

Kiran Nadar museum of Art announces, ‘The Elemental You’

Simryn Gill, Neha Choksi, and Hajra Waheed



Neha Choksi, *Release imperfect from every pore (Detail)*, 2023-2024, Limestone dust in kiln cast glass, limestone. From *Porous Earth* series. Collection: Kiran Nadar Museum of Art

Press Kit available [here](#)

New Delhi, 15 October 2024: The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art presents the exhibition *The Elemental You*, the first in a series dedicated to the practices of South Asian diaspora artists, curated by Akansha Rastogi. The exhibition initiates a critical dialogue among the works of three artists: Simryn Gill, Neha Choksi, and Hajra Waheed.

Featuring substantial bodies of work from each artist, the exhibition begins with an exploration of the element “Earth” as a geological, cultural and material experience. For decades, the three artists have engaged with rocks, stones, sand, plants, trees, fruits, light, animals and other beings as subjects and materials for their art, focusing on their multifaceted relationship with the natural world. Most of the works in the exhibition are the artists’ life-long projects or long-term commitments to specific ideas, materials, and methods. This unique layering of their distinct oeuvres is an opportunity to delve deeper into their nuanced politics of being and becoming, embodying and effacing, and wrestling with the abstraction of beinghood, things, non-things.



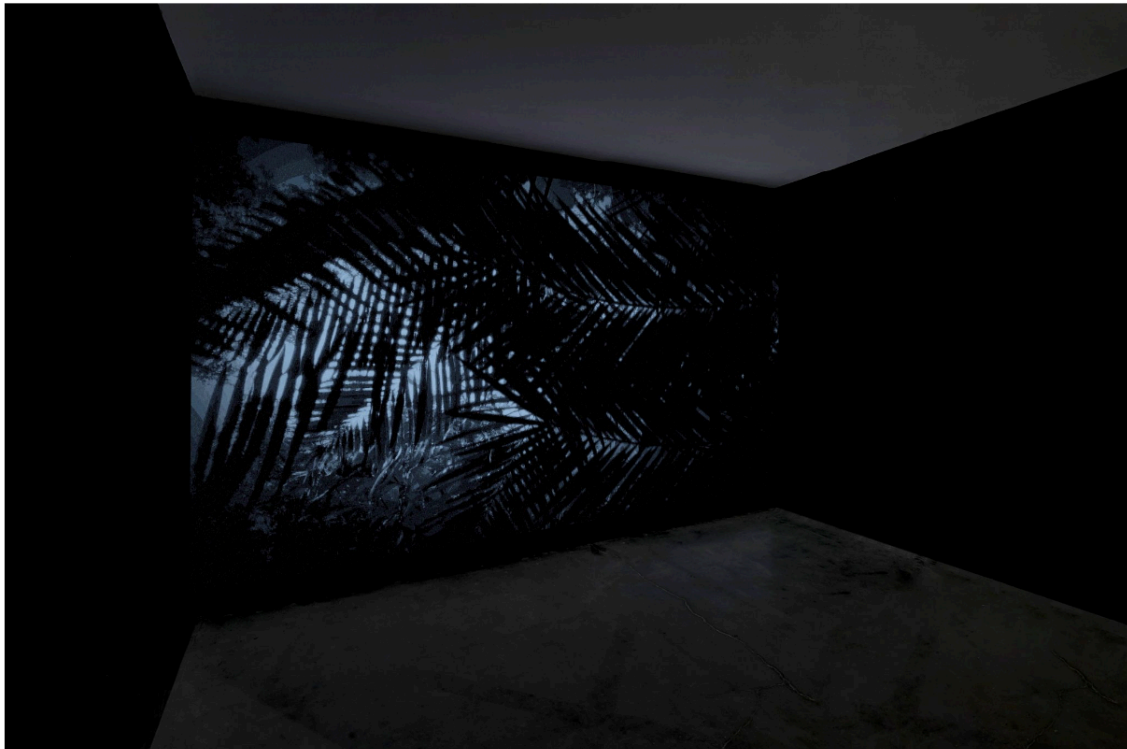
Simryn Gill, *A Small Town at the Turn of the Century #1*, 2001 C-print, Set of 40, Collection: Kiran Nadar Museum of Art

The planetary, the geological and the personal intersect in the exhibition, to reach another drawn landscape and a distinct emotional horizon. Inspired by the artists' thoughts, references, and writings, *The Elemental You* unfolds along three intertwined pathways—i) to think like a mountain, ii) survival as revival, and iii) clearing.

This is a slow exhibition—a slumbering space that transcends human experience, navigating through aeons, eras, days, and decades—marking time as the unit of contemplation. Neha Choksi's works bring attention to the Earth's past geological changes and processes that are visible in the present, to the ageing sun and the warming planet. Visitors may find themselves revisiting specific geographies such as Simryn Gill's industrial port town Port Dickson in Malaysia, which she has

been documenting since 1993. Similarly, Hajra Waheed's meticulous explorations of the night sky and Kashmir's sky draw attention to its fleeting yet constant presence in the everyday. The exhibition straddles the boundary between the human and the more-than-human, exploring modes of being, environmental discourse, and the temporal measurements of life. It invites visitors to enter a deceptively quiet and simple space of alarming beauty, of the holes created by mines, of mangroves, dead snakes, stones and mountains; a space of resilience of surfaces, materials and people. As they traverse this space, they engage with the works of the artist as a looker, digger, archivist, tinkerer of the mundane and the earthly and an interventionist and observer of a peculiar kind in the natural world.

