

LIVED IN SKIN

TEXTILE AS ARMOUR AS MEMORY

Sabeen Omar | Meenakshi Nihalani | Anshu Singh



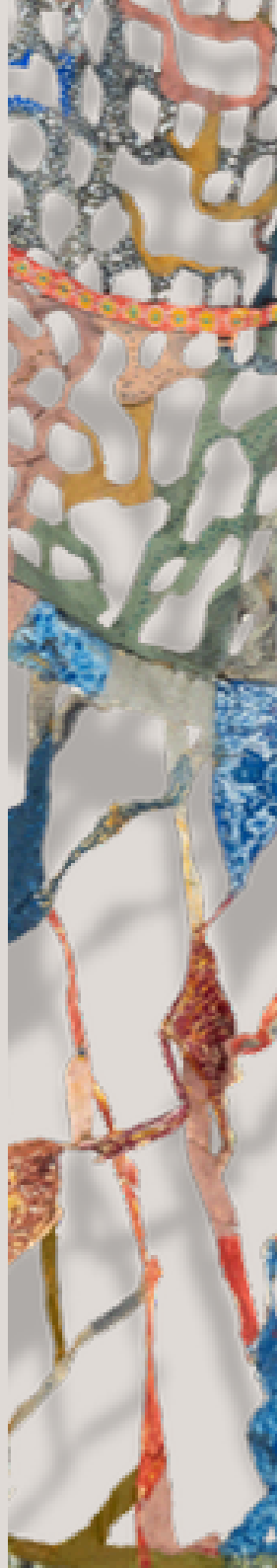
Like a dumbo

*I think I am going to cry – my garments and
Especially my undergarments have always been a
Source of intolerable suffering because they
hide an intolerable wound.*

Lived-in Skin: Textile as Armour as Memory

Critic and curator Charlier Porter translates these lines from Louise Bourgeois's notes in 'What Artists Wear' (2021) where he notes how the French-American modernist artist would infuse her everyday clothes with grief, trauma and rage - while simultaneously feeling a hoarder's pain at the prospect of having to let them go. Clothes sag under the emotive heaviness of being second skin - a daunting weight a daughter refused to carry as she donated her late mother's kimono to clothes-maker Kallol Datta in Aomori, attempting to shrug away the once matriarch's domineering gaze as it continued to rise like phantoms from the past bleeding into the present continuous from her almirah.

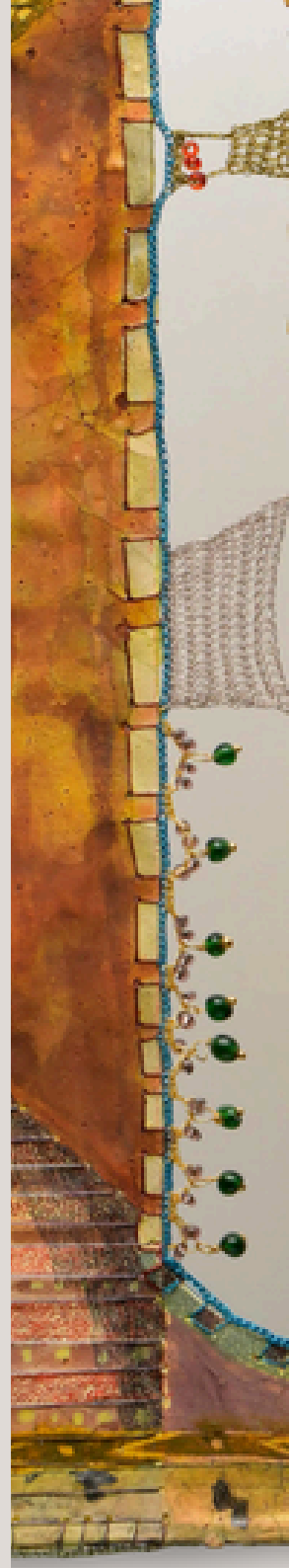
Used cotton shirts and polyester blend handkerchiefs stand upright in Sabeen Omar's textile installations - their malleable softness diluted underneath layers of stiff chalk gesso, transforming them into hardened armour - albeit with perforations. These grids charting out routes of transmission visually recall latticed windows from Mughal miniatures which Omar spent a long time studying during her university days in Chicago as a respite from seeing landscapes through the European tradition of plein air paintings. It's architectures of familiarity which she draws from, collaging fragments of worn bandhni or block-prints within the patterns of art deco grills which she encounters while visiting her family in Bombay and Chennai.



It's objects from a personal archive of collecting that Omar resorts to in giving shape to the unsaid, like the contours of a semicircular tissue holder forming two half-moons amidst a starry night which leaves way for light to pass through in "It is Night with Glaring Sunshine" (2023) with kitschy crochet around the fabric evoking the nostalgia of vintage handkerchiefs. A menacing monsoon cloud from miniatures floats in the middle of 'Is Sorrow the True Wild II' (2025) painted to mimic a patchwork quilt - a medium Omar would see her teacher and Chicago imagist Barbara Rossi work with - held in a fragile balance of embroidery Omar learnt from her mother.

