Exhibition Title: Bhubaneswar Art Trail
Location: Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India
Dates: November 18 – December 18, 2018
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A New Public Art Trail in Bhubaneswar, India Cuts a Fresh Path across Time, Place, Technology and Tradition.

In Bhubaneswar, India, a new public art trail has opened its inaugural edition. The Bhubaneswar Art Trail cuts a winding 1.3km path through the city's Old Town district, a region known for its many distinctive ancient Hindu temples. The trail leads visitors through unexpected exhibition locales, including schoolrooms, temple complexes, gardens, and private residences of some willing local inhabitants. A 150-year old monastery hosts *Reflection of Time and Nature,* a quiet work by textile artist Pankaja Sethi comprised of a large metal armature loosely woven with hand-spun jute and cotton.

Co-curated by Jagannath Panda and Premjish Achari and featuring 24 artists from India and abroad, the Trail is ambitious in scope yet local in spirit. Bhubaneswar is one of 99 cities selected for India's Smart Cities initiative to integrate technology, sustainability, and intentional planning into growing cities. Last year Bhubaneswar's art community held workshops to actively discuss the role of art in their future Smart City. Spearheaded by Utsha Foundation for Contemporary Art, the Trail is the first project to materialize from those visionary discussions.

The Trail's curatorial statement, titled "Navigation is Offline," cites the increasing role of mediating technology in human environments. Its authors propose exploring alternative means that privilege sensory and analog modes of navigation. Among the varied artistic responses to this proposal, materiality emerges as an effective strategy. Several artists have found surprising ways to transform local materials bearing connections to the surrounding temple culture, such as sandstone, terracotta, bamboo, and in Satyabhama Majhi's *Temle City,* the red cotton *salu kanna* fabric used in ritual.

In Cécile Beau's *The Vaporous Region,* hundreds of tiny terracotta *diyas* or lamps envelop a large wire armature to become the delicate scales of a giant celestial fish. Arunkumar H.G.'s *Wheel of Tradition and Faith* repurposes two massive wooden chariot wheels employed in the annual Ashokasthami Rath festival of Lingaraj Temple. Artist M. Pravat has chosen to work with laterite, a porous stone ubiquitous in Old Town temple architecture. In Pravat's *The Malleability of All Things Solid 4,* blocks of the coarse laterite are transformed into a massive russet-colored sphere. The grid-like seams of its construction evoke the parallels and meridians of an atlas, transforming the sphere into a towering, pock-marked globe.

The Trail's strongest works drop anchor into the Old Town's history and build up from there, forming new positions from which to survey its physical and cultural features. Offering a literal re-framing of the city is Sibanand Bhol's *Liminal View*, a large lingam-shaped sandstone column positioned on the bank of Bindu Sagar Lake. Piercing the column is a circular aperture through which the distant silhouette of iconic Lingaraj Temple is perfectly framed. Embodying a literal eye to the past, *Liminal View* offers a vantage point for visitors to contemplate an inherited past from the station point of the present.

With its emphasis on local identity, community engagement, and what can only be described as a ground-up approach, the Bhubaneswar Art Trail avoids many pitfalls common to

biennials, triennials, and international art projects these days. Heavy-handed curatorial agendas, excessive branding, and spectacle-scale works are refreshingly absent from this project, nor have the trail's curators pushed overly hard to position Bhubaneswar in an imagined global art context. Instead, this project illustrates how the local can be a microcosm for the global; we see how contemporary art can serve as a mirror for evolving collective identities and as an engine of unification, empowerment, and resistance in the development of our future cities.

Bhubaneswar Art Trail *remains on view through December 18, 2018.*

SATYABHAMA MAJHI
Temple City, 2018
Iron and *salu kana* fabric

NIROJ SATPATHY
Question Machine, 2018
Installation with mirrored acrylic cubes and mixed media

