

Bhavna Kakar

Presents

MARKS IN TIME/ THROUGH TIME

Perspectives in Ceramics

Antra Sinha | Khanjan Dalal

Venue: LATITUDE 28

F - 208, First Floor, Lado Sarai, New Delhi - 110030

Exhibition Dates: 3rd December, 2021 – 30th January, 2022

Timings: Monday to Saturday, 11 am – 7 pm



Antra Sinha, Buddha Forms, 9 inches ht, 2021

The Concept

Digressing from the core narrative and challenging the dominant model of ceramics as functional object or decorative, the artists Antra Sinha and Khanjan Dalal are both engaged with discursive sites that range from platonic solids that underpin structures in the natural world to the symbolic language of non-communication. Both have a largely ceramic-based art practice displaying a diversity of concepts but underpinning both is their involvement with the materiality of the medium.

Antra Sinha seeks to penetrate the world we inhabit through her intense search for the geometrical structures of the universe in the shape of the hexagon and the Fibonacci sequence. Inspired by the Zen monks ink drawings of the square, circle and triangle of the universe, she started her creative journey by translating these into three dimensions. According to Antra, 'I was completely enamoured by the tetrahedron because it is a minimal stable form and made me liken it to myself when I was going through a period of searching for stability in my personal life.' In looking for ways to make the geometric form more organic, Sinha came upon the form that she calls the 'tetrarc'. This has so inspired her that she has made it from minuscule to monumental in all its iterations in residencies nationally and internationally.

Another natural form that has inspired her is the snowflake that she investigated during her graduate study programme in the US. Using CAD software and the Computer Numerically Controlled milling programme that left faint lines of the drill bit on the model, these gestural mark trails were then translated into the slipcast mold and subsequent form. Working with these installations using shadow as an integral vehicle of expression added to the cool aestheticism of Sinha's work in repeated geometries. She moves between a juxtaposition of the organic and the geometric in a beguiling paradox of nature and artifice. For most of her practice, Sinha has been engaged in developing these complex ceramic units that when combined become large architectonic installations.

In Ahmedabad, Khanjan Dalal has used his art to explore and explain the state of humanity and is engaged in an ongoing examination of human behaviour and society. He has used his practice to translate the inner world of the subjective into the objective, thereby determining what it is to be masculine in a post-modern age. For many practitioners, the move towards installation and assemblage was an extension of their object-based practice. The poetry of the single object spilled over to fill an entire space. Dalal explores the ideology of maleness and violence in his arresting installation works '47 Ronin'. Based on a Japanese folk tale, also known as Treasury of Loyal Retainers in its Kabuki performance form, it tells a gripping tale of revenge and blood lust. What is communicated in the installation of the forty-seven totems is a sense of darkness besides the communality of a commemorative ceremony. Dalal responds to the toxic violence and masculinity that is embedded in mankind's history of wars by recognising the physicality and deeper implications of the theme by weaving his sources from Ashoka to Japanese samurai together to create a work that

is marked by emotion, body, place and memory. This is also seen in the Expressionist work titled 'Armoured Torso' where the brutalised modelled torso stands as a caricature, void of emotion except for the interactive bell that the viewer can engage with as an epic manifestation of the banality of existence.

Language, both its celebration and its uncommunicativeness, is the second thread that runs through Khanjan Dalal's works. In his 'Speech Bubbles' assemblages, he uses the wad markings of the kiln flames in order to depict the emptiness of language, what is left of the emotion, the gaps without meaning. He says, 'I see language as a tool and as a weapon. It is one of the most effective tools we as a species have devised and it is responsible for our successes as well as our failures.'

The significance of the marks and flashes of the wood firing, be it anagama or bourry box style that comes out of the ash marks a common primary element in both the artists style and technique. Inheritors of the raw naturalism tradition, albeit with different emphases, the surface embellishments of both engage directly with the fire in the earth's core: imagery evolved from the volcano and the eroded rock face: a sort of geological existentialism that both artists express through their vitrified earth. The approach undoubtedly shows the influence of the Korean Japanese tradition through the interstices of contemporary practices. Also, both Sinha and Dalal engage in devising their own clay bodies peculiar to the artistic concepts they choose to express. Sinha's fascination with the luminosity of fallen snow in Utah encouraged her to experiment with a highly vitrified clay body that reflects light while Dalal responded to his arid environment in Ahmedabad with the creation of a strong, burnt orange, toasty, textured clay more suited to his thematic portfolio.

