

## **About my work:**

God created beautiful things. Animals are more beautiful and meaningful, which fill in the blanks of the 'phenomenal' world. The lush woods, flowing waters and curvature of the mountains are nothing without living things. The relationship of an animal with human being, as a 'pet', is though a different aspect of it. Unfortunately, at times, the very 'pet' animals are treated as 'hostages' in the name of pleasure games such as circus and hunting.

Hunting or gunning down an animal was considered as a game, a tradition, and not 'poaching' in earlier times. However, in a tranquil terrain like India, where The Buddha and Gandhi preached *ahimsa* (non-violence), there have been spotted/tolerated endless accounts of killing speechless creatures. Many wild life-sanctuaries are struggling with an alarming recurrence of gun violence and many forest regions are permeated/invaded by hobby-hunters, trade hunters and militants. One must rethink the persistent glorification of guns and killing. There is nothing good that comes from the slaughter of vulnerable creatures while the tradition of 'hunting' teaches it as acceptable, even admirable, to kill a defenseless creature.

My present series of paintings in acrylic epitomize such vulnerability of life in the dark side of the beautiful forests and at amusement places in the cities. I deliberately made an effort to tone down the hues of my canvases to reveal the gloomy ambience of the creatures, often indulged in chaos. The fallen elephants, horrified monkeys, as if they are at 'war', and their susceptibility is shown as my main theme, for an instance, in one of my paintings titled "Final Lap", where in elephants are compelled to take rounds as a man blows a conch. Another painting titled "Cold War" exemplifies the animosity in the tribes, which also inevitably is a cause for the violence in the peaceful woods.

I feel, my paintings narrate the 'reality' of human affiliation with animals. Human beings, who care their own kids, teach morals narrating stories of animals but ignore when it comes to reality. The cruel veracity of hunting blurs the message we deliver to our future generation about *ahimsa* (non-violence) in this country. It is our responsibility to plant the seeds of a compassionate culture for upcoming generations. Children who learn to empathize with animals are much more likely to become empathetic adults.

**-Satish Multhalli**