

Il siero della verità

This publication has been produced on the occasion of “Il siero della verità” an exhibition by Remen Chopra and Monali Meher, curated by Veeranganakumari Solanki at MK Search Art Gallery, San Giovanni Valdarno, Arezzo, Italy, from December 1, 2012 to January 15, 2013.

Texts by Veeranganakumari Solanki and Monali Meher

Images by Remen Chopra and Monali Meher

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Il siero della verità

Veeranganakumari Solanki

“Il siero della verità,” the inaugural exhibition at MK Search Art Gallery with Monali Meher and Remen Chopra explores the artists’ practices in relation to the foundation of MK Search Art; all of who draw significantly from elements that reveal themselves to be instruments of reality. The *Mind* and *Time* are vital factors that are inherent in this series of truth.

Monali Meher and Remen Chopra’s works are layered with the theatrical elements of performance and the figurative placed in the medium of time in relation to light, sound and transient occurrences. Revealing the strata of truth, their art forms, though very different, connect through a dialogue of structured episodes. The works explore courses of incidents and thoughts that are paused for a fleeting moment, thereby making the ephemeral, eternal. However, the nature of impermanence is simultaneously evident in what has been forsaken. The artists draw from the contemplations of being through layers that take on various forms. Their practices delve into the psychological realms of human consciousness, to create awareness for the viewer at levels that may not have been experienced earlier.

Monali Meher’s “Golden Quadrilateral (Performance at MAXXI, Rome, Italy)” photographic series is another layer of her performance at MAXXI, Rome in October 2011. Her performance involved an engagement with various dimensions of elements and gradations of truth from the personal to the universal. She touches upon various emotions such as feeling high, sensations, consciousness, balance, coordination, and describes several forms such as the quadrilateral, polygon, pentagon, hexagon and beehive. While she speaks, her voice gets echoed and distorted. It is infused with various sound connotations. The light of the projection, sound, repeated rhythm and smell of soil create a hypnotic, floating vibe within the space. Meher’s balance, rhyme and graceful movement while shaking hands with the audience combined with the background sounds, creates an enchanted energy that binds the space within the elements of incidence.

The live confrontation of the artist with the public during a visual experience is transformed into a variation of the prevailing through images and a video that one experiences in “Il siero della verità.” These adopted forms are strata of real time that have been mediated into another certainty.

The photographs take on different persona of identity, which become a frame of Meher's performance while the video illustrates an understanding of her public interaction with the people and narrowing of distances. The visuals of an after-performance form another dimension of a hidden aesthetic to Golden Quadrilateral. Contrasts of real time and endorsed time create a texture of experience to the consciously documented performance making history an important point of departure.

Using the reference of time as a moral concept, where the past, present and future merge to understand the transformation of the self, Remen Chopra addresses the new aesthetic of beauty, while also drawing strongly from elements of history. Her works conveys the deep complexity of time as a state, wherein lies the artist's understanding of the redemption of mankind. Creating this through the theatrical realm of her works, she conceptualises detailed staged sets, during which she collaborates with performers who become the represented subjects of her works and drawings. The rendering of the image layers with detailed transparency signifies the artist's strong spiritual connection with the search for inner truth, ascension and salvation. Chopra works towards creating a revelation that is striated within the limitless layers of history, time and truth. The artist's titles create a deep understanding of the search for *il siero della verità* within her works.

The cultural aspects of going back to the Renaissance and returning are factors that Chopra has been addressing with the integration of perception, sensation and emotion. *Lives within time if time lives within it* (2012) and *Eternal transitions of collective consciousness – 2* (2012) are a structured fluid of thoughts that are constantly reaching for and retreating from an endless realm of surfaces and layers. *Rebirth of perfection* (2012) and *Revelation* (2012) are a prologue to *The Beginning* (2012) where there is an innate gesture of signifying a change in the act of sorting and cleaning, through an attempt to embrace the visible but inaccessible harmony and truth. The artist's creations become a beginning of conveying impressions of the new Renaissance and a yearning for the ideal.

The overlapping of layers of medium is an aspect that both Meher and Chopra have explored through various levels of their works – from words, sounds and visual thoughts to elements of the earth, video and fabric. This layering is a metaphor of “*Il siero della verità*,” where the understanding of the series of truth between the known, the unknown; the said, the unsaid; the experienced and the vision are sequences yet to be explored.

Lives within time if time lives within it

Remen Chopra

Nikolai Vsevolodovich Stavrogin: ...in the Apocalypse the angel swears that there'll be no more time.

