

Art In touch | Edition 07 | Between Brackets by Shruti Mahajan

The city, however, does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls. - Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities

In 1890, Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob published the *Jeypore Portfolio*. Under his direction, artists drafted neat sketches, dismantling (on paper) large and complex buildings into neat categories like doors, windows, brackets, inlay work, etc. The Jeypore Portfolio told a fragmented story of the built heritage of the Indian subcontinent, just as Marco Polo described the city of Zaira, the present and the past, in the quote above. Shruti Mahajan finds stories in wood and in stitch, and retells them in her new series, ***Between Brackets***.

A parenthesis creates space for an interlude or an explanation, it is independent yet attached to the sentence. In architecture, a bracket supports an overhanging ledge extending space of a building. In language, as well as in construction, brackets buttress development of a structure and ideas. Shruti explores the functions and form of the device. There are brackets stacked together supporting themselves as well as beams and ceilings. She replicates, draws and paints, makes marks and collages to create a series of work in a range of media, and techniques. In ***Between Brackets*** memories and messages flow out of open envelopes, libraries are evoked and patterns woven. Plans are drafted of spaces that cannot be contained, but those that grow— perhaps out of past experiences, projects and preoccupations.

Aparna Andhare

Bio: Shruti Mahajan is an artist and textile designer based in Hyderabad, India. Her art contemplates themes of belonging, identity, loss and memory. Her work is widely exhibited in India and abroad.

Born in 1977, Shruti Mahajan studied painting from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Saiyajji Rao University, Baroda (2000) and Textile Design from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. (2004). Shruti was a recipient of Nasreen Mohammadi scholarship in the year 2000.

In 2010, she was invited for an artist in residency program by an Art foundation, Kunststiftung NRW in Cologne for six months. She worked and lived in Koelnischer Kunstverein. In 2012, Shruti lived in Duesseldorf as artist in residence at an artist house -Studio Hoeheweg 271. It was during this stay she had two person travelling shows in three cities: In galerie Alte post Neuss, Kunstverein Xanten, and Museum Siegburg. She was the artist in residence at Kunsthistorisches Institut, Florenz, the Max Planck Institut (2019).

Shruti has exhibited her works at India art fair with Shrine Empire in 2020, exhibited at Shrine Empire and Delhi Contemporary Art Week in 2019, Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai, British Council Delhi, Gallery Open Eyed Dreams, Kochi, Gallery White Square, Berlin, Open Studios at

Koelnischer Kunstverein, Open studios at Hoherweg 271 and has collaborated with Alke Reeh (Sculptor from Düsseldorf) for shows in Field InstitutHombroich, Max Mueller Bhavan, Mumbai, and Kunst Museum Bochum, Galerie Maurer Frankfurt. In 2017, Shruti was invited to show her works at galerieWestwerk in Hamburg.

Shruti Mahajan currently lives in Hyderabad.