

INDIA VOGUE



RANJANI SHETTAR

Age 31

Hometown Bangalore

Education BFA; MFA, Karnataka
Chitrakala Parishath (sculpture)

Medium Sculpture and installation

Ranjani Shettar's father was convinced his daughter should become an artist from the time she was five years old; Ranjani made the decision for herself at the ripe old age of 13. "I started drawing as a little child and my parents nourished my interest at every stage," she remembers, recounting several childhood stories involving chalk drawings on the floor and a decided aversion to felt-tip pens.

Today, Shettar has exhibited across the world, from New York and Paris to Sydney and Sharjah. "When I'm home, I'm busy in my studio creating, reading and reflecting. When I travel, it is the other side of the coin: show openings, visiting museums, seeing original works of art, meeting people. I enjoy both, as one balances the other."

Sometimes, the travel provides direct inspiration: 'Me, no, not me, buy me, eat me, wear me, have me, me, no, not me', an installation of woven vessels (made of steel from junkyard-bound cars) came out of seeing an industrial scrap yard in Sharjah, and questions our ideas of consumption, recycling, economics and luxury.

Most works, however, arise from Shettar's love of nature: 'In Bloom' looks like a chandelier of pink-purple lacquered wooden beads (handmade by local craftsmen) and was inspired by bougainvillea; 'Vasanta' is a 'net' of threads joined by hand-moulded beeswax pellets; 'Sun-sneezers

blow light bubbles' consists of swirls and circles reminiscent of soap bubbles (or cell division), made from tamarind kernel powder and muslin.

In fact, Shettar's wide range of new, interesting and organic material is her work's most distinct—and applauded—feature. "I find it fascinating how things are made for various purposes and I see it as a rich source of inspiration," says the artist, from her studio a few hours outside Bangalore. "I can watch clay tiles, coir ropes, salt or biscuits in a factory being made for hours, and [I can] be blank with no thoughts in my mind." *DIVIA THANI DASWANI*

"Shettar's installations explore the complex relationships between the natural and the manufactured, the personal and the universal, the tangible and the intangible. Working with form and light, her works interrogate the effects of technology and rapid urbanisation on the environment. They occupy an expanse, yet shun the density of that expanse, creating one expectation but gently delivering another experience entirely for the viewer."

Minal Vazirani, co-founder and director, saffronart.com

RICHARD LEGGE

235