

Kolkata: Run in the

11 Sep
—
13 Nov
2022

Alley



Introduction

Valentijn Byvanck

The idea of *Kolkata: Run in the Alley* began when curator Steven van Teeseling introduced me to the Indian artist Praneet Soi in café Chris in Amsterdam. Soi is the initiator of the CARF residence program that brings artists living in the Netherlands to reside for several months in his birthplace Kolkata. The residence is unique in two ways. The first is that the city is overwhelmingly rich in its everyday imagery. The second is part of this richness: artists visiting Kolkata can explore techniques, skills, and practices that are particular to its social and economic landscape. These include architectural scaffolding, brick making, popular graphic technologies, and traditional clay sculpting. As result of their deep immersion into the city's culture and their gradual processing of new experiences, the artists re-negotiate their skills and practice into new directions.

For the dealings with the immensely rich experience of both practices and impressions, Soi offered participants a network of guides, mostly artists, who generously shared their expertise and communities with the newcomers. We decided to make an exhibition that would invite both groups of artists to merge their work and experiences of the city into one immersive exhibition. Manuel Klappe came aboard as the co-curator with Soi. They started a long trajectory of visits and conversations that gradually resulted in the exhibition. After a delay of the two corona years, this has now been opened festively by Mrs. Reenat Sandhu, Indian ambassador to the Netherlands.

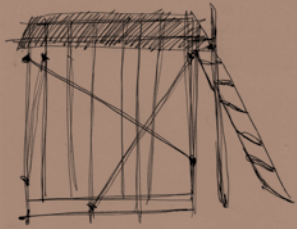
Marres has many institutions and people to thank for this. First of all, we wish to thank all the artists on both sides of the world for all their work and patience in getting this show on the road. I wish to extend the same gratitude to both curators who worked on this project for over two years. The prominent gallery Akar Prakar and Reena Lath helped us with advice, loans of classic pieces and the transportation of works from India. Director of Emami Art Ushmita Sahu and gallery Chatterjee & Lal in Mumbai have assisted in making the special room by the designer Riten Mozumdar. They also facilitated the packaging of works by other participating artists. The Gandhi Center helped to reach out to networks of Indian communities in the Netherlands, as did Lipika Bansal, Jinna Smit, and Ricardo Burgzorg. David Deprez developed a film program for this exhibition. The Ministry of Science, Culture and Education and the Mondriaan Fund generously extended the terms of the grants they provided for this exhibition, as it was delayed by the virus. Last but not least, I would like to thank the Dutch Embassy in New Delhi, which has helped with expediting the visas of the artists traveling from Bengal to Maastricht for this exhibition, and Hajin Lee at the Dutch Embassy in Seoul for helping us from Korea.



Ganesh Pyne, *Run in the Alley*, 1968. Pen and ink on paper, 8x11 cm
Collection: Akar Prakar, New Delhi

Piyali Sadhukhan & Saumik Chakraborty

Structural framework of bamboo, encompassing and unifying the ground floor.



↑↑ Designs for exhibition structure, based on bamboo scaffolding
↑ Renovations at the Indian Museum Kolkata, 2014



Kitchen, 2017. Bronze, 18 x 21 x 16 cm
Dhokra lost wax casting in Dariyapur, India

1 Tim Breukers

Tim Breukers draws upon connections between the medium, situation, and himself through sculpture, installations, and collage. In his work, he is known for his use of storytelling, humor, sculptural techniques, and makeshift solutions. About this he writes, "I am convinced that art helps us to find a balance in our

lives, and that our lives help art to become human and authentic." At the exhibition at Marres, he has smaller bronze sculptures on display that have been cast in collaboration with the craftsmen and women from the village of Dariyapur according to their traditional methods.

2 Arunima Choudhury

Arunima Choudhury went to school at Santiniketan in the late seventies, where she encountered the concrete sculptures by Ramkinkar Baij, the epic mural titled Medieval Saints by Benode Behari Mukherjee at Hindi Bhavana, many original works by Rabindranath Tagore, and Nandalal Bose at Viswa Bharati's museum collection. Under the guidance of teacher K. G. Subramanyan of the Kala Bhavan

at Shantiniketan, she explored new mediums while removing barriers between art and craft as well as form and content. Committed to an ethic of eco-sensitivity and self-sufficiency, Choudhury makes her drawings with vegetable pigments on acid-free handmade paper and cotton fabric. Nature and women are her favorite themes.



Seated Lady, 2010. Vegetable colour on handmade paper, 95 x 96 cm



Preliminary design Super Shrine, 2022

3

Bonno van Doorn

Van Doorn strives to create images that are beyond accepted classification to counter the world of logic and efficiency. He weaves these images into personal collections of form, color and visual associations, which he views as proposals for a taxonomy of a temporary order. In this environ-

ment everything speaks for something else. The shrine piles up copies of reproductions the artist found when wandering the streets of the city in a search for the order of things. Expressing his sense of wonder and estrangement, it is an ode to the streets and people of the city.

In performance, sculpture and installation works, Noorda recycles elements of the reform movement that both engage and challenge contemporary communitarian and counter-cultural practices and beliefs. By highlighting the mystical and magical elements within the Reform tradition along with other undigested and 'irrational' materials, her works perform a séance-function: excavating repressed and buried histories in

ways that set out to complicate hard distinctions between progressive and conservative social and artistic movements. During her Kolkata residence, she explored the theosophic roots of the reform movement. In her *Newspaper Works*, she uses clay, pigment and dirt that are ritually used for cleansing to frame profane and spiritual ideas. The brass dishes and antennae serve to amplify and broadcast esoteric ideas.

4

Ruchama Noorda



Preparation copper elements Shivalacrums, 2022

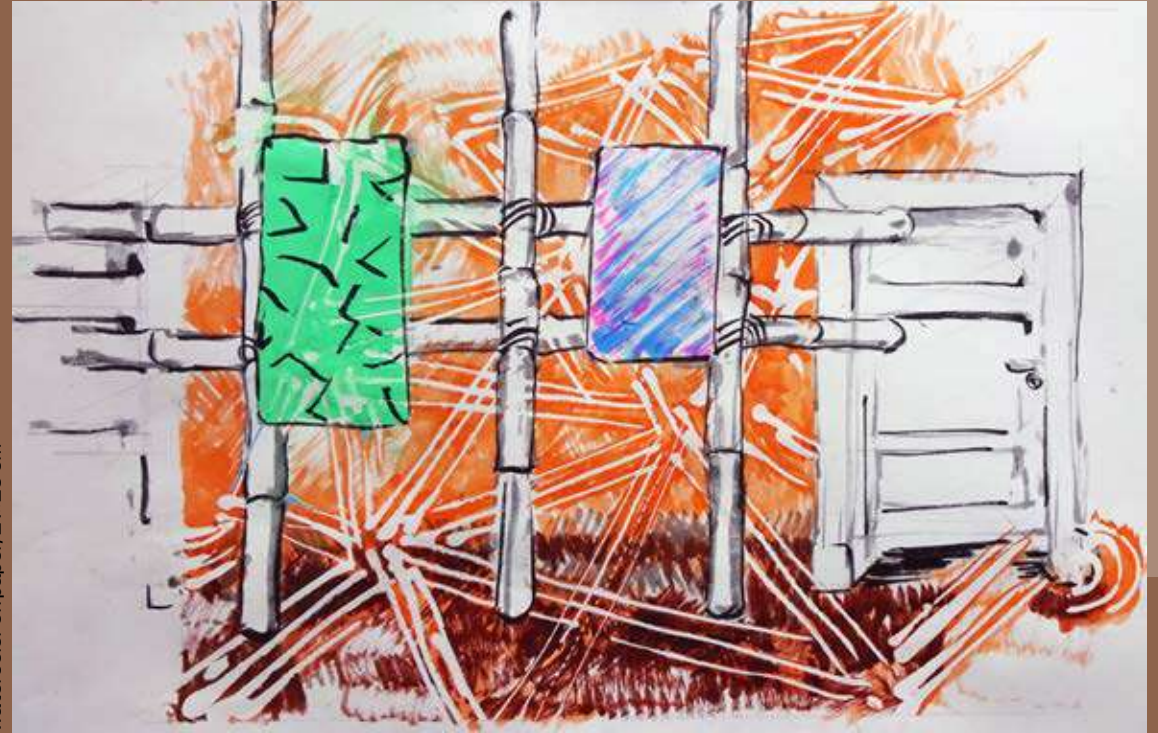
5
Srikanta Paul

Trained as a printmaker, Paul uses lithography, etching, viscosity, and serigraphy. Currently, he builds on a rich Kolkatan popular tradition of woodcut printing. The still vibrant printers' Chitpur area still shows traces of an earlier period in which Kolkata produced the indigenously styled advertisements, books, calendars, and posters rich in mythical characters and icons that were to be found in every

household. To Paul, these icons and mythology offer a language to speak about contemporary society.



