

ATUL BHALLA

Atul Bhalla was born in 1964. He completed his Bachelor's degree from Delhi University, New Delhi, after which, he pursued a Master's degree at Northern Illinois University, USA. The artist has held many solo shows, the most recent being 'Within / Without' at Aicon Gallery, London, in 2008; 'Remarking the River' at Project 88, Mumbai, in 2007-2008; Anant Art Centre, Noida, in 2007; and 'Immersion' at Anant Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2005. Bhalla has also participated in numerous group exhibitions including 'Course' at Sepia International, New York, in 2008; 'City.Cite.Site' at Anant Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2007; 'Relocating Masculinities' at the School of Art and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in 2007; and 'Wise Man's Drink' at Lemon Grasshopper, Ahmedabad, in 2006. In 2007, Bhalla participated in 'ECO+ART', a River Yamuna based art residency, organised by Khoj International Artists Association, New Delhi. The artist lives and works in New Delhi.

Biography:

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WORKING GROUP MEMBER : KHOJ, International Artists Association
Khirkee, Saket, New Delhi.

EXHIBITIONS :

2011

On the Edge

Solo show of works from 2009 -11.Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi (Oct 2011)

Water Works

Grossman Gallery. Lafayette College. Easton. PA. USA

Curation- Donna Gustafsson (Sept-Oct 2011)

INSTALLATION OF 'I WAS NOT WAVING BUT DROWNING-II' AT

Harvard Art Museums. Cambridge MA.USA.

DECEMBER 2010-APRIL 2011

2009

...IN ANOTHER SWEAT, Project 88, Mumbai, India (Dec '09)

...IN ANOTHER SWEAT, Anant Art Centre, NOIDA, India (Aug '09)

2008: '...within/without...'One Person Show : AICON Gallery London , U.K.

2007: One Person Show : 'REMARKING THE RIVER' Project88 MUMBAI. INDIA

2005 : One Person Show : 'IMMERSIONS' Anant Art Gallery, New Delhi.

2005 : One Person Show : KHOJ- International Artists Association Khirkee, Saket, New Delhi.

2000 : One Person Show : Academy of Fine Arts & Literature, New Delhi.

1997 : Two Persons Show : Art Today, New Delhi.

1992 : Two Persons Show : Shridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi.

1990 : One Person Show : Northern Illinois University, USA.

AWARDS :

1994 : Honourable Mention : National Exhibition of Art (Lalit Kala Academy).

1991 : Painting Award : Yuva Mahotsav (Sahitya Kala Parishad).

1990 : Best Graduate Painting Award : NIU, Illinois, USA.

1988-90 : Tuition Waiver : NIU, Illinois, USA.

CAMPS / WORKSHOPS.

- 2008 : 48'C
 PUBLIC-ECOLOGY-ART ' -International Public Art Project
 CURATION -POOJA SOOD
 New Delhi.
<http://48c.org/blog/?tag=atul-bhalla>
<http://48c.org>
- 2007 : 'ECO+ART' - River Yamuna based Art Residency
 Jan 5 -feb 4 2007 KHOJ International Artists Association
 Khirkee, Saket, New Delhi.
- 2006 : 'ART MEET' - Site Specific Work
 ITM Universe, Gwalior
- 2006 : 'DILLI DUR AST'- A month long residency within the old walled city of Delhi.
 KHOJ International Artists Association,
 Khirkee, Saket, New Delhi.
- 2006 : 'BLACK BOX EXERCISE' Khoj, International Artists Association.
 Khirkee, Saket, New Delhi.
- 2005 : 'SANDARBH'-- Site Specefic Workshop.
 Partapur, Vagad district, Rajasthan.

