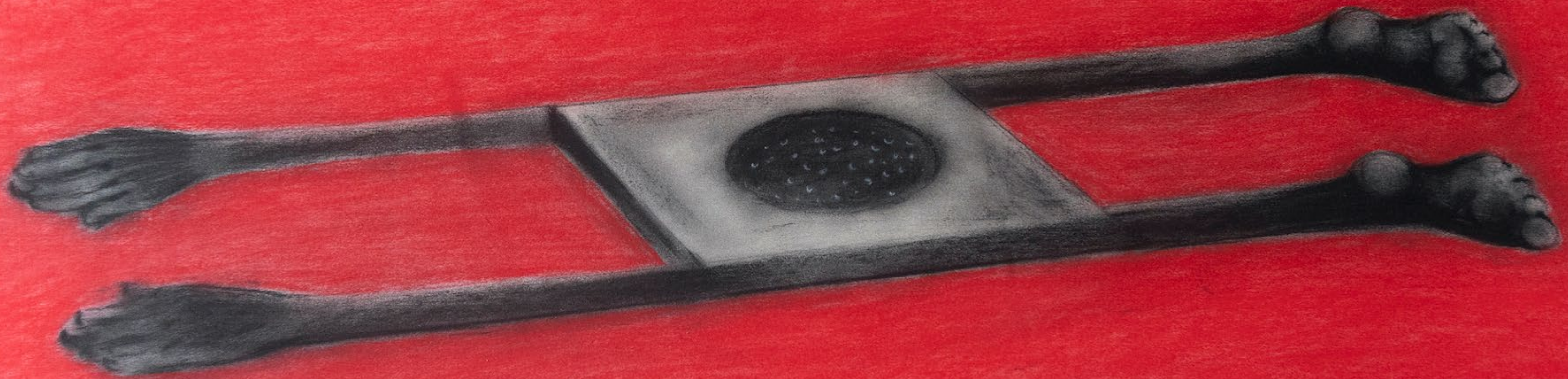


SCRATCH BENEATH THE SURFACE

ANSHU SINGH | BIRENDER KUMAR YADAV
RICHHA ARYA | THAMSHANGPHA MAKU

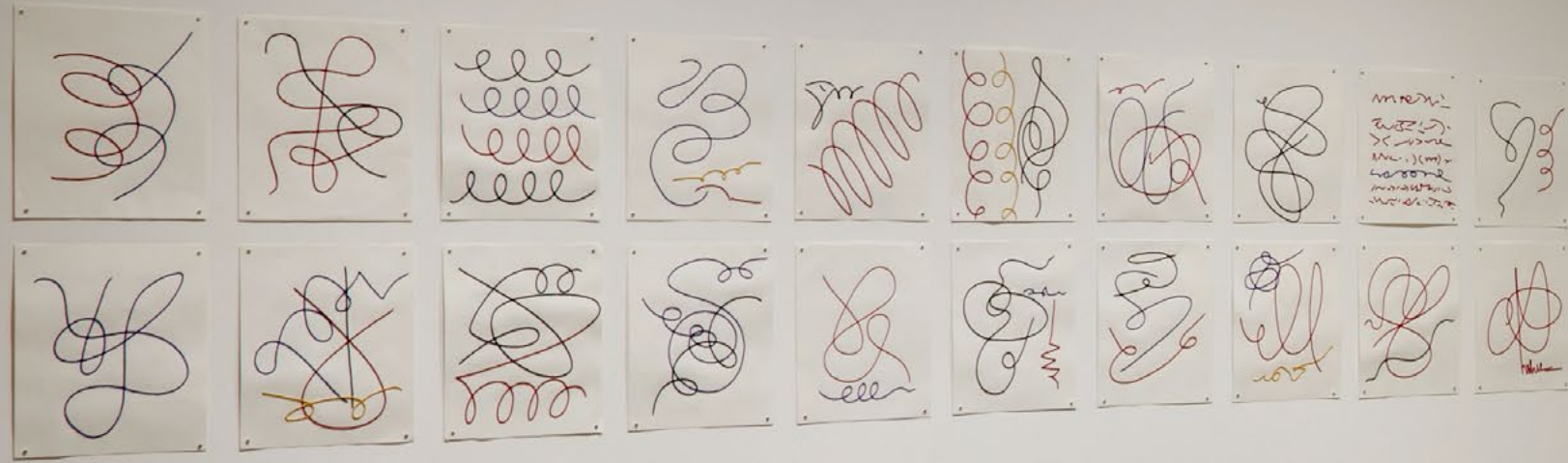


PREVIEW: 02 DEC 2023
5 - 7 PM
ON VIEW THROUGH
31 DEC 2023

Art often broadens our perspective toward economic, socio-political, and cultural processes, and shapes and expands our understanding of reality. The exhibition *Scratch Beneath the Surface* is rooted in art's capability to effect social change and creates a space for voices from the margins to take centre stage. The exhibition presents works by Anshu Singh, Birender Kumar Yadav, Richa Arya, and Thamshangpha Maku.

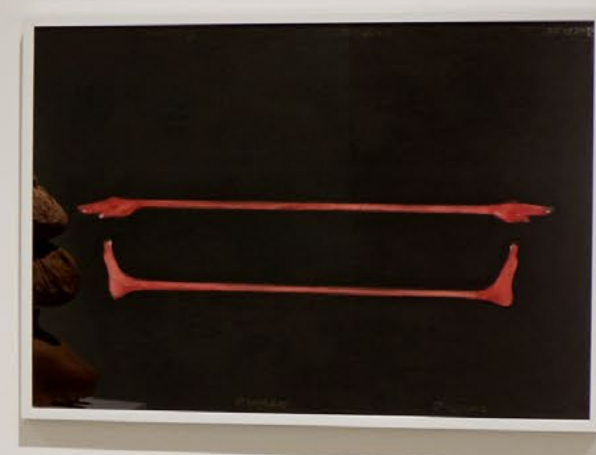
At once poignant and assertive, the works amplify the voices of marginal communities to which the artists belong and foreground their deliberations with issues of identity, agency, belonging, and the nature of labour. Anshu's and Richa's works examine the gendered division and valuation of labour, where domestic craft practices like embroidery, sewing, and beadwork become a carrier of expression against patriarchy and its operations. The works in the exhibition also present varied understandings of the relationship between the centre and the margin. Thamshangpha's seemingly tranquil landscapes depict the brewing tensions between tribes and the mainland as the centre. While everyday tools within Birender's works act as portraits of labouring castes and classes, embodying their conditions and experiences.

