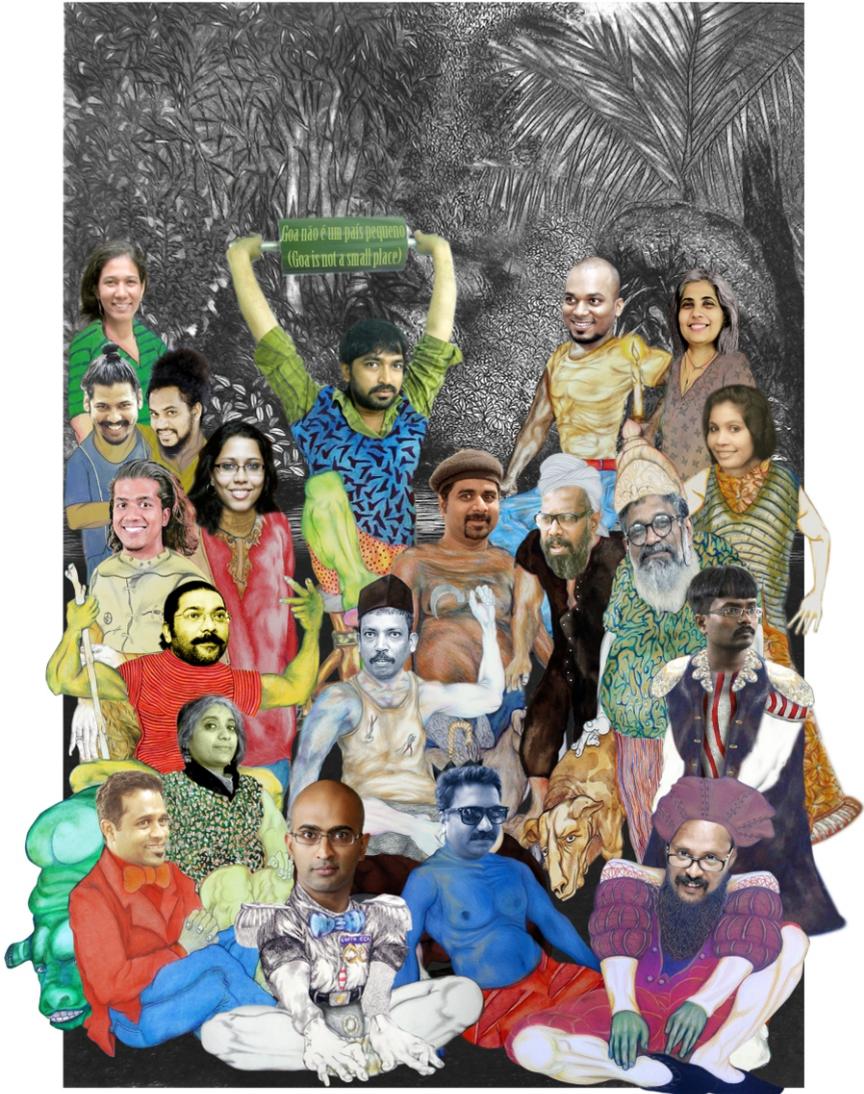


Goa não é um país pequeno

(Goa is not a small place)

2015
VIRAJ NAIK



Viraj Naik,

“Conversation”

Pictograph, 22”x40”, 2015.

Asmani Kamat | Assavari Kulkarni | F N Souza | Hemant Parab | Karishma D'souza | Karl Antao
Kedar Dhondur | Krishna Divkar | Mario de Miranda | Pradeep Naik | Rajendra Usapkar
Rajeshree Thakkar | Ramdas Gadekar | Sagar Naik Mule | Santosh Morajkar | Shripad Gurav
Sonia Rodrigues Sabharwal | V S Gaitonde | Vijay Bhandare | Viraj Naik | Vitesh Naik | Walter D'souza

Goa não é um país pequeno (Goa is not a small place)

Goa não é um país pequeno, if translated, quite literally would read as “Goa is not a small country.” The title for this exhibition has been borrowed from a similar phrase that was articulated by the New State (*Estado Novo*), the authoritarian regime that ran Portugal from the 1930s to 1974. The start of the twentieth century was not easy for the Portuguese state. It faced challenges from other European colonial powers, saw the collapse of the monarchy, and the start of a shaky Republic. The New State that emerged in the 1930s promised an end to all of this instability. In the face of challenges from other European powers and the rising tide of anti-colonial nationalist movements, the New State asserted that Portugal was not a small peripheral European country but a great multiracial nation. The New State argued that the various territories that Portugal held across the world were not colonies but in fact overseas provinces of the country. It was, in sum, one vast multi-continental country. It was in this context that the New State articulated the slogan *Portugal não é um país pequeno*—Portugal is not a small country—and refused to countenance any suggestion of freedom or autonomy for its colonies. Goa, as is well known, was a Portuguese possession until 1961, the year that the Republic of India subsumed the territory into itself. In the final analysis, it was this metropolitan intransigence embodied by *Portugal não é um país pequeno* that was, to a great extent, responsible for the troubled manner in which Goa was integrated into the Republic of India.

