

September - 2011

KALAIMAMANI

N.SRINIVASAN

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PRESENT ADDRESS

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PERSONAL PROFILE

Name	N.SRINIVASAN
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Designation	Assistant Professor (Systems Assistant) School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University, Chennai. PIN - 600025. Phone: +91 44 22359322
Father's Name	Mr. S.Natarajan
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EXHIBITIONS PARTICIPATED

Participated in many Major Art Exhibitions, held all over the Indian Nation and in several Solo Shows and Group Shows in prestigious galleries in New Delhi and Chennai.

- ❖ **Lalit Kala Academy Regional Art Exhibition**, Regional Centre at Chennai during 1993-1994.
- ❖ **South Zone Cultural Centre** at Thanjavur during 1996-1997.
- ❖ **10th All India Exhibition of Art 2003-2004**, State Lalit Kala Akademi U.P, at Lucknow.
- ❖ **19th All India Art Contest and Exhibition**, South Central Zone Cultural Centre at Nagpur in 2005.
- ❖ **Print Makers Atelier-2006**, Exhibition of Print and Drawings by Working artist of Lalit Kala Akademi, Regional Centre, at Chennai on 10.02.2006.
- ❖ **11th All India Exhibition of Art 2006-2007**, State Lalit Kala Akademi, U.P at Lucknow.
- ❖ **8th Bharat Bhavan International Biennial of Print Art** at Bhopal in 2008.
- ❖ **50th National Exhibition of Art 2007-08**, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi at Chandigarh in March 2008.
- ❖ **51st National Exhibition of Art 2008-09**, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi at Goa in January 2009.

MEMBERSHIP

- ❖ Life Member in South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur – No: 2142.
- ❖ Life Member in Jehangir Art Gallery Mumbai, from 2007 onwards.
- ❖ Life Member in Bombay Art Society Mumbai, from 2008 onwards.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL BODIES

- ❖ Life Member in Indian Society for Technical Education – LM 75739
- ❖ Life Member in International Association of Engineers (IAENG) - 113811

GROUP SHOWS

- ❖ An art exhibition by **Kalaimamani N.Srinivasan** at **Vinyasa Art Gallery, Chennai** was inaugurated by **Prof.E.Balagurusamy**, Vice-Chancellor, Anna University, Chennai on 21.04.2004 in the presence of **Thiru.I.Raja**, IPS, Inspector General of Police and Writer **Thiru.Venkatswaminathan**.
- ❖ **Kalaimamani N.Srinivasan** along with **K.Muralidharan**, **K.Balasubramanian** conducted a group show at **Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai** on 30.04.07 to 06.05.07.

The other important Artists visited this group show were *Jahangirsabavala*, *Pritishnandi* and *Bose Krishnamachari*.

- ❖ **Lakshna Museum of Art, Chennai** from 5th to 15th July 2008.
- ❖ Vinnyasa Premier Art Gallery's '**Access Art Show**' from May to June 2008.

TRAVELING SHOWS

- ❖ 19th February 2005 at Hyderabad. The show was inaugurated by **Padmasri Jagadeashmital**.
- ❖ 19th March 2005 at Bangalore. The show was inaugurated by S.G.Vasudave, in the presence of S.R.Kannan, Editor, Kalasuvadu and documented by Art Columnist Marta Jakimowicz.

SOLO SHOWS

- ❖ Solo Show at Airport Authority - Madras Airport - Drawings on "**Modernity in Tantra**" in 1992.
- ❖ One man Show at Gallery Sri Parvati Chennai - Drawings on "**Thiruvaiyaru**" on 9th April, 2006.
- ❖ One man Show "**Retrospect with Sadhasivam = Jagadeesan**" at S.M. Hindu Higher Secondary School's 110th Year Celebration (from 04.09.2006 to 06.09.2006), Sirkali, Nagai District.

COLLECTIONS

- ❖ Lakshna Art Gallery, Chennai.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu House, New Delhi.
- ❖ Public Works Department, Government of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Anna University, Chennai.

JURY

- ❖ Chief Jury for Nagapattinam District Drawing and Painting Competition Organized by Indian Express and Lions International Sirkali on 13.03.2005.
- ❖ Physically Challenged Students Show, at S.B.O.A School Chennai on 10.09.2005 by Madras Jaycees.
- ❖ Tsunami Art Exhibition by NSS Students of 230 Engineering Colleges at Anna University Chennai on 13.09.2005.

- ❖ The Hindu Young World on-the-spot Painting Competition Finals. Chennai on 27th November 2005.
- ❖ Tri-Decennial Inter School Competition-Sindhi Model Senior Secondary School Kellys, Chennai on 26.11.2005.
- ❖ Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Sarang – 2006.
- ❖ Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Sarang – 2008.
- ❖ Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Sarang – 2009.

CURATOR

- ❖ **Tsunami Art Exhibition** by NSS Students of 230 Engineering Colleges at Anna University Chennai on 13.09.2005.
- ❖ **Meiporul Art Exhibition** and **Best Student Award** Function at Lakshna Museum of ART Chennai, on 22.10.2005.
- ❖ 1st year B.Arch, Students Work Display at Art Studio of School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University on 20.09.2006.

EDITOR

- ❖ Honorary Editor of Meiporul (Magazine of Art in Tamil).

NATIONAL PAINTING CAMPS PARTICIPATED

- ❖ Regional Art week - **New Medim Camp** @ LKA regional centre Chennai during 21st to 28th February 2011.
- ❖ **National Contemporary Artist Camp** at Ooty on 15.8.2008, Organized by South Zone Cultural Center, Thanjavur, Honoured by **His Excellency Shri. Surjit Singh Barnala, Governor of Tamil Nadu.**
- ❖ **“Workshop on Non Toxic and Safe Etching Process”** from 13th to 16th September 2005 at Lalit Kala Akademi Chennai by Ms.Chayo De Chevez, the American Print Maker.
- ❖ **“Intensive Workshop on Water Colour Painting”** for Students and Staff, “Organized by Neyveli Art Society and Lignite City Club from 11th to 12th October 2003 at Neyveli.
- ❖ A **National Level Painting Camp**, Organized by South Central Zone Cultural Center, Nagpur, was held at the Curator Nagesen Art Gallery Mount Mahan Marg, Gwalior from 23rd March 2003 to 30th March 2003.

