

TEMPLON



JITISH KALLAT

THE TIMES OF INDIA, 30 mars 2022

Templon Paris unveils Kallat

Uma Nair

Jitish Kallat's work, imbued with autobiographical, political and artistic references, forms a narrative of the cycle of life in a rapidly changing India, but Kallat has become a universal player in contemporary conversations with shows across the world. Weaving together strands of sociology, biology and archaeology, the artist takes an ironic and poetic look at the altered relationship between nature and culture.



Echo verse

Kallat returns to Paris with *Echo Verse*, an ambitious exhibition conceived as a complex system of signs and hypotheses linking artistic, historical and scientific references. Famous for his conceptual and poetic language, Kallat presents in the prestigious Templon's Beaubourg gallery, transformed for the occasion, a journey exploring the passage of time and the notions of transience, evolution or entropy. Kallat is at once commentator observer and a delving deep scientist of sorts in his research oriented works that offer sensorial escapades in chapters.

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Kallat plays with scale and distance to offer a sensory and mental experience that weaves unexpected links between the daily reality and the cosmos. The exhibition opens with *Elicitation # 1 (Terranum Nuncius)*, a photographic diptych of images drawn from the Golden Record archive dispatched by NASA on the Voyager space missions in 1977.



Multiple images

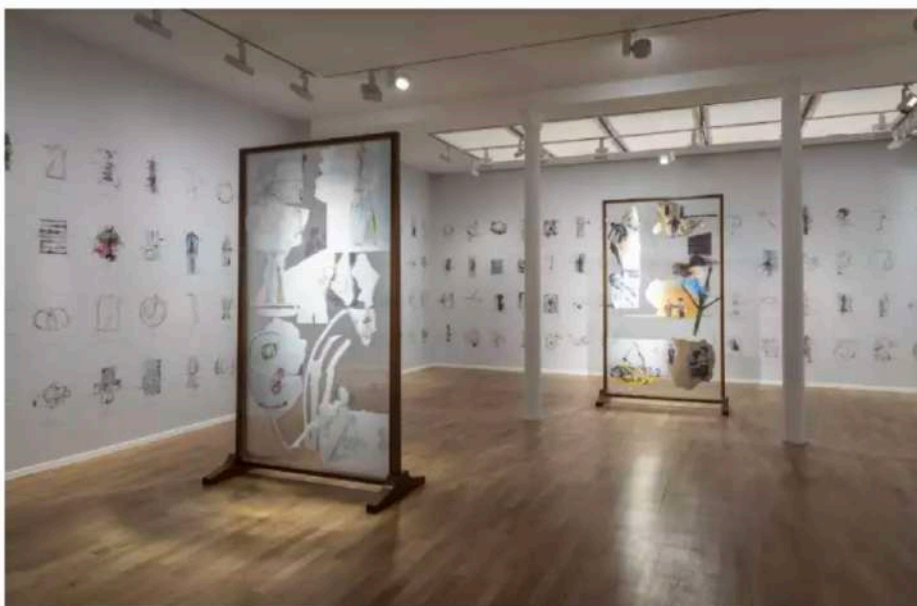
These images – children playing with a miniature globe, a woman tasting an ice cream, a man eating a sandwich – were conceived as a summary of human life as addressed to an extraterrestrial intelligence. For Kallat, these images of our existence indirectly reveal our ambiguous relationship with the planet: consumption and surveillance.

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Extending his intimate notebook into an immersive mural-like format, *Integer Study (drawing from life)* is a repertoire of shapes and numbers that spans the entire gallery. Since the beginning of 2021, the artist has been exploring the planetary present through a daily count of the world population. One encounters 365 drawings, each displaying the algorithmically estimated births and deaths that have occurred up until a specific time each day. With intricate graphite and aquarelle pencil markings and gesso stains, Kallat's painterly abstraction contrasts with precise data, forming a triangulation of life by mapping birth, death and time. Echoes of existential questions morph into ecological ones, from reflections on climate and extinction to evolution and decay.



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Eternal Epicycles

At the center of the exhibition is a new suite of four double sided, multi-spic photo works *Epicycles* (2020-21) that have their genesis in the early months of the pandemic.



Epicycles interweaves familiar markers of change – a fallen stem, a crack in the wall, or an abstraction beneath a chair – with images drawn from the iconic touring exhibition *Family of Man*, organized at MoMA (New York) by photographer Edward Steichen in 1955. Hundreds of images were sourced for this exhibition from photographers working around the world, seeking a “declaration of global solidarity” in the decade after World War II. Coalescing these intimate images from his studio with a glimpse of humanity from a distant time and place, Kallat yields a composite portrait of time and transience, ephemerality and expiry. These meticulously produced lenticular images create an illusion of depth and cause images to alternately appear and disappear as one moves in their presence.



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Cosmic Annotations

Yet another elicitation punctuates as well as annotates the exhibition. *Elicitation #2 (Cassiopeia A)* is a three-dimensional visualization of a dead star's remains from a stellar explosion that occurred 11,000 light years away. While the star, the youngest known supernova remnant in our Milky Way Galaxy blew up 11,000 years ago, its light reached Earth in the late 1600s. The model is produced from NASA's open-source files modelled from Spitzer Space Telescope's data and can be described as a conceptual prompt within the exhibition rather than as a sculptural artwork.

The *Elicitations* become reflective pauses to think of the complex interlacing of the immediate and the cosmic, the past and present, a recurrent motif in much of Jitish Kallat's practice.