

Social Fabric

Exhibition

19 January – 10 March 2012

Press view

Wednesday 18 January 2012, 10am-12 noon, talk at 11am

Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) presents *Social Fabric* exhibition at Rivington Place, in which textiles are used to explore colonial history, international trade, labour and militant politics. In the 19th Century Karl Marx's account of the cotton industry tracked fifty years of boom and bust and the effects this had on workers in Britain and its colonies (and in particular India). *Social Fabric* cross references different accounts of textile history, focusing on works by two contemporary artists Sudhir Patwardhan and Alice Creischer, presented alongside extensive range of recent and historical archival material.

Alice Creischer's installation *Apparatus for the Osmotic Compensation of the Pressure of Wealth during the Contemplation of Poverty* tracks the threads that connect cycles of investment, disinvestment and decline. Inspired by a trip to India, the work looks at the economic and social impact of European colonialism and subsequent globalisation. The craze for Indian Chintz caused protest amongst Spitalfields weavers in 1719 and devastated whole sections of its textile industry. This led to Gandhi's choice of the spinning wheel as a symbol of decolonisation, and caused Nehru to comment that - '*the history of cotton and textiles is not only the history of growth of modern industry in India, but in a sense it might be considered the history of India.*'

Since the mid-1970s, Sudhir Patwardhan has depicted Mumbai and its urban proletariat. His painting *Lower Parel* (2001) shows 'Girangaon' (mill village) the place where the cotton mills that transformed the city's economy and led to the Indian industrial revolution were located. By the 1970s textiles employed one in three of the city's workers and sucked in migrants from surrounding regions. New social institutions evolved with forms of cultural expression including street theatre, poetry and music and it was a hub for trade union activity and left politics. This painting depicts the area after the mills closed down in the early 80s, superimposing different urban strata - the defunct factories, new small scale enterprises and high rise luxury apartments, invoking the workers' struggle to keep the mills going and resist gentrification.

These two complex works are examined through an extensive display of archival loans and artist interventions, including Company Paintings, Indian Chintz, original journals from Marx, films, photographs, newspaper articles and recordings of mill workers' testimonies. A curtain and two support structures, a table and wall unit, have been designed by Celine Condorelli to display the archival material.



Images left to right: Alice Creischer, *Apparatus for the Osmotic Compensation of the Pressure of Wealth during the Contemplation of Poverty* (details), 2008 © the artist; Sudhir Patwardhan, *Lower Parel* 2001 © the artist

There will also be an extended programme of talks and events running alongside, including a symposium on textiles; and workshops with activist and writer Meena Menon. *Social Fabric* is curated by Grant Watson, in collaboration with Christine Checinska, Nida Ghouse, Shanay Jhaveri, Nada Raza and Karen Roswell.

Social Fabric will tour to Londs Konsthall from 6 April until 27 May.

Editors' notes

Artists in the exhibition: Alice Creischer, Celine Condorelli, Archana Hande, Sudhir Patwardhan, Raqs Media Collective, and Andreas Siekmann

Alice Creischer biography

Born in Gerolstein (1960), she studied Philosophy, German literature and Visual Arts in Düsseldorf. A key figure of German political art movements in the 1990s, Alice Creischer has produced collective projects, publications and exhibitions. She is also co-curator of such exhibitions *Messe 2ok* (1995), *ExArgentina* (2004) and *The Potosi Principle* (2010).

Sudhir Patwardhan biography

Based in Thane, near Mumbai, he held his first solo exhibition at Art Heritage, New Delhi, in 1979. Sudhir Patwardhan has held solo exhibitions in Mumbai, Thane, New Delhi and Calcutta and participated in many group exhibitions including the *Festival of India* touring to George Pompidou Centre, Paris and to New York and London (1982-86), and *Aspects of Modern India Art*, Oxford (1982). His paintings are in many public and private collections.

Screening Programme: Ashim Ahluwalia, Anjali Monteiro, K.P. Jayasankar, The Otolith Group, Madhusree Dutta, Tushar Joag and Anand Patwardhan.

Research: Meena Menon, Jyotindra Jain, Prasad Shetty and Rupali Gupte

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Exhibition listings Information

Exhibition: Social Fabric

Dates: 19 January – 10 March 2012

Venue: Rivington Place, London, EC2A 3BA

Rivington Place public opening hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 11am – 6pm

Late Thursdays: 11am – 9pm (last admission 8.30pm)

Saturday: 12noon – 6pm

Admission: free

info@rivingtonplace.org

www.rivingtonplace.org

Tubes: Old Street/Liverpool Street/Shoreditch High St

Rivington Place is fully accessible, for parking & wheelchair facilities call +44 (0)20 7749 1240

About Iniva

Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) engages with new ideas and emerging debates in the contemporary visual arts, reflecting in particular the diversity of contemporary society. We work with artists, curators, creative producers, writers and the public to explore the vitality of visual culture. (www.iniva.org) Iniva is supported by Arts Council England.

About Rivington Place

Opened in 2007, Rivington Place is home to Iniva and Autograph ABP. Designed by architect David Adjaye OBE, this award winning building is dedicated to the display, debate and reflection of global diversity issues in the contemporary visual arts. An ongoing programme of exhibitions and events is presented in the 2 project spaces and Education Space. It is also home to the Stuart Hall Library. www.rivingtonplace.org

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