

M. V. Dhurandhar

The Romantic Realist

CONCEPT, RESEARCH AND GUIDANCE – SUHAS BAHULKAR
CURATED BY TEAM NGMA - MUMBAI

Exhibition Preview & Inauguration – 10th September, 2018 at 6:00 pm

For Public – 11th September to 13th October, 2018, NGMA, Mumbai

From 11:00 am to 06:00 pm, Closed on Mondays & National Holidays

The idea of a retrospective on well-known artist M. V. Dhurandhar was first mooted in the sesquicentennial year of his birth (1867). The artist, who died in 1944, was hugely successful in his lifetime and his works covered all known genres of realistic art—portraits, landscapes, episodes from history and mythology, as well as mappings of social life, rendered by way of oil paintings, watercolours, drawings, sketches, and commercially popular as posters, postcards, book covers and illustrations, as well as oleographs.

The exhibition at NGMA Mumbai, supported by DAG, traverses the full extent of his career including his early works as a student at Sir J. J. School of Art, and mapping his painterly life through important works on loan from government museums in Kolhapur, Aundh, and Sangli, the collection at NGMA and Sir J. J. School of Art, the extensive inventory of DAG, and Swaraj Art Archive. For the first time ever, an extensive collection of Dhurandhar's paintings will be shown alongside rare archival material including his gold medals, his sketchbooks that he sketched in profusely, book illustrations, photographs and other ephemera.

Dhurandhar's influence was extensive not only as a painter but also as a teacher who preferred to confine his artistic pursuit to realistic art. A master of anatomical studies, he remained unmoved in the face of experimentation, refusing to budge from the practice he had trained in, and which he considered the purest form of art making. His mastery over light and shade, and the body language of the numerous characters who made up his paintings, rendered each one of them distinctive. No wonder he was widely collected and patronised.

The month-long exhibition at NGMA Mumbai will throw light on this artist whose legacy was overtaken by the artists of the Progressive Artists' Group. Even though several of his most popular paintings were rendered as lithographs and oleographs, Dhurandhar's contribution to the Bombay School of Art has been forgotten and is in need of resurrection. This retrospective will go a long way in restoring his legacy.

Conceived by Shri Suhas Bahulkar, Chairman, Advisory Committee, NGMA Mumbai, who mentored this project, he has also written a comprehensive text for the accompanying volume—a much-awaited book—that evokes the atmosphere of British India in which he painted and found fame.

According to Shri Adwaita Charan Garanayak, DG, NGMA, “In the history of Indian art especially in the genre of academic realism of late 19th and early 20th Centuries, the vast body of Dhurandhar’s work comprising portraits, landscapes, posters, prints, book-illustrations, literature on art and black & white drawings claims an impeccable position.”

According to Shri Shivaprasad Khened, Director, NGMA Mumbai, ‘Dhurandhar—regarded as the second most popular Indian artist, after Raja Ravi Varma, in the first half of the nineteenth century—left a varied and large body of work, which includes, among others, Indian mythological and historical subjects.’

According to Shri Ashish Anand, MD and CEO, DAG, ‘There is no doubt that Dhurandhar was a product of his time who did not challenge the art form that formed part of his academic rigour; indeed, he added to it with his impactful works that rooted the alien style in an Indian ethos, thereby bridging the European and the Indian and extending the discourse around the making of a then contemporary Indian art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. If anything, he can be held up as an exemplar of a tradition that flowered in and around Bombay at the time.’

ABOUT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART, MUMBAI

The genesis for the starting of the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) was mooted immediately post the Indian Independence and the first NGMA was opened in the National Capital New Delhi at the historic Jaipur House, one of the premier architectural edifices of Lutyens' Delhi, by the Vice-President, Dr S. Radha Krishanan, in the presence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and artists and art lovers of the city on March 29, 1954. The NGMA is a repository of the cultural ethos of the country and showcases the changing art forms through the passage of the last 160 years starting from about 1857 in the field of Visual and Plastic arts. This is run and administered as a subordinate office to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, which has two branches one at Mumbai and the other in Bengaluru.

The National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai was opened to the public in the year 1996. It is located in the precinct of the former auditorium the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Public Hall and the Institute of Science. This architecturally marvellous building

was designed and built by the famous British Architect George Wittet which has been completely redesigned keeping only the facade edifice that was the Public Hall. It hosts various national and international exhibitions and also has its own art collections comprising paintings, sculptures and graphics with a focus on Indian and International artists mainly from the progressive art group like K.H. Ara, F. N. Souza, V.S. Gaitonde, S.H. Raza and M. F. Husain.

NGMA, Mumbai has a great history and has also been able to host several spectacular exhibitions in the past, which we are continuing today. Some of the recent exhibitions include the highly successful the Bombay Art Society exhibition, which covered the landscape of the historic Bombay Art Society's existence over 125 years. NGMA, Mumbai has also hosted other notable exhibitions, which among others; include Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil and Jamini Roy, Nicholas Roerich, the Parsi exhibition and a major exhibition on A. A. Almelkar from the collection of NGMA Mumbai.

