Day 3 | 20th December 2019 | Archives & Anti disciplinarity |Venkat Srinivasan | Ranjit Kandalgaonkar | Amitesh Grover | Moderator: Anuja Ghosalkar

Anuja Ghosalkar: - The panel this morning is titled: Archives and Anti-disciplinarity. The idea with the next one hour is to look at the role of the archive, to explain in brief— why and how we're thinking about it. For the last two and a half days, we've been talking about the document, and document not just as paper, but as sound, as gesture, as memory, as metaphor. And all of these documents are housed somewhere. And for now, that house is the archive— we want to talk about what happens when three different artistic practices encounter the archive. We have a research–engineer–archivist, Venkat. Then we have a visual–artist–researcher, Ranjit. And then, we have a performer–director, Amitesh. We want to examine the encounter of these three practitioners with the archive— whether the guarding the boundaries, disciplinary as well as otherwise, of the archive are critical. Or is that collapse imminent and even desirable? I would invite the archivist on the panel, Venkat to share his practice. The way this this panel is structured— each of them will present for about eight to 10 minutes. We then invite this interesting and unusual constellation of people to have a conversation with each other. After which we will open it up to the audience. I invite Venkat Srinivasan to start.

Venkat Srinivasan: - Thank you all for having me here. It's really nice to be introduced as an archivist. I've been faking it till I make it. It's always good to come to audiences where there are no archivists, to the best of my knowledge. If you're there, please don't raise your hands. But I did my time earlier this year, I did share a couple of these slides with archivists and it went fine. As Anuja mentioned, I work as an archivist at this point in my life, not trained as one, will talk about that later. In the next few minutes, I am just going to rally around this idea of the archives as Commons. I am going to try and lead up to this idea, it's very aspirational at this point, but hopefully we can get to that over the coming generation, right? Just a quick show of hands. Anybody seen this thing because I've been sharing this for the last two years? And I am shameless about repeating my slides. Fantastic. This is what I expected, there are enough people in the world. You are looking at what is an archival document at the archives of the National Center for Biological Sciences. It's a field note. It's a research note from a Biologist, an Ecologist named Ajit Kumar. And it has an ID attached to it. The ID as of 2019 is MA005-1-1-1, and this is what you would type in if you are a research scholar, put in the research data and this is what will be sent to you at your desk or online. It didn't have an ID of course, three years ago, it was almost lost three years ago. Were it not for the accidental moment between me and Ajit when I asked him, he's still alive—we take material from people who are alive. We asked him—do you have anything of interest for this archive that's coming up? He said, do you want this? I said, what is this? He said, field note. I said, okay, fine. Generally, since we had nothing I say yes to everything, and then figure out what to do with it later. I asked him, "What are you doing here"?

He said he is studying the population of tree living mammals in the Annamalai hills in the Nigiris in the early 1980s when he was a PhD student. I was just nodding my head at this point, because I'm not an Ecologist and I am just thinking… okay, fine field note in my mental sort-of space. I'm thinking Ajit Kumar/research/field notes/Nigiris. I am just hierarchically thinking where it might go in the archives. But honestly, maybe you're seeing the same thing that I do, which is the perforations on the back of this note, I don't know if that's very visible to you from where you are. But these perforations, as it turns out, are Braille perforations. This is Braille paper. And so the question to Ajit in the conversation that we had— an oral history interview now intersecting with a document, two different kinds of archival sources—– Ajit why on earth are you writing on Braille paper? You know, it's the one thing that you do not do with Braille, you touch it, you sort of, you know, interpret it, you know, in a sort of a tactile way. And Ajit's a very nonchalant sort of person. And he says, well, you know, I was a starving graduate student in the early 80s. And I needed good non-blotting paper. And it turns out that a colleague of his happened to be blind, and happened to be devout, we think, because he had a copy of the Bible in Braille. And so Ajit and his colleagues, who are all in this field side, looking for non-blotting paper, asked *said* colleague, you know, where do you get this Braille Bible from? And this person said they there was a church in the United States, which had sent this Bible to this colleague. And so Ajit and colleagues again, you know, desperate for non-blotting paper did what you think they did— which was reach out to this church and ask for the Bible. And sure enough the Church in the United States thinking they've finally found like, a stronghold of potential converts sent many, many copies of the Bible. Once they sent it, they did not stop! And so these guys got paper for shelf lining for field notes for everything. I mean, I do want to clarify, I feel like I should clarify this these days, that I mean no disrespect to the church. In fact, I think they should give me a commission, because I have been evangelizing for them non-stop for the last two years. Ajit is a rock star really in the archive sort of circles. But I wanted to share this with you, because I think this is something that we're talking about in terms of layers of interpretation around material that this document— which did not even have a chance of entering the traditional archive three years ago— suddenly speaks to us, not just about the history of the tree living mammals in the Annamalai hills, but it's also a story of evangelism. It is the story of resourcefulness in research. It is a story of a particular church in United States that I'm desperately trying to find the name of right now. And it is also, of course, the story of non-blotting paper if you're a material scientist as I was in a previous life. So there are ways in which you just keep looking at these layers. And in many ways, it doesn't matter if an archive doesn't have a million objects. It has the hundreds of stories in each object. And what we try and teach our students is to have that critical thinking, to just keep looking at it and look for those layers, because it's always there. And it's overwhelming. Right? So this connects, I think, quite well to the brief that Kai and Anuja had put out, which is the idea of the in-between. And I think of? Margaret Atwood's quotation here from *Alias Grace*, which I use because Atwood is in vogue. But really to think about the idea of the story not being a story till you tell it to someone else. There is always a certain sort of roaring, a blindness. It's only afterwards when you start connecting the dots when it starts to become like a story when you look for the pattern in the data. And I think that's what we as archivists

are trying to do all the time that. We're trying to constantly enable people to find patterns in the data to construct narratives, knowing there will be many, many narratives that will come out of it. So our job primarily is as the secondary meaning makers. The primary meaning makers, of course, are the people who collect the material. So we'll talk about curation and archives a little later.

So I'll skip this but just I mean, what I'm going to do is I'm just going to walk you through a few of our sort of philosophical constructs as we build a very new archive. We're only nine months old. In the greater scheme of the world of the archives, this is, you know, pre-infancy, I don't know what it's called. Right? So very, very simple ideas that, you know, when we look for a certain diversity in what we collect, we have a lot of luxury, you know, we can actually open up anything. So it's an archive for the History of contemporary Biology. But we use these frameworks. So we say every story has many people, every person has many stories. Every single object in the archive has many interpretations. And this ends up being a very loose, what I would call an acquisition or an accession sort of policy in the archive. I mean, there are very detailed policies, but this is useful to share with students because nobody reads long documents anymore. So if you take nothing else away, these are the sort of things that we highlight for the archives that you know. Our purpose as an archive is to enable a diversity of stories, and it is to eliminate context and process. This is it, this is the entire presentation. So everything that we do is in service of these two sentences. It's a little bit like the old NCERT textbooks which had the Gandhi talisman. So this is our talisman that, you know, whenever we look at an object we ask ourselves: is what I am doing enabling a diversity of stories? If it is, then it goes in[to] the archive. If it isn't, we think again, right? This is the only slide about the archives that the NCBS, you can look up the website later.

