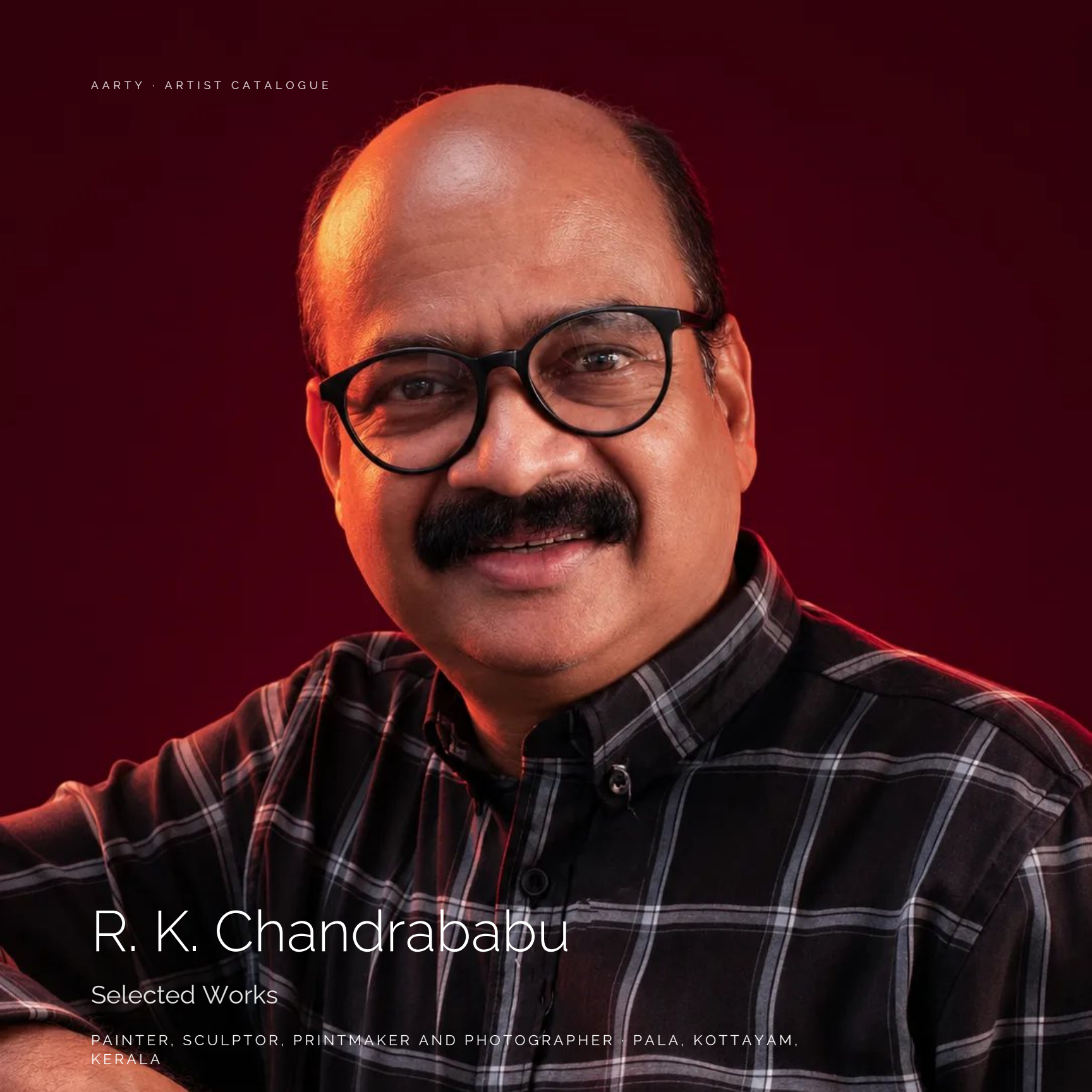


R. K. Chandrababu

Selected Works

PAINTER, SCULPTOR, PRINTMAKER AND PHOTOGRAPHER · PALA, KOTTAYAM, KERALA

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THE ARTIST

R. K. Chandrababu

A fisherman's struggle, a butterfly's brief life, a tree reaching towards the sky: in R. K. Chandrababu's art, everyday encounters become reflections on how we live and what we stand to lose. His paintings bring people and nature into an intimate relationship, exploring hardship, belonging, ecological change and the persistence of hope.

