

THE
VILLAGE
GALLERY



Paritosh Sen



The Man With The Garlands, Acrylic as Watercolour, 1980, 74 × 54 cm

Cover: *Self-Portrait, Acrylic as Watercolour, 1991, 51 × 32 cm*



An exhibition of the works of

PARITOSH SEN

Part I

INSTANT IMAGES

December 6 to 27, 1991

Part II

ACRYLICS AS WATERCOLOURS

December 28, 1991 to January 18, 1992

*The
Village Gallery*

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Paritosh Sen is a man who has had direct experience in some of the most vital art centres of the world. He went to Paris at a time when it was an active art centre. He had the opportunity of meeting some of the giants of the contemporary art movement and living in a highly charged intellectual environment. However, being a true Bengali, he could never settle abroad like some of his contemporaries. He came back and settled in his own environment. Even as a student, Paritoshda had the problem, of having undergone studies at the Madras School of Art under Devi Prasad Roy Choudhary and at the same time having an extremely sympathetic view of the Bengal School as a movement. So he is a man who can appreciate and understand diverse concepts in art without losing his identity. For this reason I would like to call him the youngest painter working in Calcutta today.

That a man who has assimilated so much can reach a point of not being self-conscious is amply illustrated in his sketches and studies which he calls instant images. In a sense it is refreshing that he could forget everything and create these instant images as he did in the case of his Bengali writing. Without even thinking whether he is qualified to be a Bengali writer or not, he wrote *The Arjun Tree*, which is one of the best pieces of writing I have ever read. I know the literary critics will not agree with me, but it was a unique experience to read how a painter can translate his imageries into words. In fact he created a monumental canvas of words.

It is true that Paritoshda is moved by events happening around him, but somehow I cannot associate any quality of political consciousness of a political painting. There is only an expression of a humanist who is actually sensitive to the problems of his fellows beings.

It is said that when an old clock is wound too much you have to take out the pendulum and make it work fast so that the tension of the spring is relaxed. Paritoshda is doing almost a similar thing in his sketches and drawings. He is not bothered about the themes, ideas or concepts on which he created his larger canvases. He is playfully using his virtuosity to use lines and colours as a child plays with sand, stick and pebbles, resulting in products that are so refreshing that you cannot associate a man of 74 doing these works.

The first reproduction of Paritoshda's work I saw was in Ramanand Chatterjee's *The Modern Review* when I was very young. It was a typical village scene of Bengal with the definite influences of D.P. Roy Choudhary's version of the Bengal School. Years later when I saw his works in the sixties I was so impressed by the way Paritoshda had changed in his work after his Paris experience. He was trying to integrate the cubist elements with the Kalighat images. Perhaps this struggle was typical of the artists of his time who were the forerunners of modern movements in India. Whereas many of his contemporaries settled down comfortably with a hybrid vocabulary, Paritoshda went on ceaselessly experimenting and thus keeping himself young.

A. RAMACHANDRAN

The present exhibition consists of two sets of works of which some are recent, others date back almost to a decade or more. Broadly speaking, one of them, done mostly in black and white, can be described, for want of a better term, as “instant images”. That is, images that revealed themselves on the spur of the moment.

Many artists, when they are not engaged in doing serious works, are apt to playfully scrawl, or even draw, on any available surface. This utterly relaxed and spontaneous act can be a source of great fun simply because one is free from all the tensions which a serious work normally involves. Quite a few of such efforts can, of course, lead to bigger or more meaningful works.

Over the years, I have been, as a matter of habit, collecting all kinds of invitation cards or other surfaces which are printed on one side only, and which, in general, are of excellent quality. Hence, worth recycling. Most of these “instant images” were done on such preserved papers or boards. I expect viewers to take them for whatever they are worth. While viewing them it may, however, be worthwhile bearing in mind that despite their seeming playfulness, the imageries can be suggestive of the artist’s subconscious intention to get closer to his fundamental ideas, or the thinking he likes best and which may mean the most to him.

The second set is different not only in the use of the medium but also because they have definite thematic contents. Nearly a decade ago, I did a whole series of works (using acrylic as watercolour) caricaturing the politician in our country. I have included a few in the present collection because they are as relevant today as they were then. In any case, they do not clash with the rest which were painted very recently. These were mainly inspired by the most heart-rending images carried by various newspapers and journals after the devastating cyclone that overtook southern Bangladesh a few months ago. Needless to say, I used those printed images as information only. I was aware that I had to transform them to suit my expressionistic objectives. The look of suffering in the eyes of those who survived was deeply felt by me. Perhaps, I was primitively trying to exorcise my feeling by painting it. Success or failure, in such a context was irrelevant.

