

The Monsoon Chapter 6

Explorations in painting by Debarchan Rout

This year, our monsoon chapter is a series of diverse explorations on the awakenings of this high and mighty season by Debarchan Rout. In his first solo exhibition, Debarchan Rout, who has been our friend and companion through many monsoons now, presents an oeuvre that speaks of his versatility as an artist - formally, technically, content-wise and emotively.

We see the crystallisation of some of the themes, approaches and devices that the artist has been employing in his formative years as a painter, but more importantly, this body of work also heralds newer directions. Things get washed away and something newer emerges...

Debarchan's works always display a refusal to be tied down to any proscribed style or easily identifiable vocabulary, and in this solo exhibition, we see exactly that - a body of work that is diverse stylistically. It is a gift to be alive to the moment, and let that itself carry you forward in your pursuit - unfettered flight of fancy, captured but in a free-spirited way...

While realism has been a stronghold with Rout, he has never let that become a staid habit, and his pictorial and technical universe is anyway enriched by many other diverse influences - be it Patachitra techniques and motifs or other miniature traditions. Technique that is fertilised with the power of ideas, imagination, stories, mythologies...

Straddling all these worlds, Rout is happy to be working in these multiple realms, from works that are easily comprehensible to those that create irony and humour, from works that appeal instantly to those that are darker, quieter, and need more engagement to reveal themselves to you...

We hope to create work that is honest, engaging and away from what is fashionable on the local, national or international arts scene, and perhaps (almost consequently) closer to the Indian aesthetic in style, sensibility, imagery or thought, even though the mediums Rout uses may not be traditional. Debarchan manages to accomplish a difficult task effectively - that of merging traditional miniature vocabulary with large format realism / abstraction.

In this chapter, Rout presents meditations on some of our classic monsoon themes - the flora and fauna of the monsoon; a celebration of the elements and nature; the human experience and response to the season; mythologies, stories, and Indian classical literature associated with rain; and the play of the divine elements in this exalted season.

Himanshu Verma (Curator)
