



Image: Artist, Gigi Scaria, Face to Face. Digital photo (2010)

Loss & Transience

An Exhibition of Moving Image Artworks and
Documentary Films from India

12 March — 2 May 2021



Curators

Lucía Imaz King, Rashmi Sawhney

Curator's Note

Loss and Transience

This exhibition brings to the Hong-gah Museum the work of ten contemporary artists and filmmakers from India, including artists of Indian heritage based internationally.

The selected works are linked by their protagonists' state of transience at key moments within the films; a transience, for example, that might be associated with being a migrant, or the more existential impermanence of losing one's citizenship. Precariousness may be linked to living in a neighbourhood of the city that is socially excluded, or having to grapple with environmental catastrophes that have severed communities from a way of life that has been lost. The creative responses to these conditions, both by the filmmakers and by the people featured in their films, however, are open to contingency and are persistently moving towards regeneration and resistance. Their strategies, porous to the conditions that surround them, are adaptive in ways that would be difficult to generalise, but must be experienced in the works themselves. Although many of these films and video works were produced before the Covid-19 pandemic, they provide numerous insights into how the day-to-day realities that impinge are being catalysed to affect change, but also to reflect on the present.

There are two strands of work under this broader theme of loss and transience. Firstly, there are video works that have a strong connection with painting. In some of these works, the digital image is directly manipulated and layered with animations and montages. The artists Ranbir Singh Kaleka, Gigi Scaria, Mochu, Avijit Mukul Kishore and Ranu Mukherjee's work falls into this group. Secondly, there are films that make use of documentary filmmaking tactics and narratives, though these documentaries may be poetic or experimental in their style. Here, we have the filmmakers Ayisha Abraham, Abhinava Bhattacharyya, Ambarien Alqadar, Madhusree Dutta and Devshree Nath. By deliberately juxtaposing these two very different approaches, the overarching themes and creative transformations emerge as common ground across these practices. Political affinities and ways in which the works have been composed in film, are drawn into relief.

Looking at the films and videos collectively, audiences may notice that many of these have a slow pace that encourages a deepened concentration in the power of the image; an immersion or absorbing into it. As examples of what we would like to call 'Slow Thought,' they prioritise the task of sensing out a habitable world, or rendering worlds through improvisation which cannot exist 'in the real world'. Slow thinking does not imply 'over-thinking'. Rather, it is an approach that is re-constructive and playful; it allows for adaptation to the challenges of the environment whilst critically questioning our role within it. Rules can be broken and counter-cultures imagined and proposed. The art of filmmaking itself is nothing if not precarious and unpredictable, contingent on human inconsistencies and vulnerabilities on the day of the shoot, but it is also a living resource. Slow Thought is not fixed, and neither time nor traditional methods can harness it. It is transient and works with, and not against, the time that is perpetually evading our grasp.

We would like to thank the Hong-gah Museum team for their invaluable support on providing translations, technical and management support that has made this exhibition possible. We would also like to thank the participating artists and filmmakers for their generous collaboration.

The curators

Rashmi Sawhney is a Bangalore-based academic, writer and curator. She has lived in India and Europe, and taught at several universities including Trinity College, Dublin; University of Bilkent, Ankara; Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; and Christ University, Bangalore. Her forthcoming book on “The Moving Image in Post 1990s India” will be published in 2021 in English and Mandarin. In the past, she has headed the Arts Practice and Curatorship programmes at the India Foundation for the Arts. She strayed into artistic practice with ‘Drift City,’ a 55 min two-channel video, part of a group exhibition “Could be Urbanism” at KHOJ, New Delhi, 2019. Curatorial projects include Future Orbits (with Lucia Imaz King) and Video Vortex XI (with Andreas Treske & Geert Lovink), both collaterals of the Kochi-Muziris biennial, 2017; and Set.Reset: cinema & labour (collaboration with Aradhana Seth), Goa, 2018.

