

Diverse Discernment

Devadoot Rajyaguru (Guru), Mehul Patel & Hrishikesh Biswal

15th april to 21st may 2008

"Most artists are now concerned with an inner world, recreating the images seen within diverse terms of reference or using them in narratives bordering on fantasy, private or public"

K.G Subramanyan

Was K G Subramanyan referring to the artists of the present show? I was wondering reading through the portion of his recent book *The Magic of Making*.

When the three young artists, Mehul Patel, Devdoot Rajyaguru and Hrusikesh Biswal came with their works', I told them straight on their face that there is nothing common in their works to make it into a thematic group show. Their themes are so varied that it was difficult to link them. When Mehul sings the songs of lost pastoral songs, Guru derisively makes statements on the "chaury tales" of contemporary life and Hrusikesh portrays the innate savage stones of desire through his paintings.

Mehul states thus 'through my work I have always wanted to preserve what so ever I saw, It is like a flashback into my life, the indefinite emotions. The formulaic shape which perhaps does not revert to any sort of conventional stability is an ongoing process which has grown over a period of time. To me it is more about putting life into my dormant memories or rather keeping them alive". I remember Mehul traveling to Bastar region with a friend and coming back with series of preparatory drawings of pastoral scenes mainly featuring bulls. When asked for his fascination with bulls he answered that he was awed by the attachment of the tribal culture with the bull and their modes of expression dealing with the animal. Indeed tribal cultures always considered bull as symbolic representation of virility, When representing the bull in the scenario of modern art Mehul does not transgress from the tribal sensibility or attachment whether it is the bull charging at a miniature rail coach or the bull with rear view mirror. Mehul interchanges the images of male sexuality of the modern world with that of primordial symbol of virility.

Rajyaguru on the other hand busies himself commenting on various aspects of contemporary life. His themes are varied but he maintains throughout a role of a critic, kind of talking aside in brackets. The chair where he states that it moves from person to person and belongs to none or in the work which portrays artist on a donkey he works montages the verbal images to that

of visual imagery The artist on the donkey gives an image Of the artists in the contemporary Indian situation where artistic freedom is being challenged and the forces of fundamentalism are baying for the blood of artist and inches on to the mists to place them on a donkey, a way of humiliation in the ascribed traditional standard. The works reflects Rajyagurus's personality and his interpretations to his immediate surroundings, best represented in his latest work 'Dear Sri'.

Reference to sexuality in art, unswervingly or obliquely is getting more and more tabooed in the contemporary Indian society. However, the innate instinct of the popular psvche appears to be worshiping it, as evident from the mass media. Hrusikesh's involvement with the subject of eroticism should not be perceived as mode of titillation but as a an expression of pacifying the psychological trauma initiated from a childhood apparition HIS works are personal letters to his muse 'Guddi Darling' rendered in the style akin to the pana and miniatures of Orissa.

Coming back to the meeting point of commonality, it may be non entity if one approaches the work in the formalistic realm as Mehul and Rajyaguru trying to reinvent the tribal art inspired schematics, wandering briefly into the academically accepted avante-garde abstraction while Hrusikesh reaffirm his roots in eastern India. On the thematic sphere one may find the meeting point where they deal with their innate teechn Of their surroundings charged with the concerns of the patriarchal construct of sexualitv.

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