



emami  
art

# THE MIRROR SEES BEST IN THE DARK

BOSE  
KRISHNAMACHARI

22/12/19-10/03/20

A mirror reflects you, back to yourself. A mirror also lures you in; entraps you. It accumulates your obsessions. It symbolizes obsession. Stay away from this symbol, the mirror! Barbara Kruger had prayed: 'Protect me from what I want'.

Love is obsessive. Devotion is obsessive. Equally: hate is obsessive. Power is obsessive. Patriotism is obsessive. Money is obsessive. My works reflect my anxiety about the tensions of our contemporary society, and a self-obsessed autocracy that is looming. I look at our relationships, our politics, our faiths, our wisdom, our communities, our gurus - our obsessions. I look at image and icon, word and number. As literal sense and metaphorical gesture.

In my practice, I have explored the coexistence of extremes, the nearness of x between opposites - ornamental maximalism and abstract minimalism.





# BOSE KRISHNAMACHARI

Artist and independent curator, Bose Krishnamachari lives and works between Mumbai and Kochi. His diverse artistic and curatorial practice includes drawing, painting, sculpture, design, installation, and architecture.

Bose Krishnamachari has exhibited in several solo and group exhibitions including Bombay Maximum City, Lille 3000, Lille, curated by Caroline Naphegyi (2006), The Shape That Is, Jendela and Concourse, Esplanade, Singapore (2006), Indian Art at the Swarovski Crystal World, Innsbruck, Austria (2007), Gateway Bombay at the Peabody Essex Museum (2007), India Art Now: Spazio Oberdan, Milan (2007), Indian Highway at the Serpentine Gallery (2009), Astrup Fearnley Museum, Norway (2009), the Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark (2010), the Lyon Contemporary Art Museum, the Fondazione MAXXI, Rome (2011), and the ARTZUID Amsterdam (2011). His curatorial projects include the seminal exhibition The Bombay Boys, New Delhi (2004), Double-Enders, A travelling show - Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore and Kochi (2005), AF-FAIR, 1X1 Contemporary and 1X1 Gallery, Dubai (2008), guest curator at the Indian pavilion of ARCO-Madrid (2009), and the travelling project, LaVA - Laboratory of Audio Visual Arts (2007-2011). In 2009, Krishnamachari created Gallery BMB in South Mumbai with a vision to bring the best national and international art to India.

Bose Krishnamachari is the co-founder of the Kochi Biennale Foundation, the organization behind the initiation of India's first Biennale—the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2012, which he also co-curated. He has served as President and Biennale Director of the Foundation till date, overseeing four successful editions of the Biennale so far. Bose curated For an Image, Faster than Light, first edition of the Yinchuan Biennale in MOCA Yinchuan, China which showed the work of 73 artists from 33 countries in the Museum of Contemporary Art, Yinchuan. He is a Board Member of the International Biennale Association and an Academic Board Member of the Taoxichuan China Arts and Sciences project.



How fast can sound travel through graphite, copper, steel, or stone? Very fast, and with considerable resonance, in the hands of an ingenious, versatile and socially engaged artist like Krishnamachari Bose, who relays through his work a powerful commitment to effecting transformation in the political and cultural contexts of the historical moment. Bose's practice has been vibrantly hybrid, spanning art-making as well as institution-building. As an artist, he has engaged with diverse media, ranging from painting to the installation and the social sculpture. If certain chromatic preoccupations have travelled with him over a period of three decades, so have certain emphases on informal pedagogy, the library, and the space of mutual intellectual and affective nourishment between artists and audiences. During the early 1990s, an entire generation of Bombay artists, then students or recent graduates, benefited from the suitcases full of books that Bose would bring back from his foreign travels. Through a project like LaVA, a giant reading room dedicated to the visual arts and art history, Bose reached out to draw potential viewers into a space of education that was welcoming rather than alienating. Through the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Bose realised his vision for a festival of the arts that would meld the local, national and international art scenes into a new, dynamic and unpredictable constellation.

