

# Thread through Asia

GUYSEIKA

Alliance Française, New Delhi  
from 11th to 16th of January 2020  
11 am - 7 pm

Opening of the exhibition  
Saturday 11th of January at 6.30pm

inaugurated by Jaya Jaitly  
president of Dastkari Haat Samiti

This show is the result of more than twenty years of exploration of Asian cultures. Not turning his back on the world of abstract-expressionism, street art and punk rock from which he comes, Guyseika confronts and mixes different world views in order to create a mythical universe neighbouring and questioning our ordinary reality.





## Monks, Mountains and Many Cultures: A Note on Thread through Asia

Artist Guyseika's exhibition Thread through Asia offers a compelling synthesis of styles inspired by traditional Buddhist art from China, Japan and Tibet, with a punk aesthetic informed by abstract expressionism. A French Zen Buddhist who has been practicing meditation with a Zen master for 22 years, Guyseika's practice spawned an interest in Zen culture that led him to study Tibetan and Zen Buddhist art while at the same time immersing himself in Japanese poetry.

Indeed, the artist has said that most of his more Japanese-influenced works have been inspired by the work of poets like Han Shan, Ryokan and Ikkyu, as well as Basho and many other Taoist and Zen poets. Guyseika's Buddhist inspirations are amply evident in his work, though they are also illuminated by a penchant for quirky captions in French and English that is as much reminiscent of Magritte as it is of Hokusai. At the same time, this merging of the graphic and the textual is directly inspired by street art and graffiti, and aims to convey the manner in which the information conveyed by our senses can sometimes differ from the feelings that are aroused within us when perception occurs. The influence of street art is more obviously visible in Guyseika's work using repurposed scraps of banana paper and cardboard. These works can also be put together in a multitude of combinations to create puzzle-like installations with an element of mixed media collage. Works like "Kat" and "Dragon posture" combine images and colours to make layered psychedelic icons redolent of punk and comic book art with their simplicity



and fantastic imagery as well as the do-it-yourself attitude with which the artist has transformed whatever is at hand into works of art. At the same time, the swirling vortexes, ascetic figures and tigers that fill these works allow us to trace a thread through Guyseika's work, the thread being the Asian influences that lend the exhibition its title.

With broad, colourful strokes, Guyseika's work in acrylic on canvas represent fluid, dreamlike forms that may be viewed as abstract expressionist experimentation with form and colour. Yet the artist has combined this tendency with his fascination

for Chinese paintings, such that works like "Falaise et flou", "Empty rocks" and "Roc doré" bring to mind Japanese and Chinese landscape painting with their calligraphic brushwork conveying the flow of energy and the titles often identifying the forms as representations of the artist's fascination with mountains. The more traditional series of Zen inks continues this walk through the mountains, with the artist capturing the fleeting present moment in muted hues of blue, red, purple and black on white handmade paper which, through his use of blank space, exerts its own influence and presence.



The artist's use of stamps resembling Japanese hankos, with the artist's Buddhist name, meaning "river of stars" in Japanese kanji lend a sense of authenticity to the series. Often, the stamps, some of which were designed by the artist himself, continue the mountain and water motif. Mountains reappear in Guyseika's series of mandala drawings made on handmade paper in natural pigments and crayons from the Avani-Kumaon cooperative whose vegetable dyes and pigments Guyseika has a fondness for. In the mandalas, the mountain motif is distilled into the geometric shapes of circles and triangles which can also be interpreted to represent the lingam. Beautifully textured like much of his work, with an aura of radiating light, these works are contemplative and meditative, with concentric circles and sharp lines reminiscent of the work of S.H. Raza.



