

An abstract oil painting with thick, expressive brushstrokes. The composition is dominated by warm tones of red, orange, and yellow, which are interspersed with cooler tones of blue, green, and grey. The texture is highly visible, with many ridges and valleys from the paint application. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and emotional intensity.

FRIEZE SEOUL

2-5 SEP. 2026 BOOTH S08

SPOTLIGHT SECTION

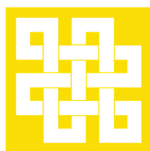
LAIN SINGH BANGDEL

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丹之寶 TANSBAO

Lain Singh Bangdel Artworks

萊因·辛格·班德爾
라인 싱 뱅델
Lain Singh Bangdel



丹之寶
TANSBAO



Widely revered as the "Father of Modern Art in Nepal," Lain Singh Bangdel (1919–2002) is a pivotal figure within the context of 20th-century modernism. Contemporary international art history has increasingly re-evaluated his work, recognizing him as a long-undervalued yet highly representative node in the global modernist movement. In an era before modernism was written through a multicentric lens, Bangdel had already developed a mature and independent visual language between South Asia and Europe. Reflecting on his practice today, he is seen not only as the founder of Nepali art history but as one of the great 20th-century modernist masters whose depth is only now being fully uncovered. As his work re-enters the international spotlight, it prompts scholars to rethink the geographical boundaries of modernism.

Born into a Nepali immigrant family in Darjeeling, India, Bangdel's close contact with the natural landscapes of the Himalayas during his childhood formed a deep-seated perception of scenery, spirituality, and memory. In 1939, he moved to Calcutta—then the most vibrant cultural center in South Asia—to pursue art training, graduating first in his class in 1945. the political turmoil and cultural currents of the city shaped his artistic outlook, leading him to view art as an ethical and historical response.

In the early 1950s, he traveled to Europe for further study and settled in London and Paris, enrolling at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts. Post-war Paris remained a crucial site for modernism, where Bangdel directly engaged with various movements such as Cubism, Fauvism, and abstract art, while establishing a network of international artistic exchanges. This experience enabled him to fuse the formal vocabulary of Western modernism with South Asian cultural memory, gradually forming a cross-cultural, de-centered modernist language that endowed his work with an international perspective as early as the mid-20th century.

In 1960, at the invitation of King Mahendra, Bangdel returned to Nepal—a moment he described as the fulfillment of a lifelong dream. He became a member of the Royal Nepal Academy and, under the patronage of King Birendra, served two consecutive terms as its Chancellor from 1979 to 1989. His return marked a turning point in Nepal's art history, powerfully catalyzing the development of the nation's modern visual language. His 1962 solo exhibition in Kathmandu is widely regarded as a pivotal turning point in the development of modern art in Nepal, often described as the moment when "modern art arrived in Nepal overnight," marking the formal establishment of modernism within the local artistic discourse.

Through this transformation, he established a creative model that was both rooted in the local and capable of engaging in dialogue with global modern art.



In terms of artistic language, Bangdel's work spanned both figurative and abstract styles. His early works depicted the urban working class and human emotions, showcasing a strong sense of humanitarian concern. In his mature period, he developed abstract landscapes inspired by the Himalayan mountains, utilizing free brushwork and color to construct spiritual spaces. These works not only demonstrate formal experimentation but also respond to core modernist themes of migration, memory, and identity, making his oeuvre highly representative of 20th-century global art history.

Beyond his creative output, Bangdel made profound contributions to cultural institutions and art education. He was one of the founders of the Nepal Art Council and played a long-term leadership role in the Royal Nepal Academy, dedicating himself to building the institutional foundations and educational systems for modern art. The organizations and cultural platforms he championed allowed Nepali art to enter international networks of exchange, laying the cornerstone for the development of contemporary South Asian art.

Beyond his contributions as a painter, Bangdel left a profound scholarly legacy. His book "The Stolen Images of Nepal" exposed the rampant theft of religious sculptures and helped raise global awareness about the illicit art trade. This detailed catalog played a critical role in the repatriation of cultural artifacts. His other key work, "Inventory of Stone Sculptures", offered a comprehensive academic survey of Nepal's stone art heritage, preserving vital knowledge for future generations. These efforts affirm Bangdel's role as a cultural guardian, devoted to protecting Nepal's spiritual and artistic legacy.

