

ART & DEAL

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QUARANTINE ARTISTS

YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

- DHIRAJ SINGH



EVENT

An interview with
CERITH WYN EVANS

- RAJESH PUNJ -

**IN THE MIDST OF
A NIGHTMARE:
BOLLYWOOD LOSES
ICONIC IRRFAN KHAN AND
HEARTTHROB RISHI KAPOOR**

- SHANKU SHARMA

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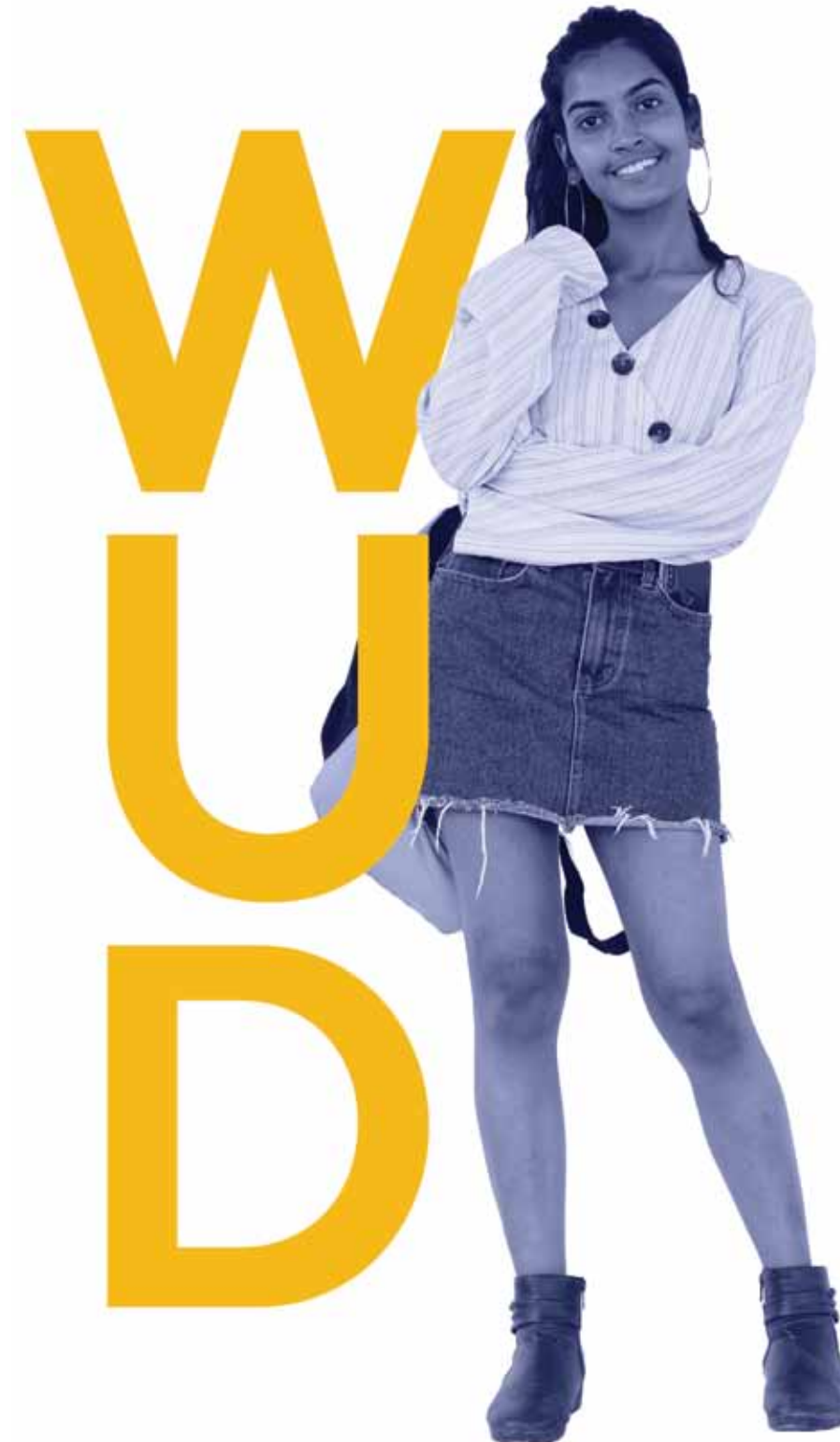
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EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

In spite of the COVID-19 outbreak, the year continues to move forward as the country leaps into Lockdown 4.0. We now adjust all our habits and ways of life in order to coexist with the virus, till we come up with a cure. It is an extremely rough time for the human species as a whole and gives us the opportunity to rethink this world that we have created for ourselves. The holes in our society and institutions have become evident and one can only hope that we use this experience to build a stronger foundation for our country.

In this summer issue, Dhiraj Singh successfully curates a list of The Best of Quarantine Artists in our cover story "Quarantine Artists: You should know about", revolving around artists who understand, comment on and have worked with isolation. Dhiraj understands the artistry of painters to create strong feelings at the hand of changes in perspective and light.

A sudden shocking incident occurred with the demise of two exemplary Bollywood stars on consecutive days in April 2020. Shanku Sharma writes an obituary "In the midst of a nightmare", remembering the iconic Irrfan Khan and the heartthrob Rishi Kapoor.

We bring forth a captivating interview of Cerith Wyn Evans by Rajesh Punj, exploring the neon and light sculptures of the Welsh artist. Where natural light acts as a point of departure, Wyn Evans probes to illustrate the perceptible relationship between the natural and artificial. Natural light illuminating the room stands significant to Wyn Evans' work, the interplay of sunlight with his neon pieces creates a haze around the piece, to the effect of nullifying it, such that when the direct light is at its brightest, the neon disappears.

Manashri Pai Dukle walks through with artist Rajaram Naik exploring Dashavatara Natak in the report "Morphing Faces - Morphing Lives". Naik's project titled "Dashavatara" explores the concept of a costume as a tool of identity, forming a discourse through traditional theatre practice where the masculine intervenes the feminine, as male actors would transform into female characters on stage. "Dashavatara" alludes to the ten main reincarnations of Vishnu, and "Nataka" a branch of dramaturgy.

Indian Art Welcomed in Croatia and Slovenia as reported by N. Kalyani, organized and curated by Hanibal Salvaro, a Croatian ceramic artist, sculptor and painter. His works range from abstract paintings to realistic digital hands-free art as well as brick installations to cement and porcelain blended works. Co- curated by the well-known studio potter and passionate ceramic artist and curator Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal from Gurugram.

Manashri Pai Dukle reviews Counter-Canon, Counter-Culture (CCCC) curated by Nancy Adajania at the Serendipity Arts Festival, 2019 in Goa. The exhibit communicates through the documentation of alternative history from the 1960's to 1980's. Merging the line between curator and artist, Nancy builds a work of art by combining and connecting the art by artist.

As we all strive for some normalcy in our lives and return to work, we pray for everyone's safety and hope we use this time to lend a hand to our fellow people to help and support each other through this global crisis.

Hope you enjoy the read.

Do share with us your feedback at artanddeal@gmail.com

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Cover Detail: 'Mona Lisa' by Fernando Botero (1978) known for painting ridiculously obese versions of famous and ordinary people, Image Courtesy: Hunar TV.

Cover Detail: Rishi Kapoor & Irrfan Khan

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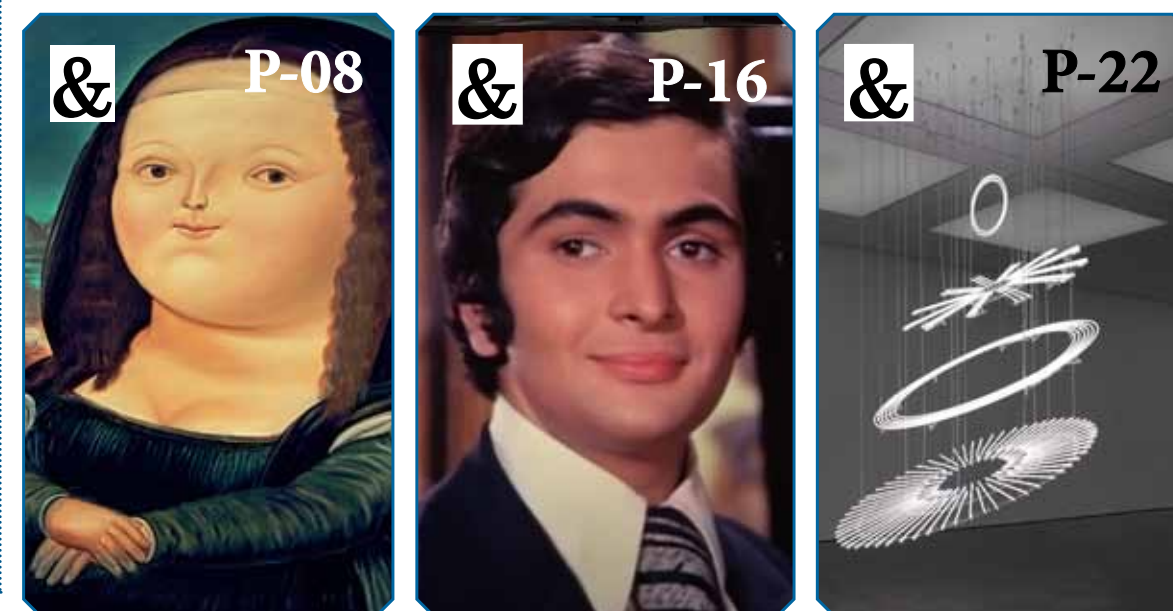
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QUARANTINEART *by Hunar TV*



QUARANTINE ARTISTS
YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

- DHIRAJ SINGH



It was one of those things that you don't plan but fall into place perfectly with an exquisite sense of timing. As the curator of the series, I was looking for works from across the world that commented, however obliquely on isolation and how it plays on the human mind. There were some artists that came to mind almost automatically when one thought of isolation. Others had to be searched and dragged out from obscurity.

^ 'Waiting for a Chance' by Tetsuya Ishida (1999) looks at the isolation of hospitals, Image Courtesy: Hunar TV.

< 'Mona Lisa' by Fernando Botero (1978) known for painting ridiculously obese versions of famous and ordinary people, Image Courtesy: Hunar TV.

TODAY, WE ARE living an event that has no parallels in living memory. You may say, it's just a virus but look at how dramatically it has changed most—if not all—of our realities. The biggest being our ability to open a door and step out... for a stroll, a party, for work, to shop or to even pick up the daily newspaper. If life was an art movement then we are definitely living in Surrealism today. But then again, even before Surrealism arrived on the scene, Art has always been pushing the envelope. Artists through time have been avant-gardists in their own quiet ways, imagining different answers to what it means to see and to be, furthermore addressing them in their own particular idioms.

Who better than the painters know about creating strong feelings through a change in perspective and light. Throwing us into the deep-end of the human mind to help heal ourselves of traumas that we didn't even know existed. Why else would people weep upon seeing 'La Gioconda' or be left speechless gazing at Rothko's colour fields. Which is why I began a series of QUARANTINE ART for Hunar TV, a web channel for the Arts that I co-founded with my partner Sahar Zaman. The idea behind it was to post a picture daily or every other day of an artwork by artists from the 20th century who understood what isolation means to the human animal.



From Odisha in India Jagannath PANDA creates a parallel reality with his fine skill and even finer imagination as he gives us a peek into the future of man and his cities—the ultimate proof and pinnacle of his civilizational progress. Yet despite his power, he is not immune to sudden disruptions from the most unexpected quarters. Panda situates wild animals in cities as if they were the most natural of sights. And somehow now it seems he knew the future better than any scientist.

paintings showing the deep and unspoken love that exists between owners and their pets. Though later in his life he became obsessed with the nudity of the ailing and the ageing, his pet paintings are brilliant in their quiet quest to portray the guileless and powerful love that exists between man and his favourite pets.

Starting out as an ad agency illustrator Richard ESTES's staggering detail in his extreme realism of American cities as they would have looked on 'vacant and quiet Sunday mornings' is prescient of today or what could happen to the greatest of civilizations if there were no people in them. Estes's slick paintings of the city often as reflected on glass windows of shops and restaurants are both beautiful and haunting, especially today.

A not too well-known artist and illustrator Michael SOWA from Germany draws out the dreams and nightmares of city people as they gaze from windows seeing all kinds of unimaginable things happening outside the safety of their homes. In his paintings sharks can be found bobbing their heads on a flooded street and animals raining down outside the window of a cozy home.

Fernando BOTERO is a Colombian legend known for his fat people. It is a vision that draws an immediate

It was one of those things that you don't plan but fall into place perfectly with an exquisite sense of timing. As the curator of the series, I was looking for works from across the world that commented, however obliquely on isolation and how it plays on the human mind. There were some artists that came to mind almost automatically when one thought of isolation. Others had to be searched and dragged out from obscurity. I am happy to say that over a month of posting pictures of paintings by such amazing and gifted artists, I have successfully curated a list—a best of list—of those whom I would readily recommend for this new and unexpected category of 'QUARANTINE ARTISTS'.

