

A studio of one's own

Ten diverse women artists unleash their creativity on canvases and prints in Dus Mahavidyas



VARIED Seema Kohli transcends boundaries

Dus Mahavidyas (Ten Creative Forces), an exhibition at the Time and Space Gallery, and book conceived and curated by Paris-based Ravi Kumar with essays by Keshav Malik showcases an assortment of sensibilities.

The categorisation of Indian “women” artists is interesting and debateable, but as the curator explains in the preface to the book, “Dus Mahavidyas’, is a project, which honours, celebrates and acknowledges creative women. In the past, women artists have often been denied their rightful place.”

He goes on to write that the ten artists selected for this project — Shobha Broota, Saba Hasan, Kavita Jaiswal, Sangeeta Gupta, Arpana Caur, Jaya Ganguly, Seema Kohli, Gina Brezini, Shanta Rao and Pooja Iranna “have succeeded in giving an original form to their artistic expression...and participating actively in the artistic debates in a world larger and more open than ever before.”

Progressive journey

Delhi-based Shobha Broota mentions that her “journey as an artist has been a progression from detailed realism to ‘Essence-ialism’ and focuses on “realm of eternity”.

Her works which use oil and acrylic on canvas explore time, nature, dreams, music and light from nothingness.

Her abstract works go back to nascent stages and you can see energy in whatever form, throbbing and circling into life. Saba Hasan’s signature is the use of multiple textures.

Mixed media on canvasses, from sand and thread to seashells and leaves weave everything from time and epitaphs to pilgrimages and objects below the ocean’s surface to penetrate and enlarge the surface.



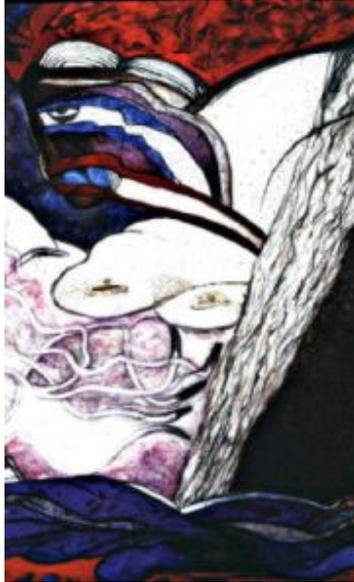
Arpana Caur looks into myths

This artist feels that "death and its mystery have captured the human mind forever." Art becomes a space to deal with death, says Saba who insists she has a love for life.

Saba explores death as taking on many layers, in globalisation as neo-colonialism, in human testing and more.

Gurgaon-based Kavita Jaiswal consciously enters "The Magical Kingdom", an inner space of one's own using acrylic, charcoal, conte on paper.

Her works run riot on the contours of pilgrimage, hermitage, time, dance, states of mind and more.



Jaya Ganguly probes the psyche and the inner self

Sangeeta Gupta uses acrylic on canvas in her series "Swirling" to chart her childhood notions of time, space and light, inspired by spontaneous tribal painters "to whom painting has never been an organised activity separate from life."

Unconventional

Delhi-based Arpana Caur looks into myths that speak of the celebration of life using oil on canvas, painting women, a yogi, a yogini and Buddha in unconventional postures and positions.

Kolkata-based Jaya Ganguly's brush cries out a "girl's grief" painting figures in portraits sometimes, using mixed media that are not realistic. Her intense, untitled works probe the psyche and inner self.

Seema Kohli who calls herself "a child of the cosmos" is vibrant in her rendition of symbolist paintings using mixed media on canvas.

Using faceless women, gods and goddesses, her interest paints its way into the quest of the essence of relationships, where the act becomes a spiritual experience, sending her to traverse and transcend boundaries.

Bulgarian Gina Brezini uses the medium of photography to manipulate and cast images in layers that blend photography and painting, sometimes using personalities. This, she says, reveals the energetic essence of the people and places she photographs. Former actor Shanta Rao "does not describe herself as a feminist artist" in her works using inkjet print on canvas.

And Pooja Iranna in her work presents "man-made structures" without their physical existence in her photographs and water colours on acid free paper.

Dus Mahavidyas turns the easel of construct of imaging women, women artists and themes they explore upside down. To create a studio of one's own.

The exhibition, with the support of The Leela Palace Kempinski, is on till February 7, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday to Saturday at Time and Space, No. 55 Lavelle Road. Call 32969412.