PAINTING CAMPS CONDUCTED

Two day's Clay model Workshop for Architecture Students in 2004.

- ❖ One day painting camp at College of fine art, Chennai for the 150 Teachers, Artists and Alumnus at Chennai on 10.04.06 by Alumni association.

DESIGN AND PUBLISHING

- ❖ Parampara, Wrapper, Greeting Card, Souvenir, Invitation and Posters for Anna University Chennai.
- ❖ 100 years Saivasidanta Perumandra Souvenir 2005.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- ❖ **Illustrations for the magazines:** Kalachuvadu, Uyirmmmai, Pudiyaparvai, India Today, Kungumam and Several Deepavali Malar 2006.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

- ❖ The Office of the President of India and Vice President of India.
- ❖ Raj Bhavan Chennai and Ooty.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu Secretariat.
- ❖ Anna University, Chennai.

EDUCATIONAL SUMMARY

- ❖ M. Phil., Public Administration – 2010.
- ❖ M.A., Public Administration - 2003.
- ❖ Saiva Siddantha Ratnam - 2001.
- ❖ B.F.A., (Painting), College of Fine Arts, Faculty of Engineering, University of Madras, Chennai - 1997.

AWARDS

- ❖ **KALAIMAMANI**, the most prestigious Tamil Nadu State Government Award in 2009.
- ❖ **Outstanding Cultural Achievement Award** in 2005 by Madras Jaycees.
- ❖ **Achievement in Fine Art – “Silver Jubilee year Honour”** at Sirkali on 27.02.2005.
- ❖ Nominated for **Indira Gandhi National Award for Social Work** in 2005.
- ❖ **NSS Programme Officer Special Award** for the year 2003-2004 in 2004.

SELECTIVE POSITIONS

- ❖ Syndicate Member of Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University, January 2011 onwards.
- ❖ Personal Secretary to the Vice Chancellor - Anna University of Technology, Tiruchirappalli from August 2010 –June 2011.
- ❖ Treasurer for Alumni association of the 155 year old College of Fine Art Chennai, from 2006 to till date.
- ❖ School Pupil Leader for 2300 Students in Government Higher Secondary School, Vaiteesvaran Kovil, Tamil Nadu during 1990-1991.
- ❖ **Narayanaswami Chettiyar Gold Medal** for Performing Art.
- ❖ Performing Artist from 1974 to 1980.

EDUCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES PARTICIPATED

- ❖ Short Term Training Programme on **“Design Methodology”** from 18th to 23rd December 2006 at SAP, Anna University, Chennai.
- ❖ **"SHIFTS"** a Digital Lecture Series, at SAP Anna University, Chennai on 29.03.2005.
- ❖ State Level Residential Programme on Capacity Enrichment for NSS Functionaries form 11.07.2005 to 13.07.2005 at Temple of Consciousness, Aliyar, Pollachi.
- ❖ Refresher Course for NSS Programme Officers conducted by the Madras School of Social Work, Chennai (TORC – NSS, 5 days) from 29th August to 2nd September 2005.
- ❖ General Orientation Course for NSS Programme Officers conducted by the Madras School of Social Work, Chennai (TORC – NSS, 10 days) from July 16th to 25th, 2003.
- ❖ One month training on Multimedia Course and Content Creation Conducted by Commonwealth Education Media Centre for Asia at Osmania University, Hyderabad.
- ❖ Attended six month Nonlinear Editing and Video Technology Course conducted by Anna University, Chennai in 2001.
- ❖ Three-year certificate course **“Saiva Siddantha Ratnam”** 1998 to 2001, Thiruvaduthurai Madam.

PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN DURING 2000-2001

- ❖ Smart card creation for the students and staff in Anna University, Chennai in 2000.
- ❖ Video technology course and Dual Degree Programme at CPDE, Anna University, Chennai.
- ❖ Online Hall Ticket, Web Course, Video Conferencing system, Digital library, Multimedia Classroom, Virtual lab, Digital Photo Studio and Lab.

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

Experience in SOFTWARE, HARDWARE AND MULTIMEDIA TECHNIQUE in the field of Art and Architecture.

SOCIAL INTERESTS

National Service Scheme

- ❖ NSS Programme Officer in School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University from 27.11.2002 to 01.12.2005.
- ❖ **NSS University Level Advisory Committee Member** 2004 & 2005 Anna University.
- ❖ **NSS Staff Selection Committee Member** 2004-2005.
- ❖ **NSS State Annual Report Committee Member** 2004-2005.
- ❖ **NSS State Award Scrutiny Committee Member** 2005.
- ❖ Assisted in all activities of Anna University NSS Cell (NSS Visits, NSS programmes, NSS functions, NSS camps and have done other NSS Office duties) along with NSS Coordinator, Anna University in 2004 and 2005.

CAMPS CONDUCTED FOR NSS UNIT

- ❖ 10 days special camp for Architecture students at Sivanantaa Gurukulam in June 2003.
- ❖ Special lectures organized by the SAP NSS unit by the eminent personalities
- ❖ 10 days NSS camp from 22.06.2004 to 01.07.2004 at palaveadupettai village near Aavadi in 2004. Special lectures by the eminent personalities was organised.
- ❖ 10 days special camp at Sivanantha Gurugulam in June 2005.
- ❖ North zone NSS programme officers one day seminar conducted at SAP 2005.
- ❖ special lecture series was organised by SAP Anna University Chennai in 2005.

