

# domus

14 • Volume 02 • Issue 03 • January 2013 / **CCBA, Christopher Benninger** when I awake in the still of the night... / **Opolis** deriving value in places / **MAD, Matthew Allen** an empathetic twist / **Frida Escobedo, José Esparza** modernist masks / **a-RT, Bhattacharjee** detailing gestures / **Y D Pitkar, Smita Dalvi** deep surfaces / **Pedro Reyes** transforms weapons into musical instruments / **K T Ravindran** on **Oscar Niemeyer**

India

R200

# Journal



Photos courtesy **Experimenter**

Kolkata, IN

## From monumental to the miniature of things

**Bani Abidi instigates the audience with her thought-provoking body of work in a recent exhibition at the Experimenter**

A place can be read in different ways through buildings, its history, people and culture amongst few parameters and then there are larger-than-life sculptures of politicians, leaders and famous personalities towering the street or public squares in almost every city around the

world. People are immune to their presence and soon become part of the cityscape exactly like many other redundant features in a city that serves no purpose at all for the people or the city. Bani Abidi in her exhibition *Then it was Moulded Anew* at the Experimenter in Kolkata brings together a body of work that forms a collection of photographs and installation that ranges from monumental to miniature scale. In the video and photograph series

titled *Death at a 30 Degree Angle* (2012), she talks about a self-deceptive political leader who would install his own statues in public spaces for self propaganda in an attempt to attain immortality and Abidi's work poses questions to the viewers on aspects such as what is the purpose of these mega structures being erected in public squares? How does it help the people of the city or country? Or what happens to these sculptures once those leaders lose

power? In history one of the most famous examples of what happens to such sculptures through time are the thousands of Lenin statues that were erected across the former Soviet Union after his death in 1924, but most were torn down, melted for scrap, or re-purposed following the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991. Closer home we have Mayawati's statues forming the landscape of Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The video and photography installation was carried out by Abidi



Previous page: Image from *Death at a 30 Degree Angle*.  
This page: Images of dioramas from *A Table Wide Country*; images from the series titled *Proposal for a Man in the Sea*



at Ram Sutar's workshop — a sculptor known in India for making large statues of politicians and national heroes. Abidi's work shows some of the famous and known faces from Indian polity and history placed in his workshop; some are still in cast and others are completed and ready to be installed at their designated places in the city. The second series of work at display titled *Proposal for a Man in the Sea* (2012) is a photographic installation around the life of sculptor Ram Sutar himself. A man in his late 80s who has been around during the Indian independence and has seen the freedom struggle, and is a man who belongs to the generation for whom the definition and meaning of nationalism is very different as opposed to the generation that was born post independence. Sutar's generation grew up with a sense of responsibility to build the nation and one can sense from Abidi's work that different generation engages with these statues at different levels. Abidi's photographic collection has been created inside the same studio where he has been working on these mega sculptures and her works reflect the struggle to keep the nationalistic ideals alive. From the monumental to the miniature, her other series titled *A Table Wide Country* explores the world of collectors and hobbyists of miniature scale models of soldiers and armaments and how not just war veterans but also it is a man's inherent feeling for chivalry and admiration of military arms and ammunition makes someone a collector of toy soldiers and thus indirectly leads to glorification of war and violence. And there are even specialised magazines that are dedicated to this hobby. This series includes photographs of dioramas with several miniature toy soldiers at a war field and it belongs to a fictional character who is an avid collector and lives in this make believe world where it is he who decides what will happen in the battle. Abidi's works transgresses through the finer lines of life and cause and effect of things that ordinarily goes unnoticed. *Then it was Moulded Anew* is an exhibition that looks at the underlying layers of mundane day to day events and attempts to understand and separate the superfluous from the real. **Kalyani Majumdar**



until 05.01.2013  
Experimenter  
[www.experimenter.com](http://www.experimenter.com)

