



## ZAMIN:HOMELANDS- CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AT JNAF

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**O**n the momentous occasion of the 100 years of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) coinciding with the artist S. H. Raza's centenary, Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation (JNAF) presented Zamin: Homelands, showcases a thoughtfully curated collection of the artist's work between the 1960's and 70's.

The exhibition title Zamin is inspired by one of S.H. Raza's seminal works of 1971. It explores the concepts of belonging, separation, borders and territories through the artist's landscapes. A monumental piece, the work marks an important shift in the artist's practice when Raza was making several trips to India from Paris, increasingly returning to and identifying with the forest landscapes from his childhood in Madhya Pradesh. In the 50s and 60s it was the French landscape and the Post Impressionists that had been Raza's area of study and inspiration. This is one of the first of the series of works which recalls the land of the artist's origins, integrating symbolism and abstraction with his idea of an Indian cultural heritage.<sup>1</sup>

The artist's journey starts from a small town in Madhya Pradesh, where his father served as a forest ranger, then moving to Nagpur School of Art, after which he studied at the J.J. School of Art in Bombay and later moving to France after receiving a scholarship, until he decided to return to his homeland in 2010.

<sup>1</sup> Ashok Vajpeyi,  
*Managing and Life Trustee, The Raza Foundation*  
*at the opening of the show*



This exhibition is presented through a multi-partnership between the CSMVS, Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, Art Musings and the Raza Foundation. Alongside his artworks and archival material sourced from the Raza Foundation are also on display, which includes two vitrines containing a careful collection of letter correspondences, one of the artists with his contemporaries and another with his wife, Janine Mongillat.

Jehangir Nicholson (1915 - 2001) was one of the earliest private collectors of Modern Indian Art and also one of the first to make his entire collection public. He also established life-long friendships and connections with some of these artists, which is excellently showcased through a range of photographs on the walls alongside the atrium staircase of the gallery.

*“Zamin: Homelands traces Raza’s oeuvre as a landscape artist, a diaspora artist and as an artist in pursuit of an Indian modern sensibility. In Raza’s artworks we see these paradigms merge through a recourse to abstraction. The exhibition hinges on the period between the 60s – 70s, when Raza moved from painting street scenes to an abstraction of nature, which originated through a desire to connect with the Indian forest landscape. From this defining juncture, we look back at some of the early cityscapes of Bombay, the French landscapes and the later ‘Bindu’ works of the 80s which he became most known for.”* (Curatorial Note by Puja Vaish, Director, JNAF).

The previous exhibition titled ‘Ancestors: Purvaj’ was a great hit with its outreach programme that engaged all kinds of visitors, walkthroughs, and artist

performances. The exhibition was curated by Puja Vaish, Director, JNAF and it showcased the works of the artist, Sahej Rahal. “Ancestors is specially curated for the CSMVS Museum’s centenary. The exhibition features artworks that resonate with the underpinnings of the museum in telling stories of civilisations. Rahal weaves mythological narratives of otherworlds that traverse through remote pasts to distant futures. The exhibition slips these narratives into the museum, staged as an archaeological tomb site of the future.” (Curatorial Note by Puja Vaish, Director, JNAF).

Throughout the lockdown and continuing at present, the team at JNAF has been reaching out to its audiences via online platforms, online collaborations, social media campaigns, talks, artist performances, workshops, and several other activities. ‘Mind the Dash’, a talk series hosted by the gallery during the lockdown received a great response, which featured scholars, curators, and speakers from around the world. In the future, the gallery has a host of exciting exhibitions and other activities planned in keeping with the centenary program.

S H Raza | Zamin: Homelands, Curated by Puja Vaish is on view till 31st July 2022

1. Curatorial Note by Puja Vaish, Director, JNAF

^ The previous exhibition ‘Ancestors: Purvaj, weekend drop in tours as a part of the outreach programme, Artist: Sahej Rahal; Curated by: Puja Vaish