

Transnational Proximities

A photographic exhibition by Sabes Sugunasabesan and Anna Laine.

5th Base Gallery, 23 Henege Street, London E1 5LJ.

Private View 8th June, 6pm to 9pm

Preview with Whitechapel Gallery First Thursdays walking Tour:

7th June, 6pm to 9pm

Open daily from 8th to 13th June, 12pm to 6pm.

Artist talk to be announced.

Sabes Sugunasabesan, photographer of the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora, and Anna Laine, artist-anthropologist from Sweden, come together in their continuous investigations across South Asia and Europe.

Sugunasabesan's part, 'The Last Walk to the Beach', presents reconstructions with his homeland and its people through a thirty-year war between the Sri Lankan Armed Forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. His work is his personal response to the war from his diasporic position, through notions of trauma, memory and hope.

Laine's part, 'At Dalits' Feet', addresses how lives within South Asian groups and communities, also at their diasporic locations, are implicated by caste. This hierarchical social system is analogous to a bodily order, where the lowest groups are connected with feet. Laine engages with these groups in the Tamil context. She elevates their feet to the guru-position and uses the term Dalit in order to foreground their long-term counter forces and consequently destabilise the structural violence of casteism.

Sugunasabesan and Laine share the notion of being situated on the border of insider and outsider, differently founded on the one

hand in diasporic existence and on the other in extended fieldwork.

They both use photography as a central tool in their research, of how relations between people and places can be grasped, and of how complex life-worlds can be conveyed in visual and material forms.

They aim to engage the viewers in ambiguous shifts between proximity and through a linked focus on the transnational effects of a civil war and of discrimination based on caste.

The visitors are invited to remove their footwear and walk in close connection with Tamils and Dalits, in touch with the South Asian practice of being barefoot indoors.

Laine's new publication with Bloomsbury, 'Practicing Art and Anthropology: A Transdisciplinary Journey', will be on sale in the gallery.



