

Beauty beyond the Real World in Krishna Prakash Shah's Paintings

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Abstract: Krishna Prakash Shah's colorful compositions capture the beauty that is beyond the real world in the sense that the colors and shapes on the canvas do not represent the recognizable objects and events of the external world. Rhythmic lines and colorful patterns have been used for their own sake without direct reference to the objective world. The works suggest the invisible aspects. The beauty created in his works cannot be found in the real world. His imagination goes beyond the immediate reality and creates its own world that is more beautiful than the real world. His abstract compositions stand for their own sake without recognizable subject matter. They provide space for the viewer's imagination. They link the shapes and colors to make images in the mind that are different from things in this world. The shapes in the painting keep on changing their forms. Different forms and visuals can be seen in subsequent viewings. There is a spontaneous flow toward an unknown horizon. The melodious motion of dynamic visual shapes provides a unique experience. The free flow of fluid form provides the rapture of novel taste. Shapes and colors melt into each other, creating a unique blend. The sense of playful forms is ever-shifting for the quest for the novel world beyond. This article attempts to indicate the beauty in Shah's abstract forms that are different from the beauty we experience in this visible world.

Keywords: abstract art, aesthetic experience, imagination, multiple, playfulness, rhythm, spontaneity

Introduction

Krishna Prakash Shah's artworks are abstract compositions. The paintings attempt to capture the invisible and intangible aspects of the self and the world. The fluid forms go beyond the referential representation. We enjoy the beauty of this real visible world, but his visual compositions provide us with the beauty that is beyond this physical world. The key element for this is his creative imagination which builds his own universe. These artworks can be interpreted in multiple ways. Before supporting this thesis statement with the analysis and interpretation of artworks, it would be worth introducing the artist and his works.

Shah, the renowned contemporary Nepali abstract artist, has made his distinct space in the area of Nepali art (Rajdhanai, 2012). He mastered the realistic techniques to represent objects and events of the external world; then, he began to explore intangible and invisible aspects of the world along with subjective feelings and emotions using abstract shapes and colors (Sharma, 2020). Dhungel (2064) points out that we can perceive the raptures of color sensation and music through his visual compositions. His paintings lead us to the depth of life. The colors stand for themselves with an emphasis of aesthetic dimensions (Ausstellung Nepal, 2015). The viewers assimilate themselves with the abstract images of painting (Sharma, 2021a). The subject becomes the object. This gives a new sense of our experience (Shah, 2007). Life dances in sensation in the colors of the paintings (Dhungel, 2064). The colors themselves have their own world. The viewer's imagination gets ample space in his colorful compositions.

Khanal (2019) states that Shah provides a concrete form to abstract concepts in his artworks and conveys visual rhythm to his invisible sensations and experiences. He is more interested in inner sensations rather than external subject matters (Gurung, 2021). He has the belief that art should provide aesthetic pleasure (*KalkarKultur and Geschichte: Exhibition Catalogue*, 2017). He gives priority to creating beauty in the visual form. He presents the melody of music in the rhythm of colors and shape (Sharma, 2020). The aesthetic pleasure from his works provides access to the viewer's subconscious mind (Khanal, 2071). The artworks free the audience from the sense of specific time and space because the images and colors in the paintings do not represent worldly objects and events in an objective manner (Shah, 2021a). The artworks are not about past or future events. We need not spend time searching for the connection to the recognizable things of this world (Sharma, 2012). The colorful compositions have presentational immediacy or spots of time. It means we take part in the rhythmic movement of the colors.

The art forms are not used to refer to some subject matters or suggest specific meanings. The colors and forms are the contents of his abstract compositions (Sharma, 2021a). Khanal (2012) argues that his artworks provide pleasure, peace, and absolute bliss to the soul. They make us feel our real existence (Shah, 2021b). The contents of his abstract compositions are not objective reality but inner sensations of the artists that thrill the viewers (Sharma, 2021b). The artist is skillful in providing life to the flow of colors and forms (*Saurya National Daily*, 2012). He attempts to assimilate himself with abstract images in floating colors that create the unknown universe. The dynamic flow of colors and lines takes the viewers along with them toward the novel world (Khanal, 2012).

