



DOUBLEBIND:

Art of the South Asian Diaspora

University Galleries

WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY



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Art of the South Asian Diaspora

Jaishri Abichandani

Hasan Elahi

Naeem Mohaiemen

Yamini Nayar

Jaret Vadera



JAISHRI ABICHANDANI
Before Kali series
Number 46 • Detail

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INTRODUCTION

KRISTEN EVANGELISTA

Director, University Galleries



HASAN ELAHI
Waterfall • Detail

**TO BELONG TO A DIASPORA...I WROTE DOWN THOSE WORDS AND STOPPED.
FOR I WAS NOT SURE ONE COULD BELONG TO A DIASPORA. BELONGING IS PREDICATED ON SOMETHING THAT IS ALREADY CONSTITUTED.** Would the first migrant then remain excluded forever from a diaspora? Who constitutes a diaspora anyhow? And what is it after all? Is it a place or simply a region of the mind — a mnemonic condensation used to form figures of nostalgia out of a vast dispersal. Or is it nothing but the ruse of beleaguered nationalism to summon to its aid the resources of long-forgotten expatriates in the name of patriotism? Well, I don't know — not yet any case.

Ranajit Guha¹

In his article, "The Migrant's Time," Indian cultural theorist Ranajit Guha interrogates the concept of diaspora, which could be loosely defined as a scattering of people who have a common national identity. This exhibition explores a related line of inquiry. For the artists in this exhibition, the notion of diaspora is more complex than the binary relationship of "here" or "there." Rather, it is multi-positional and ever shifting. Moreover, the exhibition's title is borrowed from Guha's notion of a "doublebind"—which describes the predicament of the migrant who straddles opposing realms such as native land and adopted home, and past and present. The artists in this exhibition confront and contest issues of connection and detachment, migration and displacement. They draw readily on disparate, overlapping, and opposing cultural references to resist fixed meanings. Through mediums such as photography, sculpture, and video, they explore contested relationships with space, temporality, and geography.

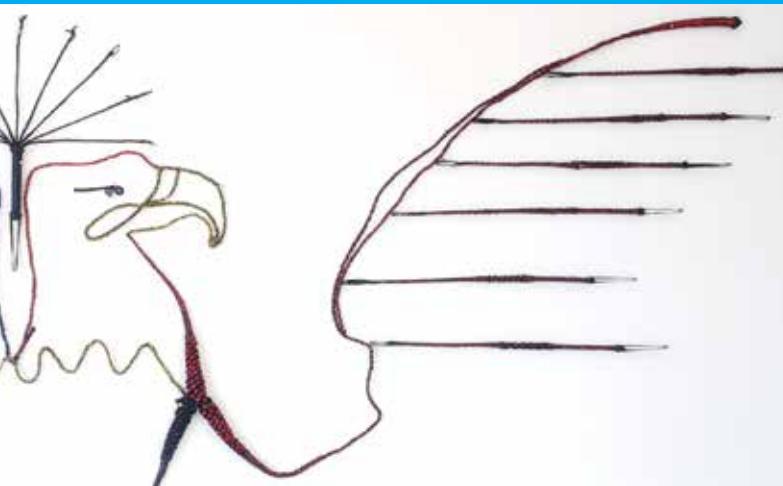
Jaishri Abichandani generates a tension between past and present in her series of ceramic female figures, *Before Kali* (2013). Terracotta figurines, an ancient South Asian art form dating from the Indus Valley civilization (2600–1900 B.C.E), frequently depicted female bodies, presumably as deities for worship. Like the Indus Valley artisans, Abichandani favors similar materials of clay, stone, and wood but she portrays women in a new range of poses, gestures, and emotional states from bliss to agony and rage. Her female figures engage in passionate acts of regeneration, kissing, and self-mutilation, including *hara-kiri*. Aided by today's glossy varnishes and Swarovski crystals, Abichandani infuses new meaning in long-standing traditions and techniques. She subverts familiar myths such as the tale of the male god Indra

who is cursed with a thousand vaginas. In *Before Kali Number 52*, a standing woman proudly bears a multitude of vaginas, rendered in rhinestones. The artist explains: "by transcribing male actions onto female bodies, I am interested in these sculptures simultaneously playing with the male gaze while embodying female agency and desire."²

New media artist Hasan Elahi probes the tensions between connection and detachment in his project, *Tracking Transience* (2002 – present). After being mistakenly investigated by the FBI in the aftermath of 9/11, he began recording his own exact location using a GPS tracker, and location and time-stamped photographs, which were continuously updated on his website. Through this act of self-empowerment, he exposes the social implications of surveillance, borders, and frontiers. This project spurred subsequent videos, photographs, and installations that comment on aspects of migration and capitalize on the artist's own mobility. Born in Bangladesh, Elahi has been a frequent traveler since his childhood; this has intensified in his active career as an exhibiting artist, guest speaker, and professor. The photograph, *Altitude v2.5.1* (2011) documents his consumption of airplane food. *Brasilia* (2011), a two-channel video, features animated still images of 100 airports in over 50 countries gathered over 10 years of travel. The video is titled after Brazil's capital city, which was designed to have the outline of an airplane. In *Waterfall* (2013), he presents a 12-channel video installation of pixelated images that he accumulated by taking a daily photograph over the course of three years. The imagery is distorted beyond recognition and shifts subtly, reminding us of our daily inundation with copious information that is beyond our ability to digest or surveil.

¹ Ranajit Guha, "The Migrant's Time," *Postcolonial Studies* 1, 2 (1998): 155.

² Jaishri Abichandani, email message to author, February 21, 2014.



JAISHRI ABICHANDANI
Heartland • Detail

Boundaries, wars, and belonging are some of the themes that inform the work of Naeem Mohaiemen. In his installation *Der Weisse Engel* (2011), he weaves together two vignettes from German and Bangladeshi lives in flux. Mohaiemen's eponymous film weaves footage and dialogue from John Schlesinger's film *Marathon Man* (1976) with the artist's own commentary. Mohaiemen appropriates a scene where a Holocaust survivor comes face to face with a Nazi war criminal ("der weisse engel," modeled after the real-life Josef Mengele). Following this scene, Mohaiemen's film then shifts to on-screen text about the idea of delayed "retribution" (or "justice"), epitomized by the film's protagonist (a Ph.D. student) who finally apprehends the Nazi villain (Laurence Olivier). The artist links this scene to the idea of delayed justice within the Bangladeshi psyche around 1971. That year, Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan after a nine-month long war that was accompanied by horrendous violence and the displacement of millions. Mohaiemen marks a radically dissimilar scene in Hanif Kureishi's screenplay for *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (1987). In a London apartment, a Bengali couple encounters their former oppressor, yet their anger is oddly muted. The installation includes photographs of a partially obscured (possibly incarcerated) figure paired with dialogue from the infamous "dentist torture" scene in *Marathon Man*. The project invites viewers to consider the slippage between "justice" and "revenge" in political struggles of the past revisited in the present.

