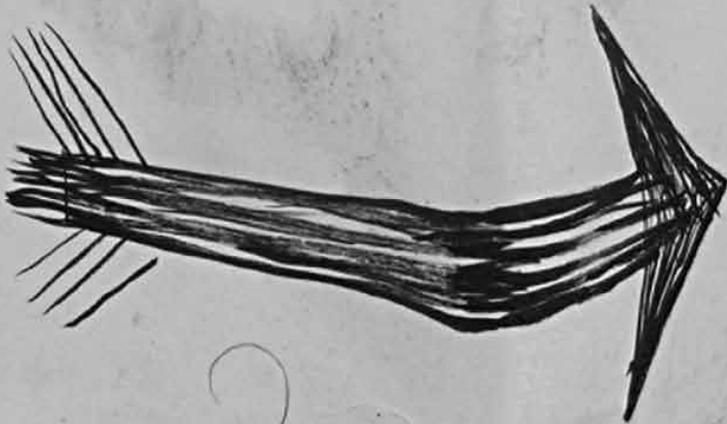


# City as Studio<sup>2</sup>

Hello! | 4.11.11 | Harkat@Sarai | Greetings from Vishwajyoti Ghosh | Introduction | Proposal | Invitation to my solo show: PERMUTATION at Nature Morte, Nov 12 2011 | Augmenting Practices: Experiments from IFA-KHOJ residency | My Bangalore Performance | Intro | Dates for Studio Residency in Delhi | Jyoti's essay on Curatorial Practice | Kushwant Singh's Delhi | Some Perceptions | Greetings to New Members | A Book Review | \$ | A belated Introduction | Image via Inder | (no subject) | Wang Gungwu: The Future of Secular Values | M F Hussein Gallery available to us | Art +/- Issues | Introduction | 10th Nov: Harkat@Sarai | Thoughts of Claire Bishop | Photo sharing | 'Artists against AFSA' Events – Dec 9, South Bombay | Tilted Arc (Serra) + Allan Kaprow | Harkat@Sarai 10th Dec | Don't touch the work of art | Harkat@Sarai 24th Dec | Kashmir Points Charlie | Delhi Metro Image's Text | Me in Images from Vivan's Gagawaka on 18th | Some resources and debates | More dates | Intro Meeting | Archaeology | First step towards CAS 2 | Project @ city as studio | WHAT IT IS? | Art Asia Archive seeks Full-Time research assistant for India | 2012! | Emptiness | 11th Feb Harkat@Sarai | Reading at SH | Open call for artists | Lavaris Vastu Donation | Happy New Year | Delhi Smells | Coming Weeks | Essays from Al Jazeera | Meet the poet: Khalid Mir: Event at Sarai 18th Jan | Hi | 23rd January meeting at Sarai | [Sarai Newsletter] Film Screening: New York Conversations with Anton Vidokle | CFP: ENVISION: Collaborations of Art, Analysis and Activism | (no subject) | Almost Island: Issue 7 | Random Thought | General | Talking about Beards | Laughing Performer | Perceptions of Dangerous Delhi | 27th 6pm (khoj live 12) | Re: coming days | Coming Weeks | Saturday 11 5ish | Possible site visit to Jor Bagh | More details | Remake of my song 'Bandha' | Exhibition walk through: Raking Leaves Special Editions 2008-2011, Project Jan Path | Young-Hae Chan Heavy Industries | List of Ideas | One day just for Performance Art | Neha Kathak at home | Fiesta | Glasgow 1871 but Delhi slum like | Next Week | Invite to online library | Maruti | Strolling | Tomorrow (Monday) 4pm: Saket Metro Station | Artists books | "We know every inch of the Nation, because we map every inch of it" | "Nafsay Khais" Delhi Export Quality | Conversation with a rickshawallah | The Object of Zionism | (no subject) | DDA has a fancy new website | Performance – Video | Fragments | Text as Bicycle | Understanding Double Burial: City as studio as sign | The floor under City as Studio | Fragments | How to feel miserable as an artist | Submission call for: "The Four Quarters Magazine"

City









*( Written in response to a debate on naming the CAS II Exhibition)*



This is not an attempt to document our process.  
This is not structured.  
This is not a mapping.  
This is not defined.  
This is not understood.  
This is not media-specific.  
This is not performance.  
This is not rooted in art history.  
This is not conventional.  
This is not political.  
This is not personal.  
This is not territorial.  
This is not theatrical.  
This is not discourse.

This is not autonomous.  
This is not critique.  
This is not representation.  
This is not slippage.  
This is not an exhibition.  
This is not an artwork.  
This is not a production.  
This is not curated.  
This is not finished.



This is not here.



## **Snippets of Conversations and Silences**

When projects or workshops of this sort end, the immediate reaction in trying to document something of this nature is to try and offer a prescriptive story; a report of sorts with a traditional start, middle and end. Sometimes however, the very nature of this reportage is that it tends to spoon feed, summarise, distil and dictate to the reader what happened. And sometimes that tends to be a little drab and reductive.

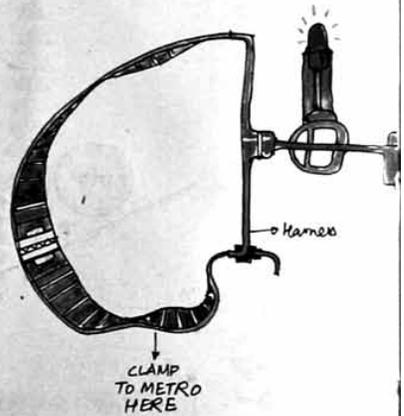
When conversation and conceptual thinking meet, there isn't usually a way of finding a start, middle or end; rather a thread of ideas seems to weave and wend upon itself leaving us with a tangled, cross-pollination of thoughts that you could disassemble and put on a page.

To gain some idea of what went on one might have to be a fly on the wall—catching at snatches of discussion; tuning in and tuning out of what was said, what was meant and what was understood; what was a starting point that sometimes led to clarity or to nowhere in particular—and being okay with that. A sense of what really went on would come from some sort of immersion through imbibing the essence of those discussions in their raw state. Being part of a group that seemed to sidestep prescription of how to think, act and understand the concepts being discussed, to try and sum up what happened during those days would certainly cheat the reader out of what really went on.

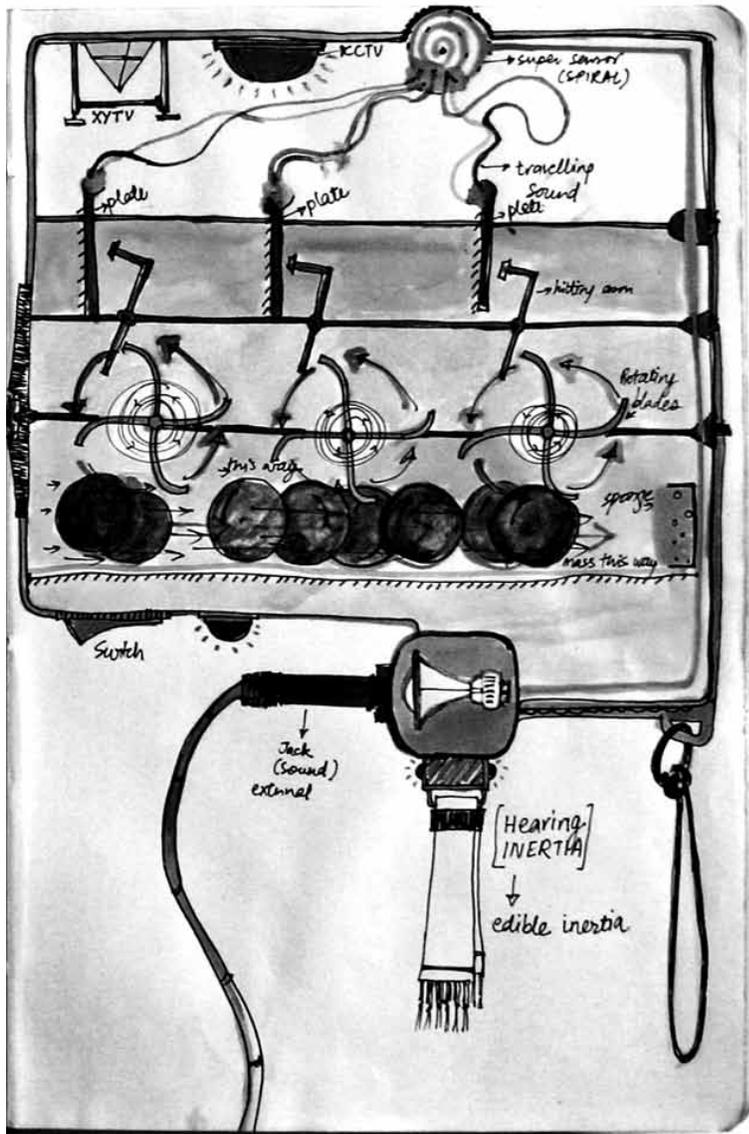
To get a sense of the free thinking and volatility of direction during this residency, I've tried to throw in snippets of dialogue with glimpses of the artists; self-descriptions, neat summaries and unfinished ideas so that what you get is a sometimes illuminating insight into how abstracted, tangential thinking of this sort often rejects boundaries and constrictions; beginnings, middles and ends. Also, I have purposely not attributed the conversational quotes to one particular individual, but rather left them as a representation of one collective voice. In all, I hope that from the way that I have woven these stories together, you are brought in and out of the conversations and silences, as perhaps anyone who happened to have had the privilege of being there—like many a fly on the wall.

**Jyoti Dhar**  
*City as Studio II*  
(Oct 2011–Jun2012)





what is the meaning  
of calculating inertia?  
This way of looking  
at the world is  
rather archaic / old.  
etc. Newton made this.  
where.



## CITY AS STUDIO II EXHIBITION AS DISCUSSION .....

### DATE

28th February 2012

### TIME AND PLACE

*A few days after the exhibition “EXB: City as Studio II,” which showcased works-in-progress and a series of live performances, City as Studio II’s fellows, mentors and auxiliary members convened in Sarai’s cozy basement. Surrounded by freshly made artwork, we ruminated, questioned and contextualized much of what we had experienced and observed over the last few weeks together.*

*Prior to the gathering (as part of our online city-as-studio group discussions where we shared ideas and interesting texts) some members had suggested reading one of Martha Rosler’s essay series.*

*We wanted to look at whether some of Rosler’s more extensive ideas on art and urban theory gave insight to our reflections on the CAS II exhibition and residency process.*

### Ground

In her essay series “*Culture Class: Art, Creativity, Urbanism*” eminent artist and writer Martha Rosler looks at how art and its various economies have played a significant role in the history of urbanization since the early 1950s. From post-war reconstruction to present day, Rosler traces the evolution of ‘the idea of the city’—from being an originally political construct, to it changing to that of an industrial hub, and then a post-industrial metropolis.

She examines the implication and movement of art-related wealth in these changing stages. What emerges is an intriguing notion of there being a “creative class” that contributes to the shape of urban economies and planning. Rosler talks of the gentrification of particular city districts, such as New York’s SoHo in the 1980s, which followed the arrival of artists, art-industry professionals and art-related markets.

As part of our final CAS II discussion, we began by looking at Rosler’s analysis of the creative class and its relationship with the contemporary urban setting.

We asked ourselves: How, if at all, do any of Rosler’s broader ideas relate to our current context of Delhi?

## Conversation

### *Gentrification and Panchayats*

The gentrification process currently taking place in Delhi's urban villages and other pockets of the city may be more complex, slow-going and less visible when compared with major contemporary European or American cities. Still, these potential shifts of class and wealth into certain areas of the Indian capital and the factors that feed into them may be interesting for us to consider. For example: How do recent changes in the real-estate and character of urban villages such as Hauz Khas village and Shahpur Jat relate to the idea of a cultural class or an arts economy in Delhi?

"I believe that Hauz Khas village used to be a kooky, artsy neighbourhood. Then when the malls came in, around the '90s, everyone shifted to them. Now, that same target audience has had enough of malls and

is coming back to the unique, boutique-y nature of Hauz Khas village. Maybe that's why you've seen it develop again recently and the prices of real-estate have shot up?

Hauz Khas village has definitely changed in character; earlier it did not have such a cultural mix—but it was never 'non-gentrified' as such.

Yes but they still have villagers that live there. Initially the villagers were very upset about the smoking and drinking etc. when TLR (The Living Room restaurant and bar) opened. The 'panchayat' (traditionally a chosen assembly of five elders from the village) had a say in it.

Does that panchayat system still function then?

No, now I think it has become RWA (Resident Welfare Association) regulated and a lot more money has come in. It's completely changed, people have been priced out.

According to Rosler, the concept of gentrification dates to the early '80s, when cities went from manufacturing to financial hubs. It was about the

corporate class coming in and asking, 'How do we entertain people?'—So in terms of husbands having golf and wives having museums, music and restaurants. **That's where this idea of culture as a commodity started to come in.**

Shahpur Jat (where our CAS II studio was located) has had publishing boutiques and independent publishing houses here for years, like Zubaan, Tulika, Tatkar, Ramayana, Penguin etc.

The interesting thing about Shahpur Jat is that at the time of the MCD sealing (in 2006 when commercial enterprises within residential neighbourhoods in Delhi were told to move out) it was one of the few places different to (other kinds of) mercantile communities that came under pressure.

It's always had this small-scale, semi-cultural, almost alternative feel to it. But now Shahpur Jat also seems to have a real back-end feel; a lot of musicians, artists and designers have their studios there—which is a recent phenomenon."

## *The Constructs of Creative Communities*

Rosler talks about how 'cultural districts' in cities are often formed in response to the development of localised urban economies, and how this in turn impacts our understanding of culture. She also challenges the notion that 'taste' and supposedly intrinsic reactions to 'culture' are our own, and instead proposes that these are merely expressions of predetermined constructs, such as our socio-economic class.

Given the supposedly pre-fabricated nature of such urban social and economic systems she asks: What does it mean to call oneself an artist and to operate within a city's cultural framework?

"You think you have original feelings, such as desire or horror and then you realize, through reading Rosler's text, that maybe you're trained to feel this way. She talks about a time when the (US) government didn't want people to be politicized (in the 1950s) so they started investing in very formal art, like abstract

expressionism. In situations like this the implication as an art worker, and the flow of money, is very important to understand.

She says that more people are calling themselves artists than ever before. It's very interesting who gets included in this term "creative class," for example it includes all gay people(!) **So it's almost like being a creative or an artistic person is no longer linked to a set of practices, but more about temperament or lifestyle.**

This is where Hauz Khas village comes into play, looking at this idea of what it means to have a creative class. How does this concept fit into and interact with the structure of the city, with particular reference to economic factors and other vested powers? Is there such a thing as a creative class or is this just fiction? And how does this particular class emerge as a force?

Well, Rosler says that an artist's way of coming to terms with being a wealth-producer is to produce art that often strives to

aspire to very liberal, political ideas of justice and equality. In the same text, Richard Florida implies that the creative class is certainly progressively minded, spiritual and follows a certain kind of politics.

The larger notion is that art is a sort of sub-set, and can be expanded to an 'artistic mentality' which can apply to anyone. Rosler also puts forward terms such as "knowledge worker" and "symbolic analyst" which are further ways of expanding upon this idea of art.

**These sorts of ideas raise doubt in the field of art; it makes the discourse around art self-conscious**—which is the same discourse within which City as Studio functions. So for example, when you come into this space, do you become an artist?"

## *City as Studio as Structure*

Bearing some of the ideas discussed above in mind, we pondered the question: How do we in CAS II place ourselves within these disrupted understandings of urban theory, politics and creative production? How do we see ourselves in relation to the 'alternative forms of knowledge' we hope to contribute to as a creative community? What is it about the artistic process that differentiates it from the methodology of ecology, architecture or feminism? And what exactly is the relationship between us (the personal) and our domain (the public)?

