

A black and white photograph of a garden. In the foreground, two large, mature trees with thick trunks stand prominently. The ground is covered in grass and shadows cast by the trees. In the background, a building with several windows is visible through the branches of other trees. The overall scene is peaceful and well-maintained.

Ideas travel faster than light

**Mecklenburgh Square Garden Project, London WC1
26th to 29th September 2020**

Participating artists:

Amikam Toren – Chandan Gomes

Anne Hardy – Sujit Mallik

Calum F. Kerr – Gagan Singh

David Batchelor – Achia Anzi

International Lawns – Vaibhav Raj Shah

Jo Stockham – Tapan Moharana

Naomi Salaman – Charmi Gada Shah

Oona Grimes & Tony Grisoni– Muskaan Singh

Ruth Maclennan – Yogesh Barve

Swapnaa Tamhane – Nilanjana Nandy

Co-curated by Clair Joy and Jasone Miranda-Bilbao

With thanks to the participating artists for their generous contribution to the project and to the Garden Committee of Mecklenburgh Square

© Clair Joy, Jasone Miranda-Bilbao and the artists

Ideas travel faster than light is an ongoing project initiated by Jasone Miranda-Bilbao. It began in 2015 with an invitation to nine artists working in Spain, UK and the US to submit proposals for new works, together with instructions of how to make them, and nine artists based in India to produce them according to their interpretation and understanding. The resulting works became a collaboration between the artists and were exhibited at the NIV Art Centre (New Delhi) alongside a publication that collected the instructions, images of the works and an essay written by Matthew Poole.

The current exhibition, collaborating with the artist Clair Joy as part of the Mecklenburgh Square Garden Project (an annual outdoor event initiated by her in 2012) constitutes the second edition of *Ideas travel faster than light* with Jasone inviting ten artists from India and Clair inviting ten artists/collaborations from the UK and Canada.

The Mecklenburgh Square Garden Project was generated with the attitude of embracing the possibility of making and situating works in the context of the communal garden, deliberately ignoring some of the expected constraints, as a way of seeing things differently. The project explores ideas and approaches that connect to landscape, using a specific theme for each exhibition. The lack of infrastructure, as well as the creative investment of the participating artists, allows for some immediacy and freedom as well as risk. *Ideas travel faster than light* constitutes the fifth exhibition in the garden from a planned series of

six. It brings the idea and question of the complex material connection between places, people and shared space on a global scale to the project.

In his essay Matthew Poole proposes that *Ideas travel faster than light* is a critique of capitalism, an experiment that ‘seeks to explore how art can outstrip or outrun its ideological heritage and current intrinsic make up, because for an object to travel faster than light, it has to jettison that which facilitates its existence’. Jasone Miranda-Bilbao is an artist that lives and works between London and New Delhi. The main idea of the project came to her when she felt she wanted to put artist friends who did not know each other in touch and as a practical solution to the problem of transporting their works across distances on a low budget. This became a matrix of events and things grew from there in response to the possibilities offered by that condition and situation. Since ideas have a level of materiality different to objects that occupy a physical space, they can be lighter cheaper and freer to move. Although at the time of its conception *faster than light* constituted a form of resistance that is the result of Jasone’s way of living and working, the new post Covid-19 situation has amplified some of its aspects and potential and given it an unexpected twist.

As a modus operandi that sets up relations at distance, this exhibition in Mecklenburgh Square Garden could not have been better timed, and yet, it does not claim to point at the injustices of the world nor to offer a solution to the pressing problems that face us. Its relation to

aesthetics and to what lies behind the artwork is somewhat different. It constitutes a relational configuration that stretches and contracts and re-addresses the balance between the work of art and the ideas that lie behind it in a way that does not give authority to the power of one mode of production over the power of the other.

For further information on the Mecklenburgh Square Garden Project please visit <http://mecklenburghsquaregarden.org.uk/art/>, @clairjoylondon.

More on *Ideas travel faster than light* at

<https://jasonemirandabilbao.com/IDEAS-TRAVEL-FASTER-THAN-LIGHT>, @jasonemirandabilbao.

Clair Joy and Jasone Miranda-Bilbao

Achia Anzi

Dear Collaborator,

I hope this message finds you well and safe.

