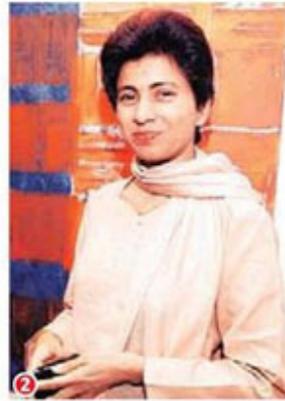


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A tryst with abstracts

Rewati Rau



Photos: Manoj Verma



Above: Artist couple Rameshwar Broota and Vasundhara Tiwari; **Far left:** Painter Illoosh Ahluwalia with actor Nasser Abdullah



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With her latest paintings, artist Sangeeta Gupta continues her tryst with abstracts. Titled Concordances, the exhibition was inaugurated on Saturday evening at Kumar Art Gallery, Sundar Nagar. The gallery sure overflowed with guests but it was hard to ignore any of Gupta's huge, colourful canvasses which almost seemed to rule the walls of the gallery. A small and cosy get together, the evening brought together artists, art lovers, collectors and gallery owners. The guest list included artists like Rameshwar Broota with wife Vasundhara Tiwari, Dharmendra Rathore, Kanchan Chander, Durga Kainthola, among others. The artist was busy signing catalogues and mixing up with guests throughout the evening and it was difficult to catch her free even for a few minutes.

Gupta, an officer of the Indian Revenue Service, said about her recent works: "My paintings show harmony. Why do we love music? It is because it has harmony. I also want my paintings to create a similar harmonious effect." Gupta began her career making drawings and shifted to painting abstracts in oils and acrylics six years back. Virendra Kumar Jain of

Kumar Art Gallery, who has been exhibiting Gupta's works from the beginning, said:

"Sangeeta's enthusiasm takes her to great heights successfully. I have seen Sangeeta grow as an artist. Abstract is the ultimate form of art and is also the most difficult. But Sangeeta's paintings are a culmination of her hard work over the years." We also spotted actor Nasser Abdullah at the do, who seems to be enjoying the city's art scene fairly well these days.



On Their Own Steam

Creativity can be found in the strangest places. In artist-bureaucrat Sangeeta Gupta's case, it strikes when she is poring over taxation policies and mathematical computations.

A serving IT commissioner in Delhi, Gupta, a self-taught painter, joins a stream of artists who hail from the world of babudom. Recently, we saw Karnataka superintendent of police, Devajyoti Ray's canvases at the Lalit Kala Akademi. Then there are a whole train of wives who are part of the camp.

Landscape painter Nirmala Das — wife of former Air India chairman and diplomat B S Das — held her show at the Habart Gallery recently, while joint secretary (tourism) Amitabh Kant's wife Ranjita Kant, is a recognised name in art circles.

Gupta though, prefers to use her credentials as a bureaucrat sparingly. "I want to make it as an artist on my own steam," she insists at her exhibition, titled Concordances at Kumar art gallery. She plans to show her works at Mumbai's Jehangir Art Gallery next month.

A collection of abstract works, the show is a study on harmony, the lines and patterns evocative of natural surfaces like bark, rock and vegetation. "My patterns are in perfect sequence, suggesting order, as opposed to the violence and unrest that is prevalent in the world," she says.

Though Gupta has been painting for 10 years, her creative journey began way back in her college days with poetry. "I wrote a lot of verse, but my heart was set on painting. So I started learning painting from Sanat Ray in Kolkata," says the 1984 batch IRS officer.

Over the years, Gupta moved from drawings and figurative works to abstracts. "While all art is liberating, I find abstracts more soulful," says the 47-year-old.

Ask her how she marries her professional life with art and she says matter-of-factly, "My passion has kept me going all through. Also I consider both my jobs to be creative in their own way."

The exhibition at Kumar art gallery is on till today.

THE HINDU

New Delhi Tuesday, Mar 21, 2006

Harmony with nature on canvas

Madhur Tankha

NEW DELHI: A one-of-its-kind solo show of paintings titled "Concordances" by Sangeeta Gupta is now on at Kumar Gallery here at Sunder Nagar.

Done in acrylic on canvas, the works highlight harmony in life and harmony with nature. Since the paintings are in abstract, there are no human figures. A self-taught artist, Sangeeta started her artistic journey with intricate drawings. She still continues to make these drawings but has found her real calling in producing abstracts in oils and acrylics on canvas.

"This is my 22nd solo show. I have put up 30 paintings that are all in abstract and used metallic colours as well as brown, orange and red ones. For the past 16 years I have been seriously pursuing painting and participated in 40 group shows across the country and abroad," says Sangeeta.

In her solo show in 2002, Sangeeta displayed her love for colour. The works were bold yet inviting. She also succeeded in firmly establishing her lines -- undulating straight, hair thin, broad and translucent.

It is often said that abstract art is only for the initiated, an acquired taste both for the artist and the viewer. In Sangeeta's case, this was an inevitable development. Her recent paintings reveal panoramic motifs, prints in the sand, fossils bearing testimony to the narrative of time, and recollections of fingerprints.

With strident and subtle strokes, dots and amorphous patterns, Sangeeta suggests the glossiness of lacquer, the glow of the sun and the inherent palette of rocks. As colour exists only in the mind, the vibrations blend, juxtapose, suggest myriad pairings of cobalt and indigo, colours of earth and trees, reds, mixed monochromes, gilded detail, using the natural spectrum with its visual sensibility.

"Concordances, this series of works, exist as a continuum, replete with dexterous metaphor. Sangeeta invites the viewer into her paintings, to affect a broader dialogue and understanding of the work. One needs to spend time with them, to view them from afar, then with changing light up close," says art curator Elizabeth Rogers.

