

It's all really very simple

● ART

Exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Praneet Soi, Kriti Arora, Avantika Bawa at Shrishti Gallery, Hotel Welcom Group, which concludes on Thursday.

AVANTIKA BAWA, Kriti Arora and Praneet Soi are close friends and often work together and in the process share many ideas and working methods despite which, the final products are so very different from each other, which is why I would rather attempt to read them individually.

Praneet Soi: It was in his childhood that Praneet came across the book "An Artist's Impression" by Desmond Doig which fascinated him much. The cityscapes and architectural drawings of Doig had become a major influence on his own artistic ventures by the time he came to Baroda to acquire admission into the Faculty of Fine Arts. Praneet usually draws (paints) buildings which are rather withered out and hence on the way to ruins. In his search for these, he now feels that these pictures are not actually mere representations of the physical (architectural) forms of buildings but rather a nostalgic capture of the grandeur of these sites. In his own way, his act of recording a cityscape into drawings (or paintings) is an attempt to convert the seemingly temporary forms of these architectures (as they are almost in ruins) into perennial visions. In this sense the works hence abstain from becoming statements or from creating issues. Praneet strongly feels that art must be "a good mixture of skill with imagination and sensitivity", and also believes that it must not necessarily hover around issues or make statements. To him, making a picture is merely a conversion of an experience into a visual and is as simple as that.

At the Faculty of Fine Arts, Praneet was exposed to more and more reading material and plates of the great works of art that this world has seen. He found artistic solace in the works of Egon Schiele, Vincent Van Gogh, Gustave Klimt, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Andy Warhol. Praneet developed a taste for portraiture and today it seems that flat colour and strong line have become his best friends. Talking of colours, Azur is his favourite shade (which is also a title to one of his latest works). It is evident from his use of colours that he is looking for a certain harmony in them that they produce depth without any use of



'Fish' by Kriti Arora. Scrap metal



'The pest' by Avantika Bawa. Etching

tonal variations. He should try to be more spontaneous in his approach, since it is here that there is always space for any amount of experimentation, which he desperately needs.

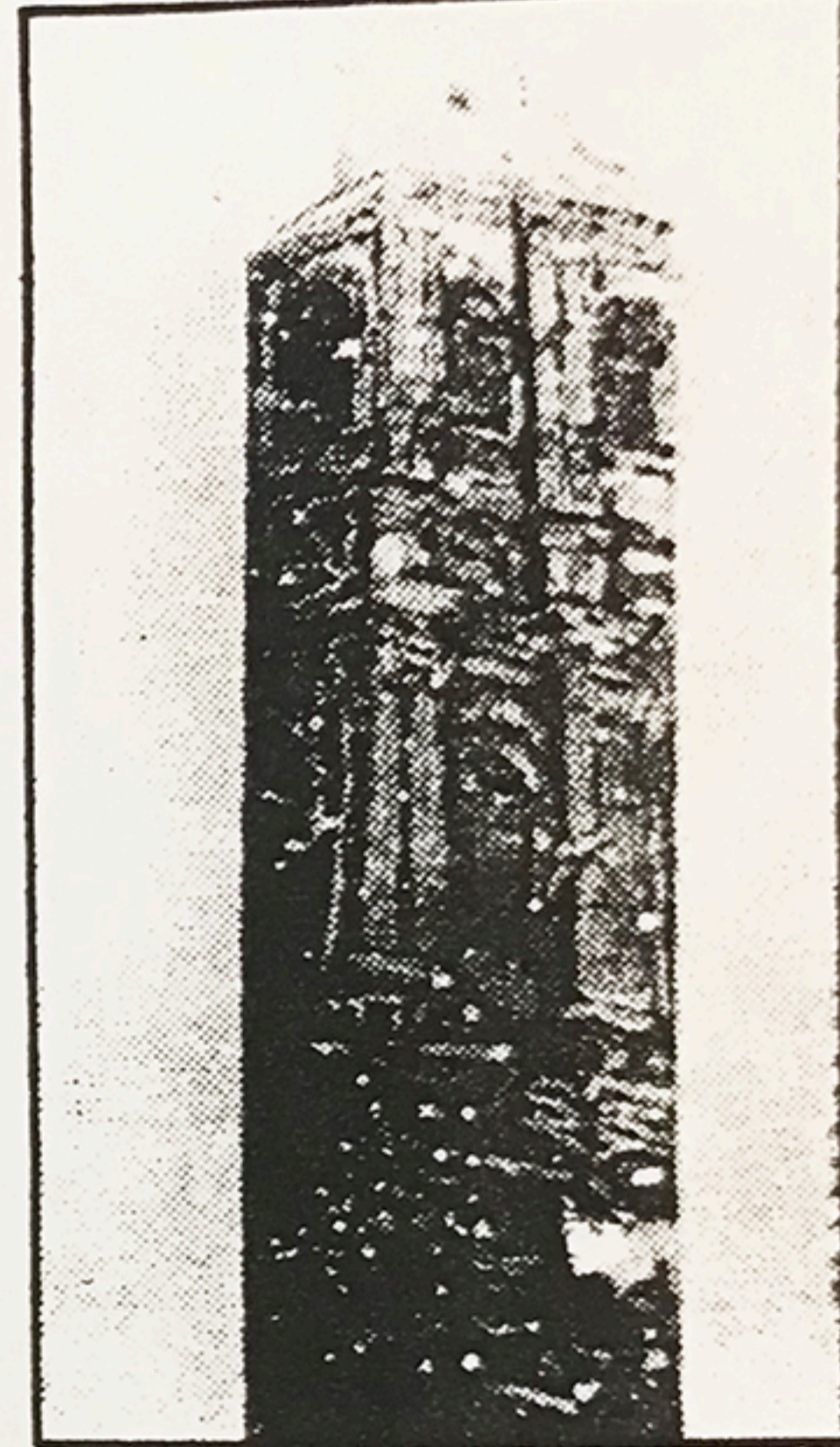
Kriti Arora: Amongst the works displayed in this exhibition there are both paintings and sculptures by Kriti Arora. Although she derives great pleasure from drawing (and which she does a lot) it is her sculptures that prove her real worth as an artist. There are clearly two types of sculptures displayed in this exhibition, the first being her works in scrap metal.

