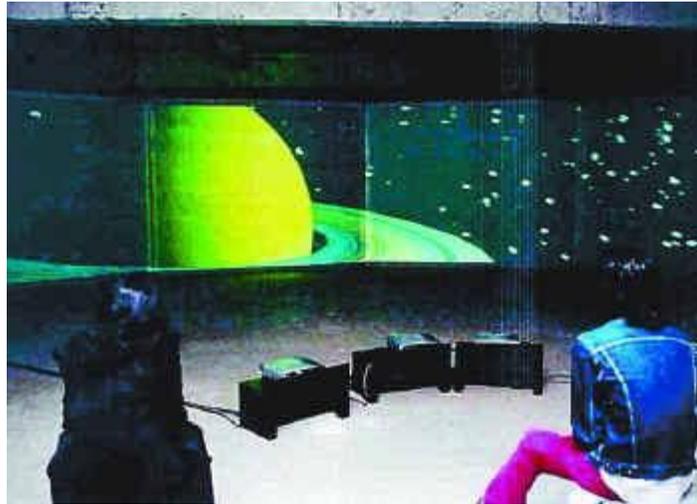


The real face of reality

GAYATRI SINHA gives an impression of the exhibition Dot Matrix Replacing Reality with Representation at the Apeejay Media Gallery and the ceramic works of Aarti Vir and Kristine Michael at the British Council in New Delhi.



THIS PAST week, the Apeejay Media Gallery expanded its curatorial scope with the exhibition - Dot Matrix Replacing Reality with Representation - curated by Vishal Dar. Dar is a young graduate in art and design from The University of California and Los Angeles who chose in this context to work on the concept of the simulacra/simulacrum.

In this way inescapably, he ties in with Jean Baudrillard's well-known and widely cited philosophy of what the French philosopher calls 'the precession of simulacra'.

As he has written "Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyper real."

Baudrillard's concern draws from the prevalence of the hyper real image, one that derived from media-tic sources, sites of virtual reality, fantasy imbued with the power to impress as the real as in cartoon and animation figures.

In the parade of images thereafter, the signs of the real become a substitute for the real itself. Baudrillard's theories do not have universal acceptance, but gain a kind of urgency in the Indian context where the selective and fiery advancement of science, medicine, media-tic images and a rapidly proliferating, technologically derived visual culture actually create a zone of the real that sits like a rarefied stratosphere on traditional models of living.

Dar's selection of new media works derives largely from international sources - which in fact serve to underscore the trans-national nature of art, its pixel reality that can beam into your living room from space.

Victoria Vesna in Cell Ghosts projects ghost particles or shadows of images captured from a record of space with a live camera.

In the work, the viewer is encouraged to walk through asymmetrically set pillars which in turn create its own parade of ghostly images.

Conceptually interesting as it is, the work does not translate into a strong or evocative visual field.

In the exhibition, the curator has emphasised texture and sensory responses, as in Manish Arora's projections of a homo-erotic relationship projected against translucent panels decorated with pink hearts. (But since when is puppy love virtual reality ?)

The two or three pieces that seem to fit in better with the brief are Jean Pierre's I am RA, with its simulation of space travel, one that mimics the games available at the push of a joystick or a digitised button, but also the simulation of war and territorial aggression.

One can also enjoy Yoshi Sodeoka's piece on "The Matrix" kind of completely computer generated images, and Tenzin Wangchuk's sensitively created work on scientific cloning and the inherent danger of deformity that any intervention in natural methods carries with in it.

Wangchuk works on two monitors and introduces his deformed figures with ballet-like grace in slow motion, that heightens the tension of the confrontation.

Ceramic show



A show of ceramics in salt glazes by Aarti Vir and Kristine Michael is currently on view at the Queen's Gallery, British Council.

Ostensibly, both the artists have little in common other than the commonality of the medium, their training at different periods with Ray Meeker and Deborah Smith at Golden Bridge Pottery, Pondicherry, and a complex array of training schedules with different potters in the UK. Aarti Vir's works with their repetition forms, combine design with utility - she pushes for a simplicity of execution even as she experiments with the notion of functionality and the form of the container.

The evocation of natural forms gives her objects a deeply felt organic quality.

Kristine, who embarks on the integration of evocations as wide as humour and poetry, presents a large panel of plates that are inspired by Pablo Neruda's Ode to Salt. The integration of the process of salt glazing, the element of salinity in sea water, and indeed of a life giving nurturing element is poetically suggested in the forms that she introduces on the plates. Although the work need to breathe a little more in the gallery display. Also enjoyable is her nursery inspired installation with fruits and vegetables cradled on plump pillow forms - the stuff of magical stories, lullabies, motherhood and nurture.

