

HALSEY MCKAY GALLERY

JAGDEEP RAINA - *THE LAST TOUCH*

November 19 - December 31 | 79 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY

For all further information please contact info@halseymckay.com

HALSEY MCKAY is pleased to present a solo exhibition featuring the works of Jagdeep Raina. This marks the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery.



Detail: Jagdeep Raina, *She travels softly through the seven gates as her garden croons for her*, 2022, Silk and cotton embroidered tapestry, 26 x 17 inches

On August 4th, 2020, I find myself seated in my father's home, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

He built this home in 1972, when enclaves across the East End offered solace, reflection, inspiration and quiet for creative minds. Back then, the dunes were so high, you could only see the ocean from the second floor. There were so many horseshoe crabs, starfish, and shells across the sand. Today, there is a summer storm, and the ocean is swallowing up the beach in a slew of greys tinted with yellow foam; waves of unimaginable size slap the beachgrass.

On the other side of this ocean, and far east into the Mediterranean basin, a different summer storm unfolds: 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate explode and rip through the heart of Beirut, Lebanon. Destruction that is relentless, unforgivable, uncompromising. A scale that defies one's imagination. You can see the rust tinted smoke and clouds from miles away: it lingers, poisoning the air.

I sit, safe, in the East End, in my father's home, while I watch my mother's home, my heartland, crumbles. I try to call everyone I know: "are you alive? Ok." Click. Next.

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It is a bewildering sense of grief to watch your heartland crumble from behind a cell phone screen.

It is torture to feel helpless, heartbroken, and conscious of your own good luck. It is strange when suddenly, Lebanon and Long Island merge.

When I see your work here, I am reminded that contrasts force us to see more clearly; that color is best understood in opposition; that a locus of quiet allows the ruminating mind to pause and listen to a someone else's personal story.

The stark contrast between the East End and Kashmir concurrently serves as a reminder that storytelling is universal to humankind. That nature is resilient, and despite the centuries of land grabs, exploitations, explosions, erosions— there will be another cycle of life to come: "I promise I'll weed out the bombs and the bullets in this lake of bones."

- Denise Maroney

Can it be that we are lands, oceans, mountains, lakes? If the last of us is given back to the land, what/who/where are we now?

What was it like on that day? Were the seals there? Have you ever seen seals there before?

The boy who never spoke cracks the earth open when he does and the water like a tsunami flows far beyond the dunes of his flesh.

The car saleswoman, the mother. The house cleaner, the mother of the mother who calls her baby, Mama.

Now, how do we hold together once the ocean swallows? What does life look like in the after? After the house is gone and the ocean took back a life it didn't deserve yet.

The boy who never spoke invites the brother over for the first time in 20 years. The brother shows up, for the ocean, for the car saleswoman, for the after.

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This is the power of Jagdeep Rainas work. I set out to write about the work included in this exhibition, but at this moment, I've yet to move beyond one piece. As I flip to the next image (viewing the work on the phone from halfway across the country), The Last Touch, I feel as if I've been sucker punched. How am I, now, supposed to take in this image? Each individual work in this collection is a commitment. The work cannot be glanced at. There is no story or character overlooked, no hierarchies between the Marlene's & the Petra's, the Mrs Bakshi's and the Mrs. Malhotra's, the cities and the lakes. What there is, for certain, is care. This is the work of a listener, work that does not neglect the pain, nor revels in it. Somehow, the work allows us to dream of a beautiful loss. The last touch.

- Mickey Aloisio

Jagdeep Raina (b. 1991, Guelph, Ontario, Canada) is currently a Fellow at the Core Program, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, and was previously a Paul Mellon Fellow at Yale University, a recipient of the 2020 Sobey Art Award, and a resident at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. He received his BFA from Western University in 2013, his MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2016. He has exhibited internationally at Blaffer Art Museum, Houston (2021); Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai (2021); Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto (2021); Textile Museum, Toronto (2021); Soft Opening, London (2020); (Midway Contemporary, Minneapolis (2019); Art Gallery of Guelph, Guelph (2019); Cooper Cole, Toronto (2019); Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton (2018); Rubin Museum of Art, New York (2018); RISD Museum of Art, Providence (2017); Humber Galleries, Toronto (2017); Provincetown Art Association and Museum, Provincetown (2017); Camden Arts Centre, London (2016); and Modern Fuel Artist Run Centre, Kingston (2016). Raina lives and works in Houston, Texas, USA.