

WHERE THE CIRCLES INTERSECT

COMMON GROUND #3 WHERE THE CIRCLES INTERSECT

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KLEINE
HUMBOLDT
GALERIE

Contemporary Art at Lichthof Ost (atrium),
main building of Humboldt University of Berlin,
Unter den Linden 6, 10117 Berlin

Opening hours: Wed - Sat, 12 - 6pm
Exhibition dates: 20 June - 18 July 2017

20 June, 7pm

Opening

24 June, 6 - 8pm

Guided tours by artists and curators during Long Night of the Sciences

26 June, 2 - 4pm

Artist talk as part of the seminar "Transregional Gender and Media Studies" of the Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften

04 July, 6 - 8 pm

Panel discussion with Monica Juneja, Eva Ehninger and Jamila Adeli

18 July, 7pm

Exhibition closing

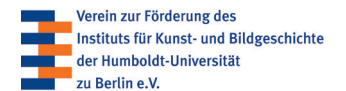
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Curatorial team: Marie-Sophie Dorsch, Johanna Heyne,
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COMMON GROUND #3

WHERE THE CIRCLES INTERSECT

Kleine Humboldt Galerie is proud to present COMMON GROUND #3 – Where the Circles Intersect. The exhibition brings together the works of six artists who call different places on the Indian subcontinent their home – or one of many homes. It thereby explores the concept of “common ground” as a space of shared knowledge and basis for common understanding. The focus is on the familiar: in their works, the artists deal with the universal topic of “home” and play with memories of everyday situations and familiar objects from domestic life. The artists investigate constructions of privacy, home and how the medium of script may create a sense of community.

COMMON GROUND #3 is the final part of a three-part series that started in Bangalore and Bombay in 2015. The preceding two chapters generated a first exchange by bringing together artists from the two cities and by showing their works from Bangalore in Bombay and from Bombay in Bangalore. The third part of the series now culminates in Berlin where the “common ground” will further expand: geometrically speaking, the exhibition is searching for the intersection not only between the two artist circles, but also between them and the Berlin art circle.

The question of „common ground“ means the discursive act – according to Foucault that which can be said and thought in a specific context – and the negotiation of a common knowledge space. The knowledge space that comes into being inside Kleine Humboldt Galerie brings together Humboldt University’s institute of South Asian Studies and the institute of Art History and Visual Studies, to approach the phenomenon of the spatial turn. The advent of the digital era, with its worldwide networks, has called for a rethinking of the spatial context of artworks and their presentation. How can contemporary art be described outside the construction of national art histories, and the dichotomy of centre and periphery? How can new relationships between the local and

the global be understood in times of migrating artworks and artists? How can one look at art from a translocal perspective? These questions will be raised and examined in the exhibition and in the comprehensive accompanying programme.

Kleine Humboldt Galerie defines itself as a student-run initiative whose members study at different universities of Berlin. The curatorial practice represents a practically oriented expansion of the art historical curriculum. As a platform for curatorial experimentation, Kleine Humboldt Galerie aims for operating across institutes and universities. It wants to create networks and processes of exchange through its exhibitions that can be enriching for the discipline of art history and its neighbouring disciplines.

Special thanks to Dr. Angelika Keune, Dagmar Oehler, Dr. Steffen Hofmann and Ines Bartsch-Huth.

The exhibition has been made possible by the generous support of Humboldt-Universitäts-Gesellschaft, Seminar für Südasiastudien, Verein zur Förderung des Instituts für Kunst- und Bildgeschichte der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin e.V., Kultur-, Sozial- und Bildungswissenschaftliche Fakultät, StudierendenWERK BERLIN, Auswärtiges Amt, Stiftung Brandenburger Tor, GLS Treuhand e.V., as well as everyone who participated in our crowd funding.

COMMON GROUND #3

WHERE THE CIRCLES INTERSECT

COMMON GROUND #2

ON SPACES AND THE IN BETWEEN

12 - 30 November 2015, Clark House Initiative Bombay
with works by Nihaal Faizal, Ragini Bhow and Tara Kelton

The second part of the series COMMON GROUND was an intervention inside Yogesh Barve's solo show „Explaining could be exploiting“ in Clark House Initiative in Bombay. On the basis of generosity and exchange, Barve provided space to show works by Ragini Bhow, Nihaal Faizal and Tara Kelton in between or instead of his works. Thereby new connections and intersections emerged which addressed the topics of spatiality and the in between. In Berlin, these topics are now elaborated further.

