

The Sniffer

Amitesh Shrivastava

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Amitesh Shrivastava is a painter who channels sensory experience through an emotional understanding of his natural and artificial surroundings. The first 24 years of his life are characterized by a persistent immersion in the forests and rural life of the Chhattisgarh region where he was born. Shrivastava embraces the fragmented nature of the past and memory. The artist does not want to illustrate his experiences, his painterly visions come to life through a subconscious unrestrained flow. A state of catharsis, which blends fiction and reality. “When I recall my memory or my nostalgia it appears with a different light, different breeze, different kind of warmth.” To recall memory and nostalgia is a way of reinventing it as well.

It is impossible to define what one sees in Shrivastava’s paintings. Landscapes entangled with bodies evoke familiarity and strangeness at once. In a fundamental way, these enigmatic appearances are fueled by the artist’s physical contact with animals, water, plants, trees. All of these elements carry their own texture, or Fur, as the artist refers to it. These textures create fleeting sensations which Shrivastava transfers to his canvases in the form of layered brushwork, thick applications of paint, and a chromatic palette that combines blue, ochre and flesh tones. What he feels towards this array of stimuli overcomes any kind of forceful attempt to accurately depict the physical world.

When asked to discuss subject matter Shrivastava references his lived experience with mud as a loose inspiration for his unstable imagery. In this layer of dirt many things happen at once: things grow and dissolve, insects crawl, moisture and dryness interact, animals dwell, a certain light and temperature becomes palpable. Mud constitutes an overarching reality that activates the artist’s pictorial sensibility, allowing him to create dense environments populated with liquid forms.

Shrivastava’s scent is an essential component of his ever-changing distorted way of seeing. It enhances the atmospheric quality of the fluid compositions and lets him perceive his irreality with more clarity. The artist has become a sniffer in order to present us with an idiosyncratic vision of the world, animated by fictional colors. The viewer becomes a witness of a veiled universe where things come in and out indiscriminately and the earth’s surface is replaced with a new form of skin.