

# Unpacking Ranbir Kaleka's Toolbox: *the Artist as Artificer*

*The storytelling that thrives for a long time in the milieu of work—the rural, the maritime, and the urban—is itself an artisan form of communication, as it were. It does not aim to convey the pure essence of the thing, like information or a report. It sinks the thing into the life of the storyteller, in order to bring it out of him again. Thus traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel.*

Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller"<sup>1</sup>

Can art that is not directly political provoke an affective response to situations that are profoundly immersed in the political? The video works of the Delhi-based new media artist Ranbir Kaleka suggest this is possible. In these works, we come face to face with the ecological refugee drawing his house in the sand; the migrant worker's psychedelic melancholia; the flickering image of the labourer trying to feed thread into the needle's evasive mouth; the man in thrall to a cockerel, a soul-bird caged in a mortal body. In the late 1990s, Kaleka, until then largely known for his paintings, made a memorable breakthrough, producing a dynamic interface between painting and video projection. In the presence of these works, the phenomenological separation between viewers of the painted image and viewers of the cinematic image came undone, was dismantled with a panther-like unpredictability. This essay positions the artist's hybrid intermedia practice within a region-specific historical account of Indian new media art. It offers an analytical account of the concepts of slow time, the philosophical possibilities of video as a medium, the ludic and the abortive performative gesture, the artisanal craft of storytelling, and the complex notion of a transcendence bound up with an elusive materiality, as these play out in Ranbir Kaleka's art.

## TRANSITIONS

The paintings that Ranbir Kaleka produced during the first phase of his artistic activity, from the 1970s to the 1990s, are charged with the irresistible force of the erotic, and centred flamboyantly on the self. These intensely visceral paintings attest to Kaleka's preference, in those years, for conjuring up a series of irreal, often grotesque creatures that are terrifying and tantalising by turns. In his pictorial orchestrations, we are hypnotised, variously, by a deathly ogre, by a *nayika* whose finger twirls itself into a lizard, a child-man who knows too much, a pregnant girl with rickety legs, or a howling dog. In sharp contrast, Kaleka's intermedia works—the video projections on paintings that he developed during the second phase of his career, from the late 1990s onwards—are pensive, philosophical in tenor and implied theme. The frenzied agonism and the phallogocentric perspective of his earlier painted narratives are supplanted by a deep empathy with both the animate and the inanimate domains of life—his conceptual spaces are open both to the unaccommodated migrant and the discarded teapot.

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The distance that Kaleka has traversed may be gauged by a comparison of his theatrically expressionist 1991 painting, *Cock-a-doodle-doo*, which bursts with a spirited, pagan, even gleeful sexuality, and his 2001-02 intermedia work, *Man with Cockerel*, a meditation on the desiring subjectivity, on possession and loss. Like many of Kaleka's intermedia works, *Man with Cockerel* is marked by a deliberately slowed-down pace and a singular gesture: these strategies allow the artist to conjure up an enigmatic atmosphere that summons forth our contemplative engagement. The intensity of affect no longer depends on an elaborate *mise-en-scene* of pneumatic or falling figures. And while the atmosphere of Kaleka's intermedia works is streaked with anxiety and a sense of anticipation, we do not sense a compelling need on the artist's part to overwhelm the viewer's consciousness with phantasmagoria, as he did in his earlier work. Instead, and especially in those works where he brings the filmed body and the painted body into dialogue, the given image and the made image flicker, separate and come together ever so quietly.

What does this transition in Kaleka's work tell us? Might two natures inhabit the same artist —each revealing itself more fully at a different stage of his life and a different phase in his work, and eventually engaging each other in vibrant dialogue? Or might different media call out to an artist in different ways, drawing out one or another of his two natures? Or do the conceptual and formal shifts in Kaleka's art map a paradigmatic trajectory from the robust, confrontational energy of youth to the measured, thoughtful perspective of maturity?

