

Slow Looking: Pranav Lal

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A Hill Hut

Pranav Lal

India, 2019

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Digital Photography with an aspect ratio of 5 to 3 or approximately the shape of a postcard with a portrait orientation.

This colour photograph features the geometric patterns of a section of steeply pitched, clay-shingled roof.

I will describe this photograph in thirds, from top to bottom, with the top third comprised of a wedge of sky, trees and a building with a roof in a similar style to the main roof. The last two thirds are taken up entirely by the roof in the foreground.

At the top of the photo on our left is a hazy powder blue sky smudged with white clouds and the tops of densely clustered leafy green trees on an incline, presumably a hill. In front of the trees, and behind the section of roof in the foreground, are the top two stories of a white washed, square shaped building with open wooden-latticed window panes wrapping around both levels. The clay under the upper roof's overhang is pinky orange but otherwise the rectangular tiles are a deep brown. There are two tiers of aging clay shingle-clad roofing. On our right the foreground roof races to a point where a few dark green fronds of palm appear and are quickly dwarfed by the leafy green trees above.

The roof in the foreground fills the lower two thirds of the photograph. It is likely that the photographer has captured around an 8th of this pitched roof, possibly from the adjacent window of another hut. The roof recedes upward and away from us, toward the trees at the top of the photograph. In the middle third, running on an upward angle from left to right, the

foreground roof's upward sloping ridge is capped with half cylinders of dark, weathered terracotta clay.

There are several hundred shingles on this section of roof, captured by the photographer. The vast majority, perhaps 90% of roof shingles are weathered and now an oak brown colour. The rest of the tiles are newer in appearance and more of a pinky brown. These lighter tiles are visible here and there, in particular in the top third of the photograph.

The shingles themselves are cut as either squares or hexagons. Each shingle marked with three vertical line indentations which divide them into four equal widths. The shingles are laid in sections of horizontal rows – either several rows of square shingles, side by side, or several rows of hexagon shingles. Cutting through these rows are a few larger, distinct diamond patterns filled in with the opposite type of shingles. This combination of shingles creates a subtle geometric pattern.

In the lower third of the photograph the shingles are primarily hexagons creating rows and rows of overlapping zigzags like an armour or dragon scales. On this section of the roof, toward the bottom of the photograph, a few twigs with bright green, fern-frond like, wilted leaves have fallen.

The image is tilted slightly 5 degrees to the right from the horizon line.

This photo was taken in Kandy which is in the central highlands of Sri Lanka. The city lies in the midst of hills in the Kandy plateau, which crosses an area of tropical plantations, mainly tea. Kandy is both an administrative and religious city and is also the capital of the Central Province. The central highlands are a recognised [World Heritage Site](#) in [Sri Lanka](#). The site comprises the [Peak Wilderness Protected Area](#), the [Horton Plains National Park](#) and the [Knuckles Conservation Forest](#). These are rain forests, where the elevation reaches 2,500 metres (8,200 ft) above sea level. This photograph was taken during a holiday there last year and is featured on the photographer's blog [techesoterica.com](#). The blog site also includes demonstrations and technical information about the software he uses in making his photographs.