

A False Security



L. N. Tallur

Promotesh Das Pulak

Marcy Chevali

Adeela Suleman

Katja Larsson

G. R. Iranna

Siri Devi Khandavili

Cover: Modified from L. N. Tallur, *Balancing Act*, 2013, Paint, iron sheet on wood and nails
Back: Modified from L. N. Tallur, *Balancing Act*, 2013, Paint, iron sheet on wood and nails

A False Security

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A FALSE SECURITY

Marcy Chevali, G. R. Iranna, Siri Devi Khandavili, Katja Larsson, Promotesh Das Pulak, Adeela Suleman, L. N. Tallur

On View February 12 – March 21, 2026

Opening Reception February 12, 7:00 PM

35 Great Jones Street, New York, NY

“A false sense of security is the only kind there is.”
— Michael Meade

Aicon Contemporary presents *A False Security*, a group exhibition that examines the fragile, performative, and often illusory nature of protection in a world shaped by instability. Across cultures and histories, humanity has devised elaborate systems—material, psychological, architectural, and ideological—to defend against perceived threats. Yet these systems rarely eliminate danger; instead, they transform it. They render fear visible, wearable, ritualized. In *A False Security*, protection is not presented as a stable condition but as a paradox: the very mechanisms meant to shield us become reminders of our vulnerability.

Across recent weeks in the United States, the terrain of safety has been foregrounded by violent events. At such a moment, it becomes important to reflect of the very concept of “security,” its distinction from safety and its relationship to paranoia.

Security has always been entangled with fear. The helmet presupposes a battlefield; the mask anticipates contamination; the uniform declares allegiance and control. As cultural theorist Paul Virilio cautioned, “When you invent the ship, you also invent the shipwreck.” Every apparatus of defense

carries within it the specter of its own failure. To construct safety is also to acknowledge catastrophe. The works in this exhibition inhabit this tension—between defense and exposure, resilience and fragility, authority and submission—revealing how deeply insecurity structures contemporary life.

In G. R. Iranna’s *Birth of Blindness* sculptures, blindness emerges as both surrender and resistance. Figures appear bound or obscured, their vision relinquished in gestures that evoke faith, obedience, and transcendence. Blindness here is not merely a lack of sight but a metaphor for belief systems that demand trust without proof. It suggests the ways institutions—religious, political, social—require a willing suspension of vision in exchange for belonging or salvation. The sculptures carry a devotional weight while quietly questioning the cost of such devotion. What does it mean to choose not to see? And who benefits from that choice?

Meanwhile, his sculpture, *Dead Smile* is in dialogue with the urgent debates around ICE enforcement and community trust, the exhibition dialogues with a contemporary crisis of authority and protection. The sculpture becomes more than an object: it stands as a metaphor for the veneer of security offered by powerful structures—whether military, legal, or administrative—that can break down with devastat-

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-ing human consequences. It asks the the pressing question of whether imprisoning fellow humans creates true safety and comfort.

Adeela Suleman's helmets, meticulously crafted yet removed from their original contexts of combat, shift from instruments of war to objects of aesthetic contemplation. Their ornate surfaces seduce the eye even as they evoke violence and authority. By stripping these forms of immediacy and re-presenting them as art objects, Suleman reveals how power can be beautified, how aggression can be normalized through design. The helmet becomes both relic and warning—its elegance masking histories of conflict, its stillness suggesting the quiet absorption of militarization into everyday consciousness.

Drawing on Ulrich Beck's notion of the "risk society," where modern existence is organized around anticipating future crises, Katja Larsson's hats and helmets oscillate between disguise and declaration. They function as ambiguous extensions of identity—protective shells that are at once theatrical and defensive. These objects suggest that selfhood itself can operate as armor: something assumed, performed, and discarded. In a culture increasingly mediated by surveillance and visibility, identity becomes a curated barrier, a protective surface that negotiates how we are seen and how we see ourselves.

Promotesh Das Pulak's gas masks confront viewers with a chilling familiarity. Once associated primarily with wartime or industrial disaster, the gas mask

has entered the realm of the ordinary—an emblem of environmental degradation, pandemics, and political unrest. Pulak's works evoke a world in which survival gear is no longer exceptional but routine.

The normalization of crisis becomes its own form of psychological adaptation. In these works, the mask does not only filter air; it filters fear, signaling a quiet acceptance that catastrophe is ambient, continuous. Siri Devi Khandavili turns inward, examining the psychological architecture of safety. Her practice explores how memory, ritual, and internal landscapes construct fragile sanctuaries within unstable environments. Safety becomes an intimate fiction—woven from repetition, belief, and the desire for coherence. Through layered materials and symbolic gestures, her work suggests that the mind itself is both refuge and battleground. The spaces she conjures are provisional, sustained by attention and faith rather than permanence.