In the third and ongoing phase of the artist's work, we may decipher a pattern of dialectical evolution: the aesthetics of the voluptuary intersects with the philosophical struggle to deal with life's complexities, to produce neither a baroque maximalism nor minimalist contemplation but a third thing that melds the two. As an example, I would cite Kaleka's exhibition of paintings, sculptures and found objects titled *Reading Man*, in which there is an intertwining of erotic playfulness and elegiac wisdom. Among his video works, I would point to the intermedia work *Sweet Unease* (2011) and the high-spirited performance, *The Dinner* (2015). The video medium certainly allows for an intensification of the performative element in both works. In *Sweet Unease*, a man and his alter ego are pictured at table; gradually, they disengage themselves from the mundane yet essential act of eating to lock each other in a wrestling bout. A slow choreography unfolds as the bodies entangle, disentangle, lunging and resisting. The tight embrace of the wrestlers could be seen as a homoerotic fantasy, as well as an austere reflection on the condition of permanent war in which we find ourselves, as we negotiate the arena of life. *The Dinner*, a burlesque feast that serves up gyrating dancers, magic potions and perfumes, flying bowls, and Commedia dell'arte masks, ends in a de-escalation of sensory pleasure into sleep, with oceanic tides for backdrop. We sense a cycle at work, rather than a linear progression: the intention of the work, apparently, is not to set up a spiritual binary between the voluptuary and the austere, but to express the impossibility of one being able to exist and define itself without the other.

### THE STRANGER IN THE HEAD

Sometimes, we join the story mid-passage, or when it has decided to interrupt its momentum with a pause that might last a second or a millennium, for all you know as you stumble into it. Sometimes, we meet people in such a pause, and they come to incarnate our anxiety or bafflement. In Kaleka's video projection on painted canvas, *Cul-de-sac in Taxila* (2010), for instance, a middle-aged man in a suit seems to wait out his time. We will never know what passes through the mind of this prisoner of everyday life, whose existence is measured out by the rhythmic sound of a single drop of water falling into a bowl. We cannot help but think of the legendary Chinese dripping-water torture method; only, here,

the water falls into a bowl and, not on the victim's head. Just when we seem to have been completely mesmerised—or, if we are more hardy, perhaps anaesthetised—by the near-metronomic rhythm of the falling water, the filmed body of the man slips out of its painted twin and strikes the air with a hammer. A gong goes off, conjuring up a gorgeous phantom. A pale horse of great beauty appears on the screen. It is a satori moment. We hold on to its resonances, even as the itch to interpret creeps up on us. Depending on specific cultural readings of the symbolism of the white horse, the apparition could signify purity or heroism; or a premonition of death, since the horse acts in some traditions as a psychopomp, a figure that accompanies the souls of the dead into the afterlife. Above all, there is a sense of imminence in the air. To the Indic sensibility, the apparition could appear as a sign of the impending Kalki avatar. Kalki, the tenth and final avatar of the supreme god Vishnu in the present cosmic cycle, is regarded as the future saviour of the universe; conventionally, he is depicted as a rider on a white horse. Kalki's advent will mark the end of the current era of evil, the Kali Yuga, and the beginning of an era of virtue restored and renewed, the Satya Yuga.

But Kaleka's white horse manifests itself on the screen very briefly: for less time than it has taken you to read the paragraph about it. Time swallows the miracle of its appearance: the repetitive character of the video loop, as a format, will allow neither a complete rupture with the past nor an absolute leap into the future. It obliges us to meet our fate again and again, in a gesture of *amor fati* that does not let us evade our predicament. Is the white horse the token of a saviour figure, or the relic of a dream that did not translate into reality? The title of the work implies that our soteriological reading is destined to come to a dead end; it also offers us a place name redolent with millennia of historical significance. Taxila, which is the Greek version of the Sanskrit Takshashila, was no ordinary city: the capital of Gandhara, located in present-day Pakistan, it was a prosperous city on the Silk Road and home to a university whose name was venerated from Antioch in the west to Yarkand and Khotan in the east. An ancient centre for Hindu and Buddhist learning, Taxila was home, at various times, to a variety of cultural figures including the court physician Jivaka, who is said to have healed the Buddha, the grammarian Panini, and the political philosopher Chanakya.

