

# In Letter and Spirit

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Saubiya Chasmawala  
Youthisthir Maharjan  
*Muzzumil Ruheel*



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Text by Ranjit Hoskote

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TARQ

F35/36 Dhanraj Mahal,  
CSM Marg, Apollo Bunder,  
Colaba, Mumbai 400001.  
[www.tarq.in](http://www.tarq.in)

## INTRODUCTION

The team at TARQ is thrilled to present the exhibition, 'In Letter and Spirit,' a collection of works by three exemplary artists, whose works each highlight the graphic beauty of text. Saubiya Chasmawala, Youdhisthir Maharjan and Muzzumil Ruheel all come from a variety of contexts, but their work stands united by the intricacy and intimacy with which they approach the idea of text.

Chasmawala, a recent graduate of MS University, Baroda, uses text in her work primarily as symbolic. The letters make no words, and the words no sentences, and allow her to grapple with her identity and ideas of transience through a text that has been inaccessible to her until her college years.

The intricate detail with which New Hampshire-based Maharjan approaches the deconstruction of text in pages of books is impeccable. His collages focus on the materiality of the page, and each of his works examine the notions of erasure and rewriting, completely separating the physicality of the text from its inherent meaning.

Based in Karachi, Ruheel engages Urdu calligraphy to delve into the issues that arise with mundane written narratives and how they operate within history at large. His work questions how we constantly write, and then subsequently present the stories of the past in the present.

Poet, cultural theorist and curator Ranjit Hoskote brings together the works of each of the artists in a beautifully-penned essay, highlighting each individual practice as if this was a collection of three solo exhibitions.

This exhibition would have been impossible without the guidance of Amit Kumar Jain, for which he has our gratitude.

Hena Kapadia  
Gallery Director, TARQ

# IN LETTER AND SPIRIT

- Ranjit Hoskote

But to tell the truth, prose doesn't exist: there is the alphabet and then there is verse, which may be more or less tight, more or less diffuse.

- Stéphane Mallarmé <sup>[1]</sup>

## 1. The Weaving of Secrets

Nothing frustrates and saddens the reader, the lover of language, more than a script she does not know. It speaks in clear, visible but inaccessible ways of a language that lies there, waiting, even demanding to be read; but this is beyond her power, and the mysteries and delights of the language remain padlocked behind what now seems to be a mocking beauty. Illegibility due to moisture, partial erasure, scribal clumsiness: an occupational hazard faced by the archaeologist, the archivist, the translator: this is understandable, and to be treated with stoic pragmatism. Illegibility due to the illiteracy of the desiring reader: sometimes one is caught off-guard in a museum, a bookstore, or the streets of a foreign city, if any city still remains entirely foreign in this epoch of dense connections; sometimes, one keeps a set of books on one's bookshelves because the script is exquisite, the binding and marbled endpapers gorgeous; the books speak to the senses but not the intellect: this is, in a quiet, everyday sense, a melancholy experience.

Start again. To a writer, few things are more sacrosanct than text. Whether written on birch bark, palm leaf, vellum, parchment, or printed on paper of diverse grain and weight, text marks the recording of voice in script. As presence is to image, so voice is to script: its representative, its proxy, its trace, its attempted likeness or avatar. And yet, just as image possesses an unpredictable spirit of its own, and can take on a social life of its own among readers and writers, independent of presence – so too can script escape the mandate of standing in for voice. It has silences of its own, brooding refusals to communicate, occasions of muteness, retreats into untranslatability.

Text is work. To bring voice and script together involves labour. The word comes to us from the Latin *texere*, to weave; *textus*, tissue; *textum*, web, that which is woven. We speak of decisions based on texts, especially canons of law and manuals of juridical procedure, that they may have been more "in the letter than in the spirit" of the text. "Spirit", here, indicates the

animated presencing of the voice; "letter", here, suggests the dead heaviness of the written or printed word. Spirit or voice: emanating from a bodied consciousness at large in the world, can play with levels of intentionality, tonality, the modalities of negotiation, empathy, claim, reassessment, the virtues of observation *a posteriori*. Letter: separated from spirit or voice, loses fluidity, and comes to embody intention, tone, the fixities of judgement based on *a priori* directives. Perhaps this is the price to be paid for the transition we have achieved, through the grand machine of modernity, from orality, through *écriture*, to print.

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So now you stand before a long line in a script you cannot read, a pattern of arabesques. So now you look at a stanza in a script you cannot read, a grid of symbols. The voice you hear when you read falls silent when you cannot read. The script waits for you to embrace it. Or at least you imagine that it waits for you to embrace it. Voice and script wait for each other across a space of unrequited love.

Sometimes they wait for generations, separated by the seal of code, which is the name we give to a language we cannot (yet) read. For centuries or millennia, until chance makes decipherment possible, the seal of the code is broken. Egyptian hieroglyphics, the pictorial script of the Pharaohs, had long eluded understanding; they would not be deciphered until the Rosetta Stone was accidentally discovered by a French soldier digging to build fortifications in Egypt in 1799. A rock stele, it bore an edict of Ptolemy V, dated to 196 BCE, in three scripts: Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic, Demotic, and Ancient Greek. The Minoan script known technically as Linear B guarded the secrets of ancient Crete as the labyrinth guarded the Minotaur, until Michael Ventris cryptanalyzed it. The script of the Harappan seals continues to hold its suitors at bay, although many have pressed their claims.

*Kryptos*, the Greek for 'secret', from which we derive both 'crypt', the subterranean sanctuary where the bodies of the departed may lie undisturbed until the Day of Judgement, and the dyadic moves of 'encryption' and 'decryption', the burial of meaning in code and the exhumation or even resurrection of meaning from code, conducted by 'cryptographers', those who write secrets, writing them into invisibility and also writing them out of invisibility.

