

SAJAN MANI

b. 1981, Keralam, South India

Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Sajan Mani is an intersectional artist hailing from a family of rubber tappers in a remote village in the northern part of Keralam, South India. His work voices the issues of marginalized and oppressed peoples of India, via the “Black Dalit body” of the artist. Mani’s performance practice insists upon embodied presence, confronting pain, shame, fear, and power. His personal tryst with his body as a meeting point of history and present opens onto “body” as socio-political metaphor.

Several of Mani’s performances employ the element of water to address ecological issues particularly related to the backwaters of Kerala, as well as to the common theme of migration. His recent works consider the correspondence between animals and humans, and the politics of space from the perspective of an indigenous cosmology. *Unlearning Lessons from my Father* (2018), made with the support of the Asia Art Archive, excavates the artist’s biography in relation to colonial history, botany, and material relations.

Sajan has participated in international biennales, festivals, exhibitions and residencies, including CODA Oslo International Dance Festival, Norway (2019); Ord & Bild, Sweden (2019); India Art Fair (2019); “Specters of Communism,” at Haus der Kunst, Munich (2017); Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh (2016); Kampala Art Biennale, Uganda (2016); Kolkata International Performance Arts Festival (2014 – 16); and Vancouver Biennale, Canada (2014). In 2021 he was awarded the Berlin Kunstpreis for Visual Art. From 2019 – 2021, he received an artistic research grant from the Berlin Senate, Fine Arts Scholarship from Braunschweig Projects, and the Akademie Schloss Solitude Fellowship, Germany.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

2024

Archival Allergies: Personal Remedies for Colonial Archives, Singapore International Photography Festival - SG

Expedition Mani — Reverberations, as part of Speaking to Ancestors
NOME, Berlin - DE

2023

Bharatiya Sadhya: A Performance Art Piece, Bikaner House, India Art Fair, New Delhi — IN

2021

Lokame Tharavadu (The World is One Family), Organised by the Kochi Biennale Foundation, Alappuzha and Ernakulam, Kerala — IND

Moving Into Sunlight: Decolonial Gestures, Embodied Archives, xart splitta, Berlin — DE

2020

Alphabet of Touch >< Overstretched Bodies and Muted Howls for Songs, NOME, Berlin - DE
(solo show)

'Tyger von otherspur' (part of Radical Mutation: On the Ruins of Rising Suns) HAU, Berlin - DE

'Tyger out, Tyger in', SOMA Art space, Berlin - DE

'Hour', Bergen International Performance Festival, Bergen - NO

'Distant Nature', Knoll Galerie Wien (AT), Fotograf Gallery Prague (CZ), MAO / DIG in K13 -
Kasarne Kulturpark Košice (SK)

2018

'Out of Turn': Asia Art Archive, Performance Art Archive session, Serendipity Festival, Goa,
India

Srinagar Biennale-Basel node, online and Basel, Switzerland

2017

'Specters of Communism: A Festival of the Revolutionary Century', Haus der Kunst, Munich,
Germany (Conceived by Okwui Enwezor curated by Raqs Media Collective)

'Re-Imagine India', London, UK (Delfina Foundation, New Art Exchange with Arts Council
England)

'The Vanity Fair & the Commonwealth of Mathilde Bl°hdorn'', with Clark House Initiative from
India, EXILE Gallery, Berlin, Germany

Musrara Mix Festival Jerusalem, Israel

2016

'liquidity Ar' - Performance (50 Hours) Kampala Art Biennale, Kampala, Uganda

Kolkata International Performance Arts Festival, Kolkata, India

Sensorium, Edition Love, Sunaparanta, Goa Center for the Arts, Goa, India

Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka, Bangladesh

N O M E

2015

Art Night Thursday, Chatterjee & Lal Gallery, Mumbai, India

2014

Vancouver Biennale 2014-15, Vancouver, Canada

AWARDS AND GRANTS

2020/21 Akademie Schloss Solitude Fellowship, Stuttgart, Germany

2019/20 Braunschweig Projects (Fine Art Grant) The Braunschweig University of Art, Braunschweig, Germany

2019/20 'Political Yoga' (1 year artistic research project) The Berlin Project Fund for Cultural Education, State of Berlin, Germany

2019/ 20 Nominated for LAP Visual Arts Fellowship Montalvo Arts Center, California, USA

2017-2019 Mart Stam Stipendium /scholarship The Weißensee Academy of Art, Berlin

2017-18 Short Listed for DAAD-Preis/Award The Weißensee Academy of Art, Berlin

RESIDENCIES

2019 Ord&Bild Swedish art and cultural magazine, Strömstad, Sweden

2015 HH Art Space, Goa, India

2015 Delfina Foundation, London, UK

2015 New Art Exchange, Nottingham, UK

2014-15 Vancouver Biennale, Vancouver, Canada

SELECTED PRESS

2020

Cover of Ord&Bild Swedish art and cultural magazine's thematic issue on India and Europe.

2018

Cover of India Art Fair Magazine and Artist of the Month on their blog and other social media platforms

<http://indiaartfair.in/sajan-mani-this-silence-is-violence>

5 Performance Artists You Must Know

<https://indiaartfair.in/5-performance-artists-you-must-know>

Five Indian artists whose works could define the year, THE WEEK, India

<https://www.theweek.in/theweek/cover/2018/12/29/creative-energies.html>

Listed by Vogue India in the Artists to Watch in 2019 list, India (Print Edition)

Sajan Mani, The Dalit who Dared, Platform Magazine, India

<http://www.platform-mag.com/art/sajan-mani.html>

Artists to watch out for, The Verve Magazine, July 2018, India

<http://www.vervemagazine.in/people/avant-garde-aesthetes-jagdip-jagpals-artists-to-watch-out->

NOME

[for](#)

How Indian artists are fighting against the Modi-fication of history, The Conversation

<https://theconversation.com/how-indian-artists-are-fighting-against-the-modi-fication-of-history-53411>

Indian Artivism-Mythologies of the state by Cleo Robert, Art Asia Pacific Magazine

<http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/101/VividConditions>

PUBLISHED ARTICLES

2020 'FEARS THAT CANNOT BE REPRESENTED, BODIES WITHOUT RECOGNITION'- Collective contribution to Ord&Bild (Swedish art and cultural magazine) with Antony George Koothanady

2015 New Art Exchange, Nottingham Blog (nae.org.uk/blognae.org.uk)

2014-15 Kaka Magazine (Columnist)

2014 Short Guide Kochi-Muziris Biennale

2014 Tehelka Magazine (Master Takes)

2012 Exhibition Catalogue Kochi-Muziris Biennale