**“One theme that seems to run through a number of the projects, explicitly or implicitly, is the whole question of space; the creation, demarcation and appropriation of it.**

There's seems to be a fluid sense of the city, whether it's using the studio in Shahpur Jat or walking through Nehru place; being aware

of the different economies existing there. Even that day in Gurgaon ([link to page 63](#)), we actively looked at the spatial transformation and architecture. So you're traversing all these grounds of knowledge, and producing something as an artistic form in response to that.

This idea came up in relation to Rashmi's work, who was producing something very specific related to gender and public space: **What is the difference in producing something as an artistic body and as a gendered body?**

How is that different to the knowledge, for example, that Jagori (a Delhi-based NGO that works towards empowering women) would produce?

Or how does Pratik's project, which essentially creates an ecological system, relate to other eco-projects or biodiversity parks in the city? How are these artistic projects approached differently to those examples and therefore how is our response as the audience different?

The notion that you could start off with a question of dust and end up with a huge pile of hair, the fact that it doesn't have to be explained directly—is that what makes this process artistic?

For me, even if you do think you're neutral, you're coming from a certain idea of knowledge that values neutrality—which goes back to the importance of signs, the value attached to intellect versus emotion, and divisions of masculinity/femininity etc. I don't know whether it is possible to be neutral and not bring yourself into the work, and I don't know what is wrong with that.

The art-world's problem with anything personal seems to relate back to this division of what is personal and what is public. So you have this whole area of knowledge which is personal—so you mourn personally, you are ill personally, you love personally and you undergo violence personally. But when it comes to art, there seems to be a problem with talking

about these things. **It's been anaesthetized, it's all Post-structuralized—so you can talk about the personal, as long as you link it to other things.**

But how do we understand the field of art? This comes back to one of the questions the Rosler essay throws up — the idea of art and where we fit into it.

One thing Rosler says is that the only autonomous art is the art of critique.”

### *History of the Medium, Technicality and Communication*

Within this CAS II context we asked ourselves, can just about anything and everything be considered art? How do we begin to form baselines from which to begin critiquing, analysing or simply engaging with such art? Can there be standardised frameworks of art theory or technical practice that can be applied to evaluate all artists and artworks? How

do our own experiences and biases affect the way we view or respond to art?

“There are certain things I've seen in Sarai or CAS II which you may not see elsewhere. Some artists do not anchor themselves in the history of the medium, which is very liberating—but how do we expand on this? Do we need to expand on it?

If anything can be art, is there a methodology wherein you can say, there will be meaning at the end of this process? Or can it be completely meaningless?

For me, it has to come back to the aesthetics at some point; the visual aspect of art. I felt Rashmi's work was one of the most powerful and resonant of the whole exhibition because it was executed so well, visually and technically, the ideas were conveyed well. It was interesting because it made me question: **Would I have found the work as interesting if I hadn't been part of these CAS II conversations and been privy to the background story?**

I was asking myself the same thing. How would I have responded or read the works if I had not known certain things about people, heard previous conversations or been part of the set-up?

I think there was an intimacy that was present in this exhibition, because of the way it was put together and in the non-explanation—it created a different kind of space.

I'm trying to work out this discomfort I feel about the idea of technicality; technical proficiency seems to contain within it the idea of mastery, training and a certain professionalization. Not that it (technical proficiency) shouldn't be part of the work, and not that it doesn't help to communicate...

...but even the word 'communicate' is problematic. [There's this famous poet who says, "If you want to communicate, just use the telephone."](#)

## *New Modes of Practice— Exhibition as First Draft*

There was something unquantifiable about the CAS II process that encouraged almost all who participated in it to experiment and allow for failure within their work. This in turn led to a re-evaluation of one's own known methods and understandings of practice. Because the exhibition took place halfway through the residency period, almost all the works could be seen as 'works-in-progress' and the resulting exhibition as 'a first draft' of sorts.

"What I found really interesting about the exhibition was that **pretty much everyone moved towards a new direction, into a zone of uncertainty**—probably more so than last year. There's a risk of failure and definite technical issues that come up as part of new forms of practice. I think that's almost the opposite of mastery—and there's a certain beauty in that.

I had this notion that a lot of it could be understood **as a first draft of an exhibition; forms of**

**disconnect and scattering were present.** So if you did a second draft, it would produce a clearer idea, but there would also be much that would be lost in that process.

So would the fair copy be better or worse than the first draft? Would it be less alive in some way?

For me, it's not about mastering or technical expertise, but about respect of a particular form and an internalization that takes place through continuous engagement with it. When you achieve that level of perfection, the medium vanishes.

Did you feel you were working with a liminal form or in a new mode?

I was working with a completely new form and I was very aware of that. Part of the kick was in knowing that I was trying something different; it was very indulgent. I've never done a photo series like that and it allowed me to see the possibilities of photography.

There are the beginnings of dialoguing with a new form,

versus something further down where it's more intimate—for me both of those things are interesting.

The idea that it doesn't have to be a finished product does give you more leeway, it produces a more messy idea. And the exhibition is about showing people that process but not trying to explain it—because to explain it you have to know it really well yourself.

Also this isn't a museum or a gallery where things are prepped up and there's paratext for you to be able to locate and possibly evaluate the work.”

### *Audience Completing the Work—The Art Context*

Beyond our closed, privileged CAS II conversations, it was important to see how our sense of practice changed once we allowed an audience to see the works. Not having been privy to the inner processes

of the residency, the viewer would have to navigate through unfamiliar territory which often brought with it a refreshing new perspective to the artwork. This also led us to re-assess the notions of spontaneity and intentionality with regard to some of the art work.

“What I’m interested in is how one ends up imagining the work, creating it and putting it up for display—and **how the audience can end up completing it at key points.** You may go through a hundred processes internally, but not unless you take that step of exposing the work do you start to really think of it from a viewer’s stance.

So the question is: Did you feel that happen with your own work? How did your sense of it shift before and after the exhibition?

For me, I’ve always made an object, a video or something physical. This time I decided to create an experience (with a performance-based installation of a man sitting

in an abandoned building who would interact with the audience when they entered). Some people wondered why there wasn’t a map to the location of my work and others were surprised there was a guy sitting there the whole night.

We actually went to another house that looked like it was abandoned. I asked the guard, “Is this where the performance is?” He said, “I can guarantee there’s nothing here, it’s been shut for years.” So then I thought, is this part of the performance? Finally we got to the right place and the watchman asked us what we wanted—and again I wondered if this was part of the script.

**I was hoping for these sorts of situations, people having to negotiate with these possible scenarios—getting people to go beyond seeing what’s in front of their eyes.**

I had a somewhat similar issue trying to get people to go to the ridge. I gathered a group and was purposely trying not to explain the way to the ridge. People kept asking: “So is this

in preparation for your work or is this part of the work?” I was very aware of this being an ‘art context’ as one person collected air in his bag as this sort of art gesture and tied a bow around it. **So it very much brought into question my intentionality and what I was trying to do.”**

### *Frameworks and Seepage*

Allowing for fluidity and seepage within the CAS II exhibition framework—where the notion of the conventional, perfected ‘exhibition’ itself was challenged—left us asking questions such as:

What happens when the work does or doesn’t come with an explanation? E.g. with labels, wall-texts and artists’ statements. Can any potential cross-pollination, (mis) interpretation or unexpected interaction between the viewer and the art work (or even between art works themselves) be considered as seepage?

“Maybe it sets up a different set of questions for those ritualized and accustomed to seeing such shows and those who aren’t?

### **Calling it a first draft makes me think of it differently now.**

At the time I approached it the same as I would in an institution like a gallery or a museum. To my mind it was still structured very much like an exhibition—except there weren’t any overt labels.

Which is why Pratik’s work confused me, because I didn’t know it was an artwork; it looked like some empty boxes on the lawn. So the question is, does art need that framework? Do I need something to tell me, ‘Yes this is it.’

I think we can only claim disappointment in this idea of the first draft. For example I was really disappointed I wasn’t able to finish my work on time, so maybe the counter-readings that happened as a result were not what I wanted. Is that what we mean when we talk about seepage?

### **And how can I offer seepage as an artwork?**

But counter-readings take place when the work is finished as well.

Sure, but let's not romanticize seepage or only produce seepage.

Well, Rosler says something really interesting of seepage and everyday life in the artwork. She says that everyday life is just a construction of the urban, so we go back to the idea of freedoms that are not so free.

**But what happens when the unexpected comes up, what does that open up?**

Funnily enough, the same discussion came up last year. The thing is, there's always going to be something completely unpredictable that happens when the audience walks in. What happened when you're allowed to be creative in a 'rough way' and in not a completely legible context?

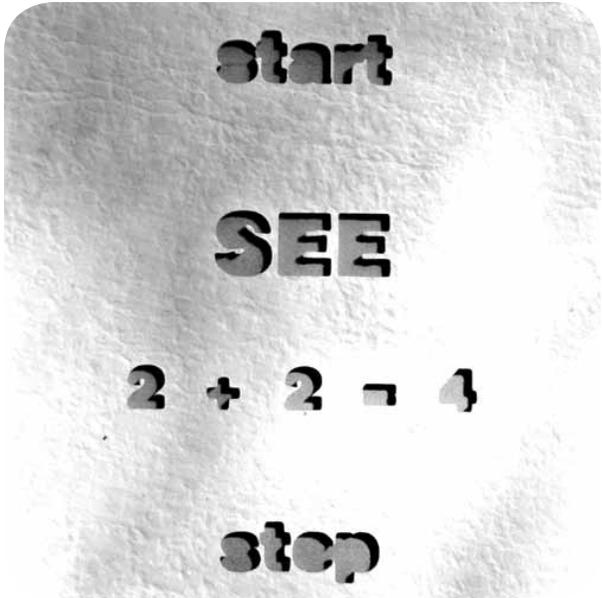
**Can we articulate this exhibition as a more articulate discussion than a less articulate exhibition?**

**Who was it articulate for?**

**For us, because every time we have these verbal discussions, it's the first time material comes up. But it's not completely articulate yet, so maybe that was the first draft of an exhibition and this is the second draft of a discussion."**

### *Concluding Comments*

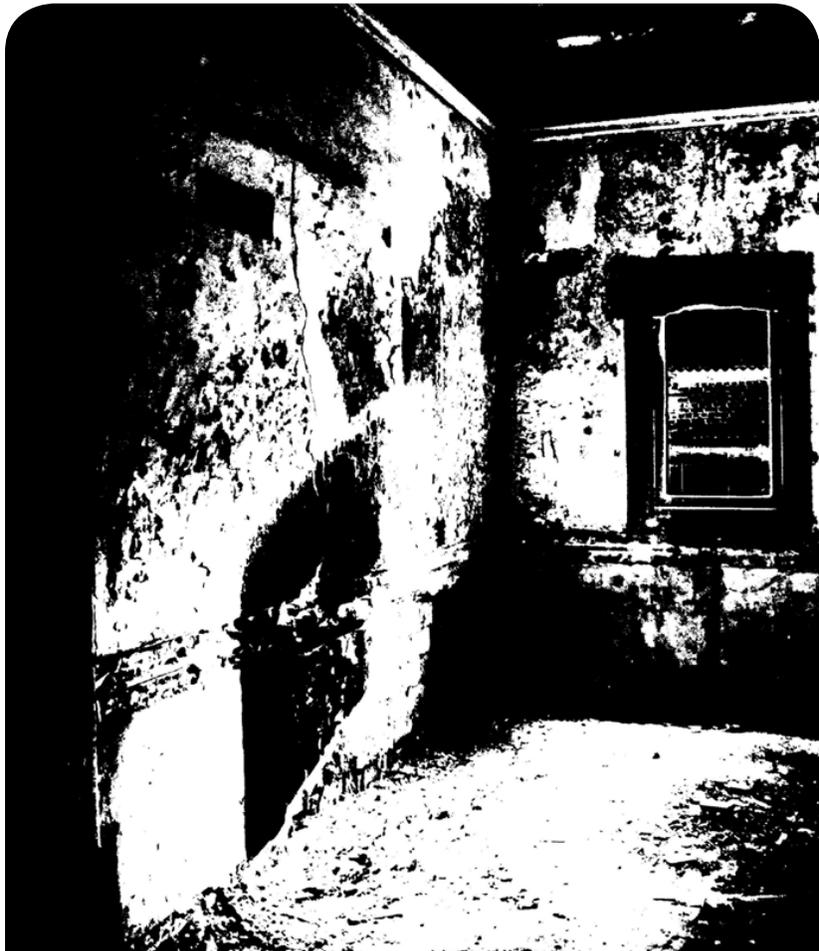
Was this public rendering, full of chance happenings, semi-reflective of our processes at CAS II? Was it meant to be? Perhaps there was a chance that it opened up another type of field of enquiry, a zone that encompassed more than just art, more than just critique, more than just another art-scape. Maybe we did succeed in questioning conventional art structures, but retained certain aspects of the art space at the same time... Which brings us back to Rosler, and the idea of the 'real-estate' of art.