I'm attaching a few images of yellow circle drawn by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in order to ensure social distancing. As you might have guessed nobody really gives heed to these circle. But this, I believe, does not mean that they have no purpose. In fact their role is crucial: they dispel the most terrifying aspect of the coronavirus, namely its invisibility. There are many other, more obvious signs of the corona (masks, globs etc.), but I'm personally interested in the more abstract and subtle emblems. In short, this is not a set of instruction but an invitation to think together about the (global) visual culture of the corona and later to translate this research/thoughts into artworks of various forms.



Achia

Chandan Gomes

The Covid-19 pandemic was an opportunity to build solidarities between people, societies and nations; to resolve conflicts. However, the opposite is happening in two of the largest democracies in the world – America burns, while India is witnessing a humanitarian crisis in relation to its migrant population. These are paradoxical times. Hence, my instruction is a call to respond to the Zhuang Zhou Paradox, also known as the Butterfly Dream.

“Once Zhuang Zhou dreamt he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn't know he was Zhuang Zhou. Suddenly he woke up, and there he was, solid and unmistakable Zhuang Zhou. But he didn't know if he were Zhuang Zhou who had dreamed he was a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou.”

Chandan Gomes

Charmi Gada Shah

Description of artwork

I propose the artist to make a maquette /scale model of the façade from the photograph (attached) which I had clicked long time ago when I was studying in



London. The artist could use any desired materials to make the model. I, myself have made a scale model of this façade and also blown it up on another façade (below are the pictures).

For me, the photograph was the only medium of reference, a reference which had no sense of scale; its former appeal as a strange architecture for a foreign viewer resulted in losing it's sense of scale and context. Hence the freedom was generated to play on its outline.

I can share the photograph of my scale model if needed but at the moment it would be really interesting if the artist created his/her own scale model independent of any references other than the photograph. It will be particularly interesting that this photograph is going back to its original location from where it came and an artist from there will re- interpret it.

Wishing you all the best.

Gagan Singh

Instructions:

To Walk:

I would like you to walk, to create walks in between walks, to find walks in between doing and non doing, between sleep and being awake, between performances and non performative moments, between writing, thinking, creating and eating, going to the market, to the other room, to another place, between two places where you go and CREATE SPACE, walk between two these two places.

Regards Gagan

Muskaan Singh

शहतूत के पत्ते /Shahtoot leaf अभीभीशङ्कु आतीबसंतम- एकसमयहै,

शहतूत केपेड़ोकोरेशमकेक9ड़ेसेदफनानेके>लये! उनके
जीवनकापहलासमय,

तबवहहरेपीलेरंगकोचनु तीहैं... वह उसे नयी रची सभा कहती है ,

रेशम के क9ड़े शहतूत के यवु ा पEFयG को काटते हा।

फशL पर उनक9 छाती पारदशN हो जाती है , सील और अंदर से
भर जाता है।

सPदयG हमारे Qवाद म- भारR बदलाव के बावजतू , हमारे पवू LJ
रेशम के क9ड़े बन गए ह...।

यवु ा शहतूत के पFे पर गोलR मारता है।

सब Sबना मँहु भी उभर रहा है।

ग-दे खलु R और परु R तरह से अकVMWद है।

अंगठू ा कोई भी बना सकता है,

जो हमारा वजन करता है। कभीसबसेसंदू रनहरंसनु ा...

एक हरJ जगह एक हरJ जानवर का सामना, जैसे कोई घर के भीतर
का शरR।

Silk. Worm. Culture And. BlueBerry Leaf

Even now there is a moment In the beginning of spring To bury the silkworm within the blueberry tree

That first moment in their lives
when they chose the yellow green. Colours

She calls it the communion, first When the silkworm bites into the Young leaf

On the field they stretch out transparent, a little moist from within

Through the ages
through changes in our tastes not so cultivated
our ancestors, collective
have turned into silkworms as the young shoots bullets Into the
equally young Blueberry leave

All without mouths within faces are flowering. This
when the petals open
and are wise in that expanded moment. Filled with wisdom

Anyone can become that thumb that shall weigh us
have not heard of that beauty of confronting the beast

in its own space
As of that body lying in its own home Worm and its culture

Translated by Sanjog Sharan

Dear Artist,

Making a new work with my instructions, Please make a work
inspired in my poem, using (whatever material you like)

Thanks & Regard Muskaan Singh

Nilanjana Nandy

Instructions:

Take the question of

How to depict time and love

as the core of the work and with regard to the

- Anatomy of love and lovers through the time immemorial to love in times of corona

The work may use abstraction or representation

The work should be drawing based but using but an idea of drawing that is open to any material and open to the idea of drawing being conversational and participatory

Lovers

Please don't rush to April

Let the Simul (Bombax ceiba/ cotton tree) become leafless But blossom into red

Then by March, Bougainvillias will turn into colour of িআবর (colours of Holi/ गलु ाल) and slowly emerges April,

Mid or end of April comes Amaltas (Cassia fistula) Not to forget red lilies/Easter lilies around Good Friday

Not to miss few Jacaranda trees here and there, very rare and the common Gulmohar

I've lost the discipline of sleeping on time. What to do? Any thoughts?

