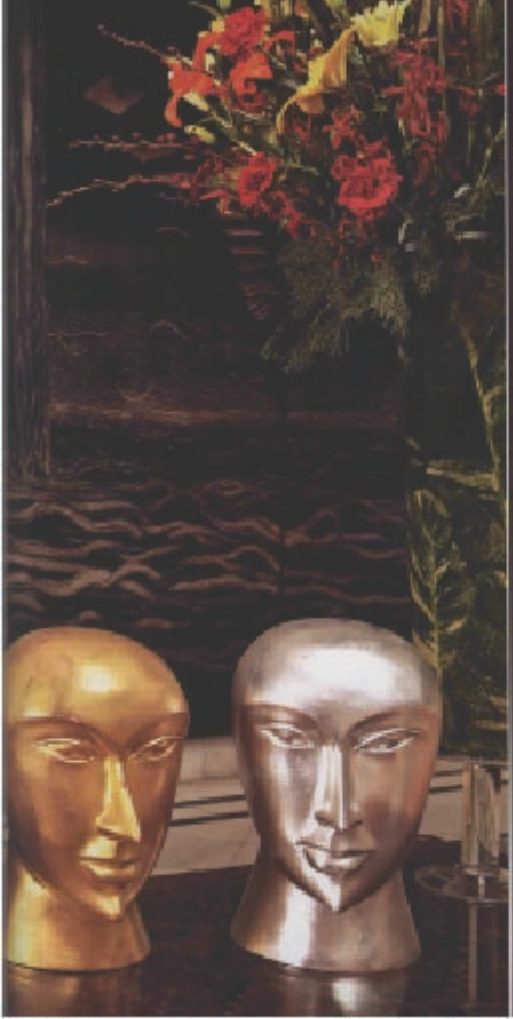

'Anyone who wants to do any kind of research should have access to my art collection as I put it up on the Internet'

Sunny Kaul, the co-owner of Delhi's most respected gallery in the contemporary Indian space, couldn't be missing the obvious. Only a privileged minority in Delhi's social circles knows that upon leaving a successful trade of hotels, the businessman is also a major collector and promoter of Indian art. The art journalist has assembled a collection over the last 20 years, with a lot of love and thought. Today the count runs 1,000 pieces of art, which he has made accessible to art scholars to study and research. Most of the artworks have been digitised and are available online for any collector to peruse. Parvez Sharma, who has curated Sunny Kaul's personal collection of art, spoke to Sunny about his passion for art, his collection and his plans for the future.

Can you recall your first art acquisition?

"Growing up in Kolkata, we were exposed to the arts in a big way. Samrat Sikdar, who was well known in Kolkata's literary circles, could see my love for art. So as a teenager in the 1980s, he would allow me to buy art works, and I would bring an engineer or painter to sit down with me. I was in the Calcutta environment. So the first artwork I ever bought was a watercolour. I was about 18 then and had accompanied my father to the show. Strangely enough, it was a watercolour by a painter that I had seen showing in the exhibition, and I approached him to buy it. So my 'First' started off an impulse in the spirit of 'let me grab it' and by and by I developed an interest in collecting with some conviction and vision."

How did the initial interest materialise itself?

"I started collecting artworks on paper as it drew me to the level of art. I bought a lot from Rupa Rani Varma (a graphic artist from Delhi) and initially collected mostly her works on paper. Then I developed an interest in the graphic and I would buy them in bulk. Then slowly I was confident to apply to an artist to see their studio to buy paintings. I remember I was invited to one of those parties in Bhai Vir Singh's house in Lodi Estate and I would see other guys and peruse works. It's in my opinion we are never educated to see 'promise' in the work unconsciously, what will run the risk of the work? I suppose, as years pass, I will learn to see and I probably can pick some like-minded people. Right now I don't have the time to do this but I have an open invitation to any kind of research should have access to my art collection as I put it up on the Internet."

Art, in your view, has not only found expression on the walls of your house but also your workplace. Does it help you in altering your mood from the mundane matters of work?

"Having art in our surrounding always helps. I am a very visual person. Art should be ▶