

SEARCHING FOR LEMURIA: INDIA 2012 AND BEYOND



INTRODUCTION

LESLEY ALWAY, DIRECTOR, ASIALINK ARTS

Asialink, based at the University of Melbourne is Australia's leading centre for the promotion of public understanding of Asia and Australia's role in the Asian region.

The role of Asialink Arts is to encourage dialogue and develop opportunities for cultural exchange and engagement between Australia and Asia based on the principles of partnership, collaboration and reciprocity.



Gigi Scaria, Macgeorge Fellow 2012 and Lesley Alway, Director, Asialink Arts at India Art Fair 2012

India is a key priority of Asialink Arts cultural exchange programs. Since 2011 we have partnered with the Australia India Institute and other cultural institutions at the University of Melbourne to build a long term engagement strategy between the arts and cultural sectors of Australia and India. Working this way has proven to be a rewarding experience for Asialink Arts and developed a rich network of expertise and support amongst our colleagues. The University of Melbourne partners include Asialink Arts, The Australia India Institute, The Ian Potter Museum of Art and the Victorian College of the Arts.

In developing a cultural engagement strategy for India, we proposed a research model based on the search for 'common ground' inspired by the mythical lost continent of Lemuria that supposedly linked Australia and India. We received some seed funding from both Arts Victoria and the Australia India Institute to support a small delegation of arts sector professionals to undertake a research visit to Delhi in January 2011. This was designed to coincide with four key festivals: The India Art Summit, Jaipur Literature Festival, Bharat Rang Mahotsav Theatre Festival and the Attakkalari Dance

Biennial. Participants included Vicki McInnes, Director of the Margaret Lawrence Gallery at the VCA, Bala Starr from the Ian Potter Museum of Art as well as Andrew Ross from the Powerhouse in Brisbane and Asialink staff. We were also joined by a number of Asialink Arts residents. From this initial visit, a number of projects evolved and were presented during a return visit to India in 2012. The projects included a curated Australian art video program at the India Art Fair, presentation of author Richard Flanagan at the Jaipur Literature Festival as well as research for new exhibition and residency projects. A number of these will culminate in late 2012 as part of the Australian Government's 'Oz Fest 2012' cultural festival in India.



Eliza Roberts, Arts Residencies Manager, photographing Museum of Indian Terracotta at Sanskriti Kendra, Delhi

The purpose of this publication is to profile these and other projects that will occur in both India and Australia to demonstrate the diversity and depth of the partnerships that have produced such a rich group of collaborative programs. Utilising the resources and expertise of colleagues at the University of Melbourne has been a great joy and transformational experience for all of us involved.

In developing this program, we have also had support from many other partners and funders including the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria, the Australia International Cultural Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australia Council for the Arts. Asialink Arts would particularly like to thank both Professor Amitabh Mattoo and Dr Nick Hill from the Australia India Institute for their enthusiastic support of the overall partnership and the various projects. We look forward to working with them on the next chapter.



Dylan Martorell, *Fieldworks*, Jakarta, 2011

SOUNDTRACKS, DYLAN MARTORELL AT KOCHI-MUZIRIS BIENNALE

Invited to participate in the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India's first international biennale to be held in Kerala, Victorian artist Dylan Martorell will present *Soundtracks*, an ongoing project that explores personal journeys, the evolution and migration of music and how we as a society deal with material refuse.

Collaborating with local artists and developing site-specific robotic (musical) vehicles during a residence prior to the Biennale, Dylan will engage audiences and invite their participation into activating these new creations.

Soundtracks, as an interactive art work reflects the ways in which different cultures approach concepts of recycling, reusing and recontextualising materials in a way in which developed Western countries have until recently ignored. Determined by what is found and influenced by street-based examples of portable nomadic activities such as street vendors homeless shelters, garbage collectors and recycle workers, *Soundtracks* is a project in cross cultural reciprocation.

VENUE AND DATES:

12 December 2012 - 13 March 2013

Kochi, Kerala

http://www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/our_work/arts/Exhibitions_on_Tour/soundtracks

ASIALINK ROVING RESIDENCY 2012

NIKHIL CHOPRA



Asialink introduces Indian artist Nikhil Chopra as the inaugural recipient of the Asialink Roving Residency 2012. The artist will 'rove' for five weeks between Sydney, Melbourne and Fremantle, where he will be introduced to new networks and opportunities along the way.

