

ART HISTORY PROGRAM

Lecture Series

UC DAVIS
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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SPRING QUARTER 2009

SONAL KHULLAR

“The New Primitives”

“So we are, in a sense, the primitives of a new age. We have to, if we want a language, to create that language,” declared K.G. Subramanyan in 1961. This lecture addresses terracotta reliefs and oil paintings made by Subramanyan, one of India’s most distinguished living artists, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Although these objects have been understood to function in the separate realms of “artisanal” and “modernist” cultural production, I demonstrate that they were, in fact, united by a commitment to inventing a new language of art.

This art-language, initially theorized by the artist in 1961, was enacted by these objects and enabled by his exposure to artists and intellectuals in the West, as well as his involvement with crafts revival, textile art, and mural movements in India during the 1960s. In other words, Subramanyan’s art embodied a complex response to contemporary discourses on American art and debates within the art-world in India on the future of a postcolonial art.

Sonal Khullar is a Ph.D candidate at the University of California, Berkeley.

Wednesday, April 1st • 4:10 pm
ART 203 (Visual Resources Facility)