

## Vistaar, Curatorial Text

The phenomena of art as a way of life traversing through the sacred and the profane, is the essence underlying the unique collection of 20 original art work specially made by a select group of 40 creative individuals working together in pairs. Vistaar in its concept, approach, range and aesthetics' takes forward the rationale of art as a complete human activity upheld by two of our great art historians and cultural experts A.K. Coomaraswamy and Rabindranath Tagore, where artist of all form and designs, be they painters or sculptors, designers of products, fashion or jewellery, visualizers of advertisements or installations, architects or new media practitioners, companies or group engaged in the business of artistic creations, craftsmen and others experts; in an expensive and inclusive range, collaborate to represent the vision, vitality and plurality of living arts of contemporary India is an on-going continuum that threads the dual domains of classical civilization as its roots and new age concepts and technology as its fruits . The importance of dialogue, teamwork and an open door policy in assimilation of the ethnic and the modern is perceived as a necessity conducive to democracy. Its impact on the cultural development of multilingual societies with heterogeneous ethnicities and veritable worldviews such as India has been highlighted also by eminent modern thinkers including Amartya Sen. Searching the roots The intertwining of art and life at a high level of sophistication continues to be reflected in the beautifully designed terracotta birds perched on thatched rooftops in rural Orissa, painted interiors of Madhubani folk hamlets, Gond tribal men and women adorning elaborately embroidered clothes, the intricate jewellery in beads and silver worn by people of desert land, incredibly designed wooden toys for children from Uttar Pradesh, exquisitely produced house hold items from Gujarat, amazing temples carvings at Khajuraho, detailed cave paintings at Bhimbekar, perfectly proportioned religious figuration in bronce from Karnataka, elaborate stone sculptures of damsels from Mahabalipuram, architectural marvels such as Taj Mahal at Agra, handmade illustrated manuscripts from Rajasthan and numerous other beautifully designed and immaculately produced high quality arts-facts; exemplifying the inextricable interlinking between arts and life in India since ancient times. This unique feature of holistic creativity and arts as a way of life continues to be reinterpreted in newer form and aesthetics in today's globalised urban India honing the creator and the rasik (beholders's) intellectual sensibilities to transcendental level.

The interconnectivity between different art forms and cultural streams-architecture- craft-design-music- dance-literature is described in one of the early Puranic texts Vishnudharmottaram through the story of vajra who once approached sage Markandeya with a request to teach him idol making for worship. But to learn handling of stone or metal he was advised to first learn how to paint, then to dance, followed by a rudimentary knowledge of instrumental music and literature before starting to paint or sculpt. The legend highlights the association and interdependence of deferent arts forms the spring from a shared sensibility, aesthetics, and terminology and practices all of involve intuition, creativity and its manifestation in a holistic form where inner vision and outer embodiment come together in a perfect harmony. The final work of art so produced must be a self-realization for it to turn into an organic discovery that may delight both its creator and the beholder or owner/user.

Sifting through an art historical context and its theoretical analysis, all artistic expressions appear to mirror the times and the society from which they emerge. Art seems neither accidental nor incidental and neither superfluous nor supernatural. The spring for art is often an urge to create for self-release and it is essentially the product of one's meditated efforts to give shape to abstract ideas and dreams or to recreate real life experiences of joy/anger/disgust in a tangible form. Or an artist may wish to create works of arts for numerous other social occasions or festivities or for utilitarian or decorative purposes or for name or fame or wealth or to protest for personal or political reasons, to communicate, instruct, or inform. What art does is to bring the subjective onto an objective plane inclusive of its intrinsic feelings and sensibility. The rasas that an art work exudes emanate

from the magnificence, energy, sensitivity and vigour that go into its making while underlying external considerations add to appeal and zeal.

The history of artists and designers working together in teams across different disciplines can be traced back to the epic of Ramayana that was enacted in multi-disciplinary performances stretched over days. Designers who enhance the utility, efficiency, look, appeal, functioning, and value of what they create or design- be it a decorative piece or usable object; are essentially artists working in varied media.

Vistaar team includes artist from Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Paris and Delhi; Some senior and other younger-working together in a confluence to dismantle rigid disciplinary patterns and set their own cannons to give shape new ideas. Through a wide range of art deco creations they bring art, craft and design closer to contemporary life-style and to each other and forms that are attractive, seductive, playful, clever and useful in a mix and match of symbols, media, shape, palette, textures and forms. They instil a re-defined appreciation and application of the traditional practices with high value additions and aesthetics to encompass the spiritual with earthy, simplicity with glamour, exclusivity with exclusivity to create arte-facts for living and for contemplation.

## **UNFOLDING VISTAAR**

Placing the nexus back between the applied and fine arts, Vistaar brings the artist in designers and designer in artist out of their closets to works in collaborative milieu and create something different and unique that might exude all the 'six limbs' or characteristics as prescribed for art in classical Indian texts with a fresh perspective or pose a challenge to it by creating art that breaks set notions to stand apart. It is the surprise elements and the added bit in a collaborative work that makes it more than the sum total of each one's individual creativity. It is also this playfulness that uplifts the creative spirit to an eclectic level. The finesse and exquisite quality that the artists in the show have brought to their work exudes a sense of joy with a touch of class.

Looking at the incredible range of work specially created for Vistaar multimedia seems to be the name of the game where versatile contemporary artists spurred by spirit for innovation experiment with a whole lot of new ideas, materials and techniques with remarkable confidence and renewed appreciation for classical, folk and tribal arts of India. There is an assemblage of art, craft, design, product and new media in an extra-ordinary convergence of the elite and living arts of India. The diverse forms and types of art in the collection re-present the rich repertoire of traditions and skills in folk arts, newer forms and aesthetics for today's audience. A perfect formation and technical finesse flows through the smooth veins of the works adding to their sublime sensuousness, beauty and drama in a mesmerizing display of realism in an interface with their functionality immersed in magnificence and imagination. The freedom to play around with each other's creativity allowed the artist to let their imagination blossom and create art in style and with luxury.

**Sushma Bahl**