Rambha, 2015. Woodcut and acrylic on canvas, 104 x 106 cm



Preparatory sketch installation Marrres, 2022
Watercolor on paper, 21x29 cm

6
Arthur Stokvis

Menacing neon camouflage made with soot flares forms a backdrop of doom and gloom to an eclectic collection of images: oak leaves and scorpions, carnival emblems and countryside graffiti, hammers and sickles, lotus flowers and phantoms. In Arthur Stokvis's most recent paintings, rattlesnakes and other ghostly figures come to the fore. They are pasted or hung, drawn and exorcised, captured in the layers of the painting. Innocent at first glance, these signs represent future catastrophes, poison clouds from a post-apocalyptic fever dream. Reminiscent of the alleys in Kolkata, they add layer upon

layer, from bamboo scaffolding to neon brush strokes, to a mud floor creeping from the floor up the walls.

Maartje Korstanje's artistic practice is driven by a strong awareness of the ephemeral nature of life. Her sculptures often show the transition between growth and decay, in the natural world as well as in the human made world. Usually, they are crude yet elegant shapes made out of simple materials including cardboard and glue. More recently she also started adding machine embroidery in her sculptural practice. For the exhibition in Marres, she creates sculptural furniture based on the banyan trees she observed in Kolkata.



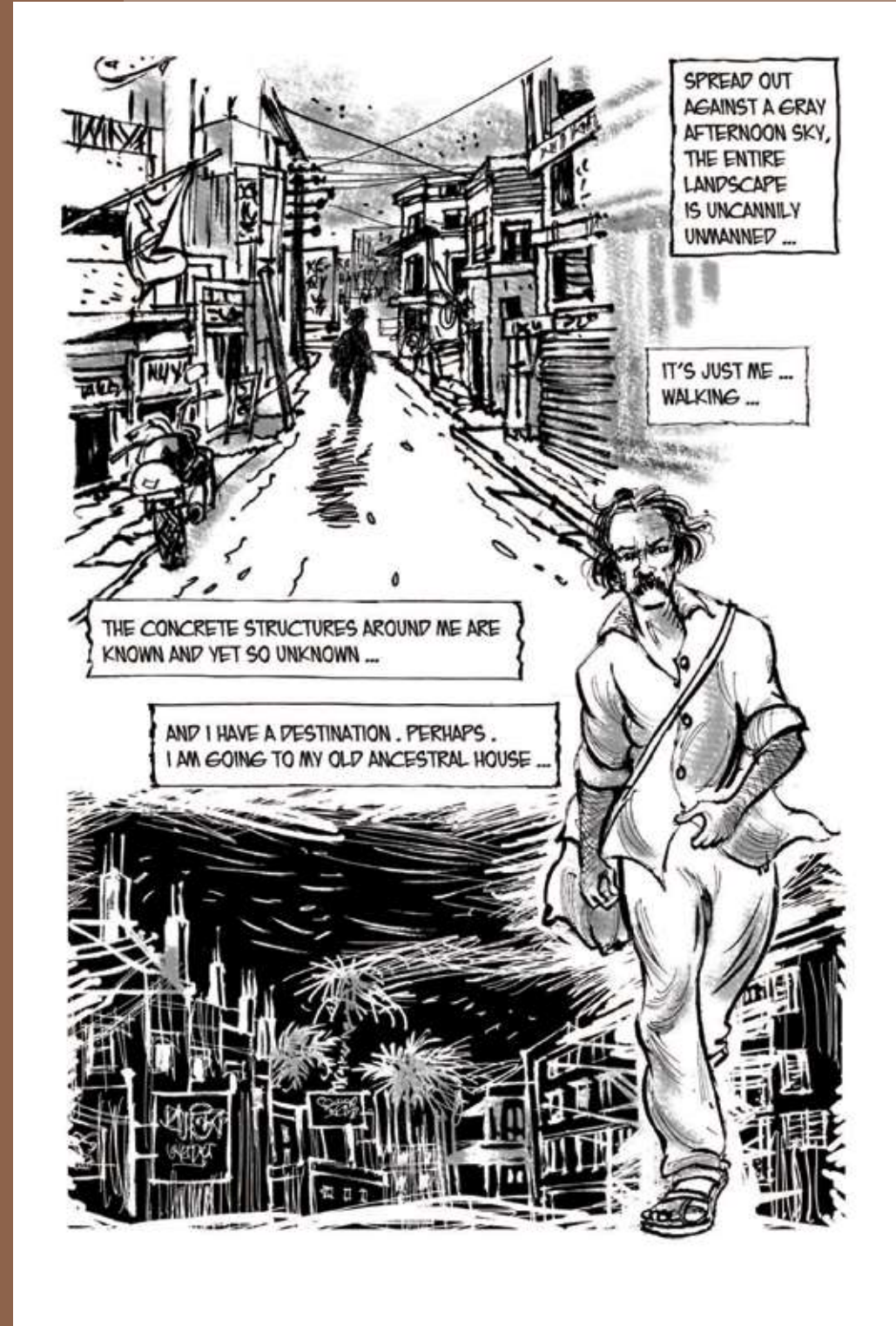
Banyan Chairs, 2022. Cardboard, glue, textile and wool, 300x150x220 cm

7
Maartje Korstanje

8
Sarbajit Sen

The present work *Rains* is taken from *Ramblings*, an autobiographical graphic novel that tries to map an entire Bengali middle-class mindscape through a series of significant social political junctures in West Bengal. The background is built on memories and lived experiences, which include romanticizing the USSR model of socialism in the post-independence days to getting enmeshed in the trappings of power at the cost of many

compromises. This includes procreating a basically complacent middle-class gentry as a corpulent, though corrosive, humongous body of voters. The story takes us back to apparently insignificant personal accounts of the people the artist lived with — accounts of love and treachery, greed and violence, defeatism and crudity. Its only disclaimer is that not a single character here is fictitious. Some of them are even still alive.



SPREAD OUT AGAINST A GRAY AFTERNOON SKY, THE ENTIRE LANDSCAPE IS UNCANNILY UNMANNED ...

IT'S JUST ME ... WALKING ...

THE CONCRETE STRUCTURES AROUND ME ARE KNOWN AND YET SO UNKNOWN ...

AND I HAVE A DESTINATION . PERHAPS . I AM GOING TO MY OLD ANCESTRAL HOUSE ...

9
Sumantra Mukherjee



Bhotka, part of the poster campaign Mass Q Line, challenging toxic masculinity on the streets of Kolkata. in collaboration with Max Mueller Bhawan

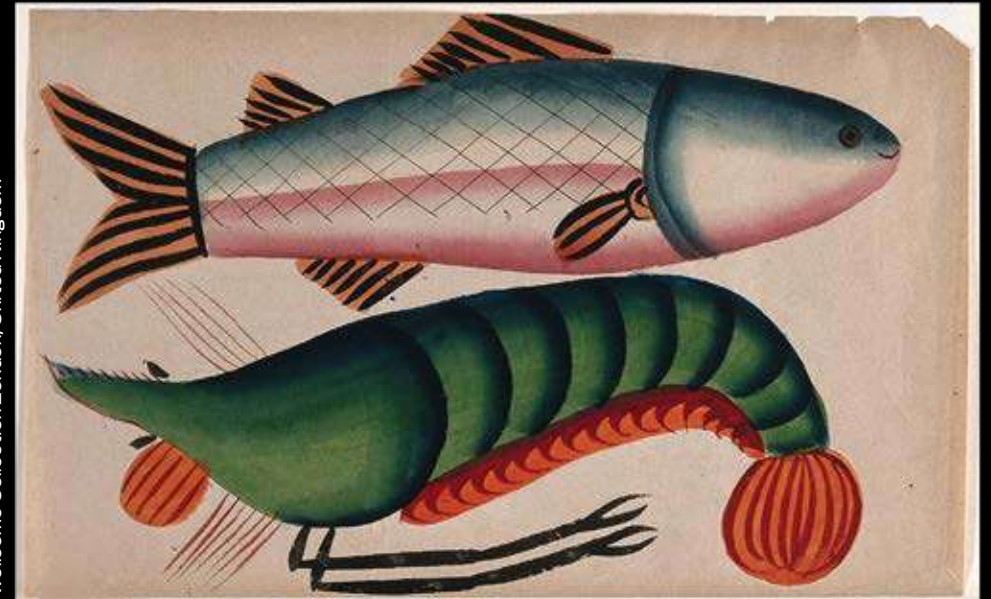
Mukherjee develops imagery for the public domain that reflects on contemporary Indian society. Following a tradition of agitprop posters and protest flyers, the colorful, and whimsical images speak out for local struggles and changes and draw out a dialogue with audiences not primarily interested in artistic practice. Overlapping and cohabiting ideas and techniques in Indian folk culture with the contemporary, Mukherjee's murals show clay figurative idols of gods and

demons washed away of their glory, showing hay tied to sticks, abstract structures with their human details withered away.

