

# INDIGO

New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina





Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives / Homage-88 Indigo resist printed circular discs hanging with blue fish net. Installation Street H 2009

The 5feet high site specific installation *Homage: Woeful Tales of Champaran 1917-18* display perales of circle hanging with printed 88 discs of 7inches diameter with sets of 15 different contemporary indigo prints. The installation maps the narrative of suffering of native farmers of deltaic region and is suggestive of accounts of oppression on farmers.

It also gives the reference of one of the mightiest peasant revolts in the sub-continent. In 1917, Mahatma Gandhi stepped in and intervened in support of indigo planters who were coerced by the colonisers to grow indigo for their Eurocentric needs. For more than 100 years living in subjugation, the farmers revolted to be free from 'tinhankha' land revenue system. Each circle is metaphorical of a farmer's woeful tales of inflicted pain, punishments, slavery and oppression. The works draw upon India's colonial past but are also engaged with contemporary economic interchanges.

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## Exhibition & Lecture Schedule

Preview : 15 – 16 December 2009

Red Earth Gallery

ABS Towers, Old Padra Road

Vadodara, India 390007

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

23 – 28 December 2009

Open Palm Court Gallery

India Habitat Centre

Lodhi Road

New Delhi, India 110003

[www.indiahabitat.org](http://www.indiahabitat.org)

12 – 18 January 2010

Nehru Centre

Dr. Annie Besant Road

Worli, Mumbai, India 400018

[www.nehru-centre.org](http://www.nehru-centre.org)

31 December 2009, 4.00 pm. Forum for Contemporary Theory

Shelly Jyoti – *"The Poitics of Indigo : Revisiting India's Torrid Colonial Past"*

Laura Kina – *"Diaspora on Devon Ave : Stitching South Asian/Jewish Intersections"*

Centre for Contemporary Theory and General Semantics

C-304 Siddhi Vinayak Complex

Framji Road, Vadodara, India 390007

[www.fctworld.org](http://www.fctworld.org)



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : India's Torrid Colonial Past Origami Boat made of News paper, 5 in. H x12 in. W 2009

# INDIGO

New works by Shelly Jyoti & Laura Kina

Essays by Murtaza Vall, JohnyML, Michelle Yee

## Overview

"Not a chest of indigo reached England without being stained with human blood" an Englishman in the Bengal Civil Service is said to have commented.

In the 19th century, Bengal was the world's biggest producer of indigo but today, the deep blue color of indigo is synthetically created in a lab and is associated, in the West, with blue jeans more than its torrid colonial past. But indigo holds a sustained presence in the post-colonial identity of India. Employing fair trade embroidery artisans from women's collectives in India and executing their works in indigo blue, Indian artist Shelly Jyoti and US artist Laura Kina's new works draw upon India's history, narratives of immigration and transnational economic interchanges.

Shelly Jyoti's Indigo Narratives utilize traditional embroidery and embellishments by Shrujan: Threads of Life along with heritage symbols belonging to travelling ethnic communities who settled in coastal Gujarat. The works in Laura Kina's Devon Avenue Sampler series were hand embroidered by artisans from MarketPlace: Handwork of India, a fair trade women's organization in Mumbai. The series focuses on street signs and imagery from Kina's Chicago Desi/Jewish immigrant neighborhood.

Sharing a mutual interest in textiles, pattern & decoration, and Asian history, Shelly Jyoti and Laura Kina decided to collaborate in 2008-2009. They began by thinking about the Silk Road intersections of their own ethnic and national positions in relation to fabrics. Shelly Jyoti is an Indian fashion designer and a visual artist from Gujarat India, a region famed for their bold embellished textiles and as the home of Mahatma Gandhi. Born in California USA to an Okinawan father from Hawai'i and an Anglo/Basque American mother from the Pacific Northwest, Laura Kina now lives and works in "Little India," a Devon avenue neighborhood on the north side of Chicago, IL, which groups from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Israel and Russia call home.

What Jyoti and Kina found they had in common is the history of indigo, from it's torid colonial past in India, to the indigo-dyed Japanese folk kasuri fabrics and boro patchwork quilts to the working class blue jeans in the United States, to the blue threads of a Jewish prayer tallis.

# Laura Kina



Laura Kina *Devon Avenue Sampler* :  
*Golda Meir / Gandhi Marg* Hand embroidery on khadi fabric, 16 x40", 2009

## Artist Statement

My work focuses on the fluidity of cultural difference and the slipperiness of identity. Asian American history and mixed race representations are subjects that run through my work.

*Devon Avenue Sampler* features street signs and imagery from my Chicago immigrant neighborhood where Orthodox Jews, Hindus, Muslims and Christians all live. This urban South Asian/Jewish corridor is lined with jewelers, ethnic grocery stores, bakeries, spice shops, restaurants, colorful sari shops, travel & tour services, cell phone/electronics/luggage shops, beauty shops advertising eye brow threading and mehndi, and a base ball field.

Using indigo dyed thread on khadi fabric (two materials long associated with Mahatma Gandhi and symbolic of India's Freedom Movement from British colonization) along with a generous dose of Gujarat style mirrored bling and Jewish inspired tassels, my samplings of Devon Avenue's polycultural street signs have been hand embroidered by artisans from MarketPlace: Handwork of India. MarketPlace is a fair trade women's collective based in Mumbai. The use of the word "sampler" in the series title *Devon Avenue Sampler* thus refers to both embroidery samplers and "sampling" as in cultural appropriation.

In a cumulative work of the same title as the series, *Devon Avenue Sampler*, I sewed a patchwork canvas of dark blue fabrics and denim reminiscent in form to Edo and Meiji period Japanese boro quilts that were made from mended patchworks of indigo fabrics. On this collage-like construction I hand painted the iconography from the hand embroidered works along with additional imagery from street signs in my neighborhood. My family is Okinawan, originally from Hawai'i, and my greatgrandparents used to wear indigo kasuri fabrics while working on the sugar cane plantation. This series let me think about indigo in relation to my family's past agricultural life and present life as an urban artist and convert to Judaism.

# Shelly Jyoti



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : *The Ballad of woe/ful tales : Rjyots of Champaran 1917-18*,  
Indigo dyed cotton ropes twisted on wire structures with metallic lace sequenced on wooden sculptured buttons. Site specific installations, 5 feet H, 2009

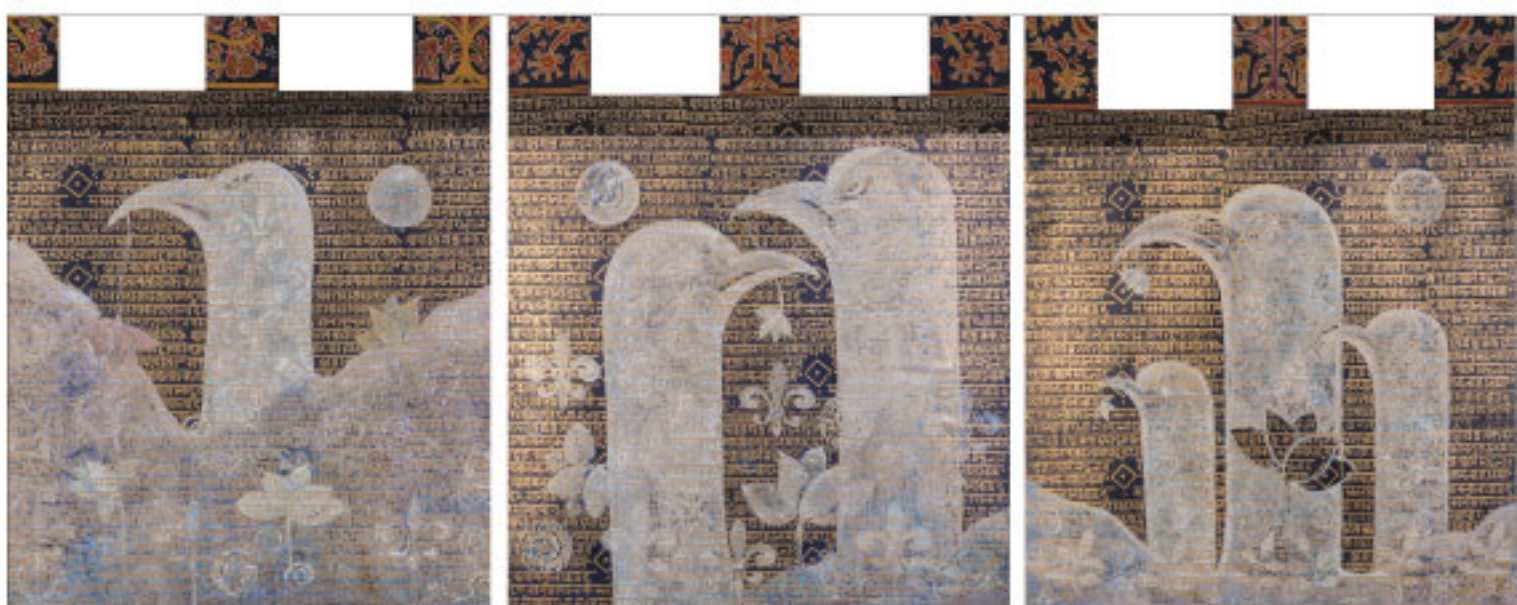
## Artist statement

My work is centered on historical iconographic elements within the cultural context of Indian history. I explore and construct the hermeneutics of period histories within the social economic and political inquiry of representation and identities. My works draw upon India's colonial past but are also engaged with contemporary economic interchanges.