An aura of secrecy surrounds the names of vanished scripts, or scripts known

only to initiates in closed circles: Sharada, Takri, Siddham, Grantha. The romance of strangeness attends the names of scripts from diverse ecologies across the planet, of writing systems that question our basic assumptions about script: Avestan, Kharosthi, Kufic, Hangul, Khmer, Mandombe, Kana; and Braille, a script to be read with the fingertips, a script that is not dependent on eyesight, and which breaches the naturalized connection between visibility and readability.

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What do we do with words? Or perhaps: What do words do with us? As elements of speech acts, we know they mark the gap between the form of our rhetoric and our motives for speaking, conscious and subconscious – between, to adapt J L Austin, our “illocutionary intent” and our “performative utterance”.<sup>[2]</sup> Vitality, also, words sometimes provoke us to impatience and agitation: they dramatize the tension between our desire for immediacy of experience – *im*-mediacy, the fullness of being without anything between subjectivity and being-there, doing-that, knowing-this, having-that, no you-and-I or you/ I but you/you – and the unavoidable gestures of artifice, the bearing of testimony through which we, with however fractional or amplified a belatedness, render that experience.

Words remind us of our simultaneous existence in life and language, a doubleness that exposes us to the vulnerability of doubt and self-doubt, the necessity of shifting optics between what we sense and what we say, or think we can say. We live with Bhartrihari’s burden, which the foundational Sanskrit grammarian described memorably in his *Vakyapadiya* (1, 124): “There is no cognition without language; all that we know is shot through with words.”<sup>[3]</sup>

The Sanskrit word for the syllable, the letter, the character is *akshara*. As the erudite novelist, scholar and Sanskritist Roberto Calasso writes, “Etymologists of ancient times understood *akshara* to be that which *na ksharati*, ‘does not flow’ [but the word can also correspond to] the English ‘imperishable’, which, from a certain moment on, was to be the dominant if not exclusive meaning of *akshara*.”<sup>[4]</sup> We may speculate that the two meanings are not distant: that which is not subject to the flux of time, the logic of decay and mortality, does not perish. The script will wait for a voice that can read it. The text has been woven, carries within itself resonances that survive

ignorance and indifference, and can take on multiple avatars. *Akshara* is the perennially renewed monument to Vac, Speech, who is the twinned Other of Prajapati, the Progenitor of the Universe; it is only through the agency of Vac that Prajapati can bring the world into being. We concentrate Vac into the *sutra*, the thread. We tie *sutras* into knots, *granthas*. The knots call out to be untied again in recitation.

In the arts of the Islamic world, an ecumene that has historically stretched from West Africa, across the Mediterranean and West, South, and Southeast Asia, to China, calligraphy enjoys an elevated status. It embodies the word: first, of course, the word of God; and then all manner of words that give sanctity to agreements, expand the imagination, tell of strange lands and customs, register disputes, debates and discussions, elaborate systems of learning, healing and inquiry. But revelation, reason and poetry do not exhaust the potentiality of the calligram, the “beautiful mark”: it releases a sensuousness, makes a claim on our field of affect, when it floats out of its proper context, into the richly decorated borders of a *muraqqa* or album, or crystallizing itself into a figure made from the curlicued or jagged strokes of letters.

The customary explanation for the Islamic emphasis on calligraphy is that it compensates for the absence of the graven image, proscribed by Islam. I would not concur. Not only have Islamic cultures produced splendid images of humans, angels, mythic beings, and even the Prophet himself, respectfully depicted with his face concealed behind a veil of fire, but Islamic calligraphy is possessed of a plenitude, and needs no doctrine of absence, lack or deficit to explain it. The illuminated manuscript is also the illuminating manuscript.

In Platonic, Neoplatonic and Christian thought, the Word enjoys primacy. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (John 1:1). The Greek word for ‘Word’ in the original passage, *Logos*, can also mean ‘idea’: it carries the sense of a disembodied original, whose translation into the world of appearances and flesh, intransience and mortality, will always be treated as a descent, a fall from a primal state of grace. And yet we know it is the body, through its vocal and vocative organs, that expresses the Word. Etymologically, subliminally, the tongue records its presence in every attempt to codify the Word. Glossary, an explanatory, alphabetically ordered list of words: from the Greek *glossa*, tongue. Linguistics, the science of the evolution of language with its various

attendant fields including grammar, syntax, phonetics, prosody, semantics and semiology: from the Latin *lingua*, tongue. And where, in the Sanskrit *subhashitas*, does *vidya*, knowledge, reside? *Jivhagre*, comes the answer: at the tip of the tongue.

The bodied labour of producing language and the material work of producing texts summon up a perennial yet generative conflict between the abstraction of Logos and the sensuousness of articulation, the field of affect, the domain of the body. As Julia Kristeva showed us in her early writings: writing is productivity, the weaving and interweaving of texts is an act of making. And as Roland Barthes reminded us in his late writings: language is also pleasure, an erotic delight we take in the convergence and divergence of the crossing strands of language, in the choreography of encounter and distance played out by signs, their meanings, their shadowy allusions, the secrets they withhold and sometimes conceal in plain sight.

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How much more fraught and complex do these questions become when script becomes material, becomes image, becomes the focus of artisanal reshaping and poetic reinterpretation in the work of an artist? *In Letter and Spirit*, as I like to think of the present conclave of three artists at TARQ, invites us to consider three distinctive approaches to the mysteries of script, the interplay of the unheard or half-heard voice and the deceptive visibility, audibility and palpability of text, the lively give-and-take of language and visibility.

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## 2. Syllable as Suture: On SAUBIYA CHASMAWALA

I do not know this language yet it defines me.

*It is the mirror in which others see me.*

It, or a classical form of it, is the language in which God dictated the Seal of Scripture to the Prophet.

It, or a classical form of it, is the language in which inb Arabi wrote the *Meccan Revelations*, the architecture of domes Bruno Latini would take home to Florence from al-Andalus, and which his student Dante Alighieri would build into his verse cathedral, the *Divine Comedy*.

It, or something like it, is the language in which al-Kindi wrote his measured defence of reason and doubt.

