

You, Me and Them: a body that I used to know



Saviya Lopes
Solo Exhibition

NOV

08

5:30 pm onwards
Preview

On view till 2nd Jan 2026

ART & CHARLIE

You, Me and Them: a body that I used to know



The body remembers. It carries within it the sediments of care, resilience, grief, and joy; traces that outlive the fragility of flesh. In *A Body That I Used to Know*, the body emerges as a vessel of intergenerational knowledge, a living archive that has witnessed the rise and fall of worlds, the making and unmaking of homes, and the quiet yet unrelenting persistence of everyday survival.

This exhibition begins from the personal and unfolds into the public, revealing how memory, labour, and resistance are inscribed into the body. The paintings chart this shift through a series of reframings: quilting once held as an act of self-care becomes a spectacle for the gaze; grief, once intimate, now registers as political; kitchen spaces transform from sites of gathering to reminders of invisible labour; a womb once named for life becomes a contested ground for law. Grandmothers' hands, remembered as soft carriers of care, extend here into an archive of touch, testimony, and endurance.

The works foreground the paradox of the body: deeply mortal, yet non-ephemeral in its capacity to remember and to hold histories even when words falter. As the exhibition unfolds, the presence of you, the immediacy of me, and the continuum of them create a constellation of relations. The "front person" reminds us of the intimacy of the singular, yet this intimacy is inseparable from the unseen others whose emotional labour, rest, and resilience sustain survival.

Within this constellation, the painting *The Land and the Body Will Not Forget* by Palestinian artist Reem Masri extends the exhibition's reflection on memory into the terrain of belonging. Her work weaves together the land and the body as inseparable entities; each carrying the memory of the other, each refusing erasure. Her work holds within it stories of exile, resistance, and return. It gestures the quiet persistence of those who remained, the pulse

of what the earth has absorbed, and the promise that even when silenced, life continues to speak through the land. Masri's voice resonates as both a lament and a declaration: that nothing truly disappears. Not the soil, nor the shadow, nor the trembling of those who fought to remain. In Reem's presence, the exhibition opens towards a shared pulse of resilience that transcends borders, where the body of the self and the body of the land speak as one.

From this shared ground, rest is recast as resistance: a refusal of extraction, a reminder that recuperation is not absence but necessity. The same soil that carries memory also cradles renewal. Emotional labour unfolds in the folds of fabric, in the gestures of hands, in the quiet endurance of everyday care. Remembrance here operates not only as testimony to grief but as a practice of celebration; an honouring of what endures through tenderness, solidarity, and survival.

The second movement of the exhibition, *I Used to Know Them Through Books, But Now I See Them Alive*, envisions a gathering across time. Here, feminists from different eras are conjured together in solidarity, reminding us of resistance as a continuum. In this speculative assembly, remembering becomes a form of hope; much like the body's way of recovering from what it has endured, and what it continues to resist.

Threaded throughout is the insistence that care itself is resistance; an everyday, feminist act that sustains life in the face of erasure. Another work declares, "Erasure is an old form of violence"...a warning and a witness. Memory is fragile not because it fades, but because it is silenced.

In ***You, Me and Them: A Body That I Used to Know***, the invitation is to listen differently...to listen to what our own bodies have been telling us...to what the bodies of others continue to remind us. Survival is political; emotional labour is not invisible; empathy and love are urgent strategies for resilience.

The question remains: *are we ready to hear what the body remembers?*

शरीर एक स्मृति-संग्रह है।

इसमें वह सब बसता है जिसे हमेशा शब्दों में नहीं कहा जा सकता: स्मृति, श्रम, शोक और ममता।

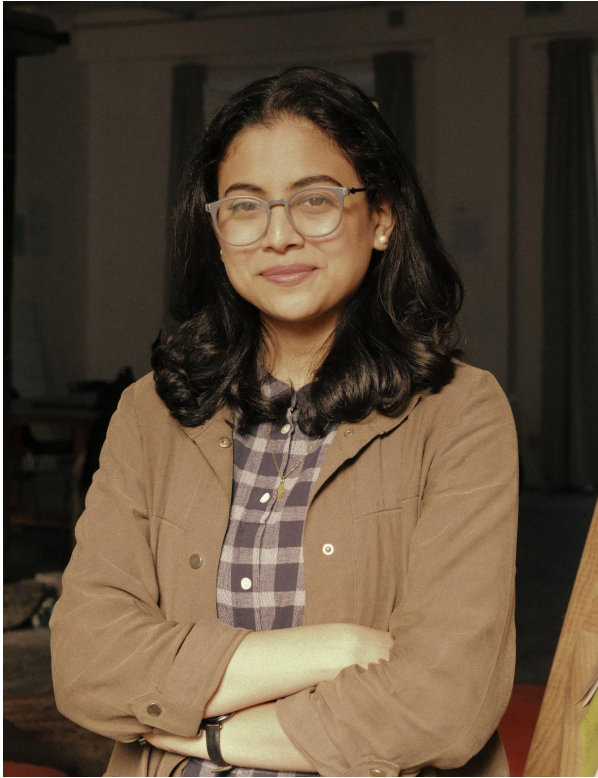
साविया लोपीस आत्मीय क्रियाओं को राजनीतिक वक्तव्यों में रूपांतरित करती हैं। हाथों की हर हरकत अदृश्य श्रम और सामूहिक प्रतिरोध के प्रमाण बनती है, विश्राम अस्वीकार बन जाता है, देखभाल रणनीति में रूपांतरित होती है और स्मृति विलोपन के विरुद्ध एक शक्ति बनकर उभरती है।

