

Artist Sandilya Theuerkauf talks about the process behind his work and Nature in its entirety



A beautifully stark eyeopener

BY RUTH DHANARAJ

Thorns rarely figure in the scheme of things for anyone, unless you are a florist or perhaps a customer at said florist's.

But for Sandilya Theuerkauf, thorns are a medium to create and display the manifold won-

ders of Nature. "I have always wanted to do something with the different aspects of things around us," says the artist, who is not interested in the interpretation of his work. Sandilya insists the focus of his work are not the thorns themselves despite their unusual appeal, but that they are a part of

the whole in the process of creating.

"I would not be able to work with thorns if someone just gave them to me. The process of procuring, of scouring a landscape, that is what I give importance to. Time spent observing, listening, in the knowing of a place, in the deliberateness of being involved in a particular location, are all part of the process of creation, a part of its intricacy and challenge. Visualising, implementing and creating are all a part of my work," says Sandilya.

Sandilya, who has been working with thorns since 2015, has collected them from acacia trees, palms and other flora. Each thorn is individually sanded or smoothed down before it is affixed on to the installations.

"I have always worked with my hands," he says. "Over a period of

time, we learn how much thorns can bend, the direction they take. There is a marked focus in concentration while working with them."



A teacher at Centre for Learning, where he was also once a student, Sandilya feels people are in a constant hurry to judge and label without paying attention to a place. "There should be a conscious attempt to look

beyond what we see," he says, adding, "One needs to go past filters and labels that we put on ourselves or the things around us, including definitions of aesthetics."

"Everyone notices a sunset or waterfall, but Nature is so much more – we notice only certain aspects of it. How to give our attention to it as a whole is what I am trying to explore here," he says.

"Our relationship with this planet should be explored to the ful-

Labour of love Sandilya and his work ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN



lest; we only have this planet. It is also very fragile and there is a gradual disappearance of what once was. Only if we are conscious of that we will not take it for granted," says Sandilya.

According to Manush John, who has captured Sandilya at work in his short film, *Trail of Thorns*, each installation is a reflection of Sandilya's experience of a place.

"By observing Sandilya at work, I have come to understand what he does is his negotiation with the spaces he inhabits."

Trail of Thorns is on display online at KYNKYNY.com till March 31.

SPIKE IT

The sweet thorn is a spiky bean tree and its thorns were used as sewing needles. Naturalists used the spines to mount insects they collected.

