

N.N. Rimzon

## Earthy icons of human grace

Most of his work is about life and death, where violence from the outside gets mediated by the timeless, reflective image of man. Yashodhara Dalmia on the artist's on-going show in Delhi.



**T**HE HUMAN figure draws attention to itself providing an island of reflectiveness. Monumental in size, it stands erect, a primeval presence through the ages. The hands are folded above the head moving upwards in an act of grace. The eyes are closed in an inner state of being. And the expression on the face is one of thoughtful repose, all the more effective because it is understated.

In N.N. Rimzon's present show at Delhi's Art Heritage gallery (on till February 9), the figure once more arrests because of its striking human quality. It is at the same time archaic in its bare, erect posture. The figure is enclosed in a large circle of tools like spades, axes, hammers, spindles, shovels; all that is

employed by the hands. Much used, they bring us back to matters of the earth.

Enclosed in a circle they imprint a cosmological significance. The earth-coloured rusted look of the tools contrasts sharply with the pale, prayer-like stance of the human and the two contained within the circle provide a wholeness of opposing dualities. At the same time, they seem to complement each other in that the concrete, the ordinary tools of day-to-day life are the very stuff of human grace.

In another exhibit *Young Lady*, we encounter a giant terracotta pot halved by the wall onto which it is implanted. Suspended on the wall it could be an archival dream vision. Its ridged brick red surface reminds one of the potter who works with his hands creating pots for everyday use. The trance is broken by a startling white sword nestled on the top. The sword on the round wholesome figure of the pot remains in contrary opposition. The fulsome shape of the jar at the same time contains the sharpness of the instrument engulfing it in a whole, timeless vision. It remains a thought implanted on the wall and not an object.

In Rimzon's sculptures, it is the comes into play since without it the work remains incomplete. The artist himself would aver that his work could be considered neo-conceptual in that conceptual art took place in the sixties in the West. Yet it is not only the rational mind which perceives the objects.

THERE is a dream-like quality about them which makes an indelible impression. As he once stated, "I want you, the spectator, to feel as if you are seeing a dream, and it is invading your mind. We have a tendency to rationalise but there are things we cannot understand rationally. We must find other means; imagination, intuition- that's the key. I bring forth the images from my unconscious. It is not the dream-like image that I want but the experience of a dream. It's that sort of transformation that I'm interested in."

There are shards of images which are experienced in his charcoal-on-paper drawings in the show. In *Sleeping Beauty*, a woman lies serenely inside a circular shape. From the outside a flash of red seems to be striking the circle, Inside, the woman with a beatific expression.

*Falls The Shadow* has a swirl of swords which are metamorphosed into plants. The same flashing blood red is the shadow which accompanies each sword shape. In the centre rests a sword which like supine turned heavenwards.

In *Traveller Under A Roof* a wave of humour relieves the sombre atmosphere. A laconic traveller moves and with him moves a small pot floating above his head.

Rimzon said, "All life, all experience is broken somewhere, sometime... There is, of course, the will. The will to integrate with the world, the will to change the world, to invent a new culture, new society, to perhaps give a new meaning to life. But the paradox is that the will controls neither death nor dying. And, after all, a work of art is all about death and life."

Perhaps most of Rimzon's work is about death and life. In a sculpture exhibited at a show in Australia recently, he installed an iconic figure, monumental in size, a timeless voice speaking from the past. Surrounding it are swords arranged in a half circle,

a halo around the icon. The violence of the outside is mediated by the iconic, timeless image of man.

All the insensate brutality of the environment gets encircled and, driving its way inwards, gets transformed by the monumental figure. There is a constant movement inwards and outwards where brute force comes under scrutiny. It is the reflective humanness of man that Rimzon addresses himself to.



One of Rimzon's installations; (above) the artist with the exhibit 'Young Lady': an archival dream vision