

8 Stories

Ratnadeep Adivrekar

8 Stories

Malerei Skulpturen und Zeichnung
Paintings Sculptures and Drawings

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Ratnadeep Adivrekar

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The Library of Babel
- Jorge Luis Borges

Borges' narrator describes how his universe consists of an enormous expanse of adjacent hexagonal rooms, each of which contains the bare necessities for human survival—and four walls of bookshelves. Though the order and content of the books is random and apparently completely meaningless, the inhabitants believe that the books contain every possible ordering of just 29 basic characters (26 letters, the period, the comma, and the space). Though the vast majority of the books in this universe are pure gibberish, the library also must contain, somewhere, every coherent book ever written, or that might ever be written, and every possible permutation or slightly erroneous version of every one of those books. The narrator notes that the library must contain all useful information, including predictions of the future, biographies of any person, and translations of every book in all languages. Conversely, for many of the texts some language could be devised that would make it readable with any of a vast number of different contents.



India Ink and Charcoal on paper | 56cm x 37cm | 2016



India Ink and Charcoal on paper | 56cm x 37cm | 2016

2.
Nadja
- Andre Breton

The narrator, named André, ruminates on a number of Surrealist principles, before ultimately commencing on a narrative account, generally linear, of his brief ten day affair with the titular character Nadja. She is so named "because in Russian it's the beginning of the word hope, and because it's only the beginning," but her name might also evoke the Spanish "Nadie," which means "No one." The narrator becomes obsessed with this woman with whom he, upon a chance encounter while walking through the street, strikes up conversation immediately. He becomes reliant on daily rendezvous, occasionally culminating in romance. His true fascination with Nadja, however, is her vision of the world, which is often provoked through a discussion of the work of a number of Surrealist artists, including himself. While her understanding of existence subverts the rigidly authoritarian quotidian, it is later discovered that she is mad and belongs in a sanitarium. After Nadja reveals too many details of her past life, she in a sense becomes demystified, and the narrator realizes that he cannot continue their relationship.

In the remaining quarter of the text, André distances himself from her corporeal form and descends into a meandering rumination on her absence, so much so that one wonders if her absence offers him greater inspiration than does her presence. It is, after all, the reification and materialization of Nadja as an ordinary person that André ultimately despises and cannot tolerate to the point of inducing tears. There is something about the closeness once felt between the narrator and Nadja that indicated a depth beyond the limits of conscious rationality, waking logic, and sane operations of the everyday. There is something essentially "mysterious, improbable, unique, bewildering" about her; this reinforces the notion that their propinquity serves only to remind André of Nadja's impenetrability. Her eventual recession into absence is the fundamental concern of this text, an absence that permits Nadja to live freely in André's conscious and unconscious, seemingly unbridled, maintaining her paradoxical role as both present and absent. With Nadja's past fixed within his own memory and consciousness, the narrator is awakened to the impenetrability of reality and perceives a particularly ghostly residue peeking from under its thin veil. Thus, he might better put into practice his theory of Surrealism, predicated on the dreaminess of the experience of reality within reality itself.





3.

A little fable
– Franz Kafka

"Alas," said the mouse, "the world gets smaller every day. At first it was so wide that I ran along and was happy to see walls appearing to my right and left, but these high walls converged so quickly that I'm already in the last room, and there in the corner is the trap into which I must run."

"But you've only got to run the other way," said the cat, and ate it.



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India Ink and Charcoal on paper | 56cm x 37cm | 2016



4.

The Vision

- Sayyidina Jalaluddin Rumi

An ant that's creeping across the carpet in a mosque, and the ant complains to God saying: "what is this, these bumps, and strange colours, and patterns, this must have been created just as a meaningless obstacle course, what a futile thing to have made." But of course the carpet maker, looking at it from above can see the patterns and the purpose of it, and can see that the whole thing is perfect and is good.



