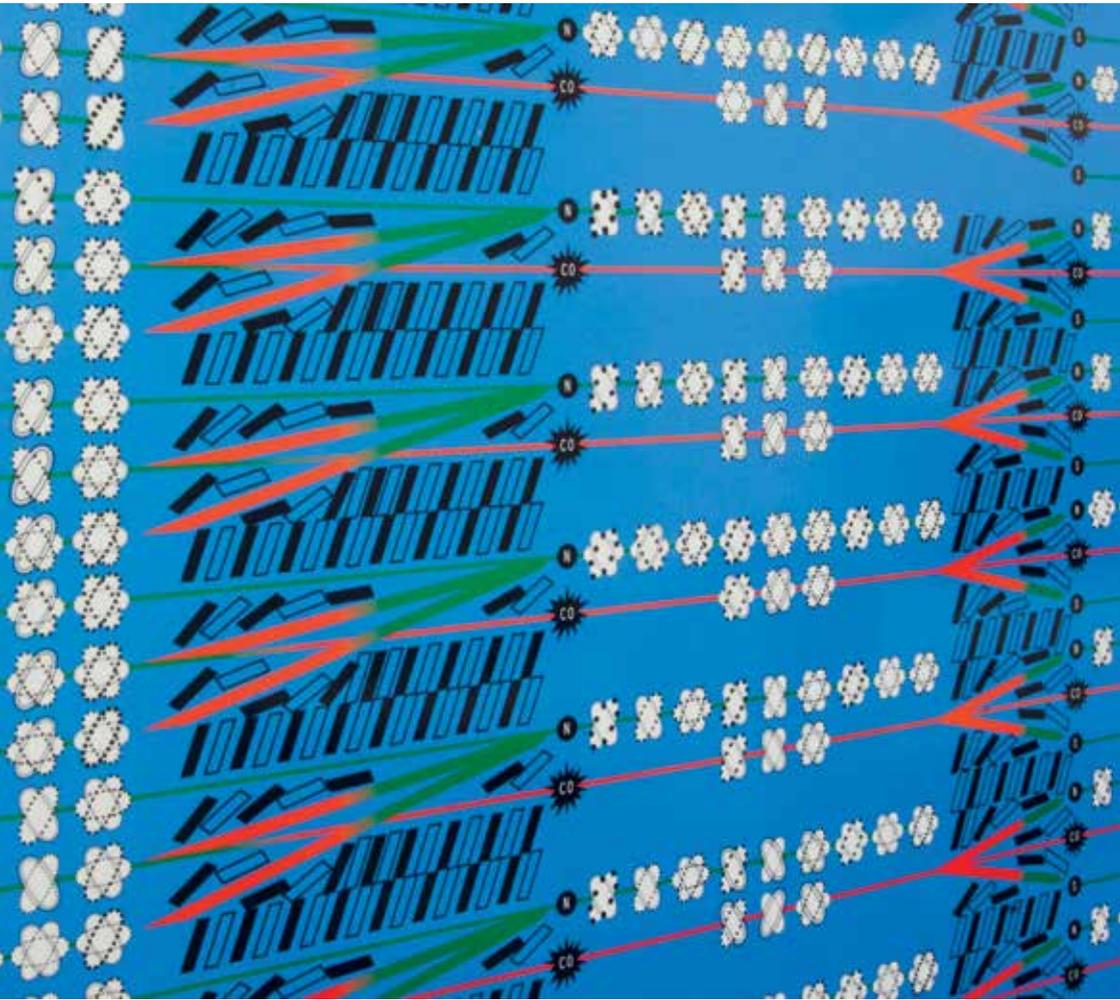


WORD. SOUND. POWER.



PROJECT SPACE
TATE MODERN
— LONDON

KHŌJ INTERNATIONAL
ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION
— NEW DELHI

Curated by Loren Hansi Momodu and Andi-Asmita Rangari

Graphic design by Tate Design Studio

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TATE
MODERN

KHŌJ
INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION

Cover: Lawrence Abu Hamdan with Janna Ullrich *Conflicted Phonemes (detail)* 2012

© courtesy the artist

Back cover: Caroline Bergvall *Voice from 5 ACTIONS GIRIH* 2007

© courtesy the artist

WORD. SOUND. POWER.

