

In Mediums That Challenge And Provoke, *Urban Testimonies* Peeps Into The Minds of Future Art Trendsetters

New Delhi: **Latitude 28** presents *Urban Testimonies*, an exhibition that embodies the new trends emerging out of new media art practice by four young artists of Baroda Art School - Deepjyoti Kalita, Kartik Sood, Nityananda Ojha and Siddhartha Kararwal, who come together for their first ever art display in Delhi from July 16, 2010 to August 18, 2010 at LATITUDE 28, F/208, Lado Sarai, New Delhi. Showcasing works in mediums that challenge and provoke, the show gives you a glimpse into the minds of art's future trendsetters.

Says Bhavna Kakar, Director, Latitude 28: "The exhibition reflects the ingenious art practice being followed by contemporary youth as they move beyond the barriers of creative limits to give a new expression to art. MS University, Baroda produces some of the best artists in the country and I wanted to seize the opportunity of representing them by providing their launching pad. All four participating artists are young, dynamic and full of energy and use the most modern methods to display their artworks. Art is a reflection of its time and this exhibition appropriately showcases the new media works by these artists who are our future trendsetters."

The artists have shared a common school of thought and their works demonstrate the contemporary vocabulary evolving at the Baroda today. The exhibition thus, highlights the shift in use of medium for the creation of a work of art. The works in the exhibition display the presence of most contemporary media such as junk jewelry, programmed LED light, timer, light boxes, burnt blanket and video projection, thereby adding experimentation and fresh ideas to the present system of art practices.

For instance, Nityananda Ojha's sculpture explores the money-oriented realm through the display of objects of an odd fascination. While his work titled *Masturbation* is a bold display of a human hand made out of junk jewelry, M-Seal and acrylic, *Abandoned Heel* is a sandal with approx 10 feet high heel, prepared with stone, chromed iron and artificial diamond. Another of his work titled *For Somebody* is a 6 feet by 4feet high installation that displays around 200 objects generating existential enticement into the minds of the viewer.

In a similar vein, Siddhartha Kararwal's creative practice revolves around the usage of ordinary everyday materials like plastic bags, foam sheets, firecrackers, cardboard, bronze, iron, copper, fibre, clay and plaster of paris. He moulds them seductively into installations and infuses them with multiple levels of meaning. For example his work titled *Kalki*, a cosmonaut suit prepared from waste material, is a satirical attack on man's negligence towards environment. The astronaut, according to the artist, will take birth in the age of iron and machines. Kalki would take away all wasted residue on the earth but unfortunately that would be a time when new age will dawn and the act of Kalki would

be no longer important for human beings on earth. In the exhibition, Kalki would be displayed in form of a comic strip highlighting the dilemma of 21st century. Siddhartha's another work titled *Whackass!* comprises 10 performance-photomontages done in collaboration with another artist Prayas Abhinav during the Sandharbh artist workshop in 2009 at Baroda. The photographs depict the artist dressed as a clown and carrying a tray-cart of artificially created stuffed donkeys. The photographs are digitally collaged with shots of a balloon pumping machine, empty water containers and local women viewing the act of performance.

In another example of out-of box thinking, Siddhartha's work *Skinned* prepared with a burnt blanket and written text is an interesting and satirical fable on the murder of a 15-year old mythical character called Skinu. According to the story, the temperature of Delhi fell to 5.2 degrees when Skinu was sleeping with his new skin (blanket) near his shop. A Skinvan tried to steal Skinu's skin and murdered Skinu with a heavy stone. Skinu's mother Skinny Devi reported the incident to Police who later arrested Skinvan. Through this work, Kararwal calls into flashpoints of violence activated at everyday guises in local neighborhoods.

While Nityananda Ojha and Siddhartha Kararwal passed out from MS University in 2009, their younger colleagues Kartik Sood and Deepjyoti Kalita completed their Masters in 2010. Kartik Sood, grandson of veteran artist Anupam Sud, displays a series of surreal light installations. His work titled *Plucking at the heart strings* is a set of ten back lit paintings connected to each other through loose strings. Images of children, mostly from the poor class, are juxtaposed with scraps of used cloth in reference to cultural identities and living environments. *If it would not have happened I wouldn't be with me* is another interesting installation made with nine wooden frames and light. In his video installation of twelve minutes and mounted on three monitors, he once again uses white cloth robes to mask the social and cultural identity of two children who can be seen performing rituals.

On the other hand, Deepjyoti Kalita's works centre around the challenge of duplicity, insecurity and instability. His series of work titled *The Incompetence of being Complete*, made with acrylic, fiberglass, iron, LED and paper displays an apparent restlessness by the shifting central figure of a man in the work. The figure of the man changes its position with others to emphasize the search of the perfect decision only to betray the protagonist with a constant confusion. Using a similar medium, Deepjyoti's another series of works *Decode* showcase impulsive images of another male in different positions. The order of these images appearing in unusual form elicits a sense of rebelliousness in method and manner which challenges the very essence of commands placed on us by society today.

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