

THE PILL

ATTITUDE 28

A Gallery for Contemporary Arts and Ideas

THE PILL

CURATED BY AVNI DOSHI

JANUARY 23 - FEBRUARY 18 2011



DIRECTOR'S NOTE
BHAVNA KAKAR

LATITUDE 28 completes one year of its physical presence and is proud to have successfully organized and presented several solos and group exhibitions in its premises along with fruitful participation in India Art Summit 2011 and Art Stage Singapore 2011. Although Latitude 28 persistently seeks to push barriers, think out of the box with challenging young ideas and experimental ventures; with 'The Pill', the gallery invited a curator to materialize an exhibition for the very first time. Underscoring the feminine power and vitality, 'The Pill' curated by Avni Doshi, spreads out a dynamic concept that is aesthetically maneuvered by selected artists like Jaishri Abichandani, Sarnath Banerjee, Ayesha Durrani, Kaif Ghaznavi, Tushar Joag, Abir Karmakar, Swati Khurana, Nandita Kumar, Tazeen Qayyum, Mithu Sen and Vito Tumbarello. The battle for bodies, particularly women's bodies, is not a new one, and the show delves into questions of sex, pleasure, fear and the changing role of women/men on a global scale. Believing in the concept and seeing it grow in production, presentation stages with the artists along with the curator has been an enriching experience. With much of energy pouring forth over the art tangents of the nation, we attempt to concur with enthralled spirit and action.

THE PILL or THE HARD

For starters, it is small and discreet. The shape of its box easily replicated a compact container of women's make-up, which could be slipped in and out of her purse without being noticed. Once in her mouth, it can be swallowed without water.

2010 MARKED THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PILL.

That is, it marked fifty years of its use in the United States of America, as the Food and Drug Administration approved the Pill in 1960. However, by that time, more than half a million women were already using it to prevent pregnancies. Discovered by Gregory Pincus, a conservative Catholic scientist who was looking for a way to treat infertility, the hormonal make-up of the Pill was isolated when progesterone synthesized from wild yams was injected into animals and found to decrease their number of offspring. For years, it was called a fertility treatment, given only to married women, who took the Pill in the guise of something else.

And so the little Pill, which barely casts a shadow, is covered in the veil of the secrecy and intrigue of its making. With its fair share of detractors in the United States, the Pill was accused of promoting immoral sexual behavior and destroying families. Entrenched in the civil rights movements of the '60s and '70s, the Pill became a symbol of moral decay for some, and social agency for others. Women in larger numbers than ever began to join the work force. It has also become a global phenomenon, where 100 million women around the world take the Pill in its many forms. And everything came together to form a delicious little bite for the media, including in cover stories for *Time* magazine.

And here we are in India, 2011. The population of the country is around 1,150,000,000 (1.15 billion) people. By 2030, the population of

India will be largest in the world estimated to be around 1.53 billion. In 2000, the country established a new National Population Policy to stem the growth of the country's population. One of the primary goals of the policy was to reduce the total fertility rate to 2.1 (children per woman) by 2010. The rate remains at 2.8. Population projections for India anticipate that the country's population will reach 1.5 to 1.8 billion by 2050. India is expected to become the first and only country on the planet that will ever reach a population of more than 2 billion, which is projected by the end of this century. The need for education and access to birth control seems to be as great a necessity as ever in the subcontinent.

However, Dr. Mohan Rao of Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University suggests that the Pill hasn't achieved popularity among Indian women because of their impoverished state. "Our average woman is not suited for the pill; she is hungry, she is anemic and has an extremely low BMI. Above all, she has no access to medical care. It's also likely that her husband decides on contraception," says Rao. Illiteracy and ignorance are also factors, and sterilization remains India's most common contraceptive method.

So where do we wave this universal flag of Feminism, which lies limp under the weight of global inequality?

For artist Jaishri Abichandani, the distance between home in India and her current residence in New York draws a relationship between the body and longing. In *No Way Home* (2010), a magnetic wall hanging made of pink leather and jewels references a uterus, an Indian holy cow and a steer from the imagined Wild West. Swati Khurana's practice has been informed by the Pill for many years, as her work *Family Planning* (2001) will attest. Khurana's recent *Monthly Cycle* (2011) repositions her engagement with the Pill, focusing on its daily ingestion through

EST THING TO SWALLOW

an embroidery project in which she collaborates with her mother and grandmother.

Seriality of a different kind enters into Kaif Ghaznavi's *Maang*. Ghaznavi considers the measure of cycles in rural villages where women follow lunar patterns of understanding time. She maps out this passing of time and space through circular rhythms that elide linear duration, in an esoteric charting of the body. Abir Karmakar focuses on the oral references of the Pill, magnifying mouths in highly sexualized terms.

Ayesha Durrani, from Pakistan, uses the forms of mannequins join binary opposites, like hard and soft, and animate and inorganic. Her work reveals the difficulty in categorizing and manipulating the female form. For Tazeen Qayyum, hot water bottles, a popular signifier for menstrual pain, become the support for her superbly detailed miniature paintings. Qayyum transforms these bottles into painted objects, investing them with a personalized form of remedial power.

As we encounter the larger concerns surrounding the Pill, it becomes immediately apparent that its magic has been as deeply mythologized under the banner of feminism as its shortcomings have been by its opposition. Tushar Joag considers the real side effects of the Pill, which are part of an ongoing battle for the bodies of women, and which is symbolic of larger societal questions regarding the inscription of laws on people. Sarnath Banerjee questions the promise of the Pill, pointing out its dangers and inefficacy in a live intervention into my curatorial note for the exhibition. Nandita Kumar uses the idea of plumbing to suggest a satirical view of understanding the Pill and its effects on the body.

The Pill, as an icon for the modern woman, has an exclusionary aspect in that it presupposes a monogamous sexuality, performed by a man and a woman. A categorical acceptance of the Pill as the most important discovery of the last century would not be compelling in terms of the global dilemma of many deadly sexually transmitted diseases. It would also be assuming a constituency that is heterosexual, educated and affluent. For photographer Vito Tumbarello, Chloe, a drag queen in the middle of undergoing a transformative sex-change, was the perfect subject to highlight this dissonance. How does the Pill affect Chloe? What other health concerns and realities might exist for her, in a space that is non-normative in terms of gender and sexuality? Mithu Sen's *Kill Pill* (2011) was drawn as a commentary on infertility, and poses a question of the potential of life and death tethered to the Pill.

