

# Picture Past Perfect

Clippings from newspapers and magazines. Cardboard. Myriad colours and textures.

Sepia-tinged paper. Pages from his artistic biography... All this and more seamlessly merge deep undertones of uncertainty with a sense of joie de vivre as part of octogenarian artist SG Vasudev's recent exhibition of collages, 'Montage of Memories', at Gallery Sumukha, Bengaluru. "Almost a year-and-a-half ago, Premilla Baid of the Sumukha Gallery told me that she would like to celebrate 25 years of the gallery in 2021 and that one of the events should be my exhibition. I happily accepted the offer," he says. The pandemic meant that Vasudev could not go to his large studio or his farm studio (at an hour's drive from the city). Not to give up, he started doing some drawings at home and began pasting some glazed silver and gold colour wedding invitations on to the drawings. Later he used magazines with glossy coloured ads and articles with splendid photographs. "Then I used some of my own art images from a coffee table book on my art and life. That is how 'Montage of Memories' was born," explains the artist, for whom the exhibition was a beautiful birthday gift, as he turned 80 on the day of the opening, March 3.

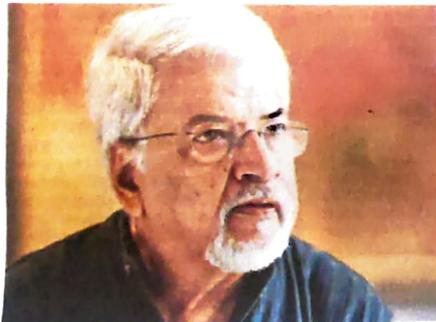
As an artist who delves into people's relationships, his art is a deeply internalised journey. The collages are a triumph of energy and jubilation over darkness and despair, and reiterate his artistic belief that art can transcend everyday problems. The exhibition has 40 works on display showcasing nature and anthropomorphic imagery

A series of collages by artist SG Vasudev made over the last year find their way to a new art show in Bengaluru

By BINDU GOPAL RAO



SG Vasudev and his artworks



MALLIKARJUN KATAKOL

that celebrates life and underlines the affirmation of hope. The colours are brilliant with pops of bright pinks and fuchsia, blues and copper with undertones of silver and gold. "I asked my stationery suppliers to provide me with pads containing good drawing sheets both in black and white. I used pens (black and white shades), acrylic liners (silver, copper and gold) and by tearing some interesting visuals from good magazines and pasting them on to the drawing

sheets, I created this collection," says this alumnus of Government College of Fine Arts, Chennai.

For an artist of his stature, the collage is also a delightful detour from the usually serious work he is known for. In fact, with this show, Vasudev has returned to making collages after more than four decades. For someone who finds inspiration in poetry, theatre, music, dance and



art, YouTube, interviews, documentaries, music recitals, and debates kept him going while self-isolating during the pandemic. "I never felt depressed during the lockdown. My collages have imagery of celebrations and love. I get them by exposing myself to things happening around

me. In this case, it was largely through my computer," he smiles. Interspersed with nuggets of humour, folk motifs, letters of the alphabet, small animals and the ever-metamorphosing Tree of Life, the collection draws the viewer into a maze of thought and ideas. "I started my artistic life as a caricaturist/cartoonist. That helps me see humour in many things," he says.

Not many know that this All India Lalit Kala Akademi National Award-winner also loves to collaborate with artists across disciplines. From creating costumes and masks for Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana*, designing the cover for UR Ananthamurthy's books to handling art direction for Kannada films *Samskara* and *Vamsha Vriksha*, he loves to do things that appeal to his creative genius, or as he himself puts it, "What excites me is finding something new." What roles do motivation and inspiration play in his scheme of things? "Motivation comes as one starts

working. I don't wait for inspiration... if it comes, well and good," he says with a laugh.

## WHAT & WHERE

Montage of Memories;  
Gallery Sumukha, Bengaluru;  
Till March 27, 11 am to 5 pm