OVERSEAS VISIT

- ❖ Kuwait
- ❖ Muscat,OMAN
- ❖ Dubai,UAE
- ❖ Nairobi,Kenya
- ❖ Mauritius
- ❖ Malaysia & Singapore

ART REVIEW, TELEVISION INTERVIEWS AND ARTICLES

Bibliography

Web

- ❖ Ulagatamil.com 01.05.2004 & 16.05.2004 – By Vankat Swaminathan.
- ❖ Chennai Online Three In One 24.04.2004.
- ❖ Sify.com - Ravi subramaniyan dated 27.04.2005.

Magazines

- ❖ Kalki Deepavali Malar 2004
- ❖ Kalki - 09.05.2004.
- ❖ Uyirmmmai May, 2004 - by Indran.
- ❖ Dinamani Kathir dated 16.05.2004.
- ❖ Kumudam Theranadhi – June, 2004 - by Venkat Swaminathan.
- ❖ India Today 03rd November, 2004.
- ❖ Kalki dated 27.04.2005 by Maruthan.
- ❖ Pudiyparvai dated 01st March, 2005 by Sundraputtan.
- ❖ Nun Kalai dated 01.03.2005.
 - ❖ (The magazine of modern art published by Tamil Nadu State Lalit Kala Academy Nun Kalai Kuzhu, Madras)
- ❖ Amudha Surabi dated 01.05.2005 by Pavannan.
- ❖ Kungumam (Weekly magazine) in May, 2005.
- ❖ Meiporul 22.10.2005
- ❖ Amudhasurabi Deepavali Malar - 01.11.2005
- ❖ An article was published by Harinarayana, Former Museum Director.

- ❖ Amudhasurabi - 01.08.2005 The Article Written by me About the Educational System of Fine Art in India.
 - ❖ Meiporul 02.01.2006
 - ❖ Meiporul 09.04.2006.
 - ❖ Pudiyaparvai dated 01st May, 2006 by Parasuram.
 - ❖ India Today 23.07.2006.
 - ❖ Free Press Mumbai August, 2007 by Regina Ruby.
- ❖ In Hyderabad 19th February to 2nd March, 2005 the articles are published in the magazines,
- ❖ An article was written by Ravi Subramaniam June, 2004.

TELEVISION INTERVIEWS

- ❖ Jaya TV Broadcasted the interview on 20.7.2004 on Kaalai Malar.
- ❖ SUN TV broadcasted the interview on 10.1.2005 on Vanakam Tamizhagam.
- ❖ Podigai TV Door Dharsan Kalai Tendral Chief Guest 31.08.2006.
- ❖ Makkal TV broadcasted my interview.
- ❖ Kalingar TV broadcasted my interview 2009.
- ❖ Teja Television and E TV 2005.

RADIO

- ❖ Ulaga Tamil Ossai Web Radio June and July, 2005.
- ❖ All India Radio Rainbow F.M Vanamani Malai Programme on 02.06.2005 at 3.00 pm to 3.30 pm along with Arunan and Mahalakshmi Madavan.
- ❖ All India Radio Rainbow F.M.Rainbow May, 2006.

DAILIES

- ❖ **Indian Express**
 - Profile – by Anjali Sircar, February 01, 2004.
 - April 24, 2004.
 - April 29, 2004.
 - July 15, 2004.

- April 11th 2007.
- The Pixels and Paint of Love By Anjali Sircar 11th April 2009.

❖ **The Hindu**

- April – 23, 2004.
- A Pioneer in digital art, The Hindu Downtown 09.10.2005.
- The Hindu 18.02.2006 - Lakshmivenkatraman.

❖ **Decan Herald**

- 21st April, 2005 by Marta Jakimowicz.

❖ **Dinamani**

- (Tamil daily) dated 15.05.2005, Sunday magazine Kondattam cover story about digital painting.

❖ **Tamil Oasai**

- April -1-2007

❖ **Other Language Dailies**

- Danageogran
- Danabaskar
- Navabarath other Dailies 2003
- The Hindu by Padma Reddy 2005.
- The Indian Express
- Vardha (Hindi)
- Andhra Jothi (Telugu)
- Enadu (Telugu)
- Hindu, Indian Express, Times of India and other daily news paper in the month of August 2008.

ARTIST
N.SRINIVASAN**OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM**

Profile by [Anjali Sircar](#), [Indian Express](#), February 01, 2004

Mixing software and programming languages to create line, colour, texture, light and space, N.Srinivasan breaks all the rules.

N.Srinivasan's paintings defy certain canons of contemporary art, their painstakingly semi-realistic execution is anomalous in a gestural age. The subject they treat – the village in which he was born, the farmers, their celebration of the land all through the year, festivals and temples – may strike some as quaint. Yet Srinivasan's aesthetic is not that of the native or the neo primitive artist. Just where do these renderings of life and ritual fit in? What sort of art are they?

Born in 1972 in a small Thanjavur village called Rajamannarkudi, he grew up with an immense feeling for art. In every family in the village there was a painter who painted either the walls of houses or a temple in beautiful vegetable colors. Others produced terracotta pottery or sculpture. To the young boy, the entire village appeared like an art form. He spent time with the farmers, learnt the practice of vegetable dyes and developed visions of painting Indian mythological figures and designs.

By the early 90's his work began to mature, and dealt with the harmony of life expressed by the village culture he was drawn to. He joined the MADRAS COLLEGE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS in 1991 to do a five-year integrated course in painting.

At the end of an excellent academic training, he returned to Thanjavur where the main character in his paintings became the village farmer.

Be it oils on canvas, watercolors on paper or pen and ink drawings, the villager dominated his creativity. He also painted from nature – birds, animals and vegetation – and earned the rare privilege of sitting inside a temple and painting.

In 1998, Srinivasan switched over to the computer to create his works of art. He never attended a computer course but spent time with highly qualified professionals in the field who talked to him about "COMPUTER ENABLED PROFESSIONS". Curious about this expression, he plunged into research. At one of the lectures he attended, he was told that after the 20th century, any profession could be converted to a " Computer Enabled

Profession”, Srinivasan was impressed with the idea that with the computer, any professional could claim the leader of success both nationally and internationally.