Combining photography and sculpture, Yamini Nayar creates contested, transitional spaces that almost verge on abstraction. She fashions tabletop constructions and wall-built models from

“On the whole, the artists presented here offer significant counterpoints to the observations of cultural theorist Ranjit Guha.”

wood, Styrofoam, and other industrial materials and debris. These ephemeral spaces and structures are captured in photographs and then destroyed. She explains, “The final photograph can be both an accumulation of gestures of traces, or chosen from a state of ‘in between.’”³ In works like *Akhet* (2013), Nayar juxtaposes multiple perspectives, jarring and unsettling the viewer’s sense of space and place. The compositions conjure a visceral immersive environment and obscure their reliance on the camera with its potential for artifice and illusions. Her practice is informed by idealized modernist architecture, specifically the Constructivist design and Bauhaus movements of the 1920s and 1930s. Her makeshift structures allude alternatively to the reworking or failure of modernism’s utopian visions. She also looks to art historian Kobena Mercer, who wrote: “Modernism, one might say, has always been multicultural.... from Malevich’s conception of monochrome painting, shaped by his reading of Vedic philosophy and mysticism, to Duchamp’s readymades, which mirrored the decontextualized mobility of tribal artefacts.”⁴ She is concerned with the non-Western origins of modernism as well as the export of modernism to India, including the Bauhaus exhibition held at the Indian Society of Oriental Art in Calcutta in 1922. Nayar wonders: “What comes out of a moment like this?”⁵

Jaret Vadera addresses the politics of vision and “the layered processes through which we make sense of the worlds around and within us.”⁶ Using diverse media including sculpture, photography, video, and installation, he challenges stereotypes and reductive conceptions of identity as well as the individual and political motivations that seek to put people in boxes. Mixing metaphors, shifting historical and cultural references, and code

switching are some of his key strategies. *Untitled VII*, from the “Here be Dragons” series (2008), is an amorphous pixelated image displayed on light box that simultaneously suggests a geographical landscape and a corporeal form. Vadera is captivated by the slippage of information and meaning in x-rays, infographics, or other documents that suggest undisputed proof or evidence. He selected the series title after noticing that some colonial mapmakers designated unknown territories as “here be dragons.” FIGS. 24–33 (2014) is a mixed media collage based on a medical diagram about eye diseases. Here, Vadera invents his own visual ailments while probing the physical and mental processes that shape our vision. With a wry sense of humor and an amalgam of low and high-tech techniques, he challenges the systems and practices that seek to codify, explain, and colonize the unknown.

On the whole, the artists presented here offer significant counterpoints to the observations of cultural theorist Ranjit Guha. According to Guha, the migrant is “stranded between a world left behind and another whose doors are barred, he has no where to go.”⁷ Yet, this generation of artists with ties to the countries of Bangladesh, India, and the Philippines grapple with this predicament, revealing ambiguities, complexities and possibilities for elusion. The artists foster ongoing debate and dispute across geographical, historical, and political boundaries. They reframe our understanding of past and present, and recast varied cultural heritages, the colonial past, the tumultuous formation of modern nation states, and the jarring impact of globalized conflicts in the current moment. Through their inventive and critical engagement with concepts of migration, memory, and displacement, they enact diverse strategies to inhabit multivalent, mutable positions. 

³ Yamini Nayar, Artist statement, 2014.

⁴ Kobena Mercer, “Art History after Globalisation: Formations of the Colonial Modern,” in *Colonial Modern: Aesthetics of the Past, Rebellions for the Future*, ed. Tom Avermaete (London: Black Dog, 2010), 236–237.

⁵ Nayar, email message to author, February 28, 2014.

⁶ Jaret Vadera, Artist statement, 2013.

⁷ Guha, 159.



"Sir, excuse me, you can't use this entrance."

"Sorry, I'm just..."

"This way."

"Wait, I'm going up to Apartment 10C."

"We have a separate door for messengers."

He gently, firmly, and steadily steered me to the side entrance. Given the plush ambience of the building, the messenger entrance was also grand. I understood within the moment what was happening. I was sweaty from the bike ride. I had a bag slung over my shoulder (graduated from utility to style signage), a helmet in my hand. I became a temporary member of Travis Culley's "immortal class."¹ Why not then, the side entrance? No foul.

Once upon a time, I would get bent out of shape by these encounters. Wait, why did you assume I was a messenger? Couldn't I know someone in this building? Why are you being so rough? Why this, that and the other? There's a phrase everyone in Bangladesh is fond of: *tumi janob ami ke?* (do you know who I am?). Delivered with the right mix of anger and menace, the traffic sergeant or the shop keeper in old Dhaka will instantly assume you're the nephew of a local political MP, goon squad or government official. But these tactics don't work well in New York. It's a city of newcomers, outsiders, travelers, floaters and Peter Pans. Everyone is from here and not from here. The idea that I could be related to anyone who matters in a sprawling, ungovernable city could never click.

At other moments I would take on *lumpen* solidarity and be glad to not belong. The more to hammer home the cause of the disaffected class. Or so I thought. In the end, the doorman dance is all about a delay in your entry to a friend or lover's apartment, not much more really. To the barricades! Not.

A complex formula is calculated in the few seconds that are spent deciding who to allow in. Race and class — refracted through

dress, hygiene, demeanor, accent, velocity, accoutrements — get processed through an "are you suitable" abacus. Dress like a bike messenger, and yes, you'll be treated as one. Then, when you explain your purpose, there's a moment of skepticism. You're here for Ms. Ayam? But you could still be delivering a package! The doorman wonders which is the greater risk: getting an ear-chewing from the 10th floor tenant (who coincidentally looks like Audrey Hepburn) for breaking her beauty sleep, or getting a push-around from a visitor who turns out to "matter."