His arts have magnetic power to pull the viewers toward themselves due to the rhythmic flow of colors—the imagination swings along the spontaneous music of the colors (Sharma, 2012). The motion takes us on the adventurous journey to the unknown place toward the distant horizon. The pulsating life of the artwork provides a sense of vitality (Sharma, 2021c). The movement is back and forth according to the whim of the fancy. One color is coherent with the other, creating harmony and connection (Adhikari, 2012). One image connects to another, creating a cohesive pattern. All the parts hang in harmony, having organic unity. The works provide aesthetic pleasure and a sense of comfort and solace (Sharma, 2020).

Rhythm is created in visual music. The melody provides a sensation of joy. The colors create a dancing motion in visual form (*Saurya National Daily*, 2012). Shah's abstract compositions are about internal feelings and intense emotions. The composition of colors connotes the quest of the self. The mundane subject of men is less important in creations (Shah, 2012). The paintings are in the quest for peace, harmony, and aesthetic pleasure for the self and others. His abstract paintings suggest comfort and serenity in the setting (Manandhar, 2007). Shah's paintings have been studied from various perspectives, but they have not been studied in terms of beauty beyond the real world. Here is the research gap, and this article tries to fill this gap by tracing the beauty that is beyond the physical and visible world in his abstract compositions.

Research methodology

The research area covers abstract paintings of Krishna Prakash Shah and studies them in terms of beauty in the artworks. Art history books, journal articles, newspaper articles, and exhibition catalogs are secondary sources that have been reviewed to create the background and to be aware of existing research in this area. The review of literature also contributes to finding the research gap. For the study and exploration, a theoretical framework has been developed by lining the research area to the particular perspective of the researcher. Aestheticism is the tool for analyzing and interpreting artworks. Shah's paintings are primary sources. The artist's studio was visited to view his compositions for analysis and interpretation, study his creative process and interview the artist. This research is qualitative because the thesis statement has been supported by interpreting the visual arts. The interpretation of an artwork is generally the subjective response to an aesthetic object. The interpretations can differ depending on viewers, time, and space.

Abstract art and intangible experience

Before analyzing and interpreting the abstract visual compositions, it would be worth briefly clarifying the abstract art concept. The term abstract connotes the important concept or idea that is invisible and intangible (Graham- Dixon, 2008). We perceive and experience something, but we cannot present it in physical form; this is the abstract. The explanation does not refer to the recognizable thing of the world (Kandinsky, 1977). Abstract art disconnects itself from the visible objects of the external world (Sharma, 2014). Creative forms and colors do not become the means of expression but end in themselves. The color itself has its value without reference. Martin & Jacobus (1991, p.75) state that abstracted visual form is significant "not because it informs about our world but because the form is its own significance." The abstract forms and colors do not present the recognizable objects and events of the external world in a conventional manner; thus, we need not think about the past and future to connect the shapes and images to the things of the world. In this sense, they become "timeless within time" (Martin & Jacobus, 1991, p.82). Abstract art is an art of pure form without content and visible subject matter. In abstract painting, "only aesthetic elements seem to be present" (Schapiro, 1979, p.185). Abstract art form fully breaks away from the concept of artistic imitation and objective representation (Sharma, 2009). In other words, abstract art is non-representational and subjective.

Abstract art form focuses on playful, spontaneous, and rhythmic presentation. The form is free and fluid due to the use of creative colors, lines, brushstrokes, and novel shapes. The lines are moving without any specific purpose (Sharma, 2014). The joy is in the movement and life itself. Sometimes, they move ahead and come back to rest. There is a dynamic play of colors and lines. The shapes, sometimes, seem to suggest something. Nevertheless, the referred shape slips away in silence. A single shape seems to have multiple significance at the same time. The shapes sometimes separate from each other and continuously melt into one. Thus, the art form is fluid and open-ended, suggesting beyond the fixed object. In abstract paintings, the "fluidity of painting" is like the "lyricism of music" (Matthews and Platt, 2001, p.534). We can travel along the lines and the pattern of colors. Viewers can make their own links in abstract paintings (Sharma, 2009). We may paint our own visual compositions in our minds. In the next view, we perceive something different, making different links among the shapes. This is the plural aspect of abstract painting.