Indigo Narratives (2009) features sculpture, installation and paintings that incorporate hand embroidered textiles, azrak printing on khadi, and Sanskrit calligraphy. My narratives are inspired by the accounts of the tyranny of British colonial indigo planters on native farmers of Champaran and Mahatma Gandhi's subsequent intervention in Bihar 1917-18, the first satyagrah led by Gandhi on the Indian soil after his fight against racialism in South Africa. The works engage textile references of coastal Gujarat, literary texts such as Neel Darpan through the history of India's colonial past along with references to indigo plant/color/dye

The use of azrak printing on khadi utilizes indigo techniques, which are used by khatri, the immigrants from Sindh and Baluchistan during 1600 C.E. Through this process I examine the implications of personal, political and cross-cultural choices of these communities. Working with 9th generation Azrak artisans in Bhuj in the interior of Gujarat on khadi fabric with ancient indigo resist printing techniques, my designs, however, are entirely contemporary interpretations of the politics of indigo. Also incorporating traditional designs motifs of different clans by artisans from fair trade women's collectives such as Shurjan: Threads of Life and thus helping contribute to providing sustainable means of income for some of India's under privileged women. The focus on embroidery patches done by coastal Gujarat women investigates the identity of clans with the stitches and the hybridity within their works with communities like Indigo azrak printers who migrated around the same period 1600CE. The contemporary mutwa embroidery is very close to 400year old blocks used by khatri clan of azrak technique.

To me, textiles created for artwork performs a great sense of preservation as a visual medium for documentation purpose than compared to functional textiles. Both have symbolic purposes. My artwork challenges me to apply this vision of traditional pattern block and color in the context of a socially and environmentally responsible design practice. Through my contemporary design motifs and presentation I strive to present the viewer with a heritage so rich and color so historically meaningful, in today's context of technique and its conservation.



Shelly Jyoti *Indigo Narratives: Triptych, An ode to 'Neel Darpan'* mixed media on canvas, embroidered loops 23 x 20 in., 2009

## The Dye That Binds: Indigo Iconographies – Murtaza Vall

Using indigo-dyed khadi embellished with embroidery, produced in collaboration with fair trade craft collectives in India, Laura Kina and Shelly Jyoti's project is appropriately transnational, engaging the rich and storied past of this oldest and most treasured of natural dyes. Activating traditional forms and craft practices associated with its use, their collaboration acknowledges not just indigo's supposed roots in the subcontinent but traces some of the many routes that have carried it around the globe through the centuries, revisiting the painful histories of colonial expansion and exploitation, and spirited resistance to these injustices, that its trade has inspired. Unsurprisingly, given these transnational trajectories, both their projects draw on migrant communities and histories—Kina on the multiethnic Chicago neighborhood she calls home and Jyoti on the ninth generation ajrak artisan communities in her home state of Gujarat—and their attendant experiences of displacement and adaptation, disruption and continuity.

Kina and Jyoti's use of textiles is a familiar feminist gesture, acknowledging the efforts of an earlier generation of feminist artists, who championed crafts such as embroidery and weaving—traditionally associated with women—as viable and vital art practice, challenging the traditional patriarchal hierarchy of art historical mediums. Similarly, their collaborations with skilled craftspeople is not without important art historical precedents, most notably Afghero e Boetti's *Mappa* (1971-1994), a series of embroidered world maps with each country's territory marked by its respective flag, which were fabricated by groups of Afghani women according to the artist's specifications and drawings.

A trained fashion / textile designer and a visual artist, Jyoti has long been drawn to and repeatedly drawn from India's rich tradition of traditional crafts. For *Indigo Narratives* (2009) Jyoti collaborated with a community of ajrak artisans who migrated from nearby Sindh and Baluchistan to coastal Gujarat and brought with them, centuries old craft techniques for resist printing with indigo. In the two dimensional works from this suite a stylized iconography recounts episodes from indigo's history in India through various craft techniques associated with indigo itself. The indigo plant is emblemized into a precise arrangement of simple shapes and patterns.

In the triptych *An Ode to Neel Darpan*, the ethical thrust and moral indignation of Dinabandhu Mitra's Bengali play of the same name is translated into a simple but powerful set of symbols. Set in 19th century Bengal, which by then had emerged as the world's biggest producer of indigo, the play was written in 1860, in the immediate aftermath of the Indigo Revolt, a mass protest by downtrodden farmers forced to cultivate indigo by colonial planters for a pittance. Using simple, accessible language, the play graphically and honestly portrayed the peasants' dire, inhumane circumstances and its subsequent translation and publication in English caused quite a stir in political circles in both Calcutta and London. In Jyoti's triptych, the colonizers are hawks, dominating the frame, a cruel twinkle in their eyes, their hooked beaks razor sharp; the peasants are worms, defenseless prey, struggling in vain to survive.

While such economy of form is a common strategy in the decorative arts, where stylized patterns repeat, it also recalls the ancient tradition of aniconism in South Asia, which privileges symbolic over anthropomorphic images for representations of the divine: Buddha represented through footprints or a Bodhi tree in the narrative reliefs at Sanchi, or Shiva who continues to be worshipped in the form of a lingam. In Jyoti's works a comparable strategy is applied to Gandhi, whose successful 1917 satyagraha on behalf of destitute indigo farmers in Champaran, Bihar, garnered him nationwide fame and the title of Mahatma. The spinning wheel, or *charkha*, closely associated with Gandhi through his championing of homespun khadi as a method of resisting oppressive colonial economies, repeats in different iterations. The symbol now enjoys pride of place on the Indian flag and its simple circular shape is multivalent, recalling not just Buddha's dharmachakra, but more general sacred forms such as the mandala and bindu. In other panels, modest wooden sandals, Gandhi's preferred footwear, serve as synecdoches, recalling not just his austere life but also his untimely death. A ceremonial procession of similarly shaped footprints in stone mark Gandhi's last walk through the gardens of Birla House to the spot where he was assassinated on January 30, 1948.

Simple emblematic forms reappear in the trio of sculptural works in the suite. A cascade of bound stick figures, constructed out of indigo-dyed rope and entangled in chains, and a coolie's jacket glowing deep blue



serve as icons of the forced labor and oppression wrought in the name of indigo not just in India, but globally. And while the wind chime-like cluster of discs decorated in various block prints using indigo demonstrates the vibrant creativity of this traditional craft it also serves as a rustling elegy for those who died in its name.

Like other mythical Little Indias—Oaktree Road in Northern New Jersey, Jackson Heights in the New York borough of Queens and Toronto's famous Gerrard Street—I had heard about Devon Avenue long before my maiden visit. Or rather, I was heralded with tales of Dewan Street—a creolization with helpful phonetic adjustments for 'V'-challenged South

Asians—where I would find the best kababs in the Midwest. Despite what one might think, immigrant enclaves like Devon Avenue are rarely mono-cultural; immigrants attract other immigrants, from cultures both slightly and very different, who add to the cultural mix, transforming the neighborhood's look and feel. The Indian and Pakistani pioneers of Jackson Heights have gradually made way for more recent arrivals from Bangladesh and Nepal, reflecting shifts in global geopolitics and immigration patterns. And before the Desis descended in the 1970s, Devon Avenue was largely Jewish and Russian.

