



PRESS RELEASE

Meeting
ARPITA SINGH

No.9 Cork Street, FRIEZE
London W1S3LL

Preview: 2 June, 2023
On view until 17 June, 2023

Vadehra Art Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition by celebrated post-modernist Arpita Singh titled *Meeting*, featuring a curated body of canvases, watercolours and drawings, on view at No.9 Cork Street, FRIEZE from 2 – 17 June 2023. This is the artist's first solo exhibition in London.

Arpita Singh's works assume new dimension as cartographical autobiographies, accenting imagined characters and landscapes with the flourish of expressionist emotion. With compositions foregrounded in movement, Singh tends to emphasize the potential of individual agency operating within collective constraints, though her mapping doesn't seem to prioritize any one aspect – whether the fictional, mythical, personal, public fact or dream. These almost *think-scapes* capture constructs of space in abstraction, whose protagonists occupy their frames implicitly and navigate time, cultures and history through an assemblage of connection.

While Singh's symbolic mapping lends itself to a narrative reading, her intentionality is rooted in a stream-of-consciousness that expands and envelops, possesses and is possessed by its inevitable existence. Often Singh's everyday digestions of literature, cinema, current events appear rendered

lyrically, even surrealistically, moving from cognition to layers of interpretation that extend through to viewers. The textuality of her compositions are more than gestural inclusions; they represent the linguistics of shared landscapes that resound with fragmentary, diversified, disembodied voices in a congruent symphony that overpowers the coherence of sensorial vision and logic. Instead, by introducing observation points that are topographically flat, Singh personifies questions of beginning and belonging so pivotal to individual and collective journeys. The protagonists themselves emerge as part of the landscape, their internality in a state of flux as outlined by the world, however it is composed, at large.

Close friend of the artist and author Ella Datta writes in her introductory essay to the exhibition:

“After a gap of a couple of years, Arpita comes back with a show of paintings and drawings that captures viewers’ attention. In her latest show, *Meeting*, consisting of oils and black and white works on paper, Arpita creates her usual magic with brush, paint, pen and ink. She presents us with glimpses of other lives in other locales [...]

Arpita is a ceaseless experimenter with her language, her material, her practice. In her earlier works, she had usually foregrounded the human figure. In this series of paintings, the figure is part of the entire scene where each element – the sky, the greenery, the water, the built spaces – contributes to a pulsating whole. Is the artist’s vision imagining a world that is not purely anthropocentric?”

Our viewing room holds works by three South Asian diasporic contemporary artists working across mediums, including London-based Indian-Canadian photographer Sunil Gupta, whose often theatrical interventions into mainstream cultural consciousnesses re-center subjects such as racism, alternative sexuality, migration, queer issues and marginalia, and Amsterdam-based Indian artist Praneet Soi, whose oeuvre pursues an interplay of open-ended narratives and the circulated image, exploring how symbols migrate across cultures, landscapes and shifting modes of perception. Also, exhibiting with us for the first time, is Houston-based Pakistani artist Zaam Arif, an emerging artist on the rise whose work presents philosophically and introspectively rich inquiries into the human journey and experience.

An e-catalogue with more information on the exhibition and the artist is available on request. For general inquiries, please write to art@vadehraart.com.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in 1937 in Kolkata, Arpita Singh graduated with a diploma in fine arts from Delhi Polytechnic.

Singh’s work has been celebrated and featured regularly in shows held in India and internationally, including a retrospective exhibition at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, in 2019, where Singh presented a stellar body of works reflecting a lifetime of practice, which was met with stupendous critical acclaim. She has also participated in important institutional shows at the Asia Society Triennale (2020–21); the Gwangju Biennale (2021); Kochi Biennale (2021); the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2021); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2021); Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi (2014, 2013, 2011); Museo Nacional de Centro Reina Sofia, Madrid (2013); the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, USA (2013); Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi (2014, 2013, 2011); Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan (2012); the National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai (2012); Centre of International Modern Art, Kolkata (2011, 2010, 2008); the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2009); and Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland (2007), among gallery shows such as Frieze Art Fair, New York (2019); Talwar Gallery, New York (2018, 2017); Grosvenor Gallery, London (2011, 2009); Nature Morte, New Delhi (2011); RL Fine Arts, New York (2010); and Aicon Gallery, London (2009). Her work will also be presented at the Kochi–Muziris Biennale in 2022.

Singh has won several awards throughout her career, including the Parishad Samman from the Sahitya Kala Parishad, New Delhi, in 1991; the Kalidas Samman, Bhopal, in 1991; and the Padma Bhushan in 2011. She was awarded a fellowship at Lalit Kala Akademi in 2014.

The artist lives and works in New Delhi, India.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Representing a roster of artists across four generations, Vadehra Art Gallery was established in 1987 with a passion to pioneer Indian art as a conduit of cultural celebration, intellect and value in the public milieu. Modern masters like M.F. Husain, Ram Kumar, S.H. Raza and Tyeb Mehta find prime spot in the gallery's calendar alongside the subsequent generation of modernists like Arpita Singh, A. Ramachandran, Nalini Malani, Gulammohammed Sheikh and Rameshwar Broota. The gallery's expansive contemporary programme includes some of the most exciting names in Indian art such as Atul Dodiya, Shilpa Gupta, Anju Dodiya, N.S. Harsha and Sunil Gupta, as well as young emerging talent like Sachin George Sebastian, Shrimanti Saha and Shailesh B.R. Over the last two decades, the gallery has published several books and monographs in collaboration with major publishing houses like Penguin and Prestel, as well as hundreds of illustrated exhibition catalogues.