





"You may shoot me with your words, You may cut me with your eyes, You may kill me with your hatefulness, But still, like air, I'll rise."

- Still I Rise, 1978

Maya Angelou (1928 - 2014)

and stilli rise

A collection of Letters written by Young Women from India, Abu Dhabi (U.A.E.), Mexico, the P.R.C., and the U.K.

With Contemporary Artists Banoo Batliboi | India Eva Pacheco | Spain Felicia Murray | USA Katherina Poggendorf-Kakar | Germany Louise Gardiner | UK ManilRohit | India Nandan Ghiya | India Natalia Ludmila | Mexico Pratul Dash | India Princess Pea | India Puja Bahri | India Qamar Dagar | India Saba Hasan | India Sachin George Sebastian | India Samit Das | India Vibha Galhotra | India

March 27th to April 12th, 2015

Instituto Cervantes de Nueva Delhi Hanuman Road, New Delhi - 110 021



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Forew0rd

"I have known about CSSG since their first fund raising event in 2011. Over the years I have got to know them better. The work and dedication they have on providing opportunities to young men and woman is phenomenal. It has been an honor to be able to support such a powerful initiative and utilise the creative sectors to help those less fortunate than us.

This present initiative is close to my heart. Having a daughter I am concerned about her future in the world in a way that I would not worry with a son. She has a bigger battle to fight even in this day and age as bigotry and stereotypes still prevail in society globally.

Luckily the opportunities and role models available to my daughter are both varied and strong unfortunately that is not the case for many women. The use of the written word provides an intimate insight that these young girls have been brave enough to share. By providing them a voice to express their deep rooted concerns and hopes and aspirations for the future the Creative Services Support Group are truly paving the way for a better future.

This exhibition comes at a time when the world's attention is focused on India and rights for women. It serves as a powerful tool imbibed in hope to remind us that we still can make a better future for the next generation of young women.

On a more personal note I have found Anand Kapoor to be one of the few people I know who is focused, dynamic and determined to make a change through the charity. It is important that we support such initiatives as CSSG in any way we can as this has the potential to make a massive change to the way we view poverty and women in India."

Gustavo de Aristegi Ambassador

Gustavo de Aristgui

Ambassador, Embassy of Spain In India



Introduction | About the Initiative

The title of the exhibition comes from one of Maya Angelou's most famous collection of poems – *"And Still I Rise"*. As the title suggests the collection focuses on a hopeful determination to rise above difficulty and discouragement. This is a central theme of the exhibition which aims to raise awareness of gender discrimination and its impact on limiting opportunities for women worldwide. The voices of the future – those of young women often marginalised in society express their hopes and fears, and shed light on a possible future they dream of. The Exhibition showcases young women now empowered by their pen and their words, to express their visions and dreams.

Literacy is a fundamental tool and undeniable right, as are myriad forms of non-verbal communication further strengthened by the contextual utterance of words. This is of utmost significance for the growth and future realization of women.

This Exhibition features the writings of young women from around the world highlighting similarities and differences, hopes and dreams, ambitions, with a focus on the evolving roles of woman in the future. As a parallel dimension, the works of sixteen contemporary artists are exhibited. The artworks reinforce the power of the written word and female empowerment across languages and cultural realms, and the inherent energy of art to transform beings and enrich their lives. The Exhibition centres around an education and outreach programme that will take stimulus from the artists and the artwork to open up discourse on gender and inequality.

As the exhibition came together the support for the initiative grew larger and larger. Empowered women were invited to take part by lending their voice to Maya Angelou's poem and share the various nuances of the the female role mode; thus showing that strong women and feminists come in many different forms.

The Exhibition has come about through the efforts of CSSG's charitable activities in providing opportunities for young men and women. CSSG is marking 2015 as the Year of Women to showcase the power of the female voice and the opportunities that exist for them.

Anand hapoor

Anand Kapoor President of CSSG and co-Curator



Parallel Entretiens: Words and Imagery

Inherent in this exhibition and project are a number of interwoven themes, very serious and fundamental values, and the energy and essence of curiosity and endeavour. This presents diverse manifestations of personal expression, hand-written letters by young women who participated in the workshops, and on a parallel tangent, works by contemporary international artists. Issues of gender, the power of the pen, and the magic of paper and the printed book, emerge from these works and voices.

Art, both the actual physical process of making a work of art, as well as the experience of the viewer as observer and interactive participant, is acknowledged and applauded for diverse powers of transformation. Similarly, the act of writing stimulates mental and physiological processes. Early forms of writing were pictographic in nature; numerous examples are visible in cave paintings, such as those at Lascaux in France. Modern Chinese has revised its forms and stroke counts, but maintains this primordial structure. Three perfections is the gathering of poets, calligraphers and painter to create an artwork in ancient China. The resulting product would be a painting that would include the work of a calligrapher to write a poem. (See Michael Sullivan, <u>Three Perfections: Chinese Painting, Poetry and Calligraphy</u>, Braziller, 1999).

Activities and investigation which involve deeper systemic undertaking stimulate exploration and fulfillment, in ways not possible through digital connectivity. The personal life journey of the poetess Maya Angelou (d.2014) illustrates the courage of conviction to radically change life circumstances, to address the restrictions of society and abusive patterns of behaviour, and to herald the power of the pen! India has a strong tradition of artists as writers. Rabindranath Tagore (d.1941) was a philosopher and educator alongside his creative outpourings. He believed in the essential revelations of art as the shaper of minds. In 1917, he pens:

Therefore I shall not define Art, but question myself about the reason of its existence, and try to find out whether it owes its origin to some social purpose, or to the need of catering for our aesthetic enjoyment, or whether it has come out of some impulse of expression, which is the impulse of our being itself. (What is Art?)

Despite the increase in technological breakthroughs and dissemination of information, the propensity for misunderstanding, discrimination and violence remains tragically pervasive. Fostering creative dialogue, encouraging basic modes of expression, through education, art residencies and collaborative programs, engenders exciting pathways for dynamic processes and heightened empowerment. Throughout this project, many levels of committed participants have been involved and each contribution has been distinct. *And Still I Rise* attests to the hopes and ideas of individuals, and the belief that expression is our shared strength, a needed catalyst for evolution and dramatic change.

Elizabeth Rogers, curator

Graduate of Harvard College, Harvard University (A.B.), Institut d'Études Politiques (C.E.P., Paris), and Institut des Civilisations et Langues Orientales (Matrise, Paris), Beijing and Fudan Universities (P.R.C.), and Yale University (M.A. and M.F.A.). She was the Assistant Director of the Museum at Japan Society (New York), the Director of the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art (New York), consultant to World Monuments Fund (New York), a consultant to the Museum at Tibet House (New Delhi), and a consultant to the Asoka Mission, New Delhi.



CSSG founded in 2011

The Creative Services Support Group (CSSG) is a registered charity established to aid underprivileged young adults through skills training and mentorship within the creative sectors. CSSG believes that equal opportunities should be given to people regardless of their upbringing. It aims to break down the barriers to equality of opportunity, inclusion and human rights by focusing on providing vocational training within job placements to young adults from underprivileged backgrounds.

Throughout the past few years CSSG has found that many young women refuse to be open to opportunities within certain sectors due to strong stereotypes and misinformation. As a result they are missing out on opportunities that present themselves. By using the Exhibition and Art as a springboard to address gender issues in children, it allows us to go some way to enable these children to become more tolerant and open to opportunities that would come their way in the future and not make decisions based on gender or stereotypes.



Feeding Hearts is the awareness arm of Creative Services Support Group (CSSG). Our intitiative Feeding Hearts cultivates talent and feeds young minds. It engenders kindred hearts inspiring them to reach out to the youth and support them through CSSG's programmes and activities.

The Workshops

Flow India is an organisation that designs and delivers innovative educational experiences that engage with art, heritage and culture.

We support Creative Service's Support Group initiative in our belief that cultures are systems of thought – and each of us is uniquely formed by our personal history and current reality. By reflecting deeply on our own experiences and attitudes we make connections and become more self-aware. This self-awareness is a part of the process of empowerment.

In our initial set of workshops, designed in collaboration with CSSG, we worked with girls from across Delhi and from very different social backgrounds to create letters about what it means to be a girl and their aspirations for the future. We did not specify the target of the letters and gave the option of anonymity.

We initiated discussion by thinking about stereotypes in a simple exercise of categorising descriptive words, e.g. brave, sensitive, loving, or strong as being typically applied to boys or girls. They were then encouraged to think about how they saw themselves and their future.

The principle behind the workshops was to create a very open space for reflection. What came out was unexpected and raw. Some expressed anger, and some felt sorry for others. While some of the girls were highly articulate, in many cases their skills in writing were not equal to the depth of emotions or complexity of the ideas they had spoken about in discussion.

The body of letters stand as they are – unpolished and intimate. These letters inspire and link the artworks in the exhibition and provoke us to think about our own opinions and immediate responses.

