



Karnataka Shilpakala Academy

RAVINDRAKALAKSHETRA, J.C. ROAD,
BANGALORE - 560 002.

All India Mini Sculpture Exhibition - Certificate

This is to certify that *Mr/Ms* **FALGUNI BHATT**.....
has been awarded for his entry entitled **LIFE PARTNER**.....
submitted for the exhibition.

N. Marishamachar
(N. MARISHAMACHAR)
REGISTRAR

K. Shamarayachar
(K. SHAMARAYACHAR)
PRESIDENT.

DATE : 22-1-1998
BANGALORE

China, with an Indian touch

V. Kumara Swamy visits an exhibition showcasing the turn of Chinese porcelain in the hands of Indian artists

They were worth their weight in gold, though gold was easier to possess. A few centuries ago, the royal households of Europe, to be ahead of others, went to great lengths to obtain porcelain wares. Importing it, as they did, all the way from China and at exorbitant prices too. And thus it continued, for years, even as the Chinese guarded closely the secret of moulding this delicate material.

To this day, porcelain in its natural form is found only in China. Indians have been aware of porcelain for centuries now, but it was in the form of imported teapots and other art forms, procured mostly from China through Tibet. Indian ceramic artists started working with porcelain as a material rather late. In fact, it has been only a decade since they began to take it seriously. And it was to mark this occasion that the Delhi Blue Pottery Trust has put out an exhibition in Delhi — Porcelain 2018 — involving



Porcelain requires very high temperatures — more than 1,300 degree Celsius — not something Indian ceramic artists are used to. "That is just the start," says Anjali Khanna, one of the curators of the exhibition and a pioneer in the field of porcelain art in India. She adds, "Porcelain clay is fragile yet strong, delicate yet robust. It requires highly skilled handling and patience."

White and blue are two colours that have been historically associated with porcelain and most artists at the exhibition hosted at the India Habitat Centre kept to the traditional colour combination, although a handful of them experimented with other colours too.

The creations explored human relationships, humour, religion, nature and, of course, there were renditions of the good old tea pot too.

Delhi-based artiste Shweta Mansingha's varied interpretations of the pear as a "being of creation" were on display. Pears, floral and stark and dotted like a cluster of marshmallows. Immaculate, save for a golden stalk. Pears with various stages of birth and death intricately carved on them. Says Mansingha, "Porcelain has not been the choice of clay for most of

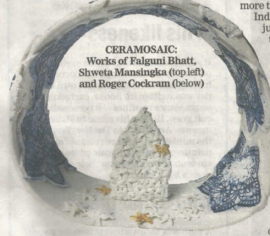
us India but it is changing now. I would still say that it is a challenging medium and the end results can be extremely satisfying."

Falguni Bhatt, a Calcutta-based artiste, again chose the combination of white and blue. Her inspiration was city space. "I have explored the city, the inner and outer spaces," she says. Buildings of all shapes and sizes inscribed on circular flyover-like structures in blue and white with labyrinthine guts dominated her work.

Porcelain was used in more contemporary forms too. Veena Singh, a Bhopal-based artiste explored women's empowerment and freedom using Nerikomi — the Japanese technique of marbling ceramic — by stacking porcelain clay of different shades to form eye-catching patterns.

One of her exhibits depicted a creature, mermaid-like, swimming to the brim of a jar, aswirl with ebullience and hope.

Porcelain 2018 was an event to celebrate porcelain and the forms and shapes it can assume, as well as the distance Indian artistes have travelled in the last decade. It is amply clear that the perambulations have yielded a crop as bounteous as thought provoking.



CERAMOSAIC:
Works of Falguni Bhatt,
Shweta Mansingha (top left)
and Roger Cockram (below)

30 artistes from across the country. The trust was the first organisation in India that got the licence to import porcelain in raw form and encourage Indian ceramic artistes to use it as a primary material in their creations.

"There is something about the whiteness of porcelain that no other ceramic can match. In a way, it's a mystery material. But our artistes, in a very short span of time, have mastered it tremendously," says Ravi Batra, founder trustee.



