

domus

INDIA

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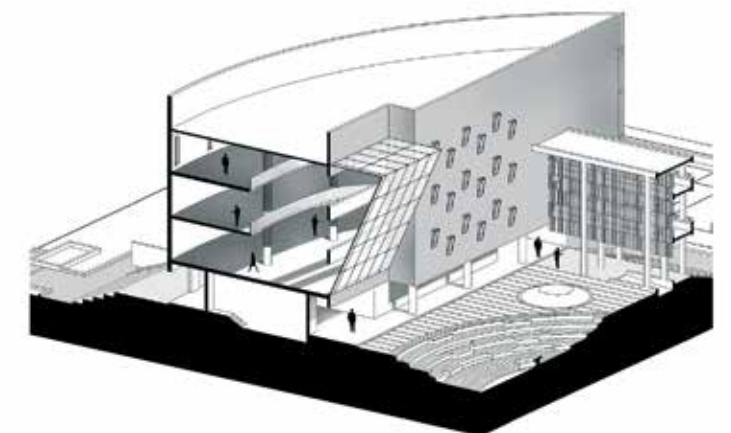
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Cover: The distinct curvatures and arcs in the architectural design of the the Virasak-e-Khalsa, in Chandigarh, designed by Moshe Safdie Architects, unlocked the potential of creating an artistic interpretation of this iconic structure. For further details on this special cover design please see pg. 8



Sketch of International Management Institute, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURE Kaiwan Mehta

One of the basic learnings for a student of architecture is to grasp the role and function of elements of architecture such as planes (walls), columns, recesses, openings, courtyards, patterns, perspectives, and so on... and as a designer, compose these elements in a synergy to produce a good architectural experience. The story seems simple until you begin to realise how space and the elements of architecture that compose it do not hold constant meaning or design value - in a sense, these elements produce and/or challenge notions of social behaviour and expectations therein. That pattern on a floor could challenge the notion of a centre, or reinforce your visual location in space such as in Campidoglio, or a blind window in a house lands up indicating the way we read interior space in a gendered fashion, such as in the Loos house. Elements hold symbolic value and can be played around with to either reinforce or disturb normative value. When conditions of space production change, the values of architectural elements begging a submissive or rebellious conversation with it, and in this issue we land up seeing this one feature after another.

The space of the home is something we visit once again, as much as we come back to the logic and monumentality of the institution. We look at the works of art by Vishwa Shroff and the home for artist Anita Dube designed by Anagram Architects in the new urban developments of Delhi, and think one more time of the home as space and home as site of action. While two institutions we explore for their elemental monumentality are the Virasat-e-Khalsa in Chandigarh by Moshe Safdie Architects and the building for the International Management Institute in Bhubaneswar designed by Abin Chaudhury Design Studio. Elements often reach a fetishised position where they recreate themselves and their symbolic meaning in the most overt and often soon the most obnoxious way - be it the sense of walls and floors inside a house or living room or the exaggeration of forms in larger building complexes. While the works of Shroff bring the everyday to us in a nuanced and hence critical reading - breaking up the home into literally its parts, object by object - much like the Saul Steinberg sketch *The Art of Living* (at some point also published within the pages of this magazine), the house design Artovert by Anagram Architects for Dube begins to break open the myth of the home as a familial space of a particular kind and the question of form in a volatile urban landscape.

Using the classical architectural system of drawings - perspective as well as surface development - Shroff unpacks the space of living like peeling an orange, and then

separating it piece by piece; she maintains the integrity and value of each object but now the parts of the whole stand exposed and hence their existence or contribution as elements of architecture come into focus. In doing a similar dissection of the party-walls between two buildings, once one of them is demolished, it further enhances the nature of urban visual structure and the value or place of regular elements such as a wall or a roof or a window and its lonesome journey when architecture is torn down for the dream of a newer one. Aspirations inside architecture, and aspirations outside with architecture of the street, get both exposed and critiqued as Shroff dismantles and meticulously draws with equal attention and care, line by line, every element of architecture. The act of drawing and the act of exploding the whole into its evident parts become a process of analysis and argument. The work of the artist here is close to the theorist's analysis and critique. Often these days many architects assume the role and mantle of the artist and hope to engage with architecture and its nuanced life, but often only land up fetishising elements and objects of architecture; such exercises do not develop an understanding of the value, the travels and the travails of the architectural elements but only reproduce them in their most obsessed forms. Architects in the name of art have fetishised demolished houses, and elements of architecture collected from broken down old houses from old neighbourhoods undergoing changes, or miniaturised brick production systems as well as objectified architectural materials in the name of an imagined philosophical exploration. Shroff's work with architectural elements and notions, their ideas and values, is developed through a very serious and rigorous thought process best expressed in the meticulous and rigorous system of drawing and layered modelling.

The Artovert project takes the urban form of home in a landscape of rapid developmental growth in the wake of haphazard planning or no planning laws and tries to bring into it the larger project of civilisation. The home is here about a human self but it is also about the many connections a human life makes with ideas and people in the world s/he lives. As often the trend goes today, design and especially urban homes focus on making introvert agendas, enclosures of sanity and lifestyle, protected zones of indulgence, this project for the artist Anita Dube gets the house to unfold and open up like a *Kaavad* shrine - the insides and outsides are in constant and vibrant, and everyday interaction with each other. The inside and outside are not simply in conversation with each other, where the outside is the walled garden or serene landscape of

a vacation house in the wilderness, but it is actually the acknowledgement of an urbanity within which the life of the artist resides. The city and the society are the homes, and this house design beautifully and strongly expresses this notion of the working and living self within larger contexts and networks of civilisation. The classic forms of the courtyard or window, the louvered wall or the terrace, the living room or the exhibition space all get constantly reworked to create an unfolding box that is house and more at all times. The two institutions featured here direct the idea of the monumental in the way they reproduce it element by element. Using classical forms of monumental expression but by either means of materiality or employment of architectural, landscape, and ornamental details the larger building complex is transformed into a story-telling carpet. Institutions belong to civilisational memory, from faraway past as well as just about yesterday, and the poetics of memory is something that both these projects submit to. The Safdie design stretches the monumental forms between land and sky, or rather lets the forms disappear in their attempt to meet the two, and in the process makes this large building complex absolutely weightless and poetic; the forms vanish as they reduce in size or fade away in their own reflection. The building for the management institute, however, recalls a history of the surface and ornament but juxtaposes it with very modern formal geometry of institutions that assume the role of a national and civilisational vision. Elements of architecture are not objects anymore but instances of centripetal and centrifugal energies, messages, and ideas, expressed in material characters and shapes. They negotiate the terrain of civilisation and the everyday life that architecture is built from and shapes in return.

