

amar kanwar

SERPENTINE NORTH

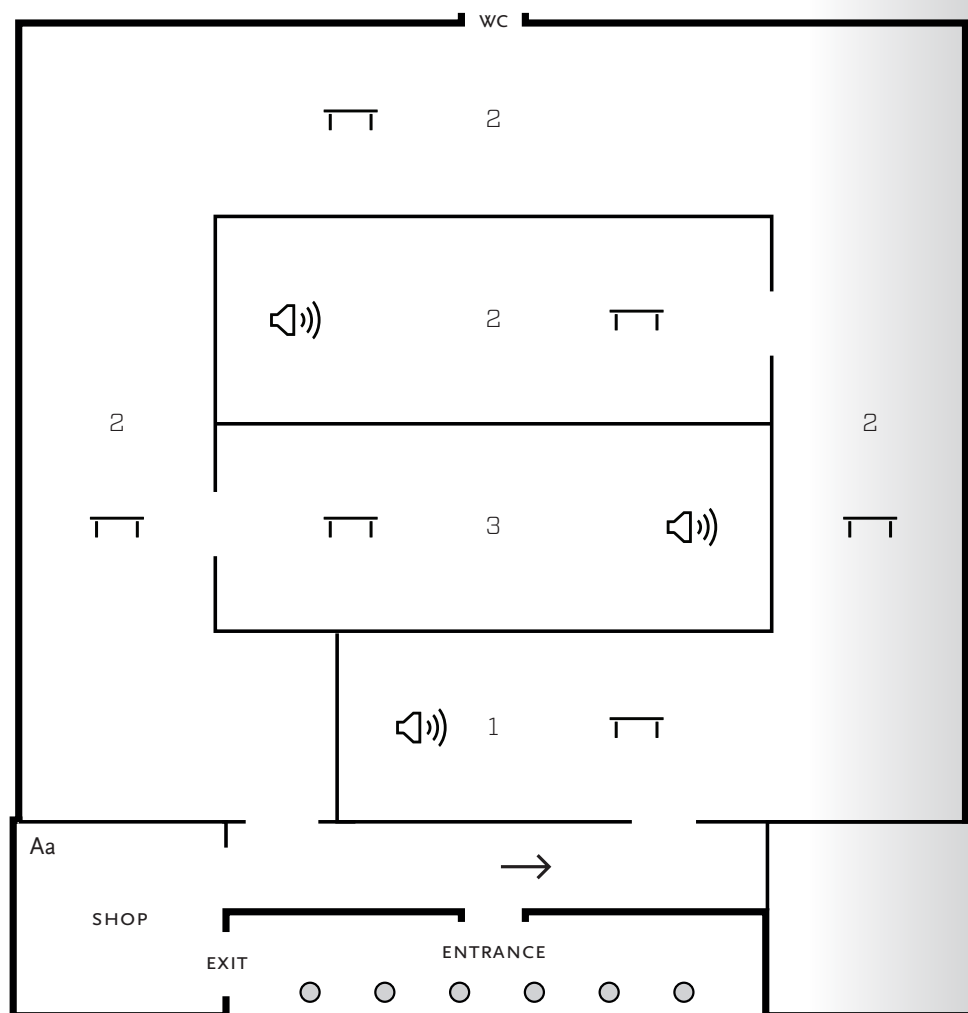
23 SEPTEMBER 2026 – 31 JANUARY 2027

SERPENTINE

“Sometimes the future is the past
and the past is the present.”

– Amar Kanwar

serpentine north



Seating available

Aa

Large print guide available



Film with sound

wc

Accessible toilet

1. the peacock's graveyard

2023

Digital video installation, 7 screens

Colour, sound, 28 minutes 16 seconds (sync, loop)

Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery

2. such a morning

2017-19

Digital video, colour, sound, 85 minutes

62 handmade ramie, cotton and banana fibre papers

17 digital video back projections

Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery

3. the charcoal man

2026

Digital video installation, 7 screens

Colour, sound, 61 minutes 57 seconds (sync, loop)

Courtesy of the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery

Please note there are low light levels throughout the gallery.