Why are we scared of our minds and bodies reacting organically?

Surprisingly, I used to be at the gallery every day. Some days I used to reach even before lunch. But I wasn't there the day you came looking for me :)

I was intrigued by the way you said - to be or not to be able to find one's own centre

Seems like the wall behind your bed is like inside a fort or a castle. Dark, maybe a prison cell and we are somewhere outside

Reason to deliberate or an open puzzle- depends upon where you leave it!

Sujit Mallik

Instructions-

Fill the gaps with new holes.

grow green and roam around . roam around and roam around. No way to return back. Places disappear from the ground, and I roam around. Just roam around and can find the same place again and again without knowing why coming to same place again. Roam a bit more and will find the reason of coming back. I found one. One body, one ground, sometimes both come together. All the walks you are able to manage are on one ground, the earth, the one walk-able ground. On that ground there are many holes. Those directly connect the ground to one. One to many.

Thank you.

Tapan Moharana

My day to day life experiences are the great resources of my artistic practice. I presently live and work in *Ghitorni*, a village near the Gurgaon/Delhi border. A very dry and dusty city filled with fast growing developments and troubled by poor quality of life, political tensions, and water shortages among many other things. I keep documenting my daily life experiences here in my locality particularly the physical, social, political and economic. I grew up in Odisha, near the south-eastern coast of India within the family of a temple sculptor and later in my life I moved to Kolkata to study. My journey as an artist took me to many different and busy cities in



India. Since 2017 until now my work has focused on a project I call ***“stories of shape-shifting; the prospect of the unsettled man”***.

For this project I keep creating small toy like sculptural objects. I believe toys are the perfect mirror to our society. Playing with toys is considered to be important when growing up and learning about the world around us. This work started from an urge to capture my observations in clay. Like symbolizing my glimpse of everyday life in a lump of clay inside my palms.



Clay is to me a very appropriate medium for story telling in the project, as it is instantly malleable and expressive, and is visually accessible to viewers. The work illustrates different stories of the socio-political issues that surround me.

Recently I have made a number of photographs which document this critical time of separation in our social landscape. Images that depict people standing in circles drawn with chalk on the floor waiting to go in to grocery stores etc. The social isolation is not only distancing one another but also bringing many of us to extreme economic downfall. I saw these circles as ‘zeros’ that tell stories.



Instructions:

I share all these aspects of my ongoing personal thought and interpretation of Zero with a participating artist there. He/ she can produce a work on the theme and concept of Zero, through storytelling and coupled to economical, social, political experience.

A Make a number of toy-size figures of approximately 6 to 8 inches size with clay, use found objects or small LED lights to cast shadows or make ‘holes’ (zeros) in the clay.

B Place them on the floor as a ‘human queue’ like a garland of flowers.

Yogesh Barve

Please follow the details:

‘Annihilation of Caste’ is an undelivered speech written in 1936 by DR B. R. Ambedkar who fought against the country's practice of untouchability. It was later self-published by the author.

Yogesh Barve started a YouTube channel 'Dalit poetry And Literature' at the end of 2017 as an ongoing project. Dalit poetry And Literature: The impact of globalization on culture and literature is quite significant. And as even more ideas and beliefs are spread to more parts of the world through information technology and has a wider access, what has been traditionally defined as culture and literature begins to undergo a change as newer understandings are integrated into traditional conceptions of good. This in turn kind of creates a sort of new vision of what culture encircles and how literature is reflected into it. Along with globalization, it is nearly impossible to stop the spread of ideas, for its very nature brings to light the inter connectivity of all individuals. And due to this, the changing conceptions of literature and culture are almost bound to happen in the mind.

Instructions:

- To read whole text 'Annihilation of Caste'.
- How, when and where is the reader's choice. Keeping in mind the state of affairs from the written speech's point of view.

Vaibhav Raj Shah

Instructions:

Correct an image or assumption from your past and render your updated vision of that person/event/place/thought/experience/etc.. in relation with a current self portrait.. as a diptych.

Regards Vaibhav