We would like to close this issue with wishing all our readers a wonderful new year ahead, praying for a world of compassion and intellectual energies, thoughtfulness as well as creative action and critical thinking. We also would like to announce that from this issue onwards, *Domus India* covers will be specially designed by invited designers, artists, architects, photographers, etc. This idea shaped up in a collaboration with designer Ajay Shah who has beautifully designed the cover for this issue and has generously gifted us his time and designs for this and some more covers to come. We are very excited about this new experience and thank Ajay for the cover behind which this editorial resides. **km**

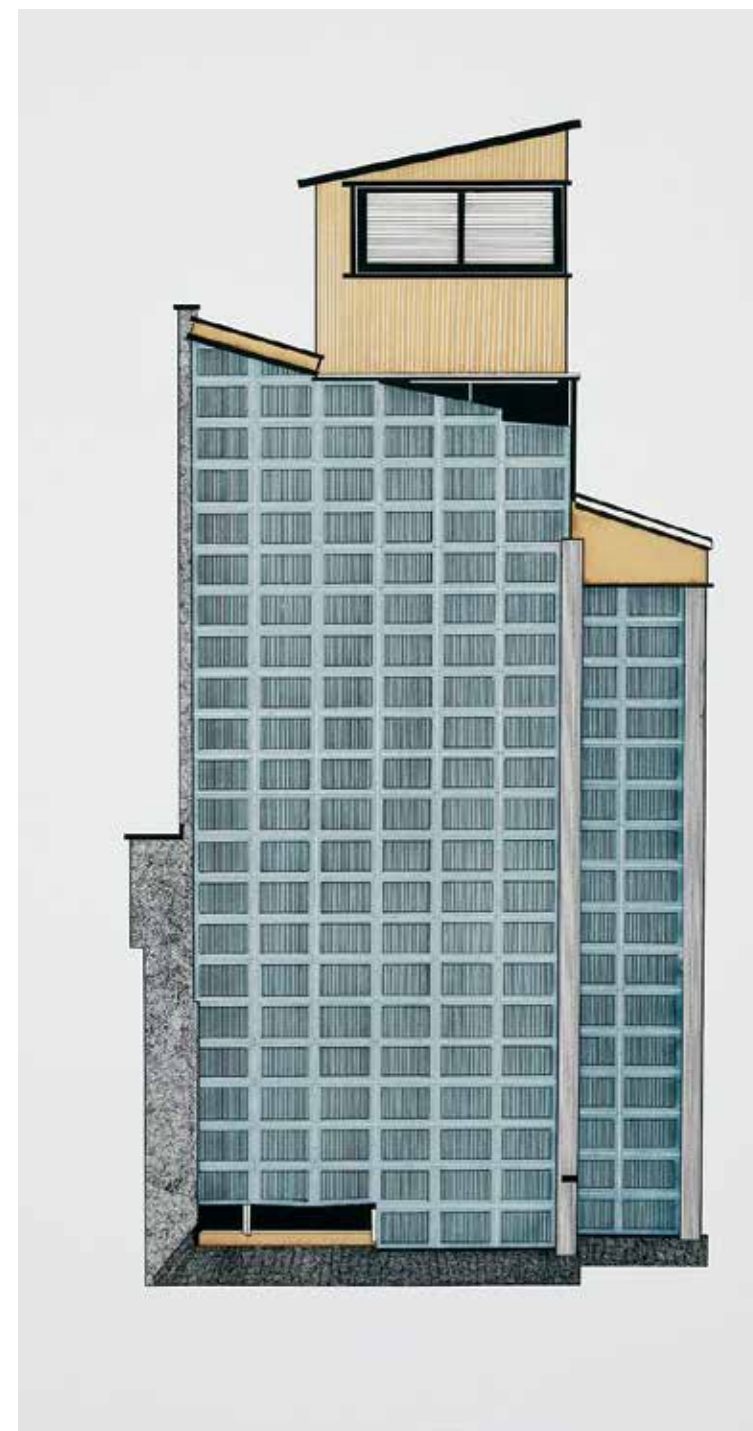
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I AM COMPELLED TO WALK FROM ROOM TO ROOM

An artist abstracts space and yet retains its most measured qualities, and its most human details of use. In these artefacts space is mapped in all its accounts of design - flooring layouts, curtains, furniture, home accessories, and yet... no humans to be seen. Details become objects, and larger schematics become available as form and idea, as well as the hint to the madness within the tidiness; we discuss here the work of artist Vishwa Shroff

Charlie Levine



Party Walls, Tokyo Series 13; Watercolour, Acrylic and Ink on Paper, Aluminium sheet; 15.5 x 13.5 inches; 2016

Tea rings on surfaces have always interested me as a relic of the beginning of something, of an action or an emotion. Why is it there? Is it the result of a vigorous stir, an enthusiastic water pour, a heavy handed slam down or knock, a tentative pick up or the remnants of the spill of liquid between cup and mouth. This simple artefact of life, of being, of a gesture holds within it so much more if one is left to daydream. But look up from the tea stained table and around you, that is where Vishwa Shroff's gaze is. Observing spatial artefacts that we might gloss over, not notice or let us daydream about. Shroff's eyes see beyond

what is in front of us, she takes trigger objects, space or surfaces and draws them, these drawing then postulating our reaction; letting her linear drawings become a trigger for us. - When I first met Vishwa Shroff back in 2012 we immediately bonded. At first because of our geographical bonds to Birmingham, UK, where I am from and she studied in 2003, to our family make ups and relationships with our parents, to a common outlook and sense of humour. Vishwa is a natural story teller and will have you laughing, crying and gasping along to exquisite

tales of her past and nougats of the overheard. We also, and importantly, bonded over our love of space as well as her exquisite attention to detail, sketchbooks and natural ease in creating works in pen. The hand drawn minute details within Shroff's work is incredible, you immediately get the patience, time, thought and meditation that goes into her pieces and you admire her instantly as an artist, and that is before you go deeper; her drawings taking you on a similar journey to that of her stories. Corners, window frames and partisan walls (short handed to partywalls, a phrase that, for me, puts me on the right track of playful

narrative with which to encounter Vishwa's work) are all spaces that hold huge potential and this is where Shroff finds her inspiration - in that which is yet to be really dissected and translated, when the mundane is elevated into the artworks and that missing floor tile or empty vase becomes the focus. The works could be seen as places that holds stories yet told or portals to other worlds, or places we are encouraged to stop and consider further.

"What I am interested in is not the overlooked but rather the mark or signifier or physical manifestation of usage. That a space, wholly and

intentionally conceived, mutates or is in a state of constant change (flux) and the marks these changes leave behind, maybe even as indicators of its initial intent. That the spaces I am drawing are intentional spaces is important to me. The marks left behind from its ware, tare and repair maybe unintentionally as we do not always occupy spaces with consciousness of its original objective or design."

