

Assimilation is violence.

It is to make us strangers to the ancestral knowledge that has run through our veins for centuries. It is the active erasure of our pasts in order to fit someone else's vision of the future. It makes us strangers to ourselves - and to each other.

We arrive and strive to be like *them* ...

...only to discover that we can never be anyone else than ourselves.

This exhibition is dedicated to those hidden in plain sight - the migrants - it's a reminder of our royalty that once was and still is - the beauty in our color, the poetry in our myths, and the song in our accents.

If we are not honored by others, then we have the power to honor each other.

My work is dedicated to you.



Alia Ali // 1ħ°|°ŷ1ħ° // عاليه علي





Red Blossom, LIBERTY Series, 2022





Alia Ali is Yemeni-Bosnian-US multi-media artist. She strongly believes that textile is significant to us all. We are born into it, we sleep in it, we eat on it, we define ourselves by it, we shield ourselves with it, and eventually, we die in it. For her site-specific installation, Ali activates the three-storied stairwell drawing special attention to the areas in between. Along with 52 collaborating Master Artisans from New Orleans, Paris and Jaipur, the artist threads together twelve of her photographic sculptures, in custom frames upholstered by the artist, herself. They are hung within in a re-imagined environment using Rajasthani hand-blocked textiles with hand embroidered elements that cover the surfaces of the building. All aspects are carefully drawn together into a visual narrative of multi-layered experience, practice, and imagination, together manifesting into a journey of identity and collectivity.





LIBERTY Series, 2022
by Alia Ali

For centuries, Yemen has been at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and the islands that pepper the majestic seas in between. Textiles have served as a driving force of cultural, economic and diplomatic exchange, offering a living archive of the communities they have touched. Their motifs have migrated away from the fibers and into the architecture, the design, the porcelains, and the story-telling, offering reminders of the histories that they both share and preserve.

Growing up in Sana'a, Yemen, I remember my mother always stressing to us that education wasn't only what we read, but what we saw, touched, tasted, and smelled. She taught us that in order to be well-rounded we needed to be grounded in the cultures of our community and to know and appreciate the stories we heard and told. I loved to ask questions and to share my impressions and thoughts - however, as we traveled and moved to different parts of the world, I discovered that in some places I was ignored and made to feel unwelcome, hushed as though what I saw didn't matter. But, it was different in Asia, whether at home in Sana'a, or traveling in Mumbai, Lahore, Hong Kong or Bangkok, I was always accepted, integrated, and seen. The world through my eyes was understood as essential for reminding elders of the cyclical nature of their existence. Children offered a reminder of the wonder, curiosity, and amazement of discovering the world for the first time.

Many of my early memories are of traveling with my mother to these places and visiting the local markets. I remember vividly the feeling of entering into spaces where there were textiles stacked and ordered from floor to ceiling, creating perfect walls of carefully arranged colors and textures. The merchants—and even sometimes the Master Artisans themselves— would insist on inviting us in, and would share with us their processes and their histories. It became very clear that they weren't just makers and sellers, they were storytellers, entrepreneurs, and artists – and they invited me into their world.

These were my favorite people and places to visit. The process of selling was so much more than a transaction— it was a ritual that had been perfected, as a choreographed dance, all parts of which would play into the final negotiations at the end. But the most important aspect was the journey that was shared together through pattern, pigment and storytelling. There was always an elevated seating area, designed for resting, relaxing, and remaining. Tea was offered as a way of showing hospitality, kindness, trust and comfort. We would commence with niceties to engage mutual curiosities and facilitate the collection of information, and soon enough the flowing of fabrics, teas, and stories would begin. It was through this flow that I developed the rhythm and timing of my own practices. I would sit there for hours, while fabrics were thrown across my legs and lap one after another, until it was no longer only the small pattern that I saw, but also what it looked like within a community of its own.

It was in the markets that I learned to harness my own opinion and to develop an appreciation for what I was drawn to, rather than what I was meant to be drawn to. I didn't learn this from being told – I learned this by what I observed, felt, and experienced. I learned that cotton is the most exquisite fabric, and the finest cottons are among the finest fabrics made. Cotton has the capacity to both cool the body and to keep the body warm, and the potential to be worn by all classes of society. The fabric impresses the richest of colors, and as a plant itself, cotton both harbors and reflects the language of the natural world. Cotton is also the most difficult fabric that I have worked with thus far, because of its extreme capacity to wrinkle, moreso than even silk.

It is well-known that Liberty cotton is among the finest cottons in the world. The skills required to create these couture fabrics were developed by Indian artisans over hundreds of years, and their place within British culture is a direct result of Britain's violent occupation of India. Taking the artistry as their own, the British disassociated the roots of this ancestral knowledge and beauty from its origin, replacing histories of splendor with narratives and images of suffering, victim-hood, and criminality – all under the trademark of "Liberty." How can one copyright liberty? How can one steal the knowledge of generations, divorcing them from their ancestors and from their land, in the name of freedom?

Liberty (2022) is a love letter to those who have taught me the most about what I know of pattern, color, texture, and the expanse of the world of textile – which is the world of linguistics, constellations, cartographies, and expressions. When asked how I obtained such a knowledge, the answer is that I owe it to my mother, to those merchants, to the keepers of knowledges, to the protectors of the archives, to the storytellers, to the tea makers, to the dyers, to the Master Artisans, to their apprentices, to the land... This series is dedicated to all those who have generously taken time, served me tea, and invited me to root my identity in and alongside their own. To this day my wonder and amazement only gets larger and bigger. You've taught me that Liberty cannot be owned, trademarked, or captioned, but must be experienced.

May you never be forgotten, may you always be acknowledged, and may you forever be seen.







