

## **River of Clay**

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Manav Gupta's installation at the India Habitat Centre uses clay pottery — earthen lamps, chillums and kulhads — to depict the river Ganga in a spectacular public art display on the Plaza steps.

The installation spans 75 ft in length, 60 ft in width and 45 ft in height, with thousands of earthen lamps placed inverted to create the illusion of flowing water, while chillums hang from columns to recreate cascading falls. When lit at dusk, the work transforms the unused Plaza into a serene, luminous riverscape.

The exhibition, part of the artist's series 'Excavations in Hymns of Clay', drew over one hundred thousand visitors during its three-month run — a record for a public art installation by an individual artist in India.

The most striking factor about the installation was the optical illusion that Gupta had succeeded in creating — of an actual river flowing. The architectural engagement of the pottery with the walls where it is placed transformed the regular venue into a riparian landscape.