Flow India and Creative Services Support Group will now be undertaking a second set of workshops, which will use the exhibition in its totality to reflect on issues of gender discrimination and stereotyping. For these workshops we are again bringing groups of children – both boys and girls - to explore, discuss and create.

By its nature art is subjective rather than didactic. Complex ideas are made tangible. Our responses are not polarised, judgemental or dismissive. Using a methodology involving focusing, investigation and creativity we can ensure a deeper response to the exhibition and the ideas that underpin its curation.

Our learning on this journey is that there is a great thirst for new ways to explore old issues – that cracked fault-lines in our society are inflicting great pain, and that our tales of global and societal progress are undermined by the very anger and passion with which these girls have written about their own lives. We see art and writing as at the forefront of humanity's effort to create a more liberated, empathetic and empowered future for all our children.



The Film

The video combines the voices of women from all walks of life into a single entity which enforces the strength of a united voice, attesting to the force and power of the written word. The use of the poem enables the message to be remphasised, bringing the exhibition full circle from the written word to artistic interpretation to the spoken word. It provides a voice that echoes through the discourse far beyond the emphemeral. A voice that will not go away, a constant reverbration in the subconscious, that reaches past the present long into the future – demanding change. The coming together of these women allows the discourse to continue beyond the four walls of the exhibition reaching out and empowering a wider audience by inspiring them to make a change. Empowerment and inspiration come in many different forms and guises, and dispel sterotypes by creating a whisper that can turn into a tide.



E X H I B I T I O N



Banoo Batliboi

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

Children develop their gender identity, early in life, by observing social cues of who they should be and responding to approval for certain behaviours that their environment gives them. I am enthusiastic about the efforts of CSSG, as I believe that when children are able to freely express their dreams, unburdened of their gender, they can come closer to their authentic selves and thus increase their potential for happiness.

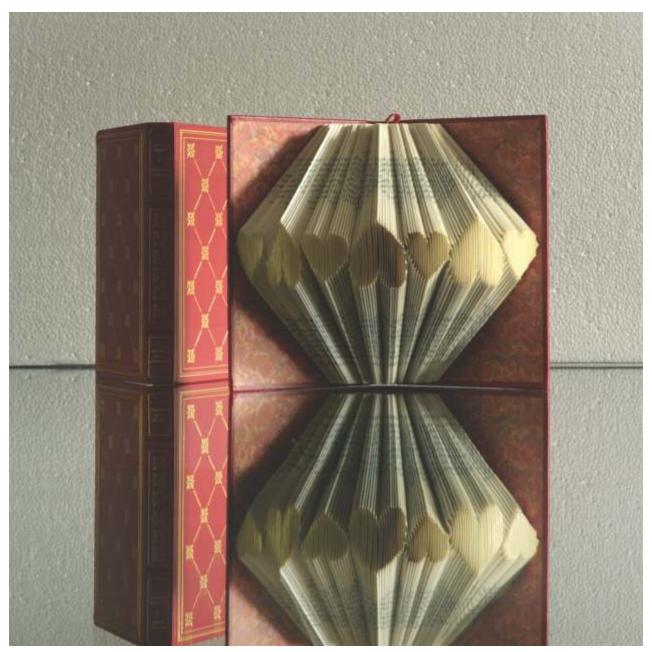
ABOUT THE WORK

Literary fiction has always had a great influence on young readers in constructing their identities - what do manly-men do? What is the feminine ideal? Some books have reinforced the gender binary that exists in most societies while others have wildly overthrown them. The established roles of a generation or two ago are being re imagined in welcome and surprising ways. This process mirrors my work of transforming old books into book sculptures, where I challenge the way a viewer sees a familiar object by making it undergo a surprising change.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Banoo Batliboi is a self-taught paper artist who lives and works in Bombay.

For the past few years she has been working in the field of 'altered book art' by making book sculptures out of old books which are at the end of their lives. These forms are created by planning intricate folds that are executed with great precision. She reimagines the book in a different form and give it a new life. She has recently been part of a show, Reading Room, curated by Amit Kumar Jain.



Hearts Paper 12" x 9" x 11" 2014

'Don't go out' my mum said 'The world is bad', she begged 'For a woman, its hell', she claimed 'For a man, it is very well framed' I didn't get it back then Thought what was so rude about men Now I realise what she meant The pain through which she went In a world of male dominance Someone needs to talk some sense After all it has to be a lady Then don't complain her thoughts are shady When god made the wise, Apparently, he forgot to revise Torture, abuse and ban on freedom Are far away from a world come wisdom Take a step, why wait? There is a whole new world we have to create Fast! We are running out of time Suffered enough in the world of slime God times are near If we keep aside our fear Fight for our rights and dignity Our voice will no longer be an exercise in vanity. I am a girl and that what makes me who I am but that does not limit me not to do things what I want!

Yes, I am a girl and I am "supposed" to be serene and calm and subjugated but why! None of you here can answer that. Still, I ask why? Why am I always made to feel suppressed and devoid to feel what I really want to? I am not putting out these questions to you because I do not know the answers. I am doing this to make YOU ALL look for answers...... Which I am sure most of you would not!

I am a girl and whenever I cross a boy, I have his eyes lingering on my body and I totally understand that his testerones are on a rise but then too, why am I told to wear a 'full covering attire'? I am a girl and even I have a future then why, people want a 'safe' career and jobs for me?

Why is journalism, fashion designing and modelling made so scary to the outer world?

Why am I not let to pursue my dream? Why can't I go around in boxers and not been stared or shocked that?

I am a girl and why am I judged by the size of my body? If I am fat, why am I totally ignored and forgotten and why is that slim, tall, fair girl given the opportunity of getting that higher paid job? Just because I cannot "please" the boss in bed? The answers to all these questions lie in them itself.

The answer is "I am a girl" and being a girl I cannot be educated and I cannot do what I want.

When did being a girl become a curse?

We made it!

Just because you topple me down and force me to sit down and below you, I won't forget to get up! I will rise and rise above you!

I will stand for what I believe and yes we'll see a female who rules the world.

I won't sit back down and let you rule and guide me, I'm a girl but I know I can be better than you.

I am a girl and am proud to be.

I am a girl and I'll prove I can be the best.

I am a girl and I don't fear you all.





SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

Art and values education aims at the development of the whole person: an approach that considers the needs of individuals at all levels of body, mind and spirit. The entire world is currently suffering from an acute crisis of diminishing values. This is of great concern to national leaders, educators and parents as more and more children and young adults are being exposed to increasing violence, social problems and lack of respect for each other and the society around them.

While there has been an over emphasis on 'Learning to Know' and 'Learning to Do', 'Learning to Be' and "Learning to Live Together" have been somewhat neglected.

The project that Anand Kapoor and CSSG are leading have been produced in response to the call by international children and young people for a new look at moral education with a view towards the creation of an ideal human with noble values for the future world.

The approach is a new initiative which has been carried out in several schools, institutions, kindergartens and organizations by teachers / educators / facilitators.

ABOUT THE WORK

Her paintings are composed through the raja yoga meditation and the spiritual knowledge she experienced in her yogi life. Her paintings are a confirmation, verification and evidence of her practice in meditation. The painting she presents to the exhibition wants to give the vision of spirituality through the art where the spectator could find and resonate with their inner spiritual space within the self. This painting is a confirmation of the bridge between art and spirituality, and pretends to remark the narrow difference between the spiritual dimension and the present time of NOW.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Eva is a Ph.D in Fine Arts from the University of Barcelona, Spain. Her investigation is a continuous process of spiritual development through art and raj yoga meditation. Eva has a M.F.A. and a B.F.A. with honours from the University of Barcelona. In addition, she was a postgraduate researcher at the (UNAM) National Autonomic University of Mexico, and studied in Greece. She participated in the international event of - Images Voices of Hope, IVOH- a dialogue for artist and media leaders in Peace Village, New York USA during 2003. Eva has been working on T.V. programs, films and theaters. Her art has been exhibited in solo and collective exhibitions in art galleries all over the world, art spaces and events. She has practiced raja yoga meditation for more than 14 years at the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.



When you change, the world changes Mixed media – painting on canvas 39.3" x 27.5" 2013

TO MY 20 YEAR LATER SELF

"Speak your heart out" You said. What did you really mean? 'Coz to empty halls I screamed Nothing hearing me but walls I spoke my heart out..... And only silence heard.

"We shall listen" You promised. But was I still heard? The empty halls got filled, Now my wards gathered dust in empty minds I spoke my heart out..... Did you hear?

"You were not loud enough" You complained How can I be loud? I asked With your hands at my throat And your gaze at my chest, luring? Yet I spoke With a million shards down my throat I spoke my heart out...... Was I loud enough?

"You have been heard" You answered And stated I fell back Just to find hell still burning In all its glory. The stars still haunting And even mocking 'How dare I speak?' I spoke my heart out..... And I paid the price.

