

Dynamic Deconstruction

Analytical Engine pushed artistic boundaries on an Indian platform

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Art has always been about pushing boundaries and reinventing definitions. As a rare occasion where art in its most experimental form, was showcased was at the opening of an exhibition cum installation entitled Analytical Engine at Bose Pacia Gallery on January 24. The exhibition was curated by Heidi Fichtner. With kitsch and deconstruction as undercurrents and recurring themes, the exhibition drew a sizeable crowd of city art enthusiasts eager to quench their thirst for the experimental.

Heidi Fichtner, introducing the exhibition, said: "This exhibition brings together a collage of 10 very diverse artists working on multifarious media. The exhibition seeks to establish the resonance and harmony between traditional, craft-based, artisan techniques and the contemporary use of craft in conceptual production. The common theme, weaving all the exhibits together, is *Handmade*, defined here as craft that underscores the primacy of manual skill and humble materials as a signifier for other critiques."

The exhibition included works that self-reflexively used traditional material, such as textile and bamboo, and used these to reflect upon a historical process in itself. Also, a conspicuous recurrent element in a few works was the use of language, not only in its expressive capacities, but also deconstructs the systemic world of language, demarcating the peculiarity of relationship between language as it is given and as it is used.

Among the most interesting works that really the boundaries of conventionality were works by Asim Waqif. Taking a cue from his roots in architecture, Waqif created two very experimental pieces. One of them was a massive bamboo installation in form of the endoskeleton of a typical Bengali *pujo pandal*. While the effigy of the deity was seated in a cosy nook, the work made one realise the beauty of a traditional material like bamboo.

Another interesting piece was the deconstructionist use of glass, dials and prisms in a conjugal celebration of art and science. The object, when kept in sunlight emanates a playful reverie of light, shadow and reflection. Waqif, speaking of his art, averred: "My work is always a work in progress, and it is often temporary. I like to continue an artwork's journey, so that it creates its place in history by being a part of the present."



Asim Waqif

The most interesting elements were media works that deconstructed and reaffirmed the lexicon art of language and also the use of modern tools as computer viruses as well as traditional ones as dyes and textiles standing side by side under a united canopy.

Signing off, Fichtner said, "Though on a world platform, it is not so, but on an Indian platform, Analytical Engine really pushes artistic boundaries. While I was apprehensive at the outset about how confluent and united the artists' works would be, the collection and collation of artworks right now reminds me of works by Manzoni and Hess. At the end it is brilliant to see each artwork stand out individually as well as in unison."