Edward HOPPER is one of the first artists that comes to mind when one thinks of isolation. Somewhat a legend, in his lifetime Hopper created paintings that would define the dynamics of space and privilege of the upper crust American life. Hopper's America practiced 'social distancing' much before the Corona virus made it compulsory.

British painter Lucian FREUD created many pet

^ 'Double Portrait' by Lucian Freud (1990) who created stark studies of pets & their parents, Image Courtesy: Hunar TV.

> 'The Entry in Silence' by Jagannath Panda (2008) foretold a human lockdown, Image Courtesy: Hunar TV.



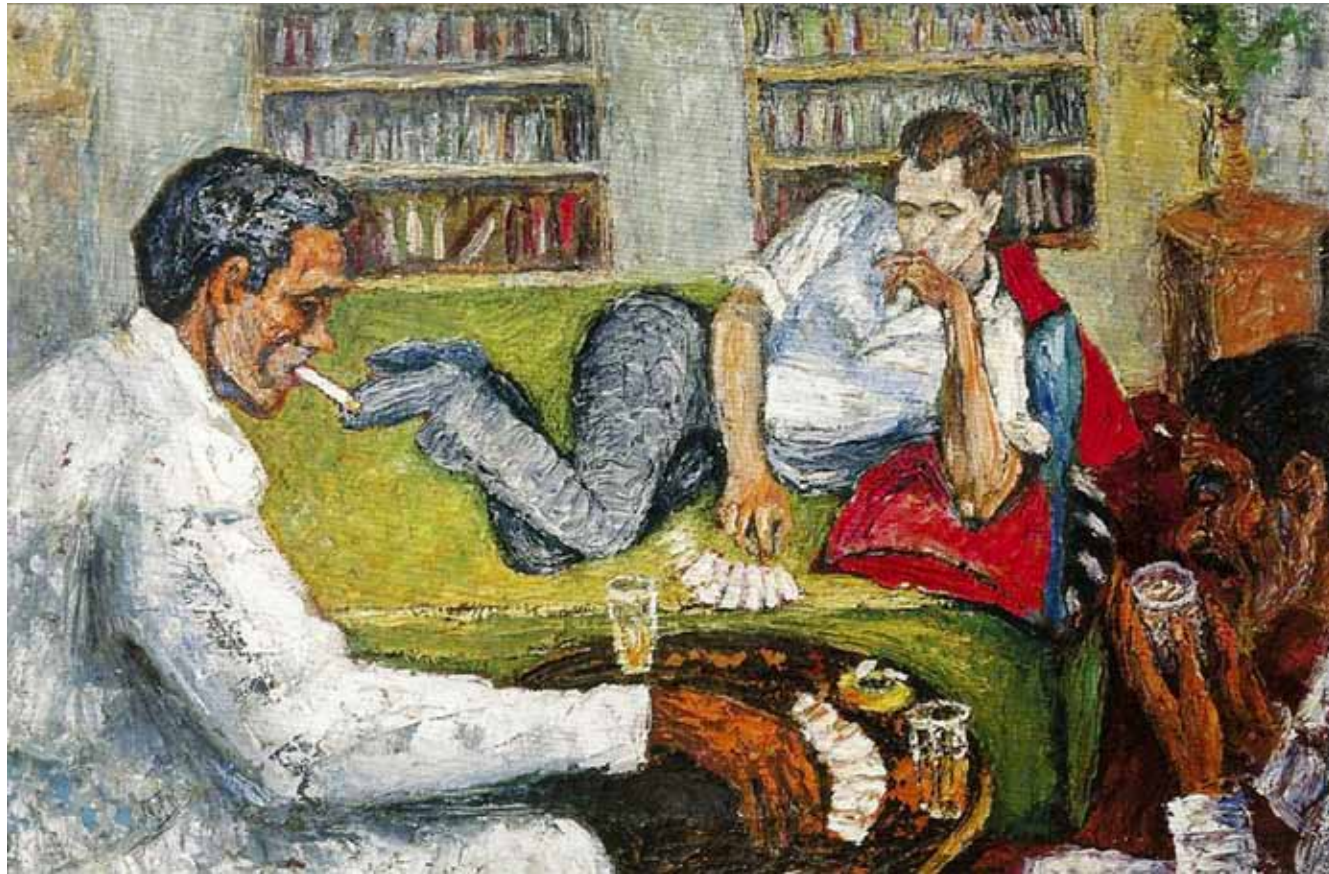


Starting out as an ad agency illustrator Richard ESTES's staggering detail in his extreme realism of American cities as they would have looked on 'vacant and quiet Sunday mornings' is prescient of today or what could happen to the greatest of civilizations if there were no people in them.

^ 'Madison Square' by Richard Estes (1994) who creates photorealistic city streets that suggest vacant and quiet Sunday mornings, Image Courtesy: Hunar TV.

chuckle. Yet beyond it lies a consistent imagination that has created its own unique distortion mirror. Mind you, Botero is not a caricaturist wanting to exaggerate faces and features for effect, his fat people are in fact the opposite of the standardizations modern living often forces onto its residents.

Jack VETTRIANO is from Scotland and he takes the sexy from Film Noir and owns it like no one since or



before. Though his most famous work 'The Singing Butler' is quite uncharacteristic of his oeuvre his other works create a whole realm of things that you can do with your lover under a quarantine. And if exhibitionism is your thing, Vettriano has a painting for that too.

Ghasim HAJIZADEH, a painter I discovered quite by chance as I was drawn to his works about the exile experience of life outside Iran. Unsentimental yet held by a thin, almost invisible web of stories about the home country, Hajizadeh's portraits are almost like people looking at an unattainable destination through their windows.

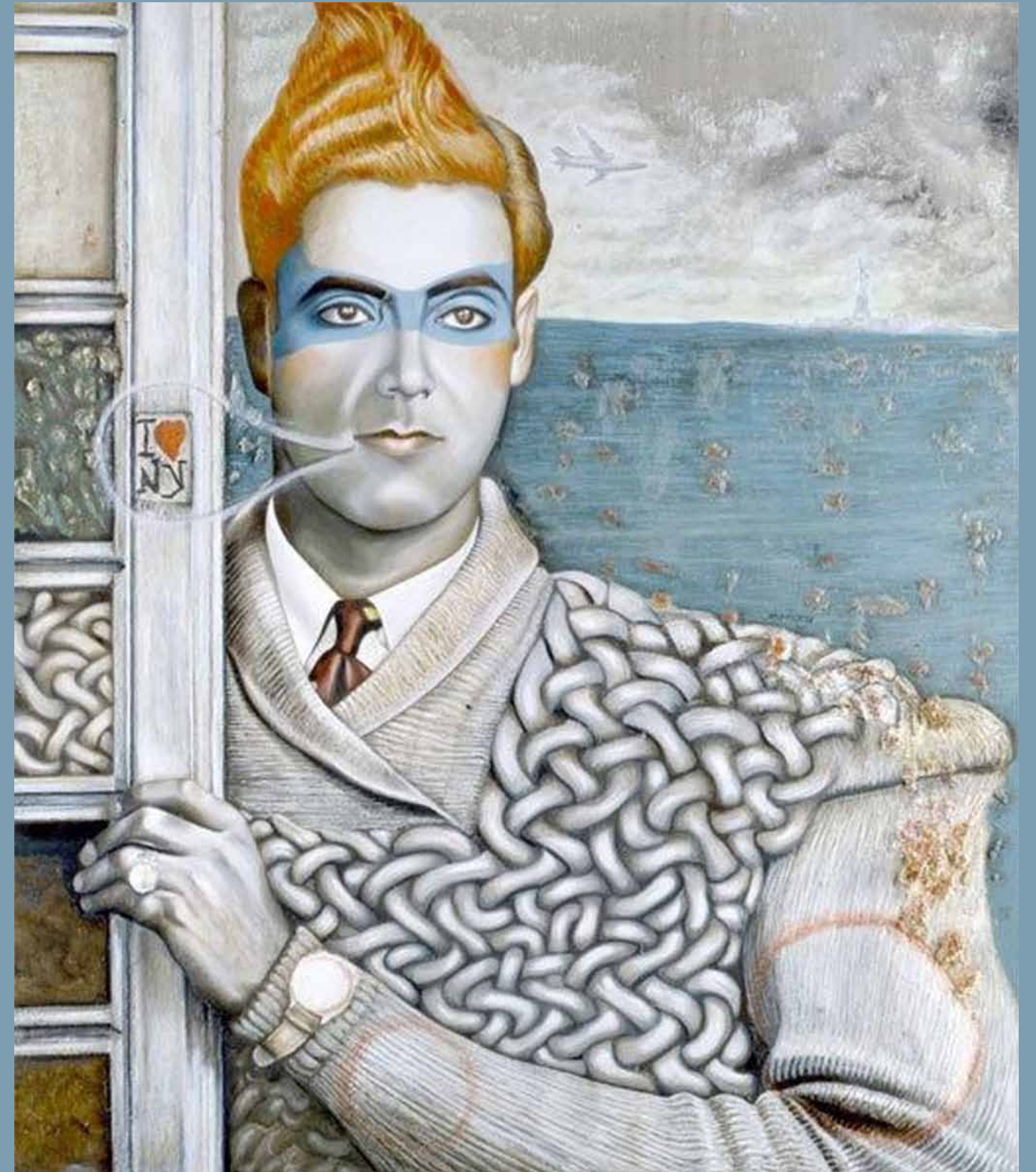
Tetsuya ISHIDA from Japan's Lost Generation of young people, saw Japan morph into a first world technological giant without really addressing human needs such as empathy and warmth. Ishida's people are half machine-half human individuals navigating urban Japan's classrooms, playgrounds and hospitals as if they have lost their anchor.

Polish-Pakistani artist Anna Molka AHMED, a pioneer of art education and used an expressionist style that looked at the people of the then newly made Pakistan in novel ways, ignoring the carefully cultivated formalism of the subcontinent. Anna created newer ways of looking at women and the marginalized in a predominantly upper-class patriarchy.

Ghasim HAJIZADEH, a painter I discovered quite by chance as I was drawn to his works about the exile experience of life outside Iran. Unsentimental yet held by a thin, almost invisible web of stories about the home country, Hajizadeh's portraits are almost like people looking at an unattainable destination through their windows.

^ 'Card Players: Moyene, Burki & Khalid' by Anna Molka Ahmed (1960) looks at the isolation of thinkers and artists, Image Courtesy: Hunar TV.

> 'I Love NY' by Ghasem Hajizadeh (2001) looks at the isolation of exile, Image Courtesy: Hunar TV.



From Odisha in India Jagannath PANDA creates a parallel reality with his fine skill and even finer imagination as he gives us a peek into the future of man and his cities—the ultimate proof and pinnacle of his civilizational progress. Yet despite his power, he is not immune to sudden disruptions from the most unexpected quarters. Panda situates wild animals in cities as if they were the most natural of sights. And somehow now it seems he knew the future better than any scientist.



IN THE MIDST OF A NIGHTMARE: BOLLYWOOD LOSES ICONIC **IRRFAN KHAN** AND HEARTTHROB **RISHI KAPOOR**

- SHANKU SHARMA

“Death is as sure for that which is born, as birth is for that which is dead. Therefore, grieve not for what is inevitable.”

- Bhagavad Gita

It was sudden and shocking. The demise of two brilliant actors (Bollywood and Hollywood) on consecutive days of a single month (April), in a single year (2020) cannot be so easily accepted. Irrfan was 53 and Rishi Kapoor 67. Their versatility knew no bounds, their faces spoke a thousand words and their roles were equally compelling. April could not have been more cruel than this - Irrfan passed away on April 29 and Rishi Kapoor on April 30.

“Har ishq ka ek waqt hota hai. Woh humara waqt nahi tha,

par iska ye matlab nahi ki woh ishq nahi tha.”

- Rishi Kapoor



*“Mohabbat Hain Isliye Jane Diya,
Zidd Hoti Toh Bahaon Mein Hoti.”*

- Irrfan Khan

Rishi Kapoor's charming personality and Irrfan's straight-forwardness fascinated us all. Irrfan was an international actor and took Indian cinema to the world stage. While Rishi Kapoor's stellar performances attracted everyone. Indian cinema will remember both these actors till the end of time.

