RADHIKA KHIMJI

> OVER, THROUGH AND AROUND

LETITIA

Letitia is dedicated to facilitating engagement with contemporary art in Lebanon through the exhibition of emerging and established artists. Interested in innovative approaches to art-making, Letitia presents work across disciplines and regions with a project-focused model that nurtures the growth of artists from the MENA region as well as showcasing international artists. Letitia gallery offers both local audiences and visitors to Beirut the opportunity to discover artists, through a program of exhibitions and public programming including talks, off-site projects and site-specific commissioning.

Cover Artwork, detail from *Some Landscapes Leak Outwards*,
oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

Jacket, diecut inspired from thread work from *A Beast Ignited*

Picture by Ben Peter Catchpole

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February 28TH > May 11TH, 2019

LETITIA

INTRODUCTION

Letitia Gallery is thrilled to launch our 2019 program with *Over, Through and Around*, an exhibition of new work by Omani artist Radhika Khimji. This second year of programming will continue Letitia's investment in showcasing international and regional artists engaged with their subject and media in innovative ways. Khimji demonstrates this innovation with her intimate portrayals of absent bodies, ambiguous landscapes and the objects left behind within them, insisting on an unfixed reading of her subject matter in favor of subtle gestures of transformation.

Working from her studio in London, Khimji employs a collaged approach to image- and installation-making. Her layered works are built up architecturally, encompassing photo-transfer, painting and repetitive mark-making, simultaneously disguising and exposing materials and marks that have come before. *Over, Through and Around* features a collection of new works on paper that incorporate knitting, a new material for the artist, as well as her signature gesture of using drawing implements to pierce the surface of the page, creating a track for embroidery. Khimji has also made a site-specific installation within the gallery in order to create spaces of representation for both the construction and unraveling of identity.

We would like to thank Adib Dada for his catalyzing contribution to this exhibition, Tala Gharagozlou for her thoughtful essay in this catalogue, and Radhika Khimji for sharing the unparalleled perspective of her practice.

Annie Vartivarian
Director, Letitia Gallery

OVER, THROUGH AND AROUND

Text by Tala Gharagozlou

^ Behind the scenes. Picture by Ben Peter Catchpole

Mounds, peaks, valleys and other accidental summits unfold before our eyes ... on rough paper and on wood, making the original materiality palpable. With a sparse but deeply evocative visual vocabulary ranging from pitch black to earthly inks, with red thread and wool coursing through, Radhika Khimji invites us into new territories. She takes us on the road.

Having physically traveled through mountains and valleys, undaunted by their scale, Khimji has taken the photographic fragments of her travels to the studio and brought land art back, as she puts it, “firmly to paper.” Rather than waiting in awe in front of these landscapes, like Ansel Adams might have done in Yosemite, Khimji physically reclaims possession of the rock face, climbing over the mountains and building or un-building new walls. Grabbing on to the odd piece of barbed wire, pipe or concrete wall, she turns over every unexplored corner, making her haptic presence known, sharply in red.

This fascination with raw materials was already present in her installation *Safely Standing* at the 2015 Ghetto Biennale in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Three cinder block walls topped with glass shards stood askew, open to the elements, commenting wryly on the elusive need for safety behind these walls and the dream of domesticity they evoked.

