

Public Address

citing installation and performance art

Geeta Kapur



Rummana Hussain, Performance by the artist; photo-projections on the body in the performance video, *Is it What You Think?*, 1998.

Is it What You Think?

'Where does she belong? Is she behind a veil? Have you defined her? Does she go into her shell? Have you pushed her? What does the press say? Do social conditions alter her behavior? Does she wash herself? Is it a prerequisite? Where does she wash? Does she have breasts? Or has she had a mastectomy? Does she have kinky sex? Does she cover her body and wear transparent clothes? Have you defined her? Has she fought battles? Have they been forgotten? Has she joined a revolution? Which movement has she joined? Has she fought for her rights? How do you interpret that? Do you think that she believes in the jihad? Did you read it in today's newspaper?'

Is this a love song? Did she fight the colonisers? Did she die for it? Or does she sit behind her veil? Is she educated? Or did you deprive her of that description? Did her father permit her? Does she live behind closed doors? Does she clean, sweep and cook for her family? Does that sound familiar? Is she like you? Can you imagine that? Have you slotted her? Is she the other? Does she follow the preachers? Have you defined her? Does she have any options? Are her beliefs an escape? Or a security? Or a habit? Or a choice? Do you find her mysterious? Do you want to focus on her? Do you want to crack the secret? Could she be you? Do sounds have any association? Do you connect them with her? Does she read the red book? Is she me?

Are your associations a fantasy? What language does she speak? Does she listen to you? Has she heard your descriptions of her? Has it made her insecure? Is she you? Would you accept that? Have you forced her into a corner? Is that why she opposes you? Or has she retreated into her shell? Have you defined her, slotted her? Where can she go? Does she resort to her faith? What are her options? Does she chant her prayers? Have you identified her? Has she a lover? Do his fingers touch her body? Does she force them up? Is she ecstatic? Do you believe her? Does she believe you? Does she have soft breasts?

*Or has she had a mastectomy? Has she been mutilated?
Can she bear the pain? Are your words like scissors?
Does she carry a knife? Does she chop vegetables?
Does she laugh? Does she feel threatened? Is she afraid
of ethnic cleansing? Does she threaten you? Does her
privacy offend you? Are you confused between
resistance and war? Do you think that she has radical
views? Do you think she can articulate them? Do you
think her voice has been stifled? Is that fact or fiction?
Have you defined her? Is she the other? Do you pity
her? Is that your construct?*

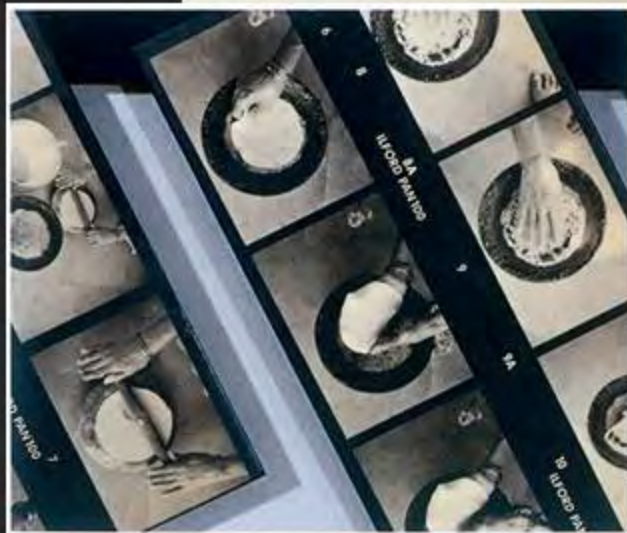
Is it a predicament?



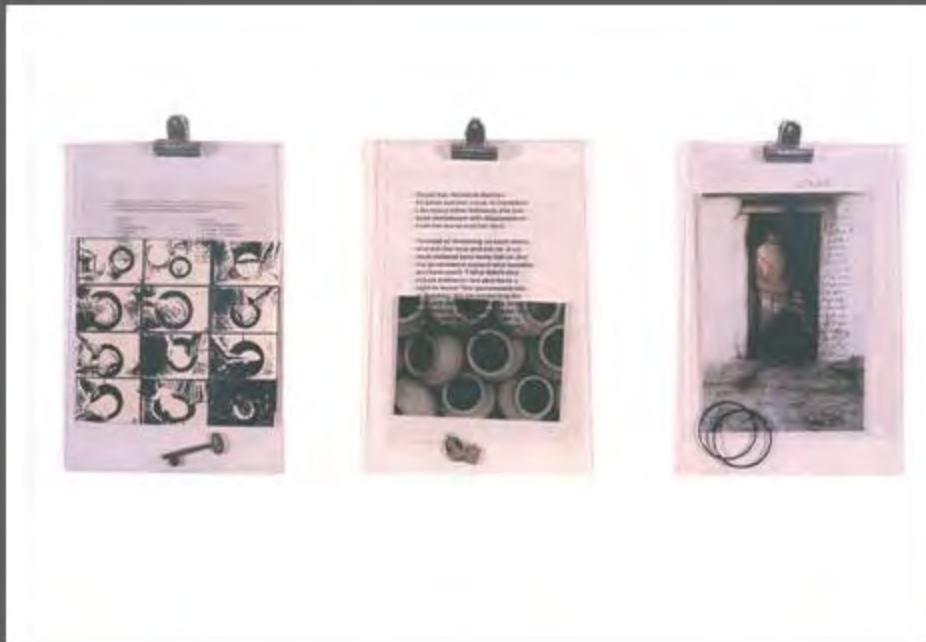
Rummana Hussain, Performance by the artist; photo-projections on the body in the performance video, *Is it What You Think?*, 1998.