LAWRENCE ABU HAMDAN
NIKOLAJ BENDIX SKYUM LARSEN
CAROLINE BERGVALL
AMAR KANWAR
ANJALI MONTEIRO & K.P. JAYASANKAR
PALLAVI PAUL
MITHU SEN

PROJECT SPACE TATE MODERN
— LONDON

12 July – 3 November 2013

KHŌJ INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION
— NEW DELHI

10 January – 8 February 2014

WORD. SOUND. POWER.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Caroline Bergvall, Amar Kanwar,
Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen, Anjali Monteiro & K.P. Jayasankar,
Pallavi Paul and Mithu Sen

From a single utterance, to the pronunciation of a name and the declaration of an idea, the voice is a tool through which we assert our presence in the world. The use of the voice as a means of protest and as a metaphor for self-representation is central to this exhibition. Each of the artists presented elaborates on the dynamic created by the use of words in speech or text, sound as voice and sound as song, power as given and power that is taken away. By bringing together a range of artists working across different creative disciplines, including audio documentary, video, performance, text and sound this exhibition takes a moment to listen to the harmony, and dissonance, of voices rising.

Artist Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen presents **Arise** 2013 and **KEST (Keep Evans Safe Today)** 2013 especially commissioned for the exhibition the works emphasise the relevance of the voice, singular and collective, celebrated and silenced in the localities neighbouring Tate Modern, London and Khōj, International Artists' Association, New Delhi. Larsen encounters the lives of four young men, continents apart who show deep sadness, sheer belief and aspiration as they attempt to find expression and empowerment. United through hip-hop culture; dance, rap and poetry become means to raise their voices in the face of adversity.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan's ongoing research project Aural Contract draws our attention to the legislation of the voice and the politics of listening as it acts to subtly undermine the technologies and systems of power dependant on the categorisation of the human voice. Abu Hamdan's audio documentary **The Whole Truth** 2012 consists of a collection of interviews with software developers, anthropologists and entrepreneurs of the biometric industry from the Netherlands, USA and elsewhere.

Through the work's investigation of a new voice based lie detector, listeners are given insight into how truth is constituted and to whom truth matters, reconsidering the relationship between testimony, free speech, technology and the body. **Conflicted Phonemes** 2012, maps the moments of flux and multiple influences on the accents of Somali asylum seekers whose applications have been determined on the basis of an accent analysis. Often unable to contest the results, the maps presented here intend to offer the rejected asylum seeker a moment of silent protest.

Using both text and sound Caroline Bergvall's work often inhabits liminal spaces, between the practices of visual art and poetry, amidst multiple languages, and as presented at Tate Modern, at the threshold of physical spaces. Using British company Feonic's 'invisible speaker' technology, the gallery window is transformed into a speaker; **Voice** 2007 recalls varied and familiar experiences of the human voice and acts as an aural subtitle for the exhibition. The visual presence of the poem – reproduced on the back cover – prompts an encounter with Bergvall's word play and her use of patterning and repetition.

In **Crop** 2010, the artist combines text and sound in this plurilingual piece that relates language to the human body and movement between languages to the movement of people. Here she likens power over language to the power we hold over our own bodies as meanings are lost and remade in the transition from one language or location to another; languages 'are being disappeared', as bodies are.

In her new work **I am a Poet** 2013, Mithu Sen reclaims her ownership of language by levelling the playing field in a world dominated by the English language. Reading from a book of 'asemic'- non-sense text, Sen will make public performances during the opening weekend, and invites visitors to record their own readings from the text, throwing into focus the void between utterance and meaning. An acclaimed poet in her native language of Bengali, Sen has experienced a sense of disconnection since relocating to the largely anglophone city of Delhi. In this work she invites us to share in a language that mutually excludes and therefore includes us all.

Poetry and song are central to this exhibition and works by a number of documentary and experimental filmmakers focus on the ability of poets and musicians to use their words to guide us in experiencing new visions of the world.

An early work by radical filmmaker Amar Kanwar, **A Night of Prophecy** 2002, allows us to witness the momentum with which the turmoil of political oppression or injustice is articulated through the music, poetry and songs of activists across India. An adaptation of Anjali Monteiro & K.P. Jayasankar's film **Saacha (The Loom)** 2001 follows the words of the poet Narayan Surve, as he recounts personal memories of the city of Mumbai, the birth place of the Indian textile industry and the industrial working class. Both political activist and poet, Surve was at the forefront of the left wing cultural movement in the city and his poetry provided an alternative mode of political representation.

Nayi Kheti (New Harvest) 2013 and **Shabdkosh (A Dictionary)** 2013 by Pallavi Paul bring together poetry and notions of time travel to propose fictional conversations between the ghosts of poets from different epochs of history. Taken from the anarchic text 'After Lorca', in which American poet Jack Spicer writes to Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca nearly twenty years after his death, Paul imagines a world in which Lorca writes back, positing words as keepers of legacy, record and knowledge production.

