

Religare Art
presents

An exhibition showcasing works created by the artists of
the WhyNot Place residency programme, 2011



HERE

NOW

THEN

THERE

and HERE again

Curated by Sumakshi Singh

Thursday 1st September - Friday 30th September, 2011

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Religare Art

India's 360 degree platform for the arts

Religare Art

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HERE NOW THEN THERE and HERE again

The theme of The WhyNot Place residency 2011 speaks to notions of displacement, location and relocation in both geography (physical space) and history (time). “Here, Now, Then, There and Here again” has been propelled by questions about what each of these words means in isolation and what possible meanings they initiate relative to, and/or in combination with, each other.

We are constantly moving, transforming and re-inventing our identities. Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle addresses the phenomenon where it is practically impossible to simultaneously determine the location of a moving particle and its velocity (which includes the idea of direction elaborated upon later). If this is to be applied to us, by the time we locate ourselves we have already shifted, i.e. the self that is aware and receptive to the answer is already a different/ changed self from the one being analyzed. So is it possible to be in the now and the here while simultaneously (now) considering their resonances? What and where are *Here* and *Now*?

One hypothesis is that the now and the here exist within awareness and not analysis ...and this is fecund territory for the artist, who is being asked in this residency to navigate not just his/her changing self, but also the morphing identities of the surrounding environment. It has been an incredible journey of discovery posing these questions to our seventeen artists and two writers in residence. Each one has opened an unexpected door into these inquiries. I have been privileged to witness the unfolding of their ideas into concrete form and share in the rigorous shaping of concept and material in the span of just twenty-five days.

That having been said, I would like to point out the obvious – while the theme was spurred largely by philosophical queries (and this essay reverts to several of them), the artistic inquiry is by no means bound by the same frames as it creates its own logic. My attempt in this essay is to offer you part of the thought substance shared with the artists, creating a parallel to their practices, interests and intuitive engagements (described at length in the essays that follow), and not (as my friend and mentor Anthony Phillips puts it) “getting caught up in a paradox by trying to nail down that which has already moved...”

Location and Trajectory

The age-old obsession with mapping has had a particularly pronounced resurgence in the art world over the past decade. One has only to google the term “mapping” to be immediately inundated with major art exhibitions and projects worldwide that have used this theme as an armature. I must frankly admit that I, for one, am somewhat baffled by this need to locate the self in place...or is it simply about locating the self?

Is the question raised by this insistent mapping and re-mapping: “where were we, where are we and where are we going?” If so, what we are really interested in is our trajectory and the directional spaces that exist between the points of *Here*, *Now*, *Then* and *There* that we have been plotting on the space-time graph. Are these points then simply decoys if the ever unfolding now becomes an instant past memory - but for our awareness?

One walks through the luminous red doors of resident artist **Soghra Khurasani’s** room into a cumulative map of Delhi’s hopes, prayers and desires made by collecting and individually knotting thousands of hand-stitched requests and prayers from neighbouring citizens on the strips of red prayer cloths commonly found outside temples and mosques. One locates one’s voice and loses it again in starkly individual phrases or cultural rhythms generated by repetitions in sentiments expressed by the many different hands. Soghra’s project is an overwhelming flood of the internal here and now and the aspirational there and then of strangers, friends and colleagues.

Space (with a capital S) and Place (with a capital P)

“I’ve decided that has been the great achievement of our age: to so thoroughly flood the planet with megabits that every image and fact has become a digitized disembodied nothingness. With magnificent determination, our species has advanced from Stone Age to Industrial Revolution to Digital Emptiness. We’ve become weightless...”

–Alan Lightman

Place is a framing of *Space* that has served us so well in the past that we have used the terms synonymously, often forgetting that *Space* also surrounds *Place*. What happens in an era where *Space* has been deconstructed so seriously that some of us are not quite sure about *Place* being real? We no longer have to be in the same location to communicate. Our material world seems poised on the brink of disappearance as offices, stores, files, books and compact discs can be carried in our pockets in zeros and ones on easily re-locatable phones and laptops.

This collapse of places and suspicions about reality are reflected by resident artist **Rajorshi Ghosh’s** site-specific works, made by projecting thin slivers of videos of public spaces (beaches, marketplaces, polluted water) upon subtly created interventions within gallery spaces. These new “locations” are placed strategically in ways that challenge our perceptions of real and imposed space.

Gustavo Villegas Solis negotiated similar territories of the real and the represented, object and image, material-as-ground and material-as-subject matter – in an astounding installation, a sculpture and three-dimensional drawings based on car crashes. His works push the boundaries of how far material can sculpturally announce itself and still retain the illusion of being something else.

Relativity

“What final meaning indeed, are we to ascribe to a scheme of things in which all the once-fixed “realities” are found to exist merely as relativities – in which time itself has no absolute definition?”

-J. Donald Walters

Renu Bariwal’s stop motion animations of six silently melting ice-clocks are projected side by side. The clock hands move continually, ominously and at different rates to each other and to their own constructed and disrupted rhythms. In its trajectory toward disappearance the ice generates its own layer of time, revealing imbedded objects, text and images – some derived from newspaper images over the month of the residency, and others from Renu’s personal history. One encounters several concepts of time within this installation, including Einstein’s discovery of time being relative and flowing at different speeds, Newton’s linear, clockwork time, Hawking’s hypotheses on two different times co-existing side by side and the Hindu thesis of time being cyclical as the ice disappears and re-appears. These little plays with the now and the then understand finitude as a condition of being human. The clock hands marking human time continue alongside the slow glacial melting...or did we get it backwards? Were we the ice?

“Time goes, you say? Ah, no! Alas, time stays, we go.”

-Henry Austin Dobson

“And” replaces “Or”

When is it okay to colour outside the given outlines?

Time and space (manifested in this essay as *here, now, then* and *there*) traditionally granted this transgression of their sacrosanct boundaries to only a few selected scientists, philosophers and yogis. Today, this permission is in the common domain, as we (as our media manifestations) exist simultaneously in multiple spaces, often without conflict. “I am in my bedroom in India wearing pajamas, on the phone attending a business conference, appearing live on Skype in Italy, cracking jokes with friends on Facebook, while my avatar on *Second Life* is indulging its consumerist tendencies by virtual shopping”. It is now possible to utter this sentence truthfully. Our “everyday” is quite extraordinary as our experiences of immediacy can be accessed in simultaneity: largely because it is no longer the distance between here and there but the instantaneousness of *here and here again*.

This concept is engaged with beautifully in the Camera Obscura installations realized by resident artist **Cristina Saez**, that invite the outside environment

to project its image in real-time upon an interior space. Viewers inside are immersed in an inverted but simultaneous image of the outside, maneuvering their way through co-existing realities that earlier seemed mutually exclusive.

To summarize, we no longer have to make a choice to be here *or* there, we can do both.

“And” replaces “Or” in our world. The oft-used frameworks of logic like “either/or” are rendered insufficient when there is no longer any contradiction at play and seem rather impoverished as space frees itself from sole identification with physicality in a manner that is experientially verifiable not just by a few specialized practitioners, but by the masses. Yet, we function within a fascinating paradox where we are comfortable exploiting the technological possibilities offered by this liberated space without completely abandoning our previous notions of its limitations. A split occurs, enabling both models of understanding (space as a prisoner of the three dimensions, and space as an expression of time, with potential for omnipresence) to be simply layered over one another, letting both or the more convenient model be chosen by situation appropriateness.

So in the first case, each of us has let the colour leak beyond the outlines of our own conditioned understanding, without wanting to shift the lines themselves. In the second case, the sheer volume of this colour bleed has made it necessary to expand these demarcations. The signifiers - *here, now, then* and *there* - constantly change form, becoming increasingly spacious to include added significations. These flexibilities in their interpretations are perhaps an act of generosity to allow more in. But does one also sense an undertone of betrayal in their inability to commit, in their slippery evasion of fixity and in their fickle relationships with meaning? For in one way we need to treat our a priori notions of time and space as “given” because our stories enact themselves in space and unfold in time.

Here and There

Magnanimously expansive, but frames nonetheless, the here, the now, the then and the there structure our notions of histories (personal and cultural), placing events in a chronology from which we attempt to draw meaning. This is partly what makes them important.

Our *here* has several parentheses located one within the other. The brackets are: here in the residency with a community of artists, in a white cube space, in a corporate building surrounded by shopping malls, enveloped by the pulsating, chaotic and ever-morphing National Capital Region of Delhi.

Amasoong- the artist collaborative spring boarded off the most immediate layers of *here* and arrived in a realm of symbolic territories: of branding, copyright and ownership. Cleverly utilizing the sanction granted to them by bracket number one of the “art space”, they ventured into the precarious *there* of bracket number two by appropriating and altering corporate Religare’s logo and font to generate a fictitious company, dialoguing with issues of commodification in the art world and referencing rigidity and flexibility in corporate and artistic methodologies.

Another project that employs branding, the corporate space and the immediate here, albeit in a completely different manifestation is **Rathin Barman’s** “Office”. The artist spent his month collecting, cutting, pasting and sculpting the cardboard packaging waste generated by corporate Religare to construct his primary experience of an office space back home in Tripura – the stereotypical government office. Commenting on the economic disparities between the corporate and government structures, the material here reconstructs the represented there. One encounters logos of sophisticated electronic and digital office equipment (deliberately retained on the cardboard), incongruously present on the life size simulacra of inexpensive, analog items found in government offices.

Each artist in the residency has engaged with the shifting notions of time and space in a manner that has asked to expand them even further. This is experienced in encounters with **Xawery Wolski’s** ethereal, silent chandelier standing out of time, in **Kartik Sood’s** silk obscured video works that reveal themselves in slow yawning intervals, in **Jesse Berkowetz’s** cumulative juxtapositions of everything from *there* brought in *here* and in **Isabel Rock’s** illustrative drawings of Delhi’s topsy-turvy universe, one-eyed drivers, monkeys and banana heaps.

Previously discussed ideas of “and” and “or” find their way into **Y. Korika’s** investigations on binary opposites in text and image, into **Luciana Lyrio’s**

performances that collapse the binary of male and female representation and **Preeti Agarwal's** wood cut prints which quietly allow for these multiple personal “ands” (represented by autobiographical objects) to exist simultaneously on her picture plane.

Sweet smelling spices, sparkling sequins, intricate laces and colourful lentils from old Delhi markets illustrate the grand beginning of space-time, using Vedic creation myths in **Kaoru Furuko's** meticulously created stop motion animation while **Manali Shroff's** animation takes the opposite route of the humble narrative, using a toy rat (as a surrogate self-portrait) who transforms as she moves through Delhi's middle class homes, set against its familiar skyline.

...But this is just the one-liner tracing back of manifest projects to the given theme, which served in all honesty like a simple hook from which were suspended incredibly rich, subtle and expansive investigations with multiple points of connection to not only time and space, but also history, psychology, gender, personality, environment, spirituality and much, much more as I am hopeful the following essays will reveal.

Critics in residence

Jigna Padhiar and **Lyla Rao** – our critics in residence – took full advantage of the opportunity to observe, interview and engage deeply with artists from several countries. They furiously penned down their observations and analyses of the tremendously varied conceptual and material artistic methodologies employed within the multiple disciplines of photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, video, animation, community workshops, performance and installation art. This was a unique invitation into the artists' studios to study and write about the artistic process: beginning from the conception of the ideas, to the shifts and changes brought about through dialogue, research and observation, until the (almost) final realization of the project and the viewer's (anticipatory) decoding of meaning in the art work. It proved to be an intense period of research, voicing artistic process without having access to the final “product” (as the artwork stayed in progress for the duration of the writing) through various experiential, art historical, material, conceptual and phenomenological filters.

While I spent several hours in Jigna's thoughtful company, actively mentoring, reconstructing and editing her writing, Lyla had a more independent role of attending the mentoring/discussion sessions with the artists and then re-working the writing on her own.

This catalogue is a labour of love answering questions like “What is the artist's stated and presented intent? How does this intention compare to the viewer's read of the work? How did he/she come up this idea? Why give the artwork this form instead of another? What is involved in the process of manifesting an idea into form? What does it mean to make art out of a thought? In fact, what does it mean to make art at all?”

This opportunity was created to address some of the gaps in contemporary art criticism in Delhi that result from a lack of interaction between the artist and the person writing about his/her work. Our hope is that this residency has provided some access to these critical questions for writers on art, who will then be able to carry this insight into their future musings on already manifest art forms in museums, galleries and other alternate art spaces.

Thank you

A big thank you needs to go out to Sheba Chhachhi, Raghu Rai, Gigi Scaria, Olivier Vidal and Avantika Bawa who generously shared their time and the nuances of their creative practices in their public lectures through our “Direct Connect” series. Their insights on self and environment, coupled with their openness in sharing their processes were invaluable assets for us all.

Another thank you goes to our hard working interns who jumped into multiple roles –researching, preparing slide shows, documenting events, writing the blog, conducting artist interviews and offering hands-on help with the projects. Sitara Chowfla, Kriti Sood, Megha Roy, Bhawani Singh and Sushma Chandra – you rock our world! Cristina Saez, thank you for your generous offer to document and share the work of many of your fellow residents – this catalogue is indebted to your beautiful photographs.

...And lastly a big thank you to the Religare Art team for enabling and encouraging the creation of a new *Here*, where we can ask questions, grow through each others ideas, expand our awareness, and express these experiences through our chosen languages.

The old adage 'a picture speaks a thousand words' holds true for Preeti Agarwal's richly hued woodblock prints created for the WhyNot Place residency. Objects from her immediate environment combine with the imaginary to create dreamscapes that are rooted in reality. These quiet, contemplative self-portraits are as telling of Preeti's stay at the residency, as they are of her personality.

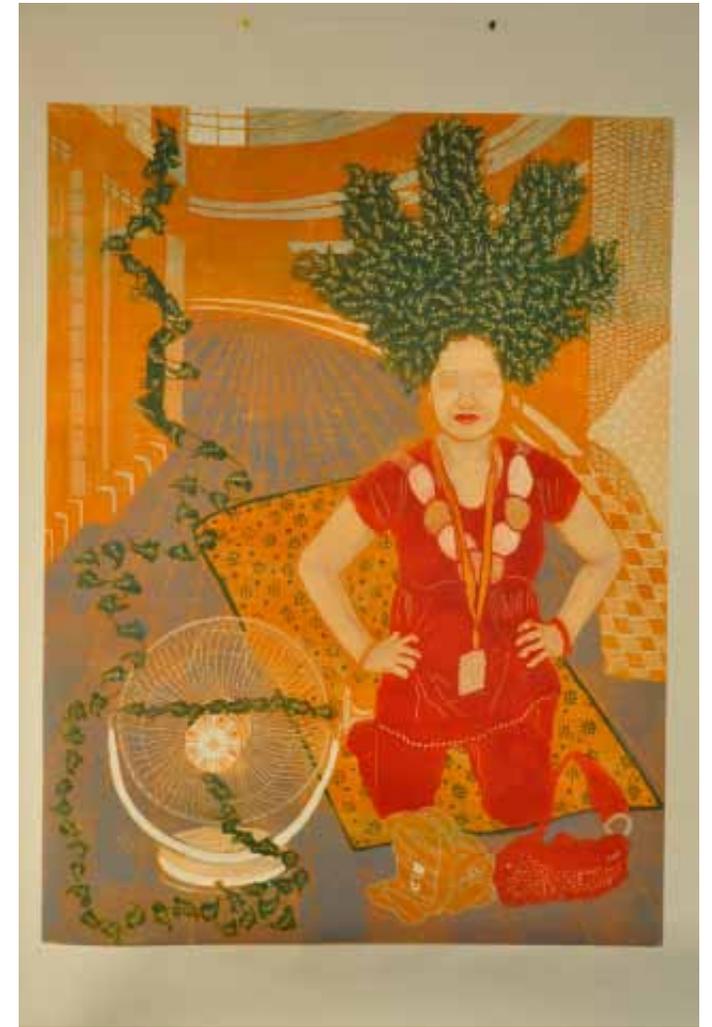
Placing herself at the centre of her work, Preeti surrounds her self-portrait with objects that reference the immediate environment in which the work is situated. In a print created for the residency, a white table fan sits silently in a corner alongside a floral patterned rug on which the artist kneels, hands on her hips, with her Religare ID card hanging prominently from her neck. In front of her lies her small little purse and camera bag. The backdrop for the work is quite easily identifiable as the atrium of the Religare Art gallery. The simplicity of the composition is disturbed by the presence of a floral vignette that appears to slide down the side of the work before weaving its way through and around the table fan. The same leaf motif re-appears as a large, striking headgear that rests lightly atop the artist's head. Perfectly at ease with her glorious crown of leaves, the protagonist in the work directly challenges the viewer's curious gaze.

A detailed view of the guesthouse that became Preeti's home during her stay in Delhi, replaces the Religare Art atrium in her second print created for the residency. Once more, the artist presents herself in the centre of the work, arms gently clasped in her lap, with a wistful, far-away look in her eyes. A common plastic water jug from her room at the guesthouse is placed on the floor, directly in front of her kneeling frame. The element of fantasy enters the work in the form of Chinese-inspired curly blue clouds that seem to settle over the grey tiled floor. The same leaf motif of the atrium woodcut re-appears, in the background, as a thin vine that wraps around exposed bathroom fixtures. The dense foliage extends into the foreground of the print, assuming the form of an impressive headdress. Permeating the guesthouse work is a sense of reverie conveyed through the figure's vacant stare and the delicate clouds that glide across the tiled floor.

Both works create intriguing compositions that fuse reality with fantasy. While grounding the work within a spatial context, the referencing of seemingly

Preeti Agarwal





mundane objects, allows for multiple interpretations. One cannot help but wonder as to the selection of these objects. Do these seemingly random objects co-exist complementarily or share a conflictual relationship? Does the significance of these objects lie in their individuality or in the unspoken relationships that exist between them? The questions are many, however, the answers are few. Much like the artist herself, her works are diffident and reserved, requiring a more patient engagement before they disclose their secrets.

As one ponders over the meaning of these works, one is forced to accept the possibility that there may be no single interpretation for these prints. Perhaps, the essence of these intense labors of love lies in the myriad narratives that

emerge from these fascinating yet unassuming objects. When questioned about her works, Preeti smiles the smile of the learned, suggesting there is much depth to the work, but it is for the viewer to discover it.

When looked upon as a pair, however, the prints appear to engage in a dialogue on the domestic and professional dimensions of Preeti's life. The guesthouse and the atrium become symbols of these two facets of the artist's personality, reflecting the emotions and sentiments that accompany them. The objects that Preeti chooses to surround herself with are also indicative of these two contrasting environments. The common water jug and a view of the guesthouse restroom stand in clear opposition to the stark glass walls of



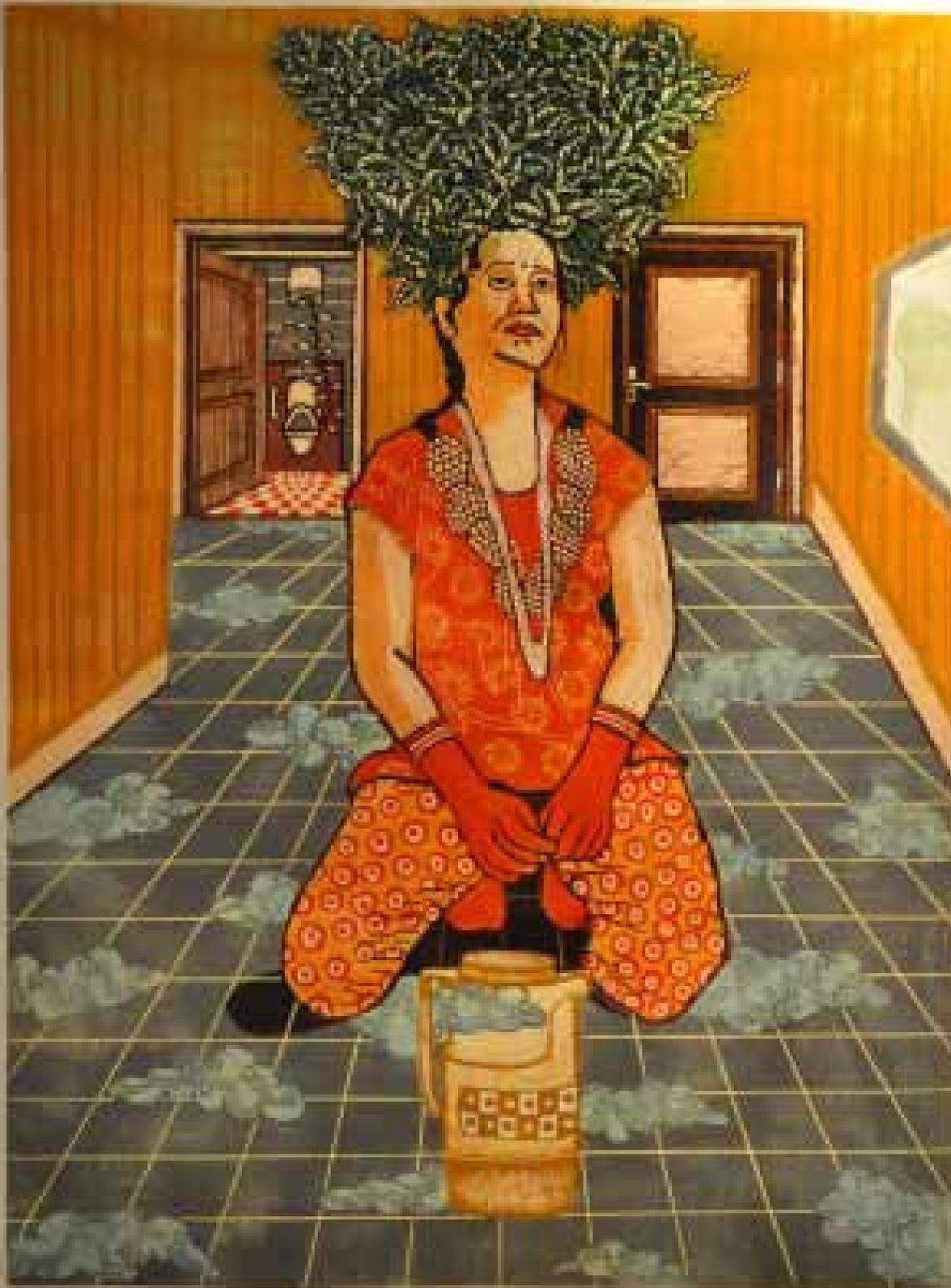
Religare's corporate office. The inclusion of the Religare ID card, along with Preeti's small red purse and camera bag, can also be viewed as symbols of her trade, further alluding to the professional aspect of her character. Viewed through the lens of the domestic and the professional, Preeti's self-portraits also take on greater significance. Alone in her guesthouse room, Preeti shies away from the viewer, averting her gaze, allowing herself to daydream, as a sense of quiet solitude filters through the room. In stark contrast to the wistful detachment of the guesthouse print, the atrium work is charged with a sense of boldness and forcefulness expressed through her assertive stance and confrontational gaze. The prints become personal narratives, linked together through a vignette of leaves that weaves through the works forging a thread of continuity.

