Ragini Upadhyay Grela



Ragini Upadhyay renders religious tolerance, and the space of women in Nepali society, and revolts against political violence through her inter-textual and inter-generic art forms. She depicts social unrest and degeneration, and looks forward to the peace and stability. Some of her graphic works have been inspired by the teachings and philosophy of Lord Buddha. They reveal a yearning for peace and compassion. Ragini endeavors to promote the importance of cultural and religious tolerance and appeal for peace.

Her paintings are intertextual, for she takes allusions from fables, oriental myths and folktales. Verbal texts in “devanagari scripts”, and “comic strips” are juxtaposed with visual images creating inter-art relationship. Her works combine “the comic with the serious, the graphics with paintings, fun with sadness and forms with empty space”.

Ragini also depicts the follies, cruelty and violence of the patriarchal society through feminist perspective, and attempts to carve the women’s space in history. “Ragini in the paintings of the Nepali paper series has captured the weak points of human nature, especially the games monopolized by men as their prerogatives, like politics, violence, backbiting and fighting for gains. Woman also figures up in these works but only as someone who standing by the corner of the horizontal space watches the drama. But the narrator, the moderator and the censor of these stories is a woman. The gap between the visible and the invisible therefore is the state of irony in her paintings.”

Her lines and colours are bold, aggressive and direct. She gives emphasis to the feeling, emotion and imagination rather than objective representation. Her works are experimental, for she always invents new techniques for her presentation. Her forms are not predetermined but evolve on the process of creation. Her favorite medium is graphics.

As the images presented in the various segments of the canvas, the union of the artist with her art work is not the sudden achievement but the gradual development from one stage to another through constant engagement with her media. The artist suspends herself and becomes music and media.

In addition to this, the works can be taken as meta art, for the artist explores about the process of creating art and drives home the idea that one should dissolve himself/herself with the work of art and media to be an artist.

Ragini Upadhyay’s compositions depict the possible intervention of the supernatural and mythical power to restore the order and harmony in the conflict-ridden fragmented and chaotic socio-political scenario of contemporary Nepal. The serpent or the *naga*in Nepali is considered as the deity in

Hindu mythology. The temples are the metonymical representation of the Hinduism. The sun is also worshipped as a god. The image of the sun is also the symbol of nationalism, for it is the image present in the Nepali flag. The image of *Kundalini Shakti* is coherent to the reviving *naga* in the sense that the *naga* has sprung up as the arousal of *Kundalini*.

The composition implies that the artist is dissatisfied with the burgeoning political forces of various sort which threaten to dismantle the traditional order. To preserve the deep-rooted institutions, the artist dreams of the revival of the mythical and supernatural power.

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