Even though grounded in specific contexts, the works carry echoes of global struggles and resistances, and strive to evaluate normative social conditions and behaviours. *Scratch Beneath the Surface* not only foregrounds overlooked yet concurrent realities that are crucial to reflect and act upon, but also kindles an introspection at a personal, local, and global level to realise a world where—human rights are upheld and sustained, social and economic security is shared by all, and differences in practices and perspectives are respected and appreciated.

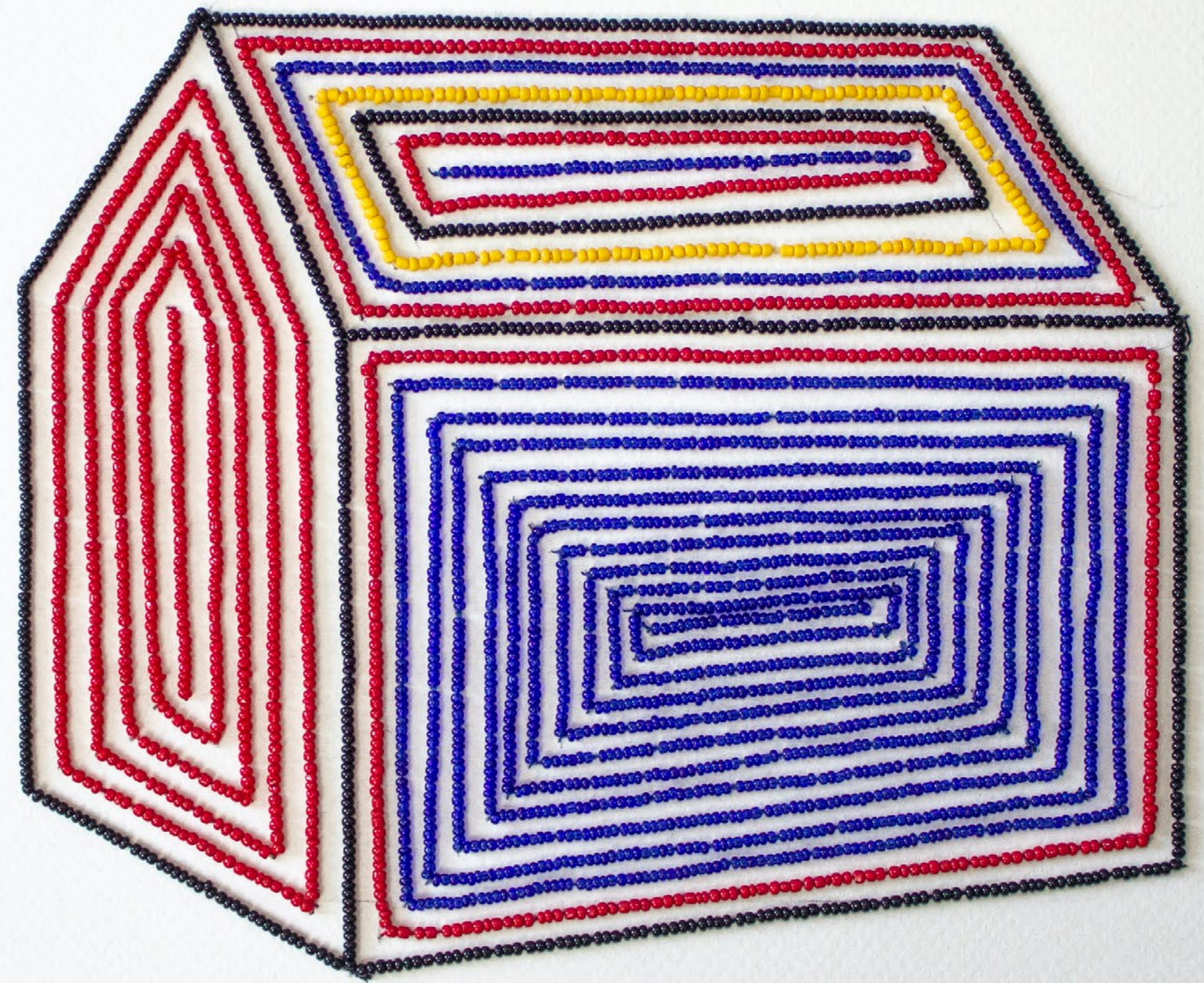


**SCRATCH BENEATH
THE SURFACE**

ANSHU SINGH | BIRENDER KUMAR YADAV
RICHA ARYA | THAMSHANGPHA MAKU

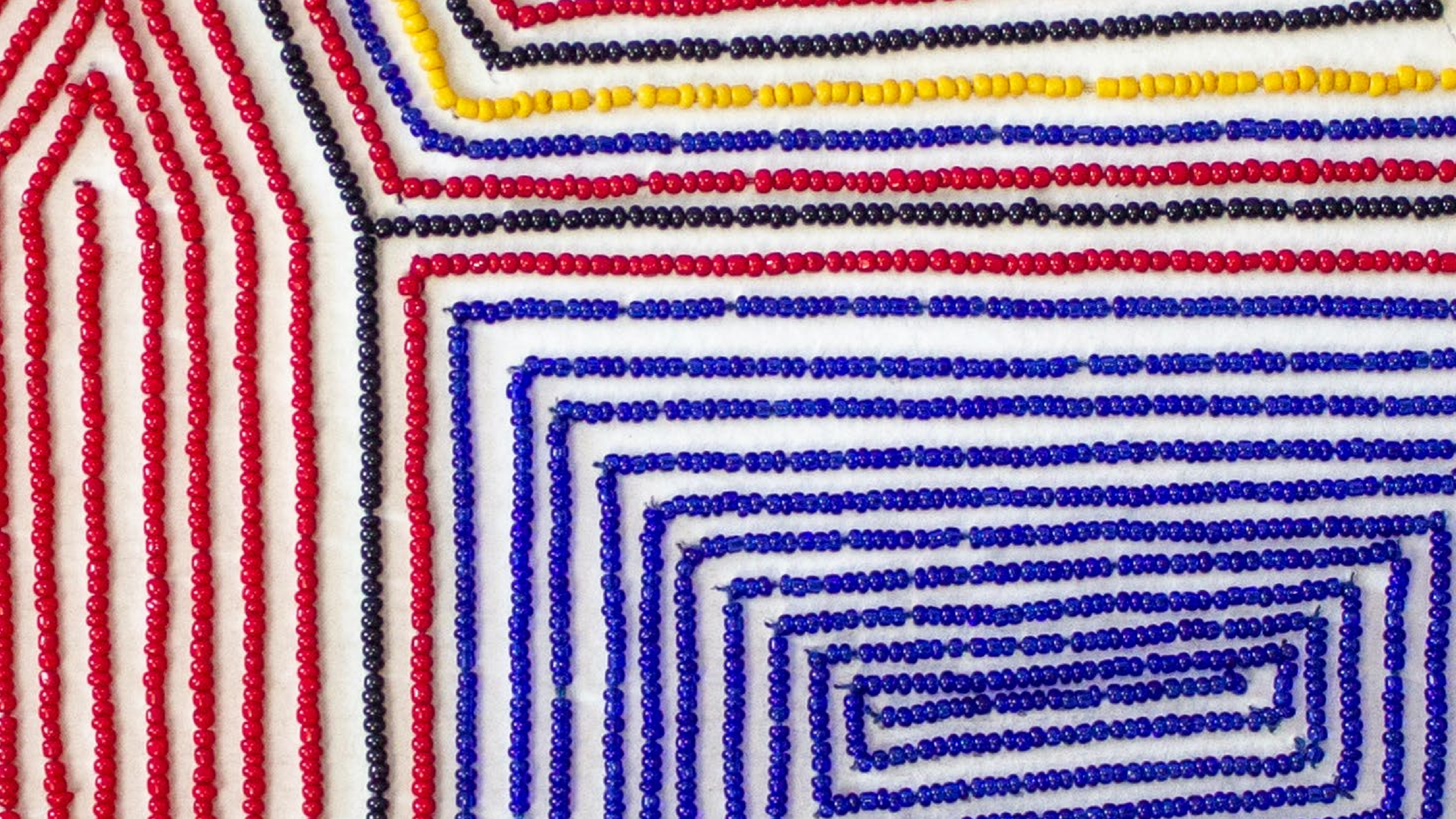


HOME
SWEAT
HOME



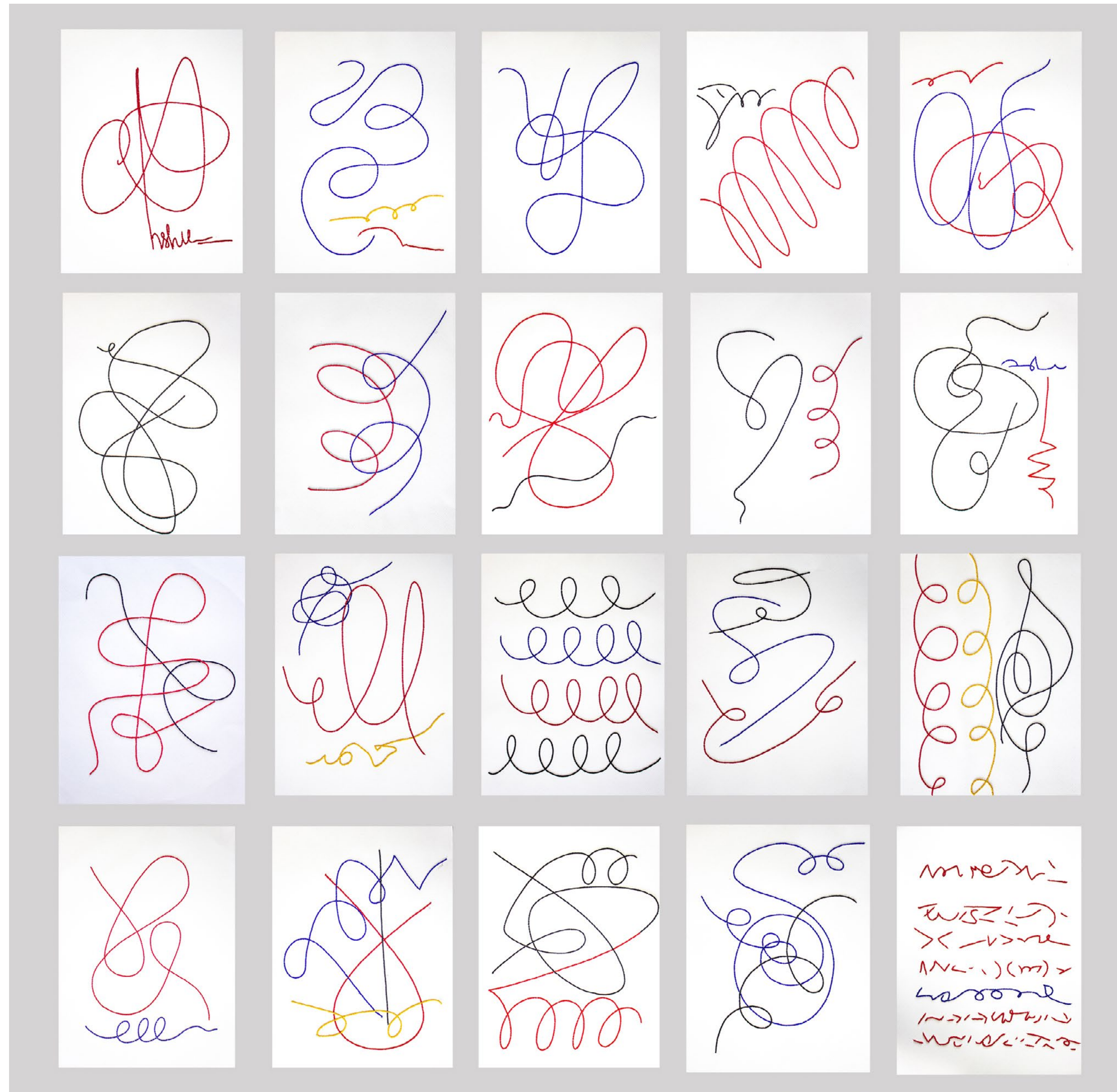
ANSHU SINGH
Home Sweat Home, 2022

Beads Embroidery on Paper
12 x 15.5 in (30 x 40 cm)



