

Uma Nair's Critique on "Deva I"

Deva 1

Metal, sand and acrylic on canvas come together to create Deva 1 that transfigures the kingdom of devas. Laila turns sculptural in essence as she creates the Deva gazing back at us mortals in this millennium. Here is a heavenly being, which derives from the Brahminic deities of ancient India. They are guardians in the mythic universe, guarding the four directions against the enemies of truth and devotion.

The manner of creation is suggestive of fusing a single block of wood for the body and with separate pieces forming some of the limbs and dress as they do in South Asian temples. This image of Ganesha reminds us of countries where old well-seasoned timber is used, for Ganesha sculptures, often taken from the beams of old buildings. The eyes are of crystal with the pupils painted from behind and the whites of the eyes probably formed from paper. The figures are finely sculpted, with much of the original pigmentation intact. Laila creates an alchemy of colours in this image that extols the chants of many ages past.
