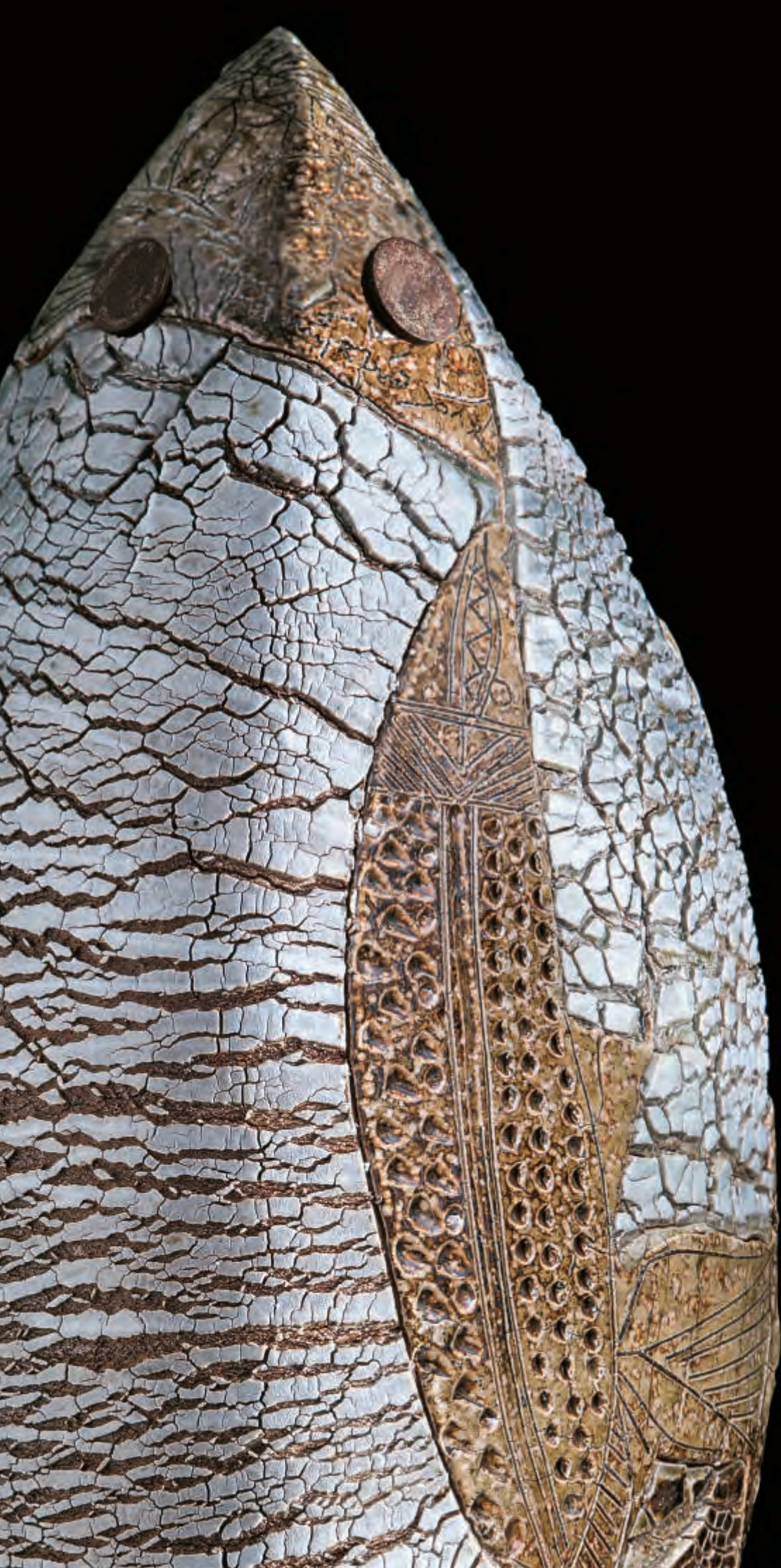


IN
COLLABORATION

Laxma Goud
&
Adil Writer





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&
Adil Writer

28 APRIL 2016 – 20 MAY 2016

Tanna House, Ground Floor
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Box of Love Series - 9 (detail)
stoneware soda-wood fired, height 6 in.]

