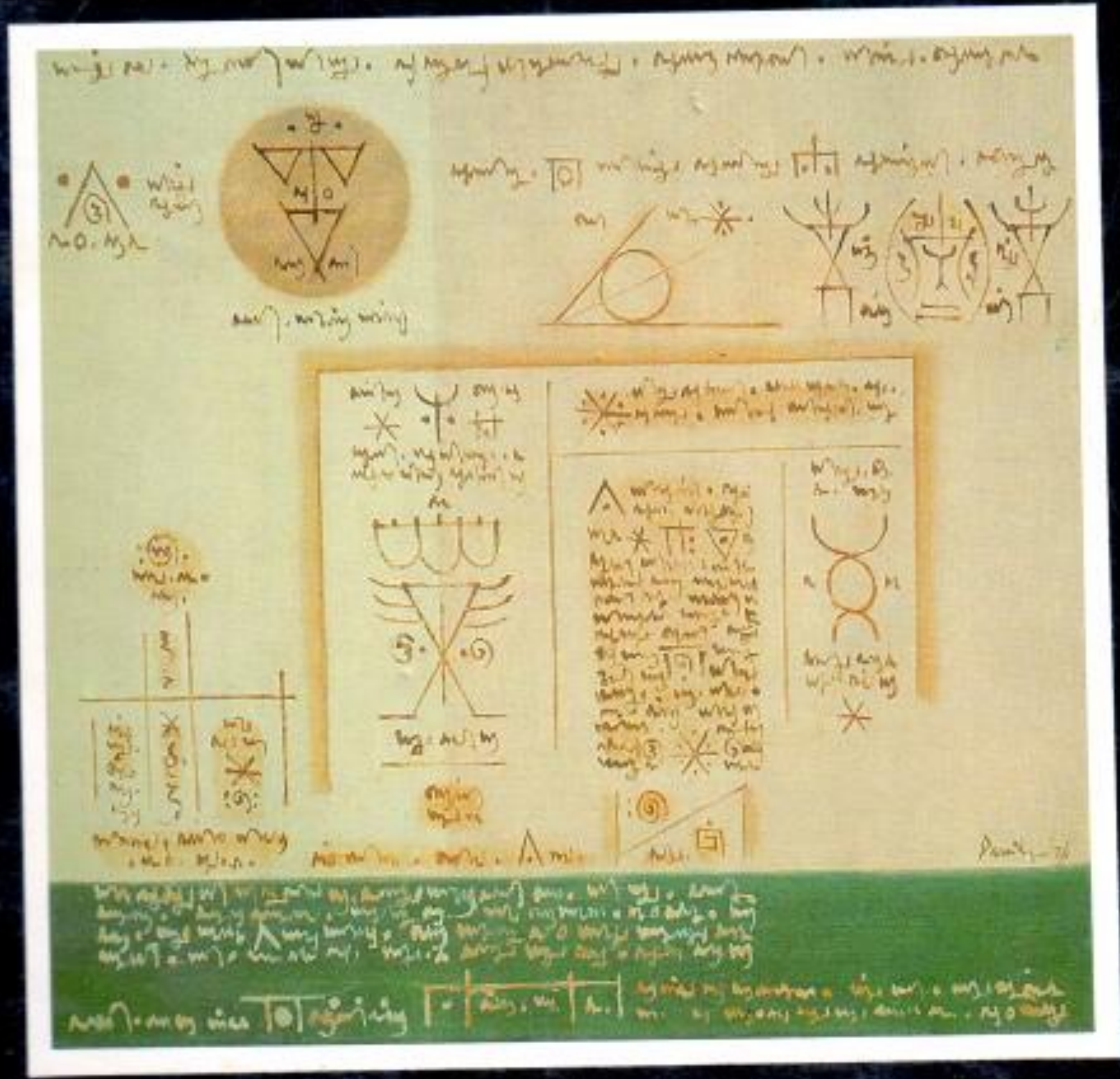

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September 1987

Cover: K.C.S. PANIKER, *Words & Symbols'*, Oil on Canvas

The Editors do not necessarily identify themselves with the views of the contributors.

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EDITORIAL

Almost every major development in modern art has been gone over by the succession of Indian artists of the modern period. But practically none of them with anything of the inevitability and the existential anxiety that these had given rise to abroad. In fact, the best thaf each of these turns had prompted in our artists are somewhat detached and awkardly deviant from the typical western works of the particular temper. Thus the Impressionist sculpture of Ramkinker Baij is distinctively different from that of his counter-parts abroad; so is the Cubism of Gagendranath Tagore, the medievalism of Jamini Roy, the Expressionism of the Madras School, the hard-edge and colour abstractions of the neo-tantrics and the "pop" art of Baroda. One way of explaining this is to argue that these expressions being imitative carry no stakes and therefore wilt away at no cost to something native and non-descript. Many who suspect and resist "modernism" would be eager to make this criticism. Such criticism is obviously motivated and unfair. This is so because it fails to note, much less explain, the quality and distinctiveness of the notable deviations. It would be more constructive to study the deviations more closely and read in them pointers to a centre of gravity quite outside the discourse of Western art. It should not be unreasonable to hypothesise something like that because we have in traditional art a vision and a discipline which, for all we know, are not included in those of Western art. If such an ideal and theory is admitted as a point of reference when considering contemporary Indian painting and sculpture the advantages are two-fold. One would be able to read into these distinctive deviations not deviousness or bravura, but a deeper and sensible orientation towards what ought have been the disposition of the work. And then, in making such reading one might find a contemporary approach towards the hypothesised centfe of gravity and point of reference which we know only exists at present. If the ambit of contemporary Indian painting and sculpture is broadened out in this manner the way we talk about them would change. We would, for instance, remark less on the original Western idea in the work and more on what has been made of it and how originally, by our artists. The language of appreciation and criticism will change to marginalise the Western brand names and to re-define the deeper supportive concepts like "figure", "picture", "drawing", "composition" and "dimentionality". Some ambivalence and polemic will have to be suffered in the process, which too will not be amiss. It will be true of the uneasy engagement between the obtruding Western idea and the unforthcoming native sensibility which riddles significant contemporary Indian expression. The point is that a larger discourse of greater catholicity and openness is possible and one must attempt it if only to redeem and validate contemporary Indian expression.