Mukherjee designed the campaign image for this exhibition that shows Kali, goddess of destruction, with a bead necklace of souls, holding up a selfie. The goddess represents the darkness from which everything is created. Considered a beautiful feminine energy, in Sanskrit Her name means 'force of time.'

In his work, Soi often addresses the composite nature of image construction. For this exhibition, he will create a version of this historical Kalighat Painting on the staircase wall, thus connecting the two floors of the exhibition.

10
Praneet Soi



Kalighat painting, A lobster and a fish, 19th century
Gouache on paper, 28 x 45 cm
Wellcome Collection London, United Kingdom



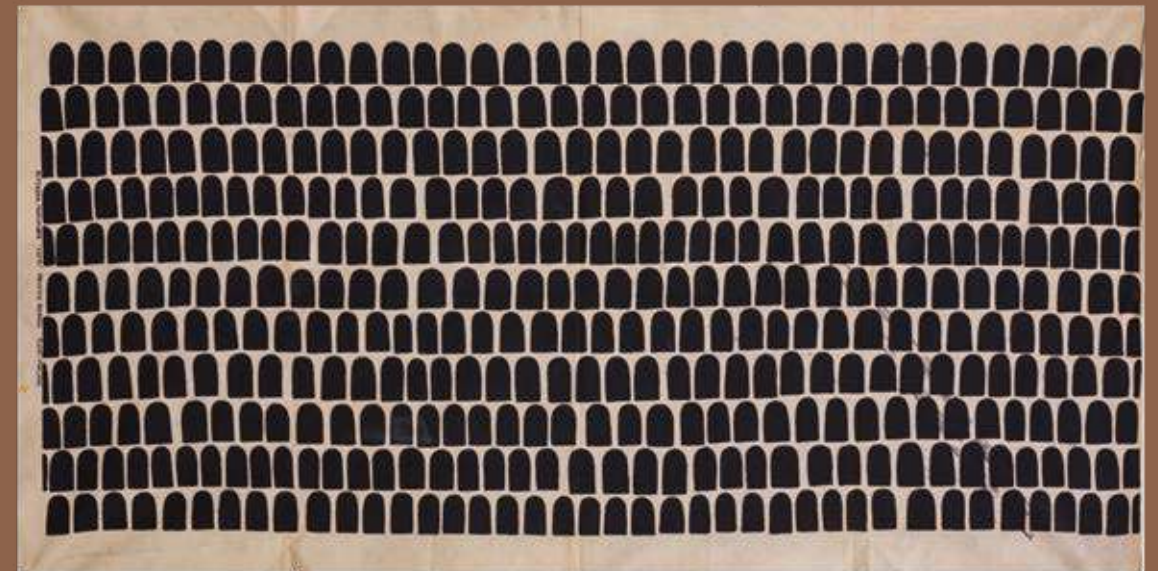
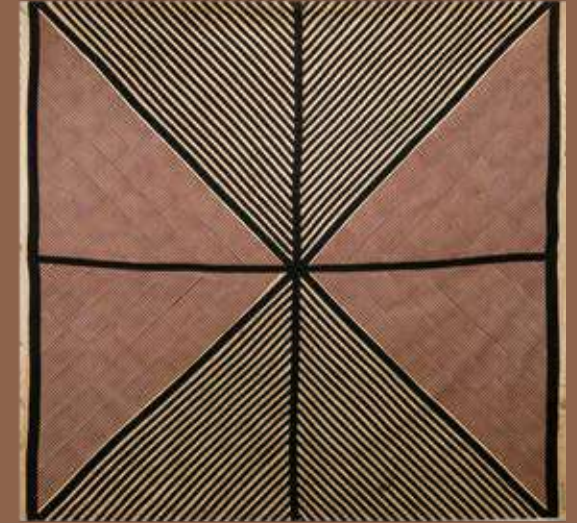
Selection of ceramic tiles based on the diverse shapes of street bricks in Kolkata. To be used in his installation at Marres, 2022



11
Henri Jacobs

Jacobs's visual work is characterized by a deep fascination with flatness and surface. Often, he uses the weaving technique of paper or linen in which old and new work are recycled into a surface that is both image and pattern. During a two-month residency in Kolkata in 2014, he photographed the battered Kolkata pavement patterns. The patterns from Kolkata evolved during a porcelain residency in Arita (2016, Japan) and ceramics residency in the European Ceramic Work Centre (EKWC) Oisterwijk (2018, the Netherlands). In Marres, the geometric concrete pavers from Kolkata are translated into ceramics and imitate the colliding patterns from the city.

12
Riten Mozumdar
curated by
Ushmita Sahu



- ↖ Riten Mozumdar, *Untitled*, early 1980's, Bamboo block print on cotton, 46 x 46 cm
- ← Riten Mozumdar, *Untitled*, early 1980's, Bamboo block print on cotton, 268 x 232.5 cm
- ↙ Riten Mozumdar, *Ja'fri*, 1956-57, Screenprint on cotton, 121.5 x 75 cm

In the past decades, Ghosh has developed a site-specific art practice that invites community dialogues through workshops. The work form is inspired by the performative activities initiated by Rabindranath Tagore in Santiniketan and the workshop games of Badal Sircar (a theater activist in Kolkata). In this room, Ghosh presents the practices of women roof makers from Bengal. The work is part of a larger project in which the artist makes memoirs of Kolkata dwellers. This

memoir is devoted to the songs that were sung by the Bauri community of female Bengali artisans while breaking the bricks to make handmade roofs. The roofs belong to early architectural traditions that were passed on from an Islamic tradition to the European houses built in Kolkata until the 1960's. Today this type of roof making is a lost tradition only remembered by the few living members of the last generation of roof makers, some of whom reside in Birbhum near Santiniketan.

13 Sanchayan Ghosh



Chhad Petanor Gaan (Roofmaking songs of the Bauri women), 2016-2020, Video still. (Part of the installation *A MEMOIR TO LOST SONGS OF LABOUR*)

in collaboration with Durga Bauri, Pari Bauri, Ashtami Bauri, China Bauri, Jyotsna Bauri, Koti Bauri, Mongali Bauri, Santi Bauri, Suksari Bauri

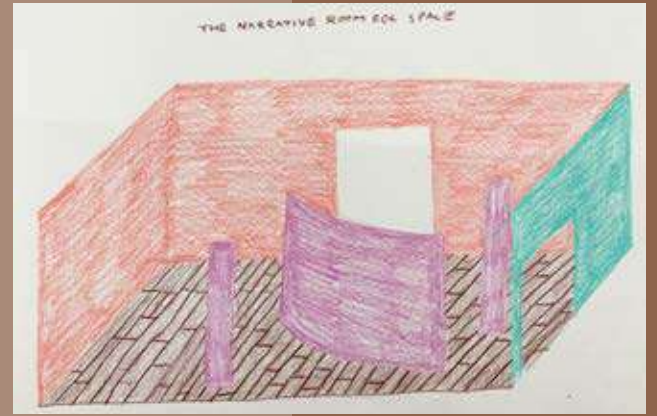
and Tulsi Bauri from Mohammad Bazar, Birbhum, West Bengal together with Utsab Chatterjee, Kolkata, and Surojit Mudi, Santiniketan

14 Koen Taselaar

Taselaar makes skillful drawings that he translates into other techniques, for instance colorful ceramics or jacquard woven tapestries. In search of ways to process his diverse output, he draws puns, makes record sleeves (for imaginary albums), psychedelic paintings, publications, and large-scale drawings that function as flat exhibition spaces. The room dividers and tapestry shown here are produced by the same technique of weft weaving, the former with wood and wire, the latter with thread. The dividers function as movable exhibition walls for the works of the other participants in the show. The tapestry takes its inspiration from modernist Bauhaus as well as the traditional Bengali (Ikat) weaving. It is titled *The Great March of Interpunction* and offers a fictional narrative about the origin of interpunction.



