



*FRESH EARTH*

March 13 – April 17, 2021

AICON ART



## FRESH EARTH

Exhibition: March 13 – April 17, 2021

Press Preview & V.I.P. Reception: Saturday, March 13, 4:00pm – 7:00pm

35 Great Jones St., New York NY 10012

**Rina Banerjee** (b. 1963, India)

**Jayashree Chakravarty** (b. 1956, India)

**Nadia Kaabi-Linke** (b. 1978, Tunisia)

**Suchitra Mattai** (b. 1973, Guyana)



Jayashree Chakravarty, *Blooming Flowers*, 2020

Dry leaves, flowers, roots, jute, seeds, tea leaves, acrylic paint, cotton, fabric, Nepali paper, thin tissue paper, synthetic glue, 72.5 x 48.75 in.

**Aicon Art** is pleased to present *Fresh Earth*, an experiential group exhibition that considers artists from around the globe who employ organic materials in varied schema to offer parables of our complex socio-political histories and of the tenuous relationship with the world we inhabit.

Oscillating between tightly structured and uninhibitedly free-form, the works in this exhibition cite materials that help us unearth and examine the construction of our identities and the dissonance that seems inevitable to their construction. The residual and the symbolic are at the forefront of their concerns and through acts of collection, re-purposement, preservation and/or juxtaposition, **Rina Banerjee, Jayashree Chakravarty, Nadia Kaabi-Linke and Suchitra Mattai**, break earth. The resulting petrichor offers us a liminal space from which to take stock.

### Jayashree Chakravarty

In a career spanning over three decades Jayashree Chakravarty has placed environmentalism at the core of her concerns. Underscoring the grave risk that human encroachment and rapid urbanization pose to natural habitats, the artist draws from her lived experiences in the rapidly urbanizing suburb of Kolkata that she calls home. Chakravarty reminds us that the earth is continuously being pushed towards a precarious edge, where the threat of daily damage has taken on precipitous dimensions.

Like in much of her previous work, the current body offers us a repository of the artist's collection of twigs, leaves, flowers, seeds and other natural detritus. The work takes on an amber-

like quality when illuminated from behind – evincing a strategy of preservation and veneration as a way to combat the inevitable sense of loss that also lies within the work. The painstaking assembly of vegetal substances in dense layers of paper suggests perhaps the passage of time but equally stresses nature's regenerative potential. Through poetic evocations, she weaves into her personal vision the need for environmental healing and resurrection.

## Nadia Kaabi-Linke

Parsing the Anthropocene with a focus on themes of geopolitics, immigration, and transnational identities, Berlin-based Nadia Kaabi-Linke's works offer conceptual frameworks bolstered by powerful historical narratives. In a dynamic new work that directly responds to the gallery space, Kaabi-Linke reflects upon the last hundred years and the structures of power that thread colonialism and capitalism. Building on "Remont" a similar installation in Kiev that saw visitors walk unsteadily over un-fixed paving stones on the floor, Kaabi-Linke seeks to offer a cognitive reorientation by way of a sensory *disorientation*.

As curator Kateryna Filyuk has observed of this installation, *"Kaabi-Linke's work hints at the notion that instability and viral uncertainty is a new normal in our contemporary moment...The environmental effects of capitalism commodifying all aspects of human activity are well established, and yet there is still no seismic shift in socio-political understanding in sight. Kaabi-Linke's installation thus becomes a metaphor for this kind of collective indifference to any necessity of change."*

## Rina Banerjee

Amid a turn toward nativist politics in the United States, the work of Indian-born, New York-based artist Rina Banerjee seems particularly relevant, reflecting as it does the splintered experience of identity, tradition and culture prevalent in diasporic communities. Banerjee's fanciful sculptures are made from materials sourced throughout the world, paying homage to items caught between cultures. What results is a polemical taxonomy that mines the material effects of imperialism and capitalism.

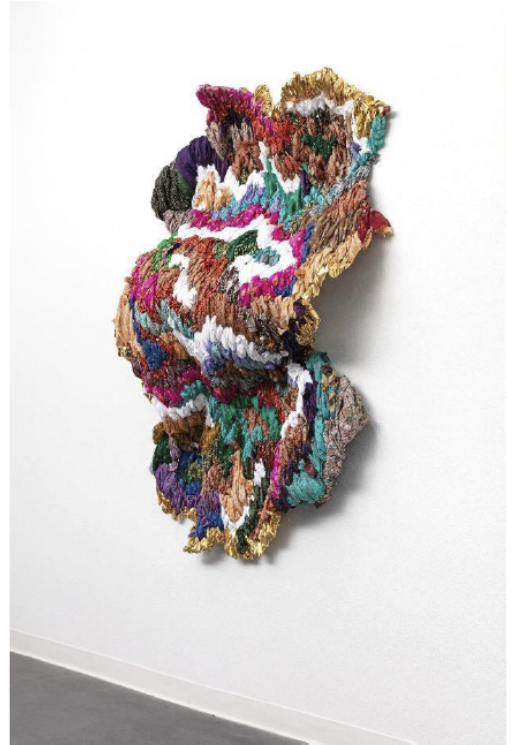
The current body of work comes directly from the artist's travelling retrospective 'Make Me A Summary of The World' and exemplifies Banerjee's use of material to not only recall past cultural legacies, but to reference the materials themselves and to open up their functionality in this way. As the artist reminds us, material and function are intertwined but the array of functions a material might take on, that remains to be seen. Banerjee's work simultaneously blends, notions of East and West, Global South and Global North, past and future to cathartic effect.

## Suchitra Mattai

The assemblage takes on new dimension in the inspired works of Denver-based artist Suchitra Mattai. While Mattai's practice includes a wide range of materials and ideas, her primary focus is on the role of land and environment in the creation of identity. Often incorporating cultural artifacts in her works, the artist takes on the familiar format of landscape painting and subverts it – sometimes foregrounding the reference through the use of organic forms in three dimensions, in other instances flattening the landscape through the use of pattern and building up layers through collage elements. Thus, through painting, drawing, collage, installation, video, and sculpture, she weaves narratives of "an other," invoking fractured sites and reclaiming historically rich objects, many of which suggest a colonial past or domestic purpose.