In *Devon Avenue Sampler* (2009) Kina reminds us of the area's rich multiethnic history and current cultural diversity. Her title acknowledges both the tradition of embroidered samplers but also Kina's strategy of appropriation and pastiche, providing a seemingly random sampling of Devon Avenue's specific urban milieu. In her earlier work Kina has demonstrated an acute understanding of the fact that cultures, ethnicities, nationalities and the stereotypes they might inspire are socially and semiotically constructed, maintained and circulated through popular culture, through advertising and mass media's familiar economy of signs. Here is a genre of Pop art with a distinctly postcolonial edge.



Laure Kina *Devon Avenue Sampler* : Detail from *Mashmi Girl*  
Hand embroidery on khadi fabric 80x15 in. 2009

Devon Avenue Sampler is composed entirely of such signs, scattered across a patchwork of variously pattern and colored fabrics, many in shades of indigo, inspired by Japanese boro quilts, modest utilitarian textiles cobbled together from discarded scraps. Local street signs and logos for a kabab restaurant, chop suey house and kosher bakery jostle with an advertisement for waxing and threading services and images of exotic hennaed hands and seductive kohl-lined eyes lifted from product packaging, a feminist critique of the beauty industry perhaps. Food and fashion, both bodily desires, are often the strongest ties that immigrants retain to their cultures of origin. Additionally, "ethnic" cuisine and dress are integral parts of America's multicultural landscape and the first encounter with another culture is often mediated through them. Visual tropes of travel and technology services, necessary for maintaining vital links with family back home, are also thrown into the mix.

Formally, its fragmented ground of interlocking planes overlaid with textual and visual fragments, indexical markers of the particular environs of Devon Avenue, recalls the collage aesthetic and *papiers collés* of synthetic Cubism, which incorporated actual bits of topical ephemera into the picture plane. As anthropologist James Clifford suggests, collage is a particularly apt "way of making space for heterogeneity, for historical and political, not simply aesthetic, juxtapositions." Other famous portraits of famous streets, which similarly sidestep traditional representational paradigms of street life, also come to mind: Piet Mondrian's distillation of the energy, rhythm and lights of New York's famed thoroughfare into a pulsating abstract grid in *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942-43), and Ed Ruscha's *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966), a wonderfully deadpan photobook that simply shows exactly what its title states. Kina constructs a comparable portrait of a multiethnic Main Street USA, its vintage all-American aesthetic retrofitted by various immigrant communities to fulfill their particular needs, desires and fantasies.

In 1930, the legendary Duke Ellington composed a soulful ballad that musically captured a deep mournful melancholy, a sentiment "bluer than blue can be," a *Mood Indigo*. It is this mood, which manages to encapsulate not just the cruel histories of colonial oppression and exploitation but also the feelings of displacement, homesickness and nostalgia that plague all immigrants, that pulses as color through the disparate elements of this collaboration, the rich darkness of this alchemical dye, indigo.

Murtaza Valli is a Brooklyn and Sharjah-based independent critic and art historian  
New York, November 2009

For a comprehensive history of indigo see Jenny Ballour-Paul, *Indigo* (London: British Museum Press, 1998). See also Victoria Finlay, *Color: A Natural History of the Palette* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), pp. 318-351.

Derived from the Latin *indicus* or Greek *indikon* meaning "oil from India." The opposition between roots and routes is borrowed from James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Lucia Carlotto, *Alghero e Bonifè: Meppa* (London: Afanell Books, 2003).

For a history of indigo in colonial Bengal and a translation of Dinabandhu Mitra's play see Aniryo Rao & B.G. Rao, *The Blue Devil: Indigo and Colonial Bengal* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1960); see also Ranajit Guha, "Nest-Deepen: The Image of a Peasant Revolt in a Liberal Mirror," *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (October 1974), pp. 1-46.

For a discussion of the aniconic tradition in early Buddhist visual practice see Vajro Dharma, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," *Asiatica*, Vol. 21 (1991), pp. 45-66.

For the history and strategic deployment of this icon during India's struggle for independence see Rebecca M. Brown, "Spinning without Touching the Wheel: Anticolonialism, Indian Nationalism, and the Deployment of Symbol," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2002), pp. 290-346.

The embroidered sampler has inspired other contemporary artists as well, most notably, Elaine Ritchie. For an extended discussion of her work see Paul Birbaumer, "Elaine Ritchie: Pixels, Bytes, and Stitches," *Art Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Summer 2006), pp. 16-35.

For an overview of Kina's earlier work see Sarah Giller Nelson, "Laure Kina," *The New American Artists of the Post-Jewish Generation* (Chicago: Sperius Press, 2007), pp. 92-94. In previous projects, Kina has explored the melodrama of soap operas and addressed the exotic Orientalist tropical island paradise tourist images for babies of Hawaii, Clifford, 3.



Laura Kina Devon Avenue Sampler :  
Travel & Tours Hand embroidery on khadi fabric, 10 x10 in. 2009



Laura Kina Devon Avenue Sampler :  
Thrillers Hand embroidery on khadi fabric, 10 x10 in. 2009



Laura Kina Devon Avenue Sampler :  
Cell Girl Hand embroidery on khadi fabric, 10 x10 in. 2009

## Indigo Inscriptions – JohnnyML

About the production of gendered and politicized authorship in the history of resistance and survival.

'(Nevertheless) there are ways in which the sexuality and corporeality of the subject leave their traces or marks on the texts produced, just as we in turn must recognize that the processes of textual production also leave their trace or residue on the body of the writer (and readers)' - Elizabeth Grosz.

When Baroda, Gujarat, India based Shelly Jyoti and Devon Avenue, Chicago based Laura Kina take on 'indigo' as a topic in the production of a visual aesthetic discourse, their subjectivities as 'women' become imperative in the process. As Elizabeth Grosz puts it, there would be a mutual inscription of sexual identities on to the subjects and their 'objects' of production. This process of gendering vis-à-vis production of an object/commodity, in turn results into the simultaneous politicization of the subject and the product, irrespective of their declared positioning within the realm of common social exchanges.

Seen within the context of an exhibition project, the works of both Jyoti and Kina come before the viewers/readers through a conscious agency, which encapsulates the authors' gendered subjectivity and the inscription of the same on their works of art. Though these two artists do not overtly position themselves as political subjects, the methods of production and the history of it draw attention to a crucial political debate that involves the issues like the global commodification of labor, women as the subjects and objects of consumption and the modes of resistance and survival undertaken by women all over the world, who are caught within the mechanisms and history of profit driven production-dissemination-consumption chain.

Hence, both Jyoti and Kina's references to the Champaran Movement (1917-18) led by Mahatma Gandhi and the movement's focus to the production of the famous blue dye called 'indigo', gain the status of a political metaphor, which is aesthetically detached from the current methods of commodity production while showing the capabilities of containing a critique on/of the same.

Champaran Movement was Mahatma Gandhi's pioneering efforts to test the efficacy of his non-violent Satyagraha philosophy. After the Kheda Satyagraha in Kheda district of South Gujarat, where he organized the Patidars against the land revenue laws of the British, Gandhiji turned his attention to Champaran in North-West Bihar, where the landless tenants were forced to do the unprofitable indigo plantations. (In fact, Champaran and Kheda movements happened almost simultaneously and history says that Sardar Vallabhai Patel played the leading role in Kheda movement and Gandhiji played the role of a spiritual leader. And this was one of the great learning lessons for Mahatma Gandhi). The indigo planters who mostly toiled in the plantations in horrendous working and living conditions were not allowed to cultivate the lands with food or other cash crops. Even the British officials of the time believed that the indigo dye made out of these plants and exported to textile conglomerates all over the world was stained by the blood of the hapless farmers in Bihar and Bengal.

Today, indigo is no longer an oppressive thing as the dye could be manufactured using chemicals. But the history of indigo cannot be forgotten as several uncelebrated lives were sacrificed within the plantations during the times since the 17th century. For Shelly and Laura, this history of these unsung people involves the history of women and their crafts too. Therefore, the selection of 'Champaran and Indigo' as a point of departure is a conscious political agency for these artists and by using the indigo metaphor as a bridge between the historical and contemporary role of women in the production (of both commodities and aestheticized commodities), they re-evoked a discourse that would analyze the role of women in the contemporary world of production and consumption.