5. Naranath Sranthan

Naranathu was born as the son of Vararuchi, the famous astrologer who adorned the court of Vikrama. Naranathu was one among the twelve offspring's or the Parayi petta panthirukulam (12 children born from the Pariah woman), of Vararuchi and was brought up in the Naranathu Mangalathu Mana, situated at Chethallur in Palakkad. Naranathu came to Thiruvegappura for mastering 'Vedas'. Thiruvegappura and the nearby Rayiranelloor Mountain, which is known as 'Branthachalam', became his usual abode. Due to his strange behavior and odd activities, people perceived him as 'mad'. At Rayiranelloor Mountain he had the vision of the Devi (Goddess), and later for the benevolence of the people he enshrined Devi in the Mountain and started his worship there.

The most famous facet of Naranath's life is his apparently eccentric habit of rolling big stones up the hill and letting them roll down back, and laughing thunderously on seeing this sight. However this act has been often considered allegorical and has been applied for social critiquing for myriad contexts.



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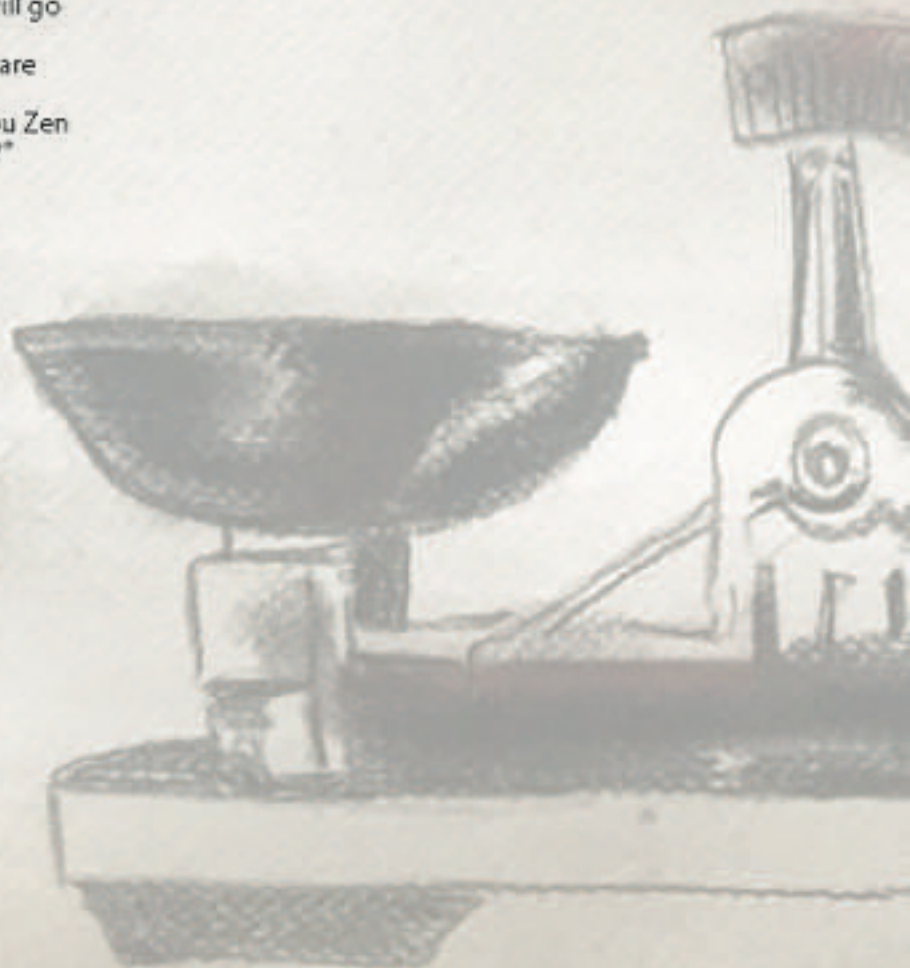
6.
A Cup of Tea

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868-1912), received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen.

Nan-in served tea. He poured his visitor's cup full, and then kept on pouring.

The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. "It is overfull. No more will go in!"

"Like this cup," Nan-in said, "you are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?"





7.
Strange Life of Ivan Osokin
- Pytor Demianovich Ouspensky


When the protagonist realizes that he can recall having lived his life before, he decides to try to change it. But he discovers that because human choices tend to be mechanical, changing the outcome of one's actions is extremely difficult. He realizes that without help breaking his mechanical behavior, he may be doomed to repeat the same mistakes forever.