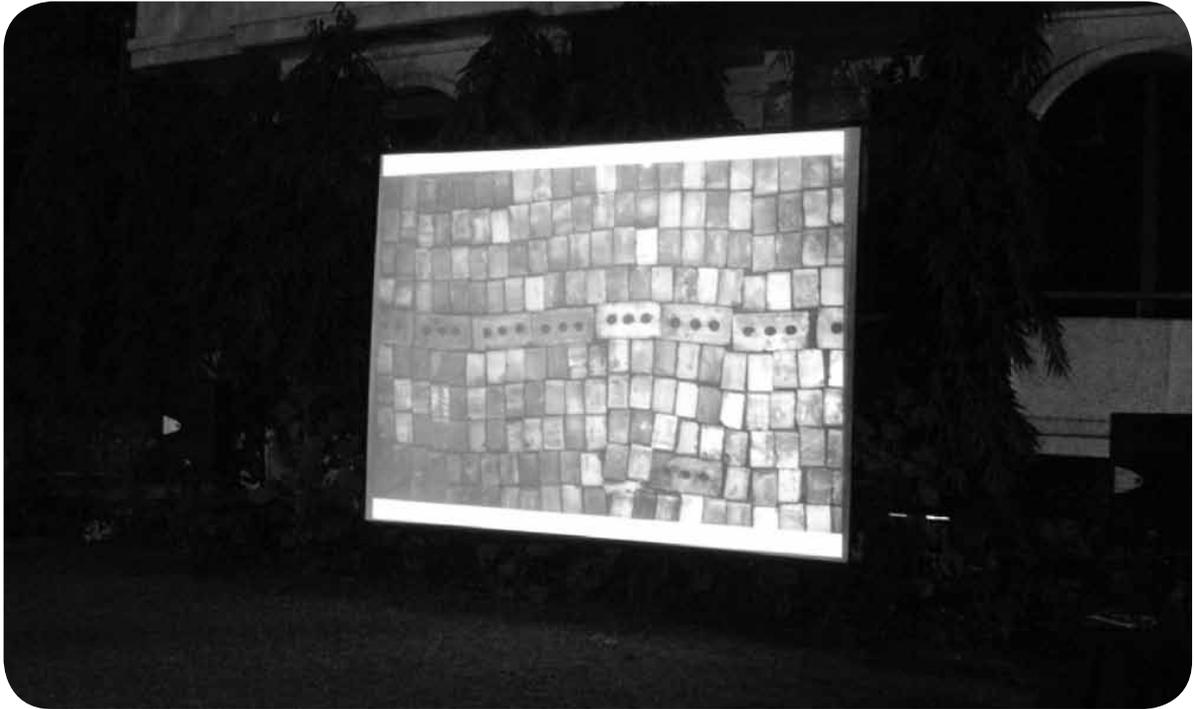


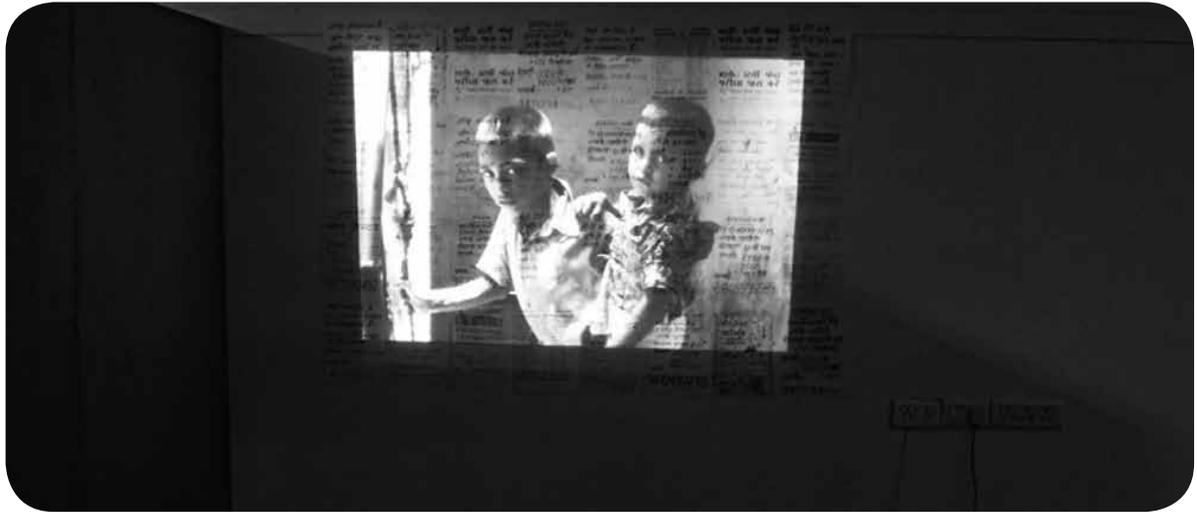


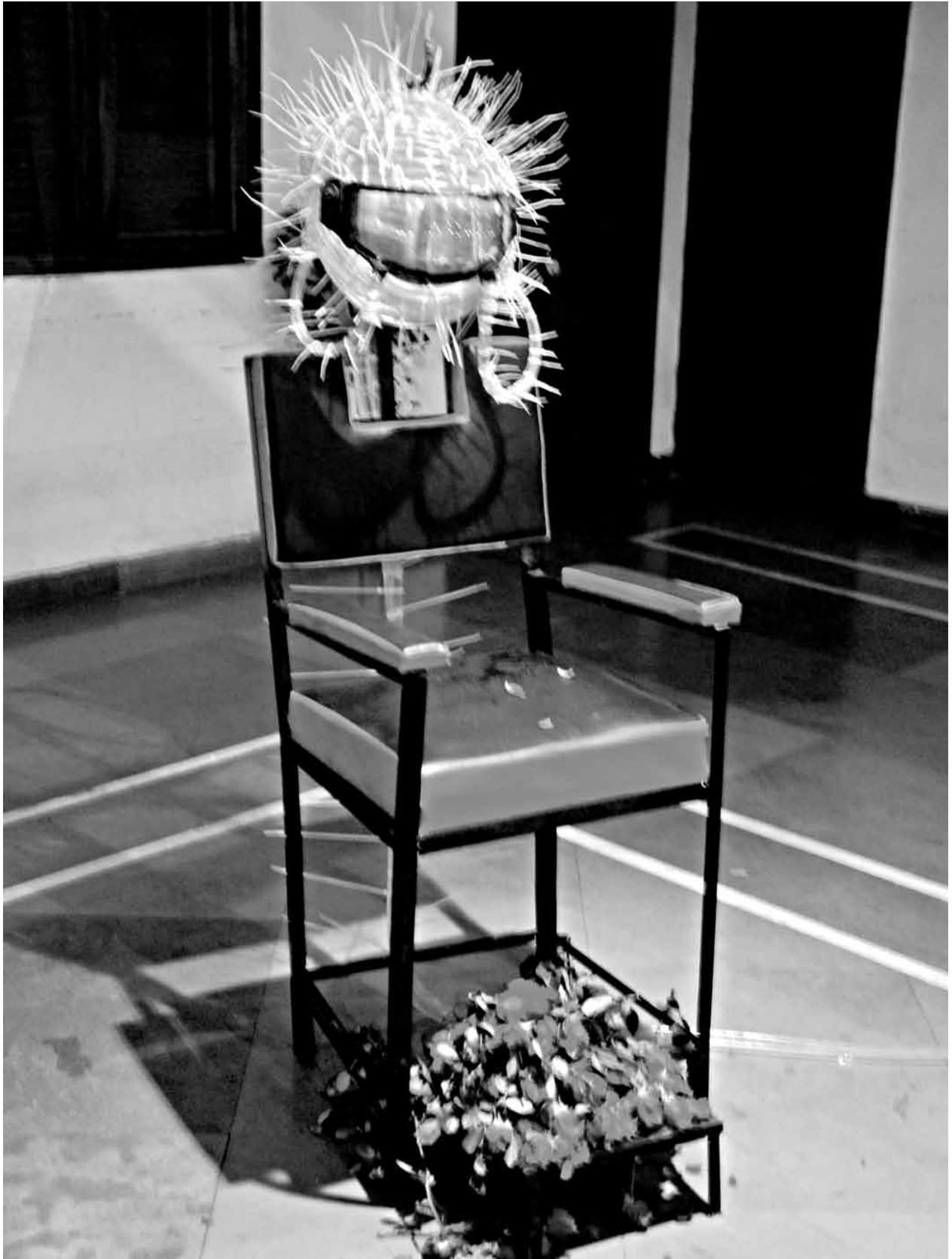


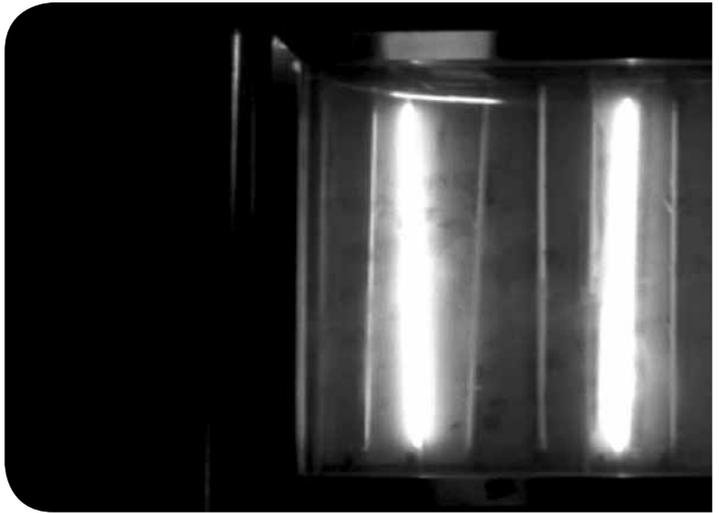
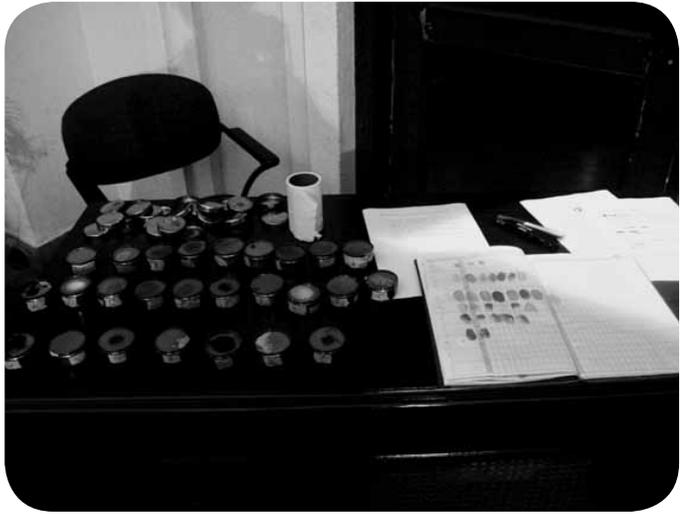
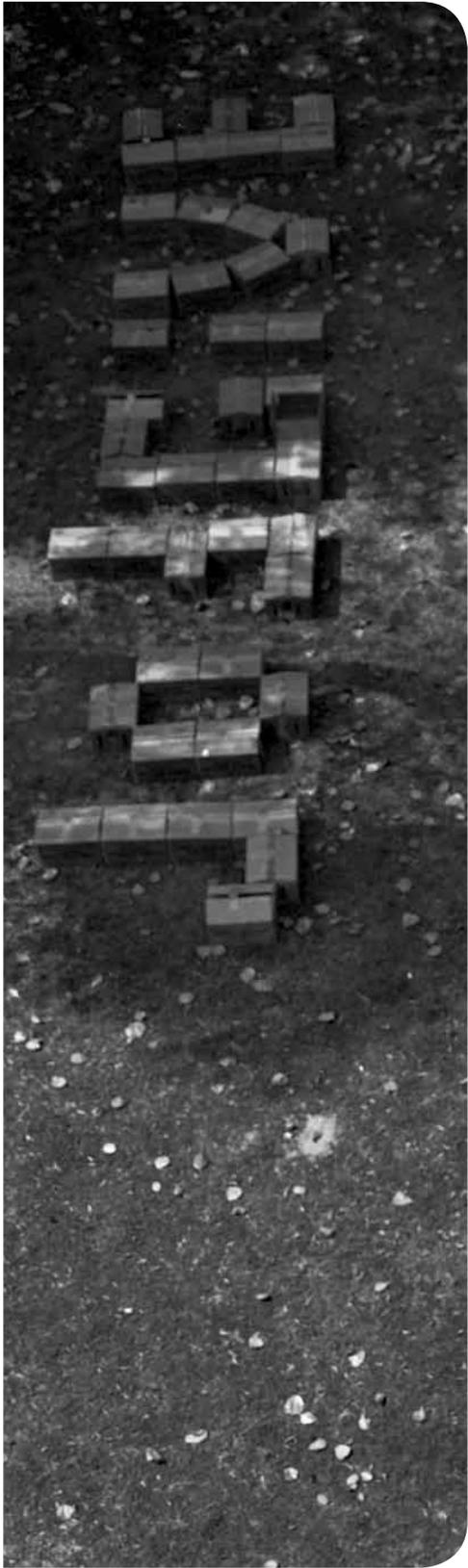


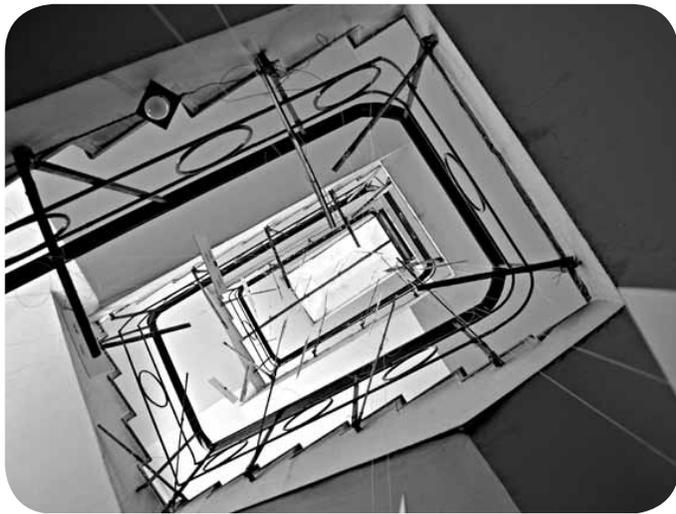
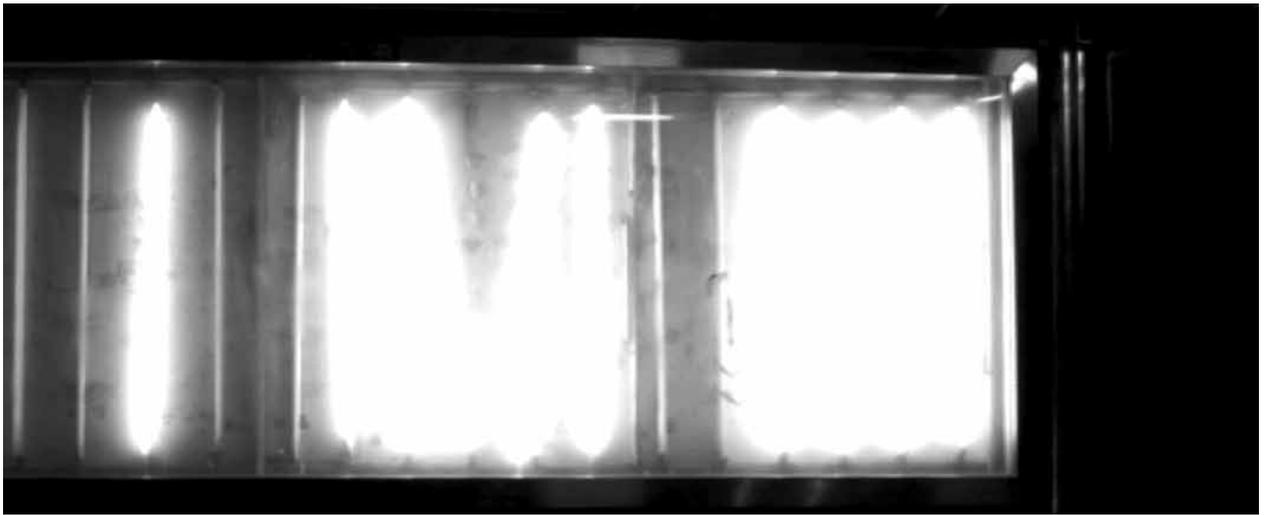












# THE CITY: THE HOSPITAL, THE METRO: THE OPERATION THEATRE POROSITIES (between time and space)

.....

**DATE**

*28th January 2012*

**TIME**

*Early in the  
afternoon, after chai.*

**PLACE**

*Shahpur Jat  
Studio—The Light  
Room.*

## **Ground**

Can the Delhi metro be viewed as simply another ‘product’ situated in an ever-growing urban scenario? A synthesized space where interactions between man and man-made can be created and observed. For Agat Sharma, investigating and potentially destabilizing some of these existing sites of instruction and operation is best achieved through introducing a series of fictions.

Interested in the idea of machines and surveillance of our bodies in controlled environments (for example during the public security checks conducted through the Commonwealth Games in Delhi, 2011) Agat investigates the drama that such scenarios create. His point of entry is often through the materiality of the object and its interface with the user.

## Conversation

But how does the logic or the concept of the metro extend into the notion of the city? Can there be types of counter-porosities between the two entities? And do these initially stark physical and psychological barriers between the two gradually become more porous over time?

Is it helpful to create fictional narratives around the idea of the metro? For example, what if we began to think of the metro as a sanitized space capable of exerting an anaesthetic effect on its occupants (in a similar way to that of an operation theatre)? Would that make its host, the city, a multi-storey, multi-functional hospital?

In this clinical space, could we stipulate that a type of numbing of the senses takes place? And does that in turn call on another set of (illusory) senses to be activated? If we were to

exhibit manifestations of this enforced scenario, what would they look like?

Maybe our human gestures begin to mimic the motions of the metro in some way. Does the product ultimately change the user?

