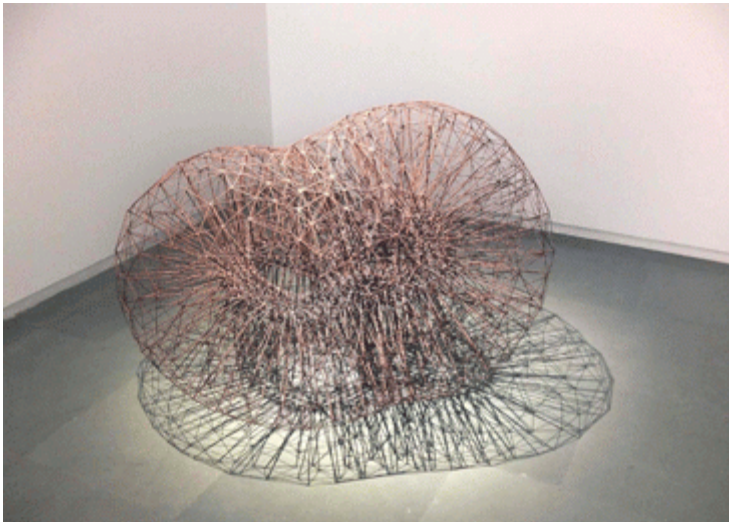


Sculpting the unseen beauty of nothingness

ADITI UBEROI 25th Mar




Endless line and expanded space

For a decade now, Alwar Balasubramaniam's work has sought to challenge perceptions of space, of the invisible and the negative. After *The Art of Nothingness* in 2009, his latest series of works, entitled *Nothing from My Hands* is on display at the Talwar Art Gallery in New Delhi.

This particular series consists of sculptures and metallic installations that try to focus attention on that which is missing instead of projecting the obvious and the apparent. "In these works, I've tried to capture the 'nothingness' between clasped hands — a space that only exists when the hands are closed. In casting this invisible space, I'm attempting to give form to the non-material and to show that even nothing is something beautiful," says Bala (as he is popularly known).

Bala has worked with diverse materials such as granite, fibreglass, acrylic, sandstone, iron, aluminium and silicon to create works whose names are equally embedded in the ideas of the unnoticed and the overlooked, such as *Shadow Lines*, *Knot*, *Stone Waves* and *Embryo*. When you enter the gallery, it may be difficult to comprehend the connection between the works. But once you understand Bala's notions of space and perceptibility, you can comprehend the conceptual pursuit that is explored through the art.

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The knot, *Between Here and There* and *Endless Line and Expanded Space* mostly consist of intricate lattice construction of lines, flowing seamlessly with no apparent endings or beginnings, with no clear demarcation between the inside and outside, the self and the other. "The works are more questions than answers. Our senses are too limited to get the full picture of what exists. For example, the space between an object and its shadow requires a continuous exploration and it is the viewers who take their experience of the work and create their own relationship with it and take it further," adds Bala.

Gallery owner Deepak Talwar says of Bala's works, "Bala has gently inspired the viewer towards one of the most fundamental questions of our existence: What is in our hands? Nothing or...Everything?"

Bala was born in Tamil Nadu in 1971. In 1999, he was an artist in residence at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire. Bala was the recipient of the Charles Wallace India Trust Arts Fellowship Award in 1997, and in 2006 he was awarded the Sanskriti Award for Excellence in Visual Arts. His works have been exhibited in galleries across the world. He has frequently employed his own body as the medium by making casts of his face, hands and full body to negotiate the boundaries of self and within oneself. He currently lives and works in Bengaluru.