In the days to come the frail black rebuses of blood in those sands would crack and break and drift away so that in the circuit of few suns all trace of the destruction of these people would be erased. The desert wind would salt their ruins and there would be nothing, nor ghost nor scribe, to tell to any pilgrim in his passing how it was that people had lived in this place and in this place died.

Blood Meridian, Cormac McCarthy

A mineral with use spanning millennia, salt today remains mostly hidden in kitchen cupboards, its once-precious rarity long forgotten in favour of widespread use beyond human consumption. Before being sealed into supermarket packets, it was mined and harvested across vast distances as a substance dense with value, capable of sustaining life by arresting its breakdown. Although seemingly more ordinary, it continues to embody an unusual duality: it preserves, yet it can sterilise soil, corrode materials, or render land utterly uninhabitable. Historically a vital commodity, traded, taxed, and fought over, it became entangled with systems of extraction within colonial economies. As a force that's both preservative and corrosive, salt carries material memory of survival and devastation alike.

The desert wind will salt your ruins takes this paradox as its point of departure, using salt's capacity to both preserve and to erode as a lens through which to reflect on legacy-making and the fragile conditions under which histories persist at a time increasingly defined by impermanence. Marked by political conflicts, ecological degradation, and shifting geopolitical certainties, the question of how one will be remembered feels at once urgent and faintly futile. Many of the intellectual frameworks through which the modern world once understood itself appear to reach a point of exhaustion. We are witnessing in real time certain epistemological closures, various posts- (postmodernism, postcolonialism) and proclaimed ends (the end of history, end of ideology), that signal sustained interrogations of Western ways of knowing and ordering the world. Their incompleteness prompts us to look beyond the givens of any history.

Cultural practices have long been entangled with the desire to leave a trace; from carmine red cave paintings to museum collections, art has insisted on presence against disappearance. But such gestures now unfold under the shadow of unprecedented uncertainty: if ecological collapse continues to accelerate and political violence carries on to fracture the world, who will remain to read these traces? Legacy falters when the continuity of its reception cannot be assumed, especially when the archive itself cannot be trusted. As Walter Benjamin reminds us, to preserve is also to select; to salvage is to leave something else behind. The archive excludes even as it gathers. What emerges here instead is a counter-archive: partial, unstable, resistant to closure. When the present moment proves to be not just a site of translation but also one of trauma, the preservation cannot simply mean fixing the past in place. It may instead require a more careful gesture: holding fragments of experience tenderly and rendering them available for futures not yet fully imaginable.

The artists in this exhibition take up precisely this gesture, assembling various fragments (personal, inherited, political) into a provisional constellation of meanings. They work with and against the archive, animating what would otherwise remain inert, turning towards both the intimate, vastly different pasts and the futures that have not yet taken form. In their hands, legacy becomes something more fluid and negotiable: less an inheritance to be safeguarded than a set of questions to untangle. Some of them can be heard louder than others: by what right, and through whose voice, does history persist? Drawing on what Catherine Malabou has described as the unheard histories that reside within the subject, these practices approach art as a site where history can be reworked rather than simply received. Archival materials are not treated as stable records but as matter to be handled, reconfigured, even fabulated, allowing multiple temporalities to press against one another, so that the past remains unfinished, still active in the present, still shaping what might come. If salt records through crystallisation, then the artists here work as solvents—loosening, liquefying, allowing forms to shift and settle again differently. The archive is not static but reconstituted.

Through photography, collage, and printmaking, Mila Rae Sarabhai reworks fragments into layered images that reflect on how personal and colonial histories linger within materials, carrying traces of both loss and inheritance. Her white-on-white screenprints on silk resist immediate visibility, shifting with light and withholding as much as they reveal. A brass *diya* filled with salt crystals rests on top of the fabric—a small, dense gesture that draws in the contested histories of salt in India, allowing them to gather materially without resolution. Alongside these works, the artist presents a series of small-scale photographs, delicately printed and affixed directly to the wall with wooden nails, emphasising their fragility and provisionality. Selected archival images are reduced in scale and set within large frames, destabilising hierarchies between the intimate and monumental, the found and composed. Across these gestures, the pictures are repurposed as a site of ongoing inquiry where the archive emerges as a site of negotiation.

