



## THE WOUNDED BOOK

*Kingsley Gunatillake*

## KINGSLEY GUNATILLAKE

Kingsley Gunatillake is an award-winning senior Sri Lankan visual artist holding two NOMA Awards from Japan and the award for illustration from the Biennale Bratislava, Slovakia. Received BFA from Fine art University, Colombo and diploma in Environmental Education from the University of Strathclyde Glasgow in 1994. Currently a visiting Lecturer in visual art at the faculty of visual arts of the University of Visual and Performing arts in Colombo. In 2001 he received the Bunka Award for visual arts for his exceptional work at the Temple of the Tooth world heritage site in Sri Lanka. The artist has had several solo exhibitions both locally and internationally, participating in numerous group shows to-date, most recent of which were in France, London, Lincoln UK, Asia House, London, Soho Galley Japan, Pakistan and India. Participated in the Seongnam International art fair, Korea.

As a versatile artist his practice includes painting, installation, illustration, mixed media, sculpture and video art. He founded the Child Art Studio in 2000 and has conducted various art activities especially for children. Through the organization, funded mostly from Japan, he has organized several local and international workshops, international exhibitions, and local exhibitions. These activities have also included education programs for undergraduates, graduates and art teachers on child art education. Living in a country battered by a war for 30 years, Kingsley has addressed his social, political and cultural issues in his works.



## THE WOUNDED BOOK

Wound(s),  
The wounded,  
To be wounded,  
To wound,  
Wounding –

In this inventory of words exists the artist's confrontation with images and sensory responses to the experience of violence, as well as the perpetration of acts of violence. With an art practice that includes painting, installation, illustration, mixed media, sculpture and video art, Sri Lankan born multidisciplinary artist, Kingsley Gunatillake has consistently resisted statist, dominant narratives in circulation of a Sri Lanka at war, and in its post war transitions, in his work. This trajectory of 'being' in relation to pain is most powerfully manifested in the form of his book artwork since the 1990s.

The book encountered herein in a multitude of creative interpretations carries its wounds: literal wounds, received in the moment of its making, as well as wounds referenced through signification, borne of a 30-year war. Each book is a narrative of pain and loss. Conceived through the artist's introspection in response to the burning of the Jaffna Library in Sri Lanka in 1981, this artistic practice of using burning and cutting repeatedly is a meditation: a creative conversation with the book as material and materiality. The book is both an act of remembering, and that of witness. In its evocation of memories of trauma and loss, the book allows for mourning and memorialization (to remember, and to forget) through a complex act of reading through juxtaposition.

Here is also an act of resistive writing. One that destroys text, in order to make and remake meaning, held in the echoes of what has been before, as well as the incoherence of pain. These books, with the shells of the bullets embedded deep within, bear witness to the fact that there is no objective knowing in the narrative of pain; what remains are the shifting sensations of terror and turbulence discerned through the artist's subjective knowing. Taken in as a threat to security for his book making practice in the aftermath of the most recent wave of violence in Sri Lanka, measured and photographed as the guilty are, this is the body that knows the fragility of artistic freedom and democratic citizenship. The work produced is telling of an ever-elusive peace.



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YOU CANT EAT THIS CAKE

*7 Used Books, Glass, 17.75 X 20.5 cm, 2017*



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**DISPLACED**

*Used Book, Wood, 26 X 15 cm, 2017*



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## PEACE EGG BOOK

*Used Books, 12 wooden eggs, 28 X 46 cms (books size), 2019*



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WAR TEXT

Used Books, Toy Soldiers, 20 x 30 cms, 2015



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WAR TEXT

*Used Books, Toy Soldiers, 21.5 X 30 cms, 2015*





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WAR TEXT

*Used Books, Toy Soldiers, 21.5 X 29.5 cms, 2015*



## NAIL ON BOOK

Used Book, Nails, 19 X 24.5 cm, 2018



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## FACE

Used Book, 18 X 24.5 cm, 2019



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## DEMOCRACY 2

*Used Book, Padlocks, 26 X 15 cm, 2019*



## BULLET BOOK

Used Book and charcoal, 19 X 26 cm, 2019



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MAY-19

*Used Book and charcoal, variable, 2019*



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## ELECTION

*Used Book, 15 X 21, 2019*



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## SECURITY CHECKED

*Used Book, Labels, 20 X 26, 2013*





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## WOUNDED BOOK

*Used Book, Charcoal, 22.5 X 14, 2013*



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**BOOK OF VIOLENCE**

*Used Book, Charcoal, 20.5 X 14, 2016*



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**HISTORY AND CULTURE OF SRI LANKA**