Josef James

C. DOUGLAS, *Poisonous Love*, Ball Point Pen and Tea Stain, 40 × 45 cms.

FEELING AND SEEING

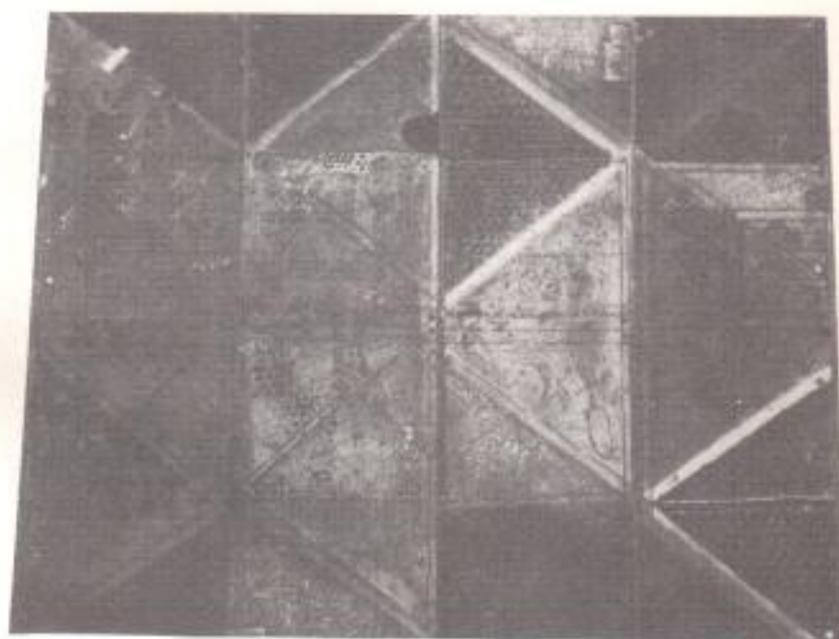
The Paintings of C. Douglas

Henry Schavoir

Spontaneity is the most precious resource an artist may ever find and keep. It is the only ideal he could hold on to. It is a course that mixes him with the irrational; a wild animal from the night cave of the unconscious. It gives him a soul and utterance. The more spontaneous a painting is, the more organic it is.

A technique that displaces decay and death is too noble. It is logical and perfected; aims at objectivity and universality. It is falsely human, schematic and eventually totalitarian.

Douglas' paintings stood stopped in the middle, for quite some time stuck in geometry. It would not come to terms with magic and paradox. They looked good and extraordinary, optimistic and aggressive, being impersonal. The bright colours turned out dirty over time; the geometry crossed out subjectivity, the approach was reductionist.



C. DOUGLAS, *Untitled*

When the circumference, centre and the middle space belong to the unknown, the logical beginning gets canceled. The middle that he can accept, is then a paradox.

Symmetrical and holistic are opposites. Caught in the opposition, Douglas' paintings lost height and prepared for failure. The formalistic flat pattern was disrupted. They became less harmonious, less articulate, a cry, an animal, an echo, primitively human. He starts making textures, holes, mixes media, draws on torn papers; feeling unresolved by thought, starts to win over the structure. The approach is widely integrative.

An ordinary vision it turns out to be in the end, like Tagore's God, down in rain, sun and dirt. A spontaneous feeling of full vision.

C. Douglas was a student of K.C.S. Paniker, at the College of Arts and Crafts, Madras. After completion of studies he lived and worked at Cholamandal. He has now gone over to West Germany. Henry Schavoir, the author of this article is a journalist in West Germany and a friend of Douglas.

Entrance to Cholamandal

AN ARTISTS VILLAGE

Josef James

This is the story of an artists village which has completed this year twenty years of its existence. What is remarkable about this is that it has managed this practically on its own. It has not during these years received nor asked for any funding from the government, quasi-governmental bodies, charitable foundations or persons. Apart from the small grant that it is entitled to, like any other art organisation in the country, it has no exceptionable support from art bodies like the Lalit Kala Akademi. The land where the artists set up their village, was purchased with the money they had earned. Their houses, studios, gallery, theatre, workshop and kitchen, they built on their own. In other words, the artists who make up this settlement, owe their village and the living they have managed to find in it to nobody's charity, patronage, munificence or eccentricity.

The notion was a bold and practical one. They spelt it out as follows: "The painters and sculptors of Madras representing the various art organisations, met in February, 1964 and resolved that since paintings and sculptures do not sell sufficiently, it is necessary to find other legitimate means for the serious artists to survive." The practice of commercial art or wholetime employment under government or private agencies as art teachers in schools or as designers were found unsuitable as they permitted too little time for creative work of a sustained character. Moreover, these occupations were found in most cases to cramp the artist or to stifle him. Part time work of two or three hours per day where the artist could freely extend his art on to a congenial craft of utilitarian nature appeared to be the answer to the problem. Two years later it was felt that the Association should have a residential work centre for artists at a suitable place preferably near the sea on the outskirts of the city with transport facilities. On the 13th of April, 1966, the Association completed the acquiring of 8.05 acres of land near the sea shore, six miles south of Adayar on the new Coast Highway. The building of an artists' village and work centre was soon under way. Since this magnificent little plot of land lies on the Coromandal Coast, the artists' village was named Cholamandal."

