



**Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum**

presents

***One Hundred Thousand Suns***

**By Rohini Devasher**

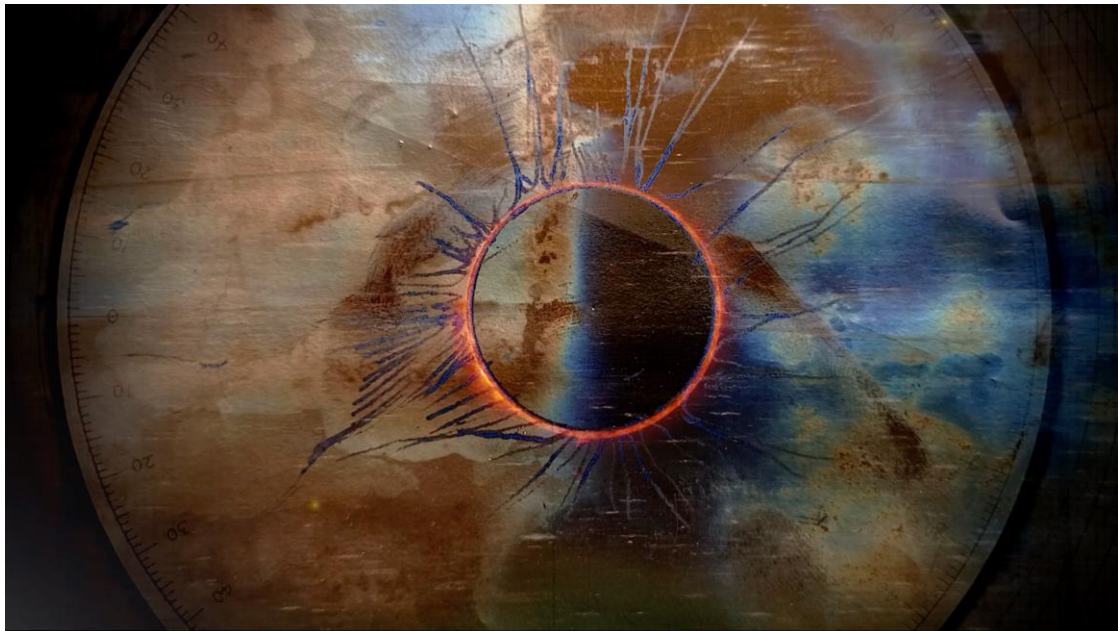
**Curated by Tasneem Zakaria Mehta**

**In collaboration with Project88**

**Preview: Tuesday, 12 November 2024, 5:30 pm**

On view from 14 Nov to 20 Dec 2024 | 10 am – 5:30 pm

Special Project Space, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai



Rohini Devasher, *One Hundred Thousand Suns*, film still, 2023.

The Dr Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum is pleased to announce ***One Hundred Thousand Suns***, the debut screening of Rohini Devasher's compelling and immersive four channel video installation in India, curated by Tasneem Zakaria Mehta at the Special Project Space, Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum. Conceived in collaboration with Project 88, this solo exhibition also features Devasher's Sol Drawings, Shadow Portraits and Skywatch, a series of embellished copper works, adorned with markings inspired by solar phenomena. Deutsche Bank's 'Artist of the Year' for 2024, Rohini Devasher's rigorous and research-driven body of work chronicles a decade of her practice as an eclipse chaser and amateur astronomer, as she delves into the intersections of science, art, and philosophy. For Devasher, the key to exploring new cosmologies between the human and the non-human lies in examining the interplay between place, observer, and observation.

The focal point of this exhibition, Devasher's *One Hundred Thousand Suns* explores four distinct dimensions of the Sun: material, ephemeral, personal, and geographic. Driven by more than 157,000 portraits of our nearest star, observed over 120 years, this audio visual work centers on the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory in India, where every day since 1901 staff have recorded images of the Sun. Through the observatory's archival material, combined with public domain images from NASA and the artist's own data – photographs, drawings, videos, and interviews with eclipse chasers – Devasher explores the complexities of observational astronomy and the ways in which 'seeing' is strange, wondrous, and more ambiguous than one might imagine.

This screening marks the culmination of the transcontinental debut of *One Hundred Thousand Suns*; Devasher's film was previously exhibited at The Minnesota Street Project Foundation (MSP) in San Francisco, California, and at Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht, Netherlands, the Kunsthalle Bern and subsequently at the PalaisPopulaire, Berlin. The exhibition will also focus on a new series of works on copper, a metal forged in the hearts of massive stars, which catapulted onto our planet more than four billion years ago. *Shadow Portraits* are intimate portraits of eclipses past and those yet to come, rendered in copper and fumage or the impressions made by candle smoke. Inspired by images of sunspots and other solar phenomena, *Sol Drawings* translate these observations more closely and deeply. While the two *Skywatch* pieces are drawings of a solar analemma on copper that explore the duality between the stillness of the image and the movement of time. Transformed through interventions like fumage, acid wash, and embossment, these intricate and luminous panels invite close-looking and contemplation.

