

SCULPTURAL DRAWING BY TRIDIB BERA IN CONTEXT OF SOCIAL HARMONY

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ABSTRACT

Tridib Bera is a contemporary sculptor; he got his entire academic art training from Kala-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan. After some initial struggling year now he is settled in Hosur, Tamil Nadu. At present, he is working widely on steel medium. He cuts steel rods into small pieces and welds them to construct the composition. His work stands between the junction of sculpture and painting; one can call it a three-dimensional drawing. Sometimes he adds electroplated effect to his work to give the desired expression to his visual language. In his work, there are layers of linear structure. And junction of the structure of two layers creates angles and planes which create three-dimensional quality of sculpture within the linear structure that helps the composition stand freely as a sculpture and that is the unique characteristic of his work of art. This paper considers some of his selective works to discuss which has been created in this current decade. In his works, he connects some iconic figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose, and music maestro like Ustad Bismillah khashahib and Bade Gulam ali. His uses of India's historical iconic figures in his composition create contemporary socio-political satire. This kind of approach is unique part of his work of art.

KEYWORDS

lines, composition, Tribute, Social-harmony, Cohabitation, uniqueness.

INTRODUCTION

Tridib Bera born and brought up in West Bengal, he got his entire academic art training from Kala-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan. After completing masters in sculpture he was teaching in some art institute while continuing his art practices. Currently, he is settled and working in Hosur, Tamil Nadu, as an academician and Practitioner. During his MFA in Santiniketan, he started working widely on junk metals and iron rods. In the initial years, his works were rawer and loud, throughout the time his works transformed and got fine-tune in both material-wise and the approach of the presentation. Nowadays he is using steel rods and electroplated effect on it which gives an elegant look to his works. Around last one decade, he is working and experimenting with this medium. He used to use both straight and curved lines for the construction of his earlier works. Construction-wise and the process of his work have not much changed, but the structure and construction-wise these works are more stable. His recent works are constructed by mostly straight lines, joining of small pieces which make these works appear more simplified, and aesthetically subdued. Uses of steel rods, electroplated effects and industrial finish these works appear more mature, and sublime. Within the thematic composition, Bera's work carries a high amount of socio-political content in it. This paper will concentrate and discuss the play of socio-political

contents in the sublime thematic composition of his work from the last decade. This paper has written mostly based on the primary source of data collection, which includes an artist's interview and his exhibition catalogue from his personal collection.



MAKING PROCESS

He draws his composition using chalk on the floor or on the base of metal sheets; then he arranges the cut pieces of steel rods according to drawing and the next step is to weld them to fix. This way he creates the small pieces of composition and then he joints them together to construct the full composition. Construction-wise two distinct types prominently visible in his works, one is drawing based linear two-dimensional structure. And another is the joining of two linear structural planes in a unifying knot that creates three-dimensional space. He uses various types of lines to construct the composition. The diagonal uses of lines give three-dimensional illusions within the composition. Use of intense black metallic board as background, stainless steel rods and golden electroplated effect on it creates the contrast between background and the subject that glorifies the linear drawing which appears prominent and vibrant. It justifies the uses of background to a sculptural composition.



Chalk drawing on metal sheets

COMPARISON BETWEEN TWO-DIMENSIONAL AND THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORK

Two-dimensional works are based on a single plane. The plane constructed through straight lines of steel rods. Three-dimensional works are based on joining of two planes one front and one profile sometimes it is unifying of multiple planes also. There is no physical three-dimensional volume rather these are seemed to be the construction of armature. He uses background only for two-dimensional works and use of diagonal line creates the illusion of three-dimensional effects within it. Three-dimensional works are free-standing and have no background. These structural works are like bold drawing and electroplated effect on steel rods creates highlights within the composition.



