

KOLKATA CONTEMPORARY

MAR 21, 2016

Aakriti Art Gallery

Brings

Kolkata Contemporary

At

Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

From 29th March -4th April, 2016. 11 am -7 pm



“Only one thing remained reachable, close and secure amid all losses: language. Yes, language. In spite of everything, it remained secure against loss. But it had to go through its own lack of answers, through terrifying silence, through the thousand darkness of murderous speech. It went through. It gave me no words for what was happening, but went through it. Went through and could resurface, 'enriched' by it all.” -**Paul Celan**

It is the trope of our times to locate the question of culture in the realm of the beyond. Our existence and the proposed exhibition will be marked by a tenebrous sense of survival, living on the borderlines of the present, for which there seems to be no proper name other than the current and controversial shiftiness of the prefix 'post':

postmodernism, postcolonialism, postfeminism.-**Homi Bhabha**

The beyond is neither a new horizon nor a leaving behind of the past. At present we find ourselves in India in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. Space is an amorphous concept in post- colonial discourse and has physical, metaphoric and psychological connotations that are almost always intertwined and represented in socio-linguistic patterns. What we understand as post-colonial identity- formation after 200 years of British rule followed by Independence in 1947 and partition is inextricably linked to the mapping of the psychological space of a community necessitated by certain historical exigencies. An orchestration of otherness and alteration constituting the works in this exhibition titled 'Kolkata Contemporary' by Aditya Basak, Chandra Bhattacharjee, Chatrapati Dutta, Sekhar Roy, Parthapratim Deb, Subrata Biswas, Akhil Chandra Das, Tapas Biswas, and Asim Basu create a body of visual text seized with revelry, resemblance, celebration and desire. The artists' role has been- first the confrontational and the heroic- outsider to the mainstream and its institutions who upheld a subversive revolutionary identity, and the second that verge on the solipsistic guise, whose reclusive symptoms manifest often through a disquieting expressionism by using the premises of abstractionist formalism. The complex entanglements of cultural currents that emerged with present concerns in postcolonial studies can only be presented adequately in exhibitions like these and thus become an experience. If Historicism – and even the modern European idea of history came to non- European people in the nineteenth century or somebody's way of saying “not yet” to somebody else; If former simple

presentation models are abandoned and the dialogues between cultures as open process, the exhibition space transforms into a site of 'contemporary gaze'.

Contemporary India may be said to be in the throes of a transnationality that defines itself in terms of a challenge in political theory and to earlier paradigms of nationhood, governmentalism and developmentalism. Rapid political, economic, social and cultural upheavals that have taken place over the last one decade fuelled by a world order. In the sphere of culture and the arts, these new reflections manifest themselves as a series of questions, about how to rediscover domestic/indigenous spaces without disengaging the world system. Cut edge artists of the present reason out proposition for locating the subversion of art practice in the interstices of urban spaces and beyond.

Here the step is to invoke an exchange that will not question our own notion of culture and society but will also affect how we imagine ourselves in India. The dialogue is a continuous process: it has little to do with past concepts of edification but any repartee that emerges as a vital process, a cultural environment where we become familiar with the changes influencing our lives. Thus signals out how an eclectic range of imagery from the changing world of postcolonial India becomes instrumental in evolving a visual language of collage and citation, which in turn, acted as a vehicle of cultural force, creating and negotiating as the sacred, the erotic, the political, the modern and beyond. The very idea of historicizing which carried with it some peculiarly European assumptions of disenchanted space, secular time and human sovereignty now challenges the notion of our presence in the waiting rooms of meta-narratives. This exhibition provides an insight into the condition of contemporary art in India and the opportunity for many questions regarding the idea of "identity" and to what extent we stretch ourselves? The questions that come up –is there a need to probe? For whom the programme is being done? Nothing but the most complex and historically specific conceptions of identity and subjectivity can sufficiently grasp the present situation and articulate a politics adequate to it. Perhaps the cultural time is paced differently according to one's location in relations to domination. Thus, the 'afterlife' of colonial discourse is very different for the colonizer and the colonized. The 'Other' no longer geographically distanced, but within, and over time significantly shaping landscape and culture- Samosas at the National Theatre café in Britain or Race riots. Not all places in the transnational circuit are however; similarly 'post-colonial' like Japan. Japan was never under any foreign rule. The active, subjective, inescapable, everyday engagement with the legacies of colonization/decolonization that is part of the British matrix for reggae, bhangra rap, Hanif Kureshi's screenplays, or Homi Bhabha's hybridity are not the terms of theoretical, artistic or political endeavors in India. For each of us there are multiple time- pathways, variously paced, so that cultural change is simultaneously slow and fast, not just across communities, but within socially and historically positioned selves.

The exhibition space act as site where these chosen artists strive out their destiny, the right to signify the human experience: the "wholeness" of existence. This group show showcased by Aakriti Art Gallery comprises works by, a representative fraction of a region, which has contributed enormously in the making of our contemporary visual text. What is also important for us that works in this show need to be seen in the context of its current concerns, practices and expectations provide a sort of space of the art of the moment- a shifting twist and turn of memory that takes place. "Only one thing remained reachable, close and secure amid all losses: language. Yes, language. In spite of everything, it remained secure against loss." -**Paul Celan**

For more details about the show, please get in touch with N G Rao at admin@aakritiartgallery.com / +91 9830411115. The show is also viewable online at www.aakritiartgallery.com