Shroff is a master of line, precision and perspective. These works at TARQ represent her methodical approach to working and how, by minimising content/colour, her

observations become other-neither illustration or architectural drawing, but an insight into how we could look at the world if we narrow our eyes and trip into the whimsy of our minds and memories.

"The mundane nature of the subject itself hopes to become thought-provoking in its stupidity, or simply curious. In a very complex world today, simplicity is rare and amusing."

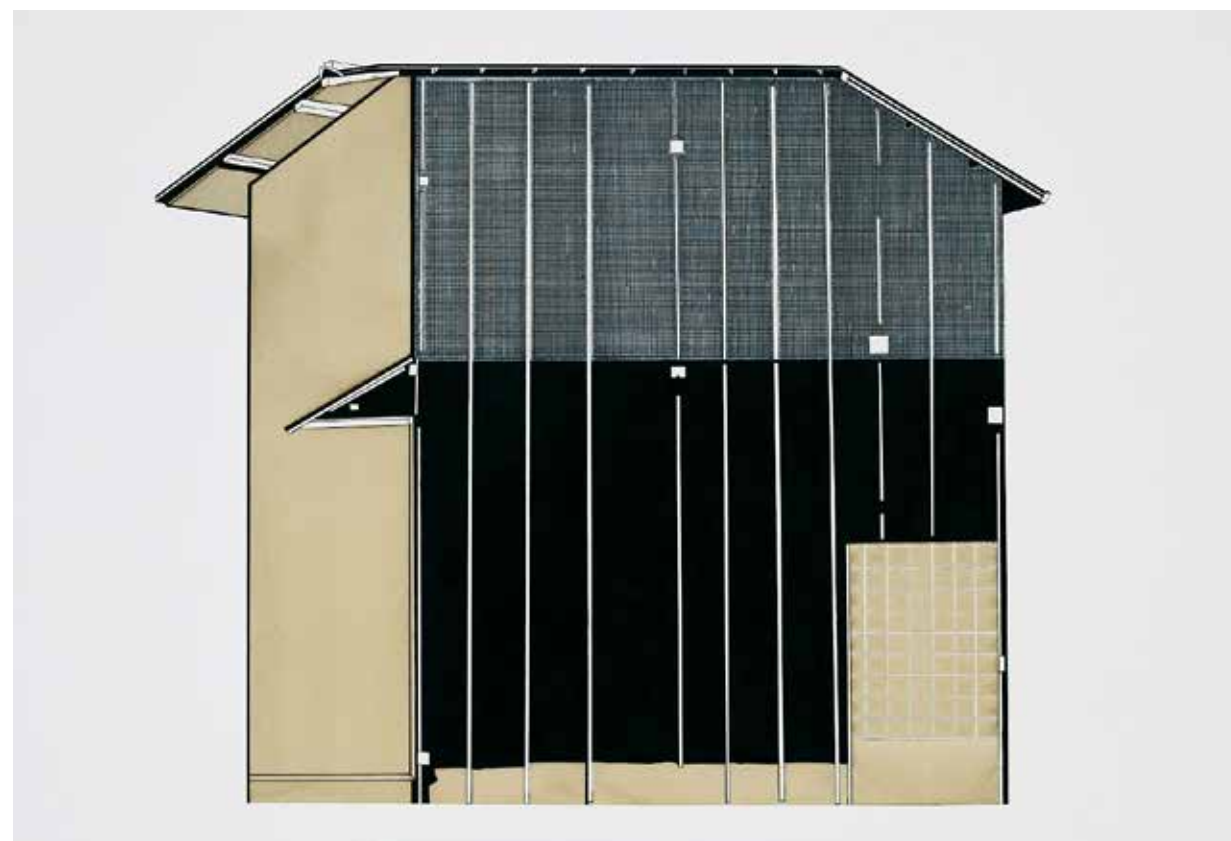
The simplicity of the drawing technique is complimented by the complexities of the form, like paper Victorian toy theatres and paper dolls with paper dresses, the assemblage

Above left: Party Walls, Tokyo Series 11; Watercolour, Acrylic and Ink on Paper, Aluminium sheet; 20 x 10.5 inches; 2016. Above: Party Walls, Tokyo Series 18; Watercolour, Acrylic and Ink on Paper, Aluminium sheet; 12.2 x 18.8 inches; 2016

