



Image courtesy - Keyaa

# TOOLBOX

BFA NEWSLETTER

JINDAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Spring 2025







Welcome to the third edition of our Biannual newsletter for the BFA Program at the Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities!

The BFA degree program provides a holistic and interdisciplinary art education in a student-centric environment designed to boost experimentation and creativity. In addition to intensive studio practice, the students get introduced to the foundations of liberal arts, develop their communication skills, and learn to conduct academic and artistic research.

Alongside the traditional mediums of fine arts such as painting, sculpture, ceramics, and printmaking, the program also offers an understanding of new and contemporary mediums/media - photography, sound, video, performance, and community art. The four-year curriculum also provides a strong theoretical base with courses ranging from Western and South Asian art histories to critical and postcolonial/decolonial theories.







Spring 2025

## Toolbox Team

### Student contributions

Ananya R, Moksha, Dhanya Talwar, Keyaa, Khushi Mittal,  
Praditi Rani Ray, Samaira, Suhasini Manu Pande, Yoshi

### Faculty contributions

Arun Kumar HG, Achia Anzi, Gopa Trivedi, Payal Arya, Priyesh Gothwal,  
Sunil Kumar Kumawat and Susanta Mandal

# IN THE TOOLBOX

BFA EXHIBITION	3
----------------	---

TESTIMONIALS	31
--------------	----

URC	33
-----	----

WORKSHOPS	37
-----------	----

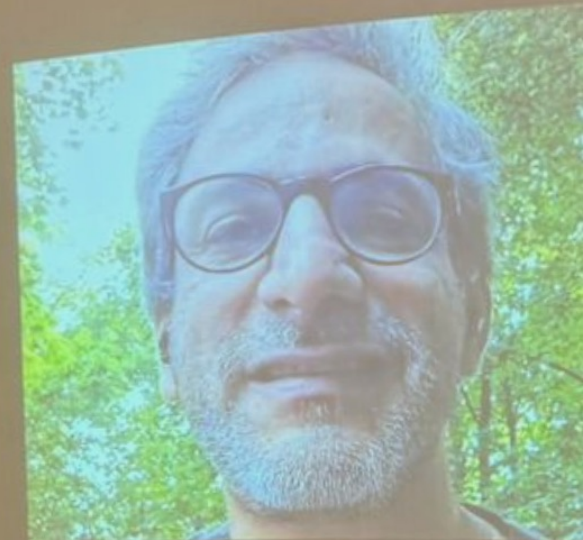
ALUMINI UPDATES	39
-----------------	----

FACULTY UPDATES	40
-----------------	----



# BFA EXHIBITION

## 2024-2025



The BFA Program at the Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities (JSLH) showcased the works of the first graduating batch. Our students engaged in artistic research and practice, setting the stage for the future cohorts to follow. Established in 2021, the BFA program offers a holistic, interdisciplinary arts education. The program encourages the students to engage with critical thinking, experiment with various media, delve into multidisciplinary research, and work collaboratively.

Image courtesy - Payal Arya



In this exhibition, students reflected on their personal experiences while negotiating rich philosophical and cultural conversations rooted in their political and social contexts. Combining self-reflection with critical inquiry, they recorded cryptic dreams and gave form to shared anxieties.

Their works played with the shifts in language and meaning, highlighting how objects and symbols acquired new resonance. They explored family histories, identity formation, and the idea of home, while engaging with the political complexities of the contemporary world.

Some critiqued the relentless pace of urbanisation and its encroachment on ecosystems, envisioning the city as a living, breathing entity. Others investigated questions of belonging and alienation, foregrounding the tensions between the local and the global, the familiar and the strange, the old and the new.

Through this lens, these emerging art practitioners cultivated and reclaimed their surroundings, questioning their sense of belonging while also articulating the ambiguities of alienation. The exhibition ultimately highlighted how artistic practice could capture and reframe the ongoing tensions of contemporary life.











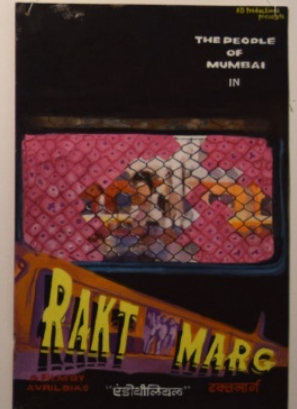


# AVRIL DIAS

Through her practice, Avril engages with systems of control and care, the poetic weight of everyday materials, and the coded traces of bodies - moving, feeding, resisting, surviving.

Using a range of media, from video and painting to embroidery and found objects, she explores how people navigate shared systems, and how these systems, in turn, shape identity, labor, and emotion. Avril looks at the city of Mumbai as an archive as well as a living organism to trace the invisible infrastructure of cities - their rhythms, containers, and coded systems.

is now a sepia-tinted brushstroke.