This exhibition contains themes that some visitors may find challenging. Please speak to a member of the Visitor Experience team for more information.

introduction

Over three decades, Amar Kanwar (b. 1964, New Delhi, India) has developed a distinctive body of lyrical films and multi-video installations rooted in the specific context of the Indian subcontinent. While charged with regional specificity and deeply personal histories, his works grapple with some of the most pressing issues of our time, moving seamlessly between documentary and fiction, the archival and the poetic.

Shaped by India's history, Kanwar frequently reflects on the enduring legacies of decolonisation and the 1947 Partition, which led to the creation of the independent nations India, Pakistan and later Bangladesh in 1971. In his films, Kanwar explores the politics of power, displacement, violence, justice and memory. Reckoning with the past to better comprehend the urgencies of the present, his work reveals what unites us, regardless of geography or context.

Conceived as a site-specific installation, the exhibition brings together a trilogy of interconnected films that transform Serpentine North into a space of deep reflection. The feature-length modern parable *Such a Morning* (2017–19) is about two people's quiet engagement with truth. It follows a renowned mathematician and professor as he navigates multiple hallucinations that move between speech and silence, fear and freedom, democracy and fascism. The film is accompanied by a series of letters, presented in the perimeter galleries. Written by the professor in the film, they comprise texts, video and light projections on handmade paper, extending the narrative that unfolds in *Such a Morning*.

Such a Morning is presented alongside two multi-screen installations, *The Peacock's Graveyard* (2023) and a new work, *The Charcoal Man* (2026), which makes its world premiere here. *The Peacock's Graveyard* weaves together images and texts that meditate on the transience of existence. Marking the 80th anniversary of the Partition, *The Charcoal Man* emerges from a relentless loop of betrayal and vengeance. Together, the three films invite viewers to reflect on new forms of reconciliation, resistance and introspection.

Please do not touch the artworks.

Photography permitted without flash
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the peacock's graveyard

2023

Maybe if I were to come close to the fragility of our personal existence, the certainty of its end, it could be possible to shift into a state of rethinking. Perhaps then one can find some insight, an antidote, a moment of pause.

– Amar Kanwar

Presented in London for the first time, *The Peacock's Graveyard* weaves together images and texts that meditate on the transience of existence. Five stories emerge and recede rhythmically across a constellation of seven invisible screens. Kanwar describes them as “perhaps a kind of gift, a collection, something to keep by one’s side, or to take along to help us reconfigure life, ideologies, politics and solidarities. Stories that create space to reflect on our unbearable arrogance, delusions and deep desire for violence.”



such a morning

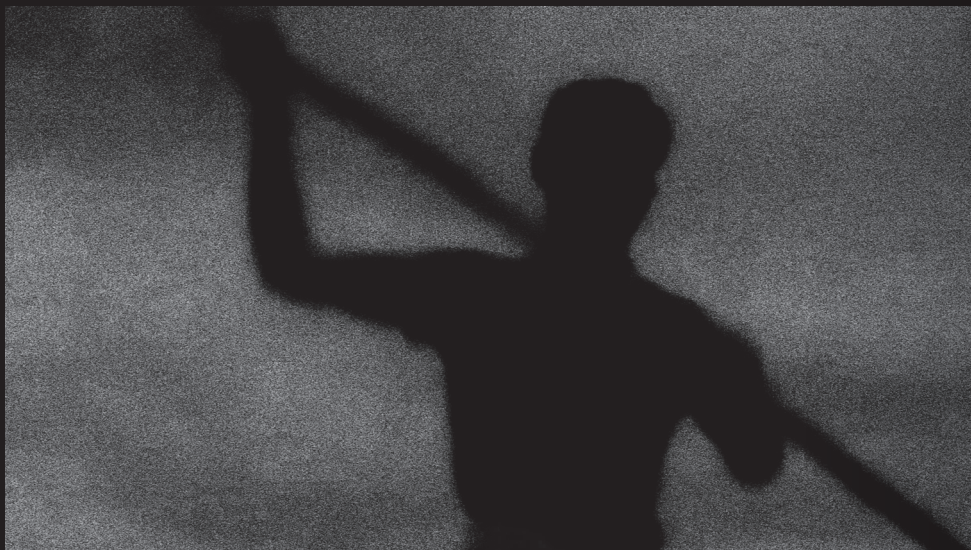
2017-19

What is it that lies beyond, when all arguments are done with? How to reconfigure and respond again? – Amar Kanwar

