

*Indian Contemporary*

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### **In Determination II - Performance by Monali Meher**

From the dreamlike world of Sosa Joseph to the disturbing three-hour performance by Monali Meher, in the spacious Gallery Maskara, was set for viewers to watch as long as they chose to. Stainless steel buckets filled with blood-red liquid were suspended from the roof of the gallery. The base of all these were perforated; as a result the blood-like liquid kept trickling down forming little puddles and pools. In a task that seemed being performed in vain, Meher was seen mopping the dark red water and squeezing it out in a small bucket which she would then empty in a larger drum. She'd mop dry a place only to find another pool forming elsewhere and back to the place which was dried out. It seemed like an insurmountable task as Meher went through a physically taxing performance where she was kneeling and going on all fours for three hours.

The significance of the work became obvious as one witnessed this repetitive and determined action. The viewers and their inaction as spectators of this insurmountable task became the subject of the work. In the invite Meher states "The action of determination is an action of peace. The recent horrifying incident in my home city forced me to manifest the action of determination. I forge this performance not just specifically related to the recent incident in Mumbai but the violence and war in the whole world. This performance has a poignant quality of change and transformation."

### **The Gallery is Dead, Long Live the Gallery - group show**

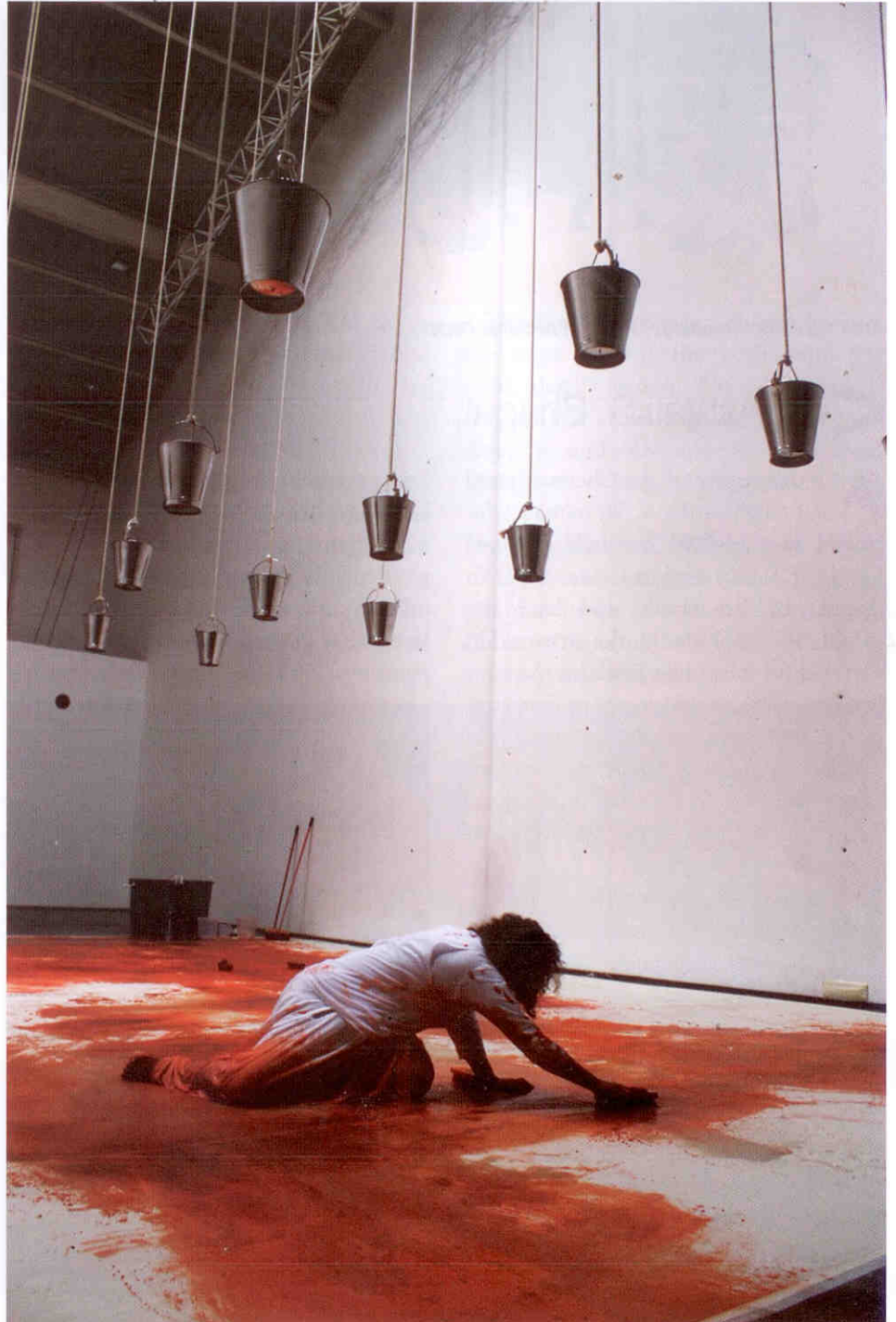
Volte, a new gallery promises "A radical shift from the traditional gallery model, where the exhibitions, events and audience intermingle into a dynamic and exciting program."

The attempt to prove its claim in the first show titled 'The Gallery is Dead, Long Live the Gallery' included works by Mukul Deora, Tara Kelton, Kiran Kaur Brar and Qusai Kathawala. On the day of the opening visitors were asked to bash up a car. Deora wanted audience

participation to express their primeval side. I'd say next time invite the MNS who vent without much provocation. While many artists participated in this activity for which they were explicitly invited, how many felt provoked at Monali Meher's performance which also goaded the viewer to take action? At Meher's performance people stood and watched the discomfoting scene. Perhaps if they were told to participate,

we'd have seen the audience mopping the floor too. Maybe not.

Among the other works was Tara Kelton's video work 'Time Travel', tongue-in-cheek work by Qusai Kathawala and Kiran Kaur Brar's performance 'Regarding the Pain of Others'. The founder and director of Volte, Tushar Jivrajka says "I started Volte with the intention of changing people's perceptions of art."



**Monali Meher - In Determination II, Performance at Gallery Maskara**