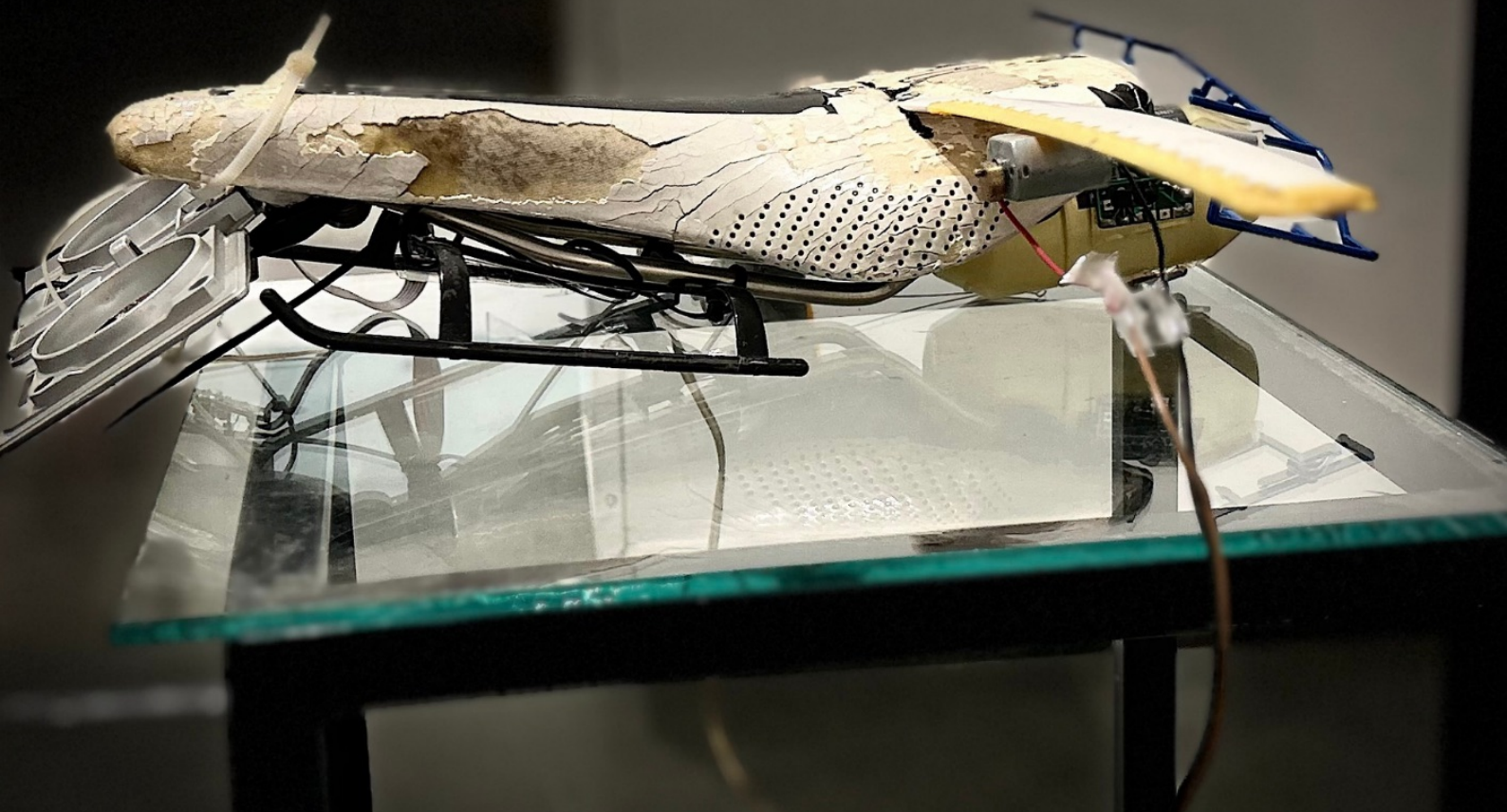








# ARJUN VERMA



Arjun works with design, sculpture, and functional objects that often intersect with technology and robotics. His practice stems from a curiosity about functionality—how objects can move beyond ideas into robust, usable forms. Experimentation with materials, from tinkering with his bicycle to building robotic extensions, informs his approach. He is particularly interested in soft robotics, imagining how hands, faces, or even small expressive details can be designed for machines.



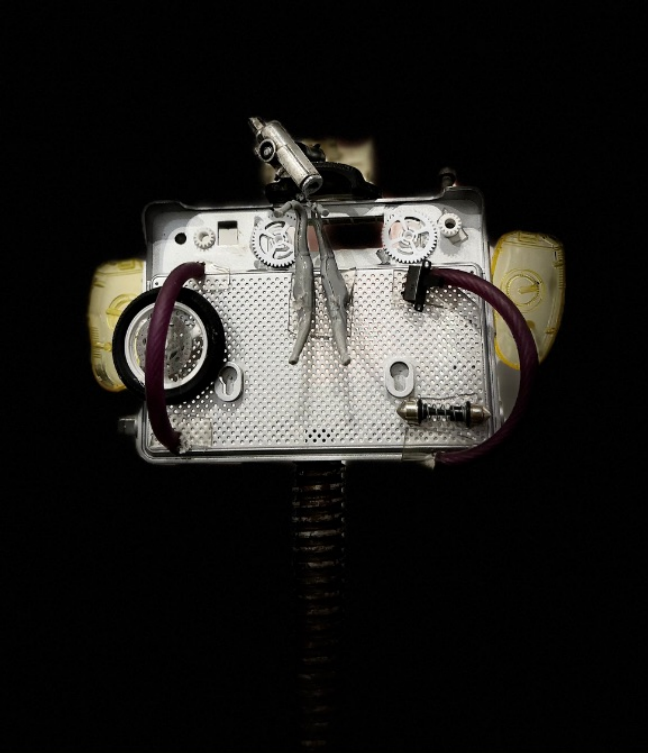
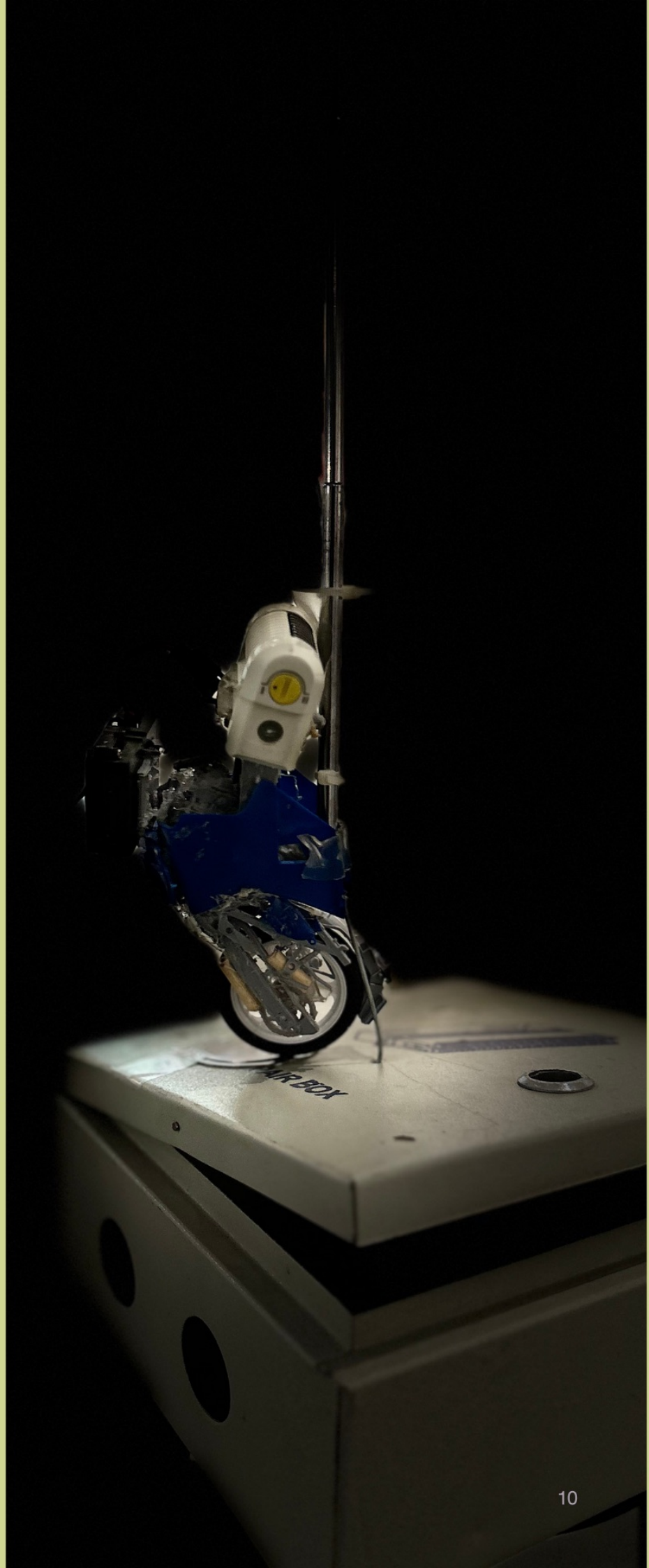


Image courtesy -Arjun Verma



# ARYA SARAVANAN

Arya inquires the idea of purity and impurity as forms of policing in society that result in false ideals, shame, and violence through her works. She usually works with a range of mediums like painting to video to performance.



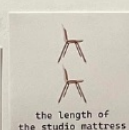
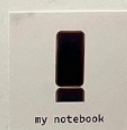






# GUNNICA ARYA

Using games and analogue animations, Gunnica works with the idea of liminality and the concept of sign, signifier, signified and the process of signification. She explores the spoken dialect of Magahi used in parts of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa through sound work and performance.



'The acts of measurement are agential acts, they both contribute and are constructive and/or constitute what is being measured.'

