

Art of **Ravi Paranjape** A Magical Realist

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Use of memory drawing in advertising, calendar and publication illustrations.

As an art student, Paranjape used to look through a window frame cut out of thick paper to visualize surrounding reality with respect to the space in the frame. It turned out to be a vital exercise. With practice and experience he was soon able to capture interesting design ideas at-a-glance which often turned into subjects of his drawings.

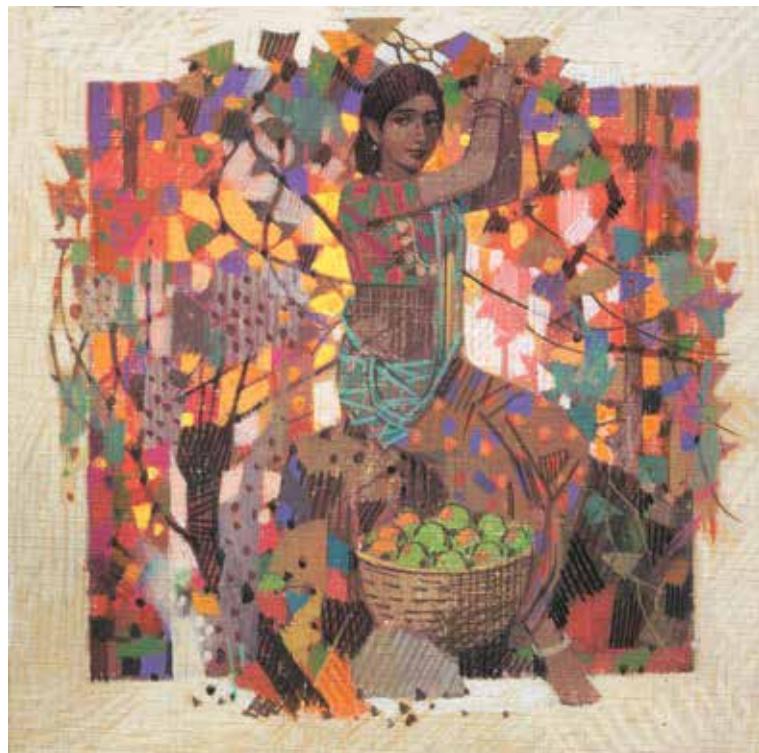
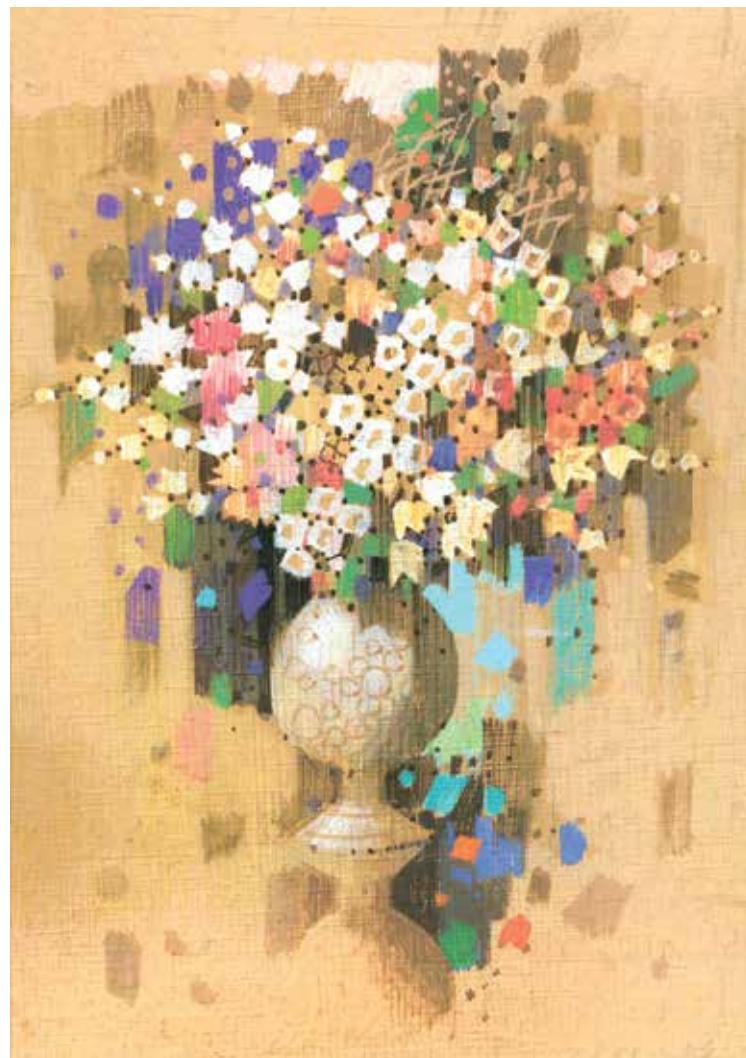


thumbnails

Ravi's thumbnails created for his paintings are a great source to study his colour approach.