He realized that technical and formal means were deliberate – what was innovative was the mind-set and pictorial devices beyond the mandated form. The artist discontinued painting manually and got down to understanding the computer as a machine that would help him reach the height of creativity. After dissecting the fastest-processing machine and its hardware, he mastered the software. This familiarized him with the technicalities of ink cartridge, laser printers, and print rollers. His aim was to work directly on the computer, not just draw, scan and transfer the image.

Soon he began mixing various software’s and programming languages to create line, color, texture, light and space. To form a line took four to five hours, to create a color took the mixing of ten to fifteen software and to finish one painting took 400 hours. After months of experimentation, whatever he visualized as a painter became a piece of art on the printer.

Commenting on his current level of creativity, he says, “My Creativity is endless because I can produce millions and millions of colors in my works of art. But my theme remains my village and the main player in my work is the Thanjavur farmer. My art emanates from my land and after encompassing the globe, all its technological development, professional and technical sagacity, returns and rests there. I have spent thirty long years studying my village and its people, their traditions, religion and happiness in a simple life, and these are all reflected in my work.” While he works with the most modern equipment, Srinivasan’s emotions and feelings bring life to his pictures. At the same time, his work is so innovative that even a professional will not be able to analyze the process of creation.

None of these sensibilities is central to the spirit of contemporary art and that is one reason why Srinivasan’s work remains outside the main stream. If such an observation sounds confounding, it also hints at the highest artistic tribute which happens to coincide with the characteristic of Srinivasan’s work - defiance of canon and time.

N.Srinivasan has exhibited all over India, participated in national level workshops and is slated to have an early show of his new works in Chennai.

DIGITAL VISUAL FARE:

THE ARTISTIC TRAJECTORY OF N. SRINIVASAN

DR. ASHRAFI S. BHAGAT.

“Life is Art - Art is Life”. N. Srinivasan

The contemporary art milieu within Chennai has witnessed dramatic changes, wherein artists have been searching for a medium away from traditional method of painting and looking into technology to provide answers for their creative expressions. Many voices emerging from the matrix of change wrought by technology sought new directions, experiments and explorations. One artist who made a conscious move from traditional tools for expressing his emotions and sentiments by engaging with digital technology is N. Srinivasan, a lecturer [Systems Assistant] in School of Architecture and Planning, Anna University, a deeply committed artist who has articulated his experiences of digital engagement in his teaching to bear upon his art as well.

THE BEGINNINGS

In appreciating Srinivasan’s works, one factor which dominantly contoured his imagination was his engagement with the culture and artistic traditions of his native town that is now integral to his persona. It translated conceptually as memories, roots and identity. This interventional approach to his art through time and space can be explained by the artist’s background, growing up as he did in a small town of Rajamannarkudi near Thanjavur. Srinivasan’s forays into the world of painted images had started at the age of ten influenced by two eminent temple artists who were his neighbours namely M.C. Sundar and M.C. Sekar. In his native town, he had breathed art, materializing in various forms from painted domestic exteriors, murals in temples, terracotta artifacts and sculptures in stone. This early artistic association was also instrumental in Srinivasan learning the three R’s of art namely drawing, painting and creating dyes from vegetables. It also educated him on myths; eventually enabling a development of a figurative mythical vision. A rich artistic tradition therefore formed his daily diet, and it comes as no surprise that the early visual education had its ramifications as internalized memory experiences that later served as referential source for themes and subjects when he joined the Government College of Arts and Crafts for an Integrated Course in Painting in 1991. He graduated in 1996 equipped with technical

skills in oils, water colours, pen and ink and with a firm artistic grip on realistic rendering based on perceptual empirical experiences.

An artist with intense sensitivity and deep feelings to his tradition, Srinivasan was equally inclined towards other arts namely dance, drama, music; having performed in school dances and dramas as a child. Srinivasan belongs to a family practicing Saivite tradition, making an enduring impact upon his sensibility. He extended this further when he joined Thiruvaduthurai Mutt to study Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy for three years. An exposure of this nature nevertheless was to have greater implication on the development of his art as he transcended from mere mimetic representations of his rural scenario to evolve concepts, which he applied with greater strength to his works.

After graduation, Srinivasan returned to his native village and the lure and predilection towards tradition of art and culture led him to make further inroads into the historical temple town of Thanjavur. The beauty of this temple town was not only its profound and dynamic architecture but also the agrarian ambience. Considered the 'rice bowl' of Tamilnadu, the town is populated with farmers busy tilling their paddy fields and involved in their tasks of grain production. The ubiquity of farmers enthralled his vision, internalizing the sights and sounds of emerald green paddy fields, which he monumentalized in his paintings where the farmer becomes the heroic protagonist, celebrating the life deeply and spiritually connected to the soil. These nostalgic forays by Srinivasan to Thanjavur and many villages around signified his deep and passionate attachment to a simple life pervaded with saivite philosophy, interesting geographical terrain, the inhabitants, arts and performances, which emerged later, significantly directed as memories and roots.

His works during this phase of his life [late 90s] was centered on the celebration of agrarian life, in which the farmer was made heroic connected intimately to his soil. These works were rendered in oils on canvas, water colours on paper or were pen and ink drawings. Nevertheless the artist did not limit his vocabulary to human figuration; he extended it to include nature in terms of birds, animals and vegetation.

This attitude and approach of Srinivasan was significant in resisting the urban magical lure, maintaining connectivity to his roots, which in the bargain also provided a rich fodder for his artistic mill. Such a posture enabled him in defining the contours of his artistic persona and marking a space in artistic arena that remains rooted in tradition but

represented through new technological medium namely digital prints. Within a few years of his graduation in 1998, Srinivasan was attracted to create forms and imageries through the medium of computer. At a lecture he attended on this subject it was vehemently emphasized that any profession could be a 'computer enabled profession'. This was the beginning of his creative trajectory into the virtual world which posed challenges but at the same time offered versatility of approach that Srinivasan decided to make it as his exclusive journey with this medium. In order to engage with it knowledgably, he studied various computer software for four years. Through a series of painterly enabled software's, he entered into the field of virtual reality to realize the world of endless possibilities that this medium could offer and generate. Harnessing his restless creative vigours he plunged into it passionately, imaginatively exploring elements of line, colours, values, textures and space.

