



# NO CHILD'S PLAY

a solo show of sculptures by

INDIRA PURKAYASTHA GHOSH



Presents

# NO CHILD'S PLAY

a solo show of sculptures by  
**INDIRA PURKAYASTHA GHOSH**

**Curator: Rahul Bhattacharya**

**01- 07 August, 2019**

**Visual Arts Gallery**

India Habitat Centre

Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003

**14 - 31 August, 2019**

**Art Konsult**

3-A, Ground Floor, Hauz Khas Village,  
New Delhi-110016

**[www.artkonsult.com](http://www.artkonsult.com)**

Powered by

**ART&DEAL**  
THE ONLY MONTHLY ART MAGAZINE IN INDIA

Front & Back Cover: Macaulay Express

Inside front & Back Cover: Detail of A Place to Play -2

Catalogue Text: Rahul Bhattacharya

Design: Prashanta Seal

Printed at: Creative Offset, New Delhi

Art Konsult

3-A, Basement, Hauz Khas Village

New Delhi-110016

M: + 91-9811757020, 9988754268,

Ph: 011-26566898;

Email: [artkonsultinfo@gmail.com](mailto:artkonsultinfo@gmail.com),

# NO CHILD'S PLAY

Contemporary India is witnessing its own tryst with modernity. Unlike in the colonial times or even in the decades post-independence, this version of modernity is powered by a technological-financial machine which is globalised, post-national and almost post-human. Of course, this neo-liberal, postcolonial modernity, like the one of the past comes to us garbed in a creative grand narrative, powered by visions of a machine lead globalised era; yet, as it powers on, it leaves behind residues of loss of utopic visions and a disengagement with the earth itself. Possibly, the manifestation of this comes through in our increasing disconnect with our day-to-day.

There are spaces and moments in our lives that just go by, often unnoticed in our day to day business living and succeeding. Perhaps our continuing fascination with innocence has ensured that children continue to evoke a romanticism. This feels special at a time when our emotional disconnect with 'nature' is almost complete. In today's collage of realities, desires and dystopias, the 'child' has remained as the only connection between hope and future. Yet, in a neoliberal India, romanticism today can no longer be reactive to modernism and in deep empathy with the pre-modern. Romanticism can now be felt as the irresolvable tension between modernity, tradition and contemporaneity. In aesthetic terms, the key is to understand romanticism is, as a sense rather than as a system of thought, a sensibility rather than a paradigm, an attitude which needs to discover its own expressive language. Indira Purkayastha Ghosh's current body of work is rooted in this tense romanticism, the 'child' for her becoming a 'rabbit-hole' into the tragic and the sublime, creating the possibility of an ironical, critique of our times, playing with both desire and apathy.

In a decade dominated by conceptual art and at a time when the discipline of sculpture has been overtaken by installation, Indira's work comes as a gush of fresh air, opening up new horizons contemporary Indian sculpture. For her, it is important to make sculptures that have the power to evoke emotions, to create some warmth in this world of coldness. Over the last many years, she has been practising and evolving a sculptural language deeply engaged with nostalgia, materials and narration. Through these engagements, she has developed a personal articulation of contemporaneity which is a powerful 'alternate' to the neoliberal aesthetics which largely defines it.

*"Being based out of Raipur gives me an edge; it gives me a new imagination of contemporary life which is difficult to access from the centres of Delhi, Mumbai or Kolkata. Chhattisgarh being a tribal state, has its own aesthetic tradition and visual culture, as a sculptor, I feel anchored by it. Being a teacher keeps me connected with children, playfulness and fantasies. "*

Over the years she has been developing a complex aesthetic expression layering and fusing strands of folk, tribal art modernism to arrive at a language, creating sculptures that are spectacular and intimate at the same time. Indira has a rare ability to combine narrativity and scale in a manner and consistency not seen since Ramkinker Baij. As an artist, she has always been interested in giving aesthetic forms to abandoned objects and accidents. She began doing collage at the age of fourteen and since then her works continue to be inspired by what she finds around her. Slowly as a sculptor, she began to use abandoned wood, furniture using them as starting points for her imagination, beginning her love affair with wood.

The scale and execution of her works speak not just of life experiences, imaginations and deep inspirations, they also contain a deep engagement with skill and sculpture making. The eastern part of India has a long history of working with discarded wood and entering the fantasyland of children. It is also a land of wooden dolls and Adivasi totems. Yet, through all this her deep training in sculpture at the Banaras Hindu University comes through; the engagement with the 'outdoor', the idea of large scale, focus on skill, execution and craftsmanship. Indira uses it to fill life into her forms almost as if trying to evoke sympathetic magic.

