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Karmic Imprints:

Liberation through seeing

Art exhibition

First of all I would like to thank all the artists for being part of this event. Pulling this exhibition together from all corners of the Tibetan diaspora was quite a feat and wouldn't have been possible without the warmhearted support from the following people: Carolyn Stubbin and Joanna Christy from Perfect Potion for producing this catalogue and taking care of the logistics; the Brisbane Powerhouse team especially Alex Winters, Kevin Stallan and Jane O'Hara; Jennifer Rowe for the research and commentary; Tarun Nagesh; Sal Battaglia; Victoria Parson; Phil Brown; Philip Bacon; Karma Phuntsok; Bronwyn Richards and all the Festival sponsors - many thanks to you all for your encouragement and support.



Love and regards
Tenzin Choeygal
Festival Director



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Chenrezig Institute



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Tashi Norbu
contemporary art

Karmic Imprints:

Liberation through seeing

Karmic Imprints – Liberation through seeing brings artworks from some of the most prominent, sought after and sometimes-controversial contemporary Tibetan artists from around the world to the Festival of Tibet in 2016. This unique exhibition will open a window into the minds of these artists, some of whom have experienced censorship during their careers, and their inspirations of politics and religion and the conflicts and synergies that exist between identity, traditions, spirituality and life in the modern world.

Tibetan and Himalayan artists have recently made a significant impact in the world of contemporary art. Inherent in their works is the desire to address the experience of identifying as Tibetan - a notion that disrupts the modern world's tendency to categorise peoples by geographic boundaries. The experience of living in exile and the reality that several generations of Tibetans have now grown up without ever stepping foot into their homeland is addressed in this exhibition, as well as the ongoing issues arising from the occupation of Tibet, through powerful references such as self-immolation, to the continued evolution of Tibetan Buddhist art and spirituality.

From the rich colours of thangka painting to quiet meditative compositions, the works featured carry an energy and voice for Tibetans, each providing their own spiritual or emotional imprint, releasing their own karmic presence. Karma is created by making free-will choices not in line with your Higher Self. Karma represents moral decisions, concepts, vows, unresolved emotions and attitudes that are held consciously and unconsciously by YOU that create, influence, or magnetize events and experiences into current reality.

Karmic imprints include your past individual karmic imprints, ancestral karmic imprints, parental karmic imprints, as-well-as collective imprints inherited.

This exhibition affords a rare opportunity to explore these concepts through the visual medium, providing a glimpse of a spiritually and intellectually rich traditional culture. Karmic Imprints also showcases the creative and experimental exploration of complex modern identities; such self-expression is largely possible due to the artistic freedoms able to be pursued - and voiced - in exile.

Sonam Dolma Brauen

Born in Tibet in 1953, Sonam Dolma Brauen fled the Chinese occupation by crossing the Himalayan mountains on foot with her family when she was just six years old. After their escape, Sonam joined her parents working in road construction to support the family in India. She began attending school for the first time at age 13. At 19, Sonam and her mother emigrated to Switzerland, where she married Swiss anthropologist and curator Martin Brauen. They have two children. She has since visited Tibet twice but has lived most of her life in Europe where she feels most at home in Switzerland.

Sonam began her artistic training in 1990, studying at Art School Bern with Arthur Freuler, Leopold Schropp, Mariann Bissegger and, most significantly, Serge Fausto Sommer. The majority of her paintings are abstract



illusory appearances following the Buddhist belief that all appearance is ultimately illusory.

After moving to New York City in 2008, where she lived for four years, she began working with installations using various materials and objects. For the biographically-inspired installation, *My Father's Death*, she used folded monk robes and stupa-shaped plaster created from a tsa tsa mould that was among the few things her family brought on their escape to India. Sonam thus created her own space of memoriam for her father, who was a Tibetan monk. It also served as a silent monument for all who have died in exile far away from their homeland.

Sonam has been working for several years on *Yishen*, a very personal series of work that engages intensively with the self-immolations in her native country. Since 2009, more than 150 Tibetans have committed acts of self-immolation, setting fire to themselves to protest as living torches against the increasing repression of their people by the Chinese government. 'Yishen' is a Chinese word that means 'leaving one's body'. In her paintings, Sonam takes up this signal of desperation, which has scarcely received media coverage in the West, carefully exploring the abstraction of intense forlornness and faith in what remains of these people who have gone up in flames.

Sonam Dolma Brauen *Yishen 25: Leaving one's body*
2013, acrylic on canvas; 89 x 64 cm

Dolma Chonzom

Dolma Chonzom was born in 1965 in Darjeeling, India, where she studied a Bachelor of Arts at St Joseph's College. She went on to study Mandarin language in Taipei, Taiwan, which she completed in 1991. Dolma is currently a resident of California, USA.

