



... Who at 70 still chases his dreams with a roaring passion, always respecting his humble roots yet never letting himself be pulled down obtrusively by the legacy? He's Avtarjeet Dhanjal.

RAMAN BHARDWAJ

AVTARJEET Dhanjal is an artist, philanthropist, a Sikh living in London. He works in the contemporary genre of installations and assemblages commissioned usually for large-scale public art in parks and museums. At 70 he still stands tall and strong to explore new skies and scale new mountains of knowledge. "Nature gives you the dream and the energy to chase that dream, you have to use your will to break the barriers of time and seek beyond mundane" Dhanjal projects pungently.

He chases his dreams with a roaring passion for excellence; esteem and knowledge, always respecting his humble roots in a village of Punjab; yet never letting himself be pulled down obtrusively by the legacy. Relaxing for the time being at the residence of his friend Diwan Manna, he shares his pearls of wisdom with us.

His work mostly involves steel and his unnerving ambitious spirit is justly described in the rising steel spirals he did in his youth. Back at his village his aunts call them "trees of steel," to which he reacts with neither pity nor angst. "Every person has his own feelings about the visuals we see around us in nature and in art," he smiles off.

An artist's life should be like one who is from the caravan of this world but where others are bound to the ground by their loads of identity and possessions; an artist flies beyond time and looks back at the caravan.

Only he will have an overview of the life and things which normal intelligence fails to perceive, says Avtarjeet. He quotes the Mexican philosophy that speaks of a supreme pool of knowledge through which one can draw any amount of

wisdom, depending upon the intuitive link one establishes with that pool. "Some call it God, some call it Christianity, or Buddhism or Hinduism and so on ... but the conclusion is same," says Dhanjal

What he urges is not fame or money, though it includes it inherently, but the fervour to explore more, to express more. His smart and mechanically perfect objects of art denote idealism that appears to be of an abstract sort but are rather clear illustrations of efforts and prize. Small successive pyramids made of sand bear footprints of a child, stamping victory of will. He made hills of dark stone and on it placed candles in a row of small niches... the light of wisdom shrouded in the darkness of ignorance.

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NB. Raman has very kindly designated me as a senior, before I felt so. Thank you. Avtarjeet Dhanjal