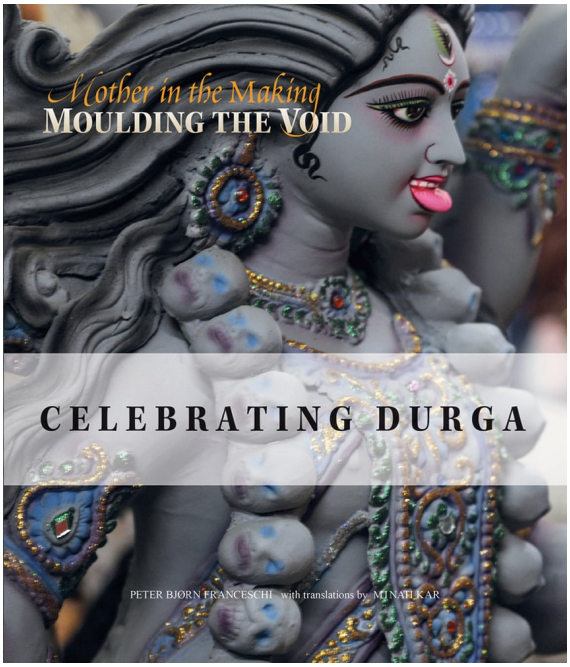
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Moulding the Void

Mother in the Making

Peter Bjørn Franceschi

Translated by Minati Kar

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- Evocative photographs of the craftsmen making idols of the goddess
- Translations of Sanksrit poetry which captures the attributes of the goddess
- Diverse Sanskrit commentary (with translations) on Tantric and Advaita philsophy

The Goddess Devi, the primordial Shakti, is a revelation of the eternal Brahman in a maternal aspect. She is worshipped during the autumnal festival of Durga Pujo in Bengal every year.

In this volume, Peter Bjorn Franceschi presents a photographic exploration of the mother goddess in the making, a visual diary of the clay idols of the goddess Durga, from conception to finished form. The book takes us through the winding lanes of Kumartuli, home to the master artists who craft the clay idols of the Devi for the Durga Pujo. Accompanying these photographs are verses from Sankaracharya's poetic work, Saundaryalahari (Waves of Beauty), translated by the scholar Minati Kar. The work is a paean to the goddess Durga, entwining Advaita Vedanta and Tantra philosophy to paint a splendid picture of Devi, starting from the crown of her head and ending at her feet. These poetic descriptions serve as a deeper layer to the visuals, and as an alternate way of interpreting the process of image making. Delving deep into the philosophical and artistic aspects of the divinity of goddess Durga, this volume is a visual celebration of her many forms, and also of the artisans who have occupied a centuries-old caesura between devotion and art.

Peter Bjørn Franceschi is a Danish visual artist working from Copenhagen, Kolkata and southern France. Trained as a glass artist from the Danish School of Design he presently works in a wide range of media. His work has been exhibited in galleries and museums in Europe, the Middle East and India.

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