

Anne Percoco: *Walking In the City*

Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath Gallery

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With this exhibition, I chronicle my experience of moving through the city of Bangalore. With a debt to Michel de Certeau's essay of the same title as well as Janaki Nair's *Promise of the Metropolis: Bangalore's Twentieth Century*, this work questions how narratives exist in the space of Bangalore, how I can create them as an artist, and how individuals continually create them within this increasingly technocratic urban environment.

The *Cityscape* photographs juxtapose religious and functionalist architecture, natural and technological elements, history and future. Urban temples act as spatial reference points: physical landmarks for cultural and historical narratives. Hundreds or thousands of years old, these temples contrast with modern architecture, which seems to exist outside of time, box-like and shiny as spaceships. The technology represented by these motherboards has already changed the way we experience space: As more actions occur within virtual space, physical space is de-emphasized, and as more efficient means of travel and communication shrink distances, I imagine our sense of place changing on a global scale.

The floor installation, *Walking Sutra*, is a material documentation of my travel through the city. The word "sutra" is used both in the sense of a thread as well as that of a moral story. The form of the sculpture is sequential, recalling a walk as a series of recovered artifacts, like steps or stitches. De Certeau writes of footsteps: "Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together." The rocks and chunks of concrete are words in what he calls "the long poem of walking", also like prayer beads on a mala. The rope, made from hair, reminds one of the human protagonist of this story.

If *Cityscapes* are representational and *Walking Sutra* is presentational, then *Test Drive* directs the viewer out of the gallery and into direct experience of the city. During this participatory performance, users will travel as a pedestrian-cum-automobile, a driver-cum-vehicle, a machine-cum-body against the background of Bangalore's main transportation hub. Moving at a greater speed than a pedestrian and a lesser speed than a car or motorcycle, they must negotiate their own space and path within existing traffic patterns. Here, each participant will articulate his or her own narrative thread: a creative process involving split second decisions, weighing of priorities, and personal preference. More playful than functional, these journeys will provide an opportunity for non-linear uses of city-space as well as reflect on the changes in city planning and infrastructure to accommodate the increase in private vehicles.