

PRESS RELEASE

Sohrab Hura, Spill

07 November 2020 - 02 January, 2021

Experimenter - Ballygunge Place

Experimenter presents *Spill*, Sohrab Hura's second solo. The exhibition opens at Experimenter – Ballygunge Place on 07 November, 2020 and will be on view until 02 January, 2021.

Spill is an unfolding of a 15-year practice marked by constant probing of the medium of image making. With beginnings rooted strongly in the documentary, *Land of a Thousand Struggles* (2005-06) and *Pati* (2010/2020 Iteration) are records that Sohrab Hura made immediately after finishing his university studies when he embarked on a fifty-day long bus journey across the north Indian rural belt with his university professor Jean Dreze and others from civil society who were part of the Right to Food movement. The journey was a final push to demand for the enactment of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) which eventually became the biggest social security measure undertaken by any government anywhere at the time, with a focus to provide the right to employment with dignity. It was also in this journey that he discovered *Pati* - a small cluster of village panchayats in Madhya Pradesh (central India) - where Hura would continue to return and work for the next fifteen years thanks to the relationships first forged during the visit on the long road trip.

While the beginning of his practice is imbued with an earnest confidence in the medium, measured skepticism is clear in many of his later works. *The Lost Head & The Bird* (2016-19) as well as the series of photographs *The Coast* (2019) blur the line between documentary and fiction bringing into question whose truth is being told, who sets the narrative – and for what purpose? Power is firmly in the corner of the one who makes the narratives today. Using the coastline as a metaphor, the photographs veer from violent scenes to the everyday absurdity of life – the viewer never sure of what is real and what is not. The character of an 'idiot photographer' also makes an appearance in self reference as Hura is all too aware of his own role in the violence and manipulation of image making today. This hyperreal chaos is set against a new film also titled *The Coast* (2020) where visuals of bathers in the sea in the dark of the night reflect the desire for conquest over the waves.

Hura's process may be viewed like a complex system of synaptic connections, where the branches of his process allow for transmissions back and forth between interests that are central to his practice and their extensions. Bodies of work such as *Bittersweet* (2019) and *A Proposition For Departure* (2017) underscore the interconnectedness of Hura's work. A room of experiments and accidents also finds place in the exhibition. In *Spill*, it is these experiments and accidents with images that help in sparking new synapses that eventually become larger branches of his process – a sign of things to come.

Sohrab Hura (b. 1981) is a photographer and film maker. Recent exhibitions include Companion Pieces: New Photography, MoMA, NY (2020) organised by Lucy Gallun; Searching for Stars Amongst the Crescents, Experimenter, Kolkata (2019); Videonale, Kunstmuseum Bonn (2019); The Levee, Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati (2019); Homelands: Art from Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, curated by Devika Singh, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge (2019); Eyes Wild Open: Life is Elsewhere, Le Botanique, Brussels (2018); The Levee - FotoFest Houston (2018); Sweet Life, Experimenter, Kolkata (2017); The 10th Shanghai Biennale curated by Raqs Media Collective (2016) amongst others. Hura's work has been widely shown in international film festivals such as UNDERDOX Film Festival; Vancouver International Film Festival; Image Forum, Tokyo; Arkipel Film Festival, Jakarta; Moscow International Experimental Film Festival; Oberhausen International Short Film Festival; FotoFest International, Houston.

Hura was awarded the 2020 Principal Prize of the International Jury at the 66th International Short Film Festival Oberhausen Online for *Bittersweet*; The Paris Photo-Aperture Photobook of the Year Award for *The Coast*, 2019; Nomination to the Paris Photo-Aperture PhotoBook of the Year Award *Look Its Getting Sunny Outside!!!*, 2018. Special Mention by the International Jury at the Oberhausen International Film Festival for *The Lost Head & The Bird*; Award for the Best Contribution, NRW category at the Oberhausen International Film Festival for *The Lost Head & The Bird* in 2020. His work may be found in the permanent collection of MoMA NY, Ishara Art Foundation, Dubai, Cincinnati Art Museum amongst other collections both private and public. Hura lives and works in New Delhi.

The exhibition in its physical form will be open to the public between 11 am to 6 pm every day except on Sundays and other government mandated closure dates. Visits to the gallery need prior appointments. Visitors to the gallery must wear facemasks at all times. Physical distancing and other safety measures will be followed at the gallery.

For further information and press related inquiries please write to admin@experimenter.in