

# An oeuvre that's earthy

**INITIATIVE** Twelve artists, myriad interpretations and one medium... that's what the Indo-Korean Ceramic Residency Project on at Kalakshetra is all about.

**PUSHPA CHARI**



One of the completed works. PHOTO: M. KARUNAKARAN

The idyllic settings of Kalakshetra seems to be an apt backdrop for 12 ceramic artists to unleash their creativity.

The artists, six each from Korea and India, are participating in a unique month-long Indo-Korean Ceramic Residency Project, jointly presented by Inko Centre, Chennai, the Arts Council of Korea, Kalakshetra Foundation and the Lalit Kala Akademi. With the result, the Kalakshetra Fine Arts Studio resonates with energy. A half baked, fully painted sculpture of a dog shares space with beautiful totem poles and lacy ceramic garments.

## Represents harmony

Jae Joon Lee, an environmental ceramic sculptor whose huge installations of humans and animals dot Seoul, finds Kalakshetra a great place to work in. As he creates a 5ft dog using the coil method, he speaks of his work which represents harmony between Man and Nature. Named 'Guardian of Nature,' the sculpture stands beside a 10-ft tall human form and

the entire installation is a tribute to sculptural brilliance.

While Jae Joon Lee's local muse is Kalakshetra's in-house dog Muthu, Keoung Ran Yeo's ceramic dog with free flowing painted motifs of flower and vine on the body is inspired by Indian folk art. "In fact my work mixes both Korean and Indian symbolism," says the artist.

Women's issues, their search for freedom and their ego dominate Kang Kyoung Young's works. Kang says of her work titled 'Secret Guardian', "She is dreaming, may be of her flight to freedom." And despite the serious nature of her search, the woman has a soft, poetic sensibility.

At the other end of the spectrum are Jin Kyoung Kim's ceramic garments, Jun Young Jimp's furniture and Kyuit Tyon's bowl-shaped incense holders. "I've incorporated the Korean incense bowl form with Indian temple motifs and added the imagery of male and female 'drishti' forms on the lids," says Indian art-

ist Rashi Jain, who has been influenced by the Korean bowl-like forms.

National award winners Shintanshu Maurya and Gayatri Apte visualise abstract forms to convey their view of the world. In Apte's language, it takes the shape of totem pole-like forms while Maurya has created logs of wood, done using the coil method. Explaining the methodology, Maurya says, "First I build a slab of clay. On the edges, I add coil upon coil to build a structure. When it is in the leather hard stage, I take a wood piece and make scrapping patterns using that."

Harish Malappanavar's oeuvre consists of women. Chiraya Kumar Sinha and Shantanu Jena are the other Indian ceramic artists who are part of the ceramic residency project, which concludes on February 12. The work done by these artists will be on view at an exhibition titled 'Earth Matters' at the Lalit Kala Akademi, Greaves Road, from February 14-21.