

## **For Immediate Release: Abattoir Gallery Inaugural Exhibition**

**Opening Saturday, April 18th, 6 – 8 PM**

Lisa Kurzner and Rose Burlingham invite you to celebrate the launch of their new space, **Abattoir Gallery**, located in the historic Hildebrandt Building, a former meat processing plant in Cleveland's Clark-Fulton neighborhood.

The gallery's mission is to exhibit work by regional artists in a national and international context. The inaugural exhibition features recent paintings by **Hildur Ásgeirsdóttir Jónsson** and **Kaveri Raina** which bring fabric and surface to the foreground in works of lyrical abstraction. In a moment in which textile arts have claimed a significant position in contemporary art, the gallery introduces viewers to two artists whose semi-abstract work mines the expressive possibilities of woven surfaces. Jónsson, a longtime Clevelander, weaves compositions of silk thread on oversized looms. Raina, based in Brooklyn, paints on burlap, incorporating the texture of her surface by working both sides of the canvas.

### **Kaveri Raina**

In Kaveri Raina's recent work, a love of the poetics of language and the act of painting are evident. In her "vibrant paintings, anxious, yet familiar shapes teeter across the surface, amorphous but present. Her forms hover in space and collapse any distinctions between figure and ground, landscape and portrait, and abstraction and representation. Raina plays with saturation and texture, molding color like clay—using a jewel-like palette to create vivid combinations and patterns".

Born in New Delhi, Raina's family originated in Kashmir, a land known for its unimaginable beauty. The family relocated to central Ohio when Raina was eleven years old. She maintains her transnational cultural perspective, deriving strong influence from her Indian heritage, partially through her selected materials. Combining humble burlap and canvas with refined linen, she pieces together an interchangeable dialogue between high and-low materials.

Raina has mastered the building of her surface. Utilizing the open weave, she paints on the verso, pushing paint through to create her signature textures. Sometimes, she dyes the burlap with yellow turmeric, red chili powders, or fennel seed, to juxtapose natural tones with traditional pigments. The artist cites Alberto Burri, the 20th century Italian *arte povera* artist who used burlap, as well as Bhupen Khakhar, figurative Indian artist as important influences on her work.

Though the paintings are not traditionally narrative--Raina starts with a word, a story, the memory of a thing or place or situation--the works read as abstract, a hybrid of abstract and subtle figuration. She sees painting as a form of myth-making; the works feel folkloric only in the sense of evoking a forgotten tale. Raina constantly consults her notebooks to search for a word; this process helps to navigate the painting. The words that resonate for her are verbs describing motions such as *squint, sway, hover, balance*.

Kaveri Raina lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She received her BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art and her MFA in Painting and Drawing from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2016. Raina has received various awards and fellowships and, since graduating has

exhibited frequently in US and abroad. She has exhibited at Luhring Augustine and at Patron Gallery. This is her first exhibition in Cleveland.

## **Hildur Jónsson**

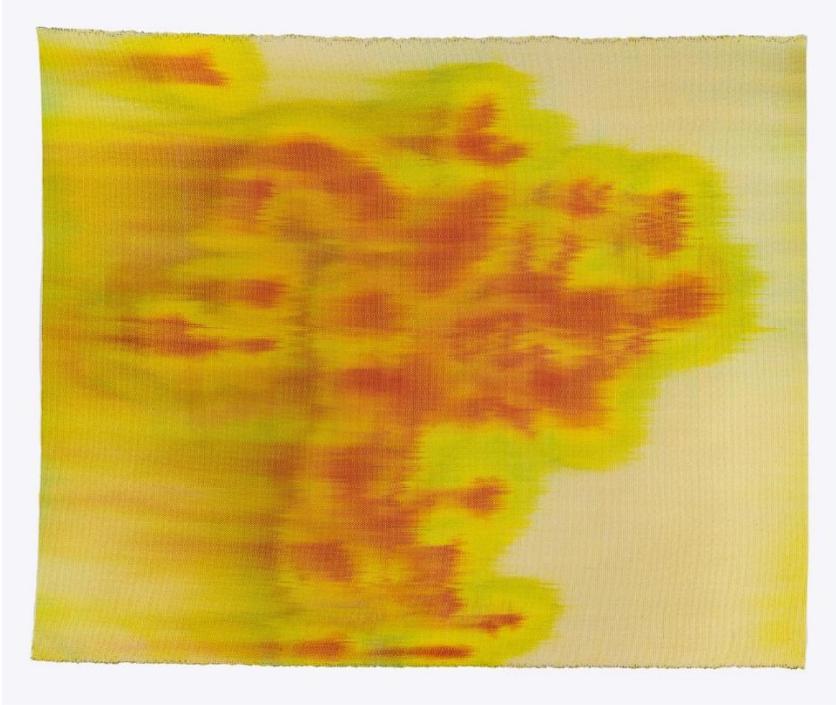
Hildur Jónsson's work depends on the geological and meteorological phenomena of her native Iceland, a place she visits every summer. A cursory examination of her work, with its rock formations, low horizons and moody skies, suggests a plein air practice. In fact, her summer visits are research trips providing fodder for her deeply felt studio practice in Cleveland. Jónsson makes woven paintings, abstract compositions that are rooted in memory of those surroundings imprinted since childhood. As a longtime Clevelander, she, like Kaveri Raina, born in India and raised in central Ohio, is a diasporic artist for whom the idea of a native landscape supports the creative process.

