

# SONIA MEHRA CHAWLA

Visual Artist & Researcher

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## EDUCATION

2002-2004 MFA (Master of Fine Art), College of Art, Delhi University, New Delhi

1998-2001 BFA (Bachelor of Fine Art), College of Art, Delhi University, New Delhi

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2022

- **Evolutionary Potential**, Kabinett Gallery, Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart. In collaboration with the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum, Freie Universität, Berlin.
- **The Rooted Sea**, Curated by ASCUS Art & Science. War Memorial and Sciennes Galleries, Summerhall, Edinburgh. In collaboration with Edinburgh Science Festival 2022, with the theme 'Revolutions'.

2021

- **Entanglements of Time & Tide**, Castle Mills, Edinburgh Printmakers. In collaboration with Marine Scotland, Creative Scotland, and ASCUS Art & Science. Presented as part of Edinburgh Art Festival and Edinburgh Science Festival, 2021.
- **(UN)Containable Life**, a comprehensive solo exhibition in the UAE, spanning a decade of artistic practice, 1x1 Art Gallery, Dubai. Lead essay by Nancy Adajania.

2015-2017

- **Critical Membrane**, Exhibit 320, New Delhi. Curatorial adviser to the project: Ranjit Hoskote. Yinchuan Biennale 2016, 'For an Image, Faster than Light' (2017)
- **Scapelands**, Exhibit 320, New Delhi. In collaboration with British Council, India and the Charles Wallace India Trust Award. Lead essay by Ranjit Hoskote (2015)
- **Scapelands**, Tarq, Mumbai. In collaboration with British Council, India and the Charles Wallace India Trust Award. Lead essay by Ranjit Hoskote. (2015)

2013 & 2011

- **The Embryonic Plant & Otherworlds**, 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hongkong. Lead essay by Veeranganakumari Solanki. (2013)
- **Metamorphosing Female**, Beck & Eggeling International Fine Arts, Dusseldorf, Germany. Lead essay by Deeksha Nath. (2011)

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS & PARTICIPATIONS (selected)

2022-2024

- **Silent Archive**, Curated by Emma Nicolson. Inverlieth House Museum, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Supported by the Outset Contemporary Art Fund's Transformative Grant in partnership with the Serpentine Galleries London, and the National Lottery through Creative Scotland (2024)
- **Alien Worlds**, co-organized by Dr Claire Cousins, Dr Emily Finer and Emma Puranen. Wardlaw Museum, University of St Andrews, Scotland, UK (2024)
- **Critical Zones: in Search of a Common Ground**, a travelling exhibition in South Asia. Co-produced by ZKM | Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe and Goethe-Institut, Mumbai. Conceptualized by Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, Co-curated by Daria Mille, Mira Hirtz and Bettina Korintenberg. Venues: Goethe-Institut, Mumbai, Zapurza Museum, Pune, JDA Perera Gallery, Colombo, Indian Museum, Kolkata, Goethe-Institut, New Delhi and Science Gallery, Bengaluru (2022-2024)
- **Beyond the Edge, Kolkata: Erasures and Resistances**, a 2024 precursor to the Bengal Biennale, curated by Oindrilla Maity Surai. Various locations near Tolly's canal, Kolkata

2021-2022

- **From Where We Stand**, International travelling exhibition. Part of British Council's landmark initiative, 'India/UK Together Season of Culture'. Venues: Design Gallery, National Institute of Design-NID Ahmedabad, British Council, New Delhi, and Castle Mills, Edinburgh Printmakers UK (2022)
- **The Beauty of Early Life. Traces of Early Life**, curated by Norbert Lenz and Peter Weibel, co-curated by Eduard Harms, Hannah Jung, and Philipp Ziegler. ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe. In collaboration with the Museum of Natural History, Karlsruhe, Germany.
- **New Natures: A Terrible Beauty is Born**, a multidisciplinary exhibition by Goethe-Institute, Mumbai. Curated by Ravi Agarwal, curator of Literature Ranjit Hoskote. Natural History Galleries, CSMVS Museum, Mumbai (2022)
- **Driving the Human**, an art, science and technology exhibition, jointly presented by ZKM | Center for Art & Media Karlsruhe, acatech – National Academy of Science and Engineering, Germany, Forecast Berlin, and Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design. Venue: Radialsystem, Berlin (2021)
- **One World: Science Connects Us, Edinburgh Science Festival 2021**. Sonia Mehra Chawla's work is presented by ASCUS Art & Science, Edinburgh.
- **The Essl Collection at the Albertina Modern**, Albertina Modern, Vienna (2021)

