

Artists Statement

Anjum Singh

I don't want to know the answer before but want an answer that can surprise

- Eva Hesse.

Mirror was a new surface for me...which opened and extended many possibilities. The work itself worked in many different levels-some expected and some not. The most central aspect of the work, however, was the optical layering and the tension that resulted between the painted and the reflected image -- the still and the mobile. Mirror itself lent an interactive character to the work, which gave the viewer the possibility of finding oneself, become a part of it. It was almost like doing a collaborative work with the mirror being the "other" which brought about a lot of playfulness and many surprises.

ArunKumar H.G.

It is not clear what inspired Piero Manzoni to make a work of art out of a balloon, but in 1960 he created Breath of Artist using a red balloon. At the time Manzoni was one of the most avant-garde artists in the world and he undoubtedly had the urge to make a work with a completely new material. Manzoni sealed the mouth of the balloon with wax and displayed it mounted on a wooden stand as if it was a precious object. Then the artist took photographs of the balloon as it gradually became deflated and developed wrinkles until it finally lay flat and crumpled on the stand.

In 1966, Andy Warhol produced Silver Clouds. This work consisted of countless silver pillow-like balloons made of plastic film, which floated freely among the viewers, who could play with them. This incorporated various new concepts, such as participation of the viewer, a work that naturally decreased rather than maintained the same form forever, and the idea of art as something that could be mass-produced.

Why did these two balloon works make their appearance in 1960 and 1966 and what kind of response did they evoke? For Manzoni and Warhol, who were both searching for new materials, balloons must have seemed very fresh and attractive. On the other hand, members of the public could hardly have viewed these as substantial works of art that were worth collecting.

However, in the current world of contemporary art, works using balloons have been on the increase in recent years. Balloon works have been steadily appearing not only in Japan but also in Europe, America, Australia and Asia. I think one reason for this is convenience; inflatable works are relatively light and make it possible to cheaply produce large-scale works that can be easily transported. Particularly for young artists, this is a big advantage. But that is not all. I think it can be said that the lightness, flexibility, colourfulness and pop image that give everyone a feeling of familiarity and fondness towards balloons meet the needs of the age.

- Extract from "Balloon Art Festival, 1999, written by Dr. Fumio Nanjo, Curator.

Bula Bhattacharya

Memory... distant...recent...past?...present ! name ... identity ... lost ... regaining ... chaos ... co-ordination ... consciousness ... thoughts ... lucid ... reasoning ... communicating ... awareness ... confusion ... remembering ... sharing ... experiences ... coherency ... displaced ... incoherent ... rootless ... identity? ... loosing ... existence ... being ... presence ... absence ... question ... answer ... thoughts ... network ... connection ... broken ... lost ... deadend ... path ... light ... confidence. ... me ... remembering ... joy ... arrival ... known unknown ... connection ... memory ... travelling back and forth ... identity ... fractured ... plural ... without a centre ... unable to grasp ... violence ... anger ... time ... awareness ... integration ... passing ... moment ... room ... space ... placement ... lost ... timelessness ... indefinite ... feelings ... oneness ... objects ... living. nonliving ... known ... unknown ... recognition ... sleep ... awakening ... static ... moving helpness ... confidence ... location fluctuation ... thoughts ... speech ... coherent rational ... irrational ... involuntary ... abstract ... meaning ... truth ... absolute relative ... multiple ... perceive ... construct ... concept ... intermingled ... sensory ... ability ... cognition ... recollection ... existence.

Caetano De Almeida

It is so hot

My experience in India was very important for many reasons.First, for being able to be in touch with people and a culture extremely rich and diverse. It was also important to penetrate in the Indian landscape and architecture, so singular and different from Brazil!

Important to me was also the possibility of realizing the greatness and the cultural richness of people that, in their majority (as in my country), lives in misery.

From my contact with the Indian culture, my artwork changed, becoming even more complex. From the visual culture of the country, I appropriated patterns; print samples that are still helping me create a new period in my paintings, which are totally inspired in India.

I cannot forget, equally, how essential it was to share these days with colleagues from all over the world, being able to exchange ideas and experiences on which I am still reflecting about, and, surely, will broaden even more the complexity of my work.