ANSHU SINGH
Life of a Thread, 2022

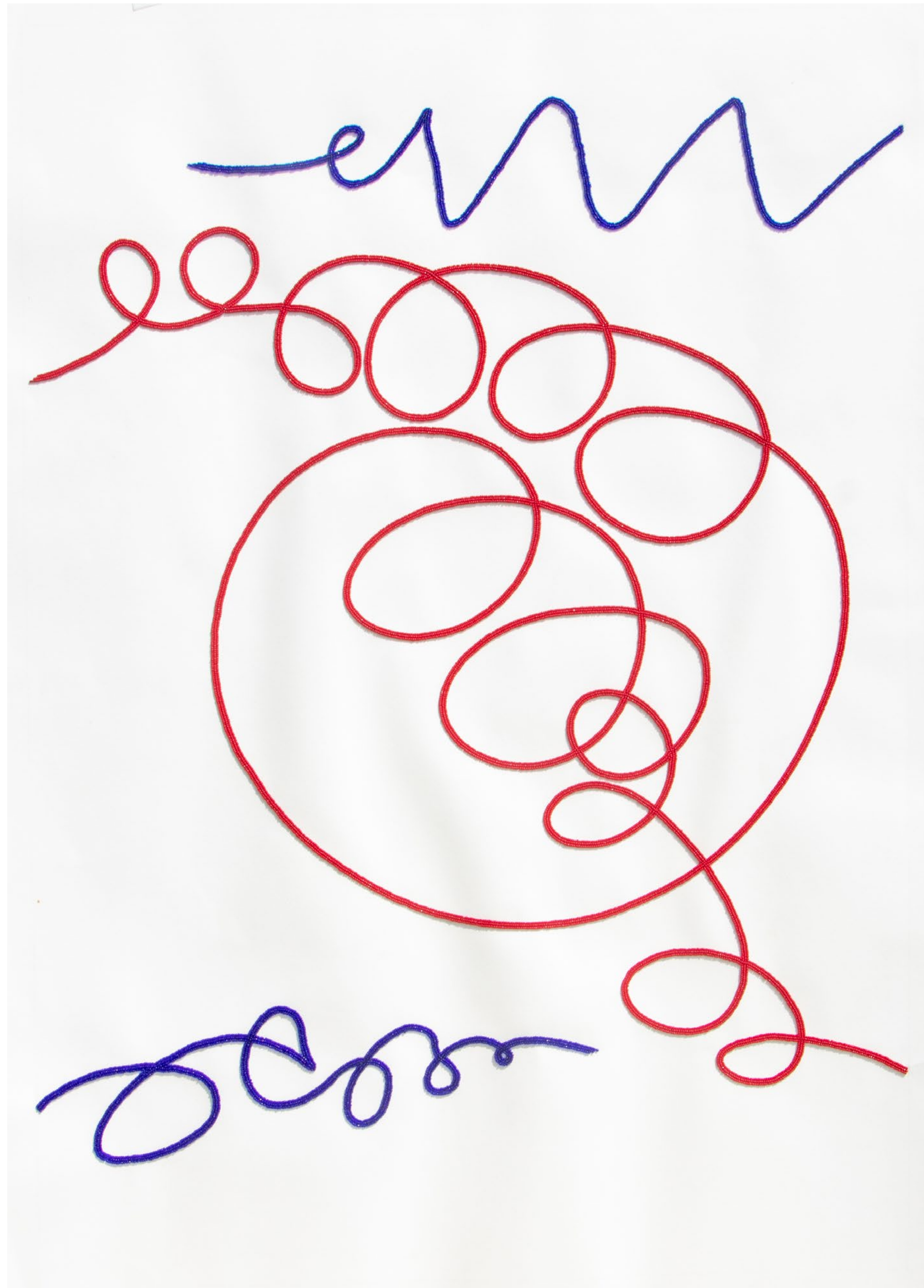
Beads Embroidery on Paper
63 x 59 in (15.5 x 12 in each)
160 x 150 cm (40 x 30 cm each)





ANSHU SINGH
Life of a Thread 1, 2021

Beads Embroidery on Paper
47.5 x 34 in (120.5 x 86.5 cm)
(Not on view)