2016-2020

- **Fragile Kinships**, Curated by Shaunak Mahbubani, Embassy of Switzerland, New Delhi. In partnership with India Art Fair (2019)
- **The Undivided Mind, Art + Science**. Khoj International Artists' Association, New Delhi, supported by Wellcome Trust UK/DBT India Alliance (2018)
- **1st Print Biennale of India**, Lalit Kala Akademi, National Academy of Art, India (2018)
- **Eine Welt in der Stadt: zoologische und botanische Gärten = A world in the city: zoological and botanic gardens**, curated by Kaiwan Mehta. Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, ifa Galerie, Stuttgart, Germany. (2017)
- **Planes of Experience, Zones of Action**, curated by Kaiwan Mehta, Gallery MMB, Goethe-Institut, Mumbai (2017)
- **On Slippery Grounds**, video art from the Indian Subcontinent. Curated by Gigi Scaria. ET4U Contemporary Visual Art Projects, Denmark (2017)

- **For An Image, Faster Than Light, Yinchuan Biennale 2016**, curated by Bose Krishnamachari. Museum of Contemporary Art, MOCA Yinchuan, China (2016)
- **Ein Baum Ist Ein Baum Ist Ein Baum**, curated by Prof. Dr. Herwig Guratzch and Kirsten Nordahl. Beck & Eggeling, Dusseldorf, Germany (2015-16)

2007-2015

- **The Wave Project**, curated by Klavs Weiss and Karen Havskov Jensen. ET4U Contemporary Visual Art Projects, Denmark, Scandinavia. (2013)
- **What Rules?** curated by Deeksha Nath, Nature Morte, Berlin, Germany (2012)
- **The Secret Life of Plants: Contemporary perspectives from India, China and Iran**, curated by Maya Kovskaya. Exhibit 320, New Delhi (2012)
- **India Awakens: Under the Banyan Tree**, curated by Alka Pande, ESSL Museum of Contemporary Art, Klosterneuberg, Austria (2011)
- **Global/Local: Time and Space in Contemporary Indian Art**, curated by Stefan Wimmer, Henn Galerie, Munich, and Beck and Eggeling International, Dusseldorf (2010)
- **Lo Real Maravilloso: Marvelous Reality**, curated by Sunil Mehra, Gallery Espace and Lalit Kala Galleries, New Delhi. (2009)
- **Re-Claim / Re-Cite / Re-Cycle**, curated by Bhavna Kakar, Galerie Bose Pacia (2009)
- **The Second Sex: India**, based on a concept by Simone de Beauvoir. 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hongkong (2008)
- **Identity and Masquerade: Staging the Self**, multimedia project and seminar, directed by Anne Braybone, Tate Modern, London (2007)
- **Khirkee ki Khoj**, a series of community-based art projects, Khoj International Artists Organization, New Delhi (2004 to 2007)
- **CC: Crossing Currents: Video Art & Cultural Identities**, Indo-Dutch video art exhibition, curated by Yohan Pinajpel. Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi. In collaboration with Royal Netherlands Embassy and Mondriaan Foundation (2004)

## AWARDS, RESIDENCIES AND FELLOWSHIPS

- Fellowship recipient of the prestigious Paper Project: Prints and Drawings initiative by Getty Museum, Los Angeles and Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh for 2024 and 2025
- British Council and Charles Wallace India Trust (CWIT) research grant, for a research visit to the UK- Edinburgh University, University of Dundee Archives and the Royal Botanic Garden, RBGE (2022)
- Fellowship in Social Sciences, Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart (2019 to 2022)
- Awardee of Driving the Human, a long-term initiative of ZKM | Center for Art & Media Karlsruhe, acatech – National Academy of Science and Engineering, Forecast Berlin, and Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design, Germany (2021)
- International Residency, art, science and business program, Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany (2022 and 2019)
- Research fellowship and residency, Marine Scotland. Marine Laboratory of the Scottish Government, Aberdeen, Scotland. (2019)
- Art & Science Residency, ASCUS Art & Science, Edinburgh (2019)
- Artist-in-Residence, Edinburgh Printmakers. Supported by Creative Scotland (2019)
- Fellow and awardee of the International Art+ Science programme, instituted by Khoj International Artists' Association and Wellcome Trust UK/DBT India Alliance. (2018)
- British Council and Charles Wallace India Trust (CWIT) award for visual arts (2014)