Dolma's work recently featured in the *Tibet Art Now 2.0* exhibition in Amsterdam, 2015, a platform for some of the leading contemporary Tibetan artists living in exile to promote their work as well as the culture of Tibet as a whole.

Dolma is interested in exploring with colours and multiple layers on canvas without any pre-meditated form. At times, her work is covered with dozens of coats of different colour that may not be obvious on the surface. The multiple layers of paint are, to her, like a visual representation of memory, experience and nostalgia, sometimes visible in fragments or completely covered by new experience or feelings.



Dolma Chonzom (detail from) *Untitled* 2015,
acrylic and ink on board; 76 x 102 cm

Jamyang Dorjee Chakrishar

Jamyang Dorjee Chakrishar was born in Lhasa, Tibet. He learnt the ancient art of Tibetan writing under Lharampa Geshe Lobsang Tharchin, a highly respected Buddhist teacher, at the Central School for Tibetans in Shimla, India. Shortly after graduation, Jamyang returned to Sikkim where his parents lived, and served the Government of Sikkim in the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. In 1993 he began work with the Central Tibetan Administration (in exile) in Dharamsala, serving at first in the Department of Religion and Culture and later as a director of the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts.

In 2001, he became regional coordinator for Trans Himalayan Culture and Arts, an NGO based in Washington DC, where he actively worked at perfecting the art of calligraphy. The startling beauty and detail of Jamyang's calligraphy work comes from his deep devotion to the teachings of Buddha and his love for the Tibetan language. He uses brush and acrylic paints on canvases with the hope that many younger artists will wish to continue to experiment with this medium to develop new artistic forms of expression of Tibetan values.

In 2010, Jamyang produced the longest calligraphy scroll in the world, which measured 163.2 meters. It consists of prayers for longevity composed for His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama by thirty-two spiritual masters of Tibet. It took six months to write the scroll, which contains 65,000 Tibetan characters written in several different calligraphy styles. His calligraphy pieces can be found in the private collections of many eminent personalities in India and the West, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Lodi Gyari Rinpoche, Richard Gere and Lama Zopa Rinpoche.



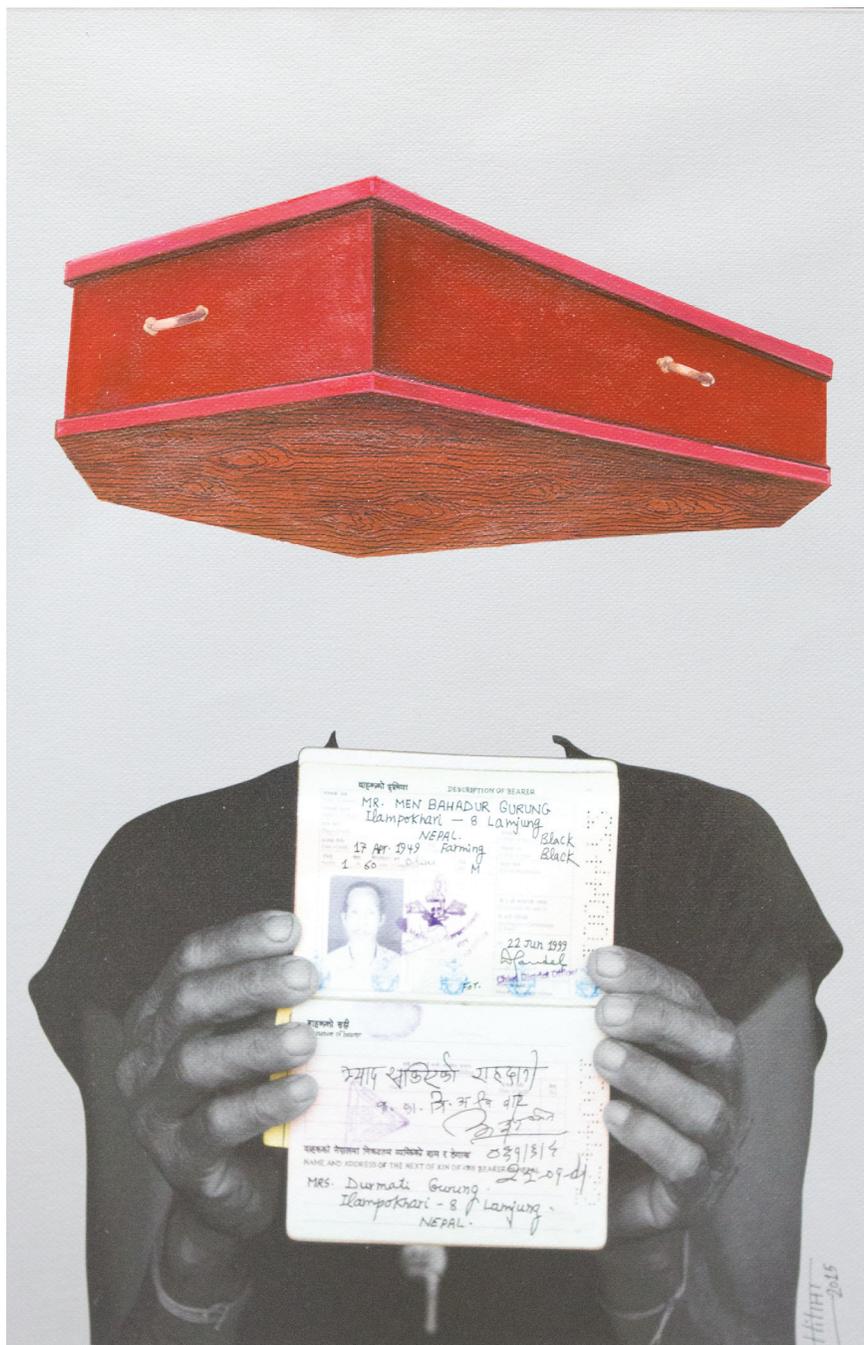
Jamyang Dorjee Chakrishar *The Aura of Compassion*
sumi ink on canvas; 40 x 50 cm

