

OF GODS AND GODDESSES, CINEMA, CRICKET: THE NEW CULTURAL
ICONS OF INDIA



OF GODS AND GODDESSES, CINEMA, CRICKET: THE NEW CULTURAL ICONS OF INDIA

An exhibition by
RPG Academy of Art & Music

The thematic exhibition, *Of Gods and Goddesses, Cinema, Cricket*, examines the emergence of popular culture in India explored through three facets: namely religion, cinema and sports that have come to become intrinsic to Indian society. In questioning what constitutes the making of the iconic image within the public realm, the exhibition explores the boundaries between "high" and "low" art, the "authentic" and "mass produced," through a contemporary exhibition platform; thereby exploring how meaning and value get inscribed and re-negotiated through the circulated image.

In exploring the mythic tradition of Indian gods and goddesses, artists borrow existing traditional, religious and folk iconography to comment on the relationship between the sacred and the profane, religion and politics. Hindi cinema similarly influences the foundation of Indian society not only shaping our value systems, fashion and music, but also by personifying an image of the nation to the world. Cricket on the other hand, has always been the most important sport in India, and since the emergence of IPL it has taken the sport to a pre-eminent position. The cricketer is now akin to a super-star, film hero or a demigod.

By juxtaposing these three components of religion, cinema and sports, the exhibition *Of Gods and Goddesses, Cinema, Cricket*, examines how iconic images get constituted and legitimized within the public realm, and its implications and significance within contemporary Indian art practice.

Atul Bhalla, Atul Dodiya, Anita Dube, Abir Karmakar, Anjolie Ela Menon, Archana Hande, Ashim Purkayastha, Bose Krishnamachari, Bajju Parthan, Jagannath Panda, Jitish Kallat, Justin Ponmany, Mithu Sen, Prajakta Palav, Prajakta Potnis, Pushpamala N. Ravinder Reddy, Riyaz Komu, Reena Saini Kallat, Sheba Chhachhi, Sharmila Samant, Surendran Nair, Sudhir Patwardhan, Vidya Kamat, Vivek Vilasini

Curated by Arshiya Lokhandwala

OF GODS AND GODDESSES, CINEMA, CRICKET: THE NEW CULTURAL ICONS OF INDIA

For the RPG academy of arts and music

Jehangir art gallery, Mumbai, February 22- march 2, 2011

Curated by Dr Arshiya Lokhandwala

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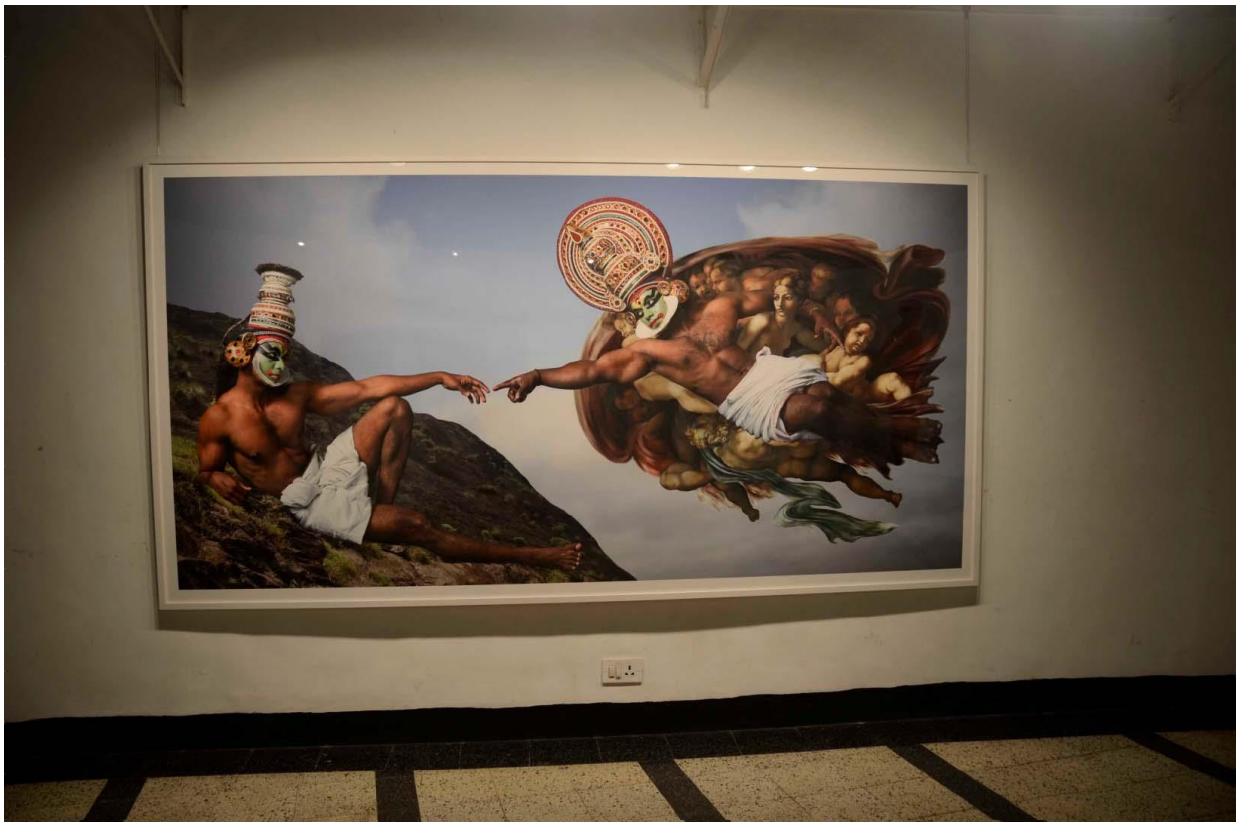
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GALLERY VIEW







