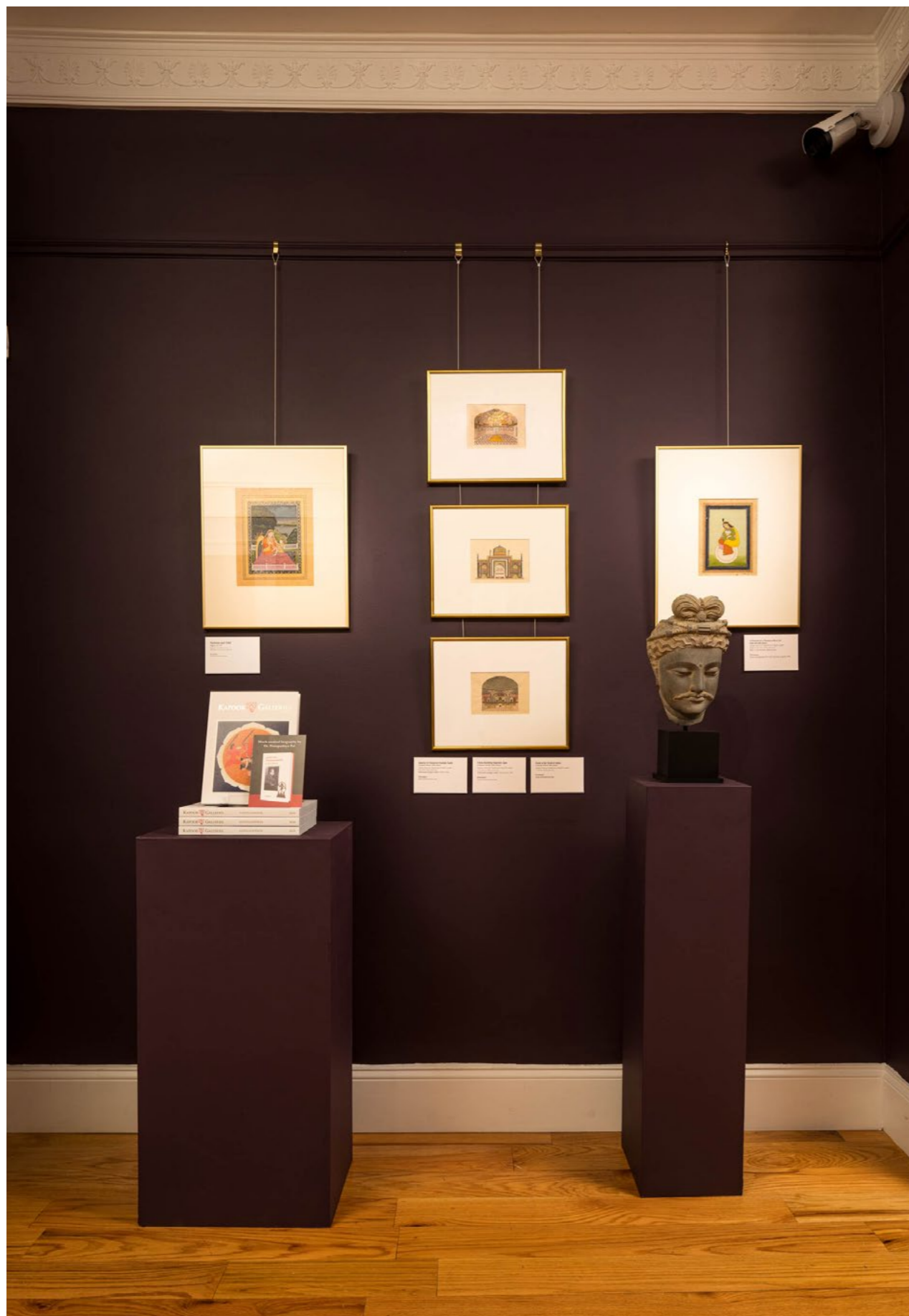




SANJAY KAPOOR

Gallery Director and owner of Kapoor Galleries since July 2012 . Since 1975, Kapoor Galleries Inc. has played an instrumental role in educating the public about Ancient and Classical Fine Arts of India and the Himalayas and encouraging interest in Indian art among collectors and institutions. For over forty years, they have been dedicated to building strong client-dealer relationships, earning the respect, loyalty, and trust of those with whom we build collections. Kapoor Galleries has guided some of the most significant public and private collections of the 20th century as an arbiter of connoisseurship in the field. Kapoor Galleries Inc. is consistently the privileged custodian of top-quality bronzes, sculptures, miniatures, and thangkas, many of which are now part of the collections of major museums, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, The San Diego Museum of Art, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

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Interior shot of Kapoor Galleries showcasing our 2020 God/Goddess catalogue, a selection of Indian miniature paintings, and a grey schist head of a bodhisattva from the ancient region of Gandhara

KAPOOR GALLERIES INC. IS CONSISTENTLY THE PRIVILEGED CUSTODIAN OF TOP-QUALITY BRONZES, SCULPTURES, MINIATURES, AND THANGKAS, MANY OF WHICH ARE NOW PART OF THE COLLECTIONS OF MAJOR MUSEUMS,

IS COLLECTING CREATIVE, IN YOUR OPINION?

There is certainly a level of creativity in collecting, as all buyers have autonomy in which objects they purchase. While some collectors focus on diversifying their assets from an investment standpoint, many have a genuine interest in the art and this informs which genres and themes they look for. Thus, it is their vision and creativity that ultimately determines the contents of their collection, making each collection unique. Furthermore, after acquiring the art, collectors must make decisions on how to display it - this introduces another level of artistry that informs how the art is viewed. The facts and points tie in nicely with my firm belief in the client/ dealer relationship, that extends far beyond business and into friendship as well. Professionals are needed to help in navigating new fields.