Kalam Patua

Listen one Listen all Listen to this artist's call
Far away in the Modi's garden There is sikribagh, which is a haven
Destination for artists from all over this global village
Making merry as in their work they engage.
Sovan's making plans to get married soon
Tapfuma's transforming into Jhulelal's tune.
Anjum is working with mirrors every day
But we know not why she is giggling away.
Katia, Caetano and Marintan
With Jagath, Masood and Hassan from Misr
With Vasudha, Lucia and Professor Indro
Join the evening slide shows, which are good fun
As we all argue the night through and still its never

done. Jagath the descendent of Lanka's Ravana Creates mayhem by breaking pots Such is the spirit of this place As we come together in one mind and find solace. Chitrovano, Bula and sculptor Prashanto

Dancing Sonia and Subba painting away Arun, Nitaya, Sue and Lin are busy day and night Zimbabwean Tapfuma has made a big drum Lets have a go at it and set the night alight. Aezaz is going mad trying to organise You ask for cloth he'll get some other merchandise While the artists are deep in their meditation Pooja is worried about their general condition So this is the story of khoj family and all I am Kalam Patua of Bengal (Translated from Bengali)

Hassan Khan

Modinagar is a small industrial town 40 Km from Delhi. The town is dominated by three main industries - sugar, cotton and steel. Over the years, heavy unemployment has hit Modinagar, leaving it a decrepit industrial township.

A bathroom corridor is transformed. The three toilets are transformed with partitions into cubicles, the walls separating the cubicles are transformed with light into exhibition spaces, In three cubicles raw industrial sugar cane, cotton, and steel are installed, Eighteen people from all different classes were interviewed on the streets of the town. The conversation was structured around three main axes - origins, fear and aspirations. Each person interviewed was invited to get their photograph taken at the town photography studio, two copies were printed one went to the individual the other was exhibited in the installation. An edited audio-track of the interviews is broadcast in the corridor. In a small dark room a two-minute video loop with images from the city and questions addressed to the audience is played.

This is an attempt at archaeology of a site -- the en framing of the relationship between the inhabitants of a town to the conceptual existence of that town. The political economy of the space, the way it manifests itself in people's daily existence, is explored rather than dramatized. Moving from the position of the passive consumer, the audience encounters their social marks of difference through a series of questions (Why do you live where you live? What do you do to get money? Who watches when you speak?). To move from an experience of the self as a stable located site - to an experience that questions the self itself.

Indrapramit Roy

It is not everyday that one, even a practising artist, gets an opportunity to talk art, live art and make art in the company of so many exciting and friendly people. The KHOJ workshop at Modinagar provided just that. I decided to paint on whatever was locally available. A bundle of film posters that was collected by some artist during the previous workshop felt just right. It's been a while that formally I am concerned about the fragments making the whole. The work consisting of fragments made of layers of film posters looked like a mural when it went up on the designated wall. The printed textile was something that Caetano was already using in his work. It provided the peg to hang the fragments. It can also be seen as a form of collaboration with a fellow artist. The poster image on which the painting was done provided a counter point to the painted imagery and is visible as a ghost image

through thin layers of paint in some areas. The smaller watercolours were more intimate and personal in their scale and ambition. It had a calming effect.

The third work consisting of mineral water bottles filled with tea bag stained water titled THE CUTTING EDGE was a product of days of animated discussions on life in art over cups of tea and bottles of mineral water. It is a work that can't help taking a slightly amused look at the idea of the avant-guard, a Modernist issue that refuses to die even in these post-modern times. The title was a spirited suggestion from Subba, who, I must add here, made life so much more fun with his ready wit, erudition and a vast storage of patience. He is a find. In the end a very big thanks to KHOJ and the ever-expanding KHOJ family, it has been really wonderful.

Katia Chapa

India -- an attack to all the senses, an explosion of thousands of different scents in a five-minute walk. Colour, sound, beauty, kindness, curiosity, monkeys, cows, religion, art, culture...

I must admit I was really nervous about not having one single clue of what i was going to work with It's such an attack to the senses that ideas just burst out; way too many to even have the time to execute them all and enough to get you confused thinking which would be best. There is so much to do, yet so little time.

Going to the market everyday and bringing something almost never seen before became part of my daily routine. I started collecting everything that would catch my attention; bangles, bicycle tire wipers, food, flowers, fruits, fabrics, grains, candy, insects, water from the pond... Every blink of an eye fed an idea. I could say my work was all about this, the constant gathering of sights, customs and traditions.

I close my eyes and I can listen to the beautiful twinkling sound of the colourful bangles in every woman's arms. I remember how almost every store or home would have seven chillies and one lemon hanging from its doorframe to keep the evil away. I can see all the red and white painted trees on the side of the road from Delhi to Modinagar.

The contact with the people was very enriching. Everyone in Modinagar knew about the artists from KHOJ. They were all very interested in what we were doing and why. For me these people were our real inspiration since we were all using their lives, their culture and their environment in order to express ourselves.

