

NEW DELHI

## Ranjani Shettar

TALWAR GALLERY

Echoes of the natural world reverberated through Ranjani Shettar's solo show "Bubble trap and a double bow." Some of the works were reminiscent of the gossamer skeins of a spiderweb; others, of lichen covering the forest floor. In *How long before another turn*, 2016, delicate nets spun out of polyester threads and studded with molded wax beads were suspended between gray gallery walls. These fragile bead constellations with their warm tones of pink, yellow, and orange threw delicate shadows, creating a complex interplay of tangible and immaterial lines in space. This effect recalled an earlier work by the artist, *Just a bit more*, 2005–2006, which was included in "On Line: Drawing through the Twentieth Century," curated by Catherine de Zegher and Connie Butler at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2010–11.

Curvaceous, sensual shapes twirled and pirouetted with ease in another work on display, *Remanence from last night's dream*, 2011–16. These floating forms thumb their nose at gravity, their seeming weightlessness belying the heavy rosewood from which they are fashioned. Evocative of Miró's quixotic doodles—but ones that have jumped off the paper into the air—or notations in a musical composition, they hearken to their own inner beat. Bright-orange protuberances spring from their dark, glistening surfaces like filaments of fungi from the bark of a tree. While the care that Shettar has lavished on the wood is evident, she does not shy away from revealing the material's fissures

and flaws; after all, she seems to suggest, they are an integral part of nature's organic processes.

A sense of rhythm could also be discerned in *Morning Song*, 2016. Spanning a long white wall, the composition's undulating lines conveyed a sense of lively movement, created by myriad lacquered brown stalks balancing polished white spheres. Could one detect the swell and trough of sea waves or the form of a porpoise as it dives or gracefully swims away through the water? Evoking elemental forces, in *Open wings of a precious secret*, 2016, forms made from stainless steel, dyed muslin fabric, and tamarind-kernel paste appeared to joyously lift off the ground like dancing autumn leaves caught in a sudden gust of wind. The artist's preoccupation with music also manifested itself in the gallery's stairwell, which sported delicate blue-and-white muslin works from her 2015 "Song Book" series. Elsewhere, a long scroll, *Liana's lullaby*, 2015, bore block-print notations from an undecipherable score on henna-dyed muslin.

Installed on the gallery roof, *Where in time is now*, 2016, could not have offered a better counterpoint to the lightness of being evoked in many of Shettar's other sculptural works. Found objects in the shape of three massive wooden wheels—the kind used in chariots, or *rathas*, to transport Indian temple deities through the streets—were conjoined to form a curious trinity. A palpable tension informs the sculpture: The wheels tilt and pull away in different directions, despite being inextricably linked. This work, much like others in the show, underscores the consummate ease with which Shettar orchestrates diverse materials to give her works both celebratory energy and gravitas.

—Meera Menezes

Ranjani Shettar, *Remanence from last night's dream*, 2011–16, rosewood, lacquered wood, pigments, 72 × 50 × 35".