PARTICIPATION :

2013

- ***"What will be my Defeat?" Performance at VARC, HighGreen, Hexham, UK.
 Curation-Cynthia Morrison Bell. 2013***
- ***"The Artist Will Be Defeated By The Art World"
 Sarai-Reader 09. With Meera Menezes-"Room for failure". Devi Art Foundation. New
 Delhi***
- ***"Peak-Shift-Effect"
 Curated by Gayatri Sinha. Vadehra Art Gallery. New Delhi.2013***
- ***TOWARDS A NEW WORLD -4 artists from 'India between memory and globalization.
 Curation -Rita Usro. Milan ,Italy. May 2013***

2012

-**Video Festival**. Curation Gayatri Sinha. Gallery Espace. New Delhi. Nov 2012

-**URBAN MYTHS AND REALITIES**, Curation-Oindrilla Maity. Empire Shrine Gallery. New Delhi. Dec 2012

-**CRITICAL MASS**, Contemporary Art from India, Tel Aviv Museum Of Art, Curated by Tami Katz-Frieman and Rotem Ruff.

-**SLIPPING BETWEEN THE CRACKS**, Curated by MEERA MENEZES, Latitude 28 New Delhi.

2011

-**BEYOND THE SELF: Contemporary Portraiture from Asia** 13 Aug - 6 Nov 2011.

Curated by Christine Clarke. NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY. CANBERRA. AUSTRALIA.

-**PARIS –DELHI –BOMBAY,**

INDIA THROUGH THE EYES OF INDIAN AND FRENCH ARTISTS-Centre Pompidou, Paris . France.

Curated by Sophie Duplaix and Fabrice Bosteau. May 22 –September 19 2011

-**HOME SPUN**, Curation –Girish Shahane, Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India. AUGUST 27-DECEMBER 27.2011

-**God, Goddesses, Cinema and Cricket**, Curation –Arshiya Lokhandwala, Jehangir Art Galleries, Mumbai India. (Feb 22.2011)

2010

WEST HEAVENS, PLACE –TIME- PLAY:INDIA CHINA CONTEMPORARY ART, Curated by Chaitanya Sambrani, Shanghai China.

WATER, Curated by Donna Gustafson, Andrew W. Mellon, Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, USA.

ID/ENTITY, Curated by Vidya Shivdas, Vadehra Art Gallery. New Delhi

A MONUMENTAL TOUR, Curated by Cho Seong Ryeong , Coreana Art Museum . Seoul, Korea.

INDIAN (SUB) WAY, Curated by Yashodhara Dalmia, Grosvenor, Vadehra, New Delhi, London

2009

LIVING OFF THE GRID, curated by Meera Menezes, Anant Art Centre, NOIDA, India

FOURTH ASIAN ART TRIENNALE, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan

IMMERSIONS curated by Deeksha Nath, Anant Art Centre, NOIDA, India

IN FOCUS - Contemporary Indian Photography, Crimson - The Art Resource, Banglore, India

2008 : 'INDIA MODERNA,
CURATION – JUAN GUARDIOLA.
IVAM Institute of Modern Art,
Valencia,Spain.

- 2008 : 'VIDEO ZONE-4'
CURATION-SERGIO EDELSZTEIN/ ROTEM RUFF
4th INTERNATIONAL VIDEO ART BIENNIAL,
ISRAEL
- 2008 : 'WHERE IN WORLD'
DEVI ART FOUNDATION
NCR, NEW DELHI.INDIA.
- 2008 : 'MUTANT BEAUTIES'
CURATION-GAYATRI SINHA
ANANT ART GALLERY NEW DELHI.
- 2008 : 'CREATIVE EMERGENCIES'
CURATION -MARIA LIVIA BRUNELLI-SILVIA CIRELLI
MAR MUSEO D' ARTE DELLA CITTA DI RAVENNA ITALY
- 2008 : 'STILL MOVING IMAGE'
CURATION-DEEKSHA NATH DEVI ART FOUNDATION
NCR, NEW DELHI.INDIA
- 2008 : 'COURSE'
SEPIA INTERNATIONAL
NEW YORK USA.
- 2008 : 'VISUALS OF A POST VISUAL WORLD'
CURATION-Ms. GITANJALI DANG
PRIYASRI ART GALLERY MUMBAI INDIA
- 2007 : 'CITY.CITE.SITE.'
CURATION- LATIKA GUPTA
ANANT ART GALLERY NEW DELHI.
- 2007 : 'RELOCATING MASCULANITIES'
SCHOOL OF ART
AND AESTHETICS, J.N.U. NEW DELHI
- 2007 : 'PUBLIC PLACES/PRIVATE SPACES'
CONTEMPORARY INDIAN
PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO
NEWARK MUSEUM,NEW JERSEY U.S.A.
- 2006 : 'WATCHING ME- WATCHING INDIA'
NEW PHOTOGRAPHY FROM INDIA
FOTOGRAFIE FORUM FRANKFURT
Frankfurt, Germany.

