

## An Indian View on a Western Sculptress

Lilian was trained as a sculptor at the Kunstgewerbeschule Bern during the wave of high Modernism. The dominant discourse of constructivism, minimalism, and the movement of Bauhaus was prevalent in Europe during her years as a student (1976-1980). The 1970's were also a time when social structures were crumbling and the youth rebelled against authority. Freedom and liberation were thick in the air and revolution was a conscious effort in society.

Lilian was much influenced by the social and political changes in her country and Europe. These events had a decisive influence on her personality and her visual language. Her assertiveness and self-conscious role as a "female artist" working in a male-dominated arena was a struggle and challenge.

She works in a sculptors' commune, exploring labor-intensive carving techniques and the use of power tools like the chainsaw. These were some radical shifts in her evolution as an artist.

There were some decisive monumental sculptures that Lilian created. One was a classical marble public monument to a junkie injecting himself with a syringe. Another was a woman like a modern mother goddess with a flower crown and boxing gloves. Other hybrid images were humans merging with animals. These images ask us to think about the treatment of the human as a raw material in modern capitalist biogenetic order.

In 2006 she earned postgraduate credentials in Cultural and Gender Studies at the Hochschule für Künste, Zürich. In the process, she studied Postcolonial Studies and modern Indian theoreticians. Lilian took a much-needed break from routine and came to India for a multi-sensory experience. She started her work cycle "All about Indian Phantasies" in Switzerland in early 2007 (under the subtitle of "Pre-India"). As part of this, she created a large archive of pictures and sculptures in plastic and wood as an installation. She expresses all the fantasies of India through an orientalist gaze in this installation.

Multicultural India was an overwhelming experience for her. She wanted to make the best use of this opportunity to explore the intense sensory experience of a new space and time. This "woman artist" with the chainsaw bought an Ambassador car to live the fantasy of another country. She also confronted the new economic boom and a polyvalent vision of a multicultural nation.

The current work has evolved from exploring the urban landscape. The artist encounters the harsh urban realities. Much of it is defined by architecture and the modernist aesthetic with the larger agenda of globalization.

This is the order that represents the chaos and anxiety of the city, the new metropolitan that defines India. Lilian deals with this new order and aesthetic that has emerged in our cities. Beyond clean lines and private spaces of her own, she deals with ironies and visual contrasts that coexist here.

So the artist negotiates the city to collect visual images to construct a new reality. In her installation, she incorporates never-ending construction sites with scaffoldings that rise in a rhizomatic order to the sky. She has sculpted a fragmented eye with a life of its own and a cluster of balloon-breasts that hangs as an organic counterpart to the adjacent scaffolding structure. The raw physicality of her objects confronts us as a metaphor for another contemporary reality. By culturally encroaching, she learns from her Indian experience. Lilian is conscious about migration of artists and the conversation across cultures. She believes in subjective transformation of ideas in a coherent way and intends to move beyond the gloss of a superficial Indian experience. Her focus on empty

and contested spaces on the urban landscape and the architectonic structures is attempted to look at India of today in all its complexity.

Lilian raises questions about the meaning and purpose of art in an age of accelerating social and spiritual uncertainty. The artist interacts, transgresses and transforms her idea of India beyond the hegemonic position of the West. The artist creates a "third space" that is a synthesis of her experience into a multicultural space. Her works are subjective interpretations of her experience that aim at the general cultural osmosis and mutual encroachment.

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