



OJAS
ART

Fellowship

Fulbright Alumni Artists

13 to 19 January 2017

OJAS ART GALLERY

Participating artists

Biman Das		Ela Mukherjee
Gopika Nath		Hanuman Kambli
Indrapramit Roy		Jyoti Bhatt
Kalpana Subramanian		Manisha Bhattacharya
Neeta Omprakash		Partha Dey
Parthiv Shah		Prasanta Mukherjee
Rahul Kumar		Rathin Kanji
Satadru Sovan		Sundeep Bali
Suresh K Nair		Sushanta Guha
Sushma Yadev		Vasudev Akkitham

Vineet Kacker

Curated by
Kathryn Myers and **Pradosh Mishra**

Fellowship

Fulbright Alumni Artists

Fellowship—Fulbright Alumni Artists, sponsored by the United States-India Educational Foundation with financial support from the U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, and generously hosted by Ojas Art Gallery, is the first exhibition to bring together twenty-one Indian artists who won Fulbright Fellowships in the visual arts over five decades, from 1964 – 2015.

This exhibition celebrates contributions that artists have made in fulfilling United States Senator J. William Fulbright’s mission to promote mutual understanding across nations and Jawaharlal Nehru’s affirmation that culture widens the mind and the spirit.

From Texas to Vermont, California to Connecticut, New York City to Kalamazoo, Michigan, Indian Fulbright artists have traversed the United States in body, mind and spirit. Invigorated by new situations and surroundings, inspired by the startling and the strangely familiar, they have engaged in reciprocal creative research in universities, institutes, museums, art centers and ateliers. Encountering new colleagues and friends through both structured and serendipitous dialogue, they have shared India’s diverse artistic heritage through their own contributions to that legacy.

Through stories and works of art, this exhibition offers an opportunity to revisit—or meet for the first time—the collective Fulbright experience of traveling and returning home with an expanded sense of self and the world.

Kathryn Myers

Professor of Art, The University of Connecticut,
Fulbright Scholar – India, 2002, 2011

Pradosh Mishra

Professor of the History of Art, Banaras Hindu University,
Fulbright Scholar – United States, 2012



The beauty of the India-US partnership

“The world is but a canvas to our imagination”, or so said Henry David Thoreau, the author of *Walden*, and leading philosopher, abolitionist, naturalist and transcendentalist. We all have images of our worlds that are unique and special. Artists, such as the 21 Fulbright alumni artists who have shared their images of their worlds with us through this exhibit, are blessed with the ability to communicate their worlds in deep and meaningful ways through their art. Unlike poetry, theater and literature which depend on language to tell stories and share images, the visual arts transcend language borders and allow a broader, deep sharing of images that highlight our shared perspectives while, at the same time, provide us with opportunities to explore the canvases of those with images reflecting other cultural backgrounds and influences.

The work on display in this exhibit demonstrates the power of the arts in crossing borders and creating meaningful opportunities for people to share their imagined worlds. The Fulbright program has clearly served to enrich the canvases of these 20 alumni artists.

This exhibition, brilliantly curated by Fulbright alumni Kathryn Myers of the University of Connecticut and Pradosh Mishra of Banaras Hindu University, serves as a visual testimony of the power of international exchanges in general and the Fulbright program in particular.

The physical setting, housed in one of Delhi’s finest art galleries, the Ojas Art Gallery, is ideal for not only maximizing the impact of the art on display but also providing an ambiance that invites the visitor to immerse himself/herself in the art and transcend into the worlds of the artists’ imaginations as depicted through their art.

The US Embassy is proud to be part of such a program. Visual exhibitions of the work of our exchange program alumni demonstrate the power of cultural diplomacy. At times when misunderstandings are in the spotlight and the manifestations of these differences can be catastrophic, this exhibit reminds us of our shared values, perspectives and images while providing us a beautiful way to share views.

Cultural diplomacy is at the heart of what we do and is a cornerstone of the India-US relationship which embraces overlapping values such as cherishing diversity and the freedom to share it. This exhibit is a wonderful visual illustration of the beauty of the India-US partnership at its best.

Dr. Craig Dicker
Cultural Affairs Officer
US Embassy



Promoting mutual understanding

The United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF), with financial support from the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, is proud to be the sponsor of “Fellowship,” an art exhibition that brings together the works of 21 contemporary Indian artists who have been honored with Fulbright awards in the visual arts.

The Ojas Art Gallery, New Delhi, provides a stupendous backdrop for this exhibition of Indian talent in celebration of the artists’ common passion and commitment to their individual work, and their dedication to expanding their horizons, as well as those of people around them through art.

This art show, carefully and lovingly curated by professors Kathryn Myers (University of Connecticut) and Pradosh Mishra (Banaras Hindu University), showcases works of gifted and recognized artists, each defining diverse cultural, geographical, and generational diversity within the Indian context. Each of these artists had also their unique academic and social experiences in their host communities in the United States, where they enriched others’ lives in the process of enriching their own.

Since its inception in 1950, USIEF has avidly supported proposals by visual and performing artists and art historians through the Fulbright grants, based on the knowledge that artists, their work, and their areas of expertise are viable conduits for effective and profound influence, for stimulating dialog, and, ultimately, for the promotion of mutual understanding. Few other disciplines have such an immediate impact, or such an unequivocal purpose.

It is a rare opportunity and an extraordinary privilege to enjoy these works together, to bring this seemingly unrelated lot to bear witness to a shared life changing experience, a Fulbright fellowship.

Adam J. Grotsky
Executive Director
United States - India Educational Foundation





Budding Joy, 2014
Bronze

BIMAN DAS

Artist statement

The ovoid organic forms in the mid-order of the sculpture braces manifestation of the generative energy and protective potential of nature in blossoming of lives and Joy. Winged butterfly in the centre of the composition suggests the vibrating joy and the songs of life in Nature, vibes of future and development. "The Sun Motif" on top of the sculpture has a distinctive radiance is suggested to glorify uniqueness. The Sun, literally, is the supreme source of both light and lives' progressions on earth, creating the perennial drama of the Day and the Night, in the centre-stage of Universal Nature.

Fulbright experience

I was serving as principal, Govt. College of Art, Calcutta and in the year 1997, selected for Fulbright Travel grant only to deliver the lectures on Contemporary Indian art and artists, folk art and temple sculptures. My co-sponsorer was my sculpture friend John Antone, who took entire responsibility of staying and hospitality at Virginia. My first lecture took place at British Columbia University, Richmond. It was unforgettable days had passed in USA by delivering

lectures in several art colleges, School such as Chicago College of Art Huston San Antonio. Maryland, Connecticut, Washing DC. I also mentioned eminent print maker, Rabart Kirshbaum for living inviting me his institute for interaction with the students and delivering lectures on art. I will never forget Prof. Ruth Boldau, Rich Mond, Rabart Kirschbaum and ultimately John and all of his friends, Fulbright officials who have whole heartedly supported and encouraged me and vision were grand success.

I wish Fulbright will encourage more amore to young talented artists both the countries through exchange programs. Fulbright Alumni group exhibition, which is to be held in Delhi, proves to be brilliant step further.



Dreamweaver III, 2014
Ceramic

Ela Mukherjee

Artist statement

Form plays the most important role in my works and I love to repeat them. Each work is a repetitive sequencing of a form, which once puts together form a cohesive whole. Forms are usually organic, at times juxtaposed with geometric. Clay is the primary medium in my works but I also incorporate textile, metal, glass etc. with it.

Fulbright experience

The Fulbright Fellowship was the first opportunity I had to go overseas as an individual professional ceramic artist. I am self-taught in ceramics. Though I had been exhibiting my works in galleries in India before 2005 and had received Junior Fellowship by MHRD, Govt. of India, receiving the Fulbright has been an important landmark in my career. I chose to work under Mr. Yoshiro Ikeda at Kansas State University. This was my first experience to be a part of a fine arts department in a university and I made the most of this opportunity. I had many memorable experiences both professional and personal. I made many artist friends there and I helped them connect with galleries and residency programs here in India on my return. Overall it was an extremely enriching and evolving experience and I am grateful to USEFI for this.



