

# Spell of Spill Utopia of Ecology

Curated by  
Veeranganakumari Solanki

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# Spell of Spill Utopia of Ecology

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Canons and boundaries of theory, concepts and art constantly evolve to integrate change; thereby improvising objects and ideas into invented realms of reality. This reality often borders on the notion of Utopia.

An idea is attributed with Utopian elements through a desired backdrop, whose possible in-attainability adds to the concept of an aura. The meaning of Utopia changes depending on: What is perfect? Who you want to be? or What you want to see? However, it is essentially supposed to be free from the demands of being realistic – existing nowhere. But, then again, as Oscar Wilde stated – “A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at.” There is a reality to every utopian dream, which in turn tests the bounds of reality...

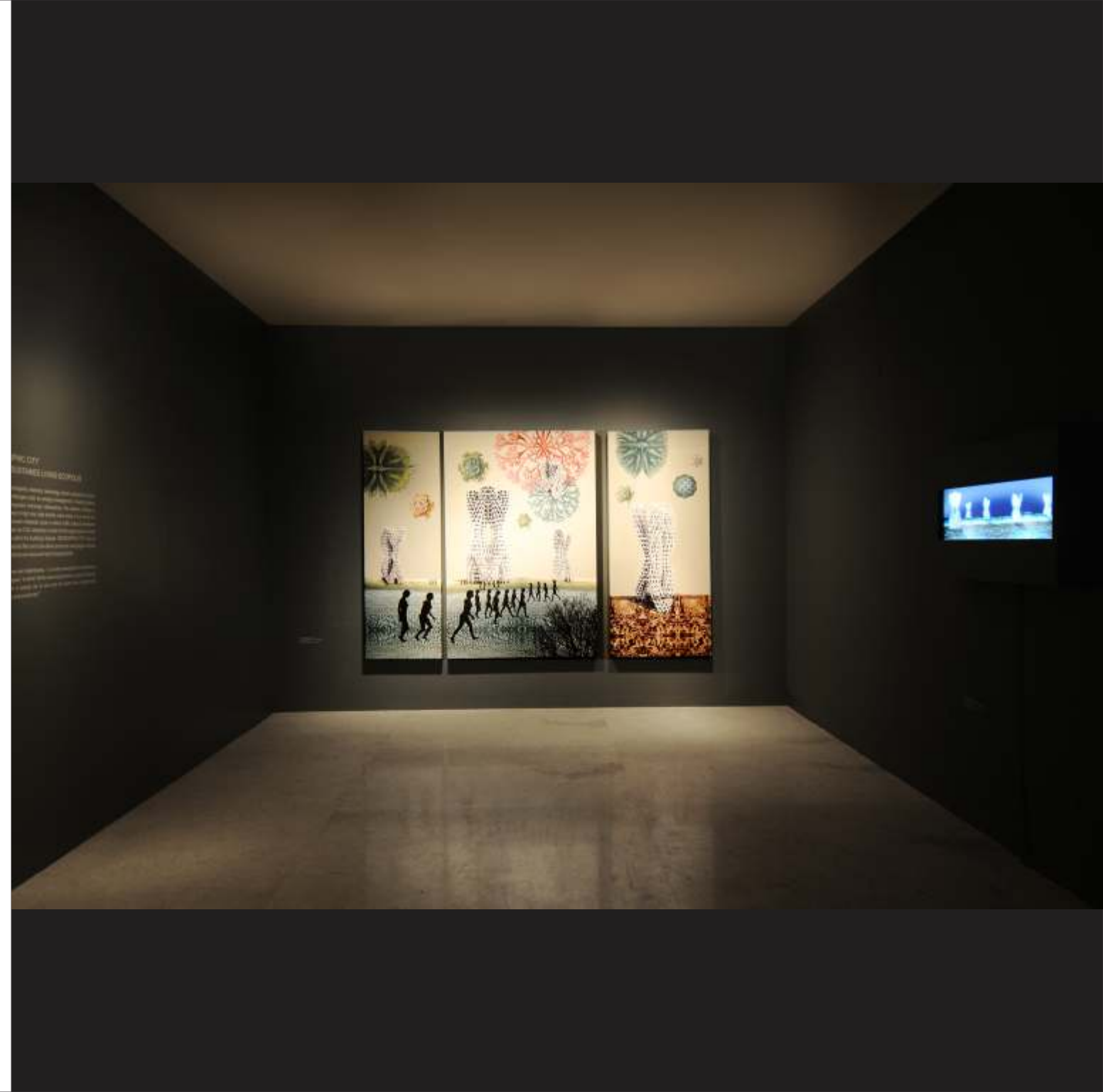
While dealing with notion of Utopia, one of the primary reactions and concerns, (which is also growing globally) is ecology. The first reaction to imagining a Utopia is a conjured image of a landscape and the perfect ideology. However, while questioning this perfect ideology, the ecology could imply a super-efficient Jetson-age or go back to an integration of nature harmonised with needs, wants and desires. Where would one begin to create this Utopia? Would it be a universal translation of the Tower of Babel or challenging norms of architecture or creating a world without borders? However, then again, would there be individual constitutions to govern each Utopian citizen's Utopia or would it turn into adhocracy?