I spoke my heart out Loud and clear I spoke my heart out, With fury and fear Just to have my mouth clamped shut I tried rising up, Just to be pulled down Deeper into your world. A world of your pride A world of your pride A world where I was maid, a worker, a lowly creature, An object built to satisfy your desires. A world where I was anything but me I spoke my heart but...... Did anyone hear?

I spoke my heart out While they still let it beat......

DEAR WORLD,

ANYONE can dream big and become great. Whether young or old, the world is always at your side.

MAYBE it takes badness or may be it takes confidence. Maybe you must be strong to overcome the darkest times.

BECAUSE one day, love, hatred, jealousy and war will stand in your path.

IT will crush you and break you and leave you in pain. You will be left feeling hopeless. It will tear you apart.

TWO souls leave the earth every second. They leave in happiness or in sadness, in pain or in relief.

INTENTIONALLY or not, they leave their loved ones with memories.

ONLY some achieving their dreams, we all have ambitions, but only some stay strong.

NEVER the less, we are determined and we are strong. We are not competitive but we are bad.

SETTLING or travelling, with ambitions anything is possible. With our loved ones or without, we can achieve our dreams, if we do it right.

If we put our minds to it, we can achieve our ambitions.



Felicia Murray

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

When I heard about this project, I thought of the mother goddess Tara, vowing to ever remain in a female body until the realm of confusion and the place of endless rebirth is emptied, because, of course, a being can become enlightened in a female body. As women, we are the keepers of wisdom and the knowledge holders. We can share with each other through experiences as well as through books. Books are one's friends; they enrich one's sense of the world and others' points of view. The universal factor is that we are not alone and regardless of culture, we are in a fortunate time where it is becoming no longer acceptable to discriminate based on gender. I am honored to be part of this initiative and hope that it will accelerate the time where there is no longer any gender bias. I also hope that this initiative will encourage the education of boys and men to respect girls and women as equals.

ABOUT THE WORK

A self-portrait, reflected between photographs of my grandmother and mother, and barely visible portraits of my grandfather. This bedroom of my grandparents stands today in the family property in Vermont, New England.

I come from a lineage of strong women, each of whom had an inclination for isolation which led to a great friendship with books. Having been born into a family of dedicated readers, I was blessed with the presence of books and with an innate, instinctive desire to see what was inside those books. The mirror in the photograph represents how we reflect one another and how we are never alone as the reflection is that we are all sharing the same journey.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Felicia Murray, born and raised in New York City, studied photography at the International Center of Photography in New York. Her work has been exhibited around the United States, France, Germany, Venezuela, Ecuador, India, published worldwide, and is included in numerous collections, including the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the Musée Carnavalet (Paris), the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, Florida and the American Kennel Club Museum of the Dog in St. Louis, Missouri. Most recently, her work was exhibited in Looking Inwards, the 3rd Inner Path Festival of Buddhist Film, Art and Philosophy, at the Alliance Française de Delhi and the Korean Cultural Centre, New Delhi. She has spent a lifetime discerning the magic of light in her photographs of people, animals and nature. Her photographs explore the chiaroscuro that lies between motion and stillness and create intimate scenes from moments of both action and silence. She often uses long shutter speeds to show the passage of time, making the invisible visible and blurring the lines between time and space. In her photographs as well as her life, she works on manifesting presence of awareness and luminous clarity - a process without beginning or end.



Three Generations, Beaver Brook Farm, Vermont Archival pigment print 13'' x 19'' 1995

Let Me.....TO GOD

Let me be a part Then decisions and family talks start Treat me as mature Yes! Of course am an adult for sure

Let me freak out I don't know dancing I might be boring Accepting, even my looks aren't alluring

Let me live Oh! My friend, you came into my life with the blowing wind And, when out, without me knowing it You enjoy your life And everyday on seeing you my heart cuts itself with a sharp knife.

Let it be my day Want to be proud of myself, 'one day' And for now that 'one day' is 'no day' Want to achieve something Want to see the tears of pride, happiness and respect for me in my parent's eyes.

Let me touch the sky I want to grow, I want to rise 'Just DYING' won't suffice Let me be Just let me be myself.

TO ME FROM ME

Am I to be held back? Held back by the heavy chains society ties me down with. Why? Because of my gender; because I am a girl.

Be a certain way, "sit like a lady", "you are only a girl", "you need a boyfriend", "don't wear this", "your hair isn't perfect", "why do you hang out with so many boys?", "KEEP IT TOGETHER"

I aim to surpass my own expectations for myself. I aim to live every second of the life I was gifted with. I am to be happy and enjoy everything I do to the fullest. Aim to make those around me happy too. At the end of it all, just want to be a good human being.

Liberty is vital to achieve what the heart truly desires. However it does not come easily. This is our life, as women, something we just have to swallow and accept. But why must it be different for us. Why must it limit us?

Our lives cannot be controlled by society. It's in our hands to break the norms; to rise above.

Oh, priyanshi! I want you to do what makes you content. Speak out for what you believe in and help others find that burning flame inside themselves to do the same. If you feel like changing something about yourself, think about the repercussions it might have, but don't let the things that people will say ever stop you.

I know you have a big reckless heart and a desire in you that will drive you to accomplish anything you put your mind to. So go, achieve your goals, make your dreams come true and make yourself go to bed each night with a smile on your face.

Do what you feel like, when you feel like. Learn from all your experiences and have no regrets.

Good luck with everything.



Katherina Poggendorf-Kakar

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

To have an interest in young peoples' life stories, aspirations and hope is of great importance to me. My aim in founding Tara Trust, an organization that works mainly with children who had a less privileged start in life, was to create an open learning environment through arts and skill development that helps young minds to make choices and take up challenges. Anand is following a similar idea with his engagement and guidance of young adults. The show Elisabeth and Anand have organized – mainly as a space for the participating young women from less privileged backgrounds to experience and reflect about their own motivations in a more self-driven environment – is an opportunity for the artists involved to engage with the girls and perhaps help them to believe in their power within to take ownership of their lives.

ABOUT THE WORK

The installation "Spirit - and Still I Rise" consists of a glass jar with an artificial pink butterfly, a digital screen placed inside the table in front of the jar. The visitors are invited to tap the copper lid of the jar, which makes the trapped butterfly move frantically due to a touchscreen within the lid.

The screen in front of the jar will consistently project shifting photo material, which relates to free flying butterflies and the written letters of the girls participating in this project. The installation invites the girls to reflect and communicate about ideas, how -on the one hand- our history, experiences and traumas hold our mind and body trapped and limit our options to move forward in life, and -on the other hand-how aspirations, dreams and the value one gives to one's self can give one's mind the power to free itself.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Katharina Poggendorf-Kakar, born in 1967 in Germany, grew up in an artist family and was exposed to art from early childhood. She studied Comparative Religion, Anthropology and Indian Art History at the Free University, Berlin, where she taught at the Institute of Comparative Religion from 1999 till 2002 and took her Ph.D. in 2001. She is the author of several books and was a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Study of World Religion at Harvard, USA (2001/2002) and at Morphomata, Center for Advanced Studies in Cologne, University of Cologne (2011/2012).

In 2003, she moved with her husband, the writer Sudhir Kakar, to a village in Goa/India where she lives and works most of the year. In 2008 she initiated the non-profit organization Tara Trust, which uses art as a tool for growth and education for deprived children in India.

In 2012, she began to work full time on her art. She instantly received recognition for her installations and drawings from leading curators in India, which led to a series of exhibitions within India. Her body of work emerges from her academic and theoretical base in religious studies and anthropology and she perceives her art as a confluence of her work of the past 20 years. She is currently exploring two cycles of work: "Women/Bodies/Goddesses" and "Archives".



Spirit (And Still I Rise) Mixed media (iron, copper, glass with artificial butterflies, digital screen, video/photo material) 19.6" x 15.7" x 43.3" 2015

SHACKLED

Shackles of 'security' Binding my liberty Cannot fly up to the skies I feel trapped, my spirit cries Are you listening? Someone..... anyone? Give me my freedom, I want to run. A plethora of dreams in my heart Responsibilities loading up my cart. Expectations climbing up my ladder There is too much on my platter I can't handle so much, I may fall Could I speak to god? Grant me a call I would ask him, 'why did you create me?' If the world only wanted to rape me! If I was just supposed to be the production Of a stereotype that shows a sick reflection Of a society filthy and wry Too late for a cure money can buy! Help me; allow me to spread my wings I want adventure, not pearls on a string.....' I have been nurtured enough Now is the time to turn tough To take a chance, to make a change And break away!

I HAVE A MESSAGE! I WANT TO BE HEARD!

I'm a bit worried. When I look at the state of this world, right now, I feel extremely sad and worried and think "will this worsen in the future?" I am only 15 right now, and I have my whole life to live, I don't want to live in a world where women aren't allowed to live and enjoy life the way they want to. Women are faced with a lot of discrimination, with stereotypes and gender labels following them around everywhere. It hurts me thinking about existing in a world like this. I fear that my many hopes and aspirations for the future will not come true due to these meaningless tags. How can anyone generalise and put one above another?

