

Between Spirit
and Magic

精神與魔幻之間



Ritual Practices of Joy

喜悅的儀典

Jaishri Abichandani

Between Spirit and Magic brings together the works of six artists living in the United States who trace their origins to India, Pakistan and Iran. Their practices slip between mediums, but retain decorative, feminist preoccupations that are grounded in their identities. Ranging from the tightness of traditional forms in the work of Anila Quayyum Agha, Ambreen Butt and my own, to the surreal looseness of Ruby Chishti and Negar Ahkami, ending with the mysterious and magical realism of Rina Banerjee, the sculptures and two-dimensional works in the exhibition rely on process-based materiality to communicate in a visceral manner.

The works in *Between Spirit and Magic* come from a place of embracing one's identity, understanding the stereotypes and limitations imposed upon us by being the 'other'. We create with a double gaze: at once self-reflexive, aware of being a brown body, yet able to inhabit the brownness of our bodies with a self-confidence that allows us simultaneously to extend the language of contemporary art and to create new content and processes from older forms of imagemaking. There is a positionality that is imposed upon us – one that we have embraced and crafted as active makers of culture. The beauty in these works comes about because we do not attempt to transcend racial boundaries; instead, we excavate them for their riches, building from a foundation of older formal aesthetic traditions, such as sacred geometry, miniature painting or devotional sculptural and architectural forms.

The deliberate, aesthetic decisions involved in making beautiful works that are as much grounded in formalism and process as conceptual ideas are strategies employed by other American artists of colour, such as Kehinde Wiley, Firelei Baez and Wangechi Mutu. It is important to understand the context and, subsequently, the radicality of embracing this aesthetic, as there are few structures that support us in its making. Contemporary art prioritises a drier academic approach that centres on white artists, aesthetics and theorists – we have few historians or critics who can unpack all the information encoded within our works, as the cultural signifiers may appear opaque. Whilst we occupy positions of First World privilege, we do not have the privilege of being part of the majority, instead inhabiting dislocated identities and speaking in a visual patois that is unfamiliar within and outside of Western contemporary art.

Even as the human figure appears and disappears in this exhibition, there are other strands of resonance between the works. Anila's use of sacred geometry in her embroidered works finds formal echoes in Ambreen's prints from the series *Daughters of the East* (2008) in its use of a muted palette evoking a dusty earth, in addition to formal framing devices and floral patterns. Whilst Anila liberates the decorative elements in her work

from religious frameworks, Ambreen instead hones in on the complicated figures of female devotees who were used as human shields by Islamic fundamentalists and killed by government forces in 2007 at the Siege of the Lal Masjid in Islamabad, Pakistan. My own sculptures follow an impetus similar to Anila's in the desire to evoke the awe associated with religious artefacts and architecture, but through heavily adorned, clearly feminist forms that evoke Hindu deities – figures that have more in common with the women in Ambreen's prints. A certain preoccupation with religion, an examination of our place within religious structures, brings these works together, as we pick apart the connection between where we come from and where we find ourselves. These questions continue to inform our lived experiences and, subsequently, the work we produce.

Several strategies and materials appear in varying forms, including the (historically feminist) use of fabrics and embroidery in the works of Ruby, Rina and Anila. Whilst Ruby and Rina employ carefully selected found fabrics, they choose them for different reasons: Rina is more interested in antique materials with colonial histories; Ruby selects for texture, colour and markers of class. Anila embroiders beads onto paper, and Rina works them onto sculptures. The luminescence achieved by the beading is echoed in the crystals and finish of my sculptures and the glitter in Negar's paintings. Within Anila's work, the quality of the illumination is essential to revealing the form, whilst it appears magical in Rina's work, playful in Negar's and alluding to the divine in my own. The quality of luminescence in artwork traces its origins to its use in religious artefacts via the application of gold, jewels and beads to evoke a sense of awe in individuals involved in rituals of worship.

The impasto mark-making in Negar's paintings finds its parallel in the folded, layered stacks of fabric that swirl like brush marks in Ruby's large wall sculpture. Ruby, Negar and Rina embrace a looser, surrealistic, magical approach to their creations with cultural signifiers and practices, such as sewing and beading, altered and reconfigured to create fragmented surfaces that coalesce into dazzling wholes. Rina's and my sculptures incorporate forms created from scratch, along with found objects and materials, to completely different effects and divergent objectives: her formal investigation into the position of colonial subjects and objects is a project spanning decades, whilst my own endeavour is to create a feminist sculptural lexicon that at once resists both white supremacist and Brahmanical patriarchies. Each of these areas of commonality contains formal elements of practice that have bound us to each other over time, as they have required extended examination.

Anila is best known for her award-winning sculptural work that uses the new technology of laser-cutting metal to articulate traditional floral forms. *Tear Drop – Aqua (after Robert Irwin)* (2018), a two-dimensional suspended sculpture that creates intricate shadows, represents this aspect of her practice. Also included are three large embroideries incorporating metallic thread and gold beads onto handmade brown Korean paper. These works are consistent with her concerns, as she has long explored sacred geometry and the circular form in various materials and dimensions. Here, meticulous stitches render globes in subtle tones, hinting at a fragile planet drained of life, at once melancholic and sublime, and mirroring the metanarrative of our own lives. Alluding to feminist and South Asian aesthetic traditions, the delicacy of this body of work engenders primal anxieties about our survival.

The sombre colours of Ambreen's *Daughters of the East* have much in common with Anila's works on paper, including their clear references to South Asian aesthetic traditions. Within Ambreen's suite of prints, five separate fragments come together to form a disjointed story, the surfaces filled with a crowd of women clad in black burkas (like a flock of crows) and yielding weapons such as sticks and guns. Ladybugs, birds appear in stylized detail, as does the figure of a woman on her knees bending backwards in supplication, her burka trailing to the floor, where it sweeps up into a transformed dragon hovering over her, fangs and tongue extended, before it lands its fatal strike. The figure's gaze is directed at a sun made of revolving guns that are echoed over the surface in muted tones. The violence of the original siege and massacre in Islamabad finds its release here in magical realism, a perfect container for the complex and conflicting ideologies of capitalism and religion that are destroying the world today.