—Helen Barad  
Meeting the Universe Halfway



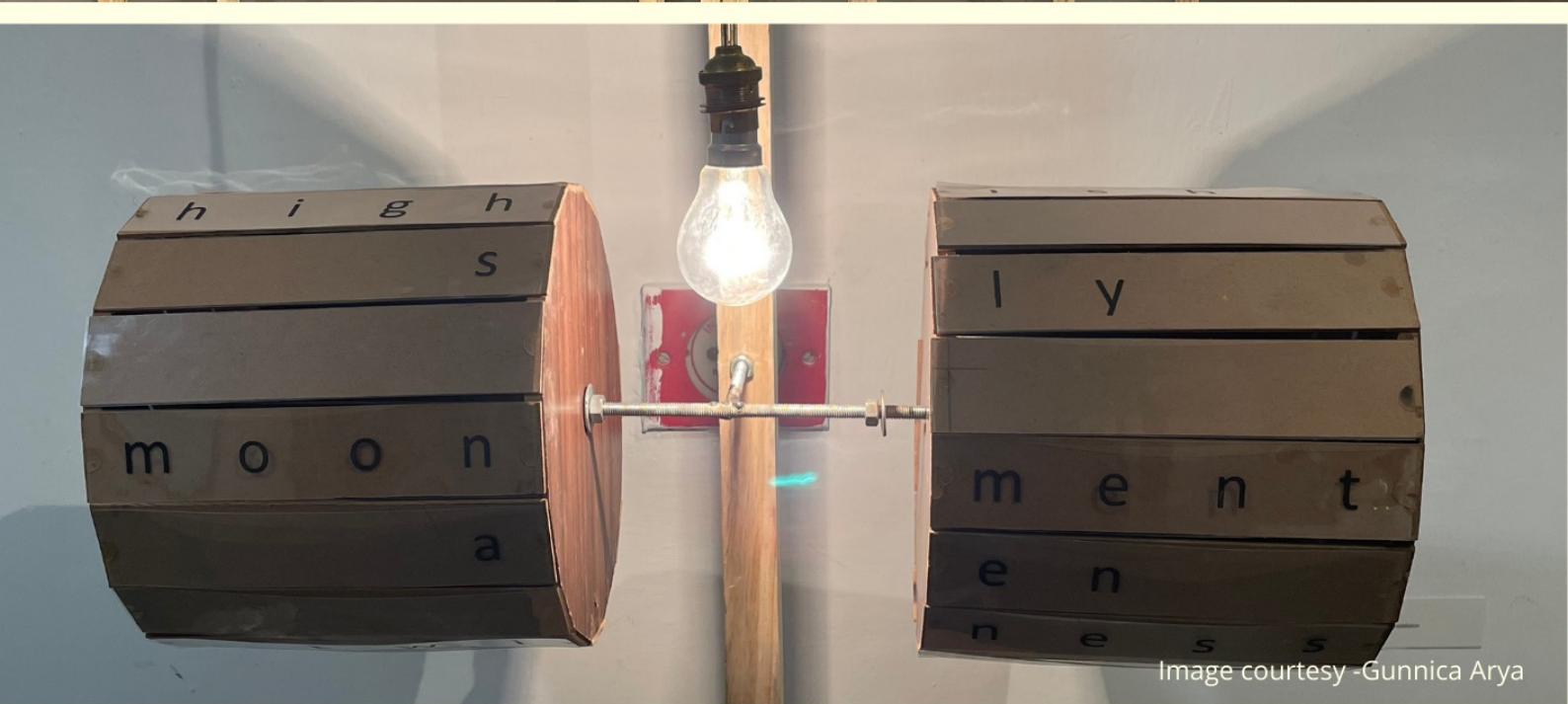


Image courtesy -Gunnica Arya





# HASVINI JAIN

Hasvini's work focuses on the intersection of the mundane and the profound, exploring how everyday objects and overlooked spaces function as unexpected sites of meaning and discourse. These overlooked elements continuously shape our daily lives, suggesting that the most profound discoveries often lie hidden in plain sight. And how meaning and beauty exist not in distant or elevated realms, but in the quiet presence of the familiar world that surrounds us.







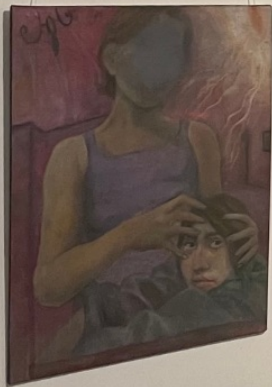


# MANYA KUMAR

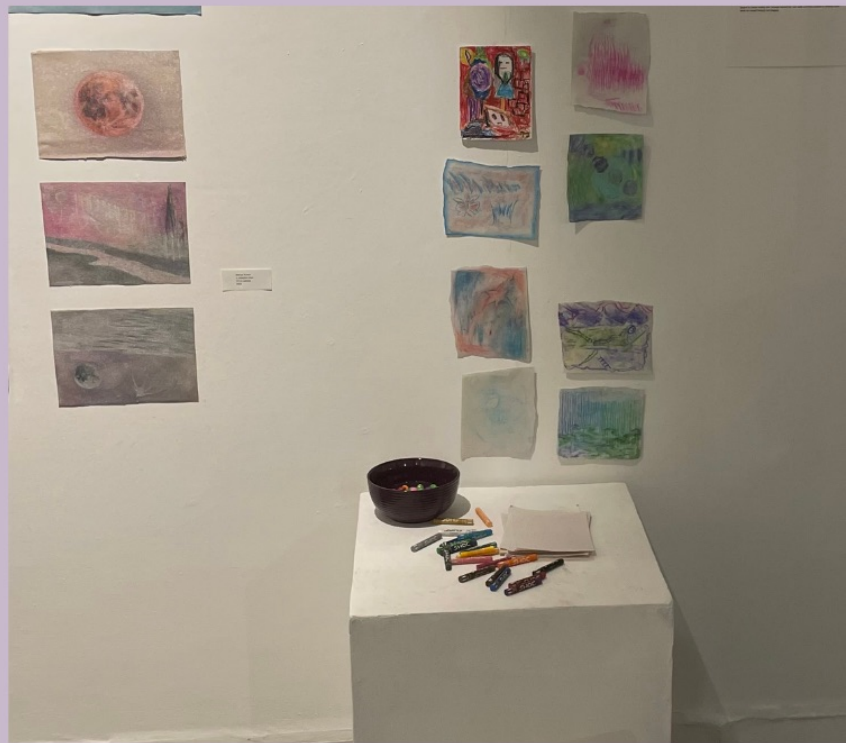
Manya works with the ideas of the inner world, dreams, identity and homage. They collate within its walls, and from it emerges a post dystopic remodeled and transformed self. Looking at what lies beyond the human transformative journey, she questions the perpetual evolution of humans and wonders if there is a world for the human in this physical realm beyond its becoming.







Talking about her experience, Manya says the program is beneficial in helping students develop a language of their own through their art and the concepts they engage with. She is currently pursuing a masters degree from the Limerick School of Art and Design.





# NISHTHA JAIN

Nishtha works with paintings, installation and layered paper cuttings. Her techniques, central to her practice, are slow, repetitive and intensely laborious. She is drawn to slowness as a form of resistance in a world that rewards speed and productivity. Labor becomes a way to think and to sit with difficult questions and to inquire about certain narrative - mythological, historical, or cultural.



Image courtesy - Nishita Jain

She is currently part of a group show titled GenZ Unboxed: The New Avant Garde, curated by Dr Arshiya Lokhandwala. The exhibition is at Lakeeren Contemporary in Mumbai.