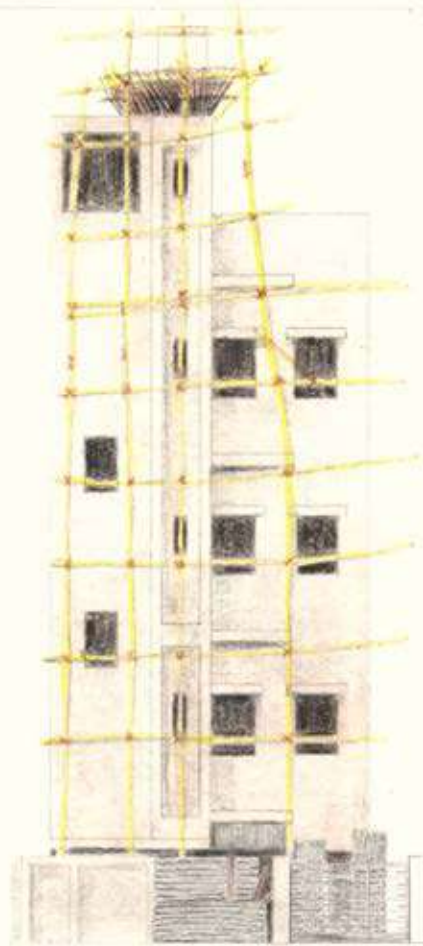
→ *The Great March Of Interpunction*, 2022
↓ Jacquard woven tapestry, 250x170 cm
→ *The Narrative Room for Space*, 2021
↓ Drawing on paper, 21x29 cm



Sachi Miyachi

Miyachi sculpts the here-and-now. She is inspired by the oppositions between nature, humans and technology, and the ways these play out in public space. She researches and artistically translates our collective efforts to handle this space: measuring, comparing, scaling, representing, and designing and altering bodies, architectural spaces, and landscape. Miyachi's work offers a

response to the world she finds herself consumed by. At the same time, it tracks her ambition to a ritualistic and obsessive crafting of her mental archive. *Practising Structures: India* offers a series of drawings she made during her residency in Kolkata as a daily exercise in observing Kantha embroidery and the ever-changing street scenery in Kolkata.



Gautam Choudhury

↓ Untitled X, 2019
 ↓↓ Untitled XI, 2019
 ↓↓↓ Untitled XIII, 2019
 Pen and ink on paper,
 29 x 22 cm



Choudhury's figures and faces are made up of marks, scratches, lines, and rubbings followed by the shadows of the past, present, and future. At the same time, the specter of erasure and continuous defacement looms large. Touched deeply by the history of life as the conflict zone, Choudhury's works are shaped by the continuum of time and refuse any selective representation. In this exhibition, his paintings and drawings speak for themselves in a breathtaking direct and naked way. Eschewing narrative tropes, issues, and concepts, they focus on a single human form.

Nobina Gupta

Nobina Gupta's work deals with the relationships between socio-spatial realities, climate emergencies, and behavioral changes. She initiated and curated the *Disappearing Dialogues Collectives* that strives — with practitioners, youth from communities, and organizations — toward conser-

vation and sustainability of the East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW). Located at the periphery of Kolkata, the wetlands boast of a unique natural waste management system. At the core of this system lies a set of sustainable practices involving pisciculture and agriculture whose affordable fresh

produce and water are essential to the city's economy and welfare. *Patachitra — The story of East Kolkata Wetlands* is a work created in collaboration with the folk artist Mamoni Chitrakar. Through a traditional format of storytelling accompanied by a folk song, this work highlights

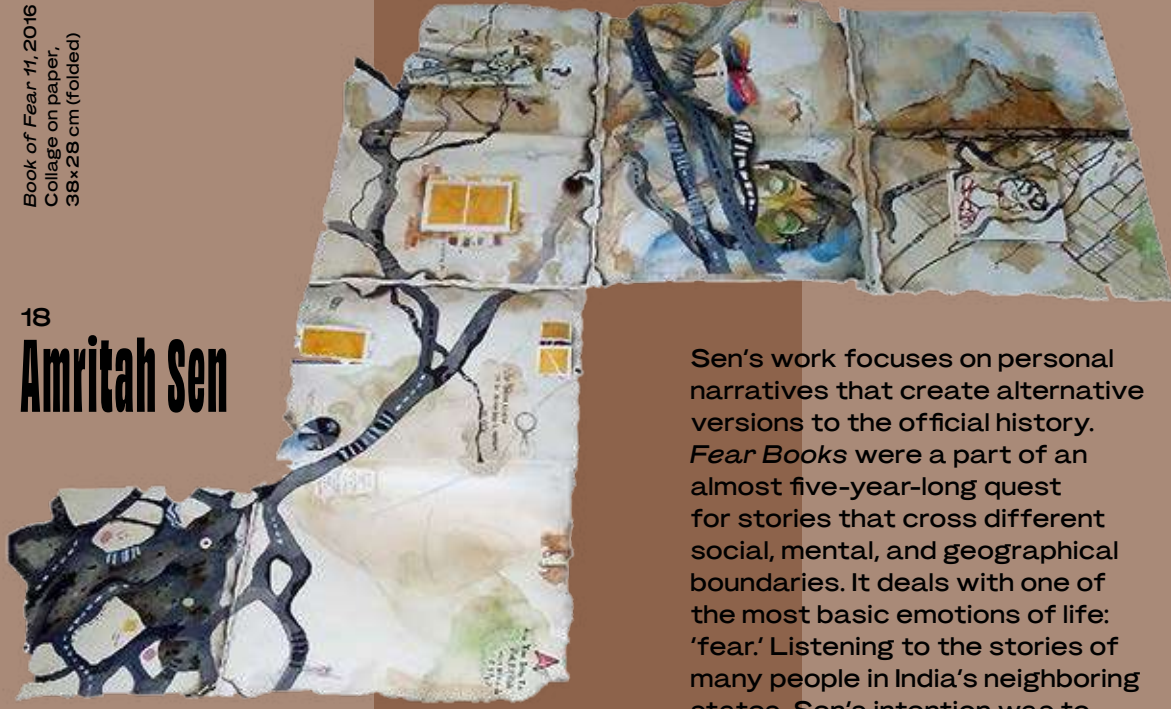
the unique elements of the EKW and the contributions of the wetland community. *Regenerative Cycles: The Story of Wetland Ecology* highlights the various invisible circles of symbiosis and sustainability underpinning the various elements of this thriving ecosystem.

In collaboration with Mamoni Chitrakar, *The story of East Kolkata Wetlands*, 2019. Patachitra (Traditional storytelling scroll), 50 x 350 cm



Book of Fear 11, 2016
Collage on paper,
38x28 cm (folded)

18 Amritah Sen



Sen's work focuses on personal narratives that create alternative versions to the official history. *Fear Books* were a part of an almost five-year-long quest for stories that cross different social, mental, and geographical boundaries. It deals with one of the most basic emotions of life: 'fear.' Listening to the stories of many people in India's neighboring states, Sen's intention was to discover if this negative emotion also triggers positive traits in us including bonding and connecting to the past.

