

READING FRAGMENTS FROM TIME

Abstraction's tenors and its expressionism have brought Sudip Roy to its matrix of moody momentousness as you espy the grooves and limpid passages of the intentions of the mind in these works that read like fragments from time. Drawing simultaneously on photo-sensitive perceptions with a light hand and the dulcet design of colour's vapid vacuous tonality these works are as if Sudip adds a footnote to the history of abandoning, realism and merging into the magic of Abstract Expressionism.

It is the expanse of colour that makes curiously inviting tonal graphs of sites frequenting a certain perception that continues to coax abstraction from almost magical manipulations of smoke and mirrors, land and sea, and making beautiful landscapes that mirror the brink of an epiphany not unlike the works of the great Abstract Expressionists.

Sometimes the work is maximal in intent but sometimes it is minimal and it seems as if Sudip creates pictorial haiku by giving and using the in an internalized memory perhaps of open pages of books of photography, some of which he alters, or even the terrain of intrepid inertness that he has seen either from a n imaginary view or just in the cavernous recesses of his own mind.

Similarly oblique are the tonalities that he chooses maybe an ability to organize existing objects and materials into startling images that command prolonged study, different as they are in every way. And each artistic perception chips away at the illusion of the abstraction as instantaneous and evanescent event -- a throw of the dice over time can change its very abacus -- and blur the distinction between found and known, extending the medium of abstraction in its tryst with time, space and memory.

It's almost like watching a riveting concert of tango, if you like tango shows in one shade — dark and brooding — it's dancing seriously but also about emanating a playful grasp of theater. Colours that silently gleam with a dismal sheen, can actually glide along as smoothly as a train without ever derailing into a pseudo-seduction melodrama.

In the show Sudip gives us a fresh look at abstraction, part of the allure is the numerous, exceptionally well-knit shades of tonal gradations that gives us the abstract choreography that blends the pastiche of planar divisions.

No work however, is lavish ,it's lucid and limpid in it's subtle tenors its almost as if there is in the inner reading of the innertness there is a tension that gives way to voluptuous softness, and powerful overhead lifts of rough hewn harshness is melted onto the floor of earthy soil in silken extensions of singular swishes.

Abstraction for Sudip who has done pure realistic and quasi impressionist landscapes for more than a decade is about a subtle sense of time rather than place. His more recent paintings, which first had infrastructures of angular lines that resembled briary fences and then more relaxed, elegant tangles of thick, ropelike loops that uncoiled across radiant, still monochrome fields, occupied a class of their own. But this movement gives him a kind of flame-keeper status -- something like the Giorgio Morandi of radical abstraction, a maker of inordinately beautiful, exquisitely made (and expensive) artworks.

The exhibition shows him as an artist who has spent his career assiduously converting the rule-ridden zone of Minimalist abstraction into a capacious yet disciplined place, pushing it toward landscape and the figure while reconnecting it to its roots in Abstract Expressionism and beyond, in non-Western art. It makes perfect sense that one of the greatest influences on Sudip's art has been the art of India's abstract masters, where originality is a much deeper, more nuanced concept.

Watching someone start out at a time when painting had grown narrow and confining and make the medium big again is exciting. Moving from realism to abstraction is a step that is akin to a certain detachment from familiar terrain, but the abstract genre beckons in a manner that nothing else does. Obviously abstraction as a process and a projection has been growing inside Sudip and that perhaps gives these works another complexion-a fabric of the fragments of time's inner and outer poetic recesses.

As Sudip's abstractions progress from one idea of structure, proportion, colour, light and surface to another, his trajectory encompasses a tremendous range of physical and emotional energy and gives the lie to the idea that any art can be purely formal or completely abstract.

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ART CRITIC