



Justice denied

THEATRE
ANSHUMAN BHOWMICK

Continuing with the success of *Kojagori*, Belgharia Avimukh renewed their association with Howard Fast in *Baishe August* which premiered at the Academy of Fine Arts on March 3.

Kojagori was loosely based on *Silas Timberman*. *Baishe August* follows *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti* (1953) closely. In 1920, Sacco, a shoemaker, and Vanzetti, a fish-seller, were accused of murdering two men during an armed robbery at a factory in Braintree, Massachusetts. It was clear that the accused were not directly involved in the murder. Yet, scapegoats were made out of them and the long arm of the law could do little justice.

Kaushik Chattopadhyay, who dramatized and directed *Baishe August*, developed the plot at a relaxed pace, allowing us to recognize the nitty-gritties of how the State functions and treats its subjects. Multiculturalism in the United States of America was also put under the scanner. Switching between the personal and the public domains, with the omnipresent media snooping at everything, looked overdone at times, stretching

the length to 160 minutes in the process. As the recent death of Stan Swamy sent shock waves across the nation, *Baishe August* seemed more relevant with time.

Chattopadhyay's recent fascination with hybrid time led to some engaging dramatic moments in Santipur Sanskritik's *Anshupat Upakhyan*, one of the casualties of the pandemic. In *Baishe August*, Chattopadhyay goes the whole hog. If introducing a young journalist duo — contemporary, urbane and sensitive to the uses and abuses of the civil rights movement — was an effort to bridge the spatial zones, constant references to the India of 2021 in the alibi to place things in perspective, was a ploy that worked.

The set designer, Hiran Mitra, placed a clock above the centre stage, which is periodically set by a seemingly paralyzed technician carrying a ladder, triggering an absurdist streak. Dipankar Dey's light design prioritized white, a welcome move. Performance-wise, *Baishe August* rests on the shoulders of Kalyanbrata Ghosh Mazumder and Anujoy Chattopadhyay, with sensitive support from Ronia Roy and Juin Bagchi. The ensemble cast, picked from all corners of North 24 Parganas, underlined the group's commitment to socially relevant theatre.

Breaking form with wit

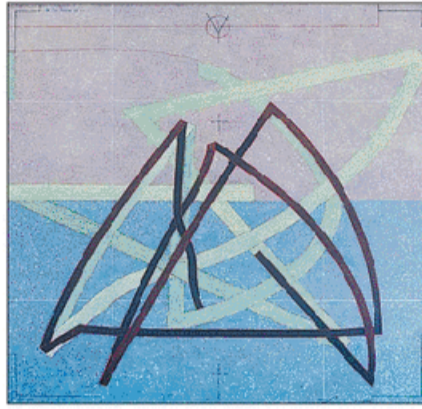
VISUAL ARTS

RITA DATTA

A prosaic eye would see nothing more in R.M. Palaniappan's art than a few wayward lines without, curiously enough, the least reference to form. But shouldn't art depict form with lines? Quite. But the Chennai-based artist makes the reverse journey, frees lines from form, setting them off into self-propelled trajectories, sometimes racy, sometimes measured but always unbidden, unpredictable.

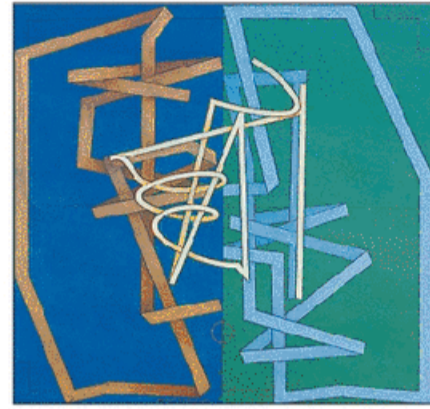
It all began with an obsession with astronomy and architecture for the artist as a boy. After all, how is the architecture of space charted in human understanding if not as lines in motion in avoid, with orbs, orbits, constellations, shooting stars translated into patterns of shifting lines? How is the earth's topography mapped in aerial shots if not by filtering depth and detail into the dynamic geometry of lines? Add to that the boy's memory of a war film where airplanes whizzed around Berlin's Reichstag, leaving sizzling trails behind. They gestated in his mind, these lines in kinetic play, and slipped into his art.