The horse was to be found everywhere along the Silk Road. It was on the backs of horses that wars were won, negotiations conducted, peace enforced, and mercantile exchanges conveyed along this continent-wide network of trade and pilgrimage routes. Taxila flourished until it fell to the Huns in the fifth century AD. After this catastrophe, the centre of gravity of the Sanskrit cosmopolis—as Sheldon Pollock terms the transcontinental ecumene bound together by the use of Sanskrit—shifted to Nalanda in present-day Bihar.<sup>2</sup> Today, Taxila, a supremely important archaeological site, is threatened by war, terrorism and plunder. Symbolic of itinerancy, migration, exchange and cultural transfusion, the horse fades into a distant dream, trapped forever in a punishing loop.

*Cul-de-sac in Taxila* is replete with coded meaning. The title works against its own apparent emphasis, opening up etymological doors for us. In the original Sanskrit, "*Takshashila*" was, as myth tells us, the capital of the Naga king Taksaka. The Marxist historian D. D. Kosambi places another gloss on the place name: it is, he suggests, derived from the Sanskrit "*taksaka*", which means "carpenter".<sup>3</sup> But the *taksaka* is no simple carpenter: he is a "superior craftsman", indeed, he is an artificer, one who combines the skills of the artisan, the architect, and the magician: a Daedalus figure, creator of labyrinths, flying machines, or floors so glassy that they look like the surfaces of lakes. Coincidentally, Kaleka's first intermedia work, *Man Threading a Needle* (1998-99), featured the artist's carpenter, Sadanand. Not only has Kaleka always been respectful and admiring of the work of those who make things with their hands, but he has also always felt a special affinity for people far removed from his own class and milieu.

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The artist confesses to being bored by people like himself or of his own class; his work often pivots around the frisson that occurs during an encounter with the stranger, or the stranger in the head.

Taxila also embodies the deep archive of Kaleka's own history: it stands for the classical past of northwestern India, of western Punjab, which is integral to the artist's imagination and to his sense of his own moorings. We see a rare glimpse of Kaleka's ethnic identity in his four-channel intermedia work, *Crossings* (2005), where the turban, a distinctive religious symbol of the Sikh community to which the artist belongs, unfurls as a token of atavistic continuity but also as a river of blood, invoking memories of the 1947 Partition, which divided British India into the postcolonial nation-states of India and Pakistan. The Partition turned Punjab into a battlefield, as the transfer of populations and the experience of mass exile turned rapidly into a holocaust.

### THE SCREEN

*Taksaka* or Buddhist monk, despite or beneath his business suit: the stranger in Kaleka's head who strikes the air with a hammer to produce a gong in *Cul-de-sac in Taxila*? While this figure may have emerged from the recesses of the artist's imagination, I would like to dwell on the physical thrum I experienced, as a viewer, when I heard—or saw; or saw and heard—the gong. What Kaleka produced was a synaesthetic encounter during which light appeared to produce sound, a visual provocation triggering an aural impact. Kaleka's turn towards the filmed image, which has often been conscripted into the nascent history of video art in India, would seem, at least to me, to have its origins in cinema's magical dealings with sound, light and time, and not in the proceedings of much video art as it sets out heavy-handedly to establish that the tedium is the message. Kaleka incarnates the aphorism, often attributed to Bill Viola, that there is no such thing as video art; there are only artists who use video.