Lucia Imaz King is a curator, a documentary filmmaker and a producer of video installation artworks and paintings. She has an extensive track record of self-authored and collaborative projects produced in India and across Europe. Her projects are primarily distributed in art gallery contexts and independent film festivals. Her curatorial work is driven by questions around the role of the author in artists’ filmmaking, particularly in relation to artists working transnationally today. Her PhD (obtained from SOAS, University of London) and research explores the methodologies of contemporary documentary and artist-filmmaking in India and South Asia (1991 to the present), investigating the historical legacies and contexts of their production and international distribution. She currently also teaches Moving Image at University of Brighton, School of Art & Media (UK). Since 2014, she founded and directs VisionMix with Rashmi Sawhney.
www.luciaking.co.uk

VisionMix is a curatorial network promoting moving image artworks and films produced in (and about) South Asian culture. This network fosters international alliances that generate exhibitions, screenings, publications and wider public debate. Its activities provide platforms for collaboration and the sharing of practices amongst film and video makers, scholars and curators internationally around the nexus of programmed activities. VisionMix's associates are resident in India, the UK and the US with guest collaborators contributing from Pakistan and other nations. The artworks and films generated by these associates have spanned topics such as environmental and urban ecologies, citizen rights and artists', as well as cultural critics' transformative agency. We generate public involvement in exhibitions, screenings, publications and online networking locally and internationally.
website: www.visionmix.info

VisionMix has formed a partnership with videoclub, to bring a selection of works from Loss & Transience to our audiences online, open from 19-27 March. These screenings will provide an additional opportunity to see the films and meet the artists and Loss & Transience organisers online, hosted by Jamie Wyld, director of videoclub.

videoclub is a platform for the most exciting artists' film, video and moving image from around the world. We deliver a programme of UK & international exhibitions, screenings, residencies and research opportunities, with the aim of developing new audiences, new conversations and new markets for artists' film.
website: www.videoclub.org.uk/

Ayisha Abraham

En Route or Of a Thousand Moons

(2011, 8mm film digitally transferred, 20:00)



Credits

Concept, direction: Ayisha Abraham

Original footage: Ramesh Kapoor, Hiru Patel, Anonymous sources

Editing, Postproduction: Ayisha Abraham Anaroopa, Manasa Rao

Sound: Yashas Shetty

Supported by: Centre Pompidou, Paris

En Route is a collage of moving images of postcolonial India. Amateur filmmakers often filmed their experiences far from the familiar, influenced by, and absorbing cultures beyond their own. The film artifacts of our human world age and deteriorate. The emulsion on the celluloid surface becomes food for fungus and bacteria, eating away into those moments that were meant to preserve and recall a tactical relationship to memory; making inevitable the transition from one time to another, one life form to another and perhaps a less sanitized understanding of ourselves. This biological process is given an image through a microscope, forming visual punctuations that bring together these disparate personal vignettes. *En Route* collates a number of film forms organically to create a synchronous rhythm. The 3-inch spool of 8mm film resembles an inanimate roadside pebble; its internal stories are as hidden as a mute object, shelved and ignored, as if it has no value - a burden like all other accumulated junk. Yet when light passes through the lens, images once hidden away in obsolescence are brought to life again. Like a magic lantern, a phantom of the past is conjured into being.

Biography

Born in 1963, Ayisha Abraham lives and works in Bangalore, as an installation artist and short filmmaker, and is Dean of School of Media Arts & Sciences at Srishti Institute, where she teaches history of art and visual culture. She studied painting at M.S. University, Baroda, India; Rutgers University, New Jersey, United States (1995), and Whitney Independent Study Program, New York City (1992). She has worked at the Srishti Institute of Art, Design & Technology, and as a visual arts consultant (1997) and member of Bengaluru Artists Residency. She founded and organized a documentary film festival for students of this institute, Nazariya (2004). Since 2000, she has produced a series of short experimental films that re-edit 8mm home movies filmed by older residents of her neighbourhood, collected by her locally. These films have been screened as single channel works and installations with her sculpture and drawings. Her work has been widely exhibited nationally and internationally, such as at Max Mueller Bhavan, Bangalore; Coimbatore (2010); Caixa Forum, Barcelona (2010); Pompidou Centre (2011); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2012); Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing(2012).