Hit Man Gurung

Born in 1986 in Lamjung, Nepal, Hit Man Gurung is a Kathmandu-based visual artist. He received his Master of Fine of Arts from the Central Department of Fine Art, Tribhuvan University and is a lecturer at Tribhuvan University and other schools. He was a recipient of the Australian Himalayan Foundation Art Award in 2011 and in 2012 was selected to participate in the *2nd Kathmandu International Art Festival*. That same year, he was selected for *Imagining our Future Together* - a project organized by the World Bank Regional Vice Presidency for South Asia and curated by the World Bank Art Program. In 2013 he was granted an arts residency by the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles, at the 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica. He participated in the *International Art Festival 2013* in Copenhagen and in 2014 he participated in *2nd Dhaka Art Summit* represented by Siddhartha Art Gallery. In 2015 Hit Man was selected for the *8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art* at QAGOMA in Australia, representing Nepal for the first time.

Hit Man's work continues to deal with the exploitation of migrant workers from Nepal. The number of deaths among Nepali migrant workers remains highest among Asian countries and continues to grow. Three or four coffins arrive at Nepal's international airport each day. Hit Man's work reflects the hopes and aspirations of migrant workers as well as the misery of death often experienced by the families of those who never return.

Hit Man is co-founder of Artree Nepal, a contemporary art space. Since the April 2015 earthquake, he has been working closely with communities affected by the disaster and led an art therapy camp in the Everest region for more than 300 school children. The Australian Himalayan Foundation funded the camp as a form of post-earthquake trauma therapy, part of over a decade of efforts to provide critical health and education services to remote mountain communities in Nepal. The Australian Himalayan Foundation has been working to provide critical health and education services to remote mountain communities in Nepal for over twelve years.



Hit Man Gurung | *I Have to Feed Myself, My Family and My Country* 2015,
acrylic on documentary photograph; 29.7 x 42 cm

Gonkar Gyatso

Gonkar Gyatso was born in Tibet in 1961 and grew up during the Cultural Revolution, which saw the suppression and destruction of art forms that did not coincide with Mao's ideological program. Years later, while studying traditional Chinese brush painting in Beijing, Gyatso came to appreciate the distinctiveness of his Tibetan heritage. After graduating, he studied traditional Tibetan thangka painting in Dharamsala, India. In 1985, he founded the Sweet Tea House in Lhasa, Tibet, the first Tibetan avant-garde artists' association. In 1996 he received a full scholarship to study in the United Kingdom at Central Saint Martin's and Chelsea College of Art and Design. In 2003 he established a London gallery for contemporary Tibetan art, also known as the Sweet Tea House.

Much of Gyatso's work charts subtle shifts in identity and belonging caused by migration and diasporic experiences, traversing the hybrid nature of resettlement by fusing different cultures and traditions. His work also explores issues of globalisation, consumerism and mass-media culture. It moves through traditional Chinese

brush techniques and Buddhist iconography to high-density pop collages of colourful stickers and cut-out text, playing on but subverting typecast notions of Pop Art and Tibetan culture while reflecting on the popularity of Buddhism in the West.

Gyatso was the recipient of a Leverhelm Fellowship in 2003 and was an artist in residence at Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University. Gyatso's work has been exhibited in major galleries and events around the world such as the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel; City Gallery, New Zealand; Institute of Modern Art, Australia; Rubin Museum of Art, New York; Chinese National Art Gallery, Beijing; Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art; Courtauld Institute of Art, London; Burger Collection, Switzerland; Wereldmuseum, Rotterdam; QAGOMA, Australia; Griffith University Art Gallery, Australia and University of Queensland Art Museum, Australia. He has participated in the *53rd Venice Biennial*, Italy; *6th Asia Pacific Triennial*, Australia and *17th Sydney Biennale*, Australia.



