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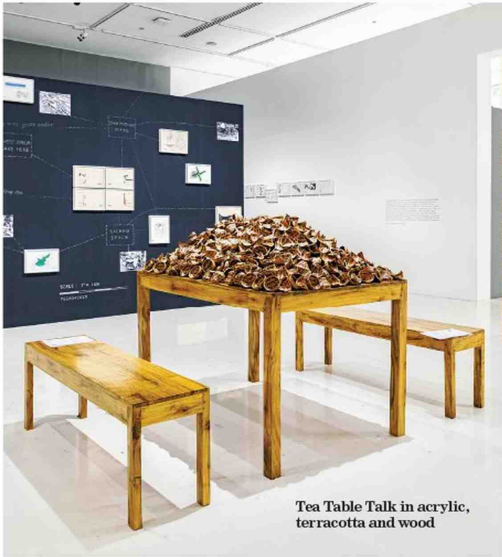
ART

Prasanta Sahu's "The Geometry of Ordinary Lives", presently exhibited at Emami Arts, is anything but ordinary. His approach, his intervention, methods, and the skill of making ordinary lives and objects shed their mundane cloak and reveal their rich history, with his unique ability, are extraordinary. On canvas, photographic prints and through videos, the multidisciplinary Odisha-born artist makes the viewer rediscover the ordinary yet exceptional lives of skilled workers and their tools in rural and suburban life.

An interesting aspect of Sahu is his background in engineering. He found the discipline unidimensional and restricting his artistic flow, and a class on dams proved to be a turning point in his life, egging him to make the big switch. However, and again, interestingly, the formal and more disciplined elements of the field find their impression in vivid lines — dotted, linear and pronounced, and are a constant feature in his works. A large painting, at the start of the gallery, with a solar lamp, with clean lines, like a perfect diagram, introduces the audience to Sahu's aesthetics. The piece might seem to be stuck in time, like a photograph, but the outlines give it a sense of movement. Similar large canvas, with complete and incomplete silhouettes, invites the viewer to investigate. His canvas, which plays with layering, acts as a puzzle, often engaging people in finding the objects, and striking their own dialogue with the world that Sahu captures. A large blackboard gives more insight into his work, which stands as a vision board with dotted lines connecting one section to the other like neat diagrams, reflecting Sahu's engineering influences and breaking the barrier between two worlds.

Occupying a central position at the gallery is a Tea Table Talk, a pile of *chai-er bhar*, earthen tea cups, positioned like a mountain over a table. On the evenly sliced *bhar*, Sahu captures the multitude of conversations that take place over a cup of tea, a culture ubiquitous in this part of the country. With it, the artist, who studied art at Kala Bhavana in Visva Bharati University and painting from M.S. University, Baroda, once more explores angles that are not ordinary. "In our country, in any public space, it's very difficult to maintain privacy; even if you don't want to hear anybody's conversation, you will be part of that. In this part of India, you will find people spending hours discussing many casual things along with many meaningful arguments over a cup of tea. They discuss, starting from politics to personal life. They mourn there, they share their secrets also," said Sahu, who being an artist, is attracted to these joints and thought of this work around eight months ago.

"Then a lot of other connections are there. As a medium, this terracotta cup is so ancient, carrying the whole history of maybe more than two, three thousand years. And still in Bengal, Odisha, you will find craftsmen producing such teacups. Plus, it's



Tea Table Talk in acrylic, terracotta and wood

PRASANTA SAHU'S THE GEOMETRY OF ORDINARY LIVES, AT EMAMI ART, EXPLORES VARIOUS ANGLES OF HIS LIVED EXPERIENCES

got a very interesting relationship with the consumer, it's important yet short-lived," said Sahu who wants his viewer to add their imagination, memory, experience and not control the whole thing.

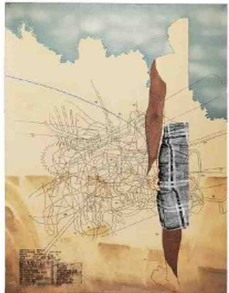
Sahu emerges triumphant as the viewer relives memories of the favourite *chai-er dukaan*, where they hang out with friends or the small tea shop that makes colleagues bond better.

Settled in Santiniketan, Sahu loves spending time in nearby villages and his process involves moving around with his bicycle in tow. His artistic vision and critical perspectives involve viewing objects in a rural setting in their entirety. "I move on my cycle for about one or two hours and try to connect with a situation in a village. Imagine a discarded motorcycle tire kept aside a bullock cart wheel, in a rural village in Bengal. If you look at the whole history of a cart wheel, it might be a few thousand years, if you connect with the whole evolution of a wheel — starting from a wooden wheel to gradually moving to a kind of sophisticated cart wheel, animal cart wheel and bike wheel... I try to examine the visuals I encountered from a critical perspective, try to dissect them, try to take photographs in HD or DSLR camera and then enlarge and examine them," informs Sahu who also writes poetry and one can find two of his poems as installations at the venue.

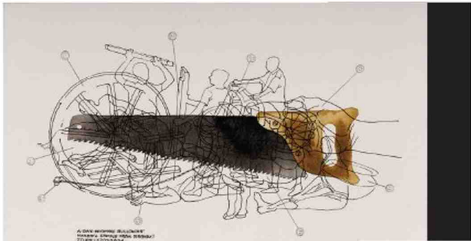
Farah Khatoon
Pictures: Emami Art



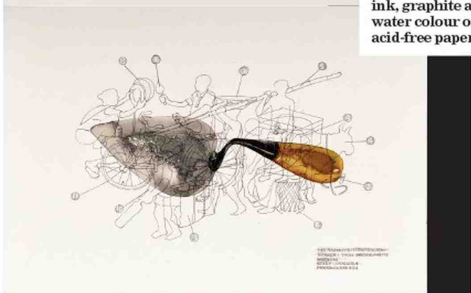
Elements I Forgot to Add While Designing a Solar Lamp in Our Locality, acrylic on acid-free paper



A closer look at the Table Talk with evenly cut clay pots capturing everyday conversations



Tools that Hold Memories with ink, graphite and water colour on acid-free paper



Mapping My Neighbourhood, acrylic and photo transfer on acid-free paper



Prasanta Sahu

Between The Earth and The Space, acrylic on raw canvas coated with gesso