

LATITUDE 28

Bhavna Kakar

presents

THE FRIEND THAT I NEVER HAD

A studio experience by Neha Sahai



REKHA AND SUSHMA ON A BALMY SPRING AFTERNOON IN SUNDER NURSERY, READING GULZAR

OIL AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

58 x 70 INCHES

2026

LATITUDE 28



Preview: 7 April 2026 | 6 PM onwards

Venue: EDGE at LATITUDE 28

Lado Sarai, New Delhi

Exhibition Open Till: 28 April 2026

Timings: Monday to Sunday | 11 AM – 7 PM

LATITUDE 28 presents THE FRIEND THAT I NEVER HAD, a project of new works by Neha Sahai.

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The exhibition unfolds through a sustained enquiry into relation, intimacy, and the forms companionship takes when it cannot be fully realised within the structures of everyday life. Across Sahai's paintings, figures gather in states of nearness that remain unresolved. Bodies lean, turn, and pause within flattened expanses of colour that offer no horizon, no setting, and no narrative continuity. What emerges is a pictorial field in which relation is held without conclusion.

Sahai's visual language is shaped through reduction. Softened contours, unmodulated planes of colour, and the withholding of descriptive detail keep the image at the surface, concentrating attention on posture, distance, and the charged space between figures. Within this field, hybrid presences recur. Human and animal forms coexist with ease, their proximity unfolding without rupture. A fish assumes the posture of a body; a face recedes from the certainty of recognition. These figures move through the work as emotional presences, carrying projection, attachment, and substitute intimacy.

"I didn't understand the language around me, so I made my own and painted it," Sahai notes.

Painting, in this context, becomes a process of language-making. Images emerge through repetition and return, arriving before they are fully understood. Meaning gathers gradually, held in suspension across the surface of the work.

The project extends beyond the canvas through the presence of Sahai's studio within the gallery. The space in which these paintings are made enters the exhibition as part of its internal structure. Objects, references, and working conditions remain in view, situating the paintings within a lived environment of making. The studio holds the rhythms through which these figures are returned to, adjusted, and allowed to persist. Its inclusion brings the viewer into proximity with the conditions under which these presences take form.

THE FRIEND THAT I NEVER HAD brings these elements together into a single field of encounter. The exhibition holds space for forms of closeness that remain partial, for relations that do not stabilise, and for figures that continue to exist in quiet, sustained proximity.

From the Director's Desk

LATITUDE 28

“At LATITUDE 28, we are drawn to practices that hold their ground with clarity and conviction. Neha’s work does this with a remarkable sense of restraint.

There is an immediacy to her paintings that draws you in, and a complexity that unfolds slowly. The figures feel familiar, yet they do not settle into recognition. They remain with you.

What is particularly compelling is the world she builds through very little. The forms are minimal, the space is reduced, and yet the work carries a strong emotional presence.

This project brings us closer to her practice in an intimate way. The inclusion of her studio allows us to understand not just the images, but the space in which they are held, revisited, and lived with.

In a moment of constant visual noise, Neha’s work creates a space for attention, for pause, and for a quieter form of engagement.”

— Bhavna Kakar

Founder-Director, LATITUDE 28

About the Artist

Neha Sahai

(b. 1985, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India)

Neha Sahai’s practice engages painting as a space where autobiography, memory, and imagined forms of relation converge. Her works construct a visual language shaped through reduction, repetition, and intuitive image-making. Figures appear within flattened fields of colour, often inhabiting states of quiet transformation and relational ambiguity.

Drawing from personal experience and narrative sensibilities, Sahai develops recurring presences that function as companions, doubles, and witnesses. These figures operate within a space that remains intimate and self-contained, allowing forms of attachment, projection, and interiority to take shape.

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Sahai began working with painting as her primary medium in her early thirties. Her practice continues to evolve through a sustained engagement with image, surface, and the emotional conditions that underlie them.

She has participated in the group exhibition *The Personal is Mythical* at LATITUDE 28, New Delhi (2025).

About the Artist



Neha Sahai

(b. 1985, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India)

Neha Sahai's practice occupies a luminous intersection between autobiography, myth, and memory. Drawing from design and narrative traditions, her work conjures a visual folklore of quiet surrealism, where moonlit fish women, star-gazing moths, and cross-species romances unfold in still, dreamlike spaces.

Emerging at 33 into painting as her primary language, Sahai's practice resonates with feminist explorations of self and interiority. Her recurring Fish Woman figure, often draped in sarees and immersed in solitary rituals—reading, resting, or gazing into distant worlds—functions as a mythic double or alter ego. In these soft, sensorial landscapes, Sahai collapses distinctions between the remembered and the imagined, the personal and the archetypal. Her work aligns with a lineage of artists who have used figuration and myth to explore identity and interiority — from the narrative intimacy of Bhupen Khakhar, to the feminist poetics of Paula Rego and the introspective sensuality of Amrita Sher-Gil. Like them, Sahai weaves the deeply personal into visual vocabularies that transcend the self, creating spaces where memory becomes myth.

She has participated in the group exhibition '*The Personal is Mythical*' at LATITUDE 28, New Delhi (2025).

About LATITUDE 28

LATITUDE 28

Established in 2010, LATITUDE 28 has redefined contemporary gallery practice with its lateral, avant-garde approach. The gallery stands as a vanguard in nurturing and showcasing emerging South Asian artists by championing experimental material-based practices while fostering meaningful connections among stakeholders—artists, collectors, patrons, arts professionals, and enthusiasts. By prioritising mentoring and capacity building, it shapes creative practices through programs that drive cultural discourse across the region and beyond.

The gallery's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility makes it a critical nexus for cultural exchange, connecting artists with leading institutions worldwide. Through curated exhibitions that weave together art, history, and socio-political narratives, LATITUDE 28 facilitates an understanding of the forces shaping contemporary society. This approach ensures that each exhibition is a dynamic, immersive experience that engages and challenges audiences.

As an incubator of innovative artistic expressions, the gallery facilitates dynamic exchanges through site-specific artworks, artist talks, and immersive curatorial experiences, setting new standards for what galleries can achieve. Its influence in shaping artistic discourse and inspiring collections is felt across continents, making LATITUDE 28 an essential player in global cultural conversations.

Under the strategic leadership of Founder and Director Bhavna Kakar—also the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of TAKE on Art, South Asia's premier contemporary art publication—LATITUDE 28 has cultivated a robust network of collectors and patrons. This network extends deeply into global artistic ecosystems, bridging continental divides and enhancing cross-cultural dialogues.

SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES

Instagram: @latitude_28 @bhavz15 @takeonart

Facebook: Gallery Latitude 28

FOR MEDIA QUERIES

www.latitude28.com | latitude28@gmail.com | +91 8368320353