

Golpitha

A Namdeo Dhasal Memoriam

Dual Solos in Painting & Ceramic

Prakash Bhise | Upendra Ram

11 November - 11 December 2021

*Opens **Art Night Thursday***

inauguration by

Arjun Dangle,

Poet, Author and Cultural Theorist.

11th of November 2021 | 6.00 - 9.30 pm

Curated by Prabhakar Kamble

How do neighbourhoods inform aesthetic practices of a city? Golpitha, in the neighbourhood of Kamathipura becomes the constituency of poetry for the Dalit Panther Namdeo Dhasal. A district far beyond our pretensions but in the centre of Mumbai's imaginary as an urban space, it's proximity to our moral lives defines the hypocrisies of human existence. Prakash Bhise, a retired professor of painting at the LS Raheja College of Arts, and a friend of Dhasal makes grey blackboards illustrating Dhasal's opus 'Golpitha' bringing alive a geographic settlement that is as intellectually and culturally relevant in the 1970s to Bombay, as was the Harlem Renaissance to New York.

How does the space between two arms author the shape of a ceramic object? Jean ARP called his ceramic sculptures concrete propositions rather than abstract forms because they occupy physical space and germinate as manifestations in our mind. Upendra Ram allows the space that forms between two arms to be diagrams of experiments for his jars. They are at times topped by a human head or etched by swaying

human torsos conversing with the intent of Dhasal's poetry that dealt with the human condition.

Upendra Ram depicts himself chased by a dog, these are memories of a childhood that informs his practice today. As a toddler he would make dolls using the clay from the banks of the village pond much to the chagrin of his mother who saw it as a feminine preoccupation. Until his uncle living in Patna relented because he had seen artists being respected there. A string tied to a dragonfly reminds us of aspirations to fly - an emotion held by most kids who see planes only as part of visual fiction in Rural India. A slaughtered sow and a weeping woman narrates the rituals and dichotomies of village faith and the context of sacrifice. The structures relate to the mounds used as totems to village gods that Upendra Ram's family was expected to fashion out of clay and colour for the village's privileged castes. The illustrative narrative is Upendra Ram's distinct contribution to Indian ceramics as he changes tracks of aesthetic evolution away from the decorative and the need for utility in the objects. Rather it is sculptural, conceptual and steeped in the experiment of forms and narration.

Upendra Ram comes from Siwan, Bihar and has studied art in Benaras, eastern Uttar Pradesh or Purvanchal. Across this region on the gates of villages long limbed horses and elephants greet travellers, installed in devotion of Raja Salhes, Goraiya Baba, Shokha Baba, Bandi Devi and Veer Chuharmal. These are indigenous Gods who are village deities and are called Gramdevtas and are made of clay mounds which may look abstract but concrete in their intent to vanquish inequality, discrimination and abject sadness. At times they are terracotta and, in some villages, unfired clay. Upendra Ram's sophisticated beautiful renderings in ceramic gives a nod to the traditions of communities using beautiful manifestations as forms of dissent. Ceramic has always been an elite arena, what differentiates a ceramic object than the fired clay utensils from a potter's wheel. In parts of north India taboos disallow the re-use of terracotta chai cups as a marker of caste untouchability. Upendra Ram recalibrates this relationship. Dhasal in his peons of praise raises the residents of abject and a red light

district into the deities of a city who hold character by living the truth in its face unbridled by society or its morality.

Prakash Bhise's drawings in ode to Namdeo Dhasal do not depict the poet rather they depict the subjects of Dhasal's opus. You see women organising themselves , at work and leisure. You see them manifest near the statue of Ambedkar and you see the district come alive through an interplay of work and quotidien life. Prakash Bhise's nephew Vikrant Bhise draws the portrait of Dhasal in the show and the famous portraitist Pramodbabu Ramteke makes a portrait of Prakash Bhise. Portraits were the first forms that rejected the abstract forms that allowed ambiguity in thought and action. Ambedkar was introduced to art by Dattoba Salvi who was the court portraitist at Shahu Maharaj's palace in Kolhapur. Bhise makes portraits of the subjects of Dhasal's poems continuing a tradition. An edition of serigraphs of Dhasal's drawings that accompanied his publication Golpitha along with his writings flanks the opening wall of the exhibition.

During the pandemic of 2020 , Bhise draws moving migrants and female sanitary workers who risk their lives by continuing to clean the metropolis city of Mumbai. He draws the migrants who began leaving their villages escaping caste and poverty in the nineteenth century finding jobs and homes in Bombay. Their 21st century reverse migration is captured in his drawings. During the Spanish Flu of the early 20th century migrants in Bombay fled to their villages and Bhise's family lost many members. His grandfather one night buried 5 bodies , when he returned home his wife asked him to go retrieve the silver chain left on the neck of one of the girls who was a toddler. It was needed to fund food. The pandemic was accompanied by shortages of foods and it was followed by successive famines. Bhise draws this scene alongside his pandemic drawings relating to a personal history of loss. His drawings of 'Golpitha' are sensitive , an art artists cannot forget , for in times of existential life , empathy is the only connection we share as humans.