In his current body of work, 'The Mirror Sees Best in the Dark', Bose returns triumphantly to art-making. In these marvellous experiments with form and material – in which he shuttles among word, image and assemblage, between an austere minimalism and an opulent maximalism – he confronts the increasingly extreme discourses that shape our consciousness. In Bose's handling, these discourses crystallise around keywords that then become slogans, deployed in the witch hunts and debased debates that characterise a polarised society. Bose explores the thresholds at which potentially unifying concepts like nationalism can become unhealthy obsessions, dividing the world into Us and Them, injecting toxicity into collective life. What we see in Bose's recent works is a portrait of what we have done to ourselves today, at the level of the individual, the community, the religious group, the nation-state. Sometimes, this portrait is manifestly clear, as in the works where he uses a traditional Kerala metal mirror. Sometimes, as when he uses Braille in his graphite works, we may have to decode the portrait. The seriousness of the artist's intent communicates itself through playfulness as well as sombre irony. The sighted can sometimes miss the obvious truth, while the visually challenged can read it with precision. The times are dark, and Bose's mirror is designed to see – and reveal – better in such conditions.

Ranjit Hoskote  
Poet, Curator & Cultural theorist



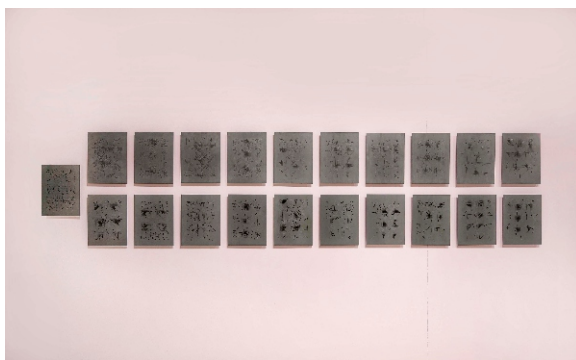


Title : 10 Commandments in Silence  
Medium : Paper  
Size: 46 x 37 x 3 cm each  
Year: 2019

A minimalistic rendition, that also lies on the border of the absurd. Ten gospels, written in Braille, yet framed in glass, disallowing one to touch, engage or read.

Installation & Gallery View



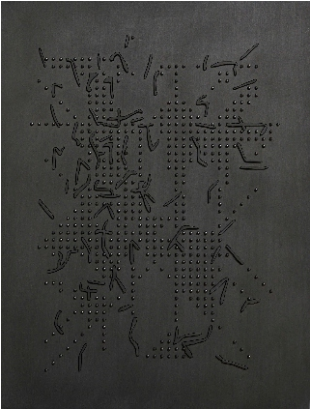
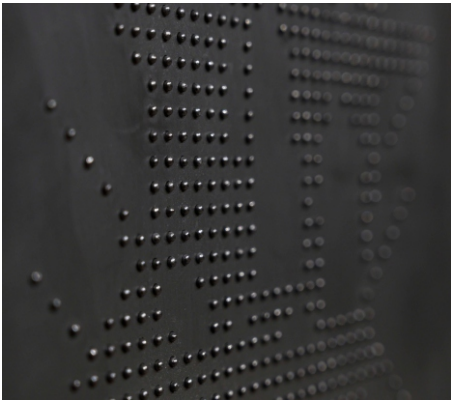
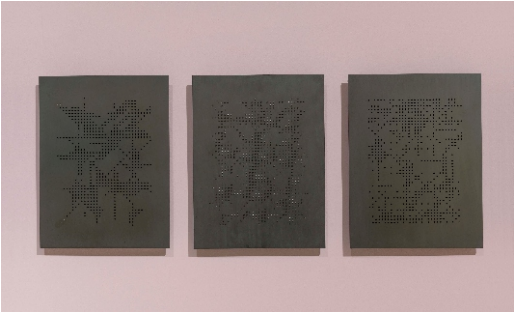
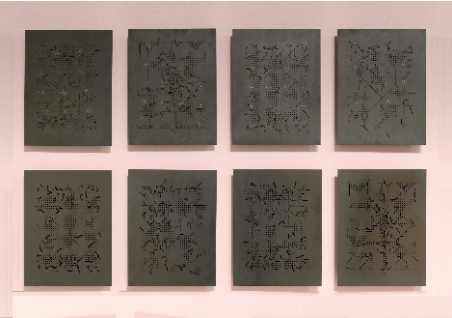


Title: Scores from the Dark - 1  
 Medium: Graphite, handcrafted teak wood  
 Size : 28.4 x 21.6 x 2.3/2 cm each  
 Year : 2019

A meditative series of mathematical patterns, perforated and embossed (negative and positive) by hand on 41 graphite plates; 41 being the traditional number associated with reflection and abstinence.