Marcy Chevali and L. N. Tallur further complicate the exhibition's inquiry into constructed safeguards. Through material experimentation and symbolic layering, their works question the authority embedded in protective forms. Tallur's sculptural interventions often merge sacred iconography with industrial or technological motifs, destabilizing the boundaries between reverence and mechanization. Chevali's explorations of surface and structure evoke containment and exposure simultaneously, underscoring the instability of the frameworks we depend upon. Together, their practices amplify the exhibition's central assertion: that security is a designed condition,

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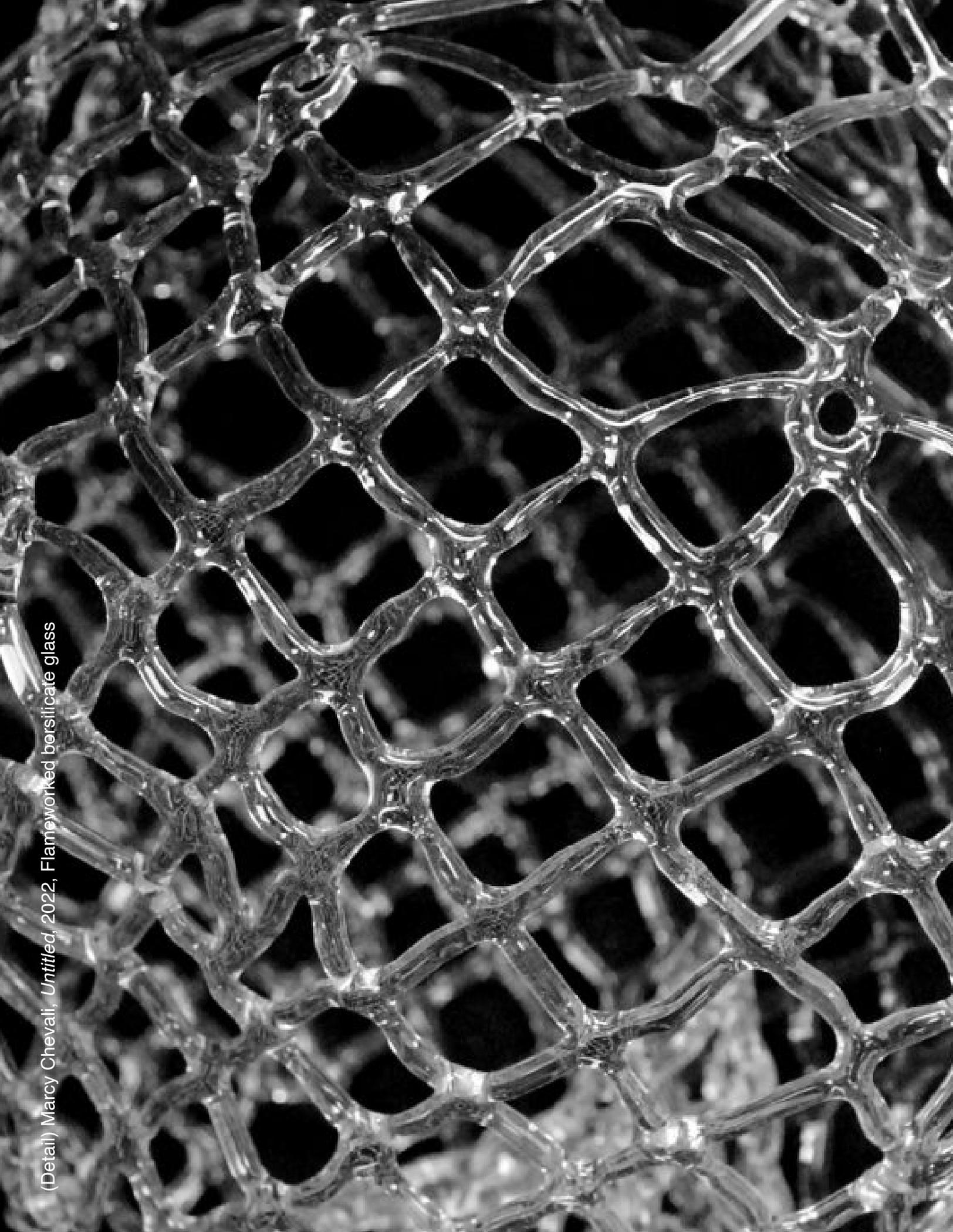
shaped as much by ideology as by necessity.

Across the exhibition, objects of protection—helmets, masks, coverings, rituals—function as both shields and signs. They promise safety while revealing fear; they assert control while acknowledging uncertainty. In a global climate marked by ecological threat, political volatility, and technological acceleration, security has become an industry, a performance, a belief system. We fortify borders, encrypt data, surveil public space, and curate personal identities, all in pursuit of reassurance. Yet reassurance remains fleeting.

A False Security does not offer solutions or solace. Instead, it invites reflection on vulnerability as an active, even resistant state. To recognize the fiction of absolute safety is not to surrender to despair but to confront the reality of interdependence and fragility. The works assembled here ask us to consider the fine line between protection and control, between faith and blindness, between adaptation and normalization.

If, as Michael Meade suggests, a false sense of security is the only kind there is, then perhaps the task is not to eliminate illusion but to understand it. In acknowledging the artifice of our defenses, we may begin to see more clearly—not only the structures that promise protection, but also the human anxieties and desires that give rise to them.

