

## Contemporary Art in Sri Lanka

Sabine Grosser<sup>1</sup>

In the last years more contemporary art from Asian countries was shown in major art exhibitions like the documents, various biennials, etc. The relationship between post-colonialism and cultural development came into the discussions with texts by Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhaba and others questioning binary oppositions and hierarchical relations.

In the context of art history or better art science this means to question binary oppositions like high and low culture, centre and periphery, original and copy, etc. Especially in the Anglo-American discussions new terms like hybridity and heterotopias, contact-zone and transgression, identity and nation became relevant.

In the discourse in German speaking countries, these topics are slowly gaining awareness but are often still considered under an anthropological or ethnological perspective.

This research project develops an approach to contemporary art in Sri Lanka and especially its developments during the last decade of the 20th century. To appreciate the individual artistic production on its own right, the project concentrates on five artist personalities: Anoli Perera, Jagath Weerasinghe, Druvinka Madawela, Chandraguptha Tenuwara and Koronegela Pushpakumar. For a better understanding and to reflect the perspective of the author's outside point of view it combines the analysis of art works with interviews. In the interviews the artists speak about their artworks, their ideas, self-concepts and their understanding of own role as artists in contemporary Sri Lankan society as well as art immanent questions related to technique and media. Major topics in this context are changing concepts of identities as artists, women, men or as members of the new middle class as well as the relation of art and politics in the face of the current political situation and the ongoing cultural globalisation.

Key Words: Contemporary Art; Sri Lanka; Cultural Globalisation

The Social Structure and Filtering Mechanisms for the Anti national

---

<sup>1</sup> E-mail: [drsgrosser@yahoo.com](mailto:drsgrosser@yahoo.com)