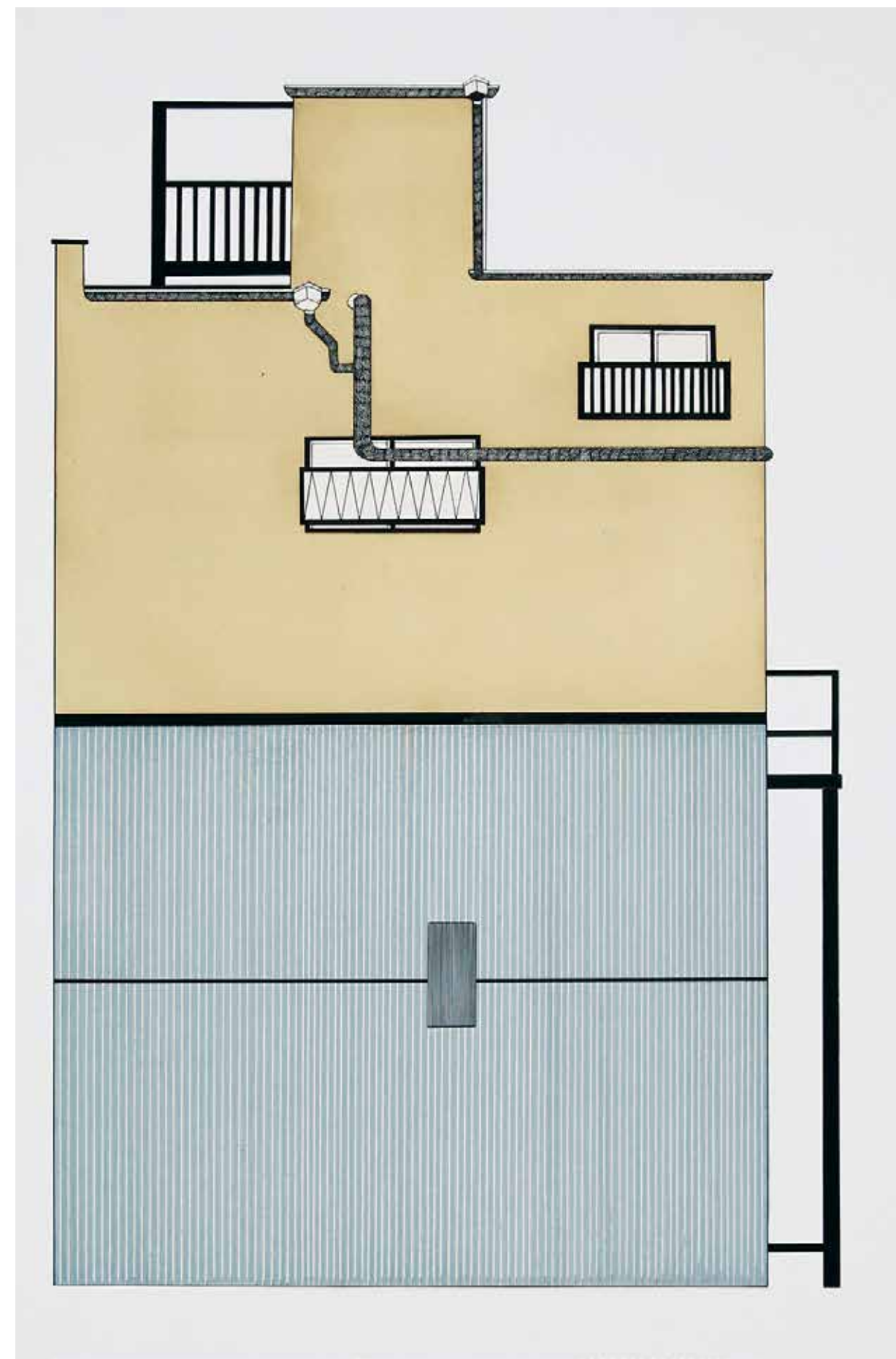


of the paper layers and play that is involved in this making process allows for unique mark and pattern making. There is formality that follows these historical toy make ups that Vishwa brings into her practice. With *Corridor* when you first enter the gallery, Shroff is encouraging you to literally enter how she sees the world. Life size drawings of a place you remember but have never been to, you begin your journey around *Drawn Space* by walking among the pages of a book and into the folds of a story. There is a purposeful lack of human occupancy in her work and this does not mean she is trying to highlight the overlooked or forgotten, rather how the signifiers within the works showcase something removed or what was. This piece creates a dialog between drawing and experiential space. The installation of four panels next to one another emphasises the method of their creation, pages ripped from a book and hung, a dismantled object becoming a dismantled installation. Shroff, along with occasional collaborator Katsushi Goto, is a highly skilled book maker and has produced many books that mimic this larger works. In *Room* we see the life of a room occupied by a single person, as you go through page by page the resident becomes older and, although never visible, the objects left around the space hint at clues to knowing the life of this stranger and how they have lived in and out of the confines of the book/room. Whilst in *Postulating Premises* Shroff and Goto take the familiar, rooms that could be from film stills and we can pass through them, one after the other, room upon room, not knowing where we will end up. Again the

Party Walls, Tokyo Series 12; Watercolour, Acrylic and Ink on Paper, Aluminium sheet; 15.7 x 13; 2016



Party Walls, Tokyo Series 10; Watercolour, Acrylic and Ink on Paper, Aluminium sheet; 12.8 x 15.5; 2016



Party Walls, Tokyo Series 17; Watercolour, Acrylic and Ink on Paper; 18.5 x 11.5; 2016



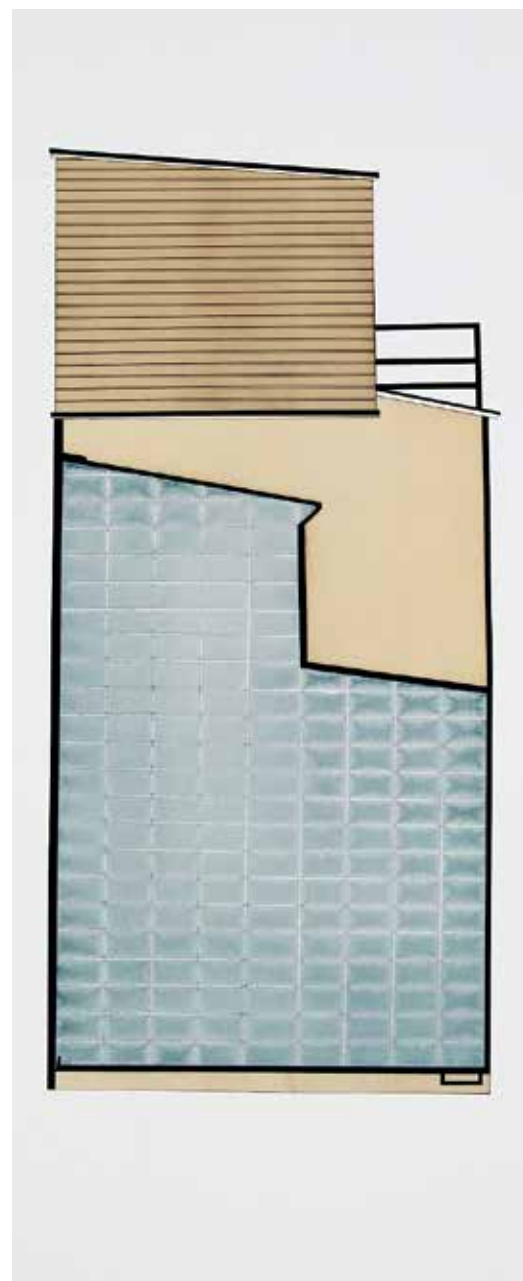
Display at the gallery



Party Walls, Tokyo
Series 14; Watercolour,
Acrylic and Ink on Paper,
Aluminium sheet; 19 x
10.8 inchesYear: 2016



