

## **Press Release**

### **Title: Lalit Mohan Sen: An Enduring Legacy**

July 14 to September 30, 2023.

Ground Floor Emami Art

### **Exhibition Overview**

Emami Art presents a retrospective-scale exhibition of one of the most significant modern masters, Lalit Mohan Sen (1898-1954). Featuring archival materials and artworks from different phases of his short but immensely productive creative career, 'Lalit Mohan Sen: An Enduring Legacy' aims to present him historically.

Contemporary to Asit Kumar Haldar and Mukul Dey, Lalit Mohan Sen was well-known during his lifetime as a prolific artist and teacher. Sen was one of the four artists the Government of India selected to decorate the newly built India House in London in 1930. He studied in India and England, and his rich and expansive practice is represented by a wide range of mediums and materials, including oil and tempera paintings, various graphic prints, book cover illustrations and a selection of previously unseen drawings and photographs. He excelled in academic realism and the Indian style of painting and tried to create a personal style by blending the two apparently opposite artistic trends.

The exhibition pays tribute to his extraordinary oeuvre, celebrating the diversity and modernist spirit in Lalit Mohan Sen's works.

### **Quote by Richa Agarwal**

Although he was a great artist and quite well-known in his lifetime, the name of Lalit Mohan Sen is seldom heard in today's art historical discourse. Based on intensive research, the exhibition brings together a large variety of his work – paintings, drawings, prints, design works, sculptures and photographs – along with rare archival materials, presenting Lalit Mohan Sen truly as a prolific and versatile artist. Besides contemporary art exhibitions, Emami Art is committed to showcasing historically significant but not-so-widely-known master artists. In 2021, we held a similar research-based retrospective-scale exhibition of Kartick Chandra Pyne. I believe 'Lalit Mohan Sen: An Enduring Legacy' will enchant the students and art lovers, encouraging them to find the relevance of the artist's multipolar creativity in today's art practice.

(Says Richa Agarwal, CEO of Emami Art)

### **Quote by Debdutta Gupta**

Lalit Mohan Sen (1898-1954) was one of India's most prolific and talented painters, about whom little is known in public today. Sen graduated from the Government School of Art in Lucknow in 1917 and then went on to study at London's Royal College of Art in 1925. This exhibition seeks to reinterpret and expand our knowledge about the artist through the collection of his works, firstly by drawing attention to the multiple mediums, including photography, sculpture and ceramics, of which he was a master. Secondly, it looks beyond his Western oeuvre and focuses on his relationship with Indian and indigenous art forms. This project seeks to reinstate Sen's versatility and ability to

experiment and amalgamate different genres and mediums, especially in an age when art has become increasingly impacted by digital technologies.

(Says Debdutta Gupta, Exhibition Consultant)

### **Bio of Lalit Mohan Sen (1898-1954)**

Lalit Mohan Sen was born in 1898 in Shantipur, Nadia, to his parents, Jadumani Sen and Kunjabehari Sen. Growing up in a family associated with the famous traditional textile industries of Shantipur he enrolled in the Shantipur Municipal High School, but, due to the sudden outbreak of malaria, moved to Lucknow in 1909. Sen enrolled in the Government School of Arts and Crafts, Lucknow, established in 1911 under its first principal Nathaniel Herd. After graduating in 1917, he joined its Drawing for Reproduction Class as a teacher at age twenty. In 1925, on a government fellowship, Lalit Mohan Sen went to London to study at the Royal College of Art under its Principal, renowned artist Sir William Rothenstein. He earned a Diploma in painting and a certificate in wood engraving from the RCA. A member of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain, Lalit Mohan Sen, took training in various graphic art mediums under the guidance of the celebrated etcher Malcolm Osborne. After returning to India from England, he rejoined the Government School of Arts and Crafts, Lucknow, as Superintendent of Drawing Teacher's Training and continued to teach there. He became the School's Principal in 1945.

Success came to Lalit Mohan Sen early on. The renowned art historian Laurence Binyon commissioned him to copy the Bagh Cave paintings. He was one of the four artists the Government of India hired to decorate the newly built India House in London. His paintings, prints, posters and photographs were widely exhibited and praised in India and abroad. Queen Mary appreciated his tempera painting 'Potter Girl' in the Royal College of Art exhibition in 1930 and bought it for the royal collection. In the early-1920s, he was the only Indian artist whose woodcuts Victoria & Albert Museum had displayed in the Museum's print room as permanent exhibits. Sen's photographs were shown in the Royal Photographic Society's annual exhibition and published in the Society's journal. Besides these, he was a reputed book illustrator known for his commercial art. He won the Federation of British Industries Prize (London) for the best poster design.

A versatile artist and teacher, Lalit Mohan Sen passed away in Lucknow in 1954.