

NOME

A L P H A B E T O F T O U C H  
O V E R S T R E T C H E D B O D I E S  
A N D M U T E D H O W L S F O R S O N G S  
S A J A N M A N I  
S E P T E M B E R 1 1 - O C T O B E R 1 0 , 2 0 2 0

NOME is pleased to present Sajan Mani's first solo exhibition in Europe, which opens with a durational performance on September 10 and 11, 2020.

Just because a howl is muted, doesn't make its source less painful, nor its purpose less potent. The "muted howls" of the exhibition's title refer to Sajan Mani's translation of the protest songs of Dalit activist and poet Poykayil Appachan (1879–1939), from the suppressed history of South India to the drawn-upon walls of the European gallery. Appachan was a slave child born into the lowest caste of the Dalits, considered the 'untouchables', and grew up to become a social reformer. Sajan's dynamic performance over two days covers physical space with expressive renderings of the original Malayalam songs. Hand connects with paper in a haptic experience responding to the call of Appachan's early lament: "There was none on the earth to write the story of my race."

Sajan hails from a family of rubber tappers in a north Keralan village. Rubber is inextricable from extractive colonial histories and the utilitarian products of the capitalist present. In Mesoamerican cultures, the indigenous sap has a mysterious and sacred role in spiritual practices, and now it gathers a sensorial place in the artist's memory. These multi-layered significations animate several works on display: the video *Unlearning Lessons from my Father* (2018) depicts his father at work with the rubber trees, projected onto a stretched piece of this same material, while the white silkscreen prints of the artist's body, *I want to touch the BWO of the rubber tree* (2020), also on stretched rubber, extend a politics of touch. This collection of works embodies Sajan's moving philosophy, which happens in the intimate space between personal and collective histories.

NOMEGALLERY.COM

Glogauer Str. 17 - 10999 - Berlin

**Sajan Mani** (b. 1982) is an intersectional artist from Kerala, living in Germany. In his performance practice, the “Black Dalit body” of the artist represents a meeting point of history and present, confronting pain, shame, fear and power. 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 2019–2021 he received an artistic research grant from Braunschweig Projects, and the Akademie Schloss Solitude Fellowship in Germany.

***Alphabet of Touch >< Overstretched Bodies and Muted Howls for Songs***

**Sajan Mani**

**September 11 – October 10, 2020**

**Opening and performance September 10, 2020, 6–9 p.m.**

**Performance September 11, 2020, 6–8 p.m.**

**NOME, Glogauer Str 17, 10999 Berlin**

CREDITS

Press contact

Olga Boiocchi

[press@nomegallery.com](mailto:press@nomegallery.com)

[www.nomegallery.com](http://www.nomegallery.com)