^^ *Safley Standing*, concrete, mortar and glass, 2015. Image Credit: Lazaros

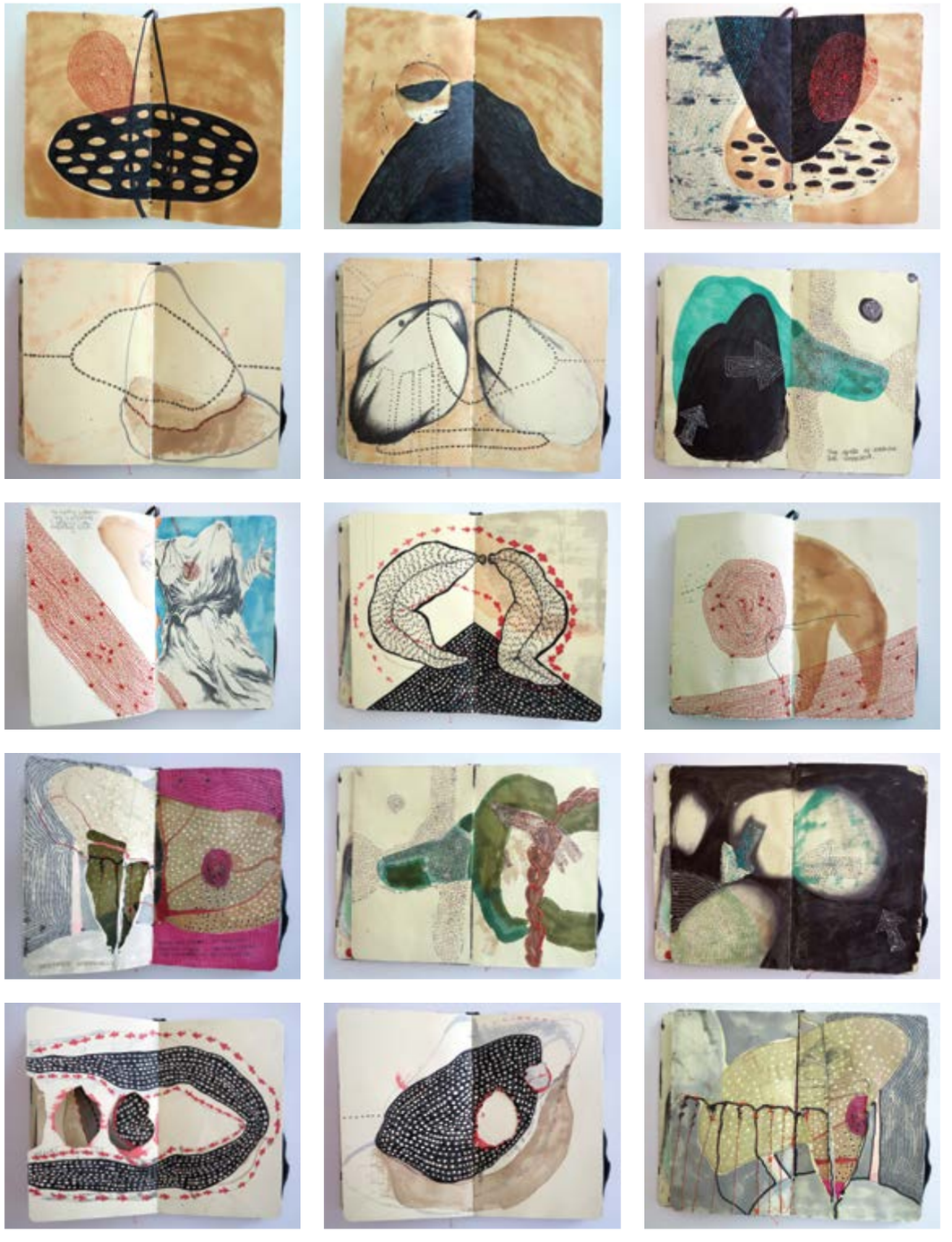
Khimji started playfully exploring the remote landscapes of her native Oman in 2010 with *Safe Landings*, where the installation of a parachute became a testimony to her fleeting presence in these seemingly abandoned sites. The floppy fabric awkwardly or majestically draped a corner of an architectural ruin, further highlighting the strange absence of the body that should have landed with the parachute. In her documentation, the thin veil of the parachute co-existed strangely with the muted palette and remaining stone walls of its monumental surroundings.