Again and Again I, 2011
Cotton Fabrics, cotton floss, cotton polyester thread
Set of 3

Gopika Nath

Artist statement

The deep-rooted philosophy of Indian textiles, their history and excellence is a factor that has always inspired me. Working as a designer, I have been fortunate to work with rural craftsman in different parts of the country. It was their predicament in this frenetic digitized age that took me deeper into the historical practices and traditions where I found myself resonating with the ideas of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy that crafts in ancient India nourished the man in mind, body and spirit and that too without self-expression which was the norm in Western art practices. Through my work as an artist, I discovered the potential of thread, cloth and embroidery to speak a language of feelings – of self-expression that was never a part of the ancient traditions of textile-making, which I so admire.

In our chaotic world, we function more through the intellect than our feelings, which in turn become suppressed and make their presence felt in destructive ways. Something that our feelings were never meant to do. Creative self-expression, in that sense, seems to serve towards containing this destructive potential.

Through this process of discovery and recovery of the power of feelings,

the deconstructed threads also lend themselves towards bringing renewed attention and value to the practice of embroidery – one of the many crafts of the ancient world.

Fulbright experience

The year was 2000, the beginning of the new millennium – when I went to a small town in Colorado for my Fulbright Fellowship. Fort Collins is home to the Colorado State University where Tom Lundberg, my mentor, was (and still is) a professor in the Fibre Arts Department. During my three month stay there, I was to discover many things and re-define my rather cliched ideas about the America I knew – of New York and her bustling pace, McDonalds and Starbucks, Carnegie Hall, the Met and the Guggenheim.

Being a Fulbright scholar was a privilege I treasured, but the respect it commanded in the US was both astonishing and gratifying. Everywhere I went, all I had to say was that I was a Fulbright scholar doing research and people were most forthcoming. An usher at MOMA asked for advice about his application for the fellowship and there were times when it seemed as if 'Fulbright scholar' were magic words and doors would open Khulja sim-sim (open sesame).



Mirror
Etching-Engraving

Hanuman Kampli

Artist statement

I have working on a series “human faces” which intrigues me because so often they change expression. I also created many works based on the theme “Facebook” a social network that attracts me, for which I created many works. The work “Untitled” concerns the human condition, how political and economic power suppresses human beings, how a powerful hand and visible and invisible walls divides humans and powerfully undermines fellow human beings.

Poisonous mind spread poisonous thoughts, it always an action that divides and spread venom among each other, where by contrast, nature is full of peace and love!

Fulbright experience

I didn't have a specific project as such. They treated me as an international visiting printmaker-professor and provided me facilities including a studio which well equipped. As an academician it was great experience because in India we face all sorts of difficulties. I was working on series of etchings and simultaneously sharing my experiences with students and teachers. They provided me with all assistance and

helped me so that I could gave illustrated talks at different Universities and art Institutions there. At the end of my term I had an exhibition of my work.

I visited many museums and galleries around Michigan and Chicago. After that I worked at Blackburn studio at New York and also visited many museums, galleries and institutions and viewed many works of masters. The Blackburn studio gave me many opportunities to interact with many international artists. As a Fulbright scholar, it was big opening of free brave world of artistic expression and influenced my art practice as well as my teaching methods.



Cafeteria, 2016
Watercolour on Arches Paper

Indrapramit Roy

Artist statement

"You learn more and more that everything exists at once with its opposite, so the contradictions of life are never ending and somehow the meditation between these opposites is the game of life."

—Milton Glaser (Graphic designer and the creator of 'I Love New York' logo)

The contradictions of life are all around us. The cities are repositories of them. The beautiful tree is chopped and mauled and then lit with fairy lights, The brightest lights hide the darkest secrets, the shanties jostles for space with swank high rises, the medieval and the modern co-exists in uneasy proximity, all that glitters is not gold yet life goes on in all its liminal glory.

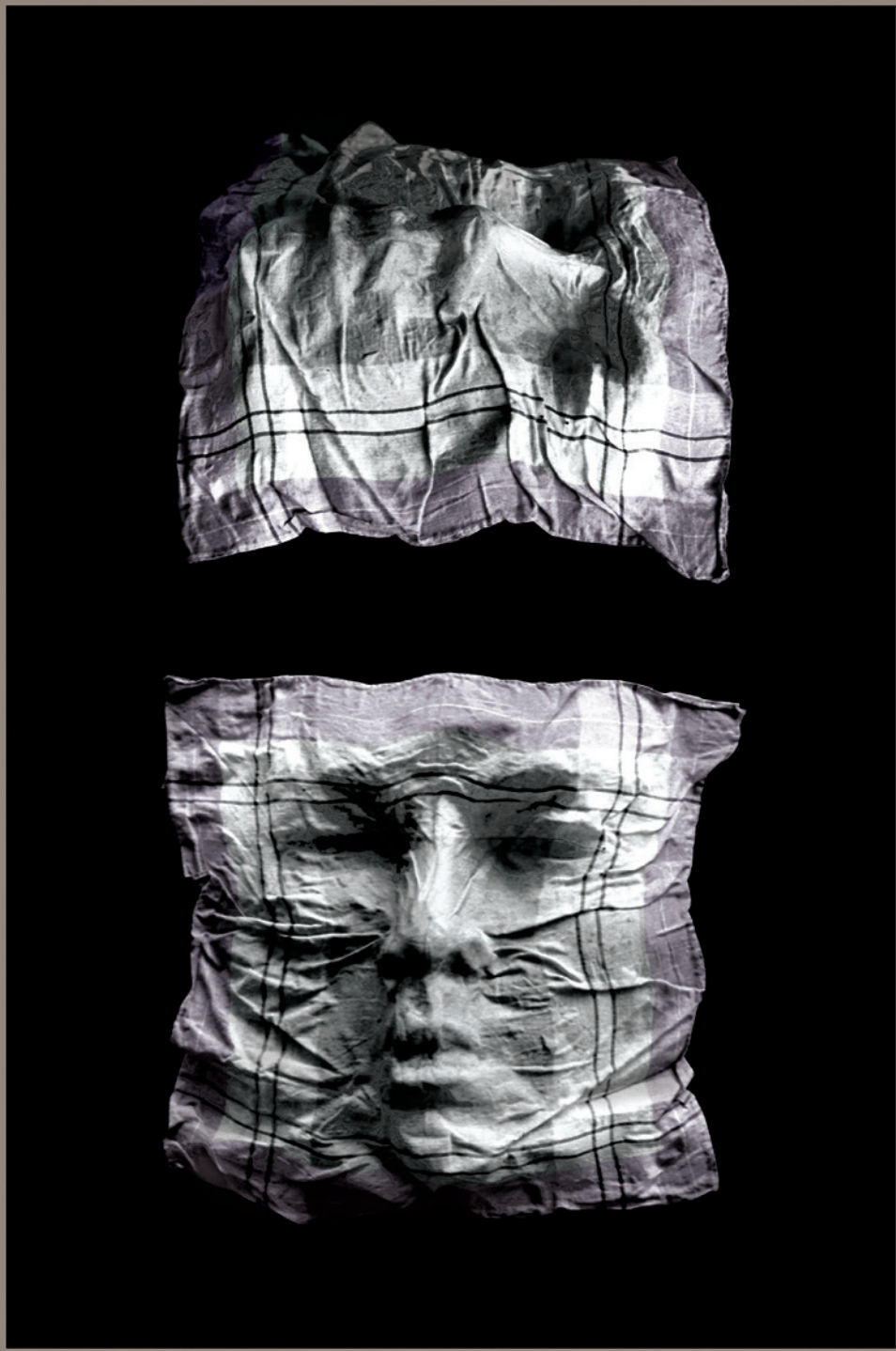
Fulbright experience

I arrived at the Newark Liberty International on a perfect fall day of October 2004. I moved to the beautiful campus of Bennington College, Vermont where I was to spend the next nine weeks. I worked in my apartment that was provided to me as the artist-in-residence and taught a course in Printmaking once a week. A set of objects found in and around my apartment along with a set of self-portraits was what my work revolved around. At the end of the stay there was a show of all the works produced in those weeks at the college gallery.