The roiling tension within clothing is wound tighter by Anshu Singh, taking the perspective of female textile workers - most of whom are Muslim - in her state of Varanasi where they aren't allowed to operate the loom - which ironically churns out womenswear. Coming from a rare matriarchal family of weavers in the region, Singh was determined to keep her mother's handloom running after an injury to the spine forced the latter to close their shop. Embedding this facet deeply within her practice, she has always asserted her identity as artist-weaver.

In 'No More Shall I Weave a Garment of Pain' (2023), Singh who specialised in tapestry at Banaras Hindu University, moves away from an expectation of the medium to align with decorative arts by working with a material quite disassociated with it - jute, which has been relegated as a material with working class connotations, which also what led Congolese artist Lucie Kamuswekera to stitch tapestries of conflicts in Congo on it with recycled thread, like Singh. She furthers her discourse by weaving a stark line of poetry by Kabir, a fifteenth century Muslim weaver from Varanasi whose mystical verses contested caste hierarchy and religious dogma.

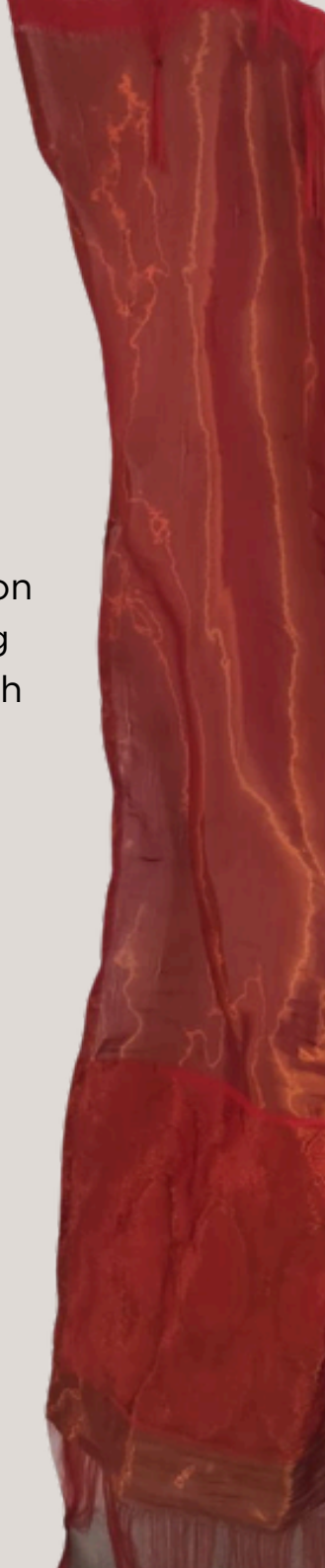


It's this political stance towards her material which propels Singh to use discarded fabric or remnant matter from weaving units. 'Wire and Veins' (2026) made with discarded copper wire from power looms, shines sienna as reimagined Varanasi brocade traditionally woven with gold and silver zari. Transferring the floral patterns of brocade onto what is seen as a baser metal, Singh questions a tradition where the women makers of the textile will never be its buyers and offers an alternative – as copper glows as electric.

In 'Gulistan' (2025) Singh documents her uncle's archive of brocade designs while Meenakshi Nihalani, taking from the tradition of kantha in Bengal, sews ephemeral memories of the Partition of 1947 from conversations with female elders in her hometown of Baroda. Growing up listening to such narratives from her maternal and paternal grandparents – the former arriving from Sindh by traversing the long road to Agra and the latter by waterways to Baroda – Nihalani inserts herself within this narrative as a young girl immersed in reading about an unknown landscape across the borders, even as her figure is dotted with piercing arrows of inherited sorrow.

Collaborating in pickle-making with her grandmother with recipes from Sindh, Nihalani infuses pickle jars with sentient energy as they scatter around the horizon, caught up in whirlwind of turmoil around them. Nihalani's intentional stitching follows the lines of her skills draughtsmanship as she stitches out a fragile flock of migratory dragonflies she would see around her during summers in Agra, fleeting across the open sky, dyed in her signature indigo. Nihalani's work draws from people's movements pre-Independence like the Indigo Rebellion of 1859 which leads her to return to the material as a signifier of many other grassroots revolts leading to the country's independence, which would arrive at the cost of Partition.

Text by Upasana Das



Upasana Das

Upasana Das is an arts and culture writer. She has previously written for ArtReview, Wallpaper, The Guardian, British Journal of Photography, BOMB, Elephant Art, The New York Times, Dazed, Vogue India, DAG, Serendipity Arts Foundation, Experimenter Gallery among others.