Sitting cross-legged upon her long worktable, Preeti was often seen diligently carving her large wood blocks from early morning till late at night. These bright, vivid works come alive as the viewer explores the many subtle stories that lie embedded in these dream-like spaces. Layered with ink and with meaning, Preeti's prints remain open to interpretation, silently offering insights into the life and psyche of a young and talented artist.











Untitled
woodcut print
48" x 36" (each)
2011

Amasoong, which means ‘and’ in Manipuri, is the mastermind of two creative Delhi-based personalities, Korou Khundrakpam and Kundo Yumnam, who are originally from the North Eastern Indian state of Manipur. Working under the banner of Amasoong since 2009, their individual and collaborative art practices are informed by a strong need to “dig up dirt” in contemporary society. Previous projects have seen them successfully tackle portentous abstract notions, ranging from patriotism and nationalism to war and power struggles, by deconstructing them into deceptively simple concepts that demand a more critical involvement on the part of the viewer.

As part of the WhyNot Place residency, Amasoong decided to create a work that would respond both physically and conceptually to their new working environment at Religare Art. Intrigued by the inclusion of an art institution within a financial company’s headquarters, Amasoong began to work through a series of ideas, analysing the dynamics between these two contrary areas of production: What are the rules of engagement when producing art within a corporate organization? How does art, for which nothing is sacred or above critique, exist within an environment that adheres to certain sacrosanct beliefs and practices? An encounter with a Religare security guard perhaps provided Amasoong with some insight into these questions. Early on in the residency, finding the gallery space too cold, the Delhi-duo sought respite in a warm corner on the steps alongside the atrium’s water fountain. Barely had they sat down when a uniformed security guard (with an expression of sheer disbelief, I imagine) rushed forward and urgently ushered them to a set of plush leather couches, arranged neatly in a square, a few feet away.

For Korou and Kundo, this curious yet rather amusing incident of corporate etiquette posted myriad questions regarding the physical and metaphorical dilemmas involved in negotiating this art/corporate space. The more they studied their surroundings the more aware they became of the “corporate stiffness” of their environment. Accepting of the difficulties that would befall a project that directly or indirectly critiqued corporate culture within the sanctuary of its own walls, Amasoong and Sumakshi went back and forth in search of the perfect project that would “challenge the environment and change the rules”, while remaining respectful of the sensitivities of their host. Proposals that examined the white cube¹ as a concept and not as a physical space were discussed and rejected, as were those that investigated the notion

Amasoong

 BELIGARE
SINCE 1982







Cut Here 1
Digital print on archival paper
48" x 24"

of painting as a commodity. Long and stimulating conversations on the commodification of art and the power of a signature to determine market value, ultimately led to an examination of identity as expressed through the concept of branding.

A project on brand building made perfect sense as an Amasoong project on a multitude of levels. Amasoong's preoccupation with notions of identity, and by extension those of nationalism and patriotism, as socio-culturally constructed concepts, that are marketed and sold in the form of maps, flags and other such pride inducing commodities, allow for parallel examinations into the construction of corporate brand identity through the commodification of goods and services sold. At its most basic level, the corporate visual brand identity is the single most important marker for a company. For Amasoong, it graphically represents the company's identity, and to a lesser extent that of its employees, by virtue of them being a part of the company's workforce, in much the same way, a nation's flag or the map of a country represents a part of an individual's identity by virtue of them being a citizen of that country.

Having identified a working concept, Amasoong set out to formulate how best to communicate these ideas. Referencing their environment in the most direct manner possible, Amasoong conceptualized a whole campaign for the launch of their very own company.

Introducing – 'Begilare'!

At the time of this essay going to print, Begilare promoters, Amasoong, have informed us that the proposed launch of the company, and its newest product, is to coincide with the grand opening of the new Religare Art Gallery in Saket. The product on offer has been designed by the Begilare promoters, who have painstakingly conceptualized and developed a simple yet effective dark green, three-leaved clover logo to serve as the visual identity of the company and its tag line 'Begilare – Values Assigned'. The arrival of Begilare, we are told, would be announced with much fanfare (sans the non-vegetarian starters and alcohol, of course! In keeping with a Religare policy) through multi-coloured graphic advertising posters placed strategically along the walls in and around the gallery, designed for one thing and one thing alone – to lure the visitor in and sell them the product.



Admitting to the possible influence that the Religare Enterprises Limited brand might have had in shaping their company name, logo and tag line, Amasoong maintains that since their fictitious company falls under the license of an art project, they are exonerated from any charges of plagiarism or identity theft, aligning their project to that of ‘a spherical horse in a vacuum!’ – A Russian metaphor for highly simplified scientific models of reality.

Often seen sitting at their round conference table in the centre of the gallery space, Amasoong were kind enough to give us a sneak preview of the product they have designed for the launch of their new company. Although currently still at the drawing board stage, Amasoong propose to create a hundred finely crafted 12”x12” pearly white boxes, sealed tight with Begilare printed across one side of the box with the logo cleverly placed at one corner so that each petal occupies one side of the corner. How these boxes will be stacked and where they will be placed remains to be seen, however, one thing is clear, the new Begilare product promises to deliver. But what exactly is being delivered? Is the white cube the packaging or the product itself? Does the Beligare white cube critique the concept of the gallery as a white cube neutral in nature and free of context? Is the rigid structure of the cube a reflection of the perceived stiffness of a corporate office as compared to the flexibility of an art space? These are but some of the questions we hope will be answered at the keenly awaited launch of Begilare.

¹The art gallery as a white cube is seen as a space free of all social contexts in which a work of art can be experienced without the influences of historical space-time factors.





BEGILĂRE

Values assigned

**YOU WILL
NEVER HAVE
TO THINK
OUT OF IT**



UNIMAGINABLY BIGGER THAN YOUR BOX

**IN OUR
TIME OF
ILLUSIONS**



SOMETHING YOU CAN BELIEVE IN

**ANYTHING
ELSE IS
JUST AN
EMPTY BOX**



IT HAS WHAT YOU NEED

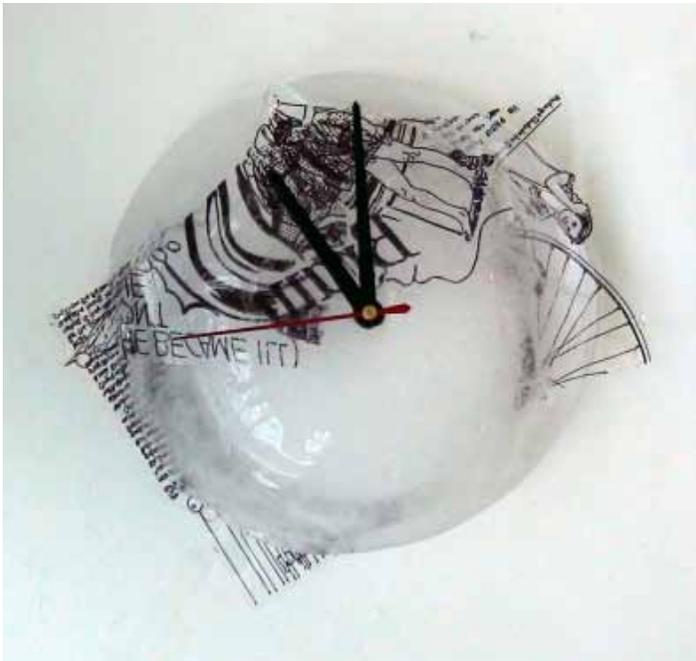
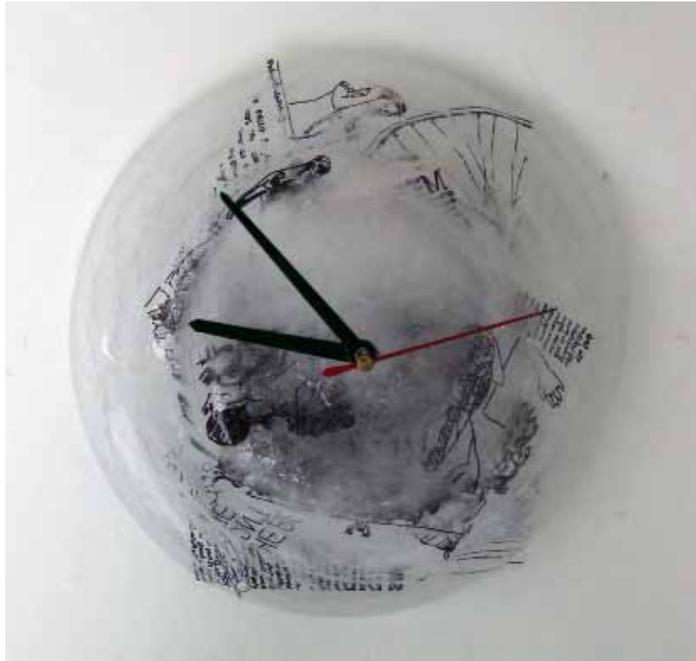
Delhi-based Renu Bariwal spring boarded off the residency theme “Here, Now, Then, There and Here again” to generate her first stop-motion animation “Now, Then, There and Now again”. As the title suggests the animation deals with multiple ideas of time. Six ephemeral cast-ice clocks silently tick away time as they melt and re-form side by side in what appears to be a time-lapse video.

The hands of each clock, move at a different rate inviting dialogue on relativity and separate yet co-existing models of time. Every few ticks shrink the ice, revealing layer after layer of drawing and text in black ink derived from newspapers reports on different days, Delhi’s changing landscape, Renu’s personal history and other microcosmic and macrocosmic markers of time and place. In our journey through the horizontal layers, we encounter Renu’s attempt to position herself as an artist by interspersing her own drawings and paintings among representations of popular masterpieces by Leonardo da Vinci, Marcel Duchamp and Roy Lichtenstein – all interestingly white, male artists. She also takes the opportunity to look back at her own journey in time and space through nostalgic line drawings of interiors of homes that she had inhabited in places like Rathlaam, Jhunjhunu, Rajgarh and Delhi. Occasionally, embedded objects like tack-pins and string reveal themselves as if trying to adhere the image to the ice. Each noiseless tick of the clock attempts to catch up with the present through imagery from the past.

Absence gives itself presence: a resonance is heard in the silence of the clock and a frozen stillness stays implicit despite the visible melting and constant movement. Images surface from the depths of the ice, like layers of memory – occasionally hazy, often overlapping and at other times remarkably sharp until the decaying, disappearing, fragile past is swallowed completely.

Right from the onset, Renu knew that she wanted to dwell on the subject of water. Having lived in rural Rajasthan, she had experienced and observed water crises that had occurred in the marginalized areas of the state. Her sensitivity towards the issue brought her to the topics of thirst and the quest for water – finding parallels to the human quest (that she witnessed in the urban metropolis of Delhi) for money, fame, knowledge, love...the list goes on. She also chose water for its material property of always being able to find its own level (through the undulating landscape of material pursuits) and flow around obstacles.

Renu Bariwal



Now, Then, There and Now again
Stop motion animation
2 min. 30 sec.
2011



Musing over the preciousness of water, Renu's initial proposal was to create an installation with a number of coloured earthen pots of varying sizes displayed upon dunes of actual desert sand. She planned to layer the installation with sound or video interviews with people from various socio-economic backgrounds talking about quests and thirst.

Discussions with Sumakshi led to the conclusion that perhaps the proposed visual manifestation of this idea was too contrived. Maybe she could consider subtler ways of introducing these themes, or make the unmediated experience of it tangible to the viewer instead of creating this distanced symbolism of an "exotically rural" landscape. She introduced Renu to the work of several installation artists including Yayoi Kusama – whose work shares a strong affinity with some of Renu's earlier projects.

These early discussions led to the gestation of an alternate conceptual approach in Renu's mind. Suddenly one morning, stepping out of the gallery





space, one noticed golden water taps with what appeared to be flowing water. Upon closer inspection, it turned out that the simulation of water was achieved in resin.

Renu had an idea a day! Every morning she would show the mentor a whole new visual concept, developed from scratch, employing new sets of material and every morning Sumakshi would work with Renu to identify the nuances of concept, material and presentation and how they work together to generate meaning. Further introspection led Renu toward identifying materials that have stronger intrinsic relationships to subject matter and to the present environment. She decided to use water in another form: a large disc of ice, tinted with colours. This idea was refined further through a sketch that involved enveloping a candle with ice and watching both substances eventually melt. Encouraged by the mentor, Renu decided to document this project by experimenting with a medium new to her existing vocabulary – video. Initially hesitant to handle the technology, Renu eventually stepped out of her comfort zone and this process resulted in the final project: a stop motion animation.



The poetic exploration of the passage of time in these previous experiments, evolved into the idea of constructing ice clocks. Sumakshi suggested that Renu work with the nature of this material (to conceal and reveal) to engage in specific dialogues with time, treating it not just as evenly measured linear markers but also as personal, historic and quotidian. One solution was to embed the images and objects within the ice. Renu spend days sourcing and drawing appropriate images, finishing the first melting clock animation, just hours before the Residency Open Studio evening.

Her video projection piece triggered feedback from various vantage points. Gigi Scaria (a visiting artist) suggested smoother video transitions and the introduction of a sound element while Jesse Berkowitz (a fellow artist in residence) found a certain meditative force in the silence of the piece as well as the studiedly amateur quality of the animation. Even after her stay at the residency was over, Renu kept fine-tuning the piece, playing with the pacing and adapting herself to the challenges posed by the new medium introduced into her practice. Eventually, five more animation pieces were created by her.

Renu has managed to skillfully maneuver her way through the variables of chance-based production, incorporating drawing, photography, video and sculpture into her work. In this video collage made of words, images, memories and news reports, histories melt and evaporate leaving behind a few traces of ink, silence performs the function of sound and individual narratives emerge within the larger rhythms set up by time.



Rathin Barman

Objects are ubiquitous and define spaces, just as much as spaces give context and refine the interpretation of objects.

Is there ever really a time when we aren't surrounded by things that bear personal, historic, social, cultural, political and psychological associations? These associations form the core of Kolkata-based Rathin Barman's practice. His residency project confronts socio-economic "structures" through a replica of an Indian government office made out of cardboard waste generated by corporate offices.

Rathin moved from a small rural town in Tripura, a state in North East India to the relatively faster paced city of Kolkata and now was invited to work in this luxurious, glass fronted corporate tower in one of the largest cities in the world- Delhi. His sensitivity to nuances of objects and spaces comes from his multiple experiences, interactions, disrupted expectations and expanding associations of what an "office", a "urinal" or "construction material" can mean.

"Where I come from an "office" means "government office". There is no other kind! Government offices cater to almost 90 percent of India's population while corporate offices are associated with only 10 percent. Yet it's so skewed financially- the corporate offices have all the facilities and gadgets and we still see the same government office with piles of impenetrable paperwork from 50 years ago!" Rathin exclaims. His work is not just about disjuncture, varying work dynamics and economic disparities as seen through specifically represented objects. But first lets back-track a little.

Rathin's initial proposal for the residency was to simply create a sculptural table and chair in cardboard, seeing them as the penultimate symbols of civilized human society (generated in this discarded material). He also began another project that involved documenting the architectural exteriors and residential interiors of Delhi's hotchpotch of widely varying buildings. Deteriorating facades were then juxtaposed in a diptych format with the lovingly tended and often eccentrically decorated interiors of people's homes located unexpectedly within the same documented facade.

Noticing that his second project revealed a deeper interest in the specificity of spaces (in particular the contradictions between the outside and the inside, the expected and the revealed, the public and the private and the here and the there), Sumakshi suggested that Rathin choose a relevant point in history,





time or space that could enhance the read of these proposed generic objects (a table and chair). Encouraging him to play with the residency theme of “Here, Now, Then, There and Here again”, she helped him to synthesize notions of objects, materials, space, transformation, history and time, and opened up discussions about constructing an entire analogical office space with cardboard, so as to engage with the “then” (history) of this very space he was working in (a corporate office).

Through his project titled, “Office”, one confronts the history of the “actual” space that was (until recently) a corporate office, now transmogrified into a detailed semblance of an Indian government office complete with a table bell, table fan, dial phone, furniture and Mahatma Gandhi’s image, all cleverly constructed out of corrugated cardboard boxes used to package objects (like printers, computers and refrigerators), which were collected on site (the Religare offices surrounding the gallery). While sitting on a plush chair in the gallery Rathin once commented, “This one office chair is so expensive! One can create an entire office with the same amount of money...”

As one walks into Rathin’s office, noticing the deliberately retained packaging logos and brand names on the constructed objects, associations of urbanization, commoditization and migration emerge. One notices Rathin’s micro-attention to detail in the ironic etching of the inevitable map of India found in each government office, recreated here, on a flattened box proudly bearing a “Made in China” sign. Rathin’s office is quite a delightfully experiential space (unlike most testimonials of actual Government office experiences) that invites viewers to move around the objects and furniture and occasionally even interact playfully with the functional drawers and closet doors.

Discussions opened up questions of “What does it mean to construct a life-sized, non-functional space with consumer waste? What possible meanings can unfold and what discursive layers should it attempt to create within the space? How many of the gallery going people personally spend time in current Government offices as opposed to sending agents, drivers etc.? Will their experience of the depicted space be mediated through the nostalgia of Hindi movies and their parents stories? Will it be a romanticization of the past or a confrontation with reality?”



Upon deciding to build an entire office with cardboard boxes, Rathin began collecting reference images of government offices and their peculiarities like the old-style box switchboards, piles of old fashioned file folders, a *jhadoo* (Indian style broom), and tube-light holder along with the other objects already mentioned above. With his few modest tools: a pair of scissors, glue, scale, pencils and a cutter used for slicing, cutting, folding, bending and pasting, Rathin started “living in the cardboard boxes”, as he fostered the objects with his hands. With the quiet assurance of a master-craftsman Rathin exhausted pile after pile of cardboard boxes, pushing hard at the transformative possibilities within both the material and the methods employed.

A previous project involved mounting a urinal on a cow-dung caked village wall in Tripura (becoming a source of much bewilderment to the locals who had never encountered the “exotic object”) and then creating the project’s counterpart - a urinal made out of cow dung, placed on a gallery wall. Rathin was already investigating how the associations of objects were colored by their contexts. His work often employs materials found on-site (like bricks, cardboard and twigs) and exploits their potential toward unexpected ends with undertones of environmental consciousness and nostalgia.

