



ARTS ILLUSTRATED

Hi!

_Play this

Delivered

VERBAL KABADDI

- farmer is a wrestler -

Delivered

RULE

To be read in a single breath,
by both the players.

Delivered

HOW TO PLAY

- **Player 1** - Start the game by reciting 'set one' in a single breath.
- **Player 2** - Repeat the same text.
- Stamp a point only if recited correctly.
- Continue to play till 'set seven'.
- Count your points/stamps at the end.
- Breathe.



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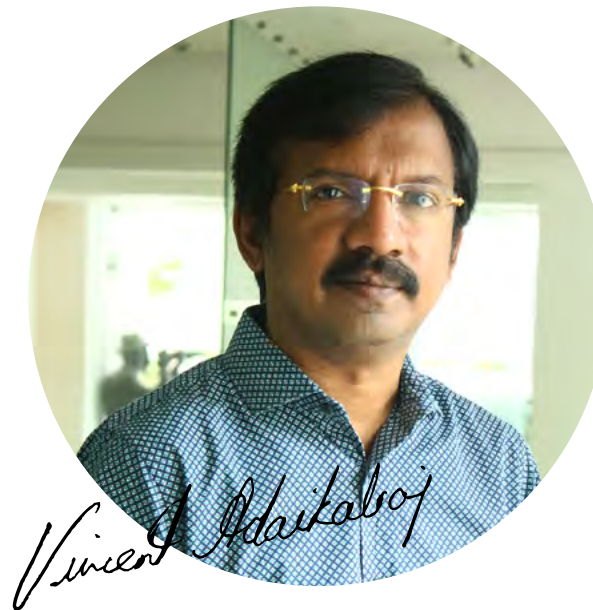
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Publisher's note

The games we played as children and the games we play as adults can hold a world of difference in their meanings – games can be tricky as they belong to both the young and the old, and within this divided belonging, we situate our next issue.

In this issue on 'Games', we primarily look at what happens to an exchange of dialogue when a sense of play enters the picture, what happens when that sense of play disappears, and, more importantly, what happens in the moments in between these transitions. We also try to unravel the rapidly changing sociopolitical dynamics of the world around us through art that is not afraid of the floodlights or the booing-cheering crowds, and enters the arena to not win or lose but simply to feel the rush of the wind, the rush of freedom, the rush of a good game.

