

Ancient transmissions, modern canvases



From a 12-year-old boy drawing *Dharmic* deities at religious ceremonies to becoming the most sought after *Paubha* artist breathing new life to the ancient art, **Lok Chitrakar** talks about his journey in a conversation with *Shaurya Kshatri*

The arc of Lok Chitrakar's journey as an artist is apparent as soon as one enters the Simrik Atelier, his workspace and training school in Patan. The walls are filled with *Paubha* paintings with ornate renderings of Buddhist and Hindu deities. Some of the paintings on the walls and atop easels are reproductions of classic tales, and religious iconography dating back centuries; others are Chitrakar's own creations. Through colours and forms, Chitrakar tells stories that not only resonate with people, but also stir deep emotions and provoke innate thoughts.

am still only learning. So tell me how can I surmise something in short sentences when an entire lifespan wouldn't be enough? Anyway, when someone looks at my paintings, I want him to forget all his troubles even if it holds meaning for that fleeting moment of time when he stops at his tracks and stares at the art. That, for me, is when I have done my job as an artist.

WHAT WAS THE TURNING POINT IN YOUR CAREER AS AN ARTIST?

Artists would have long ceased to make a living if it wasn't for a boom in the country's tourism. That's the bitter truth of our country. Back in 1990, I was fortunate enough to attend an exhibition in Japan. There I saw the original works by Rembrandt, Leonardo Da Vinci and Vincent Van Gogh. But it was the way I was treated there that actually changed my perception about art and artists. Seeing the kind of respect with which they treated the artisans really elevated my confidence. For the first time in my life I thought being an artist meant something.



WORK AND PAINTINGS THAT EVEN AFTER 20 YEARS ARE LEFT INCOMPLETE. IS IT BECAUSE YOU LOSE INTEREST HALFWAY THROUGH?

These works will keep on living long after I am gone. They are my personal endeavours, my passion projects. They weren't commissioned and I don't have a deadline, so I have the liberty to take my own sweet time with them and get them as close to perfection as I can. Art can't be rushed. It isn't supposed to be.

CREATIVE PEOPLE ARE KNOWN TO DRAW IDEAS FROM THE MUNDANE. CAN YOU SHARE ANY SUCH INSTANCE WHERE YOU DID THE SAME?

I have grown quite fond of using *kajal*, the cosmetic eyeliners. It's also called *kohl* and is used as mascara for eyelashes. I have used it for sketching.

ARTISTS LIKE DA VINCI WERE NOTORIOUS FOR NOT FINISHING THEIR WORK. YOU TOO HAVE STACKS OF INCOMPLETE

YOU ARE WIDELY REGARDED AS A MAN WHO GAVE THE CENTURIES-OLD ART FORM A 21ST CENTURY INCARNATION. WHAT SIGNIFICANCE DOES PAUBHA ART HOLD FOR YOU?

I am 58 now. I have spent 46 years trying to master this art form and I



Photos: Nishant S Gurung / THT

AT SIMRIK ATELIER YOU HAVE BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS COMING TO STUDY UNDER YOU? HOW HAS PROMOTING PAUBHA ART ACADEMICALLY BEEN SO FAR?

Simrik Atelier has been around since the last 21 years and a lot of amazing talent has sprung up over that course of time. Now, there are other institutions that have started teaching *Paubha* in their curriculum. One such institution is Srijana College.

YOU ARE A SELF-TAUGHT ARTIST YET YOU FEEL THE NEED TO TEACH PAUBHA ACADEMICALLY. WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO START A CURRICULUM?

Many people do not regard traditional art as a subject to pursue. However, what they don't realise is that you can't create something out of scratch by only sitting in front of a canvas on an easel. You need to go out, explore, observe, and most importantly study. The essence of *Paubha* lies in giving shape to the shapeless; portraying feelings as real entities. As a Chitrakar (which translates to Artist), I only wish to impart the mastery of the work perfected by my ancestors to the coming young generation.



WHAT'S HOT

Celebrating good times



Radisson Hotel Kathmandu celebrated the world's biggest beer fest in their own way. Radisson Hotel Kathmandu organised an event to celebrate Oktoberfest on September 27 at Terrace Garden. Along with an elaborate Bavarian menu the event also had beer games, a live music band and other fun things to do. The event was dedicated towards merrymaking and coming together of friends and family. Oktoberfest is one of the most loved festivals in the world, and Radisson Hotel Kathmandu kicked off the festival in style.

Event



A German fiesta

Travel & Leisure joins in the revelry at Hyatt Regency Kathmandu

taste palates of all the guests, the food extravaganza aimed at creating a balanced meal including German breads, soups, salads, and meat dishes.

On offer were lip-smacking traditional Bavarian cuisines like the Sauerkraut soup, Chicken Schnitzel, Bratwurst and Frankfurters Sausages among many others. Meat lovers had plenty of options to choose from, especially the juicy and fulfilling pork knuckles, presented live by the Chef's skilled entourage of cooks.

Complementing the meal were a wide array of desserts like the Apple Strudel,

Apple Chocolate Trifle, Blackforest Cake, Raspberry Pie, et cetera, which had the perfect sugar balance and adequate flavours to tickle the taste buds of the guests without them worrying about gaining extra calories. The event was amped up with the addition of a live music performance by the Midnight Walkers band, which delighted the audience with their soft, acoustic numbers. Overall, the Oktoberfest celebrations truly kicked in the festive mode and enchanted the guests with a wholesome combination of food, drinks, and a wonderful ambience.



Photos: Ranjan Shakya / THT

Inspiring young travellers

Qatar Airways' friendly Oryx Kids Club mascots inspire young travellers to get creative in planning their next journey with a visit to an exciting digital drawing booth. Helping children demonstrate their creativity towards travelling by participating in a digital drawing competition, the fun-filled event encourages youngsters to develop a sense of familiarity when they travel to their favourite destination with Qatar Airways. Designed to inspire and excite children when they fly, they are able to enjoy specially designed plush toys, activity packs, and special meal boxes.



Skybound