

Vivan Sundaram

Artist Statement and Biography

Artist Statement

In search of gold is an ancient story. But there is another old story: in search of black gold pepper.

A large installation comprising tens of thousands of 'discarded' potshards forms an imaginary (two thousand year old) sea-port city Muziris. The lay-out of this installation suggests an archipelago; the phenomenological experience of circumambulating the 'site' is that of precious mineralization. The geographical allusion turns into a metaphor; the archipelago folds into a playground of infancy.

When the camera traverses the site, the dense formation takes on yet another visage: 'dead' matter unravels fresh terrain that is in its very fragility combustible. Animation created by a range of perceptual positions — camera movements from high above swoop onto details creating arabesques; top-angle views the plan, the map bring forth islands surrounded by water; the flattened image becomes a stained glass sky. Low angle shots, drag the viewer through the remains of human habitation.

The video image oscillates between showing a bed of detritus and an emerging gestalt that may be deciphered as history. A scene of devastation, a cityscape submerged in a cataclysmic spill--millions of floating peppercorns. Or is this meteoric patina covering another planet?

Often in mythic and historical tales there is a tragic end: the flood.

There is the sound of the deluge.

There is the silence of the aftermath.

Beauty is located at the shifting centre of slow time that enables us to stand on solid ground to plunge into waters that carry us to other shores.

Artist Biography

Vivan Sundaram India

b. 1943, Simla

Studied painting in M.S. University, Baroda and The Slade School of Fine Art, London in the 1960's. Since 1990 he has turned to making artworks as sculpture, installation, photography and video.

He has exhibited in the Biennial's of Sydney (2008), Seville (2006), Taipei (2006), Sharjah (2005), Shanghai (2004), Havana (1997), Johannesburg, (1997), Kwangju (1997)

Has participated in international group shows in:

London (Tate Modern, 2001), (Whitechapel Gallery), New York (International Centre for Photography, 2008, Queens Museum, 2005), Tokyo (Mori Museum, 2008, Munich (Haus der Kunst, 2006), Vienna (Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation, 2006), Karlsruhe (ZKM, 2007), Chicago (Chicago Cultural Centre, 2007), Berlin (Haus der Kulteren Welt, 2003), Rotterdam (Museum Boijamns van Beuningen, 2001 Copenhagen (Arken Museum of Modern Art, 2012-13). Paris (Centre Pompidou, 2011), Modena, Italy (Fondazione Fotografia, 2010)

He has had solo shows in many cities of India as well as in New York, Chicago, Dallas, London, Paris, Toronto, Montreal and Copenhagen, His last two solo exhibition, 2011-12, *GAGAWAKA: Making Strange*, was exhibited in Delhi, Mumbai and in 2013, *POSTMORTEM (After Gagawaka)* in Delhi. In 2010 *Amrita Sher-Gil: A Self-portrait in letters and writings*: edited and annotated by Vivan Sundaram, was published by Tulika Books, Delhi. Vivan Sundaram lives in Delhi and is married to the artwriter, Geeta Kapur.