

Press Release: **Home Spun**

The Lekha and Anupam Poddar Collection is India's most comprehensive assemblage of contemporary South Asian art. Renowned for its focus on cutting edge pieces in new and unusual media, the collection also encompasses folk art and antiquities. The Poddars display their collection through curated exhibitions mounted periodically at the Devi Art Foundation in Gurgaon. The Foundation's next show, *Home Spun*, curated by Girish Shahane, opens on 27 August and will be on view till 27 December, 2011.

Home Spun showcases the works of more than 36 artists from five countries. India, Pakistan and U.K figure most prominently among these five nations, while Sri Lanka, Iran, and Oman are represented by one artist each. Seven new commissions are being executed especially for *Home Spun*, which features a number of significant large-scale sculptural works such as Subodh Gupta's *My Mother and Me*, Rashid Rana's *Desperately Seeking Paradise* and Hamra Abbas's *In This is a Sign for Those who Reflect*.

As its title suggests, the exhibition is a spin on the idea of home. Home is a place as well as a state of mind: it has both a locational and an emotional dimension. At one level, the exhibition delves into the desire for sanctuary and, conversely, the pain of exile. It dramatises the tension between longing and belonging, and interrogates the nature of these fundamental sentiments. If the absence forced upon exiles makes their heart grow fonder, the familiarity of homespun domesticity can breed contempt. A number of artists in the show have satirised mundane, sedentary existence by producing quirky variations on ordinary objects. They have remade articles connected with daily routine – whether sofa sets, brooms, ceiling fans or typewriters – into rich and strange artefacts. These works are light in mood and for the most part small in scale, working as ensembles rather than stand-alone pieces.

The exhibition also focuses on the physical spaces we inhabit. Whether we inhabit them voluntarily or through compulsion, they can express our personality and define our character. The interrogation of built form in *Home Spun* brings to life abstract issues of identity, security and conformity through tactile materials such as brick, lace and bamboo. Artists employ the cylinder, cube, and the archetypal house shape in their examination of architectural design and its influence on our lives.

Each section of *Home Spun* is accompanied by a short text that reflects on the artworks or uses them as take-off points. These texts, whether poetry, fiction, history or myth, add a crucial dimension to the larger theme. The exhibition encompasses sculpture, painting, photography, digital prints, video, and interactive installations. It aims to demonstrate that art can be entertaining and thought-provoking at the same time.

Address, opening time:

Devi Art Foundation : presents '**Home Spun**' curated by Girish Shahane from 11am to 7pm at Sirpur House, Plot no. 39, Sector 44, behind Epicentre (Apparel House),Gurgaon 122003. Tuesday to Sunday (Closed on Mondays). website www.deviartfoundation.org Telephone: 0124-4888177.

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Girish Shahane received degrees in English Literature from Elphinstone College, Bombay University, and the University of Oxford. He was elected to a Rhodes scholarship to study at Oxford. He has written on Indian art for fifteen years, and was editor and later consulting editor of the Art News Magazine of India. He has lectured or presented papers at institutions such as the NCPA and NGMA in Bombay; the Max Mueller Bhavan, Bangalore; the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad; the Tate Modern, London; Wesleyan University, Middletown; and the Art Institute, Chicago. Among the shows he has curated are *The Presence of the Past* (1998); *Art / Technology* (2000) and *Legacy: A-vanguard* (2010). Girish Shahane is currently Advisor to the Skoda Prize for contemporary Indian art and writes a fortnightly column on cultural politics for Yahoo! India.