Meanwhile, within the glass walls of the Religare building parallel construction activity was underway. Offices were being torn down and the gallery was literally being created with concrete, wood, glass, stone and metal. As Rathin’s space started taking shape, insightful dialogues (triggered off by comparative analysis) about labour, building methods, material, design and intent came about, extending from the realms of functionality to abstractions in contemporary visual culture. In this digital age of hi-tech “art production”, hybridism, macho materials and cold, machine-made precision, Rathin’s humble, meticulously hand-crafted cardboard objects are a rare display of virtuosity harking back to the local craft-techniques of hand building and weaving which he learnt in rural Tripura and shared with us all in Delhi.









One can imagine how fragmented a first time visitor's understanding of a city like Delhi can be. The city's ever-increasing abundance of things, people, sounds, smells, objects and behaviours became inexhaustible fodder for Brooklyn-based Jesse Bercowetz's contextually responsive work strategies. While traversing streets in Delhi, Jesse proved to be a source of much fascination for the locals. Somewhat similar is the awe of the foreign form generated by his complexly layered sculpture.

What we see is an elaborate assemblage that cleverly avoids commitment to any one direct figurative reference. This could bring to mind one of the futuristic sci-fi travel machines, or a fantasy island from a fairy tale or even a sprawling hybrid or supernatural being - generating an intriguing and uncanny set of encounters as one walks around letting multiple tales and references unfold.

A sensory assault occurs with the layers of suspended sweet-smelling used-soap bars bought from an Old Delhi market, a micro-landscape of *dhoop* and *agarbatti* (varieties of incense) collected on a research trip to an incense factory, a pile of reddish human hair cut from the long tresses of a fellow artist, broken terracotta pots, a found mummified squirrel, bits of turmeric roots, acrylic paints and religious red and yellow threads among much, much more that one discovers in this weirdly delightful six-foot high sculpture. In this constructed universe are embedded layered spheres, created out of hardboard cutouts that read names of planetary bodies, from which other found and artist-made objects hang in a trinket-like fashion. A viewer may engage with the drama and sheer physicality of this overwhelming piece, while simultaneously absorbing the poetic, the sensual and the spiritual nooks of the sculpture. Here, there are no hierarchies between the layers of material, nor does the work guide a viewer's gaze or determine his position. Instead it encourages receptivity by allowing a new context in order to re-experience the familiar. Sifting through objects that make Jesse's sculpture is a process of building kinship with the work and the self, questioning the order of our lives and spaces we inhabit.

Bogged down by the summer heat, Jesse started working almost after a whole week had passed, building our curiosity about what he was going to make. Day after day, one by one, he started assembling objects - bought from markets, found on the streets, and sourced from within the Religare building, putting

Jesse Bercowetz





them alongside self-crafted elements. He started several abstract drawings on small pieces of paper with bold flat colours. He used broken wall-parts from the gallery undergoing renovation, to create two sculptural drawings. Meanwhile, visceral assemblages made from organic materials like wood, a cane basket, incense and thread, took on forms resembling the residue of totem rituals. Jesse's practice has over the years, been influenced by science fiction, punk rock, folk art and historical references. One wondered: was he replicating something or consciously subverting representation? What was this constructed formlessness all about? Was it formless or free form?

The abstract and formal qualities in Jesse's work are built from surprisingly culture-specific materials chosen by him. His initial proposal for the residency was to create sculptures purely out of incense, accentuating the ephemeral nature of the material, where the work of art would end in incineration, ash and dust. Jesse's idea was to take a traditional material like incense with a strong cultural history signifying spirituality, hoping to reflect culture back through an outsider's perspective. However, the limitations inherent to the art space in a corporate building made it difficult to support a work that would



involve lighting up the incense. Nevertheless, Jesse, along with fellow artist Cristina Saez visited an incense factory, bringing back bags of raw material and an experience to share and cherish. Cristina later culminated the plethora of video and photo footage captured during this trip into a seven-channel video piece.

Jesse's work was evolving into seemingly separate projects. In about 15 days he had created almost five individual pieces. Jesse works directly with the collected materials, letting them dictate the form and shape of the work without preparatory thoughts, drawings or sketches. He builds different components, reminiscent of islands, which later get altered and delicately interconnected to build larger complexes. Sumakshi would often speak of them as abstract-expressionist, gesture-based paintings in three-dimensional space.

Guided by synchronicity of movement, desire for detail, material sensitivity, attention to the minutest of objects and sequential occurrences, with macho tools like a hammer, a hacksaw, a drill, a hot glue gun and large scissors, Jesse's building skills go back to his childhood days of spending time with his grandfather in their garage workshop.

During discussions with Sumakshi and visiting artist Avantika Bawa, Jesse was offered the suggestion of taking his sculptures outside into a busy street amidst the public and the landscape of Delhi, outside the safe confines of the gallery, confronting the many contradictions of the city.

Jesse made trips to Old Delhi markets and streets, observing the ways in which common people in India worked at problem solving - finding temporary "make-do" solutions to problems. Captured through his camera were images of a broken plastic chair held together with ropes and strings wrapped around every part of it and an old wooden switchboard with wires dangerously plugged into its sockets. We watched Jesse's process echoing this make-shift methodology and introduced him to the term *jugaad* during our discussions. His Kentucky upbringing helped him relate right away.

We also observed other elements from the chaos and humdrum of Delhi transferring onto his work. Metal pipes bent in curvy shapes loomed over neatly arranged rows of *dhoop*, while miniature prints of his abstract drawings



Process: *Swami Bondage, Weekend Query and the Night-Time Soak*
Wood, metal, plastic, wire, string, rope, styrofoam, cardboard
85" x 100" x 36"
2011







Detail view: *Swami Bondage, Weekend Query and the Night-Time Soak*
 Wood, metal, plastic, wire, string, rope, styrofoam, cardboard
 85" x 100" x 36"
 2011

hung like little ornaments in a marketplace – all seen through a crisscross of colorful electric wires resembling the actual patterns formed between the electricity poles, adorned by gestural lines of glossy hot glue tinted with colours that now sparkled under the bright gallery lights like elements of the rich, polished culture of the capital city - New Delhi.

The last week at the residency saw drastic shifts from a huge chariot-like rectangular form to its current orbital iteration along with considerations of whether it would be an installation or sculpture and how it would be relocated. Jesse had to work his way backwards into the by now complex jungle of objects, adding components that read *Lift Here* and *Yahan Pakadiye*. The sculpture now pronounced itself self-contained.

Jesse looks at each of his pieces created in different parts of the world as sculptures, which if brought together could pose as one big installation. "These are all punctuations in a large paragraph, or one page of a book." Jesse's creative process is personal and meditative, opening up multiple interpretations to the viewer. By layering things, Jesse accentuates the memory of the preceding act or thing, letting it linger on and merge with the one that is to follow. For example, the hot glue that formed rhythmic patterns could eventually fall on any part of the sculpture - creating a new texture; similarly if the fragile *dhoop* broke off, it could be placed again on another part of the sculpture, extending its layers. Is the sculpture then about unique moments and changes in time? Or is it a small performance telling us about the constructions of history? The exact time of the creative process of the sculpture then collapses, because the metamorphosis in each moment creates several presents.



The Pale Memory of Man (installation in 3 parts)
 commissioned by The Happy Lion Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, USA
 2008

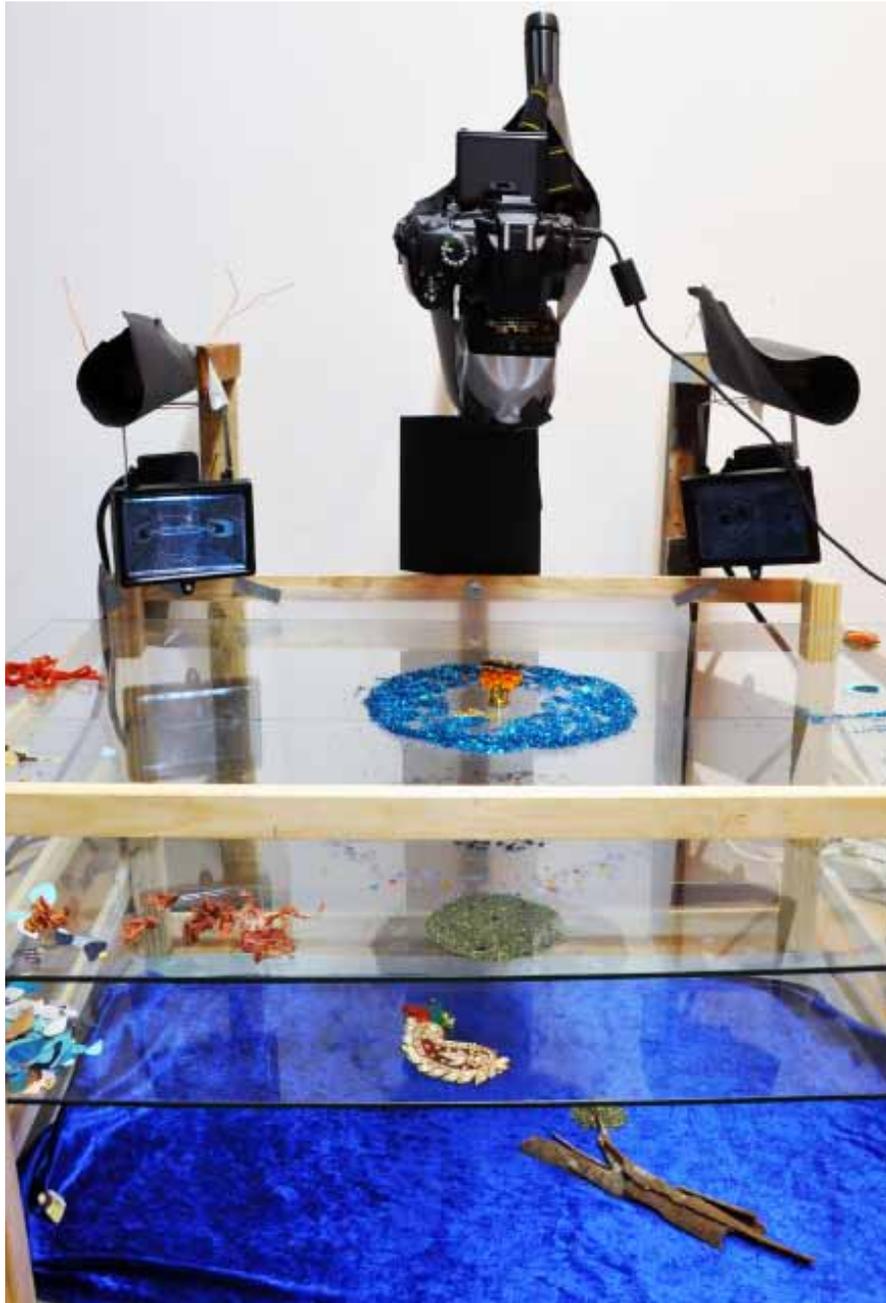
Colourful and richly patterned strips of sari borders lie neatly displayed at one end of a sideboard while a dog-eared cardboard box filled with shimmering *bindis* sits carefully at the opposite end. Bundles of multi-coloured pieces of fabric lie strewn across the floor, while stacks of old magazines rest clumsily in a corner. Among plastic packets of pungent smelling spices and pouches of dried lentils, are scattered bunches of glass bangles, four peacock feathers and an assortment of fresh flowers and leaves. Suspended prominently over a three-tiered rack of glass sheets is an SLR camera, clamped into place, supported by a scaffolding that also serves as a light stand. Welcome, to animation artist Kaoru Furuko's temporary studio at the WhyNot Place residency.

At the heart of Kaoru's art practice is the desire to graphically represent myths and folklore using materials that are intrinsic to the culture in which they are situated. Her captivating and engaging stop motion animations reveal a deep fascination with different cultures, their beliefs, and their practices. Incorporating locally available materials to illustrate popular fables, Kaoru creates complex visual stories that are embedded within a specific cultural context. The element of music, so critical to enhancing the narrative quality of Kaoru's animations, is also informed by the artist's keen awareness of the cultural milieu from which the stories emerge. The resulting beautifully collaged videos, while rooted in the specific, are imbued with an inherent visual and narrative appeal that transcends borders, making them universally accessible.

"I tried to read the Rig Veda but it was too big!" exclaimed Kaoru, as she excitedly spoke of producing a stop-motion animation on the theme of a creation myth for the residency. Prior to arriving in Delhi, and based on rudimentary research obtained off the internet, Kaoru prepared a fascinating storyboard that loosely referenced the cyclical nature of creation, as articulated in the Rig Veda. Her initial storyboard, with its rough sketches and pencilled in notes, revealed an almost intuitive knowledge, and surprisingly accurate, account of Vedic notions of cosmic evolution- as Sumakshi and I pointed out to a surprised Kaoru. Kaoru's initial cycle of creation began with a five pointed star nestled gently in the yolk of a golden egg. As the star expands, it creates waves that crash together to spark a chain reaction that produces jumping fish and fiery, volcanic mountains that morph into lush landscapes with trees and

Kaoru Furuko





serpents, before coming full circle and returning to the egg. Although inspired by the Vedic myth of creation, Kaoru asserts that her animation remains a more personal reflection on the idea of creation, and “the birth of a small world”.

Kaoru’s “small world” is composed of an assortment of materials sourced from multiple visits to the various local markets in Delhi. Repeated treks to Chawri Bazaar, Chandni Bazaar and the old spice market of Khari Baoli reaped bags full of discarded fabrics, aromatic spices and vibrant packets of *Holi* colour powder. Each visit to the market brought with it the addition of new materials to Kaoru’s ever-growing hoard of eclectic supplies. Isolating these objects, and viewing them with a purely formalistic eye, Kaoru combined these materials to create new forms. Traditional Kashmiri paisley motifs, cut from strips of fabrics, are transformed into small jumping fish; layers of shimmering glitter form angry, rolling seas of blue; ornate stone-studded *bindis* morph into tiny delicate birds, and a bright orange marigold flower becomes the nucleus of Kaoru’s small world, within a golden egg.





The egg as a symbol of life and rebirth is recognized in civilizations as far apart as Polynesia and China. Hindu mythology cites a crack on the shell of a gently rocking, golden egg for the birth of the world as we know it. Half the shell became the earth and the other half the sky. The inner membranes formed the mountain ranges and the outer membranes the clouds. The sinuous veins flowed as rivers and the bright yellow yolk became the sun. Keen to extend the symbolism of the egg within her work, Kaoru proposed a more literal referencing through the display of the animation within the circular yolk of a sculpted golden egg. The mirroring of the animation through the form in which it is contained meant that Kaoru had to reconstruct her entire storyboard for a circular format.



Storyboard sketches

According to Hindu mythology, the origin of all sounds, both music and language, rests in the sacred unstruck sound of 'Om' or 'Aum'. It represents not only the sound of origination but, in its purest intonation, transcends all configurations of time. The past, present and future are all combined in this one sound. Acknowledging the importance of sound and its relationship to the Vedic myth of creation, made it a critical component of Kaoru's artwork. Furthermore, the thought was that the accompanying soundtrack would ground the animation, breaking the hypnotic and almost trance-like quality of these magical moving images and preventing it from becoming too indulgent. Upon Sumakshi's suggestion and request, Rajati Bakshi – a trained Hindustani classical singer – was invited to the gallery and introduced to Kaoru. Rajati agreed to compose a musical piece that would respond to the ethos of Kaoru's animation, while simultaneously locating the work within a definite cultural framework.

As the residency draws to a close, Kaoru begins to focus on the presentation of the piece. The overall merit of the work lies in its ability to interweave the audio and visual with the surrounding space. Intending to create an intimate



viewing space that would encourage a more personal engagement between the viewer and the work, Kaoru envisions a darkened room with a single spotlight focussed directly on her animated golden egg. As Kaoru's small world evolves, only to dissolve, before re-emerging again, the viewer is left contemplating their own existence within a world of illusion.







Animation still: *The Golden Egg*
Stop motion animation
2011

Rajorshi Ghosh

A flock of black birds circle ominously above the old city skyline of Delhi while two elevators travel endlessly in opposite directions in Ghosh's recently completed video works created for the WhyNot Place residency. These works can be seen as an extension of the artist's ongoing research into ideas of perception, and their association with the creation of meaning. Through the removal and re-introduction of a situational context within which to view the work, Rajorshi creates experiences that challenge our perceptions of the seemingly mundane. In his two video works completed for the residency, the playful is made threatening and the nostalgic is made anxious.

Captivated by the possibilities of interpretation presented by a chance encounter with a man feeding birds near old Delhi's famous Jama Masjid, Rajorshi began to document this interaction, focusing solely on the birds, deliberately choosing to omit the man's role in the ensuing activity. The removal of the original situational context, through the exclusion of the man, results in a large black and white digitally altered video projection of kites and crows that hover, seemingly threateningly, above the structure of the old mosque. The video with its pregnant air of suspense and an undercurrent of imminent terror is reminiscent of Alfred Hitchcock's famous 1963 horror film, 'The Birds'. The almost cinematic effect created by Rajorshi's birds as they turn and wheel and climb and dive, forming a swirling veil of black feathers, seems to engulf the entire landscape, casting it in a shadow of darkness. Rajorshi's decision to edit the video so as to increase the number of birds visible in a given frame, coupled with the viewer's inability to witness or understand the cause for the predatory movement of these birds, adds to the drama of the overall piece. Ambient street sounds, recorded in-situ, serve as the soundtrack to Rajorshi's sinister video. As the birds continue to circle overhead, the piercing wail of sirens filters in, before eventually fading away, adding to the tension of an already tense landscape. The flight patterns of the birds appear to reflect the rhythm and mood of the accompanying sounds; flying more aggressively when paired with the high-pitched screams of the ambulance. It is interesting to note that the whine of sirens in truth belonged to an innocuous ambulance, merely trying to weave its way in and out of traffic. The combination of the birds and ambulance sirens, however, dramatically alters the mood of the piece, suffusing it with a sense of impending doom. Through the nature of its presentation, Rajorshi transforms the landscape of old Delhi, and





the playful act of feeding birds, into an environment rife with the threat of dread and destruction.

