

n.^o 16

JUDITH BLUM
REDDY
*EVERYTHING
IS NOT OK*

02.06—29.07.2023

Obras / Works

Indian Timetables, 1997; *108 Names of the Ganges*, 1997; *Delhi Phone Book*, 1999; *Map 1*, 1972; *Map 2*, 1973; *New York Bound*, 1974; *Revisiting the 2019, 2019*; *Heavily Redacted Document*, 2020; *True*, 2020; *Everything is Not Ok*, 2021; *This is for you*, 2020; *Unperson*, 2021

Comisario / Curated by
Mira Bernabeu

Fotos / Photographs by
Dev Benegal

Texto / Text by
Sadia Shirazi

1MM



Indian Timetables, 1997

DELHI-KANPUR-ALLAHABAD-VARANASI-PATNA-DHANBAD-HOWRAH

- ▼ 242 RAJHANI EXPRESS
- ▼ 232 KALI-KA-HOWRAH MAIL
- ▼ 238 NEW DELHI-HOWRAH POORVA EXPRESS
- ▼ 308 UDAN-ASHA TOCHAN EXPRESS
- ▼ 311 DEHLI-SEALDH EXPRESS
- ▼ 2308 JODHPUR-HOWRAH EXPRESS
- ▼ 2134 MUGHALSARAI-SEALDH EXPRESS
- ▼ 3004 BOMBAY-HOWRAH MAIL
- ▼ 116 GHAJIDPUR-HOWRAH CHAMBAL EXPRESS
- ▼ 1162 ASHA QANTI-HOWRAH CHAMBAL EXPRESS
- ▼ 1172 INDORE-HOWRAH CHIRPA EXPRESS
- ▼ 4164 MEERUT CITY-ALLAHABAD SANGAM EXPRESS
- ▼ 3418 KURIA-BHAGALPUR EXPRESS
- ▼ 5231 KURIA-MUZAFFARPUR EXPRESS
- ▼ 3078 JAMMU-TAWI-HOWRAH HIMALYA EXPRESS
- ▼ 3046 AMRITSAR-HOWRAH MAIL
- ▼ 3050 AMRITSAR-HOWRAH EXPRESS
- ▼ 3152 JAMMU TAWI-SEALDH EXPRESS

DELHI-NEW DELHI-AGRA-JHANSI-BHOPAL-BHUSAVAL-BOMBAY V.T.

- 1 303 HOWRAH-BOMBAY MAIL
- 1 1028 GORAKHBUR-DADAR KASHI EXPRESS
- 1 1034 VARANASI-BOMBAY MAHANAGRI EXPRESS
- 1 7518 BOMBAY-NANDED TAPOLAN EXPRESS
- 1 1145 MUZAFFARPUR-DADAR SHRAM-SHAKTI EXPRESS
- 1 3100 VARANASI-BOMBAY RATNAGRI EXPRESS
- 1 1068 FAIZABAD-BOMBAY SAKET EXPRESS
- 1 2487 BHUJA-PURI-KURIA EXPRESS
- 1 2646 GUWALIJI-DADAR EXPRESS
- 1 14245 VARANASI-KURLA EXPRESS
- 1 2960 HOWRAH-BOMBAY GOURJALI EXPRESS
- 1 8000 HOWRAH-BOMBAY MAIL
- 1 8030 HOWRAH-KURLA EXPRESS
- 1 1440 NAGPUR-DADAR SEVGRAM EXPRESS
- 1 1036 NAGPUR-BOMBAY VICARSHA EXPRESS
- 1 7584 NAJAFUR-KOLhapur MAHARASHTRA EXPRESS
- 1 4246 VARANASI-SURAT TAPTI-GANGA EXPRESS
- 1 1004 NANDED-BOMBAY DEVGRI EXPRESS

HOWRAH-TATA NAGAR-ROURKELA-DURG-NAGPUR-BOMBAY V.T.

- 1 2860 HOWRAH-BOMBAY GOURJALI EXPRESS
- 1 8002 HOWRAH-BOMBAY MAIL
- 1 8035 HOWRAH-BOMBAY EXPRESS
- 1 8034 HOWRAH-AMHABAD EXPRESS
- 1 8477 KALINGA-UTKAL EXPRESS
- 1 8005 HOWRAH-TITLAGARH EXPRESS
- 1 5011 HOWRAH-JARSUQDA SRAT EXPRESS
- 1 8013 HOWRAH-TATANAGAR STEEL EXPRESS
- 1 8015 HOWRAH-HATIA EXPRESS
- 1 8017 HOWRAH-PURulia EXPRESS
- 1 2037 JHARGUDI EXPRESS
- 1 8403 PURI-AMHABAD EXPRESS
- 1 3066 VIDARBHA EXPRESS
- 1 1440 SEWGRAM EXPRESS
- 1 7584 MAHARASHTRA EXPRESS
- 1 6048 NAJAFUR EXPRESS

HOWRAH-EHUBANESWAR-PURI-VISAKHAPATNAM-VIJAYAWADA-MADRAS CENTRAL

- 1 2816 NEW DELHI-PURI EXPRESS
- 1 1020 BHUJA-STL-14-BOMBAY POKHARI EXPRESS
- 1 2427 MIRAJ KHANDI EXPRESS
- 1 8449 PIKAVI STEEL CITY ALAMPUR EXPRESS
- 1 2422 FAIDHANI EXPRESS
- 1 3561 VISAKHAPATNAM-HINZAMUDON LINK EXPRESS
- 1 1033 HOWRAH-SECUNDERABAD-FALAKNUMA EXPRESS
- 1 7037 GODAVARI EXPRESS
- 1 7047 GOUTAMI EXPRESS
- 1 8045 EAST COAST EXPRESS
- 1 7445 VISAKHAPATNAM-VIJAYAWADA ROTHACHAL EXPRESS
- 1 271 PURI-AMRITA-MADRAS PINJANI EXPRESS
- 1 7240 SIKHADAI EXPRESS
- 1 7044 CIRAH EXPRESS
- 1 7498 TIRUPUR EXPRESS
- 1 2622 TAMIL NADU EXPRESS
- 1 804 LUCKNOW-MADRAS EXPRESS

