

## GIRJESH KUMAR SINGH

### LIFE IN THE RUBBLE



Girjesh Kumar Singh, *Laaga Chunari Mein Daag (The Stained Robe)*, 2023, bricks and mortar mounted on panel, 107x191x13cm

*Girjesh Kumar Singh - Life in the Rubble*  
26 May - 30 June

PV 25 May 6:30 - 8:30

gallery rosenfeld is delighted to be hosting the second solo European exhibition of Indian artist Girjesh Kumar Singh entitled "Life in the Rubble". Contemporaneously, there will be an accompanying exhibition entitled, "Looking at the Human" displaying a collection of sculptural heads from 450 BC - early 20th Century from a notable private collection.

Western civilisation from its earliest days has been centred around humanism, the human figure has nearly always been at the centre of the artist's search for truth. Even not delving very far back in time, Picasso, Soutine, Bacon, Freud, and Auerbach have shown us different ways of portraying human features. The overriding theme of both the shows asks the question, "What is it to be a Human?". Girjesh Kumar Singh creates his sculptures from his scavenging amidst the rubble of destroyed buildings in Uttar Pradesh, near where he lives. As the building material is brick, he works with the broken bricks which he finds at the various sites. As he himself states with great modesty: "the sculpture is already in the brick and I am merely completing the process".

The idea that out of what appears to be total destruction, just as with the first shoots of a plant after an extremely cold winter, life will find a way to always re-emerge. Viewing an exhibition of Singh's work, which comprises of installations of 15 meticulously sculpted human heads and single visions of architecture, is profoundly moving, not just for the impact of the works but even more for what it tells us about the human spirit.

The different heads are always individual and inspired from different ages of the human being, cultures, and epochs so what we find ourselves looking at is a compendium of the physiology of the human being in time. In this sense, the partner exhibition entitled, 'Looking at the Human' will show a selection of works from an important private British collection, which will represent a perfect dialogue with Singh's work as we find ourselves looking at various heads from various cultures and epochs. From a Cypriot monumental male votive head of c450. BC to a Gandra Head of Buddha from the 3rd or 4th century to a Hip Mask from the Edo period from the Benin Kingdom in Nigeria to a Korean head from the 1930's are just some the works which give an idea of the extremely wide net which has been used to put this show together.

Singh, due to his extreme humility, maintains his heads within a very realistic physiognomy, whereas the sculpted heads in the exhibition downstairs, emerging as they do from many different cultures, have a bewildering variety. This combination of shows has the aim not just to make us wonder at an artist's or an artisan's ability at expressing the mysteries and expressiveness of the human physiognomy but also Girjesh Kumar Singh's tenacity in working with such an unrelenting material as broken bricks to communicate the profound ability of human beings' endless quest for survival.