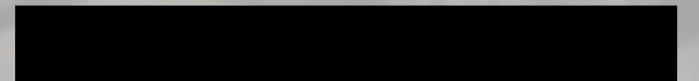




IBDP Visual Arts HL Exhibition Portfolio

Mirrored through my Binoculars

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Curatorial Rationale (696 Words)

My passion for our Planet – the environment and it's people, has distinctly influenced my Art. My Art exhibition comprises of 11 Artworks which explore the underlying themes of Man Vs. Man, Man Vs. Society, Man Vs. Nature and Man Vs. Self. For each Artwork, I have drawn inspiration from complex challenges of our times, and real issues which confront our world such as gender, racism, religion, suffering, deprivation, destruction of nature, and the like. I seek to communicate these through my Art, to create awareness about them, and inspire my audience into action with a view to bring about positive change in our world.

I have explored various forms, styles, and mediums like Pen and ink, Color pencil, Acrylic, Oil, Semi 3D assemblage, Sculpture, Photography and Digital art to create my Artworks. Over and above, I have also worked with diverse materials like metal, plastic, plaster, matchboxes, cartons, and cloth. This has served to hone my skills and helped me discover my forte.

The first four pieces are Digital Artworks exploring multiple themes, which I have composed from my own photographs. Artwork #1, "Ant Armstrong", portrays the strength and will of a species to survive, and adapt in hostile environments, against the odds.

Artwork #2, "The Writing on the Wall", a piece created by superimposing various photographs, is intended as a warning that man's vandalization of nature will have a devastating impact - the extinction of all life. Artwork #3, "Symbiosis", depicting the interdependent relationship between Nature and all species is a gentle reminder to preserve Nature. Artwork #4, "X-Ray - Within and Without", seeks to convey that all humans are equal irrespective of their race, religion, nationality etc., and that we need to drop all differences and unite.

Artworks #5 & #6 warn us of the devastating impact of War; these are framed and placed together. Artwork #5 "The End Game", is a set of color pencil sketches which conveys the destructive nature of war, and its inevitable fallout - death and loss of innocence. Artwork #6, "Vortex of Death", is a pen and ink sketch that depicts the horrors of the Holocaust during World War II, the loss of millions of lives as a result of one man's greed to conquer the world, and the futility of it all.

Artworks #7 & #8 revolve around human conflict. Artwork #7, "Misplaced Anger", is a diptych Acrylic painting which portrays the unfair victimization of innocent Muslims, following the Paris attacks, which was a cowardly act of terror committed by few extremist Muslims. Artwork #8, "Society on Fire", is a semi-3D piece made from Matchboxes and matchsticks, which depicts the tensions that result due to disparity between the rich and poor sections of society.

Artworks #9 & #10 draw attention to water as a depleting natural resource and are an urgent call to action. Artwork #9, "Desolate", is an oil painting that is a compilation of my multiple photographs, transferred onto canvas. It depicts the severe drought and water scarcity in my home state Telangana, and its debilitating impact on the quality of life in the region. Artwork #10, "Dehydrated" is an Installation communicates the global water crisis. It is displayed at a height in an isolated space with minimal lighting. It appears to look down upon the viewer to create the feeling of claustrophobia and fear, and hold us collectively responsible and accountable for grim scenario.

Artwork #11, "6 feet under at Siachen", is an homage to the Indian soldiers who lost their lives while safeguarding the borders of the country, due to an avalanche at Siachen Glacier. This installation has been placed right in the center of the exhibition as a fitful tribute to the unflinching commitment of the brave soldiers who gave up their lives for the country.

Looking back, I believe that my understanding and outlook of the world and mankind, from which I draw inspiration has broadened, deepened and matured over time. I have evolved from portraying clichéd issues in my Art to focus on real and diverse issues of actual significance. Therefore, the foundational concepts of my Artworks have become more relevant and powerful, as has my ability to communicate through my Art.