Installation & Gallery View





Title: 9 Rasas and One Soft Cut

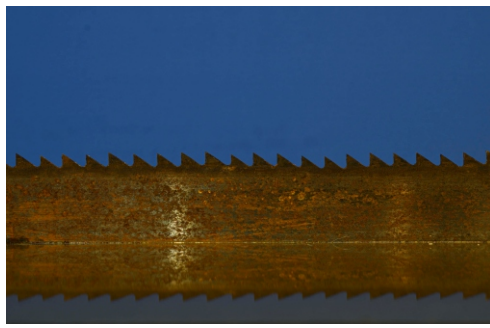
Medium: Handcrafted teak wood, paint, metal, acrylic mirror

Size: Variable

Year: 2018-19

A series of highly ornamented wooden panels, of variable size, arranged in a diminuendo, over a metal saw - a representation of the perils of obsession.

Installation & Gallery View







Title: Obsessions - 1

Medium : Teak wood carved frame,  
acrylic mirror, ornamental glass,  
graphite, copper, wood, steel,  
brass, granite, bronze, ceramic and marble

Year : 2018-19

Size: Variable

'The Obsessions' are enshrined within a built 'sanctum' of the exhibition. The walls of this sanctum, slathered with heavily patterned wallpaper, display nine highly ornamented golden wooden frames. Within these frames, of variable size, are the words 'God, Religion, Technology, Casteism, Regionalism, Nationalism, Narcissism, Racism, Capitalism', over multiple layers of detailing on acrylic mirror and ornamental glass.

Installation & Gallery View





Title: Religion

Medium: Teak wood, neon light, acrylic mirror

Size : 305 x 152 x 26 cm

Year : 2018-19

A large ornamented golden wooden frame, outside the sanctum. Neon lights that read an obsession, that is safe to call the most dangerous of them all.



Installation & Gallery View





Title: Mirror Sees Best in the Dark

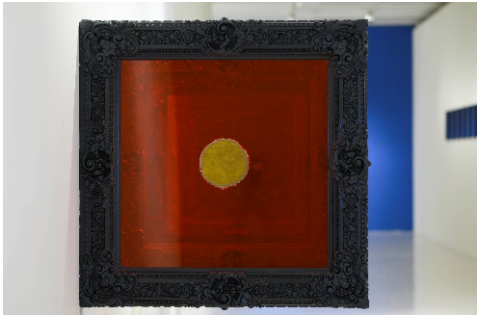
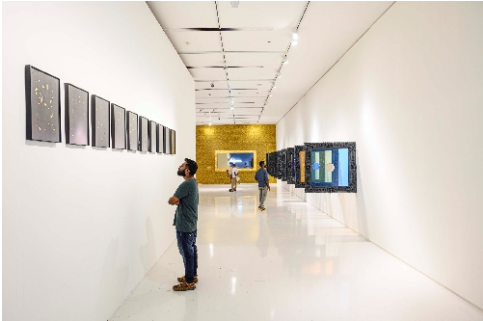
Medium: Teak wood, aranmula mirror, non-reflective glass