Gonkar Gyatso *My Identity 1* 2003, archival inkjet print; 83 x 62 cm



Gonkar Gyatso *My Identity 2* 2003, archival inkjet print; 83 x 62 cm



Gonkar Gyatso *My Identity 3* 2003, archival inkjet print; 83 x 62 cm



Gonkar Gyatso *My Identity 4* 2003, archival inkjet print; 83 x 62 cm

Judy Holding

Judy Holding is a contemporary Australian visual artist whose works on paper, sculptures and installations feature rich imagery drawn from her surrounding landscape. Holding, who is currently Melbourne based, has been practising for over 25 years and in this time has exhibited her work extensively both nationally and internationally. In 1977 Holding completed a Diploma of Fine Art (Painting) at Monash University. Since 1979, she has consistently travelled to the Northern Territory to observe and document indigenous ritual practices, social structures and spiritual beliefs. Her abiding interest in the landscape and people continuously informs her work. Holding regularly visits the monsoonal escarpment country of the Kakadu region of the Northern Territory and her imagery springs from her lived experience of the mystery of the Australian landscape. Her works also represent a meditation on how we, as members of an industrialised and modern nation state, relate to the natural environment.

Holding has developed a sensual language of colour and symbols – a repertoire of shapes and signs that are repeated and reconfigured in suites of paintings, drawings, cut outs and three dimensional objects. Shapes and contours coupled with Holding's use of loaded colour emphasise the underlying energy of the prevailing atmosphere. Her works are about feeling the energy of place; the distance and relation between places; and communicating the underlying force that exists within the ancient Australian landscape.



Judy Holding (detail from) *Bindi Birds* 2014, cut and painted paper on Nepali lokta paper; 50 x 76 cm

In response to her time in the Himalayan region Holding's work makes an environmental statement about the natural beauty of the region and its fragility. She chooses birds that live throughout Nepal and Tibet and focuses on their distinctive silhouettes. She paints sheets of thin paper, cutting out birds with a scalpel, creating an energy across the picture plane by their placement. The use of bindis localises the images and adds beauty.

Judy Holding exhibits regularly throughout Australia, and is represented by Alcaston Gallery in Melbourne, Beaver Galleries in Canberra and Stella Downer Fine Art in Sydney.

Tulku Jamyang

Born in Kathmandu in 1977, Tulku Jamyang Gyatso (“TJ”) is a contemporary Tibetan artist residing in his home country of Nepal. Since childhood, TJ was trained in traditional Tibetan art from his father, Ugen Dorjee, a renowned thangka painter. He was also taught traditional Tibetan calligraphy while living in a Buddhist monastery as a monk. Recognized as a reincarnated Tulku (Tibetan spiritual teacher) at two years of age, TJ has unique life experiences of intensive monastic Buddhist training in southern India and extensive international travels as a Buddhist teacher.

TJ began working in visual arts only in the last few years, and his dedication to spirituality and Tibetan Buddhism is clearly expressed in all of his work. His art is influenced by his brother Tsherin Sherpa, a fellow contemporary Tibetan artist, both merging the sacred with the mundane. TJ also finds further artistic inspiration from the works of Andy Warhol, Joseph Beuys, and Gerhard Richter. Many of his works are created through the unique practice of burning holes in rice paper with incense and overlaying the resulting pockmarked paper with colourful compositions – a simple yet exacting process that results in a visually stunning effect. The method emerges from a philosophical fascination with the dichotomous tension between the simultaneously constructive action of creating an artwork and destructive action of burning and physically destroying parts of the support material.



Tulku Jamyang Rang Tsal: *Self manifestation* 2015, rice paper burned with incense and acrylic colour laid over black rice paper 45.5 x 46.5 cm

Surendra Maharjan

An upcoming artist in Nepal, Surendra Maharjan is a Kathmandu-based visual artist. He received his Master of Fine Arts from the Central Department of Fine Art, Tribhuvan University, in 2014. His choice of media is print-making, which he believes has a meditative effect. The work Surendra produces is mostly autobiographical and reads as an expression of his subconscious. His art is a reflection on his life, memories and actions and is generally recognised through its darker hues of blue, brown and burnt orange. Surendra's works are rendered in high detail with the foreground and background seeming to blend together.

In recognition of his outstanding work as a printmaker he was awarded the Australian Himalayan Foundation Art Award scholarship in 2014, which provided him with the means to acquire, explore and experiment with new materials, textures and subjects.

