

AMANDEEP KAUR

Highly Commended: Contemporary Art Awards 2018

Liminal Landscapes

By Annette Ong

Canberra-based artist, Amandeep Kaur (b.1986), creates intriguing photomontages from places she has visited. She transforms ordinary travel photographs into unique creations. Kaur describes her work as an exploration of the “possibilities of belonging to multiple places and the merging of local and global environments through multiple auto-ethnographic narratives.” Forming part of her *Liminal Landscape* collection, her digital print titled *Aussie Clouds in Tokyo* (2017) won the Contemporary Art Awards 2018 highly commended.

The print is a study of the fluid nature of boundaries and the impact of ethnicity and gender on these boundaries. They are invisible, complex spaces of negotiation and manipulation; always changing within different social, cultural and historical contexts. Kaur has purposefully altered the digital image to highlight the merging of identities and space. A woman sits in the foreground, in the middle of the street with a few surrounding pigeons. Her image is static; she is sitting in a reflective position, her face invisible. The chosen setting is typical of many capital cities with bright signs, a cluster of shops and bustling bodies. A man walks with a cow's head growing from his thigh. An idol sits at the base of a store sign. A figure in gold stands faceless on the roof of a building, beneath dark looming clouds.

By experimenting with digital photomontages, Kaur's work suggests the influence of modernisation and technology on the urban setting and how it provokes liminal spaces. Within these spaces, connections to the predominant culture are made. When these connections fail, it may lead to a sense of alienation and isolation, as illustrated by the faceless woman. This approach enables the viewer

to project themselves and imagine their own face within the setting. Kaur's work is female-centric; it highlights the “otherness” of migrant women. The mutual experience of being seen/unseen is familiar to those negotiating new cultures; their difference elicits curiosity and interest, yet can also lead to ignorance and invisibility. The subtle use of birds in the image contributes to the idea of journey

and displacement; birds have a migratory nature and instinctively adjust to fit their environment.

Kaur's work is a keen observation on notions and experiences surrounding identity and space. Her art raises important questions and ideas about the contributing factors that impact identity, particularly women's identities and how one configures/reconfigures the self in alternative settings. It represents identities in constant flux; always redefining. Kaur's work is intelligent and thought-provoking, providing stimulus for conversation and reflection.

Amandeep Kaur graduated from the Australian National University with a Masters of Visual Arts, majoring in Sculpture.



On this page, *Liminal Landscapes (Aussie Clouds in Tokyo)* (2017), archival digital print, 118.9 x 84.1cm.

Image courtesy of the artist

Amandeep Kaur's artwork can be viewed at:
<http://www.contemporaryartawards/finalist-exhibition-2018.com>