It's a very slow site. We're working on it. But it's a space for the history of contemporary biology in India. It's a thematic archive, contemporary is 200 years biology from today in a very broad sense of the word. I'll tell you a little bit about kind of crazy collections we've been starting to receive. And India, broadly South Asia, there are no nation state boundaries issues here. There are two structures that I want to, sort of, focus on here, right? When we think about the position of the archives we have to consider its relation to time and space. And these are questions that we have to ask ourselves over and over again, because these will dictate the form and the content of the archive 100 years from today. And there are these questions a bit— where does the archive really begin? Where does it reside? Where does the story begin? Where does the archive end? Does it ever end? Is there a point when you start moving beyond this construct? Right? I think the more important questions connected to this, then, are these questions of representation. And I know someone in the audience does not like that word. So this question of whose material enters the archive, for whom does the archive exist? Who's building it? Who's describing it? When does curation become the archive? These are questions that we have to ask ourselves over and over again. And keep in mind that these are only questions that we have the luxury to ask, because we are starting from nothing. And we are building a thematic archive. If we were building an institutional archive, these questions may not be available to us in as broader sense of this, as I'm sharing with

3

you. And so I realize that not every archive can ask these questions. Very often, they have limitations around what they can do. So I'll come back to this question of archives and time, and, you know, we talked about this very briefly, I shared this question with Kiran yesterday in his presentation about the origin of the word. So this was a fun exercise for us. We looked at, you know, within India, I just took the currency note. And I decided, let's look at the word archive in all the languages represented in the currency and also some other languages that we could find. Turns out, this is not an easy problem to solve. It's very hard to find the word archive. So there's this question of what came first, the meaning or the word, you know, is I think very much resonant in the word archive. And Derrida has talked about this endlessly, of course, I won't go there too much. I'll talk about a little bit. But the word archive means many, many different things in Indian languages. In Tamil, for instance, the word largely means a space for documents, not necessarily old, etymologically speaking. In Urdu, it's *muhafizzkhana* so it's a beautiful construct of, you know, a space for precious objects to the best of my understanding. But not necessarily documents so it opens up the landscape. In most Devnagri scripts, it's *purabilekhaghar*, as it is in Goa. Anyone not visited the state archives here, please visit it. It's an extraordinary space. *Purabilekh*, you know space for old letters in a sense, right? So, but this is very, very different. I mean the word archives of course, at least historically, you know, the English, to the best of my knowledge, got it from Latin; Latin, got it from… no, French got it from Latin; Latin got it from Greek, to the best of what I remember; and the Greeks, of course, the idea of the *arkon*, the people who are sort of chief record keepers to the best of my knowledge. And of course, there is hence, the word archives, and anarchy, monarchy, architect, hierarchy, and, of course, archipelago. But also this other question of you know, it doesn't mean commencement, is it *archaea*? Is it *archaos*, hence archaeology? Or is it the word *archae* in Latin which is safekeeping? I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing these words right.

But honestly, I think it's useful for us to sweep away all of this for a moment. And just think of the archives as being in the middle of a story, the in between space. It is the space between data and meaning over and over again, over and over again, and make this a little messier. I want to just give you this heuristic of where the archive is placed. There is a certain linearity that we think around the place of the archive, from archive comes meaning, comes interpretation. But I'd like to sort of circle it out and say that every archival object, of course, to state the obvious, comes from a variety of stories. There's no way around that either. So if we, at least, positioned the archive as being part of this very messy circle, where the archive was just responding to the objects of the past from which some things have come through. So the word archive can mean many things in different spaces. I'll just be very open about this idea simply to say that, even though I'm part of a space that is a traditional archive, there are very, very different forms of the word archive, there is my favorite form of the archive is the Burning Man archive of today, which is the Snapchat, Instagram sort of phenomenon. And of course there are, you know, a variety of CCTV cameras around this campus out of which I don't know how much of that data will actually enter an archive. So I think there are questions that we need to ask ourselves about what really enters the archive? Who's defining the process here? There are archives

of people who are disappeared. We talked about this, I think in Rustom's talk a couple of days ago, maybe it was a different talk, around the idea of archives looking at disappeared people from Kashmir. So these are archives that are responding to gaps in the traditional archive. You know, it very much aligns with Kundera's statement in *Book of Laughter and Forgetting* and, I see that statement about forgetting in the back, about a nation that cannot cross a desert of organized forgetting that eventually the archives will be the space for distortion. So there is some way in which we need to think about that position of the archive, that eventually it will be the space because it is the one space that is left that people take for granted and do not question its veracity. And so it's useful to just think about that position.

I'll just wrap up with this to say that as we go forward, our intent is to build a mosaic archive in a climate of othering. To think about digital preservation, in a climate of internet shutdowns, you know, a climate when we having to start to think of an inverter for the internet. And to look at decentralized meaning-making in a climate of propaganda, I think an archive has to think about these three things over and over again. Creation, preservation, access to diverse forms, is what I think we need to work towards. And that's generally something that we're trying to do and I can talk about that in the Q&A. Yeah, okay. I'll wrap up with this physical space because that will segue into Ranjit's conversation.

So just a quick sort of plugin for the archives at NCBS. We're a tiny little space in Bangalore. Please come, we're not that far from the airport so you can escape the traffic. This is a drawing that was done by a student. We work with students from about 15 disciplines. So far we've had 45 students in the last two years, they have been fantastic. I think we've learned more from them than they have from us honestly. And we use it as a space to do anything that you want. Of course, there are people who come and do research, but we've had it as what I call a co-working space without coffee. We don't have any liquids. We have an exhibition space. So the artists amongst you please keep a lookout for a call that we will put out in March for an exhibition that will open in October. The theme broadly will be silence in the archives and you make off it what you want. We just request that you use one object from the archives at NCBS, everything else you source from anywhere else in the world and we will try and get your permissions. If you're in Bangalore in the next month come we have an exhibition opening in February looking at 17th century meaning-making between India and Europe, which is why I was at the State Archives a couple of days ago.