The politics of the Pill are deeply informed by lobbies, which either reify its promises or magnify its side effects. Funded by corporate pharmaceutical interests, which can achieve hegemonic control over the media and public opinion, the politics around the Pill are not only about health and reproduction. There are financially driven decisions made regarding its relationship with public opinion.

Perhaps the one point that cannot be argued is simply that the Pill is an icon. Its circulation in language might be the best proof of this. It is described as magical, innocuous and terrifying, a set of three words that are difficult to level.

It is always capitalized. Like Madonna. And God.

AVNI DOSHI

Mumbai, January 2011

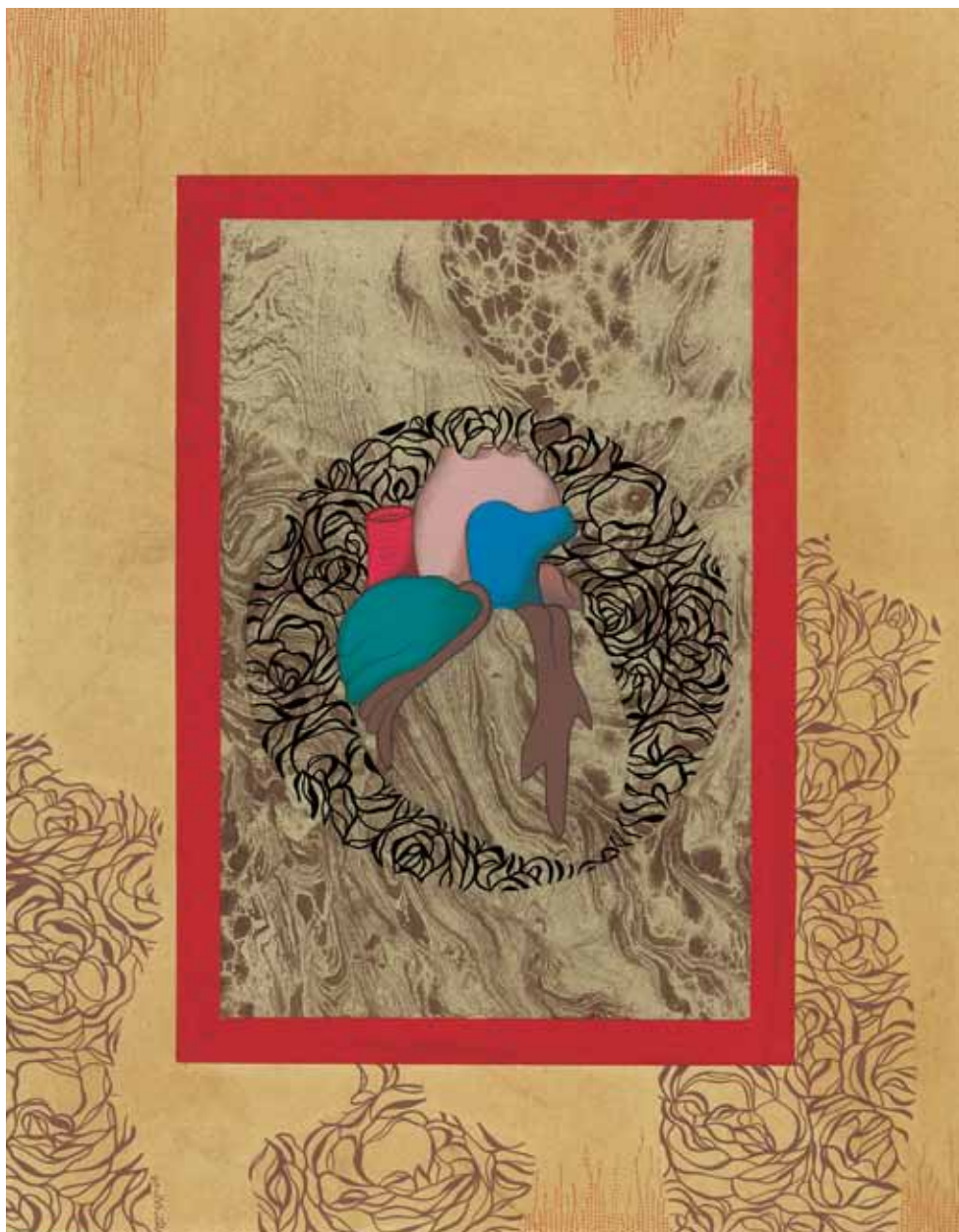
ABIR KARMAKAR



IN THE OTHER ROOM I
2010 | Oil on canvas
48 x 72 inches



IN THE OTHER ROOM II
2010 | Oil on canvas
48 x 72 inches



AYESHA DURRANI

left

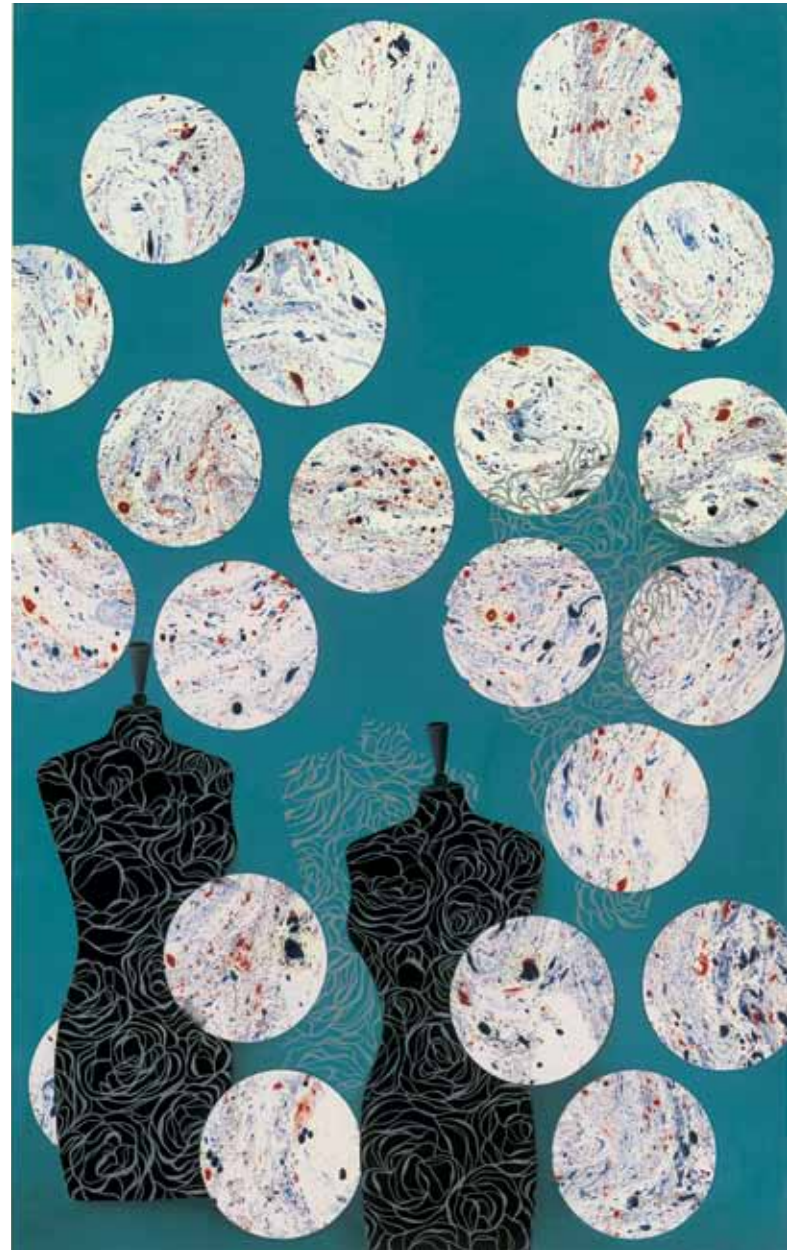
ONE THING FOR ME

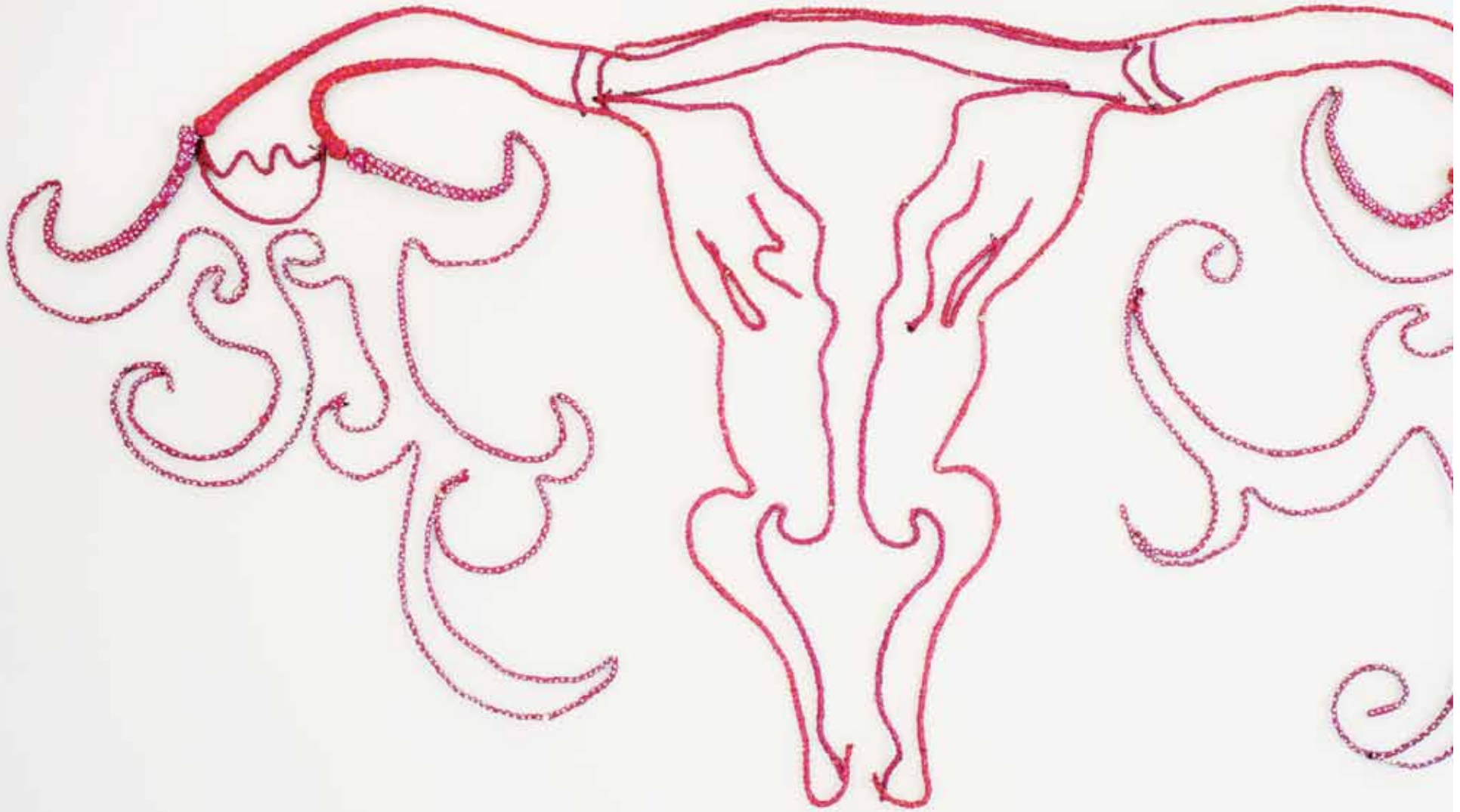
2010 | Marbeling Teawash and Guache on Wasli
14.5 x 11.5 inches

right

SALVATION

2010 | Guache on Wasli
20.5 x 13 inches







JAISHRI ABICHANDANI

NO WAY HOME (GUPTA/O'KEEFE)
2010 | Leather whips, paint, wire, jewels
47.25 x 98 inches