Both artists have demonstrated the ability of ceramics to move into other spheres of practice without reducing the intensity of the 'ceramic continuum'. Antra Sinha speaks eloquently of building a ceramic network bridge between the world's ceramic practitioners and the exploration and connections between creative peoples across the world. Khanjan Dalal sees metamorphosis as the ageing, growth or maturation from a space where the artist is the tree growing from within and together with others to create a raw energy that fuels a rich fusion of life, nature and imagination.

By
Kristine Michael

Kristine Michael is a ceramic artist, curator, researcher and arts educator based in New Delhi currently a PhD scholar at JNU School of Arts and Aesthetics.

Antra Sinha
(b. 1978, Bihar)

Antra Sinha is inspired by the structures that emerge and evolve from the micro of the organism to the macro of the universe. Recently, the Fibonacci sequence and the hexagon have both commanded her attention. She is fascinated by the countless examples of six-sided shapes, spaces and structures to be found in the natural world. Beehives, the molecular structure of benzene, and interlocking basalt columns on the shore of Northern Ireland all share six-fold symmetry with the feather like water crystals that we call snowflakes. Some of her latest creations are designed in the 3D-rendering software SOLIDWORKS, and printed in PLA. Others are made using a CNC mill to form molds, then slip-cast in porcelain. All the while, she continues to make work with the age-old coil building process, celebrating its linear quality while noticing the parallels between pinched and milled marks. These marks are further enhanced with sustainable wood-firing. She chooses to fire her work in a wood kiln which is a variation of the train kiln design by John Neely. This kiln has a chamber similar to an anagama, yet the firebox is like one of train kiln – called bourry box. She enjoys the repetitive and meditative process of coil building which she has used for pieces such as *Fibonacci Forts*. She has used an extruder for shaping hollow coils for the work *Intersection and Structure*. The work *Triangle Square and Hexagon* was designed on CAD program and printed in PLA, which she used for making a mold. She used this mold for slip cast. The work *Cascade* is designed on CAD, carved on insulation foam using CNC milling. The resultant form was used for creating the mold. This mold was used for slip cast. The *Buddha Forms* are simple forms made using the potters' wheel.

Antra completed her BFA and MFA from MS University, Baroda. She then became an apprentice to Ray Meeker for ten years at Golden Bridge Pottery (GBP) in Pondicherry, India. An award from The Japan Foundation took her to the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park in Japan for six months in 2008. Her signature sculpture, *Tetrarc*, was purchased by the Hyatt Regency in Chennai, India, in 2009. The sculpture was one of six, and was created for the pool deck area at the GBP studios and installed in 2011. A trip to Australia enabled her to work at The Tin Shed Pottery in Launceston, and then assist Neil Hoffman in preparation for the pre-conference and Wood Fire Tasmania conference in 2011. In 2014 she travelled to Markus Bohm's studio Muritz Keramik in Germany. Here she helped set up a pre-conference event conducted by Chester Nealie before the 2nd European Wood Fire Conference in Guldagergaard, Denmark. She furthered her practice by building her own kiln design and opening her ceramic studio, Earth Art, in Pondicherry. This studio was on the same campus of her family's architectural business, Ovoid Atelier (OA). At the 50th NCECA conference in Kansas, she made a presentation at Blinc 20/20 and was awarded the MultiCultural Fellow. In 2018, she received the Master's Student Researcher of the Year Award at the Caine College of the Arts, USU. The year of 2019 took her to Dankook Univeristy in Korea, where she presented a paper entitled *Ceramics in South India* at the ISCAEE conference. In 2021, she received the Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art Teaching