Interdisciplinary artist Nikhil Chopra is based in Goa. His practice is grounded in cultural history and personal memories. Chopra's residency will begin in Sydney with a site-specific endurance performance that responds to the history and architecture of his host, Carriageworks in New South Wales.

In Melbourne, Victoria, Nikhil Chopra will conduct a Performance Lecture at the Victorian College of the Arts. He will also participate in a panel discussion in collaboration with the Ian Potter Museum of Art and Utopia@Asialink as part of the Melbourne Festival.

The artist will conclude his Roving Residency with a performance lecture at the Fremantle Arts Centre, Western Australia that summarises his voyage.

Chopra's residency forms part of a reciprocal exchange with 1. Shanthiroad in Bangalore. Asialink resident Janet Meaney and Carriageworks resident Justene Williams have been the Australian recipients of this exchange.

A post-residency publication that documents Chopra's outcomes and maps his Australian journey will be produced by Asialink.

VENUE AND DATES:

Melbourne

Event: Performance Lecture

Date: Tuesday 9 October, 12.30pm

Venue: Victorian College of The Arts (VCA),
Federation Hall, Grant Street, Southbank

Event: Panel Discussion Lemuria: Cultural
Entanglements between Australia and India

Date: Monday 15 October, 6 - 7.30 pm

Venue: The University of Melbourne,
Yasuko Hiraoka Myer Room, Level 1,
Sidney Myer Asia Centre

www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/roving_residency_2012

Sydney

Event: Three-day Endurance Performance

Date: 28 - 30 September, 10am - 9pm daily

Venue: Carriageworks, 245 Wilson St, Everleigh

Fremantle

Event: Performance Lecture

Date: Tuesday 30 October, 7.30pm

Venue: Fremantle Arts Centre, The Pavlich Room,
1 Finnerty St, Fremantle

Above
Nikhil Chopra, *Inside out*, 2012
live performance.
Photography: Shivani Gupta,
Costume: Sabine Pfisterer

PROGRAM PARTNERS



UTOPIA@ASIALINK AND THE IAN POTTER MUSEUM OF ART, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE,
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MELBOURNE FESTIVAL



SLEEP ON THE LEFT SIDE



seven art ltd.



VCA
Victorian College
of the Arts

ROVING RESIDENCY 2012



Department of Culture and the Arts



FREMANTLE
ARTS CENTRE



CARRIAGEWORKS



VCA
Victorian College
of the Arts

THE BOOKWALLAH



Front Cover
Nikhil Chopra, *Inside out*, 2012
live performance.
Photography: Shivani Gupta,
Costume: Sabine Pfisterer



UTOPIA@ASIALINK AND THE IAN POTTER MUSEUM OF ART, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE,

FORUM

LEMURIA: CULTURAL ENTANGLEMENTS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND INDIA

The utopian idea of Lemuria is an imaginary, submerged landscape hugging the shoreline between Australia and India. This forum comprises insights by leading cultural theorists, artists and curators who examine the complexities of working cross-regionally while speculating on how we can navigate the shorelines of all our practices.

Speakers:

- **Nikhil Chopra**, Goa-based artist and Asialink roving resident 2012
- **Emily Floyd**, Melbourne-based artist and former Asialink resident in India
- **Jitish Kallat**, internationally acclaimed Mumbai-based artist
- **Dr Chaitanya Sambrani**, curator, writer and lecturer, ANU
- **Gigi Scaria**, Delhi-based artist and Macgeorge Fellow 2012
- Chaired by **Natalie King**, director, Utopia@Asialink and **Bala Starr**, senior curator, the Ian Potter Museum of Art

VENUE AND DATE

Monday 15 October 2012 at 6pm

FREE ENTRY

The University of Melbourne,
Yasuko Hiraoka Myer Room, level 1,
Sidney Myer Asia Centre

Please RSVP by registering online
www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/utopia

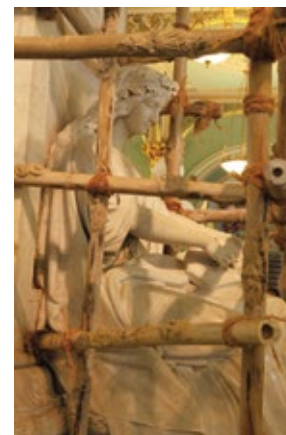
EXHIBITIONS

JITISH KALLAT: CIRCA

Curated by **Bala Starr** and **Andrew Jamieson**, Ian Potter Museum of Art & **Natalie King**, Utopia@Asialink

Internationally acclaimed Mumbai-based artist, Jitish Kallat presents his first solo exhibition in an Australian museum, conceived as an evolving narrative experiment with multiple interventions across the Ian Potter Museum of Art. The central sculptural component, *Circa*, comprises 120 scaffolding poles cast in resin that are tied, propped and bound within the museum, recalling scaffolding found throughout India and Asia.

