



Sheela Gowda (Bengalore), installation
Pushpamala N (Bengalore), photography

SECULAR PRACTICE: RECENT ART FROM INDIA



MOVING IDEAS: HOOPOE CURATORIAL PRESENTS AN INDIA-CANADA DIALOGUE
November 10 to December 15, 2001

Opening: Saturday, November 10 at 2 pm, 2001
Artist Talk: Saturday, November 17 at 2 pm, 2001

The work of Sheela Gowda and Pushpamala N is presented as part of *Secular Practice: Recent Art from India*, an exhibition of nine contemporary artists from India that is taking place at three Montreal artist-run centres in addition to La Centrale. The exhibition itself is one of a number of components of the project *Moving Ideas: A Contemporary Cultural Dialogue with India* organized by Hoopoe Curatorial and presented in Montreal in cooperation with Cargo Productions. The project also includes the exhibition *Dust on the Road: Canadian Artists in Dialogue with SAHMAT*, as well as film series, lectures and other programs.

Responding to the reality of living in a rapidly modernizing society, the work of the artists in *Secular Practice: Recent Art from India* addresses issues ranging from freedom of expression, social justice, growing religious fundamentalism and widespread communal violence to sexuality, women's rights, the inequities of entrenched class and caste systems, the processes of history and memory and the nature of art itself in these circumstances.

Sheela Gowda uses everyday materials such as cow dung, coconut fibre, needle and thread not only to evoke the centrality of the natural world in rural India but also as an act of identification with the preoccupations and difficult circumstances of the women in rural India for whom these materials are a part of everyday life. The perishable and fragile materials she uses are a metaphor for both the condition of these women and the condition of Indian nationhood.

An artist who has incorporated popular culture into her work, Pushpamala N has adopted various popular persona and ironic roles as a vehicle for examining issues of gender, place and history. Often humorous, in her photo-based installations and projections, the comic aspect of her work carries a particularly sharp edge in its exposure of cultural and gender stereotyping and its exploration of the complex terrain of contemporary urban life in India and a nostalgia for a less critical but nonetheless more repressive past.



[back to exhibitions](#)