HOWRAH-BOMBAY V.T. VIA ALLAHABAD

- 1 3419 BHAGALPUR-MUZAFFARPUR EXPRESS
- 1 1158/1181 CHAMBAL EXPRESS
- 1 1171 SHIRPA EXPRESS
- 1 1148 MUZAFFARPUR-DADAR SHRAM-SHAKTI EXPRESS
- 1 5214 MUZAFFARPUR-KURIA EXPRESS
- 1 5646 GUWALIJI-DADAR EXPRESS
- 1 5417 BHAGALPUR-KURLA EXPRESS
- 1 4248 VARANASI-KURLA EXPRESS
- 1 1066 VARANASI-BOMBAY RATNAGRI EXPRESS
- 1 1068 FAIZABAD-BOMBAY SAKET EXPRESS
- 1 1070 ALLAHABAD-BOMBAY EXPRESS
- 1 1034 MAHANAGRI EXPRESS
- 1 5414 MUZAFFARPUR-KURLA EXPRESS
- 1 4246 VARANASI-SURAT TAPTI-GANGA EXPRESS
- 1 4244 VARANASI-SURAT JANDEVA EXPRESS
- 1 3003 HOWRAH-BOMBAY MAIL
- 1 1028 DADAR EXPRESS

LUMDING-DHARMA NAGAR-KUMARGHAT-SILCHAR

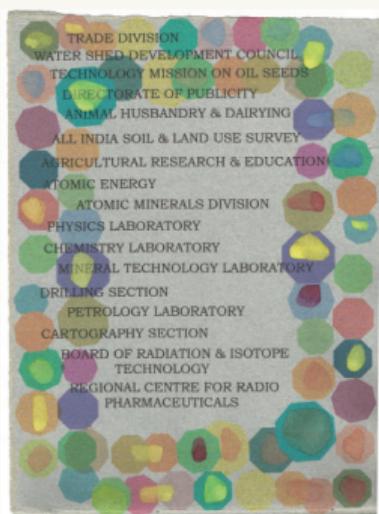
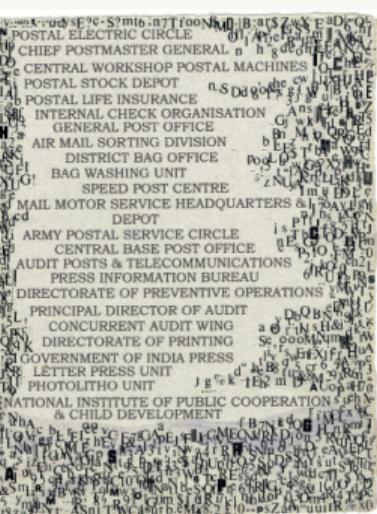
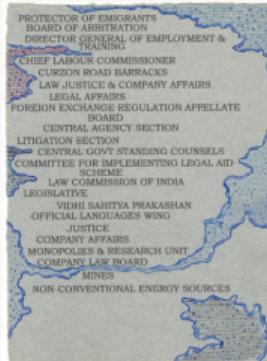
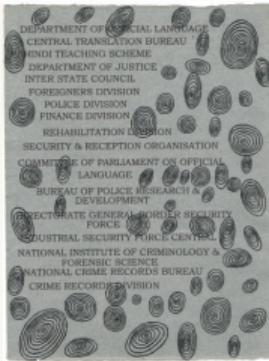
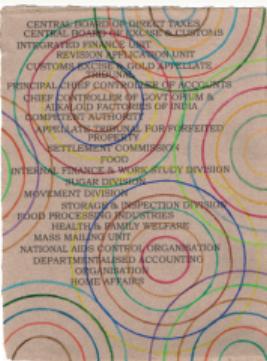
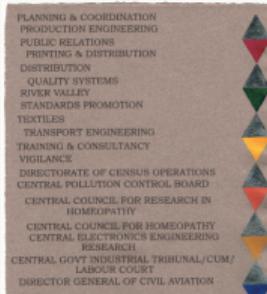
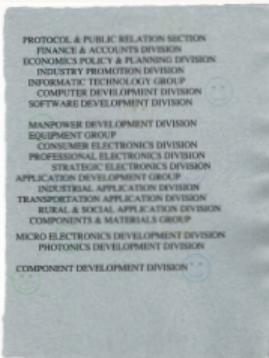
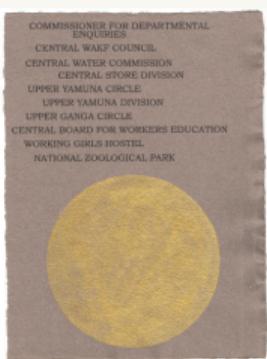
- 1 204 TRIPURA PASSENGER
- 1 5011 BARAK VALLEY EXPRESS
- 1 8031 CACHAR EXPRESS
- 1 6039 BOMBAY-KALUTARA EXPRESS
- 1 6031 BOMBAY-TRIVANDRUM EXPRESS
- 1 1003 NEHRUNAGI EXPRESS
- 1 1031 KANNIYA KUMARI EXPRESS

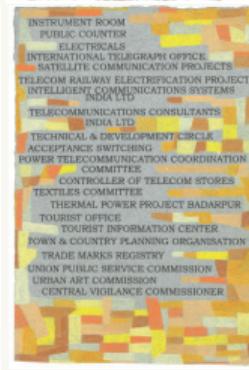
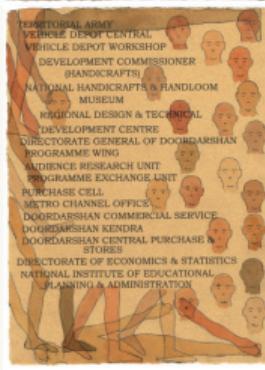
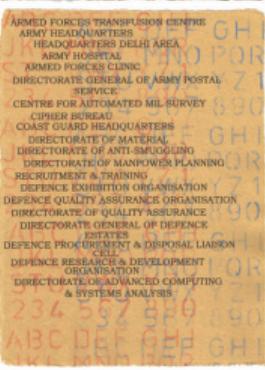
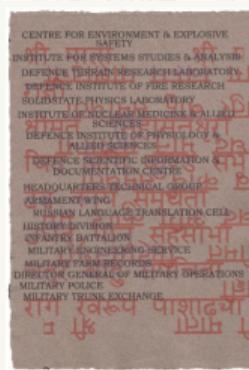
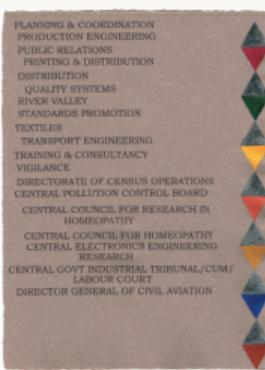
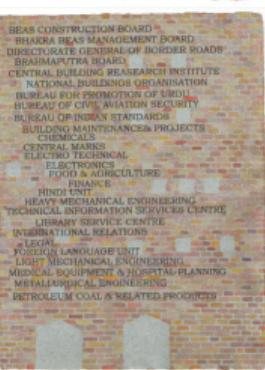
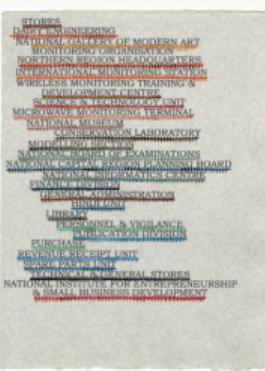
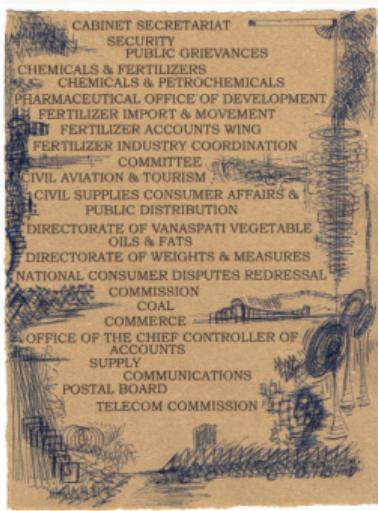
BOMBAY V.T.-COCHIN-TRIVANDRUM-KANNIYA KUMARI-MANGALORE