The works created by the artists invited for this exhibition explore: possibilities to create a reality; demystify a Utopian notion; explain and question the meaning of real boundaries (tangible and intangible) in various contexts and fields of society – from economics, politics and sociology to ecology, religion and beyond.

These thirteen artists address the notions of space in varied constructs of understanding. It could be the invasion of private space, a reconstruction of a historic space or a highly futuristic reality. Within this construct of expression of spaces and engagement, there is the medium of time involved that behaves as preserved moments within which, Utopia is held. In this Utopian ecology, everything appears as an evolution within the spell of fantasy and grandness. The works originate from the lingering past, the gained present and an envisioned future, thereby casting a “spell” of ideas which, “spills” over into the notion of the “Utopia of Ecology”.

## Sonia Mehra Chawla

Benefitting from positive solar orientation, in order to maximise solar acceptance toward the dynamic photo bioreactors which are built into the facade, 'BIOMORPHIC CITY' acts as an environmental filter, harnessing harmful traffic exhaust emissions in order to feed and cultivate microscopic algae to produce renewable bio-fuels. The work investigates visionary, technology driven solutions to future mega-city challenges such as energy management through an envisioned futuristic landscape and lifestyle. For Michael Foucault, these spaces are either utopias or heterotopias. Utopias are perfections of existing arrangements, either positive or negative, and have no real space. Heterotopias, those "other" spaces, are for Foucault “a sort of counter-arrangement of effectively realized utopia,” in which "all the real arrangements (of space) that can be found in a society are at one and the same time represented, challenged, and overturned." Sonia Mehra Chawla proposes to visualize 'biomorphic city' as an effectively realised utopia ie. heterotopia.



**Sonia Mehra Chawla** | Biomorphic City: A Self Sustained Living Ecopolis  
78" X 108" (Triptych ) | Mixed Media On Canvas | 2013



**Sonia Mehra Chawla** | Biomorphic City: A Self Sustained Living Ecopolis  
Single-Channel Video | 2013





## GR Iranna

'Mother' – Mother earth, biologically the result of ecology and the thereby the result of a spill of imagination into a Utopia. Iranna's work reflects the state of nature and ecology in a changing world where human beings and nature converge into the importance of a living form. The artist disregards the shape of the form, acknowledging the importance of nature. A muse to an artist is something unique and rare. In a world of influx of technology and dearth of nature, Iranna embraces the form and beauty of the Tree and its importance for a desired Utopia. The artist, whose concerns lay within the margins of what humans look at to attain salvation, adopts that relevant form of expression in his works. Shifting from the form of serene monks, into an expression through trees in his current series, Iranna's works have a meditative quality, which absorb the viewer into reflections of memory, situations and promising futures.



G R Iranna | Mother | Acrylic On Tarpaulin | 54" x 66" | 2013





## Reena Saini Kallat

'Paper Machine' – In this work, Kallat translates through the innocent and tactile nature of the art of origami issues of borders and war zones that create the form of this paper machine – a cannon – the result of the destruction of Utopia, ecology, and the spill into the unknown forms of nature, new borders, human relationships and politics. In a world where everything is defined by nationality and identity, Kallat questions the relevance of these differences and inequalities. The *Line of Control* evident on 'Paper Machine' could refer to borders between countries, the fire-line of weapons at war or the reason of birth on a land on which divisions and politics created differences. Can these be folded up into a simple 'Paper Machine' of something called a world map? Or, must we continue to live in a world ruled by the fear of destruction, imposed rules, differences and territories? Is the concept of a world without these notions inherent in Utopia?