Flying Landscape (Attainment of life) Bodhi tree (Three Dimensional)
(Two Dimensional) (Electroplated Steel)

SUBJECT

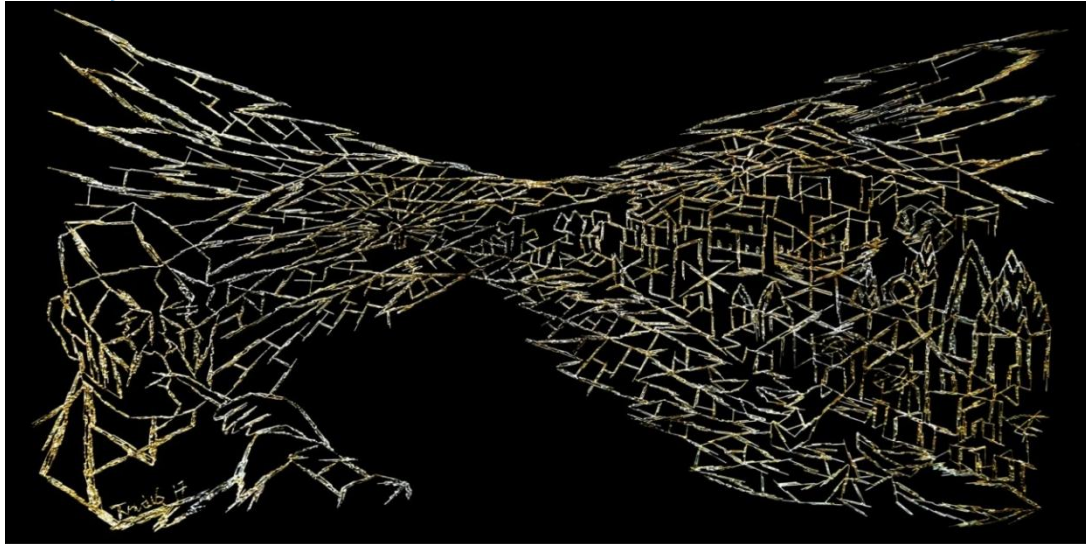
Bera's subject encompasses various areas that include his personal life journey, surrounding affairs, and socio-political issues. Subject wise his earlier works are very loud, rough and sometimes vulgar. He used to use textural-biological and oxidise effects on his works. On the contrary, his recent works are more subdued and sublime.

In a conversation with Bera, he was remembering the discussion with his mentor Sculptor Susen Ghosh, who described him about art - "A distinct characteristic of art is *Incomplete Expression*, it indicates something and then leaves on to the Viewers." ¹ There is a space for viewers to communicate and understand in their own way. Bera remembers this and that reflects in his works of art across his artistic journey.

He explained about the art of Indus valley civilization and two major cities of its Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Though they were in the same time period and culture but their arts are distinctly different from each other. This kind of duality exists in various aspects of culture, tradition and within the life itself. This duality plays a significant role in his works both structurally and thematically.

¹As told by the artist

BHAIRAV AND YEMON IN BENARAS: (MORNING AND EVENING AT BENERAS)



Title : Bhairav & Yaman in Banaras

Medium : Electro Plated Steel

Size : 74" x 120"

Year : 2017

This work looks like a drawing based linear One-point perspective composition various layers of thoughts oven into its thematic subject. As the title denotes the amalgamation of two different Ragas¹*Bhairav* which is a morning Raga and *Yaman* an evening Raga. On the left the iconic Shehnai Maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan playing his Shehnai (an Indian wind instrument) and the other side on the bank of River Ganga the series of temples are visible. The composition creates a feeling of resonance; it seems the music is spreading across Benaras. There is a social message which viewers can easily recognize; some opposite elements interplay within and meet at a point- morning and evening, day and night, Hindu and Muslim and art binds them together in one union. And this understanding of union is strong and tenacious as it's compositional structure.

M.G. ROAD



Title : M.G.Road

Medium : Steel

Size : 114" X 50"

Year : 2016

¹Raag/Raga – is the melodic Frame work and the central feature of the classical music tradition of India.

We all are familiar with M.G. Road; almost all Indian cities have one. This composition is centred with Gandhi's iconic step 'Dandi March'. Using geometric structures Bera arranges structures of buildings, temple, church and Mosque on both the sides of the road and the composition drove our eyes to a meeting point on the horizon. The thematic composition conveys a message that is beside our various beliefs and thought we should follow one path, the path of peace, harmony, union and coexistence which our visionary leaders dreamed of and that is the guiding principle of our nation, the nation of many belief, faith and religion.