> ∧ *Parachute*, canvas ropes and metal eyelets, 9m in diameter, Koutoubia Mosque, 2016
Credit: Marrakesh Biennial, Not New Now

> ∨ *Safe Landings*, March 2010, solo exhibition, Muscat, Oman

Despite their larger scale and coarser materials, Khimji's paper-based works remains at the heart of her practice. Paper here is not simply a flimsy material, instead it is taken apart and run over to reveal its fragile resilience. Drawing in her journals, Khimji's thick felt pen marks bleed from one page to the next, creating unexpected shadows of the first marks on paper. As the pages turned, thread and needle embroidered through both sides of the page; the staccato of her meticulous embroidery both challenging and reinforcing the material integrity of the paper pages. Surreptitiously, a strange figure and field relationship emerges; the seemingly heavy abstract black shapes take on a new sensuousness when in contact with the halo of red thread. At times the thread echoes and prolongs their profile, while at others the thread hovers independently, at the edge of the field of vision.

Where, on a smaller scale, the monumentality of these mounds and valleys is only symbolic, the jump in scale and paper in *Over, Through and Around* fully confronts the viewer with the scale of the original model. At times, the landscape photographs form the very base layer of the piece, while in others, the physical layers of the paper have been manipulated to such as an extent as to only read as fragments fusing with their plywood base. Khimji's red thread turned coarse wool reminds us that our modern-day Ariadne will not be left waiting in safety but would rather spring into action herself.



> Various spreads from notebook, books 5 and 8, 2010 & 2015

> OVER, THROUGH AND AROUND

Detail from *Brewing Below*, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 30 x 42 cm, 2018

EXHIBITED WORKS

A Beast Ignited, ink and thread on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.

Anything Can Flip Over, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5

Backsplash, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm,

Detach, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 201

Disengage, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25

Firmly Paper, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x

Internal Mishap, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7

Ladder Out of Reach, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x

Little Worlds, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x

Looking Over, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm

Orbs Floating in Air, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper,

Porous, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 201

Some Landscapes Leak Outwards, oil and gesso on photo transfer on

Wool Pulled Over, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20

Brewing Below, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 30 x

Double Mind, Deep Freeze, oil on digital print on wood and paper, 70 x

It Couldn't Be More Unseen, oil and gesso on photo transfer on wood a

Off Centre, oil, acrylic and gesso on photo transfer and digital print o

The Great Escape, oil and gesso on photo transfer on wood and wool,

Tongue, oil and gesso on photo transfer on wood, 28.5 x 36 cm, 2019

Scroll Down, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper and wo

Floating Islands, ink and thread on digital print on paper and wool, 1

Falling Out, oil, wool and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 137 x 115

Crevice, oil, and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 115 x 177 cm, 201

Somewhat Protruding, oil, and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 165

^ *A Beast Ignited,* ink and thread on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

v *Anything Can Flip Over,* oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

^ *Backsplash,* oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

v *Detach,* oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

> ^ *Orbs Floating in Air,* thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

> v *Porous,* oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2019

^ *Disengage,* thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2019

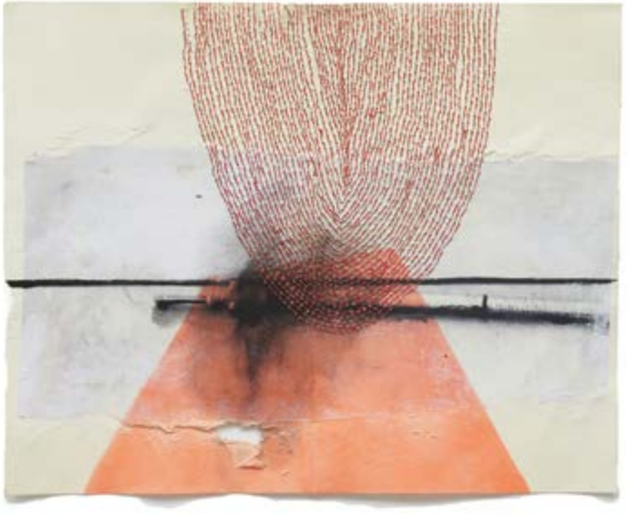
v *Firmly Paper,* thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

