

Symposium: 'Homelands: Art, Conflict and Displacement in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan'

Saturday 18 January 2020, 10am – 6.45pm
Clare Learning Studio

- 10.00 – 10.30 Coffee in the welcome area
- 10.30 – 10.50 Tour of Jim Ede and India by Alina Khakoo (Kettle's Yard)
- 10.50 – 11.00 Opening remarks
- 11.00 – 12.30 Session 1
Moderated by Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam (academic, writer, Dhaka)
- Dr Zehra Jumabhoy (Courtauld Institute of Art)
The 'Indian' Moderns after Midnight
- Professor Iftikhar Dadi (Cornell University)
Borders and the Everyday
- 12.30 – 14.00 Lunch in the Ede Room and curator's tour of Homelands
- 14.00 – 16.00 Session 2
Moderated by Dr Devika Singh (Tate Modern)
- Bani Abidi (artist, Berlin)
PLEASE DON'T HONK, THIS NATION IS SLEEPING.
- Yasmin Jahan Nupur (artist, Dhaka)
On Home (2019)
- Nada Raza (Courtauld Institute of Art)
Unhomely Futures: Altered Inheritance: Home is a Foreign Place with Shilpa Gupta, Zarina Hashmi and Sophie Ernst
- 16.00 – 16.45 Coffee break in the Ede Room
- 16.45 – 17.45 Session 3
Performing Landscape/Curating Nation
Sophie Ernst (artist, Berlin) and Hammad Nasar (Paul Mellon Centre) in conversation
- 17.45 – 18.00 Concluding remarks
- 18.00 – 18.45 Drinks reception and late opening of Homelands

Speaker bios

Bani Abidi is a visual artist working with video, photography, drawing and sound. She lives in Berlin and Karachi. Recent solo shows include: 'Funland', Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; 'Bani Abidi - They died laughing', Gropius Bau, Berlin; 'Bani Abidi - Exercise in Redirecting Lines' Kunsthaus Hamburg, Hamburg and 'Bani Abidi – Look at the city from here', Gandhara Art Foundation, Karachi. Group shows include Karachi Biennial (2018), Busan Biennale (2018), Edinburgh Arts Festival Commissions (2016), 8th Berlin Biennial (2014) and DOCUMENTA 13 (2012). Her work is in the permanent collections of Tate Modern, Museum of Modern Art NY, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Guggenheim Museum and the British Museum.

Iftikhar Dadi & Elizabeth Dadi have collaborated in their art practice for twenty years. Their work investigates memory, borders, and identity in contemporary globalization, the productive capacities of urban informalities in the Global South, and the mass culture of postindustrial societies. Exhibitions include the 24th Bienal de São Paulo, Brazil (1998); The Third Asia-Pacific Triennial, Brisbane, Australia (1999); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2000); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2000); Liverpool Biennial, Tate Liverpool (2002); Moderna Museet-Stockholm (2005); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2010); Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan (2012); Art Gallery of Windsor, Canada (2013); Dhaka Art Summit (2016); Office of Contemporary Art Norway, Oslo (2016); Lahore Biennale 01 (2018); and the Havana Biennial (2019). Iftikhar Dadi is an associate professor in Cornell's Department of History of Art and Director of the South Asia Program, and a board member of the Institute for Comparative Modernities. He is the author of *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (2010) and the edited monograph *Anwar Jalal Shemza* (2015). He has co-edited *Lines of Control: Partition as a Productive Space* (2012); and *Unpacking Europe: Towards a Critical Reading* (2001). He received his PhD from Cornell University. Elizabeth Dadi is a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI).

