



Skin Deep



curated by

Lyla Rao & Mohini Varma



RELIGARE ENTERPRISES LIMITED

Religare Enterprises Limited (REL) is a leading financial services group anchored in India. In India, we offer a wide array of services including broking, insurance, asset management, lending solutions, investment banking and wealth management. With a network of over 2,200 business centres across 550 plus locations, and more than a million clients, REL enjoys a dominant presence in the Indian financial services space. We have also built an Asia & emerging markets focused Institutional equities & Investment Banking business and a multi-boutique global asset management platform to tap the broader opportunities offered by the most promising emerging markets around the world.



Religare Arts Initiative Limited (Religare Art) was founded in September 2007 as a subsidiary of Religare Enterprises Limited, a globally trusted brand in the financial services domain. Established as India's first corporate supported arts organization, Religare Art is founded on the vision of creating a 360 degree platform for the arts, to provide contemporary art a larger integrated voice, and to make it a more transparent, relevant and effective force in society.

The Religare Art Gallery, New Delhi is spread over 20,000 square feet in the city's iconic heart, Saket. Located within Religare Enterprise's corporate headquarters, the facility integrates two galleries, a resource centre and ancillary transitional spaces that double up to accommodate symposia, workshops and other art activities. Through a consortium of supportive activities including exhibitions, residency programs, art appreciation workshops, and arts management services, the organization ensures that all the diverse dimensions of art are nurtured and given the right exposure, allowing art to permeate more completely into our societal fabric. With a number of outstanding exhibitions curated across themes, mediums and artists, Religare Art remains committed to using its resources to represent and promote shows that hold the power and promise to forge an identity that best represents the depth and expanse of what we today call, Indian Contemporary Art.

In addition, Religare Art proffers a range of Arts Management Services that have evolved out of a deep understanding of the client's needs to enhance and consolidate the value of their art assets. A spectrum of services comprising the following has been carefully crafted to ensure the best advantage for clients:

Authentication | Valuation | Collection building | Restoration and conservation | Inventory documentation and management | Corporate collection management, promotion and liquidation | Art loan scheme | Art insurance

SKIN DEEP

The term 'skin deep' implies a superficial reading of things, a hastily arrived at conclusion, based upon a cursory examination of the surface, whereas, in actuality, the human skin is a complex web of interconnected cells, that is as metaphorically layered, as it is compositionally. This fragile yet resilient membrane, serves both as a transmitter of external stimuli, as well as a medium through which abstract notions of race, identity, beauty, gender, desire and power are constructed and deconstructed. A shared visual aesthetic, and a preference for a layered approach to material and meaning, bind together the works of this exhibition. To experience these works is to peel back the skin of it. Layer upon layer of symbols and symbolism, are delicately stacked to create a visual *bebunca*ⁱ that fosters a prolonged engagement between the viewer and the work. While the works on display encourage further dialogue on the subject of skin, and its role in shaping socio-cultural thought and practice, they seek to do so through an examination of the medium's formal structure, its texture, composition and function as the definitive divide between the corporeal inner world, and the physical outer world.

The skin as surface

It is difficult to divorce the surficial nature of skin when viewing it through the lens of fine art. The skin as canvas to paint, tattoo, pierce and decorate, is an old and accepted cultural practice in the creation and expression of one's identity. How we choose to adorn our bodies is reflective, to an extent, of how we view ourselves, and how we wish society to view us. Just as one cannot isolate the cultural subtext of body piercing, or tattooing from its visible physical manifestations, one cannot help but think of the word 'surface' in terms of what it conceals or what lies beneath. In the world of art, "there is the surface of the painting and there is what lies beneath it"ⁱⁱ. According to Christa Robbins in her essay 'Surface' for the *Chicago School of Media Theory*, "...surface, in western fine art, more specifically within painting, is that aspect of the painting that we see through, to get to the subject matter, narration or figuration." She goes on to assert that the vacillating importance given to the surface of an image in art has helped define western art movements from the Renaissance (which she considers the "nadir of surface's cycle"), to its greatest heights during the modernist period under Clement Greenberg, where the surface of a painting was reduced to a picture plane, impenetrable and impossible to "hole through"ⁱⁱⁱ. Surface remains an area of contest within the studies of art history. Trying to locate the surface, to what degree and in what manner, all remain critical to an understanding of art itself.

Neha Lavingia and **Sumakshi Singh** play with the idea of the surface of the image, striking a balance between its total assertion and suppression. The flatness of Lavingia's small format drawings accentuates the dominance of the surface as a picture plane. Careful not to allow the works to fall into the trap of what Michael Fried terms the "objecthood" of things, wherein a work is reduced from art to object by overemphasizing the surface, Lavingia fractures the patterned skin of her drawings, with tiny fissures and cracks that open up new portals through which the viewer can access the work. These delicate, yet violent little wounds challenge the supremacy of the surface, allowing for the illusion of depth and space, that further allude to notions of the private and the public, the internal and the external, as well as text and subtext. Lavingia's play on the suggestion of depth finds resonance in the paper collages of Sumakshi Singh. Bright colourful rings of concentric circles tear through the skin of the paper, opening up new areas of investigation, while subverting the superficiality of the surface. The simultaneous viewing of these multiple layers splinters the plane into a kaleidoscope of form and colour, that blurs the contours of the image, and invests the work with a sense of the infinite. Much like the Russian nesting dolls, Singh's works become keepers of an inner world, accessed only through the unveiling of their multiple and nuanced surfaces.

While the peeling exteriors of Singh's drawings focus largely on the surface of the image, her textured approach to material is highly evocative of the physical layering of skin. The largest organ in the human body, the skin, accounts for approximately 16% of an adult human's body weight and has a surface area of between 1.5 – 2.0 square meters with a thickness of 2-3 millimeters. It is this very thickness (or lack thereof) of the human skin that informs the artworks of **Parvathi Nayar** and **Vishwa Shroff**. A play on the term 'Skin Deep', allows Nayar to look "deeper" at the structure of "skin", unveiling the microscopic worlds that lie hidden within it, while at the same time acknowledging the two-dimensionality of the artwork's surface. In doing so, the artwork undercuts itself while questioning, "what is really skin deep, what is superficial...and what is the reality that lies beneath the skin of the reality that we see?"^{iv} The illusion of reality, and its construction, is delicately outlined in the muted drawings of Vishwa Shroff. Employing a layering of form, similar to that of skin, the artist strategically places four distinct images, one in front of the other, to create the illusion of a single harmonious whole. In their individuality their details are revealed, and together they complete the picture. A dialogue emerges within the work itself, between the image and its parts, and between the seen and the unseen. For both Nayar and Shroff, their choice of medium is critical to the execution of their concepts. While the thin wooden sheets of Nayar's panels reflect the tactility of skin, the semi-opacity of Shroff's paper works allude to its translucency, which conceals as much as it reveals.