India Ink and Charcoal on paper | 56cm x 37cm | 2016



India Ink and Charcoal on paper | 56cm x 37cm | 2016



8.
Toba Tek Singh
- Saadat Hasan Manto

The story is set two or three years after the 1947 independence, when the governments of India and Pakistan decided to exchange some Muslim, Sikh and Hindu lunatics, and revolves around Bishan Singh, a Sikh inmate of an asylum in Lahore, who is from the town of Toba Tek Singh. As part of the exchange, Bishan Singh is sent under police escort to India, but upon being told that his hometown Toba Tek Singh is in Pakistan, he refuses to go. The story ends with Bishan lying down in the no man's land between the two barbed wire fences: "There, behind barbed wire, was Hindustan. Here, behind the same kind of barbed wire, was Pakistan. In between, on that piece of ground that had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh

Images Tell Lies: Paradox of 8 stories

*The lamp of Reason in the brains of the head,
Smell in the nostrils and speech in the tongue,
Jallaludin Rumi, The Masnavi*

"In the beginning was the Word ..." provokes one to ask, where was the image?

People learn through stories, define themselves through stories and think in stories. Telling stories through pictures has been one of art's most important tasks for centuries. From the Mahabharata dated back to 400 BCE to the age of antiquity, stories were told of the classical sagas of gods, heroes, numerous legends and everyday events through art.

Since the early 1990s have artists again begun to explore the further possibilities associated with the use of narrative elements in art. In so doing, they do not fall back on complete stories; their narrative structures are not linear, chronological or logical, but rather deal with space and time in a completely casual manner. Their goal is to communicate with the viewer, who must often create temporal and causal structures on his own, thereby assuming the role of the author.

Visual art has always been closely associated with storytelling. In Western culture, painting and sculpture initially evolved to illuminate narratives of religion, patronage, and power. Over the centuries, genre scenes, still life's, and portraits—often created as intricate allegories for religious or historical subject matter—became popular as the narrative role of art expanded. In the twentieth century, with the advent of abstraction as a radical break with the past, many artists associated with the avant-garde rejected the figurative and, hence, eliminated explicit narrative content.

The recent narrative turn in contemporary art cannot be separated from the current age of social media with its reverberating cycles of communication, dissemination, and interpretation. Seemingly every aspect of life is now subject to commentary and circulation via digital text and images. These new narrative frames highlight the roles that each of us can play as both author and reader, foregrounding the fact that meaning is contingent in today's interconnected and multivalent world.

The Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert in Africa have a tradition of story-telling, where the events of mythic time, as well as human memory time, are superimposed on the landscape. Certain places and natural features become charged from previous events and are later reactivated by walking through them and their story. Walking through the landscape then becomes a re-telling of the stories of these beings, usually through singing. The feeling of being on the edge of something has persisted for most of our lifetimes. The 20th century was an exhausting journey into a receding future, and the first decade of the 21st continues to entrance us with the allure of what seems to be forthcoming forever. In meta-expressionism, reality is the manifestation of the artist's will, evident in the design of the pictorial components and a manifestation of personal awareness of the underlying patterns composing the natural world. Furthermore, the artist's expression of emotion or spirit is present in the work via use of



color or some other pictorial means.

The stories in Ratnadeep's paintings arise not from the interplay of the elements, but from the conceptual logic, which irresistibly draws the viewer into a cosmos in which he recognises himself again. The images that fascinate and enthrall us are not an end in itself. These stories exist as a reflection on the inner walls of the mind, or as a projection of the inner state without. He marvels at what the story has produced. He marvels as a child marvels, but at the same time he condenses this wonderment in a highly complex structure of associations. The eight painted stories are part of a comprehensive vision of emergence and evanescence. They are occurrences that are

transcended in a concept of transition, at once keen and congruent. Removing all cues, from the outside, the voices of the inner state become louder, clearer. As the poet William Blake wrote

"If the doors to perception were cleansed, then everything would appear to man as it is — infinite."