फिलिस्तीनी कलाकार रीम मासरी की कला इस संवाद को और गहराई देती है, हमें याद दिलाती है कि भूमि और शरीर एक हैं; दोनों अपनी स्मृति में जीवित हैं, दोनों विलोपन का प्रतिरोध करते हैं। उनकी उपस्थिति लोपिस के विचारों को सीमाओं से आगे, सामूहिक जिजीविषा के स्पंदन तक ले जाती है।

यह प्रदर्शनी हमें अपने और दूसरों के शरीरों की आवाज़ सुनने के लिए आमंत्रित करती है। हमें याद दिलाती है कि अस्तित्व स्वयं में राजनीतिक है, भावनात्मक श्रम का अपना महत्व है, और सहानुभूति तथा प्रेम, दृढ़ता के अनिवार्य साधन हैं।

प्रश्न यह नहीं कि शरीर क्या याद रखता है, प्रश्न यह है कि क्या हम उसके स्मरण को सुनने के लिए तैयार हैं ?

Translated by **Aditya Jadhav**



Saviya Lopes

Saviya Lopes (b. 1994) is a visual artist from Vasai (Bassein), India. Her practice delves into her East Indian Catholic heritage through detailed research of family archives and oral histories. She draws inspiration from activities like practising quilt making by her grandmother - a subtle, yet powerful act of dissent and preservation to explore cultural heritage through intimate narratives and intergenerational memory. Her works reinterpret history with a feminist lens, addressing themes of violence, heritage, and colonialism through a focus on emotional labour, protest, and identity. Her practice, informed by women's labour and textile history, explores the body as a living archive and domestic crafts as spaces of refuge and resistance. She examines the often-invisible emotional and physical work that sustains communal and cultural bonds, engaging with themes of resilience, erasure, and care. Lopes's work balances transparency with depth, exploring the interrelation between body, language, culture, and the navigation of spaces while positioning acts of care and domesticity as central to understanding histories of creativity, healing, and empowerment.

Lopes has showcased her work in numerous group exhibitions worldwide since 2015. Key exhibitions include Dakar Biennale (2016); The Showroom, London (2018); Ireland Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2016); Foundation Fiminco, Paris (2021) and a co-curator for Kochi Students Biennale 2022-23.

She was the recipient of Inlaks - UNIDEE Award for International Artists' Residency at Fondazione Pistoletto - Cittadellarte, Italy (2024) and is currently on the advisory board of the Kaka Baptista East Indian Museum, Mumbai.

Picture Credit: Dalia Jacobs



Saviya Lopes

I used to know
grandmother's hands
as care...

But now I also know
them as archives 2025

Oil on Linen Canvas
13 x 13 inches



This painting traces the intergenerational transmission of knowledge through women's gestures, acts of care that endure beyond speech. The grandmother's hands, marked by time and labour, guide the child's smaller ones into the soil. What is passed on here is not merely the act of planting but the politics of sustaining, an unspoken pedagogy rooted in repetition, labour, and love.

The work reclaims the domestic and the intimate as sites of feminist knowledge. It refuses the historical erasure of women's labour by framing care as both resistance and authorship. The grandmother's hands, etched with traces of unrecorded histories, become living archives, repositories of experience that challenge the division between intellectual and manual work.

In this intergenerational exchange, the body itself becomes the medium of transmission. The soil becomes a metaphor for relationality, mirroring the way women cultivate, nurture, and restore amidst systemic dispossession. Yet, within that shared vulnerability emerges a counter-narrative of strength: the capacity to nurture, to restore, and to begin again.

The painting unfolds as a feminist meditation on continuity, locating power not in dominance but in the quiet insistence of care. Each gesture of the hand becomes a citation, each touch an act of remembrance; an archive written not in ink, but in soil.



