

T M Azis

Artist Interview

Why did you take up Art as a career? And what were the early influences on your work?

I was interested in Art since early years. In school I had a good teacher who constantly encouraged me. She was the main inspiration in those years. After schooling I joined for pre-degree but discontinued after one year and took admission in a fine arts college in Trichur, Kerala. I studied 2 years of foundation there but failed, as the methods were very academic and conventional. I liked more experimenting and trying out new medias and techniques. After this I joined in Fine Arts College, Trivandrum. It was a 5-year course where painting was my specialization. In the year 1989, I joined the Jamia Mila Islamia University, Delhi, for a Masters degree in Painting. At that time renowned artists like A. Ramachandran and Paramjit Singh were in the Faculty.

Could you comment on your early shows?

I had my first solo show in the fine arts college gallery at Trivandrum in 1986. N.S.Bendre visited our faculty at the time. Seeing my show he inquired as to what I want to do after my B.F.A. My plan initially was to go to Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal. He advised me to paint more. So with a change of plan, after my BFA, I took a break and returned home to Trichur. I started painting again in 1987. In the year 1989, I had my first solo show in Bangalore at the Chitrakala Parishath. It was soon after that show in the year 1989, that Mr. Naozar Daruwalla noticed me. At that time he was just planning to start the Crimson Art Resources in Bangalore. He was a driving force in my career. Since then I have had a number of shows in the Crimson art Resources, Bangalore. I also had a combined show with Babu Namboodri in 1988 in Mumbai. It was the first time I was showing in Mumbai.

Your work is essentially figurative. How do you choose your subject matter?

Describe your process of working

I always carry a sketch book with me. I keep doodling, scribbling, or casually sketching which may be abstracts, figures or still life. Sometimes I ask people to model for me. My 7-year-old son is one of my favorite models. I ask people to pose in particular ways and make sketches. I choose from the scribbles, work on them, develop ideas and accordingly add other forms, creating the sketch for paintings.

The medium in your work these days is mainly acrylic on canvas. Do you experiment with other media?

In the early stage of my career, I used to use a lot of mixed media on a single work. Like watercolors, pastels, acrylics and oil on both paper and canvas. The different media initially was due to financial restraints. I used to use a lot of paper, as it was fast to complete. These days I do acrylic and oil on canvas.

Your appearance as an artist is in the 1990s. How do you see Contemporary Indian

Art growing? What have been your greatest influences?

I constantly take ideas and influences from movies/dramas, the popular media that features changing times. Media like magazines, new papers or TV brings entertainment and news from every corners of the world that we like to hear and not to hear. It really influences us, making vigilant and responsive for some and quieting for others. I have never been very particular about maintaining a style. I like to adapt to newer instances. I realize that experiences change with time. I accept the new environment, people and also like to adapt new techniques and new colours. If any one comments on my work, I would take it as a form of encouragement and interest and consider what they are saying. It's like a feedback. I do believe that ideas are not final or total.

Artists in India are now getting interested in various new concepts, media and in Installation art forms. How do you see the future of painting in this changing Art scenario?

I have always appreciated new medias as it goes with the changing times. I have taken part in about 4 interactive shows, with other artists. 'Walls of Memories', an art event in and around an open well and the art event 'Quilted' both were done using installations, dance and photography in Bangalore, 2003. I feel that if an art form demands a particular expression/medium, artists have to extend themselves accordingly.

I do photography. I find that an artist or non-artist, both have an interest in photography. When a photograph is taken, we all want to see the prints, the final picture. In Art, taking photographs is like using models in earlier times. I make many preliminary sketches and take photographs that can be incorporated in a work. And these days with photography acquiring a more serious aesthetic value, it presents as an artwork fully extending its possibilities.

How do you see yourself 5 years from now as an artist?

I never sit idle. I am constantly doing something, either photography or sketching. I always keep my self busy. It's all a process. One painting leads to another, so I really do not think '5 years from now'. I just keep painting. My family has always been supportive to my art. It is all about being positive.