REVISITING GANDHI: THE ART OF SHELLY JYOTI 2009 – 2018

SWARAJ | KHADI | SALT | INDIGO: Symbols of Nation & Identity in Textile Art

REVISITING GANDHI: THE ART OF SHELLY JYOTI 2009 – 2018





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SWARAJ | KHADI | SALT | INDIGO: Symbols of Nation & Identity in Textile Art



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The Wheel of Swadharma 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2016

Member Secretary's Note

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi is delighted to present this exhibition entitled "Revisiting Gandhi: The Art of Shelly Jyoti (2009-18) Symbols of Nation Building and Identity through Textile Art". A retrospective of the artist, this show reflects Shelly's long period of intense introspection on Gandhian ideals, thus creating an important juncture in her creative journey.

The exhibition significantly also marks the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, as IGNCA begins its celebration of Gandhi Parv, with a diverse range of programmes on the life and teachings of Bapu in the year 2018-19. IGNCA takes great pride to initiate this tribute with a show based on four important concepts of Swaraj, Khadi, Salt and Indigo.

These concepts find their manifestation in her textile productions. The artworks draw on the enduring intellectual, historical, spiritual and artistic ideas and traditions, which though rooted in the past, still flourish, ferment and bear fruit today.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Shelly Jyoti as the artist, curator and writer of this project, for her dedication towards her art practice, and also in her continuous effort to bring awareness on building self-sufficient peaceful societies, truly making this show one to reckon with.

I am thankful to the Executive Committee of IGNCA and all its Trustees for their constant support. I would also like to acknowledge the active involvement of Kaladarsana Division in this venture.

SHRI SACHIDANAND JOSHI

Member Secretary, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi



2009 - 2018

OVERVIEW

The opportunity of this exhibition, *Revisiting Gandhi*, comes at an important juncture in Shelly Jyoti's life and creative journey - offering her reason to reflect on over a decade of intense introspection on the life and work of Gandhi. Realizing that what Gandhi inspired and put into action - self-transformation, with the ultimate goal of the total transformation of society - is an ongoing and ever-present process, Jyoti's study of Gandhi's principles has been transformed into exquisitely crafted and deeply meaningful works of textile art. In this exhibition, inclusive of bodies of work created between 2009 - 2018, she has found material form for key themes in Gandhian thought and Indian history and identity - Swaraj, Khadi, Salt and Indigo.

By translating her ideas and interpretations through India's unique craft traditions, her collaborative spirit and creative processes pays tribute to both Gandhi and her country.

Shelly Jyoti's textile works draw on enduring intellectual, historical, spiritual and artistic ideas and traditions rooted in the past, but that still flourish, ferment and bear fruit today. Guided by by Gandhi Jyoti believes that contemporary Indian society can still connect with concepts of swadharma, swaraj and sarvodaya, which may help foster a greater sense of association between urban and rural communities and heal, troubled and turbulent aspects of society. As a designer, Jyoti has explored India's

many distinct regional craft and textile traditions and much of her work results from frequent collaborations with artisans in Kutch in western India who practice unique forms of dyeing, block printing and embroidery. *Khadi*, hand-spun cloth, is a humble material used by Gandhi that asserted a persuasive message leading to Swaraj - self-rule and independence. Using Khadi as the material ground for complex processes of *ajrakh* printing, dyeing and embroidery, Jyoti constructs her designs with forms and symbols layered over sumptuously decorated surfaces, conjuring aspects of Indian history embodied in Gandhi's ideals. Many of her images are imbued with both universal and specific meaning as the appearance of a similar shape may provide formal

REVISITING GANDHI: THE ART OF SHELLY JYOTI

continuity while illuminating distinct social and spiritual contexts.

Shelly Jyoti's works have been exhibited internationally including in Chicago, Miami, Seattle, California and Washington DC in the United States. In India, they have travelled to New Delhi, Baroda, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore. Select exhibition venues include The Chicago Cultural Centre, Gandhi Memorial Centre in Washington DC, The National Archives of India in New Delhi and The National Gallery of Modern Art in Bangalore.

Kathryn Myers, Professor of Art, The University of Connecticut, USA

Keeping it for a Day for the Nation

BY JOHNY ML Delhi based Curator, Critic, Writer

helly Jyoti is driven by a mission; a mission to take the Gandhian ideals of Swaraj and Swadharma, which could be translated as 'One's Own Country' and 'One's Own (moral) Duty' respectively, from the annals of India's national history to the living realities of the contemporary citizens of the country. It may seem a bit ambitious on the part of a visual artist who pursues an ideal that has got etched in her mind, strongly believing that the establishment of such a citizenry is possible provided each one harks keenly what Gandhi had said on his pet concepts of Swaraj and Swadharma and also sees what Shelly Jyoti has to say or rather show about these ideals/ideas via her favourite medium, textiles. As a textile designer-visual artist, Shelly swims in the ocean of India's textile history like a fish with great ease and grace and by now has settled comfortably among the luminous corals of Indian Block Printing on fabric, which is otherwise known as Ajrakh. She flags out this area of fabric making and designing and considers it as a reliable realm replicable to create rural autonomy and sustainability as envisioned by Gandhi, and through her projects she has already emphasised this idea by exhorting the middle-class and rich urban populations to become annual patrons of this realm so that not only a few meters of the home spun or hand spun fabric which is popularly known as

Khadi could become a part of their daily lives but also could become a philosophy of organic life, simplicity, wholeness and the holistic well being of the human beings from both the urban and the rural sectors.

There is a tremendous optimistic reliance on the patronage as well as the traditional techniques of making Ajrakh visual design on the Khadi fabric created by Shelly Jyoti not just because she feels like working with textile as a medium for creating two or three dimensional works of art but because she has developed full faith in a sort of falling back on to an earthy, organic, traditional, rural and aesthetical method of production (of textile) which even though would not decelerate the pace of post-industrial and Information Technology based production, but perhaps would become handy in inculcating an alternative life style and world view. In the Post-Truth days of today palpable alternatives are sought after less and the pursuits of people are often guided by the socio-political and cultural meanings of what they consume rather than what they understand.

Here in this 'Introspective' exhibition what Shelly tries to showcase is not the essence of the relational values that come masqueraded as Truth values but to showcase an ensemble of possibilities where





Lunar Swell: Waxing and Waning A hexaptych installation 36 x 80 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work 2018

The idea of Swaraj is timeless, whether Gandhi's narration of Hind Swaraj critiquing western modernity, or Tilak's famous quote *"Swaraj is my birth right"* or Swami Vivekananda referring to Swaraj as internal awakening during Arya Samaj movement in early 20th century. Although without alluding to the specific historicity of events, Swaraj, swadharma, seems eternal and embedded in time.



Lunar Swell: Civilization and Collective Forces Site-specific installation 32 indigo dyed Khadi fabric strips of variable sizes 2018

Installed in the shape of a semi-circle, this arrangement of variable sized strips of indigo dyed khadi represents sequential movement and alludes to the nature of time itself. It calls to mind the endless ebb and flow of tides, the continual revolution of the sea and the state of perpetual motion. The gradually folding and merging of hues of blue amalgamate to make a whole, akin to water as the beginning and end of life. Human life originates as a minute seed and expands to full bloom, ultimately contracting to a withered state. *Lunar Swell: Civilization and Collective Forces* is the sculptural embodiment of these energies that foster life and impose structure on our existence.



Lunar Swell: A Dusk Moment and Terminator 36 x 50 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and mirror work on Khadi fabric 2018

Inspired by the optical transitory illusionary line, the dusk moment between light and dark hemispheres, I feel that it is a "dusk" moment for us in the early 21st century. Considering how technology has taken over many of our lives, I question how we can be self-aware enough to eschew the temptations that modern civilization offers, and consider how we measure success, progress and development in material terms?

philosophical subtlety guides economic correction and creates cultural locations. In this Shelly imagines the possibility of bridging the gap between the 'sanskar' (organic, innate and traditionally chosen practices) and the culture (artificial, extraneous to basic living conditions and chosen by market decisions). This binary however needs further elucidation.

The modernist binary of nature/culture or here Sanskar for nature and Culture for culture is not selfexclusionary anymore. Nature no longer remains as a 'pristine' entity unvisited by culture at all. Similarly, culture is not a location or practice which is far away from nature. Interestingly, we constantly see one reproducing the other; information technology penetrating even into the remote parts of any country and concrete housing complexes developing ponds, forests, meadows and wildlife within their premises are examples to see how nature imitates culture and vice versa. In Shelly's projects during the last one the upper hand by 2012, Shelly for sure found herself walking the same road that Gandhi had taken in 1930 when he marched with his disciples from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi seashore to break the salt law imposed by the British. Shelly's interest in Khadi and Ajrakh does not waver even if the metaphor has now shifted from Indigo to Salt. She presented 'Salt, the Great March' in 2013 and it travelled to many cities during the next two years. We see an interesting transferring of political philosophy of Gandhi and its pivotal metaphors into the visual art practice by Shelly in this project. As Gandhi believed that there was a little bit of salt in everyone's life, Shelly rightly believed that there was a little bit of Khadi in everyone's life, and the belief still lingers on in her. In this project Shelly dealt with two metaphors in one go; one Khadi as a metaphor and two, salt as a metaphor. Looming large over these two metaphors was the metaphor of Gandhi himself and Shelly, perhaps for the first time yielded to the temptation of depicting Gandhi in his popular silhouette with a walking stick and in one of the works, as a pair of lean legs in brisk stride. This breakage from the pattern oriented depictions had underlined the urgency of a powerful and moving metaphor and had considerably contextualized the works of Shelly, who otherwise had been still fighting with the popular notions of being a textile artist and a textile designer and visual artist. 'Salt the Great March' that had consolidated Gandhi's position in Indian politics at a crucial moment, the visual art project of the same name established Shelly's position in Indian art too.

