

BHARATI SAGAR

Artist Statement



A dominantly figurative artist, her works are partially autobiographical reflecting her angst, happy emotions and nostalgic sentiments as well as her empirical experiences of the world and life observed around her including culture which she has conflated seamlessly through her experiences. At the heart of her works lies the concept of time and space, a palimpsest which conceals through layers of her veiled imagery and transparent brush strokes those memories that ultimately finds realisation in the correspondence of its translation as time and space. Her attraction to the language of human forms was the power of images as opposed to the specific meaning of the depicted subject. Time and space through which she corroborates is assimilated into a visual language of either complex or simple patterns serving as building blocks for her expressions of emotions, sentiments and feelings.

Among her range of works, there are a few series that show her conceptual strength and crafty artistry. The 'Boxed in' Series is one of the prominently striking works, which was developed in the early 1993–1997 while posted in Kolkata centering on the identity and independence of the woman within her household. The compositional layout in this series is represented by the wooden crates symbolically marking the cloistered, confined, cramped space within which the woman defines herself. The strange, uncomfortable postures, technique of engaging the brush strokes in creating mottled effects, the thin transparent veils of tonalities sweeping over the forms, the dark pessimistic gloomy black tones offer a rich gamut of psychological, emotional, physical unhappiness and angst of women deprived of their voice, dignity and independence.

The representation of each form in this series has a narrative to convey, which Bharati has done with clarity. Since most of her works are premised on her experiences of having perceived or observed the domestic reality around her. Her tonalities are similar to the Japanese concept of Notan, the balance of light and dark. The figures in Boxed series and the monk series explicitly reveal her engagement with light to create a sense of mystery as well as contemplative serenity. Space maintains a close relation with illusionism, narrative, and the performative qualities of art. To the spatial element in her works reinforces the narrative content with forms either cloistered heavily or creating free movement. The concept of space in her abstracts creates the visual balance of positive and negative space, in which the element of the duality cannot exist without the other making both necessary. The negative spaces or those spaces between her forms enhance her abstraction enriching the beauty of her composition.

Spatially her representational forms floated as she did not provide any anchoring. Working continually, the identifiable forms lost their contours and she settled with just pure forms, through these forms she extended to recognizable ones as the horse, winged human form, dancing and acrobatic figures, children, a bird, a bicycle, or a boat on water. Conveys it with dynamism, thus taking her art to another level.