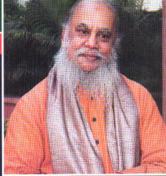


## BOOK MARK

# SHUVAPRASANNA BHATTACHARYA

THE ARTIST LETS HELLO! INTO HIS PERSONAL SPACE AS HE TALKS ABOUT HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY **BLACK, BROWN AND THE BLUE**



**Y**ou chose to do the book differently – instead of a regular autobiography *Black, Brown and the Blue* is a fine balance between commentary and the exposition of your personal journey. It goes beyond the genre of the coffee table book. Was that intentional? "I am 65 now and wanted to display my art from various series that I have painted in these years as an artist. I had the desire to have a retrospective of my works. From there came the idea

of a book that would reach out to a wider audience. Every time a painting is sold, it limits itself from reaching out to a vast majority. The book represents my art in a way that gives the reader a snapshot from each phase. What I also felt is that art is not just a product for home décor but something to live with and putting it all in a book would help reach many people. Tripat Kalra of Navi Art was willing to come on board and when we discussed the idea with Roli Books everything fell into place. We then got Sushma Bahl, Seema Bawa, Ina Puri, Manasij Majumder, Professor BN Goswami and German Ralf Oestreich to share their perspective on my art. I wanted to bring out aspects of my art through the commentaries of other people. Sushma touched upon the personal aspect while Professor Goswami talks of iconography in my art."

**How did the title of the book come up? Do you think it encompasses your entire artistic journey?**

"Originally I had suggested the title of the book to be *Anarchy and the Blue* but that was not met with everyone's approval. Then I suggested *Black, Brown and the Blue* – these are important colours that have been part of my life and canvas. For me, they are the most vibrant colours on the palette. No title can encompass anything completely. As an artist I am not a happy guy; I always want more. The quest remains."

**How symbolic is this book going to be in expressing the artist's journey?**

"The book represents my artistic journey from 1969-70 onward and also harks back



to my childhood days. The first portrait I drew was of the Russian President and ever since it has been a long way. I started at a time when art was considered a strange option for a profession. No one would have believed what an artist can achieve today. I continuously fought along the way. This book includes that whole aspect of my journey from the beginning to now."

**In the paintings taken from different stages of your career, one of the noticeable aspects is your effort to present things and people as they are – you are not trying to enhance beauty in any way...**

"What is beauty? It has diverse interpretations. Some people like the jasmine flower and find beauty in how it looks, some find beauty in its fragrance. Some even relish eating the flowers of a pumpkin, I can think of beauty even in what others define as ugly. I don't relish the plastic or the sugarcoating that many appreciate nowadays. But imagine the comfort you feel in plain clothes sitting at home compared to the fancy but uncomfortable clothes you wear when you go out in a superficial environment. I have tried to capture the comfort that simplicity offers you."

**In the book, as in your own metaphorical journey, you have tried to explore the concept of 'I am who I am'. Have you arrived at any concrete conclusions?**

"Every day I try to discover my true self. The greatest friend that one has is oneself ultimately. Every human being is born to find out who they are and what their purpose is in life. I try and explore these aspects through my art. The being within is God, and the nearest and the dearest to the self. Sometimes I manage to find that self and sometimes it plays truant – like a game of hide and seek. But the journey will go on. Meanwhile I just want to paint, paint and paint and hone myself to be a finer human being." **H**

TEXT: SANGHITA SINGH