

# EXHIBIT 320

## Known Creates the Unknown

**Solo show of recent works by Kumaresan Selvaraj**

**Text by Rahul Kumar**

What do layers signify? Literally, it is sheet of substance on top of a surface. What is noteworthy is that it must be a material that is distinct and different from materials on its either side. Metaphorically, it conveys of a passage of time, of accumulation and collection, of strength and resilience. Cut a tree trunk or see the cross section of soil, the various layers form a fascinating pattern that is telling of a story. Our very existence allows for enormity of experiences and a constant barrage of thoughts. What becomes of the intangible, sensorial exitance?

Visual artist Kumaresan Selvaraj manifests this idea through stacked sheets of paper. Perceivably, they appear to be one whole and a singular mass. But on closer inspection, the fine and distinguishable layers begin to appear. "For me these references my memories and thoughts", he says. Kumaresan believes that all the understanding we have as individuals is a reflection of the life events and past. And just like order and disorder co-exists in nature, we accumulate the joyous and sorrowful memories, often unknowingly. Kumaresan's practice is media agnostic. He has used iron, wood, cement, and paper in his works. Choice of media for him is entirely dependant on the 'demand' of the work he has conceived of. And while he remains versatile in his approach, paper has made a repetitive presence in his art. He uses the discarded pieces from a local printing press. "The press cuts off the excess sheet based on the job order at hand, and this becomes my raw material to work with," he says. It is a rarity for Kumaresan to use new and unused paper, something he is forced to do when there is a need of a specific colour. His process entails carefully stacking sheets of varying thicknesses and colours and gluing them together. Once he has achieved the desired pattern, he uses a handsaw to make a cross section of the stack, thereby exposing the internal

layers. For the relatively larger works, he has worked with chainsaw machines used to cut logs of trees.

Kumaresan likes to photograph details of exposed layers from his environment. These become his visual motivations and are recreated in his works. From images of organic and natural material to the ones from his urban environment, there is abundance of references that he relies on. "Sometimes just observing the falling light on stacks of paper from floor to ceiling at the printing press excites me," he confesses.

The new body of work titled *Known Creates the Unknown* is an extension of Kumaresan's ongoing quest to explore the ideas of memory, its recollection and manifestation on the human psychology and forming the very idea of identity. In his words, "...my current artworks are inspired from the juxtaposed encounters. The idea is to establish this as a visual form by creating highs through the depth and depth through the high". For him, the high cannot be experienced without the depth. It is in this variation that lies the true experience of our perceptions. For instance, to elaborate, it is ironical but true that the good cannot be understood or felt without having the bad to contrast it. The undulated patterns of protrusion and indentions originate from the ups and downs of his personal life journey. The densely arranged papers create abstracted patterns, as a solid and unified block. Yet, each one has a presence of its own, that is well-defined and distinct from the rest. Just as all the experiences form who we become as an individual and yet the layers of memory deeply etched within us have a significant role to play. And though he uses non-archival paper to create his sculptures, he treats the works through acrylic spray that protects it from aging. Metaphorically, as though it is a process of preserving the very memories that are ever fleeting.

Kumaresan used imaging software to prepare the basic patterns and employed machine-slicing equipment. It is interesting how the discarded and the new, elementary and cutting edge, the whole and components, and abstract and real all uniquely come together in his works. Further, Kumaresan creates an element of surprise and potential unease by portraying what is naturally consumed in the 'vertical' but presenting it in a horizontalized orientation. He says, "I provide a lead, a direction for my viewer through the work title. Others have seen and experienced the same sources as I do for my visuals, but what one takes away is entirely up to the beholder".

Just like his process that cuts apart from a larger whole, Kumaresan feels that this body of work is only a section of his continuum. It is neither an object nor a destination. It is resolved but yet to be completed.