

ANITA DUBE

BORN 1958, INDIA; LIVES AND WORKS IN NEW DELHI, INDIA

Initially trained as an art historian and critic, Anita Dube creates works with a conceptual language that valorizes the sculptural fragment as a bearer of personal and social memory, history, mythology, and phenomenological experience. Employing a variety of found objects drawn from the realms of the industrial (foam, plastic, wire), craft (thread, beads, velvet), the body (dentures, bone), and the readymade (ceramic eyes), Dube investigates a very human concern with both personal and societal loss and regeneration. Dube came to her sculptural practice through her involvement with the Indian Radical Painters and Sculptors Association, a group of young artists formed in the 1980s in Baroda whose self-styled critical social and political consciousness contrasted with the more established, self-conscious narrative painting of the so-called Baroda School.

In 1997, Dube began working with a new material, the industrially manufactured ceramic eyes that are affixed to Hindu religious statues commonly found in Indian temples. She initially used these variably sized eyes in site-specific ways, attaching them to the spot in a room where the ceiling meets two walls to form a corner, as in *Intimations of Mortality* (1997). In works such as *Disease (River)* (1999), the ceramic eyes began to move, branching out across the wall like a virus or a flooding river. Although her work evokes a number of meanings, one can think about these wall pieces in terms of the various modes of human migration in the contemporary world. As Dube suggests, “The eyes are like people for me and this could speak of large migrations in history.” In this light, the eyes take on less of a horror-film quality and instead stand in metonymically for the mass of humanity that has been forced to relocate due to political persecution, economic deprivation, or the relentless effects of global development that push people from the countryside into the city. This use of the sculptural fragment to subtly invoke a humanist critical agenda speaks to her uncompromising desire to tangentially address the social through metaphorical means.

Dube’s work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Nature Morte in New Delhi (2000), and Sakshi Gallery in Mumbai, India (1999). Her work has appeared in a number of group exhibitions, including *Alchemy* at the Stephen Lawrence Gallery, University of Greenwich, England (2002); *ARS 01* at Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland (2001); the Yokohama Triennale, Japan (2001); and the VII Bienal de La Habana, Havana, Cuba (2000–2001).

—Douglas Fogle