Vincent Adaikalraj



Editor's note

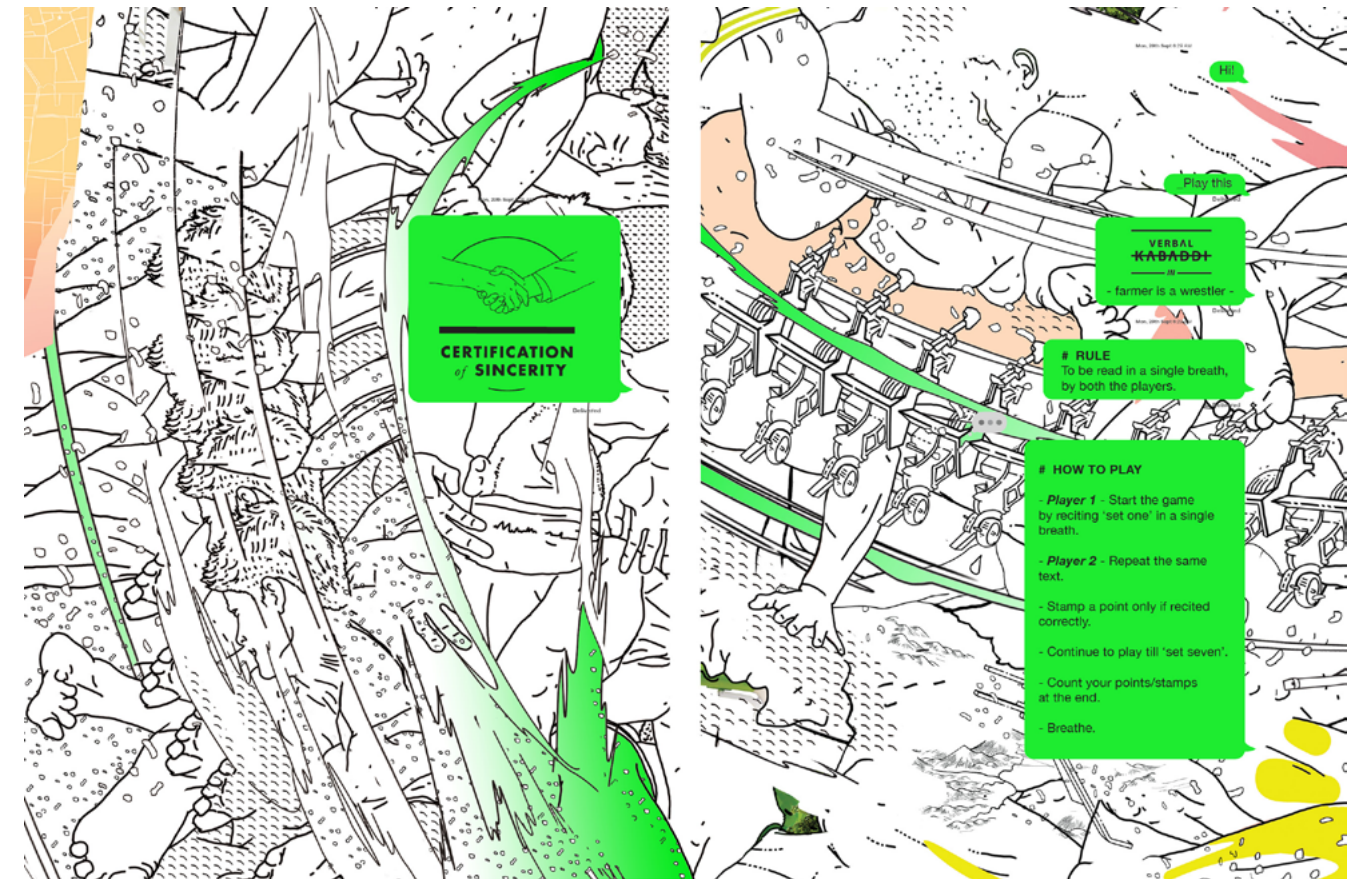
It is a truth that ought to be universally acknowledged – at least, it would have been if Jane Eyre was still here and writing – that we are constantly in the middle of playing games. While waiting, we play; while negotiating, we play; in the park we play, on a date we play; in politics we play, with nature we play; we 'play' the cartoon, the news or sports; we play to win, we play for money or we play for fun – there is so much contained in that four-letter word that often we forget we are active inhabitants of that world.

So, then, what happens when art is put into this mix? Do we play with art or is it the other way around? This issue, for me, was like being that excited child in a playground – 'Ooh, shiny see-saw, I want!' 'Oh look, swing! I want!' 'Jungle gym!' 'No, no, merry-go-round! Yay!' – every single story, every single artist and every single writer, with a lot of charm and magnetism, redefined the meaning of 'fun' and the role that 'rule' had within that understanding. It wasn't so much colouring within the lines as much as it was the lines adjusting themselves to how we coloured that made this issue exciting, unpredictable and deeply meaningful. Especially today, as we watch the world hurtle towards its own doom, these stories gives us that much-needed 'another chance', another role of the die (ha!) on a board that has just ever so slightly been shifted.

It also meant that through the act of seeing the game and becoming conscious of how we play it, there was the unlearning of thought, the subversion of ideas and the reimagining of patterns. Whichever way you look at it, the adrenaline rush of putting this issue together was addictive. In short, I want to go back to that playground.