LaxmaWriterAdilGoud
Four Hands Clasped

Laxma Goud had already produced a significant body of work in clay—terracotta—when he approached Adil Writer of Mandala Pottery in Auroville. In his ever expanding quest for experience in new media Laxma wanted to work in stoneware. Adil Writer, equally expansive and at ease in both two and three dimensions, welcomed this unique opportunity and a friendship developed that went beyond collaboration.

I witnessed an extraordinary work dynamic unfold. Laxma and Adil matched energy in an eight to eight schedule—a continuous choreography of four hands at times independent at times connected, forming combining pouring drawing painting. Tables floors shelves, any available surface in Anamika's Mandala studio are carpeted with raw clay work waiting for the kilns. I tip-toe through a layered collage of shields discs slabs faces goats heads boxes breasts books fissured texture slips and color, all floating dreamlike—Chagallesque.

The kilns. There are several at Mandala Pottery. Adil Writer will fire them all for this show. This takes courage. From both men. Laxma, a meticulous craftsman, embraces control. Adil, an inveterate experimenter, relishes surprise. Clay can be unforgiving. And Adil decides to risk firing much of this work in a soda kiln that he has only fired twice.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained and from within the open kiln the goddess of fire smiles with the lambent light of new possibilities. This synergy is not going to be a one-off event. There will be a sequel and I look forward to it.

Ray Meeker
Pondicherry
January 2016



[Laxma Goud and Adil Writer (from right to left)]



[Laxma Goud with Deborah Smith and Ray Meeker]



[Laxma Goud with the Mandala Pottery group]



[Laxma Goud with Shanthi at Mandala Pottery]

Embracing Unpredictability

Aarti Vir

Laxma Goud and Adil Writer : Collaborators; conspirators; irreverent provocateurs; artists; impresarios and myth makers.