KAI F GHAZNAVI

MAANG

2010 | C- type print

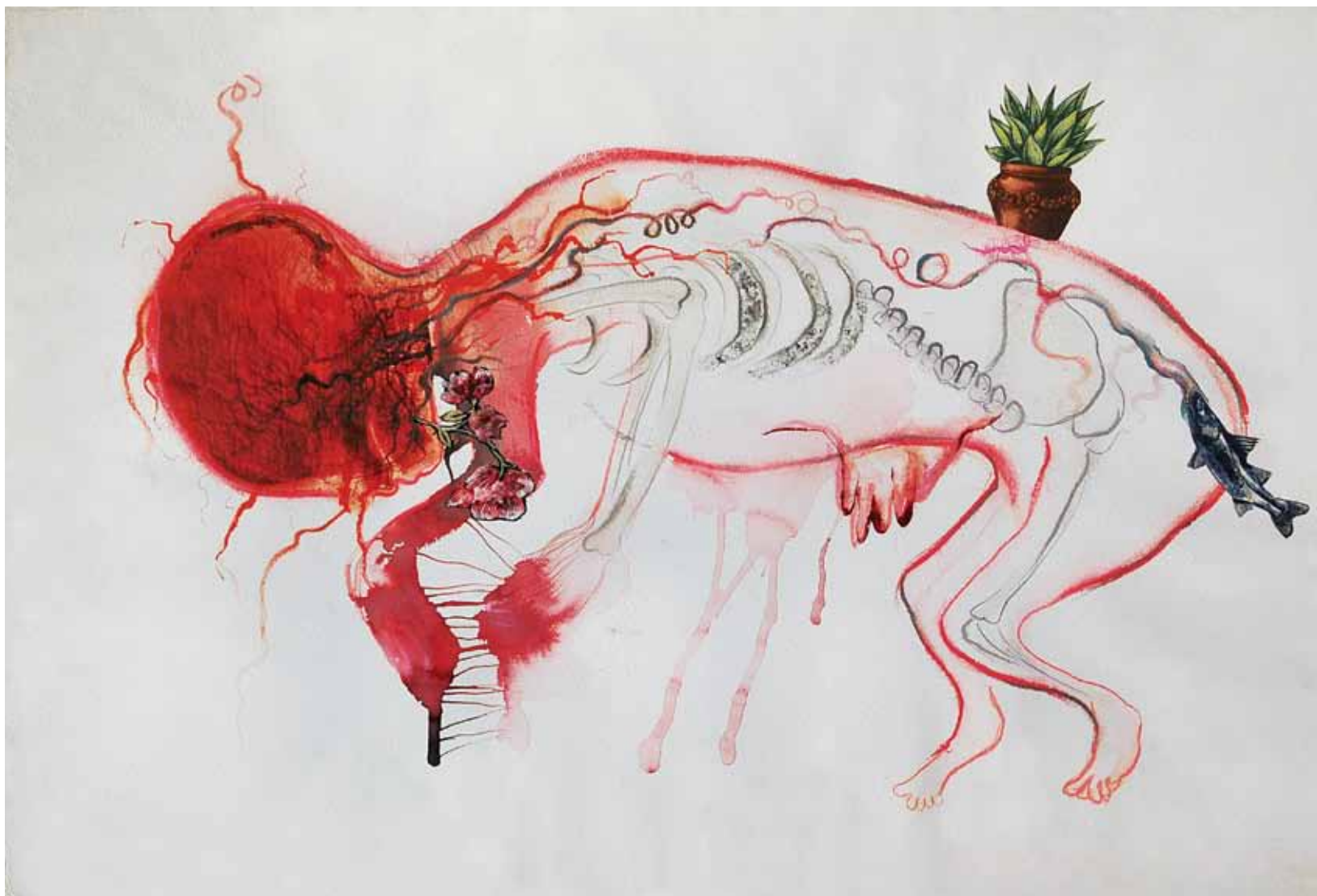
Each photograph of 8 x 8 inches (approx 50 photographs)

Installation 12 x 7 feet approx





MITHU SEN



DOG BABY

2010 | Mixed media on handmade paper

40 x 30 inches



KILL PILL

2010 | Mixed media on handmade paper

40 x 30 inches





NANDITA KUMAR

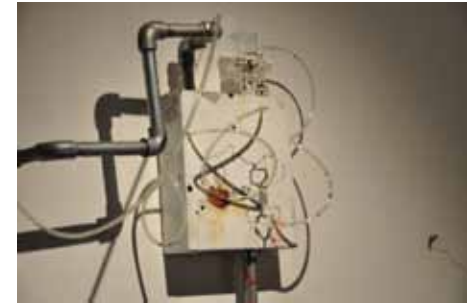
aN iNteLLliGENT dESiGn?

2011 | Mixed media installation

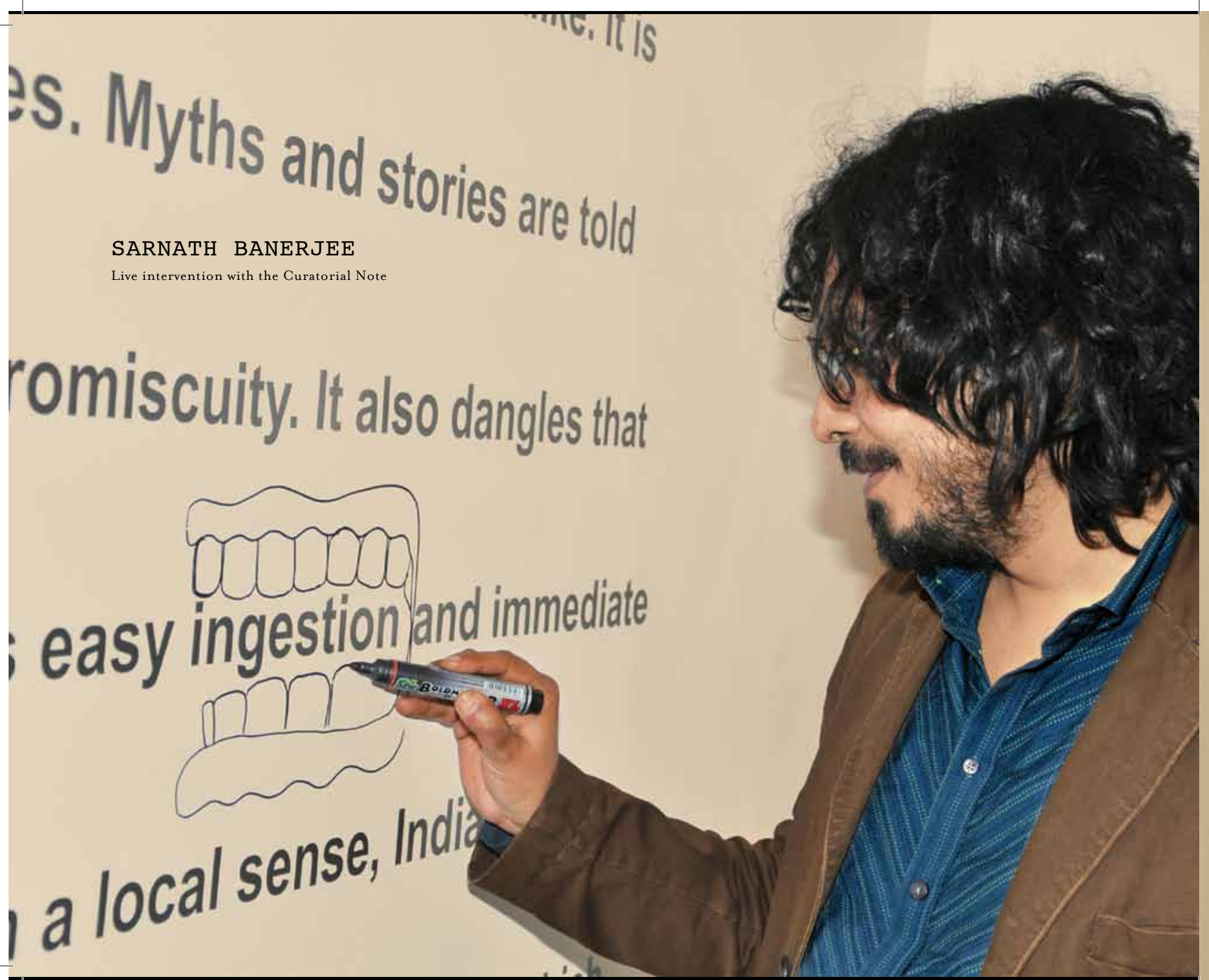
5 canvases, plumbing pipes, plastic pipes, cup, pill