> ^ *Internal Mishap,* oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2019

> v *Ladder Out of Reach,* oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

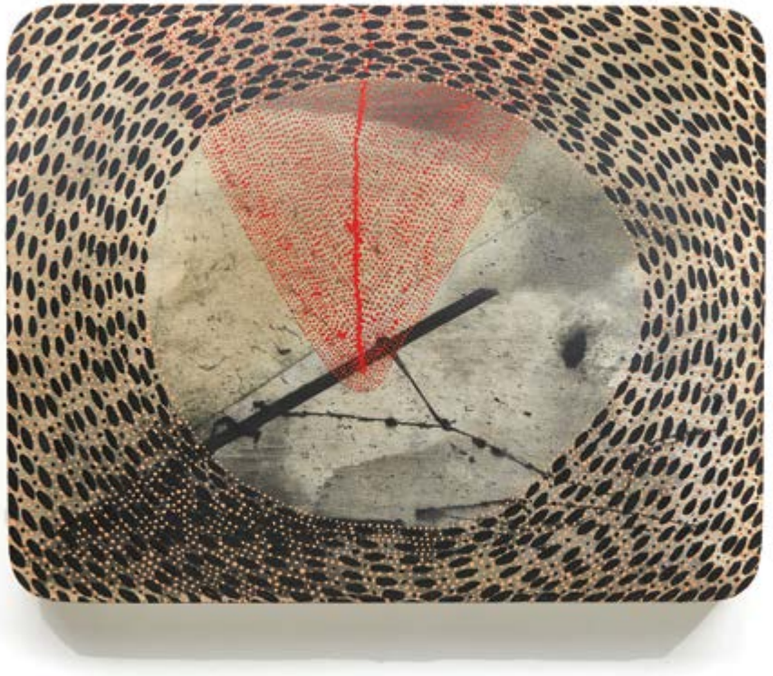
^ *Little Worlds,* thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

^ *Looking Over,* oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018



> ^ *Some Landscapes Leak Outwards,* oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018

> v *Wool Pulled Over,* thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2018



^ *It Couldn't Be More Unseen*, oil and gesso on photo transfer on wood and wool, 32 x 39 cm, 2019