Her poignant observations of daily life from a child's point of view, and the ability to translate deeply personalised tropes into sculptural forms are inspired by her experiences as a mother and an educator. Being an art educator for over two decades has given Indira the perspective and empathy to understand children coming from different social backgrounds, to observe their realities, desires and anxieties. Importantly, it also creates for her a perspective point allowing for a self-reflective about her own motherhood/mothering. Teaching exposed her to the dystopic world of the knowledge industry, and also to the vast power in children to explore fantasies and create narratives, which are sincere and playful at the same time. 'No Child's Play' brings together a body of work which are sculptural expressions of stories around power, play and hope. The show becomes a rich container of an adult's struggle to imbibe to experience and articulate the emotions of children.

Though storytelling, play and improvisation are important to her art practice, yet, her large scale works are sculptural manifestations of carefully crafted Kafkaesque nightmares. 'Pressure Cooker', (2017, wood & aluminium,) shows a gigantic pressure-cooker, standing tall like a factory-like building or a fearsome god. In this long vertical composition, we see robotic arts crawling from far away through a broken wall, reaching it with homage and fear. The pressure-cooker itself is frothing over (in self-importance and uselessness?) The work is deeply disturbing even as it is beautiful forcing us to be engaged in this startling critique of the education system. A grim take on how power operates inside education systems, the temptations how power and how it tarnishes young souls that go through its structure.

**Being based out of Raipur gives me an edge; it gives me a new imagination of contemporary life which is difficult to access from the centres of Delhi, Mumbai or Kolkata. Chhattisgarh being a tribal state, has its own aesthetic tradition and visual culture, as a sculptor, I feel anchored by it. Being a teacher keeps me connected with children, playfulness and fantasies."**