(Detail) Marcy Chevalli, *Untitled*, 2022, Flameworked bersilicate glass



MARCY CHEVALI

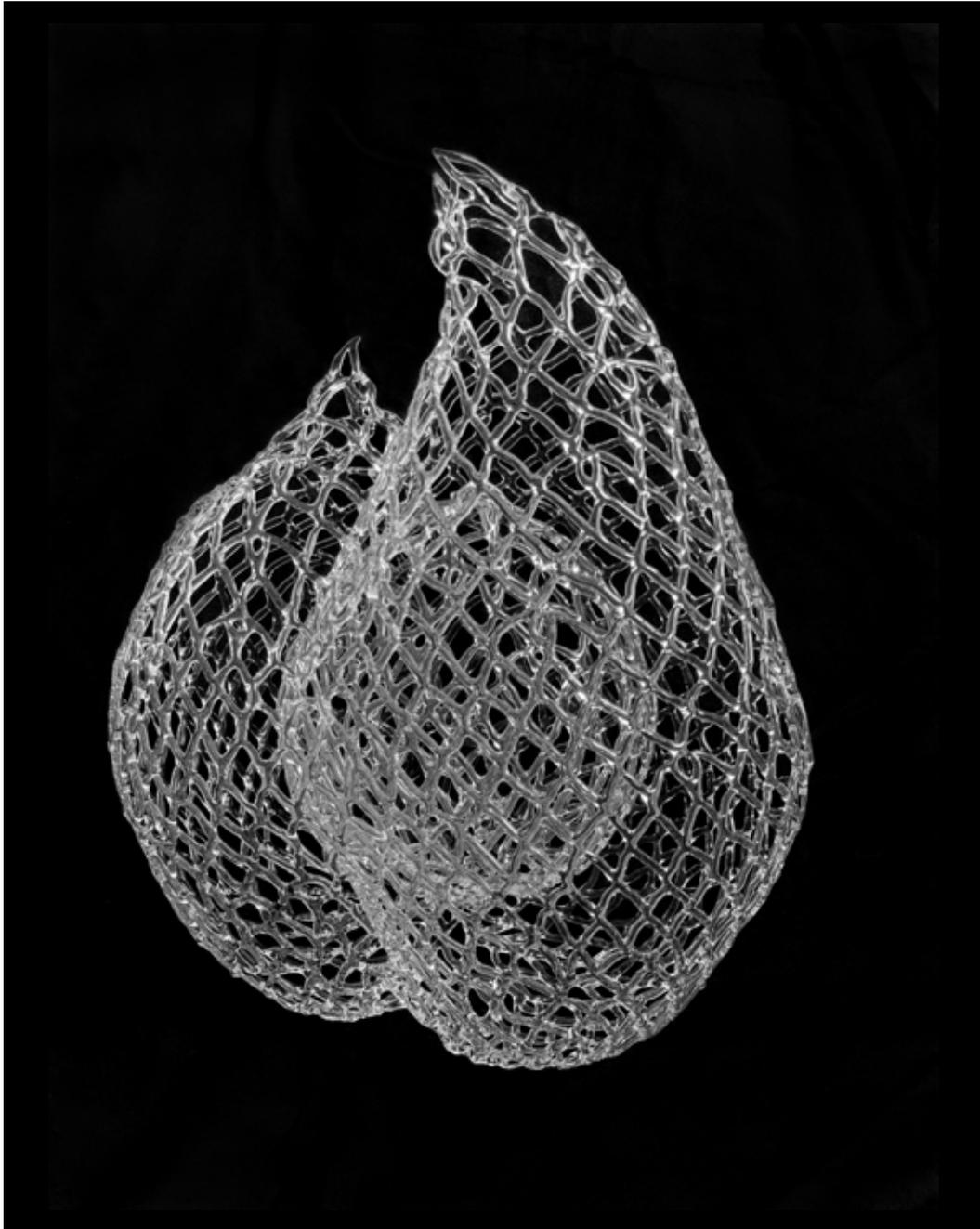
Born 1982, Cleveland, Ohio



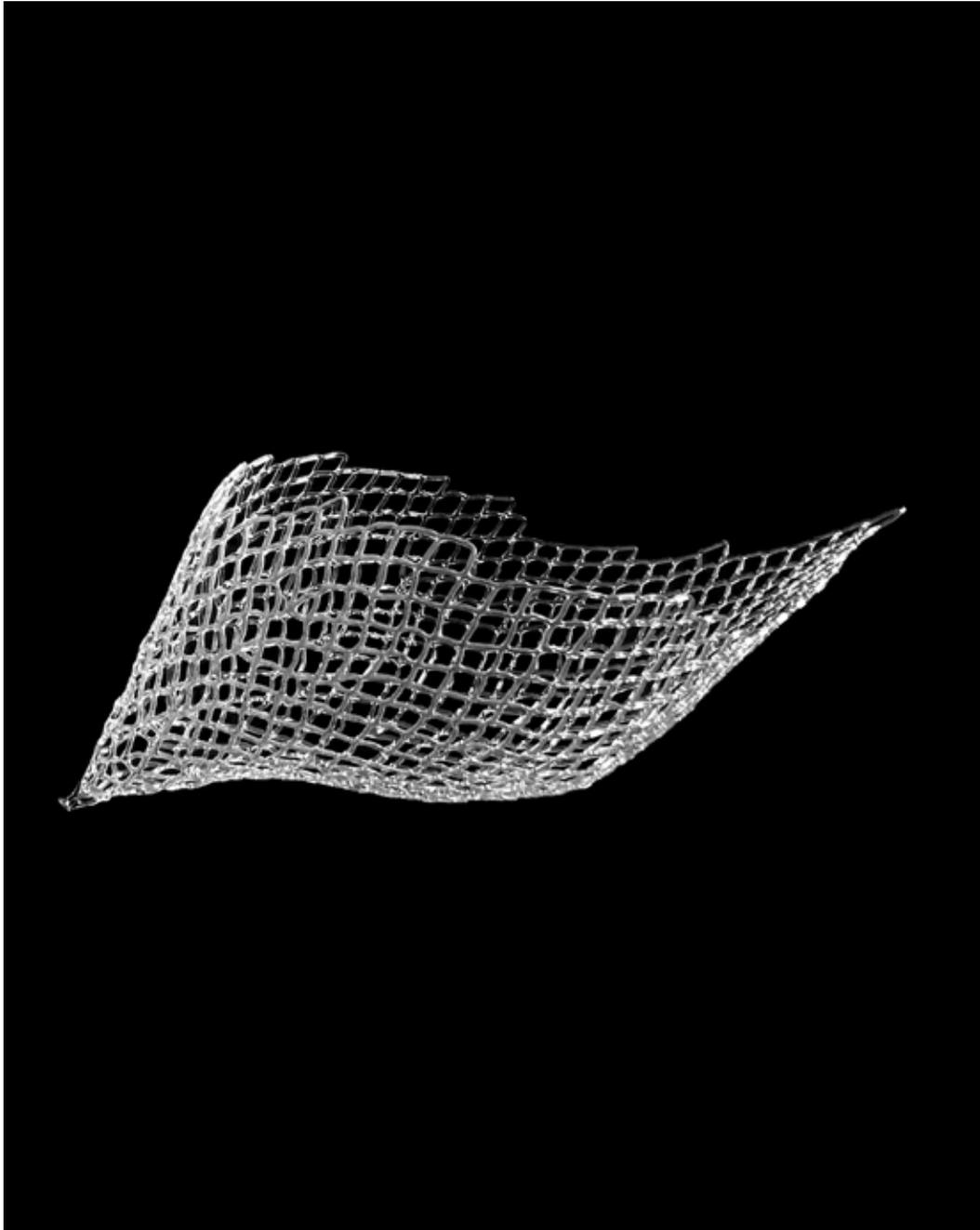
Chevali is known for her glass and mixed media sculpture works which reinterpret the tradition of repetition in women's crafts as a method of shielding and empowering the transfixed self. Applying processes from knitting and weaving to lamp-working and wire-tying, Chevali creates enthralling, biomorphic-shaped glass and wire nets. These illusory grids reinterpret delicacy and fragility as strength. Interested in permeability, the artist creates boundaries that visually expand and contract.

Chevali has a BFA from Ohio State University and an MFA from Maine College of Art. Marcy Chevali has shown her work extensively, including at the