

Creativity to Cherish

Creativity is a remarkable thing. It blends the constantly changing elements of matter with human intervention to create things that were not there before. These objects are matter infused with the human spirit. And the way in which the human spirit enters these objects is through production. Some artists concentrate on a single type of production, say painting or sculpture, but increasingly younger artists are expressing their creative urges in many different ways. They reflect a world where many techniques jostle around waiting to be tried out and there is a great desire to experiment with as many of these as possible. Adil Writer is one of them.

He began as an architect, a state of being where the creative process is divided into plans visualized by the architect and shaped into objects with the participation of draughtsmen, engineers and various forms of skilled and unskilled labour. And this collective effort, with the intermeshing of a number of different relationships, gives us an environment which may be a house like that of the Sarabhais in Ahmedabad or a city like Chandigarh.

The larger and more complex the project, the less it is a direct expression of the individual creative mind, for everyone who intervenes puts a little of himself or herself in it. So it is perhaps a perception of this reality that got him to immerse himself directly in the process of production and move from architecture to painting, ceramics and sculpture. This allows him to make the object that he wants, with the learning process involved in finishing it, to be internalized through his own hands, eyes and nostrils, something that no assistant could either communicate or execute. So his paintings and ceramics in this exhibition have a certain directness and authenticity of the creative urge in him that we often see lacking in assemblages that are only supervised by the artist and executed by hired labourers.

What do we make of it? One thing that pervades his paintings, wheels, stelae, shards, urns, covered bowls, pottery pillows and treasure boxes, is a basic joy of living life through a process of constant interaction. This is spelt out in the tactile nature of his works. They are for the eye and hand to touch, to feel, in the real sense of the word.

Indeed, the feeling is heightened by the use of many different techniques. There are digital images that are given a surface in paint sometimes mixed with fine washed sand, ceramics mostly wood-fired, at temperatures up to

1300 degrees, anagama works fired for over 60 hours with temperatures reaching upto 1350 degrees, and some gas-fired works, with different surfaces, slips and glazes.

As is to be expected from an artist in love with life, the works are not pieces created in isolation. They draw inspiration from the broken stone grinding wheels that lie scattered in villages all over Southern India, or from the megaliths of stone-age burials, from rock inscriptions with lofty ideas engraved on them and even from the ancient Chinese clay pillows and elegant little jewelry boxes of urban India. But the jewels they house are secret spaces of unexpected shapes to awaken ideas we never normally bother to entertain.

His works call on you to participate in and relate to the joys of creation embedded in the objects that throng this exhibition. But he also reminds one that creation is subject to the ravages of time whose diacritical marks are visible on the surfaces of so many of his works. That, however, is only one part of the picture, for in a number of his works we also find man's desire to overcome the process of decay and disintegration in nature, by dabbing ochre on them, or red spots to ward off misfortune. This urge distinguishes works of art from mere pick-ups that are expected to be used and thrown away. Art demands you hold it, cherish it and preserve it, as Adil's works do. In order that you are drawn to doing it, the artist brings together a unique blend of technique and perception that makes each work worth pondering over and preserving. This quality of passing on and yet remaining there is crucial to all works of art. This element is strong in Adil's ceramic work and paintings and confirms its validity as art.

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