

DEBANJAN ROY

Born 1975, Kolkata, India.

Debanjan Roy is engaged in an ongoing process to articulate the changing social realities of day-to-day India. He has produced a series of works which take Gandhi ostensibly as their subject but this is a Gandhi who is seen holding or interacting with incommensurably contemporary objects; a cell-phone or an iPod for example. This incommensurability is at the heart of Roy's project – how do we square India's history with its present and its future?

Roy is part of a generation of artists who has witnessed India's transformation into a nascent global superpower and like many, is keen to interrogate this process. Also of interest for Roy is the rise of the Indian middle class, and its social and environmental ramifications among others. Others of his generation use the signifiers of Indian domesticity (steel utensils in Subodh Gupta's work for example) in order to generate a dissonance between material and statement. Roy uses the key figure in 20th century Indian history – Gandhi is used as a signifier of the history of India, a history of resistance and self-emancipation. His language is pop – he is one of the few Indian artists operating at the moment whose visual idiom very deliberately reference Pop Art, with his shiny repeated figures of Gandhi recalled Oldenburg's outsized signs of American culture or Warhol's repetition of American icons, most obviously, Marilyn Monroe. If Warhol's repetition of Marilyn emptied out her face of its personal qualities, mirroring perhaps the emptying processes of celebrity, then Roy's repetition of Gandhi empties Gandhi of reverence. Instead he is seen posed in increasingly confused, yet happy poses – a large bird perches on his head in one of Roy's works. Yet Roy seems to be ambivalent about what this process means – his use of 'India Shining' repeatedly in his titles does not suggest a whole-hearted belief in the rhetoric of India's march to global superpower.

The artist lives and works in Kolkata, India.

Education

1998	Bachelor of Visual Arts from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata
2000	Master of Visual Arts from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata

Select Solo Exhibitions

2013-14	<i>The Altar of Convenience</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2010	<i>Looking for Bapu</i> , Gallery Akar Prakar, Kolkata; L & P Hutheesing Centre, Ahmedabad
2009	<i>Experiments with Truth</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2007	Gandhara Gallery, Kolkata
2002	Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata

Select Group Exhibitions

2011	<i>Reprise</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2010	<i>Art Dubai 2010</i> , presented by Aicon Gallery, New York
	<i>ARCO 2010 Madrid</i> , presented by Aicon Gallery, London
	<i>Who Has Seen Gandhi?</i> , presented by Tangerine Art Space at Raj Bhavan; Kynkyny Art Gallery and Tangerine Art Space, Bangalore
	<i>Artifact</i> , Gensler, San Francisco
2009	<i>Shapeshifter</i> , Aicon Gallery, London
	<i>Pulse New York</i> , presented by Aicon, New York
	<i>The Human Animal</i> , jointly presented by Gallery Threshold and Arts I (Religare Arts Initiative) at Gallery Threshold, New Delhi
2008	<i>Who Knew? Mr. Gandhi</i> , Aicon Gallery, London
	<i>The Road to Contemporary Art</i> , Art Fair, Rome
2007	<i>Eastern Edge</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2005	<i>New Wave in Bengal Art</i> , Gallery Akar Prakar, Kolkata

2004	<i>Tale of Two Cities</i> , Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata, Mumbai and Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi
2003	<i>Migration, City, Home</i> , Lalit Kala Academy, Kolkata
2001	Japan Triennial <i>Award Winners Exhibition</i> , HK Kejriwal Foundation, Bangalore
2000	Annual Exhibition, West Bengal State Academy Annual Exhibition, All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society (AIFACS), New Delhi
1999 – 2000	Annual Exhibition, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata
1994 – 2000	Annual Exhibition, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata

Awards and Scholarships

2007	<i>Navonmesha Puruskar</i> , Kolkata
2004	Nirman Award
2002 – 2003	Lalit Kala Academy Scholarship.
2002 – 2004	Junior Fellowship from Ministry of Tourism and Culture, Government of India
2001	HK Kejriwal Foundation Young Artist Award
2000	Best Sculpture Award by West Bengal State Academy Best Sculpture Award by Rabindra Bharati University
1999	Best Sculpture Award by Rabindra Bharati University
1996	Certificate of Merit from Inter University Competition