

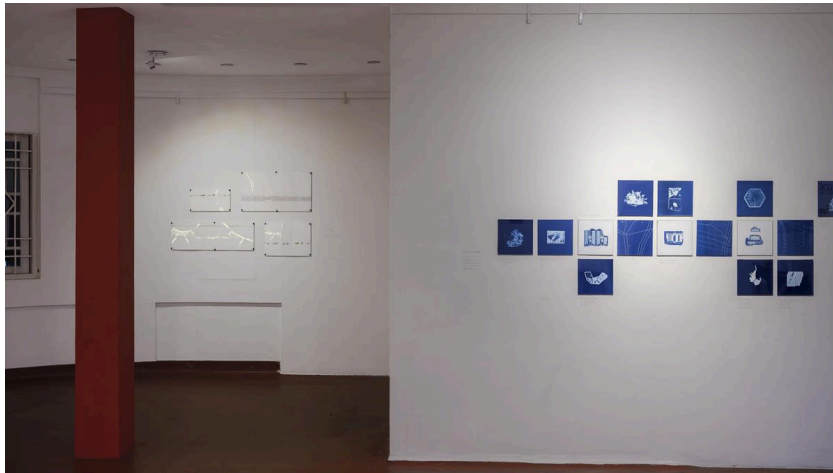
Architecture of Remembering art exhibition in Thiruvananthapuram explores the dynamics of urban existence

The exhibition by Bengaluru-based artists Supriyo Manna and Philippe Calia is on till February 7

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Installations at Architecture of Remembering exhibition | Photo Credit: Philippe Calia

Architecture of Remembering art exhibition, currently on display at the Alliance Française de Trivandrum, explores the impressions left by people across “sites, objects and structures” as they interact with one another. The exhibition, featuring the works of Bengaluru-based artists Philippe Calia and Supriyo Manna, curated by Tak Contemporary, portrays the ever-evolving tapestry of urban existence.

The showcase combines the work of Supriyo, whose pieces are predominantly made from found materials, and Philippe, who uses technology to document his observations.

The exhibition opens with Cloud Atlas by Philippe, a series of satellite images of mining sites across the globe presented as cyanotypes, a type of photographic printing that does not use cameras. There are snapshots from Australia, Tanzania, the USA, South Africa and Armenia.





Philippe Calia | Photo Credit: Gokul P Dev

The artist created this work during the lockdown. "I could not go out to make images. I was compelled to work with what was available. The convenient thing was to browse the planet on Google Earth. **What interested me were these ponds near mining sites**, which are man-made structures where waste is stored. Initially, I had no idea what they were, and was awestruck by their size and colours."

Another one of his works, *Praxis du Souvenir*, is a diptych displayed in a darkroom. One part of the installation is the photo of Philippe's brother with their mother at a beach in France in 1977, and the other is a set of photographs of the same locale taken between 2016 and 2019. For the exhibition, he destroyed photos with chemicals and recorded their degradation and dismantling. These photographs were then stitched in reverse order. When one forms a discernible shape, the contents of the other disappear. "I am interested in that moment, where an image ceases to be a representation of something you can identify with," he says.



Praxis du Souvenir at Architecture of Remembering | Photo Credit: Philippe Calia

In *The Bodyguard Lane Album*, Philippe documents the migrant settlers of the eponymous street in Mumbai. “The families came from Gujarat in the early ‘50s. It was touching to see those family photographs with the street as the backdrop, where Bodyguard Lane had become a home. We were on the streets with cars passing us by; it felt like we were in someone’s living room”

In the work *Nest of an Urban Ploceidae*, Supriyo looks at the life of migrant labourers in Bengaluru. The artist labels them as agents of change in the city, yet they do not have a place to live. “They create informal settlements in the city. I tried to create a memoir or remembrance of those informal structures through this work.” *Nest...* is made of white acid-free paper cut into thin strips woven into a cubicle. “The delicate exhibit is a reminder of how we can create a fragile nest out of space, which speaks about these informal settlements.”



Supriyo Manna | Photo Credit: Gokul P Dev



Another one of Supriyo's works, *Anatomy of a Dead Garden*, presents the "skeletal remains of a vanished garden erased by urban development". The exhibit represents a garden that was destroyed to build a bus station in Bengaluru. "I collected one cut-down tree, created a mould of it and cast it with tracing papers, which are found materials from blueprint shops. I just took those discarded negatives, which carry the real data of structures built around the city."



Anatomy of a Dead Garden at Architecture of Remembering | Photo Credit: Philippe Calia

The papers are stitched together with hair, depicting the fragility of human-made structures. "From our perspective of development, it is very concrete but at the same time, from a philosophical point of view, we are changing this ecology, and making it fragile day by day," he adds.

Field Notes, too, belongs to Supriyo's list of site-specific exhibits containing sketches from construction sites. The work features latitudes and longitudes, which are labelled as man-made borders by the artist. "I tried to resonate that with my work, where I am also documenting certain boundaries or human-made restrictions."

The exhibition is on till February 7 at Alliance Française de Trivandrum. Time: from 10am to 5pm.

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