Rummana Hussain, *Home/Nation*, 1996. Installation view (details).



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Rummana Hussain, *Home/Nation*, 1996, (details).



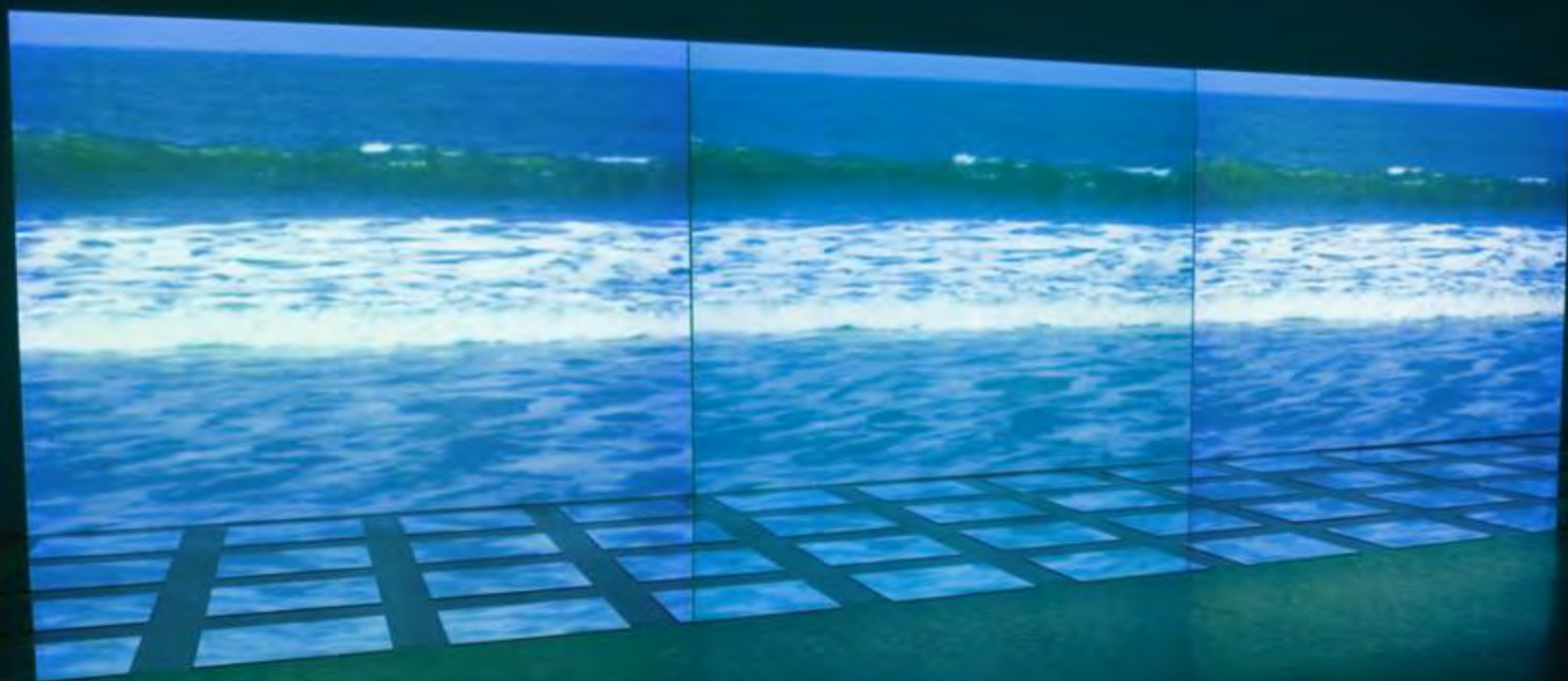
Rummana Hussain, *Home/Nation* (detail).



Rummana Hussain, *Home/Nation* (detail).



Rummana Hussain, *Space for Healing*, 1999. Multipart installation with dimmer and sound, room. 5 x 5 metres (variable)
Collection: Queensland Art Gallery Foundation, Brisbane.



Navjot Altaf, *Lacuna in Testimony*, 2003. Room dimensions 9.50 x 6 metres (variable)
Video Installation with three projections. Each 7 minutes 21 seconds, mirror on the floor
Collection: The artist, Mumbai.