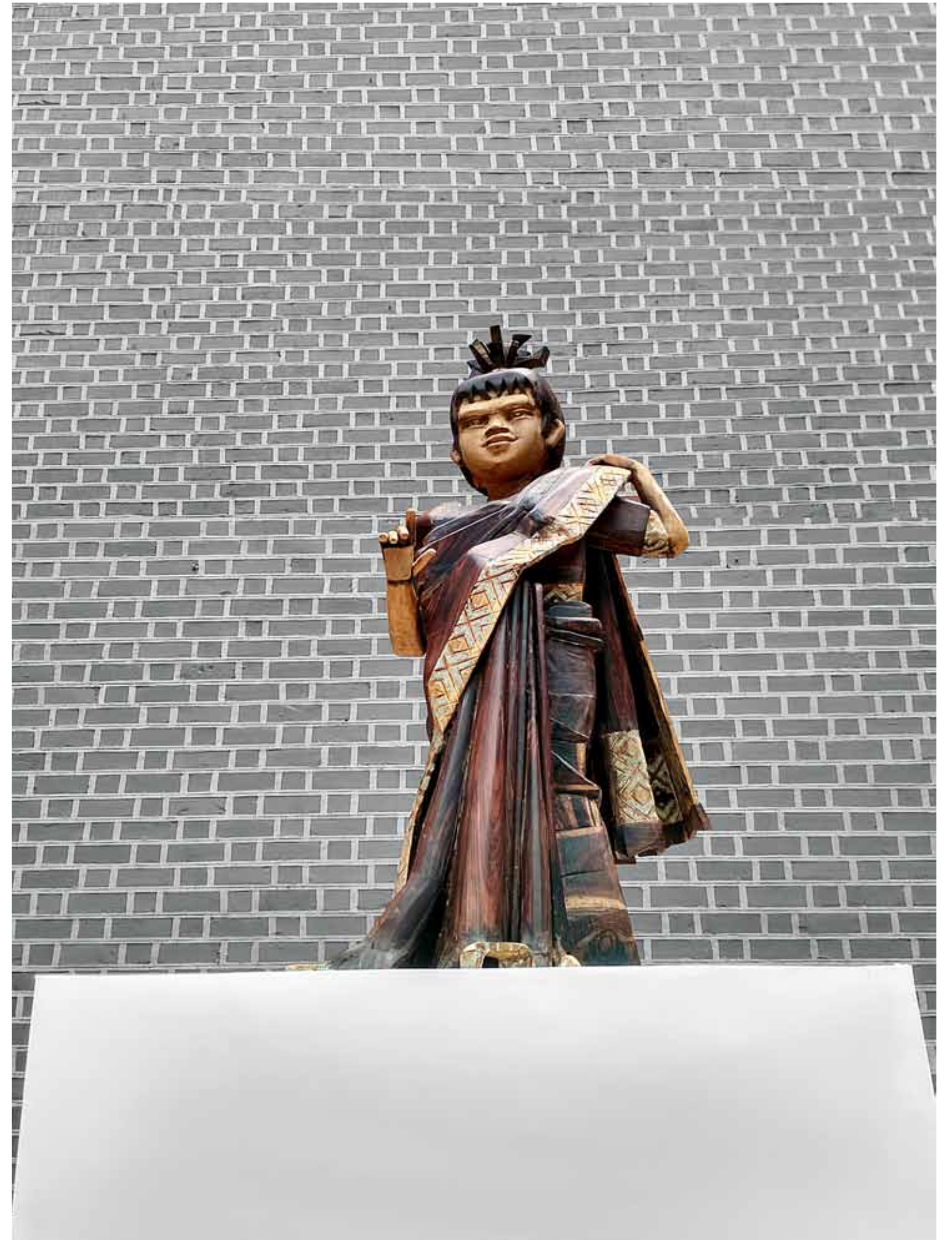
No Child's Play

3.3 X 2.2 X 1.8 ft.

Wood ( Shishem, Bija, Haldu )

Aluminium dust & Resin, Additional- Ply

2019





*"In my works, medium and concept develop simultaneously, each exploring the other. I have always been interested in giving aesthetic forms to abandoned objects. I work with wood scraps of different colours and different textures, pasting together according to the shapes and concepts, in a playful manner. I use metal scraps, wires, metal dust in many of my works. I blend metal to show strong sentiments and assert my feelings. These are the manifestations of the inherent strengths within all of us, which mostly lie dormant. I depicted the character of a bird through Bamboo roots. Sometimes neglected parts of woods arouse in me significant thoughts. With gourd somewhere, I tried to show lightness and sometimes I have used it to show heaviness too."*

Her works carry a memory of our folk cultures and their visual language without being overtly derivative of those traditions. There seems to be an inherent connection with folk traditions and their idea of sympathetic magic. Purkayastha's forms and their silence speak of an artist who is aware of the forces and memories that inform her work and more importantly is in sync with their conscious altering possibilities in the face of contemporaneity. Indira has a rare ability to combine narrativity and spectacular scale in a manner and consistency not seen since Ramkinker Baij. She uses these qualities to create her monumental poetic metaphors. Working predominantly in the medium of wood, Indira has arrived at a visual style which combines the material practices and understanding of modernism to arrive at an extremely personalised expression of melancholia within the aesthetics of play.

Her poignant observations and the ability to translate deeply personalised tropes into sculptural forms are inspired by her experiences as a mother and an educator. Being an art educator for over two decades has given Indira the perspective and empathy to understand children coming from different social backgrounds, to observe their enactments of fantasies and their ability to find wonder in the mundane. Importantly, it also creates for her a perspective to be self-reflective about her own motherhood/mothering, opening up delicate sensibilities. She almost becomes a translator of maladies from the world of children to ours.

Incidentally, the exhibition flows through the entire month of August; a break in a hectic admission season that is kick started by the announcement of CBSE results and opening of the primary school admission window. This is also the time when ideas of success and directions for the future are mapped onto (often very) young minds. Maybe it is the perfect moment to look at children again, reflect upon the manner we shape them and opening up possibilities of being shaped by them. No Childs Play is an exhibition distinctive in its scale and use of metaphors. Inspired by and dedicated to children and a powerful neo-romantic take on contemporary culture.