Queens Museum of Art, Noyes Museum, Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum, Aicon Gallery, AIR Gallery, and Gallery Aferro, and with organizations such as South Asian Women's Creative Collective, Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, ABC No Rio, Project for an Empty Space, 4heads and Peculiar Works Projects. Notable residencies of Chevali's include Playa, Edward Albee Foundation, Haystack Mountain School of Craft, Kimmel Harding Nelson, and Urban Glass. She was awarded a Ron Desmett Memorial Award for Imagination With Glass from Pittsburgh Glass Center, received grants from Queens Council of the Arts and FST Studio Projects. Chevali is featured in Aicon Contemporary's 2025 Armory Show presentation, *After Nature*.

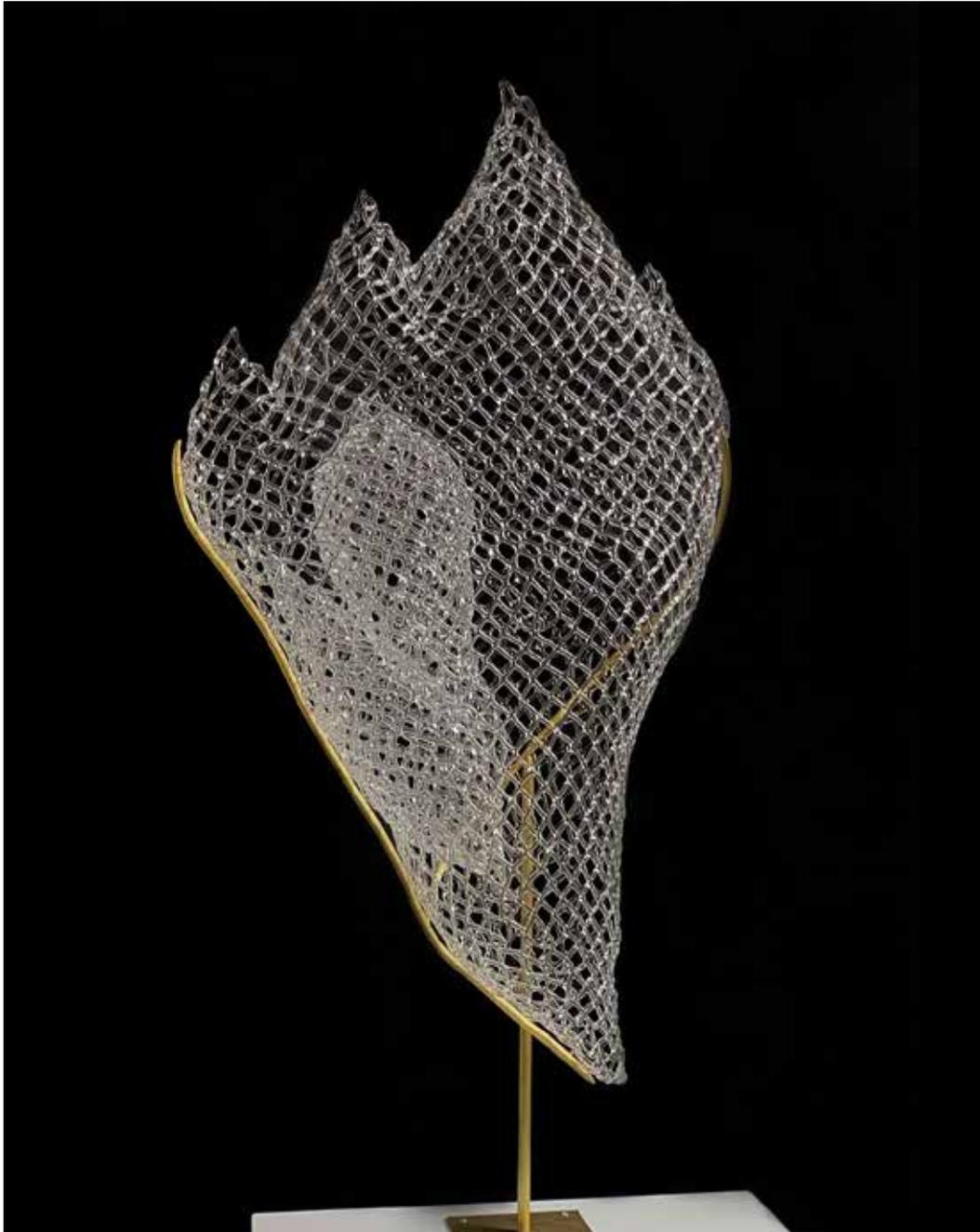
Chevali lives and works in New York City.



