

Verve

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Memory in motion

ALIA SYED'S WORK HAS BEEN described as absent of time and space, a fine irony given that its material and metaphysical concerns manifest the artist's concern about the physical shape of the work and the emotional space it attempts to chronicle, the cultural borders of the displaced, and the fault lines of physical and social dispersion.

The composition of her work also speaks directly to such concerns. Her latest film work and photographic stills, called *Priya*, are created with 16 mm film covered in a combination

of leaves, earth and waste recovered from Syed's kitchen and buried in her garden. "I wanted to work with compost, as something that would leave its own mark," Syed explains. "It implies both memory and degeneration. The original image is obscured, and the image vacillates between the degraded and un-degraded image."

The original image, in this instance, is taken from footage of danseuse Priya Pawar, based in London. Syed, who has worked with the moving image and sound for over twenty years, spotted

one shot of her footage that worked extremely well, and so the stills of *Priya* were born. In collaboration with nature, the stains produced by the film's deterioration contribute to as well as erase the original scene of a lone, twirling dancer, creating a tension between motion and stagnation, a place where familiarity and strangeness combine to give the viewer an insight into the inner ecstasy of the dancer.

Elision, is on view at the *Talwar Gallery, New Delhi, until February 7. A solo exhibition will open at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sophia in Madrid, Spain on February 11.*

— SUPRIYA NAIR