*Super Bloom (left), Minakshi
(right, Blue Blossom top),
LIBERTY Series, 2022*





IN COLLECTIVE RISE

Every artist requires a community . Without this community my practice and artistic voice would not have been possible. The artist would like to acknowledge Masha Sha and Stephen Firenze for their continued commitment to believing in her. Because of their light love care attention, this project would have never come to life nor would her practice, This exhibition is dedicate to you

ARTIST

Alia Ali

CURATION

Annelies Thoelen

Co-curated by Branko Popovic & Max Rummens

INSTALLATION, CURATION & LOVE

Matis Mojciechowski

Rien Geypen

Kurt Geraerts

Nadine Van Est

Piet Snoeks

Ronald Steegmans

Ali Osman Tugla

Jessie Bas

Fatima Ait Fair

Lindsey Thys

SITTERS

Masha Sha

Alia Ali

STUDIO LIGHTING

Cameron Wood

PRINTING & RETOUCHING

Elisabeth Hering, Artist Liaison, PICTO Paris

Christophe Batifoulier, Master Printer, PICTO Paris

Pascale Brunel, Retouching, PICTO Paris

Laouen Goareguer, Mounting, PICTO Paris

FRAME FABRICATION

Rajesh Saini, Jaipur

Shankar Lyer, Jaipur

Dan Alley, Denali Art Solutions

John Craun, Master Carpenter

Abe Grassland, Fabricator

Chris Herbeck, Fabricator Painting

Surge Loncar, Driver

Keland Jackson, Painting and Finishing