If the guard is from (maybe?) your part of the world, the interface can get even more muddled. Perhaps he'll be at pains to prove impartiality. You might get an extra third degree. Generally though, when the doorman is from Bangladesh, I get a warm reception after the shock. We'll quickly switch languages, and he will pepper me with questions, possibly about the person I'm visiting. I'm a temporary secret window into his ward, my casual knowledge surpassing his two years of loyal service.

Doormen are right to be suspicious, you say. Who can say who is who, what is what. There could be a million imposters, swarming the fair citizens of tony New York (defined as the upper east and west sides, as well as the expensive swaths of lower Manhattan). If only the guards of the Dakota had been a bit paranoid, perhaps Mark David Chapman would never have managed to get access on 8th December, 1980. After shooting John Lennon, an unbelievable breach of security outside New York's premium address, he told us: "I'm sure the large part of me is Holden Caulfield, who is the main person in the book.² The small part of me must be the Devil."³

New York's rules of engagement place you in a box and calculate your place in the social pecking order (whether in a fancy highrise, swank restaurant, snooty art gallery, or high-security government building). Looking at these elaborate rituals, I'm reminded of the

great debates over impostaers and shadow-shifters through history. Like False Dmitriy I, who claimed to be the son of Ivan the Terrible during the Time of Troubles. Supported by Polish noblemen against Boris Godunov, Dmitriy eventually stormed the royal palace after the Tsar's death. But his wife Marina Mnischek's non-conversion angered the Russian Orthodox Church, and the boyars, who accused him of spreading Roman Catholicism and "other Polish customs." After his enemies stormed the Kremlin, Dmitriy was killed, cremated and allegedly shot (in ash form) from a cannon towards Poland. So much for being recognized for your true worth...

The ominously menacing, hyper-physical, glacially unfriendly doorman guards a world within worlds. Seeing everything and nothing, an invisible ghostly presence with inner lives tucked away for after-work unveiling. The perfect metaphor for the hyper-conscious lives we live in a security-panicked world. In America and Europe (and now Asia), people pay obsessive attention to decoding surfaces. Appearances are scrutinized, racial hue scanned, facial hair counted, accents parsed. This exercise is a little harder to pull off in the melting pot, home to more nationalities than any other world zip code (after the debacle of the 2004 elections, out of step with red-state America, we defensively joked that New York was an "island off the coast of Europe"). But leave the borders of safe liberal city utopias, and appearances can set off tongues or alarms. Like the three bearded brothers who were chased by police after a suspicious waitress "tipped off" the authorities. They were looking at me funny. They weren't smiling. And oh yes, they didn't tip.

Security jobs are often taken up eagerly by the city underclass. In a variation of tradition, it is now African Americans and Latinos going into these minimum-pay positions. The communities that were targets for racial profiling now flip the script and profile others.

This too is a tradition. To move up the pecking order, you must find someone lower on the food chain. Be a model house guard, and you too can advance. Not to the penthouse, but perhaps to \$13.50 an hour.

In a time when particular attention is paid to hyphenated identities, many have perfected the art of "passing." In cities, airports or security zones. How to blend in and be anonymized. Atomized. Mix in and be a good neighbor. Model citizen. First up for promotion. Last to be fired. Smile and keep looking ahead. But the more you speak in this language, the more you alarm certain people. To Michelle Malkin, the blended-in citizen is the ticking time bomb.⁴ Invisibility is flipped inside out. It's not what you say you are, it's what we say you are. Lawrence Chua summarized Peter Brimelow's xenophobic book, *Alien Nation*, as the following hysterical conundrum: "Are the wogs here to roll an honest burrito, or blow up the World Trade Center?"⁵

One night, at that same building, I was visiting until very late. Leaving apartment 10C, taking the elevator down, I walked past the front desk and was surprised to see it vacant. At a high security joint like this, eternal vigilance is expected. Down the hall, a door was open and as I walked by, I caught a glimpse of the missing guard. He was sitting on a small bunk bed, in a relaxed mood. Smoking a cigarette on his break, he was hunched over on the bed — in front of him, the folded pages of a Ukrainian newspaper. Perhaps he was scanning the news, the classifieds, the matrimonials, or searching for a cheap sublet in Corona, Queens. His black, tasseled doorman jacket hanging on the chair. Sitting in his undershirt, reading intently, he was both a sad and glorious figure — reminding me of Parvez in *My Son The Fanatic* (alone after hours, drinking scotch, listening to jazz).⁶ The guardian of the halls of power, rendered softly human in half light. 

¹Travis Culley, *The Immortal Class: Bike Messengers and the Cult of Human Power* (New York: Villard Press, 2001).

²The book Chapman refers to is of course J.D. Salinger's *Catcher In The Rye*. Both Chapman and John Hinckley Jr. (Ronald Reagan's attempted assassin) were "inspired" by the book. This is spoofed in the 1997 film *Conspiracy Theory*, where Mel Gibson is pursued by black ops agents, alerted by his purchase of the book.

³Statement of Mark David Chapman to NYPD investigators at 1 a.m., Dec. 9, 1980, three hours after the killing of John Lennon.

⁴Michelle Malkin, *Invasion: How America Still Welcomes Terrorists, Criminals, and Other Foreign Menaces* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2002).

⁵Lawrence Chua, "Review of Alien Nation: Common Sense About American's Immigration Disaster," *Village Voice Literary Supplement*, April 1995, 17.

⁶Originally published in Hanif Kureishi, *Love in a Blue Time* (New York: Scribner, 1997). The scotch-drinking scene is from the film adaptation, directed by Udayan Prasad.



