

‘So Long as the Green Hill Remains, Do not Worry about the Lack of Fuel’

The above phrase, taken from a ‘Chinese proverb’, fits to describe, what summarises the spirit of Suresh Jayaram’s art. Living in an eminently urbanised area between two major gardens, Suresh metaphorises them as the lungs of his fast-paced, changing city – Bangalore.

Aesthetic creation today, should possess the existence of the ‘real’ and the persistence of a utopia. Suresh’s art takes this pose by reserving his stance for the changing environment in Bangalore. What distinguishes Suresh Jayaram from other “environmentalists” is the timeless quality. The timelessness is sought through the timelessness of art, which yet reserves the concept for the ‘present’ or ‘real’.

Suresh’s works are all about co-existing. He is deeply concerned about the problems our natural surroundings are facing; a leaf choking or trees replaced by high buildings. As an artist, ‘real’ for him is the human contribution, i.e. a realisation of what is happening in our city today. Questioning the new situation in our city where nature is divorced from fast-paced globalisation; where survival of the fittest refers to the economic stature of the individual, Suresh hopes to create a sensitivity to this predicament.

For him art is the mentor where the walls of the gallery space display what's taking place outside. Where the space holds no bounds, but rather demonstrate the condition beyond.

Suresh’s work unveils layers of paint as the innumerable layers on earth.

The use of earthy colors, with ‘natural’ (unprecedented) brush strokes admits to the scheme or ‘idea’ behind his works. His work titled ‘Nature Diary’ consists of a culmination of his previous observations and collections of leaves during his morning walks. The work has actual prints of leaves to retain the actuality of its ‘nature’.

“*Prakruti avum Vikruti*” meaning “Nature and it’s Diversity”, is the concept behind his work.

The show titled ‘My City’ displayed at the Sakshi Gallery in Bangalore, between 20th October and 2nd November 2001, refers to the present epoch in time when man must understand the fragility of other living things; when sensibilities need to attain a new sensitivity.

The works are also a contest between the demands of the global and the local. Where identity is sought through global welfare, Suresh hopes to rekindle the local spirit. But ironically, the works are multi-lingual, in the sense that, as a subject, it positions itself between the local v/s the global, but the technique or treatment is different. He uses imagery from works of great masters like Da Vinci, Van Gogh, Mondrian and Miyanke, which reveal a pictorial language, which is global. It is this format that today's postmodern era is grappling about.

Today Art has to be validated by its previous history. Every scholar of Art, evaluates the standard of Art, through the language it informs. When one reveals, educates or informs, it is sufficient knowledge on the concerned subject, that allows this inter-textuality of references. Suresh Jayaram applies his art historical background by using popular and meaningful imagery to obtain a growing interest in his idea. He picks up images from various sources, which create multiple voices, which unanimously speak for him.

Suresh's concept also involves site-specific installations and sculptures (which essentially have a "site" specific context!) Stressing on the existence of his surroundings, an interesting site specific work, titled 'Love on a Parkbench' presents flowers arranged in a heart-like shape on a park bench, reveals the very tactile experience of working outside the gallery space, a space which is confronted by the common public. This installation signifies an intimacy, sensitivity through flowers, 'a homage to a park ...for being "alive" ...an epitaph?

Originating from the 'thigala' ancestry, which consists of farmers/gardeners in local Karnataka who worked for the colonial power, Suresh draws inspiration from them. Where individuals in this new urbanised culture are slaving under foreign demands, Suresh wants to re-introduce the local ethos.

An installation work, which is a ' Colonial oven with plastic flowers and seed pods', discusses the amalgam of various instances of time, class and also the prevailing of a 'kitsch' element in it. The work consists of a baking oven, which signifies a colonial presence, juxtaposed with plastic flowers expressing an 'artificial' component in it. On the top of the oven, is a showcase containing fragile objects, which is kept to make the composition 'interesting'; so akin to the practicing trends in art today.

Suresh Jayaram's paintings and sculpture-installations are all very well balanced with the 'inner strength'. The unnecessary luxury of materialistic things are sidelined, the façade of power overlooking the simple yet important nuances of nature, are rejected. The rich earthy colors displayed in his paintings seek to establish the Second Coming of Nature.