YOU ARE THE FOURTH-GENERATION DEALER WITH KAPOOR GALLERIES WITH A WELL-ROUNDED ATTENTION TO DETAIL. IS THE RESEARCH ALSO SOME KIND OF ART IN ITSELF?

While the aim of research is to uncover and compile factual information about the objects, a kind of artistry does come into play when presenting such information. The first level of this comes in the writing itself, as any type of writing requires skill and creativity. Beyond this, however, is which aspect of the artwork's narrative you choose to highlight - whether it be a formal analysis of the artistic style, the religious context, or the actual story behind an illustration. A scientific approach we take in conjunction with the above is done through the use of our digital and substantial print archives of records and publications.

These further tie into the single most important aspect of our process - Provenance comes first, and we take due-diligence to the next step, personally guaranteeing your objects.

WHOSE RECOMMENDATIONS DO YOU TRUST IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE HESITATING IN BUYING AN ARTWORK?

Ramesh Kapoor (when he is talking to me) Dr. Pratapaditya Pal (also when he is talking to me) Unfortunately the list is a bit short - as the majority of the acquisitions and sales are made from both my own experience (in the present moment), but culminated by the decades of experience I have been blessed with access to thanks to pioneers in the field like Ramesh Kapoor, Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, and numerous other friends, scholars, and clients such as: Dr. Daniel Ehnbohm, Robert Del Bonta, Mitche Kunzman, Dr. Gursharan Sidhu, Dr. Amina Okada, Dr. Gautama Vajracharya, Jeff Watt, Pujan Gandhi, and Dr. Vidya Dehejia.

DESPITE YOUR NEED TO RESEARCH BEFORE MAKING A PURCHASE, HAS THERE EVER BEEN A TIME YOU WANTED TO BUY A WORK ON THE SPOT?

With the type of work my gallery specializes in, it is imperative that the pieces we buy have provenance documentation. However, this information is often presented with the object, and should the object have good provenance, I would be more enticed to make a quick decision. Also, working in this field as long as I have, I am often already familiar with particular objects that have circulated, and I have a keen eye to detect the worth of this art, as within the niche nature of this field the ability to identify important artists, schools, periods, and sets is imperative. There is no simple "signature" or artists catalog *raisonne* to reference. I find that although the education of working in the field (or "school of hard knocks") is best, as you really do your research when putting your money on the line - the tuition is quite high, as everyone makes a mistake at some point or another.

YOU ARE THE GALLERY'S POINT PERSON FOR ALL SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION. DO YOU BROWSE WORKS ON INSTAGRAM? WHAT

ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON INSTAGRAM AND THE ART SCENE?

While I occasionally come across artworks on Instagram that I'd like to inquire about, any buyer should be extremely cautious with this, and in general I would say do not purchase an object without viewing it in person first or contacting the seller for more information unless you've already built a repertoire or have extensive knowledge of their history and reputation. Artworks will always look different in real life than in images, and Instagram abounds with accounts that are not reputable. So, while the platform may be a nice tool to get an idea of what type of art one would like to collect, it should not be viewed as a sure-fire way to secure fine works. However, it can be a very good tool for contemporary artists to amass a following, and nonetheless serves to propitiate the vital and important interest in classical and ancient Indian and Himayan Art more so important to younger generations.

WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND BEGINNER COLLECTORS TO RESEARCH ON BEFORE MAKING A PURCHASE?

This is a question I could talk for days about, and would be happy to guide anyone that wishes to begin:

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It is very important that you keep an eye on the market, its trends, what sets are in vogue. A reputable dealer can help you to begin until you have enough confidence on your own. There simply is not enough book research that can be done without being exposed to a large amount of objects in person.

HOW ARE YOU INVOLVING A YOUNGER AUDIENCE INTO THIS INDIAN ANTIQUE ART SCENE?

This is an issue I am very passionate about, as the longevity of such art will lay in the hands of the younger generations. With the internet and social media becoming more integral to our society over the years, especially in the midst of the pandemic, I am trying to secure a presence across all relevant platforms to reach a younger audience. -We have made a very cutting edge website - We have built several VR platforms and 3D walkthroughs - We produce extremely high quality and accessible catalogs,

An 18th century Mughal painting depicting women drawing water from a well

both digital and print - We are constantly engaging in all forms of social media - We work with non-profit organizations such as Himalayan art resources on a regular basis.

YOUR COLLECTION INCLUDES CONTEMPORARY INDIAN ART. WHEN DID YOU START COLLECTING AND WHAT WAS THE REASON?

Sometimes I will see a piece that I simply like - I recently bought a Meiji period Japanese dragon with a rock crystal orb - the contemporary Indian art is along the same lines of reasoning. I have purchased Jamini Roy's in the past, although modern, for resale. What you may call "contemporary" would be my collection of Indian Travel Posters, including ones of Air India, from which I have the largest collection in private hands.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE CURRENT INDIAN ART SCENE?

I am very interested yet quite disappointed. The Indian economy is booming, yet I still have hardly seen any resources go into increasing and developing their museums and scholarly research institutions. I had hoped the younger generations would start to appreciate the classical arts, however it has sadly come to be my experience that except for a handful of Indian collectors, the market has been growing maturely for quite some time, and is mainly in the interest of academics, institutions, and collectors in the USA and Europe.

WHAT IS THE MOST TREASURED ITEM YOU HAVE BOUGHT?

The most recent example I can think of also ties into your "bidding on something in the heat of the moment" question. There was an Indian miniature painting of Chinnamasta at a small auction house in Texas estimated at 4-600 USD. I would end up winning it for almost 100k USD, but was lucky to have trusted my eye, as later on we found a signature by Nainsukh on the back.

