

# **Self-Determination & The Nation-State**

## **Understanding conflict through sculpture**

**Visual Communication PROJECT 2**

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Master of Design (2015-17)

**Guide: Prof. Raja Mohanty**



# Declaration

I declare that this written submission represent my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresentation or fabricated or falsified any ideas/data/fact/source in my submission.

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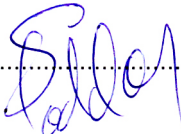
# Approval Sheet

The visual communication Project 2 entitled '**Self-Determination and The Nation-State, Understanding Conflict through Sculpture**' by Kshetrimayum Dideshwor Singh, Roll No: 156250011 is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Mater of Desgin degree in Visual Communication.

Guide Prof. Raja Mohanty :.....

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External Examiner : 



# Acknowledgements

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Last but not least my family, for giving me wings to fly and lettering me seek my destiny and all my dear friends who kept encouraging me till the end.



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The topic deal with the apparatus of the Nation - state and Self -Determination as a context for art making. Understanding the conflict between Nation - State and Self determination was the origin of this project. My reaction or responds of this counflict was expressed throught a series of Sculpture which may give a the artistic solution thought to the veiwier of my sculpture.

Our India is kown for its unity in diversity, The high mountain ranges, countless rivers and streams, dark forests, vast seas large river-irrigated lands, sandy deserts, all these have adorned India with an exceptional diversity. Among the people there are numerous races, castes, creeds, religions and languages. As we said India a sovereign country with 29 states and people living in India are the child of one mother who call Mother India but a lots of conflict, domenstic interference between state and nation. Some state demand for a

self-determination and the nation state trying to control them. So when someone is trying to control someone's freedom the conflict arise. particularly I was focused and study the burning issue of Manipur.

Manipur a state of India which is located in the north-eastern part of India. which is also my birth place where I was grown up and play around. I was involved with such conflict zone since childhood and the conflict still continue in Manipur. So, in this project I am trying to understand the how the conflict arise, study other conflict in 21st century. I tried to understand why people want to be self-determination and why people want to are against someone freedom and how may control it and give a peace massage to all the people in an artistic way.





## Chapter 2: Understanding the Nation-state and Self-determination

The project is mainly related to the Nation state and Self-determination at first I need to understand the terms properly and need to understand the relationship and conflict between Nation-State and Self-determination, so that I can respond my opinion thought work of sculpture. I am keen to know how and when do the conflict arise and need to understand some example of this conflict between them.

### Understanding the Nation-state

A nation-state is a geographical area that can be identified as deriving its political legitimacy from serving as a sovereign nation. A sovereign state of which most of the citizen or subject are united by factor which define a Nation. A country with distinct and independent existence. Around the world there are 195 countries today, comprises 193 countries that are member states of United Nation and 2 countries that are non-member observe state. All this

countries are sovereign and have their own Jurisprudence that means the full right and power to governing body to govern itself there countries without any interference from other countries or outside body or source. A nation state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs to the exclusion of all external power on the principle of non-interference in another country's domestic affair. Our India is also considered as a nation state which have a unalterable border, has a state polity. political and geopolitical entity, cultural and ethnic. India is views itself as a unique and inviolable territorial unity. There are 29 states and 7 union territories in India, all these states and union territory is existing as one even after various deference. People are from various religion, culture, casts and belief however they are living with unity and proving the fact that India a unity in diversity. Taking India as a Nation state let see the term Self-determination and study about India and its self-determination by looking examples.

## Study of Self-determination

The principal of equal right and fair equality of opportunity, the right to freely choose their Sovereignty and International political states with no interference. It is the freedom to make your own choices, people have free choices of own act or state with someone external compulsion. People can choose their own state and territory boundaries. Freely to determine without external interference, their political status and to pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

Self-determination is defined as free choice of ones own acts without external compulsion, and especially as the freedom of the people of a given territory to determine their own political status or independence from their current state. In other words, it is the right of the people of a certain nation to decide how they want to be governed without the influence of any other country. The latter is a complex concept with conflicting definitions and legal criteria for determining

which groups may legitimately claim the ;right to self-determination. This often coincides with various nationalist movements.

Any group or people that can self-identify can directly claim the right to political self-determination, though making a meaningful claim generally demands that the groups has a long historical presence. Further, claims of political self-determination almost always conflict with some other individual's or group's ongoing claim to political self-determination, and they are rarely resolved quickly or easily. So in this world people are leaving in this conflict.

