

GIRJESH KUMAR SINGH LIFE IN THE RUBBLE



Girjesh Kumar Singh, *Laaga Chunari Mein Daag: The Stained Robe 1*, 2023, brick and mortar from demolished construction, 106x183x13cm

Girjesh Kumar Singh - Life in the Rubble
26 May - 30 June

PV 25 May 6:30 - 8:30

gallery rosenfeld is delighted to be hosting the second solo European exhibition of Indian artist Girjesh Kumar Singh entitled "Life in the Rubble". Contemporaneously, there will be an accompanying exhibition entitled, "Looking at the Human" displaying a collection of sculptural heads from 450 BC - early 20th Century from a notable private collection.

Western civilisation from its earliest days has been centred around humanism, the human figure has nearly always been at the centre of the artist's search for truth. Even not delving very far back in time, Picasso, Soutine, Bacon, Freud, and Auerbach have shown us different ways of portraying human features. The overriding theme of both the shows asks the question, "What is it to be a Human?". Girjesh Kumar Singh creates his sculptures from his scavenging amidst the rubble of destroyed buildings in Uttar Pradesh, near where he lives. As the building material is brick, he works with the broken bricks which he finds at the various sites. As he himself states with great modesty: "the sculpture is already in the brick and I am merely completing the process".

The idea that out of what appears to be total destruction, just as with the first shoots of a plant after an extremely cold winter, life will find a way to always re-emerge. Viewing an exhibition of Singh's work, which comprises installations of 15 meticulously sculpted human heads and single visions of architecture, is profoundly moving, not just for the impact of the works but even more for what it tells us about the human spirit.

The different heads are always individual and inspired from different ages of the human being, cultures, and epochs so what we find ourselves looking at is a compendium of the physiology of the human being in time. Furthermore, we shall be showing two brand new series of works. One comprises very large individual heads where the mixture of red brick and cement create a strange hybrid where the heads are never viewed completely. The other series is made up of a series of 'pebbles' where on each individual stone, the artist has sculpted individual architectural scenes. All Kumar Singh's works are also referencing the problems of peoples' impermanence in their homes and his sculptures are a cry against the forced migration which so many peoples are forced to undergo due to war, a lack of natural resources and extreme poverty. In this sense, the partner exhibition entitled, 'Looking at the Human' will show a selection of works from an important private British collection, which will represent a perfect dialogue with Singh's work as we find ourselves looking at various heads from various cultures and epochs. Sculptures on display range from a Cypriot monumental male votive head of 450 BC, a Gandra Head of Buddha from the 3rd/4th century, a Hip Mask from the Edo period and a Benin Kingdom in Nigeria to a Korean head from the 1930's give an idea of the extremely wide net which has been used to put this show together.

Singh, due to his extreme humility, maintains his heads within a very realistic physiognomy, whereas the sculpted heads in the exhibition downstairs, emerging as they do from many different cultures, have a bewildering variety. This combination of shows has the aim not just to make us wonder at an artist's or an artisan's ability at expressing the mysteries and expressiveness of the human physiognomy but also Girjesh Kumar Singh's tenacity in working with such an unrelenting material as broken bricks to communicate the profound ability of human beings' endless quest for survival.

For images, interviews and further information contact Yeojun Lee: press@galleryrosenfeld.com