There have been other solutions to the problem of the artist's vocation and existence in society; one of them is widely accepted and even idealised. The artist in this case sets himself in a defiant and eccentric relation to the common round of people pursuing their purposes. Accordingly, they appropriate a rebellious attitude towards such disciplines as that of the commercial circuit, administrative procedures, office routines, teaching curricula and the host of other proprieties and conventions that cramp his initiative and stifle his spirit. He grants himself the licence to go at these and the common mentality that is formed of them with a kind of expression that is worked up to shock the people out of their common wisdoms and conventional ways. That arrangement would give the artists a perpetual grouse to fan their fires with and in return, a heady bohemian existence which could be honourably cheap. What has come to be accepted all round as modern art is part of that solution to the attitude towards art and artists and of artists towards others in society, that developed in Europe towards the end of last century. This distinctly middle-class deal has since become idealised and philosophised to legitimise modern art. The romance of that kind of solution proved so captivating that people were willing to fake the existential and societal circumstances of it in order to liberate themselves into that kind of rebel expressiveness.

This solution, comprising of the philosophy of the isolation and alienation of the artist from the run of common life and that of the violently paranoic art is certainly historic and authentic to the cultural situation in Paris, where it originated, also to that of Germany and the United States where it flourished sensationally. This philosophy of art and existence did sway many

minds in this country too and some of them lent themselves to the kind of solution that it held out. At the height of its influence, this group of artists in Madras spoke out against it. "In India the so-called progressive school adopts not only the various techniques and approaches to art prevalent in New York, Paris or Mexico but also to the fundamental thought-feelings of the nationals or races of these regions. That these thought-feelings and racial or national tendencies have been inherited by these people through long tradition is perhaps overlooked in the face of the intense and moving experiences of close contact provided by modern life. In order to rise to its greatest stature of self-expression in the arts a race or a nation has to depend in the midst of all influences on its own fundamental ways of thinking, feeling and shaping." (Artrends, Oct. 1964). Like earlier schools which advanced the truth of a more authentic vision and inspiration, this group of artists put away the sensational philosophy of art and existence as not binding and rejected the bohemian solution.

What is true of us historically is a philosophy of art and existence wherein the relationship between the two is not that of paranoic alienation but of ritualistic identification. The ritualistic approach of the traditional disciplines eliminated the ego or the self-centred subjectivity which really is the incriminating agent, and identified art and existence in a selfless discipline of living and working. It is but natural and honest for artists with a sense of tradition in this country to find themselves anchored to this view. "It is in this depersonalisation", these artists articulated to say on the authority of T.S. Eliot," ....that art may be said to approach the condition of science." In Indian tradition we have perhaps always sensed this truth. The almost total anonymity of great Indian masterpieces of painting, sculptpure and architecture and sometimes even of literary works tend to indicate that the ancient Indian masters aimed at taking art beyond the bonds of personality, towards the truly human in a broader

J. SULTAN ALI, Nirantar, Oil, 85 × 115 cms., 1977. Collection—Lalit Kala Akademi

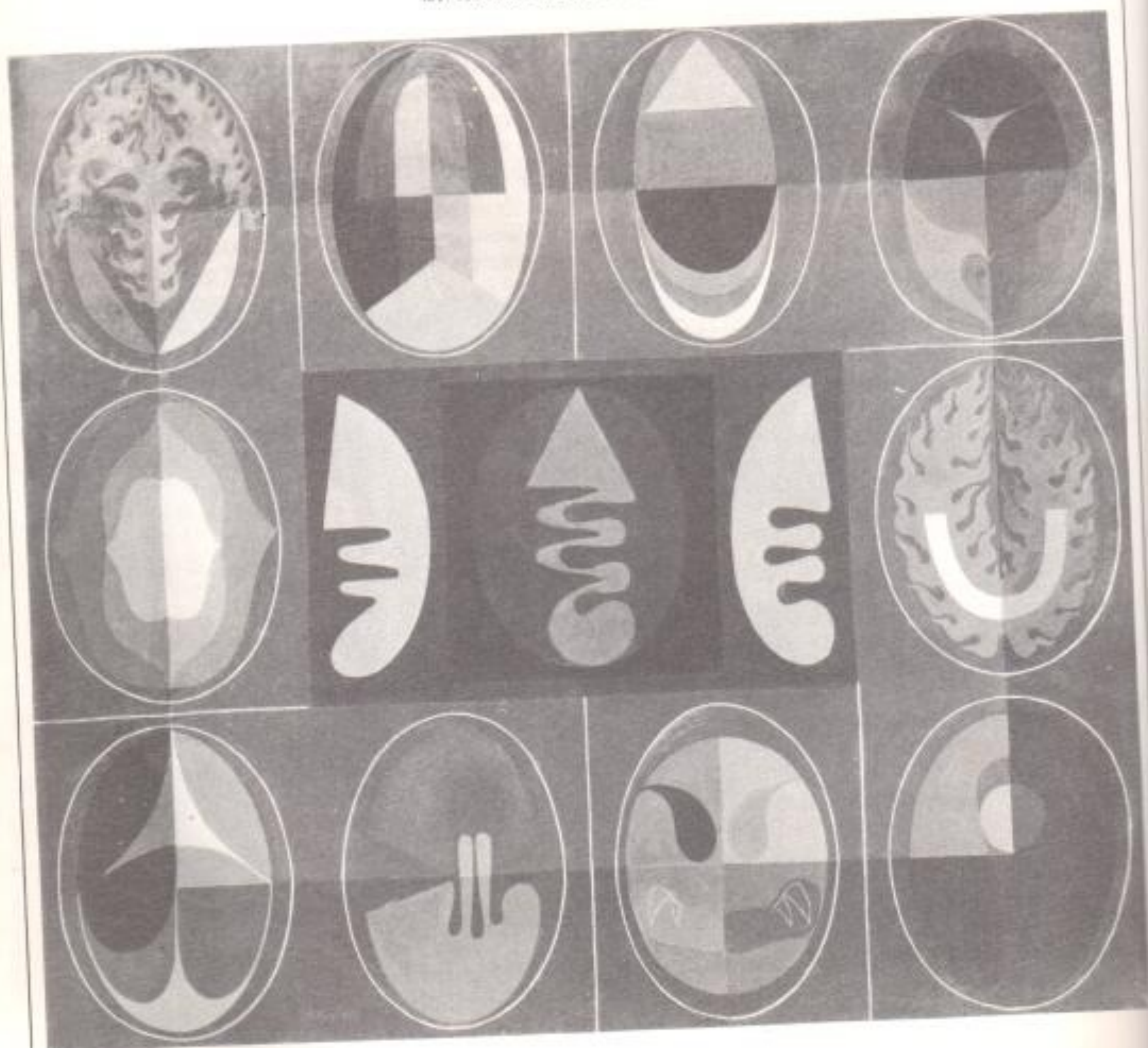
sense." (Artrends, Jan.-Apr. 1965). This position is certainly not wholly exogenous to the range of exigencies of the modernistic philosophy of expression. It was present right at the height of the paranoic out-burst in Cezanne's desire and striving for classicism, in the medeiavalism of Walter Gropius, in Rothko's attempt to express his 'not-self', in the aesthetic withdrawal of Robert Morris and the whole reaction against 'luddite' art by the futuristic-technology school. But that was no more than the wind that blew abroad, which did not change the weather much in this subcontinent.

