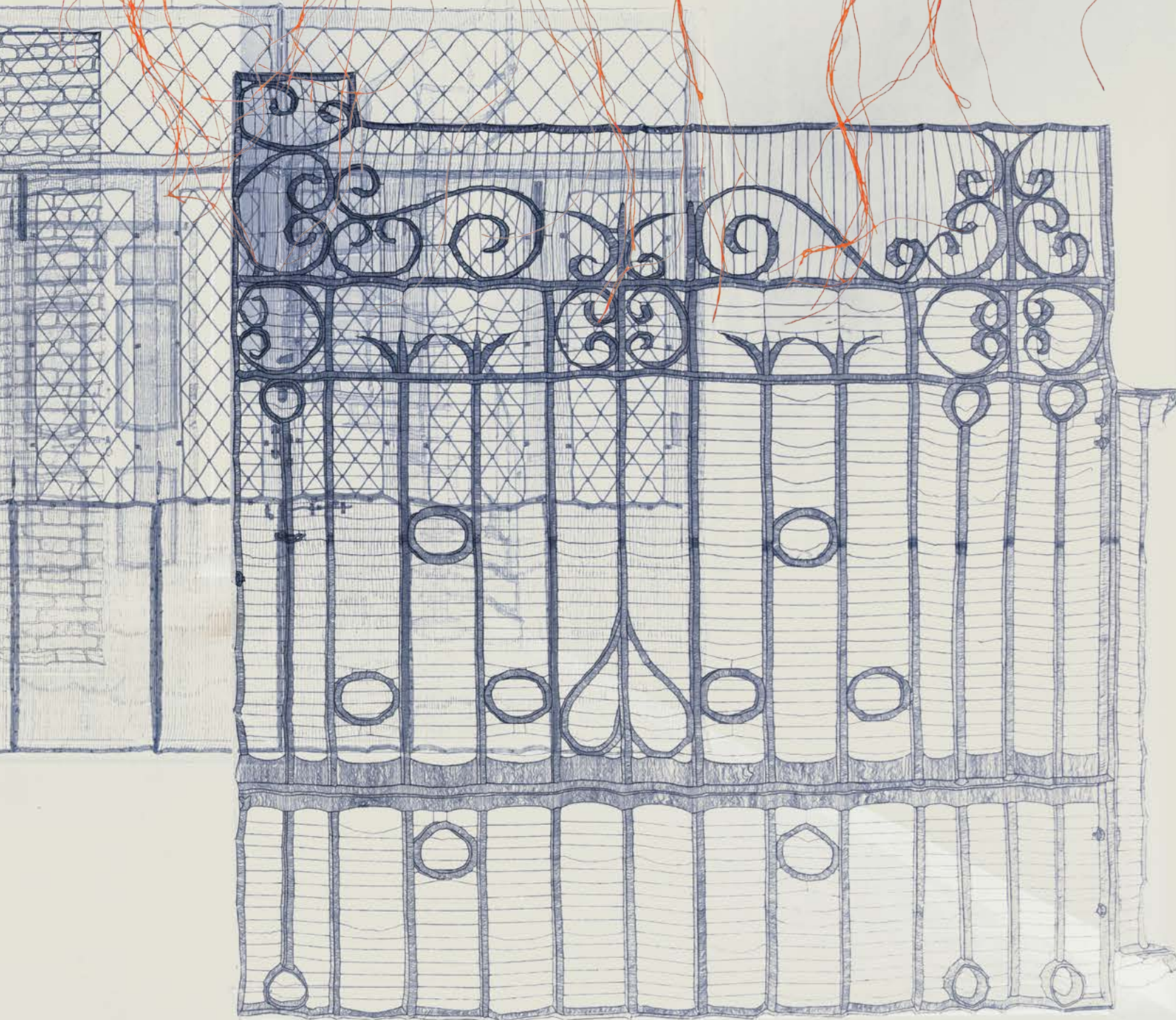


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Team

Sales Offices

Chennai

127 T.T.K. Road, Alwarpet,
Chennai 600018
phone +91 82203 08777
phone +91 44 4216 5100
sales@artsillustrated.in

Coimbatore

Jenney's Residency
Opp CIT Avinashi Road,
Coimbatore Aerodrome Post,
Coimbatore 641014
phone +91 82203 08777
sales@artsillustrated.in

