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Art Talk

Marta Jakimowicz

Anne Percoco's recent exhibition at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (March 19 to 21) offered glimpses into not just her observations but also into a quite personal involvement in the process of coming to know the place and interpreting its condition.

Mediating different worlds


Anne Percoco, a young artist from the US, was on a residency of Bangalore Artists Centre during which she preoccupied herself with experiencing, probing and mediating the vivacious chaos that this city is. Her recent exhibition at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath (March 19 to 21) offered glimpses into not just her observations but also into a quite personal involvement in the process of coming to know the place and interpreting its condition. The "Walking in the City" show, indeed, contained references to this way of learning and commenting about Bangalore on a number of levels. The large installation "Walking Sutra" had a rope meandering on the ground and entangled round stones and rough chunks of construction concrete that referred to the artist's steps or recognitions. Although made of hair in order to suggest its human, intimate dimension, it came through mainly as a presentation of an idea without conveying much of the experienced sensation, besides its aesthetic formula being somewhat over-familiar. "Test Drive" was an exciting and warmly witty indication of another idea which materialised later as a performance with more participants. The shoe-size, old-fashioned car on roller skate wheels promised its wearers to help them mediate the actual traffic somewhere between the human pace and automobile speed. At the exhibition, it could act as a stimulus to the viewer's imagination but needed some explaining. What one truly appreciated was a series of photographic "Cityscapes" that built and metaphorically evoked the dynamic, generative chaos of the urban space where layers of time and physicality coexist in a partly alien yet mutually influencing symbiosis. Percoco erected and then digitally photographed strange but playful as well as serious toy-city districts piecing together its new, technological architecture from the openly disembowelled hardware of electronic gadgets, batteries, cables and such. On the one hand, it appeared rigid, indifferent, mechanically repetitive in structure, glistening motherboard trajectories dictating the road pattern. On the other, the inflections of the wires and leaning, building elements, along with the sheer density of things, conjured their own unruly liveliness that alluded to organic behaviour. They eventually seemed to respond to the

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presence of the live plants and to the carnal-like softness of the little terracotta temples placed matter-of-fact amidst the technological scenery. The viewer could not but admire the artist's astute empathy in this reconstruction of the urban force in which the present looking to the future somehow connects with the archaic past and with nature, a jerky and fluid relationship that from a literal, foreign proximity manages to locate tentative but vivacious links capable of yielding poetry. Such mediation between realities and times let one think of Percoco's automobile skates on the roads.

Token spirituality


The two painters being currently promoted by Renaissance, Hemant Kumar Dash and N Harichandan (April 1 to 6), on the face of it offer a joyous admiration for human immersion in nature that contains cosmic structures and forces and is expressive of spiritual aspirations. What comes through actually, however, seems to be an excessive indulgency in composition in terms of rather amateurish designs and smaller patterns. In fact, both artists do it in so similar a manner that it becomes hard to differentiate between their idioms. Dash may be relying more on square-like motifs, while Harichandan multiplies parallel, curving strokes, their stylised simplification of contours and loose brightness of colours has the same kind of obvious character. The way with representing spiritual moods, too, partakes of an equally conventional source in imagining things obvious.

Design over meaning

The current exhibition by Jagdish Kadur at the CKP is titled "Black and White". One may be surprised initially, because the canvases strike as somewhat messily colourful. Only a number of paintings are done in this basic contrast but their play on simple geometry and texture appears formalist and dated, making it quite impossible to guess without explanation that the works refer to the relationship between man and women. Even if the other works have clear female figures and shadowy, masculine ones, the stylised mannerism of the execution is such that the viewer does not even try to read the possible depths of thought behind them. The combination of unsophisticated planar divisions along horizontals and regular diagonals with heavy impasto areas is shallow as such, but the cutely outlined faces with huge eyes and tiny, sweet lips could be only politely described as naive.

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