

Eclectic collection of influences

Krishnamachari Bose is sardonic; Dhruvi Acharya insightful, says **Amrita Gupta-Singh**

One of the critical turns in contemporary art practice is the negotiation of the gallery-space, and also its engagement with other applied fields, like design and architecture. *LaVA* (Laboratory of Visual Arts) is a mixed-media art installation conceived by the multi-faceted artist, Bose Krishnamachari. Presented by the Bombay Art Gallery and showing at the Museum Gallery (till September 10), *LaVA* is a *contemporary-temporary* laboratory for the public. This archival project consists



■ Bird by Dhruvi Acharya

of books, DVDs and CDs on cinema, architecture, design, fashion, cultural studies and philosophy. Krishnamachari exhibits his personal collection, bought from museums, institutions, galleries, shops and streets of major art capitals of the world.

Over the years, Krishnamachari has negated constructed hierarchies in his art practice and works simultaneously with realism, abstraction, sculptural objects, installations and also curates exhibitions. *LaVA* is an intervention that challenges existing art institutions and outmoded pedagogies. It brings together Krishnamachari's interest in architecture, design, furniture and provides an ideal space for the public, representing the dynamics of 'information-gathering'. The anatomy of the white-cube is transformed and positioned as a museum of total knowledge.

This art intervention raises questions about the permanence of a museum versus the impermanence of the art object. It is in this interplay of ambiguities that Krishnamachari's installation becomes operative.

As a participatory project, where visitors can browse through books, watch DVDs and CDs, make notes or just enjoy the process of seeing, it emphasizes the artist's aesthetic autonomy and concerns of social inclusiveness. As Krishnamachari takes something out of the real world and amplifies it to a fully equipped and modern art library, he creates a discourse that is at once economic, social, political, ideological and aesthetic in character.

Another exhibition, titled *Two plus Two Equals*, by Dhruvi Acharya explores aspects of feminine subjectivity, multiple roles of a woman artist, and also larger concerns of societal violence. Showing at Gallery Chemould (till October 4), Acharya's narratives seek to achieve a balance between family life and domesticity, her conscious choices as a professional artist and living in two culturally different cities, Mumbai and New York.

art review

Stylistically, Acharya refers to Indian miniatures, Amar Chitra Katha comics, arabesque surfaces of Gustave Klimt, colour fields of Grace Hartigan, and California graffiti artists. Her main protagonist is the urban woman, aware of her position, yet solitary.

Other paintings portray Acharya's everyday exchanges with her sons, her negotiations with multiple art theories, and the latent violence and aggression that are in contemporary existence.

In a flat and stylised imagery, the protagonists display vacuous expressions and dead-pan gestures, yet have personal and universal conversations with the viewer through intricate texts, thought-balloons and visual symbols. Discerning psychological portraits mark her oeuvre, with qualities of tranquility and animation. In an eclectic strategy, boundaries between high and low art, fine art and commercial art become indistinct. Acharya adopts an aesthetic position without hierarchy or value judgments. Email: dnasalon@gmail.com