LAWRENCE ABU HAMDAN (b.1985 Amman, Jordan) Based in London, Abu Hamdan has a hybridized practice running the arts space Batroun Projects in north Lebanon as well as forming part of the research team Forensic Architecture at Goldsmiths College where he is a PhD candidate and lecturer. Abu Hamdan has also written for Cabinet Magazine and the 10th Sharjah Biennial. He has had solo exhibitions featuring commissioned work *The Freedom Of Speech Itself* at The Showroom, London (2012) and *The Whole Truth* at CASCO, Utrecht (2012). His ongoing project *Aural Contract* has been exhibited at Arnolfini, Bristol (2013) and The Taipei Biennial (2012). His collaboration as part of *Model Court* was presented at Gasworks, London (2013). Early works include *Marches* for Artangel, London (2008).

CAROLINE BERGVALL (b.1962 Hamburg, Germany) Bergvall is an artist and writer of French-Norwegian origins based in London, working across languages, artforms and media. Her language-based pieces and micro structures frequently revisit literary models as well as tackle historical and political events. She has exhibited and performed at: MOMA, New York; The South Bank Centre, London; DIA Arts Foundation, New York; MCA, Denver; Fundacio Tapiès, Barcelona; Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol; MCA, Antwerp; MACBA, Barcelona; Wood Street Galleries, Pittsburgh; The Powerplant Gallery, Toronto. Recent publications include: *Meddle English*, Nightboat Books (2011); *Middling English* John Hansard Gallery (2011). Bergvall is currently working on DRIFT, a collaborative live performance for voice / percussion/ electronic text, initially commissioned by and performed at Grü/Transtheatre, Geneva (2012). Recipient of the Judith E. Wilson Fellowship in Poetry and Drama 2012–13, Cambridge.

AMAR KANWAR (b.1964 New Delhi, India) Lives and works in New Delhi. Kanwar is the recipient of the 1st Edvard Munch Award for Contemporary Art, Norway and an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts, Maine College of Art, USA. His films have been shown at international film festivals and Kanwar is the recipient of the Golden Gate Award, San Francisco International Film Festival and the Golden Conch, Mumbai International Film Festival. Recent solo exhibitions include the Fotomuseum, Winterthur, Switzerland; Babel Art Space, Trondheim, Norway (2011) and the Marian Goodman Gallery, New York (2010). He has participated in Documenta 11, Documenta 12 and Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany and in the Kochi-Muziris Biennale and Sharjah Biennale (2013).

NIKOLAJ BENDIX SKYUM LARSEN (b.1971, Aalborg, Denmark) lives and works in London and Paris. Larsen completed undergraduate studies in Sculpture at Chelsea College of Art and a Masters in Fine Art & Media Art at Slade school of fine Art, London. Solo exhibitions (selected) *Promised Land*, Dilston Grove, London (2013); *343 Perspectives*, Peckham Space, London (2012); *From The Edge*, Dundee Contemporary Art (2012); *Do Not Use*, Revolver Galeria, Lima (2010); *Rising Floating Falling*, Museum of Modern Art, Aalborg (2004). Group exhibitions (selected) *Estuary*, Museum of London – Docklands, London (2013); *Freedom*, Kunstpalais, Erlangen (2013); *In Spite of it All*, Sharjah Art Foundation (2012); *Together*, Trondheim Art Museum (2012), *Folkestone Triennial* (2011); *Looped*, Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City (2011); *Changing Stakes: Contemporary Art Dialogues with Dubai* at Mercer Union Gallery, Toronto (2011) and *Sharjah Biennial editions 9* (2009). Larsen's work is represented in public and private collections in Denmark, England, France, Greece, Holland, Italy, Norway, United Arab Emirates and the United States.

ANJALI MONTEIRO & K.P. JAYASANKAR (b.1955, Pune, India and b.1952 Kochi, India) both live and work in Mumbai. As filmmakers and academics a presiding thematic of much of their documentary and research work has been a problematising of notions of self and the Other, of normality and deviance, of the local and the global. These range from the stories and paintings of indigenous peoples to the poetry of prison inmates. Jointly they have won thirty national and international awards for their films. Vibgyor Film Festival, Kerala, Bangalore Film Society and Madurai International Film Festival have organised retrospectives of their work in 2006, 2010 and 2012 respectively. Dr. Anjali Monteiro and Dr. K.P. Jayasankar are Professors at the School of Media and Cultural Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India. Monteiro is Dean of the School and Jayasankar is Chair, Centre for Critical Media Praxis. Monteiro and Jayasankar have been awarded the Howard Thomas Memorial Fellowship in Media Studies and the Erasmus Mundus Scholarship, and have been attached to Goldsmith's College, London; University of Western Sydney and Lund University.