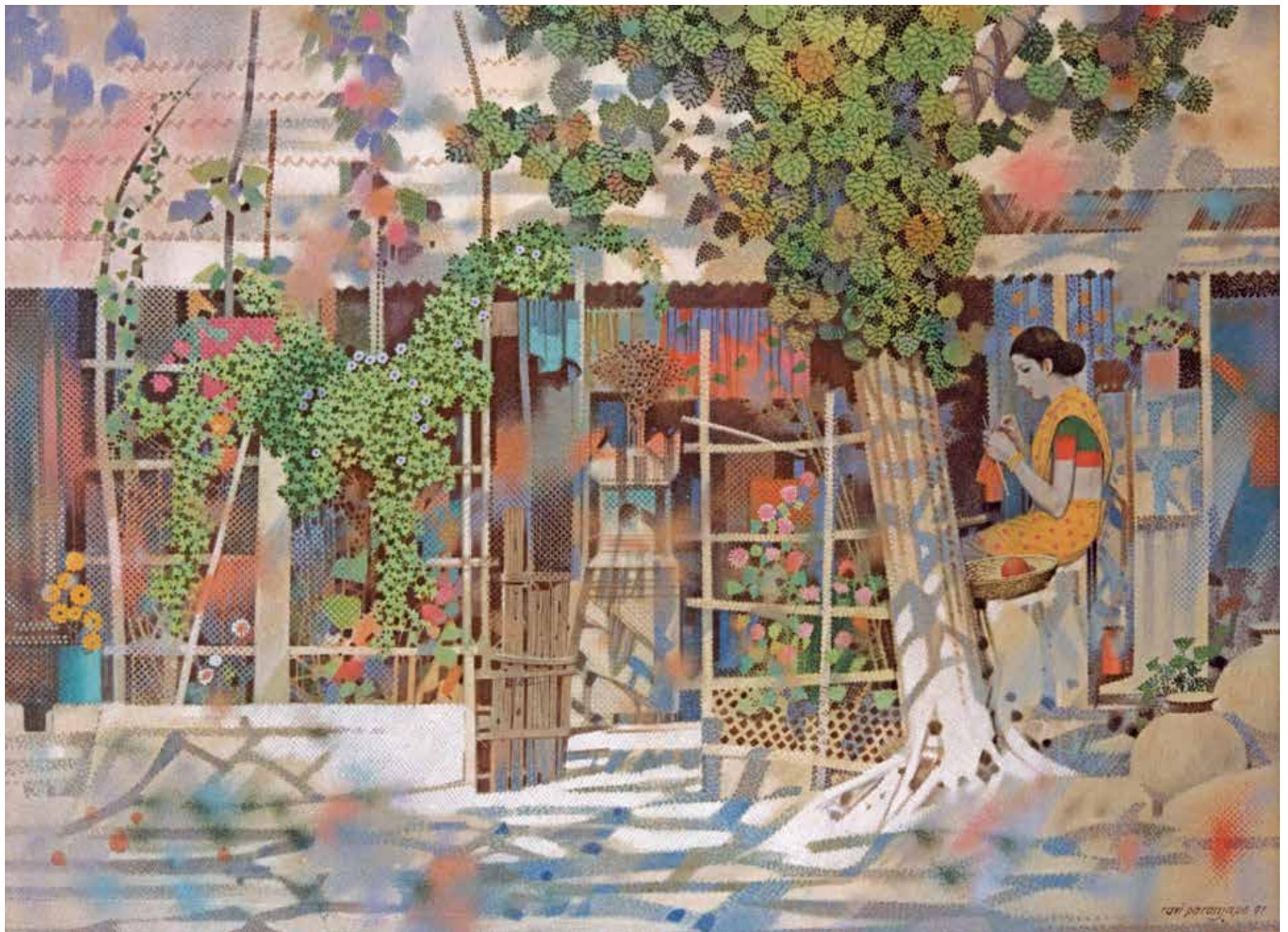
"A thumbnail complete with coloured tonal values is a piece of art which is rich in its visual music."

Making the thumbnail is a thought process that matures as the artists' association with colours and understanding tonal values grows with tireless experimentation. An artist must pay attention that the tonal values of colours are complementary to each other to maintain the balance of all elements.





Effervescent colours and their exotic blend makes the painting such a sparkling environment that reflects the genius and his creativity.



"Truly colour is vice! Of course, it can be, and has the right to be one of the finest virtues. Controlled by the strong hand and careful guidance of her Master drawing, colour is a splendid Mistress, with a mate worthy of herself, her lover, but her Master likewise, the most magnificent Mistress possible, and the result is evident in all the glorious things that spring from their union."

– Whistler (1834 - 1903) to Fautin-Latour on colour

Watercolours

Artist Ravi Paranjape has handled watercolour medium in a method different than the conventional approach. The picture is mostly rendered using transparent washes of small forms. In this method use of many shades and colours is possible due to which the subject is lent with an aesthetic dimension.

His dialogue with watercolours is very unique. He has used small areas of lucid washes instead

