

ART *India*

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ARTS AND CRAFTS





Chinmoyi Patel. *Constructions (Rising)*. Found concrete, foam, cloth, thread, football. 29" x 25" x 30". 2019. © the artist.

Paper, Threads, Dolls

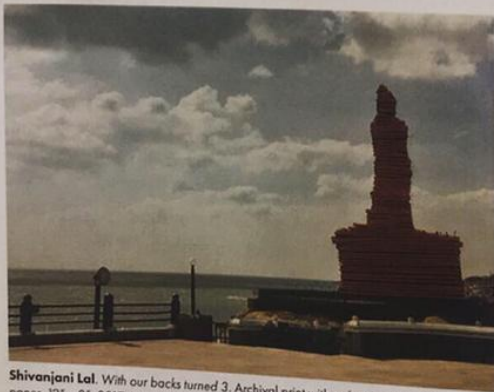
Sandhya Bordewekar discusses the works of five Baroda artists who engage with diverse crafts-based methods in their art practices.

Unpacking the Studio

SONALI BHAGCHANDANI

Making Space, from the 19th of September to the 19th of October, was the inaugural show at Sakshi Gallery's new space in Colaba, Mumbai. Curated by Saloni Doshi, the show featured 33 artists who have been part of Space 118's residencies. Space 118 has served as a hub for several artists and was set up in 2009 in Mazgaon's industrial wasteland.

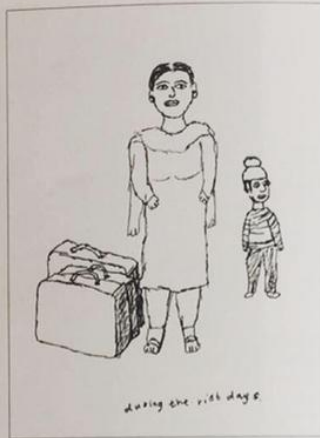
How might the materiality of a studio shape the intimate process of making art? The show unravelled this enigma through asymmetric connections. The experience of geographical space inspired a captivating work by Pratap Morey featuring the blueprint of a city on the edge of detonation. *With our backs turned 3* by Shivanjani Lal spoke of erasure and forgotten memories, with red thread lines shrouding a memorial. In a similar vein, Remen Chopra traversed into performative image-making, exploring fictional ruptures that made and unmade history. Radhika Wader's surreal diagrams looked like brain waves or mind maps. In the painstaking and precise surfaces in Ankush Safaya's and Parul Gupta's works, each line came across as fiercely sonic. Richi Bhatia brought the organic world inside the studio, and her works included material like fish scales, nut- and sea-shells. In Al-Qawi Nanavati's *Bandagi* series, sawdust-embossed printwork on paper, a result of gestural layers, created a script that was indecipherable; the artist gave voice to silence, articulating thoughts that were yet to be discovered by words. /



Shivanjani Lal. *With our backs turned 3*. Archival print with red embroidered thread on paper. 12" x 8". 2017. Image courtesy the artist, Space 118 and Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai.

Pathos in an Absurd World

SONALI BHAGCHANDANI



Gagan Singh. *Untitled*. Ink on paper. 11.75" x 8.5". Exhibited in 2019. Images courtesy the artist and Chatterjee & Lal.

It's like walking into a diary. Gagan Singh's characters suggest stories that often defy conventional logic. You may trace their enigmatic roots in fiction or in an absurd world that is real and intimate. In *What I Did Every Day*, mounted at Mumbai's Chatterjee & Lal, from the 19th of September to the 7th of November, Singh's peculiar sketches tell tales of a flawed, conflicted reality.

Each spare sketch contains a clue, embedded in language – you often find Singh twisting words and their meanings. See the cloudy and smoke-filled 'dream' of a pop-corn kernel. Or a centipede going to a shoe store. These amusing images often hint at darker spaces. Amongst the various drawings, scrolls and artists' books, the most compelling work involves Singh's haunting response to the death of his father. He inscribes this moment with clinical precision; it is an invisible pathos that is betrayed by the jagged edge of each hesitant letter that the protagonist writes.

The 1984 pogrom against the Sikh community leads Singh to trace the trauma of violence through drawings of ordinary objects. A mother and son stand with three packed and ready suitcases; a petrified boy clutches his hair; men brutalise one another, and themselves. Singh's watchful eye follows people in their roles – from the art critic to the collector to the theorist. He unravels each role through a reflected reversal. At times literal, these witty works short-circuit the logic of reality by exposing the illusions that sustain it. /