In 2001, British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare made a work titled *The Swing (after Fragonard)*. The sculpture is based on Jean-Honoré Fragonard's 1767 painting depicting a joyous young woman mid-swing, with exposed arms and legs. The original painting and Shonibare's sculptural rendition are iconic works that informed the creation of my own sculpture *Holy Family* (2015–18). There are clear references within the title and the work to divine heteropatriarchal families in mythologies and religions: Shiva-Parvati-Ganesha and Joseph-Mary-Jesus offer paradigms of how a family has looked for millennia. Yet my own community includes queer biological families that were created through the assistance of science. My sculpture bears witness to multiracial lesbian families who are demonstrating what motherhood can look like without patriarchal hierarchies within the home. *Holy Family* appears as a woman perched upon her lover's lap, on a swing festooned with roses, each figure holding a child in her arms. Queer love, desire and motherhood coexist here in forms that were not previously created by male sculptors. The same impetus is behind the sculpture

Two Boys in Saris (2018), a raucous sculptural portrait of a queer Muslim couple who both perform and run a food truck in Australia, creating community through their work. Inserting these loving, queer, Muslim bodies into the sculptural lexicon of holy figures simultaneously disrupts hegemonic narratives of contemporary art and those based in multiple religious fundamentalist ideologies, from Christianity and Islam to Hinduism and Buddhism.

Joyful, empowered, queer and feminist bodies dressed in pink recur, from my sculptures to Negar's paintings. Her *Birth Rite* (2018) offers a number of encrypted ideas, from its rigorous engagement with the historic language of paintings to its use of fragmented planes and patterns to its rendition of human bodies. An entranced, dancing female figure clad in pink in the foreground on the left is balanced by clusters of other performers, including the kneeling, warbling figure of Freddie Mercury, notes reverberating around his body like a force field. The posture of Freddie in *Birth Rite* is almost identical to that of the female figure in Ambreen's prints, but to two completely different effects – the man conquers whilst the woman submits. At once whimsical and masterly, *Birth Rite* conjures visions of paintings from across time, from *The Starry Night* (1889) by Vincent van Gogh to Gustav Klimt's symbolism. Yet all are married to a contemporary feminist sensibility akin to that of London-based Kashmiri artist Raqib Shaw. Negar states, 'My art is deeply inspired by Iran's rich ceramic traditions and its ornate architecture. Also influenced by German expressionism, NYC street art of the 1980s, and the flamboyance of Iranian humanity – my work is expressive, gaudy, and imbued with *jolie-laide* tension'.¹

The pathos and muted colours of Ruby's installation *The Present is a Ruin Without the People* (2016) stand in sharp contrast to the vibrantly populated landscapes of Negar's paintings. Ruby's work employs a palette similar to Ambreen's *Daughters of the East*. A melancholia invoked by these colours binds the works of Anila, Ruby and Ambreen. It is echoed by the artists' shared experiences as a generation of Pakistani women rigorously trained in traditional artistic disciplines who are evolving that aesthetic language to encompass their diasporic experiences as makers of contemporary art. Within Ruby's work, the viewer is presented with what seems to be a forested, hilly landscape interspersed with empty window frames and made from mixed materials; the artist primarily includes recycled clothing, some of which once belonged to her long-deceased mother. The emotional weight of these carefully selected, folded and sewn fabrics, along with their repeated layering, assumes the appearance of excavated soil sediments or terraced mountains, like markers of the passage of time. Although the human figure, itself, is absent from the work, its presence is implied through garments that once shielded bodies and remnants of the architectural elements that

once housed them. The viewer is left searching for clues within a labyrinth of colours that undulate over the wall: Was it conflict or climate that caused these spaces to be abandoned? Like rock-cut architecture or villages carved into mountainsides, Ruby's sculpture evokes times other than the present – perhaps as much our violent past as our apocalyptic future. Green, grey and brown tones present a zoomed-in view of the parched earth in Anila's work.

Rina's work encompasses elements of all our work, and entire universes unto itself. Surreal forms that hover between menace and beauty, organic and inorganic matter, microscopic and macroscopic visions of the world, found objects and fabricated structures coalesce into mysterious sculptures that require close reading to continuously reveal their complexity. To fashion her iconic sculptures, Rina selects objects that are loaded with colonial histories, such as vintage porcelain doll heads and antique silk fabrics, and combines them with animal parts, like fish bones and horns, as well as mundane objects, including glass bulbs and plastic cups. The work included in this exhibition is titled *Jack Fruit Johnny she was a diasporic Devi changed her name to honey changed her faith to sunny, changed this sex to something funny, changed her city to New York City – all for reason to be far far away from misery and war for money* (2015). The sculpture is presented as an almost-neo-shamanic object, glittering and nebulous, with the small, covered head of a black woman, a distended body and gigantic claws made of porcupine quills. Threads unravel from her personage, as the bottom half of her gourd-shaped body is held upright by a classical tripod-shaped base, sculptural in form and made of metal. The race of the figure is of particular interest, because Rina's practice involves researching and re-presenting forgotten historic exchanges and the solidarity between people of colour during times of colonisation and slavery. The beguiling, luminous, interrupted surfaces in Rina's work are uniquely and wholly hers – few artists are able to thus synthesise their knowledge of biology, engineering, history, art and science, along with clearly culturally marked signifiers, to create such magical works that speak of the past whilst offering a hybrid vision of our evolution. One can imagine these sculptures having a charge well into the future, retaining their relevance and power.

From quiet, contemplative works to brash and joyful ones, the art in this exhibition strives to speak with a playful seriousness about deeper universal existential anxieties. The artists represented in *Between Spirit and Magic* are in the midst of a private three-way relationship that has lasted decades between ourselves, our work and the muses that speak to us and through us – some of us acknowledge these muses as Spirit, Luck, the Universe, whilst others call them 'magic'. It is this sustained relationship with our work that allows us to survive the perils of this modern age with no parallel. Within this private relationship lies our salvation.

