

## The Falcon of Karachi

### Elisa Caldana

Exhibition: 16.02.2024 — 14.04.2024 Opening: 16.02.2024, 19:00 hrs.

Location: West Den Haag in the former American Embassy, Lange Voorhout 102, The Hague

*This creature is found also in the Foreign Countries of the South, but in Hindustan, it is found in abundance. And it is caught a lot in Punjab too, and in the district of Bathinda, where there is the area of Malwa, it is in abundance there. Common people catch this Laggar. Translated from Indian Birds, Hindustani, Manuscript, 1778, British Museum Collection*

**The Falcon of Karachi is a solo exhibition by artist Elisa Caldana at West Den Haag, presenting a new series of works in an installation setting specifically designed for the exhibition spaces of West to the national and international audience for the first time.**

Through various mediums, Caldana attempts to trace the elusive identity of a singular falcon called the Laggar falcon, an endemic species in Pakistan, India, and Myanmar, which is slowly disappearing in the wild and has become a near threatened species. Often overlooked and seldom appearing in historical narratives and depictions, the Laggar has a reputation of being a minor falcon, an underdog, lacking the qualities of being a memorable or spectacular falcon, as well as the dramatic presence and performance of other falcons within the same family, like the Peregrine.

Largely missing from the collective memory and imagination, the Laggar is becoming increasingly more popular in the moment of its looming disappearance, in connection with an international community of falconers and their endeavours in raising awareness and counteracting the threat of the falcon vanishing from the wild.

Consisting of moving-image, textile, a sculptural installation and a soundtrack, 'The Falcon of Karachi' exhibition presents a series of counter-narratives and counter-images attempting to shift a commonplace portrait - that of being seen as a minor falcon into that of a being recognised as a valuable member of the falcon family - by focusing on the falcon right to life, regardless of its reputation and apparent usefulness to humans. Starting from the potential aesthetic possibilities of a falcon known as just a brown falcon, 'The Falcon of Karachi' exhibition traces an impression of a Laggar while observing the human-animal relationships that emerge from the concrete actions of caretakers at the service of wildlife preservation.

The project inscribes itself in a series of works exploring the relationship between wildlife and domesticity. It investigates the role of culturally produced wildlife, and attempts to define a language to describe the paradoxical cultural processes behind developing wilderness within captivity.

'The Falcon of Karachi' series was produced in various locations and through numerous collaborations, including during a residency at Vasl Artists' Association, Karachi, Pakistan; at the Fonderia Artistica Battaglia in Milan, Italy; and at the TextielLab in Tilburg, the Netherlands. A musical postcard, playable within the exhibition, will contain a special edition of the film soundtrack made in collaboration with Luisa Puterman and Zeerak Ahmed (Slowspin). The entire series of

works will enter the permanent collection of the MACTE Museum of Contemporary Art in Termoli as part of the Italian Council XII award. The project is supported by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Italian Ministry of Culture under the Italian Council program (12th edition, 2023), which aims to promote Italian contemporary art worldwide.

Elisa Caldana (1986, Italy) lives and works in The Hague. She graduated from Städelschule, Frankfurt, and IUAV University of Venice. Her work was exhibited internationally, including at the MAXXI Museum, Rome, 2023; Italian Cultural Institute, Mexico City, 2022; MAMbo Museum, Bologna, 2021; Whitechapel Gallery, London, 2020; ROZENSTRAAT, Amsterdam, 2020; Tokyo Arts and Space, Tokyo, 2019; ar/ge Kunst, Bozen, 2017; Sandretto Foundation, Turin, 2016. She is an alumna of Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht (2020-2021), recipient of the Italian Council – XII edition (2023) and VII edition (2019), nctm e l'arte (2018), Hessische Kulturstiftung (2016-2017). Her recent publications include Times of Crisis, MAMbo Editions, 2021, and Never Again, Mousse Publishing, 2020. Her works entered the permanent collections: MACTE Museum of Contemporary Art in Termoli, MAMbo Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, MAXXI - National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome, and Städelschule Portikus e.V.

A publication dedicated to 'The Falcon of Karachi' will be published in the summer of 2024 (Mousse Publishing, Milan), deepening thematic and questions raised by the project.

*(\* All the falcons appearing in the moving-image work were rescued and released back into the wild after rehabilitation.*

Public program will take place on Sunday, April 14th at 14:00 hrs, More info will be announced on the websites of the institutions supporting the project.

For more information, please contact us: [info@westdenhaag.nl](mailto:info@westdenhaag.nl) or +31(0)70.3925359

Supported by:



Direzione Generale  
Creatività Contemporanea



With the collaboration of: