

A Meeting of Two Opposites

Bengaluru-based Arshad Hakim works primarily with photographs,

text-based pieces and video with a strong interest in non-linear and non-narrative cinema. His fellow city artist Sarasija Subramanian engages analogies derived from the organic world in relation to its cultural and political implications. In stark contrast, Moonis Ahmad Shah juggles his time between Srinagar and Melbourne. He straddles the space of hegemonic narratives and archives alongside their radical, futuristic alternatives. What do these three seemingly different artists have in common? Bound by a thread, their practice revolves around myth, suspension and violence. Gallery Ark in Vadodara brought forth this commonality in a multidisciplinary show titled A Voyage of Seemingly Propulsive Speed and an Apparent Absolute Stillness. The genesis of this intriguingly titled exhibition resulted in etchings, drawings, zinc plates, videos, digital prints and LED strips that made the show a rich, layered dialogue.

Initially planned for a March opening, the pandemic put a spanner in the works till it was decided to make the format digital. "Our move towards

Vadodara's Gallery

Ark brings a

multidisciplinary

online show by three

emerging artists—

Arshad Hakim,

Moonis Ahmad

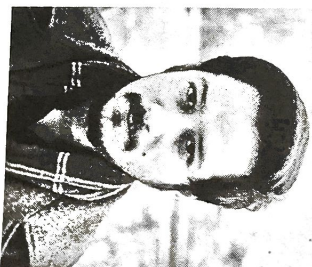
Shah and Sarasija

Subramanian

By BINDU GOPAL RAO



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(Top) Still from a 3D exhibition model; Moonis Ahmad Shah (right)



Sarasija Subramanian and her artworks (right)



Integrating digital exhibitions is fitting because these young artists are pushing the boundaries with their experimentation and a deep thinking around an alternate future," says Nipur Dalmia, director, Gallery Ark. The artists knew each other from their art school days and bringing them together was a call taken by the in-house assistant curator, Aashish Benmwal. "Our desire is to keep pushing curatorial boundaries, straddle the boundaries of conceptual and aesthetic appeal and something new to the table each time," adds Dalmia. Interested in abstraction and minimalism, Hakim uses a variety of mediums to provoke conversations. Video, photographs and even a trusted plate

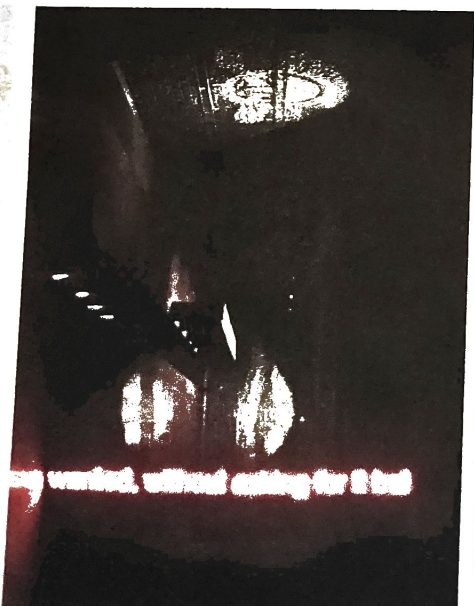
of steel often find place in his collages. For this show, he brings two series of his drawings—'Stages in Return that I Did Not Want' and 'Dreams of a Cyborg' Trapped in

A Drawing by Nasreen Moham-ed! Both the series have been created using rust transfer, gouache, ink and laser print on paper. Besides, his video piece, 'Plumber, 2002' and 'Ourbros—a sculptural eight-foot LED light strip installation—are also a part of the exhibition. "The artworks were specially selected as they resonated with the three words that serve as touchstones for the conceptual framework of the show. All three of us dug deep into our and each other's practices to connect the dots between our diverse artistic practices and preoccupations," he explains.

Born in Srinagar, Shah's hybrid practices involve a coming together of diverse mediums. Here he presents four bodles of work that highlight his rich range. Whilst the three series—'Accidentally Mistranslucis Everyday From That Heaven and Too—highlight his experimental computer programming, the series 'Telegrams to Bollywood from a Mad Landscape Sound'

meditative process, using ink on tea-stained paper.

Exploring growth and belonging through her art, Subramanian's work presents a set of artefacts that are constantly throbbing with life. The ever-shifting layers of past, present and future contexts and perspectives merge together to provide the much-needed points of conversation. She has presented three bodles of work at the exhibition—'Dictionary of Gardening', 'Sea Monsters (Bred In Captivity)' and 'Sea Monsters / And Others'. "Starting from the ideation of this exhibition all the way through the processes of curation and display, this show has been unlike any other. Besides, the unique architectural spaces in Gallery Ark and the



range of mediums in the show make for a particularly interesting exhibit," she says.

It took the team about three months to build the exhibition, using a software called Unity. Its current format, the model allows one to replace the artworks and move things around. The 3D virtual gallery as well as the Online Viewing Room are up on their website theark.in and it show to