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Reading and exploring the 'self'

The artists are drawn together by Anand's quest of challenging the traditional literary genre of memoir by exploring the possibilities instead of relying on evidence.

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(ME)(MORY) at Vadehra Art Gallery

Curator Dipti Anand's entire show, (ME)(MORY) at Vadehra Art Gallery (and online at vadehra.in), explores one thought - how do you 'read' the world? Here, Faiza Butt, Ruby Chishti, Anoli Perera, Bakula Nayak, Apnavi Makanji, Rakhi Peswani, Himali Singh Soin, Biraaj Dodiya, and Shrimanti Saha attempt to place their 'self' in relation to the world.



There is a Song (2019) by Bakula Nayak,
12.5 x 9.75", mixed media on vintage paper

The artists are drawn together by Anand's quest of challenging the traditional literary genre of memoir by exploring the possibilities instead of relying on evidence.

"I am interested in how we perceive our own lives, arrive at definitions of identity, and tell our stories to ourselves and others," says Anand. Anand feels that much of what we experience of the world is constructed from our perceptions, and hence has elements that can be passed on as fictional narrative.

"Sometimes, a lot of what we hope for includes an element of fiction in it." It was Anand's own writing and academic research that led to this Delhi show, including her approach to ideas of self-construction, creativity in terms of authorship, and the relationships between self and others.

Her upcoming novel also deals with the ideas of self, where the protagonist is figuring out who she is in a world very different from her own imagination. The show has a range of narratives illustrated using a variety of materials.

Ruby Chishti's sculptures include personal memories borne of contextual circumstances. Rakhi Peswani's fabric panels explore the tediousness of channelling self-expression into skill. While Biraaj Dodiya's abstract oils showcase an unknown world navigated by intuition, Faiza Butt shares autobiographical elements in her ceramic and porcelain sculptures.

Anand calls the endeavour of working with these artists a collaborative one. "I was familiar with the artists' work before approaching them and putting the show together following my instincts. The exhibition became a space of conversation, and over time a lot of deeper connections have emerged in thecuration."

Talking about the decision to install the show both in the gallery space and offer a digital platform to art enthusiasts, Anand informs it was more to do with finding a synergy between the two formats. "We are inviting people to visit keeping all safety protocols in mind. After the lockdowns last year, we creatively embraced our digital presence and are focused on exploring this synergy between the digital and the physical."

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