Saviya Lopes

I used to know quilting
as self care.... but now
I also know it as an
ornament for the
spectator

(Harriet Tubman) 2025

Oil on Linen Canvas

36 x 48 inches



This painting reconfigures Harriet Tubman within an alternative visual and ideological frame, challenging dominant historiographies that situate her solely within the discourse of resistance and liberation. By relocating Tubman to a quiet interior, engaged in the intimate act of tending to the loose threads of a finished quilt, the work foregrounds care, contemplation, and selfhood as radical extensions of her political agency.

The composition performs a critical intervention into how labour, particularly female and racialized labour has been aestheticized, commodified, and stripped of its relational context. The floor tiles echo quilt patterns, tracing the invisible routes of resistance that women have historically mapped through everyday making.

The juxtaposition of the quilt and the crucifix on the wall interrogates the institutionalization of both faith and craft, suggesting how the sacred and the handmade are absorbed into hegemonic systems of value and display. Lifted from the hands of the maker to become objects of reverence or aesthetic consumption. In reimagining Tubman at rest, the painting reclaims the right to stillness and introspection as forms of resistance in themselves.

This work questions who owns the narrative of labour and care. By invoking Alice Walker's "Everyday Use," it reclaims quilting not as ornamentation but as a living archive of emotional labour; a repository of memory, survival, and self-definition. Tubman's silence here is radical: it speaks of the right to rest, to reclaim one's craft beyond its commodification, and to remember making as a language of love and resistance.



Saviya Lopes

I used to know womb as life,
But now I also know it as a
battleground for law
(L-R : Sulochanabai Dongre,
Simone de Beauvoir, Billie
Holiday, Nina Simone)

Oil on linen canvas

36 x 48 inches



This painting stages four women as monumental embodiments of intertwined histories of reproductive struggle, bodily autonomy, and resistance: Sulochanabai Dongre, Simone de Beauvoir, Billie Holiday and Nina Simone. They stand encircling a pomegranate tree. Here, the tree becomes more than a symbol of fertility: it is the contested site of autonomy, a living witness to the ways in which the womb has long been legislated, regulated, and morally policed. They stand in a gesture of protection central to the Chipko movement: an echo of movements in which bodies have formed barricades, protection circles, and lines of refusal.

Each woman draws from distinct yet resonant genealogies. Sulochanabai Dongre, one of the earliest advocates for reproductive rights within anti-caste feminist thought in India, stands beside Simone de Beauvoir, whose Manifesto of the 343 openly defied the criminalization of abortion in France. Inscribed discreetly on the tree trunk, the number 343 calls forth the audacity of that collective declaration; that women's own testimonies are sufficient to speak their truth. To their right, stand Billie Holiday and Nina Simone, whose voices transformed grief into the song "Strange Fruit" invoke another axis of struggle: the fundamental right to live, to breathe, and to be free from racial terror. Their presence calls to mind how the control of the womb and the policing of life itself are never separate struggles.

The pomegranate, cracked open at their feet, reveals seeds like histories: numerous, difficult to access, requiring labor to release. At the base of the scene, a porcupine stands quietly, its spines recalling the soft and sharp edges of survival, defense, and vulnerability.

This gathering does not imagine solidarity as already achieved but as learned, painstakingly, across differences. It asks whether we can recognize the monumental while we are still living inside it. It invites a re-reading of history; not as a distant archive, but as a living lineage that continues to shape the fight for the right to rest, to decide, to resist, and to remain fully human.



Saviya Lopes

I used to know grief as
personal...
but now I also know it
as political
(Mahasweta Devi) 2025

Oil on Linen Canvas
36 x 24 inches



"I used to know grief as personal, but now I also know it as political" is a work that gathers women in an intimate act of mourning. At the heart of the scene stands Mahasweta Devi, holding her book *Rudaali*, which foregrounds the long history of grief as a feminized labour, inherited and sustained across generations. The painting reflects on grief as a deeply personal emotion, yet one that becomes entangled within the social structures of gender, community, and expectation.

The work emphasizes the immense emotional labour involved in carrying, not only one's own grief but also tending to the pain of others. Women, historically positioned as professional or familial mourners, tend to carry this dual responsibility, where grief becomes both a burden and a duty.

Yet, the work also insists on reclaiming grief as a personal right. It argues for the necessity of allowing individuals to grieve for themselves, to tend to their own emotional landscapes, rather than being subsumed entirely within the rigid expectations of collective mourning. Here, grief is reframed not as weakness but as resistance; as a way of refusing the silencing structures that dictate how, when, and for whom one may cry.



