

BALRAJ KHANNA  
A RETROSPECTIVE

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018



Gallery Elena Shchukina is proud to present a retrospective exhibition of mixed media paintings by Balraj Khanna. Opening on the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Khanna's arrival in the UK, the exhibition will celebrate the Punjab-born artist's prolific career.

Khanna's first exhibition in London took place in 1965 and the exhibition goes back to that time, showcasing works from 1967 onwards, including landmark pieces such as *African Queen* (1970), and *Green Belt*, first shown at the Serpentine Gallery in 1979. These early works are displayed alongside Khanna's most recent project, an array of small paintings created in the months leading up to the exhibition.

Amidst the diversity, we can find a continuity in Khanna's oeuvre. Textured, shimmering grounds of sand and primer, populated by cut-out silhouettes of toys and otherworldly characters, form the underpinning narrative of Khanna's practice, punctuated by short departures which allow Khanna to draw from new sources of inspiration and expand his painterly world. As Robin Dutt once wrote:

**'Khanna has been tenaciously loyal to a particular discipline - making art out of childhood memories and everyday events, representing emotion in a way which curiously embraces abstraction and figuration in equal measure'**

Taking inspiration from nature, spirituality and holistic concepts of creation, Khanna's works are a joyful celebration of the act of creating itself. Khanna's creative impulse hasn't wavered, and he remains extremely prolific – as demonstrated by the dizzying myriad of small paintings which completely fill one of the Gallery walls.

**"Buoyant, engaging and above all festive Balraj Khanna's paintings ... all seem to hover on the walls, and the floating sensation continues within most of the canvases, where a motley array of objects dangle weightlessly in space"**

It is this floating sensation described by Richard Cork that best describes Khanna's universe as one that encompasses all life across dimensions. In more recent works, like the three dimensional *Great White Tondo* (2005), Khanna's shapes are cut from a single form, their exploded wholeness poignantly elucidating the artist's philosophy about the cosmos. His figures are not fixedly suspended in time and space, but rather, transcend them. Immersed in the warm radiance of his paintings, we experience the life-affirming force of Khanna's work: we too become momentarily weightless, partaking in the sheer bliss of transcendence.

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For press information and high-resolution images please contact Rebecca Gremmo: [rebecca@elenashchukina.com](mailto:rebecca@elenashchukina.com) or 02074996019

Gallery Elena Shchukina  
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Weblink to exhibition page: <http://bit.ly/2wooOsM>

**Notes to editors:**

• Gallery Elena Shchukina is a contemporary art gallery located in Mayfair that draws from a pool of established and emerging international artists exhibiting identifiable or innovative techniques.

The Gallery offers a stimulating schedule of art and cultural events, workshops and lectures, and has an e-commerce platform offering work by a set of primarily UK-based artists.