And what if we were to think of the metro like a science museum instead—proudly displaying its exhibits of speed and inertia? Except that this time, the viewer finds themselves inside the exhibit.

### CLINICAL SPACE

*“In the metro, your senses are open; the surrounding sounds operate on you.*

*I was thinking about some of the disorders you might develop in the metro—inertia, excessive eaves-dropping, even scarred palms.*

*The physical at-*

### TIME

*“Now that we have the metro, we are able to regulate time—people go to great lengths to find out details (such as where the doors open, the shortest routes etc) so as not to waste a minute.”*

If we look at key aspects and rituals that play out in the metro, the idea of automation surfaces time and again; the idea that the controller’s actions and responsibilities are being enacted through a series of buttons and automatic machines on the trains, platforms and concourses.

### JET LAG

*“Do you know the Chawri Bazaar area?*

*That place seems to exist in a slightly different time zone—like it’s 15 minutes behind the metro. Only after half an hour of sitting on a bench there, do you adjust to the jet lag. Then you are ready for the bazaar.”*

Is the metro trying to alienate you through its lack of comprehension, distanced understanding and mechanical nature? As Agat poignantly shares with us, “I find it difficult to spend time in the metro, but easy to play around with the idea of it. It goes back to the idea of saying ‘I like Dubai because I haven’t been there’.” ([Link to page 44](#))

**I GUARANTEE  
IN THE NEXT  
15 MINUTES  
YOU WILL CHANGE  
AND YOU WONT KNOW.**



# THE BODILESS IMAGE, A SENSE OF LOSS AND THE POLITICS OF DISAPPEARANCE

*Dubai, Delhi and Hong Kong*  
.....

## DATE

*28th January 2012*

## TIME

*Early afternoon.*

## PLACE

*Shabpur Jat  
Studio—The light  
room.*

## Ground

One of the central ideas running through City as Studio II was to question the notion of the city and of the studio—to challenge them, dismantle them and possibly think of alternative forms or language we could use to represent or interpret them.

As part of thinking about cities in a more generalized context, it was proposed we read ‘*Dubai: The Bodiless Image*’ (2008) by critic and curator Stephanie Sykes. Using this text as a spring board, and Dubai as case study, we sparked off a wide-ranging discussion about the larger ideas surrounding the notion of the city.

Could some of the concepts generated in response to the city of Dubai or Hong Kong have relevance or resonance in Delhi?

## **Anchoring Text**

In her essay, '*Dubai: The Bodiless Image*', Stephanie Sykes talks about what it means to have two artists make works in response to The Global Art Forum (the series of talks that accompanies the art fair Art Dubai) and the city of Dubai. She says the emptiness of Dubai's "consuming brand" is like an image without a body—it's a myth, it doesn't exist. So she asks whether authenticity can be better achieved by removing the superfluous branding and getting to Dubai's core: Can we understand the city better through de-branding it?

For this project, the artist Thierry Bal took photographs of Dubai—its desert landscapes, empty construction sites and palm trees. His peer Idris Khan then worked on the photographs, repetitively layering their imagery and changing their final aesthetic. The resultant works comprise of obscured images of mostly unoccupied spaces—and interestingly, there are no overt signifiers that make reference to the city.

The works look to the future of Dubai, but also examine its present state of cultural deconstruction. Sykes suggests that Bal and Khan's images serve as a form of resurrection of this culture, as they examine these ideas through the canon of art.

## Conversation

### *Branding*

“The reason I was reminded of this text was because so many people mentioned the idea of empty spaces in our first meeting: Tanya is interested ways of mapping invisible parts of the city; Asim is looking at abandoned or derelict spaces; Thomas is exploring relatively unknown parts of the city like the ridge and even Gowhar was talking about taking portraits of people but removing their faces.

So I just started wondering why, and if there is something to this. Is there a reason we seem to be going beyond the people to look at the spaces? Are we doing something similar (to the idea outlined in this text) in that we’re removing bodies or immediately identifiable parts of the city in a bid to dig a little deeper—to go beyond the surface? Or is it none of the above?

I’m not sure. What you were saying about the removal of all culturally identifiable marks made me think—well then it could be anywhere in the world, it could even be virtual. But these photographs look like Dubai to me, especially the ones with the date palms—they have a very strong association with Arabia. And what does de-branding really mean?

My sense is that Dubai was really a brand from the start. What one understands is that there was just sand and then this whole entity was built very quickly. Then, this brand was presented to the world.

The closest thing Delhi would have to branding would be with the metro; it’s presented almost as a metaphor for Delhi’s modernity or India’s hyper-modernity. Certain metro stations like Chawri Bazaar are meant to represent the past meeting with present,

where the global blends with the local. All this is then presented to tourists and investors etc. and that's a certain image of the city that's being created.

But it doesn't seem like Delhi was ever a blank slate in the same way that I understand Dubai was. Well what about certain phases of Noida or Gurgaon?

Even Gurgaon can't really present itself that way—there are layers of what existed before (this current development).”

### *Loss and Migration*

“But in the course of this development, why do people seem to feel there's something they're losing rather than something that could be gained? What did Delhi have before, that it doesn't anymore? Where is this overriding feeling of loss coming from?”

Then are images of the city that people have. Romances—like the old city, twilight in Delhi. Then there's a whole pre-liberalisation past which there seems to be a lot of nostalgia for.

Is this where the interest in abandoned buildings comes from? To be able to resist these sorts of (romantic and nostalgic) narratives?

This fascination with abandoned spaces in the West seems to come from ideas of post-industrialisation, especially in parts of the US. It's not a post-industrial nostalgia in Delhi that's for sure. One gets a different sense of nostalgia walking through these alleyways; it's an affective attachment.

I think there's a huge sense of loss in Delhi. The thing is, we're a very migrant population. If you look at most people, they have no past beyond 60-70 years in Delhi. A lot of people came in after partition, then another wave came with the Gujjars and Jats who occupied parts of the city. The narrative of the city depends on who you meet.

I was talking to my Gujjar landlord. He said suddenly, this city has made it very difficult for him to keep cows and that's very important to him—so that's about a loss of lifestyle, but possession too. Many people who used to own farmland (on the outskirts of Delhi) sold it and got compensation for it, but how do they feel now?

I think a lot of local Delhiites have this sense of encroachment—a feeling of violation even. There is this sense of space that was and space that is no longer theirs or there. Like these urban villages. I've heard the villagers didn't want to let go of their way of life—despite everything around them changing.

To me it seems to be about the creation of real-estate.

I feel it has something to do with whose city is it? And how do you claim ownership of it? Is it through being born here, having lived here for 5 years or for generations? I feel I hear these stories of loss more from long-term residents of the city and not from new migrants.

Migration is not a narrative of loss for me.

But is it a sense of loss for the migrant?

I'm trying not to delve into that. I'm trying to think of other ways we should be looking at or writing about the city.

There's a book called '*Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*' (1997) where the author (M. Ackbar Abbas) is basically saying that no one considered the culture of Hong Kong until it was being handed back to the Chinese. This manufactured narrative of loss was only created at that specific point.

So what is this loss if it was never there to begin with? And how do we then begin to locate the city?"

**PERFORMATIVE  
SPONTANEOUS  
BIOLOGICAL:  
THE ART OF THE GARDEN**  
.....

**DATE**

*10th February 2012*

**TIME**

*After chai. This was  
an eight hour day.*

**PLACE**

*Shabpur Jat  
Studio—The Dark  
Room, while it was  
still light.*

**Ground**

The notion of trespassing can refer to a number of things: from entering a space (often unlawfully) to which you aren't allowed access, to passing beyond certain limits, to making excessive use of something. These variegated ideas of trespass seem to 'lurk around' Asim Waqif's practice in one form or another—whether it be as he explores the space and stability of (often derelict) man-made structures, or as he asks the audience to enter his semi-controlled environments filled with innovative, time-bound processes.

With a penchant for geometry, architecture and design Waqif often creates organic habitats and incorporates mechanical aspects into them, including movement sensors, sound recordings and artificial lights. Of this he says, "I'm trying to see what happens if I mix vernacular methodology with new age electrical technology."

## Conversation

So what happens if you combine your fascination for abandoned, dilapidated buildings with ‘the art of gardening’? What could be the potential of interactions with such a space?

In an old, empty house in Delhi Waqif set about experimenting with leaves, *kbota* and moss sticks on bamboo, to see if a “disease” might grow across the house.

Taking this project from spring through till summer, the idea was to encourage the growth of foliage, fungus and cobwebs alike—in the hope that they may spread across the empty space, like “some sort of rash”.

What happens when you introduce slow-moving processes into a space that you don’t have complete control over? What is the potential of engaging with a living, changing, long-term art project in this way?

As well as the space of the existing building, what happens when you introduce organisms (including humans), who may have been previously excluded from this space, into it? How does that dynamic of claiming a space that wasn’t originally one’s own come about?

It could be because this type of work involves a degree of spontaneity, and

### **Bamboo Gardening Tip**

*“The traditional form of bamboo cutting is: (To cut before the dry season, during the time of the waning moon, early in the morning.)*

*You let the leaves continue to photosynthesize and the starch begins to break down into alcohol, which preserves it. Then take the bamboo ‘nadi ke kinare’ and water-log it for 8-10 weeks. Once you take it out, dry it in the shade, then dry it in the sun and finally bake it in an oven. Now it’s ready for the long-term.”*

often requires a participatory audience, some may ask, “What is the work’s primary intent?”

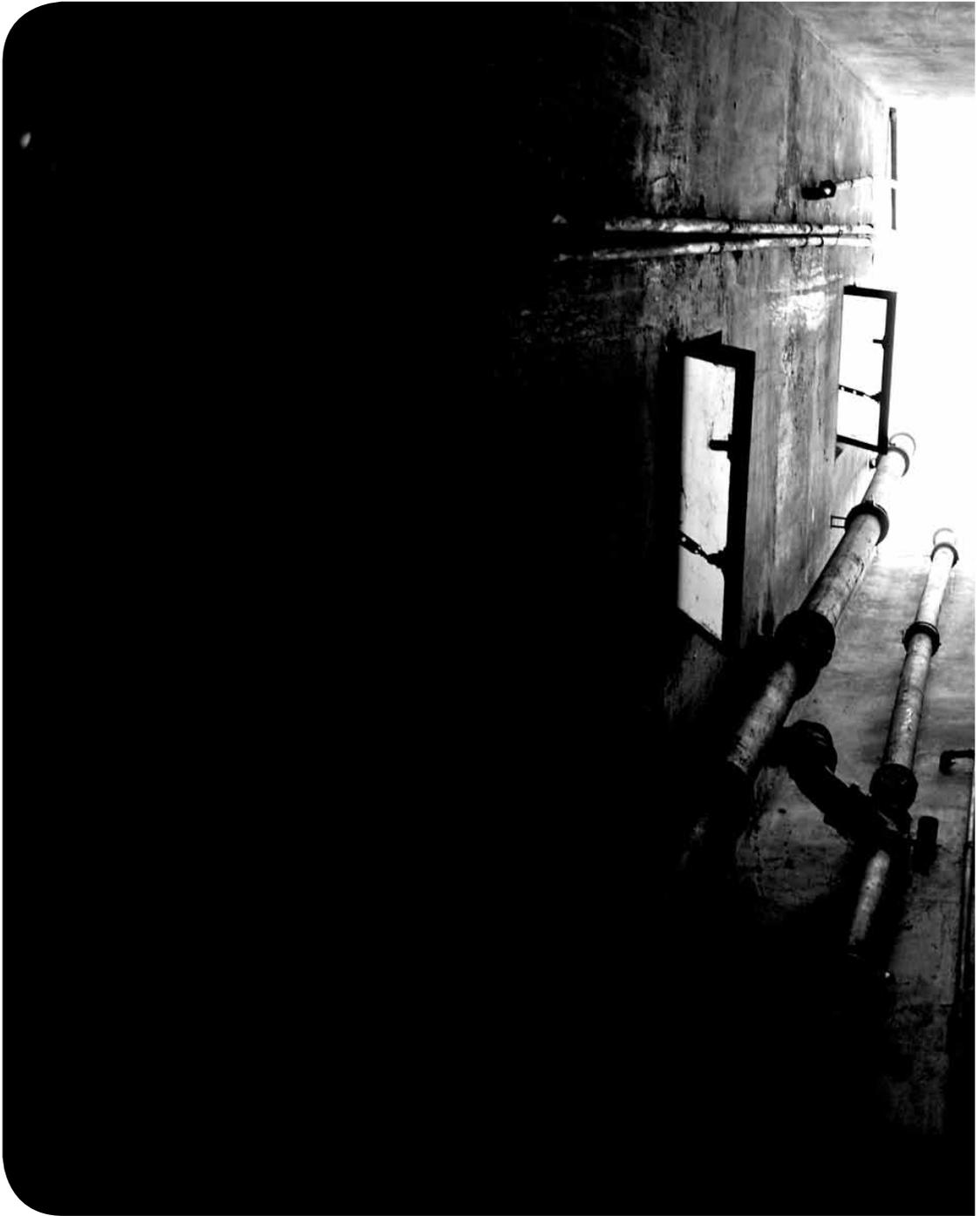
For some artists this is clearly defined from the start—for others, like Waqif, it’s more of an explorative, intuitive, internal process. ([Link to page 53](#))

As Asim reminds us, “It’s difficult to quantify the effect you’re having on an audience... It’s more about the *nautanki* of the project.”

Without a pre-meditated design, the space can be worked and re-worked upon with the help of termites and vagrants alike. With the various layers of this interactive, collaborative installation being built over time—the act of layering in itself, i.e. the building of the structure and all its various components, could also be read as a kind of performance.

**“ How does human interaction fit into your work? What does it add to the project? I don’t understand this obsession with touching an artwork. What comes of that?”**

*It’s a physical object; it’s got a materiality to it. There are more ways of experiencing an artwork than just visually.”*





# THE BUS, THE PIGEON AND THE MEANING OF IT ALL: OBSERVATORIES AND INTENTIONALITY

---

## DATE

*10th February  
2012*

## TIME

*Way after chai,  
some sort of dusk.  
This was an eight-  
hour day.*

## PLACE

*Shahpur Jat  
Studio—Very cold  
in the dark room,  
huddled under  
blankets.*

## Ground

How does a supplementary text, symbolic title or even a background narrative (i.e. ‘the making of’ story) help the audience to read an artwork? Do we always need such adjunctive tools when looking at art? Do they usually serve to enhance, or can they often hinder, a potentially nuanced meaning?

For filmmaker Ujjwal Utkarsh, when making purely observational pieces, there is not always a pre-determined intent. The idea can simply be to create an artwork that encourages the viewer to look, without being burdened by the need, desire or pressure to interpret it in a certain way.

## Conversation

*Film 2: The one about a pigeon on a building.*

Can the intensity of an engagement with an observation offer a certain completeness on its own? Is it only when the audience participates in the artwork that it acquires an additional pressure to communicate or explicate?

If intentionality only surfaces once the audience is brought in, then perhaps one way to do it is to make enough of this kind of work that it teaches people how to read or interpret it?

Who was meant to be the main character in this film—the pigeon or the building? Why isn't there an accompanying text or explanation to this film? What was this film meant to be about, and why was it shot in the first place? What is it symbolic of?

Maybe it's just symbolic of a pigeon sitting on a wall. Maybe waking up in the morning and choosing to shoot a view that you have been looking at for the last year is enough of a narrative, enough of a reason. Perhaps it can be about a spontaneity born from an internalization of thought.

**“Does art always have to be loaded with a message or a point?”**

*I guess what people are asking is: what is the intentionality of this work?*

**Why can't it just be about seeing?**

*But then there has to be an axis. Maybe it's not about intent, but being able to explain or defend the work to an audience.”*

*Film 1: The one about a bus being ripped apart.*

There are two different sounds that can accompany the visuals of a film, the first are those which already exist in the surroundings during recording, and the second are those introduced during post-production work on the film.