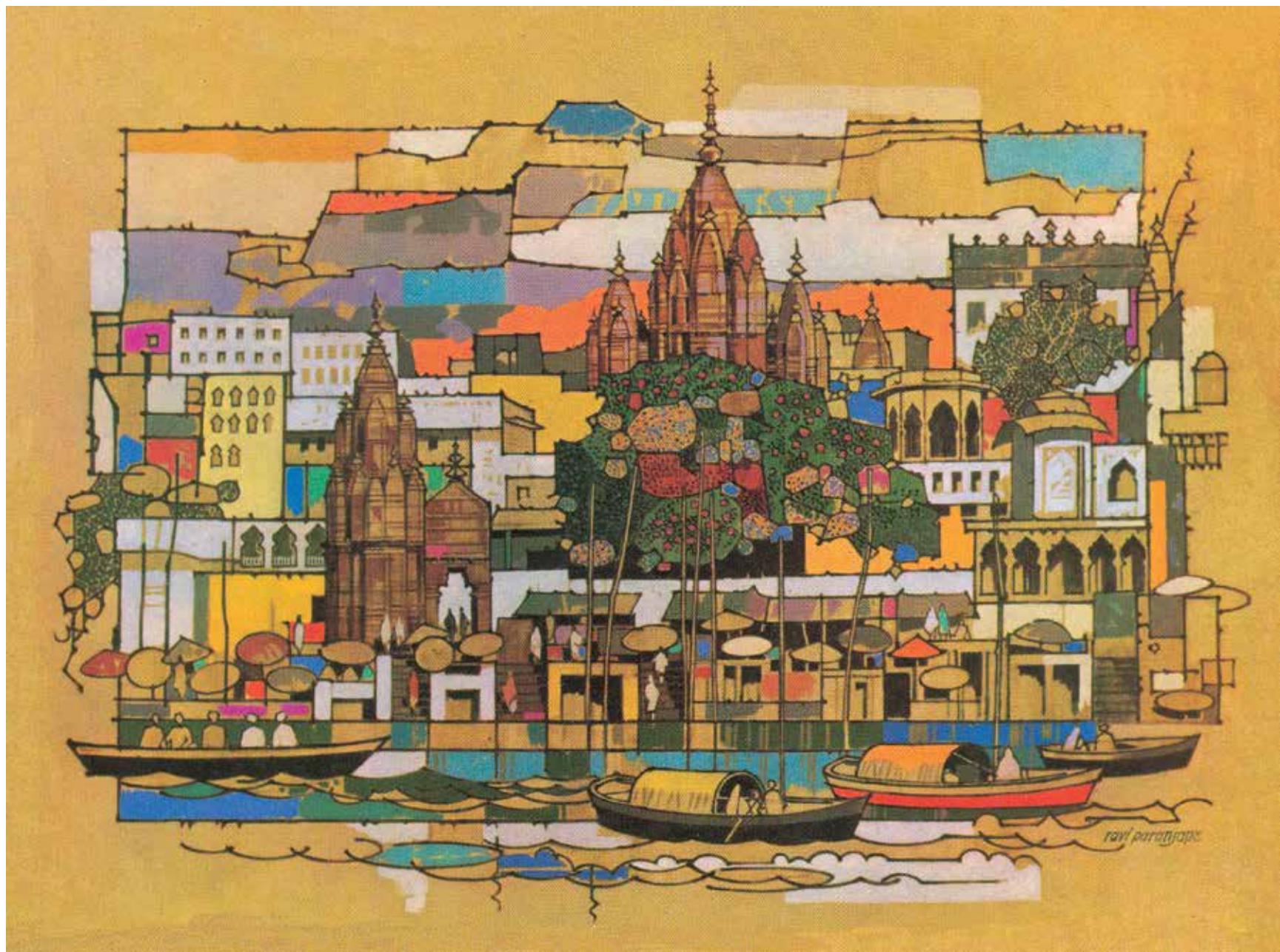
of big wet in wet washes of colours. Glazing technique is used very effectively with the accents of small dots and lines to enhance the aesthetic value of the subject. This approach is very different from the conventional way of handling the medium. He has experimented by adding Gum arabic to watercolour painted on gesso coated background and the results are very interesting.