In the context of the present exhibition, this imperialist phrase is reutilized to suggest that Goa's small geographical extent does not limit its size. Despite the fact that Goa is the smallest territory in the Union of India, it is home to a remarkably diverse history. Not only does it play host to a variety of migrant communities; it is also the home of a migrant community that is spread across the world. As the artworks in this exhibition demonstrate, and this essay elaborates, this breadth of experience allows for Goans to hold a variety of perspectives and to own diverse insights into the multiple worlds that they occupy.

The structuring concerns

If there is one intention that guides this exhibition, then it is the desire to represent the breadth and diversity of the Goan experience through art. This desire is in fact the result of a number of concerns that the curator, Viraj Naik, encountered when charged with putting together the exhibition. The concerns that he encountered are not necessarily personal but those that bother many Goans.

Foremost of the questions that agitate many Goan minds is the issue of identity. Way back in 2005, the art scene in Goa faced a peculiar situation when Pedro Adão, the Consul of Portugal in Goa of the time, organised a show titled “Portugal through the eyes of artists *in* Goa” [emphasis added]. This formulation was the result of identitarian conflicts within Goa, where some native Goan artists asserted that only they could claim to be Goan artists. Those who were not sons of the soil, the logic went, could not call themselves Goan artists; they were merely artists *in* Goa. It is perhaps in response to these identitarian politics that the artists presented in this exhibition include persons who could be called native Goans as well as those who, though not native to the territory, have made Goa their home for generations now. The exhibition includes both Goans based in Goa and those who have settled outside of Goa. The ensuing selection of artists was also determined in an attempt to represent experience, allowing us to see the work of those who are well-established, mid-career practitioners, and younger artists.

The diversity that this exhibition has attempted to reflect has also ensured, perhaps inadvertently, that this selection of artists represents a number of *bahujan* voices. This is truly a positive step in the representation of artistic work from Goa. Until recently, the more celebrated of Goa's artists, such as Mario Miranda, Angelo da Fonseca, Francis Souza, Ganesh Vamona Navelcar, and Vasudeo S. Gaitonde, have all hailed from dominant caste backgrounds. That this unilateral representation will give way to art from a range of social locations will only add richness to the way in which Goa is figured and read.

Another concern that plagues the Goan is the sense of being ignored

and being left on the sidelines, be it nationally or indeed within Goa itself. It was Viraj's opinion that the visual art that emerges from Goa is too often not given adequate attention even within Goa itself. His attempt, therefore, was to create a space for the various aspects of the visual by representing, in addition to the traditional categories, those of photography, video and sculpture.

Above all, the curation of this exhibition was fuelled by the desire of most Goans to somehow capture Goan-ness. As I will go on to discuss, this desire to define Goan-ness has emerged from the rapid changes that have occurred in Goa, not only with its integration into the former British India but also as a result of the dramatic changes that have taken place within the territory in recent years, such as the change in local lifestyles due to the departure from a largely agrarian economy, as well as the dramatic change in demography resultant from an increased flow of migrants into the territory, not to mention the surge in floating populations—almost twice the size of the host population—during peak tourist season. The other concerns that have motivated this desire to define Goan-ness are the felt need to create a secular vision for Goa, one that rises above the sectarian identities that plague a community impacted by dramatic and rapid change. One source for this vision, Viraj believes, is in the production of artists, who know no religion beyond art. I personally do not share this conviction about artists being above quotidian concerns and divorced from politics. This position smacks too much of the romanticist notion of the artist as standing apart from society. The works of artists are interesting primarily because they are a part of society and allow us insight into the workings of the society from which they emerge. As I will go on to demonstrate, however, his selections have in fact managed to present a bouquet of artworks that can intervene in and complicate the discourse on Goan identities positively.



Ramdas Gadekar,

"Past Perfect"

Mix media on board, 12" x 40", 2014.

Continuity and change



That change is a major cause for those associated intimately with Goa is obvious from the fact that at least three of the contributions to this exhibition deal with change. Ramdas Gadekar's twin contributions, "Past Perfect" and "Future Tense," respond to the changes in income patterns that have allowed children to move from the rustic games of Goa's past that involved physical exertion to amusing themselves with tablets, mobile phones, and computer games. What is interesting about Gadekar's representation of the perfect past is also the gun and dart shaped "toys" that are used to burst fire crackers. While most Indians may associate crackers with Diwali, in Goa, it is the feast of Ganesh Chaturthi that is punctuated by the bursting of fire crackers—a Goan specificity that most are aware of and marks one more feature that carves out a distinct Goan identity.

If Gadekar's contributions are redolent of nostalgia for a past that is imagined as perfect, through her contribution, "Memory that Scandalously Lies," the Bangalore based Asmani Kamat eschews any valorisation of the past. Her concept note informs us that our memories of the past are invariably embellished by our present and hence

are unreliable. Despite her refusal to indulge in nostalgia, the works by both Kamat and Gadekar are united by their gaze at childhood. This is perhaps largely because it is childhood that is the imagined space of purity and authenticity. That it is the topography of childhood that is obviously changing is perhaps the reason for Gadekar's nostalgia.