Dimension of the 5 pieces

1. tHe weiGHTless bURden | 12 x 8.5 inches
2. Pill Junkies | 9 x 10 inches
3. i luvvvv Vaginas! | 8 x 9 inches
4. deep, down Under | 6 x 8 inches
5. fabrication n bEYond | 14 x 10 inches



details



SARNATH BANERJEE

Live intervention with the Curatorial Note

es. Myths and stories are told

romiscuity. It also dangles that

easy ingestion and immediate

a local sense, India



The Pill – A Curatorial Note

2010 marked the 50th anniversary of the Pill. Although it has been in

circulation in its many forms for 50 years, the Pill still creates multiple levels of

controversy, skepticism, fear and misunderstanding. There is no such a thing as

The Car, The Fridge, or The Pain Medicine. The Pill, even as a word, implies its

own singularity. The Pill is a global icon, with detractors and supporters alike. It is

a means to politicize health, and bind laws and bodies. Myths and stories are told

about the Pill and its side effects. It is a signifier of promiscuity. It also dangles that

elusive notion of choice. The idea of the "Pill" with its easy ingestion and immediate

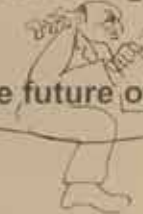
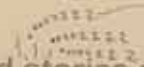
efficacy has metaphoric value in an urbanized India. In a local sense, India has its

own complex relationship with family planning and access to sex education, which,

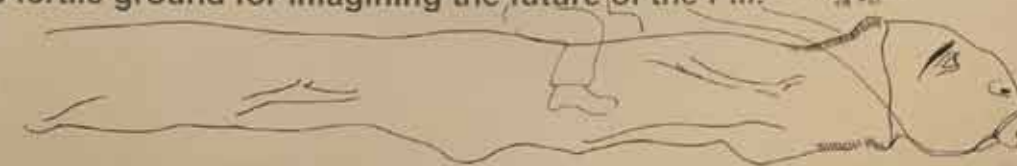
when considered with its growing (over)population and its changing demographics

in terms of family size, is fertile ground for imagining the future of the Pill.