Abu Dhabi

Flat No. 701, 7th Floor,
H.E.Shaikh Tahnoon Bin Moh'd
Al Nahyan Building, (Arab Bank
Building), Al Nasr Street,
Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.
phone +97 15631 89405
sales@artsillustrated.in

Singapore

No. 1, Kim Seng Promenade,
12-01 Great World City (East
Tower), Singapore 237994
sales@artsillustrated.in

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Publisher & Chairman

Vincent Adaikalraj

Editor

Praveena Shivram

Consulting Editor

Rahul Kumar

Subeditor

Vani Sriranganayaki Vanamamalai

Copy Editor

Sethulakshmy S Nayar

Graphic Designer

Chenchudar Chellakannu

Administrative Officer

Ramakrishnan

Gallery Manager, Art Houz Gallery

Lakshmi Krishnakumar

Operations Manager, Art Houz Gallery

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Administrative Manager, Art Houz Gallery

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Graphic Designer, Art Houz Gallery

Santhosh Kumar

Sales Head, South

Felix Raju

Contributors

Abha Iyengar

Arti Sandhu

Dr. Ashrafi S. Bhagat

Meera Rajagopalan

Poonam Ganglani

Rehana Munir

Seema Massot

Shantanu Prakash

Siddhartha Das

Supriya Sehgal

Suzanne McNeill

Tvishaa Shah

Published by

LA 5 Global Publications
#127, T.T.K. Road, Alwarpet,
Chennai 600018, India
phone +91 44 4216 5100
info@artsillustrated.in
editorial@artsillustrated.in
sales@artsillustrated.in

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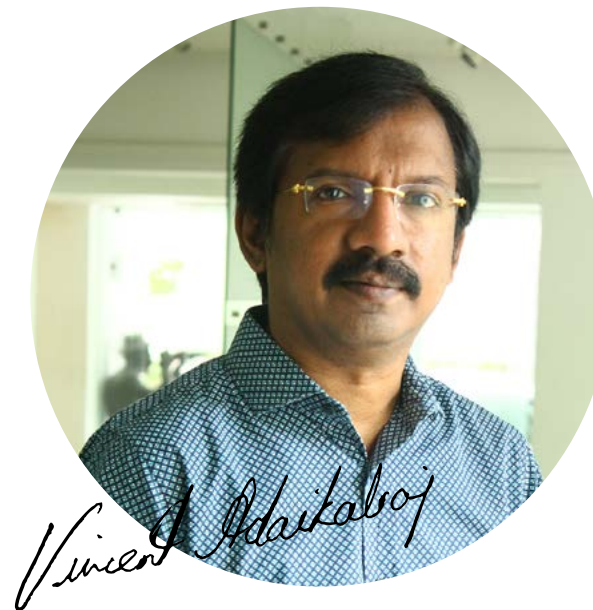
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Publisher's note

Our sixth anniversary issue is here! And I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our artists, writers, photographers, advertisers and well-wishers in supporting our journey the past six years, and I hope we will have their continued support and best wishes in the coming years as well.

This issue, we decided to go with the theme of 'Tapestry', where we look at the many different things that come together, in an unhurried manner, to make something that inspires and engages. We look at artist(e)s who stitch together disparate media to tell a story, even if it is of a single experience, thought or impression. And to then see what happens to the nature of dialogue itself when it finds itself in a wide, uncategorised expanse; and to the nature of how we define a community within, and through, the language of the arts.

Vincent Adaikalraj



Editor's note

When I first started writing professionally, in my early 20s, my two favourite words were 'ubiquitous' and 'tapestry'. Any excuse I would get to use those words in a sentence, I would, and then feel terribly accomplished about it all. *Love is that ubiquitous emotion in this tapestry of life – you get the drift, no?*

So to say I was excited that the theme for our sixth anniversary issue was 'tapestry' would be an understatement. I was ecstatic – can you imagine the number of times I could use the word and it would all be considered legit and not an overkill? But like all things that are AI-theme-related, where the magazine effortlessly morphs into a being of its own every issue, tapestry too took on an avatar of its own, blue skin intact, that I had to let go of my obsession with the word and truly see it for what it is – I See You and all that.