Sophie Ernst trained as an industrial mechanic before studying sculpture. She was a resident at the Rijksakademie voor Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. In 2016 she completed her PhD from Leiden University. For several years Ernst lived and worked in Pakistan, where she taught as Assistant Professor at the Beaconhouse National University. Ernst has presented her work widely at exhibitions like: the 6th Moscow Biennale; 14th Asia Triennial, Manchester; 9th Sharjah Biennial; *Lines of Control: Partition as a Productive Space* at Johnson Museum, Cornell University and Nasher Museum, Duke University; *Move on Asia*, ZKM (Karlsruhe); and solo exhibitions such as: *Memory is an Ideal Place*, Kunstverein Heidelberg; *Architecture of Belonging*, Royal Academy of Art, The Hague; *Presence of an Absence*, Museum de Lakenhal, Leiden; *HOME*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Manzoorul Islam, after his retirement from the University of Dhaka as a professor of English, has been teaching at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh. His areas of teaching and research include Modern Poetry, Shakespeare, Literary Theory, Cultural Studies and Postmodernism. He also writes on art and has curated exhibitions both at home and abroad. He was on the editorial board of *Jamini*, an English-language international journal of the arts, for more than ten years. He has lectured extensively on art, artisanal practices, architecture, and culture and daily life. Besides his academic publications, Dr. Islam has written a number of books on Bangladesh art and artists, of which two are in English. He has attended many seminars and conferences on art in Bangladesh, India and UK, and has taught art history in the Faculty of Art, University of Dhaka for a couple of years. Dr. Islam is an award-winning fiction writer with seven volumes of short stories and five novels to his credit. English translations of a short story collection and a novel have been published in Dhaka. In 1996 he received the prestigious Bangla Academy Award for literature and was awarded the second highest civilian award of the country, Ekushey Padak, in 2018 for his contribution to literature. Dr. Islam was a member of the jury of the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1989 (Eurasia Region) and DSC Prize for South Asian Fiction, 2016. He was also on the jury panel for the 2008 Asian Art Biennale in Dhaka.

Zehra Jumabhoy is a UK-based writer, speaker and art historian. She was the Steven and Elena Heinz Scholar at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, where she completed her doctorate and is an Associate Lecturer, specialising in modern and contemporary South Asian art. She has been the editor of the Visual Art section for *Time Out Mumbai* and an editor at the journal *ART India*. Her book, *The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today*, was published by Random House, London, in 2010. She was the Guest Curator of *The Progressive Revolution: Modern art for a New India* (14 September 2018–20 January 2019) at the Asia Society Museum, New York, which was inspired by her PhD at the Courtauld on the intersection of art and nationalism.

Alina Khakoo is a Curatorial Assistant at Kettle's Yard and a Cambridge Trust-funded doctoral candidate in the Faculty of English at the University of Cambridge. Supervised by Dr Priyamvada Gopal, her research concerns diasporic visual culture in Britain during the decolonisation period, focusing particularly on South Asian artists' coalitions with other immigrant groups, and how this body of material generates intersectional theories of postcoloniality, gender and sexuality. After graduating from Cambridge with a BA in Modern and Medieval Languages, she completed an MA History of Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, worked as a Researcher for Sotheby's London and spent a year at Harvard University as a Herchel Smith Scholar.

Hammad Nasar is a curator, writer and researcher based in London. He is presently Senior Research Fellow at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (part of Yale University), where he co-leads (with Sarah Turner) the *London, Asia* project. He is also co-curator (with Irene Aristizabal) of *British Art Show 9* (2020-22). He was the inaugural Executive Director of the Stuart Hall Foundation, London (2018-19); served as Head of

Research & Programmes at Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong (2012-16); and, earlier co-founded (with Anita Dawood) Green Cardamom, London (2004-12). Known for collaborative, research-driven and exhibition-led inquiry, his recent exhibition projects include: *Lines of Control: Partition as a Productive Space* (2005-2013); *Excessive Enthusiasm: Ha Bik Chuen and the Archive as Practice* (2015); *Rock, Paper, Scissors: Positions in Play* – the UAE’s national pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale (2017); and *Speech Acts: Reflection-Imagination-Repetition* (2018-19). Nasar is a member of the Board of Mophradat (Belgium) and Tate’s magazine, *Tate Etc.*, and an advisor to: the Lahore Biennial Foundation (Pakistan); Alserkal Avenue (UAE); and, Delfina Foundation, Manchester Art Gallery and Whitechapel Gallery (UK).

