

Exquisitely etched in clay

By Twinkle Ghosh

Titled, "Rain, the Ganga Waterfront along Time Machine", the India Habitat Centre has been premiering the unique artworks of Manav Gupta.

The exhibit, which would be concluding on Tuesday (April 21) projects a pioneering innovation in public art on sustainable development made out of the potter's produce as a suite of environmental art installations on Ganga — as the river flows along the passage of time.

"Made by deploying the quintessentially Indian potter's produce of clay earthen lamps, 'chillums' and earthen cups, it is the first of its kind environmental public art that brings forth consciousness on sustainability by transforming lakhs of inverted earthen lamps to represent the river along 'Time'," explained Gupta.

Executed in a public space, the collection raises consciousness on sustainable development intelligently using Ganga as the idiom and the earthen lamp as the metaphor letting it engage with audiences, who can participate in its flow in many ways.

While the artiste lures one intelligently within the sensuousness of the 'Waterfront', 'River of clay', and 'Rain' letting you feel the ethereal, emotive content like that of an epic story, he simultaneously explores current issues around the river and earth's resources.

"The earthen lamp is woven in the cultural-religious fabric of India from time immemorial. And the chillum represents a means of cheap intoxication to gratify. This humble clay bowl and the local 'cigar' have a nondescript existence and only during that momentary use turn into the medium of gratifying the desires of the soul or the senses. Taken for granted; anointed when needed — only revered when in use. Their life is strange like the Ganges. They make one ponder over the usage of the earth's resources, while we live our own lives in this minuscule moment of 'Time' in the universe," the artiste concluded.