SABEEN OMAR

b. 1985, Colombo, Sri Lanka)

Sabeen Omar's practice engages the material and affective conditions through which value is produced, assigned, and transformed. Working with everyday and discardable materials such as cardboard, packaging, and garment fragments, her works function as sites where the ordinary is reoriented through acts of preservation, repetition, and reassembly. Objects are displaced from circuits of use and repositioned within intimate and mnemonic frameworks, where their status shifts between the negligible and the treasured. Through this, her practice examines how attachment, memory, and labour confer value onto matter. Her compositions draw on geometric vocabularies associated with Islamic architecture, which are set against atmospheric and mutable grounds. Pattern operates as a structuring device, while the surrounding fields introduce flux, instability, and duration. This juxtaposition produces a sustained tension between order and impermanence, where surface becomes a site of negotiation between cultural memory and lived experience. The work holds together opposing conditions without resolving them, allowing value to remain unstable and contingent.

Omar holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics with Economics from University College London. Her first solo exhibition, *Tiger Balm & Other Boxes*, was held at Cornell University, Ithaca (2022).

Omar lives and works in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

LATITUDE 28



where does longing rest?

62 x 23 inches

Egg tempera, oil pastel, coloured pencil, graphite, thread, bed sheet panel, tinted chalk gesso
2026

₹ 5,50,000

Supported by Colomboscope, 2026



Detail

LATITUDE 28



***body holding its falling /
softened armour***

49.5 x 26 inches

Medium: Gouache, oil pastel,
graphite, thread, bed sheet and
garment fragments, chalk gesso
2026

