

MEDIA RELEASE

Prajakta Potnis: The Slow Burn

**Opens February 16th at New Media Artspace,
Baruch College, CUNY**



Prajakta Potnis, *The Slow Burn*, 2020.
Images courtesy of the artist.

NEW YORK, NY- February 6, 2021 — [The New Media Artspace](#) proudly presents the online solo exhibition *Prajakta Potnis: The Slow Burn*, a sequence of images and videos hearkening from various distinct bodies of work from this versatile, interdisciplinary Mumbai-based artist. The exhibition is curated by Katherine Behar, Associate Professor of New Media Arts, and is sponsored by the Sandra Kahn Wasserman Jewish Studies Center.

Prajakta Potnis: The Slow Burn will be on view from February 16, 2021, through May 7, 2021, at the New Media Artspace website, [newmediartspace.info](#). The Wasserman Jewish Studies Center and the New Media Artspace will host an online public artist lecture on Tuesday, April 20, 2021, from 8:30 to 9:45 P.M. Please visit [newmediartspace.info](#) to register for this public event.

The New Media Artspace will host a casual online discussion with the artist for Baruch students on Friday, March 19, 2021, from 1:15 to 2:15 P.M. Members of the public who wish to attend may RSVP to newmediaartspace@gmail.com.

In this interactive exhibition, as users advance through Potnis's works, they stitch together an enigmatic narrative in which the shifting, unseen protagonist is someone or something taking shape in a domestic surround. Intentionally staged through the now-routine mediation of digital distance, the exhibition interface leverages everyday digital touches—taps on the phone or clicks on a screen—to progress the narrative; as well as to inquire into how, as people come to think twice before touching, the current pandemic is transforming the intimacy of touch and tactility.

Numerous works incorporate elements of interiors and feature domestic appliances. For example, photographs from Potnis's *Capsule Series* (2016) show surreal landscapes that the artist painstakingly staged and photographed inside of frostbitten freezers and refrigerators. Recontextualized in *The Slow Burn*, these whimsical images of reconfigured frozen spaces and miniature landscapes now appear like a kind of misrecognition of the (over)familiar sites and sights of lockdown.

The Slow Burn also includes a series of X-ray images and gouache drawings that were originally included in *A Body Without Organs* (2019), an uncannily prescient series that Potnis created from 2018–2019 and debuted in early 2020, right before the global COVID-19 pandemic seized hold. Notably, these works include X-ray films that appear to show lungs infected by an alien presence. The series was inspired by Potnis's uncle, whose lungs were contaminated by trace chemicals inhaled in the detergent factory where he labored throughout his working life. Like the apparitional moments of misrecognition in her freezer images, the X-rays show how *the familiar is alien* since, on closer inspection, these images are composed of ordinary household objects, like steel wool and beads, which Potnis carefully arrayed on the X-ray plates to *appear* as lungs.

While initially intended to be about the plight of the laboring body under capitalism, these radiological images cannot help but evoke the medical imagery showing evidence of lung scarring among COVID-19 patients. Potnis links the frailty of the human body to its susceptibility to disease on the one hand and to its suffering under the greed of capitalist states on the other. In point of fact, this is also the crux of the pandemic's brutality. The disease COVID-19 is indeed ravishing, but its incommensurate deadly impacts across race, class, nation, etc., are the direct and unmistakable consequence of the violence of racial capitalism. Indeed this "scorched earth" ruthlessness of capitalism burns slowly too.

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Prajakta Potnis's practice sails through painting, site-specific sculptural installations to public art interventions. She has extensively shown her works since 2001 nationally in India and internationally throughout Europe, Asia, and North America.

Her solo projects include *A Body Without Organs*, Project 88, Mumbai (2020), *When the wind blows*, Project 88, Mumbai (2016), *Kitchen Debate* at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2014), *Time Lapse* at The Guild art gallery Mumbai and *Local Time* at Experiment, er, Kolkata (2012), *Porous walls*, The Guild art gallery, Mumbai (2008), *Membranes and Margins*, at Em gallery, South Korea (2008), and *Walls in between* (2006) at The Guild art gallery. She did an extensive project commissioned by The Sharjah Art Foundation as part of *A Tripoli Agreement* curated by Renan Laruan in collaboration with Air Arabia and The Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, in 2018. Potnis's work appears in numerous books, and she has been awarded multiple international residencies. She won the Umrao Singh Shergil Grant for Photography 2016-17, and her work is held in the collection of *Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg*.

In addition, she has participated in numerous significant international exhibitions, including *Now is the time-25 years collection Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg* (2019) and *Facing India: India from a female point of view* (2018), both at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg; Kochi-Muziris Biennale curated by Jitish Kalat, Kochi, India (2014); the traveling exhibitions *Indian Highway IV*, at Mac Lyon Museum of contemporary art Lyon, France (2011), *Indian highway III* at the Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark (2010), and *Indian highway II* at the Astrup Fearnley Museum, Norway (2010); among many others.

Prajakta Potnis: The Slow Burn is curated by Katherine Behar, Associate Professor in the Fine and Performing Arts Department in the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, Baruch College, CUNY. The exhibition is generously sponsored by the Sandra Kahn Wasserman Jewish Studies Center under the co-directorship of Professors Jessica Lang and Andrew Sloin. The exhibition is produced by the New Media Artspace Student Docent Team and is made possible further by support from the Baruch Computing and Technology Center (BCTC), the Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, and the Newman Library. All images appear courtesy of the artist and Project 88.

Gallery Location: New Media Artspace at Baruch College, Library and Information Building, 151 E. 25th Street, New York, NY 10010

Gallery Hours: The New Media Artspace is open to the CUNY community during regular library hours. Members of the public may request access to the New Media Artspace at the security desk at the second floor entrance to the library. For this week's public hours, please check the gallery website: www.newmediartspace.info or dial a docent at 646-312-1664.

The New Media Artspace is a teaching exhibition space in the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Baruch College, CUNY. Housed in the Newman Library, the New Media Artspace showcases curated experimental media and interdisciplinary artworks by international artists, students, alumni, and faculty.

About Baruch College:

[Baruch College](http://www.baruch.cuny.edu) is a senior college in the [City University of New York \(CUNY\)](http://www.cuny.edu) with a total enrollment of more than 17,000 students, who represent 160 countries and speak more than 100 languages. Ranked among the top 15% of U.S. colleges and is the No. 4th public regional university, Baruch College is regularly recognized as among the most ethnically diverse colleges in the country. As a public institution with a tradition of academic excellence, Baruch College offers accessibility and opportunity for students from every corner of New York City and from around the world. For more about Baruch College, go to [http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/](http://www.baruch.cuny.edu).

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