IF THE MIGRANT'S IMAGINARY IS FLUID

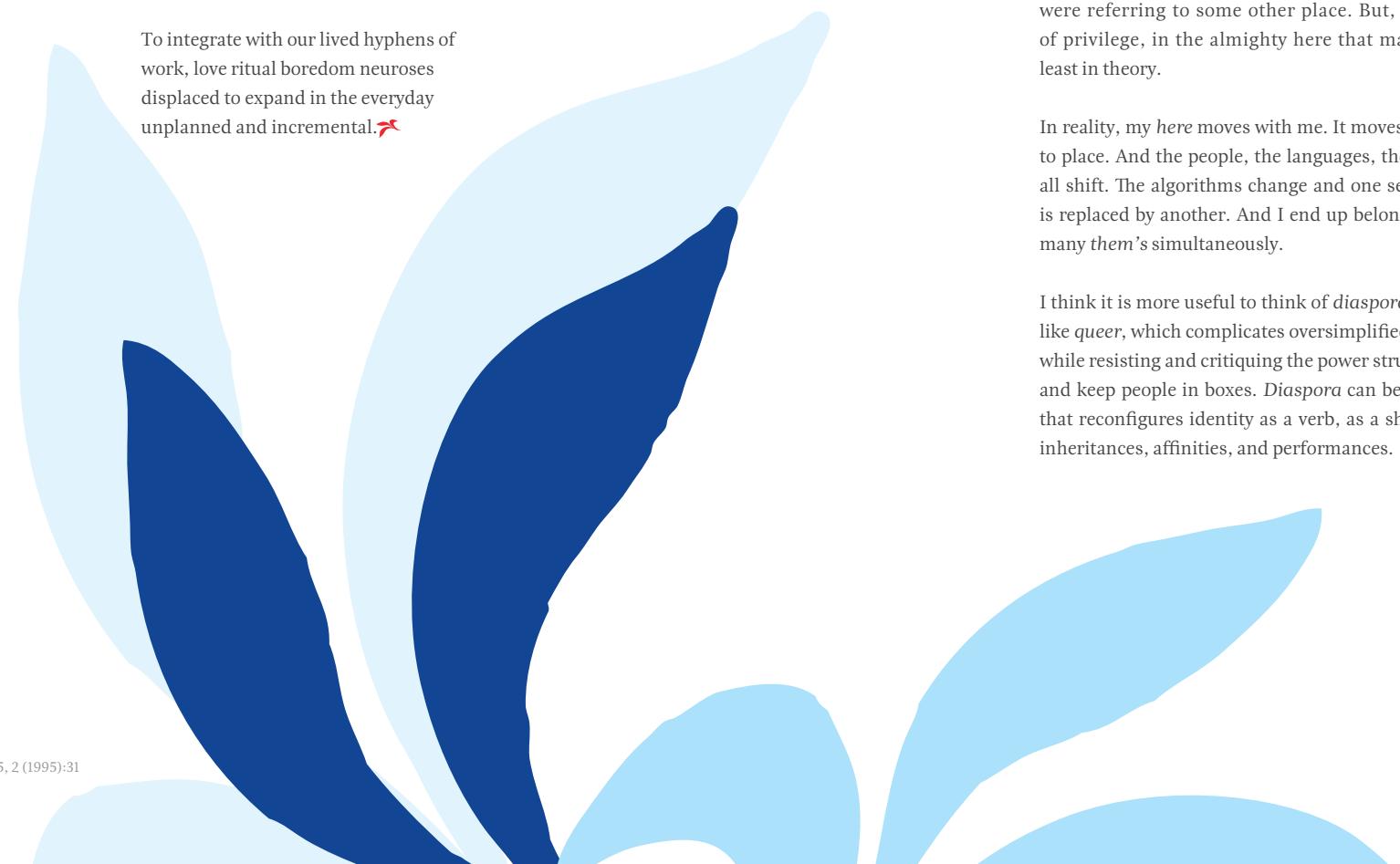
YAMINI NAYAR

If the migrant's imaginary is fluid,
then it must coagulate
from history
a dried wound
a scab which breaks the skin
external, both a rupture and an object.

A scab eventually flakes and dissipates into the world.
Healed, it is "a memory without memory of a mark."¹
Our imaginary space does not leave us,
though it shifts form; it is a foundation,
a basement of cement and attic of timber.
A rupture finds shelter.
Is it painful?

Does it become a detached sleepwalker?
A Flaneur tucked in the urban landscape
as we strive to stay present?
We are of two minds in and out of slumber
adrift: is the migrant's imagination sleepy?

Does the space move forward while always
looking back?
Time slows in retrospect, in memory and in sleep.
But does the imagination wake the poet to flirt?
Half tongues flicker in half lit nights.
Translation loses words in the inner language.
Inter-language.



If the space of the migrant is productive,
then it must need nostalgia to keep it warm and fertile.
The past becomes its currency,
yet future states keep it frozen in order to stay productive.

Do we inherit the migrant's imagination across generations?
Does it collapse and meld into our own consciousness?
Does it make us wealthy women and men?
Accumulation in the coming and going,
stacked shipping containers,
stoic and formed, but the insides unseen.

To integrate with our lived hyphens of
work, love ritual boredom neuroses
displaced to expand in the everyday
unplanned and incremental. ↗



BELIEVE YOU ME

JARET VADERA

I have an ambivalent relationship with the term *diaspora*. There are a myriad of experiences that fall under its umbrella. But usually, when I hear *diaspora* used, it is often referring to a loss of some sort, an incompleteness, or a feeling of longing, that I can't say that I personally relate to. I've never really been nostalgic, or confused or no place—at least not in that way.

The schizophrenic feeling of existing in-between *here* and *there* probably holds truer for my parents. First generation immigrants, who seemed to have believed in the existence of authentic national identities. Whenever they said home, they were referring to some other place. But, I was born here. Full of privilege, in the almighty *here* that makes me one of us. At least in theory.

In reality, my *here* moves with me. It moves as I move, from place to place. And the people, the languages, the beliefs, the contexts, all shift. The algorithms change and one set of either/or binaries is replaced by another. And I end up belonging to many *us*'s and many *them*'s simultaneously.

I think it is more useful to think of *diaspora* as a rubric, or a lens, like *queer*, which complicates oversimplified categories of identity while resisting and critiquing the power structures that seek to put and keep people in boxes. *Diaspora* can be used as a proposition that reconfigures identity as a verb, as a shifting constellation of inheritances, affinities, and performances.