Saviya Lopes

I used to know
photographs as
absence....

but now I also know
them as a Presence
(Top L-R: Ramabai
Ambedkar, Jyotiba
Phule | Bottom L-R: Dr.
B. R. Ambedkar,
Savitribai Phule) 2025

Oil on Linen Canvas
30 x 42 inches



This painting reconfigures the visual archive by transforming the photograph traditionally a vessel of memory and absence, into an active site of continuity, dialogue, and resistance. The intimate act of writing is carried on by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Savitribai Phule, while Ramabai Ambedkar and Jyotirao Phule preside over them like quiet ancestors of thought. Their presence frames an intergenerational continuum of feminist and anti-caste discourse, foregrounding the shared intellectual and emotional labour that has shaped social emancipation movements.

Through this scene, the painting reflects on how the legacies of Ambedkar and Savitribai were sustained by unseen emotional and intellectual labour, the companionship of Ramabai and Jyotirao, who, though absent in time, remain present through memory and influence. The act of writing here becomes more than documentation; it is a practice of survival, a conversation across generations, and a method of recording collective dreams of liberation.

The honey bees resting on the table emerge as metaphors for shared work, the ceaseless hum of care, endurance, and the emotional labour embedded within social struggle. By bringing these figures together, the painting challenges linear history, proposing instead a cyclical temporality where love, thought, and resistance are forever intertwined. The photograph, once a symbol of absence, here becomes a site of return; a testament to presence that refuses erasure.



Saviya Lopes

I used to know the
kitchen as a site of
gathering...
but now I also know it
as a site of invisible
labour 2025

Oil on Linen Canvas
48 x 36 inches



This work renders the kitchen in vivid, almost overwhelming detail: stacked utensils, half-cut vegetables, empty vessel on stove, scattered spices, dirty cups, and a stained cloth draped over the sink. At first glance, the scene radiates abundance; as if recalling the kitchen as a site of gathering, nourishment, and celebration. Yet, situated within this apparent plenitude is the unrelenting presence of invisible labour. Every pot to be scrubbed, every ingredient to be chopped, or every cup out of place, gestures to the body's exhaustion. Its repetitive, unacknowledged movements that sustain domestic life but remain absent from recognition.

The painting insists on seeing what is usually unseen: the weight of emotional labour within the kitchen. The warmth of feeding, the patience of care, the attentiveness to others' needs; all of these circulate here as silent demands are placed on women's bodies and, in many homes, the bodies of domestic workers whose labour is naturalized into the background. What appears as disorder is in fact the trace of constant effort, an economy of care where presence is measured through depletion.

By staging the kitchen in a state of abundance and disorder, the painting refuses nostalgic idealization. It wants to confront the viewers with the kitchen's duality: as a space of intimacy and togetherness, and as a theatre of invisible, undervalued work. In doing so, it tries to unravel the myth of domestic harmony and asks us to reckon with the structures that render this labour unseen: gendered expectations, class hierarchies, and cultural narratives that assign value to care while refusing to acknowledge its costs.

"I used to know the kitchen as a site of gathering, but now I know it as a site of invisible labour" becomes both testimony and critique. It mourns the erasure of labour from memory while reclaiming the kitchen as a space that must be re-read. Not as a neutral backdrop to domestic life but as an archive of bodies, gestures, and histories of care that demand recognition.



**I used to know them through books...
But now I see them alive (series)**



Saviya Lopes

संध्या काय चाललय?
/ What Are You Up To
These Days?

(L-R: Toni Morrison,
Babytai Kamble, Faith
Ringgold, Sojourner
Truth, Ismat Chughtai)
2025

Oil on Linen Canvas
60 x 36 inches



What Are You Up To These Days?/ सध्या काय चाललय? disrupts the canonical history of painting by placing women, not men, at the center of monumental representation. Instead of grandiose battles or mythic exploits, the canvas locates significance in gestures of care, intimacy, and collective survival. The figures : Toni Morrison, Savitribai Phule, Sojourner Truth, Faith Ringgold, and Ismat Chughtai inhabit a space of quiet solidarity: writing, sewing, harvesting, and sharing. These acts, seemingly ordinary, are charged with radical meaning. They articulate how women have continuously labored to imagine freedom, not only in public struggles but in the intimate terrains of craft, nurture, and storytelling.

The iconographies embedded in the scene re-signify familiar symbols: the pomegranate as both womb and offering of knowledge, the sunflower reclaimed from histories of plantation to become an emblem of self-love, the quilt as archive of intergenerational memory and desire, the black cat playing with a potato as a subtle critique of colonial impositions on women's lives and bodies. Together, these elements create a visual vocabulary of feminist resistance, where rest itself becomes a political act.