And I think I should just wrap up on a slightly hopeful note. You know, when we think about archival objects, we kind of forget the sheer unlikeliness of it even reaching. And for us to be able to read it. I had the privilege of looking at something that was about 450 years old in the state archives a couple of days ago. And I keep coming back to this line that the poet Szymbroska mentioned in her Nobel lecture. She said, "the world, whatever we might think of this measureless theater to which we've got reserved tickets, but tickets whose lifespan is laughably short, bounded as it is by

two arbitrary dates, whatever we might think of this world, it is astonishing". So I just hope you remember this as we go forward. Thank you.

Ranjit Kandalgaonkar: - I am going to read from my notes otherwise I won't end up saying anything that I wanted to. I am an artist and researcher and I am based in Mumbai, and have a very research intensive practice. And lot of my projects are long term, they take between five, seven, eight, 10 years sometimes, and so I have to do all of them simultaneously. One of the first thing that I was doing was this project with a couple of architects on inner city, Bombay— looking at mixed housing, and documenting what was happening within those spaces. And it's a project called *Gentricity*. I am actually going to be talking about these two projects– *Isle's Amidst Reclamation* and *Stories of Philanthropic Trusts*. And the reason why I have shown all these four images, because they are actually projects that went into the archive, thinking that I'll be working on stories of trusts, but then I ended up getting three, working on three other projects based on other material that I kept coming across.

The stories of philanthropic trusts is basically a long term project looking at like institutional trusts that were operating in 19th century in Mumbai. And I went to charity commissioner's office. And suddenly my project became about looking at 12,000 trusts that were operating between 1820 to about 1915. And I've only managed to look at around 5000. This project is *Gentricity*. It was a collaborative project alongside two architects where we attempted to document existing build forms occupations, land use existing within crevices of ambiguities, and modes of survival within older buildings. So whose upkeep was affected by rent control act. The state government approached an architecture college to do a review on inner city areas, and two of the members from that team could not represent everything within the project report. So they invited me— we formed a collective and we started making paintings about the kind of tenancies, the sub tenancies, the living conditions within those spaces. And the reason why I'm showing you the example of this project is because while walking around Bombay, within that space looking at this project, I started coming across trusts, you know, like spaces, which we sometimes could access, sometimes could not access. So it was suddenly this kind of, almost this barrier that kept forming. This painting is called *Boy in Balcony*, it's made actually by two architects and myself. Half of it has been painted by an architect and then I started, it was a kind of a very democratic process where it's like, "Ranjit can paint pipes and he can draw people. So let's give him that." We literally started working on each other's canvases and we had a very strange kind of process, even if it's my drawing, but I don't get to put anything on it till all three of us agree. So we worked on about 10 images, and we did this with the *Majlis* fellowship. So we were the last people. So while walking through a whole bunch of spaces, this is one of those kind of buildings. So I just wanted to show, give you a sense of the trust form, right, as space. So this is called, I can't remember it's called… the monkey temple in the area. It's in Kalbadevi. In Kalbadevi area, basically you will find about 250 temples, sometimes it's in a room, sometimes on the side of the road, next to the *chaiwalla*, between two *phluwallas.* So it's this crazy space—this was very interesting because they have an inner sanctum space. So there's always this kind of inner courtyard area. And this photo is something I gleaned off the net. And this is

the one, one on the left is the one which I took. But I took that photo in 2009. And I wanted to also give you a sense of the space so zoomed out, that's the density of the inner-city areas, which is A, B, C, D, E ward of Bombay, which is still South Bombay, specifically because that's the old quarter, old town. And I wanted to give you also a sense through the street level. So you see the density of the street as well as the buildings. And so a lot of these trusts, lot of these philanthropic trusts have kind of a door or gateway or *dwar*. So the one on the left is a Hindu trust, but it's a temple trust. And the one on the right is called Javer Bagh, it is a very interesting trust. It's a Ayurvedic trust, but half of it has become a *gaushala*. So there's a proper *gaushala* and a hall inside, as well as a temple and a Ayurvedic shop. And till about 50 years ago, there were Ayurvedic practitioners that were living there on rent, but they're not there anymore. So if you go in the problem about the site is that you cannot gain access. People will stop you. And then they'll ask you what you're doing there. They're very protective. So this whole idea of the border and the internal courtyard within it. So architecturally, everything became part of the study, and then, mapping it against the whole idea of the trust list. Right? I'll just show you one more.

That's Umerkhadi jail, which has a TB clinic and a trust inside, which is on the right-hand side. So below is, I can't remember the name, it's a trust I think, in Umerkhadi itself. But there's a mosque in the quadrangle center, which you can see. It's protective in nature. The space completely changes, right? When you enter into it while there's a busy street outside. I started making drawings that are also different representations of trusts. This is the manager's office. So sometimes you will have a trust that is just run with— he has a cell phone, chai, a folder, his mother's photo and like an *alamari*, right? And he's running a trust. There is no physical space for the trust. It's a trust that basically runs the bank accounts of 10 other trusts. That's the objective of the trust, right? This is a drawing that I did for a TB sanatoriums that were on the outskirts of the city. It was just a response, like a very abstract kind of thing. While talking to Anuja yesterday, she said also include some other drawings that I made initially, but they essentially didn't fit into the format of the project. You know, they were kind of becoming things unto themselves, rather than sticking to what I wanted to talk about the project. So the project was getting splintered. It was becoming about each image or each drawing. I wanted to kind of pull back on that I started making also these Ayurvedic trust images. So it says "my name is Rustomji-Pestonji and these are my grandchildren Ipikak and Bella Donna and say hello dikraas". So it's also this kind of response that happens with how Western medicine starts impeding into spaces such as the trusts and even discounting them bit by bit. It happens with leprosy. It happens with TB, it happens with all the big diseases, plague as well. And I had to, kind of, then spend one year studying leprosy in order to learn about public health trusts. And this is the image I made of JJ's ship, which burns. It may have been scuttled, and the opium fumes kind of become the portrait of JJ. But this idea of his entire philanthropic largesse that gets built on basically, in a sense out of opium, it's this kind of, you know, very fraught system. But the philanthropy that I want to study is the small businessman, the businessman that is on one street in Santa Cruz, where there's every hall, every road, every by-lane, every part and aspect of it that is named after him. But it's also done at just a community base. So collectively, for each community, it is still a form of living. That was a kind of a

drawing as a response to the connection between *gaushalas* and slaughterhouses, which doesn't get talked about, in a sense because they always maintain the balance and the *gaushalas* and the slaughterhouses, the owners, Hindu and Muslim were always friends, that kind of managed a balance. This is some of the work that goes into basically mapping. I started making the list with a vectorized map and marking out all the trusts from the charity commissioner's office. I spent all my years as an engineer, basically avoiding learning Excel. And then I am artist, and I had to learn Excel at the age of 35. Deeply humiliating. But then there are other forms of mapping— the map on the left is Dr. Carter, basically mapping leprosy cases. So I was just looking at different forms of representation for mapping space. And the one on the right is like this idea of embellishments, which are narratives on the edges of maps that kind of come into a map. That's an example of the charity commissioners listing, where you have the objective, you have the money, and I basically work with this list and built the series drawings. I'm going to skip this, these were things kind of strategies to deal with the immense amount of data that I was coming across. So it's basically happening at a city development phase and the charity commissioner's office lists it through space, but I wanted to do it through categories. So my main categories are animal welfare, rites and rituals of the dead, public health, social hygiene, education, migration and then unique typologies, that kind of the strange trusts.

