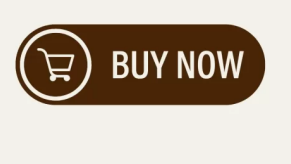



What Conversations Do Srinia Chowdhury's Sculptures Spark About Diversity and Acceptance?

September 17, 2024



Srinia Chowdhury creates sculptures that are a fascinating expression of identity, emotion and humanity — all viewed through a quirky and surrealist lens. Through the lens of a playful but complex visual language, her creations invite viewers to enter a territory where reality meets fantasy, and where accepted forms and meanings are subject to change.



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Srinia Chowdhury sitting in front of one of her quirky sculptures| Courtesy: Srinia Chowdhury

Superficially, Chowdhury's sculptors look striking because of their colourful paints and exaggerated features. Their masked, antlered, and sometimes eerily unnatural countenances seem grounded in a world just on the other side of strange familiar. The bold colours; a rich blend of deep blues, vibrant reds and earthy tones deliver a high visual impact in that every time you look at them it appears to be vivid with the intricate patterns and textures begging for closer inspection. It is as if each piece narrates a story, yet the story feels missing, subtly enticing the spectator to further expand their imagination.



Honey Bunny| 14.5 x 9 x 5.1 inches| Stoneware clay| Courtesy: Srinia Chowdhury

Dualism is crucial to Chowdhury's oeuvre. Her sculptures often feature faces or figures in halves, with traces of the human and animalistic, childlike and sorrowful mixed between. Such a duality mirrors the multi-layered construction of identity. Chowdhury's figures allude to our multi-layered selves — in a society where people often wear a variety of 'masks' to accommodate in different social landscapes. Repeated motifs like hands holding eyes are another way in which that sense of hidden depths and repressed emotions is directly symbolized. These visual elements hint at something lurking underneath, a game of being seen and unseen.



Aliceator| 12.5 x 10.6 x 6.6 inches| Stoneware clay| Courtesy: Srinia Chowdhury

There is also a layer of meaning in the materials that Chowdhury uses—ceramic—that further deepens the significance of her sculptures. Fragile and resilient, ceramics reflect the precarious balancing act of human life. Medium also delivers a tactile experience which builds a closer, more personal relationship between the viewer and the sculptors. To Chowdhury, this material intimacy is crucial; it allows her to situate the fantastical aspects of her nu creations within the realm of a real human experience.



Minni Mouse | 11 x 8.6 x 5.1 inches| Stoneware clay| Courtesy: Srinia Chowdhury

Many of her sculptures have a touch of humor or irony to them, appear in the form of nose-clown figures who have exaggerated wide smiles. But this humor comes with a lot of complexities. Playful aspects are mixed with overtones of discomfort or obscurity, and it is in the hidden undertones where lies a deeper meaning. In this sense, Chowdhury leads the viewer to wonder whether these appearances have a backstory to every smile or curious look and to question their attributions and prejudices as well.



The Party angel| 12 x 5.9 x 5.1 inches| Stoneware clay| Courtesy: Srinia Chowdhury

The work of Chowdhury can also be viewed as an examination into the mutable quality of human nature. Combining the hyper-real with moments of the surreal, she takes us to what it means to be human; ever-contradictory, innocent and knowing, funny and serious, fragile while real. Her sculptures are totems to the human spirit, distilling the contradictions that birth us.

In other words, Srinia Chowdhury's sculptures are much more than a sight to see — they are an experience to feel. They ask the viewer to pierce beyond what is apparent, to reckon with the equivocation and plurality of being. In her bold colours, whimsical forms and frequent motifs Chowdhury creates a story that is more about the traveller than it is about the sculptures. The work of this visual philosopher encourages us to acknowledge our lack of knowing, illuminate and celebrate the complexity of being human, meet ourselves in the sensemaking process — both seen and concealed. In doing so, Chowdhury has emerged as a singular voice in the cannon of contemporary sculptors who refuses to limit their practice with conventional responses to reality and fantasy.

Feature Image: **Mischief Master, Party Fairy, Wondergirl**| Stoneware clay| Courtesy: Srinia Chowdhury

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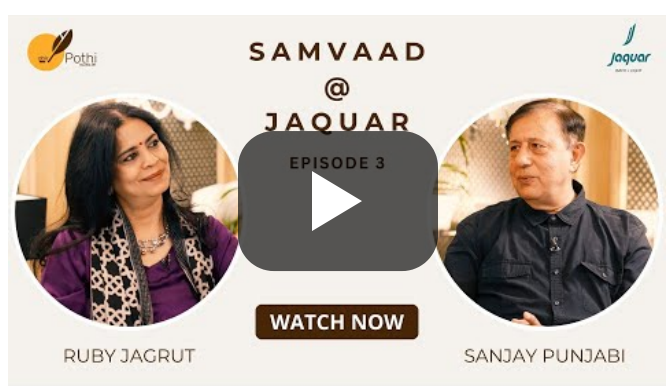
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