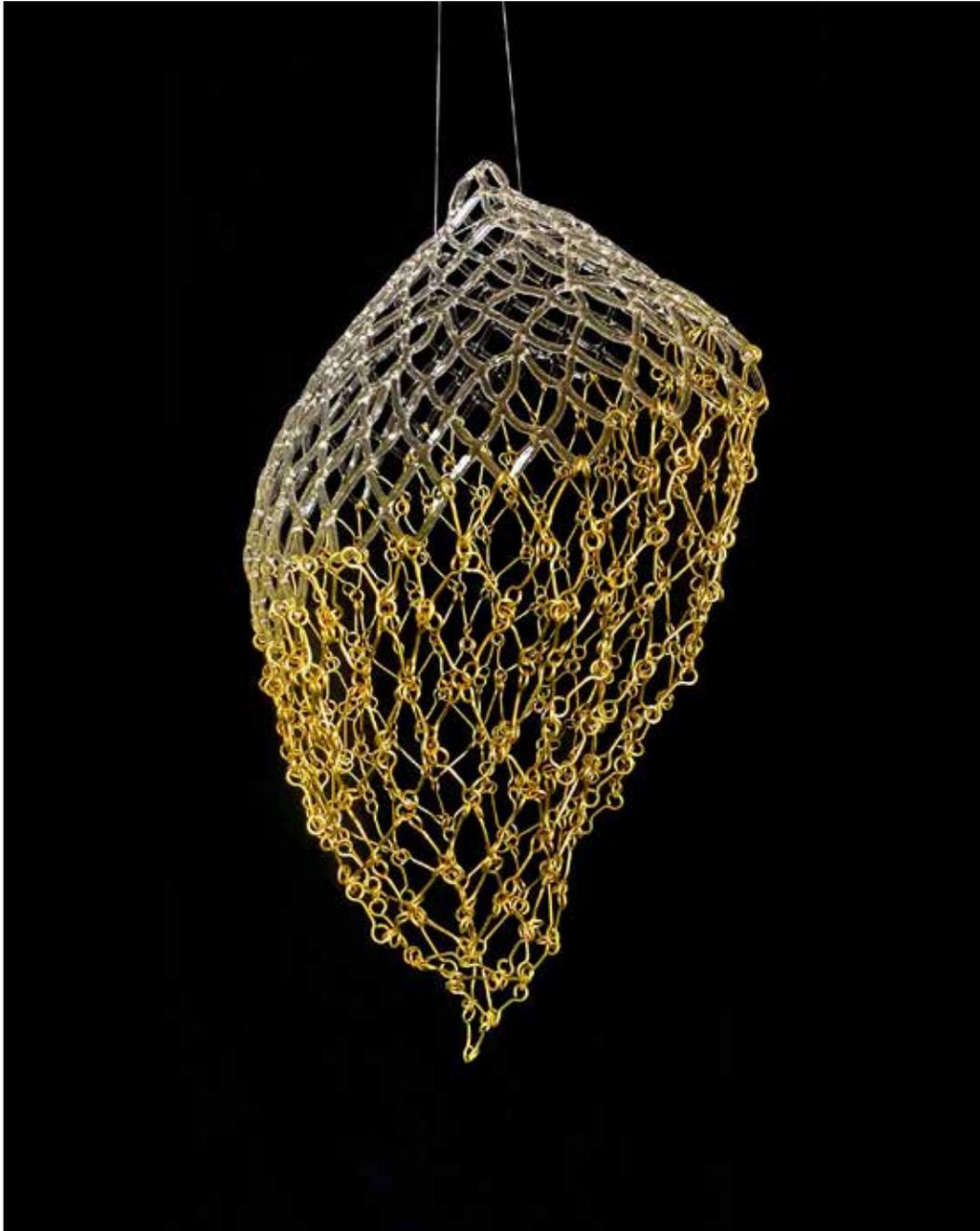
Marcy Chevali
Untitled, 2022
Flameworked borsilicate glass
14 x 10 x 7 in



