

garden of eden

by vinod daroz

17th to 27th September, 2008

the garden of eden

The multiple technicalities inherent in pottery and ceramics has historically placed the medium in the domain of crafts, and it is in the 20th century, outside industrial production, that ceramics found a new role in studio pottery. It was an art practice based on new ideologies, parallel to modernism based on truth to materials, individual artistic expression, originality, unity of form and decoration and aesthetic freedom. Studio pottery interrogated the problematic word 'craft' which has proved to be such a battleground for practitioners in the hegemonic discourses of the visual arts and aligns the ceramist to a wider field of cultural production, not limited by the medium employed. Locative in a new space of formal and conceptual experimentation, studio pottery subverted taboos against clay as a sculptural medium, perhaps marginalized due to its humble origins and today, no longer confined to the decorative arts or other craft categories, ceramists explore an unlimited range of influences, styles, and ideas, engaging in an inventive dialogue with the pottery and ceramic tradition.

Vinod Daroz, a prominent ceramist, moves beyond the stereotypes attributed to the medium, particularly the idea of *form following function*, displaying a conceptual and aesthetic maturity by formulating a language that takes *the form beyond its function*. The idiosyncrasies of clay open up multiple possibilities for the artist, who derives his inspiration from nature and its organic forms, while exploring the philosophical dimensions of the act of creation in its mythology and cosmology. The narratives of creation expressed how humans related themselves in context to the natural history of the universe, and the ceramics of Vinod are expressive of this history, a way of being in the world, delving into humanity's origin and destiny.

The permutations and combinations of a myriad forms and delicate glazes, reveals an individual sensibility in complete control of his medium and a curiosity for art historical imagery and philosophy gives his work a unique edge as a ceramist. Vinod visited Kanchipuram and the *gopurams*, *shikharas*, *garbagrihas* and *lingam/yonis* forms in South Indian temples triggered in him questions of creationism, sexuality, sublimity and spirituality. The *Temple Series* emerged out of this intensely spiritual experience, which Vinod differentiates from religion. This series is not just about the possibilities of the form, but also about the expression of peace, experienced through the form via the white, translucent nature of the body, associative with faith and the meditative energy of God.



As Vinod articulates, "My most interesting observation while working on the *Temple Series* was that there are so many possible ways of exploiting one subject through different clay bodies. The use of slip cast porcelain enabled me to achieve the desired repetitive patterns. It has been an interesting challenge to incorporate a clay body successfully in my work, keeping its industrial characteristics intact. This series of work focuses on the creative life forces of the universe".

As an extension of the *Temple Series*, comes a body of new works: '**The Garden of Eden**', which is representative of the symbology of the *lingam* and the *yonis*, a sculptural and aesthetical explication of creationism, imperative in Hindu temple iconography. A major visual reference in

these works is a rock at Hampi, which is carved with repetitive 'lingam' forms, and leaves an optical impression on the viewer. Popular religious practices in Hinduism, such as the use of the yellow and red thread in various contexts, also merge in abstractionist forms, in lines and colour contrasted against the three-dimensionality of *lingam* configurations.



Vinod contextualizes, " These red and yellow threads are sometimes tied around the wrist as a blessing, or a protective force, sometimes tied around trunks of holy trees asking to grant wishes; it is the symbol of the bond between *gurus* and *shishyas*. In all its forms, it is to me an indication of faith."

