

‘Social’ Psychic

Champa’s approach to the medium of printmaking is ambivalent. On one hand she produces prints which follow a conventional rendering such as linocuts and woodcuts. On the other she promotes a sense of “painterly-ness”, by adding colours to the prints, making them individual works of art.

The visual narrative takes on the depiction of female figures standing together in groups, in gloomy un-exposed/private spaces capturing an instance or an occasion. Her women seem composed, confident and indulgent, absorbed in their present stance, conversing, interacting and ‘empathising’ with one another. The works hark at the social status granted to the modern woman. Champa assumes the role of a seer who experiences/sees urban social situations and transforms them into art. Through her art we see images of women masquerading in a ‘current situation’. Her figures appear on the threshold of the outside and their own private world. In one sense her recurring female forms with accessories appear as repeated forms of the protagonist/s- as they seem to belong to the popular club culture so familiar in Bangalore city.

Her technique in Baroda was primarily etching, and later on in Bangalore she opted to do large wood cut prints. The colouring is with print ink and sometimes she applies water colours on the prints making the works more unique. Where the figures seem mildly vigorous due to the sort of monumental rendering, the foliage or the intricate designs in parts of the work pronounce positive and negative spaces. In some designs we see influences gathered from the rich artistic tradition from Mysore, convened during her former years.

Each figure is more or less similar in facial features and physique, a sort of essentialisation of the female form; though the hairstyles, movements, clothes and other accessories vary from one another. The eyes are either immersed in association or stare blankly as if in contemplation. Her art which reconstructs the female exposed to urbanization also generate spaces for interrogation... as the figures depicted seem cognizant in their awkwardness, to the viewer who sees the façade...

The works participate in understanding modern formed notions of womanhood and capturing the tension between the new realities; discussing relationships between the public and the private. They are also her relation to reality discussing the complex interrelationships between the social and individual forming the periphery and centre, creating a haziness of the outdoor and indoor... the hidden and the exposed.

There is great deal of drama between the background and the figures. The usage of foliage designs accentuate or bring out the figures performing in the subdued spaces.

Using gradations and textures these works that depict mainstream/elite subjects, communicate a deep growing sensitivity to the urban surroundings recording a historical moment that helps us decipher womanhood in its context.
