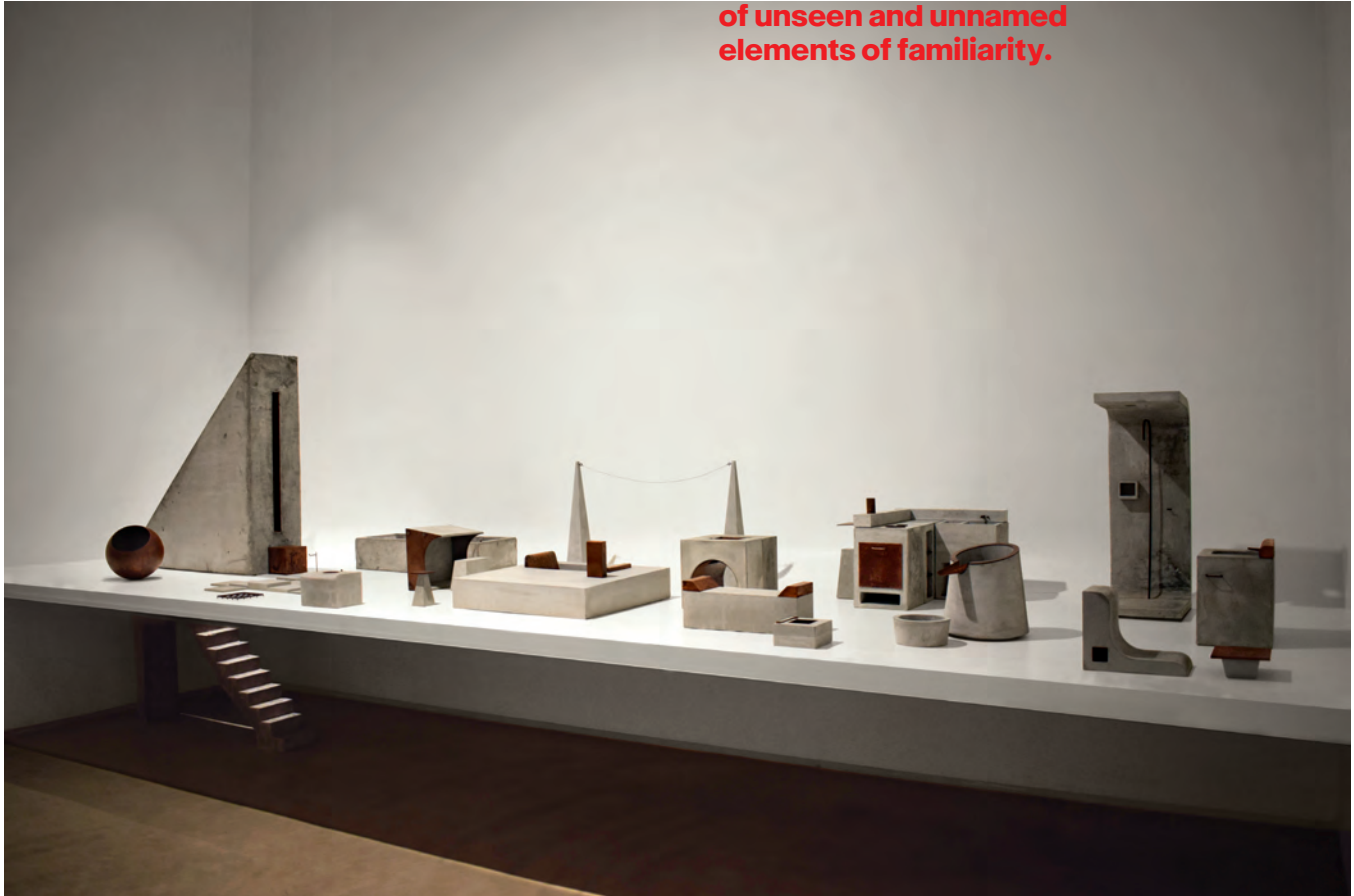


# A Lot Like Home

Artist-architect Shreya Pate's installation, *Untold*, reveals how spaces are largely made of unseen and unnamed elements of familiarity.



TEXT: ARSHIA DHAR. PHOTOS: SHREYA PATE.

FRAGMENTS LAID OUT ON A PLATFORM AT THE EXHIBITION AT GALERIE MIRCHANDANI + STEINRUECKE IN MUMBAI.

**W**hen structures are disassembled and reduced to their bare bones, revealing to us some named and mostly unnamed objects that go into creating them, what we are left with is the larger essence of a space that adheres to our ideas of domesticity—or elements that make up our everyday lives. This “domesticity” is silently embedded in the shapes of our doorways, the textures of the ground we walk on, or the forms of the walls we are surrounded by. And it’s from this very idea of domesticity that we build and perceive the world outside of the physical spaces we inhabit. Artist-architect Shreya Pate, whose installation *Untold* will be on display at the India Art

Fair in New Delhi—which opens in April—after being hosted in her first exhibition at Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke in Mumbai last year, aims to deconstruct how we inhabit spaces not just corporeally, but also intangibly. After earning her MA in architecture from the Royal College of Art, London, in 2019, Pate wished to further investigate the various aspects constituting the discipline of architecture; *Untold* is only her first step in that direction.

“A window in a house becomes invisible and merges with its surroundings because we relate it so much to its functionality and the activities involving it. I believe that is what architecture should be about—where functionality and



design become one with its surroundings,” Pate says. She translocates functional units of a home into the exhibition site as models crafted out of concrete and metal in life-size and miniature versions. Christening them “fragments”, she has left it to her audience to interpret them. While some have likened her fireplace to an arched gateway, others have seen bridge between the connected pyramids. The fact that the installation plays with scale helps Pate succeed at what she set out to do: urge people to engage with the “fragments” in defining the spaces they occupy.

Expectedly, a lot of what people see in these pieces is influenced by what they have seen before. Clearly, the idea of domesticity extends beyond the realm of home and subsumes a sense of familiarity that pervades our perception of the world at large. “I thought that was very interesting. You see, even when you build

public spaces like a stadium, you will need domestic elements like a sink to make it functional,” she says. And indeed so, as one eases into alien turf with the help of crutches in the form of visible or invisible elements, whose essences resemble those of the tangible world surrounding us, especially within our homes, or spaces we spend most of our time in.

“When I came to this gallery, I thought it was a home, and that now I will have to insert my spaces into it with the help of these various objects,” Pate says, pointing towards a bathtub—a lone object that allows the empty room to mimic a bathroom.

Evidently, her work reveals to us how home, more than a composite whole, largely resides in the parts that constitute it, leaving humans to seek them out in “fragments” when navigating through unfamiliar—even barren—landscapes. ▲

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:  
A KITCHEN COUNTER; A  
WATER CONTAINER AND  
TUB; AND A SHOWER.