## Some conflict in 21st Century

### Manipur

Manipur is a state located in northeast region of India and has a long and culturally rich history. It was once a prosperous Independent kingdom. According to “Cheitharol Kumbaba”, official chronicle of the kings of Manipur. Manipur ruler from 33AD to 1944, ending with the last kin, Bodh Chandra.

It was once an independent princely state, which was taken over by the British in 1891. When British left, the reins of the state were under the hand of Maharaja Bodh Chandra.

After India gained independence from British rule in 1947, India’s first Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, set about the task of integrating more than 500 princely states that existed in the Indian subcontinent with the newly formed Indian union. This process of integrating the princely states took place over a period of time. Manipur was one such state which merged with India on 21 September 1949. Bodh Chandra was asked to





sign the “Merger Agreement,” which he refused. He offered instead to discuss the matter with his council of ministers. The maharaja on return to his Shillong residence in the hill station found that Indian Army personnel had surrounded the premises. And the maharaja was placed under house arrest. Finally, on September 21, 1949, Bodh Chandra signed the “Merger Agreement.”

Majority of leader were against the merger with India, for most Manipuris their right to self-determination was violated that Sept. of 1949. After Manipur designation as a Union territory in 1956, give the impression of Step-Motherly treatment to the Manipuris who expected greater autonomy or Statehood with Indian Union. Among the leader Hijam Irabot Singh of Communist Party of Manipur was the person who sowed the seeds of Insurgency. The long era of military presence was begun in Manipur. One war ended and another began, here the conflict arises. The Communist Party



of Manipur and its Red Guard founded in March 1950 led by Hijam Irabot, but ended after he died in 1951. In Nov. 1964 the United National Liberation Front (UNLF) were founded to fight for Manipur.

*“UNLF have nothing to demand from Govt of India but instead it is fighting to regain the lost sovereignty”-UNLF*

As of October 2015 according to South Asia Terrorism Portal, there are almost 42 identifiable undergrounds operating in Manipur. Six are banned terrorist groups:

1. Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)
2. Kanglei Yawol Kanba Lup (KYKL)
3. Manipur People's Liberation Front
4. People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK)
5. People's Liberation Army (PLA)
6. United National Liberation Front (UNLF)



In 1970, the Government of India declared Manipur as a disturbed area and all revolutionary organisations were declared unlawful. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 was enforced. An army officer, stationed in Manipur during the time, had then observed: “Imphal, the capital for Manipur – today -- is like Saigon during the Vietnam war and nobody can explain why so many paramilitary forces are stationed in such a small area. As of 2015, Manipur remains the most violent state in the region with over 20,000 killed. Over 20,000 women became widows as many young men from the state were killed in conflict.



## Kashmir

Jammu and Kashmir is a state in north India. It has an International border with Pakistan and China. Kashmir is a beautiful valley in north part of India. As same as Manipur, Kashmir was a princely state from 1846 until 1952. Before the Partition of India in 1947, Kashmir was ruled by the Hindu Maharajas of the princely state of Kashmir and Jammu, although the majority of the population were Muslim, except in the Jammu and Ladakh region.

After the partition of two new nations: the Union of India and the Dominion of Pakistan, while British suzerainty over the 562 Indian princely states ended. According to the Indian Independence Act 1947, “the suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States lapses, and with it, all treaties and agreements in force at the date of the passing of this Act between His Majesty and the rulers of Indian States”, so the states were left to choose whether to join India or Pakistan



or to remain independent., while having a Hindu ruler(Maharaja Hari Singh.) On partition Pakistan expected Kashmir to be annexed to it. In October 1947, Muslim revolutionaries in western Kashmir and Pakistani tribals from Dir entered Kashmir, intending to liberate it from

Unable to withstand the invasion, the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession on 25 October 1947 that was accepted by the government of India on 27 October 1947.



After rumours that the Maharaja supported the annexation of Kashmir by India, militant Muslim revolutionaries from western Kashmir and Pakistani tribesmen made rapid advances into the Baramulla sector. Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir asked the government of India to intervene.

However, India and Pakistan had signed an agreement of non-intervention. Although tribal fighters from Pakistan had entered Jammu and Kashmir, there was no iron-clad legal evidence to unequivocally prove that Pakistan was officially involved. The Maharaja desperately needed military assistance when the Pakistani tribals reached the outskirts of Srinagar. Before their arrival into Srinagar, India argued that the Maharaja must complete negotiations for ceding Jammu and Kashmir to India in exchange for receiving military aid. The agreement which ceded Jammu and Kashmir to India was signed by the Maharaja and Lord Mountbatten of Burma.





