

THE INNER FACE OF REALITY

To survive independently in the 'asphalt jungle' of the day, you have perforce to use your self-regarding moves to the hilt. But even as you return back home after this war of wits each sunset, the neglected something in your deep subconscious demands fulfillment and will not be denied expression. Well, at least in the case of the more conscientious amongst us, the inner unrest finds a life-confirming materialization.

Having observed the growth of Sangeeta Gupta's art-works during the last several years, as well as being aware of the trials of the working women under difficult urban conditions, I am of the firm opinion that she is not unfavoured by the muses, and that therefore she is able to treat us to an innerly formatting work in joyful health and not sickness, as so often. The fact that this work has branched out in different directions over a course of time testifies to this observation.

There is a true tenderness to the painter's touch, and so whether particular work be ink on paper, pastel, oil, or whatever medium. Sangeeta Gupta is evidently protective towards the defenseless flower of all nature. She treats each of nature's creations with a loving eye. By such intrinsic, spontaneous, affection she transcribes branches, stem, trunk, and all that, into artistic space with a fine precision. Only the authentic contours of the observed reality are recreated with sufficient imaginative selectivity. Thus her earlier cacti, and as of course her endearing owls. But even objects like stones have been showered by her similar appreciative attention.

Then, if some of her earliest ink and pen drawings were exquisite, with the same media she now treats us to quite another, a much drier and yet astonishingly scintillating visual music. Here definitely is a fresh mutation. The subtlety grows space. As you take in these spare, gauze like forms, or those other weavings and workings out of suture like designs, you realize

that the artist is uncompromising, that she does not allow the usual concessions of bright colours or broad subject matter to the lazy viewer. Here the artist seems to be getting down to the very warp and woof of the material world. She does not mean to denude this, or to reify it, rather the attempt is to introduce us to nature's extraordinary strengths and intricate complexity. The designs that nature invents from moment to moment are a miracle. There never is dullness among them. As also, there is no place of vain, wasteful sentimentalizing in it. What the painter tells us is, that, nature has no time to waste, what it is ever creatively busy, that it is innovative, and that it is rooted ineradicably in the very structure of core reality. It is in the context of such structure alone that we witness the inner face of reality. The said face supports the outer ornament of flora, as the beauties that commonsense applauds in fauna.

The clarity and directness of this genre gives it an unusual strength. Nothing ever is added for effect, for the painter is intent upon catching the truth of things alone, and not their secondary, more ephemeral qualities. In this way these compositions gain in value considerably.

I do believe that the artist in Sangeeta Gupta is intrinsically live, and it is for this very cause she is unlikely to rest on her laurels in time to come. As with good artists, there may well be new achievements, but soon is renewed, the eager search for fresh and unknown pastures. In such departures is certainly an artists eternal self-renewal.

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July 2000, New Delhi