



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Arts

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS OF GAJENDRA PRASAD SAHU

KEY WORDS: Printmaking, Gajendra Prasad Sahu, pen and Ink works, Designing, Painting.

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ABSTRACT

Artist Gajendra Prasad Sahu's creative expressions are the inspiration for many artists today. The way he showed his exceptional talent in different mediums is really commendable. His artistic creations contain a wide range of works starting from painting, to printing, and pen and ink to designing. His works reflect his choice of concepts like indigenous culture and conversation in between humans and nature. The colours in his paintings are really vibrant and always speak a story. He exhibited his works at various prestigious places and designed prestigious awards for the nation, and made his soil proud of him.

INTRODUCTION

Artist, Gajendra Prasad Sahu, was born on 14th of April 1961, in Baleshwar district of Odisha. He was born in a middle-class family, and had a strong willingness towards art from his childhood. The family's financial condition couldn't stop him to becoming an artist. During his childhood days, he used to make rangolis and alponas on the floor during festivals, along with his mother, and from there he started his artistic journey, and now he is at a place where he is influencing countless artists. His vibrant and expressive paintings, excellent prints, and creative designs, are the hallmark of his creations.



His works are interesting because of their appearance, and the contrasting backgrounds seem to synchronize the visual feast. The second element it emphasizes is the relationship between humans and nature. This relationship can be as natural as is normally found in an Odishan environment. Natural is more decorative and perhaps symbolic. The treatment of the theme is very close to the artist's mood. The human face is cared for in various conditions. Occasionally they feel pale, depressed, lost in the chaos of the city, looking for a niche to survive. This provides a broader understanding of internal and external, containment and exploration, fulfilment and emptiness, and more. Other than his Paintings and Prints, his design works have also got numerous attentions, whether be it his Nabakalebara logo design or be it the designs of the prestigious trophies, he showed his excellent creative ideas, which is an essential entity to become a successful artist.

His Works

In the above painting, we can see the artist used 2 straight lines in the painting, one long horizontal line and one short vertical line; as a result the painting is divided into three different spaces. The bottom section of the painting is the largest section, in which two big female faces are present, which is the emphasis of the painting. Both the faces are in abstract style, one face is black, and another one is yellow in colour. Long sharp nose, long eyes, curly hair, bright red lips, and decorated eyelids, are the main features of these two female faces. Other than these two figures, five other small human faces are also drawn, which are again in abstract style and really unrecognizable, whether the figures are male or female.

Both the figures are shown standing in between plants and leaves are waving around them. While the artist has shown, a complex wave like structure, in the upper left corner. The artist has also shown his creativity in that wavy structure, and also shown miniature leaves and floral like patterns. While again, three indistinguishable faces are present at upper-right corner. The leaf like patterns are making this works more attractive. The colours are really contrasting to each other. This is actually making the painting more attractive. This painting looks very creative as the artist has used many shapes in his paintings. He focused on mainly two female faces, which are done in between a 'U' shaped structure. Again, both the figures are abstract figures. The artist has given his style to those figures. A third face is also present in the bottom-right corner, but the artist has used his creative technique and has hidden that face. That face is really indistinguishable, as the artist has presented it in a creative way. The artist's regular leaf - like patterns are also present in this painting.



There are white lotus flowers along with buds and leaves are also present in the bottom left corner, besides the third face. Other than these, few women faces and birds are present in the painting. This can be considered as the supporting characters of the painting. The background of this painting is really creative and very contrasting to the subject.

Although the painting is a modern art piece, still we can find the traditional Patachitra floral pattern in the background. Only two figures are present in the painting, and it's obvious that one of them is a male figure and another one is the female figure. The artist has shown the male figure a little bigger than the women figure. And he has shown the woman figure with 'sindoor', which is the biggest ever asset of a married Indian woman. By doing this the artist proved that the male and female figures are a couple. Both the figures have long eyes and long eyebrows.

The width of face is less than the total width of two eyes and also the same with eyebrows. He also has shown dried leaves with some ancient patterns drawn on it. The patterns are basically of leaves, human figure, and animals. This gives a vintage look to the bottom part of the painting. This ink work

reflects the scenic beauty of Muktesvara temple. The artist has shown, the main sanctum, pidhadeula and torana in his ink work. This colourless work is saying much more than colourful works. The artist has represented the temple from a side view so that he can show all the works in detail. The perspective of the temple is perfectly shown by the artist. Although it's an ink art piece, still its perfect detailing, are reminding of black and white retro period photography. He used normal hatching and cross-hatching to represent the dark, light, and highlight part of the temple. Each single corner of torana and pidhadeula is represented by the artist in a very detailed way. The sculptural ornamentation done on the flat portico is looking so natural. The height proportions of all three temples are so correct. Not only the subject, but also the background trees, cloudy sky and the floor is also shown by the artist in a very natural way. The Lingaraj temple, the tallest temple of the capital of Odisha, is also known as 'Mandiramalini', which means the plenty of temples.



