

Folk and Minor Art in India
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Lecture - 45

Endnote

So, I would like to end the course with some more experience shared to me by some of my friends and also I would like to demonstrate, read out from one of my very favourite book that is part of the endnote of the collaborative art works created by the artist from the folk and minor art genre and the academic main stream artists together. Also how there connecting their stories their narrations with the academically trained writers, publishers and how the paradigms shifting and moving towards the positive direction.

So, it is very important to realize that this was course that is into a very different dynamism that has to be realized by all of us that this is a tradition which is we are talking about that is still living it is a surviving tradition, unlike ancient Indian art or ancient European art we are not making studies on ancient Greek art. But the topic is much more thriving, and that is perhaps reason that it took me heard time to categorise the chapters and I am still wondering where the we could cover everything because it was not possible for anybody to cover the entire range which is very vast and I think I spoke about that in the beginning of the course, that it is too vast to capture and too living to be interpreted from a distance. It is so intrinsically connected to our lives and our being and they are all around us. So, how to take to sub line view of this kind of tradition which is happening, it is almost like the way you need a mirror to look at your own eyes.

The same way this is your live this is your costume tradition this is the favour of our being and it is very difficult to give it an academic perspective in that sense and that is perhaps we hesitate to call them, as call it and include it in to the main stream academics or perhaps there are other reasons. So, that is something what I felt that is challenging to some extent. Now this is almost that we are coming to a very different this course and we are forming dialogs from our side and that was the effort and I do not know how for that was successful.

So, in this context I would like to share via the artist Amrita Sen who worked closely in building up the script of a book which was also published by Tara books and she work in close collaboration with Swarna Chithrkar. Rather she was there as an interpreter to connect Geetha urff the Tara book publisher the writer with Swarnachithrkar as the language was known to the two of them and more over it is not the literally language rather it is a dialog it has to be understood in a very different term. And the artist and the creative writer, they can only understand each once language because it is not like a formal thing that can be interpreted through a Google interpreter or any dictionary or anything which is more mechanical.

So, I find a few question to Amrita Sen to understand her experience with Swarnachithrkar because we need to see likes Swarnachithrkar being a very intelligent folk painter, very sharp and creative amazing painter. We need to know that how the contemporary artist like Amrita Sen could connect to her as she was working as a bridge between the publisher, the writer and the artist; how could she actually understood her. So, I find a few questions and I am just going to discuss them here. That upon asking how much familiarity did you share with the village painter as a practice in artists Amrita replied the Swarna is what is popularly known as a Pattuva a specific artist clan of Bengal who paints and seems mythological stories to local people, I was more interested to find out that this particular clan is a Muslim by their religious belief though they traditionally paint Hindu mythologist.

So, there are many parts which are not known us and we are still curious to know many thematic data along with their creative endeavours. So, upon asking what was your experience with Swarnchithrkar as a whole, Amrita says that interviewing Swarnam intensely for stretch of seven consecutive days was a rather rewarding experience for me, to take the fact that I am a painter myself to look in to some other artists life so minutely to find out smallest details of a life as well as artistic sensibilities where almost exhausting. But it was fantastic to discover that though we belong to two different social sections or have been trained in to two very different kinds of art language or understanding. There are so many things in common when artistic attitude is concerned.

That is the different matter to Swarna also Amrita replies the first and most important thing that is noticeable in Swarna that she is a superbly spirited woman. In one word she is smart; the smartness is visible in her appearance as a person as well as an artist. After I

heard her life and we squished out small details which was all there inside her, but she did not mention on her own I heard an impression that she fought a difficult days and accepted the success with same kind of courage, getting so much of exposure was not an easy thing to handle for everyone, but she did it with conviction. It shows how much her horizons have broadened and she admits even the uncomfortable experiences brightly with a pinch of humour.

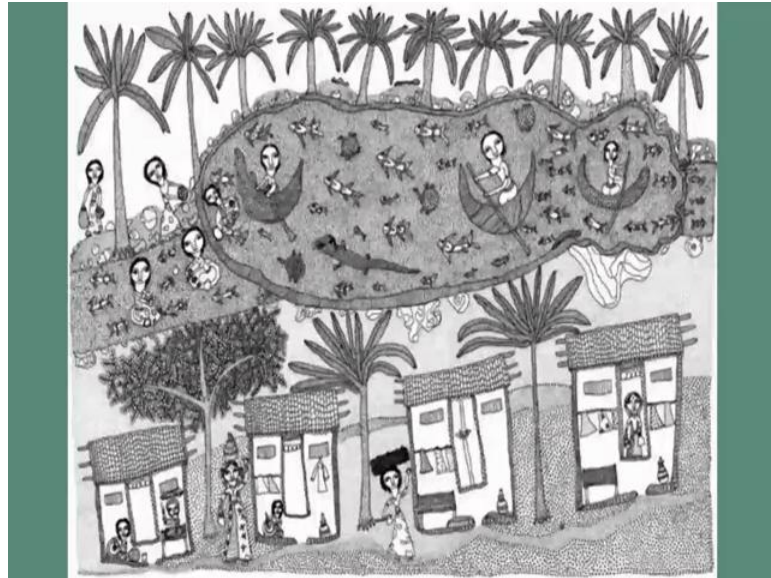
She has a fantastic sense of humour that was the glow of success I felt, as though she had a very hard early life, it is true that she has never seen as said back in her life or career till now. She brightly told us the story about how she upgraded her looks, taken off her gomta and even wore a salwar kameez one day at Chennai for the first time. With that I found her quite conscious like any other contemporary artists about her appearance to people and even a sense of liberty about her colleagues and what about her poise as an original creator within obligation to keep the legacy intact, how much she is conscious about the history and legacy that she is a part of - Amrita says watching a making the drawings was another experience, she seemed equally bright in picking up instructions and following them. Patuas generally have their very own kind of compositional sense.