Ramdas Gadekar,

"Future Tense"
Mix media on board,
24" x 20", 2014.





'Asmani Kamat, "Memory that Scandalously Lies", 36" x 48", Oil on Canvas, 2014.

Two other works, though not overtly concerned with change, are engaged with the process of archiving traditions, some of them continuing, from Goa's past. Hemant Parab captures performances of folk dances, while Krishna Divkar's "A Perilous Leap of Faith" captures a peculiar tradition among the Catholics in Goa. The feast of *São João*, or Saint John the Baptist, is



Krishna Divkar, "São João- A Perilous Leap of Faith", Photograph, 8" x 10", 2014.

commemorated on 24 June, a good few weeks after the monsoons would have hit Goa. At this point in time, the wells are quite literally overflowing, and Catholics in particular celebrate the feast by wearing crowns of leaves and flowers, and jumping into these wells. These leaps are a reference not only to John's use of water for baptism but also his leap of joy while still in the womb, when his mother Elizabeth met her cousin Mary, who was then bearing the future Messiah, Jesus. The image



that Divkar captures offers a particular nuance to this tradition. Children born after an act of divine favour was requested are also crowned with wreaths and taken into the waters with caring adults as a thanksgiving for the fulfilment of the favours petitioned.



Hemant Parab,

"Dance I"

Photograph, 8"x12", 2013.

Assavari Kulkarni's photographs have a sculptural quality to them highlighting a natural symmetry. If there is one single factor that most nostalgic Goans will agree on, it is of the memory of Goa that was green and linked with nature and natural cycles. Kulkarni's images, which also contain the image of fish—possibly the food for which all Goans share a passion—echo this fascination for the natural.



In her offering to the exhibition, Rajeshree Thakkar continues working with the mobile elements that defined her earlier works. "Prayer Wheel for Goa" seems to make obvious that given the rapid changes that are overtaking Goa, there is a need to pray for the land, its people and its traditions. What is left to our imagination is whether this prayer is one for a peaceful death or one for sturdy continuity.





Assavari Kulkarni, "Warheads" photograph, 16"x21", 2013



Rajeshree Thakker "Prayer Wheel for Goa" Mix media on Canvas, 35"x40", 2014.

Defining Goan-ness

Predominant in Thakkar's "Prayer Wheel for Goa" are images of a Goa that are linked to the Goan, and especially the Catholic elite's engagement with the European and Portuguese cultures. To many, these images that craft the vision of a *Goa Portuguesa* are indisputable hallmarks of Goan-ness. And yet the issue of what exactly defines Goan-ness is a hugely contested battleground. The trope of *Goa Portuguesa*, or Portuguese Goa, emerged in the twilight years of Portuguese sovereignty over Goa and as a logical extension of the Portuguese state policy that Portugal was one indivisible, multi-continental nation. Goans, the authoritarian Portuguese New State argued, were not Indian, but profoundly Portuguese. This assertion, strangely enough, got reaffirmed in the period subsequent to integration into the Indian Republic, and especially under the years of Congress rule in the 1980s, when it was used to aggressively market Goa as a Western paradise in India. This image continues to be crudely imitated by those who wish to sell Goa as a space of leisure, whether for tourists or middle class and rich Indians seeking holiday homes in Goa.

In opposition to the idea of a profoundly Portuguese Goa emerged that of *Goa Indica*. Goa's identity, the partisans of the latter idea affirmed, had nothing to do with Portuguese influences, but was deeply connected with India. If the Portuguese state leaned toward one extreme, the votaries of *Goa Indica* swung toward its polar opposite. Even as Goa's society changes rapidly, the truth perhaps lies somewhere in the middle. In any case, rather than attempt to adopt a single definition, it makes sense to be attentive to the suggestions that emerge from the ground; in this case, the works on display in this exhibition.

One thing that emerges strikingly in much of the contemporary artistic production from Goa is the figure of Christ or references to what could broadly be called Catholic lifestyles. This exhibition's collection of artworks is no exception to this rule.