It, or something like it, is the language in which al-Idrisi annotated his comprehensive atlas of the world, the *Kitab al-Rujar*, commissioned by Roger II of Sicily.

It, or something like it, is the language in which ibn Hazm wrote his passionate poetry of love and exile.

It, or something descended from it, is the language in which Ghalib wrote his irreverent poetry of dissent against the cleric, the jurist, the abstinent preacher.

Script has a life beyond scripture.

*How to come unglued from the mirror?* <sup>[5]</sup>

I find script in the strands and knots of fraying fabrics, like Silk Road scrolls.

Script can hide in the unfolded, many-marked folds of the exquisite corpse.

Delicate acts of erasure, subtle re-arrangements. Is that a score for lost music?

Surfaces like half-obliterated scores, found in archives long lost to air and sunlight.

Peeled off, torn. What did I lose?

The telling origins of words. *Ob-literate*. To efface what is written.

\*

Until someone opened the mouth of the wound

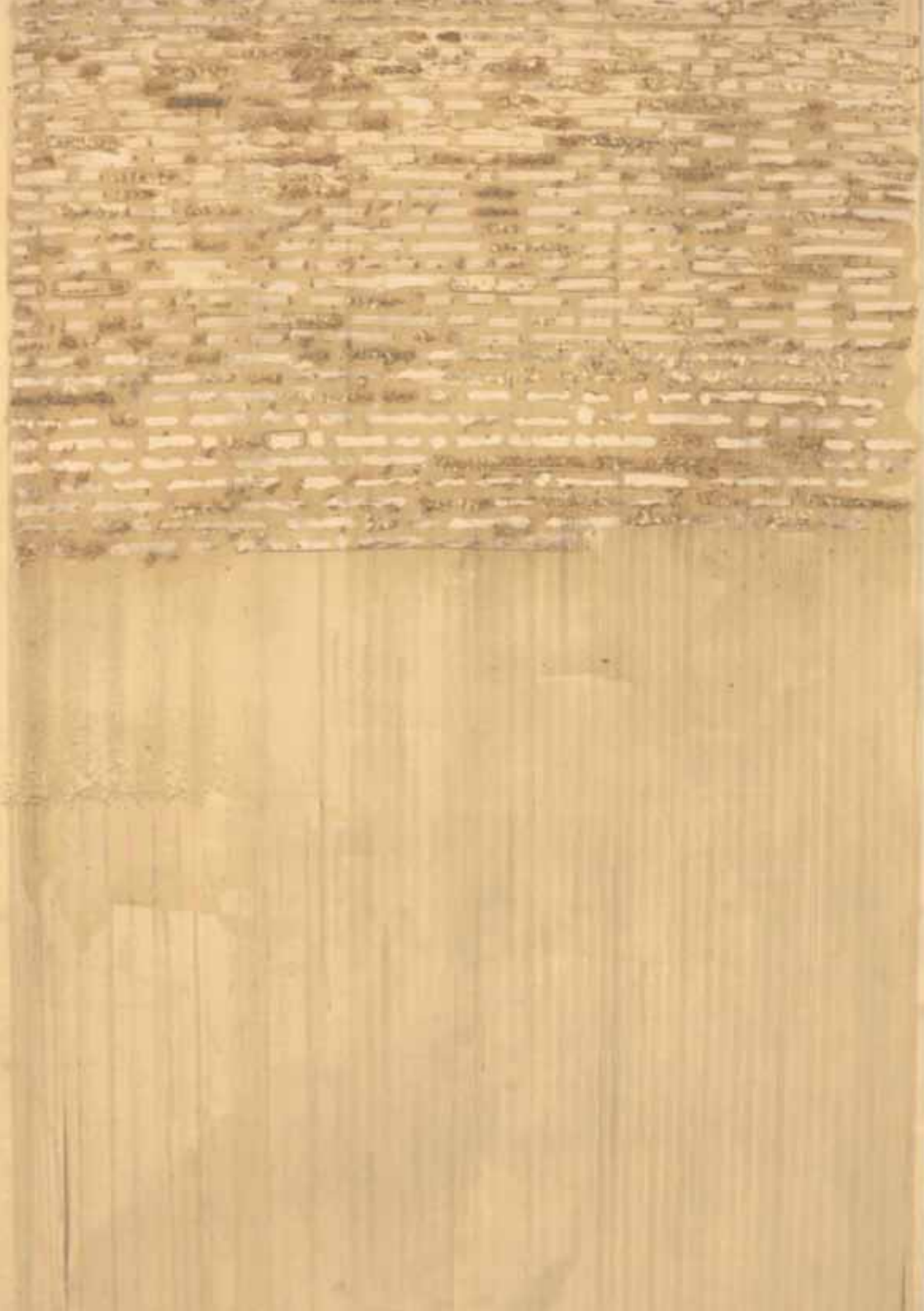
no one could find a way of getting through to you.

- Ghalib <sup>[6]</sup>

The voice as cry of the wound, the syllable as suture. Words stitched into a makeshift path.