THE CONCEPTUAL TERRAIN

The saliency of Srinivasan's artistic persona was not to be simply mimetic in his representation. He had mastered the skills in realism and his restlessness pushed him into exploring the conceptual terrain which he attempted by looping back to his roots and through the concept of memory, roots and identity. He had realized that the human mind did not perceive the passage of time as an amorphous, indiscriminate sequence of events or as a process. The human journey through time was what established the memory. He thus reflected on time, which opened up scope for debating on memory or roots or identity status within the cultural framework. "Memories" and "Roots" were words that had the capacity to evoke numerous emotions. Memory for Srinivasan in many ways connoted nostalgia, romantic reveries both pleasant and unpleasant, happy reminiscences or recollections of events when external stimuli set off certain images of the past. Memory was thus space and time meaningfully integrated. Roots on the other hand created an imagery of a concept of a sense of belonging, a yearning to go back in time to a particular place because of certain associations, as well nostalgia for something precious taken away and a desire to retrieve it through different means, and expressions. Identity as argued by Edward Said "is a matter of negotiation and association", which depended largely upon the capacity of making the identifying voice heard. The implication of identity in terms of Srinivasan's works has to be read as negotiations through certain sentiments and associations with his culture from the rootedness of a modern artist's autonomous position,

mapping trajectories that set him apart by his creative explorations and experimentations via the modes of technique and concepts.

Srinivasan through a specific trajectory bestows meaning on events and demands an evocative understanding of his expressions. This consciousness allows flux of time to place valence on interpreting and examining cultural paradigms leading towards retrospection or meditation either on tradition, society, culture or nature. Within this context, which marks “time” as a dominant centrality in reinvestigating cultural and social traditions, Srinivasan reflects on his experiences to find an appropriate voice. Thus he meaningfully and powerfully invested in the expression of the fragility and universality of memory recollections, rootedness within his culture and search for individuated identity. Dominantly a figurative artist, but paradoxically, his professional work has been amidst geometrical abstractions of architectural spaces; namely his employment in School of Architecture and Design.

INTERVENTION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

The dynamism of Srinivasan’s works gain in strength, constructed materially not from traditional tools like brushes, palette knife and tube colours rather with computer-aided paraphernalia and ink colours. Srinivasan has an anecdote to narrate in his deployment of technological aids and traditional subject matter. He quotes his experience of the village potter who works in the medium of clay but does not produce the normal expected wares, rather indulges in creating a tractor with moveable wheels etc. Extending this reference to his works he says he melds technology and traditional subject matter with his personalized modern symbols and metaphors to mark his signpost as individualist. Mediating through computer software as Paintshop Pro, script, Flash MAYA and Photoshop, his visual language validates the intentions of his generated images to conceptually establish remembrances, sentiments and emotions.

The technique and colours manipulated through computer tools establish his firm knowledge in the management of digital technology. But Srinivasan craftily blends his creative skills with digitally offered tools to create diverse textured and painterly effects. His lines are sensuous as he deliberates over them, sometimes making it minimal yet suggestive, or playfully interactive alluding to symbols as a Lingam. His sense of colours though garish and kitschy, yet creates psychedelic and fluorescent effects, which he desires

in interpreting within the contemporary milieu. The sizes of digital prints are large and make an impact on the viewers' sensibilities.

His process in creating the composition digitally is aptly described by Srinivasan. "Essentially I try to create a concept based on my observed recollections. This I try to narrate as a story through sidhantha and offer solution through vedantha. The process of visualization begins through drawings of which I do a number of them and it may relate or not relate to my concept but that does not concern me. For what is important is that through drawing I am able to create a language that helps in bringing forth my concept. I also draw directly through mouse and use Flash to create line. My manually rendered sketches are scanned. Sometime I also use Vacuum tablet for drawing.

But drawing alone is not enough, so I bring in photographs and meld, superimpose or layer over it to create the necessary visual textures as well meaning. The textures, colours and space definition in my works are also conditioned by the concept.

After I have decided what the final requirements of the images are, the process of layering, texturing, colour manipulation begins. And this is where the main challenge to my works is. My effort consists in creating colours through digital coding. But the idea for my colours is derived from nature and the software then becomes only a tool in helping me to materialize various shades and tones. As far as the textures are concerned, I always scan the required textures that I need to use in my work. That is how crumpled papers, dots, squares etc become integral to my methodology.

When I have finished working on the composition to my satisfaction, I finally ready it through pixel editing software that edits all 250 to 400 layers through which I have worked for the final print. My proficiency in digital method was also enhanced by learning photography and I am presently using D2X Nikon for still photographs and mini DV camera for shooting film. In addition if I am making a video I use the Pro tool for sound. Other software that I engage with for my digital works are Coral for vector drawing, Flash for animation, 3d max & Maya for model. For the script which is also integral to my work I use Lingo, which is a language for scripting. Finally all my prints are made on archival paper using six to nine colour inkjet printer (CMYK or RGB). Sometimes I also extend my printing to jute, ceramic, wood, and other surfaces as well.

Each work of art takes minimum of 250 to 450 man hours to create, and is an intense and a labourious process. Computer is a tool which allows the facility of simplifying

complicated processes but I use it to make it more complicated through different software. Finally I feel my thought process is transferred through this visual medium to the people by this dynamic computer technology.

NEGOTIATING MEMORIES REFLECTING TRADITION

Srinivasan's earliest series of works were generic themes executed in various mediums. Later engaging with the computer he articulated his expressions digitally with varied subjects and themes. The earliest series was premised on heroic imagery executed in 2005.