Piercing through this translucency are the magnificent mixed media drawings of **Pranati Panda** and **Samanta Batra Mehta**. In their works, fantastical subcutaneous worlds of intricate biomorphic forms emerge, revealing a synthesis of reality and illusion, observation and imagination.

At a glance, the skin appears smooth and continuous but under the glare of a microscope, luxuriant worlds are uncovered that are fluid and mutable. A cross-section of the skin exposes three distinct layers of cells punctured by an assortment of glands, blood vessels and nerve endings. The mixed media drawings of Mehta and Panda are like magnified viewings of the skin's anatomy, filled with straggly hair-like follicles that pierce the surface, to fat glutinous glands that lie within it. Within these finely inked collages flourish tiny ecosystems, connected through a network of sustained mutual dependency. The interconnectedness of these forms reference the interdependency of our lives. Here, parallel undercurrents of fragility and tenacity, of the internal and external, and of the self and the environment are constantly at play. Although these works throb with a life force all of their own, the lightness of line, the subtlety of colour and the suppleness of form allude to the delicate fragility of the integumentary system.

The implied vulnerability of skin in the works of Mehta and Panda is made explicit in 'The Skin Remembers' by **Megha Joshi**. The pinched pink tissue of a wound healed, the cracked brown scab of an old lesion and the inflamed red gash of a fresh incision, are three of thirty panels created by Joshi, to document the "different stages of healing". Beautiful in their abstraction, yet disturbing in their rawness, these festering abrasions simultaneously beckon and repulse. According to Joshi, wounds are the physical and emotional markers of life's assaults on the human body. Whether for cosmetic or life-saving reasons, each scar tells a story – a story of cuts and stitches, of sorrow and joy, and of rupture and repair. While the work lays bare the skin's weakness under the glint of a metallic scalpel, it recognizes its adeptness to heal itself. In its recuperation, the skin interns the memories of its infliction, rendering the surface sensitive, long after the inflammation has subsided. The silent cries of these wounds are echoed in the contained black and white photographs of **Koumudi Patil**. Reflecting Joshi's thoughts on the memory of skin, these photographs make visible the remembrances of its interactions. From the gentle impression of a crumpled bed sheet on the side of the face, to the violence of a hand imprint on an arm gripped too tight, the skin retains the visual memory of its interactions. According to Patil, the retention of these memories, and the manner of their manifestation, is determined by the skin alone. Whether through the welts and furrows of Joshi's wounds, or through the generosity of its forgiveness in its return to normalcy, the skin exactly mediates all infringements of its immediate space. As such, both Joshi and Patil invest the skin

with the power of memory, elevating it from its role as a passive receptor, to that of an active processor of the body's physical encounters.

The Affective Skin

In his seminal text, 'The Ego and the Id' Sigmund Freud first alluded to the importance of the psychological experience of skin as the delineator of boundaries between what is experienced to be external and what is experienced to be the self. He states that, "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity but is itself the projection of the surface [i.e. the skin]". Freud goes on to say, "the ego is ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body. The ego is thus a mental projection of the body."

The skin as the primary mediator of human experiences lies at the heart of **Priyanka Dasgupta's** video installation titled 'Dreams of Inconvenience'. While challenging Freud on his theory of the efficacy of dreams to ease mental angst, Dasgupta appears to consent to the psychoanalyst's hypothesis on the skin as the primary negotiator of our psychological experiences. Dasgupta's work centres around a video projection of a female protagonist, as she fades in and out the frame, tying red ribbons torn from her dress, to the branches of a large central tree. The video is flanked by two, three-dimensional stenciled cutouts of shadow puppets that offer the protagonist's heart and brain in humble supplication. The skin, in this work, is conspicuous by its absence. Much like the psychic skin of Freud's theory, the dress becomes the conduit for the mediation of all cognitive and emotional experiences (symbolized in the work by the brain and the heart) between the self and the outside world. As the protagonist fades into oblivion, leaving behind a web of red ribbons, the viewer is left contemplating the transient grace of life.

The body in transition is graphically captured in a series of sixty-four inkjet prints by **Yardena Kurulkar**. Appropriately titled '5 Seconds Later', the work deals directly with the transience of time and the mortality of the flesh. Yardena's dissolving clay heads call to mind the putrefying meat dresses of Canadian artist Jana Sterbak. While both Kurulkar and Sterbak use direct visual references to the flesh to meditate on the fragility of life, their works differ in terms of their representation. While for Sterbak, the strength of the piece lies in the witnessing of the meat as it matures from a raw to a cured state, for Kurulkar, the documentation of the decomposition is as important as the decomposition itself, making the work a modern day *vanitas*^{vi} painting. Kurulkar's photographs make permanent that which in life is most transient. They stop time and record, every five seconds, those

moments of transitory perfection that the poet Robert Frost describes, with melancholic resignation, as the fall of Eden, and the dawning of a new day^{vii}.

Recognizable forms give way to abstraction in the works of **Kavita Jaiswal** and **Riya Chatterjee**. Notions of frailty and the impermanence of life, infuse the mixed media drawings of both artists. Imprints of dried brittle leaves, and the markings of the body interior, seem to emerge from the mesh of sinuous lines that traverse the surfaces of their parchments. The fragility of these forms is reflected in the modesty of their medium. The humble paper, by virtue of its organic make-up, becomes a metaphor for the tenuous and ephemeral nature of life. For Jaiswal, her paper becomes her skin, upon which she scratches and caresses, tears and stitches in an attempt to capture, “the vulnerability of the human body as it changes and ages”^{viii}. But the act of ageing is not without beauty, as revealed in the burnt paper surfaces of Riya Chatterjee. Through a controlled torching of paper, Chatterjee gives rise to sublime abstractions that highlight the irony of locating beauty in decay. The violence of the burning is assuaged by the softness of its patterns, however, only temporarily, as a line of ants tread purposefully across the surface, signaling the first stage towards total decomposition.

Moving away from the physical dimension of skin to a more subtle examination of its socio-political connotations, are the works by **Lavanya Mani** and **Remen Chopra**. While Mani studies the implications of skin from a post-colonial perspective, Chopra approaches it from the perspective of its relationship to beauty.

