

LATITUDE 28

BHAVNA KAKAR

PRESENTS

IF A TREE FALLS (SOMEWHERE IN NORTHEAST INDIA)

Recent works by Chandan Bez Baruah



Venue: Gallery Latitude 28, F-208, Lado Sarai
Curated by Waswo X. Waswo
Exhibition date: 22nd January until 25th February 2021
Timings: Monday to Saturday, 11am to 7pm

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Bhavna Kakar presents 'If A Tree Falls (Somehwere In Northeast India)', curated by Waswo X. Waswo, featuring recent works by Chandan Bez Baruah at Gallery Latitude 28.

In a rambling (and ultimately self-rejected) concept note to his series *Somewhere in Northeast India*, Chandan had opined that one purpose to his landscapes was “to see the insight terrain of the marginalised or the subaltern, and to situate Postmodern landscapes as encountering Romantic theory”. The truth of Chandan’s statement is evident when looking at the work. Meticulously carved upon medium density wood-fibre matrixes, these woodcuts nonetheless spring from the digital photographs which Chandan has earlier captured for reference. The artist’s inspired translation of these photographs, and highly skilled hand-craftsmanship, is astounding. The photorealist style he painstakingly employs is complicated by the chaos of the scenes; a chaos unlike the orderly compositions one might expect in more traditional and Pictorialist vocabularies, yet which holds a graphic beauty of its own. Devoid of human figuration or wildlife, Chandan unashamedly subscribes to the notion of the solitary observer, or, as the American photographer Ansel Adams once put it, *To the complaint, ‘There are no people in these photographs,’ I respond, ‘There are always two people: the photographer and the viewer.’* Yet, there are many more than two people in these woodcuts. There are multitudes. Chandan’s stark, mountainous undergrowth exists within ecologies and geographies of history, culture, and contemporary conflict.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Chandan Bez Baruah (b.1979) did his BFA in Printmaking from Government Art College Guwahati, Assam, and MFA in Printmaking from Visva-Bharati University Santiniketan, West Bengal. Some of his exhibitions include 'TIME WARP – an exploration of the unusual', at Gallery Veda, Chennai (2021). 'The Print: Matter in Matrix', Gallery Latitude 28 at Sridharani Gallery, New Delhi (2020); 1st Print Biennale India, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi (2018); 'On the Threshold of Time', Art Heritage Gallery, New Delhi (2017); 56th National Exhibition of Art, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi (2017); 10th Triennial Print Exhibition, France (2016); Daejeon International Art Show, Korea (2015); 9th Triennial Print Exhibition, France (2014); International ICAC Printmaking Show, Mumbai (2014); Kyoto International Wood Print Exhibition (KIWA), Japan (2014 and 2013); 7th Bharat Bhavan International Biennial of Print, India (2011); 49th National Exhibition of Art, Lalit Kala Akademi, Bhopal (2006). Chandan Bez Baruah is more sensitively working on postmodern approach of landscape. His work 'Somewhere in North East India' is a significant continuum of series, and a short take on his visual cultural practice in a confined and comprehensive manner. His references for the woodcut prints are his digital photographs. His attachment to the Northeast landscapes, is used during the image making process. While using the curving tools he always goes through his experiences and this creates a peculiar attachment between the particular frame and him. It is here that the works open to emotional interpretation and atmospheric transformation on the wooden surface using wood carving tools or one can say through his expressions and visualisation.

FROM THE CURATORIAL NOTE

Chandan Bez Baruah was born in Nagoan, the fourth largest city of Assam, which is cut through its border by the Kolong River, a tributary of the Brahmaputra. It was in Guwahati that Chandan developed a keener love for the forests, seeing them as an escape from the congestion of the city and a soothing retreat in a time of newfound loneliness. Chandan's works are meticulously carved upon medium density wood-fibre matrixes, yet these woodcuts nonetheless spring from the digital photographs which Chandan has earlier captured for reference. The artist's inspired translation of these photographs, with highly skilled hand-craftsmanship, is astounding. The photorealist style he painstakingly employs is complicated by the chaos of the scenes; a chaos unlike the orderly compositions one might expect in more traditional and Pictorialist vocabularies, yet which holds a graphic beauty of its own. Chandan's stark, mountainous undergrowth exists within ecologies and geographies of history, culture, and contemporary conflict. The artist has skilfully coaxed these images out of wooden board because the woods itself is asking for revelation. There is an intimacy to these images, as if the artist has trekked us through the jungle to his most favoured haunts, asking us to stay silent and observe what he treasures and wishes to reveal. We are seeing things from Chandan's eyes - the young man who once conversed with these woods and walked in step with Indian soldiers he would befriend as similarly needing a desi pair of eyes. Chandan has heard the songs of birds, the peep of frogs, the swift clicking buzz of beetles and the rustle through the leaves. He has heard trees falling in the forest. He asks us to use our eyes as ears, and hear their falling, too. Be a witness. It is only the act of hearing that makes these fragile treescapes real.

Waswo X. Waswo
Udaipur/ 2020

ABOUT LATITUDE 28

Since its inception in 2010, Gallery Latitude 28 has been promoting creative dialogue and presenting dynamic exhibitions that focuses on contemporary art from South Asia. Founded by art historian Bhavna Kakar, Latitude 28 has become synonymous with cutting edge art from the region, seeking fresh perspectives and innovative thinking in its attempt to stimulate interest in new waves of art-making providing a horizontal environment where artists are encouraged to contextualize and experiment with medium and material, positioning them within historical and contemporary frameworks that critically respond to the canon. When making programmatic decisions, Latitude 28 seeks to promote diversity and equity through building a community and culture that is inclusive of all groups and individuals. The gallery has exhibited works of several South Asian artists such as Baiju Parthan, Chandan Bez Baruah, Deepjyoti Kalita, Ketaki Sarpotdar, Khadim Ali, Minal Damani, Niyeti Chadha Kannal, Noor Ali Chagani, Prajjwal Choudhury, Radhika Agarwala, Sanket Viramgami, Shweta Bhattad, Sudipta Das, Veer Munshi, Wardha Shabbir, Waseem Ahmed, Waswo X. Waswo, Yogesh Ramkrishna, supporting their alternative display practices that could further the understanding of contemporary art. Keeping with its wider role as an institution dedicated to the arts, Gallery Latitude 28 has paved the way for active collaborations between artists from Iran, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and India through its curated shows and outreach events. The gallery, thus, continues to work towards making art accessible and inclusive to larger audiences and our patrons with our exhibitions strategically located at the nexus where artists, their work, art institutions, collectors and many different publics intersect.

For more information on Gallery Latitude 28 please visit:

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