

Name:-Mahima Singh

Country:- Nepal

Artistic Medium:- Installation cum participatory art

Description of project

This project is driven by the concept of life and death. Our existence, by and large, tends to be materialistic and is therefore ephemeral. When we die, we leave behind all the materials that we cherish and even our body that holds our soul and our conscience. Life indeed is very fragile, even a blow of wind can take it away. The world and times that we are living in is characterized by quite a lot of violence, lethal diseases, unpredictable natural calamities and terrorism to name but few all of them taking their toll on the fragile human life. In 2015, I bore a firsthand witness to one of those large scale destructions in the country of my origin as thousands of people perished in no time in a 7.9 magnitude earthquake. On the face of it, the data says that close to 9000 people died but the damage it caused to the ones who survived that scare is beyond imagination. Many of us lost our loved ones- mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, uncles and aunts. I lost my sister.

The process I choose to create my art can be a way of self-healing through which I try and enunciate the transient nature of the materialistic world. Prior to this particular process which I have envisioned for post traumatic healing through art, I had engaged myself with a community especially with children and women in Patan, one of the three historic cities of Kathmandu as we reflected upon the vitality of water in our lives. No sooner had this project been completed than we were hit by the disastrous earthquake. Ironically, the historic stone taps of the city which had dried out saw water flow from them in the aftermath of the earthquake but it flowed alongside the river of tears of people whose lives had been shattered.

A relatively new genre of contemporary art, installation art, as the word itself might suggest is an artistic medium of expression using site or space for its demonstration and is usually three dimensional. I intend to start off the process by making portraits through stippling technique out of the pictures received from people with their consent- pictures of the ones who lost their lives. Washable colors are to be used in regions of the portrait that are flesh and blood while non-washable golden colors are to be applied in regions like clothes, shoes and ornaments. Following this, the portraits which are made will be submerged in the water tank and it could be done by anyone who comes for the exhibition (not necessarily the person who gave the picture for the stippling portrait). The dipping process shall lead to the washing away of washable colors from the portrait with the non washable golden ones remaining in the material appendages. The motive is to pull the strings at this realization that our lives are very fragile just like the dots used in the stippling portrait and washable colors which the water washes away. What remains with the color of gold despite the color of gold is not remotely valuable to us. Despite the life's

fragility, it is something so very precious to us and we need to cherish the same to the utmost. This is the message that I intend to get across through this process.

Mired in our worldly responsibility, do we forget to appreciate life and living? Do we live our life to the fullest when we actually can? Our existence is akin to an ink dot prone to getting smudged and wiped out all too easily. Yes, it is fragile and easily perishable but can we not appreciate and celebrate it with people around us and with ourselves before it's too late? My project is but small effort at reminding ourselves of the ephemeral nature of our existence; that it lasts someday which perhaps can work towards making us more human.

Humanity is at its best when everyone is willing to help each other and care for each other.

