Cross-cultural creations on canvas

Four city-based artists express the realities of life in their work for the exhibitions. Madhu Sharan, who is being introduced by the city to the national scene, has used her art to evolve a new kind of realism, while Neetu and the other artists have experimented with styles, motifs and topics.

By Manoj Kumar

Express Herald Service

CHENNAI: Art is a fusion of fact and fantasy, a self-defining social and emotional resonance, and an exploration of convivial relationships. Madhu Sharan, the artist who is being introduced to the national scene by the city’s art gallery, is creating an evocative realism through her paintings and drawings featuring four artists residing in the city, in an expression of the subtleties of life that are viewed from different perspectives. Zooming into the creations, we find the common thread which connects all the artists’ works — the socio-cultural changes of the modern world and the role of how societal institutions and constructions affect people’s psyche and ways of being.

Introducing the artists and their works, Rathe J이에, director, Billis Centre, Chennai, shares, “The artists we have featured in our exhibition are all from different cities, and the works we have shown are not just about the locations, but also about the people’s emotions and identities. We have made an effort to present their unique perspectives through their art.”

Chennai combines art, science, and spiritual insights. Samuel Jayachandran uses art as a seemingly mundane thing. Vijayraghavan is a multidisciplinary artist who works with both videos and multimedia. His works are more about the issues, exploring from the good and the bad to the more complex details. Manoj (Indyagiri) has a layout technique where memory, identity, and history are coming together. All of them experiment with different techniques and mediums, adding that through this exhibition the interaction between nature and process becomes important.

Understanding the muse

Madhu Sharan welcomes us to her world of realities that have been passed down from the past to the present. She uses a geometric, minimally abstracted visual structure to create a world of patterns and rhythms, and her influence is somewhat exceptional. She aims to convey the idea of love via love work. Speaking about the word painting “Love formed me like itself,” she shares, “Even if you have everything in the world, without love, you feel as though you have nothing in life. Every single person has a unique kind of unconditional love, I strive to capture its form in an effort to convey my ongoing desire for love. Through this abstract artwork, I strive to capture the visual impression I have of what it could be like to embody the mystery of love that I feel.”

Amid the colourful paintings in a wooden installation titled “Unbalance,” which contains 20 wooden rods and a wooden box, the creation is a mesmerizing “Unbalance” that brings in a balance for almost seven years now and I have seen the imbalance between the people in terms of culture, religion, race, politics, and many other factors. As an artist, I aimed to bring all these issues that separate us in the life line with my art. Each of the twenty rods represents a different issue and their placement reflects the imbalance.

The artist has experimented with different materials like banana fibres to show his inclination towards natural materials. His photographs displayed were also abstract and pointed towards bright colours. He says, “The photographs were taken in Nancy, Paris, and I tried to show in bright colours as the story behind the pictures, those of the weavers were dark. They were not properly benefiting from the work they did.”

When the other artists focus on society, Michael’s work looks into the conscious manifestations of the mind. The layering technique he uses has led him to compose a surrealistic narrative. His artistic uncle, Chronicle Lead, employs a rich visual dialogue that binds human emotion, the holy mind, pain and pleasure, the past and present, the present and the future, and the past.

He emphasizes on restoring past experiences when the villages were pollution-free and humans and animals survived together happily. As the artist, I tried to capture the visual impressions I have of what it could be like to embody the mystery of love that I feel.

The pictures I have seen in my childhood and the vegetable which is being reflected in my work. I used watercolour, water, and pencil.” he says.

Vijayraghavan tries to blend in both society and the individual. His creations reflect the story that drives human existence and life. Hisamburger single channel video projections titled Twenty Atans and Wales Mob Up, which were made in Berlin and Portugal respectively, are displayed for the first time in Chennai. The artist delves into the opposing forces or binaries at work in daily life, including truth and falsehood, good and bad, attraction and repulsion, and corporeal notions of reciprocal visual dialogues that dehumanize in metropolitan settings.

Exploiting his painting, Nostalgia, he says, “I lived in London for a few years. When you are going abroad you are in the diaspora engaged with the past and the future. I have represented the use of the background and the imagery in the foreground. I have used cultural connections showing fish, yamada’s snail, and Ashari’s snail, ensuring the boasting of the East.” The installations are meant to be the deconstructed and the suspended in his work, as well as his expansion into the world of new media technologies and the dimensions of arrangement of the visual surface into deconstructible pieces, defining the artist’s style. The collaboration of the like-minded

The exhibition was “The Colleagues of the Four people who met at the right time and right place, comments Gertie. Vijayraghavan, the curator of the event details, “We had the idea of exhibiting our works during the pandemic. The focus was on the artists living in Chennai who were continuously working with material exploration in a parallel conversation. In fact, all these artists except Gertie are from Chennai, but Gertie had been residing here for the past four years. I think he has given us a great opportunity when most of the private galleries don’t promote experimental work.”

For details, visit: www.incoincentre.org
Chennai-based artists' group exhibition features art with unique mediums

Talking about the works she says Geetika combines art with science and spirituality.

Photograph by Vijaygarman

Chennai: Infa Centre is organising Madras Muse, a group exhibition featuring the works of four Chennai-based artists, Geetika Jaya Chatterjee, Michael Fraduyaraj, Samuel Jaya Chandran, Vijaygarman S. at The Gallery till February 19.

Speaking to DT Next about the exhibition, Rathika Jale, director of Infa Centre says, "These artists approached us and pitched the idea for the exhibition. Each of these artists has a different technique and their concept. Experimentation is what brings them together. It is a great to see that the muse is important, but these artists have managed to bring it out in a way that is collaborative."

She says she was intrigued by how visually rich their art is. "The fact that they are looking at deeper socio-cultural and political issues that impact us on a daily basis through the lens of art is very inspiring and this also initiates conversations."

Talking about the works she says Geetika combines art with science and spirituality. Her work reflects on patterns and how things in life repeat themselves. Vijaygarman's works are sophisticated in the sense that he uses both conventional and unconventional mediums of art. Being a multimedia artist, he explores the concept of binaries in life.

Vijaygarman's work has a sense of a meldine narrative. He uses a layering technique wherein people can see how memory and identity play a role in his concept and work. Samuel's pop art uses bright and popping colours to highlight and offer a fresh perspective to everyday life's mundane objects.

“Apart from the Indo-Korean collaborations we also try to accommodate and offer our platform to support local artists. This is one such collaboration and we are looking forward to more.”

Offering insight into how the collaboration happened, Vijaygarman says, “We have been seeing the work Infa does and so we felt this would be the right platform for us to showcase our works. Each of us has something different to offer and this comes from a special place. Even though the other artists have been in Chennai for a short duration, they feel an endurable connection with the place that reflects in their work.”

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