Marcy Chevali
Untitled, 2025
Flameworked borsilicate glass
6 x 12 x 20 in



Marcy Chevali
Untitled, 2023
Flameworked borsilicate glass
30 x 17 x 8 in



Marcy Chevali
Untitled, 2025

Flameworked borsilicate glass and brass wire
15 x 8 x 9 in





Marcy Chevali
Untitled, 2025
Flameworked borsilicate glass and brass wire
38 x 9 x 7 in

(Detail) G. R. Iranna, *Birth of Blindness*, 2007, Fiberglass, wood, iron, cloth



G. R. IRANNA

Born 1970, Karnataka, India



G. R. Iranna's early life was shaped by formative years spent studying in a gurukul and residing in an ashram for nearly seven years. These experiences underpin his enduring engagement with spiritual inquiry, cultural memory, and the dualities inherent in human existence. His work seeks to translate an interior, meditative landscape onto tactile surfaces, often drawing upon visual languages associated with Buddhist art. Although Iranna began his career working primarily in oil on canvas, he later adopted tarpaulin as a principal medium, embracing its material resonance and symbolic associations.

Iranna's work was exhibited at the 58th Venice Biennale and is held in the permanent collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Singapore Art Museum, and the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, among others. Iranna has presented six solo exhibitions with Aicon Contemporary since 2006 and has participated in numerous group exhibitions.

Iranna lives and works in New Delhi, India.



G.R. Iranna
The Birth of Blindness, 2007
Fiberglass, wood, iron, cloth
27 x 26 x 42 in each



G.R. Iranna
Dead Smile, 2007
Fiberglass, wood, iron, cloth
27 x 26 x 42 in each



G. R. Iranna
Untitled, 2016
Graphite on paper
48.5 x 111 in





(Detail) Siri Devi Khandavilli: Untitled

SIRI DEVI KHANDAVILI

Born in Mysore, India



Khandavilli works across painting, performance, video, and installation to create visual art rooted in traditional Indian techniques, yet her work transcends cultural specificity to hint at more commentaries about the nature of the present. She is interested in global cultural migrations, the perception and history of the femme body in art, and how tradition transmutes across time and place. She often uses mirror-like and reflective materials in her works as a way of inviting viewers to explore themselves and reflect on her visual articulations of a shared experience.

Khandavili holds a BFA and an MFA in Intermedia from Arizona State University, a second MFA in Sculpture from Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, and has trained under the temple sculptor, Pandiyan from Kumbakonam. Khandavili has had numerous solo and group shows and has been collected around the world, including Albertina Museum (2020), Durham University, UK (2018), Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, USA (2016), Fidelity art collection (2016, 2014), ASU Art Museum, USA (2015), Queens Museum, USA (2014), ESSL Museum, Austria and Indigo Blue Art Gallery, Singapore (both in 2010) as well as art fairs, such as Art Basel, Miami (2013, 2014, 2015), and India Art Fair (2020).

Khandavili splits her time between New York and New Delhi.



Siri Devi Khandavili
Chitravali series, 2015
Bronze and glass mirror
38.25 x 29.5 in



Siri Devi Khandavili
Chitravali series, 2015
Bronze and glass mirror
28.75 x 35.5 in





Siri Devi Khandavili
The Wear of Vigilance, 2015
Mixed metals and rust
18 x 2 x 2.7 in

(Detail) Katja Larsson, *Torso*, 2022, Jesmonite, natural stone, mild steel



KATJA LARSSON

Born 1987, Stockholm, Sweden



Larsson's practice is rooted in transformation. Her artworks speak of anachronistic object relationships, whether they describe the metamorphosis of a prehistoric fossil into the fuel of a modern-day combustion engine or how the hydrocarbon industry borrows virtue from the gods, heroes and symbols of the ancient world. Larsson's work highlights the arch of mythology that bridges antiquity with the present day. She imbues modern-day things with classical beauty and creates contemporary relics of our time.

Larsson graduated from The Slade School of Fine Art in 2015 and received her BA(Hons) from The Glasgow School of Art in 2013. The same year she was selected for the Saatchi *New Sensations* exhibition at Victoria House, London. Her work has been exhibited during National Sculpture Prize, Devon, CHART, Copenhagen, MARKET, Stockholm, UCL Art Museum, and Kristin Hjellegjerde, London. In 2017 she was awarded the EIB Institute's residency Representing the Anthropocene and in 2018 she was presented at Borås Konstmuseum in the exhibition SNITTET. She is represented by Cecilia Hillström Gallery, Stockholm, with her most recent solo show *Mythologies* in 2019. In 2020, Larsson's work was featured during *The Armory Show* as a solo presentation with Aicon Contemporary, and the exhibition *Shapeshifters* at Malmö Konstmuseum. Larsson is currently working on a public sculpture for Uppsala, Sweden, and two upcoming solo exhibitions in 2022.

Larsson is currently based in London.