My Layout Plans

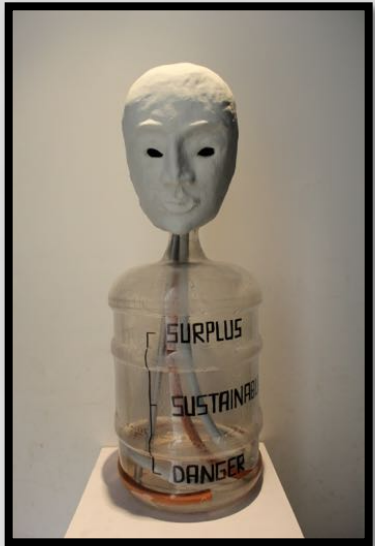
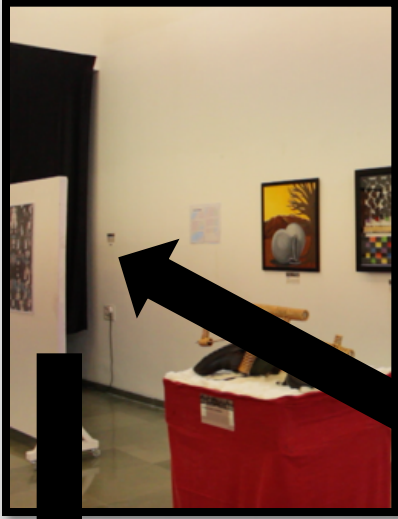


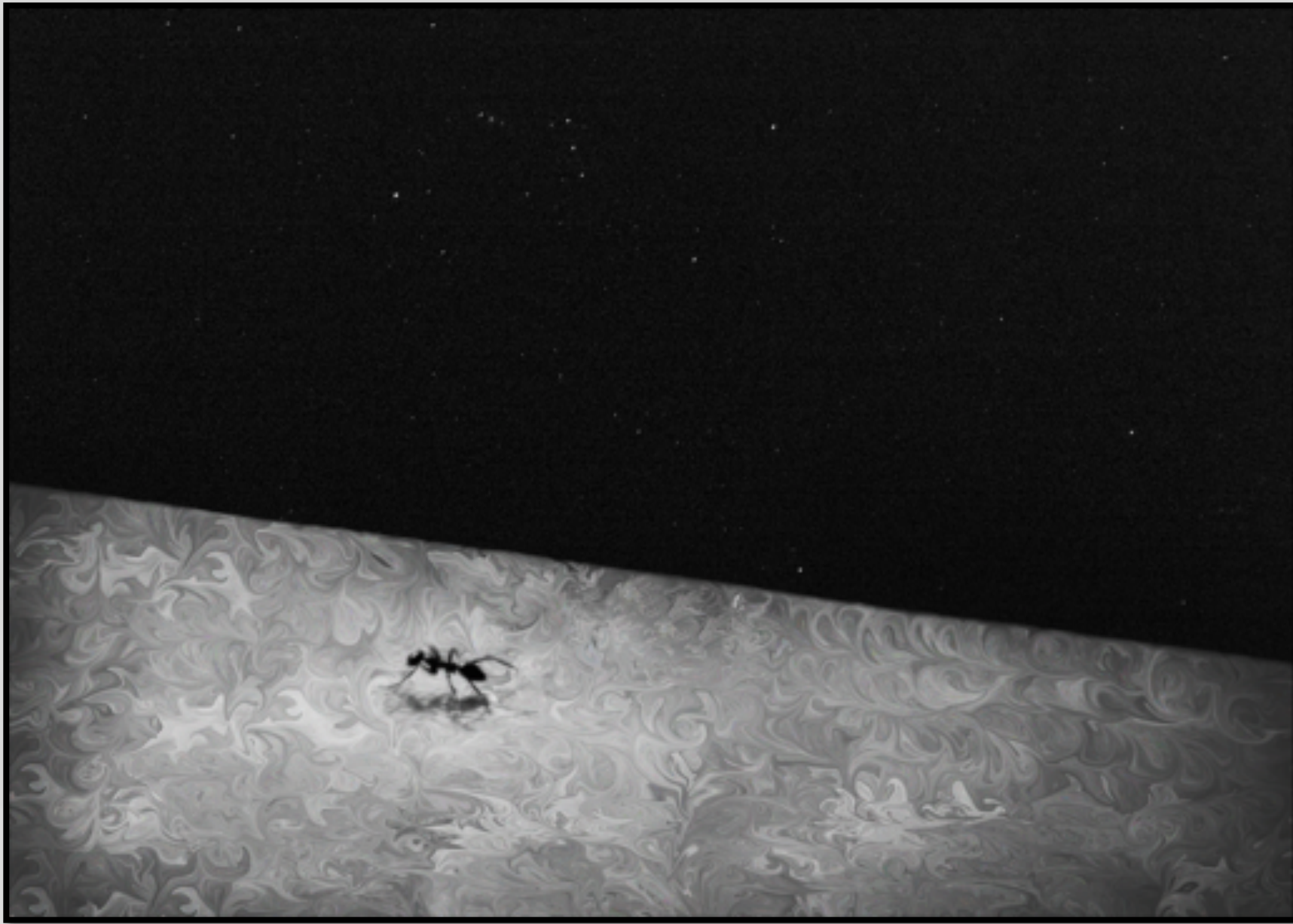
^ This is an isolated spot that I have in mind for a sculpture of mine. The location will help intensify the message of the artwork and have a greater impact on the audience. To the right, is my floor plan. >