I'll quickly tell you the types of drawings. I'm going to skip this because it's too long, and I know I'll take over Amitesh's time if I start talking about that. But that's the Panjapur trust, which is a 175 year old trust that was created by J.J and Motichand Amichand. It's in the middle of the city in Bhuleshwar. This is my second case study, which is the widow rehabilitation trust in Masjid— it's very interesting because this widow rehabilitation trust basically was 32 widows living in a building, each in one room, and, kind of, it's a very unique living topology, right? So that's a photo of that same trust in, I think, 1911. I know I can't remember the date when it was there but the photograph is given to me by the one of the widow's grand nephews. So anyway, so a lot of the project involves basically being within the archives as well as corroborating evidence. And so the first image that I showed you essentially, I started coming across so much information that was talking about land reclamation. So I literally had two projects that came out looking only at land reclamation and issues related to it. One project was this project called Isles Amidst Reclamation. So I started looking at when Bombay was seven islands, all the land, the reclamation that happened led to a lot of loss of flora and fauna due to land reclamation. I wanted to map that so I started making drawings and I got permission to basically show work within the state archives and the BNHS, the Natural History library. I installed work in both these archives and I exchanged information because usually, information only stays local to a particular library, right? I made work from information that I got from this library, but I installed it in the other one. And you had to do a walk through, this is whole politics about that because I wanted six archives or six spaces to walk through, but we only got permission for two. So I'll just quickly show you work for that. I reworked Flash Gordon panels to talk about ecology because in the Flash Gordon world, nature is winning, you know plants that attack you and forests, the scale is much larger. And then I made this notice, it says "Important Notice: Sea

Dugong washes up on shore". I used the letterhead of the archives, and I aged it and then I put it up there. And right now what ended up happening was that they never de-installed it. So it's been there for four years, it's kind of becoming part of the archive. And it's become as forgotten as every other part of the archive because I love the State Archives so much that I'm always going there and always telling them. This project was basically work made for researchers. So I made artworks there, I made these Flash Gordon drawings and then I put it on the rib of that partition. So you can basically slide it across, or you can switch it across. Because people are constantly kind of stacking piles of documents, so you need to move the artwork away or you can, I tried it also, you can actually. It even works well as a discus. So this was just some things to do with loss of flora and fauna, tigers that could be seen by train drivers at Byculla, Kalbadevi, the last leopard that was seen running through the streets. And this is a silhouette of basically a document that I found in 1760 of the Worli Sawmill Company that was just active for 60 years. They were just like these banal data entries, you know, of logistics. It's basically brab palm trees that have been cut for like 30 or 40 years. So this was the work that I installed there. I did these series of readings and I'll just end with this. I started hiding drawings in all the libraries and archives, and I also I put a note with it. That says "It doesn't belong to the archives. So please take it." And I just think the librarian has a whole list of drawings at home that they keep cleaning and finding. But I've been doing that since this project, I've been doing it for the last four years in all the libraries that I keep visiting.

Amitesh Grover: - Thank you Anuja, thank you Serendipity for inviting me here and also for this absolutely incredible and excellent panel. I hope my time hasn't started right now because gratitude has never been part of the archive. And so my time should start now. Thank you Ranjit for these excellent ideas, but I want to return to one of the ideas that Venkat mentioned in his presentation and I am quite struck by Venkat when you talk about the archive as being the middle of a story, and it intrigues me a lot. And I want to turn it around for my presentation. I think that every story somewhere in its middle has an archive and I'm going to start with a personal story.

In the summer of 1996, weeks before I turned 16, I was asked to go learn how to earn for myself. An uncle of mine had recently acquired a job at the Human Resource department of Bank of America. The company had inaugurated a swanky branch at Barakhamba Road in Delhi. The economic liberalisation, India had been set in motion in 1991, providing middle class homes reason for spontaneous urban wide celebrations and I grew up as a teenager seeing the celebrations. A New World Order was on the horizon, opening up the nation to private and foreign investment. Only a few had protested publicly. And I remember going to those protests as well. And even fewer privately, against the fact that these changes were dictated by the World Bank and the IMF as a condition for a 500 million dollar bailout to the Indian government to deal with the utter mismanagement of the Indian economy since independence and I think that my generation inherited a failed nation. Nehru's nation building project, one anchored in an original adaptation of socialism had been finally aborted. Our lives, and specially, my generation, we became the seismometer

since absorbing, recording, articulating the intensity of the seismic shift till today. Exactly two decades later, in 2016, I was invited on an art commission by the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in Delhi. K.N.M.A is the first private museum of art exhibiting modern and contemporary works from Indian subcontinent and sponsored by the Shiv Nadar foundation. Mr. Shiv Nadar, as we all know, is an Indian billionaire industrialist and philanthropist, the founder and chairman of H.C.L tech private limited, the biggest IT company in India. They have campuses across Delhi, Bangalore, Chennai, etc. Everybody's nodding in here, nodding we know the company.

Scathing critique has been produced about the circular and circumspect relation between surplus capital and the art market in the 21st century. But not nearly enough has been considered about the overlapping contours of the laboring body and the making of art. According to theorist Paulo Verno artistic performance is no longer unique to performers, dancers, musicians, but now dovetails the general condition of waged work. Verno writes, and I quote, "the affinity between the pianist and a waiter, which Marx had foreseen finds an unexpected confirmation in the epoch in which all wage labor has something in common with the performing artists". My artistic curiosity was fueled further when K.N.M.A decided to open the final exhibition of my works in the Noida museum. Itself housed inside the largest of six plots of H.C.L tech. Personal queries around art as occupation, work as art, how to occupy the site of work, occupying as an approach to art making now became extremely urgent for me. And I started asking myself, if it will be possible to dis-alienate dis-identify, introduce a new torque in the system, to communize it somehow, something that I was ill equipped to do as a teenage worker, two decades ago.