At the heart of the exhibition is "The Working Space", which presents two special projects - by Vijai Maia Patchineelam and Ranjana Dave, alongside an Artists' Roundtable that includes rotating interventions by five artists. The Roundtable converges around themes of grounding, immersion, repetition, field visits, tools, landscape, record-taking, micro-stories, rubbings and the transfer of intimate traces of objects onto surfaces, and many parallel universes. Each artist will occupy the metaphorical Roundtable in succession, sharing the entanglements and transformations occurring in their ever-changing environments, to intersect with the rest of the exhibition.



Hajra Waheed, Installation View: *The Spiral* (2019), Video Installation, 7 min 10 sec.
Photo Credit: Toni Hafkenschied

This exhibition is part of KNMA's ongoing research and collection-building on South Asian diaspora artists. *The Elemental You* is accompanied by a catalogue, a toolkit to navigate the exhibition, and an extensive public program that includes field visits with geologists, tours to nurseries in New Delhi, performances, film screenings and a one-day film festival, conversations with artists, workshops and coursework on artists' archives, care and "the pedagogy of unwellness" inspired by Mimi Khuc's book *dear elia*. The exhibition and the public programs are curated by Akansha Rastogi, Senior Curator, Exhibitions and Programming at KNMA, with colleagues Avik Debdas, Swati Kumari, Chinmoy Deori and Mahika Banerjee.

Kiran Nadar, Founder and Chairperson of KNMA comments: *"We are thrilled to present this timely exhibition that speaks to degrading environmental conditions and the history of the earth. Rooted in the museum collection, it expands outward with seminal works on loan. The exhibition learns from and showcases the inspiring practices of Simryn Gill, Neha Choksi and Hajra Waheed. Together, we hope to open discussions around their work, writings, impulses and visions."*



Artists bios

Simryn Gill

Simryn Gill's methods include photography, drawing, sculpture, making collections, and writing and publishing. The materials and process she works with are often simple: used, or discarded everyday things, plants and texts, which might be pressed, printed, glued, scanned, torn, to make works that meditate on habitation—our place inside and outside places—in history, in geography and in language.

Simryn Gill's work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, including Singapore Art Museum (2024); Barbican Art Gallery, London (2023); Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, New South Wales (2023); Rohkumbau XXVII, Altdöbern (2022); Buxton Contemporary, Melbourne (2021); Gropius Bau, Berlin (2020); Drawing Room, London (2019); TarraWarra Museum, Victoria (2019); Met Breuer, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2019); National Gallery Singapore (2018); Kohta, Helsinki (2018); Lunds Konsthall, Lund (2017) Gill represented Australia at the Venice Biennale in a solo presentation in 2013. She has shown in documenta 12 and 13 (2007, 2012), and in the Sydney Biennale (2018) and Moscow Biennale (2013).

Neha Choksi

In work across and beyond performance, moving image, and sculpture, Neha Choksi probes lived experiences that negotiate relationships in unconventional settings. Harnessing stone to plant, animal to friends, public to philosophy, Choksi's materially bound art engages the terms of our existence in ways personal and planetary. Choksi's work has been widely exhibited in the United States, Asia, Australia, UK, and Europe for nearly three decades. Exhibition venues include the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi; Dhaka Art Summit; The Box Gallery, Los Angeles; Galerie Barbara Thumm's New Viewings, Berlin; Kleefeld Contemporary Museum, Long Beach, CA; Various Small Fires, Los Angeles; Ishara Art Foundation, Dubai; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Manchester Art Gallery, UK; Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles; Hayward Gallery Project Space, UK; among others. Her work has been discussed in various publications, including in Artforum, Art in America, Frieze, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Art Asia Pacific, Take on Art, and Art India. Choksi lives and works in Los Angeles and Bombay.

Hajra Waheed

Hajra Waheed's multidisciplinary practice ranges from painting and drawing to video, sound, sculpture and installation. Amongst other issues, she explores the nexus between security, surveillance and the covert networks of power that structure lives, while also addressing the traumas and alienation of displaced subjects affected by legacies of colonial and state violence. Characterized by a distinct visual language and unique poetic approach, her works often use the ordinary as a means to convey the profound, and landscape as a medium to transpose human struggle and a radical politics of resistance and resilience. Waheed has participated in exhibitions including: Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2024); IMMA, Dublin (2024); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2023); Sharjah Biennial 15, Sharjah (2023); CAM St. Louis, Missouri (2023); State of Concept, Athens (2023); PHI Foundation, Montreal (2021); Portikus, Frankfurt (2020); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2020); Lahore Biennial 02, Pakistan (2020); British Museum, London (2019); The Power Plant, Toronto (2019); 57th Venice Biennale, Venice (2017); 11th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea (2016); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2016); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015); La Biennale de Montréal, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Quebec (2014) Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, NY (2012) and Antoni Tapies Foundation, Barcelona, ES (2012). Her works are held in major collections worldwide.



Notes to Editor

About KNMA

Founded in 2010, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) is a pioneering private museum of modern and contemporary art in South Asia, with branches in New Delhi and Noida. The not-for-profit organization produces rigorous exhibitions, educational and public-focused programs, and publications. Through its rigorous and multiple programs, KNMA emphasises its commitment to institutional collaborations and support-networks for artists and creative communities, while extending its reach to diverse audiences. The museum houses a growing collection of more than 15,000 artworks from South Asia, with a focus on the historical trajectories of 20th century Indian art, alongside the experimental practices of young contemporaries. KNMA was established through the initiative of art collector and philanthropist Kiran Nadar and is supported by the Shiv Nadar Foundation. The new standalone building of KNMA is due to open in the next three to four years, near Delhi's Indira Gandhi international airport.

www.knma.in

Ongoing exhibitions at the Museum:

At KNMA, Noida

Purvae: Evoking Pedagogic Lineages

13 September 2024 - 15 December 2024

Curated by Avijna Bhattacharya

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