19 Paula Sengupta

Sengupta's work addresses gender binaries, enforced migration, homelessness, heritage and environment, and a concern for the conservation of societies, communities, and ecologies. Hereby she uses methods and materials applied in feminist thought. Reconstructed from a story

narrated by two Tibetan women in exile in India, *The Monkey & the Dog* throws light upon Sinicization of Tibet. It tells of how the small Himalayan trading village of Toe Yancho Tanga was visited by two soldiers in blue suits, who brought with them a caged monkey and a dog. The two animals were made



Unrested sleep in the Himalayan mountains, just the village of Toe Yancho Tanga. In summer, as the monkey melts, peasants cannot access the high passes; hearing the loads of salt and



When the monkey would hold a plough and make the dog plough the field.

to plow a field for the amusement of the villagers, who soon grew wary, suspecting it to be a bad omen. Sure enough, the blue soldiers soon came in hordes, changing life in the idyllic village forever. Using the mediums of etching and serigraphy, the scroll derives from the traditional

thangkas of Tibet, some of which are linear paintings in gold on black backgrounds.

The Monkey & the Dog, 2013
2 of 10 sheets, leporello of etching, chine colle and serigraphy on paper, 575 x 32 cm

20, 21, 22, 23, 24
BENGAL MODERNISTS

Somnath Hore
Ganesh Haloi
Benode Behari Mukherjee
Sarbari Roy Choudhury
Ganesh Pyne



Somnath Hore, *Untitled*, Woodcut, 45x30 cm
Collection: Akar Prakar, New Delhi



Somnath Hore, *Untitled (Trial/Proof)*, 1979, Lithograph, 27 x 40 cm
Collection: Akar Prakar, New Delhi



Benode Behari Mukherjee, *Composition*, Collage on paper, 28 x 18 cm
Collection: Akar Prakar, New Delhi



↑↑ Ganesh Haloi, *Untitled (Scroll 21)*, 2021
 ↑ Ganesh Haloi, *Untitled (Scroll 22)*, 2021
 Gouache and Chinese ink stick on Japanese scroll paper, 135 x 35 cm
 Collection: Akar Prakar, New Delhi



Ninety degrees, 2013. Video still



Kolkata: Run in the Alley

Praneet Soi
Manuel Klappe

Kolkata is a city of layers. Layers of cultural accumulation: the new upon the old, the religious alongside the secular, collaged together in a dense mass of material abundance. Nowhere is this more present than in its alleyways that, squeezed between mansions and shacks, have risen from necessity rather than official ordinance. Away from the traffic they house a multiplicity of functions. Small temples, mosques, and shrines enable the busy city dweller to perform puja (prayer rituals) on the go. Political graffiti colors the walls. Bazaars and hole-in-the-wall shops service neighborhoods, which are hives of manual production. Tinkering, welding, slaughtering, carving, and most other small-scale, artisanal, electronic, and industrial activities are all performed in full view. The region's flourishing nature is quick to reclaim untended space: the sacred banyan trees, so plentiful within the city, rapidly overtake neglected architecture and add organic decay to the many layers that make Kolkata sublime.

Until 1911 Kolkata, then known as Calcutta, was the capital of the British Empire in India. Its lucrative port and geopolitical importance attracted diverse populations in search of fortune. Its newly generated wealth served as a backdrop for a rich cultural and intellectual life among its locals. Under British rule, the seeds of the independence movement, religious reform, and cultural reinvention — later called the Bengal Renaissance — were already blossoming. This created a modernity specific to Kolkata, incorporating forms and ideas from near and far in a distinct, syncretic voice.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) is a central figure within this narrative. In 1913, he set up an experimental school

in Santiniketan just outside of Kolkata, propagating what he described as the best of Occidental and Oriental educational methodologies. Tagore and his brothers, Abanindranath (1871–1951) and Gaganendranath (1867–1938), were not only exceptional artists but also revolutionary thinkers, and through them modernism in India originates in Santiniketan. Under their patronage artists such as Ramkinkar Baij (1906–1980), who came from a tribal background, were encouraged and their productivity formed a backbone of art imbued with a fresh vision. This vision was born of lived experience and related to an environment that had thus far been colonized and now needed to be rethought and pictured anew. Artists such as Somnath Hore (1921–2006) and Chittaprosad Bhattacharya (1915–1978) etched out their socialist commentaries using drawing, printmaking, and book-making. Later in the twentieth century, with the establishment of Marxism within the state, the importance of Bengal was further highlighted by the proliferation of experimental film. Filmmakers such as Mrinal Sen (1923–2018) and Satyajit Ray (1921–1992) used the language of moving image to critique contemporary society and its conditions. West Bengal's current artistic processes are in still deeply influenced by this rich cultural legacy. An affinity toward materiality continues to be highlighted in its universities' art curricula.

Kolkata's manufacturing processes can be magnificently anachronistic as is visible in its once flourishing jute industry where ancient Scottish machines still operate, their well-greased moving parts serviced by improvisation. The city's treadle press operators continue to justify cutting their fingers typesetting zinc plates within the backstreets of

the Baithakkhana neighborhood, waging a slow and losing battle against desktop publishing and offset printing. An overwhelming presence of manual labor — with all its related stimuli — catches the artist's eye, leaving the impression that everything in the city can be made by hand.

The title of the exhibition *Run in the Alley* refers to a pen and ink wash drawing by Ganesh Pyne (1937–2013). It depicts an alley in his neighborhood in North Kolkata, one of the city's oldest precincts, showing a little boy running after his kite. In colonial times, this part of the city was reserved for the city's local Bengali and migrant Indian communities. Europeans lived exclusively along the city's southern Esplanade that housed the colonial bureaucracy, institutions related to commerce, hotels, theaters, the racecourse and, importantly, Fort William.

North Kolkata's indigenous elite were traders and tax collectors, appointed by the British government. With their amassed wealth they built themselves lavish mansions styled on the homes of European nobility, with sprawling, manicured gardens. Over time and due to shifting socioeconomic tides, these families' fortunes dwindled and their mansions went to seed. The aging properties were divided and subdivided, let and sublet. Illegal add-ons contributed to the collaged chaos. An exploding, youthful, and migrant population added momentum to this trajectory. Spaces were repurposed and metamorphosed into low-cost neighborhoods, housing people along with their means of livelihood. These localities are now densely populated and are centers of social, cultural, and economic activity. They are representative of an intricate and

organic ecology of urbanism that is fueled by necessity. Sculpted by human hands from a bricolage of material it is this sedimentary effect of use and reuse that is mirrored in the layers visible throughout the city.

The Hooghly River contains this northern precinct. The banks of the river are rich in clay, a material that empowers local artisanal and industrial activity. It is used for layering over the straw armatures of the various religious effigies made to celebrate the cities packed religious calendar. These religious effigies are constructed mainly in Kumartuli (kumor means potter) also in North Kolkata, and this site, rich in its production of religious iconography the year around, is firmly situated in the city's imaginary. The manufacture of bricks is an important industry in Bengal and indeed along the country's entire Gangetic plain where clay collected from the riverbanks is used as its main ingredient. Brick kilns dot the banks of the Hooghly where its production provides a livelihood, not only to kiln laborers but also to artisanal roof-makers such as the Bauri community, who travel to Kolkata for employment and are known for the songs they sing while working.

Bamboo is traditionally used as scaffolding material to construct pandals, temporary marquees for religious festivals where the effigies constructed in Kumartuli are placed. Until recently, bamboo scaffoldings were used in construction sites. However, explosive growth in the city has led to the construction of high-rise buildings that require modern scaffolding similar to those used in the rest of the world. This huge growth is symptomatic of the modern and resurgent India glorified in international media. In the north-eastern

parts of Kolkata are its wetlands, the lungs of the city that are gradually being filled in by high-rise residential communities and hotels and office buildings for the city's nascent hi-tech industry.

During election cycles, many of the city's walls and sometimes entire buildings will be covered by giant displays of political graffiti. The symbols used by its political parties are central to its democratic process — voting sheets display these emblems for those unable to read. Kolkata is filled with these icons in election months. Competing with the many other forms of advertising, they are easily recognizable, painted in broad strokes and bright colors. Their iconography can be linked not only to contemporary graphic design but also to the popular art forms of the city, including the nineteenth-century Kalighat patachitra tradition that thrived in Kolkata and originated on the footpaths surrounding the Kali temple in Kalighat.

Such popular traditions continue to influence artists today. Sumantra Mukherjee's poster, specially commissioned for this exhibition, references not only this tradition but also that of the more recent circus posters whose cut-out imagery was until recently visible upon Kolkata's streets. On Mukherjee's poster the tourist, her back towards the viewer, clicks a selfie which reveals her to be the goddess Kali, traditionally pictured with a protruding tongue. Kali is the presiding deity of the city of Kolkata, and it is after her the city has been named. The silhouetted cutout has at its extremes two windmills and the Victoria Memorial in between, signifiers of the collaboration between artists from the Netherlands and Kolkata, while

simultaneously pointing to the city's colonial past.