In 1871, anthropologist and natural historian Charles Darwin in his book, ‘The Descent of Man’ stated that “of all the differences between the races of man, the colour of the skin is the most conspicuous and of the best marked...”^{ix} For Darwin, the skin emerged as a primary physical marker in the identification of a people. From the mid-18th century onward, the skin becomes the leading attribute by which a society distinguishes itself from the rest of civilization. For Lavanya Mani, the skin of her painting becomes the site for the exploration of the “other”. Referencing botanical drawings of the ‘orient’ by early nineteenth century European explorers, Mani appears to equate the sensual mysteries of the skin with the unknown thrills of a foreign land. The seductive lure of both land and skin is, however, tempered by the fear of disease and decay. The anxiety of the unknown manifests itself in the mysterious topographical projections that adorn her work. At once reminiscent of early European vegetal drawings, the work also brings to mind imprints of the cellular make-up of skin. Here, the topography of skin is transformed into a landscape of vegetation that holds within it the mystery of both desire and dread.

In an attempt to demystify the seductive desirability of skin, Remen Chopra takes a closer look at the medium, and ponders whether beauty is truly skin deep. The old maxim ‘beauty is skin deep’ first appeared in 1613 in Sir Thomas Overbury’s poem ‘A Wife’, to distinguish between the external attractiveness of the poet’s wife, and the inner goodness of her character. While questioning the validity of the phrase, Chopra reflects on the implications of skin, as it relates to matters of identity, history, beauty and DNA. The history of beauty in western art demands an understanding of the ancient Greeks’ obsession with order and symmetry. The Greeks believed that all beauty, whether in nature, or in art, stems from the existence, or application, of a mathematical proportion, better known as the ‘golden ratio’ or the ‘divine ratio’. This mathematical approach to beauty reemerged in Europe in the early 1500s and enjoyed great prominence during the rise of the Italian Renaissance. Applying this ratio to the human body, Chopra discovers a perfect correlation between the construct of the ‘golden section’ and the helical structure of a DNA molecule. While Chopra accepts that this little revelation poses more questions than it answers, the embodiment of beauty within the very fabric of our being, hits at the core of who we are and what we are, allowing the artist to conclude that, “we are nothing but spiral structures, internally built, aiming for a structure based on the ‘golden ratio’.”

The fragmented forms of Chopra’s image complete the arc of this exhibition, bringing the discussion full circle, back to its title, back to the question of what truly is skin deep. As each artist embarks on their individual journey through the myriad layers of the epidermis, fantastical topographies and narratives unfold, that speak to matters of the self and the environment, of surface and depth, of strength and vulnerability, of desire and disease, and of the grotesque and the beautiful.

i A traditional, multi-tiered Goan dessert.

ii Robbins, Christa, *Surface*, Chicago School of Media Theory, Chicago; <http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/surface.htm>

iii Greenburg, Clement. “Toward a Newer Laocoon.” *The Collected Essays and Criticism*. Ed. John O’Brian. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.

iv A quote by Parvathi Nayar

v Freud, Sigmund, “The Ego and the Id”. The Hogarth Press Ltd. London, 1949.

vi *Vanitas* is a term generally used to describe Flemish and Dutch still life paintings made popular in the 16th and 17th centuries. Paintings executed in the *vanitas* style were meant to remind viewers of the transience of life, the futility of pleasure, and the certainty of death.

vii Frost, Robert. “Nothing Gold Can Stay.” Poetry X. Ed. Jough Dempsey. 16 Jun 2003. 19 Jul. 2012

viii Karode, Roobina, ‘*No Beginning, No End*’, Exhibition Catalogue Essay, Artkonsult, 2011-2012, New Delhi.

ix Darwin, Charles, “The Descent of Man”. John Murray. London. 1871

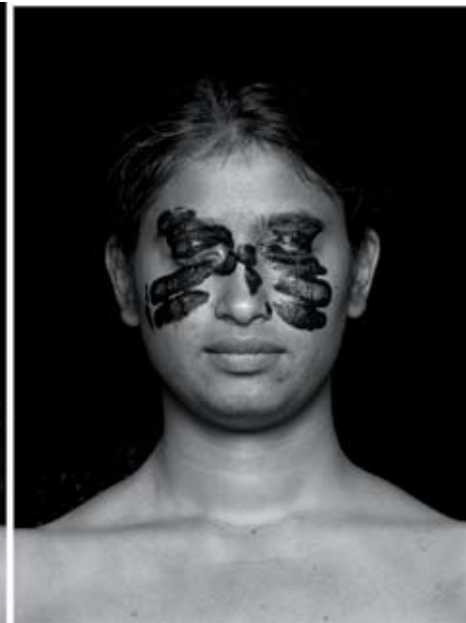
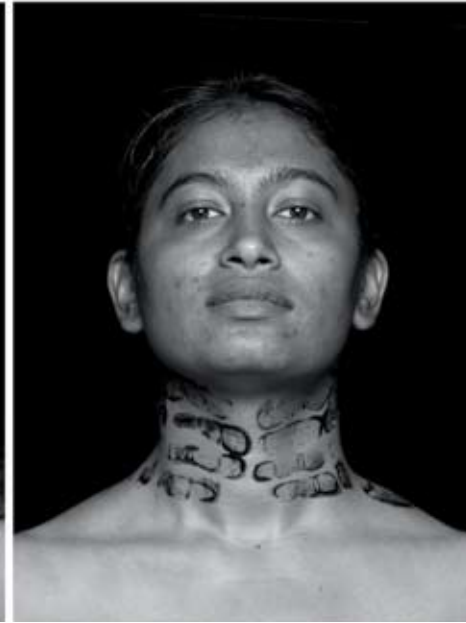
KAVITA JAISWAL

Image XVIII, VII & IX, No Beginning No End
mixed media on paper
40" x 30" (each), 2011