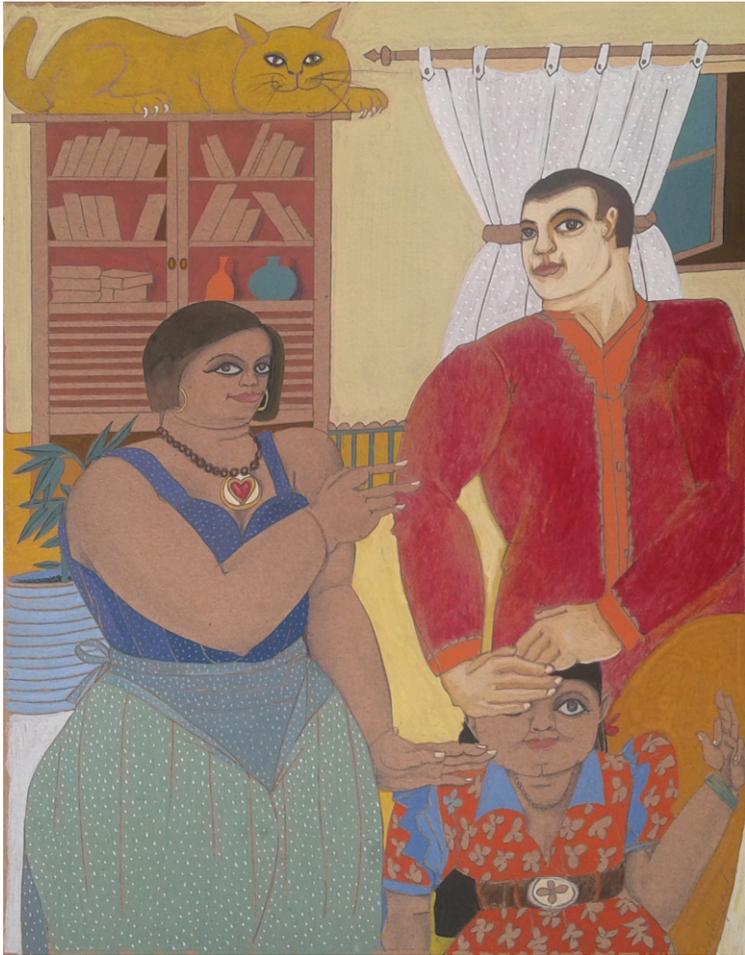
In addition to the works discussed earlier, Vitesh Naik's "Odyssey" and Shripad Gurav's "d lesson" seem to narrate stories from Catholic lives. Of course, it would be a little too straightforward to suggest that these are Christian





Vitesh Naik, "Odyssey" mix media on paper, 7"x7", 2014.

figures merely because these images feature men in shirts and trousers, and women in skirts. These images could also be interpreted as narrations of life in Goa's Old Conquests, those central parts of Goa that were under Portuguese sovereignty for the longest period. However, because of the manner in which Western modernity entered into Goa via Christianisation and the ensuing westernization of the Christian populace, one can in fact suggest that a Western way of being is subliminally tied in the popular imagination to Christians. Indeed, even as the bahujan have increasingly Hinduised, they have also adopted forms of Western modernity that seem to have been directly picked up by imitating Catholics. Take, for example, the manner in which weddings are celebrated, increasingly with Western-style bands and receptions modelled on those held by Catholics in Goa.



Shripad Gurav,

“d lesson”

Mix media on paper board, 12"x 9", 2015.

Catholic imagery is perhaps the most salient in Pradeep Naik's exhibit, "The Third Lie," which is a direct reference to the Apostle Peter's three denials of Christ. The canvas depicts an *Ecce Homo*, a bust featuring the head of Christ crowned with thorns, with ecclesial buildings in the background. Beyond this ecclesial structure lies another structure suggesting contemporary industrialised Goa. Divided into two halves, the other half of Pradeep Naik's canvas presents us with a brown, desolate plain that seems to echo the iron rich lateritic soil of Goa and the devastation wreaked on it by the indigenous mining industry. Perhaps the true mark of Portuguese colonialism in Goa, mining for iron ore in Goa commenced in the 1940s. This industry continued under Indian rule, but it surged exponentially due to the Chinese demand for iron ore since the start of the new millennium.



Pradeep Naik,

"The Third Lie"

Acrylic on canvas, 36" x 42", 2014.

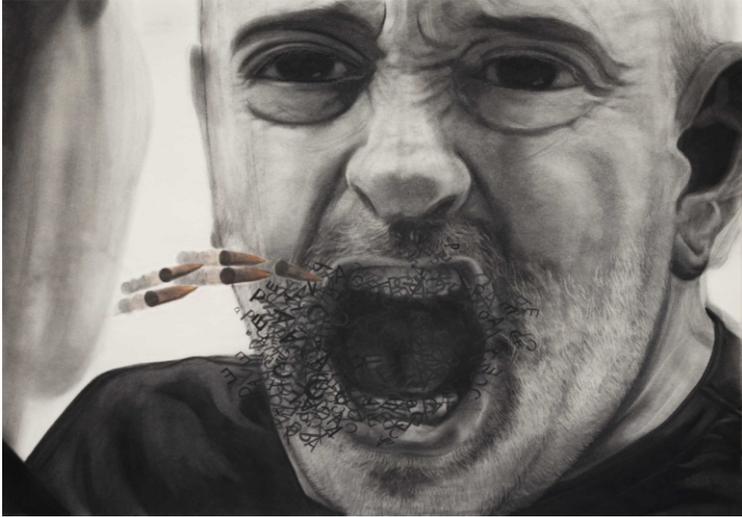
This was a period when the shady operations of legally mandated miners were compounded by those who were mining illegally. Goa was flush with funds, and despite the fact that Ramdas Gadekar mourns these changes, it brought prosperity to a large number of Goa's bahun groups. The environmental impact, however, has been devastating. In addition to the respiratory diseases suffered by people living in the mining belt, and the destruction of fields through their inundation with mining waste, there has also been the destruction of the water table and drying up of perennial streams that issued from the hills that have been literally disembowelled. The temple of the Goddess Lairai in the village of Shirgão lies in this mining belt and is the locale of a famous feast, or *zatra*, depicted in a contribution from Krishna Divkar. At this feast, members of the Dhond caste purify themselves in the spring-fed tank attached to the temple, and then walk over the embers of ritual fires. The irony of the situation is that the spring that fed the tank had run dry since many years thanks to the mining operations in its vicinity. To ensure the completion of the fire walking ritual, the tank would be filled by tankers just prior to the start of the *zatra*, making a mockery of the nature-worship located at the heart of this ritual.



