APPENDIX- I

Partha Pratim Deb, Interview conducted on, 30/3/2014

Q. Describe briefly about early years in Agartala before moving to Santiniketan to study art.

A. In my school at Agartala we had a drawing teacher named, Nanigopal babu. During those days drawing was part of the school curriculum till class VIII. And those who were good in painting got the responsibility of decoration during Saraswati Puja. I remember to be part of this team for many years and did my job with enthusiasm. Out school principal, Sri Smritikantha Sengupta used to love me for my proficiency in painting. Once he wanted us to make a series of drawings portraying the important historical incidents. Our drawing teacher, Nanigopal Babu headed the project. Selected students of Class VIII, IX and X painted the walls of our school with series of drawings depicting the notable characters of Indian history including the Mughal emperors. My interest in painting thrived since then and increased manifold with time. 1961, the year I got admitted in M.B.B College Agartala, was the birth centenary of Rabindranath Tagore. To commemorate the great poet a painting exhibition was organized in the college and I painted a portrait of Gurudev for the same. The painting got award in the exhibition. The professor of English in our college, Dr. Brajen Das, inspired me a lot and many other professors also encouraged my passion for painting. My parents were always supportive and seeing my seriousness in the field they appointed the local artist Sailesh Dev Barman as my art teacher. Sailesh Babu was the student of Nandalal Bose and was adept in water color and wash techniques. He was the drawing teacher of Maharani Tulsibati Girl's School in Agartala. He was an interesting character and in spite of having immense knowledge on painting techniques he was conspicuously down to earth. It is perhaps their humility that makes people like him unique. It was from him that I came to know about luminaries like Nandalal Bose, Dhiren Krishna, Benode Behari and Ramkinkar Baij. After taking my tutelage from Sailesh Babu I took admission at Kala Bhavana in Santiniketan.

Q.Tell me about your experience at Kala Bhavana and any memorable moments?

A. Ramkinkar Baiz once organized a play named 'Kakeswar Kuchkuch' at Kala Bhavana. He used to be present at our rehearsal regularly and through the entire periods. One of the characters in the play had to dress like a goat. A mask of the animal was made. But the students were at a loss about how to bring in the desired shape of the creature. Then Ramkinkar advised us to bring two pillows, a white bed sheet and a black *saree*. Tying the pillows in the hip and covering the front portion with the white sheet he wrapped the mask with the black *saree* and put it in place from behind. And bingo! There was the goat. I see can't believe how easily he made that difficult thing look so easy! The interest in making funny forms was sowed in me right from then. Once I came back to Agartala, I continued to act in the stage and also make costumes for the characters in the play. The affinity to take interest in myriad things started from Kala Bhavana.

Q.Who was your teacher when you have joined at Baroda and how was the experience?

A. Once in Baroda I found that the teaching style there is even more liberal. An important technique of teaching at Baroda included creating different problems in making art and seeing diverse solutions for it. Compared to this the technique at Kala Bhavana was much more subjective. However, liberal ways of both the schools helped me in thinking differently. The basic perception and conception gained at Kala Bhavana together with the liberal ways of Baroda helped me in expressing myself in diverse ways. At Baroda I got teachers like K.G. Subramanyan, Jyoti Bhatt et al. All these art teachers were then very much in the scene as artists. This helped the students in accepting them as teachers more effectively. The willingness to create art in newer forms was manifested in me by these teachers.

Q. After completing your study you come back Agartala and got job at Maharani Tulsibati Girls School.

A. After returning to Agartala I got the chance to know and see myself independently. Pratibha Datta Gupta was then the head mistress of Maharani Tulsibati Girls School. She was a spirited lady and had interest in diverse subjects. But she was especially dedicated to art. She never put any obstacle in anything related to art. The class rooms of the schools were big in size and I used to go to the school in the morning and come back home in the evening. I used to experiment with the broken and scrap things that were found scattered in and around the school. It was by this that I learned how to add diverse dimension to art in order to make it funny. Good quality colors and canvases were not available in Agartala during this time. It was this dearth that prompted the inclination towards alternative art practice. I was fortunate to get a likeminded person in Chinmoy Roy with me at that time. He too had then joined Maharani Tulsibati Girls School as an art teacher after completing his studies in Santiniketan.