PALLAVI PAUL (b.1986 New Delhi, India) Lives and works in New Delhi. Paul has completed an M.Phil in Cinema Studies at the department of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Her research has explored post-emergency documentary cinema in India, in relation to the availability of video technology. Pallavi Paul utilises non-fictional video material to create image poems and essays. Paul has edited the work of a number of documentary filmmakers and contemporary artists and is the recipient of several fellowship awards including City as Studio Fellowship for artists, SARAI-CSDS, CAMP- Pad.ma Fellowship for experimental video practice and the Public Service Broadcasting Trust Fellowship for documentary film.

MITHU SEN (b.1971, West Bengal, India) lives and works in New Delhi. Sen completed her BFA and MFA degrees in painting at Visva Bharati University in India and later studied at Glasgow school of art. Mithu received the SKODA award in 2010 for the best contemporary artist in India. She is a published poet and works in a variety of medium in her visual practice, making site and time specific installations that often combine sculpture, video, sound, drawings, and poetry. Solo exhibitions (selected) *Devoid*, Gallery Nathalie Obadia, Paris (2012), *In House Adoption*, Gallery Steph, Singapore (2012), *IN TRANSIT*, Espace LOUIS VUITTON, Taipei (2011), *Nothing Lost In Translation*, Nature Morte, Berlin (2010); *BLACK CANDY (iforgotmypenisathome)*, Chemould Gallery, Mumbai (2010). Group exhibitions (selected) *Emotional Drawing*, SOMA, Seoul (2009); *Generation in Transition*, New Art from India, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw and Contemporary Arts Center, Vilnius (2011); *Spheres 4*, Gallery Continua, Leipzig (2011); *Crossings*, KNMA, New Delhi (2012). Sen's forthcoming solo show at Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum in Michigan State will open in 2014.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan *The Whole Truth* 2012
© courtesy the artist

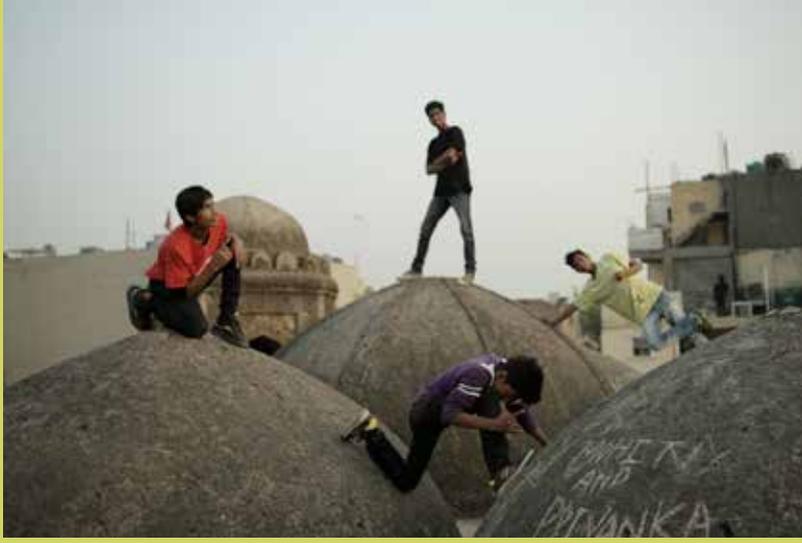


Lawrence Abu Hamdan with Janna Ullrich *Conflicted Phonemes* 2012
© courtesy the artist