So under the auspices of an art commission, I approached H.C.L tech. Private Limited for a placement in their company. I was greatly helped by the then curator, Junior curator of the K.N.M.A Museum, Akanksha Rastogi and I also invited my studio collaborator at the time, Arnika Ahldag, to participate with me in the project. I proposed an employment contract, in which I declared the request for a job as an art project. I'd witness the rise of an entirely new demographic of people erupting countrywide. I'd witness the rise of Gurgaon as a first private city in India. As someone who belongs to that demographic, male in my 30's, having completed certificate courses in computers at colleges like N.I.I.T, I conceived of this art project as an exercise in occupational realism and embedded series of performance acts that somehow allow me to highlight the structure of social and political relations with all its ambiguities. I wanted to depict labor or laboring bodies, but not in the way in which we think of factory workers or industry workers. We have a new demographic of software workers. These are soft bodies with soft exploitation placed right next to the artist's body. I decided to adorn the artifice of a worker, dress as a subject of the company working for the company and yet somehow continue to pursue it as an artist. My intent was to appear as a worker to learn the work of computer engineers, to go to office every day to get wages, to perform. Now, you know, growing up around *mamas*, *chachas*, uncles who have inhabited the HR departments and have gotten rich in families, it was not difficult for me as an actor and a performer to play

this role. And I was waged in this project for six months. Six months, every morning I woke up, got dressed, went to the company, worked. And here in this picture, you can see me wearing this corporate outfit adorning an employee ID card, a camouflage I grew increasingly into as time passed, you know, the thing with actors we begin to like our roles so much that we cannot distinguish between what we inhabit and what we are outside of. Unlike the usual buzz at show openings, no welcome reception was planned on the joining day of this project. The project was open to the public— the 22,000 strong workforce employed at the company's site. The intent was to become indistinguishable from the others amongst whom I trained and worked for a period of six months. There's another photograph, me and there's Anika behind and this is in one of the departments that we were placed to learn this kind of work. These are shots of the campus that we inhabited, you can already see the geometric control over the geography, over the territory, over the S.E.Z plots of these companies. A contract is a document of relations between people. For a contract to be formed, we must reach mutual assent, a meeting of minds. Above is one of the pages of the regular contract of the company which outlines an all-encompassing corporeal and temporal ownership of bodies, production and data. So I'm going to read one point from this contract. Point number one item S states that: All notes, data, tapes, reference items, sketches, drawings, memoranda, records and other materials in any way relating to confidential information or otherwise to the company business shall belong exclusively to the company and this section is enforceable against my heirs, successors and all other__ ?. By being employed in the company, my entire family, my ancestors as well as my successive generations are implicit. It was imperative to reject the original contract and instead offer a counter contract. As artists we proposed an exchange, we follow the working routine suggested by the company in terms of the expected working hours, working protocols, access to canteen, biometric identification, maintenance of employee logs, etc etc. One of the maintenance of the logs was called the performance log. At the end of everyday, every employee was asked to fill how he or she performed in the company. All the tasks that were completed, the tasks that were not completed, and the employee was given a performance score at the end of each day, which then cumulatively affected the precarious nature of his or her salary at the end of the month. We said that we will not be obliged to explain, announce, communicate, signal or otherwise describe any part of our actions or gestures to anybody in our work environment in the production of this artistic data. We promise that all artistic data will be useless to the company. The day of joining, ironically for me, was akin to being back at the theater.

The induction day was held in a proxy theater hall with stage, theater lights and audience seating. The day's protagonist was the induction day expert who came on stage with a well-rehearsed script, split into neat scenes about the company, the dream and the journey ahead. I was equipped with ID cards, along with 80 other new employees taken through endless opportunities the company offered to its new aspirants. I was offered a new bank account, a new car loan, a new housing loan, a new apartment and options for schools for my children. The performer on stage was eager to be seen as a maker of my future. Induction day performers are regularly exposed to personality training through theater workshops to aid them in these

performances. Performing the company is serious business, an ordinary induction day expert initiates around 80 to 100 employees a day, an average of 4 induction days take place in the company on a weekly basis which adds up to 400 new employees being inducted every week, 1600 every month, 19000 employees every year. I asked if the expert ever experiences, face fatigue. He laughs it off and says that this is his dream job. He always wanted to be an actor and this role offers him the glamour he desired. We look each other. I, a performance-based artist acting as an employee, he an employee acting like a performer. I had to soon learn how to perform to be a good employee on the second day of my employment, I was given a good employee booklet. In which they stated how does one perform to be a good employee. I went through the literature and I started to publish my own booklet of how to perform like a good employee. Now I realize that pamphlets and targeted broadcasts based in print, works surprisingly well in sealed, cordoned off, hyper digitized spaces. In the third month of employment I began writing, designing and distributing a guide for sabotage for ordinary employees, especially for those who may not agree with their company's policies towards employees. I wanted to explore how a set of simple but unfamiliar instructions would read, be discussed, be circulated and be carried out within the company. Would this lead to a spontaneous choreography of sabotage? To destabilize the working of one afternoon? To stage disruptive actions? Let's sample one of a few of these performance instructions.

Collapse. Become indistinct or intentionally inverted. Oscillate between visibility and invisibility. Choose your moments, timing is of essence here. Persevere with useless tasks. Dig a hole, then cover it. Walk with purposeful circularity. Stare into your cubicle, into your laptop screen indefinitely. Now these are laptops that have been given to employees with face software installed in the cameras. So the software is tracking the eyes of the employees, logging the number of minutes that the employee is directly looking at the screen. The cursor that moves on the screen is also being recorded. *Take the elevator up. Then down for your entire work shift. Shift incessantly in your chair in a meeting at lunch, look nervous. Ask questions. Inquire needlessly. Pick out a detail and then obsess over it. Make duplicates when you can, as many as you can duplicate files, folders, parts of code, error, reports, emails, texts, encourage everybody around you to do the same. Make speeches. Talk as frequently as possible and at great length. Illustrate through abstraction.* Also the six months that I was there, a network of biometric identification with digital chip in my ID card, login notifications on the company laptop and a log of tasks served, kept marking the timestamp on the traces of my employed body. I am not expected to work in shifts, rather the time and the space of my work are extended indefinitely. I'm expected to be online, sometimes on site, other times off site, at different times of the day and night. Thousands of servers and server farms across the world are managed, repaired and maintained by my department. As the servers oscillate between uptime and downtime, I vacillate between service level agreements and escalation. Now S.L.A is part of the performance contract of an employee in which it outlines the amount of time in which an employee should be able to solve a problem, and, if that does not get achieved, the problem gets escalated and this direly affects the remuneration that the employee gets at the end of the day. I'm going to wrap up in a minute. And therefore, I started leaving traces of my body with placards in the

surveillance system of the company and started asking for these screen grabs from the company headquarters on the pretext of one reason or another. And then started producing them as photographic documents of my time in the company.