My six month long Fulbright Fellowship was divided in two parts: the first part spent in Bennington, a Liberal Arts College that offered a variety of courses with the option of mixing different streams, a concept quite different from the mainstream Indian educational concept at that point. The second half of my stay, after the winter break, was spent at a professional Art School, The University of Arts (UArts), Philadelphia.

In between these two rather intensive periods of work I used the time to travel a bit in New England, around Bennington and then to Boston and University of Connecticut's Storrs campus, where my old friend Kathryn Myers arranged for a talk and an interactive session with the students. In the Christmas break I went to Los Angeles where I had an invite from the J. Paul Getty museum. I had illustrated books for them and wanted to see the Malibu villa that was just being readied for a grand opening in early 2005.

I returned to Baroda in April 2005 after a most exciting six months in the US of A marked by intense periods of work interspersed with travel and socialising.



Mask
Photograph

JYOTI BHATT

Artist's statement

I have been making paintings and prints since 1950. Apart from these I have also tried my hand on photography, ceramics and sculptures. I do not think I ever had a clear idea or any "concept" before starting my work or while working on that. On the other hand, while I am working, I do get all kinds of ideas; some of them are often related to the forms that my images should be given.

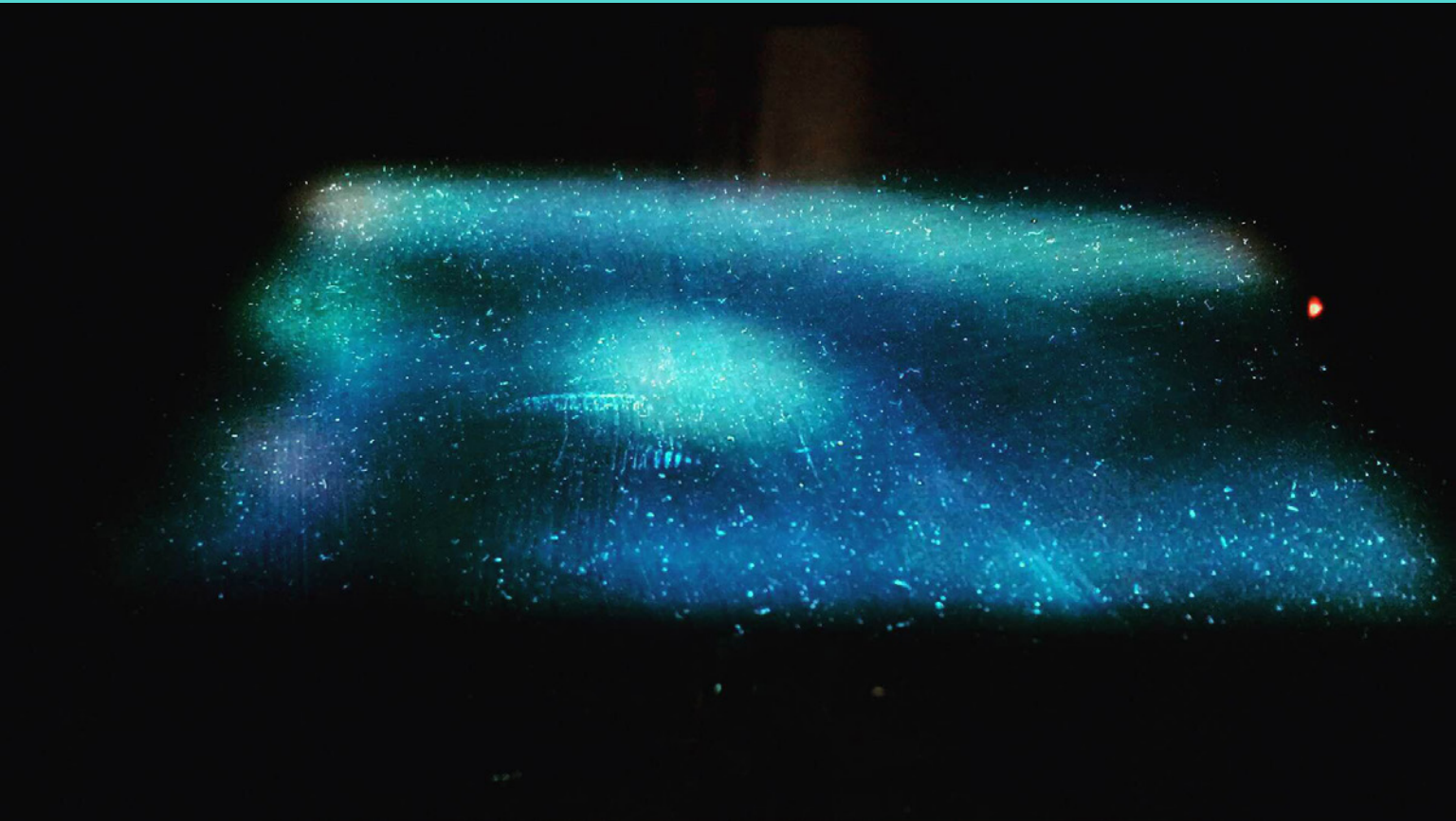
I must confess that I do not even know the meaning of this term "concept" that artists and art critiques have been talking about. So, some times when I am asked about my concept, I try to evade that jokingly by a reply such as: "My concept is to create a concept less image."

Fulbright experience

After the selections were confirmed, all awardees were invited for orientation talks. Our voyage from UK to USA was in a ship that was like 'Mini USA' as it was full of American students returning home after holidays in Europe. And, then I was warmly received at NY Port by Mr. and Ms. Grebe and their three little children. I stayed with them at their New Jersey home for a month.

Initially I was to study at an university in some city, but I requested USEFI to place me at an Institution that was in a metropolises. This was granted and I was placed at Pratt Institute, one of the best institutions for learning print making in USA. As it was in New York – the happening place – I could learn so much from museums and art galleries. I was allowed to accept another grant – form JDR III Foundation – and could continue my study for one more year.

After returning I shared my experiences with art students and Indian printmakers. I had not done etchings in India as there was no etching press available here and, it was impossible to import them. So, my fabricator friend and I made a press similar to the one I had used at Pratt. It worked very well and many art colleges and centres in India are now using similar presses.



Still from *Empyrean*, 2015
Video

Kalpana Subramanian

Artist's statement

Empyrean is an abstract, meditative film that explores and celebrates the magical quality of cinematic light. This work revisits Brakhage, by studying his films as a source of light in themselves. Shot entirely on an iPhone the imagery is composed of layered images of dancing light on a projection window, captured during screening of various Brakhage's 16mm film prints. In terms of process I was literally 'filming' at the altar of celluloid cinema, (kneeling at the projection booth window, iPhone in hand) intercepting the light from the projector refracting through the glass before it hit the screen. Part of a series of films titled, *Light Mediated - Eyes on Brakhage*.

Fulbright experience

My Fulbright experience was a landmark in my creative, professional and academic life. It was instrumental in shaping my journey as an artist-filmmaker and researcher, allowing me access to new resources, people, ideas and opportunities that helped me expand my practice and strengthen it greatly and came at a perfect time in my career. The overall experience has resulted in helping consciously working to create transcultural dialogue and mutual understanding which are at the heart of my research practice.



Sounds of the Sea
Raku Pottery

Manisha Bhattacharya

Artist's statement

"We are all mortal until the first kiss and the second glass of wine." – Eduardo Galeano

Perhaps we all become artists after that—such is the power of imagination. They say art suggests, and that suggestion in the Indian aesthetic tradition is the foundation of aesthetic expression. For an artist, suggestion is the quintessence of any narrative and narrative is the quest for completion. It is the moment of communication where the artists' being, distilled from a lifetime of experiences, is offered through a creation to the '*sahridaya*' (one of the same 'heart').

