

Gallery Latitude 28
presents

'We Are Always Working'

An exhibition of works by **Waswo X. Waswo**
In collaboration **Rajesh Soni** and **Shyam Lal Kumhar**.



Waswo X Waswo, The Observationist in Stolen Garden Series , Black and white digital photograph handpainted by Rajesh Soni and R.Vijay, 15 x 12 inches, 2020

Curated by **Bhavna kakar**

Exhibition open from 28th August – 28th September 2020

Timings: 11am – 7pm (visitation by appointment only)

Gallery Latitude 28 presents 'We Are Always Working', showcasing works by American born photographer Waswo X. Waswo, in collaboration with Rajasthani miniaturist Rajesh Soni and traditional terracotta sculptor Shyam Lal Kumhar.

Part portraiture from Waswo and Soni's well-known Studio in Rajasthan series, and part spoof on both the studio process and the photographer himself - this exhibition will call attention to the place of performance, or the "stage", upon which studio photography is enacted. The title, We Are Always Working, references the ongoing process Waswo and his studio engage in, both physically, as well as in a wider philosophical discourse concerning his practice and methods.

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Waswo X. Waswo's career in India has spanned almost two decades, utilizing the medium of studio photography as a method of self-discovery, navigating between personal revelation and inspired fantasy. With traditionally hand-painted backdrops, the photographic studio became a quasi-diorama in which Waswo and his models playfully devise a series of tableaux. His elaborate processes, involving casting local people as 'models' in the photo shoots, are akin to co-operative theatre performances.

Waswo's sepia photographs, hand painted by Udaipur based photo hand colourist Rajesh Soni, take on a dream-like quality, which harks back to ethnographic photography of bygone eras while maintaining temporal roots in the contemporary. Interplay develops between the villagers who populate Waswo's work, the caricature of Waswo himself and 'artefacts', which he inspects under a magnifying glass. As the protagonist of many of the photographs, dressed incongruously in a white suite and fedora hat, Waswo takes on the role of *'The Orientalist'*, interspersed throughout the exhibition.

The origins of 'The Orientalist' caricature can be found in previous collaboration between Waswo and miniaturist R. Vijay, as Waswo himself states:

"...He created a character which was supposed to represent me, and my adventures in India, but as time went on he became sort of an 'everyman'. I stopped thinking of him being explicitly myself, or specifically myself. Now [the character] has leaped back into the photographs. He's literally become me, I now find myself acting the role of the little man in the miniatures. I've adopted the very character that I've created and now personify him in some of the photographs."

'The Orientalist' as a concept plays with the notions of otherness, ethnic stereotyping and Western fetishisation of the developing world, however the driving force is that in this day and age a stereotype has been made of 'The Orientalist' himself. He is now encapsulated in the very same diorama as his subjects, playing out scenes in which the symbolic figure offers itself up for scrutiny, generalization, categorization, and questioning.

About Gallery Latitude 28

Since it was founded in 2010, Latitude 28 has become synonymous with cutting edge art from India, seeking fresh perspectives and innovative thinking in its attempt to stimulate interest in new waves of art-making for art patrons and critics. The establishment's strategy allows the space to act as a horizontal environment where younger artists are able to contextualise and reference their work with the masters of Indian art, even as the ethos of the gallery encourages them to experiment with medium, material and institutional critique. The gallery supports contemporary Indian art not only through exhibitions, but also by supporting residencies and organizing outreach programs.

Latitude 28's vision is shaped by its Founder/Director, Bhavna Kakar, who has over a decade's experience as a curator, editor and art consultant.

For more information on Gallery Latitude 28 please visit:

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