

Artists Statement

Christoph Storz

Our group used to travel in a barred police vehicle from the hotel to the workshop site and back. I had to clear a path - a drawing if you like - into a plot of weed, a plot so unattractive that even cows avoided it. Yes, I did escape like a coward to the far off corner of the much defined (socially, aesthetically) resort. The weed was parthenium, said to be an imported pest, springing up unasked for in all unused spaces. Asthmatics fear it and I was warned, that touching it could lead to skin rashes. Though the drawing fell short of being an idyllic maze, the children ran and jumped when they entered it.

Later I moved a push cart - as used by street vendors - through the path. Hundreds of glass marbles rolled noisily on its board over an engraving of a dot grid rangoli , which repeated four times the arbitrary figure of the path now orderly connected as an endless line. I parked the cart in a kind of wigwam of stitched vinyle advertising waste.

Gisele Amantea

The work Beauty Spot is explicitly linked to my experience of traveling in India and participating in Khoj. In the first days of the workshop, when we were first meeting each other the strong character and physical beauty of the Indian women participating in Khoj was particularly noticeable to me. I have come to know India as a complex country embracing aspects of the style and fashion of the West but always in the context of a strong, vernacular culture and sense of tradition. I am interested in this dilemma as an artist as from my perspective, North American culture is more devoid of tradition. Often we desire other cultures for an authentic experience and their exotic difference. It was this desire for the other that I came to explore through the practices of beauty at Khoj.

Hema Upadhyay

In 1998 I moved away from my family to live in Bombay. This work deals with the complex issue of migrations: migration by choice or forced migrations - both of which deal with the complexities of discontinuities; of time and space; of mutated identities. I wrote a letter to my parents on the ground with Ragi seeds. As I worked, the metaphors of the seed's life cycle- of birth, nurturing, growth and eventual decay began to dawn on me. I watered my letter twice a day. The Ragi seeds began to sprout, and my letter surfaced. Soon I will be gone and with no one to trim or water the letter, the Ragi will over grow and weeds will cover it. The letter will disappear, as if it never was there. But I am glad for it: I think I am too shy to write a letter to my parents.

H.A. Anil Kumar

The dispute to share the waters of the river Cauvery between two Indian states dates back to the British raj period when the two states (Karnataka and Tamil Nadu) were not divided on linguistic basis. Regardless of a good monsoon, Karnataka was bound to share the river water with its neighbour. The farmers of Mandya, Maddur and Mysore district in Karnataka were the ones who were affected the most. When the state failed to solve this water shortage problems due to shortage of rainwater, the farmers tried to resolve the matter by not sharing the water at all! But the state was pressurized by the Central govt to maintain the sharing as usual. Agitated farmers blocked the main roads (for almost a month) between Mysore and Bangalore in protest. It was a metaphoric disconnection between the traditional rural space and the resultant urbanized localities. The dispute resulted in the deaths of many innocent farmers.

Against this stark background which erupted suddenly, its influence became a "theme" for some participants, a "suggestion" for a creative process and provided the obvious "media" for some other artists.

By the time the artists from various countries had assembled at the workshop venue of Olive Gardens, the issue at hand insiduously "affected" their very functioning at Mysore, be it their xenophobic condition or a search for an artistic statement. Even the "absence" of the issue in a few artists works made its "presence" felt in a powerful way.

At a time when farmers from both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu were being pawned by the politicians on either side, artist Sarat Kumara Siri diligently addressed the issue as it was pictured by the media: Newspaper clippings along with visuals of politicians were collaged together in a particular way; Christoph Stortz worked with the weed parthenium creating a path reminiscent of rangoli patterns. Interestingly, parthenium is the main enemy of a farmer in this geographic location.

In yet another work, the artist Hema Upadhya wrote a letter to her parents on the ground with the seed raagi; a staple food of the farmers, raagi is basically grown by farmers who have pawned their living/lives to the "moods" of river Cauvery. This is no mere metaphorical statement, for the weather, rain, politics, emotions, disputes and hence the creative and philosophic moorings of people of the two neighbouring States literally depends on this mood.