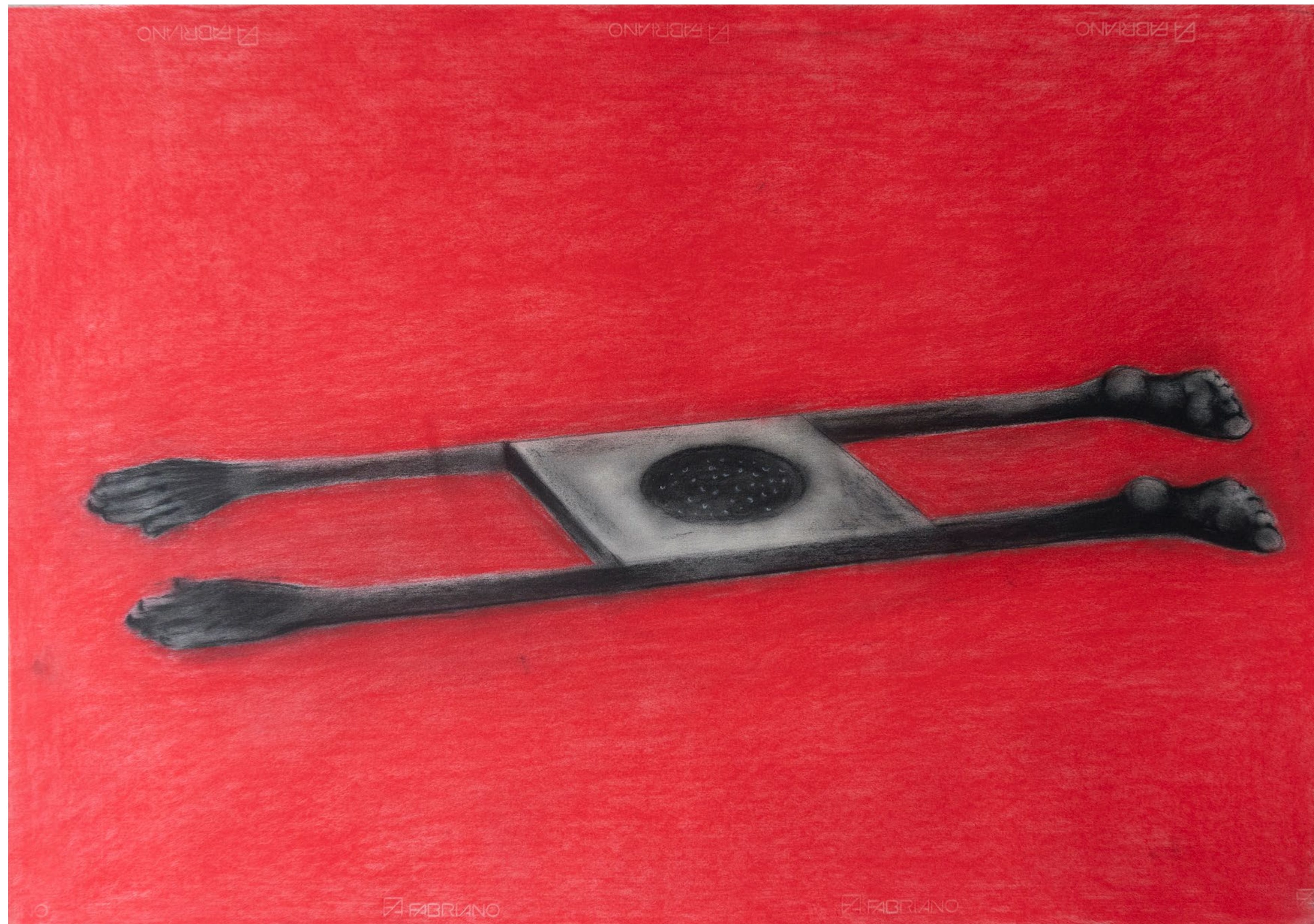


ANSHU SINGH
Life of a Thread 3, 2022

Beads Embroidery on Paper
47.5 x 34 in (120.5 x 86.5 cm)
(Not on view)

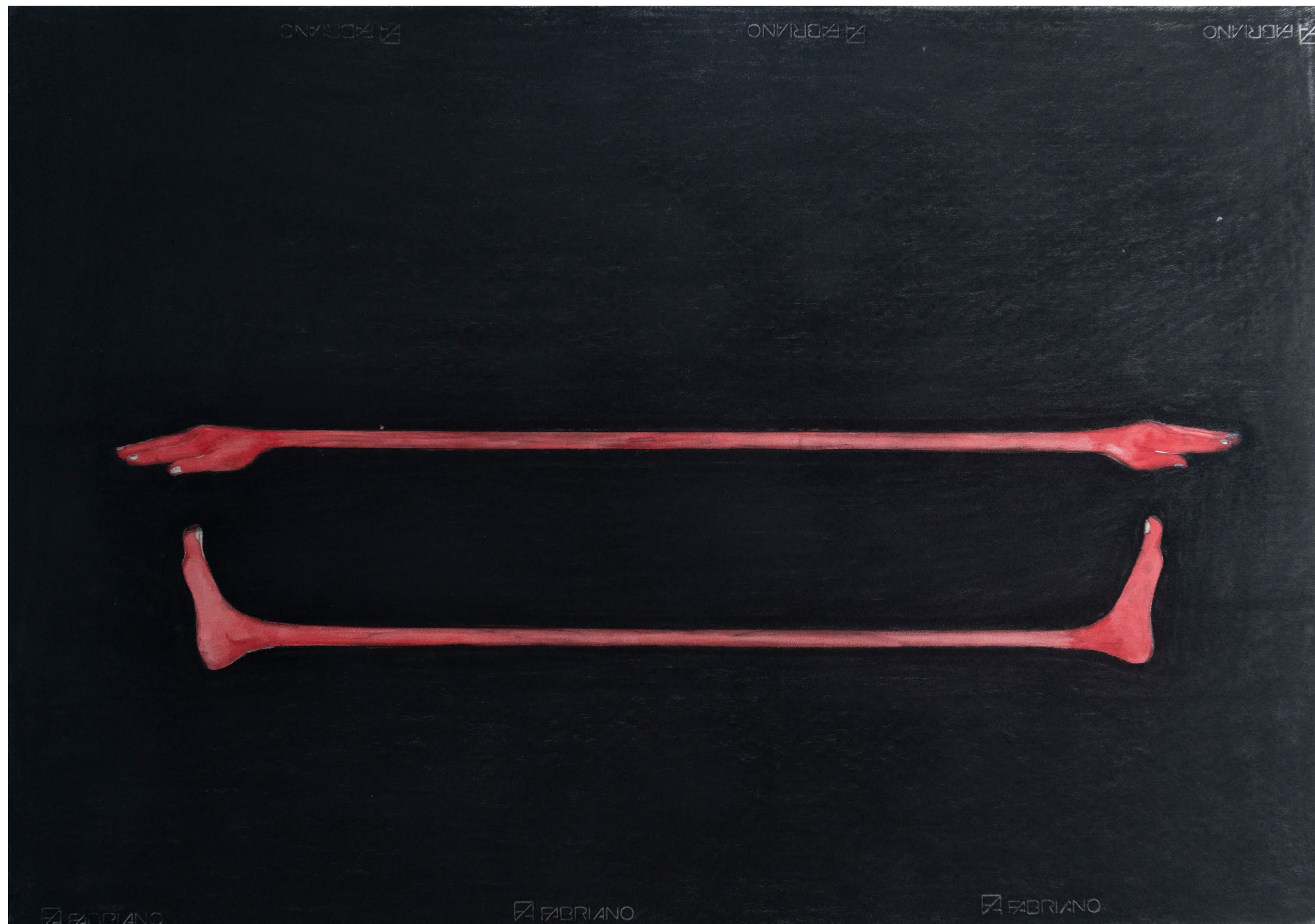
BIRENDER KUMAR YADAV
Life Tools -29, 2021

Charcoal, Soft Pastel, Paper
Unframed size: 28 x 39.5 in (71 x 100.5 cm)
Framed size: 29 x 40.5 in (73.5 x 103 cm)



BIRENDER KUMAR YADAV
Unit, 2021

Charcoal, Soft Pastel, Paper
Unframed size: 28 x 39.5 in (71 x 100.5 cm)
Framed size: 29 x 40.5 in (73.5 x 103 cm)





BIRENDER KUMAR YADAV

Life Tools -37, 2021

Charcoal, Soft Pastel, Paper
Unframed size: 43 x 29 in (109 x 73.5 cm)
Framed size: 44.5 x 30.5 in (115.5 x 77.5 cm)



BIRENDER KUMAR YADAV
Bundle, 2023

Terracotta
29 x 18 x 14.5 in (73.5 x 45.5 x 37 cm)





RICHA ARYA
Skin Cover-2, 2021

Iron Sheet Stitched With Brass Wire,
Paper Stitched With Thread
Unframed size: 48 x 29.5 in (122 x 81 cm)
Framed size: 50 x 31 in (127 x 79 cm)
6 Parts , Unique



