



## Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts

presents

### RETELLINGS

an exhibition of works from the *Goa Open Arts Catalyst Grants 2020*  
in partnership with **Goa Open Arts** and **Goethe-Institut** (Max Mueller Bhavan Mumbai)

*with the participation of*

***Afrah Shafiq, Asavari Gurav, Bhisaji Gadekar, Kommas, Nandita Kumar & Poonam Pandit***

10 February to 07 March, 2021

#### ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*Wherever a story comes from, whether it is a familiar myth or a private memory, the retelling exemplifies the making of a connection from one pattern to another: a potential translation in which narrative becomes parable and the once upon a time comes to stand for some nascent truth... Our species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories.*

– Mary Catherine Bateson

Six artists who live and work in Goa retell and reinterpret experiences rooted in mythology, folklore, folk art, nature, and a post-truth world. Afrah Shafiq, Asavari Gurav, Bhisaji Gadekar, Kommas, Nandita Kumar and Poonam Pandit come together in a multi-media exhibition of artwork inspired by each artist's unique experience and interpretation of their life in Goa. The exhibiting artists are grantees of the *Goa Open Arts Catalyst Grant 2020* that was instituted at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic with the intention of providing ongoing support to the artistic community of Goa.

Responding to the precarious environmental situation that threatens Mollem Forest, KOMAS has created *Mollem Resonance* - an audio-installation that is inspired by this precious endangered habitat. Remixing field recordings to create a unique soundscape, KOMAS imagines the forest as a living entity in harmonization with them. Also bringing together environmental urgencies and new media apparatuses, Nandita Kumar presents 'a chance score', which is generated through the interplay between language and the construction of meaning. In this multimedia installation, Kumar deconstructs political statements related to varied environmental issues from the vast amounts of gathered data.

Like Kommas' audio composition, textile designer and weaver Poonam Pandit creates a series of tactile woven compositions that draw upon the narrative of fiber, originating from the natural old world, into the modern synthetic, conservational ecologic and technologic future world.

Growing up against the background of Goa's rich culture and folklore, Asavari Gurav and Bhisaji Gadekar each present a body of work that highlights their modern interpretation of traditional subject matter. Gurav plays with text and images to create a dream-like space in which the figurative and abstract create a sense of the absurd. Her drawings, paintings and artist books take reference from her own poems, literary sources, theatre, Goan culture and socio-political conditions. Gadekar, established as one of India's emerging talents in the field of performing arts, continues his dialogue with confronting tropes of gender, sexuality and self-representation through the use of costuming and dress. For *Retellings*, Gadekar presents a new piece that looks back at his family's tailoring profession, and his own misgivings, excitements and questions about ideas of 'dress'. Through this performance, Gadekar also investigates the changing face of traditional handicrafts in Goa.

Afrah Shafiq, a multimedia artist and filmmaker by training, creates an installation that churns together folk literature, songs, myths, religious and cultural practices, testimonies, historical data, academic writing, theories and musings from Goa. The work uses sound, electronic prototyping, folk imagery to look at the syncretic nature of goddess worship across Hindu and Catholic traditions in Goa.

The works in the exhibition are a showcase of their research, ideation and experimentation via the *Goa Open Arts Catalyst Grant* from August 2020 to January 2021.

*Descriptions of the artists' works and their biographies are in the following pages.*

## **MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

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## ABOUT SUNAPARANTA



Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts was founded by Dipti and Dattaraj V. Salgaocar. It is a not-for-profit, process-based public arts space that dialogues directly and freely with the community to encourage creation, learning, understanding and appreciation of various art forms. Over the years, Sunaparanta has showed work from nationally and internationally acclaimed artists like Dayanita Singh, Julian Opie, Vasco Araujo, FN Souza, Ram Kumar, Bharat Sikka, Olivia Fraser, Antonio Piedade da Cruz, Ida Kar, Lancelot Ribeiro, Jacob Felländer, Hassan Khan, Akram Zaatari, Matthias Müller, Alejandro Cesarco, Simryn Gill, Shambavi Kaul, Shilpa Gupta, Paul Mathieu, and hosted lectures by Anne Enright, Roger Ballen, William Dalrymple, Jitish Kallat and several other stalwarts of the art world.

