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CREATIVE MIND

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Shukla Choudhury

■ CRITICISM ■

by Subhra Mazumdar

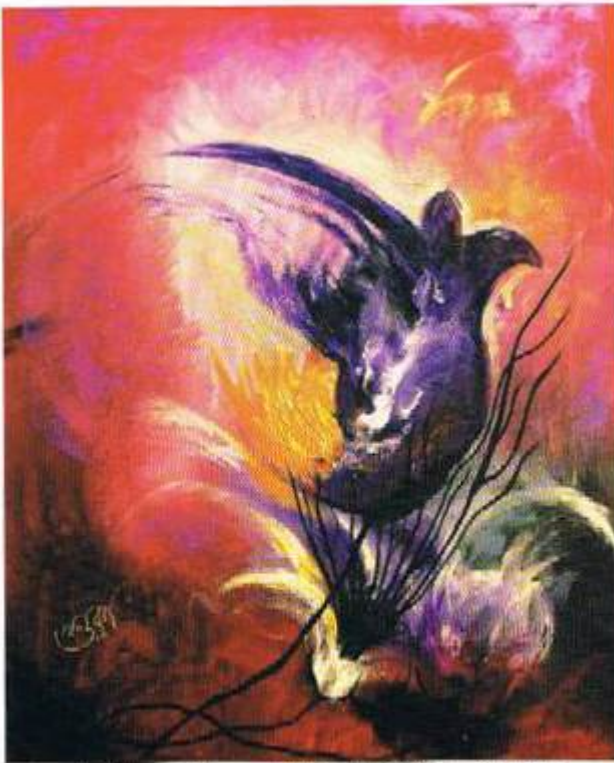
The Phoenix Sings a Song II

When the mythical bird Phoenix had burnt itself into ashes, as the legend goes and then re-generated itself once again to live out another life cycle, what were the first sights and sounds that might have greeted its senses? This perplexing thought is given a fitting answer in the artwork created by Shukla Choudhury, from Mumbai. Through her current series of works titled 'The Phoenix Sings a Song...II' which is follow-up of an earlier series on the same, the artist articulates her thoughts on her pristine canvases in a riot of colours, a variety of forms and a myriad emotions the sum total of which become the leit motif of her artistic expressions.

At another level, the works, recently on exhibit at the Lalit Kala Gallery in New Delhi, were studies of primordial nature, when the innards of this

planet were a burning mass of molten and gaseous form, a veritable storehouse of unbounded energy. In them, the power of uncontrolled energy exudes a rare hypnotism on the viewer.

The geographical features that have later transformed into scenic settings on the surface of the Earth are as yet in their formative beginnings and even the sunshine is not an unhindered ray of light caressing the earth's surface. As for the cloud formations and the force of the wind, these too, have their unfettered beginnings which the artist has made manifest in works such as 'Where the Wind Comes From'. In the depths of the ocean the undercurrents are still a fiery swirl as the sunshine penetrates through the churning mass as a blurred form, dispelling the sombre levels of the ocean's underbelly. Needless to



Twists and Turns, Acrylic on Canvas, 24"x36"

add that it needs a fertile and thinking artistic mind to conceptualise an eminently impersonal subject such as this, into a personal viewing format, infused with feeling in its content. That in short, is the master stroke behind the abstract works of Shukla Choudhury.

Moving beyond the facile and evident side



Where the Wind Comes From, Acrylic on Canvas, 48"x48"



Blooming Trees, Acrylic on Canvas, 36"x48"

of nature for the artist, has been an intensely personal journey as well. "This creative voyage has taken me beyond the realms of ordinariness and elevated my sense of being. When I paint I transcend the precincts of logic and emerge in the macrocosm of after-life and eternity," she surmises. The works therefore on this personal level become a magical kingdom which she enters, a space which is shared between her art alone. Her viewers are given access to what follows thereof the direction of massive movement, a free flowing process at work, energy that never seems to secede into calm, and the nurturing principle that gives birth to ultimate creativity.

The forms that her canvases display bear in them an image of the special recordings of Time before it was harnessed into a mathematical structure of days and months and years. It is a resplendent, aspiring and entombed mass, with its secrets held within its bosom as in the work titled 'One is Great' where the white light of the outer rim erupts distractedly from a core of yellow tones, into a firmament of specks and sprays. In her work, 'Twists and Turns', the hair-like black lines trail like flower stamens in the pull of a massive current and the bulbous form attached to it is twisted bodily and



One is Great, Acrylic on Canvas, 48"x36"

uncontrollably by the push of the wind force. Elsewhere, clustered into a bloom bunched with tendril-like extensions in the work, 'Blooming Trees', the seething forces of nature look becalmed, like the lull after the storm. It introduces a phase of solitude amidst the hectic activity of nature at work.

In all these works, one notices an unusual take on the many manifestations of nature. For Choudhury, the regular incurving petals of a chrysanthemum become the start point of her concept of a primeval floral formation. The caressing gentleness of a breeze is the mystical source of



When the Storm has Gone, Acrylic on Canvas, 48"x36"

untamed wind power and the flow of the rivers and oceans help her analyze the emotions throbbing in the human heart. The works therefore wear a garb of keen sensitivity and become the vocabulary of the artist's inner consciousness.

Her colour palette, like her thought process remains unbounded by the parameters of modulation or restraint. Her strokes are spontaneous and their expressive forthright and catchy. The riot of browns, pinks, yellows, and greens wear a freshness all their own and since they spring from a focal positioning on the canvas space, their effect is as dynamic as sunburst. Indeed their buoyancy is unparalleled as they transcend into spontaneous spatial planes hitherto unvisited by Man and his physical self. It is only when one journeys across them powered by the 'ether of imagination' can one comprehend their meaning and their relationship to life and love.

The works show great maturity in their presentation. A veteran of several solo shows and groups shows and camp workshops pan-India, Shukla Choudhury brings to the Delhi art fraternity a choice offering of geologic imagery through a compositional scheme that exudes both originality and character. ■



Shukla Choudhury

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