DIASPORA CAN BE USED
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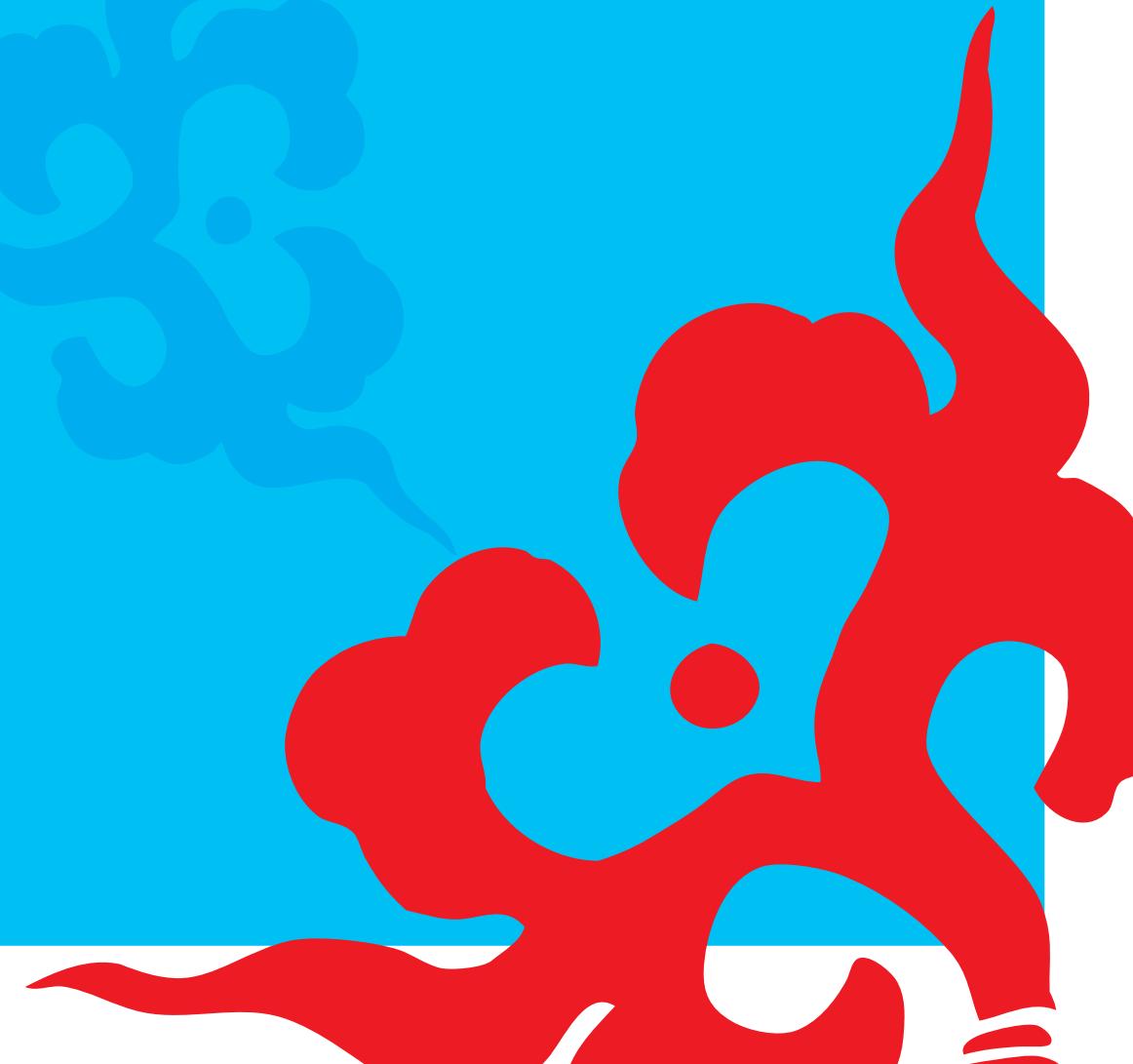
My country, my culture, my family, my idea of home, is rooted in people, in a network of connections and traditions and places and stories that cut across nation-states. But, even though I may imagine myself as some shape-shifting pangean turtle with passports for wings, I do live in this world. A world where fear mongers with microphones, make speeches about shadows in the dark and convince people with guns to become monsters.

Identity is, of course, big business. And it is as real as death. It is as real as drones, as torture. As real as eugenics, as the prison-industrial complex. As real as money, and mobs, and votes, and the War on...whatever the war is on now. ↗

¹ Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression" *diacritics* 25, 2 (1995):31

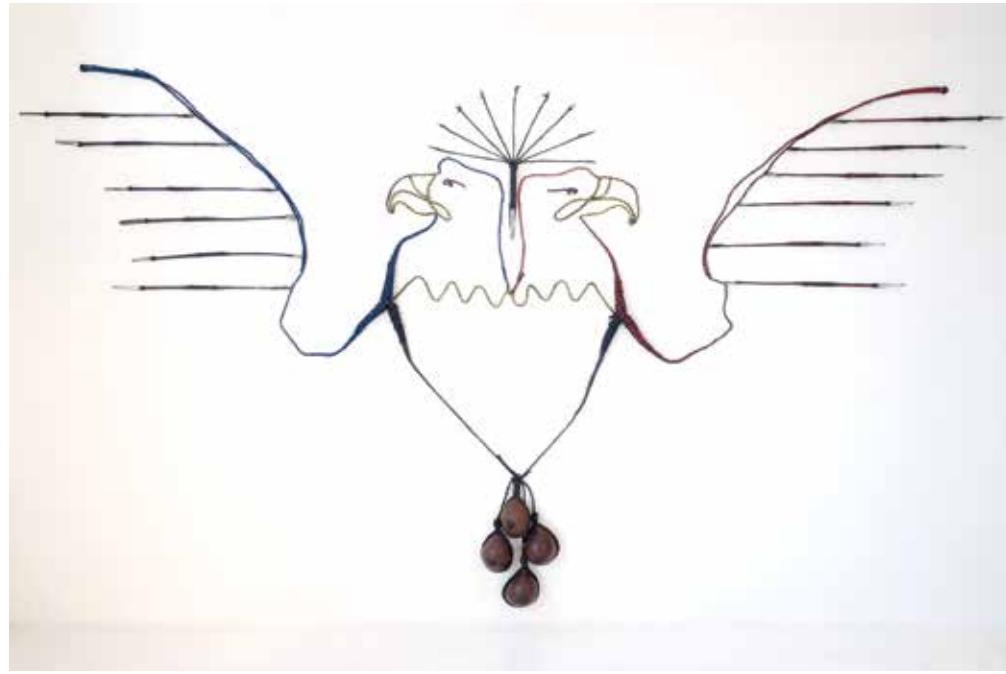


ILLUSTRATIONS





Jaishri Abichandani



Heartland 2 • 2010
Leather whips, plastic breasts, paint and glue
90 x 108 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Rossi and Rossi, London



Before Kali series Number 46 • 2013
Clay, stone, wire, paint, varnish
Approximately 9 x 4 x 3 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Rossi and Rossi, London



