

object of art

WORKS OF  
ADIL WRITER





... the things we make have one supreme quality — they live longer than us. We perish, they survive; we have one life, they have many lives, and in each life they can mean different things.

— NEIL MACGREGOR, DIRECTOR OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM, TALKING ABOUT THE CYRUS CYLINDER AT TED TALKS

## object of art

Writer makes objects not meaning.  
His material is the only substance  
between us and him; his form, only a  
pause; his colour, the remains of change;  
his size, only contrast, and we have only  
ourselves to find proportion.

Like the patina of raindrops that stain  
Rodin's bronze, we find time vitrified in  
Writer's objects — having acted  
upon clay, presenting proof than pretty.  
They look old. Their gnarled bodies are  
heavily marked; having secret places of  
clotted residue — as if carrying some  
stolen legacy, bleeding away ceaselessly  
before our eyes.

WRITER'S EXPERIMENTS WITH DIFFERENT MINERAL-RICH  
CLAYS AVAILABLE TO HIM AT A RESIDENCY IN SHIGARAKI,  
ONE OF JAPAN'S SIX ANCIENT KILN SITES.

1. [COVER] SHIGA BOWL, ANAGAMA-FIRED, 9" DIA, JAPAN
2. [LEFT] BOOK OF SECRETS, STONEWARE, 12" HT, JAPAN
3. [RIGHT] HIKIDASHI CUPS, ANAGAMA-FIRED, 4" HT, JAPAN



... I wanted to write about it all. Everything that happens in a moment. The way the flowers looked when you carried them in your arms. This towel, how it smells, how it feels, this thread. All our feelings, yours and mine. The history of it, who we once were. Everything in the world. Everything all mixed up, like it's all mixed up now. We want everything, don't we?

— RICHARD BROWN IN 'THE HOURS'  
BY MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM

I might have found Adil Writer's hidden subject, this 'time'. Like a harlequin trickster, he treats time as if it were a sprinkle of ground sugar on crème Brûlée. As it settles, time acts for Writer through memory, an aftertaste — memory that makes up the identity of his architecture. He presents us with one odd creature after another — old souls, at once playful and profound; incidental and infuriating in their silence. He steals a moment and holds it captive in physical form. Sometimes, I feel like letting one drop to the floor, if only to see what might be released from it breaking.

THICK PLATTERS MADE BY CHUCKING THE REMAINS OF THE DAY, ALL INTO A MIX OF IMPURE CLAY —QUARTZ, FELDSPAR, SILICA CRACKLING AWAY TILL DAWN IN AN 'ANAGAMA' OR CAVE KILN, TRADITIONALLY CONSTRUCTED AS A SLOPING TUNNEL OF FIRE INTO THE HILL-SIDE.

4. PARSİ SAÉS, SODA-FIRED STONEWARE, 11" HT, AUROVILLE  
5. SHIGA PLATTER, ANAGAMA-FIRED, 12" DIA, JAPAN





Among his creatures, is one that he calls 'treasure box'. He makes them everywhere. They are two halves of a whole, holding a sphere within.

Some are born together in shapes of the other's presence. The gesture of Writer's repetition is not unlike his use of scale in a single object. The singular hollow of a treasure box exists in relation to the colossal association of our collective 'precious', as we open each box and match them shut, wondering what we might have found.

TREASURE BOXES IN UNIDENTICAL REPEATS  
— WRITER'S NAVAGRAHA SERIES BASED ON THE INDIAN  
COSMOLOGY OF PLANETARY POSITIONS.

- 6 [LEFT] FOUR-POSTER SERIES,  
SMOKEFIRED STONEWARE, 8" HT, AUROVILLE  
7. [RIGHT] BLOCKS IN EVER-CHANGING VERTICAL  
ARRANGEMENTS  
'ARCHITECTS OF IMMORTALITY' SERIES,  
WOOD-FIRED STONEWARE, 72" HT, AUROVILLE



As if to confound us further, Writer is constantly scratching his surfaces with what might appear to be clues in our chase for meaning. You soon develop a suspicion though, that it's likely to lead you nowhere; that it's some momentary response to the object shifting states in its elemental business.

He is always strongly stated and seldom intelligible, with his incisions on clay or his smears on canvas. What reaches us is the emotional energy of when he was upon them. As in his Shodo paintings, the strokes and formations on canvas appear to be only one of the multiple, splintered directions they could have taken.