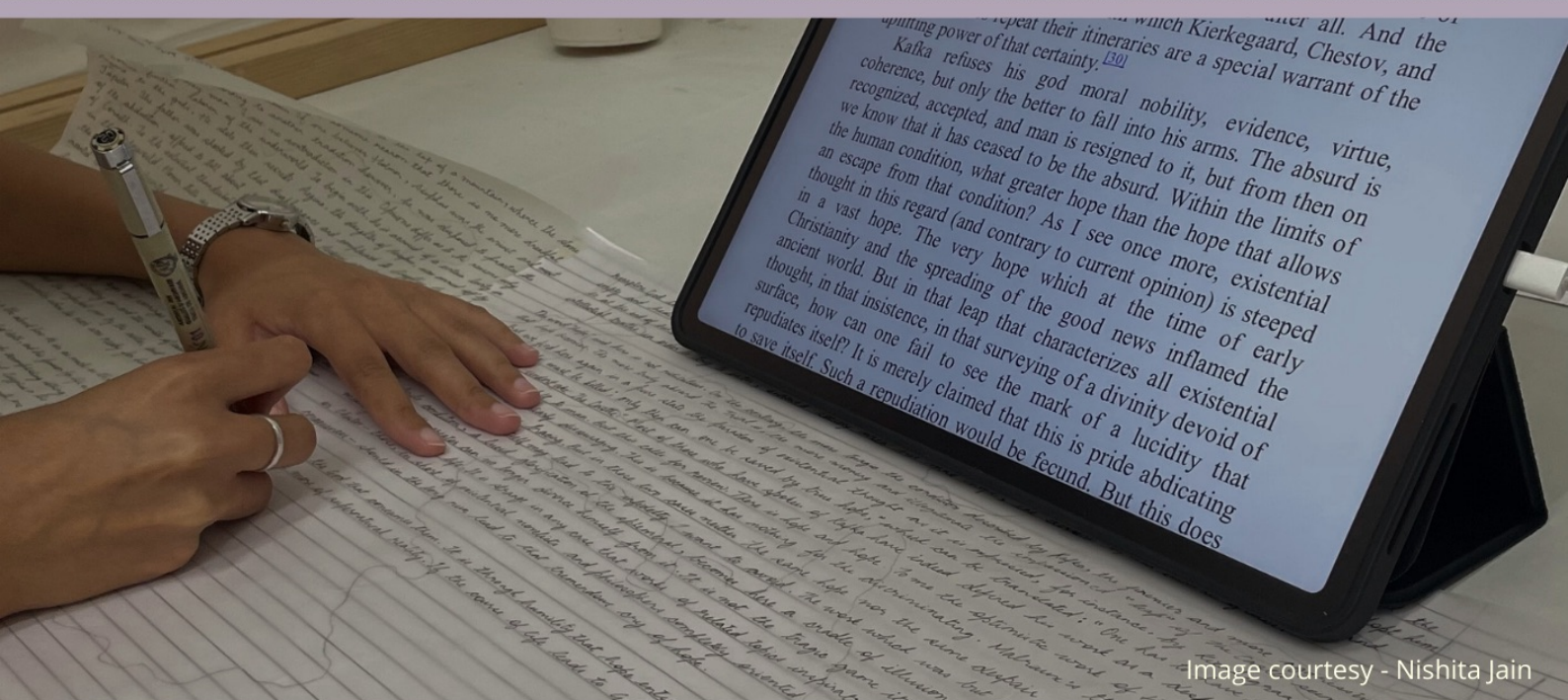
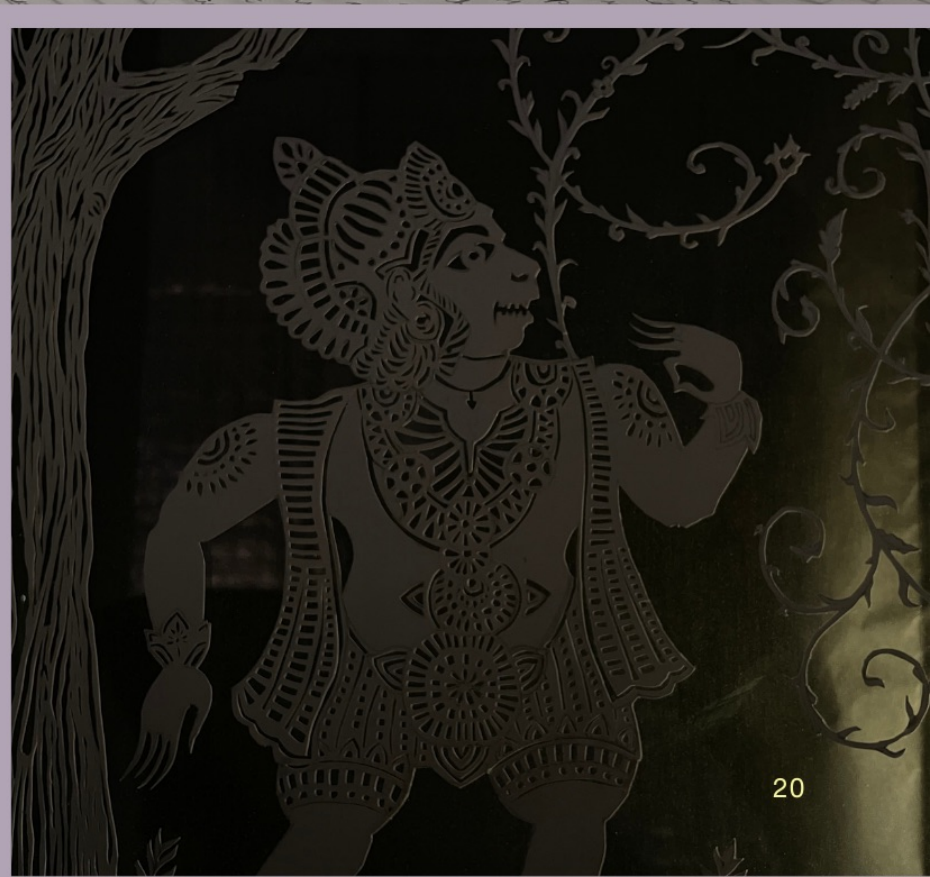


