

## Non-Tangible Surface

Arati Rao's paintings have many dimensions, and consequently many visions. Physically, it includes acrylic paints, glass, the past and her present. The expressions conveyed, using paint on glass reveal an expanse of creative impulses, influences from works by Klimt and human instincts relating to sexuality and her experiences of motherhood. She paints on glass, a material whose essence is an absence; embodying immateriality. Arati has always been intrigued by the null space and enjoys the challenge of making a tangible/visual surface from it, in turn strengthening it.

Much of the excitement comes from the fact that her works engage the understanding she obtains while encountering various situations and influences. With a successful film-making career, Arati alongside, indulges in the medium of paint; where the bright colours opaque the transparent glass surface, giving a feeling as if starting from scratch. The transparency or 'nothingness' of the glass surface is negated, as if resisting to be perceived as it is supposed to be; instead the emerging forms and colours give it an illusionary multi-dimensionality as in paintings. The glass performing as canvas, recites unconventionality in choice of medium and illuminates an array of imagery and concepts, created and incorporated by her; corresponding to the multi-dimensional aspect of a film, which initially starts as a non-tangible idea or vision, but then proceeds to become a full-fledged art form.

Presently settled in Bangalore after many years in Mumbai, Arati, restarted her painting career a year ago. In today's age, with emergence of various ideas and styles, and a prominence of a marketplace in defining the status of almost everything; the art culture is perched on level where it is interrogated with intense fascination. Major shifts, as the sudden rise of a market value for art works or the prominence of individual idioms which allow or do not allow personal expressions to be maneuvered, give consent to artists and their art to exist with a flamboyant and successful countenance. In few of her squares the soft unmediated and unpremeditated streams of lines and flows of pigment seem to spring directly from the artist's impulses.

Her works have the lyrical, romantic symbolism incurred through influences retained from masters, such as Gustave Klimt, an Austrian painter in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The sensuous, self-indulgent forms or flowing soft designs have the striking two-dimensionality with which Klimt surrounds his figures evoking the gold ground of Byzantine art; this platform of directly adopting from the past negates the space in which the painting is done, as in negating time, thus in consequence creating images of eternity, similar to Klimt's borrowing from an earlier period.

In fact the present show, performs as a tribute to this great master. Many of the works retain a similar identity, but yet transfigured by her choice and impulse. With the proliferation of images in our world today, the choices are vast, thus an art-work is a result of preference, and directly or indirectly artists are influenced by what is around. Arati's choice in picking imagery, symbols, designs incorporated by Klimt, rejoices or pronounces her awareness and love for his work.

All the paintings are bright, discussing her relationship with her experiences. The experience of being a woman, a mother, an artist, and through it all emerges her persona

celebrated through the beautiful glass paintings. The rendering on the glass is delicate, and the paint wanders spontaneously, but softly.

Intrigued by the detailed symbolism, coveted by Klimt, Arati picks up fragments from his work. 'At Play', 'On My Mind' or 'Love' are active, bright and decorative yet contemplative paintings. Textiled backdrops, brightly hued forms and symbols, the mother child stylized personas or the designed Klimt's Kiss, together unite and revel in colours which move stealthily on the glass surface; the initial decorativeness which appears flat is in actuality skin deep. Their colorful playfulness and our delight in the paintings assure us of a deeper awareness of a similar potential in ourselves.

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