As I said before, I have many dreams for my future; what I want to do, how am I going to do it, where I am going to live, my "bucket-list" etc. when I grow up I want to do something major with my life that will be better and influence others, in a positive manner. One way I can achieve this is by doing something noble like becoming a doctor, something I wanted to become ever since I was younger. Seeing the high rate of deaths of women due to complications during pregnancy and child birth and the large majority of deaths are preventable, it aches my heart and urges me to do something to fix this, for the world and especially for women. I want to get married and have family in the future, but not which puts down a woman. So many women are suppressed in their families, being used as baby producing machines; its obnoxious and disgusting. I do not want that; I want a loving family, one can call perfect. I want to live and enjoy my life, like a free bird not like a caged circus animal.

I want to be an inspiration to people, someone they'll look at and say "wow"! She is someone I salute. But I am scared that won't be the case. Why you may ask? Because I am a girl. The way the world is working now, I can see this happen; it's not hard to imagine. I want to go out at anytime of day or night and not be scared that something will happen to me. I am a dreamer; someone has trouble keeping her feet on ground. I will not be a subject or victim of these general labels. This infuriates me when I am expected to act a certain way only because "I am a girl." I want to have fun and enjoy life, keep my head up in the clouds without a care in the world. I am sure I am not the only one, not the only girl who wants to live life king size. So as citizens of the world I want you to take a pledge to never say "you can't do this, you're a girl" or not let someone do something because she is a girl. I want you to pledge never to surpass a woman.

I want you to take a pledge to empower your daughters, sisters, mothers and all the women in your life. We are no less and I promise you we will become superior someday. Women are the building blocks and foundation of our society, so don't you dare discriminate against one based on genetalia.

I WILL BE HEARD! I WILL RISE!



Louise Gardiner

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

I hope that this piece illustrates the precious roller coaster journey of life, the exciting unknown and the need to take risks. I strongly believe that by nuturing people's creativity we can find empowering and interesting ways to lead our lives. This exhibition is a celebration of the creative potential of all young people around the world. Like my tumbleweed, they can collect experience, nurture inner strength and blossom.

ABOUT THE WORK

This piece stands for so much I believe in regards sharing and spreading creative energy, positivity and inspiring people. It seems to fit the exhibition brief so well. It has a story of my life as an artist and as a self-employed person who has stuck with it and gone with the flow as much as possible. Not knowing quite where you are bound but giving life your absolute all. As the wind blows this tragicomic Tumbleweed along, symbolic of humourless desolation, it develops and grows in intensity, dresses up for the occasion and demands attention as if generating its own energetic force or electricity.

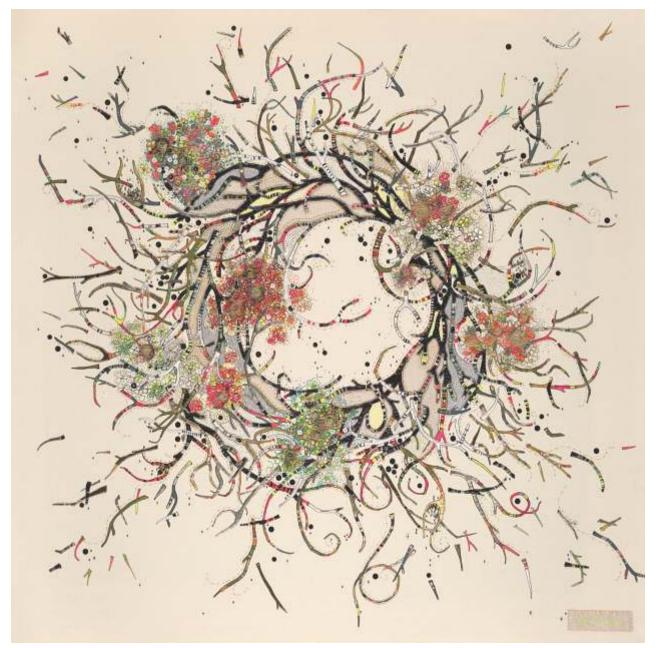
This embroidered artwork explores the notion of travelling through time and gathering experience. By intuitively creating complex layers of appliqué and stitch, I attempt to produce an embroidery that despite its labour intensive and finickety nature, has immediate dynamic impact. This piece was inspired by the odyssey of the humble Tumbleweed fracturing at its roots, randomly travelling through the landscape, not knowing its destiny but driven by a powerful independent and creative determination. As the wind blows it along, symbolic of humourless desolation, it develops as if generating its own energetic force or electricity.

I created these embroideries from intricate pen drawings at my farm-based studio in Cheshire, England. I then translated these complex designs on paper into stitch, drawing freely with a basic but strong sewing machine. Detailed painting and complex applique and embroidery have then been added layer by layer to create a rich and ornate 'thing of beauty' out of something once lifeless and brittle. I am passionate about exploring exciting colour combinations, neon, metallic and reflective materials which subtly react with light. I attempt to push the boundaries of the classic and ornate, versus flamboyant kitsch.

* The piece is an embroidered and embellished silk version of the original 'You Blow Me Away' embroidered canvas that she exhibited as part of a series of works at The Saatchi Gallery London.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Having studied at the Art Foundation at Manchester Metropolitan University, She then graduated from Goldsmith's College, London with a Textiles BA (Hon's) in 1994. In 2001 she returned to Manchester Metropolitan University and completed an MA in Illustration. After yo-yoing between London and the North West, She secured a studio in Bristol for 6 years, enabling her to develop larger scale, more ambitious projects. Every work is unique and labor-intensive, intuitive and spontaneous. The London Embroiderers' Guild awarded her a scholarship for her embroidery in 2005 and she has exhibited internationally. In 2012, she completed her most ambitious project so far - a sequence of 'exploding Tumbleweed embroideries' for the Project Space at COLLECT, The Saatchi Gallery. The Crafts Council commissioned a film about this work.



You Blow Me Away Mixed media (Silk, Embroidery, leather, metallic thread and beading) 51" x 51" 2015

DEAR WORLD, I AM FLOWER

Dear World, From birth the road extends itself on unopen and free path, From which the flower of my life uproot,

From which the flower of my life uproot, Nodding their needs as they laugh. Their care, a bud, my soul in bloom, The petal of my dream, My mind races forward, to all the possible scenes. But I feel my heart is hesitant To plant all of those seeds Happiness and anxiety, who shall I be? But I have understood, I've had a glimpse, At the best water for a flower, To breathe in compassion and breathe out love and live for this very hour. To nourish what already exists and let go of what has passed, To breathe with the wind, but not be uprooted when it lasts To stop being imprisoned by dreams and memories To accept the wildness of the ocean, And that world won't stop for me.

Dear World, my aspiration, are to grow, and hope, and bloom, And live my life as an odd little flower, Between light and gloom.

DEAR DAD,

When I see the little world around me (my school and home) I feel protected but further thinking made me realize that this protection comes at price – my freedom.

I know you have three girls that you need to educate, feed and love and even though you seem to love us as much as you would if we were boys, I do not believe that entirely true and can often notice it through the different restrictions put on our life.

You have mace us receive an education through which we realise that women are unfairly treated and while you say this is for our security I am old enough to decipher that this is all about my gender.

You dictate our life and force us to conform to your rules and your views which are often stereotypical. Either my shorts are too short or my pants too tight or my stomach peeked through my shirt as I raised my hand you point out everything wrong to demean me and this makes sure that I follow every rule you set.

I am not allowed to go for adventure camp because there are boys?? Seriously?? You send me to a co-ed school where I have literally been brought up along with them. If only I was a boy I would be allowed to go.

When I see my future I think about becoming a lawyer as this profession allows me to stand up for what I believe in. This freedom of expression is a mirage at home wherein we all made to feel free while curbing our rights at the same time.

Your sexist comments on the dining table often enrage me and when I think about my life goal if would be to live in a world when both men and women are treated equally.

Women are not treated equally in the society, no matter how hard they try. They are often ridiculed for even stand-up in the first place but as you know I am not one to back down very easily.

I believe that even if I change a persons mind as to appreciating women for the different roles they play as - wife, mother, daughter or sister have been successful in life.



ManilRohit

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

As artists such beautiful initiatives help us put our art to direct use for some good. We all work on million ideas and thoughts and visions of a utopian world, and it is only through initiatives like these that the soul of our works finds a direct platform to be of effect. It's highly satisfying to be part of projects that have a vision to empower the youth of the country and that is also certainly the need of the hour.

ABOUT THE WORK

The work revolves around the unfair biases metted out to the female gender in our society, even before the girl child comes into existence and carries on throughout her life.

While we have used the symbolic neutral form of the "Foetus", both as the shape of the canvas and as elements in the work, the title suggests, how our society has the audacity to choose and manipulate nature's organic processes of birth, life and death. Simultaneously, our underlying Carnival theme treats this subject also as another one of life's amusing and bewildering paradoxes. Game on!!

