

GUGGENHEIM

NEWS RELEASE

Guggenheim Exhibition Presents New Works in Film, Video, and Sound by Seven Artists Based in South Asia

Exhibition: The Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim: *Being Singular Plural*
Venue: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York
Location: Annex Levels 2, 5, and 7; New Media Theater; Fifth Avenue
Dates: March 2–June 6, 2012

(NEW YORK, NY – January 23, 2012) -- The Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim: *Being Singular Plural*, the first exhibition of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum to focus exclusively on artistic production in South Asia, presents new film, video, and sound-based works by seven of the most innovative and visionary contemporary artists, filmmakers, and media practitioners living and working in India today. This exhibition marks the first time that these artists will be showing work in a North American museum and is assembled as part of the Guggenheim's global Asian Art Program. *Being Singular Plural* is organized by Sandhini Poddar, Associate Curator, Asian Art, at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and will be on view March 2 through June 6, 2012.

This exhibition is made possible by Deutsche Bank.

The Leadership Committee for *Being Singular Plural* is gratefully acknowledged.

Expanding on its original 2010 Deutsche Guggenheim presentation, the exhibition presents eight projects dispersed among the museum's Annex galleries, New Media Theater, and outdoors along the exterior ramp leading from Fifth Avenue down to the Sackler Center for Arts Education. The New York installation continues to focus on researching and co-producing new work with its community of practitioners: Desire Machine Collective (Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukailya), Shumona Goel and Shai Heredia, Amar Kanwar, and Kabir Mohanty and Vikram Joglekar.

According to Ms. Poddar, "This group of artists and filmmakers all draw inspiration from their experiences in South Asia, but a closer reading of their work reveals a transnational context that highlights some of the most significant political events, aesthetic forms, and critical theories defining contemporary culture today. While recent exhibitions of contemporary art from India have celebrated finished works as end products and often contextualized them in light of the country's economic boom

and strong art market, the works in *Being Singular Plural* assert the quieter principles of practice, process, and perception.”

Philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy’s notion of “being singular plural” provides the exhibition’s structural framework and intellectual scaffolding. Created with a profound recognition of the interconnectedness of all beings, the selected films, videos, and sound installations invite visitors to reassess conventional boundaries between such categories as fact and fiction, art and cinema, the still and moving image, and objectivity and subjectivity. By manipulating sound, image, and text in experimental ways, the artists in *Being Singular Plural* explore the social possibilities within the technology of these mediums. The works posit new modes of phenomenological and physiological address for the viewer, shifting these positions from passive spectatorship to active participation.

Desire Machine Collective (Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya), whose name derives from the philosophical writing of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, seeks to redirect attention toward careful looking, watching, and listening. Jain and Madhukaillya have been working collaboratively since 2004 to examine the roles that moving images play in recording social histories and investigating the limits of these roles. In 2007 they established *Periferry 1.0*, an ongoing migratory artists’ project using a government-leased ferry docked on the Brahmaputra River in the heart of Guwahati, the duo’s hometown, in northeast India. At the Guggenheim, the collective will install a site-specific interactive sound piece, *Trespassers Will (Not) Be Prosecuted* (2012), as a round-the-clock public artwork outside the museum inspired by sounds collected in a sacred forest. The exhibition will also include two new moving-image projects by Desire Machine Collective in the Annex galleries: *Residue* (2011), a 35 mm work filmed in an abandoned power plant on the outskirts of Guwahati, and *Nishan* (2007–), a meditative four-channel video installation shot in the city of Srinagar in Kashmir, the contested state that lies on the political fault line between India and Pakistan.

Shumona Goel’s films investigate the stories of people who often go unheard or events that go unwitnessed. For *Being Singular Plural*, she and co-director Shai Heredia present *I am micro* (2011), a 35 mm black-and-white film that celebrates small-scale independent filmmaking and collaboration while conveying their fragility. The images in the film are culled from two different sources—a film shoot around National Instruments Limited (NIL), a now defunct Kolkata-based company that was once involved in the design, manufacture, and development of opto-mechanical and opto-electronic instruments, and behind-the-scenes footage from the set of filmmaker Ashim Ahluwalia’s latest fiction film, *Miss Lovely* (2012). The film includes a voiceover by director and screenwriter Kamal Swaroop, whose debut film *Om Dar-B-Dar* (1988) initially reached wide acclaim but quickly fell into obscurity.