On the evergreen Rishi Kapoor

“Har ishq ka ek waqt hota hai. Woh humara waqt nahi tha,

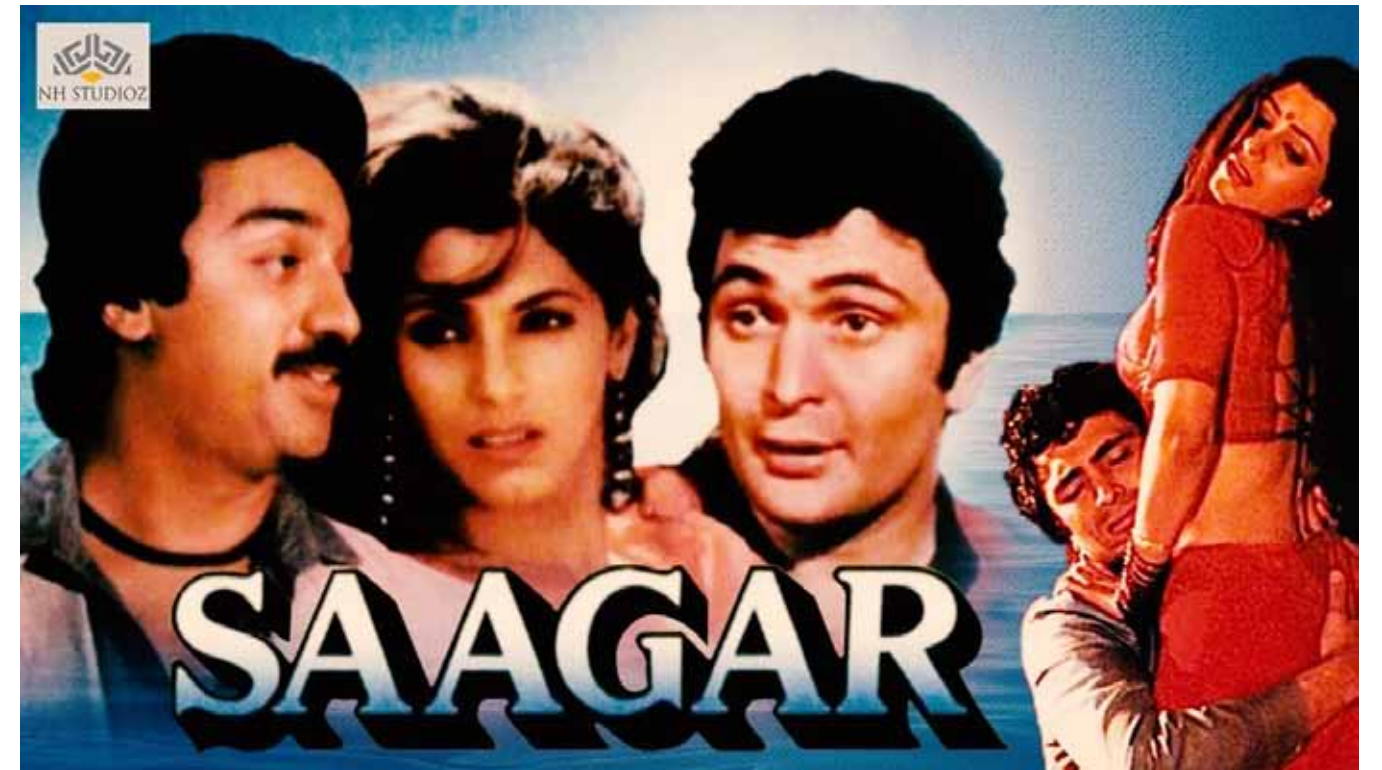
par iska ye matlab nahi ki woh ishq nahi tha.”

- Rishi Kapoor

Rishi Kapoor, the evergreen heartthrob of Bollywood, passed away in a hospital in Mumbai. He was admitted to Sir H. N. Reliance Foundation Hospital in Mumbai on April 29. He fought a long battle with cancer. Rishi Kapoor (September 4, 1952–April 30, 2020) surprised all by winning the National Film Award for Best Child Artist for his debut role in his father Raj Kapoor's 1970 film Mera Naam Joker. He shot into limelight with Bobby (1973) and won the Filmfare Best Actor Award in 1974. Bobby was a landmark film, and it catapulted him to superstardom. He played leading roles as the romantic lead in over 90 films between 1973 and 2000. His acting skills mesmerised all. For his performance in Do Dooni Chaar, Rishi Kapoor won

^ Irrfan Khan in film Paan Singh Tomar

< Rishi Kapoor in film Bobby



the Filmfare Critics Award for Best Actor in 2011. He also enthralled us with his role in Kapoor & Sons. He won the Filmfare Award for Best Supporting Actor in 2017. In 2008, Rishi Kapoor was honoured with the Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award. He and his wife actor Neetu Singh acted in twelve films between 1973 and 1981.

Some memorable lines (Rishi Kapoor)

“Tu saath hokar bhi saath nahi hoti ... ab toh rahat mein bhi rahat nahi hoti.”

“Sharaab peene de masjid mein bahetkar ghalib ... yah woh jagah dikha de jahan khuda na ho.”

“Hum aaj joh faisla karte hai ... wahi hamare kal ka faisla karega.”

“Jaane se pehle, ek aakhri baar milna kyun zaroori hota hai?”

“Main markar bhi na mar saka ... aur na hi jeekar jee sakta hoon.”

“Ek din gaaliyon ka shor taaliyon ki goonj mein chup jayega.”

“Zindagi toh dhoop chaon ki tarah hoti hai ... is mein agar bure log hai, toh achche log bhi hote hai.”

Rishi Kapoor, born Rishi Raj Kapoor, in Chembur, Bombay, to a Punjabi family, was the second son of the legendary actor-director Raj Kapoor and his wife Krishna Raj Kapoor. He was the grandson of legendary actor Prithviraj Kapoor and his brothers Randhir Kapoor and Rajiv Kapoor, and maternal uncles, Prem Nath, Rajendra Nath, Narendra Nath

^ Prem Rog movie poster

> Saagar movie poster

and Prem Chopra, and paternal uncles, Shashi Kapoor and Shammi Kapoor, were all actors. He had two sisters. Some of his unforgettable performances can be seen in films like Rafoo Chakkar (1975), Kabhie Kabhie (1976), Hum Kisise Kum Naheen (1977), Amar Akbar Anthony (1977), Karz (1980), Naseeb (1981), Prem Rog (1982), Coolie (1983), Saagar (1985), Naseeb Apna Apna (1986), Chandni (1989), Bol Radha Bol (1992), Deewana (1992), Shreemaan Aashique (1993) and Damini (1993). Some films post 2000 presented Rishi Kapoor in unique roles. These films showcase how versatile the actor was. He appeared in Yeh Hai Jalwa (2002), Hum Tum (2004), Fanaa (2006), Namastey London (2007), Love Aaj Kal (2009), Patiala House (2010), Aurangzeb (2013), D-Day (2013), Mulk (2018), and British films Don't Stop Dreaming (2007) and Sambar Salsa (2008). Do Dooni Chaar (2010) marked the on-screen reunion of Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Singh. He will also be remembered for his villainous role in Agneepath (2012) and in the multi-starrer Housefull 2 (2012) where he appeared with brother Randhir Kapoor for the first time after Khazana (1987). His association with legendary filmmaker Yash Chopra was also remarkable. He did a cameo role in Yash Chopra's Jab Tak Hai Jaan (2012) along with his wife. Rishi Kapoor also reunited on-screen with superstar Amitabh Bachchan after 27 years for 102 Not Out (2018). He last acted in The Body (2019).

On the iconic Irrfan

“Mohabbat Hain Isliye Jane Diya,
Zidd Hoti Toh Bahaon Mein Hoti.”

- Irrfan Khan

April 29th (from this year, 2020) will forever be treated as a black day for Indian/world cinema with the sad and untimely demise of one of Indian cinema's finest actors, Irrfan Khan. His passing away at 53 at Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital (Mumbai) on April 29 is unfathomable and unacceptable. He was under observation for colon infection. He left behind an oeuvre of excellent films. His clinical performances in most of his movies will forever be remembered and studied. He was one of the gifted actors of this generation and his contributions to Indian cinema was immense. This unparalleled actor will be remembered and celebrated for a long time, perhaps till eternity. It's a colossal loss. Powerhouse talent Irrfan Khan's cinema drew much of this generation to cinema.

Some memorable lines (Irrfan)

“Yahan sabka ek hi takia-kalaam hai ... hazaar ke note pe Babu ko salaam hai.”

“Sirf insaan galat nahi hote ... waqt bhi galat ho sakta hai.”

“Sharafat ki duniya ka kissa hi khatam ... ab jaisi duniya vaise hum.”

“Pistol ki goli aur laundiya ki boli jab chalti hai ... toh jaan dono mein hi khatre mein hoti hai.”

“Rishton mein bharosa aur mobile pe network na ho toh log game khelne lagte hai.”

“Hamari toh gaali par bhi taali parti hai.”

“Yahan sabka ek hi takia-kalaam hai ... hazaar ke note pe Babu ko salaam hai.”



“Baaz chuje pe jhaptaa..udaa le gya. Kahani sachchi lagti hai hai lekin achchi nahi lagti. Baaj pe palatwar hua. Kahani sachchi nahi lagti hai lekin khuda kasam bahut achchi lagti hai.”

In a career spanning over three decades, he acted in over 50 Indian films and some international films (The Namesake, Life of Pi and Jurassic World among others). He was born to a Muslim family (Jagirdar Khan and Begum Khan) on January 7, 1967, in Rajasthan. Irrfan, who was good at cricket, was selected for the prestigious C K Nayudu Tournament for emerging players under 23 years. It was a stepping stone to first-class cricket in India. But unfortunately, he failed to play or rather turn up for the tournament because of lack of funds. He earned a scholarship to study at the prestigious National School of Drama (NSD) in New Delhi in the year 1984 while he was pursuing his MA degree. Irrfan Khan married Sutapa Sikdar, his writer and fellow NSD graduate. They had two sons, Babil and Ayan. He made his screen debut with Salaam Bombay (1988), the Academy Award nominated film. From then on, there was no looking back for him. He delivered one stellar performance after another. He acted in over 50 Indian films and several international films. He was awarded the Padma Shri, the country's fourth highest civilian honour. He ruled over our hearts. The years that followed Salaam Bombay were full of struggles. He was passing through a critical phase. He had his breakthrough in the year 2003 with Haasil (2003) and Maqbool (2004). From then on, this towering

figure of Indian cinema gained critical acclaim for The Namesake (2007), Life in a...Metro (2007) and Paan Singh Tomar (2011). Paan Singh Tomar earned him the National Film Award for Best Actor. He became synonymous with success. He mesmerised us with his stellar performances in The Lunchbox (2013), Haider (2014), Piku (2015) and Talvar (2015). Irrfan acted in some international films like The Amazing Spider-Man (2012), Life of Pi (2012), Jurassic World (2015) and Inferno (2016). He won accolades for Hindi Medium (2017). He made his final appearance in Angrezi Medium (2020). He also acted (and took part) in various television shows and serials including Shrikant, Bharat Ek Khoj, Chanakya, Chandrakant, Darr, Mano Ya Na Mano among others. Actors like Irrfan Khan had gone, never to return. He was India's face in the West.

On D-Day (2013) – Rishi Kapoor and Irrfan

Rishi Kapoor and Irrfan had worked together in Nikkhil Advani's D-Day (2013). Rishi Kapoor played a gangster based in Pakistan, and Irrfan played the role of an undercover intelligence officer, Wali Khan. D-Day is generally regarded as one of the best films in the careers of both Rishi Kapoor and Irrfan. Both of them received a lot of praise for their effortless and natural acting in the film.

^ Rishi Kapoor and Irrfan Khan in film D-Day

> Angrezi Medium movie poster





EVENT

An interview with CERITH WYN EVANS

- RAJESH PUNJ



^ Cerith Wyn Evans, *Courtesy Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, 2019, Photo: Lorezno Palmieri.*

< Cerith Wyn Evans, *The Illuminating Gas... (after Oculist Witnesses)*, 2015, © Cerith Wyn Evans. *Courtesy White Cube Photo: George Darrell.*

Americans Dan Flavin and Bruce Nauman saw coloured light as equal to the promise of paint in the era of Abstract Expressionism, able to alter space by opening it up and as easily closing it down, with the flick of a switch, Flavin explains, “realising that the actual space of a room could be broken down and played with by planting illusions of real light (electric light) at crucial junctions in the room’s composition.” Which is as evident in the neon works of Welsh conceptualist Cerith Wyn Evans, in which ‘real light’, as Flavin calls it, appears like an unflickering flame. Impressively impressing the neon lines of his sculptures with light, becoming these brilliant and equally bizarre spatial drawings. Yet as much as it has that fantastic quality about it, Flavin was equally convinced of the rudimentary relevance



of light to reality. Saying, “one might not think of light as a matter of fact, but I do. And it is, as I said, as plain and open and direct an art as you will ever find.” And it is that amalgam of fantasy and fact that resonates off of the works. Wyn Evans is aptly able to explain the physical properties of neon and glass - of the velocities and volumes of lighting required for any one sculpture, but beyond that he also has a feeling for the ephemeral in everything he creates.

Wyn Evans sees all forms of light, natural as well as artificial, appreciative of the space that they encounter, occupy, dissolve and disappear from, creating works of man-made beauty, his interest as he explains it, lies in the exposure of the sun on electrically generated light, as each impresses the other. And for the artist, it is not just about the ability of light to illuminate a space, but as much about how it gratifies a room with its presence. English novelist E. M. Forster, in his appraisal of man, saw the devil in the darkness, writing, “we cast a shadow over something wherever we stand, - choose a place where you won’t do very much harm, and stand in it for all you are worth, facing the sun.” And it is that influence of light on the human psyche that appears inherent on coming into contact with the work of Wyn Evans, as his choice of neon lavishes the skin as a romance of light and life.

I prefer the way in which there is an instance shroud, of the sunlight drenching a neon, which is also balanced with the same kind of colour temperature. Creating a haze around (the work), almost erasing it, and when you have direct light on that, at its absolute brightest, the neon will disappear.