Kolkata: Run in the Alley brings together a group of artists from Bengal and the Netherlands. They all participated in the artist residency program CARF, initiated in 2014 by Kolkata-born artist Praneet Soi and supported by the Mondriaan Fund to grant artists living in the Netherlands the opportunity to explore his hometown. The program was aimed toward those engaged in a material practice, for whom the city's landscape and its cultural environment would provide a space for development. Over the course of their stay they befriended, interacted with, and collaborated with artists from Kolkata and its surroundings. *Kolkata: Run in the Alley* was conceived to give this shared experience a platform.

What makes this exhibition unique is the artists' filtered usage of an iconography that is very particular to modern Bengal. The artists visiting the city from the Netherlands, guided by their friends from Kolkata, embraced local craft and folk traditions in the making of new work. The artists from Bengal utilize within their works a language that in lineage points to a modernist tradition exemplified by the ethos of Santiniketan, the college founded by Tagore, as well as historically relevant popular art forms including that of the Kalighat patachitra mentioned earlier.

At the heart of this project lies the ethics of representation. How does one represent a city? A sincere representation cannot do without those represented — they must be present! But equally informative can be the perspective of outsiders, engaging with a place and filtering their reactions over time and

through dialogue. It is when these perspectives are combined that a nuanced depiction of the city becomes possible. Unfortunately, too often such combinations are asymmetrical, due to the uneven distribution of resources. In our experience, interpersonal relationships and generous collaboration can address and surmount such challenges. For the installation of this exhibition in Marres, the artists from Bengal were present, this time interacting as visitors, building up the scenography of the exhibition with those they had met in Kolkata and with whom they became colleagues and friends. *Kolkata: Run in the Alley* is a sum of this experience.

BIOS OF PARTICIPATING ARTISTS & CURATORS

NILANJAN BHATTACHARYA

(Kolkata, India, 1968) is an independent Indian filmmaker, artist, and writer. He has produced and directed several acclaimed films and diverse media art works. Bhattacharya has a keen interest in biodiversity, food cultures, and indigenous knowledge systems in India and he has produced many films and art works around these themes. This filmmaker received the President's Award of India twice for his documentaries, *Under This Sun* (2005), and *Johar: Welcome to our World* (2010). Other films include *Bengalis in the World of Fish* (2001), and *Rain in the Mirror* (2012).

TIM BREUKERS (Breda, the Netherlands, 1985) studied at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. He followed residency programs at art centers in the Netherlands — International Artist-in-Residence and Center of Excellence for Ceramics (EKWC), and Hotel Maria Kapel — as well as at international art centers: Calcutta Art and Research Foundation, MMCA Seoul, and Bus Projects Melbourne. He has participated in various group exhibitions, including at the De Pont museum in Tilburg, W139 in Amsterdam, NEST in The Hague, and at the Korean Changwon Sculpture Biennale. His work can be found in collections at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Centraal Museum Utrecht and the Design Museum Den Bosch.

ARUNIMA CHOUDHURY (India, 1950), studied fine arts under Bikash Bhattacharjee at the Indian College of Arts, Kolkata, where she mastered different mediums set within the academic syllabus in Western technique. Later she co-founded her own art school, Bihan. Bihan became a vibrant platform to learn and experiment in various fields of creative expression. Choudhury exhibited her works at Hert Gallery, P.R. China, 2004, and in *Khela*, at Seagull Foundation of the Arts, Kolkata and London, 2007 and 2008. Her most recent exhibition was *Dark Edge of Green* at Emami Art, Kolkata, 2022.

GAUTAM CHOUDHURY (Kolkata, India, 1951) received his diploma in Fine Arts from the Indian Art College in Kolkata, India in 1974. He has been an art teacher at Patha Bhavan, Kolkata since 1975 and is a founding member of the Bihan Center for Visual and Performing Arts in Naihati, India. He has exhibited at Birla Academy in Kolkata and Delhi

(1990), Jehangir Art Gallery in Mumbai (1996 and 1998), HART Gallery in Beijing, China (2004), and Gallery Charubasona in Kolkata (2020). He received the Shilpi Samman lifetime achievement award by the Government of West Bengal, India.

SARBARI ROY CHOUDHURY (Ulipur, East Bengal, India, 1933 – Kolkata, India, 2012) attended the Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata, the University of Baroda and the Accademia de Belle Arti di Firenze, where he came into contact with Alberto Giacometti and Henry Moore. Combining influences from Ramkinkar Bajj and Prodosh das gupta, with their counterparts from Western modern art, most of his work consist of cast bronze sculpture. Highly abstracted and profoundly inspired by Hindustani classical music, the human form often finds a dream-like quality in his work. Some describe it as objectified sensibility.

BONNO VAN DOORN (Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1977) studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (2004–2008). He showed work in a range of venues, including *TOURIST CAVE*, C&H galerie in Amsterdam (2018); *Dancing Bear*, Greylight Projects in Brussel (2014); *Supermarket Art Fair* in Stockholm (2014); *Obviously*, 1646 in Den Haag (2013); *The Painted Bird*, Marres in Maastricht (2017), *Bright*, Cultuurcentrum Mechelen (2017) and *Hungry Eyes*, Orbital Residency (2018). Van Doorn teaches at the University of the Arts, Utrecht, and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam. He is co-founder of ART BAR KIPPY.

SANCHAYAN GHOSH (Kolkata, India, 1970) received his MA in Fine Arts at Kala Bhavan, Visva-Bharati University, in 1997. He has worked in self-organized initiatives in various parts of the world and explored transformative relationships of land, location, labor, and practice. He has participated in Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2012, Dhaka Biennale in 2016, and Document 14 in 2017. Selected solo exhibitions include *Reversed Perspective: 3 Conjectures* in 2014 and *Sisyphus Effect*, together with Experimenter, Kolkata in 2010. He is currently an Associate Professor at the Department of Painting of Kala Bhavan.

NOBINA GUPTA (Jabalpur, India, 1972) received a Masters and Bachelors degree of Fine Arts from Kala Bhavan, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan (West Bengal) India. She participated at various national

and international forums: the India Art Fair and the Art Fair Cologne, Germany; Art Stage, Singapore; Art Asia Miami, and Art Dubai. Her work has been further showcased at Gallery Sanskriti in Kolkata, Jan Kossen Contemporary Gallery in Basel, and Galerie Kashya Hildebrand in Zurich. In addition, Gupta has participated in group shows in the UK, Sweden, Indonesia and India.

GANESH HALOI (Jamalpur, East Bengal, India, 1936) after attending the Government College of Art and Craft in Kolkata, Haloi joined the Archaeological Survey of India, where he was commissioned to document the world-renowned Ajanta cave paintings. He returned to Kolkata in 1964 to become a lecturer at the Art College, Kolkata. Like Hore and Roy Choudhury, Haloi fled from East Bengal to Kolkata, after the partition of Bengal created East Pakistan, later Bangladesh. His work often focused on his place of birth, which assumed mythical proportions perhaps in part because of his regret to be unable to return. His stylized and highly abstracted works capture the essence of subjective recollection.

SOMNATH HORE (Chittagong, East Bengal, India, 1921 – Santiniketan, India, 2006) studied at Government Art college, Kolkata and Santiniketan, where he later became head of the Graphics and Printmaking department. A printmaker by heart, Hore gained notoriety for his depiction of major historical events of twentieth century Bengal, starting with the documentation of the Bengal Famine in 1943 that claimed the lives of between 2 million and 4 million people. From the 1970s onwards, Hore integrated sculpture in his practice. Employing diverse artistic media, his work focused throughout his career on the scope and depth of human suffering and celebration.

HENRI JACOBS (Zandoerle, the Netherlands, 1957) studied at AKV| St. Joost Breda, the Academy for Visual Arts in Rotterdam and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. In 1990–1991 he spent a year as artist-in-residence at the Van Doesburg House in Meudon, Paris (France). In September 2013, the book *Henri Jacobs — Journal Drawings* was published by Roma Publications, Amsterdam. The book is a repository of nine years of drawing and collecting images.