^ This is a view of the rest of my exhibition. Artworks will be hung on walls with one of my assemblage right in the center. All these designs were made on Autodesk Home Styler prior to the exhibition.

The Exhibition





Ant Armstrong

Digital Artwork
Print – 16.54” x 23.39”
2015

This artwork is one that portrays the strength and will of a species to survive and evolve in hostile environments. It depicts an Ant on the moon with the vast expanse of Space in the background. This shows how the smallest of species can exhibit the resilience to adapt, and the indomitable spirit to survive against all odds. I have taken the Sky and the Ant from photographs shot by me, while the surface of the Moon has been digitally rendered. The diagonal depiction of the surface of the moon creates a tension in the composition and depicts the ant's uphill struggle for survival.



The Writing on the Wall

Digital Artwork

Print – 2 x 16.54” x 11.69”

2016

This is a set, based on the theme of Man Vs. Nature. The first artwork aims to bring out the impact of urbanization on nature. The green trees represent nature on the planet, which is getting enveloped by the concrete jungle. The background sky of the original photograph has been replaced with the photograph of a vandalized wall to demonstrate how we have vandalized the planet with the increasing urbanization. In the second artwork, there is a silhouette of two birds and a tree, once again, against the concrete sky. The dark colors set a gloomy and grim mood. The two birds appear to be the last two remaining animals on earth, staring at other helplessly. The destruction we have caused has left them with just the company of one another and a dead tree.

