

Rumale Chennabasaviah

Bangalore's Van Gogh

Rumale Art House and Sanjay Kabe

Rumale Chennabasaviah, also known as the Van Gogh of Karnataka, was a painter noted for his naturescapes on Bangalore. He was born on September 10, 1910 in Doddaballapur, Bangalore district. Rumale studied art in the late 1920s at Bangalore-based Kalamandir School of Art and later at Chamarajendra Technical Institute, Mysore. His contributions spanned participation in the non-violent Gandhian freedom movement for India's independence from 1930-47.

From 1947 to 1962, Rumale was involved in nation-building activities and helping leaders build the newly formed Mysore State; and laying the social foundation of a new India by starting a youth movement - the *Seva Dal* - to train youth across religious and socio-economic divides, to imbibe a 'service mindset' to work for the nation. He was a Member of the Legislative Council of Mysore State for two terms during 1952-60. He also served as the editor of the noted Kannada daily '*Tainadu*'.

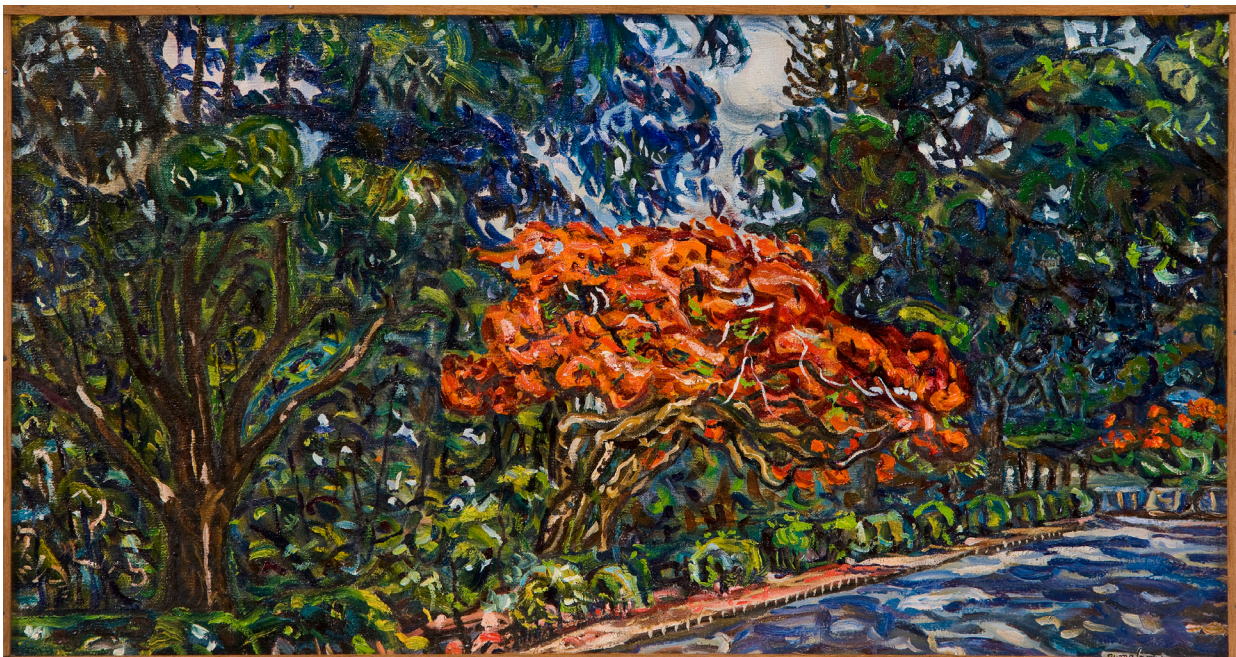
Rumale was inspired by nature and he worked with full-minded devotion and passion on capturing the plein-air impressionistic style of the landscapes of Karnataka along with other parts of India and Sri Lanka. More than any other artist of

his time, Rumale celebrated the beauty of Bangalore in particular, in both water colours and oil paintings. All his paintings were done 'on the spot' and often he trekked tens of kilometres with his art materials to do his paintings.