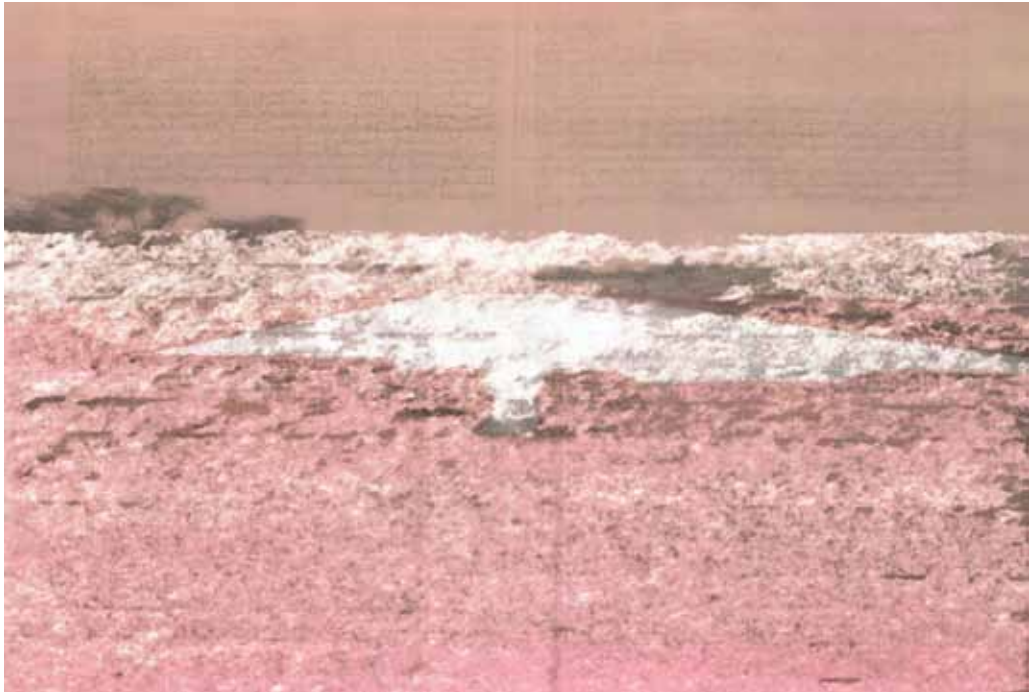


**Untitled**  
Gouache, charcoal and incisions  
13 x 7.25 inches  
2011



**Untitled**  
Coffee, ink, incisions and whitener on paper  
20 x 28 inches  
2014





Untitled  
 Ink, graphite, and coffee on a printed  
 photograph on cartridge paper  
 22 x 15 inches  
 2016



Untitled  
 Thread, gouache, masking fluid and  
 coffee on a printed photograph on paper  
 27.5 x 19.5 inches  
 2016



Untitled  
Ink, masking fluid, and coffee on a printed  
photograph on cartridge paper  
22 x 15 inches  
2016

### 3. Palimpsest as Portrait: On YODHISTHIR MAHARJAN

The printed page does not forget its origins in the forest. The Latin for 'book', *liber*, meant 'bark'; the Latin for 'leaf', *folium*, gives us our 'folio'.

Thrift in an age when paper was difficult to produce and distribute, and was extremely precious, meant that medieval monks in monasteries in Ireland, Germany, Austria and elsewhere had to recycle earlier manuscripts; sometimes, the caprice of the censor, the need for scribal emendation, or editorial intervention played a role too. From these origins come the palimpsests we admire.

The palimpsest records the gestures of superimposed labour that have gone into its making, leaving the layers visible: in some sense, it is an archaeological site.

Text, obscured, eclipsed, superscribed. Partial glimpses of narrative, beneath graphic interventions.

Like looking into once pellucid water through floating grasses, darting fish, bubbles of light.

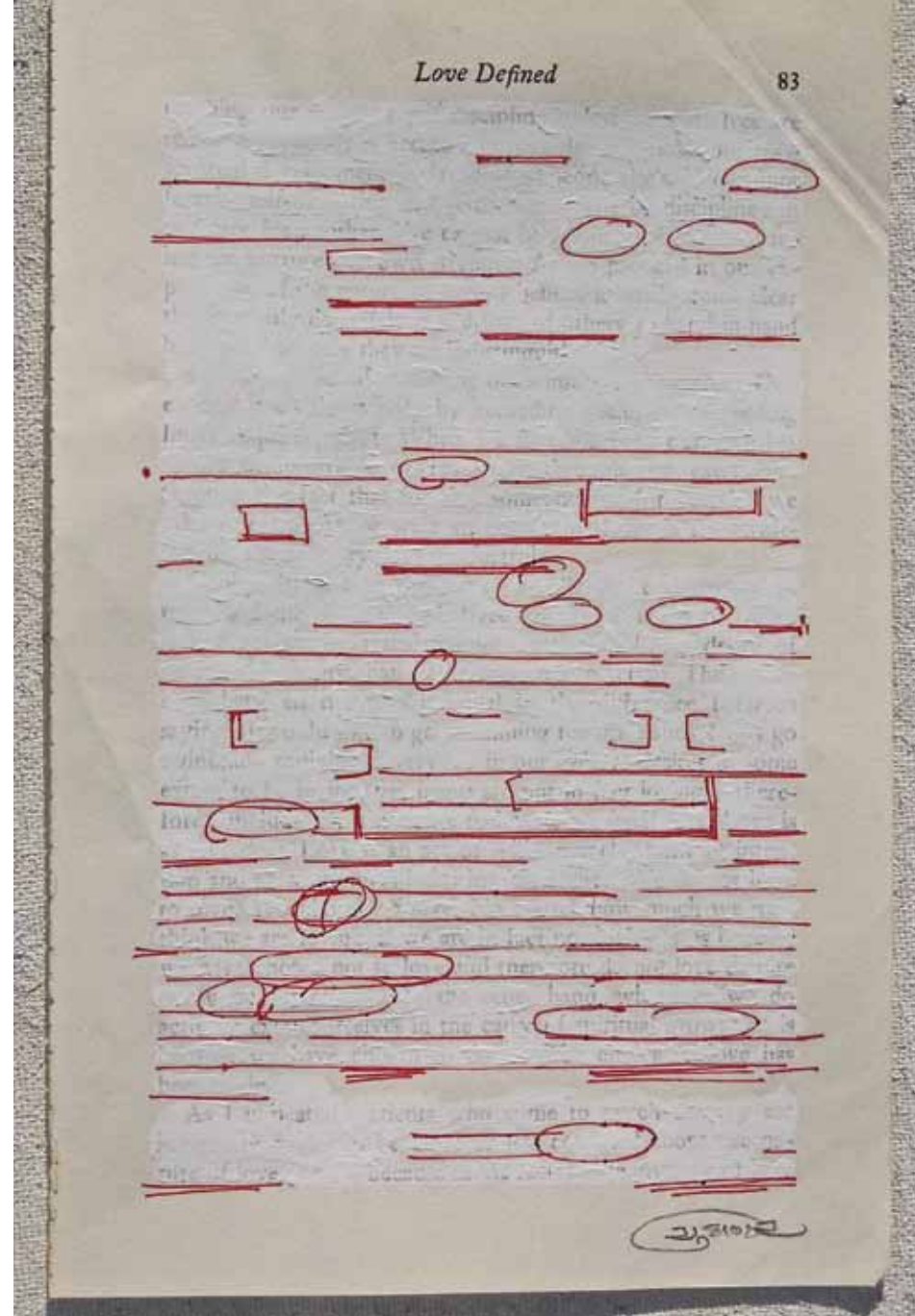
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The collage extends the possibilities of the palimpsest.

