AMOL K. PATIL

Below Another Sky (Residency), Highland Print making Studio, Inverness, Scotland, 2014

Talking Sweepers, Silkscreen prints, 10.5 x 8 Inch, 2014
Sound Sculpture, Internal body of an old telephone that rings.

Amol Patil inherited form his grandfather, the spoken-word histories of B.R Ambedkar, the thinker who gave India a road out of caste and toward social equality. These found hand written songs written by his grandfather give impetus to Amol's and a sound work, to a new artistic language and forms within a very old protest tradition, of Powada spoken - word- rap-like protest from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, much in use before and after national independence- speaking always from the viewpoint of the lowest castes.

For the exhibition in Glasgow with its rich history of anarchist and labor movements, Clark house initiative, Bombay, presents exploration of radical protest languages as they approach art forms, abstracts from recent historical movements' how to protest displacement after mill workers strikes, an artist had the idea to walk through the roads with a procession of a hundred alarm clocks to wake people up. Amol refers to this with his
old telephone / boxing ring bell, over drawings that speak the life of sweepers of the city of Bombay, who all still somehow, despite everything, only ever seem to come from the lowest castes hands peer over walls of rules, and holes bruise bodies.

-Text by Zasha Colah

**INSERT, Mati Ghar, New Delhi, 2014**

Floor plan of the space and the placement of the works.
A father and son in the village from where I come in Maharashtra always played a game. It is a game where father lets the son win the game in order to encourage him. They come from a drummers (tasha) family. A hundred rupee note is kept in between the two as they play their drums. The drums are to be played at the highest pitch so that the note would crawl towards that person because of the vibrations caused on the ground.

This story has been the inspiration to create this work, where vibrators are kept at particular distances below the ground and one can notice sand moving by itself.
‘Peep in’, bricks, screen, video installation, 2014
SOClAL THEATRE
Solo show at Clark House Initiative, 2013 and Petite Morte, 2014

Social Theatre is set as a dialogue between a father and son. The son, who is an artist today, revisits his father's work as an actor and playwright. Though it is a personal narrative, the artist also conveys to his lost father, of his own situation today. He remarks and exclaims with his father's personal remains. Though it is a one-side conversation he imagines his father to be a part of it. He talks about the dead objects, which remain, in his village and his home. He sets them in motion, like a jerk, in an attempt to wake something or someone up. The whole show in each step is a series of conversations, which trigger many situations that Amol analyses from the vantage of his own battles today.

Amol Patil is an artist based in Bombay whose practice is performance based. He comes from a family of traditional folk performers. His grandfather Gunaji Patil, was a 'Povada Shahir' or a 'Poet Performer' who travelled across villages in Maharashtra narrating ballads of heroic deeds. Amol's father Kisan Gunaji Patil migrated to Bombay to work at the municipal corporation, but he was also an avant-garde playwright who formed a theatre group scripting absurdist experimental plays with absurdist situations that discussed the ravages of immigration on the personal lives of the people, describing madness, and discussing the trauma of migration to the city, families torn apart by the jobs the cotton mills of the city offered. He graduated from Rachana Sansad Bombay in 2009.

-Text by Poonam Jain

http://vimeo.com/78052379

My family traditionally comes from folk theatre that travelled from village to village to sing folklore - ‘shaheer’. My grandfather was gifted with six pieces of lands in Lanja, a Taluk in Maharashtra by a British officer who was pleased by his performance. This gift made him settle in the village but also an outsider. It became difficult to meet his ends. So he migrated to Mumbai to join BMC. My father followed the path and joined BMC, however he began a theatre group. My late father who was an avant-garde playwright and actor had scripted a play where few men who were in an asylum enact the objects in a room. I revisit this play today about which I had only heard from others but had never seen it by myself. I am analyzing the performance art and the theatre practice in this video where I take on the characters of these supposedly man made dead objects and enact them. I become the table fan, I become the grandfather clock, I become the newspaper and I become the doors. The location is the renovated house of my grandfather in Lanja. All of these objects who have been injected with life now and interact with each other to create a dialogue of dead.