**Rahul Bhattacharya**

Monsoon 2019

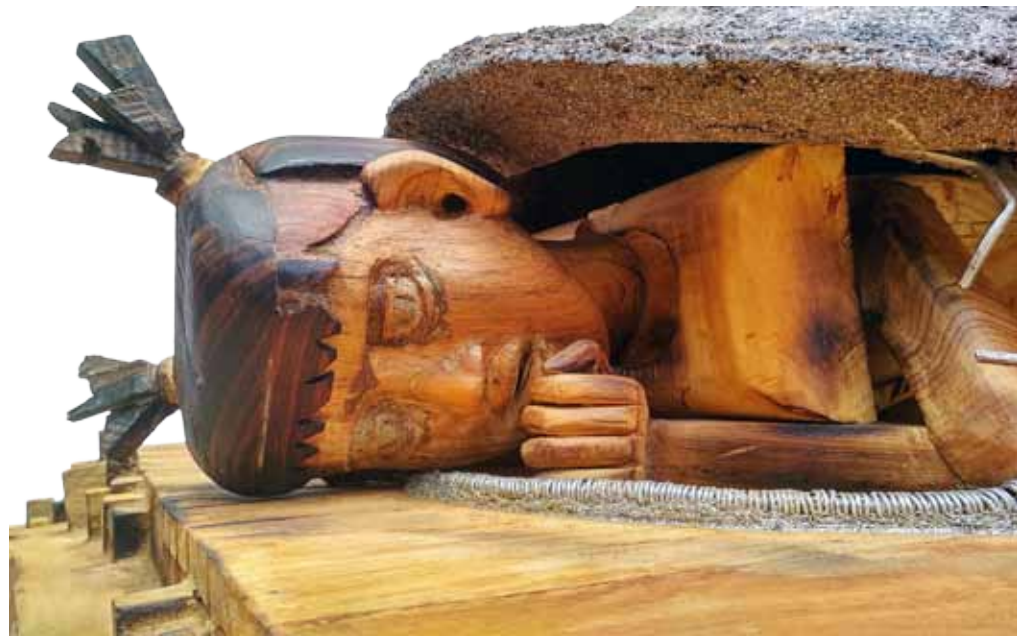


Learning to Fly  
3 X 2.25 X 1.7 ft.  
Wood & Iron Scrap  
2010



Utopia of Adults  
3.3 X 1.6 x 2 ft.  
Wood & Brass  
2013





No Child's Play - 2  
3.3 X 3.3 X 1.8 ft.  
Wood(Shishem, Teak, Bija, Haldu, Pine)  
Aluminium Dust & Scrap, Resin  
Additional- Nails & Iron rod  
2019