During a conversation intended to trace the sources of his interest in new media, Kaleka told me—instructively—that he does not remember the first video work he saw. But the first film he saw as a child is etched in his memory, or at least a single scene from it is. “I remember, it was a man sitting on the floor and then he sits up and picks up a hammer and starts hammering, moulding something,” he recalled. “I think that hammer stayed with me. That clanking sound, it was surprising that something that had no substance was creating sound. I thought it was light creating sound, didn't know there were speakers. It seemed very magical.”<sup>4</sup>

Kaleka's family was populated with storytellers who took turns to enthrall the children at bedtime with tales of sand fairies and ghosts who walked backwards, while the shadows on the walls of the family *haveli* or mansion in Patiala threatened to grow longer. Proto-cinematic devices such as the shadow play or the magic lantern, which enchanted him as a child, have had a clear role to play in his early cinematic education. Later, as an adolescent, Kaleka tapped into the film society movement and the embassy circuit to screen foreign films. The work of the icons of world cinema—Bergman, Fellini, Ozu—materialised on his verandah wall in Patiala. One of the deep and abiding sources of Kaleka's intermedia works is the primal cinematic experience of seeing an image establish itself as an immaterial yet compelling aura on the opacity of the projection surface. Of course, this is not to argue that video art has held no significance for him. On the contrary, he has been profoundly receptive to its poetics, imbibing from the finest video art practices the preference for a stretched temporality, and the crux of a gesture held against the infinite refrain of the loop. Kaleka brings these sources into interplay as he orchestrates his intersections between the light and mobility of video and the materiality and stillness of painting.



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I must ask my readers to forgive me if this section assumes the rather Upanishadic form of a “*neti neti*”, an argument that proceeds by declaring “not this, not that”. I make this choice in the interests of clarifying the sources and contexts of Kaleka’s intermedia art, and retrieving them from several of the well-meaning but misleading readings of his work that currently prevail. One of these readings claims Kaleka’s intermedia art for the realm of “expanded cinema”, a claim that I would question. “Expanded cinema”, a term attributed to the American artist Stan VanDerBeek, rejected the conventional screening of films by producing immersive film and kinetic art environments in the 1960s. According to artist and theorist Peter Weibel, expanded cinema deploys multiple screens, multiple projections, new materials such as inflatable structures and air or water, and fosters audience participation with viewers’ bodies doubling as the site of projection.<sup>5</sup>

Kaleka’s intermedia works were not intended to exceed or expand the viewer’s expectations of cinema; instead, they could be read as explorations of expanded painting. The artist was drawn to works such as the surrealist painter Max Ernst’s *Two children are threatened by a nightingale* (1924) and Rauschenberg’s combine *Monogram* (1955-59), which pushed the boundaries of the two-dimensional canvas. The model of a wooden gate literally fixed to the surface of Ernst’s painting pulls us into a nightmarish scene not dissimilar to the fantasies that populated Kaleka’s childhood. In the painting, a child-abductor reaches for an actual doorknob protruding from the frame of the painting. The gate and the doorknob suggest devices that could open up closed forms or secret domains. They induce the viewer to re-think the Renaissance idea of painting as a window to the world. They complicate the illusion of a continuum between the viewer’s sightline and the picture plane by positioning objects as obstacles on the picture surface. Rauschenberg’s combines of the 1950s brought elements of painting and sculpture together to create a third thing. They challenged the viewer’s relationship with the picture surface in dramatic ways. As the critic Leo Steinberg observed, these combines were like a receptor surface, a tabletop or a bulletin board on which objects were scattered or pinned.<sup>6</sup>

Kaleka was alert to the expansion of artistic practices in India too. During the early 1990s, he was following the work of artists such as Vivan Sundaram (born 1943) and Nalini Malani (born 1946), who were in the process of moving beyond the two-dimensional frame and embracing the possibilities of assemblage, installation, video and performance. An early outcome of this process was Sundaram’s *Collaborations/Combines* (1992), in which the artist extended a series of charcoal drawings into sculptural forms and assemblages, combining these with engine oil trays, to annotate the First Gulf War against Iraq. Another striking work produced during this period was Malani’s ephemeral site-specific installation, *City of Desires* (1992), in which she made drawings directly on the walls of the gallery, a gesture intended to expose the irony of nineteenth century murals in the temple town of Nathdwara being allowed to disintegrate while Hindu majoritarian forces were inciting a form of holy war in the name of an imagined past.