Raku is a traditional Japanese firing style, intimately linked to Zen philosophy & the tea ceremony. During the 15th & 16th century the Japanese aristocracy patronized the tea ceremony as a form of social interaction amongst the elite. The emperor gave a royal seal with Raku (Raku meaning covers a gamut of emotions from enjoyment, comfort, contentment...) engraved on it to Chojiro, the reigning potter. What I do is called 'American Raku'—even in Japan. It was only in the 20th-century that it left the shores of Japan for its westward journey.

Beyond the realm of philosophy there is also the technical difference. Post-firing, the pots are dunked in water in Japan. In the West they are smoked in sawdust or

other combustible materials. The former is oxidation, the other reduction. The blue in the oxidation process is copper colour in reduction.

Fulbright experience

My experiences as an artist-in-residence at the School of Art & Design, UWIC, Cardiff on a Charles Wallace India Trust Award in 2001 and the Fulbright Fellowship to the New York State College of Ceramics, Alfred University, NY, USA in 2003-04 were both extremely enriching.

However, I got more sustained intellectual input from my guide Wayne Higby at Alfred University. I consider myself really lucky that I got an opportunity to interact with Dave Roberts in the UK and Wayne Higby – two artists whose work I admire immensely, and relate to. The black/white works that I am currently doing is very much along Dave's technical style. Wayne's influence goes much beyond.

Since Raku is mainly non-functional, it frees the vessel-maker from the restrictions imposed by the rules of function... It is difficult to articulate/define all our influences, but I search for a quiet strength and stillness. Maybe, that's why I love Wayne & Dave's works. Both influenced by landscape, they encompass the quality of nature's calmness. Even in fury, nature has a stillness.



Cultural Rooting & Geographical Dislocation, video series, 2012-13
Jaishri Abichandani, *Dilemma of Relocation*, video still

Neeta Omprakash

Artist's statement

My interest in interacting with trans-national artists of Indian origin was to know how they deal with the dilemma of 'belonging' and 'non-belonging' to a particular culture. The answers that I was seeking for the questions were:

- When does someone 'belong to or not belong' to a particular culture?
- How deep can the roots of a culture be? Can they be any time wiped out?
- Which are the ways a community preserves the cultural traits? How and when are they revoked?
- Why and When do people feel the need to claim for the cultural identity?
- Difficulty in use of the terms 'diaspora' & 'trans-national'.
- Have the artists been able to achieve their objectives after immigration?

During my stay when I met some other artists I realized that the same dilemma was shared even by African-American artists. In fact, the zeal to claim for the native culture was seen much stronger among those artists. The memories of the bygone era stored in the collective unconscious of a particular community, myths, fairy tales and folk tales narrated by one generation to the other probably plays a significant role in keeping the ties strong with the

native culture. Immigrants have to seek the balance between the values nurtured by the native culture and the day-to-day reality they confront with, however contrasting they may be. Artists have an added advantage of their creative potential to express their thoughts, dilemmas, problems, issues and stress by way of which art becomes therapeutic.

Fulbright experience

The opportunity given to me by the Fulbright Foundation to visit USA as a scholar to explore the field of art was a significant moment in my life and career. After the interaction with Indian-American artists and art historians, I developed confidence in myself about the direction in which I was thinking regarding my area of research. The interaction with other scholars and the students in the university campus gave an insight into the higher education in the American universities.

The most appreciative aspect of the American society was the discipline, honest and sincere approach towards the work assigned to each individual, which helps to run any system smoothly. It was amazing to see the strictly followed traffic rules without anybody honking, even in the busiest streets of New York!



Preparation of Festival in the Old House
Oil on canvas

Partha Dey

Artist's statement

Old lime walls, red cement floors; frosted glasses over antique wooden windows and doors panels were my surfaces during childhood. I was in love with these textures. The antique reliefs at our old building were my inspiration. The decorated and antique criss-cross beams over ceiling, hanging antique fans, old mounted tungsten lamps brackets etc. inspired me. Other than this I love cooking, along with the cuisine from grandmas, mom and the traditional chefs from our old house. The art of classic cooking deeply made an impression on my creativity.

The impressions made by sweet dyes, use of bonti, decoration on floor during festivals, using of Vermilions over forehead of women through perforated papers along with the liquid red paint marks on feed gave vibrant nostalgic feelings of freeing approach of drawings. Different past traditional techniques are presently implemented in my present project. Beside the ceramics art and pottery I often combine both mediums Installed in multi-surfaced composition, where the use of contrasting materials is my ambition.

Fulbright experience

By a single word my Fulbright experience was unique. At the time I was selected in 2011, I was staying at our studio house with my mom, I lost my daddy in 2004 and since then I was accompanied by mom. The worst situation appeared while mom disappeared after the final selection. I was depressed. The Final achievement of Fulbright was a brilliant dream. My project was Application of ceramics on multi surfaces. I was selected by the University of IOWA – at the Studio Art Department. After at first being ignored a little from some lowan colleagues, I was totally impressed by them and well received. They opened their barriers as much as possible, I enjoyed them lot. I executed more than three thousand research-oriented art works during my project and I staged three solo exhibitions in the IOWA city. The USA makes Bulls Eye Glass that is used with ceramics. Enamelling on copper and silver along with Ceramics were possible due to their updated facilities.

Museums have a good mentality to support an artist. Visits to museums and art galleries, Curio shops in different cities like Des Moines, Chicago, Rhodes Island, Connecticut, Washington DC, New York were an added aspect of my exclusive nine months project.



Stories My Body Tell
Digitally printed photo book

Parthiv Shah

*Iss Ghat Antar Baag Bageeche, Issi main Sirjanhaara
Iss Ghat Antar Sat Samandar, Issi Main Naulakh Taara
Iss Ghat Antar Paras Moti, Issi Main Parkhanhaara
Iss Ghat Antar Anhad Garjai, Issi main Uthat Phuara
Kahat Kabir Suno bhai Sadho, Issi me Saain Hamara*

*Within this earthen vessel are bowers and groves, and within it is the Creator.
Within this vessel are the seven oceans and the unnumbered stars.
The touchstone and the jewel-appraiser are within.
And within this vessel the Eternal soundeth, and the spring wells up.
Kabir says: "Listen to me, my Friend! My beloved Lord is within."
- Kabir*

Artist's statement

I grew up listening to lyrics by Kabir, a 15th-century Indian mystic weaver, poet and saint and other poets who used metaphors in their writings. Body is celebrated in different ways in Indian philosophy and also treated as a garment or a vessel which can be changed or can go back to the earth. Digging into the archival images from "Through Positive Eyes", I found myself thinking about all the recurring images of bodies, and how those images imply their own kind of story. I began to pull out images that caught my imagination, and then I began to play with them, to blow up parts in order to focus on details, even when this caused the original image to be distorted in some way.

Fulbright experience

I was awarded the Fulbright fellowship to teach Photography at department of The World Arts and Cultures at the UCLA. This was a unique experience for me as I taught

a full credit course at a university for the first time. This tenure allowed me to teach students from varied disciplines from law to architecture and dance to design. It was a fulfilling experience for me as it gave me the opportunity to inculcate in them various approaches in ways of seeing. It gave them a chance to decipher images they confront with in this wide digital world where images are now come to them practically every second.

This entire experience allowed me to interact with students from different cultures across the globe on the campus which was challenging as well as satisfying. I used this opportunity to do my ongoing research on image creation, image dissemination and identity. Four months away from my studio in India gave me opportunity to reflect on my own work and life and that has helped me in my future projects and work.



Camouflage, 2016
Painted Fibreglass

Prasanta Mukherjee

Artist's statement

My works celebrate relation between humans with nature. With the growing population and rapid urbanization, natural resources are dwindling. This is creating a threat to human life. In my works I create a harmonious coexistence between the two. I do a lot of drawings of natural objects putting them under the microscope. This serves the reference point for my sculptures, in which I juxtapose figurative with organic forms.