¹ Negar Ahkami, 'Artist Statement', accessed December 2018, <http://www.negarahkami.com/artist-statement>.

Negar Ahkami











Rina Banerjee







Rina Banerjee

Hanuman's flight is evolution's climb, 2017



Rina Banerjee

*Jack Fruit Johnny she was a diasporic Devi changed her name to honey
changed her faith to sunny, changed this sex to something funny, changed her city to
New York City – all for reason to be far far away from misery and war for money, 2015*



Rina Banerjee

*Like honourable apparel sunny clouds would change her and
some windless net in motion would engage her figure forwards,
braids will often wander stealing air as treasure, 2011*



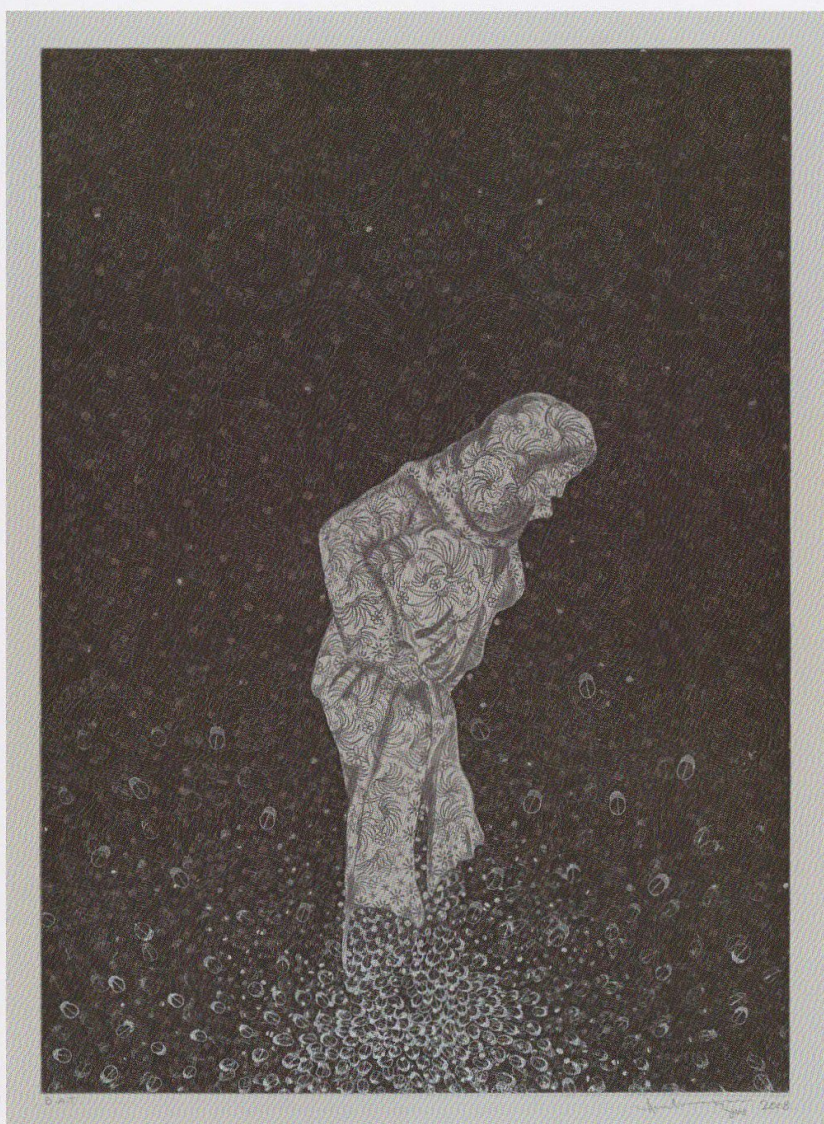




Ambreen Butt











Ruby Chishti









Ruby Chishti

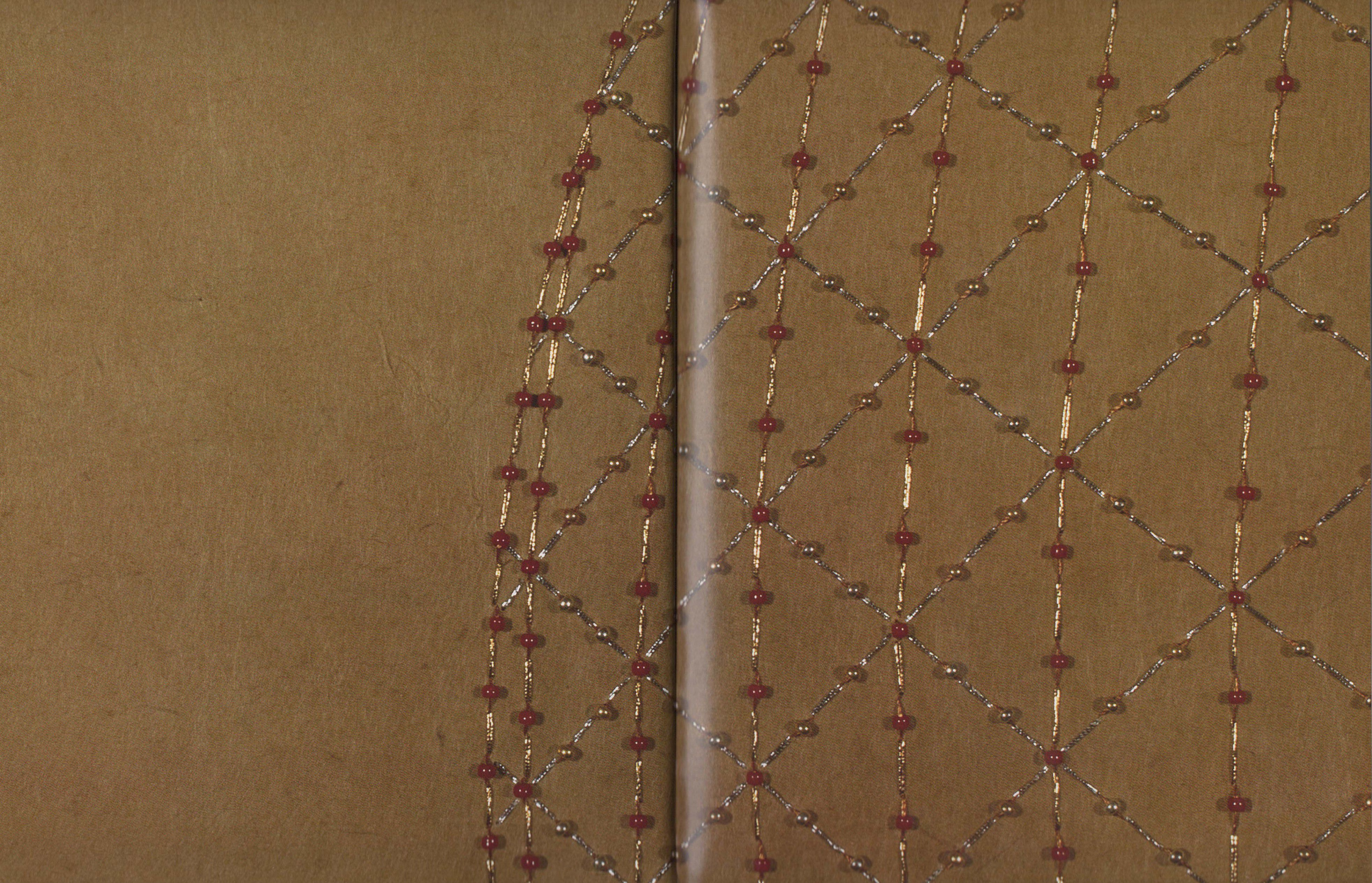
The Present is a Ruin Without the People, 2016