It is an honor to present the work of this distinguished group of artists. Several of whom have been seen recently in major forums like the Venice Biennale (Rina Banerjee); Musée Guimet, Paris (Jayashree Chakravarty and Rina Banerjee); the Guggenheim Museum, New York (Nadia Kaabi-Linke); Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India (Nadia Kaabi-Linke and Rina Banerjee) and the Sharjah Biennial (Suchitra Mattai and Nadia Kaabi-Linke) to name a few.

Please contact Erica Kyung ([erica@aicongallery.com](mailto:erica@aicongallery.com)) for more information.



Suchitra Mattai, *Cloud 17064*, 2020  
Vintage saris, wire, fabric, dimensions variable

NADIA KAABI-LINKE  
RINA BANERJEE  
JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY  
SUCHITRA MATTAI





NADIA KAABI-LINKE









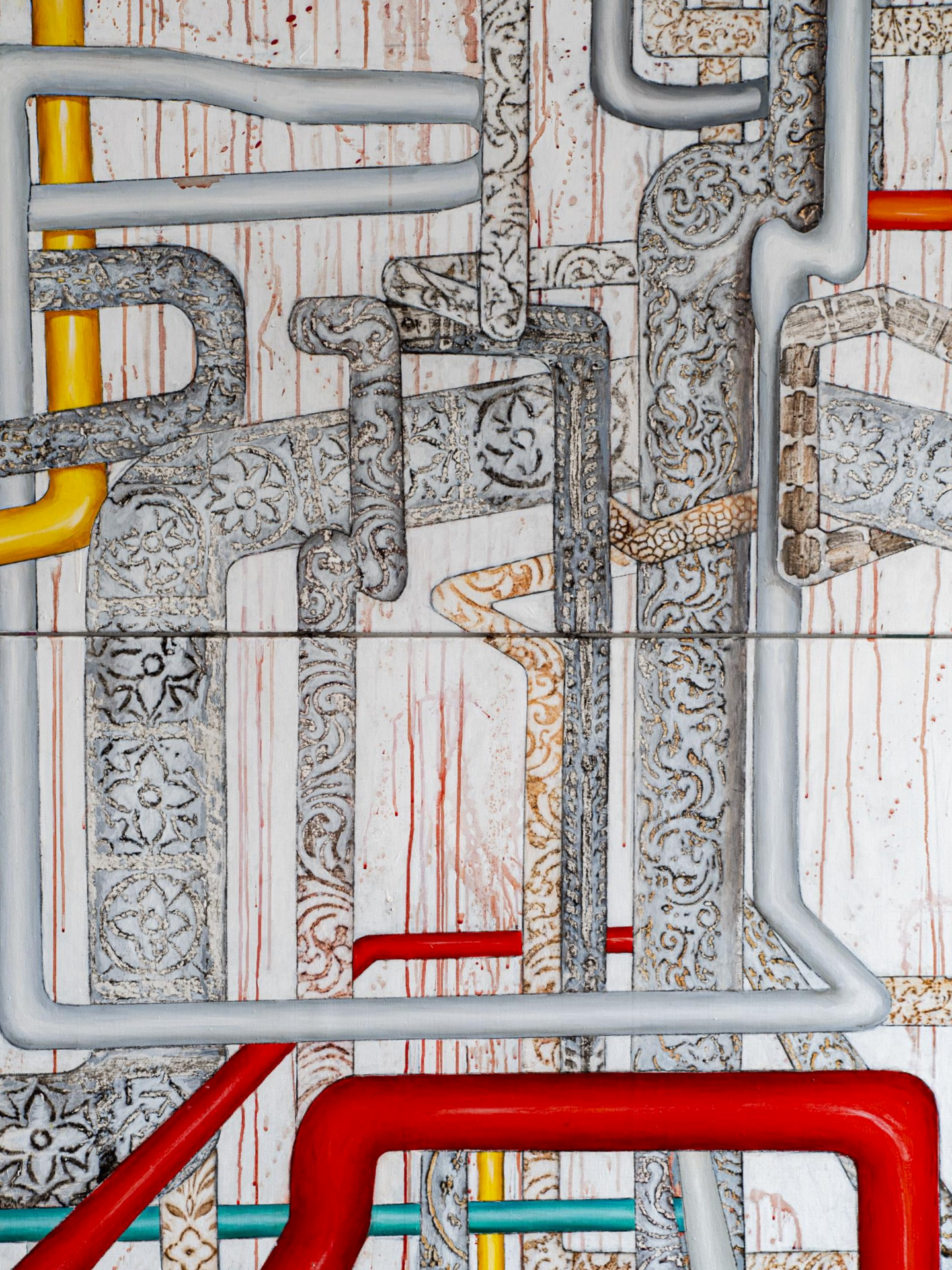
NADIA KAABI-LINKE

NYSE Road Works (Remont II), 2021

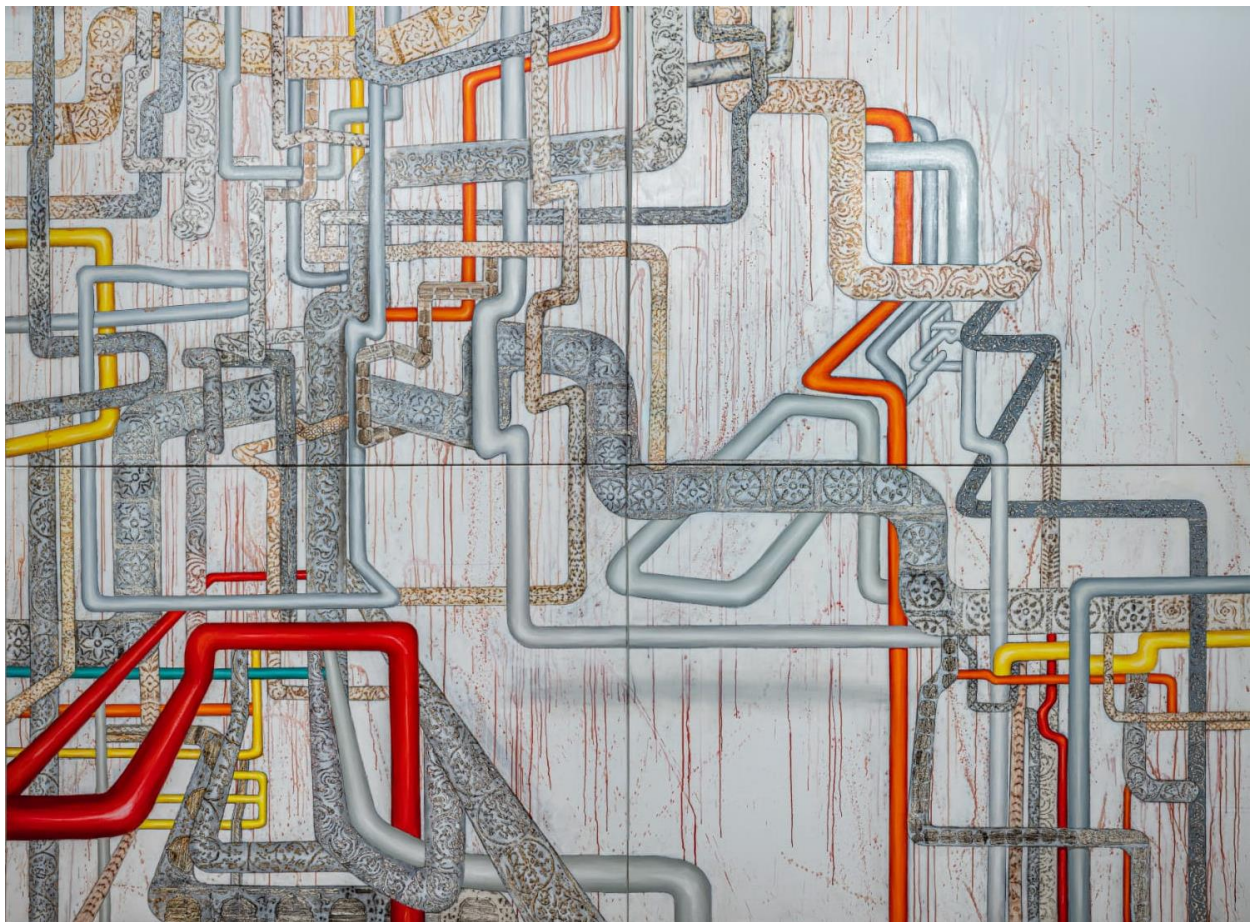
Site-specific installation: granite, MDF, acrylic paint, sand