Mumbai, IN

# Lines, forms and spaces

**Hemali Bhuta in her ongoing exhibitions at Project 88 and Mumbai Art Room explores the existing space and the response to it**

How do we negotiate an interior space by looking at a building from outside? Do the built spaces that we see from the outside are similar from inside? For instance when one is looking at a building from the exterior one might think it has a high ceiling, but from the inside the spaces might have false ceilings, columns, cornices, false floorings and other elements that give the space an illusionary effect. Hemali Bhuta's recent exhibition titled *Point Shift and Quoted Objects* at Project 88, discusses the forms and materials that are often ignored or even overlooked or get lost in the bigger picture. In her exhibition she has attempted to separate the elements such as: columns, cornices, brackets, false ceilings, skirting and roofs and have shown them in their singular or pure state and through her works she has explored the importance of elements that separate structures, for instance, columns separate the floor from ceiling but at the same time also connects them. If one separates the material and looks at it singularly it is so different than what it looks like when it is a supporting element in a building. Bhuta's sculptural interventions show simple and natural form of a line wherein lines separate endpoints but at the same time they also connect them and that by folding it or shifting it does not get deleted

rather just creates another new line. In another exhibition by Hemali Bhuta at Mumbai Art Room, titled *The Column in Transit and The Wall Piece*, she has used local silica sand, faced with painted Plaster of Paris to make a site-specific installation. Her installation is a wall that is jutting out from a column into the exhibition space. Interestingly this installation actually works well with the limited space of the Mumbai Art Room as the space is divided into two halves and the viewer cannot see both sides of the wall at one time and to some extent it also creates an anxiety for the viewer caused due to its overwhelming presence and the fact that one cannot see both sides of the wall at the same time and experiencing the feeling of confinement in a limited architectural space where your movement is restricted. Bhuta's work is linked to the history of Mumbai Art Room as the present gallery space was earlier used as a two-car garage and then it was a karate studio for some time and in 2011 when this space was under renovation, a large nest of white ants was discovered and Bhuta has used the same material used to ward off white ants to show a raw edge in a wall that she has constructed in the exhibition space.

**Kalyani Majumdar**

until 02.02.2013  
Project 88  
[www.project88.in](http://www.project88.in)

until 26.01.2013  
Mumbai Art Room  
[www.mumbaiartroom.org](http://www.mumbaiartroom.org)



Photo courtesy Mumbai Art Room

Cologne, DE

# Orgatec 2012

**Germany's fair dedicated to the office is increasingly an event about themes and less a review of products**

It might be the two-year interval that gives companies some breathing space to come up with new ideas or it might be the large visitor numbers (50,000 from 123 countries according to official estimates), but the fact remains that there was no great sense of recession in the Cologne pavilions last October. The biggest change at Orgatec 2012, for the office world, was the transition from a product fair to a theme exhibition—a challenge embraced by the leading names in the sector. One key issue was the design of work spaces that can facilitate communication while enabling workers to concentrate better. Another major focus concerned integrating cutting-edge technology and the possibilities of sharing, forwarding and jointly processing knowledge and information. The emphasis

in this case was on more movement and comfort in the office, and on employees' health and long-term working capacity.

**Elena Sommariva**

Kölnmesse  
[www.orgatec.com](http://www.orgatec.com)

**1** Archipelago modular seating system by Monica Förster for Tecno

**2** "A-Chair, is a "modular" chair by Jehs+Laub for Brunner

**3** A-Collection by the Bouroullec brothers for Hay

**4** Media, high-tech desk by Fernando Urquijo for Unifor

**5** Liz chair by Claudio Bellini for Knoll

**6** Liquid Lounge modular sofa system by Studio CIBIDI for Castelli

**7** Framework 2.0 by Fantoni adopts a "social office" concept for a flexible and shared work space

**8** Physix, the "dynamic sitting" designed by Alberto Meda for Vitra

**9** Cork Desk by the Bouroullec brothers for Vitra

