

BIG ART

The art, artists and everything in between.



OCTOBER 6, 2017 · BY KASTOORI BARUA

ORDER OF THE AGE: KAUSHIK SAHA

As I view the artworks of the solo show titled Order of the Age I am taken in by the dark, muted expanses with short, rich bursts of vibrant colours. Upon closer inspection, I see myriad elements that make up the urban space: nails, copper-wires, bicycle tubes etc. everything that holds the city-space and its movements together. There are ghostly figures of humans, of advertisements, and animals—things that are quintessential examples of city-life and space. The intricacy and detailing is mind-boggling and rich with symbolism. Brimming with inquisitiveness, I interview Kaushik Saha, the creator of these complex, thought-provoking artworks.

1. Tell me more about your use of colour in your artwork.

My colours are purely representative of the dirt that is contained in urban society dirt. My palette is greyish and monochromatic. There is an almost perpetual absence of green because there is hardly any vegetation in the cityscape.

2. There are subliminal and subtle political messages or otherwise that I see in your artworks, Can you tell me what they stand for? Are you making a political statement?

I'm not making any direct political statements, the symbolism in my artworks is arbitrary in the sense that one would see such kind of posters and images in a *chai adda* where friends gather to talk about various things over cups of tea. There is no overt political statement, just urban kitsch. No one really gets into deep commentaries over tea. It's just casual conversation. But then again, everything today is a political and that in turn makes painting a political act in itself.

3. Unlike most contemporary art in India, your artworks are riddled with subtle political meanings. What pushed you into marrying politics and art—two seemingly disparate spheres of life?

Common public is a backbone of my work and the public is a part of a political apparatus. I am trying to bring an egalitarian landscape where the common man and the distinguished are seen as equal. That is why I have featured quotes from Rabindranath Tagore's manuscripts and used cycle tires on the same plywood.

4. There is a grand narrative in your show, can you tell me about the smaller narratives that constitute the larger one?

Narrative art is something that I learnt when I went to Baroda. My smaller narratives are about the common public and literature. This is what makes my work composite and layered in nature. This is also what lends an indirect political leaning to my artwork although I'd like to

reiterate that it is not meant to hurt anyone.

5. What inspires you?

Two things majorly inspire me. Landscapes and advertisements. They have greatly influenced my art process. I am fascinated by the way layers are added to a landscape, when you see buildings on top of one another, or when one is demolished and a new one is built. The landscape is constantly fluctuating. Advertising is ubiquitous in urban life. Anything that we buy is through advertisement. Like Facebook is an advertisement in itself. We are all advertisements. Calcutta is full of advertisements, it is a product of urbanity. I am trying to show a synthesis of these two in my works.

The gradual and complex layering of his "A Piece of Land Within the Frame" series is a well-thought-out experiment about the usage of urban space and the lack thereof. The colours though stark and contrasting nonetheless hold the work in a paradoxical unity, just the way a city holds its own paradoxes. One should keep an eye out for Kaushik Saha's newer projects as his Order of the Age is a very promising solo exhibition.

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The show is on from October 5th to November 4th, 2017 at Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai.



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