Dimensions variable









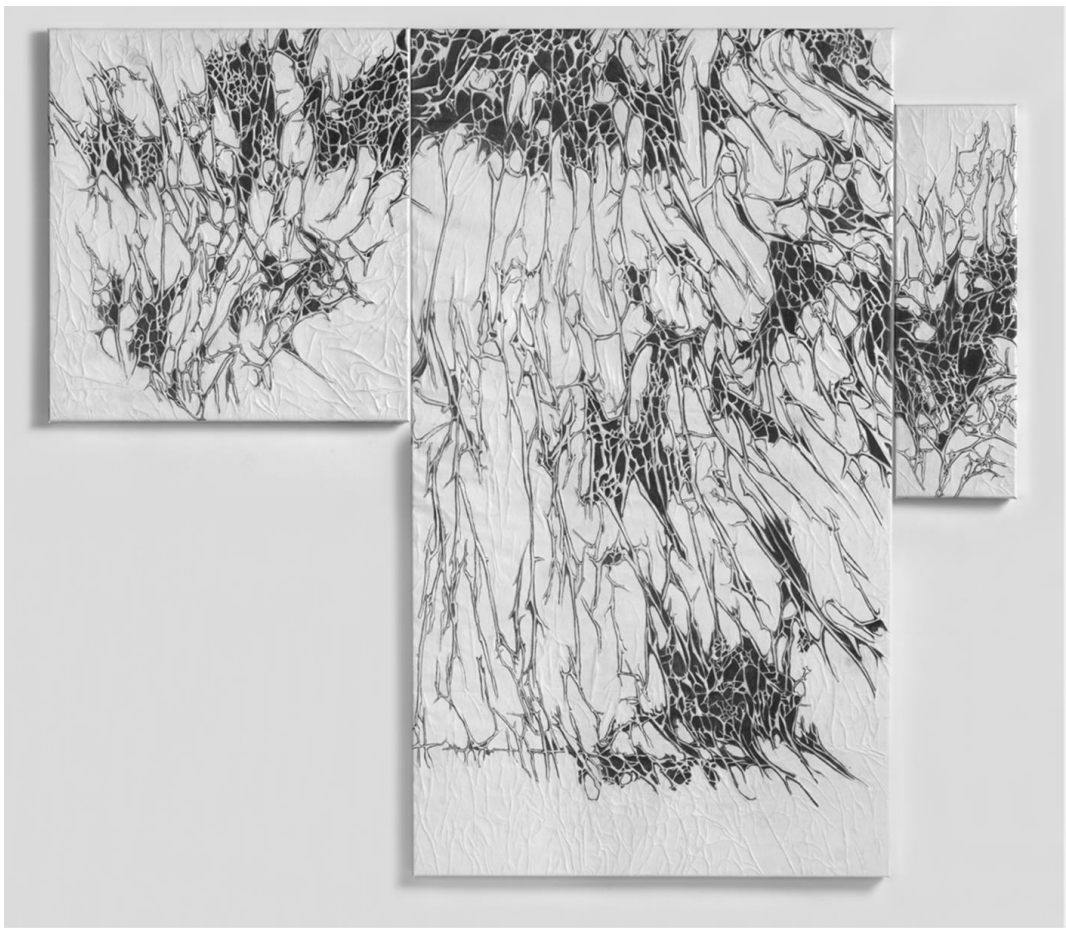
NADIA KAABI-LINKE

*Whitewashing after the Carnage at the Waterpipe*, 2021

Mixed media on canvas, aluminium, steel and wood

118 x 157.5 inches

300 x 400 cm



NADIA KAABI-LINKE

*Spic and Span in June and July, 2019*

Graphite and acrylic on paper pasted on canvas

57 x 52.5 inches

145 x 133 cm





NADIA KAABI-LINKE

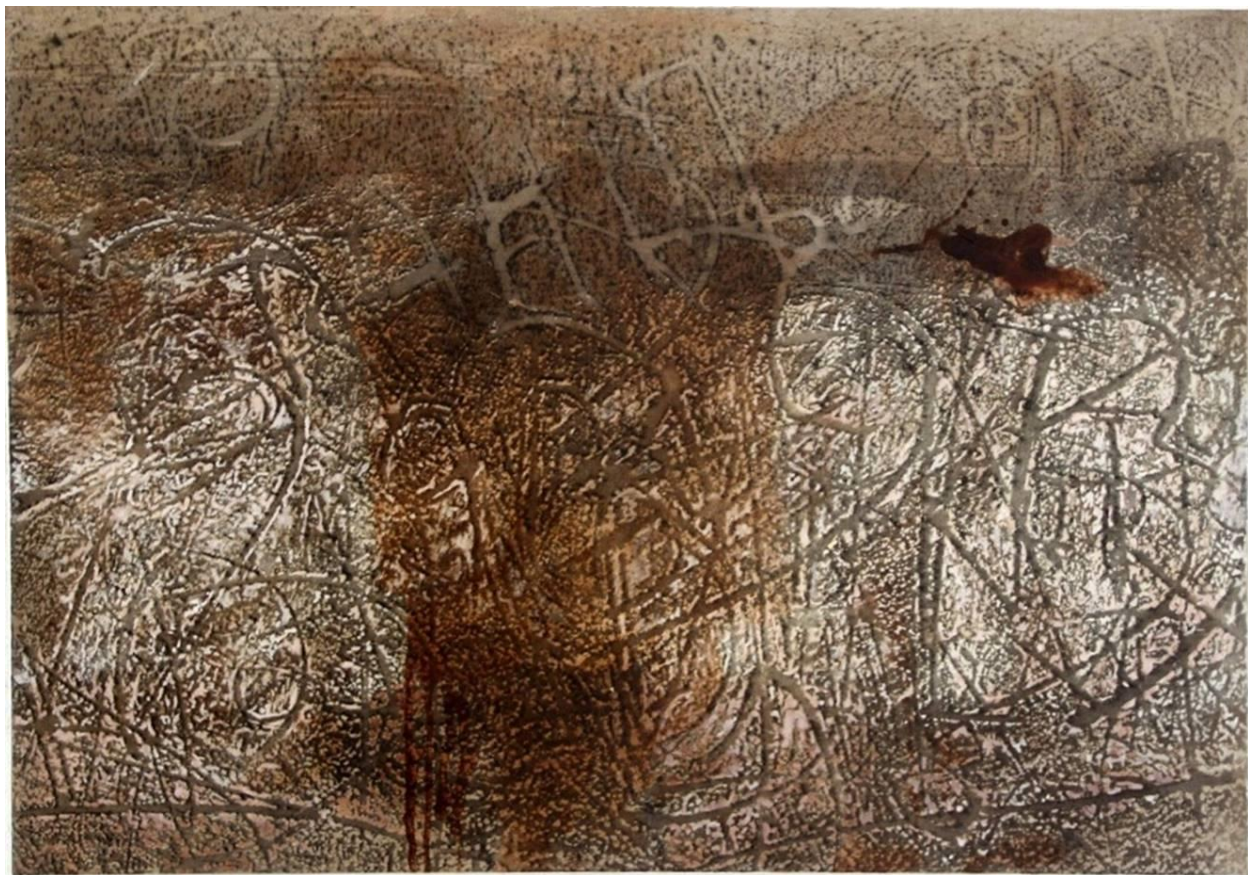
*Baruth St.*, 2008

Ink and wax on paper pasted on canvas

35.5 x 25.25 inches

90 x 64 cm





NADIA KAABI-LINKE

*Beans*, 2009

Coffee, ink, pigments, paper on canvas

27 x 38.5 inches

68.5 x 98 cm





RINA BANERJEE









RINA BANERJEE

*A world Lost: after the original island, single land mass fractured, after populations migrated, after pollution revealed itself and as cultural locations once separated merged, after the splitting of Adam and Eve, Shiva and Shakti, of race black and white, of culture East and West, after animals diminished, after seas' corals did exterminate, after this and at last imagine all water evaporated...this after Columbus found it we lost it, imagine this, 2013*

Black synthetic horns, wire, netting, lightbulbs, scale, ostrich eggs, textiles, cowrie shells, pebbles, coins, feathers, fish vertebrae, greenery, coral, glass birds, miniature human and animal figurines, plastic cups, and red thread

