

LATITUDE 28

WHICH SKY DO BIRDS FLY |

WHICH SKY DO BIRDS FLY || 25 AUGUST---15 OCTOBER 2023



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CO-CURATED BY
SALONI JAIWAL
& MANAN SHAH

LATITUDE 28

DEENA PINDORIA
DOLA SHIKDER
IPSHITA MAITRA
MEENAKSHI NIHALANI
POORVI SULTANIA
PRIYANKA D'SOUZA
SALMAN BABA
SATYANARAYANA GAVARA
SUBRAT KUMAR BEHERA
UTPAL PRAJAPATI
WALTER D' SOUZA

CONCEPT NOTE

“What would it be like if I had something to defend - a home, a country, a family - and I found myself attacked by these ghostly men, these trusting boys? How do you fight an enemy who fights with neither enmity nor anger but in submission to orders from superiors, without protest and without conscience?” *

— Amitav Ghosh, *The Glass Palace*

From time immemorial, place-making has been acted out as an evolutionary practice especially by us in our ecosystem through a feeling of affinity or attachment to a place which leads to building of communities, as we start finding points of connection. The psychological drive to feel this subjective experience/ entity has been coined over the centuries as Belonging or Belongingness. Within this urge to belong there develops the ‘right to feel at home’ at a specific location, which gives birth to the politics of space and access to it and question, ‘who belongs more?’ as the historical past is filled with narratives of colonisation and contestation over lands and space whether territorial, ecological or of natural resources.

In our post-truth society, it’s a known fact that humans as well as the ‘more than human’ world which is biodiversity is marked by mobility, flow and interconnectedness. Sense of belonging is carried out or performed as a relational field where multiple entities are involved. Since, the civilisational process is founded on contrasting drives which are dynamics of power on one side and on the other empathy, belongingness is employed by hegemonic cultures or structures to produce the politics of inclusion/ exclusion. This is also a result of how history is manufactured to the present generation at different points of time sometimes as by far accepted ‘Scientific truths’, ‘historical facts’ as well as ‘nomenclature and vocabulary’. Because, for every other individual, that knowledge of ‘sense of belonging’ is passed down as a generational education.

This sense of belonging to a space - geographical, ecological, psychological or intimate determines the ordering and bordering of the world. Within this narrative, we have witnessed a rise in territorial conflicts which are motivated by geo-politics based on a psychological and imaginative idea of belonging and citizenship. These contestations and exertion of the Anthropocene beginning especially from colonial history, have resulted in the eradication of natural habitats where ‘grand narrative’ of urbanisation takes precedence

backed by late-capitalism. On the other side of the coin, there is an awareness of inter-species relationship and the sense of belonging where subjectivities are formed over points of connection to the same time, resources, habitat and landscape.

The exhibition calls attention to changing definitions of belonging in contemporary culture and thereby the politics of space with the backdrop of ever-present contestation of lands. Working from different vantage points, the artists represent alternative histories that inform our current sense of belonging, the contestations over space, bodies and territoriality, interrogating and resisting the hegemonic narratives that become the mediatized source of knowledge for the individual.

Belonging is created through intimate relations of entities which includes objects, humans, flora and fauna, the sphere of biodiversity, culture and everyday rituals thought to be found in a certain location which leads to place-making. But, as Nira Yuval Davis notes in *Politics of Belonging*, that from globalisation to the free market, we have come far to become a “web of social networks”, and belong to multiple places simultaneously. Within this narrative, we have witnessed a rise in territorial conflicts which are motivated by geo-politics creating multiple forms of citizenship and belonging. Her idea of activist citizens explains the nature of plurality of belongingness which has emerged in contemporary times where the focus of activism can be local, transnational, transcultural creating ambiguity in boundaries inside and outside, within the state and beyond.

The digital media is untamed and also now works as a myth-making device where a lot of “facts” float unverified. This slippage of misinformation into history is now a major influence on how people make sense of belonging to a place and time. Therefore, it is essential for us to revisit written and oral history from a contemporary lens informed by the awareness of plurality of vantage points of recording and dissemination of knowledge and by a multicultural sensibility of a global digital citizen. In that process, we will be able to have a better understanding of multiple kinds of belonging informed by social, cultural, political and ecological consciousness.

*Amitav Ghosh (2001). “The Glass Palace: A Novel”, p.31, Random House.

