

Gardens as Thought Form: Lexicons for Revolution

Aziz Hazara, Bani Abidi, and Prabhakar Pachpute

27 August – 31 October, 2021

Experimenter – Hindustan Road

Experimenter presents *Gardens as Thought Form: Lexicons for Revolution* with works by **Aziz Hazara, Bani Abidi, and Prabhakar Pachpute**.

Gardens exist in multiple forms – many are public, some are secret, some fragile, some even exist only in consciousness or imagination. In the nebulae of a garden lies a seed, and within its seemingly insignificant presence is held, the complex knowledge of life – something so beautiful and precious, yet layered, diverse and full of possibilities. Where should the seeds of resistance be planted and do those seeds store a vocabulary for the future? Can a garden of revolution exist today? Can a lexicon of thought form be constructed to probe the broader questions that such a garden may present?

The three artists in the exhibition explore thought forms of conflict, identity and resistance enmeshed within their practices. **Aziz Hazara's** video *Rehearsal* is deceptively simple at first glance. Addressing ideas of play, coming of age and loss of innocence at a time of deep uncertainty, the work makes a strong reference to the current developments in Afghanistan where Hazara spent his childhood, growing up in the backdrop of the two Gulf Wars and the War in Afghanistan. In the video, one boy carries another on his shoulders, as an older child might carry their younger sibling. Meanwhile, the younger child mimes shooting a gun, a perfectly commonplace (albeit problematic) childhood game. Those familiar with military weaponry immediately recognise the startling accuracy of the boy's imitation of an assault rifle. The work poses several concurrent questions. What exactly are they 'rehearsing' for and what revolution will the young of Afghanistan imagine? Their body language is equally misleading. The younger boy being on the shoulders of the other, is it an expression of care, or is he being sacrificed? Their movements are tied together, and the 'gunner' becomes an extension of his 'mount', in the same way Afghanistan was so frequently used as a pawn and proxy between warring powers. Occupying a wall close to the video is *Chalk Drawings*, a pair of photographs of a standing man's feet, which look similar at first, but on closer view, one sees demarcating spaces with chalk lines near the man's feet, which seem to point towards ideas of borders, access and denial of movement, an aspect of Hazara's life that is only too conflicted at all times.

Gardens often serve ambivalent positions in our minds. At times it is a space for the public, at other times a form of escapement or sometimes even as a space for the expression of love. An immersive environment engulfs the viewer in **Bani Abidi's** *Locations in The Garden of Love*, a 5-channel moving image installation that is inspired by Karachi, Pakistan's largest and most populous metropolitan city. In this exploration of romantic love in public spaces, a rumour of a purported love tryst unfolds across time as witnessed through the eyes of gatekeepers and park employees. The love story, recounted in the form of monologues, exists only as a chain of divergent and often speculative memories. *Locations in The Garden of Love* is thus a reflection of society's ambivalent relationship with the notion of romantic love in relation to values of honour, belief and truth. The title of the work comes from a poem by the 18th-century poet William Blake whose poem of the same title expresses his hostility

towards all forms of organized religion. Given Karachi's current political climate, the work is a timely and poetic antidote to the city's grimmer stories.

Prabhakar Pachpute's practice has for over a decade explored forms of resistance and collective action of labour, and through his continued engagement with farmers and miners, has used folklore to address contentious issues of land and conflict. Pachpute's large work on shaped wood, *Anthills* is a reminder of a collective force that comes together using ants and anthills as a metaphor. *Asylum Seeker*, the second work by Pachpute on view shows an emaciated animal of farming and not unlike other works definitive of his work, its head is replaced with an excavator and carries within itself an entire industrial machination, yet trudges on seeking another place she may call home. Pachpute's characters are often made against a desolate, surreal and post-apocalyptic landscape, yet always embedded between the narrative are clear markers of resistance and hope.

The exhibition proposes a body of work as thought forms that use an expanded understanding of gardens as a lens to focus on lexicons of revolution as we know them and propose new possibilities in building a vocabulary that we can rely on going forward.

Aziz Hazara (b.1992 Wardak, Afghanistan) lives and works between Berlin and Kabul.

Bani Abidi (b. 1971 Karachi, Pakistan) lives and works between Karachi and Berlin.

Prabhakar Pachpute (b. 1986, Sasti, India) lives and works in Pune, India.

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