

The Exhibition

Raqs Media Collective's artistic practice examines questions of the everyday, alongside philosophical and historical inquiries of the universe. Unravelling structures of economies, time and language, their work examines the shifting state of contemporary life and boundaries of visibility. This exploration of transformation is embedded in the process and subject of their work, and in the collective's name – 'raqs' – a term for movement and whirling, in Urdu/Hindustani, Arabic and Persian.

Raqs Media Collective: Still More World draws on the energy of Doha's urban landscape of light, which symbolises this global city in continuous movement, its networks of people, and raw materials. Thirteen installations ranging from videos to textiles and sculptures, made between 2011 and 2019, are presented at Mathaf and across the city of Doha.

Literary stories and scientific anecdotes about the cycles of progress and change appear in these works, touching on the movement of people and populations, as the material and immaterial are contrasted. Playing with language, energy and digital technologies, the series of five *Dohas for Doha* (2019) are displayed at Mathaf and as an intervention in the urban environment on Burj Doha, using the lights and architecture of this iconic building to mark the conversation between Raqs and the city. The dense hanging of carpets, *To People* (2019), shows 'people' as pixelated crowds, referencing the diversity of Doha's inhabitants and expanded digital networks. Other works explore the connections between living organisms, the natural world, geological time and the cosmos.

The works in this exhibition re-examine human progress and natural resources, considering historical and contemporary movements of people and the way terrains change. Continuing Raqs' exploration of the immeasurable, *Still More World* offers a rephrasing of the prevailing sensibility, embodying the double bind of humanity's present condition; the promise and desire for growth coupled with the question of how much more the earth has left to give.

Curator: Laura Barlow
Assistant Curator: Lina Ramadan
Curatorial Assistant: Hessa Al Romaihi

Cover Image
A Planet Turns on Its Axis without Permission (detail), 2018
4K video, 18 min, 6 sec

Raqs Media Collective Still More World

21 March – 31 July 2019
Atrium and galleries 1, 2 and 3

The Artists

Raqs Media Collective are artists, curators, and thinkers. Founded in 1992 by Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula and Shuddhabrata Sengupta, the collective's practice spans the making of multi-medium installations, films, events and publications, in addition to collaborations across architecture, literature, science and theatre, broadening insights into the world around us. Raqs Media Collective frequently exhibit their work internationally. Recent solo exhibitions include *Not Yet At Ease*, Firstsite, Colchester (2018); *Everything Else Is Ordinary*, K21 Ständehaus, Düsseldorf (2018); *Provisions for Everybody*, AV Festival, Newcastle (2018); *Twilight Language*, The Whitworth, University of Manchester (2017); *The Work of Art in the Age of Collective Intelligence & If the World is a Fair Place*, Laumeier Sculpture Park, St Louis (2016); *It's Possible Because It's Possible*, MUAC, Mexico City (2015); *Untimely Calendar*, The National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi (2014–2015); and *The Great Bare Mat & Constellation*, the Isabella Gardner Museum, Boston (2012). They have participated in group exhibitions and biennials including the Venice Biennial, Venice (2003, 2005 and 2015); Biennale Bénin, Cotonou, Porto Novo, Ouidah, and Abomey (2012); Manifesta 9, Limburg (2012); Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai (2010); and documenta 11, Kassel (2002). Raqs are Artistic Directors of the 2020 Yokohama Triennale and were curators of the 11th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai (2012), as well as co-curators of Manifesta 7, Bolzano (2008). In 2001 they cofounded Sarai, a programme of interdisciplinary research and practice, at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. Raqs Media Collective are based in Delhi, India.

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Provisions for Everybody, 2018
HD video, 50 min

Provisions for Everybody looks at materials, energy and extraction, and the way in which various life-worlds merge, focusing in particular on food, scarcity, abundance—and doubt. Visualising the earth as a raft on a journey, carrying provisions for everybody, the video argues for the need to be cautious of human ‘wisdom’, even in the current state of euphoric complacency. This video also suggests that the cycles of consumption and re-absorption of waste residues represent the ‘slow poisoning of life’. *Provisions for Everybody* is an exploration of the capacity of the multitude, even as it recognises how life itself can become drained of sustenance.



UID (Untold Intimacy of Digits), 2011
Digital animation video, 47 sec

This is an animation of one of the first known biometric prints in the world, created in 1858 from the hand of Raj Konai, a Bengal peasant, and used by the University of London for the study of science and identification technologies. Raqs found the print during research on the history of human identification, following the Indian government’s launch in 2010 of a biometric tracking system to monitor the population. The fingers in the animation count indefinitely, refusing to be measured. The act of finger counting can also be connected to meditation in religious and cultural practices, or the counting of musical notes.



36 Planes of Emotion, 2011
Perspex blocks with acrylic paint and etched text on wooden table, variable dimensions

In this work, Raqs play with the idea that human experience is not singular, but layered. Creating 36 descriptive phrases to describe feelings that cannot be reduced to a single word, Raqs attempt to evoke the complexity of emotions such as joy, fear, love and sadness, as experiences that impact the state of the brain and heart differently for every individual. The artists began creating these phrases when thinking about how a person or a body inhabits a feeling that emerges in the context of different experiences and situations. They describe this practice as exploring the ‘spectrum of unrecognised possibilities’. Rereading the phrases as book titles on plexiglass suggests the possibility for transparency, as the complexity of the emotion is revealed in a way that a single abstract noun cannot do.

Installation view of *36 Planes of Emotion*, from *Raqs Media Collective: Twilight Language*, 30 September 2017 – 25 February 2018, The Whitworth, University of Manchester



Alive, with Cerussite and Peppered Moth, 2017
3D printed PLA plastic, cast polyester resin, plywood, and video projections, variable dimensions

This architectural installation speaks to the evolution of materials and living forms across alternative time epochs. The 3D printed structure represents crystal cerussite, the natural state of lead carbonate, while the light projections refer to the changing transparency of the peppered moth, which occurred during the Industrial Revolution. In this period, the black and white peppered moth experienced industrial melanism, which meant its pigment became black for better camouflage in an environment polluted with soot residues. This temporary evolutionary strategy was reversed when pollution levels were reduced. In this work, these varied states of transformation explore the relationship between the changing invisible threads of ecology and compressed time.

Installation view of *Alive, with Cerussite and Peppered Moth*, from *Raqs Media Collective: Twilight Language*, 30 September 2017 – 25 February 2018, The Whitworth, University of Manchester

Mathaf Opening Hours
Saturday to Thursday 9:00 am – 7:00 pm
Friday 1:30 – 7:00 pm

Opening hours may change during Ramadan.
For details please check mathaf.org.qa.

Dohas for Doha (2019) is displayed on
Burj Doha from 20 March – 3 April 2019



First Floor Permanent Collection

Ground Floor Raqs Media Collective: Still More World M. F. Husain: Horses of the Sun Project Space 13: Doha Art Map