Navjot Altaf, *Lacuna in Testimony*, 2003.



Navjot Altaf, *Lacuna in Testimony*, 2003.



Navjot Altaf, *Lacuna in Testimony* (details), 2003.



Navjot Altaf, *Lacuna in Testimony*, 2003.



Navjot Altaf, *Lacuna in Testimony*, 2003.



Girls carrying water-vessels at a municipal hand-pump, in Bastar.

Women working for project *Nalpar*, 2000-2002, ongoing site-specific structures (cement and iron) at community hand-pumps, in Bastar.





Woman at a municipal hand-pump in Bastar region of central India.



Navjot Altaf, collaborative project *Nalpar*, in Bastar.



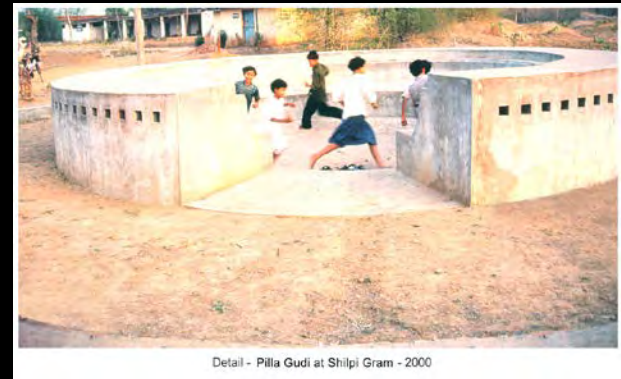
Navjot Altaf, collaborative project *Nalpar*, ongoing site-specific structures (cement and iron) at community hand-pumps, in Bastar.



Navjot Altaf, collaborative project *Nalpar*, ongoing site-specific structures (cement and iron) at community hand-pumps, in Bastar.



Navjot Altaf, collaborative project *Pilla Gudi*, 1999-2004, ongoing site-specific structures (cement) for children's workshops, in Bastar.



Detail - Pilla Gudi at Shilpi Gram - 2000



The north facade of the Victoria Memorial, Kolkata.
Statue of the Angel of Victory atop the dome.



Statue of Queen Victoria (Empress of India, 1 May 1876 – 22 January 1901) in front of the Victoria Memorial, Kolkata.



Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial.



Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial. Installation view: entrance with railway track. End of railway track with stopper structure.

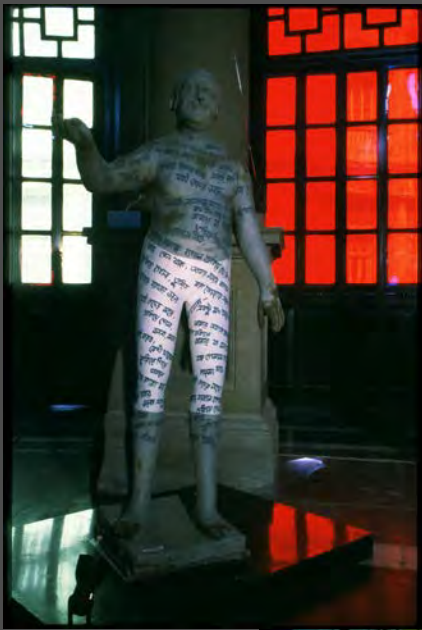


Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial.

Installation view: jute bags with texts of peasant and labour struggles chronologically listed from the 19th c. onwards in Bengali and English.

Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial. Installation view: vitrine with hammer and sickle in red velvet, hemp bales below.





Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial. Installation view: *Actors Charade*: figures made by Kalighat patua/sculptor representing characters from famous Bengali plays - the body is clothed by the text in Bengali and English.





Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial. Installation view: *The Women's Question*: four-poster bed with video showing films with women protagonists from the 1930s to Satyajit Ray and Ritwik Ghatak.



Inset: Ghatak's *Meghe Dhaka Tara*.



Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial.
Installation view: printing press and acetate scroll with photocopies of 19th-early 20th c. magazines.



Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial. Installation view: railway track inscribed with historical dates.



End of railway track with barrier.



Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial. Installation view: *History Project* as seen from above.



