

STILL ALIVE...

SHARATH KULAGATTI

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07 - 27, December 2006



Pundole Art Gallery

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“Everything is mystery...ourselves and all things both simple and humble”
–Morandi

Young emerging artists make Baroda their stop-over. This has become a kind of pilgrimage that has mapped careers and chartered destinies of exiles from southern India. This dislocation has given many decisive directions to artists who then move beyond the local to the national scene.

Sharath Kulagatti is one among them. He has been obsessed with the found object from the urban junkyard; machinery parts, objects of utility and beauty. He picks these mundane objects and lovingly admires the form and carefully captures their shape, texture, contours and the inherent sensuousness. He also celebrates the lives of objects, and the erotic associations they hint at, by suggesting parts of the vital human anatomy and presence.

This young artist is a loner finding his own rhythm amid his contemporaries who are part of the figurative fervor. He has searched for and found the serenity of still-lives in their solitude.

Accelerated innovation very quickly makes objects and lifestyles 'obsolete'. The media feeds the greed of the buoyant economy to discard the 'old' and buy the latest commodity: 'item'. We are surrounded by more and more 'junk' and industrial 'waste'. The fascination for the 'obsolete' led Sharath to borrow from a local collector, Amitabh Gandhi. Most of these are objects discarded by people obsessed by the mantra of modernity.

In Baroda, the Friday flea market – *shukrawari* – is a bazaar that recycles the old: nut cracker, sewing machine, kerosene lantern, antique lock, carpentry tools, charcoal-fired iron box, measuring can for oil, engine oil dispenser, table lamp with swan neck, nuts, bolts, screws, bobbins, and many more. Sharath has a grasp of the objects he collects, weaving the texture of their own richness. They all suggest labor; the use of hands. These tools are part of our culture – objects we use in daily life – created by unknown designers. They are ergonomically designed by local urban product designers or they are cheap imports. These are objects we don't want to display in drawing rooms but are tucked away. They are a social embarrassment for the elite but a reality to people who work with machines and love labor. Here, work is worship – a mantra for survival. He accentuates the lyrical and meditative elements of the object, preserving the resonance of these obsolete objects.

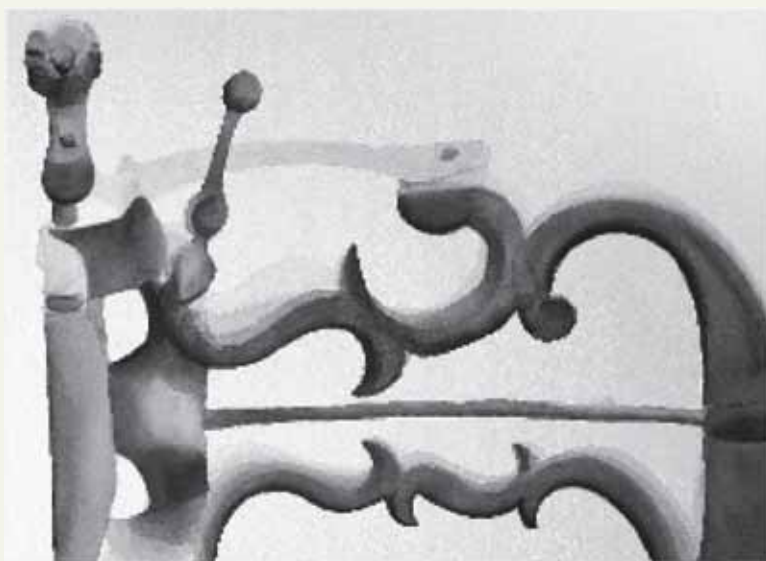
Drawing and sincere draftsmanship have shaped Sharath's artistic intelligence. His study of objects is naturalistic. He works from actual objects and retains their proportions; his monochromatic painterly treatment is a contrast to the detailed drawing. The space surrounding the objects is relatively neutral. They become intimate autobiographical evocations as seen in the works of the celebrated Italian painter Morandi who devoted his career to painting the still-life of every-day reality. One can draw parallels between both these artists' sympathy towards, and celebration of, these humble objects.

