

SHAKTI MAIRA

SUBVERTING DUCHAMP,
CELEBRATING BEAUTY,
RECONNECTING WITH MUMBAI

PAINTINGS - SCROLLS - SCULPTURE

INTRODUCTION

When a philosopher and contemplative thinker looks at his work created over the years, he finds that he has consciously worked on a thematic discourse of sorts, traversing time and space and materials. Through varied combinations of universal but personally resonant themes, in this landmark retrospective exhibition, Shakti Maira unravels his vision across two definitive decades and a full range of media. Sculptures, paintings, drawings, and scrolls that are placed in dialogue with one another reveal the breadth and consistency of his sensibility after moving back to India in 2001 from the US, and draw us into the world of a solitary genius.

Formed in the Crucible of Time

by

Uma Nair

Art critic & curator

SUBVERTING DUCHAMP, CELEBRATING BEAUTY (2018-19)

Is it really true that if it is beautiful it is not art?...
that beauty is a poison to art? Are we willing to
displace beauty with conceptualism in art?

Beauty Poisons Art
2018
Acrylic on canvas
54" x 24"





*It is not art, if it is
beautiful*

2018

Acrylic on canvas

4' x 4'



Art Gives Meaning
2018
Acrylic on canvas
5' x 5'

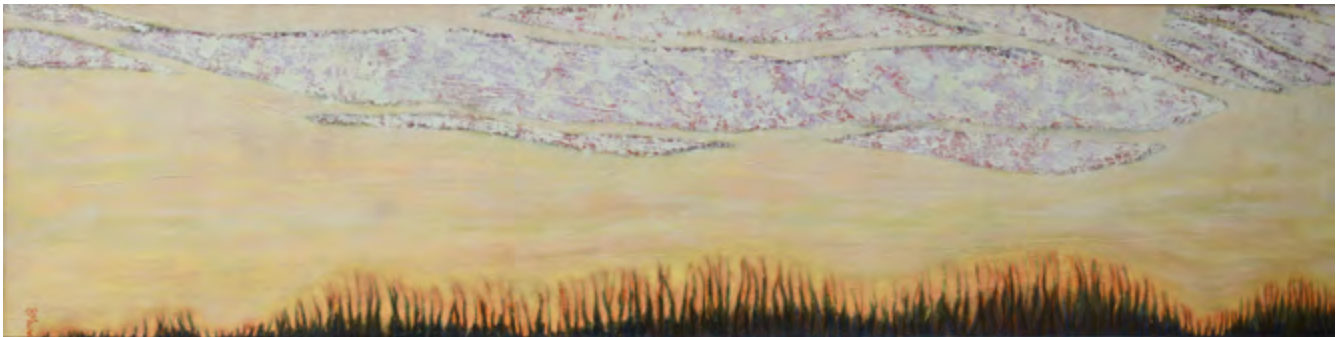


Art not Beauty
2017
Acrylic on canvas
25' x 25'

THE TRANSITIONAL SELF (2000-01)

Impermanence, insubstantiality,
the comings and goings inherent
in life.

Transitional Self - IX,
2001
Acrylic on linen
72" x 18"





Transitional Self - XII
2001
Acrylic on linen
72" x 34"



Transitional Self - XIII
2000
Acrylic on linen
62" x 34"

THE PILGRIMS' PATH (2000-01)

The physicality of the spiritual path: roots, branches, fallen leaves, dust underfoot... the living of lives filled with beauty and grief... the impossibility of an order that excludes randomness and chaos. This work uses clay from the banks of the Ganga, and marks a return to the imagery of the Mind-Nature series (1972-79).

Pilgrims' Path (C8)
2002
Acrylic and Ganga clay on canvas
50" x 38"





Pilgrims' Path (C6)
2002
Acrylic and Ganga clay on canvas
50" x 38"



Pilgrims' Path (C7)
2001
Acrylic and Ganga clay on canvas
50" x 38"



Pilgrims' Path (P14)
2001
Mixed media on paper
17" x 36"



Pilgrims' Path (P15)
2001
Mixed media on paper
17" x 36"



Pilgrims' Path (P3)

2001

Ink, acrylic and Ganga clay on paper

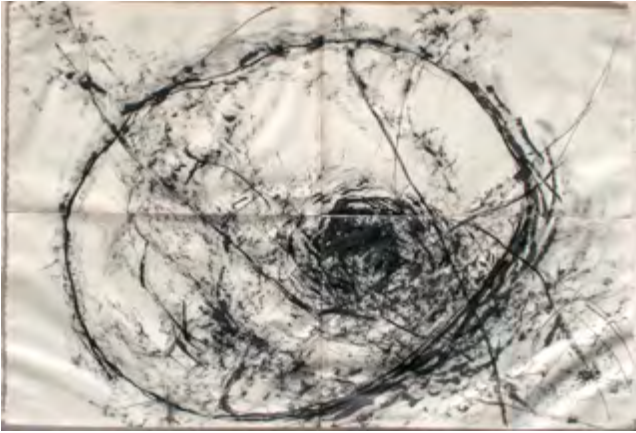
23" x 28"

BEEJ (2003-04)

This series explored potentiality... meditations on the life within a seed, of the possibilities within us, of the starburst energy of growth, of new beginnings and new life. A series largely done in drawings and scrolls - a response to being back in India and using a traditional Indian art form.