This sense of fear and trepidation filters through into another work created by the artist while at the residency. Referencing the well-known Indian 'SHIP' matchbox, Rajorshi fashioned a near four foot tall matchbox out of wood and automobile paint. Its long and persistent presence within the Indian market makes the 'SHIP' matchbox an easily identifiable commodity, and one that is often looked upon with a touch of nostalgia. The original 'SHIP' matchbox,

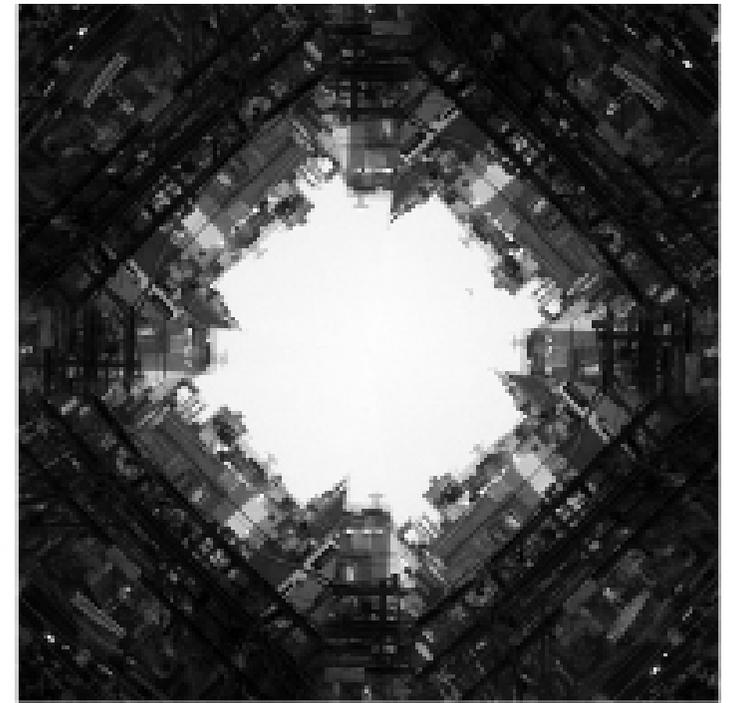
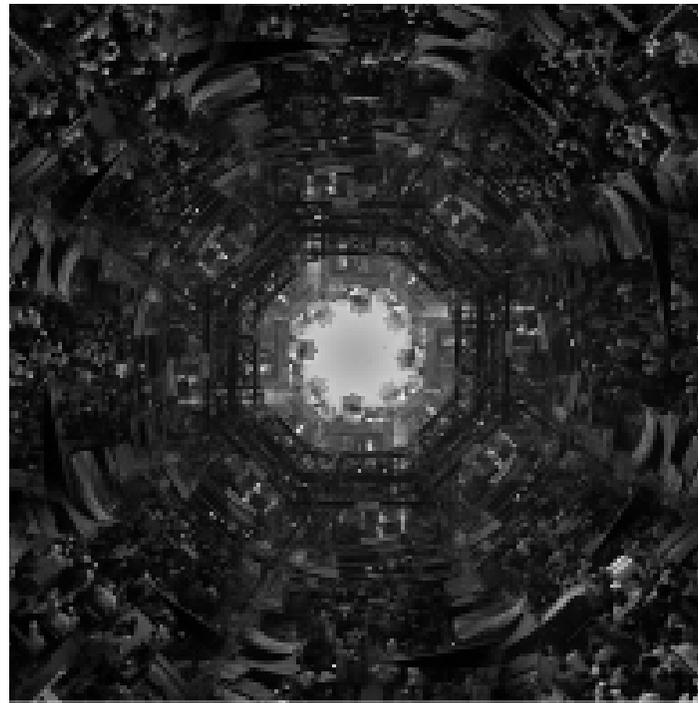
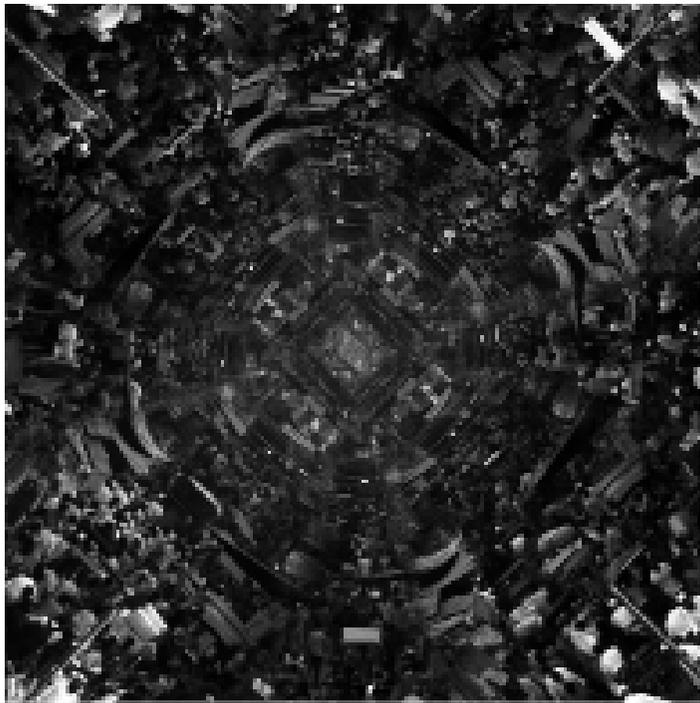
with its dark reddish-pink background and white text, is characterized by a silhouette of an old three-masted sailing ship printed prominently across its front cover, along with a single quiz question printed on the reverse. Upon a cursory glance, it appears as though Rajorshi's oversized matchbox is a perfect replica of its referent, down to the last detail of the quiz section and the manufacturing details printed on the back. The quiz question on Rajorshi's wooden matchbox reads: 'How many warships were sent from the US for President Obama's visit to India? Answer: Thirty-four'. Upon a closer look, however, one notices that the image of the classic tall ship has been replaced



Line Opening Corner
Site specific video installation
10 min. loop
2008

Exercise in Framing (Religare Art)
Site specific video installation
10 min. loop
2011





with a black silhouette of a sleek, modern warship. Suddenly, the striking magnification of the object's size and the simplicity of the printed question take on greater significance. The direct correlation between the seemingly harmless question and the outline of a modern warship, allow for multiple readings into issues of security and threat. The tenderness of the nostalgic is challenged by the harshness of the contemporary. A sense of unease, as evoked by Rajorshi's haunting video of birds, begins to creep into his oversized 'SHIP' matchbox.

The substitution of an old classic ship with a straight-lined contemporary warship also allows for a parallel dialogue on the concept of time. Rajorshi links the past and the present through the replacement of the old schooner with a modern-day version of its former self. This play with objects as symbols of a past is beautifully communicated in Rajorshi's nostalgia-filled elevator video works completed for the residency.

A sense of wistful longing permeates these mesmerizing videos of elevators as they ascend and descend in virtual perpetuity. Inspired by a visit to his father's old workplace, Rajorshi was drawn to the beauty of the open-cage elevator that plied the floors of his father's Government-styled office building

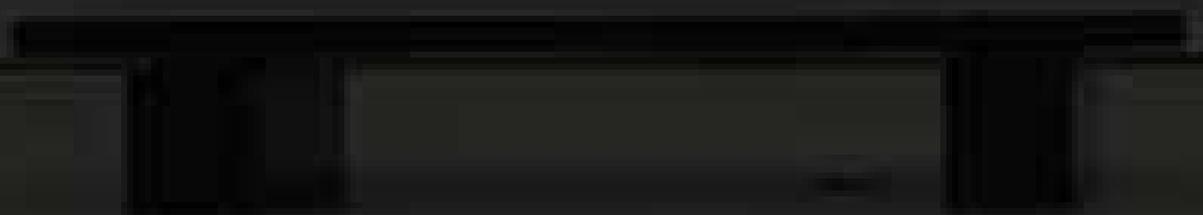
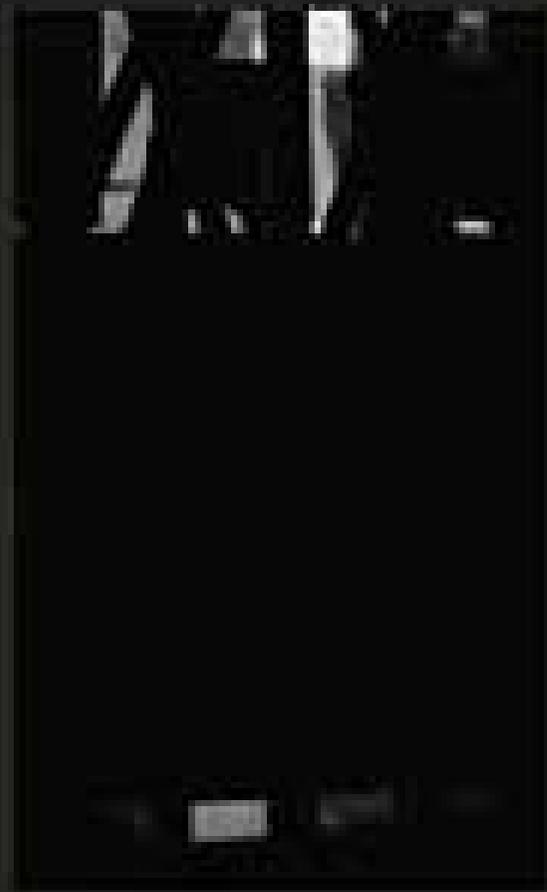
in Kolkata. The nostalgia assigned to these now obsolete cast-iron machines, made the open-cage elevator the perfect link through which Rajorshi could reference a common past. An on-going search for Kolkata's remaining open-cage elevators began. Documenting his rides from within ten different elevator cars, Rajorshi edited the footage to create two seamlessly streamed looped videos of elevators travelling in opposite directions. Snippets of the outside world flicker through the grill doors of these grand old elevators as they ascend and descend in an endless loop, leading nowhere. As the elevator travels, the viewer is offered glimpses of *paan*-stained stairwells that fade to scenes of abandoned government offices, and of torn political posters, pasted on peeling walls, that dissolve into fleeting views of the Kolkata skyline. From time-to-time, the heavy hum of the elevator fan is punctured with the sounds of car horns and muffled human voices. It is only upon a closer study of the work, however, that one begins to notice that as the images change, so do the grill doors. As one elevator cage is replaced with another and yet another, a sense of entrapment begins to set in. The viewer appears confined to a never-ending ride that has no beginning and no end. A glorious machine that is responsible for transporting people from point to point is now transformed into a prison of eternal internment.

From the innocence of feeding birds, to the memorializing of old matchboxes and elevators, Rajorshi's works create charged environments in which the perception of the seemingly mundane has been transformed by the removal or distortion of the original situational context. These banal objects and actions, devoid of their original setting, create strained environments in which the playful is made threatening and the nostalgic is made oppressive.



Current page:
Empire Egypt
Light box, archival duratrans print
40" x 30" x 5"
2011

Next page:
Elevators (A,B,C,D, 1,2)
Single channel videos, installation view
2010-2011





Luciana Lyrio Junqueira

Syringe in hand, Luciana carefully examines the sheet of paper lying stiffly on the ground beside her. Slowly she leans forward and with a caring practiced hand injects the paper with 50 ml. of vermillion red. The pigment seeps into the veins of the paper, staining it bright red. Using the syringe as a paint brush, Luciana creates intricate ‘tapestries’ of curvilinear forms inspired by motifs of Indian embroidery, that spread across the entire surface of the paper. The elegance of these patterns is subverted by the forceful dripping of paint to create the appearance of a web of blood capillaries. Luciana Lyrio Junqueira is now both artist and caregiver.

The body as a site of investigation into issues of gender and power has been at the heart of Luciana’s art practice. Through direct and indirect references to the human body, Luciana seeks to articulate a desire to “cure and heal the gender imbalance” that exists in contemporary society. Although there is a strong feminine narrative to Luciana’s art, her practice is not driven by a feminist agenda. Instead, her works appear as a supplication for the restoration of a social equilibrium expressed through tender re-enactments of culturally defined, women-oriented tasks, as in her performances ‘Collection of Morning Dew’ and ‘The Lucidity is White’. In ‘Collection of Morning Dew’ Luciana assumed the role of a traditional Chilean woman performing a culture specific task of wringing out thin sheets of netting, that had been left in fields overnight to trap the morning dew, which is then offered to people to drink as a healing tonic. By presenting the potable dew as an elixir, Luciana hoped to cure society of its social ailments. In a similar vein, Luciana played with notions of nursing and resuscitation in ‘The Lucidity is White’, where she tenderly anointed the barks of large heavy trees with dew before bandaging them in white gauze. These generous deeds of giving can perhaps be explained as an extension of the artist’s professional training as a veterinarian – a profession she rejected in favour of art at the age of twenty-eight – that continues to find resonance in her art practice.

Luciana was determined that her project for the WhyNot Place residency be firmly situated within an Indian context. In her first mentoring session with Sumakshi, Luciana excitedly flipped through the pages of a book on Indian embroidery, pointing out patterns and floral motifs that referenced both male and female sex organs that she hoped to incorporate into her large-scale drawings. Embroidery seemed but a natural starting point for Luciana, as it





referenced a primarily gender specific vocation, while simultaneously referring back to notions of healing and mending, as suggested through the simple act of stitching. Moreover, the organic nature of these embroidered patterns and forms, and their allusion to male and female organs of reproduction further cemented Luciana's resolve to work with this artform.

In contrast to her vibrant and fluid paint injected 'tapestries' of bright red patterns, Luciana simultaneously began working on a large monochromatic pencil drawing. Referencing patterns selected from her book on Indian embroidery, Luciana spent hours hunched over her work table, creating detailed drawings of floral motifs that alluded to the female body. These two very different and contrasting styles of working are also to be seen as gender specific. For Luciana, while her delicate drawings represent her more feminine and introverted side, her forceful, ink infused paintings are manifestations of her more extroverted masculine persona.

But it was in her performance conceptualized for the residency that all these various factors of gender, healing, embroidery, and the Indian cultural context came together most sublimely. According to Luciana, the performance was inspired by the notion of healing seen through a cycle of giving and receiving. Motivated by an early visit to the local Mehrauli flower market, and a tour of the Mehrauli Archaeological Park, Luciana began conceptualizing a piece using fresh flowers and a 16th century monument as a backdrop. While watching the local flower sellers, almost intuitively, string marigold after marigold into garlands of gold, Luciana was amazed at how this quiet act of threading flowers mirrored her own art practice. For Luciana, the creation of these garlands represented the perfect blend of masculinity and femininity, combining the femininity of the flower with the masculinity of the needle.

As communicated by the artist, the performance would involve her sitting in the middle of a small pillared domed pagoda dressed in white, with heaps of marigold flowers placed in the four corners of the corresponding space, patiently stringing flower after flower to create multiple garlands to be



Adjacent page top:
Para Dizer Que Nao Faiei pas Flores
Graphite on rice paper
39" x 108"
2011

Adjacent page bottom:
Untitled
Acrylic on paper
56" x 109"
2011

Detail:
Para Dizer Que Nao Faiei pas Flores
Graphite on rice paper
39" x 108"
2011



displayed along the floor of the performance area. Following discussions with Sumakshi, Luciana decided to sustain the piled petals through the insertion of a saline solution drip to amplify the role of healing, subtly suggested through the suturing of flowers. What Luciana takes from the medically fortified flowers, she gives back in the form of garlands. Once again Luciana plays the role of medical practitioner and artist.

Although, it is hard to separate the insidious violence inherent to the act of piercing a flower, for Luciana, however, the emphasis is more on the stitching together of two forms to create a third. The suggested harshness is seen as a necessity of sorts. To quote the artist, “it is a necessary pain involved in the creation of something beautiful.” The use of a needle as a gentle mender of things, and in its more invasive avatar as a medical implement, also plays into Luciana’s vocabulary of gender dynamics, with the former being representative of the feminine and the latter of the masculine.

At the time of writing this essay, Luciana’s performance has yet to take place. Her main concerns remain the identification of a secluded dome structure within the Mehrauli Archaeological Park and the unpredictable nature of a Delhi monsoon. As the days roll by and materials for the performance are acquired, we can only hope for the weather gods to heed the plea of a young woman in search of gender equality.







Performance stills: *Para Dizer Que Nao Faiei pas Flores*

There's a wall at the back of the Religare Art gallery with two doors painted bright red. Do they open? Where do they lead? Should one open them? Curiosity, bewilderment, doubt, excitement, estrangement and expectations of lurking danger propel one towards them. Upon approaching them, they reveal themselves to be a rich, laborious construct of layer upon layer of knotted red fabric strips, featuring white words shyly embroidered by several hands in different languages.

"Joy", "Please stop my neighbor from buying expensive things", "World Peace", "An apartment in Delhi", "My father's smile", "May I get married to Pooja", "Good Sex", "No terrorism" – what do these phrases have in common? What we have walked into is a jumbled up cumulative map of Delhi's secret prayers, casual wishes and quotidian desires. Opening up Baroda-based Soghra Khurasani's red doors is an overwhelming encounter with several hundreds of people at once: not personalities with faces and names, but a much more intimate introduction to the endless engagement with aspirations of every variety: terse, insipid, sensitive, thoughtful, expansive, personal, humourous, clichéd, unpredictable and poignant. Literally drowned in the luscious red voices of Delhi's citizens within the approximately five by five by seven foot room that one walks into, one is simultaneously pulled, repelled, amused and transported to a quietly contemplative state, as subjective encounters with (some) bizarre and (other) all too familiar desires begin. Which of these desires have been ours already and which will be in the future? The cloth of course references the *mannat* or prayer that devotees ask of God in mosques and temples, often following the act by firmly knotting a thread or a strip of fabric (usually red) to a wall-like structure or a tree.

Being a printmaker, Soghra's initial proposal was to create large-scale wood cut prints. But within the first week of the residency her ideas expanded to include this installation project, along the lines of a simpler version that she had earlier created titled 'Do This, Do That' referencing didactic instruction imposed by religious institutions. Soghra proposed creating a door-frame mounted on a wall with small pieces of red cloth tied on a wire-mesh structure within.

Sumakshi teased out Soghra's conceptual interests in this piece through several questions and conversations. What did it mean to encounter a door that did not lead anywhere? What were Soghra's hopes for what viewers would walk away with? Soghra spoke of attending ceremonies in mosques with her

Soghra Khurasani



family and her observations of quickly transforming human behavior. How conversations on mundane, material matters would halt abruptly as people entered the sacred space and would start up as abruptly after the prayer ceremony. In fact Soghra has recorded the “after prayer” conversations and as of now is discussing the possibility of this being the sound component to her installation. Discussions with Sumakshi led to the idea of creating an immersive environment instead of a tease or symbolic encounter with an object like a door. In fact Sumakshi recommended that Soghra research the trajectory of this cloth from material to signifier (from cotton fields, to thread, to where and how it gets woven, dyed, sold, cut up, sold again as prayer flags and then ultimately imbued with reverent prayer and offered to the divine) to generate a more expansive installation culminating in this room as an analogy to the viewer/devotee’s transformative journey. She also encouraged Soghra to consider the specific theme of the residency and if these cloth strips could literally become containers for the prayers and wishes of the public “Here, Now” wanting to be “Then, There” and finding themselves “Here Again”.

The artist along with Sitara and Kriti (the residency interns) visited malls, *Dilli Haat*, the Religare cafeteria, open street markets and several other public places to collect prayers and wishes from people. While some participants, intrigued by the idea, voluntarily took time to stitch their prayers into the fabric strips, others hesitated to reveal personal thoughts to strangers. Still others, pressed

for time, wrote their prayers on the cloth or paper leaving the stitching process to be completed by Soghra (much to Soghra’s initial consternation, Sumakshi pointed out the material to concept integration through stitching as opposed to writing). Once the prayers were collected, everyone - fellow residency artists, the interns, Religare staff, and the mentor - got involved in the stitching process, generating a strong sense of community. Soghra started photo documenting each and every piece of prayer – which will find its way into a video projected in the room.

In the meantime Soghra was working on another project involving portraits, photography and wood cut prints. Forms of blood cells, rose petals, clouds, smoke, dark shades of red, brown and black have been the recurring vocabulary in Soghra’s prints characterized by intricate detail and repeating units. During the residency she was introduced to the works of Shazia Sikander, Bharti Kher and several other lesser known artists. Soghra loved to venture out of the gallery, interacting with unknown locals and discovering nuances of the city. Her sense of humour raised its quirky head as she asked random citizens to don a pair of black glasses (usually worn by the visually impaired), holding a flower and posing in the classic Mughal miniature portrait style of the Shah Jahan period. Surprisingly, she encountered a number of people who wanted to pose with equipment and uniforms that would reveal their professional identity in the photographs, collapsing a



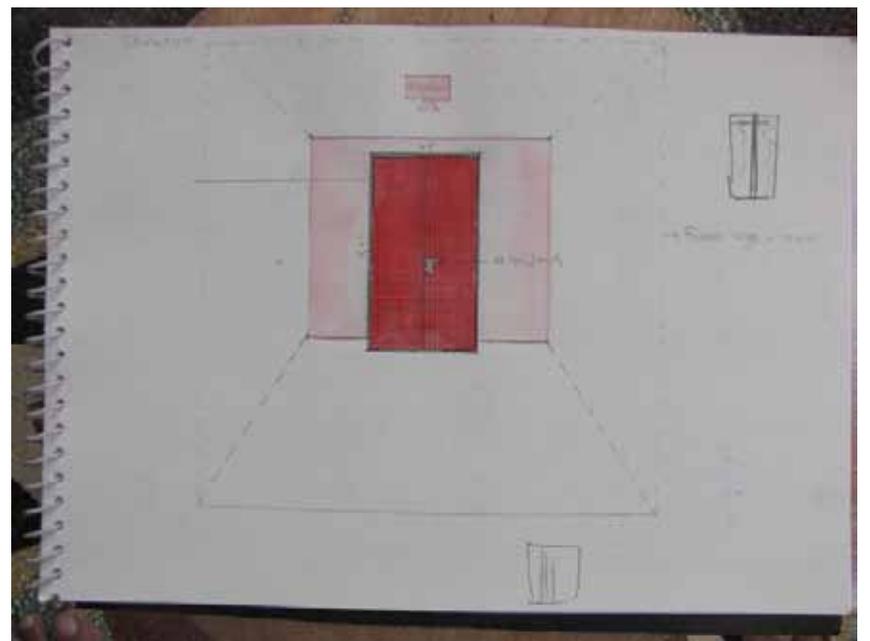
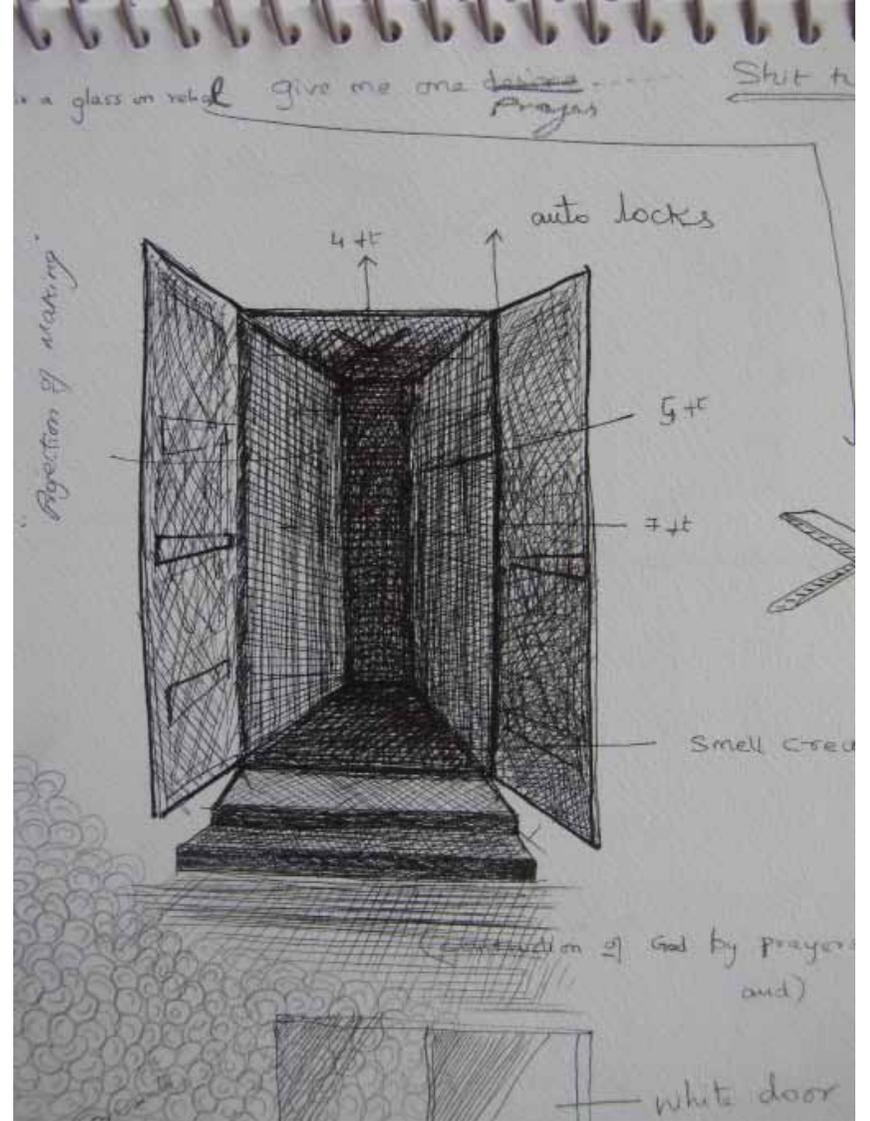
grandiose kingly past with a matter of fact, service-class present. Soghra had to decide how much information these portraits would reveal, eventually erasing backgrounds and retaining just the posed character, the flower and the aforementioned chosen object. Her idea of creating oval window mounts decorated with miniature designs in woodcut was eventually put on hold to further investigate its creative and conceptual potential. During a studio visit, artist Avantika Bawa expressed interest in these photographs with white backgrounds suggesting that Soghra simply display just the set of photographs without imposing woodcut techniques upon them.

