

BETWEEN THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE



BIOGRAPHY OF
ANURAGK GUPTA
SPIRITUAL ARTIST LEADER



On the way to Destiny (24in x 36in) Oil on canvas

Bridging the Seen and Unseen: The Journey of Anuragk Gupta

Spiritual Artist, Leader & Philanthropist

Member of IFFACA (International Federation of Fine Arts, Culture & Architecture)

His works have been appreciated by Pope John Paul II and acknowledged by Queen Elizabeth II & Art Collectors around the world

Editorial

By Chirananda

There are lives that are lived, and there are lives that are revealed. The life of Anurag K. Gupta belongs to the latter. His autobiography is not a mere record of events, but a sacred unfolding—like a scripture written in colours, forms, and silences.

To walk through these pages is to witness a pilgrim of the spirit, one who has carried his art not as a profession, but as a prayer. Every mural, every relief, every stroke of his brush is less an ornament to the world and more an offering to the Eternal. Behind the commissions, the certificates, and the recognitions—from the Vatican to Buckingham Palace—there breathes a constant inner dialogue: *How can art become a bridge between the seen and the unseen?*

Anurag's journey has not been free of struggle. In fact, it is struggle that shaped his hands and purified his vision. He has wandered through the corridors of uncertainty, carried the weight of survival, and yet, never let the flame of devotion to beauty be extinguished. His art rises from these crucibles like the lotus from the mud, radiant and untouched.

This book is not only about one artist's accomplishments; it is about the alchemy of spirit. It tells us that life's trials are not obstructions, but chisels. It shows us that every brush dipped in sincerity touches the Infinite. It reminds us that true art is not created by the hand alone, but by the soul in surrender.

In Anurag's story, we find a mirror for our own seeking. For those who read with open hearts, this autobiography becomes more than a personal narrative—it becomes a meditation.

May these pages inspire you, as they have inspired me, to see that the highest art is life itself, sculpted in faith, polished in love, and consecrated to the Divine.

— *Chirananda*

Editorial Note

This autobiography is not merely a chronology of life events, but a living testament to the spirit of creation, resilience, and devotion. Anurag's journey is both artistic and spiritual — a bridge between the visible and the invisible.

As his friend and editor, I have arranged the text and integrated his artworks so that the reader may not only follow his story but also feel the presence of his art as prayer. Each image stands as a silent companion to his words.

— Chirananda



Art as a Bridge Between Seen and Unseen

Autobiography of Anuragk Gupta Spiritual Artist Leader

Preface

Life has always unfolded for me as a dialogue between the visible and the invisible. What the eyes perceived was only half of the truth; the other half whispered in silence, in dreams, in those subtle nudges of destiny that cannot be charted but can be felt deeply. This book is an attempt to give form to that dialogue—a weaving of the tangible struggles and triumphs with the intangible grace that has guided me through them.

I did not set out to write an autobiography to chronicle mere events of my life. Rather, this is a testimony to the currents that flowed beneath those events—the unseen threads of spirit, love, and endurance that shaped the artist, the seeker, and the leader within me. It is a journey across the bridge between what we touch with our hands and what we sense with our hearts.

If these pages illuminate anything, may it be the truth that every life carries a hidden rhythm, and when we learn to listen to it, we discover a larger harmony. This book is not only about my path—it is an offering to all who seek to walk their own bridge between the seen and unseen.

With gratitude to those who stood with me in light and shadow, and with reverence to the Spirit that never let me fall, I welcome you to step into these reflections. May you find echoes of your own journey within mine.



— Anurag K. Gupta

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Prologue: The Bridge Between Seen and Unseen

Every artist begins with a question, though not all can name it. Mine was simple yet relentless: What is the meaning of creation, and why does it flow through me?

From my earliest struggles to my recent awakenings, I have carried this question like a flame. There were years when art was a survival tool, when brushes were weapons against despair. There were years when commissions kept food on the table and yet left me restless for something deeper. And there were years when service to others—feeding children, teaching the poor, painting altars—taught me that art is not just a private act but a bridge that connects lives.

This book is not a chronicle of achievements, but a journey through trials, teachers, family, and faith. It is about how doubt became texture, how suffering became a teacher, how service became colour, and how spirit became the invisible canvas on which all my works now rest.

I write not as one who has “arrived,” but as one still walking—an artist searching, stumbling, rising, and slowly realizing that art is both offering and prayer. This is the story of becoming, and of discovering the eternal bridge between the seen and the unseen.

Introduction

This book is not only a reflection of my life as an artist but also a journey into the spaces where the visible meets the invisible, where form surrenders to spirit. It is both autobiography and meditation—a record of experiences, struggles, and insights that shaped me into who I am today.

There are worlds within worlds, veiled in silence and woven with light, that rarely meet the human eye. Yet they call to us in dreams, in sudden moments of awe, and in the quiet stillness between thoughts. Art, to me, is not merely the crafting of form and colour; it is the invocation of these hidden realms. Each stroke of the brush, each carving of stone, is like a mantra unfolding — a prayer that opens a doorway between the visible and the invisible.

From my earliest years, I sensed that life was not confined to what we see or touch. The tangible world is but a reflection, a surface shimmer of a deeper ocean. To be an artist is to dive into that ocean, to listen to the voices of the unseen, and to return with offerings for the world of form. My journey has been shaped not only by discipline, training, and

devotion, but also by an unseen guidance — a force that carries both protection and purpose.

In these pages, I share not just my story but the soul of my seeking. For art has been my sadhana, my worship, my dialogue with infinity. The canvas is my temple, the pigments my rituals, and the silence before creation my meditation. Each painting, mural, or sculpture becomes more than an object; it becomes a living vibration, a reminder that the divine breathes through all things.

This book is not written only for those who wish to understand me, but for every soul who has felt that faint stirring within — the call to touch something beyond appearances. The bridge between the seen and the unseen is not mine alone to walk. It belongs to all who dare to listen to the whispers of the unknown, to all who sense that behind every color lies a truth, behind every form a mystery, and behind every silence a song.

I offer these words and works not as conclusions, but as invitations — to enter the mystery, to see with inner eyes, and to walk awhile with me on the path where art becomes prayer and creation becomes communion.

May this offering awaken within you the remembrance that you too are a bridge — between earth and sky, between matter and spirit, between the finite and the infinite.

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।

तयोर्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति ॥

“As the Upanishads remind us — we are like the two birds upon the same tree, one tasting the fruits of the world, the other witnessing in silence. May this offering awaken within you the remembrance that you too are that bridge — between earth and sky, between matter and spirit, between the finite and the infinite.”



Ananta Naad, Oil on canvas (18"x24") 2025

Chapter 1: Roots of an Artist

Part I – Birth and First Impressions (Calcutta, 1973)

The air of Calcutta in January 1973 was thick with contradictions—an old city both weary and alive, crumbling and eternal. Trams rattled along their tracks, bells clanging as if announcing both modernity and memory. Hawkers shouted on narrow lanes, the smell of frying luchis mingling with incense drifting from roadside shrines. It was into this atmosphere—where every street seemed a collage of chaos and devotion—that I first entered the world.

My mother often told me later that the day of my birth was marked by unusual stillness. It was Makar Sankranti, a time when the sun shifts northward, and in many homes across Bengal, rice and sesame sweets were being prepared. On that evening, as the city lit small clay lamps and kites soared in the winter sky, I came into the world at 5:47 p.m. My first cries mingled with the

chanting of evening prayers, and perhaps that was my first initiation into the dialogue of sound and silence—the visible and invisible—that would one day become my life’s bridge.

The house where I was born stood close to one of the older quarters of the city, its plaster peeling, its balconies lined with rusting iron railings. A small shrine occupied a corner of the living room, where an oil lamp burned before an image of Shiva. The lamp’s flame, trembling against the draft from the window, became one of the first images my infant eyes must have met. That trembling light, fragile yet unwavering, has never left me; even now, when I paint, I sense its flicker guiding my brush.

My father, a man of discipline, had already been hardened by years of work and responsibility. Yet, in the story my mother loved to recount, he softened when he held me in his arms that evening. His voice, usually curt, grew tender as he whispered that I would carry both fire and stillness within me. He could not have known how true his words would prove, or how often I would wrestle with the balance between the two.

Calcutta itself was a teacher from the beginning. The streets around us carried echoes of centuries—colonial mansions decaying beside makeshift stalls, sacred chants competing with cinema songs blaring from tea shops. Every morning began with the call of conch shells, blown by women standing at doorways with trays of flowers for their household shrines. Every evening ended with the smoke of dhuno incense, curling up through narrow lanes like offerings to unseen gods. For a child, this mixture of sacredness and survival seeped in without explanation. It taught me early that life was not linear—it was a dance of opposites.

I do not remember those earliest days, of course, but memory has a way of living in the body. The smell of wet earth after winter rain, the sound of temple bells, the rhythmic creak of a hand-pulled rickshaw—all these impressions must have woven themselves into me even before I could hold a brush. When, much later, I painted scenes of struggle or devotion, I often felt I was simply returning to these earliest textures of life.

Part II – Solan: The Himalayan Childhood

If Calcutta was the furnace of my first breath, Solan became the valley where my spirit learned to breathe. We moved there while I was still small, and the town’s hush shaped my earliest memories. Mornings began with mist clinging to the slopes, reluctant to leave until sunlight coaxed it away. The air smelled of pine, damp earth, and woodsmoke; monkeys leapt across rooftops with the reckless freedom of uninvited gods. From the backyard I could see ridges whose blue shadows shifted with every hour — a landscape that felt less like backdrop and more like a silent guardian watching my childhood.

Solan was no city; it was a hush. Silence was not emptiness here but presence. Temple bells carried down the valleys, villagers greeted one another with folded hands, and smoke from

wood-fires curled upward like offerings. The mountains themselves spoke in moods: dawn's pale pink tenderness, noon's silver blaze, dusk's descent into indigo mystery. That atmosphere planted in me an awareness that the world was more than surface — that behind the visible, something unseen always waited.

At St. Luke's School, my days unfolded like a mosaic of voices and laughter. The classrooms were simple: wooden desks burnished by restless elbows, chalkboards carrying faint ghosts of yesterday's lessons, and windows opening to pine slopes where breezes wandered in uninvited. Within those rooms I met companions who became the colours of my childhood.

There was Rupark Saraswat, quick-witted and restless, always ready to make us laugh at the wrong moment. Anurag Lala, sharing my name, was my mirror and rival, as though fate had placed two reflections in one classroom. Joydeep Grover, with his generous smile, became a brother in spirit, while his younger brother Rahul—innocent, affectionate—was like my own sibling. Abhishek Srivastav, Rohit Sablok, and Ashok Dhiman brought their own sparks: whether in the playground or along long walks after school, each friend left their imprint. Among the girls were Yogita Bhardwaj, Jasmine Williams, Shelja, Anuradha Saxena, and Richa Gupta. Richa, especially, became an everlasting sister. Her kindness and sincerity formed a steady bond that endured beyond the seasons of childhood, a lamp that still glows quietly in memory.

Yet, joy was braided with shadows. We lost friends too soon. Pukhraj Singh, bright and lively, died suddenly in an accident. Vivek Dev, fragile but gentle, was taken by kidney failure. The silence that followed their absence was heavier than any lesson we had yet learned. Grief touched others too. Yogita's father died from a gunshot accident; Jasmine's father passed away when we were in middle school. Their sorrow entered our classrooms like an invisible presence, and though we were children, we felt its weight. These losses were my first encounters with impermanence. They planted in me the seed of compassion — the realization that every moment, every bond, was as fragile as it was precious.

One season of my boyhood remains etched in particular: my father's illness required treatment in Chandigarh, and during that time, I stayed with Joydeep's family. Their home became mine without question. His parents fed me, sheltered me, and cared for me as though I were their own. With Joy and Rahul, I roamed freely. We walked railway tracks at sunset, balancing on iron rails as if on tightropes, laughing when we fell. We wandered the Mall Road, where shops displayed sweets and trinkets, the air rich with roasted corn. We climbed hills until the valley stretched wide beneath us, a universe entrusted to our feet. Rahul's small hand often slipped into mine, his trust teaching me that family is not only given but also found.

Festivals in Solan deepened these bonds. On Diwali, our home glowed with clay lamps. My mother lit them one by one, her face bathed in trembling light. Firecrackers burst in the distance, yet what stayed with me was the silence between explosions—the mystery of flame holding its ground against the dark. On Holi, we gathered in the schoolyard, faces smeared with

pinks and blues until all differences dissolved. Rupark launched sneak attacks with buckets of water, Abhishek and Rohit plotted ambushes, and Richa—hesitant at first—always ended up with colours across her cheeks. By day’s end we were unrecognizable, distinctions erased, and I understood: beneath colours, we are the same canvas.

At school, music was another festival. Our principal, Mr. Michael, believed discipline and devotion could be taught through song. Seated at the harmonium, his fingers danced across keys while his foot pressed the bellows, the instrument breathing with him. He invited, never commanded, and our voices—timid at first—grew bolder until they filled the hall. One refrain lingers still: “Solan is a wonderful place, the north side where we live...” That melody wove itself into me, teaching that art was not solitary; it was communal, a weaving of many voices into one.

Then there was Mrs. Harrison, who carried herself with a grace that seemed almost luminous. She would gather us for nursery rhymes, sitting by the upright piano whose polished wood gleamed even in the dim light of the classroom. Her fingers moved across the keys with practiced ease, her voice rising in melody that seemed to float above the desks. “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” became more than a rhyme when sung by her — it became a lullaby for the soul, a reminder that beauty need not be grand to be eternal. Her face carried a serene light; to us children, she seemed touched by something gentle, almost divine. It was she who first showed me that music was not just sound but grace embodied.