Shelly Jyoti calls her current suite of works generally as 'Indigo Narratives'. A textile designer by profession and a visual artist by choice, Shelly has been working with textile workers and traditional crafts women for a long time. Her research interest in the history of craftswomen has led her to the history of indigo. She makes a two way connection with the Azrak craftspeople who came to India from Baluchistan in early 17th century and settled in north Gujarat and with a contemporary artist, Laura Kina. Shelly uses this linkage to develop a narrative by relying heavily on the narratives around the indigo movement and the legacy of indigo and craftwork handed over from generations to generations of traditional craftswomen.

Shelly Jyoti's narratives come in two different forms; one, as sculptural installations and two, as painted and embroidered two dimensional works on canvas. The sculptural installations, which are curiously kinetic, show diminutive human figures dangling from metal ropes. These figures are the emblematic human beings who were once oppressed by the draconian land laws of the colonizing government. Interestingly, these dangling figures suddenly draw parallel with the farmers of our times who are forced to commit suicide thanks to the imperial introduction of genetically modified seeds. The indigo victims are still around, in a new form under new forms of imperial governments, Jyoti seems to say.

Indigo Narratives become quite a poignant affair in the works like 'Homage/Ballad of Woeful Tales' and 'Blued/Indigo Coolie'. In these sculptural works, the woman-man relationship within an oppressive system of production is emphasized through sensitively handcrafted buttons and through the iconization of a coolie/merial worker's uniform, which too is dyed with indigo. Shelly's paintings in this series are in a way collaborative works with the Arzak craftspeople who carry on with a long tradition of indigo resist block printing technique and embroidery. Jyoti selects images from the lives of these women as well as the images related to the Champaran Movement and Gandhiji's life. Each image has its own vital linkages with the present and the past, positing the works as a field of inscription of the gendered subjectivities of the author/s.

Creation of collaborative narratives is what inspires Laura Kina to her works. Kina does not directly refer to Champaran Movement. Instead, she reaches out to this particular referential point through the usage of the color indigo as the predominant background in her 'handcrafted' paintings, which are abundant with the imageries from her local settings at Devon Avenue. Some of the images directly make linkages with the life of Gandhiji and what attracts the viewers' eyes is Kina's insistence on the local histories of a place, which is American and multicultural at the same time.

Devon Avenue in Chicago, which is a corridor of the South Asian and Jewish communities amply populated with the characteristics of migrant communities, has two roads named after Mahatma Gandhi and Golda Meir Boulevard, Indian and Israeli social reformers and political leaders respectively. The signages in and around Devon Avenue not only accentuate the history of the people who migrated to the place but also underlines their cultural and political leanings and their insistence on 'difference'. Through the emphasis on difference, Kina creates a narrative, which with its intrinsic relationship with the craftswomen in India and the khadi clothe, places before us a discourse on 'women and their productive labor' in the larger context of contemporary times.

Women from the 'Market Place', a Mumbai based craftswomen's collective work with Kina to create the ensemble of her works. In this way, these signage paintings using embroidery as a medium become an internal narrative of the women involved and also this narrative contains the gender and political inscriptions of the author/s. Kina deliberately calls her works as 'sampler'. Sampling a way to collaborate and appropriate, which could be double-edged seen from two different cultural perspectives. Collaboration and appropriation is a political act for creating a subaltern but unified narrative of expression but at the same time, it could be a critique on the ways in which the global corporations appropriate crafts and the craftswomen's lives into their profit driven enterprises.

Laura Kina very consciously inscribes her socio-cultural positioning as a gendered and political subject in the selection of images. Without taking an overt stance of an Indophile, Kina makes an aesthetic linkage with the chosen thematic of indigo. Shelly Jyoti and Laura Kina together create a body of works that not only speaks of the de-politicized existence of craft in an exhibition space but also makes a statement on the politicized selves that become an agency in the production of a discourse on gender and gendered production of aesthetics and commodity.

The present project by these two artists becomes all the more important especially when we come to know that there are no existing visual documentations on Gandhiji's involvement in Champaran. For the first time in history, Champaran movement and its peculiar connection with indigo is given a visual representation and representation by two contemporary artists. And this goes beyond illustration and sympathetic affiliation as both Jyoti and Kina bring in their respective subjectivities to position their works within the textual discourse of the concerned history.

JohnyML is a Delhi based curator, critic and writer.  
New Delhi  
October 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives: 'The Porter's Identification'  
Brass, 4 H x 6 W in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives: 'The Blue Farmer'  
Indigo dyed cotton rope on steel wire structure, metallic sequenced lace, 15 H x 5 W in. 2009



Laura Kina Devon Avenue Sampler : Eyebrows Threading Hand embroidery on khadi fabric, 16 x 28 in, 2009

### Moving Materials: Reclaiming Histories of Migration –

Michelle Yee

In the introduction to *Exiles, Diasporas, and Strangers*, Kobena Mercer states that "Migration throws objects, identities and ideas into flux...Taking account of life-changing journeys...deepen our understanding of the critical and creative role of estrangement and displacement..." Mercer's statement empowers mobility, viewing it as a crucible from where creativity struggles into productive action. The dynamic movement inherent in migration, though troubling and unsettling, acts as "critical and creative" perspectives that ultimately turn victimization into agency. For artists Laura Kina and Shelly Jyoti, materials hold the power to invoke histories of mobility, to tell stories and to empower change. In a unique collaboration, Kina and Jyoti utilize indigo and khadi fabric to retell a story of a torrid colonial past filled with displacement and relocation. Through the processes of making objects the artists reclaim the terror of indigo's past and enable the material to create change.

Indigo and khadi in India's history move through stories of colonization, rebellion, empowerment and struggles of independence. Through these two materials, the artists examine patterns of migration influenced by economies formed by the high demand for indigo – demand that inflicted cruelty upon communities, but ultimately also worked to form and shape them. By reminding viewers of the fraught history surrounding these materials, Kina and Jyoti's objects literally migrate through time and space and, in turn, cast a critical and productive eye towards the distressing history inherent in their chosen materials. Both in the creation and exhibition of the work, Jyoti's *Indigo Narratives* and Kina's *Devon Avenue Sampler* are displaced and re-placed into diverse spaces. From a multi-ethnic street in the heart of Chicago, Illinois to the small town of Bhuj, Gujarat, Kina and Jyoti's work remind us of the innate motion situated within art objects.

From the outset, the coming together of artists Laura Kina and Shelly Jyoti is unusual. Based out of Chicago, Kina self-associates with a mixed racial and ethnic heritage. Born to Japanese/Anglo American Christian parents and holding a BFA and an MFA, Kina creates work that emerges from an academic and Western art discourse. Inspired by the

ethnically-diverse avenue of Chicago, *Devon Avenue Sampler* makes visual the ever-changing diversity of immigrant communities. Jyoti, on the other hand, holds bachelor's and post graduate degrees in English literature. From this literary background, the Baroda, India-based artist presents *Indigo Narratives*, a series that appropriately finds its inspiration in a literary text, *Neel Darpan*, an 1860 play written by Dinabandhu Mitra. Through the narrative of indigo in pre-, present-, and post-colonial India, Jyoti's project traces hierarchies within indigo farming imposed by the British upon the indigenous farmers and craftsmen of India.