132 x 234 x 128 inches

335 x 594 x 325 cm





RINA BANERJEE

*Lentil flour, chickpeas mixed fermented friedballs presented in the leaf of bananas could cure the hunger of a labouring man, 2008*

Shells, gourds, acrylic, polyester banana leaves, nylon hair, fake grass, glass beads, gold thread, spoon

47.25 x 31.25 x 51 inches

120 x 79.5 x 129.5 cm





RINA BANERJEE

*Sex-bait, in likeness to fish bait to catch her as disloyal, in likeness to Eve, arouse her fear, to create racial panic of blacks jewels like honey to stir and stir poison n' passion, minted lynchings in likeness to money., 2017*

Ceramic vintage negro head, Victorian brown bitters bottle, red silk tassels, Murano glass, and steel armature

34 x 23 x 13 inches

86 x 58 x 33 cm





RINA BANERJEE

*The gene was his mule, Mendel with his peas in the monastery in thick garden made variety, made mischief while green ponds, unripe flower took to crossing, blended fluids so dominant was recessive, 2008*

Acrylic, ink, marbled paper collage on watercolor paper

29 x 25 inches

74 x 63.5 cm





RINA BANERJEE

*Bacteria: In combat 540 wild beast in green fury took refuge in curdled milk, kindled friendship with nomads skimmed butter as treasure absconded with proteins warmed milk until certain odor blew more flora, 2012*