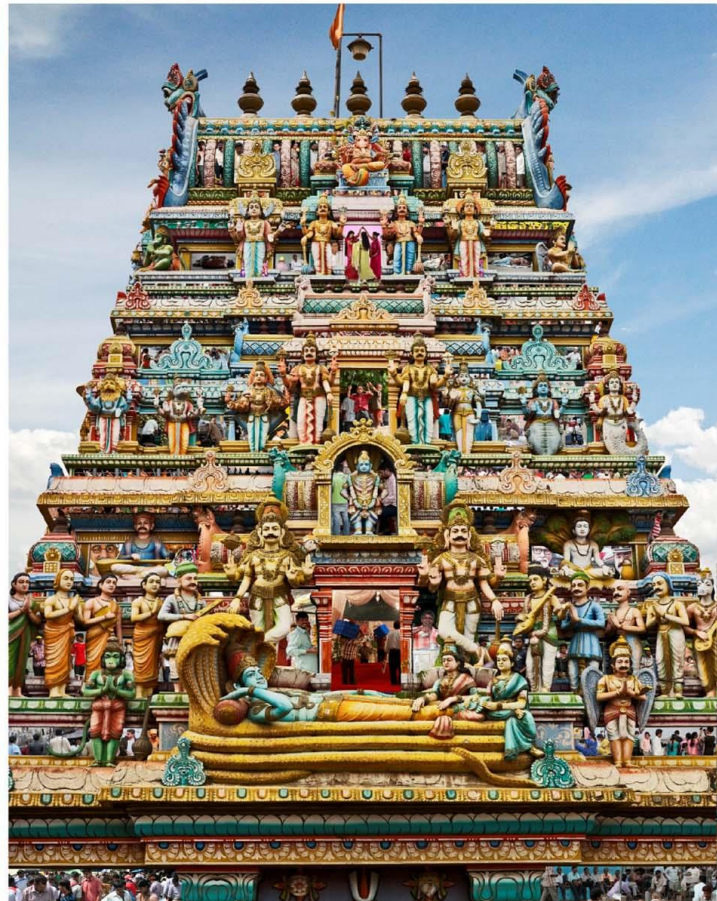


Vivek vilasini

Between One Shore and Several Others (after Creation of Adam by Michelangelo)

Archival print on paper, 2009

Edition of 6/9



Vivek Vilasini

Include Me Out

Archival Print on paper, 2010

Edition 4/9



Anita Dube
Neti Neti (A Blue Print for a Revolution)

Installation with enamel votive eyes

2009-2010

Edition of 3 works



Neti Neti (not this, not this either) is a labyrinth constructed with the eyes of Gods, what are called Ishwar ke Netra. Three drawing fragments, are superimposed one on top of the other: the first- a 'kollam' floor pattern; the second- a grid map of Alaknanda, the area in Delhi where I reside; and the third- a random doodle on a blank piece of paper.