decade, one could witness this mutual reproduction of binaries. Shelly, as an urban artist imbibes the spirit and methodology of a rural fabric-making and designing practice with the help of the traditional practitioners of the art and craft form (here Ajrakh) and in turn they receive a culturally created idea of Swaraj and Swadharma from Gandhi via Shelly. Historical experiences have taught us how Gandhi had imagined and tried to put into practice a rural sustainable economy sitting in a liminal space (an interim space or a passage therefore not really a space at all!) while articulating his ideas on sustainable economy in 1909 while he was travelling by a ship. A liminal space is a 'no space' also; it is a space/place in transition; that means the Gandhi who had started penning down the ideas of Swaraj the ship in his mother tongue Gujarati was not the Gandhi who had emerged from the voyage. The space in transition had made all the difference. Similarly when Shelly started working on the Ajrakh traditions a decade back, after creating series in making 'lyrical abstractions' on canvases, little did she know that she was entering in a space in transition. It was then she started reading Gandhi's works to understand his involvement in the Champaran Movement in 1917. This movement had shaped the Gandhian struggle in India, which had a thorough base in his experiences in South Africa. Shelly soon found out how Champaran became a point of departure for Gandhi when he identified with the causes of the Indian farmers and Khadi became a practice and a metaphor in his political life. Shelly's interest in Ajrakh and Indigo (which was the central point of the Champaran Movement) As mentioned at the outset, Shelly becomes a grew hand in hand and culminated in her exhibition contemporary artist with a clear mission when 'Indigo Narratives' (2009). Shelly took it further as her she crosses over from 'Salt the Great March' to interest in Indigo and Ajrakh became immense and 'The Khadi March: Just Five Meters' (2016-17). By the project took different shapes during the next eight this time, Shelly has become a staunch follower of years as she kept embellishing the project with her Gandhi's Khadi Movement and has started believing involved engagements. in the possibility of changing the rural economy by making the urban patrons to buy 'just five meters Whether it was her interest in the textile or it was of Khadi' so that the 'sixty percent of the illiterate rural population of India' could develop a sustainable her fascination for Gandhian philosophy that took

economy. At the outset, one may find it a bit Utopian an idea but as one goes into the nuances of it one would come to know that in the days of crowd funding and online selling, chances are abundant for pooling in tremendous amounts of money through converting the rich urban population into sworn consumers Khadi. However, the irony is that even if the rich middle class urban people talk a lot about their loyalty towards their country and try to wear their nationalism and patriotism on their sleeves when it comes to the core ideas of generating money for the stability of rural economy many takes a few steps back. But Shelly's optimism is infectious and she believes that as an artist she could instil this idea into the minds of the young and rich urban audience who eventually would understand the essence of Khadi as a 'vichar', a philosophy. What makes Shelly's visual art ensemble appealing is her ability to shun sloganeering and package her ideas in attractive patterns, designs and forms using traditional Ajrakh technique on Khadi fabric. She beautifully blends two ways of production; the rural and urban, thereby brings two worlds that are apparently set apart by socio-political and economic forces.

While creating works of art out of the Khadi fabric and employing Ajrakh printing methods, Shelly considers that she is in a process that needs meticulous design and technical support. The technical support comes from the traditional Ajrakh printers in the Kutch region in Gujarat, where Shelly had been a regular visitor during the last one decade. True to her guiding philosophy, Shelly brings the rural expertise to the urban galleries and prefers to call the technicians as her technical collaborators. A video that accompanies her visual art projects shows how she and her team of traditional technicians go through the fourteen stages of Ajrakh print making diligently before getting the final desired results. Shelly is an artist who explores the nuances of the binding theme and expands its scope to the complementary visuals as one sees in the works where the female garments become a central iconic presence. Here she speaks of the absence and presence of women in the social life of India and also she underlines the dignity that women prefer to carry in their personal life through self reliance. The idea of Swarajya/ Swaraj always comes to Shelly with the notion of collectiveness. She sees the society as a collective body whose members ideally agree with each other. In reality that may not be the case, however, Shelly as she underlines in her 'Just Five Meters (of Khadi)' a society could progress if the members could stand together. She brings in the image of an emblematic pack of fishes to show this collectiveness. Also, Shelly brings forth the traditional images such as 'wheels' (suggesting progress and Time), 'flags' (path finding and triumph) and 'flowers' (purity and fecundity) along with embellishing bead works, embroidery and rarely hand painting. Shelly Jyoti's creative world may look pattern-filled at the outset but as one goes deep into the nuances and intricacies, the underlying philosophy of autonomy, stability and social morality emerges from the fabric surfaces and with its persuasive force which leads the viewers to a special zone of aesthetical engagement.

Residue, Reflections, Reproductions Site-specific Installation 20 meters of handspun, handwoven Khadi fabric, layered residue with Ajrakh printing 2018

I place lengths of fabric under each sheet before block printing the material laid out on the studio tables. The marks on the sheets are the outcome of the process of many prior works in progress, residue from the left-over dyes. I hope to convey through this piece that last decade of my life has been a period of intense study on Gandhi as well one of finding my own self, my own dilemmas, introspections, self-transformation and of reading Vedic literature to connect to Gandhi and the endless ocean. I feel through this process I'm coming closer to comprehending and understanding my life and artistic journey.





OVERVIEW

'It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves' - M K Gandhi

These works titled Bound by duty: An Idea of Swaraj and Collectiveness are inspired by Gandhi's seminal anti-imperialist text Hind Swaraj written in 1909. This exhibition examines elements of Gandhi's critique of modern civilisation, noting his emphasis on an evolved ethical and spiritual self for creating an alternative perspective of a better world. To bring social revolutions for creating peaceful societies, the idea of self-rule or self-control needs to be experienced uniquely by each individual. Individuals who have harnessed their inner strength can move mountains.

Shelly Jyoti is inspired by the micro-organisms in water, such as trillions of tiny fishes collaborating together, displacing water to create oceanic currents, waves and turbulence in undersea environment. She examines the idea of 'collectiveness' and 'collective impact' that can bring about social change with evolved and spiritually self-aware communities.

These works are in continuation of Jyoti's previous works titled,' Indigo Narratives'2009, Salt: The Great March 2013 and The Khadi March: Just Five Meters 2016. The exhibit includes textile site specific installations, 30 new Ajrakh artworks on khadi, multimedia spoken word poetry and short film on making of Swaraj and collectiveness.

I turned to Gandhi's most important work Hind Swaraj to seek answers to my own dilemmas. I wished to understand the meaning and importance of the relationship between self, societies and social transformation.

2018

Bound by Duty: An Idea of SWARAJ & COLLECTIVENESS

Gandhi at Sea: individual duty and collective action

BY LISA TRIVEDI

Professor of History, Hamilton College, New York, U.S.A Author of Clothing Gandhi's Nation: Homespun and Modern India

Born on the western coast of the Kathiawar peninsula, in what is now the state of Gujarat, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) was born in a town that had been an ancient trading post from Harappan times (1600-1400 B.C.E) and later sent goods across the Arabian Sea to the Middle East and Africa. It is little wonder therefore that Gandhi would find the sea an important feature of his life—a force shaping his life and politics in a variety of ways. Shelly Jyoti explores the power of individual duty and collective action in her most recent show, *Bound by duty: An Idea of Swaraj and Collectiveness*. Here Jyoti revisits Gandhi's focus upon individual action, or the performance of dharma, alongside the power of collective action.

Gandhi's earliest formulations of non-violent resistance, or satyagraha, took shape not while he was in India, but instead while he resided across the Arabian Sea in South Africa. Returning from India in 1896, Gandhi found himself arriving in South Africa at a time when the public was considering a bill that would restrict Indians from political representation. On December 18, 1896, the ship he was traveling upon, the *Courland*, arrived off the coast of Durban and dropped anchor. It was customary for ships to await certification that passengers were allowed to disembark. But, Durban officials quarantined the travelers of the Courland for a longer period than was usual under the guise that the ship's passengers were potential carriers of plague that had broken out in Bombay. Some of Durban's most influential residents sought to intimidate the Indian travelers, but especially Gandhi in particular, in the hope that they would return to India. During the period of their quarantine, advocates of restrictions on Asian migration spread unfounded rumors hoping to garner the support of their neighbors and the government in their efforts to restrict Asian immigration. They claimed that while in India, Gandhi had 'indulged in unsubstantiated condemnation of Natal whites'. They also promulgated the lie that Gandhi had recruited Indians to return the South Africa as settlers. As a result, the passengers of the Courland allowed to disembark only after the quarantine was ended in January of 1897, some three weeks later after the travelers had arrived. After the government acquiesced to the demand to allow the passengers to land, Gandhi was attacked. When he declined to press charges against his assailant, few understood why. Had Gandhi's time at sea brought clarity to his thinking about injustice?

The sea would again provide a fruitful context for the development of Gandhi's thinking. This time Gandhi was returning to South Africa from London on the SS Kildonan between 13 and 22 November 1909 when he wrote Hind Swaraj, or Indian Home Rule. The treatise takes the unusual form of a dialogue between a fictitious newspaper Editor and his Reader. Together, they discuss many important questions of the period. Hind Swaraj explores four inter-related ideas: India's self-rule cannot be achieved through the adoption of a British-styled society; India's self-rule can only be won through passive, not violent, resistance; India's passive resistance must be grounded in the practice of selfsufficiency; India can only be free if it rejects modern civilization, which is devoid of morality. The Gujarati original, which was published in the pages of Gandhi's newspaper Indian Opinion, was banned in India by the British government. An English version of the work appeared shortly thereafter, circulating among India's political elite.

Several years later, while traveling to England and India in August of 1914, Gandhi described himself as at sea when news reached him about the outbreak of World War One. He was both in the English channel and uncertain about whether participation in war was ever justifiable. Gandhi had struggled previously on two occasions over war. His first consideration of war occurred during the Boer War (1899-1902), which pitched British interests and settlers against Dutch interests and settlers of South Africa, known as the Boers. Gandhi had been deeply conflicted about supporting war, but eventually concluded it was his duty as a British imperial subject to support the British side. Rather than take up arms against the Boers, Gandhi raised an ambulance corps of Indian volunteers to tend to the wounded. Only a few years later, the British in South Africa again faced a significant challenge to their power; this time their opponents were Zulus, who rebelled in 1906. In this case, Gandhi encouraged South Africa's Indian community to volunteer for military duty. When British authorities turned down Indian recruits, Gandhi returned to assisting the wounded. He led



Image:Details of artworks from Fish series 2018

24 stretcher-bearers to treat the wounded on both sides of the conflict. Years later as he considered the outbreak of a European war, Gandhi recalled the torture scars he saw on African bodies. The violence that Gandhi witnessed during the Zulu rebellion haunted him for decades afterwards, making him wonder if violence, even to protect British interests, could ever be justified.