Q. In the year 1972 you got another job at Rabindra Bharati University. How were the days?

A. At the university I got Sovon Som, Laxmi Narayan Panchuri, Samaresh Chowdhuri and Dharmanarayan Dasgupta as my colleague. As the visual arts department of the university was new then need to think about the teaching process. As my colleagues were all students of Santiniketan they were a liberal way of thinking among them. Without the consent of all the teachers it would have been difficult to uphold a different practice in place of the contemporary art practice of Kolkata.

Q. Say something about your experimental works on those days.

A. My art has always been criticized. But those who could understand they have appreciated this initiative of making art in a different form. But I was not much concerned about what people thought of my conception. My endeavor was to continue with the experimentation. I have even done exhibition with my works. But no one showed interest to collect my art works then.

Q.The alternatives art practice got manifested in the art practice of your students. Gradually you could establish yourself as an influential professor at Rabindra Bharati University.

A. At that time I was new to Kolkata. The university I joined was also new. The traditions of art practices at the established art colleges of Kolkata were deep rooted then. But since I was trained in a different fashion I used to carry out different experiments in front of my students. The trend which started at Maharani Tulsibati Girls School in Tripura proliferated in myriad dimension in Kolkata. However, this unique art practice shortly got manifested among the students' works but it took time be established as an art language in its own right. However, the positive thing is that the alternative view has finally been accepted. It is important for an artist to have an multi dimensional approach. One tract thinking cannot make one an artist. There was no option for specialization in Kala Bhavana during our times. We had to learn everything. I have realized this from my lost stint as a teacher.

Q. How do you go about creating your works?

A. It will not be right to confer my work as painting or sculpture. I call them art work. In order to engage oneself in art it is imperative for the artist to know and understand himself. I have always tried to do that and the urge to present a single work in diverse ways was always there inside me. And in sub-conscious a strong sense of humor is always at work. There are idiosyncrasies in me which I tend not to express in front of others. My daughter had once said that instead of being an artist I would have been more successful as a comedian in movies.

APPENDIX- II

Pranabranjan Ray, as Interview on, 3/4/2014

Q. As my research topic on two major artists- Dharmanaryan Dasgupta and Partha pratim Deb, what are your views on aesthetic sensibilities and also their contribution for the art scene in Bengal?

A. Deb's works out through the making process often subsumes an instantly recognizable criticality. His plan for visualisation of any critique is humourous and ironical, rather than angry. He would animatedly juxtapose unlikely metaphors in an arrangement or lay emphasis on comical gestures and postures in the figurative suggestive images, dissimilar Robert Rauschenberg, and more like Sukumar Ray and Subramanyan. This carricaturish approach links Partha Pratim even with some of Paul Klee's drawings. It is this kind of purposeful amalgamation of linguistic devises from choicest predecessors that makes Partha Pratim's art truly global, without ever exhibiting the loaned kinships. And rooted he remains, through his use of objects of daily experience for his imagery.

Q. Once you wrote Partha pratim needs to be celebrated as a pedagogue of the genre of Abanindranath, Nandalal, Benode Behari, Subramanyan and Somnath Hore?

A. Partha Pratim, like his gurus, Nandalal, Benode Behari and Subramanyan seems to enjoy merrily the process of rotating the surplus items into images by playing with them. This should however, not be taken as that he ends in giving to the objects some new resemblances only. The new and the craft-attributed likeness he gives to the found objects transform those into significant images.

Q. Partha Pratim Deb has a very personal way of looking around himself. What do you think?

A. Deb world full of Bengali middle-class beings and the objects of their daily use. He neither represents them, nor their objects of daily use. His art is taken

on those. He takes up unnecessary and worn-out objects of middle class daily use, and transforms those subsequent his private gaze to turn those found objects into funny joyful images, with significant social-critical undertones. Consumerist habit of making obsolete all that were once loved is the target of Deb's oblique statements.

Q. What do think about Dasgupta's works?

A. Dharmanarayan Dasgupta had experimented with different expression of images over his initial years of 60's and 70's. The 80's finally saw him to emerge with–his own style. His paintings present a beautiful marriage of two different styles, of the dreaminess of miniature paintings and the style of Kalighat Painting. Humour or satire dominated the theme of his creations. Sometimes there is an understated sense of pensiveness in that humour. There is an influence of *babu* culture of 19th century in the work. But in the guise of that humour it represents the fault and degradation of contemporary life. In that sense there is also an element of protest in his paintings. There is indirect impact of the paintings of Rousseau and Chagall in creating fantasy in his paintings. In his paintings there is resemblance of the silence or soothing atmosphere of the sceneries of Rousseau's paintings but in a different way.