Image courtesy - Nishita Jain



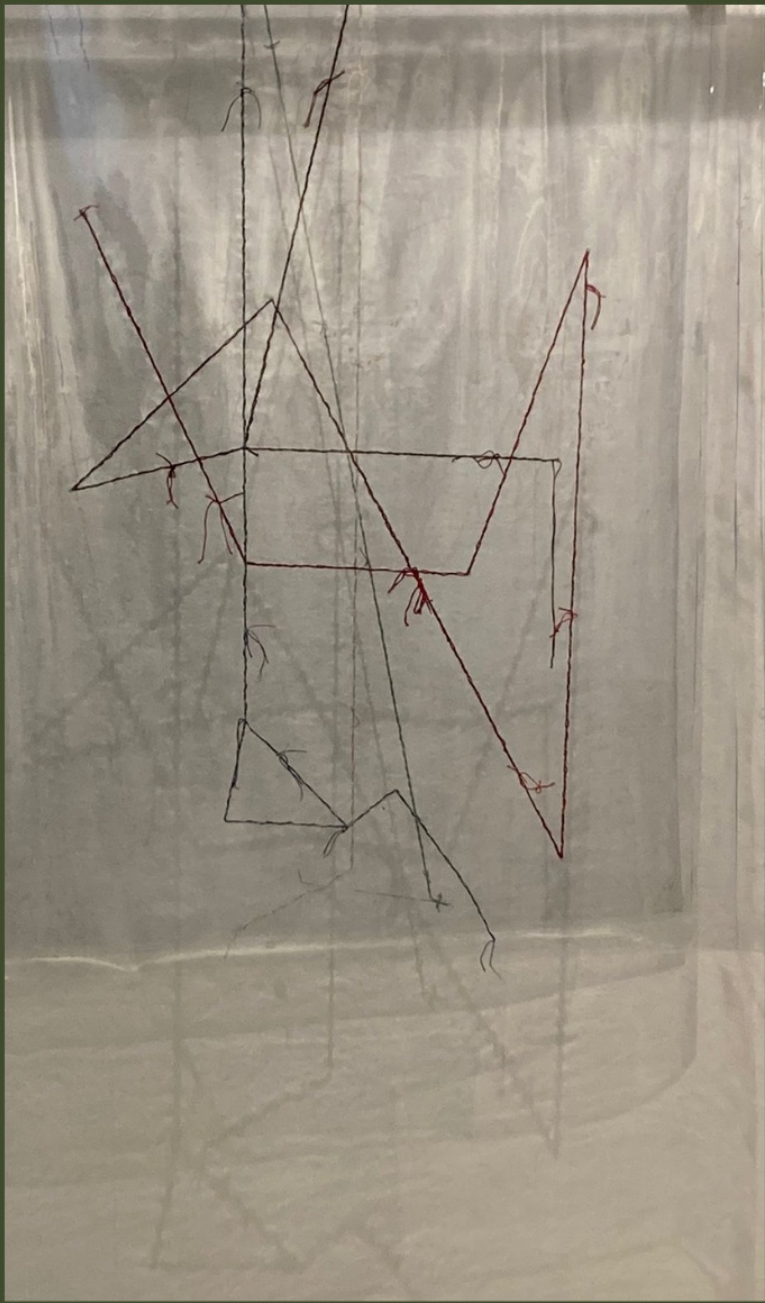


# MEHER PANNU

Through a personal and political lens, Meher's works navigate the inherited memory of watan — a homeland that exists in fragments of loss, longing, and imagination. Her works explore the tensions between roots and routes, colonial residue and postcolonial desire, memory and erasure.







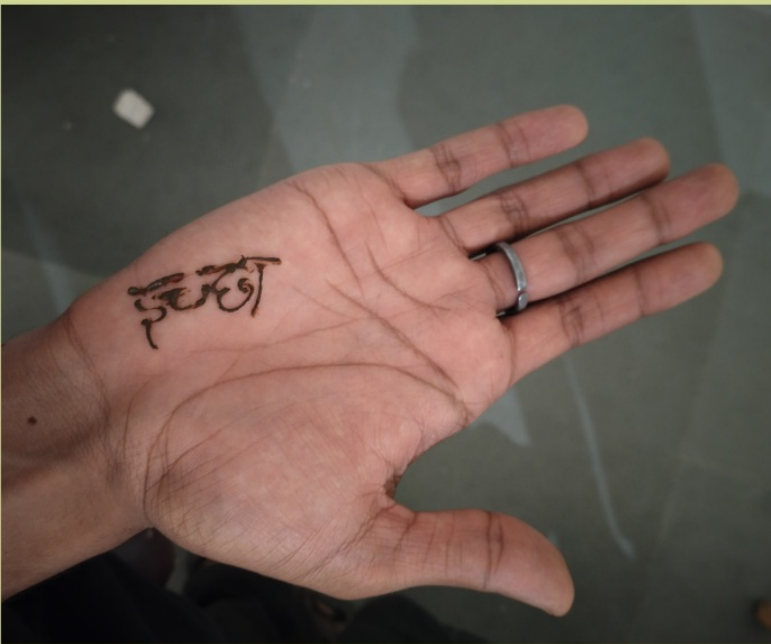


# RISHITA KOHLI

Using the theme of family history, Rishita's work tries to explore the self and sense of belonging. She further inquires the role women play in society and how they are often instructed to present themselves in specific, restrained ways. She questions the narratives behind traditional rituals and poses. She also explores the idea that beauty does not require perfection. She uses various mediums like docufiction, charcoal, sculptures and photographs.



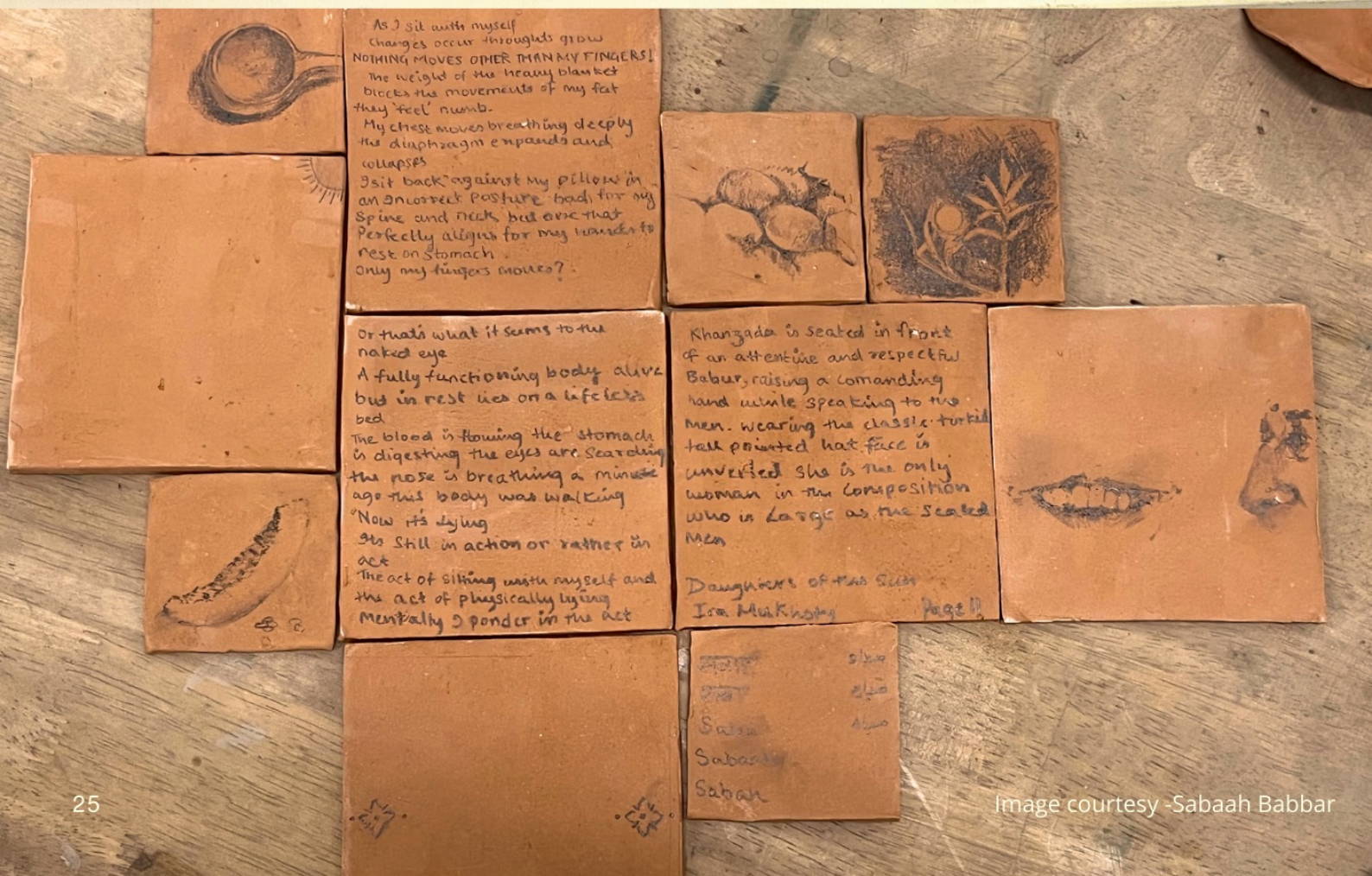






# SABAAH BABBAR

Sabaah works with a wide range of mediums: text, oil on fabric, gouache on plastic wrappers, clay, wood, papier-mache, and even food- allowing each material to speak in its own voice. Her work emerges from a deep curiosity about how the self encounters the world through making.