< *Tongue*, oil and gesso on photo transfer on wood, 28.5 x 36 cm, 2019

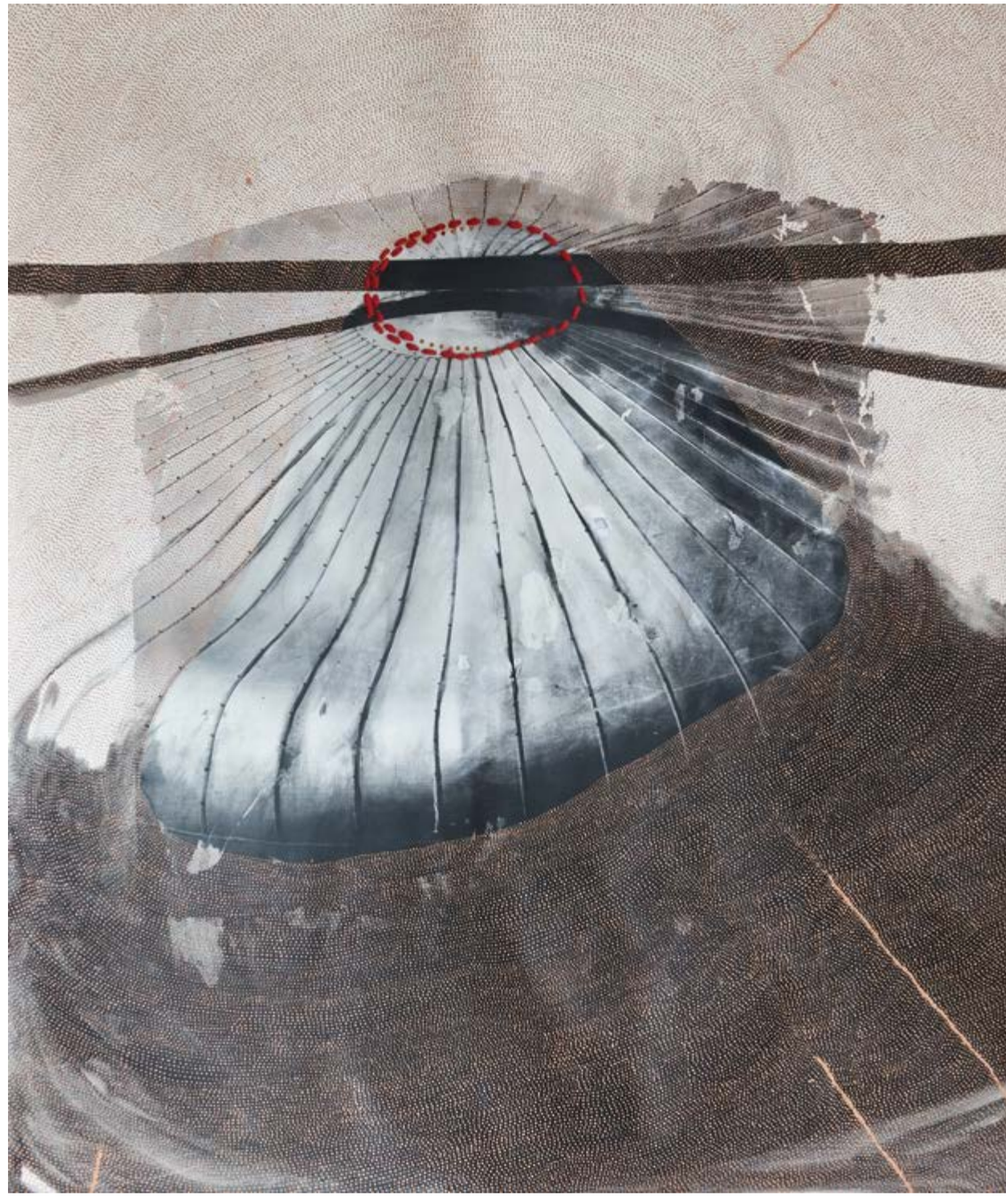
< *Scroll Down*, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper and wool, 33 x 44 cm, 2019

^ *The Great Escape*, oil and gesso on photo transfer on wood and wool, 38 x 51 cm, 2018

^ *Off Centre,* oil, acrylic and gesso on photo transfer and digital print on paper and wood, 31 x 49 cm, 2019

< *Brewing Below,* thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 30 x 42 cm, 2018