While the protests against the devastating effects of mining have received the support of the Catholic Church, which has maintained a commitment to environmental justice, the heroes of the agitation have sprung from the *Adivasi* communities of Goa. Is it this face of the contemporary martyr that Pradeep Naik presents against the backdrop of the ravaged land?

Another vaguely Christ-like figure manifests in Sagar Naik Mule's sculpture "Armageddon." The reference to Christ's Last Supper is also present in Vitesh Naik's cluster of works. The Christian influence is perhaps more nuanced in the work of Kedar Dhond, the title of whose video installation, "Refrain from anger and turn from wrath, it leads only to evil," is in fact a quote from a biblical Psalm. His work is a contemplation on wrath, one of the seven sins, or cardinal vices, as articulated by Christian ethics. That so many artists engage with these Christian images, despite their not confessing Catholicism, goes to document the integral part that the Christian vision plays in moulding a Goan sensibility.





Kedar Dhondu, "Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; it leads only to evil"
Charcoal and Soft Pastel on paper/ Still from Video, 48"x36", 2014.

My assertions above are not to reaffirm a colonial period argument that Goa is indeed *Portuguesa*, given that the *Indica* is not altogether absent either. One of the primordial faith traditions in Goa is of its *Adivasi* people. These peoples, who are today largely marginalised, worshipped the mother goddess, as Sateri, and believed that she manifested herself in the form of the *roen* or ant hill. The ant hill that is normally associated with the divine feminine energy is transformed in Sagar Naik Mule's sculptures "Armageddon" and "Apocalypse" into masculine and phallic figures. "Apocalypse" depicts ants emerging from the uber-macho masculine torso. Interestingly, the V-shaped torso of today's ideal masculine figure is also an inversion of the triangular form of the ant hill mound. One wonders if this hyper-masculinity could be a reference to the growing desire, fomented by aggressive Hindutva, to fashion tough male bodies marked by bulging muscularity. "Armageddon," Mule's other sculpture, once again has an ant-hill-like phallic object that holds a man within it.

This obsession with hyper-masculinised male torsos is also evident in the popular art that emerges when Goans celebrate Diwali. The difference of Hinduism in Goa is marked by the fact that the effective high point of the Diwali



Sagar Naik Mule, "Apocalypse", Fibre-glass and wood, 18"x10"x15, 2014.

celebrations is what has come to be called Narakasur Nite. In Goa, the night of Naraka Chaturdashi, the lunar day before the new moon night when the goddess Laxmi is worshipped, sees the preparation of effigies of the *asura* Naraka. These effigies are the focus for raucous music until the wee hours of the morning, when the effigy, stuffed with crackers, is consigned to flames.



Sagar Naik Mule,
"Armageddon",
Fibre-glass and wood,
40"x10"x10, 2014.

In recent years, these effigies that earlier depicted the robust body of the *asura* have given way to depictions from the torso up. Like the torso that Mule has sculpted, these new avataars of Naraka are grotesquely muscled. I suspect that it is because of the structural challenges that this new body type presents that these effigies now focus only from the torso up and, rather than being constructed entirely of combustible materials, are now built over a frame of iron girders rooted in concrete bases.



The contemplation of feminine energy and form continues with the work of Rajendra Usapkar, titled "I see the truth II." "Rebirth," Santosh

Morajkar's work in this exhibition, is another example, and marks a continuation, of Morajkar's engagement with human genitalia, and thereby fertility, whether male or female.

Rajendra Usapkar,
"I see the truth II",
Pen and charcoal on paper,
30"x20", 2010.



Santosh Morajkar,
"Rebirth",
Graphite on paper,
26"x19", 2014.