Abstract art form makes us free from the "tyranny of time and space and the fury of functions" (Martin and Jacobus, 1991, p.81). By avoiding reference to concrete things, abstract arts liberate us from the habits of referring to objects and events of the world (Shah, 2021b). Abstract composition is not a closed art form but an open-ended and plural. Its significance is beyond the visible and tangible world around. The significance of abstract form is provisional and ever-shifting. Such artworks "defer any final answer, implying that all answers are relative" (Wain, 1999, p. 4.) It denies final answers and defers completion and a closed state. However, it always suggests other possibilities in the visual form. The momentary function is more important than the final signified. We do not view the work for anything to understand but for aesthetic experience in the form (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The constructed sense of the work always remains in process. The significance undergoes constant transformation depending on time, space, and viewer (Sharma, 2020). The momentary signified is always in the process of becoming. The significance is always beyond the real world. That exists, but we cannot see it in this world. The only abstract artist gives visible form to the invisible dimensions. Abstract art attempts to capture the beauty and aesthetic aspects that are beyond the objective world. In the coming section, Krishna Shah's abstract paintings have been analyzed and interpreted in terms of the beauty that is invisible and intangible in the real world.

Analysis, interpretation, and discussion of Shah's abstract paintings

Krishna Prakash Shah's abstract paintings present the beauty that is beyond the visible world around us. They convey a unique aesthetic sense we have not experienced in the real world. In our life, we directly experience the beauty of things, places, and people that we visit, see and feel. After utilizing this possibility, the artist goes beyond the limit of time and space toward the

imaginative world, and sometimes the world of the unique experience that others have not seen and felt. The artist has created new space, shapes, patterns, and colors that flow in spontaneous rhythm. The playful shapes appear and disappear in the flux of movement. Due to the blurring of defined boundaries, the works seem to be open-ended, having multiple significances. The colorful compositions do not represent the objects and events of the real world but go beyond it, suggesting alternative scenes and settings. Lines, colors, and shapes sometimes stand for themselves, avoiding the referential nature. There can be a dim association of shapes with recognizable images, but the association or reference instantly slips away as in a dream. The fluid shapes change their form perpetually. For different viewers, the visual composition may appear different and have entirely different significance. The shapes of concepts or images beyond this world are unknown to us; we can only construct them in our minds. Nevertheless, the beauty of unknown shapes in the compositions provides us new experience.

The swing of visible and invisible lines provides a unique sensation. This is the journey of the hinterland. The colorful clouds and the whirling pool of colors create a new setting in the new space. New thoroughfares of the new world are still not explored entirely. The more we travel, the more interesting lands appear. The ride on the colors goes on and on until we are satisfied. The addition to melodious colors makes it difficult to disconnect ourselves from a colorful home. Since the shapes change their form, the next day, we find novel land to explore (Manandhar, 2007). The viewing experience is more important than the final meaning of the form. The virtual journey provides the ecstasy of life. He strikes a balance between comfort and the flux of life. The splash and flow of colors create a new setting and atmosphere. The cycle of creation and dissolution is visible in an unusual sequence. Multiple associations and references make the work forever new.

Shah's composition "Beauty beyond the Real World-I" (Fig.1) does not refer to the objects and events of the external world but attempts to capture the invisible and intangible aspects of the world beyond human experience in three-dimensional form. We can go around the art form. The work is neither a realistic representation nor a distorted presentation of anything at all but self-reflective. The colors and shapes stand for themselves. The colorful patterns affect the viewers directly. We need not associate them with a particular time, space, characters, and events. The rhythmic and melodious colors guide the viewers' eyes toward an unknown horizon. A soft and harmonious color combination creates a new world of its own. The viewers enter the canvas and explore the newfound color field with adventure. The viewers identify themselves with the colorful shapes without being aware of their physical existence in the mundane material world. The viewers and the artwork become one. The subject and the object are united. The assimilation is natural and spontaneous. In a new land, new characters and space appear on the canvas (Shah, 2022). The making of the personal space in the new land gives a sense of epiphany.



Fig.1 Krishna Prakash Shah (2021), *Beauty Beyond the Real World-I*, (60x60x90cm.)

