

THE GALLERY OF  
**EVERYTHING**

A SUMMER OF  
GODS AND GODDESSES  
**NEK CHAND SAINI**

14.07.24 > 15.09.24

THE GALLERY OF **EVERYTHING**  
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THE GALLERY OF  
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NEK CHAND SAINI  
(1924-2015)

*THE CITY AND MY GARDEN ARE AS DIFFERENT AS  
THE SKY AND THE EARTH*      **NEK CHAND SAINI**



*UNTITLED (SADHU)*, c 1980/90  
METAL, CEMENT, PAINT  
91 x 63 x 56 CM, 35<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 24<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 22 IN



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THE GALLERY OF **EVERYTHING** PRESENTS *A SUMMER OF GODS AND GODDESSES*: AN INSTALLATION OF ORIGINAL SCULPTURES AND FIGURES BY **NEK CHAND SAINI** (1924-2015).



*UNTITLED (SEATED FIGURE)*, c 1980  
METAL, CEMENT, CLINKER, CERAMIC  
50 x 40 x 28 CM, 19<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 11 IN



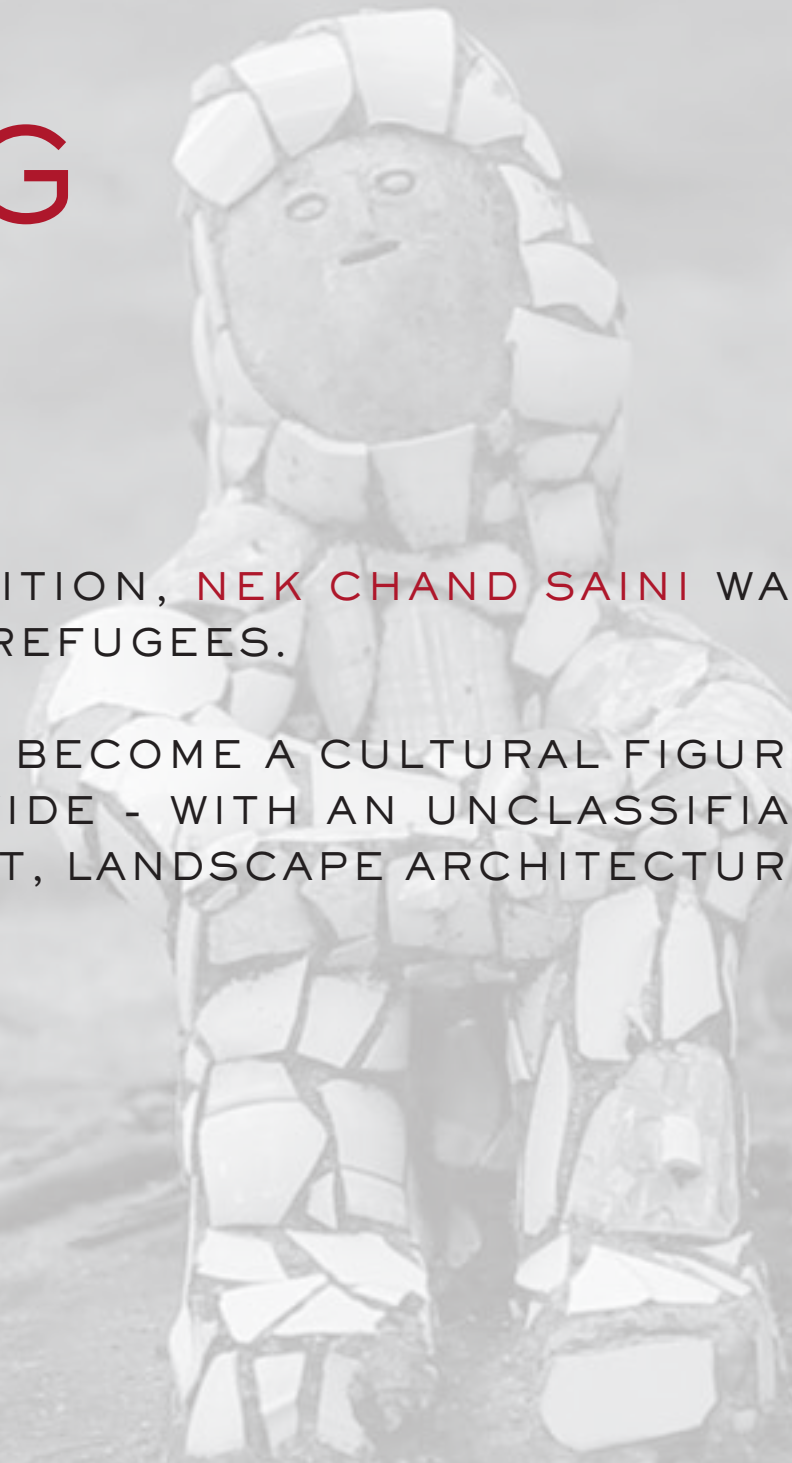
*UNTITLED (SEATED FIGURE)*, c 1980  
METAL, CEMENT, CLINKER, CERAMIC  
46 x 42 x 25 CM, 18 x 16<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> x 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> IN

# THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING

NEK CHAND SAINI  
(1924-2015)

BORN IN 1924 BEFORE THE PARTITION, **NEK CHAND SAINI** WAS A VILLAGE-BORN CHILD WHOSE FAMILY FLED TO INDIA AS REFUGEES.

HE WOULD EVENTUALLY GO ON TO BECOME A CULTURAL FIGURE OF MYTH AND MYSTERY - NOT ONLY IN INDIA, BUT WORLDWIDE - WITH AN UNCLASSIFIABLE PRACTICE, SITUATED SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN LAND ART, LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND THE VAST REALM OF THE FOLKLORIC VERNACULAR.





*UNTITLED (LEANING LADY)*, c 1980  
CEMENT, STONE  
77 x 40 x 25 CM, 30<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 9<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> IN



*UNTITLED (LEANING LADY)*, c 1980  
CEMENT, STONE  
86 x 36 x 27 CM, 33<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 10<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> IN



*UNTITLED (LEANING LADY)*, c 1980  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC, PLASTIC  
80 x 38 x 21 CM, 31½ x 15 x 8¼ IN





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AS AN ARTIST (A TERM HE DISAVOWED), **SAINI** WAS MORE ELUSIVE THAN HIS LEGEND IMPLIES.

HE WAS A FREEHAND DESIGNER, AN INVETERATE RECYCLER AND A LIFETIME VISIONARY, WHOSE EMPLOYMENT AS A ROADSIDE INSPECTOR WITH THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF CHANDIGARH GAVE HIM THE MEANS, ACCESS AND CONFIDENCE TO EMBARK ON THE PRIVATE PROJECT WHICH CONSUMED HIS ADULTHOOD.



*UNTITLED (STANDING LADY)*, c 1980/90  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC  
158 x 51 x 54 CM, 62¼ x 20 x 21¼ IN



*UNTITLED (STANDING LADY)*, c 1980/90  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC  
158 x 51 x 59 CM, 62¼ x 20 x 23¼ IN



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ORIGINALLY TITLED *THE KINGDOM OF GODS AND GODDESSES*, SAINI'S PHYSICAL DREAMSCAPE WAS PARTIALLY INSPIRED BY CHILDHOOD FABLES OF MAGICAL EMPIRES, RECOUNTED TO HIM BY HIS MOTHER BEFORE THEIR FORCED EMIGRATION.

YET IT WAS HIS ENGAGEMENT WITH CHANDIGARH, THE CAPITAL CITY DESIGNED BY ALBERT MAYER, MATTHEW NOWICKI AND LE CORBUSIER WHICH SPARKED HIS INNER FIRE.