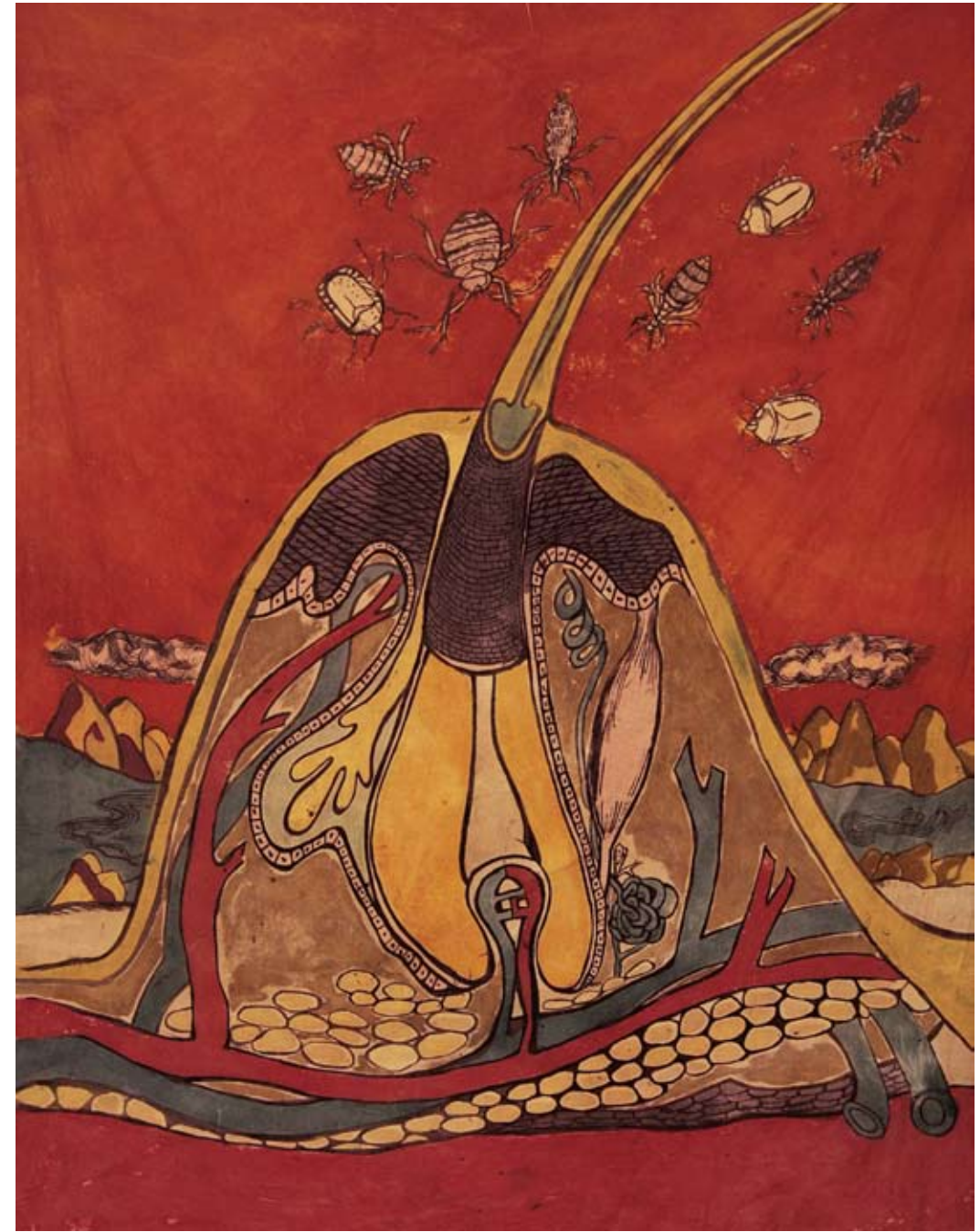
KOUMUDI PATIL

Imprint of an Encounter 1, 3, 4, 5
photograph on archival paper
set of 4 - 24" x 36" (each)
edition 1 of 4 + 1 AP, 2009



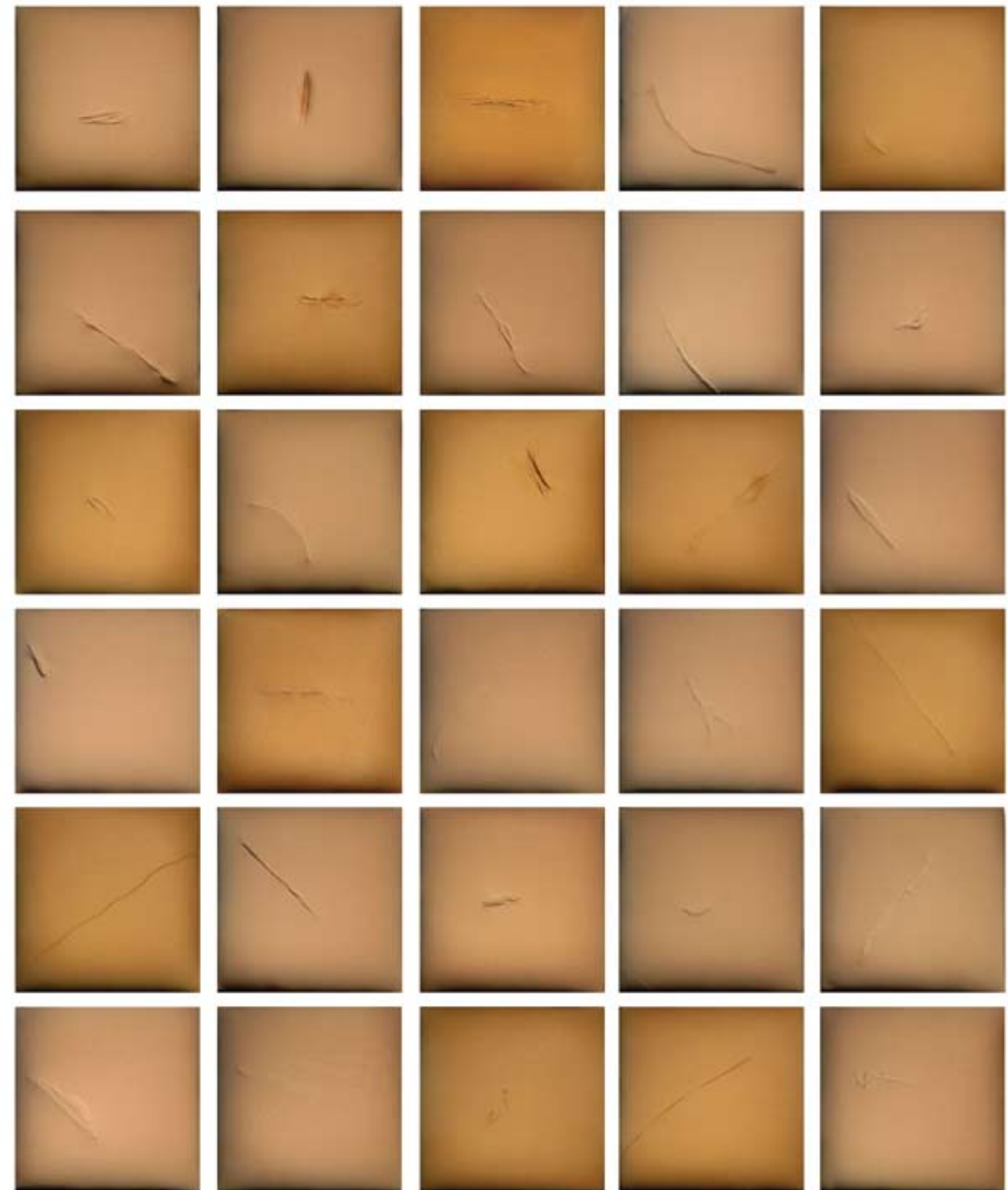
LAVANYA MANI

Untitled
natural dye on cotton fabric
48" x 60", 2012



MEGHA JOSHI

The Skin Remembers
fabric, glue, rubber and foam on plywood
set of 30 - 8" x 8" (each), 2012