## ABOUT GOA OPEN ARTS



Goa Open Arts is the initiative of a group of creative professionals living in Goa aimed at galvanising the creative talent pool that resides in Goa. In addition to the significant native population of Goa's artists, makers and performers, a large number of designers, writers, artists, musicians, chefs and whatnot have come from all over the country and the world to make Goa their home. Through its bi-annual Goa Open Arts festival, the Catalyst Grant and various other activities, it seeks to be a platform where the creative community of Goa can come together and create something new.

## A TALE OF TWO SISTERS

### AFRAH SHAFIQ

*Once upon a time, a young brother sets out of his home with his seven sisters to drop each one of them to their husband's homes. The journey takes a long time and he is finally ready to return home. But the sisters have already begun to miss their mother's home and one by one they start to cry. They cry so much that their tears make the rivers swell up and flood. The brother gets caught in the flood and endlessly swirls in the river, trying hard not to drown. The only way he can save himself is if the flood subsides. The only way the flood will subside is if his sisters stop crying. The only way his sisters will stop crying is if the brother goes to pick them up from their husband's homes. Stuck in this deadlock situation since the beginning of time, all of them have lost touch with each other and the story is forgotten. But the grinding stone, an age-old confidant of young women, remembers...*

The grinding stone, or the *dantem* as it is known in Konkani, was often handled by the youngest daughter in law, the newly married bride. She sat grinding all day and as she laboured, she confided in the stone. It is no surprise then that *oviyos*, or the grinding songs, are mostly about pining for home and reuniting with brothers. I wondered why the girls didn't sing much for their sisters.

Speaking of sisters who never got to meet, I began to think of the two most prominent female goddesses in Goa – Mother Mary and Shantadurga. Some say that Mother Mary is simply a version of Shantadurga. Maybe that's why they are both called by the same name, "*saibini*". Others say that Mother Mary, or rather Milagres Saibinn of Mapusa is one of seven sister deities who came to Goa along with their brother. Maybe that's why coconuts and flowers are sent back and forth the temple and church during their feasts. But who was this brother, and where was their home? There is talk of an origin, older than the pyramids of Giza, *sateri*, the sacred termite mound, the home of snakes...

Churning together folk literature, songs, myths, religious and cultural practices, testimonies, historical data and academic writing from Goa, Afrah Shafiq uses the form of the grinding stone to look at the syncretic nature of worship across Hindu and Catholic traditions in Goa.



*AFRAH SHAFIQ is a multimedia artist based out of Goa. Using the process of research as a playground, she brings together the verified world of facts, history and archival findings; linking them to a speculative world of feelings, folklore and fantasy. She often makes interactive-hybrid forms using animation, code, sound and the handmade, seeking ways to retain the tactile within the digital and the poetry within technology.*

*Her work has been shown at the Lahore Biennale, the Kochi Muziris Biennale, Computer Space Bulgaria and the Fusebox Festival among others. She has been a research fellow at the Institute of Advance Studies in France and attended residencies at Fluent Collaborative in Austin and the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art.*

## ONCE UPON A TIME

### ASAVARI GURAV

Asavari Gurav's work takes inspiration from animistic representations prevalent in folk culture. Stories of various characters are animated through myriad forms that include painting, embroidery and illustration. Viewers are invited to enter a fantastical world where they are confronted with the ambiguity of these mythical subjects. Here, they begin a dialogue with the protagonists of the work, while oscillating between real and imagined spaces



*ASAVARI GURAV is currently pursuing her Masters in Graphic Arts following a Bachelors in Visual arts from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. Her work incorporates text and image that she transforms into subliminal dreamscapes. She references Goan literature and theatre that critique contemporary socio-cultural conditions*

## SECOND SKIN II

### BHISAJI GADEKAR

In collaboration with Alice D'Souza, Shilpa Shiva Gawde, Rajashree Faras, Geeta Faras, Laxmi Faras, Ranjana Faras & Asha Faras

Second Skin II is a performance-based, sculptural installation that takes its genesis from the traditional skills of craftsmanship that are now becoming extinct with modern technology. In this piece, Bhisaji presents fashion garments constructed and assembled from bamboo, shown off and experienced in an atelier. The work is representative of the artist's sartorial lineage where acts of stitching, cutting and embroidering take the form of rituals.

