

MOA

INDIA'S FIRST EZINE ON ART

The Art of
Attentive Seeing

Few contemporary artists arrive at painting through a life as layered as Vandana Krishna's. Before establishing herself as an artist, she spent decades in the Indian Administrative Service, serving across Maharashtra in departments ranging from housing, education and health to women and child welfare, tribal development, and rural governance. Her postings took her from the bustling streets of Mumbai and Pune to remote rural and tribal regions, exposing her to an extraordinary diversity of landscapes, cultures, and lived experiences. Rather than remaining separate from her artistic practice, these encounters became its emotional foundation.

"Painting allows me to interpret the world with an intimate lens," Krishna

reflects. If public service required her to understand society from a broad perspective, painting became a quieter, more personal way of engaging with the world. Her canvases are less concerned with documenting places than with capturing the emotions, memories, and fleeting sensations they evoke.

Art had always been part of her life. As a child, she was drawn to painting, music, and singing, but practical realities led her towards the civil services. The creative impulse never disappeared. Around 2007, she returned to painting with renewed seriousness, balancing demanding professional commitments, she devotes her evenings and weekends to developing her artistic practice. Initially trained in water-



Auto Ride
Oil on Canvas
29.5 x 28.5 in

(opp page)
Flying Free
Oil on Canvas
37 x 27 in



colour, she gradually embraced oils, drawn to the medium's richness, luminosity, and capacity for layering. For nearly two decades, painting remained an intensely personal pursuit before she began sharing her work publicly, bringing with her a mature visual language shaped through years of quiet discipline.

Krishna's paintings reveal an artist deeply attentive to atmosphere and light. Her visual vocabulary has evolved through sustained engagement with both Indian and international art history. She acknowledges the influence of Van Gogh's emotional intensity, Monet's treatment of light, and Vermeer's quiet intimacy, alongside the expressive force of M.F. Husain, F.N. Souza, and Amrita Sher-Gil. Yet these

influences serve less as stylistic references than as companions in an ongoing search for her own voice. Increasingly, her work moves towards a painterly language where expressive brushwork, layered textures, and luminous colour become vehicles for memory rather than representation.

One of the most enduring subjects in her practice is Mumbai during the monsoon. Rain transforms the city into a constantly shifting landscape where wet roads mirror architecture, headlights dissolve into shimmering pools of colour, and familiar streets acquire an almost cinematic quality. Krishna is fascinated by these transient moments when light alters perception and reflections create parallel realities. Working from photographs



as well as remembered impressions, she reconstructs these scenes through emotion rather than documentation, allowing memory and intuition to shape the final image. The resulting paintings are rich with atmosphere, balancing movement with stillness and familiarity with dream-like ambiguity.

A more recent direction in Krishna's practice is her growing engagement with flowers. These intimate still-life paintings mark a departure from the reflective mood of her urban landscapes, embracing instead the quiet poetry of everyday blooms. Sunflowers bow gently under their own weight, daisies gather before open windows, and richly coloured asters burst from earthenware and porcelain

vessels. Executed with vigorous, tactile brushwork and a luminous palette, the paintings explore the interplay of colour, light, and texture rather than botanical precision. Each bouquet becomes an expression of seasonal abundance and emotional warmth, where flowers are not merely decorative subjects but quiet metaphors for renewal, joy, and the fleeting beauty of ordinary moments. Through these works, Krishna demonstrates her ability to transform the familiar still-life tradition into deeply personal reflections on nature's enduring capacity to inspire contemplation.

Her studio practice reflects the same balance of discipline and intuition that has defined much of her life. During periods

FEATURE

Sunflowers in Green
Oil on Canvas
22 x 22 in

Purple Bloom
Oil on Canvas
24 x 21 in (detail)

Daisies
Oil on Canvas
22 x 22 in

Sunflowers in Turquoise
Oil on Canvas
22 x 22 in

(opp page)
Traffic Lights
Acrylic on Canvas
23 x 29 in 22 x 22 in





of intense work, Krishna dedicates herself fully to painting while continuing to balance her professional responsibilities. For her, painting is less about routine than immersion, demanding sustained attention as each canvas evolves through layering, revision, and spontaneous discovery.

Entering the contemporary art world has brought its own set of challenges. Krishna speaks candidly about discovering that today's artists must not only create but also articulate their ideas and engage with audiences. While recognition can often appear unpredictable, she remains committed to the integrity of her practice rather than external validation. Authenticity, she believes, ultimately matters more than visibility.

What distinguishes Vandana Krishna's work is its quiet emotional depth. Whether depicting rain-soaked cityscapes, luminous bouquets, or contemplative interiors, her paintings invite viewers to slow down and look more closely. Rooted in observation yet transformed by memory and feeling, they celebrate the poetry of the everyday. In an age defined by speed and constant distraction, Krishna reminds us that the most enduring images are often those that emerge from attentive looking, revealing not only the world around us but the landscapes within. ◉

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