Such a Morning is a contemporary parable about two people's quiet engagement with truth. A philosophical response to our contemporary reality, the feature-length film follows a renowned mathematician and professor who, after his sudden retirement, seeks refuge in an abandoned train carriage in a forest. Over the course of the film, he blacks out the carriage windows and, as darkness descends, develops new ways of seeing. Part-epiphany, part-hallucination, these revelations take form as a series of letters that examine forty-nine types of darknesses.

Through the professor's letters, comprised of video, light projections and texts on handmade banana, ramie and cotton fibre papers, the exhibition continues the narrative beyond the film into the surrounding galleries.

The train carriage built for the film remains in Delhi; a memorial to the professor who refused to conform, stepped off the tracks and wandered into the wild.



the charcoal man

2026

Unknown triggers, orphaned fragments and cataclysmic events float through the normalcy of life. Desire, passion, rage, jealousy and love spin in the eternal compass of the mind. On our knees, face to face with our own selves, the bottomless well reflects the sky. And the story becomes the memorial to that midsummer nightmare of 1947. – Amar Kanwar

The Charcoal Man is a new seven-screen installation that lies within a hybrid terrain, where fact and fiction coexist seamlessly. Marking the 80th anniversary of the 1947 Partition of India, the work emerges from a relentless loop of betrayal, vengeance and illusion. The Partition saw the division of the Indian subcontinent into India, Pakistan and later Bangladesh in 1971, triggering one of the largest and most violent mass migrations in history. Considered an extension of the narrative and filmic strategies explored in *The Peacock's Graveyard* (2023), the work weaves together varied memories, images, texts and archival materials to “seek coherence from disintegration, insight from fusion and stories within stories.”

list of works

such a morning

2017–19

Digital video, colour, sound, 85 minutes
62 handmade ramie, cotton and banana fibre papers
17 digital video back projections

PRODUCED WITH THE SUPPORT OF
Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), New Delhi
Marian Goodman Gallery, New York
AKF Productions, New Delhi

DIRECTION, SCRIPT:
Amar Kanwar

CAST:
Robin Das, Lima Kanungo

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:
Dilip Varma

EDITING, SOUND DESIGN:
Sameera Jain

ADDITIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHY (MANIPUR):
Ranjan Palit

SOUND:
Suresh Rajamani

ADDITIONAL SOUND (MANIPUR):
Julius Basaiawmoit

DESIGN, HANDMADE PAPER:
Sherna Dastur

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:
Prateek Shekhar

GAFFER, DRONE:
K. Nandhakumar

CAMERA ASSISTANTS:
Sagar Mathur, Sunil Dutt, Suraj Mathur

LIGHT ASSISTANTS:
Gaurav Dutt, Prem Kumar, Sonu, Ombir, Rajip

LIGHTING EQUIPMENT:
Flamingo Films

DIGITAL COLOURING:
Sherna Dastur, Desmond Roberts

POST WORKFLOW SUPERVISION:
Sonu Singh

POST SOUND CONSULTANT:
Pratik Biswas

RESEARCH ASSISTANT:
Mallika Visvanathan

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS:
Khayui Raleng, Amit Dhadiwal,
Sanjay Kumar, Rohit P. Singh, Dhani

TRAVEL COORDINATION:
Vijay Kumar Jha

DRIVERS:
Surjit Singh, Tutu, Rocky, Yadav

PRODUCTION SUPERVISION:
Rajesh Kumar

LOCATION SUPERVISION:
Akhil Kumar, Ranvir Singh, Sispal Singh,
Ranpal Singh

SET CONSTRUCTION:
Madan Kumar, Devi Lal, Vijay Kumar, Sunil Kumar,
Mohan, Aslam, Akhilesh Yadav, Roshan Shukhla,
Remso Control Technologies

LOGISTICS:
Shobit Singh

LOCATION MANAGEMENT:
Manoj Kumar Sharma, Omvir Singh, Deopal Singh

MUSIC:
Eclipse by Toru Takemitsu with Kinshi Tsuruta and
Katsuya Yokoyama; Vocals and Sarangi by Jalaludin
Langa and Group; *Song From Utanmyra* by Jan
Johansson/Björn Lindroth, Intersong-Förlagen Ab/
Warner/Chappell Music Scandinavia Ab.