The complex map of gritty colour and texture, its dips and deposits, is only worth the imagination of the many parallel states in which they might exist. These surfaces, their kinetic arrangements are the picture of possibility, rather akin to Writer's own road from architecture to ceramics.

Out of the paths of the morning star they came -  
The sun-eyed children of a marvellous dawn -  
The messengers of the Incommunicable,  
The architects of immortality.

— FROM *SAVITRI*, BY SRI AUROBINDO.







Writer's training as an architect is well-exposed. He refuses to hang his clay-painted canvases on the wall in frames. Instead, he devises formations to wrap his canvases on. He wants us to feel their concrete presence.

For most of its history, architecture sought to resist time, to tell stories that transcend its gravity, using materials that would hold up against the ravages of history. Writer, now leaves time be, in his objects. In the touch of its contour and crevice, resides it's voice — epic tales held within little details.

NOT HUNG YET AND STILL STANDING

8. [LEFT] "BARCODE", TRANSFORMATION SERIES:  
ACRYLIC WITH CERAMIC INGREDIENTS ON CANVAS,  
80" L, AUROVILLE
9. [RIGHT] POLENG BOOK, STONWARE, 14" HT, BALI



When invited alongside an impressive list of artists to contribute to the 'bucket show' Writer is the only one to make multiple buckets. Why duplicate an orange? Are there not enough to go around? But in asking the question, in confronting its prosaicness, he makes us make meaning. How does sculpture relate to its origin in nature? How do multiples in turn relate to the original in sculpture? In Writer's world even the common balti has poetic possibility.

It is the juxtaposition that is both familiar and strange and therein lies his mischief in nudging us to read by the object — big and small, grand and mundane — as a narrative for sculpture, imagination, and the tenuous fragility of our own momentary and momentous existence.

**Oroon Das**

Berlin, 23 November 2013



10. "BUCKET" SERIES: STONEWARE,  
VARIOUS FIRINGS, 16" HT, AUROVILLE

Bachelor of Architecture, Sir J.J. College of Architecture, Bombay.  
Master of Architecture, University of Houston, Texas, USA.  
Golden Bridge Pottery, Pondicherry, India, with Ray Meeker and Deborah Smith.  
Since 2001, Mandala Pottery, Auroville, India. (Production and studio pottery)

### Selected Exhibitions

2015 "Six by Six", Indo-Australian show at Stepping Up, Canberra, Australia.  
2015 "Ceramic Connect", an Indo-Korean group show, INKO centre, Chennai.  
2015 "Touching Earth, Soaring Skies", Terra Forma Gallery, New Delhi  
2015 "What is Auroville?" Lalit Kala Academy, Chennai (Mixed media group show)  
2015 "Codes", Dakshinachitra Gallery, Chennai. (duo-show of painted media)  
2015 "4 Expressions of Auroville", Apparao Galleries, Chennai. (group show, ceramic & paintings)  
2015 "Chess", Apparao Galleries, New Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai. (group show)  
2014 "International Ceramic Exchange", Naori, S. Korea (group show)  
**2014 "Shades of Grey", Gaya Design Centre, Bali, (solo, ceramics and batik)**  
2014 "Bridges", Stainless Gallery, New Delhi. (group ceramic show)  
**2013 "Secrets & Lies", Gallery Art & Soul, Bombay. (Solo, ceramics & paintings)**  
2013 "Indian Pavilion", Fule International Ceramic Art Museum, Fuping, China  
2013 "Traditions Evolving", NCECA conference, Houston, USA. (group show)  
2013 "The Bucket Show", Forum Gallery, Chennai. (International group show)  
2012 "4 Continents Ceramic Exhibition", The Studio Gallery, Yallingup, W Australia.  
2012 "Collection from Sasama", Mino, Gifu, Japan (group show)  
2012 "Qalam-Atma International Calligraphy Exhibition, Jaipur.  
**2012 "Art On Sunday", Petite Ferme, Auroville (solo, paintings & ceramics)**  
2012 "International Group Show", Gallery Hu, Nagoya, Japan.  
2012 "Jeff Shapiro & Friends", Kala Kendra, Auroville, India. (ceramic group show)  
2011 "Delegate's Master Show", Verkehr Shimizu Museum, Shizoka, Japan.  
**2011 "Himitsu Te Uso", SCCP, Shigaraki, Japan. (solo, ceramics)**  
2011 "Continental Drift", Deloraine Gallery, Tasmania, Australia. (group show)  
2011 "Atmos-fire", Artifakt Gallery, Australia. (international invitational group show)  
2011 "International Tea Pot Show", Shanghai, China. (also in 2010, 2009 & 2008)  
2011 "Firebox", 1 Shanthiroad Gallery, Bangalore. (group show)  
**2010 "Treasures", Gallery Time & Space, Bangalore. (Solo, ceramics & paintings)**  
2010 "ICMEA Emerging Ceramic Artist Competition", Fuping, Shaanxi, China. (selected entry)  
2010 "10 Years of Wood-fire", Knighthood's Assembly, Tallinn, Estonia.  
**2009 "The White Rabbit", Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. (Solo, sponsored by Delhi Blue Pottery Trust, ceramics & painted media)**  
2009 "2nd Shanghai-Shenyao International Wood-kiln Exhibition", Gallery Shenyao, Shanghai, China.  
2009 "5th World Ceramic Biennale 2009", CEBIKO, Korea. (Selected entry)  
2009 "Small Objects-Fete Picasso Auction", Vallauris, France.  
2009 "Maati - Explorations in Terracotta", India Habitat Centre, New Delhi (Delhi Blue Pottery Trust's international show)

