

SHARBANI DAS GUPTA: OUT OF STEP

January 27 through February 26, 2017

Cathy and Jesse Marion Art Gallery



You understand the heart of the matter
yet you like to walk through mine fields
without any shoes. Today you may suffer
from an overdose of enlightenment.
You should keep in mind all phenomena is
temporary
so that you may do the cha-cha
while everyone else is doing the tango.

"Out of Step" by Vijay R. Nathan. Reprinted from the collection
Escape from Samsara: Poems, with permission from the author.

Central to Sharbani Das Gupta's work are the concepts of *timescape* (all phenomena is temporary) and *samsara* (the illusion that we are autonomous beings). She seeks to break the illusion that nature and culture are divided; in the words of Barbara Adam, the socio-environmental theorist who developed the concept of timescape, "we are nature, we constitute nature and we create nature through our actions in conditions that are largely preset for us by evolution and history" (Adam 1998, 13). While landscapes emphasize the visual and spatial, timescapes reference rhythms or temporalities that prevail in a given area or situation. Time is more complex than just clocks and calendars. Natural rhythms are embedded in the body and in the environment; the earth's rotation governs climate and the behavior of plants and animals. Cultural rhythms interact with natural rhythms often resulting in ecological devastation. Timescape perspectives involve a sensitivity to time in all its diverse forms, and a quest to understand interconnections between occurrences in nature and culture.

Related to timescape is Adam's concept of *timeprint* or ecological footprint, the impact of our present mode of life across space, matter, and time. This concept "enables us to focus on the mismatch between our enormous capacity to make futures (extending our impact for literally millions of years), our poor knowledge of potential outcomes and, as a result, our irresponsible approach to shaping and creating futures to our will and desire. Knowledge of this troubling relation shifts our sense of rights, duties and responsibilities" (Adam 2008, 7-8).



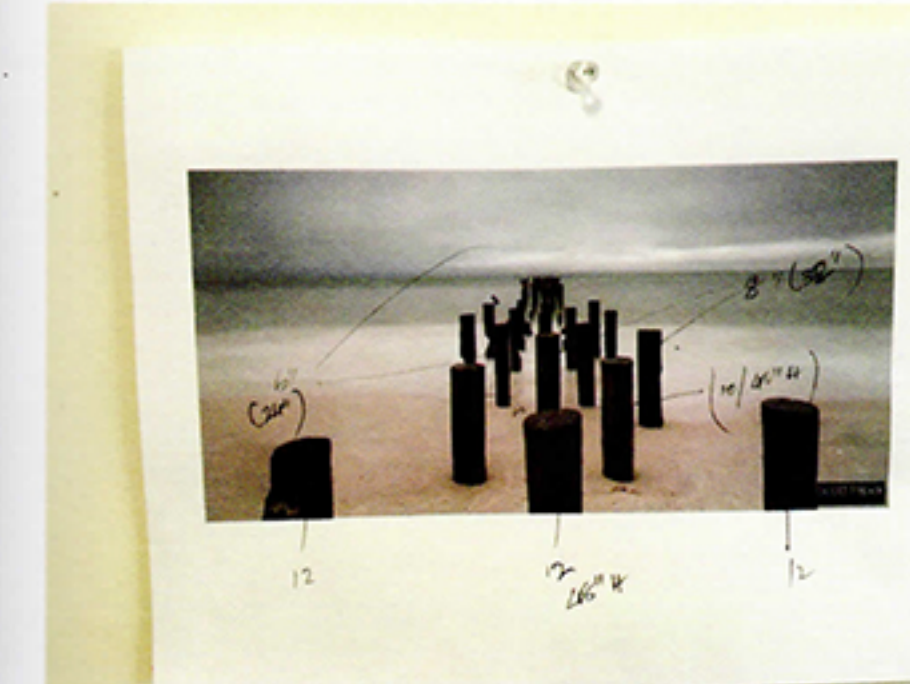
Urban Blooms

The installations in this exhibition reflect Das Gupta's interest in the socio-environmental world and her profound sense of responsibility as a consumer and activist for a sustainable future. In these works she addresses the interconnections between the individual, society, politics, economics, history, and nature. She speaks of the present and the future, and an ideal of time that governs the temporality of all phenomena.

Barbara Racker, Director
Cathy and Jesse Marion Art Gallery

Works Cited

- Adam, Barbara. "Of Timescapes, Futurescapes and Timeprints." Lecture, Lüneburg University, Lüneburg, Germany, June 17, 2008.
- Adam, Barbara. *Timescapes of Modernity: The Environment and Invisible Hazards*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- Nathan, Vijay R. *Escape from Samsara: Poems*. Pennsauken, NJ: BookBaby, 2016.



In Hindsight

After completing school in Kolkata, India and college at the National Institute of Design in Gujarat, **Sharbani Das Gupta** studied clay under Ray Meeker and Deborah Smith at Golden Bridge Pottery in Pondicherry. Later she worked as a studio assistant at the University of New Mexico's porcelain studio and at a summer workshop in Penland, North Carolina.

Das Gupta has exhibited in India, the United Kingdom, China, Greece, and the United States. Her work is on permanent display in the sculpture garden of the Hyatt Regency Chennai and was featured in the publication *Ceramics: Art and Perception*. At the 2013 National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) Conference in Houston, Texas she curated *Naturalization*, co-curated *Traditions Evolving* and was a participating artist in *Readymade*.

In 2015 Das Gupta participated in the two-person show *Terra Firma* sponsored by the Brown-India Foundation and exhibited at Santa Fe Clay and the Las Cruces Museum of Art. Her work was also featured in the 2016 exhibition *50 Women: A Celebration of Women's Contribution to Ceramics* and *Standing Wave* at the 2016 NCECA Conference in Kansas City, Missouri. She has written for *Ceramics: Art and Perception*, *Ceramics Ireland*, *New Ceramics*, and *Dao Magazine*.

Das Gupta has been an artist-in-residence at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft and the Skopelos Foundation for the Arts, Skopelos Island, Greece. In 2013 she was awarded a residency as part of a delegation of contemporary Indian ceramic artists at the FuLe International Ceramic Art Museum (FLICAM) in Fuping, China, and in 2014 she participated in a residency at Naori Eco Art Festival in South Korea. In December 2016 she completed a residency at Benyamini Contemporary Ceramics Center in Tel Aviv, Israel where she, eight other international artists, and nine Israeli artists explored the theme *Post Colonialism?*.