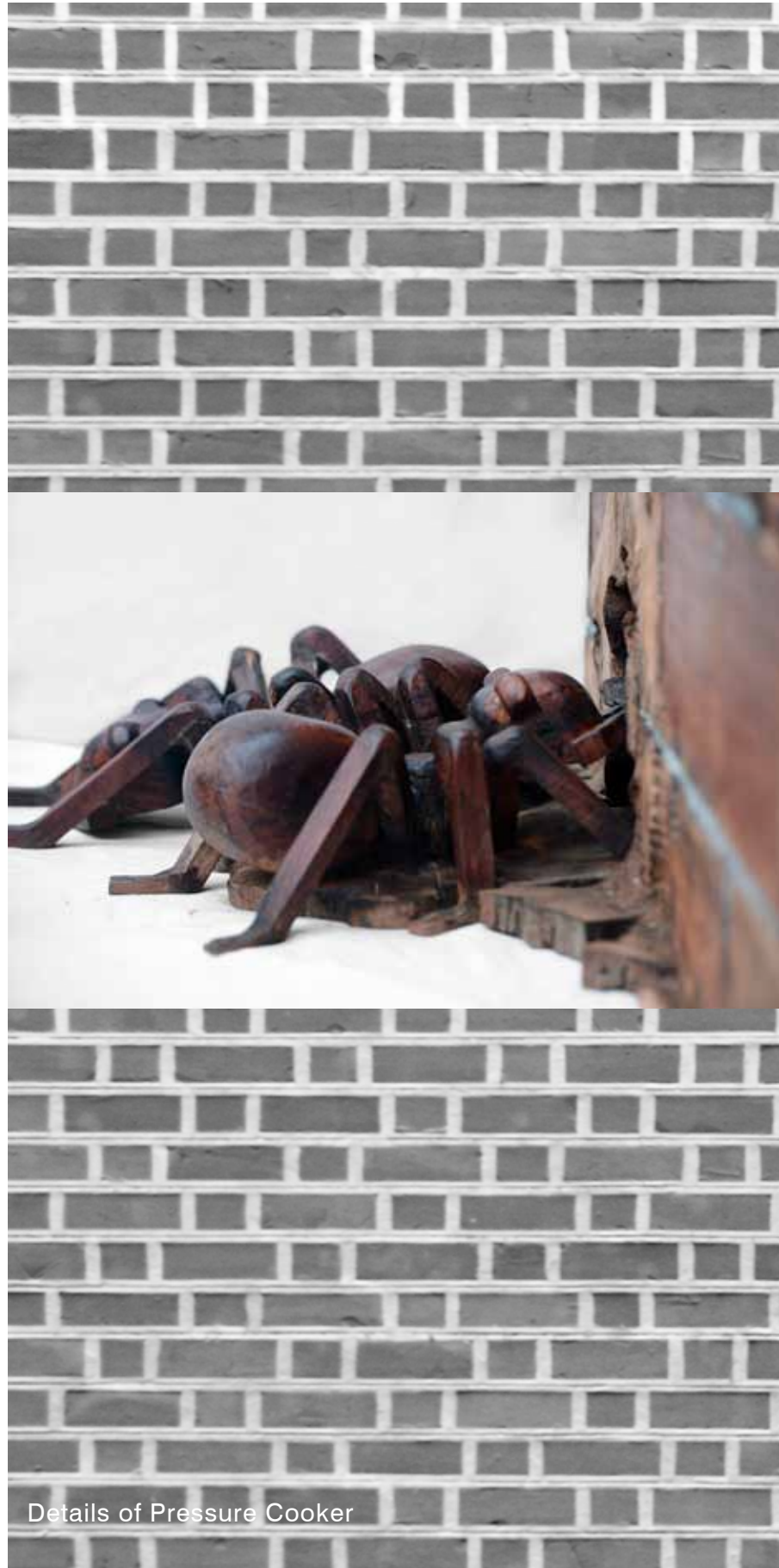
Details of Macaulay Express

Macaulay Express  
16 X 7.5 X 7.5 ft.  
Wood( Bija, Shishem, Haldu , Pine & teak)  
Additional- Ply, Nails & strings  
2019



A Place to Play  
2.3 X 2.2 X 1.8 ft.  
Wood  
2014





Pressure Cooker

25 X 5.3 X 8 ft.

Wood(Teak, Shishem, Bija ), Aluminium Dust & Resin

Additional -Ply, Iron Rod, Nails

2016



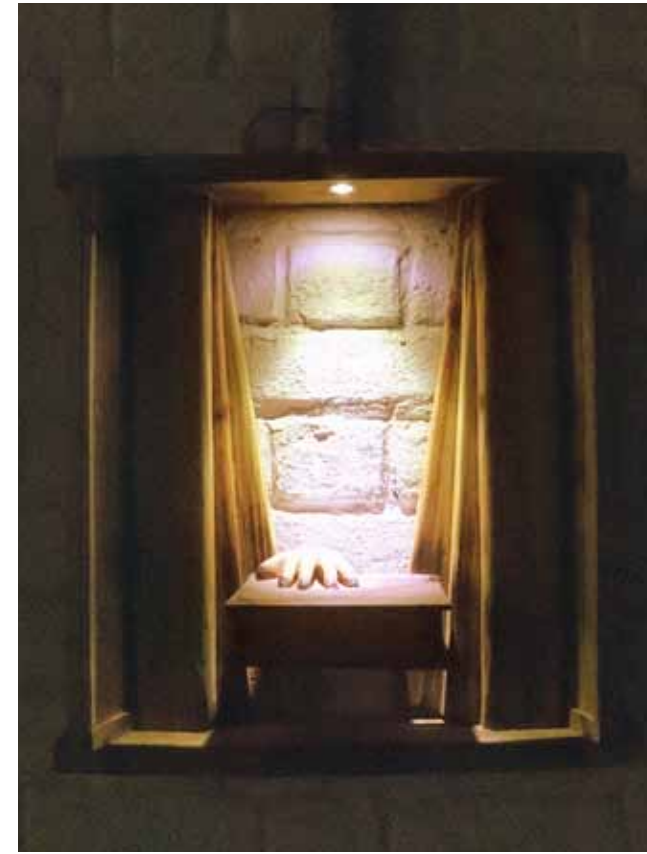
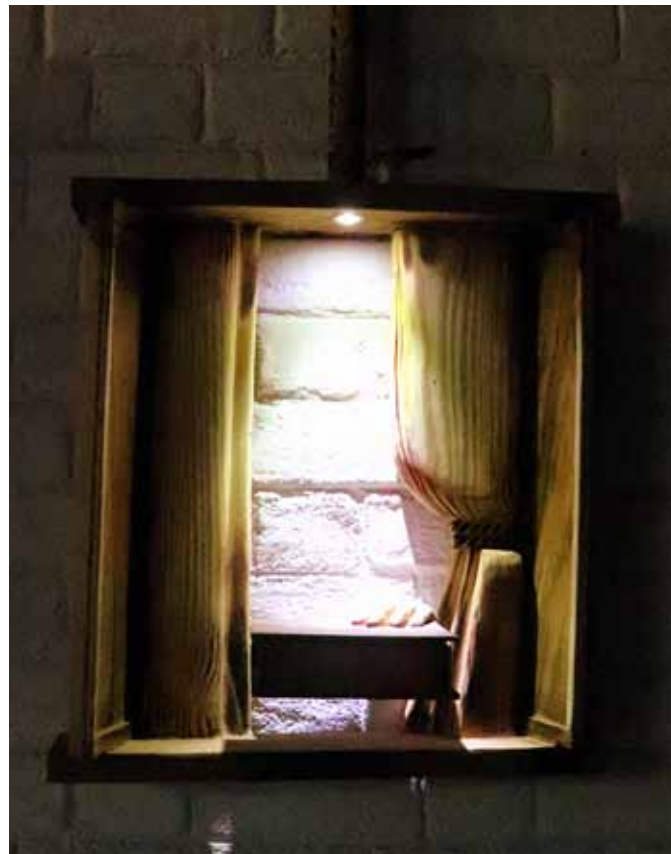