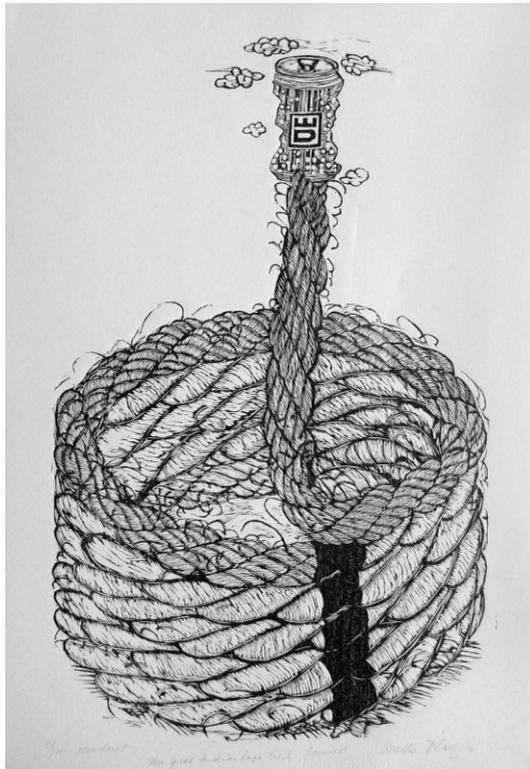
In “Divine Journey,” Sonia Rodrigues Sabharwal demonstrates the fascination with Hinduism that animates a number of contemporary Catholics in Goa. While one of the images offered by Sabharwal is a reworking of the Catholic icon of the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, the rest of her images engage with Puranic deities and Hindu festivity. What is one to make of the squat bodies and flat noses of these images, however? While this imaging of the human body is characteristic of a number of Rodrigues' works, could it also be seen as stemming from the desire to move away from the vaguely European and Aryan imaging of the Hindu body, as evidenced by the works of Ravi Varma and subsequent Hindu imagery?



Sonia Rodrigues Sabharwal,

“Divine Journey”,
Mix media on canvas board,
16"x12", 2014

Even as it was necessary to correct the suggestion of *Goa Portuguesa*, the problem with *Goa Indica* is that it collapsed the Indic into Hinduism. What was not Hindu was effectively erased from the record and not presented as part of Goa's Indic heritage. The Jain, Buddhist, and Islamic pasts of Goa were victims to this tendency in *Goa Indica*. This history is partially salvaged for us through the incorporation of the Maitreya Buddha into Thakkar's "Prayer for Goa" and the artefact of the prayer wheel. This Bodhisattva of the future looks upon the flow of time and change that Thakkar presents, offering hope for Goa's future. Buddhism is, however, not merely a part of Goa's past but could possibly be a part of its future through the presence of Dalit communities which, following Dr. Ambedkar's lead, converted to Buddhism and hold hope for a regenerative change in Goa's future.



Walter D'souza

"The Great Indian rope trick - canned"
woodcut, 22"x30", 2014.

Walter D'Souza's sculpture and prints, which seem to be a take on orientalist notions of India as the land of elephants and the great Indian rope trick, offer a jocular engagement with the exotic notion of India. In engaging with this representation of India, D'Souza also makes a point critical to placing this exhibition in context. Goan artists are not limited to articulating a vision restricted to Goa; they can, and do, converse with the larger world around them.



Goans and the world

One of the tropes that the colonial regime relied on when asserting the Portuguese-ness of Goa was to point to the epithet “Rome of the East” that was used to describe the city of Old Goa, once the capital of the Portuguese empire in the East. This epithet is most often used to refer to the profound influence of Christianity in the city. Until the religious orders were evicted from Portuguese domains by Governmental decree in 1834 Old Goa hosted representatives of the major religious orders in Christendom. However, the influence of Rome on the Goan psyche can be seen beyond the presence of Christian religious orders in the former capital city. Just as was the case of the Ottoman, Russian and, more recently, American empires, Imperial Rome was an object of emulation by the Portuguese empire as well. While various Portuguese monarchs sought to create a second Rome in Lisbon, the City of Goa, as the seat of the Viceroy also sought to incarnate itself as another Rome. It is not a coincidence that the cities of Lisbon and Goa had seven hills, just as Rome did. The architecture that manifested in the City of Goa was not Portuguese but European, specifically drawing from architecture that had links with Imperial Rome. It was this Roman inspiration that would later provide the basis for the homes of the Goan elite and middle classes—buildings that are today erroneously called Portuguese. Similarly, the westernization of the Goan, whether Catholic or otherwise, was not so much an imitation of the Portuguese as much as it was an engagement with European systems, a good number of which had always been inspired by

Imperial Rome. It was therefore a cynical conceit of the Portuguese New State to claim Goa's Western aspects as Portuguese. If anything, this westernization flowed from an engagement with Rome effected not merely through the patronage of the Portuguese crown but through European missionaries, and native Goans engaging independently with Europe.



Vijay Bhandare,
"Apparition of a Roman head, induced by sleep paralysis in the wee hours of
2nd November 2014"
Oil on canvas, 48"x36", 2015



This engagement with Rome, conscious or otherwise, seems apparent in Vijay Bhandare's surrealist "Apparition of a Roman head, induced by sleep paralysis in the wee hours of 2nd November 2014." What this work also brings to mind is the memory of another Goan who has gained some international repute through his engagement with sleep and paralysis. It is a little known fact that the character of Abbé Faria in Alexandre

Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* was based on a real person of Goan origin. A Catholic priest from the seaside village of Candolim, Abbé José Custódio de Faria was part of the native Goan elite in the mid-eighteenth to the early nineteenth century Goa. Travelling from Goa, Faria was educated in Rome, preached at the royal court of Portugal for a while, and eventually found himself in Paris, where he gained fame and notoriety for his experiments with hypnotism. His treatise on the subject, *On the Cause of Lucid Sleep in the Study of the Nature of Man*, is now recognised by some as having initiated the scientific study of hypnotism. In 1945, this son of Goa was honoured through a public memorial erected in the city of Panjim. A bronze statue wrought by Ramachandra Pandurang Kamat captures Faria in the act of hypnotising a woman. It is through this image, felicitously also captured in Thakkar's prayer wheel, that Faria is more substantially present in this exhibition.