Kallat's repertoire appears across the museum including drawings of cracks on vitrines housing Indian antiquities in the Classics and Archaeology Gallery; a nocturnal buffering projection on the Potter's façade suggestive of interstitial moments; and mirrored 'cracks' in the Potter's atrium that reflect hidden aspects of the museum. Kallat constructs a sculptural conversation within the museum in order to explore notions of duration and restoration and to evoke unexplained narratives.



Left
Gigi Scaria Face to face, 2010
digital print on archival paper
111.8 x 162.6 cm © Courtesy the artist

Gigi Scaria Amusement park (production still), 2009
single-channel video with sound
5 minutes © Courtesy the artist

Gigi Scaria Settlement, 2009
wood, mirror glass, paint
203 x 457 x 153 cm © Courtesy the artist

Gigi Scaria Fountain of purification 1, 2011
aluminium, aluminium fabricated sheet, water pump, paint
height 732 m, diameter 3.04 m (base) © Courtesy the artist

IN ASSOCIATION WITH MELBOURNE FESTIVAL PRESENT

Kallat (born 1974) has participated in major exhibitions at venues such as the Arken Museum, Denmark, 2012-13, Musée d'art Contemporain de Lyon (2011), Tate Britain, London (2011) and Saatchi Gallery, London (2010) amongst others.

VENUE AND DATES:

13 October 2012 – 7 April 2013

FREE ENTRY

The Ian Potter Museum of Art
The University of Melbourne
Swanston Street (between Faraday and Elgin streets)
Parkville

Tuesday – Friday 10am – 5pm
Saturday – Sunday 12 – 5pm
Monday closed

www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/utopia
www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au



All Above
Jitish Kallat *Circa* (detail), 2011
resin, steel, rope © Courtesy the artist and Arndt Berlin
Photo: Dr Bhanu Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai

GIGI SCARIA: PRISMS OF PERCEPTION

Curated by Bala Starr, Ian Potter Museum of Art & Natalie King,
Utopia@Asialink

Delhi-based artist and Macgeorge Fellow Gigi Scaria presents video installations as a precursor to his major solo exhibition at the Ian Potter Museum of Art in 2013. Deploying humour and images of India's rapid urbanization, Scaria creates environments of the future by constructing imaginary architectures and unfamiliar landscapes. Scaria's experience of moving from his village in the southern state of Kerala to the sprawling national capital made clear to him the alienation commonly experienced by migrants.

Gigi Scaria (born 1973) is one of a new generation of Indian artists who have established a significant international exhibition profile including the 2011 Venice Biennale (India's debut presentation), curated by Ranjit Hoskote. Since 1994, he has participated in more than 90 exhibitions throughout India and in the US, the UK, Europe, Asia, Israel, the West Indies, the Middle East and South Africa.

VENUE AND DATES:

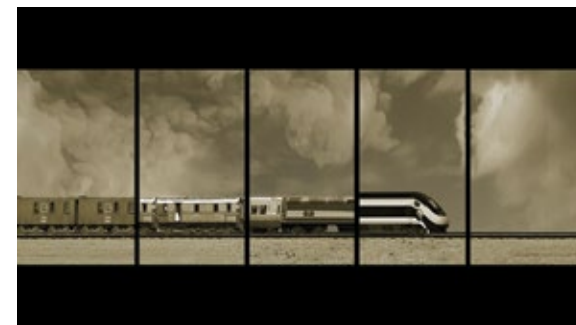
13 October – 28 October 2012

Gigi Scaria is supported by the Macgeorge Bequest

FREE ENTRY

The Ian Potter Museum of Art
The University of Melbourne
Swanston Street (between Faraday and Elgin streets)
Parkville

www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/utopia
www.art-museum.unimelb.edu.au



FILM

TO LET THE WORLD IN, VOLUME 1 (2012)

Producer: Sanjay Tulsyan, Art Chennai

Concept & Interviews: Chaitanya Sambrani

Cinematography and Direction: Avijit Mukul Kishore

Duration: 93 minutes

Premiering in Australia at the Melbourne Festival, *To Let the World In, Volume 1* (2012) is a new documentary film that lures us into the intriguing world of contemporary Indian artists. Avijit Mukul Kishore's skillful cinematography reveals candid insights, studio interviews by Chaitanya Sambrani and unique footage of 10 renowned Indian artists including Gulum Mohammed Sheikh, Vivan Sundaram, Nalini Malani, N. Pushpamala, Anita Dube and Atul Dodiya.