*Acrylic on watercolor paper*

30 x 22 inches

76 x 56 cm





RINA BANERJEE

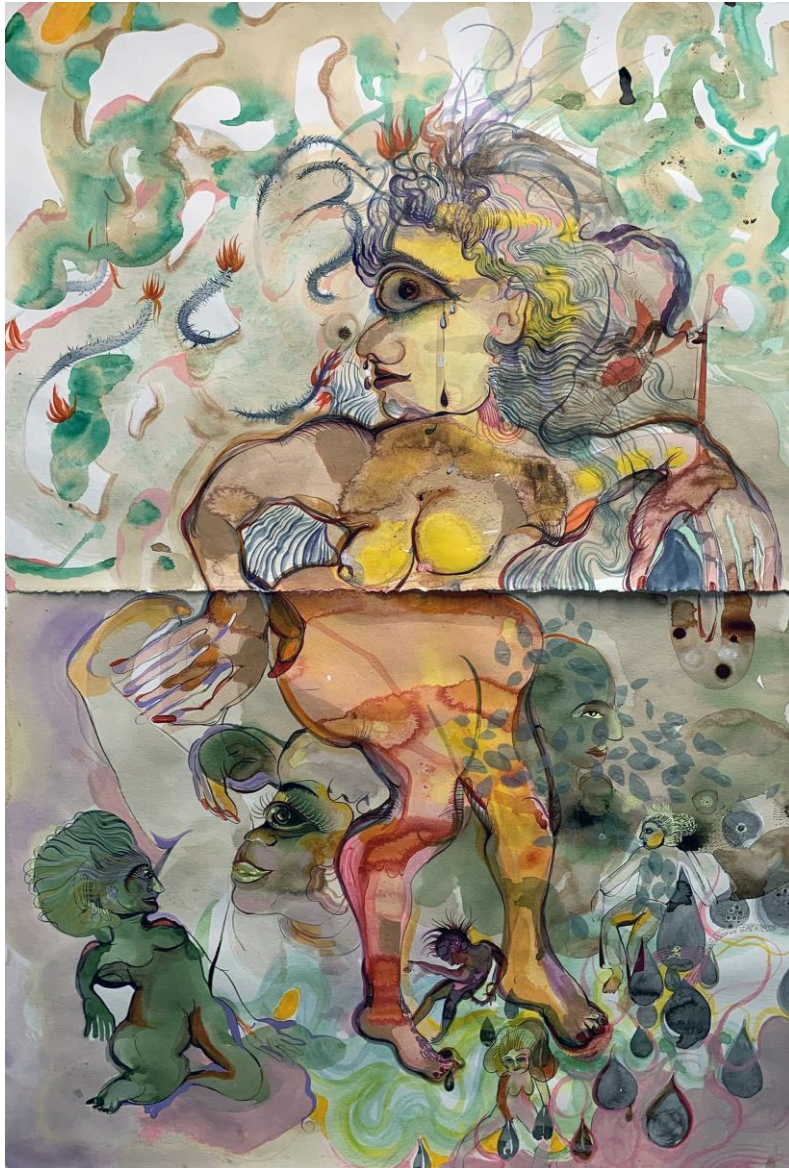
*Untitled, 2020*

Acrylic, ink and collage on paper

30 x 22 inches

76 x 56 cm





RINA BANERJEE

*Untitled*, 2021

Acrylic, ink and collage on paper

44 x 30 inches

112 x 76 cm





RINA BANERJEE

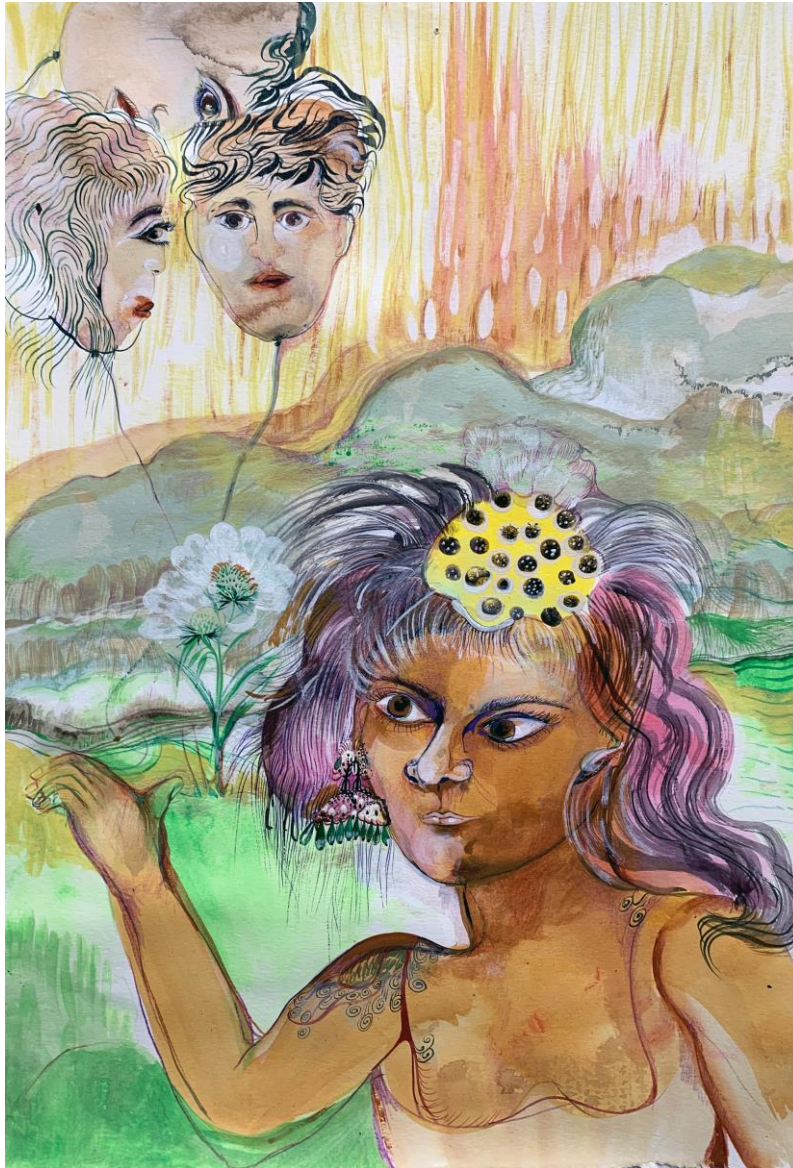
*Series: Beneath the Earth, under the surface value, 2021*

Acrylic, ink and collage on paper

16 x 12 inches

41 x 30.5 cm





RINA BANERJEE

*Fevers and Flora, Gaugin's grandmother, her salt, her Peruvian heritage  
crossed mountains sent death kind balloons, face me nots, sweat of voyages  
eaten by inheritance., 2020*

Acrylic, ink and collage on paper

22 x 15 inches

56 x 38 cm





JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY













JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY

*Terra firma*, 2020

Dry flowers, roots, jute, seeds, tea leaves, acrylic paint, cotton fabric, nepali paper, thin tissue paper, synthetic glue

94.75 x 64.25 inches

241 x 163 cm





JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY

*Soaring to the skies*, 2020

Dry flowers, roots, jute, seeds, tea leaves, tea stain, acrylic paint, cotton fabric, nepali paper, thin tissue paper, synthetic glue