- Printmaking residency, facilitated by British Council. London Print Studio, London. (2014-15)
- National Award for Visual Arts, in the category of Painting, Lalit Kala Akademi, National Academy of Art, India (2004)

## TALKS/LECTURE-PRESENTATIONS (selected)

- Locating Critical Zones, a presentation and conversation with artist Sonia Levy, moderated by curator Mira Hirtz, organized by Goethe-Institut, Mumbai, ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe and Toxics Links (2023)
- Lecture-presentation, 'Human-Nature Intra-actions through a Multispecies Lens', organized by AMOR MUNDI Multispecies Ecological Worldmaking Lab, Dept of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. (2022)
- (Un)Containable Life, a conversation with Nancy Adajania, organized by Alserkal Arts Foundation and 1x1 Art Gallery Dubai, UAE. Collateral event of Art Dubai 2021.
- The Art of Printmaking, a conversation with Emma Nicolson, Head of Arts at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh. Organized by Edinburgh Printmakers. Part of Edinburgh Art Festival 2021.
- The Rooted Sea, in conversation with Miriam Walsh, Director, ASCUS and scientist Kiera Tucker for Edinburgh Science Festival 2022.
- 'The Non-Human Touch' and 'Vital to Life', artist talks at the Edinburgh Science Festival 2021, followed by conversations with Prof Colin Moffat (Chief Advisor, Marine Scotland) and Miriam Walsh (Director, ASCUS)
- Lecture Presentation, Marine Scotland's seminar series at the Marine Laboratory of the Scottish Government in Aberdeen (2019).
- Lecture presentation, 'Material and discursive possibilities in contemporary art framing of art & science', 'IIT Cognitalks', the annual seminar of the Indian Institute of Technology in Gandhinagar, Gujrat (2018),
- International artist and speaker for SCAD Define Art 2013, organized by SCAD Museum and SCAD University, Hong Kong.
- Speaker and panelist on 'art, ecology and preservation', Kala Ghoda Arts Festival, Mumbai, curated by Ranjit Hoskote & Asad Lalljee (2016)

## PUBLISHED MATERIAL (selected)

- **(Un)Containable Life**, published by 1x1 Art Gallery, Dubai, on the occasion of the artists' comprehensive solo exhibition in the UAE. Lead essay by Nancy Adajania (Digital, 2024)
- **Scapelands**, solo exhibition catalog, published by Exhibit 320 and British Council, India. Lead essay by Ranjit Hoskote and a conversation with multimedia artist Gigi Scaria (2015)
- **The Non-Human Touch: What Values Can Emerge from Ruined Landscape?** Published in Akademie Schloss Solitude's Journal 01, 'Collective Care and Response-ability' (2022)
- **The Non-Human Touch**, L13 Reader, published as part of the project 'Nurturael' by Lothringer 13, Munich (2022)
- **Hence (un)Proven: Reflections on Art & Science**, edited by Aparna Uppaluri, published by Khoj International Artists' Association, New Delhi (2019)
- **For An Image, Faster Than Light**, the publication of the Yinchuan Biennale 2016, curated by Bose Krishnamachari. Museum of Contemporary Art, MOCA Yinchuan, China. (2016)
- **Eine Welt in der Stadt: zoologische und botanische Gärten**, exhibition catalog, published by Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, ifa Stuttgart, Germany. (2017)

- **Some Things That only Art Can Do: A Lexicon of Affective Knowledge**, edited by Nancy Adajania, published by Raza Foundation, India (2017)
- **Ein Baum Ist Ein Baum Ist Ein Baum**, a comprehensive publication by Beck & Eggeling, Dusseldorf, Germany. Essays by Dr. Herwig Guratzch and Kirsten Nordahl (2016)
- **The Embryonic Plant & Otherworlds**, solo exhibition catalog, published by 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hongkong. Lead essay by Veeranganakumari Solanki. (2013)
- **India Awakens: Under the Banyan Tree**, comprehensive publication by ESSL Museum, Austria, on the occasion of the landmark exhibition (2011)
- **Indian Art: The New International Sensation**, a comprehensive survey of contemporary Indian art, edited by Dr Alka Pande, published by Manjul Publications (2010)