

## **Migrating Identities - Naini Arora & Shruti Mahajan**

### **Westwerk**

Admiralitätstr. 74

20459 Hamburg

Germany

<http://westwerk.org/naini-arora-shruti-mahajan.html>

### *Opening:*

Tue, Nov 7th 8 pm

### Artist Talk:

Fr, Nov 10th 8pm

### *Opening hours:*

Wed – Fr, 4 – 7 pm

Sat / Sun, 1 – 4 pm

and on arrangement

Within the idea of (global) migration lies the notion of a more or less uncontrolled movement of objects and people. People migrate, ideas migrate, never knowing, where things or people may end up. And what plants may grow in an alien environment. A displacement from known places to different worlds. With all the possible benefits or detriments this may cause.

Shruti Mahajan (Hyderabad) and Naini Arora (Hyderabad/ Bangalore) both deal with some sort of migration and displacement in their own ways. Thus inquiring cultural and social backdrops of multiple identities and affiliations in a modern India that would also hold true for many other places in a so-called 'globalized' world. Whatever – at any rate – the term 'global' may actually mean anyway.

Way beyond our eurocentric stereotyping of India as a homogeneous state it actually appears as being divided between North and South, into urban and rural regions, religious and ethnical groups. On the one hand, India raises a firm claim for tolerance towards everyone. May her/his issues be of a cultural, religious, ethnical or a gender-related nature. On the other hand traditional values, the cast system and the colonial past still have a stronghold in Indian society.

These conflicting entities are reasons for many of the on-going migration movements – past and present – that shape India today politically as much as socially. And as a consequence a strong preoccupation with questions of decent, identity, memory unfolds. Just as the works of Shruti Mahajan and Naini Arora show: In their visual archives of paintings, prints, videos, performances or installations they scrutinize the self-contradictory structures, that surround them and which seem to be in constant movement. Making it rather uneasy for a foreign on-looker as much as for any party involved itself, to get a clear grasp on what's actually happening and where objects and people move to.

Anja Ellenberger

(Art & Film Historian/ Curator)

**Naini Arora** (Goa – India) Naini Arora (Goa – India) studied Fine arts in Goa, Baroda and Hyderabad. At present she teaches at Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore. Her research revolves around the theory and practice of visual arts with a focus on photography. She is currently engaged in site-specific works that explore the subtle relations that bind entities to each other and how shift in spaces transform those relations. She works in various materials as print-impressions from wood, photography, video, cowdung and clay. She has shown her work in Hyderabad, Goa, New Delhi and Connecticut. In 2016, she was artist-in-residency at Frise, Hamburg and showed her work at Schloß Agathenburg.

**Shruti Mahajan** (Dhar – Indien) studied painting in Baroda and Textile Design in Ahmedabad. In her paintings, prints, installations and videos she focusses on borders, affiliations or memory. Her ‚visual archives‘ look back into the past as well as into the present, reflecting on personal experiences and observations of a life lived in military cantonments in contemporary India. Shruti has presented her work in New Delhi, Mumbai, Kochi and Hyderabad as well as in Berlin, Cologne, Dusseldorf and Frankfurt. Since 2009 she stayed in Germany for various artist-in-residencies in North Rhine-Westphalia and now in Hamburg.

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