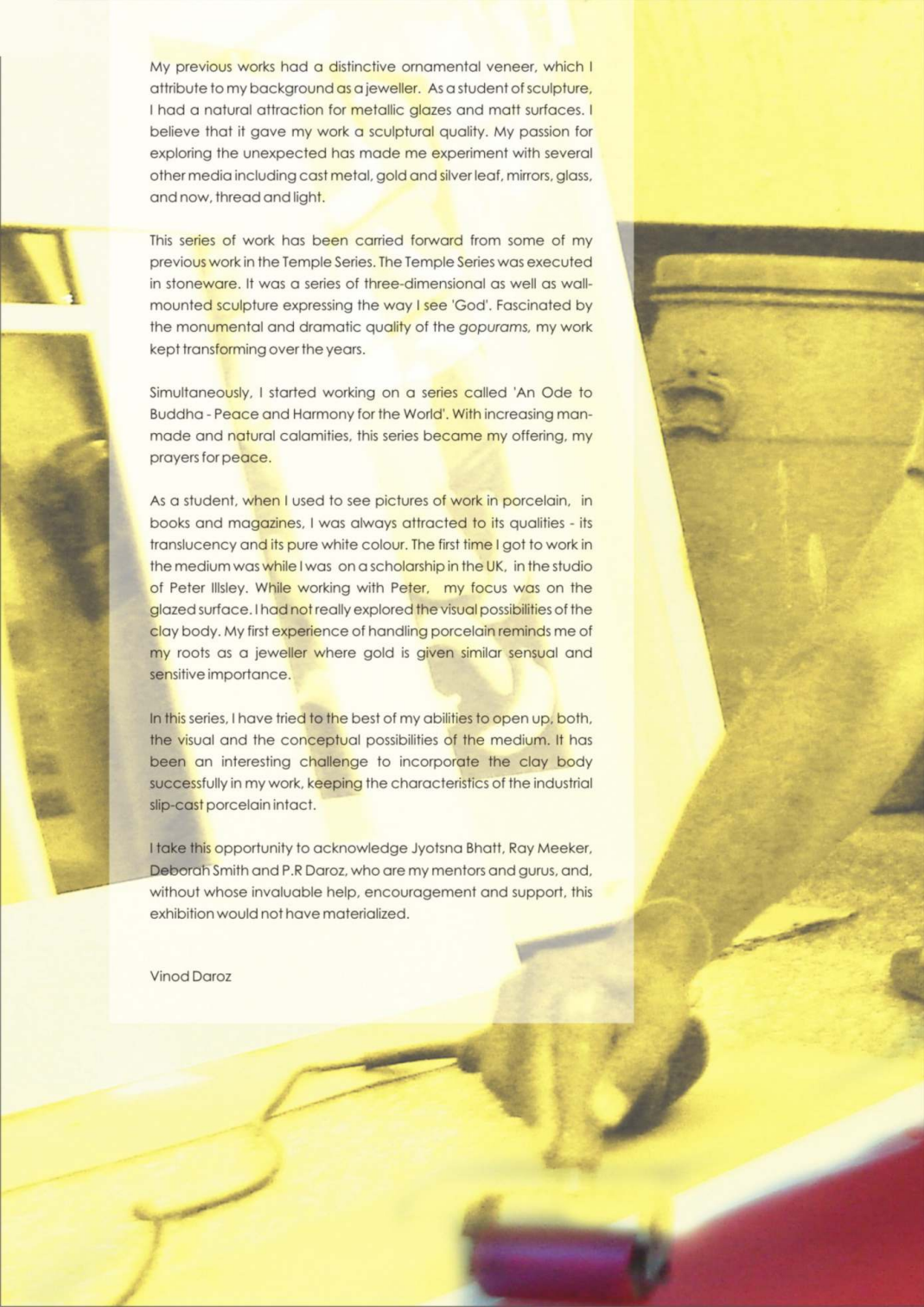


Other visual references are murals in Tibetan monasteries with repetitions of Buddha figures, mandalas, which have meditative connotations, and also traditional Indian handlooms, its weaves, prints and recurring geometric designs, influencing the artist in a myriad ways. This series can also be linked to Christian mythologies of creation, especially that of Adam and Eve in Eden, as described in the Book of Genesis. The fallen angel, Satan, is represented in

repetitive human faces with horns juxtaposed against symbols of masculinity and femininity, such as bananas, golden flowers and cut apples.

In formal terms, what is most remarkable in these current works is how Vinod articulates a playful exploration of geometrical form and variable planar colours. The parallel representation of realistic forms and abstractionist patterns focus on the perceptual aspects of art, which result both from the illusion of movement and the interaction of color relationships; art historically, this can be traced to a tangential influence of Op Art, which was derived from the constructivist practices of the Bauhaus. Op Art is a perceptual experience related to how vision functions, stemming from a discordant figure-ground relationship that causes the two planes to be in a tense and contradictory juxtaposition. While Op Art was largely a movement in painting, Vinod creates this optical tension in the medium of ceramics, creating spatial fluctuations of three-dimensional arrangements adjacent to flat linear drawings and symmetrical colour patterns, interspersed sometimes with real threads, amid iridescent glazes.

