



BEYOND THE BINDU: INTERSECTIONS OF ART AND LITERATURE IN PRAFULLA MOHANTI'S CREATIVE UNIVERSE

Art & Literature

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the multifaceted creative world of Prafulla Mohanti, a renowned Indian artist and writer. Through an exploration of his paintings and literary works, the study reveals the intricate connections between Mohanti's art and literature. It is also a study of the mystical world of Prafulla Mohanti's Paintings, exploring the symbolism and spirituality that underline his work. At the heart of Mohanti's art is the bindu, a small dot that represents the void and the infinite. Through an examination of his artistic style, symbolism and personal experiences, this article reveals the deeper meaning and significance of Mohanti's paintings. By navigating the intricate web of spirituality, philosophy and culture that informs his work, we gain a profound understanding of Mohanti's artistic vision and its relevance to contemporary society.

KEYWORDS

Prafulla Mohanti, Indian Art, Symbolism, Spirituality, Bindu, Abstract Art, Contemporary Art, Literature, Rural India

Prafulla Mohanti's life journey began in Odisha, India, where his upbringing in the quaint village of Nanpur, nestled in Jajpur district instilled in him the beauty of art intertwined with daily life. Vibrant religious and social ceremonies shaped his early experiences, laying the cornerstone for his future work.

After studying architecture in Mumbai Prafulla ventured to London for further studies. He spent two years in the city before moving to Leeds, where he earned a Diploma in Town Planning. Returning to London, he worked with the Greater London Council as an architect-planner for five years, earning membership in the esteemed Royal Town Planning Institute.

However, his true passions irresistibly attracted him. Leaving the Greater London Council, Prafulla devoted himself wholeheartedly to painting and writing, transforming his experiences and inspirations into captivating art. With the essence of his village, its fragrance wafting through every creation. The circles and dots weave magic in his paintings, while the elegant balance of red and blue hues defines his distinctive style. The rustic charm of his birthplace and childhood memories unmistakably resonates in his art. It all began in the Abadhan's chatawali of his village, where as a curious child, he drew three circles on the ground with chalk, symbolizing Brahma, Bishnu, Maheswara marking the inception of his educational journey. As a child, Prafulla's world was alive with vibrant scenes: women bathing in the river, villagers worshipping the ancient deities, birds returning to their nests at dusk, and cattle grazed their way home as the sun dipped low. On the mud walls of his home, he would draw these moments with lively drawings. Prafulla Mohanti's literary works are a testament to his profound connection with rural India, its people, and their stories. He gifted readers with his literary works, including "My Village, My Life", "Through Brown Eyes", "Changing Village, Changing Life", "Indian Village Tales", etc., which vividly capture the essence of rural India's struggles, triumphs, and timeless traditions. His autobiographical work "My Village, My Life" is a nostalgic and introspective account of Mohanti's childhood in his narrative village. With vivid descriptions, he recreates the sights, sounds, and emotions of his formative years, offering readers a glimpse into the simple yet profound joys of rural life. In "Through Brown Eyes" Mohanti delves into the complexities of rural Indian society, exploring themes such as poverty, social inequality, and personal struggle. His writings are a testament to his love for village life, its people and their stories. Prafulla Mohanti's works continue to captivate readers with their storytelling and profound insights into the human experience.

His artistic landscape is characterized by abstract renditions, featuring the bindu (dot) representing shunya (the void) amidst floating clouds and the endless blue ocean. These elements weave together to create a tapestry of profound beauty and spirituality. His painting is a profound and spiritual realm, where abstract renditions coverage to evoke a sense of infinite and the mysterious. At the heart of the compositions lies the bindu, a small dot that represents the void and shunya. This tiny, yet potent, symbol serves as a gateway to the infinite, drawing the viewer into the depths of the artwork. His paintings feature an intriguing interplay of elements, with clouds and endless blue ocean

blending seamlessly together. The clouds, with their soft, white peaks, appear to drift effortlessly across the canvas, while the ocean stretches out to the horizon, its blue hues evoking a sense of calm and serenity. These elements, though disparate, coalesce to create a tapestry of profound beauty and spirituality.

Mohanti's artistic vision is deeply personal, drawing inspiration from his own life experiences. The vermilion spot on his mother's forehead a traditional mark worn by married women in India sparked his fascination with radiant sunrises and sunsets. These fiery hues, which bathe the sky in warm crimson tones, are a testament to the enduring power of love. His paintings, the simple circle is transformed into a vast cosmos or brahmada, reflecting the infinite possibilities of life. This symbol, with its perfect curves and boundless potential, serves as a reminder that life is full of endless possibilities and promise. As the viewer gazes upon the circle, they are drawn into a world of infinite possibility, where the boundaries of reality are stretched and the imagination knows no bounds. The paintings are more than just beautiful works of art; they are a reflection of the human experience. His use of colour, symbolism and composition creates a sense of depth and meaning that resonates deeply with the viewer. As we gaze upon the artwork, we are reminded of the infinite possibilities that the life has to offer, and the profound beauty that can be found in the simplest of things.

Prafulla Mohanti's poignant memoir "My Village, My Life" touched hearts worldwide. Inspired by his captivating narrative, the BBC filmed a documentary shedding light on it. In recognition of his literary prowess, the prestigious Central Sahitya Academy in New Delhi honoured him with Honorary Fellowship for his tireless dedication to literature. This esteemed accolade celebrated Prafulla's profound connection to his roots and his ability to weave compelling stories from the fabric of his village life.

Despite staying in London; Prafulla Mohanti's heart remains rooted in his ancestral village, Nanpur. Through his writing and art, Mohanti shares the rich cultural heritage of his village offering a glimpse into the traditions and tales of villages. His legacy serves as a reminder of the enduring connection between art, culture and identity.

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