

# Artists who pushed the boundaries through materiality in their art

Looking back at the year 2021, the STIR's round-up on materiality refocuses on a select artists who skillfully exploit the medium and process of their choice.

by [Rahul Kumar](#) | Published on : Dec 22, 2021

All art builds on the solid foundation of craft and working the very media it is made doing so, a thorough understanding and deep comfort with the material and process becomes critical to fructifying any idea. Artists have employed and exploited various media towards this objective. Often, the substance in use has a significant undertone layering the meaning and context of the work. And in contemporary genre, there are many who have pushed the boundaries of what a particular material has been used in the past. At STIR we have celebrated such cutting-edge work. Looking back at 2021 are seven global artists who created magic and wonderment through materiality.

## 1. The sculptural art of Kristof Kintera gives creative expression to e-scrap



Postnaturalia

*Image: Courtesy of Kristof Kintera*

The green pastures, sprawling fields, untamed gardens embellished the earth before major portions decayed and turned into barren land. If nature was open for communal gatherings in the Stone Age, then the non-renewable energies have isolated the human in the current times or the 'copper-age' as Czech **mixed media artist**, Kristof Kintera would like to call it. To visually translate this phenomenon into **art installations**, Kintera represents the binary running between nature and technology – botanical world gradually eaten by the junks of technology. In contrast to the popular Anthropocene artwork: simulating the effect of change in our nature, armed with the gravitas to dismiss any sense of absurdity, Kintera likes to paint his works with a streak of witty sarcasm.

## 2. Ayesha Singh uses architectural elements to comment on hierarchies of power



Flag (Torn)

Image: Ayesha Singh, Courtesy of Nature Morte

The flag, since time immemorial, has held a potent significance as a symbol of identity creation in relation to imposed demarcations, such as borders and territories. Considering its universality, contemporary visual artist [Ayesha Singh](#) utilises its familiar form to imply the inherent connotations that are accessible globally. Within this framework, she addresses the nuanced manner in which architecture holds up socio-political hierarchies in reference to the politics of flags.

### 3. [TARQ](#) presents Boshudhara Mukherjee's second solo show, 'The Familiars'



Egg, on the far left, and Adi on the right, by Boshudhara Mukherjee

Image: Courtesy of TARQ

[Bangalore](#)-based [textile artist](#), Boshudhara Mukherjee, says, "The way the audience reads a work is always intriguing and gives me, the artist, a new perspective to my work. I don't really think of my works as birth, death and rebirth but simply as a character, function, and love for material. I hate wasting/throwing things away, especially fabric, ending up with cupboards full of old material, anything I believe I can reuse or fix, usually belonging to my family and friends. Everything to me is recyclable and this idea ver

naturally extends into my art work. My old artwork to me is eventually just material to reuse, no different from converting a once loved piece of clothing into a patchwork blanket. The decision is thus a purely aesthetic and practical one”.

#### 4. Li Gang's art practice is a revelation on the significance of materiality



Beads No. 2

*Image: Courtesy of Galerie Urs Meile*

Given the rise in the number of artists and the performance pressure to present a plethora of artworks, more often than not, it leads to the production of replicas, where the novelty takes a backseat and a challenge to create incessantly ends up defining art practice. Standing apart from this lot is the Chinese artist, Li Gang, whose art practice creatively weaves in and out of multiple disciplines such as **painting, printmaking, architecture and installations**. Avoiding any kind of flippancy, a variety of artworks by Li Gang pushes the viewers to understand every work in a new light. Accustomed to his metaphors and draw analogies while running between the series of an artwork, Li Gang's works opens an opportunity for his audience to glide into the world of an uneasy inexplicability only to reveal the presence of, until now, unseen.

#### 5. Alex Frost's art practice revisits the act of fast consumption and consumerism



Tuna Mayo on White Bread (Coop), Corned Beef on White Bread (Tesco), Cheddar and Red Onion (Tesco), Cheddar and Roast Vegetables on Rye Bread (Tesco)

Image: Ollie Hammick

The sandwich packed in a one-time-use material is a common sight in our urban life. The pizza slice purchased and consumed hurriedly is another common practice. The 'on-the-go' food when displayed outside cold storage spaces as an installation on the wall could be held as a common phenomenon. The UK-based multidisciplinary artist, Alex Frost, with his works across sculptures and videos talks about the act of consumption. The work is all about the 'on-the-go' food, the kind of food you would see at a train station or you would see at the entrance to any convenience store, ready to be bought and eaten quickly. On his return to London six years ago, after living away for more than 20 years, Frost realised the expanse of hyper-modern urban life.

#### 6. Artist duo TARWUK discusses their solo exhibition in Italy, 'Ante Mare et Terras'



Tuzni Rudar by TARWUK

Image: Courtesy of TARWUK

The works by Bruno Pogačnik Tremow and Ivana Vukšić, artists of Croatian origin who have come together to create TARWUK, use materials like steel, polyurethane foam, epoxy clay, rubber, wood, BQE relics and various detritus of human presence. Much of the material used in the artworks has been salvaged from the artists walking around in



York, exploring construction sites and debris left on the roadside. Although their art is physically manifested, the penultimate goal of their practice is an innate feeling of being in a place beyond physical.

#### 7. Artist Bosco Sodi collaborates with nature to produce delicately aged abstract



Display at the gallery

*Image: Damian Griffiths, Courtesy of Bosco Sodi and König London*

Mexican artist Bosco Sodi says, "I believe that the accident, the uncontrolled, the unpredictable, and aging due to the flow of time makes a work of art unique. In the course of my work, normally, I work for a few days on the clay or the paintings and then I let it follow its own path. In order to achieve that, I let the elements and the organic ones play their own role. Even for me, the final result at the end is a surprise".

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## About Author



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Rahul is responsible for curating the Art section. He has been a Consulting Editor with Arts Illustrated and has written for various publications like Mint-Lounge and Vogue. Before retiring from mainstream corporate roles, he led an art