

10 February ————— 28 May 2023

## In Other Words Ishita Chakraborty

'In Other Words' is a solo show by Indian artist and poet Ishita Chakraborty. The exhibition presents her large-scale, floor-based installation 'Europa' alongside wall-based ceramics and works on paper.

Chakraborty's practice engages with global migration, its causes, and the resulting implications and socio-political issues that follow. She initiates her work through the interaction with individuals and groups directly affected by, or actively entangled in, geographic displacement.

Having moved from India to Switzerland in 2018, the identity of an immigrant has been something the artist has had to engage with in all aspects of her life. When she initially moved, a large part of her time was spent attending German language courses where she met other immigrants and refugees, listening to their stories and sharing experiences. Following this experience, Chakraborty began conducting participatory workshops where refugees, migrants, and locals within Switzerland meet to speak with one another, share stories and make models of mushrooms together. Intending to connect people and allow them to share experiences, the workshop offers an opportunity to speak their native languages.

An outcome of this is the work 'Europa', a 2700+ installation of mushrooms, produced from different types of clay, resulting in a variation of colours including black, brown, white, beige, pink and orange. The artist likens these colours to the skin types of those who attend the workshops. Giving a sense of diversity much like an ecosystem.

The artist imagines each person as a mushroom; interconnected through a root network that transcends countries borders. They serve as a metaphor for the dispersion of people beyond their birthplace. A reference of Chakraborty's is Anna Tsing's seminal book 'A Mushroom at the End of the World' (2015). The book uses mushrooms as an analogy for the importance of human 'assemblages' outside of a conformed nationality or country. Similarly with 'Europa', anthropological questions also become ecological ones, highlighting our interdependency on one another.

In a line along the walls of the gallery, is another of Chakraborty's unglazed ceramic series titled 'Resistance' (2021-ongoing). Modelled on barbed wire, an object that embodies violence and intolerance of 'the other', the work is a commentary on the brutality of humankind, symbolising borders and the keeping out of those not wanted. By producing the work in a fragile material, the artist neutralises the original objects threat.

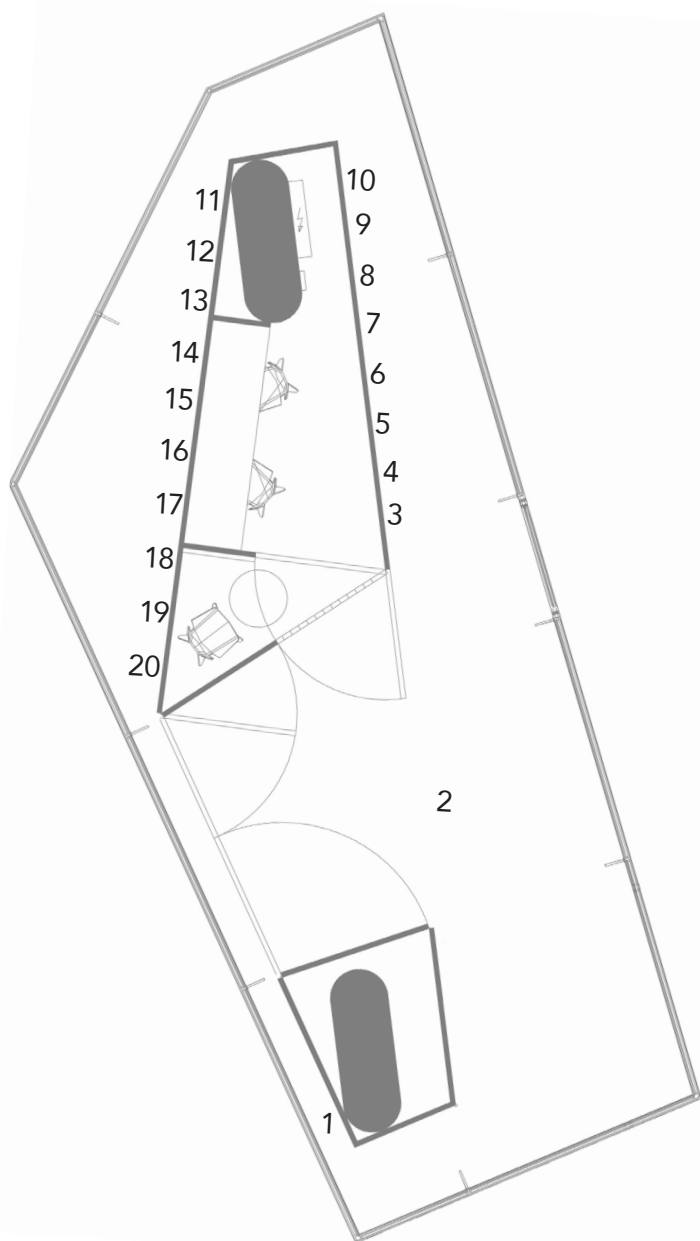
The violent connotation of cutting that is evoked by barbed wire, feeds into another series presented as part of the exhibition. 'Zwischen/Between' (2017-ongoing) is a series of works on plain white paper which have had their surfaces scratched, like a deep wound beneath the surface of skin, inspired by braille script. Deriving from recordings the artist has taken of the voices of those who have experienced exile, loss, and violence, the series becomes a visual archive of these stories. Chakraborty considers listening an exercise of resistance and a tool for the anti-colonial struggle to understand peoples' identities.

**Ishita Chakraborty (b. 1989, West Bengal, IN)** lives and works between Switzerland and India. She holds an MFA in Art and Media from Zurich, University of the Arts, CH (2021) and another MFA in Fine Art from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, IN (2013). Awards include Credit Suisse Förderpreis 2021; Preis der Jury 2021, Gast Auswahl 2022, Aargauer Kunsthau; Visiting Artist Fellowship for Harvard University; ZHdK Avina Foundation grant; Sunayani Devi Smirti scholarship.

She has exhibited internationally at Biennales, institutions and galleries including: the 5th International Biennale de Casablanca, MA; Aargauer Kunsthau, CH; Johann Jacobs Museum, Zurich, CH; Prameya Art Foundation, New Delhi, IN; Museum Forum Schlossplatz, CH; Kunsthau Zofingen, CH; Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau, CH; Die Diele, Zurich, CH; Atelier Mondial, Basel, CH; Keinraum, Luzern, CH; Gallery Espace, New Delhi, IN; Art Container Zurich, CH.

Residencies include Pro Helvetia Residency in Brazil 2023, Arbeitsgruppe Gästeteatler Krone Art Residency, Aarau, CH (2017), and Piramal Art Residency, Mumbai, IN (2016).

Forthcoming exhibitions and projects include: a presentation at the India Art Fair, New Delhi, IN (February 2023); Hyundai Art for Hope, Bikaner House, New Delhi, IN (27 February 2023); the 8th Biennale Kulturort Weiertal, Winterthur, CH (May 2023); the community based art project 'Co-Habitations' at WE ARE AIA, Zürich, CH (June 2023) and 'OHNE HAUT-OHNE HAUS' at Stiftung akku Emmen, CH (26 August 2023). She will be on residency with Pro Helvetia in the Amazon Rainforest, BR (Oct-Dec 2023).



1. Ishita Chakraborty, *Zwischen / Between*, 2022. Scratched paper drawing on paper. Framed. 21 x 29.7 cm. Unique.

2. Ishita Chakraborty, *Europa*, 2019-2022. Fired, un-glazed ceramic installation. Dimensions variable.

3 - 16. Ishita Chakraborty, *Resistance*, 2022. Unglazed ceramics. Dimensions variable.

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