Through the three-part series of *Indigo Narratives*, Jyoti chronologically moves through the macro history of indigo brought to Bhuj, India in the 1600s to the colonial exploitation of indigo farming and craft and the subsequent intervention of Mahatma Gandhi. Now, in 2009, Jyoti arrived in contemporary Bhuj to work with 9th generation Azrak artisans to give form to her sculptural textiles. Descendants of migrating communities from Sindh and Baluchistan, these artisans represent a history of "interchanges within communities." Thus, through the complicated history of indigo, Jyoti's work refuses a stagnant conceptualization of colonizer and colonized, insisting on the influencing powers of communities upon each other. In the final component of this series, *An Ode to "Neel Darpan"*, Jyoti created a visual conception of the literary play. Each panel of the triptych exhibits hawks with lotuses in their beaks rising over a ground with worms. The hawks, representing the British colonizers, twist and manipulate lotuses in their beaks. The lotuses signal planters, British and Indian individuals who acted as intercessors and translators between the British colonizers and the indigo farmers, here represented as the hardworking and severely underappreciated worms. Jyoti's decision to utilize *Neel Darpan*, a text the artist likens to Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* published just a few years earlier in the United States, highlights the importance of a text that shed light upon a specific and cruel political and social situation. In addition, however, Jyoti selected a text that was translated by a British missionary and distributed in the United Kingdom where it raised awareness among the commonwealth population of its own people's exploitation of indigo farmers. Thus, *Indigo Narratives* highlight the impact of migrations as evoked by the spatial movements of artisans from Sindh and Baluchistan

to Bhuj, by the collision of a British missionary and an Indian text, by the return of Gandhi from South Africa to India, and finally by Jyoti's own movement from Baroda to Bhuj. Such histories of colonization, immigration, transnationalism, and the collision and influence of cultures upon one another are as relevant in the American diaspora. In Kina's work, the blending of cultures is dizzying. Devon Avenue, the multi-cultural stretch of Chicago that serves as both Kina's home and influence, is situated in the heart of Little India and boasts a myriad of immigrant communities. The street, quite literally, explodes with signage signifying the intense diversity of the place. Kina's work brings forth diaspora in all its colorful vivacity, and yet invokes the struggles inherent in migration and relocation. For example, in *Devon Avenue Sampler: Eyebrows Threading*, Kina re-creates a sign advertising the low cost of beauty services suggesting an immigrant-run business. While the sign advertises eyebrow threading and waxing, it can be imagined displayed prominently on a nail salon's window. Such salons are typically associated with Asian women who have developed a significant skill in order to create a livelihood. Embroidered on khadi fabric and dyed an indigo blue, Kina's work indirectly reminds of the Indigo narratives of India so implicit in Jyoti's work, suggesting both the area's identity as Little India and the economic struggle that, though contextually different, are experienced by both Jyoti's Indigo artisans and Kina's immigrant communities. Still, like *Devon Avenue* itself, Kina's work extends beyond only an Indian diasporic identity to represent a jumble of cultures, interwoven but not without distinct borders. Kina's work is a reminder of the strength of identity and history. While the subjects of her pieces hint at a myriad of cultures – Jewish, Pakistani, Russian, Desi, Vietnamese, Muslim, etc – literally woven into fabrics suggestive of another and specific culture, each one stands on its own. Kina's *Devon Avenue* is no melting pot where cultures come to melt into one another, losing identity and inimitability. Instead, it is a conglomeration of cultures; each undeniably influenced & impacted, yet still determinedly its unique own.

Situated at this point of cultural collision where Kina and Jyoti's projects meet sits another point of intersection – one as fundamental as their chosen mediums. Here resides decades of conversations and dialogues about the role of textiles in fine art. As art historian Paula Birnbaum reminds, "Since the early 1970s feminine artists have been using embroidery as a vehicle to reclaim female agency...and to question the validity of a hierarchy of genres in the history of art." Artists such as Elaine Reichek and Judy Chicago have sought to "[unravel] the tradition of the embroidered sampler" to "critique the patriarchal and modernist assumptions of our culture." Like Reichek and Chicago, Kina and Jyoti's work resonate with feminist concerns and utilize embroidery as legitimate art mediums. However, Kina and Jyoti have both extended beyond a feminist concern for historical representation and instead turned their art into vehicles to assist women in contemporary society. By employing fair trade women collectives based in India to give form to their artistic concepts, the artists provide business for these collectives, owned and operated by, and with the purpose of providing, women with the "opportunity and the chance to earn a dignified living." By turning their "high art" concepts over to the hands of craftswoman, Kina and Jyoti do not merely critique "patriarchal... assumptions," but also tangibly affect lives. They reclaim not only textiles as a legitimate art form, but also the history of labor associated with indigo. They utilize the past to empower the women of the present.

Textiles, while questioning the [masculine] perspectives of high art versus low art, also arrest attention on the actual materiality of an art object. With its tactile quality, textiles remind the viewer of the objects very object-ness – inviting the viewer to touch, handle, and thus move. As Kina and Jyoti's projects moved from studios to cooperatives back to studios and finally into the galleries for exhibition, they are shipped across oceans, adjusted and handled by innumerable hands, building and holding the meaning that will ultimately be inseparable from their physical presence. More importantly, in the journeys that each object will travel, the art itself will impact, remind of and change its surroundings. Mirroring the interaction of humans through migration and mobility, the movements of art objects inform and influence every destination.

Finally when these objects reach the galleries meant for viewers' eyes, they will already hold weighty meaning from decades of conflicted powers in India, from cultures coming together in the immigrant-heavy society of the United States, from the empowerment of women, and from the transnational and nuanced diversity of the world. For Laura Kina and Shelly Jyoti, art is an enabler. It enables history to influence and affect the decisions of the present. Art questions and dismantles its own hierarchies to bring light upon the implications forced upon simple materials. Finally, it enables such implications to be questioned and reworked to create tangible change, not just in perceptions of history, but in the status quo of today's societies.

Michelle Yee, November 2009, New York City, NY

Michelle Yee is currently a doctoral student in Art History at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She holds an MA in Art History from the University of Connecticut and a BA in Art History and English from Georgetown University.

Kobena Mercer, "Introduction" in *Edles, Diasporas & Strangers* (Cambridge MA Press, 2007), 7. Shelly Jyoti, *Artist's Statement*, 2009.

It is important to note that Reverend James Long, the English missionary who translated, published and distributed the text, was arguably more concerned with the dissemination of Biblical values and norms upon an indigenous (and presumably heathen) population than with the rights of the farmers as human beings. A relevant and interesting perspective is presented in Purni Panwar's article, "Vernacular Dressing and English Re-dressings: Translating Nal Darpan" in *Translation Today Journal*, vol. 1, no. 2 (October 2004), 6 November 2009. <http://www.usinfo.org/india/vernacular.asp>; Shelly Jyoti, *Artist's Statement*, 2009.

Eds: Lai and Dennis Arguillas, eds. *The New Face of Asian Pacific America: Numbers, Diversity & Change in the 21st Century* (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center press, 2005), 242. Lai and Arguillas present the staggering statistic that "30 percent of the 22,000 nail manicure salons in the United States" are owned by Vietnamese immigrants, primarily women. (Paula Birnbaum, "Elaine Reichek: Pixels, Bytes, and Stitches" *CMA Art Journal* vol. 07, no. 2 (Summer 2006), 19. For Judy Chicago, see Paula Harper, "The Chicago Revolution," *Art in America* vol. 88 no. 6 (June 2000), 112-15, 137-8; Birnbaum, 19. Purni Panwar, "Our Mission: Legacies of Love," *MarketPlace: Handwork of India*, Mumbai, India, 9 October 2009. [www.marketplaceindia.org/MP/](http://www.marketplaceindia.org/MP/); Birnbaum, 19.

My use of the term "object-ness" admits and is indebted to a lengthy and complex art historical discourse about the art object as a physical presence versus a mechanical reproduction. I admit that I cannot here give Michael Fried's 1967 article "Art and Objecthood" and Walter Benjamin's 1936 essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" the discussion that their texts justifiably demand. Thus I hope that it suffices to state my own impetus to use the term object-ness as an apt phrase to underscore the demand of an object to be physically handled and thus to exchange hands.

Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Ode to Nal Darpan. Acrylic resin printing on khadi fabric 60x42 in. 2009



# Shelly Jyoti

## Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Azrak



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Azrak  
'Yed spinning wheel' Azrak resist dyeing on khadi fabric 46 x 46 in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Azrak  
'Moolan spinning wheel' Azrak resist dyeing on khadi fabric 46 x 46 in. 2009

### An Allusion to Azrak

I worked with 9th/10th generation Azrak artisans in Bhuj in the interior of Gujarat, on khadi fabric with ancient indigo resist printing techniques. My designs, however, are entirely contemporary interpretations of the politics of indigo.