Here, too, enters another aspect of some images that are not images, which involves the reading of stories through images or a particular process of observation designed to extract certain information encoded in their forms. The early Greeks perfected a system of memory that used the mental imprinting of any objects or key points to be remembered onto specific locations along a pathway previously memorized from an actual temple. The interesting thing about stories and memory systems is that they presuppose the existence of some sort of place, either real or graphic, which has its own metaphors and meaning. As the gateway to the soul, the pupil of the eye has long been a powerful symbolic image and evocative physical object in the search for knowledge of the self. There is always a whole story, which already exists in its entirety, onto which ideas and images can be mapped, like the "Memory Theatre" created by Giulio Camillo in Italy in early 1500s which he actually constructed in wood, calling it a constructed body and soul.

Ratnadeep has always been fascinated by stories from Dashavtar to Wagner's The Ring whether they are pieces of History, myth or philosophy, reality, existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language he enjoys the art of interpreting them. He thus undertook a singular and ambitious experiment with the ways of reading by representing storytelling through his paintings. Indeed our myths which are the key to Indian thought have made of unreality an extension of the real. Our belief in the continuum of this world is unique and profound. This parable element in our myths is perhaps didactic in its intention, but it lends credence to and supports further myth-making. Folk beliefs are absorbed into the traditional stories of the epics and the whole woven into one seamless tapestry.

The Artist through his experience is conditioned by all that he assimilates he wilfully strives to invent new juxtapositions, to pose fresh arrangements that stir us to wonder and delight. In the eight stories this is particularly so, since it is not the forms that are new but what is done with them. The complicity

of the stories involved turns the work all the more upon itself. The artist suggests new possibilities and through the presentation of the unreal creates a new reality. We contemplate this visual world as we do a new story, for it leads us beyond our circumscribed horizons. Each story introduces us to a private world which is quite realised, which has its own boundaries, its own characters, and its own terms. Further these paintings stimulate our interest; we not only enjoy them visually, but also because they are points of departure into the unknown; these paintings owe nothing to others, they are self-sufficient cameos, nourished within and externalised in self-created visual idioms.



In a sense the Eight stories form a special kind of series of works because it presents more than a visual arrangement. The stories are initially anchored in sensation. Impressions are produced in the mind by external stimuli and it is these impressions that the mind works over into forms inherent in the nature of mind itself. We are all pioneers now, chasing and being chased by the shifting border-posts of the frontiers imposed upon us by history. Yet our efforts to break new ground do not necessarily carry any longer the confidence of self-proclaimed 'avant gardes'.

Ratnadeep plays with the deep human desire for stories. What we see can be enjoyed by the eyes, while what is depicted stirs the mind, this is the gateway of romance and reverie, its mood something which does not exist but which we are willing to make our own. The viewer is summoned to participate because – in addition to that of the counterpart – he is also assigned the role of reader, as well as that of director, detective or author. For all the works, however, one thing applies: Without the viewer, there is no story.

- Abhijeet Gondkar

Notes

A meta-narrative* (French: *métarécit*) in critical theory and particularly in postmodernism is a narrative about narratives of historical meaning, experience or knowledge, which offers a society legitimization through the anticipated completion of a (as yet unrealized) master idea. The term was brought into prominence by Jean-François Lyotard in 1979, with his claim that the postmodern was characterised



precisely by a mistrust of the grand narratives (Progress, Enlightenment emancipation, Marxism) that had formed an essential part of modernity.

According to John Stephens and Robyn McCallum, a meta-narrative "is a global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience—a story about a story, encompassing and explaining other "little stories" within conceptual models that assemble the "little stories" into a whole. Postmodern narratives will often deliberately disturb the

formulaic expectations such cultural codes provide, pointing thereby to a possible revision of the social code.

Disclaimer: This introduction constitutes a first attempt to trace the origins and contexts of 'visual autofiction'. 'Autofiction' has proven to be a particularly productive concept in literary studies. However, taking a closer look at 'autofiction' shows that this notion is closely related to themes and questions raised in other forms of art throughout the 1970's, in particular in conceptual art. The present introduction argues that we may speak of (strategies of) 'visual autofiction'. Far from being the mere transposition of a literary genre to currents in visual art, 'visual autofiction' forms a contemporary aesthetic stratagem that creatively appropriates conceptual art's aporias. In order to gain an understanding of what is at stake in 'visual autofiction', a comparison will be made with important thematic shifts in cultural theory from the 1970's onwards, in particular in the later works of Roland Barthes.