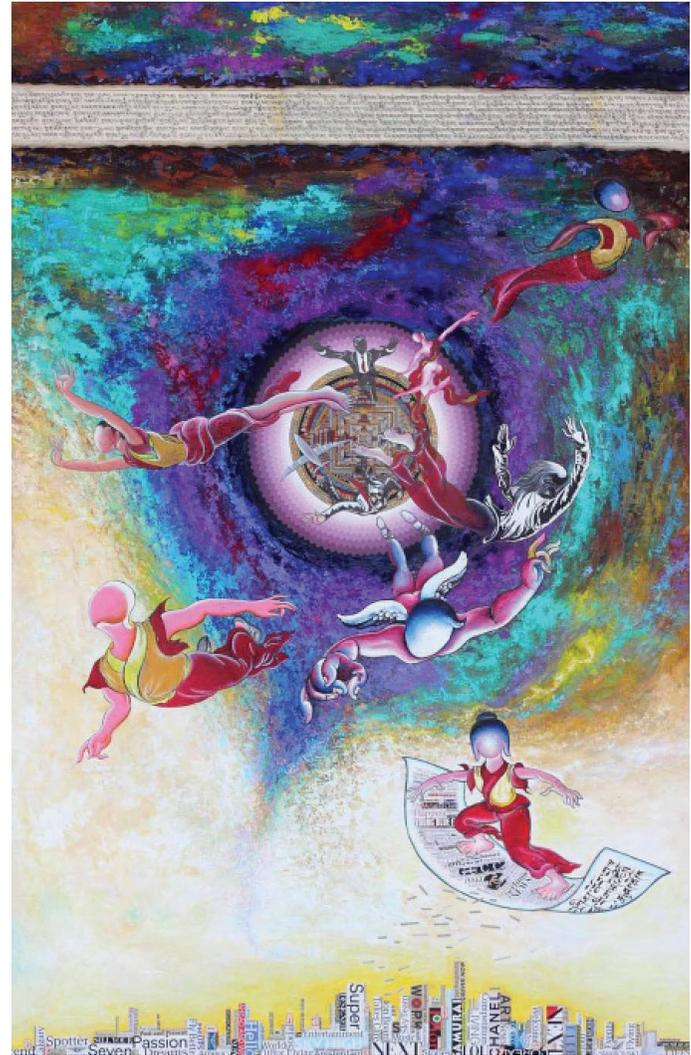


Surendra Maharjan *Inside Out* 2013, etching on zinc plate
(limited edition of 15 prints); 45 x 57 cm

Tashi Norbu

Tashi Norbu is a Tibetan contemporary artist who was born in Bhutan in 1974. He was educated as a traditional Tibetan thangka painter at the offices of the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, India, and completed his art studies in the Western world at the Saint Lucas Academy of Visual Arts in Ghent, Belgium. This enabled him to be close to the contemporary art he admired, and sometimes even to hold it in his hands. While he is now a Belgian citizen, Tashi Norbu has lived and worked in the Netherlands since 2007. In 2008, he co-founded Tibet House Holland for Tibetan Art and Culture. In co-operation with the international Tibetan Art Movement Foundation, he organized the *Tibet Art Now* exhibition in Amsterdam in 2009. He operates his own art studio, 9 Pillars, in Wormer, a village close to Amsterdam.

Tashi Norbu has developed into an all-round and versatile contemporary artist; yet his art still shows the fundamentals/basics of his background - Tibet and Buddhism - combined with strong influences from Western art forms, Western ideas and modern icons. His work is exhibited in and represented by the Wereldmuseum (Museum of Ethnographic Art) and Kunstcentrum Zaandam in the Netherlands; Tibet House, New York and Huis van Alijn museum in Ghent, Belgium.



