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Kalindi & Prtha by Michael Buhler-Rose



Untitled by Stephen Mueller

Coming from the Advaita Vedanta branch of Hindu philosophy, Neti-Neti means "not this, not this" or "neither this, nor that." Artistic practice today seems to comfortably inhabit many interstitial Grey areas in terms of content, forms, materials, techniques and cultural identities. Artists are attracted to subjects and ideas from all over the world, with scant regard to provenance or pedigree.

Life is, ideally, multi-layered and confounding, full of cross-referencing as well as overlapping concerns. Cultural indeterminacy has become a preferred language and attitude, the most appropriate response for both the inhabitants of cyberspace and the polyphonic community of creative travelers.

The sentiment is largely reflected in the new exhibit Neti Neti at the Bose Pacia art gallery in New York. The exhibit is a fusion of East and West in the true sense.

The collective works by eight artists from South Asia as well as the US, assembled for the exhibition, include painting, sculpture, photography and collage. If not actually hybridized from diverse materials, the works articulate through imagery and content a space that is in between tradition and contemporaneity, straddling cultures both Western and Eastern. Is this American art or Asian art? Critical thinking or multi-cultural confusion? Happily, we can ascertain that these works are "neither this, nor that." The works present the positive capabilities of visual and material forms to express that which language is inevitably inadequate to describe.

"The works displayed are an example of cultural interdependency in today's global situation," says gallery's Associate Director Rebecca Davis.

The participating artists include Michael Bühler-Rose, who lives and works in Florida, Boston and New York. He shoots portraits of young people who study the traditions of one culture from the other side of the world. Bühler-Rose has been a Hare Krishna devotee and most of his models are Hare Krishna followers as well.

Sheba Chhachhi lives and works in New Delhi and has documented a group of women ascetics whose identity seems iconoclastic within the parameters of their own orthodoxy.

Stephen Mueller is from New York. He makes meditative paintings that might also be musical notations or diagrams for dance.

Delhiite Aditya Pande combines computer graphics with painting and collage to synthesize imagery that is purposefully contradictory.

Arlene Shechet of New York crafts ceramic sculptures that imply function while denying any fixed cultural patrimony.

Bharat Sikka from New Delhi takes painterly photographs of landscapes that hover between development and degradation.

Maurizio Vetrugno who lives and works in Turin, Italy and Bali; addresses issues of fashion, travel and celebrity culture in his collage and embroidered works.

Raqs Media Collective from New Delhi includes Monica Narula, Jeebesh Bagchi, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, who investigate surrendered time. Entries from a Time Book gathers a luminous dog guarding stolen moments of a worker's leisure,

arrested time pieces, and signs marking the road to Harmony, Industry and Economy.

The exhibition has been curated by Peter Nagy, an American artist who has been based in New Delhi since 1992. He is the director of Gallery Nature Morte in New Delhi and the curator for Bose Pacia Kolkata.

Visit Bose Pacia at: 508 W 26th St , 11C, New York, NY 10001. Phone: 212 989 7074.

Open: Tuesday – Saturday; 11.00 am - 6.00 pm

By Juhi Jhunhunwala Dhingra

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