Fountain of Youth • 2010
Leather whips, wire, paint, wood, Swarovski crystals
90 x 50 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Rossi and Rossi, London



Hasan Elahi



Waterfall • 2013
12-channel video installation, edition of 3
36 x 144 x 72 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Altitude v2.5.1 • 2011
C-print
31 x 44 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Brasilia • 2011
2-channel video
Duration: 6 minutes, 44 seconds
Courtesy of the artist



Naeem Mohaiemen



Der Weisse Engel • 2011
Installation: video (8 minutes, 22 seconds),
photographs, and texts
Courtesy of the artist and Experimenter, Kolkata



Der Weisse Engel • 2011
Installation: video (8 minutes, 22 seconds),
photographs, and texts
Courtesy of the artist and Experimenter, Kolkata



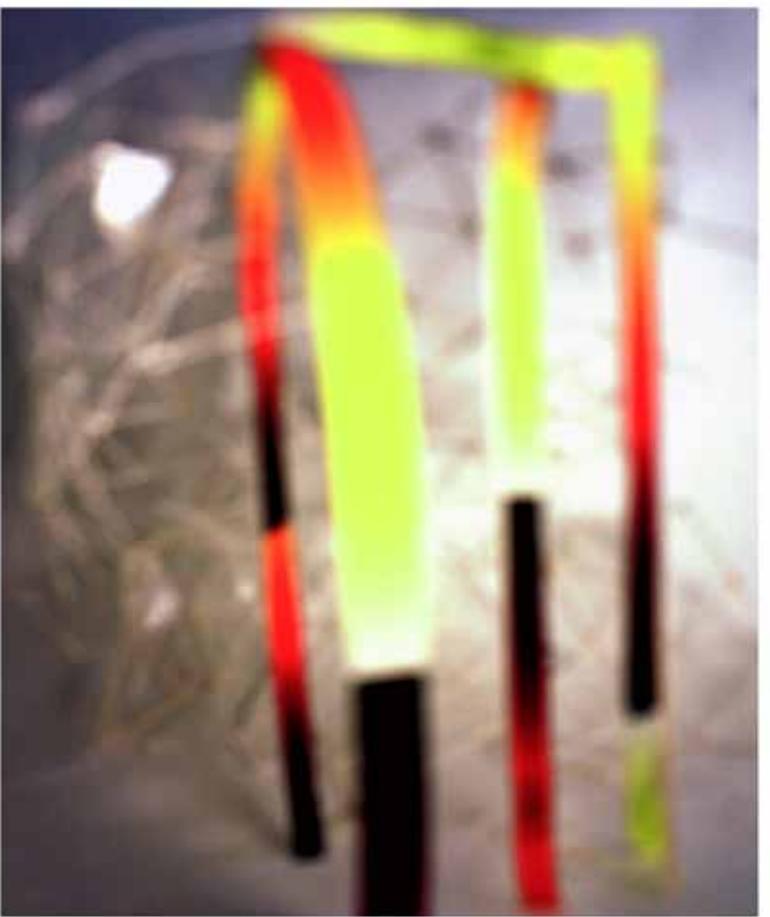
Yamini Nayar



Akhet • 2013
C-print
50 x 40 inches
Courtesy of Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai,
and Thomas Erben, New York

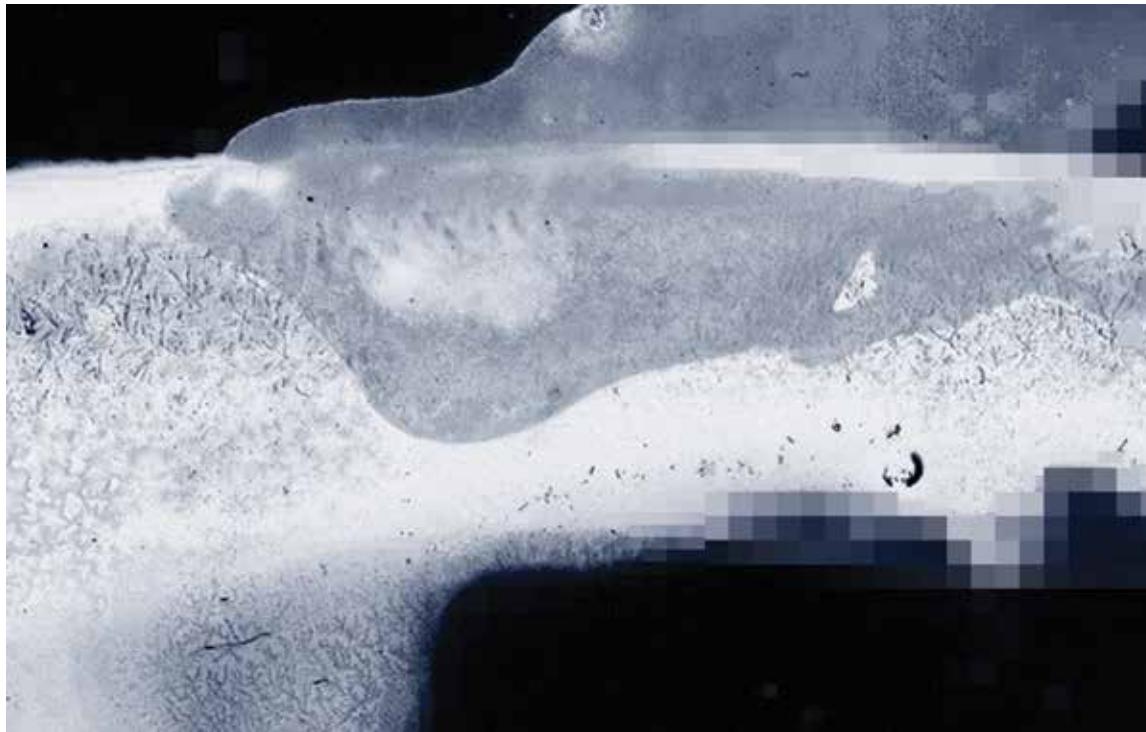


Come and Go • 2013
C-prints
Diptych, 11 x 14 and 16 x 20 inches
Courtesy of Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai,
and Thomas Erben, New York