Against a backdrop of corporate offices and shopping malls, Soghra's "prayer room" can be read as an exposé of excess consumerism, simple needs and luxurious fantasies that form the surface of our everyday lives and struggles. It functions as a microcosmic slice of Delhi, accessing the social through the spiritual and through the psychology of desire. Unlike certain religious institutions, these doors seem accessible to all, playing with the politics of entry. Of course, one soon reflects that the actual gallery door has its own set of rules for who enters this white cube space and from that point, wonders if there is any door in the world devoid of a frame of inclusion and exclusion.











Adjacent page:
Installation and process view: *Do This Do That*
2010

Current page:
Untitled
Woodcut print
44" x 44"
2011

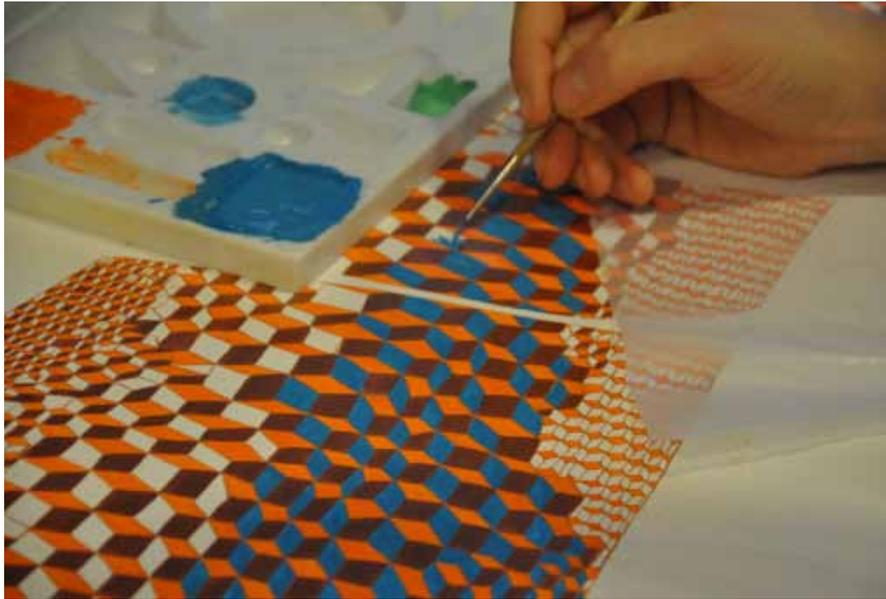
Hybrid forms with gnarled twisted appendages animatedly interact with each other to create elaborate narratives that unfold in Isabel Rock's fantastical drawings produced at the WhyNot Place residency. A construct of the artist's personal visual lexicon, these delicately delineated half-animal half-human forms partake in what appears to be a frenzied act of feeding and consumption. These beguiling characters with their sly smiles and sharp darting eyes have long resided within Isabel's mind, eking out an existence in excited anticipation of that desirable moment, when the artist puts pen to paper and they can spill out into the drawing.

Isabel's characters dwell in a world parallel to the reality of our own, where talking animals and monkey gondoliers engage in a critique of a contemporary society obsessed with notions of consumerism and the "need to feed off each other". Wonderfully peculiar, these distorted beings serve as metaphors for human relationships. Their seemingly playful gestures and smiling faces belie a darkness of character that festers within. Characterized by an element of the fantastical, Isabel's drawings reveal a deep interest in the subverted violence embedded in fairytales and folklore, that frequently involve characters being "eaten by wolves". In Isabel's drawings, animal-like forms emerge from other forms, weaving complex symbiotic relationships that are governed by a primal need to consume. The protagonists in the drawings are simultaneously both prey and predator. In their greed, they clamber over each other forming, what can best be described as, precariously balanced pyramids of hybrid forms. For Isabel, the fragility of their support systems is indicative of the vulnerabilities of a frenetic consumerist society.

These disturbing acts of cannibalism and aggression are tempered with humour, infusing the drawings with a playful edginess that engages the viewer. Cautious not to let these drawings slip into the realm of the absurd, Isabel reigns in the humour, providing the perfect blend of wit and critique. One is tempted to view these works through the prism of 'nonsense verse', made popular by writers like Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll and Roald Dahl. Isabel's incorporation of humour and parody to construct imaginary worlds, where strange characters partake in bizarre activities in an attempt to critique the socio-cultural attitudes of contemporary society, can almost be seen as the visual manifestations of the writings of Carroll and Dahl. In an early drawing created at the WhyNot Place residency, Isabel portrays a grinning monkey

Isabel Rock



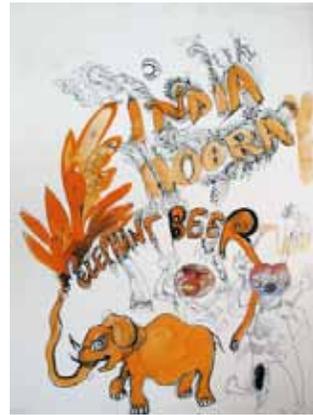


gondolier, balancing a lopsided over-sized diamond-shaped crown on the top of his head, while attempting to steer a golden banana gondola with the aid of a long, twig-like oar. The comical incongruity of the composition slowly reveals a more critical commentary on issues of power, as symbolized by the lofty crown, and the frailty of the structures that support it. The strangeness of the composition is as inviting as the toothy grin of the monkey is disturbing.

Isabel's initial proposal for the residency involved the creation of a series of drawings that would reference the concept of an Indian fairground or *mela*. The idea of a fairground, replete with thrill rides, sideshows and side stalls proffered Isabel with sufficient food for thought. Relying on experiences during her stay in New Delhi, Isabel began documenting these encounters in her drawings. A pile of talking green limes detailed with exaggerated facial features began to emerge in one drawing. In another work, a bird-headed balloon seller presented the viewer with a pink balloon decorated with a number of three-legged carousel horses that extended beyond the skin of the balloon. Isabel's personal vision of a Delhi fairground seemed to be coming alive.

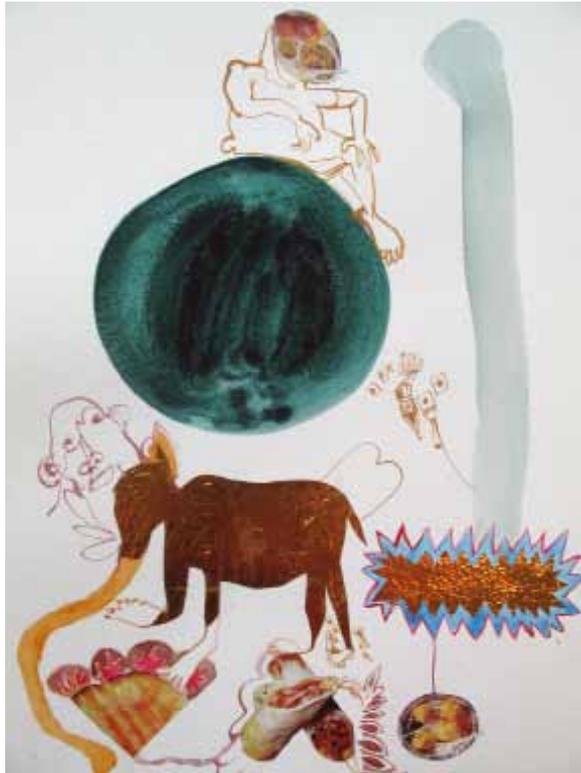


Sir Beachamp Seymour
Mixed media on paper



A selection of sketches produced at the WhyNot Place residency 2011





Breaking with her practice of finishing a drawing before moving to the next, Isabel simultaneously began working on multiple works, resting them often only to revisit them later on. While her freshly illustrated mutant forms adjusted to their new environment, Isabel returned to her sketchbook to conceive of other characters and ideas that could be incorporated into her large-scale artworks. Upon Sumakshi's recommendation to make her forms "less precious", Isabel began experimenting with the idea of loosening her drawings through messier acts of mark making, and limiting the number of characters in a single artwork.

Curious little sketches that fused bright colourful splotches of paint, finely inked drawings, text and elements of decoupage began to emerge. In one work, animals and birds fashioned out of golden chocolate wrappers seem to engage with a flabby rotund male form whose face has been replaced with an image of a plate of *pav bhaji*, while in another, a bright orange elephant,

spewing flowers from his trunk, promotes a new beverage with the words, "India Hooraa...Elephant Beer". The drama that is so central to Isabel's drawings is heightened and beautifully articulated in these small sketches, through a combination of delicately drawn lines and the introduction of bright splashes of ink and gouache.

As the residency rolls into its final week, and at the time of writing this essay, Isabel remains unsure whether the theme of a Delhi *mela* is still relevant to the drawings, or if she will create a Delhi-centric character that weaves in and out of the works produced at the Religare Art gallery. But fear not, as we remain assured of a few things, including a magical journey into a land where reality is subverted, where the beautiful is rendered grotesque, and where the inspiration for it all stems from our beloved city of Delhi – its "plants, tress, horses [and] yellow dung".





Bird Man
Mixed media on paper



Banana Gondoliers
Pen, ink, acrylic and watercolour on paper
40" x 28"
2011

Cristina Saez

It was London-based Cristina Saez's first time in India and she was always ready to step out of the gallery studio space and explore. With the eyes of a photographer interested in Camera Obscura, she developed a knack for processing the visual environment upside down. The Camera Obscura is an optical device that projects an image of its surroundings on a screen. The device consists of a box or room with a hole on one side. Light reflected from an external scene passes through the hole and strikes a surface inside where it is reproduced, upside-down, but with color and perspective preserved.

Cristina's initial proposal was to create temporary Camera Obscura installations at various locations around the city – sites that were in transition, abandoned or inhabited, about to be transformed or to disappear, sites that function as a reflection on/of the city of Delhi, where past and future overlap with the present. Capturing the transformation of day into night within the cityscape was also an area of interest that Cristina wanted to explore photographically. Superimposing the dynamic present of the exterior world upon the cumulative histories collected by an interior space, her Camera Obscura installations orchestrate a collapse of spaces – 'here' and 'there'-simultaneously.

Comfortable being the 'observer' behind the lens - Cristina became subject to the gaze in Delhi. Anywhere she looked, she was already being watched by men and women fascinated by the colour of her skin. Upon Sumakshi's suggestion, she began to reverse the power dynamic of this situation and started photographing these gazes thus observing the observer. By the end of her journey Cristina had collected hundreds of photos of 'all the men that stared at me'.

Cristina's photographic and installation based art practice has constantly re-interpreted urban spaces and gotten increasingly conscious of viewer interaction with it. For example, in an earlier body of work with medium format photographs, she shot extreme close-ups of miniscule weeds and plants located in their out of focus, urban settings which generated illusions of large landscapes. Another series of large format photographs depicting trees in a forest almost seemed to invite the viewers into the frame through their sheer scale, the below eye-level vantage point, their placement on the gallery walls and the play of natural light within the image. Cristina's works teeter on the edge of the outside and the inside of the image and the viewer's





entry into it (either physical as in the case of the Camera Obscura installations or implied as in the projects above), often blurring boundaries between the viewer and the subject.

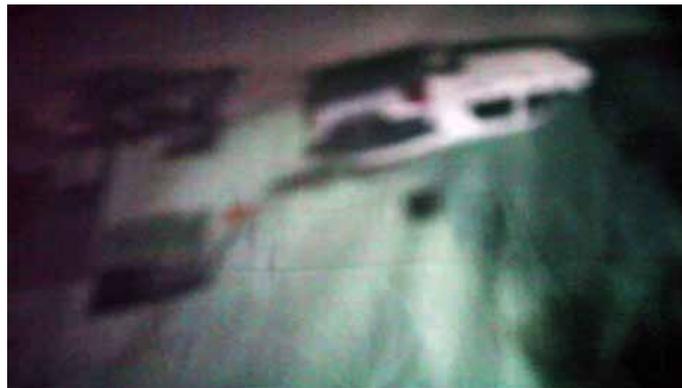
Logistical problems of creating Camera Obscuras in public places led Cristina to ideate on a Camera Obscura room within the gallery. However, brainstorming with Sumakshi initiated ideas of giving the Camera Obscura a more innovative, participatory and experiential form that would include more aspects of the city. Citing the example of the Art Taxi in London (a travelling version of a gallery where passengers hailing a particular cab get to experience installations/sound pieces/video art while travelling to their destination), Sumakshi suggested the idea of creating a Camera Obscura in the yellow-green auto rickshaw, or even better a cycle rickshaw (that anyone could ride). This would allow passengers to travel through the city in the commonly seen vehicle, sitting inside the Camera Obscura room, isolated from the 'gaze' of the surrounding city, while simultaneously being able to watch the outside world upside down. The hunt for a cycle rickshaw began and ended successfully two days later.



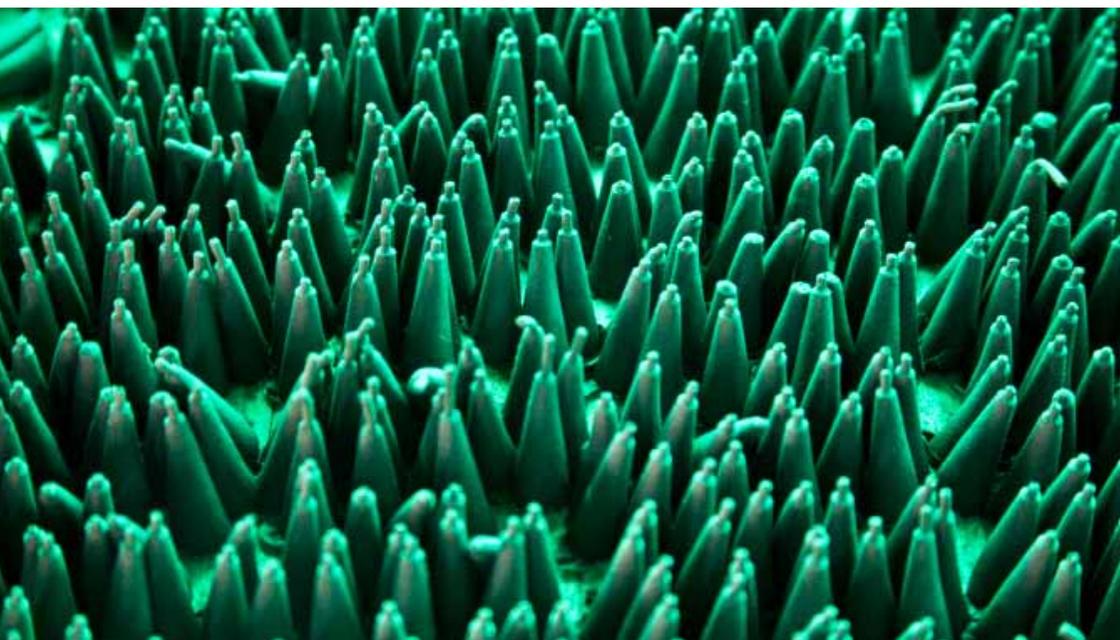
Cristina's cycle rickshaw, seen circling around the buildings, became an art process, not just an art object. Once one is inside, wrapped in darkness that gradually gives way to a 360 degree, upside down view of the outside world, one experiences a sense of surprise followed by intrigue: an unexpected journey far from the everyday mundane. But what kind of a psychological effect does this experience induce? This cycle rickshaw makes it possible to immerse oneself in past time as images of spaces and events already passed by dance around the passenger. The process and idea of a rickshaw journey has now morphed from focusing on the destination to being absorbed in the present while constantly being made aware of the immediate past.

In the chaos of an urban metropolis, the time it takes to travel to and from one's everyday destination is often a personal space of isolation, contemplation or relaxation. What happens then, when the visuals made present by the Camera Obscura intervene into this personal space?

Another one of Cristina's proposals for the residency was to create a video piece featuring sounds and voices from the city. This idea transformed into a seven-channel video loop after her visit to an incense factory with fellow



Examples of external views projected within Cristina's Camera Obscura rickshaw



residency artist Jesse Bercowetz. Abstract yet narrative, the video shows close up images of machinery parts in motion, raw material being prepared for some kind of production cycle, the rhythmic, repetitive, gestures made by the hands of men and women at work, along with the swishing, dripping, thumping and clicking sounds created by machines. The seven channels begin and end at different times creating a carefully orchestrated symphony of rhythms and disruptions.

It took weeks for Cristina to generate the final video, with the daunting task of selecting a few visuals from the thousands that she had documented. As the bytes were painstakingly processed and edited, the conceptual and perceptual meanings started surfacing in abstract forms. The imagery in the seven-channel video began developing multiple levels of connections with each other

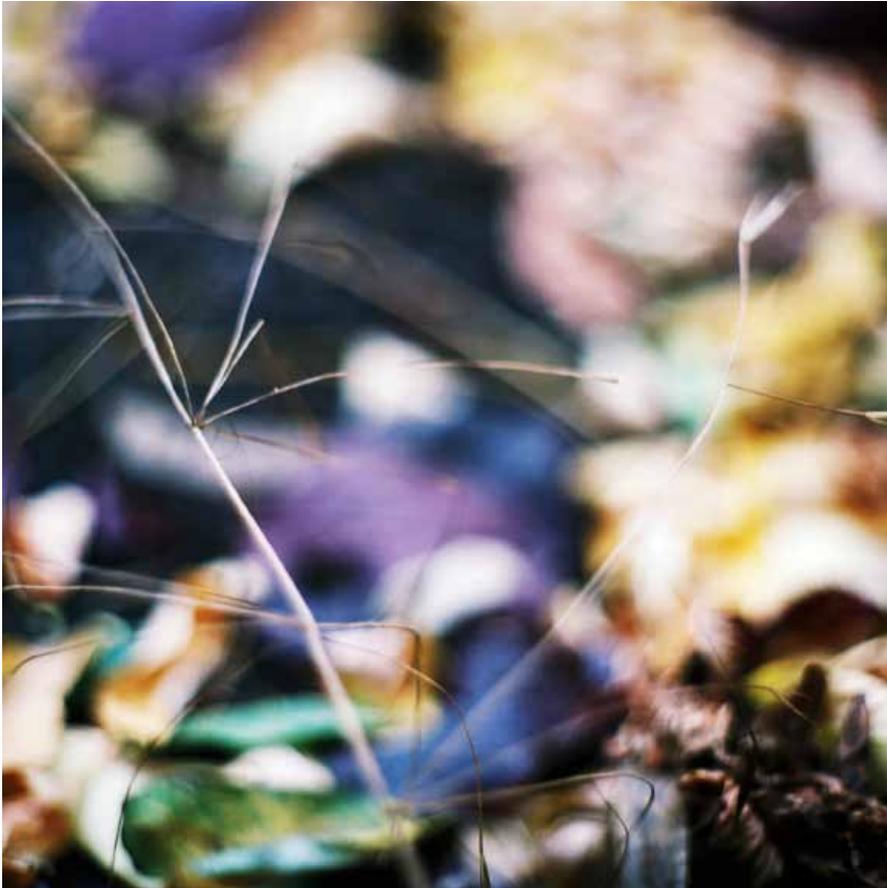


incorporating dialogues about production, human labour, the constancy of activities in the circle of life and the overload of information in contemporary culture. The languages of unfamiliarity and familiarity, juxtaposition, repetition, continuousness and interruption challenge a linear read of its content, expanding the ground for the viewer's interpretive capabilities.