Ambarien Alqadar



The Ghetto Girl

(2014, documentary film, 35:00)

The Ghetto Girl was a name used for me as I went to school in New Delhi during the 1990s. My home was in a Muslim neighbourhood known as 'The Little Pakistan'. The school was in a part of the city that saw a massive post-liberalization transformation; a city of malls, apartment blocks and buildings. But the lives of people who lived close by saw little change. I revoke that process of name-calling in this personal documentary that unfolds as a third person narrative about a girl who walks the streets in search of a lost home movie. Streets are full of stories about disillusionment that have come to constitute the experience of being middle-class Muslims in India today. This sense of disillusionment finds a way home in a mother who refuses to be photographed, due to her changing beliefs. But the girl discovers an abandoned family album, bringing her memories of a time when it was possible to photograph. But was this a family album or a home movie? Did it really exist, or was it part of the girl's false memory? The search takes the girl into inventing her own maps, creating her own home movie and reflecting on the meaning of belonging, community and history. A tale of love and loss about being Muslim in India today. After making the film, I received a letter from the Censorship Board requiring me to remove sections in the film that referred to this neighbourhood as 'Little Pakistan', since there are so many Muslims in this neighbourhood, it is an 'assumed' hiding ground for terrorists. So here is the double bind: one cannot speak as a Muslim, even though one is targeted as such.

Biography

Ambarien Alqadar is a filmmaker and artist. Shaped by the experience of growing up in Jamia Nagar, New Delhi, the metaphor of border-crossing is central to her creative practice. Her works explore intersections of dislocations, memory, history and collective trauma. Experiments with cinematic technologies are central to her hybrid practice between narrative, documentary and experimental forms. Ambarien studied at Jamia Millia Islamia, India and Temple University U.S. where she was a Fulbright-Nehru Fellow. She was a Mid-Atlantic Creative Arts Fellow at The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts recently and has received several prominent awards and grants. She lives between New Delhi and New York where she teaches at The Rochester Institute of Technology Film and Animation Program. More information: www.ambarienalqadar.com

Abhinava Bhattacharyya



Jamnapaar

(2017, documentary film, HD video, 24:21)

Jamnapaar (Hindi or Urdu for 'Beyond the Yamuna') explores how the inhabitants of the Yamuna relate to the everyday presence of a dead river; and how we, who are unfamiliar with its presence perceive the fragile nostalgia of its unknowable past. The filmmaker, an outsider to the Yamuna, accesses the past and future of the black river through a vision that is like an oracle. We are immersed in the memory and dreams of an old man who was once employed to watch over and rescue drowning people in the monsoon floods. The horror of its unthinkable future is similar to what is confronting many vast natural spaces on Earth, from the burned Amazon forest to the blanched coral reefs. This film uncovers new ways of imagining and relating to the natural world in the midst of the sixth mass extinction on Earth, our final planetary dream. The film was shot in Delhi, the site of the Yamuna's most extreme degradation.

Biography

Abhinava Bhattacharyya is a New Delhi based filmmaker trained in non-fiction filmmaking at the Creative Documentary Course (SACAC). His interests in art and film have veered towards more experimental filmmaking modes. He seeks the penumbral space of Stan Brakhage's 'untutored eye', going even deeper and further back than the infant's vision (a primal vision in filmmaking that informed Brakhage's work) to the embryonic impressions of light and sound in the womb and the blood system. Above all else, he is deeply fascinated by the alchemical power of cinema and its potential to address the central darkness at the heart of the human condition on Earth while looking to illuminate the endless interconnections and ancient kinship between the human and non-human.

Madhusree Dutta



Seven Islands and a Metro

(2006, Documentary film, 100:00)

Mumbai/Bombay is a city of many languages, of much intolerance, of worker's mills and informal industries that have been closed down, of popular film culture, sprawling slums and towering new real estate. This film is a tale of the history of migrants and migrations in a city that is in continual flux; a city that has changed names over time from 'Bom Bahia' and 'Bombay' to 'Mumbai'. It is an assemblage of fictional and fact-based testimonies of its inhabitants, incorporating found footage, sound installation and literary texts. The main storyline is told through a conversation between the writers, Ismat Chughtai and Saadat Hasan Manto; the two legendary writers who lived in this metropolis and who argue about the multiple identities and ways of experiencing this extraordinary city. Shot mainly during the monsoon, the film reveals some extremely beautiful yet ruthlessly violent features of Bombay. An aspect of Mumbai which is generally not included in popular narratives of the city.