Jaret Vadera

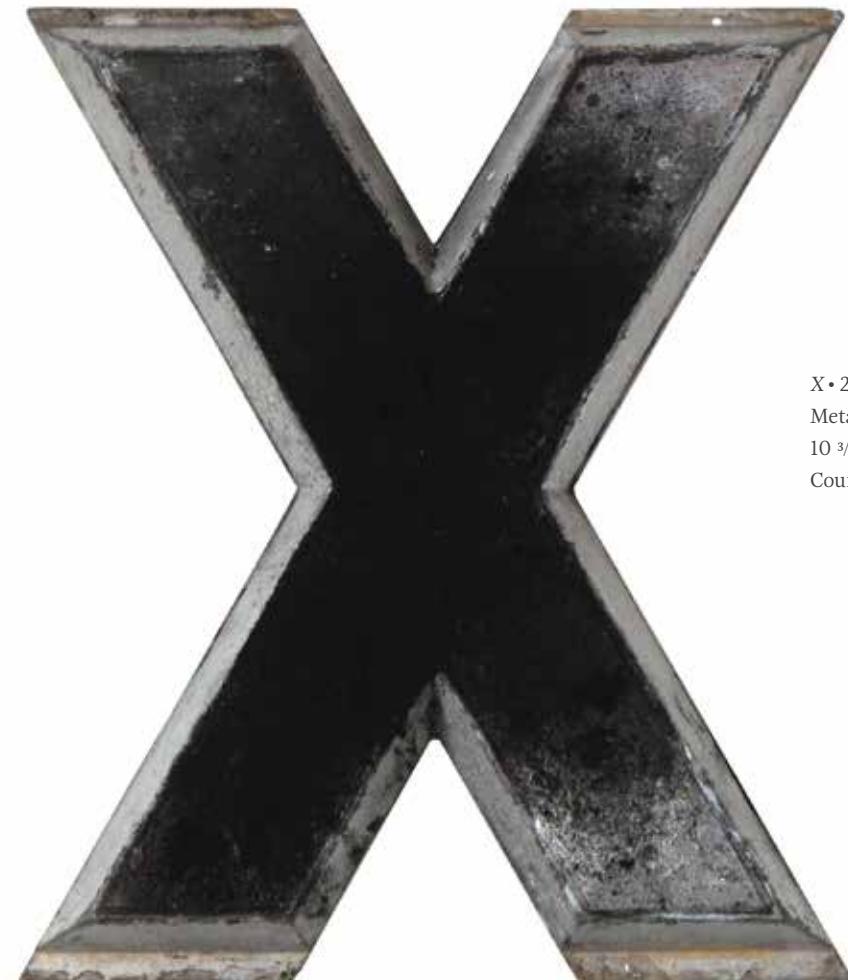


Untitled VIII, from the "Here Be Dragons" series • 2008

Duraclear on light box

10 x 16 inches (image size)

Courtesy of the artist



X • 2014

Metal, acrylic, and pigment

10 3/4 x 9 3/4 inches

Courtesy of the artist



ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Jaishri Abichandani was born in 1969 in Mumbai, India and lives in Brooklyn, NY. She earned her B.A. from Queen's College, New York, NY in 1991, and she received her M.F.A. from Goldsmiths College, University of London in 2005. Abichandani intertwines art and activism in her career, and founded the South Asian Women's Creative Collective (SAWCC) (www.sawcc.org) in New York and London. As a SAWCC board member from 1997–2013, she collaboratively developed hundreds of events focusing on the work of South Asian women. She was the Founding Director of Public Events and Projects at the Queens Museum from 2003 – 2006. She has curated numerous national and international exhibitions. Her studio practice encompasses photography, sculpture, installation, and painting. She had solo exhibitions at Rossi and Rossi, London, UK (2010); the Queens Museum, Queens, NY (2007); Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, India (2002); and the Castle of Good Hope, Capetown, South Africa (2002). She participated in group exhibitions at the Queens Museum, Queens, NY (2012, 2002, 2001); the Guangzhou Triennial, China (2009); the Valencia Institute of Modern Art, Valencia, Spain (2009); Gallery Espace, Delhi, India (2008); P.S.1/MoMA, Long Island City, NY (2007); Exit Art, New York, NY (2007); and House of World Cultures, Berlin, Germany (2007). Her work is represented in the Burger Collection, the Asia Art Archive Collection, and the Saatchi Collection. Her art and writings have appeared in many publications including *Art Asia Pacific* magazine. She has been a Visiting Artist and Critic at Yale University, Goldsmiths College, and the University of Michigan, among others. She received the Urban Artists Initiative Award (2006), the Enfoco New Works Award (2000), and was recognized by the Brooklyn Arts Council in 2009. Abichandani is represented by Rossi and Rossi, London, UK.

Hasan Elahi was born in 1972 in Rangpur, Bangladesh. He is currently Associate Professor of Art at University of Maryland where he is Director of Design, Cultures, and Creativity in the Honors College. He currently lives outside of Washington, DC

roughly equidistant from the CIA, FBI, and NSA headquarters. He is an interdisciplinary artist whose work examines issues of surveillance, citizenship, migration, transport, and borders and frontiers. His work has been presented in numerous exhibitions at venues such as SITE, Santa Fe, NM (2010); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (2007); the Sundance Film Festival, Park City, UT (2008); Kassel Kulturbahnhof, Kassel, Germany (2005); The Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia (2005); and the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2007). Elahi was invited to speak about his work at the Tate Modern, London, UK (2006); the Einstein Forum, Potsdam, Germany (2008), the American Association for Artificial Intelligence, Washington, DC (2012); and at TED Global (2011). His awards include grants from the Creative Capital Foundation, Art Matters Foundation, and a Ford Foundation/ Phillip Morris National Fellowship. His work is frequently in the media and has been covered by the New York Times, Forbes, Wired, CNN, ABC, CBS, NPR, and has appeared on Al Jazeera, Fox News, and on The Colbert Report. In 2010, he was an Alpert/MacDowell Fellow and in 2009, was Resident Faculty at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