HEROIC IMAGERY 2005

One question that philosophers have discussed is whether 'memory experiences' are to be equated with having certain 'images' or with having 'thoughts about the past,' or with a state that involves both 'images and thoughts'. Memory is nevertheless a cognitive activity on the site of which remembrance is suffused with emotions. Traditionally, philosophers and scholars alike have opined that the presence of images was essential, marking the mandatory presence of the latter to have a phenomenological appeal because one was introspecting on memory images. This argument directly addresses the question of perceptual knowledge that rests upon sense data, or sense experiences defining the articulation of the empirical.

Srinivasan reflects upon his empirical knowledge namely the sights and sounds of his native rural culture marking it as a site of memory recollection to channelize his personal experiences of migration to an urban milieu – the stress, tensions, insecurity – and to focus on these varied emotions by mediating through the traditional concepts of heroism as reflected through Hero Worship. The Hero Worship as a concept has been validated metaphorically by Srinivasan to establish the heroic struggle for survival within an urban culture after a life of simplicity and unaffectedness in his native village. Thus he engages with the traditional notion of "Hero Worship" that only included warriors heroically laying down their life to now encompass 'heroicism' at three different levels of "spiritual, physical and material". By encapsulating this concept with his trajectory of personal experiences, Srinivasan conveyed his angst and tensions through appropriately selected metaphors and symbols. He nevertheless does not experience a sense of displacement or loss but vehemently appropiates on the nostalgia for a past left behind. The past emerges, or is invoked in many different forms and the term memory reminds us of this diversity. The

'continuous remembering' of a past amplified in Srinivasan's works are premised on artistic traditions observed in sculptural iconography or epics emerging as internalized experiences

Memories nevertheless structure one's inner world. It serves and aids in guiding and structuring the search for meaning and interpretive truth in any given context. But then memories are also structured by artist's self-image and desires. It is within this context of self-image and desire that Srinivasan posits himself recreating the images of tradition particularly of "hero worship" to inflect his urban experiences as interpreted by his modern sensibilities.

In this series of digitally evolved works, Srinivasan has extended the scope of the hero worship theme to interpret it with versatility including within its ambit the categories of Gods, Monarchs/Nobility and Warriors corresponding to spiritual, material and physical planes. The representation of 'Gods' is on the premise of pure worship as ultimate Truth. Nevertheless within this category of Gods, Srinivasan includes the binary opposition of demons namely Ravanna. The Gods take on various avatars as Muruga and Rama, or conceptually signified as a Lingam. In addition Siva is also represented in his manifestation of a destroyer performing his tandava. Interestingly Srinivasan offers a postmodern visual interpretation of Siva's cosmic dance by transforming Nataraja into a typological cultural icon in this instance a contemporary dancer with strobe effect fluorescent colours and trendy sartorial wear. In addition Srinivasan has carefully explored iconographical images within Indian plastic traditions, namely the representation of a dwarapalika a female representation rather than a dwarapala or the male representation as guardians of temples. From the Ramayana, Srinivasan has zeroed on the demonic heroicism, alluding to Ravanna, and his presence significantly visualized as an arrowhead representing ten heads. His vindictive act is reinforced by the abduction and captivity of Sita.

In his interpretation of the 'Physical', the artist employs the metaphor of the "Warrior" to reinterpret the heroicism of modern life. In one of his works, the artist has created an enigmatic and nebulous contour implying the countenance of the warrior. The overlaid lines and play of colours are significantly employed to entail effects of perpetual state of awareness and awakening. This metaphorical language used by the artist implies active and agile mind. It bespeaks of perpetual tension and angst as the warrior works on strategies involving possible target victories. Within this category is also the representation of Lakshmana from Ramayana who bravely, courageously and heroically sacrifices a life of

palatial comforts to lead a life of perpetual tension or living on the edge if comprehended within contemporary reality.

The “Material” dimension of heroic worship is represented through economic status. The artist here employs the status symbols namely a monarch/emperor or a noble to record his idea of the worship of the money. Since social status and position largely validates a material heroicism, Srinivasan has visualized in one of his work the representation of the Chola monarch Rajaraja. As a heroic monarch conveying his multidimensionality, he is now a faint memory as he recedes from his composition through repetitive and diminutive forms. Employing the device of continuous narration [representation of the same image more than once to reiterate the significant position of the protagonist] from Indian pictorial tradition, Srinivasan refreshes the memory of this nearly faded idea in representation.

“Retrospection of my student days” 2006

This series, technically demanded a laborious process, assiduously blending photographs and scanned images of pen and ink drawings as well crushed paper. Srinivasan intuitively developed his working methodology premised on conceptual demands. Since he was layering time and space in these suit of works, the photographs and line drawings translated to metaphors of memory through insertion of nostalgia. Says Srinivasan, “Even if we have come a long way from our past, we still have an allusion of it in our heart. I have tried to bring the cherished moments of the past through this”. His simple but endearing subject involves architecture and interior domestic spaces, negotiated through the play of light and dark that enacts moods of sentiments expressing the emotions of the artist. In this suit of digital prints Srinivasan, opens space of familiar conventions, ubiquitous in every household and manifest as family photographs. These relate to past ossified moments that get resurrected to narrate precious, rewarding, or happy instances related to it. There is an allusion to the life of the protagonists that the photograph memorializes, not the physicality but the trace of their persona on the family, which has valence for later generation and hence for posterity. In its formal analysis, he has played upon textures metaphorically translating as textured personalities of family members and the idea of reverie is reinforced with dull matted colours and superimposition of forms that produces a layered narrative.

Waiting For What - 2007

Philosophically inclined, Srinivasan ventures into the realm of metaphysics and transcendence with questions as, “where we are? What are we? And waiting for what?”