PARITOSH SEN



*Terrorist, 1982,
Ink on Paper, 25 × 27 cm*



*Kumbhakaran, 1982,
Ink on Paper, 25 × 27 cm*

1989, Ink on Paper, 33 × 27 cm





After The Cyclone (Bangladesh), Acrylic as Watercolour, 1991, 65 × 50 cm



After The Cyclone (Bangladesh), Acrylic as Watercolour, 1991, 42 × 30 cm



After The Cyclone (Bangladesh), Acrylic as Watercolour, 1991, 50 × 65 cm



*Man Counting Money
Behind The Curtain,
Acrylic as
Watercolour, 1980,
74 × 54 cm*

INSTANT
IMAGES



*After The Cyclone
(Bangladesh),
Acrylic as
Watercolour, 1991,
46 × 30 cm*

INSTANT IMAGES

*Ink on Paper, 1990,
25 × 27 cm*



Ink on Paper, 1991, 18 × 24 cm



*1991, Ink on
Paper, 12 × 9 cm*

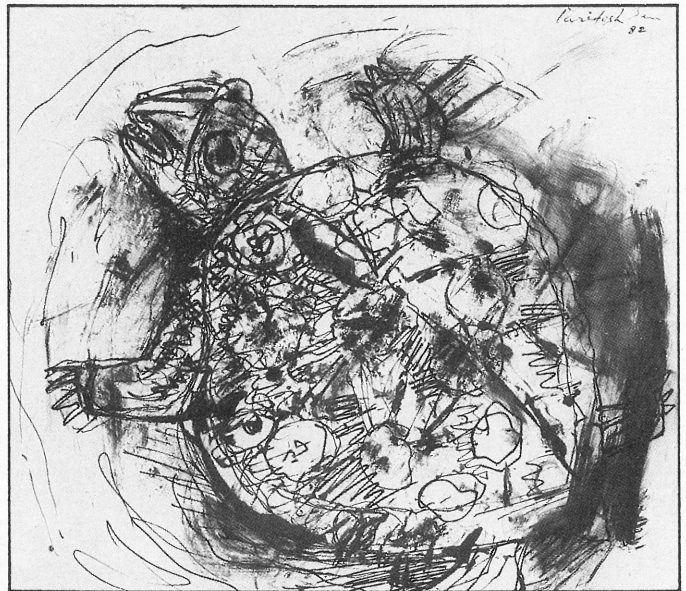
INSTANT IMAGES



*Pregnant Goat II, 1990,
Ink on Paper, 21 × 30 cm*



*Ink on Paper, 1991,
17 × 10 cm*



*Ink on Paper, 1982,
25 × 27 cm*



*Ink on Paper, 1990,
17 × 12 cm*

INSTANT
IMAGES



*Self-Portrait, 1990,
Acrylic on Paper, 27 × 18 cm*



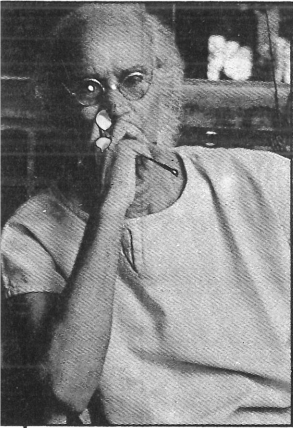
*Man With Wings I, 1982,
Ink on Paper, 25 × 27 cm*



*Ink on Paper, 1990,
25 × 28 cm*



*After The Cyclone
(Bangladesh),
Acrylic as
Watercolour, 1991,
45 × 30 cm.*



PARITOSH SEN

- 1918 Born in Dacca, now Bangladesh
1936-40 Studied at Government College of Arts and Crafts, Madras
1950-53 Studied at Paris at Andre Lhote's School, Academy Grand Chaumier, Ecole des Beaux Arts and at Ecole de Louvre (for History of Painting)

One Person Shows

Since 1950 in India and abroad

Group Shows

- 1961 Joint show with Tyeb Mehta, London
1965 The Commonwealth Arts Festival, Sao Paulo Biennale and Asahi Shimbun exhibition of art, Tokyo
1972 Four Indian Painters, Pittsburgh, U.S.A.
1986 Second Biennale, Cuba

Participations

- 1943 Founder member, Calcutta Group
1954-56 Taught art at Daly College, Indore and Neterhat Vidyalaya, Bihar
1956-79 Staff member, Regional Institute of Printing Technology, Jadavpur, teaching design and layout
1962-63 Invited by French Government to design Bengali typeface based on script of Rabindranath Tagore
1979 Invited by Indo-Soviet Friendship Association for exhibition of his works, at Moscow
1981-82 Invited by Indo-U.S. subcommission on Culture and Education as visiting professor, Maryland Institute of Art, Baltimore, U.S.A. to lecture on Contemporary Indian Art at various centres in the U.S.A.
1983,84,87 Artist in residence, National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad
Elected Fellow, Lalit Kala Akademi
1986 Portfolio of his short story in English and illustrated by him, brought out by National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad
Commissioner, Indian section of Havana Biennale II, Cuba
Invited to speak on Indian Contemporary Painting at Loomis Chaffee School by Allan Lundie Wise Lecture Fund, Windsor, Conn., U.S.A.

Has been member of General Council, LKA, New Delhi

Presently member of Executive Council, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan

Has contributed numerous articles to journals on problems of contemporary art. Has published three books in Bengali
A documentary film on his work was made by West Bengal Government in 1962. A documentary on him made by Doordarshan, Calcutta, *One Day In the Life of a Celebrity* in 1988

Awards

- 1969-70 French fellowship to continue with designing typeface
1970-71 John D. Rockefeller III grant
1985 Asian Paints award
1989 Abanindra Puruskar for painting by Government of West Bengal
1991 Conferred "Doctor of Literature" *honoris causa* by University of Burdwan, West Bengal

Collections

National Gallery of Modern Art, Lalit Kala Akademi, Ministry of External Affairs, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Palam Airport

The
Village
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1. HUSAIN Graphis Eighty-Nine, April 1989
2. Self Portraits, October 1989
3. Sculpture for Use by ATUL SINHA, February 1990
4. Jottings by GANESH PYNE, March 1990
5. The works of SATYAJIT RAY, October-November 1990