94.75 x 64.25 inches

241 x 163 cm





JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY

*Scattered foliage*, 2020

Dry flowers, roots, jute, seeds, tea leaves, tea stain, acrylic paint, cotton fabric, nepali paper, thin tissue paper, synthetic glue

73.75 x 48.5 inches

187 x 123 cm





JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY

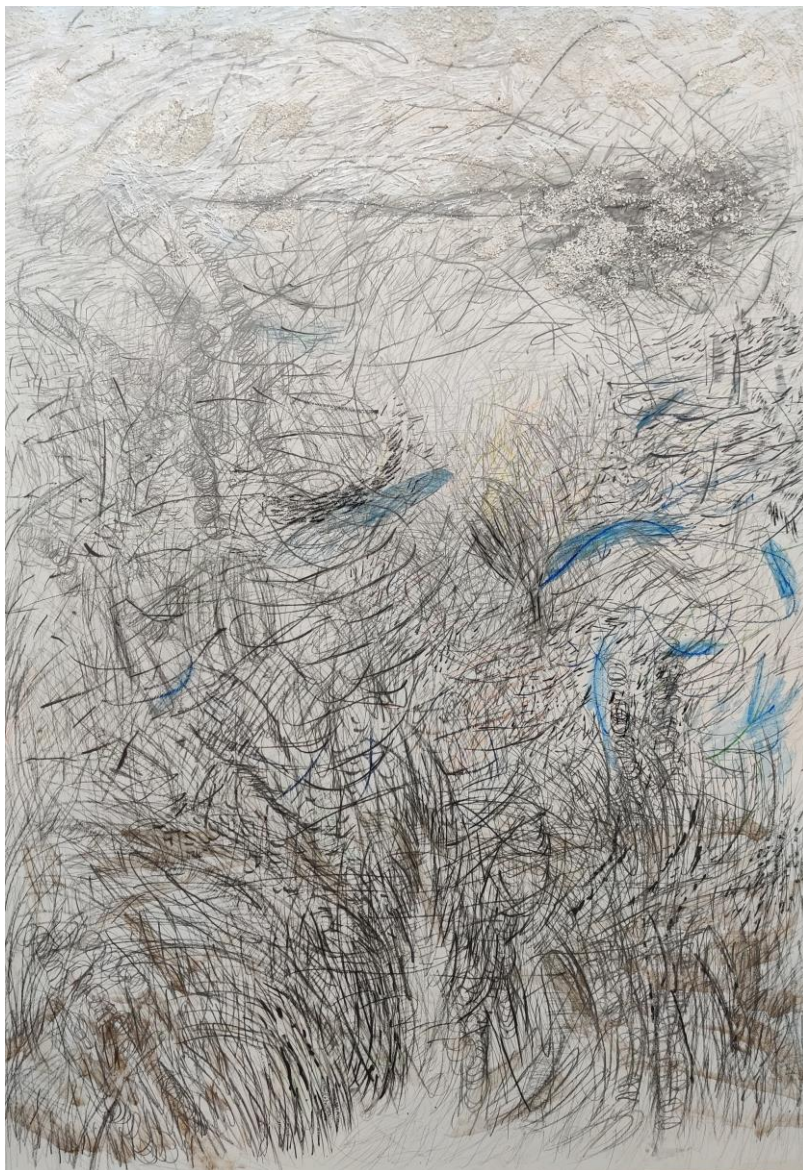
*Blooming flowers*, 2020

Dry flowers, roots, jute, seeds, tea leaves, acrylic paint, cotton fabric, nepali paper, thin tissue paper, synthetic glue