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

ManilRohit is a collaborative brother-artist-duo of Manil Gupta (1978) and Rohit Gupta (1985). Brought up in Lucknow, they completed their respective early schooling there before moving to New Delhi in 1998.

Their works have been experiments in various media like, paintings, photography, sculpture, installation, design, including converting their own car into the popular Public Art Car project called 'The Holographic Love Machine'.

With the underlying theme of Carnival / Circus, their latest works are graphic and employ visually dense comic narrative. In their new works, they are also experimenting with contextual shapes for canvases, hand-cut into plywood and other materials.



The Rigged Lottery Acrylic, Pastels, Graphite & Stickers on shaped WPC Board 48"x46" 2013

WARRIOR AT HEART

I am gentle, but you cannot crush me. I am selfless, but you cannot misuse me. You may try to bind me in shackles, But I still fight and eventually break free.

I am sensitive, I am caring, But I am as strong as steel inside. I am devoted, I am soft, But you can never control my life.

You think you own me; you think you control me, But that is just your misconception. You think you can suppress my thoughts, But try and I'll come with more aggression.

I am a woman, who'll live her heart, Irrespective of what people say. I'll rise above all those, Who tried to pull me down one day.

Your attacks, abuse and torture, Are each day, making me grow stronger. Just like a diamond after being beaten, Comes out as beautiful as ever.

I m a woman, and I'll fight, Like a warrior for my right.

A LETTER TO YOU

I wrote this letter to you. Yes you, the person who is reading this. Many people may read this and the words will remain the same. But the meaning; well it will mean something different to each one of them.

There are times when I feel that there is something wrong with me. Always annoyed with the way things work in this world; I am forever complaining. Of course I do not like being so pessimistic but the truth is.....I want change.

The way society is, the educational system, the way we settle for lives that we do not want to lead. The way people fudge, discriminate and label others.

The way the world works. It needs to change. Each day I feel suffocated, I cannot be who I want to be, I do not live in the world that is accepting. I am not free. It is my dream to change the system; the way the world around me works.

Ever so often, I push these ideas out of my mind. I find all my hopes and aspirations ridiculous, unachievable even. I am at constant war with myself.

But then I see women like me being denied the simple joys of life. I see people break down because of the hate they receive. I see humans tortured, killed and held back. Held back from a life they want. A life they deserve.

All these things do something to my very being. It's like a force that pushes me. I want to change the world, it seems like a silly idea but it's like a torture in such an animal world.

I want to live in a world where it's okay to be different, it is okay to have fun and it is okay to be yourself.

I am a woman, I am a human being just like you and if I try, I can bring about the change I want to see in this world.

So can you.



Nandan Ghiya

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

The participation in such an initiative becomes an extension of my art practise and philosophy. More specifically in the context of the show, both the initiative as well as my works dealing with the idea of femininity seem to compliment each other. However, my works shift focus to a specific cultural context, as seen or perceived from a male's point of view, artistically so.

This initiative brings me a more objective, intimate and in-depth take on femininity. It's quite inspiring to be honest!! I have dealt with the themes of femininity for over nine years in my art, covering subjects ranging from motherhood, love, feminism, relationships, foeticide, abortion, molestation, iconography, mythology, discrimination, and domestic violence.

ABOUT THE WORK

Our 21st century existence is one of emulation, competition and pressure. We strive to address the routine challenges or adversities. My art practice is an effort to reflect the same. I employ various images/ objects, typical of Indian traditional aesthetics. My creative process involves some form of deconstruction/vandalism- simply a reversal of sorts, of the way human pursuits occur.

To elaborate, all our pursuits/aspirations are governed by an "image"- one of an ideal existence. In effect, when I employ a traditional/vintage image/object as a possible raw material/ medium of expression, it strikes to me as a realization of the same.

The set of two wooden figurines in this exhibit or "Peer- Pressure Glitch", as I have titled it is a distortion of the stereotypical image. It is a state of limbo/evolution/transformation/ transition- maybe, from old to new or from physical to digital. Just like our pursuits, it never really reaches anywhere. If it did, it would simply be tagged as traditional or dated or vintage. The transitory state is the state of its existence. The two female figurines or the other work Untitled (Mom) are two different takes on womanhood, borrowing from my surroundings and childhood in an orthodox Rajasthani family, and and the evolution or transition of changing opinions as to how a woman should behave or dress up, among other things. At the same time I also attempt to touch upon the aspirations of women in society, some of which they curtail, others they try to secretly live and realise in subtle metaphorical ways or through their offspring.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Nandan Ghiya was born in Jaipur, India and graduated in Fashion Design from the National Institute of Fashion Technology in New Delhi. His experimental art practice aims to challenge perceptions of the status-quo. Ghiya addresses tensions between a culturally-rich country and a rapidly-globalizing world. As he hails from a family where antiques and old photographs are well respected, this has helped him form his own perspective of genealogy and visual arts. Within the 'deFacebook Project', the artist has included a couple of different individual collections such as 'The Family Tree 2.0' and 'Single & Available'. These artworks develop his unique point of view on contemporary societies and human relationships in a series of vintage print collages, a peculiar recycling of different times. His first solo show was held at the Hungarian Cultural Center, New Delhi in 2001. His work is included in a number of public and private collections in India and abroad. Ghiya teaches at the Indian Institute of Crafts & Design, Jaipur.



Untitled Mom Photograph, acrylic paint and wood 25.5" x 21" x 5" 2013

The Peer Pressure Glitch (2) Wood and paint 28" x 8" x 10" each 2013

WARRIOR AT HEART

I am gentle, but you cannot crush me. I am selfless, but you cannot misuse me. You may try to bind me in shackles, But I still fight and eventually break free.

I am sensitive, I am caring, But I am as strong as steel inside. I am devoted, I am soft, But you can never control my life.

You think you own me; you think you control me, But that is just your misconception. You think you can suppress my thoughts, But try and I'll come with more aggression.

I am a woman, who'll live her heart, Irrespective of what people say. I'll rise above all those, Who tried to pull me down one day.

Your attacks, abuse and torture, Are each day, making me grow stronger. Just like a diamond after being beaten, Comes out as beautiful as ever.

I m a woman, and I'll fight, Like a warrior for my right.

TO MY 20 YEAR LATER SELF

I have been in constant turmoil with myself since I hit puberty even though I don't know why but I know its ok since the people around are facing larger issues. I haven't yet decided what I want to be mainly because of the fact that I don't want to regret later about the choices I make today. Getting confused about the career doesn't really mean that I am completely disinterested or well I don't know. See that is it. I really don't know who I really am. All I know is that I want to leave my mark in this world. My family has been really supportive by providing me a chance to explain myself by admitting me to a good school and by giving me forever 21 tops.

I am writing this letter in the Spanish Institute, sitting alone with 20 of my friends knowing that I am not a good or a philosophical writer but I am feeling relieved writing this letter. Seems like all the tensions, regrets, guilt and pain fades away. At one point of my life, I was popular self-centred, wannabitch and selfish but fortunately I have gone over that stage. I have made many mistakes (a lot, really) but I don't want to brood on that. I have got some amazing best friends whom I know will be with me for like forever? Yeah, the question mark at the end yet again means that "I DON'T KNOW "and again its okay. There was this stage in my life where I felt I was nothing, where I used to cry over break-ups, where I felt I was not good enough or intelligent enough or pretty enough. I have a dark complexion and all my childhood I have been called names but well it doesn't really matter. This seems awkward, writing this shit when you know you can't time travel back to your teenage- suck up life. So, now I cry less, watch English series, eat nutella, watch football and cut the crap out of my life. Even though, I haven't decided what I want to be. I want to leave a mark on this world. I want my pain to be felt even though the pain is not like having a family member killed or being an orphan or something but still, I want my presence to be felt. I want people to appreciate me. I want to leave a mark on this world. This is what I want and this is what I dream about. This is me ending this letter inside this Institute, knowing that I feel lighter and looking forward to 2034.



Natalia Ludmila

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

In taking inspiration from Maya Angelou's "And Still Rise" poem and some of the letters written by the girls during the workshops. I was searching for a way to depict a general sense of gender disparity in an indian setting and the preoccupations voiced in the girls' letters. ?? (And Still Rise) speaks of the invisibleness young women face in society's eye. A girl is not seen as a human being full of possibilities and paths to be fulfilled. In order to exalt this veiled state, only clothing items are depicted with detail while the girls are pencil drawn and scarcely discernible. Who are these girls? They are every girl, they could have been you and I.

The piece ?? is about making a certain human condition visible. It is ever present in almost all corners of major cities yet we seem to have become incredibly desensitised towards it. These girls are out there exposed not only to the elements but to hunger and abuse. In the piece the fragility of their situation is represented by the vast empty yet chaotic space engulfing these unknown girls.