At sea in the English Channel as World War broke out in 1914, Gandhi, like many Indians, considered whether to support the war effort or to withhold service until an unjust colonial authority was ameliorated. Eventually, Gandhi concluded that 'England's need should not be turned into our opportunity and that it was more becoming and far-sighted not to press our demands while the war lasted.' Before his own health forced his return to India, Gandhi again began organizing an Indian medical corps for the war front. After his return to India, Gandhi went so far as to support military recruitment efforts in India, believing that the British would surely reward India for its contributions and sacrifices after the war was won.



Image:Details of artworks from Fish series 2018

The sea would play a transformative role in Gandhi's politics in 1930 when he sought to challenge the legitimacy of British taxes on salt. Embarking on his Dandi March from his ashram in Ahmedabad on 12 March 1930, Gandhi sought to draw national and international attention to British injustice.

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth. We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually. We believe therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain Purna Swaraj, or complete sovereignty and self-rule.

While the march began with Gandhi and seventyeight of his most trusted satyagrahis, hundreds must be aimed at the service of others. Service to joined the march along its 390 Kilometer route to others can inspire individuals not only to recognize Dandi, which took twenty-four days to complete. Once there at the sea at Dandi on 6 April 1930, us. Thus, Hind Swaraj could not be achieved by Gandhi and his supporters broke the law by making a single fish in isolation, but rather through a salt and selling it without tax. In doing so, they drew deep and meaningful connection established and attention to the injustice of the law, but also the maintained by a community. power they possessed as individuals engaged in non-Gandhi conclusively demonstrated to the world the power that resides in the individual who acts in the service of others and thus performs their dharma. Shelly Jyoti's moving tribute to this idea is communicated through art that evokes the sea, which figured so prominently in Gandhi's life. She reminds us both the incredibly important role to be played by each of us as individuals, especially as our action may inspire those around us. Home-rule for the individual thus has the potential for home-rule for the collectivity. Schools of fish in the sea produce currents and counter-currents that have the potential to transform the world.

violent collective action. After Gandhi's arrest less than a month later, millions more were inspired by the protest. What had begun as the individual action of eighty satyagrahis quickly turned into the action of a new collectivity. At the sea, Gandhi demonstrated for himself, his followers, and millions in India and around the world the indisputable power of collective non-violent action. At the root of Gandhi's political success was his ability to enable people to recognize their individual duty to themselves and one another and then to act accordingly. Shelly Jyoti's exhibition brilliantly

expresses the power of Gandhi's thought through Ajrakh embellished textiles with signs of the sea. The power of collective action, like the schools of fish Jyoti has selected for this show, was an outgrowth of the millions who moved in unison performing their duty to themselves, their neighbors, and their fellow countrymen. Individual action, when performed alongside others, produces power that exceeds the simple sum of its individuals. Schools of fish in the sea produce currents and countercurrents of their own.

Jyoti draws our attention to the beautiful power of dedicated, righteous action as a means to addressing the challenges that face the world today. She reminds us that perfection, of the sort that Gandhi hoped to inspire, cannot be mandated by elites or government, but rather derives from the purification of individual intention and action. Although righteous action must begin at an individual level, Gandhi made clear that dharma cannot be performed simply for the self, but rather our own duty to ourselves, but also to those around



Fish Series: *Shoal of Fish - Chaos* 36 x 46 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2018



Fish Series: School of Fish - Streamlined 36 x 44 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2018 Fish Series: Solitude 36 x 36 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018





Fish Series: Solitude 1 36 x 36 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018

Fish Series: Collectiveness 36 x 36 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2018





Fish Series: *Duality* 80 x 70 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2018



Fish Series: A *School of Fish - Harmony* 80 x 70 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2018 Fish Series: *Shoal of Fish - Togetherness* 80 x 70 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2018





Fish Series: A Shoal of Fish - Collectiveness 36 x 80 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2018



Fish Series: A School of Fish - Linear Narrative 36 x 70 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018

Fish Series: *Soul Force* 36 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018





Fish Series: *Soul Force 1* 36 x 55 inches Ajrakh Print on Khadi fabric 2018



Fish Series: Undercurrents 36 x 36 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018



Fish Series: Undercurrents 1 36 x 36 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018





Fish Series: Swaraj 36 x 36 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018

Fish Series: Swaraj 1 36 x 52 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018

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Fish Series: A Shoal of Fish - Chaos 36 x 46 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018



Fish Series: Introspective 36 x 46 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needlework on Khadi fabric 2018



Fish Series: *Reflection* 80 x 70 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2018

Following Spread Fish Series: *Self and Society* 70 x 104 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2018







OVERVIEW

The Khadi March: Just Five Meters challenges those living in urban cities to grant dignity to and reconsider our relationship with the spinners, weavers and others who work with handicrafts in the villages. The featured works in this exhibition have two aims, one to touch upon the idea of *swadharma* towards country, and secondly, to explore a solution that might help augment the economic status of the rural population. The first is an ideology stemming from Vedas (Ancient Indian texts composed in Sanskrit,) the second involves finding a solution to help bridge and connect with people in rural areas that make up 70% of India's population. I am exploring the idea that if thirty crore in the urban population buys five yards of khadi once a year, we can empower spinners, weavers and unremunerated village citizens and help bring them livelihood. This form of *swadharma* toward our rural brethren would be an effortless exchange of sacrifice and gain, woven through the notion of patriotism, and purity and sacrifice. This exhibition features several site-specific installations featuring khadi, twenty Ajrakh textile artworks, multi-media spoken word poetry, and a short documentary film titled 'Mapping Ajrakh Textile Traditions in Contemporary Art and Craft'. These works are a continuation of artist Shelly Jyoti's previous works 'Indigo Narratives' (2009-18) and 'Salt: The Great March' (2013-18)

A focus on swadharma possesses the potential not only to reclothe urban India, but also to build new bonds between urban and rural populations, investing communities across the nation with common cause and purpose. I use khadi as a medium that can be a catalyst for a new dialogue with our fellow human-beings in rural India.

2016

THE KHADI MARCH: JUST FIVE METERS

Communicating with Communities

BY LISA TRIVEDI Professor of History, Hamilton College, U.S.A Author of Clothing Gandhi's Nation: Homespun and Modern India

helly Jyoti's compelling exhibition, The Khadi March: Just Five Meters, is a provocative exploration of India's material possibilities for building greater community in the new millennium. Drawing upon the nationalist politics of Mohandas K. Gandhi's swadeshi movement and using its chief product, khadi or homespun, homewoven cloth, Jyoti's multimedia art considers how production and consumption today might foster empathy and understanding across communities, as well as develop self-reliance and independence within individuals. Many of the pieces featured in this exhibition are purposeful collaborations between Jyoti, a textile and visual artist, and ajrakh artisans in Kutch, Gujarat, whose families have been engaged in textile arts for generations. In opening up this dialog among fellow artists, Jyoti not only reintroduces earlier forms of textile practice to urban viewers, she aims to engage urban communities in the lives and livelihoods of rural Indians. Re-establishing this connection across India promises to provide lessons with potential beyond India's borders, an idea first explored by Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948) in the early twentieth century.

The questions that Jyoti raises and leaves the viewer with are as centrally important to an ethically and morally engaged community today as they were in Gandhi's time. Do we value the craft, artisanal skill, and labour of our rural fellow countrymen and women? If so, how do we demonstrate this to ourselves and to one another? How can our lives be intertwined and self-sustaining in an era otherwise characterized by global displacement and the disintegration of community? Are there small decisions that we might make in our everyday lives that honour the kind of community to which we want to belong? Like other communities the world over, India today faces a great challenge. How to maintain its sense of distinctive community while achieving its full potential as a global leader. Jyoti's exhibition suggests production and consumption as a means of self*purification* and she believes that the contemporary urban Indian viewer of her exhibition can sustain India through the challenging times ahead in part through the daily choices they make in everyday life. One possibility, Jyoti suggests, may be found in creating new forms of fellowship through our consumer choices. With cooperation and fellowship towards our fellow countrymen and women, India can realize its full potential.

September, 2016



The Yarn Spring Site specific installation

Lend a hand 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle and mirror work on Khadi fabric 2016

Opposite page Lend a hand Diptych 36 x 52 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle and mirror work on Khadi fabric 2016







Timeless Silhouettes: Angrakha 1 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2016

Timeless Silhouettes: Angrakha 2 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2016



Timeless Silhouettes: Angrakha 3 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2016



Timeless Silhouettes: Angrakha 4 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2016



Timeless Silhouettes: Angrakha 5 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2016





The Flag Series 36 x 100 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2016





Timeless Silhouettes: 7 Blouses 75 x 75 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing, needle and mirror work on Khadi fabric 2016



Timeless Silhouettes: Blouse Sampler 1 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing, needle and mirror work on Khadi fabric 2016



Timeless Silhouettes: Blouse Sampler 3 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing, needle and mirror work on Khadi fabric 2016



Opposite page Timeless Silhouettes: Blouse Sampler 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing, needle and mirror work on Khadi fabric 2014

Timeless Silhouettes: Blouse Sampler 2 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing, needle and mirror work on Khadi fabric 2016







Structured Jackets Site-specific installation of 6 Jackets, Autumn Winter Collection 34 x 55 inches Hand embroidered, mirror work, indigo dyed, Ajrakh print on Khadi, 2016

Opposite page Timeless Silhouettes: Angrakha 34 x 55 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2016





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Tree of Life 36 x 54 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2016





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Tree of Life 36 x 54 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2016







The Ajrakh Headgears 12 Gandhi topis Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2016

The Gandhi Topi was an 'invented tradition' and distinctive from both traditional headgears typically worn in native communities and those prescribed by government dress codes during British India. The choice to wear this new hat eventually challenged both traditional norms of comportment and disrupted the imperial habitus.