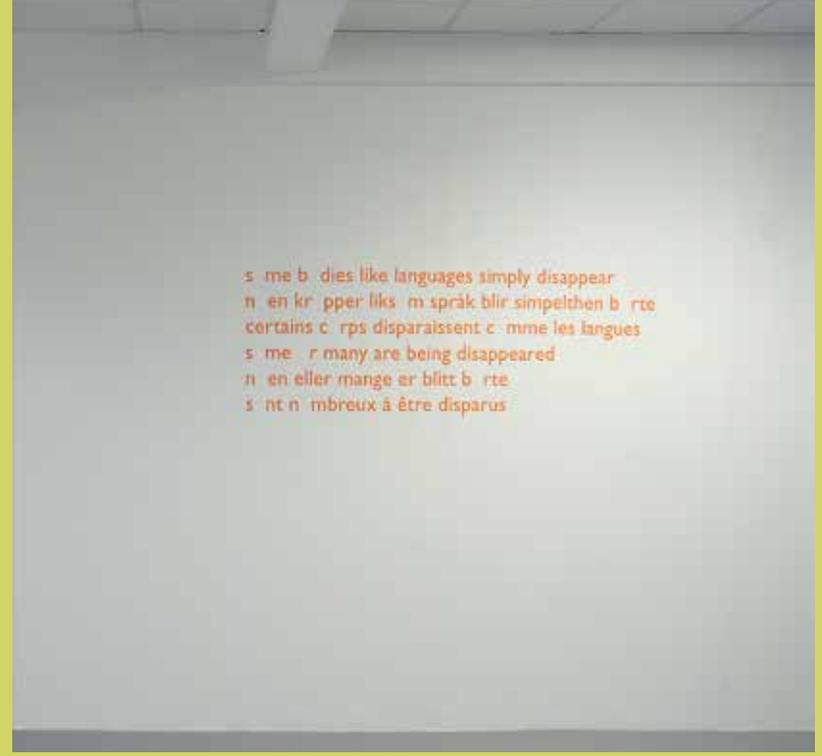
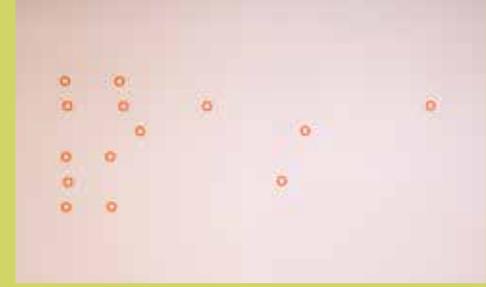


Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen *KEST (Keep Evans Safe Today)* 2013
© Photography Jonas Mortensen

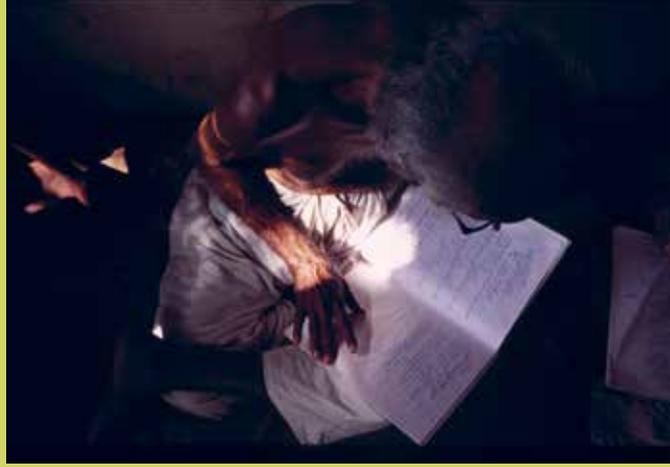


Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen shooting *Arise* 2013 in Khirki, New Delhi
© Photography Jonas Mortensen

Caroline Bergvall *Crop* 2010 © Steve Shrimpton 2010



s - me b - dies like languages simply disappear
n - en kr - pper liks - m - språk blir simpelthen b - rte
certains c - rps disparaissent c - mme les langues
s - me - r many are being disappeared
n - en eller mange er blitt b - rte
s - nt n - mbreux à être disparus



Amar Kanwar *A Night of Prophecy* 2002
© courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery New York

Anjali Monteiro and K.P. Jayasankar *Saacha (The Loom)* 2001 © TATA Institute of Social Sciences



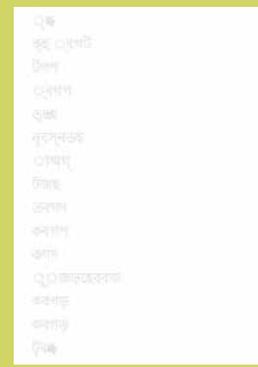


Pallavi Paul Nayi Kheri (New Harvest) 2013 © courtesy the artist



Pallavi Paul Shadbkosh (A Dictionary) 2013 © courtesy the artist

Mithu Sen / am a Poet 2013 © courtesy the artist



WORD, SOUND & POWER

By Loren Hansi Momodu

The formulation 'Word, Sound & Power' resonates globally in a variety of different contexts, from the Jamaican reggae group of the same name prominent in the 1970s, to the current multimedia collective based in New Delhi, India producing activist films with South Asian musicians.

In the context of this exhibition, these words form a title that acts as a nexus to explore how contemporary artists interact with, challenge and affirm their meanings. The use of words as text and the appropriation of language by visual artists has been a prominent strand of conceptual practice since the 1960s. Employed to challenge the notion that art should consist of a physical object; text has been used as sculpture, narrative and political statement. Similarly, the medium of sound has also become an inspiring resource in contemporary art practice, infiltrating a myriad of genres and drawing on influences from composer John Cage to the Lovers Rock of Susan Cadogan.