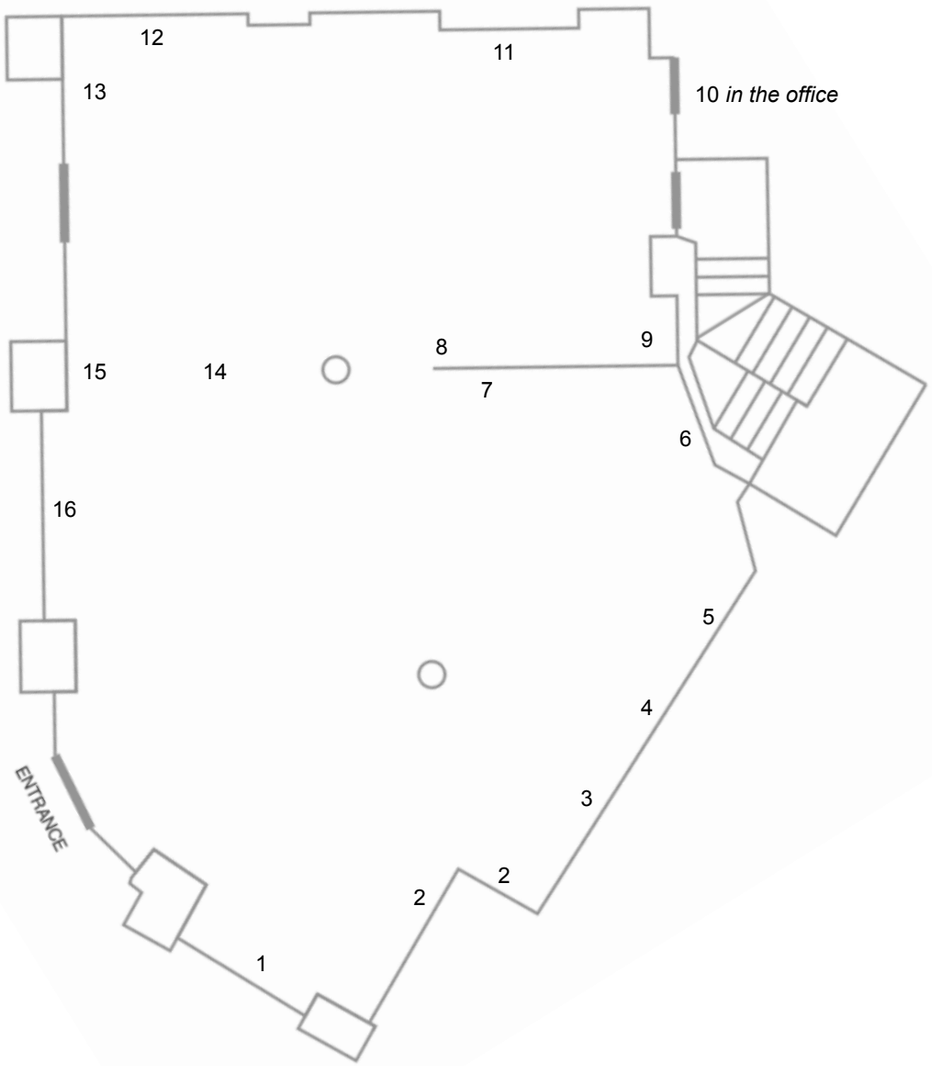
Dzina Liaonava's practice sits between erosion and endurance, her paintings slowly sedimenting into being. Built from successive washes of watercolour, the *Russian Doll* series echoes the logic of analogue photography: images are formed gradually through the slow sedimentation of pigment, layer upon layer. Drawing from a family archive of photographs taken in the former USSR and Belarus—many by her grandmother, an amateur photographer—Liaonava translates these images into large-scale, black-and-white paintings. Figures, often drawn from intimate family scenes,

appear enlarged, blurred, or subtly distorted, suspended between presence and dissolution. Trained as an architect, Liaonava approaches the image with a sensitivity to structure and fragmentation, yet she resists any attempt to stabilise or restore what has been lost. Instead, the black-and-white paintings hold memory in a state of suspension, acknowledging the instability of home while refusing total disappearance.

