

Amar Kanwar: The Sovereign Forest + Other Stories

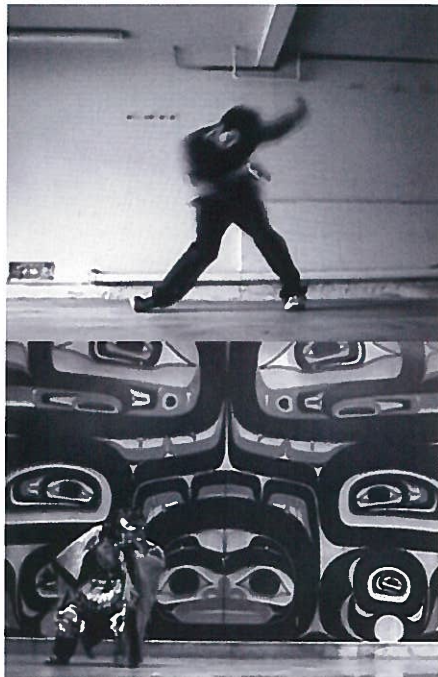
YORKSHIRE SCULPTURE PARK, WAKEFIELD, 11 OCTOBER - 2 FEBRUARY

Amar Kanwar is one of India's most highly regarded artists for film and installation. Primarily a documentary filmmaker, he highlights issues relating to power, violence and justice. *The Sovereign Forest + Other Stories* perpetrates thematic continuity and integrity. The focus is upon the conflict in Odisha between the local communities of indigenous farmers and the government and mining corporations. In the area, farmland, coastline, forests and rivers are being bought and eradicated, destroying these dependent livelihoods.

Kanwar's intention is to raise questions for himself and for the observer. These various ideas consider the basic understanding of crime and the position of the artist in intervening. The works also ponder whether poetry or art have any authority as evidence in a political trial. The centrepiece of the exhibition is Kanwar's 2011 film, *The Scene of Crime*. Each section is given the title of a numbered map; this lends an ironic formality to the beauty of the territories captured, which are in fact, proposed industrial sites in the process of being acquired by the government and corporations.

In other galleries, the book is the main form of communication. Three large texts, which are to be read by the visitor, also function as horizontal screens for the projection of moving images. Here both humane and atrocious evidence, written and unscripted, is aggregated. Another film, *A Love Story* (2010), speaks of disappointment in relation to continuous migration. Kanwar achieves a poetic accumulation of evidence highlighting its tragic nature and communicates the need for an artistic understanding in the face of mercenary zeal.

Daniel Potts



Beat Nation: Art, Hip Hop and Aboriginal Culture

MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL, 17 OCTOBER - 5 JANUARY

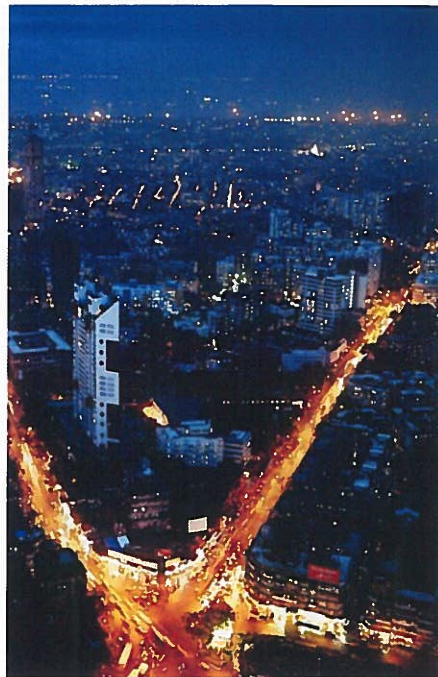
Beat Nation is an engaging angle on today's North American Aboriginal vibe. Traditional and avant-garde, political and philosophical, spiritual and practical expressions meet in this cross-section of hauntingly beautiful street-inspired media.

A play on the sacred objects of Aboriginal tradition is seen in *Turning Tables* (2010), a fully functional hardwood turntable by Jordan Bennett. Handmade felt and silver *Jingle Boots* (2012) and *Jingle Gloves* (2013) by Maria Hupfield and low-rider bikes by Dylan Miner customised with furs, leathers and traditionally painted bone talismans, make more direct reference to the evolution of craft. Spray-painted totem pole-inspired graffiti by Corey Bulpitt and Aime Milot feels edgy, while Dana Claxton's portraits of Aboriginal family members posing on horseback and also in front of mustang cars, stand out as strong statements of reformulating identity by a politicised people.

Perhaps the most gripping narratives are provided by the films. Here, drum beats, sampling and remixing sounds combine in different ways with ironically repurposed Hollywood film clips and stereotyped Aboriginal historicity and custom. Mounted as harmonic octaves of lo-tech multi-channel imagery, where the visuals are pixelated, sometimes shot with hues of ultraviolet, the oeuvres unite in a dreamy high note.

Overall, ancient mythologies seem to time travel in the garb of borrowed gangsta motifs to arrive in the present with a new voice. Inside this show, the audience feels repurposed, compelled to bow to the romance of visionary art and to view the Aboriginal soul of now as a harbinger of tomorrow.

Caia Hagel



Dayanita Singh: Go Away Closer

HAYWARD GALLERY, LONDON 8 OCTOBER - 15 DECEMBER

Indian artist Dayanita Singh describes herself as a bookmaker working with photography, favouring this directed viewing experience. Driven by the editing of photographs, Singh tells stories about urban and rural India through vignettes, each image demanding time to unfold in relation to a wider narrative in a privately engaged reading space. This exhibition is also a rare opportunity to see her images presented in innovative ways.

Her book works, published over the past 30 years are available to handle. Some are mounted on the wall, presenting the covers and form as fetishised objects. On a shelf is a particularly unusual and delicate concertina-folded book, unfurled from its white box. Like a miniature portable exhibition, *Sent a Letter* (2008), published in seven volumes, is intimate both in scale and tone. Conceived as photo-journals, each made with a particular person in mind during Singh's travels, they contain diaristic images of people and places.

Works are also re-contextualised through curated series of prints. *Dream Villa* (2008) shows hyper-real landscapes with flashes of saturated colour caused by using daylight film in darkness. Also shot in this way, *Blue Book* (2009), showcases large blue-tinged prints of industrial landscapes.

The exhibition highlight is *Museum Bhavan* (2013), a new project resulting from Singh curating her own vast archive of images. Large folding teak structures open out to display grids of black and white photographs. Each nano-museum unifies a collection of images through a particular theme, such as "Chance" or "Machines", offering another new way of reading her rich photographs.

Leela Clarke

1. Amar Kanwar, *A Love Story*, 2010. Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris. Commissioned by the Independent Cinema Office and LUX, England. 2. Iku Heider Shugastakaan, *part 1 & 2*, 2011. Nicholas Galanin, Video still. Courtesy of the artist. 3. Dayanita Singh, *Dream Villa II*, 2007, 2008. C-type print.