

The Odd One

Societal Structures

👤 [Azra Bhagat](#) 🕒 [December 16, 2020](#) 📁 [Uncategorized](#)

Sameer Kulavoor is back at TARQ with his latest exhibition “You Are All Caught Up” where he displays his newest pieces created before and during the COVID-19 lockdown. Buildings are transformed into geometric shapes. These shapes are also used to represent our obsession with technology or the invisible presence of social media in our lives. “It was also the only way left to connect while in isolation” says Kulavoor and is a thread of commonality between the themes he has drawn on.

Each canvas portrays the city in its dysfunctional emptiness. The lack of normalcy and people can be seen in his more architectural works like *Discomfort* or *The Migrants Have Left*. The feeling of home usually reminds one of a comfortable space; a forgiving environment. During the recent pandemic, however, this is the only space we have left to inhabit. The many changing forms of home speak of a structure under pressure. Expanding, contracting and getting distorted based on our day-to-day experience of it. Kulavoor also addresses the socio-political issue of displacement of the disenfranchised.





Studio 58 by Sameer Kulavoor.

Kulavoor's painting of his own studio titled *58* is by far the most interesting play on forms and touches upon the different ways of seeing things. One can hold the Escher-like canvas in any direction and the piece will still make sense. Imbedded within the canvas are many Kulavoor's, his works, his pet cat, his different technological devices and much more. We can see a canvas from "Man of the Crowd," a canvas from his current show *Fear of Missing Out* and a self portrait. The painting is self-referential and is similar to @cinta_vidal an Instagram artist's work.

A political piece *Read and Resist* is a painting of the recent protests in Shaheen Baug where the adults are streaming their dissent through a plethora of camera phones. This piece ties

into his work about the migrants who are also being oppressed. The children are sitting in the forefront of the painting reading books and paintings titled “Democracy” and “Imagine” with books by prolific thinkers such as Gandhi, Nehru and Mandela. It is hopefully looking towards a future of equality and knowledge over fascism and propaganda. With a nod to the Australian bush fires in January 2020 and climate change there are many historical markers of time embedded within the piece.

Kulavoors exhibition “Man of the Crowd” that was unveiled at TARQ in 2018 seems to be the starting point of this direction in Kulavoor’s work which is much more people-centric. His newer pieces have figures that are much bigger in scale as well as have multiple viewpoints. Kulavoor still adds in all the details like the paving structures of footpaths, cigarette butts and rubber chappals (slippers). All these details in signs and clothing gives his work the context of an Indian environment as well as differentiates it from other figurative paintings.

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