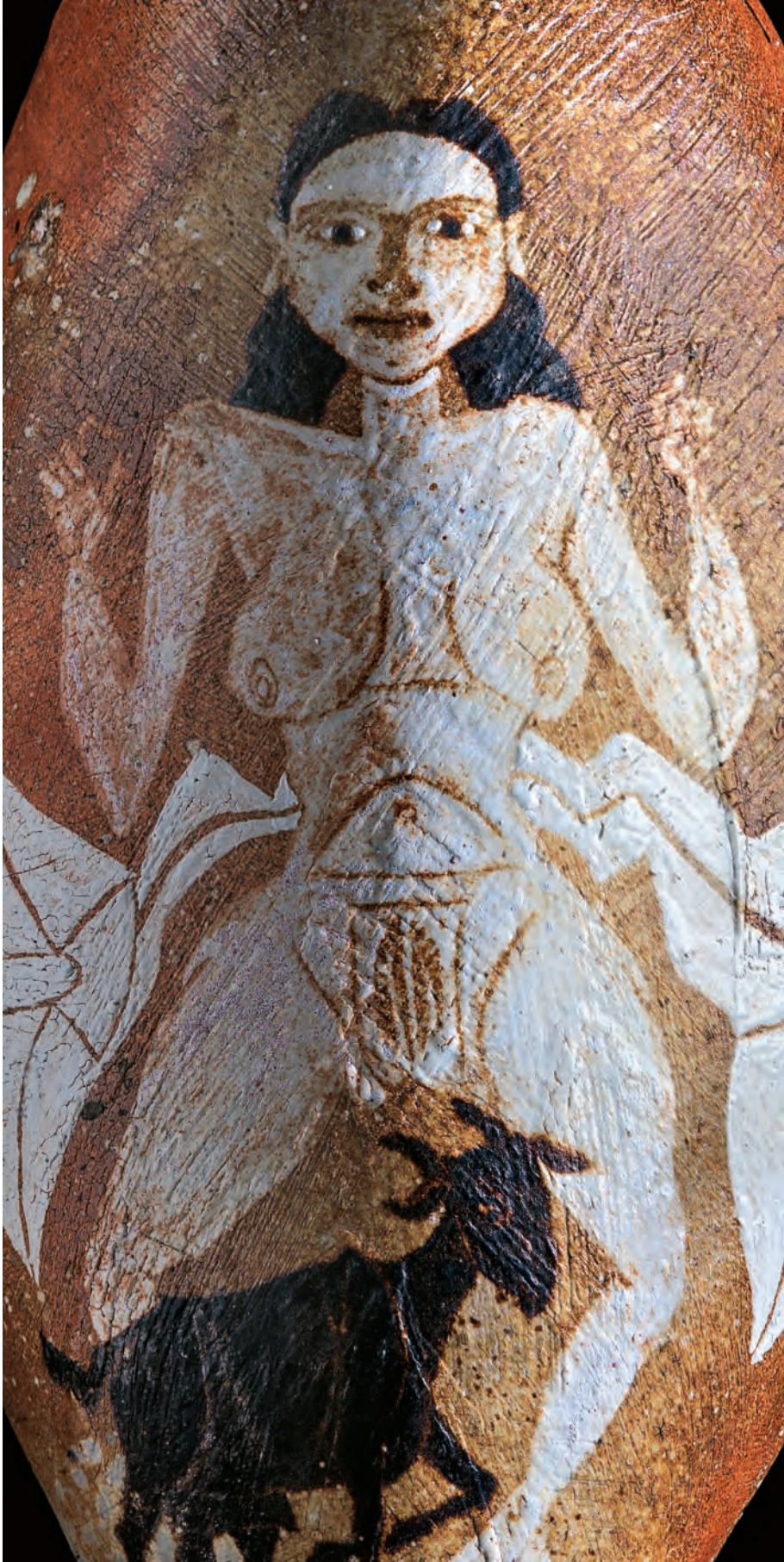
Laxma, with roots in rural India, earthy and uninhibited, a printmaker, and in his own words, “now a clay worker”. A clay worker, seduced by the material. A clay worker, influenced by his own teacher, K.G. Subramanyan. A clay worker, harking back to his indigenous roots. Laxma draws constantly. In notebooks, on scraps of paper, forceful lines, each one put down with care and deliberation, and yet, flowing with a spontaneity. Sometimes teeming with pattern and detail, at others, sparse and evocative. He travels constantly too. Excited by new possibilities, always willing to explore and push boundaries. And yet, he sees himself as conventional. His idiom established, his aesthetic well charted and secure. Methodical, certain of his roots and his direction.

Adil, the urbane parsi from Mumbai, the world is his oyster. An architect, a clay worker, a painter, the quintessential magpie, interested in everything around him, gathering influences, allowing them to seep into his own work, gradually transforming them to something unmistakably his own. A profusion of heavily textured surfaces, Adil's work is materiality incarnate. What better medium than clay then, to express with.

Laxma and Adil. The one who will not let the village be taken out of him, the other who carries the world with him. Peripatetic both. Fearless and curious. One, an exemplary draughtsman, the other an intuitive painter. I am struck by how alike the two men are in their unfettered, spontaneous personalities. Brought together serendipitously, the encounter has sparked a collaboration that is breathtaking in its possibilities.

Laxma has been working with clay for a decade now, travelling to studios where he can use the facilities and get technical support. Always amenable

[*Shield - 5* (detail), stoneware soda-wood fired, height 22 in.]



to new and interesting opportunities, he enthusiastically accepted the proposition to work with Adil in his studio. Enamoured as he is of the “voluptuousness of clay”, all he really cares about is to feel the material metamorphose in his hands. Approaching clay from his position of nostalgia for his rural childhood, coupled with his love for pattern, Laxma’s clay work has thus far comprised of murals and “heads”, predominantly in terracotta. Whether free standing or relief on slabs of clay, they seem to embody the abstract power of icons, far removed from the pagan world of his prints and drawings.