Katja Larsson
Torso, 2022
Jesomite, natural stone, mild steel
35.04 x 24.02 x 18.11 in



Katja Larsson
Kings of Our Destiny, 2022
Bronze, mild steel
21.65 x 13.39 x 11.81 in

(Detail) Promotosh Das Pulak, *Encapsulated 4*, 2014, Shola flowers, circuit boards



PROMOTOSH DAS PULAK

Born 1980, Sylhet, Bangladesh



Pulak is known for his sculptural installations of large-scale war equipment assembled using small flowers made of 'Shoal plant', which are traditionally used as craft materials. Recently, he has added motion to his installations, fostering interaction from viewers and addressing issues of history, culture and identity. Self-portraits are a key feature of Pulak's oeuvre. In video and image manipulation works, the artist incorporates himself within the frame. He is fascinated with the aesthetics of violence and its combination with the beauty that reflects the visibility of socio-political unrest around the world.

Pulak completed his MFA in 2004 from the Faculty of Fine Art from the University of Dhaka. He has exhibited in several shows in Bangladesh and internationally. He was represented at the Bangladesh pavilion at the 54th Venice biennale in 2011, was nominated as an emerging artist in sculpture at the Prudential Eye Awards in 2016, was shortlisted for the Samdani Art Awards at Dhaka Art Summit in 2012 and 2014, and received a fellowship from Aminul Islam Trust in 2007. He was an artist fellow at Harvard University's Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute for the academic year 2020-2021. His most recent solo exhibition, *Contaminated Rhythms*, debuted at Aicon Contemporary on June 6, 2025.

Pulak lives and works in Dhaka, Bangladesh.



Promotesh Das Pulak
Encapsulated 4, 2014
Shola flowers, circuit boards
12 x 7 x 7.5 in



Promotesh Das Pulak
Untitled (Gas Mask for the Rich & Famous), 2019
Brass, copper, shola flowers
12.50 x 6 in



Promotesh Das Pulak
Untitled (Gas Mask), 2019
Shola flowers, resin and acrylic
12 x 6.5 x 7 in



Promotesh Das Pulak
Encapsulated 5, 2016
Shola flowers, circuit board, resin
25.75 x 24 x 10.75 in

(Detail) Adeela Suleman I Will Meet You by the Water - 11, 2017, Metal cleaver with enamel paint and hardener



ADEELA SULEMAN

Born 1970, Karachi, Pakistan



Adeela Suleman's sculptural practice examines the fragility and ephemerality of life through a striking juxtaposition of pastoral imagery and industrial materials, most notably stainless steel. Her works evoke the precariousness of the human condition amid social and political flux, simultaneously addressing themes of violence, loss, and coexistence. The motifs within Suleman's practice oscillate between symbolic representations of humanity's relationship with nature and fragmented documentary references to recent catastrophic and violent events within her sociopolitical context.

Suleman studied Sculpture at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture and holds a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Karachi. She is currently the Coordinator of Vasl Artists' Collective in Karachi, in addition to being Associate Professor and Head of the Fine Art Department at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. Suleman has participated extensively with group and solo exhibitions worldwide, including *Phantoms of Asia* at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, the 2013 Asian Art Biennial at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art, *Hanging Fire – Contemporary Art from Pakistan* at The Asia Society, New York; Gallery Rohtas 2, Lahore; Canvas Gallery, Karachi; Aicon Gallery, New York; and, the International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, Bologna, Italy (2008). Her work has been reviewed and featured in publications including *Artforum* and *The New York Times*.

Suleman lives and works in Karachi, Pakistan.



Adeela Suleman
Not Everyone's Heaven, 2017
Wood, polish & enamel paint hardener and lacquer
88.5 x 62.5 x 5 in





Adeela Suleman
Not Everyone's Heaven 2, 2017
Wood, polish & enamel paint hardener and laquer
82.5 x 48.5 x 5 in





Adeela Suleman
I Will Meet You by the Water - 10, 2017
Metal cleaver with enamel hardener
5.5 x 12.5 in

