

AN INSTINCT FOR MOVEMENT

If any viewer of these works wonders what they are about, let him think on the word rhythm – it is such movement and its patterns that inform the root reality. Dancers and musicians build their houses of beauty on that very foundation, even as our body registers the same. Thus day and night. Now painting too will not be left far behind, even though we imagine that it images still life. Well, if on the surface it is minus physical motion, it is certainly not so, or may not be so, in what it imaginatively conceives on a flat surface. Sangeeta's new work is instinct with movement, and so – this once – with full knowledge of what she is excluding from it. This time around she represents nothing at all, and merely presents, or if you like, enacts the choreography of normally not noticed objects, things, materials etc., etc., she presents the energy behind the apparently neutral, non-gendered fact.

It is how, over here, we have the joints, the pins and needles, the sticks and stones in their fascinating square dancings, dialectics, matings or courtships, and so on. These are overtures of material reality as well as its upshot, the reflections in our own minds, the concourse of specters, shadows and shades. The forms or configurations that our perceptions assume.

The painter is not concerned to treat us to the gross substance as appears commonsensical, but rather the essences that underlie it. And these may well be the rhythms in their various guises. The work therefore is a kind of algebra, and not additive arithmetic. Its import is to our contemplating, self delighting eye, rather than to the computing logos. A vision of motion in action so exciting that it annihilates every other kind of wish, say, for the descriptive narrative, and which is catered to by disparate orders of art quite adequately.

All art would be said to derive from an ever latent dream, and one which many a painter likes to guide. But in this present case it is as though the

work guides itself quite independently. To dream this wise is to forget the materiality of one's body, to shuffle into one pack the outer and the inner worlds. Our painter would appear to dream a little whatever she 'sees', even at the exact moment of painting, as progressively, that is even while she is seeing the so called common objects in her studio – curtains, slats, the criss-cross patterns on her own blouse, the bathroom's welcome mat, the grill up by the ventilator – to enumerate certain of the objects or appendages. All of which gain souls by this act of dreaming, or especial seeing. To put it another way, she sucks out the contemplative goodnesses from out of these otherwise inert realities. The artist in Sangeeta is amazed at the world lying about her in such potential richness. And she mines these very riches whose value is in pure delight, nothing more nothing less. Having seen the growth, or change, in her *métier* for the past some years, one can say that this painter is not the same person, you speak to, in social gatherings, for this other one is really in a state of permanent dreaming, in a mood of constant astonishment, and which makes her marvel at everything seen. Well then, even if this be so, our dreamer also harbours the crafts-person in her, one who is attracted to precision, to a sort of hallucinated exactitude. Sangeeta's work is thereby well defined even in its ambiguities.

It is a blessing that someone who carries on the hard business of the unrelenting and indeed unforgiving world with eyes and ears wide open for possible missteps, nevertheless changes over by evening into the alter self that puts her hair down and slips whether wittingly or otherwise into the stream that refreshes, and wherein our making mind come to the fore, to play with the counters of reality, so as to skim off its cream, and so that our taste buds are fed their food of joy.

About a hundred years or so ago, some artists on the European continent started off the process which was subsequently nicknamed abstract art. Though as a matter of fact, a great deal of pre-historic art as in the making

of pots and pitchers, vases and urns, as in the patterns of basketry, and what not, bear the mark of the art which we now call abstract art, as though being hard up for a more concrete term to distinguish the thing. All orders of art have long lasting traditions. And these repeat themselves in keeping with the temperament of the artist concerned, as well as the time spirit. Sangeeta's art presently is in the cycle where simplicity and an express frugality on the score of colour and form are the norm. If there is a delirium in all artistic creation, it must be decanted, and separated, from the harmful residue, with all the precautions that this delicate operation involves. The painter herself only succeeds in approaching her essential secrets and decanting any of her deeper artistic moments through the use of simplicity and transparency, to let the amorphous become natural and flow without effort (or seem to), and to proceed in such a way that the ineffable is familiar, at the same time that it retains its miraculous secret roots.