At Madras, in the early sixties, the group of artists were more alive to the practical steps to be taken than to philosophising precisely about the stand they were being intuitively led to take. They were quick to see that, "it is a thin line that divides a great painter or sculptor from a great craftsman though present day thinking sometimes appears to under-estimate the place of a craftsman in society. It is often forgotten that a great artist is also a great craftsman for there can be no art without craftsmanship." (Artrends, Jul.-Oct. 1966). In craft which had wrought such marvels as the fine Mohenjodaro and Harappan seals, the carvings on the temples of Konark, Khajuraho, Tanjore and Madurai, the South Indian bronzes, the jewellery and handicraft objects of utility, they identified the enormous ritual that relieved artists of their personality, self-centred individualism and other contentious manifestations of his being, and shifted him over to 'the truly human, in a broader sense'. In craft therefore, they saw the cure for the alienation of art and artists from their own humanity and of those around them. Feeling their way to this part of the solution, they articulated: "It is often felt that modern painters and sculptors are insufficiently understood by a large majority of people. The Association's experience has been that while it is difficult to sell a modern painting or sculpture, it is easy to find a market for the most avant-garde work of utilitarian character in handicrafts. Woodwork, ceramics, batiks and leather works are easily bought by the people at good prices. Some of them find in the new crafts something which gives them an introduction to modern painting and sculpture as well." (Atrends, Jul.-Oct. 1966). "The Association is convinced", they went on to say, "that a more complete acceptance of modern artists by the people will be achieved partly and to a great extent at that, by the normal and natural education in aesthetics and taste of the people through utilitarian craftwork created by him. It is felt that the gulf that exists today between the artist and the people can be bridged this way effectively." (ibid)

Once the shift (from self-expressive to ego-negating from the emotive content to exhaustive craft) had been effected intuitively, they were emboldened to re-do for themselves the existential circumstances, or the working and living conditions according to the new orientation. The Bohemian act that artists were obliged to put on for a living could be ditched, because one is fooled no more by the ego which pushes one into the act. "We are not bohemians out here, neither are we recluses", said one of them in a recent interview, "we are just artists." "I do not know, I just paint, I guess" professed another more like a devoted craftsman than as an imposing performer. (Aside, Mar. 1987). It took some years for the conviction to form clearly in their minds. During the sixties the existential issue was to find release from the ego-expressive art they were disagreeing with and from the harsh, demeaning demands the practice of it was making on them. "One of the maladies that has dogged the step of the contemporary artist", they articulated, "is his apparent need to keep himself in the lime-light without a break for survival. He has to continually please all through his life in order to sell and live. Truly an artificial situation considering human limitations—it does not seem to allow for the perfectly normal slack periods of creativity in man. As a result we have too many exhibitions of painting where the artist has really nothing new to say......the spiritual significance of such self-imposed and periodical withdrawal from public exhibitions of ones work by potentially creative painter does not appear to be much understood. It can possibly give the artist clarity of mind and vision and help him to find himself—to *arrive*." (Artrends, Jun.-Apr. 1966). They sought to withdraw and seek an existence where they could put their minds to the "truly human" prospect

The Beach front at Cholamandal

K.V. HARIDASAN, *Bija Yantra*, 1971



which they had been able to sense assuredly in their works.

The number of artists who shared this prospect was more than forty; all of them either students of faculty at the Government College of Art and Crafts, Madras. This institution, helpfully, had an excellent craft department consisting of engravers, mould makers, goldsmiths and wood-workers, alongside the faculties of painting and sculpture. It is difficult to assess how much this circumstance had to do with the centralisation of the ritual of craft to the discipline of creative expression that these artists were led to attempt. But there it has for a fact, institutionalised along with the freer disciplines of painting and sculpture in that institution. There was acceptance and appreciation on both sides and also instances of unwelcome interference as between the moulders and sculpture students, for instance. But the forty-odd painters and sculptors that the institution held worked freely and intensely not tended by any overt ideological management or frontage.