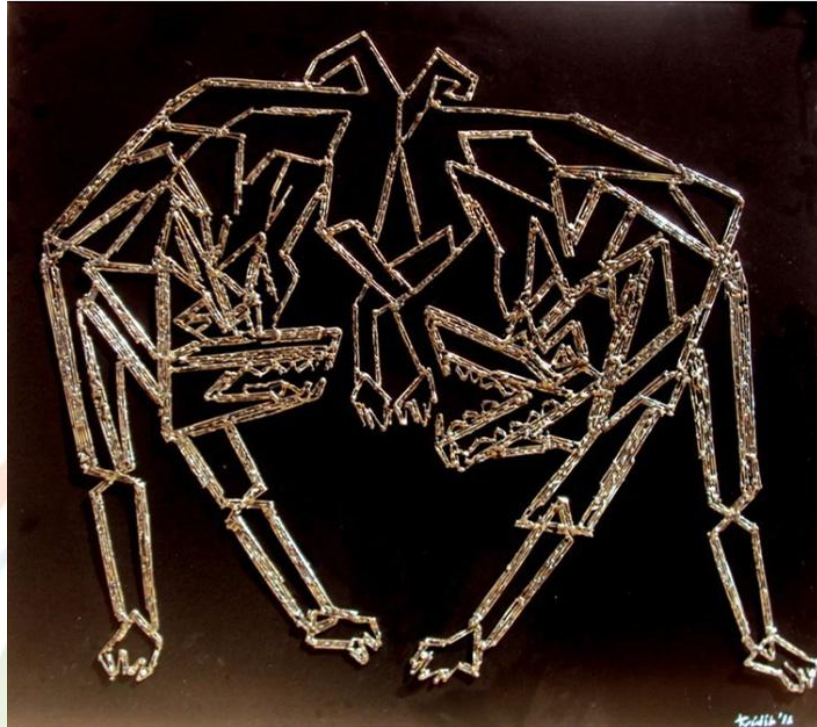
PORTRAITS



Ustad Bode Gulam Ali Khan Kazi Nazrul Islam M.F. Hussain
Medium: Steel Medium: Steel Medium: Steel

He has been using legendary figures in his works but there is a clear approach towards socio-political status. He has done a portrait series recently. It contains a socio-political element. In a personal conversation, he expresses the reason for making these portraits. He stated as 'my Muslims' and portrayed some iconic figures like Ustad Bode Glam Ali Khan, Kazi Nazrul Islam and M.F. Hussain and few others who have great contribution in India's cultural scenario. This is very significant in India's current socio-political situation. This is a symbolic protest which is intellectually prudent and shrewd.

POLITICAL ALLIANCE



Title : Political Alliance Medium : Steel Size : 39" X 43" Year : 2016

One might find it vulgar in the first appearance but this work contains full of satire. The work, 'political Alliance' is a tight slap on coalition system in Indian politics. Bera composes here a meeting scene of two dogs in his typical two-dimensional construction. He resembles the nature of dogs with the nature of political alliance in India. We are quite familiar with it in Indian politics where we witness such kinds of political alliance for the sake of power, ignoring their political ideologies, beliefs and ideals. This is his shrewd criticism of this sort of politics.

CONCLUSION

Bera has an intense liking for lines, his uses of many lines remind Van Gogh's drawing. Often he observes play of lights and their intersection in his home terrain. This observation reflects in his work where he explores his fascination for moving lines and dissecting planes; and his sculptures, where the plays of line manifest in a tangible form. There are duality and contradiction exit in his work in the divergence of lines and planes which is quite similar to human existence. He has been exploring the contradiction between aesthetics exploration and social relevance, besides having aesthetic sensibility it also carrying a message which is meaningful and socially relevance. In his understanding elements, the artist uses in their art are similar to vocabulary; together they create meaningful dialogue and communication. He too uses such vocabulary or elements in his work through which he creates a visual dialogue to communicate with viewers. His works are the outcome of socially

conscious thinking. As the duty of an artist, he displays the reality of our society and it is our responsibility how we look at it and act.

REFERENCES

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Images I have used here are from the personal collection of Tridib Bera

Major sources are from the personal conversation with artist Tridib Bera, during 2019.