The isolation of a person from his/her environment forces him/her to find and create a new one wherever he/she may be. I think we all found this at KHOJ; a new family was born in a very interesting culture potpourri.

I think art is an obvious consequence at KHOJ.

Lin Holland

It is approximately nine months since I participated in KHOJ 2000. The experience was immense, the lessons were profound and the friendships enduring. Say yet exactly how or why, but I know that it is. The sedimentary nature of time buries all experience into memory, but I have carried something of KHOJ with me on a daily basis.

Lucia KingThe installation work made for KHOJ is called "21 paradigms for how the artist has captured the world". It consists of 21 transparent balls, which hang from the ceiling of a disused aviary (4 x 4 x 3 meters) in the gardens of the Modi family estate. Inside each of the balls is a small Marquette, which represents in a kind 3D cartoon form, a paradigm of how contemporary artists disengage themselves from their environment by the aesthetic, critical or self-reflective concerns in their artwork. The trunk of a tree growing inside the aviary, projecting out of it at the top was also painted blue where it was still inside the cage. This dematerialised the force of nature bursting through this confining man-made space. (The blue colour made the tree ephemeral, like the sky).

The piece is intended to be both Ironic and provocative in the context of an exhibition-cum-workshop situation where I felt that attitudes to making art within limited time (on site) were more important than finished results. I wanted to show all the possible scenarios of how the artist can alienate him/herself unintentionally through the way of putting material (or a network of intention) between him/herself and other people in the world. Because the Marquette's inside the plastic balls were pre-conceived before I arrived at KHOJ, the point of making the installation was also to see if any of the participating artists approaches would be comparable with my models. I was hoping to be challenged about how other artists and public read my paradigms, in the image-metaphors that I composed to represent a state of creativity.

The most significant response I had from the other KHOJ participants was from South African artist, Tapfuma, who assumed that each of the models I had made corresponded to the approach of one of the participating artists. He picked out one of the hanging sculptures and asked, "Is this me?". This was indeed the point of the work: that artists could recognise themselves in the paradigms and embrace (our own) potential follies and perceptual framings. An example of one of the Marquette's: It was covered in money glued to the surface of it with the slogan, "Buy my life-style" on it, and a small cup and toothbrush balanced inside. For artists today who are no longer concerned with producing art objects for a market, the framing of themselves as separate to "normal" society is still potentially there, since their life-style may become commodified. I wanted to do this with a sense of humour, which came out mainly in the surreality of the image compositions in the tiny Marquette's.

The effect of installing the work in an old birdcage proved that these models of being an artist are either outdated or questionable to me, since I am ultimately looking for an art, which is embedded, in social and human relationships. I am currently also directing short films where the question of what is the subjective point of view of the actors (in this case children in Delhi and Dharamshala who are co-writing the scripts) is foremost. We all live by our personal myths but how do we access the mythic dimensions of another's experience?**Nitaya Ueareworakul**

The image of my work is the two chairs in the living room, Title : Conventional dialogue Media : Art object Material : Found object, fabric and bamboo stick Concept : Pleasure and pain --- a realistic dialogue beyond class, colour and religion... Experience : Being part of the workshop, feels like going back to school. The experience of friendship coming from everywhere in the world...gives me the

chance to fulfil a certain side in my life...Knowledge appears everywhere in its own environment & circumstances...Sharing, communication and exchange, sometimes do not need any words...

Prasanta Mukherjee

My works are prompted by circumstances around me, be it social, political, religious or environmental. My very first day's experience of the environment at Modinagar, an industrial suburb is behind the conceptualisation of the work done during the workshop. There is a presence of some suspended matter in the air of this industrial town. These omnipresent black particles seem to layer any form of life on earth, which is like a sore to the abundant green of our immediate surroundings. My work reflects this toll on life represented by a seed, a leaf, and a flower.

Sonia Khurana

The flower carrier or the mad woman with the forget-me-not

Installation and performance video. Installation: wheelbarrow, (found) plastic flowers, metal stand, postcards for distribution (with text excerpts from Milan Kundera's Immortality) Performance vide (ongoing): a performed sequence of the artist walking with the flower (fashioned after the description in the text on the postcard) through the streets of Modinagar, at various times of the day/s, with a subsequent, ongoing through other places. The video has the ambient sound of traffic/streets interwoven with text read out as a voice over.

