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Description	Man, animal share space and colours

New Delhi, March 27 (IANS) Man is an animal with a thinking head. His ability to rationalise sets him apart from the beast in the forest, though both belong to a broader generic canvas called 'life'. "The Human Animal" art exhibition explores the unseen threads that bind the human and animal worlds through a series of sculptures, installations and canvases by young contemporary artists.

The exhibition, at the Religare Arts-I gallery here, curated by Marta Jakimowicz opened March 19 and will close April 9.

Modern and contemporary Indian art, says Jakimowicz, is full of animal figures, though their forms have changed over the decades. Jamini Roy painted graceful animals, stylised in their rustic simplicity, whereas Tyeb Mehta was minimalistic and abstracted in his depiction of the animal world that conveyed, rather than portrayed, the idea of a beast.

In contrast, M.F. Husain's horses and elephants exuded a sensuousness, while artist K.G. Subramaniam was intense in his vision of the wild.

Each of their animals was endowed with human traits - either in its form or in its body language.

The artists carried the "masterly beasts" a step further by combining figures of animal and man in their frames to bring out the similarities and contrasts.

Artist Gurusiddappa G.E.'s "The First Rain After a Long Summer", explores the sexuality of two species through a collage of a mating couple and dogs in grey monochrome, comparing it to a blossoming golden flower, which blooms on the top of the erotic lovers. The flower offers a relief in colour, offsetting the grey act with its sunny radiance.

Curator Jakimowicz calls the two-part acrylic series on canvas "contentment of the first rain".

Viraj Naik's five-part "Nomad" series in graphite and colour pencils is a curious figment of imagination in which the man wears an animal face. In the first frame, a piggy-rider (astride a pig-like beast) sports the face of a cow, in the second human thighs morph into cow-heads, while in the third, man becomes a parrot with a beak for nose.

In the fourth, he turns into garuda astride a lion cub and in the fifth he loses his shape in a flurry of elephants, swan, donkeys and hippopotamus.

The hybrid and eclectic themes span a gamut of artistic genres, drawing from folklores of diverse lands, popular theatre, social realities and literature.

"Theme-based shows are our current focus," Mukesh Panika of Arts. I, the brain behind the exhibition, told IANS.