Okay to wrap up, I performed well, I did not get fired through the six months, I performed well, I failed to produce a single moment of productive labor. I was there every day for six months performing to know with an outfit, a posture and ID card, which I called "softwear". The employees that I met every day were part of this battle station that is performance today. Performance is an urgent claim. Capital claims it as resource for extraction. Technology enables frameworks within which it can be quantified and valued, and art presents it with the fluctuations and aberrations that escaped the system. We have thousands of hours of audio recordings, photographs and videos that we were able to smuggle out of the company or remember that this is a highly surveilled campus where no digital information can either enter or exit the company without surveillance. And we've uploaded this entire, the documents that we produced on Pad.ma, which is an excellent sort of an archive of artistic production in India. Thank you.

Anuja Ghosalkar: - Thank you, the three of you for such provocation for hiding, for smuggling things in and out of archives makes me very excited. Okay, just to start up the questions and then I really want to hear you talk to each other, then we will open it up to the audience, and we will try to keep time. The question is to Ranjit and Amitesh. You know, Ranjit the archive for you becomes a map of your artistic practice. You go into the trust building and the trust building project becomes many other projects. And then you start smuggling things back into the archive. And in your work, Amitesh, my God, the infiltration is complete, and you're infiltrating this corporate system and then producing archival work out of that. So just if you want to talk about those two things, and then can ask each other questions.

Ranjit Kandalgaonkar: - Well, yeah I usually kind of go in looking for something that complements. I find anyway archives as being incomplete spaces, and it's never complete, and a lot of my work is also just about re-looking at something that is potentially, I think of it as like trapped data, and then I always look at artwork not as like a work of art, but as an assist in a sense. So, kind of tell that story, but not always just through drawing. I was talking about that grandnephew *chechu bhai*. So, he gave me that photograph and I was supposed to return it to him in 2010, but every time I called him, he is like, my house is getting done. I will take it later or I'm out of town. So I used to call him regularly, then I call him every couple of months, I have your thing. So now I think of myself as this single document archive that I'm holding his archive of photographs, you know. So it's also this kind of strange thing that's happening with how information is being kept, what is being produced. It's also your own filtering system in terms of I may talk to someone, but it's also going into a space of precarity within a trust, and then how does it serve your project and your artistic practice, but does it serve the space that you are engaging with? Earlier the trust project was for me to get to the bottom of things, like I need to get to the bottom of it. And then as I was looking at these trusts, there's this entire database of trust that are missing. So now that's become a missing archive of trusts that are no

longer there. Trust that you go to the space, you find it that there's a new building or if you find the building, then the trust is no longer in the building. Or if you find the trust in the building, they no longer have an archive, or, if you go, they have all of it. They just don't want to talk to you and so every time there is a restructuring of how you engage with it.

Amitesh Grover: - Yes I shared the sentiment, that I'm also looking for gaps in the archive. But because I'm from a performance background, I often ask myself does theater happen? I mean in the sense that, you know, when you look at, when you look at theater and performance, one kind of distinguishes it from the real. As if life happens outside and whatever happens on stage is somehow a representation of what is happening. I over the last few years through my practice, I have tentatively sort of question this, I have stand to question this because a large part of the vocabulary of performances entered life and one sees it in different kinds of employment contracts, one sees it in different kinds of lifestyles that are now unfolding. And there's a certain quantification of performance that has entered. So whether we talk about wearable technology and the way it quantifies the performance of the body, or how these massive corporate entities are now quantifying the performance of an employee, or nation states are now performing with China having initiated a nationwide surveillance system for quantifying and giving credit scores to citizens, right? What has happened is that the framework of performance and how we define performance has now entered life and I think this kind of the segregation between the real and not so, no longer holds for me. And therefore, if documents document the real, then I mean, I'm trying to sort of look at it the other way, and say that performative interventions are also able to perform documents of the real you know. Something that Rustom, sort of mentioned it with Kanhaiyalal's Savitri's photograph and the Manipuri women protesting and those two photographs were placed right, one after another. Your work, for example, is working with photographs of performance, but which have become documents. And therefore, carry a certain torque or carry a certain veracity of the real. And that's the interstitial space that I'm interested in producing where the archive doesn't exist, can performance create that archive, you know?

Ranjit Kandalgaonkar: - I was actually quite surprised when you said Pad.ma. So I basically work with Pad.ma for the year, because I was working with Majlis. So I just realized that probably the only job I've ever held is the job working for an archive. Also one thing when you make the statement about not producing a single day of productive labor? I think at some level we do that, as artists in any case, like productive labor as artists and, you know, space. The bodies that you speak of in that space, is there also a certain way that they start performing with you? You're doing this very provocative act of holding up a placard and how does it tune into what they are thinking is happening? Are they responding in a different way? Are they really seeing you as someone who is, trying to get to the bottom or are you trying to, get them to quit? Or how is that playing out? Because it's playing out in a certain way that you even talk about the whole space, right? So are there moments when they kind of just start talking to you, more freely? Because you know people perform back?

14

Amitesh Grover: - Yeah, I, this is a disclaimer that I must sort of declare before I begin to answer that question. You know, in these kinds of environments like talks, etc. when one talks about this kind of a project, it sounds very important but, actually, it was not so important when I was performing it there. This, excerpting something always gives it far more value, you know. In a campus in which 22,000 people work every day, it is impossible to be able to make a difference as a single artist who camouflages their work or does something. And yet we were able to amass hundreds and hundreds of hours of audio and video recording of setting a performance act. So one of the examples was that I set up a desk called I must help you. And we started giving out time slots of 15 minutes each in which there was a chair across the table and anybody could come and book the time slot with us, sit there. And once they sat there, I had a pool of literature, poetry and also some sabotage material from the CIA that US had published to help employees perform sabotage in the East Block in the communist part. So every 15 minutes we would, I would perform or read something that was not supposed to be part of that company space. And at the end of it, I would ask them, so what did you think? And many of them would say, I think you're the HR from a rival company. You're trying to poach us, you're trying to see what my IQ level is. You know, you have to see that these bodies in these psychologies are embedded so much into the system, that they've been changed so much that the signs that they're picking up are signs that are familiar to them from the space. I also came across acts of sabotage that employees were performing themselves— one particular employee who had been asked to quit, because of some trouble between the manager. He introduced a viral code in the entire data set that he'd been handling for the last two years. And that entire data set got corrupted the moment he quit. And it was very difficult for his colleagues to be able to set that right. And this viral code was the secret that these employees shared between them. So anybody who got angry with the company, they would pass to each other this viral code in a USB stick, and I saw that being handed over in canteens, I saw that being handed over in smoking corners etc. etc. And this is a heavily surveilled state, company in the sense that you have cameras and biometrics, beeping at every door. So, for example, there is a map of my movement across the company across 6 months. How much time I spent, where did I go from there etc. etc. So it's unthinkable to cause that revolution you know, it's just that sounds too ambitious and also foolish in a sense. But what was more possible for me to act, to be able to smuggle narratives out because this archive was missing.