MANUEL KLAPPE (Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1982) studied Art History, Philosophy, and Economics

at the University of Amsterdam, and received a Masters of Arts in 2011. After organizing exhibitions *Beeld Hal Werk* (2010) and *Present Forever* (2012) in the Kromhoutal and an abandoned parking garage in Amsterdam, he co-founded the artists initiative KAFANA. In 2014, he was the first participant of the CARF residency program, which reignited two earlier interests: first the history and workings of historical encounters between East and West with an emphasis on its artistic exponents in regional modernisms — and, second, the collecting of the same.

MAARTJE KORSTANJE (Goes, the Netherlands, 1982) studied at AKV|St. Joost in Breda and the Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam (MFA). She was winner of the Prix de Rome in 2007, attended residency programs at Kunsthuus SYB, IBB Curaçao, European Ceramic Work Centre (EKWC), CARF, and ISCP New York. In 2014, she was nominated for the Volkskrant Beeldende Kunstprijs. Her work was part of group shows at GEM in The Hague, Museum de Pont in Tilburg, ISCP in New York, and Marc Straus Gallery in New York. Solo exhibitions include, among others, Upstream Gallery in Amsterdam, Vleeshal and Zeeuws Museum in Middelburg, mariondecannière in Antwerp, Museum Jan Cunen in Oss and the Groninger Museum.

SACHI MIYACHI (Tokyo, Japan, 1978) studied Art and Anthropology at Wako University in Tokyo. Fine Art at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam. Her work consists mainly of three-dimensional installations, site-specific interventions, rituals, and performances, often presented in museums and art institutions as well as in outdoor and indoor public spaces. Her solo exhibitions include *The Hut Next to the Guard's House*, public space, Leiden, NL (2021) and *The Fall – Transition into the Better*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, NL (2014). She participated in several group exhibitions, including the Jusselbiënnale, De Kapellebaan, DordtYart, Dordrecht, NL, W139, Amsterdam, NL. In 2014, she was awarded the Theodora Niemeijer Prize. Her publication *Practising Structures: India*, was released in 2022.

RITEN MOZUMDAR (Kasur, Punjab, India, 1927 – Santiniketan, West Bengal, India, 2006) was one of the most significant artist-designers of the Indian modernist design renaissance. In the decades following India's struggle for independence

(the 1940s) and responding to the socioeconomic and cultural upheaval sweeping through the country, Mozumdar approached design as a complex nation-building idiom focusing on modernization and revivalism. This period witnessed exploratory arcs between India and the world in politics, art, culture, design, engineering, and architecture. Between the 1950s and 1980s, his celebrated and influential praxis heralded a new brand of aesthetics within India. Mozumdar's work displays a diversity of range and materials. He worked with metal crafts, *namdahs* (felted wool rugs), wood carvings, hand-painted, block-printed, or silk-screened textiles (furnishings, dresses, sarees, scarves) wood blocks, and furniture. He also designed women's fashion apparel that was exported to several countries, including Australia and the Middle East. In 1955–56, he worked as a textile designer with the Finnish design company Marimekko and made numerous original designs for their collection.

BENODE BEHARI MUKHERJEE (Behala, India, 1904–1980) studied under Nandalal Bose at Tagore's Kala Bhavan in Santiniketan. In 1925, he became a professor at the same school, where he taught many prominent Indian artists including K.G. Subramanyan, Somnath Hore, Riten Mazumdar and Satyajit Ray. In 1947, the year of India's independence, he worked on his now famous murals at Hindi Bhavan in Santiniketan, generally viewed as one of the starting points of India's post-independence modernism. Combining influences from the West as well as further East, Mukherjee created an individual style, often using silk as carrier, following the long ink wash traditions of China and Japan. Having had trouble with his sight from birth, Mukherjee turned completely blind in 1957 and continued his practice by way of collages.

SUMANTRA MUKHERJEE (Kolkata, India, 1981) graduated from the Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata in 2005. His first solo presentation was titled *Cloud 9* 2009 in Kolkata (2009), followed by *NORMAL* in 2015 at AIR — Het Wilde Weten in Rotterdam and *Chiriya Chug Gayi Cake* in the SoCA, Kolkata in 2018. At present Mukherjee is involved in a poster-based public project, titled Mass Q Line, supported by the Goethe-institute, Kolkata.

RUCHAMA NOORDA (Leiden, the Netherlands, 1979) graduated from the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague and completed her MFA at the

Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam in 2004. She received a PhD degree from Leiden University where she researched the early twentieth century Lebensreform movement, a social movement that criticized modern industrialization and advocated a return to nature. Solo shows and performances include Galeria Municipal do Porto (2019) in Porto, Mediamatic (2019), Paradiso (2018), De Appel (2016), De Oude Kerk, all in Amsterdam (2015), Marres in Maastricht (2013), Stadthaus-galerie/Kunsthalle in Münster (2013), Kunstvereniging Diepenheim (2012), Museum de Lakenhal in Leiden (2007) and Museum De Domijnen in Sittard (2003).

SRIKANTA PAUL (West Bengal, India, 1971) received his bachelor degree in painting from Rabindra Bharati University in Kolkata in 1998, and his master degree in printmaking from M.S. University of Baroda in 2001. He is guest lecturer at Rabindra Bharati University, Department of Graphics — Printmaking. He participated in many international initiatives, including *TRANSFORM* Trondheim International Festival Norway, *Fraternity & Aesthetics in World Art* in Istanbul, Turkey, *SIPMA* (International print-makers & artists), NYC, and *Art at Wharepuke*, New Zealand.

GANESH PYNE (Kolkata, India, 1937–2013) began his artistic career as a book illustrator and animator of cartoons at the Madar Mullick film studio, before attending the Government College of Art & Craft in Kolkata. Raised in the old and densely populated north part of Kolkata, he had an intimate knowledge of its streets and byways that were sometimes too narrow for sunlight to come in. Unable to afford colors, his early work consists mainly of black and white, pen and ink drawings. This sober palette, later enriched by hues of brown, red, and blue in tempera, would stay with him throughout his career. With the poetic surrealism of crumbling facades and old folktales, Pyne created a visual language uniquely his own. It is in high demand today. The title for this exhibition is taken from the work shown here.

PIYALI SADHUKHAN (Kolkata, India, 1979) graduated from Rabindra Bharati University in 2004 and Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati University. Her engagement with layers of memory, knowledge and meaning takes her to everyday found objects and economical raw materials. Her new oeuvre turns to the individual, as she moves toward the intangible,

weathered imaginations of form. Her chief shows are *Moder Kono Dosh Nai*, *Moder Kono Disha Nai* at Forum Schlossplatz, Zwitserland (2015), *A Room of Her Own* at Gandhara art gallery, Kolkata (2015) and *Urban narratives* at Espace Louis Vuitton, Tokyo (2012). She made headlines with her huge Kaliya installation on the courtyard of the Indian museum, Kolkata (2014). In 2021, she had solo shows in the gallery of Akar Prakar, was participant in The Artissima Art Fair and in Classical Radical, a show organized in fondazione Torino Musei, Turin, Italy. Sadhukhan also works as an artistic director and scenographer. Together with Saumik Chakraborty she is a sought-after builder of temporary pavilions (pandals) for the yearly Hindu festival Durga Puja. The pandals are constructed from bamboo scaffolding and built to house the goddess Durga.

SAUMIK CHAKRABORTY (Kolkata, India, 1975) is an interdisciplinary art practitioner from Kolkata. He has worked as an artistic director and scenographer in more than 150 theater productions and has created a great number of critically acclaimed designs for major theater productions of Kolkata. In his designs, his focus is against the power elite and for the suppressed minorities, who are constantly forced to move and can barely function at a subsistence level. His first solo exhibition was *Of Lower Heavens, Vaporous Scars* in A.M (Art Multi-disciplines) Studio, Kolkata, 2018. Group shows he participated in include *Dark Side of the Moon* in Gallery 1000A, New Delhi, 2022, *Strides at Stake*, A.M (Art Multi-disciplines) Studio, Kolkata, 2020, and *Human Ecology & Art*, Chattagram, Bangladesh, 2017. Chakraborty was a collaborator and co-participant for the show *Moder Kono Dosh Nai, Moder Kono Disha Nai* at Forum Schlossplatz, Switzerland, 2014. He also participated in site-specific projects including *Exploring the Making of Myths*, in Sundarban, West Bengal, 2012.

