

Wall paintings of Bengaluru [Kitsch paintings on the walls of Bengaluru]

Minor research project under the UGC

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The kitsch paintings on the walls of Bangalore, was the courtesy of the BBMP as part of their ambitious project to keep the city clean and beautiful. This was a huge project spread all over the city walls which had its repercussions felt among its citizens both positive and the negative. If a visual document was not done then this one time mammoth happening would only remain as official papers in the official files. This minor research was to document the whole project visually and descriptively, as it was an occurrence too large & significant to be ignored. It did not look at the expenditure as that would not affect much on the opinion of the people.

Positives and Negatives are always at work when government decides to carry out projects for public. At best, such endeavours are accepted with scepticism. At other times, they are subjected to critical assessment. This unique dichotomy makes it exclusive and remains outside the realm of the public. For the same reason, government seems like a distant entity with machinations that are not understood by the public. Fact remains that the twain should come together. This is possible when it becomes collaborative and participative, it must become an inclusive process

We have been conditioned to regard art as a product of man's surplus energy and wealth. Even more so with fine arts because it is not considered an essential necessity for organized living but something exclusive. However, it has existed throughout the human history - prehistoric to present. It is thriving today. Yet art is presumed to be as simple as bathroom singing, and everyone seems to be an authority with an eerie finality! Perhaps the democratic nature of modern art makes it appear so. In today's connected world with access to knowledge, intricacies and nuances are easily available for the discerning person who wants to pursue, but the professional attributes require training and expertise.

At the outset, these two issues are different but are intertwined in this project 'Wall paintings on the walls of Bangalore by the BBMP'. The civic body's decision was almost unilateral, art work turned out to be a saga of *kitsch* images. Sophisticated art of contemporary or modern sensibilities was definitely not expected, yet the whole pursuit could have been genuinely unique, appealing, elevating or even creating awareness of sorts. It was critical that this issue be addressed and documented. It had to be done quickly as these paintings are perishable. Just couple of years have elapsed and the whole thing is

neglected. If the objective was to beautify Bangalore, it certainly has not been achieved. Instead, the whole thing has been relegated to unkempt patches that could have been avoided.

Important junctions, large canvasses are all documented along with some interviews of the common man who is the recipient of this Kitsch! This document does not attempt to look at project cost and outlay nor does it seek the opinion of the elite. Primarily because reactions do not change based on cost! Since elite wasn't a stakeholder in the process, their opinion has not been sought.

Art is the catalyst that brings to fore the complexities of human lives, societal norms, grandiose pursuits and everyday endeavours. And when we are adroitly coerced into tolerating something, there must also be voices that can express opinions and also become the harbinger of discussions that enable genuine art to become more accessible!

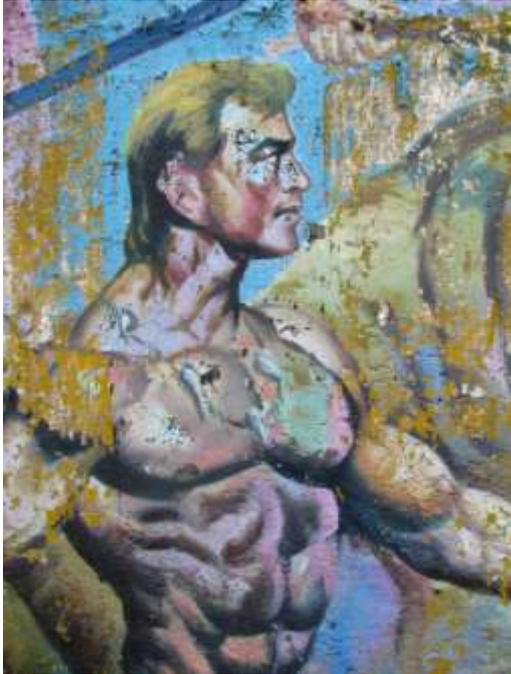
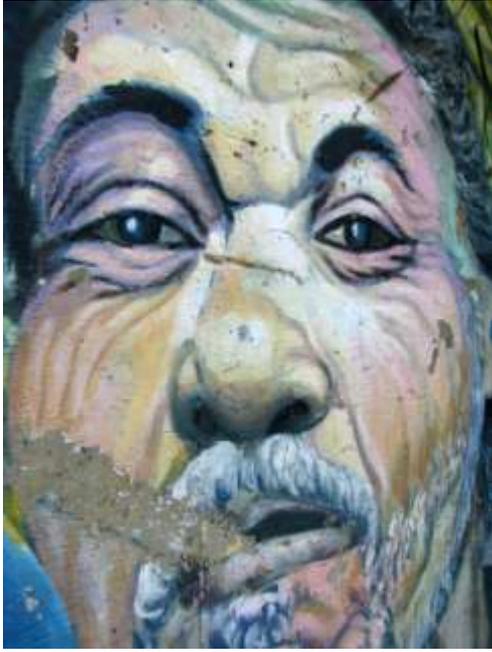
The kitsch paintings in abundance are documented for posterity including its deterioration. Concern for the city's aesthetic look for which it was always known was raised. It also addresses the issue of public participation and involvement.

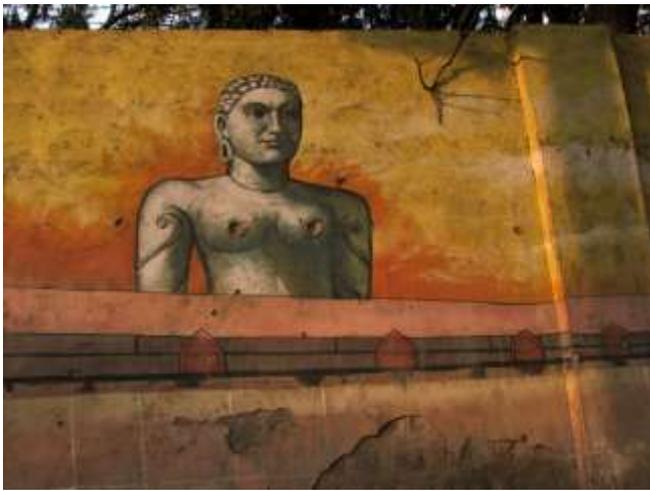
Projects of this nature are documents of the growing cities with an unbiased view. It highlights the apathy people have assumed towards the activities of the civic bodies and the laid back authority of these bodies too. At any given time the people of Bangalore especially those who are concerned about the aesthetics, culture of this 'Beautiful city' can always be reminded of this issue. This project discusses at length the need to have inclusive participations from both the public and the officials to both whom this city belongs.

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