

Gallery Latitude 28 in collaboration with Art District XIII present

# Babur ki Gai

*A group show focusing on contemporary mythopoesis*

**Venue:** Gallery Latitude 28 and Art District XIII, Lado Sarai, New Delhi - 110030

**Exhibition Dates:** 25th October – 1st December 2018

**Timings:** 11am to 7pm

**Curated by:** Bhavna Kakar

**Conceptualised by:** Adwait Singh

*Amritah Sen (India) | Anupama Alias (India) | B Manjunath Kamath (India) | Elancheziyan S (India) | Fay Ku (Taiwan) | Kedar Dhondu (India) | Ketaki Sarpotdar (India) | Khadim Ali (Afghanistan) | Neda Tavallae (Iran) | Priyanka D'Souza (India) | Priyesh Trivedi (India) | Pujasree Burman (India) | Radhika Agarwala (India) | Shailesh BR (India) | Shilo Shiv Suleman (India) | Waseem Ahmed (Pakistan) | Waswo X Waswo (USA) | Yogesh Ramakrishna (India) | Zahra Yazdani Nia (Iran)*

Gallery Latitude 28 in collaboration with Art District XIII present a group show, 'Babur ki Gai', from 25<sup>th</sup> October to 20<sup>th</sup> November, showcasing works by 19 artists from the Indian subcontinent and beyond.

This exhibition examines the oxymoron of 'contemporary history' through the phenomenon of mythopoesis. The concept of the contemporary as the fleeting 'nowness' is at odds with history, commonly understood as the documented past. Like the Uncertainty principle, the instant the duration of the contemporary is registered, it ceases to be of the present and passes into the cannon of history. One way to create contemporary history then is through speculation, a prognosis of the moment that is to unfold in the near future or is the projected outcome of a present continuous. Similarly, the temporality of myth is something that typically belongs to the past if not to the pre-historic. Why then are artists increasingly turning to fabulations and futurisms in the current times? What advantages can be served by contemporary myths over canonical modes of history? These are some of the questions that the exhibition essays.

"The title, 'Babur ki Gai' refers to a key work in the show by the artist Priyanka D'Souza, who claims to have recovered the lost pages from the *Baburnama* folio. The authenticity of these pages as well as their recent citation by a politician in support of the agenda to ban cow slaughter is however contested, as the researchers suggest that the mention of cow slaughter happens not in the *Baburnama* but in his 'wasaya' or will, which has been proven to be a 17th century forgery. As such, the title 'Babur ki Gai' encapsulates the casual volleying of certain shared beliefs and myths as if they were actual facts of history in order to achieve political ends, and the general discrediting of the truth in a world that increasingly traffics in brutality and fake news. Conversely, it speaks to a particular a priori logic characteristic of magical thinking that

constitutes the conditions of its own existence, to the general power of myths to render the reality around them, and to the ways in which artists are able to tap into this arcane powerhouse to pervade the reality with corrective fictions and vitalising utopias. Thus, 'Babur ki Gai' also hints at the mythopoetic function whereby the artists are able to contest certain political ideologies or dominant social norms with unconventional belief systems and alternative visions of the world", says Bhavna Kakar, Director and Founder of Gallery Latitude 28.

With this exhibition we continue our commitment towards emerging artists and the association with MSU Baroda which is the Alma mater of our founder, Bhavna Kakar. This year, we are introducing Yogesh Ramakrishna and Ketaki Sarpotdar, young MSU Baroda trained artists, in addition to the College of Art (Delhi) graduate Elan Cheziyan who employs folklore, myths and storytelling to allegorise contemporary social and political concerns; Amritah Sen takes on some of the most commonly used phrases and sayings in her native Bengal that have acquired mythical status; Anupama Alias reinterprets Christian and Hebrew iconography to voice her feminist concerns; Priyesh Trivedi's well-known *Adarsh Balak* series subverts the imagery of state sponsored idealism recognisable through certain educational charts used by school children in making social science scrapbooks; Shilo Shiv Suleman, the founder of 'The Fearless Collective', has created a site specific work that celebrates female sexuality in the process of reimagining the missing Sanskrit manuscript, *Chandrakalas* composed by a mysterious sage in the 4th century BCE; Pujasree Burman deconstructs the myth of the body through a series of expressionist watercolours; Kedar Dhondu 'rewrites' the 'histories' of certain local shrines that have mysteriously survived the interregal violence characterising cultural or political transitions in the Goan hinterland. Waswo X Waswo's hand-painted photographs playfully appropriates colonial archetypes such as the 'evil orientalist', turning them inside out, whereas the hollowed-out sculptures of Manjunath Kamath pay homage to Vaishnavite myths and iconography.

Alongside these, the exhibition includes works by acclaimed international artists such as the US-based Taiwanese artist Fay Ku, the Pakistani miniaturist Waseem Ahmed, the Australia-based Hazara artist Khadim Ali whose works are in prominent museums and collections worldwide such as the Guggenheim, the National Museum of Contemporary Art (Sydney) etc., and were exhibited at the Documenta 13 in Kabul. It also marks the first Indian exhibition for the Iranian artist Zahra Yazdani Nia whose series of fictional landscapes are derived from her immediate socio-political surroundings.

### **About Gallery Latitude 28:**

Since it was founded in 2010, Latitude 28 has become synonymous with cutting edge art from India, seeking fresh perspectives and innovative thinking in its attempt to stimulate commercial interest in new waves of art-making. The establishment's strategy allows the space to act as a horizontal environment where younger artists are able to contextualise and reference their work with the masters of Indian art, even as the ethos of the gallery encourages them to experiment with medium, material and institutional critique. The gallery supports contemporary Indian art not only through exhibitions, but also by supporting residencies and organizing outreach programs.

Latitude 28's vision is shaped by its Founder/Director, Bhavna Kakar, who has over a decade's experience as a curator, editor and art consultant.

**About Art District XIII:**

Art District XIII is an eclectic contemporary art gallery representing some of the biggest & also emerging names in Indian contemporary art, it has been conceptualized by the ardent art collector, Kapil Chopra to encourage people to embrace art in a gallery space, which is diverse and will show art beyond the ordinary. It celebrates and espouses the numeric XIII, considered inauspicious by some but very auspicious by the initiators of the gallery. While Art District XIII holds back from showing artists who are transactional in their approach, it simultaneously ensures that artists are guided and their work is showcased on International platforms. Art District XIII believes that profit is not the motive but 'art' is -both the artist and the collector will stand to gain from a gallery that promises to transform the Indian art landscape. All profits are donated to the NGO, Charitybeds, which works toward helping the underprivileged in Delhi get quality medical care, free of cost.

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