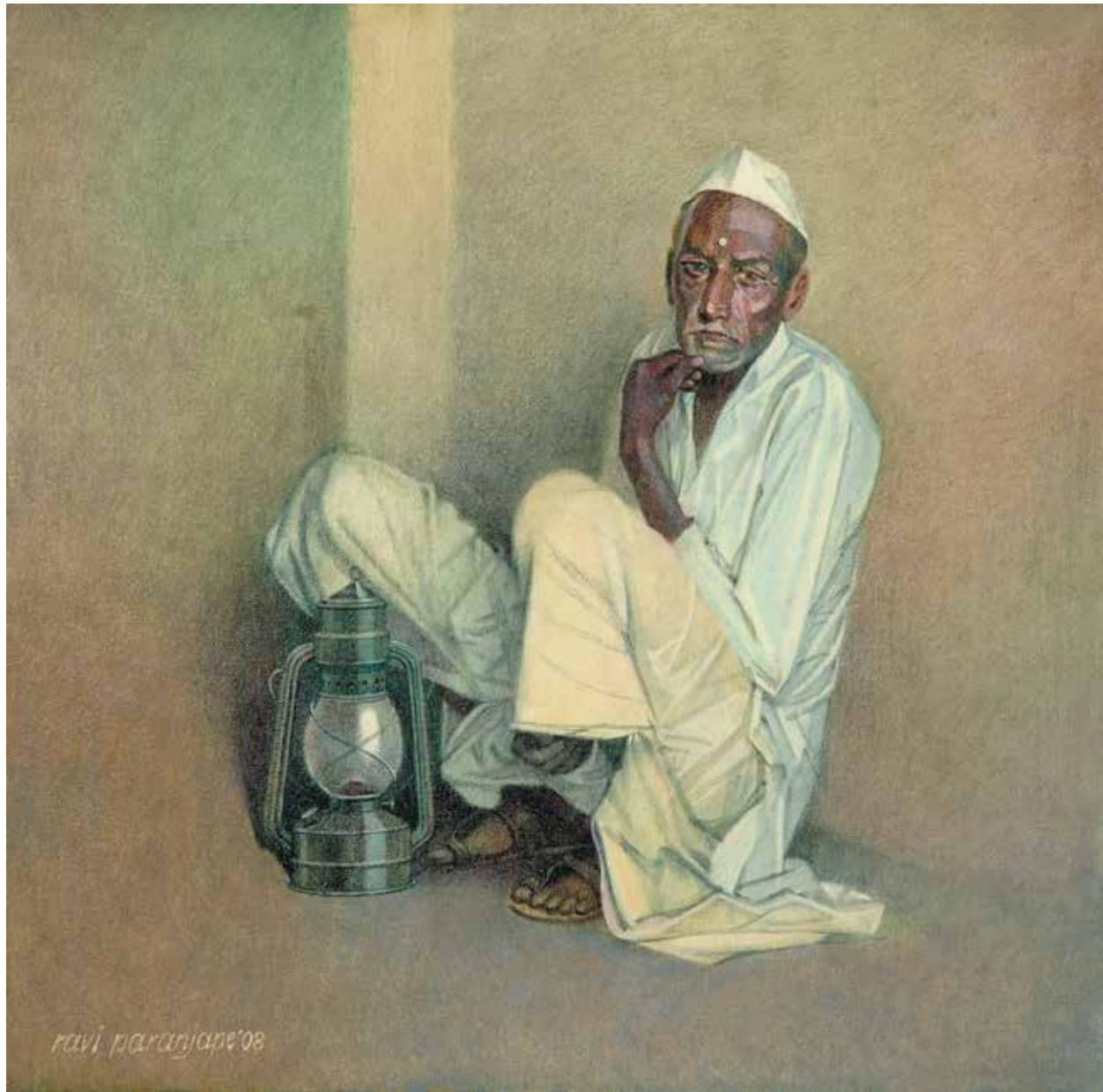


Oils

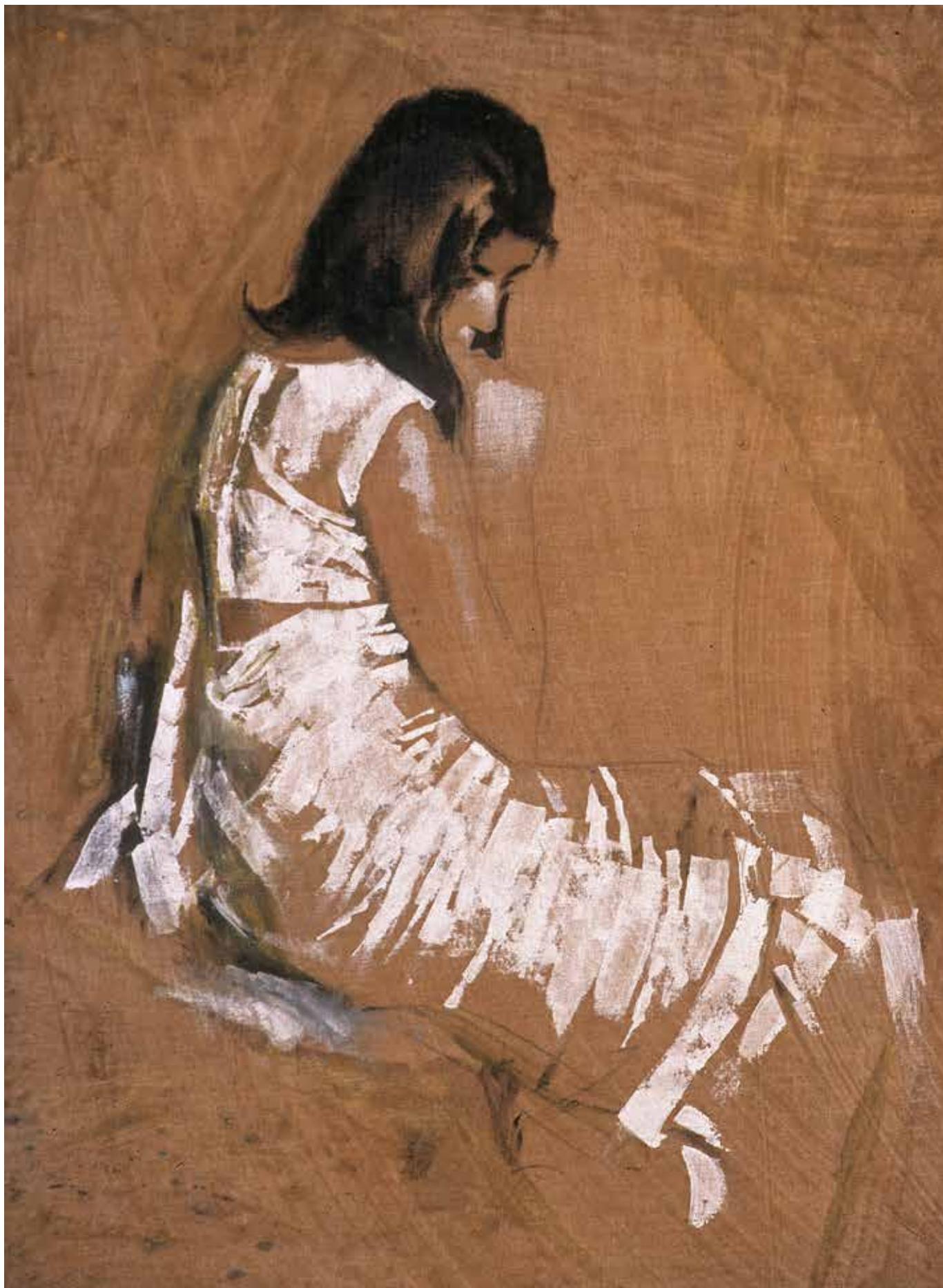
His breakthroughs with oil paints are also very interesting. He used flat application, transparent glazes, linear marks, pointillist technique and cross-hatch very powerfully to treat the form with its lost and found edges. Ravi used a special technique of dotted effects on paper which are reminiscent of the 'pointillism' of the French artist Seurat. However Ravi used brushes and oils for his works.

His technical understanding of colour pigments was very strong. As a result, his works were very refined on the technical side. In Ravi's works luminosity, colour and harmony form a trio of excellence and distinction. He has experimented with mediums like turpentine, linseed oil, oleopasto, liquin, along with special medium he invented; with which he could put and pick up colour glazes to achieve desired effect.