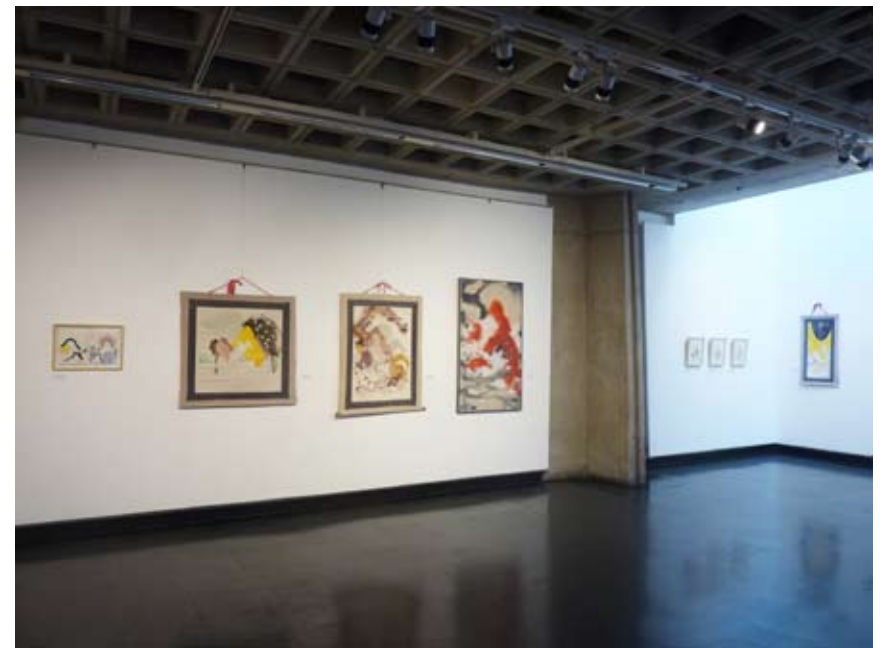
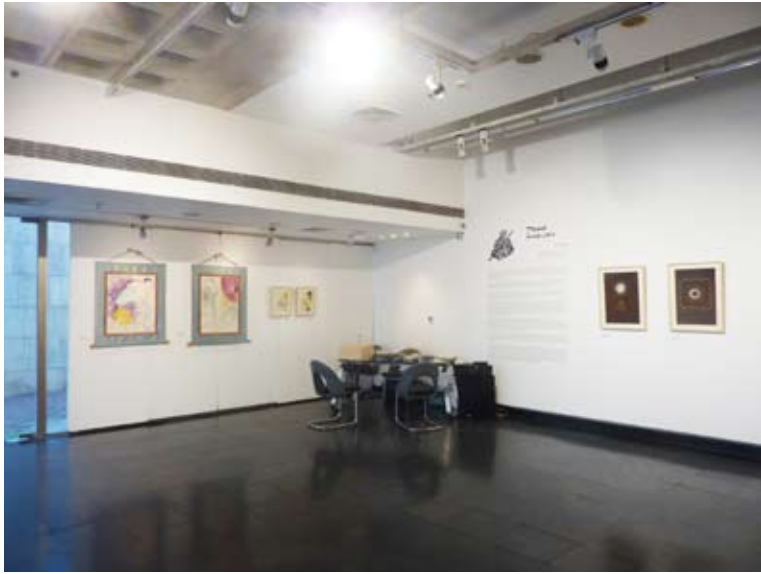
Regardless of the way one might interpret them, the mandalas showcase a fascination with the construction and opposition of forms and the story they tell.

As with the mandala, Guyseika offers his own spin on tangkha art, with large canvas paintings as well as smaller ones on paper in watercolour, that are clearly inspired by Tibetan art with their whiskered tigers and abstracted mudras. Works like "Vajra" and "Lotus 2" are imbued with a deep respect for the culture from which they are drawn while also attempting

something that bears the mark of the individual artist. In many ways, they gesture at the central journey through Asian culture that Thread through Asia represents. Tibet – with its Buddhist culture; its location, through which Buddhism had to flow to reach China from India; its history of wandering, displacement and exile; and, of course, its mountains! What better ethos to draw from for an artist inspired by his study of tangkhas, and Chinese and Japanese poetry and paintings? It is more significant still that this exhibition is taking place in India whose influence in terms of colours, pigments, sculpture and, of course, Buddhism, has made such an impact on Guyseika. Thread through Asia is a show that stands testament to the value of cultural exchange and synthesis, in a country that has, for centuries, been known for the same.