These artists were responding to a twofold challenge posed to them during the early 1990s: on the one hand, the technological forces of globalisation, with the arrival of twenty-four hour television, the domestication of video technology and access to the Internet; and on the other, the threat of communalism, with India’s composite and largely inclusive cultural fabric being ripped apart by the divisive and polarising politics of Hindu majoritarianism. From this experimental moment, there also emerged works like Sundaram’s video installation *House/Boat* (1994), on the politics of migration, and Nalini Malani’s *Remembering Toba Tek Singh* (1998-99), an ambitious immersive video installation based on Saadat Hasan Manto’s story about the absurdity and horror of The Partition, as well as the continuing aggression between India and Pakistan. During this momentous phase of India’s collective

life, Rummana Hussain (1952-1999) combined autobiographically charged performance with sculptural elements in her practice, which directly confronted the majoritarian politics that was in the ascendant in India at that time.

Kaleka's own steps beyond the painted frame were more cautious and tentative. With *Man with Bhutta* (1999), a nocturnal blue expressionist oil painting, he produced a break in the flat pictorial space by giving it sculptural volume. Paradoxically, the illusion of the painterly convention is simultaneously maintained and broken here—a strategy that is also used in his intermedia works such as *Man Threading a Needle*. In its first iteration, the spell produced by a seemingly static image of a man focusing on a precise gesture is disrupted by small movements such as breathing or a facial twitch and in the second one (*He was a good man*, 2008), the depth produced by the skin of the painting and the overlapping video projection is flattened by the image of a train speeding through the protagonist's body. Kaleka enchants his viewers with an elaborate oneiric vision; and, just when they are completely captivated, he reveals his machinery, the artifice that lies at the heart of art.

Crucially, I would argue, Kaleka's move in the direction of intermedia art spelled out his unfolding formal arguments with himself, with the inner logic of his art. Unlike practitioners such as Sundaram, Malani and Hussain, he was not primarily motivated by a political choice. Rather, his intermedia works share a greater affinity with those of Baiju Parthan, who was one of the first Indian artists to generate an interface between the domains of painting and the Internet, as he engaged with distributed conceptions of selfhood and the distributed self's reserves of memory and dream. I would suggest that a more viable armature for the experiments of Parthan and Kaleka is that affirmative 'prehistory' that I have elsewhere proposed for new media practices in the Indian context—one that rejects the tropes of lack, belatedness and permanent apprenticeship which plague the narrative of non-Western art. Instead, my 'prehistory' privileges the experiments in film and photography conducted by Akbar Padamsee, Nalini Malani, Tyeb Mehta, M. F. Husain and Krishen Khanna during the late 1960s and 1970s, especially at the Vision Exchange Workshop, Bombay. It also claims Dashrath Patel's transdisciplinary installations, and his exhibition designs for international expos and grassroots-activism projects from the 1960s to the 1980s, as a legitimate yet overlooked genealogy for new media art in India.<sup>7</sup> It is in these formal, conceptual and existential expansions of consciousness and practice—rather than in an overtly political choice—that we may more productively anchor Kaleka's oneiric departures in the flux of intermedia.