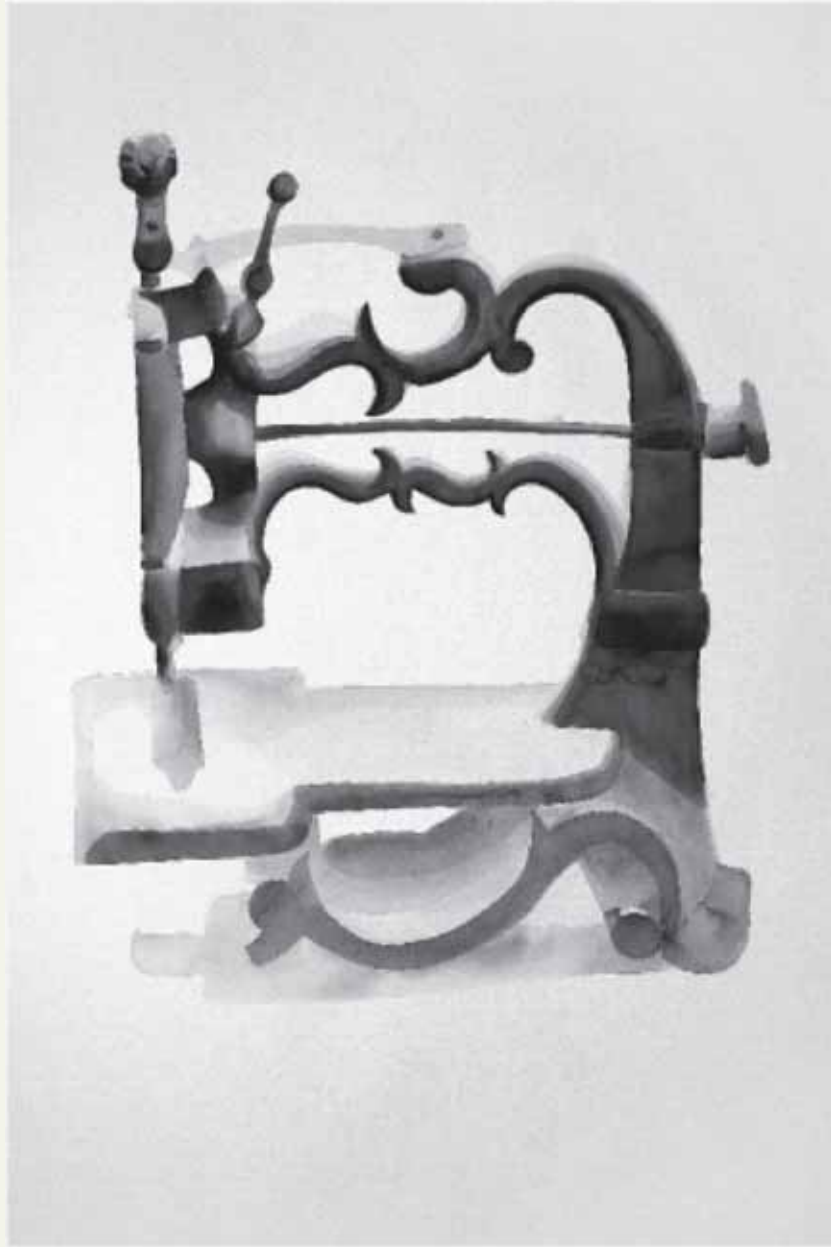
Sharath nostalgically celebrates the existence of these objects. They are recollected from the attic of memory and captured in monochrome. Their sculptural qualities are highlighted with the play of chiaroscuro capturing the patina of time and the textures the surfaces; the sand-casted hardware, hand-beaten sheet metal, their angularity and art deco curves. The play with scale makes them larger than life; He celebrates the ordinary and gives it the status of an icon. His objects grow beyond human scale and control. He limits his palette to a narrow range of tones which transform the objects into subtle poetic images; objects that symbolize labor and are an extension of the body.

Suresh Jayaram
Principal
College of Fine Arts
Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath.



Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 45" x 70"





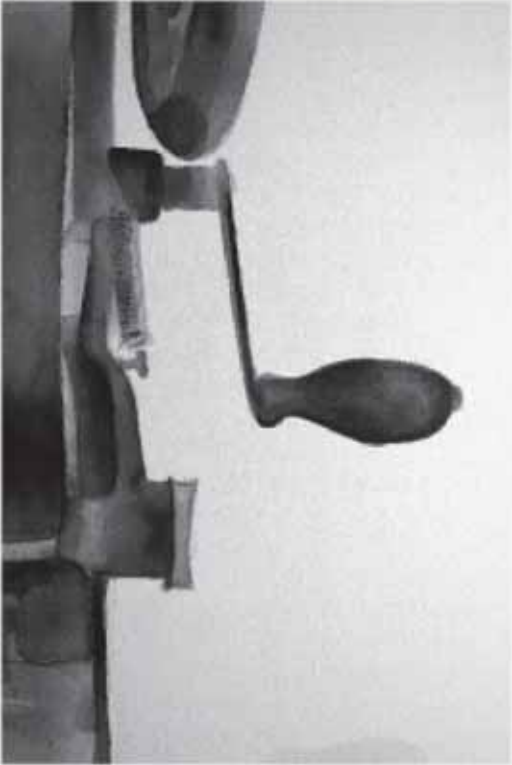
Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 70" x 45"

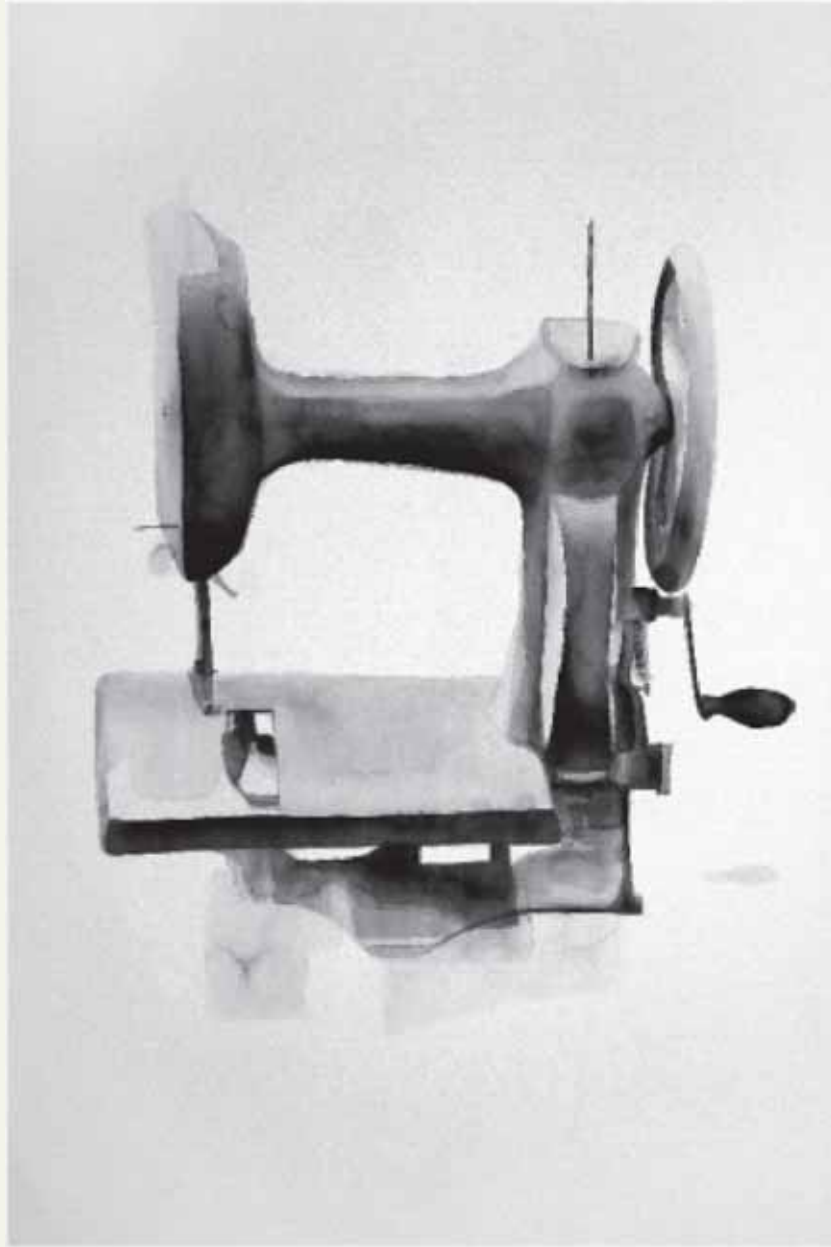


Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 45" x 70"