Out of this tussle between different structuring principles: the past (tradition), present (location), and the future (dynamic and random), a terrible beauty arises, negating that which is oppressive, and transforming it towards new possibilities

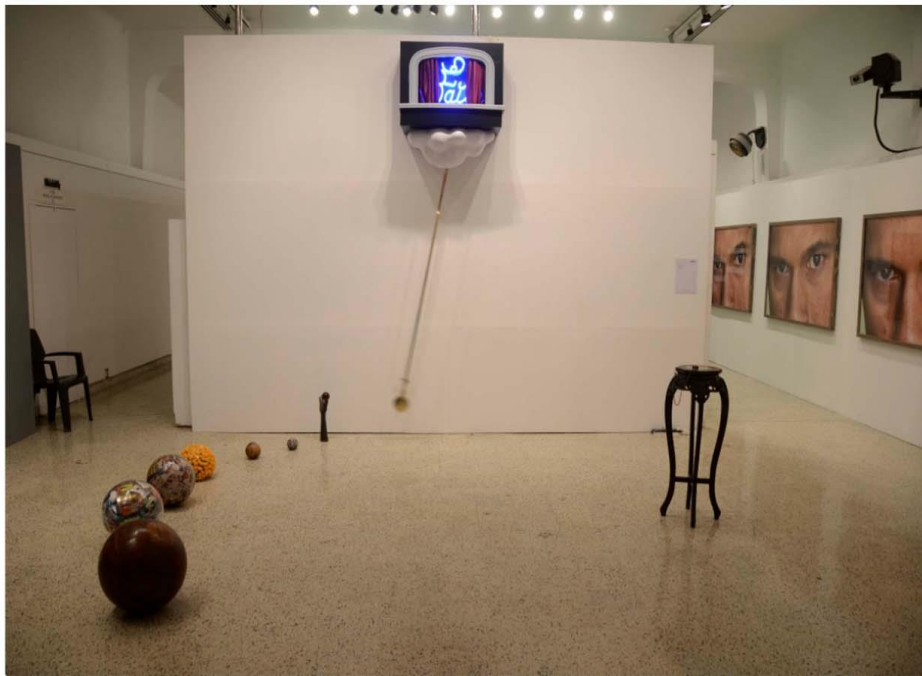


Abir Karmakar

When Raj Weds Simran

Medium oil on canvas Audio CD, 2011

'Many love stories will be told, many were told, Heer- Ranjha, Romeo-Juliet, Sheeri-Farhaad...but history shall remember that once upon a time the story of Raj- Simran was told. Undoubtedly it will! Because after Raj and Simran met, Love was never to be the same again!'



Sharmila Samant

Faith By Remote Control

Installation, 2011



Ashim Purkayastha

Janmorcha

Acrylic on canvas, 2009-2010

The newspapers and the television news channels go on repeating the same news or events. Simple happenings or even issues like bomb blast, starvation, farmers committing suicide etc are shown over and over again thus dramatizing and making it larger than life.

The politicians and the political parties also take up issues including death, fake encounter, insurgency etc. and try to sensationalize it and give it a monumental image. For example the political situation of West Bengal- it is almost civil war being created. The same is been witnessed in many other states.

'Janmorcha' juxtaposes unusual spaces and events. Things and events are being interrupted, discontinued or diverted even before it is allowed to happen.



Mithu Sen
Howzat!
Installation mixed media on paper
2011



WHAT IS CRICKET
(As explained to a foreign visitor)

You have two sides one out in the field and one in...

Each man that's in the side that's in goes out he comes in and the next man goes in until he's out...

When they are all out the side that's out comes in and the side that's been in goes out and tries to get those coming in out....

Sometimes u get men still in and not out...

When both sides have been in and out..

Including the not outs...

That's the end of the game...

Howzat!



Atul Bhalla

Yudhishtra Washing

Video, 2011, duration-3.43 minutes, edition 1/3+IAP

Peripheral God (?)

(This time they left him at the Gate!)