Complementing his concept is the material that he engages with in these suit of works, which comprises of paper punched textures, and brilliant hues bordering on the transcendental reminiscent of the leaping acid colours of El Greco's spiritual paintings. Here the methodology involved overlapping photographs; creating layers of texts and subtexts that enigmatically harbour meanings that needs to emerge at the right time and moment that is, alluding to the experiences in life that awakens many dormant senses in search of certain truths pursued by individuals. In addition he has also scanned his drawing and overlapped it with photographs creating disjuncture, in the interstices of which rests the answers to the questions he has raised. The compositional process was laborious and involved 250 layers and 750 man hours.

Trace of existence - 2008

A compelling factor in life, when displacement happens is to interrogate the physical space of a particular territory/region from where migration has occurred to another place. Srinivasan in this suit of works has engaged with cartography, photographs and drawings of the region to articulate a thread of connectivity, particularly through art and culture and the ethnic population. His works are therefore dominated by the presence of ubiquitous icons as forms of Siva, political denizens as Periyar, film stars et al bringing his art into the domain of postmodern sensibility through these fragmented interventional devices or modes. His visual language also developed digitally in consonance with his drawings and paintings offering a similar reading within postmodern tradition. He further reinforced memory of his region through deliberation on styles of domestic architecture. Hence the juxtaposition and superimpositions interestingly marked the trace of his existence in the delta region as varied layers of his life lived there. The colours are earthy, muted and brilliant interspersed also with characters from the Tamil script. The layering in his process of work also creates a narrative that semantically inscribes past through thin veils, which links it to his emotions and feelings. The fragmented imagery, the iconic presence sans its sanctity and the integration of popular culture in terms of festivals and the kitschy colours marks a trace of his memory within a secularized zone. Some of his works are titled Festival memory (God Asking for whom), Nostalgic event (Asking for the God)

For this suit of works, his process included photographs of maps and local folks from the delta region. These were then skillfully integrated through computer aided drawings to

evolve them into composition. In order to give the rustic feel he has finished his works with mud house wall texture and straw finish.

Demand for fluid (Hydro energy) – 2009

The fluidity of life in metro is dependent on its energy as fuel for automobiles and other vehicles. Satirizing the demands made on 'fluids' which also includes water, the artist in this suit of works has juxtaposed old and new forms of communication as the donkey energizing a truck, camel the auto rickshaw or an elephant positioned with a vintage car. The glance especially to the latter conveys the lack of fuel efficiency which translates in the form of an elephant that with its ponderous physicality is equated to the automobile and high fuel consumption. Through photographs shot at Rajasthan, Srinivasan cleverly has done the necessary juxtaposition including drawings of animals rendered realistically. Compositionally the works are iconic in which the machine and animal are the protagonist, with the background thoughtfully worked out as the desert for camel, granite for elephant and donkey is provided with no particular ground because its only goal is 'hard labour' as the only purpose for its existence. The social sensitivity of the artist is foregrounded in this particular suite of works in his awareness and experiences of the preciousness of the energy that requires to be economically used, fuelling at the same time the awareness of preventing environment hazards.

A Critique In analyzing the suit of works that he has produced in the last five years, one dimension of his artistic personality emerges, and that is his engagement with drawing, which fundamentally conditions a creative artist's process of conceptualization. The versatile articulation of his drawings is narrative, descriptive, symbolic and metaphysical. His drawings are rendered either physically or digitally, and the manipulated lines are brief scratches, confident contours describing the physical body or as fragments that gestalt to convey a form. The lines exude confidence through firmness, control, agility and geometricity. He also imbues it with emotional quality conveying sentiments, nostalgia, reverie and feelings. Bordering on the expressionist or decorative style his linear renderings nevertheless convey moods and emotions. And it is this dimension of Srinivasan's work which is at the heart of his drawings, providing the criticality in his digital medium. And the easy facility is premised on his constant engagement in drawing and sketching all forms, shapes, animals, birds, humans, landscapes, either realistically or consciously distorted to serve the required purpose. The dominance of line also retrospects to his art pedagogy at

the art institution and to the Madras art Movement, which had emerged from the locus of the Madras School of Arts and Crafts. Srinivasan in many respects is traveling and meandering down memory lane which ultimately provides the conceptual crux of his subject.

A meticulous, systematic and organized approach to his artistic creations under girds his output, yet he is a visionary with philosophic predilections and interests in Saiva Sidhantha, offering binaries of practical living with metaphysical orientations. Consistently over the past decade, Srinivasan has assiduously, diligently and intelligently has worked through his concepts to create a large body of works.

His works have been showcased as drawings, digital prints, installations, videos and three dimensional sculptures.

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In to the Digital World of Art

-Venkat Swaminathan

15.04.2004

Face to face with Srinivasan's works, the more I pondered over them, the more I realized that they held out many surprises for me. Any work of art does precisely that. A young lad from Rajamannarkudi, taking to digital painting is a journey not easily imagined. Taking to painting is all right, but not the deliberate choice of unfolding a world of colours and lines on a computer screen. For an artist handling the brush and colours, drawing lines and creating shades of different hues is a pleasure, which becomes an act of creation. Does he get that pleasure when he has his fingers on the computer keyboard? The source of pleasure is not what you do or with what you do, but the discovery of what your acts lead to.

The process of creation begins somewhere, with the material that is available; it may be the dark inner walls of the Bhimbetka caves of Madhya Pradesh, or the huge boulders on which the early Assyrians and Babylonians inscribed their thoughts in cuneiform characters. In successive stages of history, the base and materials have changed, from walls to palm leaves, papyrus and canvas and now it is the computer screen. But it is the human ingenuity that creates, not the chisels, brushes or the quills. With the change of materials and medium, the challenges the medium throws up change. Finally, what we are concerned with is, the vision that the artist unfolds before us.

