

Local History, All Boxed Up by Avni Doshi

Mathesis: dub dub dub

Gallery Maskara

Warehouse on 3rd Pasta (b/w Dena Bank ATM and Sanghvi Exports) 6/7, 3rd Pasta Lane, Colaba, Mumbai, India

November 3, 2009 - December 3, 2009



Avantika Bawa is not interested in the identity crises and subjective introspection found in most of the contemporary art seen around Mumbai these days. Along with the show's curator, Abhay Maskara, she has envisioned something particular to the large warehouse space of Gallery Maskara. The show, *Mathesis: dub dub dub*, offers a conceptual excavation of the gallery building and its history. Bawa, who lives and works in both Atlanta, Georgia and New Delhi, has a keen awareness of space, which clearly informs her own curatorial practice. Taking into consideration the gallery's geographic position within the city, she focuses on the close proximity between Colaba and nearby Navy Nagar. Navy Nagar, a naval base as well as a port, now slowly funnels into the bustling shopping streets and tourist destinations of south Bombay. As the demarcations between martial and commercial collapse, Bawa elucidates the way in which forms are divorced from their original purposes, and how they are re-assimilated into space and experience in the present. These aspects of the area are explored through the piling of boxes, each painted a uniform grey. White bricks are arranged at an angle in a line on the floor so they appear to have been pulled out of the ground after some kind of excavation. The

colors are stark and beautiful. Diagrammatic drawings on the wall function as blueprints for the layout of the rest of the space, and will serve as archival documents of the different parts of the exhibit. Clearly indebted to minimalist notions of space, Bawa turns the gallery inside out with her site-specific critique. This mode of inquiry invokes the work of artists like Imi Knoebel and Daniel Buren, whose influences are evident in Bawa's stacked boxes and graphic stripes. While the show does feel dry overall, there is a hint of nostalgia creeping in through the walls of the gallery as Bawa's work offers a unique glimpse back into the city's past.

-- Avni Doshi

(Images Courtesy of Gallery Maskara and the artist)



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