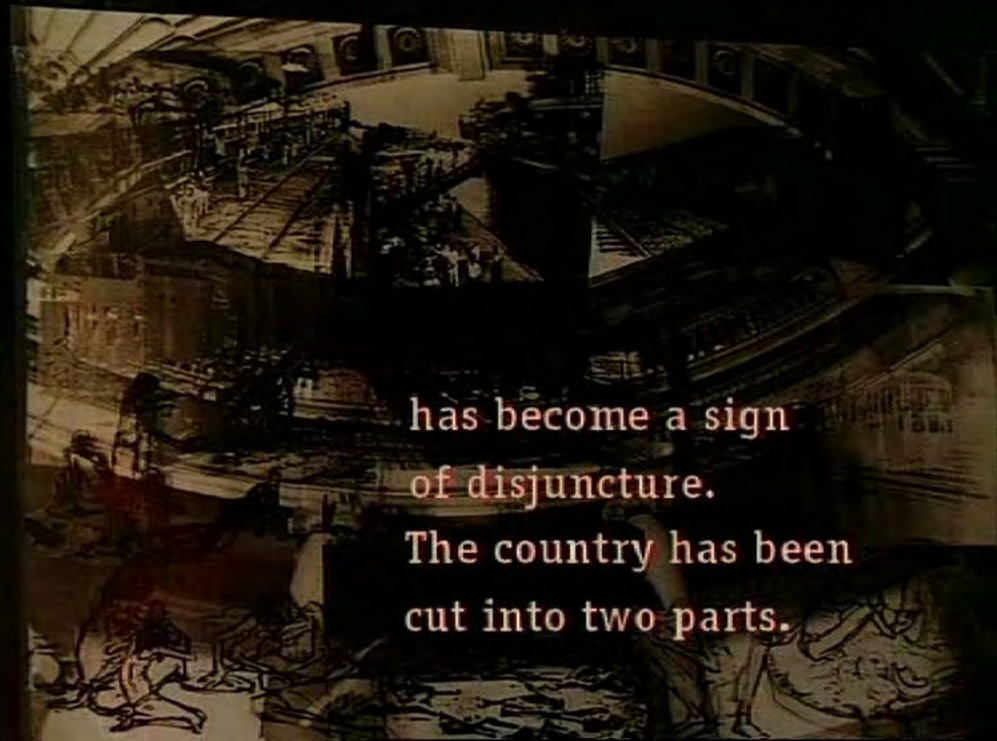
Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial.

Installation view: entrance to metal structure/goods wagon with rubber tyres. Poems on Partition heard inside the wagon.



Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial.
Installation view: entrance to metal structure/goods wagon with rubber tyres. Platform for agit-prop performances.
Poems on Partition heard inside the wagon.

Rice, is the thing, just rice
coarse or fine or even crawling
with worms. Meat, fish, ghee,
oil those who died of starvation
didn't ask for these.



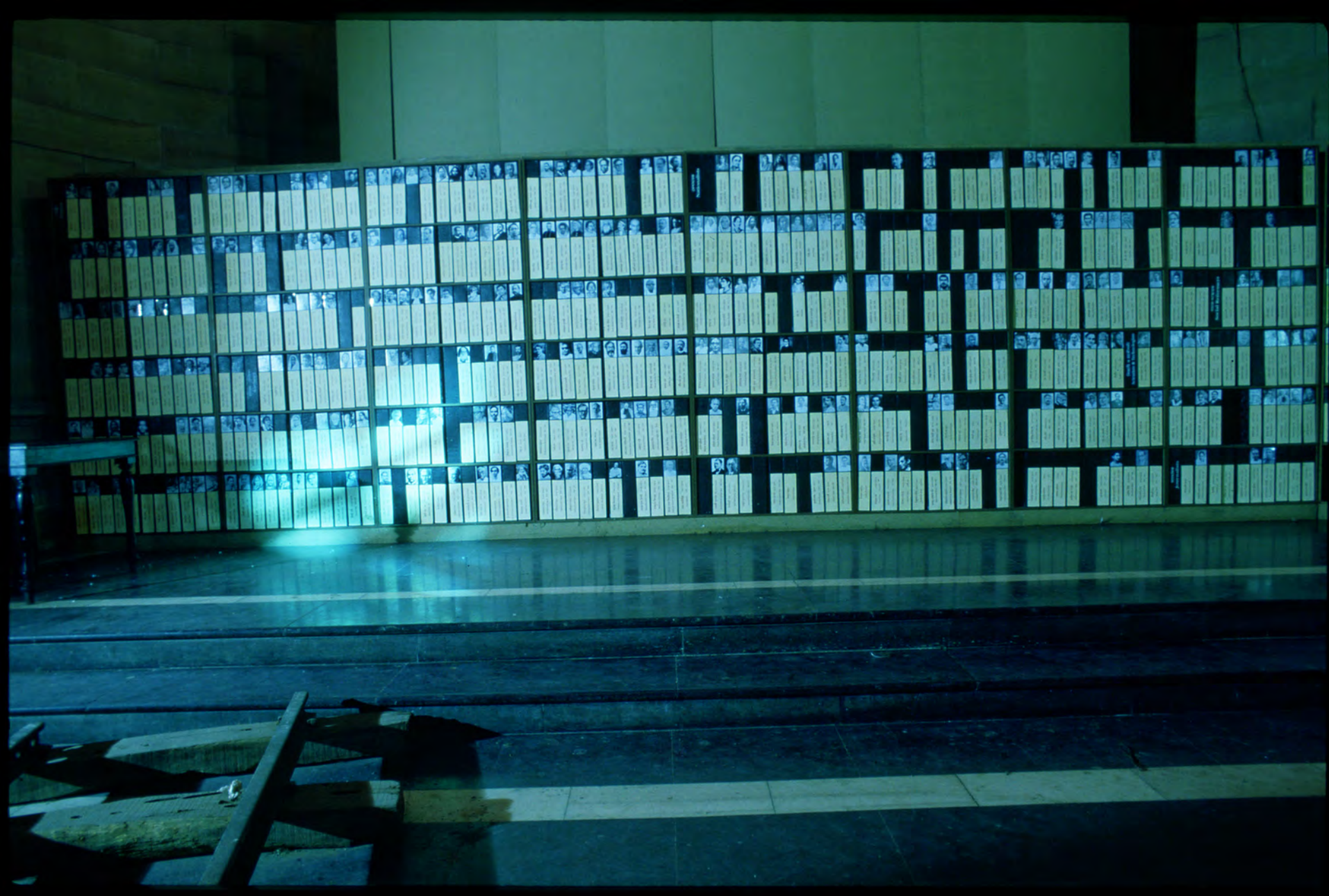
has become a sign
of disjuncture.
The country has been
cut into two parts.

Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial. Installation view: texts of recited poems on the Partition heard inside the wagon.



Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial.

Installation view: jute bags with texts of peasant and labour struggles chronologically listed from the 19th c. onwards in Bengali and English.



Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial. Installation view: wall of file boxes with names and photographs of freedom fighters in the struggle for independent India.

Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial. Installation view: wall of file boxes with names and photographs of freedom fighters in the struggle for independent India.





Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial.
Installation view: quotation from Ramakrishna Paramahansa in the apse.



Vivan Sundaram, *History Project*, 1998. Durbar Hall, the Victoria Memorial.
Installation view: the dome inscribed with lines of poetry from Rabindranath Tagore and Jibanananda Das. Scroll descending from the dome to the printing press.



Jitish Kallat, *Public Notice 1*, 2003. Burned adhesive on acrylic mirror, wood, stainless steel
Five panels, each 198.1 x 137.2 x 15.2 cm (78 x 54 x 6 in.). Shumita and Arani Bose Collection, New York.



Jitish Kallat, *Public Notice 1*, 2003.
Burned adhesive on acrylic mirror, wood, stainless steel
Five panels, each 198.1 x 137.2 x 15.2 cm (78 x 54 x 6 in.).
Shumita and Arani Bose Collection, New York.



Jitish Kallat, *Public Notice 2*, 2007. Resin; 4,479 sculptural units; installation dimensions variable. The Saatchi Gallery, London.

ROBABILITY IT WILL BE MY
TECH TO YOU EVEN IF THE
THAT ADJOMS ME TO MARCH
ON MORNING THIS WILL BE MY
TECH ON THE SACRED BANKS
VARANASI POSSIBLY THESE
THE LAST WORDS OF MY LIFE
HAVE ALREADY TOLD YOU
DAY WHAT I HAD TO SAY
SHALL CONFINE MYSELF TO
YOU SHOULD DO AFTER MY
AND I ARE ARRESTED THE
ME OF THE MARCH TO SALAPUR
E FULL FILLED AS ORIGINALLY

SETTLED THE ENVIESTMENT OF
THE VOLUNTEERS FOR TRANSPORT
SHOULD BE CONFINED TO BROADWAY
ONLY FROM WHAT I HAVE SEEN AND
HEARD DURING THE LAST RECONCILIATION
I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT
THE STREAM OF CIVIL RESISTANCE
WILL FLOW UNBROKEN BUT LET
THERE BE NOT A SENSATION OF
BREACH OF PEACE EVEN AFTER
ALL OF US HAVE BEEN ARRESTED
WE HAVE RESOLVED TO UTILIZE ALL
OUR RESOURCES IN THE PURSUIT
OF AN EXCLUSIVELY NONVIOLENT

STREAM: IT IS OUR COMMON
A MARCH TO AHEAD THIS IS MY
HOW AND PRAYER I HOPE THESE
MARCH AND OTHER OF THE LINE
MY TASK SHALL BE DONE IF I
MARCH AND SO TO MY COMRADES
IT WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY
COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS TO
SAVE YOU THE DAY AND IT WILL BE
OF THE YOU TO FIGHT THE BIRD
SO LONG AS I HAVE BREATH
I WILL FIGHT FOR THE BIRD
IN CONTRIBUTION TO THE

AUTHORITY WOULD BE IN THE
THE CONGRESS AND ONLY I CAN
RECONSTRUCT THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE
SUPPORT TO THE CONGRESS. HOW
AND EARLY IN THE MARCHING WE
CANNOT BE CONSIDERED AS
THE CONGRESS WITH THE CONGRESS
THERE AS WITH AS A NEW ORGANIZATION
IN THAT CASE VOLUNTEERS
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Itish Kallat, *Public Notice 2*, 2007.
Resin; 4,479 sculptural units; installation dimensions variable.
The Saatchi Gallery, London.



