

Hit Man Gurung

Artist Statement and Biography

Artist Statement

International labor migration has grown exponentially in Nepal over the last decade. According to Nepal's foreign employment promotion board around 1,700 Nepalese leave the country each day, and send back their income to their families. World Bank reports that remittances to Nepal account for some of the highest rates in the world. Migration workers are often exploited. The number of deaths among Nepalese migrant workers is higher than those compared to other Asian countries. Around 1,300 Nepalese migrant workers die each year.

Migrants dream of a better life. Tragically on average, three to four coffins arrive at Nepal's international airport each day. The coffin for the installation was sourced from a crematorium in which a migrant laborer's body was transported. As a multicultural country, Nepalese exercise numerous last rites. But when a migrant worker dies abroad, their identity is reduced to the contents of a wooden box.

The interior of the coffin is lined with photographs of Nepalese who apply for visas. Their identity protected with calligraphy which indicates their birthplace. The destination of the countries that they wish to travel to is indicated above their photographs.

The entire exterior of the coffin is lined with a collage of passport prints. A map is drawn over the lid of the coffin. This distorted map of the world highlights the countries, where the largest number of Nepalese migrants died. The belongings of the dead are packaged in plastic bags just the way they arrive. The monumental paintings of a bereaved mother is a portrait of my own mother. She holds a coffin in her lap – a la Michelangelo's *Pieta*. The set of twelve small paintings juxtaposed against the coffin and the mother painting depicts the dreams, desires, and hopes which propel migrant workers to leave the country.

Artist Biography

Hit Man Gurung
Nepal

Education

I.F.A - T.U. Lalitkala Campus, 2004

B.F.A. - T.U. Lalitkala Campus, 2007

M.F.A. - Central Department of Fine Art T.U., 2012

Achievements

2012-2013 – One of the twenty-five winners of the juried art competitions and exhibition at Silpakala Academy, Bangladesh Dhaka, Heritage Plaza New Delhi, World Bank Head office, Washington DC 'Imagining our Future Together-a vision of a better common future in South Asia', a project organized by the Vice Presidency for South Asia and the Art Program of the World Bank.

2012 – Selected in the '2nd Kathmandu International Art Festival'.

2012 – Participated in the art program 'Art from the Earth' at Kamal Kunj, Kamaladi, invited by The Ambassador of the United States of America and Mrs. Scott H.Delisi.

2011 – Recipient of 'The Australian Himalayan Foundation Art Award' supporting young artists in the Himalayan region.

Selected Art Events & Projects

- 2014 – Created an installation "*Synthetic Flow*" for *Climate +Change* exhibition organized by ICIMOD
- 2013 – Created an installation "*The Truth of a Sacred River*" for *Climate +Change* exhibition organized by ICIMOD
- 2013 – Participated in *Nee// Kala Jatra*, organized by KCAC
- 2012 – Group art exhibition *No Name No Theme Just Art* at Ting
- 2012 – "Amalgam", an exhibition of paintings by 26 artists - July 23, at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal, Kathmandu, Nepal - org by Siddhartha Art Gallery
- 2012 – "Under the Bodhi Tree", an exhibition of paintings by 12 artists: May 6 - April 22 at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal, Kathmandu, Nepal - org by WWF and

Lumbini Development Trust

- 2012 – “From portrait to Self-Portrait” - a project by Antonio Nodar, collaboration with 314 Nepali artists exhibited at K.C.A.C. (Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre) and Patan Museum, Kathmandu, 2012
- 2011 – “New Expression on the Block” an exhibition of paintings by eleven artists: 21st Dec - 17th Jan, org by Siddhartha Art Gallery, Kathmandu, Nepal
- 2011 – Two men show at Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babarmahal, and Kathmandu. Supported by 'The Australian Himalayan Foundation Art Award'.
- 2011 – “Future of History - Part I” - A collaborative art project, supported by Art Network Asia (ANA) and exhibition at Park Art Gallery
- 2010 – “Walking on the Street”: Three months-long collaboration with art students from T.U and K.U – an artistic and peaceful demonstration on the streets for 3 days in Kathmandu and one day in Panauti
- 2010 – “Art Bridge Education”: Collaboration with art students from T.U and K.U - an artistic and peaceful demonstration against delay of M.F.A. education in Nepal
- 2009 – “Intimacy with Nature” - A documentary of 2-days travel at Shiva Puri National Park and a day workshop
- 2009 – “Public Art-2” - A creative awakening demonstration against garbage problem of Kathmandu Valley
- 2007 – “Yuwa” Sutra art workshop, in collaboration with Kathmandu university center for Art and design, K.U., Kathmandu

Art Residency /International Art Festival

- 2014 – 2nd Dhaka Art Summit, organized by Samdani Art Foundation, represented by Siddhartha Art Gallery.
- 2013 – International Artists Residency Granted by City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs at 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica, USA.
- 2013 – Images Festival, Occupy Utopia 2013, (CKU) The Center for culture and Development, Denmark
- 2008 – ‘Naya Awazeharu’ (New voices-2), organized by SUTRA, Art Council, Kathmandu

Working Experience

- Lecturer at Fine Art Campus, Bhotahiti, Kathmandu, Nepal
- Art Teacher at Pathsala Foundation, Dhobi Ghat, Patan, Nepal
- Art Teacher in Wigen & Leigh College (WLC Nepal) Kathmandu, Nepal
- Art Director in the movies Fitkiri , 2013, Maun ,2013 and Dhanda, 2012
- Set Designer in the play Court Martial, 2013