# SABAR SALUJA

Sabar's inquiries have been grounded in a fascination with nature, about the cycles of life and death, growth and decay, everything between the cellular and the planetary. She is interested in cultivating a state of multispecies sondering, though poetic as well as scientific tools of observation.





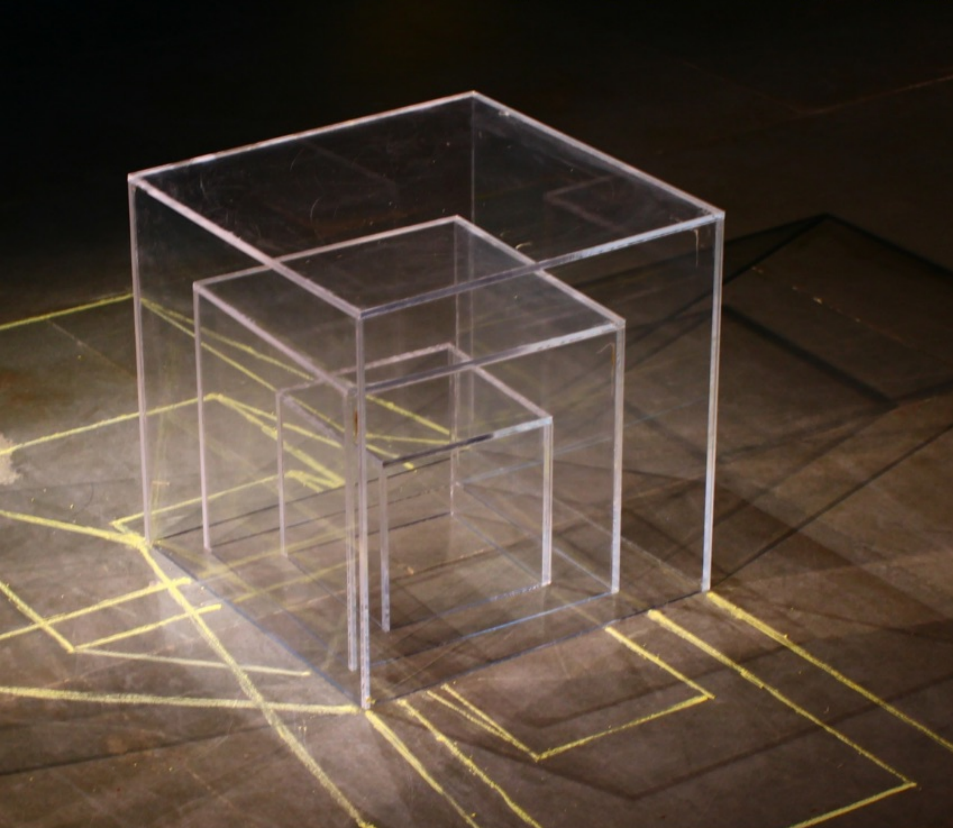


Image courtesy - Sagar Saluja





# NORA VARMA



Nora's practice explores the intersections of art and science, seeking to question the idea of the 'real world.' Her work takes a reductionist approach with the aim to convey the common goal of art and science, that is, to challenge the concept of the 'real world'. Most of her artworks are about finding the 'truth' about reality, regardless of the discipline we study it from.







Spring 2025

# SANNA GUPTA

Sanna's practice, *Of Time, Memory, and Perception*, explores the quiet weight of time through memory and perception. Working across installations and video art, her works reflect on what we carry forward, what fades, and how our ways of seeing shape the world we inhabit.





# Testimonial

Recently presented at the India International Centre (IIC), the 'BFA Final Year Show – 2025' by the first graduating batch of the Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities can be argued as a 'radical' but 'other' exhibition from multiple perspectives. Radical because the presentation challenges the conventional understanding of what a "BFA art exhibition" typically entails. Departing from the traditional emphasis on skill-based practices that dominate most BFA programs across the country, this show refuses the familiar formula — still-life studies, figure drawing, landscapes, and modernist abstraction, explored in media like watercolour, oil, charcoal, or even the overused label of 'mixed media'. Instead, it offers a different kind of experience.

These students have boldly moved beyond such conventions. Rather than limiting themselves to classical techniques or following the so-called "academic" art training, they have expanded their artistic toolkit to include reading, writing, cutting, sticking, editing, shooting, embroidering, documenting, surveying, translating, performing, acting, researching, and theorising. They have embraced both the thesis and the tactile – working across a wide range of media including oil, watercolour, graphite, video, collage, audio, paper, photography, and performance. Their inquiries span gender, patriarchy, and caste, attending to questions of labour and time through abstract reflection and everyday, embodied acts.

I did not have the opportunity to speak to each artist individually, so I cannot analyse every work in detail. But I watched them act and heard them speak — cooking Freud and Camus with Kabir and Ambedkar, serving mangos, mushairas, and Mumbai locals all in the same breath, and it was a deliciously intoxicating cocktail.





What stands out most is their comfort and ease with integrating text, from literature, philosophy, and critical theory, into their visual representations. Unlike the hesitation often seen in other art schools, these students are unafraid to merge word and image, to distort and erase, to blur boundaries and transgress. Their works are deeply process-driven and research-based based often accompanied by voice, monologue, argument, or conversation, and many unfolded as live performances throughout the exhibition programming.

The result is a display that exudes both confidence and vulnerability. These students understand the complexity of contemporary art practice and accept the weight of it. They do not flinch at the responsibility of their own Frankenstein, a metaphor I borrow from one of the artist's readings. They perform like Sisyphus, but are unafraid of repetition.

Part of the credit undoubtedly goes to the faculty. My heartfelt congratulations to each one of them. And kudos to the artists: Arjun Verma, Arva Sarvanan, Avri Dias, Gunnica Arva, Hasvini Jain, Manya Kumar, Meher Pannu, Nishtha Jain, Nora Varma, Rishita Kohli, Sabaah Babbar, Sanna Gupta, and Sabar Saluja. What they have achieved here deserves serious attention and recognition.

If you remember, I said above that it's a "radical" and "other" exhibition. That's because this four-year BFA program at the Jindal School costs around or above 20 lakhs, a substantial amount. The unfortunate reality is that such a cost makes this kind of education accessible only to the few privileged. A "liberal" institution should think about liberal access, especially when it comes to art education in India.

However, pedagogically, this exhibition marks a significant and thoughtful shift in how we might reimagine the possibilities of a BFA education and exhibition in India.

Paribartana Mohanty  
Artist  
Visiting Faculty  
Shiv Nadar University





# URC

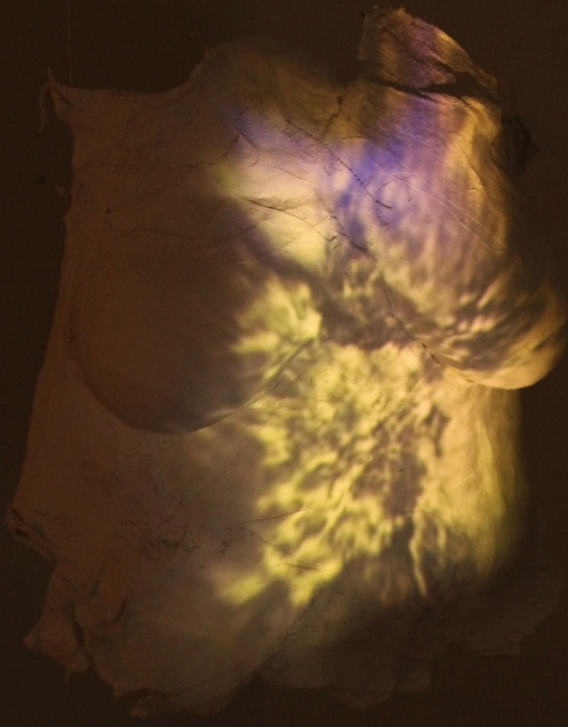
## Undergraduate Research Conference

The Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) course encourages students to conduct research on a topic of their choice and present their findings as a thesis. Instead of requiring students to follow the formal process of writing a thesis, they are encouraged to conduct 'Artistic research' which may come naturally to them. Students are expected to exhibit artworks that reflect their research topic since this enables them to explore their topics through a more creative lens and express their findings artistically.