- 1 6039 BOMBAY-KALUTARA EXPRESS
- 1 6031 BOMBAY-TRIVANDRUM EXPRESS
- 1 1003 NEHRUNAGI EXPRESS
- 1 1031 KANNIYA KUMARI EXPRESS

JAMMU TAWI-NEW DELHI-VASCO DA GAMA

- 1 2479 GOA EXPRESS
- 1 2027 KANNIYA EXPRESS
- 1 1017 JHELUM EXPRESS





LEDGER पाठी	
Account of गंगा नाम GANGASTOTTARA-SATA-NAMAVAL	
BHISMA-MATR	
SIDDHA	
RAMYA	
UMA-KARA-KAMALA-SANJATA	
AJNANA-TIMIRA-BHANU	
JAMBU-DVIPA-VIHARINI	

LEDGER पाठी	
Account of गंगा नाम THE 108 NAMES OF THE GANGES	
ABOUNDING IN THE FOUR MILK TREES	
DWELLING IN THE MATTED LOCKS OF SHIVA	
RELEASING FROM THE THREE DBITS	
THE TUFT ON THE HEAD OF THE ENEMY OF TRIPURA	
PERTAINING TO TĀBNU	
CARRYING AWAY FEAR	
IMPERISHABLE	
AFFORDING DELIGHT TO THE EYE	
DAUGHTER OF THE MOUNTAIN	
NOT PAINTED WITH COLLYRIUM	
ETERNALLY PURE	
ADORNED WITH A NET OF WATER	
STIMULATOR	
DWELLING IN WATER	
SWELLING THE WATERS OF THE OCEAN	
DELIGHTFUL	
RIVER MADE OF WATER DROPS	

LEDGER पाठी	
Account of गंगा नाम GANGASTOTTARA-SATA-NAMAVAL	
PARABRAHMA-SVARUPINI	
PURNA	
PURATANA	
PUNYA	
PUNYA-DA	
PUNYA-VAHINI	
PULOMAJARCITA	
PUTA	
PUTA-TRIBHUVANA	
JAPA	
JANGAMA	
JANGAMADHARA	
JALA-RUPA	
JAGAD-DHITA	
JAHNU-PUTRI	
JAGAN-MATR	
BHAVA-PATNI	

LEDGER पाठी	
Account of गंगा नाम THE 108 NAMES OF THE GANGES	
UNMANIFEST	
RESORT OF THE EMINENT	
HAVING THE SAME HUSBAND	
HAVING BEAUTIFUL LIMBS	
BEAUTIFUL	
HAVING A DAZZLING WHITE GARMENT	
HAVING SIVA AS A FOREST-DWELLER	
HAVING THE CRESCENT MOON AS A CREST	
WHOSE WATER IS A MINE OF NECTAR	
LEAPING OVER MOUNTAINS IN SPORT	
DWELLING IN THE WATER POT OF BRAHMA	
TRIPLE-BRAIDED	
POSSESSING THE THREE GUNAS	
DESTROYING THE MASS OF SINS OF SANGATA	
MAKING A NOISE LIKE A CONCH SHELL AND DRUM	
CARRYING AWAY FEAR	
CREATING HAPPINESS	

LEDGER पाठी	
Account of गंगा नाम THE 108 NAMES OF THE GANGES	
SPORTIVELY BILLOWING	
FLOWING LIKE A STAIRCASE TO HEAVEN	
EMBODIED IN THE PANTHEON	
BESTOWING WATER	
DESTROYING SORROW	
BRINGING ABOUT THE CONTINUANCE OF PEACE	
DESTROYER OF POVERTY	
BESTOWING HAPPINESS	
DESTROYING THE POISON OF ILLUSION	
HAVING PRAYAGA AS AN ABODE	
FURROW	
RELEASING FROM THE THREE AFFECTIONS	
PROTECTOR OF THE SICK WHO COME TO YOU FOR REFUGE	
GIVING COMPLETE SPIRITUAL EMANCIPATION	
RESORTED TO FOR THE ACQUISITION OF MAGIC POWERS	
DESTROYER OF SIN	
HAVING A PURE BODY	

LEDGER पाठी	
Account of गंगा नाम THE 108 NAMES OF THE GANGES	
GANGES	
BORN FROM THE LOTUS-LIKE FOOT OF VISHNU	
DEAR TO HARA (SIVA)	
DAUGHTER OF THE LORD OF HIMALAYA	
FLOWING THROUGH THE MOUNTAIN-COUNTRY	
MOTHER OF DEMON TARAKA'S ENEMY	
LIBERATOR OF THE 60,000 SONS OF SAGARA	
JOINED TO THE RIVER SARASVATI	
MELODIOUS OR NOISY	
FLOWING TO THE OCEAN	
PERTAINING TO THE SAINT BHAGIRATHA	
HAPPY OR FORTUNATE	
FOLLOWING THE CHARIOT OF BHAGIRATHA	
FALLING FROM THE FOOT OF VISHNU	
FLOWING THROUGH THE THREE WORLDS	
WHITE AS MILK	
A COW WHICH GIVES MUCH MILK	

NEW YORK BOUND

La práctica artística de Judith Blum Reddy abarca el grabado, el dibujo y la pintura. Nacida en 1943 en Nueva York, cursó Bellas Artes en Cooper Union y trabajó en el taller de grabado de Bob Blackburn antes de trasladarse a París para proseguir su formación en Atelier 17. Fue ahí donde, a mediados de los sesenta, comenzó a crear una serie de obras sobre lienzo, procesuales y muy trabajadas, abandonando el grabado, aunque no sus técnicas. Las primeras pinturas de Blum Reddy consistían en mapas de grandes dimensiones que incorporaban textos y jugaban con la iteración.

