

“This Is Not It”

Chirag Patel

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The Michael cult hit the 80's and 90's and I was plagued by it too. My growing up years in a small city where “western music” cassettes were sparse, my only introduction to “English Music” were the cassettes that my dad bought on his frequent foreign trips. In one of his business trips he got me “Michael Jackson” who was already a pop icon in the west; that was it. An addict, I requested every older cousin living in the city and studying in the U.S to send me more of MJ video tapes, cassettes posters, sparkly gloves, trophy jackets, stud bands, belts and aviator glasses – I wanted them all and I wanted them first. I still recall buying issues of Sun magazine to complete the MJ poster that came in 3 parts. I waited for hours in the lobby of The New Oberoi to have glimpse of him- A stone studded jacket produced an aura around him as he walked passed us wearing a red mask covering his face partially, a frail thin had waving at us-they don't just call him the Phantom of the Pop for nothing.

"The Phantom of the Opera", “Angel of Music”, “Wacko Jacko”-Who is it?

Ecstasy Ecstasy why can't we all Live in Ecstasy. Without a guilt, without regret I am here to forget Tainted memories of imagined sin In every friend, kith and kin.(extracts from Dancing the Dream written by Michael Jackson)

Duality in life is existence, evil and good are inherent within Human life, with one or the other being manifested due to the arising of certain cause and condition. A fundamental darkness which we fight each day, but we can elevate our lives and suppress the manifestation of one and harness the other. “When we claim all goodness and virtue for ourselves and consign all evils to the other, we are destined- Like Goethe's Faust after selling his soul to the devil Mephistopheles-to become immune to the voice of conscience within', says my Mentor.

A Pop Icon who created phenomenal music, but also a confluence to bizarre controversies. “I love you” said MJ leaving the audience mesmerized, you believed him. Celebrities become public icons, the masses worship them and hang them on their walls but they forget these idols are actually humans. Tomorrow they pelt stones at this very Idol and even gossip about him without a cringe in their bellies. Doubters and lovers would agree the contribution of MJ a perfectionist, who wanted to constantly create and re- recreate is the King of Pop who revolutionized music video and created a new jaunre of music. “I am trying to save my voice” rues Michael in his movie “This is it”, dancing comfortably amidst kids half his age. He may failed, in his attempts to become invincible but his art immortalized him.

“This is not It” Chirag Patel reveal his frailty and opium like effect that one artist had over the other. Michael Jackson came as a opus of hope recalls Patel chatting with me in May of 2009 just before the king of pop died. Chirag reminiscing his happy days had doodled with sketches of MJ all over his studio

and his soft board revealed his Michael mania. Chirag has a narrative impulse and his art are stories first then a painting but it does not have a slice of life. Vignettes of the subject and a memory locked within. No matter how many times you see the pop icon Michael Jackson in the series "this is not it" blast of neon colors repeated in every work but every line ever hue though shows sheer familiarity will yet surprise you. His works are stolid narration of the life of king of pops. Chirag's concern is the language of hues and shades not the story itself, an amalgamation of kitsch and poster art and yet the detached way of representing things suggests a universal style. The works have no pretension just like the artist himself. "I am mesmerized by MJ's videos, the lights they play with gravity. Michael had a taste for technology. His videos and concerts were cutting edge back then. The tiles that lit up in Billie Jean amazed me more than the music. Michael's videos and concerts made me transgress to a parallel world that was my own. Michael will always be remembered as the King of Pop, an inspiration to many artists" said Patel.

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