*Used Book, Plaster of Paris, 23 X 19, 2016*



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**HEALTH**

*Used Book, Bandage, 13 X 19, 2019*



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## ENCYCLOPEDIA

*Used Book, Metal, 27 X 20, 2013*



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YEAR 1971

*Used Book, canvas, bandage, charcoal, 78.5 X 58, 2010*



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YEAR 1971

*Used Book on canvas, 78.5 X 58, 2010*

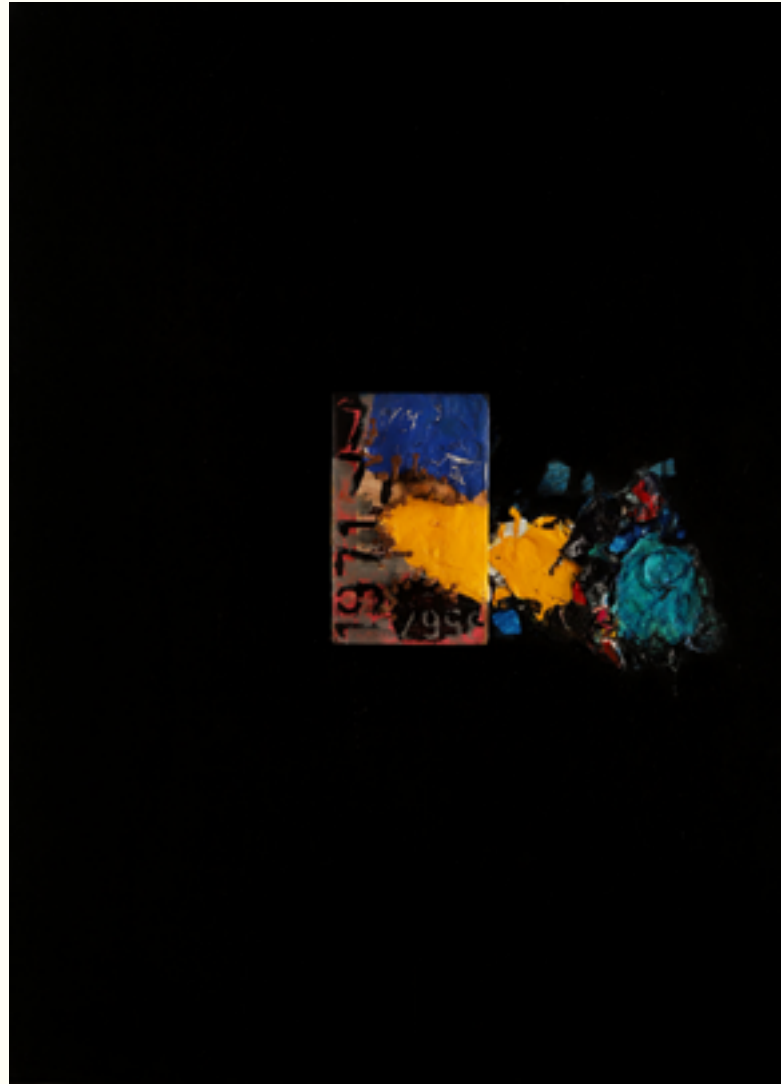


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YEAR 1971

*Used Books on canvas, 78.5 X 58, 2010*





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YEAR 1971

*Used Books, nails on canvas, 78.5 X 58, 2010*

# blueprint.12

Blueprint12 has been conceived as a space that can identify emerging talents and categories in South Asian art. As a curatorial premise, the gallery works in dissolving the boundaries that exist in art, envisioning a common platform for South Asian contemporary artists, including folk and outsider art. Our exhibitions are conceived to foster a fresh outlook and dialogue by engaging in lesser known practices that exists in the Indian sub-continent, constantly driven by our own vision to look beyond the commercials. In the past few years, we have successfully lived up to our expectations, and slowly but surely, have carved a niche space in the Indian art fraternity.

Young in its career, Blueprint12 has supported several projects such as Reading Room, an exhibition of book art curated by Amit Kumar Jain. The exhibition was critically well received in New Delhi and was invited to show in Mumbai, Kochi (as a partner event of Kochi-Muziris Biennale), The School of Art, University of Winchester, United Kingdom, and Saffron Art, New York.

It is a most exhilarating time for the world South east Asian art, which is burgeoning internationally in a way as never before. It is our endeavor at Blueprint12 to promote contemporary artists from the region and hence its motto .... Encouraging challenging and experimental forms of art!

[www.blueprint12.com](http://www.blueprint12.com)



Established in 1987, Vadehra Art Gallery stands today as one of the most well-respected art galleries in India, representing a roster of artists spanning four generations. Modern masters like MF Husain, Ram Kumar, SH Raza and Tyeb Mehta, find prime spot in the gallery's calendar alongside the subsequent generation of modernists like Arpita Singh, Gulammohammed Sheikh and Rameshwar Broota. VAG's contemporary programme includes Atul Dodiya, Shilpa Gupta, Anju Dodiya, Nalini Malani, NS Harsha, Praneet Soi, as well as young emerging talent.

VAG has collaborated with National Gallery of Modern Art and Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, to produce seminal shows on Indian art, and has loaned works and supported exhibitions at Guggenheim Museum, NY; Kunstmuseum, Bern; Chicago Cultural Centre; Asia Society, NY; Peabody Essex Museum, Boston; Serpentine Gallery, London; and Mori Art Museum, Japan.

The Gallery has been actively engaged in publishing books & catalogues on Indian Art since 1996, and has collaborated with publishers Prestel and Penguin.

[www.vadehraart.com](http://www.vadehraart.com)