72.5 x 48.75 inches

184 x 124 cm





JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY

*Wilderness*, 2020

Watercolour, graphite, charcoal, ink shell, acrylic on paper

39.25 x 27.75 inches

100 x 70.5 cm





JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY

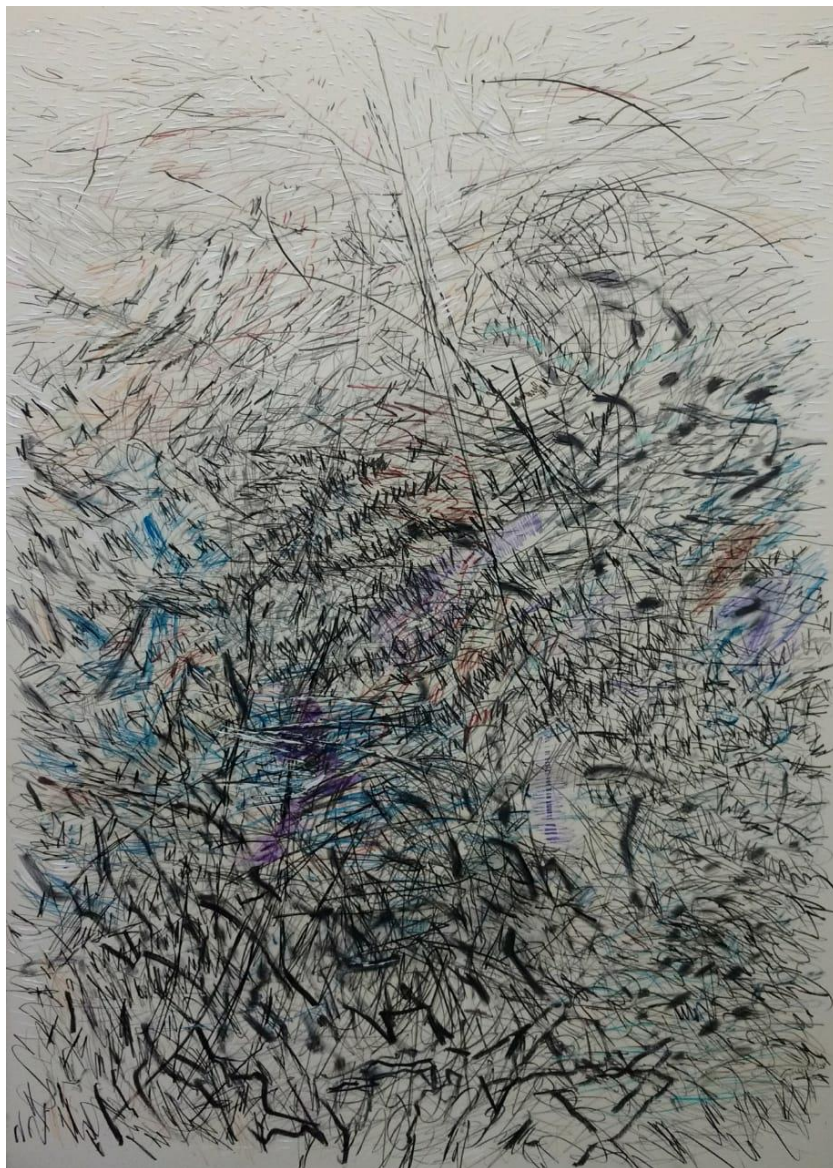
*Spring Tides*, 2020

Watercolour, graphite, charcoal, ink shell, acrylic on paper

39.25 x 27.75 inches

100 x 70.5 cm





JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY

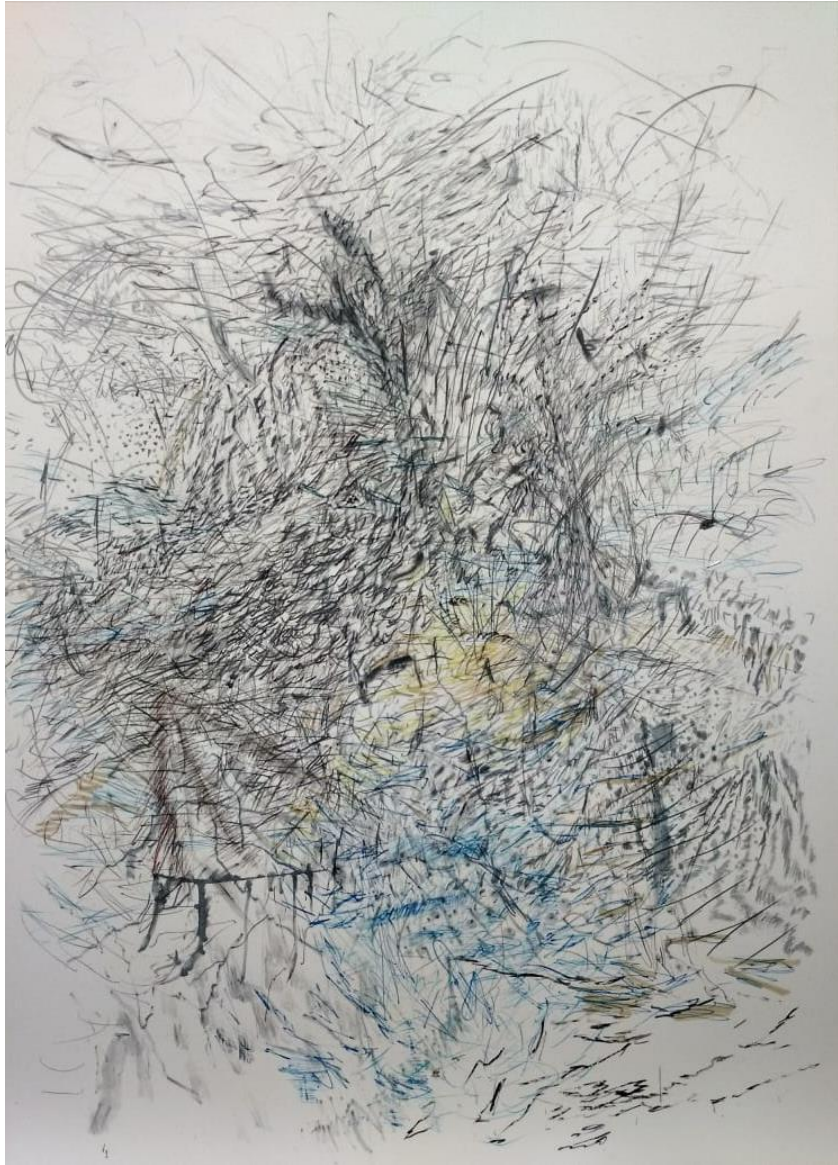
*Scribbles*, 2020

Watercolour, graphite, charcoal, ink shell, acrylic on paper

41.25 x 29.75 inches

105 x 75.5 cm





JAYASHREE CHAKRAVARTY

*Nature's marks*, 2020

Watercolour, graphite, charcoal, ink shell, acrylic on paper

41.25 x 29.75 inches

105 x 75.5 cm





SUCHITRA MATTAI



#### FRESH EARTH: PAROING THE ANTHROPOCENE

This sculpture, titled 'Fresh Earth: Paroing the Anthropocene', is a large-scale work made of thousands of small, multi-colored threads or fibers, suspended from the ceiling. It is a response to the Anthropocene, the current geological epoch characterized by human activity.

Overlaid on the right, the sculpture is a large-scale work made of thousands of small, multi-colored threads or fibers, suspended from the ceiling. It is a response to the Anthropocene, the current geological epoch characterized by human activity. The sculpture is a response to the Anthropocene, the current geological epoch characterized by human activity.

