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## Combining Architecture and Essay

*The art and spirit of K. P. Singh*

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*K.P. Singh (Photo by Susan McKee)*

A city trying to enhance its cultural image got a boost Friday during a reception at Butler University for one of Indy's most famous living artists.

K.P. Singh, who moved to Indianapolis 38 years ago, has penned his first book. And he not only drew the illustrations, but also wrote the essays to accompany them.

The reception, co-sponsored by Butler and the Asian American Alliance, gave his fans their first chance to buy *The Art and Spirit of K.P. Singh* and *K.P. Singh*

have copies signed by its creator. A portion of the proceeds from the sale benefit the Asian Studies Endowment at Butler.

K.P., an architect by training, is known for his precise, detailed pen-and-ink drawings of historic architecture and monuments in Indiana and around the world. His work is on display in private and public collections in at least 25 countries.

People waited in a line that snaked down the length of the Johnson Room and out into the corridors of Robertson Hall as K.P., a native of the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent, wrote personalized dedications in each tome.

About an hour after the event began, Joy Dumandan of WISH-TV 8, took to the microphone as Mistress of Ceremonies. The audience had been listening to the music of Dan Yu in the background, and then the California musician took center stage to perform a traditional Chinese song on her harp. She also closed the formalities with another piece, this one Italian.

Bobby Fong, president of Butler, welcomed the crowd. Former television anchorman Clyde Lee read a selection from Singh's book, as did Daniel Felicetti, former president of Marian College (who flew in from Annapolis, Md., for the event).

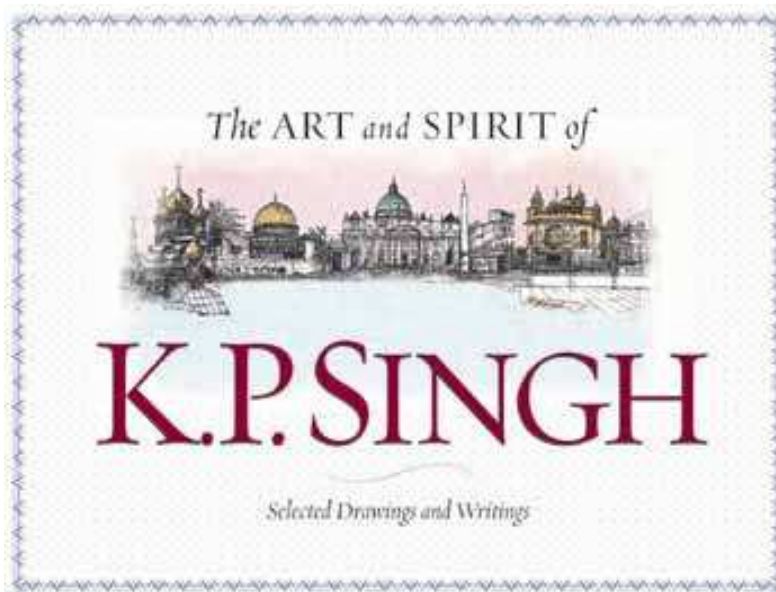
Indianapolis Mayor Bart Peterson gave a tribute, even though K.P. had made him blush earlier in the evening by forecasting a run for the presidency.

Sen. Richard G. Lugar, R-Ind., wasn't able to come to the reception, but wrote the foreword to Singh's book. K.P. was recruited after graduate work at the University of Michigan as a senior urban planner for the City of Indianapolis' Department of Metropolitan Development when Lugar was Mayor.

The city has changed a great deal since 1967. K.P. was once the only man in a turban on the streets of Indianapolis — a sight so unusual it merited a mention in the local paper. (Members of the Khalsa, a sub-group of Sikh men, wear the distinctive headgear.) Now there are two Sikh congregations in the city. From a handful of Indo-Pakistani families when he arrived, there is now a community of thousands.

As each speaker noted during the program at Butler, the increasing acceptance of the city's immigrant communities is due in part to the untiring efforts of Singh, a man who lives his belief in the oneness of a mankind illuminated by an invisible life-force he calls "spirit."

"Strangers are people I haven't made my friends yet," he said when it was his turn to talk.



Following K.P.'s remarks, it was back to signing and schmoozing. In the audience were friends and collectors of K.P.'s art, including women in gold-trimmed silk saris, men in three-piece suits, newspaper editors and art critics, socialites and businessmen. It was an unusual confluence of world culture, right here in Indianapolis.

"If lines on paper could speak," Singh writes in his introduction, "they would reveal that our heritage is an extension of our spirit." For K.P., much of that heritage is embodied in "the history, art and spirit of architecture."

*The Art and Spirit of K.P. Singh* (Guild Press, 2003; \$40) is available in bookstores and from the author, [KPSinghDesigns@lycos.com](mailto:KPSinghDesigns@lycos.com) or 1-317-849-7340.

