

## PARALLEL INTERSECTION

A sister and a brother, raised within the fold of a similar Indo-western liberal education grow up to join the corporate world of their globalising society. But art haloes their existence. The sister paints despite litigating against the clock, and the brother spins in his mind even as he walks the path of business research.

In this show, they stop and share the crossroads of their arrival in a public space. The parallels turn their angles and meet...

### ...RAHUL K. and the Waltz of CLAY

#### The Indian context

In the later Indian texts of Hindu mythology, *prajapati*, the king of creation, is referred to as a separate deity, a supreme god, creator of heaven and earth, lord of gods and men – and he is frequently identified with *Brahma*. In the plural, the *prajapatis* denote the *mānasā - putra*, mental sons or the mind-born children of *Brahma*.

The potter as *kumhara* is also *prajapati* as he creates the bodies of the pots and fills their void – each with a life of its own. At the Hindu funeral rites, before the pyre is lit, a pot is crashed on the floor, symbolically releasing the soul of the deceased person. *Chak puja*, the re-cycling of the *khullad* of *chai*, and the norm that a potter must *buy* his *diyas* for Diwali, keep the ancient craft of pottery alive in our living civilization.

#### Flash forward

Although the potter has traditionally held the title of *prajapati*, which he shares with the Creator, physically he creates from the fringes of the village – underlining the co-existence of straddling the centre stage and the periphery at will.

Rahul Kumar is not very different. As a New Delhi potter whose clay began pirouetting in the shadows of Gurcharan Singh – the Delhi Blue original, he now lives in Gurgaon, once a jaggery market which lay beyond the halo of a metropolis. It has now burgeoned into a megacity, but Rahul's studio and home are in Kendriya Vihar, literally 'central abode'. Therein lie all the potter's tales – centring the lump of clay, thumbs on the pulse and navel of the wheel. But the fingers remain on the exterior margins, giving each twirl a form or a groove for posterity.

#### The potter

Rahul's wheel continues to spin out pots as humans with the same perfection-imperfection duality. His pots, gas-fired at 1280°C, have feet and heads, or just a base in which the pot rises to its open mouth, leaving the body headless.

#### Confessions

How many potters would admit to a hammer being their most important tool (after a wheel, for sure)? – but Rahul does. Not a large portion of the pots he and his students make survive his hammer's knock. Not because he is destructive, but precisely because he is constructive

towards his own vision of 'expression of the creator'. "They just didn't become it" he says. So, one must imagine that they were destined to be aborted.

"Tribes or villages have expressed their 'craft' as a community expression...", the articulate potter points out, "...and it became 'art' with individual expression". That is what he has set out to seek.

### **Sheer poetry**

The pots turn like dervishes  
and craze his mind.  
From half to 'full bright' in the kiln –  
the fires of the mind burn –  
and glaze the earth he picks and turns.

This consciousness, away from the anonymous, creative tradition of India, came to him with his Fulbright scholarship. He's come a long way from his first wobbly pot in 1994, turning in every direction under Guru Gurcharan Singh's eye. This 'original' potter of our early conscience was a living legend, and Rahul had the privilege of two years of interaction with this 'Daddy-ji', as he was called.

But because the potter's wheel spins around as does the earth, it gives Rahul occasion to whirl within and constantly pull out the rewards.

– Aman Nath, August, 2011

Aman Nath is a historian by education but from an early age he has painted, written poetry, practiced graphic design and copywriting for several advertising campaigns. He has co-written/authored thirteen illustrated books on art, history, architecture, corporate biography, and photography, two of which have won national awards. These are also used as the official gifts of the President and the Prime Minister of India. He is involved in the restoration of India's unlisted architectural ruins, now run as the Neemrana 'non-hotel' Hotels, which have won awards from Unesco, the Indian travel trade industry and National Awards. Involved in contemporary art, he was the curator of the India Today's gallery. As an inveterate traveller - after walking 400 kms to Mount Kailash and sub-Antarctica - he has contributed to several travel magazines.