

There is Now a Wall

Rathin Barman

03 Feb – 02 April 2022

Experimenter – Hindustan Road

Experimenter presents *There is Now a Wall*, Rathin Barman's fourth solo project at the gallery. For over a decade Barman has been weaving narratives of history, architecture and memory through his sculptures by forging long lasting relationships with inhabitants of a range of grand homes, some built over two centuries ago, in North Kolkata. For Barman, the nuances of these structures, the narratives of their occupants, anecdotes and personal experiences act as tools for understanding the complex socio-political history.

Although architecture is characteristically perceived as a fixed entity, central to validating history yet simultaneously existing outside it, to Barman however, it serves a wider role. In his practice, architectural form has actively served as an anthropological tool, in building a collective recollection of a place and its people. The title of the exhibition is borrowed from a conversation between two brothers who have divided their home between themselves, erecting a wall in the centre of the majestic courtyard of the house. What emerged from the conversation with both patriarchs is a passionate recalling of the imposing architecture and the past grandeur of the home, the cultural and social importance of the family in society, now all diminished leading Barman to create the central work in the exhibition, embedding the red concrete with brass inlays.

A series of sculptures, *Notes from Lived Spaces*, reside in the central cavity, once itself the inner courtyard of the building, where the gallery is housed. The sculptures resemble building blocks stacked atop and nestled within each other, with architectural intricacies of windows, trellises and grilles. Blocks of concrete cast in pigmented red and natural colours, the sculptures seem to hold aloft a delicate equilibrium of opposing and simultaneously symbiotic pulls between their many planes. Adjacently, a body of wall based sculptures from the series *Transitory Spaces* face each other. While some of them highlight their altered current arches and pillars through brass projections, others have scaffolding-like structures protruding from their surfaces resembling a parasitic, modern grid imposed over a series of reinforced concrete board panels with drawings and perspective notations. Others work further Barman's gaze at details of buildings all embedded in a series of pigmented and natural concrete panels, highlighting stained glass arches, slightly ajar French louvre windows and mastheads over Doric columns.

There is Now a Wall underscores the transitory nature of the built structures that not only house generations and mark the idea of what is home, but also the memories and relationships that they hold within them.

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