



# MORNING DEW

Recent Paintings by Lalu Prasad Shaw

January 5 - 30, 2019

लालु प्रसाद शर्मा



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January 5, 2019 - January 30, 2019

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# MORNING DEW

Recent Paintings by Lalu Prasad Shaw

A panting silence fills  
The empty vault of Night with shimmering bars  
Of sullen silver, where the lake distils  
Its misered bounty. — Hark! No whisper mars  
The utter silence of the untranslated stars.

- (E.E. Cummings, Summer Silence)

Lalu Prasad Shaw's temperas are a revelation of mind and soul, compositions given the scrutiny has been subjected to contexts in which it has been used, we know much about its origins, or better, the occasion that gave rise to it, the history of its appearance. The best and most compelling of his work approach to an eclectic realm that leans heavily on his insights. In spite of his enormous erudition and sense of form and texture that remind of his earlier 'Babu' and 'Bibi' series, he puts them together with a calm detachment in which a clear structure combines intimately with solipsism and expressiveness to achieve a paradoxical visual image to create scenes of artifice that makes him one of those venerable Masters. Having established the 'pleasure of seeing' a main thrust, he then turns these works to a translation in order to show how the context in which his figures appear. he has twisted - one would say - the magnificence grasp of life itself and forced him to make choices in his practice that are, to say the least, desirable of moments seized with a visual felicity by an entirely expressive affective surface, but it never gives itself away as external sign- rich in privacy and inwardness. These abstracts done in gouache in the present exhibition contain an element which makes this work both resistant to categorization yet intellectually irresistible. From the late Fifties to the present his personality expressed through his etchings, paintings, and sculptures has presented a challenging half-mocking conundrum to the viewer. The drawings of self location and the vessels of colour he painted here is minimalist in its mode. The present series can variously be interpreted as referring to psychological alienation as if he developed these ideas in isolation, and far from excluding content, the works are intended to provide a screen on to which the viewer projects his own experience provoked by the Master. The bareness of the image forces the viewer to consider the idea behind the non- event of the painted space.

Here is a feeling of Master's delivering the pleasures of traditional gestural abstraction in a personal or expressive idiom- painted space done in gouache with brush and roller, there is an intense activity; obviously, the energy made visible is controlled, and one has to watch closely the expressive visual modulation of color into which are woven into planes which are so sophisticated, controlled and lucid that they may go unnoticed and encompasses formal structures that becomes a vehicle to cross-pollinate the techniques of his medium and the poetry in his work; the flat paint body seem less important than tone, an effacement of one layer followed by another setting a vector, shadow set against deeper shadow, marking the points where their forms reflect, intersect or diverges instead of converging, elucidating spaces as vivid streaks of fluorescence make a way for light tunnel, a kind of enlightened aesthetics settles on the viewer as our own encounters find an abode in

another pictorial space. It becomes interesting at this point how his small works here done in gouache, the abstraction fights for its life, seeking instead to hold on to that tenuous thread that connects its operations to those of the world, whose appearances, at least are conspicuously absent from their frames. This painted ground, this rhythmic unity of senses, can be discovered only by going beyond and gives his work in this exhibition a fervor - enigmatic abstract forms quietly emerge from richly layered surfaces of poetic abstracts. The small vessels seek to break out of "the purified domain of light and colour".

In an earlier series, blending fact and fiction, Shaw incorporates representations of one's self alongside his fantastical creations laced with a sardonic charm that carries the essence of a bygone world in colonial Bengal, complicating conventional representations of the self with humor and acerbic wit which is also a part of his magical oeuvre. Love, tenderness, submission, compassion, introspection - his works cast an encompassing degree of the human and cultural condition. Not for him, the mock-casual almost-prose of so much contemporary in his Bibis' and 'Babus' - a voice that is not ashamed to speak in a balladeer's register. We know of no one else at present who has conceived of such chronicles where his impressions unfolding his perspective on life as he sees it through a literal prism as we experienced in our nineteenth century and early twentieth century Kolkata of bibis and babus, the parvenus that emerged - a new social elite during the rule of John Company, hymns and songs. The human forms on canvas interestingly, aren't sketched to any anatomical precision but with a sense of aesthetics - rather by being granted certain distortions of the poesies, they have a somewhat piquant, inscrutable quality. But it for him the practice would be impossible to stop- one has to create the text in spite of the odds. He meditates to return to contemplate on a variety of things he ponders, but on a few recurrent icons culled from memory and mythology through which can be sensed underlying verities; his paintings are like none that we had ever witnessed before, at once lyrical and fiercely disciplined, engaged and yet deeply introvert. His language and verve is an act of his mind where the memory mode plays a vital part as he revisits a cultural space of Kolkata, its splendor, decay and decadence all entwined together; the memory of surface values remains with us whether we are looking at his images or not- a languor of an infinite yearning, celibate but still singing. It is through such discourse that the other become anonymous and structures eternal texts of desire. He is able to choose a spectrum and create a symphony with predominating colour as a keynote, the texture laid with luminosity, imagination and precision juxtaposing the modern and contemporary revisiting of the past.

(...and eddie and bill come running from marbles and piracies, and it's spring, when the world is puddle-wonderful – E.E. Cummings).

