

**curatorial portfolio**  
**arshad hakim**

arshad hakim's curatorial practice is grounded in institution building and creating infrastructures of knowledge, with particular interests in histories of abstraction, archives, and moving image. he has worked with museums, foundations, and independent art organisations, in which he has led projects from research and conceptualising to production, publication, and public engagement. simultaneously, he maintains an active artistic practice exhibited in India and internationally.

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Install view: Nasreen Mohammadi, *An Abstract Turn: Baroda from the 1950s to Now*, curated by Deeksha Nath for Ark Foundation for the Arts, Vadodara. Photo Credit: Dhaivat Shah.

## Exhibition

### *An Abstract Turn: Baroda from the 1950s to Now*

curated by Deeksha Nath for the Ark Foundation for the Arts  
2025

developed exhibition frameworks alongside the curator and realised project deliveries from research, artist liaison, exhibition production, publications, budgets, installation, logistics, hospitality, and opening events.

The curatorial intent of *An Abstract Turn: Baroda from the 1950s to Now* is to trace the evolution of abstraction from its early experiments in stylization and distortion to the later languages of minimalism, primitivism and material and sensory investigations at the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University of Baroda, through the practices of key alumni and faculty, spanning over seven decades.

From the modernist sculptural language of Sankho Chaudhuri to the architectural gestures of Vishwa Shroff, the exhibition examines how abstraction, far from being a singular, formal category, has functioned as a site of inquiry, resistance, spirituality, trauma, and material poetics in the Indian subcontinent. Rather than positioning abstraction as a stylistic departure from figuration, *An Abstract Turn* foregrounds it as a parallel and often understated trajectory within Baroda's artistic and pedagogical history.

The Faculty of Fine Arts at M.S. University, established in 1950, has long been a crucible for experimentation and critical artistic discourse in India. While its lineage is often shaped by the figurative and narrative traditions of the Baroda School, this exhibition proposes an alternate historiography, one that centres abstraction as a radical and often quiet force running through its artistic legacy. Rather than treating abstraction merely as formal reduction or non-representation, the exhibition approaches it as a method of thinking, embodiment, and expression. By mapping this trajectory through selected artists, the exhibition foregrounds the plurality of abstraction—as meditative structure, as material foregrounding, as postcolonial cartography, or as feminist resistance.

The project includes major figures such as G.R. Santosh, Jeram Patel, Himmatt Shah, Ira Chaudhuri, J. Swaminathan, Mahendra Pandya, Nasreen Mohammadi, Shanti Dave, Jayashree Chakravarty, and Manisha Parekh, alongside mid-career and emergent artists like Avantika Bawa, Sukhdev Rathod, Sashikanth Thavudoz, Soghra Khurasani, Teja Gavankar, Arshad Hakim and Dhaivat Shah. Together, they create a dynamic intergenerational dialogue that highlights Baroda's enduring role in shaping abstraction as both practice and pedagogy.



Install view: Himmat Shah, *An Abstract Turn: Baroda from the 1950s to Now*, curated by Deeksha Nath for Ark Foundation for the Arts, Vadodara. Photo Credit: Dhaivat Shah.



Install view: (L) GR Santosh (R) Jayashree Chakraborty, *An Abstract Turn: Baroda from the 1950s to Now*, curated by Deeksha Nath for Ark Foundation for the Arts, Vadodara. Photo Credit: Dhaivat Shah.



## Exhibition

### *Histories Loved and Tempered : The Nilima Sheikh Archive*

An exhibition curated by Samira Bose for Asia Art Archive in India in collaboration with Ark Foundation for the Arts.

2024

developed exhibition frameworks alongside the curator and realised project deliveries from research, artist liaison, exhibition production, publications, budgets, installation, logistics, hospitality, and opening events.

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“The traditions of tempera painting I had learnt to love—Indian, Asian, and European, gave me clues to code my new concerns.”

—Nilima Sheikh, *A Note on Paintings III*

How might the etymology of a word uncover various threads of an artist’s research, methods, and sensibilities? This exhibition uses “tempera” as a conceptual device to engage materials from the archive of artist Nilima Sheikh.

The exhibition is segmented based on terms that share etymologies with, or are related to, tempera—temperature: to consider the mix of climates and geographies the artist encountered through her travels; tempus: to think through the complex temporal registers of materials in the artist’s studio; and tempering: in Sheikh’s collaborations with theatre practitioners and illustrations for children’s books. This exhibition is curated by Samira Bose for Asia Art Archive in India with support from Pallavi Arora, Noopur Desai, Özge Ersoy, Arshad Hakim, and Sneha Ragavan.

Installation View. *Histories Loved and Tempered: The Nilima Sheikh Archive*. An exhibition by Asia Art Archive in India in collaboration with Ark Foundation for the Arts, Curated by Samira Bose. Photo Credit: Dhaivat Shah.