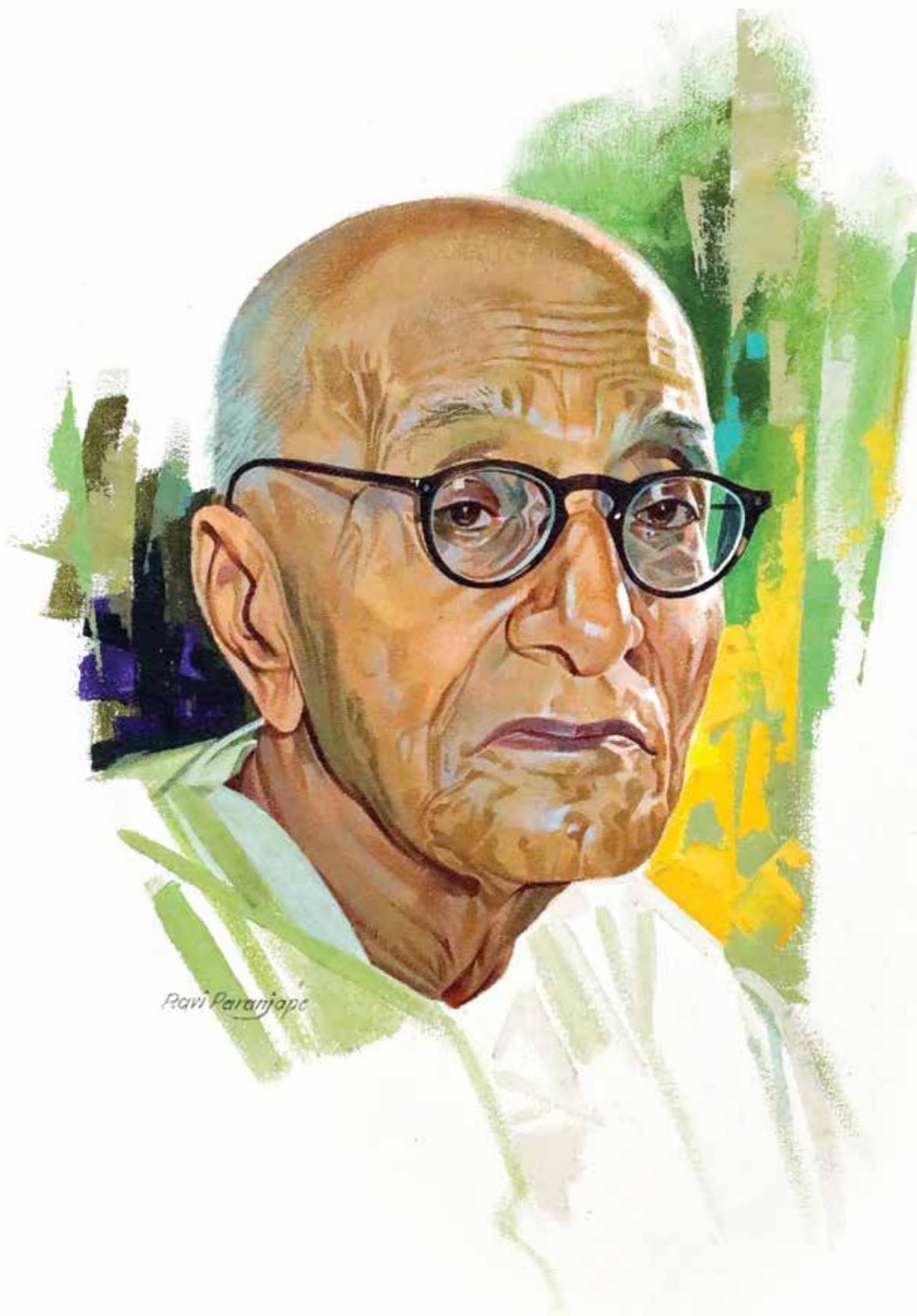
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Drawing

Communicating
expressions
through lines

Raw Paper

“ My inner self adores the beautiful, the melodious and the lyrical aspects of life. So, if my drawing has an imprint of my own identity, or my style, please remember, it is a product of my long years of introspection, with an eye for the beautiful, the melodious and lyrical aspects of our life. ”

- Ravi Paranjape

Ravi Paranjape's philosophy of life has always been "Choose the beautiful and make it more so for yourself and for others", and this philosophy is clearly reflected in his drawing. A painter-illustrator with an exceptional ability to observe the world around him, he transformed it into a visually rich graphic language with his forceful, energetic yet melodious, lyrical characteristics of line.

A journey that began with scribbling on the wall and then transforming those scribbles into drawings, right from the age of five; set the path for this outstanding artist called Ravi Paranjape.

Drawing is the fundamental aspect in the development of an artist. Quality of lines, forms, search of beauty and composition are all integral to drawing.



Colour

Melodious Adventures



“ The key to my success as a colourist was constant experimentation and a convention-free application of colour on the chosen surface. The most important thing was achieving colour orchestration – creating a melody of singing colour values with aesthetically controlled modulations. This called for a certain sensitivity much like that of a musician. ”

- Ravi Paranjape

To create visual music on canvas was the aim of artist Ravi Paranjape no matter what the subject may be. He was very sensitive about the use of colour, both as a Painter and an Illustrator. Along with linear rhythm and shapes associated with the pictorial space, colour is a major factor that helps to create visual music in his paintings.

Looking at his creations in various mediums one can clearly witness that colour has a special importance in his paintings and that he is very particular about the role of colour and its value in pictorial compositions.

Colour creates moods, colour is known by the company it keeps, colour harmony, are the common terms used by artists and designers with respect to colour. And this was very evident in Ravi's works. Complementary colours are juxtaposed with acute understanding of colour temperature. This variation of tone and temperature was a unique virtue that Ravi possessed.

