

RANAJIT SINHA

Ottawa, ON

BIOGRAPHY

Ranajit Sinha is a contemporary Canadian artist. He was born and raised in New Delhi, India, and is currently based in Ottawa, ON. His sculpted paintings cause the viewer to physically engage in the subjective act of discovery. Through visual representations, his work reflects tangibility and the sentient reality of changing identities.

Sinha received his BFA degree from Delhi College of Art, New Delhi, an MFA in Print Making from Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan in India, and an MFA degree in Painting from Central Washington University, with a teaching assistantship grant. During this time he was awarded the National Academy Award, All India Fine Arts & Crafts society (AIFACS), and the National Research Grant award.

Sinha has exhibited nationally and internationally, including the National Academy of Fine Arts Gallery, New Delhi, India; Sarah Spurgeon gallery, Ellensburg, WA, USA.; the Varley Art Gallery, Unionville, Canada; Canadian Sculpture Center, Toronto; Agora Gallery, Chelsea, New York; and Saw Video, Ottawa, ON, Canada.

Sinha has received various awards and grants in both Canada and India and his works have been inducted into various public and private collections including the City of Ottawa's Direct Purchase Program. In 2020, The City of Ottawa's Public Art Program launched a project titled *Microcosm* as a response to the global pandemic and in solidarity with anti-racism movements. Sinha was selected as one of the seven artists to represent his local ward.

Sinha has worked in the advertising world with reputed companies such as Saatchi & Saatchi and Young & Rubicam for a period before migrating to Canada, during his stay in United Arab Emirates.

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ARTIST STATEMENT

In my work, I focus on the individual as a concrete node, an intersection of abstract global and local forces. This interest springs from my own experience as an immigrant. Born in India and living in Canada, I have a relationship with two geographic regions, two physical spaces that are located on the opposite sides of the globe but overlap each other in the internal space of my body and even deeper, my mind. This duality has played an important role in every aspect of my personal and artistic life. I work mostly with burnt wood, oil and acrylic color, digital prints, and drawings that incorporate new media. These materials synthesize a spiritual self-awareness with my diverse cultural experience revolving around the human struggle for spiritual and political peace from a multicultural perspective.

The exposing of stretcher bars is inspired by Michael Asher's signature work involving the removal of the gallery wall that divided the office from the exhibition space; thereby focusing attention on the moneymaking business behind "priceless art". This show was exhibited at Claire Copley Gallery, LA in 1974. Unlike Asher's critique of the art market, my focus on the structural support functions to honour and undermine. The stretcher bars, a usually unseen support, are revealed as scaffolding; the structure of the self, around and through which swirl the dynamic forces to which I refer.

In a rapidly changing world, the identities of individuals require fluidity, constant movement, remapping of everything around us, physically and psychologically. One's identity is never an accomplished reality. We are what we live and breathe. In my perspective change of identity is a process of creation, destruction and re-creation whether it is in the physical world or the spiritual world. Through visual representations, I aim to show the tangibility, the sentient reality of changing identities.

My proposed ongoing project titled *Embodiment of Identity* is multi-layered, and emphasizes the non-physical evolution of abolishing and renewing one's identity. This idea originates from my observation of Hindu funeral rituals, where the body is burnt to charcoal, setting the soul or the subtle body or *Jiv-Atma*, free to take a new physical body or form. My art process goes through a similar cycle: an idea takes a form, develops, and is projected in a medium to create a new form, a new artwork. The process continues thereafter giving birth to a new concept which goes through the same phases of the cycle spawning a new identity each time.

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ORIGINS & FUTURES - CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Sinha pushes the boundaries between painting and sculpture to explore the spiritual and social constructions behind his Indian-Canadian identity. Through the modification and exposure of the canvas support, Sinha brings a sense of fluid changeability to the time-worn idea of the stable wooden stretcher. A skeletal framework for the draping canvas, the exposed bones of the stretcher become a metaphor for the armature of the spiritual self.

Sinha seems to be hunting for the origins of our inner world – where is it that we harbor the self? In *Life Comes From Life* the artist has included a digital print rendition of his own DNA scan in blues, reds, and greens. We are reminded that we are all born from abstract code within ourselves, genes which structure our physical and psychological form. The contrast between Sinha's abstraction of DNA and the raw presence of wood ties together the conceptual and the sensual.

The delicacy of Sinha's wood-burning combined with the natural growth lines of trees create topographical maps of the human figure. Sinha's references to growth and burning away, inspired by the Hindu funeral ritual *Jiv-Atma*, mirror his conviction that the self is not a solidified form but an ever-changing process of transformation. Sinha's charred figures, surrounded by the unsteady space of torn canvas, become emblems of the transitory self.

- Tiffany April
Curator

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CV

EDUCATION

- 2002 MFA, Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA, USA
- 2009 IFCO Filmmakers of Diversity Workshop Series, Ottawa
- 2009 Glass Art workshop, Northern Art Glass Inc. Ottawa
- 2010 Video and film Workshops at Saw Video

SELECTED SOLO SHOWS

- 2018 Embodiment of Identity, Gallery Luz, Montreal
- 2012 Third Space, ASP gallery, Ottawa, Ontario
- 2010 Extinction, Atrium Art Gallery, Ottawa, Ontario
- 2006 Transmigration, Gloucester Gallery, Ottawa, Canada
- 2004 Passage, Sarah Spurgeon gallery, Ellensburg, WA, USA