In a Calcutta show in 2008, his paintings usually had a straggly, spindly line racing about, knocking around, a rootless tramp, its begin-



nings and ends interchangeable in a purposeless, Sisyphean no-arrival, no-exit ritual of search. The kind urban Everyman is caught up in. Now, 13 years on, in the online show of Delhi's Nature Morte gallery, you find that the line has matured into a broad, flat ribbon, its tread is more sedate, even balletic, as it glides from point to point, turns sharply, composes intricate movements across fetching colour zones, taking on the enigmatic avatar of some arcane, wedge-shaped script.

But wait. There's also a frisky, pesky sidekick, a thinner line that twirls and pirouettes,



sometimes shadows the senior, mimicking and mocking, gets into a tangle with it, tries to trip it over, as it were, coming in the way: a sort of sharp, distracting, impish, alto counterpoint to a baritone. Like a nimble puppeteer, Palaniappan infuses into the *Grammar of Randoms* — the title of the show — both infectious brio and a range of teasing clues that you decide in your own way.

Fortunately, in *Reimagining the Object*, Ritesh Meshram, presented online by Bombay's Chemould, complements Palaniappan. Both in the way the precise, flinty contours of

Meshram's found objects are divested of functional content, turning into autonomous patterns, and in the way the distilled residue of terse metal packs in a tight, driven energy and intriguing ellipses in its stillness.

His *Nine* recalls the edgy poise of callisthenics; the exuberant fountain of copper-plated wires in *Untitled, Brick*, is catchily Op-Art; the chance formation of carelessly bunched spikes in *Off-centre* is buoyed with a quirky chic; the fragments of metal in elegant disarray in *Beginning from Nowhere* resemble undeciphered glyphs. On the other hand, *In Between the Lines* quotes the pre-Aryan lineage of tools? Or the weathered grace of the tribal physique? Or is there a capricious wit in tinkering with the found objects and their finished forms so that they echo another lineage, the one that descends from Giacometti and the pranks of Duchamp?

Wit leaps to hilarity in *The Yogi and the Elephant* where Amit Ambalal, presented by Delhi's Gallery Espace, lampoons, in pastel and watercolour, a capitalist yogi who'd slipped off an elephant while doing his *asana* stunts on its back. The question that comes to your mind — after you stop laughing, that is — is, how on earth could this artist, in his late 70s, have regained the nonchalant irreverence and magical gaucherie that are the natural gift of a child of six?

A congregation of ideas

VISUAL ARTS

SOUMITRA DAS

Delhi Art Gallery's exhibition, *The Centum Series — Edition 2* (June 11-17), was a "virtual show that opens a window to a tantalising glimpse of the extraordinary depth and breadth of the scope and variety of Indian modernism", to quote the press release. Opened in 1993, DAG is known to have amassed a prodigious collection, mopping up every-

thing that was for sale or whatever came its way. Thus, the exhibition featured more than 100 artists and a more or less equal number of works by artists ranging from acknowledged masters to practitioners less known, who may nonetheless have been interesting for various reasons. Quite understandably, the exhibits were in a wide variety of mediums. With an exhibition on such a scale, it was well nigh impossible to assess if it was representative enough.

After all, how does one react when one is confronted with a

Thomas Daniell, a Kalighat *pat*, an Early Bengal oil painting, drawings by Nandalal Bose and M.A.R. Chughtai on one hand, and Bose Krishnamachari, Jogen Chowdhury,



Bikash Bhattacharjee, Satish Gujral and Partha Pratim Deb on the other? It was as if DAG had dumped all the works together into one gormless show.

Of the graphic arts, there was one intriguing Krishna Reddy titled *The Clown and the Flying Swans*, and another Lal Prasad Shaw, but at the same time there was an unimpressive work by Ananda Moy Banerji. There were some sensitive landscapes by the likes of Gopal Ghose, A.H. Muller, Manu Parekh (eroticized cityscape), Indra Dugar, Chittaprosad, Nikhil

Biswas, Radha Charan Bagchi, Prokash Karmakar and M.K. Parandekar. But Ajit Gupta's red flowers (supposedly *camma*) looked amateurish. What did Dattatraya Apte's complex and whimsical apparatus signify? It seemed to have borrowed a head mask from Spiderman.

