

## PRESS RELEASE

*Waiting for the Wind*  
March 7 – April 26 2014

Shilpa Gupta  
Iman Issa  
Naeem Mohaiemen  
Tushar Joag  
Raqs Media Collective  
Walid Raad

Experimenter presents *Waiting for the Wind* showing work by Shilpa Gupta, Iman Issa, Naeem Mohaiemen, Tushar Joag, Raqs Media Collective & Walid Raad opening on Friday, 7 March 2014. The exhibition will be on view until April 26 2014.

*Waiting for the Wind* takes The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) that has been in effect for now over 50 years, starting with the states of Assam and Manipur in 1958 and then to all of the 7 strife-ridden North Eastern states in India as a point of entry into the exhibition. The Act has come under immense criticism from human rights activists from all over the world through the years, but it continues to be exercised, under which circumstances children sing songs, lovers make eternal promises and friends dream of a brighter future. But people in these states continue to wait for the winds to change.

At a time when India takes pride in calling herself the largest democracy in the world and simultaneously sweeps under the carpet inhuman atrocities that are being committed on a daily basis at these frontiers of incumbency in the name of national security, the duality of its hypocritical policies is ever more compelling to comprehend. Individuals such as Irom Sharmila emerge as beacons of hope amidst continued despair – a wind-maker of sorts. Warlike situations prevail all around the world in several pockets of disturbances and in each of these geographies, arise situations that are personal, inspiring and more often than not, even disturbing, all of which gets ingrained into the memory of a population who live and thrive there. These memories become the scaffolding on which a future is built and the past is remembered. And with time, the ability to recall the memories reduces but the need to remember them becomes important. In due course, some cavities are formed, some memories are forgotten and a few alternate realities are birthed, where truths are blurred and memories merge with aspirations. *Waiting for the Wind* attempts to be references to those memories, insertions between slippages and signposts for a possible future.

**Shilpa Gupta's** (b. 1976) *National Highway No 1 – 6 Mins 28 Secs en route Srinagar to a picnic in Gulmarg, Kashmir*, is a simple video shot from a moving car, the picturesque landscape punctuated with armed military guards bringing forth a sense of unease and strange uncertainty.

Egyptian born, New York based artist **Iman Issa's** (b. 1979) single channel video, *Proposal for an Iraq War Memorial* was made for the *Memorial to the Iraq War* exhibition in 2007 at the ICA in London. In responding to the curatorial premise, Issa articulates the shape that a memorial to the war might take at that particular moment. Issa's video memorial features a female subject with no direct connection or relationship to the war articulating her thoughts and feelings about the war and the general landscape of Iraq while also responding to a series of found images and footage.

**Naeem Mohaiemen** (b.1970) presents *Otondro Prohori, (Gaurding Who)* a project realized on the streets of Dhaka when skirmishes broke out between the military and students in the University campus, leading to widespread violence and revolt across the country in 2007. Delicately revisited

through an installation of old projector slides, photographs and text, Mohaiemen contemplates those moments in 2007 when Bangladesh was under military rule and the pressures of being in such conditions. **Tushar Joag** (b. 1966) creates an assemblage consisting of a wind gauge (often used in military airports) and other objects in an attempt to capture changing winds but also to ruminate the Indian Air Force strikes on Mizoram, India during March 1966 to quell the revolt of the Mizoram National Front, and in effect bombing its own people. The month of March has a special significance for Mizos and Joag will enable the staging of certain activities and readings by local Mizo groups within the gallery space through the dates of the exhibition.

**Raqs Media Collective's** *A fortunate spell of pleasant amnesia*, is an image of a single broken gun, hanging from an electrical wire against a tranquil blue sky. The gun which is an INSAS 5.56mm LMG/Assault Rifle, the official and standard issue ordinance for almost all Indian military and paramilitary personnel is well recognized wherever the AFSPA is in operation, but its ineffectiveness is brought forth through the image.

Lebanese born, and New York based, **Walid Raad** (b. 1967) presents *Hostage: The Bachar Polaroids* a series of hostage images that were created as part of a project with Souheli Bachar, a Lebanese national who was kidnapped in Beirut in 1983 and held hostage for ten years. Upon his release Bachar created a series of videos with Raad and his fictional Atlas Group. Bachar was the only Lebanese national who was held captive with American men who were kidnapped in Lebanon in the 1980's.

*Waiting for the Wind* is a contemplation on freedom, on hope and on dreams. The exhibition brings together work of artists who have deeply engaged with understanding the casualties of strife, the lines of borders, and the wings of freedom within their practice. The exhibition may be viewed as a point of entry to comprehend a possible future or as a punctuation to stop for a moment and breathe the air instead of waiting for the wind.

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