

Mithu Sen

mOTHERTONGUE

22 April – 18 June 2023

Continuing the annual ACCA International series of solo exhibitions by influential artists on the international stage, a new exhibition of work by leading New Delhi-based artist Mithu Sen will open on 22 April.

Mithu Sen (b. 1971) was born in West Bengal, and is one of India's most renowned contemporary artists, with a prolific body of work recognised through awards, exhibitions, and performances at prestigious forums across the globe.

Mithu Sen explores myths of identity, and their intersection with the structures of our world, whether social, political, economic, or emotional. Sen works fundamentally as a performer, tangling with politics of language, disciplining of bodies, conventions of society, and polite impositions of the art world. Known for her provocative, alluring, and playful examination of these hierarchies, Sen is committed to perpetual unbecoming through performative interventions.

mOTHERTONGUE surveys the past fifteen years of Mithu Sen's compelling art practice, alongside a series of major new commissions. Curated by **ACCA Artistic Director/CEO Max Delany**, the exhibition is presented as a mind-map, moving between interior states and visible surfaces, charting Sen's language-based articulations and interventions. *mOTHERTONGUE* will explore the ways in which language is channelled into forms as diverse as drawing, media and performance to create complex artworks which resist definitional categories and elude institutional power structures related to race, gender, ethnicity, caste, and location.

Returning time and again to the idea of myth and initiating its unmaking, Mithu Sen's work explores personal and public dependencies through radical hospitality by generating concurrent dialogues, gatherings, and contracts that test relationships between guests and hosts, participants and performers, and ultimately, an artist and her audiences — thereby complicating the notions of identity circulating around her as a woman artist located in the global south, navigating feminist and post-colonial discourses, framed within the art market.

Max Delany said ACCA was excited to present the work of such a distinguished and intriguing artist. "Mithu Sen's practice occupies both intellectual and emotional registers – at once sensual, intimate and bodily, whilst equally conceptual, critical and subversive, extending from conceptual art to glitch poetry and performative media interventions, and from daring, libidinous drawings to graphic works which condemn the prevalence of communal violence and marginalisation in Indian and wider global society".

Mithu Sen lives and works in New Delhi. She grew up in a Bengali family steeped in culture; her mother is a poet, and Mithu originally considered poetry her calling. Writing Bangla poetry from an early age, she published several books, before expanding her repertoire to the visual arts. Sen studied at Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan, where she gained her BFA and MFA in Painting from 1990 to 1997. She subsequently participated in the post-graduate program at the Glasgow School of Art in Scotland in 2001. Mithu credits her move to Delhi at the end of 1997 as a defining moment in her artistic journey, where she was a migrant in the

nation's capital, home to diverse cultures, populations, and a cosmopolitan and anglophone art world.

Mithu is now one of India's most renowned contemporary artists. She was awarded the Skoda Prize in 2010 and the Prudential Eye Award for Contemporary Asian Art – Drawing in 2015. She has exhibited and performed in major international forums including Sharjah Biennale 15, UAE (2023); sonsbeek 20-24, Arnhem, the Netherlands (2021); APT9-9th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2018); Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg (2018); Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai (2018); Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi (2017); Guggenheim Museum, New York (2016); Unlimited: Art Basel (2016); Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan, USA (2014); Kochi-Muziris Biennale (2014); Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna (2014); Dhaka Art Summit (2014); Tate Modern Project Space, London (2013); Zacheta Museum, Warsaw (2011); and National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo (2008), among other forums and institutions.

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art

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Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday 10am–5pm, Weekends 11am–5pm, Free entry

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