SHIPPING & CRATING

Vikas Goswami

Jimmie Dacuyan, Craters and Freighters, New Orleans

Manon Strack, PICTO Paris

LEGAL COUNSEL

Virginie Parant, ARTech Law

TEXTILE FABRICATION

Sachin Gotharwal Chhipa, Owner, B & R Enterprises

Deepak Gotharwal Chhipa, Owner, B & R Enterprises

Arif Mohamed, The Fabric Craft

Rajendra Kumar, Chippa Arts

Rohiyan Masterjhi

Preeti Agarwal, Project Manager

Ekta Bhair, Project Manager

Bharat Sharma Goswami, Textile Manager

TAILORING

Maliram Bunker, Master Tailor

Lalitesh Kumar, Tailor

Ashok Kumar, Tailor

Mohammed Salim, Tailor

Suresh Kumar, Tailor

Vushnu, Tailor

FINISHING

Dinesh Sharma, Manager

Suman Devi

Rekha Ji

Komal

IRONING

Rakesh Nayak

EMBROIDERY

Mohammed Chand, Head of Atelier, Jaipur

Rakesh, Master Artisan, Jaipur

Sundar, Master Artisan, Jaipur

Mohammed Islam, Master Artisan, Jaipur

Mohammed Shaan, Master Artisan, Jaipur

Mohammed Asif, Master Artisan, Jaipur

Mohammed Bilal, Master Artisan, Jaipur

Mohammed Wasim, Master Artisan, Jaipur

Mohammed Salan, Master Artisan, Jaipur

WALL PANELS & BORDERS

Ramesh Chand, Tailor

Lallu Lal, Tailor

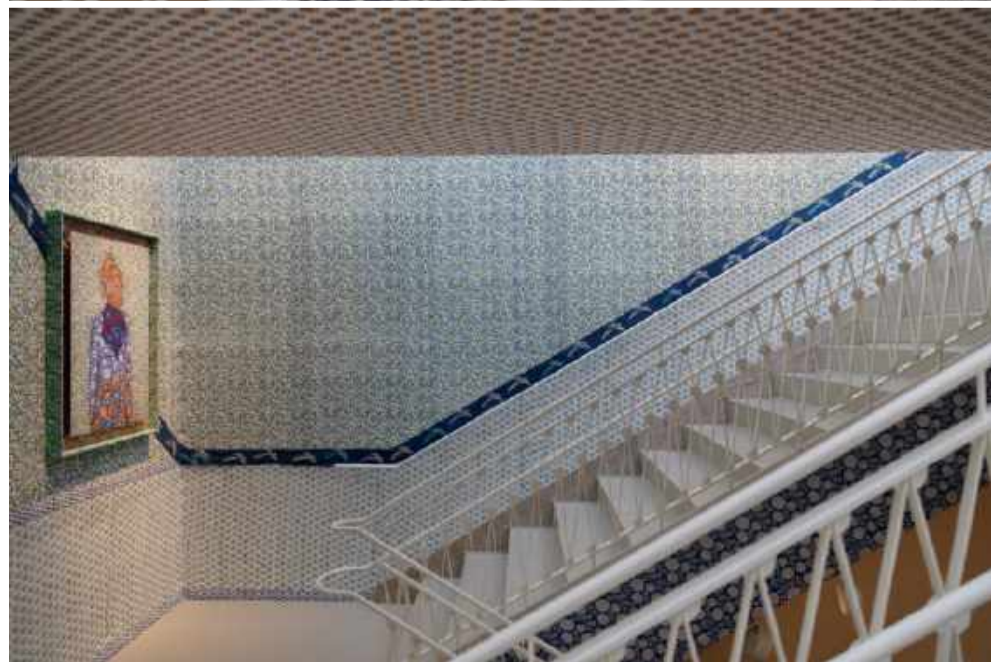
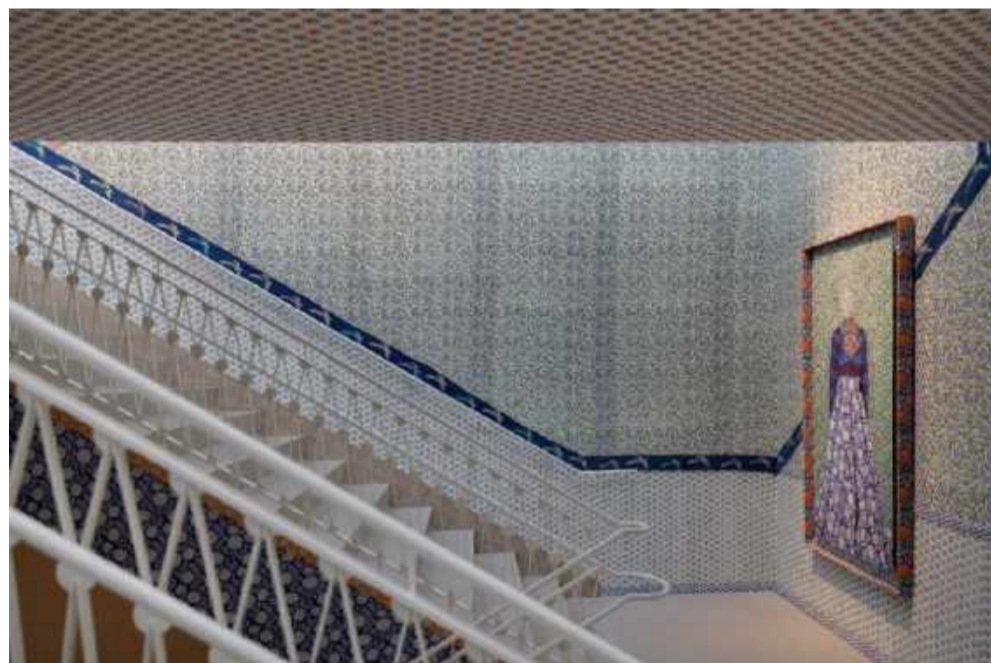
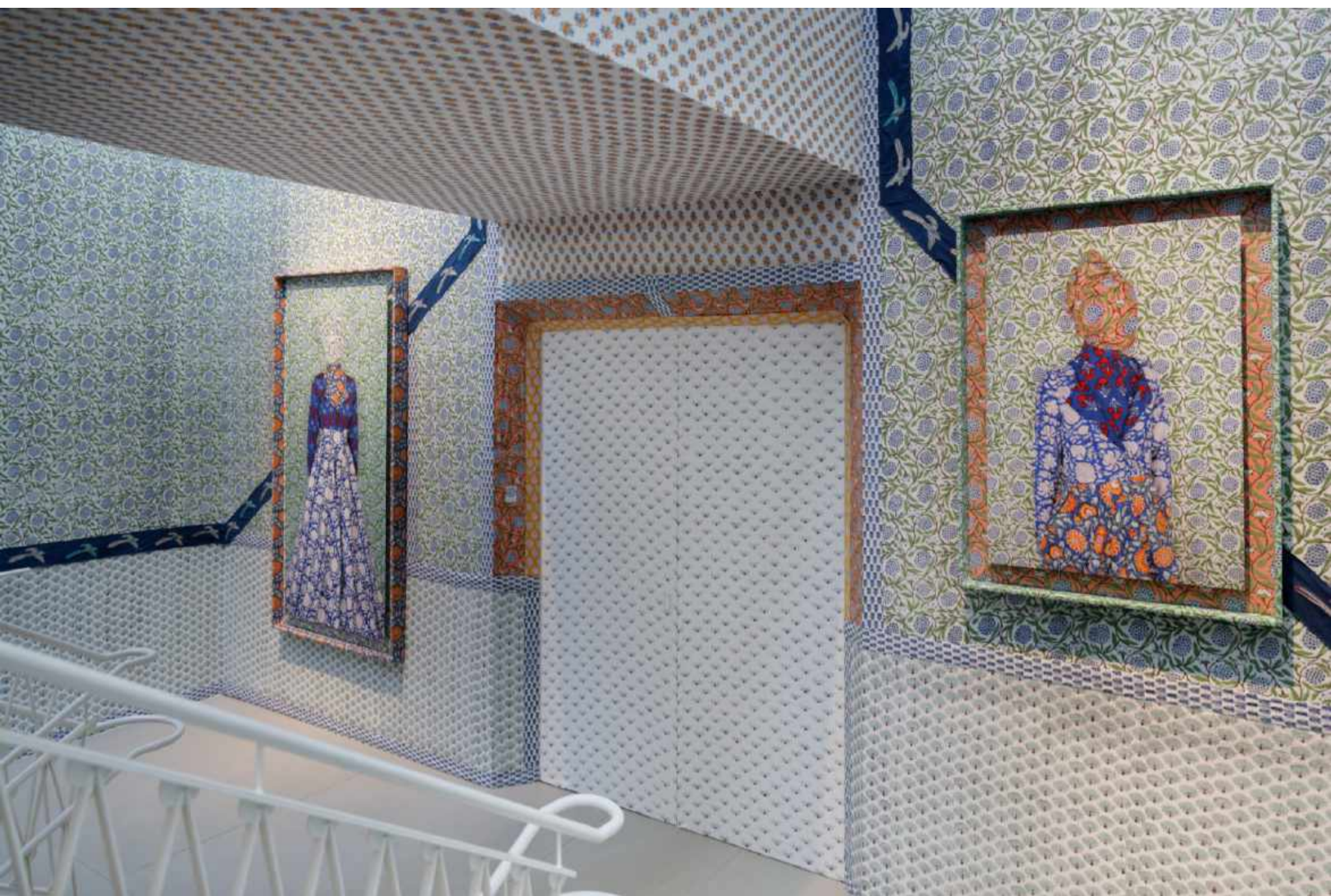
Kedar Choudary, Masterji

