

R.C.T.: Permit me to recall, Mr. Roerich, that it is quite 22 years that I ^{first} wrote about your work. Even then, your technical skill as a painter -- sure draughtsmanship, handling of colours -- were remarkable. Some of your portraits, specially those of your great father had won international renown. And yet, going round this exhibition has been a most exhilarating experience. It has been a feast of colour. You have certainly grown in vision, if I may say so. I shall be grateful if for the benefit of listeners of All India Radio you will say a few words about some of the paintings, putting in words what you have so exquisitely done in line and colour.

S.R.: I shall be very glad to do so. ^{M. Tandon} Let us go and have a look at the pictures.

R.C.T.: Since there are so many fine ones in the exhibition the selection of pictures will not be very easy. Let us stop a while before this picture 'Toil' obviously a fruit of your sejour in South India. The women folk with their young, supple figures so well arranged in a composition. Sylvan setting. Are the colours not somewhat over-dramatised? What inspired you to paint this painting Mr. Roerich?

S.R.: This painting ^{as you rightly observed} was inspired by the Malabar Coast and shows women gathering palm leaves in a palm grove. The painting deals with the problem of light streaming through the palm trees, the treatment of decorative elements and composition and the beauty and harmony of the human figure toiling in these surroundings.

R.C.T.: Shall we turn next to the picture 'Humanity Crucified'? It suggests an atmosphere of cataclysm and inspires an almost religious feeling.

S.R.: This is one of a Tryptich which was painted in the period 1939-42 of the Second World War. It was inspired by thoughts born of the conflict. I have shown in one of its wings 'Humanity having come to a dead end in a chasm, man crucified in space in the central panel - a symbol of the recurrent crucifixion of man against the background of destruction, upheaval and war and then I have shown the 'Release' in the third panel where man is fighting man in a great elemental struggle with a single central figure detaching itself with man released and emancipated in the upper

portion of the painting. The symbol of hope - man having freed himself of the Shackles of Self.

R.C.T.: Quite different in its theme is the next picture 'Spring'. The cow and the flute give the boy figure a Krishna touch in this pastoral picture.

S.R.: This is a picture of expanding nature, of spring - one of a series called 'The Sacred Flute' the life of shepherds tending their flock which ~~brings us back~~ takes us back to the story of Krishna which still permeates in the countryside in the sound of the shepherd's flute.

R.C.T.: Looking at the next picture 'Over the pass' one could understand why your work has sometimes been credited with a mystic quality. Here one can sense the high altitudes, almost a ¹²varified atmosphere. Are these figures of the pilgrims?

S.R.: Over the pass a caravan crossing on the Tibetan uplands, a sterner nature of towering peaks barren rocks, wind and billowing clouds. Man struggling against nature and overcoming the elements.

R.C.T.: We could now go over to the other hall. Here is 'Sunset' over the Kanchenjanga. Another picture of the great Himalayas. This is said to be one of the most glorious sight anywhere.

S.R.: Sunset over the Kanchenjanga range in the Eastern Himalayas. Shown in one of its infinite moods. When the snow peaks turn a golden orange and the blue and purple clouds provide one of the striking contrast so typical of this magnificent range.

R.C.T.: Now shall we look at this picture 'Gods are Coming'? It recalls to me the Dussehra time I spent in Kulu sometime back.

S.R.: Yes, it is a scene of the Dussehra celebrations in Kulu where a procession of priests and villagers is shown carrying a chatri of a god surrounded by dancing pujaris sword in hand. The men are shown in their brilliant festive attires against the majestic mountains of the Kulu Valley.

R.C.T.: We know Mr. Roerich, you have a remarkable talent for painting portraits. Here are quite a few of them in this hall. We shall confine ourselves to only two of them, the first one that of Madame Devika Rani Roerich. It is a charming portrait.

S.R.: This portrait of my wife was painted in Sikkim. She is shown in a red Kashmir shawl holding yellow flowers *she loves so well* against the background of blue mountains and flowering trees. A combination of a realistic portrait and a decorative treatment.

R.C.T.: The portrait of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is also highly realistic in the best traditions of the academic painters. A fine likeness. Does full justice to the subject. I like the twinkle in his eyes.

S.R.: The portrait of the Prime Minister was painted in Kulu almost 18 years ago. It is one of the several portraits and studies I made of the Prime Minister. He is shown here in a contemplative mood looking *ahead* ~~as if~~ into the future. *It has given me great joy to paint these portraits.*

R.C.T.: I have taken quite a deal of ~~xx~~ your time, Mr. Roerich, over the pictures. They are so many. But there is just one I would like you to tell me something about. This is 'Out of the storm'. The theme is well understood. What was the occasion for it?

S.R.: Out of the Storm. A girl and deer flying from some sort of a catalysm or catastrophe towards a clear sky and calm expanse of the sea. The painting was painted in March 1947 as a possible foreboding of the dislocations of the partition which came later in the Autumn.

R.C.T.: Thank you so much Mr. Roerich for this running commentary on ~~xxxx~~ some of your paintings. In the background of this it will be nice to have very briefly your views on the function of Art in life, and how you view the purpose of Art generally.

S.R.: In my approach to Art I was always inspired by the words of Michelangelo uttered over four centuries ago:

"True Art is made noble and religious by the ~~xx~~ mind producing it. For those who feel it nothing makes the soul so religious and pure, as the endeavour to create something perfect, for God is perfection and whoever strives after perfection is striving for something Divine."

The words of Rabindranath Tagore also profoundly moved me:

"In Art the person in us is sending its answer to the Supreme person who reveals Himself to us in a world of endless beauty across the lightless world of facts."

Though expressed by people far apart in time, place and birth yet how close these words come in their innermost feelings. This essential unity is the unity of true Culture and of the Arts as the exponents of that Culture.

There, where our words come from our heart, our inner being, where we stand as a complete personification, of our emotions and thoughts, our message will have the greatest power, carry the greatest conviction, in other words it will be truth itself.

R.C.T. One last question, please. I wonder if I could draw you out on a subject which disturbs some people who are called upon to look at pictures. There is a view sometimes expressed that the appeal of a picture should lie in its pictorial quality and not so much in its theme. The idea perhaps is that there is no room in art for conveying a message or being idealistic and so forth. What is your reaction to such attitude towards art?

S.R. All I will say is that to me Art is universal in its expression and is all embracing and all containing in its content and scope. I would never like to think of art as an expression which may be qualified by one or another consideration. The more complete our expression is, the greater harmony there is between its component parts, the more perfect, richer and more living will be the ultimate whole.

R.C.T. That is beautifully put Mr. Roerich.

I have now to thank you so very very much for your cooperation here.
