

SHRINE EMPIRE

presents

Spatial Dialogues

with

Madhav Raman + Parul Gupta

Martand Khosla

Abhimanyu Dalal + Ayesha Singh

Ravindra Gundu Rao + Shruti Mahajan

6th April – 8th May 2021

Can a door speak to the sky? Can barbwires speak to the land?
Can the demolished city ever speak to the complete plan?
Do the cartographies of our lives eventually exist as dust or as loom or as languages?
Do mirrors only like speaking to light?
Are maps, always, invincible squares? Or do they quiver sometimes?

Architect, Bernard Tschumi, explores the idea of architecture as a set of events, which we experience, imagine, create or live with. Tschumi's formulation of 'architecture as event' can be extended to this exhibition that has been built from a set of conversations, experiments and affects between artists, architects and artisans.

Parul Gupta engages in a *jugalbandhi* with the architect Madhav Raman. Their work is more the process than a finished art piece, emerging from their calibrations of light, mirrors and reflections, and also the voids created by each of these. Is their work of art an object or an event, or is it both?

Martand Khosla, on the other hand, has a conversation with the architect in him, posing the issues of what the square accommodates, deletes or builds upon. In his architectural practice, Martand is also in constant conversation with the city, its scale, its squares and its people. Embedded in a strong sense of the material, he works with wood, brick dust and metal—the elements with an ubiquitous and ethereal presence in the built environment of our cities. Though Martand claims that his conversation is with himself as an architect, his work traverses the terrains of labour, working-class settlements, housing issues and the craftspeople he works with in his practice. It is the resonance of these conversations that speak to and flow back into his work. Is Martand's work then a call for revolution, an event to change the world?

Ayesha Singh and Abhimanyu Dalal come together to create a syntagmatic sequence of languages, materiality and light in their collaborative work. Ayesha has diligently identified 100 spoken languages and included alphabets from recently developed scripts by enmeshing these with older scripts. Ayesha and Abhimanyu's installation of an inverted pyramid generates a room of spoken words, floating through the light and attacking the favourability of the written over the spoken. Arabic, Brahmi, Devanagari, Bodo, Khasi, English and many other languages refract and generate new encounters of the spoken and the written. It is as

if the words begin to speak, as one walks through the installation, swirling sometimes gibberish, sometimes sensibilities, meanings and codes about the world around us. Much like incrementally built cities; do languages also seep into each other, reflect, bypass or hold each other?

Shruti Mahajan has been in conversation with architect Ravindra Gundu Rao for about 20 years now. Starting from the ghats of the River Reva (Narmada) in Maheshwar, the warp and weft of their conversations have been crafted across different frames of thinking and materials. Shruti, being an artist with a deep interest in textiles, renders her frames of the river and the undulating steps of the ghats by reading shadows, light and life. She renders them in sketches, in textiles woven with deep and long friendships with the weavers of Maheshwar, who have walked the same spaces, lived with the same textures, walls and pathways as she had in the Holkar *wadas* of Maheshwar. Do the ripple and surge of the flowing river come to rest in the stillness of cloth, or continue in ongoing conversations?

These dialogues, between architects and artists, become events of dust, loom, babble, light and glass, holding somewhere coherence, somewhere form, wedded to confusions, affects and our existence, in all its fantastical beauty and grace.

- **Sarover Zaidi**