

VOLUME 22 / ISSUE 2 / QUARTER 2, 2018 / ₹250 US\$10 / ISSN 0972-2947

ART *India*

THE ART NEWS MAGAZINE OF INDIA



MAGAZINE AS GALLERY;
PAGES AS WALLS

EIGHT CURATORS TAKE TO PAPER

Moments, Lost and Recovered

SHWETA UPADHYAY



Madhvi Subrahmanian.

In the Shadow of the Trees.
Stoneware, light, shadow. 2017.
Image courtesy the artist and
Chemould Prescott Road.

pering the growth of the other. The tension between the organic and the urban world came to a head further in *Germination*, in which Subrahmanian represented the shape of a seed using traffic cones that are used to direct traffic.

One of the most moving series was *Mappa Mundi* – Subrahmanian borrowed from the Japanese technique of Kintsugi, of repairing broken pottery with powdered gold, and mapped her daily journeys and routes in the two cities she inhabits, Bombay and Singapore. Memories are often nebulous and moth-eaten, and Subrahmanian's use of gold reflected the act of burnishing and magnifying absent and lost moments.

From the personal, she moved to the political in *Upla* that comprised porcelain cow pats bearing hand marks, installed in rows on a white wall that lent it a precious look. The idea seemed to critique the cow politics prevalent in the country by glorifying the value of cow dung materially, but the work fell short when compared to the task of responding to the violence prevalent in the country in the name of the animal. /

Ceramic art practices in India have seen many crests and troughs. The Indian Ceramics Triennale starts in Jaipur this August and goes on till November. An important show in September last year was *Mapping Memory* by Madhvi Subrahmanian at Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai – there was a rife, uneasy relationship between natural and urban landscapes on view. On the first day of the show, visitors were provided with a clay mound and asked to turn the clay into a tree. These small trees were then added to the exhibit, *Forest*, which showed houses in a city in the shape of trees, inspired by Italo Calvino's story *The Baron in the Trees* in which a character climbs a tree and vows to never come back to the world and its regulations. *In the Shadow of the Trees* depicted gnarled hybrid structures, with looming shadows, in which buildings and trees were entangled in a tight grip as if in an embrace of death, arresting and ham-