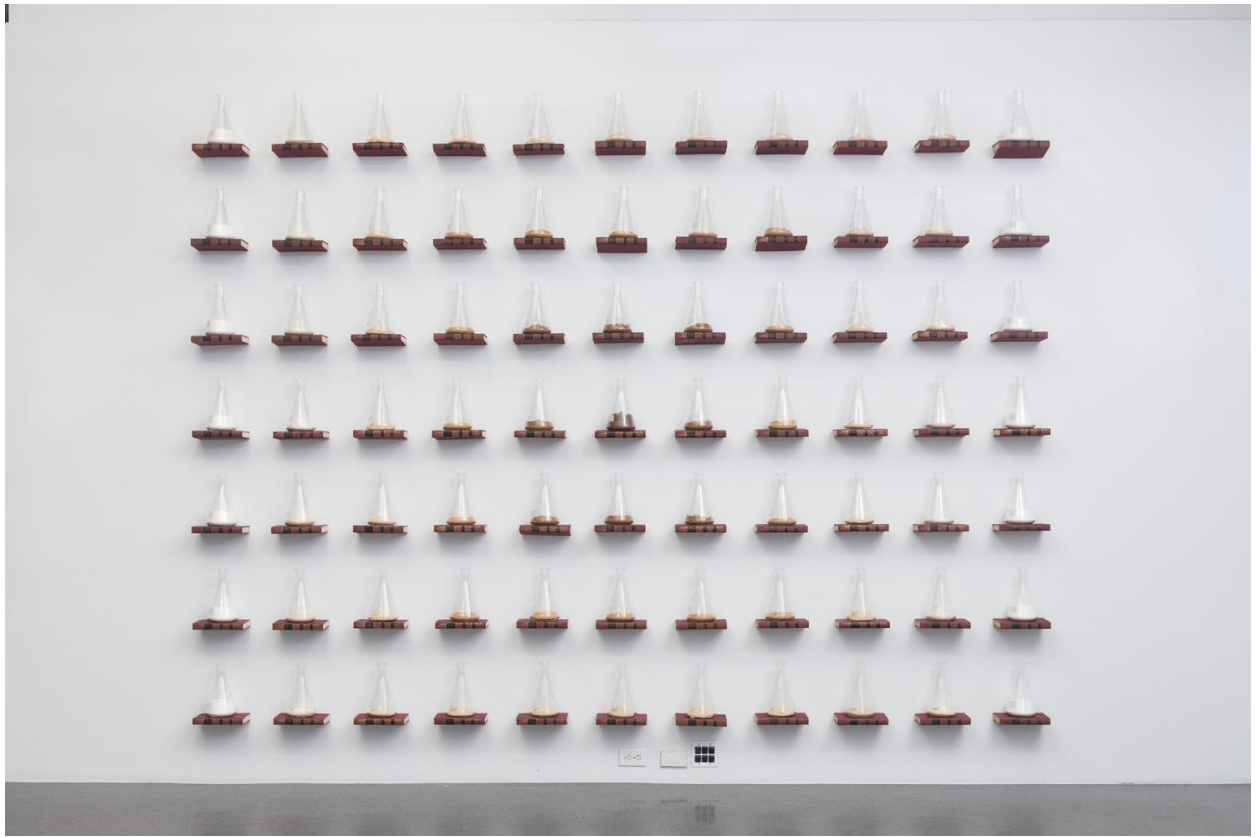




**FRESH EARTH: PARSING THE ANTHROPOCENE**

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SUCHITRA MATTAI

*Skin*, 2018

Sugar, flasks, vintage encyclopedias

Dimensions variable





SUCHITRA MATTAI

*And the waves purged the fears, 2020*

Vintage saris, wire, fabric

Dimensions variable



SUCHITRA MATTAI  
*Tethered*, 2020  
Vintage saris, wire, fabric  
Dimensions variable





SUCHITRA MATTAI  
*Cloud 17064*, 2020  
Vintage saris, wire, fabric  
Dimensions variable



SUCHITRA MATTAI

*My life is not my own*, 2019

Gouache, found needlepoint, and embroidery floss on fabric

48 x 76 inches

122 x 193 cm





SUCHITRA MATTAI

*An American chorus*, 2020

Vintage sari and needlepoint

32 x 32 inches

81.3 x 81.3 cm



SUCHITRA MATTAI

*A small place, a vast world (after Jamaica Kincaid), 2020*

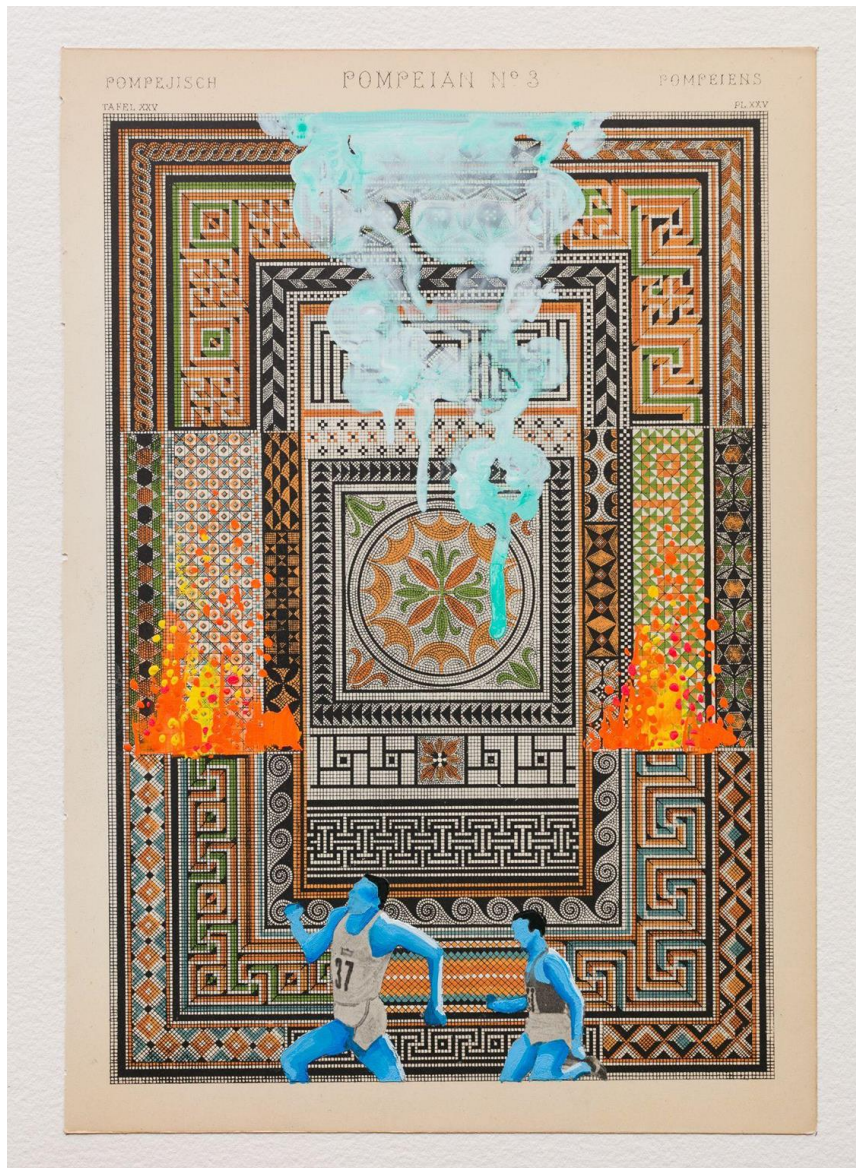
The Grammar of Ornament (1910) book page, gouache, 1960 Saturday

Evening Post

9 x 12.5 inches

22.8 x 31.75 cm





SUCHITRA MATTAI

*Pompeii*, 2020

The Grammar of Ornament (1910) book page, gouache, 1960 Saturday Evening Post

9 x 12.5 inches

22.8 x 31.75 cm





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