http://vimeo.com/user15649805/httpvimeocomimpression
The place where I live, every time there is a wedding, whether Hindu or Muslim, the entire chawl have their hands and feet decorated with henna. My work explores the desires that are generated constantly by the fashion and other media. I reflect on appearances, the fake characters generated by mall culture and Bollywood within in my process. This is where my desire to create a unique costume, which is impossible to replicate, came into existence. ‘Impression’ is a jacket, which is a product of my performance before camera. The mediums used are henna, fevicol - a synthetic resin adhesive, and my body. My body becomes a machine and heat from it helps the fevicol dry over a period of 24 hours, which is then peeled off. The peeled layer then contains the textures and wrinkles of my skin. Using henna and fevicol serve the purpose of contradicting each other. Henna is used as a temporary tattoo on hands and legs for decorative purpose, while fevicol helps me symbolize the fake nature of cosmetic products. They merge and create a surface of their own; to peel the so called ‘dead skin’ from my body.
‘Make up and the Land’, Performative photographs from Lanja Village mounted on coco-soil blocks, 10 inch x 8 inch, 2013.
Amol Patil revisits his personal history and a cultural history that reveals a certain series of political events that now define the city’s political and urban landscape. His father, a blue-collar municipal worker and an avant-garde Marathi playwright, left him a voice recorder, few tapes, scripts and photographs as an inheritance, dying young. Not far from this space at Worli Naka, reside laid-off mill workers and their families. They form a formidable Dalit political constituency that once saw camaraderie with the Black Panthers, a community to which Amol along with all the gallery attendants belong.

Challenging conventional Marathi theatre, sets within formats of caste and myth, the son of a traditional nomadic powada singer Kisan Gunaji Patil’s plays reflected on issues of the migrant, the need for private space, unemployment, and the labor strikes that brought about an end to the mills.

- Text by Sumesh Sharma and Zasha Colah

http://vimeo.com/78716247

‘Detritus’ is a work where I place a tuft of hair on the spool of the Walkman, by doing so it works as a windmill, forcing us to deal with something that is considered impure among Indian traditions, referring to the sanitation workers of Bombay and the detritus of caste that remains, amongst us in India.

My father Kisan Patil scripted plays as he worked as a civil engineer in the Bombay Municipal Corporation, narrating stories of dilemma's of a migrant in the city. 'Postcard' was a play that discusses the relationship between a migrant working in the city's mills and his wife in rural Maharashtra. He would collect references for his plays by recording conversations using a Walkman and sounds near their chawl in the Bombay's industrial district of Parel. Having lost my father as a young boy I got acquainted with my father through the props such as the Walkman he left behind. In 'Postcard' I split my father's Walkmans into two, recording sounds (now, within the gallery), connecting the two through Walkmans by a cassette reel that moves between them and repeat the same sound like a conversation between two characters.

‘Unsung Mountain’, two angle-poised lamps, an alternating device and a stone from Gunaji Patil's (my grandfather) mountain in Lanja, Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, 2013.

https://vimeo.com/87807233
‘Commissure’, Gunaji Patil’s (my grandfather) bed, motor and video, 2013

http://vimeo.com/72131733
Amol Patil was invited to perform at the 'World Event for Young Artists' Festival (2012) in Nottingham, sponsored by the Arts Council England. Despite an entirely funded invitation his visa was rejected for he was seen as a high-risk economic migrant who might overstay his visa to seek employment illegally, for he lacked sufficient funds in his bank account.

His elder brother Jagdish, a civil engineer, who believed art was a path to emancipation, nudged Amol Patil into becoming an artist. Jagdish has been fighting an unending lawsuit aimed at ending caste discrimination that he faces at the municipal corporation. The act of invitation and subsequent rejection, the barrier to travel he faces hinders his career, and believes it is akin to the class barrier his brother faces. He presents a performance as a tribute to the efforts of his brother, presenting his views on visas and travel.