My teachers left marks in quieter ways too. Mrs. Soorma, in kindergarten, wrapped our earliest steps in warmth. Mrs. Clarke, steady and patient, guided us with a lantern-like calm. Once, when we were noisy, she hushed us not with anger but with silence. Then she said, “Learning is like water; it needs quiet to flow.” Those words carved themselves into me. Later, as an artist, I would return to them—silence is not absence but the space where creation begins.

Home carried its own lessons. Each evening, my mother lit a lamp before our household shrine, the flame quivering yet unextinguished. That fragile steadiness became one of my first symbols of devotion. My father’s sternness often collided with my mischief. When I scribbled crude drawings on the wall with charcoal, he frowned. My mother, however, placed an old notebook in my hands. “If you must draw, draw here,” she said. That notebook became my first sketchbook, its pages filled with clumsy lines that grew, with persistence, into something resembling form.

It was my history teacher’s home that gave me the decisive nudge. Her husband was an artist. His studio was chaos and order combined—brushes in jars, sketches pinned to walls, colours scattered like maps of another world. I watched him bring a face alive with a few strokes of charcoal. Something erupted inside me: awe, recognition, longing. I rushed home, tried to imitate him, failed miserably, tore page after page. But failure did not end the hunger—it deepened it. I knew then art was not pastime but summons.

Beyond school and home, the sacred sometimes walked into my life uninvited. Shaivite ascetics, ash-smeared and matted, wandered through town. One tall figure paused outside our house, chanting in a voice that seemed older than the mountains. My mother offered food; he accepted and vanished up the hillside. That night he entered my dreams, his gaze wordlessly asking, What will you offer the world? I woke shaken. Years later, painting ascetics, I realized it was this presence—half-glimpsed, half-dreamed—that had entered me.

Looking back, Solan was more than setting; it was initiation. The valley gave me friendships stitched with laughter and loss, teachers who taught through silence and song, a second family in Joydeep's home, festivals that erased difference, ascetics who carried questions larger than childhood, and a notebook where clumsy lines first wrestled with the invisible. It was there that I began to sense what life was asking of me: to listen more deeply, to see beyond what eyes could hold, to give shape to the unseen.

Part III – The School & Its Teachers

St. Luke's was more than a school; it was a world within a world. The building stood proud yet humble on the hillside, its stone walls weathered by rain and wind, its windows catching the morning sun as though they were eyes keeping watch. Each day, I climbed its steps with my satchel bumping against my side, carrying not only books but also the quiet expectation of discovery.

The classrooms breathed their own rhythm. Chalk dust hovered in the air like pale incense, coating fingers and cuffs. The wooden benches creaked under restless bodies. On the blackboards, lessons came and went like tides, yet faint chalk ghosts lingered, as though knowledge never truly left once written. The smell of ink from fountain pens mingled with the faint scent of pine drifting through open windows, and sometimes I wondered if even the hills themselves were listening.

It was here that teachers became not just guides but sculptors of my inner life.

Mrs. Soorma was the first—her voice soft, her manner patient. She carried us through kindergarten as though we were seedlings that needed light and warmth more than instruction. When my small hands fumbled with letters, she bent low, her sari rustling, her smile encouraging. "Don't fear the page," she once whispered, "it will welcome you." To a child, those words meant little; but years later, when I faced the terror of a blank canvas, they returned like a blessing.

Mrs. Clarke followed with a different kind of grace. Tall, composed, Anglo Indian with an air of calm authority, she brought order without severity. Her lessons were never rushed. She had a way of pausing—an expectant silence that made us lean forward, waiting. Once, when the class

grew noisy, she did not raise her voice. She simply stopped speaking until the room stilled, then said quietly, “Learning is like water; it needs quiet to flow.” That sentence never left me. In art later, I came to understand: silence is not emptiness but the canvas on which everything else is painted.

And then there was Mrs. Harrison. She did not simply teach; she carried music into our days like a fragrant offering. With her upright piano, polished and gleaming, she gathered us for nursery rhymes and simple songs. Her face always carried a look of grace, her voice a clarity that lifted ordinary words into melody. When she played “Three blind mice...” the notes felt like silver threads woven into the air, and for a moment, the classroom transformed into a place beyond walls. I remember sitting spellbound, my hands still, my ears full, as though I had touched something sacred. She was the one who taught me that music was not just sound—it was beauty embodied, grace made audible.

Mr. Michael, our principal, was the great conductor of this symphony. Tall, dignified, with an ever-present Spanish Guitar, he believed music was as essential to education as reading or arithmetic. He often gathered us in the assembly hall, where his voice would rise in hymns and folk tunes. His fingers pressed the keys with devotion, his foot coaxed breath from the bellows, and he drew us along until our hesitant voices became strong. “Solan is a wonderful place, the north side where we live,” we sang, our words drifting into the valley beyond. Sometimes I imagined the mountains themselves echoing us. Through him, I understood that art was not solitary—sometimes it was a chorus, a joining of voices until individuality melted into harmony.

These teachers shaped me in ways beyond subjects. They taught me patience, silence, rhythm, discipline, and grace. They showed me that learning was not only about accumulation but about becoming. Each of them planted something within me—a word, a silence, a song—that would later sprout in my art.

And yet, even amid this guidance, I carried my own restlessness. There were days I could not sit still, my mind chasing pictures instead of arithmetic, my fingers doodling in the margins instead of writing sums. Sometimes I was scolded, sometimes laughed at, but always the urge returned—to draw, to imagine, to turn sound and silence into form. My teachers may not have known it then, but their patience allowed me to stumble toward a path I was destined to walk.

Part IV – First Touch of Art

Every calling begins quietly, like a whisper that grows into a storm. For me, it began not with mastery but with clumsy attempts, not with triumph but with frustration.

I still remember the first time I picked up a piece of charcoal from the kitchen stove. Its blackened tip smudged against the wall, leaving crude circles and crooked figures. To others, it was nothing but childish mischief, but to me it was a revelation—that a surface could hold memory, that thought could take shape outside the body. My father, stern as ever, frowned at the mess, but my mother's eyes softened. Instead of scolding, she placed an old notebook in my hands. "If you must draw, draw here," she said. That notebook became my first sketchbook, its pages filling with clumsy figures that bore little resemblance to life but carried all the urgency of my young heart.

The decisive spark came one afternoon when my history teacher invited me to her home. Her husband was an artist. His studio was unlike anything I had ever seen: sketches pinned to walls, jars of brushes like soldiers standing in rows, colours scattered across the table as though spilled from another world. I stood transfixed as he drew. A few strokes of charcoal, quick and certain, and suddenly a face appeared—alive, breathing, staring back. Something shifted violently inside me, as though a curtain had been pulled aside.

That evening, I rushed home, seized my pencil, and tried to imitate him. My lines were crooked, lifeless. I tried again, tore the page, tried once more, only to fail. Yet the more I failed, the more I hungered. Frustration became fire. I understood, without fully naming it, that art was not pastime but summons.

Saturdays at St. Luke's gave this hunger a rhythm. Unlike the weekdays of rigid lessons, Saturdays opened into freedom, offering us choices. In the first shift, I entered **leather art** class with **Mrs. Soorma**. The smell of raw hide filled the small room, earthy and old. My fingers stumbled as I tried to cut and emboss patterns, but under her guidance flowers, borders, and motifs began to emerge. Leather resisted the hand; it demanded patience and pressure. In that struggle, I learned a lesson that never left me: art is not always easy expression—it is persistence against resistance.

In the second shift, I almost always chose **music class**. The room was lighter, the air full of song. We learned to sing in unison, guided by harmonium or drum. My voice trembled at first, but slowly grew steadier. Music felt like another form of drawing—this time sketching upon air instead of paper. It taught me rhythm, resonance, and the truth that art was not bound to one medium.

Not all Saturdays were devoted to art. Around that time, our school began a **literacy program**. Each of us was asked to teach someone from the surrounding villages who had never been to school. My first student was **Ramlal**, an old villager whose hands were rough from years of working the soil. At first, the thought of teaching him felt strange—what could a boy like me offer to an elder? Yet when Ramlal sat before me, pencil trembling between his calloused fingers, his eyes shone with a hunger that humbled me. I guided his hand across the page, slowly shaping the letters of his name. When he finally wrote it—crooked, shaky, but his

own—he looked up and smiled. That smile said more than words could. It taught me that teaching itself is an art, and that true creativity includes service.

Those days became a mosaic of struggle and discovery. At home, I filled notebooks with crooked faces, torn pages piling up beside me. At school, I shaped leather, sang songs, and held the trembling hand of an old man writing his name for the first time. Each act was a thread, weaving together a pattern I did not yet see. Only later would I understand that those clumsy sketches, stubborn materials, trembling voices, and patient lessons were all preparing me for the life ahead.

Looking back, what strikes me most is not success but hunger. What mattered was not what I could draw but what I could not yet draw. The impossibility itself called me onward. Every awkward line, every torn page, every trembling note was an initiation. Art had entered my life not as a hobby but as a demand, asking me to listen more deeply, to see more closely, to give more fully.

It was then, in those small classrooms and quiet evenings, that I first touched the truth: art was not just skill. It was calling.

Part V – Adolescence & Awakening of Calling

Adolescence did not arrive gently; it came with upheavals, journeys, and the restless tug of change.

During my 10th grade, my parents sent me to Jaipur to live with my uncle. From the cool valleys of Solan, I was suddenly dropped into a city that felt like the opposite of everything I had known. Jaipur was hot, dry, and dusty, its roads shimmering in the afternoon sun. I rode a bicycle to Tagore Public School, and every journey left me covered in sweat and grit. The city felt strange, alien, almost hostile. Yet it was there that I discovered a new side of myself.

The school's annual function introduced me to drama. I was cast in the role of Narad Muni, the divine messenger, mischievous yet wise. For weeks, I rehearsed lines, practiced gestures, and learned to project my voice. When the day came, I stepped onto the stage with my costume and veena, nervous but alive. The audience laughed and clapped; the play was a success. For the first time, my name was printed in a newspaper out of appreciation. But the joy turned comic the next morning — the paper mistakenly reported that I had played the role of a dai ma, while Primiti Tiwari, who had played the dai ma, was named as Narad Muni. We laughed until our stomachs ached. Even in recognition, fate had a way of keeping me humble.

My cousins in Jaipur, Pappu dada and Mantu didi, were a saving grace. They welcomed me warmly, calling me by a teasing nickname — *Bobbymati*. My family had always called me Bobby, but they added *mati* in jest, giving it a feminine tone. Instead of anger, it filled our evenings with laughter, and the nickname stuck in our small circle. In a city that often felt heavy, their affection lightened my heart.

Still, Jaipur never became home. Its air was too dry, its streets too dusty, its rhythm too harsh. When my parents shifted to Paonta Sahib, I followed, grateful to leave Jaipur behind. Driving through Dehradun into the Yamuna valley, I felt as though I was returning to heaven. The river glistened in the sunlight, the air was cool again, and my spirit breathed easier. I told myself I would never return to Jaipur.

In Paonta Sahib, I was admitted to Guru Nanak Mission Public School, a Sikh institution with strict discipline. Life there was not simple. I was often bullied for my short height, pushed around in ways that tested my patience. Yet I carried with me the strength born in Solan — my command of English, a gift from St. Luke's. That command became my shield, my dignity, my hidden strength. I did not stay long in Paonta Sahib, but it was long enough to complete my matriculation and to realize that survival, too, is an art.

From there, I moved to Scholar's Home, a boarding school in Dehradun. The shift was dramatic. Life in a hostel was demanding, but it also carried opportunity. For the first time, my art found public recognition. In the City Winter Colour Competition, I won the second prize. Standing among students from across the city, holding that certificate, I felt a rush unlike any before. It was small by the world's measure, perhaps, but to me it was monumental. Someone beyond my family, beyond my friends, had recognized what I carried in my heart. That recognition was fuel—it told me that the hours of sketching, the failures, the torn pages, were not in vain.

At Scholar's Home, I also found a new anchor: Fine Arts became my additional subject in grade 12. For the first time, art was not something hidden in the margins of notebooks or practiced in the secrecy of my room. It was part of my formal education, something acknowledged, given space, given weight. I threw myself into it, determined not just to pass but to live it.

Those years—Jaipur's dust, Paonta Sahib's trials, Dehradun's competitions—were more than transitions of place. They were stages of initiation. Each one added something: drama gave me the courage to stand before others, bullying gave me resilience, recognition gave me validation, and formal study gave me direction. Together, they turned restlessness into resolve.

Looking back, I see those adolescent years as the true awakening of my calling. Childhood had whispered, but now life was shouting. I knew, with a certainty that left no escape, that art was not just something I did—it was who I was.

Part VI – Philosophical Interludes

Adolescence is a strange alchemy — a furnace where innocence burns away and something restless, searching, takes its place. For me, it was a time of questions, dreams, unspoken loves, and a hunger that no meal could satisfy.

At night, I often dreamt of the ascetic who once paused outside our home in Solan. In those dreams, he stood at the edge of mountains, his eyes vast as galaxies. Sometimes he spoke, sometimes he was silent, yet always he asked without words: “*What will you offer the world?*” I would wake with my heart racing, unable to answer. His presence haunted me, as though destiny itself had taken a human form to remind me that I could not escape.

My journals began to fill not only with sketches but with fragments of thought and poetry:

- “The mountain does not boast, yet its silence rules the horizon.”
- “Every lamp burns itself to give light—perhaps every life must do the same.”
- “If love is a colour, is it crimson for its fire or indigo for its depth?”
- “I want to paint silence, but which hue will obey me?”

