

Moksha deconstructed

This suite of satirical works critiques the urban consumer culture, says **Aruna Bhowmick**

JENNY Bhatt's current MokshaShots series, titled 'Liberation through Consumption' at Seven Arts, refers to the consumerist myth that fulfillment (Moksha) can be found through the purchase of a product or an experience promised by it. It is a suite of satirical works that critique urban consumer culture.

The concept was in a solo exhibition in Mumbai in 2008. 'Moksha' or salvation, as per Indian philosophy, is a taste of the sublime. Now, since no one will probably get to full-fledged Moksha in this lifetime, each to his own glimpse of 'moksha' in the consumer marathon - art, a chocolate brownie, sex, a film, a vacation or a tequila shot.

Consumerism is the new secular religion. So Jenny uses the format Thankha and Mandala paintings, traditionally



used for meditation, to highlight the brand-deification of products, people and experiences, now venerated by the consumer.

To satirise this penchant for veneration, she has created deities called MokshaPetsTM. Each of the major deities has a Mandala of his/her own with their individual mantra on it. So there is There's MokshaBuyTM the Consumer Goddess, whose multiple hands hold weapons of mass consumption, and MokshaBumTM, the Thinker and Armchair Philosopher. He never gets up, moves little and expounds a lot. Everything just comes to him. (For some people, life is just perfect!), and a host of others.

The Digital Interactive work looks at the operation of e-commerce and puts the audience through the processes of online transactions, while showing up the hidden agendas of its practitioners. It also looks at how art, spirituality, media and emotion have all been commoditised.

The satire is attractively coated in colour, woven in fine detailing, the imagery as engaging to a child as to the adult. In a world where the serious is fashionably turned to colourful panorama, and the frivolous into serious money churning business, Jenny's style is a powerful analysis of

altered human values in the face of crass capitalism, where tears are generated virtually to sell more tissues.

An interestingly mounted exhibition, cleverly accessorised with stickers designed by the artist on the walls and ceiling substantiates the show. MokshaShotsTM, the concept, deities and everything related has been internationally copyrighted to the artist. The imagery is in the process of being extended to several forms of aesthetic practice-interactive work, a graphic novel, film, art objects and new media. Having said that, a somewhat more affordable pricing would have been only reasonable.

Rich body of art

VIPUL Saini, born on 25 October 1972, did his schooling and college from the Capital. Multi-faceted, he ventured into films and advertising before joining College of Arts back home to learn painting. Having organised a variety of cultural programmes and workshops over the years, including music concerts, dance, poetry recitations, art exhibitions and camps, craft workshops and film screenings, he also writes lyrics and poetry in Hindi, Urdu and English.

In February 2011, in the first of the shows with Art Walk, F-Grill & Lounge in the Metropolitan Mall, Saket, he presented FIVE, including Amrut Patel, Gopi Gajwani, Himmat Shah, Jai Zharotia and Sudip Roy exploring the five senses and the five elements.

Again in March, on the occasion of the centenary of International Women's Day, he put together Feminale 2011, with 13 women artists exploring the feminine phenomenon, highlighting the principal of procreation and the feminine values of receptivity, acceptance and benevolence.

A rich and well chosen body of works dominantly abstract, with Yuriko Lochan and Anupam Sud's about the only figurative works, it included Kanchan Chander, Kavita Nayyar and Alka Raghuvanshi among others.

The show continues at gallery Art Sastra, SMC (Saffdarjung Enclave, New Delhi) till 5 April.

