

LATITUDE 28

Presents

“A Bend in the River” by artist Pratul Dash

Pratul Dash’s solo show is a meandering of mind’s musings and a dive into nostalgia

Venue: CCA, First Floor, Bikaner House

Preview: 28th September, 2023, Thursday

Timing: 6 PM – 9 PM

Exhibition Open till 7 October 2023

Timings: Monday to Saturday, 11 AM – 7 PM

LATITUDE 28 presents a solo exhibition of artist Pratul Dash titled “A Bend in the River” that draws viewers to engage with an alternate view of reality. This kaleidoscopic panoply of artworks is on showcase from September 28 to October 7, 2023 at Bikaner House.

One of the most profound contemporary art voices in India, Pratul has been preoccupied with the fear and fantasies that accelerate contemporary life, constantly changing in unwarranted ways. His reflections on every day, mundane, abstract and philosophical observations are reflected poignantly in this exhibition that features abstract artworks, drawing viewers into a world that is open to interpretation.

“My art is intricately woven into India’s vibrant fabric, where human stories, cultural threads, and political landscapes come together. In a world where borders blur and global influences are strong, my creative expressions tell a story of how local and universal ideas dance together. While I am not swayed by external pressures, my creations are a lively conversation between my own context and the global viewpoint, showcasing the delicate balance of our times,” says **Pratul Dash**.

“Coming full circle, Dash’s style has again evolved in a completely new direction, yet the themes and preoccupations that consume the artist have not changed. As an artist, Dash finds new ways to express himself and his innermost ideologies and self-inquiries, leaving one to always wonder about what is going to come next. The works in this show are inspired by landscape, memories both fragmented and time-based, self-prognosis, and contemporary commentaries,” says **Bhavna Kakar, Founder, LATITUDE 28**.

“Latitude 28 becomes the nurturing ground for many an artist like Dash, who has a powerful vision for his practice but forays it through his coded conceptualization and sensitive aesthetic. Dash completely subverts his usual style to bring forth this profound conglomerate of artworks and boldly takes time off to challenge his own artistic exploration. I am proud that Latitude 28 has supported Dash’s transformation from a budding artist making his impact to a more confident artist

who aligns himself with recalibration and experimentation. It is what we ourselves aspire towards and endeavour our artists to embark with us on this trajectory,” she adds.

Whether or not his personal opinions and thoughts align with ongoing issues, Pratul Dash certainly cannot remain unchanged and unaffected by them. The influenced mind has digressed from the truth under a deluge of political alignments, cultural misappropriation, public opinion, mass mentality and the age of misinformation. While the brain is the vanguard of eternal light, it can also so easily be swayed and clouded. Thus, this show becomes a commentary on time, a record of the lapsing of the eras, and a visual séance on the linking of the beginning and the end. It has been important for the artist to reflect upon and share the implications of a world, not so easy to comprehend and yet surrounding us. A dichotomy of aesthetic images and values underpins a commentary on the realities of existential crisis and dilemma.

Pratul leaves the immediacy of places and spaces and explores the innards of an apparent world, which is possible only through digging into dreams and memories. There is some desperation in this self-consuming life and it is a sort of omniscience and omnipotence of the artistic self as the sole negotiator of his/her world. The artist chronicles the desperations of our times but at the same time, he shows us how we could overcome it by trusting in our own goodness and regaining those lost worlds of innocence and trust through our memories.

To contemplate upon the world from a celestial standpoint remains the prerogative of the artist who creates a sensation that at once seems familiar and yet strange and unsettling in its configuration. Pratul juxtaposes motifs obliquely hinting at depleting resources and fragmentation of natural beauty. The precisely rendered beauty of Pratul’s paintings is in a sense deceptive, as the artist uses the tool of pictorial attraction to enrapture the viewer’s attention, demanding deeper engagement with his concerns through the visual encounter. Traversing his own memories through the canvas one encounters all forms of disruptions and rhythms – a language not unlike that of the universe and of existence itself.

Pratul drives home the point that his art is also his way of carrying forth his conceptualizations of cellular structure, topography, human bodies, dogs, maps, bones and the elements of our universe into a pluriverse of coexistence. His canvas is alive with forms and landscapes that contrast the then and now, the microscopic and the macrocosmic, the abstract and the real, the tangible and the unfathomable. An aesthetic drama, a tug of life and death, celestial and earthly, geographic and metaphysical, entrenches us to a point of listless fixation. Thus the large surfaces of his works seem to move on two distinct levels in their conceptualized format. The current depletion is directly impacted on the surface by barren topographical landscapes or negated spaces, with telltale haziness. The void of clarity and the vacancy of space becomes slowly populated by human intervention.

Translating the abstract qualities of the mind, the artist also notates his fixation on the phenomena of memory and memory-making. As he uses ‘politics of aesthetics’ as a tool, he delves into his subconscious with great sensitivity, where his meanderings are a reflection of the current events and times as well.

“Over the years, I look at the painted surface as a window through which one can slowly rupture and fragment the viewer’s ideal of realism,” adds **Pratul Dash**.