SPECIAL THANKS:
Mr and Mrs Arthur, Yirmiyan Arthur, Zyrus Arthur,
Reiphang, Haobam Paban Kumar, O.P. Jain, Roobina
Karode, Imrana Qadeer, Ishan Roy, Aradhana Seth,
Dilip Simeon, Aseem Srivastava, Swapnil Srivastava,
Ranjanesh Sahai, Rekha Shipurkar, R P Subramanian,
Trishul Barua, Tripurari Sharma, Arunima Tenzin
Tara, Nirupama Academy of Paper, Kolkata,
Shangshek Village, Ukhrul and documenta 14,
Kassel/Athens.

the peacock's graveyard

2023

Digital video installation, 7 screens
Colour, sound, 28 minutes 16 seconds (sync, loop)

COMMISSIONED BY
Sharjah Art Foundation and M+, Hong Kong

DIRECTION, CAMERA, SCRIPT:
Amar Kanwar

EDITING, SOUND DESIGN:
Sameera Jain

MUSIC:
Raga Malkauns – Alap Jod Jhala by Utsav Lal, 2018

DESIGN:
Sherna Dastur

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS:
Prateek Shekhar, Arunima Tenzin Tara

RESEARCH:
Javed Sultan

COLOUR:
Company3, London

DIGITAL COLOURIST:
Dominic Phipps

COLOUR EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:
Ellora Soret

COLOUR LINE PRODUCER:
Kerri Aungle

COLOUR ASSISTS:
Alex O'Brien, Santino Napolitano, Jack Kennedy

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT:
Sanjay Uniyal

TRAVEL:
Vijay Jha, Sudhir Das

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TEXT CREDIT:
The Priest adapted from 'If It Isn't You, It Must Be
Your Father', Kannada folk tale, in A.K. Ramanujan
(*ed. and trans.*), *Folktales from India* (Penguin, 1994).

ARCHIVAL FILM CREDITS:
Amar Jyoti, V. Shantaram (*dir.*), Prabhat Film
Company, 1936; *Barsaat*, Raj Kapoor (*dir.*), R.K.
Films, 1949.

SPECIAL THANKS:
Okwui Enwezor, Hoor Al-Qasimi, Silke Schmickl,
Sandhini Poddar

the charcoal man

2026

Digital video installation, 7 screens
Colour, sound, 61 minutes 57 seconds (sync, loop)

COMMISSIONED BY
Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), New Delhi

DIRECTION, SCRIPT:
Amar Kanwar

CAMERA:
Dilip Varma, Amar Kanwar

EDITING, SOUND DESIGN:
Sameera Jain

MUSIC:
Raga Yaman – Alap Jod Jhala by Utsav Lal, 2010

DESIGN:
Sherna Dastur

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS:
Prateek Shekhar, Arunima Tenzin Tara

COLOUR:
Company3, London

DIGITAL COLOURIST:
Matthieu Toullet

COLOUR EXECUTIVE PRODUCER:
Ellora Soret

COLOUR LINE PRODUCER:
Kerri Aungle

COLOUR ASSIST:
Santino Napolitano

PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT:
Sanjay Uniyal

TRAVEL:
Vijay Jha, Sudhir Das

SPECIAL THANKS:
Kiran Nadar, Deepanjana D. Klein, Sandhini Poddar,
Dilip Simeon, Javed Sultan, Yirmiyah Arthur

I would like to express my gratitude and acknowledge the work and resources that are available in the public sphere. The Charcoal Man has been inspired by familial memories, oral narratives, biographies, archival newsreels and cinema, legal and historical documents.
– Amar Kanwar

ARCHIVAL FILM CREDITS

NEWSREEL COLLECTIONS AND DOCUMENTARIES:

Funeral of Mahatma Gandhi; Punjab Disturbances – No Sound; Punjab Troubles – Floods Aggravate; Refugee Population Exchange; Punjab Disturbances; Bombay Boycott Parade; India Checks Mass Disturbance Riots (Indian Uprising); New Pictures of Bombay Riots. Courtesy AP Archive/British Movietone, 1947–48.