Buddhism deals with the human at the centre of its philosophical discourse, it plays to erect a way of life concerned by one's personal logic rather than a philosophical exercise, aesthetics that follow the human way help us context, contest and repair dichotomous realities of the world. In celebration of Namdeo Dhasal's life and work visual memoriam ensues towards new vehicles of change.

Prakash Bhise (1954) , Mane Rajuri, Sangli , is a professor of painting and drawing having retired from the LS Raheja School of Art , Bandra. He has a MFA from the Sir JJ School of Art where his thesis dealt with the progressive artist groups ' aesthetic project . He has had 9 solo shows at the Jehangir Art Gallery , was the Vice-President of the Bombay Arts Society and the President of the JJ Alumni Association. He has shown at the National Gallery of Modern Art ,Bharat Bhavan , Gallery Art Media Holland , Chitra Kala Parishad, Bangalore , India - Bangladesh Art Summit , G 21 Art Foundation ,Coomarswamy Hall , India Habitat Centre and Phule Ambedkar Chair Mumbai University. He is in the collections of Air India , National Gallery of Modern Art , Tata Memorial Hospital , Kala Kendra , Jammu ,Lalit Kala Akademi and Madhav Nair Foundation . He has been a life long member of the Ambedkarite Movement and was a personal friend of Namdeo Dhasal for who he first held a memorial show by illustrating his poem Golpitha in 2015 .

Upendra Ram , 1987 , Siwan , Bihar is a ceramicist based out of Nagpur . He graduated with an MFA in Pottery & Ceramics from Banaras Hindu University in 2013 . He practices ceramics as a conceptual medium using narratives that form puns on human existence . This is his first solo show and he has been resident at Uttarayan Art Foundation , Baroda . He is resident ceramicist at Studio Pottery , Nagpur currently .

Prabhakar Kamble (1986, Shendur) is a Mumbai based artist, curator and cultural activist who works with the notions of Equality in his practice dealing with social realities stemming from existential conditionings and Ambedkarite consciousness. He has co-curated 'Broken Foot-Unfolding Inequalities' a COVID-19 fundraiser of 60 artists, at Mojarto.com and NDTV India, 2021, 'Heard- Unheard' India Art

Fair 2019. He curated 'Working Practices', at the Showroom, London, 2017, which was a significant curation with a cross disciplinary format in conjunction with Clark House Initiative. The curation drew from the connections between British Black Arts movement and artists whose practices concerned with Dalit politics within the Indian contemporary art. He works in the grassroots as a cultural activist and is the convenor of the Secular Art Movement. His solo shows as an artist include 'Existential'. 2017, Clark House Initiative and a debut solo at the Jehangir Art Gallery - 'Agitation of a restless Mind' in 2016. He has written more than 60 essays on fellow artists.

Gallery Art & Soul

Gallery Art & Soul, established in 2003 is a gallery of Indian modern, contemporary and decorative arts in the heart of Bombay. Founded by Dr. Tarana Kubhchandani as an extension of her activities at the Art & Soul Cancer Foundation, the gallery has pursued a discourse both within India and internationally of aesthetic syncretism producing exhibitions that are varied in genre, materiality and conceptual though across art historical timelines.

Ceramics by Upendra Ram



Title – Roop Katha 1

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 9 x 41 inch (width & height)

Price – 90000/Rupees

Weight - 10 Kg 200 gram



2.

Title – Roop Katha 2

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 9 x 41 inch (width & height)

Price – 90000/Rupees

Weight - 10 Kg 350 gram



3.

Title – Roop Katha 3

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 9 x 41 inch (width & height)

Price – 90000/Rupees

Weight - 10 Kg



4.

Title – Lady Figure

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 7.5 x 35 inch (width & height)

Price – 70000/ Rupees

Weight - 8 Kg 250 gram



5.

Title – Lady Figure 2

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 7.5 x 38 inch (width & height)

Price – 70000/rupees

Weight - 6 Kg 750 gram



6.

Title – Baby Girl Figure

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 7.5 x 28 inch (width & height)

Price – 60000/Rupees

Weight - 4 Kg 650 gram



7.

Title – Green Tree

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 8.5 x 36 inch (width & height)

Price – 70000/Rupees

Weight – 8 kg 900 gram



8.

Title – Roop Katha 4

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 7.5 x 30 inch (width & height)

Price – 90000/Rupees

Weight - 6 Kg 390 gram



9.

Title – Roop Katha 5

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 8.5 x 28 inch (width & height)

Price – 80000/Rupees

Weight - 5 Kg 180 gram



10.

Title – Thinker

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 6 x 8 inch (width & height)

Price – 7000/rupees (each)

Weight - 1 Kg 300 gram



11.

Title – Thirsty Crow

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 6 x 8 inch (width & height)

Price – 7000/rupees (each)

Weight - 1Kg 300 gram



12.

Title – Roop Katha 6

Medium – High Temperature Ceramic

Size – 4 x 7 inch (width & height)

Price – 5000/rupees (each)

Weight - 1200 gram

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