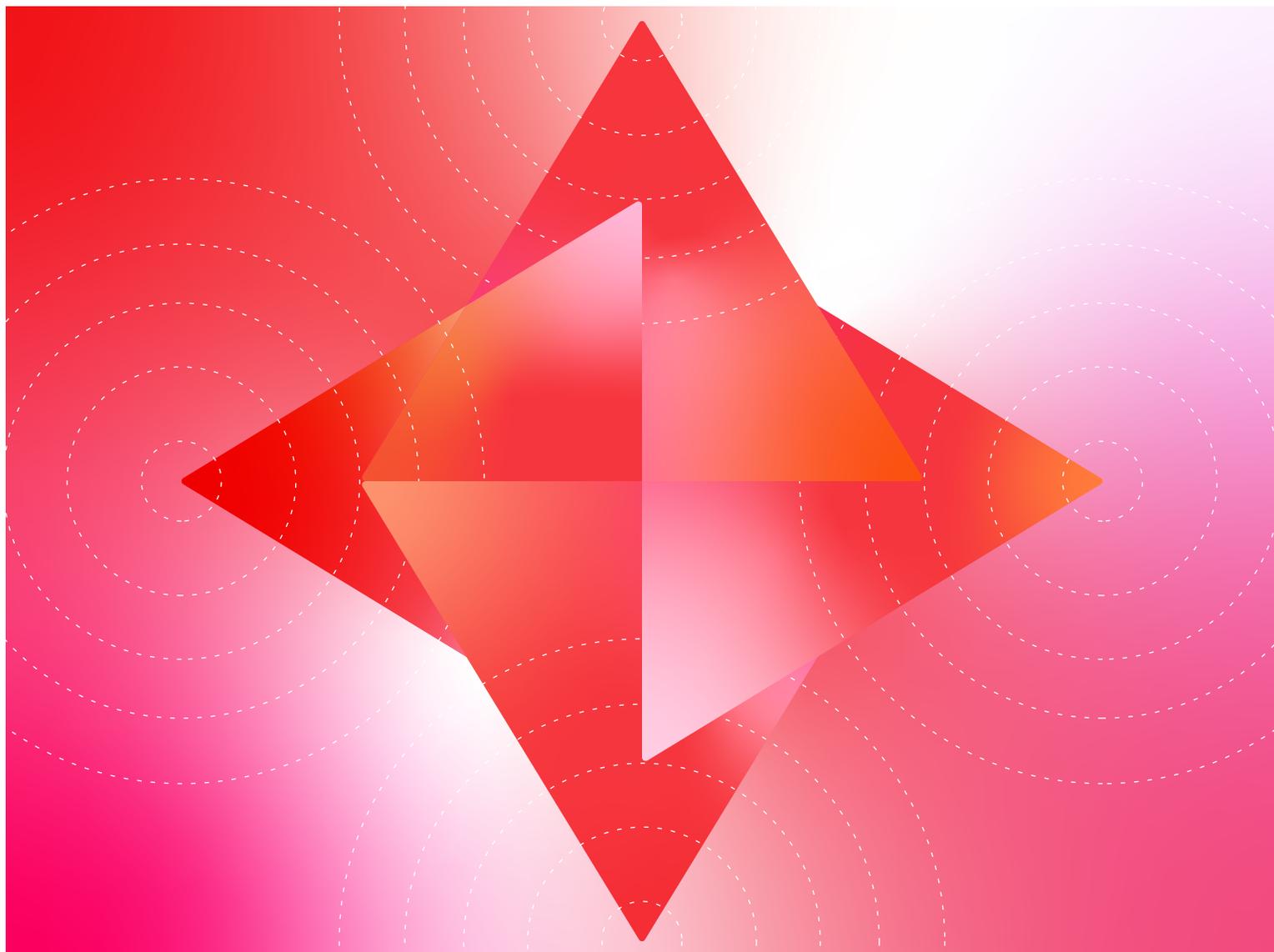


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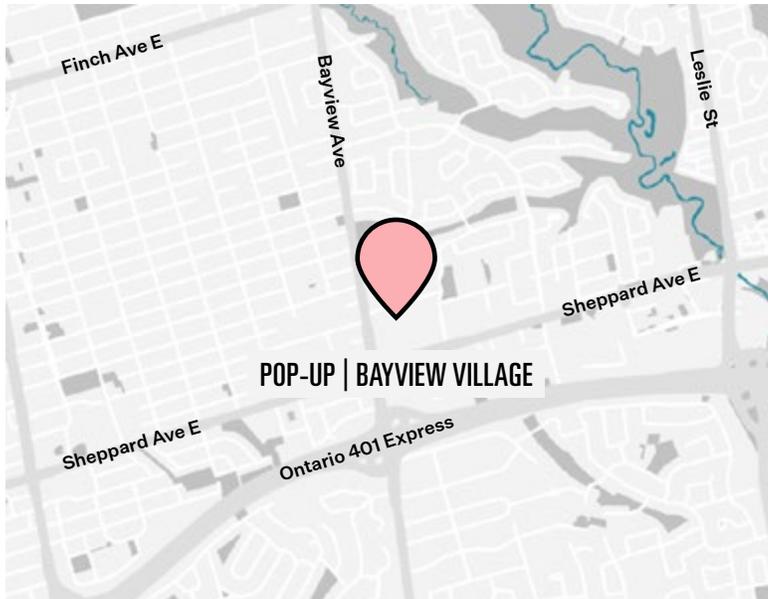
C L O S E S D E C E M B E R 3 1

ArtworxTO

POP-UP

Bayview Village

CURATOR: RAJI KAUR AUJLA



ABOUT POP-UP @ BAYVIEW VILLAGE

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In the culturally vibrant North York neighbourhood, this elegant shopping centre invites the collective histories of Punjabi community and migration through a curatorial exhibition by Raji Kaur Aujla. Over the past 10 years, writer, curator, and producer Raji Kaur Aujla has emerged as a leading voice for better representation of BIPOC voices in Canadian arts. She is currently the president of Willendorf Culture and Editor-In-Chief of Newest Magazine.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT Raji Kaur Aujla

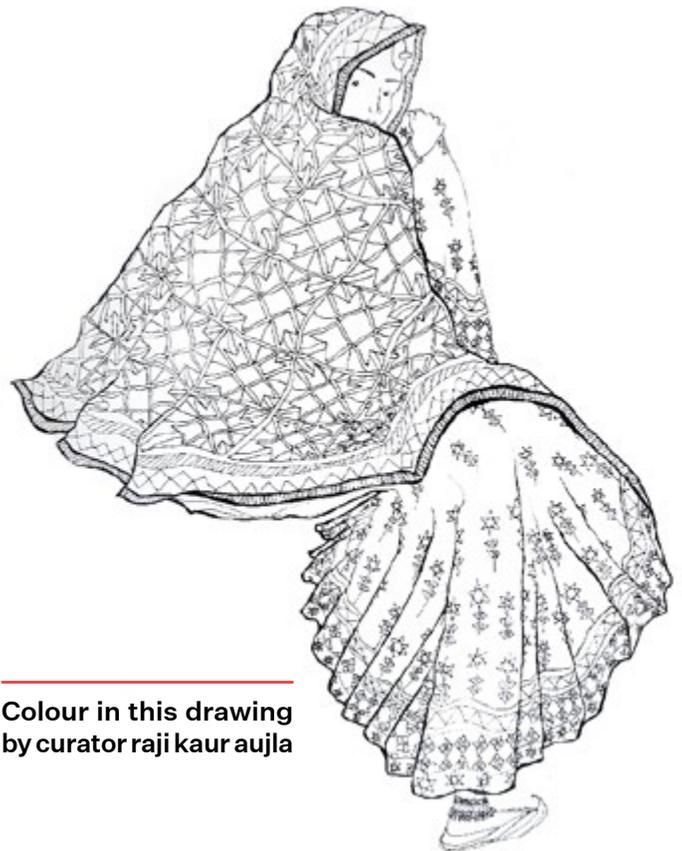
Sat Sri Akal Gurbakash Kaur,

I look for you in texts, films, photographs, Gurudwaras and yet, can only find you in my imagination. You wear an ivory salwar kameez with a chashm e bulbul phulkari effortlessly draped around your small but mighty frame. Your visibility makes you invisible. There's determination in your two eyes and love coming out of your third. It wraps me like the phulkari that protects you. Your murti was once here, weaving a bagh for me. Now it carries your spirit.

If the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji is worshipped as living representations of the Gurus, each textile from the phulkari to pagh to the ramala embodies your spirit and carries your stories through matrilineal lineages. You are visible in your invisibility because you are felt and understood. We will tell your stories to the next generation.

Thank you to all the Sikh Kauras before me.

raji kaur aujla



Colour in this drawing
by curator raji kaur aujla

artworxTO.ca

CHAMBA

By Harjot
Ghuman-
Matharu

“Chamba” aims to highlight the narrative of a living history that is intimate to its collective experience. Using a tableau of 70’s to 90’s era furniture, artefact, archives, lighting, and soundscape, I recreate a Sikh family’s home. This sets the scene of a time of mass immigration and settlement that is uniquely tied to the Canadian Sikh diasporic experience. A seamless melding of the Golden Horseshoe’s cultural products and those of Punjab.

