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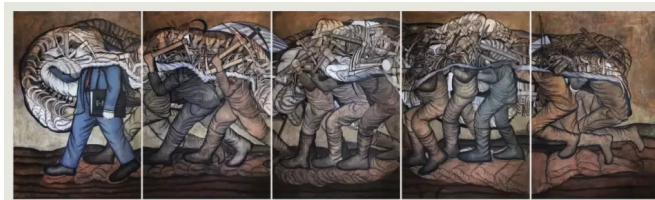
Critic and Curator Uma Nair has been writing for the past 33 years on art and culture. She has written as critic for Times of India and Economic Times. She believes that art is ... MORE

The capital city of Delhi is seeing a number of young curators who are spreading their wings. It's a mixed bag of minds but Arushi Vats of Anant Art is one of the finest. Her Naya Anjor at Bikaner House had two stellar artists to contemplate upon. The first was the incomparable print maker Soghra Khurasani from Gujarat and the second was Vikrant Bhise, an artist of rare timbre with the hand and mind of a muralist going back to tradition brought forward

to modernity and contemporary character.

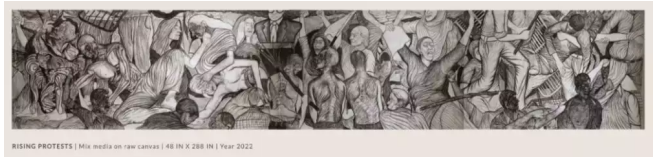
Protest Rising and Babasaheb

Begin with the brilliant Bhise whose coalescence of human figures in both black and white as well as colour created a choreography that reminded us of Mexican muralists who created walls of history that spoke to human memory. His *Rising Protests* and his *Babasaheb with Labourers* are two veritable masterpieces in melancholic meanderings and the language of human struggle and angst. In one work he plays with human drama and suffering effortlessly in the lithe fluid and languid strokes. In the second he creates vertical fragments of desolation and the promise of hope as *Babasaheb* virtually lifts the labourers and gives them solace and hope in the midst of trauma.



Pregnant with history and memoir, Bhise brings back memories of 1966, when on his 75th birth anniversary, and a decade following his death, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was honoured by the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department with a commemorative stamp. The stamp carried a portrait of a solemn, bespectacled, middle-aged Ambedkar in a suit, an image that recurred in most of his subsequent philatelic representations.

Bhise uses this blue suited “authority on Constitutional Law” as his mascot of the masses. Bhise’s painting of the fragmented humans unravels like a brochure acknowledging Babasaheb’s patriotism”, “the role he played during India’s transition from a colony to a republic” and the “leading part” he played “in the framing of the Indian Constitution.”



Bhise creates a corollary of conversations around the second work created as a recurring series of drawings that echo the involvement in social movements for the upliftment of the “Harijans” Bhise creates two magnificent works that speak to us like a philatelist. In a curious and quixotic manner Babasaheb is painted both as a “fervent nationalist,” and “the Great Emancipator of the Oppressed,” one among “progressive social thinkers” and an “eminent Constitutional Lawyer.” Bhise’s propensity for drawing the human figure in its prismatic pathos takes us back to the Renaissance Masters and the beauty of simplicity and modesty of thought.

Soghra’s subliminal woodcuts

The second artist who draws in your gaze is the brilliant award winning Soghra Qurasani whose works have been sent on loan by Tarq Mumbai. Soghra’s woodcuts

gleam like little jewels they are eloquent echoes of the Japanese as well as European woodcut Masters. The works at the show are a testimony to her search for a quintessential colour tones that create a subliminal essence of soft yet serene textures. The grass filled study of a field is a landscape of infinite beauty as well as rhythms of resonance.



Soghra creates metaphors of mood and mooring within the earth tinted woodcuts that create tensile tenors of the painful, the sad, the sombre and the small murmurs of life being a quilt of tremors and trauma. The largest print in the Anant Art show at Bikaner House, is a medley of textures and colour. In an interview she has said: "I rarely repeat colours.



“Mixing colours for printmaking is a challenge. There isn’t a lot of choice in the palettes, so artists have to create our own colours. Each work has its own unique composition—I rarely repeat colours. Of the seven layers of colour in each print, the last two play an important role in determining the final result. For the series *Shadows under my Sky*, I used almost-clashing colours to create a kind of mesmerising effect.”