Travel abroad, often for work, has been a part of the Goan experience for generations now. Some historians date this migration for work to the British Occupation of Goa in the 1800s in the wake of the Napoleonic crisis in Europe, and subsequently through the signing of the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 1878. This treaty opened up channels for both Hindu and Catholic migration to British India and British East Africa. The contact with Portuguese East Africa was possibly longer, given that Goa administered these territories directly until 1752. There continue to be substantial Goan populations in various parts of East Africa, and it is this connection with Africa that comes to mind when contemplating, "Mind's eye," and "Sprouting seeds", the sculptures of Karl Antao.





Karl Antao, "Minds Eye" wood and hand painted, 2014

The migrations of Goans have continued into recent times largely because it is still difficult to gain dignified employment within Goa. The absence of educational facilities is another factor that has propelled Goans abroad. Karishma D'Souza's "Night Walks – Baroda" can be read as a testament to these voyages of migration, given that D'Souza, like many Goan artists, completed a good amount of her education in the fine arts in the city of Baroda. Like many Indian artists, she continued to linger on in that city, which offered the camaraderie of other artists from across India.





Karishma D'souza,

"Night walks - Baroda",

Acrylic on canvas, 26.5"x48", 2008.



Viraj Naik,

"Cultural Conversation II",

Pictograph, 22"x40", 2015.

Continuing conversations

An ideal location to conclude this discussion of the works curated within this exhibition would be the pictographs titled “Cultural Conversation” contributed by Viraj Naik. These assemblages present a variety of characters drawn from a number of his earlier works. Viraj is clear that these characters are not Goan characters but embody universal aspects. They emerge from different locales and periods, and seem to be engaged in conversations across diverse landscapes, some of which, like the river that cuts across both images, one could identify as distinctly Goan.

Even though the popular imagination has pegged the sea as the quintessential element of the Goan landscape, this is perhaps more the result of external imaginations of Goa. Until recently, except for the fishing communities for whom the sea was the site of labour, the sea was an alien element to many Goans. It was perhaps only from the early twentieth century that the Goan middle classes, in imitation of European fashions of the time, began to vacation by the seaside in the summer so that they could take the waters. Until this time, the river had possibly been the landscape feature that defined Goan identities. It was the rivers that marked boundaries, whether prior to the arrival of the Portuguese or even subsequent to their arrival. Indeed, in the first phase of Portuguese expansion from the city of Goa, it was the rivers that provided boundaries for the realms of the Portuguese Crown. As a fragment in Thakkar's assemblage indicates, the Portuguese armadas did not merely sail across the seas; they also sailed up the rivers to assert their sovereignty over the city of Goa and other ports. Despite engaging in trade across the seas, these ports were located upstream from the sea. Until the advent of macadamised roads and petroleum-fuelled automotive transport, it was the rivers that allowed for rapid transportation across the various territories that today constitute Goa. It is little wonder, then, that besides Viraj, the centrality of the river to Goan narratives is echoed by the Goan poet Manohar Shetty's collection of Goan short stories, titled *Ferry Crossings* (2000), while *Reflected in Water* (2006) is the name of Jerry Pinto's collection of writings on Goa. In fact, what is perhaps one of the most famous conversations from the Goan cultural repertoire, between a dancing girl and a boat man in the folk song

Choltam Choltam, popularly known as *hanv saiba poltodi voita*, takes place on the bank of a river.

There is no vibrant society that is not engaged in conversation, and it would therefore be presumptuous to accord to Goa any uniqueness in the conduct of conversation. And yet, ever since its birth as a city-state in the 1500s, and even prior to this period, Goa's history has been marked by the presence of diverse actors and returning Goans, who have contributed to the sometimes bewildering diversity of this territory. Goa means many things to many people, and Goa is often reincarnated overseas by those who, after having departed from its shores, reimagine what Goa used to be. It is for this reason, then, that one can assert that indeed *Goa não é um país pequeno*.