Ramprasad Choudary, Masterij

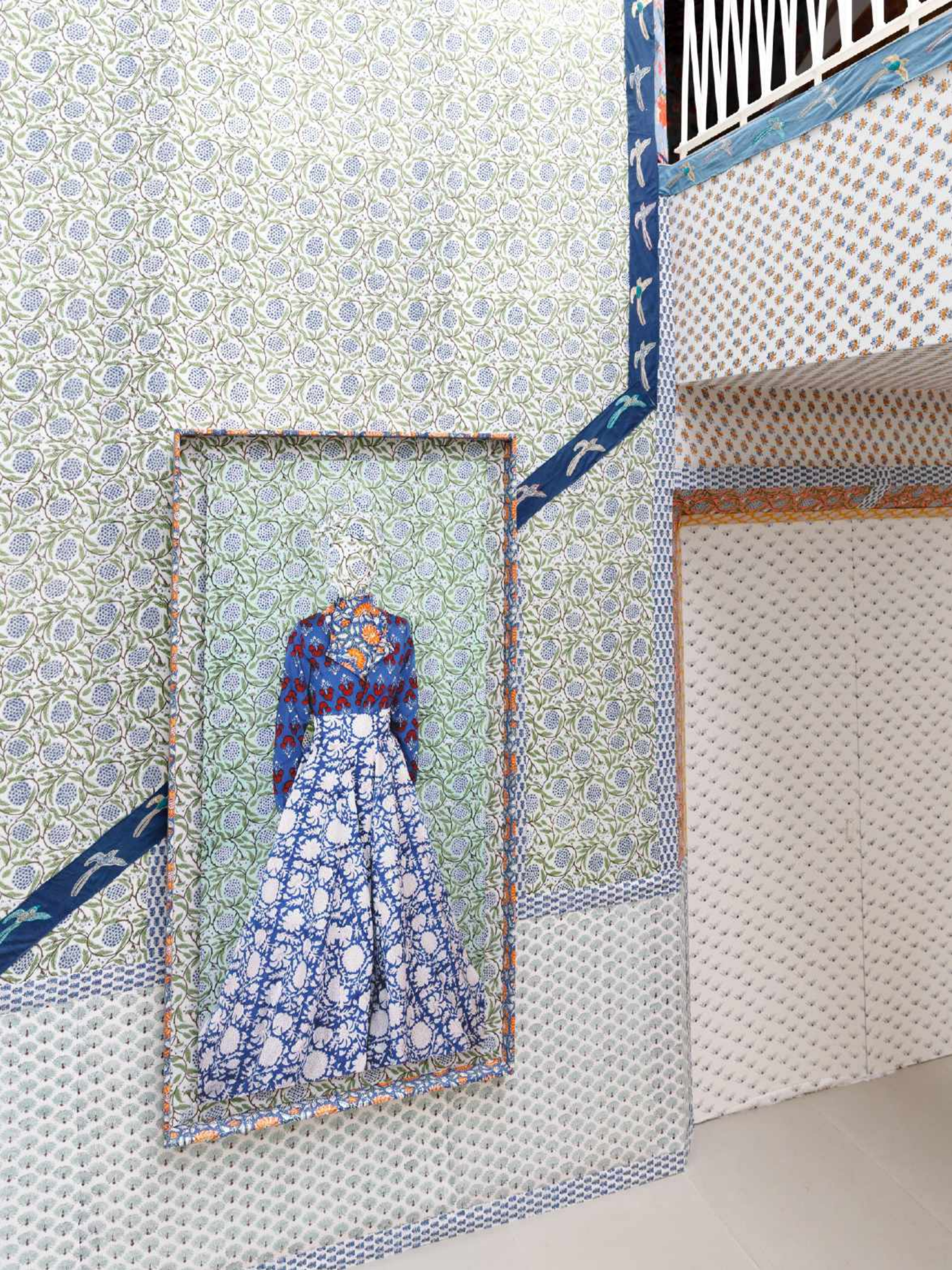
Rajendra Kumar, Packing

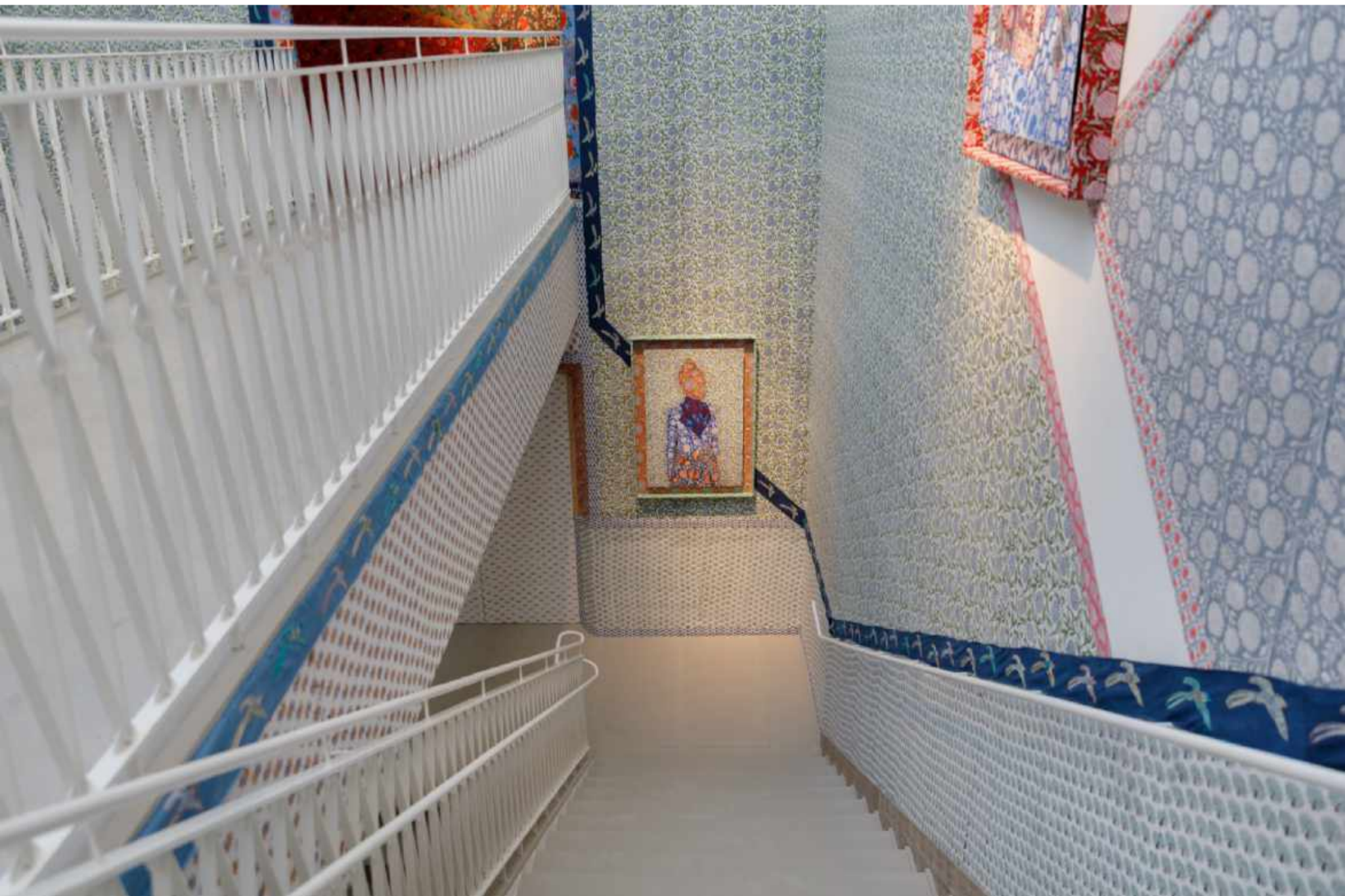
Priya Bhatra, Project Liaison

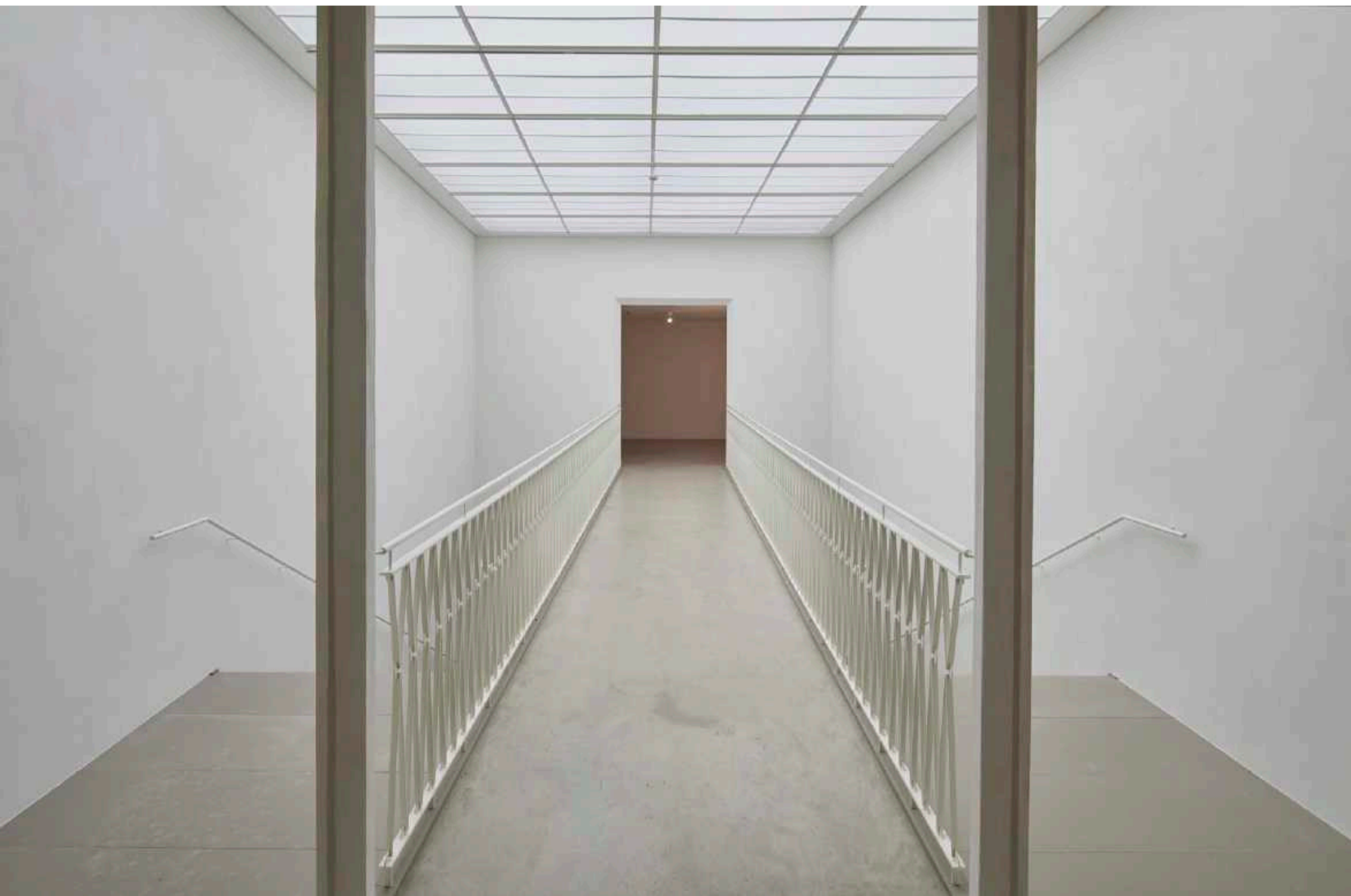
Sanjay Dhanopia, Project Liaison



Guardian, LIBERTY Series, 2022
pigment print with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in
wooden box frame upholstered with 100% cotton manually block
printed in Jaipur, Rajasthan with unbleached 100% muslin lining
Edition of 3+ 1 EP + 1 AP