To Gandhi, dress became a visual symbol in his journey of fight against British. He looked for many designs of caps suiting the comfort, wearibilty and rejected many finding comfort in Kashmiri style. The khaki cap, as Tarlo points out, eventually provided a visual uniformity, which had never existed in Indian headgear. The ajrakh printed Khadi caps are not only comfortable and style statement in twenty-first century but also the Khadi cap visually signals ones allegiances.







A documentary film

Mapping Ajrakh Textile Traditions in **Contemporary Art and Craft**

This short documentary film features the processes of Ajrakh textile traditions and craftsmen collaboration with contemporary visual artists. It explores newer dimensions, the critical relationship between the materials and traditional processes used in Ajrakh production and to develop a deeper understanding of the critical role that cloth, fiber, natural dyes, and environment each play mapping Ajrakh traditions in contemporary art and craft.

OVERVIEW

To draw from 'Parapolitics: Towards the City of Man' [Raghavan N. Iyer], can modern societies become genuine moral communities? According to Gandhi, they can. Gandhi's vision of a Sarvodayan society is embryonic, but nonetheless engaging and stimulating, defining traditions and duties clearly for individuals with the Swadharma theory.

Exploring salt as a symbol of non-violence and investigating the *sarvodaya* theory in the practice of nonviolence, tolerance, peace and harmony through the narratives of swadeshi politics has been the primary aim of much of Shelly Jyoti's work over the past several years. Her works draw upon the history of India's colonial past and particularly Mahatma Gandhi's historic 1930 Dandi March which propelled the Salt Satyagraha and became a crucial part of the Indian independence movement.

In the series, Salt: The Great March, Jyoti explores the possibilities of establishing alternative societies where Gandhian ideals of swadharma and sarvodaya could be adhered to and sustained with sincere implementation. In a society where corrupted human values have threatened the rights of women in particular, Jyoti feels that re-introducing Gandhian ideals along with critical changes in society might function as a healing force. Shelly Jyoti's new works feature large lengths of khadi fabric with Sanskrit calligraphic printing arranged in site specific installations. Along with these works are two sculptural installations of hand spun cotton yarns and pipe cleaners, forty contemporary artworks with Ajrakh dyeing/printing incorporating needle work on khadi fabric and multimedia spoken poetry.

I explore the possibility of swadharma and sarvodya as a movement that might inspire and uplift societal values. What are the implications of involving art with an audience where human values disintegrate the foundational strength of the societies?

2013

SALT THE GREAT MARCH Recontextualising Ajrakh Traditions in Contemporary Art & Craft

Fragrance of Time, Taste of Memories and Hopes for Future -

BY JOHNY ML Delhi based Curator, Critic, Writer

Shelly Jyoti's 'Salt: The Great March' is emblematic of her philosophical and aesthetical involvement with Gandhian ideals. It is her desire to live in more humane world. It is an evocation of something being forgotten. It is like a reminder. It is like an old letter suddenly found out. It has the fragrance of time, taste of memories and hopes for the future.

The artist poetically alludes to salt through khadi. Her works are printed with traditional Ajrakh prints on khadi. She has also incorporated the service of the people who are the traditional needle workers who make quilts as a part of their daily existence. However, these works are not quilts. Even when they could be used as quilts, The focus is not on converting them into usable objects. She deliberately wants them to remain in the aesthetical zone so that it could be validated in the socio-economic and politico-cultural debates. So there is a fair amount of de-functionalizing of the products of these artisans here. By taking them out of their user context, Shelly attributes them with metaphorical and symbolic values.

Ajrakh is a printing process in which various layers of natural dyes are applied in order to create multiple

aesthetical and textural effects. Shelly collaborates with the *ajrakh* craftspeople for dying and printing the khadi textile that she has collected from the Khadi Bhandars, The artist feels khadi to become a contemporary alternative to salt and perhaps it could be subtly employed to push a *sarvodaya* agenda through the perusal of *swadharma* in our personal lives. Hence, the artist chooses to work on khadi in the place of salt with a reference to Gandhiji's ultimate pragmatic ways of popularizing khadi during the days of struggle for independence.

The installations titled, 'Integrating Khadi 2013' printed Sanskrit texts on khadi scriptures are meant to refer to the centuries old heritage of India and the artist feels that one should take a great pride in being a part of that tradition. But what makes me more thoughtful while looking at this work is its emphasis on the rupture that has occurred between the past and present. The past has become a point of embellishment while the present remains anchorless and abandoned. Besides, the whole installation has a kinetic feeling that simulates the walking style of Gandhiji who preferred to walk briskly.

September 2013, New Delhi



The March 'Integrating Khadi' Site-specific installation 50 pieces of constructed sails from Khadi fabric, cotton threads 2013

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Solidarity 1 60 x 53 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2013



Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric





The Jewel 76 x 23 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Aton 70 x 22.5 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Solidarity 2 60 x 53 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Atone 70 x 22.5 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Atone 2 70 x 22.5 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Rhythm 65 x 22 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Collective 75 x 22 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013




Greens 65 x 22 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013

Buoyancy 65 x 22 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing on Khadi fabric 2013



Solidarity 3 60 x 53 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Allow Me to Grow Without Fear 2 40 x 32 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Allow Me to Grow Without Fear 2 A dress: two meters Ajrakh fabric, fully structured baby frock 40 x 32 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Allow Me to Grow Without Fear 2 40 x 32 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Solidarity 4 60 x 53 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Spring 46 x 33 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013





The Black Wheel 51 x 32 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2013



Solidarity 60 x 53 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2014



The Patterned Wheel 75 x 75 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2014



The Patterned Wheel 2 75 x 75 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2014

Opposite spread 15 Indigo Chakras 36 x 54 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2014





OVERVIEW

These works draw upon India's history, including literary accounts of the oppression of farmers. These narratives are inspired by the social, economic, political, historical references, situations affected by the tyranny of British colonial indigo planters on native farmers, and Mahatma Gandhi's subsequent intervention in Bihar. This was Gandhi's first *satyagrah* as *Chamapran* movement 1917-1918 on Indian soil after his South African experience of fighting against racialism. In the 19th century, Bengal was the world's biggest producer of indigo, but today, the deep blue color of indigo is synthetically created in a lab and is associated, in the West, with blue jeans more than its torrid colonial past.

These works are inspired by play *Neel Darpan (1860)* written by *Dinbandhu Mitra*. The play portrayed the eco-political exploitation of the indigo farmers in eastern India by the colonizers in early 19th century. *An Ode to Neel Darpan* is a narrative retold in site-specific installations. The installations re-contextualize the story through a tapestry of designs and pay tribute to indigo farmers of *Champaran*. The block printed disks are inscribed with 15 different traditional and contemporary indigo prints which map the story of *Ryots of Champaran*, suggesting of their sorrowful tales inscribed in each circle.

My narratives are inspired by the socio-economic, political and historical references of early 20th century, situations affected by the tyranny of British colonial indigo planters on native farmers and Mahatma Gandhi's subsequent intervention as his first satyagraha on Indian soil as Champaran movement 1917-18. I further explored indigo as a plant color and a dye by creating artworks with ajrakh textile traditions.

2009

INDIGO NARRATIVES

The Dye that Binds: Indigo Iconographies

BY MURTAZA VALI Brooklyn and Sharjah-based independent Critic and Art Historian

or Indigo Narratives (2009) Jyoti collaborated with a community of ajrak artisans who migrated from nearby Sindh and Baluchistan to coastal Gujarat and brought with them centuries old techniques for resist printing with indigo. In the two dimensional works from this suite a stylized iconography recounts episodes from indigo's history in India through such craft techniques associated with indigo itself. The indigo plant is emblematized into a precise arrangement of simple shapes and patterns. In the triptych An Ode to "Neel Darpan", the ethical thrust and moral indignation of Dinabandhu Mitra's Bengali play of the same name is translated into a simple but powerful set of symbols. Set in 19th century Bengal, which by then had emerged as the world's biggest producer of indigo, the play was written in 1860, in the immediate aftermath of the Indigo Revolt, a mass protest by downtrodden farmers forced to cultivate indigo by colonial planters for a pittance. Using simple, accessible language, the play graphically and honestly portrayed the peasants' dire, inhumane circumstances and its subsequent translation and publication in English caused quite a stir in political circles in both Calcutta and London. In Jyoti's triptych, the colonizers are hawks, dominating the frame, a cruel twinkle in their eyes, their

hooked beaks razor sharp; the peasants are worms, defenseless prey, struggling in vain to survive.

In Jyoti's works a comparable strategy is applied to Gandhi, whose successful 1917 satyagraha on behalf of destitute indigo farmers in Champaran, Bihar, garnered him nationwide fame and the title of Mahatma. The spinning wheel, or charkha, closely associated with Gandhi through his championing of homespun khadi as a method of resisting oppressive colonial economies, repeats in different iterations.[6] The symbol now enjoys pride of place on the Indian flag and its simple circular shape is multivalent, recalling not just Buddha's dharmachakra, but more general sacred forms such as the mandala and bindu. In other panels, modest wooden sandals, Gandhi's preferred footwear, serve as synecdoches for him, recalling not just his austere life but also his untimely death. A ceremonial procession of similarly shaped footprints in stone mark Gandhi's last walk through the gardens of Birla House to the spot where he was assassinated on January 30, 1948.

Simple emblematic forms reappear in the trio of sculptural works in the suite. A cascade of bound stick figures, constructed out of indigo-dyed rope and entangled in chains, and a coolie's jacket glowing deep

blue serve as icons of the forced labor and oppression wrought in the name of indigo not just in India, but globally. And while the wind chime-like cluster of discs decorated in various block prints using indigo demonstrates the vibrant creativity of this traditional craft it also serves as a rustling elegy for those who died in its name.

In 1930, the legendary Duke Ellington composed a soulful ballad that musically captured a deep mournful melancholy, a sentiment "bluer than blue can be," a MoodIndigo. It is this mood, which manages to encapsulate not just the cruel histories of colonial oppression and exploitation but also the feelings of displacement, homesickness and nostalgia that plague all immigrants, that pulses as color through the disparate elements of this collaboration, the rich darkness of this alchemical dye, indigo.