Untitled
Oil on canvas
142cm x 244cm (56"x96"), 2016





Untitled

Oil on canvas

142cm x 244cm (56"x96"), 2016





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122cm x 173cm (48"x68")
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Untitled

Oil on canvas

122cm x 173cm (48"x68")

2016





8 Stories (Detail) | Wood, Epoxy, Color and Mix Media | Size 182cm x 458cm (72"x 180") - Variable | 2017



BIOGRAPHY

RATNADEEP GOPAL ADIVREKAR

Born 13th November 1974, Mumbai, India

QUALIFICATION: Passed B.F.A. with First Class in 1997 from Sir J.J. School of Art, Mumbai.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2016: 'shipsoul' Performance/Video with Georg Wolf at Alang & Revdanda
- 2014: 'Parallax Views', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2013: 'The Golden Ear - A Tribute to Wagner', Seminarhaus Bayreuth, Deutsche Oper, Berlin & Kameha, Frankfurt.
- 2013: 'Infinite Range of Responses to Time', Galerie Sogan & Art, Singapore
- 2011: 'Discourse of prismatic truths', Pavillon du Centenaire/Arcelor Mittal, Luxembourg
- 2010: 'Allegories of talking road' at Galerie Sylvia Bernhardt, Germany
- 2010: Crimson Hatworks Boulevard, Bangalore
- 2009: 'Proverb In/ter/ventions' at The NUS Museum, Singapore
- 2004: 'Refraction of ideas', Artists Centre, Mumbai
- 2002: Solo Exhibition at Crimson Art Gallery, Bangalore.
- 2000: 'Souvenirs from journeys within', Kala Academy, Panaji.
- 1999: Exhibition at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai.
- 1998: 'Memoirs of the unreal city and findings thru journeys', Chavan Art Gallery, Mumbai.

SELECTED PARTICIPATIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

- 2017: History & Voyage, National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai
- 2016: Curated 'Axis of Secret Histories', Kochi Munziris Biennale Collateral Exhibition, Kochi
- Curated 'Masters of Indian Art', Inaugural Show of The Bombay Art Society Complex
- '111 Platographic Expressions of Leading Print Makers of India', Jehangir Art Gallery
- 2015: Kokuyo Camlin 50 years Exhibition, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2014: Devrukh Museum Show
- Infinite, Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2013: 'Equilibrium', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 54th National Exhibition of Art, L.K.A., Tripura
- 'J 90s- The Time of Change', Sir J.J. School of Art, Mumbai
- 2012: 'Synergy 2012', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 'online', le Sutra Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2011: 'Reflections of Konkan', MMRDA, Mumbai
- 2010: 'Evolve', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2009: 'Power of Peace', UNESCO 2nd Global Forum, Bangkok, Thailand
- 'Big Dreams', Crimson Hatworks Boulevard, Bangalore
- 2008: Emerging Trends, Dhoomimal Art Centre, New Delhi
- 2007: The Ueno Royal Museum, Japan
- The Big Draw, Crimson Art Resource, Bangalore
- 2006: Group show, Indo-German Chamber, Delhi
- Black n white show, Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
- Pictures of Asia, Larasati Auction, Singapore
- Art for water, Gynroza Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 'Indian Art' Lasalle-SIA College of Art, Sculpture square gallery, Singapore