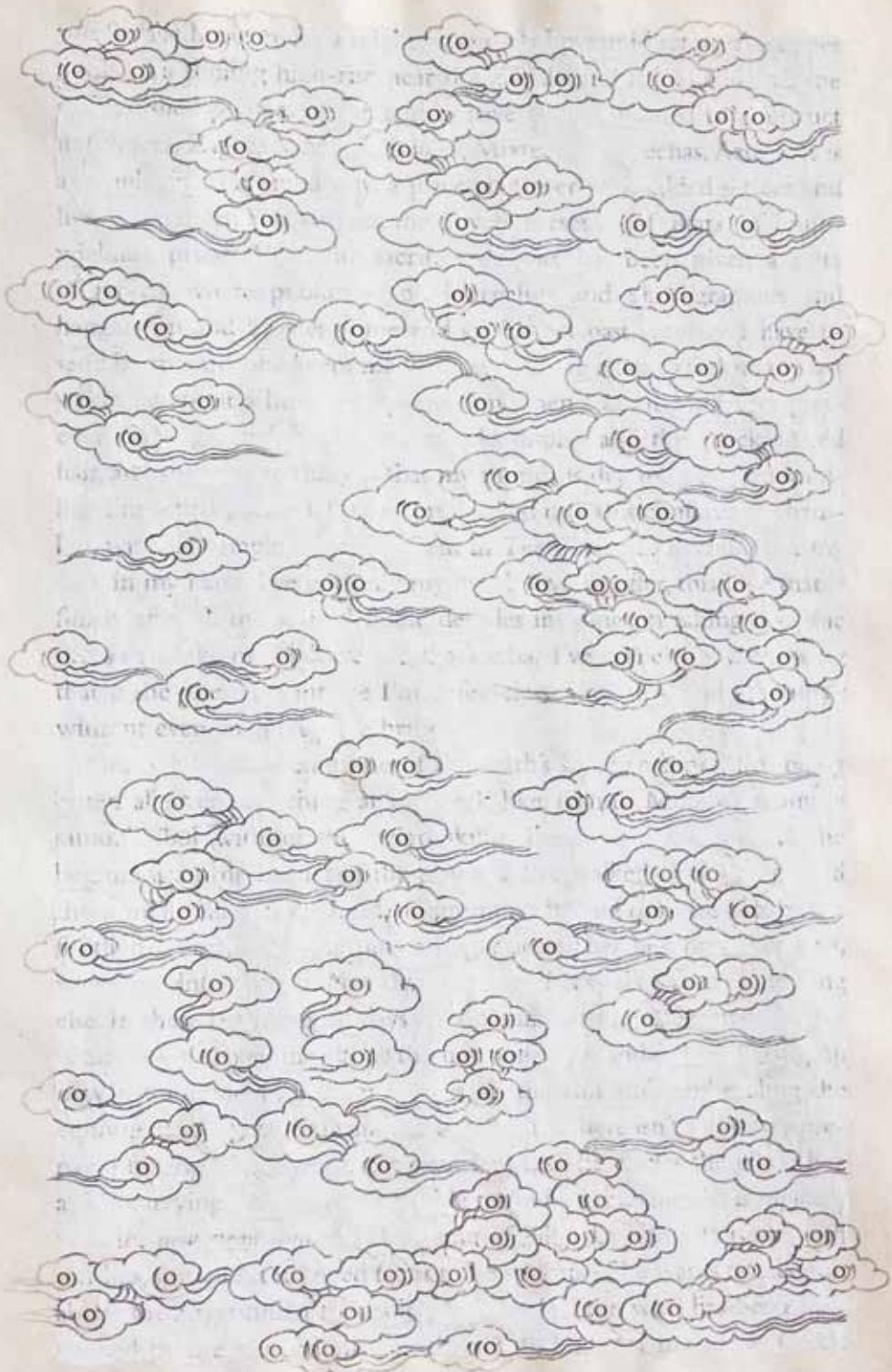
Reminders of the enchantment of an industry in decline, almost extinct: letterpress. Text cut out into stencils: shadow silhouettes of letters. And text cutouts that form themselves into a spun nebula of script at the heart of a page. Star maps: constellations faint and emphatic, on clouded nights and clear. Clouds occupying a continually changing atlas. The spikes of a seismograph, prevailing over an architecture of vanquished sentences.

The editor. The censor. The mathematician. The astronomer. We struggle through their maps and diagrams to discern the passages of fiction, memoir, theory, fragments of which we recognise beneath them.

You ask us to make a difficult choice. In an epoch of censorship, how do we embrace a beauty that defaces enunciation? How do we confront our doubleness, drawn as we are both to the wordless magic of the map and diagram, and to the floating fragments of text they challenge and eclipse? How do we abandon the word? Or do we surrender ourselves to the shape-shifting impulses of the verse that Mallarmé saw in everything that could be read, be pieced together in the play between word and image?



