

SALA DIAZ

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Thu – Sat, 3pm – 7pm & by appointment



Pradeep Dalal: Copy/Scan/Print/Repeat

April 22, 2017 to June 10, 2017

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 22, 6 - 11 PM

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

I make copies of articles to read on subway rides and long flights. I refer to xeroxes of architectural drawings – plans, sections, and elevations – when I visit sites. I copy travel guides, articles, and essays. These are stapled and transported in clear plastic file folders. Mostly they live in unwieldy piles in my apartment. I have made xeroxes of my photographs, scanned them and made photographs from the scans. Sometimes I repeat this move. I like the displacements of the image. Copy, scan, print, repeat. The xerox prints of Barbara T. Smith from her experiments in the mid-60s – graphite smeared shapes and patterns on mustard yellow, pale pink, and orange papers – are spare, trace-like and surprisingly powerful. I also admire the rule-bound rigor of the work in the *Xerox Book* published by Seth Siegelaub in 1968. The graphic minimalism of the design and his twenty-five page-per-artist format is still radical, yet the works seem brittle and leave little residue.

In Bhopal, I was able to get my hands on a poorly xeroxed copy of a key book on the Bharat Bhavan collection. Later, I found pristine copies of that book in libraries in New York where I could easily make high resolution scans. I was reminded of seeing plaster casts of the Ishtar Gate bas-reliefs of Babylon on location south of Baghdad in the early 1980s, and then encountering the originals in Vienna and Chicago. Why should this rankle and what does it say about the fluid ways objects, books, bodies, and ideas circulate and re-circulate through the world?

I set myself an exercise to copy the drawings of tribal artists from the Bharat Bhavan collection book *The Perceiving Fingers*. Once I began to draw them, I noticed the unusual shapes and arrangements – the abstract leaf-vein lines, the cellular orb-like forms, the supple, breathing lines,

dashes and dots, quite unlike anything I had drawn in Bauhaus-inspired foundation graphic exercises in architecture school.

This insight from poet and translator A. K. Ramanujan helps clue me in:

Self-conscious, we write out of a corner of ourselves filtering out our childhood, our obscenities, our bodies, our mythologies, the rich fabric of allusion that a first language is. You don't just write with a language, you write with all you have. When I write in Kannada, I'd like all my English, Tamil, etc. to be at the back of it; and when I write in English I hope my Tamil and my Kannada, like my linguistics and anthropology, what I know of America and India, are at the back of it. It's of course only a hope, not a claim.

Pradeep Dalal, 2017

Notes

Barbara T. Smith in "A Machinery for Living" organized by Walead Beshty at Petzel Gallery, New York, July 2 - August 8, 2014.

"The Xerox Book: Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Lawrence Weiner" at Paula Cooper Gallery, September 12-December 17, 2015.

J. Swaminathan, *The Perceiving Fingers*, Bhopal: Roopankar, Museum of Fine Arts, Bharat Bhavan, 1987.

A.K. Ramanujan, "Interview One," in Uncollected Poems and Prose, ed. by Molly Daniels-Ramanujan and Keith Harrison, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Pradeep Dalal is Mumbai-born artist based in New York. His work was included in *Compassionate Protocols* at Callicoon Fine Arts, *I need my memories. They are my documents* at sepiaEYE, *Strange Invitation* at Franklin Street Works, *Picturing Parallax* at San Francisco State University, *Vision is Elastic Thought is Elastic* at Murray Guy and *Fifty Artists Photograph the Future* at Higher Pictures. His photographs were included in *Grey Room 65 Artists Dossier*, *Blind Spot 43*, and *Cabinet 52*. His book "Bhopal, MP" was excerpted in *Chandigarh is in India* (The Shoestring Publisher, 2016) and his essay "A Bifocal Frame of Reference" was published in *Western Artists and India* (Thames and Hudson, 2013). He teaches at the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College and works at the Andy Warhol Foundation's Arts Writers Grant Program.

<http://www.pradeepdalal.com/>