

SAKTI BURMAN

60's - 80's



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Kolkata

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The Divine Desire : Paintings of Sakti Burman

Among the artists coming to lime light during 1960's Sakti Burman is somewhat different in his approach towards the world of his art, both in content and form. Innocence and wonder are the words that can aptly be applied to have an idea of his expressions. Rebellion is one of the general trends of the art of the sixties. Most of the artists speak against the wide spread evil that encompasses the social world around them. Their forms are full of turbulence, excitements and fragmentations, mostly expressionist and primitivist in formal orientation. In other sense, Sakti Burman is also rebellious. But he cast his protest from an opposite direction, from the view point of classical composure. Probably he believes that evil can be negated by projecting the bounteous light of innocence and beauty. Here, his philosophy is more or less parallel to that

of the artists' like Jamini Roy, Binodbehari Mukherjee, Matisse or Chagall.

In his art there is an assimilation of the artistic philosophy of the East and the West. In his personal life he has gradually moved from eastern regions towards the west. He was born in Calcutta in 1935, but spent his early childhood in Bidyakoot, a village of East-Bengal, now in Bangladesh, whose nature and environment, the jubilant greenery and melodious flow of water in rivers have made permanent mark on his consciousness. In Bidyakoot itself he earned the first blow of life. He lost his mother at the age of three or four. The submerged grief of that loss has lingered in his memory through out his life. From there, his family moved to Dibrugarh in Assam in 1943, the year of devastating famine. Completing

his schooling there Burman came to Calcutta in 1951 and got admitted in Government School of Art. After completing his diploma in Fine Arts he moved to Paris in 1956 for studies in École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts. He visited all the art centres of Europe and ultimately settled permanently in Paris, where he married his life partner artist Maite Delteil. In Europe he was fascinated by the forms and ideas of Pierre Bonnard, Matisse and Chagall. The Italian frescos also moved him. In spite of his permanent settlement in Europe his contact with the country did not cease. Between 1960 and 1970 he visited extensively to most of the art centers of India like Ajanta, Ellora, Sanchi, Khajuraho, Elephanta etc. Assimilation of the forms of the earthly, yet ethereal Italian Frescoes with the jubilant and enlightened classical ethos of Ajanta and the dream world of medieval miniatures has gradually been internalized to build up the translucent joyous imageries of his paintings, where the mythologies of both regions, orient and occident and the events of his personal life have merged into a harmonious tune.

To bring out this harmony, his form plays a vital role. Burman is not only a painter. During the recent time he has come out as very successful sculptor also. His works are mostly figurative. But the association of the figures defies the general norms and logic of reality. They create a world of dream defying the prevalent law of gravity. The reality is heightened towards an environment of surreal. His technique plays a vital role towards this direction. Apart from drawings, he paints mostly in three mediums: oil, water colour and pastel. There is a chromatic orchestration in his oils, very jubilant and ecstatic even within a structural orientation. In stead of flat display of painted space his pigments burst into fragmented pointillist mist and scatter through out the picture space to create a mystic environment that contribute extensively to bring out an ethereal flavor defying the earthly gravitational pull. Once he accidentally invented the technique. While working with oil in normal technique suddenly a drop of water fell on the pigment causing the pigment to burst into pointed atomic splinters and scattered around the space shattering the normal character of

reality. He then developed this process of pigmentation to achieve his contemplated goal. While his oils are jubilant and ecstatic there is some sort of restraint in his water colours, which is the outcome of the treatment of space.

In the present show barring four oils most of the paintings, about twenty in number are in water colour executed between 1960 and 1980. In his water colors, he transforms vacuity of the space into a divine light of the sky through treatment of his figurative forms. The second characteristic of his water colours is the use of texture. Pointillist texture is an essential feature of his oils. The same is present in his water colour also. But the transparency and subtlety of application of chromatic points bring out a different character in his water colours. The smudgy display of minute chromatic points intermingling with very tiny yet crafty non-chromatic voids displayed by the whiteness of paper creates a wave that dilutes the naturalness or reality of the environment and transposes the characters in the pictorial field to a different conceptual environment and helps to bring down the divine on the earth and elevate the

mundane towards a noble sensation. This nobility is the essence of his expression. In oils it is ecstatic, more colourful, where as in water color it is more refined and restrained.

His early water colours executed during his art college days in 1950s display a conventional form in British water colour technique. He devised his own technique of water colour since 1970 when his love for French post-impressionism particularly the world of Bonnard and Chagall brought emancipation in his treatment, where the earthly elements defied the worldly reality to transpire towards a wondrous jubilant space. During 1980-s and 1990-s his water colours have developed further towards a synthesis of naturalness and the abstract. He created a kind of minimal surreal environment, which is amply displayed in the paintings shown in this exhibition. The artistic identity that Sakti Burman created in the modernist field of post-1960's art is a kind of spirituality through a sensation of love for the life.

Mrinal Ghosh



SB104
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000



SB105
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000



SB106
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB107
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000





SB108
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB102
Dream of Maya
Oil on Canvas
36" x 46"
1964-65
Price on request





SB109
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB110
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000





SB111
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB112
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000





SB113
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB101
Oil on Canvas
30" x 40"
1970
Price on request





SB114
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB115
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000





SB116
Water Colour on Paper
19" x 25.5"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB117
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000





SB118
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB103
Oil on Canvas
23.5" x 19"
1981-82
Price on request





SB119
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB120
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000





SB121
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB122
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000





SB123
Water Colour on Paper
25.5" x 19"
Late 1970
₹ 3,00,000

SB124
Oil on Canvas
24" x 18"
Price on request





Satish Gujral | Acrylic on Canvas | 12" x 12" | 2015



M.F. Husain | Rajasthani Head | Oil on Canvas | 20" x 20" | 1970



S.H. Raza | Bindu-Nad | Acrylic on Canvas | 20" x 20" | 2007

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