His chief obsession was nature, manifested in the flowering trees that he foregrounded against buildings. In addition to parks and gardens, he searched for such trees along roadsides, in private houses and near public buildings. Much in the manner of the renowned Dutch artist Vincent Van Gogh, Rumale used colour to express emotion and mood.

The golden yellow shower of the Indian Laburnum, the rich orange of the Flame of the Forest, the African Tulip, and the cluster of drooping pink *Cassia Javanica*, the soothing mauve of *Jacaranda*, the bright yellow *Gulmohur* and the fragrant *Frangipani* lining the city's streets were a cause for exultation and wonder, which Rumale captured in acid yellows, hot reds, cool blues and deep purples.

Rumale was commissioned by the Government of Karnataka to capture on canvas the landscapes of important sites of Karnataka which were impacted by the Nehruvian vision of industrialisation. These included Jog Falls, several important dams, and



Gul Mohar, Cubbon Park, Bangalore, 1981
Oil on Canvas, 31.5x59cm



Tree in Blossom, Bal Bhavan, Cubbon Park, Bangalore. 1975
Watercolour on paper, 66.04x97.15cm, Cabinet Hall, Vidhana Soudha

historical sites that would be submerged and sometimes lost, due to the construction of dams.

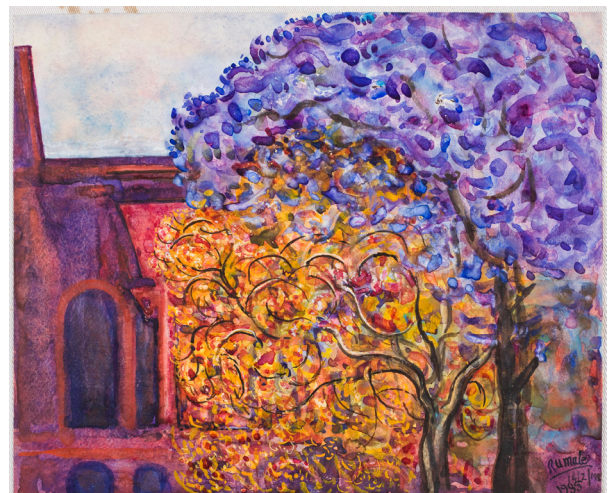
He started Rumale Art Gallery, Bangalore's first private art gallery in 1973, to display his works. He received several awards, including the Dasara, Lalit Kala Akademi, All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, and Karnataka State Rajyotsava awards. Rumale was posthumously bestowed the status of Distinguished Citizen of Bangalore in 1988. Renowned litterateur Professor V.K.Gokak called him the 'Painter-Laureate of Bengaluru'.