Symbiosis

Digital Artwork
Print - 16.54" x 11.69"
2015



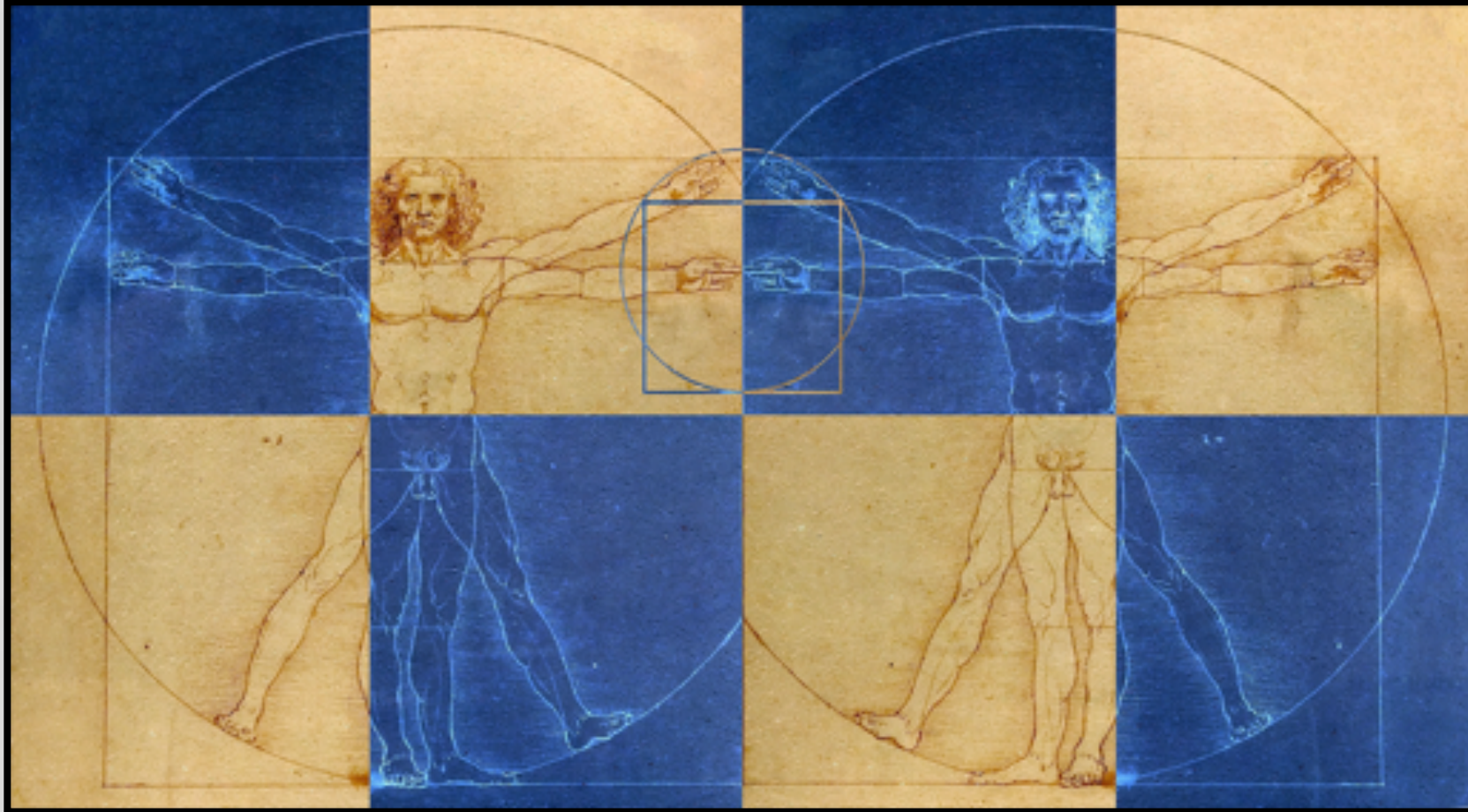
This artwork is a compilation of a few photographs of mine. The artwork shows a squirrel on the tree, and a tree on the squirrel. It is a depiction of the symbiotic relationship between nature and all the species on the planet. It emphasizes on how they need each other to survive and hence, must peacefully co-exist. The squirrel here is also symbolic of the human society. The underlying message here is that, instead of causing destruction and devastation to nature, human beings need to preserve, revive and rejuvenate nature. If we destroy nature, nature will find a way to continue, but we will perish.

X-Ray: Within and Without

Digital Art

Print - 46" x 33"

2015



This artwork draws inspiration from Leonardo Da Vinci's 'Vitruvian Man'. It is a digital rendering which signifies that all humans are equal irrespective of the man-made differences of race, religion, nationality, and the like. The symmetry of the composition is juxtaposed with the tension created between two beings at opposite ends of the spectrum. I have created the contrast and tension of a chessboard using the colors - Blue and Sepia. The Sepia represents the external appearances of people; while an X-ray, which penetrates and sees through a human being, to show what lies within inspires the Blue. I have deliberately left the context open to interpretation, based on individual experience. This is a universal concept, which can be applied to any issue that creates differences and tension between two sets of people, and can hence evoke strong feelings in the viewer.