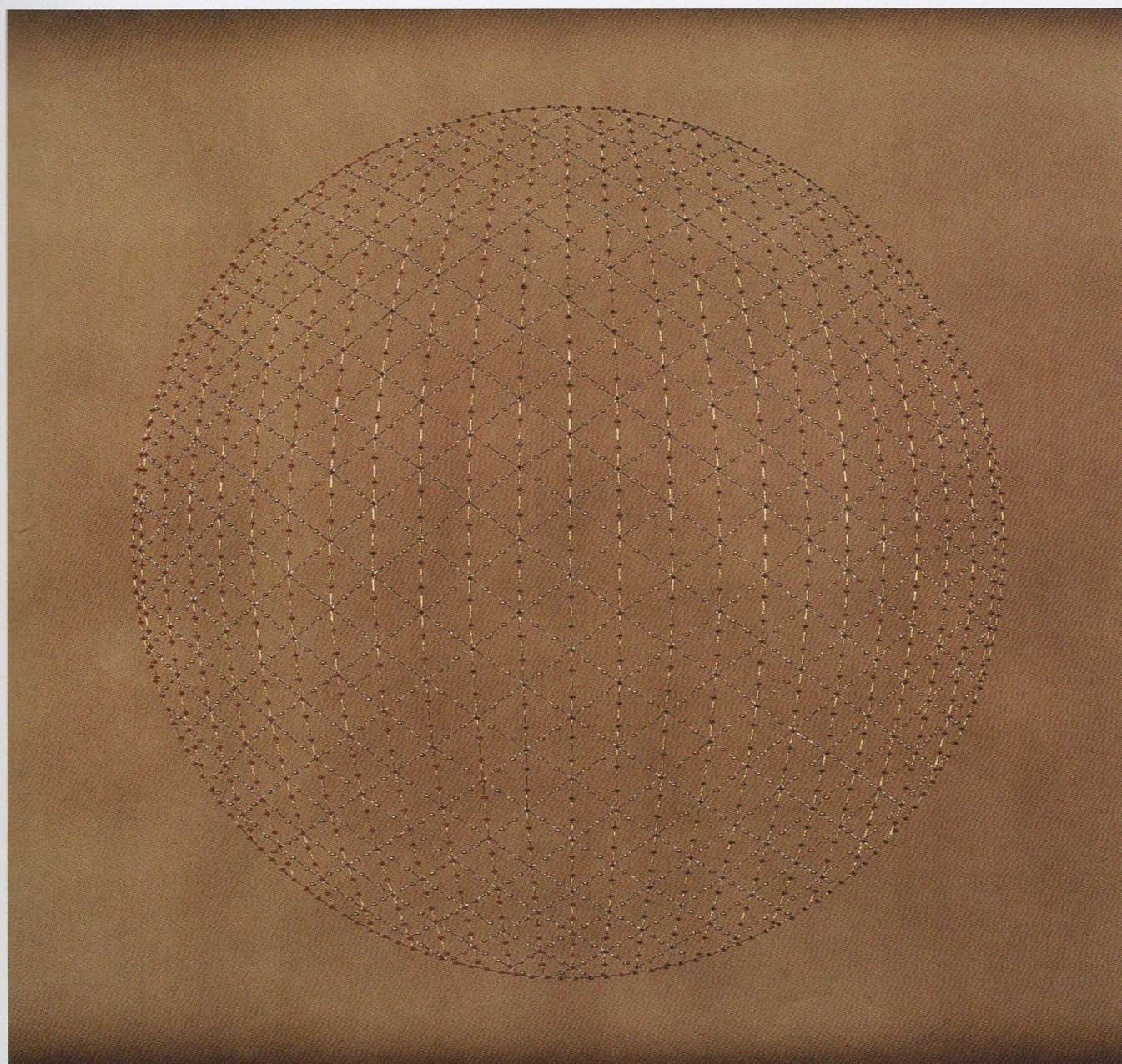


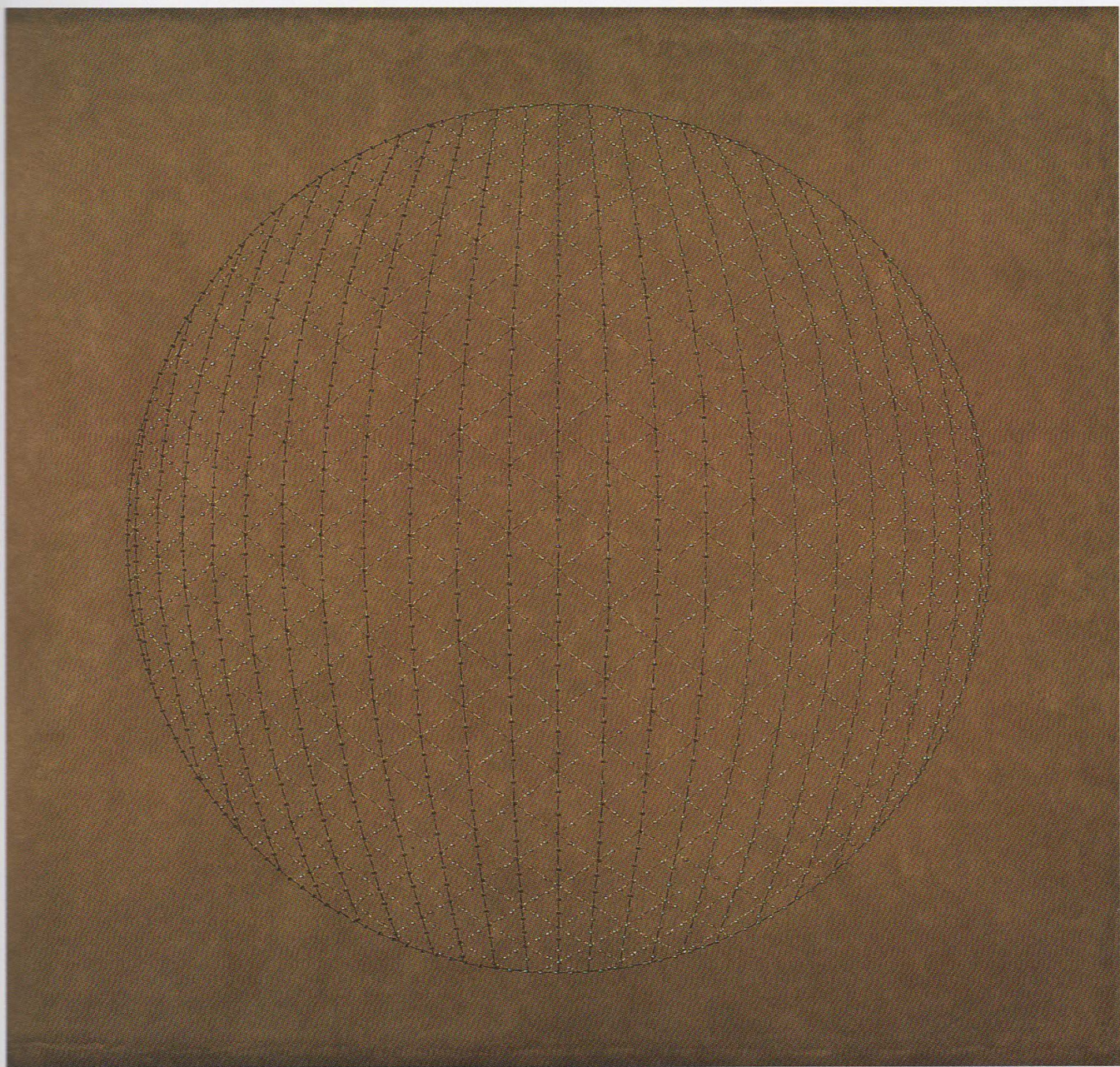


Ruby Chishti
The Present is a Ruin Without the People, 2016