₹ 4,00,000

Supported by Colomboscope, 2026



Detail



LATITUDE 28



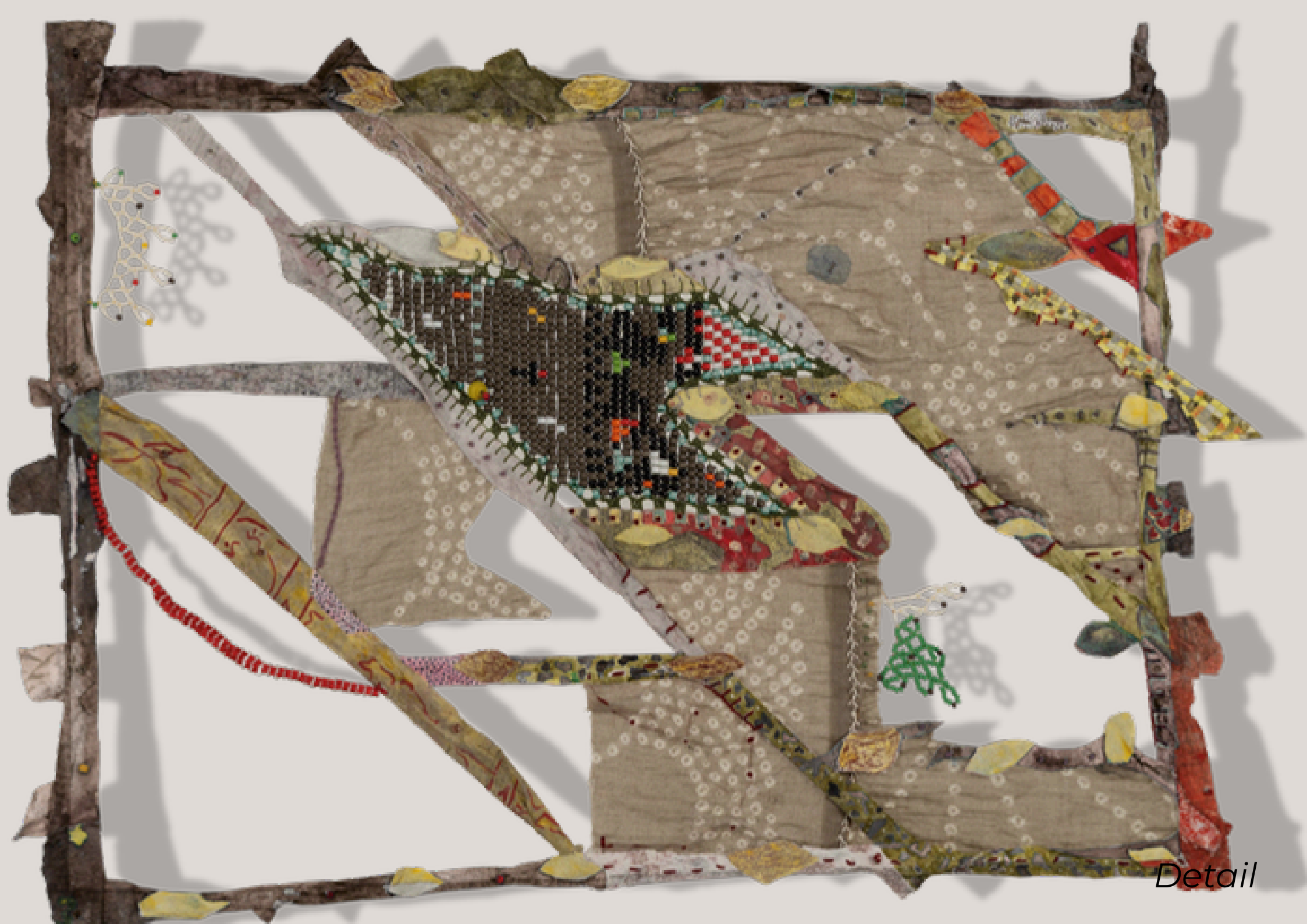
is sorrow the true wild? I

16 x 12.5 inches

Medium: Gouache, egg tempera,
graphite, thread, wire, beads,
garment fragments, chalk gesso
2025

₹ 1,80,000

Supported by Colomboscope, 2026



Detail

LATITUDE 28



***we work too hard.
we're too tired
to fall in love.
therefore we must
overthrow the government. (Rod
Smith)***

11 x 11 inches

Gouache, fabric dye, oil pastel,
coloured pencil, graphite, thread,
beads, handkerchief, tinted chalk
gesso

2022

₹ 1,35,000

Supported by Colomboscope, 2026



Detail

LATITUDE 28



***we work too hard. we're too tired
to fall in love.
therefore we must
overthrow the government (Rod Smith)***

1 x 11 inches

Gouache, fabric dye, oil pastel,
coloured pencil, graphite, thread,
beads, handkerchief, tinted chalk gesso
2022

₹ 1,35,000

Supported by Colomboscope, 2026



Detail

LATITUDE 28



is sorrow the true wild? ii

23 x 14 inches

Gouache, egg tempera, coloured pencil, graphite, gold leaf, watercolour paper, thread, beads, handkerchiefs, chalk gesso
2025

₹ 1,80,000

Supported by Colomboscope, 2026



Detail

LATITUDE 28



to be in pain is innocent (Hugh Prather)