Naeem Mohaiemen was born in 1969 in London, and grew up in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He studied at Dhaka University (Dhaka, Bangladesh) and then received his B.A. from Oberlin College (Oberlin, OH) in 1993. He works in Dhaka and New York as a writer and visual artist, using photography, film, and mixed media. Mohaiemen co-founded Visible, a coalition of New York artists and lawyers investigating post-9/11 security panic (www.disappearedinamerica.org). Visible's work showed internationally at L'Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris, France (2011), and the Whitney Biennial of American Art, New York, NY (2006), among others. Since 2006, Mohaiemen has worked on The Young Man Was, a research project on the 1970s ultra-left. Chapters from this project have shown at numerous international venues including the Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy (Dhaka Art Summit), Dhaka, Bangladesh (2014); Kiran Nadar Museum, Noida, India (2013);

the New Museum, New York, NY (2001); the Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah, UAE (2011); and Frieze Art Fair, London, UK (2010). His essays have appeared in *The Sun Never Sets: South Asian Migrants in an Age of U.S. Power* (NYU Press, 2013); *Visual Culture Reader* (Routledge, 2012); *Partition as Productive Space* (Johnson Museum, 2012); *Granta* (Volume 112: Pakistan, 2010); and *Sound Unbound* (MIT Press, 2008); among others. His work is in the collection of the Tate Modern and the British Museum. Mohaiemen is a recipient of grants from Creative Capital (2008), Arts Network Asia (2009), and Creative Time, (2013) for his ongoing research. He is also a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at Columbia University (New York, NY). Mohaiemen is represented by Experimenter Gallery in Kolkata, India.

Yamini Nayar was born in Rochester, NY in 1975. She was raised in metro Detroit, MI and New Delhi, India. She currently serves as a Thesis Advisory in the School of Visual Arts M.F.A. Photography Department and resides in Brooklyn. She received her B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design (Providence, RI) in 1999, and her M.F.A. from the School of Visual Arts (New York, NY) in 2005. She has participated in residencies at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (2011–12); New York University (2011–12); the Center for Photography at Woodstock (2010); the Art Academy of Cincinnati (2010); and Chashama (2002). She had solo exhibitions at Thomas Erben, New York, NY (2012), and Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, India (2012). She has exhibited her work internationally at venues including the India Art Summit, New Delhi, India (2014); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA (2013); the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia (2012); the DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA (2012); the Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah, UAE (2011), the Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH (2010); Saatchi Gallery, London, UK (2010); Exit Art, New York, NY (2007); and the Queens Museum, Queens, NY (2005). Her work has been featured in numerous publications and magazines including *Unfixed*:

Postcolonial Photography in Contemporary Art (Jap Sam Books, 2012); *Manual for Treason: Sharjah Biennial* (2011); the *New York Times*, *New Yorker* magazine, *Art India*, *ArtForum*, *Art in America*, *Frieze*, *Vogue India*, *Art Papers*, and *Art Economist*. She is the recipient of a 2014 Art Matters grant. Nayar is represented by Thomas Erben Gallery, NY, and Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, India.

Jaret Vadera was born in 1976 in Toronto, Canada. His father was born in India and his mother was born in the Philippines. Vadera lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and is currently an artist-in-residence at the Lower East Side Print Shop. In 1999, he graduated from the Ontario College of Art and Design, and participated in the Mobility Program in Fine Arts at the Cooper Union School of Art (New York, NY) the same year. He received his M.F.A. in Painting and Printmaking from the Yale School of Art (New Haven, CT) in 2009. Vadera's work explores the poetics of translation, and the politics of vision. His paintings, prints, photographs, videos, and installations have been exhibited and screened at a number of venues including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2013); EFA – Project Space, New York, NY (2011); Project 88, Mumbai, India (2010); Triple Candie, New York, NY (2009); PPOW, New York, NY (2009); Aljira, a Center for Contemporary Art, Newark, NJ (2007); the Queens Museum, Queens, NY (2006); White Box, New York, NY (2005); Paved Art + New Media, Saskatoon, Canada (2005); and A.W.O.L. Gallery, Toronto, Canada (2003).



WORKS IN EXHIBITION

JAISHRI ABICHANDANI

"Before Kali" series • 2013
Clay, stone, wire, paint, varnish
Selection of 15 figurines, dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Rossi and Rossi, London

Fountain of Youth • 2010
Leather whips, wire, paint, wood, Swarovski crystals
90 x 50 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Rossi and Rossi, London

Heartland 2 • 2010
Leather whips, plastic breasts, paint and glue
90 x 108 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Rossi and Rossi, London

HASAN ELAHI

Pixel • 2013
Ink on cotton rag archival paper
12 prints, 22 x 30 inches each, edition of 5
Courtesy of the artist

Waterfall • 2013
12-channel video installation, edition of 3
36 x 144 x 72 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Altitude v2.5.1 • 2011
C-print
31 x 44 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Brasilia • 2011
2-channel video
Duration: 6 minutes, 44 seconds
Courtesy of the artist

NAEEM MOHAIMEN
White Teeth • 2012
Video
Duration: 4 minutes, 21 seconds
Courtesy of the artist and Experimenter, Kolkata

Der Weisse Engel • 2011
Installation: video (8 minutes, 22 seconds), photographs, and texts
Courtesy of the artist and Experimenter, Kolkata

YAMINI NAYAR

"an axe for a wing-bone" series • 2013
C-prints
Selection of photographs, dimensions variable
Courtesy of Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, and Thomas Erben, New York

Akhet • 2013
C-print
50 x 40 inches
Courtesy of Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, and Thomas Erben, New York

Come and Go • 2013
C-prints
Diptych, 11 x 14 and 16 x 20 inches
Courtesy of Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, and Thomas Erben, New York

JARET VADERA

All we see is vision • 2014
Vinyl
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Duct Tape Gray and Jeepney Blue Kicks • 2014
Tape and shoes, size 10 1/2
Courtesy of the artist

FIGS. 24 – 33 • 2014
Mixed media collage
13 x 19 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Neither left nor right, black nor white, not there, nor there, nor nowhere. • 2014
Duct tape
5 feet, 9 3/4 inches x 3 feet, 5 1/2 inches
Courtesy of the artist

X

• 2014
Metal, acrylic, and pigment
10 3/4 x 9 3/4 inches
Courtesy of the artist

Untitled VIII, from the "Here Be Dragons" series • 2008
Duraclear on light box
10 x 16 inches (image size)
Courtesy of the artist

This catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition, *Doublebind: Art of the South Asian Diaspora*, organized by the University Galleries, William Paterson University, and on view March 31 – May 30, 2014. The exhibition is presented as part of the University's 2014 Cross-Cultural Arts Festival: South Asia, which celebrates the cultures of Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan from March 23 – April 12, 2014.

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University Galleries

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Large Print



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