These scribbles were clumsy, but they were the beginning of my philosophy.

Adolescence also carried its sweeter confusions. I began to notice the shy smiles of classmates, the sudden brightness in a girl’s glance, the way laughter sounded different when it came from someone who mattered. There were innocent crushes—unspoken, awkward, thrilling—like secret sketches hidden between the pages of a notebook. A letter half-written, then torn; a look across the playground that lasted too long; a melody hummed, wondering if someone else would hear. Love at that age was not possession but possibility—a mirror in which one glimpsed both beauty and vulnerability.

Popularity, too, began to find me in strange ways. My sketches passed from hand to hand, admired, sometimes even envied. Teachers began to notice, classmates asked me to draw for them—posters, greeting cards, little caricatures. For the first time, I felt the weight of eyes upon me, a taste of recognition. It was intoxicating, but also frightening. Recognition, I learned, is both gift and burden: it lifts you, but it also sets expectations.

When I finished school, I dreamed of joining a Fine Arts college in Chandigarh. My heart longed for it, my hands itched for it. Yet dreams often meet the immovable wall of reality. My father, practical and cautious, could not afford it and, more than that, did not wish for me to choose art as a career. To him, art was a beautiful indulgence but not a livelihood. He wished for me a secure life, not one spent in uncertainty and hunger. His refusal was firm. My dream cracked like glass.

I enrolled instead in a Bachelor’s degree in Commerce. The classrooms were filled with numbers and accounts, balance sheets and profit margins. My mind tried to obey, but my heart rebelled. I doodled on ledgers, sketched in the margins of notebooks, and found myself daydreaming of canvases instead of calculations. The dissonance was painful. I felt as though I were living someone else’s life. Yet, in that very pain, something hardened in me — the conviction that art was not something I *chose*. It had chosen me, and no denial could erase it.

It was during those years that a remarkable opportunity arrived, one that seemed like a secret blessing to keep the fire alive. Through Justice Onkar Singh, a collector and connoisseur, I was invited to restore a painting by Sobha Singh, the great Sikh painter whose works of Guru Nanak and Sikh history were revered across the land. To touch even a corner of Sobha Singh's canvas was to enter into dialogue with history itself.

I remember the first time I stood before that painting. The colours, though aged, still breathed dignity; the brushstrokes carried the rhythm of a master. My task was not to create but to heal, to bring life back where time had dulled it. As I worked carefully, brush in hand, I felt as though Sobha Singh himself guided me. Each stroke was not restoration alone but initiation, a silent apprenticeship under a teacher I had never met. That moment confirmed what my heart already knew: art was not profession, not pastime, but destiny.

Looking back, I see my adolescence as a tapestry woven of contradictions — dreams and denials, love and loneliness, recognition and rejection. Yet through it all, the question of the ascetic echoed: *"What will you offer the world?"* Slowly, painfully, joyfully, I began to discover the answer. My offering would be art — not as decoration, not as career, but as prayer.



Dissolution, Oil on Canvas (18"x18") 2024

Chapter 2: Early Struggles and Seeds of Creation

Art was never an easy path. Like many artists, I faced doubts, insecurities, and the practical worries of livelihood. Yet, my brush always found its way back to the canvas. Every struggle became a shade of colour, every challenge a new texture. My art was not only a profession but a lifeline, a way to give voice to the unseen currents flowing through me.

In those formative years, I often wondered whether the pursuit of art was a choice or a compulsion. The world outside demanded stability, yet my inner world demanded expression. The canvas became my sanctuary—a place where I could wrestle with uncertainties and transmute them into form and meaning.

I still remember the smell of turpentine that lingered in my small studio room—partly workshop, partly refuge. The walls were bare except for unfinished sketches and splashes of accidental colour. On some nights, when the electricity went out, I painted by the flickering light of a candle. The shadows it cast became silent companions, reminding me that creation is born as much from darkness as from light.

Carrying Canvases, Facing Doors There were days when I would carry my canvases, wrapped carefully in old sheets, through the streets to potential buyers. Each painting felt like a part of me, a piece of my soul wrapped in cloth. I would walk into a gallery or shop, heart thumping, hopeful that someone would pause, look, and truly see.

Most visits ended in polite rejection. Some owners nodded absently, eyes already elsewhere. Others said, “Leave it here, we’ll see,” but the canvases often lay untouched, gathering dust. The worst were the indifferent glances, as though what had cost me nights of labour was not even worth a second look. Walking back home, my arms ached not from the weight of the canvases but from the heaviness in my heart.

Conversations at Home At home, the air often carried unspoken questions. My father was practical, a man who believed in stability above all. He wanted me to build a secure life, one that would not betray me. When I spoke of art, he listened, but his silence was heavier than words. Once, breaking that silence, he said quietly, “Paintings cannot feed a family.” The words stung, not because they were unkind, but because they carried the weight of truth.

My mother, ever gentler, tried to bridge the two worlds. She encouraged me softly, reminding me that faith was as necessary as food. Yet even her encouragement could not erase the tension that hovered at the dinner table. There were evenings when the clatter of utensils was the only conversation, and behind it lay the question: Was I reckless in listening to an inner calling rather than outer security?

The Breaking Point There came a night when I nearly gave it all up. I stood in my small studio, staring at a half-finished canvas. The strokes seemed chaotic, mocking me with their incompleteness. The weight of failure, of responsibilities unmet, pressed so hard that I flung the brush aside. For a moment, I resolved to abandon painting forever.

But as I turned away, my eyes caught the canvas again. In its jagged, unfinished strokes, I saw something unexpected—the reflection of my own turmoil, messy and imperfect, yet undeniably alive. I froze, tears rising. That night taught me something profound: art is not always about beauty. Sometimes it is about truth. And the truth, even raw, deserves to be seen.

Between Commerce and Creation Meanwhile, college life unfolded with strange dissonance. I had enrolled in a Bachelor's degree in Commerce, after my dream of Fine Arts in Chandigarh was denied. My father had neither the resources nor the will to let me pursue art as a career. To him, Commerce was security, Fine Arts a gamble.

The classrooms echoed with the rustle of ledgers and the drone of balance sheets. I sat among students who spoke of business ventures and banking futures. I listened, but my hands betrayed me—sketching in the margins of notebooks, doodling faces where numbers should have been. Friends laughed, professors frowned, but I could not stop. The world of accounts fed the body, but only colours fed the soul.

A Moment of Grace: Sobha Singh's Painting Amidst these struggles, grace arrived unexpectedly. Through Justice Onkar Singh, a collector and man of refined taste, I was invited to restore a painting by Sobha Singh, the great Sikh painter revered for his portraits of Guru Nanak and scenes of Sikh history.

The first time I stood before the painting, I felt awe. Though time had dulled its brilliance, the soul of the master still shone through. My hands trembled as I prepared my tools. This was not creation but stewardship, not invention but dialogue. Each touch of colour, each patient stroke of restoration, felt like communion across time. In those quiet hours, it was as though Sobha Singh himself stood beside me, guiding my hand.

For once, I did not feel like a struggling student of art. I felt like an apprentice in the invisible presence of a master, initiated into a lineage greater than myself. That experience strengthened my conviction that art was not pastime, not profession, but destiny.

Seeds of Strength Slowly, I began to see what others called “struggle” as the soil where creation was sown. The frustration of unfinished canvases, the sting of rejection, the scepticism of onlookers—all became part of the process. Art is not born in ease but in friction.

Sometimes, a small kindness kept me going. A teacher pausing to admire a sketch, a friend asking for a caricature, a stranger praising a line—all were drops of water on parched soil. And within me, the fire refused to die.

Looking back, I realize those years were not wasted battles. They were the foundation. Each rejection chiselled resilience. Each wound opened depth. Each night of despair turned into a dawn where I returned to the canvas, brush in hand, ready to wrestle again.

What others saw as struggle, I began to recognize as seeds. Seeds that would one day break through the soil, carrying not just colour but the truth of a life lived between fire and faith.



Whispers of the Sky, Oil on Canvas (18"x24")2025

Poetry

“Brush strokes of doubt and faith
Upon the canvas of my days,
uncertain hands once trembled,
mixing colours of doubt with shadows of fear.
Yet every hesitation left a trace,
a texture the spirit remembered,
a pause where silence taught me to listen.
Faith arrived not as thunder,
but as a quiet light within the cracks,
guiding the brush to move again,
to layer darkness with a whisper of gold.
Each line I drew was never mine alone
invisible winds shaped the curve,
unseen hands steadied the stroke.
Now, when I look back,
the doubts are part of the design,
faith the hidden pigment that bound them whole.
A painting of a life unfinished, unfolding
a bridge rising between the seen and unseen,
built with brushstrokes of doubt,
and redeemed by faith.

Chapter 3: Grace in Struggles, Light in Companionship

Struggle has its own rhythm—sharp, relentless, testing. Yet, even in its harshest notes, grace often slips in like a hidden melody. For me, companionship became that melody. Where loneliness had once pressed like a shadow, friendships, mentors, and small sparks of love arrived as light. They did not erase my struggles, but they changed their shape, reminding me that no artist journeys entirely alone.

A Friend in Darkness There were evenings after college when despair followed me like a shadow. Numbers from commerce classes swam in my head, meaningless, while my sketchbooks filled with faces no one seemed to want. One particular evening, I sat on the steps outside my small room, my canvases stacked inside like silent witnesses of failure. My head was buried in my arms, and for the first time, I wondered if my father had been right—if paintings could never feed a family.

It was then that my classmate and friend, Kamal, found me. He didn't arrive with philosophy or advice, but with quiet presence. He sat beside me in silence for a long time, letting the dusk settle around us. Then, softly, he said, "Bobby, when you draw, even your mistakes look alive. Why do you let their blindness kill your vision?" His words startled me. To him, my fumbling sketches carried life.

That evening, his voice became an anchor. I realized how even one word of faith from a friend could silence the thousand doubts echoing in my own mind. Kamal didn't know it, but he kept me from putting the brush down that night. Companionship is sometimes nothing more than a hand on your shoulder, steady enough to remind you that you are not falling alone.

A Circle of Companionship in Dehradun, I found another refuge—a small circle of companions who loved poetry, theatre, and music as fiercely as I loved painting. We gathered in tea stalls that smelled of cardamom and tobacco smoke, our conversations stretching long after the cups were empty. We shared our work as though unveiling secrets: one read poems, another sang a song, a third practiced lines from a play, while I sketched their faces and postures in the margins of scrap paper.

One evening, as my poet friend recited lines with feverish intensity, I quickly captured his face in a sketch. His eyes burned with passion on the page just as they did in real life. When I showed him the drawing, he stared at it in silence, then whispered, "You've captured not me, but my hunger." That moment stayed with me. It showed me that art, at its truest, reflects not only appearances but inner fire.

Our circle became more than pastime—it was sanctuary. In a world that measured success in money and degrees, we measured it in words, notes, lines, and strokes. That companionship taught me that art is not sustained by solitary genius alone, but by the fellowship of those who dare to dream.

The First Glimmers of Love No artist grows without love—sometimes returned, sometimes unspoken, always transformative. There was a girl at college whose smile seemed to carry sunlight. She was not from my class but often passed through the courtyard with her friends. Our eyes met occasionally, fleeting but electric, as though time paused for a second.

Once, during a college festival, I sketched her from memory—her face outlined with the kind of tenderness that pencils sometimes reveal without asking. Gathering courage, I handed her the drawing. She looked at it, smiled, and said softly, “You see people differently.” Her words replayed in my mind for weeks, not as flattery but as affirmation.

It was not romance in the grand sense, but it was enough. It showed me how art could bridge two souls without words, how affection could lighten the burden of struggle. For a young man caught between rejection and responsibility, even the glimmer of love was grace.

An Unexpected Mentor Grace also came in the form of a mentor. Justice Onkar Singh, who had trusted me with the restoration of Sobha Singh’s painting, became more than a benefactor. After the work was complete, he invited me into his home. His study smelled of leather and old books, and paintings hung on the walls like silent keepers of memory.

He spoke slowly, with the weight of wisdom. “Art,” he said, “is not only creation but preservation. When you restore a work, you are not simply repairing paint—you are protecting memory. You are serving something greater than yourself.” Until then, I had thought of art only as something I produced. He made me see it as a responsibility, a trust, a way of carrying heritage forward.

That evening, he encouraged me not to abandon my gift, no matter how uncertain the world seemed. “Every artist,” he said, “is misunderstood before they are recognized. Your struggle is not proof of failure—it is proof that you are on the path.” His words became a quiet lantern in my darker hours.

Grace in Small Gestures Sometimes, the greatest companions were strangers. Once, while sketching by the banks of the Yamuna in Paonta Sahib, where I often used to go with my dog Bijli and Hawk named bahadur, a small boy wandered near, barefoot, his clothes tattered. He watched me silently for a long time, his curiosity shining. Finally, he asked, “Will you draw me?” His voice carried more wonder than request.

I sketched quickly, capturing the mischief in his eyes and the stubborn tilt of his chin. Handing him the paper, I watched his face light up. He clutched the sketch as though it were treasure and ran off without a word. I never saw him again. But his joy was etched in me forever.

That day, I understood that art does not need galleries or buyers to matter. It only needs to touch one heart. Even a stranger, even a child, can carry away a piece of your soul and make it their own.

The Companionship of Silence Yet not all companionship wore human faces. Some nights, when I painted by candlelight, shadows swayed across the walls, moving like quiet friends. In those hours, silence itself became my companion. It sat with me as I wrestled with canvases, it whispered when no one else believed.