Meenakshi Nihalani

Meenakshi Nihalani (Mumbai, Maharashtra) is an active research based Visual Artist from India. She has received her BFA in Sculpture from the Sir J.J. School of Fine Arts, Mumbai. She has recently exhibited in Berlin, Germany, representing the Agrarian culture and social and psychological impact of British Colonialism on the Indian farmers and the ecosystem emphasizing the Absurdism of politics and power on mankind. She has received the Scholarship Residency by Fundaziun Nairs in Switzerland in 2019 and also has attended residencies in Amsterdam, Germany, Switzerland and India. Her practice involves expression of forms through her sculpture, textile installations & drawings depicting ironical glimpses of situations in our postcolonial society. Involving Textile and Sculptural forms, the artworks reflects the absurd psychology of mankind.

The artist currently works from Mumbai and Baroda, India.

Coming from a background with the chaos of expressions, Meenakshi is a second-generation Post-Colonial Daughter of her family. Her Grandparents had to migrate from Sindh, the northern part of previous India while escaping the killings through the Arabian Sea to the Independent declared section of the country. It took a lifetime for her community to understand that this deconstruction was permanent enduring the impacts following it.

Her works are based on the association of the post-colonial construct to the ecosystem and the communities especially affected by it, leading to personal allegories and the future associated with it. The recent series is based on post colonial landscape of an agrarian country with the narration of Indigo farming, farmers and the land, a part of the colonial system.

Meenakshi's practice includes drawing based and handstitched Textile Installations and sculptural forms, using mediums as wood, glass, textile, bricks. She represents the stories of the survival of the land and attached to it reflecting episodes which are minimalistic documented in the passages of our history.

Incorporating traditional techniques in Installations and sculptures, she emphasizes the medium learnt in her childhood to express a common technique of stitching taught to her as a girl child, something rather more important than education. My personal preference lies in dramatic visual and large dimension artworks to communicate with the viewer as a narrator. All through human history of mythology and religion, culture, where human behaviour through art has been used as a metaphor for conducting a message to society. I intend to reflect human philosophies utilizing Art."

Meenakshi Nihalani

Across Hindu Kush North

Jute Textile, Hand Stitched Indigo Cotton
Thread, Indigo Dye Hindi Dictionary Paper