The everyday question of "What are you up to these days?/ सध्या काय चाललय?" grounds the painting in the language of encounter. It gestures simultaneously to ceaseless work and the urgent need for rest, exposing how these women have always carried the weight of transformation yet are rarely imagined in moments of pause. Here, solidarity is not abstract but embodied, woven into acts of making, tending, and being with one another. The work insists that such gestures are not marginal to history but central to reimagining it.



Saviya Lopes

या जेवायला / Come Eat
With Us

(L-R: Kadubai Kharat,
Mikki Kendall, Iron
Sharmila, Frida Kahlo,
Alice Walker) 2025

Oil on Linen Canvas

60 x 36 inches



Come Eat With Us / या जेवायला is a re-visioning of monumental painting that brings together Kadubai Kharat, Mikki Kendall, Irom Sharmila, Frida Kahlo, and Alice Walker into a shared scene of rest, nourishment, and conviviality. Joy and sustenance appear here not as incidental, but as essential forms of resistance, foregrounding care and leisure as integral to the political lives of women so often remembered only through their struggles. The composition interrupts the historical gaze that has cast women as passive subjects, repositioning them instead as agents who define their own presence through practices of solidarity.

Through its symbolic layering; the honey jar, pomegranates, bread, wine, and tea basket – the work gestures toward a cultural grammar in which representation, identity, and practice are inseparable. Iconographies traditionally dismissed as domestic or trivial acquire radical charge, recasting women’s labour and collective rituals as political signifiers. The act of Irom Sharmila being fed honey; marking the end of her fast against AFSPA, becomes both a document of history and a re-inscription of intimacy as a political force.

By refusing the epic form’s alignment with patriarchal histories of war and conquest, the painting reclaims monumentality to articulate an alternative narrative: one where women become legible not only as figures of sacrifice but also as creators of spaces for laughter, gossip, and replenishment. In resisting the tendency to reduce these women to singular symbols of resistance or suffering, the work expands their legacies to include tenderness, celebration, and everyday joy.

In this sense, Come Eat With Us / या जेवायला proposes a feminist grammar of monumentality: where care, sustenance, and collectivity are foregrounded as radical gestures, and where the invitation to “eat with us” becomes a political demand to reimagine the histories of painting, resistance, and togetherness.



Saviya Lopes

चला बसूया / Come,
Let's Sit Together

(L-R: Angela Davis,
Sojourner Truth,
Tarabai Shinde, Bama
Faustina) 2025

Oil on Linen Canvas
48 x 36 inches



In **चला बसूया / Come, Let's Sit Together**, four women: Angela Davis, Sojourner Truth, Tarabai Shinde, and Bama Faustina, who have gathered around a modest table, their presence transforming an ordinary evening into a site of political intimacy. Wine, fried fish, and laughter fill the room, where music and writing flow as naturally as conversation. One woman, seen from behind, and an empty chair extend an invitation to the viewer: to listen, to sit, to belong.

Through this gathering, the painting dismantles the patriarchal and colonial histories that have often confined women's images to domestic roles or symbolic muses. Here, the domestic space becomes a site of political imagination. A place where laughter, song, and writing coexist along with struggle and fatigue. The keffiyah draped on the window sill and the olive branch outside gesture toward solidarity across geographies; an acknowledgment that liberation is always collective.

The women may have gathered after a day of protest, labour, or loss or simply to speak, gossip, and be. In this ambiguity lies the strength of the work: it recognizes the political within the everyday. **"चला बसूया"**, a familiar phrase of invitation, becomes an anthem of belonging; an insistence that togetherness itself is revolutionary. Their gathering becomes a speculative feminist utopia. A space where dissent is nurtured through tenderness and storytelling. Writing, singing, and cooking are not separate acts, but interconnected expressions of survival and creativity. The painting attempts to challenge the patriarchal gaze that confines women's gatherings to domesticity or triviality, reclaiming gossip and leisure as acts of collective resistance.

चला बसूया / Come, Let's Sit Together transforms the ordinary into the monumental, reframing conversation, care, and rest as feminist acts of resistance. It envisions a world where women's gatherings, in all their tenderness and defiance, continue to shape the future: one shared meal, one song, one story at a time.