Fulbright experience

I received Fulbright Fellowship to travel and work in Chicago in 1999. It was an opportunity to explore the art and culture of another country and it was an enriching experience. I came to know many artists and their art practices and the experience contributed to my growth as an artist.

Apart from creating my own works, I was also participating in outreach programs involving the community. This gave me a chance to experience people's lives in my host country. I must say the warm hospitality I received there, was fulfilling. On my return I applied my newly gained experiences to my art practice and art education.



Achrome 2, 3, 5, 10
Porcelain clay

Rahul Kumar

Artist's statement

Pottery for me is a silent spiritual journey, a creative discipline, a flamboyant celebration, a passionate love affair to revel in forever!

I like to 'reinvent' things from nature in my own visual language. I like to balance between wheel throwing and slab construction. Developing these two methods simultaneously allows a fresh creative approach, which promotes exhibiting the contrast of the medium – wheel thrown pots representing symmetry, rigidity, and hand built components showing the organic, fluid nature of the clay. I also attempt to convey the qualities of clay by allowing the form to speak of its existence through the evidence of artist and medium in collaboration. My artistic endeavours are spontaneous, intuitive, and in many ways quite basic, but liberating for me. My works celebrate the journey so far. It is a contained outpour of passionate creativity that chooses to communicate through clay.

Fulbright experience

It has been eight years since I completed my masters on Fulbright, and the memories of my experience are still very fresh. I decided to work at the University of Dallas (UD), Texas as I thought UD had the one of the best ceramic art departments. It was very well equipped and had a history

of over 40 years. But, to be honest, I considered Alfred (upstate New York) first. I was very keen to work with Val Cushing, the celebrated artist. On reaching out to him, I found that he had given up formal teaching and immediately guided me to Dan Hammett, who was the chair of the art department at UD and the ceramic art professor. My interactions with Dan were very meaningful. I thought he was very sharing, but more importantly, was willing to guide me to find my voice.

My 12-year practice before the Fulbright revolved entirely around making functional works. This is probably not surprising since that's how most ceramists globally, and certainly in India begins the clay journey! But I had a deep desire to move away from the conventional and use my medium to express. But using the mundane pot to tell a story – did seem like an uphill task.

My time in the US was most valuable and enriching. Since I was part of the formal program at the university, I had an opportunity to learn other aspects of art that went way beyond the clay studio. There were classes at the sculpture, painting, and print-making departments and I took courses in Art History! My professors never promised to make it easy, and it was not, but since then I know how to tell stories using my lowly pot!



Hot, 2008
mixed media on canvas

Rathin Kanji

Artist's statement

In modern times problems of urbanism include critical environmental issues. In developing countries, the adjustment to modern life has been problematic, consequently this has become a major concern in my work. I reorganize space, color and form in my paintings in search of harmony. This signifies the realization of urban space in ecological harmony with humans and their environment.

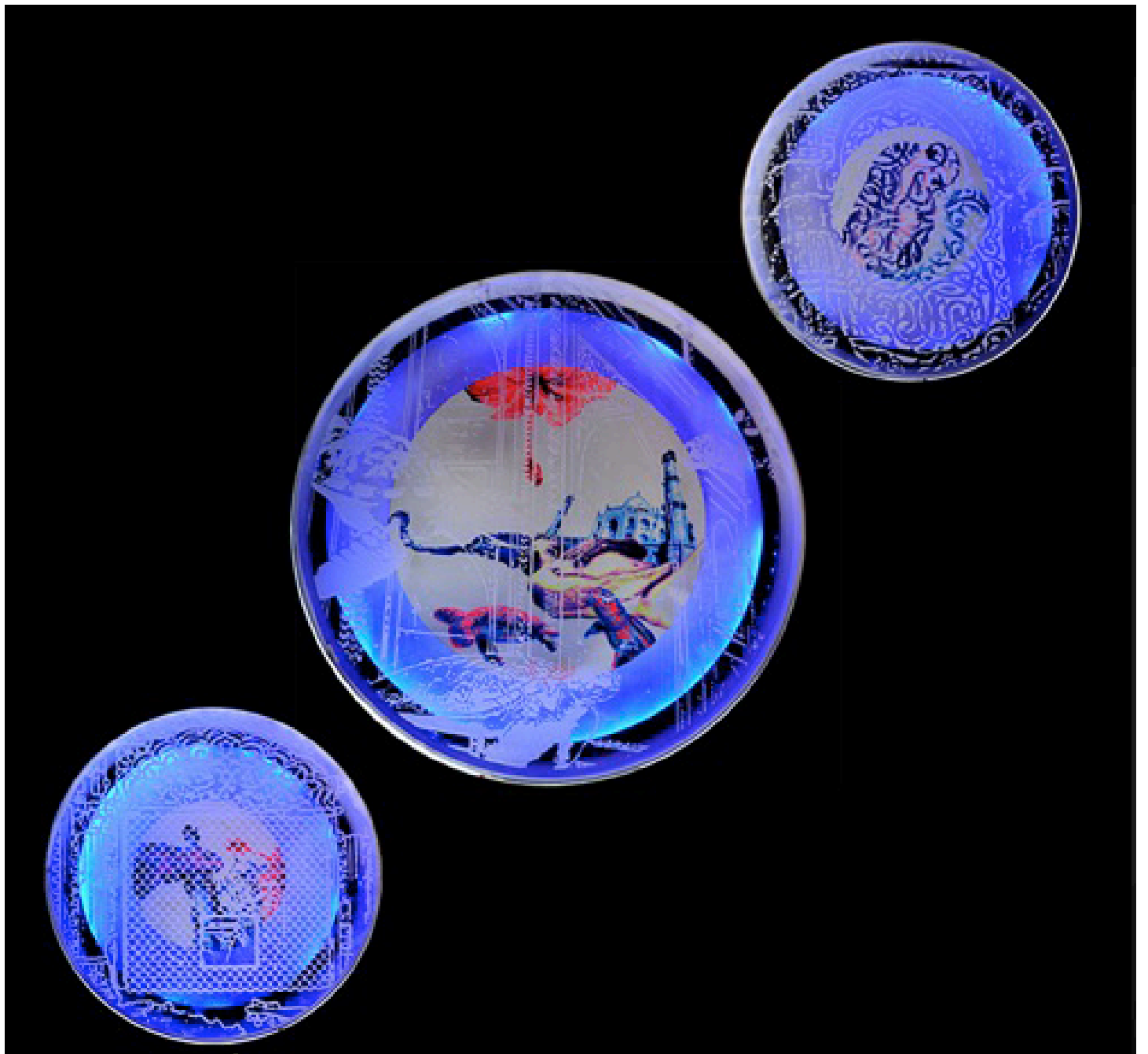
I also emphasized the combination of text & numbers. The use of multifarious objects from the consumer world such as photographs, newspapers, digital prints etc. is not random but calculated, essential and precise. Multinational companies, their products and ads have made a great impact on our consumer society and urban landscape. The increasing demand for products has supported the concept and practice of globalization, which has brought countries across the world closer in sharing ideas and business. This optimistically can be seen as a force that breaks down political and religious boundaries.

We live in the most complex period of human history. In the past two hundred years we have made advances in science, industry, machines, democratic government and the status of women than an all previous centuries combined. But at the very same time we are facing

the problem of genocide, global warming, ecological destruction, human trafficking, labor exploitation, terrorism and the most grinding and relentless poverty. I am very concerned with these urban issues, and through my work I want to reveal all these crucial problems to the viewers.