Human and organic forms, philosophy and theology coalesce in these works, along with a spontaneity that is characteristic of Vinod's oeuvre. The precision of the work that he creates not only suggests a confidence with material but also brings to mind the realization of geometric concepts. Explorative in material and medium, Vinod Daroz, like an alchemist, continues his quest for that perfect form in correlation with the natural histories that encompasses us, in the sublimity of the creative act and its mysticisms.



My previous works had a distinctive ornamental veneer, which I attribute to my background as a jeweller. As a student of sculpture, I had a natural attraction for metallic glazes and matt surfaces. I believe that it gave my work a sculptural quality. My passion for exploring the unexpected has made me experiment with several other media including cast metal, gold and silver leaf, mirrors, glass, and now, thread and light.

This series of work has been carried forward from some of my previous work in the Temple Series. The Temple Series was executed in stoneware. It was a series of three-dimensional as well as wall-mounted sculpture expressing the way I see 'God'. Fascinated by the monumental and dramatic quality of the gopurams, my work kept transforming over the years.

Simultaneously, I started working on a series called 'An Ode to Buddha - Peace and Harmony for the World'. With increasing man-made and natural calamities, this series became my offering, my prayers for peace.

As a student, when I used to see pictures of work in porcelain, in books and magazines, I was always attracted to its qualities - its translucency and its pure white colour. The first time I got to work in the medium was while I was on a scholarship in the UK, in the studio of Peter Illsley. While working with Peter, my focus was on the glazed surface. I had not really explored the visual possibilities of the clay body. My first experience of handling porcelain reminds me of my roots as a jeweller where gold is given similar sensual and sensitive importance.

In this series, I have tried to the best of my abilities to open up, both, the visual and the conceptual possibilities of the medium. It has been an interesting challenge to incorporate the clay body successfully in my work, keeping the characteristics of the industrial slip-cast porcelain intact.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge Jyotsna Bhatt, Ray Meeker, Deborah Smith and P.R Daroz, who are my mentors and gurus, and, without whose invaluable help, encouragement and support, this exhibition would not have materialized.

Vinod Daroz





Untitled Slip-cast Porcelain & Light 20 x 23 x 5.5 inches 2008



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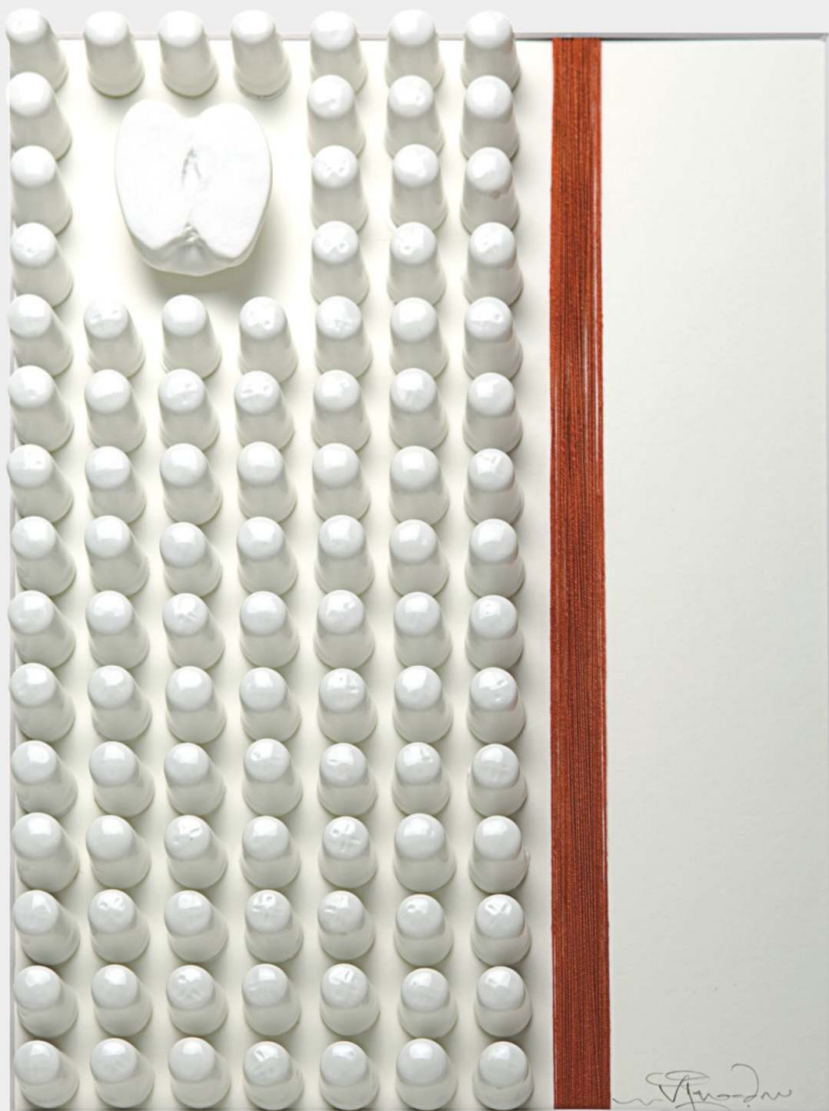


