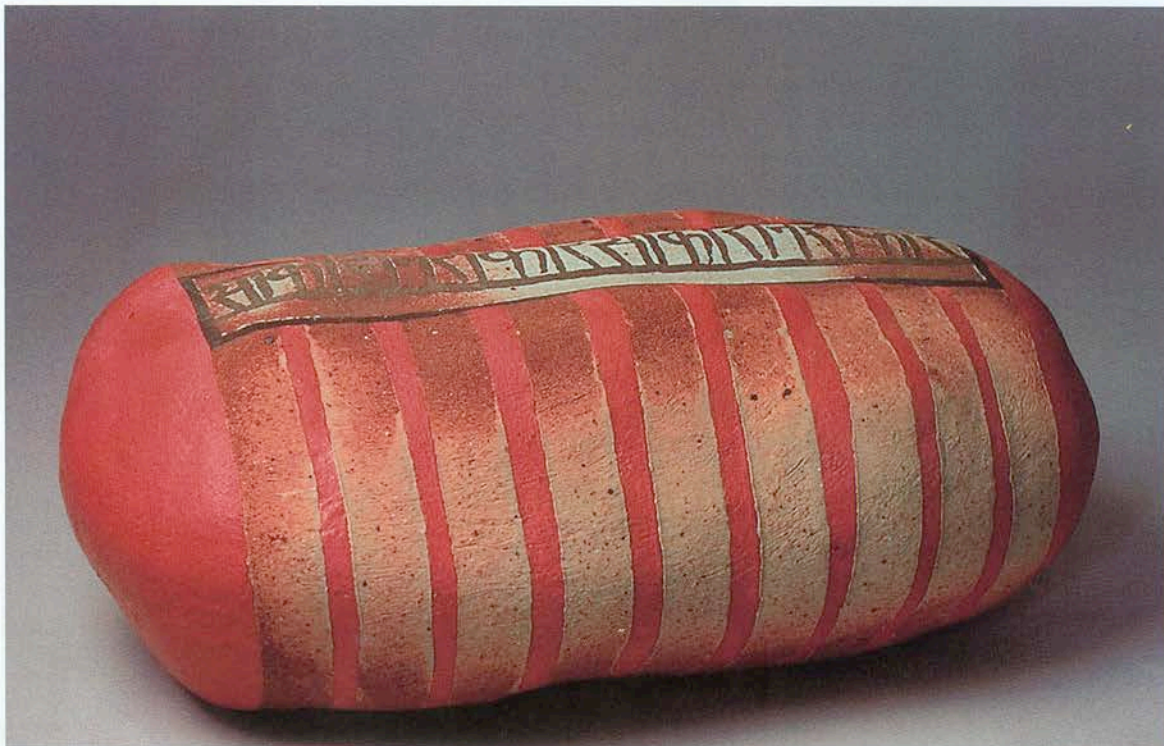


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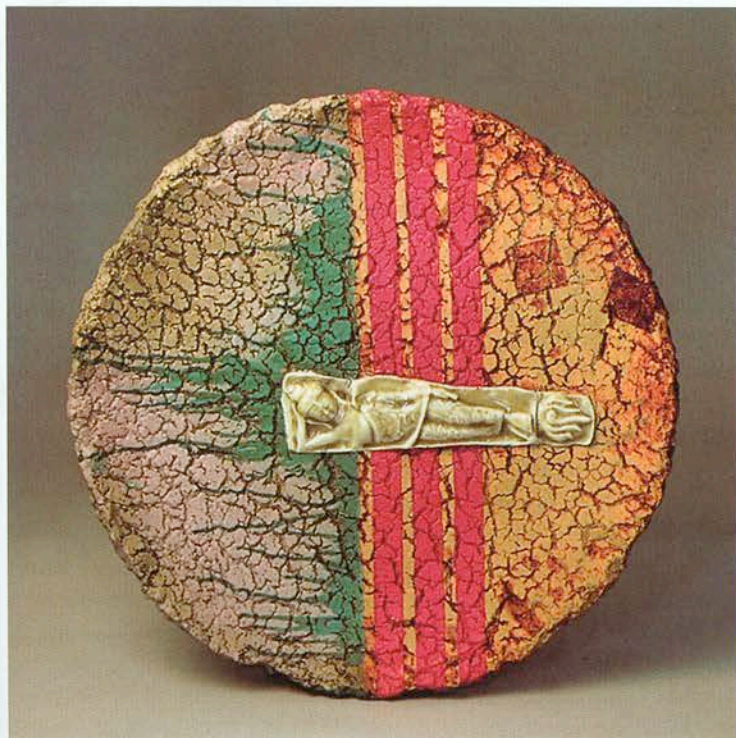




Vineet Kacker. *Sutra Stone for Contemplation I*. Ceramic work. 22" x 12" x 10". 2006.