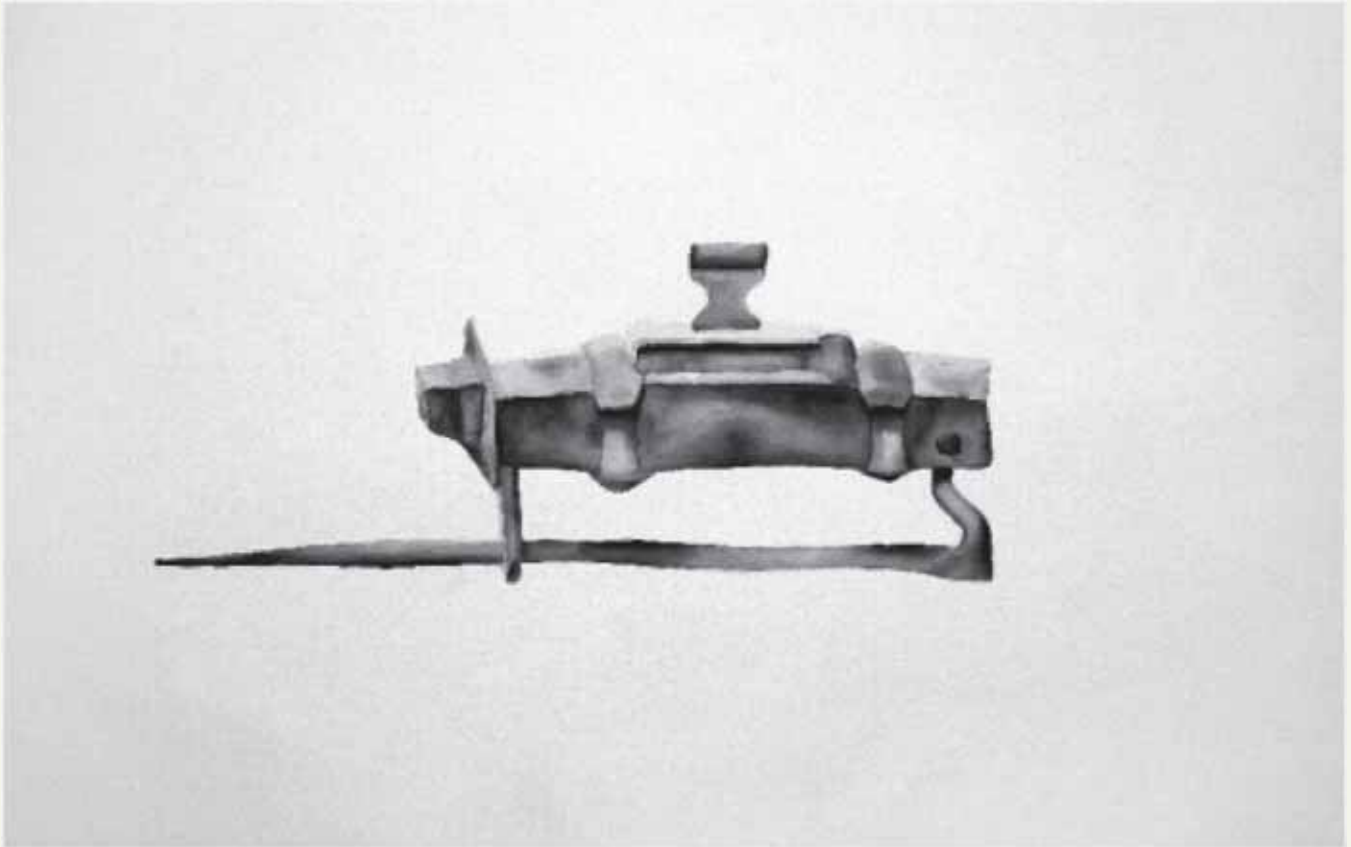


Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 70" x 45"





