

VoyageChicago

Meet Soumya Netrabile
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Today we'd like to introduce you to Soumya Netrabile.

Every artist has a unique story. Can you briefly walk us through yours?

I was born in India and emigrated to the US with my family in the early '70s. I've been making art since I was very young. As an introvert and only child, drawing was a great source of comfort to me. After graduating high school, I studied engineering, but my vocation has always been art. After working for a few years to save up money, I enrolled at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. From early on I mainly concentrated on painting and drawing, even though art school. After I had my daughter, a friend convinced me to sign up for clay classes at a local ceramics studio. I soon discovered that I had a great affinity for sculpture as well. For the last ten years, I have divided my time between painting and sculpture. Even though the mediums are different, I find the two constantly inform each other as I continue to build my body of work.

Please tell us about your art.

I'm currently working on paintings and sculptures that are informed by the body, both externally and internally. My process is basically intuitive, whether I'm working with clay or paint. I generally begin a painting by starting with a color and building the canvas up slowly, looking for relationships between colors and forms that emerge. It's very much an exploratory activity, where I am constantly confronted with endless possibilities and I essentially don't know where I'm going till I get there. This is one reason why I find art so addictive—the feeling of having no limits. When I am working with clay, I have to switch gears from working with something fluid to

something more solid. Clay offers different technical challenges, but it's satisfying to address formal problems in three-dimensions. My sculptures explore animal and human forms, re-forming or merging parts that don't naturally go together. I've always been attracted to themes of transformation and mutation in film and literature, when things that appear mundane turn into something unexpectedly beautiful and haunting. That sense of wonder is something I aspire to create.

What do you think is the biggest challenge facing artists today?

I think being an artist has always been a challenging job, because you are on the fringe of the modern consumer-based society. One particular challenge for me has been to find ways to get my work seen and shown. It takes a lot of investment of time and energy to network and apply to available opportunities, which of course takes time away from making art. But, on the flip side, we now live in a world where social media allows us to access audiences in a different way. I feel optimistic about the possibilities. I've had several people reach out to me through Instagram to buy or show my work.

How or where can people see your work? How can people support your work?

I'm working on building my website, but people can also see work on my Instagram page (@Netrable). I'm currently working on pieces that will be up in a solo show at Terra Incognita in Oak Park from June 23 to mid-July.