

Gurpreet Singh Dhuri: Transforming Challenges into Prosthetic Artistry

PROF. D S KAPOOR

Prosthetic Art Technology is committed to delivering exceptional prosthetic rehabilitation, specializing in the precise restoration of the face and body. Each prosthetic is a unique masterpiece, meticulously crafted to meet the individual needs of our clients. In addition to medical prosthetics, cosmetic expert excels in prosthetic makeup, also known as special makeup effects. This intricate art form combines sculpting, moulding, and casting techniques to create advanced cosmetic transformations.

In the quiet village of Ghanaur Khurd, nestled in Punjab's Dhuri region, a young boy unknowingly sculpted his future with every brushstroke and every sketch he etched onto his school walls. That boy was Gurpreet Dhuri, now a sculptor of extraordinary talent and one of Bollywood's most sought-after prosthetic makeup artists and character designers. Born in December, 1983 to Smt. Joginder Kaur and Sh. Labh Singh, Gurpreet Singh Dhuri grew up in a humble, working-class family where resilience was not just a virtue but a way of life. The youngest of four siblings, he watched his father struggle to sustain their ancestral shoemaking trade. However, as modern technology and evolving fashion trends took over, the once-thriving craft gradually declined, Labh Singh had to take up work as a labourer at the local sugar mill in Dhuri to ensure that his youngest son had the opportunity to forge his own path before stepping away from the workforce.

Gurpreet, however, was never one to be confined by circumstances. Art was his escape, his rebellion, and ultimately, his salvation. What began as simple calligraphy and mural painting, his creative imprint on school walls, soon evolved into a relentless pursuit of artistic expression? This passion would eventually lead him into the world of sculpture and prosthetic makeup, establishing him as one of India's most sought-after artists. Even as a young student at the government school in his village, Gurpreet's artistic talent stood out. "For a village kid, I got more than I asked for. Whenever I was given colours to paint a board, I was always allowed to keep the leftovers. So, there was never a shortage of colours in my life," he fondly recalls. From painting walls and village streets to assisting signboard painters, Gurpreet tirelessly honed his skills, driven by an unyielding passion for art. With every brushstroke, he nurtured a dream-not of fame, but of becoming a teacher, hoping to pass on his love for art to others.

His passion for colours & painting first blossomed, when he started working as an assistant to Rinku Painter, gaining his preliminary hands-on experience with paints. Gurpreet learned to work with poster and enamel paints on cloth, walls, and metal sheets, refining his skills with every stroke. By the time he passed matriculation, he already sensed a deep connection to art, though he was still uncertain about its potential as a career.

Fate, however, had other plans. One day, his elder brother, Gurmeet, handed him a newspaper clipping, suggesting it might interest him. Unsure of its significance, Gurpreet took it to his primary teacher, who explained that it was an advertisement for admission to an art college. "At that moment, I knew- this was my destiny," Gurpreet later remembered. That single discovery redirected his artistic journey, opening doors beyond signboards and walls, leading him toward something far greater. Although Gurpreet Singh Dhuri initially aspired to pursue painting or applied art, fate had a different path in store for him. Encouraged by his mentors at Chandigarh's Government College of Art, he chose sculpture, a discipline that was not as sought-after at the time. Yet, it was in this medium that his artistic identity truly took shape, despite the challenge of financial constraints. Every Friday, he would travel 128 Km to his hometown, Dhuri, spending the weekends painting banners to earn money. By his third



year, he started receiving small commercial sculpting projects, balancing his studies with freelance work. He continued working with Rinku Painter in Dhuri, painting banners for advertisements and political campaigns, an occupation that remained a part of his life for years. "I met many kind persons who supported and encouraged me: Rahi Mohinder Singh, Sant Singh Dhuri, Rinku Painter Dhuri, and Jagdeep Jolly," he recalls. After completing his Bachelor's Degree, Gurpreet pursued an MFA, completing it in 2009, a testament to his resilience and unwavering dedication to his craft.

Gurpreet Dhuri's evocative works, such as 'Cycle of Life' and 'Female Foeticide', speedily gained appreciation and recognition for their powerful social observation. While pursuing his MFA in Sculpture at GCA, he pedantically honed his craft. "I tried to master the intricacies of portraiture- how to capture expressions?, highlight personality traits, and understand the unique properties of different materials," he recalls.