The third year students researched on topics like the intersection of human and machine, the abject body and medical gaze, gendered spaces and homoeroticism, the complacent nature of human beings. They questioned whether images show reality or are images just a perception of reality and not the whole truth.

Scan the QR codes to find out more about each artwork.





Suhani Taneja  
Untitled  
Plaster of paris bandages, images, typewritten text



Ridhimaa  
Untitled  
Fabric Installation, Floor painting, Light projection



Kashish Dhakal  
Bound Yet Beating  
Multimedia Installation





Khushi Mittal  
1879.13  
Moving Image



Despite all that it survived,

Image courtesy - Khushi Mittal





Image courtesy - Suhasini Manu Pande



Suhasini  
आँखों देखी (Aakhon dekhi)  
Video Installation



Divisha  
Untitled  
Docufiction, mono-prints, photographs

Image courtesy - Divisha



Keyaa  
किसके बाग में हो?, Kiske Baag Mein ho?  
Mixed media Installation

Image courtesy - Keyaa



# WORKSHOP

## Electronic Life

Electronic Life's Living Archive project was a key part of the third-year fine arts curriculum, combining a workshop and internship to develop an AI prototype exploring ephemerality in art. Electronic Life, a collective working with AI for social good, was founded by Professors Sunil Manghani and Ed D'Souza of Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, both co-editors of the Journal of Visual Art Practice.

The collaboration began with a talk by Sunil and Ed in February 2025, followed by a three-day workshop in April. Building on the students' 2023 visit to the Kochi Biennale, the workshop explored AI in art and introduced Electronic Life's projects.

This collaboration further translated into an internship with the students. Centered in Kochi as both a conceptual and physical space, the project invited students to deeply engage with questions about the limits of data and the challenges of capturing and reimagining transient moments. Closely tied to the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, which the student batch visited in 2023, this connection enriched the research by embedding it within the contemporary art ecosystem and linking the AI explorations directly to the themes and practices encountered at the Biennale. Throughout the process, students showcased early AI prototypes and research in group discussions, drawing inspiration from their shared experiences and the Biennale's influence. Continuous feedback, anchored in Kochi's local context and the Biennale's international scope, played a crucial role in shaping the project's trajectory, opening new avenues for archiving ephemeral art through technology. Ultimately, this collaborative endeavor highlighted the powerful intersection of artistic research, AI experimentation, and active participation in addressing urgent questions on archiving and ephemerality within contemporary fine arts practice.

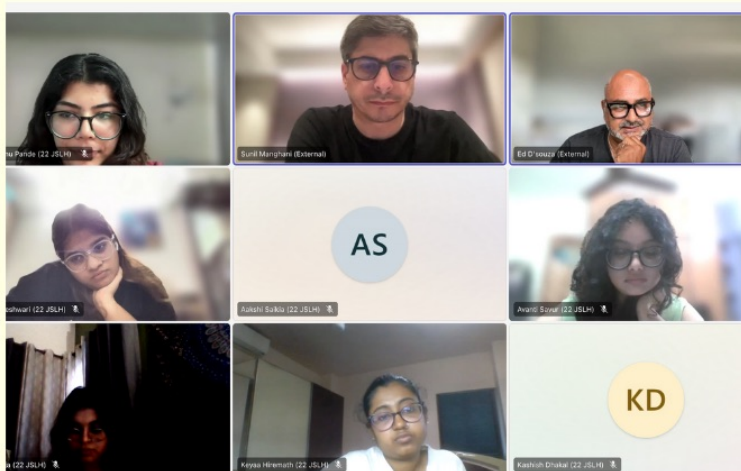


Image courtesy - Priyesh Gothwal



Image courtesy - Suhasini Manu Pande





## Unofficial Data Un/official Data

to investigate the boundaries of data

what counts as data?

what counts as official data?

what counts as unofficial data?

## Authority

how does the authority shift?

who has the authority to decide?

who decides what's official and what is not official?

### LANGUAGE AS DATA

- what is an "official" language?
- who decides which language is official?
- hierarchies in language
- translating languages
- P language, Kington, Elvion

### CONCEPT NOTES AS OFFICIAL DATA

- entry into the artwork for those who do not understand the artwork or have questions about the artwork
- most "official" piece of data about artwork
- concept notes mostly always in English
- "formal" language and therefore use of flowery language

Shabana Raza



Thapali



Thapali does not have P language!!!



A virtual room where users can enter and find new pieces of data, move them around, leave behind data that they have, Dungeons and Dragons-like mechanic:



Cafe as an exhibition space

- Mocha Art Cafe
- Kashi Art Cafe
- David hall

Khushi Mittal

Architectural heritage-hybrid styles

<https://www.architectural digest.in/content/essentials-guide-kochi/>

Khushi Mittal

Chinese Nets

- were introduced in India by the Chinese explorer Zhang He around 1350s
- still in use

Khushi Mittal

<https://www.slideshare.net/slideshare/cochin-yarnacular-architecture/4735920>

Kochi Architecture

Food tour- authentic food of Kochi or famous restaurants

- Fusion Bay
- Tibet Kitchen, etc.

Khushi Mittal

biennale and food are connected- restaurants etc get a lot of business during biennale. Its an essential part of experiencing Kochi.

Aakshi Sarkis

places to eat in fort Kochi

1. tibet kitchen\*
2. fusion bay\*
3. seagull\*
4. pandal cafe
5. david art hall
6. kashi art cafe\*
7. bian b
8. oceanos
9. loving earth cafe
10. fort paragon
11. quissa cafe
12. burnton boatyard

(reddit) (\*personal experience)

Aakshi Sarkis

Import/export- spice route

dutch Portuguese roman british influences

Aakshi Sarkis



<https://www.joinpaper planes.com/the-warehouses-of-fort-kochi/>

<https://kiranabhat.com/2024/09/22/warehouses-of-kochi/>

Khushi Mittal

Some old warehouses were converted to the venues for Kochi Biennale

For eg -

- Wapinevill House
- Pepper House
- T&M Warehouse
- Dutch Warehouse

## Kochi as Interface

Connection between things

- sustainable response
- audience's view, their experience with Kochi, (through Video, Audio, pictures),
- Visitors' POV and Local POV

Divisha Maheshwari

History of Kochi

- Things that they are still using
- Places that still exists.

Divisha Maheshwari

Cultural Influences and Diversity

Multicultural heritage

Kochi has been a cultural crossroads for over a millennium. It has welcomed and absorbed influences from:

- Hindus - the majority community with rich temple rituals and festivals.
- Christians - including Syrian Christians, Latin Catholics, and others brought by missionaries.
- Muslims - especially the Mappila community, descendants of Arab traders.
- Jews - the Paradesi Jews settled in Mattancherry and built one of the oldest synagogues in the Commonwealth.
- Europeans - Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonizers left strong architectural and cultural footprints.

