

TEJAL SHAH
›Between The Waves‹

Exhibition from 26 April – 22 June, 2013

The Indian multimedia artist Tejal Shah has become known for her politically motivated works in which she deals with feminist themes and questions of sexuality and nature from a feminist lens. In our second exhibition with the artist we are showing the five-channel video installation *Between the Waves*, which premiered at dOCUMENTA (13) under the curatorial rubric of *Collapse and Recovery* of artistic director Carolyn Christov Bakargiev.

Shah examines phenomena of cultural and biological diversity. She regards deviance as an integral part of nature. Exuberance and difference are, for her, the "source and essence of all life, which all other patterns follow." In this work, Shah develops her own vision of an evolutionary story that breaks away from norms about body, kinship, sexuality, sex and productiveness. Boundaries between genders, even between people animals and plants, are lifted.

Filmed largely in India, especially in transition zones between large cities and nature, the main film in the installation is structured as a circular fable. Divided into five chapters. It appears to begin in an ancient city. Shah's protagonists, unicorn like creatures, move in a physically sensual way through a world of splendid colors, devoting themselves to spiritual and erotic rituals until a tidal wave destroys their peaceful existence. Stranded on a coast and muddied by the refuse of civilization, they try to reorient and find regeneration in mangrove forests with its ancient amphibious creatures. After another hedonistic phase the fictitious story ends in the reality of a large Indian megapolis. Here, Shah abruptly and aggressively puts an end to the whole imaginative creativity.

Projected in a loop with other synchronized channels, we experience the story with multiple possible beginnings. Four other channels of *Between the Waves - Landfill Dance, Animation, Moon Burning and Morse Code* - run parallel to the main film's loop and mark the two extremes from the mythic to the cybernetic age, which Shah spans thematically.

Through the multimedia, three-dimensional installation in which moving pictures, various sound compositions, animation, dance, drawing, and collage overlap, the encounter with *Between the Waves* becomes a physically sensual experience that provocatively questions our notions of normality, life and living, and matter itself.

The exhibition is supplemented by color collages and drawings in which Shah takes up the themes from her ongoing research on mysticism, science, mythologies of ecology and post-pornography. Motifs continue to develop and reformulate according to her intuitive handling of materials and ideas into a holistic world.

Tejal Shah, born in 1979 in Bhilai, India, lives and works in Goa, India. Her work was first introduced to the German public in 2011 in a solo show at the Barbara Gross Galerie, which included a discussion with the artist and Hans-Ulrich Obrist. In 2012 she participated in the dOCUMENTA (13) with her well-received video installation, *Between the Waves* (2012). Internationally, her work has been seen in solo shows in China, India, and Canada, and it has been featured in many group exhibitions in important museums, such as the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Serpentine Gallery in Paris, the Herning Museum of Contemporary Art in Denmark, and the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, in Oslo, Norway.