Biography

Madhusree Dutta is a filmmaker, a curator and pedagogue with a background in theatre direction, visual arts, and arts publications. Since 2018, she is Artistic Director at the Akademie der Künste der Welt (Academy of the Arts of the World), Cologne. Across her practice, she has been an advocate for labour and feminist movements, activism against communalism, and the democratisation of art practices. Her various works explore cultural literacy, art pedagogy, the interfaces between genres, movements and disciplines. She founded and was executive director of Majlis in Mumbai, a centre for rights discourse and multi-disciplinary art initiatives in Mumbai, India, and in 2014, was one of the curators of the Artists' Cinema programme at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. Dutta also founded/directed a major curatorial initiative: Project Cinema City: Research Art and Documentary Practices (2008 – 2012). This project engaged a wide range of established and emerging filmmakers, curators and cultural stakeholders responding to the relationship that Mumbai has to cinema and the city. The interdisciplinary project was presented in different venues, such as: 60th anniversary of the Berlinale, and the National Gallery of Modern Art, India to celebrate 100 years of Indian cinema, at Film and Television Institute (FTII). Project Cinema City explored the production strategies, labour structure, viewing conventions and materiality of cinema highlighting the inseparable relation between cinema and the city.

Ranbir Singh Kaleka



Man with Cockerel

(2002, variable presentation formats, 6:00)

This looping film operates by creating unexpected ellipses of time in the image of a man who stands, half submerged in water, holding a cockerel in his arms. The cockerel repeatedly escapes his grasp and flies out of shot, reappearing only to be captured again. The composition of the film frame (in black and white) resembles a moving painting in which particular elements of the image are singled out to be distorted, or to subvert our expectations of how the sound and the image relate to one another. The man departs from our view whilst, illogically, his reflection remains attached to the water's surface. Time is reversed when a heron enters, and then walks backward out of the scene. The sound track does not offer the meditative calm that would 'fit' this lake-side scene. Instead, we hear a clatter of mechanical and industrial sounds that displace our viewing. Kaleka's video-artwork indicates how precarious the moment is, in which we subject an image to our interpretation, but it highlights too how precarious the role of the artist is when faced with creating a new reality in an artwork. *Man with Cockerel* is an "allegory on the tantalizing grasp of desire" which continually eludes us, as the art critic, Geeta Kapur observes.



Fables from the House of Ibaan

(2007, Video originally projected onto painted canvas, 5:24)

As if peering into the space of his day dream, we see a man sitting in front of an empty jug and a row of unlit lamps. A woman enters, filling the jug with milk and the lamps simultaneously light up. Across many cultures milk stands metaphorically for life, nourishment and growth: the promised land, blessing, and abundance. Here too, the woman offers a physical and spiritual regeneration. The man carries the filled jug and walks into a living city, and the day's cycle ends as night falls. The 'spilled milk' flows back into the night. The cycle repeats as the man returns, seated beside the empty jug again. The film evokes the ways in which memory inhabits our habitual environment, yet stretches beyond into the fables of the mind and its inner hauntings.



Forest

(2009, Video originally projected onto painted canvas, 16:00)

In this work, a library of books stands improbably in a clearing in the forest, symbolising 'a library of knowledge.' A lion enters, becoming the guardian of this knowledge but also, representing a mythical, other-worldly creature of the imaginary. The lion is driven away as the library is set on fire. Finally, a young lion returns to the city that emerges from the ashes of the scene. Flowers rise from the burnt ground. In this visionary and poetic video artwork the 'hidden atrocities' that take place in this animated painting are suggested rather than explained. It becomes a statement about a collective destruction of the environment, and of generational knowledge and wisdom passed through centuries and across cultures for which we must all atone.

Biography

Ranbir Singh Kaleka is a leading Indian contemporary artist who trained at the Punjab University, Chandigarh and at the Royal College of Art (London). He initially established himself as a painter depicting every-day scenes from Indian life that are infused with mythical, oneiric and visionary reality. From the 2000s onwards he became a well-recognised pioneer of video and moving image, contributing substantially to the generations that followed him. A key body of his early video works explores how the temporality that exists in painting (as an art form) can be captured and transposed into the medium of cinema, including the convention of 'video loops'. This led to a series of works in which he projected slowly animated film images on top of canvases that were already painted on with a 'ghost image'. This technique creates a moment of realisation and focus around how moving image and painting interrelate, both in one's perception of the image, and art historically. The concept of memory, and the poetics of place are also key to Kaleka's video artworks. Several of his installations have investigated the demise of displaced people and environmental concerns. Examples of this are, *House of Opaque Water* (2010), which explores the experience of a survivor of a flood in the Bangladesh Sundarban marsh region, and *Crossings* (2005), which references the migration history of Sikh communities from the Punjab to other regions of India. A recent key exhibition of Kaleka was titled, *Tah-Satah*, curated by Ashish Rajadhyaksha. Kaleka currently lives and works in New Delhi.