Blum Reddy absorbió en París el anticolonialismo, el feminismo y la semiótica que circulaban por la capital francesa, unas influencias que combinó con un humor muy agudo y un contacto permanente con la existencia cotidiana. Atelier 17 se convirtió en centro de reunión de una comunidad de artistas internacionales con los que Blum Reddy, hija de refugiados judíos procedentes de Austria, se sintió muy afín. Contrajo matrimonio con el artista indio Krishna Reddy, entabló amistad con Zarina, participó, junto a Mona Saudi, artista palestina y amiga suya, en talleres de cartelismo y se embarcó en una serie de obras colaborativas con otra de sus íntimas, la creadora turca Nil Yalter. Además de en Francia, pasó temporadas en Nueva Delhi, Madison (Wisconsin) y Davis (California).

En 1975 Blum Reddy regresó a Nueva York, instalándose en un loft de la cooperativa Fluxhouse situado en el número 80 de Wooster Street, donde continúa viviendo a día de hoy. La planta baja la ocupaba Anthology Film Archives y en la acera de enfrente había una cooperativa feminista. Todos los días caminaba hasta el loft de su amiga Camille Billops, para trabajar como ayudante y archivera en el Hatch-Billops Archive, poniendo orden y registrando su meticulosa colección de recortes de prensa, materiales expositivos y todo tipo de elementos relacionados con artistas negros y del Tercer Mundo, así como transcribiendo entrevistas para la publicación *Artist & Influence*. Blum Reddy volvía así a implicarse en círculos feministas de artistas negras y del Tercer Mundo, participando

en un número especial de *Heresies* que se tituló «Racism is the Issue» (1982).

La práctica artística de Blum Reddy reúne corrientes de información de orígenes diversos, incluyendo mapas, documentos gubernamentales con fragmentos censurados, prensa escrita, señalética pública, horarios o aplicaciones de teléfonos móviles. Esa plétora de información la destila en unos collages de técnica mixta elaborados a base de textos y símbolos, que a menudo poseen un efecto tragicómico. Palabras y listas aparentemente inocuas se repiten y acumulan para revelar un mundo caótico, en el que tanto el significante como el significado son puestos en entredicho. Sus obras más recientes, habitadas por símbolos de armas de fuego, taxonomías raciales, *fake news*, protestas y cerdos, aparecen ahora jalónadas aquí y allá con alusiones al pasado de la artista —nombres de antiguas amistades, lugares frecuentados en el pasado, frases arcaicas— flotando por una suerte de campo de batalla de desinformación. Para nuestra tranquilidad, la artista nos ofrece una verdad: no todo está bien.

Esta conversación se inició presencialmente en Nueva York, continuando luego a través de llamadas telefónicas y textos.

Sadia Shirazi: Simultaneaste tus estudios en Cooper Union con tu trabajo en el estudio de grabado de Bob Blackburn. ¿Cómo acabaste ahí?

Judith Blum Reddy: Trabajé en el estudio de Blackburn porque él era profesor en Cooper. Un día me dijo que me dejaba asistir a su estudio gratuitamente. Solo tenía que barrer y limpiar. Así que, al terminar las clases, me iba al estudio a trabajar en lo mío y a estar ahí.

SS: Háblanos del entorno del estudio de Blackburn, ¿qué ambiente había?

JBR: Era una casa de locos [risas]. Con Bob y un montón de gente por ahí, que no le pagaban la matrícula. Bob era negado para el dinero. Era muy divertido. Había mucha gente interesante, pero funcionaba con un presupuesto bajísimo. Todo era bastante caótico, pero a mí me encantaba.

SS: ¿Qué te llevó hacia el grabado?

JBR: Ya me gustaba en Cooper, donde tuve un profesor muy bueno, Will Barnett, del que Bob era

el asistente. Simplemente me atrajo. Me parecía más atractivo que la pintura. Recuerdo a aquellos profesores de pintura repitiendo sin parar que no podía usar negro en el lienzo, lo que me parecía rarísimo. [risas].

SS: Cooper era gratuito, ¿no?

JBR: Sí. Creo que pagabas algo para materiales, algo esencial para mucha gente, que no tenía ingresos de ningún tipo. Era una escuela abierta a todo el mundo, con o sin dinero. Lo único que les interesaba era tu trabajo.

SS: Y, de repente, decides cruzar el mundo y marchar a París a estudiar en Atelier 17, otro taller de grabado. ¿Cómo se te ocurrió aquello?

JBR: Bob Blackburn fue un mentor muy importante en mi vida. Me animó a ir a estudiar a París, y allá me fui. Así fue como conocí a Krishna.

SS: ¿Recuerdas tu primera impresión del Atelier? ¿Quién andaba por ahí por entonces? ¿Había muchas mujeres?

JBR: Imponía un poco. Menos mal que había gente que hablaba inglés. Había un par de estudiantes chinos y japoneses, algunos británicos, un par de americanos y latinoamericanos pero, en general, era bastante europeo. Unos años después empezaron a llegar estudiantes indios, porque sabían que Krishna enseñaba ahí y también porque podían acceder a becas del gobierno francés. La verdad es que había bastante racismo en París, y gente a la que no gustaba la presencia de estudiantes asiáticos, ya sabes, los de siempre [risas]. Curiosamente, diría que el porcentaje de mujeres era igual al de hombres.

SS: ¿Cómo organizabas tu tiempo en París? ¿Estudiaste ahí la técnica de la viscosidad en la estampación?

JBR: Iba a trabajar después del almuerzo y me quedaba ahí hasta las siete. Luego tomaba un autobús para volver a casa de Krishna, donde tenía una habitación alquilada. En el Atelier sentí que tenía que convertirme en una artista abstracta. Estaba muy desencantada con la estampación. ¡Con lo que me gustaba en Nueva York! De ahí que, unos dos años después, decidiera abandonar el grabado y dedicarme en exclusiva a la pintura. En casa tenía un estudio, así que me quedaba a trabajar en mis

cuadros. Estaba algo aislada, pero tuve la inmensa suerte de conocer a Nil Yalter. Le gustó mi trabajo y me propuso hacer algo juntas, las dos solas, y creamos una obra sobre París. Colaboramos dos años en Paris Ville Lumière.