**“Is it a documentary?”**

*I don't like the word documentary or documentation.*

**But when the sparks were flowing in the film, I felt there was an aestheticization of sorts.**

*Yes, but I've not staged anything. I was a complete outsider.”*

What is it that the first one offers, and what is it that the second one can do? Is there a way to include text or sound alongside visuals, without them becoming prisms through which to interpret the imagery?

Playing in the background of Ujjwals's first film is the sound of the 'double azaan.' Against the clanking of a metallic chassis of a bus being hammered, this call to prayer helps contextualize this particular moment in time and space; maybe even making the space more real.

The film's format encourages a certain openness—without trying to impose a moral stance on the viewer. As Ujjwal says, “The ripping apart is so methodical, rhythmical and unemotional. The idea was to look at the relationship between man and the machine, where the machine becomes more human than the man.”

# REALITY IS THE BIGGEST FICTION

---

## DATE

*7th February 2012*

## TIME

*Before lunch.*

## PLACE

*Shahpur Jat  
Studio—The Light  
Room with some  
light.*

## Ground

What are the aesthetics of a liminal space? How do liminal spaces form a continuum with the city? What distinguishes a city from a ‘non-city’? For example, when we go from Delhi to Gurgaon, is the interface between the two cities sudden or gradual? Do liminal spaces allow for more nuanced readings compared to those loaded with more conventional urban signs?

Interested in experimenting with the photographic representation of urban spaces—where the city is seen as a living, expanding body—Gowhar Yaqoob punctuates, hyphenates and at times accentuates her visuals with text. This

allows a level of fiction and theatricality to be introduced into her images.

As she tells us, “The idea is to make the space participate, for it to generate the idea of active participation through humans.”

**“How do you decide the photographs you take? Is it according to a narrative?”**

*It’s mutual – sometimes the visual provokes the narrative. I’m writing a script between three characters; he me and she. The idea is to fictionalize the moment.”*

## Conversation

What kind of dynamic is set up when you choose to juxtapose text with visuals? Can the text help us to navigate our way through the visuals or can it sometimes become a distraction, a digression of sorts? What happens when the viewer is forced to process the gap between the two?

For Gowhar, it is possible to search an interface between image and text which allows visuals to transcend location and, in this way, disassociate the image from a particular city. Some of her images, for instance, may have been taken in Sringer, but what they present “could be Kosovo, or somewhere in Palestine or Israel,” she says.

What happens when the referents in your photographs no longer exist in the real world? Do your photographs become an alternative kind of

fiction or a type of archival document?

If your photographs become a form of documenting the collective memory of a space, do they lose their ‘nowness’?

Perhaps a certain ‘passage of time’ occurs with photographs such as these that has to be accepted (in that they inevitably become reflective of an idea of the past). Yet that is not to say the images become any less dynamic, relevant or any more banal with time.

*“The space between the bunker and the road—that’s also a liminal space—between the power of oppression and daily life. How does one negotiate that space? In reality, if a person transgresses that space it means certain death.”*

But how do photographs of “urban areas of conflict” resonate with those who live with the conflict on a daily basis? Do they hold a different quality or ‘value’ (and are they more jarring) for those unused to seeing such imagery within city landscapes?

*“What do they use the barbed wire for?  
To block passage ways, so that you can’t trespass, and also around bunkers.  
The bunkers keep shifting their place, so sometimes the barbed wire gets left behind.  
It almost looks like hanging sculpture.”*

Perhaps state oppression or occupation is present on some level in every city; it just exists in different tropes.

Could the act of photographing a subject or space (in a given area of conflict) be one way of confronting the state’s oppression? Could it be a way of regaining power or control on an individual level? In that sense could photographing zones of conflict be a form of emancipation for the artist or even the viewer?

## THE DECISIVE MOMENT and THE PERSONAL: THE TURNING POINT

---

### DATE

*10th February 2012*

### TIME

*Too late for tea.*

### PLACE

*Shahpur Jat  
Studio—The dark  
room as it begins to  
disorientate.*

### Ground

Where do we begin to draw the line between the private and the public in art? As an artist dealing with potentially emotive subject matter—from working with vulnerable, minority communities, to re-searching the pedagogy of the oppressed, to exploring the psychoanalytical concepts behind mourning—how does one begin to start evoking these things within their work?

For Rashmi Munikempanna, photography becomes a useful mode of enquiry; a way of encountering the problematic through an object. She investigates how photographs, videos and sound installations, as interfaces of visual, oral and emotional stimuli, inform readings of ourselves and the space around us.

## Conversation

### *Space and Gender*

“Some spaces are just perceived as unsafe. Statistics won’t tell you if a space is safe or not. It’s more to do with familiarity.

But familiarity doesn’t stop the violence, it stops the fear.

If Karol Bagh is starting to feel safe to you, then it seems to be a process of claiming that space. It’s almost as if there isn’t an absolute meter of safety, but that the charge of the space can change through negotiating with it every day.

When I look at something, I’m looking at it as a very gendered person. The way I’ve been taught to read these signs, the emotions that I produce, has all been predefined. I want to present my own encounter of what I perceive of safety...

*“How do you know a space? What are its details? How do you start listening to a space which has seen something? Can you hear history, conflict or violence? How does one map that decisive moment? Where is the wound of the image located?”*

There’s a freedom of voice that comes when with working with gender—the ability to speak about the most intimate things.

But not all women approach these questions in the same way. Of course, it’s dependent on class and religion... And just differences between people.

But is your view too singular when analyzing the situation?

There are many other perspectives or ways of seeing this space, rather than through the perspective of gender.

When you say gender, what do you mean? Is it just the body, or the mind too? Are you talking about the fact that gender is a performance?

Gender encompasses the cultural, the biological and the historical... Let's just all agree that gender is constructed."

### *Identity Politics and Agency*

"It's a question of identity politics in the end.

Sylvia Winters, a black American theorist, says that identity politics is an important moment in self knowledge—a tremendous amount of creativity is released through it—but it also finds its limitations, which have to be transcended. Otherwise you're in danger of being trapped by the terms that subjugate you.

But who decides when that moment comes, or that it is over? When you're functioning within structures that are based upon identity politics, how do you not reference them?

How you behave also determines how your surroundings respond to you.

That's putting too much onus on the person. This idea that you have agency and you can expand upon the norms within which you function is valid, but it's also important to acknowledge that those norms and structures exist.

It's a bit of both—it's not that you're completely passive either.

Maybe you could gather your images, text and feedback, and make yourself open to what else is being released. What are the other possibilities?"







TIME  
*Afternoon group trip*  
PLACE



## WORKERS WANTED

.....

### DATE

*3rd February 2012*

### TIME

*After a good  
chat about urban  
industries.*

### PLACE

*Shahpur Jat  
Studio—The dark  
room, but it felt very  
light.*

### Ground

*“Unpar to Graduate,” “Canteen and Bus  
Free,” “Overtime Given.”*

In an urban landscape marked with such notices, what do the words tell us of the people to whom these phrases pertain? What of the agency and day-to-day systems of the workers that are wanted? In short, what can we gauge of the life of the people who interact with these signs?

Vishwajyoti Ghosh is interested in exploring the landscape of the labour colonies in Gurgaon, through following the workers’ quotidian lives, documenting them closely and frequenting their living spaces. In particular he looks at the typography and the “textualisation of the walls” (where classifieds for labour are plastered across dwellings around the city) as a way of comprehending larger questions, such as:

What are the informal infrastructures and formal hierarchies of the migrant worker set-up? And how does one attempt to settle in a temporary setting?

## Conversation

“Most of these people are ‘migrant workers’—and they’re pretty happy with that term because they know they’re not going to be here forever,” says Vishwajyoti.

*“Kapasbera is for garments, Manesar is for industrial and leather and this (categorization) stretches all the way to Diwardi; little pockets of specialization.”*

## *Dwelling Structures*

So what is the typical path of the migrant worker from Gurgaon? How do they usually end up leaving their rural lives and come to work in different towns and cities? Vishwajyoti describes how much of this type of job placement involves word of mouth references—where one person working in garments will recommend to his friends or relatives from the same village that they join him.

“The dwellings are also based on the same format—so if you meet one guy from Kanpur, chances are he’ll be living with

other guys from the same district... There’s a GK and a Lodhi colony there as well!” These settlements have been built on plots of land previously used for agriculture. Now converted into single-story or multi-level ‘chawls,’ each plot of land comes with its own grocery store. But there’s a caveat: you are obliged to buy your groceries from your own local shop, otherwise you may be asked to leave.

## *Local Economies of Labour*

So what are the other economies of the area?

How do you begin to claim such transient spaces as your own? What rituals can develop on the fringes of authority and society?

There are licensed liquor shops and cinema halls (which function out of ‘concrete shacks’ under the Haryana video act) showing the latest Bollywood films or soft pornography. You can carry your own bottles and food with you, and the makeshift cinemas often show a range of regional films. An interesting cross-pollination that has happened as a result of this is that much of the UP crowd has become interested in the Bhojpuri genre.

*“We worked with an NGO for the workers and helped them form a sort of informal union. It had a membership of around 1,000—which is a drop in the ocean considering the lakhs of workers who live there.”*

How do these intermingling and shifting systems affect established ones, such as class or the caste system? And how

do the other power structures play out? For example, who controls the way labour is attributed and assigned?

Although there are no written contracts for much of these men, there are stipulated durations to work. For example, ‘NREGA=100 days of work for Rs. 100 a day.’ Often *dab-bang guys* (read head-hunters, informal agents or middle-men) inform supervisors that these workers will only work for a set amount of time or money. Control shifts from worker, to middle-man, to supervisor and back.

But what happens when more and more men choose to remain in their own villages as a result of better paid jobs closer to home? What will this shift in skills and economies of industry look like? And how will change in opportunities for the labourer in turn affect the sites and spaces constructed for such labour?

## ONE...TWO...THREE

*Ground, Questioning, Response:*  
.....

### DATE

*2nd February 2012*

### TIME

*Before chai.*

### PLACE

*Shabpur Jat  
Studio—The Light  
Room at twilight.*

### *The Flash-happening*

Gitanjali Dang's original plan was to do a series of flash-happenings which would manifest as successive spontaneous talks, e.g. about art history or environmentalism, at public art institutions. Soon after this proposal was submitted, the movement Occupy Wall Street happened, followed by a much publicized flash mob occurrence in Bombay's Victoria Terminus. Suddenly this kind of event had become very fashionable.

So Gitanjali's original concept began to morph into various directions—it would remain 'discourse-as-performance' orientated but would be relocated to a wider cultural space. The idea was to find ways of making the project more inter-disciplinary and bringing it to a larger audience.

*"But then I didn't want it to be all talk... So this (original idea) was overturned and changed into a performance.*

But why would you do away with talk altogether?

*I didn't want it to have a totally pedagogic quality, only addressing universities etc. Now I'm sticking with Paper Ballet."*

## *The Paper Ballet*

“I’m going to seek out some choreographers and perhaps twenty performers or so and we will rehearse these gestures—shooting paper planes, tearing and eating paper, the balancing act, maybe reading a couple of texts.

What’s underpinning this?

The idea that the culture (of reading) is moving away from libraries. I like (Jorge Luis) Borges and his idea of the library as a kind of labyrinth—that was a visual trigger. Also, in the movie, *The Red Dragon*, Ralph Fiennes breaks into a museum and, fascinated by William Blake, he finds a text of his and eats it. I’m interested in that act of consumption. The project has changed a lot over time...

Do you want to talk about your confidential project now?

The confidential project is now out.”

## *The Confidential Project*

The ‘confidential project’ was conceived in Jaipur amongst the controversy that followed Salman Rushdie’s exclusion from the Jaipur Literary Festival in 2011 (as a result of his notorious novel, *The Satanic Verses*). Inspired by this, one idea of Gitanjali’s was to leave copies of *The Satanic Verses* lying around the city in various

spaces, including the library. It was all thought out, the press and art practitioners would be alerted by proxy through friends from abroad. This project would explore ideas such as fetishisation of an object, censorship laws in India and the discourse that this could potentially generate. But it was felt that this too could become problematic and as such it didn't go ahead as planned....

“...I didn't want to indulge in an overtly interventionist project.”

### *Other Ideas and Suggestions*

“It seems to me like you have three distinct projects in your mind... But if we open it up and look at the principles of what you're doing, then there could be all sorts of ways to bring these things together or re-invent them...”

There are 54 banned books in this country, people could memorise parts of them and read them out? Or make bookmarks of them?

...I read something on the Huffington Post about an author saying he hated e-books, because at least you can burn books.

What if you burnt a copy of the Satanic Verses? What does it mean to have a book as a material object versus a tangible object? How does that change the nature of

reading and what is it that this materiality introduces?

What if you were to take all the words from a banned book and list them alphabetically? What would that mean?

What would happen if you were to introduce some of these ideas through stand-up comedians? How could these performers address the intended discourse or the politics of the library?

...One doesn't know with any creative project if it's going to resonate, and how it's going to resonate.

**Maybe we should make a list of all the things that came up."**



**EMPTY – SIGN – EMPTY –  
SIGN – EMPTY –  
SIGN**  
.....

**DATE**

*10th February 2012*

**TIME**

*Zoning between  
histories.*

**PLACE**

*Shahpur Jat  
Studio—The dark  
room with very little  
light left.*

**Ground**

Is there an equivalent visual sign for an empty space? Does emptiness exist beyond an abstract, romantic notion? And if so, how can this concept be mapped? Tanya Goel is interested in finding different ways of looking at spaces and surfaces and exploring how they may be mapped through imagery.

Using the “activated surface” of a glossy paint-layered canvas or the “infinite space” of a television screen, she investigates the porosities and intersections within both the urban and virtual grid.

As Tanya says, “I’m interested in moments that repeat, subtract or negate each other.”

*“What is a sign?*

*A rose between two lovers is a sign.*

*That’s very clear.*

*A sign basically means it refers to something.*

*A sign without a signifier is empty.*

*But something is still there.*

*Of course, the residue, the ghost image.*

*Are you trying to make the invisible concrete?*

*Yes.*

*An image is a sign as well.*

*But not in the same way a billboard is a sign.*

*Have we actually read enough Saussure to know what we’re talking about?”*

## Conversation

During the setting up of Bhogal or Tuesday market in Delhi, one minute the streets can be empty and in the next, without warning, they can become filled with stalls and people.

Does that mean that the market's emptiness can only really be seen as transitory and relative?

If we were to see a histogram or any other alternative mapping of such a space in an artwork, titled 'Bhogal market,' would we be able to link the image back to the original space?

How does one attach a sign to such a space? What happens when an urban sign is emptied out and the signifier attributed to that space is erased? Rather than

*“Looking at advertisement signs that have the content removed, you're left with just a frame. That's not empty though. It's an empty sign. It's just perceived as empty.”*

dealing with abstractions, could there be concrete ways to transform the idea of emptiness into an image? If colour is essentially made up of wavelengths of light, then could recording the intensity of light rays in a given space be a way of mapping its density? Could deciphering the relative density of a space then be a way to refer to that emptiness somehow?

By looking at wavelengths of light and potential frequencies as equivalents of colour, Tanya explores alternative spatial and conceptual representations of urban areas.

But how does one begin to work with such data? What can it tell us about our perspective of a space? Where does the fiction lie and where does the fact? Why is it so difficult to chart emptiness? What is the opposite of emptiness? And ultimately is emptiness just a red herring?





