



Neha Choksi: *Liberty Matter*

March 18—April 29, 2017

Reception: Saturday, March 18, 5—8PM

Location: 3006 W 7TH ST STE 220 Los Angeles CA 90005

Exhibition Hours: Wednesday—Saturday, 12–6PM and by appointment

This exhibition begins with a mountain. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say it begins with the feet that stood on a rock, with the hand that marked it. The mountain is the surface, pigment, and subject of sculptures, paintings, and video installations in Neha Choksi's exhibition, "Liberty Matter," which gestures between "affirmative acts of destruction" and non-productive acts of creation. Choksi's investigation of materials and temporality for accessing existential insight is augmented by meditations on hands and feet—the first tools used by humans to move toward these more exalted realms.

As the title "Liberty Matter" suggests, Choksi's exhibition touches on idealism, the idea of liberty, and the concrete reality of matter. In aggressive and sometimes humorous ways, Choksi's work demonstrates the potential of matter to achieve the aims of autonomy. Seemingly wishful and wistful thinking are grounded by the indomitable presence of rocks.

The rock sculptures, "The Weight of the Cave," demonstrate Choksi's exploration of human energy galvanizing matter. The artist makes pigment from the extracted rubble and reapplies it as handprints on the same rock, marking the spot she would normally grasp to lift the rock. These painted sculptures are markers of effort with manufactured indentations and handprints of the artist channeling the rock from its source to a symbolic physicality.

The single-channel video, "A Stone's Throw..." features members of Choksi's Los Angeles community sharing their beliefs and throwing rocks. At the moment of impact handprints appear on the screen, reminiscent of the first instances of human art-making in Stone Age caves.

"Insurrection" situates the viewer in the path of the volleying between the 2-channel video installed on opposing walls. Starting with play objects, segueing through items flung in domestic squabbles to the final cobblestone thrown, the work is at once an homage to ancient, mundane, and anarchic rhythms.

The video installation "Dust to Mountain" pairs sheer, printed curtains with a video shot in the environs of a landscaping supply company. The video—displayed at the angle of the artist's reflexology—shows the artist kicking increasingly unyielding substances: dust, gravel, pebbles, rocks, boulders, and



finally a mountain. There is a productive and potent energy of belief—the willingness to give over one’s body to the cause of making things suit our intentions. We can find hopefulness in the artist’s failure. Through her efforts, sweat, and fatigue, we begin to believe with her.

From prostrate to upright, ground to sky, nature to culture, Choksi invites a reconsideration of the most basic elements of human existence in light of all that they make possible.

—Ana Iwataki

Neha Choksi (b. 1973 in Belleville, NJ; raised in Bombay; lives and works in Los Angeles and Bombay) makes work in various media, often involving performance, video, sculpture, and hybrid installations. Choksi’s work has been exhibited worldwide in galleries, museums, festivals, film screenings, and are in notable public and private collections. A recent institutional solo exhibition of her work was mounted at the Hayward Gallery Project Space, London, and another is forthcoming at the Manchester Art Gallery. Several new commissions include work for the 20th Biennale of Sydney (2016), Los Angeles Museum of Art (LAMO) at Occidental College (2017), Dhaka Art Summit (2018), 18th Street Arts Center (2018), and the University Art Museum, California State University, Long Beach (2019). Her work has been shown at the Office of Contemporary Art Oslo, Spencer Museum, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, the Frestas Sorocaba Triennale, Whitechapel Gallery, the Shanghai Biennale, the Asia Pacific Triennial at the Queensland Art Gallery, Kristianstads Konsthall, the Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, John Hansard Gallery in Southampton, Wanås Foundation, Khoj, and the Khoj Performance Festivals in Delhi, among others. Additionally, her work has been selected twice for the Sculpture Park at the Frieze Art Fair, London, and was included in the 10th Venice Architecture Biennale. She was recently honored with the India Today 2017 Award for the Best New Media Artist of the Year. Choksi is on the editorial board of the X-TRA, a contemporary arts journal published in Los Angeles. This coming year she will serve as the Regional Representative for the Annual CAA Conference Committee. Her work is represented by Project 88.