Avijit Mukul Kishore



The Garden of Forgotten Snow

(2017, HD video and 8 mm film, stereo, 30:07)

Credits

Cinematography, Direction: Avijit Mukul Kishore

Sound recording: Suresh Rajamani

Sound Design: Madhu Apsara

Interview: Chaitanya Sambrani

Editing: Rikhav Desai

Production support: Chemould Prescott Road, Art Chennai

Still image caption: Construction Site (detail), from the exhibition, Each Night Put Kashmir in Your Dreams, Nilima Sheikh, 2010. Courtesy of Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai.

The Garden of Forgotten Snow looks at the art practice of Nilima Sheikh and her engagement with the multiple histories, literary references and artistic traditions of Kashmir. The film comes out of two decades of engagement between the artist and the filmmaker. Sheikh is an eminent artist who studied painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda, India. She belongs to the Narrative-Figurative tradition of painting that broke away from the prevalent trend of Modernist Abstraction in the early 1980s, to focus on subjects that were local, personal, dealing with gender and feminism. Sheikh has a long association with Kashmir, a land of beauty and luxury, unfortunately known in recent times for its history of separatist strife and conflict.

Biography

Avijit Mukul Kishore is a filmmaker based in Mumbai. He studied cinematography at Film and Television Institute of India, Pune and holds a bachelor's degree in History from Hindu College, University of Delhi. He works in documentary films and inter-disciplinary moving-image practices, both film-based and digital. He frequently collaborates with other visual artists, architects and academics on video and film-based works. He is involved in cinema pedagogy as a lecturer, writer and curator of film programmes. His works have been shown at Documenta 14, Chicago Architecture Biennial, Pinakothek-Moderne Munich, Kochi-Muziris Biennale and Dhaka Art Summit in addition to international film festivals including CPH Dox, Sheffield Docfest, Dok-Leipzig, Documenta Madrid and various academic and cultural spaces.

Mochu

Wake (2008, HD Video, 14:00)



Credits

Direction: Mochu

Cinematography: Prahlad Gopakumar

Edit and Sound: Gayatri Kodikal

Production: Mochu

A remote village in the desert, inhabited by fleeting humans, guarded by a dreaming puppet. Flies buzz around a crashed time-machine. Noise particles infest thought and emotions. Guided by birds, dead and alive, a man discovers the time-machine's flight recorder, and the memory of the village flows out.

Biography

Mochu is an experimental filmmaker, artist and writer whose work engages with the life of fictional figures found in works of art and their encounters with various philosophies, mythologies and techno-fiction. A number of his works focus on particular milestones in art history, drawing on the imagery found in the works of earlier artists. Mochu is a recipient of the Edith-Russ-Haus grant for Media Art 2020 and his practice has previously been supported by Ashkal Alwan, India Foundation for the Arts and The Sarai Programme. Exhibitions include 9th Asia-Pacific Triennial, Sharjah Biennial 13, 4th Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Alserkal Avenue, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art and Transmediale BWPWAP. He is currently based in Delhi and Istanbul.

Ranu Mukherjee



Home and the World

(2015, Hybrid Film, HD video/Animation, 5:12)

Home and the World takes as its starting point the corridor scene from the filmmaker Satyajit Ray's 1984 cinematic adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's 1916 novel *Ghare Baire* ('The Home and the World'), in which the female protagonist passes through from domestic chambers, to enter the civic life of a nascent post-colonial India. Mukherjee's film depicts the colonial corridor architecture falling apart and being replaced by bamboo scaffolding; a hallmark of contemporary Mumbai and the capitalist economies of the early 21st century. A woman sweeps up the debris, creating a transition between eras. In each, an identical series of female figures walks forwards, some protesting violence against women. The figures represent complex intersections between modernization and the ongoing social struggles and resilience of women. *Home and the World* is composed and animated from photographic, digital and painted imagery. Its slow deliberate rhythm is built through overlaying distinct types of motion.



