



GALLERIA CONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA SAO PAULO PARIS

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NIKHIL CHOPRA

Remembering Being There

Opening Saturday 11th September 2021, via del Castello 11, 6pm-8.30pm
Until 14th November 2021, Monday to Sunday, 10am-1pm, 2-7pm, by appointment only
To ensure maximum safety, it is necessary to book your visit to the exhibition using the appropriate form on galleriacontinua.com. At the entrance, it is necessary to show a vaccine pass.

Galleria Continua is pleased to host a new solo exhibition by Nikhil Chopra in its San Gimignano gallery. *Remembering Being There* is composed of a previously unseen body of works which activate an imaginary journey with a corpus of drawings, videos and live art experiences created between the shores of Goa and the mountaintops of Kashmir, India.

Chopra's work explores the boundaries between performance, theatre, live art, sculpture, photography and drawing. For *Remembering Being There*, the drawings are shaped as Chopra's personae wander through landscapes, whether it is an explorer probing the ridges of the Goa coast or an archetypal female figure carved out of the rocky and melancholic landscape of Kashmiri mountains. What we see in the exhibition is the result of an immersive experience, with both delicate landscape drawings and two videos that narrate the journey of these characters, creating a poetic dialogue that ricochets back and forth.

The landscapes Chopra draws could be defined as site-specific, as they are deeply connected to their location which functions as a root around which the artist develops the performance itself. They examine the construction of identity through historic, individual and collective conscience as well as the larger questions that geopolitical readjustments and global economy developments have rendered evermore urgent. History, for Nikhil Chopra, is not only a projective scenario but also the origin of possible conditions in which to experiment oneself.

The project that the artist conceives for this exhibit starts from an assumption: to paint is to remember. "In *Remembering Being There*", declares Chopra, "I examine the role of landscape painting in my artistic practice. I make live performances that incorporate making drawings of places, real and imagined. Live Art is in a crisis; my personae - the traveller, wanderer, explorer, trekker and nomad - are in turmoil, as the world came to a standstill, buckling under the effects of a pandemic. My first video traverses between shots of a turbulent, monsoon-beaten sea, with my persona making his way across the beach, and a drawing in progress of the sea on paper. The desire is to collapse the space between 'being there' and the memory of that moment is the impetus. The second video follows the path of Michelle, a fictional persona, a feminine figure making her way through the Kashmiri Himalayas, throwing her body into the wilderness with all her strength and vulnerability. In an exhilarated live art state, the journey

awakens an acute attention to the landscape that follows three stages: the questioning, the revelation and finally, action with the drawing of the landscape she inhabits.”

The video shot in Goa, *Remembering Being There*, commissioned by the artist in 2020 from the New Art Exchange of Nottingham, opens with the image of a framed painting, hung on a wall as if imitating a window. “In the tradition of landscape painting, the artwork aspires to puncture the wall and give us a glimpse of what lies behind and beyond its surface, while the marks on its surface allude to its object-ness. As we stand in front of it and gaze at it, we are caught in the cross fire of what it reminds us of and what it is. Memory then becomes a vital tool to allow for any suspension of disbelief that is required to plunge into the world of the painting.”, affirms the artist.

The second chapter of the exhibit revolves around the performance experience of Chopra in Kashmir, where his family roots lie. “Perched at 4,000 meters high,” recounts the artist, “the body is at the mercy of nature. In this highly charged land where centuries of conflicts and militarization have scarred a pristine paradise, the body in the film is dismantled of its man-ness and a fierce, feminine force emerges. The Himalayas summon the figure of Shiva, just as the river which weaves its way through the nooks and crannies of the mountain summons the figure of Parvati.”

Entangled between live art and landscape painting, *Remembering Being There* comes at a shift in Chopra’s practice. By conjuring up the polarized persona of the nomadic traveler and allowing its body to immerse itself in the landscape, Chopra creates a collective remembrance of an epic journey in a time when everyone is confined to their own restricted environment.

Nikhil Chopra was born in Calcutta in 1974 and lives in Goa. He trained at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Maharaja Sayaji Rao University of Baroda in India, he then continued his studies in America where in 2003 he created SIR RAJA II, his first solo exhibition. He returned again to exhibit in the United States in group exhibitions in 2005 and, in 2006, at the Brooklyn Museum in New York. Among the most important exhibitions are the following solo shows: “Drawing a Line through Landscape” for Documenta 14 (2017); “LANDS, WATERS, AND SKIES”, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2019); “Yog Raj Chitrakar: Memory Drawing IX” created at the New Museum in New York in 2009 and the group exhibitions: “Production Site: The Artist’s Studio Inside-outal”, Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago (2010); “Generation in Transition: New Art from India” at Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw (2011). In 2011 he also made, in collaboration with Munir Kabaniper H Box, the film “Man Eats Rock” presented at Art Sonje in Seoul; at the Today Art Museum in Beijing and at the Guangdong Museum of Art in Guangzhou. In 2013, as part of the Manchester International Festival, his performance “Coal on Cotton” received critical acclaim. In 2014 and 2015 he took part in the Kochi Muziris Biennial, the Havana Biennial and the Sharjah Biennial; and in 2017 the Yinchuan Biennial.

For further information about the show and for photos:
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