



Left: Shambhavi Singh, *Lullaby*, 2008. Iron, blackboard paint, and charcoal, 114 x 36 x 13 in. Below: Shambhavi Singh, *Braille*, 2008. Iron, blackboard paint, and charcoal, 114 x 36 x 13 in.

seductive softness in sharp contrast to the spiky raw holes punched across its surface. Singh's choice of the sieve is not random: used by low-paid workers across the country, it is closely tied to her concern for the marginalized, particularly for the scores of people who migrate from her homeland in Bihar to find work across India. Nowhere is this concern more strongly embodied than in the painting *Migrant Labour*, in which hundreds of tiny feet emerging from a foreboding blue-black landscape suggest a nameless and faceless humanity. Greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and his peaceful struggle for India's independence, Singh's *Khadau* renders traditional Indian wooden slippers in brass, with maps of India and South Africa etched on the inner soles. The almost reticent symbolism of this small work was overshadowed in the show by the exuberance of the large and col-

orful "Ghatak" paintings, which depict the cosmos enclosed in a womb-like pot.

Based in New Delhi, Singh has exhibited her works in India, South Africa, the U.S., and the Netherlands, where she was associated with the Foundation of Indian Arts, Amsterdam. She made her first installation, *Mid-night song on 12 pages*, in 2001 while on a residency in Cape Town, home to Gandhi before he came back to India. Her first sculptures were made in natural materials (bamboo and palm leaves) and paid tribute to rural life. Now, she prefers to use iron for its material properties and symbolic significance. The iron industry was the first to be set up in Bihar, and Singh admires the nomadic *lohaar* (blacksmith) community whose members survive in rural areas by exchanging the everyday implements that they craft for part of the farmers' harvest. For Singh, "making installations and sculptures in iron is reflective of the hard life that these people lead and yet, they continue to exist in this consumer and retail-driven world."

—Minhazz Majumdar

fied beats. Migone seems nostalgic for a time when the nothingness of virtuality's metaphysical paradox was mitigated by robust sensuality and tangibility.

—William V. Ganis

NEW DELHI

Shambhavi Singh Talwar Gallery

Like many artists in contemporary India, Shambhavi Singh has been tempted to explore three-dimensionality. "Lullaby," her latest show, presented a sometimes incongruous mix of intriguing sculptural installations and monumental, brooding paintings. Walking into the space, one felt a discernible sense of displacement akin to Alice entering Wonderland or, more likely, Gulliver

in the Land of the Giants. Everyday objects, nothing exotic or alien, are transformed into the extraordinary by virtue of being on a different scale. *Lullaby*, the titular work, magnifies palm-leaf hand-fans into towering forms. Used by the poor across India in the absence of electricity, the simple hand-fan stirs the still air and provides relief from the stifling heat. The scale and choice of material here—hard metal instead of fragile fiber—is transformative: the fan is no longer an ephemeral utilitarian object but a powerful symbol of poverty.

Braille is an oversized crude metal sieve of the kind used to sift grains or construction material. Blown out of proportion, it dominates the room, casting a gigantic stippled shadow of

