

Thukral & Tagra

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Text An Aziz Images Art Plural Gallery



JITEN THUKRAL AND SUMIR TAGRA ARE TWO INDIVIDUALS WHOSE CREATIVE ENERGY REGENERATE WITH CONTEMPORARY NUANCES, AND THEIR DECISION TO JOIN FORCES 12 YEARS AGO HAS PROVED TO BE AN INCREDIBLY CLEVER ONE AS SINCE THEN, THEY'VE BEEN TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM. PLAYING THE AUDACIOUS CARD IS NOT AN ANXIETY IN THE ART SCENE, BUT BECAUSE THEY SOFTEN THE BRASHNESS WITH FINE ART, THEY'VE ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BE CREATORS IN THEIR OWN LEAGUE. THE MAIN GAMEPLAN FOR THESE GUYS STEM FROM THE GLOBALISATION OF CONSUMER CULTURE AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS AS IT IS BEING EXPERIENCED IN INDIA TODAY. THUKRAL AND TAGRA APPROACH THIS SUBJECT OF THE INDIAN IDENTITY PLAYFULLY, BUT AT THE SAME TIME NOT LOSING ALL SERIOUSNESS AND CREDIBILITY, RESULTING IN WORKS THAT ARE AS INTRIGUING AS THEY ARE WHIMSICAL. WITH THEIR SHOWCASE STILL STANDING STRONG ON OUR SHORES, WE CAUGHT UP WITH THEM TO HAVE A LITTLE CHAT ON THEIR SYNERGY TO UNCOVER WHAT THESE TWO ARE ACTUALLY MADE OF.



It has been a long time since you guys have started working together. How has the synergy been like?

It is great to work together; we easily switch places and pull in a lot of work as a team. We like working on large pieces and solving complicated projects because we're able to understand each other. Everything comes out as a result of our brainstorming sessions – somehow we have a clear picture of what the end result should be. We know exactly our strengths, mediums and failures by now.

You explore the current trends in the Punjabi community, and in most of your works, you describe it as currently being in an age of "diaspora". What triggers this usage of the theme in your works?

Doing these projects come very naturally to us. We have seen our friends and families migrating, and have thus been working on these issues. Having witnessed the desires and heard the stories of our friends, we realised how one idea changes and dictates one's life. This is an ongoing project which we have been cultivating mainly by talking about the values and despairs of young Indians. We have also set up a foundation which is responsible for the educative part of the project; it also gets us into places where we can create projects which are out of white cube spaces.

So we heard you have your own brand that you invented called "BosaDK". Tell us a little bit more about it.

BosaDK is a fake label which we conceived back in 2003. It is actually a bad word used as a local slang (laughs). We used it as a performance piece by printing the word on T-shirts and making it look like a real label. The idea was a hit, and everybody loved the limited

edition pieces. We presented the BosaDK products in an installation in our exhibition at Nature Morte in 2007, which recreated the interior of a supermarket. Our use of BosaDK for the branding of our artworks also indicated our recognition that all artists and art in general are now trapped within a spiral of marketing, commodification and consumption. We are both innocent and guilty within this system and the only moral position is to acknowledge this hypocrisy and complicity.

Apart from India, is there any place else that inspired your work?
Japan! Its religion, culture, and aesthetics! All of it!

You've also created a cause called the Foundation of Thukral & Tagra three years ago to spread awareness about HIV and to dispel misinformation about AIDS. How's it going right now?

We wanted to set up something ambitious, but it is a massive responsibility to run and keep up! It is going smoothly and slowly, as we are getting busier in our travels and projects. We're currently in the process of building our studios so we would have more dedicated help monitoring this front.

Seeing how your work is so whimsical, is there any equally unconventional artist you'd like to work with, dead or alive?
Quentin Tarantino! ♣

Thukral & Tagra: Windows of Opportunity will be showcased until 25 May 2013 at Art Plural Gallery.

www.thukralandtagra.com

