The Fuschia Tree™
A Life. Line. On New Art.

By Veeranganakumari Solanki

Original Article

What is it that makes art design or design art? Why would you call a piece of art design and why would you not? Design is functional art that integrates aesthetic values similar to visual art – be it contemporary or modern. When visual art enters a designed space, the aesthetics of the layout essentially becomes functional. Architecture involves manifesting spaces that are designed to mould themselves to enhance the purpose and function they have been designed for – be it a library or a laboratory.

Similarly, when it comes to exhibition design – the question posed to a curator or gallery is to make the space physically functional (design) for the viewer to view something non-functional, but highly aesthetic (visual art). Taking the D of Design, this virtual space explores three works by artists – Sumakshi Singh, Charmi Gada Shah and Tejal Shah – who transform the space to become a part of the art work being experienced by the viewers; who in turn become a part of the designed space.

Animated Suspension: Half way Here – *Sumakshi Singh.* One enters a room – it is a real room, with real objects, but each one is a very evident three-dimensional drawing. You could sit on a drawn chair, put walk on a drawn floor and place your cup on an outlined table, just like what you see Sumakshi Singh doing in her stop motion animation on the wall you are facing.

Sumakshi Singh's recent projects have involved outlining, assembling and creating illusions on existing objects and architectural spaces. Singh draws out every line in the space along with its components to make the space appear illusionary and a drawn out animation.

"Using the disconcerting nature of the perceptual and phenomenological experience,

Singh describes this project as one that "asks questions about permanence and transience, object and image, fact and illusion, mapping and displacement, perception and knowledge, exposing the fragile set of givens upon which meaning is constructed."

Home Series – *Charmi Gada Shah.* Five models of inhabited places and spaces, recalling the homes the artist has lied in find a space in a niche, against a column, in a corner, on the floor for aesthetic inspection. They are all post-construction models, which have served their functional term. Each of these has been a space, functional as a home, but now placed to function aesthetically in the model of a space designed for them. The room you have entered is a home for home designs.

These detailed miniature models, meticulously fabricated in balsamic wood, steel and paper by Shah question the inheritance of design and create a platform for discussion and thought on forgotten spaces that dissolve in one's memory.   Shah comprehends her work through Rainer Maria Rilke's words;   "Oh longing for places that were not Cherished enough in that fleeting hour How I long to make good from far The forgotten gesture, the additional act" Feed / Kill Tejal Shah A surreal supper you cannot escape, you must experience, and you cannot draw away even if you must!

Tejal Shah's video installation Feed / Kill is a room where the video extends into the viewer's space with a bowl of fruits on a table with chairs for the viewers to sit around. Mesmerised by violence and spectacle of the video that suggest grotesque and attractive all at once, you are repulsed to leave, but drawn to stay.

These three rooms in the D are three different experiences that put the viewer through three different emotional states of mind. Experiencing a fantasy of being part of an animation in Sumakshi Singh's *Animated Suspension: Half way Here*; to reminiscing space and delving into folds of memory and homes in Charmi Gada Shah's works; to being slammed into an emotional turmoil in Tejal Shah's Feed / Kill, force the viewer to become a helpless spectator, emotionally and architecturally bound.

When you leave the D, you are leaving a created space – into reality? Or is it reality you've faced through those emotions and are escaping into virtually created emotions in a real space?

Sumakshi Singh is an artist based in New Delhi.

Charmi Gada Shah is an artist based in Mumbai.

Tejal Shah is an artist based in Mumbai.