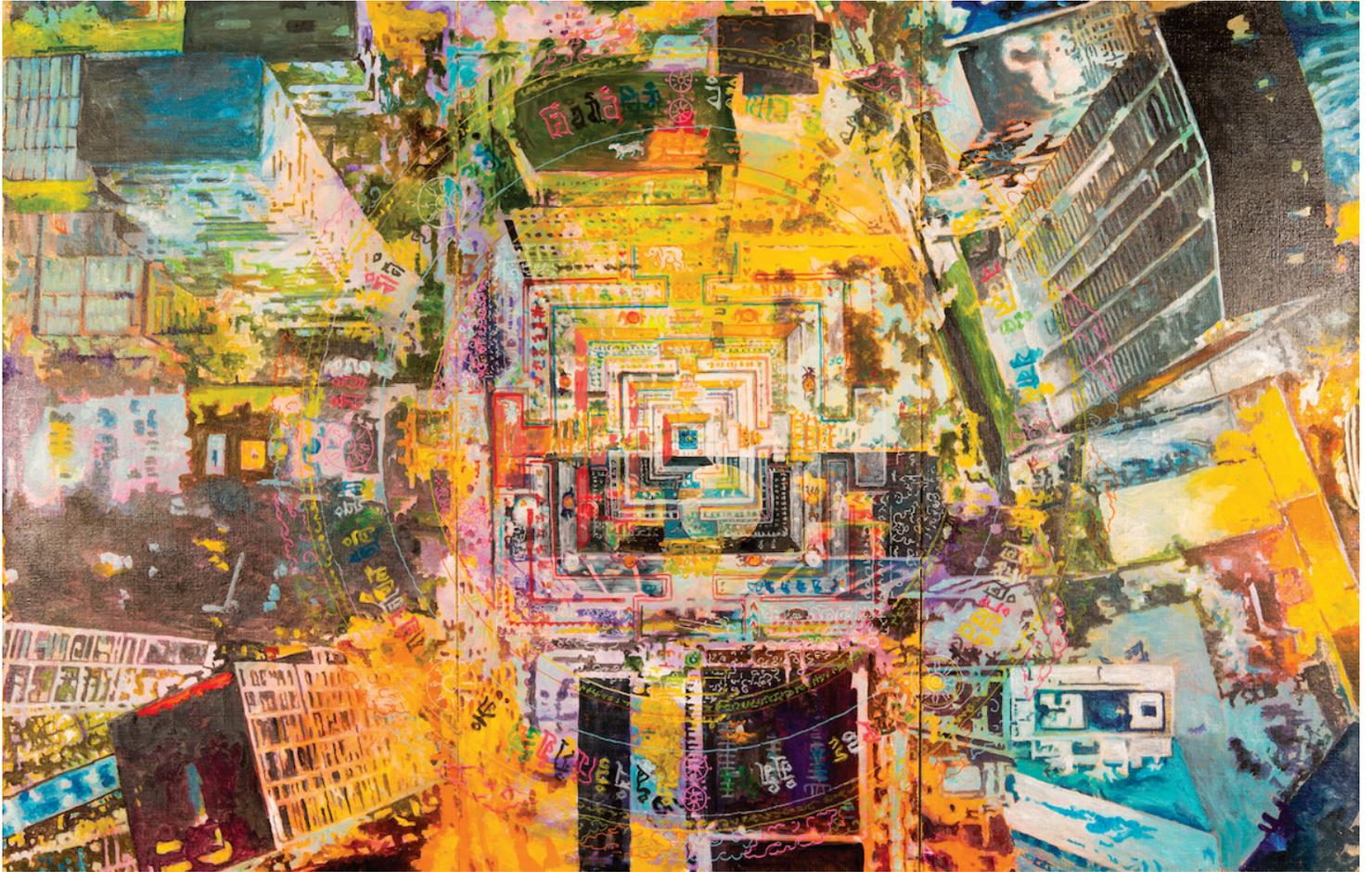
Tashi Norbu *Time Traveller 2* 2015, digital print on aluminium finished with clear acrylate; 80.5 x 118 cm

Karma Phuntsok

Internationally acclaimed artist Karma Phuntsok was born in 1952 in Lhasa, Tibet. In 1959 his family fled their home in the sacred Jokhang Temple area of the capital after the unsuccessful uprising against Chinese occupation escaping into India as refugees and settling in the northern state of Sikkim. He studied drawing and painting through his school years and in 1973 moved to Nepal to study with a master of traditional Tibetan thangka painting. In 1981 Karma migrated to Australia and now lives in the “Bush” north of Kyogle, New South Wales, with his wife.

An early commission in Australia was undertaken as artist-in-residence at Chenrezig Institute, a Buddhist centre on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland between 1982 and 1984. There Karma embellished the meditation hall (gonpa) with hundreds of colourful images and taught students the skills of traditional thangka painting. He completed another residency at the Vajradhara Gonpa in northern New South Wales between 1985 and 1989. Since then he has developed an extensive repertoire of individual and group exhibitions in Australia and throughout the world.

Although traditionally trained, Karma applies a range of innovative techniques and materials in his work, creating unique and dynamic expressions of contemporary Buddhist Art. He often creates futuristic expressions using his time-honoured craft. Karma’s recent paintings are mostly experiments based on Tibetan Buddhist deities, interweaving traditional techniques and symbols with modern inspirations such as built cityscapes, natural landscapes and Australian flora and fauna. His many influential works dealing with more political themes such as the Chinese occupation of Tibet and proliferation of Tibetan self-immolations in recent years have notably been the subject of academic publications analysing influential pieces of Tibetan contemporary art. Karma’s art is featured in collections around the world, including the Queensland Art Gallery and the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Australia. His highly sought-after paintings are collected world-wide, and published in various books and magazines.



Karma Phuntsok *City Mandala* 2016, acrylic on linen; 122 x 80 cm

Karma Sicho

Karma Sicho was born in Tibet and was raised and educated in the Tibetan Children's Village school (TCV) in Dharamsala, India. He received formal training in thangka painting at the Centre for Tibetan Arts and Crafts in Dharamshala (now part of Norbulingka Cultural Institute) under the guidance of renowned thangka painter master Rinzin Paljor, who was one of the main Potala court painters in Tibet and continues to work directly for His Holiness the Dalai Lama in exile. After graduating in 1993, Karma has mainly worked as an independent artist on commissions from individuals, monasteries and schools. He devotes much of his time and energy to various political activities within the Tibetan community

in exile, as well as to the study of the diverse Tibetan thangka painting styles and contemporary art forms.