An artist has two pedals at his or her disposal, a light one for opacity, and the other one for transparency. The artist has both of these at her disposal, she often would seem to operate in darkness during periods of crises. But work performed under pressure also has its advantages, since this permits increased daring, and because of the incidental enhanced lucidity during then. But the strangeness in her work appeals to her only when it has become acclimated, when it has attained the human temperature. It is in this way that she tries her hand at making a straight line out of one of several broken lines. Certain artists are the victims of their moments of trance in that they indulge in the mere pleasure of unburdening themselves and neglect the beauties of their art. Or, to use another image, they fill their own glasses to the brim while forgetting to serve you, the viewer. Not so this painter. She has hardly ever experienced the fear of banality that haunts many artists, but rather that of incomprehension and queerness. But even when she is no specialist in riddles, certain of the public have yet failed to

grasp the virtue of her works. Their eyes are perhaps fixed on the day's banal art.

The image as in Sangeeta's work, is the magic lantern that gives light to artists in darkness. It is also the lighted surface she sees when she approaches the mysterious centre where the heart of art beats. But images are not all in all. There are also transitions from one to the other, which must have such an element of art, something like a poem, in paint. As for explanations they have been called anti-art, and this is true in terms of explanations of logic. But some of them are too submerged in the dream, though that without leaving the domain of the artistic.

Thus an artist may aspire to coherence and plausibility in an art work, the surface of which will be transparent at the same time that its mystery takes refuge in the depths. The painter counts on her art works to bring order or harmony into the images and forms and makes them sing true. It is for this that these apparently abstract compositions are bathed in an inner dream. Also, she never waits for inspiration in order to begin to paint, but goes more than half way to meet it. An artist cannot always wait for those very rare moments when one painted as though someone else were conducting the brush. And thus, it seems to me, an artist must imitate the man of science, who does not wait to be inspired before setting to work. Indeed science teaches us a valuable lesson in modesty. How often we think we have nothing to say when a painting is waiting inside us, just behind a thin curtain of mist. It is enough to silence the surrounding noise for the work to be revealed to us. A painter's doggedness is all that matters and this Sangeeta has in plenty. I imagine this may be the involuntary doggedness which, one day ends by bearing fruit. This, our artist has deep inside her and it is whereby she sees as through a sky-light, that which is ordinarily invisible. I'm opposed to too marked an originality, and for this reason prefer the minimum of self-conscious originality as in the classic painters. Surely

the true artistic resolves are intact inside Sangeeta. Despite the marvelous examples of certain painters with long manifestoes, Sangeeta paints without thinking or leaning over much on rational thought or else words that bear that some rationality. She appears to come closer and closer to her central idea or thought, in the intermediate state between thought and dreaming. It is this that gives rise to a work, or series of works in a given genre. Thus, her remarkable transformations from genre to genre of art. Each itself, even though there is a deeper continuity palpable to the entire body of work for the initiated viewer.

Every artist has his secrets, I have tried to sketch some Sangeeta's by revealing that other self which catches her in the darkness and either approves of her or forces her to scratch off a proposed painting. But still I have not told the most important of the art's secrets, which is, the mystery that dwells in every artist, and from which she (Sangeeta) never succeed in separating entirely, in order to be able to judge it from the outside. I believe this 'mystery' does find place in the chosen of Sangeeta's works. In fact observing her works in their unfoldment from year to year, I have been surprised by the persistence of the force in her which keeps on showing fresh profiles in their different incarnations, and that without tiring, without any sign of the exhaustion of making impulse – the making of delight; yes that despite the onerous relentless demands of her other vocation in which she is by the logic of sheer necessity completely entangled. The cheerfulness on her main betokens rock-bottom realism, but nevertheless she yet adoring the life bestowing airy and ozone filled house of imagination. Giving dues to the world as we know it and yet she ensuring that particular freedom of self without which life is brutish, indeed not worth the candle.

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