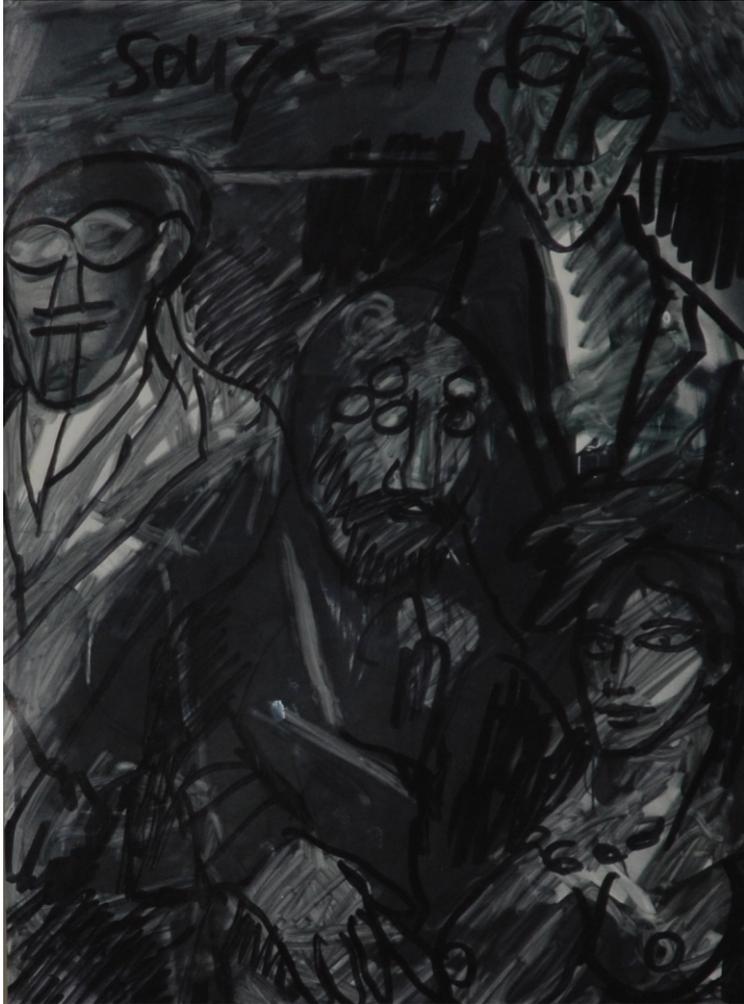
Jason Keith Fernandes¹

¹*Jason Keith Fernandes likes to describe himself as an itinerant mendicant because it captures two aspects of his life perfectly. His educational formation saw him traverse various terrains, geographical as well as academic. He completed a Bachelor's in law from the National Law School of India, Bangalore. After a couple of years working in Patna and Hyderabad in the environmental and developmental sector; he obtained a Master's in the Sociology of Law from the International Institute for the Sociology of Law, Oñati, which is located in Spain's Basque country. Subsequent to a diploma in Culture Studies, he obtained a Doctorate in Anthropology in Lisbon for his study of the citizenship experience of Goan Catholics. He is currently a post-doctoral researcher at the Centre for International Studies at the University Institute of Lisbon, but continues to shuttle between Lisbon and Goa. He sees himself as a mendicant not only because so many of his voyages have been funded by scholarships and grants but because he will accept almost any sensorial and intellectual stimulation that is offered to him and thank the donor for it. Jason's opinions on his many areas of interest are archived at www.dervishnotes.blogspot.com*





Mario de Miranda



FN Souza



Viraj Naik,

"Cultural Conversation III",

Pictograph, 22"x40", 2015.

Viraj Vassant Naik is a Printmaker born in Goa in 1975. He has done his post graduation from Sarojini Naidu School of Fine Art, Nampalli, Hyderabad in 2000. Since then he has been awarded by a number of institutions such as Central University of Hyderabad - S. L. Parasher Gold medal in 2000, International Biennial of Mini Prints, Tetovo, Republic of Macedonia-2008, Artist-in-Residence, Frans Masereel Centrum, Belgium in 2012.

He has committed to the practice of his profession through participation in numerous shows all over the planet: 'Mythical Menagerie', Visual Arts Centre, Hong Kong; 'Speaking of otherness', Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai; 'Hybridization' India Fine Art, Mumbai; 'Landscape with possible monsters', Travancore Palace, New Delhi; 'Blue ants', Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi; 'Anxiety', Museum Gallery, Mumbai; 'Metamorphosis', Galeria Cidade de Goa; 7th International printmaking Biennial of Douro, Portugal; "Rebirth of Detail" Sunaparanta- Goa Centre for the Arts; 15th Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh; "Hybrid Identities" Edinburgh, UK; Krakow International Print Triennial, Poland; Scion Art Installation Gallery, Los Angeles, U.S.A; 10th Biennale Internazionale per L'Incisione, Acqui Terme, Italy; 6th KIWA Exhibition, Kyoto, Japan; "New perspectives of India" Gallery Avanthay contemporary, Zurich; "Reading paint" Gallery Soulflower, Bangkok, Thailand; "Strangeness" Anant Art Gallery, Kolkata, India; "Portugal through the eyes of Goan artists" Consulado Geral de Portugal, Goa, India; Minaaz art gallery, Hyderabad, India.

He has worked as Guest Faculty at Sarojini Naidu School of Fine Arts, University of Hyderabad; Art teacher at Navy Children School, Goa; Curator for "Look at this Land" Etching portfolio camp and workshop, Sunaparanta- Goa Centre for the Arts.

Presently he works from his studio Graphikos, Quellosim, Goa.