In 2007 Karma Sicho and his wife founded Dolls4Tibet, a Dharamsala-based business producing handmade dolls that Tibetan children can culturally identify with. The project provides a socially aware, supportive training and working environment for vulnerable Tibetan women refugees under a fair trade model, while encouraging cross-cultural understanding and social integration with local Indian women who are also employed at the centre. Dolls4Tibet now makes a variety of Tibetan doll styles reflecting different regional costumes and traditional

ways of life as part of their efforts to help preserve diverse aspects of Tibetan culture. The workshop is also used as an open space for experimental creative art projects, including the *Tibetan Fusion Arts Performance* series featuring an ever evolving line-up of guest artists, including prominent Tibetan writers and renowned Tibetan musicians from around the world. During every visual arts performance, Karma paints a new canvas that is auctioned at the end of the event.

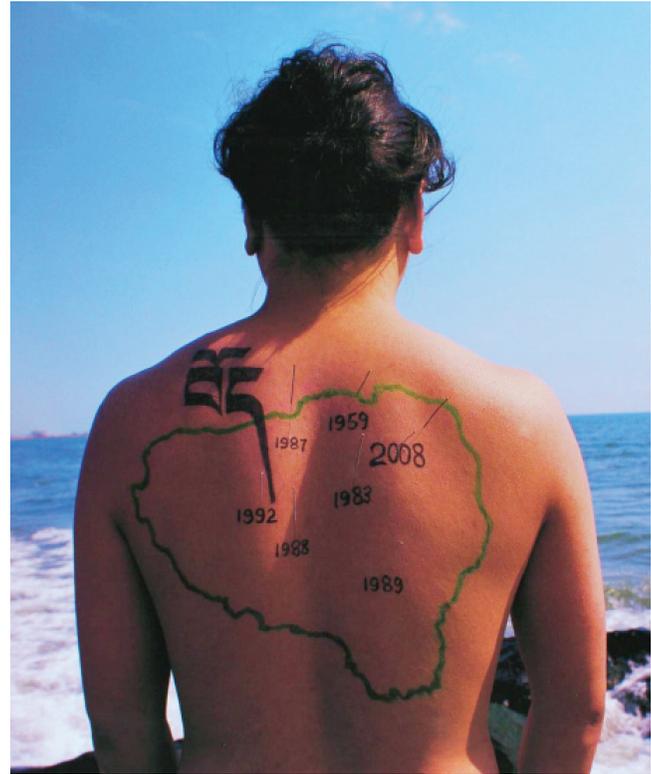


Karma Sicho *In Search of Common Ground*
2016, acrylic on canvas; 104 x 76 cm

Tenzing Rigdol

Born in 1982 in Kathmandu, Nepal, Tenzing Rigdol has studied an extensive range of artistic traditions and contemporary forms of creative expression. Rigdol's formal training began in 1997 when he learned Tibetan carpet design in Dharamsala, India. In 1998 he studied classical painting under Tsering Yankey in Tibet. Rigdol attended the School of Tibetan Tangka Painting in Nepal in 1999 where he studied under master painters Phenpo Tenzin Dhargay and Tenzin Gawa. In 2001 he learned Tibetan sand painting, butter sculpture and Buddhist doctrine at Shakhar Choten Monastery in Nepal. His family were granted political asylum in the USA in 2002. In 2003 he earned a diploma in traditional Tibetan thangka painting and in 2005 was awarded a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting and drawing and a Bachelor of Arts in art history at the University of Colorado, USA.

Rigdol's broad portfolio of work ranges from painting, sculpture, drawing and collage, to digital video-installation, spoken and written poetry, performance art and site-specific pieces. His paintings are the products of collective influences and interpretations of age-old traditions. They are influenced by philosophy, often capturing the ongoing issues of human conflict and have strong political undertones – for him, politics is an unavoidable element in his art. Perhaps his most ambitious project to date was the widely reported *Our Land, Our People* project in 2011, which involved the covert transportation of 20 tonnes of soil out of Tibet, through Nepal, to Dharamsala. There, displaced Tibetans were given the opportunity to walk on their home soil once again. The



Tenzing Rigdol *Unhealed*, archival inkjet print; 63 x 71 cm

journey to smuggle the soil across borders is documented in *Bringing Tibet Home*, an award-winning documentary directed by Tenzin Tsetan Choklay.

Rigdol exhibits internationally and his artworks are included in public and private collections around the world. In 2014 Rigdol became one of only two contemporary Tibetan artists to be included in the exhibition *Tibet and India: New Beginnings* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. His work *Pin Drop Silence: Eleven-Headed Avalokitesvara* was also the first work by a contemporary Tibetan artist to be acquired by the Met.