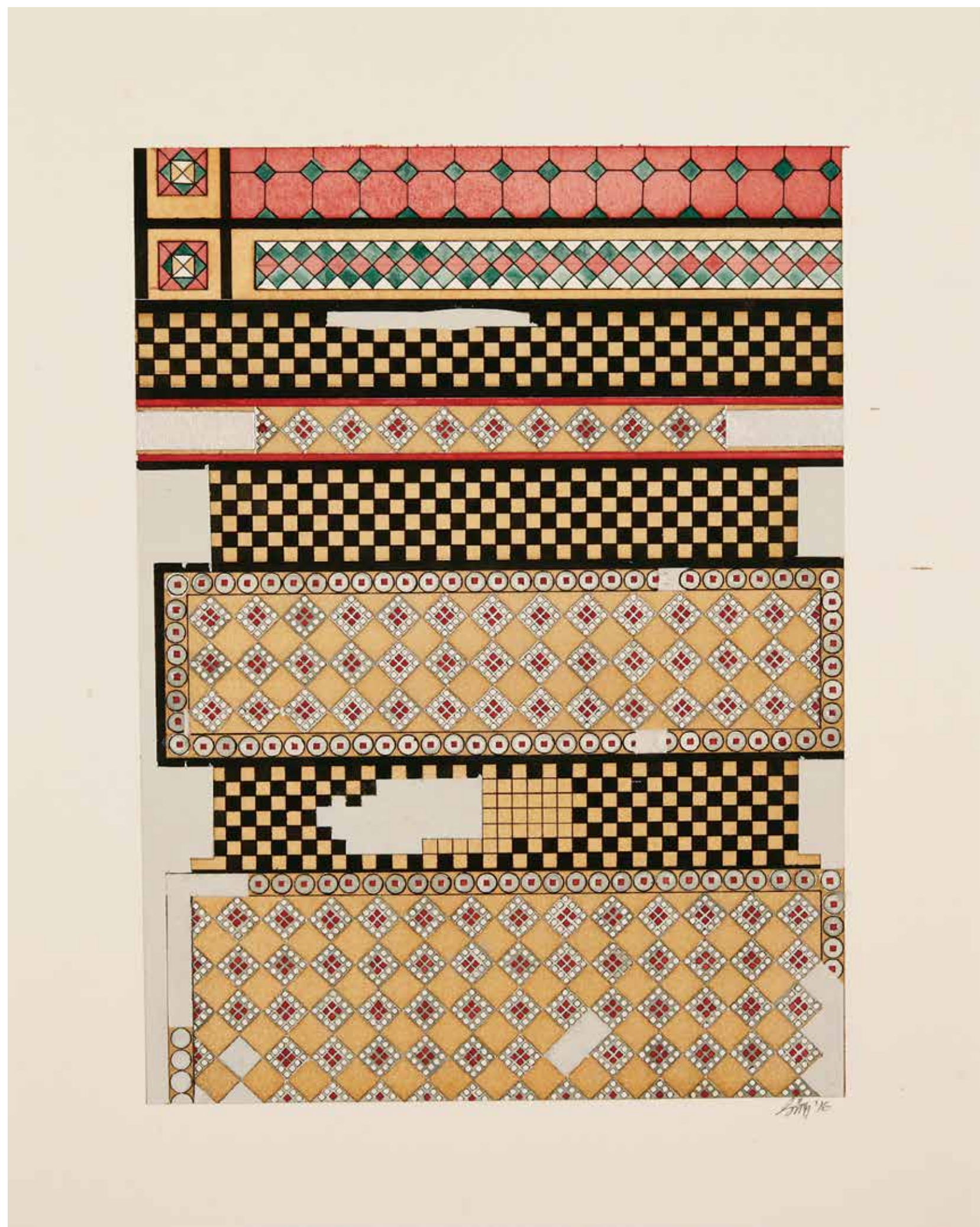
Party Walls, Tokyo
Series 4; Watercolour,
Acrylic and Ink on Paper,
Aluminium sheet;18.2 x
13 inchesYear: 2016



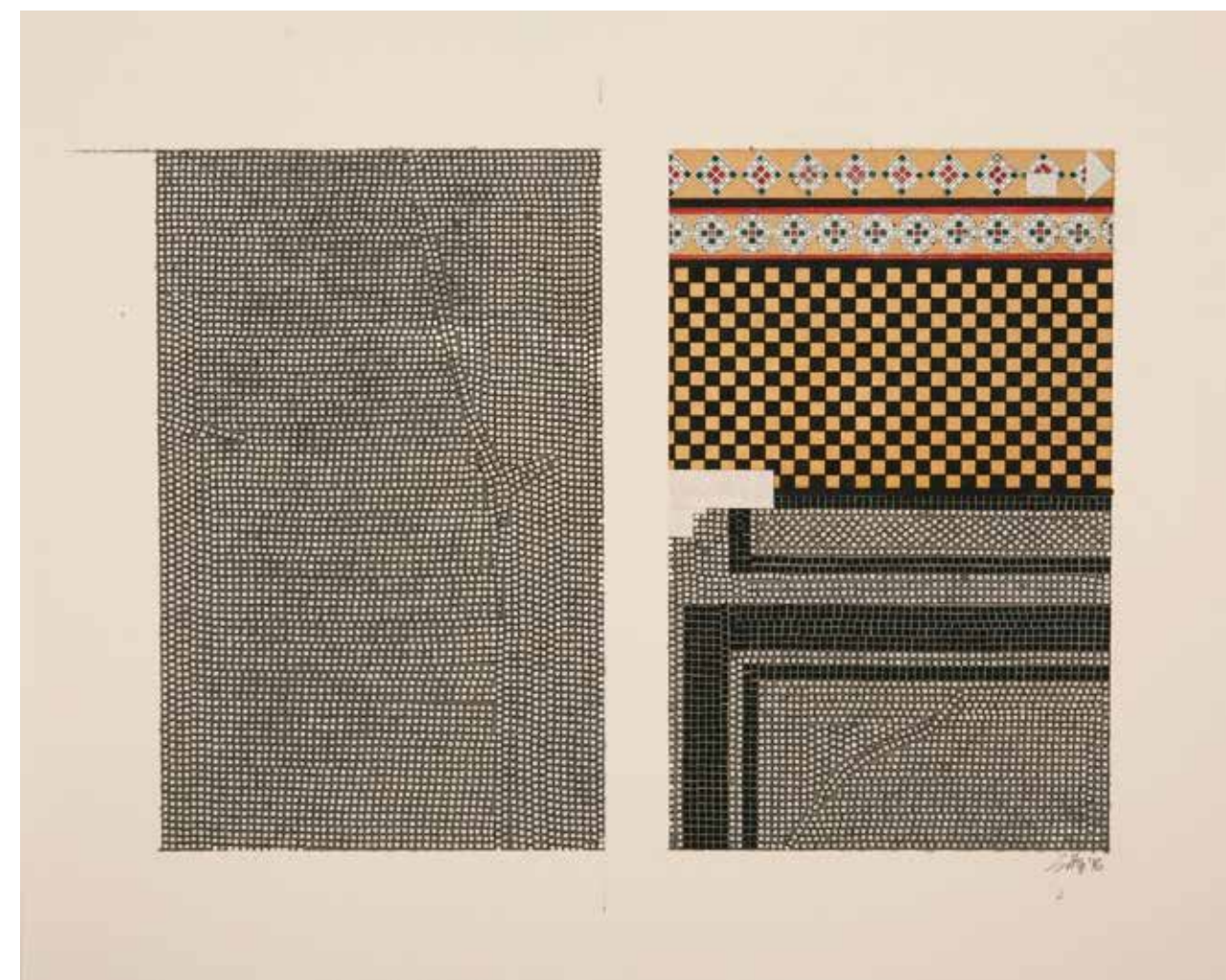
Party Walls, Tokyo
Series 3; Watercolour,
Acrylic and Ink on
Paper, Aluminium sheet;
19 x 10 inches; 2016



