

On artist trail

Ratnadeep Advrekar



Artist Ratnadeep Gopal Advrekar exploits Mumbai images - sufficiently simple and abstract ones in order to re-invoke the spectator's cultural and personal memories. These memories, or the process of their construction and interpretation, finally constitute the effect of his work finds out Shivani BT

The artist, having experimented with a wide range of styles and subject matter, brings together metaphors from contradictory or unpredicted sources, both historical and contem-



porary, by using diverse materials and techniques. Ratnadeep is joining substantive images of the past and more abstract icons from the present, trying to attribute them to transcendent symbolism. At the same time, he does seem to want to flirt with their nostalgic content, since it is in part through the presentation

of a sense of something that is lost that the active tensions of his works can be elaborated. The forms are drawn from his surroundings and reminiscences of past experiences, it all seem to connect making the works quite intense and dense.

Where is your studio?

My studio is located close to my house in Goregaon. Luckily it still has protected forest land and is green around the year; it is easily accessible to the highway and close to the airport. Although it has fast growing skyscrapers skyline it still has the old charm in smaller by-lanes and wadis. It is a nice locale with several artist and actors, film technicians living in the vicinity, due to its proximity to Film City and Filmistan the famous bollywood studios. It also has interesting cultural spaces like artist Mohan Samant's Museum for art lovers.

How was growing up in Mumbai?

I was born in suburbs of Mumbai, unlike today it was more of satellite village. As children, renting bicycles for half a rupee an hour and riding them down to Madh Island or Aarey Colony were our vacation past times. Next to our house was old bungalow of Mrinal Gore which bore a deserted look otherwise but would be very active in times of political rallies and meetings.

What fascinates you about Mumbai?

The soul of Mumbai, what more can one say - the optimism, the diversity, creative scene, it is a full spectrum of colour, where dreams come true or untrue but one never stops dreaming.

What do you think is the essence of Mumbai?

Whatever the calamity 26/11 attacks or 26/7 floods people in Mumbai stand together shoulder to shoulder with fellow Mumbaiikars. Due to its strong economy Mumbai is strong magnet for transmigration bringing in a strange mix of people and ideas which eventually becomes an idea of Mumbai.

Cultural scenario?

Prithvi theatre, NCPA, YB Chavan are interesting places for viewing good theatre and short films, sadly Rang Bhavan has no more live performances, during our college days we were fortunate enough to attend concerts of famous artists likes of Zakir Husain to Rock Festivals like 'Independence Rock'. Bollywood is of course the major influence on the masses, interestingly with new filmmakers the bollywood films have improved a great deal. There is a great awareness of art these days but I also think more people should visit galleries and museums to get visually educated.

The places you like in Mumbai?

Being an artist I like Kalaghoda art district, it has vibrant art scene with several galleries and museums around and interesting architecture. Also my college Sir J. J School of Art campus,



Gothic style heritage building built in 1857, being right in the centre of the buzzing town it retains the natural environment and once inside transforms into a creative peaceful zone.

Favourite food joints?

Although I prefer home cooked meals, I sometimes indulge at China Garden, Olive, Baghdadi. On the streets bhel puri and vada pav are my all time favourites.

What is next?

Solo exhibition at the NUS Museum Singapore in June and later showing at Sydney and Tokyo and also I am working on an upcoming show at the Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai in November.