This expertise later proved invaluable in the film industry. After completing his MFA, Gurpreet moved to Gujarat to assist his seniors on a museum project. Around the same time, he ventured into cinema, joining the prosthetics team for Anurag Kashyap's Gangs of Wasseypur. He played a pivotal role in creating hyper-realistic prosthetics, including a severed silicone head and Richa Chadha's prosthetic belly. From there, his journey into character design, portraiture, and prosthetic FX design took off. His deep understanding of materials such as clay, silicone, wax, and metal combined with his scrupulous study of human features set him apart. His ability to capture intricate details with uncanny precision has earned him widespread recognition. "His attention to detail is supreme," say those who have observed his work up closely.

Sculpting Reality in Art and Bollywood Cinema Projects: Renowned for his mastery in clay modelling, portraiture and prosthetic makeup, Gurpreet Singh Dhuri made an ineradicable influence on Indian cinema, by crafting hyper-realistic prosthetics and props for Bollywood and Television. He has established himself as a leading contemporary artist with a significant presence in Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi and Mumbai.

His journey into prosthetics began at Dirty Hands Studio in Ahmedabad, where he spent five years refining his skills. Later, he co-founded Studio Hash in

Delhi alongside fellow artists Rakesh Kumar, Harpreet Singh and Akash Gaur. Together, they have contributed to numerous films and commercials, pushing the boundaries of prosthetic artistry in Indian cinema. Today, Gurpreet remains an essential part of Studio Hash, working on groundbreaking prosthetic designs for upcoming Bollywood films. His unique ability to blend artistic precision with technical expertise has earned him recognition as a true pioneer in the industry.

Ever since the lockdown, his studio in Sarangpur near Chandigarh has become a creative haven, a mini-gallery where each corner tells its own story. In one corner, a recently unveiled bust of The Tribune's legendary Editor, Kalinath Ray, commands attention; in another, silicone models for an upcoming film project cast a futuristic glow. There, a majestic model of Maharaja Yadavindra Singh stands alongside an in-progress sculpture of Bhagat Singh. For Gurpreet, these works are a living reminder of his art college lessons. "The Maharaja must exude regal authority, Bhagat Singh's stance should embody unwavering conviction, and Kalinath Ray's eyes must reflect his inner strength," he explains. "Even when cast in metal, they must look real. Have you ever seen Ambedkar's statues, with a finger rigidly pointing forward? I fail to see the man behind them. That's why I believe in engaging in discussions and debates before a sculpture takes shape."

For someone whose filmography includes Gangs of Wasseypur, Tumbbad, Detective Byomkesh Bakshi, Ghoul, and Sonchiriyaa, Gurpreet remains remarkably humble. His breakthrough independent project, Tumbbad, was both his most challenging and most rewarding endeavour. Directed by Rahi Anil Barve, Tumbbad is widely regarded as one of India's finest horror films, celebrated for its haunting visuals, meticulous artistic design, and compelling storytelling. Working as a character designer on Tumbbad was a transformative experience for Gurpreet, demanding a seamless blend of artistic skill, prosthetic expertise, and teamwork. He credits his wife, Gagandeep, an accomplished sculptor in her own right, as a pillar of support, balancing multiple roles within their family. His team, which included two of his nephews and other talented artists from GCA, embodied true synergy, bringing their collective vision to life. "Our dream was fulfilled when we succeeded in placing Nek Chand's sculpture, created by us, in the Rock Garden. But we were deeply disappointed that he was not there to witness our work." Gagandeep shared, reflecting on a bittersweet moment in their artistic journey. Prosthetic work is an incredibly demanding craft for artists and actors, often requiring hours of painstaking application with limited time for shooting. Creative Director Anand Gandhi recognized the importance of nurturing local talent, and in Tumbbad, this belief materialized through the dedication and artistry of Gurpreet and his team. Gurpreet painstakingly crafted the eerie presence of the grandmother, focusing on intricate skin textures, deep wrinkles, and subtle facial expressions that heightened the character's mystique.

Despite the challenges and high costs, more directors are embracing innovation in prosthetics and special effects. "If I see the possibility, I say yes; otherwise, I commit to trying," says Gurpreet, who draws inspiration from Stan Winston, the legendary artist behind Jurassic Park and Edward Scissorhands.

"In Chandigarh, there's a kind of peace and stillness that lets you work and meet the right people, something unthinkable in Mumbai's fast-paced life," says Gurpreet Dhuri. While as a student at Chandigarh's Govt. College of Art, Gurpreet often remarked, "I don't dream big." Now, as one of India's most sought-after prosthetic artists, he modestly repeats, "I don't dream..."

(The author of this article is the former Principal, Govt. College of Art, Chandigarh; Founder and served as OSD, National Institute of Design, Kurukshetra.)