- 2006 : 'WISE MAN'S DRINK' LemonGrassHopper,
Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- 2005 : '...Through 22kms...' 'Living. it.out.in.Delhi'
Presentation made at the solo show by Vivan Sundaram
LKA Galleries, New Delhi.
- 2005 : 'SELF X SOCIAL'- School of Art and Aesthetics, J.N.U, New Delhi.
Curation : Ms. Geeta Kapur.
- 2004 : Median- Epiques Art Gallery, New Delhi.
- 2002 : Lok Raag- Visual Art Gallery, Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- 2001 : Small but Significant- Arpana Fine Arts, AFAL, New Delhi.
- 2001 : "...and Buddha smiled again" Masters Guild, Academy of Fine Arts & Literature, New Delhi.
- 1999 : Mira Centre for the Arts, New Delhi.
- 1997 : Art Access : Birla Century Art Gallery, Mumbai.
- 1996 : AIFACS Annual Painting Exhibition, New Delhi.
- 1995 : AIFACS Annual Painting Exhibition, New Delhi.
- 1994 : National Exhibition of Art, Lalit Kala Academy.
- 1993 : Search for Talent Exhibition, Vadhera Art Gallery.
- 1993 : National Exhibition of Art, Lalit Kala Academy.
- 1992 : Ravi Jain Memorial Art Exhibition, Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi.
- 1991 : 63rd Annual AIFACS Painting Exhibition.
- 1991 : Yuva Mahotsav, Sahitya Kala Parishad.
- 1990 : Spring : ARS Nova Show, NIU, Illinois, USA.
- 1989 : Fall : ARS Nova Show, NIU, Illinois, USA.

1989 : Spring : ARS Nova Show, NIU, Illinois, USA.

Videos:

Videos – Atul Bhalla

1. Presentation: YAMUNA.ELBE - Session I - A 'view' of the river, June 2011

<https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=video&cd=2&cad=rja&ved=0CDkQtwlWAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fvimeo.com%2F25174333&ei=OHISUqHwE4TJrAecglHgDg&usg=AFQjCNEupG1oCzs4pw8PXErhEt74AzTUZA&sig2=AOOfnccSsdFTl0y8JGc09A&bvm=bv.53537100,d.bmk>

2. Panel Discussion with Atul Bhalla and other artists, Harvard Art Museums, March 2011

https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=video&cd=3&cad=rja&ved=0CDwQtwlWAg&url=http%3A%2F%2Fvimeo.com%2F20878460&ei=OHISUqHwE4TJrAecglHgDg&usg=AFQjCNFYTxAQMubf-JOfKZVhglkgP5HIw&sig2=mP_XOVgrdTWd90_BROyQeQ&bvm=bv.53537100,d.bmk

3. Slide Show: "What Will be My Defeat" on Elbe river in Hamburg in Germany Oct 16.

https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=video&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CDYQtwlWAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.prokerala.com%2Fnews%2Fphotos%2Fmulti-media-artist-atul-bhalla-presented-a-12-27068.html&ei=OHISUqHwE4TJrAecglHgDg&usg=AFQjCNEyLRTIGwWNPjSL_tj9FxoHzgHI9A&sig2=K8V8xovW48pQRMBHDCag8g&bvm=bv.53537100,d.bmk

4. Slide Show: An eco-art installation on the bank of Yamuna river by artist Atul Bhalla inspired by the plastic bottles and Mahabharata

<http://www.prokerala.com/news/photos/lit-up-with-art-music-behold-the-yamuna-5919/?slideshow=1>