Beej Monotype
2003
Oil resist on paper
18" x 21"





Beej Drawings
2003
Ink and conte on paper
26" x 36"



Beej Triptych
2004
Collograph on paper
20" x 30"



Beej Scroll #18
17" x 37"



Beej Scroll #9
19" x 38"



Beej Scroll #12
22" x 24"



Beej Scroll #6
27" x 48"



Beej Scroll #10
18" x 33"



Beej Scroll #3
19" x 39"



Beej Scroll #21
25" x 50"



Beej Scroll #7
28" x 49"



Beej Scroll #2
18" x 33"

THE SEEKERS (2003-2006)

Spiritual seekers revealing the different emotions in the spiritual journey. This form - a wrapped androgynous figure with an articulated head - was the start of a sculptural journey that remains a recognizable artistic signature.

Seekers Group
12 sculptures
Bronze
45"

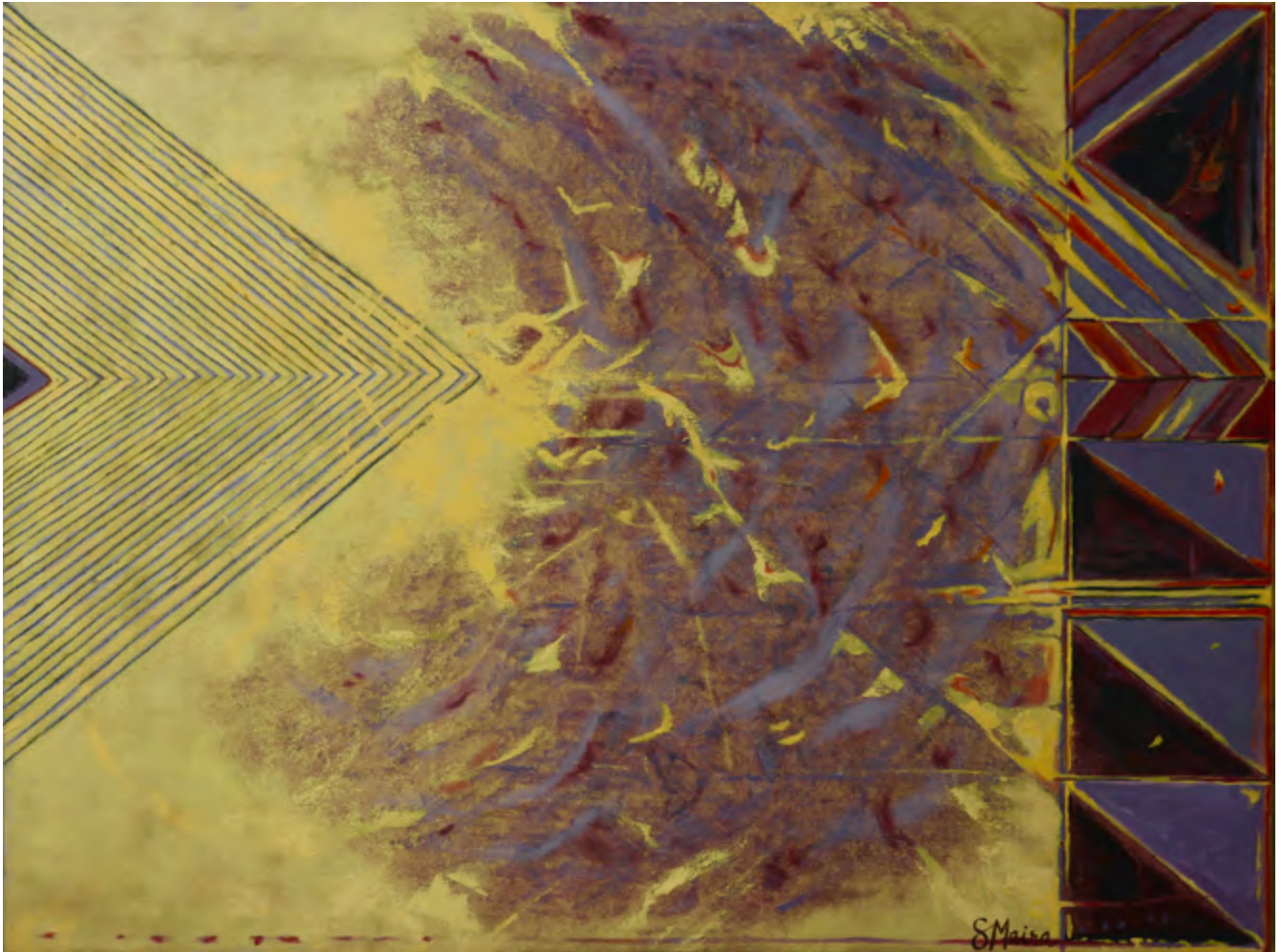


SOUND AS FORM (2005-06)

Expressions that grew out of the
artist's deepening into music -
learning to play the flute and sing
- on his return to India.