PANKAJA SETHI
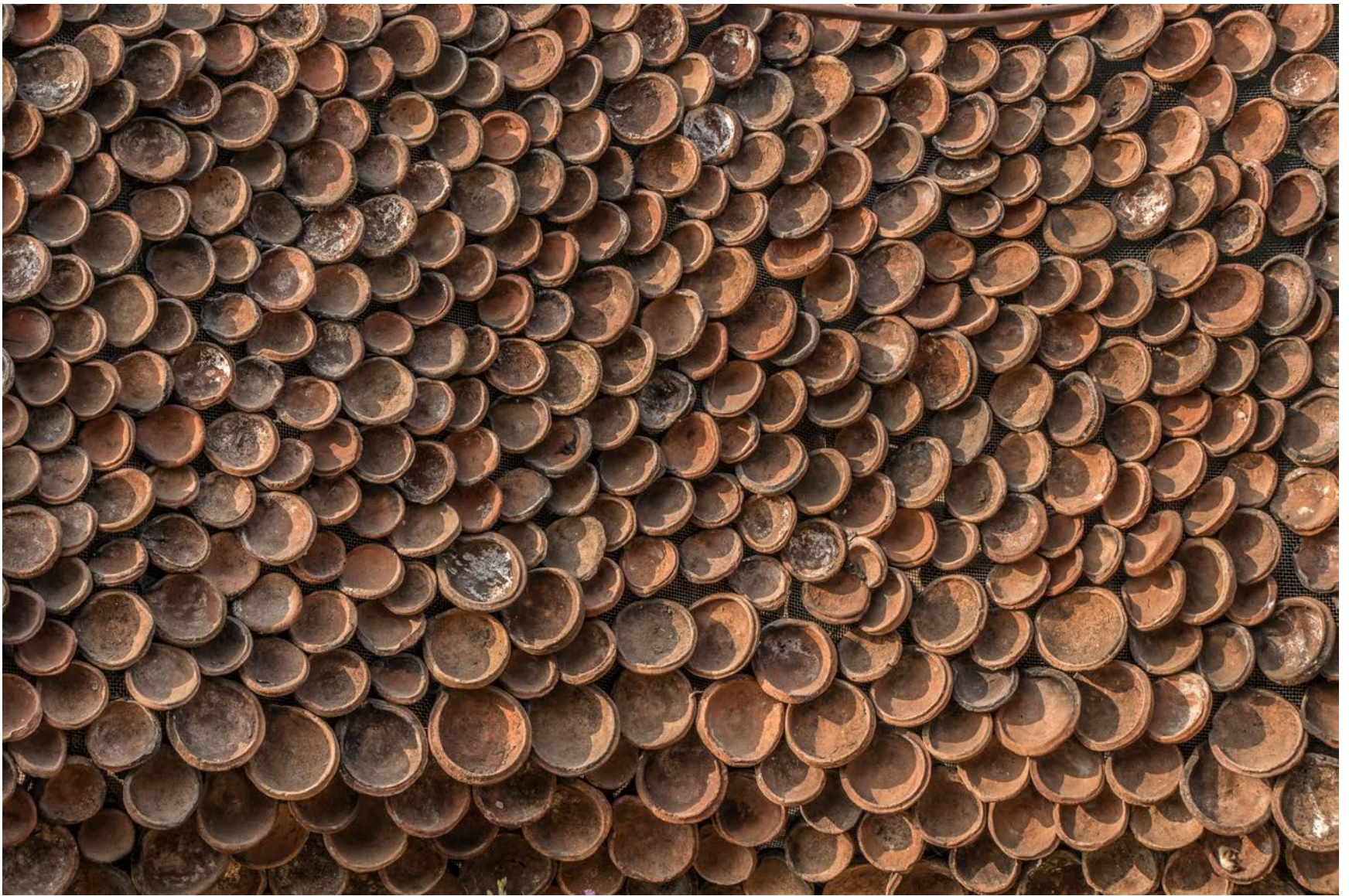*Reflection of Time and Nature,* 2018
Cotton, jute, and coconut fiber with iron armature

Cécile Beau
The Vaporous Region, 2018
Terracotta *diyas* with mixed media and sound

Cécile Beau
The Vaporous Region, 2018
Terracotta *diyas* with mixed media and sound

ARUNKUMAR H.G.
Wheel of Tradition and Faith, 2018
Installation with wooden chariot wheels and axles

M. PRAVAT
The Malleability of All Things Solid, 2018
Laterite, concrete, and metal

SIBANAND BHOL
Liminal View, 2018
Sandstone

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Liminal View, 2018
Sandstone

PRATUL DASH
Temple for Birds, 2018
Terracotta pots, mixed media and sound

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Temple for Birds, 2018
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SUDARSHAN SHETTY
Shadow City – A Life After, 2018
Industrial wood and rice
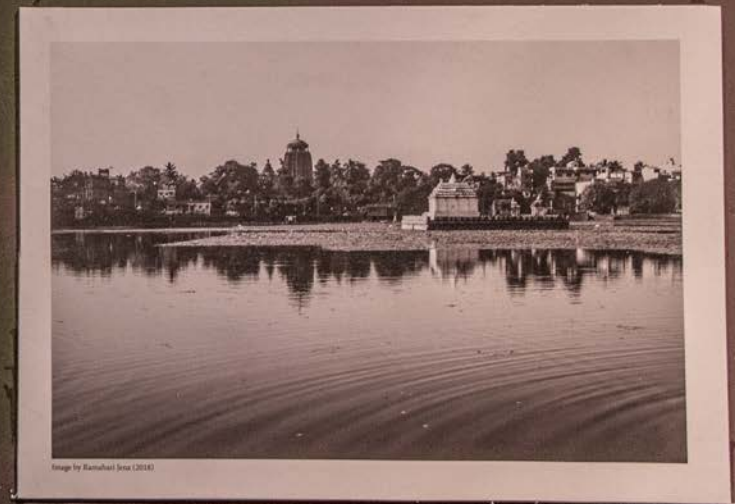
SAYANTAN MAITRA BOKA
Duck Above, Fish Below, 2018
Bamboo

MARKUS BAENZIGER
Traces, 2018
Installation with iron and fabric

PATAP CHANDRA JENA
Untitled, 2018
Bamboo and mixed media

RAMHARI JENA & BHOOMI
Outsiders: Discovering the Self by Inventing the City, 2018
Mixed media installation with photographs
Detail: Photographs depicting Bindu Sagar Lake and Lingaraj Temple c. 1868-69 (left), and 2018 (right)

SHARMILA SAMANT
The Heated Debate, 2016-ongoing
Performance and site-specific Installation with painted text, carving, and LED

SUBRAT KUMAR BEHERA
On Cultures Through Collecting, 2018
Installation with works in acrylic, watercolor, lithograph, and charcoal

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SMRUTIKANT ROUT
Sailing In Between, 2018
Bamboo installation