SS: *Háblame de tu obra New York Bound. Hace pensar en un documento de archivo, una instantánea de un momento concreto de Nueva York, con frases tan cómicas como «Abortion clinic killed graffiti sweetie» [La clínica de abortos mató al amorcito del graffiti], «what we need is radical surgery» [Lo que necesitamos es cirugía radical]», «gimme gimme gimme» [dame, dame, dame]...*

JBR: Tenía morriña. Estábamos a punto de regresar a Nueva York, a donde llegamos justo el año en el que se legalizó el aborto. La leyenda “*a free abortion clinic*” [clínica de abortos gratuita] visible aquí, ayuda a situarla en el tiempo.

SS: *Es un buen elemento para fecharla. ¿No te parece increíble volver a vivir una tendencia hacia la ilegalización del aborto? Sé que Nil vio esa obra antes de que os embarcarais en las piezas de colaboración. Me recuerda a Paris Ville Lumière.*
JBR: En efecto. Ella pensó que podríamos hacer algo juntas. También ella usaba por entonces texto en su trabajo.

SS: *¿Cómo explicas la importancia del texto en tu obra?*

JBR: Para los artistas es difícilísimo explicar por qué hacen lo que hacen. Al menos para mí... Puede que porque yo leía sin parar. Ya de muy niña leía todo tipo de cosas. En aquel tiempo no teníamos *iPhones*, ni siquiera televisión, y yo leía y leía y leía. A lo mejor por eso uso tanto texto. ¿Tiene sentido?

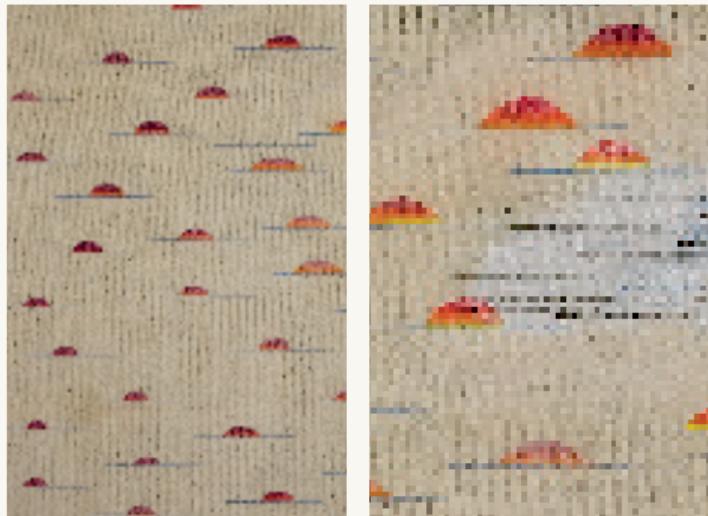
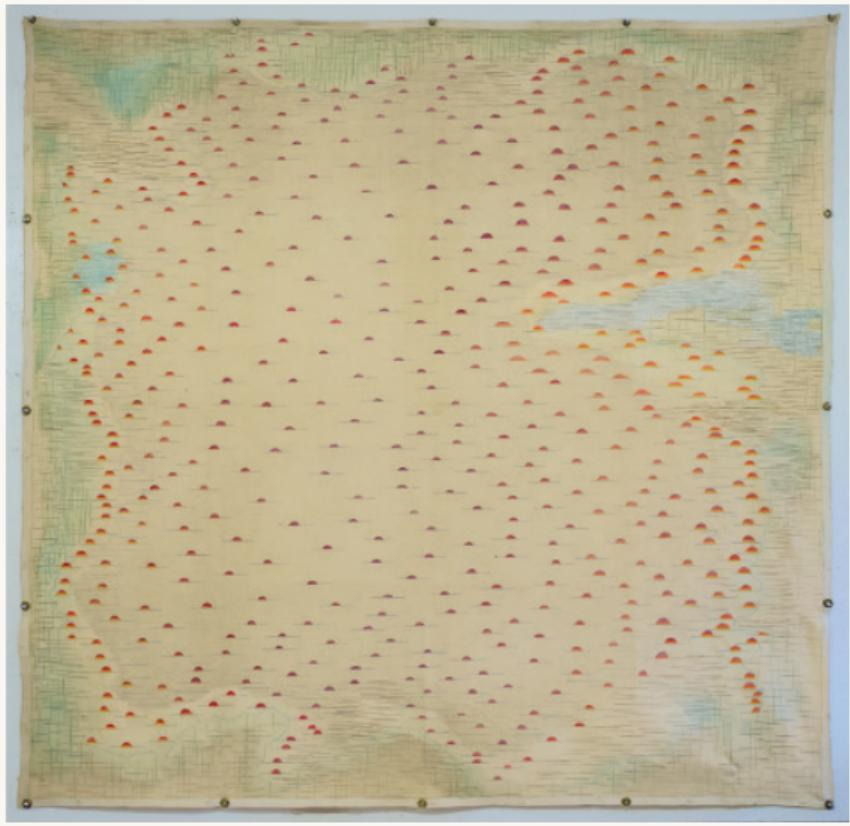
SS: *Mucho. Eres también una gran contadora de historias, una gran habladora.*

JBR: Muchas gracias. [risas] En mi adolescencia no teníamos televisión. Mis padres pensaban que era un horror tener algo así en casa. Así que crecí leyendo sin parar. Es una buena respuesta, ¿no?

