

PRESS RELEASE

Tejal Shah – *UNBECOMING*



Kunsthaus Hamburg

25 October – 3 December 2017

Curator: Chus Martínez (HGK, Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst, Basel)

Opening reception

Tuesday, 24 October, 7 pm, Kunsthaus Hamburg

Exhibition walk-throughs

Thursday, 16 November, 6 pm

Sunday, 26 November, 3 pm

PROGRAMME

Film screenings

Saturday, 21 October, 6 p.m., HFBK, room 229

Other Species, Other Times

A program of single channel moving image works curated by Lalitha Gopalan and Anuj Vaidya, 60 minutes

Sunday, 22 October, 6 p.m., HFBK, room 229

Koi Sunta Hai: Journeys with Kumar & Kabir (Someone is listening)

A documentary film directed by Shabnam Virmani, 96 minutes, 2008, language: Hindi, Malwi & English with English subtitles

Lecture performances

Wednesday, 25 October, 6 p.m., HFBK, *Aula*

by Tejal Shah and Shabnam Virmani followed by Q&A

Further information on www.kunsthausehamburg.de

The aesthetic practice of the Indian artist Tejal Shah (*1979, Bhilai) encompasses video, photography, performances, drawings, sound works, and spatial installations. Her works compellingly engage us in layered propositions on the co-dependent relationships between gender, ecology, science, sexuality, and consciousness. Informed by queer, feminist, and Buddhist thought, Shah questions systematic dualistic differentiations and seamlessly integrates important reflections on violence and power on the one hand, and love and regeneration on the other. Particularly in the context of her native country India, her unique artistic position is a testimony of courage, outstanding in quality and independence.

At the Kunsthaus Hamburg, Shah will present her 5-channel video installation *Between the Waves* as an extensive spatial experience. In the installation, which premiered at DOCUMENTA (13), the artist develops her own vision of a cosmology that breaks with all standard conceptions of corporeality and consciousness, dissolving the boundaries between human, nature, culture, and other species. The humanimal protagonists that appear in the films unselfconsciously embody ritualistic and intuitive explorations, unapologetically seeking closeness. The artist presents a radical imagination that is both a utopia and a dystopia. It can be asked if this deeply impressive as well as disturbing vision of a

humankind haunted by waves of love over and over will change anything in this world as it is. Beyond the video installation, the Kunsthaus Hamburg is showing collages that are thematically linked to the films and is premiering *unbecoming*, her new installation of drawings, which pivots on the Mahayana Buddhist ideal of the figure of the Bodhisattva.

In collaboration with the Hamburg University of Fine Arts, HFBK (Prof. Michaela Melián), Tejal Shah will outline the specific cultural context in which her works are created by presenting two film programmes. She has invited the Indian film-maker and singer Shabnam Virmani as a special guest, whose films she will present and discuss. The works of both artists contain multiple thematic and conceptual links and they will jointly conduct a day-long workshop with the students at HFBK.

Shah will furthermore elucidate her current research on October 25 in a performance lecture also presented at the HFBK. For over two years, she has been focusing on key aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, which follows the *Middle Way* Philosophy School, a legacy of the erstwhile Nalanda University. She is thus drawing upon a living spiritual tradition that offers some of the most profound and scientifically compatible perspectives on the nature of reality and consciousness. Her main interest is in the practical application of the core insights proposed by this body of knowledge and its relevance to the total process of living in consonance. In Hamburg, she will give a public account of this intensive form of aesthetic research for the first time and Shabnam Virmani will also make an artist presentation alongside. This will further provide special insight into their practices, which are respectively both critical and urgent in the present cultural landscape of India.

Tejal Shah (*1979, Bhilai, India) studied at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia, and at the Art Institute of Chicago in the United States. She has participated in numerous international exhibitions, and her films have been presented at various film festivals; among other venues, she has shown her works at the Museum of Modern Art, Oslo (2016/17), the Whitechapel Gallery, London (2014), the Gujral Foundation, New Delhi (2014), dOCUMENTA (13) (2012), the Centre Pompidou (2011), and the Tate Modern (2006). In Germany, she is represented by Barbara Gross Galerie, Munich, and in India by Project 88, Mumbai.

The events presented in cooperation with the Hamburg University of Fine Arts are associated with the doctorate graduate program "Aesthetics of the Virtual", which is supported by the Landesforschungsförderung.

HFBK Aesthetics of the virtual
Hamburg *aesthetikendesvirtuellen.de*

Kindly supported by:



The exhibition is taking place in the context of India Week, Hamburg.



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