At first, I thought I was alone in those nights. But over time, I began to feel a presence—a stillness that was not empty but full, guiding me without words. Perhaps it was memory of the ascetic from my dreams, perhaps the spirit of Sobha Singh's brush, perhaps something deeper. Whatever it was, it taught me that solitude is not abandonment. It is apprenticeship to the invisible.

In silence, I learned patience. In shadows, I learned that creation does not demand applause; it only demands honesty. That silent companionship gave meaning to struggles that otherwise might have broken me.

Closing Reflection Looking back, those years of struggle could have crushed me had they been only mine to carry. But companions—friends who encouraged me, poets who reflected my fire, a girl whose smile affirmed my vision, a mentor who reminded me of responsibility, strangers who treasured a sketch, and silence itself—wove threads of light through the fabric of hardship.

Each encounter reminded me that grace often hides within struggle, waiting to be discovered. It was not the absence of difficulty that sustained me, but the presence of companionship within it. Through them, I learned that art is not only the expression of solitude but also the celebration of connection.

And in those connections, I found the strength to continue, brush in hand, toward the unknown canvas of destiny



I am waiting (18"x24") oil on canvas 2014

Chapter 4: Commissions and Livelihood Journeys

The leap from art as passion to art as livelihood is one of the hardest an artist must make. Until then, my paintings had been my sanctuary, my private dialogue with silence and colour. But the moment I began to paint for survival, the canvas also became a battlefield, where vision and necessity often collided.

Episode 1 – The Dehradun Beginnings

It was in Dehradun that I first felt the taste of art as livelihood. The city, nestled in the valley, carried both charm and hardship. Its streets were lined with bookshops, tea stalls, and barracks echoing the footsteps of soldiers. Here, art was not merely decoration—it was memory, often for families of servicemen who wanted to preserve the faces of their loved ones.

There was a modest studio called Kala Kutir, a place where portraits lined the walls in muted sepia and oil. I often stopped outside, staring through the open doorway, watching brushstrokes bring faces to life. An old man worked there, quiet, focused, his spectacles sliding down his nose as he leaned over canvases. Most of his work was devoted to army veterans—men who had served, retired, or passed away, their uniforms painted with reverence, their medals gleaming under his brush.

I never knew his full story, but his dedication struck me deeply. He painted not for fame but for remembrance. Families came with photographs creased by time, and he gave them back a living presence. Watching him, I realized that portraiture was not only about likeness—it was about restoring dignity, about preserving a man's service and sacrifice in colour. Kala Kutir and its quiet custodian became my first inspiration to take portraiture seriously.

Episode 2 – The First Commission

Soon after, I received my first commission. A teacher at college asked me to prepare a poster for an event. It was nothing grand, just a cultural program announcement. But when I received a small payment folded into my hand, my pulse quickened. I had been paid for art. However modest the sum, it was recognition, a first step into the world where art and bread intersected.

Encouraged, I took on more small tasks: wedding card designs, shop signboards, portraits from faded photographs. Each carried its own challenge, but also its own satisfaction. I poured sincerity into even the humblest request, telling myself that no work of art deserved less than my full devotion.

Episode 3 – Negotiating Value

The hardest part was not painting—it was negotiating value. People often assumed that because I loved art, it was not labour. Payment, if given, was meagre. One client admired a portrait, then said casually, “You must have done this in a few hours—why charge so much?” I bit back the retort rising in my throat: *those few hours had cost me years of practice, of struggle, of burning midnight oil*. Instead, I smiled, accepted what he offered, and walked away with dignity intact but heart aching.

At times, I returned home with only enough to cover brushes and colours. My father’s silence at such moments weighed heavily. He longed for me to settle into something secure, while my mother’s eyes prayed silently for my stubbornness to somehow lead me to grace.

Episode 4 – Murals and Larger Dreams

In Dehradun, a community hall invited me to paint a mural. Standing before a blank wall, brushes in hand, I felt both excitement and fear. The scale was immense compared to my small canvases. For days, I climbed ladders, stretching my arms until they ached, splattering colour until forms emerged.

Children gathered to watch, pointing and whispering as the mural grew. When it was complete, elders of the community blessed me, one saying, “These colours will remain long after we are gone.” Their words sank deep. That was the first time I realized that public art carries not just aesthetics but memory, that a wall can become scripture for a community.

Episode 5 – Delhi and Chandigarh Sojourns

Hunger for recognition pushed me to Delhi and Chandigarh. With portfolios wrapped in brown paper, I knocked on gallery doors, my heart beating with every step. Most did not open; those that did offered polite refusals. “We’re looking for established names.” “Promising, but not yet.”

Walking past Connaught Place’s white pillars, I felt both small and invisible. In Chandigarh, I admired Le Corbusier’s planned geometry but wondered if there was space there for the chaos of my colours. At night, I carried my portfolio back like a wounded soldier carrying his weapon. Yet those journeys toughened me—they taught me that courage sometimes means facing closed doors without letting them close your heart.

Episode 6 – Temples, Families, and the Sacred

Back home, work often came in the form of temple paintings. Priests requested depictions of gods and goddesses. I painted Krishna, Durga, Guru Nanak’s calm presence. At first, I feared I was reducing divinity to decoration. But as I worked, the act itself became prayer.

Once, after completing a painting of Lord Shiva, the temple priest placed flowers before it and whispered blessings over my hands. “You are serving Him, not us,” he said. I walked away humbled, realizing that livelihood and worship could merge when the heart was sincere.

Families, too, commissioned portraits—fathers, mothers, relatives remembered in youth, ancestors whose photographs had faded. These works were never just paintings. They were bridges between generations, and I treated each as sacred.

Episode 7 – The Inner Battle

Despite these commissions, the battle at home never ceased. At the dinner table, silence often spoke louder than words. My father’s face carried worry, my mother’s carried prayer, and mine carried guilt. Was I selfish to pursue colour when it brought so little stability?

On nights when this conflict weighed heaviest, I lit a candle in my studio. Shadows swayed across unfinished canvases, silent companions to my unrest. In those hours, I painted not for buyers, not for my family, not even for survival, but for myself. Those raw sessions reminded me why I had begun—that art was not profession, not pastime, but truth.

Closing Reflection

Looking back, my Dehradun years and the early commissions were more than survival—they were apprenticeship. Kala Kutir and its old custodian showed me that portraiture is remembrance. Murals taught me that art can be public scripture. Temples showed me that livelihood can be worship. Families reminded me that painting preserves love.

Every poster, every refusal, every journey to Delhi, every prayer whispered by a priest chiselled me into shape. The struggles did not crush me—they seeded me. And though I could not yet see the blossoms, I knew the soil was being prepared for something greater.

Poetry

Two faces of the same coin—bread and brush

Two faces of the same coin—

the hunger of the body, the hunger of the soul.

Bread, to quiet the noise of need;

Brush, to awaken the silence of vision.

One earned in sweat, the other in
surrender,

yet both demanded my hands,

both carved my destiny.

For what is bread without meaning,
and what is art without breath?

So I walked between survival and spirit,
learning at last

that even the simplest loaf

tastes of eternity

when painted with love.



Body & Soul (18"x18") Resin Relief Work 2004

Chapter 5: Turning Points and Expanding Horizons

Struggle had been my apprenticeship, but destiny was preparing a broader canvas. Slowly, opportunities appeared — some through faith, some through institutions, some through chance meetings that seemed more like divine appointments. Each step widened the horizon, lifting me from the solitude of my small studio into larger arenas where art touched communities, organizations, and even nations.

Marriage to Sharmistha and the birth of my daughter opened an entirely new phase of my journey. Fatherhood brought both joy and gravity — the awareness that my art and my life were no longer only my own. From Paonta Sahib, where our roots still lingered, we migrated to Delhi in search of stability. Yet, Delhi was not kind at first; finding steady work was difficult, and the city's rhythm seemed indifferent to a struggling artist with new responsibilities. In time, the path carried me further to Bhilwara, where I turned to accounting-related work to make ends meet. It was there that I encountered Anil Agarwal, who was building a house and opened a door into architectural commissions. Through him, I met Rajeev Jain, an interior designer with an eye for detail and opportunity, who entrusted me with multiple art orders — particularly relief paintings that blended structure with spirit. These projects revived my artistic pulse, reminding me that creation would always find its way back. After some months, I returned once more to Delhi, where another turning point awaited: an introduction to Mr. Balraj Sahni, who welcomed me into his partnership firm, *Sneh Builders*, giving me stability in uncertain times. Life moved in surprising directions, and through these years I also reconnected with Karanvir Saran Dass, who began delegating to me art commissions for exhibitions and trade fairs — assignments that not only brought income but also expanded my presence in the circles of creation and commerce.

Shifting to Silvassa and the Patronage of Navin Feta

My Parents had by then shifted to Silvassa, I missed them and so I followed. The place was smaller, greener, tribal, and yet full of hidden opportunities. Through this move, I met Chandra Shekhar, a respected town planner, who began assigning me civic projects. Art was now entering public life, tied to planning and vision.

But the most decisive connection came with Navin Feta, a visionary hotelier. Walking me through his under-construction resort, he gestured at the bare walls.

“These walls must not be mute. They must speak. Can you make them speak?”

His trust became a catalyst. I painted landscapes, portraits, abstract canvases, each one filling his hotels with life. Then came a challenge: a resin relief model of Jampore Beach Resort. I poured weeks into shaping every palm, every contour, every imagined structure. When it was done, Navin studied it long, then said: “We’ll build it.”

Months later, standing on the actual resort ground, I watched workers bring to life what had first existed only in my resin relief. The realization was staggering — my art had stepped off the canvas into architecture and reality.

Navin’s faith was more than patronage. It was empowerment. He saw not just a painter but a creator who could shape environments. His trust gave me courage to accept larger visions.

Government Projects and Corporate Orders

Soon, my work found recognition from authorities. Administrator O.P. Kelkar and the Finance Secretary commissioned me to create a waterfall for the foyer of the Government Circuit House. Designing it was a test of engineering as much as art. When the water finally cascaded over the sculpted forms, visitors paused in wonder. It was no longer just installation — it was experience.

Other projects followed from CPWD, the Police Department, the Fire Department — sculptures, tableaux, civic artworks. Each demanded both precision and empathy, whether honouring bravery or celebrating public service.

Corporate houses also came calling: Indian Oil, Hindalco, ONGC. For ONGC, I prepared a working model of an oil rig, merging technical detail with artistic construction. Watching engineers nod in approval of my model was unlike any applause I had known — recognition from minds of steel and science.

The HR Path and Mentorship

Life, however, never unfolded in a single straight line. Alongside art, I stepped into the professional world of Human Resources. My first significant role came at International Packaging, a 100% Export Oriented Unit (EOU). The factory floor hummed with machines, but my work was with people — recruitment, training, grievances, and building bridges between management and workers.

Here I came under the mentorship of Benjamin Luke, a seasoned HR professional whose wisdom went beyond policy. “Managing people is not numbers,” he told me, “it is about listening. People are not machines — they are dreams wrapped in skin.” Under his guidance, I learned that HR, like art, was about empathy, patience, and vision. The two paths — HR and art — began to feel less like contradictions and more like companions.

The Call from Delhi

It was during this time that I received a call from my old acquaintance, Karanvir Saran Dass. His voice was electric with urgency.

“Anurag, I’ve taken on a project linked with BrahMos HQ in Delhi. They’re shaping the vision of Mission 2020, the dream of Dr. Abdul Kalam. I need you here.”

I hesitated — leaving work was no small risk. But something in his voice told me this was destiny knocking. I took leave, packed quickly, and boarded a train for Delhi.

BrahMos and Meeting Dr. Kalam

Delhi greeted me with its winter haze, but my mind was fixed on the corridors of BrahMos, where scientists and strategists were building not just missiles but visions of India’s future.

I first met Dr. A.S. Pillai, a man whose intellect was sharp but whose humility was even sharper. “We are not just building technology,” he told me, “we are building India’s confidence.” His words lit a fire inside me.

Then came the moment I will never forget. We were ushered into a hall where Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, then President of India, awaited. His presence was luminous. His hair framed his face like a halo, his smile was gentle, and his eyes saw straight through pretense into intent.

He greeted each of us with folded hands. When he reached me, he asked softly, “What do you do, young man?”

“I am an artist, sir,” I replied nervously, “but I also work in Human Resources.”

His eyes sparkled. “Ah, then you build both structure and soul. Remember, India needs both dreamers and doers. Vision is not only for scientists. Every creator, every teacher, every artist builds the nation.”

His words struck me like scripture. In that instant, my double life — HR professional by day, artist by night — no longer felt like conflict. It felt like preparation.

Later, I also met Dr. Chakraborty, whose fierce clarity about Mission 2020 was like blueprinting destiny itself. Walking out of BrahMos that evening, I felt lighter, freer. I realized I was not merely surviving anymore. I was part of a larger movement of vision.

That night, alone in my Brahmos HQ Delhi, I could not sleep. Dr. Kalam's words echoed: "*Structure and soul... dreamers and doers.*" I felt both blessed and burdened — but in the best possible way.

The Church Altar Mural

Back in the world of colour, another turning point awaited me. A pastor in Delhi commissioned me to paint a biblical mural on the church altar. The wall loomed blank and daunting, but I immersed myself in scripture, sketching scenes from the Gospels, parables, Christ at the Last Supper.

Each day as I painted, parishioners gathered silently. Some prayed, some watched with tears in their eyes. I often felt less like an artist and more like a vessel.