Praveena Shivram
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Verbal Kabaddi – Farmer is a Wrestler

The idea of our work for this issue of *Arts Illustrated* that revolves around the idea of 'games' was to create a participatory work that is meditative, yet challenging and cerebral. We created a verbal version of the popular Indian game, *kabaddi*. Set in a printed format, it replaces the physicality of wrestling bodies – of farmers in this case – with tongue-twisting texts to be read in a single breath. It takes the reference from the recent uprising by the farming community, questioning their rights, existence and daily survival in today's world.

While maintaining the sanctity of the traditional game by combining physical and mental strengths as a sight of endurance, the aim is that participants will comprehend the intricate details of the lives, trials and tribulations of the agricultural community. Each player will compete with his/her opponent by reciting the given set of text. A demanding sport of endurance is transformed into an exercise in concrete poetry and agility, with perseverance still being essential to win. The game shows the duality of the figure of the farmer as a wrestler, staging strategies for survival against a complex set of challenges.



Thukral & Tagra

1:2500

AUGUST 24 TO SEPTEMBER 21, 2019, NEW DELHI

Reviewed by *Rahul Kumar*

That Martand Khosla is an architect by education and practice is very evident from the works at his second solo-exhibit at Nature Morte gallery in New Delhi. 'When I design a building or space, there are many external constraints to work with, and within. The function of the built space, vision of the client, availability of material and rules and laws that specify what must be done... My art practice allows for a sense of formal freedom, in many ways it begins where architecture ends,' explained Khosla as we walked through the exhibition. The title itself, *1:2500* references the typical scale of survey maps where even the tiniest gesture of a dot and dash stands for something much larger in real life.

The entire show, across the three levels of the gallery, had five formal themes of renditioning that could be classified into two conceptual bodies of work. First were Martand's freehand drawings that are disbursed throughout the show. Small-format ink-on-paper works are often made as three-dimensional visions of a busy cityscape. Built towers reaching for the sky and occasionally collapsing. Large format works on paper use colour for the background of the work that is made using brick-dust, and metaphorically refer to the air pollution of urban life. The work titled *Upwards* is a cluster of sculptures that look like housing towers with basic structures made in steel and 'house' walls made with laser-cut wood. The wood pattern uses the freehand drawings, with three types of wood of varying thicknesses leading to contrasting patterns as they are placed back together, as though it were a mix-and-match jigsaw puzzle.

The work, titled *1:2500*, had wall-mounted, relief city-scape patterns similar to the walls of the 'towers'. Neatly placed on the outer corner of a walkway, they evoked a sense of a dense city skyline. The life-size wooden doors are the final works that revolved around the city dwelling units as a concept. This time, though, not at a macro level of the city, but rather as a single component of it. The dramatic surrealistic gesture, twisted and bent wood, creates a wonderment of both the material and the process. Wall-mounted and free-standing sculptures carefully refer to a modern-day pattern of a door. While no information is shared to decipher the front and back (rather inside or outside) face of the door, Martand consciously leaves the nails visible, reminding the viewer of the medium.

The second series, titled *Maximum capacity*, is the most abstract work in the show. Metaphorically, it forces the contrast of state versus migrant, or illegal versus citizen, in the context of contemporary urban cities. Taking a minimalistic approach, the works suggest a sense of chaos filled beyond the limit, although within the construct of a delicate balance.

Martand aspires for multiple readings of his works. And while he does not intend to cross-pollinate his architectural works based on his art, it would be intriguing to see a real-life tower akin to his *Upwards!*



Installation view of *1:2500* on display at Nature Morte, New Delhi.