Text on postcard:

"She said to herself: when once the onslaught of ugliness became completely unbearable, she would go to a florist and buy a forget-me-not, a slender stalk with miniature blue flowers. She would go out into the streets holding the flower before her eyes, staring at it tenaciously, so as to see only that single beautiful point, to see it as the last thing she wanted to preserve for herself from a world she had ceased to love, she would walk like that through the streets, she would soon become a familiar sight, children would run after her, laugh at her, throw things at her, and all would call her: the crazy woman with the forget-me-not."

Sovan Kumar

The Social Marriage- a site-specific installation with performance This "installation" has happened to me in real life. It felt a bitter sensation - a scarring experience regarding the concept of marriage.

Getting married is a common "social" happening - a social "phenomena" today; an inhuman deadening concept, it is seen as the urge of one body coalescing with another. But for me, marriage is something, which happens, in the emotive sphere rather than the crude social sphere. It is a metaphysical or cosmic happening.

In my work at KHOJ, I used all the marriage accessories: invitation cards printed on the wall, the motif of the banana tree on the top of a sacred pitcher, the symbolic bride on both sides of the door of my room. In front of a pond, I performed as a groom seated on a presentation/gift box being costumed in the groom's attire. Separately, I decorated a trolley as a bedroom with a floral tent anointed with Kamasutra motifs. The whole project was a celebration of marriage ceremony: A satire on the process and methodology of marriage where the marrying humans are nothing more than sensibly paralysed dolls - they become social toys being sacrificed theatrically to fulfil the purpose of a ritual. Marriage is not made in heaven it's only a social actMarriage is not made in heaven. It makes heavens and heavens

Subba Ghosh

City of Dreams
Chance meetings
By the highway
Transaction
Conversation
Lives crossing
Into the unknown
Strangers
Exchanging fragments
By the light
Of a single bulb
Dust On the television
Smoke
Waiting
Cough of an old motor
For the
Refusing to start
The passing silence
Shouts Over the static
Laughter Of the blaring radio
From the darkness
Chance meetings
Beyond the pool of light
That is what we are
Each one
Shutting
Silhouetted
Floating
Whispering
Between life and death
Of journeys
Like senseless words
Never completed
From unknown stories
Straining
To catch the broken
Image
Subba
Of an old movie
August 2001

Sue Rees

.....And finally much later than ever and anon there comes a momentary lull. The effect of those brief and rare respites is unspeakably dramatic to put it mildly. Those who never know a moment's rest stand rooted to the spot often in extravagant postures and the stillness heightened tenfold of the sedentary and vanquished makes that which is normally theirs seem risible in comparison. The fists on their way to smite in anger or discouragement freeze in their arcs until the scare is past ... Samuel Beckett. The Lost Ones..... As life becomes more subject to administrative norms, people must learn to wait more. Games of chance possess the great charm of freeing people from having to wait. Walter Benjamin. The Arcades Project

All Still
3 spaces with in I and III series of 10 knitted gloves fabricated from saris, 50 made -gloves with latex : string, pulleys, with metal wheel and handle for observer to turn the wheel on the outside of the building. Those viewing inside are not aware of who is controlling the movement. Incidental Sounds. I should have begun with this : the sky. A window minus the sill, frame, and panes. An aperture, nothing more, but wide open.

Wisława Szymborska. Sky

Vertical Passages
at Modinagar followed by an installation at the British Council, New Delhi in conjunction with performance artist Marintan Siriat. 14 ladders made out of bamboo covered with white paint with the heights ranging from 12 to 144. At Modinagar they were placed on window ledges and balconies and at the British Council hung from a grid, as well as placed on window ledges.

Vasudha Thozhur

One of my projects for KHOJ was to have been the making of a KHOJ diary, from the "taqtis" in wood that I found in the market -- I did not get beyond the fourth or fifth page. Mail from Subba reminding me about the catalogue piece, and I now try to recall what I did. The bamboo pieces. The newspaper / fabric pieces. The painting -- of myself painting.

The discovery of how to start a process in motion, in a situation resembling a vacuum; to discover the *raison d'etre* of an artwork, of endeavour of any sort -- and the methodology which needs to be formulated for such a purpose.

The methodology was to set in motion the cycle of cause and effect, in the creation of a phenomenal reality governed by a set of variables / a given set of concrete elements peculiar to the situations on hand -- the people, the available material, the house, the environment.

What I most enjoyed was the patterns made by the tiles on the floor -- a different one for each room; consequently, the desire to preserve them as memories. I spent the first couple of days tracing them out and then colouring them. I still have a roll of those tracings, as yet unused, awaiting their moment. It occurs to me now that I can make my diary with these patterns, a different one of each page or day.