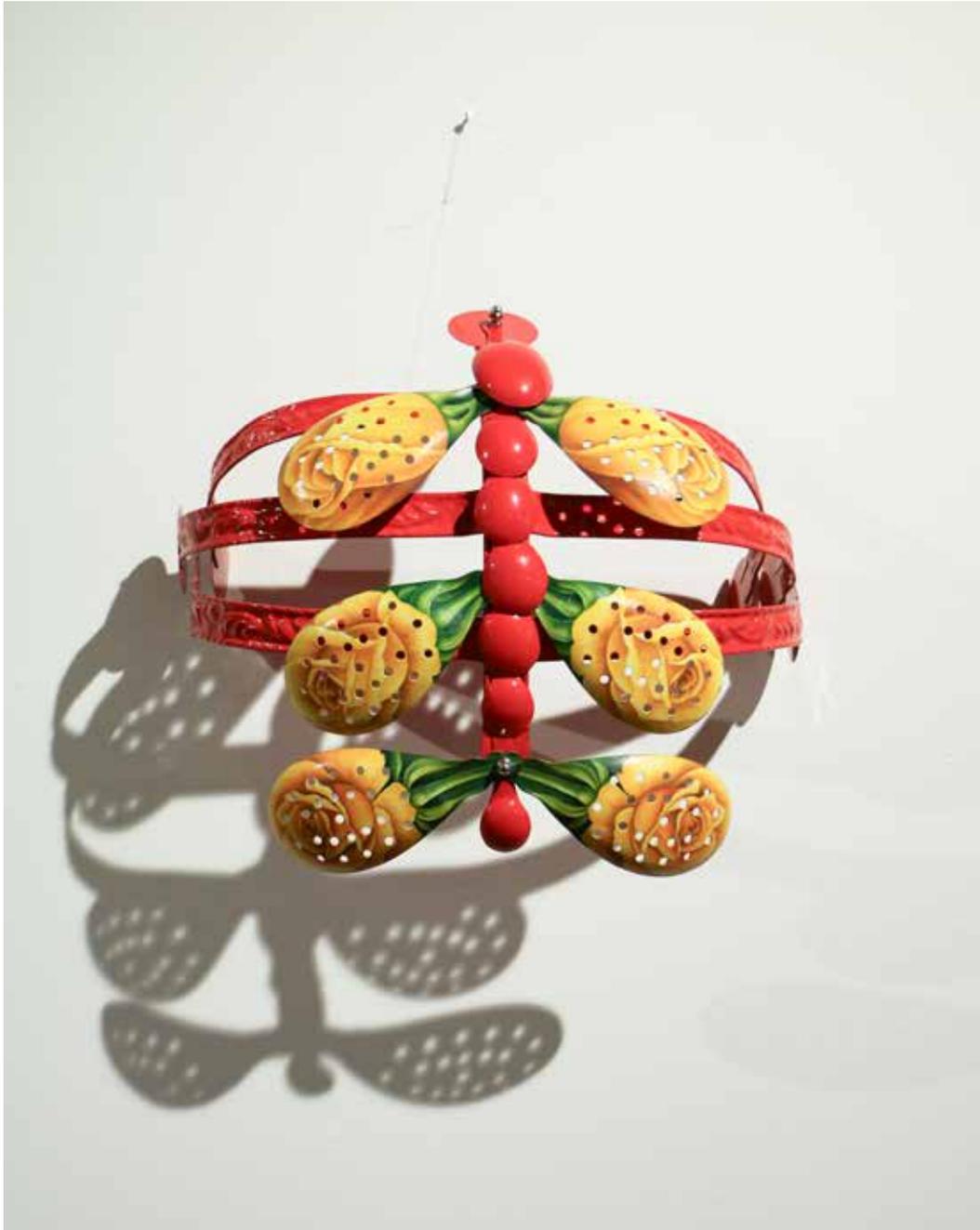


Adeela Suleman
I Will Meet You by the Water - 11, 2017
Metal cleaver with enamel paint and hardener
5.5 x 12.5 in



Adeela Suleman
I Will Meet You by the Water - 2, 2017
Mixed media
5.5 x 12.5 in





Adeela Suleman
Asma, 2009

Steel tongs, measuring spoons, rice serving spoons, and enamel paint
5.5 x 12.5 in



(Detail) L. N. Tallur, *Balancing Act*, 2013, Paint, iron sheet on wood and nails



L.N TALLUR

Born 1971, Karnataka, India



Working across mediums, Tallur's work exposes the absurdities of everyday life and the anxieties that characterize contemporary society. His practice fuses handmade craftsmanship, found objects, and organic and industrial materials, often drawing on symbols of a transforming India to create resonances between traditional and contemporary systems of belief. His works reference subjects as wide-ranging as Hindu iconography, and popular culture, as well as broader political and societal issues, such as the nature of value and the globalized economy.

Tallur holds a BFA in Painting from Chamarajendra Academy of Visual Arts, an MFA in Museology from Maharaja Sayyajirao University, and an MA in Contemporary Fine Art Practice from Leeds Metropolitan University. He was awarded The Skoda Prize for Indian Contemporary Art, 2012 and was part of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, India, 2012-13. He has been exhibited internationally, including solo exhibitions in Germany, South Korea, India, China and the United States. Selected group exhibitions include The 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT 7), Queensland Art Gallery, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia, 2012; Critical Mass: Contemporary Art from India, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel 2011; Meditation: Asian Art Biennial, National Taiwan Museum, Taiwan, 2011; The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today, Saatchi Gallery, United Kingdom, 2010 and La Route de la Soir, Tri Postal, France, 2010.

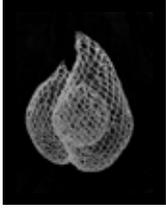
Tallur lives and works between Seoul, South Korea and Karnataka, India.



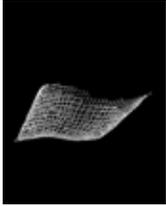
L. N. Tallur
Balancing Act, 2013
Paint, iron sheet on wood and nails
104.75 x 23.625 x 19.625 in



Detail: L. N. Tallur
Hatha Yoga, 2013
Wood, nails and fiber-reinforced plastic
4.75 x 8.624 x 4.75 in



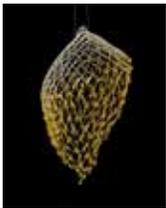
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Untitled, 2025
 Flameworked borosilicate glass and brass wire
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Marcy Chevali
Untitled, 2025
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 Fiberglass, wood, iron, cloth
 27 x 26 x 42 in each



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Dead Smile, 2007
 Fiberglass, wood, iron, cloth
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G. R. Iranna
Untitled, 2016
Graphite and ash on paper
48.50 x 111 in



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Bronze and glass mirror
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