

Goddess Kali gets Special Commendation by Woollahra Council in Vaucluse Australia

By : Surinder Jain.

Vaucluse is a harbour suburb in the Woollahra council within Sydney, Australia. It is one of the most fashion and art conscious highly sought after suburb with a very high average income. The Council runs an annual Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize (WSSP) and attracts some of the best artists in Australia and overseas. It brings together a collection of finalists from preeminent to the lesser known.



Pointy Gold Head Kali



WSSP Exhibition

This year it had 46 finalists whose sculptures were on display in the Council building with an entry by Neeraj Gupta from India. The mayor of Woollahra opened the exhibition and announced the prizes. A special commendation prize was awarded to a Kali sculpture made by a Fiji Indian now Australian artist Ramesh. The award was presented to artist Ramesh by the mayor of Woollahra Council Peter M Cavanagh.

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The Kali sculpture called “Pointy Gold Head” was chosen by the judges to be awarded a Special Commendation. The sculpture is a 24-carat gold plated bronze statue of the face of Goddess Kali with her tongue protruding out. According to its artist Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran, the material used included clay, shells, rubber hoses and cardboard and one can find these objects embedded in the surface. The artwork was made permanent through bronze casting and Gold Plating Process, a direct reference to representations of the Hindu Goddess, Kali.



We caught up with the artist and asked him

Q. what inspired you to make a sculpture of Goddess Kali.

A. I was making a face out of various waste material and a sudden inspiration caused me to pull the tongue out. Before I knew it, face of Goddess Kali had already been made.



Ramesh with
Commendation from
Mayor

Q. Why did you Gold Plate the face with 24 carat Gold.

A. To reflect the immense power and glory of the Goddess, I had to imbue it with some thing of extreme value. Pure 24 carat Gold lets that happen.

Q. Where were you born.

A. I was born here in the suburb of Auburn in Sydney though my parents had come to Australia from Fiji.

Sri Lankan-born, Sydney-based artist Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran creates rough-edged, vibrant, new-age idols. He experiments with form and scale in the context of figurative sculpture to explore politics of sex, the monument, gender and religion. Formally trained in painting and drawing his practice has a sculptural emphasis which champions the physicality of art making. These works are often stacked to form totems or perched atop customised plinths.

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While proceeding from a confident atheist perspective, Nithiyendran draws upon his Hindu and Christian heritage as reference points as well as a large range of sources including the internet, pornography, fashion and art history. Self-portraits make frequent appearances and the dual presence of male and female organs suggest gender fluid realms of new possibilities.

He has exhibited at various spaces and contexts including the 2018 Dhaka Art Summit, the encounters section for Art Basel Hong Kong, the Art Gallery of South Australia's flagship exhibition, the 2016 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art and The National: New Australian Art 2017. He has presented solo exhibitions at the National Gallery of Australia, The Ian Potter Museum of Art and the Shepparton Art Museum. In 2014, Nithiyendran was awarded the 2014 NSW Visual Arts Fellowship (emerging) administered through Artspace. In 2015, he was the winner of the 2015 Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award, Australia's richest and premier award for artists working in the medium of ceramics.

His work is held in various collections, including the National Gallery of Australia, the Art Gallery of South Australia, The Art Gallery of Western Australia, Artbank, The Ian Potter Museum of Art and the Shepparton Art Museum. The sculpture is available for sale at a price of Australia \$19,800.



Organizer Lyn with the Author and Neeraj's Mind's Eye

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Neeraj Gupta from India had also been selected as a finalist for his sculpture Mind's Eye which was priced at \$12,000.



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