In Jammu and Kashmir, National Conference volunteers worked with the Indian Army to drive out the Pakistanis. The Instrument of Accession of Kashmir to India was accepted by Viceroy Louis Mountbatten, 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma. The resulting war over Kashmir, the First Kashmir War, lasted until 1948, when India moved the issue to the UN Security Council.

Sheikh Abdullah was not in favour of India seeking UN intervention because he was sure the Indian Army could free the entire State of invaders. The UN had previously passed resolutions for setting up monitoring of the conflict in Kashmir. Following the set-up of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNCIP), the UN Security Council passed Resolution 47 on 21 April 1948. The resolution imposed an immediate cease-fire and called on the Government of Pakistan 'to secure the withdrawal from the state of Jammu and Kashmir of tribesmen and Pakistani

nationals not normally resident therein who have entered the state for the purpose of fighting.' It also asked Government of India to reduce its forces to the minimum strength, after which the circumstances for holding a plebiscite should be put into effect 'on the question of Accession of the state to India or Pakistan. However, both India and Pakistan failed to arrive at a Truce agreement due to differences in interpretation of the procedure for and extent of demilitarisation one of them being whether the Azad Kashmiri army is to be disbanded during the truce stage or the Plebiscite stage.

In November 1948, The Indian and Pakistani governments agreed to hold the plebiscite, but Pakistan did not withdraw its troops from Kashmir, thus violating the conditions for holding the Page on Plebiscite addition, the Indian Government distanced itself from its commitment to hold a plebiscite. India proposed that Pakistan withdraw all its troops first, calling it a precondition for a plebiscite.





Pakistan rejected on the grounds that the Kashmiris may not vote freely given the presence of Indian army and Sheikh Abdullah's friendship with the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. However, Pakistan proposed simultaneous withdrawal of all troops followed by a plebiscite under international auspices, which India rejected. Hence Pakistan didn't withdraw its forces unilaterally. In addition, the Indian Government distanced itself from its commitment to hold a plebiscite. Over the next several years, the UN Security Council passed four new resolutions, revising the terms of Resolution 47 to include a synchronous withdrawal of both Indian and Pakistani troops from the region, per the recommendations of General Andrew McNaughton. To this end, UN arbitrators put forward 11 different proposals for the demilitarisation of the region. All of these were accepted by Pakistan, but rejected by the Indian government.



## Naxalite

Chandra Naxals/Naxalites/Maoist are terms use to refer to militant who believe in the ideology of communism. The term Naxalite came from a village called Naxalbari in West Bengal. It was uprising in 1967 by the later Kanu Sanyal, Charu Mazundar and Jangal Santhal. The conflict between Naxalite known as Maoist insurgency and Indian government is a serious on going conflict in India. This ongoing conflict has taken place over a vast territory of India. Due to this conflict Hundred of people were being killed. Mostly Naxalite were controlling territories throughout Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and other near by. Poor people of rural area especially "Adivasi" support the Naxalite. They are the people who are very poor and tribals and they make small or large group within themselves and are anarchist because they are deprived from social status, poor and are not given respect so they become exile and start to fight against government and by doing terrorist







activity they want to show their presence. They are fighting for improvement land right and jobs for farmer and poor peoples, But at the end these fight common people make common people suffer. More than 13,400 people have died since 1996 to 2015 due to the fight between Naxalite and security forces. In this 2,605 were security force , 3,009 were Naxalite and 7,716 were innocent civilians . The government sometimes feel helpless as these are enemy within ourselves and there are some new schemes to include them by providing them job and status. They are demanding land reformation in which redistribution of Agriculture land equally among the people who engaged in agriculture production and landless people.

## **Middle east conflict** (Syria , Israel, Palestine )

The history of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict began with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. This conflict came from the inter-communal violence in Mandatory Palestine between Israelis and Arabs from 1920 and erupted into full-scale hostilities in the 1947–48 civil war. The conflict continues to the present day on various levels.

Israel–Syria relations refers to diplomatic and economic relations between Israel and Syria. The two countries have since the establishment of the State of Israel been in a state of war. The countries have fought three major wars, which are the 1948 Arab Israeli War in 1948, the Six-Day War in 1967, and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, later also being involved in the Lebanese Civil War and the 1982 Lebanon War. At other times formal agreement of warring parties to stop fighting arrangements have been in place.