Size : 121.5 x 121.5 x 15.5 cm each

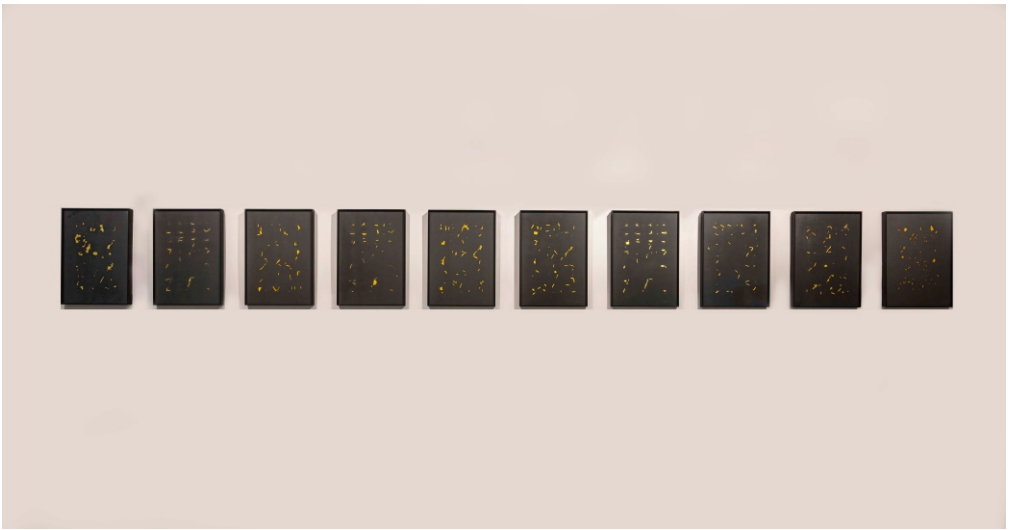
Year : 2018-19

The 'aranmula kannadi', is a type of metal-alloy mirror that is native to Pathanamthitta, Kerala, and is the centerpiece of this work. Considered a traditional metallurgical feat, the mirrors are produced by excessive polishing of the dark metal surface, for several days straight, till they become bright enough to reflect. Nine carved wooden frames, with aranmula mirrors embedded in coloured acrylic glass, comprise of the titular artwork of this exhibition.

Installation & Gallery View



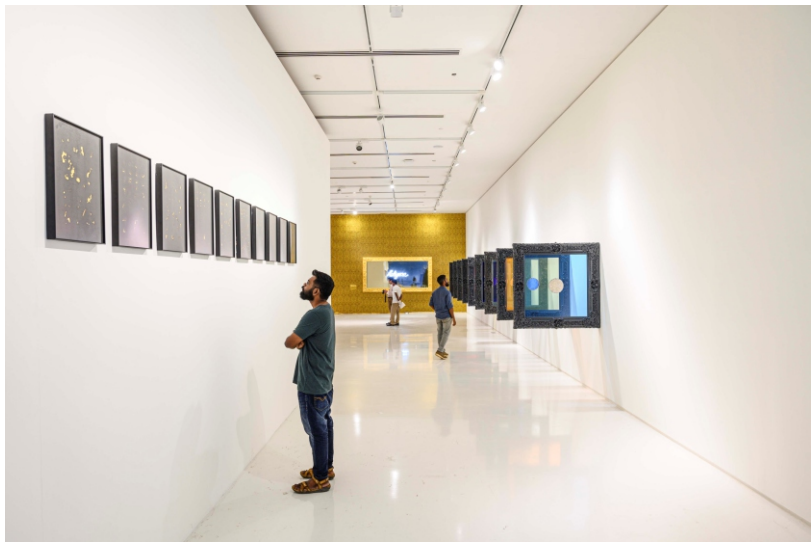




Title: Darkness Visible  
Medium: Graphite on paper, painted wood.  
Size: 51 x 40 x 4 cm each  
Year: 2019

'Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya' - Bring me from darkness to the light. Drawings that symbolize finding light in the darkness, as a series of musical notes/scores.

Installation & Gallery View





Title: -2019+  
 Medium: Granite  
 Size : 75 x 90 x 150 cm  
 Year : 2019



Title: 10 Words  
 Medium: Granite  
 Size : 60 x 120 x 150 cm  
 Year : 2019

Two sculptures, chiseled out of found stone, created today, to be an artefact for posterity.

[Spoke-less Ashoka Chakra, Mirror carved on a tablet, carrying text and braille]

Installation & Gallery View









A destination for Modern & cutting-edge Contemporary Art, Emami Art is a one-of-a-kind art space built in keeping with international standards. Positioned as a key destination for artists, visitors and art collectors, the gallery aligns with the Emami Group's mission to support artists & artisans and contribute to society's well being. A regular programme of curated exhibitions, including the works of new talents and eminent masters of regional, national and international repute aligns with the promoters' ideology that while the popular contributes to the academic, the academic uplifts the popular. Spearheaded by Richa Agarwal, Emami Art's new 10,000 sq.ft. art space is located in Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC), a state-of-the-art multi-disciplinary not-for-profit Trust, off Eastern Metropolitan Bypass, Kolkata, India.

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