Adil, gregarious and generous was happy to have another artist visiting and working in his studio. Clay bodies, slips and glazes, firing with wood or gas or now adding soda vapour glazing to his repertoire, Adil has the technical knowledge and support system well established. Repositories of myriad and ever changing meaning, dependent entirely on what he might be engaged with and excited by in that moment, Adil makes forms which are simultaneously abstract and representational.

And so this unexpected journey has begun. For Laxma, the idea of collaborating was a new proposition. To Adil it appeared to be the most obvious outcome. Fascinated by Laxma’s village tales, tales of a raw sensuality and fertile imagination and not having seen much of Laxma’s earlier work, Adil recounts how during a chat in his studio, he gave Laxma a leatherhard slab of clay and a needle and requested him to draw something. Something reminiscent of his early works. Those drawings and prints peopled with his memories of growing up in a village. Peopled with concupiscent men and women, fertile fish, strutting roosters and full uddered cavorting goats. The ease, the spontaneity and freshness of those drawings then led him to expand the scope of the collaboration. Why not present Laxma with his own forms? “The Books and Boxes of Love” thus emerged. Adil’s Books and Boxes, which have been made with different clays on several continents, fired in different kilns, now offered up for an exploration, to an artist who draws with the ease and unselfconsciousness that comes from a lifetime of observing the world around him and recording his impressions.

I am struck once again, by the responsiveness of the two men. By Adil’s letting go of his forms, to allow them to be transformed by another hand, and by Laxma’s ability to accept the challenge presented by having to work within the confines of another’s imagination. In Laxma’s own words, “if it is my own cube, I already know what to do with it”. Looking at these boxes, books, shields and cubes you would not believe it was anything but as simple as breathing!

In his studio at home in Hyderabad, Laxma has cupboards crowded with things he has made. Little objects made with wood, painted in white and black and ochre, graphic lines and dots and swirls; clay heads, some fired to 1200 degrees centigrade, others only bisqued, still others cast

in bronze. Work that he refuses to part with. Toys with a lively playfulness. Heads with the power of totems. Tucked in behind these, a small papier mache and bamboo bottle form, made using an old bowl as a mould and painted in white and ochre. His form. Someday, I hope it will be reincarnated in clay. Perhaps this experience of drawing and painting on another's three dimensional forms will spark another direction in his clay work. One that brings together his love for clay with his strength in the two dimensional.

Adil meanwhile continues to produce Boxes, Books, Cubes and Shields, their surfaces suddenly teeming with Laxma-esque drawings in addition to the text, texture and "red dots", so characteristic of his own work.

The symbiotic partnership, the exchange of ideas and energy, has led to the emergence of new work by both the artists. Adil's excitement is palpable. He says he has always been keen to explore the figurative, but hesitant. This collaboration has quite obviously liberated him from that hesitation.

"People who see our fired works at the studio ask me, 'whose work is this? Whose idea was this series?' And all I say is look at it and judge it for what it is. This collaboration has taken me one step ahead with my own work. Laxma ji's wonderful vibe, humility, willingness to share thoughts...and seeing his focus, are things I will forever cherish", says Adil.

A successful collaboration requires the ability to embrace unpredictability, an eager receptivity, and a certain amount of humility to be able to let go of old ways of seeing and making and engage in the process of a joint exploration of ideas. Laxma and Adil the ideal collaborators epitomise these qualities. Whether the journey continues or not, and what direction it takes remains to be seen.

Aarti Vir

January 2016

(Aarti Vir is a ceramic artist based in Hyderabad)



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Shield - 4
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 22 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Treasure Box Series - 7
stoneware, gas fired
height 7 in.



Adil Writer
Treasure Box Series - 8
stoneware, gas fired
height 6 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Platter - 3
stoneware, wood fired
diameter 11 in.



Laxma Goud
Head - 2
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 12 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Box of Love Series - 6, 6a
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 8 in. max.





Adil Writer
Shield - 6
stoneware, wood fired
height 22 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Shield - 3
stoneware, gas fired
height 22 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Platter - 1
stoneware, soda-wood fired
diameter 18 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Platter - 2
stoneware, soda-wood fired
diameter 19 in.