Detail of Assembly of Angels



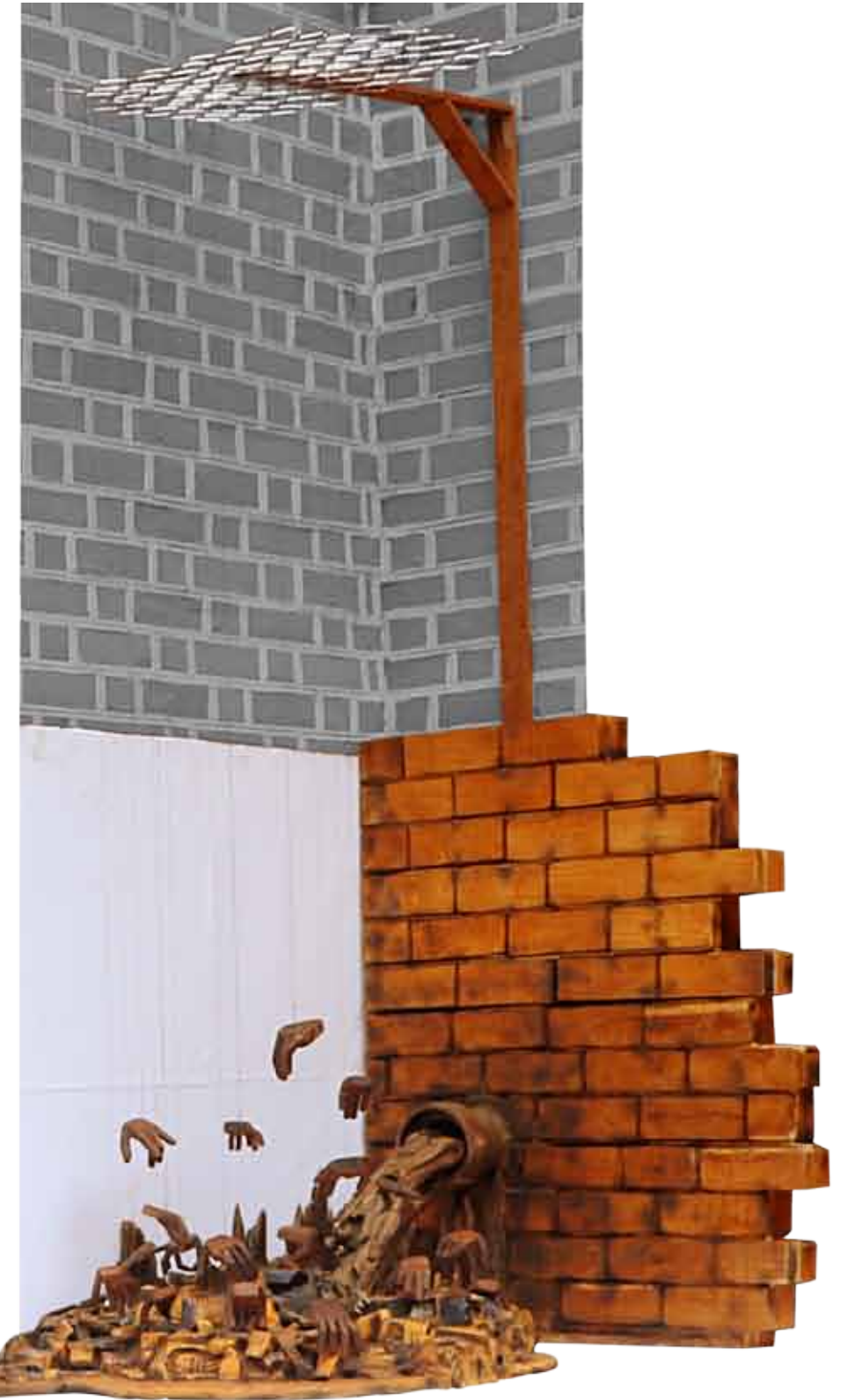
Assembly of Angels  
9 X 3 X 3.5 ft.  
Wood & GI scrap  
2016





Reading by the Window  
20 X 5.3 X 0.9 ft.  
Wood ( Teak,Pine,Shishem, Haldu)  
Stoneware, Lazer light, Iron scrap  
2018





A Place to Play -2  
14 X 3.3 X 4 ft.  
Wood( Bija,Teak,Sishem,Haldu,Pine)  
Stoneware, Additional- Ply & String  
2019