Love Defined  
Acrylic and ink on reclaimed book page  
8.25 x 5.5 inches  
2015



Beneath Her Feet  
Acrylic and graphite on reclaimed book page  
8.25 x 5.5 inches  
2015

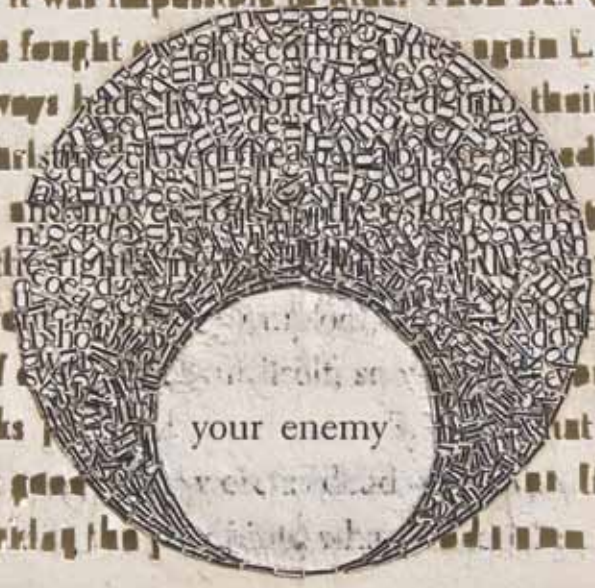
Cozey and the wide hospitality his place was known for. His laugh, his unerring arm, his instinctive knowledge of his guests' needs smoothed over every crack or stumble, from an overzealous argument among staff or a stilly, overbearing wife—ignorant as a plate—to peppy theft and a broken ceiling fan. Bill Cozey's charm and La's food was out. When the ramps ringing the dance floor were rocking in ocean air, when the music was just getting started, when she appeared, dressed in one of her favorite dresses, they would sit knee in knee at the little table, their faces lit with smiles. If a harsh word exchanged much too often, it would be a matter of partners swayed under the stars and didn't mind the occasional emissions because ocean breeze kept them napping on their cocktails. Later in the evening—when those who were not playing what were telling big lies in the bar; when couples were smoking off in the dark—few remaining dancers would do more with outrageous names, names musicians made up to control, confuse, and excite their audiences all at the same time.

Vida believed she was a practical woman with as much sense as heart, more wary than dreamy. Yet she squeezed only sweetness from those nine years, beginning right after the birth of her only child, Wally, in 1962. The denture under way even then was kept invisible until it was impossible to hide. Then Bill Cozey died and the Cozey girls fought over his coffin. Once again L restored order, just as she always had. Her words hit them, their faces stopped them cold. Christine, who had picked up her ridiculous hat and moved to the grave. Standing there, one to the right of Bill's casket, their faces, as different as day and night. Hate does that. Burns off your face, so your grievance is, your face looks like your enemy. That nobody could doubt the best person was dead. If Hilda had any notion of remarking the...



2016

entire, Wally, in 1962. The denture under way even then was kept invisible until it was impossible to hide. Then Bill Cozey died and the Cozey girls fought over his coffin. Once again L restored order, just as she always had. Her words hit them, their faces stopped them cold. Christine, who had picked up her ridiculous hat and moved to the grave. Standing there, one to the right of Bill's casket, their faces, as different as day and night. Hate does that. Burns off your face, so your grievance is, your face looks like your enemy. That nobody could doubt the best person was dead. If Hilda had any notion of remarking the...



Love Your Enemy (detail)

Facing page:  
Love Your Enemy  
Reclaimed Text Cutout Collage  
8 x 5.25 inches  
2016

As each legal checkpoint, the men had the right to stop and search and to install a road block. They were usually accompanied by three uniformed officers standing on the edge of the road with Afghan Kalashnikov assault rifles slung from their shoulders. These were the real police. They would stop us, regulate us as we descended the valley, look inside our car, and



Police, militia, and illegal gangs must be viewed with suspicion and treated with care. The police force in Afghanistan is divided into several units. It is impossible to distinguish the law-abiding from the lawless, for many of them are

The legal checkpoints in the mountains are a constant reminder of the real and police army system that ruled Afghanistan during the days of the Taliban. The Taliban forces, in partnership with the Afghan government, controlled the border with Pakistan. They did fight the Taliban, but they also controlled their people as their subjects, regardless of the law. In all, it was a chaotic and largely corrupt system. They took what they wanted, and there was little room for resistance.

The illegal checkpoints were equally chaotic, run by the local community protected by local militia and supported by their presence of mujahideen, Taliban, and other forces.

It was always difficult to tell the difference between the police,

in brilliant green that appeared fresh and soft in the distance but sparse and brittle in the foreground. It was a contrast to the previous forest full and vibrant. On one side of the road, the mountains rose with standing obelisks, their faces covered in weathered symbols carved by goat and sheep trails. On the other side, the land stretched out nearly flat into the distance. I could see fields of wheat and half-filled fields of corn, yielding locally made cheese, herding their herds to the mountainside.



The road was a mix of dirt and gravel, and the trucks brought their own water. The mountains were a mix of green and brown, and the fields were a mix of green and yellow. The road was a mix of dirt and gravel, and the trucks brought their own water. The mountains were a mix of green and brown, and the fields were a mix of green and yellow.

Every few kilometers I saw another village, a group of houses packed away in the arms of the hills. Some were built on steep sides upon fields. I had never been to these villages, but my driver knew them all. He reported the stability and safety of such as we traveled along. He said of the major towns, though not the minor ones. I could see the signs of Taliban warfare marked with bullet holes, scattered, sometimes burning from piles. These points marked the gates of entry.