Saviya Lopes

छाती भरून आली / Chest
Is Full

(L-R: Nangeli, Audre
Lorde, Ana Mendieta)
2025

Oil on Linen Canvas
54 x 42 inches



"Chest Is Full/ छाती भरून आली" rigorously interrogates the intersection of corporeality, historical violence, and the politics of representation by situating Nangeli, Audre Lorde, and Ana Mendieta within the seemingly domestic yet charged space of the kitchen. The table, laden with coconuts, pomegranates, melons, milk bottles, a hot iron, Minne di Sant'Agata (a Sicilian pastry) and a breast pump, functions simultaneously as a site of nourishment, labor, and embodied memory, registering the material and affective histories that have constrained and defined women's bodies. The hot iron recalls the violent imposition of bodily discipline; flattening breasts as a mechanism of erasure. While the presence of St. Agatha, alongside a breast imprint resembling a praying mantis's gaze, beside artifacts such as a wall hung sculpture of breasts and a blouse, underscores the enduring surveillance and codification of female corporeal expression.

Through the orchestrated gestures of these figures; Ana's drawing, Nangeli's coconut cutting or Audre's contemplative writing, the painting articulates a radical reclamation of bodily agency, situating care, labor, grief, desire, and creativity as mutually constitutive forces. The titular declaration, "Chest Is Full/ छाती भरून आली", functions as both affective and political lexicon: it simultaneously indexes the weight of emotional labor, intergenerational grief, joy, pride, and the burden of cultural representation, revealing the body as a repository of historical and ongoing struggles.

The work destabilizes traditional visual regimes by refusing the male gaze and canonical hierarchies of heroism, instead asserting that women's intimate, domestic, and creative labor constitutes a monumental register of meaning. Intersectionality is encoded not merely as content but as structural logic: the painting articulates how race, gender, labor, and embodiment converge, resisting reductive readings and exposing the complex semiotics of power. In doing so, it reframes the quotidian as revolutionary, the domestic as political, and fullness of the chest as an emblem of persistent, embodied resistance: a radical archive of memory, care, and creative labor across temporal and spatial terrains.



Saviya Lopes

एकता बाजार / Street of
Solidarity

(L-R: Sant Soyarabai,
Urmila Pawar,
Artemisia Gentileschi,
Tarana Burke) 2025

Oil on Linen Canvas

54 x 42 inches



In “एकता बाजार / Street of Solidarity”, four women from different geographies and temporalities: Sant Soyarabai, Urmila Pawar, Artemisia Gentileschi, and Tarana Burke gather in a shared marketplace, imagined as a utopian site of resistance and kinship. Here, the street becomes a metaphor for solidarity, an intersection of stories, struggles, and gestures that have shaped feminist histories across time.

Soyarabai, seated on the ground with her ektara, sings of spiritual equality and caste emancipation. Her song reverberates through the space, grounding the scene in the rhythm of everyday resistance. Urmila Pawar, carrying books, embodies the written archive — the memory of Dalit women’s experiences preserved in narrative form. Artemisia Gentileschi, the painter once confined by patriarchal patronage, paints anew, though the subject of her canvas remains unseen, inviting speculation. Tarana Burke, standing beside her, writes Me too on a wall layered with flyers; a quiet yet powerful gesture of collective remembrance and solidarity.

In the painting, the women inhabit the market not as consumers but as creators, reclaiming a public space historically shaped by gendered labor and exchange. The marketplace, often feminized and trivialized in art history, here transforms into a living archive of resistance, where song, writing, painting, and protest coexist in a shared rhythm.

Street of Solidarity imagines what it means for women to encounter one another across centuries; to recognize their reflections in each other’s acts of defiance and care. It is a speculative geography of sisterhood, where differences in caste, race, and era collapse into collective purpose.

This painting redefines the epic. Not through war or conquest, but through gathering. It represents revolution in tenderness, intellect, and collaboration, suggesting that perhaps every great movement begins in places like these: over shared songs, open books, and walls waiting to be written on.



Saviya Lopes
फुलांचा गुच्छा / A
Bouquet of Flowers
(Phoolan Devi) 2025
Oil on Linen Canvas
30 x 42 inches



In फुलांचा गुच्छा / A Bouquet of Flowers, Phoolan Devi stands amidst a vast field of sunflowers; unarmed, radiant, and self-assured. Her stance, with hands on hips and a gaze that meets the viewer directly, reclaims the visual language of authority and presence so often denied to women. Once confined to narratives of violence and vengeance, Phoolan is reimagined here as a figure of tenderness and strength, her body no longer a site of spectacle but of survival.

The field of sunflowers becomes a feminist landscape. Each bloom echoing her gaze. The small praying mantis at her feet, almost imperceptible, gestures to a quiet, natural assertion of the female gaze; one that sees, guards, and survives. In this gesture, the painting resists the patriarchal narrative that frames women's anger as chaos rather than consequence.

It refuses the familiar image of the distressed or idealized woman, instead offering a vision of joy and reclamation. Through this act of re-seeing, Phoolan becomes both the subject and author of her own story — one that acknowledges the violence enacted upon her body but does not let that violence define her.