Kalpana Gupta Ratan's Poetry- A Spectrum of Different Hues

JANG S. VERMAN



Kalpana Gupta 'Ratan' is an academician, administrator; social, religious & cultural activist; poet and short story writer of Jammu & Kashmir. So far, her three poetry collections, titled: 'Sukhad Ehsaas', 'Ehsaas Ke pal' and 'Zindagi Ki Talaash' have been published. Over 100 creative works by Kalpana have been published in various newspapers and magazines of the country. She has been the Editor of 'Mehkti Vatika' - I, II and III. She has presented her creations on various platforms and Kavi Gosthii etc. Kalpana was born in the family of Smt. Santosh Devi and Sh. Ganga Prasad of Bhardarwah (J&K), during 1965. Now she is settled in Jammu. She has done MA Economics; and B Ed. Smt. She has been honoured with Sahitya Shree Samman by Nami Dogri Sanstha, Jammu; by Distt. Administration on Republic Day; Lakshya Bhed Shram Sevi Sammaan; Lakshya Bhed Shakti Aradhna Sammaan; International

Pride Women Award; Writer of the Day; Sarvshreshth Rachnakar; and some other honours during online events also.

While going through her two poetry collections, titled 'Ehsaas Ke pal' and 'Zindagi Ki Talaash', I was able to assess that the books were written during the times of Covid-19 Pandemic. So, there are a number of poems based on the themes related to Pandemic and other such affairs. The emphasis on the issues related to womanhood, their empowerment and vivid issues related to the females and the sufferings in their life can be easily traced in the poems of these two books.

The union and partition among the beloved ones, inter-personal relations and isolation are also included in these poems. The other issues reflected in her poetry are related to variety of societal, environmental, and contemporary life related issues. Some where there are themes related to Nature, devotion etc. also. Variety of styles and genres of verse seem to be emerging out of the poems included in the two books under consideration. There is some kind of experimentation in these poems, like a trial to compose Ghazals, Haikos or Tappas (none of these seem to be there), reflecting different rhyming patterns. Most of the poems are written in free verse. The diction used is very simple without any complicity of language, symbols, metaphors etc. At times, satire can be witnessed here & there. Use of Hindostani in place of hardcore Hindi language is quite evident in her poems.

In the book 'Ehsaas Ke Pal', the scenario of the contemporary world is reflected in these words: Kaise har sakhs ko khush rakh payoge/ Banavati baton se kya khush'haali la payoge/ Beete vah din jab pyar ke poudhe lagaa

karte the/ Ab to seench laho se bhi pyar na uga payoge/... (Banavati). A sense of exploration from self to the whole universe can be seen in the words: Kalpana hoon main bharti kalpanayon ki udaan hoon/ Kabhi nam main khag ban kar ghoomti jahaan hoon/... (Kalpana). A piece of Satire can be seen here, in the poems: Toota sheesha mujhe ayeena dikha gaya/ Bikhri zindagi ka mayna dikha gaya/ Jhoothi chamak damak mein kho gaye hum itne/ Poore vishav ko vah made in China bana gaya/... (Toota Sheesha). Badle zamaane ke dekho badle rang dhang/ Nahin ab koyee pyaase ko paani pilaaye... is another piece of satire in the poems.

The issues related to female issues and womanhood continue to exist in both the books, though the book, titled 'Zindagi Ki Talash' ponders on a broader spectrum of their issues. In the book 'Ehsaas Ke Pal', she writes: Aurat ke jeevan mein bawaal kyon?/ Uski shakhsiyat par sawaal kyon?/ Aurat Ishwar ki hai komal si rachna/ Usko dekh aate hain bure khyaal kyon?/... (Sawaal Kyon).

Her imagery and love towards Nature's divergent colours and shades as well as its mysteries and role can be seen in the lines: Mere man ke jazbaat/ Pahunchaye bahut aghaat/ Bikhre ke barse yoon/ Jaise hoti hai greeshm ritu/ Mein olon ki barsaat/... (Jazbaat). Appreciation of Nature's beauty, its different moods and Shringar rasa can be seen in poems like 'Chandni Ki Chaadar', 'Apni Hi Parchhayee', 'Pahli Baaris', 'Jharna', 'Mehboob' and other poems. The crisis of inter-religious hypocrisy and tyranny is shown in 'Dooriyan', and 'Bikhra Huya Insaan', whereas distorted state of relationships have been reflected in 'Faasle'.