Bangdel's contributions received wide international recognition. In 1982, he was awarded the Gorkha Dakshin Bahu II by the King of Nepal. Internationally, he was honored with the Commendatore from Italy, the National Order of Arts and Letters from France, the Gran Cruz from Spain, and was appointed a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order by the United Kingdom, granting him the honorary title of "Sir." These transnational honors not only validate his cultural contributions but also reflect his high standing in the international art world.

Today, Bangdel's works are housed in major public collections, including the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (USA), the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (Japan), the Newark Museum of Art (USA), the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (University of Oregon), the United Nations Headquarters (New York), the National Art Museum of Nepal, the Nepal Art Council (Kathmandu), the Bhaktapur City Museum, KNMA Museum (New Delhi), and the Embassy of Nepal in Washington, D.C. Leading institutions such as the Tate Modern in London, and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi are actively engaged in discussions to acquire his works—further testament to the growing international recognition of his legacy.



As his work enters major museums and international exhibition circuits, Bangdel's historical status continues to be re-evaluated. Scholars increasingly view him as an essential 20th-century artist who developed an autonomous language within a non-Western context—a practice that not only expanded the boundaries of modernism but also provided a new perspective for understanding global art history.

Ultimately, Lain Singh Bangdel's artistic practice is not just a personal history of creation, but a case study in how modernism is redefined across different geographies and cultures. He connected Himalayan spirituality with the language of global modern art, allowing local experience to enter the narrative of world art history. As a major modernist master being rediscovered in the contemporary era, Bangdel continues to offer new insights for understanding 20th-century art history and maintains a strong and lasting resonance in today's global art context.





Lain Singh Bangdel
Echo of the Mountain

1972 | Oil on canvas
108.5 x 100 cm
US\$71,000



In Echo of the Mountain, Bangdel transforms the Himalayan landscape into an expressive field of fractured forms, suspended movement, and muted earth tones. Rather than depicting a recognizable mountain, he evokes its presence through rhythm, memory, and sensation. Dark angular shapes rise and descend across the canvas, suggesting peaks, shadows, and shifting geological forces.

The work reflects Bangdel's movement toward abstraction while retaining a profound emotional connection to Nepal's landscape. Here, the mountain becomes not merely a physical place, but an enduring presence—remembered, internalized, and spiritually resonant.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Rainy Season

1974 | Oil on canvas

114.5 x 104 cm

US\$78,000



In Rainy Season, Bangdel evokes the monsoon through a turbulent interplay of color, atmosphere, and movement. Veils of blue-gray suggest rain-laden skies, while flashes of green, ochre, white, and deep brown emerge like vegetation, earth, and fleeting light within the storm.

Rather than presenting a literal landscape, Bangdel transforms the rainy season into a sensory and emotional experience. Forms appear to gather, dissolve, and re-form across the canvas, conveying the vitality and uncertainty of nature in transition. The work exemplifies his mature abstraction, in which memory of place is expressed through rhythm, texture, and shifting fields of color.





Lain Singh Bangdel

City by Dusk

1964 | Oil on canvas

91 x 106.5 cm

US\$70,000



In *City by Dusk*, Bangdel reimagines the urban landscape as a vibrant constellation of fragmented forms. Clusters of ochre, green, red, blue, and black suggest buildings compressed within the fading light of evening, while angular lines create a sense of movement and restless energy.

Rather than describing a specific city, Bangdel captures the atmosphere of urban life—dense, shifting, and animated. Painted during a pivotal period in his development, the work demonstrates his increasing movement toward abstraction while preserving traces of recognizable architecture. The city emerges as both a physical environment and a remembered experience, suspended between structure and dissolution, daylight and darkness.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Winter

1964 | Oil on canvas

82 x 106.5 cm

US\$68,500



In Winter, Bangdel reduces the landscape to its essential rhythms of line, color, and atmosphere. Slender, leafless branches rise across the foreground, their dark contours set against broad bands of muted earth, cool blue, and luminous yellow. Small flashes of red, green, and blue enliven the otherwise subdued terrain, suggesting traces of life within a dormant season.

Rather than depicting winter literally, Bangdel evokes its stillness, austerity, and restrained vitality. The painting reflects his growing engagement with abstraction during the 1960s, while preserving a strong sense of place and natural structure. Through its layered horizon and delicate vertical forms, the work transforms the winter landscape into a meditation on endurance, renewal, and the quiet passage of time.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Song of the Valley I

1982 | Oil on canvas

116 x 106 cm

US\$74,000



In Song of the Valley I, Bangdel transforms the Himalayan landscape into a lyrical composition of sweeping lines, luminous color, and suspended movement. Warm passages of yellow, orange, and red are interwoven with green, black, and white, suggesting mountains, wind, vegetation, and shifting light.