Installation View. *Histories Loved and Tempered: The Nilima Sheikh Archive*. An exhibition by Asia Art Archive in India in collaboration with Ark Foundation for the Arts, Curated by Samira Bose. Photo Credit: Dhaivat Shah.



Installation View. *Histories Loved and Tempered: The Nilima Sheikh Archive*. An exhibition by Asia Art Archive in India in collaboration with Ark Foundation for the Arts, Curated by Samira Bose. Photo Credit: Dhaivat Shah.



moderated panel discussion on

*Vasudha Thozbur: Diaries, Projects, Pedagogy 1998–2018*

published by SSAF-Tulika Books as the first in the Art Documents series, edited by Geeta Kapur.

at the Ark Foundation for the Arts, Vadodara  
2025

link to the video [here](#).  
about the Book:

In the artist's own words:

“This book is a compilation of texts that were written as a response to different compulsions. As the title indicates, it contains diary entries, seminar papers, catalogue essays and excerpts from a series of nine books related to an extended project undertaken between 2002 and 2012. Woven together, as they are, it is hoped that they create a narrative that exceeds the sum of its parts. I write, as I paint, to break the skin of the everyday, to create ruptures that provide access to dimensions of life as lived through the practice of art. Diaries and journals are doorways to a kind of becoming that leaves little scope for obfuscation or concealment: they provide loops that one can enter at any time and still feel a sense of being in the present, and in truth – despite its mutations and uncertainties.”

Art Documents, under the SSAF–Tulika Books imprint, is conceived as a series of montaged text and image documents, at once archival, contemporary and contextual. Creatively introduced and edited, these books seek to present multivalent forms of discourse where there is no single thesis, and no necessary convergence of the vectors released in the process of inquiry. Geeta Kapur is Series Editor of Art Documents. *Vasudha Thozbur: Diaries, Projects, Pedagogy 1998–2018* is the first book in the series.



## Exhibition

**VISIBLE/INVISIBLE: Representation of Women in Art through the MAP Collection  
Musuem of Art & Photograh, India  
2023**

co curater and programe coordinater for the exhibition

VISIBLE/INVISIBLE, a three-year long exhibition, explores the representation of women through artworks in the collection. It attempts to re-address preconceived notions of femininity and gender as a social construct through art history by providing a more inclusive understanding towards it.

For centuries, while women have been one of the central themes of artistic representation, the image builders have largely been male, allowing women very little control over the nature of their mainstream representation. This exhibition focuses on such central themes but also presents ideas and histories which provide a counter to it. Sacrifice, nourishment, aggression, abandonment, desire, success, struggle and power dynamics form a common thread across the exhibition to highlight selected stories of women.

Approximately 130 artworks ranging from tenth century to contemporary including sculptures, textiles, posters, paintings and photographs by a diverse range of artists and makers are featured. They are interwoven into four key sections based on narratives and counter-narratives: Goddess and Mortal, Sexuality and Desire, Power and Violence, and Struggle and Resistance. Each section presents how women's lives have been portrayed, the spaces that they occupy and challenges that women have faced in the Indian subcontinent. The themes and ideas explored in Visible/Invisible hopes to encourage audience awareness of the history and role of women and gender in art. It does not attempt and cannot be a holistic representation of the several issues that are necessarily part of any investigation on gender representation and its consequences.

Through a programme of associated talks, commissioned research papers, round table discussions and public discourse, this exhibition aims to engage with multiple viewpoints, to ask questions and to provide the tools and contexts for audiences to form their opinions and challenge existing ones.



## Publication

*VISIBLE/INVISIBLE: Representation of Women in Art through the MAP Collection*  
Museum of Art & Photography, India  
2023

editorial and publication coordinator

link to the book, [here](#)

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*VISIBLE/INVISIBLE: Representation of Women in Art through the MAP Collection* accompanies the Museum of Art & Photography's inaugural exhibition and offers a critical exploration of how women have been represented across centuries of art in the Indian subcontinent. Drawing from MAP's collection, the publication brings together nearly 130 artworks ranging from the 10th century to contemporary times, including sculptures, textiles, paintings, posters, and photographs.

Structured around four thematic sections—Goddess and Mortal, Sexuality and Desire, Power and Violence, and Struggle and Resistance—the book examines the frameworks through which women's lives, identities, and roles have been depicted. Each section is introduced with broader contextual arguments, followed by artwork images and descriptions that propose both narratives and counter-narratives. Quotations, excerpts, and poems are interwoven throughout, offering multiple vantage points and deepening the dialogue around representation, gender, and power.

