Doors of the Past

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In his latest exhibition Proshanto Karmakar has used a variety of colours ranging from black to touches of vermilion , green, blue etc.

"Asked if he preferred painting to prints, Proshanto says, I get a lot of satisfaction from etching. The necessary acid is not easily available and so I'm moving on to acrylic, that has the effect of oils and is quick to complete" He is also experimenting with serigraphy.

Questioned if he did not fear that his viewers might not get bored with the subjects being repeated many times, without any overwhelming variation, he says that he wants to present tourist type subjects. Says the artist: "My aim is dissemination of knowledge and revival of old places, which I fear will not last long, unless the government does something about the preservation of our heritage."

Hence the depiction of doors. The first one has two ornate pillars at the side .There are floral motifs at the top of the pillars and more motifs invite you in to the arches.

The second one concentrates on a door and a keyhole. It is wooden and cracked. The difference between the door and the rest of the building construction is obvious. The manner in which the door is somewhat ajar lends the painting a sense of drama.

In the third creation is yet another arch on the bunt-sienna wall leading on to a yellow –ochre thick rampant which leads on to the beauty of the piece. There we see all the wonderful, ornate designing of Muslim architecture , showing arches, balustrades, windows , with panelling leading on to dark labyrinths.

A third door is gradually being eaten up by worms. Yet its attraction is not yet gone. On top of the door are fine arabesques and floral designs which intertwine with one another. This is in a bright red brick colour. The tiles at the side and the top of the pillars are again as floral as they can get. The door, the accompanying pillars are pale yellow ochre, tinged with pink. The look of iron which opens the door is in black.

Another picture shows a door made of planks of wood and bars of stripped wood which forms a part of a gorgeous building , ruined by the ages, and speaking of lack of care, which is what Proshanto withes to draw attention to, in all his paintings of the past glory of the Muslims.

There are then the half lit steps leading up to the rooms of the once-fancy home of the rich and prosperous. This painting, done in jet-black , chrome yellow and duck yellow is dramatic indeed. It reminds you of the chiaroscuro effect of the Dutch masters. There are boats on the River Buriganga with elaborate and romantic gas lights near at hand. Through one of the openings in the idyllic, ancient archways of the buildings can be seen horse riders, with a large tree at the backThere is the depiction of the River Buriganga with thatched boats which have been docked with poles and the mysterious gypsies with their women and children.

Taught by Bonizul Huq from Rajshahi Art College, given guidance and opportunities by his brother Kalidas Karmakar and influenced by Biren Shome"s style, he was told by Qamrul Hassan "Whether you have academic training in a big way or just keep studying art works, especially that of the masters, always maintain your individuality so that the viewer will see your work and recognise that it is only yours and not of someone else's." Proshanto is trying to follow this invaluable piece of advice.

Café Mango Gallery is located at 48/B, Pragati Sharani, 1st floor.(opposite Cambrian College. The exhibition which began on 16 May, ends on the 15th of June and may be extended.