The first edition of this project took the form of terracotta installations inspired by Azulejo and its relationship to the history of Goa.



*BHISAJI GADEKAR received his Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art from Goa College of Art and Master's Degree in Fine Art from Santiniketan. His works integrate sculpture, performance and site-specific installations. He has worked in a collateral project Janela at Kochi Muziris Biennale, 2014 and has also been an active member of Kolkata International Performance Art Festival (KIPAF) and HH Art Spaces, Goa.*

*Bhisaji is presently engaged with the contemporary artists group: Goa Artists Collective. He has performed at various art institutions and initiatives such as Goa Open Arts Festival, 2020; Theertha Performance Platform, Colombo, 2019; Museum of Goa, 2019; Serendipity Art Festival, 2018, 2017 & 2016; The Lusofonia, Macau, 2018; Poonam Lodge with Goa Artist Collective, 2018; Khoj Workshop Goa, 2017; Sensorium Arts Festival, Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts, 2014.*

## MOLLEM RESONANCE

## KOMAS

Komas' sound installation *Mollem Resonance* is inspired by Mollem National Park, its forest and wildlife to bring to life a sound/music based composition with the forest as a living entity, harmonizing with us as a sonic embroidery giving voice to this endangered habitat. The musical composition synthesizes the field recordings from Mollem National Park and its surroundings to create music and beats using computer-based digital processing as well as musical instruments and the artists' voices. The installation consists of synthesised compositions of bird calls, cricket chirps, gusts of wind, rain drops and leaves rustling with recorded sound and musical arrangements layered over them accompanied with spectrographic drawings created in real time and in response to the original field recordings.



*KOMAS is Enit, ko, Srinivas, each hailing from diverse art practices such as photography and performance, drawing and painting, computer arts and music. KOMAS came together to form a band/art collaboration in 2018 to explore the intersection between music and sound through their interest in the vernacular, ritual and theatre, language and location, structures and systems found in nature, ecology and activism. Their compositions are an interaction between live musical instruments, vocals and field recordings which are transposed by computer-based software*

FROM PARADIGM  
TO PARADIGM  
INTO THE BIOMIC TIME

NANDITA KUMAR

Nandita Kumar's installation is representational of a newspaper-press going in a constant loop that comments on the constant regurgitation of misinformed and manipulative facts by individuals who have the ability to influence public opinion to protect their own interests. This new media work deconstructs political statements related to varied environmental issues by collating statements made by influential individuals, media, politicians, companies; that were then put through a code generating "Haiku poems", which will form the basis of creating a chance composition generating music through a punch piano. A book placed next to the installation will allow the viewer to connect the different Haiku generated and understand the functioning of our ecosystem and its misinterpretations.



*NANDITA KUMAR is a new-media artist who works at the intersection of art, environmental science, technology and community to create interactive installations. Her interest lies in propelling the human race towards sustainable development, which not only focuses on environmental protection but also social development. She employs technology as though it were a natural element in an extended ecosystem. Her works are hybrids, rooted simultaneously in human nature while a pervasive electronic layer is integrated seamlessly. Nandita has shown at the Centrein Pompidou, ZKM, Kiasma, KNMA,*

## INTERWOVEN

### POONAM PANDIT

Poonam Pandit presents an anthology of weaves showcasing the evolution of fibre as it journeys through the ancient past into the present.

She uses natural fibres like jute, cane, grass, banana, cotton, wool and synthetic fibres that are bioluminescent, neon, recycled polyester, retro-reflective and fibre optic.

Her work is displayed as a series of tactile compositions that draw upon the narrative of thread as it weaves its way across traditions, cultures and technologies.



*POONAM PANDIT is a textile designer and weaver.*

*Her work is defined by the use of innovative materials and techniques with traditional textile artisanry and is positioned at the intersection of art, craft and design.*

*Her label 'Kalakar' focuses on conserving Goa's valuable heritage of handloom weaving, through a meaningful practise that is sensitive to local ethos.*

*She works with educational institutions, craft and design organizations, and artisanal textile groups across the country.*