

GIRJESH KUMAR SINGH

An Endless Journey



Girjesh Kumar Singh, Laaga Chunari Mein Daag (The Stained Robe), 2018

"An Endless Journey"

13 April 2018 – 1 June 2018

Opening reception: Thursday 12 April 2018

6.30–8.30pm

rosenfeld porcini is pleased to present 'An Endless Journey', Indian artist Girjesh Kumar Singh's first solo exhibition in Europe.

As the Western world reels from the effects of the mass migration from Africa and the Middle East and the media is full of harrowing stories of innumerable human tragedies, Girjesh Kumar Singh's compelling sculptures made from broken bricks of destroyed homes provide a perfect artistic testimony to the traumas we are living with in our contemporary societies.

The artist's practice manages to combine the poetics of destruction with something human and historical, transforming the inanimate into the visceral, and bringing to light difficult truths which are too often suppressed or ignored by those unaffected.

Featuring a selection of large scale groups of figures carved out of broken bricks from demolished walls which the artist collects from his hometown Uttar Pradesh and from other cities in India; The exhibition highlights Kumar Singh's interest in destroyed building sites and their legacy.

Five different assemblages of groups of individual human heads entitled *Look at You* provide the central focal point of the show although the theme of migration is further explored through two other series which will function as a dovetail to the heads.

In *Look at you*, Kumar Singh intentionally doesn't restrict himself to any Indian physiognomy but rather attempts to gather a compendium of humanity across both nations and time. Singh's poignant faces show no sense of desperation. They look out at us or across at each other with great poise and dignity.



Often I find myself near the doors that allow me to leave, 2017, Brick and mortar

Entitled *Plucked for the sake of the Gods*, the ambitious installation downstairs comprises of 72 individually carved roses made out of the same broken bricks. In the artist's own words, "*Plucked for the sake of the Gods* resonates with the feeling of a conscious act of displacement of something from its natural habitat only to appease the self-serving motives of a few gods". Although this work refers more directly to an idea of pilgrimage as a migration forced by a 'misguided' idea of religious belief or duty, it still contains the core concept of a radical giving up of one's home to undertake a journey with an uncertain future.

With *Often I find myself near the doors that allow me to leave*, the artist evokes the memory of the world people have been forced to leave behind yet which will remain with them, representing a permanent emotional pull to the possibility of an eventual return.

A social and humanitarian artist rather than a political one, Singh is interested in the history of his materials, in both a literal sense that deals not only with actual past events and architectural structures, but also in the implied human narratives that established them. By reintroducing a human element to these objects, the artist reminds us that the meaning of buildings, their homeliness and utility, can only exist through social interpretation. Furthermore, by asking us to consider the lives of the people who might once have inhabited them, he also poses inevitably emotionally charged questions about current human situations; 'where people might be, and what has become of their lives.'

Although still living and working in Uttar Pradesh - his hometown - which inspires the *raison d'être* of his art, his sculptures manage to transcend any possible mere local or national significance into a far broader relevance that relates to the human story since the dawn of time.

Girjesh Kumar Singh born in 1981 Girjesh is from Uttar Pradesh and lives and works in Vadodara, Gujarat. Graduated in Literature, Economics and Philosophy at art school in Benares first, completed his BFA in 2004 and then went on to Baroda to do his MFA in Sculpture from Maharaja Sayajirao University in 2006. Girjesh has participated in a number of group shows and had his first solo show with The Lalit Kala Academy, Varanasi in 2004. His second solo show was held at The Strand Art Room, Mumbai in 2010. He held his third solo show in October, 2012 in Mumbai and the show travelled to New Delhi in January, 2013. Girjesh's works have been acquired by important corporate and private collectors in India, Singapore, Chicago among others.