'Bhyaanak Saya', 'Khamosh Chehre', 'Majbooriyan', 'Kitna Badal Gaya Sansaar', 'Tera Korona Mera Korona' and other poems, related to the themes of Covid-19 Pandemic, demonstrate issues related to the time of Pandemic. These lines from the poem 'Nireekshan Karne Nikley Jangal Ke Raja' read like: Ve dekh nireekshan karne nikle jungal ke raja/ Bhalu bhed, bakri se kaha, kaho sabko aaj/ Apna hi hai har disha haror raaj/ Insaan chhup gaya hai kahin door aaj/ Jis se chhup firte the hum sab aaj tak/ Chhip gaya hai kahin, nahin dikha raha door tak/...

Similarly, the theme of womanhood, its empowerment and challenges are translated in a number of poems like: 'Bhatriya Nari', 'Nari Nahin Kamyor', 'Nari Shakti', 'Ek Sa Akaar', 'Kaash Main Hoti Prinda' and others, have made their place in the collection- 'Zindagi Ki Talaash'.

There is optimism also reflected through the poems like 'Naya Aasmaan'. 4 Varunas have been shrewdly explained through the poem 'Nari Ki Jaati'. Here is a part of the verse: Bacchey ki potty jab ki saaf usne/ Sudra hone ke saare gunh samaye usmein/ Bacchey ki jab suraksha karti hai nari/ Kshetriya gunhon se ban jati gunhkari/ Jab vah gyan v deti bhoutik sanskar/ Brahman hone ke aate paas uske adhikaar/ Acchhi grahni ban karti bachat vah/ Vaibhavshali jeevan jab deti ban jaati Vaisya vo/...

Satire on modern life has been shown in the poem 'Network Suvidha' and 'Kahte Hain Hum Sab Adhunik Ho Gaye Hain'. A Stanza of latter poem reads like: Karte hain hum sab adhunik ho gaye/ Gaadi Bangla Mobile mein kho gaye/ Sanskaaron ka utthh gaya janaaja/ Jayein kahan khatkhatayain kiska darvaaja/...



JKAACL hosts 'Meet the Eminent' with Padma Shri Narsingh Dev Jamwal

JANG S. VERMAN

J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) hosted 'Meet the Eminent' at K L Saigal Auditorium, Writers' Club, Jammu on 3rd April, 2025. The event honoured Padma Shri Narsingh Dev Jamwal and released his latest Dogri book, 'Manno Nei Manno'. The programme was held under the guidance of Ms. Harvinder Kour, Secretary, JKAACL. The event organized by JKAACL commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Javaid Rahi, Divisional Head, JKAACL, Jammu, representing Secretary, JKAACL. Dr. Rahi highlighted Jamwal's contributions to Dogri literature & culture, and expressed the Academy's pride in celebrating his legacy. As a mark of respect, Dr. Javaid Rahi and Ms. Reeta Khadyal, Editor, Dogri, JKAACL, presented a flower bouquet and a shawl to Sh. N.D. Jamwal. The programme featured insightful academic discussions, including critical papers on 'Manno Nei Manno', presented by Sh. Rakesh Verma and a scholarly analysis of Jamwal's literary achievements by Dr. Padam Dev Singh, Senior Assistant Professor of Dogri, University of Jammu. Sh. Jamwal shared his literary journey, answered questions, and offered valuable insights into Dogri literature.

The event proceedings were conducted by Ms. Reeta Khadyal, Editor, Dogri, JKAACL, who also extended a vote of thanks to the guests for their participation. It may be mentioned here that Sh. Narsingh Dev Jamwal, known for his contribution in the fields of literary art (novel, short story, poetry, lyrics, Ghazal, plays etc.), visual arts (drawing, painting and sculpture) and in the field of radio, television and theatre, has made a significant contributions to Dogri literature & culture, having authored 52 books, including the Sahitya Akademi Award-winning novel 'Sanjhi Dharti Bakhle Mahnu' (1978). He has done Master's Degree in Dogri and Pre- Ph. D from University of Jammu. He has served J&K Police Deptt. and retired as Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP). His early life includes participation in the Battle of Garhi (1947) as part of Subedar Duni Chand's platoon, where he was captured as a Prisoner of War (PoW) in Pakistan before being released a year later.

His dedication to literature and education earned him India's fourth-highest civilian honour, Padma Shri, in 2019. He has also been honoured with Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (2008) for his contributions to Indian theatre as a playwright; President's Police Medal (1986), Sahit Akademi Award (1978), 50 Years of India's Independence Award (1997), Indian Academy of Fine Arts, Amritsar Award in All India Art Exhibition (for Painting), (1968), State Award by J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (for Sculpture, 1989) and Awards in All India Police Welfare Exhibitions, and others.