



Krishen Khanna

The Embrace of Love

Gayatri Sinha

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Krishen Khanna speaks of his drawing as an intuitive process, "I start to scratch the surface of a piece of paper. Soon enough, the pencil moves as if of its own accord, putting my hand this way and that rather like a pencil in a planchet creating a nervous scribble meaningful only to the directing ghost." In an output of painting that exceeds 50 years, Khanna attracts more than one reading of his work. His paintings and drawings emerge as nuanced narratives in which the artist plays out his formal concerns, as well as the shifting and unfolding theatre of human relationships. Politics and identity remain fluid in the larger question of humanity. Effectively, the paintings constitute a powerful psychological engagement, one that also serves as a document of the passage of time in modern India. While many Indian artists during these decades have slipped in and out of experimentation with other media, Khanna has remained faithful to painting and drawing as central to his art practice. Retrospectively, in a career that has spanned nearly six decades, his large body of work places him at the apex of engagement with everyday Indian life.