He was a strong colourist. He could create, transform and elevate the mood of a painting by colour orchestration. He could do this in many ways: observing colour in a pictorial reality and interpreting it differently was one way. At other times he could add some arbitrary colours in the composition to elevate visual experience and many a times he imagined a thin curtain of colour between himself and the subject which helped him to achieve colour harmony in the painting, transforming observed reality into a work of art with rich aesthetic experience.

There were many colour surprises in his paintings and illustrations, but behind them there was a solid foundation of colour experimentation. His search for new possibilities of colour orchestration was a continuous creative process. Looking at some of his works one can witness his colour adventures with open frankness. He invites the viewer to enjoy and get engaged in the visual music he has created in a painting. Through his colour organisations he could transfer his emotional response to his subject in his own style very effectively.

His sensitive mind could absorb colour inspiration from almost anything in his daily life experiences. His outdoor sketching expeditions for landscape painting were especially a great source of inspiration and experimentation so far as colour was concerned.

Medium

An extraordinary dialogue



“ During my stage as a student, my work was focused on achieving mastery over drawing, study of colours and practice of mediums. During years of my candidacy, I went through the process of handling of various mediums, search for creative possibilities of a medium and putting forth my own search with respect to subject, concept, presentation and technique and now based upon all that experience, the aim of my work is to search for ‘pictorial melodies’ with the help of colour, lines and forms and expressing them through the medium of colours. I felt the need to search for the possibility of different mediums and therefore, I have worked in a variety of mediums. ”

- Ravi Paranjape

Ravi was truly a master of many paint mediums. If we take a cross-section of his huge body of work, we can witness that he has worked with varied mediums like charcoal, graphite pencils, colour pencils, oil pastels, pen and ink, watercolours, poster colours, acrylics and oils with equal ease. This itself is a rare virtue. From his student stage of higher art education, he was practicing many mediums. As an illustrator, both for the advertising and publication fields, he focused more on pen and ink, poster colours, photo colours, lithographic chalk and printing inks to achieve various visual effects. He wildly experimented with different tools and surfaces to develop new visual languages for solving visual problems at hand. He tried a number of surfaces – scholar paper, linen-textured mount board, ivory card, box board, commercial art board, tinted paper and so on...

Being a top rank illustrator in the country, he was a trendsetter for many stylistic explorations and in order to achieve this, he was constantly searching new creative horizons. This search was the need of the profession. This need was combined with his strong artistic passion to open new avenues of creative expression in the advertising and publication art he produced.

This approach was also reflected in his paintings. He achieved varied breakthroughs in handling mediums like watercolours, acrylic and oils in particular. He experimented with different solvent mediums used for oil painting like oleo pasto, liquine, distilled turpentine and linseed oil to get astoundingly fantastic results. He has formulated a unique painting medium on his own but its technical formula is not known to us. He could lift up a thin layer of oil paint from the surface of an inlay glazes of other colour in that area. This has the unique quality of that medium.

All his experimentation was backed by solid thought behind it. It developed through his need to convey his emotional response to reality. The process of converting observed reality into pictorial reality with his own set of aesthetics has given birth to various visual expressions on canvas. In order to do so he developed a special ability to have a dialogue with the paint medium, explore and understand possibilities and limitations of the medium, and then found ways to express with the medium.

Technique & Style

Creating visual music



“ Any art form should be substantial on two tiers at once: the first one is to convey the obvious communicative aspect and creation and the second to unfold the abstract content of expression at its core. As far as painting is concerned this task is carried out by technique and style hand in hand. That is why many-a-times they are mistaken for each other. It is very important to understand that technique is tied to an artist's skill and style to his individuality and inner self. ”

- Ravi Paranjape



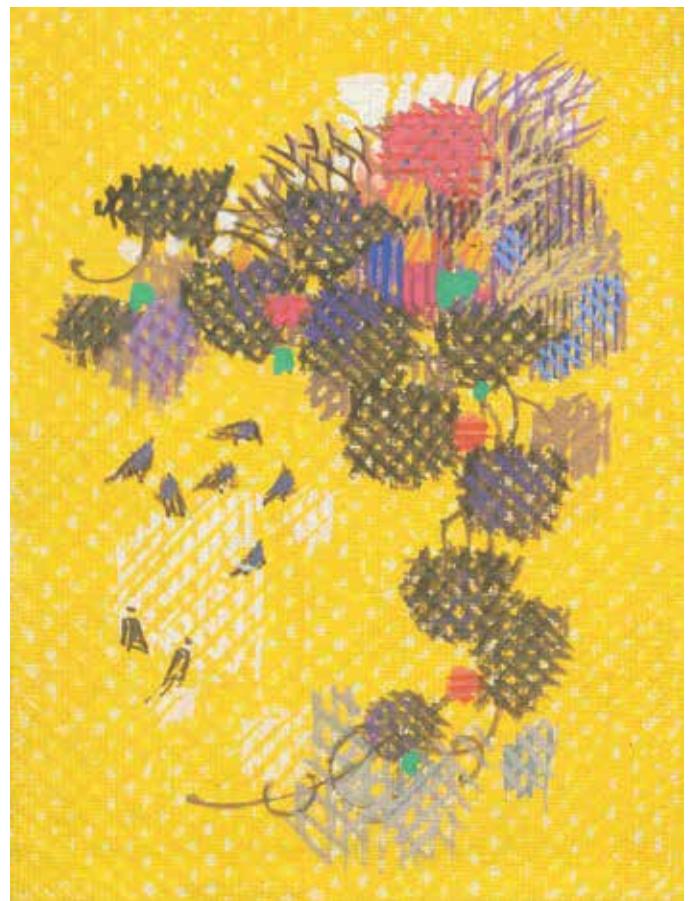
Composition

Space and shape
orchestration



“ Be it a design strategy or a composition, it largely hinges on the aesthetic sense of the artist. This could be cultivated to a certain extent by astutely studying master painters and towering forefathers. However, it is an artist’s responsibility to take in only the beautiful and present it even more beautifully. A true artist should despise anarchy, disorder, confusion, which cloud his creativity. Instead, he should embrace peace, harmony and order. ”

