

HGCREATORS

'Salted Caviar' by Parag Tandel Shines An Anthropological Spotlight On Mumbai's Koli Community

Parag Tandel's solo exhibition at TARQ explores how time, colonialism, and language have shaped the histories and identities of Mumbai's original inhabitants.



The exhibition underlines how much of a community's knowledge and identity can be lost when its language is interpreted through a colonial lens. Parag Tandel

Samiddha Singh

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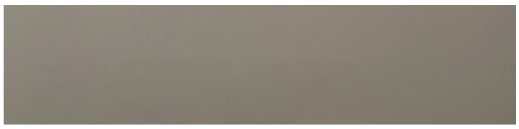
At first glance, *Salted Caviar* by Parag Tandel feels like a material study of the ocean. There are textures, fish motifs, references to water, and words that seem like translations. The works are abstract, beautiful, and deeply connected to the sea. But it is only when you hear the artist walk you through them that you see the relationship of the Koli community with time.

My understanding of Mumbai and the Koli community has always been shaped by the city as it exists today. This exhibit gave me an insight into how time and colonisation affected the original inhabitants of Mumbai.

Through an anthropological lens, Tandel explores the Koli community's relationship with the ocean, tracing how its language, beliefs, traditions, and ways of life have evolved over time. The works look at the community from within, but also question how it has been understood by outsiders, and how colonisation has shaped the meaning of its identity.

One of the first things the exhibition explores is language, and the things that get lost in translation. Using yarn and other materials, Tandel creates a visual interpretation of a spider, drawing attention to the origins of the word '*Koli*', which is associated with the community's colonial-era naming. He also explores words that carry meaning specific to the community and cannot be translated so easily. '*Garva*', for instance, refers to a traditional fishing technique that uses a hook. It underlines how much of a community's knowledge and identity can be lost when its language is interpreted through a colonial lens.





From language, the exhibition moves into belief and religion. '*Salt Shrine*' explores how the Koli community's relationship with worship has evolved over time, from spiritual connections with nature to the influence of organised religion and colonial encounters. Through yarn and colour, the works trace these shifting belief systems, examining how the community's religious practices have transformed through colonisation and the passage of time.



Tandel also touches on the political struggle of the community's ongoing struggle with industrialisation and the petrochemical industries that occupy spaces deeply connected to its history and livelihood. Tandel brings in material from Jaisalmer, a region associated with the ancient Jurassic sea, to explore the relationship between the ocean, natural resources, and the Koli community. The work draws a connection between the ocean as a source of life and the extraction of resources from it, raising questions about capitalism, ownership, and what happens when the very environment a community depends on becomes an industrial resource. The use of stone also brings the conversation back to the materials and tools associated with traditional fishing practices, connecting the geological history of the ocean to the lives shaped by it.



The exhibition also looks at the community's relationship with technology, particularly the changing ways in which we use and occupy the ocean. In one series, Tandel

the changing ways in which we use and occupy the ocean. In one series, Tandel reimagines traditional Koli recipes through the visual language of ocean cartography. He then takes these sketches into artificial intelligence, exploring how the technology interprets and transforms them. During the walkthrough, the artist spoke about underwater data centres as an inspiration for the work. There is something particularly interesting about this juxtaposition: a community that has always understood the ocean as home and livelihood, set against a future in which the same ocean becomes infrastructure for an increasingly digital world. What does it mean for technology to occupy a space that has long held its own knowledge, histories, and ways of life?



Salted Caviar is an exhibition that asks you to look closer, to understand the stories held within materials, and to consider how a community's relationship with its surroundings changes over time.

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'The Art Of Less' Explores Producer Bobby Kang's Layered Relationship With Music

The British producer takes us through his hip-hop roots, his discovery of Punjabi music and the curiosity that informs his approach to sampling



Disha Bijolia

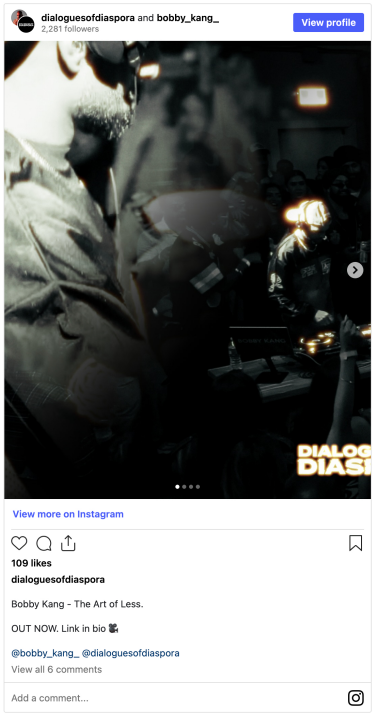
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Summary

British hip hop producer and DJ Bobby Kang is the subject of 'The Art Of Less', a short documentary by Dialogues of Diaspora. The film explores his relationship with hip-hop, Punjabi music and sampling, following the influences and musical curiosity that shape his production. Kang also discusses his identity as a Punjabi hip-hop producer and the creative skill involved in building new sounds from existing records.

British producer and DJ Bobby Kang has an eclectic relationship with music that spans genres and generations with a sound built around hip-hop, soul, funk. He's perhaps best known for his production work with Punjabi rapper Raf-Saperra, including tracks from '*Ruff Around The Edges*' and '*Modern Mirza*' and '*5 Deadly Venomz*', where Punjabi folk and hip-hop come together through his sample-driven approach. His own project, *Soulquarius*, is a seven-track homage to the Soulquarians, the collective of musicians and producers associated with D'Angelo, Erykah Badu and Q-Tip. With guest mixes on Rinse FM and Foundation FM, appearances on BBC radio and a monthly show called *Thirty By Thursday*, Bobby has spent years developing an approach to music that comes down to an instinct for finding the right sounds and knowing what to do with them.

His practice now shows up in '*The Art Of Less*', a short documentary by Dialogues of Diaspora, a creative production house that explores South Asian stories through films, talk shows and print publications. Founded by Sanvir Singh Chana and Ramneet Baidwan, the platform has previously explored the lives and work of South Asian artists, musicians and cultural figures through projects like '*Mastané*' and '*Renaissance In The Realm*'. The Bobby Kang film follows him through his musical journey, offering a glimpse into the influences, experiences and personal philosophies that inform his practice.

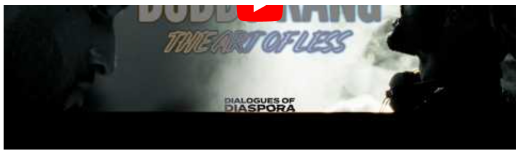


The film is a snappy but intimate ride-along with Bobby as he talks about his curiosity for music, his relationship with sampling and the importance of trusting your taste. He gets into how sampling works and the skill involved in breaking a track into its components, picking out the pieces that speak to you and making them fit in your own vision. Against the perception that sampling is a way of stealing music because you don't play an instrument yourself, Bobby makes a case for the work and creative decisions that go into the process. We also get to hear him talk about his identity as primarily a hip-hop producer who just happens to be Punjabi. He recalls discovering Punjabi music through his mum's CDs playing in the car when he was young, an early introduction that would eventually become part of his musical vocabulary.

In under 10 mins, the film takes us inside the mind of an artist who's devoted to his music, especially when that devotion comes down to spending time listening, developing your taste and following your curiosity. *The Art Of Less* gives us a glimpse into the person behind Bobby's production, and the many influences that find their way into his sound.

Follow Bobby Kang here, check out Dialogues of Diaspora here, and watch the film below:





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