Jitish Kallat, *Public Notice 3*, 2010. LED panels installed in Art Institute of Chicago.

...which is more far removed by million of human beings
from a home which I remember to have renounced from my eyes
of the grand Zoroastrian nation I will never to you brethren a few
religion which has sheltered and it still fostering the remnant
shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny I am proud to belong to the
refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was
remnant of the Israelites who came to Southern India and took
proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest
the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am
proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and
universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am
both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in
I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world
the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration.
have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim
this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient
all classes and sects. My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on
thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of
world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions, and I
us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the
to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given
Sisters and Brothers of America, it fills my heart with joy unspeakable

Jitish Kallat, *Public Notice 3*, 2010. LED panels installed in Art Institute of Chicago.



Jitish Kallat, *Public Notice 3*, 2010.
LED panels installed in Art Institute of Chicago.

As at Wardha
C.P.
India.
23.7.'39.

Dear friend,

Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request, because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.

It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has seliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success? Any way I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you.

I remain,
Your sincere friend
M.K. Gandhi

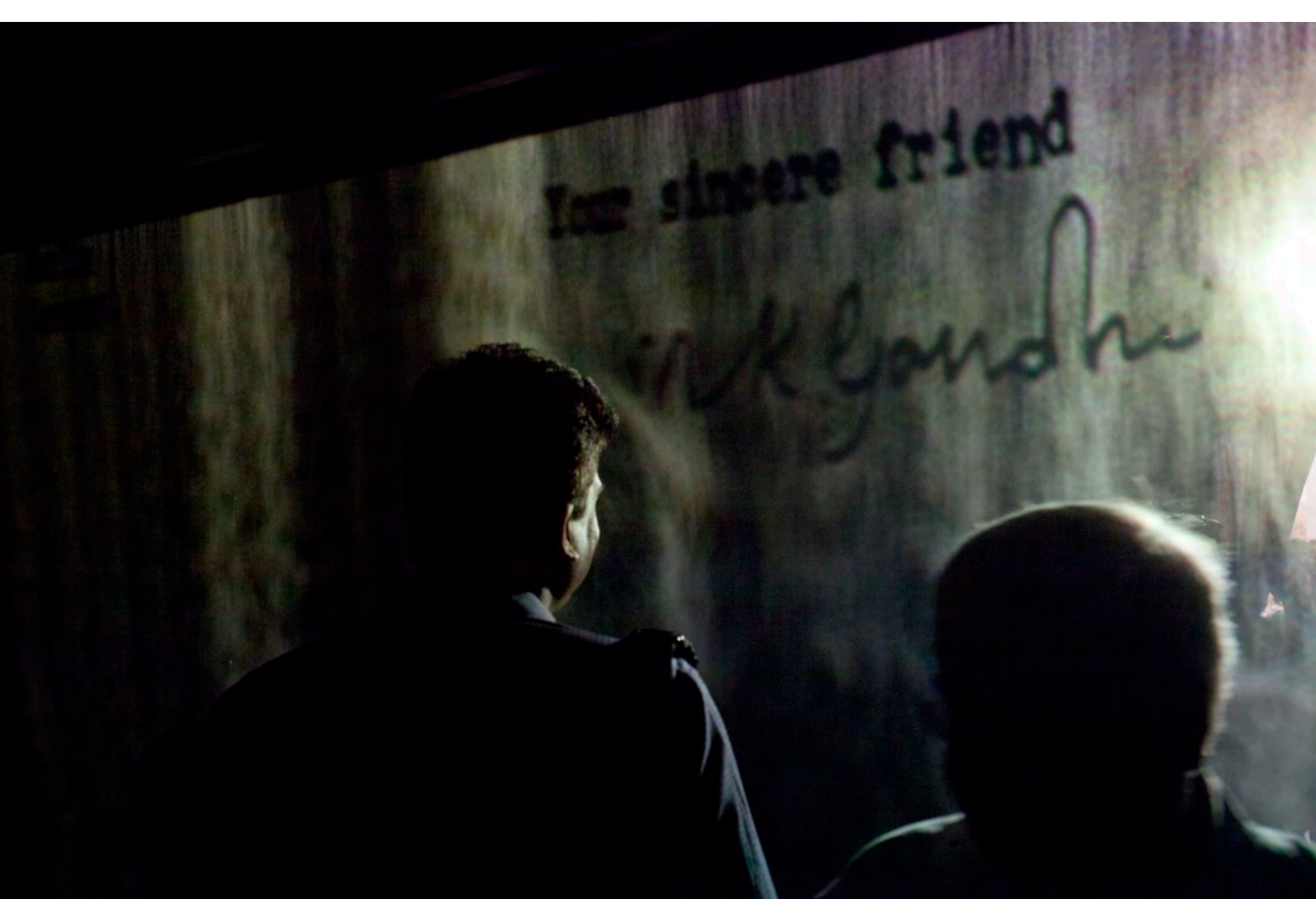
Herr Hitler
Berlin
Germany.