^ Cerith Wyn Evans, *Still life (In course of arrangement...)* V, 2017, *Turntable with Phoenix roebelenii*, Installation view, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, 2017, © Cerith Wyn Evans. Courtesy Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Photo: Stefan Altenburger © Museum Haus Konstruktiv.

> Cerith Wyn Evans, *TIX3*, 1996, © Cerith Wyn Evans. Courtesy White Cube, Photo: Stephen White.

For American artist James Turrell light, as he explains it as material matter. Convinced, “that light has ‘thingness’ itself, so it’s not something that reveals something about other things you are looking at, but it becomes a revelation in itself,” a substance that Wyn Evans exploits for exploring many other ideas. Yet where natural light serves as the entire entity of Turrell’s work, for Wyn Evans it acts as a point of departure, for his choice of sculptural objects – his neons elevated as these amusement park-like altar pieces. Whilst Turrell claimed the night as ‘rising’, for Wyn Evans it is daylight that draws him in. Confessing to spending hours at a time in the kitchen looking at the light layer the walls, as though the embodiment of life itself.

For Wyn Evans, it isn’t as he explains, about absolutes, instead, that everything should be available to the elements. In turn, the world can influence and affect art in the same way that an audience is essential for its reception, enabling his work to have a sensory self. “I prefer the way in which there is an instance shroud of the sunlight drenching a neon, which is also balanced with the same kind of colour temperature. Creating a haze around (the work), almost erasing it, and when you have direct light over that, at its absolute brightest, the neon will disappear. It is a bit like having a candle in sunlight. I don’t know if you

have ever seen it, it is extraordinary when you see the shadow of a flame cast, it has that strange uncanny filtering.”

For an artist creating works in neon, we might assume their luminosity was dependent on the darkness, for a greater contrast of colours – white against black, yet Wyn Evans looks to the natural light that illuminates a room as significant to his work. Seeing how the light incumbent in his works responds best to natural sunlight, that leads, as he sees it, to this remarkable reaction of the bleeding or bleaching out of reality, as well as dissolving his work of its physicality. Leading to these moments, seconds, events, of light crossing over light, as the natural works reacts to the artificial. That Wyn Evans explains as, “a transverse trajectory, direction, energy, flow, that goes on a certain level is light intensity, that is the link between the volume and the audible, and of conceivable silence, as your eyes become accustomed to the light. There being a detectable relationship between the natural and the artificial.”

As assemblages of artificial light, Wyn Evans’ neon works are remarkable for their sheer complexity, as though light drawings dancing through space. His interest in the neons being exposed to normal light appears to explain the limitations of receiving



artworks in an enclosed space. Instead, wanting to have the room open to the elements, initially caressing and eventually cancelling out the artificial light generated by his neon works. Talking about light is to acknowledge the sensation of light on our lives, and Wyn Evans sees it as a close acquaintance, arriving unannounced in the morning, leaving as dusk turns to darkness. Observing whilst in New York, "the light moves across from the west, and then you have at this certain point this brilliant sunshine, that hits these deli's and drugstores, and I suppose the fashion of New York from the 1920's onwards, was to choose neon lights to advertise hotdogs, the name of a store, or something similar." And of how American critic and correspondent, Frank O'Hara describes in his writing "this great moment with great poignancy, where the neon lights look rather compromised by the strength of this invasive sunlight, etching it out of existence. And somehow being able to notice, as you do when you have the luxury, to really take your time and be still in a room, to watch the sun moving around." And it is that relationship of light on light that interests Wyn Evans enormously. As if to say the artificial cannot exist alone, it has to react to the real world to become part of it.

Writing about light as though a lover, O'Hara exemplifies the affection Wyn Evans has for the illumination of everything. O'Hara in his prose appears to capture light in his clenched hand before it rejoins the atmosphere. Saying, "the light comes on by itself, and just as independently off." Which is how Wyn Evans wants the world, far from absolute, and not entirely artificial.

Interview

Rajesh Punj: *I wish we had met in Milan for the opening of your neon show at HangarBicocca last year.*

Cerith Wyn Evans: It is hard to tell how these works will turn out. It does present a particular challenge to work in that kind of grand scale of architecture. You are never really quite sure of what to find, or how to tell if it has been successful or not. So it takes a while for it to sink in. All of the logistic and administrative chaos at the beginning, where people don't know if they can do it in time, and when there is a lot of energy and people running around like mad trying to get everything done. And then the exhibition is on, and everybody makes a big noise about it, there is a party, and finally, you go home and wonder what happened.

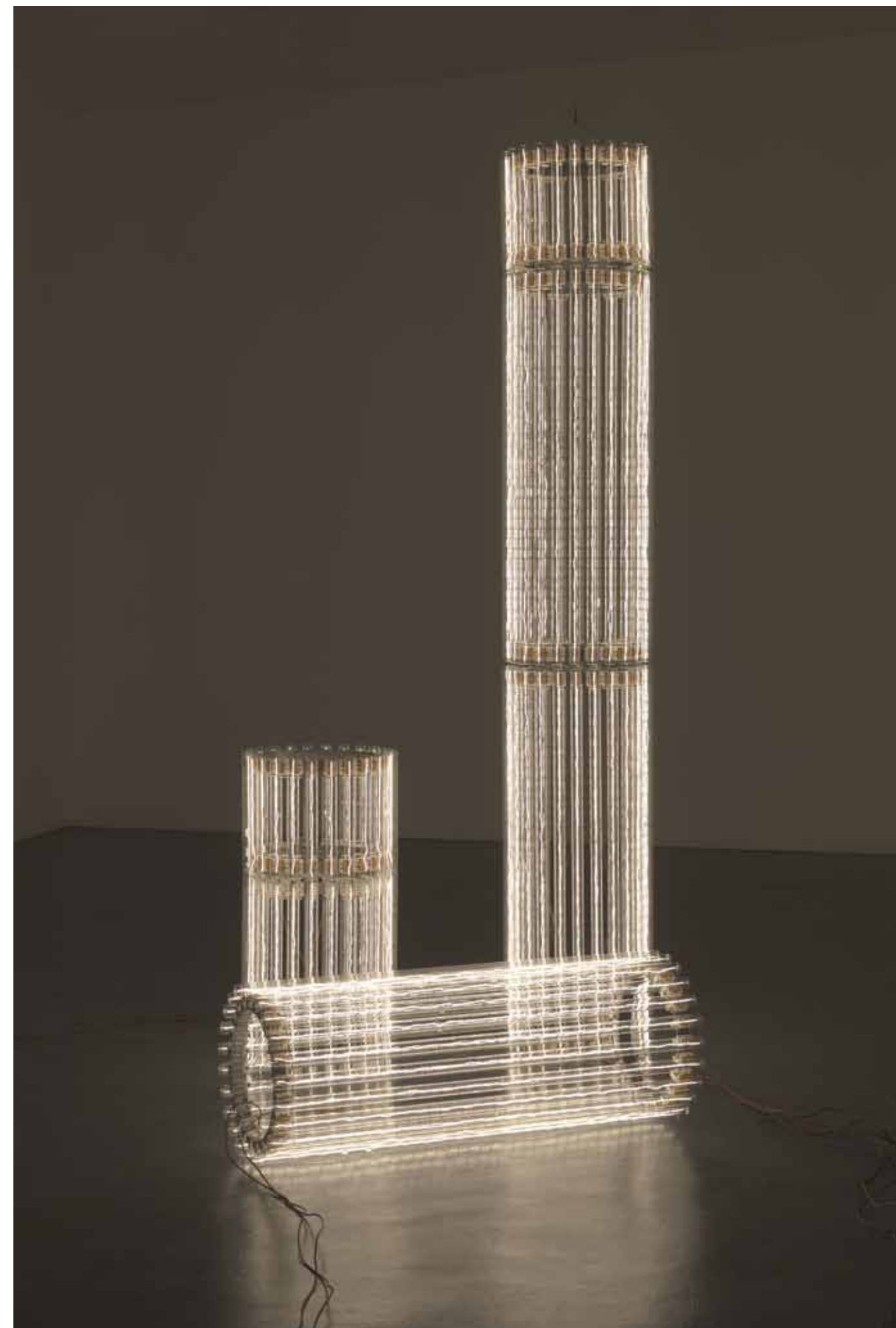
RP: *'And then the lights go out' - I think of novelist Joan Bauer who suggested, "you don't understand how much light you have until the lights go out." I wonder without the light what the works become? And I think of your neon sculptures in Milan, and as well your works at White Cube, Bermondsey, that are currently exhibited when I say that.*

CWE: Do you mean literally to the 'lights going out'? Or of their presence not being felt when you remove yourself from that space?

RP: *Both, I am intrigued by the significance of light, artificially generated, and of its value and volume upon the works, as light gives them life and they live in a space. Without light, and possibly we might think of American Dan Flavin's works in the same way, that they become something else - empty vessels?*

CWE: They don't exist without the lights being on, the columns do, StarStarStar/Steer (totransversephoton) 2019, because the columns are about that, the very tall columns, because I guess that is the one thing that you wouldn't appreciate from a photograph, that all of those things happen in time, and it combines with the atmosphere of the room as well. In Milan, you have the occasion at the very end of the space (because you exit from the same curtain you enter), the furthest point from the first doors of the exhibition, receiving natural light throughout the day. The show has been on predominantly throughout the winter and now the afternoons are getting a little longer, but they have had quite a mild winter there so one of the things that happened within the space is that for two hours every morning on a bright sunny day, you have this sort of 'event' that happens where the space is flooded with sunlight at the end. A meteorological event that is a backdrop to the density and compression of that huge amount of neon covering the full length of what they call the 'navate' or nave by the side church (they have these quasi-religious names for part of the architecture), so in a sense, the show in Milan opens with the columns because the feeling is of them being extraordinarily high.

> Cerith Wyn Evans, Column (Assemblages) V, 2010, © Cerith Wyn Evans. Courtesy White Cube, Photo: Todd-White Art Photography.





RP: *It is interesting to be aware of the manufacture of (artificial) lighting.*

CWE: So we looked at ways in which we could maybe surf across that issue, and look at ways it might be possible to examine what these developments were for clearer and much more efficient lighting. We can dim those up and down so that the light moves between the columns, of them illuminating at different levels, and there would be an occasion when, and I have seen it very few times when all the lights are out. Fading very slowly up and down, there is this exchange of energy across the light columns that moves from one to another. So you get this sensation, this sense of rhythm or movement, which is quite slow to the luminosity of the work, and subsequently, people move around the space in a very different way, when there is that kind of activity happening. The other big thing that is part of the Milan exhibition is a sound aspect to the show, which is constantly changing and shifting. And the soundtrack acts as a kind of pedestal or backdrop or something that is coexistent with the appearance of the light, and the other thing, of course, is just the scale of the space is so vast.

RP: *I was there at HangarBicocca last for Sheela Gowda's 2019 exhibition - when I saw you all (curatorial committee, assistants) in conversation,*

There is a transverse trajectory, direction, energy, flow, that at a certain level is about light intensity, that is also the link between the volume, the audible, of conceivable silence, and of your eyes becoming accustomed to the light.

[^] Cerith Wyn Evans, *Column (Assemblages) I*, 2010, © Cerith Wyn Evans. Courtesy White Cube, Photo: Todd-White Art Photography.

[>] Cerith Wyn Evans *S=U=P=E=R=S=T=R=U=C=T=U=R=E* ('Trace me back to some loud, shallow, chill, underlying motive's overspill...'), 2010, Installation view, White Cube, London, 2010, © Cerith Wyn Evans. Courtesy White Cube Photo: Todd-White Art Photography.



previously before that for Mario Merz in 2018, and Lucio Fontana, in the same year. And I do feel that the space has this monumentality about it, that if I think of the Lucio Fontana environments exhibition, it is capable of reducing everything in scale, to works that become miniature versions of themselves. Did you see either of the exhibitions?

CWE: Yes, a beautiful show. The Fontana pieces were in no way (new), they were a recreation of a historical series of crates, or black boxes, that at a certain level it would be possible to say - even though it was a spectacular exhibition, so many wonderful things in it - it wasn't the best place to have put all these things, because they were all contained within small environments, that was like a chain that ran through the entire exhibition as his environments were presented as a series of self-contained jewel boxes inside a bigger palace. I thought that was successful was the Mario Merz exhibition.

RP: *Which I attended as well.*

CWE: That was a beautiful show, a really lovely show. And there was something about the consistency, I don't just mean forms, but in a way seeing the development of this image that we had of this iconic, repeated form of the igloo that Merz returned to time and time again. That acquired different meanings in different reiterations. Of different materials, that became a kind of life motif for him, and the huge variety of those things, that you didn't feel like you

were seeing the same thing twice. That came from a creativity trajectory of one thing reflecting off of another, etc., etc. So when Vicente suggested (the retrospective) and I said 'no, no, no', I had a much clearer idea of what I wanted to do, which I didn't really at the time.