Ritual and Routine Objects

Latika Gupta finds Vineet Kacker and Yushi Ito drawing diversely from shared traditions.



Vineet Kacker. *Platter - Monastery V*. Ceramic work. 19.5" diameter. 2006.

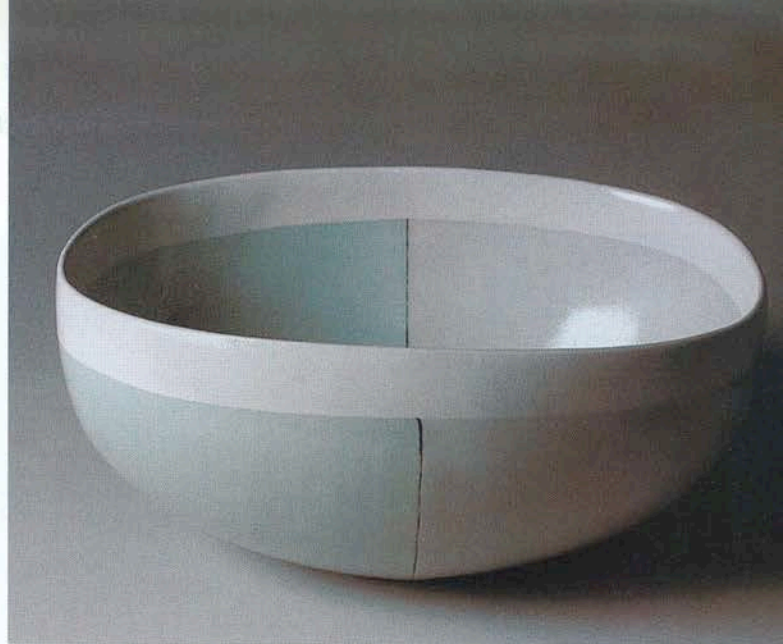
THE CERAMIC WORKS IN THE JOINT EXHIBITION BY VINEET Kacker and Yushi Ito at Anant Art Gallery, New Delhi, from the 9th to the 28th of September, referred to some of the modes of exploring religious/philosophical/aesthetic traditions that are shared by both India and Japan.

Both the countries have had a long tradition of using clay to fashion objects of utility and worship - many of these objects have ritual as well as routine uses. Kacker's and Ito's works seemed to perform both the functions.

Kacker's ceramic works made obvious references to Buddhism, drawing from the rich visual vocabulary of the rituals of Vajrayana Buddhism. Small votive offerings (*tsa-tsa*) and stupas are widely seen in



Vineet Kacker. Bodhisattva Totems. Ceramic and thread. 3.5" x 3.5" x 11". 2006.



Yushi Ito. Bowl. Porcelain. 11" x 8" x 5". 2006.



Yushi Ito. Dish. Stoneware. 10" diameter. 2006.

the trans-Himalayan region. Mud-structures in many places here house the relics and teachings of Buddhist teachers, acting as markers of the Buddhist faith. Kacker placed small objects resembling votive offerings with photographs of the trans-Himalayan landscape as a backdrop digitally printed on a ceramic matrix. These objects were made in the likeness of the many *chortens* (or stupas) that dot the landscape in Ladakh and Spiti. He transformed oblong ceramic stones into sacred objects as well - merely by anointing them with colour, they got invested with sanctity.

Kacker's works were like memorials, or offerings, that drew from a range of Indic religious influences - from the rustic handprint, the lotus, to the Buddha seen in various postures and *mudras*. In these pieces, the clay retained the quality of the place it was drawn from. The parchedness of the dry landscape was communicated through the strategic use of the material. Kacker's works referred to the vibrant use of colour in trans-

Himalayan Buddhist monasteries (colour which breaks the monotony of an otherwise bleak landscape).

Ito's objects - bowls, vases, dishes, and tea and sake vessels were imbued with a Zen-like understated quality - they suggested and framed a kind of harmony. The traditional Japanese emphasis on ceremony was also seen being evoked through the suggestion of elaborate tea rituals. A certain sombre decorum was communicated through the objects of everyday use. The earthy colours on the smooth porcelain spoke of Ito's aesthetic approach, which believed in beauty in utilitarian objects.

Interestingly, the expressions of both the artists were firmly rooted in their own cultural locations. While Kacker's works communicated the religious life of upper India, Ito's objects spoke of the careful subtlety of Japanese culture.