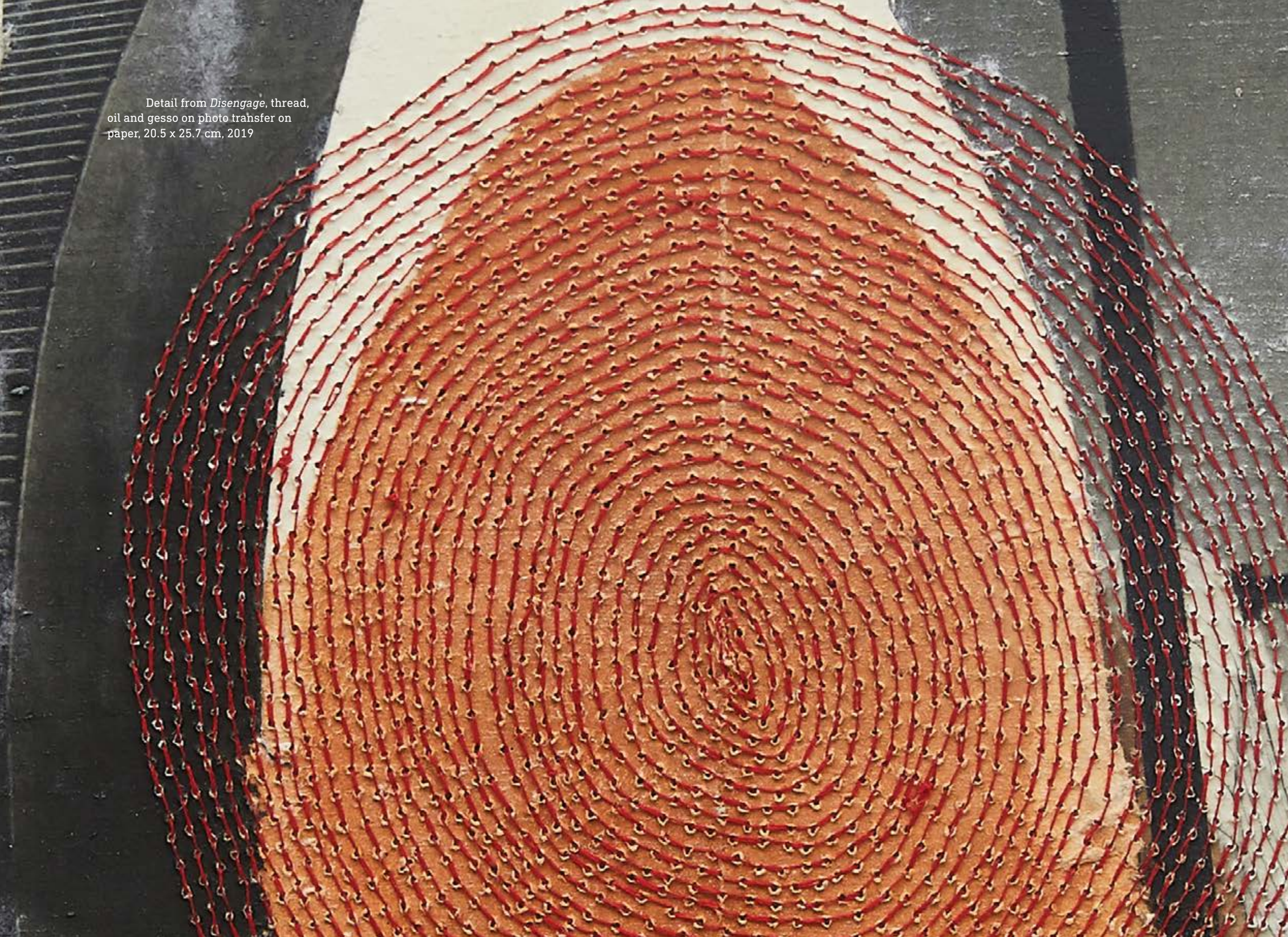
> *Somewhat Protruding,* oil, and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 165 x 115 cm, 2019



> *Falling Out,* oil, wool and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 137 x 115 cm, 2019

> *Floating Islands*, ink and thread on digital print on paper and wool, 107 x 78 cm, 2019

> *Double Mind, Deep Freeze,* oil on digital print on wood and paper, 70 x 50 cm, 2018



Detail from *Disengage*, thread, oil and gesso on photo transfer on paper, 20.5 x 25.7 cm, 2019

CURRICULUM VITAE

B. 1979 Oman

EDUCATION

2006–2007 UCL: MA in Art History
2002–2005 Royal Academy of Art, Fine Art Post Graduate Diploma
1998–2002 Slade School of Fine Art, BAFA
1997–1998 Kingston University of Art and Design, Foundation Course

EXHIBITIONS (Solo)