Flock, LIBERTY Series, 2022
pigment print with UV laminate mounted
on aluminum Dibond in wooden box
frame upholstered with 100% cotton
manually block printed in Jaipur,
Rajasthan with unbleached 100% muslin
lining
49 in x 35 in // 124.5 cm x 89 cm (framed)
Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



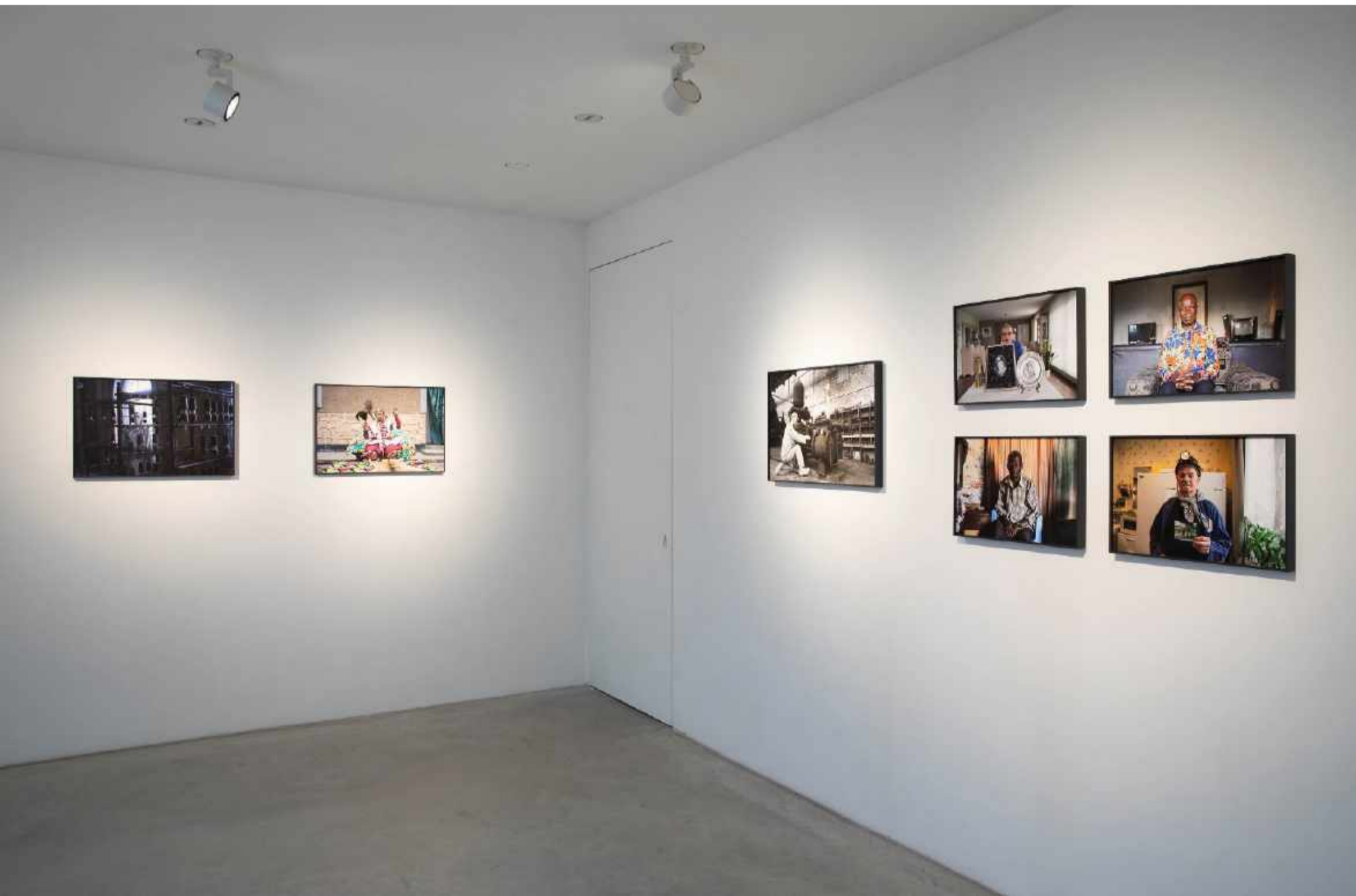
Blue Tides (left), Pink Palms (right), LIBERTY Series, 2022

pigment print with UV laminate mounted on aluminum Dibond in wooden box frame upholstered with 100% cotton manually block printed in Jaipur, Rajasthan with unbleached 100% muslin lining
49 in x 35 in // 124.5 cm x 89 cm (framed)
Edition of 5 + 1 EP + 1 AP



