

Terrible beauty

Sakshi Gupta's second solo exhibition at Gallerysye (December 12 to January 16) is one of those extraordinary and rare encounters that offer a disturbingly spectacular experience of forces and transformations underlying our reality, the horror and the proximity of whose recognition are potent of catharsis. Her vision of a mutating environment simultaneously has a physical, suffused immediacy considered on a vast as well as intimate scale and much restraint which prevents any illustrative literalness and enhances the impact.

The wonderful thing is, in fact, that the works avoiding the grand traps of conceptual formulations, even projection of the artist's gesture, conjure sheer sensations, ones nonetheless that allow for essential intuitions, associations and thoughts. The complex and non-typical sculptures rather than installations devoid of titles conjure a sense of profound, irreversible processes of spectacular but unhealthy altering in the growth the organic world is undergoing currently under the pervasive invasion of technology, and industry with their denatured materials and poisonous secretions or emissions.



Sakshi Gupta's untitled sculpture

Gupta does not depict the elements and causes behind the phenomenon, but envisages their consequences as driven to an eerily fascinating fruition when the earth has

evolved a new sheath and matrix of animated, breathing metal about to take everything over and proceed in unpredictable yet inevitable directions. From close-on, she looks

at the expansiveness of the transformation creating entire mutant sceneries. The architecturally mounted piece at the entrance is a wall of turbulent sea painstakingly threaded of smaller and larger bits of industrial steel scrap.

There is a dense, vertical surface pregnant with some crusty creatures linking to ripples and scale-like rhythms that oscillate between the dynamism of water and fish or plankton. The waves emerge from it bulging powerfully to close onto themselves and in pointed ridge strands, the glistening metallic reflectivity imbued with an alien and terrifying enchantment. The landscape on floor, again comprising a multitude of metal scraps, seems to be acquiring a slow, cancerous animation as it heaves and almost spreads under the muted clink of its inhaling and exhaling.

On the verge of chaotic mess and not yet apparent, self-generated purpose, it is processing a decayed mass of rusty steel as if it were some ominous, artificial plant-life blossoming over areas of reddish, glassy beads.

The harsh-subtle evocativeness of these sculptures implying regularity as well as elusiveness arises from the amount of the hand-crafting labour which is both aware and instinctual.

These perspectives on the evolving matter become com-

plemented by the more compact images of animals, observed directly and close-on, nevertheless eventually yielding a similar diffused disruption, hybrid state and transmutation, while their uncomfortable humour appears to augur the dead-end and death. The condition is brought out, better than in the huge cock hanging from the ceiling like at a butcher's, by the concrete pig and the synthetic crow caught or imprisoned in domestic objects, mechanically altered and truncated. The irony of the analytical view here still carries plenty of tender, intimate sadness.

Contemporary ambitions

"Platform 15" was an exhibition by as many artists from different places, mainly the South, often connected with Baroda (CKP, December 22 to 31). The young participants, except for the conventional realism and such abstraction of Sounder Rajan R and A Satish Munar, displayed a good hold on their techniques as well as ambitions for contemporary, if not the cutting-edge, methods along with a focus on vital issues characterising society, otherwise in a genuine manner offered personal moods and concerns.

In comparison to the already mentioned names, A P Shabarish used his representational skills to evoke the atmospheric yet chaotic urban geometry and Navaneet T C in a shaky symbiosis blended abstract forms with organic and mechanical ones. Quite a few participants resorted to a rather intellectualised message-expression verbally pieced together of several symbolic images, while sincerely and sometimes inventively relying on fairly established ways in painting and installation-based sculpture that largely referred to violence and technology's invasion of life, as in R Magesh, Naaz Tamkanath, Ravi Kumar A S, Abhishek Mandala, R Janarthanan and Santosh C H Whereas Lopa Mudra's landscapes and figures hesitated between stylisation and vagueness, Mariam Ashraf Bahrainwala proved a charming, feminine simplicity in her fantastically poetic trees and Bandi Durga Prasad in a slightly expressionistic manner delved into man's and animal's corporeality.

Very convincing one found the light yet vigorously probing humour in Snehal Kulkarni's images of human monkeys. The most original and the strongest were perhaps the paintings of Sunitha K B V Subhramanyam confronting glamour models and mental as well as the environment's dirt.

Marta Jakimowicz