



Chemould Prescott Road

CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

3rd floor, Queens Mansion | G. Talwatkar Marg | Fort, Mumbai 400 001 India | call: +91 (022) 22000211 / 123

Breathing on Mirrors

Anju Dodiya

February 29 - March 31, 2020

We take pleasure in announcing the opening of Anju Dodiya's *Breathing on Mirrors* at Chemould Prescott Road on 29 February. Having begun her journey with Gallery Chemould in 1990, Anju's first solo show was exhibited in our small space at Jehangir Art Gallery.

Throughout her practice, Anju has been using pictorial references from varied sources including Renaissance paintings, world cinema, Japanese Ukiyo-e prints, newspaper photographs, Indian miniatures, and lately, Instagram. Advertently, her narrative often depict martyrs, saints, pilgrims, warriors, sportspersons, and women responding to their struggle – domestic and peripheral. In a recurring portrayal of an artist's inner life, part real, mostly fictional, Anju never fully discloses the narrative; the viewer is pushed to decode the plot.

Breathing on Mirrors allows for an up-close analysis of several occurrences, both, empirical and ideational; she continues to be an omniscient narrator who draws attention to the protagonist of a plot, which then follows multiple characters and narrative arcs, zooming in and out of a story. The artworks traverse through atypical aspects of identity, mortality, the fragility of the human body and the heroic conversance that keeps it going, supplemented by distant yet profound contemplation. The spectacle, however, displays fewer colours with room for formalism introduced by strong charcoal lines, geometric and graphically enhanced elements, and tense yet theatrical postures.

Anju's art is rooted in the figurative and carries an intense emotional charge; these works are like an abbreviation of her interior monologues.

One may sense the fear that lingers in her paintings, but cannot miss the strength displayed to encounter the demons either; for instance, birds appear repeatedly in artworks like *Ancestors*, *Studio (with Phoenix)*, and *Arachne's walk*, a symbol of fragility and freedom. *Target* presents violent motifs, where pencils assume the role of arrows that pierce the body, yet the body holds still – withstanding; and in *Daphne*, of Greek Mythology, the branches of the tree assume the same role, however, the girl's body still holds a steady symphonic gait. Varied human forms and faces appear, often radiating pain, and in the same breath, vigour.

Materials form the hinge of Anju's works, which add an allegorical yet literary element to it. Mattress as a base has a seemingly soft cushioned surface that comes undone as an object upon which stains, marks, lines, and colour interact with each other to create a conversation that is, both, intimate and tense, all at once.

Breathing on Mirrors, therefore, is an amalgamation of a pictorial build-up shaped by ambiguity, an awkward gentleness, and layered intricacies.

Anju Dodiya (b. 1964, Mumbai) has had 18 solo shows in India and abroad, which include the site-specific installation, *Throne of Frost* at the Lukshmi Villas Palace, Baroda, 2007; *Room for Erasures*, Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai, 2012; *Imagined Immortals*, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, 2014; *How to be Brave (in Pictures)*, Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris, 2016, and *The Air is a Mill of Hooks*, Bikaner House, New Delhi, 2018.

Her important group participations include *ARS 01, Unfolding Perspectives*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland, 2001; *New Narratives: Contemporary Art from India*, curated by Betty Seid, Chicago Cultural Centre, Chicago, 2007; *Making Worlds*, curated by Daniel Birnbaum, 53rd Venice Biennale, Venice, 2009; *Fifth Beijing International Art Biennale*, National Museum of China, Beijing, 2012; *Aesthetic Bind | Subject of Death*, curated by Geeta Kapur, Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai, 2013; *The Eye and The Mind: New Interventions in Indian Art*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing, China, 2015; *Continuing Traditions*, Musée de la Toile de Jouy, France, 2015; *The Journey is the Destination: The Artist's Journey between Then and Now*, Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, Mumbai, 2016; *No Parsi is an Island*, curated by Ranjit Hoskote, Nancy Adajania & Pheroza Godrej, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, 2016; *Bhupen's Contemporaries*, Grosvenor Vadehra, London, 2016; *Visions from India*, Transforming Vision: 21st century art from The Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, Ohio, USA, 2017; *Possibilities for a Non-Alienated Life*, curated by Anita Dube, Fourth Edition of the Kochi Muziris Biennale, 2018.

Represented in several private and public collections in India and abroad, including the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, Mumbai; Jehangir Nicholson Art Foundation, Mumbai; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon; Burger Collection, Hong Kong; RPG Enterprises, Mumbai; TAPI Collection of Shilpa and Praful Shah, India; the Art Institute of Chicago; Zabłudowicz Collection, Finland.

Lives and works in Mumbai, India.