*Sameer Abraham Thomas is a Faculty Associate with the Centre for Writing and Pedagogy at Krea University. He is also a freelance editor and content writer with an interest in the arts.*

Video : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGP-Lr6Fr1I>





With indian artist Arpana Caur



Ambassador of France in India Emmanuel Lenain, artist Guyseika, president of Dastkari Haat Samiti Jaya jaitly, director of Alliance Française Delhi Jean-François Ramon.







# MESSAGES FOUND IN IMAGES OF THE EAST

by **Antara Raghavan**

**FRENCH** artist and Zen practitioner Guyseika grew up listening to his grandmother's stories of her childhood in Vietnam. "The tales of that part of the world have always been a part of my life," he informs. A resident of Nantes, his interest in Asian culture is strong even today. "I really got into the swing of it when I was 20, when I started meditation. This led me to explore Eastern parts of the world, and its art."

Guyseika's extensive study of Asian art will be displayed this weekend. Speaking about the exhibition, 'Thread through Asia', Guyseika says, "It's a kind of journey through Asian cul-



*An acrylic on handmade paper 'Tiger' (extreme left); A painting 'Voie Sauvage' or 'Wild Path' (left).*



*French painter Guyseika.*

ture, as well as the amalgamation of Western and Eastern cultures. I've always been interested in the art of Japan and China, so I try to extract the cultures through my own expressions of it." Several of his artworks are inspired by

the Zen discipline, so you'll find calligraphic drawings and paintings on handmade paper, and others in the forms of mandelas or inspired by Tibetan *tankas*.

"As a painter, what is fascinating to me is how the East uses

messages in images rather than in words. The impressions are extremely vivid."

To be inaugurated by Jaya Jaitly, President of Dastkari Haat Samiti, this exhibition will be on until January 16 at the Alliance Française.

**MAIL TODAY** Fri, 10 January 2020

There's more to you. <https://epaper.mailtoday.in/c/47836081>



Publication Asian Age

Link: <https://www.asianage.com/life/art/240120/the-strokes-of-asia.html>

Publication: Outlook

Link: <https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/east-meets-west-in-this-french-artists-asiainspired-works/1705026>

Publication: India Today

Link: <https://www.indiatoday.in/mail-today/story/message-found-in-the-images-of-the-east-1635631-2020-01-10>

Publication: Millennium Post

Link: <http://www.millenniumpost.in/features/buddhism-influenced-works-of-french-artist-on-view-in-delhi-395412>

Publication: IANS

Link: <https://ianslife.in/culture/east-meets-west-french-artists-asia-inspired-works>

Publication: Lokmat Times

Link: <https://english.lokmat.com/national/east-meets-west-in-this-french-artists-asia-inspired-works/>

Publication: Can India

Link: <http://www.canindia.com/east-meets-west-in-this-french-artists-asia-inspired-works/>

Publication: News D

Link: <https://newsd.in/east-meets-west-in-this-french-artist-s-asia-inspired-works/>

Publication: Pro Kerala

Link: <https://www.prokerala.com/news/photos/east-meets-west-in-this-french-artist-s-asia-inspired-works-1461281.html>



# Buddhism-influenced works of French artist on view in Delhi

The ongoing exhibition features over 50 contemplative works done in various media

## OUR CORRESPONDENT

Inspired from the traditional Buddhist art of several Asian countries, mixed with imagery from popular culture and his own interpretation, the artworks of French artist and Zen practitioner Guyseika are unique vignettes of eastern culture and abstract expressionism.