DATE  
*13th February 2012*

TIME  
*Performance Art  
Day*

PLACE  
*Shahpur Jat*



## SERMON ON THE MOUNT

---

### DATE

14th February 2012

### TIME

Early afternoon, in  
the sunshine, before  
lunch.

### PLACE

Sitting outside in  
a foliage-filled,  
manicured plot  
of land, situated  
between an historic  
wall and the park  
opposite the Shabpur  
Jat studio. We  
had to jump some  
gates to get there  
and ward off a  
couple of keepers,  
but it was worth  
it; a truly restful,  
contemplative,  
haven of a space.

### Ground

How do you negotiate between concerns or ideas originally generated by the social sciences (such as political theory) and the use of art as a mode of enquiry? How do you begin to investigate politics in a space which is already so heavily loaded, it's near impossible to penetrate?

*“...The omnipresence of the politics of resistance has led to the disappearance of resisting forces...Success cannibalizes open space, it swallows possibilities of alternative modes of doing things...It's time that we claim the radical heritage of non-work, non-resistance, persistent poetry and discreet playfulness that revolutionaries always deny—seriousness and success have had their day, the night is failure...Failure does not provide answers, it asks questions.”  
— PAAJI manifesto*

Anirban Gupta-Nigam is interested in finding different ways of looking at the present moment and creating forms of chaos or interruption within given structures—whether they be political, artistic or somewhere in between.

## **Anchoring Texts**

### Influences in Critical Thinking

These three essays might be a good place to start as they were significant for me: Raqs's "*X Notes on Practice*" (2005), "*Smuggling: An Embodied Criticality*" (2003) by Irit Rogoff, and "*Why has Critique Run Out of Steam?*" (2004) by Bruno Latour.

## **Conversation**

### *The Object*

"Latour says the critic uses a hammer to smash things in an iconoclastic gesture—which reveals core, essential truths underlying the appearance of objects. I was interested in the fact that the dominant approach in social science, or large strands of art writing, is through the Marxist idea of fetishism of the object. This says that commodity hides the labour of the person who produced it.

Is art's understanding of commodity the same thing? It's reworked in different ways—but the basic idea is the same. Latour tries to undo what he sees as a subject-object split, where objects are simply things which you (humans) act upon; instead he gives agency to the non-human (object) as well.

This is something that interests me and it relates to the way Sujit has been

thinking about dust; he says it's not just something that exists, but that it is doing something to the environment."

### *Seepage and Smuggling*

"Raqs's essay was quite useful in that they identify these four agents on the contemporary landscape: the pirate, the alien, the hacker and the squatter.

They use the metaphor of seepage to talk about these people.

As an architectural concept, seepage seeps out of a structure but needs that structure in order to survive. Seepage takes away the concept of a conscious revolutionary subject who is actively trying to break something.

Along the same lines, Irit Rogoff uses 'smuggling' as a paradigm to think about things from art to social practice; essentially that there isn't a marked border

between what is legal and what is smuggled. There's a fluidity to that space.

These were sets of ways to re-think in terms of contemporary commodity cultures. Through being at DU, JNU and my interactions here (at City as Studio) I began to see failure as a process which one might want to engage with."

### *Politics and Parody*

"For the performative part of my project I've been thinking about the idea of mobilizing people and what it would mean to de-mobilize people? What does it mean for people to come together but not be mobilized—what would that look like?

You're trying to mobilize people to be de-mobilized, to be a successful failure—it's rife with contradictions. Politics has a certain armature or a way it has to be done to be recognized by the system.

There is a certain safeness offered by a slight degree of parody. If it's on the boundary of not being sure whether it's serious or not, then it has the potential to seep into the subconscious.

Oulipo was a fascinating French postmodern literary movement, a group of people that broke away from the Surrealist movement (which was also closely aligned with the communist party). Oulipo was, at the same time, a parody of the idea of a literary movement.

So when you have something that is a 'near parody,' it doesn't necessarily act as a replacement of something, but questions the idea of it.

These political ideas you propose might have a comical aspect to them, but at the same time they're capable of releasing an imaginative potential."

*"I have a short manifesto of Post-Anarchist Association of JNU India (PAAJI).*

*I'm looking to find a balance between what is satire and an expression of what I disagree with (at JNU).*

*The framework will be:*

*1) The importance of failure in politics (versus the importance of collecting seats, votes and being successful);*

*2) The idea of exhaustion in politics (as opposed to the productive, energetic body);*

*3) The idea of height (where you're immersed in the situation, not looking at it from above)."*

## THE RIDGE = LUNGS OF THE CITY

---

### DATE

*7th February 2012*

### TIME

*In the afternoon.*

### PLACE

*Shabpur Jat  
Studio—The Light  
Room with some dust  
and haze.*

### Ground

Can you experience a space without reason? (*Can you loiter without intent?—Link to page 47.*) How does engaging with a space through an interactive event add to our understanding of it? What counts as a game and what doesn't? Does a game conceptualized within an 'art' context have to have an essentially investigative nature? Framed by an academic position, Thomas Crowley's interest lies in ecological issues and how they intersect with philosophical attitudes, political agendas and cultural perspectives. In the creative space he conceptualizes "interactive performance environments" in which he gives the audience a participatory role and provides an alternative way of approaching a space as well as a subject.

## Conversation

Where does the ridge begin? How do we start to explore the boundaries of the ridge? How do we go beyond looking at the ridge as a separate space of nature and re-entangle it with the city?

What are the possible lessons to be learnt from the ridge? What is it potentially a metaphor for?

Thomas's project within the ridge looks at the idea of repurposing spaces but also ties into the contrast between populated and empty spaces ([link to page 73](#)). Some of the discussion around his proposed 'interactive game' scenario involved the concept of actors playing the roles of different DDA officials, judges and bank managers.

But would this quickly become too complex and have to be very tightly scripted to work? Would

*“What’s the objective of the game?”*

*Games don’t have to have an investigatory nature.*

*Of course they do. The idea of a game is that it has to be exploratory of something.*

*This is not just a game though.”*

this be in danger of becoming a parody of itself? What would be the ways to avoid this?

One suggestion was to go to the ridge beforehand and workshop in the space to see what ideas arose naturally. Another was to do a rehearsal—although this may have become too prescriptive.

Thomas was happy with players “breaking character or disputes breaking out.” But what if the improvisations caused the players to become completely lost in the game?

*The Ridge Game: “Delhi’s oldest cultural heritage in its newest ecological centre.”*

Alternative suggestions included the following notions:

“Human beings are complicated so what if you were to make a virtual version?”

What if we were to play monopoly in the space but build atypical things and not houses?

What if there were two cricket teams and various handicaps were introduced to the players?

...Or we could just play battleships?”

At its essence, the most intriguing aspect of the game came from the idea of exploring, mapping and discovering of the ridge; the pleasure that this experience would give the participants.

*“A working idea of the game is that it would be vaguely modeled on the Vasant Kunj malls case. These were built in an area that was officially the ridge and a proposal was put out by the DDA for real-estate developers to bid for the project.”*



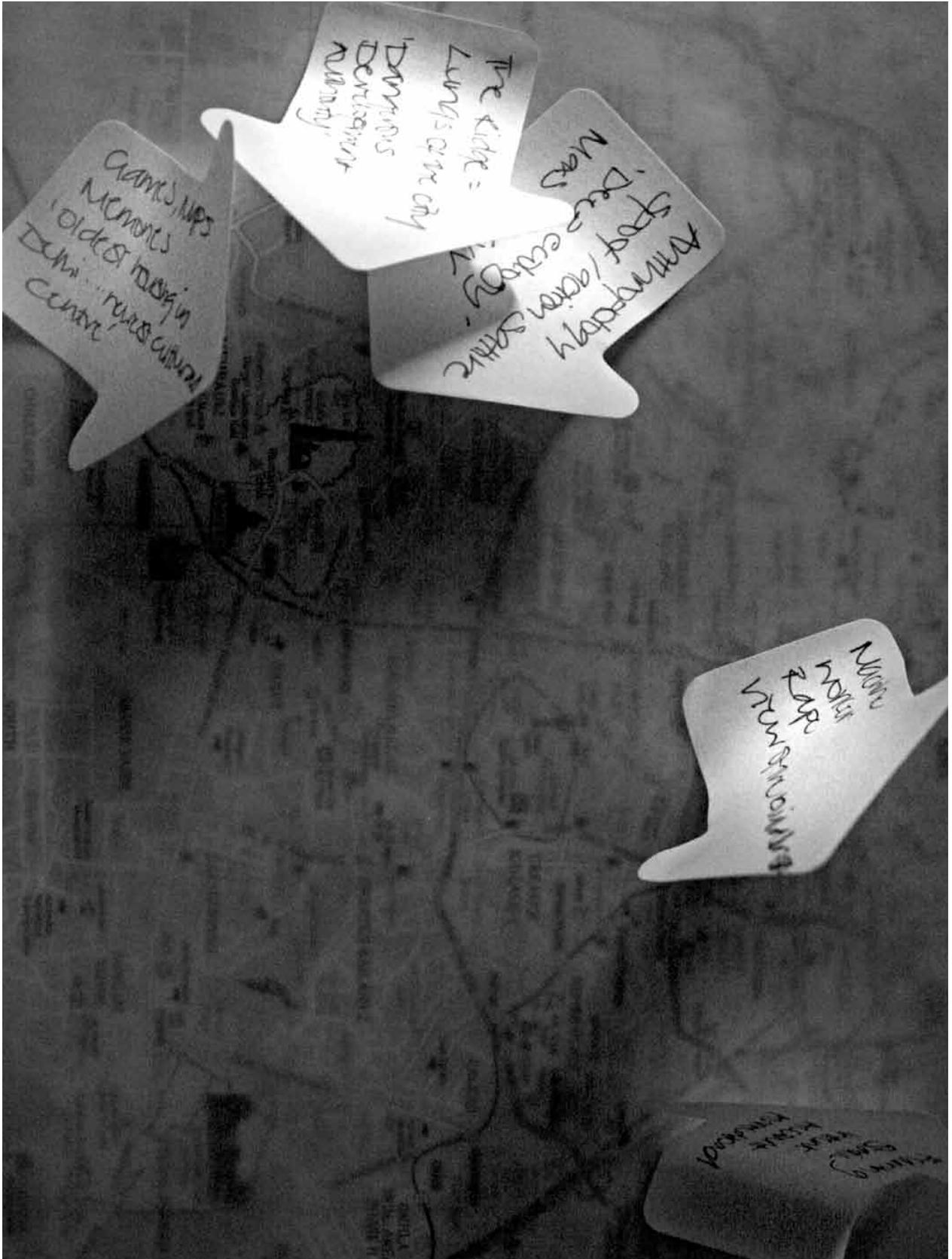
*“People would go off in teams representing real-estate developers and be given a budget. They would have to explore the ridge, then come back and negotiate with the person playing the DDA official and the judge etc. You’d have to negotiate or bribe them and maybe bend the rules. The idea is very fluid.*

*The team that gets all their clearances and escapes all the lawsuits wins!”*

Also this was meant to be a model that had the potential to be replicated on a monthly basis with those outside of the art world. (Thomas did later stage a Hindi version of this event.)

As Thomas says, “My initial idea was to try and get as many people involved as possible and give them a challenge to work with... for it to be a somewhat structured, interactive event.”





- Sujit - Mahim Fort → old architecture + made - all  
bits on top - now what was old = living space  
→ 3/4 parts - everyone defecating + putting garbage  
back into sea → no toilets go here - ASI not involved  
- what time did this represent?
- PSARA - 1500s - some trap on some roofs + walls -  
just on top creating some kind of museum coz they see  
it from sea
- 20th - performance - but some in car park - put  
against a tree - put a platform
- in choosing something you trash → gives it value
- give people power each time they meet them → create  
memory of event - inspired by graffiti  
'just as memory'

- 'pandara dhanya + the panchai dhanya'
- dictionary has no value for me - has no value
- word on flower → word gets value + flower be  
dust
- accumulating ideas but not remembering - matter  
should not be holding like sand
- performance done by cyburshalla - ending  
'gareeb' out of newspaper  
'kya karu hu?'
- 'gareeb ko karu rahu keh'
- sit on metro → pull out massive map - spin  
globe → small globe - see what happens

(Notes on Sujit Mallick's Mumbai Mahim Fort Trip)

*Kolab:*

Is silence golden?  
Who knows who?  
Is freedom chaos?  
Is chaos freedom?  
Who controls chaos?  
What's left unsaid?  
Where does power hide?  
When does porn  
become art?  
What doesn't sell?  
Is there such a thing as  
good money?  
When does it become a joke?  
Can you keep politics out?  
Is this not political?  
Is art not an ideology?  
How does any of this  
matter?  
If it's not documented,  
did it happen?  
Are art suppliers art?  
Who made the readymade?  
Who made this?  
When does an artist  
"make" it?  
Is art labour?

Is labour art?  
When is "free" affordable?  
Are artists workers?  
What does it mean to ask a  
question again?  
Does art need theory?  
Does theory need art?  
Are we separate from our  
work?  
Is this worth it?  
Is the exhibition left or right  
side of the signal?  
Where art thou?  
Is power contagious?  
When does a collective  
become an institution?  
Art Factory?  
What legitimises art?  
Have you come to party?  
Did you just  
climb the ladder?  
Did you meet anyone  
new today?  
What is the colour  
of your circuit?  
Do you like what I like?



# EVERYTHING = NOTHING

## BIRDS AND BRIDGES

---

### DATE

*14th February 2012*

### TIME

*Late afternoon,  
inside after being in  
the park earlier.*

### PLACE

*Shabpur Jat  
Studio—The light  
room, right at the  
end.*

### Ground

“I am a person of the larger picture. I can’t find that one narrative, object or incident that inspires me. I’m more concerned with questions of who we are and why the world is the way it is.”

Through her hand-painted illustrations and experiments with form, Dyuti Mittal produces a visual language that looks at exploring alternative kinds of representation and symbolism.

Generally working in either of two extremes, Dyuti strives to concentrate on the conceptual and therefore limit the form (“almost like information design” she says), or work with form and therefore limit the content, rendering it as inexpressive as possible.

*“Everything around us, in some ways, is an illusion—as it is neither everything, nor nothing.*

*I wanted to represent dystopia, that incompleteness and the search for absolutes through the metaphors of numbers.”*

## And Ground

“I’m not stating anything or making conclusions, I’m just trying to recreate situations where questions, problems and possible solutions can be found within them.” Pratik Sagar is interested in the creation of gathering spaces and interactive rituals as ways of both observing and intervening in the natural environment.

At strategic points in the city, whether it be Chittaranjan Park, Khirkee village or the shamshan ghat at the Yamuna river, Sagar creates installed structures filled with foodstuffs—often in the configuration of specific words.

Over time, these begin to attract a plethora of wildlife that feast off the installations—but they also seem to connect with the local community including policeman, sadhus and children alike.

*“There’s no natural food available for these Siberian birds. They migrate here for four months every year and they leave after Holi. I will give them a warm farewell with the notion that next year they will get their food naturally, without depending on hand-made eatables and dead fish offered to them.”*

## Conversation

### *Bridges and Communication*

“I want to give myself the challenge of talking about Pratik and Dyuti together. There’s a chapter of this Insectopedia on cricket fighting in China. It’s about how a person trains this cricket over three weeks using a blade of grass as a bridge between him and the cricket.

When we went to Kapashera, Dyuti was drawing and it became a bridge between her and the people there. The act of drawing became a way of communicating.

Similarly the tradition of feeding the birds is one of those kinds of bridges. Perhaps in this case, the food becomes the bridge as it were? The question is: How do we use these essentially communicative devices?