The End Game

Color Pencil

Paper - 2 x 8.27" 11.69"

2014

This is a set of two Artworks. The first artwork seeks to convey that at times, the only way to escape from War is Death. It depicts the inevitability of Death in the form of various methods of disposing the dead, as followed by different religions. The light from above represents hope, as an irony. For all that a soldier in conflict can hope for is a decent burial or performance of final rites. The second Artwork shows a baby wearing a World War II gas mask. Imagining a baby inside a thick cloth sealed by glass is a really horrific thought that will send a shiver down the spine of one and all. Instead of playing with toys, the baby is shown as playing with a grenade. This Artwork portrays how war leads not just to death but also the loss of innocence in the living, leaving them scarred for life.



Vortex of Death

Pen and Ink
Paper – 8.27” 11.69”
2014

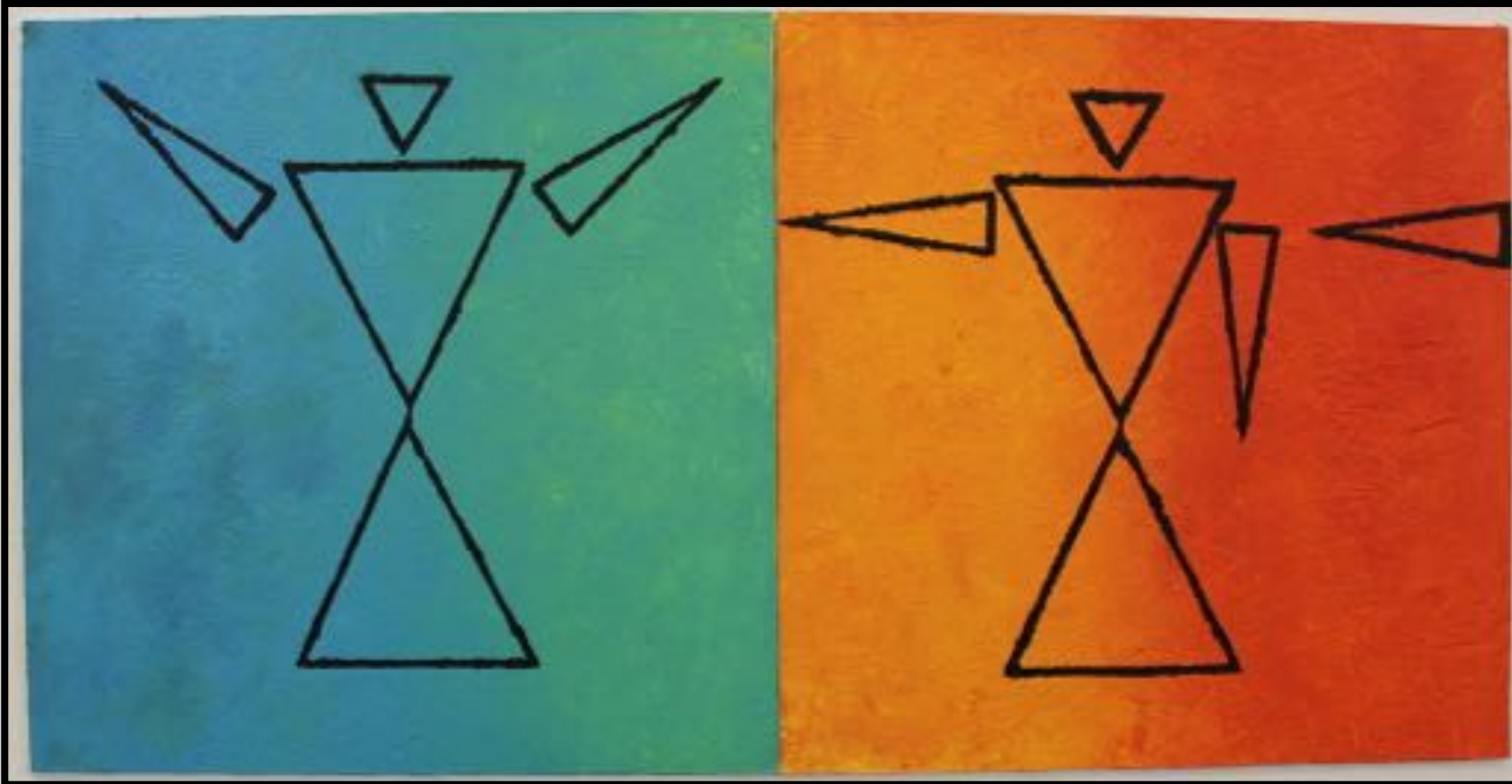
This artwork inspired by World War II, depicts the horrors of the holocaust. It depicts a man being sucked into the ground to inevitable death, surrounded by millions of skulls. The precariously placed Swastika on the top of the Artwork is the much-hated Nazi emblem, which is reminiscent of one of the worst wars in the world’s history. The human figure is drawn in a style that is used to draw geographic maps. This depicts the conflict triggered by territorial expansionist and fascist tendencies of Hitler, leading to the loss of millions of lives.

