

# Daimler Art Collection

Private/Corporate IV

Works from the Lekha and Anupam Poddar Collection, New Delhi, and the Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart/Berlin: a dialogue

Daimler Contemporary, Berlin

January 19 – June 3, 2007

Renate Wiehager

Foreword

‘Private/Corporate IV’ is the fourth in a series of exhibitions, which was initiated in 2002, and in which the Daimler Art Collection presents itself in a dialogue with an international private collection once a year. Since 2002, cooperation has always revolved around a focusing on what is characteristic for both the private collector invited and the development of the Daimler Art Collection: conceptual trends and international contemporary positions of ‘reduced art’ (dialogue with Paul Maenz, Berlin, 2002), minimal and post-minimal art (dialogue with Ileana Sonnabend, New York, 2003), German positions in the borderland of abstraction, figuration and minimalism (dialogue with Heliod Spiekermann, Düsseldorf, 2005).

Anupam Poddar (\*1974), the dialogue partner for ‘Private/Corporate IV’, ranks among the most significant art collectors in India. The extensive collection was initiated by his mother, Lekha Poddar. The rather small number of distinguished private collections in India have one thing in common, namely that they have concentrated exclusively on national art to date. Against this background, the collection of Anupam Poddar differs in that it reflects a cross-discipline interest, comprising pictures, objects, sculptures, installations, photography and video art, while at the same time integrating selected representatives of Indian folk art.

**D**

**A C**

'Private/Corporate IV' comprises over 60 works by some 30 artists, most of them from India, from the collections Poddar and Daimler.

Mrs. Lekha Poddar began collecting contemporary Indian art during the 1980s, with works by the 'Progressive Artists' Group' and others who were active at the time. Anupam Poddar started to collect around the year 2000, with works by younger artists around his own generation who represented, to quote him, "a vision of India to which I could relate". He began with works by Delhi-based artists like Bharti Kher and Subodh Gupta. The Poddars had just moved into a large farmhouse on the outskirts of Delhi, and the idea was to acquire art for their new home. Over the last six years they have been following experimental/cutting edge developments taking place across India. Slowly overcoming inhibitions in terms of subject matter/content and the question of space for proper display of installation and new media art, they have been expanding their collection purposefully. This is essentially a family collection. Anupam Poddar looks after it and makes choices and decisions in consultation with the family. The artists strongly represented in the collection include Subodh Gupta, Mithu Sen, Bharti Kher, Anita Dube, Sudarshan Shetty and A. Balasubramaniam.

At the time of writing the collection holds about 2100 works, including some commissions. Ceramics has been largely excluded as a field, but about 800 works of ethnic or folk art (tribal art) figure in the core collection. The collection grows weekly, with additions in the fields of contemporary art and folk art. In future selections from the collection, presented thematically, are also to be accessible to the public in an exhibition venue in New Delhi. Anupam Poddar runs a 'boutique hotel' called 'Devi Garh' outside Udaipur in Rajasthan, which he established with his mother in the year 2000. They have just been voted 'Hotel with Best Ambience and Décor in all Asia' by Conde Nast Traveler and put on the Gold List for 2006. The main family business is the Sirpur Paper Mills in south India. They also have various other small businesses in the Group.

Our co-operation with Anupam Poddar started with a two-week visit to Mumbai and New Delhi, arranged by the Mumbai based gallery owner Ranjana Steinrücke. This provided an opportunity not just to get to know the contemporary Indian art scene, but also to visit about 20 important private collections. While the focus varied considerably in individual cases, we still met only Indian exponents of narrative, figurative art, in many cases showing explicitly political commitment. This also applies to the Poddar Collection, though it also convinced us with the breadth of its interest and an extraordinarily active collecting policy that is not averse to risk. So in this case the challenge lay in interrogating the Daimler Art Collection, which concentrates on the abstract avant-garde in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, in order to find works in it that could trigger a meaningful and exciting dialogue with the Poddar Collection.

**D**

**A C**

As a response to this questions, it seemed an attractive idea to show a large commissioned work by David Salle in public for the first time that otherwise hangs permanently at Daimler Financial Services in Berlin. Poster painting for the Indian film industry has regularly provided a key stimulus for Salle's highly allusive paintings since the 1980s. Other links emerged with critically and politically motivated positions in the Daimler Art Collection: K.R.H. Sonderborg, his pupil Tobias Hauser, then artists like Buetti, Herold and Jaar. As well as this, we are also presenting for the first time a group of large paintings addressing contemporary self-awareness with particularly masculine or feminine characteristics by the Georgian-born painter Tamara K.E. This constellation is complemented by new Daimler Art Collections acquisitions in the field of contemporary Indian art.

(from the publication: 'Private/Corporate IV. Works from the Lekha and Anupam Poddar Collection, New Delhi, and the Daimler Art Collection, Stuttgart/Berlin: a dialogue', Stuttgart/Berlin 2010, pp. 7-9. You can purchase this book online.)

**Daimler Contemporary**

**Haus Huth Alte Potsdamer Str. 5 10785 Berlin**

**daily 11 am - 6 pm**

**D**

**A C**