#### THE MIGRANT, HOME AND AWAY

Kaleka's carpenter, Sadanand, plays the protagonist in three of the artist's memorable works. *Man with Bhutta*, as well as intermedia works *Man Threading a Needle* and its second iteration, *He was a good man*. In the latter works, he is presented in a moment of preparation, evidently just as he is about to stitch a tear in his vest, or stitch back a button that has come loose. At one level, we could read his gesture of singular focus as a psycho-sexual dilemma; or perhaps as a meditative act, labour transmuted into *dhyana*, as in Vermeer's 1670 painting, *The Lacemaker*. Or could this flickering portrait be read as an allegory about migration? Even without the train hurtling through the protagonist's body in *He was a good man*, other clues sensitise us to the artisan's situation. The portraiture hints at a man far away from home, isolated in a space defined by labour, without family near him. The sound track filters in people's opinions about this nameless "good man", precarious and vulnerable ("pakad liya" or "caught him", somebody shouts implying a game of cricket or a police chase). Is he alive or dead; 'was' he or 'is' he?

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The spectre of internal migration has haunted independent India since 1947, without amelioration in the living conditions of people displaced by large-scale projects, mass violence, forced labour, economic emigration from one region to another. While the commentariat focuses much of its attention on the migration from rural to urban India, there is also a vast and less visible movement of populations from one rural zone to another; most pertinently from Kaleka's perspective, the well-established seasonal migration of agrarian labourers from Bihar to Punjab. Kaleka's approach to these questions may not be phrased as a sociological investigation; but it is no less powerful, communicating itself as a deeply affective phenomenological exploration, whether in *Crossings* where the bird-seller juggles captivity and flight through an adroit sleight of hand, or in *Not from here* (2009), where the migrant family spat out by the passing train turns into a phantom image, their faces overexposed, their togetherness soon becoming a memory of the past. Without warning, this multi-channel work fills its screens with a dreamscape of psychedelic colours pierced by the enunciation of a single word—"akele" or "alone"—its syllables stretched and aborted. The artist observes that he was seized, while developing this work, by the memory of the railway station platform in Patiala where the train brought in farmhands during the harvest season.

I suspect that Kaleka returns to the theme of migration, not only because he feels an empathy for those who have been exiled from their homes, but also because he feels permanently exiled from his own childhood home: the *haveli* where he once led a sheltered existence, travelling on the iridescent wings of stories of varied kinds. Stories with a moral at the end, as told by his father; his uncles' stories, full of adventure, kidnappings and magic; erotic stories whispered into his ears by the house mason; and his mother's sad stories, which made him cry. The loss of this *temenos*, and its forced evacuation from his adult life, have perhaps made him long for that walled garden of enchantment all the more.<sup>8</sup>

The home as construct and as an aching absence makes an indirect yet palpable appearance in *Man with Cockerel II* (2004). The visual choreography of what could be best described as an exercise in *aparigraha* or non-possessiveness, in Jain philosophy, is counterpointed with sounds emanating from a domestic space, chopping, grinding, the flushing of the toilet. The gravitas of a philosophical exercise is disrupted with these interruptions of everyday life, with the act of possession and letting go composed in a repetitive loop that offers us a choice between the shackles of the everyday and the explosive hope of redemption.

With *House of Opaque Water* (2012-13), a set of three immersive video projections, Kaleka made a rare bow in the direction of the documentary format. This work narrates the real-life account of an ecological refugee, a man with a culturally confluent name, Sheikh Lal Mohan, who lives in the lush mangrove forests of the Sundarbans delta in eastern India. Mohan talks of the submergence of his house in the hungry tidal waters of the delta and pats into shape a mud map of his lost village. His loss generates a powerful catharsis, which manifests itself through successive waves of consciousness. Dreams alternate with hallucinations here, and events with hopes. The sound track of the video installation is visceral in its immediacy, laid over as it is with the roar and stutter of the motorboat, the solitary foghorn and also the resonant Tibetan Buddhist chants which, paradoxically, seem to make the tide heave like a monster. In Kaleka's handling, the classic documentary format—premised on a quest for truth—opens itself up into a zone of transformative vision, where the ground conditions of reality are metamorphosed in, and by, the act of active seeing or through heightened apperception.