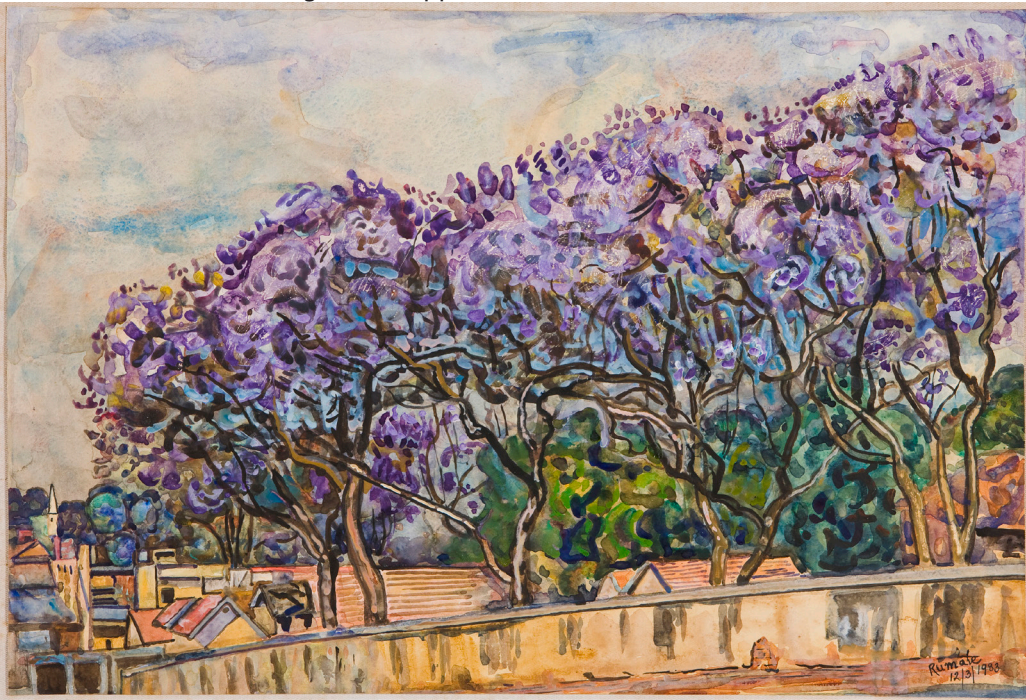
Tree in Bloom, Rama Mandira, Rajajinagar, Bangalore. 1985
Oil on Canvas, 37x40.5cm



Unknown Soldier Statue, Opposite General Post Office, Bangalore, 1978. Oil on canvas, 37.5x57.5cm



Yellow Bloom and Jacaranda, High Court, Bangalore, 1985
Watercolour on paper, 34x29cm



Jacaranda in Bloom, Cavalry Road, Bangalore. 1983
Watercolour on paper, 38x56cm



Bougainvillea on Sri Nagappa Alva's Residence, Bangalore, 1973
Watercolour on paper, 56x76cm



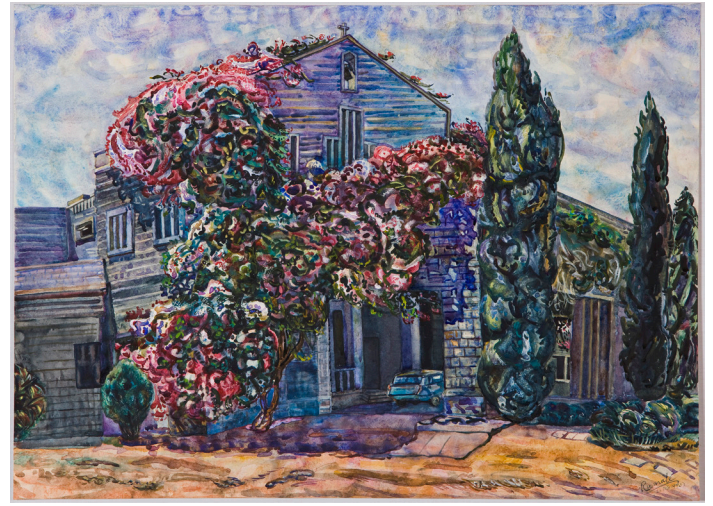
Spring Season, Lalbagh, Bangalore, 1968
Watercolour on paper, 61.59x93.98cm, Cabinet Hall, Vidhana Soudha



Varna Mythri, Vidhana Soudha Corner, Bangalore, 1986
Oil on Canvas, 39x59cm



Edward's Statue, Cubbon Park, Bangalore. 1976
Watercolour on paper, 35x46.5cm



Bougainvillea on St. Peter's Seminary, Malleshwaram, Bangalore, 1973
Watercolour on paper, 50x70cm,



K.R. Circle, Bangalore - A Collage, 1979
Watercolour on paper, 66x98.5cm

Note: Sanjay Kabe of Rumale Art House generously shared the images for this essay. The text for this essay draws from the Rumale Art House brochure 'Rumale Chennabasaviah: An Introduction.'

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