Text by Avni Doshi



Future =







SWATI KHURANA

MONTHLY CYCLE

2010 | 28 mixed-media embroideries on linen in wooden hoops

Each 3 inches diameter

Dimensions of installation variable

FAMILY PLANNING

2001 | 3 mixed-media altered birth control containers

4 x 4 inches each





TAZEEN QAYYUM



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



1 - 10

ITS COMPLICATED

2010 | Flexible acrylics on rubber bottle | 14 x 8 inches

previous page

THEE ONLY DO I LOVE

2010 | Flexible acrylics, canvas and plastic | Various

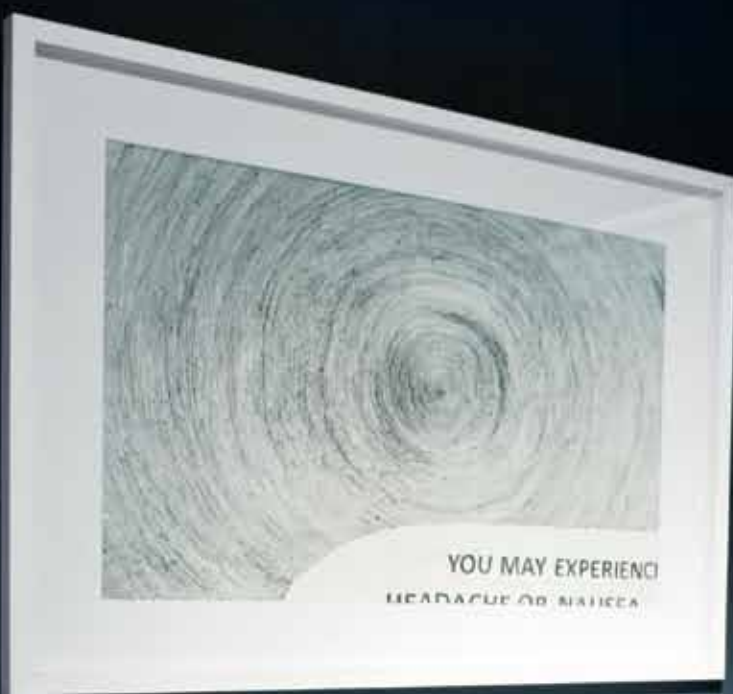
TUSHAR JOAG

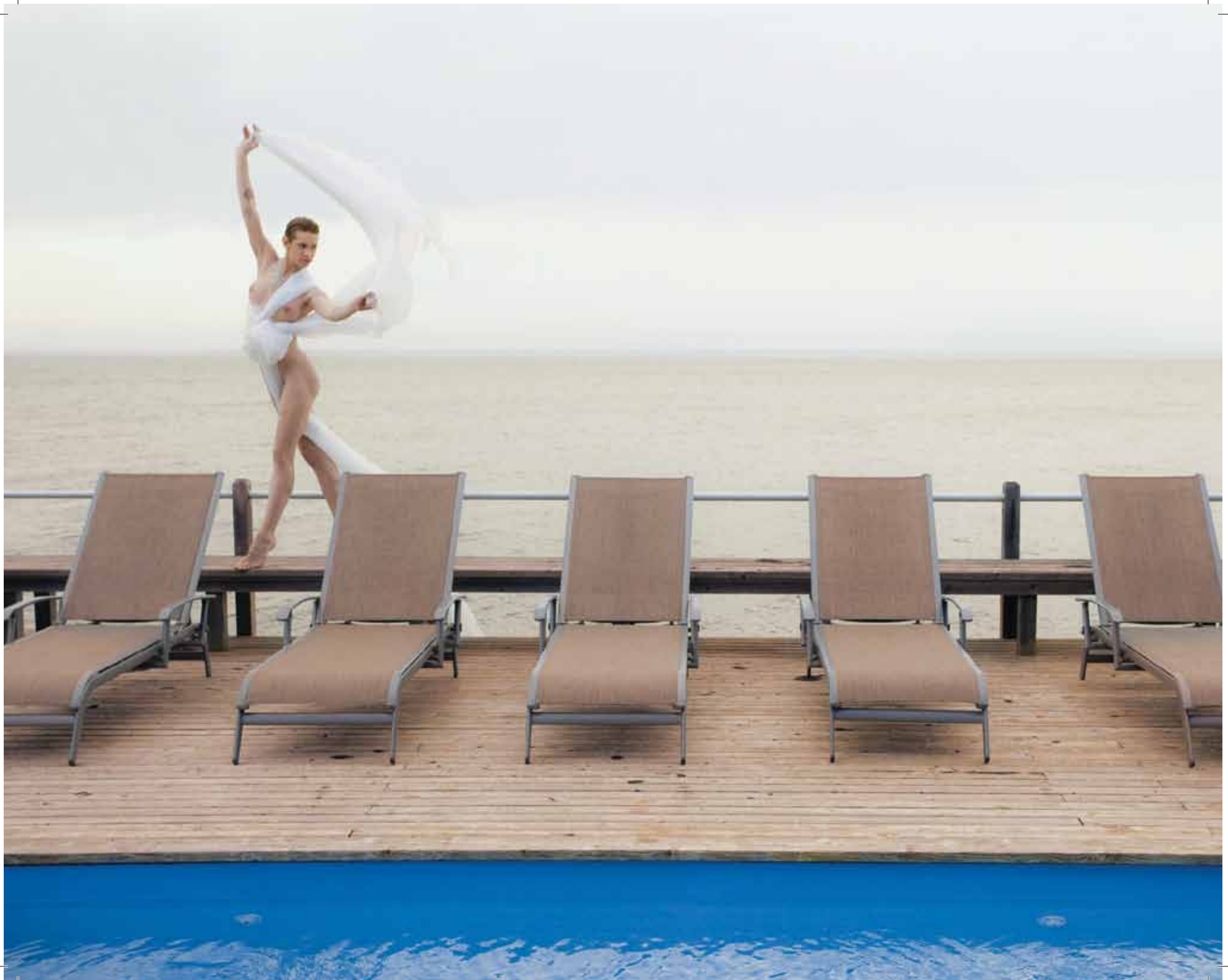
COLLATERAL DAMAGE

2010 | Mixed media on rice paper

18 x 27.5 inches each









VITO FUN TUMBARELLO

UNTITLED

2009 | From the series *Chloe*
Print on fine art pearl
24 x 32 inches each





Installation Images





ABIR KARMAKAR

Abir Karmakar was born in 1977 in Siliguri, India. The artist received his M.A in Fine Art from M.S. University, Baroda in 2003. Prior to this he received his B.F.A. in painting from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata in 2001. Karmakar lives and works in Baroda, India.

AYESHA DURRANI

Ayesha Durrani attended fashion design school but soon realized that she did not want to spend the rest of her life making clothes. So she went to art school instead – and found her true calling. She received a BFA from National College of Arts, Lahore in 2003, and her work has been shown in galleries in Pakistan where she works, as well as in India, the US and in the UK.

JAISHRI ABICHANDANI

Jaishri Abichandani was born in Mumbai, India and immigrated to New York City in 1984. She received her Master of Visual Arts Degree from Goldsmiths College, University of London and has continued to intertwine art and activism in her career, founding the South Asian Women's Creative Collective, (www.sawcc.org), in New York and London. She has exhibited her work internationally at various venues including P.S.1/MOMA, the Queens Museum of Art, and Exit Art in New York, the 798 Beijing Biennial and the Guangzhou Triennial in China, Nature Morte, & Gallery Chemould in India, the IVAM in Valencia and the House of World Cultures in Berlin.

KAIF GHAZNAVI

Kaif Ghaznavi is a visual artist who lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan. She received her MA in Fine Arts from the California College of The Arts in San Francisco in 2010. Prior to that, she studied at the National College of The Arts in Lahore, Pakistan. Ghaznavi has shown in both solo and group exhibitions, and has worked on curatorial projects as well.

MITHU SEN

Mithu Sen was born in West Bengal and obtained her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in painting from Kala Bhavan at Santiniketan, and later, completed a postgraduate program at the Glasgow School of Art in the United Kingdom on the prestigious Charles Wallace India Trust Award for 2000-2001. Having participated in numerous shows worldwide, Sen's recent solo exhibition includes 'Black Candy,' (2010) at Chemould Prescott Road, for which she has been awarded the Skoda Prize 2011.