**Reena Saini Kallat** | Paper Machine | Painted FRP | 2012 – 13



## Nandita Kumar

Five islands of Utopia, sensitive to light, come alive, to resonate sounds that have been designed to transport the viewer into a state of Utopia in the space created by the artist to “day-dream”. Similar to the nature of ecology, darkness will silence all sounds. Sounds include: Love Frequency (528 Hz) This is the frequency to possibly re-construct DNA. Idea that all beings have a psychic connection through unseen frequencies and that Utopia can be attained through an awareness of how we resonate with one another | Universal Consciousness (Crown-chakra frequency) | Communication (Thinned out radio waves and satellite recording) | Nature (Eco-system) Little utopias in themselves | Thought (Manipulated human voices of people talking about Utopia) Sharing thoughts over great distances

Reacting to light with sensors, this cluster of islands comes alive with sounds at different intervals, ensuring that nothing ever sounds or stays the same – there is a constant evolution in the ephemeral.



**Nandita Kumar** | News From Nowhere | Collaborators Sound Design: Kari Rae Seekins (LA)  
Electrical Engineer: Paul Chacko (Bangalore) | acrylic, copper, pcb, speakers | 2013





## Tanya Mehta

Found images, history, self-portraits and created places, spill from reality into mythical landscapes of Utopia in Mehta's works.

'*Glosoli*', an Icelandic word for "Glowing Soul" is based on the musical composition by the band Sigur Ros; which explores an essence of history into the future without letting go of the past. The image depicts the concept and philosophy of the inner self, the soul that makes a person complete. It explores the help and support of that immaterial essence within all of us which in turn in the animating principal. The vital drum line, which continues throughout the song in the form of a march, is represented along with the innocence and magic brought about by the lyric and the triangle.

Taking a chance, doing that one thing you always wanted to do, experiencing the one thing you always wanted to feel and in the end despite the grave outcome saying '*No, I have no regrets*'. The image represents the sense of weightlessness and erraticism brought about by the melody and lyrics. A hyperbole in depiction it tells the story about taking a leap of faith, of risking it all in one graceful yet poignant move.

'*The Dryad*', a mythological tree nymph, is represented in magnanimous proportions equal to a force of nature like God. Despite this power it personifies the modern human spirit and the state of nature within our modern world. The face in the tree is pained as it bears the burden of itself representing in this beautiful imagined state of perfection, the internal turmoil and weariness of an individual.



**Tanya Mehta** | Glosoli | 24"X 24" | 2012 | digital painting and collage on archival paper



**Tanya Mehta** | Dryad | 36" x 36" | 2012 | digital painting and collage on archival paper





Tanya Mehta | No, I have no regrets | 36" x 36" | 2012 | digital painting and collage on archival paper





## Manjunath Kamath

'*As You Know*', a Utopia is created out existing forms of history, experiences, recognised forms, layered with myth, imagined compositions and imagination – just as one looks at it in Kamath's brewed panorama. The artist, known for his layers of imagery, conjures up the visual of a terrace that almost every viewer is familiar with. Here, the situations within Utopia begin to occur – be it wrestlers on a Persian carpet, a bride leaning out of the picture in the opposite direction, or a horse, swan or Kamath's iconic elephant atop neighbouring building terraces. These elements of fantasy base themselves on situations that everyone relates to at personal levels, thereby transporting the viewer into their very own subjective states of imagination and Utopias.



**Manjunath Kamath** | As You Know | 36" x 96" | 2013 | Digital Print On Archival Paper



## Pooja Iranna

'Towards Another Symphony' is a gated architectural structure of a Utopian past that mirrors into multiples of a landscape of a future city. Iranna's treatment of the medium of staples pins into curved straight lines hinges on the possibility of a Utopic realisation. The artist who has been working with the representation of architectural structures through her earlier series has challenged the use of medium from the dexterity and details of water-colours to the flexibility of staple pins. With attention to minute details, Iranna's works convey the sensitivity of emotions and personal reactions that are evoked beyond the facade of un-phased Utopia cities.



**Pooja Iranna** | Towards Another Symphony | 11" X 34" X 4" | 2013 | Staple Pins





## Vibha Galhotra

Galhotra's works are deeply inspired from her social existence and concern towards the fast growing urban development and depleting living environment. She has been working with the concept of Utopia from her earlier series – 'Utopia of Difference' – that has now carried forward into her new series – 'Orbus Unum' (one world) – where all differences dissolve back into the concept of a universal consensus and realised Utopia.