Fulbright experience

My Fulbright Fellowship (2003–2004) for six months as a Visiting Research Fellow at the School of Art & Design, University of Michigan was very productive and career-changing. The fellowship opportunity came at a time when I was on the extreme edge of making a drastic effort to eradicate all existing way of approaching my work; shifting from flat surfaces to three-dimensional installations. During my Fulbright experience I had the time to explore with the help of new technology and to experiment with video work. I felt very much supported by the University. The Asian Art curator, at the Museum of Art, University of Michigan, purchased my large painting on canvas, a 14 x 4' diptych, for their collection from my exhibition held in the Warren Robbin's Gallery. Working and sharing ideas with other young contemporary American artists was a great experience. Apart from this I had a chance to visit other major museums. It was a great experience that helped me build up my artistic career.



Drops of Nectar, Ocean's breath, beyond awake, beyond the existence, 2015
Acrylic on paper, glass etching, LED light

Satadru Sovan

Artist's statement

Simultaneously provocative and macho, my works are populated by representations of the limits of masculinity. I am emboldened by masculine and feminine dynamics and how they play out in intimate relationships of body and society. Based on dynamics I experienced in my childhood where at the age of 14 I understood that my voice was not masculine, my work contends with socio-cultural changes in South Asian Gender dynamics well taboo notions about male identity and expectation of being "macho."

My works combine seductive, geometric, topographical and social panoramas -modes of gaze-representation based on gender and social as well as artistic expectations of decorum. The simultaneously provocative and macho issues in my work contend with representations of the limits of masculinity. The folds of the human body as well the texture of fabrics in my works evoke an

unfolding of melodies, through which I try to convey a sense of the beauty of organic forms that are also simultaneously disgusting. I also explore male genetic disorders and biological differences in an improvised, participatory performance works.

Fulbright experience

During my Fulbright Scholarship at the University of California, while majoring in Digital and New Media, I developed an obsession and understanding of light across creative forms – from painting, to animation and movies and theatre. This understanding is evident in my work shown here. In these Geometric LED installations from my experimentations with the South Asian gender narrative, I combine materials, imagery and light and shape in bringing to life post cyber movement perceptions. Different works incorporate glass etching, digital imagery and painting, and light refracting glass beads.



Acts of Seeing
Digital photography

Sundeeep Bali

Artist's statement

Informed by provenance and myriad historical-functional contexts, my gaze views monuments as super-structures worthy of admiration. What happens when the gaze is subverted? The view is diverted from the monument to the hordes of tourists from across the country and the globe who come to witness the 'see' the monument as part of their package-tours of the capital city.

The monument here is Qutub Minar – a complex of monuments with an imposing yet beautiful ornate minar as its visual-center. The sprawling urban growth in the last decade has ensured that the minar is no more the apparent visual-landmark for at least the city-dwellers who pass by the monument everyday from south-Delhi to Gurgaon and back.

There is a palpable rhythm to the inflow of crowds as one stands and observes from the monument with the camera looking away from the minaret. It starts with a riot of colors, cultures and faiths converging to catch the first glimpse of monument and metamorphoses into a melange of expressions as necks gently strain-up to fathom the majestic, slightly overwhelming but not completely intimidating visuality of the minar. It's immensely engaging to witness, see and capture this evanescent but ever-repeating mosaic of emotions and gestures.

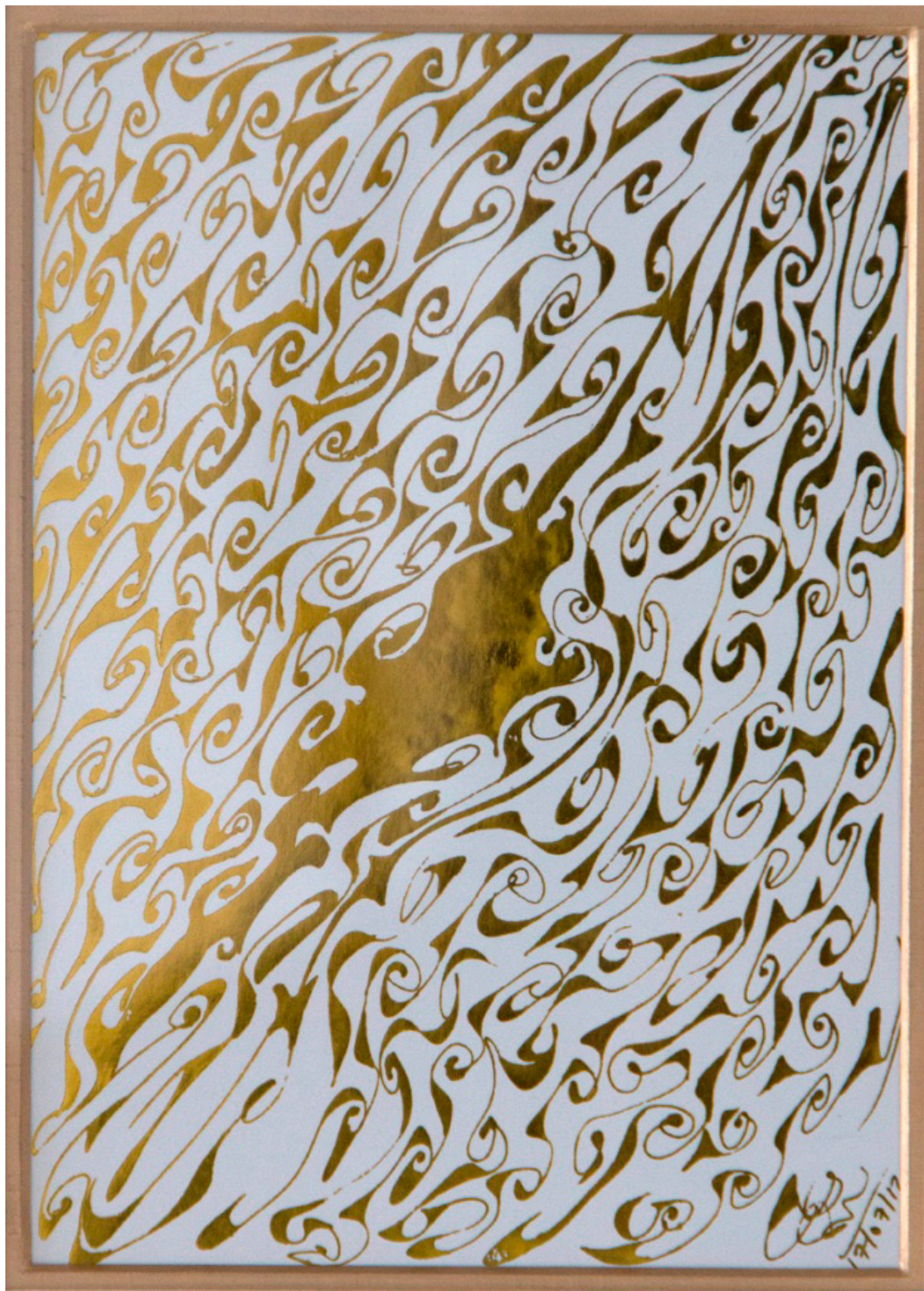
Not least is the paradox that my point of view as an image-maker here is distinctly third person and yet it culminates into a resounding delight seldom experienced when I gazed head-on at the Qutub Minar.

Fulbright experience

I was accorded the Fulbright Fellowship (2004–05) to research the museum-communication, education and interpretation at the National Gallery of Art and the Freer & Sackler galleries in Washington D.C. My Fulbright experience tuned out to be the catalyst in my journey as a lens-based artist. Interactions with fellow museum and art-management professionals who were practicing artists as well enthused me infinitely during my stay in US.

My first solo 'Made In USA: An American Experience' (India Habitat Centre, 2006) was built on my American experience – literally as well as figuratively.

Last but not the least should be a mention of all the individuals whose generosity made my sojourn a rewarding journey – my academic advisor Debra Diamond at the Freer & Sackler, Claire Orologas at the Freer & Sackler, Faya Causey at the National Gallery of Art, Martha M. Smith who hosted me at her place and patiently showed me how to find my way around the D.C. metropolitan area and Larry DeVore for his insights as a docent.