RICHA ARYA
Threaded Lives, 2023

Hand Stitched With Iron Sheet, Brass Wire
53 x 55 in (134.5 x 139.5 cm)
Unique

RICHA ARYA
The Last Season, 2023

Hand Stitched With Iron Sheet, Brass Wire, Paper
Unframed size: 34 x 27 in (86.5 x 68.5 cm)
Framed size: 35.5 x 29 in (90 x 73.5 cm)
Unique





THAMSHANGPHA MAKU
Pleasure Over Matters, 2023

Paper, Stich With Yarn, Oil, Canvas
24 x 18 in (61 x 45.5 cm)

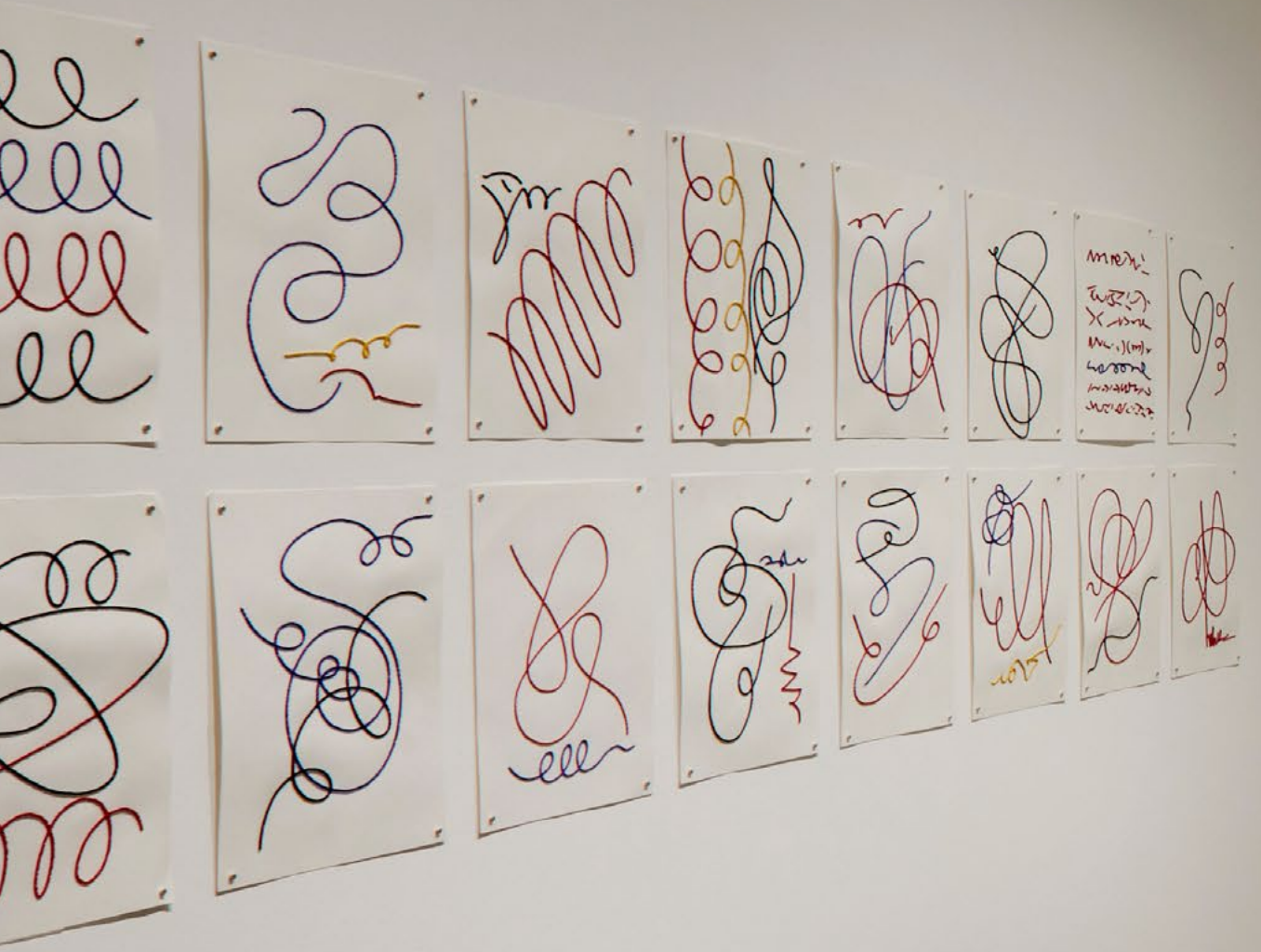


THAMSHANGPHA MAKU
Pleasure Over Matters, 2023

Paper, Stich With Yarn, Oil, Canvas
24 x 18 in (61 x 45.5 cm)









ANSHU SINGH

Anshu Singh was born in 1989 in Varanasi, India and has obtained both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Weaving and Textile Design from the Banaras Hindu University. Her artistic journey took root in her mother's boutique, where she was exposed to the weaver's community that frequented the establishment. As a contemporary artist, her work embraces the intersection of traditional crafts and contemporary contexts. Inspired by the craftsmanship of the marginalized communities traditionally employed in embroidery ateliers, Anshu explores the possibilities afforded by unconventional materials.

Anshu has most recently participated in Fault Lines (2023), a group exhibition at Conflictorium Museum, Ahmedabad, and participated in Art & Soul Foundation's display at the 2023 India Art Fair, New Delhi. She was awarded the Young Artist Scholarship in Visual Art (2014-2015) by the Ministry of Human Resource Department, Government of India, New Delhi.

Anshu Singh lives and works in Varanasi, India.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Anshu's artistic practice pushes the boundaries between artistry and artisanship, emphasizing the importance of the artisans' authorship, particularly among women and Muslim communities who form the majority of the workforce. Her works conceptually navigate these intersections, giving voice and visibility to marginalized communities. In her recent explorations, Anshu has been experimenting with repurposed clothing, plastic, and other everyday materials, creating pieces that seamlessly blend traditional practices with contemporary contexts. Through her art, Anshu not only showcases her technical expertise but also advocates for the preservation of traditional crafts.

