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(RE)LOOKING INSTALLATION ART IN INDIA-II

RESONANCE OF INDIGENOUS CREATIVITY IN BIHAR

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Installation art is a form of art practice in which an artist deals with space and its three-dimensionality. Its evolution can be traced back to ancient times when people used to make different structures with found objects to perform rituals and ceremonies which were part of their living traditions. Recently, however, installation art has significantly evolved with the usage of various mediums, such as video, photography, sound and performance, etc.

We can notice the emergence of installation art in Western art practices during the 1970s. The wave hit India in the early 1990s. During this period the Indian contemporary art tradition witnessed the execution of new mediums. This new art form soon spread from the main centres

of art to regional centers and small cities. In Bihar also, some artists showed interest in this medium and incorporated it well in their works. Artists like Subodh Gupta, Sanjeev Sinha and Shambhavi Sinha from Bihar came up with some outstanding installations using indigenous objects. In fact, Gupta gave a new dimension to installation art, which has helped to place Bihar on the global map. Yet, in spite of the significant contributions of these artists in making Indian art global, Bihar is still considered inconspicuous in the contemporary art discourse of India.

When we look at the history of Bihar, we can see it holds a great place in the history of India and has been one of the most prominent centres of art and culture down the ages.

However, in spite of all its historical significance, the present condition of art and culture in Bihar is quite miserable.

Bihar has only one full-fledged functional art college in Patna under Patna University; it is in extremely pathetic condition waiting for a complete revival. There are several artists who have studied in this college and made a mark in the field of contemporary art in India. Artists like Shyam Sharma, Sanjay Singh, Vireshwar Bhattacharya, Subodh Gupta, Shambhavi Sinha and Sanjeev Sinha have received their initial art education from this college. As the purpose of this article is only to map the present condition of installation art in Bihar, I will not go into details about the prominent artists who have made significant contribution in

he worked with bamboo shafts incorporating the Hindu marriage ritual artifact '*mauri* (headgear)'.

Arbind Singh, trained as a sculptor, began experimenting with installations using various media like video-, sound- and site-specific installations. His works narrate the condition of human life in the social, political and economical scenario of India as an experience of a common man's life. Like several other artists he uses found objects of daily life as a constituent of his installation. These include photography reels, bamboo, readymade iron, slippers, water and LED lights.

One of his installations titled *Blood and Sweat* portrays the



Amresh Kumar, *The Holy Insects I*, mixed media installation, variable, 2010

Amresh Kumar is a well-known sculptor from Bihar presently working as a lecturer at Kurukshetra University. After doing some splendid sculptures he has used his creative genius in sculptural installations and site-specific installations. He has worked on various subjects derived from rituals and traditions, and has beautifully incorporated them in his contemporary art practices. In his recent show at New Delhi, he did an installation titled *Bhism Pitamah* creating a funeral pyre made up of wood. Through this creation he tried to showcase that our country and its rich culture are currently put on the pyre like Bhism Pitamah. In the previous display of the same work he placed himself on the pyre to complete this installation. Thus he used his own body as a medium for this performative installation. This also had another context: that we are also part of this pyre; if we do not protect this, we will also lose our existence. In another installation work done during his Khoj residency