Originally from Pala in Kerala's Kottayam district, Chandrababu draws deeply from the landscape surrounding the Meenachil River. Its greenery, waterways and village life inform a visual world that has grown through extensive travel and close observation. His formal training includes KGTE in Painting from Kairali Fine Arts, Pala, and a National Diploma in Fine Arts from the Government College of Fine Arts, Thrissur.

His practice spans painting, sculpture, printmaking, photography and writing. Working across acrylic, oil, watercolour, charcoal and other drawing media, he moves between textured landscapes, expressive figures and compositions where recognisable forms merge with abstraction. His graphic work includes woodcut, linocut, etching and drypoint, while his sculptures explore the expressive possibilities of clay and wood.

Across Flying Life and Black Stones in Flying Life, a recurring vocabulary connects these different approaches. Boats suggest journeys, livelihoods and the search for shelter. Trees and plants acquire human qualities. Fish and butterflies embody nature's beauty, movement and impermanence. Tall organic forms, interwoven roots and groups of figures create images of lives bound together, sometimes in solidarity, sometimes under pressure.

Beneath the vivid colour lies a sustained concern for people pushed to society's margins. Encounters with fishing communities, people living with HIV, persons with disabilities and transgender communities have informed his understanding of exclusion and resilience. His paintings also confront the exploitation of women, the pressures of urban life and the destruction of the natural environment. Yet even when addressing suffering, his work repeatedly returns to possibilities of renewal: a gathering beneath a tree, a journey towards light, or life emerging from damaged ground.

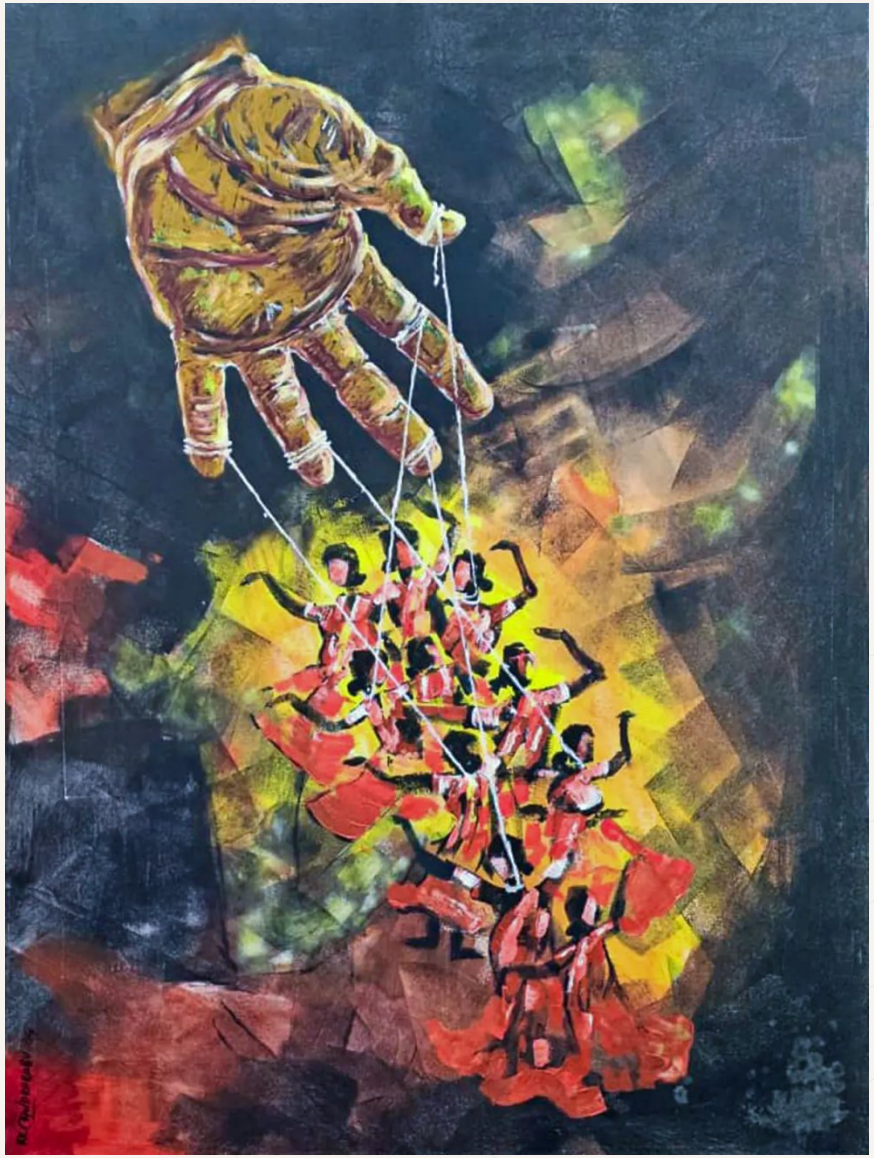
Teaching and community engagement are central to this outlook. His career includes teaching at Global Public School, Rajagiri Public School and other institutions in Kerala. Beyond the classroom, he has organised free workshops and participatory art programmes for children and underserved communities. His “Music with Art” sessions combine live painting with music to encourage engagement, including among autistic children and people receiving mental health care.

