

## How artist Sakshi Gupta's debut show in Colaba wants viewers to think about life's fundamental questions

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Using metal scrap as the centrepiece, artist Sakshi Gupta's debut show at a Colaba space prods the viewer to find a moment to contemplate life's fundamental questions



*Spaces of Being. Pics Courtesy/Sakshi Gupta and Abner Fernandes*

For Sakshi Gupta, her artistic processes begin outside the studio, as she comes across discarded metal and concrete scrap on her way to her Reay Road studio, scrap that will later be incorporated into her sculptures. The pieces in her ongoing Mumbai debut show *If The Seas Catch Fire* at Experimenter Colaba present a transformation of materiality to embody the artist's thoughts.

Sharing the ideas that the sculptures hold, Gupta reveals, "I've always been interested in the fundamental questions of life such as what is life about, what is our purpose, why are we here. As an artist, I am able to channel the constant struggle with these questions through my practice. This body of work comes from a feeling of disconnection that we feel within us and with a larger sense of consciousness [with others]."





***Metal pigeons in 'To keep things whole I' are placed across corners of the gallery***

Each piece pushes the artist to investigate such questions. For instance, Spaces of Being, a large 89 x 117-inch sculpture comprising four panels of metal scrap carved into a coop almost bursting with agitated chickens. Gupta explains, "At first, it offers the sight of a chicken coop but when you come to it, it's almost as a mirror where you encounter yourself and the drama that the internal space unfolds as thoughts clash and fight for our attention. The idea is that sometimes our mind feels confined like a chicken coop and the question is how do you break out of this trap?" Perhaps the choice of material is appropriate to take on the questions subjected to them. Gupta adds, "Metal offers a certain resistance that I enjoy working with."



***Sakshi Gupta***



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Similarly, a stoneware piece shaped into gunny sacks and titled, 'For beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror, that we are still able to bear.' The artist notes that this piece echoes the similar sentiment of feeling trapped in the mind and the struggle to get out of it.

Do the questions ultimately find their answers at the completion of a piece? "The questions don't leave the mind, but as an artist presenting a body of work, one creates a space to share these questions and create a moment of pause to contemplate them; almost creating a bridge from our sense of consciousness and a larger sense of consciousness. It creates a sense of relief and companionship."

As the contemplation continues, maybe the title of the show, which is taken from a line in Dive For Dreams by E Cummings, might allude to some semblance of an answer. Gupta shares, "The line goes on to say that even if an unimaginable catastrophe takes place, if the waters of the sea catch fire, there is still something to hold on to — he terms it as the all-encompassing love which keeps existence going. In a way, we are also a sea of thoughts, feelings and emotions and might experience that sense of fire."

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Till: October 26; 10.30 am to 6.30 pm

At: Experimenter Colaba, 1st Floor, Sunny House. 16/18 Merewether Road. Colaba.