On view at the Alliance Française de Delhi from January 11-16, Guyseika's debut India exhibition 'Thread through Asia' showcases Asian influences on his art.

The solo show is a glimpse into the 22 years of his Zen practice and artistic exploration - a thread piecing together traditional Zen and Taoist painting of China and Japan, shamanism, mandalas and folk rituals of India with Tibetan thangkas. The exhibition features over 50 contemplative works done in various media.

Guyseika was attracted to Asia right from childhood onwards, through the deep link that his grandmother had with Vietnam, having spent her childhood there. After travelling extensively within eastern countries and experiencing Buddhist culture first-hand, the Normandy-born artist started practicing Zen with a Japanese



master. He later voyaged through India. Not surprisingly, upon his return to Paris, his works were strongly dominated by eastern cultures.

Guy also became fascinated with the spiritual and geometric forms of yantras and mandalas, and the ritual use of pigments, that one finds in abundance in India.

Looking forward to this occasion, Jaya Jaitly, President, Dastkari Haat Samiti said, "In the midst of all the pandemonium around us, Guy offers beauty, calm and gentleness through his intensely thoughtful works. I truly believe this is what we all need to internalise to keep our balance."

With bold, colourful strokes of the brush, Guyseika's work in acrylic on canvas represents fluid, dreamlike forms, and visualise his affinity for the mountains - spaces where much of his Zen exploration took place. Many of his works imagine Buddhist visuals mixed with manga, tattoo, street art and surfing culture.

The more traditional series of Zen inks, reminiscent of Asian calligraphic styles with the artist capturing the fleeting present moment in muted hues of blue, red, purple and black on white handmade paper.

*Guyseika's aim?* To confront and mix different cosmogonies in

order to create a mythical world neighbouring and questioning our ordinary reality.

Rooted in Buddhist philosophy, his works beautifully combine the text and visual forms. They often illustrate a short poem, and present a simple but profound teachings on Tao (the path, Dharma).

The artist names some of his Japanese influences as poems by Han Shan, Ryokan and Ikkyu, as well as Basho.

Thomas further notes, "Guyseika's Buddhist inspirations are amply evident in his work, though they are also illuminated by a penchant for quirky captions in

French and English."

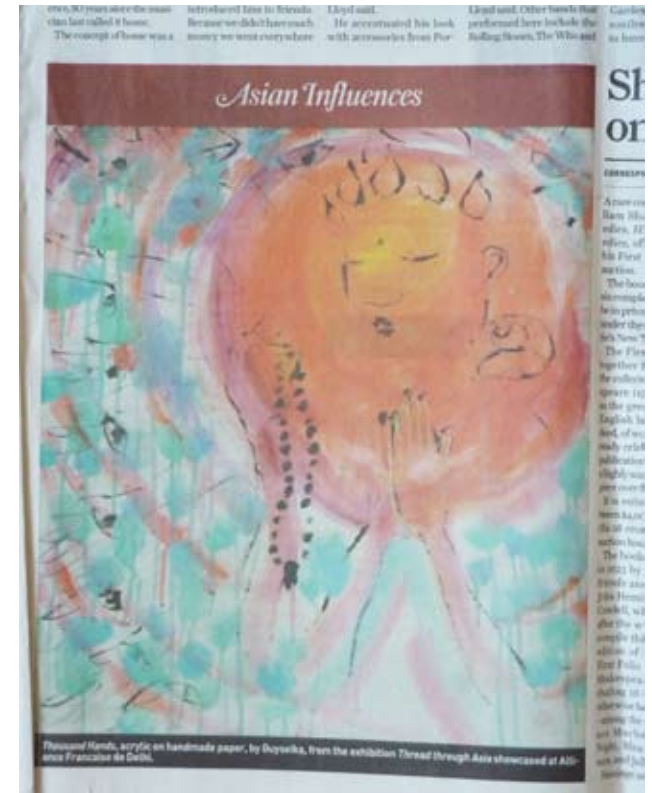
His works like 'Kat' and 'Dragon Posture' make layered psychedelic icons redolent of punk and comic book art with their simplicity and fantastic imagery.