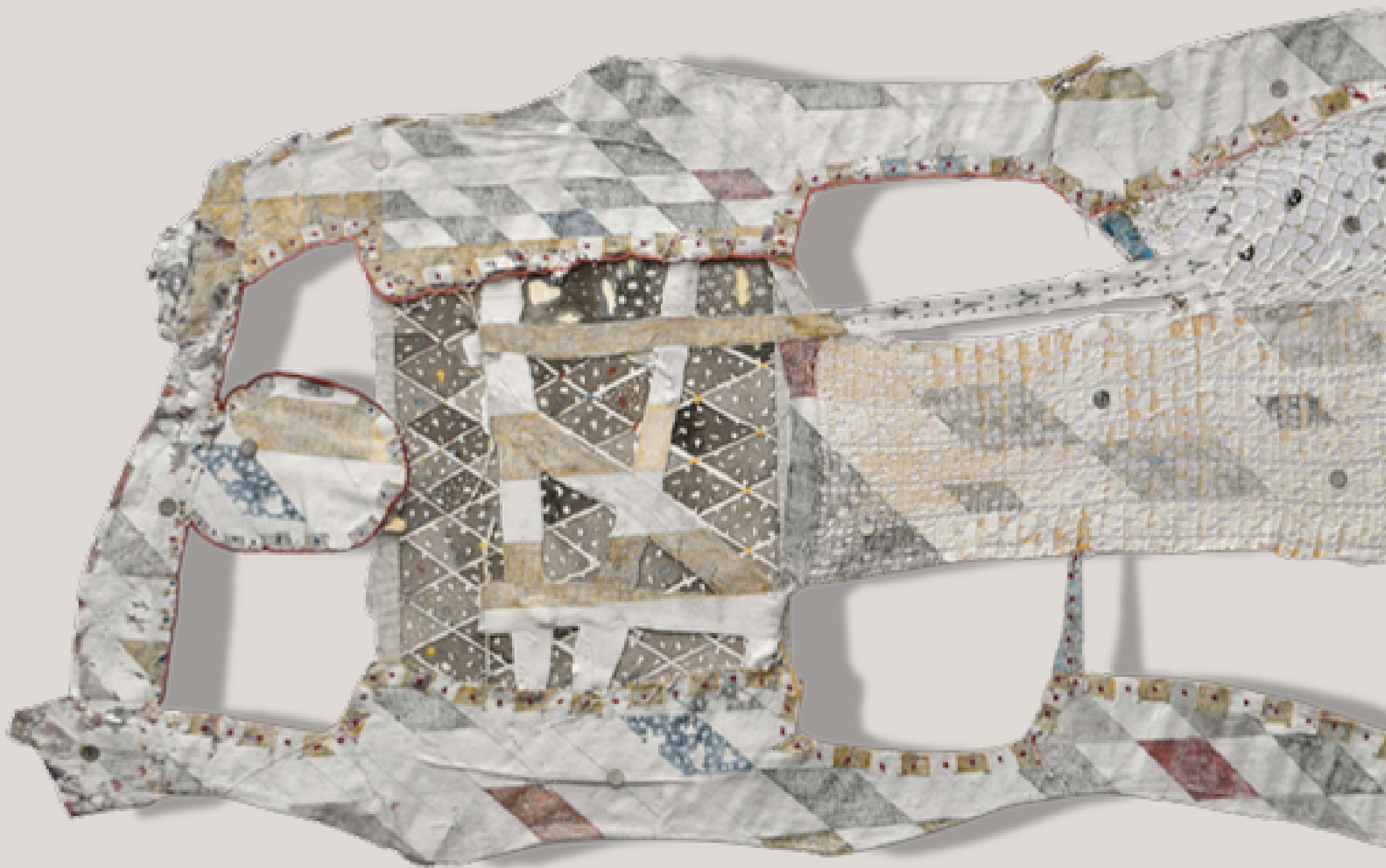
21 x 10.5 inches

Gouache, ink, coloured pencil,
graphite, paper, fabric, thread,
chalk gesso

2022

₹ 1,35,000

Supported by Colomboscope



Detail

LATITUDE 28

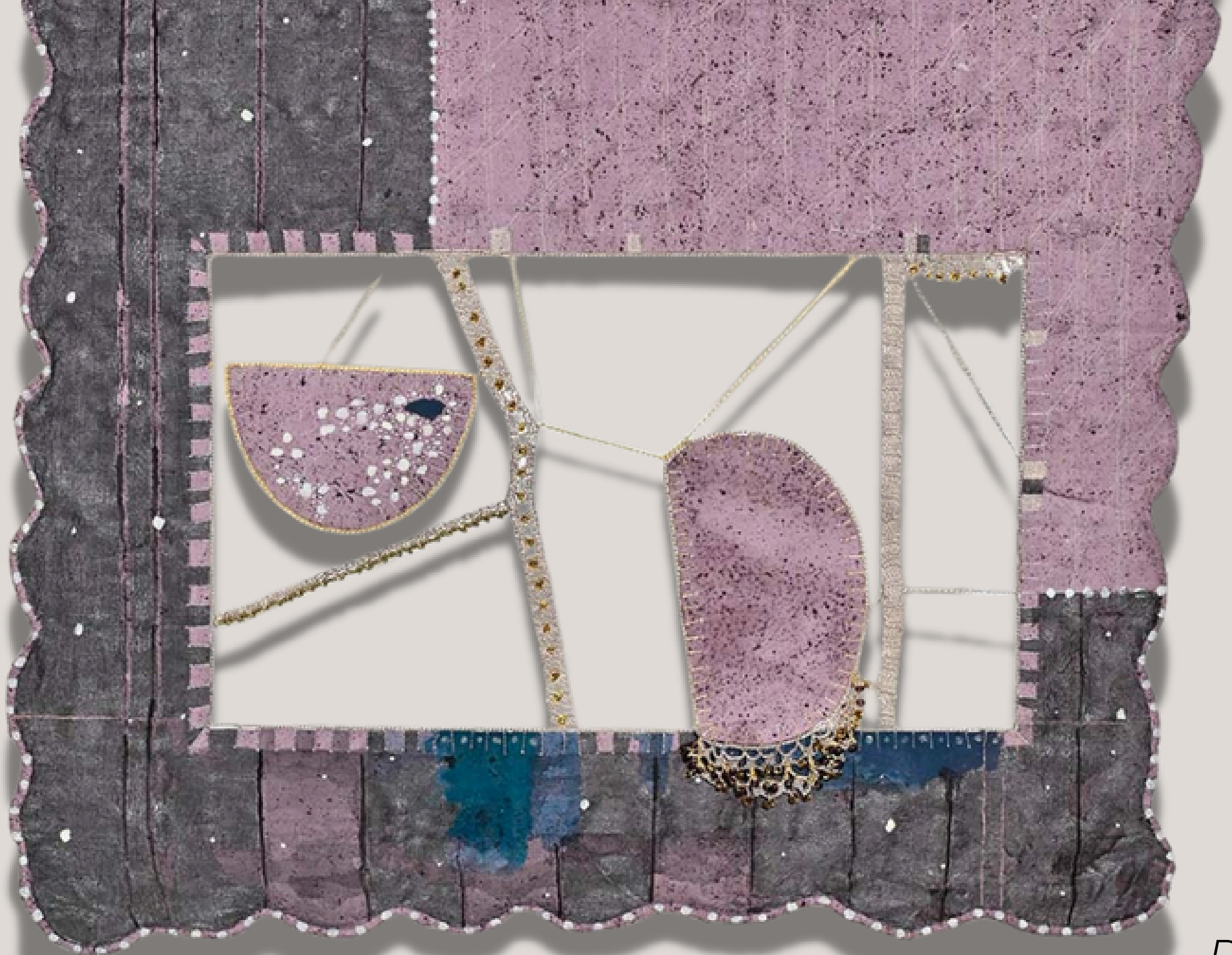


***it is night with glaring sunshine
(Tomas Transtomer)***

11 x 11 inches

*Oil paint, oil pastel, graphite,
coloured pencil, acrylic, fabric
dye, beads, embroidery, crochet,
chalk gesso, handkerchief
2023*

