

The Weird and the Absurd

Aditi Aggrawal

Friction between the two surfaces creates some amount of energy which can have dramatic consequences.

Every image and object contain an inherent meaning. Putting many objects together may lead to the creation of a unique, new meaning; in the same way, several short stories make a big story when construction is in play. The attempt is to capture the noise, speed, time and duration of the urban experience. The length of the time of painting or making a drawing is, in a way, synthesised into a single act of creating a collage. The entire experience of working on this project made an exploration of the possibility of letting the image lose its meaning under the weight of the spectacle. While working on them, I took the liberty to work freely, without preconceived narrative or definitive meaning. The process involved creating in a style of free association, in an attempt to create a sort of 'compositional gibberish', abstracting both time and space, articulating spaces of both anxiety and dysfunction.

The works presented were made in analogue collage and digital and then converted into serigraphy and PS Plate lithography prints. The series is titled as "Red Brick Residency Project" measuring Book Size: 7.5 x 8.5 inches. The book was created during a residency at Kolkata after getting introduced to the text called 'Abol- Tabol'¹ which translates as 'The Weird And The Absurd'²

Coming to the historically and culturally precious space (Kolkata), I was flooded with images and experiences reminding me of childhood trips to an amusement park, fascinated by the architectural heritage which I found unparalleled. I knew that it required more than one medium for me to express this impression. In the process, I started to look out of my studio, trying to find extensions to my work and ways to appropriate them. This work also becomes a way to archive the building's surroundings, objects and memories.

The technique of cutting and pasting materials together has played an essential role in the formal resolution of many works. To me, the medium of collage acts like a springboard, a model for more extensive work in painting or sculpture. The fragment can be a bit of a newspaper or a theatre ticket, a found object or a readymade one. The fragments themselves propose a dislocation in time and place.

The images take off from the photos I clicked at the house named as the *Red Brick Residency* at the Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata, while others were collected from the internet and local newspapers and magazines. The images created are heavily invested in the exploration of materials with rice papers of varied transparency and translucency, which I'd bought from the *Baithakkhana* Paper Market. To me, the creative process synthesised the disciplines of painting, drawing, photography, and collage into a cohesive whole. The images are also an overflow of information of sorts, conveying multiple viewpoints simultaneously, in an attempt to communicate the intensity of the city. In essence, the results are both inexplicable and familiar.

1. A collection of Bengali children's poems and rhymes composed by Shri. Sukumar Ray; first published on 19th September 1923 by U. Ray and Sons, Publishers.
2. Trying to find out more about the catchy words, I came across definitions like unrelated, unsorted, aesthetics of nonsense, weird and random, playful bounces of perfectly fine choices, faulty in places, etc.

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