Archival pigment print, 2011, edition of 3 +IAP, 2011

Water Gods-III

Archival pigment print, 2011, edition of 3 +IAP, 2011

Roaming the worlds after the Great War, Mahabharata, Yudhishtra reaching Heaven's gate is asked to leave the dog, which he befriended on his journeys outside at the periphery and enter. Refusing to enter Heaven without the dog, Yudhishtra chooses to wait outside at the peripheral gate forever rather than enter heaven without one who had been his true companion through all his journeys when all else abandoned him! Allowed to enter after this test, the keeper of the faith reveals himself as the dog. Women pray during Chhath in Bihar, Sitamarhi at the peripheral waters from dusk till dawn half immersed in the 'Repository' of myth, meaning, fertility and history.



Jagannath Panda

An Avatar of the Metropolis

Acrylic, Fabric, Glue, 2011

I have always been interested in cinema in which explosive narratives are intricately interwoven, and the movement of the camera becomes a vehicle that dislocates the viewer's fantasy or utopian desire. In a similar manner, *An Avatar of the Metropolis* is an immediate response to what is happening to the rocks of Aravali mountain range- near my home at Gurgaon. The work is the confluence of many layers of overlapping images frozen in different timelines. It brings out the confusing perspectives and the impossibility of their probability, and stands in an ambiguous process of explosion and compression into one.

An Avatar of the Metropolis therefore appears with a theatrical-sculptural effect that raises the question: Are we shaping the world or are we being shaped by it? For me, the desire of metropolis narrates the possibility of placement and displacement, the inflation and deflation of the imageries that are occurring within itself. The representation of the tension or the encounter between the quiet and the chaotic in our frantic world is the pursuit of my work.



Justin Ponmany

Replay / Play Again

Installation, 2011

The numbing numbers and statistics that we grapple with in daily life, intrigues me whether it's cricket, population census or scam figures. Do the numbers get so large; that we can't fathom things anymore and hence are not affected by it, or, is it that we may as a nation, have a voracious appetite for them? Could it be just in our destiny to chew on them as the juggernaut rolls and planets pass us by? They spin on their own axis to get their high, much like a cricket ball leaving a bowlers hand. Does the humble cricket ball as we know it, like a swastika, the grand spinning wheel, really mark a new beginning every instant or every next ball perhaps? while it invokes various disciples like mathematics, astronomy, astrology etc as it courses through it's journey...



Sudhir Patwardhan
Narratives of Longing
 A Suite of Nine Paintings, 2010
 Acrylic on canvas



Atul Dodiya
Jai-ho
 Enamel Paint Synthetic Vanish with Gold Powder,
 Acrylic epoxy on Laminate 2007- 2011



Prajakta Palav

Chup Chup Ke

96"xl44," 2011, inches, Acrylic, Gesso and Glossy Medium on canvas

My works provokes the basic question of 'beauty.' What is "real", "unreal" is what I attempt to capture. The simulacra of staging a set of the Hindi film, evokes within me a need to invite viewers to enter into my realm of simulation...feeling at home in a space that they cannot inhabit...a fantasy. This connection with the living, inhabited and illusion of the unreal is central to my practice.



Prajakta Potnis
Porous walls
 Installation, 2011

Through this work my endeavor is to trace the influence of popular culture in our day-to-day life. Our need for idol worship either through religion, cricket, cinema or politics probably reflects a certain kind of emptiness experienced within. By installing packaging material with popular imagery as furniture within an interior space, I am trying to draw references to consumerism and its relation to the psychology of the people consuming it.

"Porous walls" refers to the wall as a veil and also as an organic separation between the inside and the outside through which imperceptible elements pass and affect the psyche of individuals. It also attempts to draw attention to a voyeuristic curiosity people have towards the other's life.



