

JHAVERI CONTEMPORARY

Simryn Gill: Soft Tissue

16 January—2 March 2019

Soft Tissue is Simryn Gill's third exhibition at the gallery. It will show three works, *Naga Doodles*, *Punch Drunk* and *Weeds of my parents' garden*, made in three very different materials and methods. Each work is a record of negative spaces and non-things from the vicinity of Gill's homes in Port Dickson, Malaysia and Sydney, Australia.

Naga Doodles are a group of more than 70 relief prints, made over a two-month period in 2017, directly from the bodies of snakes that Gill found run over, and brought back to her studio. She inked the carcasses with etching inks, using rollers, and then took the impression of the animals onto a variety of papers, on occasion drawing blood and bodily fluids along with the inks.

Punch Drunk is a group of plaster casts made last year, by pouring casting plaster into the hollow inner chambers of fruit and vegetables – pumpkins, melons, papayas – and allowing the still-liquid material to settle into empty crevices and nooks inside the fruit. To clean the cast plaster, Gill enlisted the help of birds and insects, who pecked at seeds and excavated for the bits of pulp caught in the ridges and gullies in the forms, before doing the final cleaning herself. These sculptures are shown on a table finished in blackboard paint, a surface on which they become reminders of sticks of chalk – they are after all more or less the same material, compounds of calcium – that might teach the attentive viewer the inner workings of vegetables, and the methods of human-animal-microbe-plant collaborations.

Weeds of my parents' garden are photographs, in colour and black-and-white, of weeds in the garden of Gill's childhood home. Another instance of her longstanding activity of recording detritus and unwanted things on film, these photographs unexpectedly echo the styles and compositions in amateur photography magazines from the Fifties and Sixties, like those belonging to her father and still kept in the library of that home. The choice of paper and processing methods give the photos the colour and tonal range of these offset magazine pages, in spite of Gill's photographs being traditional darkroom prints. 'The old chasing the older' might be a way to describe the final result: one obsolete process trying to look like another.

As an artist, Gill has refused to be pinned down to a single medium or process, be it photography, drawing, different kinds of print-making, or working with found objects. Her work has often incorporated her own writing and reading, and the making (and unmaking) of books that combine text and image. She has also consistently absorbed and assimilated the forms and substances of flora and fauna in her work, not only confounding the binaries of art and nature, but also rendering rich and strange – and therefore inscrutably complicated – the relationships between the natural and the political, or the historical and the contemporary. For Gill, the de-familiarizing of what we take to be the organic through the labour of art or writing leads, seamlessly but reticently, to the question, as Kajri Jain writes in an essay on Gill, "of what it is to inhabit a place, given that she, like so many, has never been able to take location for granted."

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Simryn Gill was born in Singapore and presently lives in Port Dickson, Malaysia and Sydney, Australia. Gill's work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions, most recently at Kohta, Helsinki (2018), Lunds Konsthall (2017), Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent (2016), NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore (2015), Museum of Modern Art, New York (2014). Gill represented Australia at the Venice Biennale in a solo presentation in 2013. She has showed in documenta 12 and 13 (2007, 2012), and in biennales that include Sydney Biennale (2018) and Moscow Biennale (2013).

Public collections that hold Gill's work include Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Solomon R Guggenheim Museum in New York; The Getty Centre (LA), The Hammer Museum (LA), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in California; Centre Pompidou in Paris; Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki; Museum of Fine Arts in Ghent; Tate Modern in London; Art Gallery of New South Wales (Sydney), Art Gallery of South Australia (Adelaide), Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (Sydney), National Gallery of Australia (Canberra), Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art (Brisbane) in Australia; National Gallery Singapore and Singapore Art Museum; M+ in Hong Kong; Petronas Collection in Kuala Lumpur, and Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in New Delhi.

Aveek Sen will do a walkthrough of the exhibition at Jhaveri Contemporary on Saturday 19 January at 2.45 pm. For additional information and images, please contact info@jhavericontemporary.com