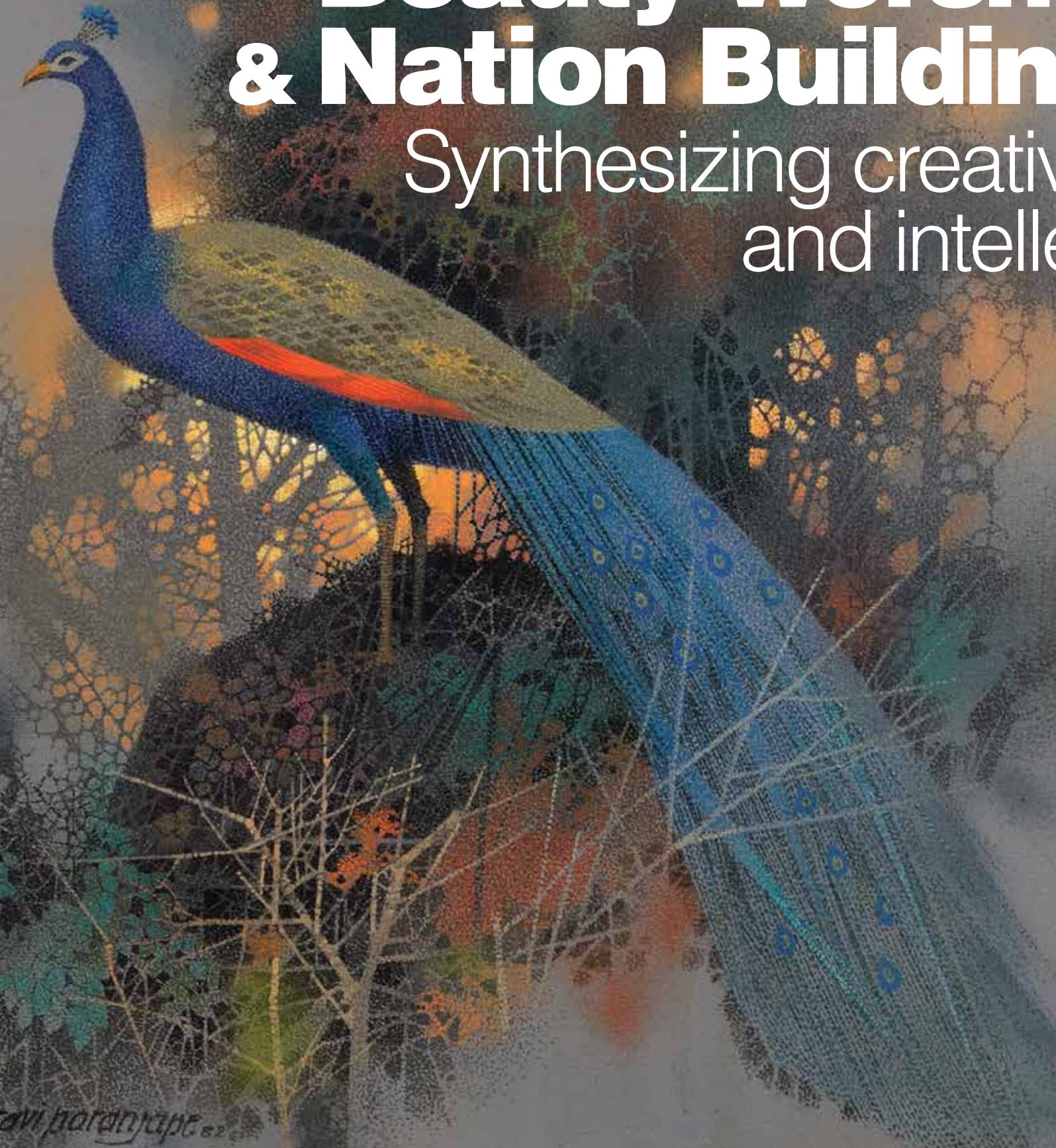
- Ravi Paranjape

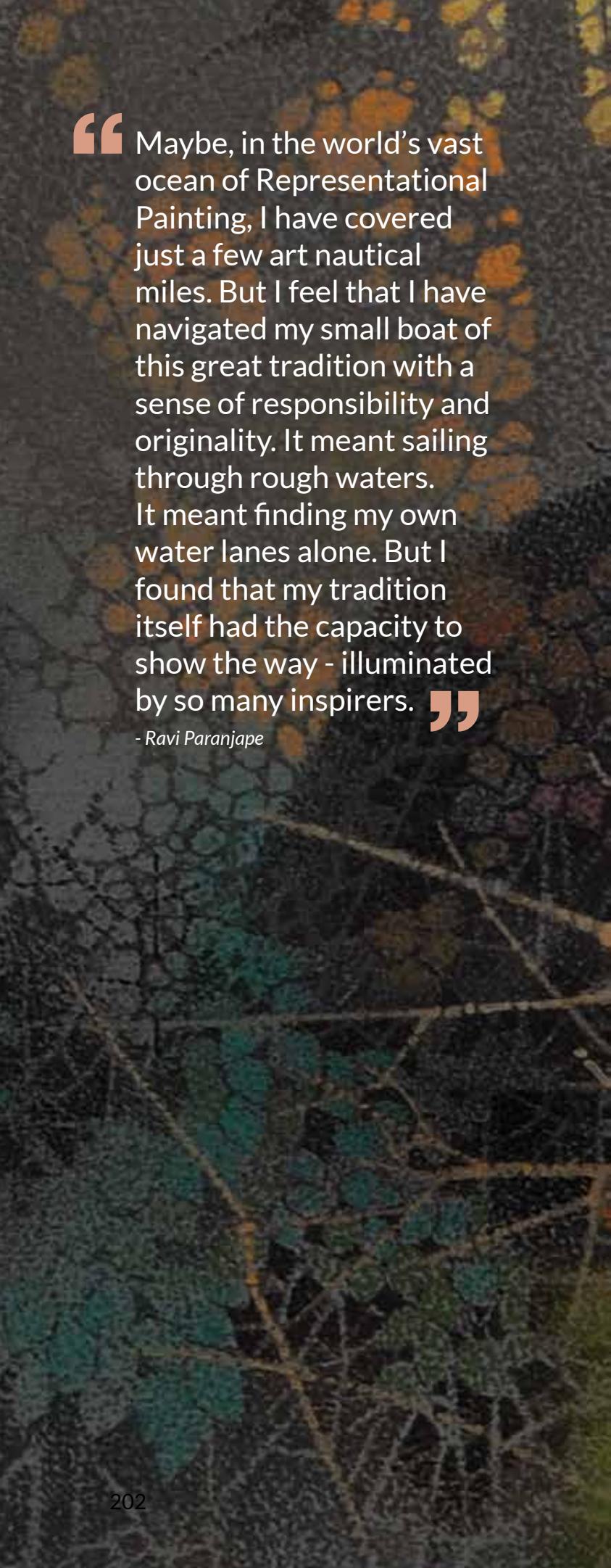


Broadly speaking composition is an eye pleasing, well-balanced arrangement of pictorial elements within the given space. Artist Ravi Paranjape was very conscious about his compositions. Whether it was an illustration or a painting, in any medium or size; he gave utmost importance to the arrangement of pictorial components. His compositions were created and developed to record his emotional response to the subject or reality. It could be a portrait, landscape, still life or figurative painting, for him what came first was the arrangement, balance between negative and positive shapes in the picture, the visual hierarchy, linear rhythm, colour, tone and texture. He used to say that the ultimate aim of composition is to create pictorial harmony.

Beauty Worship & Nation Building

Synthesizing creativity and intellect





“ Maybe, in the world’s vast ocean of Representational Painting, I have covered just a few art nautical miles. But I feel that I have navigated my small boat of this great tradition with a sense of responsibility and originality. It meant sailing through rough waters. It meant finding my own water lanes alone. But I found that my tradition itself had the capacity to show the way - illuminated by so many inspirers. ”

- Ravi Paranjape

Life begins as a vast blank canvas and our individual vision determines how we all fill it up. Each one of us has a unique understanding and a particular perspective of life. This perspective is based on many different aspects including our upbringing, genealogy, surrounding environment, intelligence and our basic mental makeup. And it is this that dictates our own special journeys in life.

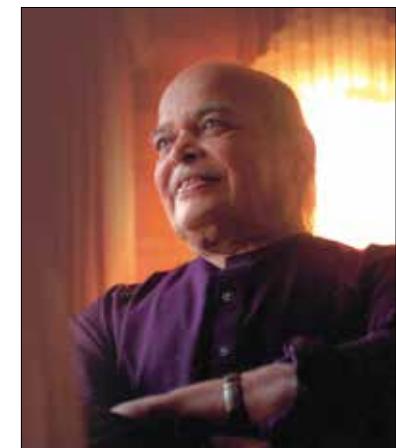
So how did Shri Ravindra Paranjape view life? Life, for him, was a constantly changing, vast canvas. A harmonious energy in action. The many splendours of nature in which human life was intricately woven, fascinated Ravi. He saw the world as a richly woven tapestry in which we all had to keep adding colours and designs to make it more and more beautiful.