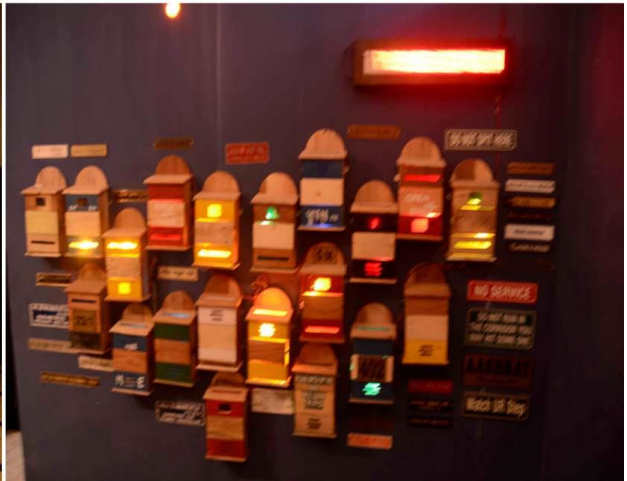
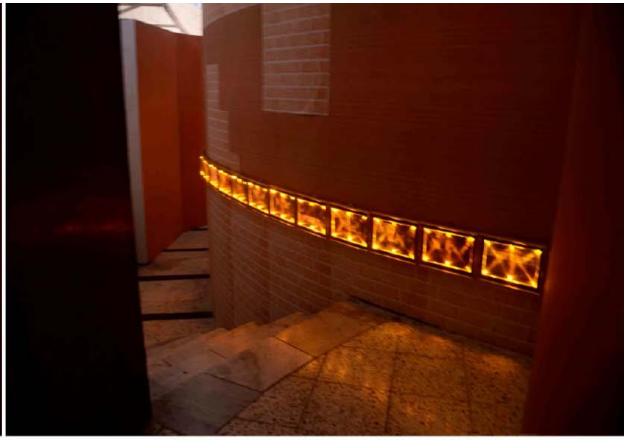
Anjolie Ela Menon
Money Money Money
 Mixed Media on Canvas, 2011



Surendran Nair

Hand to mouth

15degrees of separation..



Archana Hande





Pushpamala N

Motherland

Archival Inkjet prints, 2009

From the Mother India Project Photo Credit: Clay Kelton

Mother India comes to be photographed with her vahana, weapons and martyrs...

