

## SELF/TRANS-LATION SUDARSHAN SHETTY

AKBANK  
SANAT

Curator: Hasan Bülent Kahraman

Untitled, 2017  
Heykel Sculpture  
Recycled teak wood and found ceramics  
193 x 79 x 94 cm



The piece, as it were, seemingly an archeological object/container within a glass vitrine is made of broken porcelain and recycled wood found from a market that sells wood retrieved from dismantled homes. The artist here assumes responsibility of reconstructing something of value, very well knowing that there is a parallel position of vacuum within that. Both the position of making something which seems to have an archeological value and the fact that it is an artificial construct, are not mutually exclusive.

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Untitled, 2017  
Sculpture  
Recycled teak wood  
226 x 152,4 x 26 cm

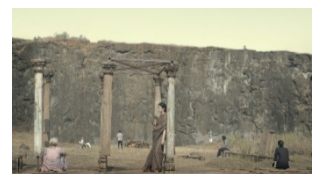


The intricately carved Persian carpet – originally sourced from the second hand market – opens up perhaps unknown and imaginary stories of thousands of footsteps over it, and is accentuated by the fact that the piece is entirely made of re-used wood that would have belonged to various dismantled homes in and around Mumbai.

The carpet in its disheveled state may evoke a sense of drama as it urges the viewer to straighten it or wonder what could be underneath. The piece in that sense invokes an event – an event in its perpetual state – and acts as a witty remark on what makes for an art object and when.

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Shoonya Ghar, 2015  
Video, 60', Ed. 2/3  
HD video, color, sound



Shoonya Ghar Miniature Model, 2016  
Installation  
Recycled teak wood  
177,8 x 81,3 x 40,6 cm

Who is asleep and who is awake in this city, this home, this settlement, and this fortress of nothingness? What is the relation between building and consciousness? This film involves building and construction alongside characters enacting scenes in which dramatic action mobilizes conventions of representing birth, death, sex, dance, play, music and violence in local traditions of story-telling. A group of performers enacting a set of disparate scenes carry the thrust of the cinematic action alongside the construction of the set. The set is constructed by five craftsmen, who erect the buildings through the length of the film as a parallel narrative. This set is also recreated in the gallery becoming the mise-en-scene for viewing the film. The viewer walks through the set to reach the film and returns through the set. The set construction is thus both a mediation and a performance of the first order. The film reflects on the construction of the set or the stage, the musical score and performance - three distinct processes that are fundamental to cinematic narrative and time. These three independent streams, integral to story-telling in cinema remain parallel, never

converging to create an authoritative narrative.

The gallery viewer is offered these components in various states of construction and has the opportunity to put these modular pieces together in constructing a narrative that may draw upon their experience, imagination and history as persons. The gallery turns into a space mediating cinematic narrative as it foregrounds and layers different sources of mediation required to produce narrative. The performers' actions unfold in the scenography provided by the set construction while the viewer's experience of the film comes from stepping into the space opened up by these scene to resolve the film's open-ended structure. The film-maker as auteur dissolves into these layers of mediations.

The work draws on a poetic work by 12th century poet Gorakhnath who also influenced his celebrated successor Kabir. These poetic traditions rejected idol worship but populated their verses with the concrete symbolism of the built world and things within it, with references to nature and the environment as metaphors for the body and its beyond. In terms of narrative and aesthetic structure, successive verses of longer poems set up contradictions that remain unresolved and open-ended while also remaining structurally bound to each other. The film's conceptual form opens the possibility that these pieces can be taken apart and placed in opposition to each other to discover a relation between what is real and what is imagined. Its experience raises the possibility of recreating these aesthetic ideas in contemporary forms and media, in the space of the gallery/museum challenging conventions of cinematic experience and representation.

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Untitled, 2013

Sculpture

Steel, brass glass

28 x 24 x 24 cm



The 'One Kilo Sculptures' are made in response to the idea of standard (IPK) for the measure of Kilogram that is kept in various parts of the world. These standards, over a period of time, have changed in their respective weights and the standard really is in question.

My work here represents the idea of weight and mass that is so close to how we perceive our own bodily existence.

The fact that I have made them into sculptures – loosely following a 'modernist' method – points at the fact that a standard for any measure can be a myth and that this is largely a matter of subjective perception of the world outside.

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A Song A Story, 2016

Video, 24' 18''

2 models, Ed. 2/3

HD video, color, sound



This work comprises a two-channel video anchored by two built objects. A couple's home and a public space are the dramatis personae along with the couple. On the face of it, the narrative is simple, drawn from a popular South Indian folk tale. The woman, a wife, is alone and asleep. From her breath emerge a story and a song that have never come to light. Angry at being submerged and repressed, these potential narratives formed in language and music enact their revenge upon the woman by escaping from captivity in her body. Assuming the form of a man's umbrella and a pair of his shoes, they station themselves outside her door. When her husband returns at dusk, stunned by the signs of another's presence, he walks away without investigating. The woman remains asleep. As night falls, the man finds shelter in a public place. Alone, he begins hearing voices conversing in the darkness – gradually realizing that the voices belong to the lights from different homes that are extinguished as people fall asleep. Eavesdropping on the conversation amongst the lights as they slowly brighten the darkness, he learns that the umbrella and the shoes belong to no one, to no other man – they were merely the forms taken by the song and the story submerged within his wife's silence, her sleeping, unconscious self. He brings back this story of the song and the story to his wife who is surprised by their provenance for once they have escaped her, she can no longer claim any knowledge nor connection to them.

This story is told and retold in multiple screens – the two channels of the video itself but also the television screen in front of which the woman has fallen asleep. Although simultaneous, the narratives playing out across these framed spaces also convey a sense of unfolding time and a sense of suspense about the potential of narrative as it comes into the world through the media of language and music. What remains unconscious to the self takes on a life of its own, indeed demands a life of its own. The two buildings that frame the space and contain time – one domestic, the other public – contain the action but only nominally. A sense of the unrealized potential, the traffic between the real and the virtual takes place both on-screen and off-screen, as the sets and the actors constantly spill out of the frame. Formally, the video creates a sense of time that confounds linearity as it places a mind, unaware of its own potential and its multiple refractions in objects, lights and voices, at its center. The set itself, built off site for the enactment of the performance, is brought off-screen into the space of the gallery anchoring the story of the story and the song.

Philosophically, the work raises the question of when a story becomes a story and when a song becomes a song. What kind of space allows them to come into being and what confines them to silence? Within the artist's recent trajectory, bringing together music, cinema, performance and folklore this project clarifies different ways of grappling with the knowledge and wisdom that has been taken for granted in context of contemporary art. It is allegorical and draws consistently on forms that lie outside a canonical art history to question the range of understandings of time and place – at once philosophical and material - that remain tacit in our ways of life, not alluding to dominant political framings.

Courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Krinzinger

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