

Home > Cities > Kochi

Capturing earth's incandescence

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KOCHI: Serious art lovers and history buffs, who visit the 3rd edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB) make it a point to go to the Gallery Sutra at Fort Kochi. Here well known painter, sculptor and installation artist Vivan Sundaram's photo installation 'Terraoptics', a collateral exhibition of KMB, is being held.

For past one month, since its opening on December 14, 2016, the installation, which features 25 photographs of the miniature sets of the same pot-shards excavated from Pattanam near Kodungallur has attracted many art lovers. These pot-shards are the archaeological remains from the ruins of the disappeared port-town of Muziris, which was used in an installation in the first edition of the Biennale in 2012.

The 2012 installation 'Black Gold' was made up of a hundred thousand terracotta pieces arranged to depict the terrain of a denuded landscape, flooded with black peppercorns reenacting the inundation of the town in 1314 AD. The artist is back in the third edition of Biennale with a series of photographs of the miniature sets of the same pot-shards overlaid with light wires which dissect the surface into luminous planes in intricate patterns, named 'Terraoptics'.

The pot-shards were placed in a tray and photographed by Gireesh G V, a professional photographer. The terracotta assemblage is a relief, a flat-bed or picture-plane. It is also a riverine landscape with pre-historic formations and emblazoned habitation.

"The earth-body is made of incandescence. It produces a terrestrial-optical consciousness," said Vivan Sundaram, who was among the first Indian artists to work with the installation. He added that artists play with temporal positions, seeking counter-time equilibrium for human (un)settlement. The exhibition will conclude on February 10, 2017.