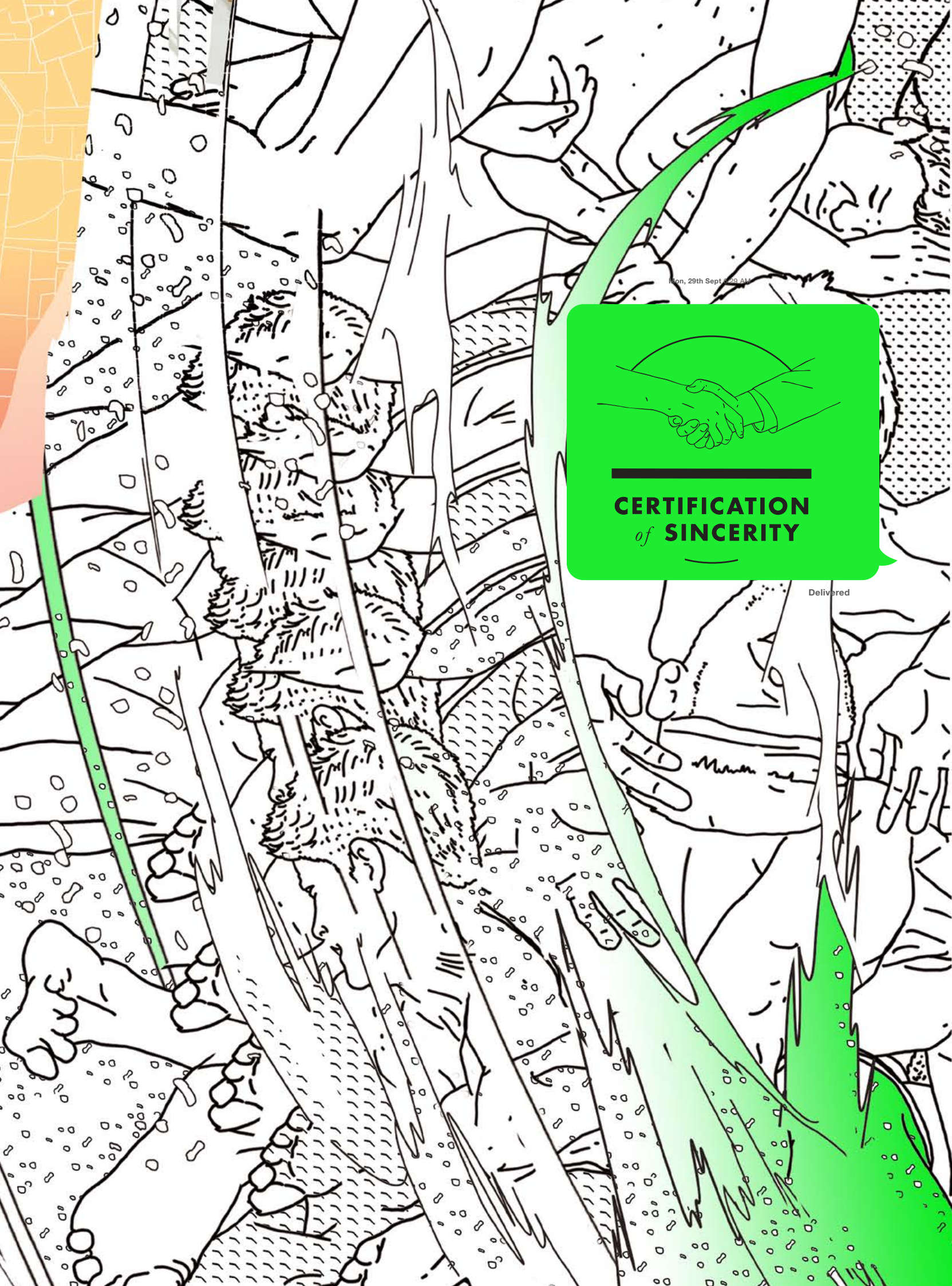
Upwards II, Steel and reclaimed wood, Dimensions Variable, 2019.

Maximum Capacity 3, Metal and reclaimed wood, 37.12" x 26.75" x 8.62", 2019.

Pascal 2, Wood, 50.37" x 61.12" x 22.87", 2019.

Pascal 1, Wood, 42.12" x 43.75" x 24.37", 2019.

Photographs by Shovan Gandhi. All Images Courtesy of Martand Khosla and Nature Morte, New Delhi.



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