Both of Cristina's artworks involve movement and processes that invoke phenomenological questions which ask the viewer to re-interpret their relationships to time and space and explore non-linear methodologies of digesting the environment in conjunction with our structured sense of the world.



Images from the artist's visit to the Hari Darshan Sevashram incense factory.





Untitled
Site specific installation
2010

Manali Shroff

“We’re all in a rat race.” Baroda-based Manali Shroff references this cliché in a manner far from the predictable stereotype. The micro observer in Manali subsumes her interests in idiosyncratic stories, probable fictions and everyday behavioral traits into paradoxical narratives and metaphysical discourses. These find voice both on canvas and in stop motion animation, spring-boarding off a more open-ended version of Baroda’s narrative painting style.

A synapse is a junction between two nerve cells, where one nerve almost touches another in order to transmit signals. To experience Manali’s work, one submits to a similar process, where the situations set up by her are like decoys, (almost connecting but not quite) while the slippery (but undeniably present) content is moving in the space between them. To be able to observe the making of these works was delightfully interesting, as much as it demanded keeping pace with the everyday changes and new plots that Manali introduced!

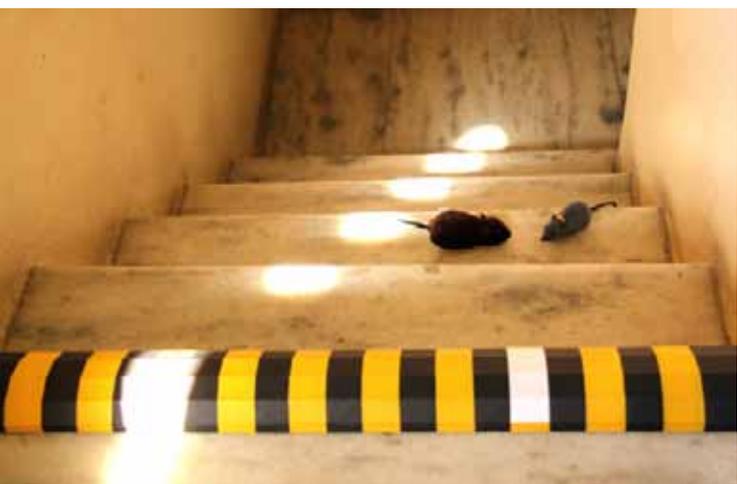
In both the paintings as well as the animations, the represented has elements of the absurd. The rules in Manali’s universe are different and so the viewer begins as a spectator standing outside the situation being represented. Manali then employs various tropes to slowly let the viewer in, to wander through this strange story: through humor, through enlarged scale of the projected animation so that one feels literally immersed in its environment, through addressing us with the direct gaze of her portrait, through the offering gesture of her extended hand, and by representing objects and spaces that bear familiar connotations of economic class and culture.

Manali had initially proposed to explore the diptych format for her oils on canvas. These later manifested into two singular images that dialogued with each other.

The canvases began with drawings of quirky characters and autobiographical content, which used the armature of her previous practice of taking references from humorous readings and her immediate surroundings. Day by day, layer over layer of colour appeared, obliterating the negative space, leaving hints of the bright orange, green and purple that had once covered the canvases, generating richly layered backdrops. Soon the formal concerns with colour, texture, light and space gave way to narrative schema bouncing in her playful brain, as allegories emerged through a self-portrait sitting prophet-like on the flush tank of an Indian style toilet holding out a rat to a murder



Citrus fruits for a pirate mind...
The dog is gone, the eggs are mine...
Oil on canvas
39" x 79"





(wedding processions) interspersed with pregnant silences. The camera follows our protagonist from the eye level of a rat, thus placing the viewer at the same scale as this tiny creature. The humble process often reveals itself answering the question, “How was this done?” as bits of masking tape are seen from time to time adhering our toy rat to various surfaces. The narrative is created by numerous still shots, each moment clicked one at a time and then combined in rapid sequence to simulate movement. The “whats” and “whys” are answered tangentially for the viewer as the rat keeps running frantically through these spaces without a break in this looping video defying the traditional narrative format of beginning, middle and end. Light, shadow, sound and chosen vantage points create the heightened drama of conflict and resolution, suspense and humour.

Each carefully measured moment, and each thoughtful addition to narrative, subverts Manali’s subject matter of mindless rushing and herd mentality. For Manali, repetition is anesthetizing as much as it is to evoke consciousness of our shifting, temporal relationship to the world and our superficial levels of exchange.

By the end of the third week, Manali was putting in the final touches to her video. Even before the video was finished, both Manali and Sumakshi started brainstorming on possible and seemingly impossible ways to display the video. Sumakshi talked of letting this projected rat run around the periphery of the gallery surfaces. They considered creating small sets, based on the spaces depicted in the animation, to display this video. Manali finally chose the simple





format of a large projection so as to elevate the position of the rat, in size and meaning and let the viewer feel as if they were immersed in the environments. Although Sumakshi and Avantika Bawa (a visiting artist, critic and curator) suggested the possibilities of added narratives, dis-junctures, locations, specificities and silences within the video, while retaining its subtle ease in viewing and digesting, Manali decided to stick to the understated narrative language of the metaphorical and the implicit.

Manali simultaneously worked on an even quirkier stop motion animation featuring 'bride/groom wanted' matrimonial advertisements taken from an actual newspaper, cut and rearranged to exaggerate the ridiculous nature of some of them. Her surrogate character (in the video) was hunting for the perfect match for her egg-laying dog (also seen in her painting). This will be displayed in a digital photo frame within a wall installation of shelves and niches that will contain the constructed trousseau and wedding gifts for the hypothetical dog couple.

Manali's works generate a parallel universe unto themselves complete with characters and narratives that (with surprising ease) move in and out of the paintings, the videos, potential performances (that Sumakshi encouraged Manali to explore as a venue for highlighting the absurd) and finally find rest in the installations. They stand witness to the critical transformative potential offered by creativity, leaving one to grapple with a debunked sense of reality while continually springing forth a stream of active meanings and associations.





*In the broad daylight,
When the world works...
Few fight - Hunger strikes,
Some sell and some lineup for fake kites...*
Oil on canvas
60" x 54"
2011

Gustavo Villegas Solis

They say people make places. Mexico-based Gustavo Villegas who visited India for the first time, for the WhyNot Place residency, showed more interest in the automobiles, clothes, faces and food. As soon as he landed at the Delhi airport, he was completely taken by the classic Ambassador car.

In the high decibel cacophony of Delhi's markets and roads, one often saw Gustavo with a camera glued to his eyes documenting the Ambassadors, the posh BMWs, the fuel-efficient Toyotas, buses, motorcycles, cycle rickshaws, auto-rickshaws and carts. The various modes of transportation used by the different strata of the society, captured through his camera lens, started becoming his "vehicles of communication" engaging with the dynamic socio-cultural nuances that crisscross through the complex cityscape of Delhi.

Cars, or to be precise, car crashes, have been Gustavo's subject matter for a few years now. In one early series of paintings on paper, one is confronted from afar by seemingly simple large images of crashed classic cars. Slowly, suspicion arises as one sees shadows cast behind the irregular edges of the drawings: Is the surface sculpted? Is it the painted image of a crashed car or is the crumpled car metal an effect created by actually crumpling the painted surface? A closer inspection reveals a three-dimensional form created by the warping of the paper on which the image of a whole car in mint condition has been painted. Immediately, questions regarding the artistic process arise: Was the image first painted and then the painted surface crushed or was it calculated to exist on the distorted three-dimensional planes of paper? It is a strange impulse to meticulously and schematically re-construct an event that, in reality, took just a violent fraction of a second to occur.

Once the surface structure reveals itself, the subject matter starts gaining precedence. Gustavo considers cars to be a "cultural representation of intricate realities and an important symbol of contemporary society" as well as "a metaphor for the fragility of human life."

Gustavo began with research on the comparative psychology of car crashes in various parts of the world. He conducted interactive projects with children aged 7-10 years in both, a private school in Mexico as well as the Salaam Balak Trust in Delhi, that adopts and educates children living on the streets of Delhi. Children were given toy cars to play with and asked to crash them. He also asked them to make drawings of car crashes. In Mexico the strength of the toys made them





impossible to destroy, while the drawing project resulted in several colourful, graphic and aggressive drawings of car accidents and dead victims. In Delhi destroying the poor quality toys was no problem for the children! But to his surprise, these young street children drew flowers instead and seemed perfectly content to use just one colour, even sharing that colour pencil with their friends. Sumakshi and Gustavo discussed not only the many cultural but also economic class variations that the project could address. For example, if the same project was given to private school students from high income backgrounds in Delhi (children with access to video games, Hollywood films and parents that were conscious of car brands; children that did not have to share their colour pencils with other students because of a lack of resources) the results would undoubtedly be different. Gustavo decided that he would need to conduct multiple workshops in different countries before he could culminate this project into an artwork.

His interest in cars and crashes was triggered by his visits to a junkyard close to his home in Mexico. Albeit interested in the forms and textures of metals, he



has never worked directly with the material – retaining a pre-disposition toward painting on paper and canvas. Delhi's multiplicity of landscape and highly charged environment compelled Gustavo to expand his paper investigations into a vast variety of media, images, references, methodologies and ideas. Through discussions with Sumakshi, Gustavo learnt about the socio-cultural structures woven into Delhi's fabric and how different papers and paper bags can bear connotations of social class similar to the different vehicle brands. She suggested that he start developing stronger relationships between the represented means of transport and the surface (found paper) that it would be painted on. Thus, paper and the different modes of transport in Delhi became the cornerstones of his artwork during the WhyNot Place residency.

Whereas his earlier series emerged from his inquiries into translating the transformative abilities of paper into the aesthetics of car accidents, his creative trajectory during the residency incited new expressions in sculpture, installation, photography and drawing.



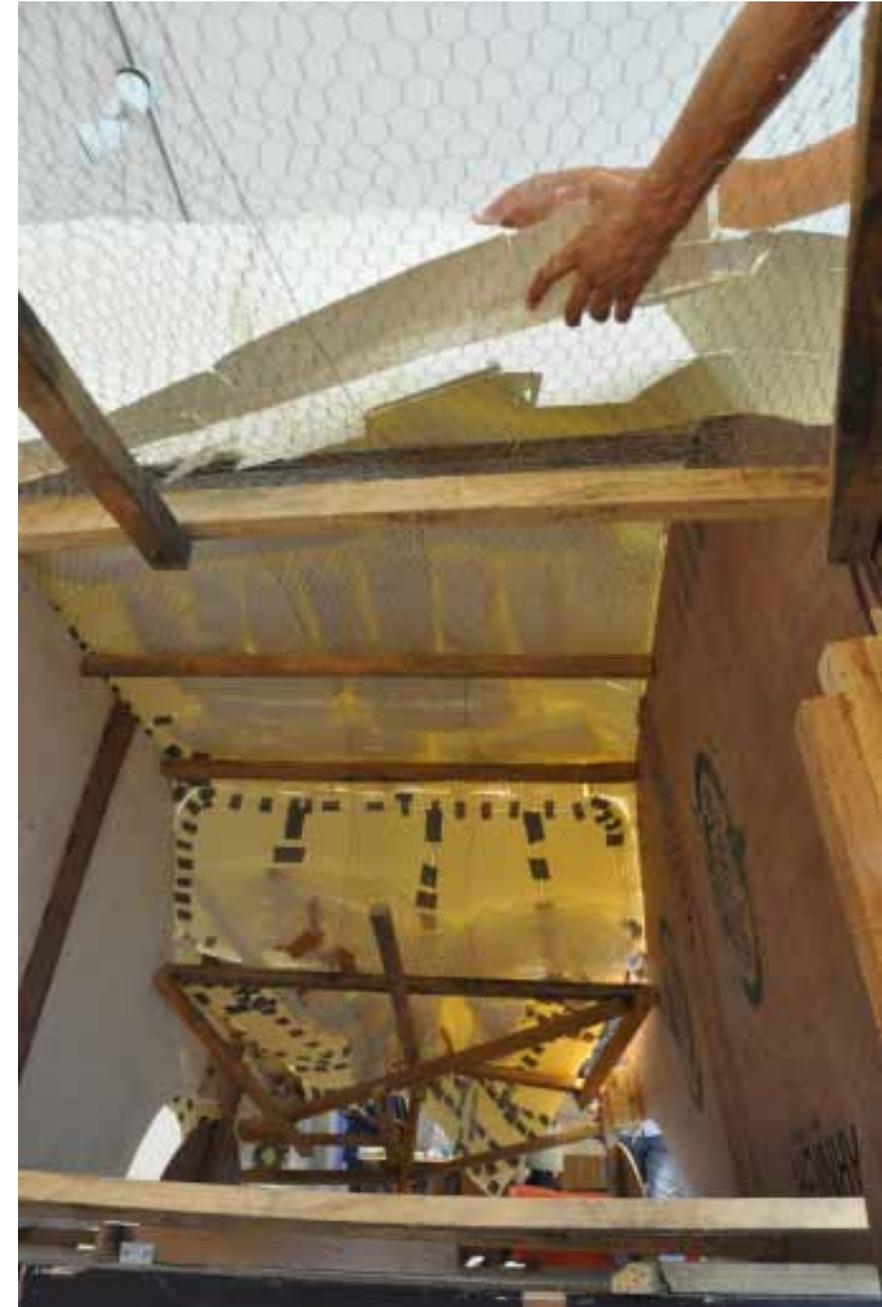
On one wall of Gustavo's work space at the residency, are arranged numerous sheets of paper and paper bags found and collected by him from various sources in Delhi. One might encounter a tiny, delicately painted image of a bus on a recycled paper ticket stub from his bus ride, a slick BMW posing on a shopping bag bearing signs of an expensive brand or a frail-looking rickshaw of a *raddimallah* (scrap paper collector) on a tattered piece of cardboard. The specificity of the chosen papers - fragile and resilient - is the (re) presented material surface that is as indicative of socio-economic class as the vehicles represented on them, thereby achieving a remarkable cohesion of image with surface, and locating the work somewhere between painting and sculpture.

Gustavo's multi-stage process involves photographing the vehicles, projecting the images onto the appropriate paper surfaces, tracing and painting the images before pushing them towards their inevitable destiny of being reduced to crumpled heaps of material - an illusion achieved by the final step of crushing the paper. In the process, he renders a three dimensional illusion while revealing the inherent ability of paper to transform into a sculptural material.

Chronicles reveal themselves in the folds of these found papers, enveloped as they were in their own histories and cultural, political and economic associations. A *chholewala's* (chickpea curry seller's) bicycle, painted on one of the newspaper bags which he uses to parcel food is fraught with the struggles of survival and living, whereas a goods-carrier truck sketched onto a shipping VAT (Value Added Tax) sheet addresses the politics of free flowing goods, borders, location and dislocation, movement and migration. This plurality of material by choice and chance confronts the drastically diverse polarities of the city. Now, Gustavo intends to carry on similar investigations of socio-cultural, political and economic nuances, through paper in other parts of the world.

Soon after these drawings, Gustavo took up a daunting task that involved him spending literally every waking hour in the basement parking lot of the Religare building – earning him the nickname of “The Underground Man”. Discussions with Sumakshi and slide shows of works of artists (like Damian Ortega, Simon Starling, Gabriel Orozco, Jitish Kallat, Valay Shende and others) whose subject matter have been automobiles, led to the playful idea of creating







a paper mask for a real car. Delving into the psychology of shock and surprise of seeing one's car crashed, Gustavo decided to create an illusion of a serious dent, upon an actual car, echoing the familiar visual byproduct of chaotic and fast-moving city traffic. Soon he started working on constructing the mask. Scale by scale, measure by measure, Gustavo mapped meticulous patterns on paper, that he hand-cut and then pasted bit by bit with masking tape to re-construct the life-size three-dimensional form of the car bonnet, then painting the illusion of the crashed metal upon it. The aesthetic and realistic representation invokes simultaneous allure and repulsion, somewhere between hedonism and restraint.

Gustavo's works throws open some questions: What is it that attracts viewer attention to this apocalyptic spectacle? Why are we unable to look away from a crashed car? Why do we find excitement in new versions of the same event?

Delighted by the simple material (paper and masking tape) and the complex process of cutting and arranging the pattern for the car mask, Sumakshi suggested that Gustavo might consider creating an entire life-size sculptural replica of a car, leaving the paper humble and unpainted to make transparent

this meticulous process. Gustavo took up the incredible challenge of creating a crashed Ambassador car in white paper. Rammed into one of the gallery pillars, the sculpture utilizes the spectacle of accidents but with one of the most fragile materials. Tracing, cutting and pasting parts of the Ambassador using simple tools -scissors, pencils and masking tape- working in isolation hour after hour in the basement car parking lot in the sultry Delhi summer – this has been the most challenging art projects that Gustavo has ever undertaken. Once completed, another tedious task was to transfer the fragile structure into the gallery and fix it onto its wooden armature.

Gustavo gladly acknowledges that the course of the residency got him to push his creativity to explore deep dimensions of his art practice and brought several insights into himself as an artist. Through all his playful sculptures, paintings on found paper, community interactive activities and illusionistic installations, the viewer cannot help but experience an underlying thread of unease. What is this crash about?

Perhaps we need to slow down.



A confluence of the past and the present captured through photographs, videos and paintings seamlessly come together in Kartik Sood's work created for the WhyNot Place residency. Through this captivating multi-media installation, Kartik seeks to understand how we negotiate our visual environment. What do we deem important enough to store in our memory bank, and what escapes us? How do we recall and engage with these still and moving images at a later date? From early mentoring sessions with Sumakshi, Kartik seemed keen to delve deeper into these notions of time and its relationship to the creation and contextualization of memory.

According to Kartik, we live in a visually loaded environment, surrounded by images; some of which remain etched in our subconscious, while others fade away with time. How these "visual sensations" (as Kartik likes to call them) enter us, and how they create their own symbology are questions Kartik grapples with in his art. The random manifestation of these stored visual stimuli and their intersection with the present also becomes an area of investigation in Kartik's recent works. Embedded memories find release through his quiet images. Beautifully sensual yet insidiously disconcerting, these multi-media installations solicit a deeper engagement from the viewer, encouraging the projection of their own experiences onto these images, thereby creating new contexts in which to view these works.

Sitting quietly at his workstation in a corner of the gallery, Kartik sifts through his personal archive of photographs, culling from it the faces of people he has met and the places he has visited, isolating them from their original contexts and re-grouping them to forge new narratives that reference the residency's theme of 'Here, Now, Then, There and Here again'. The re-contextualization of these visuals is more directly communicated in his residency work, through the incorporation of a video that was part of an earlier installation. The accompanying looped, black and white three-channel video of a waterfall, that is at times forceful and at other times serene, is transformed on account of its new viewing context. These displaced memories allow for new dialogues to emerge between the protagonists of the work, and between the viewer and the work itself. The past is made present again.

Vibrant digital prints of surreal landscapes of horses and boats, yellow grass and red dogs lie across Kartik's table. These intimate digitally altered prints are saturated with paint before they are ensconced in silk and framed behind

Kartik Sood



Silence of Permanence
Double channel video
15 min. looped animation
2011



glass. The fracturing of the composed image through the layering of materials beautifully echoes the notion of a layered sub-conscious, replete with its reserve of splintered memories that informs Kartik's art practice.

In the proposed installation, the interstitial space between time past and time present is eloquently expressed through a veil of silk that drapes across the surface of the projected, and digitally morphed images. The sensuality of the silk is subverted by the deliberate tears in the fabric that further obstruct a clear reading of the image, infusing the work with a sense of mystery that conceals as much as it reveals. These silk-encased videos and painted photographs are caught in a space-time warp, suspended in indefinable limbo somewhere between a bygone time and the contemporary. Unlike his earlier works which saw a more passive use of the silk screen, to possibly denote the contemporary filter through which we negotiate our past, his recent works for the residency reveal a desire to activate the silk by painting directly on it, as well as on the image it conceals, creating forms that shadow and speak to each other.

