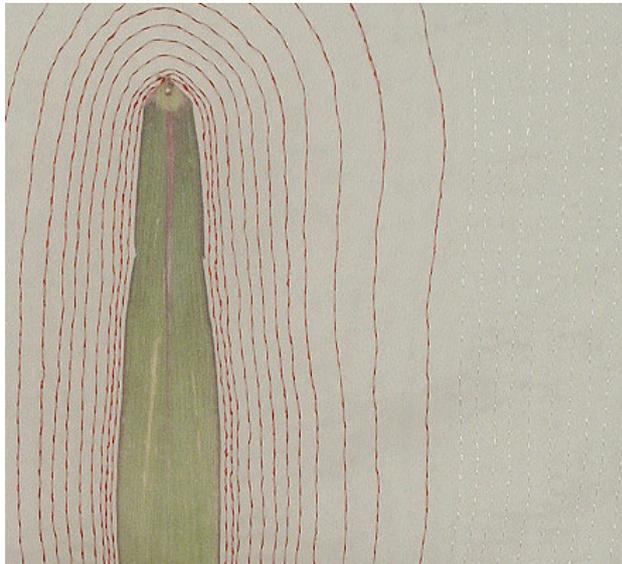


The Spiritual Potentialities of Art

By Acarya Anandananda



Art is the refined expression of subtle ideas, and it holds the potentiality to have a subtle effect on the lives of both the creators of art and those who contemplate it. Art is subtle because it takes people into the deeper layers of their minds.

In yoga philosophy there are five layers (kosas) of mind. Atimanas Kosa is the third one, and it is the first of the three deeper layers. It is the intuitive layer and it contains the capacity for phenomena like clairvoyance, telepathy, creative insight and a sense of aesthetics. Aesthetics is the appreciation of pleasing or beautiful things, and it is inherent in art. Anything that is arranged in a pleasing or harmonious way comes within the realm of aesthetics. But it is in painting and sculpture,

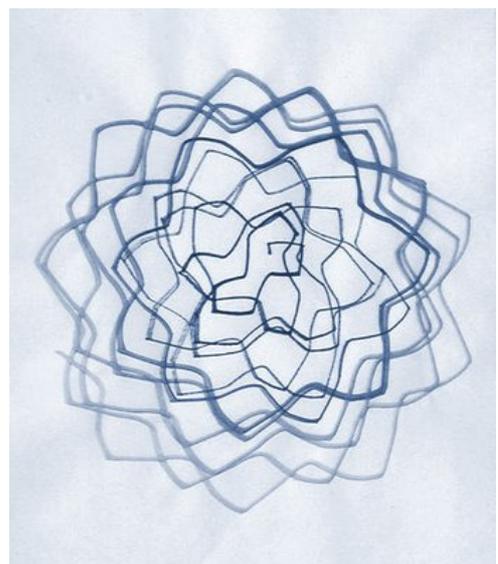
which are considered the subtlest of all the arts, which we find the true expression of the wonderful aesthetic sense that people have. And indeed, painting and sculpture beautifully bridge the gap between the mundane (the ordinary) and the supramundane. Supramundane means things, such as aesthetics, which we cannot perceive through our sense organs; we can only perceive them through intuition.

The depth and subtlety that can be gained from the practice and contemplation of art can lead people towards spiritual realisation. And the greater the spiritual realisation a person has, the more success that person will have in the creation of art. It is impossible for those who do not seek spirituality in their lives to successfully create art, even though they have some creative faculty.

For the spiritually awakened artist, the aim of artistic creation is to communicate joy and bliss. And to do this, the artist has to strive to see that one supreme, cosmic entity in everything, and to lead everyone towards that entity. Through art, people get the opportunity to move towards that cosmic entity.

In the words of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, the founder and spiritual head of the Ananda Marga Yoga Society, the responsibility of the artist is also to unite humanity:

“Though separated by many countries, many states, many religions, many communities or by many languages, the human race is an indivisible entity. Every human mind is but the diversified, individual manifestation of that same indivisible Cosmic Mind. Today we look forward to the advent of the artist and the writer who will convey this truth to the hearts of humanity in a still sweeter language, still more strongly and deeply.”



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