

***A Line of Foreign Verses***

Hera Büyüктаşçıyan and Seher Shah

28 February - 29 April 2023

*'Day by day I float my paper boats one by one down the running stream.**In big black letters I write my name on them and the name of the village where I live.**I hope that someone in some strange land will find them'.*

Rabindranath Tagore, 1913

Artists have historically forged friendships at critical crossroads in their lives. ***A Line of Foreign Verses*** weaves together cultural and political histories between the artists, **Hera Büyüктаşçıyan** and **Seher Shah**. Bound by shared experience, the importance of this unique dialogue speaks to the power of memory and to passageways across turbulent landscapes. Their work explores the geographies of paper and place, and the intimacy of threads that bind. Between the city and self, the artists navigate the historical, personal and political through the surfaces and sounds of fragments, with the act of writing and drawing.

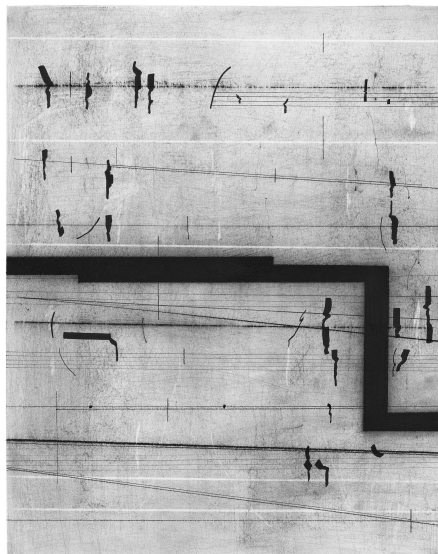
In her film, *The Labyrinth of the World, Paradise of the Heart* (2021-2022), Hera Büyüктаşçıyan anchors the surface and underground through the water architecture of Prague, a city that is often referred to as a threshold. Using stop motion sequences, glass beads meander through the cavities of wastewater treatment plants and public baths covered with glazed Rako tiles. These ornamental tiles resurface an underlying tension between the body and the constructed environment in relation to the city's colonial past that shaped notions of purity and cultural contamination. The title of the film references the allegorical work of Czech philosopher, Jan Amos Comenius. In his book, the world is portrayed as a city resembling a labyrinth, where a pilgrim is in search for his way in life while being misguided by Falsehood and Delusion.

Hera Büyüктаşçıyan, *The Labyrinth of the World, Paradise of the Heart* (video still), 2021-22



Seher Shah, *Notes from a City Unknown* (detail), 2021

Seher Shah's *Notes from a City Unknown* is a portfolio of thirty-two screen-prints on paper, drawing on observations and reflections from New Delhi. Through poetic notations composed alongside architectural forms, the work explores the city through sites of fissure, complexity and contradiction. Shah looks to bind architectural, political and historical events, to the intimate and personal. Written between 2014 and 2021, the work is set against a backdrop of a brutal nationalism, pervasive surveillance and the mass mobilization of minority communities for their right to home and citizenship. At the core of her work is a question of home and belonging through the traces of those that came before her.



Seher Shah, *Weight and Measure (1)*, 2022

Made with finely ground graphite dust, Shah's series of drawings, *Grey to Silver* and *Weight and Measure*, explore variations of the incomplete line. The drawings in between architectural abstraction and music notations, communicate neither language in their entirety. *Grey to Silver*, takes its title from studies in light and materiality; when graphite turns silver in the sunlight. Drawing through the language of music, *Weight and Measure*, are incomplete notations, erased and redrawn over several layers, through graphite and ink.

Büyüктаşçıyan's collage series, *Intervals for the Unreplaceable*, combines photographs of architectural fragments and imprints of modernist tiles from Prague. The indented surface of the cast paper reveals the imprinted absence of the tiles, while simultaneously embodying the city's colonial past. In these compositions, the dynamics between ornament/ power, departure/ distance and scale/ representation are explored through vocalized contours, flowing between bodies and spaces.



Hera Büyüктаşçıyan, *Intervals for the Unreplaceable* (6). Collage serie, 2022

## About the Artists

**Hera Büyüктаşçıyan** (b. 1984, Istanbul) graduated from Marmara University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Painting department in 2006. She was awarded the Emerging Artist Prize at the Toronto Biennial of Art in 2019.

Solo exhibitions include: Tate St.Ives, Cornwall, UK (forthcoming); *On Stones and Palimpsests*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2020); *Neither on the Ground, nor in the Sky*, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) Gallery, Berlin, Germany (2019); and *Write Injuries on Sand and Kindness in Marble*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2017).

Group exhibitions include: *You Know Who*, Abdülmeceid Efendi Mansion, Turkey (2022); *Enmeshed*, Tate Modern, London, UK (2022); Biennale Matter of Art, Prague, Czech Republic (2022); *rīvus*, Biennale of Sydney 2022, Australia (2022); *Soft Water Hard Stone*, New Museum Triennial, New York, NY (2021); *Once Upon a Time Inconceivable*, Protocinema, Istanbul (2021); *I heard it from the valleys*, Haus N Athen, Athens, Greece (2021); *What If a Journey...*, Autostrada Biennale, Kosovo (2021); *Reflections: Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa*, The British Museum, London, UK (2021); *LB02: between the sun and the moon*, Lahore Biennale, Lahore, Pakistan (2020); *Every Step in the Right Direction*, Singapore Biennale, National Gallery, Singapore (2019); *The Shoreline Dilemma*, Toronto Biennial of Art, Toronto, Canada (2019); *On Threads and Frequencies*, GIGANTISME, Dunkirk, France (2019); and *Planetary Planning*, Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2018) among others.

Her works can be found in collections ranging from the British Museum, London, UK; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Istanbul, Turkey; Tate, London, UK; The Gori Collection, Santomato di Pistoia, Italy and Vehbi Koç Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey amongst others.

**Seher Shah** (b. 1975, Karachi) received her Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Architecture from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1998.

Solo exhibitions include: *The Weight of Air and Memory*, Glasgow Print Studio, Glasgow, Scotland (forthcoming); *Seher Shah and Randhir Singh: Studies in Form*, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2022); *Notes from a City Unknown*, Nature Morte, New Delhi, India (2022); *When Words Disappear into Trees*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2021); *Artist's Rooms: Seher Shah and Randhir Singh*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, UAE (2019); *Studies in Form: Seher Shah and Randhir Singh*, Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh (2018); *Of Absence and Weight*, Nature Morte, New Delhi, India (2016) and *The Lightness of Mass*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2016) amongst others.

Recent group exhibitions include: *In our Veins Flow Ink and Fire*, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi, India (2022); *Horror in the Modernist Block*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK (2022); *manifesto of fragility*, 16th Lyon Biennale of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France (2022); *75 Years of Consequence: The Partition of India*, The Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, New York, NY (2022); *Urban Impressions: Experiencing the Global Contemporary Metropolis*, Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University, Houston, TX (2022); *Pop South Asia: Artistic Explorations in the Popular*, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE (2022); *Proposals for a Memorial to Partition*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, UAE (2022); *On Muzharul Islam: Surfacing Intention*, Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2020); and *Homelands: Art from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan*, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, UK (2019) amongst others.

Her works can be found in collections ranging from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Queens Museum, New York; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate Modern, London; Art Jameel Collection, Dubai; The Ishara Art Foundation and the Prabhakar Collection, Dubai; Hallen für Neue Kunst, Schaffhausen; Kiran Nader Museum of Art, New Delhi; and the Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary Foundation, Vienna amongst others.