New York, November 2009



Neel Coolie Acrylic painted canvas fully structured / stitched size medium with brass identification tied on the sleeves 21 x 34 inches 2009



The Porter's Identification Brass 6 x 4 inches 2009

Indigo Inscriptions

BY JOHNY ML Delhi based Curator, Critic, Writer

yoti's references to the Champaran Movement (1917-18) led by Mahatma Gandhi and the movement's focus to the production of the famous blue dye called 'indigo', gain the status of a political metaphor, which is aesthetically detached from the current methods of commodity production while showing the capabilities of containing a critique on/of the same. Champaran Movement was Mahatma Gandhi's pioneering efforts to test the efficacy of his non-violent Satyagraha philosophy. After the Kheda Satyagraha in Kheda district of South Gujarat, where he organized the Patidars against the land revenue laws of the British, Gandhiji turned his attention to Champaran in North-West Bihar, where the landless tenants were forced to do the unprofitable indigo plantations. (In fact, Champaran and Kheda movements happened almost simultaneously and history says that Sardar Vallabhai Patel played the leading role in Kheda movement and Gandhiji played the role of a spiritual leader. And this was one of the great learning lessons for Mahatma Gandhi). The indigo planters who mostly toiled in the plantations in horrendous working and living conditions were not allowed to cultivate the lands with food or other cash crops. Even the British officials of the time believed that the indigo dye made out of these plants and exported to textile conglomerates all over the



The Ballad of Woeful Tales: Ryots of Champaran 1917-18 Indigo dyed cotton ropes twisted on wire structures with metallic lace sequenced on wooden sculptured buttons Site specific installations, 5 feet high 2009

world was stained by the blood of the hapless farmers inwho carry on with a long tradition of indigo resistBihar and Bengal.block printing technique.

Today, indigo is no longer an oppressive thing as the dye could be manufactured using chemicals. But the history of indigo cannot be forgotten as several uncelebrated lives were sacrificed within the plantations during the times since the 17th century.

Shelly Jyoti calls her current suite of works generally as 'Indigo Narratives'. A textile artist/designer by profession and a visual artist by choice, Shelly has been working with textile workers and traditional crafts women for a long time. Her research interest in the history of craftswomen has led her to the history of Indigo. She makes a two way connection with the *Ajrakh* craftspeople who came to India from Baluchistan in early 17th century and settled in north Gujarat.

Blue farmers: Shelly Jyoti's narratives come in two different forms; one, as sculptural installations and two, as painted and embroidered two dimensional works on canvas. The sculptural installations, which are curiously kinetic, show diminutive human figures dangling from metal ropes. These figures are the emblematic human beings who were once oppressed by the draconian land laws of the colonizing government. Interestingly, these dangling figures suddenly draw parallel with the farmers of our times who are forced to commit suicide thanks to the imperial introduction of genetically modified seeds. The indigo victims are still around, in a new form under new forms of imperial governments, Jyoti seems to say.

Indigo Narratives become quite a poignant affair in the works like 'Homage/Ballad of Woeful Tales' and 'Blued/Indigo Coolie'. In these sculptural works, the woman-man relationship within an oppressive system of production is emphasized through sensitively handcrafted buttons and through the iconization of a coolie/menial worker's uniform, which too is dyed with indigo. Shelly's paintings in this series are in a way collaborative works with the Ajrakh craftspeople The present project by these two artists becomes all the more important especially when we come to know that there are no existing visual documentations on Gandhiji's involvement in Champaran. For the first time in history, Champaran movement and its peculiar connection with indigo is given a visual representation

by a contemporary artist. And this goes beyond illustration and sympathetic affiliation to position her works within the textual discourse of the concerned history.

New Delhi, October 2009



Homage: Woeful Tales of Champaran Farmers 1917-18 Site-specific installation 300 resist printed circular discs hanging installation shot at Chicago Cultural Centre, IL, USA, 2014

Materials: Reclaiming Histories of Migration

BY MICHELLE YEE

Michelle Yee is currently a doctoral student in Art History at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She holds an MA in Art History from the University of Connecticut and a BA in Art History and English from Georgetown University.

n the introduction to Exiles, Diasporas, and Strangers, Kobena Mercer states that "Migration L throws objects, identities and ideas into flux... Taking account of life-changing journeys...deepen our understanding of the critical and creative role of estrangement and displacement..." Mercer's statement empowers mobility, viewing it as a crucible from where creativity struggles into productive action. The dynamic movement inherent in migration, though troubling and unsettling, acts as "critical and creative" perspectives that ultimately turn victimization into agency. For artists Laura Kina and Shelly Jyoti, materials hold the power to invoke histories of mobility, to tell stories and to empower change. Jyoti utilize indigo and khadi fabric to retell a story of a torrid colonial past filled with displacement and relocation. Through the processes of making objects the artists reclaim the terror of indigo's past and enable the material to create change.

Indigo and khadi in India's history move through stories of colonization, rebellion, empowerment and struggles of independence. Through these two materials, the artist shelly jyoti examine patterns of migration influenced by economies formed by the high demand for indigo – demand that inflicted cruelty upon communities, but ultimately also worked to form and shape them. By reminding viewers of the fraught history surrounding these materials, Jyoti's objects literally migrate through time and space and, in turn, cast a critical and productive eye towards the distressing history inherent in their chosen materials. Both in the creation and exhibition of the work. Jyoti, holds bachelor's and post graduate degrees in English literature. From this literary background, the Baroda, India-based artist presents Indigo Narratives, a series that appropriately finds its inspiration in a literary text, Neel Darpan, an 1860 play written by Dinabandhu Mitra. Through the narrative of indigo in pre-, present-, and post-colonial India, Jyoti's project traces hierarchies within indigo farming imposed by the British upon the indigenous farmers and craftsmen of India.

Through the three-part series of Indigo Narratives, Jyoti chronologically moves through the macro history of indigo brought to Bhuj, India in the 1600s to the colonial exploitation of indigo farming and craft and the subsequent intervention of Mahatma Gandhi. Now, in 2009, Jyoti arrived in contemporary Bhuj to work with 9th generation Ajrakh artisans to give form to her sculptural textiles. Descendants of migrating communities from Sindh and Baluchistan, these artisans represent a history of "interchanges within communities." Thus, through the complicated history of Indigo, Jyoti's work refuses a stagnant conceptualization of colonizer and colonized, insisting on the influencing powers of communities upon each





An Ode to Neel Darpan Mixed media on canvas, embroidered loops, triptych 30 x 23 inches each 2009

other. In the final component of this series, An Ode Textiles, while questioning the [masculine] to "Neel Darpan," Jyoti created a visual conception of perspectives of high art versus low art, also arrest the literary play. Each panel of the triptych exhibits attention on the actual materiality of an art object. hawks with lotuses in their beaks rising over a ground With its tactile quality, textiles remind the viewer of with worms. The hawks, representing the British the objects very object-ness - inviting the viewer to colonizers, twist and manipulate lotuses in their touch, handle, and thus move. As INDIGO project beaks. The lotuses signal planters, British and Indian moved from studios to cooperatives back to studios individuals who acted as intercessors and translators and finally into the galleries for exhibition, they between the British colonizers and the indigo farmers, are shipped across oceans, adjusted and handled here represented as the hardworking and severely by innumerable hands, building and holding the underappreciated worms. Jyoti's decision to utilize meaning that will ultimately be inseparable from Neel Darpan, a text the artist likens to Harriet Beecher their physical presence. More importantly, in the Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin published just a few years journeys that each object will travel, the art itself earlier in the United States, highlights the importance will impact, remind of and change its surroundings. of a text that shed light upon a specific and cruel Mirroring the interaction of humans through political and social situation. In addition, however, migration and mobility, the movements of art Jyoti selected a text that was translated by a British objects inform and influence every destination. missionary and distributed in the United Kingdom Finally when these objects reach the galleries meant where it raised awareness among the commonwealth for viewers' eyes, they will already hold weighty population of its own people's exploitation of indigo meaning. It enables history to influence and affect farmers. Thus, Indigo Narratives highlight the impact the decisions of the present. Art questions and of migrations as evoked by the spatial movements of dismantles its own hierarchies to bring light upon artisans from Sindh and Baluchistan to Bhuj, by the the implications forced upon simple materials. collision of a British missionary and an Indian text, Finally, it enables such implications to be questioned by the return of Ghandi from South Africa to India, and reworked to create tangible change, not just and finally by Jyoti's own movement from Baroda in perceptions of history, but in the status quo of to Bhuj with histories of colonization, immigration, today's societies. transnationalism, and the collision and influence of cultures upon one another. November 2009





An Allusion to Stitches: An Indigo Leaf Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 inches 2009



An Allusion to Stitches: An Indigo Sapling Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 inches 2009







An Allusion to Stitches: A Contemporary Silhouette Block Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 inches 2009



An Allusion to Stitches: Gandhi's Spinning Wheel Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 inches 2009



An Allusion to Stitches: Kimono Pattern Block Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 inches 2009





An Allusion to Stitches: Footprints Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 inches 2009



An Allusion to Stitches: Tribal Neck Band Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 inches 2009



An Allusion to Stitches: Unstitched Upper Body Block Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 inches 2009



An Allusion to Ajrakh: A Spinning Wheel Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 46 x 46 inches 2009



An Allusion to Ajrakh: Red Spinning Wheel Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 46 x 46 inches 2009



An Allusion to Ajrakh: Single Footprint Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 46 x 46 inches 2009



An Allusion to Ajrakh: Footprint Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 46 x 46 inches 2009



An Allusion to Ajrakh: Design Block Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 46 x 68 inches 2009



Untitled 1 Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 36 x 46 inches 2009



Untitled 1 Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 46 x 46 inches 2009



An Allusion to Ajrakh: Patterned Spinning Wheel Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 46 x 46 inches 2009



An Allusion to Ajrakh: Modern Spinning Wheel Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 46 x 46 inches 2009



An Allusion to Ajrakh: An Indigo Plant Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 60 x 46 inches 2009

Following Spread An Ode to Neel Darpan Ajrakh resist dyeing on Khadi fabric 60 x 42 inches 2009





An Ode to Neel Darpan Ajrakh resist dyeing on khadi fabric 60 x 42 inches 2009

Salt

Salt is the only rock we eat Salt is the only rock That we cannot live without

A substance That has influenced The trade routes Establishments, Secured empires Provoked wars, Served Currency, And inspired revolutions

I want the world sympathy, in this battle of right Against the might, said Gandhi April 5th 1930, In Dandi Why do we have to buy the Brit salt? When shores all three sides Why do we??