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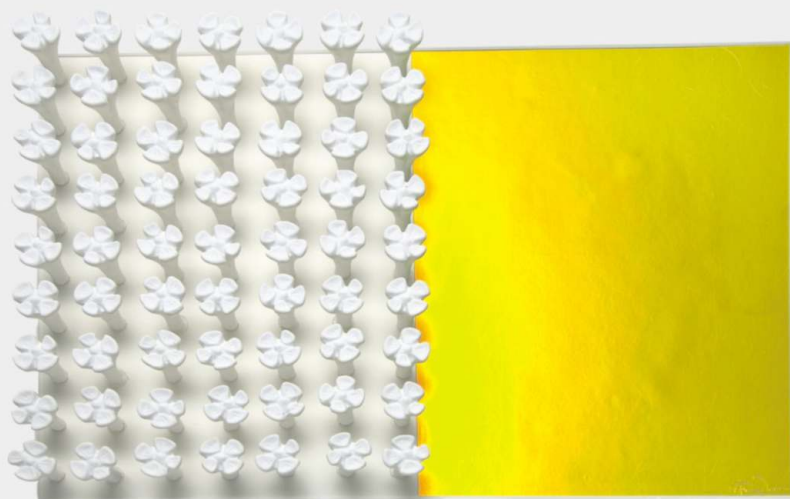