RP: *The Merz exhibition influenced your thinking?*

CWE: I thought not to include a room of films, a room of chandeliers, and of this and of that, which as far as I was concerned would end up being a bit of a dog's dinner. I intended to narrow it down and give it some kind of intensity. An overall impression when you step into the space of appreciating that there is a central unity to the entire exhibition and that everything is somehow concerning all of the other elements. And it is not that I hate using the term, but there was this aspect of - and it was Hans Ulrich Obrist who would always tease me about all these things - 'gesamtkunstwerk' (a total work of art), to have a 'gesamt' quality to the togetherness, in a sense.

RP: *And it is interesting to think about togetherness when you have so many of your neon's under one roof at HangarBicocca, and the consequence of that, in terms of light against light and such intense luminosity possibly eliminating the subtleties of individual works. Essentially we naturally think of artworks in isolation, so to introduce an army of works, what did it do to how we see the works?*

CWE: I have always thought of the works in that way, that they fundamentally coexist. I never see them as separate pieces, I have always been confident of that and that it will continue. But its days are numbered, because anything in a series is limited to a certain extent, so you embark on research and a whole exploration along certain lines, and narrow some of the parameters around that, physically in terms of the nature of the material, that you might work with and explore. And so I suppose these neon works have for some years now been part of a series, that I suppose as long as there is interest from me, and by extension, interest from other people, there will be the means to continue making them. Very few of these things exist in the real world, with anything like the theatricality that HangarBicocca provides. Because it is a huge dark space, we are far more accustomed to theatre or contemporary performances happening in this kind of space.

RP: *Yes, of course. You touch on something incredibly important there, of art in a theatre-like setting.*

CWE: In this vast space the trajectory was that, like the powerhouse that was Tate Britain, industrial buildings being converted into culture factories. So we are a little more familiar in the post-industrial age with that reappropriation of a space like this, where there was the production of locomotives of some kind. I think it went from trains to cars, including, I think, making turbines for aeroplanes. Which all has to do with space and the works having this phenomenal shell to contend with. You wouldn't think of an artist like Sheela (Gowda) excelling on that kind of scale, because many of her works can be held in your hand, which is so intimate in the way of a substance transforming into another and that form of transformability. However she makes very big pieces, and when you are confronted with that you have to feel something, to be able to engage with it.

Otherwise, if you try and make things to fit (the space)..., in a sense for me it was quite straightforward because there are so few places where, on the scale of the Duveen Galleries at the Tate, that we knew that we could accommodate the work in the HangarBicocca space, and still have only filled a tenth of it. What it gave us was an anchor at a certain level, for the kinds of works to place around (that first piece). And then it just became like one big piece, because you were arranging the works from a sight line that was from where the viewer would stand on the ground.

RP: *Something I spoke to Sheela about last year, was that with HangarBicocca you have so much empty or negative space that hangs above the works, or in your case, surrounds the work, and it is that, that overwhelms my imagination - of how you negotiate between the void and the visible?*

CWE: Well that doesn't exist where you have



I anticipate you could read, or observe composer John Cage, and appreciate that there is no real absolute silence, darkness, or complete light and that all these things have a relational capacity, and quite often just working on the fringes and edges of these things, is fruitful and rewarding, because something's that we take for granted are then open for exploration.

^ Cerith Wyn Evans, *Mantra*, 2016 (detail)
© Cerith Wyn Evans. Courtesy White Cube,
Photo: George Darrell.

> Cerith Wyn Evans, *Mantra*, 2016
© Cerith Wyn Evans. Courtesy White Cube,
Photo: George Darrell.





something that exudes light; as far as you can see them they occupy the space.

RP: *That is interesting when we think of works having parameters or endpoints, and your neon works radiating beyond themselves, that afterglow being very much part of the work. So as Flavin saw it, of light being able to eliminate space.*

CWE: Yes indeed, as an observation for HangarBicocca, you can have one fairy light or candle right at the far end of the enormous building, and if you can still see the light from where you are, to a certain extent it still occupies the space. So, what to me was most fascinating, was the compression of space, and the success in a sense of my intuition to play with scales and gages within that. I know this sounds like a reactionary and very formalist perspective to take, this take on things is relatively

^ Cerith Wyn Evans
 "...the Illuminating Gas", exhibition view at Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, Milan, 2019, Courtesy of the artist and Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, Photo: Agostino Osio.

fresh for me. But knowing that in certain instances I have tried to, how should I put this, interrogate a certain confidence people have with a perceptual verisimilitude, or lifelikeness. So I played with that on several occasions, pushing and pulling things according to what the camera can understand, and what the eye will want to do to measure the grounding of space. And that has been about tearing into notions of, for want of a better word, perspective. So knowing that I could replace or repeat a form, say a curve, an angle of a triangle, in these receding gages, you can stretch the perception a great deal by doing that. It is like putting a full-length mirror in a room, if you remove the mirror, the room becomes a good deal smaller.

RP: *A welcomed illusion. As well you spoke of (Marcel) Duchamp, and Surrealism, so it applies when you speak of the uncanny, and the perception*

of space, and the certainty of one's surroundings.

CWE: Yes, I think it is part of a palette. One of the media we rely on is history, and I think of it as one of the tools that I use.

RP: What is interesting, when I think of the two exhibitions, at HangarBicocca in Milan, and the White Cube exhibition in Bermondsey, or even Marian Goodman, Paris before that, was to understand negative and positive space with you, and what I mean by that is the black or white backgrounds of HangarBicocca and White Cube. I wonder as we might all think if the neon works have a greater resonance or register against black than they would against a white wall?

CWE: Yes they do. It is ostensibly black, and everyone reads it as black, but if you go to HangarBicocca itself you realise that there is this whole other veil



happening there because it isn't black at all but navy blue, because before Pirelli owned it the building was Alfa Romeo. So you have this signature brand, Alfa Romeo blue on the walls, and if you put a point of really strong light on them, you realise it is navy blue. You read it as black, and because there is so much of it, your mind reacts to it as black, but if you look at a chip of paint in daylight, it is dark blue. That is okay because it is a slight technicality. But in a way, and very often, I have felt the need to look for where natural light comes into as space. Now there is only one room at White Cube that has natural light when it appears not to have natural light because it is excluded, shrouded by these fluorescent tubes in this nine-by-nine room. Where you have this big, hybrid machine that is hanging from the ceiling, fig. (O) 2020, of a helicopter - whatever you want to call it.

RP: Yes I recall that being photographed as I was in the room, with you behind me.

CWE: Well the light above that particular work is in fact daylight coming into the room. When you go there for the private view, and during the winter, it is dark outside and you don't get to see that, but on a sunny day there is much more sunlight that comes into that room; and it is much lighter. If you were to switch the neon off on a sunny day, there would easily be enough sunlight, daylight in that room. So it was important for me that we took the temporary ceiling away to bring in natural light, and I suppose

^ Cerith Wyn Evans
 "...the Illuminating Gas", exhibition view at Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, Milan, 2019, Courtesy of the artist and Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, Milan, Photo: Agostino Osio.

> Cerith Wyn Evans
 Neon Forms (After Noh XIII), 2018 (detail), Courtesy of the artist; Marian Goodman, Gallery, New York, Paris and London, and Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, Photo: Agostino Osio.

the ideal place for me to show these neon works is a space that is open to changes in the season. Very often photographers have misunderstood, and they photograph these things against black backgrounds, or whatever it is because they think that if you really want to see a light properly and clearly (then it needs to be photographed in such contrast).

RP: Possibly I am guilty of thinking like a photographer, of white neon against black, not seeing the significance of natural light on your work, instead, thinking of two very distinct states, of artificial light illuminating from the darkness, that gives the works licence if you like. But what you suggest is the enhancing of neon by natural light, and that the natural world can be involved with the artificial, each illuminating the other.

CWE: The most successful ways to explain (the significance of natural light on the works) involved the big piece at HangarBicocca, which was in the open room at the end - described as the transit of the moon across the surface of the sun, as a total eclipse - on a sunny day, there is a diagonal bar of sunlight scanning across this image and this piece of text, that describes a total eclipse moving over the world. And for how long is the geography of the world in total eclipse at any one time, and how everything moves on from there. So I look for the sunshine in rooms, I am going on Monday to San Francisco, where I have been invited to make a commission for a building

that looks extraordinary. And of course, it will have a lot of California direct sunlight coming onto the neon. And I think those are the conditions and the occasions the neons work best in.

RP: It is interesting to think of your neon works outside in-situ. But then we have had neons illuminating burger bars and restaurants in the modern period. That was always intended for the outside world, for the attention of the masses.

CWE: Because outside, the neon is in direct competition with natural light.

RP: Which goes back to our discussing neon illuminating best in the darkness.

CWE: I prefer the way that in this instance there is a shroud of sunlight drenching a neon, which is also balanced with the same kind of colour temperature (6500 k). Creating a haze around (the work), almost erasing it, and when you have direct light on that, at its absolute brightest, the neon will disappear. It is a bit like having a candle in sunlight.

RP: Something I wrote down whilst at White Cube, was making the 'ephemeral physical', something you feel yourself attempting to do? I think of your concentrating on 'light' and 'sound', which are elements we think of as beyond the physical.

CWE: They are always in a flux, nothing is ever really nailed down, and that I think goes across the

board. There is a transverse trajectory, direction, energy, flow, that at a certain level is about light intensity, that is also the link between the volume, the audible, of conceivable silence, and your eyes becoming accustomed to the light. There being a detectable relationship between the natural and the artificial. Frank O'Hara in his writing describes this with great poignancy, where the neon lights look rather compromised by the strength of the invasive sunlight, etching it out of existence. And somehow being able to notice, as you do and have the luxury to really take your time and be still in a room, that you can follow the sun moving.

RP: *Do you understand light better by looking at it? And if we think of light's omnipresence, can we consider it appearing differently in Osaka over Sydney or Seoul? It intrigues me, the idea of our 'understanding of light', physically and emotionally.*

CWE: Perhaps understanding should be cast in the light of 'experiencing'. Different places have different atmospheres, and you are constantly, in a way, aware of the specificity of many occasions, that will influence where something is placed, and the amount of time it is given, or the amount of precedence it has in a certain situation. I am constantly considering how the light falls in a room.

RP: *And to hear you talk about space as occupied when we might think of it as empty.*

CWE: I anticipate you could read, or observe composer John Cage, and appreciate that there is no real absolute silence, darkness, or complete light and that all these things have a relational capacity, and quite often just working on the fringes and edges of these things, is fruitful and rewarding, because something's that we take for granted are then open for exploration. So a whole new field opens up... Those things to do with the frayed edges of things are fascinating, and there is recourse to occupy those spaces where something is either full or empty, or you appreciate after a while that there are relatively few absolutes. And it is worth considering, as a norm, you might expect common sense overrules these things, but I think as an artist it is worth throwing down and questioning some of the things that we take for granted.

RP: *One of the things that I am curious to ask you, having spoken to your assistant at White Cube, was about the Folds works in the North Galleries, of glass and bronze inter-pinned, that take on the shape and form of Japanese folding screens. I want to understand how you decided on the breaking of the glass, that appears as much composed as accidentally carried out. And very quickly you can see that there are nuances to the nature of your damage, a vocabulary even. How do you explain those intensities of deliberate damage?*

CWE: I suppose I was looking at many things there, and I have collected photographs of broken glass forever, and whenever I see anything broken in that way, it is one of the things that I photograph. I won't photograph my food, but I will take pictures of broken glass. John Latham was interested in making these drawings that were..., I mean making glass break takes such a short amount of time. I did all of the breaking of the glass myself with hammers, in a glass studio, and you realise that you are so out of the control with the trajectory that all of those broken lines take, and that glass has an innate structure to it, and so it is possible to make these tiny punctual gestures. It takes one knock with a hammer on a sheet of glass and the whole thing will crack. If it is too hard (a hit) you will shatter the thing, but we are working with a glass that we have rehearsed over and over again, and we have researched into because it is laminated, suitable for protecting people from breakage. So it appears completely transparent but in fact, there is a layer of very ultra, less than a microbe of polymer, which is cleverly sandwiched between two sheets of glass, and is the thing that keeps the whole thing together.

> Cerith Wyn Evans
S=U=T=R=A, 2017, Installation view at Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, Milan, 2019, Courtesy of the artist; Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris and London, and Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, Photo: Agostino Osio



Certain glass will shatter - you see it at bus stops where it just crumbles, and others like windscreens will if there is chipping, or more familiarly they appear as these gunshots. It just means that a bullet, a hammer, a little stone, or anything, with sufficient force, will result in that kind of damage. If you have one puncture point then you can create a flower effect, like a stone dropping into shallow water. You will have 'radio shocks' appearing as these concentric circles going out from around that central place, and cracks going off as a spider's web from an anchor point. In principle, a crack will want to run its course to the edge of the piece of glass, but there are all these other properties that it has, so in as much as I am thinking of the immediacy of this, if you 'talk to glass', which is something John Latham did as well, and I saw him get into an argument in a museum in Paris about thirty years ago because he wanted to hang a piece of plate glass by a little corner from the wall, so the glass could bend. But if that had broken it could have killed someone, because the glass would have just exploded across the room in the most dangerous kind of way. Also, there is the 'large glass' (La Grand Verre), by Marcel Duchamp...