Alexei Nilych Kirillov: I know. It's quite true, it's said very clearly and exactly. When the whole of man has achieved happiness, there won't be any time, because it won't be needed. It's perfectly true.

Nikolai Vsevolodovich Stavrogin: Where will they put it then?

Alexei Nilych Kirillov: They won't put it anywhere. Time isn't a thing, it's an idea. It'll die out in the mind.

— Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Demons*, 1872

These works convey the deep complexity of time as a state, wherein lies the redemption of mankind. Like a detailed report, static in its outwardly presence, lucid in meaning, these works resemble a detailed report of impressions and connections with the intensity of the laws of universe.

These complexities and layers of the universe become paths of departure, and central to the course. Rendering it through the theatrical realm I enact the act of cleansing in these images to step into the second birth of spiritual awakening. The works showcase this inner journey towards ascension and salvation. The work then becomes the beginning... conveying the impressions of the new renaissance... a yearning for the ideal.

These works are characterized by recurring motifs of dream and memory in time only to be recaptured as a photo and drawing work on paper. Using the reference of time as a moral concept, where merges the past, present and future to understand the transformation of the self.

Understanding figuration as an exponent of balance and harmony, I delve into the history of this genre in art to inquire about notions of aesthetics and beauty in order to create what I call “the new renaissance.”