Women are considered the foundation of Sikh family homes, yet struggle with agency in a traditionally patriarchal culture to create space for themselves. In juxtaposing the physical space of a man-made room, I explore the resiliency of women who create homes, a nest, through love and nurturing the way that our mothers and grandmothers created space for themselves.

Traditional Punjabi symbolism draws on bird and aviary analogies in music, lore, and storytelling to speak on the Sikh female experience. Utilizing these symbolic tropes, my work creates an emotional weight that centers the room and ties the invisible threads of community together as a Chamba, a gathering for the flock.

Through the family room, the literal space in which a family gathers, I explore the functionality of gathering and the spirit of the unseen through a manifestation of the imagined.



Woman on Charpai
Amrita Sher-Gil
1937/1938

Oil on canvas
Rights: National Gallery of Modern Art

MADHUR'S PHULKARI

By
Jagdeep
Raina

Jagdeep Raina on contemporizing old ways of making.

I’m interested in ways of art making that are going extinct.

I don’t want to romanticize the past. I actively ask myself, what is it about certain parts of the past that I am in love with and why?

History was a place where everyone depended on one another. It’s beautiful to think about how many years ago, everyone made everything by hand. They grew their cotton, spun and wove it. Then it was dyed with plants and vegetables that were locally grown and traded. There was a rich sense of community and it was built into the fabric of society. As an artist, this is really seductive to me.

Our history, as Kashmiris, is as artists. I want to go back to the idea of learning, as much as I can, to resurrect our ancestral ways of making. We’ve become so disconnected from that.

This disconnection speaks to sustainability as well. I’m thinking about our carbon footprint and globalization. We are living in a culture of speed and addiction, buying things constantly, the malls, suburbia, grocery stores...there’s so much waste in what we produce. My dream is to get away from that all as much as I can. I’m in love with this idea of using my hands to make everything from scratch. Right now, I have a big bag of cotton and another bag of silk that I’m learning to spin myself. It’s slow and a lot of work. I’m not doing anything new. I’m doing something that was done for thousands of years by our ancestors and connecting with that.



ਬੰਦੇ ਚਸਮ ਦੀਦੰ ਫਨਾਇ ॥

BANDE CHASM DEEDN FANAAI

By Simranpreet Kaur Anand and
Conner Singh VanderBeek

Bande chasm deedn فنااي || is a body of works comprised of found Sikh textiles and sacred objects.

In Sikh practice, objects that come in contact with the Guru Granth Sahib - the sacred scripture that is regarded as a living entity - are considered to be imbued with the Guru's sacred energy. These objects are cremated at the end of their life cycle through a ritual called agan bhet seva, or an offering to fire performed in a purpose-built structure. Due to the pressures of globalization and the replacement of slow handicrafts with mechanization and mass-production, materials that were historically made of natural materials have been replaced with synthetic, plastic-laden fabrics that off-gas toxic fumes when cremated. This shift has also led to an abundance of Sikh textiles that are given as offerings in gurdwaras. In Canada, excess textiles are stored in warehouses and ceremoniously cremated.

The majority of the textiles used in this exhibition were found in a warehouse at a Sikh facility in Canada. The textiles have been taken with permission from the facility director and used in consultation with friends and fellow Sikhs.

In the title for this work, Guru Arjun Dev declares that all which humans can see with their eyes will perish (Ang 723). The pieces within all draw inspiration from passages in Gurbani that discuss the spiritual emptiness and material wealth and the transience of the physical body. These passages help illuminate the tensions between the messages of the Gurus and how those ideas have been misinterpreted, ignored, or forgotten in contemporary Sikh material practice.



ਮਾਲ ਕੈ ਮਾਣੈ ਰੂਪ ਕੀ ਸੋਭਾ ਇਤੁ ਬਿਧੀ ਜਨਮੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ ॥

MAAL KAI MAANAI ROOP KEE SOBHA IT BIDHEE JANAM GAVAIIAA ॥

Materials: Cardboard tubes, various synthetic fabrics, ashes, soot, charred and melted plastic

The textiles in this piece are recognizable as fabrics that could be sewn into rumaley sahib but hold no sacred significance in this form. The parts of the textiles that touch the ground have been burned, revealing the contemporary artificiality of materials that historically would have been made of cotton with embroidered silk. Sikh scripture speaks at length of the spiritual emptiness and wastefulness of ornate materials, yet flashy, synthetic fabrics have overtaken the practice of making rumaley sahib. In the line used as the title of this piece, Guru Nanak tells that one cannot appreciate the grace of the Guru if they remain preoccupied with the trappings of wealth and material beauty (Ang 24).