And what I did see were stories and thoughts in so many different shades and textures that it was incredible how every little nuance would add up to create something bigger, like building blocks in a child's hand, only to be destroyed, so the process could begin again. This issue, it wasn't so much the ephemeral qualities of the stories that left an impact, but the comfort of permanence of that ephemerality, the fact that even when unravelling, the threads remain intact. Like the timeline we created, and the act of looking back that allowed us to trace every single decision, however small, in making the magazine what it is today.

This issue was also a reaffirmation for me, of what the magazine and the arts mean to the world today and why in this tapestry, which we are all a part of, every ubiquitous stitch matters (I am sorry, it's a disease). But, bad sentences apart, this magazine and what we try to bring to our readers every issue with every theme is an overriding sense of hope and beauty, of tolerance and acceptance, of inclusivity and openness, and of joy unhindered by the politics of hatred.



Praveena Shivram
praveena@artsillustrated.in



Altered image of installation view: 33 Link Road, Thread, Room dimensions: 19' x 15.6' x 13.4', 2019. Photograph from the solo exhibition at Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai.

I think of embroidery as a way of making an image which literally ties itself to its ground (usually fabric) and, therefore, feels more permanent and fixed than many other forms of mark-making – for example, one can't easily erase it, like a drawing; with thread, an undoing is required. Ironically, in this body of 'groundless thread drawings' that I am currently working on, this 'securing' of image to the ground is challenged, as the fabric itself is removed after the embroidery occurs, leaving behind what appears to be a thread skeleton – an apparition which levitates without the support that was used to create it. This process, for me, echoes the nature of memory – which seems to present an extracted story, a shimmering mirage removed from the substance of our present experience in current space and time.

For the cover of this issue, I chose an installation titled 33 Link Road. Originally made in white thread (here the colour is altered to indigo blue), viewers walked through this labyrinth of membranes featuring life-size, embroidered

architectural fragments from 33 Link Road – my grandparents' home built in Delhi soon after the Partition, when they migrated from Pakistan to India. A site of gathering, story-telling, embroidering and knitting in the sun, family weddings and sleepovers, a room at the back where my mother was born and a room in the front where my grandfather died – this home, a container of potent memories, now lies unoccupied. Hard architectural form transforms into soft, tactile skins of thread and the language of memory finds resonance in these veil-like, white surfaces; flattened as if preserved within the pages of a book.

My work has often explored the dissolution of substantial seeming form; form turning flat and ethereal through memory, form breaking apart in illusions I have created, form deteriorating in the re-creations of peeling walls, and, here, the Arts Illustrated logo dissolving into the thread with which I embroidered it to celebrate the issue on tapestry.



Sumakshi Singh



Collective Commons

An Immersive Experience

Self-taught artist and author, Manish Pushkale lives in his South Delhi home with his studio in the basement of the building. The façade faces the Chor Minar (Tower of Thieves), a 13th century minaret built under the rule of Alauddin Khilji. The backyard of the house shares a wall with a temple. A trustee of the Raza Foundation, Pushkale literally and metaphorically lives between history and religion. We talk to him about his love for the arts and philosophy.

Rahul Kumar

Photographs by Shantanu Prakash





The tradition of hanging art on the wall came from my maternal grandparents

I grew up in Bhopal and my grandparents lived in a small town, Sagar, in Madhya Pradesh. It houses the illustrious Gaur University that led to the town becoming an educational hub for the region. My family never had direct interest in arts, but I distinctly remember seeing walls adorned with Ravi Varma oleographs, tapestry on the floor, and mirror work on the ceiling of the living room. Aesthetics was a way of life.

Two significant events of 1983 shaped my life

I was ten years old when the Bhopal gas tragedy happened. We lived just off the city centre. There was no television or mobile phones then, so news travelled slower. As a result, the morning after the incident was usual for us and I left for school. It was customary to see stray animals and busy roadside shops, but that morning I saw dead cows and silent roads. On reaching the school, I was told that school would remain closed. By the time I walked back home, there was mayhem on the streets. It was the biggest exposure to death for me at that impressionable age. I too inherited breathing allergies and

asthma, having been exposed to the poisonous gas on that ill-fated morning. It was also in that year that Bharat Bhawan, an arts complex and museum, opened its doors in the city. It was the early days of the institution, but the energy was palpable. I had not seen architecture like that before. Everything at Bharat Bhawan was a wonder for me. From then on, seeing exhibitions, experiencing artists working in studios, listening to conversations... I soon knew that art was my calling.