During the pandemic, Chandrababu extended this commitment through a project presenting one hundred paintings over one hundred days online, directing part of the sales proceeds towards charitable work. His involvement in flood relief, environmental awareness and community art reflects a belief that creativity can offer practical support as well as emotional expression.

His achievements include the Thrissur Diocese Michael Angelo Award (1996), the All India Navaneeth Drawing Teacher Award (2005), the Mahatma Award (2014) and the DHUNI Kalaprathibha Puraskaram (2016). His record of exhibitions includes solo shows at Durbar Hall Art Centre, Kochi, and Kerala Lalithakala Akademi venues across the state. The supplied catalogue also records recognition from the International Book of Records for his project of creating one painting daily for one hundred consecutive days—an achievement that brought together artistic discipline and his commitment to supporting others.

His literary work includes Ottayalmozhi and the children’s book Amigos 55. Solo and group exhibitions, curatorial projects and art camps have provided further settings for a practice that continually crosses between personal expression and public participation.

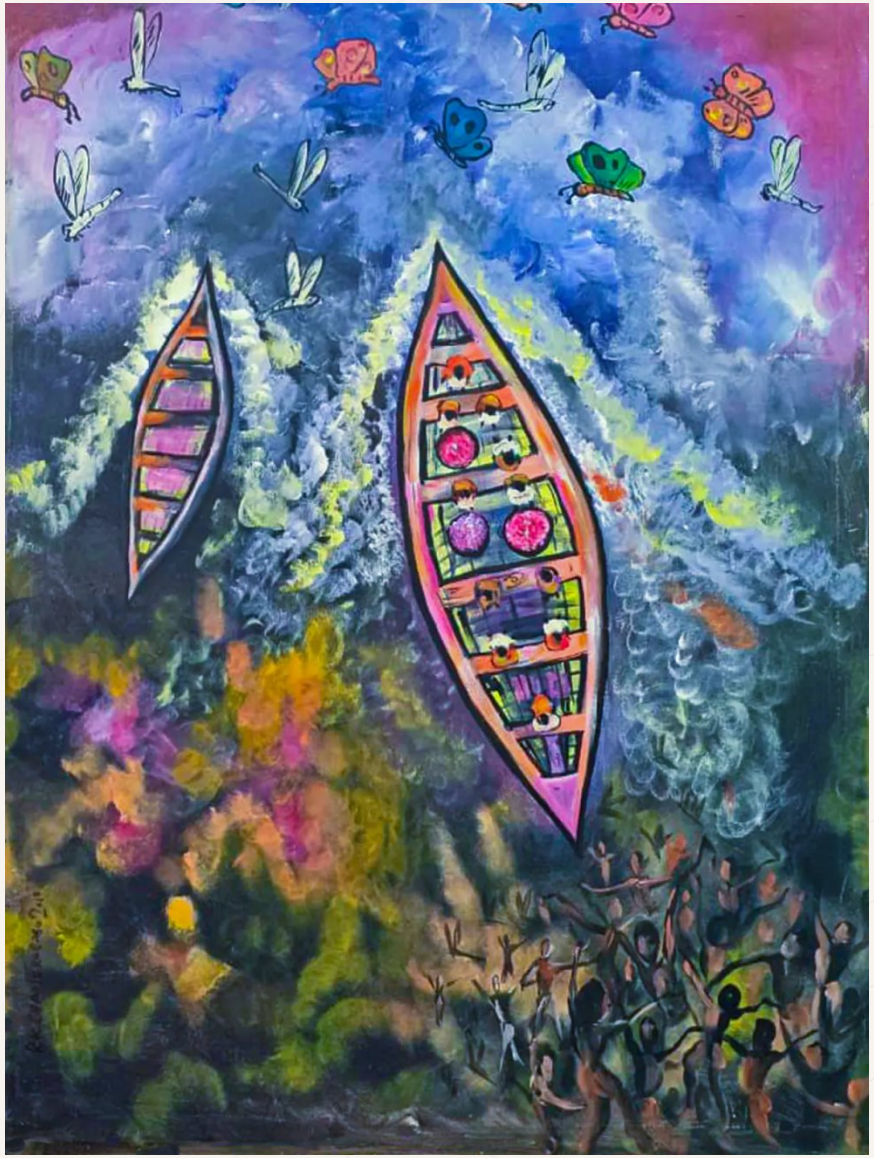
For Chandrababu, making art is closely connected to paying attention: to a landscape under threat, to an overlooked person, to a story waiting to be heard. His work asks viewers to recognise those connections and to find, within them, reasons to care.



