

Praneet Soi, *Srinagar*

New acquisition on view in *The Collection Now* 28.02 – 10.04.2016

From Thursday 28 January 2016, one of the project rooms in the exhibition *The Collection Now* will be dedicated to a recent acquisition by the Van Abbemuseum: the work *Srinagar* by Praneet Soi (Kolkata, India, 1971). Delving into ideas linked to the depiction of Srinagar's cultural fabric and the slippages in the public understanding of its rich historical legacy, the show is set against the backdrop of the violence, loss and longstanding misrepresentation of Kashmir in mainstream media. It brings together Soi's artistic probe into Srinagar's cultural elements as well as his contemplative reflection on Kashmir's portrayal in the public domain.

The opening of the exhibition takes place on Thursday evening 28 January at 7.30 pm with an artist talk between Praneet Soi and Charles Esche, director of the Van Abbemuseum.

The installation

Soi's first visit to Srinagar was in 2010, shortly after violent protests erupted across Kashmir and waves of stone pelters, young and old, descended on the streets of the city. Srinagar was the first stop of a personal journey through which Soi seeks to dig into the connections between forms and images which have travelled, through the passage of time, across China, Iran and India. It was in relation to this enquiry and in an attempt to understand the links between Kashmir, Central Asia and Iran that he spent his time in the city documenting the many historic Sufi shrines in Srinagar. He furthered this investigation at the Smithsonian, where he was awarded a fellowship to study South Asian and Islamic Art at the Freer and Sackler Galleries.

It was during his first trip to Srinagar that he met Fayaz Jan, the *Ustad* (Master Teacher) of an atelier where he later returned to work in 2014. Jan's apprentices painted traditional motifs on the papier-mâché boxes and objects that flood shops across Kashmir. The art of papier-mâché, a composite material made of pulped paper and adhesive which hardens as it dries, travelled to Kashmir from Iran much like the decorative patterns on Sufi architecture. Soi worked with the craftsmen to create experimental compositions based upon historical designs they still work with today.

The installation consists of 44 painted papier-mâché tiles arranged upon a table. The walls surrounding the table have been painted chalk-board black. On the surface are traced in chalk a sequence of images including one from Leonardo Da Vinci's 'Codex Atlanticus' which speaks of anamorphosis, a perspective technique which causes an image to appear distorted. Soi's reference to the method is an oblique allusion to the state of Kashmir and the media's perception of it, fed on images and information that obscures more than it reveals.



Praneet Soi, *Srinagar*, installation view Eva, Limerick, 2014. Photo Eamonn O'Mahony

Lastly, a dual-projection slide-show narrates his exploration of traditional patterns used by the cities craftsmen interspersed with images he collected during his stay in the city.

Praneet Soi

Praneet Soi (Kolkata, India, 1971), studied painting at the Maharaj Sayajirao University, Baroda, India and visual

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arts at the University of California, San Diego. Soi moved to the Netherlands in 2002 to follow a two-year international residency program for artists at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, and since then he has divided his time between Amsterdam and Kolkata. Amongst other international venues, Soi participated within the Indian Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011). In 2009 Soi worked for six months on a series of murals and sculptures in and around Het Oog at the Van Abbemuseum.

Curators

Evelien Scheltinga, Christiane Berndes

Subsidisers

The project is part of the exhibition *The Collection Now*, which was made possible with the support of BankGiro Loterij, Mondriaan Fund, Stichting Promotors Van Abbemuseum, and VSB Fonds.

Srinagar was made possible by support from Outset Contemporary Art Fund. The installation was acquired with the financial support of the Stichting Promotors Van Abbemuseum.

"memory" or about the museum as a public space. As a result of international cooperation and exchange, the Van Abbemuseum is also a place where cultural cross-pollination takes place. It is a source of wonder, inspiration and imagination.

Van Abbemuseum,
Bilderdijklaan 10, Eindhoven.
www.vanabbemuseum.nl

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday 11.00 – 17.00. Thursday 11.00 - 21.00.

Admission

Adults: € 12.00 / Groups of 10 or more: € 9.00 / Young people 13-18 years old, students, CJP holders, Eindhoven city pass (stadspas) holders: € 6.00 / Children under 13 years of age, Museum card: free / Family pass (2 adults and max. of 3 children until 18 years): € 18.00.
Tuesday 15.00 – 17.00: free.



Praneet Soi, *Srinagar*, installation view *Eva*, Limerick, 2014. Photo Eamonn O'Mahony

For the editors:

For further information and photographs see: www.vanabbemusuem.nl/en/press

Or contact

Ilse Cornelis, Communication & Press
Telephone: +31 (0)40 238 1019
Mobile: + 31 (0)6 12995794
Email: i.cornelis@vanabbemuseum.nl

Van Abbemuseum

The Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven is one of the leading museums for contemporary art in Europe. The museum has an intensive international collection of more than 2,700 works of art, including key works by Lissitzky, Picasso, Kokoschka, Chagall, Beuys, McCarthy, Daniëls and Körmeling. Questions in the field of art and society are raised by the museum in an experimental way. An open attitude, hospitality and the exchange of information are important for the Van Abbemuseum and we encourage both ourselves and the visitors to think about different subjects, for example about the role of the collection as a cultural