NEHA LAVINGIA

Emerging Through
water colour on paper
set of 8 - 5.5" x 5" (each), 2012



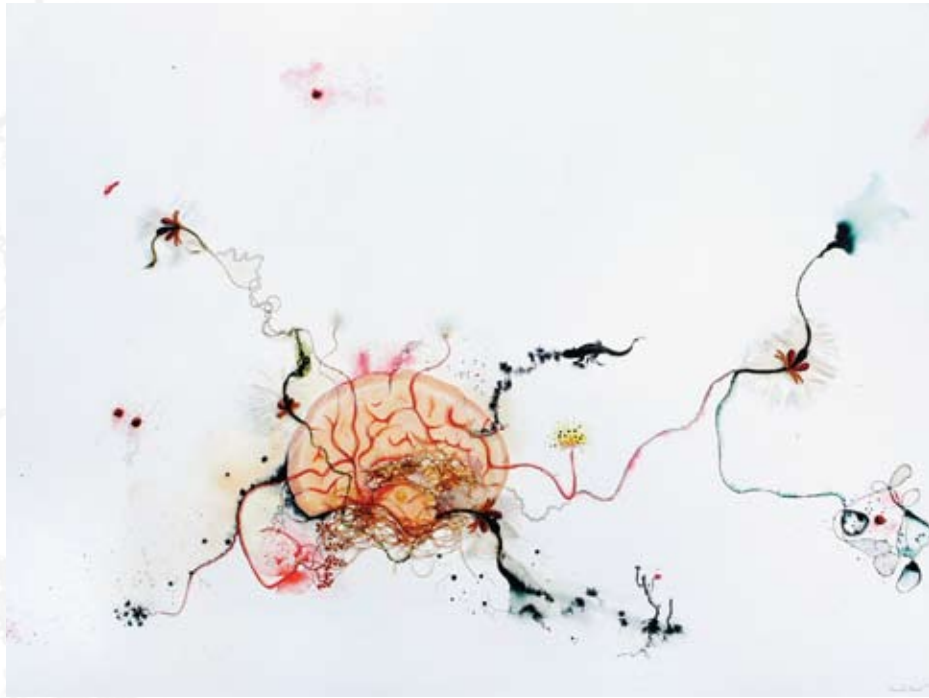
PARVATHI NAYAR

The Skin Beneath my Skin
mixed media on wood
triptych - 30" x 20" (each), 2012
[artwork detail view]



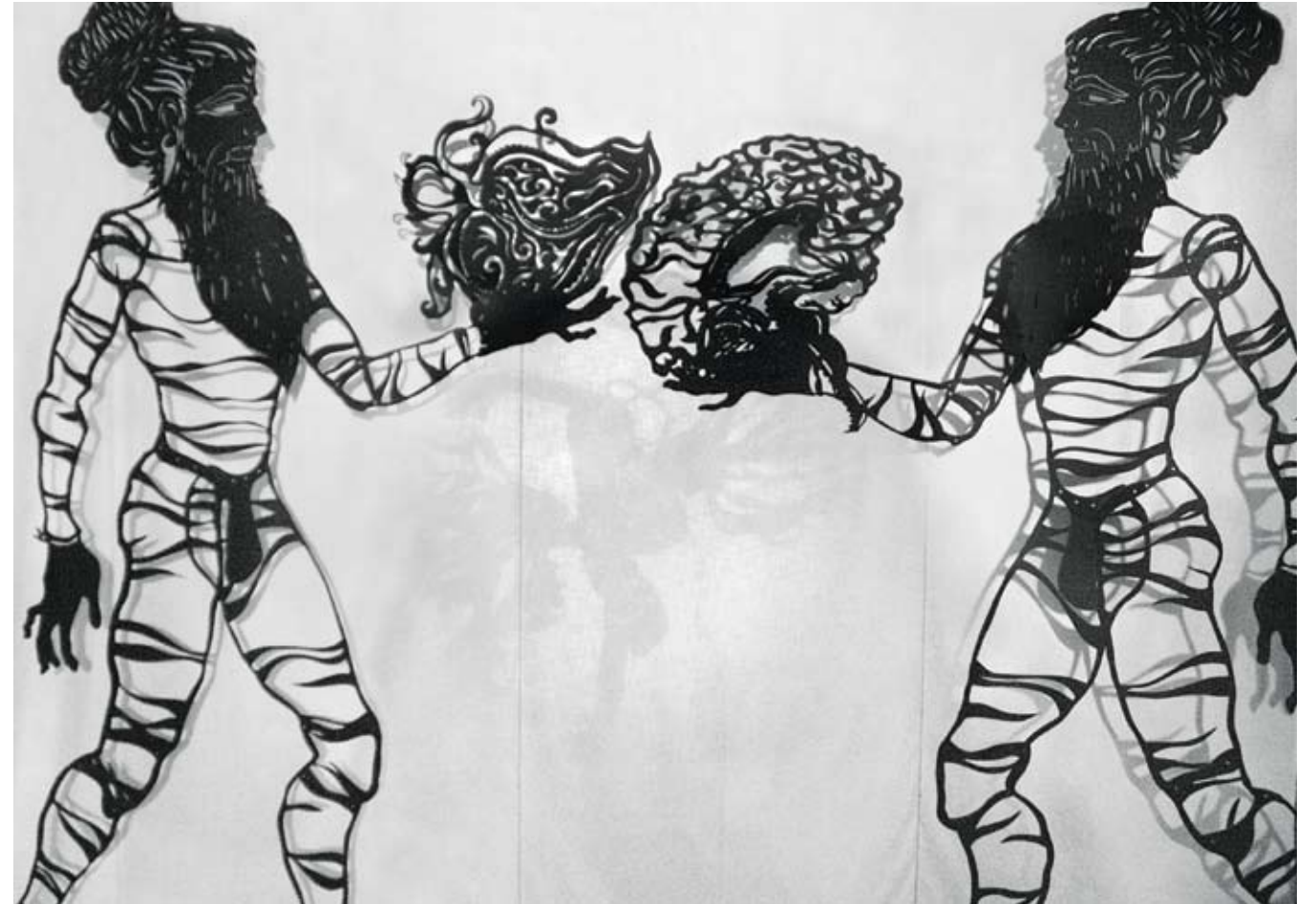
PRANATI PANDA

Facing Page: Mindscape
mixed media on paper
22" x 29", 2011
Opposite Page: Untitled
mixed media on paper
22" x 29", 2011