This re-visioning also intervenes in the politics of representation: the image becomes a site of cultural negotiation rather than replication. Phoolan's body, often scripted by caste, class, and gendered violence, here writes its own narrative. A refusal of erasure. Her smile is not naive; it is reclamation.

The painting acts as a counter-image — a refusal to aestheticize trauma and instead to celebrate survival. The sunflowers, in their insistence on light, hold the memory of darkness without being consumed by it. This is a story that resists the "single story" — the narrow lens through which women like Phoolan are often remembered.

फुलांचा गुच्छा is an offering to Phoolan, and to all those women whose histories have been written through erasure. The sunflowers bloom as witnesses of resilience and collective hope, transforming the visual archive from weapon to warmth, from resistance to radiance, from object to the origin.



Saviya Lopes

I used to know
pomegranate as a fruit,
but now I also know it as
labour (soft sculpture)

Velvet, fabric scraps,
embroidery, assorted
embellishments

12 x 4 x 4 inches



This work considers the pomegranate not merely as a fruit but as a site of labour: textual, emotional, and embodied. Crafted from velvet and reclaimed fabric, its form is soft, almost tender, yet its surface glimmers with the density of hand-sewn embellishment. Each bead, thread, and texture marks time: hours of attention, patience, repetition. It is a labour that is often unseen, dismissed as decorative, feminine, or domestic. Yet it is precisely through such labour that memory and care are preserved.

Traditionally associated with fertility and abundance, the pomegranate's symbolic generosity obscures the labour required to access it. The act of extracting its seeds becomes a metaphor for forms of care, maintenance, and emotional labour that are routinely undervalued. By foregrounding the material accumulation of touch, repetition, and time, the sculpture reframes domestic making as a site of knowledge and endurance. The fruit here is not simply consumed or admired; it registers the persistent and often invisible work that underpins nourishment, intimacy, and collective life.

In this sense, the pomegranate becomes an archive of labouring bodies. Particularly those whose work is absorbed into daily life without acknowledgement. The soft sculpture's tactile surface invites reflection on how value is assigned, who performs care, and how certain forms of labour are naturalized into silence. It gestures towards a broader feminist re-reading of material culture, where the domestic is not peripheral but central to understanding how societies are sustained, remembered, and reproduced.



erasure is an old violence.

Saviya Lopes

**आठवण/Remembrance
2025**

Archival pigment ink on
cotton Muslin

36 x 72 inches



आठवण / Remembrance unfolds as a meditation on erasure, silence, and endurance. The plain muslin fabric, modest and unadorned, becomes a vessel of remembrance; a skin that bears the weight of what has been muted across generations. Near its lower edge, the phrase “erasure is an old violence” stands as a quiet declaration that remembers what history has tried to forget.

The choice of muslin is intentional: it carries the residue of labour, colonial extraction, and women’s domestic work. Once woven by hand, it now becomes a surface of inscription, holding within its weave the tensions between visibility and disappearance. The text, sparse and restrained, unsettles the illusion of neutrality. The work functions as both a warning and a witness, asserting that memory is fragile not because it fades, but because it is silenced.

In reclaiming the language of fabric and domestic labour, आठवण / Remembrance transforms softness into critique. It reminds us that tenderness, repetition, and repair are not merely gestures of care, but radical methods of survival against historical amnesia



Saviya Lopes
Let There Be Hope

**THOU SHALT BE
HEALED**
(Set of three quilts)
Organza Fabric
36 x 48 in



Saviya Lopes
Let There Be Warmth

**THOU SHALT BE
HEALED**
(Set of three quilts)
Organza Fabric
36 x 48 in



Saviya Lopes

Let There Be Light

**THOU SHALT BE
HEALED**

(Set of three quilts)

Organza Fabric

36 x 48 in



Throughout history, gender discrimination has relegated women to subordinate roles, often silencing them within dominant societal structures. Yet, women were never truly voiceless, they cultivated their own means of expression, crafting a language beyond words. This language found form in quilts, a medium akin to a mother tongue; one that carries memory, communicates resilience, and asserts identity.

Here, quilting transcends its domestic origins, emerging as a powerful tool for storytelling, activism, and resistance. The quilts of *Thou Shalt Be Healed* explore the emotional labor induced in sewing and stitching, transforming the fabric into vessels of refuge, warmth, and protection. These works function as living archives, blending personal narratives with collective histories, challenging traditional hierarchies of art and craft.