Motherland: The Festive Tableau

Motherland: Studio Portrait with Flag, Om Flag, Trishul

Motherland: Lion and Flag

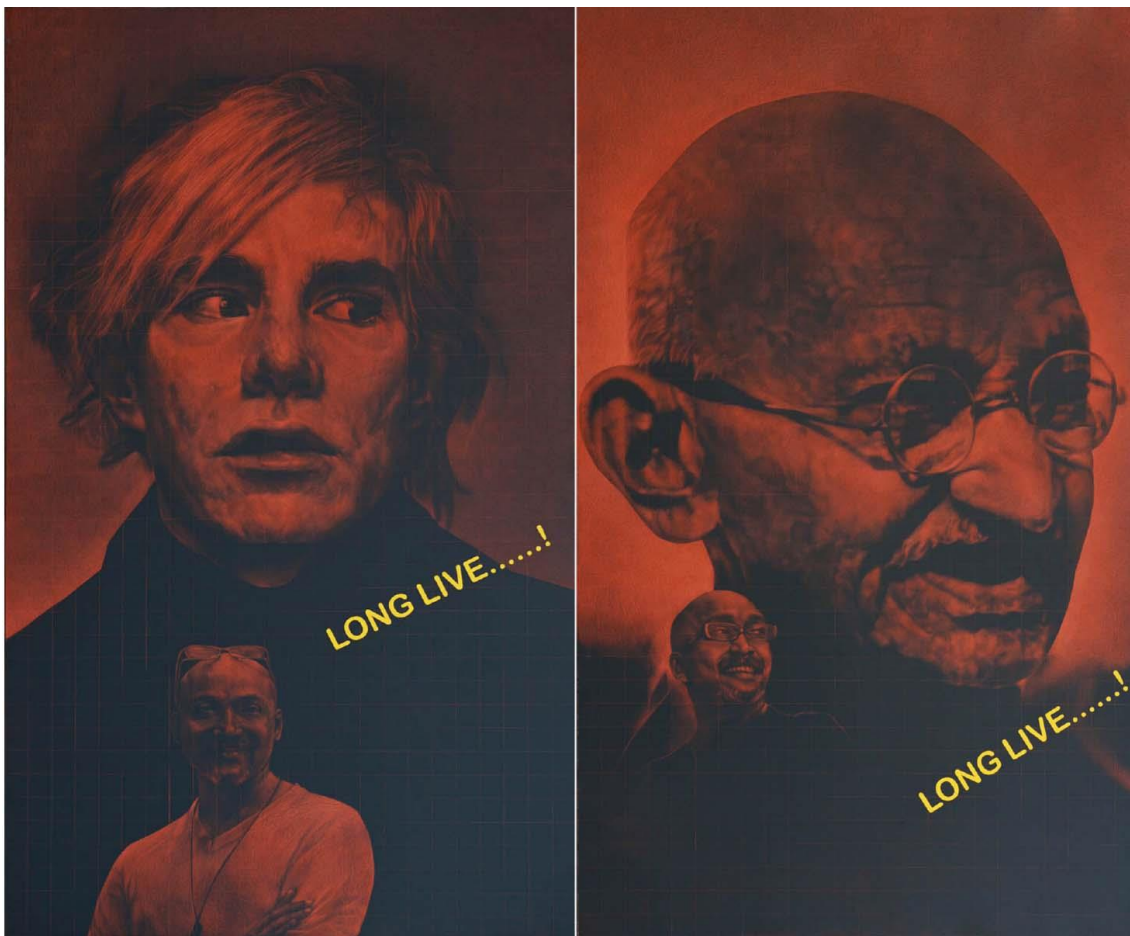
Motherland: The Great Sacrifice



Riyas Komu

20 years of the Straight Drive

Archival print 2011 edition of 1/ 10 (set of 6)



Bose Krishnamachari

Long Live ...! (Andy Warhol)

Acrylic and oil on silk canvas, 2010

Long Live ...! (Gandhi)

Acrylic and oil on silk canvas, 2010

About Long Live...!

Appropriation of a grand narrative and the critique of it through the positing of the artistic self within such narrative is a technique that the artist has been using for a long time. In 'Re-locating the White Cube' and the series of paintings that followed it, the artist had critiqued the grand narratives within the aesthetic discourse. While positing the self image within the recognizable and popular icons of Andy Warhol (radical aesthetics) and Mahatma Gandhi (nation, nationalism, narration and the supreme forms of conceptual performative politics), the artist deliberately creates a sub/inter-textual reality where the societal grand narratives are appropriated for temporal gains by the political leaders (as in the hoardings erected by local politicians with the grand pictures of their leaders in order to emphasize the allegiance to power).



Baiju Parthan

Chorus

3D rendering and photo compositing - lenticular print, 2010

Chorus depicts two entangling time-lines in an anxiety ridden psychotic vision of the city. Urban life with its blistering pace and hunger for novelty entangles with traditional mythic reality and the idea of cyclical repetition of events.