Amar Kanwar’s complex films and videos are fragmented narratives of violence, displacement, and resistance told through lyrical images and texts that elicit a compassionate response. Kanwar’s nineteen-channel video installation *The Torn First Pages* (2004–08) indirectly portrays (among other stories) the unbelievable horrors perpetrated by the Burmese junta on its people as well as the lives of Burmese exiles in Norway and the United States. The videos, projected onto several sheets of paper attached to steel armatures, envelop viewers in multiple spatial, emotional, and temporal zones. Kanwar is deeply interested in conflating genres in order to open up new relations and destroy any solitary system of address by adopting multiple venues for display and methodologies for seeing. His films and videos are both acts of political resistance as well as sensitive commemorations of other people’s lives. His

Guggenheim presentation will include a reading area where visitors can digitally access a “living archive” of ongoing news footage from Burma gathered since the inception of the *Being Singular Plural* project in 2009.

Kabir Mohanty also encourages alternative types of visual and auditory experience. Some of his videos are conceived for monitors that fit in the palm of one’s hand while others test the durational limits of attention. For *Being Singular Plural*, Mohanty designs a diagrammatic space in the museum’s galleries that will be used to screen his epic video *Song for an ancient land* (2003–12). Combining new and archival footage with complex sound design, the artist pans, inverts, curves, and otherwise deconstructs the material bases of his images in order to reveal the artifice of his construction and the physicality of video as a medium. Mohanty’s approach stems from a filmmaker’s sensibility but moves beyond this traditional framework to develop an innovative vision for video. Together with sound engineer and designer Vikram Joglekar, Mohanty will also present an interactive sound installation titled *In Memory* (2009/2012), which mixes prerecorded tracks with sound effects generated by museum visitors as they enter a Foley pit as well as exterior noises transmitted live from 89th Street just outside the museum.

Catalogue

The New York presentation of *Being Singular Plural* will feature a revised and updated catalogue, which includes cross-disciplinary essays by Erika Balsom, Kaushik Bhaumik, Martta Heikkilä, and exhibition curator Sandhini Poddar, who are international specialists in cinema studies, history, aesthetics, and art history, respectively. An extended plate section provides multiple images from the video- and filmmakers’ works, a majority of which have been published for the first time. Artists’ biographies and an annotated reading list offer references for further study. The catalogue is priced at \$45 and will be available at guggenheimstore.org.

Education and Public Programs

Being Singular Plural will be accompanied by a rich array of public programs, including film screenings, workshops, lectures, and panel discussions with each of the artists in the exhibition.

Screenings

I am micro

Daily, Mar 2–Jun 6

As part of *Being Singular Plural*, Shumona Goel and Shai Heredia’s 35 mm film *I am micro* (2011; 15 min., 46 sec.) is screened in the New Media Theater, Mon–Wed at 11 am, 12 pm, 2 pm, 3 pm, 4 pm, and 5 pm and Fri–Sun at 3 pm, 4 pm, and 5 pm. Free with museum admission.

Song for an ancient land

Daily, Mar 2–Jun 6

As part of *Being Singular Plural*, Kabir Mohanty’s digital video *Song for an ancient land* (2003–12; approx. 220 min.) is screened in Annex Level 7, Mon–Wed, Fri, and Sun at 11:30 am and Sat at 11:30 am and 3:30 pm. Free with museum admission.

Eye to Eye: Artist-Led Tours

In Memory

Fri, Mar 2, 2–4 pm

An interactive tour of Kabir Mohanty and Vikram Joglekar's sound installation *In Memory* (2009/2012), with their artistic collaborators Biju Dhanapalan, Clifton D'Souza, and Aziz Kachwala. Reception follows. \$20, \$15 members (limited to 25 participants per tour). For tickets, visit guggenheim.org/publicprograms or call the Box Office at 212 423 3587.