Jitish Kallat, *Covering Letter*, 2012. Fog Screen projection. Installation dimensions variable.



Jitish Kallat, *Covering Letter*, 2012. Fog Screen projection. Installation dimensions variable.



Jitish Kallat, *Covering Letter*, 2012. Fog Screen projection. Installation dimensions variable.

I am Dr. Binayak Sen



Performance at a meeting in solidarity with Binayak Sen, Alliance Francaise, New Delhi, 2011



This is Palestine

Performance J&K artists' show, M.F Husain Gallery
Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, 2010



AFSPA YOU KILL

Meeting to protest AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act), passed on 11 September 1958 by the Parliament of India.

I mixed names of Manipuri and Kashmiri persons killed in fake encounters under AFSPA. I played dead, while a Manipuri youth read out the names. The words AFSPA YOU KILL illuminated with LED electronic device was spelt out repeatedly on my body.

Video stills from a performance at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, 2013



The fall of Iraq

Protest Against the Invasion of Iraq,
Aman inscribed with hair at the back of my head.
SAHMAT event, New Delhi, 2003



Railtracks to Meerut

Performance on the track to Meerut
in Making History Our Own,
SAHMAT exhibition, AIFACS and the Women's Press Club, New Delhi, 2007



Performance at Trafalgar Square, London, 2007



I Protest at Jantar Mantar

In 2010 in Kashmir, 120 young boys were killed for pelting stones, after which huge protests followed.

Some Kashmiri Muslims protested at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, which was opposed by BJP/RSS activists. There were nearly 200 policemen dividing the two opposing groups of protesters.

I joined the Kashmiri protest. The typical feature of this protest is that they would cover their faces with their handkerchiefs before they hurled stones/bricks on the security forces.

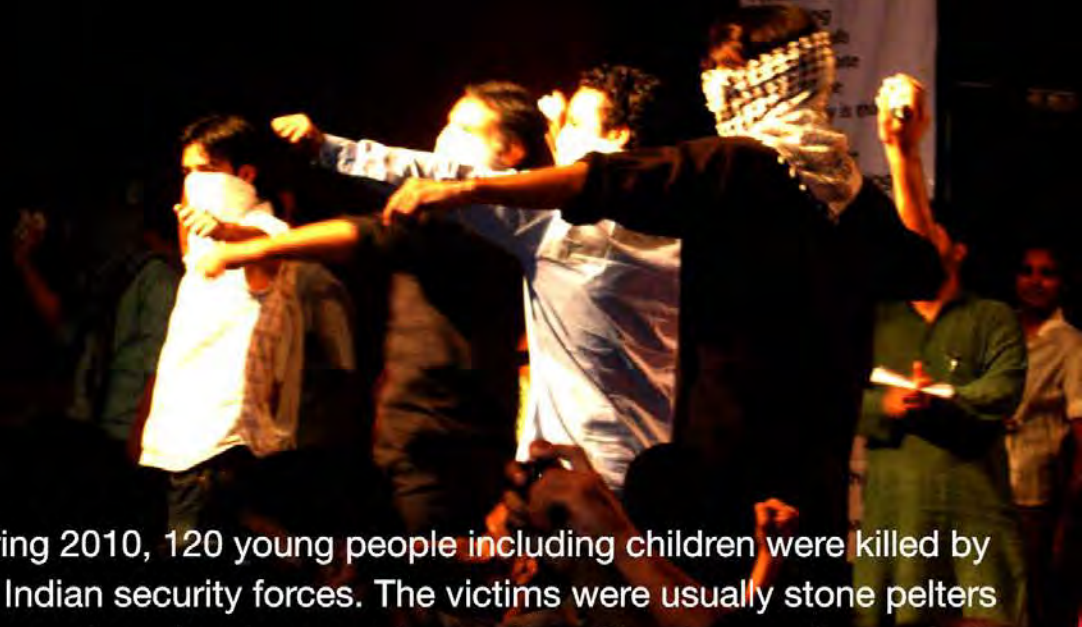
I picked up a poster from the crowd, with the text, "I PROTEST" and crumpled it into a ball/stone and posed as a stone peltor with a handkerchief tied around my face.

I repeated this act at LTG auditorium in New Delhi during a seminar, "AZAADI, THE ONLY WAY", which resulted in 'sedition' charges against some key speakers/participants. (The charges have since been diluted.)

On stage, once again I used the "paper ball and handkerchief" and posed as a stone peltor. A large number from the audience stood up and posed as stone peltors along with me. There was considerable tension in the auditorium.

Video stills of a performance at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, 2010

Debating Azaadi



During 2010, 120 young people including children were killed by the Indian security forces. The victims were usually stone pelters or sometimes just innocent bystanders. The stone pelters usually charged the forces with their faces hidden behind a scarf.