Jitish Kallat

Post Meridiem

Pigment Print on Hahnemuhle Photrag Paper, 2008

Edition of 6 + AP



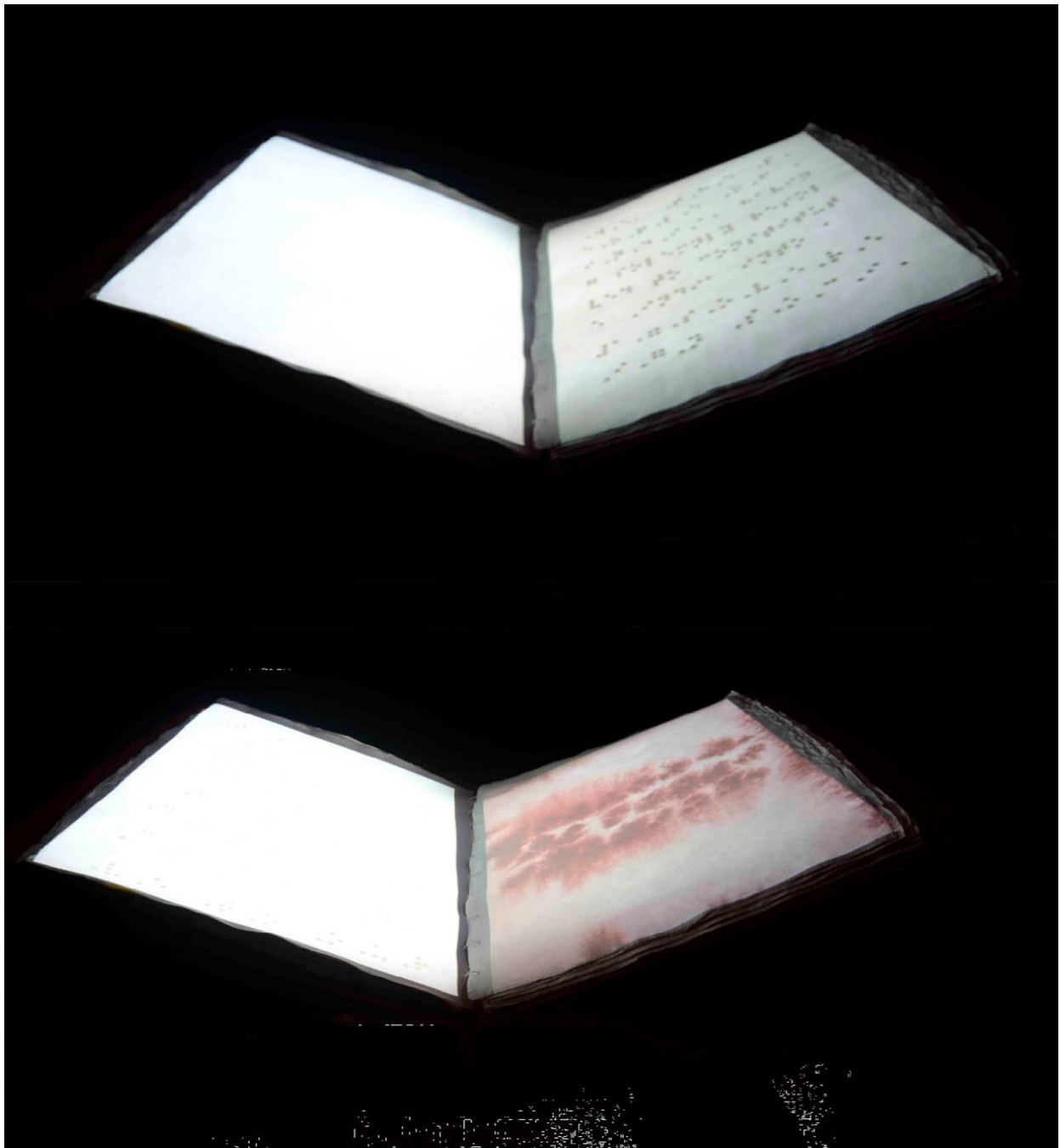
Vidya Kamat

Being Kumari

Digital Print on Archival Hanamule Rag paper, 2005

Edition 2/3

"Being Kumari" is the recollection of a very personal memory, of being worshiped as a child goddess. This is a ritual, which is commonly performed in Indian homes even to this day. As a child one enjoyed these moments of celebration with great pleasure, but it also raised questions about the notion of 'body' that is deeply entrenched in traditional notion of 'feminine' and 'sacred', which in effect constrains one's individuality as a woman. This work negotiates memory as a terrain and as a cultural tool that in effect construes the notion of identity, both personal and political.