In one location, we passed through two distinctly separate scattered clusters of villages situated across a distance. One was the old and the other was the new, two very different Afghan tribes. He told me that for years during the Taliban war, members of the tribes had moved themselves on either side of the river

In the Land of Blue Burqas. Reclaimed Text Cutout Collage. 8.25 x 5.5 inches (each). 2015

#### 4. Script as Shimmer: On MUZZUMIL RUHEEL

*Of these broken words, we build ourselves a wall, a house, a city.  
The calligram is a unit of measurement.  
The word produces its own architecture.*

*These words dance, it is the dance of those wounded by a lightning far more intense than their electricities, those dissolving into the grace of the sublime: raqs-e bismil.*

*Why should script be left to scripture, to the monochrome decrees of jurists, the agitated tenor of posters, the hortatory tone of pamphlets? These characters are emancipated from the chain-link logic of theology, law, science. They form a shimmering chain, sequins in a veil. They can evolve into portraits of individuals known, yet unknown.*

*Or into tropes of shelter and transit. They are not conscripted into spelling language. They have grown wings.*

*Could calligraphy be reclaimed from the “decorative arts”, still a category used in certain museum practices? Could it be transformed into the basis for a new departure in shape-making, a new graphic idiom? A haptic embrace of architecture, locality, circumstances of being, as well as the sensations of intimacy, the textures of tenderness?*

*The detail has been liberated. Why should the fragment carry with it, on its journeys across the world, the entire epic from which it came? It could embed itself into new locales, leave the impress of thought, a fable or an anecdote, on the surface of a fresh mind.*



*They All Said The Same Thing 3*  
Ink on paper (Wasli)  
13 x 9.5 inches  
2016

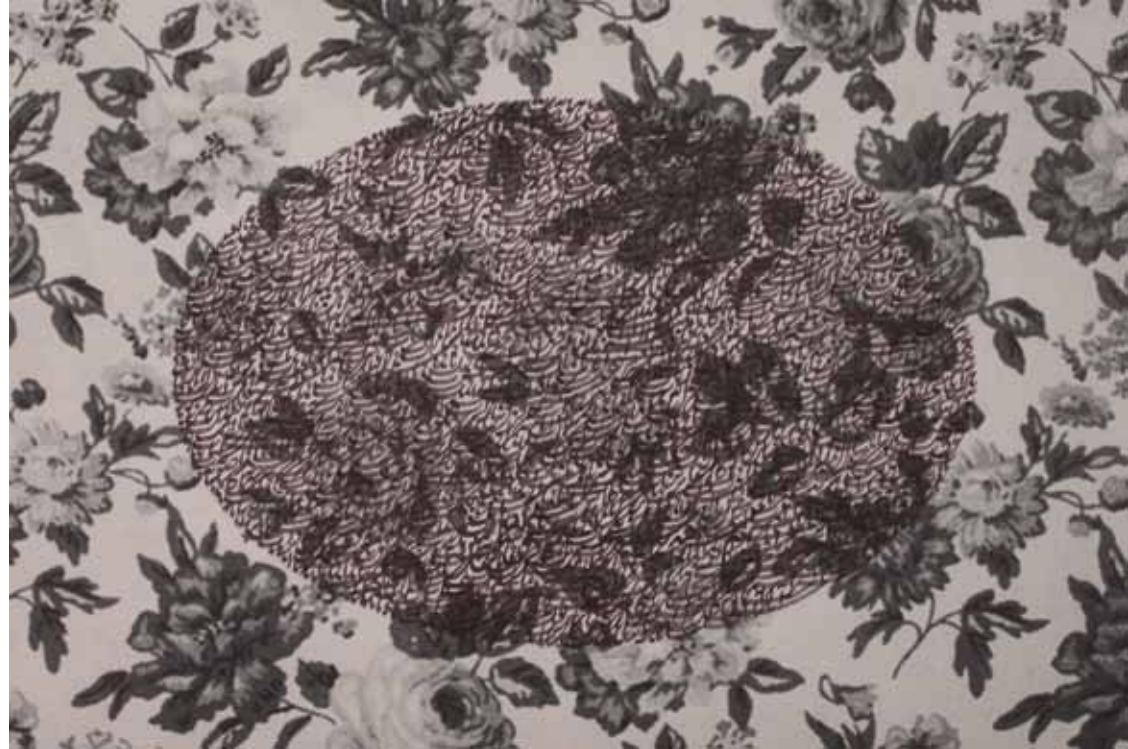


*So Shall Be Written*  
*Acrylic and ink on canvas*  
*56 x 36 inches*  
*2016*





*He Wrote of Their Glory*  
Ink and archival print on paper  
Dimensions variable  
2016



*He Wrote of Their Glory 7*  
Ink and archival print on paper  
5.6 x 8.7 inches  
2016



*By The Sea He Wrote*  
*Ink on acid-free archival paper*  
*13.6 x 11 inches (each)*  
*2016*

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This translation of a passage from Mallarmé's 1897 text 'Crise de vers' is by Tim Parks, and occurs in Roberto Calasso, *Literature and the Gods* (trans. Tim Parks; London: Vintage, 2001), p. 129. See, also, Stéphane Mallarmé, *Divagations* (trans. Barbara Johnson; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University/Belknap Press, 2009).
2. See J L Austin, *How To Do Things With Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955* (J U Urmson and Marina Sbisa eds.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).
3. See K A Subramania Iyer ed. *Vakyapadiya of Bhartrihari with the Vritti: Chapter I* (Pune: Deccan College Publications, 1965).
4. Roberto Calasso, *Literature and the Gods* (trans. Tim Parks; London: Vintage, 2001), p. 159.
5. Roland Barthes, *The Rustle of Language* (trans. Richard Howard; Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 348.
6. This translation is by Ranjit Hoskote. For the original Urdu, see Sarfaraz K. Niazi trans. and ed. *Love Sonnets of Ghalib* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2002), p. 802.

## ARTISTS

**Saubiya Chasmawala** received her Masters in Visual Arts from Vadodara's Maharaja Sayajirao University, Fine Arts, specialising in painting (2015). She interned under the paper-artist Anupam Chakraborty in hand paper-making at the Nirupama Akademi, Kolkata.

In her work, Chasmawala routinely struggles with ideas of identity, using the visual of text to further explore her relationships with her past, and her engagement with various scriptures. Her practice also deals with ideas of the ephemeral and with notions of change over time.