Being an ardent enthusiast of classical music, Ravi believed that music is the ultimate testament to the concept of design and that melody is created only when notes and rhythm are in sync; else there would only be a discordant mix of sounds. He realized early in life that: ‘when you know the notes to sing, you can sing almost anything’. And this is how he applied this philosophy to his art. The basic structure followed time-tested traditions and knowledge and he used this framework to inspire, improvise and evolve... continuously.

He was a profound reader and was always searching for some historical evidences, creative processes, new thinking frameworks. He has studied British Renaissance, philosophy behind art and crafts movement in England, Indian art theory of picture making, design culture and nation building, literature by Indian Saints and incorporated all of this in his writings. All his writings reflect his deep concern about the nation’s progress and solving problems on economical, political, social as well as educational and cultural fronts. His books record his thinking about visual arts, art history, a design-based culture, and role of visual arts in nation building. He expressed that cultural heritage should have a close relationship with overall development taking place in various aspects in the nation.

Ravi Paranjape (1935–2022)

An eminent illustrator, painter, and writer with an illustrious artistic career spanning over sixty years—was born in the culturally rich town of Belgaum into an artistically endowed family.



After completing his education and apprenticeships, he began working as an illustrator, advancing through positions at well-known publication houses and studios in Mumbai. In no time, Paranjape's ever-evolving, structured but imaginative, drawing-oriented artistic style made a lasting impression in the world of visual communication arts, both in India and abroad. Having earned recognition and confidence, he soon established his own art studio in Mumbai.

Despite having an enormously rewarding career as a commercial artist, Paranjape's heart was set on his passion for painting without boundaries. His artistic style was a confluence of representational art and abstraction, often heavily stylizing cultural themes and natural elements to form dream-like environments in his paintings.