PRIYANKA DASGUPTA

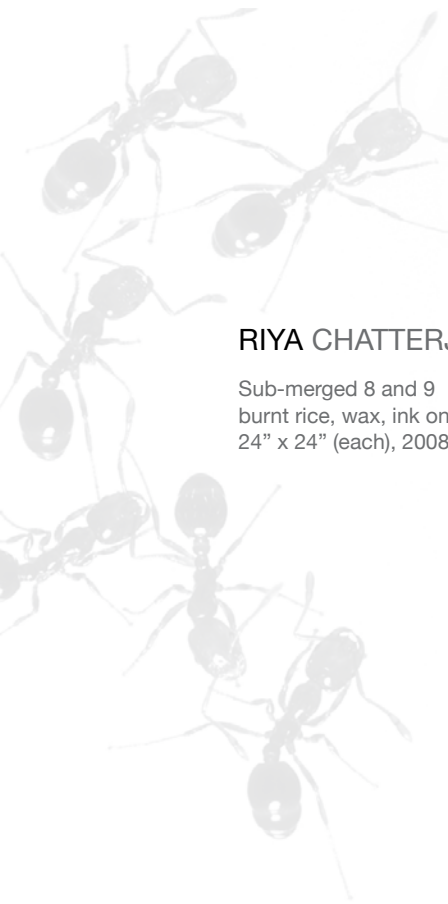
Dreams of Inconvenience
single channel video, acrylic and wire sculpture
size variable, 2011
[installation detail view]



REMEN CHOPRA

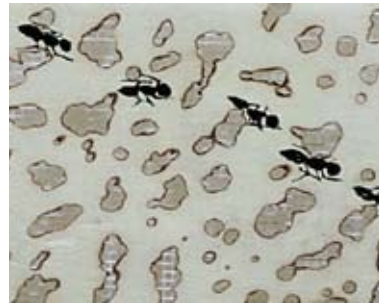
I Lie Beneath the Skin
mixed media on paper and acrylic
48" x 71.5", 2012





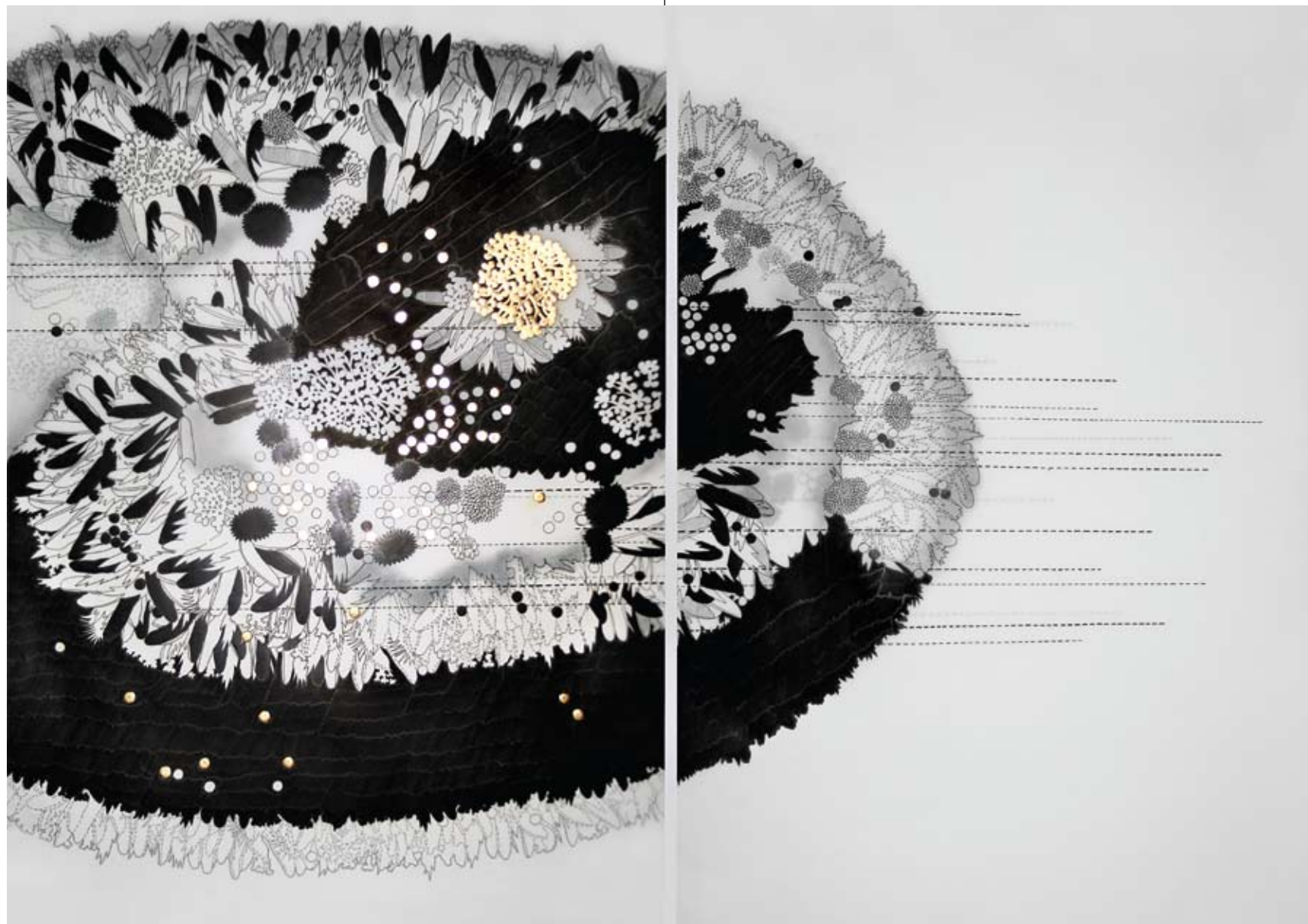
RIYA CHATTERJEE

Sub-merged 8 and 9
burnt rice, wax, ink on tracing paper
24" x 24" (each), 2008 - 2009



SAMANTA BATRA MEHTA

Cosmic Egg
ink, graphite and gold leaf on mylar
diptych - 36" x 48", 2009



SUMAKSHI SINGH

Facing Page: Peel 6
layers of paper, aluminium foil, ink and water colour
14" x 9", 2010
Opposite Page: Peel 8
aluminium foil and ink on paper
9" x 11", 2010



VISHWA SHROFF

Near the Lily Pond
translucent paper, pen and ink
27.5" x 27.5", 2012
[artwork detail view]



YARDENA KURULKAR

Facing Page: Gap in the Void
plaster, water, oil and glass
size variable, 2011

Opposite Page: 5 Seconds Later
inkjet print on archival paper
set of 64 - 11.5" x 10" (each)
edition 1 of 3, 2011