If the intervention has a social purpose (to create a community of humans and non-humans) then how do we think about the ways in which those bridges are constructed? How does that evolve in our practice?

I see my practice so far as a model with which to go further—sometimes it’s more conceptual, sometimes it’s more performative. Food or feeding birds is just one entry point to connecting with the community.

If you see Pirs, they’re Sufis who connect with your pain, and they connect with the ‘lower communities’ because they can come and offer food; one spoon of sugar, or a bag of atta—that’s your prayer and a way to share your problems. There’s a lot of scope in that.”

## *Birds and Humans*

“The first thing I try to document is what we do as humans, for humans—things are according to us. The difference between us and birds is intellect.

I don’t know if I agree with that.

We create objects that have charge and energy.

But birds create tools.

Yes and I know crows are really intelligent.

Crows can recognize and remember faces. There is also this tradition of feeding crows. They’re supposed to be ancestors, so you feed them rice. Crows have a kind of negative association because they’re black, but they are sacred too.

What about hunting? How do you see that? There’s an intense process of

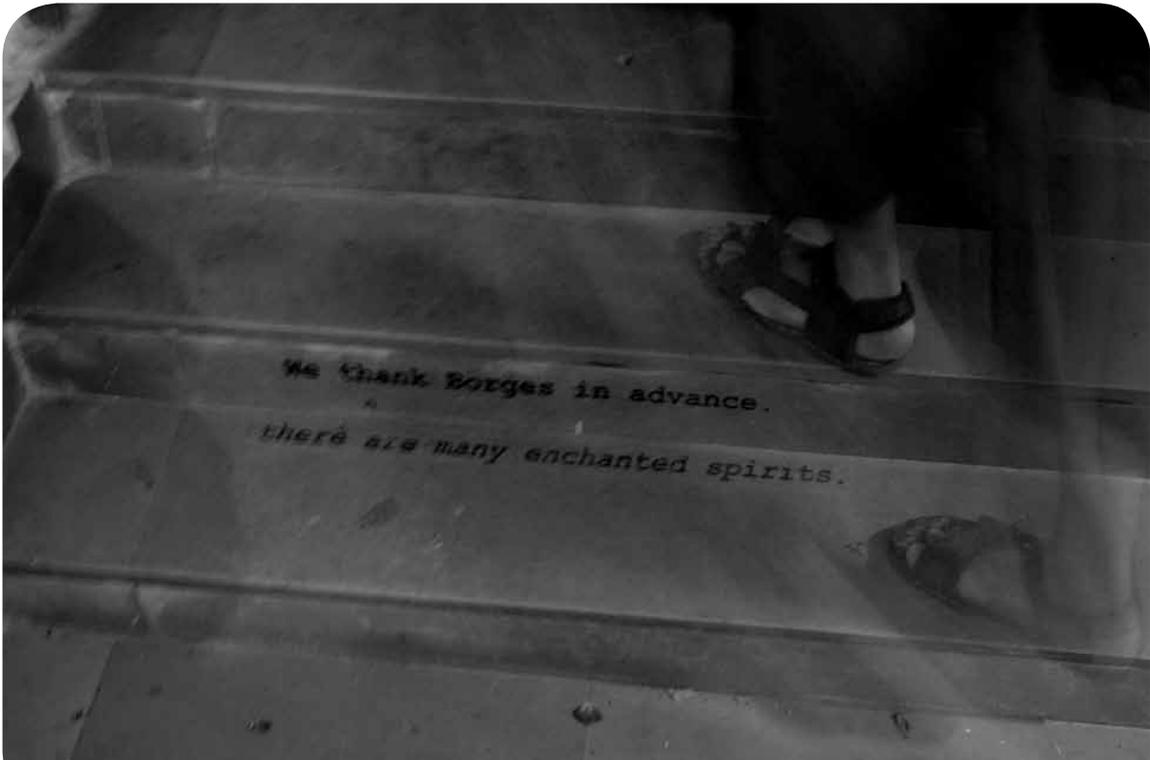
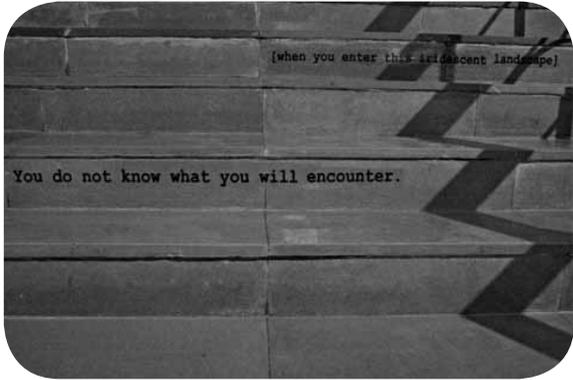
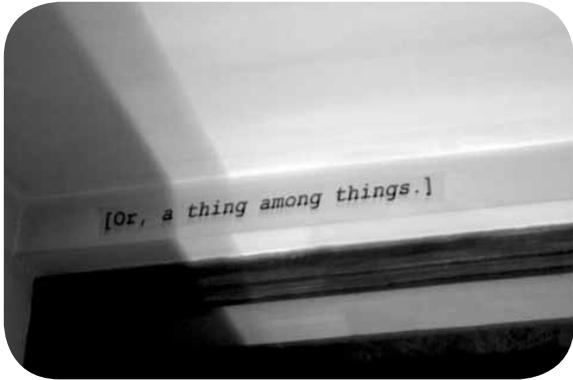
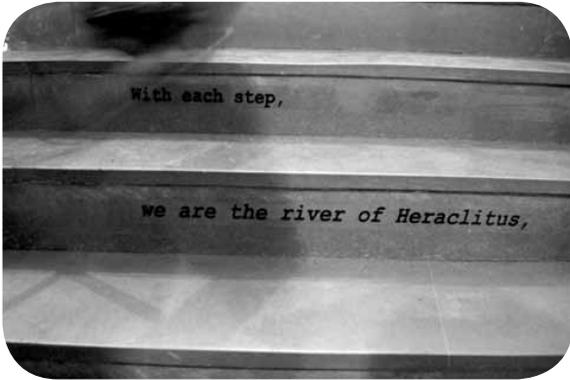
identification that happens with that.

I’m not sure. The Gita says when you kill somebody, you don’t kill their soul, which can be read positively or negatively. But at the end of the day it’s a philosophy and not to be taken literally.”









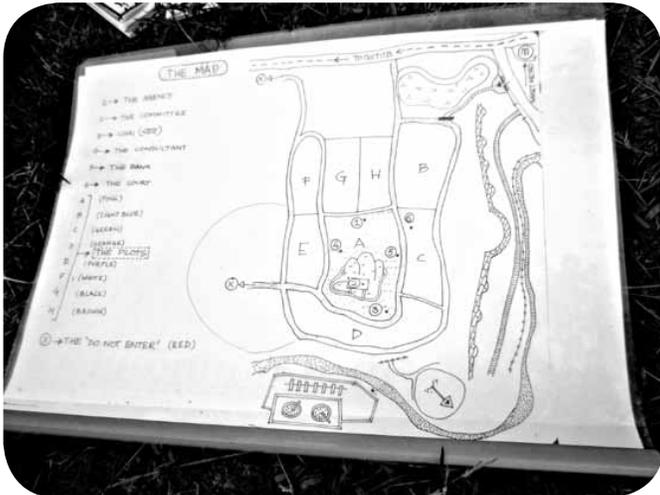




DATE  
4th February 2012

TIME  
Dusk, walking  
through the ridge.

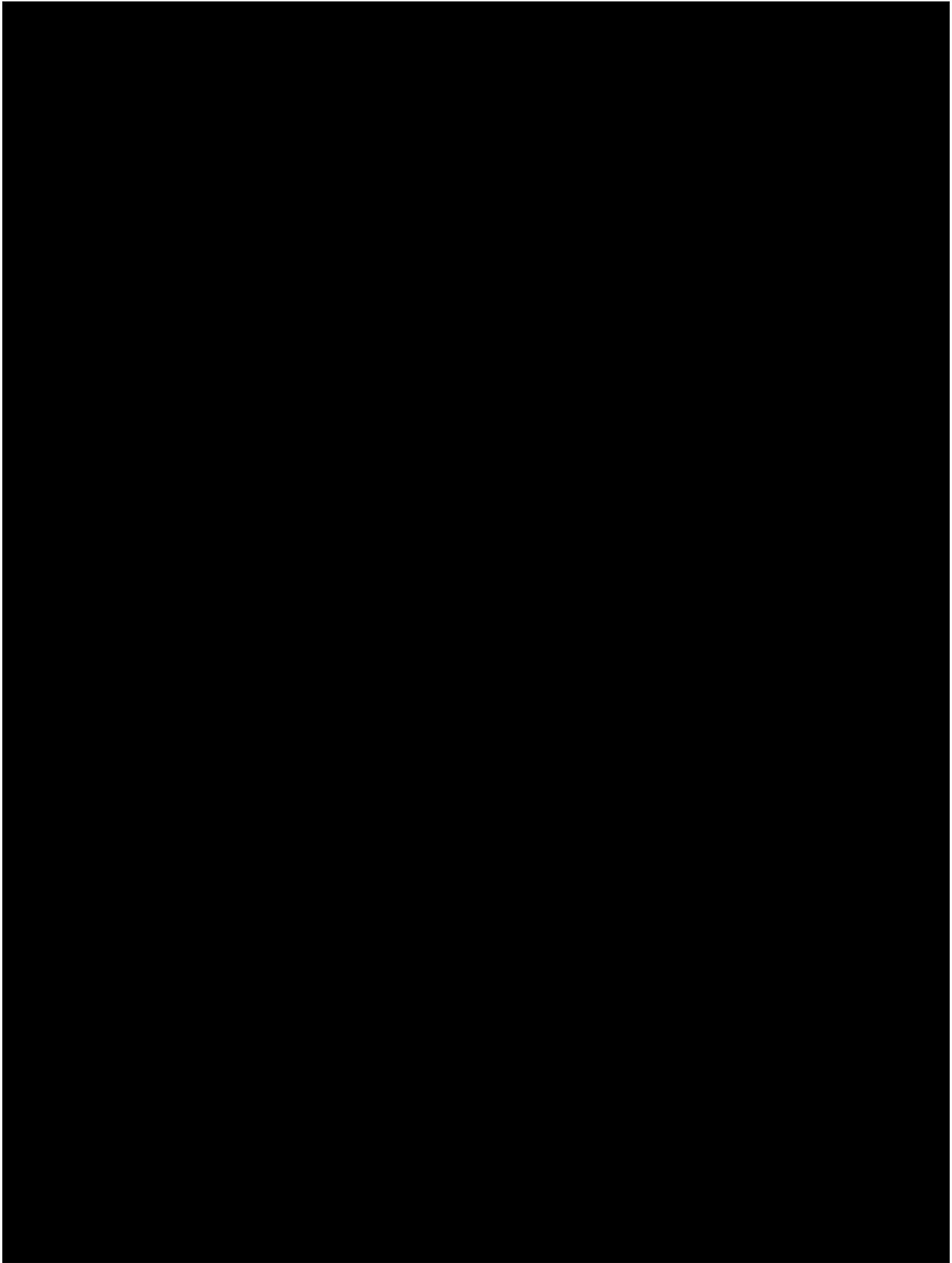
PLACE  
The Ridge



THE AUCTION WINNING LIST

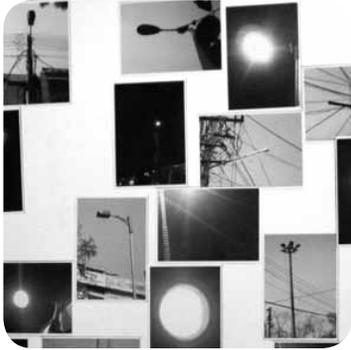
	Team Name	Bid Amount
PLOT A	Taunika	150 ea
PLOT B		
PLOT C		
PLOT D	Vicki	50 ea
PLOT E	Nandi	50 ea
PLOT F	Sam	50 ea
PLOT G		
PLOT H	Taunika	100 ea
PLOT I	Red Dot Corp	200 ea

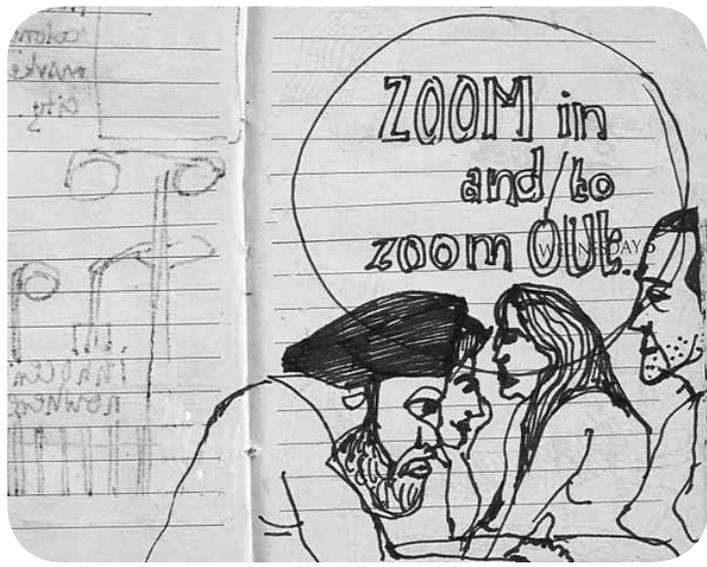












April 2000

6 THURSDAY



7 FRIDAY

April 2000

SATURDAY 8



SUNDAY 9

Sentience is a tricky thing.





