

## **Come Away**

**A collaboration between**

**GALLERYYSKE**

**Pichvai Tradition & Beyond**

**PHOTOINK**

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## **ANITA KHEMKA & IMRAN KOKILOO**

### *Shared Solitude*

*Shared Solitude* was born out of a literal and forced—isolation as a result of a family emergency coinciding with the very unplanned and brutal lockdown, enforced by a political system hell bent on being seen as decisive. It made us question the status quo we had grown accustomed to and the dichotomy of our daily lives. One of our early sitters, Ishita echoed our views, “Living in lockdown has been a revelation. I’ve realized that [certain] relationships, having time to read, being with dogs, and having enough meaningful work in the day is enough for me — this is all I would like to keep in my life.” This burgeoning clarity and purpose about one’s life, we realized, was shared by many people. This project thus set out to excavate memory, the joyous and painful, and confronts the universal dilemma of ownership, possession and letting go.

**Anita Khemka** (b. 1972) read English Literature at Delhi University and studied Visual Merchandising from La Salle, Singapore before she decided to become a photographer in 1995. Her photographic practice has since endeavoured to find meaning in her relationships with individuals and communities. She has closely followed the lives of socially marginalized and communities — abandoned widows, people with intellectual disability, addictions, HIV and AIDS, political minorities, sexual and gender minorities.

Khemka’s work on alternative sexuality was the basis of a German film, *Between the Lines – India’s Third Gender* in 2005. *Self-portraits*, a series of colour photographs was included in group exhibitions in Helsinki (2011), Stockholm (2010), London &

Barcelona (2009), Paris (2007) and Frankfurt (2006). Her work, *Pellet Identity*, produced in collaboration with her partner, Imran Kokiloo was exhibited at FotoFest international in Houston, Texas (2018). During the pandemic, the couple produced *Shared Solitude* (2020-ongoing)—family portraits staged outside the studio as well as the familiar surroundings of homes.

**Imran Kokiloo** (b.1978) has a career in the Hospitality, FMCG and Consultancy Industry. He began photographing in 2016 in collaboration with his partner, Anita Khemka and documented the conflict in Kashmir. The first series, *Pellet Identity* was exhibited at the FotoFest, Houston in 2018. He has since revisited Kashmir in a series of self-portraits, titled, *Kashmir: A Memory in Mist*. He is interested in alternative photographic processes and printing techniques and is presently making portraits of fellow artists using glass plates and the wet collodion process.

His installation titled *Protest* (part of an ongoing work, *Kashmir: A Lost Childhood*), was included in a group exhibition and publication titled, *Celebrate, Illuminate, Rejuvenate the Constitution of India at 70* for SAHMAT at Jawahar Bhawan, Delhi 2020.

## **MADHUBAN MITRA & MANAS BHATTACHARYA**

### *Remakes*

The two new films presented in this exhibition are part of our ongoing series of short films that continues our exploration of the history of cinema. In each film, we “remake” a significant or iconic sequence/ fragment from a historical film drawn from the century-old global history of cinema. Unlike conventional remakes, we appropriate/ borrow the unaltered soundtrack from the chosen sequence of the original film and generate new images for it, thus displacing and expanding the meaning of the original film and renewing it for our vexed present. Each film is made with a mobile phone camera, during other work or travel, in a diaristic way, eschewing the means of an industrial production system and its values for a minimalist, guerilla form of image-making.

*Escape From Alphaville* is a remake of Jean-Luc Godard's iconic film *Alphaville* (1966). Godard's ominous vision of a tumultuous Paris of the 1960s is transposed on the urban nightscape of present-day Calcutta. Our remake uses the beginning, a crucial point in the middle and the extended final sequence of Godard's film. Using a single long take (the images have nothing to do with Godard's film) we attempt to find a structural and poetic equivalence or correspondence with *Alphaville*.

*Landscape in Arkanar* reframes the landmark Russian film *Hard To Be a God* by Aleksei Gherman (2013). We reconstruct the extended opening sequence of the film, again using a single long take. The original sequence unfolds as a dream set in an alien planet. We attempt to find a poetic association by using the phone camera differently, filming through layers of dirty, grimy glass, working with reflections, flares, and giving it the palette of cross-processing, to record the actual view from the window of our workspace, perhaps resonating with the sense of confinement and isolation of those lockdown months.

Both films mobilise the tropes of dystopian science-fiction to enact political allegories of totalitarian societies. Made during the anti-CAA-NRC protests and the following lockdown, our remakes are a direct but poetic response to what is happening around us in this country and beyond.

**Madhuban Mitra and Manas Bhattacharya** are based in Kolkata, India and work together as an artist duo, primarily with photography and video. Madhuban studied English Literature and holds a Ph.D in Cultural Studies. Manas studied cinematography after completing his M.A. in Comparative Literature. Their work engages with time and memory, transience and detritus, notions of the archive and the catalogue, the original and the copy, employing and often combining documentary and fiction, analogue and digital, and images made and found. Some of their key interests are the small histories of photography and cinema, industry and labour, the city and the urban imaginary.

They received the Skoda Breakthrough Artist Award for the best debut solo show in India in 2011. Other awards include the Embarrat Award from Museo Trepas, Tarrega, Spain and a grant from Fondazione MAST, Bologna, Italy as part of the GD4PhotoArt Award 2014-15. In 2017 they were awarded a Research Residency

in Switzerland by Pro-Helvetia. They also teach an annual module on Moving Image, Photography and Allied Media at National Institute of Design (NID).

Some of their recent solo and group exhibitions include *Afterimage* at PHOTOINK, New Delhi, India; *Postdate: Photography and Inherited History in India* in the San Jose Museum of Art, California and Ulrich Museum of Art, Kansas, USA; and *The Great Machine II* at Museo Trepas, Spain; GD4PhotoArt/ Foto Industria at MAST, Bologna; PHOTOINK at GALLERYYSKE, Bangalore; and *Imagined Futures, Reconstructed Pasts* at Bikaner House/ Anant Art, New Delhi, India.

## **PALLAVI GAUR**

### *The Geography Is All Wrong*

In March 2020, an order for a 21-day lockdown was made with only four hours notice. It displaced thousands of people from their workplaces and homes. In the middle of the night, lone figures carrying hefty bags, sought to make their way home, to villages miles away.

As everyone struggled to cope with the lockdown, I too was trying to manage my anxiety. As witness to a crisis that manifested itself in an extreme way, it made me withdraw inwards and think about the meaning of a “home”. It brought to mind the image of how children always walk to school but run back home. I asked myself questions that I otherwise evaded, if not adamantly escaped. I took refuge in some old prints I had lying around. I looked at them in a new light. Working with memory, cutting through landscapes only to make new memories; it was a renewal of my promise to life, it was a comforting process. These photo collages present an image of possibilities and permanence, of endless horizons.

*The Geography Is All Wrong* is my dedication to life and to love. I hope this work can rekindle in you an image of your idea of home, so you can create it.

**Pallavi Gaur** (b. 1985) grew up in New Delhi. She graduated in Philosophy and went on to pursue her interest in cinematography through a career in television. She

worked on special feature shows with CNBC and NDTV before finishing her Masters in Image and Electronic Arts from Goldsmiths College.

In 2015, her work titled, *Origin of Love* was part of the *Origins: PhotoUKIndia* exhibition curated by Alkazi Foundation and British Council of India. She was selected for the VII Photo Masterclass, Berlin Edition in 2016.

Pallavi continues to develop her long-term photography projects while she works as an independent Producer/ Director on documentaries with NDTV and Deutsche Welle.