

# experimenter

## *Drawn from Practice*

Aug 18 – Oct 31 2018

Experimenter – Hindusthan Road & Ballygunge Place

Artists: **Abir Karmakar / Ashish Avikunthak / Aweek Sen / Badal Sarkar / Bijoy Jain / Kanishka Raja / Padmini Chettur / Rahul Jain / Sahil Naik / Srinath Iswaran / T.M. Krishna**

Experimenter presents *Drawn from Practice*, an exhibition which relooks at the conceptual, notational, and foundational role of drawing across a wide arc of disciplines and media. The exhibition proposes to explore the conceptual idea of drawing as a scaffolding for building practices of expression, rather than restricting itself solely as / to a skillset. It connects the conceptual workings of practitioners that feed into the diverse range of grammar of various disciplines, beyond the world of visual arts and include performing arts, theatre, music, textile, writing, architecture and archives.

Participating artists include Abir Karmakar, Ashish Avikunthak, Aweek Sen, Badal Sarkar, Bijoy Jain, Kanishka Raja, Padmini Chettur, Rahul Jain, Sahil Naik, Srinath Iswaran, and T.M. Krishna. The exhibition opens on 18 August 2018 at 6pm simultaneously in both Experimenter spaces in Kolkata (2/1 Hindusthan Road & 45 Ballygunge Place) and will be on view until 31 October 2018. It works towards building a dialogue not only across practices but also across spaces, keeping in mind Experimenter's interest in presenting a cohesive and unified program across both locations.

Traditionally viewed as markings, notations, and sketches often on paper or personal diaries, drawings form a fertile ground for experimentation and testing boundaries of thought. Conceptually akin to a blueprint, a skeleton, or a structure, drawing is often the only initial scaffolding on which practices rely as a point of departure. Thereby forming an important aspect of the process of particular practices and a vital practice in itself. Thus, *Drawn from Practice* takes the influence and scope of drawing beyond the physical act into the realm of drawing as thought, form, and practice.

Using interior-scapes as a point of entry into the exhibition, **Abir Karmakar** presents a painting installation juxtaposed with a working desk that include his notes, an image bank, and sketches for his paintings that draw a clear painterly connection between the installation and his visual notes. **Ashish Avikunthak** shows *Rati Chakravayuh*, an experimental, 106-minute single-take film that creates a nuanced narrative through a series of organically developing conversations between six newly-wed couples and a priestess using deep philosophy as framework to probe not just longstanding ideas of mythology, but also social and political tenets. Writer and thinker **Aweek Sen** inhabits the gallery during the course of the exhibition, building an open writing studio and bringing in an entire library of books, reference reading, audio and video material as he opens his writing practice to a working and living space. One of India's leading avant-garde playwright and hugely influential theatre director, late **Badal Sarkar's** work was entirely based on workshop models where his actors and audiences became participants and the final production emerged as a collaborative exercise rather than a director's final cut. Despite this rather amorphous practice, a congruent method was apparent and the exhibition uses his writing, audio excerpts, collages, and interviews to express a strong connection between the workshops he conducted, his writing practice, and the final production of the piece.

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**Kanishka Raja**, a painter who worked across media, at the intersection of representation, craft, ornament, and multiple textile and printing technologies used interconnected bodies of work that consider the visual politics of neutral and contested territories. His work straddles both gallery spaces with a large painting in Hindusthan Road employing weaving, scanning, printing, embroidering, and reproducing counterparts that interlock in complex visual fields charged with colliding realms of the foreign and the familiar and lend an insight into the complex yet precise processes that a work goes through during its formation. At the Ballygunge Place gallery, Raja's two works inform the other. In a sixteen panel painting *KR020*, a dense yet grided image is juxtaposed with a drawing titled *Pagoda* that portrays a visual and conceptual connect with each other. **Sahil Naik**, working with ideas of architecture and experimentation with scale, presents a series of works on paper that in turn closely influence his sculptural practice centering around built architecture by using it as witness and consistently experimenting with scale and reality. Reflecting architectural practices and material application, artist and architect **Bijoy Jain** shows a series of works across both spaces that seem at first sight like 2-dimensional structures and links between natural material and weaving but also becomes positions of form and shape.

Exceeding beyond traditional notions of the static, contemporary dancer and performer, **Padmini Chettur** deconstructs a particular performative work *Beautiful Thing 1*, with video, lighting design, sound compositions and notes, which show a deep relationship between the planning, preparation, and presentation in performative practice. Revivalist and textile designer, **Rahul Jain** goes back to traditions of velvet weaving through looms he has set up in Varanasi and will show rare traditional woven materials, drawings for textile weaving, and photographs that bring together a very precise drawing practice and a tactile material form. In another part of the gallery, image maker and photographer, **Srinath Iswaran** presents photographs using light as a medium of drawings and allowing both positive and negative light in stark proximity with each other, exposing a relationship between the visible and invisible. Thinker, philosopher, vocalist, and social commentator **T.M. Krishna**, has used his thoughts on challenging traditional ways of performing Indian Classical Carnatic music by introducing new ways of performing arts. His conversations and lecture demonstrations are as important as his performances, showing a conversational link between thought and practice. Though the development of inherently static haphazard notations, disorder, and initial ideas seem to animate much of the work on view in this exhibition, a coherent image is what ultimately emerges.

*Drawn from Practice*, takes the conceptual arc of drawing as a wide and impactful tool of thinking, deliberating, experimenting, and activating ideas that go on to define how practices evolve. Recognizing that drawing is often the starting point of work, or the bridge between thought and action, or a segue between conversation and advancement, the exhibition attempts to break away from generational boundaries and traditional disciplines by holding the idea of drawing at its kernel.

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