My exposure was to a holistic creative world

I am equally fascinated with tribal practices, as I am with urban arts. I saw all this in one space, in one frame. Watching Kumar Gandharv perform and then the intellectual debates between, say, a theatre actor and a painter was most enriching. And these were not formal discussions, rather casual conversations. For me it was an ultimate amalgamation. I hear poetry in a painting and see sculptures in theatre. I am therefore not a product of a Bengal, Bombay, or Baroda 'school'. I am a product of an institution, both by way of my artistic choices and aesthetic sensibilities.

The first artwork I ever collected was a gift from the noted painter

Jangarh Shyam and I are probably the two artists who fully credit Bharat Bhawan for our education. We started our careers together and remained very close friends till he passed away. The first ever work of art that I owned was a gift from him. It was for no occasion and there was no commercial value for it then. I still have it preserved, and honestly it is priceless for me. I distinctly remember that the second work I got was from Motilal Jogi, who I believe is an unsung song. He is a tribal artist who worked with tie-and-dye technique using paper.

Collecting art gradually became a habit

As my exposure expanded, my interest deepened into owning art. The motivation was never wealth or commerce or investment. It became incredibly important for me to surround myself with works that had depth. This was never restricted to fine art. Crafts, folk arts and even books became an area of interest for me. I continued to buy, but a large portion of my current collection is owing to art works exchanged; it was more an exchange of an idea, a belief system.

Sensorial institution and experiencing art in its totality became critical for me

KG Subramanyan wrote that all prejudices exist in the senses of the viewer. Once we free

ourselves of these preconceived ideas, we can embrace the creative in its totality. I realised that it is actually possible to 'hear in a painting' and 'see in the music'. Ghulam Mohammed Sheikh created a work on Kabir – not what he saw, but based on what he heard. And these concepts go far beyond the narrative and enter the sensory space. This is reflected in how I collect, too. They are not just objects but experiences. In my house, we have had *baitbaks* with musicians, discourses with thinkers, and book readings. I call this part of my 'collection'. I have Webster's Dictionary from 1958. I collect water! I have it bottled from 857 sources from around the world, including the Dead Sea, 54 springs, 130 lakes and even two deserts.

SH Raza has been a big influence

I have interacted with Raza from very close quarters. A work he gifted to me is very special. I was in France on a six-month residency. As a ritual, I would meet Raza *saab* every Sunday and walk with him to church. On October 26, 2003, as always, he bought three candles – one for me, one for his departed wife and one for himself. After we walked out of the church that day, he gave me some pocket change to donate to the homeless. He said that since it was my birthday, doing this would bring me good luck. I was surprised that he even knew and remembered my birthday. Later, he took out from his overcoat a small work he had made for me as a birthday





Manish Pushkale.

gift. The work was a drawing of an eye and he said it is the 'inner eye', that everyone has eyes to see the outside world, but artists need one to see within.

I have deepest admiration for Rajendra Dhawan
 Dhawan was a complicated personality. I attended the opening of his show in Paris. During the course of the entire evening, only a handful of people dropped by, and not a single work sold. I stayed on to give him company and ended up having the most fascinating discussion with him as we walked from the gallery to his residence. On asking for his source of inspiration, he actually opened the lid of a trash can and asked me to observe intently. I literally saw the form of his painting in that stinky street dustbin. Next morning, he handed over a large work, saying he had enjoyed the time we spent together.

Himmat Shah wall-sculpture is one that I will preserve over anything else
 KB Vaid, a Hindi fictional writer, is a family friend. He got a unique work made by Shah as his wedding anniversary gift in 1979. Vaid decided to relocate to the United States in 2007, where he continues to live. This work was very precious to him, and he did not want to take it to the United States, in case it got damaged in transit. So, instead, he decided to give it to me saying he believed that I would respect it. If I have to pick one work out of all that I have, it will be this one – not for the object, but for the trust that I cannot let down.