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Azrak  
'Yirvano pattern' Azrak resist dyeing on khadi fabric 46x 46 in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Azrak  
'Gandhi's foot print' Azrak resist dyeing on khadi fabric 46 x 46 in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Azrak  
'Patterned spinning wheel' Azrak resist dyeing on khadi fabric 46x 46 in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Azrak  
'Gandhi's spinning wheel' Azrak resist dyeing on khadi fabric 46 x 46 in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo *Nanāśas* : An Allusion to Azrak  
An Indigo Plant, Azrak resist dyeing on khadi fabric 60 x 48 in. 2009

# Shelly Jyoti

## Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stiches



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stiches 'Tibet neck band'  
Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stiches 'Omoro pattern block'  
Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stiches 'Contemporary silhouette block'  
Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stiches 'Unstitched upper body block'  
Acrylic on canvas, Sanskrit calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 in. 2009





Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stitches 'Gandhi's wooden footwear'  
Acrylic on canvas, Sarakri calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 in. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stitches 'An Indigo sapling'  
Acrylic on canvas, Sarakri calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 in. 2009



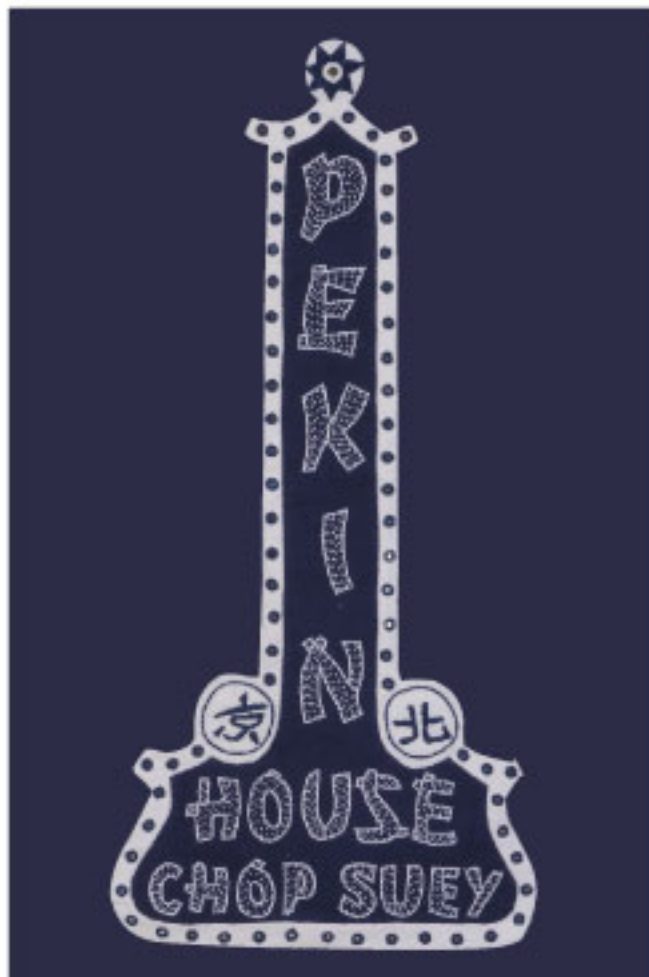
Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stitches 'Gandhi's spinning wheel'  
Acrylic on canvas, Sarakri calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 in. 2009



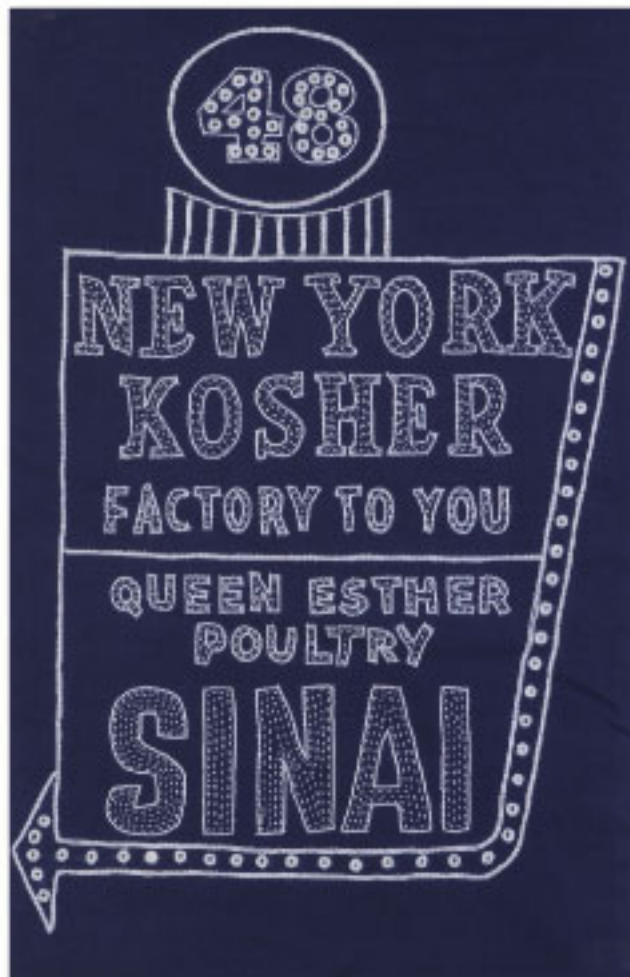
Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stitches 'An Indigo Leaf'  
Acrylic on canvas, Sarakri calligraphy block printed, embroidered patches 40 x 33 in. 2009

# Laura Kina

## Devon Avenue Sampler



Laura Kina Devon Avenue Sampler :  
Peking House Chop Suey Hand embroidery on Khadi fabric with mirrors 24x16 in. 2009.



Laura Kina Devon Avenue Sampler :  
New York Kosher Hand embroidery on Khadi fabric with mirrors 24x16 in. 2009.



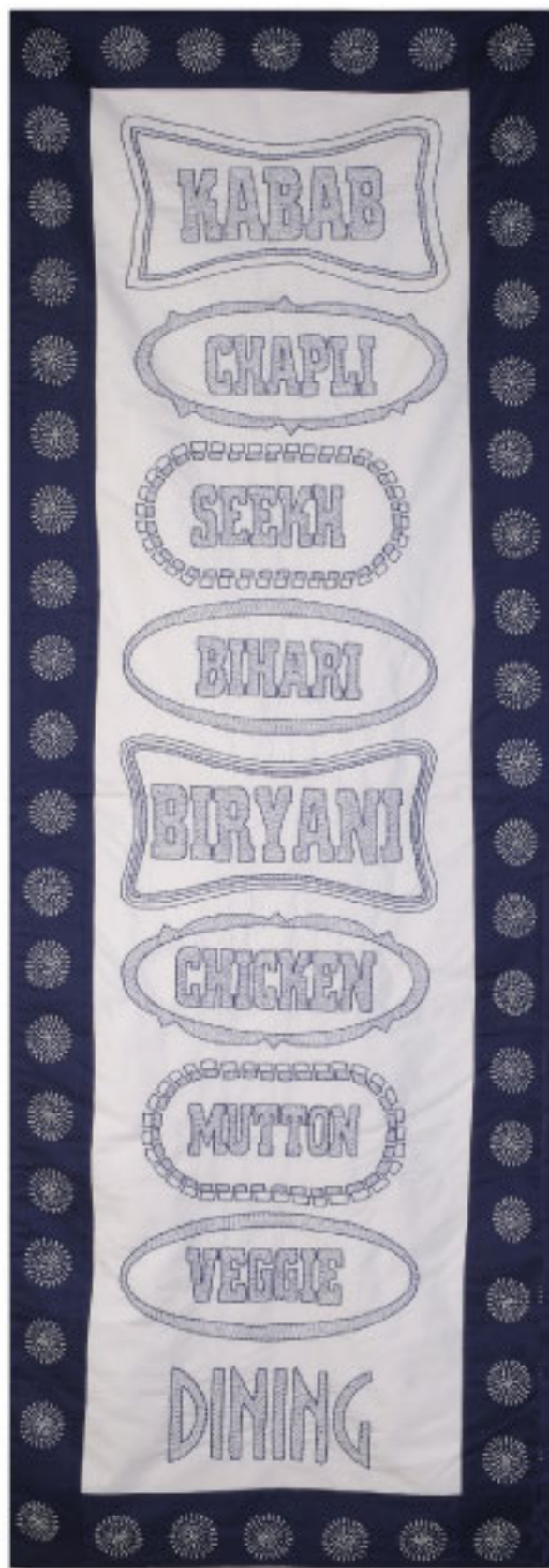
Laura Kina  
Devon Avenue Sampler



Laura Kina Devon Avenue Sampler : Digital Conversion Hand embroidery on khaki fabric, 18 x 16 in. 2008



Laura Kira Devon Avenue Sampler :  
 Ashani GH Hand embroidery on Khadi fabric 60 x 15 In. 2009



Laura Kira Devon Avenue Sampler :  
 Zam Zam Hand embroidery on khadi fabric 60 x 18 In. 2009

## Laura Kina



Photo by Robert Diaz 2009

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Laura Kina is an artist, independent curator, and scholar whose research focuses on Asian American art and critical mixed race studies. She is an Associate Professor of Art, Media and Design, Vincent de Paul Professor, and Director of Asian American Studies at DePaul University.

