

Hasmukh C. Patel

If you are from Ahmedabad, and interested in architecture you cannot have missed the work of Hasmukhbhai. However, this little write-up is on Hasmukhbhai the painter. About two years ago, I had the privilege of having a private viewing of a collection of well organized paintings at Hasmukhbhai's residence, in the presence of the man I was told he considered his guru, Apurva Desai. While the various oil pastels, mostly portraits in earthy dark hues were shown, deep and meaningful thoughts were exchanged by the two. Hasmukhbhai approaches painting rather like a child; he is exploring the possibilities of the medium and sounds sometimes precocious about his experiences with the brush. He paints absolutely for pleasure and in that he is different & fresh from the regulars one sees exposing today. Also rarely does one see an architect show his skills with the brush, that too, where there is no hint of his lifelong profession. Satish Gujral, being the opposite, a painter dabbling in architecture.

Hasmukhbhai is a man who has challenged everything in life and met every challenge thrown at him by life with gusto. Should one bump into him today, it would certainly be an eventful meeting, not one you will forget easily. For he is interested in everything you have to say and will add several thoughts of his own to the conversation. All this while Bhaktiben, his wife stands by listening judiciously. They are together two small, but power packed personalities. This energy is visible within the whole family. Each member is successful in his/her chosen profession, not far from the main course set out by Hasmukhbhai many years ago. It is also visible in the collection of outsiders who work with the various firms now branched out from the original HCP Design & Project Management Pvt. Ltd. Everyone knows of Hasmukhbhai, and everyone has their moment in his little chamber of clean concrete lines where everything has a place.

I have felt his reluctance to show his paintings to a wider public. Yet they are meticulously preserved in portfolios and then placed orderly in cabinets. I wonder what the evolution of his work might be in the years to come. Will the paintings become larger, more primary in tint or even more cubic, reflecting his first love architecture? All said it is certainly a pleasant surprise that the public at large is getting its chance to see Hasmukhbhai the painter, and we hope this will not be the last, for I can tell you there's a lot more from where that came.

Gauri
Art Historian

Word count 427