Krishna Shah's painting "Beauty Beyond the Real World-II" (Fig.2) presents a unique and unusual world of its own. This is the creative vision of the artist. They give the momentary impression of a strange place on the new horizon, but it is impossible to connect the shapes with recognizable images and figures. It is difficult to pinpoint the content of the rhythmic outburst. The fluid form moves with force in an unknown direction. The harmony of the colors creates visual rhythm in a playful manner. The same shape suggests many concepts and visions. It is the dream world of the artist's imagination. The subtle shapes emerge and dissolve into an infinite universe. The pink colors suggest the life force and energy, whereas the blue suggest calmness. These are the invisible

patterns of life. The three-dimensional solid particles on the canvas suggest the existence of new characters that are in the movement toward transformation. This is the romantic passion of the artist to create a unique world beyond the setting in the surroundings. Something breaks the surface and projects up toward the open space. This is the quest for freedom from the boundary and limitations.



Fig.2. Krishna Prakash Shah (2017), *Beauty Beyond The Real World-II*, (89x102cm)

The artist creates the beauty that exists beyond the physical world. The release of stored energy covers the visual universe of the canvas. In the next sense, this is the revealing of rhythm in the unconscious mind. The artist creates his own world on the canvas. It is possible in imaginative art. A chain of associations comes in sequence, facilitating the visual flow. The melody of colors and spontaneous flow of shapes engage the viewer with aesthetic pleasure despite the contingency of certain signified. The open-ended visual form provides ample space for viewer participation and imagination. The missing things in the new world are supplied through the viewer's imagination. The fluid visual form frees the viewers from the sense of specific time and space in the context. The visual form seems to remain ever new since we encounter new shapes and images in the process of our virtual journey (Madhupark, 2009). The virtual journey leaves a lasting impression in our real life. The aesthetic experience in the new world breaks one's monotony, providing a sense of meaningful life.



Fig.3 Krishna Prakash Shah (2021), *Beauty Beyond the Real World-III*, (102x127cm.)

Shah's work "Beauty Beyond the Real World-III" (Fig.3) presents a creation of the new world on the canvas. The shapes emerge from the silent surface and cover the universe of the canvas. The germinating seed hidden under the dark silent surface breaks the ground, grows, and covers the atmosphere at the appropriate time. The artist suggests the mystery of creation, condensation, and expansion of the universe. The mélange of harmonious colors conveys this impression. The background appears to be marine blue,

suggesting silence, calmness, and coolness, whereas red and white suggest life, growth, and movement. From the margin of the background, all of a sudden, the abstract shapes of white, red, and dark blue emerge and move toward the center of the canvas. The waves appear in the flux and vanish at the moment. The time has been condensed. The universe appears and vanishes; life emerges and collapses at the moment. The artist has a broader view of the self, life, and the world. The morning mist gathers gradually in silence and vanishes silently with the sunshine. The white cloud creates characters and places that go through a metamorphosis at the moment with the emergence of a novel universe of its own. This may be the representation of sudden flashing of the intuitive vision in the creator's mind at the time of meditation (Shah, 2020). This composition seems to have evolved in the process of creation without preplanning and forethought. Shah's imagination and sub-conscious rhythm drive his brush ahead and create melodious patterns of colors and shapes. The spontaneous glides of the colors have soothing and consoling effects with the healing power of art. The novel composition sublimates our emotions and imagination, taking us to tour a new world of creativity.

Conclusion

Krishna Prakash Shah's abstract paintings are abstract compositions. These artworks are in the quest for beauty beyond the visible world. The works attempt to capture the intangible imagination and experience of the artist. The artist does not refer to and represent the objective physical reality but the subject picture in his mind. The unique creative compositions with the melody of colors swing the viewers toward an unknown world. The fluid, flexible, flowing form with visual rhythm provides a perpetual aesthetic experience. Due to the playful shapes and plural connotations of colors, the paintings remain ever new. The dynamic colors and abstract shapes sometimes suggest initiation of life, growth in flux, the comfort of reunion, and the ecstasy of climax in a state of meditation. The composition is full of new energy and vitality. Constantly melting shapes and separating forms presents the play in the visible and invisible worlds. Remaining in visible space, the artist captures the invisible beyond this world, brings it to life, and presents it in aesthetic visual form. His artworks are always new. They go beyond the conventional definition. His visual creations bring new color, form, shape, texture, and harmony to the aesthetic experience.

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