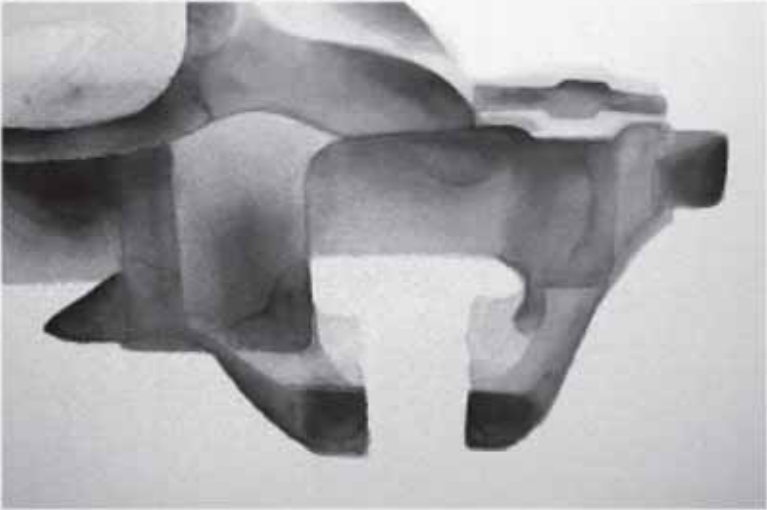
Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 70" x 45"



Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 45" x 70"

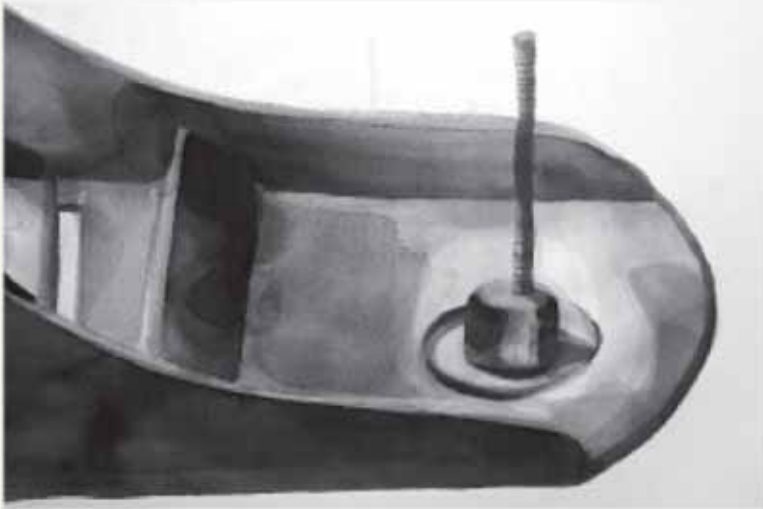


Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 70" x 45"





Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 45" x 62"





Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 45" x 70"



Untitled, 2006, Chinese ink on paper, 45" x 70"

Sharath Kulagatti

Born : May 1978

2005 : Master of Fine Arts (Graphics), M.S University, Baroda

2000 : Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting), Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore

Exhibition : Solo

2003 : “..... and life will go on.” Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore

Exhibitions : Group

2004 : “Urban Confluence” Sharan Apparao Gallery, New Delhi

2002 : “Verbal Passage” Easel Art Gallery, Chennai

2000 : “Exposition 2000” College of Fine Arts Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore

Awards

2002 : “AIFACS”, All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, New Delhi

2000 : “Exposition 2000” art exhibition by College of Fine Arts, Bangalore

1999 : First Southern Region Camilin Art Exhibition, Mumbai

Workshop

2004 : “Samitha” College of Fine Arts, New Delhi

Lives & works in Baroda



I would like to thank
Ajay Desai for his belief in my work and his generous support
that gave me the freedom to build this body of work.

Krupa Amin - 'Space' The Artist's Studio
Amitabh Gandhi, Ravi Kumar Kashi

My guide and my mentor Rekha Rodwitty
and
My family

Photography : Manish Mehta
Catalogue write-up : Suresh Jayaram



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