

WISH

“Dream is capable of flashes of lightning “ Helene Cixous

The zone of wishes and dreams transcends nostalgia and whimsy. In a dream we can imagine what is possible, with a wish we can formulate an alternative. We enter Wish metaphorically through Mona Kamal's piece, Screen of Wishes and continue on into the dreamscapes of Pamila Matharu's mixed media series Urban Clarity. The work of both artists present fragments much like peripheral sights that elude us whilst firmly claiming their place as sign. Tara Sabharwal's body of monoprints follow to rock us into what is at once a lullaby and a storm, allowing us to feel the world move beneath our feet while inviting us to regain our footing. These existences though unstable and fragile, are not precarious. For the body understands how to find its place and it is through awareness and conscious negotiation that we proceed to give meaning, to make meaning, and to move forward.

In a dream come true, Mona Kamal journeyed through India, watching and touching the original, distant home of a culture whose rituals, values and mannerisms she had been raised with in her Canadian home. During the journey, Kamal's Screen of Wishes was inspired by a marble window screen in the shrine of Shaikh Salim Chishti located in the ancient Mughal city of Fatehpur Sikri. As a cultural tradition, visitors to the shrine tied colourful strings to the lattice screen as they made wishes. To a textile artist, the window with its brightly coloured threads appeared to be a vibrant piece of fabric woven from people's dreams. Standing before it, Kamal felt like she was looking through this window into her parent's culture. In Screen of Wishes, she hangs a long narrow textile piece, which has been taken apart and re-knotted to form a mesh of gold and white threads, in front of the crimson sari her mother was married in. Kamal uses this meshing of traditions to express her own perceptions while referencing the window in Fatehpur Sikri. The sari, she is unlikely ever to don in the same way, and the fabric, unmade and made again, touches upon the essence of a dream.

De-construction is the gesture of thinking that permits the discovery of the quick of life under the immurements. Helene Cixous

In the passages we traverse what do we retain? Fragments and dreamscapes are the subjects of Pamila Matharu's mixed media series Urban Clarity, which collectively create a fragile construction of place and transience. Capturing familiar urban images such as the receding car of a subway, the crossroads of an intersection where only the street sign is visible and the Statue of Liberty, Matharu works with mixed media to layer the images and create a micromacro personal perspective, enabling her to place herself within a sprawling urban centre, which although familiar remains difficult to appropriate. How does one become part of the

bigger picture while retaining one's integrity and sense of self? How do transients insert themselves into a place while they are just passing through?

Artist Tara Sabharwal's early work was located in worlds that she had come from and revisited. As her locations shifted she increasingly became an outsider, a visitor to these worlds and so chose to move within to claim a space. Sabharwal found solace in the orderly environment of her own body: the structure of cells, the mechanisms of internal workings as they lived beneath her own skin. Her images of vessels and home speak of being contained and positioned less within a community or culture than within her own claimed space. The tension between containment and a need to be free is apparent in these monoprints onto which Sabharwal has layered materials to build up her interiors. The desire for home and community is countered by the wish to be grounded in self. Marking the position of self allows this self the strength to continue moving between worlds whilst not losing one's centre.

No sooner I write...it is not true. And yet I write hanging on to Truth. Helene Cixous

In the process of making work: knotting fragile threads, layering materials onto surfaces, meaning is created in infinite layers, always moving towards an end but never definitively conclusive. Evoking memory and emotion, the works speak from places always in process. Temporality and process then, form not ambiguity but possibility.

What is involved is a state of alert in-betweenness and "critical" non-knowingness, in which the bringing of reflective and cosmic memory to life - that is, to the formlessness of form - is infinitely more exigent than the attempt to "express," to judge or evaluate. Trinh T. Minh-ha.

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