Making a connection between sound and experience, American sound artist Brandon Labelle suggests that 'sound is intrinsically and unignorably relational': that it 'emanates, propagates, communicates, vibrates and agitates; it leaves a body and enters others'.¹ It is all of these facets of sound, as described by Labelle, that make it an inspirational locus for the artists presented in *Word. Sound. Power.* as they explore various approaches to empowerment through sound, from political agitation with words and communicate on a corporeal level.

Theorist Louis Chude-Sokei describes the sound of the reggae music genre as signifying 'process, community, strategy and product.' Chude-Sokei explains that sound 'functions as an aesthetic space', and creates imagined communities 'operating through the cultural economy of sound and its technological apparatus which is distinctly oral.'² Thinking of sound as a means of creating aesthetic space, can further suggest that through the production of sound – whether that is a spoken word, a musical rhythm, or a song – the imagination is ignited to consider new possibilities.

It is the possibility of political change that is enkindled in Amar Kanwar's film *A Night of Prophecy* 2002, in which the viewer encounters poets and folk musicians across India who choose sound as the medium through which to participate in a politicised discourse. Shot in the regions of

¹ As quoted by Sonia Boyce at 'Art Connect Panel Discussion 'Women Artists from Africa and it's Diasporas' Tiwani Contemporary, 28 March 2013. Brandon Labelle, *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art*, 'Introduction: Auditory Relations', xxi
² Louis Chude-Sokei, 'Dr Satan's Echo Chamber', in *Chimorenga* 13, South Africa 2008

Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland and Kashmir, the musicians shown in the film, harness the power of sound in order to voice their lament and visioning for political change and in doing so create an imagined community operating through oral communication.

Returning to Chude-Sokei, and the 'technical apparatus [of sound] which is distinctly oral', we may not only consider the sound systems of dub music resistance mentioned by Chude-Sokei, but also the contemporary apparatus of the voice, such as the lie detectors and voice analysis devices used in modern immigration politics. As artist Lawrence Abu Hamdan has explored in his audio documentary *The Whole Truth* 2012, the technologies employed to analyse the voice are increasingly designed to force us to use our voices; not as a means of self-assertion, but as a means of self-defence. In *Conflicted Phonemes* 2012 Abu Hamdan explores the common practice in immigration departments across Europe to analyse a person's accent in an attempt to validate their eligibility for asylum, and the pronunciation of a single phoneme, word or phrase can incriminate the speaker, placing them on the wrong side of a border, whether imagined or otherwise. In this usage, the apparatus of sound does not aid resistance to a dominant political structure but instead is itself, something to be resisted.

In his critique of new Caribbean cinema, theorist Stuart Hall notes that 'practices of representation always implicate the positions from which we speak or write - the positions of enunciation'.³ This statement has fed into the curatorial thinking that has guided our selection of artists based in India, France and the United Kingdom and also to the commissioning of a new film work for the exhibition by Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen, which opens up a variety of positions of enunciation. In two films, shot in Khirki, New Delhi and Southwark, London, Larsen taps into the impulse for self expression enacted through dance and rap. Following the lives of four young men in our communities who, rarely afforded the chance to speak out, express themselves through movement and poetic lyrics. *Arise* and *KEST (Keep Evans Safe Today)* 2013 present lives of hope and aspiration, linked with a deep sadness and frustration.

Artists Caroline Bergvall and Mithu Sen move this exploration from a focus on sound, as the fundamental basis of words or music, to examine our experience of language. The positioning of language within the

³ Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Identity and Difference*, eds Kathryn Woodward, SAGE: London, 1997, p51

formulation of Word, Sound and Power is in part drawn from an approach to linguistic theory that has great currency in considering contemporary art as a form of cultural production.

Mithu Sen deals very directly with the complexities of self-representation and enunciation in her new work, *I am a Poet* 2013, in which she reasserts her power over language by creating an asemic text-without specific meaning-that forms an abstraction to known language systems and emphasises its pictorial qualities. Sen will make public readings from the book of poetry and invites visitors to do the same. Through this action the artist reflects on the ways in which our access to power is intrinsically linked to our access to language. Similarly, the work reflects on the notion that one's capacity for self-representation is shaped by a fluency in the dominant language system or way of speaking.