Misplaced Anger

Acrylic on Canvas

48" x 24"

2015



I have made this artwork in response to a current scenario in the world, where the Muslims of the World are at the receiving end of hatred, due to the acts of terror of few of their co-religionists. After the Paris attacks, many Muslims around the world had been attacked or killed as an act of revenge. The artwork seeks to demonstrate how the anger of the attackers is misplaced and wrongly directed towards innocent Muslims. I have painted the background of both the squares in two contrasting color gradients. The aquamarine gradient represents calm, peace and innocence, while the fire gradient represents rage, violence, and war. The use of triangles as a motif to demonstrate the attacker and the victim symbolizes the destruction and tension within the human society.



Society on Fire

Semi 3-D Canvas

24" x 24"

2016

This artwork is based on the Post-Colonial theme of disparities in the society. It depicts the difference between the lives of two sections in the society - the Majority and Minority. The upper part represents the poor, a majority in number, whose life is difficult and chaotic. The bottom part represents the rich, a minority, who enjoy an orderly and colorful showing the. The use of the term Majority and Minority is a paradox because the Majority is actually a minority, and vice versa. The center wall, ironically made of matchsticks represents the dividing line and the tension between the two sections, which often sets societies on fire. The few colorful matchboxes on the top end represent the hope the poor who want to cross over to the other side, and become rich.