The times have moved on Our nation of 66 years The struggle for better times,

continue still Sarvodaya becomes a pole star Guiding like a compass Heal and cleanse ourselves Arise national consciousness Individual enlightenment Individual Commitments Meditating or tapas

An effort for self-realization To suffer for the sake of the good of all, Sarvodaya becomes my pole star

Profound and inspirational. A therapeutic elixir In century twenty first My mind is like a fading coal today, The wind fans and refreshes The dying embers of the chaos.

Corroded human values Eroding the strength of the societies, Communal living and believings Ah! With the inconstant wind. The coal, awakens to transitory brightness Sarvodaya becomes my pole star

Let's take on the task, of stewarding the Nation Be the change that, we expect in the society Unify the humanity, Put a hand to the wheel

On anvils of self-enlightenment Sarvodaya becomes my 'pole star' With staggering feet, tired and head down Gandhi walking towards the horizon Watching the pole star

Salt is the only rock we eat Salt is the only rock That we cannot live without

by Shelly Jyoti, August, 21, 2013. The Sarvodaya society is one that is based on Truth and Non-violence, with trusteeship as its fulcrum point. Such a society, which might be termed 'non-violent socialism', is dedicated to complete equality, to uplifting each and every individual, irrespective of caste, religion, sex or occupation. It includes the 'haves' as well as 'the have nots'. Its primary conviction is the inherent Equality of all.

Indigo: An Ode to Neel Darpan

The blues of indigo Or the moods of indigo! The turbulent blue waters Stormy skies and stormy weather

Farmers blue On meadows green Toiling and sweating Ploughing and cultivating

Die of hunger No food to eat, but grow indigo! Why! Says a farmer's child! Innocently, I am hungry!

The natives of deltaic,

by Shelly Fyoti, December 2013

Early 19th century.... Torrid and stifling times **Oppressed** in drudgery

The hawk and the worms The greed intensifies 'tinkathias' enforced... The hell break loose, like worms they die, they do, Even today!

Preaching 'right to live', 'freedom to live' The blues of indigo Kindling awareness, wrote

letters unending Ruling colonisers, unshaken he was

NO VIOLENCE he said

STOP growing indigo ... we will fight! We need wheat and rice to survive! For the dying farmers Who gave lives to grow indigo The blood that spilled in the fields of blue Is the blood that stained the chest of indigoes to reach England.

Do we need another Mahatma to fight for 21st century farmers...!! Or the moods of indigo!

Just Five Meters: My Friends - An Urban Appeal

Fust five meters

My urban friends and fellow supporters Let Gandhi's khadi and present

Modern India Become another historic reality

Let's walk with the flame Of candle in our hands Let's ignite this 'urban socialism' Like a human chain it spreads You, me and three hundred million of us

An effortless sacrifice and gain Fust five meters, my friends We can Together Do it!

I stand silently

Observing my own thoughts The monsoon rain falling The skies grading dark to brown And brown to twilight ... The music of serenade in my head Water foaming in the seas Of coastal Arabian blue, In Gujarat At the Dandi shoreline

Let the idea of Gandhi's swaraj Be re-explored again In the century twenty first

by Shelly Jyoti, August 24th, 2016. This poem titled 'Just 5 meters- An urban appeal' (2016) focuses on the idea of swadharma towards the nation not only to reclothe urban India, but also to build new bonds between urban and rural populations, investing communities across the nation with common cause and purpose.

When I go in deeper inquiry of my subject, I am so overwhelmed with my subject and inspiration that soon I hold a pen to write, gushing words pour and so do the tears stream. As I write my thoughts on the paper. I soon realize that I have reached the climax of understanding the subject, and that I can visually create and deliver. Yet I pause and ask both, Can I dare I or dare I? The heart still pounds with more ideas. Like one handles to balance one's own heart as if a glass of water is held tight, instructing the spilling heart must not spill. And yet the heart desires to spill and spill and spill, to say, Look at the atrocities! See how I bleed.

His head hung in shame His land is not what he dreamt of His people are not who he instilled faith in *His eyes shut --- as if bleeding with tears*

His ears shut - with the communal cacophony. His mouth sealed- an orgy of -silence Like his three monkeys on my table, I feel Mahatma doesn't stop spinning

This poem delves into the politics of indigo, the first national freedom movement in chamaparan led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1917-1918 and the unfortunate state of farmers even today.

Hundreds of years of subjugation

Mahatma steps in... He walks miles and miles

Yes, it's true! I stood Silently muddled Deep in my own thoughts

That little boy still plays in dirt He needs clean water to drink Even after seventy years of our nation on its feet Yet clothing, fooding, and hygiene For seven hundred million of us-Still unanswered The puddles and potholes still remain unrepaired Flooding and infrastructure hay wired Sub-standard schools, Dysfunctional healthcare Wonder what took so long and why? To educate the masses and civilize I stood silently brooding

Let's learn to rule ourselves

Self-govern Disciplinize and internalize Self-purify and spiritualize Individually Arise Like there is No kingdom No king, No fear People's realm to rule Let sarvodya be our nation's pole star! For the sake and good for all

Let the flame of the candle burn My urban countrymen and women Let's march toward rural brethren Lend our thoughts to them and support Let the charkhas begin to spin and roll

Simply once a year! Handspun and hand-woven Let's buy just five meters An effortless offerings and gain Just five meters, my friends Five meters, we can do it! Yes, we can do it! Together

Press Coverage



LOANT IN ALLS

Solo show

The khadi march

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4 DECCANHERALD







Art with a Gandhian twist

An abain artwork at the "Salt: The Great March-2002" esh



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LY JYOTI is inspired by Gar phy and practices. She al Indian emb waith and Sanskrit calligraph her works.

By Drivit Kaussin













Artist Biography

Shelly Jyoti is a visual artist, fashion designer, poet and an independent curator. She is trained as a fashion designer from National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi, and she earned her MA in English Literature from Punjab University, Chandigarh. Her work focuses on Gandhi's ideology of nation building for creating moral and peaceful societies, relevant for 21st century, connecting past with the present. Recent shows include: Revisiting Gandhi: The Art of Shelly Jyoti retro/introspective (2009-18); *Bound by duty: An idea of Swaraj and Collectiveness* (2018); *The Khadi March: Just Five Meters; Salt: The Great March; Indigo: New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina; Vastram: Splendid worlds of Indian Textiles* (curatorial project)2012.

She has lectured extensively in select institutions like Textile Society of the Art Institute of Chicago; University of Illinois, Chicago; Palo Alto Art centre, California; Woman Made Gallery, Chicago; Anne Lloyd Gallery Decatur USA; DePaul University, Chicago IL; National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi India; M.S university, Baroda, Gujarat, India; Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai; Apparao Gallery, Chennai, India; Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi; Association of third world studies annual conferences; Centre for Contemporary Theory and General Semantics, Baroda, India.

Jyoti is a guest faculty and a jury member at National Institute of Fashion Technology NIFT, New Delhi. Her poetry and art works are in publication with the Sahitya Akademi journal of Indian English literature. Her exhibitions and artworks have been reviewed and interviewed with important print and digital media.

Her works are found in corporate and private collections in India and abroad, including the TAPI collection (Textiles & Art of the People of India) in Surat, India, IGNCA (Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts) New Delhi, and with International Lincoln Centre, Louisana State University, Shreveport as their permanent collection. She lives and works in Gurgaon and New Delhi.

www.shellyjyoti.com





EMAIL: Shellyjyoti12@gmail.com www.shellyjyoti.com

EDUCATION

- 1995 Fashion Design and Clothing Technology, National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi, India
- 1980 MA English Literature, Punjab University, Chandigarh, India
- 1978 BA English Literature with Fine Arts, Punjab University, Chandigarh, India

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Revisiting Gandhi: The Art of Shelly Jyoti, Retro/introspective show 2009-2018 • 2018 Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi

Bound by Duty: An Idea of Swaraj and Collectiveness 2018 Solo • 2018 Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi

The Khadi March: Just Five Meters 2016-2017 Solo

- 2017 National Gallery for Modern Art, Bengaluru, India
- 2017 Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, India
- 2016 Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Salt: The Great March 2013-2015 Solo

- 2015 Salt: The Great March, Azad Bhavan Gallery, Indian Council of Cultural Relations ICCR, Delhi
- 2014 Salt: The Great March, The Museum Dakshin Chitra, Chennai, India
- 2014 Salt: The Great March, IIC India International Centre, New Delhi, India
- 2013 Salt: The Great March, IGNCA Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi (2013)

Indigo: New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina 2008-2014 • 2017 Indigo Narratives: An Ode to Neel Darpan, The Museum for National Archives of India, New Delhi

- 2011 Indigo: New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina, ArtXchange Gallery Seattle WA, USA
- 2010 Indigo: New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina, Nehru Centre, Worli, Mumbai

Beyond Mithila: Exploring the Decorative 2008-12 Solo

- 2010 Beyond Mithila: Exploring the Decorative, Taj Palace, and New Delhi
- 2009 Beyond Mithila: Exploring the Decorative, Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre
- 2008 Beyond Mithila: Exploring the Decorative, Woman Made Gallery Chicago
- Beyond Mithila: Exploring the Decorative, Jamaat Art Gallery, and Mumbai

Lyrical Abstraction: A Space for Abstraction & Muses 2007 Solo

- 2007 Lyrical Abstraction: A room of / for muses works on canvas, Experimental Art Gallery
- India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
- 2008 Sristhi Art Gallery Welcome Hotel, Baroda

Pastels, Inks, Drawings - Works on Paper 2005 Solo • ICC Milpitas, California

• 2014 Indigo: New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina, Gandhi Memorial Centre, Washington DC USA • 2013 Indigo: New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina, Chicago Cultural Centre Chicago IL, USA • 2011 Indigo: New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina, Diana Lowenstein Gallery Miami FL, USA • 2009 Indigo: New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina, Palm Court Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi • 2009 Indigo: New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina, ABS Red Earth Art Gallery Baroda, Gujarat