The long, multistep process of Jónsson's work—from photograph to drawing to cartoon—allows images and ideas to germinate, arriving at their full potential in the final form of woven paintings. Since the 1990s, she has worked in an original weaving process that draws upon techniques historically used by several Eastern cultures. She paints the image onto loose silk threads and weaves these, the warp, into the horizontal weft to create the work. Jónsson manipulates irregularities of the weaving process to emphasize expressive gestures in the work, much like playing free jazz or laying down impromptu brushstrokes on canvas. In the past eight years, Jónsson's canvases have jumped in size and scale with the acquisition of a larger loom, allowing her to expand into monumental wall-size works.

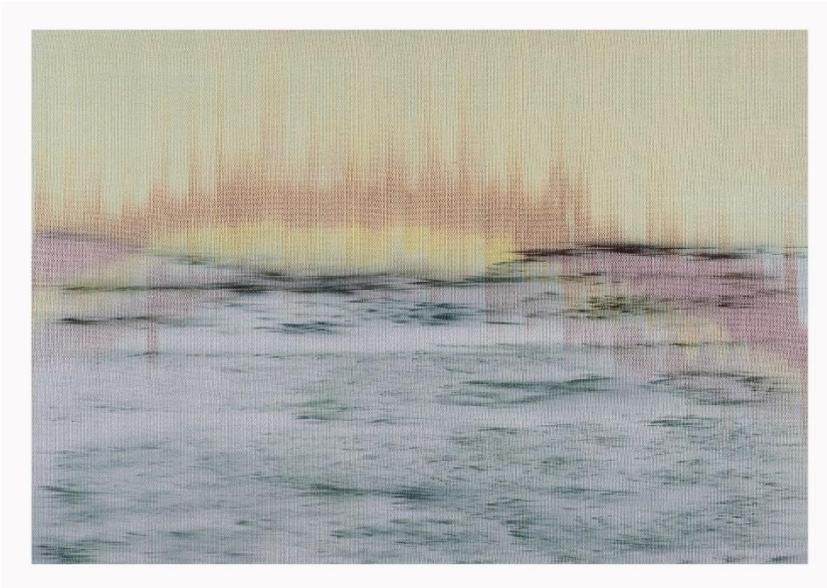
Presented are two bodies of work made in the last four years, which have not been shown here before. Each series exploits different aspects of her materials. Two works from the *Lichen* series demonstrate the deeply saturated hues of painted silk threads concentrated in tighter formations, referencing lichen growing on rock—close viewing through a microscope. The second group, drawings and paintings from the *Rainbow* series, evoke large skies and expansive landscapes of Iceland's topography. Rendered in muted hues with subtle color and gesture, these exhibit Jónsson's expert control over her medium.

Hildur Jónsson was born in Reykjavik, Iceland. She received her BFA and MFA in Textiles at Kent State University. Her work has been collected and exhibited widely in the region, nationally and internationally. She has received many awards including the Cleveland Arts Prize and a Louis Comfort Tiffany fellowship.

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Hildur Jónsson, *Lichen #6*, 2016. Silk and dyes, 27.5 x 33 inches. Photo by Tim Safranek.



Hildur Jónsson, *Rainbow Fragment #13 small*, 2018 silk and dyes, Photo by Tim Safranek.



Kaveri Raina, *Le Mon, To Teeter*. 2019. Acrylic, oil pastel on burlap. 60 x 44 inches.



Kaveri Raina, *Held, To Hover*, 2019. Acrylic, oil pastel, burlap. 40" x 70".