Tsherin Sherpa

Tsherin Sherpa was born in Kathmandu, Nepal, in 1968 and was trained from a young age in the art of traditional Tibetan thangka painting under the guidance of his father, Urgen Dorje, a renowned tangka artist from Nyalam, Tibet. After six years of formal training, Tsherin travelled to Taiwan to study Mandarin Chinese and computer science. He then returned to Nepal and resumed working with his father, painting both tangkas and wall murals. Tsherin travelled to the United States in 1998 and worked as an artist and instructor at the Healing Buddha Center in California. He currently lives in Oakland, California.

Tsherin's precise and immaculate paintings of Tibetan spirits and deities are explorations of the detachment experienced by the Tibetan diaspora in relation to their homeland. Through the lens of the Tibetan diaspora, his work simultaneously deals with the preservation and transformation of a scattered culture by bridging the sacred and secular, past history and contemporary experience. Tsherin's own experiences of identity and adaptation are explored by experimentation with the

deconstruction and abstraction of traditional Buddhist iconography. He is curious about, as cultures intertwine, how a unique essence can be maintained, celebrated and shared while integrating the benefits found within the surroundings of a new culture.

Tsherin Sherpa's work has been included in numerous exhibitions around the world, including most recently the *8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, 2015, at QAGOMA, Australia; *Scorching Sun of Tibet*, 2010, at Songzhuang Art Museum, Beijing; *Tradition Transformed – Tibetan Artists Respond*, 2010, at the Rubin Museum of Art, New York; *Anonymous*, 2013/2014, at the Samuel Dorsky Museum and the Queens Museum of Art, New York; *Freedom... just another word*, 2014, at Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, USA; and the *Dhaka Art Summit*, 2014, Bangladesh. He has also completed residencies at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and the Dharamsala International Artists Workshop and was awarded the Himalayan Fellowship by the Rubin Museum of Art in 2010 completing it at the Vermont Studio Center, USA.



Tsherin Sherpa *All Things Considered* 2015, archival ink with gold leaf on Somerset paper (comprising two panels); 83 x 32 cm

Chungpo Tsering

Chungpo Tsering was born in Dhingri, Tibet and as a child studied at the Tibetan Children's Village school (TCV) and the Vocational Training Centre in Dharamsala, India. He then travelled to Nepal to work as a carpet designer in a number of well-known carpet factories, contributing designs for international carpet collectors. In 2001, he produced his first solo exhibition, *Charcoal Paintings*, at Indigo Gallery – the first solo exhibition by a Tibetan contemporary artist in Nepal. It captured the attention of major national news outlets and was praised for a unique aesthetic, blending politics and art.

Chungpo went on to open his own gallery, the Gallery of Modern Art, in 2004 to support other Tibetan and Nepali artists. However, after three successful years the gallery was forced to close due to censorship of artworks of a political nature following intervention from the Chinese Embassy and a popular Maoist group in Nepal. In that same year, Chungpo received an invitation from the Korean Ministry of Arts and Culture for a one-year residency program hosted by the Korean National University of Art in Seoul. After completion of his residency he travelled to the United States where he received political asylum as a Tibetan refugee artist. At present he lives and works in California.

Chungpo Tsering's works have been collected by prominent private figures, such as former US President, Bill Clinton, and Donald Rubin, director of the Rubin Museum in New York. His artworks have been exhibited throughout the United States and abroad, including Hong Kong, Thailand, Nepal and Korea.



Chungpo Tsering *Selfie* 2015, original - charcoal on paper (limited edition of 15 prints); 101 x 132 cm

Pema Tshering

Growing up in Bhutan, a country entrenched in traditional Buddhist art, Pema wants to free Buddhist concepts from the regulations of traditional representation. In his work, he tries to liberate the Bhutanese Buddhist eye, removing the grids, for the viewer to see new creative dimensions. Pema wants to explore how thoughts, people, colours, ideas, and beliefs collide, relate, and become one another, and the spaces and questions in between. Pema's interest in art started as a young child. He joined VAST (Voluntary Artist Studio, located in the capital Thimphu) as a 13-year-old where his training deeply shaped his development as an artist. He is one of the founding members and continues to participate in the studio as a teacher and mentor.

Recently, Pema was a recipient of the Australian Himalayan Foundation Art Award, which provides financial support for a select number of emerging artists from the Himalaya for the period of one year culminating in a major exhibition in Kathmandu. Sale of these works goes to supporting future Art Award recipients, creating a fully sustainable arts program.

Pema's art explores Buddhist spiritualism - its manifestations in everyday objects, portraits, symbols, life, and human landscapes of faith. One of his favourite paintings, *Orange Abstract*, envisions the soft hues of enlightenment suggested within natural and human scenery.



Pema Tshering *Orange Abstract*,
Acrylic on canvas; 65 x 95 cm

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