Mumbai

Neha Choksi
PROJECT 88
BMP Building, Gound Floor, N.A. Sawant Marg
Colaba
October 3–November 16

Neha Choksi’s solo exhibition “Iceboat and Sky Fold” comprises two different works that are united by their exploration of transience. The first, a video based on a 2012 performance, takes viewers to a lake where a white-robed, shaved-headed Choksi is seen rowing a boat made entirely of ice. Much of the nearly fourteen-minute Iceboat, 2013, features footage of the artist navigating the water even as the vessel in which she sits is slowly consumed by its surroundings. The second, Sky Fold, 2013, is a series of eight works on paper that use the cyanotype process to create grid-driven studies of clouds in a blue expanse.

In Iceboat, the main draw of the show, one expects the discomfort from the freezing temperature of the boat, the exertion from rowing, and the trepidation of being eventually ejected into the water to show on Choksi’s face, but they don’t. Rather, the artist gives the impression of being in a state of rapture, even as half of the ice block turns into water. Unlike in her previous work Minds to Lose, 2008–11, in which Choksi put herself and three animals under anesthesia, viewers aren’t shown how this performance ends. Though chronologically disjunctive, clips in the beginning and middle of the film show the artist floating underwater and lying on the shore, head thrown back and eyes closed, looking ready to ascend to heaven. Sky Fold, with squares of blue and white on paper, contributes to this spiritual undercurrent. In its entirety, the exhibition provides a thoughtful meditation on survival and failure: As Choksi stumbles along in the film, knowing her fate (as does the viewer), her struggle turns into a clear analogy for life’s transition into death.

— Zeenat Nagree

Image: Neha Choksi, Iceboat, 2013, HD video, color, sound, 13 minutes 35 seconds