The title emphasizes the musical quality of the work: forms rise, intersect, and dissolve like notes within an unfolding rhythm. Rather than depicting a specific place, Bangdel evokes the valley as an emotional and spiritual presence, remembered through color and gesture. The painting reflects the expressive freedom of his later abstraction and his enduring connection to Nepal's landscape.





Lain Singh Bangdel
Winter in the Valley

1972 | Oil on canvas
56x61 cm
US\$35,000



In *Winter in the Valley*, Bangdel evokes a Himalayan landscape through concentrated color and sharply fractured forms. Deep blacks, earthy reds, blue, green, and ochre rise against a cool gray ground, suggesting trees, dwellings, and rocky slopes compressed within the winter atmosphere. The composition balances stillness with vigorous movement, as angular shapes appear to gather, overlap, and dissolve.

Rather than describing a specific valley, Bangdel conveys its emotional presence—remote, austere, and quietly resilient. The painting exemplifies his mature abstraction, transforming remembered landscape into a dynamic interplay of color, rhythm, and form.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Autumn Rain

1965 | Oil on canvas

62.5 x 81 cm

US\$48,000



In Autumn Rain, Bangdel transforms the seasonal landscape into a concentrated arrangement of color, movement, and atmosphere. Vivid passages of orange, green, blue, white, and black gather against a cool gray ground, evoking rain-soaked foliage, shifting clouds, and the fragmented reflections of autumn light.

The forms seem to emerge and dissolve simultaneously, suggesting nature in a state of transition. Through energetic brushwork and compressed abstraction, Bangdel conveys not a literal scene but the sensory experience of rainfall—its rhythm, freshness, and restless vitality.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Autumn

1973 | Oil on canvas

30 x 37.5 cm

US\$18,000



In Autumn, Bangdel distills the season into a compact yet energetic composition of color, gesture, and atmosphere. Rich ochres and yellows are set against deep black, brown, blue, and green, evoking foliage, earth, and shifting autumn light. The forms cluster and overlap at the center of the canvas, creating a sense of movement within the surrounding pale space.

Rather than depicting a recognizable landscape, Bangdel captures autumn as a fleeting sensory experience—vibrant, transitional, and alive with change. The work demonstrates how even on an intimate scale, his abstraction could convey the emotional power of nature.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Winter Storm

1976 | Oil on board

27 x 35 cm

US\$16,000



In Winter Storm, Bangdel conveys the force and volatility of nature through a dynamic interplay of angular forms and contrasting color. Black, white, blue, green, yellow, and orange collide across the surface, evoking wind, snow, rock, and fleeting light within a turbulent winter landscape. The composition feels at once fragmented and energized, as if the elements are being swept into motion by the storm itself.

Rather than describing a specific scene, Bangdel captures winter as an elemental experience—restless, austere, and full of dramatic intensity. Even at this intimate scale, the painting reveals the expressive power of his mature abstraction.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Stormy Winter

1975 | Oil on canvas

28 x 38 cm

US\$17,000



In Stormy Winter, Bangdel evokes the turbulence of a winter landscape through sweeping forms and forceful contrasts. Dark, jagged shapes move across a cool gray-green ground, interrupted by flashes of orange, red, yellow, blue, and white. These fragments suggest wind-driven clouds, mountains, and bursts of light without resolving into a literal scene.

The broad horizontal movement gives the composition a sense of elemental force, as though the landscape itself were shifting beneath the storm. Through compressed gesture and color, Bangdel transforms winter into an intense emotional experience—unsettled, dramatic, and alive with movement.





Lain Singh Bangdel
Mountain and Valley

1973 | Oil on canvas
46 x 61 cm
US\$29,000



In Mountain and Valley, Bangdel evokes the Himalayan landscape through a vibrant arrangement of fractured forms and sweeping gesture. Bold passages of red, blue, green, ochre, white, and black intersect against a pale, luminous ground, suggesting peaks, slopes, and the shifting energies of the natural world.

Rather than depicting a specific site, Bangdel captures the dynamic relationship between mountain and valley as a lived and remembered experience. The composition conveys both movement and balance, reflecting his mature abstract language and his enduring emotional connection to Nepal's landscape.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Landscape

1975 | Oil on canvas

58.5 x 79 cm

US\$39,000



In Landscape, Bangdel transforms the natural world into a delicate arrangement of fractured forms, shifting color, and atmospheric space. Ochre, blue, green, white, red, and black gather across a luminous golden ground, suggesting hills, vegetation, rock, and distant settlements. The composition appears both structured and fluid, as forms emerge, overlap, and dissolve into their surroundings.