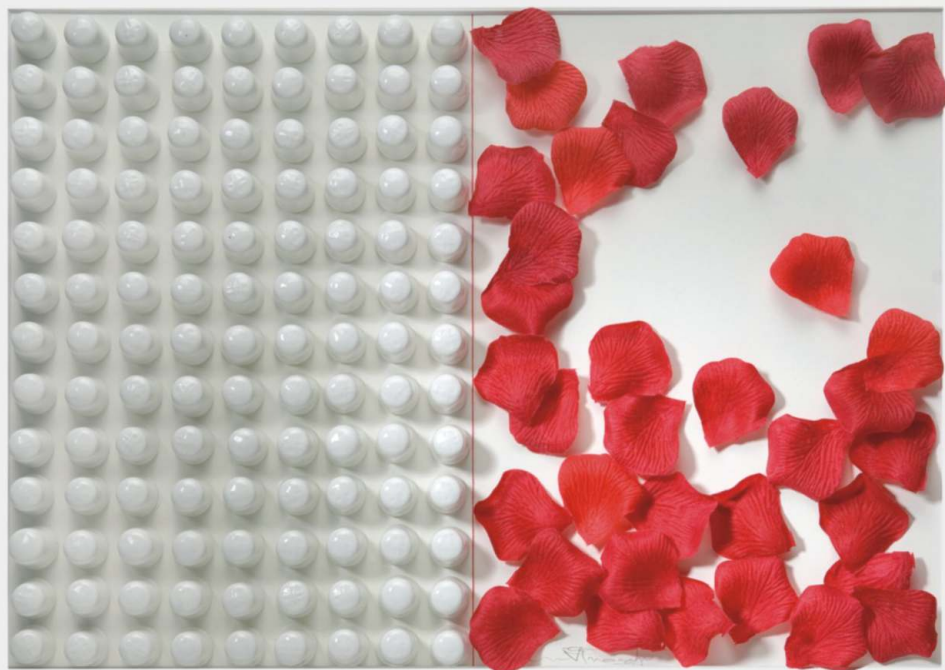






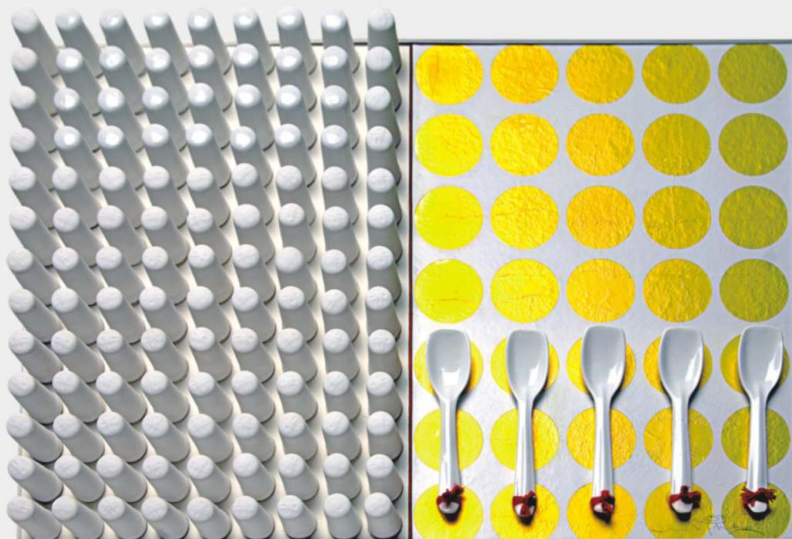






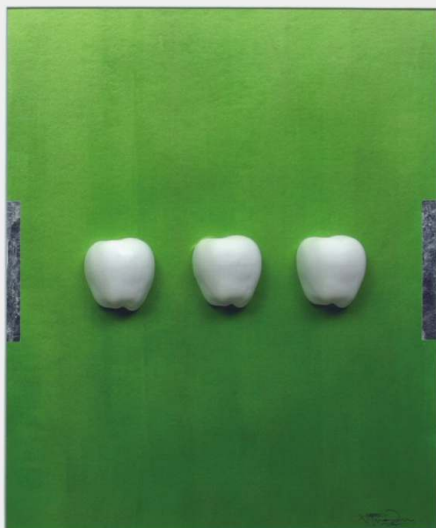
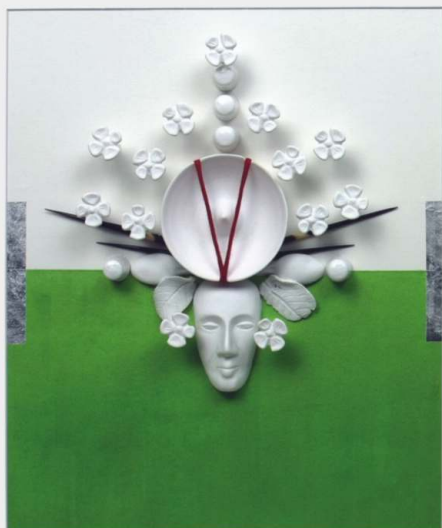