They were at it together day in and day out at the College of Art and Craft. After class hours they would move over to the premises of the State Lalit Kala Akademi to continue painting and sculpting late into the night; at it again the next day at the college and at the Akademi after that. To take care of the collection, exhibition and sale of their output of painting and sculpture, they formed the Progressive Painters Association. This Association of theirs founded their journal "Artrends" in 1961, "a quarterly bulletin on contemporary art, mainly Indian." The clearings they came upon in their attempt to bring about the value shift in art and the prospects and retrospects that occured to them on the way, they articulated in their journal. This grew into a movement when they became conscious of the distinctive vision and evaluation that was clearing up for them. This new ambience and the accumulation of craftwork that they were turning out made it necessary to form the Artists' Handicrafts Association to handle the crafts projection, along with the Progressive Painters Association which concerned itself with the software. It was clear as the sixties progressed that this whole activity would outgrow the College of Art and Craft, if it had not already done so.

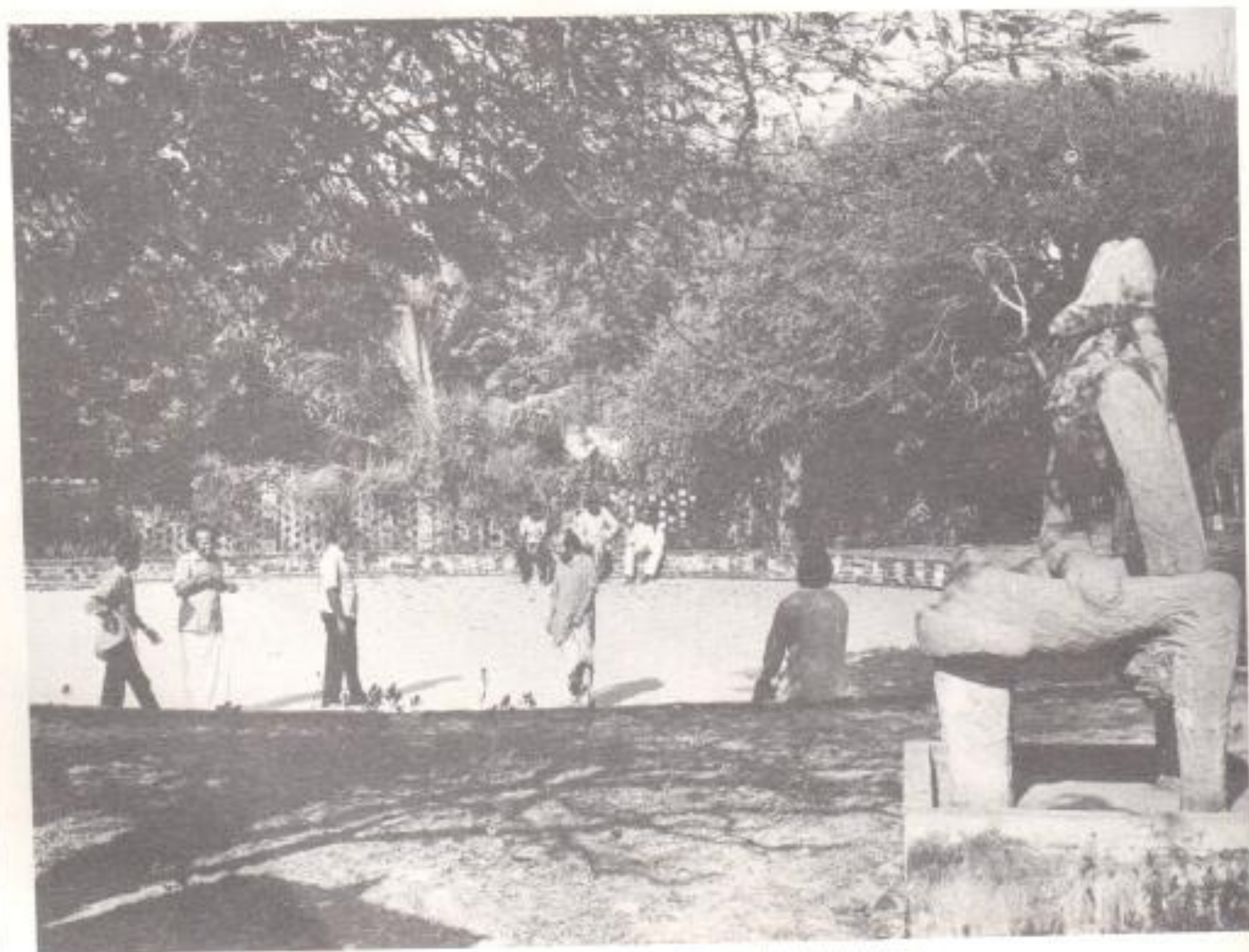
The Principal of the College of Art and Crafts, K.C.S. Paniker had himself been the prime visionary and the nerve-centre of the whole development. His own attempts to shift away from an emotive valuation (served by fauve colour and cubistic drawing) to a holistic and transcendental discription, had taken him by the early sixties to a point where the established order of craftsmanship in the medium had to be critically examined and possibly redone. While the issue appeared in a summary form in his work, the results obtained by his colleagues in their own individual exercises and investigations had passed into it or were there standing by it. But he was to retire from the institution in 1967 and the students who were absorbed in this large enterprise to be lost to the effort after completion of their terms in college. Art institutions with fixed courses and tenures like the one in Madras or elsewhere cannot keep up an art movement beyond a point. Artists, for all they might owe to it cannot count on it to keep them together as long as they need to. It must at some point in the development of the movement disown them and in ordinary circumstances frustrate them as a group or as individuals. "Art institutions in India", they reflected helplessly, "turn out hundreds of possible young painters, sculptors and creative craftsmen every year. But over ninety five percent of them seem to disappear from the field sooner or later. At least, they never heard of again. Probably, many of them eke out a dreary living somewhere drudging on uncongenial commercial art work of some kind or other. Many of these unfortunate young artists often have brilliant backgrounds of student work. Some were, perhaps, even looked upon, while they were students, as the up-and-coming artists of our times." (Artrends, Jul. 1964).