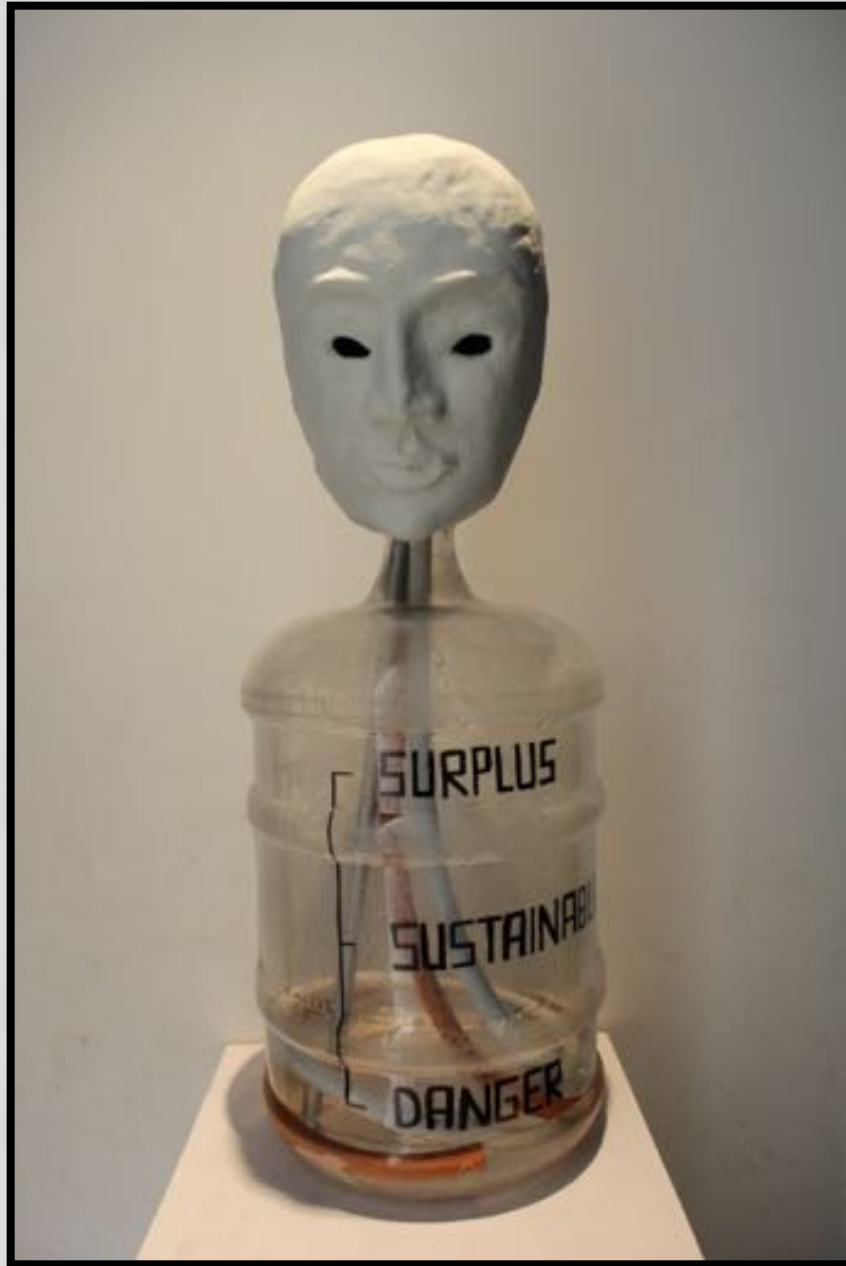
Desolate

Oil on Canvas

24" x 24"

2014

This painting is a compilation of multiple photographs shot by me in my home state, Telangana. A still life drawn from my personal experience, it depicts the acute water crisis in Telangana and its impact on the region. The empty pots symbolize the deprivation of water, a necessity of life. The setting sun and the dead tree point towards fading hope of the people. The parched earth communicates the barrenness of the land. The color palette is drawn from the dry, arid landscape of Telangana. All these elements are metaphors for the poor quality of life and the hardship faced by people in my state.



Dehydrated

Assemblage
12" x 12" x 48"
2016

This is a sculpture that draws inspiration from the water crisis that we humans have created. The artwork is a call to action and focuses on the post-colonial theme of Man Vs Nature. The base is a water container marked with Surplus, Sustainable, and Danger. The water filled only up to the Danger level, is a sharp pointer to the dwindling levels of water on the planet due to overuse and abuse, by the human population. Inside the bottle are pipes, which represent the human spinal cord, showing how life is drawn from water. Perched on the pipe is a human face in the form of a pale mask with sunken eyes - depicting thirst, dehydration, and death. The disdainful manner in which the face looks down upon the audience is intended to evoke feelings of guilt and introspection to take corrective measures to check the existing water crisis.



6 Feet Under at Siachen

Installation
24" x 18" x 6"
2016



This installation is a tribute to the Indian soldiers who lost their lives due to an avalanche at the Siachen glacier, while on duty. The gun painted in gold, shows how the conflict of Man Vs Man, puts more value on war than it does human life. The upside down shoes of the soldier, still holding the gun upright, convey his commitment to safeguard his country even after he is dead and buried under snow. This installation seeks to communicate the unflinching commitment of the brave soldiers to the country even in the hostile terrain of the Siachen glacier, and pay homage to them.