In Bergvall's sound and text piece *Crop* 2010, a persistent correlation of multilingual voices layer over one another, and text appears woven together on the wall. Associating language directly with the human body, (the Norwegian word 'Kropp', incidentally, translates as 'body' in English) the words speak of languages and bodies that simply disappear or 'are being disappeared'. The spoken words of the sound piece touch on a loss of knowledge and also of ownership over one's own body while a physical gesture isolates letters from the main body of the text on the wall. Bergvall's work often explores the creolisation of text, the moments at which different languages come together to create a 'third space', with new meanings and new possibilities.

The relationship between word, sound and power can be read in any number of ways, as it is possible to see their relevance in all that we do as human beings. This exhibition attempts to provide a platform for artists who are exploring the creative agency of sound and the poetics of voice. Artist Olu Oguibe's reading of French linguist Roland Barthes underlines this formulation and provides a useful starting point to consider the exhibition. As Oguibe states: 'Barthes identifies speech as a code of legislation, and notes that utterance, language, that which we speak or write, and one may add, paint or sculpt, all that we produce as a body of text, as a composite of signifiers, enters the service of power upon coming into being'.⁴

LICENSE / SILENCE: THE ANAGRAMMATIC TERRAIN OF VOICE

by Andi-Asmita Rangari

⁴ Olu Oguibe, 'Art, Identity, Boundaries: Postmodernism and Contemporary African Art', in *Reading the Contemporary: African Art from Theory to the Market Place*, eds Olu Oguibe and Okwui Enwezor. London: Institute of International Visual Arts, 1999, pp. 17-29

What is 'voice'? A self-aware mode of articulation? Or rather, a unique vantage point from which contradictions in language, politics and culture can be envisioned anew? Can 'voice' be the very arena within which notions of subject-hood, hegemony, truth and power can find themselves challenged and reconstituted?

Voices do not only exist within people, they extend and give meaning to places, moments in time and physical objects, suggesting that the idea of the voice, while often seen in conjunction with sound, speech and language may also thrive outside of it. This renders the possibility of re-imagining a new world, where not only distinct voices, but ways of hearing and empathy can be nurtured. In such a world the voice may be a trace, a half-residue, of not only a resonant past but of an equally pulsating future.

Conceptually, *Word. Sound. Power.* encompasses all modes of articulation and is built on the terrain of license/silence. Anagrammatic, to begin with, the letters stay the same, but when rearranged, form a new word, signifying the drastic opposite of the earlier formation. Such semiotic tension also inaugurates a field of meaning and play, a non-linear domain of expressive possibilities. The exhibition explores how this domain unfolds. Thematically, *Word. Sound. Power.* is about the poetics and politics of voice. The formation of an utterance in relation to the norm, and how, in the process, a voice raised can also be understood as an act of poesis, a creative and aesthetic process that incorporates critique.

A particular concern that runs through the exhibition is to interrogate the inherent privilege in being allowed to voice dissent, reflected in cultural echoes—through art, music and poetry. *Word. Sound. Power.* is about articulation and questioning the ability to articulate. It is about the event that makes people take recourse to utterance. In this context, it is important to respect how intelligible silence, too, can be. A voice can be both raised and razed.

Amar Kanwar's documentary, *A Night of Prophecy* 2002, presents a conversation about a story that finds itself paralleled and repeated across regions of India, met by cycles of violence and various modes of resistance. Histories of excesses against the marginalised are felt and extended outwards through the very texture of music and poetry.

Kanwar himself asks, '...if different poetic narratives could merge together, allowing us to see a more universal language of symbols and meanings... would there be a moment of prophecy?'. Delicately intimate and fragile in some moments, then audacious and collusive in others, Kanwar's film poses a poignant question that spurs us to rethink our expectations of the world we inhabit. *A Night of Prophecy* is about sketches of a possible future, as much as it is about traces of the past.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan's works, *Conflicted Phonemes* 2012 and *The Whole Truth* 2012, constitute a sharp critical interface upon which the relationship between the voice and its authenticity can be observed. Hamdan visualises the technologies through which 'truth' is manufactured and appropriated within larger agendas of surveillance, governmentality and the creation of the citizen-subject. The presence of a 'witness' figure and by extension a 'testimony', works as a powerful interjection to the notion of a singular, all encompassing history and asks deeply troubling, philosophical questions about identity, mobility, speech and the body.

Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen's newly commissioned work *Arise* 2013 and *KEST (Keeps Evans Safe Today)* 2013 traverse between forms of poetic, personal histories, narrative and essayistic portraits. United in their passion for hip-hop and hopes for a better future. The films subtly weave together the life stories and aspirations of four youths experiencing marginalisation at multiple levels across their geographical locations in London and New Delhi. Larsen's work expands our notion of the 'artist-chronicler' via the traditional 'documentary subject' while creating an alternate order of poetry within the non-fiction film form.