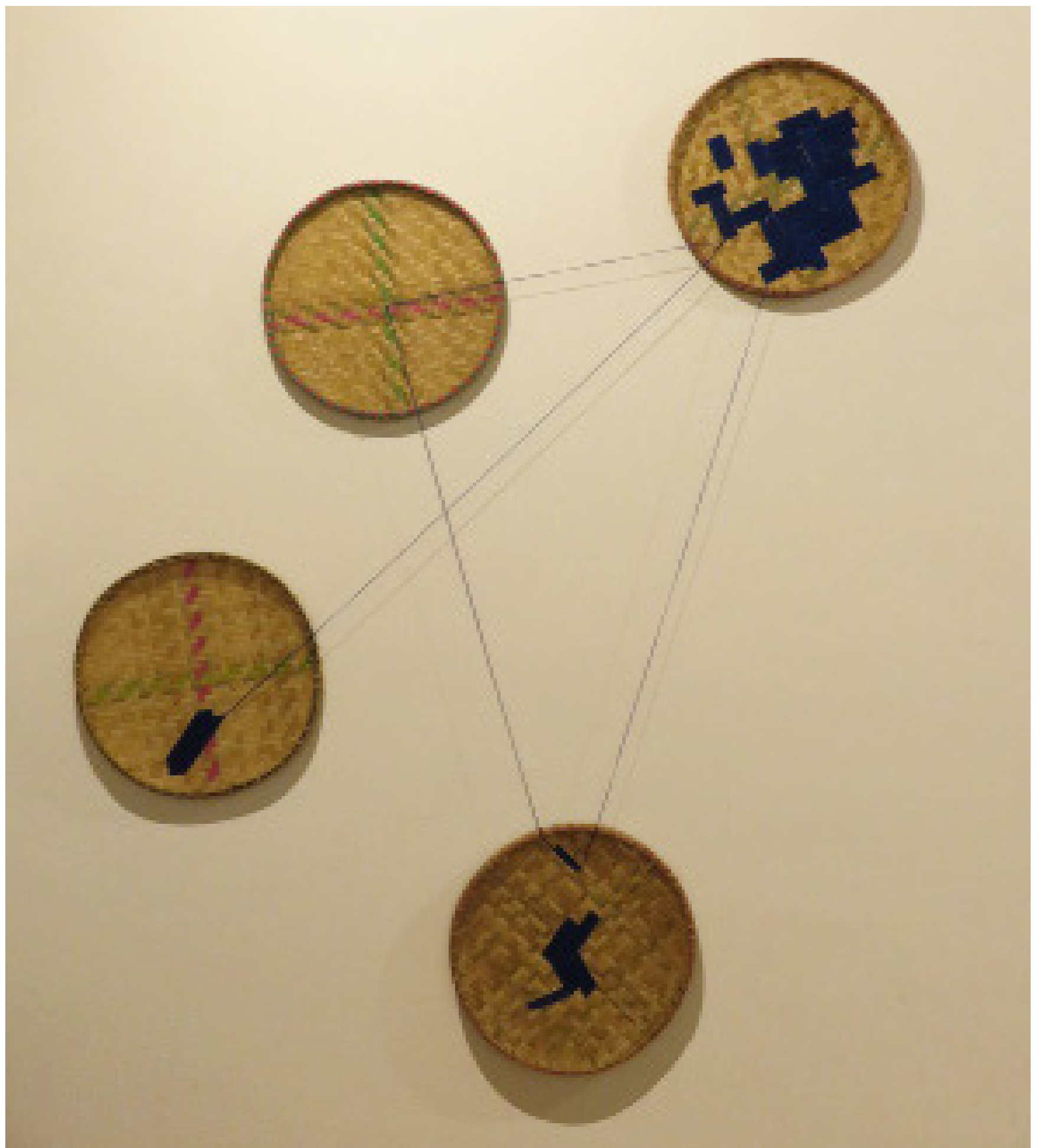
72 × 48 inches

2022

INR 1,50,000



Meenakshi
Nihalani



1777 to 1857 Landscape Bengal

Winnowing baskets from eastern India, 4
nos, Cotton thread, Indigo Dye

24 × 96 inches

2019

INR 1,00,000

Meenakshi Nihalani

Childhood Waves

Cotton Textile, Indigo Dye, Hand Stitched
Cotton Thread, Indian ink

36 × 48 inches

2023

INR 1,80,000



Meenakshi
Nihalani



Topography A

Bronze Relief Cotton Textile, Indigo
Dye, Teak Frame

12 × 16 inches

2023

INR 1,40,000

Meenakshi
Nihalani

Topography B

Bronze Relief Cotton Textile, Indigo
Dye, Teak Frame

12 × 16 inches

2023

INR 1,70,000



ABOUT THE CURATOR(S)

Saloni is a writer and photographer. She completed her B.A. in English Literature from Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi and her M.A. in Arts and Aesthetics from School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has interned with National Museum and Sahapedia in the past. Currently she works with LATITUDE 28 and TAKE on Art magazine.

Manan Shah is a museologist, writer and aspiring art curator and art critic. Born and brought up in Kasheer (Kashmir), he holds a degree in Archaeology - Ancient History and Museology from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India. He has published widely in magazines and journals including Inverse Journal, History is Now Magazine, World History Encyclopedia, Free Press Kashmir, among others. His writings and curatorial practices are attentive to the knowledge systems of antiquity that have informed the current-day cultural and political identity of Kasheer. Shah is also a recipient of the Kochi Students Biennale Curatorial Fellowship and has been part of India Art Fair's Young Collectors Programme as an assistant curator. He is a member of ICOM. Currently, based in New Delhi, Shah is working as an assistant editorial coordinator at TAKE on Art - a magazine dedicated to contemporary South Asia arts. He is also part of the curatorial team at the contemporary art gallery LATITUDE 28, New Delhi, India.

About LATITUDE 28

Since 2010, LATITUDE 28 has probed into a gallery practice that is lateral, disruptive and avant-garde. Discerning emerging artists from South Asia, the gallery focuses on experimentation with medium and material fostering critical dialogue, perspective and practices by writers, critics and researchers alike. These maker-market relationships amongst collectors, art enthusiasts and art practitioners have grown through the gallery's interactive incubation space, where ideas have been generated through innovative curatorial projects located on the cusp of art history and socio-political context through site-specific artworks and artist talks. The gallery makes art accessible and inclusive with exhibitions located at the intersection of artists, institutions and art education. LATITUDE 28's vision is shaped by its Founder/Director, Bhavna Kakar, who is also the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of TAKE on Art - South Asia's leading contemporary art publication.

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