SS: *Es una respuesta fantástica. Habitás un mundo de palabras.*



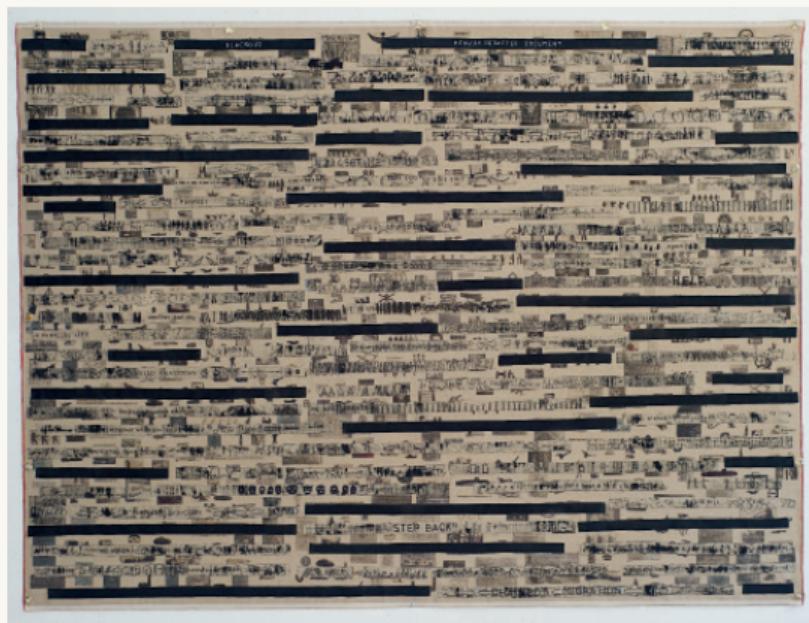
New York Bound, 1974



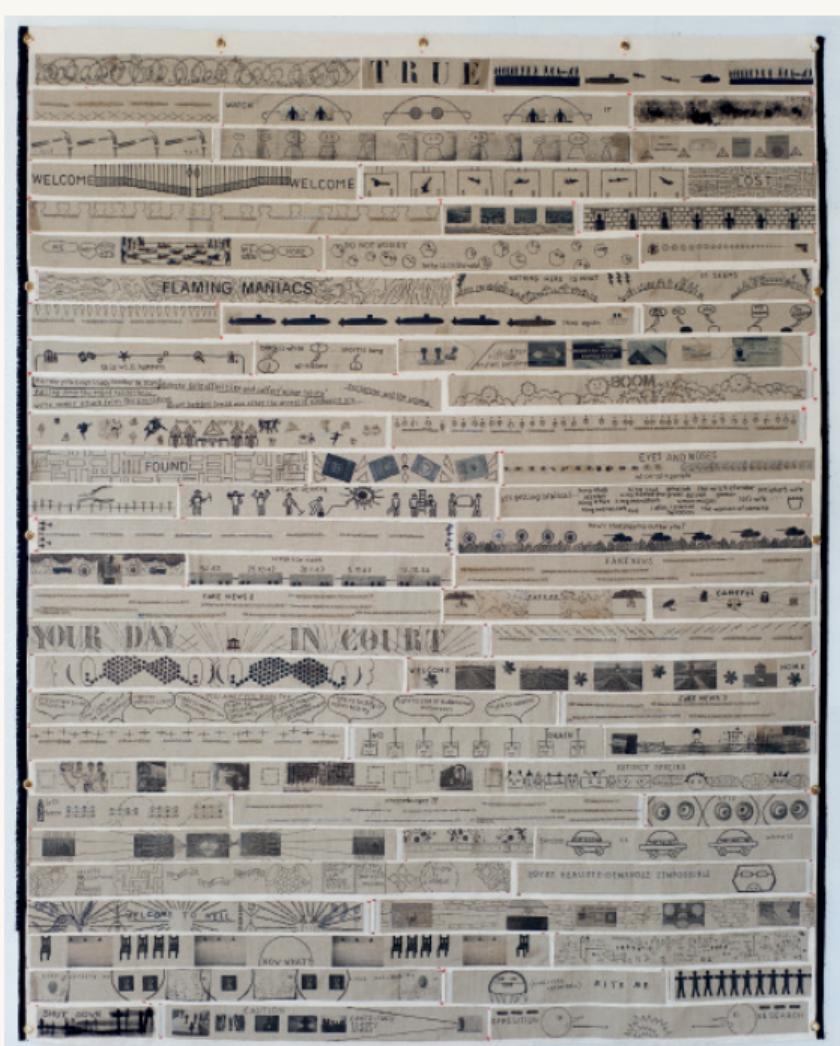
Map 1, 1972



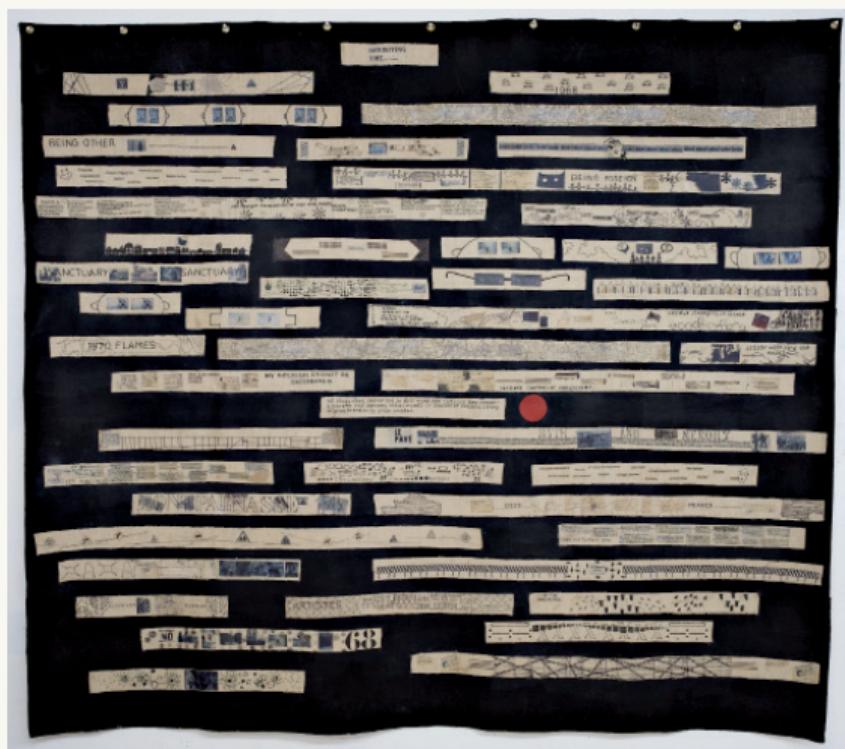
Map 2, 1973



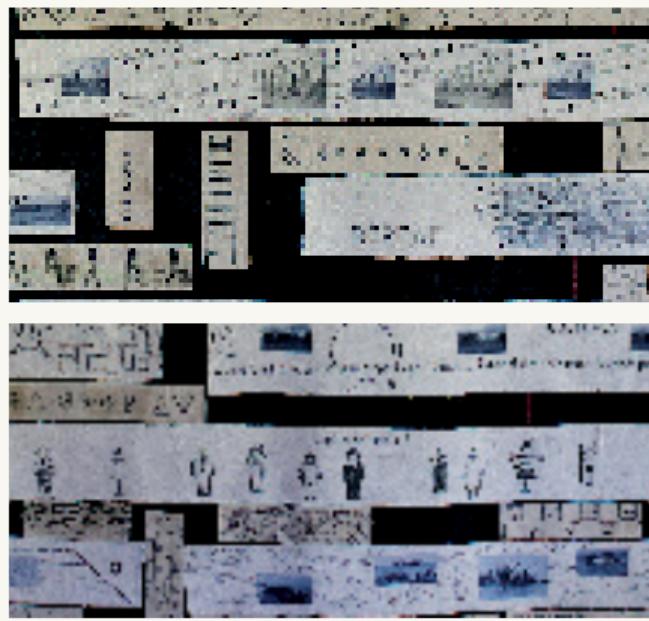
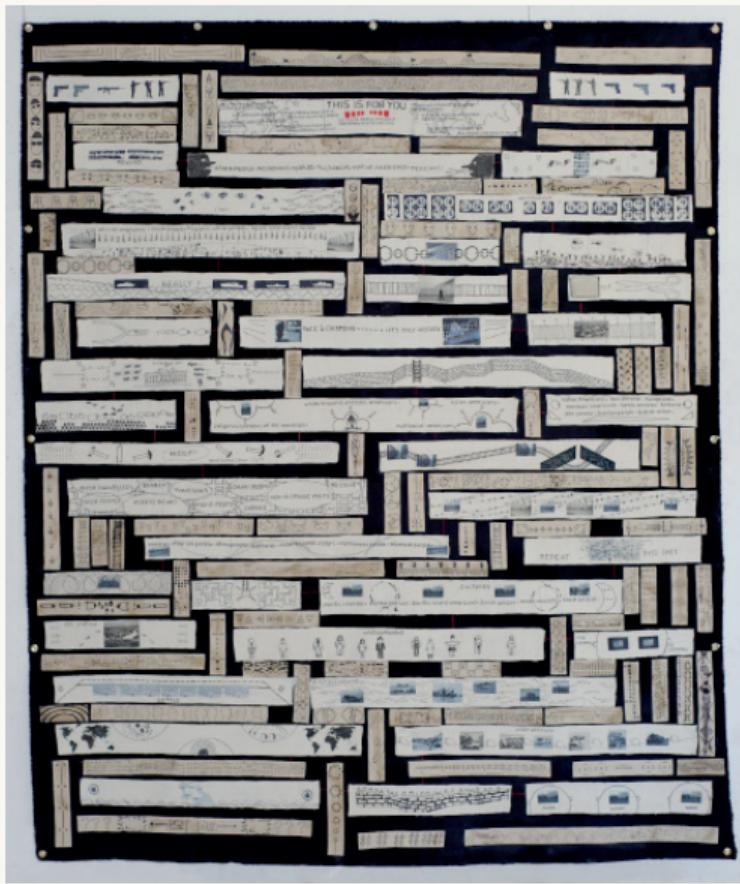
Heavily Redacted Document, 2020



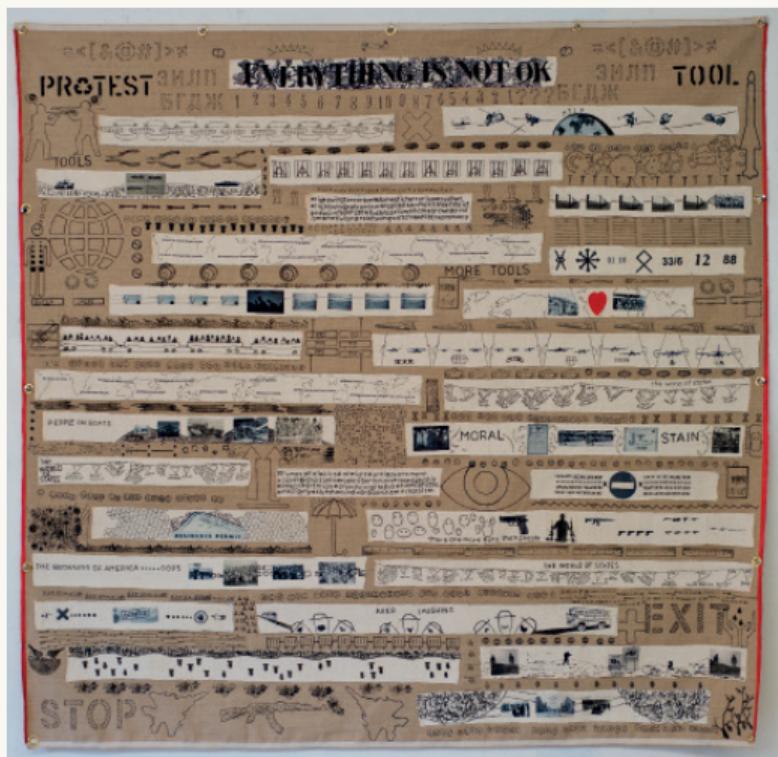
True, 2020



Revisiting the 2019, 2019



This is for you, 2020



Everything is Not Ok, 2021

NEW YORK BOUND

The work of Judith Blum Reddy traverses printmaking, drawing and painting. Born in 1943 in New York City, she studied fine arts at the Cooper Union, worked at Bob Blackburn's printmaking workshop, and then moved to Paris, to study at Atelier 17. It was there, in the mid-1960s, that she began creating a series of labor intensive, process-based works on canvas, abandoning printmaking altogether, though not its techniques. Blum Reddy's early paintings included large-scale maps, into which she began incorporating text and played with repetition.

In Paris, Blum Reddy absorbed the influences of anti-colonialism, feminism, and semiotics that were swirling around. She drew these together with her keen ear for humor and investment in everyday life. An international community of artists began gathering at Atelier 17 and it was there that Blum Reddy, the daughter of Jewish Austrian refugees, found kinship. She married the Indian artist Krishna Reddy and befriended Zarina, attended poster making workshops with her Palestinian friend, the artist Mona Saudi, and embarked on a series of collaborative works with another confidant, the Turkish artist Nil Yalter. In addition to France, she also spent time in New Delhi, India, as well as Madison, Wisconsin, and Davis, California.

In 1975, Blum Reddy moved back to New York, to a loft at 80 Wooster Street, the Fluxhouse co-op where she still lives. Anthology Film Archives was on the ground floor and a feminist cooperative across the street. Everyday, she walked to her friend Camille Billops's loft where she worked as an assistant and archivist at the Hatch-Billops Archive. She organized and annotated their meticulous collection of news clippings, exhibition material, and ephemera on Black and Third World artists, and transcribed interviews for the publication *Artist & Influence*. Blum Reddy was drawn again into feminist circles of Black and Third World artists, and contributed work to a one-off, special issue of *Heresies* entitled "Racism is the Issue" (1982).