The Harmony Show, Nehru Centre, Mumbai
 2005: 'Future and Present', N.G.M.A., Mumbai
 'Indian contemporary art', Chelsea Art College, UK.
 Pune Art Show by Kirloskars and Tao Art Gallery
 'Ardhanareshwar', Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
 2004: 'Christian Art Show', Goa
 'Ideas and images IV' N.G.M.A., Mumbai
 'Tao of Shiva' at Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
 Art Camp by Gallery Beyond, Mumbai
 2003: RPG Art Camp at Madh, Mumbai.
 Art on Train by WSF with Open Circle.
 'All India Artist camp' by S.C.C.Z. & Kannada & Culture, Bangalore
 'Scared And Secular' inaugural exhibition, Time & Space Gallery, Bangalore
 Kite exhibition at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
 I.I.F.A. Art Show at Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai.
 2002: Self portraits from RPG Collection at Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkatta
 Inaugural group exhibition, The Gallerie Maharaja, New Delhi.
 'The Quotable Stencil' group show, Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
 'Golden jubilee exhibition' of Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
 Group show by Gallery Beyond, Mumbai
 'One square feet' exhibition, Dhomimal Art Centre, New Delhi.
 RPG 'Mela' Exhibition, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
 2001: 44th National Art Exhibition, L.K.A., Ahmedabad, New Delhi
 Concern India Show, Jewels on Canvas, Mumbai
 Ao-rta Project, BBK Kunst Forum, Dusseldorf and Ausstellungshalle Innenhafen, Duisburg, Germany
 Maharashtra Mahoutsav Exhibition, A.I.F.A.C.S., New Delhi
 43rd National Art Exhibition, L.K.A., Bangalore
 Gujarat Relief Fund Exhibition, N.G.M.A. Mumbai
 The RPG Collection Show, N.G.M.A. Mumbai
 2000: RPG Camp at Madh, Mumbai.
 & 01 to 05 Participated in The Harmony Show, Nehru Centre, Mumbai.
 Indian Contemporary Art, Group Show by Easel Art Gallery, Singapore & Hong Kong.
 Six Young Artist, group show at Artist Centre, Mumbai.
 1999: Dual show at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai.
 Annual Art Exhibition, Indian Oil, Mumbai
 'Art of the red soil' at Dabhol Power, Guhagar
 Art festival at Lakereen Art Gallery, Mumbai
 1998: 'Group Show' in Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi.
 'Varsha 98', Chavan Art Gallery, Mumbai.

Artquest for C.R.Y. Group show, Mumbai.
 1997: 'Monsoon Show', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai.
 Group Exhibition, Dr. Bhausaheb Deshmukh Academy, Mumbai.
 Group show by Bombay Art Society on occasion of 50 years of Indian Independence.
 1996: 'Chatak', Nehru Art Gallery, Mumbai.
 'Vista Black & White' Group Show at Chavan Art Gallery, Mumbai.
 Group Show, Birla Academy, Calcutta.
 1995: 'Varsha 95', Students Monsoon show at Chavan Art Gallery, Mumbai.
 -96 Attended Artist Terracotta Camp at Phansgaon, (M.S.)
 1994: 96,99,02 Participated in the Bombay Art Society Annual Exhibition, Mumbai.
 95,96 Participated in the Bombay Art Society Exhibition, Pune, and Goa.
 Group Show NAG Foundation, Pune.
 Kala Mela organized by Lalit Kala Academy in New Delhi, Calcutta.
 Dr. Bhausaheb Deshmukh Art Academy Show, Amravati.
 1993: Attended 'Artist Camp' in Kolhapur (M.S.)
 96 Participated in the Art Society of India Exhibition, Mumbai
 94,02 : Participated in Maharashtra State Art Exhibition, Mumbai.

AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS:

2017: 'MVUWA Award' for Achievement in Field of Art
 2003: 'The Harmony Award' for Best Emerging Artist of the year, Mumbai.
 2002: 'Bendre-Hussain Scholarship', Mumbai
 2002: 'Maharashtra State Art Award', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
 2001: 'National Scholarship' by Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
 1999: 'The Governors Prize' at the Exhibition of The Bombay Art Society.
 1996: 'Best Painting Award' The Art Society of India Exhibition.
 1994,96: 'Merit Certificate' the Exhibition of The Bombay Art Society.

Ratnadeep is the co-founder of Arka Art Trust, a non-profit organisation to create awareness of art through public art events, bridging the gap between working Artist and Students of Art & providing platform for interaction of Art. He is also on governing body of Devrukh Museum & Managing Committee of The Bombay Art Society.

Lives and works in Mumbai, India & Berlin, Germany.

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