2008 "Mad Hatters Tea Party", ICIA Gallery, Bombay. (All India teapot show)  
2008 "International Ceramics", Sanbao Ceramic Studio, Jingdezhen, China.  
2008 "Resonances", Provence, France. (Auroville artists' mixed media by Marie Claire Barsotti)  
**2008 "Threshold", Gallery Art & Soul, Bombay. (Solo, ceramics & painted media)**  
**2008 "Miniatures", Artist Centre, Bombay. (Solo, ceramics & paintings)**  
2008 "Harmony 2008", Nehru Centre, Bombay. (Mixed media, All India Art shows hosted by Reliance Industries in 2005, 2006, 2007 & 2008)  
2007 "Contemporary Ceramics", Lemongrasshopper Gallery, Ahmedabad.  
2007 "Masters Show, Clay Edge 2007", Cudgegong Gallery, Australia. (Invitational ceramic show)  
**2005 "Stoneware", Hatworks Boulevard, Bangalore. (Solo, ceramics)**  
2004 "Peace and Harmony", Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. (Delhi Blue Pottery Trust's international biennale)  
2003 "Potters in Peril", National Gallery of Modern Art, Bombay. (Indo-US show)

### Selected Residencies / Workshops Attended / Conducted

2015 Co-organised a soda firing workshop with Ruthanne Tudball in Auroville. Attended anagama workshops at Golden Bridge Pottery, Pondicherry, with Jack Troy, Jeff Shapiro, Peter Thompson, Betty Woodman, Sandy Brown, Mike Dodd, Jane Perryman & Jim Danisch.  
2014 Residency at Naori Eco-Art Festival, Naori, S. Korea.  
2014 Residency at Gaya Ceramic Centre, Bali, Indonesia.  
2013 Organiser & invited artist, Fule International Ceramic Art Museum, Fuping, China. Making works for the 1st Museum of Indian Ceramic Art in China.  
2012 "Not Only Elephants & Horses!!!", a presentation of contemporary Indian ceramics at "Subversive Clay", Australian Ceramics Triennial, Adelaide, Australia.  
2012 "Fired Stacks", demonstrated the fired-house technique, Perth, Australia.  
2012 "The Road Less Taken", an installation of 500 treasure boxes at the Hyatt Regency, Chennai. A part of the ceramic sculpture garden envisioned and curated by Rajeev Sethi and Ray Meeker.  
2011 Invited artist to International Ceramic Festival in Sasama, Japan.  
2011 Selected Artist-in-residence at Shigaraki Cultural Park, Japan.  
2010 International Wood-firing Ceramics Symposium, Kohila, Estonia.  
2007 Clay – Edge 2007, invitational ceramic event. Demonstrated the building and firing of a fire-stabilised mud-brick dome at Janet Mansfield's residence in Gulgong, Australia.  
2001 "Woodstoke 2001", Paul Soldner, Rudy Autio, Tom Collins, Rodney Mott at Penryn, CA, USA.





11. Inspired by Ray Meeker's fire-stabilised mud house technology, Writer builds these domes (or stacks as he calls them), only to light them afire, to reach temperature as blue turns to twilight, leaving behind toasty remains by morning for habitation or memory's sake.

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