Kriti accepts that it was after looking up the works of David Smith that her interest in recycling of waste material was actually aroused. She believes that what must be carefully observed in her works is the peculiar distortion that it bears. In order to get this distortion as in "Snail" and "Fish" the arrangements of the pieces of scrap metal and the wires or rods is rather spontaneous, where at the same time the linearity of these pieces is surely pre-planned and schematised to give

the basic structure. Interestingly, though the cylindrical structure of any snail may give commonly a horizontal feeling, Kriti's "Snail" has an upward, vertical motion, a sheer example of her conception of distortion. According to Kriti the recycling of wastes is her statement on the concept of decay, the decay of materials around us which in itself is a strong reflection of our present times.

The second type of sculptures, perhaps the more interesting one, is that of her works in clay. The concept of decay has effectively been brought out in her "Shoes" and "Sandals". What is most interesting is that Kriti has been able to show stagnancy in objects which usually show motion (e.g. shoes that we walk in). The feeling that one gets of the play of time on objects is very strong and thus even an "end" seems "endless" as time itself is.

Kriti's drawings, though on one hand may be pleasing pictures but it seems as if she has missed something somewhere, along the way. The influences of Edward Munch and Henri Matisse show clearly, yet effective application lacks.



'Old City' by Praneet Soi. Etching

To Kriti, art is that what speaks of its time not without having understood the importance of materials as mediums. I am sure her sculptures live up to this.

Avantika Bawa: A very good attitude that Avantika Bawa maintains is that of conjunction between life and work. She believes in keeping in mind and in action - spontaneously, humour and simplicity, which she maintains both in her life and in her works. This is why her work does not fail to show this naivety of hers.

Extremely spontaneous reproductions of insects, spontaneous choice of colours, spontaneous strokes are all some of her favourite things in life and work. Daddy Long Legs, The Beatles, The Fly, Mr Praying Mantis, Little B-Comb, Mean Mephistopheles, Catch-a-Pillar, Hawk Eyed Mouth, Johnny B-Goode and Alfred E. Neuman are all there in her sometimes wild, sometimes mundane world, much like The Sgt. Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band.

Avantika's nervous strokes and lit up colours show much likeness to those of Oscar Kokoschka and also the vegetative greens are similar to the same of Henri Rousseau's. Her insects demand great respect from us humans and will no longer bear insult or neglect, they fly and buzz all around us at the Shrishti Art Gallery.

It is all really simple and this trio proves it quite well.