Party Walls, Tokyo
Series 7; Watercolour,
Acrylic and Ink on Paper,
Aluminium sheet; 14.6 x
13.2 inches; 2016



Transition 1; Watercolour and acrylic medium on archival paper; 10.5 x 8.25 inches; 2016

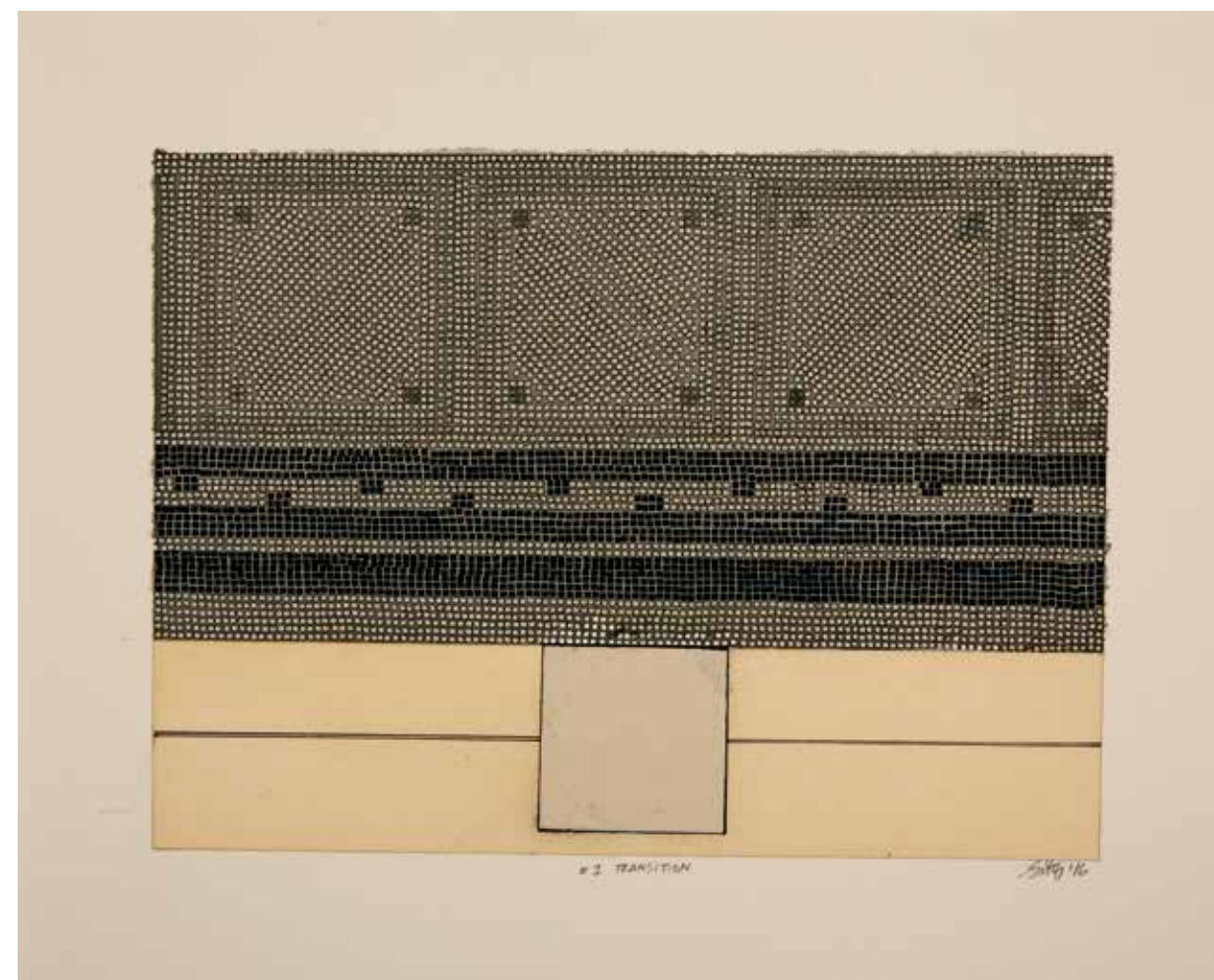


Transition 2 Medium; Watercolour and acrylic medium on archival paper; 8.25 x 10.5 inches Year: 2016

residents of these spaces are absent and it is us who write the plays that happen within these pages and—as with this work specifically—when the book is separated and the pages presented like old fashioned toy theatres we can physically see these rooms as sets. This flexible work lets us be narrator via the book and performer via its 3D presentation.

“What happens in the small format is now something that we challenge as a drawing in Corridor. How can these ways of drawing stand independently from the “one behind the other” experience and can it, as a drawing, have a duality or curious duality?”