Adil Writer
Box of Love Series - 9
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 6 in.



[Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Books of Love Series - 1, 2
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 12 in. max.]



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Shield - 2
stoneware, wood fired
height 22 in.



Adil Writer
Shield - 1

stoneware, gas fired
height 22 in.



Laxma Goud
Head - 1

stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 12 in.



Laxma Goud
Head - 1b
bronze (edition of 6)
height 12 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Platter - 13
stoneware, soda-wood fired
diameter 17 in.



Adil Writer
iKing & iQueen
stoneware, wood fired
height 22 in.



Adil Writer
Shield - 7

stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 22 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Shield - 5
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 22 in.



[Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Treasure Box Series - 1
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 10 in.]



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Treasure Box Series - 1b
bronze (edition of 6)
height 10 in.





Adil Writer
Box of Love Series - 3, 4, 5, 6
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 10 in. max.



Adil Writer
Platter - 11

stoneware, soda-wood fired
diameter 16 in.



Adil Writer
Shield - 18
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 26 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Square Platter - 6
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 8 in.



Laxma Goud / Adil Writer
Square Platter - 6b
bronze (edition of 6)
height 8 in.

[-Artist Profile- K. Laxma Goud]

Born in 1940 in Nizampur, Medak district, Telangana, K. Laxma Goud attended the Government College of Fine Arts and Architecture in Hyderabad, where he studied drawing and painting from 1958 to 1962. After receiving a state scholarship, Goud went on to study mural design under K.G. Subramanyan at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda between 1963 and 1965. It was here that Subramanyan encouraged Goud to try printmaking, instigating a curiosity in him to discover other materials and mediums. A pioneer of printmaking, Goud excels at handling a range of materials, whether be it ink, colour-pencil, watercolour, gouache, metal or clay.

Talking about his journey, the artist has said, "Do you think we could sell in the 60s? I used to give my works to people for free and even then they wouldn't take it. Now, people look for my prints but they aren't available easily. To have a meal, we would walk for hours. Painting didn't get you money those days but I somehow got a job with Doordarshan as graphics designer". After stints in television production in Pune and Malaysia with Doordarshan, K. Laxma Goud was invited by the Central University, Hyderabad to set up the Post Graduate Fine Arts College in 1989, now known as the Sarojini Naidu School of Performing Arts and Communication. He worked there till 2001, retiring as Dean of the school that same year.

Most of K. Laxma Goud's artwork is centered on the rural, capturing the tribal energy reminiscent of his youth spent in rural Andhra Pradesh. It was in his hometown in Kalabhavan, Hyderabad where Goud had his first solo exhibition in 1965. He has since held numerous solo exhibitions and been a part of a number of group exhibitions both in India and abroad.

In 2007, the Aicon Gallery organized *Laxma Goud, 40 Years: A Retrospective* in New York. Other recent solo shows of Goud's work include *K. Laxma Goud: Etchings, Drawings, Watercolour, Pen and Ink, Acrylic, Sculptures and Mixed Media Works Period 1967-2011*, held at the Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi in 2012; *Recent Terracotta, Ceramic, Bronze Sculptures* at Gallery Threshold, New Delhi and Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai as well as the *Bronze and Terracotta Sculpture Show*, The Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai, all in 2006; and those held at Aicon Gallery, New York in 2003 and Grey Art Gallery in 2001-02.

Among noted group shows in which the works of Goud have been featured, is the 2011-12 Aicon Gallery Exhibition, *Reprise 2011* in New York; *Dali's Elephant*, Aicon Gallery, London in 2011; the 2010 show *Essential, Eclectic...Ephemeral* at The Harrington Mansions, Kolkata and the 2009 Aicon Gallery exhibit *In Search of the Vernacular* in New York among others.

Notably, K. Laxma Goud was among the most represented artists in the prestigious Chester and Davida Herwitz Family collection. His works outside India further feature in the collections of the Masanori Fukuoka and Glenbarra Art Museum, Himeji, Japan; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; The Phillips collection, Washington DC; The Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, USA and Griffelkunst, Hamburg, Germany.

