

# Southern sensibility & authentic images



Intaglio by Laxma Goud

The mental image of art from the southern regions of India is one of rounded images, stressing volume in the human form, with a preference for darker hues and pure colours. This is so because artists from the south have continued to paint as they saw and perceived. Indeed, this is the trait that made them more sincere and authentic in their expressions. Now to laud them for at last "taking part in the 'mainstream' art movement is to virtually deny them their very strength of remaining true to self, soil, and expression.

What is mainstream? To become 'different' because everybody else is trying to be 'different'? Well then, you are no different at all, but, in fact, quite like what every-

Artists should maintain their originality, says  
**Aruna Bhowmick**

body else is. The generic South still to an extent stands out for its ingenuity and rootedness, which is what art is all about. To shed one's own garment to adopt someone else's is neither modernity nor modernism. It is losing the self to become another - the death knell for any artist's sense of growth. 'Mainstream' for all its worth has become like a traffic jam on one's sensibilities - tumultuous and uproarious.

Does any movement remain "without significance" without "buying and selling", and does its quality and sincerity really undergo a significant change with 'public support' in the shape of noisy buying and selling? To my mind any such movement is no movement but rather a *sabzi mandi* - the media and society at large compensating for the sellers between them.

While an artist's expression could well contemporise if he so felt, to sideline it in the

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face of 'mainstream' pursuits is, like asking Newcastle to produce guavas and Durgapur to produce soft toys. Speaking of the 'mainstream', well it would remain truly so only if it itself learnt to recognise purity of feel and expression and remain glued to it rather than the other way around.

Coming to Suruchi Art Gallery's ongoing show, Deccan Hues. A motley collection with art of all hues and sizes, it has the old stalwarts accompanied by some less familiar names. With none of us being all-knowing, the familiarity factor becomes operative when

nothing about the artists is mentioned in the ten-page catalogue, other than images of their art work. Now one way of bringing them closer to the 'mainstream' might have been to include their resume' in the catalogue.

The most eye-catching works are by artist Surya Prakash who seems to be getting finer by the day, as also RB Bhaskaran whose powerful lines and strokes of colour electrify the



Cat, mixed media on paper by RB Bhaskaran

frames. His are specific examples of how frames can make or strain in a painting, regardless of what the purists may exclaim. T Vaikuntham remains his redoubtable self as does Laxma Goud with his untitled intaglio work of the blue woman.

K Balasubramanian, P Gauri Shankar, P Gopinath, Ramdas Adyanthaya and Palaniappan are the abstractionists in the show while Rekha Rao's abstraction is yet transcribed by realism. SG Vasudev 'She', the work one faces on entry is a silk smooth oil on canvas, its red hue warming up the entire display - so characteristic of the south.

P Gopinath's colourful acrylic on paper geometric abstractions also light up the show.

While one quizzes over Palaniappan's geometric abstraction a voice tells us that one has seen much better from Yusuf Arakkal.



Acrylic on canvas board by T Vaikuntham