

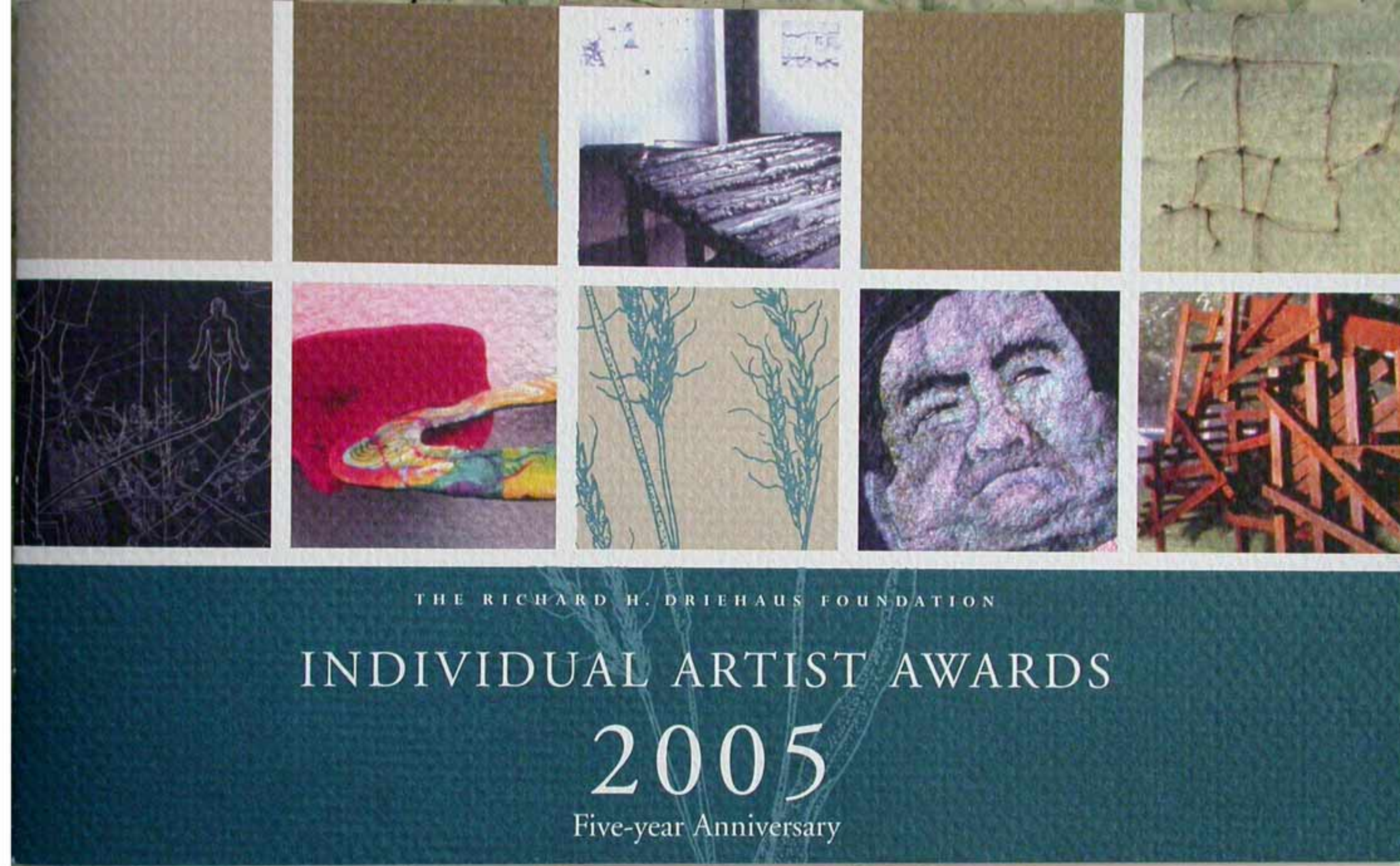
Sumakshi Singh

2005 Award Recipient

IN THE PINK



NEGATIVE SKELETON



THE RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS FOUNDATION

INDIVIDUAL ARTIST AWARDS

2005

Five-year Anniversary

Sumakshi Singh is the recipient of the 2005 Driehaus Individual Artist Award for an Emerging Artist. Singh makes tiny “interventions” in existing architecture, delicately inserting an unexpected new microscopic world into normal spaces, in order to offer new consideration of the larger world. Trained as a traditional artist working in painting and sculpture, she fashions little colorful grottos or caves that seem to have grown organically in the walls, ceilings, or floor. She uses clay, nails, mirrors, wood, copper wire, mixing in moss, ivy, and other natural materials. She then shines them up with Vaseline or brightly colored acrylic paint. Sometimes these scenarios are based on existing flaws in a space—a crack, a crevice, a vestigial hole in the wall—calling attention to the myriad of complex and subtle details that make up a seemingly neutral white gallery cube. Singh then “adds” mistakes elsewhere, in gestures that are so slight as to be almost invisible.

As viewers enter an exhibition of Singh’s work, they are first drawn to peer closely at the singular interventions. Then, a treasure hunt ensues, as the eye travels around the larger room, hunting out all the signs of the artist’s hand. Thus, Singh literally brings us from the micro to the macro, encouraging us to query the artfulness of every inch of the space around us.

She has described this viewing process as asking for a “basic vision, like infants that haven’t yet been conditioned to bracket visual information. . . . This incorporates elastic scale shifts from the molecule to the body to the building to the outside world and back.” By virtue of the location and diminutive size of the work’s components, the framing devices normally put around art works are gone. “The work rids itself of a frame and migrates not only into each other’s territory but also the outside world,” she says.

Singh grew up in India, where she earned a BFA from Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. She came to Chicago to attend the School of the Art Institute, where she graduated with an MFA in 2003 and was an artist in residence at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She has already had five solo shows, including “12 x 12” at the MCA and “Void” as part of Gallery 400’s “At the Edge: Innovative Art in Chicago” series.

Chicago has been a source of inspiration for her work, and she has benefited from the support of the community here. The Driehaus award will help Singh undertake projects on a more ambitious level, including more public interventions and further investigations into the subtleties of vision.