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## **ULRICH MUSEUM OF ART TO PRESENT EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY INDIAN ART THIS FALL**

WICHITA, Kansas (September 1, 2015) — The Ulrich Museum of Art at Wichita State University will present an exhibition of contemporary photography from India in which artists reinterpret the history of colonialism in their country. *POSTDATE: Photography and Inherited History in India*, opening September 11 and on view September 12 through December 13, 2015, showcases the work of nine contemporary Indian artists that are breaking ground, taking history into their own hands, and redefining historical representations of India through image-making. Previously exhibited at the San Jose Museum of Art, where it received national recognition for being “the greatest Indian art exhibition this spring” (Huffington Post), *POSTDATE* explores many complicated themes.

Drawing inspiration from diverse sources such as early 20th-century hand-painted studio portraits, archaeological surveys created by the East India Company, and Bollywood film stills, these artists reconstruct historical iconic images of India and challenge the exoticized portrayal that has traditionally represented the country. *POSTDATE* includes more than 50 photographs as well as several videos and installation works. The exhibition features internationally renowned artists such as Gauri Gill, Jitish Kallat, and Vivan Sundaram. Also included are works by Raqs Media Collective, Nandan Ghiya, Pushpamala N., Madhuban Mitra and Manas Bhattacharya, Annu Palakunnathu Matthew, and Surekha.

Photography was established commercially and artistically in India by the 1850s at the height of the British Occupation. Driven by British colonials and their compatriots’ perceptions of India as a foreign and “exotic” land, photographers (both British and Indian) focused their lenses on indigenous populations and customs; architecture and monuments; and street scenes and landscapes. Thus, historical depictions often captured images such as the Taj Mahal, decorated elephants carrying British officers, and women adorned in colorful saris walking the desert landscape.

“Aware of such historical misrepresentations, the artists in *POSTDATE* reclaim history by challenging outdated narratives, revealing hidden stories, and making personal connections with tradition while experimenting with innovative digital photographic processes, said Jodi Throckmorton, curator of contemporary art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, and guest curator of the exhibition. “*POSTDATE* not only deepens our understanding of the history of photography, but celebrates new and socially engaged modes of image-making in South Asia.”

*POSTDATE* was organized collaboratively by the San Jose Museum of Art and the Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Kansas, and is made possible by the generous support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, Kaushie Adishesan and Anand Rajaraman, Tad Freese, Mike and Yvonne Nevens, and Dipti and Rakesh Mathur.

### **About the Ulrich Museum of Art**

The Ulrich Museum of Art at Wichita State University serves as the area’s premier venue for new work by emerging and established artists of national and international reputation. The Ulrich Museum is home to the renowned 76-piece Martin H. Bush Outdoor Sculpture Collection—rated one of the top collections of its kind by Public Art Review—and a permanent collection of more than 6,300 works of modern and contemporary art. Established in 1974, the mission of the Ulrich is to expand human experience through encounters with the art of our time.

## EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

Raqs Media Collective presents a multimedia installation of still photography, video, and sound entitled, *The Surface of Each Day is a Different Planet* (2009), which expands on the collective's work with archives and the history of Indian photography.

Nandan Ghiya addresses the effects that digital technology has had on indigenous cultures and personal identities by obscuring the faces of subjects in 19th-century, hand-painted, studio portraits. Ghiya pixelates their faces and morphs the boundaries of the image as if an error in transmission has occurred.

Gauri Gill creates large photographic portraits of people in rural Rajasthan by visiting the nomadic and migrant communities there. By photographing in black and white, Gill disrupts the established exotic portrayal of the Rajasthani people depicted in colorful magazine shots.

Vivan Sundaram explores the convergence of national and personal histories by collaborating posthumously with his grandfather through the layering of images from the family archive into single photographs. Sundaram collapsed time and space by bringing together people and places across decades, from locations in India and Europe, to create fictional scenarios.

Pushpamala N. challenges traditional representations of Indian women in photography and cinema. Part performance, part social critique, she created an album of women from South India as they have been imaged across centuries, reenacting 19th-century ethnographic portraits and 1920s film stills featuring mysterious Bollywood ingénues in her series *Native Women of South India* (2000-2004).