2018 On the Cusp, stal Gallery, Muscat, (Oman)
2017 Becoming Landscape, Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna (Austria)
2016 Adrift, Collectionair, curated by Olivier Varenne, online platform
2016 Of Place and Places, Gallery Sarah, Muscat (Oman)
2016 Art Dubai, solo booth with Gallery Sarah, Dubai (UAE)
2014 Artefacts from Below, Project 88, Mumbai (India)
2014 Fragments 2, Gallery Sarah, Muscat (Oman)
2012 Found Gesture, Katara art Center, Doha (Qatar)
Curated by Mayssa Fattouh
2010 Rashm the First: The Corridor of Rasm, Qbox Gallery, Athens (Greece)
2010 Safe Landings, Barka Fort, Barka (Oman)
2009 Density and the Shifting Plane, Bose Pacia, New York (USA)
2009 B Sides, Nature Morte annexe, New Delhi (India)

EXHIBITIONS (Group)

2019 Drawing Biennial, Drawing Room, London (UK)
2018 Adventitious Encounters, Whitleys, London (UK)
Cutrated by Huma Kabacki and Anna Skladmann
2018 FIAC, Galerie Krinzinger, Paris (France)
2018 Frieze art fair, Galerie Krinzinger, London (UK)
2018 Friends of Waqas, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna (Austria)
2017 Weihnachtsausstellung, Krinzinger Parterre, Vienna (Austria)
2017 Art Basel Miami, Galerie Krinzinger, Miami (USA)
2017 FIAC, Galerie Krinzinger, Paris (France)
2017 Frieze art fair, Galerie Krinzinger, London (UK)
2017 Drawing Biennial, Drawing Room, London (UK)
2017 Of Things Long Forgotten, Siegfried Contemporary, London (UK)
2017 The House of Penelope, Gallery 46, London (UK)
2016 MENASA Sovereign art prize, Alserkal Avenue, Dubai (UAE)

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2016 Marrakech Biennale 6, Not New Now, Marrakech (Morocco) Curated by Reem Fadda
2015 4th Ghetto Biennale, Port –Au – Prince (Haiti) Curated by Leah Gordon and Andre Eugene
2015 Somewhere In- Between, Karavil Contemporary, London (UK) Curated by Huma Kabakci
2014 City Senses, Blackall Studios, London (UK) Curated by Huma Kabakci and Aisha Stoby
2013 Biennale Jogja XII Equator no.2, Langgeng Art Foundation, Yogyakarta (Indonesia) Curated by Agung Hujatnika, Sarah Rifky and Farah Wardani
2013 Salon Oman, Leighton House, London (UK) Curated by Aisha Stoby
2011 Home Spun, The Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon (India) curated by Girish Shahane
2010 PEN 1, Exhibit 320, New Delhi (India) curated by Shaheen Meerali
2010 Treacherous Path, Nature Morte Gallery, Berlin (Germany)
2010 Progress Reports, INIVA, London (UK) curated by Angela Kingston
2010 The Franks-Suss Collection, Saatchi Gallery, London (UK) curated by Eli Zagury&Tamar Arnon
2009 The Franks-Suss Collection, London (UK) curated by Eli Zagury & Tamar Arnon
2008 Radhika Khimji/The David Roberts Art Foundation at V22, The Wharf Rd Project, London(UK)
2007 The City and the Street, Bait Muzna Gallery Muscat (Oman) Circle group

RESIDENCIES

2017 Residency at Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna (Austria)
2010 summer, Artists-in-residence, Qbox Gallery, Tzia (Greece)

AWARDS

2004 Sir Frank and Lady Short Award

COLOPHON

This publication has been produced to coincide with the exhibition Radhika Khimji: Over, Through and Around from 28 February to 11 May 2019, at Letitia gallery, Tour de Saroula, Hamra, Beirut, Lebanon.

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LETITIA PAST EXHIBITIONS

HATEM IMAM
THRESHOLD
15 November, 2018 > 2 February, 2019

BASIR MAHMOOD
EYES RECENTLY SEEN
6 September > 3 November, 2018

NATHANIEL RACKOWE
THE SHAPE OF A CITY
27 June > 25 August, 2018

AHMED BADRY
PORTMANTEAU
18 April > 16 June, 2018

EILEEN COOPER
UNDER THE SAME MOON
1 February > 31 March, 2018

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