

LATITUDE 28



LATITUDE 28 in collaboration with Sakshi Gallery

Presents

MEMORY TRACE / DAPAAN*(...it is said)

Ankush Safaya

Venue: LATITUDE 28

F-208, First Floor, Lado Sarai, New Delhi – 110030

Preview: 20 July, 2023, Thursday

Timing: 6 PM – 9 PM

Exhibition Open till: 20 August, 2023

Timings: Monday to Saturday, 11 AM – 7 PM

Conceptual Premise:

Looking from the bay windows of my studio which is currently on the ninth floor in Baroda, it seems like the landscape changes every moment I am looking at it. Something very similar to listening to a piece of music or recalling a memory. In this process of looking I establish connections through the observation of the subtle and the nuanced, confronting the unexpected – a space where the line between the real and the imagined becomes often blurred.

Things act as triggers for me – ideas that come from my reading and the music I listen to that create spaces of remembrance and memories revisited. It is from here that I gather a data-pool of connectives through which I re-establish and re-create for myself. Perhaps it's a process of looking at myself - both from a perspective of deconstructing a past that holds the imprint of my belonging – as well as imagining via a process of re-assimilation, a comprehension of life as I am living it.

At first glance, my works breathe stillness. But as the eye trains itself on the picture plane these flat surfaces become activated linear whispers that assume kinetic energies and suggest poetic missives of human experience. My training as an engineer exposed technology to me in a way that made me engage with an abstract world, wherein circuit boards translated into Mondrian's paintings, and jumbled wires became reminiscent of a Jackson Pollock painted surface. I play with deconstructing structures, sculptural forms, mechanisms around me and then reconstruct them in my head as new forms, keeping balance and rhythm as crucial elements within this exercise. I ideate the concept in a three dimensional process of thought.

This then over time undergoes a series of metamorphic transformations to articulate itself as I desire, onto a two dimensional surface. I can best describe (because I find it difficult to put this into words) that there is an osmosis of learning that I arrive at through my work. It leads me to find methodologies of structuring language and choosing material.

The optics of illusion that makes two dimensional lines appear to have movement or suggest a three dimensional space – where the conjuring of a visual tactility seduces the eye. My work is about the conflict, as it is about the calm.

I identify with a politics that regards human life and the dignity of its preservation as important. Many of the works in this exhibition come from texts that I extract from my readings – books that are mostly political and historical - and works of fiction from geographical territories which have narratives of the histories of conflict and turmoil. These texts create a journey back and forth in time, sometimes a sense of loss and sometimes a sense of connection. The texts I select from larger passages of writing undergo a series of transformations using Morse code as a method to re-write them. I then inscribe these texts through varied ways. Sometimes articulated via the carbon of graphite pencils making nuanced lines on the paper surface or mechanism of burning the paper using laser - which is fed by instructions via these codes- that then creates burnt marks on paper, or perforations on these layered sheets of gateway paper which become a metaphor to skin; or the rhythm of layered translucent papers that become a palimpsest that suggests the altered. Multiple layers of these codes then transform to become multiple layers of memory on each surface – like a landscape of floating rhythms.

– Ankush Safaya, 2023

(*Dapaan is a colloquial Kashmiri word, a vernacular idiom, used frequently in everyday life; often used to begin any story that is fact or fiction.)

About the Artist:

Ankush Safaya

(b. 1985, Hoshiarpur, Punjab)

Ankush Safaya's interest lies in how formal elements arrange themselves and meanings arise through the personal interplay of individual experiences decoding the works. The triggers to his visual articulations often include musical pieces of composers like Arvo Part and John Cage, the visuals of filmmakers Andrei Tarkovsky and Akira Kurosawa, along with the metaphysical oeuvre of the artist Nasreen Mohammedi. Each becomes a mental sounding board, with the unique potential to create infinite echoes that have inexplicable transmutations. His work is based on form and structure as the major components that deliver his pictorial content. Having forfeited the chance of formal training at an art school earlier in life proved that the methods of learning had to be different. He initially worked as a technical studio assistant to Veer Munshi, an artist in Delhi. In 2014, Safaya met Rekha Rodwittiya and decided to move to Baroda to be part of The Collective Studio Baroda hosted by her and Surendran Nair.

Ankush completed his B.Tech (Electronics and Communication) from MIMIT, Malout in 2007 and Multimedia (VFX) from MAAC Gurgaon in 2012. He was awarded the Glenfiddich emerging artist of the year 2013 (runner-up) at Nature Morte. Ankush debuted with his first solo Anantata – Hymns of Graphical Notation at Sakshi Gallery in 2019 and another A Room Of One's Own in 2023. He has been previously part of group exhibitions such as 'Ufuq- Zarina a tribute' at Kamalnayan Bajaj Gallery, Mumbai, curated by Dr Arshiya Lokhandwala, presented by Sunaina Kejriwal, 'Four Conversations in the Room' at Sakshi Salon, Mumbai, curated by Rekha Rodwittiya; 'The Sacred And The Profane' at Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, 'Five for the future' at Nature Morte, Gurgaon. He presented at the Tie Conference 2019 at Santa Clara, California, on the invitation of the Motwani Jadeja Foundation, and also gave a masterclass to the fellows of the Rajeev Circle Program. He participated in the first Artist-in-residence program by the Motwani Jadeja Foundation in New York in August 2019. He has been presented by Sakshi gallery in 2010, 2022 and 2023 at three Indian art fairs.

Safaya continues to reside and work at The Collective Studio, Baroda.

"MEMORY TRACE / DAPAAN(...it is said) by artist Ankush Safaya is a show that blurs the boundaries between reality and imagination, taking viewers on a captivating journey. Having observed Ankush's work for over the years, I am glad that we are finally showcasing his practice in this new exhibition. Ankush's art serves as a catalyst, triggering memories and creating immersive spaces of remembrance. Drawing from personal experiences, literature, and music, the artist weaves a tapestry of connections, deconstructing and reimagining the past while exploring the intricacies of life. Safaya's works exude a serene stillness, yet upon closer examination, they pulsate with kinetic energy, conveying poignant messages of human experience. With his unique blend of engineering and artistic vision, Ankush reconstructs structures and mechanisms, giving birth to new forms characterised by balance and rhythm. This exhibition, MEMORY TRACE / DAPAAN*(...it is said), is a testament to Safaya's mastery of transforming thought into expressive art, inviting viewers to embark on their own introspective journey of memories and connections."*

— **Bhavna Kakar, Founder LATITUDE 28**

About LATITUDE 28

Since its inception in 2010, LATITUDE 28 has been promoting creative dialogue and presenting dynamic exhibitions that focus 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 and provides 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 through building a community and culture that is inclusive of all groups and individuals. Keeping with its wider role as an institution dedicated to the arts, 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 exhibitions strategically located at the nexus where artists, their work, art institutions, collectors and many different publics intersect.

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