**“In my works, medium and concept develop simultaneously, each exploring the other. I have always been interested in giving aesthetic forms to abandoned objects. I work with wood scraps of different colours and different textured, pasting together according to the shapes and concepts, in a playful manner. I use metal scraps, wires, metal dust in many of my works. I blend metal to show strong sentiments and assert my feelings. These are the manifestations of the inherent strengths within all of us, which mostly lie dormant. I depicted the character of a bird through Bamboo roots. Sometimes neglected parts of woods arouse in me significant thoughts. With gourd somewhere, I tried to show lightness and sometimes I have used it to show heaviness too.”**



Learning to Fly -2

16 X 3 X 2.5 ft.

Wood(Teak, Shishem,Haldu)

Scrap Iron, Additional- Nails

2019





Dreaming of Dreams  
6 X 4 X 2.6 ft.  
Wood( Shisham, Haldu,Teak, Bija, Pine )  
Additional- Ply,Nails& Iron rod  
2019



Hungry Games  
2.9 X 2.9 X 1.6 ft.  
Wood  
2013

The feel of mud  
3.8 X 2 X 2.8 ft.  
Wood (Teak, Haldu, Pine)  
2016





A Garden of Dreams  
7 X 7 X 8 ft.  
Wood( Bija, Teak ,Shishem, Haldu)  
Aluminium Scrap, Gourd  
Additional- ply, nails, aluminium  
2019



## **INDIRA PURKAYASTHA GHOSH**

Date of Birth: 24th March 1971

### **Education**

1991: B.F.A. from B.H.U.

1994: M.F.A from B.H.U.

Scholarships

1994-96: National Cultural Scholarship Ministry of HRD, Govt. Of India

1997-99: Junior Fellowship, Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India.

### **Awards**

1993: Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata.

1992 & 93: Maha Koshal Kala Parishad, Raipur

1994: SCZCC Nagpur. Professional category

1996: Academy of Fine Arts & Crafts Society, Kolkata.

1998: Asha Mukul Das Award, Academy of Fine Arts & Crafts Society, Kolkata.

1998: Academy Award, Academy Of Fine Arts, Kolkata

2007: 11th All India Art Exhibition, LKA, Lucknow, UP

2017: Prafulla Dahanukar West Zone Gold Award

2018: National Akademy Award, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

### **Camps**

1997: Sculpture & Mural Workshop, Lalit Kala Kendra, Kolkata.

1999: 10 Days Workshop with German Sculptor Engolf- Eschen-Bacgh. organized by Maxmuller Bhawan, Kolkata.

2001: Sculpture Workshop, Regional Round Square International Conference held at Vidya Devi Jindal School, Hisar.

2006: National Level Sculpture Workshop, Shilpgram, Udaipur.

2010: Regional stone carving camp, Bodhgaya,

2017: National Metal Casting camp, LKA Kol. At Imphal

### **Solo Show :**

2009: Jehangir Art gallery, Mumbai Gallery No. 3

2016: Jehangir Art gallery, Mumbai Gallery No. 1

### **Group Show**

2018: Extending the Contemporary, Art Konsult, New Delhi

2014: Traces, Shridharani Art Gallery, New Delhi

2014: The Eastern Light, Birla Academy Of Art & Culture, Kolkata

2012: Samyatsar, Rabindra Bhawan, LKA, New Delhi

1997: Figment, Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata

1987: Faculty of Visual Arts, BHU, Varanasi

### **Participation**

2017: Nehru Centre, Prafulla Dahanukar Art Contest

2015: 56th National Exhibition, Rabindra Bhawan, LKA, New Delhi

2015: 28Th National Exhibition of contemporary Art, SCZCC, Nagpur

2007: 11th All India Exhibition, LKA, Lucknow

1999: Vishwa Banga Sammelan, Kolkata

1999: PARAMA, La Mere Art Gallery, Kolkata

1998: Young Faces in Contemporary Indian Art, Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata

1998: 63rd Annual All India Art Exhibition, Academy Of Fine Arts, Kolkata

1997: 38th National Exhibition of Art, LKA, Bangalore

1991, 96-98: Annual Exhibition, Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata

1996: 61st Annual All India Art Exhibition, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata

1996: AIFACS, New Delhi

1994: SCZCC, Nagpur

1994: All India Art Exhibition, State LKA, Lucknow

1993 & 92: Maha Koshal Kala Parishad, Raipur

1991: All India Exhibition, Jaipur

### **Collections**

1994: South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur.

1997: National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi.

