

## To unravel many tales

Artist Samit Das talks about book art and the magic of stories that go beyond pages

ADVERTISEMENT



Sukant Deepak

September 26, 2019 UPDATED: September 26, 2019 12:56 IST



K Asif

**A**s a visual communicator, he is clear he wants his inner world to be seen sans punctuation marks. That there be no jargon, and everything must flow seamlessly. "Maybe like classical music, so that surroundings too have a peculiar resonance. Life is complicated already, why add more complexity to it? The jugalbandi between images and text should ascertain that everyone takes away something and there are no questions left

answered, no manufactured white spaces" he smiles.

Post his exhibition titled 'Index of Untold Stories Imagining books as self directory' held recently at India International Centre, Samit Das, who completed his BFA and MFA from Santiniketan and has collected books and magazines since his younger days, insists that book art has been around for decades in the country, and it is only recently that the term seems to have been in vogue. "It is our tragedy that we don't know how to derive terminology. Once the west does it, we just follow. For me, bookmaking has existed ever since childhood, of course the knowledge that it was art eluded me at that time. I still remember buying old colour books, calendars and art books, and working on them to produce something new."

Imagining books as a self directory or an index library, he deconstructs them as physical forms; with dots, pixels and lines on paper that come together creating stories; the role of cover pages to contain and hold within a pre-set space, ideas and content that goes beyond the pages; and the bindings that holds books to together. The exhibits also included several old books along with unique editions of artist's books, journals and catalogues.

ADVERTISEMENT

Story in  
Audio

His exhibition encouraged visitors to touch the book art. He insists this was important so that visitors don't feel alienated, and can derive their own meanings from what they have constructed. Das, who used photography, glue and sewing to give new meanings to his work, says his intention was to bring together both art and craft on a single platform, as he deconstructed books as physical forms with its elements forming a relationship with one another to tell a story. "It's sad we have decided to distinguish art and craft. What is sadder is many a times rural art is copied and sold off as contemporary art. I have given order to things and also shown the reference point. It is from here that untold stories emerge. The work does have a strong autobiographical element."

The artist, originally from Jamshedpur, admits it was Santiniketan, a man-made space with several physical and emotional motifs, and graphic representation of life-landscape, that lent him several metaphors to work on. "And then, I shifted to Delhi. The Capital is a place that takes everyone and constantly questions where are you? Everyday, you create your own breathing space here. It is here that you build yourself constantly, just like a book.



Isn't a book something like this --- it involved holding unholding images and dialogues?

isn't a book something like this -- it involved holding, unfolding, images and dialogues:


The fact that any book is so open to interpretation and reinterpretation, and creates architecture space in the mind is what draws me," he says while talking about the pre-determined space and ideas that go beyond pages.

Das insists he does not have a favourite medium. "I go for the one that can hold a particular content and context together. I like to surprise myself."

Get real-time alerts and all the news on your phone with the all-new India Today app. Download

**POST YOUR COMMENT (0)**

 	 Posted by Apoorva Abhay Uzagare
--	---

**YOU MAY LIKE**

Sponsored Links by Taboola

**Greatest Cricket Batsmen of All Time, Ranked**

Stadium Talk

Story in Audio

**Luxury 1/2/3 BHK Starts @ ₹91 Lacs\* in Kandivali East, Mumbai**

Godrej Nest Kandivali

**Bajaj GX1 500W 3 Jars Mixer Grinder (White)**

Rs1,769 - tatacliq.com

**1 RK in Kukatpally**

Rs 4,500/M - nobroker.in

**Plan Your Dream Vacation. Apply Online for Personal Loan. Lowest Interest @ 10.99%.**

Paisabazaar.com - India' Top Finance Portal

**At 80, Al Pacino Lives Modest Life With His Partner**

Cash Roadster