Efforts have been made from time to time to achieve peace between the neighbouring states, without success. Syria has never recognised the State of Israel and does not accept Israeli passports for entry into Syria. Israel also regarded Syria as an enemy state and generally prohibits its citizens from going there. There has not been diplomatic relations between the two countries since the creation of both countries in the mid-20th century.

There has been virtually no economic or cultural ties between the two countries, and a limited movement of people across the border. Syria continues to be an active participant in the Arab boycott of Israel. Both countries do allow a limited trade of apples for the Golan Druze villages, located on both sides of the ceasefire line. The state of peace at the ceasefire line has been strained during the Syrian civil war, which began in 2011 and is ongoing, but Israel has thus far participated only minimally in that conflict.

There are two primary issues at the core of this continuing conflict. First, there is the regularly destabilizing effect of trying to maintain an ethnically preferential state, particularly when it is largely of foreign origin. The original population of what is now Israel was 96 percent Muslim and Christian, yet, these refugees are prohibited from returning to their homes in the self-described Jewish state (and those within Israel are subjected to systematic discrimination).

Second, Israel's continued military occupation and appropriation of privately owned land in the West Bank, and control over Gaza, are extremely closed, with Palestinians having minimal control over their lives. Thousands of Palestinian men, women, and children are held in Israeli prisons. Few of them have had a rightful trial; Physical abuse and torture are frequent. Palestinian borders (even internal ones) are controlled by Israeli forces. Periodically men, women, and children are uncovered searched; people are beaten; women in labour are prevented from reaching hospitals (at times resulting in death); food and medicine are blocked from entering Gaza, producing an escalating humanitarian crisis. Israeli forces invade almost daily, injuring, kidnapping, and sometimes killing inhabitants.

According to the Oslo peace accords of 1993, these territories were supposed to finally become a Palestinian state. However, after years of Israel continuing to formal agreement land arrangement and conditions steadily worse situation, the Palestinian population disobeyed. This uprising, called the "Intifada" (an armed uprising of Palestinians against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip) ( Arabic for "shaking off") began at the end of September 2000.



## Chapter 3: Responses to conflicts

In India there is a lot of conflict between Nation-state and Self-determination. As I study some conflict of India in 21st century, the nation-state India trying to solve the conflict in various way. I chose the conflict of Manipur as my I am from Manipur and I am trying to understand the respond to the conflict by the indian govt. I had studied their responses and some artist responses and tried to give my response too.

### Response of the Indian state (AFSPA)

To control the conflict of India, a various type of polices, acts, rule makes and imposed. India government take initiative to control the self determination conflict of Kashmir, Manipur, Naxalite and all make an Act called Armed Forces Special Power Acts (AFSPA) was imposed, the armour of AFSPA protect the forces wherever they move in the state. The Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Ordinance 1958 was



promulgated by the President Dr Rajendra Prasad on 22 May 1958. It was replaced by the Armed Forces (Assam and Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958 on 11 September 1958 to control the law and order. When the whole of Manipur was declared “Disturbed Area Act (DAA)”. AFSPA was applied in Punjab and Chandigarh in 1983 and lasted there for fourteen years. While the Punjab government withdrew its DAA in 2008, but continued in Chandigarh till

Sept 2012. The infamous AFSPA protected the Indian Army, Which gives the armed forces, the power to arrest and shoot citizen on mere suspicious and search a property without a warrant. It also protected them from trail and punishment without the sanction of the central government. As of 2015, Manipur remains the most violent state in the region with over 20,000 killed. Over 20,000 women became widows as many young men from the state were killed in



*12 Manipuri mothers disrobing themselves and storming the local army headquarters*

conflict. Manipur's women and children are traumatised by the deaths of family members. They bear the brunt of the emotional and socio-economic impact of violence. Apart from that, women themselves are particularly vulnerable to violence and intimidation at gunpoint, often used as a deliberate military and

political tactic. Also women and girls continue to be tortured, raped and killed at gunpoint. I show a debate on you-tube, a retired army generals appear and say that asking them to fight without the legal framework of AFSPA is akin to asking them to 'fight the enemy with one hand tied'.



## Response from some artists

Many Artist, writer, filmmaker responded to ongoing conflict of Indian, I had study some of responses of artists and trying to understand their concept and feelings to develop my concept. here some response followed.