• 2004 Pastels, Inks, Drawings - Works on Paper, Welcome Art Gallery, Baroda

Ethnicity and Symbols 2003 Solo

- Ethnicity and Symbols, American India Foundation, AIF, California, USA
- Ethnicity and Symbols, Indiana University, South Bend Indiana

Woman of the New Millennium 1999-00 Solo

• Shristi Art Gallery, Baroda

SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 NEW TRADITIONS: Influences & Inspirations in Indian Textiles, 1947-2017 at Jawahar Kala Kendra
- 2017 Re-Union2, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
- 2016 Traversing Traditions/India, Charter Oak Cultural Center Hartford, CT, USA
- 2013 CARE Package India International Centre, 40, Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi
- 2012 CARE Package, Twelve Gate, Philadelphia, PA, and Curator: Ombretta Agro
- United Art Fair, New Delhi
- 20th Anniversary Exhibition: 20 Jurors Woman Made Gallery Chicago.
- 2010 13th International Open, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago IL. Curator: Laura Kina
- Logged, Emami Chisel Art Calcutta, India. Curator: Amit Mukhopadhyay
- Art Fusion, Nehru Centre, Mumbai. Curator: Nina Rege
- Natures Fury@20×12 (Curatorial Digital Project), Jahangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 2009 Women Imaging Women: A Study of Female Portraiture, Robert Morris University, Chicago
- Curator: Amy Galpin
- 2007 The Spirit of India, Singapore. Curator: Anu Aggarwal
- Line and Form, The Mahua Art Gallery, Bangalore
- Cynosure Lanxes, ABS Art Gallery, Baroda, Gujarat
- 2006 Creative Fantasy, The Mahua Art Gallery, Bangalore
- Elle Decor Art & Design Show, New Delhi. Curator: Dr. Alka Pande
- Here Comes the Bride, Woman Made Gallery, and Chicago, Illinois. Curator: Beate Minkovski
- 2004 Print Making, Chaap, Baroda
- 2003 Women, Trauma and Visual Expression, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, Illinois
- 2002 Nature's Fury, (curatorial project) Digital artwork, Srishti Art Gallery
- Voices against Violence, Fine Arts Faculty, Baroda
- 2001 Earthquake Relief Art Benefit, Fine Arts Faculty, Baroda
- Earthquake Relief Art Benefit, Artcore Gallery, Baroda

SELECT CURATORIAL PROJECTS

- 2012 'VASTRAM: Splendid World of Indian Textiles' for ASEAN countries
- Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR project), Authored the Published catalog • 2015 Muscat, Oman
- 2013-15 MGC Asian Traditional Textiles Museum, Siem Reap City, Cambodia

HONORS/AWARDS/GRANTS

- 2017 Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi and South Region
- 2013 Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts IGNCA, New Delhi
- 2012 Indian Council of Cultural Relations-'Indigo Project International', ICCR New Delhi

- 1994 Best Traditional Craft Design Collection Award, NIFT, New Delhi

PUBLICATIONS

Authored Articles/Poetry/ Published Artworks and Catalogs • 2017: The Khadi March: Just Five Meters

- Published catalog by Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, 76 pages
- 2014 Salt: The Great March: Published Catalog, Indian Council for Cultural Relations ICCR
- 2013 Salt: The Great March: Published Catalog, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts
- 2012 Authored the published catalog by Indian Council of cultural relations • 'Vastram'; Splendid Textiles of India
- 2012 'The Quilters' Spring 2012- Brinda Gill, 'Indigo Narratives' series, Jyoti Shelly
- 'Shringara' by Dr Alka Pande-Published art work. Jyoti Shelly
- Socleen journal-'Genetically modified crops' Published artwork
- 2010 Jyoti Shelly. Authored article 'Art & Couture: The Collaborations.' Art ETC Magazine
- Vol.9 Jyoti Shelly (Visual Arts Publications IHC, New Delhi, 2010). Jyoti Shelly.
- Socleen Journal 'Green Houses' 2010. Published artwork
- 2009 Jyoti Shelly. Socleen Annual Journal 'Global Warming'. Published artwork
- 2008 Jyoti Shelly. The Alchemist. (Institute of General Semantics, Texas USA) Cover image
- Sahitya Akademi. IL238. 2007. Poetry and Published Artwork
- 2002 Jyoti Shelly, Raja Ravi Varma. "Fusion of Art and Design." Times of India. Published article

ARTIST LECTURES /CONFERENCES /WORKSHOPS

- The Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda, Gujarat
- 2016 Panel Discussion-The Poetics of Khadi: Cutting across time and space -PANELISTS: Ritu Beri-Fashion designer; Meenakshi Lekhi-MP; Shelly Jyoti- A visual/ textile artist; Poonam Goel-Delhi based art writer
- India Habitat Centre, New Delhi Oct 22, 2016
- 2016 A Talk: The Making of The Khadi March: Just Five Meters: Concept, processes and installations Textile Design Students, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Oct 18, 2016

• 2010 Grant for curatorial project 'Nature's Fury' by Gujarat Sports & Culture Ministry 2009, Gujarat • Grant for "Indigo Narrative" project by Gujarat Lalit Kala Akademi, Gujarat • 2004 "Artist of Eminence" by Baroda Management Association, Baroda, Gujarat

• 2015 Ajrakh: Celebrating Textile traditions by Shelly Jyoti, ITC magazine 'Namaste', Jodhpur issue

• 'Sahitya Akademi' Indian English literature (IL268- March April 2012 edition LV1 NO2)- Jyoti Shelly • 2007 Jyoti Shelly. Spring Magazine. (St. Xavier University, Chicago) Cover image. Published Artwork

• 2016 Paper Presentation: Installation Art: Objects, Things and Symbolism - XIX International Conference,

Geeta Goradia- Chairperson Jewel Industries, Varsha Das- A Gandhian thinker, art critic and literature;

• 2016 A Gallery walk Mapping Ajrakh textile traditions in contemporary art and craft Visual Arts Gallery,

- 2015 Paper presentation The Khadi March: Gandhi's Political Enlightenment Traversing Human Lives and Humanity By Shelly Jyoti
- XVIII International Conference 'The Wider Significance of Nature', 20-23 December 2015, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack Odisha, India
- 2015 A Talk 'Indigo: Narratives: An Ode to Neel Darpan' Shiv Nadar School, Noida. Nov 4, 2015
- 2014 Salt-A colonial Metaphor: Relevance today-Verbal, Visual and New Media Art by Shelly Jyoti, 17th International Conference, Forum for Contemporary Theory, Goa
- 2014 Invoking history and celebrating the subaltern by Shelly Jyoti
- Apparao Art Gallery, Magnolias, DLF phase 5, Gurgaon, Haryana
- Invoking history and celebrating the subaltern by Shelly Jyoti Apparao Art Gallery, Chennai
- 2014 Salt- A Colonial Metaphor: Relevance today by Shelly Jyoti, National Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai (In collaboration with Dakshin Chitra Museum Chennai)
- 2014 Textile Installation in Contemporary Visual Space by Shelly Jyoti NIFT, Haus Khas, New Delhi
- 2014 Gallery walk by the Artist, Curator and Poet: India International Centre, The Art Gallery, Kamala Devi Complex, New Delhi 110003 India
- 2013 'Lincoln, Gandhi and Obama: A creative visual dialogue in Miniature painting style by Shelly Jyoti -Academic paper, 31st Annual International ATWS conference, IIT Chennai
- 2013 Rebuilding: A Sense of Nationalism by An Artist talk by Shelly Jyoti, Indira Gandhi National Centre of the Arts, New Delhi
- 2013 Quilting, Art history and Metaphor' DePaul University students with Prof Jean Bryan Chicago Rooms, Chicago Cultural Center
- 2013 Public Lecture Artist talk- 'Indigo: Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina' Shelly Jyoti, Laura Kina and Pushpika Frietas, Chicago Rooms, Chicago Cultural Center
- 2013 Artist Talk- 'Indigo: Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina' Art Institute of Chicago, students with Prof Nora Taylor-
- Asian Art Now, Chicago Cultural Center
- 2013 Artist Talk: Art Institute of Chicago, Textile Society, Chicago Cultural Center
- 2012 'The Splendid Textiles of India: Trade Cotton Cloth' Forum on Contemporary Theory, XV International Conference Theme: 'Media and Utopia: Imagination, History, Technology' Allahabad, India
- 2011 Artist lecture & workshop 'Beyond Mithila Past & Present' DePaul University, Chicago, IL
- 2011 Visiting artist talk "Transnational Artistic Collaboration: Shelly Jyoti and Laura Kina" Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, IL. Invited by Beate Minkovski, Director
- 2009 Artist lecture The Politics of Indigo: Revisiting India's Torrid Colonial Past, Centre for Contemporary Theory and General Semantics, Baroda
- 2008 Artist lecture- Beyond Mithila Past & Present, University of Illinois, Chicago
- 2006 Workshop Madhubani Traditional Art Form/Artist lecture Fashion Designing as a Career Opportunity, Vidya Vihar School, Baroda
- 2005 Workshop Apparel Designing: Methods & Trends, Dept. of Home Science, M.S. University, Baroda
- 2004 Artist lecture Experience Sharing as a Woman Artist and a Designer, Seminar on Women Force and Source, Baroda Management Association
- 2003 Workshop Madhubani Traditional Art Form, Stanley Clarkes School, South Bend, Indiana
- 2002 Design lecture Technology and Computation Accelerating the Speed and Growth in the Garment Industry, Forum for Contemporary Theory, Baroda

domestic market – NIFT New Delhi

JUROR & RELATED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

- 2015 Jury for JUNK JUSTAPOSED The Times of India initiative- Delhi chapter and National event
- 2015 Jury for fashion show organized by Deccan Herald, New Delhi
- 1994-2003 Designed, manufactured garments under my own label 'SHELLY JYOTI' domestic market Freelance designer for export houses for American and European markets. Coordinated fashion related courses in Fashion Institutes in India
- 1983-1985 'Art studio for Creative Minds' Pune Maharashtra. Set up creative workshops for adults
- 1981-1983 Pre-nursery school 'Little Angels Kindergarten School' New Delhi

ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

- Board Member-Special School & Centre for Autism -DISHA Baroda Gujarat-India
- Board member- Society for Clean Environment- SOCLEEN, Baroda, Gujarat India

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Forum for Contemporary Theory Baroda, India
- DAAN-The Diasporic Asian Art Network, New York
- Woman Made Gallery, Chicago IL USA
- Association for Third world studies, USA
- Kasturba Gandhi Trust of India. India
- Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, India

IN COLLECTION

- TAPI collection (Textiles & Art of the People of India) Surat, India
- IGNCA (Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts) New Delhi
- International Lincoln Centre Louisiana State University, Shreveport, USA
- Her works are in many private and corporate collections in India and abroad

SOCIAL INITIATIVES

- Supporting Ajrakh Textile artisans
- Art for Adult Autism

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

- Contemporary visual art; History of traditional textiles; Art and Fashion: Designing & documentation; Studio Arts (painting, drawing, printing, dyeing); Writing on Art and fashions; Installation Art
- visual culture; Critical theory; Traditional textiles of the world, Subaltern studies

• 1996 Designing Kids Wear from Concept to Consumer, six week programme design conducted for

- 2014 Jury and lectures at National Institute for Fashion Technology NIFT, New Delhi, India
- 2001-2005 Juror to fashion shows National Institutes of Fashion Design, Baroda

• 1997 Designed & painted the site pre-nursery school, Delhi Public School, East of Kailash, New Delhi

• Research Interests: History of Colonial India; Gandhi and his idea of non-violence, Gandhi, khadi and

Exhibition Schedules & Lectures

INDIGO NARRATIVES 2009

Indigo: Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina 2009-14 (Two-woman Show)

- Red Earth Art Gallery, Baroda, Gujarat, India 2009
- India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India 2009
- 2010 Nehru Center, Worli, Mumbai, India
- 2011 Art Exchange Gallery, Seattle USA
- Diana Lowenstein Gallery, Maimi, USA 2011
- Chicago Cultural Center, IL, USA 2013
- Gandhi Memorial Centre, Washington DC 2013
- The Museum of National Archives of India, New Delhi 2017

Group shows:

- 2017 Traversing Tradition, Hartford Museum, Connecticut, USA
- Spirit of India, Anne Lyod Gallery, Decatur, USA 2010
- Art Fusion, Nehru Art Centre Mumbai 2010
- 2010-13 International Open, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago
- Logged, Emami Chisel Art Calcutta 2009

OUT REACH & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS:

- 2013 Artist Talk: Quilting, Art History and Metaphor DePaul University students with Prof Jean Bryan Chicago Rooms, Chicago Cultural Center, Illinois, USA
- Public Lecture Artist Talk Indigo: Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina and Pushpika Freitas, Chicago Rooms, Chicago 2013 Cultural Center, Illinois, USA
- 2013 Artist Talk: "INDIGO" by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina, Art Institute of Chicago, students with Prof Nora Taylor- Asian Art Now, Chicago Cultural Center, Illinois, USA
- Artist Talk: Art Institute of Chicago, Textile Society, Chicago Cultural Center, Illinois, USA 2013
- Lecture & Talk: Collaborations with Indian and US Artist, Woman Made Gallery, Illinois, USA; 2011
- 2009 Lecture: The Politics of Indigo, Revisiting India's Torrid Colonial past, Forum for Contemporary Theory, Baroda, Gujarat, India

SALT: THE GREAT MARCH: Re-contextualizing Ajrakh Traditions in Contemporary Art & Craft 2013

- 2013 Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Exhibition Hall, New Delhi, India
- India International Centre, The Art Gallery, Kamaladevi Complex, New Delhi, India 2014
- Dakshina Chitra Museum, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India 2014

Group shows:

2018	Indian Textiles; Post Independence through Textiles (19
2015	Vastram: the Splendid Textiles of India, Oman, Muscat

OUT REACH & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS:

- 2015 Conference, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Odisha, India
- 2014 Forum for Contemporary Theory; December 2014, Goa.
- 2014
- Invoking History and Celebrating the Subaltern, Apparao Art Gallery, Chennai 2014
- 2014
- 2014 New Delhi
- 2014 Complex, New Delhi, India
- 2013

THE KHADI MARCH: JUST FIVE METERS 2016

- National Gallery for Modern Art, Bengaluru, India 2017
- 2017 Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, India
- Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi 2016

OUT REACH & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS:

- 2017 Film screening and poetry reading, National Gallery of Modern Art, Bangalore
- 2016 Forum on Contemporary Theory, Baroda, Doon University, Dehradun
- Panel Discussion by YES bank 2016 The Poetics of Khadi: Cutting across time and space Bikaner House, New Delhi
- 2016 Habitat Centre, New Delhi
- 2016 Technology, New Delhi
- 2017 Palo Alto Art Centre, California
- 2017 Technology, Bengaluru.
- Film screening and Poetry reading: National Gallery of Modern Art, Bangalore 2017

ugh Textiles (1947-2018) curated by Mayank Kaul

The Khadi March: Gandhi's Political Enlightenment Traversing Human Lives and Humanity, 18th International Salt - a colonial metaphor: relevance in today's verbal, visual and new art media, 17th International Conference,

Salt -a colonial metaphor: relevance in today's verbal, visual and new art media, Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai

Invoking History and Celebrating the Subaltern, Apparao Art Gallery, Magnolias, Gurgaon, Haryana

Textile Installation in Contemporary Visual Space National Institute of Fashion Technology, Haus Khas,

Gallery Walk by the Artist, Curator and Poet, India International Centre, The Art Gallery, Kamala Devi

Rebuilding: A Sense of Nationalism by an Artist talk, Indira Gandhi National Centre of the Arts, New Delhi

Paper Presentation: Installation art: objects, things and symbolism, 19th International Conference, The

A Gallery walk Mapping Ajrakh textile traditions in contemporary art and craft, Visual Arts Gallery, India

A Talk: The Making of The Khadi March: Concept, processes and installations, National Institute of Fashion

An Artist Talk Indigo, Salt, and Khadi: Textile art as an Expression of National Identity by Shelly Jyoti at

An Artist lecture: Textile Installation in Contemporary Visual Space National Institute of Fashion

Bound by Duty: An Idea of SWARAJ & COLLECTIVENESS



SC 0012





SC 0014



SC 0015



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THE KHADI MARCH: JUST FIVE METERS



TKM 0014



TKM 0015



TKM 0016



TKM 0019



TKM 0020



TKM 0021



TKM 0024



TKM 0025



TKM 0026



TKM 0028



TKM 0029



TKM 0030





TKM 0033 TKM 0034

SALT THE GREAT MARCH: Recontextualising Ajrakh Traditions in Contemporary Art & Craft







SGM 0013

SGM 0018







SGM 0015





IN 0012

IN 0013



SGM 0016

SGM 0012



SGM 0017

SGM 0013







SGM 0020

SGM 0014



SGM 0021





IN 0016

IN 0017



SGM 0022

SGM 0028

SGM 0033 SGM 0034 SGM 0035



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SGM 0029





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SGM 0019



SGM 0026

SGM 0027





IN 0021



IN 0020







IN 0026

IN 0027





IN 0030



SGM 0038 SGM 0039















SGM 0040 SGM 0041







SGM 0036 SGM 0037







SGM 0031



IN 0025









INDIGO NARRATIVES



IN 0014



IN 0018



IN 0022



IN 0023



IN 0015



IN 0019



IN 0024





IN 0028



IN 0029





IN 0033

IN 0032

Hand and Stand on the Marking Comparison of Marking Comparison of Marking Comparison of Marking Comparison of the Marking The Khadi Wheel 6x7 inches Calligraphy on board

2014



Salt: The Great March - Continuity: The wheel of yarn 36 x 46 inches 2013

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to all

REVISTING GANDHI: THE ART OF SHELLY JYOTI 2009-2018

Member Secretary, Shri Sachidanand Joshi, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi Smt Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee (Grand-daughter of Mahatma Gandhi) Rajmata Shubhangini Raje Gaekwad of Baroda Shri Vinay Kumar Saxena, Chairman, Khadi Village Industries and Commission KVIC

Dr Achal Pandya, Head of Kaladarshan and Conservation Department, IGNCA Ms. Supriya Counsel, Programme Director, IGNCA The staff of IGNCA, New Delhi for their support and co-operation

Editor: Prof. Kathryn Myers Lead member of curatorial team: Nivritti Dhruve Catalog essays: Dr. Lisa Trivedi, Johny ML, Murtaza Vali, Dr. Michelle Yee Shri Gurujee Narayana, Bhagwat Gita and Vedic expert Documentary voice over: Dishant Narang Dress forms: Figurette INC Kalkaji, New Delhi Photography: Inder Gopal Proof reading: Garima Chopra Ajrakh craftsman: Juned M Khatri Ajrakh artisans, Bhuj, Gujarat: Abu, Mohamad, Ashraf, Ishak Ali Mohamed, Juber Adam, Razak Siddique 2009-18 Embroidery: Farida, Shefali, Kohinoor, Naintara, Savitri, Gudiya, Shefali Artwork Construction: Pradeep Gupta, Khandelwal Interiors, New Delhi Video editing: Creations films, Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi. Panel discussion partners: YES Bank Culture, New Delhi Graphic designing Catalog: Supriya Mahajan Graphic designing Signage: Madathara Mohandas Pradeep Catalogue publishers: Archana Press, New Delhi Gallery installations & signage execution: Trident exhibitions, Noida U.P Audio recording Studio: Pindrop, Haus Khas, New Delhi Documentary work: Ridham D Chhatrala, Bhuj, Gujarat Construction and stitching of fashion: Suresh pattern master Sejal Handicrafts: Sanskrit calligraphy block printing on khadi fabric Baroda, Gujarat Student Volunteers for the exhibitions: NIFT Textile Design students, New Delhi, Bangalore Outreach event partners: Khadi Village Industries Commission (KVIC), New Delhi and YES BANK Institute of Art and Culture



Salt: The Great March - Omnipresent series 36 x 54 inches Ajrakh Printing/Dyeing and needle work on Khadi fabric 2014







Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts I.C.V. Mess, Janpath New Delhi 110001 Tel: +91 11 2338 8341 Email: igncakaladarsana@gmail.com www.ignca.nic.in