The exhibition has particular resonance with the Museum, which was established in 1855 as the 'Central Museum of Natural History, Economy, Geology, Industry, and Arts.' Initially located at the Town Barracks, the Museum featured telescopes for meteorological and astronomical observations. Dr George Buist (1805-1860), who was the first curator of the Museum, made a significant contribution through his astronomical observations and writings in the 19th century and also headed the first observatory in Mumbai established by the East India Company, the Colaba Observatory, from January 1842 until March 1845.

One Hundred Thousand Suns was commissioned by Data as Culture at the Open Data Institute (ODI) as part of an Evidence & Foresight online artists' residency 2021-22. Part of the research for this piece was made possible as part of Five Million Incidents, 2019-2020 supported by Goethe Institut / Max Mueller Bhavan, New Delhi, in collaboration with Raqs Media Collective

### **About Rohini Devasher**

Working with video, painting, printmaking, drawing, installation, and other mediums, Rohini Devasher (b. 1978, New Delhi, India) maps the complexities of ecology, cosmology, and technology. The theoretical grounding of her work draws from the history of science, philosophy, speculative fiction, and eco-horror. Her work has been shown at the Palaispopulaire, Berlin (2024) Minnesota Street Project Foundation, San Francisco (2024), Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco (2024), Kunsthalle Bern, (2024), Museum Catharijneconvent Utrecht, Netherlands (2024), Tai Kwun Contemporary (2023), Macao International Art Biennale (2023), Collegium Helveticum, Zurich (2023), Warehouse 421, Abu Dhabi (2023), the Open Data Institute London (2022), Rubin Museum, New York (2021- 22), the Sea Art Festival, Busan (2021), Vienna Academy of Fine Art (2021), the Kunst Leuven City Festival (2021) the 14th Sharjah Biennial (2019), Kaserne Basel (2019) Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) (2018), 7th Moscow Biennial (2017), the Spencer Museum of Art USA (2018,16), MAAT Museum of Art and Technology, Lisbon (2016), ZKM, Karlsruhe (2016), Bhau Daji Lad City Museum in Mumbai (2016, 2018), Whitechapel Gallery, London (2016) among others.

She was recently a 2023 dual resident in Arts at CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) in Geneva, Switzerland, and at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS-TIFR) in Bengaluru, India as part of Connect India, a collaboration between Arts at CERN and the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. Most recently, she is the recipient of the Deutsche Bank's 'Artist of the Year' award for 2024, culminating in her ongoing solo exhibition, Borrowed Light, at PalaisPopulaire, Berlin.

Devasher's past residencies include Cove Park, in Cove, Scotland (2022); London's Open Data Institute (2021–22); Spencer Museum of Art in Lawrence, Kansas (2016); the Anthropocene Campus at Berlin's Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HWK) (2016); the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum (2014); the Glasgow Print Studio (2014); and the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin (2012). In 2018, she spent 26 days as an artist-in-residence on an oil tanker traveling from Fiji to Singapore as part of The Owner's Cabin Residency Program.

Rohini Devasher holds a BFA in painting from New Delhi's College of Art and an MA in printmaking from the Winchester School of Art at the University of Southampton in the UK. She is co-represented by Gallery Wendi Norris in San Francisco, California, and Project 88 in Mumbai, India.

## About Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum

The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum is Mumbai's first museum, established in 1857, and is the erstwhile Victoria and Albert Museum, Bombay. The Museum building and collections underwent a comprehensive restoration, spearheaded by the Tasneem Zakaria Mehta as Convenor of the Mumbai Chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). It was supported by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai and the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation. It opened to the public in 2008, and has pioneered contemporary art and design which is presented in the extraordinary 19th-century building, one of the finest in India, in an attempt to rethink the cannon and challenge colonial and enlightenment precepts.

The Museum was built to showcase the city's contemporary art and craftsmanship of the 19th and early 20th centuries, through a rare collection of fine and decorative arts of India. The Museum's robust exhibition and outreach programme invites artists to engage with these collections and archives and interrogate its founding principles. Over 85 exhibitions have been presented, which include collaborations with both local and international institutions and organisations. Past exhibitions have showcased contemporary creative practices in design, crafts and textiles, architecture, urbanism, and film and video art.

**Tasneem Zakaria Mehta, Managing Trustee and Director**, is an art historian, curator, designer, conservationist, and cultural activist. She is the former Vice Chairman and Mumbai Convenor of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and has successfully pioneered the revival and restoration of several cultural sites in Mumbai. She conceptualized, curated, designed, and implemented the restoration and revitalization of the Museum, which won UNESCO's 2005 Asia Pacific Award of Excellence for Cultural Restoration. She has curated several path breaking exhibitions at the Museum. She has written and edited several articles and books on art and culture. Her latest book – 'Mumbai- A City Through Objects', 101 stories from the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum' was co-published by Harper Design and released in May 2022 to mark the Museum's 150th Anniversary, has won several awards including Art Book of the Year.

The exhibition is on view at:

### **Special Project Space, Museum Plaza,**

Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Botanical Udyan and Zoo (Rani Bagh), 91-A, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Road, Byculla (E), Mumbai – 400027

Timings: 10 am to 5:30 pm | Closed all Wednesdays and certain public holidays

Free entry

For more information about the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum, please visit [www.bdlmuseum.org](http://www.bdlmuseum.org)

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bdlmuseum/>

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BDLMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/BDLMuseum)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BDLMuseum>

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Kindly note that the main Museum building is currently closed due to essential repairs.