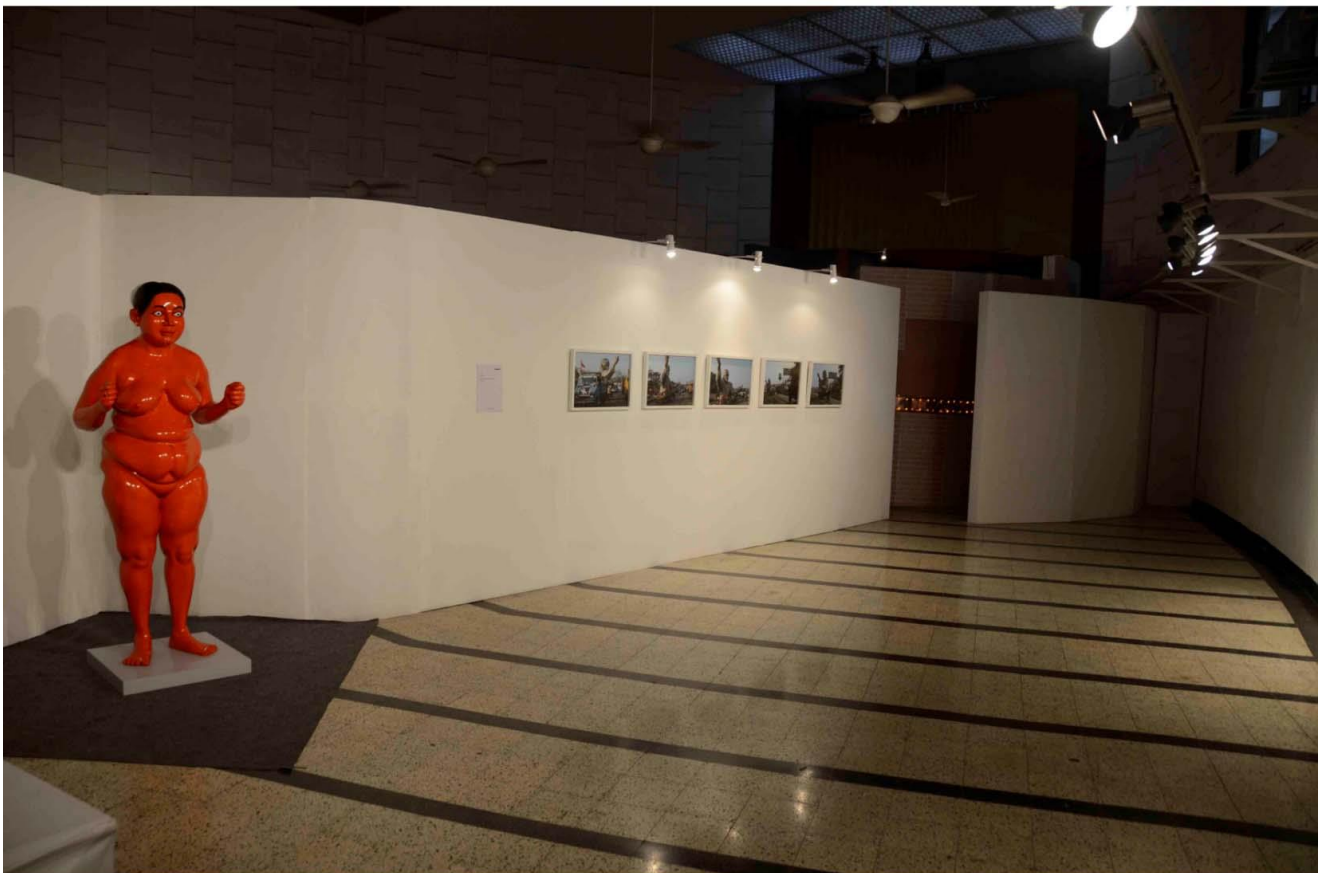
Reena Kallat

Preface

Wooden stand, handmade paper book,
Two-channel looped video projection, 2010

The video work 'Preface' consists of an oversized book, presented like a sacred/ religious object on a prayer stand. The book presents the promise of democracy enshrined within the Preamble of the Constitution of India, in Braille. The video has developed as a result of my long engagement with the text, The Preamble of the Constitution of India that elucidates the purpose and underlying philosophy of the Constitution. Being the most religiously diverse country in the world, India's democratic republic is premised on a national belief in pluralism and an assimilative culture.

Rendered in Braille and thus reduced to various unreadable dots are words that spell out the fundamental principles, procedures, powers and responsibilities of the government and also the fundamental rights and duties of citizens. What you see are a series of images that evoke neural patterns constantly changing, transforming where the dots/words break open, blot, clot, smudge and stain the pages. What interests me is how this text gets interpreted by different people differently.



Ravinder Reddy

Untitled

Painted Polyester Resin Fiberglass, 2011



Sheba Chhachhi

Warrior/Saint

Video projection (6 min silent) on fiberglass/cloth object, wooden stand, booth with red velvet curtains, 2002

Cinematic images of violence have become ubiquitous, in tandem with the unprecedented increase in violence in every sphere of life. On the big screen, mediated through television, posters, hoardings or screensavers, images of militarized masculinity have become commonplace. The 'man with the gun', (whether terrorist or radical cop), has become an icon.

This work explores the affective, emotional implications of this equation of the prototype of aspiration with violence. The figure of the 'hero/terrorist', drawn exclusively from Bollywood fan material, is brought into conjunction with the figure of ahimsa, the bodhisattva, to investigate the tension between older ideals of the elevated human and contemporary icons of a new globalized masculinity. In the movement of the viewer between these two extremes, the artist urges an examination of popular values that merge desire and violence within a single figure