Demonstration against Simon Commission, 1927; Mahatma Gandhi travelling in train on Harijan tour in South India, 1934; Demonstration at Bombay during Quit India Movement, 1942. Gifted by Roopa and G.V. Ravi Shankar. Courtesy of the Museum of Art & Photography (MAP).

Gandhi ends last fast shortly before his assassination in 1948. Courtesy Grinberg Paramount Pathe LLC Images, 1948.

The Horse in Motion, Eadweard Muybridge (photographer), 1878. Animation by Waugsberg.

Hundreds Die in Bombay Harbour Fire, Universal News Volume 17, Release 297, 1944. Courtesy National Archives and Records Administration.

FEATURE FILMS:

Nirmala, Franz Osten (*dir.*), Himansu Rai (*prod.*), Bombay Talkies, 1938; *Rattan*, M. Sadiq (*dir.*), Jaimani Dewan (*prod.*), Kardar Studios, 1944; *Sujata*, Bimal Roy (*dir. and prod.*), Bimal Roy Productions, 1959; *Madhumati*, Bimal Roy (*dir. and prod.*), Bimal Roy Productions, 1958; *Amar Jyoti*, V. Shantaram (*dir.*), Prabhat Film Company, 1936; *Amar*, Mehboob Khan (*dir. and prod.*), Mehboob Productions, 1954; *Mahal*, Kamal Amrohi (*dir.*), Ashok Kumar and Savak B. Vacha (*prod.*), Bombay Talkies, 1949; *Miss India*, I.S. Johar (*dir.*), B.L.

Rawal (*prod.*), Rawal Films, 1957; *Aaram*, D.D. Kashyap (*dir. and prod.*), Kashyap Productions, 1951; *Tarana*, Ram Daryani (*dir.*), K.S. Daryani (*prod.*), Krishin Movietone, 1951; *Aurat*, Mehboob Khan (*dir. and prod.*), National Studios, 1940; *Anokhi Ada*, Mehboob Khan (*dir. and prod.*), Central Studios, 1948; *Bazar*, K. Amarnath (*dir.*), M.R. Navalkar (*prod.*), Madhukar Pictures, 1949; *Dilruba*, Dwarka Khosla (*dir.*), Lotus Orient Films, 1950; *Jagte Raho*, Sombhu Mitra and Amit Maitra (*dir.*), Raj Kapoor (*prod.*), R.K. Films, 1956; *New Delhi*, Mohan Segal (*dir. and prod.*), De Luxe Films, 1956; *Aakhri Dao*, Mahesh Kaul (*dir.*), L.S. Agarwal (*prod.*), Movie Stars, 1958; *Naya Daur*, B. R. Chopra (*dir. and prod.*), B.R. Films, 1957; *Jungle Princess*, Homi Wadia (*dir.*), Wadia Movietone, 1942.

biography

Amar Kanwar (b. 1964, New Delhi, India) is an artist and filmmaker. Selected solo exhibitions of his work have been at Palazzo Grassi–Pinault Collection, Venice, Italy (2026); Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, USA (2024); photo.circle, Kathmandu, Nepal (2023); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA (2022); Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain (2019); Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India (2019); Tate Modern, London, UK (2018); Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minnesota, USA (2018); Bildmuseet, Umeå, Sweden (2017); Le Frac des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France (2016); Goethe Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan, Mumbai, India (2016); NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore (2016); Assam State Museum in collaboration with Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi and North East Network, India (2015); The Art Institute of Chicago, USA (2014); Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, UK (2013); Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary (TBA21), Vienna, Austria (2013); Fotomuseum Winterthur, Switzerland (2012); Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2008); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and 's-Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands (2008).