Musical Drawings, 2012
Gold leaf Print on Paper

Suresh K. Nair

Artist's statement

Imaging Sounds: Travelling Show across 25 Indian Cities

In the year 2007 I arrived at Varanasi as a faculty member at the Department of Painting, Faculty of Visual Arts, Banaras Hindu University. The ancient city welcomed me with its varied sounds, music and rituals. The reverberating Vedic chanting, the evening Arathys, the sounds of cycle rickshaws et al became part and parcel of my life at Varanasi. The city enchanted me with its very special and divine sounds.

During my student life at Guruvayur, Kerala between 1989 and 1994, I was involved in a project that documented moving images of classical dance forms like Kathakali, Bharatanatyam, Mohiniyattam and Krishnanattam. Being a student at Santiniketan between 1995 and 2002 was in itself a great learning experience. I was introduced to the world of Rabindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Binodbehari Mukherji and Ramkinker Baij and was inspired by their works. The writings of Tagore also influenced me a great deal. I was also exposed to the rich and varied traditions like Rabindra Sangeet, Ghazal and Hindustani music.

It is with such experiences and influences that I started documenting the sounds and music of Varanasi through drawings. In the beginning, it was an experimental activity done through a calligraphic practice. Later it evolved and since has become a collection of more than 5000 drawings

based on both Hindustani vocal and Instrumental music.

Fulbright experience

My experience as a Fulbright Fellow was the most memorable of my life. My area of study was experimentation in public art. Fortunately, my host institution was The Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia. This is one of the prestigious educational institutions in the United States.

Interestingly, the city of Philadelphia is well known for its public murals, as the government made it part of their tourism campaign. This 'Mural City' helped me to get involved with my specific area of studies more intensively. I met most of the artists and muralists and became increasingly interested in the concept of "Public Art".

The idea of the Fulbright Fellowship Program is basically an educational exchange program. As an artist and academician, I also shared my ideas and works through a few slide show presentations and lectures at The Tyler School of Art. I also curated a show of traditional arts through photographs and also did a show of contemporary artists of India at the Tyler Gallery. The most interesting things I liked at the Tyler school of art were the critiques and the art history classes.



Life, 2016
Lithograph

Sushanta Guha

Artist's statement about the work

Right from the beginning, human beings and their problems have been the main theme of my work. I have been making compositions which are completely figurative with elements of the environment like foliage and birds. The principal character in my composition is the common man who is constantly inside the framework of the contemporary problems of our society.

The work I am showing in this exhibition is titled "The Life" within a complex city with urban life. My neighbor is closely observing human life and how it functions, including life which we assume might be the existence of extra terrestrials within our surroundings that we may not know about.

Fulbright experience

I received Fulbright fellowship in 2003 for a period of three months and worked at the Manhattan Graphic Center, New York. Mr Vijay Kumar was the artist-faculty at Manhattan Center, he was a great support and a very helpful person who really helped me to do my work and experiment in new mediums where I worked with non-toxic methods of printmaking. I did a great deal of work and was satisfied with the experimental work which I created in the studio. I also received help from other professional artists who live in New York. Some of my works were selected for private collections, including The New York Public Library.



Torment, 2015
Intaglio

Sushma Yadev

Artist's statement

The concept of home has been central to my work for a long time now. It is a construct, imaginary and elusive. It is a migrant's dream although it in no way corresponds to the place one comes from. It works as a life source of sustenance, something to fall back on. It is an all-encompassing spirit that guides everything one deals with. The Italian metaphysical artists were led by certain elusiveness similar to this. They invented a kind of poetics out of uncertainty. Although they worked with concrete images, atmosphere was central to their thoughts.

Fulbright experience

My experience as a Fulbright scholar in 2006 at Western Michigan University Kalamazoo (U.S.A) was great fun as well as productive time of research and experiments with non-toxic print making which is not at all possible in India till today due to unviability of materials. My non-toxic intaglio and lithography research work was done under the guidance of professor Charles Stroch and Nicole Morry.

My Fulbright experience and printmaking experiments also helped in my PhD research work, particularly in my articles and chapter upon non-toxic printmaking. All printmaking water based inks, solvents are acid free and were totally new for me to learn as well as coated plates for lithography, coated plates for etching, a variety of papers for printing and new tools for etching that I have used first time during my stay in U.S.A where professor Charles Stroch helped me learn the mezzotint technique I have used in a few small works. I also enjoyed photography and Art history along with printmaking and I was able to attend classes along with students. Professor Bill Davis helped me to learn new methods of photography and I have used all those photographic effects in my works, and have also made few new experiments upon cloth. It was a great opportunity and experience overall as a Fulbright scholar which enhanced my knowledge and made me a better printmaker.



This side of the forest, 2014
Conte on Paper,

Vasudeva Akkitham

Fulbright experience

New York City had always fascinated me. The energy and spirit of that place has no parallels. The experience I had of a short visit to New York in 1997 was really what prompted me to apply for Fulbright fellowship. I was interested in spending six months there, nowhere else.

As a practicing artist who is also a teacher, my initial desire was to associate with an important art institute there and learn more about the syllabi and teaching methodology employed from close quarters.

The most cherishing experience was spending time in the museums and galleries including the one in Washington DC. I returned to these places again and again like a student going back to the classrooms.

Living in Queens as a paying guest of Ms. Meriam (surrounded, by many artworks including two George Gross drawings), brought certain stability to my existence. She was already eighty plus and an amateur printmaker. We often traveled together to the Manhattan prints studio. My wife and son joined me for about a month towards the end of my stay, to become an extended family of Meriam.

I returned home in the month of August 2003.

A few years later when I met Vijay in Delhi I was informed about Meriam's demise. For me her memory still continues to be an emotional link with New York City. May her soul rest in peace.



Chorten 4, 2016
Ceramic, Thread

Vineet Kacker

Artist's statement

Vineet Kacker's work draws from a personal involvement with Eastern spiritual thought, and the landscape, art and iconography of the high Himalayan regions. Ancient texts, icons and imagery are remixed and re-contextualized into new works that are symbolic without being derivative, accessible without being populist. The work walks a line between the meditative and the playful, and questions the perceived boundaries between Spirit and Matter.

Topographies of a Formless World is a rotating column, based on the prayer wheel. The rotation is an aid to shift focus from the thought-perceived linear to the eternal-cyclical. All religious teachings, all sacred iconographies are efforts to map a formless world. As human beings we choose to see ourselves on a horizontal plane, travelling through life from point A to point B. But to begin to perceive the unseen mappings of an underlying formless world, a shift in perspective is needed. Only with a new, elevated seeing is more of this undiscovered topography revealed.

The Architecture of Dissolution is based on the form of a chorten or stupa. Chortens

are reliquaries that may store actual mortal remains of enlightened spiritual masters, but they are also seen as repositories of timeless wisdom. While in the material world commemorative statues are built to laude the achievements of individuals, chortens are built for ones who have seemingly done the apposite – they celebrate a state of dissolution of individual identity.

Fulbright experience

In 2001 I had just finished building my ceramics studio when I was selected for a residency award at the vibrant Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis, USA. At that early stage in my art practice I was hungry for international experience, yet without personal funds to support such ventures. The Fulbright grant made possible an exciting three-month residency that included working alongside peers, visiting and interacting with well-known local artists in their studios, and having an exhibition of my work at the NCC art gallery. In addition, the Fulbright supported me to travel and present a lecture on "Ceramics in India –From Tradition to Modernity" at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, University of Minnesota and the Clay Art Center in New York State.





Fellowship by Fulbright alumni is truly a special exhibition for all of us at Ojas Art.

The historical Fulbright Program resonates with the ethos of the gallery. We stand for the same values – diversity, equality and creativity.

We truly believe in, *Vasudhev Kuttambhakam* — ‘the world is nothing, but one big family’. And no medium is better than art to connect and strengthen this one big family.

Its a privilege and honor to exhibit the works of the promising young artists alongside the masters – spanning five decades of studio practice. The exhibition, covers diverse mediums like light installation, lithography, photography, video art, ceramics and paintings. All with the common thread of using art to mobilise change.