1997: ABC Art Gallery, Tata Timken

2009: Cymroza Art Gallery, Mumbai

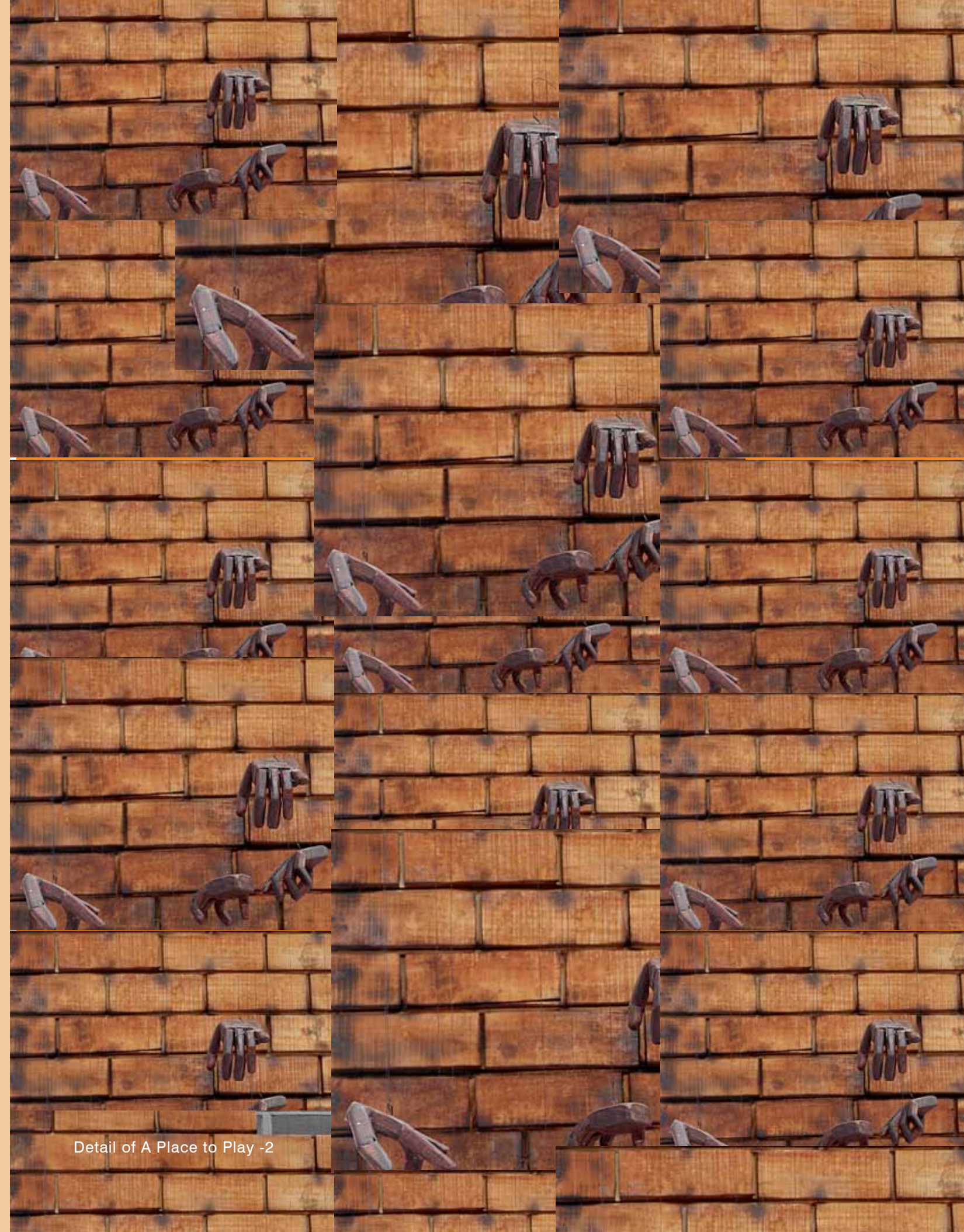
2009: ACC Cement Headquarters, Cement House, Mumbai

2009: Creative Impex, New Delhi

2016: Somaiya Vidya Vihar, Mumbai

2017: Floodlight foundation, New Delhi

**Rahul Bhattacharya** is an educationist, art historian and a curator; currently Associate Professor at the Department of Visual Communication. He has been pursuing independent writing, curating exhibitions, art education spaces and large scale public art projects. Over the last 15 years. He was the Managing Editor of Art&Deal Magazine and the founding Conveyor MATI. He is also the co-founder Kolkata International Performance Art Festival as well as the NINE Schools of Art.



Detail of A Place to Play -2





3-A, Ground Floor, Hauz Khas Village, New Delhi-110016  
M: +91-9811757020, 9988754268, Ph: 011-26566898;  
Email: artkonsultinfo@gmail.com, Web: www.artkonsult.com