The unveiling came on a bright Sunday morning. Sunlight streamed through stained-glass windows, painting the new mural in shifting hues. The congregation fell silent. The pastor turned to me and said, "This will speak long after our voices are gone."

Applause rose, but what moved me most was an old woman whispering through her tears: "*It feels alive.*" In that moment, I knew art could be scripture too — colour as testimony, wall as witness.

Reunions and New Friendships

Around this time, destiny reconnected me with Rupark Saraswat, my school friend from Solan. He was working with Croda Chemicals Ltd. in Bombay and arranged for me to create paintings for their corporate spaces. Each theme stretched me further, proving that art could belong as much in boardrooms as in temples.

Another friend, Dr. Ketan Shah, Director of Usha Lifeline Hospital, asked me to create a work for patients. I painted Mt. Kailash — the eternal mountain, still, strong, radiant. When it was unveiled, patients and staff paused before it. Some folded their hands, some simply stared in silence. For a moment, even illness seemed lighter in its shadow. That day, I realized again that art is not decoration. It is healing.

The Trinity of Turning Points

Looking back, these years of expansion were not accidents. They were orchestrated openings. The Church altar mural taught me that art can be scripture. The patronage of Navin Feta taught me that art can become infrastructure. The meeting with Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam taught me that art, like vision, is nation-building.

Together, they became a trinity of turning points — faith, patronage, and nation — expanding my horizons beyond anything I had imagined. From HR boardrooms to BrahMos corridors, from church walls to corporate offices, from waterfalls to oil rigs, my brush moved across surfaces as varied as life itself.

And through it all, I sensed one truth: art is not a career. It is destiny — one that flows not only in colours and stone, but in relationships, in trust, and in vision.

Chapter 6: Inner Consolidation and Spiritual Anchoring

The years of expansion had carried me into projects of recognition, but the more I achieved, the more I realized that something deeper called me. The applause faded quickly, the commissions ended, but the longing remained — a longing for meaning, for anchor, for the unseen thread that connected my brush to the eternal.

It was during this season that I began to travel not for patrons or projects, but for pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage: Kedarnath, Trimbakeshwar, and Ujjain

In 1990, I made my way to Kedarnath, my first jyotirlinga. The trek was harsh, the cold biting, but every step seemed like penance. The temple stood against the Himalayan peaks, small yet immovable, as if the mountains themselves bowed to Shiva's presence. Standing before the lingam, I felt my own restlessness dissolve into something larger. That visit planted a seed of reverence that never left me.

Years later, I visited Trimbakeshwar in Nashik, the second jyotirlinga. Unlike Kedarnath's austere heights, this place carried a softer, almost maternal aura — the God here felt both guardian and giver. In its quiet courtyards, I felt that art, like worship, needed both austerity and gentleness.

A third pilgrimage took me to Ujjain with my family, where the Mahakaleshwar jyotirlinga drew crowds like a tide. The rituals, the smoke of incense, the resonant chants — they overwhelmed the senses, but also lifted them. In Ujjain, the aesthetics of faith merged with mysticism, and I realized that art too must aim for this fusion: not just beauty for the eye, but depth for the spirit.

These pilgrimages rose like milestones in my memory, guiding me from outward expansion to inward anchoring.

A New Dawn in Jaipur

Soon after, my journey led me to Jaipur. The Pink City, with its desert glow, forts, and palaces, felt like a living museum. I did not arrive with grandeur — only uncertainty. My father had settled in a new colony inhabited mostly by retired army officers and bureaucrats, and through local whispers I heard of an old castle in Kalwar village, partly in ruins, partly being restored as a hotel.

One afternoon, I went there with my father and little Anushay. The palace loomed like a dream: broken staircases, arched windows, fading frescoes, and gardens where peacocks danced as though guarding forgotten histories. On the staircase, I encountered a lady whose elegance was impossible to miss. She wore her grace like an invisible garment — upright posture, luminous eyes, and a kindness that made strangers feel like kin. This was “Sneh Aunty,” who would become my mentor and anchor in Jaipur.

Her husband, Retired Lieutenant General Mandhata Singh, soon followed with the authority of a soldier and the warmth of a father. Over tea in their veranda, with the hillock behind the castle offering a glimpse of Ganesha, they welcomed me into their world. My first commissions here were portraits of their ancestors — dignified figures brought back to life in oil. Each brushstroke was more than likeness; it was continuity, a bridge between past and present.

Evenings with the General were treasures. We sipped chai in the palace gardens as peacocks spread their feathers, and he spoke of discipline, service, and honour. Their family gave me not only work but belonging, a sense that I too had a place in this unfolding tapestry of Jaipur.

The First Job: Teaching in a School

Through Sneh Aunty’s guidance, I received my first job in Jaipur — teaching at a local school. At first, it felt like a compromise, a return to stability. But soon it revealed itself as something greater.

I taught English to children, their curious faces lighting up at every new word. Occasionally, I slipped into art lessons, guiding their small hands to hold brushes, to mix colours, to see beyond the obvious. Their laughter echoed in the classrooms, more uplifting than the silence of galleries. It was not prestige or commission, but it was deeply fulfilling. Teaching, I realized, was not merely about knowledge but about igniting something invisible in another soul.

Portraits, Havelis, and Art Deco

Commissions also found me in Jaipur's grand old havelis. Bureaucrats, dignitaries, and members of the royal family invited me to paint portraits in rooms where frescoes had faded but history still breathed. Walking through those high-ceilinged halls with my sketchbook, I often felt as though my brush was conversing with centuries.

Alongside portraits, I was also asked to work on art deco projects — modern flourishes that blended with the city's classical charm. These works stretched me, teaching me to move between eras, to be both traditional and contemporary. Each commission was more than income — it was a reminder that art was legacy.

Road Scholar: Becoming a Cultural Bridge

Jaipur opened another unexpected door: an introduction to Road Scholar, an American non-profit launching service-learning programs in Rajasthan. Their volunteers — mostly senior lifelong learners — came to princely towns and rural schools to teach and serve. I was invited to head the program.

Leading it transformed me. I was no longer just an artist or teacher — I became a cultural bridge. I taught English, organized village lessons, and most importantly, gave presentations on Indian spirituality — yoga, Vedanta, dharma, meditation. To my surprise, these talks captivated the American volunteers. Many told me later that what moved them most was not my knowledge but my devotion — my visible love for the communities I served.

Seeing their awe, I realized my own roots anew. In teaching them, I rediscovered India.

The Orphanage: Service as Art

Beyond Road Scholar, my heart was drawn to an orphanage on Jaipur's outskirts. I visited often, sometimes with little Anushay by my side. The children, though lacking families,

brimmed with affection and curiosity. We sat on the floor shaping clay, laughing as our hands became caked with mud, creating tiny sculptures with no market value but infinite joy.

The orphanage had a small church, and they entrusted me with painting its altar. To create something sacred for those who had so little yet so much faith was a privilege unlike any commission.

The orphanage school became another space of service. I taught the children not just academics but art and imagination, encouraging them to see beyond their limitations. Watching Anushay play beside them, sharing his toys and laughter, I felt fatherhood expand — I was not only a father to my son, but in some way, to all these children too.

A Threshold of Spiritual Art

In Jaipur, my canvases began to travel abroad — with American volunteers to the U.S., with earlier contacts to the UK. But more importantly, my words and service travelled too, carrying with them glimpses of India's spiritual heart.

Looking back, Jaipur was more than a city. It was a threshold. Here, the seeds of spirituality in art and service were sown more deeply. My brush was no longer only about commissions, nor my profession only about HR. Life itself had become a canvas — blending art, service, teaching, and devotion.

Jaipur taught me that true creativity lies not only in painting canvases, but in shaping lives with love, patience, and presence



Deva-Deepawali oil on canvas 2007

Chapter 7: Crossroads of Art and Spirit

Every journey has its tests. Some come as slow whispers, others arrive as storms that shake the very foundation of life. For me, the greatest storm came during the pandemic years—a time when the world fell silent, and yet inside that silence, a louder, deeper voice began to call.

Until then, I had walked a path woven from multiple strands: family, art, teaching, and service. In Jaipur, my days had been filled with commissions, teaching English, giving spiritual talks, guiding Road Scholar volunteers, and visiting orphanages with my son. But when COVID-19 swept across the world, all of that was brought to a halt. Doors closed, borders shut, and fear lingered in every breath of air.

Yet even in that stillness, I could not remain still. The village Kalwar & Mundota in Jaipur, already burdened with poverty, now faced hunger, illness, and despair. Children could not

go to school; families had no steady income. I knew I could not solve everything, but I also knew I could not stand by idly. With the little resources I could muster, I began to organize supplies—food, medicine, and daily essentials.

I remember those mornings vividly: waking before dawn, loading sacks of rice, pulses, and biscuits into whatever vehicle we had, and driving down dusty lanes where homes sat quiet in anxiety. The looks on the villagers' faces as we handed out parcels were unforgettable—hesitant gratitude, eyes that spoke of relief, children tugging at their mothers' hands with smiles that had been absent for weeks. My son, Anushay, often accompanied me, his little hands passing biscuits to children of his age. His virtue of donating his toys and dress, Watching him share in that service made me realize that fatherhood was no longer just about providing for my children, but about teaching them to carry compassion for all.

The American volunteers from Road scholar—though unable to travel—stayed connected through calls, messages, and even financial support I remember close friends Doug and Lezlie arranged donations from US through some channels and used to PayPal me. Many wrote that they admired not just the charity itself, but the devotion with which I stayed close to the communities we had once served together. Some evenings, I arranged virtual cultural exchanges, where I would speak about Indian spirituality, the strength of inner stillness, and the importance of seva (service). Across the screen, I could see their faces soften, as though hearing not just words but the pulse of a living truth.

In those months, I also spent more time at the orphanage where I had often worked earlier. The small church altar, cracked and worn, became my canvas. Painting it anew in that quiet space—while the children watched with wide eyes—felt like consecration, not just of wood and colour, but of life itself. I taught the children to make clay models, their laughter filling the air as clay slipped through their fingers. The orphanage's school became another place where I shared lessons, not just of grammar or craft, but of resilience, of finding joy in creation despite lack.

But life is rarely one-sided. Service nourished me, yet my body began to falter. In the midst of this intense period, I suffered a paralytic attack. The strength I had taken for granted abandoned me in a moment. My body stiffened, my movements slowed, and suddenly the simplest acts—lifting a cup, walking across a room—felt like mountains to climb. The man who had erected sculptures, who had painted walls and altars, who had carried sacks of supplies into villages, was now confined, dependent, fragile.

The days in the hospital remain etched in memory: the sterile smell of disinfectant, the monotony of white walls, the anxious faces of my family, the silence of nights broken only by distant footsteps. Recovery was slow, demanding humility and patience. Physical therapy taught me how to begin again—small exercises, repeated endlessly, each one a prayer of perseverance.

It was during this fragile stage that I discovered something that has since defined my art. When my hands could not move freely, I learned to move them slowly, with deep attention. Each brushstroke became a meditation. Each layer of resin became a prayer. Where once I had painted for recognition or commission, now I painted because the very act of painting healed me.

This was the true beginning of my spiritual art.

My canvases changed. I no longer sought to capture only form or likeness. Instead, I began to layer symbols—circles that echoed the cycles of breath, translucent resin that felt like time itself, figures half-seen as though emerging from another dimension. The shimmering textures of foil no longer spoke of industry, as they had in my Hindalco days, but of divine light breaking through darkness. The resin, once an experiment in surface, now felt like skin—fragile, eternal, luminous.

When people later saw these works, they often spoke of silence, of depth, of presence. Some said they felt as though the paintings breathed; others said they carried a vibration that was hard to explain. For me, they were simply offerings—born from paralysis, service, and prayer.

This period also deepened my spiritual exchanges with friends abroad. The Americans I had once guided through Road Scholar now became fellow pilgrims, listening to my talks on Vedanta and spirituality not as lectures but as life shared in honesty. Many carried my works back with them, and thus my art found its way into homes in the United States, carrying with it not just images but the resonance of resilience and surrender.

Looking back, I see these years as a crossroads. On one side was livelihood, commissions, and the earlier stages of survival. On the other was surrender, service, and the discovery of a deeper calling. The two roads met in the crucible of the pandemic, in the hospital room where I relearned movement, in the dusty lanes where food packets became lifelines, in the orphanage church where paint became prayer.

This was no ending—it was an awakening.

As I grew older, physical aging and mental struggles became companions I could not ignore. My health, shaken by illness, demanded more care; the pressures of responsibility sometimes weighed heavily. Yet in those very moments of vulnerability, I found the strength of support—from family who stood by me, from a few loyal friends, and from the unseen presence of God and spirit that seemed to guide each step.

These challenges did not diminish me—they began to shape me. My art became more inward, more contemplative, more prayerful. My role in life expanded beyond the studio, into something larger: a preparation for spiritual leadership through art.

Now, when I look at the path ahead, I see not only a painter or sculptor but a spiritual artist-leader emerging—someone whose brush does not just create forms but seeks to inspire, to heal, to connect. The leadership skills I once used in HR, in cultural programs, in charity work—those too were seeds planted for this moment. They remind me that destiny is not a straight road, but a weaving of art, service, and spirit into a single tapestry.

The Crossroads of Art and Spirit was not a final destination but a passage into a wider, more luminous journey—one where the seen and unseen meet, where every act of creation becomes an offering, and where even struggles are transformed into seeds of grace.

And though the journey yet continues, I walk it now with a clearer sense of who I am becoming—an artist shaped by struggle, blessed by service, and called toward a destiny where art is not only creation but communion.