Symposium

Lines of Control

Sat, Mar 3, 4–6 pm, and Sun, Mar 4, 9 am–5pm

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

This two-day academic symposium held in collaboration with the Department of Art History at Cornell University and in conjunction with the exhibition *Lines of Control: Partition as a Productive Space* at the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art focuses on the formative and ongoing dilemmas of the nation-state in the modern and contemporary eras. Speakers include Salah Hassan (Cornell University), Amar Kanwar, Aamir Mufti (University of California at Los Angeles), Sandhini Poddar, and Bhaskar Sarkar (University of California at Santa Barbara), among other notable scholars and artists. For registration and more information, visit museum.cornell.edu/news/lines-of-control-symposium-march-3-4.html

The Elaine Turner Cooper Education Fund: Conversation with Contemporary Artists

Tues, Mar 6, 6:30 pm

Amar Kanwar, whose work *The Torn First Pages* (2004–08) from the Guggenheim Museum's collection is on view in the exhibition, leads a conversation. Reception follows. \$10, \$7 members, free for students with RSVP. For tickets, visit guggenheim.org/publicprograms or call the Box Office at 212 423 3587.

Q&A with *I am micro* filmmakers

Wed, Mar 7, 12:20 pm

Following the 12 pm screening, filmmakers Shumona Goel and Shai Heredia answer questions from the audience. Free with museum admission.

Public Studio with Desire Machine Collective

In residence: Mar 2–24

Public program: Tues, Mar 20, 6:30 pm

A three-week residency with Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya involving the development of new work culminates in a public program dedicated to conversations on technology, ecology, and artistic collaboration involving the artists' moving-image work, open studios, and ongoing dialogue on the philosophic condition. For tickets, visit guggenheim.org/publicprograms or call the Box Office at 212 423 3587

The Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim

Being Singular Plural is the fourth exhibition in the Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim, which is dedicated to exhibiting works of art commissioned jointly by Deutsche Bank and the Guggenheim Foundation as well as other thematic exhibitions at the Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.

In 1997 the Guggenheim Foundation and Deutsche Bank opened the Deutsche Guggenheim and launched a unique and ambitious program of contemporary-art commissions. This collaboration has

enabled the Guggenheim Foundation to act as a catalyst for artistic production. The Deutsche Guggenheim was conceived as a partnership and consists of three main objectives: the presentation of thematic exhibitions that recognize artists who have contributed significantly to the development of art; the presentation of works from the Deutsche Bank Collection; and the commissioning of site-specific works by both emerging and established artists.

About the Asian Art Program

In 2006, the Guggenheim Museum became the first international modern and contemporary art museum in the West to establish a curatorial position for Asian art. *Being Singular Plural* represents the fifth exhibition in New York to be realized under the curatorial direction of the Asian Art Program, following the award-winning *Cai Guo-Qiang: I Want to Believe* (2008), *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860–1989* (2009), The Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim: *Anish Kapoor: Memory* (2009), and *Lee Ufan: Marking Infinity* (2011). Central to the museum's Asian-art activities is the Asian Art Council, a group of museum directors, scholars, curators, and artists formed in 2007 that serves as a curatorial think tank, mapping the intellectual course of modern and contemporary Asian art and debating key issues pertinent to its curatorial practice.

About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

Founded in 1937, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of art, primarily of the modern and contemporary periods, through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. Currently the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation owns and operates the Guggenheim Museum on Fifth Avenue in New York and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection on the Grand Canal in Venice, and provides programming and management for the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao. The Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin is the result of a collaboration, begun in 1997, between the Guggenheim Foundation and Deutsche Bank. The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a museum of modern and contemporary art designed by Frank Gehry on Saadiyat Island, adjacent to the main island of Abu Dhabi city, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, is currently in progress. More information about the foundation can be found at guggenheim.org.

VISITOR INFORMATION

Admission: Adults \$18, students/seniors (65+) \$15, members and children under 12 free. Admission includes an audio tour of *Being Singular Plural* and of the concurrent exhibition *John Chamberlain: Choices* in English and an audio tour with highlights of the Guggenheim's permanent collection and of the building, available in English, Spanish, French, German, and Italian.

