



Shelly Jyoti, *Bound by Duty: An Idea of Swaraj and Collectiveness 2018-19* | *Soul force, 36x55inches, diptych, Ajrakh printing and dying on khadi fabric, 2018*

These two artworks by New Delhi, India based Artist Shelly Jyoti are being displayed for Gandhi-King Conference, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Tresidder Memorial Union, Stanford, CA 94305, for the relevance to the shared idea of peace, nonviolence, the uplift of all and the collective community building. Shelly is a panelist at the conference.

Bound By Duty: An Idea of Swaraj and Collectiveness 2018-19

By Shelly Jyoti

Overview

"It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves" - MK Gandhi

These works titled *Bound by duty: An Idea of Swaraj and Collectiveness* are inspired by Gandhi's seminal anti-imperialist text *Hind Swaraj* written in 1909. This exhibition examines elements of Gandhi's critique of modern civilisation, noting his emphasis on an evolved ethical and spiritual self for creating an alternative perspective of a better world. To bring social revolutions for creating peaceful societies, the idea of self-rule or self-control needs to be experienced uniquely by each individual, and ultimately achieving self-transformation. Individuals who have harnessed that inner strength can move mountains.

The biggest challenge today is a disconnect between economic development and ecological well-being, ecology is understood both as man's outer and inner environment. Economic progress of the kind being pursued in India and elsewhere in the world has become an end in itself. It is divorced from ethics, and righteousness. It stands in conflict with man's responsibility towards his own community and other communities of the world.

Shelly Jyoti is inspired by the micro-organisms in water, such as trillions of tiny fishes collaborating together, displacing water to create oceanic currents, waves and turbulence in undersea environment. She examines the idea of 'collectiveness' and 'collective impact' that can bring about social change with evolved and spiritually self-aware communities.

These works are a continuation of Jyoti's previous works titled, 'Indigo Narratives,' 2009, Salt: The Great March, 2013 and The Khadi March: Just Five Meters, 2016. The exhibit includes textile site specific installations, 30 new *Ajrakh* artworks on *khadi*, multimedia spoken word poetry and short film on making of *Swaraj and collectiveness*.

About the Artist

Shelly Jyoti is a visual artist, fashion designer, poet and an independent curator based in New Delhi India. Her works explore creating moral and peaceful societies with focus on Gandhi's ideology of nation-building relevant for the 21st century. Her educational background includes Literature, Arts and Fashion. She has a keen interest in both India's material and socio-political history, that has inspired her textile work over the past few decades.

Recent shows include: *Revisiting Gandhi: The Art of Shelly Jyoti (Retro/introspective works 2009-18)*; *Bound by duty: An idea of Swaraj and collectiveness 2018-19*; *The Khadi March: Just Five Meters 2016*; *Salt: The Great March 2013*; *Indigo: Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina 2009*; *Vastram: Splendid worlds of Indian Textiles (curatorial project ICCR) 2012*; *Beyond Mithila: Exploring the Decorative 2009*; *Lyrical Abstraction: A Room of/for Muses 2007*.

These works have been exhibited across the continent including select venues like Chicago Cultural Centre, The Museum of National Archives of India, National Gallery of Modern Art, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi. She has lectured extensively at institutions like Washington University Textile Museum DC; Textile Society at Art Institute of Chicago; Forum for Contemporary Theory, Baroda, Gujarat; National Museum, New Delhi and others.

Jyoti is a guest faculty and a jury member at National Institute of Fashion Technology NIFT New Delhi. She has been widely covered by important newspapers, magazines and TV channels in India for her works. Her artworks are with corporate and private collections in India and abroad, including the TAPI collection (Textiles & Art of the People of India) in Surat, India, and International Lincoln Centre, Louisiana State University, Shreveport as their permanent collection.

She lives and works in Gurgaon and New Delhi.

www.Shellyjyoti.com

About the Artworks

Mapping Ajrakh Textile Traditions Through Contemporary Art and Craft: The Art of Shelly Jyoti 2008-19

'For many artists in urban India, collaborations with artisans living in rural or tribal areas have been an invaluable way to enrich their creative practice. For Shelly Jyoti, whose educational background includes Literature and Fashion – has a keen interest in both India's material and socio-political history, that has inspired her textile work over the past few decades. Jyoti has been able to consider the critical relationship between the materials and traditional processes used in Ajrakh production to develop a deeper understanding of the critical role that cloth, fiber, natural dyes, and environment each play in her khadi and Ajrakh art scrolls. She gained a nuanced understanding of the relationship between traditional artisans and contemporary artist like her in maintaining and innovating this particular textile tradition.

Ajrakh means blue in Arabic language. These artisan migrated to Bhuj in 1600CE from Sindh and Baluchistan with their craft of Indigo printing and dyeing. The history of the Ajrakh can be traced from the times of the ancient civilizations of the Indus Valley, around 2500 BC to 1500 BC.

In 2008, Shelly jyoti was working on a visual art project titled 'Indigo Narratives'. Her works examined the plight of indigo farmers and Gandhi's first non-violent protest and further explored Indigo as a plant, color and dye through ajrakh textile traditions and subsequently she went into deeper inquiry to understand Gandhi's idea of khadi and contemporary relevance to it.'

- Prof Kathryn Myers, University of Connecticut, USA

This exhibition is supported by SACHI, Society for Art Cultural Heritage of India, a nonprofit educational organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, which actively promotes the understanding and appreciation of the rich and diverse art, culture, and heritage of India.