At the same time, the swirling vortexes, ascetic figures and tigers that fill these works allow us to trace a thread through Guyseika's work, the thread being Asian influences that lend the exhibition its title.

The artist's use of stamps resembling Japanese hankos, with the artist's Buddhist name, meaning "river of stars" in Japanese kanji lend a sense of authenticity to the series, writes Thomas.

Mountains reappear in Guyseika's series of mandala drawings made on textured handmade paper in natural pigments and crayons from Avani-Kumaon cooperative whose vegetable dyes and pigments Guyseika has a fondness for. In mandalas, mountain motif is distilled into the geometric shapes of circles and triangles.

As the eastern cultural traditions and art come alive in Guyseika's work, it is the perfect opportunity to see the east meeting west. Interestingly, Seika does not own a studio. He likes to work where life takes him.



Publication: New Kerala

Link: <https://www.newkerala.com/news/2020/4808.htm>

Publication: Pioneer

Link: <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2020/viva-city/watch-out.html>

Publication: Daiji World

Link: <https://www.daijiworld.com/news/news-Display.aspx?newsID=661974>

Publication: BDC TV

Link: <https://bdc-tv.com/east-meets-west-french-artists-asia-inspired-works/>

## Biography of GUYSEIKA / SEIKA FAUNE

Seika, born in Normandy in France, started painting shortly after high school, at the age of 18, and moved to London the following year, hoping to find fertile ground for his artistic research. There he worked and attended evening art and design classes, made music, painted and took photos, until he joined the Central St Martin's School of Art in 1994. Guyseika held his first exhibitions in London, showing works dealing with London's nightlife, and then expressionist paintings at the Alternative Art Galleries. He participated in a group art project in a squat, painting on the walls using existing textures. It is also in London that, influenced by the Vietnam of his grand-mother, he started developing an interest in the East Asia, practicing Tai-Chi and studying its numerous cultures.

Back in Paris, he was noticed by the 3 Suisses Foundation during the Plein Soleil group exhibition and worked for two years for the graphic novel publishing house Glénat, before making his way to Central America in November 1997. He worked in a nature reserve for a month and then travelled through Central America for 4 months. He began writing on notebooks, savagely mixing poems, notes and ink drawings, that he will later publish in handmade books.

On his return to France, Seika started practicing Zen with a disciple of the Japanese master Taisen Deshimaru before leaving for several months for India. This interlude allowed him to start on a new footing when he came back to Paris and his works were now dominated by Asian cultures. He immersed himself in the ancient art of the zen monks and Taoist sages, shamanic visions, Tibetan tangkhas, Hindu mythology and folk art, to express these cultures through words and images of his own, as he didn't turn his back on the world of abstract-expressionism, street art and punk rock from which he came. Hence Guyseika's aim is to confront and amalgamate different cosmogonies in order to create a mythical world neighbouring and questioning our ordinary reality.

Confident in his new approach, he exhibited amongst other places, at the gallery « Impressions » together with the calligrapher Jacques Foussadier in 2003, at the Procé Mansion with the support of the city of Nantes in 2007 and 2015, as well as at many cultural centers throughout France. He was part of the exhibition and workshop concept Art Pro of the town of Orsay in 2014. In 2018 he organised, with the support of the town of Nantes, an exhibition about woolcraft in the Himalayas. He was also one of the permanent artists of the Gallery « L'Ouroboros » in Nantes. He has illustrated many books, like the Biographie Ryokan, moine du Ciel by D.Blain in 2017. Seika also created Sauvagerie Production, an organisation that publish handmade books of poetry and organise cultural events.

Seika does not own a studio and he simply uses the materials that directly surround him. We could therefore speak of nomadic art...



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