

August 15 2005

ART

Nature within

Conceived from within, Anuradha Nalpat's lovely landscapes demonstrate perpetual poetry and idealism. Anuradha visualises forms and sways with colours...all coming from nature, from oneself.

The canvases, done in oil previewed on Saturday, are on display at the Chitrakala Parishath between the August 16 to 18. And, in Kochi from the August 29 to September 4.

Her handling of vision dodges what is actually seen; the 'treatment' of paint is unique and conveys nature in its splendour. The choice of contrasting elements portray movement, be it curvy lines or the suppleness of colours. The trees are circled with delicate concentric lines with the branches barking out in all directions, spreading across the entire canvas. The snowy mountainous pictures portrayed with draped strokes of paint, gives softness to the massive forms, disregarding defined notions of solidity of mountains; the water moves across the surface rhythmically...it appears that the colours and forms stem from her imagination in order to call up a particular imagination.

In present day art ventures, landscape painting seems conventional. Various new mediums and interventions in art belittles the various types of landscape painting, considering it too repetitive or too much done. When seen from a narrow perspective, modern landscape painting is swinging back and forth between two divergent approaches.

On the one hand, there has been an effort to transcend traditional forms. On the other hand, many artists who do set out with aims to depict pure, unaltered experiences and expressions in nature, are considered too formal or 'realistic' as the progress in photography and the existence of 'natural' landscape painting from time immemorial creates an abundance of varieties of pictures from nature. Thus, it seems that what is seen now is seen before.

But, Anuradha challenges this. She asserts that nature is within all of us and thus we know it. And, the expanse of nature allows her to achieve an unstoppable continuity through the beautiful hues captured in her canvases, eliciting a zealous response from the spectator.

Placing creativity

Dakshin Hawa, a painting exhibition at the Alliance Francaise (Aug 5 to 14) featured four young artists emerging from different backgrounds who are presently based in Pondicherry. The show not only acknowledged their belonging to the city but also

depicted their search and comfortableness with the place... which helps the artists to freely gather their wandering imagination.

There are many artists today who appropriate themselves as protagonists in their work of art; the characters or forms in the paintings work as dynamic or hidden alignments helping to discover a meaning to their life and art. These artists focus primarily upon the figure as a subject. It is usually taken for granted that human appearances in paintings serve as a direct approach in recording human experiences. The visualisations in these paintings have strong individual personas, however, with a generalisation.

Though it seems that the artists are not particularly concerned about noting down individual experiences, the paintings mention specific details. They seem more concerned with the generic idea of people or a person, people in relation to their surroundings, people shaped by their interests, needs and activities, people as humanity in present context, experience and location.

In Kirti's, Arpita and Vishwajyoti's paintings the human forms are integrated with the other forms in the painting forming a structure on the whole. Appearing as wrapping, figure and background, interior and exterior into a single or multiple metaphors.

In Kirti's work the theme of sand or beach and the horizon so connected to Pondicherry is seen in all her work. In its subtlety, plainness or pureness there is a consistent schematicism - a subtle dynamics in interaction of form and colour, but not without reference to real things. All the paintings have their language of signs and poetry.

Arpita's experiences in her paintings include the figurative elements as formal elements along with contours and shades, forming the structure of the painting. Thus, the notion of figures being considered representational is subverted as the figure also works as one of the formal elements, giving it equal importance like form or colour, along with various objects/renderings in the painting.

Bikendra portraits placed symmetrically in a linear fashion exposes expanses of flat 'field' spaces. The linear forms with portraits seemingly superimposed, work as signs of the symbolic language the artist has developed.

Array of sorts

Five artists namely Barathan, Chelian, Dakshnamoorthy, Rajasekaran and Ravi from Chennai exhibiting their paintings at the Chitrakala Parishath (Aug 8-4) inherit the theatrical preference in the various styles portrayed in their works. Accumulating ideas and influences, such as the Ganesha icon, images from Ajanta paintings, these humble artists, depart from each other, and cultivate an individual style or technique by experimenting and creating varied works of art, though conceptually a common strand unites their work. Dakshnamoorthy uses a different material like fevicol in his paintings to get a particular effect whereas Chelian, inspired by the miniature and Ajanta paintings, uses the deftness of his nails in creating landscapes. He applies the technique of scraping

paint. Barathan attempts to paint horses as if molded out of terracotta.

The other two artists, Rajasekaran and Ravi, adopt individual expressions, either triangular planes or picturesque forms. Rajasekaran's Rockets have multiple vertical parallel lines shooting upwards spread across the horizontal expanse of the painting with linear indications to differentiate them. Most of these works are done using oil or acrylic, on canvas.

Out of these artists, Dakshinamoorthy's varied canvases appear as the most 'painterly' in the artistic sense of the word.

He uses the adhesive - fevicol to give a slight relief and transparent effect, and the fast 'watery' strokes softly line-out the forms in the mist of paint. His interest in a life underwater, is seen in all his paintings.

He terms the different beings collating with the numerous forms as a synthesis of a culture, an inter-relation or interplay with life and the surrounding vast world below. Using oils he creates a misty watery effect.

A lot of his work is fishes wriggling their way about within the vastness and borderless expanses of water contained within the frame of the painting.

Though the works in the show arouse an interest, it is disdained by the inexperienced way the works are displayed. Other than cluttering imagery, it also confuses the onlooker in identifying works as each artist grapples with various subjects and styles. Re-affirming the notion that in spite of sincerity portrayed by artists through works, a dexterous display counts a lot.