Flying Colors - 01

H 48 × W 36 IN (121.9 × 91.4 CM)

A large hand holds strings attached to a group of red-clad figures, set against a dark, richly textured background. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 02

H 44 × W 36 IN (111.8 × 91.4 CM)

Two boats travel through swirling blue water beneath butterflies and dragonflies, with a gathering of figures below. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 03

H 42 × W 36 IN (106.7 × 91.4 CM)

Dark vertical forms cast long shadows across a muted landscape crossed by pale, flowing bands. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 04

H 48 × W 36 IN (121.9 × 91.4 CM)

A chain of dark human figures rises towards a luminous circular form across a textured field of yellow, orange and magenta. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 05

H 35 × W 35 IN (88.9 × 88.9 CM)

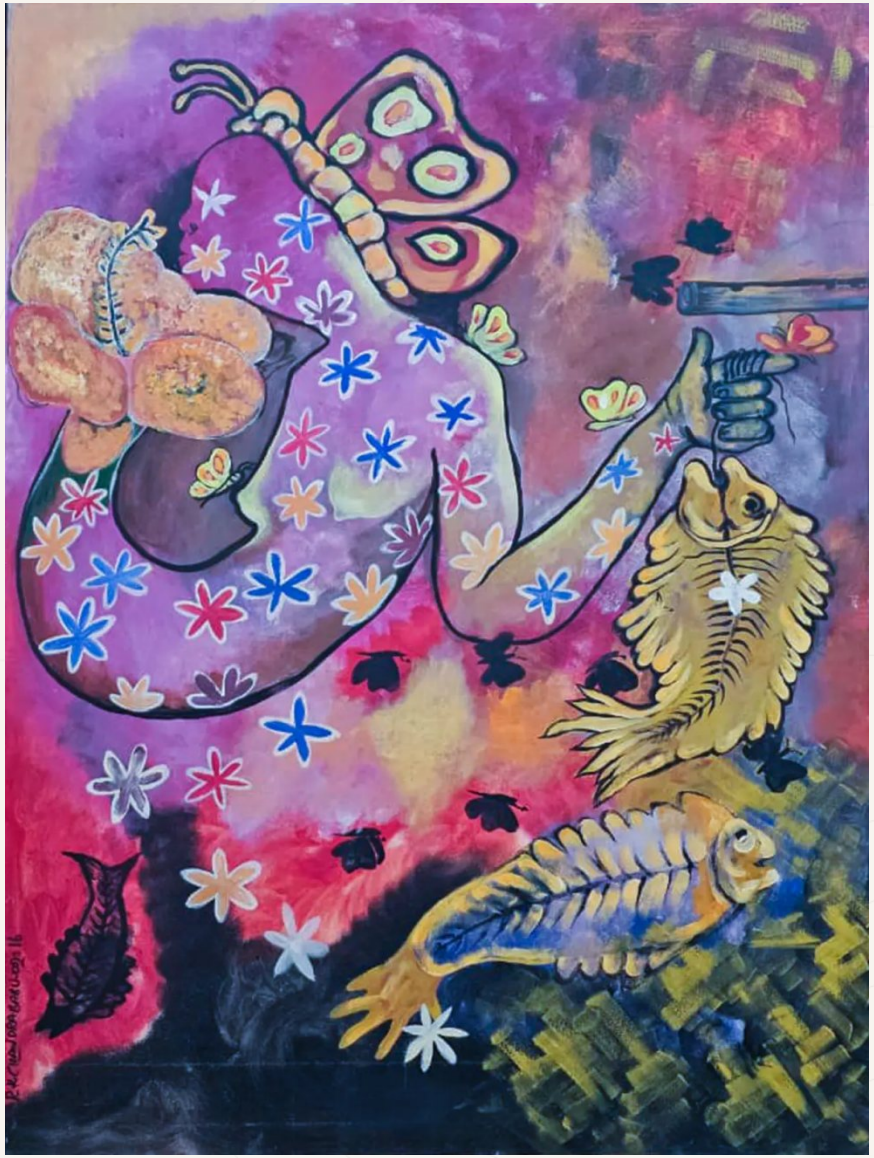
Tall trees surround a winding stream, with layered green, blue and earth-coloured brushwork suggesting a sunlit woodland. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 06

