



Karkhana, 2022. Mineral Pigment on Cotton Canvas, 15.6x27.4in each

Tashi Lama's latest works connect to the series of paintings that he made for his graduation show in 2019 that paid homage to his mother's profession as a carpet weaver. Tashi focused on the individual tools that his mother used to make the carpets. In this exhibition, he tries to encompass the people like his mother who have dedicated their lives to this industry. Quietly working day after day, the carpets become interwoven with their stories and emotions. Through this show, he wishes to acknowledge and honour their spirit, sincerity and dedication.

He painstakingly draws a grid on his canvas to recreate the same process that is used in carpet design. Using mineral pigments, he delicately shades his work to create the wool like texture in his paintings. Thus the warp and weft of weaving, the tufting and the carding, the traditional motifs of the Tibetan carpets: dragon, flowers, clouds and the eight auspicious symbols continue to inform the artist's work. His diptych reveals two balls of wool individually placed on either side of the weighing scale. The balls of wool are worth their weight in gold. But what do the balls of wool signify? The labour of his parents? Or do the golden balls of wool represent the likelihood that the carpet industry has provided to the carpet factory workers, to the nation, to Tashi's own parents and to him.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A A K R I T

Exhibition of artworks by Aakrit Collective

ARTISTS' STATEMENT

Aakrit Collective

Aakrit : to become visible / to obtain form

Aakrit is a collective effort to observe and reflect on the stories around us. The show is a culmination of our attempts to understand our influences, connect through common experiences and narrate our perceptions. While each of us has explored different aspects of our lives, many common threads intersect in our works. We found ourselves thinking about our ancestral homes, family history, everyday surroundings, childhood and the way of life of the culture we grew up in. For some of us, the starting point was a visit to our ancestral village we no longer live in, for some a small family photograph that has become family heirloom, and for others it was the wish to appreciate the labor and craft in the profession adopted by one's family and culture. For others, it was the dilemma of one's changing city. While some of us tried to bridge these changes by connecting the nostalgia of one's past with aspirations for the future, others observed the present as a way to embrace the essence of the city. For us our individual mediums such as printmaking, drawing, traditional painting, and contemporary painting were languages in which to contemplate our questions and voice our observations. Our works are attempts to delve deeper into our questions, and narrate our experiences so that we may bring visibility to the larger stories that sustain us.

GALLERY STATEMENT

Sangeeta Thapa

Founder/Director - Siddhartha Art Gallery / Siddhartha Arts Foundation
Founder/Chair - Kathmandu Triennale

Aakrit is an exhibition by **Hitesh Vaidya, Jagdish Moktan, Nawina Sunwar, Pooja Duwal** and **Tashi Lama**. These five artists formed their collective **Aakrit Collective** at Bhaktapur in December, 2019.

Memory, home, family history, migration and nostalgia are the binding themes that weave this exhibition together.



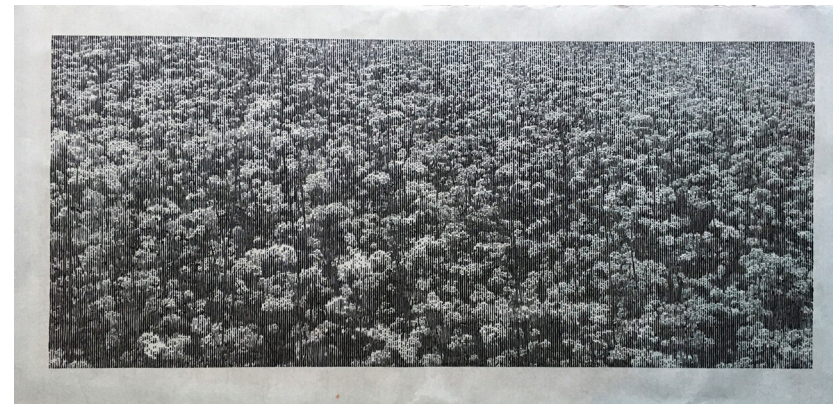
Narrating the city. Acrylic on Wooden Panel, 61x50cm