For Kartik, the presentation of the piece is critical to the overall experience of the installation. Intending to create a space akin to that of a luxury showroom, Kartik envisions his video streamed across three LCD screens, flanked on either side by tall svelte metallic panels on which are mounted his small silk-veiled photographs. In much the same way the sensuality of the silk is challenged by its rough-hewn texture, the ultra-chic minimalist design of the installation space is undermined by the rawness of the handcrafted artworks. The muted tension that permeates the work, allows for a further examination of the dichotomies of the past and the present, the handmade and the mechanical, the visible and the concealed, and the sensual and the raw.

As the viewer enters the installation, these sublime images of flowing water and idyllic landscapes begin to reveal themselves. The viewer is made to look beyond the silk veil and contemplate the relationships between these forms. What are their stories? What is their past? And with every such interaction, Kartik's mesmerizing visual sensations take on new avatars, breathe new life and become present again.

Singing a Silent Song
Mixed media on paper and semi-transparent cloth
60" x 40"

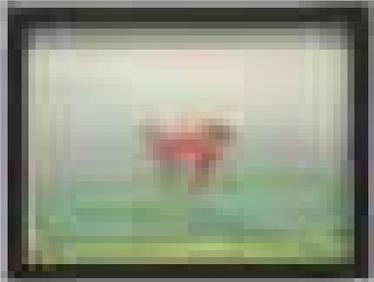


Blind Leading the Blind
Mixed media on paper and semi-transparent cloth
20" x 35"





Elephant (work in progress)





Proposed installation view for 'Here, Now, Then, There and Here again'
2011

Xawery Wolski

To enter a monochromatic world of timeless space where an ethereal glue-dripping chandelier hangs ominously from the ceiling is to enter the proposed sculpted world of Xawery Wolski at the WhyNot Place residency.

Xawery's art is located along the endless continuum between the past and the present. Notions of infinity and perpetuity inform his large format drawings and sculptures. Influenced by the artist's nomadic lifestyle, that has taken him from Poland, to France and then to South America, Xawery's art reveals a deep regard for different cultures, as well as a profound understanding of different materials and their own unique "inner rhythm". Exploring the versatility of materials, often subverting the functionality of the material in deference to its inherent beauty, Xawery's works evoke an immediate emotional response from its viewer. Through the referencing of common, easily identifiable objects, such as leaves, chains, chandeliers and dresses, Xawery alludes to the passing of time, and the continuation of the past into the contemporary.

The extension of the past into the present is most poignantly expressed in a series of *Dresses* inspired by Xawery's visits to pre-Colombian cemeteries. Among the excavated findings that included skeletal remains, ritualistic objects and ceramic ornaments, it was the intricately stitched burial robes that most impressed Xawery, who used it as a point of departure in his later works. Over the years, Xawery often returned to the form of the dress, fashioning them out of a range of materials from pumpkin seeds, to natural fish bones, and from organic red seeds to terracotta beads. These dresses exude a sense of decay, of elapsed time that is often suggested through their frayed hemlines, as in the work titled *Tzalan Huesitos*, or through the use of organic materials like terracotta and natural fish bones that "come from the earth and eventually return to it."¹ Although an element of decay is suggested in Xawery's garments, they endure in much the same way their precursor, the pre-Colombian robes, survived their owners. In both cases, the body is made conspicuous by its absence.

The sheer weight of Xawery's beautifully sensual garments renders them unwearable. The function of the form is implied but never realized and instead they hang like anthropological artifacts on the walls of the exhibiting galleries. Xawery's glue-laden chandelier piece for the WhyNot Place residency works on a similar level by subverting the function to highlight the form. Producing



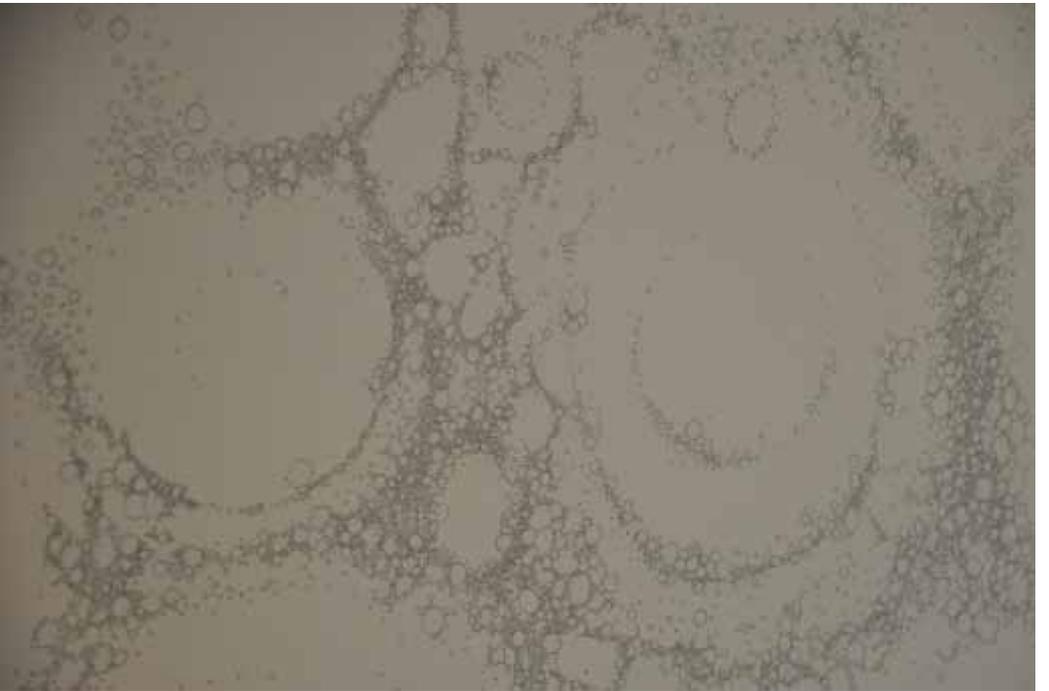


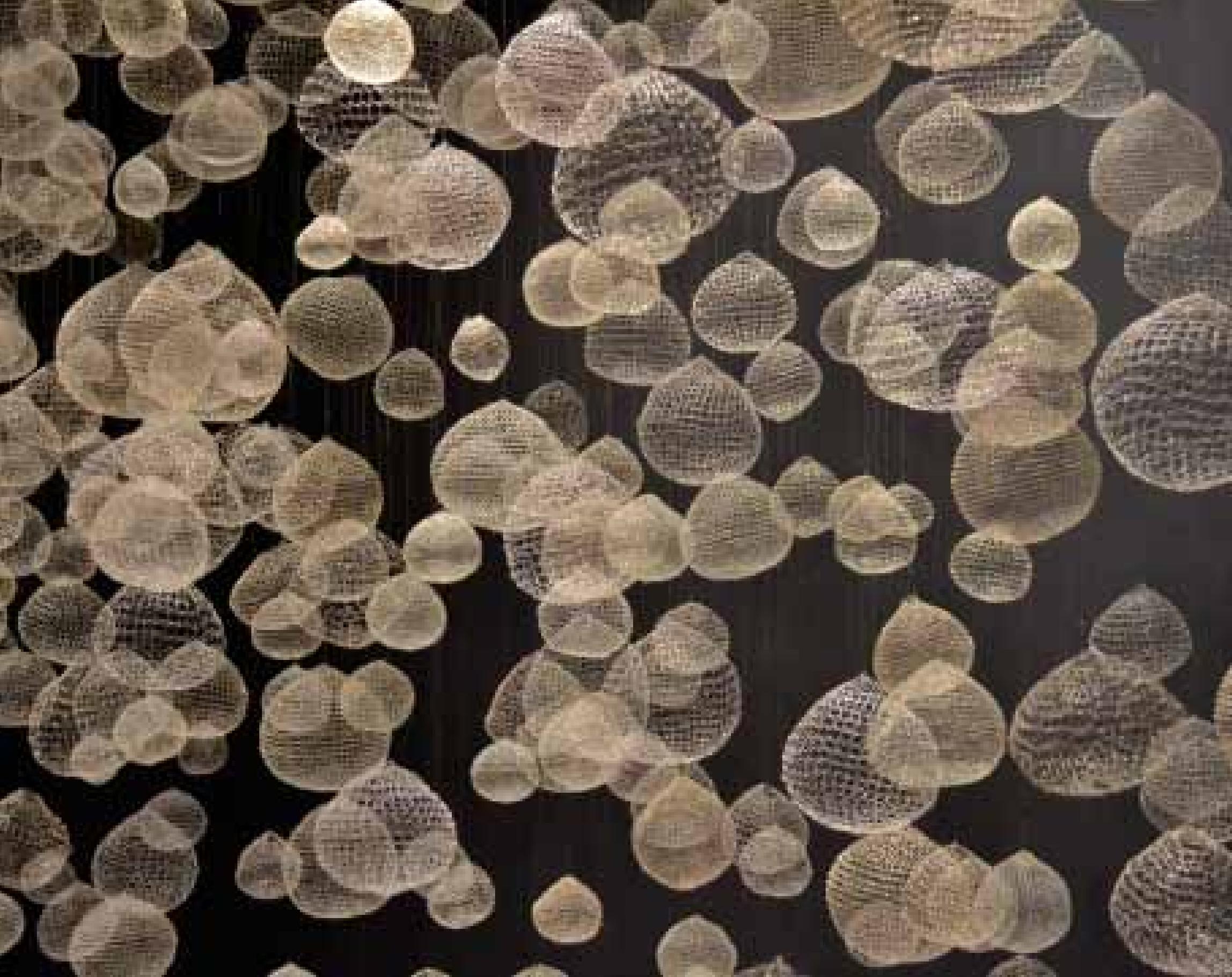
no light of its own but merely reflecting the surrounding ambient light, the chandelier draws attention to its form and embedded symbology. The finely woven web of glue, that enwraps the curvilinear arms of the chandelier and drips to the floor, creates the appearance of an abandoned light fixture enmeshed in cobwebs. Its current state of deterioration indirectly references a forgotten past, transforming the chandelier into a signifier through which the viewer negotiates the passage of time. While the chandelier allows for an engagement with the notion of time, it also encourages a more symbolic reading into issues of class when seen with respect to the choice of material used. Viewed as an emblem of wealth and affluence, Xawery strips the object of its opulence by enveloping it in glue – a cheap and commonly available

industrial material. While viewing the work, one cannot help but wonder if Xawery is critiquing the façade of a burgeoning nouveau riche segment of society that hides behind the accoutrements of the upper echelons of society. But the pretense is not infallible, and like Xawery's chandelier, it begins to erode, revealing in its attrition the bare skeletal structure that lies beneath. Although alluring, the contrast in symbolism between the material used to articulate the form and the form itself invests the work with a tension that distances the piece from the viewer, objectifying the work and placing it within the realm of a fossilized relic of a former time.

Tied to this concept of time is the idea of space, expressed through notions of weight and weightlessness in Xawery's art. His earlier work references the earth not only in terms of the forms he creates but also in terms of the medium used as well as the presentation of these pieces. Large, heavy chains sculpted in terracotta are placed neatly on a gallery floor; interconnected chain links cast in bronze give rise to a three-dimensional floor sculpture that once again references issues of volume and density. His later works, in contrast, are lighter and more airy, suspended from the ceiling, these amorphous forms are often sculpted from materials like wire and silicone. His chandelier piece for the residency can be seen as an extension of his explorations into these notions of time and space. However, encouraged by resident mentor, Sumakshi's recommendation to balance the notions of weight and weightlessness in a single work of art, Xawery is considering creating a carpet cutout of his chandelier's shadow. The black solid form of a shadow would complement the lightness of the chandelier, while suffusing the work with a visual tension that would extend vertically between the floor and ceiling.

Artworks at different stages of completion fill Xawery's work area at the Religare Art gallery. Switching effortlessly between experiments in the masking of objects in dripping glue and silicone, and a labour intensive monochromatic drawing of tiny circular forms, Xawery continues his exploration into notions of time and space through these two different streams in his art practice. Timelessness is obliquely referenced through the meditative act of endless repetition in Xawery's series of *Drawings* that he began back in 2004. Finely delineated circles of varying sizes seem to grow almost organically across the surface of the paper, driven as if by their own internal rhythm of reiteration, creating forms that have no beginning and no end. One is tempted to read







into these works an element of the corporeal, as suggested through the mitotic division of these cell-like structures. The circles appear to multiply and divide almost intuitively creating a form that is at once pervasive as it is contained.

As Xawery's chandelier takes shape and his drawing expands, one cannot help but notice how beautifully these works, with their allusions to notions of time and space, reflect the residency's theme of 'Here, Now, Then, There and Here again'. His works become visual portals through which we can begin to negotiate the prevalence of the past in the present.

¹ As quoted by the artist in 'A Conversation with Xawery Wolski' from the exhibition catalogue, *Into an Empty Sky*, Jim Thompson Art Center, Bangkok, July-August 2008.



Adjacent page:
Balloons (site specific installation)
 Woven wire
 Size variable
 2010

Next page:
Chandelier
 Cast iron and glue
 72" x 52" x 52"
 2011





Shocking and arresting: the first impact of Y. Korika's works on our psyche pronounces a certain disturbance; an unease that comes from grave visual narratives of death, life, pain and love, wrapped up in the attractiveness of the grotesque. His paintings situate their viewers on the edge of the episodic obscurity of these events, simultaneously revealing and cloaking content.

On the first day of the residency the Bangalore-based artist showed us images of his previous watercolour paintings on paper. Slide after slide, tiny paintings revealed scenes of interiors of homes inhabited by what seemed to be a family. These were mounted on A4 sized papers that featured hand written text unrelated to the images, but taken from Korika's diary. The text rooted in emotional experiences and personal memory was accompanied by illegible scribbling and cancelled words that seemed to invite viewers into his personal psyche, while distancing himself from them at the same time. One wonders: How much does Korika hold back and how much does he give away?

These painted psychological landscapes- mostly monochromatic- suggested scenes of death and pathos, in dark hues, featuring nudes and using distortion. It often seemed as if the characters were actors performing in the same backdrop of a humble household, where among the few props were a Van Gogh-like bed, a chair, a table fan, a washbasin and a pressure cooker floating in the air. Upon inquiry one discovered that the pressure cooker was a metaphorical representation of Korika himself, who liked to cook and feed his friends. Most of the characters posed with a bright green and yellow halo resembling flower petals, referencing headgears that are a common sight in Korika's hometown in Andhra Pradesh.

Another series showed portraits of corpses, which Korika had drawn from his visits to local mortuaries. Darkness, grief, loss, death and distortion seemed to drive many of his subject matters. He referred to a railway track behind his college, which had over the years, become a suicide spot where he had witnessed the death of some people. Korika's works "focus on the fusion between the subconscious and the postmodern, where human emotions are at the center." These musings express "an obsession with the physical world in the context of memory." Placed in this personal, hazy and unclear memory, his pictorial vocabulary seemed rudimentary and highly restricted.

For the residency, Korika proposed to engage with the subject matter of "Love"

Y. Korika

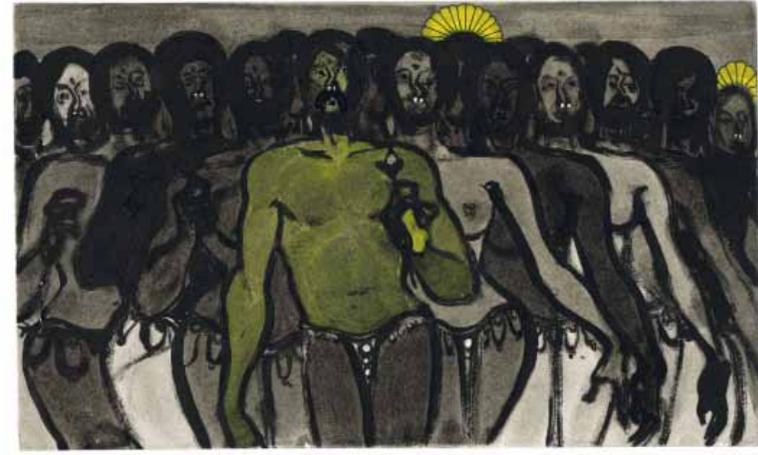


~~one~~ ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~expression~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~ ~~through~~
 All flowers blooming around faces of people
 who can't take any decisions in their life. People of
 illiteracy. ~~people~~ people of crying. people of despair
 people of unhappy people of aspiration. portraits of fear.
 Portraits of uneasy portraits of sorrow. ~~portraits~~
 portraits of pain. people of headache. people of ethnic.
 they are still people. painful people. It is pain to live with
 them and even to look at them. People of ignorance.
 fearful joy. Depressive faces. unknown problem they can
 only see it. All flowers blooming around. Rain is raining.
 In the sunshine of morning, these faces of people still
 remaining pale. sad, sad or pain, pain. their mind adjusted
 to cry in every sunlight, in flowers of garden, in beautiful
 rain of every season
 and in the lap of God.
 they always cry for
 no reason. This life
 is cry. every day is a
 sorrow. Burden of
 nothing they live
 between cry and die



Korika 2010

Love comes in life / It came in my life too / once I told my love / Flowers for you,
~~flowers for you~~
 For you / ~~close your eyes~~ / And I close my eyes / let me hold your hands /
 and what can I give you more than this? /
 Flowers for you / Flowers for you /



Korika 2010

and/or a similar subject matter as before. Sumakshi asked him if he would be
 willing to engage in more formal and informal kinds of research into "love"
 other than his own writings. Pondering the interplay of text and image, she
 recommended that Korika consider the idea of creating a graphic novel of
 sorts, where the repetitive "stage set" background image could be well employed
 and the trope of the personal could be used to explore larger social narratives.
 She showed him examples of work by Glenn Ligon, David Shrigley, Deborah
 Sokolow and Ed Ruscha where text was visually integrated into the image in a
 more cohesive manner, and still others where text subverted the expectations
 set up by the image generating potent gaps of ambivalence and contradiction.
 Mentor and artist spoke of cutting and collaging Korika's characters out of their
 familiar 'sets' and seeing who they were in new environments.

Days passed by and Korika kept experimenting with small drawings in his
 sketch book spring-boarding off his subconscious. He explored themes that

~~Formidable~~ Formidable dreams falling on the road a way from my college to my
 Room / morning and evening / bag on my left shoulder / hand in my pocket / pen in my right hand /
 Blue shoes / not together one left one coming / coming to the college / I follow my dreams / people
 buses, roads / Children, Kankumar on the posters / my every day / within / within / within / within / within / within /
~~Just three kilometers to reach my heaven called my college. C.R.P. I follow my dreams...~~
 Mahadevan, Nana. I follow my dreams / formidable dreams falling on the road, Diverging,
 I am walking back to my room. 23/1/2008.



Korika 2010

he was reading about like “Binary Opposites”. He asked people to write what they thought about “Korika” on pieces of paper and made a collage from it. Of these, some were similar in style and vocabulary to his earlier series of interior paintings, while others took his muddled memories to the external landscape. Among his few tools were an A3 size sketch book, watercolours, a palette, a few brushes, books on artists and art history. Sitting by the glass walls of the residency studio space, Korika became the thinker, who would often get drowned in his internal pool fed by books and memories. In one casual conversation Korika opened up his creative process to us – he said he liked to immerse himself in space and time to have a clear picture of his paintings before he starts brushwork. While Korika was “thinking” we at the residency were all curious to get the first glimpse of his work.

Meanwhile, artist Avantika Bawa’s studio visit with Korika opened up discussions about enlarging the scale of his drawings into a wall-size canvas or perhaps, painting directly on wall. Avantika suggested that Korika play with scale, and echoed Sumakshi’s sentiment about considering the manner in

which his text was being incorporated. Picturing cinematic qualities in Korika’s work, Avantika encouraged Korika to research artists like, Raymond Pettibon, Jaques Tardi, Daniel Heymen and Conor McGrady.

Korika made up his mind.

On day twenty of the residency Korika began his massive painting. In the past, he had always worked on small sheets of paper and here was a seven-meter long by three-meter high canvas stretched and stapled to the wall. Korika’s idea was to paint a storyboard of sorts in black.

