

Time, Space and Forms, Dhruva Mistry, Animationguru, New Delhi, p, September, 2010

There was post independent idealism in the air as my father decided for a settled and quiet life by moving to rural Charotar in central Gujarat from Bhavanagar in the 1960. Then, I was four and learnt to live with lamps and lanterns until the arrival of electricity on our street which reached to our street in a couple of years. My childhood seemed filled with magic drama of light and shadows of people and things which ended the day into an animated evening until I fell asleep. Green wilderness of the village surroundings enlivened my mother's stories with changing contours of the flickering shadows and silhouettes of childhood memories. Reveries of weathered walls, wood and painted and peeling surfaces offered abstract shapes and figurative allusions. Watching things grow from seed to plant, flower and fruit offered unique delight. Playing with leaves, thorns, flowers, twigs, papers, paints, scissors and glue opened up my world of visual interest. Hollow reeds, cut slivers of their outer shell, few sticks, thorns and small inedible fruits facilitated an absorbing play of skeletal forms reflecting visual structure of things that worked. Hollow wheat stems, new pipal leaves and sprouting mango stones were fun to turn them into blow whistles which made coarse and squealing high pitched sounds. Watching carpenters, potters, blacksmiths and odd street peddlers doing their work in the area nurtured a quiet interest in making objects of intent during formal training in sculpture at the University.

Association of Shilpa as Sculpture among variegated art, crafts and classical architectonic work in India, meant specialization of working with real materials and forms. It implied physical labour of working with different stones, wood, metals, and other things involving conventional crafts like carving, modelling, casting, chasing, lifting, building, improvised skills and use of mechanized tools and technology necessary to make forms of faith and functional belief in space. Each material revealed its own qualities, success, limits, possibilities and truth of its character that would explore for my requirements. Traditional sculpture catered social need, belief, myths and faith statues and effigies of the dead. Since 1900, sculpture as an art of the maker present forms of recognizable experience made with the materials in actual space exerting a different physicality than pictures and paintings.

Art reflects environment and ethos of the people shaping their curiosity of life, values and vision. I work to understand, discover and present secret life of forms reflecting reality of experience in space. Evolutionary ability to learn develops along with the desire and curiosity about the world, as an artist's work reflects suitable ways and means of visual

communication. I began to look into my sculptural objective of form, vis-à-vis space, to discover movement of eye, mind, thought and materials. Presence of forms in space evoked visual and perceptual reference and the delight of recalling the past and presenting the future. My ideas of work suggest individual means to an end presenting deliberation about work as I discovered thing a visual world through my moments and movement of inner and outer interest in life while pursuing delight of the forms.

“Sculpture would be much more difficult than painting which could be done in kitchen or bathroom and easy to tuck under the bed”, commented a fellow student in 1976. Avoiding the confinement, I had to learn to deal with the difficult things of materials and labour to explore outer and inner forms of things in space, the thing of my interest. Hands on training involved dealing with visual, spatial and practical inadequacies. Nonetheless, connotation of sculpture remained understandably soiled through its association with conventional crafts and skills of votive, devotional and utilitarian moulding of materials and forms. Its physicality, fragility, weight and difficulties of handling, packing, transit and transport required care, attention, labour and space which made sculpture comparably difficult. As a fresh graduate I wanted to do what I liked and never knew if my work would support and sustain my ideas of an art and life. Desire and need to work fostered my faith in the ideas of art, beauty and delight.

Depth, dimension and scope of ideas in space and materials affected my forms. Imagining things in the round as in two dimensional and real space enhanced sculptural conception. Drawing, sketching, model making and shaping forms of contemplation attracted me. Medium as material reflected economy and constraints of time, space and resources. A form in space encouraged the eye to move all around its presence. It revealed a unique and lively sense of movement space. Over the years since the late 1970s, a relentless pursuit of sculptural imagination with the help of drawing, painting on paper, printmaking, photography and computer since 1989, has led me from imaginary to the virtual and real work taking into account variety of constraints, be it visual, cultural, material or physical to shape nature of forms in imaginary or the real space, be it drawing, print or sculpture.

Dhruva Mistry

August, 2010, Vadodara

Brief CV 150 words

Dhruva Mistry was born in 1957, Kanjari, Gujarat. Studied MA, Sculpture, M. S. University of Baroda 1974-81 and went to Royal College of Art, London 1981-83 (British Council Scholarship). 1984-85 Artist in Residence at Kettle's Yard Gallery and Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge. Mistry has had regular solo exhibitions since 1981, including Asian Artist Today- Fukuoka Annual VII, Japan in 1994. Elected member of the Royal Academy of Arts, 1991. Returns to Vadodara, 1997. In 1999, Appointed Professor, Head of Sculpture and Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts, the M.S.Uni. of Baroda before quitting the Varsity. Awarded Hon. CBE by the Queen Elizabeth in 2001. He has exhibited in significant group shows in national and international exhibitions since 1979. Awarded Honorary Doctor of the University by the University of Birmingham in 2007. Mistry's work is held in major public and private collections in UK, Japan and India. Lives in Vadodara.
