

27
OCTOBER
2016
—
26
FEBRUARY
2017

**SINGAPORE
BIENNALE
2016**

A
SHARE
OF
BORDERS

AN
ATLAS
OF
MIRRORS

MUNEM WASIF
BANGLADESH

Land of Undefined Territory,
2014 - 2015

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ATLAS

AN

OF

MIRRORS

EDUCATION KIT

ARTIST FOLIOS

MUNEM WASIF

Land of Undefined Territory, 2014 - 2015



THE ARTIST

The recent art practice of Rathin Barman (b. 1981, Tripura, India) focuses on urban architecture and architectural forms. He has documented different layers of architectural progress that unveil the structural evolution of the contemporary urban landscape, while at the same time commenting on sociopolitical issues. His recent solo exhibition 'No ... I Remember It Well' at Experimenter (Kolkata, 2015) emerged from the idea of 'home' shaped by conversations with and amidst people displaced since 1947 from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). He transformed their memories into sculptural forms and, in the process, recreated remembered homes and landscapes. Barman has previously had two solo exhibitions and exhibited widely in India and around the world. He is involved in the public art project Edge Effect, curated by Kanchi Mehta, a Kochi-Muziris Biennale project (Kochi, India, 2014). He lives and works in Kolkata, India.

THE IDEA

Wasif's series of photographs explores the idea of borders and examines the relationship between the land and its people. The land in the photographs appears wounded, mined and stripped of its natural resources with no significant geographical or political identity. This land could be anywhere, as the title of the artwork suggests, and yet it is not. It is one of the most contested territories in recent history, over which lives have been lost and wars have been fought: the border that separates India from Bangladesh. Wasif makes us think of a world where new borders and new walls spring up overnight, and where borders become more important than people, families, the past and the future.

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MUNEM WASIF

Land of Undefined Territory, 2014 - 2015



Image courtesy of Singapore Art Museum

THE ARTWORK

Archival pigment print and museum rag board,
edition 7 + 2 AP
Various dimensions
Collection of the Artist

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OBSERVE AND DISCOVER

GUIDING QUESTIONS

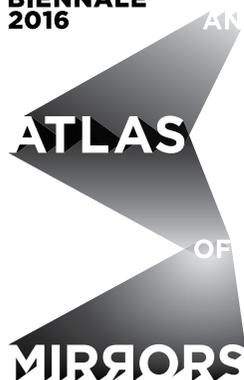
1. Take your time to look at the series of photographs on display. What do you think this artwork is about? How did you come up with that explanation?
2. Do the series of photographs require a set time to look at it? How long do you think you need to spend with the work in order to understand it better? Can you see more if you look at the work longer?
3. How do you feel when you look at the black-and-white photographs? Quickly write down 3 - 5 words that describe your feelings.
4. What do the repetitive frames of barren land remind you of? What message is the artist trying to tell you?
5. The title of the series of photographs is *Land of Undefined Territory*. How is this title appropriate for the photographs? What makes you say that?
6. The series of photographs speaks to the right to the land, to the resources above and below ground, and how they are distributed. What issues (politics, industrialisation, identity) does this work inspire you to think more about and why?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- A. By presenting us with topographies of land that has been exploited for political and economic reasons, the artist forces us to reflect on the nature of maps and borders / boundaries: Who constructs them? Are they innocent constructions? How are they broken and replaced? Conceptualise your own artwork reflecting on the nature of maps. Your artwork can be a painting, drawing, photograph, video still, sculpture or installation.
- B. The series of photographs opts for actual geographical spots in portraying the ongoing political conflict. Do you think the artist's work is specific to India and Bangladesh, or can it be applicable to other countries? Discuss as a class. What issues do you feel are important to address and discuss?

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FIND OUT MORE

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

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ABOUT SINGAPORE BIENNALE 2016

AN ATLAS OF MIRRORS
AT ONCE, MANY WORLDS

FROM WHERE WE ARE,
HOW DO WE PICTURE THE WORLD —
AND OURSELVES?

Humankind has always devised ways of seeing beyond sight. Two such instruments are the map and the mirror, which make visible more than just physical terrains. While the atlas - a book of maps - locates where we are and charts where we want to go, the mirror shows us to ourselves, sometimes unreliably, and in curious ways.

Through an exploration of the literal and metaphorical characteristics of atlas and mirror, *An Atlas of Mirrors* reveals artistic perspectives that arise from our migratory, intertwining histories and cultures, particularly in Southeast, East and South Asia.

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ABOUT THE ZONES

NINE CONCEPTUAL ZONES

The main title of the Biennale is woven through nine 'conceptual zones', or subthemes, which locate each artwork in particular curatorial contexts. These zones shape the flow of the Biennale experience, like chapters in a book or sections in a poem. Like the title - 'An Atlas of Mirrors' - which is built on the relationship between a collective noun ("an atlas" as the collective noun) and what is being thought of 'collectively' ("mirrors"), these zones are conceptually themed along specific collective nouns and what they hold together for contemplation and experience. Artworks located within each zone resonate on many levels, and at the same time, all nine zones coincide, intertwine and reflect each other along the conceptual continuum of 'An Atlas of Mirrors' as a whole.

Each zone represents concepts, ideas and ways of seeing as explored in the 58 artworks and projects.

A SHARE OF BORDERS

- NATION & GEOPOLITICS
- CULTURAL BOUNDARIES
- SHARED HISTORIES

To whom does our 'one world' belong, when so much is intertwined? As organised terrorism, xenophobia and fear of the loss of identity crescendo, ephemeral lines in the sand are marked in stark black-and-white photographs, evocative images and stunning cultural artefacts conjure much-contested Kashmir, and sonic sculptures 'reflect' imprints off Singapore pavements. Everywhere, 'walls' keep in as much as keep out; right on the region's doorstep, tense encounters escalate out at sea, where borders are writ on water.

Walls and boundaries bear witness that overlapping territories are strategically and ideologically mapped and staked; yet is there common ground, belonging to neither party on either side of the drawn line?

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Saturdays to Thursdays: 10am - 7pm
Fridays: 10am - 9pm

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