



Photo credits: (left) K.N. Raghavendra Rao, (right) Mohan Das Vadakara

K. V. HARIDASAN (1937–2014)

Born in Cannanore, Kerala, India.

Lived and worked in Chennai, New Delhi, and Thiruvananthapuram.

K.V. Haridasan was an Indian painter and art educator who is known for his pioneering work in Indian modern painting, both in the context of Neo-Tantra as well as the Madras Movement of Art. He was one of the founder-members of the Cholamandal Artists' Village, Chennai (1965-present). His 'Yantra' (1968) solo exhibition at British Council Madras (now Chennai) is among one of the earliest Neo-Tantra painting exhibitions in India. His later series such as *Nirvriti Yantra* and *Brahmasutra* are known for their striking juxtapositions of precisely rendered, prismatic colour fields with minimal iconic forms.

Several pictorial diagram-making traditions that accompanied the dance and ritual forms of northern Kerala - such as Theyyam and Padayani - have found their way into the particular iconography of Haridasan's works. Nested within geometric grids employing delicate transparency, asymmetry and flat colours, Haridasan's paintings highlight the significant contributions of southern Indian ritual and performative traditions to the history of abstraction in painting, while simultaneously in dialogue with the optical experiments of contemporary Color field painting and Op Art. His paintings were a prominent part of the Neo-Tantra survey exhibition in UCLA in 1985, co-curated by art historian LP Sihare and painter Lee Mullican.

In addition to his art practice, Haridasan was employed as a teacher at the College of Fine Arts, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala from 1980-1992, serving as its Principal from 1989-92. He was editor for the second iteration of *Art Trends* magazine published at the Cholamandal Artists' Village from 1979-85, and published his book *Intimations on Art: Indian, Western, Modernity, Tradition and Tantra* in 1994.