Artists' profiles

Kavita Jaiswal's artistic career spans over 30 years and has been well received all over the world. Her works are part of many prestigious collections including the National Gallery of Modern Art New Delhi; the Ebrahim Alkazi Collection and the Society for Scottish Artists Collection, Edinburgh. Jaiswal has been the recipient of the National Fellowship by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. She has received various prestigious awards like the Charles Wallace India Trust Award by the British Council; the Sahitya Kala Parishad award, New Delhi as well as the Golden Jubilee All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society award. Kavita has held several solo exhibitions between 1990 and 2012. She has also participated in a number of national and international exhibitions, such as the Indian Women Artists show, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi; International Women Artists show, AIFACS, New Delhi; Bharat Bhavan Biennial, Bhopal; Exhibition of Indian Women Artists organized by National Gallery of Modern Art in Bulgaria and Poland; The Christies Auction on Asian Art, London and the Asia Excellence show, ISU Gallery, Singapore.

Koumudi Patil was born in Maharashtra in 1981. She has been exploring white cubes and public spaces alike through multimedia installations and conceptual photography. She has curated and participated in many public art projects including Amdavadi Encounters, 2005, Mirror Amdavad, 2006 and Catastrophe for Art Chennai in 2012. She was the recipient of the Arts Asia Network fellowship for 2008. She has held shows at The Guild, Mumbai; Spanish Embassy, New Delhi; Hera Art Gallery, Rhode Island; Gallery BMB, Mumbai; Exhibit 320, New Delhi; India Art Fair, New Delhi and others. She is also actively involved in the craft projects of the Government of India since 2007. An alumnus of Santiniketan, she is currently working as an Assistant Professor at IIT Kanpur.

Lavanya Mani was born in 1977 and lives and works in Baroda. In 2001, she completed her M.F.A in Painting from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda. Mani's body of work celebrates craftsmanship through the revival of a centuries old technique of drawing and dyeing on fabric - Kalamkari. In this way, Mani cleverly explores notions of history, society, trade and craftsmanship. In recent years, Mani has participated in many group shows in India and abroad including "Fabular Bodies: New Narratives in the Art of the Miniature", curated by Gayatri Sinha, Harmony Arts Foundation, Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai; "Lo Real Marvallioso: Marvelous Reality", curated by Sunil Mehra, Gallery Espace and Savara Foundation for the Arts; "URGENT: 10ml of Contemporary Needed!", Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art (FICA) Travancore House, New Delhi; "A New Vanguard" - Trends in Contemporary Indian Art, Guild Art Gallery and Saffronart, New York as well as "Analytical Engine", curated by Heidi Fitchner, at Bose Pacia, Kolkata and Gallery Seven Art Ltd, New Delhi. Her first solo, "In Praise of Folly" at Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai in September, 2009 was long listed for

the SKODA Prize 2009-2010. She was awarded the KAVA (Kashi Award for Visual Art), Kashi Art Gallery in 2006. Lavanya has also conducted a number of workshops on natural dye and batik at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda. She also presented a paper entitled- "Travellers' Tales - Imperialism and Textiles" at a seminar, 'The Visibility of Cultures, Identity, Contact and Circulation in the Indian Ocean' at CSCS, Bangalore.

Megha Joshi was born in New Delhi in 1973 and studied sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda. She spent 10 years as a set designer and art director for film and television, with over seventy projects to her credit, before returning to full time art practice. Since her return in 2008, she has participated in numerous curated group shows and residencies, both in India and abroad. Her recent residencies include an international art residency and exhibition in Iceland, supported by the Ministry of Science and Culture of Iceland and Religare Art, New Delhi. Her practice spans sculpture and installation art and she works with a vast array of media. Her work has been exhibited at galleries such as the Thameside Gallery in U.K. and Dhoomimal Gallery, Art Konsult and Religare Art in New Delhi. Her work has also been represented at the India Art Summit 2009, 2011 and the India Art Fair 2012.

Neha Lavingia obtained her Diploma in Painting from C.N. College of Fine Arts, Ahmedabad. Later she went on to do a Post Diploma in printmaking at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda. After graduating she was a resident artist at the printmaking department of Kanoria Centre for Arts, Ahmedabad from 2003 to 2007. She did a solo show with The Fine Art Company, Mumbai in 2012. Her works have been displayed in various group shows in Ahmedabad, Chennai, Delhi, Mumbai, Baroda, and international printmaking exhibitions in India and France. She lives and works in Ahmedabad.

Parvathi Nayar's uniquely hybrid work brings together elements of draughtsmanship and painting, the analytical and the intuitive, and is rooted in questioning our relationships within the socio-cultural milieus in which we live. By treating her artworks as a site of dialogue where different elements – the scientific, the historical and the contemporary – meet and converse, she encourages viewers to relook once-familiar perspectives. Parvathi received her Masters in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London, on a Chevening scholarship from the British government. Her works have been collected by institutions such as the Singapore Art Museum, The Sotheby's Art Institute and Deutsche Bank. Parvathi's selected group shows in 2012 include the India Art Fair, New Delhi; "To Let the World In" curated by Dr. Chaitanya Sambrani, ArtChennai, Chennai;

"Women Artists in Singapore", Singapore Art Museum (in conjunction with the launch of the book of the same title); In 2010 she participated in "Cinema Verite Redux" curated by Shaheen Merali, Gallery Sumukha, Bangalore and Chennai and "Her Work is Never Done", curated by Bose Krishnamachari, Gallery BMB, Mumbai.

Pranati Panda was born in 1974 in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. She completed her M.F.A in 2000 from the Delhi College of Art and her B.F.A in 1995 from B.K. College of Arts and Crafts, Bhubaneswar. Her delicate, often florid imagery is representative of the female identity and the meanderings of their inner thoughts. The common subjects within her works include the human body, insects as well as plants. Creating a sense of tenacity within her framework by focusing on the space between two objects or beings who share a certain affinity, Panda explores the many in-between positions that separate our inner and exterior worlds. Panda's recent exhibitions include, "A Further Global Encounter" (2012), Grosvenor Vadehra, London; "Extending the Line", Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi; "Conservation on Canvas" (2012), Religare Art Gallery, New Delhi and Art Makers "Circa 2010" the next level-1, Exhibit 320, New Delhi.