'Altering Boon' reflects the Utopia of Pangaea. The hope of one continent, a world beyond constraints of borders, all harmonising like the shadows of 'Altering Boon'. Countries outlines paradoxed with the use of silver beads liquefy into shadows that float in harmony without the knowledge of differences, politics, inequality and borders.

A 'Clock' from the past froze at the stroke of 9 into a ticking future. The numerological state is one which is nearest to the state of nirvana, preservation, perfection and stability. 9 is the perfect number that is associated with Utopia. It is a universal state in which, everything is balanced, realised and achieved.



Vibha Galhotra | Clock | Antique Clock, Concrete And Sound



**Vibha Galhotra |** Altering Boon | Glass Beads, Ss Wire, Wood



## Tayeba Begum Lipi

Lipi addresses the larger situations related to privacy, politics and religion through simple situations and imagery that have a stark, yet subtle contrast through mediums she uses, and issues she addresses. This places the viewer of her work within new contexts of realised and imagined situations, questioning the state of Utopia.

'*Private*' – We want to practice individuality and need a lot of privacy from our childhood these days. There are a number of things in life that are private property in modern life, where things are no more shared. The medium of razor blades spills into the metaphor of sharp borders and fences to the *Private* contents of Utopia.

'*The Little Learner*' has been trying hard to learn Bangla, her own language as well as Arabic at the same time. She has been learning Arabic without knowing the meaning of any word. As a Muslim girl, she is obliged to read Arabic to practice Quran. This is about the religion phenomenon of the globe, which addresses the identity crisis of the society related to the Utopia of someday translating the Tower of Babel.





**Tyeba Begum Lipi** | Private | 13" X 16.5" | 2012 | Stainless Steel & Razor Blades



Tyeba Begum Lipi | Little Learner | 2008 | 1min 26 Sec, Single Channel Video With Sound



## Sunoj D

“*We both see the same moon*” is a reflection of the artist's fascination with the shift of imagination. Sunoj relates the moon to grandmothers' tales, Valentina Tereshkova and ritualistic practices, which counter the aspects of myth and belief. The artist talks about how we get mesmerised by the light of the moon and its beautiful stories, be it the rabbit or the lady. There are ritualistic practices and cultures associated with the glowing ball in the sky. However, the light of the moon is only a reflection of the sun's light, and science attributes the moon to Neil Armstrong or Valentina Treshkova. This is a big shift of imagination. There are differences between the real and unreal or between knowing and seeing – quite like the state of Utopia. The viewer is placed between two moons – one is scientific representation of the moon and other one is the moon what we all see from the earth.