Inspired by the documentation of the building of modern Mumbai in the 1800s, Jitish Kallat creates a panoramic cityscape in *Artist Makes a Call* (2005) that combines multiple time frames within one image, depicting the story of rapid urban development.

In her series, "An Indian from India," Annu Palakunnathu Matthew investigates the connection between the representation of native Indians and Native Americans in early photography. She reenacts iconic photographs of Native Americans by photographers such as Edward S. Curtis and prints them next to the original image.

Madhuban Mitra and Manas Bhattacharya explore the ruins of India's first and only still camera factory. The National Instruments Ltd. camera factory gave birth to the National 35, which was intended to be India's first locally made, low-cost camera, but failed to reach wide adoption. Mitra and Bhattacharya's series *Through a Lens Darkly* tells the story of India's relationship with photography and uses digital technology to create an archive of images about photography's analogue history.

Surekha's *Fragments of a Wedding Diary* (2001), is a photo installation of fragmented visuals printed from found wedding photographs and negatives. Surekha questions the reality that is constructed through the act of making images, in which the subjects are removed from reality to become actors in the drama of a wedding photograph or video.

## RELATED PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 | 7–9 P.M.

### FALL OPENING RECEPTION

To celebrate the exhibition opening of *POSTDATE: Photography and Inherited History in India*, the Ulrich invites you to a colorful evening filled with the cultural influences of ancient and modern India in art, music, food, and dance. *POSTDATE* explores the history of India and how artists mark the past with ideas from the present. Free to Ulrich Museum members and WSU students, \$10 for general public.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

5:30 P.M. RECEPTION | Ulrich Museum

6:30 P.M. PROGRAM | CAC Theatre

### POSTDATE ARTIST TALK: Annu Palakunnathu Matthew

*Living Between Cultures*

Photo-based artist Annu Palakunnathu Matthew will present artwork that explores her experiences of living between cultures—England, India and the USA. Her work is influenced by this transnational experience and includes concepts related to being an immigrant, assimilation and living as a hyphenated American.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3 | 1–3 P.M. **FAMILY FUN DAY: A Passage to India**

Squish, splat, sneeze and swirl! Bring the whole family to explore color, texture, sound and sights inspired by the art and culture of India. Partake in the traditional art practices of bowl making with clay, jump into vibrant bursts of color in our hands-on Art Lab, explore an interactive art tour in the galleries, and experience how artists from today mark the past with ideas from the present.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14–SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

### TALLGRASS FILM FESTIVAL: Spotlight on East Indian Cinema

The Ulrich Museum and Tallgrass Film Festival present two contemporary East Indian film screenings during the 13th Annual Tallgrass Film Festival in conjunction with *POSTDATE: Photography and Inherited History in India*.

For scheduling information, visit [tallgrassfilmfest.com](http://tallgrassfilmfest.com) and [ulrich.wichita.edu](http://ulrich.wichita.edu).

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17

5:30 P.M. RECEPTION | 6:00 P.M. PROGRAM

### CURATOR TALK: Jodi Throckmorton

What is the role of the artist as researcher, collector, activist, and documentarian? Join *POSTDATE: Photography and Inherited History in India* curator, Jodi Throckmorton, for a talk examining the complex relationship between traditions of representation in India and contemporary practices of image making. Throckmorton is Curator of Contemporary Art for the Philadelphia Academy of the Fine Arts.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

5:30 P.M. RECEPTION | ULRICH MUSEUM

6:30 P.M. PROGRAM | WSU CAC THEATRE

### PANEL DISCUSSION: Voices of Partition

The 1947 Partition is recognized as the world's largest mass refugee crisis. Nearly 2 million died in the communal violence that accompanied Partition, and up to 25 million were uprooted through the 1950s. Join us as we explore India and its people—before and after the concurrent horrors of the partition—with a distinguished panel of scholars and Partition survivors now living in our community. Panelists include Dr. Emily Rook-Koepsel, Assistant Professor in the Department of International and Area Studies, University of Oklahoma; Dr. Prem Baja, WSU Professor Emeritus; and Dr. Rai Atul, WSU Associate Professor and Larry Jones Faculty Fellow, W. Frank Barton School of Business; and moderated by *POSTDATE* curator Jodi Throckmorton, Curator of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia Academy of the Fine Arts.