Priyanka Dasgupta graduated with a Masters in Studio Art from New York University and a BA (Honours) from St. Stephen's College, in English Literature. Born in Kolkata, India, she lives in New York City. Priyanka is the recipient of numerous awards including a NEA grant, and has participated in the AIM Program and Aljira Emerge with Creative Capital, in New York. Her video installations have been exhibited at the International Centre of Photography, the Bronx Museum of Art, the Jersey City Museum in New York, and the Lalit Kala Akademi in New Delhi, among numerous other exhibitions and art fairs in Europe and Asia. She has recently completed a solo exhibition with Shrine Empire Gallery in New Delhi. She is currently the artist in residence at Bose Pacia's "Transparent Studio" in New York, where she is working on a new body of work which will be exhibited at the gallery, and in the D.U.M.B.O. Art Festival later this year. Priyanka's work belongs in prominent collections, including the prestigious Fondazione Fotografia with whom she has recently exhibited in Modena and Venice, Italy. Alongside pursuing a career in art, Priyanka teaches contemporary art and media in New York City Public Schools and at New York University.

Remen Chopra was born in 1980 in New Delhi, India and currently lives between Mumbai and New Delhi. Having studied at the School of Visual Art, New York, her work has been exhibited at various domestic and international venues including the Essl Museum, Vienna; Teatro Dal Verme, Milan; Westerhuis, Amsterdam; Sakshi Gallery, Korea and Mumbai; Gallery BMB, Mumbai and Gallery Espace, New Delhi to name a few. Her recent exhibitions

include a solo exhibition titled “Memoirs of Tanaz and Vimala” at Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai and several group shows including “Miniscule Marvel” at Gallery BMB and Contemplate Art Gallery; The India Art Fair with Sakshi Gallery and Palette Art Gallery. Her works have also been shown at Art Fair Rotterdam and she has been recently selected for a residency program to Italy at Casa Masaccio, Arte Contemporanea.

Riya Chatterjee has completed her B.F.A in Painting from Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan and a Post Diploma in Chinese painting from, South West Normal University, Chongqing, China. She has been awarded the “National Scholarship” by the HRD ministry, Government of India and the “Chinese Full Scholarship” by the Chinese government. She has participated in various exhibitions in India and abroad between 2003 and 2008 including “SHIBIR” at Nandan Art Gallery, Santiniketan; the Inter-Faculty Exchange art exhibition, Faculty of Visual Arts, B.H.U, Varanasi; A Group exhibition at Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata and at South West art gallery-Chongqing, China; A duet exhibition at Modern and Contemporary Art Research Centre, Chongqing, China and a group exhibition at Travancore art gallery in Delhi in 2008. The major workshops that she has attended include the workshop at T.I.S.B International School, Bangalore, Camlin workshop, Kala-Bhavana as well as a workshop with Sudarshan Shetty and Karz Rehman at H.C.U, Hyderabad.

Samanta Batra Mehta was born in New Delhi in 1975 and lives in New York, U.S.A. Her work has been exhibited at various international venues including the Queens Museum; the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts; AIR Gallery and Guild Art in New York; the Hunterdon Museum and the Visual Arts Centre in New Jersey; Gallery BMB and Bodhi Art Gallery in Mumbai and at the Salon Du Dessin Contemporain in Paris with Galerie LMD where she was invited to make a 24 foot long site-specific mural. Recent exhibitions include “Works of the Indian Diaspora” at the Queens Museum in New York and various locations across the U.S. as well as Art Stage, Singapore and at the India Art Fair, New Delhi. In 2012 her works were shown in Modena, Italy at the prestigious Fondazione Fotografia Cassa di Risparmio di Modena in an exhibition showcasing works from the Fondazione’s collection of contemporary art from India and South America.

Sumakshi Singh was born in 1980 and is an artist and an educator who has taught for several years at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and lectured at Oxford University, Columbia University and The Chicago Humanities Festival among other museums and colleges. Her interactive installations, paintings, drawings and sculptures have been presented in solo and curated group gallery and museum exhibitions in India, China, U.S.A and Europe. Recent venues include Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France; MAXXI Museum, Rome, Italy;

Mattress Factory Museum of Contemporary Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Van Harison Gallery, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Illinois State Museum, IL; Kashya Hildebrand Galerie, Zurich; Halsey Gallery, Charleston, SC and ArtHouse Texas, TX. She was awarded a Zegna Grant in 2009, an Illinois Arts Council award in 2007 and the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Award in 2005. She was a finalist for the Rijksakademie in 2006. Singh received an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), Chicago, IL and a B.F.A. from Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, India.

Vishwa Shroff’s work addresses the notion that thoughts are not linear, but assorted and that the trivialities of everyday life are abundant. Ants in the bathroom, pigeons in the city or the cat in her back yard all hold within them the ability to trigger narrative. The narratives in turn echo adverts, literature, fables, films, music, proverbs; Shroff deliberates upon iconographic possibilities of the object, how they have been used to this effect and the illustration methods used to chronicle the object itself. In 2003, the artist completed her Masters in Fine Art from the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (UCE), U.K. and her Bachelors in Fine Art from Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda in 2002. Shroff recently held a solo show entitled “One eye! Two eyes! Three eyes!” at the ACME Project Space in London, U.K. Her recent group shows include, “Open Show”, Surface Gallery, Nottingham, U.K.; “The Dramatics of Diverse Interpretation/Perspectives”, Art Konsult Gallery, New Delhi; “Shimeesha Art Show”, Vadodara; “Shifting points of View: Part I”, Group show, Thameside Complex Gallery, Grays, U.K. and “Room” Collaborative book show, Raga Numerique, Vadodara.

Yardena Kurulkar was born in 1971 and is an alumna of Sir J.J. School of Art, Mumbai. Having studied ceramics at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, U.K., she was the recipient of The Charles Wallace Award for post-graduate studies. Since 2002 she has exhibited her work in group shows in London and Cardiff in the U.K., at Toronto, Canada and Australia. After exploring living in the U.K. and Canada (artist residencies) she has come full circle to her roots and now lives and works in Mumbai. In her journey as an artist Yardena integrates philosophic investigations to discover her own mortality and contemplate on our collective fear of death. Her language emerges from years of reflection around the journey of life and death layered with her close-knit association with the medium-clay, which often behaves like skin. Her work has been exhibited at the Gold Coast Gallery, Australia; The Queen Gallery, Toronto; The Sheridan Russell Gallery in London and the Pen-Club Gallery, Budapest. Her first solo show “Transience” was held at Gallery BMB, Mumbai.

Acknowledgements

ADMINISTRATION

Mala Parthasarathy

CATALOGUE COVER, CONCEPT & DESIGN

Divya Sharma

Lyla Rao

Mohini Varma

PRINTING

Archana, New Delhi

www.archanapress.com





D3 P3B, District Centre
Ground Floor, Behind DLF Place
Saket, New Delhi 110017
Phone: +91 11 39126922
Email: religareart@religare.com
Web: www.religareart.com

Artwork Courtesy: Samanta Batra Mehta