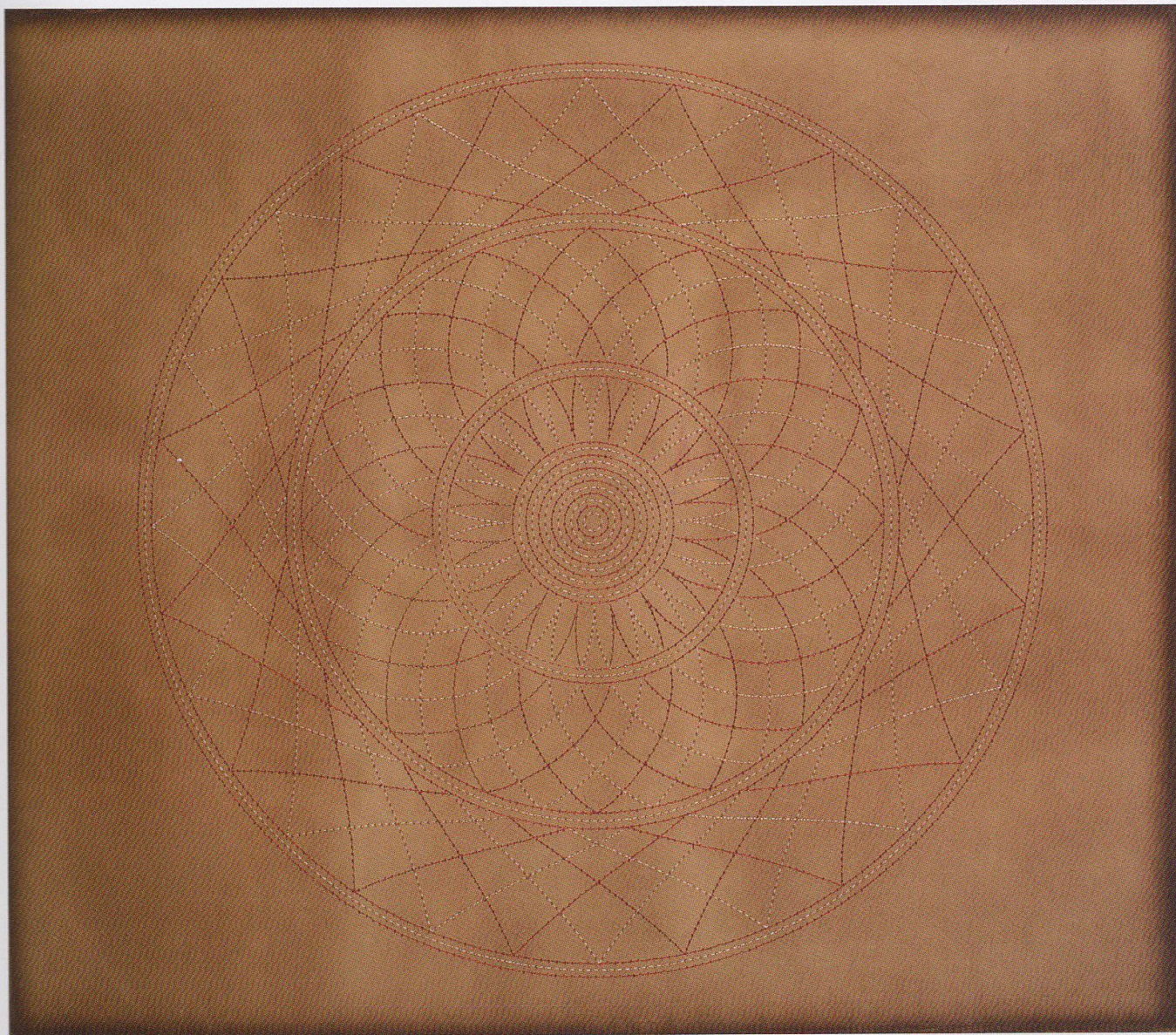
Anila Quayyum Agha

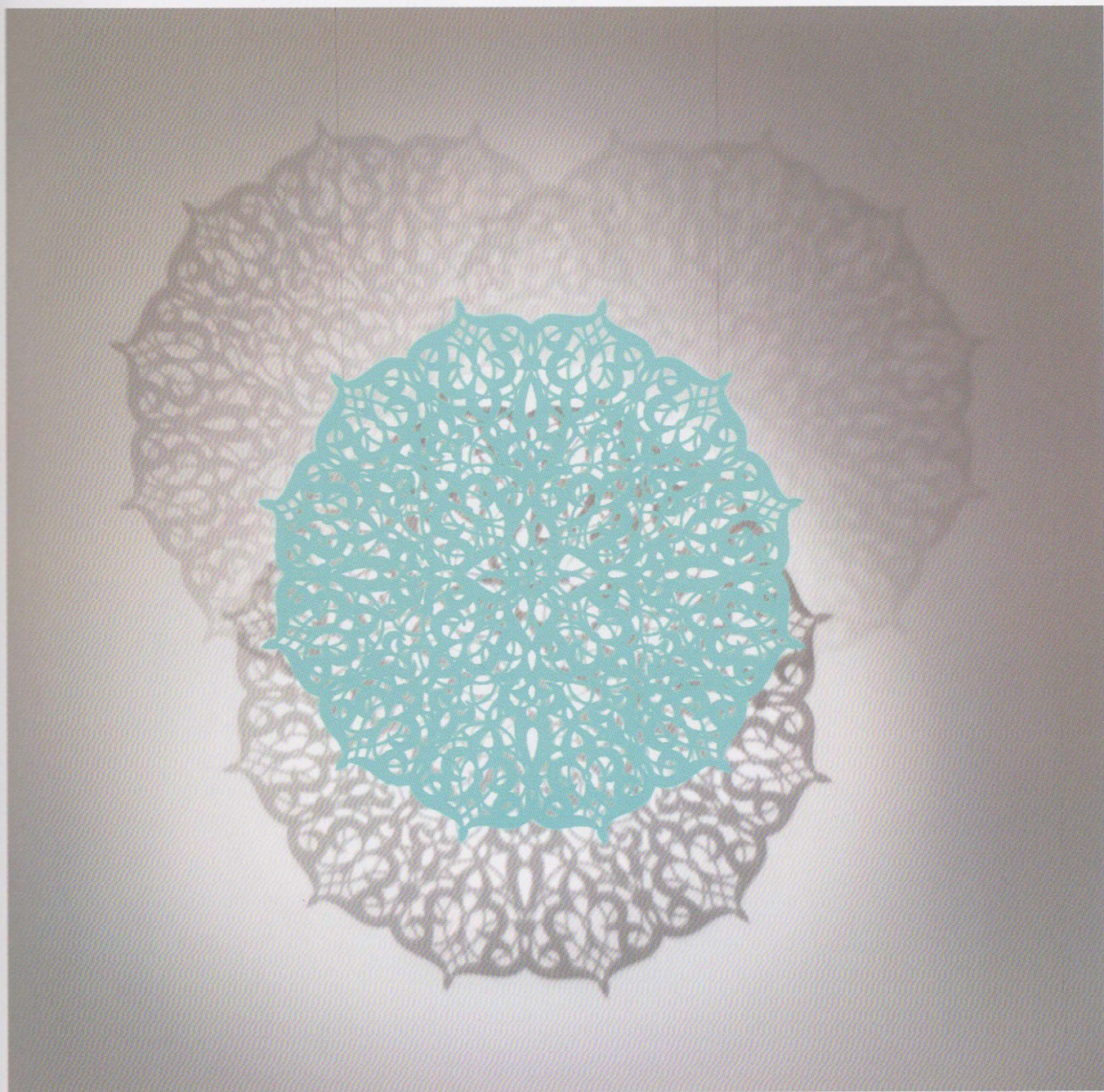












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Negar Ahkami

Birth Rite

2018

Gesso, acrylic and glitter on canvas; stretched on panel
152.5 x 213.5 cm (60 x 84 in)