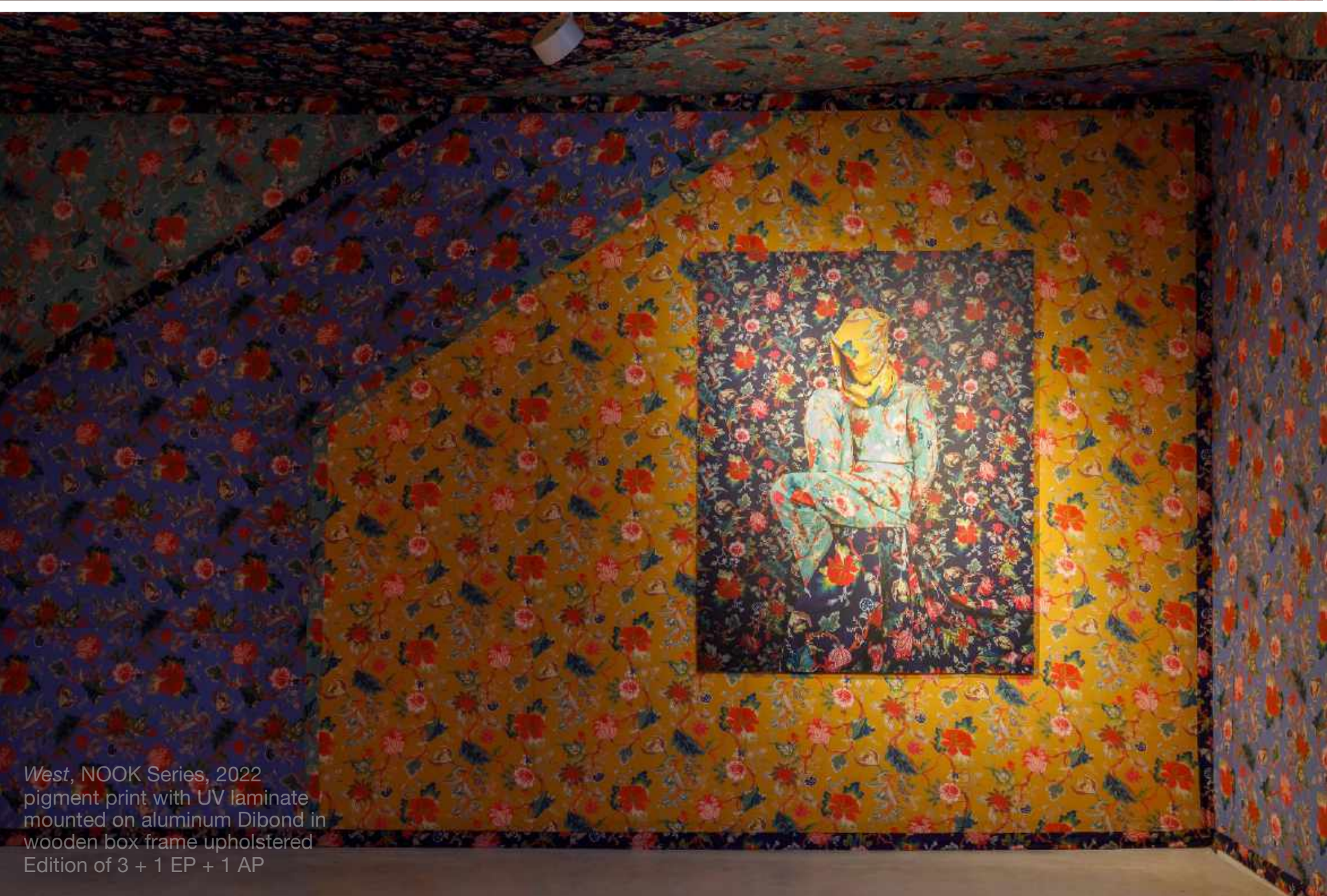


dis-Orient, NOOK Series, 2022
pigment print with UV laminate mounted on aluminum
Dibond in wooden box frame upholstered
Edition of 3 + 1 EP + 1 AP





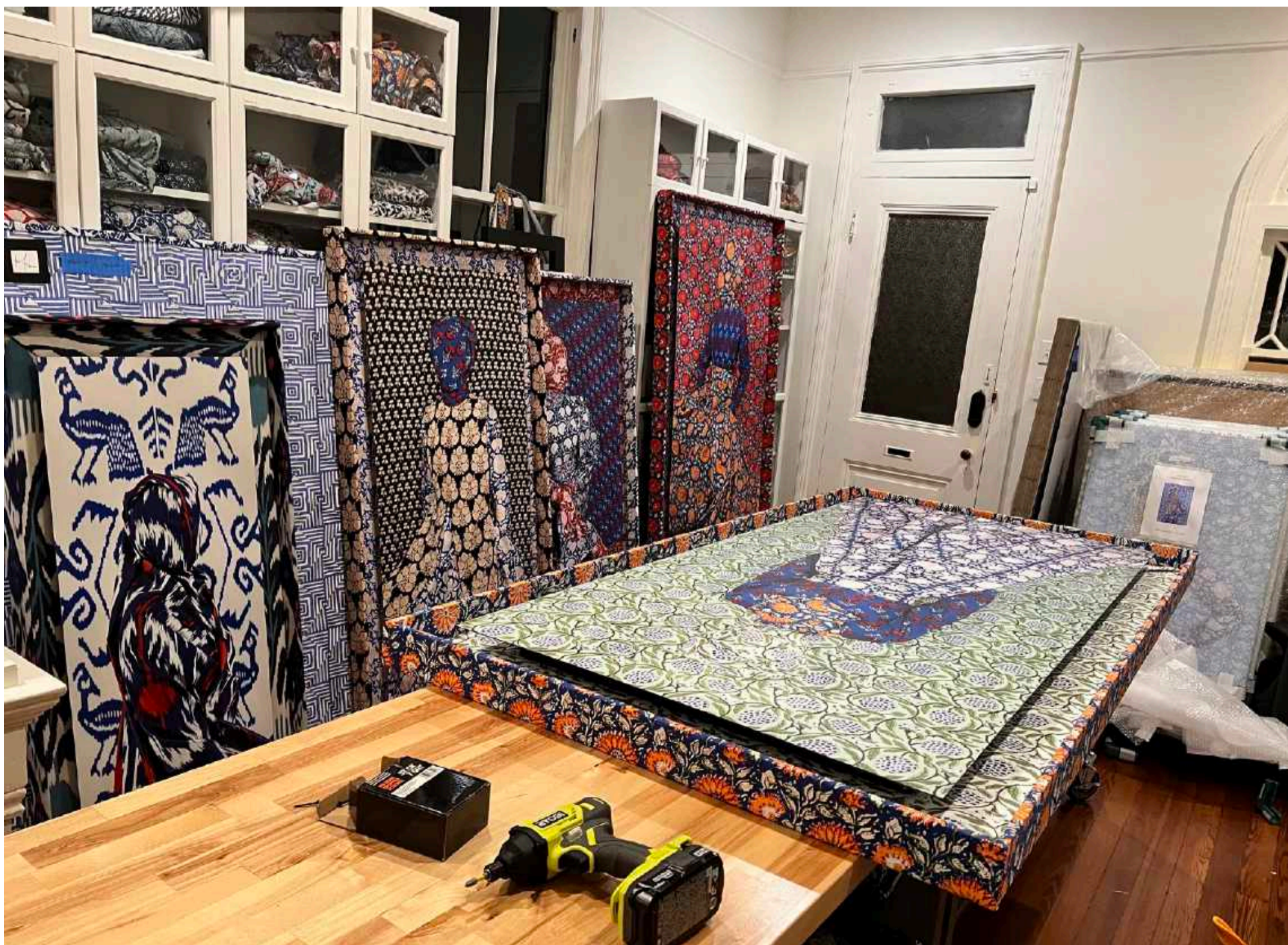
East, NOOK Series, 2022
pigment print with UV laminate
mounted on aluminum Dibond in
wooden box frame upholstered
Edition of 3 + 1 EP + 1 AP