Ranjit Kandalgaonkar: I read about this programmer, this hacker who had written code that was used in some of the programs but was also linked to the coffee machine., right? He was basically writing code on how to efficiently waste time at a space so that he doesn't have to go and make the coffee. So he started using company time to design a program that would make the coffee and the program was embedded in that coffee machine. It would make the coffee and then all he had to do was walk across, take the coffee come back and they found out all this after he quit.

Amitesh Grover: This is exactly the Italian workers revolution in the late 1960's and 70's where they were trying to use company time for leisure, to pot plants and to slow up the production, the number of units that they would have to produce in the day, etc, etc. And this has this kind of a sort of a hacking has now transferred into the digital space.

Audience Question: - Venkat, do you see your work as performative in any way? However, you choose to define that word, you know, because you gave such an amazing presentation and I'm curious, does performativity matter to you?

Venkat Srinivasan: There's performance in my narration today. There was performance in the way I shared Ajit's story, that was a story. But that story is constructed from things that exist in the archive. As an archivist, not trained as one, I have to keep putting the qualifier or disqualifier, but I have to be very careful of not mixing the archive and performance. At a very loose level, I think of an archive, as being a space that can again well enable diverse stories, but, importantly, allow for multiple interpretations over and over again going forward. That if the performance is all there is, then I think it's not an archive anymore. So if it is passive consumption of the material, if meaning-making is not done over and over again then I think it ceases to exist as an archival object. And I think this is, I'm being provocative here that I think this is partly a challenge that archivists have in allowing for that space. So I don't know if I answered to your question. So there's a performance aspect in my current, in this stage that we are in. But the material in the catalog— I mean, there is performance in the way someone has chosen the material, there is performance in the description of it, but I'm hoping it's a little, it's as Donald Trump said yesterday, "impeachment lite," so this is performance lite. This happened yesterday.

Amitesh Grover: - I guess maybe you are the horse I'm the cart and we kind of trying to pull it in different directions or, but I remember I had met a traffic archivist in Germany once. And he was looking at thousands and thousands of hours of traffic movement across Berlin. And his job was to archive traffic of a single day. And it was quite intriguing to see him perform that act, to be able to select— so he would select accidents in one day, and peaceful traffic on the other, even if there was a staggered presence of these incidents across the several days. And so what he was doing was much like what maybe I'm doing with this project, that he was creating a story to begin with that. When I asked him why is he doing it? He said it's simply impossible for everything to go into the archive. So I must keep deleting and I must keep adding and saving. And how that happens is entirely up to him and he was the single person in that department. And, in that sense, I guess story making is perhaps performative?

Audience Question: - So Amitesh I mean I've heard you before on this, just something curious because you keep bringing up the Italian workers revolution and you quoted Verno of course, fantastic reference. But this whole thing of the 1970's Italian autonomist, Marxist thinkers is that, this is anti-work. The point is, that this is part of a new kind of political collective action, which means it begins from not just the, from the subversions, which are fascinating, the performance if you want, but

the principle. And the principle is basically to reject the division of work time and leisure time in capitalism. Now my question would be since you actually worked with workers, what is our principle today? I mean these workers could be subverting, could be hacking, but do they believe in work? That's a point, the principle work, or do they like in the 70's the general strike and strike after strike in radical Marxist action that was taking place in Italy, there was a genuine threat to the fundamental principle of work in capitalism. So what is happening today in your experience?

Amitesh Grover: - As we know now, in the Maruti Udyog in Manesar, the *Mazdoor Samachar* newsletter has been brought out for quite some time where I think it's much the same mirroring of questioning of work. Questioning of the presence of laboring bodies in work and the value that is being produced there. And also seeking leisure time within the factory premises and protest being part of that work as well. This idea, now you have, we are now confronting 21st century capitalism. This is not 20th century, the 20th century capitalism has learned from all these confrontations and has evolved into this 21st century capitalism where, as you can see from the contracts, for example, it's 21 pages. It is pure literature, very dystopian, disturbing literature if you go through that contract. No amount of unionizing… in fact, I am not overstating if I say that section 144 is it operation at all times in the company. If more than five or six people gather together, there is most likely a manager who walks up to the group and says *kya kar rahe ho*? You know, they don't declare it, but it's there, they have learnt it, the kind of surveillance there I cannot even begin to describe the deep and disturbing surveillance that is there within these companies. Now, I also know that these new companies are the new countries. These nation states have become I mean, in my view, I know we are still protesting the idea of the nation state in many cities right now, but the new countries are the new companies because if you look at the, if you look at how comprehensive and encompassing their control is over the lives of an employee, I often wonder if the employee thinks of the role of being a citizen as well while being an employee. Therefore, work for them is not something that is distinguishable from leisure. I'll give you another example of this.

These companies have something that they call the happiness index. Now, this happiness index is a way to monitor the level of satisfaction and fulfillment that every employee gets from the work. Here the work is not just what they do in the department, but the work is also were if they participate in passion clubs, in nature walks, in cycling clubs. So they are performing the entire life and they are being scored. Nation states are going to learn very quickly from these companies. And so we are going to have, we're looking at a future in which we can't distinguish between companies and countries anymore. And in, therefore, this question of are you against work or for work does not arise there. There is also the imminent future of no work. Either all work gets automated, which for the Global South is a long lost dream for the Global North is very imminent or that we face major unemployment because the workforce just doesn't get upgraded in time to be able to meet the new wave of work. So, what I experienced was sheer desperation. How does one think about modes of protest and subversion and sheer desperation is the question that I

came out with, and not as Ranjit was also asking, what was the motive to make them quit work? Absolutely not. You know, it's unthinkable. Thank you.

Audience :Thank you.

Audience Question: Just to comment, I mean, Amitesh rightly pointed it out the entire discourse about work life balance even within the big multinational companies, they have kind of imbibed the idea within the language of the corporate world today. So work life balance becomes very important within the company setups, you will have gyms and playgrounds and every amenity that you would imagine you require for a life, so to speak. So, I mean, I completely agree with you, I just wanted to say that but then Amitesh kind of rightly pointed out.