Nihaal Faizal showed two video works on TVs that previously showed Barve's works. „Best of Donald – Collection 1“ (2013) was a reflection of the idea of interstices as a prolific element of narration: Faizal digitized and cut out all living characters of a Disney videotape, so that the moving objects in the room became the new protagonists. „Performance for Surveillance“ (2014) showed a performance in which the artist plays a kind of hide and seek game with the CCTV camera in front of the movie theatre Rex Cinema, a landmark in the city in Bangalore – a space between reality and fantasy. For her installation „disc“ (2015), Ragini Bhow created a neon light emerging from a black acrylic circle, reminding of a combination of a solar eclipse and new moon. At the same time, the mystically shimmering black surface could be correlated to black holes in galaxies that bring our imagination of space to its limits. Her work „bird nest“ (2014) however was a very worldly collaboration with a bird that started to construct a nest in front of her window. Not crossing the flight zone, the artist tried to understand how she could participate in the nest making process by proposing to



the bird different material that she had found across the city of Bangalore. Tara Kelton's works question our visual understanding after the digital turn. Her „Cell phone rubbings“ (2015) shown in Bombay evoked a time before this revolution: using the method of frottage, she produced indexical traces of analogue mobile telephones that became a nostalgic archive of a time before skeuomorphs replaced buttons. Her series „Unsharp mask“ (2015) involved a collaboration between desktop publishing workers in photo studios that are specialized in photo editing – normally to “embellish” photos. Kelton gave them some of Gerhard Richter's blur portraits to “correct” the unsharpness. While Richter was moving away from the trace of the artistic craftsmanship, Kelton is especially interested in the craftsmanship of the digital workers.

COMMON GROUND #2

ON SPACES AND THE IN BETWEEN



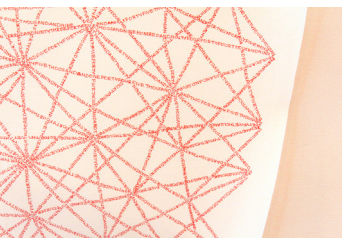
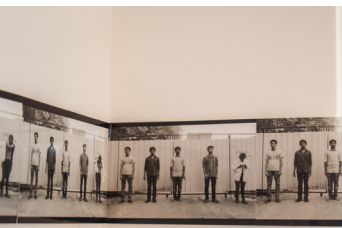
COMMON GROUND #1

ON CIRCLES AND REVOLUTIONS

05 - 10 November 2015, G.159 Bangalore
with works by Yogesh Barve, Amol Patil and Poonam Jain

The first part of the exhibition series COMMON GROUND started in G.159, an alternative art space in Bangalore that the artist Nihaal Faizal started in 2013 in his shared student apartment. For the first time, works by the Bombay based artist collective Shunya were shown in Bangalore. The idea of exchange manifested in different artistic positions through the form of the circle and the revolution.

Amol Patil's collaborative performance "Khus-bus" (2015), which is titled as the Marathi equivalent for the game 'whisper down the lane', explored the social process of exchange economies in the context of global migration: what happens when we exchange ideas, when objects travel from one person to the other, and get recycled or turned inside out? Poonam Jain's delicate but wall-filling drawing "Celestial Economy" (2015) of infinite numbers written as words constructed a circular network of uncountable connections that speak about the human attempt of measuring and numbering in order to understand the world around us. These drawings evolved out of her thoughts on *revolutio* – a word that had originally been astronomical (from the Latin word *revolitio* meaning "a turn around") and then turned into a political term in the 18th century, *révolution*. Yogesh Barve's spinning video works "Simulation" (2012) explored our ways of seeing in the context of a post-industrial acceleration of time and speed: by placing his mobile phone on a potter's wheel and manually spinning the static digital image of a fan or the view outside his studio space, he challenges our perception to a point where speed becomes at the same time violence and pleasure – what the French cultural theorist Paul Virilio called the "dromocratic revolution".



YOGESH BARVE

**is fake is real is fake is real is ...
is left is right is left is right is ...
is east is west is east is west is ...
sticker on glass, 2017**

Yogesh Barve (born 1989 in Bombay) lives and works in Bombay. He studied at Rachna Sansad Academy of Fine Arts and Crafts in Bombay and since 2012 he is part of the artist collective „Shunya“ working in the project space Clark House Initiative in Bombay. Parallel to his engagement with the space in Bombay, he has been part of exhibitions worldwide. In 2015 and 2016 he was selected for a residency project in Paris (Google Cultural Institute) and Hong Kong (Things that can Happen).

