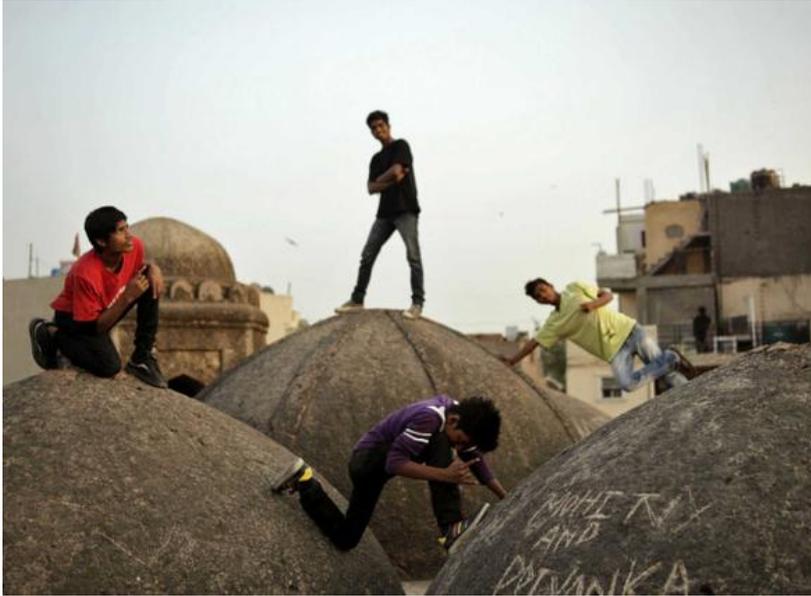


## Today's Paper » FEATURES » FRIDAY REVIEW

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### Artists resist

SHAILAJA TRIPATHI



A still from *Arise* by Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen and (right) a still from "Saacha" PHOTO COURTESY: Photography Jonas Mortensen and TATA Institute of Social Sciences

*ART Khoj collaborates with the Tate Modern, London, for the first time for an exhibition that looks at text, language, sound and poetry, as carriers of dissent. SHAILAJA TRIPATHI*

The connection between the two is uncanny but then the state of affairs around the world is such that any work of art rooted in its times seems to be borrowing from a specific incident. The fact is that the work just resonates with universal concerns. One can draw parallels between the ongoing saga of Edward Snowden and "Word. Sound. Power", an exhibition described as "poetics and politics of voice" by Asmita Rangari, Khoj's resident curator.

A significant collaboration between the Tate Modern and Khoj — that has taken place under the aegis of Tate's Project Space series, — it has been curated by Rangari and the Tate's Loren Hansi Momudu. Featuring Amar Kanwar, Anjali Monteiro & KP Jayasankar, Pallavi Paul and Mithu Sen from India and Jordanian artist Lawrence Abu Hamdan, French-Norwegian artist Caroline Bergvall, Danish artist Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen, the exhibition will be on at Project Space Gallery in Tate Modern, London from July 12, 2013 till November 3, 2013 and will travel to Khoj Studios in January 2014.

"The exhibition is about all modes of articulation and our ability to articulate. About the inherent privilege to be able to voice our concerns and the different modalities for undertaking the same. Who is allowed to speak? Who is heard? How the voice is used to express dissent and resistance - both in individual and collective spheres. About the circumstances which lead to our raising our voices. And how these voices raised inconvenience and are seen to threaten the existing power equations and hence are often silenced," says Rangari.

The exhibition, she explains, is also about looking at the interrelationship between text, language, sound and poetry. The title of the exhibition draws directly and is also inspired from the well-known Jamaican band of the 70s by the same name 'Word Sound and Power' that influenced and inspired not only the development of Jamaican and reggae culture, but also the right to freedom of speech, globally.

Assimilating works in different disciplines — audio documentary, video, performance, text and sound — the exhibition takes a view of the harmony, and dissonance, of voices rising.

"So most artists' work has largely been around exploring some aspects of the thematic or central concerns of this exhibition. For instance, Hamdan's (Lawrence Abu Hamadan) work and research has been around voice analysis and exploring, how 'truth' is manufactured and interrogating its 'authenticity'. It also highlights the limitations of such technological means that are applied and used to determine the complex influences and inter-relationship of voice and accent and the implications of these on human lives,"

says the co-curator.

Hamadan's audio documentary 'The Whole Truth, 2012' and set of voice maps 'Conflicted Phonemes, 2012', revolving around the current immigration policies, questions the possibility of spontaneity and uniqueness of voice.

On the other hand, Delhi-based artist Mithu Sen will render public performances in her new work called 'I am a Poet 2013'. Also a poet, who writes in her mother tongue, Sen has experienced a sense of disconnection with language since relocating to the largely anglophone city of Delhi. The performance will invite visitors to record their own readings from the text, throwing into focus the void between utterance and meaning.

"Poetry and song are also central to this exhibition and works by a number of documentary and experimental filmmakers focus our attention to the inherent privilege in being allowed to voice dissent, reflected in cultural echoes – through art, music and poetry. An early work by radical filmmaker Amar Kanwar, 'A Night of Prophecy', 2002, allows us to witness the momentum with which the turmoil of political oppression or injustice is articulated through the music, poetry and songs across India," she explains.

Anjali Monteiro and K.P. Jayasankar's work also falls in line. The excerpts taken from the duo's documentary film "Saacha" (The Loom), highlights the poetry of the critically acclaimed Dalit poet Narayan Surve, as he recounts personal memories of the city of Mumbai, the birth place of the Indian textile industry and the industrial working class. Both political activist and poet, Surve was at the forefront of the left wing cultural movement in the city and his poetry provided an alternative mode of political representation.

As a parallel event, Anand Patwardhan's film "Jai Bhim Comrade 2012" will also be screened at Tate on July 15 which is part of a larger retrospective – A Cinema of Songs and People: The Films of Anand Patwardhan — that has been organised in collaboration with the Otolith Collective.