Rather than depicting a specific place, Bangdel evokes landscape as memory and sensation—an inner vision shaped by movement, light, and his enduring connection to the Himalayan environment.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Winter Storm

1974 | Oil on canvas

48 x 71 cm

US\$34,000



In Winter Storm, Bangdel conveys the turbulence of the season through a sweeping interplay of color, line, and atmosphere. Fiery reds and oranges surge across the canvas, animated by accents of green, blue, yellow, black, and white against a pale, wind-swept ground. The fractured forms and swift, gestural marks suggest snow, rock, branches, and moving air without settling into a fixed view.

Rather than depicting a literal landscape, Bangdel captures the sensation of a winter storm—restless, forceful, and charged with elemental energy. The painting reflects his mature abstract language and his ability to transform nature into an expressive emotional experience.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Old City

1961 | Oil on canvas

61 x 79 cm

US\$43,000



In Old City, Bangdel transforms the urban environment into a dense field of fractured forms, intersecting lines, and vibrant color. Clusters of red, blue, yellow, black, and white suggest buildings, streets, machinery, and the compressed energy of a rapidly changing city.

The composition moves between recognizable structure and abstraction, conveying both the dynamism and disorientation of modern urban life. Painted at a pivotal moment in Bangdel's development, the work reveals his growing engagement with abstraction while retaining a strong sense of architecture, movement, and human presence.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Reflection

1993 | Oil on board

25x20 cm

US\$12,000



In Reflection, Bangdel presents a solitary figure absorbed in quiet contemplation. With the head resting gently on one hand and the gaze turned inward, the figure conveys stillness, introspection, and emotional distance. Simplified forms and subdued outlines are animated by passages of green, ochre, orange, and deep blue, creating a mood that is both intimate and meditative.

Painted late in Bangdel's career, the work reflects his enduring interest in the inner life of the individual and his ability to express complex psychological states through restrained gesture and color.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Madan

1971 | Oil on canvas

61 x 46 cm

US\$33,000



In Madan, Bangdel presents a solitary seated figure absorbed in quiet reflection. The bowed head, clasped hands, and restrained posture convey introspection, vulnerability, and emotional weight. Muted earth tones are enlivened by touches of green, blue, red, and ochre, while the loosely painted background intensifies the figure's inward presence.

Rather than offering a conventional portrait, Bangdel emphasizes psychological character and human dignity. The work reflects his enduring humanist concern with solitude, resilience, and the unspoken emotional lives of ordinary people.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Madan

1958 | Oil on board

46x46 cm

US\$24,500



In Madan, Bangdel depicts a solitary figure bent forward in a posture of exhaustion, sorrow, or inward contemplation. The curved body, wrapped in a deep red garment, is set against broad areas of yellow, green, and gray, creating a powerful contrast between emotional weight and formal simplicity. The figure's face is largely concealed, shifting attention from individual identity to a more universal experience of hardship and vulnerability.

Painted during Bangdel's formative European period, the work reveals his humanist concern for psychological expression and the dignity of the suffering individual.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Mother and Child