Cerith Wyn Evans
C=O=N=S=T=E=L=L=A=T=I=O=N
(I call your image to mind), 2010
Installation view at Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, 2019.
Courtesy of the artist; Maja Hoffmann/Luma
Foundation and Pirelli Hangar Bicocca, Photo: Agostino Osio.



RP: You referring to (Marcel) Duchamp, recalls more of the conversation I had with your assistant whilst at White Cube, of the control and the equal amount of chance that goes into producing one of these works.

CWE: Yes, once you have done it, you have to learn to accept that you have done it and that either you are going to agree according to (John) Cage's chance procedures, because the Cage/Duchamp axis is equally important, as Cage would say 'first thought, best thought', so once it is smashed, you can't do a great deal about smashing it again, you have to accept it, otherwise you see it as one that didn't work. So it offers up this kind of ego - non-ego business of appreciating that pretty much all work has to work. I would only discount something on principle, which I never did with these. I might refuse something if it started very strongly having the appearance of something else. If you made an accident and all of a sudden it looks like 'mickey mouse holding onto a swastika' I would properly declare we don't go down that road. Or something that has those associations that are so over determining that you let the glass be the glass. It is a funny one actually, and I don't know how I haven't thought it through. But I think if something takes on an appearance that you can't wipe out of your mind, and either you have to embrace

^ Cerith Wyn Evans 'No realm of thought No field of vision' White Cube Bermondsey, 7 February - 19 April 2020, © Cerith Wyn Evans. Photo © White Cube (Ollie Hammick).

> Cerith Wyn Evans 'No realm of thought No field of vision' White Cube Bermondsey, 7 February - 19 April 2020, © Cerith Wyn Evans. Photo © White Cube (Ollie Hammick).



Those things to do with the frayed edges of things are fascinating, and there is recourse to occupy those spaces where something is either full or empty, or you appreciate after a while that there are relatively few absolutes.

that with those sets of associations. Then there would have to be some sort of contingency to say, 'no this is too suggestive of something else, so therefore it limits the scope of the piece.'

RP: I don't know if I have a final moment to ask about the neon work F=O=U=N=T=A=I=N, which appears as a wall of Japanese text on neon, that references French 19/20th century novelist writer Marcel Proust. Can you talk a little about that particular work, having touched on translation?

CWE: If you speak two languages, then it is possible to attempt a transversal process, whereby you translate from one language to another. But now I am not sure whether Welsh being my first language, English I learned when I was a young child, but still aware enough to know what this process, this intriguing fascinating thing, this process of translation, and maybe even though the Welsh word 'côch' for red, is a different thing, and I don't mean as a reductivist nationalistic reading of it because it is so emotive, but Welsh red, or the word 'côch' is somehow a slightly different colour from the word 'red'. And I imagine 'rouge' is slightly different from my word for red or côch. Because there are somehow coordinates that they come with, there are sets of associations, and there are veils that colour the context of everything

as we understand it. So essentially what I wanted to do was to create an area of meaning in which its most important presence was not necessarily to do with being able to read it, and it recalls something I very much felt when I... the best person who bought this up was Mark Cousins, a dear friend of mine, a psychoanalyst and critical theorist, who taught for many years at the AA, the Architectural Association. A very important figure in my life, he attended an exhibition I did in 1992, and he wrote a brief piece about the show, and the last thing that he said, and I still stick by it, because it holds such resonance for me, was that he said 'it was like the experience of a deaf man staring at a radio', you know, and that gives you the kind of difference in a way.

RP: Wonderfully articulated.

CWE: It is about not being able to get it, but at the same time, well what is there to get? Because as you enter the gallery, if you are curious about it, you can read the English translation from the original French, and all of the White Cube press releases and language material are in English, it only takes you to look at your mobile phone or go to a computer anyway, and see how so many languages have taken their translations, and put prove to different points of access, points of entry, for that meaning. Showing that there is difference, that there is diversity, that there is an index that is coursing through a register allows for an appreciation that, and somehow I feel it is important that we just interrogate 'common sense', and 'woe be unto him', and him as opposed to her, that calls 'a spade a spade'. The laws of nature are conditional, and 'plain speaking' by its nature is apt to occlude.

RP: And it is remarkable to consider what those symbols as words transmit into the space, the idea that they evoke or adequately describe Proust's original description of water falling from a fountain.

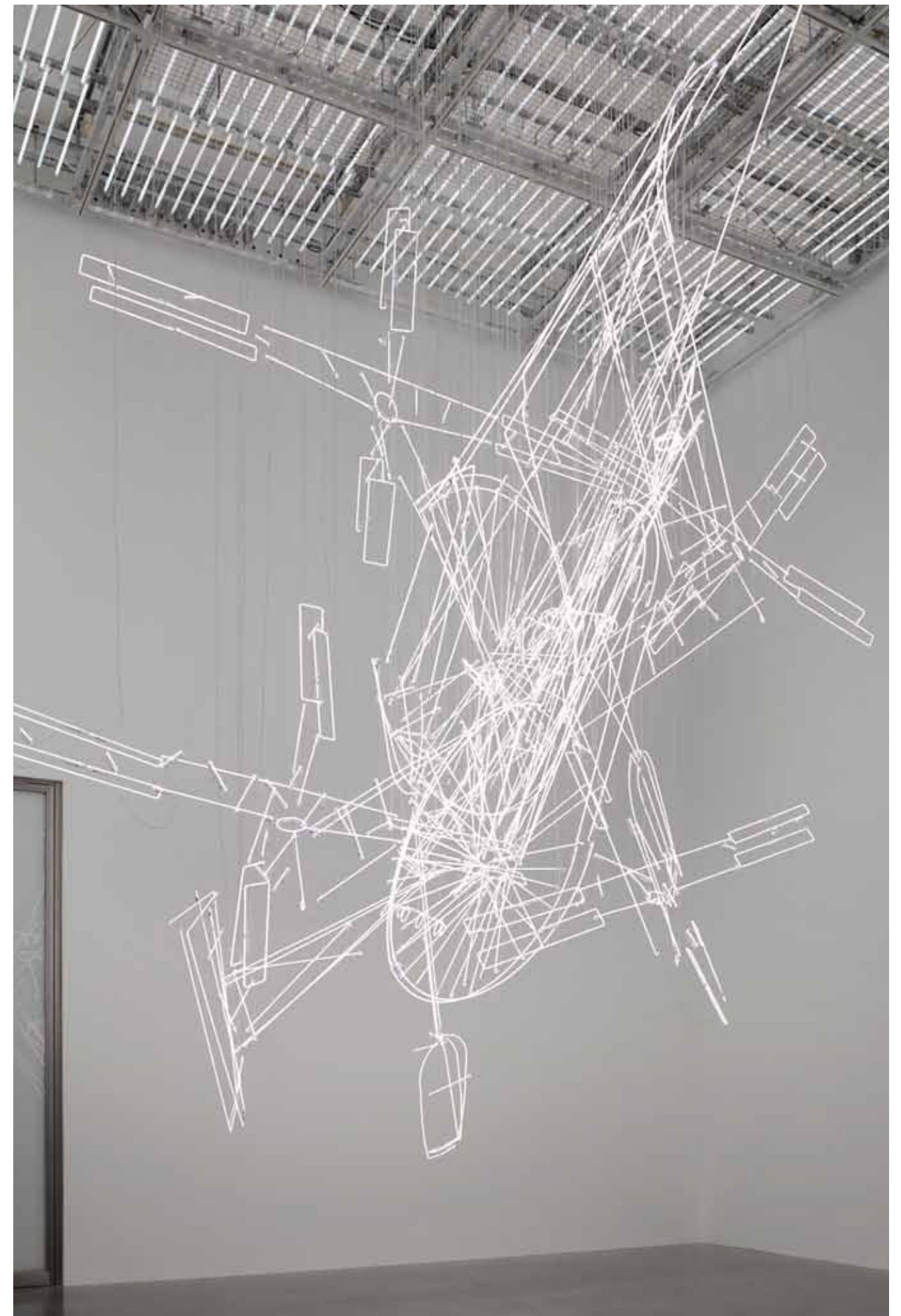
CWE: Yes, there is a nod to poetry compressed into that these are words in space, hanging like a veil. And there is concreteness to the text that could kill you.

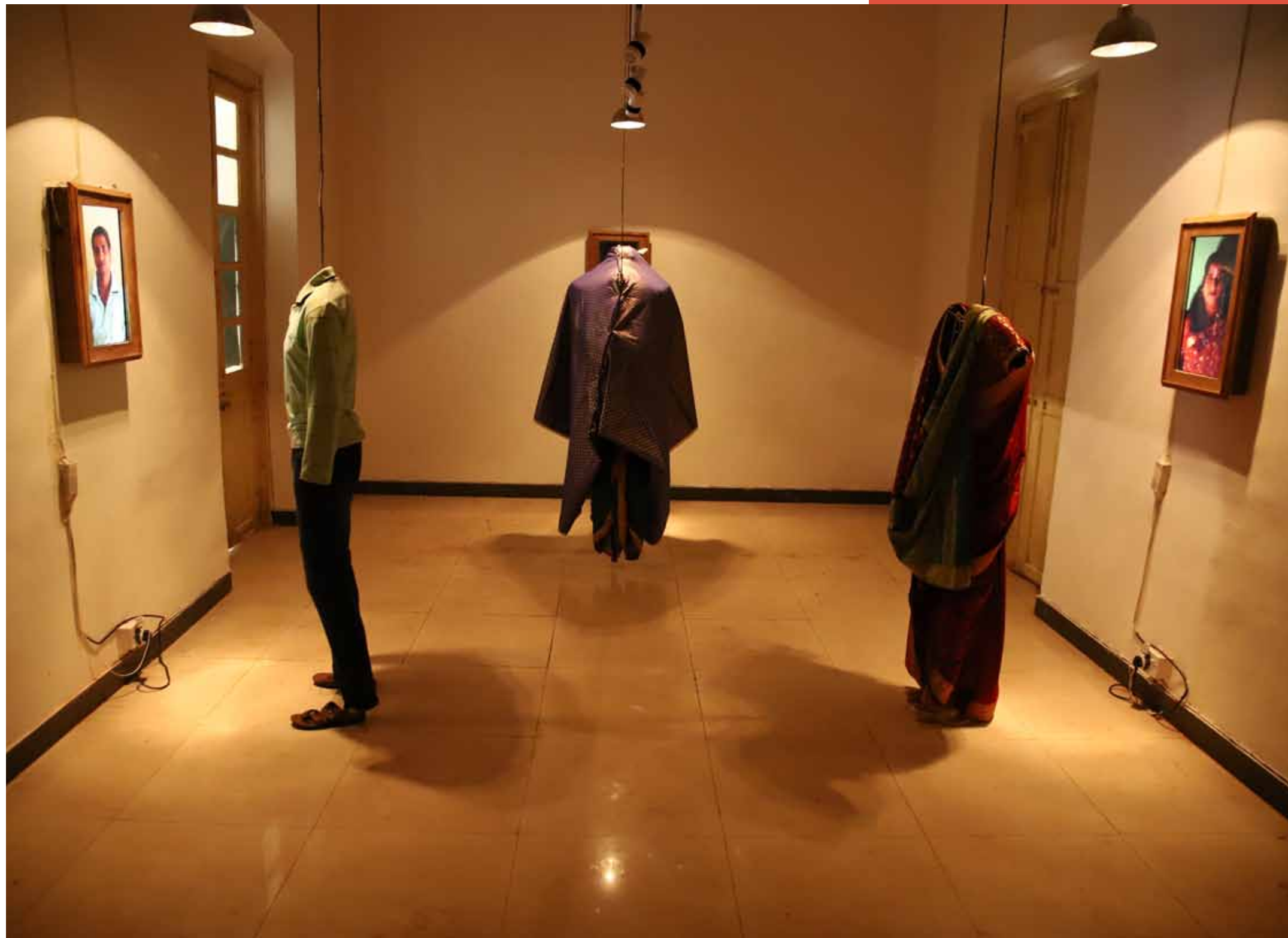
RP: Which has one wondering of the ability of words of any kind, as the symbols of any language can create a sensation of something in a different space, in a different location from the one that you are in.

CWE: In F=O=U=N=T=A=I=N, 2020 - This transposition is very much the soul of the work, the fabric of what you are looking at. It is the work of self-conscience if you like, and Proust's text is an extraordinary passage which ends with this amazing thing that throws us back into the room again because it is only a gust of wind that would otherwise drench the reader to their skin.

I suppose I was looking at many things there, and I have collected photographs of broken glass forever, and whenever I see anything broken in that way, it is one of the things that I photograph. I won't photograph my food, but I will take pictures of broken glass. John Latham was interested in making these drawings that were..., I mean making glass break takes such a short amount of time. I did all of the breaking of the glass myself with hammers, in a glass studio, and you realise that you are so out of the control with the trajectory that all of those broken lines take, and that glass has an innate structure to it, and so it is possible to make these tiny punctual gestures. It takes one knock with a hammer on a sheet of glass and the whole thing will crack.

> Cerith Wyn Evans 'No realm of thought No field of vision' White Cube Bermondsey, 7 February - 19 April 2020, © Cerith Wyn Evans. Photo © White Cube (Ollie Hammick).