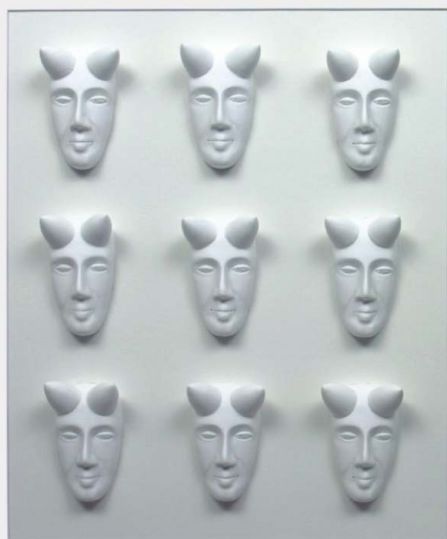














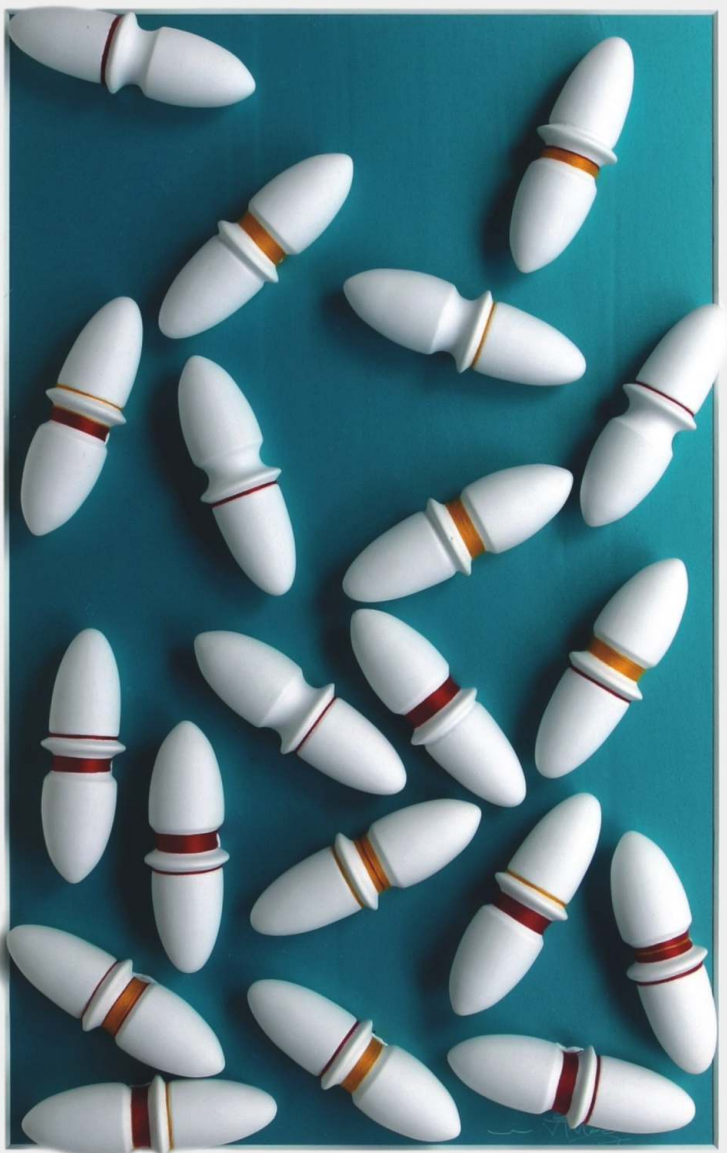


Untitled
Slip-cast Porcelain, Acrylic Colour, Gold Luster,
Copper Luster, Silver Foil & Thread
25 x 31 x 2.5 inches 2008





Untitled Slip-cast Porcelain, Thread & Silver Leaf 19 x 41 x 2.5 inches 2008





Untitled Slip-cast Porcelain & Thread 29.5 x 35 x 3 inches 2008

Vinod Daroz : 1972, Kalwakurthy, A.P.

Education

1993 - 1997 : BFA, Sculpture, Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda.

1997-1999 : MFA, Ceramic Sculpture, Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda.

1998 : Worked under Ray Meeker and Deborah Smith at Golden Bridge Pottery, Pondicherry.

2004 : Apprenticed with British potters Peter Illsley in Daventry and Sandy Brown in Bideford, UK.

Solo Shows

2007 : 'Clay is Life', Anant Art Center, Noida, New Delhi.

2006 : Ceramics, Kala Kriti Art Gallery, Hyderabad.

2004 : Wood-fired Ceramics, Sarjan Art Gallery, Baroda.

2003 : 'Terrene', L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad.

2002 : Wood-fired Ceramics, Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai.

1998 : Ceramics, Fine Arts Gallery, Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda.

Selected Group Shows

2008 : 'Clay Clan-II', V.M. Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan.

Red Earth Annual Show-2008, Museum Art Gallery, Mumbai.

'Baroda March', Coomaraswamy Hall, Mumbai.

'Indian Ceramics Today' Lemon Grasshopper Art Gallery, Ahmedabad Ni Gufa, Ahmedabad.

2007 : 'Influences', British Scholars Show, LANXESS ABS Art Gallery, Baroda.

'Art on the Wing' in support of VCARE, Sarjan Art Gallery, Baroda.

2006 : 'Recent Ceramics', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai.

'Harmony Show' Nehru Center, Mumbai.

'Feb Show', LANXESS ABS Gallery, Baroda.

'Art Access', Birla Art and Culture, Kolkata.

'Elements', India Habitat Center, New Delhi.

'An Exhibition of Fragmented Time', Daira Art Gallery, Hyderabad.