ARTIST CV

Born in 1989, Varanasi, India
Lives and works in Varanasi, India

Education

2015 - Masters in Weaving and Textile Design, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India
2013 - Bachelors in Weaving and Textile Design, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India

Group Exhibitions

2023 - Something Else III, Citadel, Cairo, Egypt
2023 - Fault Lines, Conflictorium Museum, Ahmedabad, India
2023 - SA Ladakh, Disko Valley, Leh, Ladakh, India
2022 - 13th Bamako Encounters - African Biennial of Photography, Bamako, Mali
2017 - 6th All India Women Artists' Contemporary Art Exhibition, PU Gallery, Chandigarh, India
2013 - 13th State Lalit Kala Akademi, Uttar Pradesh, India
2012 - National Level Art Exhibition, Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi, Bhubaneswar, India

Awards

2014 - Young Artist Scholarship, Visual Arts, Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Department, New Delhi
2015 - Young Artist Scholarship, Visual Arts, Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Department, New Delhi



BIRENDER KUMAR YADAV

Birender Kumar Yadav was born in 1992 in Ballia, India and is a multimedia artist, with a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, and a Master's degree in Fine Arts in 2015 from the College of Arts, New Delhi. As the son of an ironsmith, he initially studied art as a way to help his father upgrade and develop new techniques. While completing his Master's thesis he began documenting the lives and stories of a group of itinerant brick kiln workers in Varanasi, an experience that has shaped his current practice. Born out of his childhood experiences of growing up in the primarily coal mining district of Dhanbad, Jharkhand, his recent works involve the same clay, as the 'bricks are the representations of the fundamental structural blocks of exploitation and erasures in our community'. He draws from memories and his personal interaction and understanding of the world around him, often collaboratively working with his family and friends who still work in these industries.

Birender had his first solo show "Idhar-Udhar" (Here-There) (2017) at Clark House Initiative. He has participated in the 12th Berlin Biennale (2022) Germany, and the 13th Bamako Encounters - African Biennale of Photography (2022), Bamako. In 2019, Birender was the recipient of the Pro-Helvetia Studio Residency, Switzerland, and the India Residency at Darling Foundry, Montreal.

Birender Kumar Yadav lives and works in New Delhi, India.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Birender's multifaceted practice draws deeply from vernacular aesthetics and indigenous age-old practices of production. For Birender, his works are a means to reconcile the conflicting realities constructed by power structures on the one hand and the struggle-ridden everyday life of the most oppressed on the other. He draws from the memories of his family and his interaction and understanding of the world around him, often collaboratively working with his family and friends who still work in these industries. His recent works mould the same clay used by Kiln workers into large terracotta cubes, which hold within them the detritus of the worker's nomadic lives: clothes, utensils, and other personal effects that have been worn hard by intense use onsite. Drawing on the universal shape of the cube that he saw in their kiln side shrines, Birender's blocks highlight the irony of these simple bricks being shaped into malls and high rises. Similarly, he casts his iron tools in terracotta to demonstrate the fragility of these vocations increasingly made redundant by mechanisation.

ARTIST CV

Born in 1992, Ballia, India
Lives and works in New Delhi, India

Education

2015 - Masters of Fine Art, College of Arts, New Delhi, India
2013 - Bachelors of Fine Art, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India

Solo Exhibitions

2017 - Idhar-Udhar (Here-There), Clark House Initiative, Mumbai, India

Group Exhibitions

2023 - Something Else III, Citadel, Cairo, Egypt
2023 - Object making exercise, Art & Soul Foundation, India Art Fair, New Delhi, India
2022 - Rivers and Road - Meandering Stories of India, AAIE Center for Contemporary Art, Rome, Italy
2022 - Dismantling Aesthetics Of Inhibition, Gallery OED, Kochi, India
2022 - Naya Anjor, Center for Contemporary Arts, Bikaner House, New Delhi, India
2022 - 12th Berlin Biennale, Berlin, Germany
2022 - 13th Bamako Encounters - African Biennale of Photography, Bamako, Mali
2021 - Constitution, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Montreal, Canada
2020 - Sweat (Pasina), Mehnat Manzil Museum, Ahmedabad, India
2019 - Startup States, Sarai Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi, India
2019 - Collection of Undoings, 1x1 Art Gallery, UAE
2018 - Dispute: Landscapes Of Dissent, Constitution Club, New Delhi, India
2018 - The Star is Mine, 1X1 Art Gallery, UAE

Projects

2023 - ARTBAT FEST 11, Almaty, Kazakhstan
2022 - Synthesis of Difference: Contemporary Art Practices from India and South Korea, Korean Cultural Centre India, New Delhi, India
2022 - Revolution and Counter Revolution, Secular Art Movement & Secular Movement, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, India
2019 - Allow me a letter, Mumbai Art Room, Mumbai, India
2018 - Worker and Farmers: The Panorama of Resistance (prelude)- Future, Collaborations, Khoj International Artist's Association, Khirkee, New Delhi, India

ARTIST CV

Residencies

2022 - Arts Exploration Grant, India Foundation for the Arts (IFA), under the Arts Practice Programme, supported by Sony Pictures Entertainment Fund

2019 - India Residency at Darling Foundry, Montreal in partnership with What About Art? and SAVAC, supported by Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation and TATA Steels, Montreal, Canada

2019 - Residency at Workers Arts and Heritage Museum, Hamilton, Ontario

2018 - Pro-Helvetia Studio Residency, Zurich, Switzerland

2017-2018 - Artreach Community Art Grant, Delhi, India

Award

2013-2015 - Young Artist Scholarships in Painting (Visual Arts) by Ministry Of Human Resource Development, Government of India



RICHA ARYA

Born in 1997 in the village of Panipat, India. Richa completed her Bachelors in Sculpture from Kurukshetra University in 2018 and her Masters in Sculpture from Delhi College of Art in 2020. The move from village to a metropolis made Richa aware of the regressive attitudes with regards to women still prevalent in her hometown, and others like it. Richa's use of an unusual material like iron, which she painstakingly pierces and embroiders might be poetically seen as the struggle to make something out of the hard life that is the norm for the women of the village.

Richa had a solo presentation of her work at Triveni Gallery (2021), New Delhi, supported by the Raza Foundation. Most recently she has participated in several group shows like at The Lexicon Art Gallery (2022), New Delhi, and with Carpe Arte (2022), Mumbai; as well as multiple artist camps and workshops. Richa has been the recipient of the Imaginarium Emami Art Award (2023) and the Prafulla Dahanukar All India Merit Award (2021). In 2022, Richa was a resident artist at Serendipity Arts Festival, New Delhi/Goa, and at Khoj Peers, New Delhi.