<http://clarkhouseinitiative.org>

Characteristic for Yogesh Barve's work is his intensive study of language, script and other forms of communication. He often combines found objects and digital media to thereby deal with the differences that underlie the human perception. The digitally distorted writing welcomes the visitors on the big glass windows of Kleine Humboldt Galerie and plays with their spatial perception, perspective and – once decoded – with a philosophic principle of logic. Here, $A = B$ instead of $A = A$. The principle of identity attributed to German philosopher Leibnitz that describes the indiscernibility of identicals is changed to the opposite by calling two allegedly oppositions as identical. The work brings the stylistic device of repetition to its extreme, questioning the construction of dualisms like “reality” and “fiction”. For him, the global problem of serious housing shortage for the disadvantaged sections of society at one side and the rising gentrification at the other side are signs of the utopia that “home” has become in times of globalized capitalism: The word utopia comes from Greek *ou* (“not”) and *topos* (“place”) and therefore means “no-place”, or nowhere.



RAGINI BHOW

Palm Meadows
multi-part Installation, 2017

The artist (born 1991, Minnesota) studied art and biology at University of Minnesota. After her return to Bangalore, she has had solo shows in G.159 and 1Shanthiroad. Apart from that, she was part of several group shows (e.g. in Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke in Bombay) and residency projects in India (The Story of Light in Goa, Khoj - International Artists' Association in Delhi, 1Shanthiroad in Bangalore and in the US (The Soap Factory in Minneapolis). Parallel to „COMMON GROUND #3“, her work is also shown in a group show in Munich opening on June 28 called „Double Road“, curated by six German artists who had come to Bangalore on a Residency programme of Goethe Institute. Ragini Bhow lives and works in Bangalore.

<http://cargocollective.com/ragini>

Ragini Bhow's work explores the human-nature relations in the digital age. For that, she merges highly artificial material like mirror, acrylic sheets or neon lights and natural materials like wood, plant seeds or bird's feathers. The resulting minimalistic and delicate installations are often accompanied by performances, photo or video works. "Palm Meadows" incorporates video stills and an acrylic sculpture, investigating the cultivated sceneries of nature within one of the first gated communities in Bangalore which also gives the work its title. The artist spent a considerable part of her youth in this surrounding. Entering this luxurious housing complex feels like being transposed to an US-American suburb. As a contrast to this high gloss surface, Bhow deliberately uses an amateur handy-cam with its low res aesthetic. The cracks and ironies of this utopia of enclosed living thereby become visible. By now this form of living in gated communities has made its way to the German capital as well: "Prenzlauer Gärten" was built in Friedrichshain, "Townhouse Quartier" at Friedrichswerder, and in 2013 the so called "Urban Village Marthashof" opened in Schwedter Straße. Local protest groups demonstrated under the slogan "anti-social plastic", but without success.



NIHAAL FAIZAL

Hotel ABAD
short film, 12:47 min, 2016

Nihaal Faizal (born 1994 in Kochi) lives and works in Bangalore. He recently graduated from the Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore. As a student he initiated the project space G.159 in his apartment, where the first chapter of the „Common Ground“ series was shown in 2015. In 2014 and 2016, he curated exhibitions around the topic of home in the context of the Kochi Muziris Biennale („Ummijaan: Making Visible a World Within“ and „3BHK“). Parallel to „COMMON GROUND #3“, his work is also shown in a group show in Munich opening on June 28 called „Double Road“, curated by six German artists who had come to Bangalore on a Residency programme of Goethe Institute.

<http://nihaalfaizal.com/>

In his works, Nihaal Faizal uses found material from a variety of sources including VHS tapes, stock videos, popular films, surveillance cameras as well as family albums. By re-arranging the material and intervening upon it, he creates new narratives. His short film “Hotel ABAD” analyzes the connections between his personal biography and the hotel business of his mother’s family. The space of the hotel thereby becomes a space between private and public. Interview passages taken from conversations with different family members form the background to the slideshow of carefully composed photos taken from his family albums and the CCTV cameras at the hotel. His younger cousin speaks of aspiration, his mother talks about exclusion and his grandfather stresses the importance of family. The film thereby creates a narrative that describes the hotel as the home of the artist and his young cousin that nevertheless remains their uncles’ and granduncles’ property – the result of a family business run across many generations. Starting out from the local family history, the film addresses the global topic of entanglements between religion, gender and law.