The mastery of the hand holding the brush is the mastery the artist commands in its movements. It is the deftness of the fingers that decide ultimately. I have seen the felicity with which the flow of lines is achieved in Srinivasan's sketchbook. I know of artists who have taken to the abstraction, cleverly hiding their poverty in drawing skills. Srinivasan has taken to computer and digital painting, because he is a product of 'two cultures' that C.P.Snow talked of some decades back, a fusion of technology and human imagination, that is of science and art. The artist standing before the easel with his palette in hand dips his brush in different colours to accidentally stumble on a definite shade that he, all along had in his mind and so does Srinivasan with the keys of the board. What he finally unfolds has already been there in his mind or it could as well be, it came about in little detail after detail as the process was on. The process and materials have changed at each stage of transition, but it is the human ingenuity that has been the driving force and

that alone is the final arbiter of the vision that manifests itself before us as a piece of art.

Srinivasan is from Rajamannarkudi and right from those early days down to this day when he finds himself in the surroundings of Anna University College of Architecture, his mind has been occupied with the years spent in that rural milieu and it is those very memories that keep flowing when he works. Like the 'Common man' an ever present amused and amusing witness to the goings on in R.K.Laxman's cartoons, an equally cartoon like figure appears in all Srinivasan's works. Srinivasan says, he is the farmer from his native Rajamannarkudi. What the folds and twisted rolls of his headdress and the protruding spear like moustache suggest, he would be more a fitting chap from the villages of Rajasthan, not a famished one from Thanjavur. He is a lone figure to be seen in village fairs, temple festivals, or the stage of a folk theatre performance or some such village scene. The village life has not exhausted the spell it casts on Srinivasan. One sees nothing else though it is decades since he left his home ground.

But the surprising part of Srinivasan's works that I suggested at the very beginning is not his preoccupation with the nostalgic memories of his early years in the village. It is not a realistic representation, though all his works are of the figurative kind and there is not much distortion involved to obfuscate the figures. It is more the appearance of a dreamy or rather *liminal* nature of the effect achieved by the luminous treatment of the colours and texture. It appears to be a plain realistic treatment, but it is not. There is an invisible threshold that separates the work and us. It is there and yet it is not there in substance. It is a hazy and a somewhat otherworldly presence. This is achieved in all his works, by the luminous quality of the work. That may be an inherent element of any digital work. It is conceded. But where from that dreamy *liminality* presents itself? I am also willing to concede that it may not have been the intention of the artist. But I see it consistently in all the works that I have seen of Srinivasan, about 10 of them or so. May be others don't. May be Srinivasan has not intended it either. But I see it and it is what I see that matters and I can only write about what my experience with this works has been. It is this otherworldliness, this mystique, is a quality that associates itself with a work of art. In quite a number of cases, an artist is not aware of what he has achieved. How and where this transition from 'this' to the 'other' has taken place. That is the magic and mystique of all arts.

The reverse is also true in other cases of tall claims.

The pixels and paint of love

By Anjali Sircar

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His works are not cosmetically beautiful, but are quite fascinating because of their constant allusion to the land, the people and the environment. N Srinivasan's craftsmanship and unusual context are arresting beyond words. He is one of the most compelling artists in the current scene and it is difficult to compare Srinivasan with any other contemporary painter. Born in the small town of Rajamannargudi, Thanjavur district, in a Saivite family, Srinivasan found himself drawn to art in his childhood itself. There are celebrations in his village throughout the year. The farmers worshipped many gods and goddesses, painted the walls of temples and their houses. They were also involved in terracotta work, and it was natural for him to lean towards art. When he grew up, the artist joined the Madras College of Arts and Crafts for a five-year integrated course in painting and did a post-graduation in Public Administration in 2003.

After completing his education, Srinivasan returned to Thanjavur and having seen the numerous Gods and Goddesses in temples — big and small — was drawn towards Hindu mythology. His first paintings were figurative in nature and because of his devotion, he was given the privilege of sitting in a temple and painting. He, however, did not copy any temple art and his original creations embraced the human being, animals, birds, vegetation — the entire environment in short. But the focal point in each of his paintings was the Thanjavur farmer. For 15 years, he dominated the artist's canvas, and Srinivasan called his works, "Celebrations".

Then, Srinivasan left behind his obsession with Thanjavur and began travelling to experience life in other parts of the country. There are moments, when by way of contact with objects whose scale is far removed from the everyday, we become unmoored momentarily from the set of references that custom has established for us. Most often it feels exhilarating, if somewhat unsettling. The travelling brought about a qualitative change in Srinivasan's art. Now instead of painting with a brush, he uses the computer.

Success came after hundreds of hours of hard work. He began mixing various softwares and programming languages to create line, colour, texture, light and space. It took four to five hours to form a line, a colour was selected after going through 10 to 15 software's and the painting itself would take 400 hours. After months of experimental printing, Srinivasan mastered the process of mixing to such perfection that whatever he visualized as a painter became art on the printer. His work is so innovative that even professionals may not be able to analyse how it was produced. The artist's task is not the accurate rendering of the environment but of his soul — his feelings should be reflected in the art. Time and place are credited with building of the most powerful of geniuses. This is particularly true of those most sensitive souls — artists. One can, therefore, say that in the discussion of someone's artistic and spiritual development, the description of his homeland deserves special mention.

As a sequel to "Celebrations", Srinivasan created a new series of paintings called "Tracing life". As he travelled throughout the country, he studied the lifestyles of all classes of people and discovered a common characteristic — everyone wanted peace and happiness. Everyone was in search of love and camaraderie.

Having made this discovery, Srinivasan wanted to depict this universal Indianness in his paintings. He had to search for new colours and new picturisations, which was not easy. First, he had to evolve cool as well as warm colours according to the climate that pervaded the region. Mixing hundreds of colours, he arrived at Java green, Sriblue, 369 red, Kurinji-violet and Cholabrown. As the background texture, he used the land and its various people, churches, temples, monuments and travel photographs. A million colours were again mixed to make animated installations for this series.

Srinivasan paints with candor, and while these paintings do speak of certain truths, we feel that we are being addressed by an artist-philosopher who is firm in his faith, a believer whose spiritual intuition is his sole world.