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RAO BAHADUR M. V. DHURANDHAR (1867 - 1944)



PORTRAIT OF NARMADA

**Oil on Board,
15.7 x 12.6 inch**

M. V. Dhurandhar

Collection: National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai



PORTRAIT OF VISHWANATH

**Oil on Board,
15.7 x 12.6 inch**

M. V. Dhurandhar

Collection: National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai



SCENE OF HINDU MARRIAGE CEREMONY

Water colour on paper

31.2 x 37.2 inch

M. V. Dhurandhar

**Collection: Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Maharashtra
(Sangli Museum)**



RADHA AND KRISHNA

Oil on canvas, 1915

36.0 x 26.0 inch

M. V. Dhurandhar / 1915'

Collection: DAG, New Delhi



PLAYING DILRUBA

Water colour wash and graphite on paper, 1927

8.7 x 8.2 inch

M. V. Dhurandhar

Collection: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi



UNTITLED

Water colour on paper,

16.7 X 11.12 inch

M. V. Dhurandhar (27th July 1893)

Collection: J. J. School of Art, Mumbai



A SOUTH-INDIAN DANCER

**Water colour and gouache on paper, 1944
12.2 X 8.2 inch.**

M. V. Dhurandhar

Collection: Swaraj Art Archive, New Delhi



A TAILOR COUPLE

Water Colour

17 x 21 inch

M. V. Dhurandhar

**Collection: Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Maharashtra
(Sangli Museum)**



SHIVAJI MAHARAJ IN THE COURT OF FAURANGZEB

Water Colour

28 x 19 inch

M. V. Dhurandhar

**Collection: Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Maharashtra
Aundh Museum**



SHIVAJI MEETING RAMDAS, 1928

Oleograph

14x19.6 inch

M. V. Dhurandhar

Collection: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

RAOBAHADUR M. V. DHURANDHAR

18 th March, 1867	-	Born at Mumbai
1867-1890	-	Childhood at Kolhapur and Matriculation from Rajaram High School, Kolhapur
1890-1895	-	Studied at Sir J. J. School of Art
1891	-	Waddington Prize for Certificate Design
1892	-	J. N. Tata Prize for 'House Hold Work' In the Bombay Art Society's Fourth Annual Exhibition
1893	-	(i) Demise of Father and Mother (ii) Decided to work to earn money and got an appointment at Alexandra Girls School as a Drawing Teacher
1894	-	(i) Lord Mayo Medal for showing constant progress during student life at J. J. School of Art (ii) Award in Bombay Art Society's Sixth Exhibition for painting 'Music Lesson'. The same was bought by 'Raja Ravi Verma' and was printed by Ravi Verma Press (iii) Hundred Drawings of Pots for an article written by John Griffiths (Principal – Sir J. J. School of Art) and printing in 'Indian Art Journal – England
1895	-	(i) Married to Bapubai (ii) Gold Medal – The Bombay Art Society for the painting 'Do you come Laxmi?'
1896	-	Appointed as a teacher in Sir J. J. School of Art
1897	-	Death of Bapubai due to plague
1898	-	Second Marriage with Gangubai
1901	-	Started doing illustrations for Seth Purshottam's Vishraram Mavji's 'Suvarnamala' magazine
1904	-	Designed Gold Medal for Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition – Bombay and the same was awarded to Dhurandhar for his paintings on the Life of 'Shivaji Maharaj' and Drawings of 'Heroes and Heroines at Indian History'
1907	-	Gold Medal at Art & Industrial Exhibition – Pandharpur for the painting 'Naivadya'
1910	-	(i) Appointed as Head Master in Sir J. J. School of Art (ii) Gold Medal at Art and Industrial Exhibition – Jalgaon for the painting in water colour 'Brides maids'
1912	-	(i) Daughter 'Ambika' was born (ii) Gold Medal for the painting 'Homage to Their Majesties King & Queen' at Art and Industrial Exhibition – Gwalior
1915	-	Passed 'Art Master' Examination in first rank
1918	-	Appointed as 'Inspector of Drawing' for six months
1920	-	(i) Appointed as 'Inspector of Drawing' (ii) Did Illustrations for Otto Rothfields book 'Women of India'
1921	-	Decoration of Pailons to welcome the Prince of Wales
1923	-	Painting exhibited at 'Wemble' exhibition entitled 'Glory of Pandharpur'
1926	-	(i) Commissioned to do the paintings on the life of Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj by Bhavanrao Pant Pratinidhi – Chief of Aundh State

		(ii) Invited as a member of Servants of India Society and did posters for the same organisation on 'Health'
		(iii) Built own house 'Amba Sadan' at Khar and started staying there from 30 th Dec, 1926
1927	-	Honoured by titled of 'Rao Bahadur' by British Government and Dhurandhar was first artist to receive this honour
1928-29	-	Four large murals for Imperial Secretariat, New Delhi
1930	-	Appointed as Officiating Director, Sir J. J. School of Art
1934	-	Commissioned to do the sixteen murals for 'Chota Udaipur Palace' by the Maharaja Natwarsingh, Chief of the State
1935	-	Wrote fifteen articles on contemporary painters and sculptors of Bombay School in 'Vasundhara' weekly and 'Chitra' magazine
1936	-	Commissioned to do two paintings of Diamond Jubilee Durbar of Maharja Sayajirao Gaekawar, for Baroda Palace
1938	-	Visited Europe to see the museums
1940	-	Wrote autobiography entitled 'Kala Mandiratil Ekachalise Varshe' based on Dhurandhar's life at Sir J. J. School of Art from 1890 to 1931
1942	-	Prepared an unique album 'My Wife an Art' consisting 175 sketches done by Dhurandhar of his two wife at the age of 75
1944	-	Illustrations for the book 'The Peoples of Bombay' written by Percival Strip and Olivia Strip
1 st June, 1944	-	Passed away at the age of 77 in his residence 'Amba Sadan – Khar'

During his life, apart from paintings, Dhurandhar did hundreds of illustrations for social, historical and religious books. He also did illustrations for advertisements, labels. Dhurandhar also painted posters for Railways and tourism. He also worked for picture postcards, calendars and his paintings were printed by Ravi Verma press also.