Audience Question: I'll just make it short, the politics of infiltration, you know, which seems to me like a very, a strategy that cannot be completely ignored, overlooked, but it has become complicated, you know, with the kinds of work environments. I have a lot of reservations about Augusto Boal today. But there is one early form of theater, which I think continues to be very radical, dangerous: invisible theater. You know, where of course you're not doing that, but I am interested in keeping alive the many ways in which one can infiltrate, you know, highly surveilled spaces as you have and what are the implications of that? For you as an artist, yes, sure. But if that infiltration is not in a sense going to generate a kind of debate, to use an old fashioned word among workers, then we have to understand what is the efficacy of that you know. Who does it serve? But I think we have to keep infiltration in mind in today's world.

Audience Question: Then maybe my question is like quite close to this. First, of course, thank you very much. I appreciated this very thoughtful, complex work that you presented, and I can relate to it a lot. But I want to bounce back your question from the very first day which was about the distribution. I think I understand from where your question came. I would locate this question that you asked on the first day in this conversation between Benjamin and Brecht like where a theater practitioner discusses with one of the most eminent philosopher of media of the last century. And now when there's mechanical reproduction or digital reproduction, is it still enough just to make work or should work not also include changing the way of how the work is distributed. So this is, I think, where your question came from. And now, I just want to bounce back this question to you, how do you distribute this piece that you presented?

Amitesh Grover: - So the distribution mechanisms are...this is part of an exhibition that has gone back to the Kiran Nadar Museum. And they have displayed it as part of the touring exhibition that they're doing around the project. The film has been displayed in several festivals across the world, we've made a film as well. The entire archive of this project is up on Pad.ma, which is absolutely free and accessible for anybody who wants to research, there is a researcher who has accessed this archive, and is writing as part of their PhD thesis on this work as well. I'm open to all other kinds of mediums and distribution mechanisms some of this work is also up on my

website, etc. And recently we've been offered a podcast in which we excerpt parts of the audio recording and talk around that and put that up as so to some extent.

Audience Question: One could even say it's a reiteration of invisible theater for the digital age?

Amitesh Grover: Yeah, I'm really interested in this. The blurring of lines between the physical and the digital. And I think it's quite an exciting time to be at the cusp of this. Looking at the digital space in political ways and looking at physical spaces also. I think our physical spaces are post-digital spaces and, in that sense, our physical, and this is my question of theater practice as well, that, for me, as a theater practitioner, it is no longer possible for me to look at the stage in an innocent pre-digital way. It's no longer possible. And it's no longer possible for me to think of inter-relationality in performance in a pre-digital way. And so what happens now, when people come to watch theater in post digital times? And that's the question I keep asking myself.

Audience Question: - So my question is regarding the physical space, actually. You plug in and out of communities as artists like you plugged into the H.C.L community Amitesh. What, according to you, was the behavioral impact of that in the community? Was that even an intention of yours going in? What is the long-lasting impact of plugging in and out of communities that you work with?

Amitesh Grover: - It's impossible for me to follow through on the long-lasting impact, I don't think I have the means to be able to sit, like museums do and, you know, galleries do. What happens to people after a Biennale or whatever. Very difficult for me to do that. But when the exhibition opened many of the people, who were incidentally, accidentally part of this had come back to the exhibition. Many of them, they could identify themselves and screen grabs and photographs, etc, etc. and at the exhibition, there was a space that we had set up in which I lead conversations with all these employees who are coming to the exhibition for an hour every day and we sat together, and we spoke about the project and we spoke about the questions that came out of the project. And there were several narratives, confessions that came out which the company had not had the privilege to listen to before. And that's my only way in which I could see how this had contributed if anything at all back to the space.

Audience Question: Amitesh but as a pedgogue how do you look at this pre-digital and post-digital? Because in Indian context you see, performances, opening it to the digital spaces could be quite challenging. So, as a teacher, how do you look at it? I'm just wondering. I can understand what you're saying from an artist point of view but you know when we open the spaces for larger public in India. How do you look at it?

Amitesh Grover: - I try to address it through my performance work. So my performance work is trying to look for the impossibility, what's impossible in digital spaces? I'm thinking more and more about the aesthetic of the inter relational space, when people are co-present. Now, remember that we are co-present in digital

spaces as well. We are co-present on Facebook, we are co-present on WhatsApp, it always shows you online right? So co-presence itself is no longer a physical condition. And I think there is something else that we need to start finding in the physical spaces when we are co-present. We had, say, Alone's lecture on video yesterday. What if Professor Alone was live on Skype? He would have been co-present amongst us as well. And, in that sense, I think what we need to be able to ask is, what is this new aesthetic that presents? How does it present itself to us today? It's a good question to ask, why do people still come to watch theater? And if they do, what is it? Is it just simply that the actors are physically present in front of them? Is it just simply that? Are we going to, you know, make these very facile demarcations, technical demarcations between, are we going to think about the aesthetic of the performative space a little bit more? That is what I'm invested in doing through my work. So *Table Radica* yesterday was an attempt to address that at the Serendipity Arts Festival.

Venkat Srinivasan: - It's very kind. I just wanted to respond to one thing that I'm hearing and also heard from both Amitesh and Ranjit. In each of your works. When I think of the single image from the CCTV camera, right? Likely, perhaps the only image from that camera that is going to perhaps survive if you keep your records. Or if I think of the overlay of the leprosy map that you did, perhaps the only interpretation that might survive, despite everything else. So I just wanted to put out a call to all of you as artists, and I'm speaking now as an archivist, that archivists are only responding to what the zeitgeist is doing at best, and then we try and apply meaning to it, and some meaning in some sort of fair way. But we rely a lot on your process. We rely a lot on how you derive meaning in your work, how you keep track of your material, in whatever form. If Snapchat is the way all of us decide to communicate today, the archivist of 2100 is just going to respond to that and say, well, we just don't have records, right? That's how we deal with Mohenjo-daro and Harappa in some sort of vague way. Right? So there is the fossil record of the 21st century. But I, to the extent that you can, I would encourage you to keep that record keeping, as practice in some way because I think that will benefit someone 100-200 years later, as an archivist, now increasingly, I'm very conscious that I have to keep looking in both directions. 200 years back, 200 years forward, maybe 400 years forward, and just imagine what remains and how we derive meaning from it. Sameena's book, you know, is looking at events that are less than 30 years old, but it will start to have meaning over a period of time. There's a reason why we have three partition archives frantically trying to do something today. Right? And this will keep happening over a period of time and so just putting out a call, please keep good records in whatever form that you see fit.

Anuja Ghosalkar: - Thank you very much and as a record of this afternoon, I want the three of you to put out your ideas for the manifesto, that's our record. So I implore you that playful exercise should not sag. So it's up to three of you. And we move downstairs now, for a scintillating performance of music. It's called *Jagar Samerecha*. It's a collective that sings Amedkarite songs and they're waiting down. So we should just move down. It's about a 40 minute performance. Thank you.