

Preface

My interest in the field of sociology of art goes back in time when I was in junior college. Having lived in the vicinity of the Prince of Wales Museum (father was a museologist working in the Prince of Wales Museum) and the Jehangir Art Gallery the art influence was evident. I was surrounded with art related aspects since childhood. In retrospect I can say that my interest was triggered with the following incident. It must have been in the early 1990s that the barefoot artist was gaining prominence. M.F.Husain was a name in reckoning. My friend, a student of commercial art then, was excited that Husain's exhibition was coming to the Jehangir art gallery and we were going to see it. The evening after it's opening, we rushed to the gallery. The exhibition was titled 'shwetambari'. We entered the exhibition hall and stopped our tracks right there, we looked at each other and then stared at the hall strewn with newspaper all over the floor and white cloth sheets hung on the walls...my friend said that looks like the exhibition is over... but it had just started today. Then a passerby said with a smile from ear to ear...this is the exhibition- 'shwetambari'. Of course-Shwetambari means white and Husain had done justice to the title by covering the walls with pure white sheets of cloth. This was a creation that only an illustrious artist could attempt and be admired for. The exhibition was intriguing and made me question if such artwork can be created by anyone. What puzzled me was that why was it that some artists were assigned the title of renowned artists? What happened to those artists who had promises but were unable to achieve the deserved recognition? What was the world of artists like? I never got over that

Husain episode. After years having passed by it is still fresh in my memory. This research is a combination of fine art with sociology, the two intense interests of my life, and it has enabled a better understanding of the intricacies of the art world.

Sociology of art as a field has not been explored much especially in the Indian context. Baroda being famous for its Fine Arts Faculty and since no research in the field of sociology of art was undertaken here, this research of exploratory nature has focused on Baroda and its artists.

To protect the identity of the artists pseudonyms have been used in the text. Only the names of the artists who have given their permission to use their names have been included in the text. The same holds true for the paintings, that is the paintings of only selected artists have been included.

After the completion of data collection and while writing the thesis the controversy over the display of paintings in the Faculty of Fine Arts occurred. This controversy is still not resolved thus it is consciously not included in the analysis.