Divisha Maheshwari

Art and Performing Traditions

Keralam

- A classical dance-drama native to Kerala.
- Renowned for its elaborate makeup, costumes, and narrative storytelling.
- Performances often take place in cultural centers in Fort Kochi.

Molayattam

- A graceful dance form performed by women.
- Expresses feminine love and devotion, often to Lord Mahesh.
- Theyyam, Kathakali, and Ottamthullal
- Other traditional forms occasionally seen during festivals and cultural events.

Divisha Maheshwari

### Present Map

<https://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/kerala/kochi.htm>

Divisha Maheshwari

old maps of Kochi

<https://map.sahapedia.org/gallery/Vintage-Maps-of-Fort-Kochi-and-Mattancherry-10578#>

Khushi Mittal

Spring 2025

Image courtesies - Keyaa



# ALUMNI UPDATES

## Arya Saravanan



Location: Chennai

- Published an article titled 'From Dusk to Dawn: The Fight of Memory'
- Conducted workshop in Auroville, based on discussion on Tamil myth and Greek myth. It translated into materiality with clothes, stain, thread and fruit.

## Meher Pannu

Location: Sarmaya, Mumbai

- Selected for a 3-month internship in the museum's archive and curation program.

## Nishtha Jain

Location: Mumbai

- Featured in the group show 'GenZ Unboxed: The New Avant Garde' at Lakeeren Contemporary

## Manya Kumar

Location: Ireland

- Currently pursuing an MVA in Fine Art (MAFA) in Technological University of the Shannon, Limerick School of Art and Design, Ireland

## Sabaah Babbar



Location: New Delhi

- Published work in the contemporary platform Hekh, Delhi.

## Sabar Saluja

Location: New Delhi

- Her video 'Ye Bhi Dekho' was screened at 'Footprints on Gravel', a film event by Shared Ecologies, exploring the role of the non-human in shaping human everyday life.
- Appointed to a 4-month role at Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA)
- Participated in 'Forecast' by Goethe-Institut, Delhi

## Sanna Gupta

Location: Florence, Italy

- Currently enrolled in the Restoration and Conservation program at Lorenzo de' Medici, The Italian International Institute



# FACULTY UPDATES

Our faculty are practising artists as well as mentors. Their active engagement in the professional art world brings fresh insights directly into the classroom, keeping learning current and connected to real-world practices. In our close-knit environment, students benefit from personalised feedback, collaborative exploration, and guidance that nurtures their unique artistic voices.







# Sunil Kumar Kumawat

Sunil Kumar Kumawat's practice is rooted in stone, which he approaches not only as a material but also as a metaphor for endurance, resilience, and cultural memory. The pillar emerges as his central motif—a metaphorical survivor that withstands time and decay, linking the present to the past. Growing up among the stone pillars of Purani Haveli in Mau village, Sikar district (Rajasthan), where broken walls left only pillars standing as lone witnesses, Kumawat developed a deep connection to this form. For him, the pillar is not merely architecture but a living symbol of memory, strength, and continuity.

Kumawat's sculptures often return to the pillar as a structural form that embodies both fragility and permanence. Drawing inspiration from monumental sites such as the Elephanta Caves (5th–8th century CE), where rows of carved columns uphold mountains, myths, and collective memory, he reinterprets architecture into sculptural language, presenting the pillar as a bearer of history.

Working primarily in stone, he employs traditional stone-carving techniques of cutting, texturing, and polishing. His surfaces, alternating between roughness and refinement, echo the tension between ruin and monument, fragment and whole. His practice becomes a meditation on survival and continuity—on what remains, and what carries forward.









# Arunkumar HG

Arun Kumar HG is a practising artist and Adjunct faculty at the BFA programme, integrating his core practices to the students by providing courses such as Introduction to Ceramics, Advanced Sculpture, and Performance and Community Arts. He began his career in Gurgaon working in a children's toy company as a designer, where they used materials such as natural rubber foam. Later, he shifted his focus on his art practices surrounding themes of development, displacement or ecological disruption.

His initiative at SARA was an extension to his practice of instilling awareness in a time where such is a necessity. He wanted to be a hindrance in the ripple effect of infrastructural development and bring forth still water. SARA (Sustainable Alternatives for Rural Accord) Centre is located around the backwater region of the Linganamakki reservoir in the Western Ghats region of Karnataka. SARA believes in creating awareness about the same, together with the regeneration action plans. One of the main objectives for the SARA Centre is to develop a dialogue within the local community about the biodiversity and cultural heritage in the region. They have focused on creating an educational display through research and critical engagement with their surroundings.







Image courtesy - SARA website

Arun Kumar, born and brought up in Karnataka, was influenced by the extent of industrial impact on Shivamogga's natural environment and communities on a visit to his hometown in 2005. This was a stepping stone for him to integrate repurposed materials such as wood taken from industrial scrap yards, plastic waste, cements, clay, papier mache, etc. For him, the material builds the narrative and becomes primary.




<https://www.saracentre.org>  
<https://www.arunkumarhg.com>






# Payal Arya

Spring 2025



Payal Arya is a practicing artist working as a lecturer in the BFA department at Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities, her artworks are interactive and immersive. She is a filmmaker, educator and an installation artist.



Payal Arya and Meher Vahid, a visual artist collaborated together to show how their artistic actions connected and overlapped between memory, land and human life. Meher focuses on the desert while Payal focuses on the shoreline. Meher Vahid's work is made with ink and acrylic. Her work shows the comparison of the land and human body, where land symbolises life, and the flesh of the fish reminds of growth. In addition to symbolism of affection, the images incorporate urban spaces, and Ghaf tree (the national tree of UAE).





Payal Arya's work, मुड पान दी ईच्छा (An Intangible Claim), is a short film about the memories of her Nani (grandmother) during the Partition between India and Pakistan. She shows a link between her Nani being forced to leave her home and the problem of land reclamation. The film uses found footage to show the visual picture of the land that Payal heard about through the stories told by her grandmother. In the end, she found Nani's home for her, and she saw it virtually after 75 years.

The collaborative artworks show the theme of intergenerality, past and present, and the intimacy of memories told through distance.

The installation was also showcased at the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt and at Divvy film festival in Lahore in 2023, School of Visual Arts, New York and at Bayt al Mamzar in Dubai, June 2025.

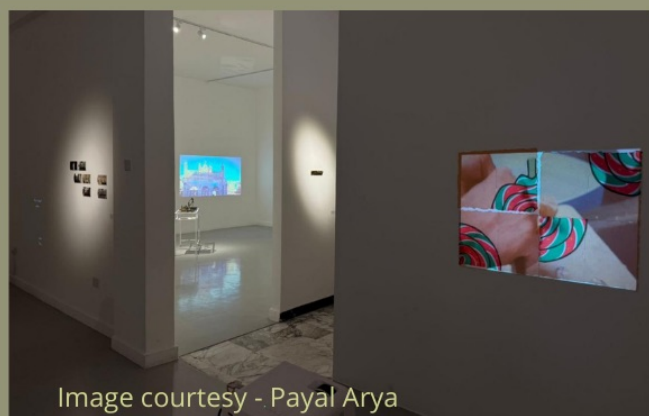


Image courtesy - Payal Arya









stops the blood from bleeding.



Image courtesy - Gopa Trivedi

Connect with us

Instagram: [bfa\\_jindalglobaluniversity](https://www.instagram.com/bfa_jindalglobaluniversity)

Website link - <https://jgu.edu.in/jslh/bachelor-of-fine-arts-hons/>