NANDITA KUMAR

Nandita Kumar is a multi-faceted, award winning filmmaker, multi media artist, painter and performer. She holds a joint Bachelors Degree from MS University, India and Auckland University, in the Elam School Of the Arts, New Zealand and has completed her Masters Degree in Experimental Animation at California Institute of the Arts, in Los Angeles. Her first solo 'Let the Brain Fly' was held in December 2010 at Latitude 28, New Delhi. Her current films include *The Linear of Nightmare*, *The Birth of BrainFly* and *Tentacles of Dimensions*. *The Birth of Brain Fly* was shown in India Art Summit 2011 Video Lounge by Latitude 28.

SARNATH BANERJEE

Sarnath Banerjee is a graphic novelist, artist, and film maker. He studied image and communication at Goldsmiths College, University of London.

He wrote graphic novels, *Corridor*, published by Penguin (India) and Vertige Graphics (France), 2004 and *Barn Owl's Wondrous Capers*, on the scandals of 18th century Calcutta by Penguin (India) and Denoel (France), 2007. His most recent publication is *The Harappa Files*, a series of graphic commentaries that analyse the cracks in post liberalized India. The artist lives and works in New Delhi.

SWATI KHURANA

Swati Khurana was born in India and raised in New York where she currently lives and works. Her videos, collages, drawings, sculptures and installations mine personal narratives and explore immigrant issues with a focus on gender, popular culture, and the seductive promises made by rituals.

TAZEEN QAYYUM

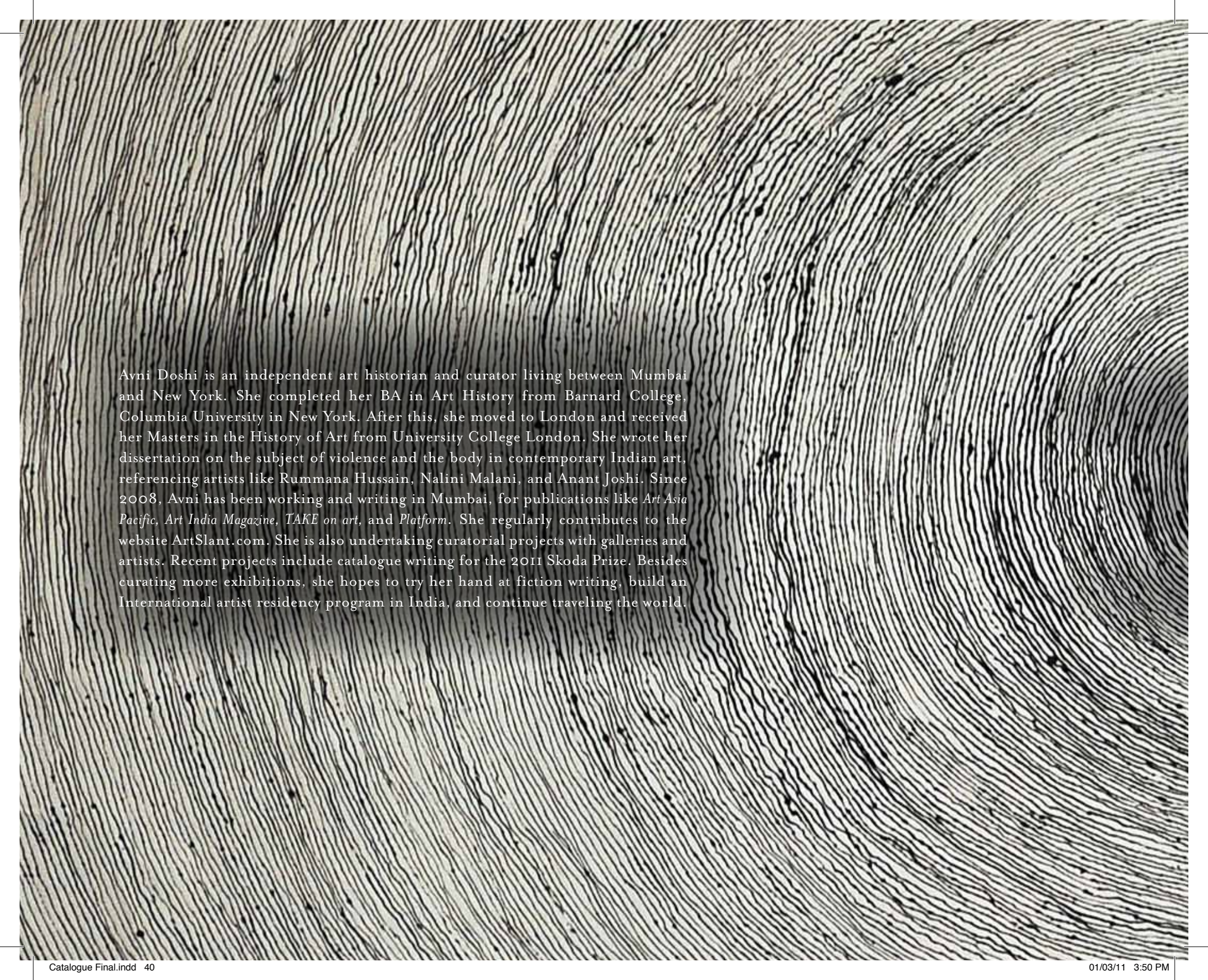
Tazeen Qayyum (Canada/Pakistan) is a contemporary miniature painter who received her BFA in Visual Arts from the National College of Arts Lahore, Pakistan in 1996. Her work has been shown internationally in both solo and group exhibitions, some of which include 'Urban Myths & Modern Fables', University of Sydney, Australia and University of Toronto, 'A Thousand and One Days: The Art of Pakistani Women Miniaturists' at the Academy of Art, Honolulu, Hawaii, 'JAALA Exhibition at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Japan, 'Homecoming', at the National Gallery of Pakistan and 'CodeLive Metro' at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. Qayyum's work was included in the 10th Asian Biennale, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2002), 2nd Painting Biennale, Tehran, Iran (2002) and has been featured at the Sotheby's and the Christie's South Asian Modern & Contemporary Art auctions, New York and London (2008-10). Her work has received several critical reviews including in *The New York Times* (2009).