कला न केवलं जीविकायै स्यात्।

सा हि साधना आत्मदीपप्रकाशः ॥

यत्र रूपं मन्त्रसमीरणं भूयात्।

तत्र चित्रं भवति ध्यानमेव ॥

Meaning –

“Art is not merely for livelihood;
it is a practice, a lamp of the soul’s light.
Where form breathes like mantra in motion,
there the painting itself becomes meditation.”

Poetry

When hands could not move, the spirit painted.

When hands lay still,

betrayed by time's unyielding tide,

the canvas did not wait it listened.

Brushes slept in silence,

yet colours rose from within,

streams of light spilling

through unseen veins of the heart.

What body could not command,

the spirit whispered into form:

shapes born of breath,

lines carved by prayer,

a palette dipped in eternity.

No trembling wrist, no failing bone

could halt the painter's song—

for art was never mine to hold,

only mine to surrender.

And so, when flesh grew weary,

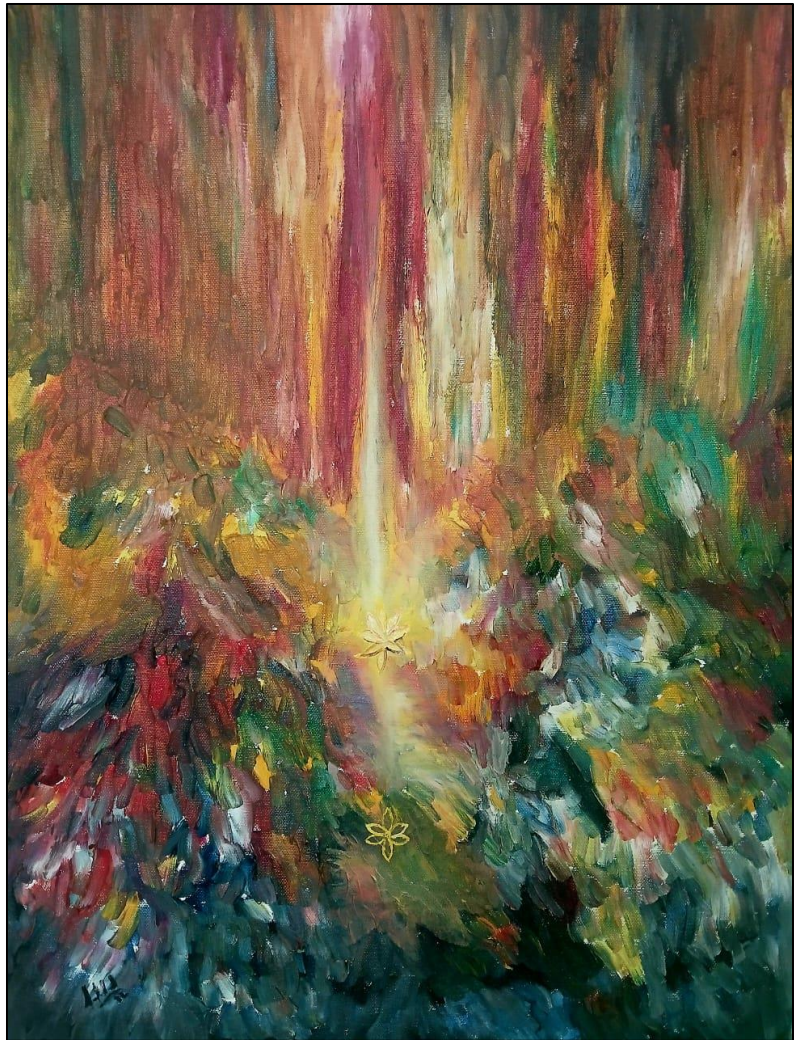
the unseen hand of grace

took over the work,

turning my stillness into creation.

The last portrait is not of me,

but of the Spirit that painted through me.



The Lotus of eternal light (18"x24") oil on canvas

Chapter 8: Emergence of Spiritual Art

The First Stirrings

The shift began quietly, almost without announcement. After years of commissions, portraits, and civic projects, I noticed my sketchbooks filling with forms that no patron had asked for. **Circles within circles**, spirals, flames, figures of wandering ascetics — images born not of demand but of some inner necessity.

At first I thought of them as distractions, doodles between assignments. But they kept returning, insistent, as though my hand was following a script my mind had not yet read. I would sit by the lamp at dawn, chant softly, and find my pencil moving into shapes that felt ancient.

This was not art for walls or clients. This was art for the soul.

Pilgrimages as Palette

The imagery carried echoes of my pilgrimages. In the swirling blues, I saw the cold silence of Kedarnath. In the glowing reds, the flame-lit courtyards of Trimbakeshwar. In the deep blacks and ochres, the midnight rituals of Ujjain's Mahakaleshwar.

Mountains no longer appeared as scenery but as presences. Rivers were no longer water but streams of consciousness. Lamps were not objects but hearts lit from within. Each jyotirlinga I had bowed before seemed to rise again in pigment, shaping my palette as much as my prayers.

I began to understand what saints meant when they said: *the outer pilgrimage becomes the inner one*.

The Brush as Mantra

During this time, my practice of mantra and meditation deepened. I often painted after dawn prayers, when silence was thick as honey. The brush moved differently then — slower, more deliberate, almost like beads sliding through fingers. Each stroke became japa, each colour an offering.

Sometimes I lost sense of time entirely. Hours slipped past unnoticed, and when I stepped back, the canvas showed something I could not fully claim as my own. It felt as though the brush had been guided, that I was only the medium.

These moments left me both exhausted and elated. They were not commissions. They were revelations.

The First Spiritual Canvases

The first works of this kind were small, almost tentative. A mandala glowing with blues and golds. A portrait of an unnamed ascetic whose eyes looked straight through the viewer. A mountain painted not with lines but with radiance, as if it breathed.

When friends or visitors saw these pieces, their reactions were different from anything I had experienced before. They did not say “beautiful” or “nice work.” Instead, they grew quiet. Some stood in front of the canvases longer than expected. One whispered, “I feel peace.”

That was when I realized these paintings were not mere decoration. They were spaces of presence.

The Creation of *Ananta Naad*

The culmination of this season came with the birth of *Ananta Naad* — the Infinite Sound. I cannot say I “planned” it. The image arrived one night in meditation, a vision of spiraling resonance, like sound waves folding into eternity.

For days, I could not shake it off. Finally, I stretched a large canvas, larger than anything I had attempted before, and began. At first it was only curves and lines, but slowly the painting unfolded into something vast — a vibration frozen in colour.

I worked late into nights, candle burning low, Anushay sometimes asleep in the corner, his breath like another rhythm joining the painting. As the forms spiraled outward, I felt myself dissolving into them. It was not me painting — it was the *Naad* painting itself through me.

When *Ananta Naad* was finished, I stood before it trembling. It felt alive. Not just an image, but a presence. I knew then that this was no longer art for patrons, but art as revelation — art as darshan.

The Emergence of Philosophy

With *Ananta Naad*, my philosophy of art crystallized: art must not only decorate; it must heal, uplift, awaken. It must carry resonance, like a temple bell that continues to vibrate long after it is struck.

Collectors who saw it responded with reverence. Some asked to buy, but I hesitated. This was not something to be traded lightly. It was a milestone — the canvas where I ceased being

merely an artist and began to become what destiny had been shaping me toward: a spiritual artist-leader.

Closing Reflection

Looking back, I see how the journey led here. Childhood whispers in Solan, sketches on school walls, commissions for survival, public projects for recognition, pilgrimages for faith, service in Jaipur — all had prepared the soil. But the bloom was here, in these canvases of spirit.

Ananta Naad was not the end but the beginning. It was the door through which I stepped into the true path of my life: to let art become prayer, presence, and offering — for myself, for those who beheld it, and for the world waiting for colours that could heal.

Chapter 9: Recognition, Companionship, and the Spiritual Artist-Leader's Voice

Recognition now was not only collectors or commissions. It was the quiet nod of a seeker who felt peace before a canvas. It was the trust of companions who believed in the vision. It was the companionship of Chirananda, who reminded me that this path was not mine alone.

And so, the journey that began in Calcutta's crowded lanes, flowered in Solan's valleys, was tested in commissions and HR offices, expanded through patrons and presidents, and anchored in pilgrimage and service — now stood at a threshold.

Not an ending, but a new beginning.

A beginning where the artist becomes leader, where colours become vibrations, and where the canvas of life itself waits for the next stroke.

A Poem for the Infinite Canvas

Not in the galleries,
not in the markets of praise,
but in the quiet breath between strokes,
there I found my home.

Colours, once wages of survival,
became rivers of silence.
Lines, once borders of form,
became hymns without words.

I have carried canvases wrapped in old sheets,
I have stood before closed doors,

I have painted by candlelight
while shadows leaned in as companions.

And yet—
through loss and labour,
through patrons and presidents,
through temples, schools, and orphan halls,
the brush became prayer,
the canvas became cosmos.

What is art if not remembrance?
What is colour if not healing?
What is the artist, if not a witness
to the unseen rhythm of the soul?

Now I walk not alone,
for friendship has found me,
for seekers stand beside me,
for every child's laughter, every pilgrim's chant
joins my strokes with their own unseen hues.

And if one day the world should forget my name,
let them not forget this truth:

That every colour longs to return to light,
that every sound returns to silence,
that every life, however small,
is already infinite.

कलेन लोकं शमयामि भावैः।
दीपः सदा चित्ततमीः निहन्ति॥
सेवा कला योगसमागमश्च।
एषा मम ध्येयपथः प्रपन्नः॥

Meaning:
Through art I soothe the world with sacred feelings.
Like a lamp, it dispels the darkness of hearts.
Service, art, and yoga in union —
this is the path, the mission, the vow of my life.



Epilogue: Gratitude, Grace, and the Journey Ahead

As I look back across the years—the struggles of livelihood, the commissions that shaped my hands, the lessons of illness and healing, the service in villages and orphanages, the companionship of volunteers from across oceans—I see not a straight path but a woven one. Each strand of struggle, family, art, and spirit has braided together into a story I could never have written alone.

There were moments when I thought I could not go further—when doubt, sickness, or fatigue clouded my vision. Yet each time, something lifted me: my wife’s unwavering devotion, my children’s quiet inspiration, the kindness of strangers, the grace of God, and the spirit that whispers in silence. Even in my frailty—through aging and mental struggles, through the paralysis that nearly silenced my art—I found that love and faith stood stronger than despair.

Today, I walk forward not only as an artist, but as a spiritual artist-leader, one whose brush seeks not only to create but to guide, to heal, and to inspire. Leadership for me is not about command but about service: about lifting others, sharing wisdom, and shaping a legacy where art and spirit are inseparable.

Above all, I offer thanks—to all those who have loved me no matter what turn my life took. To my family who bore the weight of sacrifices. To my friends who stood by me when shadows fell. To patrons, teachers, volunteers, and strangers who became companions on this road. To every soul who believed in me even when I could not believe in myself.

Special Thanks

I bow with deep and heartfelt gratitude to my parents, sister, and cousins, who were the first to plant within me the seeds of faith, resilience, and unwavering belief in the beauty of life. Their guidance, sacrifices, and love shaped the foundation of who I am today, teaching me the importance of strength in adversity and the enduring power of love. To my dear friends and companions—Myra, Frances, Ellen, John, Lezlie, Doug, Gloria, Nancy, Gini, Maryann, Susan, Vandana, Sarika, Sunita, Rupark, and Anurag—your love, support, and presence were like the light of the stars, guiding me through the moments of darkness when it felt as though the weight of the world was too much to bear. You have been my unwavering anchors, holding me steady even when the tides of life seemed ready to pull me under. Your belief in me was a constant flame, reminding me that I was never alone, even in the most challenging of times.

I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to my students, colleagues, and relatives, whose unique contributions have shaped my journey in ways I cannot fully express. Each one of you has, in your own way, been both a rock and a beacon of inspiration, showing me that this path I walk was never a solitary one but a shared experience. Together, we have carried the weight of this journey, each of us offering a part of ourselves to the collective whole. Your encouragement, wisdom, and compassion have been indispensable, and for that, I will be forever grateful.

Special recognition must go to my friend and companion, Chirananda, whose support and dedication were instrumental in helping me complete this biography. Without your guidance, patience, and belief in this project, the story would not have come to fruition. You helped me bridge the gap between thought and creation, and for that, I will always carry a deep sense of gratitude.

Without each of these people—without their love, encouragement, and unwavering presence—there would be no story to tell. There would be no bridge between the seen and the unseen, no path to walk. Each of you has, in your own way, contributed to the unfolding of this journey, and together, we have created something far greater than I could ever have imagined on my own. You have shown me that life is not just about the destination, but about the relationships, the connections, and the shared experiences that sustain us along the way.

And so, the journey continues. While the road ahead may not yet be fully visible, I walk it with faith, knowing that the path will unfold in its own time. The future may be uncertain, but I now understand that each brushstroke, each sculpture, each act of service, is not merely an end in itself. It is a prayer—an offering toward something larger than myself, a sacred expression of my connection to the world around me. The destination, I realize, is not fame or fortune, but communion—the place where the human and the divine meet in a harmonious dance of colour, texture, and silence. It is there, in that quiet meeting, where the deepest truths are revealed, and where the soul finds its true purpose.

This is my offering. This is my gratitude. This is my journey—still unfolding, still alive, and ever in motion. It is a story written not just in words, but in the shared moments, the quiet gestures, and the enduring bonds that continue to shape and transform me, and those I encounter along the way. With each step, I walk forward into the unknown, ever grateful for those who have walked with me, and those who will continue to walk beside me, as we all move toward the mystery of what lies ahead.