Richa Arya lives and works in Noida, India.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Drawing from her experience of growing up in a small village in Haryana, she creates poetic works that call into question the existing socio-cultural norms of her village, and others like it. Richa's use of an unusual material like iron, which she painstakingly pierces and embroiders might be poetically seen as the struggle to make something out of the hard life that is the norm for the women of the village. Through interviews, on-ground research, and lived experience, she creates a tapestry of images, closely associated with the home and the women who inhabit these spaces. Her stitching reveals intricate patterns, representing what she feels should be the level of cohesion and appreciation for everyone who participates in society. Richa's core belief is that 'even the smallest cog in the grand machinery of life contributes as much as its biggest'.

ARTIST CV

Born in 1997, Panipat, India
Lives and works in Noida, India

Education

2020 - Masters in Sculpture, College of Art, Delhi University,
New Delhi, India
2018 - Bachelors in Sculpture, Kurukshetra University,
Kurukshetra, India

Solo Exhibitions

2021 - STITCHED, Triveni Gallery, New Delhi, India

Group Exhibitions

2023 - Young Collective Week, New Delhi, India
2023 - Art Incept Gallery, STIR New Delhi, India
2022 - Art Incept Gallery, STIR New Delhi, India
2022 - Space118, Mumbai, India
2022 - Lexicon Gallery, New Delhi, India
2022 - Carpe Arte, Mumbai, India
2021 - Abir Foundation, Ahmedabad, India
2019 - Abir Foundation, Ahmedabad, India
2021 - Shrish3 Art Gallery, Hyderabad, India
2019 - 7th woman Artscape, Chandigarh, India
2018 - The State Gallery of Art, Hyderabad, India
2018 - 6th woman Artscape Chandigarh, India
2017 - 83rd All India Exhibition, Amritsar, India
2017 - Modern Art Gallery, Odisha, India

Residencies

2023 - Serendipity Art Residency, New Delhi/Goa
2022 - Khoj Peers, New Delhi

Awards

2023 - Imaginarium Emami Art Award, Kolkata
2021 - Prafulla Dahanukar All India Merit Award
2019 - Abir Foundation
2019 - 8th woman Artscape Merit award
2019 - College of Art 2nd Award, New Delhi
2018 - College of Art Merit Award, New Delhi
2018 - AIFACS Award
2018 - Prafulla Dahanukar (Haryana) State Award
2017 - Prafulla Dahanukar' City Award



THAMSHANGPHA MAKU

Born in 1999 in Chandel, India, Thamshangpha Maku completed his Bachelors in Painting from the College of Art, New Delhi in 2020, and a Masters in Painting from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in 2022. In native communities the relationship with nature is that of coexistence and sustenance, rather than exploitation and alienation. Living away from his Naga community, Thamshangpha feels acutely the alienation and discrimination, located as he is on the periphery to the centre, i.e. the rule makers. It is these encountered experiences as well as the notion of living at the periphery that has created a dialogue within his artistic process.

In 2022, Thamshangpha participated in group shows at Anant Art Gallery, MASH India in partnership with Khoj and Priyasri Art Gallery. He was also a fellow at Immerse 2023 at Somaiya Vidyavihar University, Mumbai. In 2022, he was awarded the FICA Emerging Artist award in Delhi.

Thamshangpha Maku lives and works in Vadodara, India.

ARTIST STATEMENT

For the Manipur-born artist the forms, motifs and imagery in Naga tribal culture are born from a close observation of indigenous flora and fauna. In native communities the relationship with nature is that of coexistence and sustenance, rather than exploitation and alienation. Now based in Vadodara, he views the world differently, through layers of speculations and policies that appear to camouflage nature. Living away from his Naga community, Thamshangpha feels acutely the xenophobia and discrimination, located as he is on the periphery to the centre, i.e. the rule makers. In these circumstances, he goes back to his mother's wise words of nurture and sustenance bearing fruit. His artistic process is influenced by these experiences and the idea of being on the margin.

ARTIST CV

Born in 1999, Chandel, India
Lives and works in Vadodara, India

Education

2022 - Masters in Painting, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Baroda, India
2018 - Bachelors in Painting, College of Art, New Delhi, India

Exhibitions

2023 - Lost Fragrance of Infinity, Space 118, Mumbai, India
2023 - Young Collectors Weekend, Stainless Steel Gallery, Mumbai, India
2022 - Breaking the Mould, Anant Art Gallery, Noida, India

Residencies

2023 - Artist in Residence, India Art Fair, New Delhi, India
2023 - HH Art Space Residency, Supported by TATA Trust, Kochi Muziris Biennale, and Student Biennale, Goa, India
2023 - FICA residency at Arthshila, Bihar, India
2023 - Immerse 2.0, Somaiya Vadyavihar University, powered by Carpe Arte, Young Art Support and Shaleen Wadhvana, Mumbai, India

Awards

2023 - Student Biennale Award, TATA Trust, Kochi, India
2022 - Emerging Artist Award, FICA , supported by Mrinalini Mukherjee, New Delhi, India





ABOUT VHC | VIDA HEYDARI CONTEMPORARY

VHC | Vida Heydari Contemporary is an international art gallery in Pune specialising in contemporary art and representing established and emerging artists with diverse backgrounds, across a variety of mediums and genres. Founded in 2020 with an emphasis on authenticity, quality and innovation, VHC aims to contribute to the cultural fabric of the city. The gallery is committed to fostering the careers of its artists and sharing their work with a global audience, providing a platform for under-represented artists, presenting pioneering museum-quality exhibitions, positive collaborations, price transparency and offering a very hands-on and tailored high-quality experience. In less than three years from its inception, VHC has mounted significant exhibitions featuring local and international artists. It has also participated in some of the most prestigious art fairs, such as Art Basel Hong Kong, India Art Fair and India Design ID. In addition to the gallery program, VHC hosts talks, performances, workshops and educational programs to create engaging and enriching artistic experiences that capture the essence of life.

ABOUT THE FOUNDER

VHC was founded by Vida Heydari, a visionary curator, gallerist and collector with nearly two decades of diverse experience in the global art world. She has worked with accomplished Indian, Iranian and Chinese contemporary artists and has consulted for various private and public collections. Known for her keen eye for detail and talent recognition, Heydari's Canadian-Iranian heritage and long exposure to Indian Culture have also informed her curatorial choices. This is reflected in VHC's unique collection that celebrates the fusion of Eastern and Western artistic influences. Under Heydari's direction, VHC has become a platform to encounter and engage with relevant contemporary art practices from around the world.

VHC
VIDA HEYDARI
CONTEMPORARY

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