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Arth Art For Earth — Minister of State for Culture inaugurates exhibition at IGNCA

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Union Minister of State for Culture (I/C), Dr. Mahesh Sharma, inaugurated exhibition titled 'Arth — art for earth' at IGNCA, New Delhi today.

'ARTH — ART FOR EARTH' by Manav Gupta consists of 'Excavations in Hymns of Clay' — a suite of environmental art installations by Manav Gupta weaving all of them with a storyline and poetry. It is an evolving, site-specific and dynamic engagement with the space it has an interface with — whether it be the Travelling or the Permanent editions.

Speaking at the event, the Minister said that Culture is our Strength and Identity, and the artists are the people adding strength to this identity. Appreciating the exhibit, he also complimented IGNCA for the efforts. Dr Sachidanand Joshi, Member Secretary IGNCA, Shri Ram Bahadur Rai, President IGNCA, Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO Niti Ayog and many other dignitaries were present at the event.

As a public art project, the artist deploys the quintessentially Indian potter's produce of clay objects such as the earthen lamps ('diyas'), local cigar ('chilam'), earthen cups ('kullar') to transform their individual identity into metaphors and idioms of sustainability, context, perception and treatment as he conceptualizes and creates large-scale avant-garde works; using the rural Indian pottery meant for everyday use, in mass numbers, he deconstructs their age-old existence as units to make them lend themselves to another form, be it in a Duchamp-like inverted concept or simply rendering them formless.

They stun the viewer with the artist's originality of thought as he produces a cutting-edge contemporary language whose global vocabulary is derived from the 'local'. In his 'excavations' of the spiritual philosophy of sustainable living as espoused in Indian scriptures, he executes an organic engagement of art with architecture and space to explore it in its universal context.

While one is lured intelligently within the sensuousness of the 'Waterfront', 'River of clay', or 'Rain' letting one feel the ethereal, emotive content like that of an epic story, Manav's statement is dipped gently into the essence of the Indian Vedic practices to subtly bring to light the repository of solutions that the ancient way of life could offer in today's context of sustainable development and current issues around rivers like the Ganga.

Whether it be the latest 'Rain' or the 'River waterfront', 'Time Machine', 'Bee-hive Garden', 'River Bed of Love', or the 'Noah's Ark', the fragility of clay juxtaposed with the limitedness of the 'cup of life' questions the paradigm of Time and human engagement with it in today's rapidly mechanized and constructed consumerist engagement with earth's resources.

The works, conceptualised, created and constructed taking into consideration the venue, is a sensitive natural interface with the ambience, seeking to engage fresh and locally relevant dialogues and questions that audiences can have with the art and within themselves.

The exhibition is available for public viewing till the 22nd of October 2018.

Bibliography — manavgupta.in