

The Third Pole: Himali Singh Soin with music by David Soin Tappeser

A solo exhibition at Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

25 October 2022 –29 January 2023

Curated by Soledad Gutiérrez Rodríguez



In October 2022, TBA21 presents *The Third Pole*, a major exhibition of the New Delhi-born artist Himali Singh Soin, in collaboration with musician David Soin Tappeser: their **first institutional exhibition** in Spain. Staged in Madrid's Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza and sustainably produced, the exhibition encompasses two bodies of work: ***we are opposite like that*** (2017 - ongoing), set in the North and South Poles, and ***As Grand As What*** (2021), set in the Indian Himalayas and the foot of Mount Vesuvius. Together, they conjure fictional mythologies for these fragile places. ***The Third Pole*** is rooted in the space between art and science, manifesting a cosmology in which everything is sentient: traversing a colonial, prejudiced past while dreaming up heterotopic futures in which love attunes us to the catastrophe of the present moment.

Himali Singh Soin works across text, performance and moving image. Her work is inspired by the natural environment to explore the nature of identity, and the entanglements between human and non-human life. David Soin Tappeser's rhythmic sensibilities inform his compositions for analogue instruments, sounding the landscape. The resulting geological-human scales of temporality are layered with cultural references and protest movements, bringing to fore questions of environmental justice and the transcendental power of listening as an act of togetherness.

Curated by TBA21's **Soledad Gutiérrez Rodríguez**, the exhibition promises to demonstrate the breadth of the artist's collaborative practice. This exhibition follows previous collaborations between Himali, David and TBA21, which saw them produce new works for *st_age*, TBA21's online platform.

we are opposite like that (2017 -) is an ongoing series of interdisciplinary works – comprising video, performance, textile, poetry and music – from material gathered during Himali's fieldwork in parts of the Arctic and Antarctic circles uninhabited by indigenous human life. It comprises mythologies for the poles, told from the non-human perspective of an elder that has witnessed deep history: the ice. Ice, a melting fossil, is running out of time. The series fuses a variety of concerns: the ways in which we know the world, the slippery spaces between solidity and spirit, the potential of error, postcolonial preconceptions, a looming climate crisis and the interdependence of the natural and the magical.

Drawing on those entanglements, the quest continues from the farthest reaches of the earth to Himali's namesake and the third pole of the world, the Himalayas. There, she encounters an emergent place where the voices of feminine deities and the physical and symbolic qualities of the natural elements echo each other, calling for a transnational spirituality.

In *As Grand as What* (2021), a three-channel film by Hylozoic/Desires, a planetary catastrophe has occurred. Inspired by the Kalachakra mandala, a cosmic diagram in which the body is a

microcosm of the planet, the artists, disguised as spirits of the earth, conduct a series of five rituals to reactivate the energy centers of the world. They go in search of a lost *bla*, a term in Tibetan medicine for the subtle life force that runs through the world-body. The mountains of India and the volcanoes of Italy begin to teach us how to be, how to be young and ancient at the same time, how to absorb what makes us fertile and release what depletes us. With the help of the resonance of sound and the force of love poetry, they seek to reinvigorate the collective self and learn from the tremulous temporality of the catastrophic.

Artist **Himali Singh Soin** comments: “The Third Pole is the breakdown of the binary, pitting ideas of the North and South not against each other, but with another, a marker of confluences that extend laterally, and diverge elsewhere. The third pole—love, distance, infinity, intuition—is evident in both geological and cultural history, as well as the artistic process. We invite you into a choose-your-own-adventure so that you are not simply witness to the art, but the art begins to look back at you. We work towards helping the communities from where these pieces arose. The exhibition is made up of a togetherness of voices, human and nonhuman alike. We offer you a sacred history of mountains and volcanoes, and hope that what you carry back is that etheric cord that holds you in this intricate network of places and ideas, even while the many slippery plates move below us.”