Having won numerous awards in the sixties and seventies, most recently, Goud has been honoured with the Telangana State Award and the Lifetime Achievement Prafulla Dahanukar Award in 2015. In 2016 the government awarded him with the Padma Shri. Goud lives and works in Hyderabad.

[-Artist Profile-]
Adil Writer

Adil Writer is a ceramic artist, painter and architect from Mumbai. He did his Bachelors of Architecture from Sir J.J. College of Architecture and his Masters of Architecture from the University of Houston, USA. In 1998, he moved to Pondicherry to study ceramics at Golden Bridge Pottery under the tutelage of Deborah Smith and Ray Meeker. Since 2000, he has been a partner at Mandala Pottery in the international community of Auroville, tucked in the verdant forests of south India. This is where he strikes a fine balance between making "delicious" functional tableware and his own sculptural studio ceramics, bringing with him twelve years of architectural experience.

Writer's CV reads like a travel retrospective. Wander-lust is what he says takes him across the world for invited residencies, workshops and exhibitions. His ceramics and large scale paintings have been showcased at several solo and group exhibitions in Japan, China, India, Indonesia, Australia, Estonia, France and USA. In 2013, Writer was instrumental in arranging a residency for a group of 18 Indian ceramists to Fuping that led to their making works for the proposed Museum of Contemporary Indian Ceramics in China. Later in 2014, he organised a residency for another group to Korea. Adil says "Working away from one's studio has its advantages. Out of one's comfort zone, fresh ideas and methods of work goad the artist into new directions in work. It's at once intimidating as well as refreshing". Writer's architectural background keeps him interested in large scale ceramic and unfired clay-on-canvas installations and murals, the most recent ones being a 60 feet long mural at a resort in Sri Lanka and the 35 feet long 'Barcode' which has toured several galleries already.

One of his prominent solo exhibitions was *Shades of Grey* at Gaya Design Centre, Bali, Indonesia where he showcased ceramics and batik. Adil explains his inspiration.... "Balinese Hinduism tells us that there is not just good and bad in the world ...not just black and white. There *is* a third median, the centre, the balance. These shades of grey were the focus of the collection".

Besides being a part of countless group exhibitions in India and abroad, Adil has also had solo shows in Shigaraki, Bali, Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Auroville. Earlier solo shows include *Stoneware* at the Hatworks Boulevard and *Treasures* at Gallery Time & Space, both in Bangalore, *Threshold* at Gallery Art & Soul in Mumbai and *Transformations* at the Citadyn Centre d'Arts in Auroville. *The White Rabbit* at the Visual Arts Gallery in New Delhi was Writer's solo show sponsored by the Delhi Blue Pottery Trust, featuring his ceramics and large scale paintings in 2009. At The Cube Gallery in Goa at a recent group show *Ceramic Spectrum*, Writer paid tribute to Goa's legends, Mario Miranda and Manohar Sardesai with a series of sculptural ceramics inspired by their cartoons and poetry. In 2011, at Shigaraki, one of the oldest kiln-sites in Japan, Adil culminated his three-month invited residency with a solo show titled *Himitsu Te Uso*. His works from Shigaraki were later exhibited at Gallery Art & Soul, Mumbai in 2013 at a show titled *Secrets & Lies*. He also featured in *Six by Six: Interpreting Craft in Gondwana*, a path-breaking Indo-Australian show at the Australian Triennial in Canberra featuring three Indian and three Australian ceramists.

This spirit of dialogue has led to *In Collaboration* at Pundole Art Gallery in Mumbai. "Working with an iconic figure like Laxmaji, seeing him wield the needle tool on clay, has been indelible. He freed me of my inhibitions of doodling erotica on my canvases and claywork! I am hoping to carry on collaborating with him and other artists who work with different media". Writer is currently a member of the International Academy of Ceramics, Geneva.



Adil Writer
Architects of Immortality Series - 12, 13
stoneware, soda-wood fired
height 52 in.





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