

THE JOY OF A NEW HARVEST

Siddharth Shajirao Shingade is a young artist who understands that the universality we speak of in our contemporary art is that of the hundreds of millions who live in the villages and eke out a living from working hard in the fields to grow the raw material that ends up packaged in our Supermarkets as bread , frozen vegetables , fruit juices and the like . That is why his art conjures up images of the daily lives of nearly 90 crore peasants who live in our rural areas , providing a livelihood for over half our population that industry is still incapable of integrating into its framework at the moment .It is this universality that is reflected in this exhibition .

This time , he has concentrated on the moments of rest and reflection of the rural ambience . The young herdsman playing the flute , the young woman tending cows , the young couple going home after a day's work on a bullock cart and the mother who protects her daughter and a goat kid with the same sense of love , are images of repose if not contentment of our rural life ; but they also reflect its constant and close contact with the natural environment not only as users but as protectors .

He has gone beyond his last exhibition where he found it necessary to be formally didactic with large spaces in his canvases given over to hieroglyphs . Now his confidence reflects itself in purer forms and a move towards the minimal in his expression . But his major concern is with relationships still : the issues of involvement and renunciation . The involvement with the unavoidable being largely portrayed in cool colours of logical expression , and its rejection in warm defensive saffron .

However , his concern with stasis and motion , death and life , male and female , destruction and creation and the abstract depiction of these as yantras within the tantric tradition of a peasant's philosophy of creation as procreation , of seed as plant , find reflection in his latest work , reminding us that our new expression has a history that carries it back to a process that is nearly ten thousand years old .Yet each time it is invoked , it is new .

This time , I find a new approach to composition in his study of a couple on a string bed which blends elements of the horizontal and vertical , figurative and non figurative in one structure ; but at the same time I find that his concern with the continuity of the theme of creation , and ofcourse , procreation , as an important component of it , giving it an element of flow .

This brings us closer to that profound reality both in art and life that whatever the lack of resources , it is the human input alone that can make up for it . This exhibition highlights the human aspect using understatement both in terms of colour and form , to bring it to the forefront . And this is the universal appeal it communicates to the viewer . Being global , close to nature and to humanity at the same time , is part of this process . It brings us the joy of a new harvest that we feel like gathering up in our arms and carrying home with us to enjoy till the next one arrives.

Suneet Chopra
Art Critic, Writer