Caroline Bergvall's *Crop* 2010 brings together ideas of poetics and the energy of displacement. In creating philosophical mobile narratives and forms that move across walls as text and fill up spaces as sound, a deeply sensuous engagement with the poetic form is arrived at. Bergvall is able to break, almost literally, the spatial continuum that shapes one's expectations of a poetic text. Multi-layered voices become presences that slowly free themselves from the meaning of the words they speak and mystery returns to utterance. Here is a possibility, perhaps a glimpse of the inchoate, that voice cannot be legislated.

Mithu Sen's work *I am a Poet* 2013, is an interesting point of departure from not only the traditional expectations of a poet-author figure but also of poetry itself. Playing with a host of forms that lie between live performance, recorded sound and printed text; Sen glides across the poetic form almost naturally. Moving towards an interactive mode, Sen implicates a live audience and generates multiple authors, who compose alongside each other, leaving behind them a forest of traces and movements. Language and silence are significant to the piece, as the idea of legibility is linked to language. Through the act of reading an unformulated script aloud, a space is created for unintelligible, aural sound, within the structures of language.

Pallavi Paul describes her films, *Nayi Kheti (New Harvest)* 2013 and *Shabdkosh (Dictionary)* 2013, as works that experiment 'with notions of poetry, time travel and the possibilities of metaphysical conversations between the ghosts of poets living through different epochs of history. Located as a witness to these exchanges are the poems of Vidrohi, a vagabond political poet.' *Nayi Kheti* and *Shabdkosh* are not about the persona of Vidrohi, but rather attempt to use his poems as a kind of laboratory, to test the tensile strength of resistance as a material for life.

Anjali Monteiro and K.P. Jayasankar's work features an adaptation taken from their documentary, *Saacha (The Loom)* 2001. This adaptation highlights the poetry of critically acclaimed Dalit poet Narayan Surve, who created a unique style of writing poems using the colloquial language of workers in a conversational prose-like style. Found abandoned on the roadside as a newborn, Surve was adopted by a loom worker. He grew up in the streets of Mumbai and taught himself to read and write. Often championed as a proletarian poet, Surve received a Padma Shri for excellence in Literature & Education, one of the highest civilian awards given in the Republic of India by the Government.

In these and other ways, *Word. Sound. Power.* explores a wish expressed by Roland Barthes in his 1977 College de France inaugural speech: 'Alienation disappears as soon as the world becomes multiple.' Indeed, voices demur to each other, agree to differ or agree, only if they converse or are not silenced. For all of us then, perhaps the only alternative is to cheat with speech or even cheat speech itself, if we are to become more human.

Performances

Mithu Sen *I am a Poet* 2013

Friday 12 – Sunday 14 July

13.00, 14.00, 15.00, 16.00

Free

In the exhibition

Artist Mithu Sen will make public readings from her book of abstracted poetic text throughout the opening weekend.

Screenings

Anand Patwardhan *Jai Bhim Comrade* 2012

India, 180 min

Monday 15 July

17.00–21.00

Starr Auditorium

Ticketed

Shown as part of the retrospective:

A Cinema of Songs and People: the films of Anand Patwardhan

12 July 2013 – 28 July 2013

Organised in collaboration with The Otolith Collective

A screening of *Jai Bhim Comrade* by Anand Patwardhan will take place on the 15th of July, 2013 as part of the retrospective *A Cinema of Songs and People: the films of Anand Patwardhan*. Focusing on the irrepressible voices of Dalit poets and activists through their long-standing tradition of street-songs, music and poetry the film captures the perseverance and resistance of an oppressed community through its soul-stirring songs and poetry. The date of the screening also marks a tribute and memorial to the spirited poet, singer and activist, Vilas Ghogre whose death becomes a poignant motivation for the film. Ghogre committed suicide on 15 July 1997, in horror and despair following the indiscriminate police firing at a predominantly Dalit community in Mumbai, killing men, women and children. *Jai Bhim Comrade* highlights a critical subaltern perspective to multiple layers of repression faced by the Dalit community and foregrounds a new generation of young activist songwriters such as Kabir Kala Manch who have been forced to go underground as the power of their words in protest have been viewed as a threat to the State.

VOICE

A group of actions
that give voice that
call that utter sounds
emit that vibrate it's

not singing yet sing
to a tuning or
hum that speak that
exclaim express give an

opinion articulate that make
a point that raise
objections can be trusted
to comment on something

might summon up that
which no-one wishes to
recall that represent that
aspire that breathe upon