Is it a melancholic condition one may ask? The humanity and enactment of the human gesture in the Master's work, which infuse them, may be traced in some measure to his own experience and the love for humanity he imbibed early in his life—the world of our human experience, the beauty of human concern is a sacrosanct. In the realm of his painting, the intensities of the sensation are more acute since the visual field is organized on the basis of his intensity. The act of recreation in its essence relies on interruptions of the flow to render it efficacious sensuous clarity; accomplished realism turns out on inspection to be both lyric vision and a complex enigma in his paintings that provide a celebratory transcendence of the subject matter. We share with them their view of a fluid, impermanent reality and this time besmeared with expressionistic brushwork that is much freer and bears a strong personal identity and ability to conjure up experience and the daring of a stepping out into the shifting foundation, as into beaten paths that one cannot follow to their ends. His tone is jocular, affectionate, his slant witty and generous. His work is exhaustive and carries the mark of an improviser. It has a substance based on energy and subtle text and has the wheels of memory to make fitful circles in the space rather the active and neutral elements amidst opposite markers. His idea in this coloured fields when painted refers to a psychological alienation, the images force the viewer to consider the idea behind the non event of the painted space: so wise that the act is an act of self possession, something carved, with brush, the continuity of brushwork and is so more wise is to define an opposition and control the tension in his painting through space, matrices, images and colour to bring out a crisis, established by a gesture and holding such elements on check. It was born from another struggle within the self while decided to abjure from the narrative exuding a grace and harmony.

He creates his own stories and associations, he puts them together with a calm detachment in which a clear structure combines intimately with playfulness and expressiveness to achieve a paradoxical visual image to create scenes of artifice and makes him one those eclectic painters. But these artifices do not by any means resist our emotional identification or intellectual response. They tempt us to penetrate beyond the surface attractions and learn what is going on by opening up our own sympathetic, imaginative-poetic faculties setting up a dialogue between our obsessions and private associations. His paintings is an allegory of the artist's calling that abandons ironic inversion for the stoic silence that hovers exploring a contrast between two kinds of private pursuits.

Poises the sun upon his west, a spark  
Superlative, – and dives beneath the world;  
From the day's fillets Night shakes out her locks;  
List! One pure trembling drop of cadence purred. (E.E. Cummings)

At the same time he rejects any pictorial superficiality which can mean hope for a word in the heart of a thinker. We come back again and again to his work why this choice was the obvious one for him. The painter's verve that touches prose-poem and produces a reciprocal need- the language of painting as the shapes and substances assume a mental quality, conferring upon the mind a sublime alienation that brought them forth a thrilling, if somewhat power of detachment accomplished by the syntax of language swinging between distance and intimacy, his works done in tempera/ gouache on paper deal with his own reassembly of an idea on a previously unseen realism he always aspired and able without modification of its own nature to relay an indefinite variety of messages.

On the other there is something to observe in these works, even if it is not what we may commonly think, and even if seeing what we commonly see may blind us to another truth, a 'more true' truth that is none-the-less there, though its mode of being there may not resemble anything like a fixed contemporary presence. In other terms, in another language, this would translate as the minimal hypothesis of logic of the subconscious, that our psychic symptoms have causes, origins even that the dreams do not cheat with metaphor, and so it pays to be meticulous and rigorous. This sense of the intrinsic worth of seeing, combines with his feeling for the poetic moments of human gesture. There is intense search, a narration, nuances; the energy made visible is controlled, his special intimacies of readings of cities and its environments not in the particularities of place and telling, but in the amplitudes of connection, of emotions that attend a tale. This is also linked with a deeper realization that the handling of etching plates in his practice of printmaking, its articulation and sense of gesture as a medium, are largely capable of an immediate registration of the movement in time of an intuitive-subjective experience with the culmination of a romantic apogee in them. There's a literalism about the unhindered fluid imagery that makes the majestic- the evolutionary path often evokes and on several occasions actually realize the potentials of a meditative enclosure and are replete with images of a static eternity that substitutes the external one translating feeling and emotions into a visual language.

Nanak Ganguly

Ref. No. C0393  
gouache on paper  
21.5 x 14.5 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0347  
gouache on paper  
19 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0348  
gouache on paper  
19 x 12.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0353  
gouache on paper  
18.5 x 14 in  
2013



Ref. No. C0354  
gouache on paper  
18.5 x 14 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0385  
gouache on paper  
18.5 x 14 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0343  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0346  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0355  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0357  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0358  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0359  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0360  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0361  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0362  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0376  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0377  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0380  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0382  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0383  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0386  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0389  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0390  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0391  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13.5 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0345  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0349  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0350  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0356  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0363  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0367  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0368  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0375  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0392  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0396  
gouache on paper  
15.5 x 13 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0342  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0378  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13.5 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0388  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13.5 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0387  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13.5 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0364  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0365  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0366  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0374  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0379  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0381  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0384  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0395  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13 in  
2018





Ref. No. C0397  
gouache on paper  
15 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0351  
gouache on paper  
14.5 x 13.5 in  
2018

Ref. No. C0344  
gouache on paper  
14 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0394  
gouache on paper  
14 x 13 in  
2018



Ref. No. C0352  
gouache on paper  
13.5 x 10 in  
1984



## The Mystery within the Real

Water-colours of Sudip Roy



February 15 - 28, 2019

## Aakriti Art Gallery

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