₹ 1,35,,000



Detail

LATITUDE 28



***...and maddest of all: to see life
as it is, and not as it should be!
(Miguel de Cervantes)***

16 x 17 inches

*Oil pastel, oil paint, coloured
pencil, graphite, thread, on
garment fragments, coffee
wrapper, chalk gesso*

2022

₹ 1,35,000



Detail

ANSHU SINGH

b. 1978, Balia Uttar Pradesh)

Anshu Singh's textile-based practice engages memory, labour, and community through processes rooted in weaving and material reconstruction. Drawing from the textile traditions of Banaras, particularly the hand-worked carpet weaving practices of Mirzapur and Bhadohi, her works function as repositories of lived experience shaped through repetition, touch, and manual skill. Textile in her practice is approached not only as material but as a social and cultural structure, carrying histories of labour, inheritance, and collective knowledge.

Working with recovered and everyday materials including jute sacks, used sari thread, and recycled factory waste, Singh constructs surfaces that register repair, endurance, and transformation. Her compositions retain the physical traces of handling and use, allowing material wear and irregularity to remain visible. Through acts of stitching, weaving, and accumulation, discarded fragments are reconstituted into tactile fields that hold together vulnerability and resilience. The work emerges from an attention to process and the intelligence of making, where the gesture of the hand becomes central to how memory and labour are embedded within form.

Singh trained in weaving and design, and her engagement with textile practices is informed by early exposure to weaving communities through her mother's boutique in Banaras.

Singh lives and works in India.

NO MORE SHALL I WEAVE A GARMENT OF PAIN

LATITUDE 28



Detail

***No more shall I weave a
garment of pain***

204 x 48 inches

Jute and Wool

2023

₹ 17,00,000

LATITUDE 28



Gulistan

(set of 24 pieces)

7 cm x 9 inches each
Hand Embroidery on
Fabriano paper
2025

₹ 20,000 (per piece, sold as
a minimum piece of 6)



