

Prakash Bal Joshi, an artist of understatement

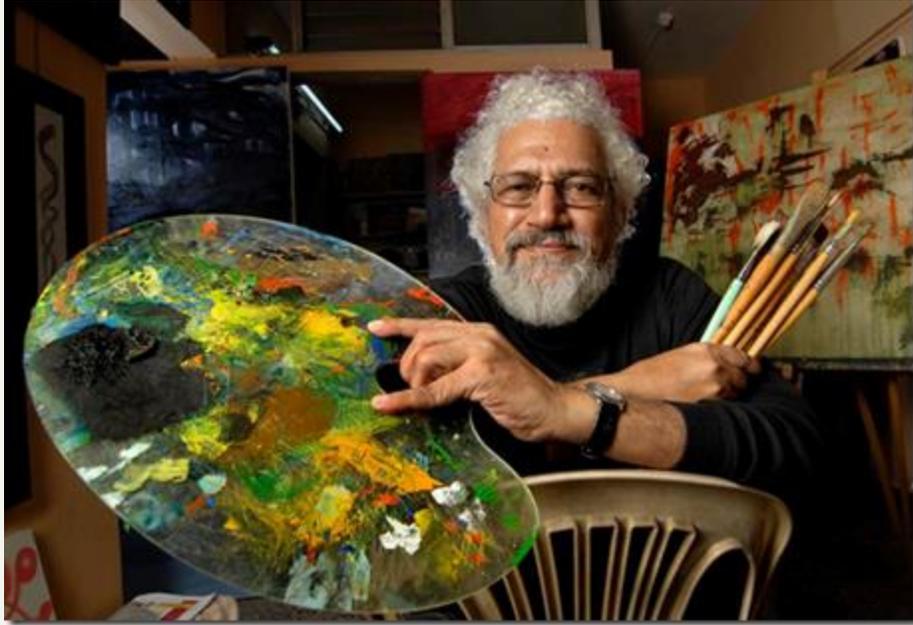
By chutiumsulfate



'Seep', acrylic on canvas by Prakash Bal Joshi

Fellow journalist, dear friend and painter Prakash Bal Joshi's 'Seep', acrylic on canvas, has been chosen by the Editorial Committee of the Art Takes Times Square competition to be featured in a coffee-table book. What makes it special is that 'Seep' was chosen from thousands of works.

I did a short post about Prakash January 15, 2011, which I republish to coincide with his winning entry. Here it is:



Prakash Bal Joshi, Photo by a superbly talented Palashranjan Bhaumick

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Faceless Chill – Oil On Canvas 24 x 24 inches by Prakash Bal Joshi

Prakash Bal Joshi always had a ruminant face. Sitting in the press gallery of Maharashtra's state assembly, watching the political theater play out below in the well of the house, Prakash would look bemused in a troubled sort of way. In retrospect I think he was more troubled by the lack of aesthetics in the way the legislators behaved than why they did so. I think he was looking at the scene as a painter and trying to make an artistic sense out of it.

That was in the 1980s when he was easily among the best political journalists in Bombay. Not that some thirty years later he has become any less of a political observer; it is just that he has emerged more as a quietly captivating painter and designer. He is also a writer of considerable literary merit. I have been meaning to write about him for quite sometime but am getting to do it only now.

When you look at Prakash's paintings, single line drawings and sketches your reaction would likely be, "Hmm, I could do this." I think that's precisely the point because most couldn't. His paintings reflect his personality in so much as they do not scream for attention. They are studiously shorn of flamboyance. He also likes to experiment with monotonous as exemplified the works above and below. "I am fascinated by the possibilities of what one can do with a single color," Prakash told me last year when he had an exhibition in the US. "You would be surprised how much one can do with a single color and its variations," he said.



Green Harmony, Oil On Canvas 30 x 24 inches by Prakash Bal Joshi

His Saraswati series, prompted by his fascination with rivers, is striking for its colors. The two examples here should illustrate what I mean.

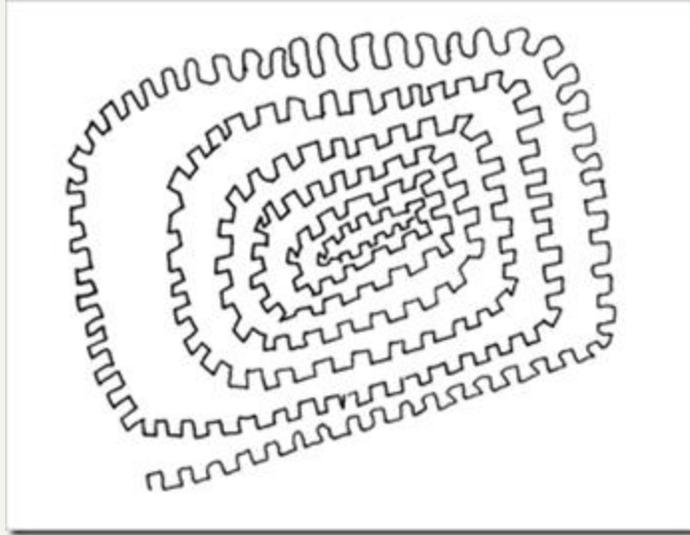


Saraswati Flows, Oil On Canvas Dimensions : 48 x 36 inches by Prakash Bal Joshi



Symphonies of Change, Oil On Canvas Dimensions : 24 x 24 inches by Prakash Bal Joshi

Here is what I mean when I talk about people's reaction while looking at Prakash's works. Look at these two, for instance. You would want to start doing one yourself.



Another feeling you get while looking at his works is that he is far from exhausting his creative reservoir simply because he seems to preserve his creative energies while doing all that he does. He betrays no hurry to be prolific. That's what I meant by his ruminant face.