*UNTITLED (HEAD BASKET)*, c 1980  
METAL, CEMENT, CLINKER, CERAMIC  
139 x 51 x 31 CM, 54<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 20 x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> IN



*UNTITLED (HEAD BASKET)*, c 1980/90  
METAL, CEMENT, CLINKER, CERAMIC  
145 x 54 x 31 CM, 57 x 21<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 12<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> IN



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IF SOME SAW **SAINI**'S UNEXPECTED INSTALLATION AS A REACTION AGAINST THE ARCHITECTURAL INVASION, THE ARTIST WAS NEVER PRECISE ON THE POINT.

**SAINI** HAD INITIATED HIS INFORMAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE LATE 1950s BY GATHERING ROCKS AND SALVAGING MATERIALS FROM THE CITY'S DEMOLITION SITES. THAT IT EVOLVED INTO A MAJOR *GESAMTKUNSTWERK*, HIDDEN WITHIN THE FOREST AND EXECUTED WITHOUT DECISIVE FORMAT, WAS SIMPLY THE CONCLUSION OF HIS STUBBORN DETERMINATION AND DRIVE.



*UNTITLED (DOG)*, c 1980  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC, GLASS  
64 x 126 x 25 CM, 25¼ x 49⅝ x 9⅞ IN



*UNTITLED (HORSE)*, c 1980  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC, GLASS  
70 x 84 x 19 CM, 27½ x 33 x 7½ IN



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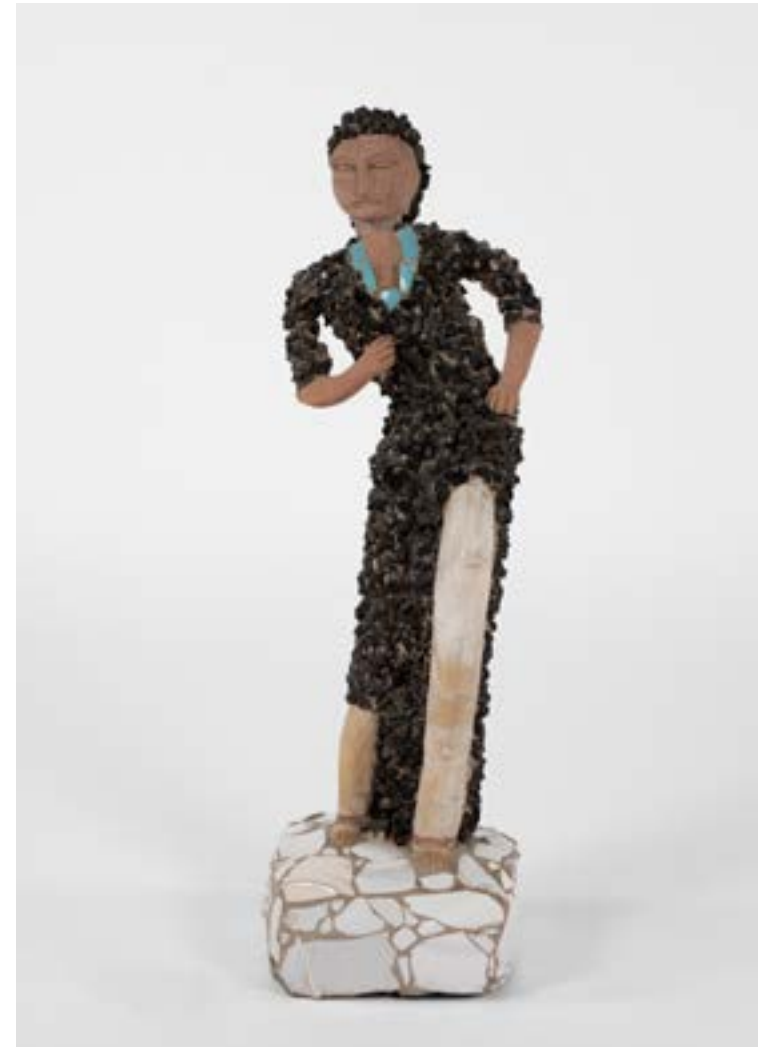
UNTIL 1972 NONE KNEW OF THE PROJECT EXCEPT **SAINI**. THE DISCOVERY OF A SECRET MAZE OF NARROW WALKWAYS AND SLOPING GARDENS, AND OF ITS POPULATIONS OF CEMENT, CERAMIC, BANGLE AND BOTTLETOP, LED FIRST TO PUBLIC CONDEMNATION, AND THEN TO AN OUTPOURING OF NATIONAL SUPPORT.