Fellowship in Logan, UT. Antra is a member of three ceramic organizations: IAC, ISCAEE, and NCECA. Currently, Antra holds the position of Gallery Coordinator and Art Instructor at the Caine College of the Arts, Utah State University, in Logan UT. Her recent participations include solo shows such as 'Waves & Fibonacci Interpretation', Projects Gallery, USU, Logan, UT USA (2021); 'Perspective', Projects Gallery, USU, Logan Utah USA 2019; 'Luminous', Tippetts Galleries, USU, Logan, Utah USA (2018) and 'Perceptions', Projects Gallery USU, Logan, Utah USA (2016) and group shows such as 'The Things We Carry', Eutectic Gallery, Portland, Oregon USA (2021); 'Inspiring Plants', Botanical Garden, Taipei City, (virtual) Taiwan (2021); 'Delegates show' Suk Joo-sun Museum Dankook University Korea (2019) and Indian Ceramic Triennale, Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur, India (2018).

Khanjan Dalal **(b. 1975, Ahmedabad)**

Khanjan Dalal works majorly with clay, sometimes blurring the lines between functional and sculptural. He has been engaging with developing multiple ideas while pushing the technology behind them as a language in itself. Working simultaneously with multiple ideas over several years he has employed a vast and diverse array of peculiar technologies and materials in his practice, each pushing its own limits. As a strategy a lot of his work remains open ended with possibilities of spontaneous changes, expansion and has more than one version at times. As a ceramicist he has a wider area of practice that balances his inner equilibrium. Developing studio pottery satisfies his need for tranquility and rhythm and working on sculptural installations fulfills the desire for internal reflection and poetry. Firing his works in an anagama kiln has manifested in a unique visual vocabulary that is robust and austere due the amalgamation of the movement of fire, deposition of wood ash and difference in clay-bodies.

Khanjan completed his BFA from Department of Painting, MS University, Baroda. He further studied at the department of autonomous sculpture at Gerrit Reitveld Akademie, Amsterdam the Netherlands. He has been a part of various curatorial projects which include 'Patterns' – A collaborative group show of Scientists, Artists, Designers and Craftsmen at the Community Science Centre, Ahmedabad during Ahmedabad Arts Festival (2011); 'Nature Morte – Repositioned' – A workshop followed by an exhibition of 6 invited artists based on still life. Gallery Lemongrasshopper (2010); 'Mind the Gap' Exhibition of artist Rajesh Sagara. His sculptures were installed on the Heritage Route of Ahmedabad (2010) and 'Crows – A Journey Back to the Nest' – multimedia installation of artist Amit Ambalal. Site-specific installation at The Ahmedabad Textile Mills Association (ATMA), Ahmedabad. This building was designed by Le Corbusier (2006). Recent participations include his solo show, 'Discourses', Tao

Art Gallery, Mumbai (2021) and group shows, 'Earthen Transmutations', online exhibition with LATITUDE 28, New Delhi, (2021); 'Peppery soliloquy' curated by Georgina Maddox at gallery Art Centrix, New Delhi (2021) and 'Know...not this', a two-person exhibition with Radhika Hamlai at gallery 079 stories (2019).

About LATITUDE 28

Since 2010, LATITUDE 28 has probed into new gallery practice, one that is lateral, disruptive and avant-garde. Be it discerning those emerging artists making their mark in the Indian Subcontinent including Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka and beyond such as Iran; or positioning their works alongside modern masters while they each respond to the critical conversations of our times or the annals of their surreal imaginations. LATITUDE 28 has stimulated artists, writers, critics, researchers and curators to experiment with medium, material, dialogue, perspective and practice while fostering collectors, art enthusiasts and takers of a new era. These maker-market relationships have grown through the gallery's interactive incubation space, where ideas have been generated through curatorial projects within art history and socio-political contexts, site-specific artworks and artist talks. The gallery makes art accessible and inclusive with exhibitions located at the intersection of artists, art institutions, collectors and many different publics. With its critical writing on contemporary art through TAKE on Art Magazine, it has supported cutting-edge content, critical writing ensembles, workshops and awards for new writers. LATITUDE 28's vision is shaped by its Founder/Director and art historian, Bhavna Kakar.

For more information, please contact **LATITUDE 28** at:

Website: <http://www.latITUDE28.com>

Email: latITUDE28@gmail.com

Tel: +91 11 46791111

Address: F - 208, First Floor, Lado Sarai, New Delhi - 110030

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