OLIVER HUSAIN

Moth Maze
video, 6 min, 2012

camera IRIS NG

set design BOJANA STANCIC

production assistance SAIF AZMI,

MATT SMITH

Kerala crew/ camera and produktion

AMITH SURENDRAN

Oliver Husain (born 1969, Frankfurt) studied at the University of Baroda (India) and at the Hochschule für Gestaltung, Offenbach (Germany). Since 2006 he lives and works in Toronto. His work has been shown in various group and solo exhibitions, as well as in several film festivals (Toronto International Film Festival, London Film Festival, Experimenta India, Film Festival Rotterdam i.a.). In 2003 his video "Q" was bestowed with the German Short Film Award. His film "Item Number" won the category of best German film at the International Short Film Festival in Oberhausen. This year's Berlinale film festival showed his video installation "Isla Santa Maria 3D" at the Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg.
<http://husain.de>

Oliver Husain's works evolve from an interdisciplinary approach and include performative pieces, conceptual theatre, experimental films and videos, 3D animations as well as installations. The settings and images he creates play with documentary realities and fictional worlds, often through a combination of computer-generated choreographies and filmed realities.

In „Moth Maze“, he focuses on the construction of domesticity and the underlying differentiation of nature and culture: out of the perspective of a moth and using a time-lapse photography technique, the camera swirls around various standing lamps in a factory in Toronto. At nightfall these images are superimposed in a stroboscopic effect with images of a circling camera journey through the forest of the South Indian state Kerala, where hanging lamps seem to grow out of the trees. The visual overlap of localities within Husain's work equates to the translocality of artist biographies like his own. It makes aware of the absurdity of national attributions of art and artists in today's time of migration.



POONAM JAIN

Letter to Me: Shrine
plaster of Paris, glue, shelves
2017

Poonam Jain (born 1989, Bangalore) lives and works in Bombay. She studied at Rachna Sansad Academy of Fine Arts and Crafts in Bombay. Since 2012 she has been part of the artist collective "Shunya", which operates in the project space "Clark House Initiative" in Bombay and participates in exhibitions worldwide. She was part of numerous group exhibitions (most recently "Home as an Irrevocable Condition" at Sapar Contemporary, New York) and has had solo shows in Bombay (Asia Art Projects, Clark House Initiative), Hong Kong (C&G Artpartment), as well as in Dubai (1x1 Art Gallery).

<http://c.larkhouseinitiative.org>
<http://www.saparcontemporary.com/poonamjain/>
<http://www.1x1artgallery.com/artist/details/54>

In her delicate drawings, artists' books, and installations, Poonam Jain investigates the relationship between architecture, human interaction and space. Her installation "Letter to Me" engages with the medium language and its textuality in a spatial way: small, white sculptures in the form of objects like watches, apples or hangers are placed on black shelves around a pillar, forming a coded text. By walking in circles around the installation the viewers recognize a certain logic and order in the daily life objects which reminds of children's riddles: The shelves become lines on a book page and the objects transform into letters of a secret poem. The circumambulation around an architectural element reminds of rituals of different religions. Mostly it is the "House of God" that people pass around – be it a ritual circumambulation of a Buddhist stupa, of a shrine inside a Hindu or Jain temple or the seven-times-repeated circumambulation around the Kabaa in Mecca, the tawaf. The content of Jain's poem is of worldly nature though: it is about propagating a certain desirable life style that goes hand in hand with consumption and rising living expenses. The mall turns into a new temple and the home into a place where economic wealth is displayed in form of objects.



TARA KELTON

Still Life with a Curtain
Digital print series, 2015

Tara Kelton (born 1981, Arlington, Texas) studied at Parsons School of Design in New York and at Yale University School of Art. She lives and works in Bangalore where she has had several solo exhibitions, as well as in London, Bombay and Delhi. In 2013 she founded the T-A-J Residency Project in Bangalore, in which Oliver Husain also took part amid many others. Among various international group exhibitions, her work was shown at the Kochi Muziris Biennale (2014) and at the "New Sensorium" show at the ZKM in Karlsruhe (2016).

<http://cargocollective.com/tarakelton>

Tara Kelton's works deal with the changing ways of human perception after the digital turn, as well as with our relationship to virtual spaces. For her series "Still Life with a Curtain", she worked with two sets of workers: first, she hired anonymous digital workers through Amazon's crowdsourcing service called "mechanical Turk". They were told to produce written descriptions of the same European impressionist still life painting. The second set of workers, from 3D rendering studios in Bangalore, were given these different descriptions with the task to digitally produce visual interpretations of this domestic scene. The result of this translation process from image to text, and from text back to image seems to be liberated from geographical and historical context. Constructions of home from different times and places come together in a new, digital condensation. Similar to the genre of the interior painting, the classical still life is a highly composed scene and only supposedly offers a view into the private. This illusion of a domestic and private setting is not suggested in Kelton's digital still lifes, where one artificial orange resembles the other and the space doesn't try to create any context through illusionary depth. However, behind this artificial no-space and sleek surface lies a history of exchange and imagination.

