

## Vivan Sundaram

### b. 1943 in Shimla

Sundaram studied painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University of Baroda (1961-65) and at Slade School of Art, London (1966-69), where he also studied History of Cinema. Active in the students' movement of May 1968, he helped set up a commune in London and lived in it till 1970. On his return to India in 1971, he worked with artists' and students' groups to organize events and protests, especially during the years of the national Emergency.

In the 1980s, Sundaram did three large shows of narrative painting and participated in the seminal group exhibition, 'Place for People' (1981). Since 1990 he has made installations that include sculpture, photographs and video. The installation Memorial (1993-2014) referred to the communal violence in Bombay. A monumental site-specific installation at the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta, now referred to as History Project (1998), was accompanied by the documentary Structures of Memory. Continuing work on the family of Amrita Sher-Gil (based on photographs taken by Umrao Singh Sher-Gil) include the installation The Sher-Gil Archive (1995) and a set of digital photomontages, Re-take of 'Amrita' (1991-92). A series of exhibitions using found objects include Trash (2008), an installed urbanscape of garbage, digital photomontages, and the videos Tracking (2004), Brief Ascension of Marian Hussain (2005) and Turning (2008). Discarded and found materials were used to make garments, and the work crossed over into fashion and performance in Gagawaka (2011) and Postmortem (2013). In 2012, Black Gold, an installation of potsherds from the excavation site of Pattanam in Kerala, was made into a three-channel video. These potsherds formed the basis of terraOptics (2016), digital photographs. A collaborative project on the artist Ramkinkar Baij, 409 Ramkinkars (2015), involved theatre directors including Anuradha Kapur, and developed into a multipart installation and performance. In 2017, a collaboration with cultural theorist Ashish Rajyadhyaksha and sound artist David Chapman resulted in a public art project on the Royal Indian Navy uprising which was joined by Bombay's working class, titled Meanings of Failed Action: Insurrection 1946.

Sundaram has had solo shows in many cities of India, as well as London, Paris, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Amsterdam, Budapest, Copenhagen, New York, Chicago, Dallas, and at the Fowler Museum, Los Angeles (2015). He has exhibited in the Biennales of Havana, Johannesburg, Kwangju, Taipei, Sharjah, Shanghai, Sydney, Berlin, and in the Asia-Pacific Triennial, Brisbane. He has also exhibited in curated shows at Tate Modern, London (2001); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2001); Haus der Kulturen Welt, Berlin (2003); Queens Museum (2005) and International Centre for Photography (2008), New York; Haus der Kunst, Munich (2006); Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation, Vienna (2006); ZKM, Karlsruhe (2007); Chicago Cultural Centre, Chicago (2007); Mori Museum, Tokyo (2008); HangarBicocca, Milan (2007); Fondazione Fotografia, Modena (2012); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2011); Arken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen (2012-13). He has organized artists' workshops and seminars at the Kasauli Art Centre, 1976-80; contributed variously to the Journal of Arts & Ideas (1981-99); and curated several exhibitions for the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust (SAHMAT).

He is the founding member of all these organizations. Vivan Sundaram is the editor of a two volume book, Amrita Sher-Gil: a self-portrait in letters & writings (2010). He is managing trustee, with his sister Navina Sundaram, of the Sher-Gil Sundaram Arts Foundation (SSAF), set up in 2016.

The artist lives and works in Delhi, India.