

Prabhavathi Meppayil Recent Works

6 Burlington Gardens, London W1S 3ET
26 April – 25 May 2019

Opening Reception

Thursday 25 April 2019, 6-8 PM



London— Pace Gallery is pleased to present *Recent Works*, Prabhavathi Meppayil's first solo exhibition at 6 Burlington Gardens and the third presented with the gallery, on view from 26 April to 25 May 2019. The exhibition will feature a new body of work that continues to explore Meppayil's concerns of modernism and Minimalism.

"Meppayil's linear designs in her work are not engendered by manual artisanal means or painterly processes: drawing, facture, and gesture originating either from pointed indentations or from linear metal insertions that singularly define graphic structures. Meppayil's paintings seem to be driven by a latent desire to leave behind the parameters of pictorial space and its supporting surfaces, reaching for an ultimate sublation of the painterly rectangle in a numinous architectural space." Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 2014.

The descendant of several generations of goldsmiths, Meppayil retains the unmistakable traces of the artist's hand combined with an element of chance, inflecting Minimalist formulas and intermissions with a profoundly transcendental dimension specific to her setting and craftsmanship methods.

The use of traditional tools, which are essentially geometric in form, is the focal point of Meppayil's large-scale installation exhibited at the 2018 Biennale of Sydney and replicated in the exhibition at Pace. *sb/eighteen* consists of gesso and 875 found iron, copper and brass tools, carefully assembled on a wall with a pristine white surface. The individual objects are deliberately arranged in a pattern suggesting a low-relief grid. These objects, conventionally used by goldsmiths in the application of their craft, also allude to postwar abstraction where geometric structures were often used to facilitate non-hierarchical methods of organisation. Three new cast concrete and copper sculptures reference these traditional tools.

By taking tools that are commonly used in the artisanal process, most of which are obsolete and dislodged from their original purpose, Meppayil reiterates them as art objects while also retaining vestiges of their individual histories. This process also emphasizes their materiality and simple forms.

Lines and carving also remain a leitmotif in her oeuvre, as Meppayil expresses the necessity to come back to the pureness and essence of the material. These paintings feature copper wires embedded in heavily gessoed surfaces and rows of indented marks left with goldsmith's tools – most notably the thinnam – used to incise ornamental patterns in bangles. The delicacy of the lines and marks belie the intense labour needed to create these works.

Coinciding with *Recent Works*, Meppayil's piece titled *n/eighty nine* (2016) will be featured in the forthcoming collection display, *Home Is a Foreign Place*, at The Met Breuer from 9 April 2019 to 21 June 2020. This exhibition will introduce recent acquisitions by the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art of The Met.

In rich dialogue with Pace's history, Meppayil's reinterpretation of Minimalist trademarks such as the grid recall the visual language of Agnes Martin, whilst her dedication to surface and pure monochromy evoke Robert Ryman. *Recent Works* will also coincide with this year's Venice Biennale. *The Encyclopedic Palace*, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013) included Meppayil's work, which subsequently prompted the start of the relationship with Pace.

Prabhavathi Meppayil (b. 1965, Bangalore) studied at Bangalore University and Ken School of Art, Bangalore. She has exhibited widely in India and was the subject of a solo exhibition at the American Academy in Rome in 2014. In 2017, she presented major installations at Art Basel's Unlimited, curated by Gianni Jetzer, and at the Dhaka Art Summit. Meppayil's work was also featured in the 2017 Kochi Muziris Biennale, as well as in numerous international group exhibitions including *Horn Please: Narratives in Contemporary Indian Art*, Kunstmuseum Bern (2007); *Orientations: Trajectories in Indian Art*, Foundation De 11 Lijnen, Oudenburg, Belgium (2010); *Equator #1: Shadow Lines: Indonesia Meets India* in the Yogyakarta Biennale (2011); and *The Encyclopedic Palace*, curated by Massimiliano Gioni, at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013). The artist's work is included in the permanent collections of Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; François Pinault Collection, Venice; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Samdani Art Foundation, Dhaka. Meppayil lives and works in Bangalore.

Pace is a leading contemporary art gallery representing many of the most significant international artists and estates of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under the leadership of President and CEO Marc Glimcher, Pace is a vital force within the art world and plays a critical role in shaping the history, creation, and engagement with modern and contemporary art. Since its founding by Arne Glimcher in 1960, Pace has developed a distinguished legacy for vibrant and dedicated relationships with renowned artists. As the gallery approaches the start of its seventh decade, Pace's mission continues to be inspired by our drive to support the world's most influential and innovative artists and to share their visionary work with people around the world. Pace advances this mission through its dynamic global program, comprising ambitious exhibitions, artist projects, public installations, institutional collaborations, and curatorial research and writing. Today, Pace has ten locations worldwide: three galleries in New York; one in London; one in Geneva; one in Palo Alto, California; one in Beijing; two in Hong Kong; and one in Seoul. Pace will open a new flagship gallery at 540 West 25th Street in New York in September 2019.

Image: Detail of Prabhavathi Meppayil, *1/hundred thirty seven*, 61 cm × 91.4 cm × 5 cm (24" × 36" × 1-15/16"), a set of two panels, Thinnam on gesso panel, 2019 © Prabhavathi Meppayil, Courtesy Pace Gallery.

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