ABOUT THE WORK

I feel that this exhibition and the letter writing workshops are important exercises as they shed a much needed light on the issue of gender equality. There is still quite a long way to go and the letters sadly evidence this, yet they also announce that change is taking place, but requires education and conscience building. We as a society need to shift from the obsolete paradigm in which one gender is viewed superior than the other.

The motivations behind my taking part in this exhibition are twofold. To begin with the theme is one that has moved and interested me for quite a while now. In order to remove ourselves from preconceived roles as women. I feel that we must inevitably be aware of the manner in which society views us and our part within it. Secondly as an artist I deem it important to engage with and speak about issues of relevance to society.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Born in Mexico City and raised in Canada. She holds a BVA in which she specialised in painting by the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plasticas (Mexico) and a Masters in Digital Design by the University of Canberra (Australia). Her work has been exhibited in several solo and group shows in Mexico, Brazil, Spain, Australia and Singapore among other countries. She was the Second Prize recipient in the XVIII Ibiza Biennale -Ibizagrafic'- with the project dfm e.p. Curated by Nilo Casares (Spain). In 2012 she was awarded the International Residency grant by FONCA (National Fund for Culture & Arts, Mexico) and spent three months in INSTINC Artspace in Singapore. Ludmila had work exhibited and commissioned by the Diego Rivera Anahucalli Museum (Mexico City). Early this year she was named in The 200 top expressions of Mexican Art initiative. Ludmila currently lives and works in New Delhi.



?? (And Still Rise) Watercolour on grey carton paper 35.4" x 75" - each panel 35.4" x 22.4" 2015

LIBERATE

There were times when silently, I yearned and aspired, Hoping that a patient ear would hear the unspoken words, Hoping that a kind soul would absorb my wild thoughts.

I waited patiently, But no one came. I was a puppet with no identity of my own, A puppet whose strings were mercilessly toyed with.

Pain was showered, Grief was gifted, Helplessness was bestowed, And sweet smiles were flashed, The curves brimming with hatred.

But now, things will change. I demand to be heard and understood, I insist to be given all I want and deserve. I give you no right to mould my life on the basis of this body of a woman which I have been generously gifted by God.

Imprison me, Torture me, Cut off my legs, Tie my hands. But in no way will you be able to stop the wings of my imagination, From soaring high into the sky.

I dream passionately, I hope patiently, I believe in myself fiercely, One day I will escape from your clutches.

I will escape into fresh air, Air that talk of justice, That smells of equality, And that inhabits a society of beings. Not selfish, cruel and wild beings, But human beings.

I will be ready to forgive, Ready to forget the sins of your past, Come together men and women of this would, Let's create a golden age.

GIRL AND PROUD

Well, I am a girl, a girl and proud, Proud to have the guts to extinguish The inferno that burns us, The reason of our fear and anguish.

I will not remain passive To your ruthless acts. Oh! You devilish society, Its time you check your facts.

You cannot change my motive Nor can you bend it, Because, I have the power to bring about a change, A change for a better world, Where freedom doesn't have a petit range.

I am proud to have the power to aware all those in the dark All those who think 'it's ok', I say, "No tree can stand without a bark."

I am no hero, I am a girl, A Girl and Proud.



Pratul Dash

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

I think being an sensitive human being, one has there own responsibility towards society, though I am not a politician or so on, so in my limited resource i have tried to express my thought towards the cause and it is always important to part of such exhibition like this one particularly.

ABOUT THE WORK

Few line about Love Difference. The world is made of differences. A form makes itself visible on the account of its difference with other forms. Red is red because of its difference with other colours. A mountain is mountain because of its difference with other forms. The letter A exists because of its difference from B and other alphabets. Van Gogh is Van Gogh because of his difference from other artists. Souls and consciousness exist because of their difference from others of the rank. If differences were not there nothing would appear visible, nothing would in fact exist. (Derrida has said the same.)

Ironically, much trouble has happened in the world due to the same factor of the difference. Some troubles relate to the differences in skin colours, others relate to the linguistic and cultural differences, racial differences, gender differences, economic differences, differences arising out of regional, national, and trans-national histories, some of which even culminated in the projects of colonization, imperialism, ethnic strife, genocides, and world wars. Sadly, in many contexts, the primacy of the difference has only proved to be a divisive factor.

At the same time, the properties of the difference have lent themselves fruitfully to the creation of the beautiful. In fact, there will be neither aesthetic nor the arts without the virtue of the difference.

Indeed, the world would be a desolate place if everything looked the same. How monotonous the world would be if everyone spoke the same language, ate the same food, wore the same costume, had the same mind, did the same type of art, had the same skin colour, and the same race.

We have, therefore, a strong reason to celebrate the difference.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Pratul Dash is a conscientious human being who believes that the most vital role of an artist is to work towards uplifting society. Born in rural Orissa, Dash grew up enjoying the openness of landscapes untouched by man. New Delhi however, came as a rude awakening to the artist, who spent over a year in the bustling metropolis while pursuing his Master's degree at the College of Art there. After experiencing first-hand the deteriorating state of natural landscapes, Dash became more and more concerned with the rate at which expanding cities were invading open spaces. His works reflect his sentiments about the environment as well as his own experiences as a man from a simple town, thrown into the chaos of urban spaces.

Dash was born in Burla, Orissa, in 1974. He received his Bachelor's degree from the B.K. College of Arts and Crafts, Bhubaneswar, in 1995 and his Master's degree in painting from the College of Art, New Delhi, in 1998. Dash has participated in a number of solo shows, the most recent ones being, 'Proxy Origin' at Palette Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2008; 'Neo-Istoria' at Palette Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2007; 'UNIDEE in Residency' at Cittadelarte, Italy, in 2004; and those at Krishna Collections Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2003; Triveni Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2001; and Rashtriya Lalit Kala Academy, Bhubaneswar, in 1995. Amongst Dash's honours are the from the Industrial Literature Society award, Italy; a scholarship from the Inlaks Foundation; the M.F. Husain award from the College of Art, New Delhi; and three annual awards from the B.K. College of Arts and Crafts, Bhubaneswar. In 2010 he exhibited internationally in a two man show at 1x1 gallery in Dubai; and solo shows at Metropolitan Matrix, Tamarind Art Gallery, NY; and Human spaces, Sara Khan Contemporary Art, Schaan, Switzerland.



Love Difference Watercolour on Paper 12" x 9" (set of eight works; each work is 12 x 9 inches) 2015

DEAR ME,

15 years from now, my brother – 15 years from now my parents, everybody I know and the six degrees of separation that connects me to the world.

People I know because of - sunshine doesn't seem so bright,

When going out for more than just groceries and a 'pani ka matka' make day's work; Home doesn't seem as much building with walls and windows and doors, than a place to share how a presentation went great and the chai at office could have that much more sugar.

When the feeling through an abyss,

happens only in fantasy fiction and

downward spirals of identity crisis

happen only in the Bourne Supremacy.

When flacks of feminity and marks of masculinity are no more than thread on a jacket of traits;

that carrying your heart on a sleeve

is as good as tucking it inside and locking it away

because differences are good.

differences are evolution, change

because differences can never intersect in the

parellograms of the society.

Unless you make them,

unnatural interventions

forceful expulsion

not natural selection

sitting at house sewing or cooking and crying at the TV or not reading and staring out of window and sweeping away ambitions under carpets of indignation and not speaking up or thinking out loud

are things that I have never been through

and never will in my entirety

because change is present

and change is constant.

just like the blood that flows through all our veins,

red and pure

and whole

I hope that 15 years from now you are exactly where you want to be, where sex is just a ratio and gender discrimination a thing of text books.

Like the Holocaust; a Holocaust of ambition and ideas and freedom

And like the Holocaust completely and entirely unnecessary change. This change started with my grandparents generation with the belief that society has warped the straight and over analysed the unbecoming of two simple words. a change that sparked and sparked and sparked until it caught a flame, like a forest fire on a dry summers day necessary in the nature to do away with the world and invite in a new world. Where the sunshine is just bright enough To light your class room.

I hope you're happy.



Princess Pea

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

Some one very dear told me once "Women your man". Ever since then I became more vocal about my feelings, hopes, dreams and desires. I don't feel any less then a man in this society. Every opportunity which comes my way to be loud enough about my emotions will be used. These letters are overwhelming and they join so many hearts.

ABOUT THE WORK

This statement talks about my engagement as a practicing artist with live art and performance. I address how my work draws on both personal and the questions of identity, the notion of perfection, self worth, the conflict between traditional and contemporary roles of woment in Indian society and the ever prevalent issuers of the cult of the celebrity both in India and abroad.

Princess Pea is a Gurgaon-based visual and performance artist. Her way of critiquing norms of society is through disguising herself into an anima character. She finds her comfort in that small element of surprise and teases senses of the audiences, as a living human toy.