5. Installation by Atul Bhalla: "VIDEO PROJECTION PEEPAL WOOD "

<http://www.atulbhalla.com/images/thumb/videothumb/SAP.htm>

6. Installation by Atul Bhalla: "REFLECT"

<http://www.atulbhalla.com/images/thumb/videothumb/reflect.htm>

7. Installation by Atul Bhalla: 'DILLI DUR AST'

<http://www.atulbhalla.com/images/thumb/videothumb/mashk.htm>

TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

2012 DIVA lecture. WITS University, Johannesburg, South Africa.

2012 YIPF, Aurobindo Campus, NEW DELHI

2011 Grossman Gallery. Lafayette College. Easton. PA. USA. OCTOBER 2011

2011 Sackler Museum Harvard Art Museums. Cambridge MA. USA. MARCH 2011

2011 College of Art. Banaras Hindu University. Varanasi .UP. India

2010 YAMUNA-ELBE Project. Max Mueller Bhavan. New Delhi

EDUCATION :

Bachelor in Fine Arts College of Art (B.F.A.) New Delhi, Delhi University .

Masters in Fine Arts School of Art, (M.F.A.) Northern Illinois University, U.S.A.

BIBLIOGRAPHY :

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES & BOOKS

VIDEO ZONE – 4, Pg. 243,245 ,2008,The Centre for Contemporary Art Tel Aviv,Israel.

INDIA MODERNA – IVAM ,pg. 309,Institute of Modern Art,Valencia.Spain,2008,

...WITHIN/WITHOUT..., Aicon Gallery, May 2008, London.

CITY.CITE.SITE, Anant Art Gallery, Curated by Latika Gupta, January 2008, New Delhi, India.

RELOCATING MASCULINITIES, An Exhibition of Photographs Video Art, Curated by Mohd. Ahmad Sabih,Rahul Dev,Srinayani&T.Sanatilanam,

December 4-14,2007, In Collaboration with SCHOOL OF ARTS&AESTHETICS,Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.

RE-MARKING THE RIVER, Anant Art Gallery, March 2007, New Delhi, India.

INDIA PUBLIC PLACES/PRIVATE SPACES, Contemporary Photography&Video Art, by Gayatri Sinha-Paul Sternberger,The Newark Museum, September 2007,Pg124-127,New Jersey,U.S.A

RECENT BIBLIOGRAPHY PERIODICALS

ART India, THE ART NEWS MAGAZINE OF INDIA , volume xiii , issue ii , quarter ii, 2008 ,
Special Report, pg no. 106,
October-November 2008, New Delhi.

AQ, ART, QUARTERLY/WINTER 2008, An eye for the absurd pg. 54, "their creations are
complex, multi-layered" December 2008, New York.

2008-ART ASIA PACIFIC-No 60, SEPT/OCT2008 ,Atul Bhalla. Aicon Gallery London. page
208.

2008-ARTREVIEW, Issue24, July&August2008, Atul Bhalla...WITHIN/WITHOUT, Aicon
Gallery, London, Pg83.

2008-CULTURE,(HONGKONG) Issue40, April-May2008, APERTURE YAMUNA MORNINGS,
Pg 38-43.

2008-VOGUE, May2008, Pg 52.

2008-VERVE, Volume16, Issue4, Pg 42-43, Off The Wall by Maria Louis.

Article in Newspaper:

Some art reaches beyond the ennui of big

GAYATRI SINHA

Recently, art made its way through the lanes and by-lanes of the Walled City of Delhi.



A POINT OF VIEW Atul Bhalla follows the route of the now obsolete mashak, once used to wash the dusty streets of India.

Against the dominance of a market that seeks to dwarf every artistic discourse, there was a breath of palpable relief that blew in from the crowded galis of Turkman Gate. On the roof of the Al-Noor hotel, in the mid evening the skyline was dominated by brick-lined house walls, swooping pigeons and the sight of a hundred kites flying. Magically, with the call of the muezzin the crackling energy of the sky quietened and streams of white clad men disappeared into the interiors of the mosques below.

