

BIG ART

The art, artists and everything in between.

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VARIETY



Avinash Veeraraghavan
Infinite Disposition (wall vinyl; 2016) with *Stardust* (right; digital print on aluminium dibond; 2016)

Ruminating on the multiplicity of imagery and impact of the internet on art, two artists Tara Kelton and Avinash Veeraraghavan present a variety of works in different media. Which is perhaps why their two-person show at GALLERY SKE, is titled *Variety*. The new SKE, shifted from its Connaught Place location, is now tucked away in the verdant lanes of Vasant Kunj.

Tara Kelton and Avinash Veeraraghavan contextualize their works in a post-modern domain of digital pastiche from still formats to moving images on screens. Within the ambit of the exhibition, their works possess and exploit various mediums ranging from superimposed digital prints to wood inlay, oil on canvas to embroidery, wall vinyl to digital print on aluminium Dibond, a series of photographic prints to video installations: it is an admixture of the experiential and the experimental in the coming-of-age digital world.

Avinash's *Homeland* (2016) is a photomontage of found images sourced to create a rag-quilt of digital images manipulated to fit the contours of a "tent". It represents the duality between body and mind, interiority and surface; and the gradually darkening void is in a process of a continual becoming, undetectable but nevertheless imparting subtle expressions. The various elements like Hieronymus Bosch's *Madonna with Child*, cactus, humans, bees, eyes, and abstract/geometric patterns, express meanings of the everyday, yet is surreal. It also implicates the simultaneity and spontaneity of the (dis)organization of thoughts, memories and imaginings.



Avinash Veeraraghavan
Homeland (digital print on Hahnemuhle photo rag paper; 2016)

In his next work *Hysteria* (2016) his choice of materials is dictated by its visceral nature. Here Avinash embroiders black and silver sequins and beads on silk organza, envisioning a solar eclipse. The dichotomy and the play between light and shadow is the best of both worlds.

“I have worked with a variety of media, partly because it’s a collection of works from different times. I made *Hysteria* in the reverse manner. I was looking for a good image that I could translate into embroidery and came across the image of the moon”, says the photographer-artist. “I titled it *Hysteria* because it is said that madness is at its optimum during full moon. I like the idea that something so rich in material is associated with hysteria, almost as if to give it weight and meaning.” He adds.

This delicate work is contrasted by the larger-than-life-size *Infinite Disposition* (2016). It calls attention to its fragmented, infinite nature, created by a digital simulation of crushed graph paper, juxtaposed against the shattered image, rather a metallic explosion of a tree titled *Stardust* (2016). Each segment or shard reflects the branches of a tree, that further symbolizes the random connective nature of the internet. The relationship between the organic and the geometric, the material and the ethereal, the haptic and the optic is foregrounded.

“Digital technology in contemporary art, is inevitable. It’s a very powerful media and art has always expressed itself in every media. To me, it’s a part of the natural progression and growth of contemporary art. Considering that digital technology is so deeply a part of our daily lives, it would be strange if contemporary art didn’t reflect that.”

Similarly, in Tara Kelton’s work we see an exploration of “Time, space and location in relation to new technology”. *Untitled (Title unknown)* (2017) is a set of two portraits of two unidentified men with blurred faces. Kelton talks of the anonymity of virtual human faces on Google Street views and how that reflected on these two images displayed in the New York City Gallery. The blurred faces are a result of technology trying to strike a truce with individuals in a surveillance-stained society.



Tara Kelton
Untitled (Title unknown) (oil on wood panel; 2017)

“Across all my work, I explore the relationship between human and machine...Screens have now become fully integrated into our lives, extensions of our bodies – many of my projects also examine how the physical screen is fundamentally changing our consciousness and the relationship of the human body to the space around it,” writes Kelton.

A poignant video-work titled *The Dead Video* (2008) runs on a loop of 49 seconds. A series of open sourced black and white photographs of perhaps a deceased person displaying various facial expressions runs to the narration that the dead in their ‘glass bottomed boats’ observe us tying our shoelaces, sleeping, or waiting to release their aura. Kelton extends the realm to the other worldly.

This concern continues into the *Death by* series (2008). This row of 95 photographs satirically foregrounds human and technological interdependencies that might eventually culminate in one’s own destruction. The subject is a white midget human figure, caused to die while on his/her various daily escapades, mundane and otherwise...there is *death by sugar*, *death by freezing*, *death by swallowing*, *death by stampede*, and most ridiculously appropriate amongst them, *death by deletion* – an empty format - mimicking the frailty and temporality of the being.



Tara Kelton
Death by series (95 photographs; 2008)

“Death By is a project I initiated while I was at the Yale School of Art. In the work, I amused myself by destroying one of these small white figures in a new way every day for a period of three months. This resulted in a series of images of these tiny ‘people’ being murdered in immediate ways ranging from being sharpened in a sharpener, cooked on a stove, to the more metaphorical/abstract, like ‘disappointment’, and ‘deletion’, and elaborate, ‘electrocution’ and ‘swallowing’.” The *Magic Carpet* (2014), is another video installation by Kelton, accomplished by a video of an image of a carpet, playing on loop on a tablet computer attached to a Roomba surveying the (carpeted) floor of the gallery space.

This unusual encounter in space between body and device explains the liberation of technology that permeates the now ‘shared’ landscape.

Images: ©GALLERYYSKE

Where: GALLERYYSKE, New Delhi
When: On view from 16th May to 24th June 2017