## Nerves

I went to see a contemporary dance called Nerves on 16th Sept 2016 at NCPA, Experimental Theatre with my guide and some student of IDC. Nerves, a contemporary dance piece from Imphal, tells the story of Manipur's suffering and binds the audience with its beauty. When I enter the theatre hall was dark and sounds of mid night insect which makes me the feeling of my homeland Manipur. It started with blinking light look like firefly in dark. With five dancers in tribal loin cloths and army boots, Nerves turns the experience of life in Manipur into one of the most powerful contemporary choreographies to



emerge from India. I never experience such type of contemporary dance in my life, it was a new experience to me. The director Surjit Nongmeikapam try to show his life experience in Manipur,



his research was on the people of Manipur, a state nested in the Northeast corner of India. Given that Manipur is one of the most culturally diverse state in India and one of the conflict zones, his focus was on the numerous issues of people of Manipur. This art piece rooted in the expressions of voiceless people from Manipur.

Through the medium of performance the artistes try to explore the lived that have been exhausted by the constant questioning of one's world, without any answer. In every dancer's movement, expressions, emotion, figures movement, postures tells the a story. They have tried to appropriate the silent torture that each of them through into there performance.

*Nerves was the winner of Prakriti Excellence in Contemporary Dance Award 2014.*



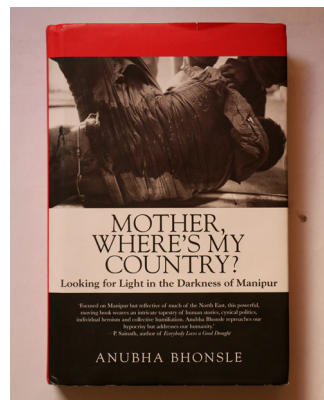
## Mother, Where's my country?

A book written by Anubha Bhonsle, an award-winning journalist. In 2006, Anubha Bhonsle went undercover, dodging security, to meet Irom Sharmila, the iconic non-violent rebel who was into the sixth year of her protest fast against the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA), which had for long compounded the tragedy for her homeland.

This unprecedented book draws upon over two hundred interviews and numerous documents, reports and court testimonies to show us an entire society ravaged by the violence of the armed forces, the police and a faction-ridden insurgency. There are voices of survivors of rape and torture, families of victims of extra-judicial killings, soldiers and leaders on both sides and ordinary men, women and children coping with fear, political apathy, curfews and economic blockades. And though it all shines the extraordinary story of Sharmila the Iron Lady of Manipur and her lonely battle.

It shows the writer beginning deep engagement with Manipur and the rest of India's North East. Over the next decade it would take Anubha to state many times, to investigate life in that conflict-zone where 'there is neither war nor peace' but people die, often brutally and both despair and courage have long history.

From this precious book I came to know how serious the conflict going on between nation-state and self-determination in Manipur. The writer responds to both sides in details.





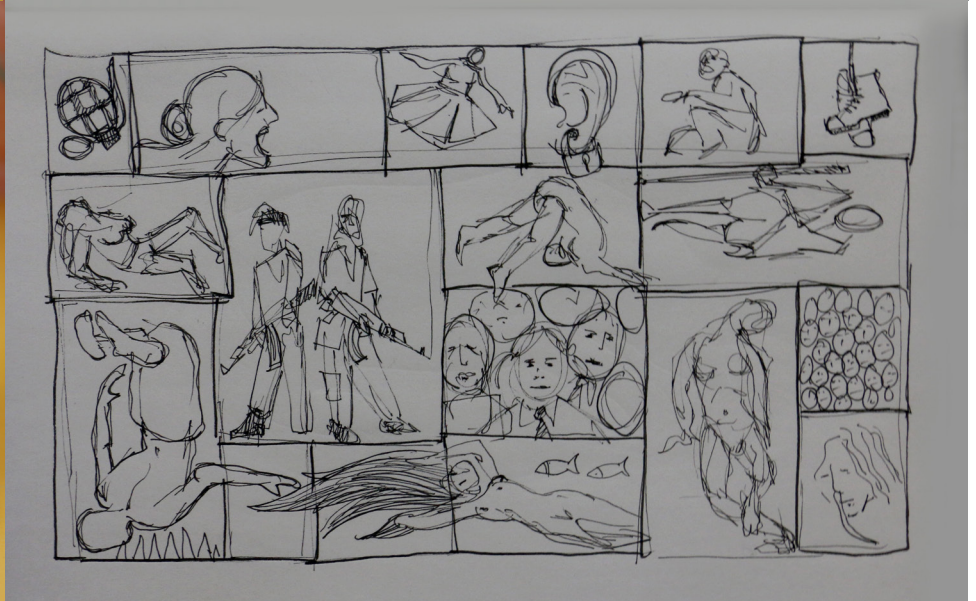
# Some my concepts and sketches

Some sketches and maquette of my works.