With gratitude and blessings,
— **Anuragk Gupta**

Edited by Chirananda

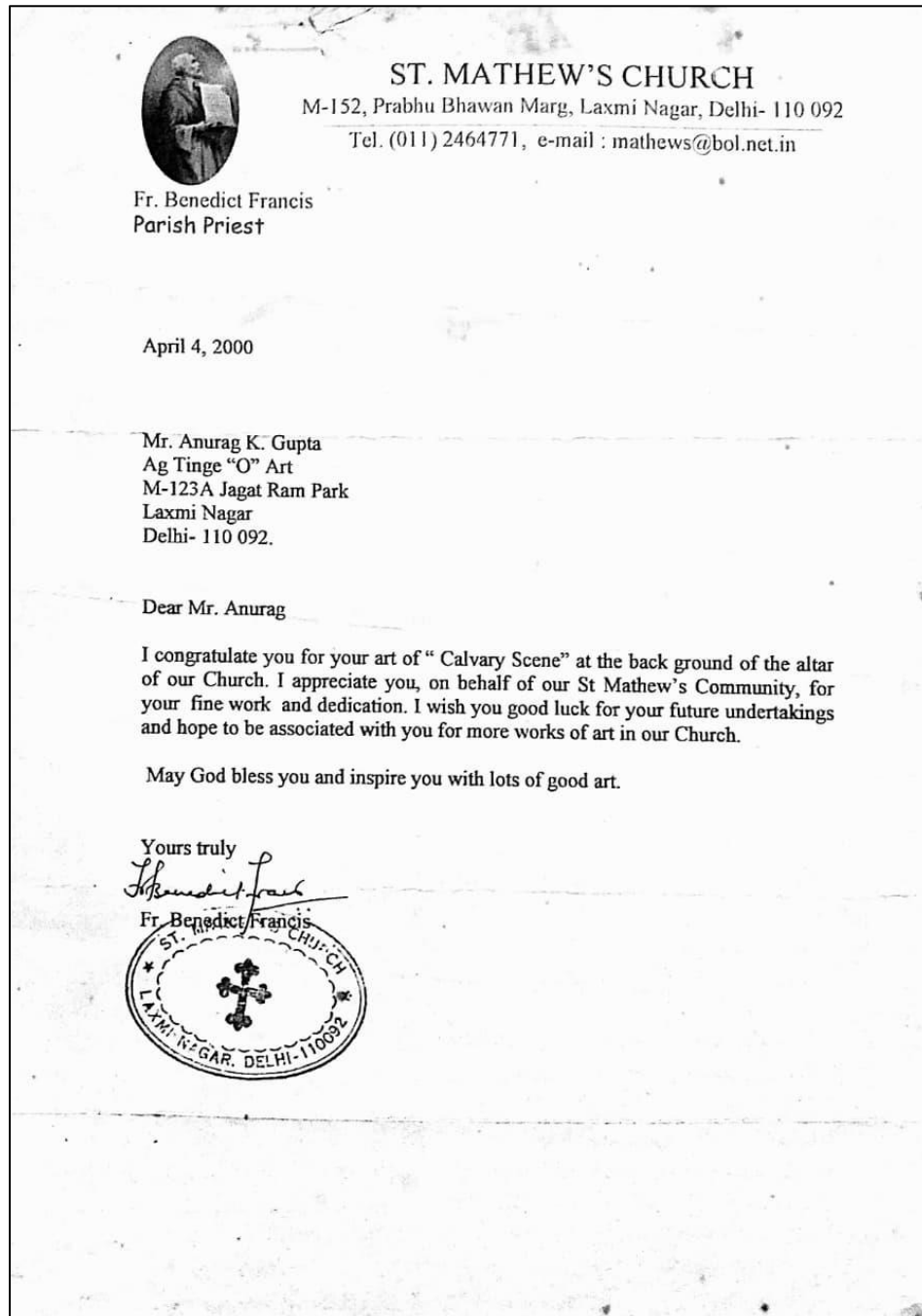
Appendix

Chronology of Letters, Certificates & Press Mentions

2000

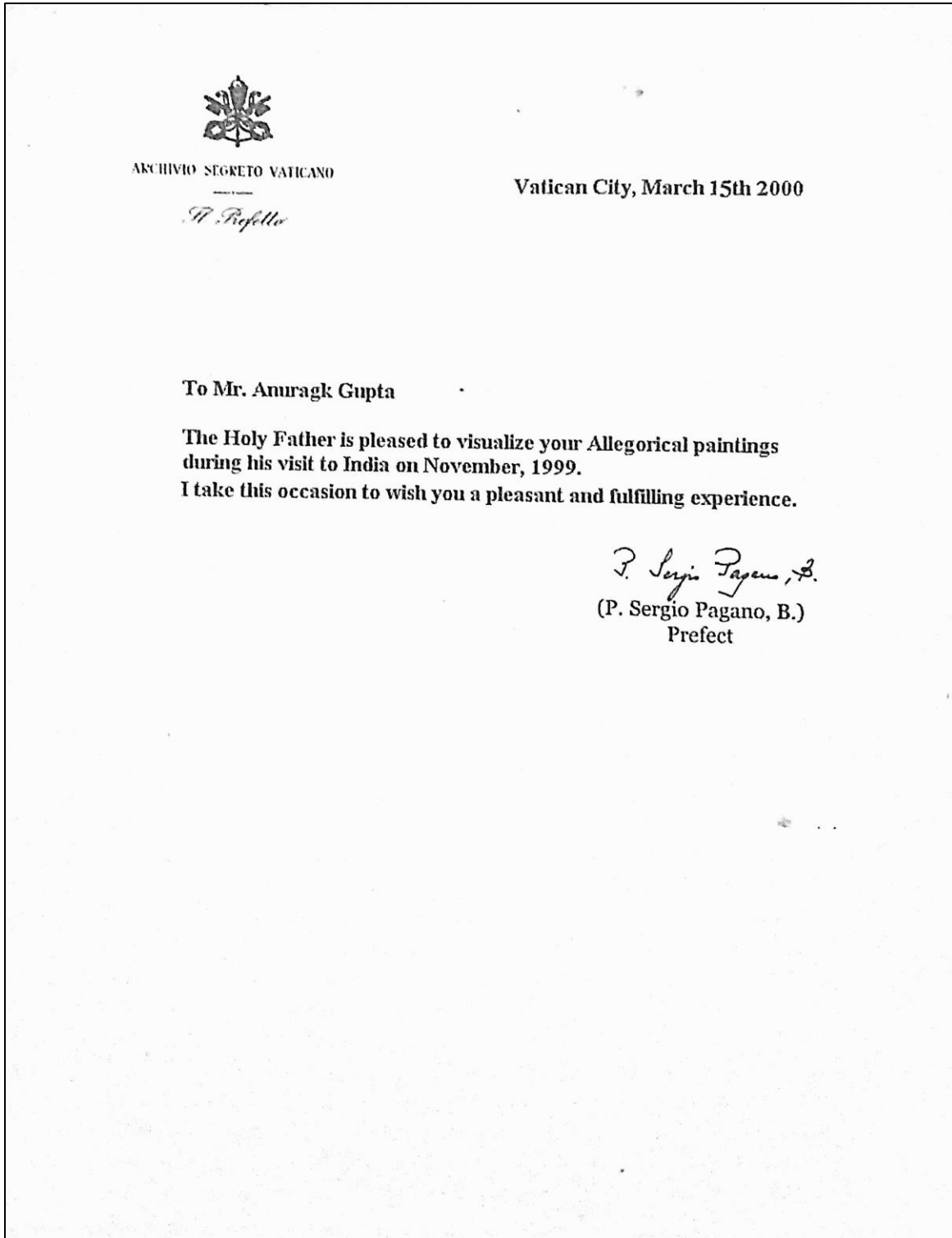
April 4, 2000 – St. Mathew's Church, Delhi

Appreciation by Fr. Benedict Francis for the "Calvary Scene" altar backdrop painting.



March 15, 2000 – Vatican City (Archivio Segreto Vaticano)

P. Sergio Pagano conveys that the Holy Father visualized Anurag Gupta's allegorical paintings during his India visit (Nov 1999).



July 12, 2000 – Buckingham Palace, London

Letter of congratulations from Stuart Shilson, Assistant Private Secretary to the Queen, on behalf of Her Majesty.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

12th July, 2000

Dear Sir,

I am commanded by the Queen to congratulate you for your incredible workmanship and contribution towards the sector of Arts.

Although the Queen is unable to write personally owing to the enormous number of letter received everyday, I am to tell you that Her Majesty and His Royal Highness have viewed your Artworks with much interest. The Queen hopes your hard work finds you a great success.

Yours sincerely,
Stuart Shilson

STUART SHILSON
Assistant Private Secretary to the Queen

Sir Anuragk Gupta, Delhi, India.

October 21, 2000 – Hindalco Industries Ltd. (Aditya Birla Group), Silvassa

Work authorization for landscaping, fountain, and installation of Statue of Liberty.



Ref. PP.PVNR. F.00/481

SILVASSA,
21.10.2000.

Shri Anurag K. Gupta,
AG Tinge "O" Art,
Trimurti Bhawan,
Naroli,
Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

Sub: Landscaping and Interior

With reference to your offer letter No.Agt-104/10-00 Dtd. 6th October 2000 and subsequent discussion had with you on 19.10.2000, we hereby authorize you to start the work for developing lawn along with fountain and erection of statue of Liberty in our colony area in front of Substation. Detailed order will be issued to you later.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,
For Hindalco Industries Limited
[Foils Division]


[P V N Rao]
Asstt. Supdt. (Purchase & Contracts)

HINDALCO INDUSTRIES LIMITED (FOILS DIVISION)

Works	: Village Khutli, Taluka Khanvel, Silvassa-396 230. (U.T. of D. & N. H.) Phone : 0260 - 647364 / 365
	Mobile No.: 098241 12923/098241 02923 Fax: 098241 70030
City Office	: House No. 1173/1, Govt. Housing Society, Silvassa-396 230. (U.T. of D. & N. H.) TeleFax : 91-0260/641389/642936
	Email: hindalco@shwan.com
Principal Works	: P. O. : Renukoot-231 217, Dist.: Sonbhadra (U.P.). Phone : 91-05446 - 52077/78/79/84 Fax : 52107 52427
Regd. Office	: Century Bhavan, Dr. Annie Besant Road, Worli, Mumbai-400 025. Phone : 022- 4308491, 4308692 Fax : 4227586
Mktg. Office	: Ahura Centre, 1 st Floor, 82-Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai-400 093. Tel.: 91-22-8307 137/136/135/127 Fax: 8307124

Feature article: "Anurag Gupta: त्रिआयामी कला के एक अनुपम शिल्पी" - detailing achievements and recognition.

अनुराग गुप्ता: त्रिआयामी कला के एक अनुपम शिल्पी

सिलवासा के बालभवन में तीन दिसंबर को 'विश्व विकलांग दिवस' के अवसर पर शुरू हो रहे 'विकलांग पार्क' में निर्मित जल प्रपात (वाटर फाल) के शिल्पी अनुराग गुप्ता हैं, जो आजकल सिलवासा में ही रहते हैं। इस जल प्रपात में अनुराग ने स्थानीय संस्कृति को प्रक्षेपित कर एक अभिनव संरचना सृजित की है।

अनुराग गुप्ता सिलवासा के लिए नये हैं लेकिन कला की दुनिया में उनकी उपलब्धियां उल्लेखनीय हैं। वह पहले भारतीय हैं जिन्हें लंदन प्रदर्शन फिलिक्स रोजंटिन है। 'श्री डायमेशनल रिफील कोलाज' में करने वाले अनुराग अधिकारी श्री हितैषी से वह छठी कक्षा में पढ़ते हैं कलाप्रदर्शनी में शिरकत उनकी कला यात्रा शुरू के मुख्यमंत्री वीरभद्र ने



है। वह पहले के प्रसिद्ध कला ने सूचीबद्ध किया (त्रिआयामी) विशेषज्ञता गैसिल झूलाजीकल सर्वे के सब प्रेरित हुए जब थे। उन्होंने देगरादून की और यहीं से हुई। हिमालय प्रदेश भी उनके काम को

सराहा था। अनुराग ने विख्यात चित्रकला सर शोभासिंह की अनमोल कृतियों को भी सहेजने 'रिस्टोर' करने का काम किया है। अनुराग गुप्ता इंडोरियर और लैंडस्केपिंग में भी खासा दखल रखते हैं। भीलवाड़ा में सांसद सुभाष कुमार के निजी उद्योग में भी 'इंडोरियट' किया है और मयूर सूटिंग्स की आंतरिक सज्जा को भी सवारा है। दिल्ली की प्रसिद्ध होटल मृंखला रोडिया का 'कांसेप्ट' अनुराग की कलात्मक प्रस्तुति का एक नायाब नमूना है। उन्होंने कला क्षेत्र के जाने माने दिग्गज राम प्रसाद और राम जायसवाल के साथ भी काम किया है। अनुराग कालेज ऑफ आर्ट्स नई दिल्ली के विद्यार्थी रहे हैं। दिल्ली में यमुना नगर के सेंट मेथ्यूज चर्च के कैवलरी स्क्रीन को 'श्री डायमेशनल' प्रस्तुत करने के बाद उन्हें विशिष्ट पहचान मिली और इसी काम के कारण वे फिलिक्स रोजंटिन द्वारा एसोसिएशन के अध्यक्ष ए.ए. गुप्ता के साथ सिलवासा में ही निवास करते हैं। आजकल वह 'हिंडालको' का लैंडस्केपिंग कर रहे हैं और वहां 'स्टेच्यू ऑफ ब्रिक्टों' की साढ़े पन्द्रह फीट ऊंची प्रतिकृति बना रहे हैं। - पी. सिन्हाराय

जनसंसार

मुंबई, रविवार ३ दिसंबर २०००

News report: Inauguration of Anurag Gupta's waterfall artwork at "Viklang Park," Silvassa, on World Disabled Day.