TUSHAR JOAG

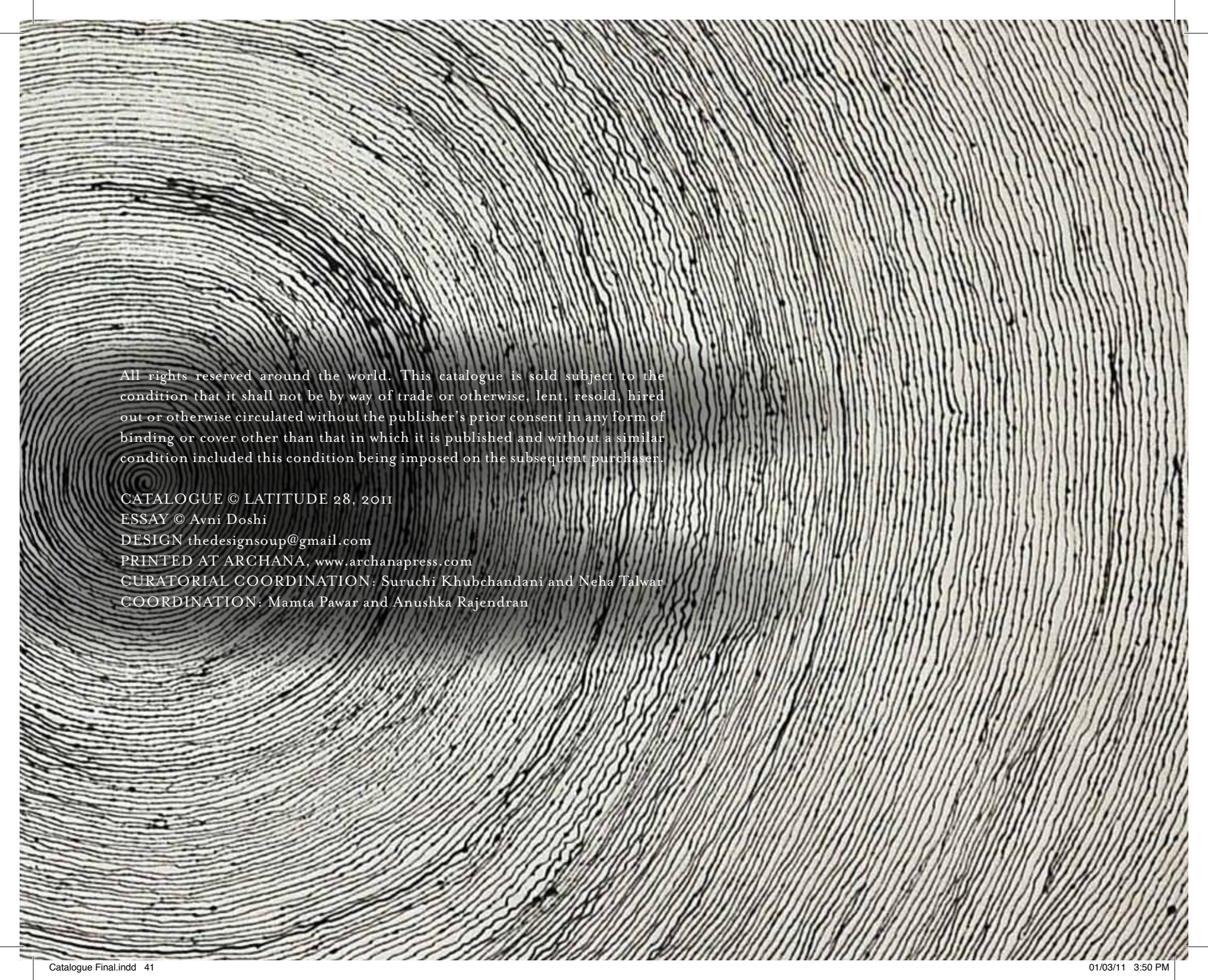
Tushar Joag was born in Bombay in 1966. In 1988, he received his Bachelor's degree from the Sir J.J. School of Arts, Mumbai, and in 1989, he completed his Master's degree from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda. The artist's solo shows include 'Reconciliation and Truth' at Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai, in 2008 and 'Willing Suspension' at Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, in 2005. Joag has also participated in numerous group shows including 'India Art Now: Contemporary Indian Art Between Continuity and Transformation' at Provincia di Milano, Italy, in 2007; 'Here, There, Now: New and Recent Work by Artists from India' at Soulflower Gallery, Bangkok, in 2007; 'Pink' at Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai, in 2007; 'Subcontinent: The Indian Subcontinent in Contemporary Art' at Fondazione Sandretto re Rabaudengo, Torino, Italy, in 2006; 'Hungry God: Indian Contemporaries' at Arario Beijing, in 2006; and 'We Are Like This Only' at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2005.

VITO FUN TUMBARELLO

Vito Fun Tumbarello was born, raised and continues to reside in Brooklyn's Park Slope. He is a professional photographer as well as a professional DJ. He is also a workaholic. Continue to expect big things from him, especially now that he found his soulmate (Jessica) to collaborate on projects with. Vito Fun has no ethnic, sexual or religious allegiances; he can be intimidating as well as intimidated.



Avni Doshi is an independent art historian and curator living between Mumbai and New York. She completed her BA in Art History from Barnard College, Columbia University in New York. After this, she moved to London and received her Masters in the History of Art from University College London. She wrote her dissertation on the subject of violence and the body in contemporary Indian art, referencing artists like Rummana Hussain, Nalini Malani, and Anant Joshi. Since 2008, Avni has been working and writing in Mumbai, for publications like *Art Asia Pacific*, *Art India Magazine*, *TAKE on art*, and *Platform*. She regularly contributes to the website *ArtSlant.com*. She is also undertaking curatorial projects with galleries and artists. Recent projects include catalogue writing for the 2011 Skoda Prize. Besides curating more exhibitions, she hopes to try her hand at fiction writing, build an International artist residency program in India, and continue traveling the world.



All rights reserved around the world. This catalogue is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be by way of trade or otherwise, lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition included this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

CATALOGUE © LATITUDE 28, 2011

ESSAY © Avni Doshi

DESIGN thedesignsoup@gmail.com

PRINTED AT ARCHANA, www.archanapress.com

CURATORIAL COORDINATION: Suruchi Khubchandani and Neha Talwar

COORDINATION: Mamta Pawar and Anushka Rajendran



THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

THE PILL

LATITUDE 28

A Gallery for Contemporary Arts and Ideas

F 208 GF | Lado Sarai | New Delhi- 110030 | T +91 11 4679 1111 | +91 99 5389 4067 | E latitude28@gmail.com | W www.latitude28.com