Born in California and raised in the Pacific Northwest, the artist currently lives and works in Chicago, IL. Her work is represented in Miami, FL by Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts. She is a 2009-2010 DePaul University Humanities Fellow.

Kina's Devon Avenue Sampler series has been funded in part by grants from DePaul University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University Research Council Grant, and funding from the Society of Vincent de Paul.

**Born 1973, Riverside, California USA**

**Work/Live: Chicago, IL USA**

### Education

M.F.A. 2001 University of Illinois at Chicago  
B.F.A. 1994 The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

2007 *Aloha Dreams*, Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts, Miami, FL  
2006 *Loving, Grand Projects*, New Haven, CT  
2003 *Hapa Soap Operas*, Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts, Miami, FL  
2002 *Laura Kina: new works*, Union League Club of Chicago, Chicago, IL

### Selected Group Exhibitions

2010 *Embracing Ambiguities: Faces of the Future*, Cal State Fullerton Main Gallery, Fullerton, CA. Curators: Lynn Stromick and Jillian Nakornthap  
2009 *GEO-graphic*, Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts, Miami, FL. Curator: Diana Lowenstein  
*Over the Top: 16 Years of Running a Gallery*, Walsh Gallery, Chicago, IL.  
Curator: Julie Walsh  
2007-2008 *The New Authentics: Artists of the Post-Jewish Generation*, The Rose Art Museum of Brandeis University, Waltham, MA./ Spertus Museum, Chicago, IL. Curator: Staci Boris  
2006 *New ART as Universal LANGUAGE*, Art & Culture Center of Hollywood, Hollywood, FL.  
Curator: Mariavelia Savino  
*Hiddenvalleyranch*, Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts, Miami, FL. Curator: José Carlos Diaz  
*Travel and Leisure*, James Hotel, Chicago, IL. Organized by Monique Meloche & Bucket Rider Gallery  
2005 *Street Stories*, Walsh Gallery, Chicago, IL. Curator: Julie Walsh  
*Love Triangles: Asian Soap Opera Exhibition*, Asian Art Initiative, Philadelphia, PA.  
Curator: Sean Stoops  
2004 *For Your Eyes Only: Gutsy Art Chicago Style*, Walsh Gallery, Chicago, IL.  
Curator: Julie Walsh  
*Men and Boys*, Walker's Point Center for the Arts, Milwaukee, WI.  
Curator: Leslie Bellavance  
*Coming Soon*, Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago, IL. Curator: Larry Lee

- 2003 *Young Generation II*, Diana Lowenstein Fine Arts, Miami, FL. Curator: Diana Lowenstein  
*Social Patterns*, Northeastern Illinois University Fine Arts Center, Chicago, IL  
 Curator: John Brunetti  
*Mythical Nation*, ArtSPACE, New Haven, CT Curator: Johanna Bresnick

#### Selected Awards/Grants/Residencies

- 2010 DePaul University, LA&S Grant "War Baby/Love Child: Mixed Race Asian American Art"  
 DePaul University, URC Grant "War Baby/Love Child: Mixed Race Asian American Art"  
 2009 DePaul University Humanities Fellowship "War Baby/Love Child: Mixed Race Asian American Art"  
 DePaul University, URC Grant "Drawing Devon"  
 2008 DePaul University, LA&S Grant "The Blessers"  
 2007 City of Chicago Community Arts Assistance Grant "Solo Show: Aloha Dreams"  
 DePaul University, URC Grant "Passing: Drawing on Mixed Heritage"  
 2006 DePaul University, URC Grant "Swirl & Blur: Painting Mixed Asian America"  
 DePaul University, LA&S Grant "Swirl & Blur: Painting Mixed Asian America"  
 The Cooper Union School of Art Summer 2006 Residency, New York, NY

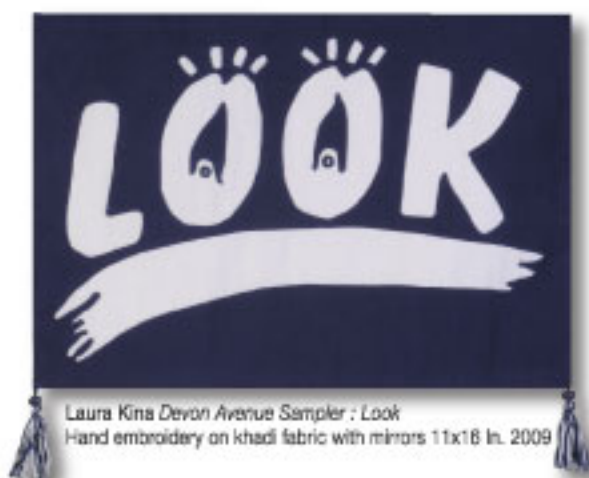
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 Elkjer, April. "Hapa Visual Artist Explores Culture and Identity."  
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 2007 Boris, Staci and Sarah Giller Nelson. *The New Authentics: Artists of the Post-Jewish Generation*. Chicago, IL: Spertus Press, 2007; 40-41 and 91-95.  
 Chang, Alexandra. "Painting Paradise: Artist Laura Kina's Aloha Dreams."  
 Asiance Magazine. August 2007  
 Herrera T., Adriana. "Los paraísos híbrido de Laura Kina." El Nuevo Herald.  
 29 July, 2007: Artes & Letras front page 1D.  
 2006 Kobasa, Stephen V. "Grand Things in a Small Space." The New Haven Advocate.  
 9 November, 2006: 35.  
 2005 Rosof, Libby. "Soapy Bubbles." TheArtblog.org. 1 June, 2005  
 Martell, Marisol. "Chicago Contemporary & Classic." Art Nexus.  
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 Brett, Max. "Painting By Color." The Chicago Reporter.  
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 Genocchio, Benjamin. "The Asia Within Us: Bicultural eyes and What They See."  
 The New York Times (Connecticut version). 27 July 2003:8.  
 Birke, Judy. "Mythical Nation, Where Cultures Overlap." The New Haven Register.  
 13 July, 2003: E1+

#### Related Professional Activity

Associate Professor & Vincent de Paul Distinguished Professor, Department of Art, Media, & Design, and  
 Program Director Asian American Studies, DePaul University, Chicago, IL

Co-curator *War Baby/Love Child: Mixed Race Asian American Art* (forthcoming) DePaul University Art  
 Museum 2011/Wing Luke Asian Art Museum 2012



Laura Kina Devon Avenue Sampler : Look  
 Hand embroidery on khadi fabric with mirrors 11x18 in. 2009

# Shelly Jyoti



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Shelly Jyoti is a visual artist, fashion designer, poet, researcher and independent curator whose research centers on design/patterns of ethnic groups and its visual representation within 20th century costumes. She is trained in fashion design and clothing technology at the National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi (an affiliate of FIT NY) and earned her Masters degree in English Literature from Punjab University in Chandigarh.

Jyoti has been a juror, given talks, conducted workshops in art and fashion schools in India and abroad. Her published works are in collection with Sahitya Akademi, the journal of Indian English literature IL238, Institute of General Semantics - Texas US 2008, St. Xavier University - Chicago Spring Magazine 2007. She is an advisory board member of Socleen, a non-profit for society for clean environment and Disha, a non-profit organizations dedicated to helping children with autism, and special disabilities.

Shelly Jyoti's Indigo Narrative series has been funded in part by Gujarat Lalit kala Academy.