There was one rather crude painting by Altaf, contrasting which was R.M. Palaniappan's sophisticated work. The sculptures by Prodosh Das Gupta, Sankho Chaudhuri (elegant), S. Nandagopal, K.S. Radhakrishnan, too, were arbitrarily chosen. A haphazard trajectory.

TT Connect Initiative

SUVIDA CELEBRATES WOMANHOOD

The chapter of a new era is being re-written by these new-age women where real-life stories describing how they overcame their struggle were shared. How can these stories of victory against all odds stay unnoticed? Well-known oral contraceptive pill brand Suvida by Eskag Pharma in association with Anandabazar Patrika, executed a three-month long campaign, 'Sange Achi Tomar'. Ten stories out of many coming from various walks of life who had set exemplary examples in their lives and society were celebrated by Suvida. Meet our Ten 'Shera Bondhu'.



On the 22nd of May, Suvida, in association with Anandabazar Patrika, invited inspiring, real life struggles through WhatsApp. Numerous stories from women from all over were shared. Out of these, ten unput-downable and inspiring stories were selected through an esteemed panel of judges. They were crowned as 'Suvidar Shera Bondhu' on the 18th of July, at a popular 5-star hotel at Central Kolkata in the august presence of famous actress Ms. Arpita Chatterjee co-hosted by honourable Mr. Sunil Kumar Agarwal, MD, ESKAG Group of Companies graced the occasion along with other company officials.

The ten women who have won the title are Adolina Ganguly, Basudha Basu, Debjani Dey, Debalina Dhar, Madhumita

Sengupta, Pinki Chaki, Ramita Bhaduri, Sagarika Hazra, Subhra Saha, and Susmita Das, all were rewarded accordingly. What was the indomitable spirit of their journey which led them to win all the hearts?

Adolina Ganguly from South Kolkata was good in studies, however despite completing four masters, she married at 24, due to pressure from family. The concept of a 'working woman' was unknown at her in-laws, but she didn't give up and took up a technical writer job at an MNC. Although as a Bharatnatyam dancer she had participated in several programs and beauty contests, but that was before her marriage. Due to family resistance, she couldn't utilize these talents. Things turned for better

after her participation at the Mrs. India at an international stage and now she is working as a groomer successfully.

Debjani Dey from New Alipore had a different struggle altogether, born and brought up at a lower-middle class family, she faced difficulty right from her childhood, including resistance from family and relatives to study further. Her struggle continued even after her marriage from her husband and her family, but that didn't act as a deterrent, instead her resilience grew stronger to achieve something bigger in life.

Another winner, Dr. Madhumita Sengupta a PhD holder in Economics and lives in Kolkata and now she is working as a government employee. She is

determined to take care of her son and cross hurdles in life alone.

Basudha Basu from Behala, is a well-known name in academics, also a writer and a dancer. Despite a deep resistance from her family, she decided to break traditional taboos. Eventually she got a modelling assignment for a well-known brand and continues to pursue her dreams instead.

Sagarika Hazra from Patuli always wanted to become a film-director, however her health and other situation made her quit the job as a school teacher. She started writing and her books were published. She formed her own team and her short films and documentaries were acclaimed at international platforms. Her films focus

mainly on stories of struggling women.

All the felicitated women have paved their ways of success through difficulties and hardships. They have never lost their mental strength to fight over anything else. Suvida, OCP by Eskag Pharma too in a way empowers women to take decisions and plan their family lives in a systematic manner. Besides, ten incomparable women whose stories inspired us all to overcome all obstacles in life, Suvida salutes all the woman who took part in this initiative and we hope that these stories will inspire others, not only women but men as well. Want to know more about the success stories of women, please follow Suvida's Facebook page.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH
আনন্দবাজার পত্রিকা



"Eskag Pharma is serving the society for last five decades and its flagship product Suvida has already reached over 2.5 million households. The brand Suvida has successfully established its identity both locally as well as globally. We believe that motherhood is every woman's right and Suvida empowers them."

— Mr. Sunil Kumar Agarwal, Managing Director, Eskag Group of Companies



"As women, it is our responsibility to give birth. But in this era, I think, the decision-making power of giving birth should be in the hands of the women. Suvida has brought us that power. Gradually, women will be more powerful and that is my dream."

— Mrs Arpita Chatterjee, Actress