A movement in which a deep revaluation was being attepted needed to concern itself not just with its sources of inspiration and the emerging convictions but also with the question of the survival of those who were making it happen with their painting and sculpture. This concern loomed large among the painters and sculptors in Madras by the mid-sixties

The Beach at Cholamandal

Their assurance on this question seems to have arisen from the very point of view they were advancing with their work. In craft, which they were advancing as the possible content of creative expression (in place of the self-suffering emotion) they sensed something which could also serve as an honest and independent means of livlihood, if practiced considerately as presently by millions of craftsmen in our country. On that assurance, "......some of the more restless painters and sculptors in Madras resolved, "that they would henceforth live a fuller life in society as creative artists. As painting and sculpture did not sell sufficiently", they went on to detail, "they would employ themselves part-time, say, two to three hours a day, on creative handicrafts for an independent living. They would extend their art on to these." (Artrends, Jul.-Oct. 1966). The result was the establishment of the Artists' Handicrafts Association for the promotion of the new ideal. With that the second part of the solution to the larger issue of art and existence was in sight for this group of artists in Madras.

The public in Madras to which they belonged seems to have regarded them well. When the artists donated their paintings to the war effort in the early sixties, they came out and bought up most of them. This trend continued well into the later years of the decade. Much more went on between the artists and the public. The artists spoke to them through their journal, reasoned with them at seminars, exchanged ideas with them at the Artists' and Writers' workshops held periodically at the College of Art and Crafts. The public responded tensely and passionately at all these occasions as if at work with them in a common search for an art which they could honestly value. There was therefore no despair or derision in their decision to move out of such familarity when the artists eventually



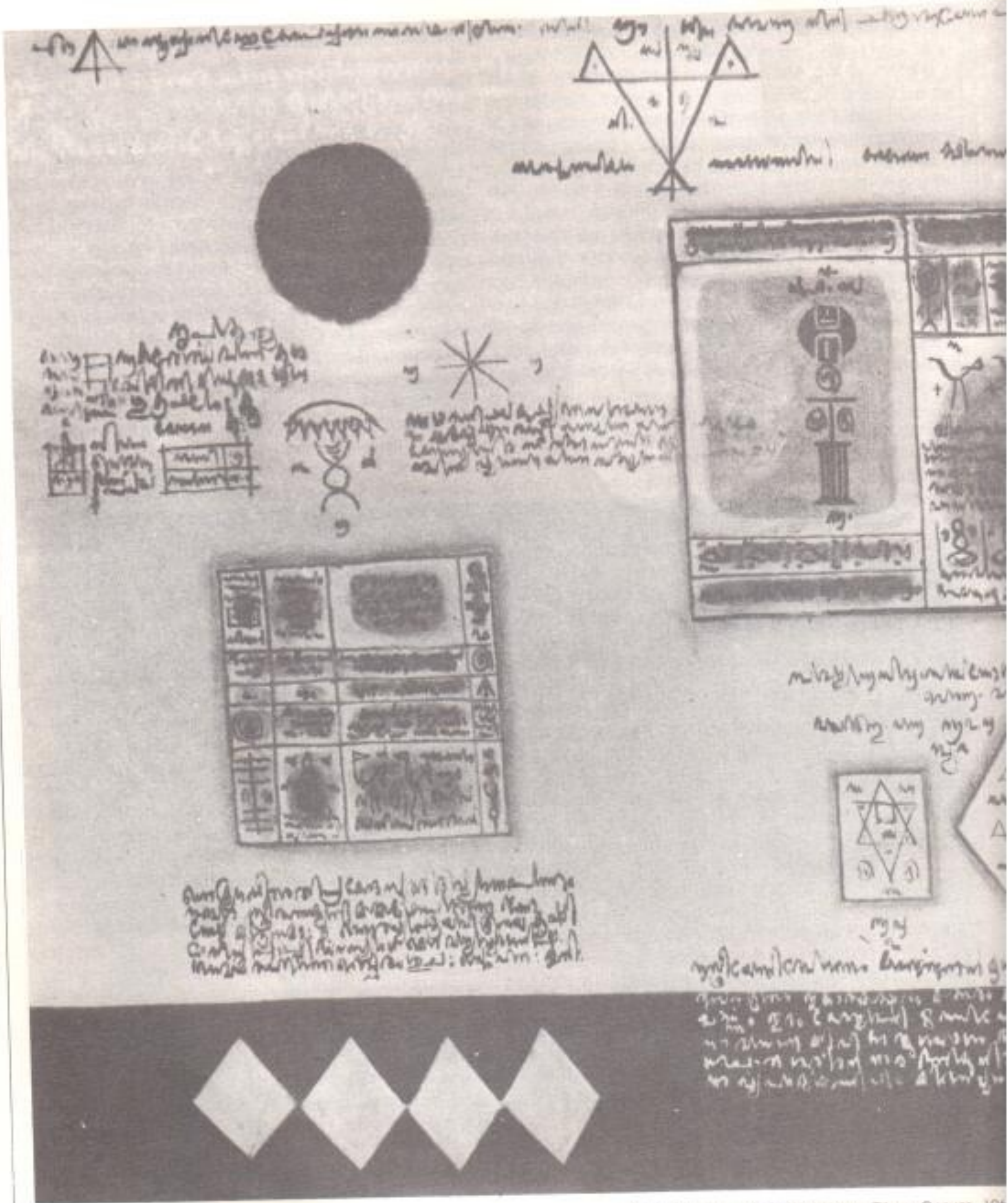
The Bharathi Open-air theatre cholamandal Artists' Village