By incorporating material memory, abstraction, and conceptual layering, the act of quilting speaks to themes of care, trauma, and survival. It moves beyond functionality to engage with socio-political discourse, reclaiming marginalized voices and recontextualizing labor as an act of radical agency. The stitched surfaces of these works speak of hope, light, and comfort; all metaphors for self-empowerment, courage, and trust. Through the work, quilting extends beyond craft; it becomes an act of resistance, a testimony to care, and a reclamation of agency in contemporary art.



Saviya Lopes

The Land and the Body

Will Not Forget ينسيان لن

والجسد الأرض 2025

Acrylic on Canvas

(Reprinted here on

Archival Hannaemulle
paper)

102 x 118 cm



The land breathes through the body, as if every cell were a vein bound to the soil, carrying within it the memory of thousands of years. From the depths of the land, a tree emerges - a buried tear, a hidden pulse. Its branches do not reach toward the sky but toward memory, toward what still lives in the veins of remembrance, toward every story buried in the land that never died. Soil and body intertwine, winding together between loss and belonging, until the land becomes living skin, trembling beneath the weight of bodies that fought to remain.

Loss continues, yet the dream cannot be killed. Memory becomes a sleepless bird, flies above the land, weaving the dream of resilience upon its wings, reviving everybody that gave its spirit to the homeland, every shadow that did not fade, every tear that has fallen. Here, nothing disappears - not the soil, nor the shadow, nor the trembling of the body. Everything lives, breathes, resists, and insists on remaining, whispering the secrets of land and sky, of the unseen and the known, of being and return.

الأرض والجسد لن ينسيان

٢٠٢٥

اكر اليك على قماش

سم ١٠٢*١١٨

تتنفس الأرض عبر الجسد، كأن كل خلية منه شرياناً متصلاً بالتراب، حاملة ذاكرة آلاف الأعوام
تنبثق الشجرة من أعماق الأرض، كصرخة دفينة، كنبيض خفي، تمتد أغصانها لا نحو السماء، بل نحو
الذكرى، نحو ما زال حياً في عروق الذاكرة، نحو كل قصة دُفنت في الأرض وبقيت تنبض بالحياة
التراب والجسد يتشابكان، يلتقان معاً بين الفقد والانتماء، فتغزو الأرض جلدًا حياً، يرتجف تحت ثقل
الأجساد التي قاومت لتبقى
يستمرّ الفقد، لكنّ الحلم لا يُقتل، فالذاكرة طائرٌ بلا نوم، يُحلق فوق الأرض، ناسجاً على جناحيه حلم
الصمود، يُحيي كلّ الأجساد التي وهبت روحها للوطن، كلّ الظلال التي لم تتلاش، كلّ الدموع التي
سالت.

هنا، لا شيء يزول: لا التراب، ولا الظلّ، ولا ارتعاش الجسد

كلّ شيء حيّ يتنفس، يقاوم، ويصرّ على البقاء، هامساً بأسرار الأرض والسماء، بما يرى وما لا
يرى، بالوجود والعودة



Reem Masri is a Palestinian visual artist born in Jerusalem in 1991. Her work explores the delicate interplay between land, memory, and self-identity. Through processes of deconstruction and reconstruction, Masri traces the complex ties between the natural landscape and human experience, moving between the visible and invisible, the constant and the transient. Working across multiple mediums—including writing, painting, and installation—she creates immersive environments that evoke both personal and collective memory.

Rooted in the Palestinian experience, Masri's practice invites viewers to reflect on their own connections to land and identity. Her art contemplates how the landscape shapes—and is shaped by—emotions, histories, and memories, revealing the profound ways in which our ties to place inform our sense of self, our resilience, and our shared community.

Reem Masri

ريم مصري فنانة بصرية فلسطينية وُلدت في القدس عام 1991. تستكشف أعمالها التفاعل الدقيق بين الأرض والذاكرة والهوية الذاتية. ومن خلال عمليات التفكير وإعادة البناء، تتنوع مصري الروابط المعقدة بين المشهد الطبيعي والتجربة الإنسانية، متنقلة بين المرئي وغير المرئي، الثابت والمتغير. تعمل عبر وسائط متعددة تشمل الكتابة والرسم والتركيب، لتخلق بيئات غامرة تستحضر الذاكرة الشخصية والجمعية على حدّ سواء.

تنطلق ممارسة مصري من التجربة الفلسطينية، لتدعو المتلقي إلى التأمل في علاقته الخاصة مع الأرض والهوية. يتأمل فنّها في الكيفية التي يشكّل بها المشهد الطبيعي المشاعر والتاريخ والذكريات، وكيف يتشكل هو بدوره بها، كاشفاً عن العمق الذي تربط فيه علاقتنا بالمكان إحساسنا بالذات، وبالصمود، وبالمجتمع المشترك الذي ننتمي إليه.

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