But though I found her extremely proud about their tradition here for the sake of the book she twisted and turned her drawings without thinking twice. The openness is something very rare, I think in every genre of artists, but she came up with very unconventional and even brave compositions as a result. I saw her with the kind of way that how quickly she follows and draws the verbal instructions and she did them so perfectly. Her capacity to picking up things is so fast must have taken her this far in her career, we do observe any difference in her work process that put her to a parallel level form, that her other colleagues. For me it was also interesting because she starts drawings from completely different angles than us and yet she makes them perfectly proportionate. Swarna ended up giving me a very strong feeling of universality of art language and spirits though it is big too (Refer Time: 10:56), but that was only true.

Let me also share another very successful project to my opinion amongst many from Tara books that is drawing from the city by Theju Behan. This is one book that is created based on the older stories of the Theju Behan, original Tamil text Salaisarvam, English text we Geeta and Geeta Urff published in Tara books. The drawings are made on paper

gate way sheets and then transferred in to the process of choreography or self (Refer Time: 11:46) and then mass produced.

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So, I will go by the text they call me Theju here I am, as a little girl in our village I feel at own indoors as well as outdoors and my favourite place is near the stream the trans behind our heart. Our village is green at times, but often when the summer is hot it is bit brown, the fields are empty and the stream dries in to a cracked bed, our house is tiny. All of us have to work for all of us to eat; it is not just us everyone around us lives like we do.

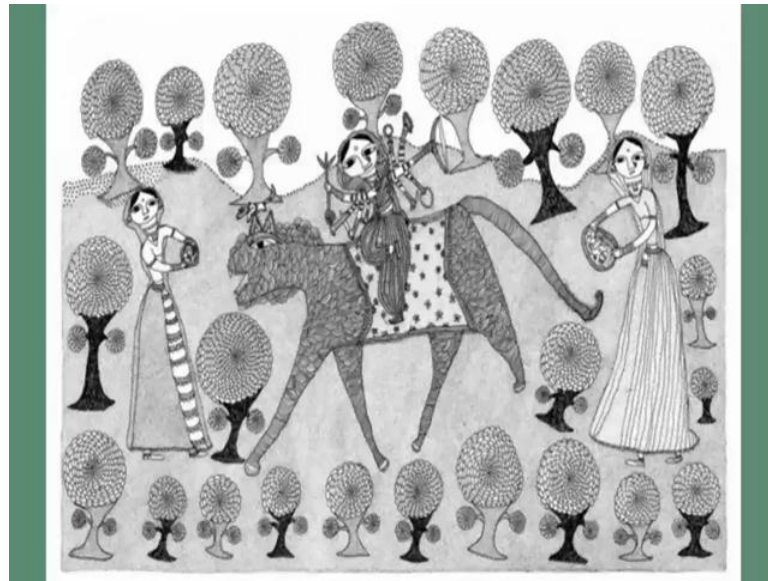
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What takes us to the forest nearby? An ever go alone pa and ma, our neighbours and the babies we all go together. It is scary to be by yourself amongst the trees you here thinks that rustler, whisper, breathe, I hold my father's hand tight. He taps the stick on the ground or on a tree trunk he tells me that it his way of telling the forest it has visitors.

What is fetching water, gathering firewood and fruit we can eat, and ma gathers other thing too – seeds, berries, and leaves. Ma says you have to listen carefully in the forest chopping squirrels warning of snakes; the wind braces the smell of rain or a dead animal. We come home to more work cooking, washing; cleaning, sometimes pa and ma go off again to work on rich peoples feels.

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Pa also seems for a leaving, he leaves early in the morning going from house to house singing songs about god, love, pain and happiness. In return people giving him money or grain, ma does not go with him she loves to sing, but in our village women do not sing in public; ma chants though, her chanting is musicale and soothing as she prays to the village goddess. Our goddesses are armed and ride the tiger and ma says she has both kind and fears all the women in the village pray to her. They ask for different things for rain, for their sick children to get well, for a good harvest I pray sometimes with ma, ma tells me that it is the goddess would takes of the poor.

But I do not know about that because we continue to stay poor. The books ends with many more stories to continue with, it begins here and at the end of the book is a thematic data always to I think it is needed today and we will be happy if we do not the thematic data any more. Right now the spreading of awareness is so important that it is written at the end of the book by the publisher that he dedicated spoke to the memory of Ganesh Bhai Jogi beloved husband of the artist Theju Behan.

Use of this passing came in just when the book was being completed, so there is a human touch the publisher bothers to mention that and I am reading partially from here that in drawing from the city Theju draws the story of a journey as an artist which was so closely intervened with that of Ganesh, her husband. So, it is advance a celebration and a tribute to his memory to the art that this gentle and loving couple practiced together. We

hope that the book will stay with Theju as a reminder of what she may yet do, Theju Behan told us the story of a life orally to capture the spirit of her narration, we asked Tamil writer Salaisalvam to work on the text. Familiar with the joys and sorrows the village childhood and urban migration Salvam could relate to Theju story easily with then he translated Salvam version in to an English text.

This much of narration is actually supporting the promotional causes that this kind of endeavours can be carried out by many more and it was very challenging for this kind of books to find the right market. So, it is just balls down to the same motions that we began with and I wish you a great journey in learning the living tradition that is thriving and they are waiting for every one support. We should look around, find out things because they are not all preserved in the museums as we yet, but there are great specimens of the Indian culture and we should also makes studies into the folk art traditions of art other countries by reading the complete different orientation that many places have and the things that we have in common.

Thank you very much for attending the course.