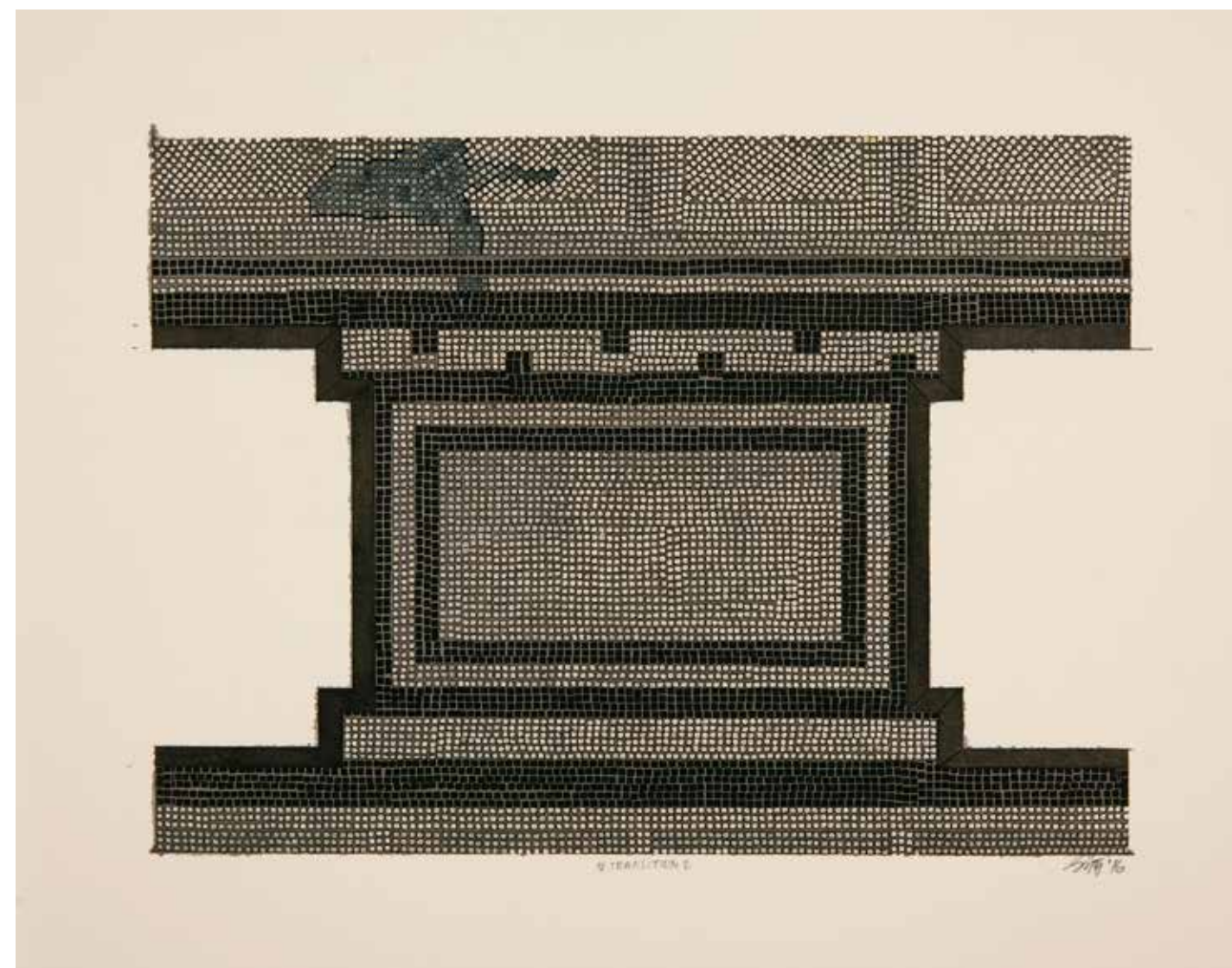
This manipulation of the imagined spaces and the impact it has on us as a viewer is key to Shroff's work. She takes what we think we know, what we think we saw and re-presents it to us with a twist. The simple line and lack of colour makes it opportunity for us to 'paint by number' our memories onto them, while she continues to manipulate the 'colours' we will chose by visual allegories and presentation methods. Shroff used to say her work was very much about this, the creating of space for audiences to compose their own narratives upon, which this exhibition certainly allows, but it also does something else, it lets us experience the void of story, fable, advert or proverb.



Transition 8; Watercolour and acrylic medium on archival paper Dimensions: 8.25 x 10.5 inches; 2016



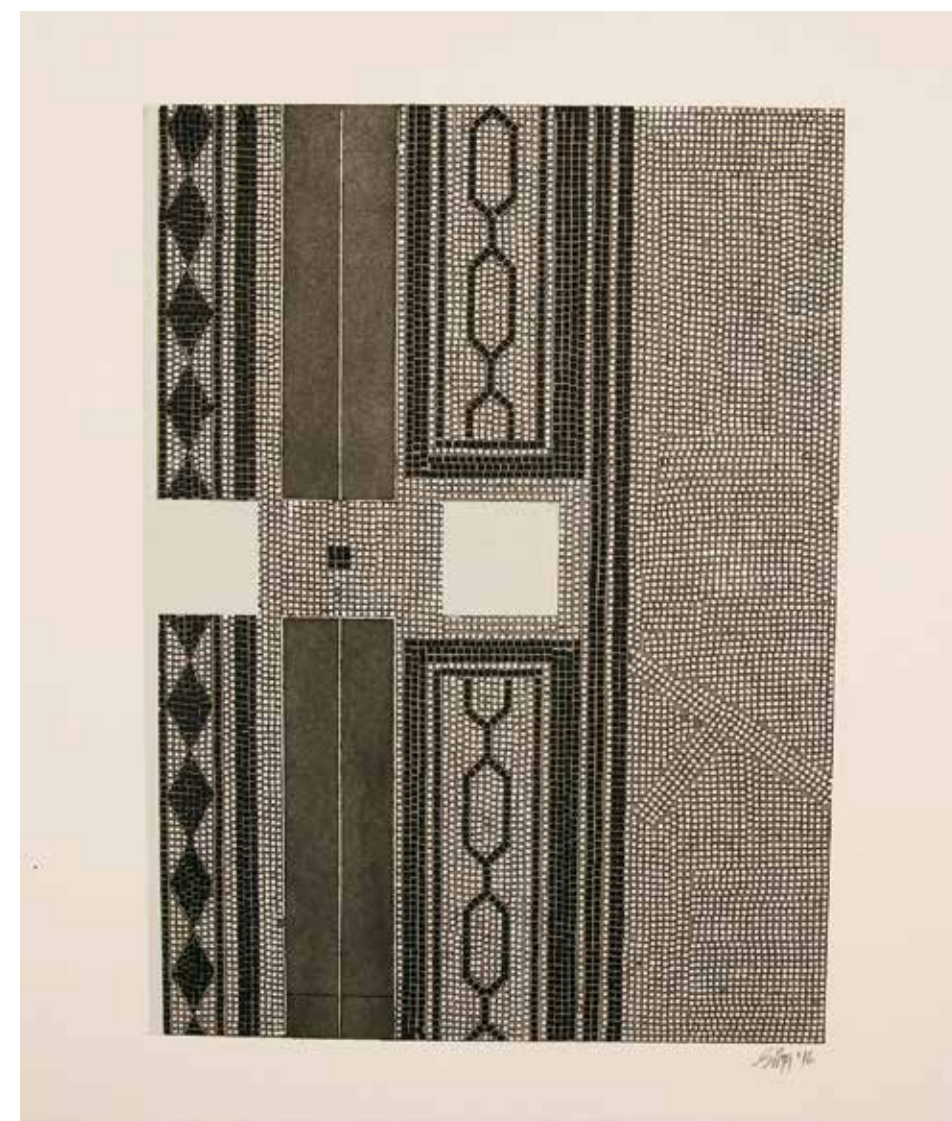
Left: Transition 3; Watercolour and acrylic medium on archival paper; 10.5 x 8.25 inches; 2016. Below: Transition 7; Watercolour and acrylic medium on archival paper; 8.25 x 10.5 inches; 2016



Transition 6; Watercolour, Acrylic and acrylic medium on archival paper; 10.5 x 8.25 inches; 2016



Transition 4 Medium; Watercolour and acrylic medium on archival paper; 10.5 x 8.25 inches; 2016



As with her *Perspective* works, the unfolding of space into something 'new' creates an alternative plane for seeing into the objects / artefacts space and furnishings. On her reading of Robin Evans' *Translation from Drawing to Building and other essays*, Shroff comments that passageways within architecture – and her artworks – are manifestations of movement; the moving from one to the next encourages a natural narrative. These rooms hold hints and clues to who has been there previously or who may return imminently, the keys to opening the stories we inhabit.