Hitesh Vaidya's latest works are made on thick agrath wooden planks that he has sourced from his neighbourhood in Bhaktapur, where he was born. The choice of surface - wooden planks, old doors and windows - connect to the traditional architecture of the space he grew up in. Hitesh's latest work marks a departure in his composition and the choice of palette which references traditional narrative paintings. The artist has studied the Patachitra painting archives ranging from physical works to online resources. Hitesh has also been inspired by more recent works by artists like Bhaktapur based senior artist, Surya Bahadur Chitrakar. In this exhibition he has created a new visual vocabulary that is rooted in tradition while being imbued with the power to narrate the plight of urban change and loss in landscape that is dear to the artist. At the same time, they also narrate the nuances of the unique way of life he experienced growing up here. In his six paintings, the artist documents the spaces that are fast undergoing transformation, "lifestyle change" and the new occupations or pre-occupations of the people. Hitesh's works also explore the idea of the city as the home of the artist and a place that continues to nurture the artist's inspiration and creativity.



Family photograph ii. 2022. Graphite on Linen, 36x54in

Jagdish Moktan has created a series of 3 portraits based on his family's photographic archive from his home in Ramechhap. The photographs of his Mother and Aunts have been damaged by time - moisture and humidity have played their role in creating the cracks and chipping of the photographs. Unfazed by the damage, Jagdish has painstakingly created portraits of his Mother and his Aunts using graphite pencil on canvas. What is interesting is that the artist has chosen not to work with restored images but instead has been cognizant of the impermanence of the image and of life itself. Thus, the image itself, in its time ravaged format, is a blessing as it has nurtured the artist's inspiration and given him the opportunity to pay homage to his family. The scale of these monumental works reveals Jagdish's mastery as an artist whose skill does not rest with just one medium.



Whispering memories iv. 2022. Relief print, 42x18in

Nabina Sunuwar is from Okhaldhunga and is primarily a printmaker. Her family migrated to Ramechaap and then to Kathmandu. However, the bucolic memories of the past that are rooted in the village, continue to make her nostalgic about memories of her family, the sights, sounds, open spaces and the earthy smell of the village. Her works are therefore a remembrance of things in the past that oscillate between visible, clear, blurred, and invisible. After Nabina journeyed to her village in Okhaldhunga she discovered that farms had been abandoned, that her ancestral home was occupied by a new tenant and that her beloved homescape had changed forever. Her initial experience had made her feel detached with the place that she felt home. This was to change after she spent some time talking with her grandparents. In order to pay homage to her grandmother she created a series of woodcut prints that portrayed hazy remembrances of her face, hands, hair, jewellery and details of her clothes.

In this show, she has focused on the fields, crops and the houses within the village landscape to contemplate her dilemma between familiarity and strangeness, presence and absence. In order to pay homage to her roots with her works, Nabina first manipulates the photographs of landscapes, houses and fields that are overlaid with narrow vertical lines that run across each work to create a semblance of an optical illusion. The artist then traces the work and arduously carves it on a wooden panel – the process is a laborious one. Nabina choses to work in black and white - her 10 prints on Nepali paper highlight the fact that life is as an optical illusion that confounds and traps us all in between the lines.



Glimpses of home. 2022. Oil on Linen, 14x12in

Pooja Duwal is a resident of Bhaktapur, the "city of devotees" where the traditional art and culture of the city permeates the very fabric of life itself. In her graduation show, she exhibited a series of small realistic paintings that were hung as a collage of banal urban places and functional objects from home and college. Her portrayal of the places and objects is coincidental, and she connects and embraces her subject with a zen like empathy. Pooja continues her work in this artistic vein and has created a new series of 31 paintings. The artist is cognizant of the rapid urban transformations that are happening around her and has chosen to paint places and objects as they are, as a final embrace, before the change occurs.