With her latest project she started building her family, By launching a project called PeaOBOX (previewed at IAF14), where the audiences are invited to a big yellow rohmboctahedral structure, and to fill a form which is about "self and alter-ego" enabling them to enter their fictional world, where they can be anyone, dream as big, and change anything they like also would let them enter to the world of Princess Pea. The respected participants of the project becomes her extended family members officially known as "The PEA FAMILY"

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Born in Punjab, India, She lives and works in New Delhi. She graduated with a BFA and MFA from the College of Arts, New Delhi. This world of Princess Pea treads a fine line between the world of fairytale and the mundane. The broad scope of art challenges perceptions about our conceived notions of the self. She has exhibited in a number of solo shows: Supercarlifragilisticexpialidicious, Rob Dean Art, Blackall Studio, London, UK, 2010; and the India Art Summit, New Delhi, India, 2009, as well as numerous group shows.



There was something missing in the world (making of another world) Paper, rope, paper globe, fiberglass Size - variable 2015



Untitled (from the "Palace of Illusion" series) 72 '' x 48 '' Natural pigments on silk 2015





SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

Gender discrimination is something I am sure every woman as a Daughter, daughter in law, Wife, Mother or as a Professional worker would have faced at some point or the other. Maybe much/little less for some of us fortunate ones..!

This is however clearly visible in the majority of various social strata and I have seen this for myself when working closely in the slums. When a boy is born in most developing countries, friends and relatives exclaim congratulations. A son means insurance. He will inherit his father's property and get a job to help support the family. When a girl is born, the reaction is very different. Some women weep when they find out their baby is a girl because, to them, a daughter is just another expense. Her place is in the home, not in the world of men.

Thankfully, we are 13 girls in the whole joint family and very proud to say, all achievers and very independent women.

Reading most of the letters from India and around the world, made me realize that things are same throughout the world. Being a part of this show gives me an opportunity to express my discontent and take a stand through my visual language on this very important and sensitive issue. Art is used to express ideas that may not be acceptable by the society.

"It is amazing how the arts can unite people across the globe, no matter where they are from, because they transcend cultural differences and capture something of what it means to be uniquely human."

ABOUT THE WORK

My work titled 'INCOGNITO' is in salute to the letters received from all over the world that speak about gender discrimination, embedded right here in resin/crystals, embellished with pink plastic birds that is a metaphor for women. The chandelier like a woman's being/ atma/sexuality/swaroop/..... is a complex structure composed of many lights mostly hung in the center of a room, and that serves both the functional purpose of providing light, and the aesthetic purpose of giving the person in the room something beautiful to look at. The chandelier, an opulent magnificent celebration of life, light, beauty, and decadence is a source of light /life(women). Each of those lights (letters) talk about the different kinds of discrimination/inhibitions a woman goes through. They are all interconnected, yet at the same time can also be distinguished from one another, if you look closely enough.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Always experimenting, Puja is currently working in a photo-realistic style and experiments with sculpture, digital and video art. There is an interesting mix of the urban and rural milieu in her art that represents a rich tapestry of images and ideas inspired by her encounters during exploratory photographic voyages. Contemporary Indian city-scape, where the old and the new, the poor and the rich co-exist is featured in her surrealist imagery overlaid with graphic markings. The thrust of her creativity has clearly traversed from a more painterly stance to a layered conceptual and digital media genre.

Recipient of the Gold medal First Prize for her stop motion video work titled MAYAA at the VIII Biennale Internazionale Dell'Arte Contemporanea Di Firenze/ Florence Italy in 2011, Puja Bahri's work has also been featured at the Delhi International Arts Festival 2011 and 4th India Art fair 2012. She exhibits widely in India and abroad. Her work has been featured in several solo and group shows at Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Hong Kong, Dubai, Singapore, Florence, Malaysia, South Africa, Dhaka and New York.

Puja works for community domain and contributes to charities. She is one of the two founding members of Arts4All Trust a non for profit organization which works as an interface between the folk and contemporary arts. She lives in Delhi and works from her studio in the city.



Qamar Dagar

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

The initiative taken by CSSG is beautiful. I do feel that Art is a powerful medium to convey one's idea or to send across a message in a telling manner where we "hit but are not hurt".

We need to remain positive and empowered through our creativity and our words.

ABOUT THE WORK

This work is titled USHA, The Dawn. I have selected this name as I think it is relevant to the spirit of the exhibition.

I do feel that there has been a distinct and positive change in people's perception about the baby girl. While much still needs to be done, the first step is the awakening followed by practical steps. The arrival of a baby girl is a happy moment bringing in joy and abundance. She is the lifeline! A mother to be loved and respected.

Mere junoon ka nateeja zaroor niklega, Isi siyaah samandar se noor niklega My passionate pursuit will surely manifest itself, From this very dark waters, will emerge the dawn. I perceive SIYAAH SAMANDAR as ignorance and NOOR as enlightenment that comes with knowledge.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Qamar Dagar belongs to a renowned family of classical Indian musicians known for Dhrupad. Guided by Amir Abdullah Khan, a master calligrapher in traditional Arabic calligraphy who was also her spiritual guru. Her education and family background nurtured her sensitivity to the beauty of the scripts. She combines Devanagri and Urdu scripts to create works of art based on themes, words and sometimes poetry.

Realising the potential of calligraphy, she formed Qalamkaari Creative Calligraphy Trust that has already held three international calligraphy exhibitions representing art works in more than 15 languages from across the world apart from its representation in crafts.

She is a project participant in the Russia-based calligraphy company MVK. Her works are at MOSA (Museum of Sacred Arts) Belgium apart from private collections in India and abroad. She exhibits regularly and conducts workshops for school children and NGOs working for underprivileged children. In November 2015, her work was part of the 3rd Inner Path Festival of Buddhist Film, Art and Philosophy in New Delhi.



Usha (The Dawn) Ink and acrylic on paper 28" x 22" 2015



Saba Hasan

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

My work is inspired by multiple elements, most noticeably the landscape of the mind, nature, social memory, power conflicts, our future and a feeling of hope. CSSG has brought together a lot of these fundamental elements within the outreach programme they are conducting and the exhibition "And Still I Rise". The objective of creating a better future for girls and underprivileged youth is a powerful ethos that drives me as an artist and affirms that a small change in perception can trigger something new.

ABOUT THE WORK

"The silence from which a woman speaks" is part of a series of text and book installations referring to women's voices in life and literature. I have used books by Indian women writers as materials to sculpt and create art works. In this piece I have printed Urdu text on my mother's sarees, from her translation of mahasweta devis stories. It creates a dialogue between female generations through the written word while at the same time questioning traditions that have been passed down through the ages. This is incredibly relevant to the exhibition as it questions the present while accepting that there may be some knowledge that is retrievable and has relevance to today's generation.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Saba Hasan is a New Delhi-based artist with a body of work consisting of paintings, photographs, book installations, videos and sound presented since 1998 when she had her first solo show. Saba holds a BA (Honors) in Economics and an MA in Cultural Anthropology from Delhi University; and Certificates from Ecole D'Arts Visuels, Lausanne, Switzerland; the Pittsburgh School of Art, USA; and in Art History from Cambridge University, UK. She has been awarded international fellowships from Syracuse University, New York; the French Cultural Ministry, Paris; the George Keyt Art Foundation, Colombo, Sri Lanka; the Oscar Kokoschka Academy, Austria; and the Raza National Award for painting. Her video titled La Verite/Haqeeqat/Truth has been nominated for the Celeste Prize 2014 and her "walking in deer park" photographs received an honorable mention at the Moscow Foto Awards in 2014. Her performance video, Saba Hasan reads her Poems, was screened at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2015.



That Silence from which a Woman speaks Mixed media 96" x 72" x 36" 2014





SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

While looking at the letters from the participants of the workshops, I could see the imagination they expressed. Thus, I thought, my new body of work would compliment them as it is also about leaving the visual content unto the viewer, a space where different imagery could emerge depending on person to persons encounters.

ABOUT THE WORK

For me dots are just creating a void on a given surface. A void that can fill in almost anything. A dot could be thought or an event or a physical being

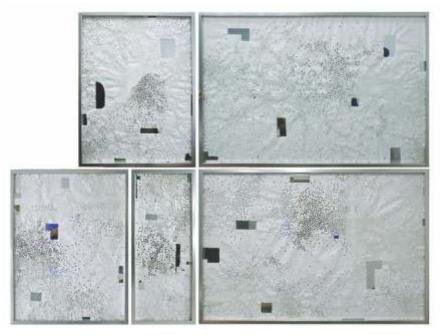
The process is about creating a fine piece that reaches a visually appealing stage, and then pushes the acceptance of aesthetics further by creating a disturbance within. A disturbance where the viewer almost feels that, without them, perhaps it would have been better. It is a disturbance that essentially balances itself. Or does the disturbance itself become another manifestation of aesthetics?