बालभवन में बच्चों के लिए एक और उपहार वित्त सचिव रमेश नेगी द्वारा आकर्षक पहाड़ी, जल प्रपात और रेल का उद्घाटन

सिलवासा, ३ दिसंबर (निप्र)। विश्व विकलांग दिवस के अवसर पर बाल भवन ने आज संघ प्रदेश दादरा नगर हवेली के बच्चों को एक अत्यंत आकर्षक सौगात पेश की। बाल भवन के उद्यान परिसर में बनाई गई आकर्षक पहाड़ी का वित्त सचिव श्री रमेश नेगी ने उद्घाटन किया। इस पहाड़ी पर एक सुंदर जलप्रपात बनाया गया है, जिसके चारों तरफ बनाई गई पट्टी पर नन्हीं सी रेल दौड़ती है।

बालभवन परिसर में बच्चों के लिए यह अनुपम सौगात रेडक्रास सोसायटी, संघ प्रदेश समाज कल्याण, स्वास्थ्य एवं शिक्षा विभाग के सौजन्य से पेश की गई है।

आज सुबह सुहावने मौसम में उत्साहपूर्ण वातावरण के बीच वित्त सचिव श्री नेगी ने फीता काट कर यह आकर्षक पहाड़ी बच्चों को समर्पित की। इस पहाड़ी पर बने मनोरम झरने

और आस-पास दौड़ती रेलगाड़ी से न केवल बाल भवन की शोभावृद्धि हुई है बल्कि बच्चों के आकर्षण में भी इजाफा हुआ है।

इस अवसर पर सभा को संबोधित करते हुए श्री नेगी ने पहाड़ी के निर्माण की सराहना करते हुए कहा कि इस बालभवन को देखकर वे अत्यंत आल्हादित हैं। उन्होंने बुद्धिजीवियों, शिक्षा जगत से जुड़े लोगों तथा सेवानिवृत्त कर्मचारियों से आह्वान किया कि वह बालभवन में आकर अपने अनुभवों से बच्चों का मार्गदर्शन करें। उन्होंने कहा कि लोग ऐसे काम के जरिए अपना सामाजिक दायित्व बखूबी निभा सकते हैं। समाहर्ता श्रीमती पुण्य सलीला श्रीवास्तव ने भी बालभवन के प्रति अपनी शुभकामनाएं व्यक्त की। समाज कल्याण विभाग के अधिकारी डा. अनिल कुमार ने बालभवन की विशेषताओं पर विस्तार की प्रकाश डाला। उद्घाटन कार्यक्रम के बाद

विकलांग बच्चों ने अत्यंत मनमोहक सांस्कृतिक कार्यक्रम पेश कर उपस्थित जनसमुदाय को भाव विभोर कर दिया। उल्लेखनीय है कि बालभवन में विकलांग बच्चों के लिए एक आकर्षक झूला बनाया गया है। इसी के साथ एक क्रिडा विहार भी बना है। जिसमें किलकारियों के साथ खेलते कूदते बच्चे अपने मनोरंजन करते हैं। कार्यक्रम में जिला पंचायत के अध्यक्ष श्री केशुभाई पटेल, रेडक्रास सोसायटी के निर्देशक श्री कुलदीप सिंह, ए.टी.पी. श्री चंद्रशेखर एवं श्री मनोज लाल भी उपस्थित थे। बालभवन की निर्देशक श्रीमती मंजीत कौर ने आभार प्रदर्शन किया। इस अवसर पर पहाड़ी का निर्माण करनेवाले शिल्पकार श्री अनुराग गुप्ता भी उपस्थित थे। उन्होंने घोषणा की कि वह भविष्य में अपनी कलाकृतियों से होनेवाली आय का दस प्रतिशत बालभवन की गतिविधियों के लिए देंगे।

2001

May 11, 2001 – PWD Dadra & Nagar Haveli (Audit Form)

Agreement No. PWD/149/WCD.I/644 for providing waterfall at Circuit House, Silvassa.

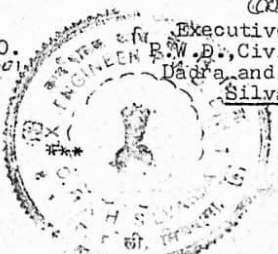
F O R M - No. 3(A)
(Referred to in Rule No.58 B(ii))

WORKWISE DETAILS OF WORK COMPLETED OR IN PROGRESS BY THE CONTRACTOR.

1. Name of Contractor	: Shri Anurak K. Gupta.
2. Name of work	: Providing water fall at Circuit House Silvassa.
3. Agreement No.	: PWD/149/WCD.I/644 Dated 11.5.2001.
4. Estimated cost of work put to tender	: Rs.58,500/-
5. Tender Cost	: Rs.58,500/-
6. Date of Starting the work	: 21.5.2001
7. Stipulated date of completion of work.	: 20.6.2001
8. Actual date of completion of the work.	: 20.6.2001
9. Amount of work done upto	: Rs.58,500/-
10. State whether the details as above given by the contractor are correct, or not state as to what incorrect information.	: yes
11. State whether the Contractor has executed the "work of progress" satisfactory as per specifications/has completed the work satisfactory as per specification/position of work.	Contractor has done the work in good manner. He has created a very good art work in Circuit house Silvassa.
12. Any other remarks.	

No. PWD/WCD.I/Audit/ 760
Silvassa, Dtd. .99-2000.
30-6-2001

Executive Engineer,
P.W.D., Civil Division No.I(B),
Dadra and Nagar Haveli,
Silvassa.



d

June 20, 2001 – PWD Completion Certificate

Work successfully completed; remarks: "Contractor has done the work in good manner. He has created a very good art work in Circuit House Silvassa."

October 25, 2001 - Testimonial by Ajoy K. Paitandy (IAS), Development Commissioner

Personal note praising creativity, sensitivity, and predicting a bright artistic future.

3 THURSDAY

(NOTES)

Name - Ajoy K. Paitandy IAS
Development Commissioner
Daman, Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli

I came here today evening to have a look at the Art works of a talented boy, Anurag K.

I Confess that I was not really ready for the pleasant Surprise.

I have witnessed a number of most soothing, imaginative and beautiful art works

4 FRIDAY

showing extreme sensitivity of mind and Extraordinary Creativity. Anurag himself is a very pleasant human being. He has dedication extraordinary.

The Visual impression of his art works is very pleasant. I am sure in years ahead he will turn into a great Artist with an exceptional mind and very healthy spirit.

I wish him all luck and prosperity.

5 SATURDAY

A. Paitandy
25.10.2001
S. L. Nanda

6 SUNDAY

November 10, 2001 – Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.

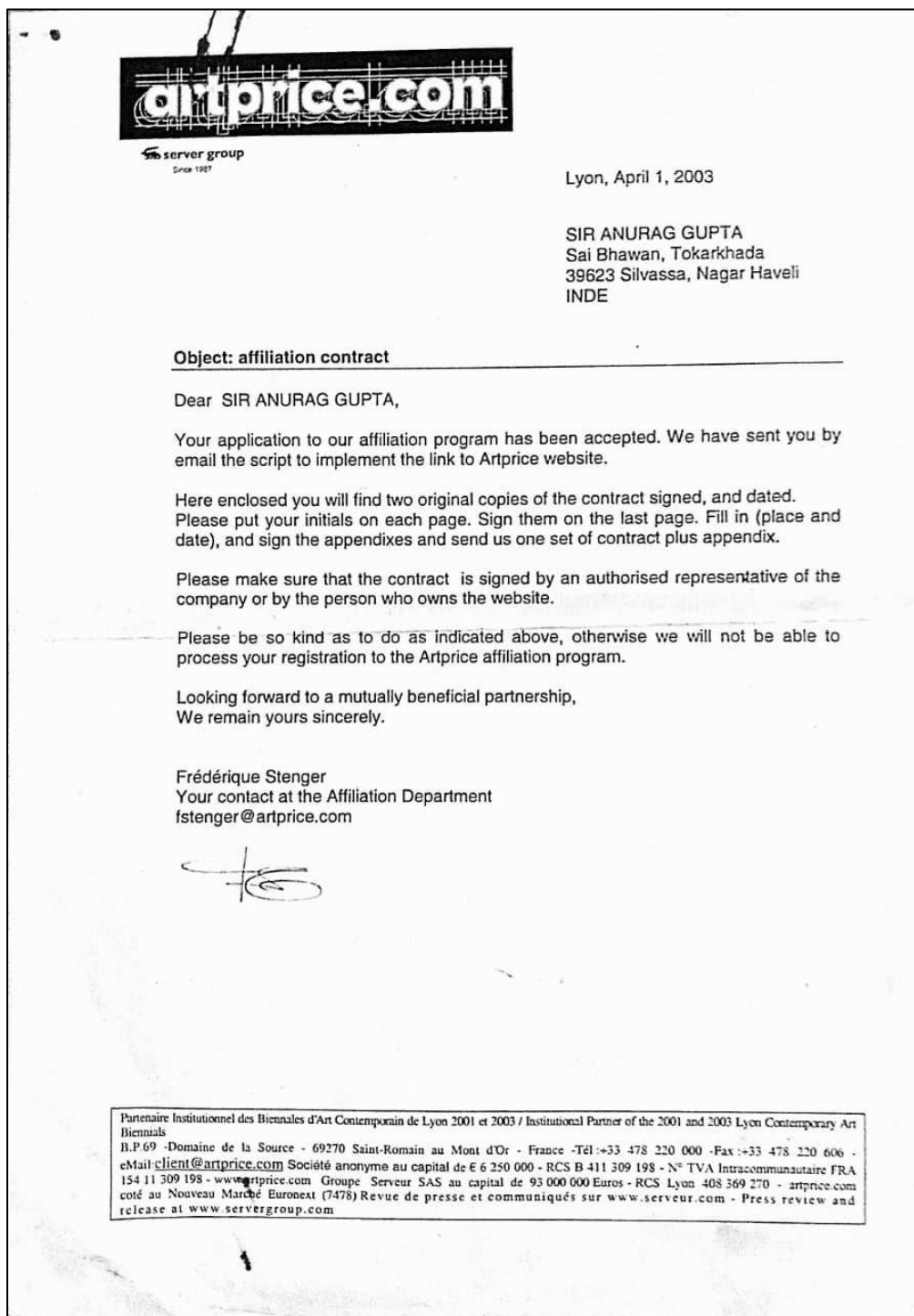
Certificate of completion for modification of conference room at Silvassa plant.

विपणन प्रभाग Marketing Division	इंडियन ऑयल कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड ल्यूब ब्लेंडिंग प्लांट, प्लॉट नं. 75/1, कराजगाम, सिल्वासा - 396 230, यू. टी. ऑफ दाद्रा अण्ड नगर हवेली. Indian Oil Corporation Limited Lube Blending Plant, Plant No. 75/1, KARAJGAM, Silvassa - 396 230. U. T. of Dadra & Nagar Haveli, MOBILE : 9824137742 / 43	
10 TH Nov.2001		
M/s. Ag. Tinge " O " Art, Sai Bhavan, Ayyappa Temple Road, Silvassa Kind attn : Shri Anurag Gupta		
Dear Sir,		
We are pleased to note that you have completed the work of modification of our conference room in time and as per our requirements. We hope to be associated with you in future and wish you the very best for a prosperous and bright career ahead.		
Thanking you,		
Yours faithfully, For INDIAN OIL CORPORATION LTD.,		
 (V.S. MENON) SR. PLANT MANAGER		
पंजीकृत कार्यालय : 'इंडियन ऑयल भवन,' जी-9, अली यावर जंग मार्ग, बांद्रा (पूर्व), मुंबई - 400 051. Regd. Office : 'Indian Oil Bhavan,' G-9, Ali Yavar Jung Marg, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 400 051 (INDIA)		

2003

April 1, 2003 – Artprice.com, Lyon, France

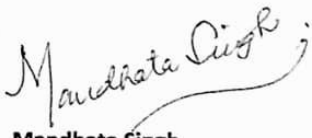
Acceptance into the global Artprice affiliation program.



2008

January 16, 2008 – Defence Intelligence Agency, Ministry of Defence (New Delhi)

Certificate from Lt. Gen. Mandhata Singh appreciating portraits painted for the agency.

	<i>Lt Gen Mandhata Singh, VSM, VSM</i> <i>Director General Defence Intelligence Agency</i> <i>and</i> <i>Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Intelligence)</i> <i>Tele: 2301 9399</i> <i>2333 5931</i>	<i>Headquarters</i> <i>Defence Intelligence Agency</i> <i>Ministry of Defence</i> <i>Room No. 256 A, South Block,</i> <i>New Delhi-110 011</i>
<u>To whomsoever it may concern</u>		
This is to certify that Mr. Anuragk Gupta has painted few portraits for us. We are glad to find his work to our satisfaction. We wish him success in his future undertaking.		
16th January 2008	 Mandhata Singh (Lt Gen)	

2017

January 26, 2017 – Rajasthan Government (Primary Education Department) – Certificate of Appreciation (प्रशस्ति पत्र) awarded for शालाभिमान. school pride / educational contribution