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Negar Ahkami

The Love Dance

2017

Gesso, acrylic and glitter on panel
56 x 38 cm (22 x 15 in)

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Rina Banerjee

Hanuman's flight is evolution's climb

2017

Silk, velvet, glass beads, gold threads, silk threads, iron wire,
glass, shells and Victorian doll eyes
139.7 x 139.7 x 68.6 cm (55 x 55 x 27 in)

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Rina Banerjee

*Jack Fruit Johnny she was a diasporic Devi changed her name to
honey changed her faith to sunny; changed this sex to something
funny; changed her city to New York City – all for reason to be far
far away from misery and war for money*

2015

Cotton thread, paper mâché vessel base, steel stand, vintage
porcelain doll head, silk fabric with printing, porcupine
needles, silver blue leaf and plastic trim
142 x 45.7 x 50.8 cm (56 x 18 x 20 in)

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Rina Banerjee

*Like honourable apparel sunny clouds would change her and
some windless net in motion would engage her figure forwards,
braids will often wander stealing air as treasure*

2011

Acrylic and ink on wax paper
56 x 38 cm (22 x 15 in)

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Rina Banerjee

Searching for greener pastures and even greener (nicer) people

2011

Ink and acrylic on watercolour paper
76.2 x 56 cm (30 x 22 in)

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Rina Banerjee

Taste my Tongue

2014

Acrylic and ink on paper
47.6 x 35 cm (18 ¾ x 13 ¾ in)

pages 43–47

Ambreen Butt

Daughters of the East

2008

Six-plate aquatint etchings with *chine collé*,
dry point and spit bite (set of five)

Edition of 30

Each print: 63.5 x 48 cm (25 x 19 in)

Image size: 46 x 33 cm (18 x 13 in)

pages 50–53

Ruby Chishti

The Present is a Ruin Without the People

2016

Recycled textiles, wire mesh, thread, wood, embellishment,
metal scraps and archival glue; with sound

207.6 x 324.8 x 29.8 cm (81 ⁷/₁₀ x 127 ⁹/₁₀ x 11 ⁷/₁₀ in)

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Anila Quayyum Agha

Catching the Light – Red

2016

Red, gold and black metallic thread with red, black and gold
beads on handmade brown Korean paper

61 x 63.5 cm (24 x 25 in)

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Anila Quayyum Agha

Catching the Light – Green

2016

Gold and black metallic thread with green, gold and black
beads on handmade brown Korean paper

61 x 63.5 cm (24 x 25 in)

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Anila Quayyum Agha

Impossible Memories

2016

Red and gold thread with beads on handmade
brown Korean paper

101.6 x 91.5 cm (40 x 36 in)

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Anila Quayyum Agha

Tear Drop – Aqua (after Robert Irwin)

2018

Cut and lacquered stainless steel and light bulbs

106.7 x 106.7 cm (42 x 42 in)

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Jaishri Abichandani

Goddess of Resistance

2017

Foam, foil, epoxy, paint, wood and mixed media

73.7 x 63.5 x 33 cm (29 x 25 x 13 in)

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Jaishri Abichandani

Holy Family

2015–18

Foam, foil, epoxy, paint, wood and mixed media
78.7 x 57 x 72.4 cm (31 x 22 ¹/₂ x 28 ¹/₂ in)

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Jaishri Abichandani

Swag

2016

Foam, foil, epoxy, paint, wood and mixed media
76 x 28 cm (30 x 11 in)

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Jaishri Abichandani

Two Boys in Saris

2018

Foam, foil, epoxy, paint, wood and mixed media
104 x 86 x 80 cm (41 x 33 ⁷/₈ x 31 ¹/₂ in)

Jaishri Abichandani

Born in 1969 in Bombay, India, Jaishri Abichandani immigrated to New York City in 1984. She received an MFA from Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2005. The artist founded the South Asian Women's Creative Collective (sawcc.org) in New York (1997) and in London (2004).

Her work has been exhibited internationally, including in the United States at MoMA PS1 and the Queens Museum, as well as at the Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM) in Valencia, Spain; the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, Germany; and the 3rd Guangzhou Triennial in China.

From 2003 to 2006, she served as the founding director of public events and projects at the Queens Museum of Art, setting the institution's current trajectory for community engagement. Whilst there, she also organised *Fatal Love: South Asian American Art Now* (2005) and the *Queens International 2006: Everything All at Once* (2006), and curated *Her Stories: Fifteen Years of SAWCC* (2012). Abichandani previously curated a trilogy of feminist, science fiction-based exhibitions at Rossi & Rossi London titled *Anomalies: From Nature to the Future* (2009), *Dirty Jewels* (2010) and *Shapeshifters and Aliens* (2011).

In 2017, the artist engineered a collaboration between the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, Asia Society and the Queens Museum that resulted in a three-day national convention of South Asian–American artists, academics and curators. The symposium was held in conjunction with the Asia Society exhibition *Lucid Dreams and Distant Visions: South Asian Art in the Diaspora* (2017), curated by Abichandani and Calvin Boon Hui Tan.

Abichandani's work is included in the Burger Collection and the Asia Art Archive Collection. She has been a resident of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Process Space and was honoured by the Brooklyn Arts Council in 2009.

Anila Quayyum Agha

Anila Quayyum Agha was born in 1965 in Lahore, Pakistan. In 2004, she received an MFA from the College of Visual Arts & Design at the University of North Texas in the United States. Her work has since been exhibited in more than thirty solo shows and fifty group exhibitions, and she has won numerous awards and grants.

The artist works in a cross-disciplinary fashion with mixed media, creating artwork that explores global politics, cultural multiplicity, mass media and social and gender roles in our current cultural and global scenario. As a result, her conceptually challenging works produce complicated threads of thought, artistic action and social experience.