An introductory essay by MAP Director Kamini Sawhney situates the exhibition within wider feminist discourse, while essays by Shukla Sawant, Vijeta Kumar, and Arushi Vats extend its critical scope. Developed over three years, *VISIBLE/INVISIBLE* seeks to challenge preconceived notions of femininity and gender as social constructs by presenting more inclusive and nuanced perspectives. Rather than offering a definitive account, the publication encourages readers to question established narratives, engage with diverse viewpoints, and reflect on the evolving histories of women and gender in art.

# Beyond Theory

Mapping  
Feminist Practices  
in the Contemporary

## Programming Schedule

Friday, 24 March 2023 (DAY 01)

Venue : Mazumdar - Shaw Auditorium, 1st Floor

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10 am - 10:15 am    | <b>Welcome Address</b><br><i>by Kamini Sawhney</i>                                                                                                                                 |
| 10:15 am - 10:30 am | <b>Introductory Remarks</b><br><i>by Arshad Hakim</i>                                                                                                                              |
| 10:30 am - 11:00 am | <b>Panel 01: Still Staying with the Trouble</b><br><i>A conversation between<br/>Renuka Rajiv and Arnika Ahldag</i>                                                                |
| 11:00 am - 12:30 pm | <b>Panel 02: On Feminist Curating: Identity, Control and Reach</b><br><i>A conversation between Srajana Kaikini, Pramodha Weerasekera and Veeranganakumari Solanki</i>             |
| 02:00 pm - 03:00 pm | <b>Panel 03: On Writing With Bodies that Play: Encounters in the Archive and the Classroom</b><br><i>A conversation between Arushi Vats and Vijeta Kumar</i>                       |
| 03:30 pm - 05:00 pm | <b>Panel 04: The Expanded Document</b><br><i>A panel discussion moderated by Rashmi Sawhney.<br/>Speakers include Yashaswini Raghunandan, Adira Thekkuveetil, and Afrah Shafiq</i> |
| 05:30 pm - 06:00 pm | <b>Film Screening: Tambaku Chaakila Oob Aali</b><br><i>25 min, Language: Marathi (with English subtitles)<br/>A film by Yugantar Film Collective</i>                               |

## Conference

*Beyond Theory: Mapping Feminist Practices in the Contemporary*  
Musuem of Art & Photography, India  
2023

curatorial lead and program coordinator for the first edition of the conference.

The Museum of Art & Photography invites you to its first annual conference in conjunction with the three-year-long, inaugural exhibition at MAP, VISIBLE/INVISIBLE: Representation of Women in Art through the MAP Collection.

The conference, Beyond Theory: Mapping Feminist Practices in the Contemporary, picks up on themes of the exhibition and expands upon them by moving back in time and simultaneously taking stock of how the sector is being shaped in the contemporary moment. We aim to bring forth, re-look and re-question, and thereby reorient existing frameworks that surround discourses on gender identities and gendered politics within creative practices. The aim is to also address the need to re-evaluate questions of power and how power operates within gendered relations especially for and within the broader cultural sector.

Drawing from the various thematic threads of the collection, the exhibition highlights questions and frameworks in order to broaden the arguments within feminist discourse. Showcasing almost a hundred and thirty artworks, the exhibition is divided into four sections, following the exhibition narratives: Goddess and Mortal, Sexuality and Desire, Power and Violence and Struggle and Resistance.

By expanding on the dialectics of the exhibition, the conference is centred on what constitutes feminist practice in the contemporary milieu. To do so, we zoom into the various modalities of what constitutes the word “practice” in today’s time. This includes artists’ practice, curating exhibitions as productions, writing as practice, archival and research-driven practices and practices of organising or coming together that foreground making and research.

The formats include panel discussions, artists’ presentations, and conversations, concluding with a performance. Please [click here](#) to view the full programme and list of speakers.



## Digital Exhibition

*K.G. Subramanyan: Baburupee in the Panorama*

Museum of Art & Photography, India in collaboration with Asia Art Archive in India, 2022

co-curator along with Samira Bose and Vaishnavi Kambadur

link to exhibition [here](#)

*Baburupee in the Panorama*, builds on works in the collection of the Museum of Art & Photography (MAP) and documentation from K.G. Subramanyan's digitised personal archive with Asia Art Archive in India (AAAI).

With K.G. Subramanyan's writings as a starting point and guiding matrix, this exhibition forms poetic frameworks around his tools: intuition, curiosity and material knowledge. The exhibition explores two key ideas: the panorama from an introductory talk titled 'Art and Craft Panorama in India', and the figure of the baburupee, from a catalogue text in 1994. Following his playful imaginary excursions and discovering "a magic in making" in the panorama, the exhibition takes the viewer through independent, yet converging meanderings through artworks, writings and keywords.

[From Writing to Seeing and back](#): a conversation between the curators Arshad Hakim, Vaishnavi Kambadur, and Samira Bose discuss their curatorial collaboration for an exhibition on K. G. Subramanyan.

thank you.