came to take it. The force behind that decision to part with the public was the ideology of anonymity suggested by the rule of craft in their expression and of course, the factor of availability of land at prices they could afford to pay. An export order from Italy of their handpainted textiles worth Rs. 10,000. brought up their savings to what would cost them to buy 8.05 acres of land at Rs. 4,000 an acre in the outskirts of the city. Their Artists' Handicrafts Association pooled their savings and bought the land on the 13th of April, 1966. Over forty painters and sculptors marked out their individual housing plots on this land, leaving out a central area for a common workshop, gallery and kitchen. Some of them moved out into it with their families straightway and continued to work. In a couple of years the artists' village was up in that place and work continued unabated.

The survival question in the larger art and existence issue that these artists had negotiated hinged on three basics: food, a place to be and fellow artists to keep oneself up with. If fellow artists were forthcoming as they had been on account of the movement that was on, a place for all and sustenance could be bought and secured, they reckoned, with the money that could be found. It looked simple once it was accomplished but it would not have been real had it not been for the ideal of craft and its ideology of anonymity which they had identified themselves with in their painting and sculpture. They trusted it to their Artists' Handicrafts Association to take the initiative to decide on the place, to register the land in its name, to plan out the settlement and to attend to the arrangements needed to run the place. Of the 8.05 acres of land registered in the name of the Association, a central area was retained by the Association to maintain common facilities like workshop, gallery, common studio and kitchen; the remaining land was to be made over to the artists-members for building their houses and to grow their gardens. While the artists were free to sell their painting and sculpture in any manner as they pleased, all their craft-work such as ceramics, batiks, leather, lacquer, wood, metal etc. were to be marketed by the Association and the sales proceeds distributed among the artists after deducting cost of material supplied and ten percent of the artist's charges. The ten percent deducted went to the general funds from which overheads and improvement expenditures were to be met. The artists elected from among themselves the President, Vice-president, Secretary and Treasurer of the Association. That is the set up which has maintained the place for the past twenty years.

The survival condition and the freedom which they had designed for themselves did not look the same to everybody. Paniker, who had, in a sense, led them to this, was inclined to view it as a state of renunciation, a moral negation of a world of strife and achievement, an existence "beyond the bounds of personality", the turning away once more "to life and nature, the perenial inspiration to man's creative faculties for a fresh and vital new experience". To another, the coming away was like losing oneself in some religious or spiritual order. But some found the closeness and constancy of the nascent ruralism too parochial for their spirit. Two of them went away to Paris to prompt themselves with the excitement of that historical art metropolis. Two others who married visitors from abroad accompanied their spouses, one to West Germany and the other to the United States. Another desired more domesticity for his family than he could find in the village and left for his hometown. A few preferred to remain where they were in town but stayed affiliated to the village. One remarkable painter found the village too open for the protection he sought from his own genius. He painted away helplessly, brilliantly and ended his life is his hut in the village in a desparate bid. Besides these, ego problems of many sorts did arise often enough in the village stirring up the placid picture that it gave out. But for all that, it is no less a fact today than twenty years ago when it started here.

The work of the individual artists and of them as a group in the new environment was to start with a continuation of what was initiated during their days at the College of Art. Paniker, for instance, went on with the researches into the discipline of figuration which he had started while at that institution. He went on to conclude it in his final "Words and Symbols" series of paintings which were done here. In these, he worked off the ego-consciousness and its burden of emotion with an extremely crafty organisation of purely syntactical graphic conventions. He passed away with that achievement ten years after moving out into the village. He was cremated at the ghat near the village which had been set apart traditionally for the last rites of craftsmen in that area. In those ten years while he was advancing with the ritual of ego-exhaustion, the self-suffering image and its expressionist registers dropped out of the paintings and sculptures of his colleagues in the village. The colour turned transparent like illumination, the form subtle and patterned and the vision relieved of anxious thought turned feely metaphysical. It had taken around ten years in the new environment for the artists to gather the strains and to



K.C.S. PANIKER, *Words & Symbols*. Oil on Canvas. 196

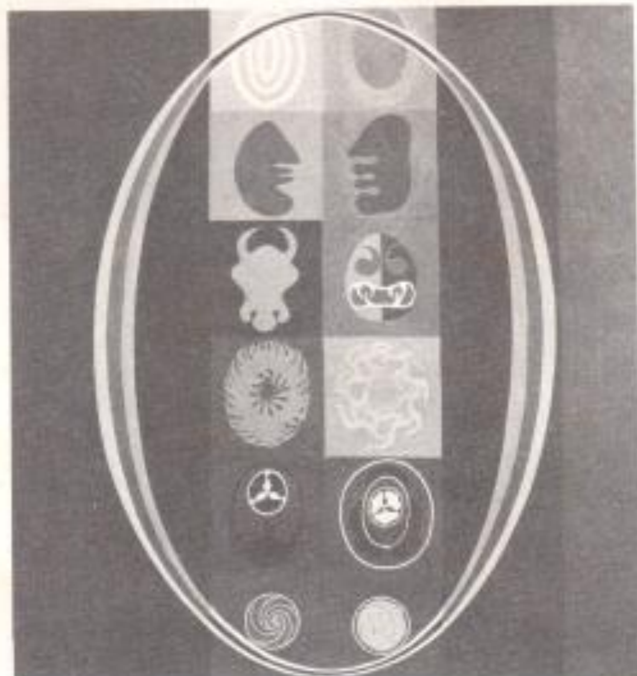
effect the crucial shift. The possibility and the effort came to be shared by artists at other centres very quickly and the outlook became widespread. (see Philip Rawson, Lalit Kala Contemporary, Sept. 1980).

The shift-over in sculpture which took place along with that in painting led to striking results. The crafting away of the ego-expressive image in this case, went so far as to finally identify such craft with the 'art' of the piece. The sculpture looked acceptable as craftwork of remarkable freshness and equally as strangely expressive work of 'art'. This identification of 'art' with 'craft' foreshadowed in the final series of Paniker's paintings, was so forthright and impulsive in sculpture that it unexpectedly showed up the flaw in the solution these artists had worked out to the issue of art and existence. 'Art' and 'craft' in their scheme were two separate categories and their strategy consisted of *extending* their 'art' to congenial crafts. Such 'artistic' craftwork was to be the commodity with which they were to buy their livelihood, time and the freedom needed to do serious 'art'. Implied in this quite definitely, is a subservient, means-to-an-end role to craft in relation to art. That clearly was inconsistent with the way art and craft become one in Panikers paintings and in the distinctive sculpture the argument had given birth to in the village. They convincingly invalidated the distinction which had been foundational to their survival.

In any case, after the first ten years things had not been going well with the solution. There were some artists who found the craftwork they were doing to be a distraction, a temptation and more of a concession to the oddities of public taste than the ritual of self-extinguishing application or of alms-gathering that it was meant to be. The off hand job many of them were led to do with it got them stuck on the romance of antiquity, religiosity or of picturesqueness to get the specialised market for artistic crafts to clear them in sufficient quantities. Such concession and convenience, besides making their crafts products dull, started eventually to hold their 'serious' art down, although not without exceptions. The impasse was finally reached when the market for craft-ware, shrank to a fraction of the original size. The market for handpainted textiles, their chief craft-ware, was flooded by imitations and by cheaper and standardised ware put out by the textile industry befuddling the choosy clients who had stood by them in the early years. It had become necessary and proper for them in these circumstances to take note of Paniker's work and the new sculpture and to review their routine and the presuppositions which had stabilised it for them.

The distinctive sculpture in which the identity was accomplished and those brilliant instances of painting which were distinctive for the same reason opened them out of the impasse which had started to hold up the enterprise the village had embodied. A third breakthrough was in architecture. In recent years, one of the painters took to designing and constructing buildings. Without any formal training in the discipline the painter went about absorbing professional ideas and ventured designing fresh and low cost conceptions and putting them up with a group of specially trained group of workmen. His constructions convinced as sculpture when considered with an open mind from that point of view, and as functional and architectural when considered from the common point of view. Besides, they cost on the average forty percent less than standard market rates of construction. In a few years after he had started he had found more clients than he could take on, including three in the village itself. As with the sculpture, one cannot conclude whether these realisations in brick and cement were 'art' or 'craft' or 'industry'. They were all of these simultaneously and in remarkable union.

The painter-architect, the sculptor and the painters could have desired greater variety and scale of their output since the distinctive products had come to be very remuneratively priced in the market. But the scope for increasing both the scale and variety of work in the village stood subject to a constraint implicit in the set-up they had put up for themselves. It appears to have been a principle that they shall not have for the village any more of management and administration than what the artists could do by themselves. They have no paid staff other than a receptionist and a watchman. The limit to the volume and variety of activity that the village could manage and support would therefore depend on the time and energy the freedom-loving workmen could spare for such tasks. Besides, apart from an informal, intuitive assent to a certain outlook on art and existence, there wasn't any ideological bind to keep them down to a strict discipline of work and management. This leaves the village unique, free of officialdom or establishment of any kind. It leaves them free, in a sense, of activity exceeding what they can manage with their spare time and residual energy. That sets the inertia, an institutionalised reservation against expensive expirementation, motivated jobbing, in general, against any such expansive approach to art and existence in their midst. This has preserved the place from the adminstrator and the ideologue and prevented the artists from turning into such ogres themselves.



K.V. HARIDASAN. *Bija Yantra*, 1971

The absence of an 'establishment' and officialdom leaves the solution without the common preservatives that keep it for a future date. The official set-up or at least an establishment binds the state of affairs into a continuing set-up which can outlive the present members and carry it on for others in the future. "I have not thought about it and nothing moves me to think about it" said Paniker when he was once asked about it. "This place is here "he said, "because the artists who are here needed such a place. It may be that they will not need it any more some day. If and when that happens it would be best for this place to die and be as if it had never been. It could be burdensome and pathetically so if this place is not permitted to be no more if and when it turns dead to those who are here." "When Cholamandal was concieved" said one of the artists recently in an interview, "It was meant to be a one generation thing." That was the generation which had to peddle their paintings for money to live, put off a meal sometimes with tea and peanuts, huddle themselves on the floor of the Akademi buildings and sometimes on the step of the College of Arts and Crafts to pass the night, hang around patrons, dealers and newspaper columinsts for favourable consideration and a word of encouragement, dreaming all the while of an art with which to kill the anxiety and to sense "the truly human, in a broader sense." 'To them Cholamandal has been a moment of glory, real, impermanent like a dream come away.'