ENDORSEMENT BY THE LIKES OF INDIRA GHANDI SUCCEEDED NOT ONLY IN PRESERVING THE SITE, BUT ENGAGING THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ITS PRESERVATION, MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT.





*UNTITLED (LEANING FIGURE)*, c 1970/80  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC  
74 x 22 x 21 CM, 29¼ x 8¾ x 8¼ IN



*UNTITLED (LEANING FIGURE)*, c 1980  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC, CLINKER  
71 x 22 x 20 CM, 28 x 8¾ x 7¾ IN



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THE SITE WAS CHRISTENED *THE ROCK GARDEN OF CHANDIGARH* BY THE AUTHORITIES; AND ITS FUTURE WAS SECURED UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ITS CHARMING AND UNYIELDING CREATOR, **NEK CHAND SAINI**.

TODAY *THE ROCK GARDEN* WELCOMES IN EXCESS OF 3 MILLION VISITORS A YEAR - GENERATING SIGNIFICANT REVENUES FOR A CITY WHICH NOW PROUDLY CLAIMS OWNERSHIP.



*UNTITLED (OFFICIAL)*, c 1980  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC  
179 x 54 x 51 CM, 70½ x 21¼ x 20 IN

# THE GALLERY OF EVERYTHING

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IN HIS LIFETIME, **SAINI** NEVER FORMALLY ACKNOWLEDGED HIS ROLE AS AUTHOR OF THIS OEUVRE; NOR DID HE RECOGNISE THE UNAUTHORISED LAND-GRAB, WHICH FORMED THE BASIS OF HIS MONUMENTAL ARTWORK, AS A POLITICAL OR POST-COLONIAL GESTURE. THIS, DESPITE ITS RADICAL ORGANIC FORM AND CONTENT, AND ITS CONTRAST TO CHANDIGARH'S MONUMENTAL CONCRETE STRUCTURES AND DISRUPTIVE ARCHITECTURAL LINES.

INSTEAD, **SAINI**'S AVOWED AIM WAS TO BUILD A LEGACY FOR EVERYDAY INDIAN PEOPLE: A PLACE WHERE THEY COULD SIMPLY GO, DISCOVER AND BE.



*UNTITLED (HEAD BASKET)*, c 1970/80  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC  
153 x 60 x 45 CM, 60<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 23<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> x 17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> IN



*UNTITLED (HEAD BASKET)*, c 1970/80  
METAL, CEMENT, CERAMIC, ROCKA  
139 x 59 x 46 CM, 54<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 23<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 18 IN



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IN THIS CENTENARY YEAR OF **NEK CHAND SAINI**'S BIRTH, THE GALLERY OF **EVERYTHING** HONOURS HIS PROFOUND ACHIEVEMENT WITH AN INSTALLATION OF WORKS FROM THE 1960s, 1970s AND 1980s, INCLUDING ORIGINAL CERAMIC AND BANGLE FIGURES CREATED BY SAINI AND HIS TEAM OF WORKERS.



*UNTITLED (TOTEM)*, c 1980/90  
METAL, CEMENT, STONE, CERAMIC  
144 x 40 x 40 CM, 56<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 15<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> IN



THE GALLERY OF **EVERYTHING** IS LONDON'S FIRST COMMERCIAL SPACE DEDICATED TO ARTISTS AND MAKERS BEYOND THE CULTURAL MAINSTREAM.

THE GALLERY OF **EVERYTHING** DISPLAYS SELF-TAUGHT, ART-BRUT, SPIRITUALIST, VERNACULAR AND OTHER NON-ACADEMIC MATERIAL FROM THE 19TH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY, ALONGSIDE CONTEMPORARY ARTWORKS BY DIVERSE CREATORS OF EVERY COLOUR, CLASS, GENDER, RACE AND NEUROLOGY.

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