H 44 × W 36 IN (111.8 × 91.4 CM)

Small boats and tall upright forms sit on luminous blue water beneath a pale cloud, with rich surface texture throughout. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 07

H 48 × W 36 IN (121.9 × 91.4 CM)

A flower-patterned human figure, a large butterfly and golden fish intertwine against a vivid pink and purple background. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 08

H 47 × W 35 IN (119.4 × 88.9 CM)

A long procession of small figures winds through a green valley towards layered blue, violet and snow-tipped mountains. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 09

H 35 × W 35 IN (88.9 × 88.9 CM)

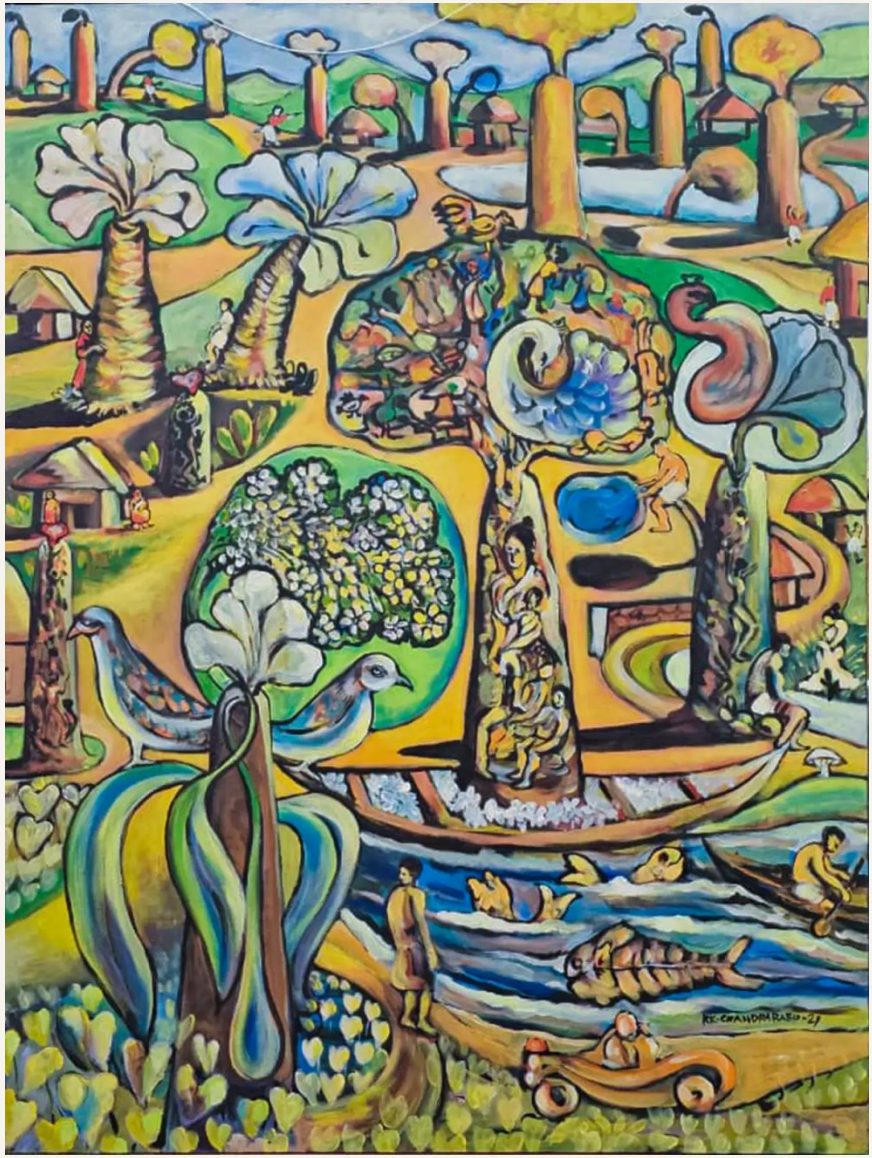
Bright blue and pink birds perch and fly around an ornate wooden doorway, surrounded by delicate branches and patterned earth tones. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 10