**Sunoj D** | "We Both See The Same Moon" | 60" x 60" | 2012 | Tea Wash And Graphite On Paper





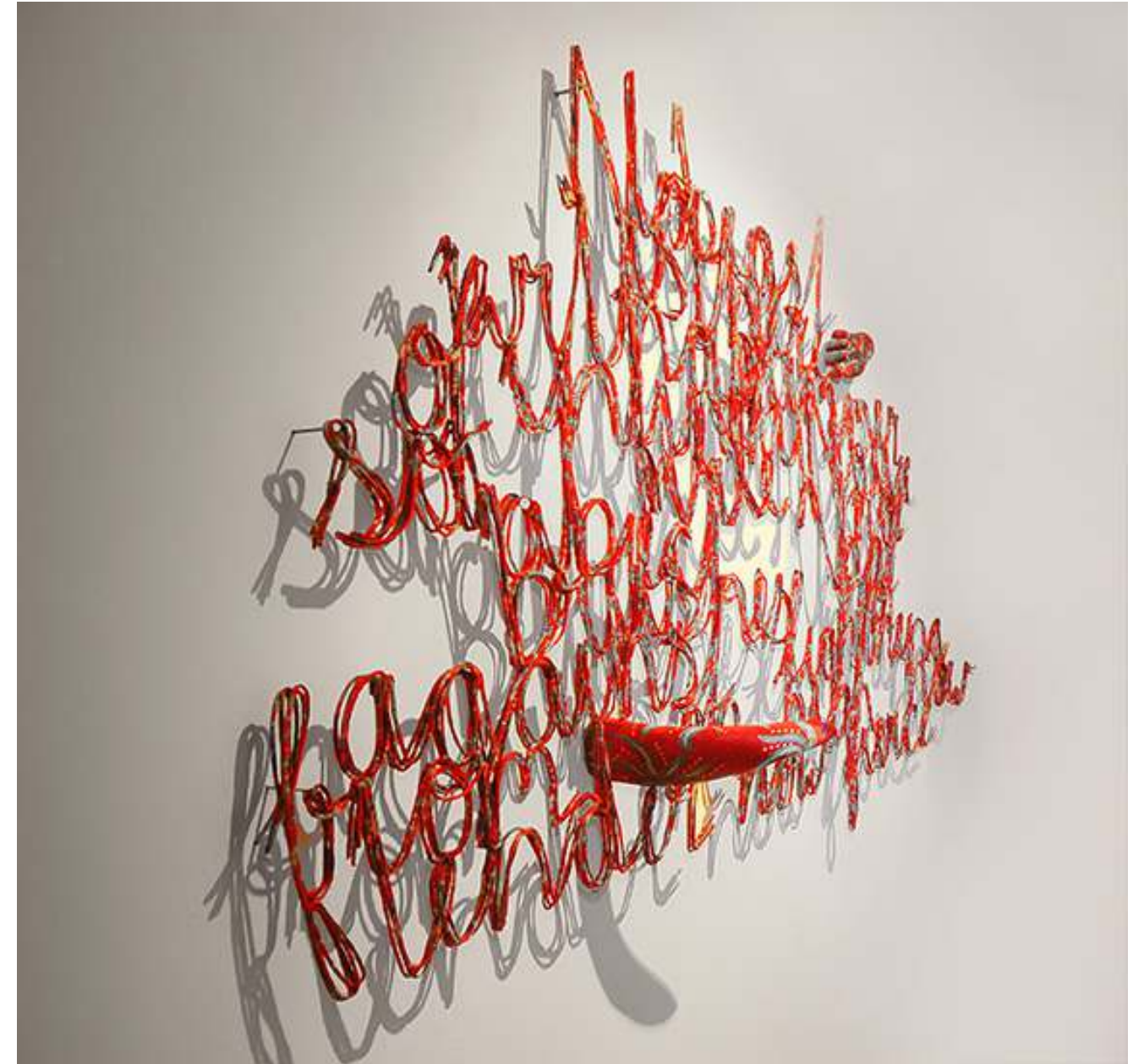
**Sunoj D** | “We Both See The Same Moon” | 36" x 36" | 2012 | Dry Pastels On Paper



## Anita Dube

“no beast is there without| glimmer of infinity| no eye so| vile nor abject that brushes| not against lightning from on| high, now tender, now fierce”

Dube's work draws from Victor Hugo's, *La Legende Des Siecles*, which initially set out to be a collection of “Little Epics”. This turned into a large volume of works that resulted in a detailed depiction of history and evolution, tracing the Utopian relation of man, beast and the universe. This work by the artist draws an excerpt from the “Little Epics” in a contemporary dialogue wrapped in red velvet correlates to her conceptual concerns with history, myth, feminine and social phenomena.



**Anita Dube** | 2011 | “no beast is there without glimmer of infinity no eye so vile nor abject that  
brushes not against lightning from on high, now tender, now fierce” - Victor hugo, la legende des siecles  
| Velvet, Steel Wire, Animal Horn And Fibre Glass



