

Memories, collaborations and mutual inspiration

by Lipika Bansal

Familiarity and memories with the handmade are a common theme in the works of Ruchama Noorda, Tim Breukers and Sanchayan Ghosh.

Noorda's hammered copper work - that functions as an antenna in Marres and as a bowl-shaped altarpiece - originated before she went to Kolkata.

"I made this work a year before I left for the residency in Kolkata. Before then, I had never seen a Shiva lingam - at least not consciously. But once there, I saw them everywhere. The first time I saw a Shiva lingam altar it looked strangely familiar and suddenly I remembered the installation I had made in the prison washroom. Some of them even have copper snakes coiled around the lingam, like the hammered copper pipes I had used in the piece. These Shiva lingam altars look like kinds of energetic batteries."



The 'Newspaper Works' was made in Kolkata. This work and the energetic battery are linked in Marres by the headlines that emerge from the clay, dirt and red alta smeared newspapers, which talk about war, commerce, spiritual values and infinite consciousness.

Like some of the other artists, **Breukers** spent time in a village called Dariyapur, collaborating with the Dhokra artisan and developing friendships within the community. "The collaboration was fun, like a feast. We each used our own casting tricks, which resulted in a very special exchange - sharing skills and surprising each other in turn. The artisans have a lot of guts in experimenting and trying out new things."



Ghosh's installation shows the practices of women roof-makers from Bengal. The songs that the 10 roof-making women sing are generated while they work. They are expressions of labour, more than actual songs memorised and performed while making. Since the 1980s, this practice has slowly faded out due to the shift from the lime and brick dust-based construction to concrete construction making.

"When I approached the 10 Bauri women to document the songs, they initially could not remember them; they realized that without physically making another roof and hitting the bricks, the songs would not return. So, we had to literally make a new roof in the house of the Leto performer Hara Kumar Gupta, and only then were they able to recollect the songs for us to record. Interestingly, after this whole process, they thought about performing the songs on stages. Together, we wrote down the songs in order to enable them to do that."



"For the present installation, I also wanted to share the portraits of the 10 Bauri women. The portraits were made with brick dust mixed dichromatic solutions. I collaborated with a student of mine (Surajit Mudi) to experiment with photo exposure onto cotton textiles. The textiles, which you see hanging in the Marres attic, are called gamccha. They are used by the roof makers to protect themselves from the heat of the sun, as they hit the surface of the roof for more than 20 days continuously."