Acts of philanthropy

A Khoj-supported workshop had converted the Al-Noor hotel over a period of a month into a site for an arts residency. The element of surprise was perhaps double edged. Al Noor was as unprepared to become a site for art, as were the streams of visitors who negotiated its narrow and sharp angles to come upon a work here or there. Gigi Scaria and Atul Bhalla, the principal artists of the workshop, vivified the location for its cultural and economic practices. One particularly admired the disbanding of the conventional viewing practices and the absorption of the art object into the site that had yielded it. Bhalla's series of photographs on the piaus (traditional pots for free drinking water) of the area are thus hung on the water tank of the hotel, furthering his engaging discourse around water.

This set of photographs, all shot straight with the full face of the lens mark human presence of the crowded mohalla that uses the piau, in the garish decorative tiles, the accumulation of paan stains and the graffiti. But the piaus also reminder of acts of philanthropy that marked the sharing of water in Delhi, and the present-day act of withholding elemental largesse, through water for sale.

The historical imperative, of a city that was razed repeatedly partly due to historical conquest and partly lack of water, is difficult to erase. Bhalla also follows the route of the now obsolete mashak, once used to wash the dusty streets of India. With a Qureshi, traditionally a butcher, he appropriates the ritual role of killing the goat, and then skinning and preparing and exhibiting the mashak.

There is a transformative quality to Atul's work that seems to float in and around the images, but not within them, lending his work its powerful nuances.

Gigi Scaria, through video works like "A day in the life of Sohail and Mariam", has used a deadpan, documentary style to examine the economies of the street. Child labour constitutes a large work force that plays out a desperate dance for existence away from India's self congratulatory economic indexes. Scaria is particularly sensitive to its indignities and scavenger-like struggle.

The two films created during the residency and seen on the roof of the Al-Noor are "Picture Perfect" and "Search". The first is the promise of hope in the image of a young boy preparing calendars of Makkah for sale on the street. Gigi has shot this with a close tight frame that identifies the boy's small body, hands and feet intent on the labour involved. The other film "Search" shot at the crack of the dawn in the Daryaganj area reveals a boy with a tool that sweeps the street like a minesweeper. He scavenges for metal waste, mainly nails that he rips off the magnet with his bare hands in a gut-wrenching gesture.

The images are presented without sentiment and without closure. Both Atul Bhalla and Gigi Scaria, who work as schoolteachers demonstrate a facility to obtain powerful lens-based images. With minimal resources, Indian artists appear poised to work significantly with little but a fresh, vigorous gaze, and a slew of new urban narratives.

Already Gigi and Atul are in the vanguard of this movement, one that has its own impetus and integrity.

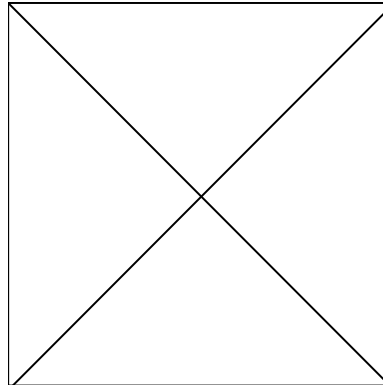
The final contribution to this atmospheric build-up was a dastan or dramatic recitation from Dastan-e-Amir Hamza, emperor Akbar's favourite text. Performed by Mahmood Farouqui and Danish Husain, the performance combines the recitation style of Parsi theatre, with a voluble poetic mix of Persian and Urdu, deeply sensuous and evocative in the narration. The performance is a powerful argument against cultural amnesia of a language and mythologicals that were once an integral part of North India - until recently the dastan would be performed on the steps of Jama Masjid. The performance also affirmed that all too often, the most valuable art engagements are not a single solitary acquisition but a shared pleasure.

That warm evening, on the roof of the Al Noor, after a long time, an art experience brought with it the smell of roses.

Review:

"MASHK"

DURATION:	5 min 45 45 sec.
Medium	:(12"x18")x22 color prints, 5 min. 45 sec. video, knife, mashk filled with water
Year	:2006



Working on a lens based project proposed by Mr. Gigi Scaria on the old walled city of Delhi had conceived a few works from the concept note- '...a city within a city reveals idea is to intervene or we live in more closely with this process we might even possibilities of our common

Delhi called 'DILLI DUR AST', I which would examine, to quote

thousands of cities inside. The understand the space; the city expanded artistic equipments. In rethink and question the

practices to produce a work of art. The intention is to interact among the people around in order to understand certain social norms and ways of life which contribute to contemporary culture to be alive....'