Succession

(2018, HD video installation, 5:41)

Succession references the process of ecological succession, the regeneration of a habitat after a devastating event, in this case the 2017 California wildfires. As two dancers move through landscape of charred trees and soil, the viewer is placed within a catastrophe, literally and metaphorically, to reconcile ways that our health is inextricably tied to the health of the Earth. In a global sense, the work acknowledges ongoing and continuous aftermaths and migrations. The film's opening sequence intercuts images of the fires with images from other cataclysmic

environmental events occurring around the world that happened in the same time period. *Succession* takes on both political and ecological significance, describing a time of change and the potential in being physically present with it. It was filmed with Hope Mohr Dance Company, following rains that came after many years of drought in California. The shock of green grass offers the suggestion of renewal within rupture.

Succession was made at di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, Sonoma, California with Hope Mohr dancers Suzette Sagisi and Jane Selna. Audio composition by Mike Maurillo.

Biography

Ranu Mukherjee makes hybrid work in moving image, painting and installation to build new imaginative capacities. She is guided by the forces of ecology and non-human agency, diaspora and migration, motherhood and transnational feminisms - drawing inspiration from the histories of collage, feminist science fiction and Indian mythological prints.

Mukherjee has produced commissioned projects for the San Jose Museum of Art, the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Asian Art Museum, the de Young Museum, the 2019 Karachi Biennale, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and the San Francisco Arts Commission. Current awards include a Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant, a Lucas Visual Arts Fellowship and an 18th Street Arts Center Residency. Mukherjee is represented by Gallery Wendi Norris.

Devshree Nath



Noor Islam (2019, HD video, 20:00)

The state of Assam in North-Eastern India is facing a humanitarian crisis owing to an environment of uncertainty, anxiety and fear, as people would rather die than be sent to detention centres for not being able to establish their citizenship. This situation has arisen due to the recent 'Citizenship Amendment Bill' passed in

December 2019 by India's parliament. Critics of this Bill believe that it is setting an agenda of marginalising Muslim citizens. The film addresses the urgent issue of identity and citizenship in India, tracing the struggles of an Assamese man who unable to prove his identity, is eventually deemed as an illegal immigrant. The film tries to explore the state of mind of a person who is on the verge of losing their nationality and consequently losing almost everything they have. His broken hopes cause a turbulence in his mind whilst the serene beauty of Assam and his humble lifestyle paint a contrast against this inner tempest.

Biography

Devshree Nath belongs to the city of Lucknow, India, and is an independent filmmaker, having studied at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. She works in the areas of cinema, photography and the performing arts. She believes that the life of the people and spaces around us are so full of potential that they need to be narrated and presented through powerful art forms like cinema. Her work and interest lies in marginalized communities exploring the politics of identity and migration. While expressing herself through cinema, and referring to contemporary socio-political contexts, she tries to experiment and attain an experiential level of storytelling.

Gigi Scaria



Hourglass

(2013, HD video with sound, 4:48)

The body of the artist-filmmaker in *Hourglass* was recorded from a camera on a tripod as he walks further and further away from it into the blinding white salt desert of Rajasthan; a tiny figure in a vast, empty expanse. His figure disappears so that we are left only with a shimmering haze, expectantly waiting for his outline to be returned to us again. The fragility of the figure in the harsh landscape suggests the potential of an existential trauma. Presence is not defined by the human form in this space, nor by its absence but by the site that the film creates in the viewer's experience. It signals a 'nowhere belonging' where 'self' becomes a timeless anti-space and consciousness is restless, having no landmark on which to adhere itself. The film was shot and performed in the Rann of Kutch, a vast desert land of salt marsh at the political boundary point between the two nations, India and Pakistan.

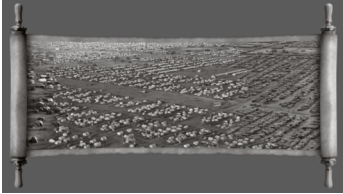


Political Realism

(2009, HD Video, 3:35)

This video artwork deals with the regime shift and the cycles of change of an era. Within the last thirty years, a drastic change has taken place in the realms of politics, economics and culture. Suddenly the world looks different for many, including for old and new generations.

Ideologies and resistance systems which were actively propagated by the different power structures lost its grip due to the advent of a new humanity. At the same time, it also left us with doubt about how to reconstruct a new 'moral code'; a big question of its survival in the immediate future. *Political Realism* brings this confusion to every single home and recollects the memory of the past to analyze the impermanence of all great power structures of the present, as well as many more yet to come.