## Chapter 4: Final Work

### Work 1

It is of a Manipuri girl with a traditional hair cut called “Thoibi cut”, Thoibi is a beautiful girl of Manipuri folk tale called “Khamba-Thoibi” like Romeo-Juliet. to represent the girls of Manipur I want to kept the iconic Thoibi hair style. In this sculpture. In Manipur there are lots of woman gun survivor who’s husband was murdered by armed force and woman who was raped by armed force. So I am trying to show the victim of the conflict.

In this work I wanted to show the effect of this conflict between Self-Determination and Nation State in our society. As Manipur is one of the main victim of this conflict so I tried to make a sculpture of a Manipuri girls. Manipur alone has 20,000 registered conflict widows. The sculpture is one and half feet tall and made of Stoneware.

A facial expression is partly sad, partly smiling and in her body somepointed rods have been forcefully inserted.



After completing we had a discussion and about my sculpture

Nishith - Proportion look good, Expression is of pity/sorrow, Don't understand those extrusions coming out of the clothes, Clothes look ragged, Don't know but there seems to be a squint in the eyes (eyes looking at slightly different directions)

Palash - She was hunted from inside and her eyes is talking about strong desire that she wanted to change all this but she still at the moment and gazing at her own situation.

Kawal - Looks like the person is in painful a long time and now is just starting back at the oppressor, features confirmed that the woman is asian .... spokes suggest that she wound is very much physical and in the the prolonged abuse.... encroached at a mental level too, it bears your style of making sculpture, good job done.

Vicky - Looks like she is seeing her something in front of her eyes and that distraction she is feeling her body. Like she know it can't change now what she just saw but she want to. It's like someone closed to her hurt her very bad.











## **Work 2**

### **KHUT (Hand)**

Stoneware

12 x 16 x 8 inch (30x15x20) cm

2016.

Conflict arise when someone's hand comes in the way of someone else's desire. The conflict can also be controlled by someone's hand. This is the role of a hand in our society.













## Work 2

### BETWEEN A ROCK AND HARD PLACE

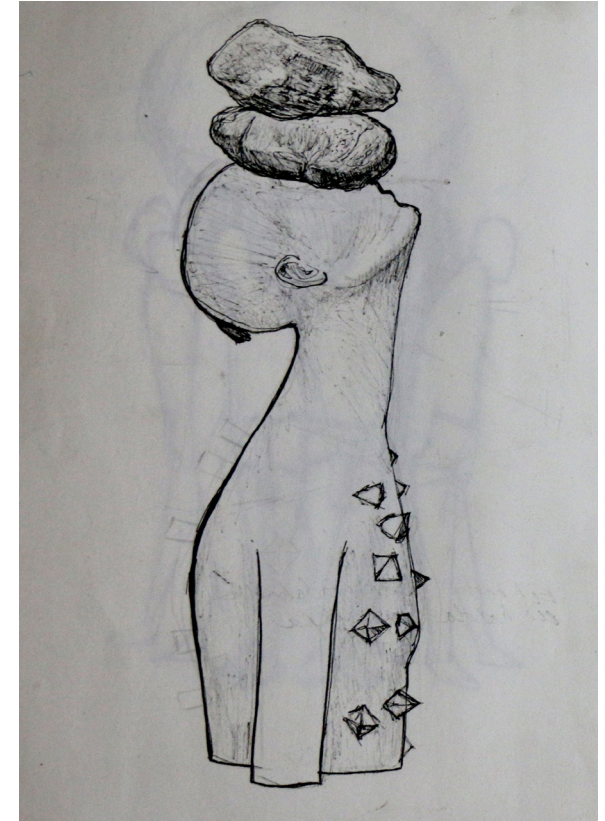
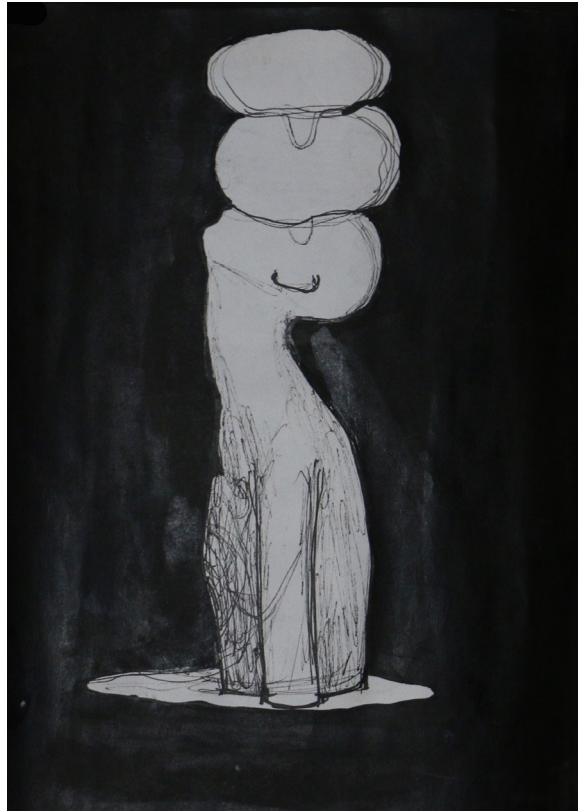
Stoneware

