

CAN YOU DIVIDE THE SKY?

PRESS RELEASE

May 25, 2022

VOLTA Basel Art Fair

Presenting Ishita Chakraborty

June 13 - 19, 2022

Concurrent with Art Basel in Basel Week

ARTPOWHER Contemporary is pleased to announce its participation at VOLTA Basel Art Fair 2022, staging the solo show *CAN YOU DIVIDE THE SKY?* by Ishita Chakraborty. The art installation conveys a poetic portrait of our coexistence and reflects on migration and identity.

Founded by Anna Maurrasse-Tomaiuolo, ARTPOWHER Contemporary is a collaborative initiative that aims to promote the visibility and presence of female-identifying and non-binary creatives in the arts.

Ishita Chakraborty (b.1989) is an artist and poet born in West Bengal, India. She lives and works between Switzerland and India. Chakraborty's artistic practice includes drawings, installations, poetry, performance, and sound. The context of her works is marked by the traces of displacement, traumas of colonialism, articulation in language, orality and identity. She investigates the strategies and the discourses of resistance narrated by individuals — often the subalterns. Her work is political, powerful, lyrical, and has been honored with several awards including the Visiting Artist Fellowship at Lakhshmi Mittal SAI, HARVARD UNIVERSITY (2020-21). Chakraborty's installation, *Europa*, has impressed the jury of the Aargauer Kunsthaut. She was awarded by the Kunsthaut as part of the Auswahl 21 program and thus invited as a guest for the upcoming annual exhibition (2022). The artist has also been awarded with the Credit Suisse Förderpreis and received a project grant from the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

Chakraborty's upcoming art installation *CAN YOU DIVIDE THE SKY?* comprises sculptures, drawings and poems. It explores stories of identity and puts forward questions around our coexistence, borders and migration. The works will be connected in material and textual practices, and a multitude of clay mushrooms will sprout throughout the installation. The mushroom installation is the result of multiple participatory workshops in

which refugees, migrants, and locals shared their stories and engaged in crafting mushrooms as an enriched community experience. The hue of the mushrooms alludes to the skin color of the hands that sculpted them. Chakraborty says: *"Mushrooms migrate. They grow wherever they find nutrients. And so, I started depicting people as these little mushrooms. Just like in a natural ecosystem, we are also connected by our stories and experiences."*

Chakraborty was inspired by Anna Tsing's book "The Mushroom at the End of the World ". An exploratory essay on capitalism based on one of the most valuable edible mushroom in the world — the Matsutake mushroom. The author also describes how people migrate across the globe in mutual dependence alongside plants in search of nutrients, whether in the form of carbohydrates or love.

In **CAN YOU DIVIDE THE SKY?** visitors are invited to walk through the space observing their own perception and sensations fused together with the textual source of the installation. Chakraborty's solo presentation provides a poetic outline of alternate forms of identities, creating and thinking. It establishes a perceptual field of hope for a more egalitarian global future.

Ishita Chakraborty's recent and upcoming shows include her solo presentation at VOLTA Basel (2022), CAN YOU DIVIDE THE SKY?, ARTPOWHER Contemporary, The Mouth Is For Speaking at WE AIA, Löwenbräu Kunst Zürich (2022), Unfortunately It Was Paradise POP UP Public Art Project 'Whispering Benches', supported by Pro Helvetia curated by Gianni Jetzer (2022), 5th International Biennale de Casablanca in Morocco (2022) curated by Christine Eyene, Auswahl 22 in Kunsthau Aarau, solo exhibition in Gallery Espace, New Delhi, India (2023), and more. She is represented by Gallery Espace in India.



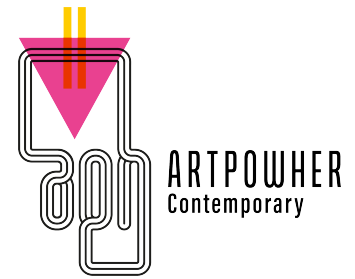
"Shaping mushrooms becomes a spiritual journey, transferring people's handprints and time spent together into the mushrooms."
Ishita Chakraborty

Photo by Julian Salinas
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"I have taken inspiration from the form and making process of Tepa Putul which is following the tradition of Indus' Valley Civilization's terracotta, one of the most important artifact for all Indian sub-continent. This is a meditative process. The lump of clay you take between your palm while making the form of the mushroom is an ancient form of meditation. The idea is to make a replica of a form which is important to the ecology and the medium is eco-friendly". Ishita Chakraborty

Image: Courtesy of the artist
Fired unglazed ceramic clays. Size: variable, 2700 until today, Year: 2019 to ongoing



Location & dates VOLTA Basel

ELYS, Elsässerstrasse 215a, 4056 Basel, Switzerland, **BOOTH: B8**

Private Preview & Press:

Monday, June 13, 10 am - 2 pm, by invitation only

Public Hours:

Monday, June 13, Public Vernissage: 2 - 8 pm

Tuesday, June 14 - Saturday, June 18, 11 am - 8 pm

Sunday, June 19, 11 am - 5 pm

www.voltaartfairs.com

Press contact & accreditation

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About ARTPOWHER Contemporary

COLLECT ART — COLLABORATE

Founded by Anna Maurrasse-Tomaiuolo, ARTPOWHER Contemporary is a collaborative initiative that aims to promote the visibility and presence of female-identifying and non-binary creatives in the arts. ARTPOWHER works with partners and organizations, who also wish to disrupt gender stereotypes and inequalities, by inspiring change through creativity and collaborations. We deliver art projects and identify opportunities to unleash synergies between Womxn artists, brands, institutions and corporations.

www.artpowher.com

www.artsy.net/artpowher-contemporary

www.vimeo.com/artpowher

Instagram: @artpowhercontemporary