1964 | Oil on canvas

61x46 cm

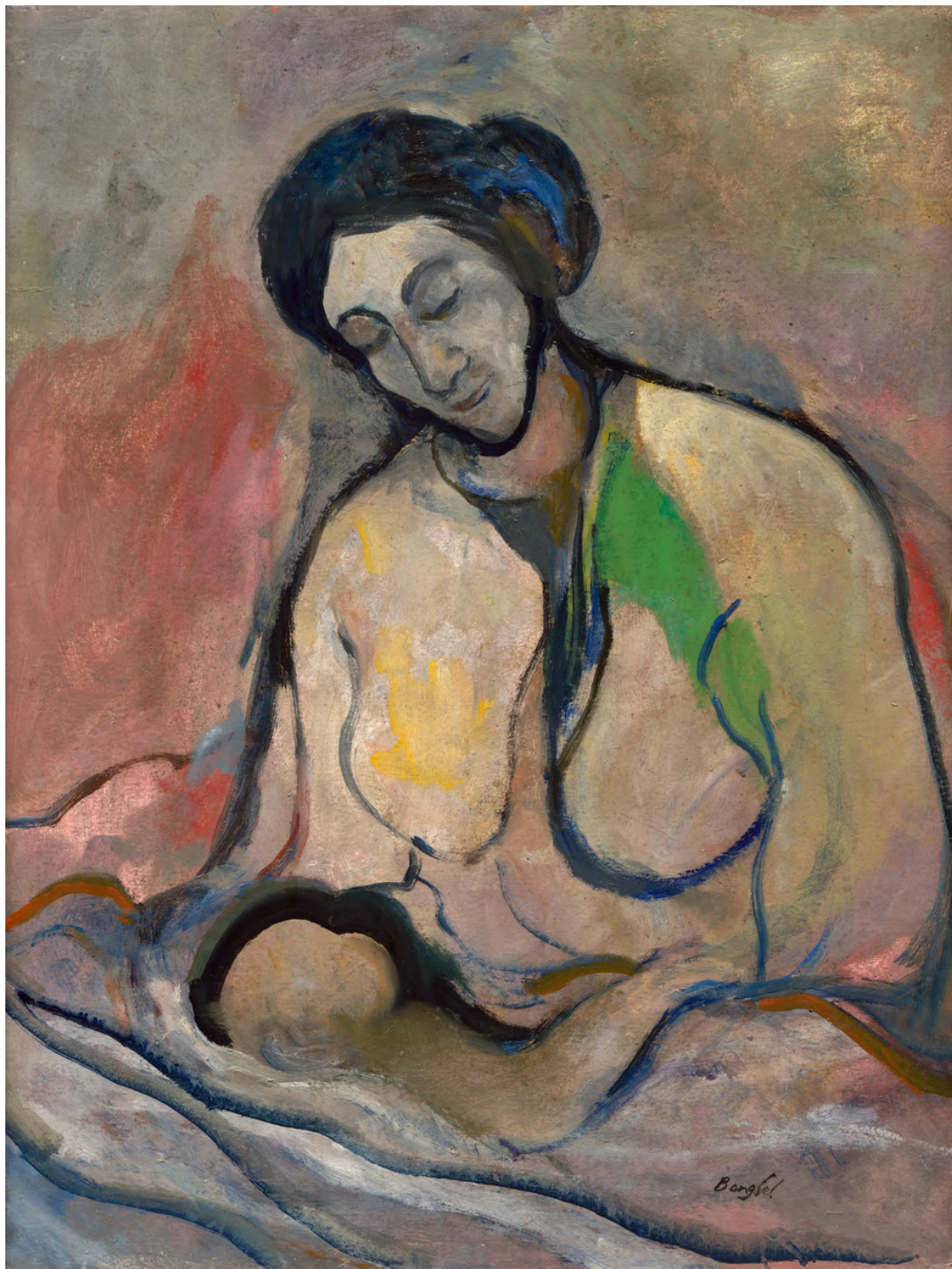
US\$36,000



Throughout his career, Bangdel repeatedly returned to the subject of mother and child. Bangdel's mother passed away when he was just one and a half years old, a loss that left an indelible mark on his emotional life. Raised by his grandmother, he carried an idealized vision of maternal love throughout his life and career.

In interviews, Bangdel often spoke of the sacred meaning the word “mother” held for him, asserting that no other love could match the purity and strength of a mother’s devotion. He once stated that he could spend a lifetime painting mother-and-child scenes and still not exhaust the emotional richness of that bond. Across mediums, the luminous softness of the compositions complements the emotional directness of the mother-and-child subject.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Maternity