Blum Reddy's work combines streams of information from varied sources, including maps, redacted government documents, newspapers,

public signage, time tables, and mobile apps. She distills this excess of information in her mixed media collages of text and symbols, often to tragicomedic effect. The repetition of seemingly benign words and lists accumulate to reveal a chaotic world in which signifier and signified are in crisis. Her more recent works, populated by symbols of guns, racial taxonomies, fake news, protests and pigs, are punctured now and again by the artist's past —the names of old friends, old haunts, archaic phrases— floating in a battlefield of misinformation. The artist reassuringly tells us one truth: everything is not ok...

This conversation occurred in person in New York City and then continued through a series of phone calls and texts.

Sadia Shirazi: While you were studying at Cooper Union you also worked at Bob Blackburn's printmaking workshop. How did you end up there?

Judith Blum Reddy: I was working at Bob Blackburn's because he taught at Cooper. And Bob said, if you wanna work, I'll let you work for free, but all you have to do is sweep up and clean. So that's what I did after school I would go there and do my work and hang out.

SS: What was the environment, the atmosphere like, at Bob Blackburn's?

JBR: The atmosphere of a lunatic asylum [laughter]. It was Bob and a bunch of people, they never paid him their fees and he was really bad about collecting money. It was fun. There were a lot of interesting people there, but it was run on a shoestring budget. It was kind of a mess. But I loved it.

SS: What drew you to printmaking?

JBR: I used to love doing it at Cooper. I had a very good teacher named Will Barnett and Bob was his assistant. I was just drawn to that and I seemed to like it more than painting. I just remember the painting teachers kept telling me over and over, you can't use black on canvas. You cannot use black, which I found very strange [laughter].

SS: Cooper was free then, right?

JBR: It was free. I think you paid a fee for materials.

It was really very important for a lot of people who didn't have any kind of money. It was a school where everybody could go, money or not. They just cared about your work.

SS: And then you decided to fly across the world to Paris, to study at another printmaking workshop, Atelier 17. How did that come about?

JBR: Bob Blackburn was very important in my life, as a mentor. He encouraged me to go to Paris and that's how I met Krishna. Bob said, you should go and study there. So I did.

SS: Do you remember your first impression of the Atelier? Who was there at the time? Were there a lot of women?

JBR: It was a bit scary. Luckily there were a few people that spoke English. There were a couple of Japanese and Chinese students. There were some Brits, a couple of Americans, and Latinos. It was pretty European. Then after a few years, Indian students started coming because they would get French government scholarships and they knew Krishna was teaching there. It was actually pretty racist in Paris. There were a few people working there that weren't happy about the Asians, you know, the usual [laughter]. I'd say equal amount of women and men, actually.

SS: What was your schedule like in Paris? Did you study viscosity?

JBR: I would go right after lunch and I'd work until seven, then take the bus back to Krishna's house, where I was renting a room. At the Atelier, I felt I had to become an abstract artist. I was really turned off then by printmaking, which is something I used to love in New York. And that's why after about two years, I decided I'm not going to do it, I was just going to paint. I had a studio where I lived, so I stayed at home and worked on my paintings. I was a little bit isolated but then I had the great fortune of meeting Nil Yalter. She liked my work and said "Let's do something together, just you and me. We will make a work about Paris. So we collaborated on Paris." Ville Lumière for two years.

SS: Can you tell me about your work New York Bound? It resembles an archival document, a snapshot of New York at a particular moment in time, with hilarious phrases like "Abortion clinic

killed graffiti sweetie,” “what we need is radical surgery” “gimme gimme gimme.”

JBR: I was homesick. I realized we were about to move to New York and I made it just before, the year abortion became legal. So we could date it to that. It says so here “a free abortion clinic.”

SS: That’s a good way to date it. Isn’t it uncanny that now you’re living through a time where abortion is becoming illegal again? I know that Nil saw this work before you all embarked on the collaborative pieces you made. It reminds me of the work you did Paris Ville Lumière.

JBR: Yes. She thought we could do something together. She was also using language in her work then.

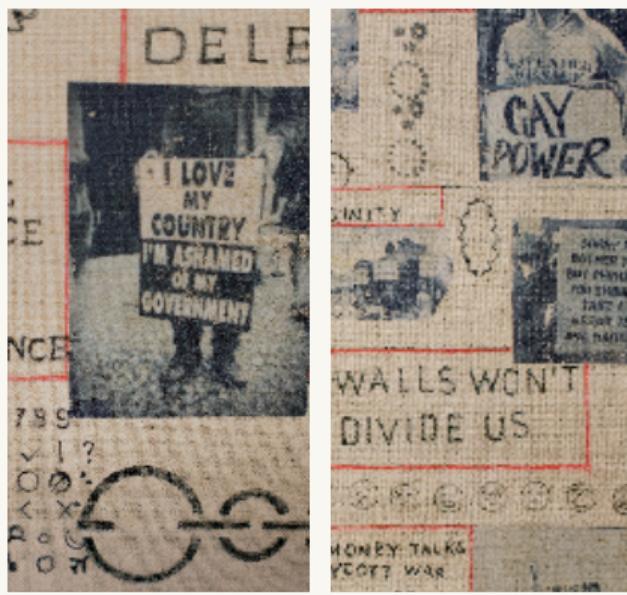
SS: Could you tell me why language has been so important for you?

JBR: It’s very hard for artists to explain why they do what they do, at least for me. Maybe because I used to read all the time. I was a great reader of everything from a very early age. We didn’t have iPhones, or even TV. I would be reading and reading and reading. So maybe that’s why I use so much text. Doesn’t that make sense?

SS: It does make a lot of sense. You’re also a great storyteller, a great talker.

JBR: Thanks a lot [laughter] My parents didn’t have a TV when I was a teenager. They thought it was a horrible thing to have in the house. So I grew up reading all the time. That’s a good answer, right?

SS: That’s a great answer. You inhabit a world of words.



Unperson, 2021



Actividad subvencionada por el ministerio de cultura y deporte.

1 MIRA MADRID 1MM
ARGUMOSA 16, BAJO DCHA., 28012 MADRID, SPAIN
TEL. +34 912 40 05 04 — INFO@1MIRAMADRID.COM
1MIRAMADRID.COM