15 x 12 x 35 inch (38x30x88 cm) 2016.

Here I am trying to depict the situation of the civilian of Manipur. In Manipur due to the conflict between the Self-Determination and Nation-State causes numerous torture. People were like lying between two danger places.

Both sides are dangerous as Indian army creates problems due to the AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Power Acts) on the other side insurgency are also worst. They collect money from civilian, make rules to obey. People can't say anything about them. So, in my point of view both are same, as they are using guns. Whoever it is using guns and fighting is an inhuman action to me.

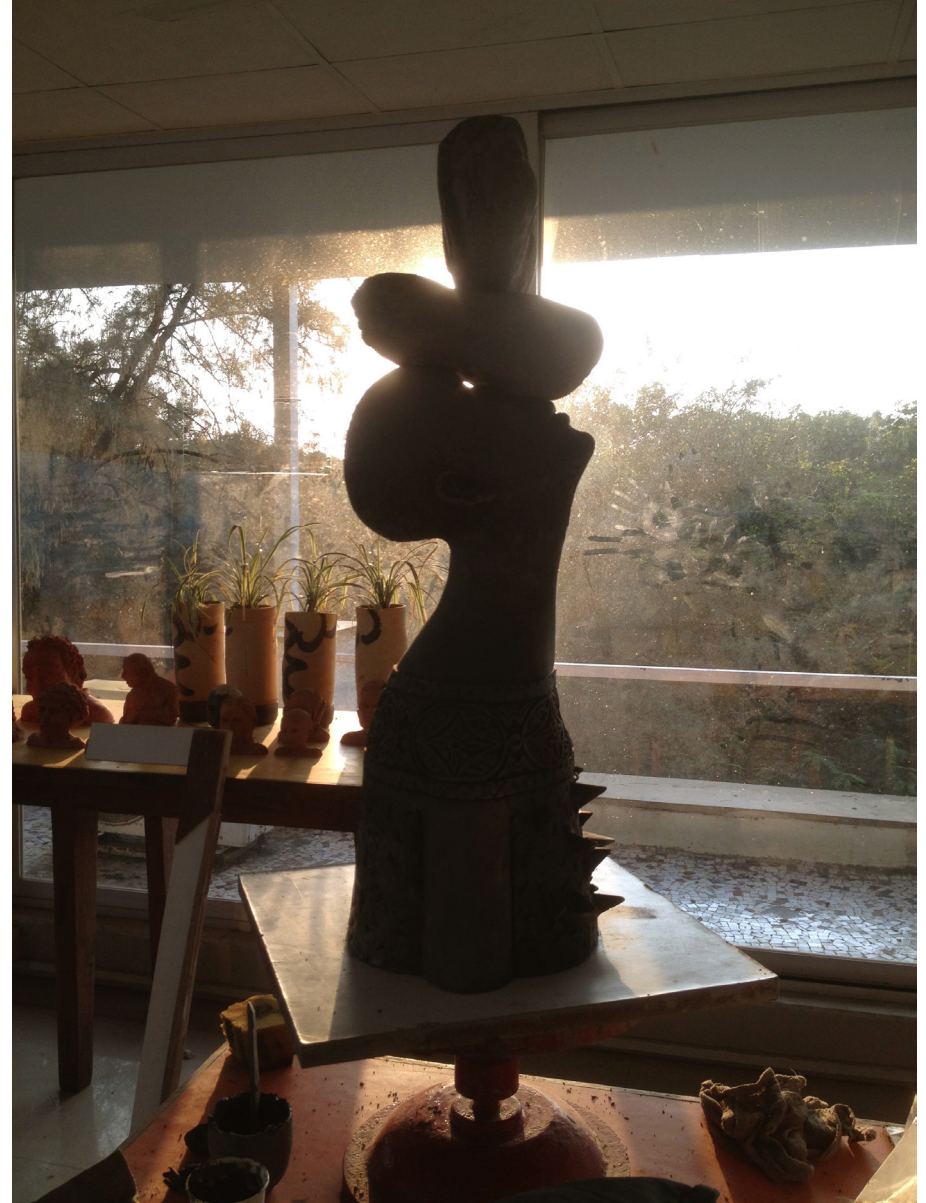
But here I made a small change to my idea, now people were not lying in between this difficult place instead people lie below it.















