

Bangalore Flat

2 – 12 November 2019

at Home Sweet Home, Bangalore, India

with Rubén Grilo, Vijay Masharani, KRM Mooney, Sreshta Rit Premnath, and Andrew Norman Wilson

Curated by Joseph Lubitz

I haven't been to Chinar's apartment in Bangalore yet, where she hosts some of the exhibitions for her project Home Sweet Home. From images she has sent me, I know her place has a covered, tiled balcony, and from it you can see the various antennas and rooftop hot water heaters of other buildings, as well as the tops of trees, including a solitary palm. Its interior is a contrast between the shiny polished look of the black floor and the simple white walls. The sparse furnishings—a low pipe bedframe painted white, a hanging woven room divider and curtains, a desk, table, chairs, refrigerator, gas cooktop, and a flat screen for her mother to watch television when she visits—give the general impression of an airy and tidy studio apartment.

Seeing these images of Chinar's flat from New York as a series of email attachments immediately brings to mind the feeling of looking (desperately at times, or aspirationally at others) for an apartment. Clicking through however many images of interrupted interiors, small details or architectural impressions suggest something specific, one after another. I also think of all the Airbnbs I have booked for work and travel, and the precarities of this model of living and working. This apartment in the Silicon Valley of India marks one specific site in the correspondence between me, Chinar, and the participating artists over the past several months and longer. Through their own economies, each work manifests the constraints of travel, distance, material, and otherwise, that define the show.

I am traveling with Rubén Grilo and KRM Mooney's works in my suitcase; the rest are digital files on a thumb drive or in my email. Mooney's piece, which fits neatly in the bottom of my suitcase, is a framed Risograph print, on newsprint, of a small cropped section of a larger spectrogram. The audio source for the spectrogram is from a field recording, that is then rendered visually by an automated software process, compressing some strategies of Mooney's site-specific sculptural practice into a travel-specific, print edition. Rubén sent me a box of three of his denim "skins." For these pieces, raw denim is cut and shaved by laser-washing, a technology that connects Spain's fast fashion corporations with Bangalore's tech and textile sectors. Now, far from the jeans of 18th Century American industrial laborers, this laser-washed denim is the product of computer modeling processes. Three dimensions are rendered flat, and a lack of wear or use produces the appearance of having been worn. When I get to Bangalore, we will hang these works with readymade home decor frames for the show.

Andrew Norman Wilson sent me a video that zooms into a series of 3-D fractal spaces designed by a parafictional group of former artists. These are environments of pure aesthetic bliss into which our minds will soon be uploaded, thereby liberated from the troublesome politics of our fleshly realities. Sreshta Rit Premnath's video, on the other hand, captures a different scene of habitation. *Sleeping Dogs* is a sequence of long, static shots, each capturing—without zoom, pan, fade, or other camera movement—street dogs sleeping in Kathmandu. The status of these city dwellers, beneath citizenship, depicts a contingent and vulnerable relation to urban space that contrasts the imagined digital frontiers of a Californian ideology.

Vijay Masharani handed me two thumb drives, each loaded with a new track created for this exhibition using Ableton Live. The title of one the tracks, "India Song," references the 1975 Marguerite Duras film and samples its eponymous moody overture. Shot exclusively on a French estate, the cinematic aura of the imagined setting is achieved through Foley sound, exotic birdsongs, and the rustling of jade foliage—an audio-visual texture that functions as a simple theatrical backdrop. Vijay re-uses the title, bringing Duras to India as a sample in a song evoking the style of laptop Hip Hop beats that circulate globally on music sharing platforms. While the tracks are meant to be listened to at high volume on headphones, the sound might also bleed beyond the confines of a solitary, over-the-ear experience, permeating the scene at Chinar's place.

Special thanks to Chinar Shah for inviting me to come back to Bangalore, to Sarasija Subramanian for her hospitality, to Sanjana Iyer for helping me with all aspects of the exhibition, and most of all, to the artists for thinking through this opportunity with me.