



Crafted in manganese-based clay, 'Exhume', an artwork by Savia Mahajan which is currently a part of the ongoing Sensorium festival probes the transient boundaries of life and death and the in between. In conversation with the artist



Down to earth

BHARATI PAWASKAR

The Goan: You began first with painting and then shifted to ceramics in 2010. What brought about this change?

Savia Mahajan: I was trained as a painter and a print-maker. Post college, I got engaged in the form of painting for over 10 years, developing a distinct style of richly coloured visuals, decorated with impasto dots. I drew inspiration from nature, fantasy and symbolisms of indigenous cultures. Eventually my meticulous methods and the final results felt mundane and I began feeling a disconnection with my practice as a painter. I found myself in a dangerous and beautiful situation. From there on my journey of curiosity began. I was in search of a new material, an intimacy with which I could express myself. I wanted all that was resident in me to have a resonance in my practice, coming from a deeper place of existential inquiries of birth, death, rebirth and its thresholds. I found clay, to me it is mass; an animistic element. It shares the very same paradoxical qualities I was looking for, of strength and fragility, creation and destruction.

TG: What is it about fossils that fascinates you?

SM: Fossils fascinate me a lot - for the obvious reasons that they were once species rising, transmuting and thriving. But beyond the mere fascination, fossils speak of the profound urge of life to leave a trace, to be remembered, to state 'I was here'. It is an appeal against forgetting, embedding oneself in times memory.

TG: Life and Death - and that which is in between or beyond. Your search is unending. What do you want to know and explore?

SM: I chose to address the age-old, probably never-to-be-answered, question of whether there exists anything other than the body which survives death and dissolution, not to seek ready answers but to temper the arrogance that stems from the taken-for-grantedness of the material world. What really is left behind? Is life ephemeral or eternal? All such

TG: Tell us more about your artwork 'Exhume'.

SM: 'Exhume' is created with manganese-based clay and 24-carat gold. The work results from a physical encounter that I had with the clay medium. I pound, tease, hit and thrash the clay leaving a very definite impression of my hands on the clay - the palms, the fingers, the nails, the touch and the physical pounding, this work becomes a record of the process - a clay sculpture detailing, in a self-referential way. Pieces of the clay that I pulled off the main mass in the process are also sculpted spontaneously into shapes and forms, as though undergoing a transmutation of sorts in the process.

metaphysical explorations preoccupy me.

TG: Why does the 'liminal space' haunt you so often?

SM: The in-between cannot be ignored: one has to learn to dig into these interstices, into the processes that interpolate between life and death. This is the exploration of the liminal, the otherwise ignored junctions between the polar opposites that we see this world as being made of.

TG: And why gold embedded into the earth? What does that mean?

SM: The use of gold in the work was vital as the process meant literally exhuming and excavating and gold as a metal is known to have sank into the core of the earth when earth was in its molten state but it surfaced to the mantle after multiple impacts, disintegration and pounding four billion years ago. The oozing out of the gold in the 'Exhume' work draws its detail from that phenomenon.



About the artist

Born in 1980, Savia Mahajan is an artist from Mumbai, whose works explore the liminal boundaries of life and death across mixed media: pottery, sculpture and installation. She began her formal artistic training at the L.S. Raheja School of Art, and transitioned from painting to the less traditional medium of ceramics in 2010. Mahajan has since experimented with ceramic techniques, the results of which can be seen in Liminal, her first solo exhibition at TARQ, Mumbai (2017). Her works have been showcased at Gallery Beyond, Mumbai (2003), Art Dubai (2006), and Chawla Art Gallery, New Delhi.

"My work is 100 percent intuitive"

What if a photograph can be several moments at several places all at once, and from more than one perspective? Jacob Fallander's 'Stand Still - Drift Theories' currently on display at Sensorium festival shows viewers exactly this



BHARATI PAWASKAR



THE GOAN: You travelled the world in 12 days to capture images of landscapes on a single negative. Tell us about your experience.