"It is in these spaces that the eye and mind wander. Not standing still even for a moment as though on a treasure hunt, I am compelled to walk from room to room, up and down and round and round repositioning the body with a thirst to scrutinise every inch, survey every corner and dekho every detail. This restlessness is then as much an object held in the room as the furniture and furnishings, characteristic of a its new, temporary inhabitant."

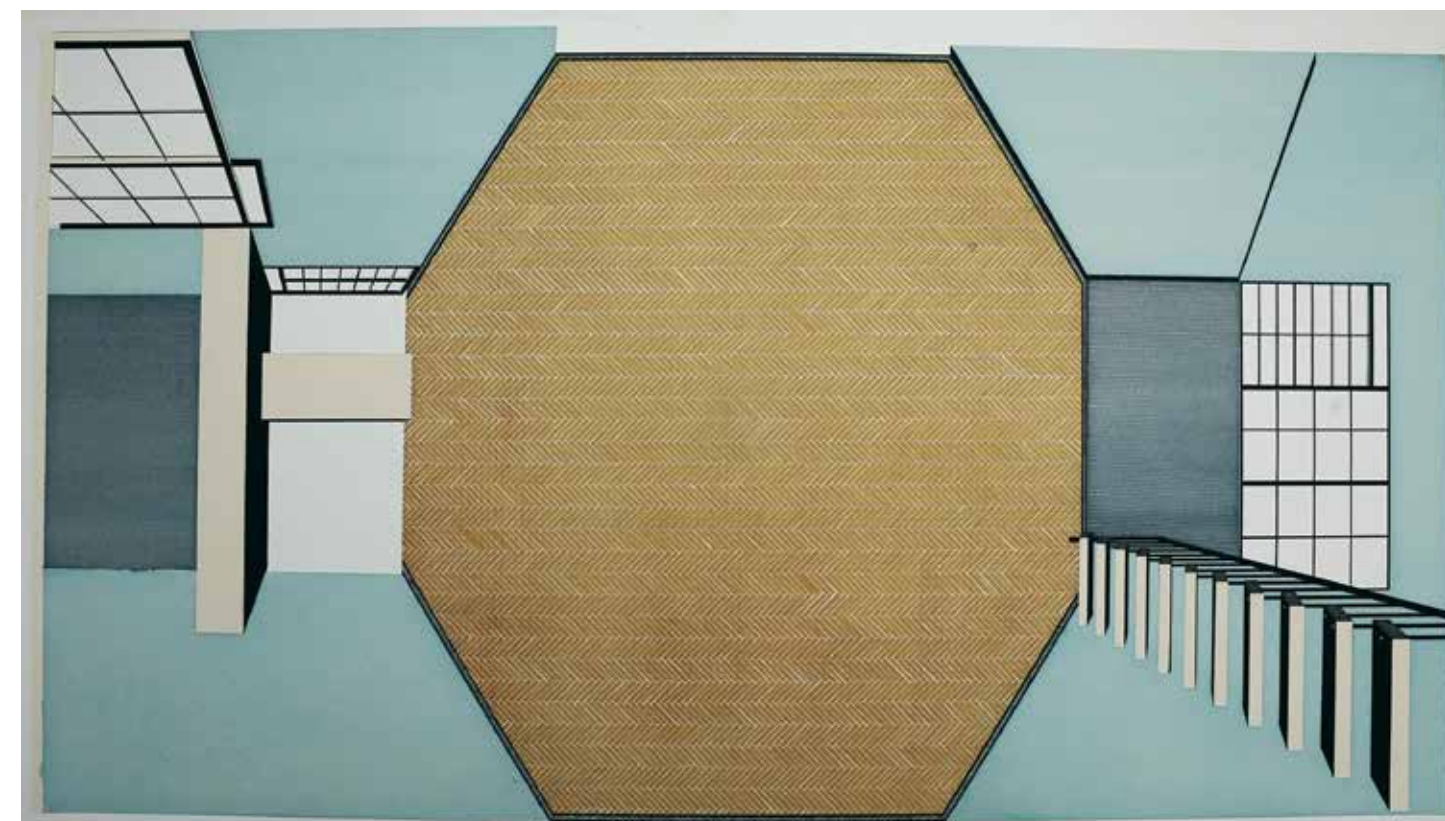
Shroff's works have developed, as has her thinking around the narrative and the audiences power to create it. Rather it has become a moment of absent narrative, the moment you wake before your consciousness catches us, the split second between day dream and reality; it is these moments that she now presents to us.

"I think while I don't completely negate narration yet, its position has been reconsidered. The aspect of narration that comes from line drawing is taken for granted and has begun to feel naive in its argument. Rather I have been thinking about methods of drawing. The evolution of representing space or architecture or city that have been employed over history from about the mid 1800's and also how drawing is experienced or how what is drawn is experienced. Narration in that sense becomes play or game both, for me to play while making the work (esp in how objects are placed) and in the mind of the viewer to play as one would we a doll house or lego, permitting

narrative constructs where they are not particularly intended."

For example *Transitions*, a series of drawings based on the floors at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, these drawings of when one floor becomes another are presented on walls. Although heavily patterned and geometric, with a lot of artist concentration in their production, it is the voids between floor tiles and floor boards that become denser than the pattern and the constructed repetitions. As we lose the sense of what we knew, Shroff makes us look at the thing we walk on every day in a different way. We are moved out of the gallery and into an 'other' world which is topsy-turvy, delicate and all ours. We are elevated off said floor, floating and it is not until our feet impact the floor again that the narration starts once more. It is the floor at the moment it lacks any human contact. Shroff is a unique artist and one that whispers greatness rather than shouts it out. She is considered, thoughtful and reflective. She has a

natural gift for seeing and translating that is universally understood and a penmanship that second to none. *Drawn Space* at TARQ is an incredible opportunity to see an artist as they are finding their feet and delivery their best work to date. Shroff has navigated various mediums, methods of production and responses to space and has created a beautiful exhibition that gives us the confidence to become the characters of these created worlds, or hover above, just look, our eyes resting and soaking it all in. @



Opposite page, top: Barbican, Perspective Series; Watercolour and Ink on Archival paper; 11 x 29 inches; 2016. This page, above: Eames House, Perspective Series; Watercolour and Ink on Archival Paper; Variable; 2016. This spread: series of furniture and interior design objects drawn to accompany the installation of the Perspective Series; Below: views of installation of Perspective Series



Vishwa Shroff is currently exhibiting at the TARO Gallery in Mumbai, 8 December, 2016 to 14 January 2017, with a show titled Drawn Space. Text written for the exhibition as well as all artwork images published here with permission from TARO Gallery and the artist