During a seminar on Azaadi in 2010 in the LTG auditorium, New Delhi, I performed a mock act of stone throwing which was imitated by many people in the audience.

Six people were charged with sedition after the seminar ended.



Haqeeqat-e-Kashmir 2013

Sher-e-Kashmir Park, Srinagar. A parallel event against Zubin Mehta's concert in Srinagar.

I arrived with the Bhand Pather music from behind the stage. I announced the performance as an attempt to understand sound (politics and life) versus music (art and culture).



I played with the sound a...a...a...the first sound of Azaadi.

I broke a radio set to hear and know the sound a...a...a...a... and people participated while I uttered the sound of Azaadi.

Black Snow in Kashmir

I invited a barber to cut my hair on a wet landscape on canvas.

It was an event organized by SSARL of 1500 people on Facebook consisting of Pandits and Muslims from Kashmir. Their slogan was: 'let us all unite and pull the rope', from a poem by Lal Ded.

A performance for 500 children from different schools, Nagin Lake, Srinagar, 2012

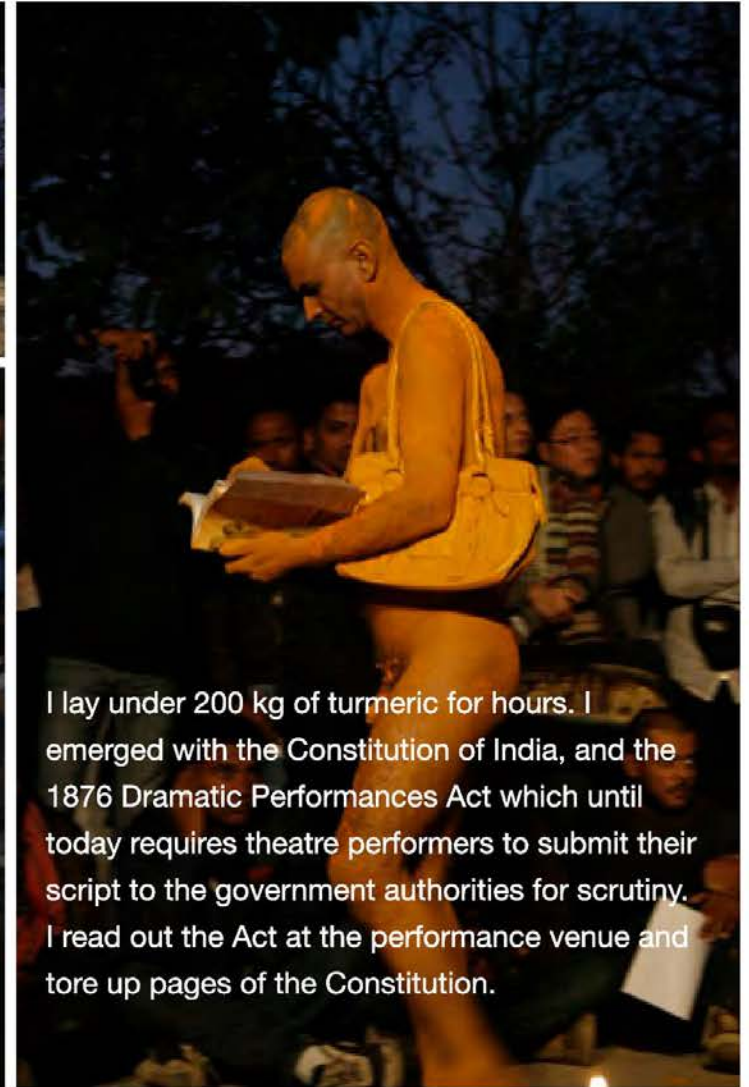
Pause. Kashmir

Performance at University of Agricultural Sciences, Bangalore, 2011



Basant

Performance at KHOJLIVE, New Delhi, 2012



I lay under 200 kg of turmeric for hours. I emerged with the Constitution of India, and the 1876 Dramatic Performances Act which until today requires theatre performers to submit their script to the government authorities for scrutiny. I read out the Act at the performance venue and tore up pages of the Constitution.



Above: Performance on the roof of half a million trees felled for Commonwealth Games in Delhi.
Below: A miniature: Majnun on the tomb of his beloved Layla.



Revisiting Yamuna river



I had to amputate to see

Photographs, 2009, Delhi

I had cut my finger in 2002 to feed the dying fish in the polluted Yamuna flowing through Delhi.



Gulabi Gang-2

Gulabi Gang is a women's activist group in U.P. who come to the rescue of women in distress. I performed while playing a video documentary clip of Gulabi Gang.

Performance during City as Studio project at Sarai, Delhi, 2012



green tears

Photograph, 2009, Delhi



with bird on cheek

Photograph, 2012, Delhi



Banner at KHOJ event, Bangalore, 2003

Against Death Sentence



Performance at Amnesty International, an event at India Gate, New Delhi, 2008