And this ink work also proves the same. This ink work shows the inside view of the border of Lingaraj temple. The artist has represented the view of main sanctum, and other mini sanctums in his art work. He has also shown the shadows of the sanctums, occurred by the rays of the rising sun. The transition from highlight to darker part is represented by him in a very natural way. This is highly appreciated by viewers. The eroded stones and sculptures, and the movement of clouds and air, is amazingly shown by the artist.

This painting is another example of the level of creativity of artist Gajendra Prasad Sahu. This painting is different because the artist divided the canvas into three parts without making any line. Use of different colours, partitioning the canvas into 3 divisions. The upper part of the canvas looks like a cloudy sky, in which the artist also shown his legacy of making leaves. The upper part and the bottom part of the painting is almost same, as the artist has only shown leaf like patterns on a cloudy greyish blue background. The middle portion is the subject of the painting, as the artist has shown many human figures in this area. Some human figures are male figures, while some figures are female figures. He has represented all the male figures, on the left side, while all the female figures on the right side of the painting, and again used his leaf - like patterns to make a separation. More than the concept of the painting, its visual impact attracts the viewers. Except the printing and painting skills of artist Sahu, his designing skills are also noteworthy. His designs made his soil proud of him. He designed prestigious awards of the nation like the Arjuna award, Dronacharya award, Dhyanchand award, and Tenzing Norgay award etc. In year 2015, his design was approved as the official logo of the auspicious 'Nabakalebara' ritual of Jagannath culture, in Odisha.

He excellently depicted the concept of 'Nabakalebara' through his logo, which ultimately showcases the storytelling capability of the artist through simplified icons. He considers this as the blessing of lord Jagannath, as well as a remarkable work in his folio. Furthermore, he designed the state tableau of Odisha in the year 2020, for the republic day parade.

He represented the religion and culture of the land of Odisha. He showcased lord Lingaraj and his sacred Chariot

'RukunaRath' in the tableau, and was also the part of the tableau performance. Because of outstanding representation of Odishan religious and cultural landscape, his tableau design bagged the 2nd prize. And, again after four years, in 2024, his designed state tableau showcasing the Patachitra tradition of Raghurajpur, and women empowerment through it, attracted crores of eyeballs, and bagged the first prize, among all the state tableaux. These achievements are the reflection of the hard work, dedication and determination of the artist. Other than this artist's largest creation, 'Mahaparinirvana', which is based on Buddhist ideology, got its place in the 'OMG BOOK OF RECORDS', as well as in the 'INDIAN BOOK OF RECORDS'. It's the biggest pen and ink work in India, which took around two years to be completed.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the work of printmaker Gajendra Prasad Sahu from Odisha exemplifies the rich tradition of printmaking in India, while also pushing the boundaries of the medium through his innovative approach and unique cultural vision. Sahu's prints showcase a deep connection to his artistic roots and heritage, as well as a keen mindfulness of contemporary issues and aesthetics.

His use of traditional ways alongside ultramodern influences creates a dynamic dialogue between the history and the present, performing in artwork that's both visually striking and conceptually engaging. Sahu's commitment to trial and disquisition in his art practice has led to the development of a distinct style that's recognizable and poignant. His prints not only serve as visual representations of his surroundings, gestures, and feelings, but also as important statements that provoke study and inspire discussion. Through his fidelity to his craft and his amenability to challenge conventions, Sahu has established himself as a prominent figure in the Indian art scene, garnering recognition and sun both locally and internationally. As Sahu continues to evolve and upgrade his cultural practice, it's clear that his work will continue to allure and reverberate with cult, further solidifying his position as a talented and influential printmaker from Odisha. His benefactions to the art world serve as a testament to the enduring significance of printmaking as a medium for cultural expression, and his commitment to pushing boundaries and exploring new possibilities ensures that his heritage will endure for times to come. Gajendra Prasad Sahu's work not only celebrates the rich artistic heritage of Odisha but also contributes to the global dialogue on art and identity.

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