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The Call Of The Sea: Kumari Nahappan The Acclaimed Artist Who Uses Seeds As Inspiration

Acclaimed artist, Kumari Nahappan, is set to showcase her artwork in an exhibition called, "The Call Of The Sea", which involves a group of 12 talented female artists.

Jan 05, 2021 | By Joseph Low



Kumari Nahappan's art pieces are well-known throughout the world and having been invited to the prestigious Venice Biennale is a testament of her mastery in the field. To be able to showcase her works overseas and getting heaps of recognition for it speaks volumes of Nahappan's unique perception of integrating her cultural beliefs and roots into the contemporary art scene that's traditionally dominated by western ideals.

Prior to being a full-fledged artist, Nahappan was an interior designer and also taught the history of art, architecture and design at a school. She moved to Singapore in the late '80s and has since based in the sunny island.



Saga, Bronze (2007), Terminal 3 Changi Airport, Singapore

Catch a glimpse of Kumari Nahappan's works in the exhibition, *The Call Of The Sea*. Ahead is an exclusive interview with the artist where she shares more about herself and her creative process.

You originate from Malaysia (Klang), you are now based in Singapore. Tell us about your first steps as an artist?

I have been based in Singapore for the last 31 years. Recollection is not an easy one. Deep interest and connecting 'dots' were probably the first steps. In time the dots changed to punctuation marks and I created works in various mediums visually and coined them into a series. I see my works as [a] continuum. It builds and layers over time.



Big Foot #1 and #2, Bronze (2010), 136 x 70 32 cm and 140 x 50 x 32 cm

What is your creative process like?

Depending on the subject matter the creative process changes. I am a firm believer in first hand information, hence my research takes me to basics. Exploring, experimentation, gardening, reading, photography, travel are all part of the process. The methodology is woven like a spider's web incorporating multiple processes to reach the 'goal'. (This is when the heart, the head and the hand come together.)



Ink-Bit Bones (2010), 65 x 55 x 65 cm

Where do you find your inspiration? What is the most challenging part about creating your artwork?

Inspiration comes from life and experiences of daily life. Life opens many windows and from these compartments, you visualise images that tell your stories and in time I stitch these stories to make sense for myself. Challenges are part of the process and that is what I find most rewarding as it takes you to unknown spaces.

What emotions do you hope the viewers experience when looking at your art?

Be it painting, sculpture or installation I like it to be easy on the mind with multiple readings. I hope my audience will have an elevating experience when viewing the works. The 'take away' evolves with time and age.



You have today collectors around the world. You are referenced amongst the leading global art websites. What does such recognition inspire you?

Recognition is subjective. Ultimately, you carry on doing what defines you as an artist. Faith, hard work, patience is what takes you through this journey.

What is the role the artist plays in the society?

Roles of an artist can be varied. Depending on creations they can take a receptive audience on a journey in TIME. They can create awareness, provoke thought, build bridges and cross borders with an artistic licence.



out of the blue: Hope, Mixed Media on Paper (2020), 130 x 100 cm

The five words that describe best your art?

ENERGY, SPACE, TIME, PLAYFUL, MONUMENTAL.

You published a book, "FLUXION". Kindly let our readers know what will they discover inside?

'FLUXION' is a documentation of artworks created over 25 years. It is a monograph which took over 5 years to come together. It showcases paintings, sculptures and installations. It is an in-depth writing on Art & Thoughts by art historian, TK Sabapathy

What can visitors expect to see from you at THE CALL OF THE SEA?

THE CALL OF THE SEA showcases a cluster of 5 red seeds all attached (ODE TO 5). Seeds and pods are central to my practice. I look upon them as containers of energy. They bring to mind the potential within with endless possibilities.



If you were to name one mentor who has inspired you in your life and path as an artist, who would that be?

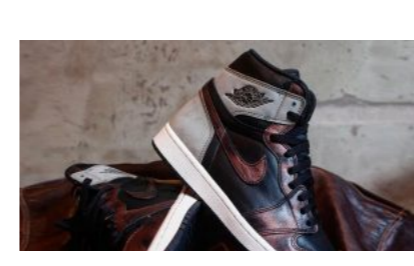
If I had to name one mentor who has inspired me in my life — that would be 'NATURE'. It has never failed to amaze me!

The Call Of The Sea is an exhibition curated by Marina Oechsner de Coninck that features a group of 12 accomplished female artists. It is available for viewing from January 7th to the 13th at Selegie Art Centre. For more information, you can visit <https://www.marinadesignworks.com/>.

If you are interested in Kumari Nahappan's works, you can visit her website www.kumarinahappan.com/.



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