Lokmanya Tilak revived the annual festival of Ganesha in order to instill the idea of socio-political discourse amongst the larger populace and since then the Ganpathy festival in Bombay has included institutional critique within its scope of objectives. Shri Sai Mitra Mandal, Regal Cinema, established in 1984, an organization of young men living on Wodehouse road granted Amol Patil permission to hold the performance in the space beside their pandal (makeshift temple) on the street.' (From the exhibition essay.)

Under the gaze of the 300 or so passersby who gathered, Amol wrapped himself with the objects he had packed, unpacked and re-packed over the last few weeks, mimicking the machines spewing plastic at airports, used to wrap
suitcases. Once he had left himself barely any airspace, he walked stiffly and heavily, with all he was carrying, passport wrapped tightly across his face, to the gallery, where he began to cut himself out of his hot imprisonment of heavy sentiment, with a pair of tiny blunt, metal scissors. Once free, he stared at the cast of his body that had accommodated all these objects, and stared at them, for almost too long, then he gave the slightest nod, and left the room.

- Text by Sumesh Sharma

‘Molt’, Product from performance in front of the camera, Henna, Synthetic Resin Adhesive, 2011
In this work I compare the human body to that of reptiles, which shed their skin each year renewing their skin. There are varied cosmetic products produced each year, which promise to rejuvenate skin into agelessness. Over the course of a day, I am able to shed – peel off – a resin-skin that had covered my whole body.

‘Molt Rehearsal’, performance in front of the camera, Video Stills, Peel Off, a cosmetic product, 2011
‘Early In The Morning’, Video stills of a performance in front of camera, Synthetic Resin Adhesive, 2011

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeHZNdei7_Q

This work is about the connection of my dreams with the space I live in. It is a simple mapping of objects in my space. These are ropes made out of fevicol (Synthetic Resin Adhesive) that I made over one day. The ropes are a molt of the tiles on the floor on which I laid out long lines of thick fevicol to dry. The ropes were like memories of the tiles. In the morning, in my half-sleep state I wrapped my body in with these fragile fevicol ropes of memory, and returned to sleep. When I woke up I used the fevicol ropes to wrap each thing I used as the morning progressed – a shirt, switchboard, iron, tube light, gas cylinder, tea cup, till the ropes created a web of connections through the kitchen.
I live in a chawl. Living here easily cultivates the desires of being popular, a celebrity. I have been fascinated with the role of the brands, mall culture and Bollywood. I satirize superficial and fake appearances in my process of practice. I walked from Prabhadevi in Bombay to Parel, making white marks from a bottle of paint, on the road to mark the distance and direction I was taking. I went into shops, tried on clothes, and the ones I liked, I left the showroom, and stood dead still on the road just outside. It was a satirical performance where I used heavy make-up imitating a celebrity, but also resembling a dead mannequin.
‘MANY I’

Many I: Shock | Digital Print on Paper | 12 inch x 9 inch | 2013

Many I: Shock | detail
Many I: Balance | Digital Print on Paper | 8 inch x 6 inch | 2013

Many I: Deal | Digital Print on Paper | 8 inch x 6 inch | 2013
Many I: Worship  |  Digital Print on Paper  |  12 inch x 9 inch  |  2013

Many I: Many  |  Digital Print on Paper  |  8 inch x 6 inch  |  2013
Bisecting the appearance, I leave behind the details of a human body representing them through silhouettes of gestures. These gestures however are made from reference of the self, but they also create a memoir from which I belong. The forms that experiment with medium emerged to form a narration of family lore.

Shock: looking at self within self
Worship: a shelf in self
Balance: a pair of legs weighing the self and the other
Deal: a frozen moment just before the gift handed over
Weight: one known and three unknowns
View: a man on mountain assuming the future
Many: is it others or I?