SELECTED GROUP SHOWS

- 2022 *Origins & Futures*, Wall Space Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 2020 *The Beginning*, Art Pilgrims, Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi, India
- 2020 *HINDSIGHT*, 2020 addition to the city of Ottawa art collection, City Hall and Karsh Masson Gallery, Ottawa, ON
- 2016 *Art Instructor's show*, Nepean Visual Art Centre, Ottawa, ON
- 2015 *Art Instructor's show*, Nepean Visual Art Centre, Ottawa, ON
- 2012 *Jumpstart*, Animation-Third Space, at Saw Video, Ottawa, ON
- 2010 *Annual Exhibition*, AOE Arts Council, Shenkman Centre, Ottawa, ON
- 2009 *Annual Exhibition*, AOE Arts Council, Shenkman Centre, Ottawa, ON
- 2007 *34TH Annual Juried Show*, Art Gallery of Peel, Ontario, Canada
- 2007 *Canadian artist without borders*, Varley Art Gallery, Unionville, ON
- 2007 *Earth Bound IV*, Canadian Sculpture Center, Toronto, ON
- 2006 *A Fine Balance*, National Capital Network of Sculptors, Old City Hall, Ottawa, ON
- 2006 *East/West*, Canadian Sculpture Center, Toronto, ON
- 2006 *SSC Member's Exhibition*, John B. Aird Gallery, Toronto, ON
- 2005 *New Members 2005*, Canadian Sculpture Center, Toronto, ON
- 2005 *Dimensions 2005*, National Capital Network of Sculptors, Ottawa, ON
- 2005 *International Art Exhibition*, Agora Gallery, Chelsea, New York, USA
- 2005 *Toronto Outdoor Art Show*, Nathan Philip Square, Toronto, ON
- 2005 *Group Show*, Foyer Art Gallery, Nepean Visual Arts Centre, Ottawa, ON

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- 2003 *Annual Juried Art Show*, Sarah Spurgeon gallery, Ellensburg, WA, USA
- 2002 *Annual Juried Art Show*, Sarah Spurgeon gallery, Ellensburg, WA, USA
- 2002 *Annual Art Show*, Color and Form Society, Art Gallery of Mississauga, ON
- 2002 *Group Show*, Color and Form Society, Hummingbird Center, Toronto, ON
- 2002 *Annual Art Show*, SAVAC, Harbourfront Center, Toronto, ON
- 2001 *Annual Art Show*, Annex Patio, Toronto, ON
- 2001 *Annual Art Show*, SAVAC, Harbourfront Center, Toronto, ON
- 2001 *Fool's Gold*, Pteros Gallery, Toronto, ON

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CRITICAL REVIEWS

- Art News, *Selections 2009 Review*, AOE Arts Council, Ottawa, December 2009
- Artist-Run-Culture Reviews, MIX 31.4 *a declaration of creative independence*, Mix Magazine, pg. 44
- Art Reviews, *Fool's Gold*, gallery@pteros.com, Toronto, 2000
- Arts link, *Canadian Artists without Borders*, York Region, On, Oct 12, 2006
- Clay Chris, *Artist receive recognition for their efforts*, The Mississauga News, May 18, 2007, pg. 17
- Clay Chris, *Pair of Mississauga artists wins at Peel Exhibition*, Arts and Entertainment, Mississauga, On, May 20, 2007
- Kirby Patricia, *Is it a painting? Is it a sculpture?* The Star, Ottawa, Canada, July 28, 2006
- Novgorodoff Danica, the 2005 SoHo/Chelsea International art Competition, *Art Reviews*, www.agoragallery.com, New York, 2005
- Rogers Television, *Mississauga Life*, Interview with Kim McClear, Television Interview, Sept 24, 2007
- Smith Gerald, *Artists offer cool Comfort at Foyer Gallery*, Nepean This Week, Nepean, March 18, 2005
- Staff reporter, *Arts Council names top talents*, Mississauga News, Ontario, September 19, 2007, pg. A9
- Staff reporter, *Racism still burns*, Arts. Society, Ottawa Citizen, Ottawa, On, Oct 24, 2020

AWARDS AND PREVIOUS GRANTS RECEIVED

- 2020 Awarded for public art project "Microcosm", City of Ottawa
- 2017 Project Grant Award-Professional Artist category, Arts Funding Ottawa
- 2012 Jumpstart grant, Saw video, Ottawa
- 2010 Juror's Award, Annual Exhibition, AOE Arts Council, Shenkman Centre, Ottawa,
- 2009 Project Grant Award, Ontario Arts Council, Canada
- 2009 Juror's Award, Annual Exhibition, AOE Arts Council, Shenkman Centre, Ottawa, Canada

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- 2007** Mississauga Arts Awards, Nominated as one of the three finalists in professional artist category, Mississauga, On
- 2007** Jurors' Award, 34TH Annual Juried Show, Art Gallery of Peel, Ontario
- 2007** Project Grant award - Ontario Arts Council, Ottawa
- 2006** Project Grant Award-Professional Artist category, Arts Funding Ottawa
- 2005** International Art Exhibition Award, Agora Gallery, Chelsea, New York, USA
- 2003** C2F Award, Juried Show, Sarah Spurgeon Gallery, WA, USA
- 2002** Juried Art Show Award, Art Gallery of CWU, Ellensburg, WA, USA

COLLECTIONS

- City of Ottawa, public art collection (2020)
- Varley Art Gallery, Toronto, ON, (2020)
- Raganjali School of Music, MA, USA
- Central Washington University, WA, USA
- Al fardan Centre, Sharjah, UAE
- Royal Palace of Dubai, UAE
- Dubai Art Center, United Arab Emirates
- National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, India
- National Academy of Art, New Delhi
- Delhi College of Arts, New Delhi, India
- Visva-Bharati Gallery, Kala Bhavan, India
- National Academy, Fine Arts, New Delhi, India
- Trade Centre of India, New Delhi

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