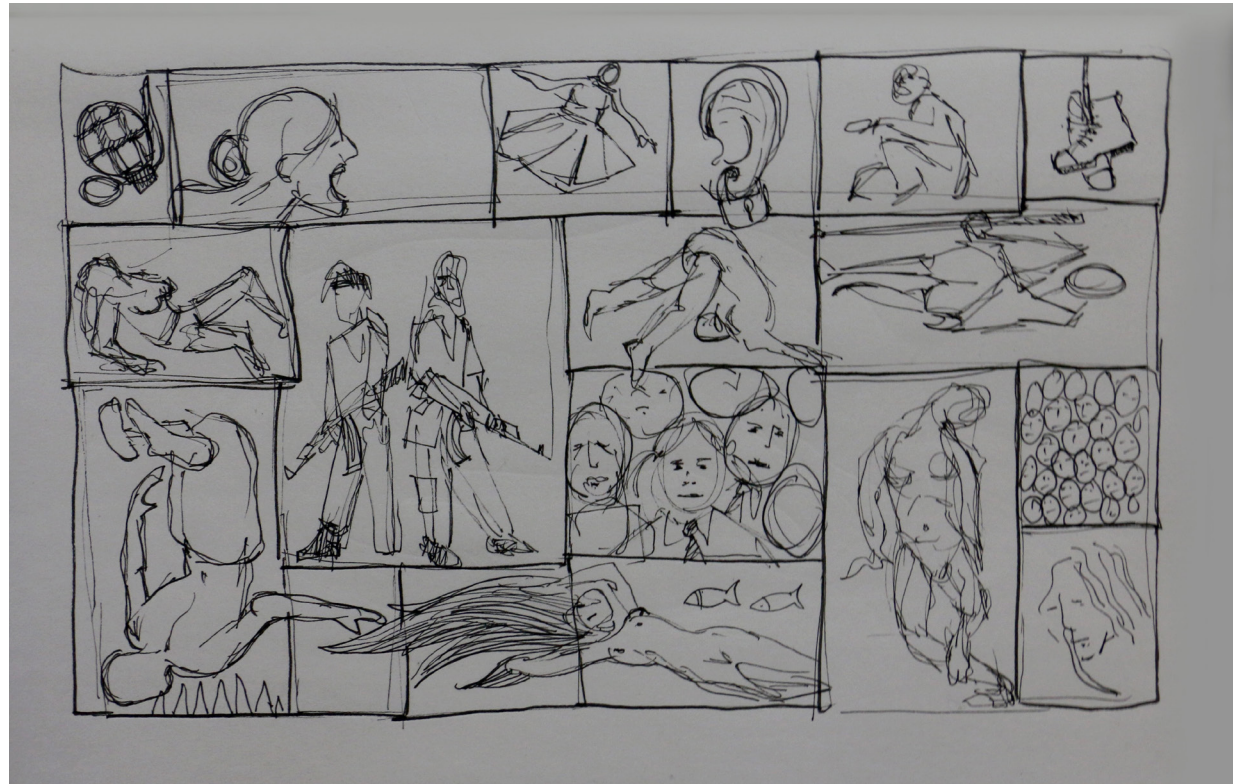






## Work 4

These work makes in Relief form. A relief is a sculptural technique where the sculpted elements remain attached to a solid background of the same material. These group of relief sculptures which I would like to show some incident that I remember and random idea came to my mine. There are ten small pieces make together one relief work.













## Reference

### Book

#### **Mother where's my country?**

By Anubha Bhonsle

#### **Art, the defenitive visual guide**

by Andrew Graham-Dixon

#### **Sculpture today**

by Judith Collins

### Aricles

by Binalakshmi Nepram

Founder of Control Arms Foundation of India (CAFI), 2004 and Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network (MWGSN),

### Films

Soldier in Sarang

RUPTURED SPRING - A Documentary  
Film 2013 on Child Rights

THiNK2013\_ NAKED RAGE

The Pressmen Story - June 18, 2001