Her works were a part of Emerging Palettes, an exhibition of paintings held at the Srishti Art Gallery in Hyderabad (August 2015), and were also included in Reading Room, a travelling exhibition curated by Amit Jain at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, United Kingdom (October 2015). She was an artist-in-residence at the Blueprint12 Studio, Vadodara (July-December 2015).

She is a recipient of the prestigious Nasreen Mohamedi Scholarship Award (2011-12), and has also been awarded the Inlaks Fine Art Award (2016). She currently lives and works in Vadodara.

**Youdhisthir Maharjan** is an artist based in Henniker, New Hampshire. He received his Masters in Fine Arts from the University of Idaho (2012), and Bachelors in Creative Writing/ Art History from New England College, New Hampshire (2008).

He primarily works with reclaimed text, altering it to create a new language that transcends its humble origin and takes a new life of its own, independent of its prescribed meaning and form. Maharjan's interest lies in the material specificity of text, freeing language from its enslavement to meaning and opening it to new possibilities. Texts from reclaimed books are erased, scraped off, and cut out individually, and pages braided and weaved with repetitive acts of the body, adding a new mark of unmaking/remaking—rewriting. The act of writing and reading thus becomes a performance.

His solo shows include Avernus, Reflections Gallery, Idaho (2011); Swayambhu, Lewis-Clark State College Center for Arts and History, Idaho (2012); The Art of Not Making, New England College Gallery, New Hampshire (2012); Spirituality and Obsession, McGowan Fine Art Gallery, New Hampshire (2014); and Mixed Media Works, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Kathmandu (2015).

Maharjan's works has been exhibited at various group shows including No Printing Necessary, Arizona State University, Tempe (2012); Printmaking/ Bookmaking: Works on Paper, Herrett Museum, Idaho (2013); The Future is Here Again: Visual Language, AC Institute, New York (2015); and Reading Room: Leaves, Threads and Traces, Winchester Gallery (2015). Furthermore, he has participated at the India Art Fair (2016) as well as the Boston International Fine Art Show (2015).

*Muzzumil Ruheel was born in Lahore in 1985. He graduated in 2009 as a visual artist from the Beaconhouse National University, and currently lives and works in Karachi. Ruheel's work is primarily about metaphorical interpretations; investigating perceptions about social to mundane events based on their documented narratives; and examining ambiguous accounts and questionable truths that have generated our history and our stories.*

*Ruheel's solo shows include The alternate life of lies, Canvas Gallery, Karachi (2016); And his beard grew and grew and grew, Rohtas Gallery, Lahore (2015); Letter of apology, (project), Kaladham Museum, Vijyanagar; and ...but some of them never happened?, Canvas Gallery, Karachi (2014).*

*His works have been shown at the Abhisaran booth, India Art Fair (2015); the Young Moscow International Biennial, Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2014); Grosvenor Gallery, London (2014); IEAA Show, Dubai (2014); and Latitude 28, New Delhi (2013). He has also participated at the Abhisaran JSW Residency, Vijanagar, a collateral event of the Kochi Biennale (2014). Earlier, his works have been displayed at Lawrie Shabibi Gallery, Dubai; Wip Konsthall, Stockholm, and were part of several collaborative and group exhibitions such as Still Exotic, Cairo Documenta, Egypt; Space Invader, AICON Gallery, London; Grey Noise, Bastakiya Art Fair, Dubai; Through Other Eyes, shown at the Herbert Art Gallery, the Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Coventry and the Glynn Vivian Gallery, Wales; Parallel Lines, Cartwright Hall, Bradford City Art Gallery and Museum; and Media as Medium, Universität der Künste, Berlin, among others.*

*Ruheel's works are a part of several national and international collections. He is represented by Canvas Gallery, Karachi.*

Ranjit Hoskote is a poet, cultural theorist and curator. He is the author of 30 books, including *Vanishing Acts: New & Selected Poems 1985-2005* (Penguin, 2006) and *Central Time* (Penguin/ Viking, 2014), and the monographs *Zinny & Maidagan: Compartment/ Das Abteil* (Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt/ Walther König, 2010) and *Atul Dodiya* (Prestel, 2014). Hoskote's translation of the 14th-century Kashmiri mystic Lal Ded has been published as *I, Lalla: The Poems of Lal Ded* (Penguin Classics, 2011).

With Ilija Trojanow, he has co-authored *Kampfabsage* (Blessing, 2007; in English as *Confluences: Forgotten Histories from East and West*, Yoda, 2012). With Nancy Adajania, he is co-author of *The Dialogues Series* (Popular, 2011), an unfolding programme of conversations with artists. With Maria Hlavajova, he co-edited *Future Publics: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art* (BAK/Valiz, 2015).

Hoskote has been active as an independent curator since 1993. He curated India's first-ever national pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2011).

He co-curated, with Okwui Enwezor and Hyunjin Kim, the 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008). Hoskote was co-convenor, with Maria Hlavajova, Boris Groys and Kathrin Rhomberg, of the exhibition-conference platform *Former West Congress: Documents, Constellations, Prospects* (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2013).

Among Hoskote's other curatorial projects are two monographic surveys of Atul Dodiya (*Bombay: Labyrinth/ Laboratory*, Japan Foundation, Tokyo, 2001; and *Experiments with Truth: Atul Dodiya, Works 1981-2013*, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, 2013), a lifetime retrospective of Jehangir Sabavala (*National Gallery of Modern Art, Bombay and New Delhi, 2005-2006*), and *Unpacking the Studio: Celebrating the Jehangir Sabavala Bequest* (CSMVS/ formerly the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, 2015). With Nancy Adajania, he is co-curator of *No Parsi is an Island: A Curatorial Re-reading across 150 Years* (NGMA, Bombay, 2012-2013 and NGMA, New Delhi, 2016). In 2015, Hoskote served on the jury of the 56th Venice Biennale.

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Youdhishtirr Mahajan  
*Muzzumil Ruheel*

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