

Reena Saini Kallat | BLIND SPOTS

Exhibition Dates: November 30 - December 28, 2019

Preview: November 29, 2019

Chemould Prescott Road is proud to present a solo exhibition of internationally acclaimed Mumbai-based artist Reena Saini Kallat titled *Blind Spots*. Following her solo exhibition at the Manchester Museum, and a flurry of exhibitions internationally at venues as varied as the Museum of Modern Art New York, Art Gallery of New South Wales, and Havana Biennale, this is Reena Kallat's solo exhibition in Mumbai after a gap of four years.

Currently her work is being exhibited at the ICA Boston, Museu Oscar Niemeyer.

Reena's practice spans drawing, photography, sculpture and video engaging diverse materials imbued with conceptual underpinnings, questioning ideas of borders, geography, landscape, identity, memory, history and the natural world.

In Reena Kallat's works over the last several years the border, the territory and the map have recurred as potent forms that point to broad historical narratives as well as the manner in which human kind have left the imprint of history on geography. In the recent suite of six drawings titled ***Leaking Lines*** (2018-19), Reena intentionally conflates the 'line', a primary artistic device with epic territorial delineations; here tense international borders and fortifications during wars appear like charred fissures on the surface of the paper. Conceived as diptychs, one part rendered in charcoal reveals the factual landscape, while the other forming a flayed fence using electric wires form rich cartographic abstractions that invoke undulating terrain.

Chorus (2018-19) is modeled on pre-radar acoustic devices used to track sounds of enemy aircrafts during the Second World War. Reena, in an act of subverting notions of war, introduces bird calls from border-sharing countries either politically partitioned or in conflict such as the Hoopoe bird (national bird of Israel) singing to the Palestinian Sunbird (national bird of Palestine), the Peacock (from India) communicating with the Doyel (from Bangladesh), the Crested Caracara (national bird from Mexico) singing in unison with the Eagle (national bird of US)... Though appropriated as national symbols by one or the other nation, these bird species inhabit both, being citizens only of a particular terrain and climate that no country can claim ownership to.

Also part of the exhibition is a large work on paper titled ***Cleft*** (2017) where hybrid animals and birds come together to form a complex world of conjoined species making a determined and desperate effort to reset a divided planet apportioned by humankind. Inviting viewers to think of the many bonds and borders that make our complex existence.

Some of these ideas take a different form in ***Shifting Ecotone-2*** wherein landscapes (with rivers at the heart of contestation between countries or the seas from contested border lands) become unstable, beginning to shuffle and scatter as if part of a child's puzzle board. The title alludes to the transitional space between biomes where biodiversity proliferates or wherein two communities might meet and integrate.

In **Blind Spots** (2018-19), Reena Kallat deploys the preambles of the constitutions of seven pairs of warring nations from around the world as Snellen eye charts used by optometrists to measure vision. As the founding promises of hostile nation-states are revealed in the form of pyramids with disjointed letters, words common to both constitutions in each pair morph into Braille-like dots. The dots lack the haptic element that makes Braille legible, thus rendering the words inaccessible both to the sighted and the blind. The parts thus obscured express universal values such as freedom, democracy, justice, and equality, shared by the constitutions of most modern nation states. The artist alludes to the metaphor of having lost sight of these shared values and common aspirations by posing a 'test of vision' that invites audiences to reflect back on promises that have slipped from collective memory amidst years of political rhetoric and myopic competition between states.

Reena Saini Kallat's (b. 1973, Delhi, India) practice spanning drawing, photography, sculpture and video engages diverse materials, imbued with conceptual underpinnings. She is interested in the role that memory plays, in not only what we choose to remember but how we think of the past. Using the motif of the rubberstamp both as object and imprint, signifying the bureaucratic apparatus, Kallat has worked with officially recorded or registered names of people, objects, and monuments that are lost or have disappeared without a trace, only to get listed as anonymous and forgotten statistics. In her works made with electrical cables, wires usually serving as conduits of contact that transmit ideas and information, become painstakingly woven entanglements that morph into barbed wires like barriers. Her ongoing series using salt as a medium explores the tenuous yet intrinsic relationship between the body and the oceans, highlighting the fragility and unpredictability of existence.

She has widely exhibited at Institutions across the world such as Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Tate Modern, London; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Manchester Museum, UK; Kennedy Centre, Washington; Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada; Saatchi Gallery, London; SESC Pompeia and SESC Belenzino in Sao Paulo; Goteborgs Konsthall, Sweden; Helsinki City Art Museum, Finland; National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul; Henie Onstad Kunstsenter, Oslo; Casa Asia, Madrid and Barcelona; ZKM Karlsruhe in Germany; Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney; Hangar Bicocca, Milan; Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai; IVAM Museum, Spain; Busan MOMA; Kulturhuset, Stockholm; Kunsthaus Langenthal, Switzerland; Chicago Cultural Centre amongst many others.

Her works are part of several public and private collections including the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung; Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada; Initial Access (Frank Cohen Collection), UK; Fondazione Golinelli, Italy; Norrtalje Konsthall, Sweden; Bhaudaji Lad Museum, Mumbai; National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi; Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi; Saatchi Gallery, London; Tiroche DeLeon Collection, Israel; Pizzuti Collection, Ohio; Ermenegildo Zegna Group, Italy; JSW Foundation, Mumbai, Burger Collection, Hongkong; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi amongst others.

She lives and works in Mumbai, India