Detail

LATITUDE 28



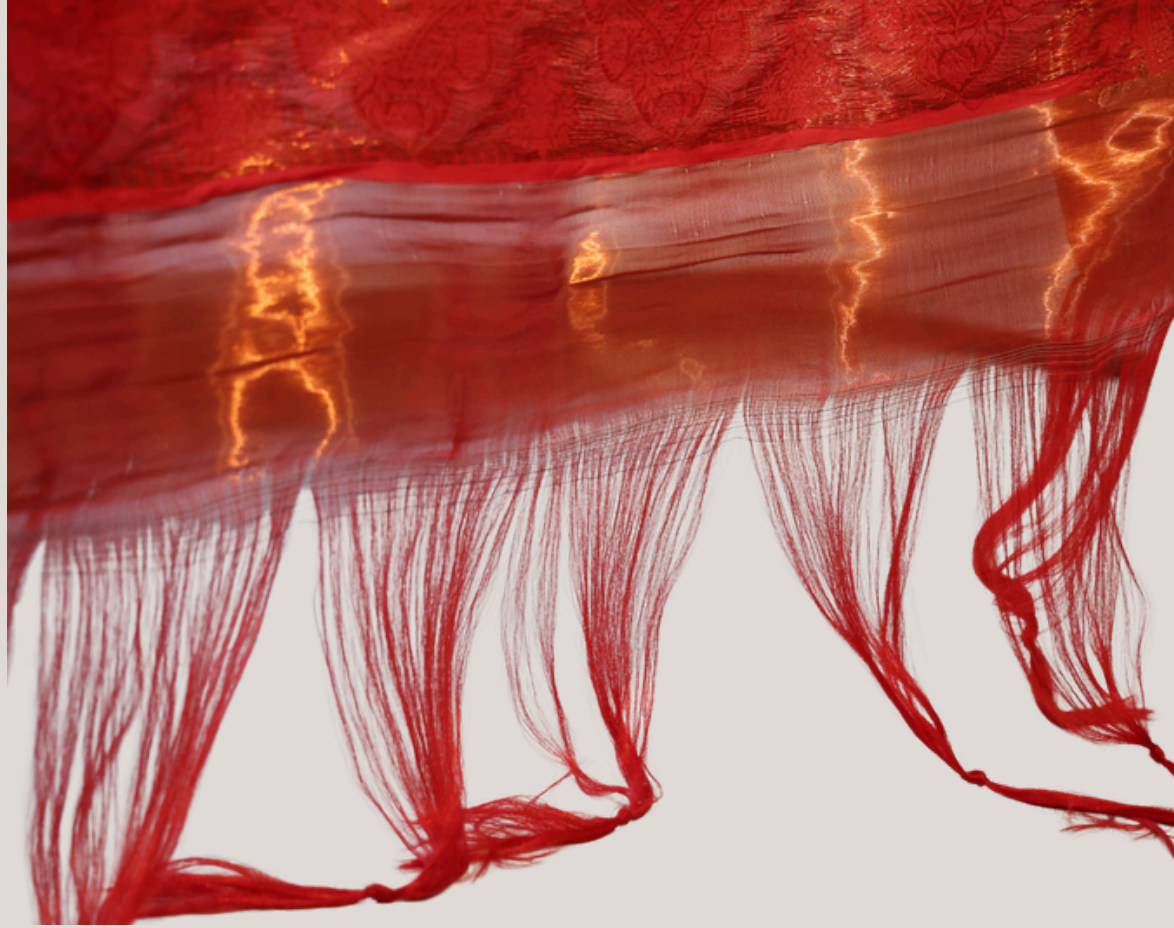
Wire and Veins

71.7 x 36 inches

Copper wire and thread

2026

₹ 6,00,000



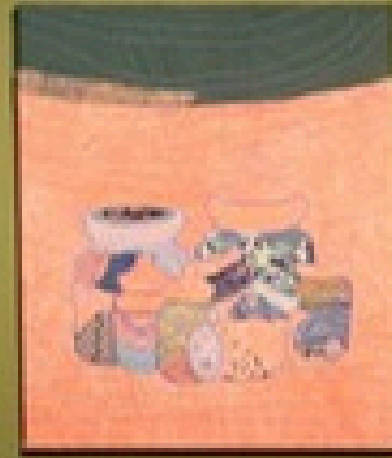
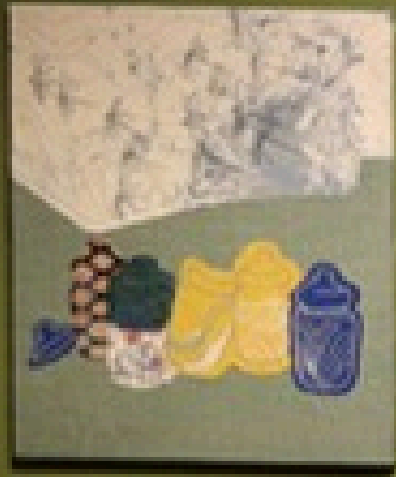
Detail

MEENAKSHI NIHALANI

b. 1978, Mumbai, India)

Meenakshi Nihalani's practice engages textile, sculpture, and drawing to examine the psychological and material residues of colonialism, labour, and agrarian histories. Her works function as spatial and tactile investigations into structures of power, where textile becomes both medium and historical witness. Drawing from archival research and lived histories surrounding indigo cultivation and farming communities in India, her practice approaches material as a carrier of social memory shaped through violence, resistance, and survival. Working with dyed textiles, hand-stitching, paper, and sculptural assemblage, Nihalani constructs fragmented surfaces that register tension between fragility and endurance. Processes of stitching, layering, and suspension operate as acts of reconstruction, allowing historical and political conditions to emerge through material accumulation. Her works often hold together irony, absurdity, and psychological unease, foregrounding the instability through which systems of authority and collective histories are experienced. Through this, the textile in her practice exceeds ornament or craft, becoming a site where labour, ecology, and postcolonial identity intersect.

Nihalani received her Bachelor's degree in Sculpture from the Sir J. J. School of Art. She has participated in residencies including the Berlin Art Institute, Germany (2017), and the Fundaziun Nairs Residency, Switzerland (2019), alongside residencies and workshops across Germany, Switzerland, and India. Her exhibitions include *Seven Yards of Blue* at Anupa Mehta Contemporary Art, Mumbai (2025); *I Am Archiving for Us* at Prameya Art Foundation, New Delhi (2020); exhibitions in Berlin addressing agrarian histories and colonial systems; and group exhibitions including *Collective Impact: Diverse Perspectives* at Exhibit 320, New Delhi (2023) and presentations at Kunstfabrik, Germany (2018). She was awarded the Lord May Memorial Award in Sculpture at the Annual Exhibition of Sir J. J. School of Art, Mumbai.