H 36 × W 48 IN (91.4 × 121.9 CM)

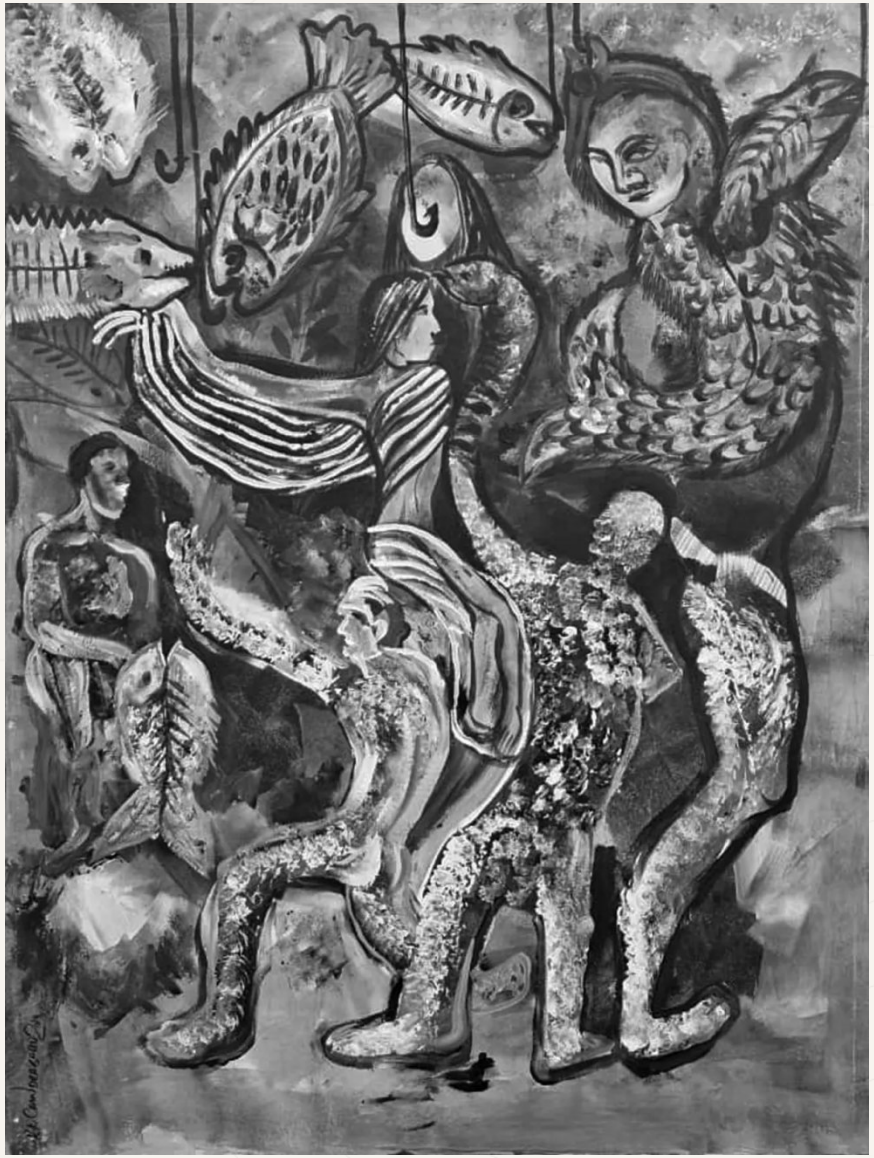
Layered mountains, scattered village houses, blue waterways and large foreground rocks form an expansive landscape in green, yellow and earth tones. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 11

H 46 × W 35 IN (116.8 × 88.9 CM)

A richly populated imaginary landscape brings together flowering trees, birds, figures, village houses and a boat on flowing water. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 12

H 48 × W 36 IN (121.9 × 91.4 CM)

A monochrome composition combines human figures, fish, hooks and flowing organic forms through bold lines and layered grey textures. A painting by R. K.



Flying Colors - 13

H 27 × W 49 IN (68.6 × 124.5 CM)

A lively street recedes between densely clustered buildings, with yellow roofs, blue sky, figures, bicycles and rickshaws rendered in energetic textured strokes. A painting by R. K.

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BY AJI NAYAR

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