**Born 1957**

**Work/Live: Vadodara, Gujarat, India**

### Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2009 Beyond Mithila: Exploring the Decorative, catalog India Habitat Center, New Delhi
- 2008 Beyond Mithila: Exploring the Decorative, catalog Woman Made Gallery, Chicago.  
Beyond Mithila: Exploring the Decorative, catalog Jamaat Art Gallery, Mumbai  
A Space for Abstraction & Muses, catalog Sriшти Art Gallery WelcomHotel, Baroda
- 2007 Lyrical Abstraction: A room of /for muses works on canvas, catalog Experimental Art gallery India Habitat Center, New Delhi
- 2005 Works on Paper - Mixed Media, ICC Milpitas, California
- 2004 Paintings and Poetry, pastels, inks, drawings, Welcome Art Gallery, Baroda
- 2003 Ethnicity and Symbols I, American India Foundation, California  
Ethnicity and Symbols I, Indiana University, South Bend Indiana
- 1999-2000 Woman of the New Millennium, Shristi Art Gallery, Baroda.

### Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2009 Women imaging women: A study of female portraiture, Robert Morris University, Chicago
- 2007 The spirit of India, Singapore  
Line and Form, The Mahua Art Gallery, Bangalore.  
Cynosure Lanxes, ABS Art Gallery, Baroda, Gujarat
- 2006 Creative Fantasy, The Mahua Art Gallery, Bangalore
- 2006 Ele Decor Art & Design Show, New Delhi Curated by Dr. Alka Pande  
Here Comes the Bride, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, Illinois Curated by Beate Minkovski  
Annual Benefit Auction, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, Illinois
- 2004 Print Making, Cheap, Baroda  
Annual Benefit Auction, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, Illinois
- 2003 Holiday Bazaar, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, Illinois  
Women, Trauma and Visual Expression, paintings and poetry selected For documentation purpose, Woman Made Gallery, Chicago, Illinois
- 2002 Show Curated Nature's Fury, Pranav and Priyum, digital artwork, Sriшти Art  
Voices against Violence, Fine Arts Faculty, Baroda
- 2001 Earthquake Relief Fund Benefit Exhibition, Fine Arts Faculty, Baroda  
Earthquake Relief Fund Benefit Exhibition, Artcore Gallery, Baroda
- 1994-2003 Designed, manufactured Garments under my own label - Domestic Market  
Freelanced as a designer with Export houses for American and European market  
Coordinated fashion related courses in premier Fashion Institutes



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : Fabric Discs / Buttons from installation 'Monage' 7 In. Dia. 2009



### Honors & Jury

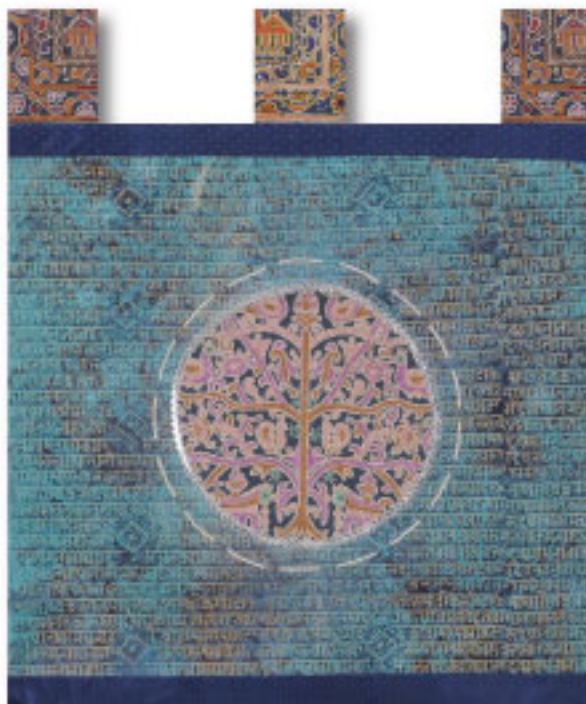
- 2004 Artist of Eminence by Baroda Management Association, Baroda  
1994 Best Traditional craft Design Collection Award, NIFT New Delhi  
2001-2005 Juror to Fashion shows – National Institutes of fashion Design, Baroda

### Selected Bibliography

- 2009 Swapna vora. 'Shelly Jyoti and Mithila: The joy of decoration ' [www.aslanart.com/articles/vora/shelly/index.html](http://www.aslanart.com/articles/vora/shelly/index.html) 2009  
Meghna Sharma.' The expressions' TV Interview- Lok sabha channel ,2009,New Delhi
- 2008 Swati mathur.'Thread of Heritage',India Today, Oct 13
- 2008 Priya malhotra, 'Interweaving: The art of Shelly Jyoti'
- 2007 Jhony ML. Lyrical Abstractions: A Room of/for the Muses
- 2008 Georgina Maddox.'Shelly Jyoti contemporises Mithila painting' Forward block, Indian Express Mumbai, Oct 07, 2008
- 2007 The Alchemist Volume 65, Number 1 Jan.2008 Cover art [www.articlearchives.com](http://www.articlearchives.com)
- 2007 Supriya sharma ,Fashionable canvases The Hindu 2007 New Delhi  
Fashionable Art 'Pioneer'2007 New Delhi  
TV interview- India times new time 2007 New Delhi  
Mamta Banga'Wear this art if you wish' The Hindustan times, New Delhi 2007 March
- 2004 'For this artist, its all in the eyes',Indian express Baroda Nov. 7,2004
- 2000 Avinash kamath 'Designers paints new women' indian express /viva city Baroda Jan13,2000  
Amita pratap shah'The evolution of women'Baroda Times Jan 2000
- 1999 Monal Jayraam:Millennium Women, Indian express 29 Dec. 1999  
Works in collection India and abroad



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stitches  
'Untitled' mixed media on canvas 33 x 20 In. 2009



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives : An Allusion to Stitches  
'Untitled' mixed media on canvas 33 x 20 In. 2009

# Shelly Jyoti



Shelly Jyoti Indigo Narratives / Neel Coolie Acrylic painted canvas fully structured / stitched size medium with brass identification tied on the sleeves 21 x 34 in. 2009

## Acknowledgements

Shelly Jyoti: Indigo Narratives 2009-2010

I would like to extend a special thanks to Red Earth Art Gallery for their gallery space to preview in Baroda, Chanda Ben, a Rolex award winner laureate from Shrujan: *The threads of life* for supporting *An allusion to stitches* series; Dr Ismail Mohamed & Junaid bhai from the 8th / 10th generation *Khatir* family from Bhuj for assisting me to create eco-friendly azrak work for *An allusion to azrak* series; Sakor bhai, a skilled azrak artisan, SEJAL of Baroda for their heritage blocks; Vipul Bundheliya and his team from Positive Ideas for their design & technical support in creating the catalog / brochures. Fine Light for photography and Mr Hitesh for videographic support, Pattern Master Mehbod bhai of Baroda for stylizing the canvases, Jagdish Chauhan for coordinating; Media Creators for maintaining my website and images. Most of all, lovable thanks to Laura Kina for sending positive vibes, her academic expertise and being a great team member which allowed seamless interplay of our multicultural ideas to convert our concept indigo into a visual reality. Skyping 24x7 kept us both focussed. Thanks to Shelly Behl, New York based artist and friend for introducing me to Laura Kina in 2008.

This project has been funded in part by grants from Gujarat Lalit Kala Academy.

# Laura Kina



Laura Kina Devon Avenue Sampler : Mehndi Hand embroidery on khadi fabric 15 x 10 in. 2009

## Acknowledgements

Laura Kina: Devon Avenue Sampler 2009

I would like to extend a special thanks to Lalita Montsro and Shelly Agrawal of Market Place: Handwork of India for overseeing the production of my Devon Avenue Sampler series as well as the talented artisans of Market Place whose embroidery and sewing skills made this work possible: Zabina Sheikh, Meera Singh, Rakha Sonawala, Haseena Qureshi, Ramila Solanki, Rabia Sheikh, Deepika Surti, and Mohammad Abur Kani. I would also like to thank Susan Fireside, of Winter & Construction Design, for her design consultation and logo development and Christina Pannos and Julie Walsh, of Walsh Gallery, for introducing me to Market Place and critic Murtaza Vali and to artist Shelly Bahi for introducing me to Shelly Jyoti. Most of all, I would like to thank Shelly Jyoti for inviting me to collaborate with her and opening my eyes to a whole new world.

This project has been funded in part by grants from DePaul University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University Research Council Grant, and funding from the Society of Vincent de Paul Professors.

EYEBROW  
THREADING

\$3



Shelly Jyoti



Laura Kina



GANDHI MARG



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

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