Yasmin Jahan Nupur is a visual and performance artist whose work is influenced by the ecological and community-driven aspects of life. Depicting human relationships from various points of view, her work explores class distinctions and the social discrepancies people face, particularly women and migrants of South Asia, in an effort to increase understanding between people of different backgrounds. Her recent research-based work has engaged deeply with architecture, landscape shifting or displacement and textiles, especially focusing on Jamdani weaving, soft sculpture and the idea of physical and social constructs affecting the artist’s psyche. Her work has featured in international exhibitions including: Lucas Artists Residency at Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga (2019), sponsored by Art Forum; Peabody Essex Museum Residency and Research, Boston MA (2019); Frieze London, curated by Diana Campbell (2019); Performance as a Process at the Delfina Foundation, London (2015); Cosmopolis #1.5: Enlarged Intelligence, Mao Jihong Arts Foundation in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou (2018–19); Patterns of a Tactile Score at Exhibit320 gallery in Delhi (2018); Beyond Borders, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (2017–18); the Serendipity Arts Festival, Goa (2016); the Dhaka Art Summit (2012, 2014, 2016, 2018); the Bangladesh Pavilion, 54th Venice Biennale (2013); and the Asian Art Biennale, Dhaka (2013, 2008), receiving the Honourable Mention Award for her inclusion in both editions.

Nada Raza is a curator and writer with a focus on South and West Asia. She was the founding Artistic Director of the Ishara Art Foundation in Dubai, where she curated *Altered Inheritance: Home is a Foreign Place* with Shilpa Gupta and Zarina Hashmi, and *Body Building*, a thematic exhibition of lens-based work, both in 2019. Prior to this, Raza was Research Curator at Tate Research Centre: Asia, with a particular focus on South Asia. Raza co-curated *Bhupen Khakhar: You Can't Please All* (2016), and organised displays of work by international artists including Meshac Gaba, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Zarina Hashmi, Sheela Gowda, Amar Kanwar and Mrinalini Mukherjee. Raza was guest curator of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize (2014) and curated a thematic exhibition, *The Missing One*, for the Dhaka Art Summit in Bangladesh and the Office for Contemporary Art in Norway (2016). She has also worked on international art at the Institute for International Visual Art (Iniva) and at Green Cardamom in London. She holds an MA from the Chelsea College of Art and Design and is a doctoral candidate at the Courtauld Institute of Art.

Devika Singh is Curator, International Art at Tate Modern. Her work focuses on modern and contemporary art and architecture in South Asia and the global history of modernism. She is an affiliated scholar at the Centre of South Asian Studies of the University of Cambridge where she was previously Smuts Research Fellow. She holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge and was a fellow at the Centre allemand d'histoire de l'art in Paris. She was a visiting fellow at the French Academy at Rome, the Freie Universität, Berlin, and the Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. Her writing has appeared in exhibition catalogues, specialised magazines and in the journals *Art History*, *Modern Asian Studies*, *Journal of Art Historiography* and *Third Text*. In 2017 she guest edited an issue of *MARG*. Exhibitions curated by Singh include 'Planetary Planning' at the Dhaka Art Summit (2018); 'Gedney in India' at the CSMVS, Mumbai (2017) and Duke University (2018).

Abstracts

Session 1

Zehra Jumabhoy, *The 'Indian' Moderns after Midnight*

As the clock chimed the midnight hour on the 15th of August 1947, the subcontinent threw off the shackles of the British Raj: India was free. How should this new nation define itself? Bombay's Progressive Artists' Group, firebrands from different castes and creeds, came together in the immediate aftermath of independence to provide an answer. This paper will trace the founding ideology of India's so-called 'quintessential Moderns'. Who were they? What did they achieve? How relevant is their message for us today? In answering these questions, it will unpick the tangled web of inter-connections between notions of the Modern, the Secular and the Progressive within the 'idea of India'.