When Carla Guagliardi created two interlinked semi circular brick walls, they formed the imaginary boundary that segretaged as well as united space - a metaphoric interpretation

Today the factual details about the distribution of the Cauvery waters is somewhat blurred by fiction. A fiction, rooted in truth but which has morphed into being the root-cause for all political clashes in the region.

The gap between art and life dissolved when a 3 hour journey from Bangalore to Mysore extended into an 8 hours drive through the rugged plains of rural India. The artists compulsorily explored the flavour of rural Karnataka, a river and its politics creating a "Cauvery-KHOJ" at Mysore.

Smitha Cariappa

PART 1

The red silk gift boxes represent,reflect exotic MYSORE.

The audio-tactile-factory experience/curious to take back-

- - the Mysore Dassera- Chamundi Hills -in audio
- - the Mysore traditional painting- in Visual
- - the Mysore Pak- taste
- - the Mysore Mallige- Mysore Sandal Soap- smell
- - the Mysore Silk- touch

Materials- Silk,Plastic boxes,Found objects.

Part 2

Materials- Cotton cloth dipped in mud, cow dung, cane trays, baskets, mulberry leaves, silk-cocoon trays called chandrika and coloured powder.

Part 3

A personal diary carrying the anxieties and despair of my pet rabbit all of four and a half years young 'Alfa'. His ride from Bangalore to Mysore. Most important the very First encounter with his fellow species for the first time, a disaster, displaced, a culture shock to encounter not just one but FOUR rabbits-

I have tried to bring forward the anxieties, displacement, despair conceptually through-

- - Photographs
- - Dottings mapped in the play area for the rabbits on the resort, the hutch
- - Verbal text- in the form of words framed through anxieties I try to read in his activity.
- - Rabbit Rhetoric's -sounds he often makes when held close ,when anxious or relating to his mood.

Sureka

Two things about Mysore have stayed with me since my childhood days. The illumination of the gigantic palace and the fragrance of jasmine. Jasmine is abundant in Karnataka, especially in Mysore and is popularly known as "Mysuru mallige".

I visited some of the archaic local photo studios, where I collected nearly 350 photographs of women wearing the jasmine braids. It is a great tradition of domestic photography in the southern part of India. The women decorate their hairs with designed jasmine braids. And they are photographed at different stages of womanhood celebrating puberty, wedding and pregnancy. Women look at the camera and their back faces the mirror. This makes available the different designs of jasmine braids,

which look like backbone structures. These photographs not only explore the genre of studio-photography but act as "mirrors of desires" in my mind.

Amy plant

Amy's News. In such a short time you have brought out an excellent newspaper with almost all details of Khoj 2002 and all over Mysore. Keep it up. It is an excellent. A new experience for me. Amy's News - an excellent newspaper brought in a short period. Very good spot chosen for a camp Khoj 2002. Since I love artists it is natural I love all their creations except the creation of human babies! I think it is very difficult to understand what you have tried to explain. You look very beautiful. This exhibition is very superb and done a very good job from the international artists. I think the Nix Art Exhibition is excellent work. Excellent! Keep it up. Organise more often please. Birds are happy, fishes are sad. Some of the works ain't that bad Trees are green, coconuts are round I feel sleepy, don't make a sound. I went around to see the exhibition but could not make any head or tail. There was no one to explain! Anyway, it was an experience of its kind. An exquisite ensemble of different artistic hues who have presumably given their best. I was not wholly disappointed.

Even though the art is of some rare nature but there is nobody to explain to us how it is created and with what it is reacted.

Very good work. Other vision of the art.

Very aesthetic, if perhaps simplified.

Good. I think I got some ideas on my intention of producing a documentary about various dimension of life including God.

Its very very nice. So beautiful garden in the garden city of Mysore. Its so nice and beautiful.

A - Arresting

M - Methodical

Y - Yearning

'X'traOrdinary!

Interesting program

Interesting, very different

I love to meet you but where?