Expanded (2015, HD Video, 3:36)

Refugee settlements across the world have a certain characteristic. Along with their temporary look they also systematically map the territories they occupy. A mark on the ground of rootless existence and a permanency in temporality reveals the nature of human tendency and the histories of mankind. An ever-flowing migration from a known to unknown territory always problematises the tradition and the cultural supremacy across the globe. Painstakingly mapped, these vast stretches of refugee settlements across history seamlessly converge as a mass landscape of an 'interim solution', or maybe a habitat. Be it Auschwitz in Nazi Germany, Darfur in Sudan, or Syria today, temporary structures are built in this constant movement of people across time, revealing to us the nature of this basic human pattern and its 'universal' identity, irrespective of the land on which it stands.



The Ark (2015, HD Video, 3:36)

Climate change and subsequent territorial disputes have a potential to tear apart the social fabric. *The Ark* intervenes in the midst of this apocalypse as it explores the great Biblical devastation. When steps of a new beginning take place, the artist, like the Biblical character of Noah who built the Ark, takes stock of humanity. The boat that shelters humanity from adversity in this Ark, reaches out towards an atomic nuclear plant. Human beings, who historically have survived calamities of all kinds, are now boarding onto another potentially dangerous threat created by our lack of regard for the planet. Personal belongings are constantly being transported from the old world to the new, disregarding the fact that these belongings will perish in the heat of the nuclear plant. The Ark, once the symbol of hope, changes its status becoming a power house of devastating proportions. When we turn our own habitat into a gas chamber, the myth of the Ark gets stuck in the archives of human memory.

Acknowledgement: Shaleen Wadhwa, Perna Sharma and Sarat Nayak

Biography

Born in 1973, Kothanalloor, Kerala, Gigi Scaria completed his Master's degree in painting from Jamia Millia University, New Delhi. His work draws the viewer's attention towards the painful truths of migrancy and displacement and the paradigms of development through his intense investigation of urban topographies and modern city structures. He is also concerned with the intended and unintended consequences of these developments for urban residents and the communities that make up, and divide them. Issues of alienation and unsettlement reverberate within the labyrinthine buildings of his canvases and the uncanny structures of his sculptures and installations. "Gigi's particular position is to investigate how city structures, social constructs, and the view of location is translated in social prejudice and class attitude," says art critic Gayatri Sinha. His recent exhibitions include BRUISED: Art action and ecology in Asia (2019) at RMIT University Gallery, Melbourne, Australia (2019); Fotofest Biennial Contemporary Photographic & New Media Art, Huston, Texas, USA (2018); 'Iconic Interruptions, Selected works by Gigi Scaria, 2007-2015', Frederic Jameson Gallery, USA (2017); Dwelling Pluralities, a collateral event of Kochi Muziris Biennale, Kochi, India (2016); Time, Site & Lore, Denmark (2016). Gigi Scaria lives and works in New Delhi.

Events

Artists and Curators Talk

27 March 7-9pm TWN, 4:30-6:30pm IST, 11am-1pm GMT

Introduction to the exhibition, *Loss & Transience*, with Curators, Zoe Yeh, Lucía Imaz King & Rashmi Sawhney, followed by a discussion with filmmaker Avijit Mukul Kishore and visual artist, Nilima Sheikh on their collaboration for the film, *Garden of Forgotten Snow*, and their respective artistic practice. Taiwanese artist Lee Kwei-Pi will respond as an interlocutor.

The Talk will be aired through Honggah Museum's FB Fanpage.

Film screenings

10, 17 and 24 April 2.30-4.10pm TWN

Screening of Madhusree Dutta's film: *Seven Islands and a Metro* (100mins)

Loss & Transience 2

An online screening programme in partnership with videoclub, UK
19-27 March 2021



Selected films/video artworks from the exhibition, on a rolling program:

Ranbir Singh Kaleka: Man with Cockerel (6 mins) and Forest (16:00)

Gigi Scaria: No Parallel (6 mins) and Political Realism (3:00)

Avijit Mukul Kishore: Garden of Forgotten Snow (30:00)

Mochu: Wake (15:00)

Ranu Mukherjee: Home and the World (5:00)



Artists and Curators Talk

20 March 7-9pm TWN, 4:30-6:30pm IST, 11am-1pm GMT

Introduction to the exhibition, Loss & Transience by Curators, Lucía Imaz King, Rashmi Sawhney and Jamie Wyld (videoclub) followed by an artist's talk by Gigi Scaria with public interaction.

Presenter



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