'...it includes certain key words such as feudalism, migration, modernization/industrialization, colonialism etc,...

Since I have been working on water as a concept for some time now, I conceived two works which allowed me to further pursue the concept within my own practice and to expand it with an attempt at a different medium.

One work titled 'Mashk' had me examine and intervene into a community of Qureshis, traditional butchers; it also examined the notion of providing free water from a traditional leather water carrier-mashk, which is made of a halal goat.

I had wanted to get a mashk made which would be totally my own; that meant the leather carrier had to be some where of me, from me. I could think of no other way than to buy a goat myself and attempt its slaughter in the traditional manner with the guidance of a Qureshi.

Which turned out to a difficult task as only one family from the about 300 families staying in old Delhi agreed to teach me but with an assurance of anonymity,

A mashk is a traditional water carrier made of leather, usually of goat, which is always 'halal' [traditional Islamic way of slaughtering animals for meat].So starting with the first step I bought a goat from the wholesale animal market after spending four days there watching live animals come in and meat come out which helped me formulate the work. I attempted to 'halal' it myself under the guidance of a reluctant Qureshi, who warned me that if I halaled the goat he would not touch it nor skin it as that would be absolutely against his religion.

The attempt turned into a reality; I did halal the goat. The goat was skinned by a Hindu butcher and the hide used to get the mashk made.

The attempt resulted in a 5 minute video which fore grounded my experientiality, 22 color prints

[12x18in] foregrounding the act, the resultant installation had the mashk and the knife as exhibits as well.

The person who carries the mashk and offers drinking water is called a 'Bhishti' which also means life giver, as 'Bahisht' means life in Urdu. So to give life one had to, in a way take a life.

The other work involved mapping the 'piaus' the traditional free drinking water sites of old Delhi. The works shot frontally shows the garish tiles, pan stains, spit, accumulated dirt, and the way we actually treat free things in life –with no respect.

The process of examining Old Delhi is still going on with me visiting certain sites almost every week as an attempt to analyze our changing relation with water and water sources man made or otherwise.

postvisual world

Curated by Gitanjali Dang

In an age where the death of virtually every art practice has been announced, it would be scandalous to suggest the death of the visual. Postvisual world does not assert or imply the demise of the image. It merely postulates that fatigue is taking over.

The connect between the visual stimuli and its receiver has eroded and each image is received, if at all, as a dormant creature. Controlled environments, such as the one offered by a gallery could be – could, being the operative word – a possible exception to the rule.

This is not a photography exhibition. It is a vivisection. Each triptych scalpels the distended mass of postvisuality in which it is embedded. The images are specimens of postvisuality.

The postvisual conundrum is particularly ironic since we are all habitués of a communications landscape, where glib visualities collide with the hope that new desires will be born.

The participant photographers have contributed a triptych each. Panel one, appraises the aesthetics of urban consumerist landscapes and in the process enables us to assess our fascination with a homogeneously seamless consumer culture. Panel two, implicates the photographers as we encounter their auto-portraits. And in the final panel the photographers plunge their lenses deep into the megalomaniacal heart of the city. To draw final blood they incarcerate the city's denizens in portraits.

With these triptychs one hopes to establish linkages, that will be startling in their visuality, and will explore consumerist landscapes as possible roadmaps to our future. With postvisual world, one intends to reach down to the imperfect aesthetic roots of burgeoning consumerism.

Within this exhibition postvisuality has a double theoretical framework: on the one hand, it assesses the cold, hysterical and hard-nosed aesthetic of urban landscapes; on the other hand, it hopes to follow the thread of postvisuality and observe how it splits its end – be it by way of appropriated and/or found image, performative photography or the purposefully mutated image.

(Excerpted from Gitanjali Dang's essay for the exhibition)