Yijia Wu's sculptural objects reveal the fragility of remembrance and the shifting forms through which ideas of home persist. Her ongoing One Pear a Year project draws on the symbolism of pear within her family, where sharing the fruit is avoided due to its name (梨 lí) being a homophone for separation (离 lí). Carved in alabaster and paired with a brass spoon as its stem, the sculpture stages tension by inviting the viewer to share something materially impossible to divide. Alongside these durable stone forms, Wu produces sculptures made in soap—forms that slowly dissolve when in contact with water. This interplay between endurance and dissolution extends into her alabaster key sculptures, delicately carved forms that recall a childhood memory of her father's once-extensive key collection—objects that no longer exist, tied to spaces that have since disappeared or been altered. Here, keys function not as tools of access, but as residues of absence, markers of thresholds that can no longer be crossed. Permanence and loss are not opposites here, but coexistent states.

Across these practices, the archive is neither fixed nor secure. It is handled, unsettled, remade. If salt crystallises, these works dissolve and re-form their structures, acting as agents of reconfiguration. What unfolds is an exhibition that understands itself as both a ruin and a record. It does not promise endurance, conscious of its fragility, yet is unwilling to relinquish the act of marking. The gestures of preservation, exposed as enclosing, occupy space between shelter and wilderness. If salt can erode and crystallise in equal measures, then these works inhabit that ambivalent threshold: holding memory in suspension, resisting both total disappearance and false permanence. In this sense, the gesture of preservation becomes an act of radical hope: not a guarantee of endurance, but a commitment to leave something behind, even when the future that might receive it remains uncertain.

Ania Kaczynska



1 MILA RAE SARABHAI, *Bite the Hand,* 2025, screenprint on silk, salt, brass diya, 118 x 600 cm

2 YIJIA WU, *Home Puzzle - Chair,* 2024, brass, hemp sheet, dimensions variable

3 DZINA LIAONAVA, *Sweetie Pie,* 2025, watercolour on canvas, 120 x 90 cm

4 DZINA LIAONAVA, *My grandma was an amateur photographer N2,* 2025, watercolour on canvas, 120 x 90 cm

5 DZINA LIAONAVA, *My grandma was an amateur photographer N1,* 2025, watercolour on canvas, 120 x 90 cm

6 MILA RAE SARABHAI, *grapple,* 2026, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle German etching paper, 27 x 37 cm

7 DZINA LIAONAVA, *Zoned Out,* 2025, watercolour on canvas, 120 x 90 cm

8 YIJIA WU, *Keys from Home* series, 2025, alabaster, antique brick mold, dimensions variable

9 MILA RAE SARABHAI, left to right: *vestige, gleam, knot, shard,* 2026, pigment print on handmade Khadi paper, wooden nails, 19 x 27 cm

10 MILA RAE SARABHAI, left to right*: linger,* 2025, photopolymer etching on Fabriano Paper (unique work), 10 x 14 cm; *highwire,* 2025 photopolymer etching on Fabriano Paper (unique work), 10 x 14 cm

11 DZINA LIAONAVA, left to right: *Mask N1, Mask N2, Mask N3*, 2024, watercolour on paper, 30 x 40 cm each

12 MILA RAE SARABHAI, left to right: *graze,* 2026, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle German etching paper in artist frame, 7 x 5.2 cm (printed area), 35 x 45 cm (framed work); *grasp,* 2026, 7 x 5.2 cm (printed area), 35 x 45 cm (framed work), archival pigment print on Hahnemühle German etching paper in artist frame

13 YIJIA WU, *Soap Bowl 3,* 2025, soap, 11.5 x 11.5 x 11cm

14 YIJIA WU, *Check-in Luggage,* 2023, stone, soap, luggage handle, 48 x 39 x 12cm

15 DZINA LIAONAVA, *Boy Looking at You*, 2024, watercolour on paper, 30 x 40 cm

16 MILA RAE SARABHAI, *mouth of the river,* 2025, 118 cm x 300 cm, screenprint on Garad silk