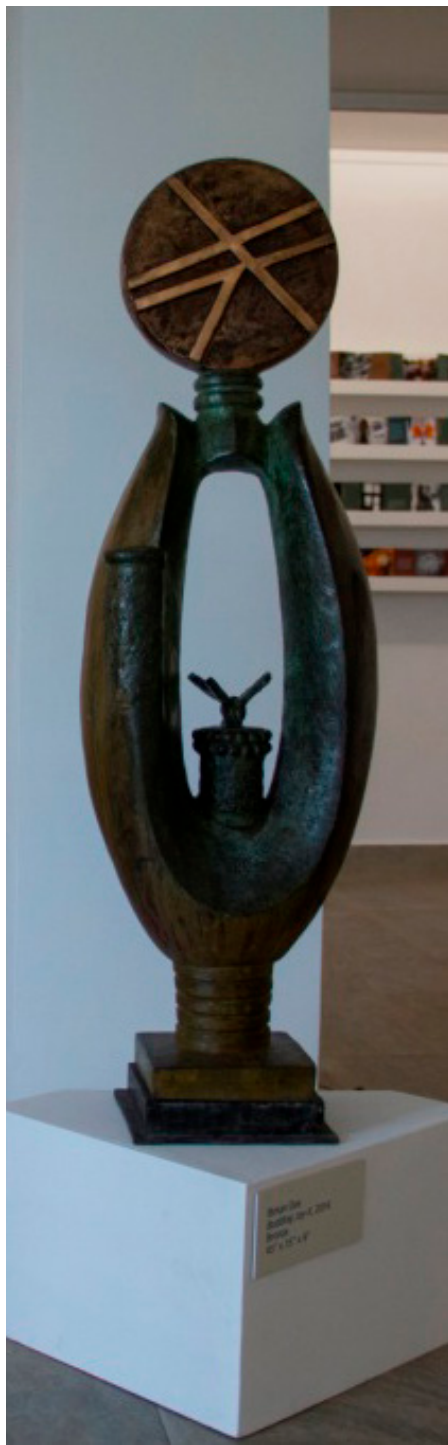
Thank you to the artists for their enthusiastic participation; Kathryn Myers and Pradosh Mishra, the curators for tirelessly working on the exhibiton across time zones; Adam Grotsky for coming up with the idea. USIEF and the US Embassy for their support. Last but not the least, my colleagues at the gallery without whom this would not have been possible.



Anubhav Nath
Director, Ojas Art









● Pradosh Mishra

● Vidya Shah

● Jeffrey Sexton

● Bhavna Kakkar

● Jagannath Panda

● Aika and Ashok Nath

● Gopika Nath

● Veer Munshi ● Ela Mukherjee

● Anubhav Nath and Adam Grotzky

ARTSY FELLOWS

UCIEF, US Embassy and Ojas Art Gallery hosted a party on the opening day of 'Fellowship' – an art exhibition by Fulbright alumni artists – recently at the gallery. The event was marked by the presence of Anubhav Nath, Adam Grotzky, Jeffrey Sexton, Ela Mukherjee, Vidya Shah, Bhavna Kakkar, Pradosh Mishra, Gopika Nath, Veer Munshi, Jagannath Panda, Aika and Ashok Nath among other art connoisseurs.

Art for art's sake: Bringing together Fulbright talent under one roof

ART AND CULTURE Updated: Jan 10, 2017 20:03 IST

Aditya Dogra
Hindustan Times, New Delhi



An artwork by artist Ela Mukherjee, titled Dreamweaver.

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A first-of-its-kind exhibition in Delhi, will bring together 21 Indian artists – Fulbright fellows in visual arts between the period 1964 to 2015. This upcoming exhibition aims to showcase artistic experience of the featured artists as fellows through various art forms. The exhibition titled, Fellowship, has been organised by the United States-India Educational Foundation (USIEF).

"This exhibition will showcase contributions that artists have made in fulfilling the US Senator J William Fulbright's mission to promote mutual understanding across nations and Jawaharlal Nehru's affirmation that culture widens the mind and the spirit," says Kathryn Myers, professor of art at the University of Connecticut, who has curated the show along with Pradosh Mishra, a professor of art history, Banaras Hindu University.

The group show will feature artist Vineet Kacker's works in ceramic. The 52-year-old sculptor says, "My work is an engagement of eastern thought and Indian spirituality and draws inspiration from my travels in the Himalayan region of India, Bhutan and Nepal. The Fulbright scholarship came to me early in my career, when I didn't have funds, and it also brought me international exposure. I also gave lectures at several international institutes on contemporary Indian ceramics, and interestingly, many weren't aware that such an art form was taking shape in India."

The exhibition will also showcase a project titled Through Positive Eyes which tells the story of HIV/AIDS in the fourth decade of the epidemic – at a time when potent antiretroviral medication has been devised but still treatment access is far from universal. "I taught as a Fulbright professor under the grant at UCLA, and that is when I got involved in the project. It was a global photographic collaboration with Gideon Mendel and the UCLA Art & Global Health Center, and this is the first time it'll be showcased in India," says photographer Parthiv Shah.



A ceramic artwork by artist Vineet Kacker.

FACTS

- What: Fellowship – an art exhibition by Fulbright Alumni
- When: January 13-19
- Where: Ojas Art, 1AQ, Qutub Minar, Main Roundabout, Mehrauli
- Timings: 11:00 am - 7:00 pm (Closed on Monday)
- Nearest Metro Station: Qutub Minar station on the Yellow Line

Follow

Celebrating scholars of art across decades



Bhavna Kakkar

This evening was all about celebrating scholars of art. At the opening of Fellowship on Friday, many known artists and connoisseur from the Capital got together. Photography, painting, video and graphic art are some of the mediums that

will be on display at the ongoing exhibit. This exhibit includes twenty-one Indian artists who have won Fulbright Fellowships in visual arts over five decades. Those seen at the do include art curator Bhavna Kakkar and musician Vidya Shah.

HTC



Anubhav Nath and Adam Grotzky



Jeffrey Sexton



Aika and Ashok Nath



Veer Munshi



Vidya Shah

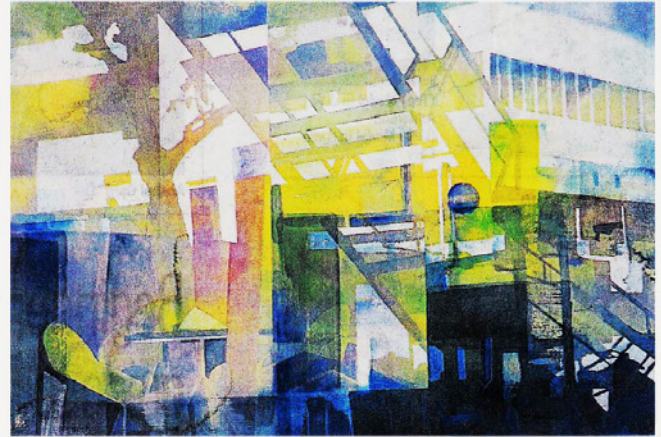
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Cafeteria by artist Indrapramit Roy

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■ aditya.dogra@hindustantimes.com

CATCH IT LIVE

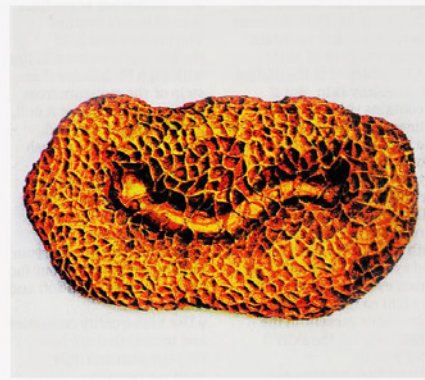
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An artwork by artist Prasanta Mukherjee



Ceramic work by Vineet Kacker



A piece by artist Biman B Das



Ela Mukherjee's Dreamweaver III

OJAS
ART

Ojas Art Gallery

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