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Sachin George Sebastian was born in Kerala, India, and is presently based in New Delhi. He completed his under graduation in Communication Design from the National School of Design, Ahmedabad in 2007. He participated in the International Artist Residency, The Idea of the Book, at Khoj Delhi in 2009, following which he exhibited his works in various shows in the city and outside. Some of his participations include Ghummakkad Narain, The Travelling Children's Literature Festival, Dehra Dun, 2010; ART MAKERS "Circa 2010", Part 1, curated by Ranjita Chaney, Exhibit 320, New Delhi, 2010; Words: A User's Manual, curated by Himali Singh Soin, Exhibit 320, New Delhi, 2011; Roti Kapda aur Makaan, curated by Anubhav Nath, Ojas Art Gallery, New Delhi, 2012; and Art Chennai, with OED Gallery (Cochin), 2012.



Impossible size of nothingness 1 Spun-bound Olefin sheets, mirror, and anti-reflection glass 48" x 72" 2015



Untitled (from the "Impossible size of nothingness" series) Spun-bound Olefin sheets, mirror, and anti-reflection glass 15.5" x 20.5", 20.5" x 30.5", 15.5" x 20.5", 20.5" x 08.5", 20.5" x 30.5" 2014



Samit Das

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

I have a very strong affinity through my work with CSSG's initiative "And Still I Rise". To engage with the letters is a form of performance and a manner of taking this process further by the use of different materials and images, thus creating different architectural thoughts. This form of expression can allow a contemporary viewer to make a connection between history and the present in an on-going act. The letters thus seem to be an appropriate structure to share essential thoughts. It takes the viewer through different experiences using a support that is a visual/ textual journey, rather like a film. It is also a manner of recalling a vast range of past experience and putting forward another aspect of architecture. Thus making the conjunction of letters and art a powerful tool for understanding the environment we exist in and thus hopefully allowing change.

ABOUT THE WORK

If we look at the points of cityscape, we can see a strong statement, of form and sense of challenge which exists in the city. For me, it is another voice of a city, with that of visual art as an integrated part of urbanization. This is most significant in all world phenomena of our times. The city has today become an engine of growth: Everyone wants to live in a city, but the city is not extending at the same time it must accommodate myriad beings within it.

– Human Landscape - My work alludes to houses and man-made structures, although I am not interested in a representational document beyond its existence in a fragmentary form. Fragmented, it re emerges as a symbol of the damage that has been inflicted on the contemporary human condition. I prefer impoverished and deteriorated spaces that accumulate past and present traces of a life that has been lived. I try to fuse philosophical reflection with aesthetic composition.

- *Void* - Is there a city specific ethos? Is there a void in new communication and connection networks? Is the new media isolating human beings, pushing them into physical and mental voids?

- Human Isolation - Through the process of construction I find the confidence I seek in other areas of my life. Here I am safe to contemplatively excavate the layered depths of my existence and to transform materials into something beyond their pre-determined destinies. The synchronized language of self-exploration that weaves its voice into the process/work.

– *Mass Relations /Relationships of Mass* - Architectural spaces present an exemplary form of recognition. They also serve as points of convergence with memory. Essentially, however, space is far more than the appropriation of reality – it is a way of creating the world.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Born in 1970, in Jamshedpur, Das completed his BFA and MFA in painting at Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan. In 2000, he participated in the Associate Student Post Graduate Program at the Camberwell College of Art, London. His most recent solo shows include those held at Art Indus, New Delhi, in 2009; Delaye Saltoun, London, in 2008; and Anant Art Gallery, New Delhi; Apparao Gallery at Shriram Bhartiya Kala Kendra, New Delhi; Gallery 88, Kolkata; all in 2007. Amongst his group shows are `Manthan` presented by Nitanjali Art Gallery at Galerie Romain Rolland, New Delhi, in 2009; `Deep In Black` at Galerie Muller and Plate, Munich, in 2009; `Nature of the City` at Religare Arts Initiative, New Delhi, in 2008-09; `Bricks and Mortar' at Hacienda Art Gallery, Mumbai; and 'India: Maximum City' at Galerie Helene Lamarque, Paris.



Untitled Mixed media 26" x 38" 2010



Vibha Galhotra

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXHIBITION

I would like to extend my congratulation and best wishes to CSSG for this great initiative for supporting young creative minds.

In India, we have so much talent along with the great tradition and history. However, to create the right vision to reveal such knowledge and resources we need to have a confusion and stress free generation. That can only be achieved if we have these visionary steps to support these young minds at the right time. I am glad to be part of this great initiative with CSSG.

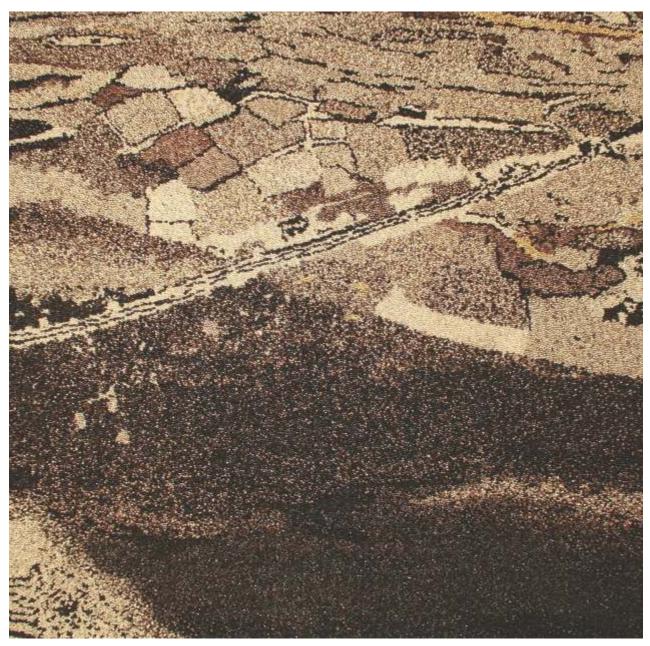
ABOUT THE WORK

The changing environment prompted Galhotra to create this series of works. Soon the whole world will face an environmental shift without an understanding of the world's borders and orders. Increasingly deteriorating water bodies affect all people living in cities around rivers: rising arsenic levels in the water reach the body system through the food grown from this water.

The artist shares that "FLOW is a series of work which started with mapping of the river passing by the city I live in. My intension is to recreate an image by deconstructing the existing image. As mentioned above that the walks around the flowing river which is dead now has been the inspiration for this series of work. As an observer and documenter, layering life with the flowing river. I am creating an organically sewn, aesthetical surface to invite the viewer, to the clean and beautiful facade to talk about the chaos behind."

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Vibha Galhotra is a New Dehli based conceptual artist whose large-scale sculptures address the shifting topography of the world under the impact of globalization and growth. She sees herself as being part of the restructuring of culture, society and geography of New Delhi and the world. Responding to the rapid environmental changes and re-zoning of land, Galhotra embodies the dense urbanization and jungles of steel and concrete through intricately sewn metal ghungroo tapestries – fusing historical grandeur with shimmering veils of steel. Galhotra's works are found in some of the world's leading collections such as the Devi Foundation (India), Essl Museum (Austria), San Jose Museum of Art (USA), Singapore Art Museum, and the Gates Foundation (USA).



Untitled(from the Flow series) Metal, Ghungroo (trinknits and bells), fabric, and wood 72" x 72" 2014

Acknowledgments | The Young Women

INDIA

A.Nithyashree Aahana Srishthi Aayushi Mathur Abhiruchi Rathi Aditi Daudiyal Aishvi Gupta Aishwarya Nangia Akiriti Ahluwalia Aksa Ameena Anahita Sharma Anam Aneeta Anita Aniali Anjali Aggarwal Anjani Miglani Anju Anmol Anonymous 1 Anonymous 2 Anonymous 3 Anonymous 4 Anonymous 5 Anonymous 6 Anonymous 7 Anonymous 8 Anonymous 9 Anonymous 10 Anonymous 11 Anonymous 12 Anonymous 13 Anonymous 14 Anonymous 15 Anonymous 16 Anonymous 17 Anonymous 18 Anonymous 19 Anonymous 20 Anonymous 21 Anonymous 22 Anonymous 23 Anonymous 24 Anonymous 25 Anonymous 26 Anonymous 27 Anonymous 28 Anonymous 29

Anonymous 30 Anonymous 31 Anonymous 32 Anonymous 33 Anonymous 34 Anushi Aggarwal Anushka Jain Apra Jain Aprajita Bagchi Archita Arohi Toshniwal Arushi Sharma Asees Kaur Ashu Rana Bhaii Bhawya Tyaqi Chanda Charvi Kundal Debolina Saha Deepanshi Mishra Devina Thomas Dhawani Sharma Diya Drishti Suri Duriti Kalra Esha Bhardwaj **Eviena Smith** Ganesh Pahwa Gauri Gauri Bansal Hana Dhaka Hansjaa Hilina Yalen Indu Ishita Agarwal JhanaviJhanvi A Nagpal Jhanvi Goel Jhanvi Sapra Jyoti A Jyoti B Kaiti Saneja Kajal A Kajal B Kamita Shiva Kamya Kamya Sharma Kashika Malick

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