Artist, Rajaram Naik.

MORPHING FACES-MORPHING LIVES: A WALKTHROUGH WITH THE ARTIST EXPLORING “DASHAVATARA NATAK”

- MANASHRI PAI DUKLE

“Dashavatara Natak” is a traditional practice prevalent in the Konkan belt, where Artist Rajaram Naik belongs from. Naik is one of the awardees of the Goan Artists’ Grant instituted by Serendipity Arts Foundation, 2019. His work documenting the essence of Dashavatara was showcased at the Serendipity Arts Festival under the exhibition titled “Form, Metaphor, Memory” along with the works of other recipients of the grant including Rujuta Rao, Akshay Chari and Nishant Saldanha.

Rajaram Naik’s project titled “Dashavatara” explores the idea of costume as a tool of identity. His work forms a dialogue through old traditional theatre practices, where the male actors transform into female characters intervening the Masculine with the Feminine. His work takes us through the journey of ‘dressing up’, almost giving us a sneak peak into the Actors’ Greenroom.

“Dashavatara” adverts to the 10 main reincarnations of the Deity Vishnu, while “Nataka” is a branch of dramaturgy/drama. This traditional practice is executed in the premises of village temples, composed by arranging together the elements of dance, drama, music, storytelling and narration, presented through colourful portrayal of varied characters.

“I have grown up experiencing this tradition closely. Being a part of this practice as a spectator over the years has made me curious and fond of this unique process where the Actor dedicates his life to the character he is assigned in the dashavatara”, says Naik who has roots in Sawantwadi and is based in Pernem-Goa.

^ Dashavatara by Rajaram Naik, Form, Metaphor, Memory, SAF-2019.



Revolving around the depiction of the ten reincarnations of lord Vishnu, the Dashavatara is a drama-practice that is performed overnight until dawn, colouring the night with the Puranic episodes and characters created on stage. More than art, this tradition is practiced as a way of life. "The practice makes me wonder about the dedication and the process of characterization the actor goes through for such a physical as well as psychological transformation" says Naik.

Lord Vishnu is associated with the creation and protection of the universe (Srishti) represented through his ten facets which include: Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narsimha, Vamana, Parshurama, Rama, Krishna/Balarama, Baudh and Kalki. Dashavatara practice was on the verge of extinction a few years ago, which was revived by taking into consideration the contemporary elements of change, helping its survival through contemporary times. Only the male artists crossdress to enact the female characters. Wearing the skin of masks of the characters they create.

The artists walk along making this practice a part of life, following a certain way of living with no definite boundaries between reality and the "story world" they create on stage, playing different roles on and

off stage. Their way of life and dedication to their art practice is what Naik's work portrays through experimental mediums of expression that leave us intrigued.

He further explores this practice through his work, documenting the merging frontier in the life of the Dashavatara artists, and conducting a case study of one of the main artists who brings to life a female character on stage. Naik's work revolves around the documentation of a character in the form of photographs, video clips, audio recordings and archives where their practice aims at extending the finite stage to infinite life. Naik records the process of transformation the actor undergoes in their life for the performance, unfolding his personal curiosity. His working style is defined by sharing unheard stories through the medium of documentation and research as part of the series with further exploration.

His work portrays the dramatist's (dashavatara artist) life through sound and visual mediums, where he arrives with the research and insights into

^ A still from Dashavatara.



their life and lifestyle, through history and story, by understanding their persona and binding together the different characters they play throughout the day. Working through vigorous research with site visits, interviews, photo documentation and audio-visual recording. The work exclusively explores the life of a Dashavatara artist named Bunty Kambli, whom Naik, has been watching perform for a long time in his village; "I have been observing his life closely, learning about his struggles and passion for the art. I interviewed him to build up references and research for the work." says the Artist when interviewed.

Dashavatara as a form of art, is practiced not as an inherited tradition but rather a pure choice made by the artist himself. These artists dedicate their lives to the art, we see this especially when they need to play the female character and they do not use wigs but instead grow their hair to fit into the skin of the female character they enact. Committing to the role is a process of total transformation and dedication. They carry this part of their life with them even when they play other roles as that of a son, a husband, a father or even a professional, which is incredible. "The conversations and interviews I have had with Bunty have never failed to surprise and fascinate me, attracting me to further explore this area of performance, the performers, their life and their

psychology." Says Naik . I would address this work as an exploration of the living traditions and an attempt at sustaining the traditions that are dying a slow death due to lack of appreciation and support, by bringing it into the limelight and spreading awareness about the forgotten traditions through documentation, a mere attempt at freezing them in material, textual and visual mediums forever.

It is interesting to see how the traditional practices like Dashavtara are revisited through the contemporary, giving the old, fading practices a new hope to survive. The conventions are rebuilt and the boundaries between the old and new art merge with such projects.

^ Detail of Dashavatara



INDIAN ART WELCOMED IN CROATIA AND SLOVENIA

- N. KALYANI



The India Welcome event at the Coal Mining Museum in the city of Velenje in Slovenia that opened on 15 October 2019, as a 30 day-long one, travelled from the Croatian capital Zagreb. At Zagreb the exhibition was part of the Festival of India in Croatia. The exhibition at Zagreb that lasted just short of a month, at the Zvonimir Gallery, opened on 12 August and was to mark the occasion of India's Independence Day. Organized by Hanibal Salvaro, a Croatian ceramic artist, sculptor and painter, the India Welcome event at both Zagreb and Velenje was inaugurated by the respective ambassadors of India to the two countries, Croatia and Slovenia, Arindam Bagchi in Zagreb and Param Jit Mann at Velenje.

Hanibal Salvaro, who marked sixty years of his artistic journey this year, is an enthusiastic and passionate artist, whose positive energy is hard to match. With an array of creative ideas from abstract paintings to realistic digital hands-free art, and from brick installations to cement and porcelain blended works, he is verily a mine of artistic imagination and imagery. His works are to be seen around the world, and he has to his credit innumerable awards.

The exhibition curators were Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal, the well-known studio potter and passionate ceramic artist and curator from Gurgaon, who runs Studio Re4clay, and Hanibal Salvaro, who heads the Artistic Design Center LADICA at Zagreb. The event had three artistic hosts Bruno Paladin, Vilko Žiljak as also Hanibal Salvaro with their India-inspired works, at Zagreb. Likewise at Velenje, the event had as artistic hosts Miljanka Simsic, Lucka Sicarov and Dani Zbontar.

Says Hanibal Salvaro, "The concept of the event includes Croatian artists who are artistic hosts with their art works inspired by India. It

[^] Indian Ambassador to Croatia Arindam Bagchi and Hanibal Salvaro at the India Welcome opening ceremony.

< Artwork by Aninda Singh.



feels good to organize the cultural and artistic event together with Indian artists and the Indian Embassy. In effect it will be to introduce people to explore how it is possible to mix and blend the creativity of India and Croatia in the right direction. It is very important for the future because this will encourage people with their good ideas. When somebody produces something good not only do they but many other people too become richer. And this is a really fine feeling and experience.”

And as the exhibition travelled to Slovenia, Hanibal Salvaro says, “India Welcome is the beginning of a mine of creative and artistic rich collaboration between India and Croatia as also between India and Slovenia.”

The event co-curator Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal explains, “... the exhibition India Welcome was



conceptualised to show that though we come from different continents and different countries, we are all One.” And she goes on to point out, “Hanibal Salvaro invited us to bring a vision of India to Europe showcasing contemporary ceramics from all over India, tempered by photographs of ancient monuments and modern cities, and contemporary Indian poetry that connected the various elements. His own installation and the India-inspired works of artists from Croatia, and then Slovenia, have added to the allure of the phrase Vasudaiiva Kutumbakam. I hope these exhibitions and these artists will be a bridge between our cultures and our people.”

The India Welcome event has had on display Indian ceramic works of artists, from across India, Sushma Anand, Leena Dewan, Usha Garodia, Neha Gawand Pullarwar, Ruby Juhnjuhwnala, Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal, Snehal Kashikar, Shama Maira, Vinod Daroz, Anjani Khanna, Tejashri Patil Pradkam, Mohini Prakash, Manu Randhawa, Saraswati, Aninda Singh, Foram Thakore and Adil Writer.

Besides, ceramic works, the India Welcome exhibition included photographs of Indian monuments and flora, and contemporary poetry. Also on display were Hanibal Salvaro’s digital graphic designs and prints in beautiful colours of space photos of some Indian cities and towns related to the display. Explains Hanibal Salvaro, “My visual sensibility has fallen in love with this visual possibility with the computer.

^ Artwork by Snehal Kashikar.

< Artworks by Hanibal Salvaro.

This is something very contemporary where I don't need to use my hands; it is done only on the computer. In effect this is art characterized by "nothing with the hands". I am promoting this also in India Welcome as a symbol of the future."

Hanibal Salvaro has collaborated with artists of different genres. Says Dr Ana Marija Grancaric, a retired professor of textile technology, and founder of the Croatian Colour Society (HUBO), "India Welcome is great like India is, for its long, rich culture and history. It is a great idea for Hanibal Salvaro to organize an event in Zagreb called India Welcome, and I appreciate it greatly."

The participating Indian ceramic artists have come from across India. Says Aninda Singh from Delhi, "Participating in India Welcome exhibition at Zagreb was a great opportunity to showcase my work at an international platform, while giving the audience there a glimpse into the contemporary ceramics landscape in India. I presented there my series "Imperfect Dreams". Rooted in nature, these sculptures questioned the concept and existence of absolute freedom in the world around us."

The Auroville based ceramic artist Adil Writer explains about his creation displayed at India Welcome, "The piece for this show is a part of my "Sentinel" series. My fascination for gate-posts possibly comes from my architectural background. Over millennia, objects that mark out territories have always had an architectural angle. In today's day and age, these gate-posts kind of indicate the style of architecture of the building these posts leads one to. They may indicate the style of architecture, they may indicate the condition of the building, they may even tell you a bit about the people living in there. I love the chumminess of the clay that I work with for these stoneware and porcelain pieces which are subsequently soda fired with wood as the fuel at my studio."

It is interesting to learn of the significance and meaning of the ceramic creations on display from the artists themselves. Says Snehal Kashikar other item on display, "The sculpture is part of the work series "Volume". It explores space as an opening for the emergence of form as a creative expression. It has been a great experience to participate in India Welcome at Croatia that brings a sense of pride together with fellow artists. Art creates a sense of warmth and friendship as it reaches minds across distant continents and cultures."

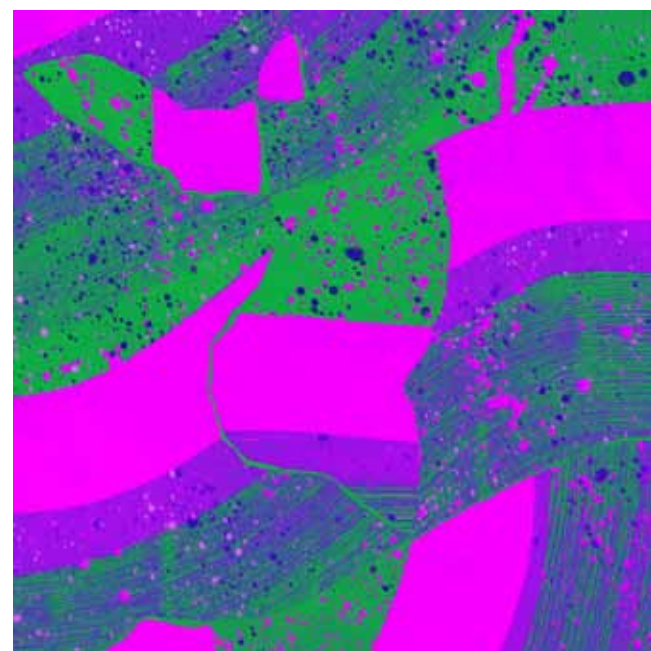
Baroda based Vinod Daroz says of ceramic works of Indian artists on display at India Welcome, "It is a great feeling and a pleasure to see Indian ceramics on a global platform."

Participating artists such as Vinod Daroz, Anjani Khanna, Ruby Jhunjhunwala and Adil Writer are

members of the International Academy of Ceramics, IAC, (Academie Internationale De La Ceramique), Geneva, as also is Salvaro.

Of her work on display at India Welcome, Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal says, "My ceramic item was a sculptural piece called Phoenix. It depicts in a abstract manner the rise of the phoenix from it's ashes. It is a symbol of eternal hope and revival. It is a recurring theme in my works aside of my main theme of Women's divine power or Shakti. However, my main exhibits were my photographs of old monuments of India that celebrate our rich cultural heritage. Old monuments give a great narrative of the times past. They also remind us not to take our future too lightly. I also displayed three poems that express my deep love of ceramics and clay, ceramics being my medium of choice."

The India Welcome Event was on at Zagreb after which it travelled to Velenje in Slovenia. Says Miljanka Simsic, a retired teacher, and the president of the ceramicists association in Slovenia, and a host artist for the India Welcome event in Slovenia, "For me, the exhibition India Welcome in Velenje is pure pleasure. And this exhibition is special, the place is special! As I see it, the public was very satisfied. It was such a "different" exhibition! And there was an opportunity to experience Indian music and also to try Indian food. At the inauguration the atmosphere was so positive. We are also trying to find a place for this exhibition in Ljubljana."



