

BOSE PACIA

February 4, 1996, New York, NY - *Bose Pacia Modern* presents the first exhibition of Kalighat painting in the United States entitled **Kalighat Painting: Works from the Collection of Jamini Roy**. The show will run from February 10 to March 31. The gallery is located at 580 Broadway, 2nd Floor in SoHo. Gallery hours are Saturdays from 12-6 p.m. and by appointment. A reception will be held on Saturday, February 24 from 5 - 8 p.m. The public is invited.

On exhibit is a collection of rare, exquisitely preserved, Kalighat paintings circa 1860 acquired from Jamini Roy in 1942 by the renowned Indian classical dancer, Ram Gopal. Jamini Roy, one of modern India's most famous artists, was profoundly influenced by the Kalighat style of painting. Kalighat painting was not only the beginning of modernism in Indian art but also influenced the work of European modern masters such as Leger and Matisse. It is likely that the School of Paris painters were introduced to these works through French missionaries in Calcutta who brought Kalighat paintings to Paris around the turn of the century.

The first serious appraisal of Kalighat painting appeared in the Indian art journal *Rupam* in October, 1926 where Ajit Ghosh wrote, "There is an exquisite freshness and spontaneity of conception and execution in these old brush drawings. The drawing is made with one long sweep of the brush in which not the faintest suspicion of even a momentary indecision, not the slightest tremor can be detected. Often the line takes in the whole figure in such a way that it defies you to say where the artist's brush first touched the paper or where it finished its work." The influence of Kalighat painting on European modernism was not lost upon Ghosh. He wrote that the genius of the Kalighat painters "anticipated by a century or more Cubism and Impressionism." These same sentiments were echoed in 1971 by W.G. Archer, curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Archer believed that Kalighat painting displayed a surprising affinity with modern art, and in particular, profoundly influenced the work of Fernand Leger who employed "the same bold simplifications, the same robust and tubular forms."

Kalighat painting marked a radical departure from the prevailing artistic style as well as the patterns of art patronage in India. They were painted by families of artists from rural Bengal called Patuas, in Kalighat, a suburb of Calcutta, starting from 1830 until 1920. Their patrons were not aristocrats, but rather the pilgrims that flocked by the thousands to the nearby temple of Kali. In order to earn a living, the Patuas needed to produce many paintings, quickly. To this end they began to use newly available British watercolor instead of the traditional tempera. For the first time, they used machine-made instead of handmade paper and applied paint in bold swift brushstrokes to depict beautiful images of Hindu mythology and poignant social satire.