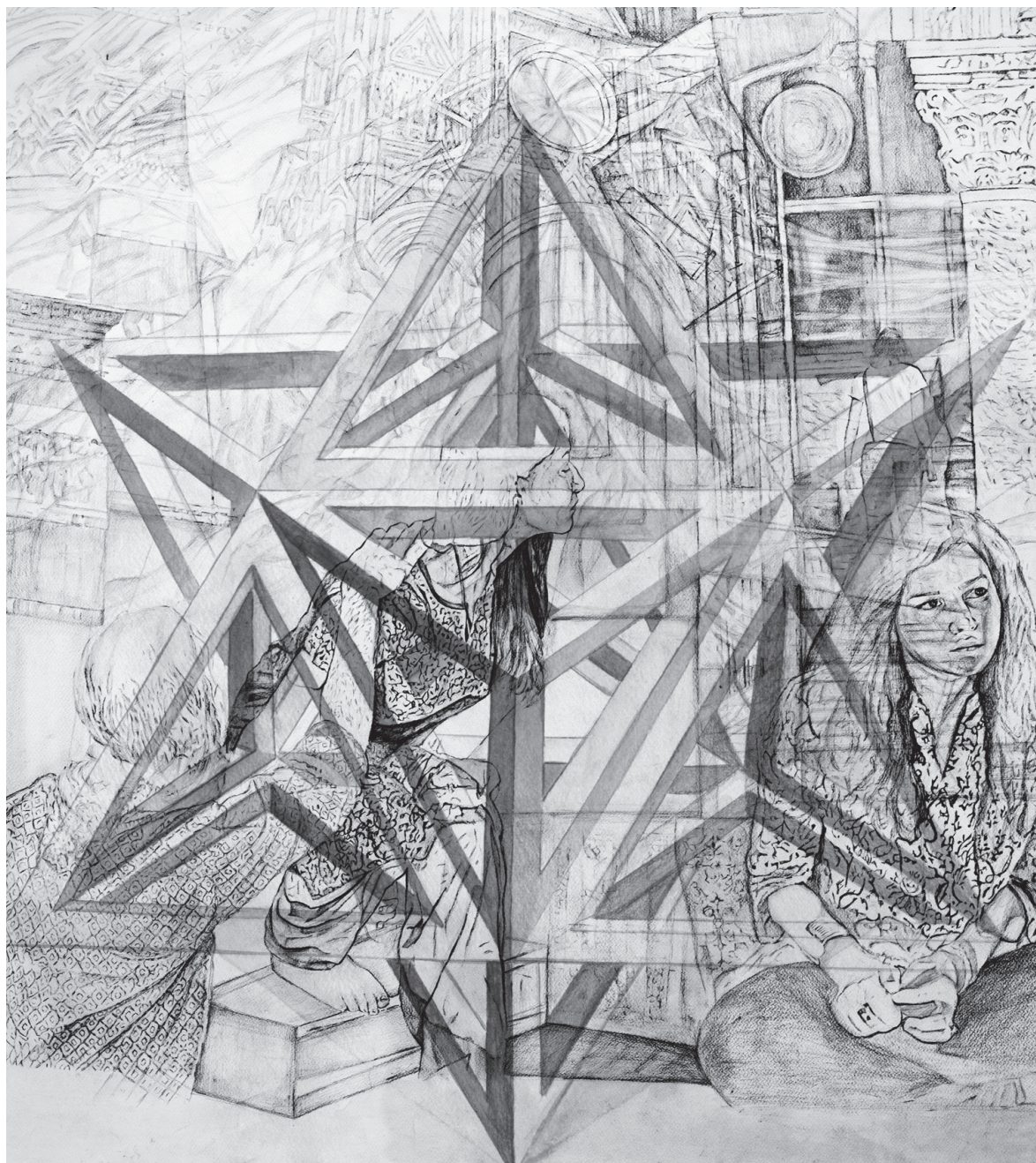


Remen Chopra

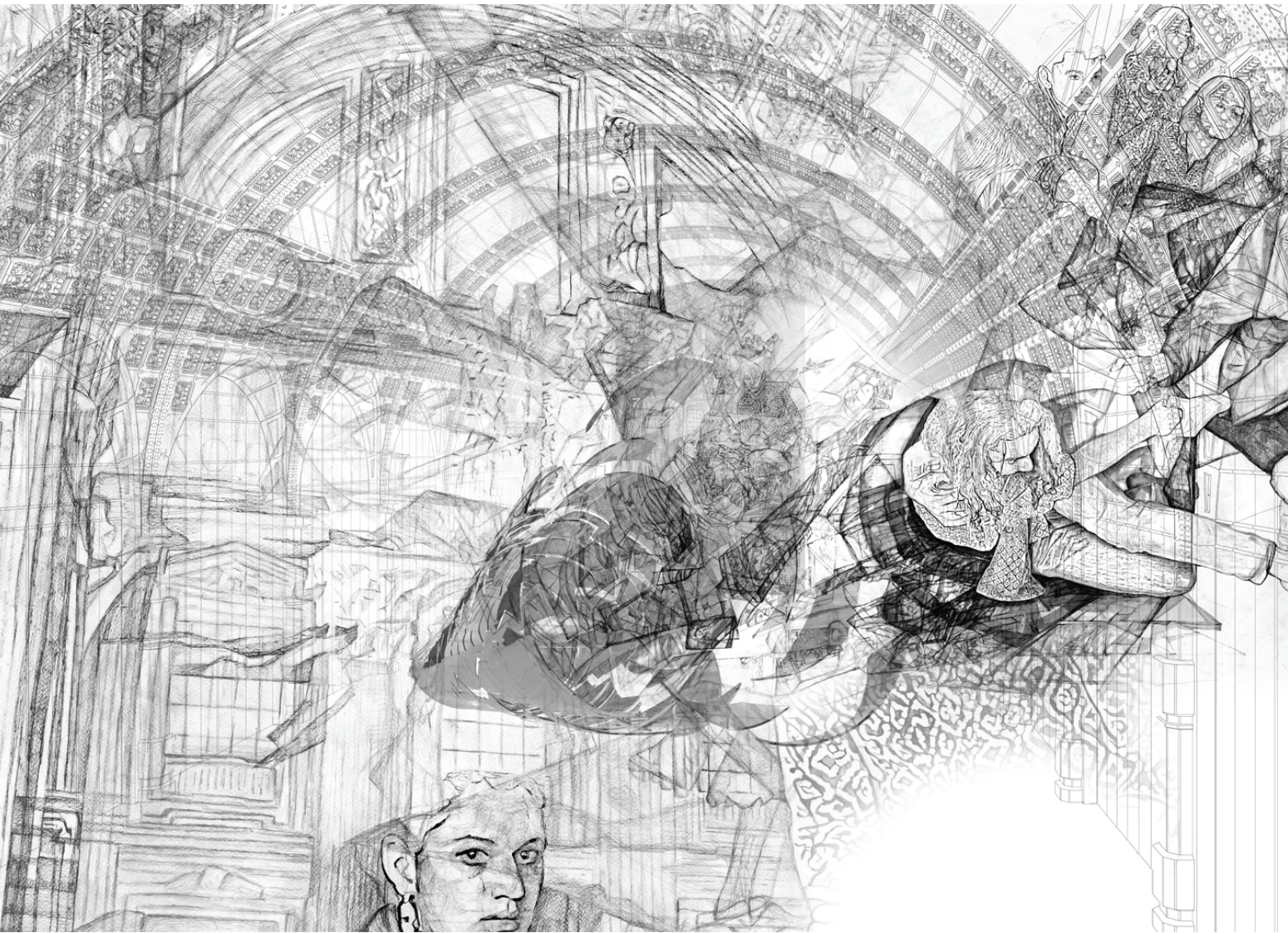
Lives within time if time lives within it – 3, 2012

Archival print on photo rag paper, 119 x 184.5 cm

Edition of 3



Remen Chopra
Rebirth of perfection, 2012
Archival print on photo rag paper, 100 x 110 cm



Remen Chopra

Eternal transitions of collective consciousness – 2, 2012

Archival print on Lambda and print of Plexiglas, 125 x 175 cm



Remen Chopra
Beginning, 2012

Archival print on photo rag paper and single channel video projection, 90 x 150 cm
Edition of 3



Remen Chopra
Revelation, 2012
Archival print on photo rag paper, 89 x 150 cm
Edition of 3



Remen Chopra
Impressions, 2012
Archival print on photo rag paper, 88 x 152 cm



Remen Chopra
The beginning, 2012
Archival print on light box, 40 x 50 cm



Remen Chopra

Lives within time if time lives within it – 2, 2012

Archival print on photo rag paper, 86.3 x 187.9 cm

Edition of 3



Monali Meher

Golden Quadrilateral (Performance at MAXXI, Rome, Italy), 2011

Lambda print on photographic paper, 67 x 100 cm

Courtesy: The artist

Photo: MKSA

Edition of 5 + 2 AP



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Golden Quadrilateral (Performance at MAXXI, Rome, Italy), 2011

Lambda print on photographic paper, 100 x 67 cm

Courtesy: The artist

Photo: MKSA

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Lambda print on photographic paper, 67 x 100 cm

Courtesy: The artist

Photo: MKSA

Edition of 5 + 2 AP

Remen Chopra

Born in 1980 in New Delhi. Lives and works in New Delhi

Education

BFA, Fine Art from the College of Art, New Delhi

MFA, Fine Art from the College of Art, New Delhi

Additional studies, The School of Visual Art, New York

Selected solo shows

2012: MK Search Art, San Giovanni Valdarno, Italy (with Monali Meher)

2011: Sakshi, Mumbai

Selected group shows

2012: "Contemporary Renaissance," Casa Masaccio, San Giovanni Valdarno, Italy

2012: "Indian Parallax or the Doubling of Happiness," Birla Art Foundation, Calcutta, India

2012: "The Contemporary Sultanate," Kutub Haveli Serai/Exhibit 320, New Delhi

2011: "Miniscule Marvel," BMB and Contemplate Art Gallery, Mumbai

2010: "Indian Awakens: Under The Banyan Tree," Essl Museum, Vienna

2010: "Her Work is never Done – II," BMB, Mumbai

2010: "New Order Beauty," Palette, New Delhi

2009: "A New Vanguard - New Trends in Indian Art," The Guild, New York

2009: "Re Visioning Materiality II," Gallery Espace, New Delhi

2009: "Art against Terrorism," Aakriti Art Gallery, Calcutta

2008: "Everything," at Westerhuis, Amsterdam

2007: "Insider," Bodhi, Mumbai

2007: "Cross Poly Nations," Teatro dal Verme, Milan

2006 : "Multiplicity and Self," India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Monali Meher

Born in 1969 in Pune, India. Lives and works in Amsterdam

Education

BFA, Sir J.J. School of Arts, Mumbai

Selected solo shows

2012: MK Search Art, San Giovanni Valdarno, Italy (with Remen Chopra)

2009: Project 88, Mumbai

2009: Fonds BKVB, Amsterdam

2008: Lumen Travo, Amsterdam

2005: Goliath Visual Space, New York

2004: Artkitchen, Amsterdam

1999: Lakeeren, Mumbai

1998: Jüttner, Vienna

1998: Foundation for Indian Artists, Amsterdam

1996: Lakeeren, Mumbai

1993: Contemporary Art Gallery, Ahmedabad, India

Selected performances

- 2012: *A Dialogue with water*, Live Action 7, Gothenburg, Sweden
2011: *Mass*, Guangzhou Live 11, China
2011: *Golden Quadrilateral*, MAXXI, Rome
2011: *Morose*, Infr'Action, Sète, France
2010: *In Determination*, The National Review on Live Art, Glasgow, United Kingdom
2009: *In Determination*, Art Dubai
2009: *Two headed with Fish Posture*, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, the Netherlands
2008: *Mapping the city, weaving the spine*, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede, the Netherlands
2007: *Reverse, Rewind, Replay: 7 acts from the past*, The National Review on Live Art, Glasgow
2006: *Between the Familiar/Unfamiliar, the Home & Heart, Beats a Golden Kiss*, Saturday Live Mumbai, Tate

Modern, London

- 2005: *With or without emotional hang ups*, live web, Duke University, Durham NC, United States
2004: *Under Pressure*, MARTa, Herford, Germany
2004: *u o a e m*, Fundación Montenmedio Arte Contemporáneo, Spain
2003: *Practising Nostalgia and Old Fashioned*, Centro de Experimentação e Informação de Arte, Belo Horizonte, Brazil
2002: *New Territories*, International Festival of Live Art, Glasgow
2001: *Camouflage*, Nehru Centre, London
2000: *Bruststucke Looser*, Salzburg International Summer Academy of Fine Arts, Austria
1999: *Protected Reflection*, Lakeeren, Mumbai
1998: *Nothing is permanent*, Jehangir, Mumbai

Selected group shows

- 2012: "Contemporary Renaissance," Casa Masaccio, San Giovanni Valdarno, Italy
2012: "Skin and Spirit," Siemens Sanat, Istanbul
2011: "ComPeung Revisited," Chiang Mai City Arts and Cultural Centre, Thailand
2011: Prague Biennale
2010: "Frictive Familiarities," Art Kino, Stockholm
2009: "rebel: Art and Feminism 1969-2009," Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, the Netherlands
2009: "De Stomme Van Portici," hoet bekaert, Ghent, Belgium
2008: Sinop Biennale, Turkey
2007: "Who is your friends/the soap operas," Soap Gallery, Kitakyushu, Japan
2006: "Rites, Rights, Rewrites," Mason Gross Galleries at Rutgers University, Newark NJ, United States
2005: "Love & Death," Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
2004: "Another Passage to India," Théâtre Saint-Gervais, Musée d'Ethnographie, Geneva
2003: "De Inrichting," Willibrord, Heiloo, the Netherlands
2002: "No I.D.," Sakshi, Mumbai
2001: "Camouflage," Nehru Centre, London
2000: May for India & You Festival, Tulln, Austria
1999: "Smell the Art," National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai
1998: Next Wave Festival, Melbourne
1997: "50 years of Art in Mumbai, 1947-1997 Part II," National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai
1996: "100 years of Cinema," Lakeeren, Mumbai

The Curator

Veeranganakumari Solanki (New Delhi, 1985) is an independent curator and an art writer based in Mumbai. She studied English Literature at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai and holds post-graduate diplomas in Indian Aesthetics from Mumbai University, Art Criticism and Theory from Jnanapravaha, Mumbai as well as a master in History from SNDT, Mumbai. Her curatorial experience has involved research on emerging Asian and international artists and art practices, as well as Indian Modern and Contemporary Art. Solanki was a participant of the first Gwangju Biennale International Curator Course, and has curated and co-curated exhibitions in India as well as internationally such as "The Contemporary Sultanate" at Kutub Haveli Serai, Exhibit 320, New Delhi in 2012 and "Emerging Asian Artists," at Art Gwangju in 2010. She is the recipient of the first *illySustainArt Curator's* prize in 2011 and the 1st Annual ALICE (Artistic Landmark in Contemporary Experience) Public's Voice Award 2012 for best Emerging Curator.

MK Search Art

MK Search Art (MKSA) was founded by Roney Simon, Luciano Donatini and Tommaso Amico di Meane in 2010 with the production of "Crossroads: India Escalate" the Indian section at the fifth edition of the Prague Biennale (2011). Including 23 artists, the exhibition stands as among the most incisive representations of the contemporary scene in India within the context of an Art Biennial. MKSA's project in Prague generated conferences and other moments of dialogue, aimed at promoting debates and a deeper understanding of contemporary Indian Art. Through this scope, Prague represented the first example of a series of encounters that MKSA proposed, also on an institutional level in India and Italy, attempting to stimulate, through rediscovery, a cultural debate between Europe and India with the idea of extending it to emerging realities. In 2011, MKSA collaborated with MAXXI in Rome, to organize *Golden Quadrilateral*, a performance by Monali Meher as part of the travelling exhibition "Indian Highway" and within the "India Day", a day of meetings with international guests and dedicated to the cultural relationship between Europe and India and its different declinations – Art, Cinema, Poetry, Literature and Philosophy. In 2012, MKSA is now moving on to two channels: the first, continuing the series of cultural projects non-for-profit, such as the Artists Residency in collaboration with Casa Masaccio in San Giovanni Valdarno, near Arezzo, Italy; the second such as MKSA Gallery, focused on the representation and promotion of emerging artists within the international context. In 2013, MKSA, which today has an exhibition venue in San Giovanni Valdarno and an upcoming venue in New Delhi, will participate at the India Art Fair (IAF) where it will present a multicultural project featuring Indian artists together with international artists from countries like Indonesia, United Kingdom, United States and Italy.