Selected group exhibitions and biennales have been at Pola Museum of Art, Hakone, Japan (2026); Shanghai Biennale, China (2026); Rhizoma, International Biennial for Contemporary Art, Kasterlee, Belgium (2025); M+, Hong Kong (2024); The Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA (2023); Sharjah Biennale, UAE (2023, 2013, 2011); Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kerala, India (2022, 2013); Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy (2022); PhotoKTM, Kathmandu, Nepal (2018); Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India (2018); Lahore Biennale, Pakistan (2018); Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh (2016); Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, USA (2014); Gwangju Biennial, South

Korea (2014); The Menil Collection, Houston, USA (2014); The 56th Carnegie International, USA (2013); National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, South Korea (2013); Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA (2013, 2012); Istanbul Biennial, Türkiye (2013); and Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Russia (2013).

Kanwar has also participated in documenta 11, 12, 13 and 14 in Kassel, Germany (2002, 2007, 2012, 2017). Kanwar was the co-curator of the 17th Istanbul Biennial, Türkiye (2022). He has been the recipient of several awards including an Honourable Mention at the Sharjah Biennial (2023); IHME Helsinki Commission (2022); Prince Claus Award (2017); Creative Time's Leonore Annenberg Prize for Art and Social Change (2014); an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts, Maine College of Art, USA (2006); Edvard Munch Award for Contemporary Art, Norway (2005); MacArthur Fellowship, India (2000); Golden Gate Award, San Francisco International Film Festival, USA (1999); as well as the Golden Conch, Mumbai International Film Festival, India (1998).

saturday talks

31 OCTOBER, 12:30PM

Chris Bayley, Exhibitions Curator,
leads a tour of Amar Kanwar

16 JANUARY, 12:30PM

Kit Gurnos, Assistant Exhibitions
Curator, leads a tour of Amar Kanwar

Free, booking required via
serpentinegalleries.org

BSL interpretation is available on
request for all our Saturday Talks

limited edition

Serpentine has a rich history of publishing artists' editions for more than 30 years. Working with established and emerging artists, architects and designers, limited editions offer our community a unique opportunity to acquire works to support Serpentine's exhibitions, architecture, education, live and digital programmes.

To accompany Amar Kanwar's exhibition at Serpentine, the artist has produced a special limited edition print.

Available in the shop or online:
shop.serpentinegalleries.org

For more information on available editions, please contact:
editions@serpentinegalleries.org

catalogue

To accompany the exhibition, Serpentine and Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz König, Köln, have published a catalogue. Conceived by Kanwar as a storybook for adults, the publication extends the exhibition beyond the gallery. Designed by Sherna Dastur, it reimagines the stories told in the artist's moving image works *Such a Morning*, *The Peacock's Graveyard* and *The Charcoal Man* in print. It also includes an extensive interview between Kanwar and Serpentine's Artistic Director Hans Ulrich Obrist that brings together conversations from 2008 to the present.

468 pages

22.8 x 20.3 cm, portrait

£30

Available in the shop or online:
shop.serpentinegalleries.org

exhibition credits

Amar Kanwar is curated in close collaboration with the artist by Chris Bayley, Exhibitions Curator, with Kit Gurnos, Assistant Exhibitions Curator

The exhibition and its accompanying catalogue have been designed by Sherna Dastur

HEAD OF PRODUCTION: Richard Install

PRODUCTION MANAGER: Zsuzsa Benke

REGISTRAR: Alice Houghton

AUDIO AND VISUAL: Mathias Taupitz and ADI

EXHIBITION BUILD: Beyond Surface

DESIGNED BY: the unloved

PRINTED BY: Impress Print Services Ltd

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MAJOR SUPPORT



WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

Sanda Lwin and Farhad Karim

The Amar Kanwar Exhibition Circle

ADVISORS



SERPENTINE SUPPORTED BY



Discover more about Amar Kanwar's work in our free digital guide on Bloomberg Connects.

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