We curiously lean forward to watch what Korika will finally make. First appears a serene figure of a man seated on a chair, which looks like a self-portrait, (which Korika denies). A labeled “mad halo” surrounds him. Soon the canvas gets crowded with more and more figures and scenes, floating and fragmented, slowly finding their roles within the complex narrative. On the left a man lies dying on his hospital bed, surrounded by a group of men who resemble doctors crowding around a patient except that they too are dressed

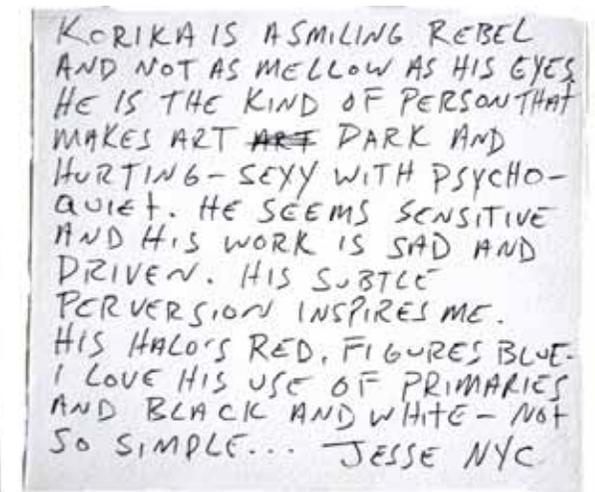
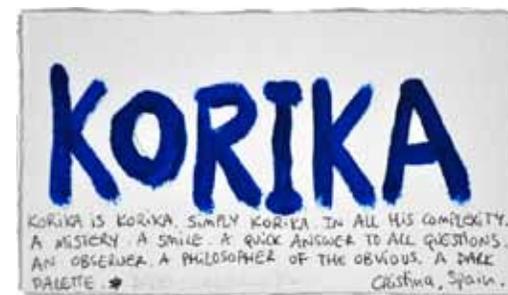
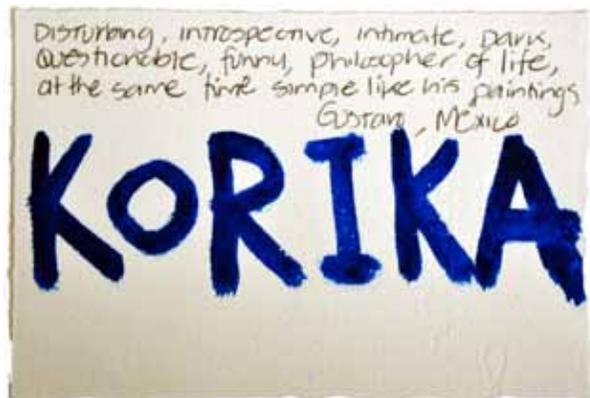


Detail view: *Memory 1*
Acrylic on canvas
75" x 196"
2011

like the patient and seem to be reading poetry instead of the prognosis. Perhaps they are urging the dying man to read. By the bed, on a desk, is a thick book of "Love Poems". A group of nudes huddle over each other on the other side of the canvas. The metaphor of the pressure-cooker has now given way to a larger number of human figures, either nude or dressed in hospital uniforms. Which one is the artist this time?

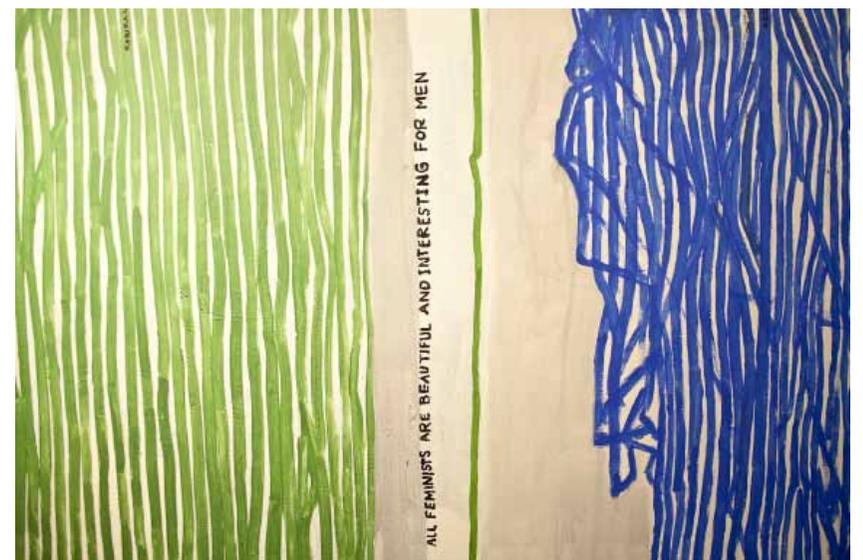
Two days passed and the crowd of nudes got painted over leaving a ghostly reflection reminiscent of the fading and overlapping of human memory. The next to go was the first figure that he had painted -the seeming self-portrait. On this surface, appeared a top-down view of four hospital beds with one patient each. The remains of the washed-away figures now seemed to be looming over the new figures on the bed letting life, death and afterlife share the same surface. Verses of love poems from Rabindranath Tagore's "Gitanjali" filled the negative space, tying together the sub-plots of imagery with text. Korika's painterly dexterity in representing facial emotions in the many characters started adding new life to the narrative, instigating corresponding responses in viewers. A group of new-born babies lie alongside the patients on the bed, amplifying the dialogue on life and death – all interwoven by love.

The "almost but not quite graspable" plot, the grotesqueness of Korika's idiom, the sticky nature of the repeated text and the lack of back-up room offered by his unapologetic imagery, all imbed themselves in the viewer's mind, with a stubborn insistence difficult to wipe away.





Detail view: *Memory 1*
Acrylic on canvas
75" x 196"
2011







Memory 1
Acrylic on canvas
75" x 196"
2011

Artist Profiles

Gustavo Villegas Solis has a B.A. in Graphic Design from the University of Valle de Mexico, Queretaro and later studied at the Autonomous University of Queretaro, Mexico. He has participated in over twenty group exhibitions in Mexico, Canada and the United States. Solo show: 'Who is Who?', Art Museum of Queretaro and Espacio Gallery, Morges, Switzerland, 2010. Other exhibitions include: 'Hazardous Pleasures', Polyforum Siqueiros, Mexico City and Bernardo Quintana Art Center, Querétaro, 2009; 'Att räkna med', Alingsås, Sweden; 'Anywhere', Espacio Gallery, Morges, Switzerland, 2008; He is the recipient of the 'Young Artists Program Grant' by the National Council for Culture and the Arts, 2010-2011, and has received honorable mentions at the Biennial of Painting Gonzalo Villa, Colima, 2006 and Jose Atanasio Monroy Painting Prize, Jalisco, 2006.

Isabel Rock graduated from the University of Brighton with a first in Fine Art Printmaking. She completed her Masters in Printmaking at the Royal College of Art in 2008. Rock has shown widely since graduating, including India, London, Paris and Manchester, and has work in many UK and Indian Collections, Most notably the David Roberts Collection. Her first solo exhibition titled, 'Ultimate Love Story', Bearspace, 2009. Rock recently completed a residency at the ICA Jaipur, India.

Jesse Bercowetz has a B.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA, 1996. He is a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellow, Jerome Foundation Fellow, and MacDowell Colony Fellow. Selected exhibition venues include: The Brooklyn Museum, NYC; The Drawing Center, NYC; White Columns, NYC; PS1 / MoMA, NYC; The Headlands Center for Art, Sausalito, CA; The Brooklyn Academy of Music, NYC; Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA; Galerie Michael Janssen, Berlin; The Happy Lion Gallery, L.A.; Art Basel, CH and Derek Eller Gallery, NYC. His work has been reviewed in numerous publications including: The New York Times, The New Yorker, Sculpture Magazine and Art Forum. His work is in many prestigious public and private collections. He has lectured at several distinguished institutions

internationally.

Jigna Padhiar has a B.A. in Art History and Aesthetics from the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda, 2005. She has worked as an art correspondent for Mumbai-specific newspaper supplements of The Times of India and Hindustan Times, for two years each. She has also written on theatre and performance art projects. Other than writing, she has worked as an occasional gallery assistant and currently works as a research, archive and studio assistant at artist Reena Kallat's studio. Jigna has also written articles, interviews and reviews for art magazines, journals, lifestyle magazines and other publications.

Kaoru Furuko studied art at both Universiti Sains Malaysia (Malaysia) and Osaka College of Art (Japan). Her main focus is on stop motion animation, illustration and conceptual art using various forms of expression. Her work has been exhibited occasionally and has featured at international short film festivals. Her films have been screened at: Toronto Japanese Short Film Festival 2010, Toronto, Canada; MHz NETWORKS, American TV Network Broadcast, 2009; Art Link, 2009; CINEMA Cafe Style, Tokyo, Japan, 2009; Sapporo International Short Film Festival and Market, Sapporo, Japan, 2009. Kaoru received the Kyoritsu International Foundation Fellowship in 2007.

Kartik Sood has a B.F.A. in Painting from College of Art, New Delhi in 2008 and a M.F.A. in Painting from the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda in 2010. His shows include: 'Urban Testimonies', Latitude 28, New Delhi, 2010; 'Turn the Tables', Gallery Art Alive, New Delhi, 2010; 'Scratch', Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, 2010. Sood's work was shown at 'New Focus', an exhibition by Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai at the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune in 2011. He received the Nasreen Mohammadi Scholarship in 2009.

Korou Khundrakpam has a B.A. in Painting from College of Art, New Delhi. Having enrolled in a M.A. in Painting from College of Art, New Delhi, Korou discontinued the course in search of more free time for his practice. He recently exhibited with Exhibit 320 at AHAF, Seoul, South

Korea, and ASYAAF 'When We First Met', Seoul, South Korea, in August 2010. Earlier he was a part of the exhibition, 'Let's Talk', curated by Ranjita Chaney at Exhibit 320, New Delhi, in March 2010. Apart from various other exhibitions elsewhere, he participated in Gen Next III, organized by Aakriti Art Gallery, and Art Camp & Auction organised by Emami Chisel Art, Kolkata, in October 2008.

Kundo Yumnam has a degree in fashion design from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Delhi and a B.A. in painting from Lasalle College of Arts, Singapore. Group exhibitions include: an exhibition with Korou Khundrakpam as 'Amasoong' at Contemplate, organized by Coimbatore Centre for Contemporary Arts at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, February 2011; Exhibit 320 at AHAF, Seoul, South Korea, August 2010; 'Let's Talk', curated by Ranjita Chaney at Exhibit 320, New Delhi, March 2010; 'Montana Wearable of Art' Grand Finale, New Zealand, 2007.

Luciana Lyrio Junqueira has a B.F.A. in Drawing and Painting, from the Guignard School, State University of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, MG 2006. She also holds a Bachelors degree in Veterinary Practices from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, MG, in 1995 and a post graduation in Clinics and Surgery in Pets, Federal University of Vicosa, MG in 1996. She has participated in art residencies and exhibitions including: Artist Residence Program Centre D`art La Rectoria, San Pere de Vilamajor, Barcelona, Spain, 2009; Omi International Arts Center, New York, USA, 2008; 'All Art Now Festival', Damascus, Syria, 2010. She was awarded 2nd place in the 24th New York Art Exhibition at Barret Art Gallery, judged by Asher Miller (Curator of the Department of 19th century, Modern and Contemporary Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY).

Manali Shroff received her B.F.A. from M S University of Baroda in 2008 and her M.F.A. from Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, University of the Arts, London. Manali was felicitated by the Government of India, ministry of Human Resource Develioment – Department of Higher Education for her exceptional performance at the University level. She was a finalist for the Annual National Lalit Kala Award and secured a merit

scholarship at the Fine Arts Faculty, M.S. University in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

Rajorshi Ghosh has a M.F.A. from the University of California L.A. (UCLA) where he studied Media Arts as an Inlaks Scholar. His recent exhibitions include: a show at the Architectural League of New York, NY, 2010; 'Time-Sensitive', Urban Arts Space, Columbus, OH, 2008; New Wright Gallery, Broad Art Center, Los Angeles, 2007; 'Closed', public-space art exhibition in Westwood Village, Los Angeles, 2006; 'Inlight', Gallery Affero, New Jersey, NJ, 2006; 'Projecting of the Wall', Procams and ITP (NYU), New York Univeristy, New York City, 2006; 'Ctrl', Spring Arts Tower, Los Angeles, 2006; LACMA Art Walk, Los Angeles, 2006; Malrose Galelry, Los Angeles, 2006; 'Short', New Wight Gallery, Los Angeles, 2005. Ghosh currently teaches as an Assistant Professor at The School of Art, Ohio University

Rathin Barman has a B.F.A. in sculpture from the Faculty of Visual Arts, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, 2008 and a M.F.A. in sculpture from the Faculty of Visual Arts, Rabindra Bharati University, 2010.

Renu Bariwal has a M.F.A. in Painting from Rajasthan University. She has participated in national and international shows in India and abroad including: 'Indian Deities', World Fine Art Gallery, New York (U.S.A.), 2007; 'Concepts with Visuals', Surekh Art Gallery, J.K.K., Jaipur, 2007; 'Teachers are the Heart of a Community', West Gate Mall, New Delhi, 2008; 'Body & Soul', Art Folio Gallery, Chandigarh, 2007; 'Victorious Race - A Tribute to the Olympics', New Delhi, 2008; An exhibition at Lokayat Art Gallery, hosted by the Mulk Raj Anand Centre, New Delhi, 2009; 'Stree', Art Mall, New Delhi, 2011. She received the Merit Scholarship from the Rajasthan Kala Academy in 2003, and was recognized by the Rajasthan Lalit Kala Academy at the 11th, 12th & 14th Kala Mela.

Soghra Khurasani has a M.V.A. in Printmaking from the Department of Graphics, M.S. University, Baroda and has a B.F.A. in Painting from Andhra University, Vishakhapatnam. She has received the Kalasakshi Memorial Award, New Delhi and the Krishnakriti scholarship, by Kalakriti, Hyderabad in 2009. Her group exhibitions include: '10/01 (Ten but One)', Faculty of Fine Arts,

M.S. University, Baroda, 2010; 'Works at One', Gallery One, Udaipur and Bougainvillea Art Gallery, Udaipur, 2010; 'GenNext V', Akriti Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2010; 'Emerging Idioms II' two-person show at The Loft, Mumbai, 2010; 'Parting Shots', Faculty of Fine Arts, Andhra University, Vishakapatnam, 2008; '22nd All India Art Contest', Nagpur, 2008. Art camps include: '2nd National Student Art Camp', CAVA, Mysore, 2008; and 'Painting Camp', organized by Indi Artza (Singapore), Vishakapatnam, 2008.

Xawery Wolski studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw, Poland before moving to Paris to continue his studies at the Academie de Beaux Arts, Paris, France in 1984, followed by a stint at the New York Studio School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, New York, in 1983. His Solo exhibitions include: 'TC3', Textile Museum of Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico, 2011; Alejandro Sales Gallery, Zona MACO Art Fair, Mexico City, 2011; Bielska Gallery, Bielsko-Biala, Poland, 2011; Art New Media Gallery, Warsaw, Poland, 2011; 'Show me the garden...', Caja Blanca Gallery, Mexico City, 2010; 'Globos', Art New Media Gallery, Warsaw, Poland, 2010; 'W Pustke Nieba', Juan Soriano Foundation, Warsaw, Poland, 2010; 'MROK, Nobody Knows What a Body is Capable of', Modern Art Museum, Mexico City, 2010; 'Más Allá', five monumental sculptures at Arcos Bosques Square, Mexico City, 2010; Alejandro Sales Gallery, Zona MACO Art Fair, Mexico City, 2010; 'Morfologías', Alejandro Sales Gallery, Barcelona, Spain, 2010. Proposed exhibitions for 2011 include: 'Dibujos/Granitos', Instituto de Artes Gráficas de Oaxaca IAGO, Oaxaca, México, October; Exhibition of Recent Artworks at Bodega Quetzalli, Oaxaca, Mexico; October; Exhibition of Recent Artworks at Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts, Miami, FL, December.

Y Korika has a B.F.A. from JNTU College of Fine Arts, Hyderabad, 2003 and a M.F.A. in Painting from Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore, 2010. He has participated in group shows at Ranga Shankara, Bangalore, 2010; Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore, 2008 and 2009; State Art Gallery, Hyderabad, 2007. He has participated in workshops at No. 1 Shanthi Road, Bangalore, 2010 and at Chitramayi State Gallery, Hyderabad, 2007. Awards received include: The Robert Bosch Art Grant, 2009; Kalaratna Art Award, RCO Club, 1998; SCCL Degree College Art Award, 1999.

Our List of Exhibitions 2008 – 2011

- **Outer Circle**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 8th Oct -30th Oct 2008
- **Phaneng**, Solo Show / Photography, 10th Nov - 8th Dec 2008
- **Ragamala**, Solo Show / Watercolours, 15th Nov - 8th Dec 2008
- **Nature of The City**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 16th Dec '08 - 15th Jan 2009
- **Everything Under the Sun...Almost**, Two Person Show / Mixed Media, 7th Feb - 8th March 2009
- **The Human Animal**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 19th March - 8th April 2009
- **Zip Files**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 21st April - 20th May 2009
- **Connaught Place: The Why Not Place**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 8th Aug - 23rd Aug 2009
- **India Art Summit**, Multi disciplinary art, 20th Aug - 22nd Aug 2009
- **Grave For Nothing**, Two Person Show, 27th Aug - 23rd Sep 2009
- **Home Sweet Home**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 5th Oct - 25th Oct 2009
- **1 : Art Against AIDS**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 1st Dec - 11th Dec 2009
- **Found Objects Lost Planet**, Group Show, Digital Print on Paper, 15th Dec '09 - 5th Jan 2010
- **Ballard Estate**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 9th Jan - 29th Jan 2010
- **Arts.i Redux**, Showcasing Emerging Artists, Group Show / Mixed Media, 11th Feb - 10th Mar 2010
- **The Decorated Cow**, Solo Show / Mixed Media, 13th Mar - 13th Apr 2010
- **The Major Arcana**, Solo Show / Mixed Media, 17th Apr - 17th May 2010
- **Holy Now**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 10th May - 15th May 2010
- **Connaught Place: The WhyNot Place - The Transforming State**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 10th Aug - 31st Aug 2010
- **Looking Glass**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 1st Oct - 31st Oct 2010
- **'Earth' Prix Pictet**, Group Show / Photography, 30th Nov - 19th Dec 2010
- **India Art Summit**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 21st Jan '11 – 23rd Jan 2011
- **Iconoclasts and Iconodules**, Group Show / Mixed Media, 15th Jan - 25th Feb 2011
- **American Psyche - A Generation in Contemporary Photography**, Group Show / Photography, 9th Mar - 3rd Apr 2011

Sumakshi Singh
Mentor/Curator, The WhyNot Place Residency
2011

Sumakshi Singh's work traverses lines between Metaphor, Reality and Illusion and ranges from plays on space-time theories to cultural, historic and physical critiques of place, manifested in performance, installation, painting and animation. Singh's work uses disconcerting phenomenological encounters to ask questions about permanence and transience, object and image, fact and illusion, mapping and displacement, perception and knowledge, here and there while critiquing notions of "fixed" universes and exposing the fragile set of givens upon which meaning is constructed. The artist has an extensive practice that varies from appropriating subtle microcosmic activity, to mapping perceptual objects in spaces and interacting with them as if they were real.

Singh is an artist and an educator who has taught for several years at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and lectured at Oxford University, Columbia University and The Chicago Humanities Festival among other museums and colleges. She has mentored residencies for the Victoria and Albert Museum, The WhyNot Place 2010 and 2011 and was a visiting artist advisor at KHOJ Delhi. Her interactive installations, paintings, drawings and sculptures have been presented in solo and curated group gallery and museum exhibitions in India, China, USA and Europe. Recent venues include Museum



of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France; MAXXI Museum, Rome, Italy; Mattress Factory Museum of Contemporary Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Van Harrison Gallery New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Illinois State Museum, IL; Kashya Hildebrand Galerie, Zurich; Halsey Gallery, Charleston, SC and ArtHouse Texas, TX. She was awarded a Zegna Grant in 2009, an Illinois Arts Council award in 2007 (in recognition of outstanding work and commitment within the arts) and Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Award in 2005 (to support and encourage excellence, artistry, focus, direction, maturity, and originality in the visual arts). Her shows have been reviewed by: Younger Than Jesus - the New Museum Catalogue, the Village Voice, ArtLovers, Austin Chronicle, Chicago Tribune, Chicago Reader, Chicago Arts Critics Association, Charleston City Paper, New Haven Register, Platform magazine and Andpersand among other journals and papers. Artist residencies include Mac Dowell Colony - USA, Djerassi Foundation - USA, Fondazione Pistoletto - Italy, Camargo Foundation - France, Skowhegan - USA, CAMAC - France and Sculpture Space - USA. She was a finalist for the Rijksakademie in 2006. Singh received an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), Chicago, IL and a B.F.A. from Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, India.



Animated Suspension: Halfway Here
Stop motion animation
Charcoal on body and other objects
2011

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Artwork detail



