

Arunkumar H.G.

In-site

Aicon Gallery Exhibition March 1 – March 31, 2018
Press Preview & V.I.P. Reception: Thursday, March 1, 6:00pm – 8:00pm
35 Great Jones St., New York NY 10012

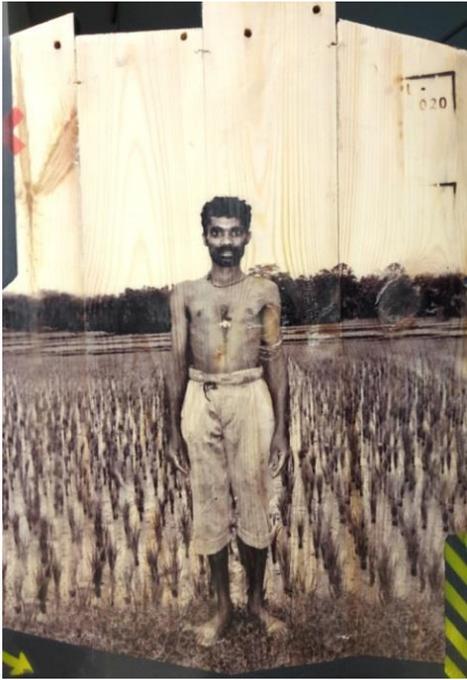
Aicon Gallery New York is proud to present *In-site*, the first major U.S. solo exhibition by Delhi-based artist **Arunkumar H.G.** Arunkumar's work explores the tacit relationship between burgeoning consumerist culture and the systematic degradation of natural resources. His collection of cast forms deliberately recalls the processes of mass production yet his choice of materials (wood pulp, cement, aluminum, wood glue and paint) speaks to the environmental cost implicit in their creation. In the current exhibition, his arrangement of animal forms evokes a nostalgic park that encapsulates long lost values and the need to reclaim a workable relationship with the natural world. Explaining Arunkumar's artistic investigation, Hong Kong-based art historian and independent curator Kathleen L. Wyma has stated "In our global present, development is promoted as the hallmark of progress and it is often cited as a panacea for many social problems; however, the materials, methods and visual metaphors used by Arunkumar in this exhibition poignantly strip bare the promise of development to hint at the nature of its existential threat."



Arunkumar H.G., *Elephant*, 2018, Paper pulp, cement, wood glue, aluminum, floor paint and clear coat, 32.5 x 17.5 x 37 in.

In-site marks the culmination of a sustained artistic investigation into this force of global production and the ecological toll of escalating material consumption. The body of work presented in the exhibition not only points to the implicit contradictions of industrial and economic development but also posits the need for a recuperative husbandry. The menagerie of animals presented aligns with the idea of husbandry and taps into the historical legacy of animal imagery within the visual landscape of India. The symbolic potency of *animals* weaves through many literary traditions; they appear as anthropomorphised leitmotifs in the *Jataka* Tales, that chronicle the previous lives of Buddha, and as metaphors for human vice or virtue in the moralising tales of the *Panchatantra*. These examples evince the rich capacity for animals to act as intercessors in the relationship between humanity and the natural world. Collectively they stand as mute distillations of life that are in turn animated, not by visual or textual narratives, but rather through the inclusion of the signs emblazoned on their bodies.

Arunkumar H.G. was born in Karnataka's Shivamogga district, a major part of which lies in the Malnad region of the Western Ghats: a once-pristine biodiversity hotspot known for both its natural heritage and its cultural history. He went on to complete both his bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts from Baroda, specializing in sculpture and then working for the Rubbabu brand, a company that makes toys out of rubber foam, where he was designing toys for the company till around 2014.



Arunkumar H.G., *Vulnerable Guardian Series 1*, 2018,
Digital print, floor paint and clear coat on reclaimed
wood, 20 x 14 in.

His hometown, Shivamogga, is now the Centre of his latest project, the SARA (Sustainable Alternatives for Rural Accord). SARA Centre primarily aims to engage people through the arts, to reclaim the power of images and other creative expressions, and to amend the unsustainable practices of today. The Centre hosts several programs creating a space for artists, intellectuals, environmentalists, farmers, teachers and students to share and to raise public awareness about sustainable life practices that specifically address the ecological concerns of the region.

Arunkumar's solo shows include: *Tract*, Nature Morte, New Delhi, 2010, *Feed*, Nature Morte, New Delhi, and Sakshi Gallery Mumbai 2006. He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions in India and abroad, most importantly: *Sculpture by The Sea*, Sculpture Biennial Aarhus Denmark, 2015, *The Eye and The Mind: New Interventions in Contemporary Indian Art*, part of Festival of India in China, 2015 (sponsored by the National Gallery of Modern Art), *Shifting Terrains/Altered Realities*, Shrine Gallery, Delhi & Singapore, 2008, *Here There Now*, Gallery Soulflower Bangkok, 2007, and *Indian Colour*, Gallery Keumsan, Seoul, 2007. He has additionally participated in several national and international artists' residencies some of which include *Art Omi international Artist*

Residency, New York, 2011, *Artist in Residency*, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 2007 & 2002, *Public Art Residency* at JNU Campus, New Delhi, 2005 and the *International Artists Camp*, George Keyt Foundation.

Please contact Aicon Gallery (Andrew@Aicongallery.com) for more information.