Q. You said there have protest in his work. What kind of protest is it?

A. The social disorder always obsessed him. The reminiscence of aggression, counter violence and death during the *naxalite* movement of seventies was expressed in a series of paintings. He made a series on blood stained *panjabi* which is hanging on the wall. Drops of blood are falling on the ground and the crows are sucking the blood. Such were the horrified imageries of death and violence.

APPENDIX- III

Amit Mukhopadhay, Interview conducted on 5/4/2014

Q. What do you think about satirical art? Please describe your opinion briefly regarding the matter.

A. Satirical art has its roots in the ancient past. There are examples of humorous representation in the art of almost all the cultures. In 19th century Bengal we have seen how satirical art makes social comments. A number of periodicals appeared all over India on that matter. *The Indian Punch*, *The Indian Charivari*, *Oudh Punch* are a few examples of such periodicals appearing in various places. Bengal also witnessed the introduction and rise of cartoons in periodicals and daily like *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Harbola Bhaad*, and *Basantak*. The historical study of the evolution of satirical images in to cartoon cannot be done without including the *patachitras,* an art that had an exclusive position. While speaking of *patachitras* what instantly comes to our mind is the school of kalighat *patachitras.* Satire has been a part of traditional culture in Bengal since a long time. The various traditional practices like *bolan*, *gombhir*a, *jhumur* incorporated in their performances an element of satire. Composing ballads and rhymes based on contemporary events and incidents and presenting them in a satirical manner was a common practice.

Q. Gaganendranath Tagore was the greatest artist in Modern Indian Art. He had experimented with various styles and techniques. However it was not easy for him to adapt the style of caricature painting in early twentieth century. What's your opinion?

A. During this time his elder brother Abanindranth Tagore was a devoted towards the style of Bengal School of art. Whereas through the style of Gaganendranath's caricature like paintings, the shortcomings and the wrongdoings of social and political events are reflected. Bound by the limits of time and space, his works were a form of art that reflected upon the arguments and the counter arguments that a current event initiates where it fills a humorist's mind with a sense of bitter-sarcastic happiness. This was

because he wanted to bring to front the dishonesty-treachery-opportunism of those whom he knew in the social and political circuits. He had also observed the pseudo/quasi-religious from really close. All these experiences had driven him to take recourse in the satirical art form.

APPENDIX- IV

Nanak Ganguly, Interview conducted on 15/5/2013

Q. What do you think about the satirical art in west?

A. I would like to mentioned artist Honore Daumie. The relentless oppression and the never ending sorrow and problems of the socially downtrodden, angered him to such an extent that he even decided to leave his own style of painting and take up his brush to draw pictures of protest against the oppressors. This is what led him to select cartoon as his medium. He protested against the treachery and the injustice practised by the French King and the noblemen through numerous cartoons which he drew and then printed them in lithographs and spread his voice of protest throughout the country. He received inspiration regarding this matter from his friend and writer Viktor Hugo. He was even put behind bars because of his protests. Just like Daumie, Gaganendranath also felt the need to rise up for the oppressed through the medium of cartoons.

Q. As my research topic on two major artists- Dharmanaryan Dasgupta and Partha pratim Deb, what are your views on aesthetic sensibilities and also their contribution for the art scene in Bengal?

A. Both of the artists are very important and they have different kind of vision of expression. Dharmanarayan paintings reflect the Bengali middle class and their dilemma, a class of people who regularly face disappointments and see their dreams crash when faced with reality. Through his canvases, he paints the sorrow, struggles and the injustices of the bourgeois who do not have a secure foot-hold in our society. He was inspired by his own heritage. In the last phase of his works, again he, at times, captured this tune of melancholy in a larger perspective, independent of anyone. In Dharmanarayan's life as in his paintings the darkness always seemed to be lurking just around the corner. Latent in the black humour that resides deep within his images.

A significant side of Partha Pratim's work is his Alternative Art Practice. In doing this he has used found object, paper pulp, thread, printed paper, saw dust, sand, plaster of Paris, board roll, ceramics, stone dust, painted canvas strips, m-seal, enamel colour, oil color, acrylic color, terracotta etc. He was not restricted to canvas painting only but his search for a new medium makes him a different identity in the field of Bengal art as well as in Indian art. The content of his works, however, has been gradually changing to symbolize absurdity and ignorant behavior of our present day society. Sometimes a humorous expression seems to pervade his entire work with absurd synchronized movements and gestures and multiplicity of motifs, typical of the urban setting.