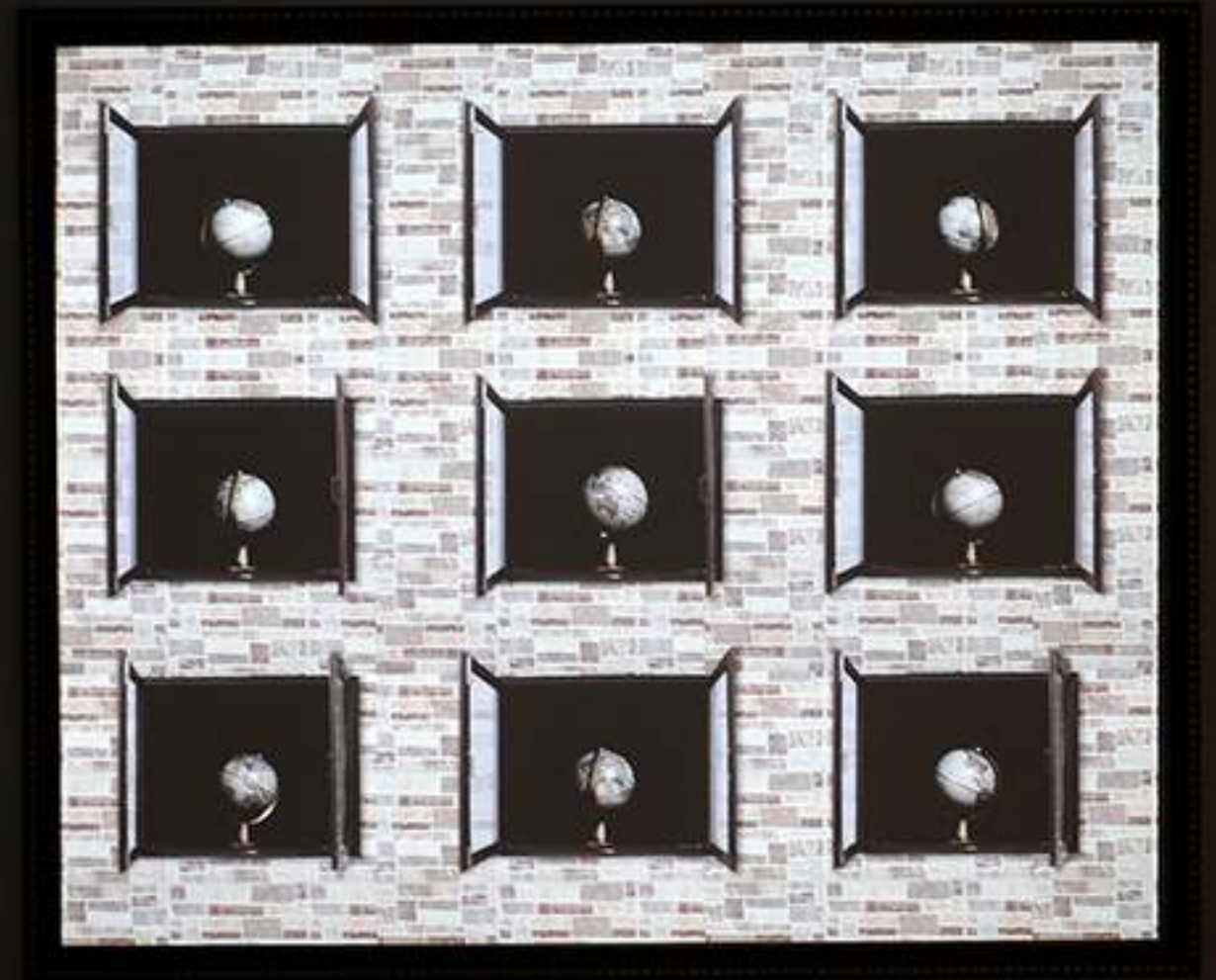
## Gigi Scaria

Gigi Scaria who has constantly commented on various aspects of civilisation, questions the notions of identity, nationalism, modernism, lifestyle and the desire of convenience in every human being. When we start rotating the world in our own terms our Utopias might get disconnected with the world we live in. Scaria's 'Orbits of the known world' change the rotating directions of the globe, quite similar to the way a Utopian perception would alter realities in these nine windows to the world. The number nine itself relates to the most complete number in numerology, encompassing a balanced state of achieving one's Utopia. It is within these windows to the world rotating on our imagined axis of Utopia that we blame, create, feel and act.





Gigi Scaria | Orbits of the Known World | 2013 | single-channel video with sound



## Mithu Sen

Mithu Sen's works address contemporary issues, with the hint of dark subtle humour that arouse subjective responses in the viewer to weave a personal narrative through her works. The artist views the boomerang as a subjective tool of Utopia. It depends upon the thrower and the targeted receiver – where for the first, it is an achievement and the second a loss. She relates this to the symbol of the phallus, which is also reflected in '*Banana Couple*'. These provocations interact with the meaning of self-notions of identity and responsibility in a contemporary world where relationships, perfections, privacy and networking are all dependent on opinion and response from the other – much like the eager retaliation of a boomerang.

The '*Returning Boomerang*' hits the viewer back into the **Spell of Spill** Utopia of Ecology..



**Mithu Sen** | Returning Boomerang (Made In Melbourne) | 2011 | Mixed Media Drawing On Acid Free Handmade Paper



**Mithu Sen** | Banana Couple | 2012 | Dental Polymer, Artificial Teeth, Glue & Thread; High Acrylic Box





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