Sangeeta has been honoured with the 77th Annual All-India Award for painting by the All-India Fine Arts and Crafts Society and the Hindprabha Award, 1999, for Indian women achievers by Uttar Pradesh Mahila Manch of Meerut.

The show is on at Kumar Gallery up to March 25.

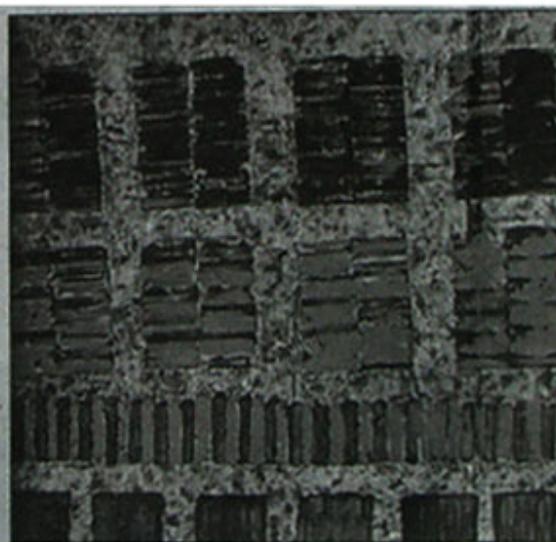
The challenge of

Is real, rigorous art being pushed to the background by market factors, wonders
Aruna Bhowmick

A plethora of shows, most of them by women, some impressive, even visually pleasing, but not very convincing. Most artists work hard, because the process of art making is a very demanding exercise if undertaken for the right reasons, for at least some of the time spent in the entire course of the artist's career. Both painting and sculpture are visual expressions, in a language coined and developed by the individual artist as his or her personal vocabulary.

The questions that remain prime most in my mind while appraising abstract or non-figurative art, are three. Firstly, what did the artist wish to convey? Second, is what is visible an actual/ successful depiction of what the artist wished to convey? And thirdly, did he wish to convey anything at all, or just made a composition (in itself quite justified

if that is all he intended)? Questions such as these are important in the case of artists who have not proven their mettle in portraying visible, recognisable realities, going through the entire exercise of sketching, drawing, study of light, shade, form, volume, distance, perspective, and so much more. Where then is the testimony of their picture making abilities? True, their sales, and consequently their popularity chart may be soaring, but is what they make real, rigorous art? But these are not comfortable questions in the art circuit of today, particularly on the market front. It is all a question of 'pulling off' with an artist, a gallery, a set of buyers, and so on. Then there is also the factor of manipulation, operation and positioning.



Concordance IX by Sangeeta Gupta

Figuring out creativity



Sangeeta Gupta (above) and her work (right)

THOSE IN nine-to-five jobs often yearn for bohemian lifestyles. Now here's a bureaucrat who manages to balance both kinds of destinies. Sure, handling the same old balance sheets

and profit and loss accounts can get a little monotonous. So IAS officer Sangeeta Gupta uses her leisure time to give herself that magic element missing in her job. She flouted all set patterns and ingrained

notions of discipline to paint, paint, paint.

"That's what a constraining government job can do to you at times," she says. So here she was letting herself loose amidst colour palettes and wooden canvases, trying to live life over again. Nudge her with too many questions and she replies, "It's the age women doing multi-tasking, isn't it?"

It's been 15 years, and Sangeeta matures with every new show. Ink drawings, landscapes, women figures, Sangeeta loved painting figurative stuff. But her last show at Kuber Gallery just a few days ago says something new. The show has been marked as her most abstract work date. "I have unknowingly shifted towards the abstract. It proves to be very therapeutic for me. I hope for my viewers as well," she adds.

Her recent paintings



चित्रों में समरसता



चित्रकार संगीता के साथ देबू चौधरी



संरचना में समरसता : कॉन्कोर्डिसेस भूखला का एक चित्र

सामाजिक समरसता को विषय बनाकर संगीता गुप्ता ने कैनवास पर बखूबी भरे कल्पना के रंग...

सहत्वपूर्ण चित्र भूखला 'कॉन्कोर्डिसेस' महाकाव्य की तरह है, जिसकी थीम एक-दूसरे से जुड़ी है। चित्रों में मौजूद लय समाज में मेलजोल बनाए रखने के लिए प्रेरित करती है। कलाकृतियां तैयार



लयात्मकता : पेंटिंग देखने के बाद आपस में बातचीत करते नासिर, आरती व इल्पुश अहलवालिया

की है चित्रकार संगीता गुप्ता ने। पिछले दिनों 'कुमार गैलरी' में आयोजित प्रदर्शनी में संगीता के 29 चित्र डिस्प्ले किए गए। चित्रों में एक ही थीम थी— 'हॉरमनि'। हालांकि सभी चित्र अमूर्त शैली में थे, फिर भी दर्शक चित्रों के रंग-संयोजन और टेक्स्चर से प्रभावित दिखे। एप्रैलिक ऑन कैनवास पर तैयार चित्र 'कॉन्कोर्डिसेस-10' देखकर रूस से आई लरिसा

बोली, 'कॉन्कोर्डिसेस गहराई के साथ है।' कलाकार संगीता गुप्ता ने 'हॉरमनि' चित्र-भूखला बनाई है, ब्राउन कलरों के साथ किया कम ही देखा 15 फीट फ्रीट चौड़े 'कॉन्कोर्डिसेस' कलर का जैसा अहलवालिया जिसकी की है। चर्चित चित्र देबू चौधरी सुनीत चोपड़ा चित्रकार गजवानी, अहलवालिया नासिर के नेपाल, रूस कलाप्रेमियों की कला डिस्प्ले की कीमत 80 लाख रुपए के