VENUE AND DATES:

Wednesday 17 October at 6pm with an introduction by Chaitanya Sambrani

FREE ENTRY

Federation Hall
Victorian College of the Arts
Grant Street
Southbank

Please book online www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/utopia

Above
Gigi Scaria *Prisms of perception* (production still), 2010
single-channel video with sound
4.25 minutes © Courtesy the artist

THE BOOKWALLAH: SIX WRITERS. A POPUP LIBRARY. 2000KM BY TRAIN

AUSTRALIAN WRITERS: Michelle de Kretser, Benjamin Law, Kirsty Murray

INDIAN WRITERS: Chandrahas Choundhury, Sudeep Sen, Annie Zaidi

LIBRARY DESIGNERS: Soumitri Varadarajan, Georgia Hutchinson, RMIT School of Architecture and Design

PROJECT LEADERS: Nic Low, Asialink Arts and Catriona Mitchell



Benjamin Law, Annie Zaidi, Kirsty Murray, Chandrahas Choundhury, Michelle de Kretser, Sudeep Sen.

The Bookwallah takes six writers and an ingenious travelling library across India by train. Three Indian and three Australian writers journey through the cities and towns of modern India in search of stories, conversations and connections.

Poet Sudeep Sen, novelist and critic Chandrahas Choudhury, and journalist and fiction writer Annie Zaidi join novelist Michelle De Kretser, young adult author Kirsty Murray, and non-fiction writer Benjamin Law.

The tour begins at the Mumbai LitFest, pauses in Goa and Bangalore, and finishes more than 2000 km away in Chennai. Along the way they'll be stopping to discuss their new books and meet readers. They'll also dine with Indian writers in their homes, converse with key thinkers and visit some of India's most thought-provoking places.

The writers are accompanied by unique luggage: a portable, pop-up library. Veteran Indian designer Soumitri Varadarajan and Australian designer Georgia Hutchinson have created a series of exquisite custom-made suitcases that open and transform into bookcases, filled with hundreds of new Australian books. Part library, part art installation, visitors can browse, sit and read, or take part in intimate library events. Books from the library will be donated to universities and local libraries along the way.

VENUE AND DATES:

31 October – 21 November 2012

Mumbai, Goa, Bangalore, Chennai.

Follow the journey across India at www.thebookwallah.com, and on twitter at @theBookwallah

SLEEP ON THE LEFT SIDE KATE DAW, EMILY FLOYD, JOHN MEADE.

Curated by Vikki McInnes, Director, Margaret Lawrence Gallery



Sleep on the left side brings together new work by three leading contemporary Australian artists, each of whom has previously spent time working in India, and whose art practice continues to be informed by time spent there, as well as by subsequent visits and conversations. The exhibition takes its title from the Cornershop song of the same name and alludes to the dualities, dichotomies and the sense of politic that each of the artists engages in different ways and through different sets of relations and conditions: Kate Daw through everyday artefacts and narratives, Emily Floyd through social politics and John Meade through particular historical monuments. There are many literal, philosophical and metaphysical associations the title will call to mind . . . the political left, of course; left and right brain functions. *Sleeping on the left side* is also said to increase happiness!

This project is presented by the Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Victorian College of the Arts (The University of Melbourne) in conjunction with Seven Art Limited, and is a direct result of international research undertaken in January 2011. In 2013, three contemporary Indian artists represented by Seven Art Limited – Aakash Nihalani, Brendan Fernandes and Saravanan Parasuraman – will travel to Melbourne to undertake artist residencies and participate in an exhibition at the University of Melbourne's Margaret Lawrence Gallery.

VENUE AND DATES:

Seven Art Limited

19 December 2012 to 19 January 2013

M Block Market
Greater Kailash II
New Delhi

Margaret Lawrence Gallery

September 2013

Victorian College of the Arts
40 Dodds St
Southbank

Above
Emily Floyd
Herrhut Commune, 2012
Lithograph, 95 x 67 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne