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Asia Society Texas Center Celebrates Regional Artists with *Site Lines: Artists Working in Texas*

First ASTC Exhibition to Exclusively Feature Artists from the Lone Star State, Hailing from China, India, Japan, Pakistan, and Vietnam

HOUSTON, April 12, 2019 — Asia Society Texas Center (ASTC) shines a light on Texas talent with its new exhibition, *Site Lines: Artists Working in Texas*, opening on April 13. All five artists call the Lone Star State their home, and all five are also making their ASTC debuts. **Ambreen Butt, Abhidnya Ghuge, Beili Liu, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, and Prince Varughese Thomas** represent a panoply of Asian backgrounds, including China, India, Japan, Pakistan, and Vietnam.

The media involved in the exhibition span a wide range, including drawings, paintings, video, collage, and installations of materials as varied as resin-castings, U.S. pennies, chicken wire, and paper plates. The artists' work, on view in the Louisa Stude Sarofim Gallery, covers an extensive array of themes, such as the creative value of labor, cultural memory, and the fragility of life.

"There is an incredibly rich diversity of artists working in Texas, and it is a particular honor for Asia Society Texas Center to create a platform for Texas-based Asian artists," says **Bridget Bray**, ASTC's Nancy C. Allen Curator and Director of Exhibitions. "These five artists' work is informed by their connectivity between Asia and their chosen home state. This exhibition evokes meaningful questions about the value of work and the power of place."

As with the *Ayomi Yoshida* installation last summer, local volunteers were a pivotal part of the installation process, creating an even deeper connection to Texas. With this exhibition, 12 local volunteers (including several art students) participated in the installation, helping to place 195,000 U.S. pennies and 8,000 paper plates, among other components.





In their works on view, Ambreen Butt and Abhidnya Ghuge engage with the ephemeral limits of life and the fragile nature of physical existence, while celebrating the tenacity of the human spirit. Beili Liu views her artistic process as a method of recording time and its inexorable passage, while Houston residents Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba and Prince Varughese Thomas investigate the various impacts that time and events have on specific communities.

Fast Facts

- Exhibition dates: Saturday, April 13–Sunday, August 18, 2019
- Admission: Free for members and children ages 12 and under; \$5 for Students and Seniors for ID; \$8 for Nonmembers
- Hours: Tuesday–Friday, 11am–6pm; Saturday–Sunday, 10am–6pm
- Location: Asia Society Texas Center, 1370 Southmore Blvd, Houston, TX, 77004 (in the Museum District)

Related Program

- Artist talk featuring Abhidnya Ghuge: Saturday, June 15, 2 pm; free for members; \$8 for nonmembers (tickets at www.asiasociety.org/texas)
- (Coming soon: dates for additional artist talks with the other artists.)

About the Artists

Ambreen Butt was born in Lahore, Pakistan and received her BFA in traditional Indian and Persian miniature painting from the National College of Arts in Lahore. She moved to Boston in 1993 and attended Massachusetts College of Art and Design earning her MFA in painting in 1997. Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions, both nationally and internationally. Institutions that have exhibited her work include the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Brooklyn Museum; USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California; Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany; and the National Art Gallery in Islamabad, Pakistan.

She has been the recipient of awards including a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant, and a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario, Canada. In 1999, she was the first recipient of the James and Audrey Foster Prize from the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, in addition to being an artist-in-residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum that same year. Her work is included in public and private collections including the Brooklyn Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, and the Minneapolis Institute of Art, among others. Ambreen Butt lives and works in Southlake, Texas.

www.ambreenbutt.com

Abhidnya Ghuge is a multidisciplinary installation artist who hand carves large-scale woodblocks to print on thousands of paper plates to create site-responsive installations. Matters such as the value of life and relationships, the disposability of life, the dignity of labor, and the power of human gatherings to create change are the focus of these installations. In addition, Ghuge's drawings are visual representations of relational portraits created using archival ink, watercolors, and gouache.



These drawings celebrate patterns and organic forms, allowing for rich sensory and spatial experiences.

Born in Mumbai, India, a dermatologist by previous profession, Ghuge draws inspiration from Indian henna designs, both the microscopic and macroscopic worlds, and the current cultural landscape of America. Ghuge is an Adjunct Instructor at the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Tyler. Ghuge has shown her work in solo shows including the Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, Texas; Crow Museum of Asian Art, Dallas; Maryland Art Place, Baltimore; Women and Their Work Gallery, Austin; and others. Her work is included in public and private collections in the U.K., U.S.A., and India. www.abhidnyaghuge.com

Beili Liu is a visual artist who has exhibited at venues such as the Hå Gamle Prestegard, Norway; Hua Gallery, London; Galerie an der Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Elisabeth de Brabant Art Center, Shanghai; and the Chinese Culture Center, San Francisco. Liu's work has been showcased in exhibitions and performances at the Detroit Institute of Arts; Hangzhou Fiber Art Triennial; National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.; Museum of Southeast Texas; Kaunas Biennale, Lithuania; and others.

Beili Liu is a 2016 Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant recipient. She was designated the 2018 Texas State Artist in 3D medium by the Texas State Legislature and the Texas Commission on The Arts. Liu has been awarded artist residency fellowships from the Joan Mitchell Center, MASS MoCA, Facebook AIR, Fiskars AIR, Djerassi Foundation, and Fundación Valparaíso, Spain, among others. Born in Jilin, China, Beili Liu now lives and works in Austin, Texas. Liu received her MFA from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and is a Professor of Art at the University of Texas at Austin. www.beililiu.com

Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba was born in Tokyo to a Vietnamese father and a Japanese mother. Growing up and being educated in Japan and the U.S., he earned his BFA from the School of Art Institute of Chicago in 1992 and then his MFA in the Maryland Institute College of Art in 1994. Nguyen-Hatsushiba, after 18 years of working in Vietnam, is now residing and creating artworks in Houston. In 2001, his first underwater film project, *Memorial Project Nha Trang, Vietnam: Towards the Complex - For the Courageous, the Curious and the Cowards* was shown at the 1st Yokohama Triennial. He was then commissioned to create a series of underwater films, including a memorial for Minamata disease patients and a multinational history based in 1972 Okinawa (Japan, Vietnam, and USA).

His works are often generated from multiple landscapes of thoughts combining unlikely, sometimes surprising mixtures into existing contexts of local history and issues. In his most recent film, *The Master and the Slave: Inujima Monogatari* filmed at Inujima island in Setouchi, Japan, he attempts to revive Inujima's history through Japan's national sport of baseball, played inside the last stone quarry of the island. A batter and a pitcher confront each other, but with a romantic endeavor of hitting the stones out from the smaller island to the mainland of Japan.

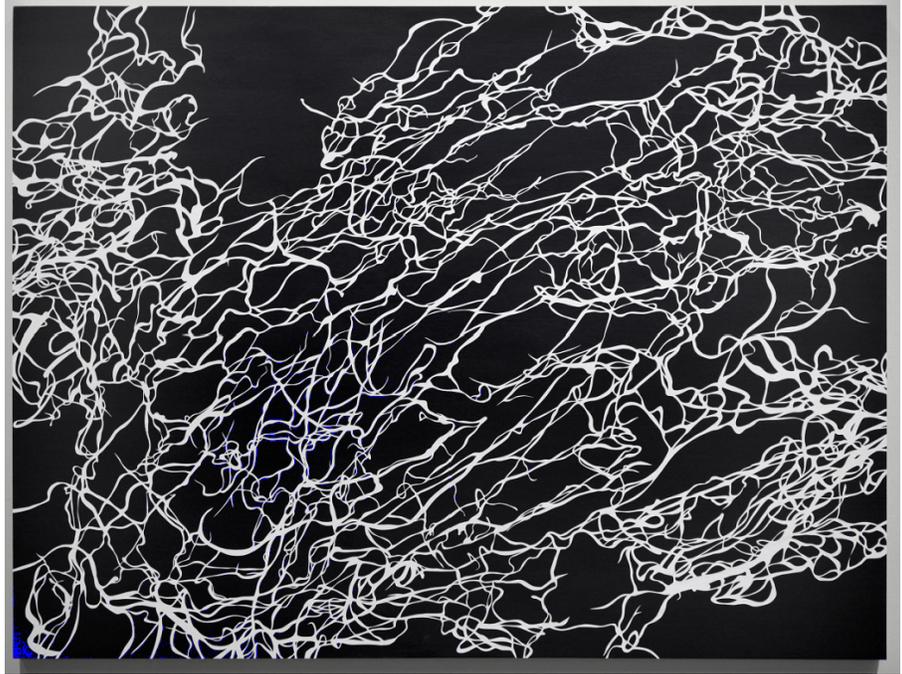
Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba has exhibited in numerous international triennials and biennales including Venice, Istanbul, Sao Paulo, Sydney, Shanghai, Yokohama, and Guangzhou. One can also find his works in the public collections of institutions such as the *Centre Georges Pompidou* in





Paris, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, and Mori Art Museum in Tokyo.
www.nguyen-hatsushiba.net

Prince Varughese Thomas is an Indian immigrant, born in Kuwait, partly raised in India, and naturalized in the United States. His studio practice is informed by his ethnicity and facing racial prejudice throughout his life. From the Iran Hostage crisis in the 70s, to aggressions in Libya in the 80s, to the first Gulf War in the 90s, and then 9/11, each decade of his life has been marked with prejudice that has been projected on to him by the



dominant culture. This experience through his formative years to adulthood has directly affected how he looks at society with open eyes and as he attempts to investigate places that he finds worthy of critique, exploration, and making art. With an educational background and degrees in both Psychology and Art, Thomas investigates and deconstructs complex issues from the interstices in personally expressive ways that humanize his subjects while incorporating a variety of photographic, video, drawing, and installation techniques into his artwork.

A winner of the Time-Based Media in Art Prize 7 and a Texas Biennial Artist, Thomas has been invited to exhibit his work and be a visiting artist, lecturer, panelist, and workshop instructor at numerous institutions including Ashkal Alwan, Beirut, Lebanon; the Station Museum of Contemporary Art; the Atlanta Contemporary; the Light Factory, Charlotte; and the Queens Museum. Thomas' work has been exhibited in over 200 solo and group exhibitions at numerous museums and galleries. His work is represented in various public collections including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Thomas received his B.A. in Psychology from the University of Texas at Arlington, and M.F.A. from the University of Houston. He is currently a Professor of Art at Lamar University. www.princevthomas.com

About Asia Society Texas Center

With 13 locations throughout the world, Asia Society is the leading educational organization promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among the peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the rest of the world. Asia Society Texas Center executes the global mission with a local focus, enriching and engaging the vast diversity of Houston through innovative, relevant programs in arts and culture, business and policy, education, and community outreach.

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Image credits:

Page 1: Abhidnya Ghuge, *Complexity of Our Relationship*, 2018, Ink, gouache, watercolor on paper, Courtesy of the artist.

Page 2: Prince Varughese Thomas, Installation view of *Body Count* in *Houston Times Eight*, 2012, Courtesy of the Station Museum of Contemporary Art, Photo by Michael Stravato.

Page 3: Ambreen Butt, *Abdul Wasit (17)*, 2018, Collage of text, watercolors on tea-stained paper, Courtesy of the artist.

Page 4: Beili Liu, *Affine/Fragment #1-3* (Triptych), 2012, Hand cut paper, graphite, on birch panel, set of 3.

Page 5: Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, *The Master and the Slave: Inujima Monogatari* (video still), 2013, Single channel digital video, 9 min., Courtesy the artist and Mizuma Art Gallery, Tokyo.