#### THE PAST IS NEVER OVER

Walter Benjamin's privileging of the artisanal aspect of storytelling, where the story-artifact carries the breath patterns and handprints of the storyteller in the passage that gives this essay its epigraph, could apply equally well to Kaleka's work. We find the impress of the intuitive and cognitive experiences from his childhood firmly set on his narratives. Constructed as a fairytale, the video projection *Forest* (2012) contains Kaleka's favoured tropes: the Mahatma-monk, the angel-flagellant, the lion who knows no fear, and the heart of knowledge, the library. As Bruno Bettelheim noted, fairytales are like user's manuals of child psychology, which can help us understand the emotional upheavals and torments that haunt a child's mind.<sup>9</sup> They can also serve to clarify the adult mind, which is often too afflicted by hubris to realise that the past is never over. In response to Kaleka's ambiguous stance towards his material in *Forest*, his collaborator, the composer Elliot Goldenthal, decided not to achieve a perfect musical 'gestalt' for the sound component of the work. Goldenthal's score combines "musical realism with dream-like tone-scapes that straddle nature and the subconscious".<sup>10</sup> The score is dynamic without being theatrical, and legible without imposing closure. In effect, the score captivates and surrounds the viewer but does not overpower her. To arrive at a clearing in the forest is, in archetypal terms, to achieve self-knowledge, this is the space of illumination, to which Heidegger referred as the "*Lichtung*". But here, the ground is charred, suggesting ecological devastation, and the presence of a flagellant seeking atonement hints at mass graves of political dissidents and the murder of innocent people by totalitarian regimes. The flagellant-angel's quest to rejuvenate the human spirit is deferred by a fire raging in a library in the middle of the forest. Without the aid of documentary footage, we remember the burning libraries of Persepolis and Nalanda, as well as the nightmarish book-burning rituals instituted by the Nazis in 1930s Germany. At least two kinds of knowledge, intuitive-divinatory as well as textual, crisscross each other in *Forest*. Neither overwhelms the other; it seems that Ranbir Kaleka, as the storyteller-*taksaka*, would prefer us to arrive at self-knowledge by zigzagging through the terrains both of experience and discourse.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov', in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, New York: Schocken Books, 1969, pp. 91-92

<sup>2</sup> Sheldon Pollock, *The Language of the Gods in the World of Men: Sanskrit, Culture, and Power in Premodern India*, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006

<sup>3</sup> D. D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1975, p. 129

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Ranbir Kaleka, Ephesus, 2 July 2009; in Ranjit Hoskote and Nancy Adajania, *The Dialogues Series: Ranbir Kaleka*, Bombay: Popular Prakashan: forthcoming

<sup>5</sup> Peter Weibel, 'Jeffrey Shaw: A User's Manual', in *Jeffrey Shaw—a User's Manual From Expanded Cinema to Virtual Reality*, Karlsruhe: Editions ZKM & Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz Verlag, 1997, pp. 9-19

<sup>6</sup> Leo Steinberg, 'Reflections on the State of Criticism', orig. pbl. *Artforum* Vol. 10 No. 7, March 1972; rpt. in Branden W. Joseph (ed.), *Robert Rauschenberg*, Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press/ October Files 4, pp. 6-37

<sup>7</sup> See Nancy Adajania, 'New Media Overtures Before New Media Practice in India' in Gayatri Sinha (ed.), *Art and Visual Culture in India 1857-2007*, Bombay: Marg, 2009. See also, Nancy Adajania, 'Dashrath Patel's Non-aligned Alignments' in *Seminar Magazine 'Inheritances'*, No: 659/July 2014

<sup>8</sup> It is not as if there was no violence in the immediate environment when Kaleka was growing up. He would hear of people being maimed due to family feuds, for instance; but he was largely protected from the outside world

<sup>9</sup> See Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, New York: Knopf, 1976

<sup>10</sup> From Elliot Goldenthal's correspondence with the artist, shared with the author on 3 November 2013