Materials: Chandoa Sahib, Rihal, Chaur Sahib, plastic marigolds, plastic rose petals, white sheet

In the sacred court, a jewelled canopy, or chandoa sahib, hangs above the seat of the Guru, demarcating the spiritual space of the Guru. In the title of this work, Guru Arjan tells that the canopy of the Guru's grace covers all beings equally, be they high or low, friend or foe; the sun rises and dispels darkness for all, and the fire provides warmth for anyone who approaches (Ang 1017). If the chandoa sahib covers the canopy of the Guru's grace and thus becomes a sacred object, does the physical canopy also need its own canopy?

This sculptural piece is comprised of a chandoa sahib hanging above an inverted, circular chandoa sahib, atop which sit a rihal or prayer book holder, and a chaur sahib, or fly-whisk used as an echo of pre-colonial Indian court regalia. The lower chandoa sahib is elevated just enough for its fringes to not touch the ground. Surrounding the platform - and placing it just beyond reach - are rings of plastic marigolds and fake rose petals: a reminder of the replication of natural materials in plastic.

ਉਚ ਨੀਚ ਬਿਕਾਰ ਸੁਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਸੰਲਗਨ ਸਭ ਸੁਖ ਛਤ੍ਰ ॥

ਮਿਤ੍ਰ ਸਤ੍ਰ ਨ ਕਛੂ ਜਾਨੈ ਸਰਬ ਜੀਅ ਸਮਤ ॥

**UOOCH NEECH BIKAR SUKIRAT SA(N)LAGAN
SABH SUKH CHHATR II MITR SATR NA KACHHOO
JAANAI SARAB JEEA SAMAT II**

ਬਹੁਤੁ ਜਨਮ ਭਰਮਤ ਤੈ ਹਾਰਿਓ ਅਸਥਿਰ ਮਤਿ ਨਹੀ ਪਾਈ ॥

**BAHUT JANAM BHARAMAT TAI HAARIO
ASATHIR MAT NAHEE PAIEE II**

Materials: Seventeen rumaley sahib, manji sahib, plastic flowers in crystal vases, white fabric

In daily practice, Sikhs wrap Guru Granth Sahib in rumaley sahib that clothe the Guru. These textiles become sacred when they are given as an offering in the Guru's court. Similarly, rumaley sahib clothe spiritual materials such as kirpans, pothis, gutkas when they are not in use. The continuous wrapping of the rumala sahib is an echo of this gesture.

In this passage from Gurbani, Guru Tegh Bahadur tells that those who become entrapped in the pursuit of wealth never escape the endless cycle of birth and rebirth (Ang 631). This piece extends that notion to the wrapping of sacred objects in rumaley sahib, which themselves have become entrapped in a cycle of reproduction and waste.



Plastic flowers and crystal vases are placed in front of the Guru Granth Sahib and around the darbar (court). Historically, these would have been fresh flowers offered and replaced daily by the congregation to the Guru but have been replaced with fake flowers due to the affordability and durability of plastics.

“It is a paradox that motherhood is elevated to sainthood and the body preparing for motherhood is reviled as impure.”

— Kiranjot Kaur
former general secretary of Sikh Gurdwara
Parbandhak committee

ਮ: ੧ ॥

First Mehla:

ਜਿਉ ਜੋਰੂ ਸਿਰਨਾਵਣੀ ਆਵੈ ਵਾਰੋ ਵਾਰ ॥

As a woman has her periods, month after month,

ਜੂਠੇ ਜੂਠਾ ਮੁਖਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਹੋਇ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥

so does falsehood dwell in the mouth of the false; they suffer forever, again and again.

ਸੂਚੇ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਬਹਨਿ ਜਿ ਪਿੰਡਾ ਧੋਇ ॥

They are not called pure, who sit down after merely washing their bodies.

ਸੂਚੇ ਸੇਈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜਿਨ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੇਇ ॥੨॥

Only they are pure, O Nanak, within whose minds the Lord abides. ||2||

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

WELCOME TO
Sri Harmandir Sahib

COVER YOUR HEAD
NO SHOES
WASH HANDS
& FEET
NO SELFIES
NO PERFORMING OF
KIRTAN BY WOMEN

HUB SPONSORS



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