Iftikhar Dadi, *Borders and the Everyday*

The notion of citizenship is most often associated with the rights and responsibilities of an individual in relation to the nation-state. Even though theorists such as Benedict Anderson have drawn our attention to the imaginative dimensions of nationalism, nevertheless notions of citizenship continue to operate primarily with respect to juridical and political norms. As artists from diverse backgrounds, Iftikhar Dadi and Elizabeth Dadi's collaborative practice investigates the remainders across which norms of identification operate in various contemporary societies. We are deeply committed to engagement with everyday material and sensory processes that continually recreate a world that is more encompassing than the limits of statist, national, and identitarian affiliations. Our work for two decades can be placed at the intersection of conceptual art, pop art, and popular culture. The latter term denotes not only the art of mass culture in postindustrial societies, but also the rich materiality of urban street life in cities of the global South, which play a vital role in orienting one's consciousness and in establishing a relation to the specificity of place. Our practice interrogates both the blindness of official narratives, and the spectacular immersions of popular cultures, by bringing conceptual rigor to a dialogue with the sense and affect of the popular and the everyday.

Session 2

Bani Abidi, *PLEASE DON'T HONK, THIS NATION IS SLEEPING.*

Bani Abidi revisits aspects of her art practice of the past twenty years from the lens of humour and its relationship to politics. Gleaning from the minutiae of everyday urban life, Abidi has over the years satirised forms of petty power and grandeur of State players in South Asia. Her works extrapolate anecdotes and events witnessed and heard, turning news and gossip into fiction and concocted history. 'RESERVED' (2006), a double channel video, is a detailed rendering of a moment when a state dignitary is expected to arrive in an unnamed South Asian city, and the lives of all its inhabitants are represented

in a state of suspension. *'Death at a 30 degree angle'* (2011) looks at the aspirations inherent in the commissioning of a portrait statue by a small-time politician, a fictional video shot entirely in the atelier of the Indian sculptor Ram Sutar. Her works empathically bring together ordinary people in their ability to laugh, resist and confront varied forms of oppression.

Yasmin Jahan Nupur, *On Home* (2019)

This presentation reflects on the artist's work on global geopolitical issues: global warming, migrancy and displacement. It addresses happenings inside the border and outside the border, the sense of the unbearable painful, suffering, hidden, sore and the artist's process of reckoning in order to articulate them. It looks back on her multi-media practice, including performance, making short film/video, archiving – both formal archives and mythologies, storytelling, memories, oral histories, inscribed in song, language, ecology, craft, food, and most importantly, in bodies.

Nada Raza, *Unhomely Futures: Altered Inheritance: Home is a Foreign Place with Shilpa Gupta, Zarina Hashmi and Sophie Ernst*

Tasked with setting up a foundation for South Asian contemporary art in Dubai, this inaugural exhibition at the Ishara Art Foundation presented perspectives from South Asia, taking into account the complex relationship that migrant workers have to home and belonging. Conceived as a formal dialogue between the practices of Zarina and Shilpa Gupta, the show included works from the 1970s to the present, mainly artworks that explored migration, separation via national borders, memory and distance. Through the commitment of both artists to language, particularly poetry and literatures of exile, the exhibition attempted to address the emotional and psychological costs of displacement and forced separation. Works were arranged in five formal and thematic clusters within a structure that echoed the architectural footprint of Zarina's childhood home in India, animated by the inclusion of a segment from Sophie Ernst's project *Home*.

Session 3

Sophie Ernst and Hammad Nasar in conversation, *Performing Landscape/Curating Nation*

Sophie Ernst and Hammad Nasar will be in conversation on ideas of home as physical and social structures through an exploration of drawing, memories, histories and collective imagination. Their discussion will follow introductory presentations on "Home as performative landscape" (Ernst) and "Curating nation" (Nasar).