1963 | Oil on canvas

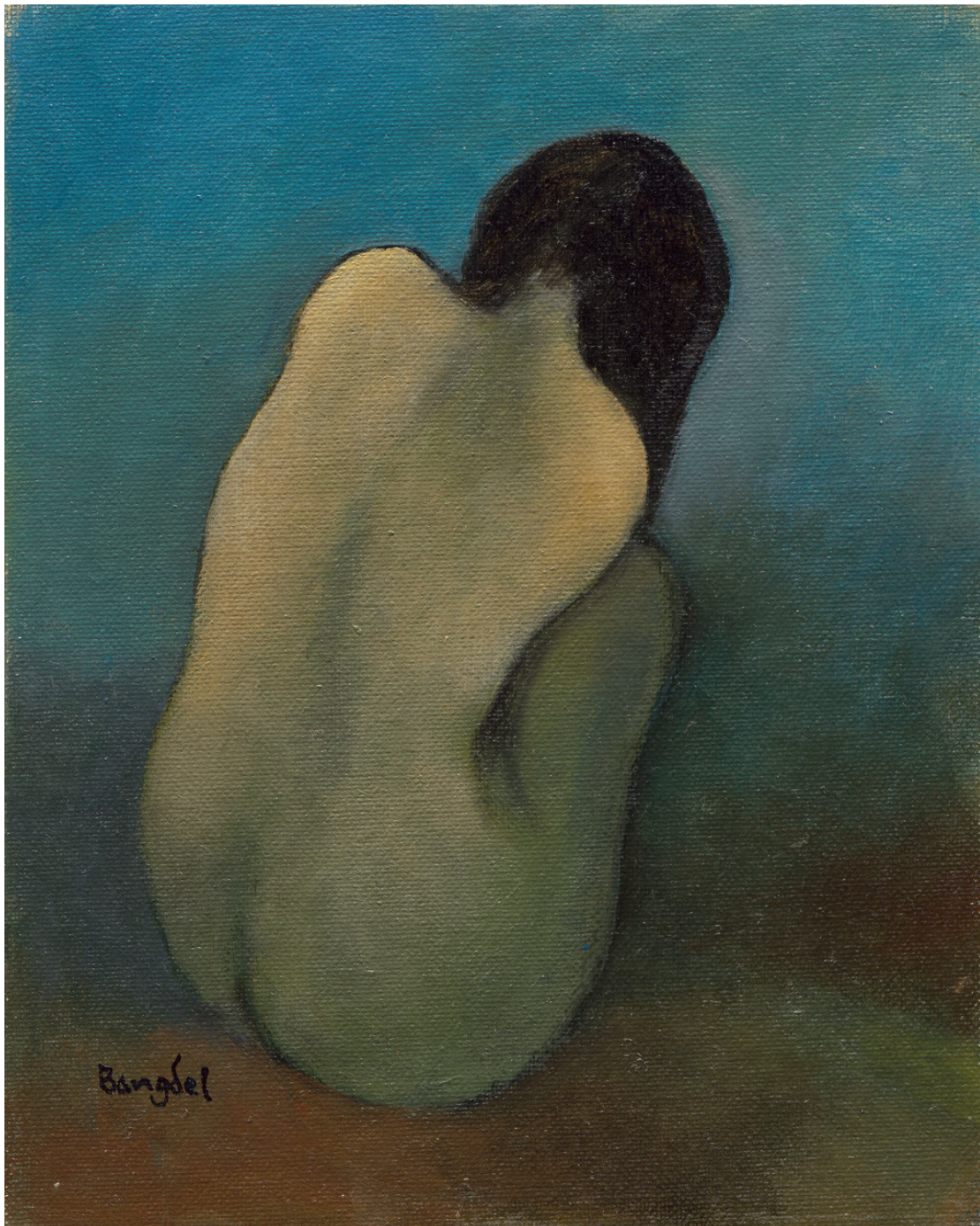
61x46 cm

US\$36,000



In Maternity, Bangdel returns to one of his most enduring themes: the sacred bond between mother and child. Executed with lyrical line and a luminous palette, the work conveys tenderness, devotion, and emotional intimacy. For Bangdel, who lost his mother in early childhood, the theme of maternity represented both personal longing and universal love.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Nude Series

1986 | Oil on board

25x20 cm

US\$12,000



In Nude Series, Bangdel presents the human body as a vessel of vulnerability, solitude, and inward emotion. Seen from behind, the figure curls into a compressed posture, withdrawing from the viewer and concealing the face. Softly modeled against a deep blue ground, the pale body appears both substantial and fragile.

Rather than emphasizing sensuality or anatomical detail, Bangdel uses the nude to explore psychological states of isolation, introspection, and human exposure. The restrained composition reflects his enduring humanist interest in the emotional life of the individual.





Lain Singh Bangdel

Self Portrait

1958 | Oil on canvas

49.5 x 42 cm

US\$35,000



Painted during Bangdel' s formative years in Europe, this self-portrait presents the artist as an observant and introspective figure. His dark jacket, white shirt, glasses, and composed expression convey intellectual seriousness, while the cool blue background creates an atmosphere of quiet reflection.

The simplified forms and restrained brushwork reveal Bangdel's engagement with modernist portraiture, yet the work remains deeply personal. More than a record of physical appearance, the painting captures a young artist shaping his identity across cultures—rooted in South Asia while participating in the artistic and intellectual world of postwar Europe.

