

Kunstmuseum Bern

Horn Please. Narratives in Contemporary Indian Art

September 21, 2007 – January 6, 2008

Word of welcome by Mrs Micheline Calmy-Rey, President of the Swiss Confederation, Member of the Committee of Patronage

The links binding India and Switzerland are strong and date back some considerable time. Next year, we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Friendship and Establishment of Diplomatic Relations, which the two countries signed on 14 August 1948. Preparations for a major programme of festivities and cultural events are already under way. India and Switzerland have shared values such as pluralist democracy and cultural diversity for a long time. My visit to India this November will allow me to reaffirm the importance, the dynamism, and the depth of our countries' relations as well as the partnership we enjoy.

Today, India is emerging as a new world power. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for Switzerland. India is one of Switzerland's main partners in Asia, and it is in this context that the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, which has been active in India since 1961, will diversify its activities and venture into new directions. In concrete terms this means that the main thrust of the SDC's programmes will be to create a new partnership with India with a view to encouraging cooperation and the exchange of knowledge in areas of common interest such as energy and climate change, the sciences and technology, as well as in the field of governance.

Since 2003, our relations in cultural affairs have also been developing steadily, and they will continue to strengthen thanks to the institutions of the Swiss Confederation active in India, namely Presence Switzerland and Pro Helvetia. The satellite office of the Pro Helvetia Foundation, which opened in New Delhi in January 2007, supports and presents projects that reflect the multicultural character of our two countries. The emphasis is on quality, originality and mutual respect, and the aim is to enable both countries to benefit from this cultural and artistic collaboration to the full.

Both Swiss culture and its links to other cultures are dynamic in nature. The exhibition "Horn Please. Narratives in Contemporary Indian Art" contributes to bringing our two cultures closer together and to promoting artistic contacts and exchanges of all kinds between India and Switzerland.