*Associate Fellows*

Agat Sharma  
Anirban Gupta-Nigam  
Asim Waqif  
Dyuti Mittal  
Gowhar Yaqoob  
Pratik Sagar  
Rashmi Munikempanna  
Sujit Mallick  
Tanya Goel  
Ujjwal Utkarsh

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Vishwajyoti Ghosh

*Rapporteur and Editor*

Jyoti Dhar



*Co-ordinator*

Kavya Murthy

*Interlocutor*

Bhagwati Prasad

*Operations*

Ashish Mahajan

*Mentors*

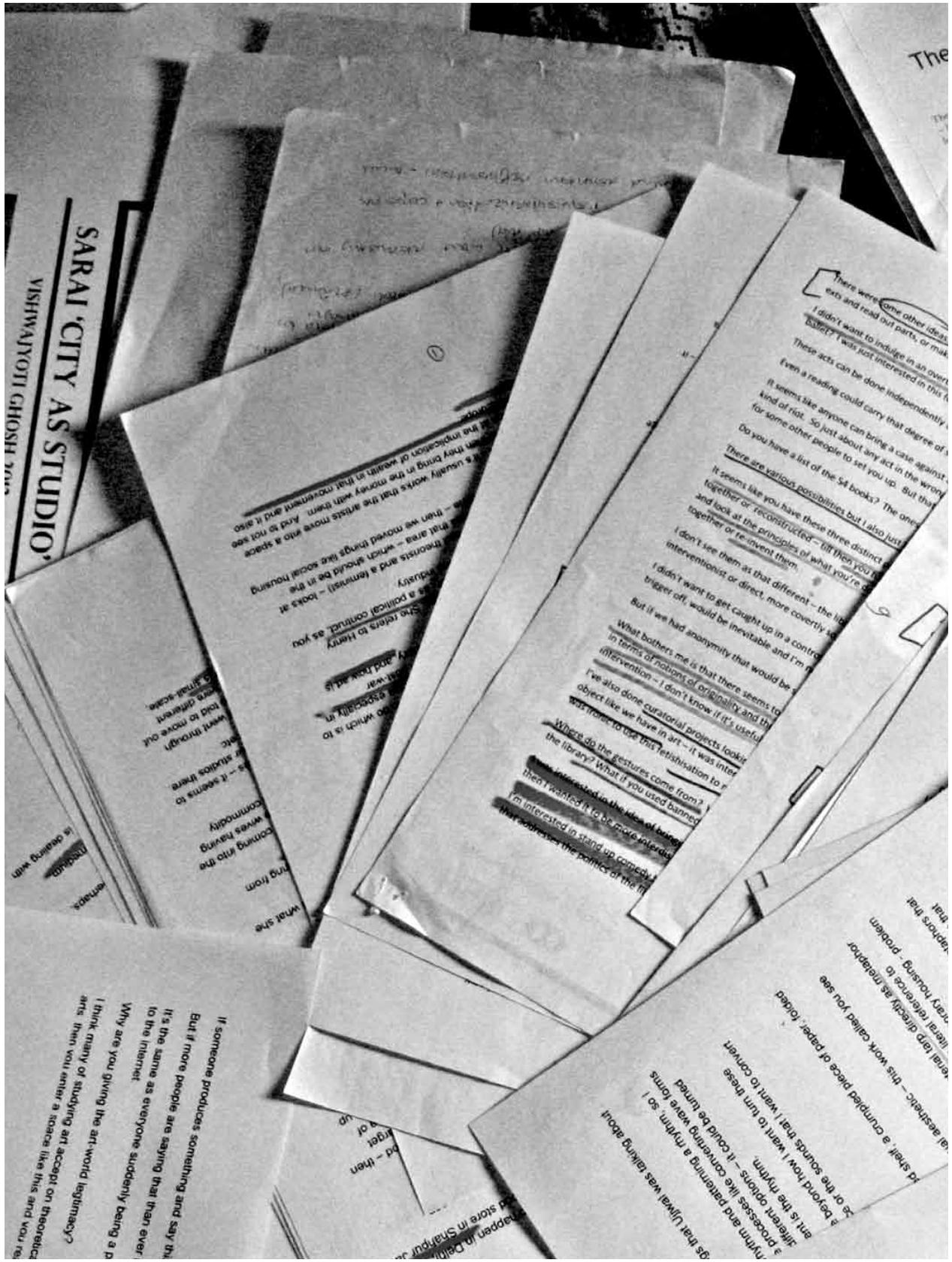
Vivek Narayanan

Inder Salim

Solomon Benjamin

Raqs Media Collective





SARAI 'CITY AS STUDIO'  
VISHWAJYOTI GHOSH 2007

It's usually works that the artists move into a space  
at the inception of moving in that movement and it also  
then we moved things like social housing  
theorists and a feminist - looks at  
that area - which should be in the  
industry  
She refers to Henry  
as a political context, as you  
and how and is  
to which is to  
and how and is  
to which is to

what she  
ing from  
coming into the  
commodity  
it seems to  
of studios there  
want through  
to move out  
different  
a final scene

perhaps  
is dealing with  
perhaps

If someone produces something and say that  
But if more people are saying that than ever  
it's the same as everyone suddenly being a p  
to the internet  
Why are you giving the art world legitimacy?  
I think many of studying art accept on, theoretica  
arts, then you enter a space like this and you re

happen in Delhi  
store in Sharapur  
rd - then  
angel  
up

gs that Lijual was talking about  
a process, like converting wave forms  
different options - it could be turned  
beyond now I want to turn these  
se or the sounds that I want to convert  
ed sheet - a crumpled piece of paper, folded  
eral hand directly as material  
every housing - problem  
that

What bothers me is that there seems to  
in terms of notions of originality and the  
intervention - I don't know if it's useful  
I've also done curatorial projects look  
object like we have in art - it was inter  
and more to see that fetishisation to  
Where do the gestures come from?  
the library? What if you used banner  
then I wanted it to be more inter  
I'm interested in stand up comedy  
that address the politics of the th

But if we had anonymity that would be  
trigger off, would be inevitable and I'm n  
interventionist or direct, more covertly  
I don't see them as that different - the lib  
together or 'reconstructed' - till then you're  
together or re-invent them.

There are various possibilities but I also just  
do you have a list of the 54 books? The ones  
for some other people to set you up. But that  
kind of riot. So just about any act in the wrong  
Even a reading could carry that degree of  
These acts can be done independently  
I didn't want to indulge in an over  
I don't want to indulge in an over  
I didn't want to indulge in an over

There were some other ideas  
I didn't want to indulge in an over  
I didn't want to indulge in an over  
I didn't want to indulge in an over

The



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## Sarai

Sarai began as a place to rest in the middle of a journey, a refuge for quests. For the last ten years it has provided refuge and succor to questions about cities, about the nature of our time, about what was going on around us in culture, technology and urban life.

Sarai is a programme of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, (CSDS) one of India's leading research institutes. Over the last ten years, the Sarai Programme has been arguably South Asia's most prominent and productive platform for research and reflection on the transformation of urban space and contemporary realities, especially with regard to the interface between cities, information, society, technology and culture. Sarai has also been a robust platform committed to critical discourse, freedom of expression and the exploration of the relationship between human rights, civil liberties and the efforts to ensure the viability of democratic ethic with regard to media and information practices.

This year will see Sarai engaged in Sarai Reader 09, a contemporary art exhibition (18 August 2012 – 15 April 2013) at the Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, curated by the Raqs Media Collective. The exhibition takes its name from the Sarai Reader book series, which have been, over the years, widely recognized as a site of critical and creative thinking. The making of the book, Sarai Reader 09 (Projections), will accompany the exhibition.

<http://www.sarai.net/practices/media-forms/sarai-reader-09-exb>

## City as Studio

The City as Studio Programme in Sarai emerged in 2010 as a response to the lack of public institutional support for artist-run spaces, and has intervened in the shaping of a responsive and engaged milieu of contemporary art and media practice through a cluster of dedicated art and media fellowships, tied to a structure of studio situations and processes in Delhi.

The 'City Studios' have brought together the fellows and other people from a range of social, cultural and media contexts to engage creatively with the local rhythms of a place. The studios have set in motion collaborative practices in contexts of unequal and contested urban environments. They have culminated in exhibitions, events and creatively intervened in the public life of our city through multiple media forms. The challenging and innovative media experiments in environments and contexts marked by social, economic and cultural difference have generated a body of material that is made available to other networks, enabling circulation and dissemination of creative practices across contexts.

The forthcoming City as Studio 03 will be co-terminous with Sarai Reader 09, a contemporary art exhibition at the Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, from August 2012 to April 2013, curated by the Raqs Media Collective.

## Associate Fellows

*Agat Sharma* is a designer based in Jaipur. He has done his Master's in Communication Design from NIFT, Delhi. He is interested in reiterating design as a more inclusive interdisciplinary practice that is critical and responsive.

*Anirban Gupta-Nigam* is a research student in film and media studies the School of Arts and Aesthetics. He works broadly on questions of media, images and materiality.

*Asim Waqif* is an artist and architect based in Delhi, where he currently teaches at the School of Planning and Architecture. He has worked as an art director for film and television and has done independent videos and documentaries before moving into a dedicated art space.

*Dyuti Mittal* is an independent illustrator based in Delhi with a diploma in Visual Communication Design from Sriathi School of Art, Design and Technology, Bangalore. She works primarily through visual/sequential narration, information design and illustration. She has worked on a self-initiated graphic novel/artist book, called *Flaw*.

*Gowhar Yaqoob* is a post-doctoral fellow at the Centre for Historical Studies, JNU, and is interested in the interface between history and literature, translations, creative writing, photography and visual art.

*Pratik Sagar* finished his Bachelors and Masters in Painting from College of Art, New Delhi. He has been engaged in

projects thinking about the intersection of ecology, urban systems and art.

*Rashmi Munikempanna* is an artist and independent researcher. She integrates various mediums such as theatre, performance, sound, moving image, photography and writing in her arts practice. She also facilitates on advocacy based participatory projects that work with images. Her research interests revolve around truth and the image, representation, self representation and usage of images.

*Sujit Mallick* is based in Delhi and has done his Bachelor's in Fine Arts from Bhubaneswar, Orissa. He is experimenting with performance and painting, and is interested in site-specific public art.

*Tanya Goel* is based in Delhi, and has done her MFA in painting and printmaking from Yale University School of Art, USA. Her interests are in figuring out a (non) system that opens up the act of making and seeing painting in today's time.

*Ujjwal Utkarsh* is a post graduate in Film & Video from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, and has been involved in film-making at several stages and in various capacities. He now makes independent films while teaching Film Direction at the School of Film & TV, Rohtak, Haryana. He has been experimenting with his own practice and loves to dabble in other forms like photography, sound and theatre.

## Visiting Fellows

*Gitanjali Dang* is an independent curator-critic based out of Bombay. Her current interests include the ontologies of art and technology. She has curated several exhibitions, including the net art endeavour *Beam Me Up – Project India*, and has contributed to local and international publications.

*Thomas Crowley* is a researcher at the Delhi-based NGO Intercultural Resources. He is currently exploring the history and the current status of the Delhi Ridge forest. He also leads bicycle tours in historic parts of the city.

*Vishwajyoti Ghosh* is a graphic novelist and cartoonist based in New Delhi. He is the author of the graphic novel 'Delhi Calm' and also author of the cartoon column 'Full Toss' that appears in *Hindustan Times Edit Page*, every Sunday.

## Rapporteur and Editor

*Jyoti Dhar* is an art writer and curator based in Delhi. She is currently contributing editor for *Art Asia Pacific* and was also Critic-in-Residence for KHOJ's residency on Art, Science and Ecology. Previous curatorial projects include curating for Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) and "In Decay," Ralf Ziervogel's solo at Carbon 12 gallery in Dubai. She was selected as a Forum Fellow of Art Dubai 2012.

## Interlocutor

*Bhagwati Prasad* is a Research Fellow in Sarai- CSDS, author and a performance artist based in New Delhi. He started researching popular culture and media life and histories in Delhi, resulting in him co-authoring *Tinker Solder Tap* (2009), a graphic novel on the history of media piracy in Delhi. He then shifted the attention of his research project to the impending global water crisis as part of the STEPS programme, producing his second graphic novel, *The Water Cookbook* (2010). He has subsequently been part of various experimental art contexts and spaces, and has recently performed in *Seen at Secunderabagh* in Wiener Festwochen, Vienna, Austria (2012).

*Kavya Murthy* works as the Programme Coordinator at Sarai, is a student of sociology and has recently performed in *Seen at Secunderabagh*, with Zuleikha Chaudhuri Productions and Raqs Media Collective. She is interested in finding new contemporary frames for understanding the "agrarian" in the Indian context, and is in the process of sifting through other intellectual encounters that have taken her in other unexpected directions.

## Operations

*Ashish Mahajan* is in charge of Operations and production of events at Sarai, with an extensive experience of managing film and art production.

## Mentors

*Vivek Narayanan* was born in India to Tamil-speaking parents and grew up in Zambia. His first book of poems, *Universal Beach*, was published in 2006. A new, revised edition of that book is due later this year, and a second volume is also forthcoming. He is also interested in exploring different approaches to reading and performing poetry, and in collaborative experiments that explore technology, physical space, movement, site-specific poetry and audience interaction. He is the Co-editor of the online journal *Almost Island*, and he was the coordinator for Sarai-CSDS's Independent Fellowship Programme.

*Inder Salim* is a Delhi-based performance artist from Kashmir, India, and is interested in poetry, photography, film-making and has over the years been closely associated with Sarai-CSDS, where he has been running performance art events called Harkat@Sarai, with young artists and performers from different fields. In 2010 he initiated Art Karavan International with local artists that travelled through 9 cities in North India, an event open to creating new intimacies between different genres of art and cultural practices without any hierarchy of one over the other. His latest work has been Kashmir.Point.Charlie, active since 2010, is a project for exchange of Artists between Germany and Kashmir, in collaboration with Silke Kastner.

*Solomon Benjamin* is an urbanist researching the everyday dynamics of city politics as shaped by the occupancies of land and economy. His academic training under rebellious teachers

instilled a useful and creative sense of in-disciplined explorations of city lives. His present interest lies in how non-metro worlds of place-making, economy, and political space via rituals and being possessed shape claims to rework notions of territorialization beyond the sterile worlds of policy, programs, and rights.

*Raqs Media Collective* have been variously described as artists, curators, editors and catalysts of cultural processes. Their work, which has been exhibited widely in major international spaces and events, locates them along the intersections of contemporary art, historical enquiry, philosophical speculation research and theory, often taking the form in installations, online and offline media objects, performances and encounters. They live and work in Delhi, and are closely involved with the Sarai program at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies ([www.sarai.net](http://www.sarai.net)), an initiative they co-founded in 2000. They will be curating Sarai Reader 09, a contemporary art exhibition at the Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon, from August 2012 to April 2013.

## **CITY AS STUDIO 2**

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(TFQM) “Town as seen with the city – as studio” | On the River Yamuna bank – once | Elusive Truth, Evolving Medium: Evaluating contemporary political documentary @British council | On the wall and paper... | Extending the residency | Study break | Thinking two urdu couplets | Tomorrow Fri 10 Feb: 2pm | City as Studio as Critique | HARKAT@SARAI#7: Jotibha Phule and other performances | On Silence :) | Tuesday: 1pm? | Shh | 11:30AM 13th Feb Shahpur Jat Studio | Story I narrated today, and you can add or alter if you want | On performance day special and... | Coming days | Part 1 – Failure | The not-so-final script | INSATALLATION PROPOSITION ON TEXT AND SPACE II, Opening on Thursday Feb 16 | Fwd: Rashid Jagee short documentary | Tomorrow: Fri 17th at Sarai: 1.00pm | After Solomon Benjamin’s presentation | Broadcast 004: ‘Dodgeball by Bazrakh’ – 20 Feb, 7pm, Satellite | Name | Ginzburg | Possibilities as I see | [Sarai Newsletter] EXB: City as Studio II | Spivak lecture | Text for recording | “Artists can’t take jokes” but art is Fanoon-e-Latifa | Tuesday meeting | Recording | The new reading | Video Editing help | [Sarai Newsletter] EXB: City as Studio II | (no subject) | A particularly loaded sentence from DDA’s website | Graffiti in Delhi | Comic relief | Round 2 | AA lecture series | Biryani | The Picasso of India etc etc | Poster? | More options | Final one | Re: Programme List | The Gulabi Gang | JNU Update | Please join the FB page for my ridge event! | Final Edit – Poster | Good Luck!!!! | Print | Our Kavya Queen | Fwd: CS Exhibition reimbursements | Hallo! | About MOODS | Thursday | Thoughts for the ridge game | Tomorrow: 2nd March | Tomorrow final meeting | Questions for the Video Session | Game! | This is not here | Some reflexes from the Friday meeting | Please bring a bottle of water or two for the ridge game | “He holds him with his skinny hands” | Wilder Connection | Black Market Goes Green | Interesting project – like the bit about loaves of bread as currency in prisons - | Nice article on the business of culture and social influence | Performance art is dead | Few CAS Images | I wish | FoXconn plant at Shenzhen | Kala market | Modern art at the Kremlin | Text as City as | Art Dubai | [Sarai Newsletter]: Three films on Kashmir and Harkat at Sarai | Anecdote on Performance | Pyrta Photo Essay | Text as Material: 2 day workshop at Sarai | Aomori Contemporary Art Centre | Gulabi Gang 2 | Mladen Dolar: Hegel and Freud | CAS II Book: Images Needed! | [Text as Material]: Poems + Translations | Utopia is No Place | On Images | Q&A article | Images for Book | Re: Kavya: On Final Submission | Some Texts | Some Write-ups | Residency/Tanzania | Calls for Proposals to Contribute to Sarai Reader:09 The Exhibition (and the Book)

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