2005 : 'Harmony Show', World Trade Center, Mumbai.

'Mobile in Mobile', Sarjan Art Gallery, Baroda.

'Art Festival', Sculpture Show, Kanoria Art Center, Ahmedabad.

2004 : 'Glaze & Glare', Priyasri Art Gallery, Mumbai.

'Garden of Roses', Sarjan Art Gallery, Baroda.

'Contemporary Ceramics', Anant Art Gallery, Delhi.

'Peace & Harmony', India Habitat Center, New Delhi.

'Harmony Show', Nehru Center, Mumbai.

'Feb Show', Bayer ABS Gallery, Baroda.

2003 : 'Positive Vision', Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda.

'Harmony Show', Nehru Center, Mumbai.

2002 : 'Harmony Show', Nehru Center, Mumbai.

- 'Water', India Habitat Center, New Delhi.
- 2001: 'People for Animals', organized by Maneka Gandhi, New Delhi.
- 'Potters in Peril', NGMA, Mumbai.
- 2000: 'Mumbai Potters Tea Party Show', NGMA, Mumbai.
- 'Harmony Show', Nehru Center, Mumbai.
- 1999: 'Ceramics & Drawings', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai.
- 1997: 'Ceramics & Drawings', Fine Arts Gallery M.S. University, Baroda.
- 'Soul of Clay', Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai.

Selected Camps & Workshop

- 2007: Ceramic Camp at Lalit Kala Akademi, Lucknow.
- National Ceramic Camp, Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai.
- Participation in Artist Camps to Himalayas, Turkey, South-East Asia & Bali.
- 2006: Ceramic Sculpture Camp, Jindal Steel Plant, Torangal, Karnataka.
- 'National Ceramic Camp', Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal.
- 'International Art Camp', Kalakriti Art Gallery, Hyderabad.
- Glass Painting Workshop, Space Artists Studios, Baroda.
- 2005: 'Kalamela', Artists' Camp, Lalit Kala Akademi, Lucknow.
- 'International Ceramic Camp', Academy of Fine Arts, Mumbai.
- Conducted Raku workshop at Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University of Baroda.
- 2004: Artists Camp, Auroville, Pondicherry.
- 2002: Artists Camp, Bangalore, (by Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai)
- Conducted Raku workshop for mentally handicapped children at Sahan Institute, New Delhi.
- 2001: 'International Ceramic Camp', Ceramic Center, Baroda.
- 2000: Ash Glaze Workshop under Mick Dodd (U.K), Golden Bridge Pottery, Pondicherry.
- 1999: Porcelain Workshop under Jim Danish (California), Golden Bridge Pottery, Pondicherry.
- 1998: International Artists Symposium, Faculty of Visual Arts, BHU, Varanasi.
- Kiln Building and Three Week Glaze Workshop, under Ray Meeker, Golden Bridge Pottery, Pondicherry.

Awards & Scholarships

- 2004: Charles Wallace India Trust Award, British Council, New Delhi.
- 'Harmony Judges' Special Award, Harmony Show, Nehru Center, Mumbai.
- 2002: Junior Fellowship by Department of Culture, Govt. of India, New Delhi.
- AIFACS Award, New Delhi.
- 2000: AIFACS Award, for Best Exhibit, New Delhi.
- 1998: AIFACS Award, for Best Potter of the Year, New Delhi.
- 1997: National Scholarship for Young Artists by Department of Culture, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

Vinod Daroz has worked on murals for several private spaces. His works are part of important public and private collections in India and abroad. He lives and works in Baroda.

Artist's Acknowledgments

I would like to express my thanks to

Pheroza J. Godrej & Cymroza Art Gallery,
Mrs. Mallika Amin & Mrs. Krupa Amin,
Mrs. Ruchika Agarwal & Red Earth Art Gallery, Baroda.

The staff of Vijaya Porcelain, Andhra Pradesh.

Neha Kudchadkar, Rose Khanikar, Sashikant Thaudoz, Vineet Nair & my family.

Firozbhai & Maniram Mistry.

Essay

Amrita Gupta Singh & Vinod Daroz

Photography

Himanshu Pahad & Manish Mehta

Catalogue design

Play Design - Baroda.

www.playdesignstudio.net toplaydesign@gmail.com

Printed at

Modern Printers - Baroda. www.modernprintersindia.com

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