Exhibition curator, **Soledad Gutiérrez Rodríguez**, says: “This exhibition works, for me, as a proposition to change the way we inhabit the world, a radical transformation guided by the potential of love as a tool to sense the universe. And the beauty of it is a theoretical statement as well as a physical one: the exhibition is produced with natural and recycled materials that absorb toxins and clean the atmosphere. This creates a unique cosmos: the marble dust and the clay of the paint invoke different layers of time and knowledge, infusing the very structure of the exhibition with its philosophy.”

The exhibition will be accompanied by two sets of performances by Himali Singh Soin and David Soin Tappeser coinciding with the opening of the show on 24 October 2022 and its finissage on 29 January 2023.

we are opposite like that

Monday, 24 October 2022

19.00 pm at the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

A score for string quartet and percussion eulogising the lost language of ice.

Ancestors of the Blue Moon

Wednesday, 25 –Sunday, 29 January 2023 at the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

A healing ritual to bring us back from our crisis of lost presence, comprising a sound bath, a tea ceremony and a ritualistic film viewing.

Note to Editors

For further information and images, please contact Scott & Co:

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About Himali Singh Soin

Writer and artist based between London and Delhi, Himali Singh Soin uses metaphors from outer space and the natural environment to construct imaginary cosmologies of interferences, entanglements, deep voids, debris, delays, alienation, distance, and intimacy. Himali Singh Soin's practice unravels speculations performed in audio-visual, immersive environments. In doing this, she thinks through ecological loss and the loss of home, seeking shelter somewhere in the radicality of love.

About David Soin Tappeser

David Soin Tappeser is a drummer, composer and performance artist based between London and New Delhi. His practice centers around ideas of time, interdependence and alterity. Utilizing acoustic instruments, his performances and compositions use rhythm to codify, manipulate and

deconstruct the listeners' linear perceptions of time, place and origin. They hint at intercultural entanglements, protest movements, parallel histories, deep time and the importance of extra-human frames of reference in unfolding environmental justice emergencies.

About TBA21

TBA21 Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary is a leading international art and advocacy foundation created in 2002 by the philanthropist and collector Francesca Thyssen-Bornemisza, representing the fourth generation of the Thyssen family's commitment to the arts and public service. The TBA21 Foundation—based in Madrid and Vienna, with situated projects in Venice and Cordoba—stewards the TBA21 Collection and its outreach activities, which include exhibitions, fellowships, residencies, educational and public programming, and policy interventions. TBA21–Academy is the research center of the foundation and an incubator for collaborative experience, artistic production, and new forms of knowledge by combining art and science. All activity at TBA21 Foundation is fundamentally driven by artists and the belief in art and culture as a carrier of social and environmental transformation and change.

In 2022, the 20th anniversary year of the foundation, a new situated project is launched in a three-year partnership with the City of Córdoba, which will encompass an array of exhibitions created from the collection as well as residencies, performances, and educational programs at C3A Córdoba and in public space. The program in Córdoba and the inaugural exhibition *Abundant Futures* place an emphasis on the centrality of regenerative and healing practices to reorient the relationship with the commons and non-human others, towards futures of thriving communities and relationships. The works selected from the TBA21 Collection testify to the artistic and ecological ethos of the past two decades of working with artists towards new forms of production, action, inquiry, and environmental conservation.

Following its 10-year exclusive commitment to the Ocean, TBA21–Academy now expands its research practices and methodologies to the Guadalquivir River in Córdoba, exploring its histories and possible futures. The results from its ocean-centered activities, long-term and multi-format research strands, led by artists in dialogue with multiple disciplines and practices, such as policy,

activism, and conservation, are the foundation for a new platform investigating wider bodies of water including rivers and salt marshes. To build on this legacy and share our approach beyond traditional museological standards, we believe that a cultural response is necessary in order to shift paradigms towards more imaginative and regenerative thinking, which in turn will lead to more sustainable and abundant futures. This is how TBA21 seeks to define its future: we aim to shift our practice away from traditional collecting to generous, creative, and engaging programming to lower our carbon footprint and to spark new strategies of cultural emergence.