LATITUDE 28



The sun followed me/ night

24 x 20 inches

*Cotton/Jute Textile, Dye, Hand
stitched cotton thread work,
Indian Ink*

2026

₹ 1,50,000



Detail

LATITUDE 28



The sun followed me/ noon

24 x 20 inches

*Cotton/ Jute Textile, Dye,
Handstitched cotton thread
work,*

Indian Ink

2026

₹ 1,50,000



Detail

LATITUDE 28



The sun followed me/ dawn

24 x 20 inches

*Cotton/Jute Textile, Dye, Hand
stitched cotton thread work,
Indian Ink*

2026

₹ 1,50,000



Detail

LATITUDE 28



The sun followed me/ noon

24 x 20 inches

Cotton/ Jute Textile, Dye,
Handstitched cotton thread
work,

Indian Ink

2026

₹ 1,50,000



Detail

LATITUDE 28



The sun followed me/ migration

4 x 6 ft

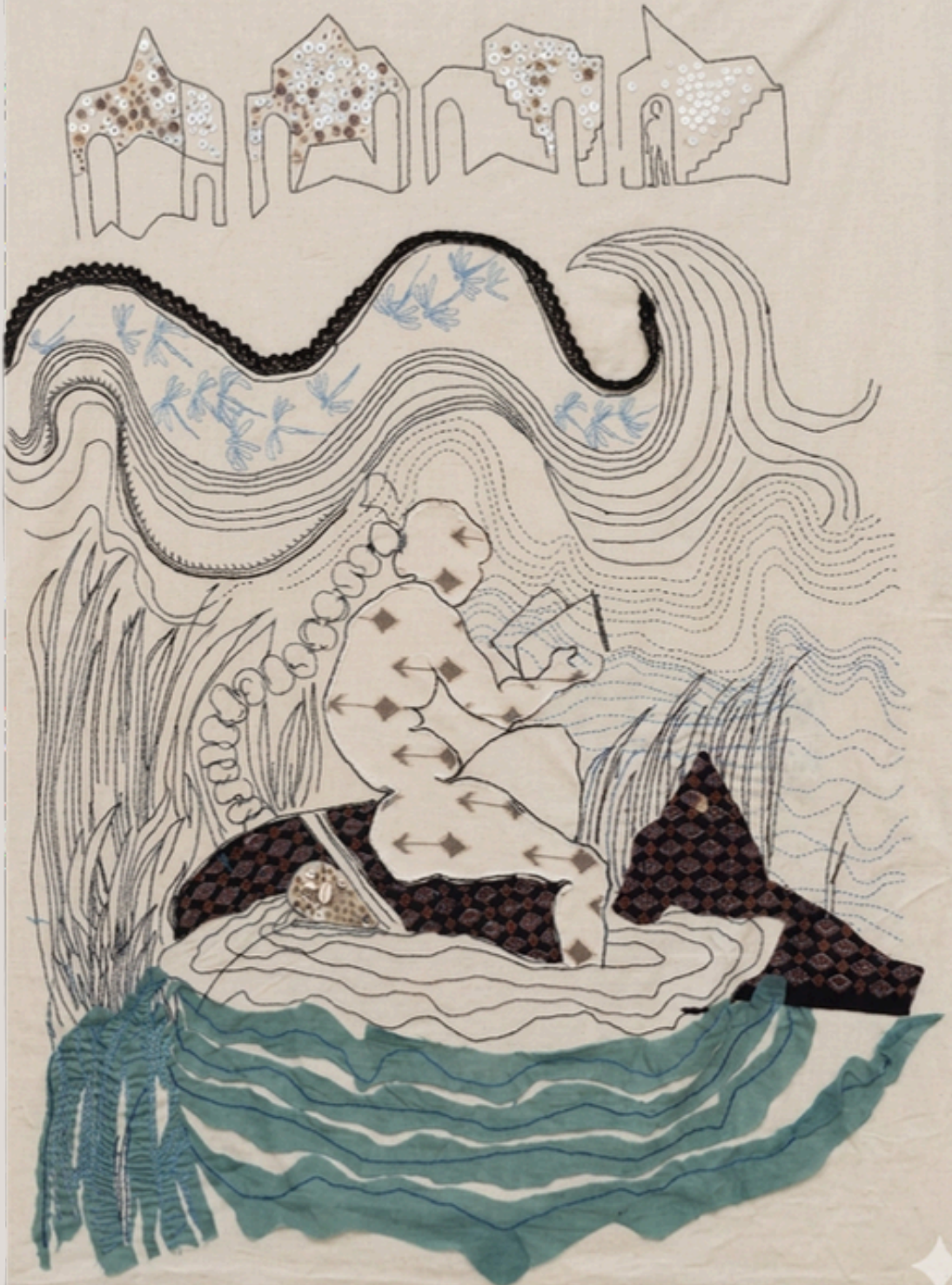
Cotton/Jute Textile, Dye,
Handstitched cotton thread work,
Indian Ink
2026

₹ 4,50,000



Yellow Tapestry
by [Artist Name]
[Additional text]

LATITUDE 28



The sun followed me/ under the stars

4 x 6 ft

Cotton/ Jute Textile, Dye, Handstitched
cotton thread work,

Indian Ink

2026

₹ 4,50,000



About 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 the Global artistic ecosystems, bridging continental divides and enhancing cross-cultural dialogues.

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