Museum Hours: Sun–Wed, 10 am–5:45 pm; Fri, 10 am–5:45 pm; Sat, 10 am–7:45 pm; closed Thurs. On Saturdays, beginning at 5:45 pm, the museum hosts Pay What You Wish. For general information, call 212 423 3500 or visit the museum online at:

guggenheim.org
twitter.com/guggenheim
facebook.com/guggenheimmuseum
youtube.com/guggenheim

flickr.com/guggenheim_museum
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For publicity images go to guggenheim.org/pressimages
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Password: presspass

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FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT

Lauren Van Natten, Associate Director, Media and Public Relations
Samantha Weiss, Media and Public Relations Associate
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
212 423 3840
pressoffice@guggenheim.org

PRESS IMAGES

The Deutsche Bank Series at the Guggenheim: *Being Singular Plural*

March 2–June 6, 2012

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

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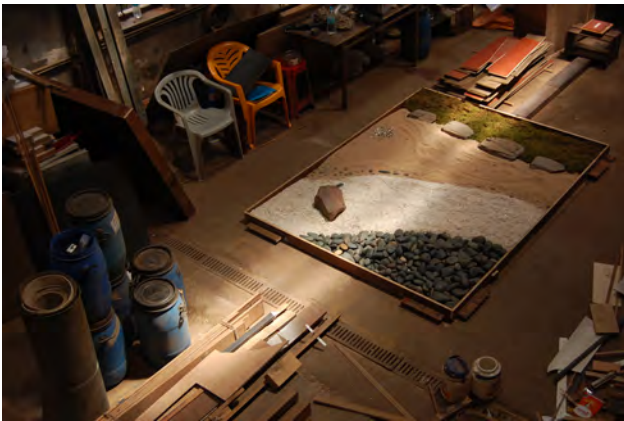
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E-mail pressoffice@guggenheim.org with any questions.



Kabir Mohanty and Vikram Joglekar

In Memory, 2009/2012

Audio installation with wooden Foley pit, artificial grass, sand, grass, shells, peacock stones, stone chips, rocks, and pebbles

Dimensions vary with installation

Courtesy the artists

Installation view: Aziz Kachwala studio, Mumbai, 2011

Photo: Sruti Visweswaran

© Kabir Mohanty and Vikram Joglekar



Kabir Mohanty

Song for an ancient land, 2003–12

Digital color video, with sound

Part one, 2003–06: 51 min

Part two, 2003–10: 59 min

Part three, 2005–12: running time TBD

Epilogue, 2005–12: running time TBD

Courtesy the artist

© Kabir Mohanty



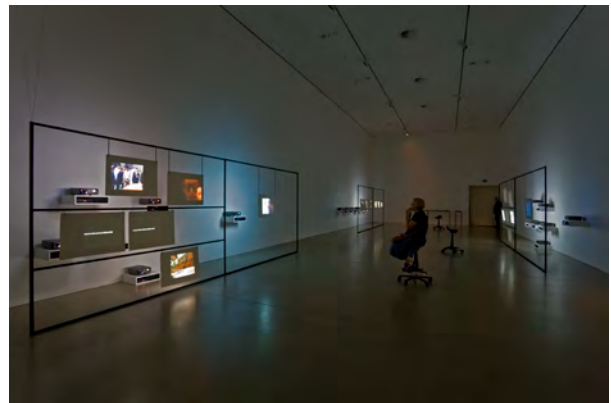
Desire Machine Collective (Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya)
Residue, 2011
 35mm film, with sound, 39 min., looped
 Courtesy the artists
 © Desire Machine Collective



Shumona Goel and Shai Heredia
I am micro, 2011
 35 mm black-and-white film, with sound, 14 min., 37 sec.
 Courtesy the artists
 © Shumona Goel and Shai Heredia



Desire Machine Collective (Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya)
Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted, 2008/2010
 Speakers, cables, sensors, and audio
 Dimensions vary with installation
 Courtesy the artists
 Installation view: *Being Singular Plural*, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, 2010
 Photo: Mathias Schormann
 © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation



Amar Kanwar
The Torn First Pages, 2004–08
 Nineteen-channel digital video (three parts, looped) installation, sixteen sheets of blank paper, three sheets of paper with text, three artist's books, and Burmese books and magazines, edition 2/6
 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York
 Purchased with funds contributed by the International Directors Council 2010.31
 Installation view: *Being Singular Plural*, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, 2010
 Photo: Mathias Schormann
 © Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation



Desire Machine Collective (Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukaillya)
Nishan, 2007-
Four-channel digital color video installation, with sound, running time
TBD, looped
Dimensions vary with installation
Courtesy the artists
© Desire Machine Collective



Amar Kanwar
The Face, 2005 (from *The Torn First Pages*, 2004–08)
Color video, with sound, 4 min., 40 sec., looped
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York/Paris
© Amar Kanwar