USHMITA SAHU (Kolkata, West Bengal, India, 1973) is the Director and Head Curator of Emami Art, Kolkata. With a background in fine arts from Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, Sahu has worked for several years as an artist, curator, art writer and scholar and has numerous national and international projects to her credit. As a scholar, she is a leading authority on the practice of the modernist artist-designer Riten

Mozumdar. She has curated *IMPRINT: Riten Mozumdar*, a compact survey retrospective about the designer at Emami Art, Kolkata, in 2022 and Chatterjee and Lal, Mumbai, in 2020. A recipient of the India Foundation for the Arts (IFA) research grant for her research on Mozumdar, she has authored several pieces on the designer, which includes a monograph in Bengali. Sahu is currently working towards a publication on Mozumdar and Indian design history.

AMRITAH SEN (Kolkata, India, 1973) specialized in painting at Kala Bhavana, the fine arts faculty of Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan, India. She has shown her works in group shows at various venues in India, Southeast Asia, Europe, and the USA. To date, she has produced ten solo shows in Kolkata, New Delhi, and Mumbai and has participated in various art fairs including the Dhaka Art Summit and India Art Fair. She participated in research projects organized by Khoj Kolkata, Art Ichol in Maihar, Hamdasti in Kolkata, Shop-art Art-shop in Himachal Pradesh, and NexUs in Kathmandu. She had been a finalist in the Sovereign Asian Art Award, Hong Kong (2018 and 2020). She currently specializes in making artist books.

SARBAJIT SEN (Chinsurah, India, 1958) describes himself as social scientist, "whose looking glass is graphically set." He studied English Literature at Kolkata University and has two passions: graphic novels and film. For many years, he contributed political cartoons and comic strips to English dailies in the city. His first comic book was exhibited at BD, Switzerland. *Carbon Katha*, a graphic novel on climate politics, was published in 2010. His work has been exhibited in Mangasia, Wonderlands of Asian Comics (Barbican, London). His first solo exhibition of art cartoons – titled *Heritage: Calcutta* – was exhibited in Kolkata and Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan. Sen is one of the editors of *Longform*, a graphic narrative anthology.

PAULA SENGUPTA (London, United Kingdom, 1967) graduated in painting from the College of Art, New Delhi, India followed by an MFA and PhD in printmaking from Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan. Trained as a print-maker, Sengupta's practice includes broadsheets, artist's books, objects, installation, animation, and community art projects. Sengupta is author of *The Printed Picture: Four Centuries of Indian Printmaking* published by DAG, New Delhi and *Foreign & Indige-*

nous Influences in Indian Printmaking with LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, Germany. She also contributed to numerous publications and has several curatorial projects to her credit. She is currently Professor at the Department of Graphics – Printmaking at Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.

PRANEET SOI (Kolkata, India, 1971) moved to the Netherlands in 2002 to attend the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten. He currently divides his time between Amsterdam and Kolkata. This oscillatory movement impacts his practice. Soi identifies over time, patterns that emerge from an investigation of his extended social and economic landscape. Recent exhibitions include Berlin Biennale 2022, *Positions 6: Bodywork* at the VanAbbe Museum, Eindhoven, 2020-21, *Anamorphosis: Notes from Palestine, Winter in the Kashmir Valley* at Mosaic Rooms, London, 2019 and *Third Factory: From Kashmir to Lisbon via Caldas* at the Gulbenkian Museum, 2018. In 2011 Soi was of 4 artists representing India within the Indian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale.

ARTHUR STOKVIS (Groningen, the Netherlands, 1981) studied at Minerva Art Academy in Groningen, and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, Belgium. His work consists of paintings and murals. In 2022, he mentored newly graduated artists as part of the Apprentice/Master program of Kunstpodium T. In 2022, his work was shown at Nieuw Dakota, Galerie Fleur & Wouter, Amsterdam and Willem Twee, Den Bosch. In 2019, he co-initiated the exhibition space Art Bar Kippy in Amsterdam.

KOEN TASELAAR (Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 1986) graduated from the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam. His work is included in several collections, such as Museum Voorlinden, TextielMuseum, and the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Recently, he had a solo exhibition at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. In 2020, he was nominated for the NN award. After spending years exploring a broad range of techniques and attending several residencies, Taselaar is now using his wide scope of skills to further broaden his horizons.

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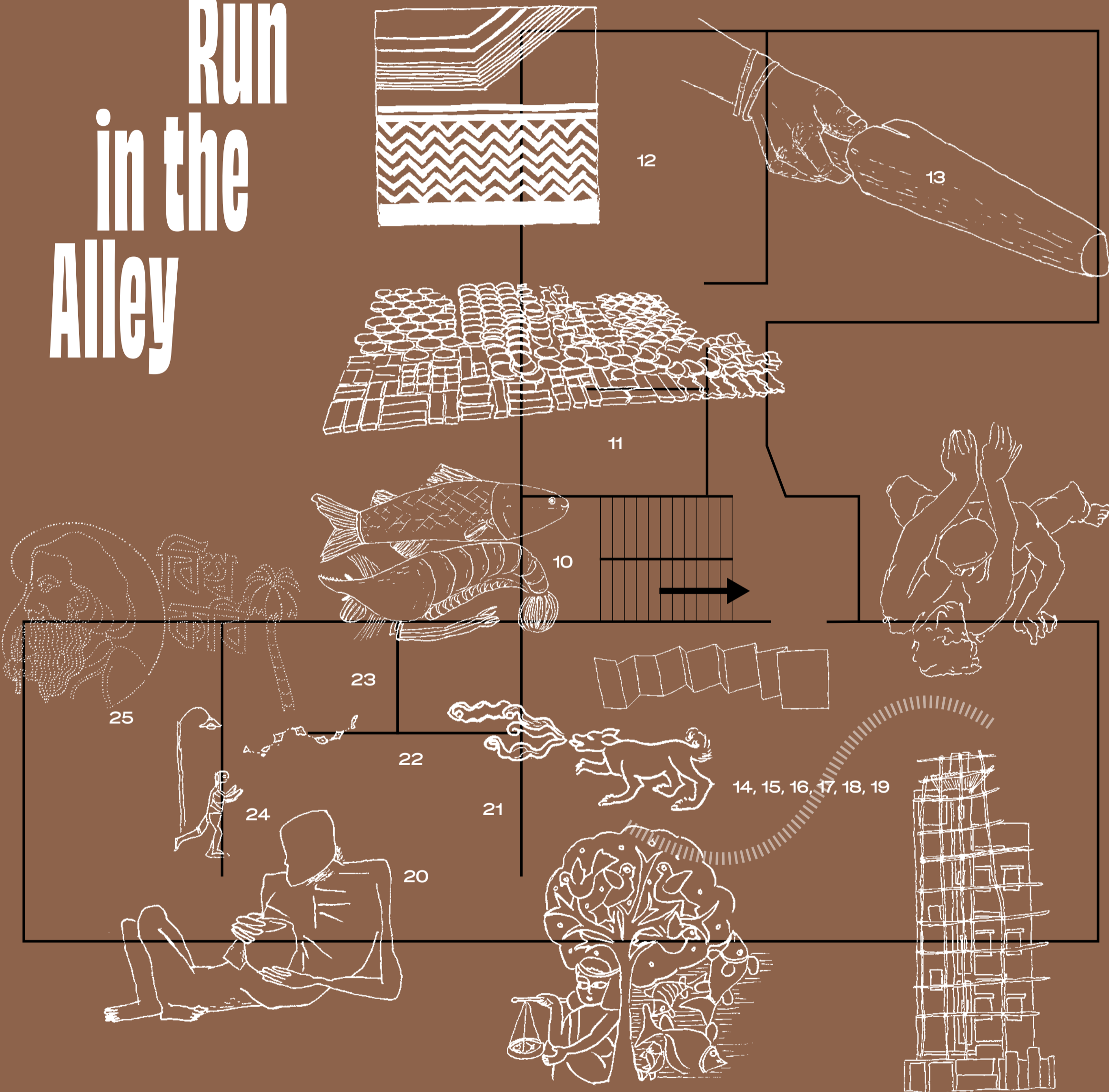
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Kolkata: Run in the Alley

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