Jacob Fallander: It started as an analogue photographic experiment to challenge the definition of a photograph as 'a frozen moment at one place'. What if a photograph can be several moments at several places all at once, and from more than one perspective? To capture the whole world in one negative, I travelled one lap around the world and multi-exposed the negative. I chose to use only 12 days so that I wouldn't lose the feeling of being 'in process'...

TG: How did the idea of 'Stand still - Drift Theories' come about?

JF: I've always had a sense that time is not linear. What if time is not a fixed variable? What if there is a reason why it sometimes feels like time passes slowly and other times, very fast? How would that look in a photograph?

TG: Why did you choose this medium to expose the world as seen by you?

JF: I use multi exposures because it gives me freedom to play with time, perspective and space within the frame. I can in essence warp time and space and create quantum physics photography.

TG: What is the deeper meaning of these exposures?

JF: That is a very broad question that I will leave to other thinkers to dwell on. It is very important to me, that my work is 100 per cent intuitive. I do not want any of my intellect involved when I work. Hence, it's hard to speak about my work from an intellectual standpoint.

About Stand Still - Drift Theories

In a single image, Felländer captures layered perspective and an elongated span of time. 'Stand Still - Drift Theories' breaks the shackles of photography, wherein the convention is to picture a single frozen moment. Using 32 plastic cameras, Felländer travelled around the world in 12 days, capturing several landscapes on the same negative with multiple exposures. He creates a sequence of events, overlapping moments from various cities, in a multi-exposure of sorts, an image unobstructed by space and time bound together into a type of 'super city'. Like the Cubists, he portrays all aspects of a cityscape in a single photograph.

Snapshots of Goa

Young photographer Daniel D'Souza talks about his viral video that documents the little tales of Fontainhas and why he will continue to showcase Goan stories

CHRISTINE MACHADO

Much has been said about the quaint beauty of the Latin Quarters of Fontainhas, the calmness it exudes and its cheerful colours. But what also makes Fontainhas the unique place that it is, is the people and their interesting tales. And it is that captivated young Daniel D'Souza and inspired him to document this on camera. "Whenever I went to Fontainhas I was always amazed by the many hidden stories all around. Although you may pass

by everyday, one tends not to notice these until you go and talk to the people there. There's so much to know about everything," says D'Souza.

Thus as part of his project at his college One School Goa, D'Souza decided to do a video around this place.

Set to a Portuguese tune, the little over two minute video 'Gems of Fontainhas' focuses on three main individuals - Erasmo Coutinho a typewriter mechanic, Gletta Mascarenhas, a bakery owner and Gundu, a bar owner. Apart from this, a lawyer, boutique owner, restaurant manager, barber, fruit vendor etc all make an



appearance.

"Erasmo uncle has always been a good friend and I always stop over for a chat with him while passing that side. As for Joseph Bar, I have always heard a lot about it and the good vibes there," says D'Souza. "The bakery too had such a great historic past that I definitely had to cover it."

While, getting these three on camera wasn't an issue, D'Souza admits that a few others were reluctant at first. "One lady especially wasn't



too fond of me moving around with the camera. However, after she saw the video she was amazed and even apologised," he says chuckling. And while the video was intended as part of a college project, D'Souza states that at the same time he also wanted to show a different image of Goa than the one people generally associate with the state. "Whenever people think about Goa, they usually think about beaches and clubbing. People don't usually think of Goa as a cultur-



Daniel D'Souza

al hub. But there is this other side of Goa which I love showing," he says, adding that he was quite surprised by how well received the video was. "I personally didn't share the video on social media myself at first. I only shared with the subjects of the video but I was very happy that people liked it," he says, adding that he will continue to do more Goan stories.

In fact, D'Souza has recently also shot a photo series titled 'A Legacy of Music' where he has documented



young Goan musicians. "The whole thing began as just one story focusing on Jaryd Rodrigues and his grandfather the noted jazz saxophonist Braz Gonsalves, but one person led to another," he says. Currently he is working on a photo story of the cross. "Although one may not always realise but there are crosses almost everywhere in Goa and it forms an important part of that area. So far I have shot in places like Pomburpa, Uccassaim and Mapusa," he says.