Agha has exhibited her work across the globe, including throughout the US – in the 2018 Kansas City Biennial, curated by Dan Cameron; the Grand Rapids Art Museum, Michigan; the Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio; the Peabody Essex Museum, Massachusetts; the Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York; and Dallas Contemporary, Texas – and internationally, at the National Museum of Sculpture in Valladolid, Spain, and the Cheongju Craft Biennale in South Korea. The artist has received numerous grants and awards, such as the Cincinnati Art Museum's 2017 Schiele Prize and the 2018 DeHaan Artist of Distinction Award. In 2014, she was awarded both the popular and the juried vote at ArtPrize for her installation *Intersections* (2018), a first in the history of the Grand Rapids-based art competition.

Her work is in the US collections of the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Peabody Essex Museum and the Grand Rapids Art Museum, as well as the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, and national and international corporate and private collections.

She lives and works in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Negar Ahkami

Negar Ahkami was born in the United States in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1971, and raised in the New Jersey suburbs of New York City. She attended the Art Students League of New York and received a BA in Middle Eastern languages and cultures from Columbia University. After studying law at Georgetown University and briefly practicing in her twenties, she went on to pursue an MFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 2006.

She has participated in various artist residencies throughout the US, including at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Workspace Residency and its Governors Island Residency, the Jentel Foundation and the Arlington Arts Center, where she is currently in a long-term artist residency.

Ahkami has held three solo exhibitions in New York – at the Leila Heller Gallery in Manhattan and LMAK Projects in Williamsburg – as well as a two-person show at Miki Wick Kim Contemporary Art in Zurich, Switzerland. She also participated in two solo exhibitions in 2018 in the Washington, D.C., area, at the Arlington Arts Center and Marymount University's Cody Gallery. Her work is currently included in *The Beyond: Georgia O'Keeffe and Contemporary Art* (2018), organised by and originating at the Crystal Bridges Museum of Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, and travelling throughout 2019 to the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh and the New Britain Museum of American Art in Connecticut.

Her work has been included in group exhibitions in the US, at the William Benton Museum of Art, the Chelsea Art Museum, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, the Queens Museum, Rutgers University, Princeton University, Stux Gallery, Kravets Wehby Gallery and Marvelli Gallery, amongst others. It is also included in national and international public, corporate and private art collections, such as those of the New Britain Museum of American Art, the DePaul Art Museum and Wellington Management in the US, as well as the Farjam Collection and the Mahmoud Afkhami Collection in the United Arab Emirates.

Rina Banerjee

Rina Banerjee was born in Kolkata, India, in 1963. She grew up in several cities, including briefly in London and Manchester, but mostly in New York. She received a BSc in polymer engineering from Case Western Reserve University and worked as a polymer research chemist for a few years before changing her profession entirely to art.

She broke from science after attending the Yale School of Art, where she studied ethnicity, race and migration with renowned professor Laura Wexler, who focuses on historical photo archives and ethnographic readings. Banerjee earned an MFA in painting in 1995, and went on to teach college studio practise, as well as art theory and feminist art and theory in visual culture classes, for seven years. For the past twenty years, she has been working exclusively in the studio.

Banerjee's work has been exhibited internationally, including at venues in New York City. Her exhibitions have also spanned thirteen biennials across the globe, and she is currently represented by Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Ota Fine Arts, Hosfelt Gallery and L.A. Louver Gallery, all of which set the stage for her work in Paris, France; London, United Kingdom; Berlin, Germany; Tokyo, Japan; Shanghai, China; Los Angeles, United States; New Delhi, India; Milan, Italy; and Singapore. Banerjee's works are included in numerous private and public collections across the globe, such as the Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; the San José Museum of Art; the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; and the Brooklyn Museum, New York.

The artist currently lives and works in New York City.

Ambreen Butt

Ambreen Butt was born in 1969 in Lahore, Pakistan, where she later received a BFA from the National College of Arts in traditional Indian and Persian miniature painting. In 1993, she moved to the United States to attend the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, earning an MFA in painting in 1997.

Since completing her studies, Butt has exhibited her work widely in solo and group exhibitions, both nationally and internationally. In the US, her work has been shown at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona; and the USC Asia Pacific Museum, Pasadena, California. She has also exhibited at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel, Germany; the National Art Gallery in Islamabad, Pakistan; and the Sunshine Museum in Beijing, China.

Butt has received numerous awards, including the Brother Thomas Fellowship from the Boston Foundation, the Maud Morgan Prize from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant and a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts in Ontario. In 1999, she was the first-ever recipient of the James and Audrey Foster Prize, which was awarded by the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston; the same year, she was also an artist-in-residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Her work is included in leading public and private US collections, such as the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; the Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts; the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire; and the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts, amongst others.

The artist lives and works in Dallas, Texas.

Ruby Chishti

Born in 1963 in Jhang, Pakistan, Ruby Chishti received a BFA from the National College of Arts in Lahore, and later studied bronze casting and sculpture ceramics in the United States. Over the past seventeen years, she has produced lyrical sculptures and installations that touch on issues such as Islamic myths, gender politics, migration and memory, as well as the universal themes of love, loss and being human.

Since 2000, the artist has exhibited internationally, including in *Duration: Passage, Persistence, Survival* at the Cornell Council for the Arts Biennial (2018) and *Witness* at the Karachi Biennale (2017). She has also shown at the Colombo Art Biennale (2016); Asia Society, New York; and the Queens Museum, New York. Her recent solo exhibition, *Narratives of Memory: A Conversation with Time*, was held at Jill Stuart Gallery at Cornell University in Upstate New York.

She has held residencies internationally – at Vasl in Pakistan, the Harris Museum in the United Kingdom, From Waste to Art Museum in Baku, Azerbaijan, and Theertha Red Dot Gallery in Colombo, Sri Lanka – as well as in the US, at the Vermont Studio Center, the Transparent Studio in DUMBO, New York City, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. The artist has also been invited to be critic and designer in residence at FSAD Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

Chishti's work can be found in the collections of the Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India; the V&A Museum of Childhood, London, UK; and the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK, amongst others.

The artist lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

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