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Beyond boundaries

Artists P.G. Dinesh, Gayatri Ruia, Mithu Sen, Nitasha Jainee, Samarendra Singh and Sabrina Shabbu use the box as a frame to express their thoughts



WHILE MOST art is intended for the lingering appreciative gaze, the title 'The Peep Show' seems to hint at an exhibition that affords fleeting surreptitious glimpses. Featuring the works of P.G. Dinesh, Gayatri Ruia, Mithu Sen, Nitasha Jainee, Samarendra Singh and Sabrina Shabbu, the cohesive characteristic of their endeavour lies in their using the box as a frame for their creative thoughts and expressions. Bordering on sculpture and yet firmly ensconced in the art of painting, moving readily between the second and third dimensions, they also tread boundaries in their varied thematic approaches.

Feelings, emotions and reactions to objects and situations inhabit the work of Dinesh, incorporating a vigorous mix of Daliesque imagery and satiric humour. Inspired by digital signboards and the flood of constantly changing imagery, his paintings create an interesting wrap-around effect on the box. Dinesh's fascination for the shifting visual is contrasted with Gayatri's premise. Reverence for the gods runs as a parallel in her work duplicating the typically vibrant colour scheme of the Indian puja room complete with the familiarity of the indispensable calendar pictures. Mimetic of the sacred place of worship, the distinction between art and reality is deficient if not imprecise.

In an attempt to box her pet hate, kitschy pink, and its implications of trussed up objects in a consumerist culture, Mithu houses within transparent boxes objects with implied associations made with lustrous silk, beads and shimmering threads, each screaming for attention. With deviously camouflaged humour and insinuation, the colour speaks loudly of clichés, chauvinism and narrow-mindedness.



Pink is again in focus in Nitasha's attempt to concretise the "extreme materialism" that we encounter daily. Pink plastic lotus flowers, mounted on a text that verbalises haute couture, are accompanied by small sketches of the well-dressed male in contrast to that of an insignificant nude articulating "a hope to return to Nature sometime, someday".

Speaking of contrasts, Samarendra's works voice the contradictions in the different aspects of the Mother, particularly as the nurturer who takes on the deadly mission of fighting evil to protect her children, thus probing the incongruity of the 'gentle creator' pictured against the 'awesome destroyer'. The varied elements he employs range from

the sensitive rendering of classical sculpture to bold folk and urban design elements, intense painted red juxtaposed by cooler hues, garish flowers and magazine images, reiterating the theme of contradiction, while coexisting harmoniously within the shared space of the box.



Considering the different communicative capabilities of dissimilar materials, Sabrina uses them in harmony with intended expression allowing for higher expressive quality. She says, "I am trying to understand material beyond phenomenological reality to its metaphysical sensibility, trying to synchronise it with the intended miscellany of ideas and thoughts."

'The Peep Show' is on till October 30 at Apparao Galleries, Wallace Gardens, 3rd Street, Nungambakkam.

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