Sound as Form #1
2005-06
Acrylic on canvas
40" x 52"





Sound as Form #2
2005-06
Acrylic on canvas
40" x 52"



Sound as Form #3
2005-06
Acrylic on canvas
40" x 52"

MIRROR-INNER (2008-09)

Paintings-cum-bas-reliefs with stainless steel, copper, mirrors, and slate clay from a landslip in Himachal Pradesh... the work reflects on the act of seeing that helps us see ourselves, and also that what we see is a combination of what is out there and what is within ourselves.



Mirror-Inner-1
2008
Stainless steel and mixed media
13" x 21"



Mirror-Inner-2
2008
Stainless steel and mixed media
13" x 21"

Mirror-Inner-7
2009
Mixed media with copper
17" x 23"



Mirror-Inner-3
Mirror-Inner-4
Mirror-Inner-5
2008
Mixed media, stainless steel
with mirrors
13" x 21"





Mirror-Inner-6
2008
Mixed media with aluminium
13" x 21"



Mirror-Inner-8
2009
Mixed media with stainless steel
27" x 36"

SANGHA HEADS (2011-12)

Casts from the Sangha, a group of twelve life-sized figures, which depict the resolve and mind-states of seekers on the spiritual journey.



Sangha Heads
Bronze
15"x12"x10"







THE SUFIS (2014-15)

Figures that play on the idea of our inherent multiplicity and oneness. The unusual texturing of the bronze robes is reminiscent of the 'suf' of the Sufis.

Sufis (Group)
2015
Bronze
32" X 15" x 15"

Solitary Sufi
2015
Bronze
31" x 7" x 7"



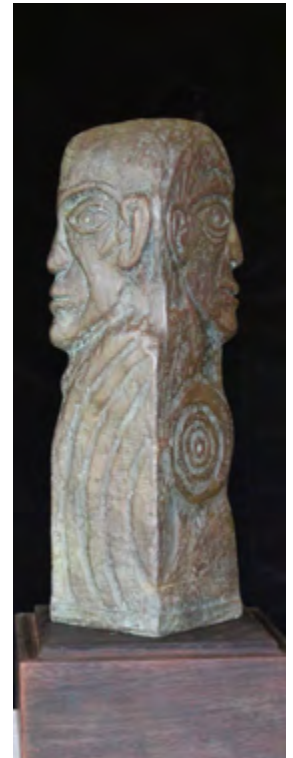
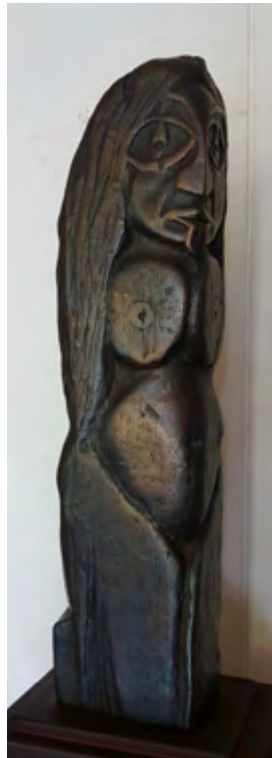
FORMED RESONANCE (2015-17)

Wood carvings, in a variety of woods - teak, deodar, juniper, American ash, shisham, keekar - done without any power tools, just a saw, a mallet, chisels, rasps, files, sandpaper, and ultimately, fire. Finally, some were cast in bronze.

Formed Resonance series
2017
Bronze
34"x12"x10"

Formed Resonance series
2017
Bronze
26"x12"x10"

Formed Resonance series
2017
Bronze
34"x12"x10"





Formed Resonance series
2017
Bronze
22"x14"x9"



Formed Resonance series
2017
Bronze
23"x10"x10"



Formed Resonance series
2015
Deodar wood and brass base
30"x10"x10"



Formed Resonance series
2016
Teak wood and brass base
43" x 11" x 11"



Formed Resonance series
2016
Teak wood and brass
45" x 12" x 12"



Formed Resonance series
2016
Deodar wood and brass
41" x 9" x 9"

Tao Art Gallery

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The logo for Tao Art Gallery features the word "TAO" in a stylized, hand-drawn font. The letters are thick and black, with a slightly irregular, artistic feel. The 'T' is the tallest, followed by the 'A' and then the 'O'. The 'A' has a small loop at the top right, and the 'O' is a simple circle with a small gap at the bottom.

The way to Art