West, NOOK Series, 2022
pigment print with UV laminate
mounted on aluminum Dibond in
wooden box frame upholstered
Edition of 3 + 1 EP + 1 AP







Alia Ali (Arabic: عاليه علي // Sabean: 1ħ°|°1ħ°) is a Yemeni-Bosnian-US multi-media artist. A child of migrant linguists, Ali has traveled to sixty-seven countries, lived in and between seven, and grown up among five languages. Her migrations have led her to process the world through interactive experiences and the belief that the damage of translation and interpretation of written language has dis-served particular communities, resulting in the threat of their exclusion, rather than a means of understanding. As an artist who exists on the borders of identifying as West Asian, Eastern European, a United States citizen, queer, culturally Muslim yet spiritually independent, her work explores cultural binaries, challenges culturally sanctioned oppression, and confronts the dualistic barriers of conflicted notions of gender, politics, media, and citizenship. Through her practice, Ali critiques linguistics and inherited political structures and narratives, while simultaneously attempting to counter the polarization and miscommunication that imperils communities across the world, encouraging viewers to confront their own prejudices.

Throughout life we are presented with endless examples in which individuals and groups have been excluded from communities based on appearances, beliefs and actions. When this happens, there must always be two, those who impose standards, the decision makers, the 'included,' and those they exclude. Communication can be used to both connect and divide, evolve and regress, educate and destroy. Inclusion is, therefore, engaging someone in a dialogue, but not necessarily a verbal one.

Alia Ali's work invites the viewer to analyze their subjective perception in regards to inclusion and exclusion, and the threshold in which the transition between the two, occurs. What are the parameters that define each? The various series exhibited highlight the immediate duality that occurs in any given situation; to have one, you must have the other for either to exist. In this case, understanding inclusion requires us to be critical of what it means to be excluded. In order to be included, must one come from a state of exclusion or vice versa? The theme of duality extends to questioning the moment in which the mysterious becomes apparent, restraint becomes freedom, the underneath becomes the above, and illusion becomes reality.

The characters in the portraits, called —*cludes*, are wrapped in layers of fabric that shield them from interrelating with anything beyond the material. What are these fabricated barriers in society that inhibit the incorporation of others? Or are the obstacles just that: ideas, intuitions, fear, discriminations and 'understandings'? Does inclusion mean acceptance? If so, does this definition lend itself to exclusion meaning rejection? Or do they both mean different points on the spectrum of tolerance?

What side of the fabric are we on and can we be on both sides at once? When we exclude, does it come from the fear of being excluded ourselves? Isn't exclusion a form of security, as well? If so, what is it that we fear from discovering that lies beneath the cloth and behind the curtain? By remaining indifferent, and uncommunicative, do we become like one of them, dehumanized? Or are we the ones enclosed and what we see is an illusive barrier that we have bestowed on them?

Does the material set a power dynamic? It certainly creates a boundary, but who holds the power; them, for their anonymity, or us, for their confinement?

Who are the '*includes*' and who are the '*excludes*'?

Working between language, photography, video, textile, and installation, Ali's work addresses the politicization of the body, histories of colonization, imperialism, sexism, and racism through projects that take pattern and textile as their primary motif. Textile, in particular, has been a constant in Ali's practice. Her strong belief that textile is significant to all of us, reminds us that we are born into it, we sleep in it, we eat on it, we define ourselves by it, we shield ourselves with it, and eventually, we die in it. While it unites us, it also divides us physically and symbolically. Her work broadens into immersive installations utilizing light, pattern, and textile to move past language and offer an expansive, experiential understanding of self, culture, and nation.

Ali is a graduate of Wellesley College and the California Institute of the Arts (CALARTS). She lives and works in and between New Orleans, Paris and Marrakech, and recently concluded a residency at the Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program (RAiR) in New Mexico.

IG // @studio.alia.ali
alia-ali.com



To acquire textiles directly from the Masters in Jaipur visit and follow their pages:

CHHIPA ARTS - Rajendra Kumar Chhipa

https://www.etsy.com/shop/Chhipaarts?ref=simple-shop-header-name&listing_id=722744104

The Fabric Craft - Arif Mohammad

https://www.etsy.com/shop/thefabriccraft?ref=usf_2020

ROHIYAN - Rohiyani Masterji

https://www.etsy.com/shop/ROHIYAN?ref=usf_2020

BORN & THREAD - Sachin Gotharwal Chhipa

https://www.instagram.com/bornand_thread/

