

ART

Indian Sculptor Prashant Pandey on Time, Material, and the Making of Monumental Art

Rooted in craft lineage and shaped by experimentation, the Jaipur-based artist’s practice reframes monumentality as a shared act of care among the artist, the site, and the collector.



Born in Jaipur into a lineage of traditional marble artisans, Prashant Pandey developed a sculptural practice working with discarded and residual materials. **Prashant Pandey**

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Born in Jaipur into a lineage of traditional marble artisans, Prashant Pandey developed a sculptural practice working with discarded and residual materials to examine how objects move through cycles of use, neglect, and renewal. With an MFA in sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU, Baroda, Pandey, who was also an artist in residence at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, grew up witnessing both the labour that goes into idol-making as well as the large amounts of waste it generates. Using materials including marble blast stones, blood slides, industrial scrap, and organic residue, his sculptures circle both minimal and monumental forms with layered meanings.

Pandey showcased an installation titled ‘*Biography*’ at the Gallery Maskara in Mumbai, made with 3,50,000 cigarette butts, collected from pavements and built over a period of five years. And the result? A carefully-woven sculpture resembling organic skins and cosmic topographies, offering a quiet reflection on time and presence. During an exclusive conversation with Robb Report India, Pandey spoke about monumental, material-led structures as a collaborative, time-intensive practice, and more.

Robb Report India (RRI): Biography engages deeply with material, memory, and endurance. For collectors today, what makes material-led, large-scale sculpture a compelling form of long-term cultural investment?

Prashant Pandey: Material-led, large-scale sculpture embodies time, not only in its creation but also in the experience it offers. These works don’t rely on quick consumption; they demand patience and reflection. For collectors, this provides a form of cultural investment that grows richer rather than becoming outdated. Over time, the piece gains meaning through qualities that cannot be duplicated or rushed.



At Gallery Maskara, Mumbai, Pandey showcased an installation titled ‘*Biography*’ made with 3,50,000 cigarette butts. **Prashant Pandey**

RR: Your work often exists beyond conventional indoor settings. How do you think about permanence, maintenance, and stewardship when creating sculptures for private patrons and institutions?

PP: I see permanence not as resisting change but as the ability to withstand it thoughtfully. From the start, I consider how a work is exposed to weather, light, air, and human contact. Maintenance is part of stewardship, not a flaw. Like architecture or landscape, these works require care and

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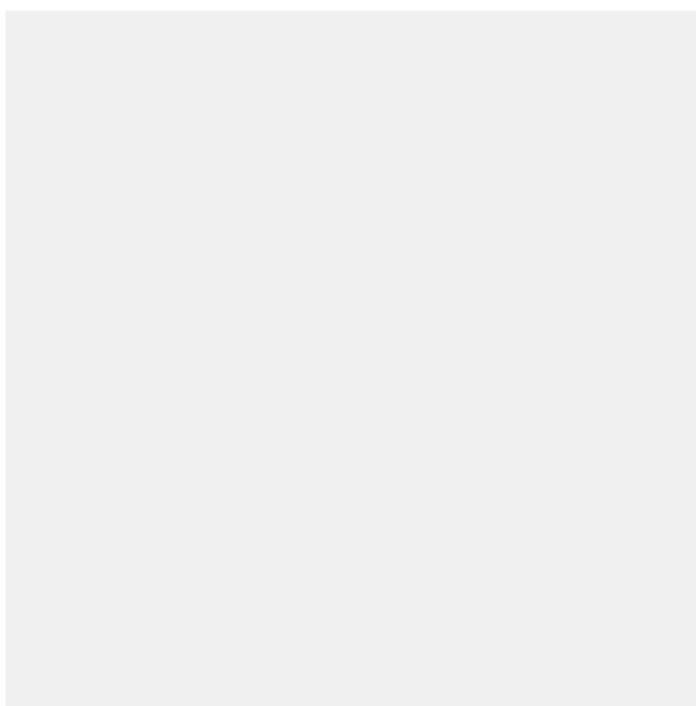
ongoing dialogue. I see collectors and institutions as partners sharing responsibility for the work's life.

RR: Monumental sculpture requires a level of commitment that goes beyond acquisition. What should serious collectors understand about commissioning large-scale works in terms of time, collaboration, and vision?

PP: Commissioning a monumental work is a collaborative process. It requires time not only for creation but also for reflection, planning, and responding to the site. Collectors should see themselves not as buyers of finished objects, but as participants in a longer dialogue. The most successful works emerge when there is alignment of vision and when space is provided for the work to develop rather than be hurried.

RR: Have you noticed a shift in how Indian collectors, foundations, or developers are approaching patronage of large-scale and public art in recent years?

PP: Yes, there is a noticeable shift. More collectors and foundations are thinking beyond interiors and beginning to engage with scale, landscape, and public visibility. An early example is Manish Maker, who built Maker Maxity in Mumbai with art as an integral part of the plan. With projects such as The Sculpture Park in Jaipur, there is growing interest in works that shape environments rather than merely decorate them.



According to Pandey, material-led, large-scale sculpture embodies time, not only in its creation but also in the experience it offers. **Prashant-Pandey**

RR: Space plays an active role in your practice. How do you guide patrons in selecting sites that allow a work to evolve meaningfully over time?

PP: I encourage patrons to see space as a collaborator. The ideal site allows the work to breathe and respond to light, movement, weather, and human presence. I often spend time understanding how a place is used, how people move through it, and how it changes during the day. A successful site doesn't overpower or hide the work. It promotes ongoing dialogue.

RR: In a market often driven by immediacy, how do you articulate the value of slowness, process, and craftsmanship to collectors engaging with contemporary sculpture?

PP: When collectors see the effort, repetition, and time involved in the work, they understand that value isn't always about speed or novelty. Craftsmanship and process add depth, longevity, and emotional resonance. These qualities reward long-term engagement rather than instant consumption, which is becoming increasingly rare and, therefore, more meaningful.

RR: Looking ahead, what kind of patronage or institutional thinking do you believe will shape the future of monumental sculpture in India?

PP: The future relies on informed, collaborative patronage. Institutions and collectors willing to support research, processes, and long-term projects will shape the next phase of monumental sculpture in India. I also believe we will see stronger connections among artists, architects, planners, and civic bodies, allowing sculpture to become part of living environments. Examples like Naoshima Island in Japan and Ekebergparken (a public park) in Norway come to mind.

Prashant Pandey

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