

Title Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra
Publication Artforum
Date May 2013
Source <http://artforum.com/?pn=picks§ion=world#picks40971>

ARTFORUM

Singapore

Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra

ART PLURAL GALLERY

38 Armenian Street

March 22–May 25

For almost a decade, Indian artists Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra have been using different media—product design, graphics, sculpture, installation, and video—to explore identity and social problems that affect their homeland. For their first solo exhibition in Singapore, the artists have created a series of paintings and a site-specific installation that reflect on the diaspora in Punjab, a state located in northwestern India where more than twenty thousand immigrate illegally every year. This move is predicated on the widespread belief that living in the west (which in India is connotative to living in nations like the United Kingdom, Belgium, or Germany) guarantees a better lifestyle and social status.



View of “Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra: Windows of Opportunity,” 2013.

Visually stimulating, the paintings on view address identity, consumerism, and migration issues in a critical yet provocative and humorous way. *Dominus Aeris: Escape 3*, 2012, depicts a video game-like landscape where floating hot-air balloons, mansion-like houses, trees, paper planes, a Canadian flag, and a Facebook-like icon, evoke Indian middle-class dreams. Building off this is a series of diptychs, “Pinball - Windows of Opportunity,” 2013, consisting of portraits of young men and women outlined in oval-shaped airplane windows. Encased inside pinball machines, these paintings parallel the experience of migration with a mechanical game. Pinball players must keep the ball in motion, avoiding the game’s many traps and obstacles, if they are to accumulate points. Migrants face a similar situation, their game dependent on overcoming the difficulties of the never-ending quest for adaptation. Playing off this theme is an orange racetrack that loops around the gallery space in different directions. Lacking a clear finish, it seems at best a futile take on migration marathon mania, where, regardless of its player’s effort, ambitions remain ambitions and success comes in the form of endurance and not achievement.

— *Claudia Arozqueta*