^ Artwork by Hanibal Salvaro.



Besides India Welcome, Hanibal Salvaro has invited Indian artists to participate in various art events organized and hosted by him in Croatia. At such international events there have been Indian artists as participants and as jury members. The Zagreb Full Color 19 and EXAT 110, for instance, both organized this year, had Indian artists on the jury.

Says the legendary ceramic artist of Pune, Ruby Jhunjhunwala, "Hanibal has really promoted the India -Croatia creative connection. This has been his mission and he has not faltered. Hats off to him! He is a real inspiration to me."

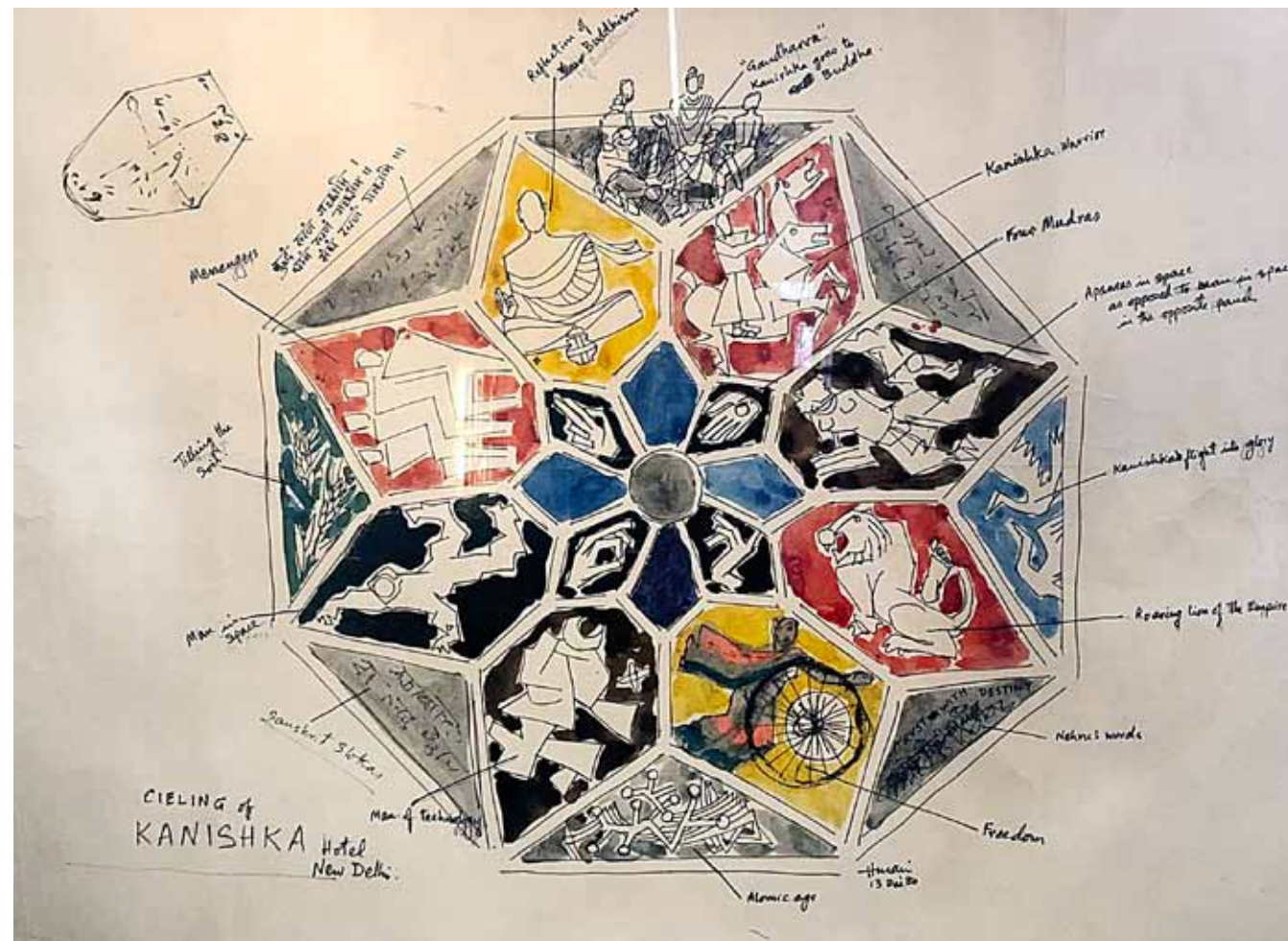
And Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal sums up about Hanibal Salvaro, "Being a part of Hanibal's exhibitions in the past has always been an amazing experience. His eclectic mix of participants and his interesting themes are very invigorating. He works very hard to make the exhibition successful. His seniority and experience in the field are very big assets as he has

participated in over 400 exhibitions in his 60+ year career and has organised more than 100 himself. He has also won scores of awards, recognition, citations and honours throughout his long and distinguished career."

And the interaction that has come about with India Welcome is expected to extend. Says Rekha Bajpe Aggarwal,"This year I have co-curated the special exhibition India Welcome along with Hanibal as a part of the Festival of India. In a cultural artistic exchange, next year I will host an exhibition of works of Croatian and Slovenian artists."

Ultimately it's as Hanibal Salvaro puts it: "Art is like love. Art doesn't need any explanation."

^ Artwork by Usha Garodia.



AN ALTERNATE CANON TO THE MAINSTREAM CULTURE: CCCC

- MANASHRI PAI DUKLE

Counter-Canon, Counter-Culture (CCCC) curated by Nancy Adajania for the Serendipity Arts Festival, 2019 in Goa, speaks through the documentation of alternative history marked from the 1960's to 1980's. The exhibition encounters the counter-canonical as a document/archive, paralleling experimental art to the mainstream expressly the culturally accepted definition of art at that time. The unrealized art found into the wrong places, finds a way into the right space through Adajania's meticulously researched documentation. The exhibition marks a classic example of the merging lines between the curator and the artists, where the curator herself creates a piece of art through combining and connecting the art by artists, like how the assemblage artists worked.

Adajania's curation speaks through visual narration, informing the audience of the history of the peripheral, a lateral vision in art. The space showcases experimental photographs, collaborations, films, music, techniques, textures along with reflective

experiences and dialogue. CCCC connects culture and canon and then counters it, Adajania's curatorial process works like 'connecting the dots', where there comes a story that supports a particular work but then again that story has another character, which ultimately shapes into a supporting document or an archive. It asks the viewer the question and gives the supporting clue to the answer. CCCC makes one think "Can the process that goes behind making an art by itself be a work of art?" it simplifies the Jargon of archiving and research through curating.

Adajania includes lesser explored mediums and materials of the time and the archives of the newly emerging techniques and technological influences charged with a sense of newly discovered upsurge of nationalism of the period, when Progressive art groups emerged on the Indian 'artscape'. CCCC very well arranges itself within the confines of direct or indirect connections between the individual units. It initiates a dialogue with the audience while conversing within itself. CCCC functions like clusters of vaults, each with a history of its own. It encompasses a vast array of mediums, archives and experimental expressions: starting with P C Sorkar's magical piece that challenges one through its timing of illusion and anticipation.

It further includes "behind the scenes", raw, improvisations and documents like "Zakir Husain maquette" by Dayanita Singh, annotations and scribbles of the mural maquette like "glimpses of Mauryan Grandeur" by M F Husain and design maquette of the selected, Indian Pavilion, expo 70, Osaka by Jasmir and Rosemary Sachdev alongside

^ A frame from 'Bhooter Naach' or the ghost dance sequence from Gupy Gyne Bagha Byne directed by Satyajit Ray.

< Mural Maquette by M F Husain.



the probable-rejected design for the same structure by Charles Correa. The exhibition also explores the dialogues as well as the process besides the finished material.

The off-stream exploration of mediums by the mainstream artists of the time like M F Husain and Krishen Khanna's photo experiments and Akbar Padamsee's exploration and commentary of Syzygy and F N Souza's 'chemical paintings' are captivating. The selected, experimental films produced by the Film division during the late 1960's marks an interesting addition to the archival cube, among other works. Closing with the "Mor ki kahaani", decoding of the dialogue between Nina Sabnani and Sher Singh regarding the title for their collaborative film.

The exhibition space travels through a transcultural and transdisciplinary background of morphing ideas of aesthetics and concepts, making one aware of the forgotten history through the origin points of the contemporary art practices in the Indian art scenario. The exhibition attains its credit because of its ability to connect present-day art with the art of yesterday, which ultimately concludes to be much ahead of its time of acceptance as the mainstream. Satyajit Ray's (1969) masterpiece, 'Goopy Gye Bagha Byne' for instance is something that can run through the generations and still be relevant. Every time with a newer perspective added to it. I see this exhibition as a storybook and Adajania as the storyteller, where every work is a chapter that is needed to set up the entire plot and she narrates

it brilliantly with the detailed research of her characters. She brings in light, the alternate canon to mainstream culture.

^ Dayanita Singh's Zakir Hussain book maquette.



JÜSTA LAKE NAHARGARH PALACE HOSTS CHITRASHAALA

- ART&DEAL CORRESPONDENT

JuSta Lake Nahargarh Palace concluded with its annual art residency program Chitrashaala on 9th November, 2019. The one week artist collective comprised of forty four artists of various disciplines from around the globe, all engaged in a reposeful and archaic setting in Parsoli, Rajasthan. On the very first glimpse from the ferry that drops you to the residency one could see a stark white monumental palace right in the middle of an enormous placid lake with green forests and hills forming a scenic backdrop. The place would assure its sojourner artists a calm and a tranquil abode for the next seven days. Apart from staying at Lake Nahargarh Palace the artists get an informative insight into the local history and culture through planned tours to the historic Chittorgarh Fort and the artistic village of Bundi.

Chitrashaala derives its name from the Bundi School of Art which is an important school of the Rajasthani style of Indian miniature painting that lasted from the 17th century to the end of the 19th century in the princely state of Bundi. The program steps into its sixth year and famed artists like late Dhiraj Chowdhury and many others from across the world are now associated with it. The participating artists came from Poland, Egypt,

^ Justa Lake Nahargarh Palace.



Norway, Algeria, Thailand, Korea, Bangladesh, Turkey, Spain, China and India.

Alicja Puruhniewicz is a visual artist from Poland who takes inspiration from her immediate surroundings, emphasizing the impact of the venue on the work of such artists. Hanne Haukom a ceramic artist & painter from Norway has been associated with the program since the very first Chitrashaala. Akhinoor Binte Ali is an award winning printmaker from Bangladesh known for her lithographs. Dr Yildiz Arun a visual artist from Turkey who works with acrylics on canvas and paper has her paintings in many private collections. Lieuwke Loth is a Dutch painter and a bronze, steel and ceramic sculptor and her works are displayed permanently at the Galeria Luz de la Vida in Spain. Another artist from India Avijit Mukherjee has been associated with Chitrashaala since 2015. The residency also had specially abled artist Adarsh Baji whose Gandhi works can be found in Anil Ambani's main chamber office.

The CEO of juSTa Hotels and Resorts Ashish Vohra reminisces about how far they have come since the initial years when they had started off with just six artists. Also the man does not seem to be content with what the program has offered to the viewers till now. He plans to have standardized art tours for the guests. "Chitrashaala has been providing the local and international artists with an exposure to a very comprehensive display of art works, styles and forms. Our annual art residency program has enabled them to express their art creatively" says Ashish.

The program has critic Anirudh Chari as its curator who is also a permanent curator for Ganges Art Gallery, Kolkata.

Art residencies like Chitrashaala open up a lot of prospects for the artists. The residency becomes an amalgamation of unique cultures and ideas under one roof where one can learn something from each other. A lot of artists shared that they had been exposed to the varied skills of other artists and the warmth and

companionship within the residency have given them friends for life and they cannot wait to come again next year too. Fatma Abdelrahma one of the resident artists from Egypt says "The aesthetic and the artistic milieu has had a deep effect on my subconscious". One of Fatma's friends exclaims that she sees a contrast in her work done in the residency as compared to what Fatma has earlier painted, implying the effect of the ambience on the artists' works.

Some artists had come to India for the first time. It becomes a matter of immense pride for us as believers in atithi devo bhava to see how highly impressed they were by the amiable people of our country as they visited the local villages.

Programs like these are helpful in exposing the international artist community to the Indian art scene as well. Artists were enthralled by the fascinating architecture of the historic Chittorgarh Fort and the Nahargarh Palace. The arched windows of the palace were seen in the works of many artists in the residency. Landscape artists used Chittorgarh Fort as a reference for their works. It was an opportunity for the Indian artists as well to have experienced the artistic diversities in a multitude of creative disciplines.

Chitrashaala art residency program at the solitary and restful juSTa Lake Nahargarh Palace is a benchmark quintessential art program which can be considered as a melting pot of various art cultures. It has been promising enhanced experiences to its artists and guests year after year and it should excite everyone with what lies ahead in its next edition.

^ Participating artists at Chitrashaala art residency program.

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