



# Sikh Research Journal

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**Rupy C. Tut**

*When we meet again*, 2022

Handmade pigments and 23ct. shell gold on hemp paper  
Courtesy of the Artist and Jessica Silverman Gallery



“When we meet again”, Rupy Tut, 2022, handmade pigments on wasli, 37”x37”  
Image by Shaun Roberts

*In the last eight years of making work circling displacement, I have constantly made the effort to connect with the displacement history of my family and in turn try and make sense of my own displacement. The moments in which I reflect, research, and*

*report these very personal histories through the work, I find myself fluctuating between reactions that are either painful and hopeless, or inspired and motivated. Whether its displacement events like the 1947 Partition of India or the Holocaust, traveling through the multiple stages and impacts of displacement is often difficult – especially the story of the journey mothers made with newborn children as refugees. I find myself numbed by the lack of humanity in a specific time in our history where so much was inflicted on humans by humans. For each work I create, I reconnect and relive the trauma of my grandparents, their sudden exodus, their loss of belonging and belongings, the deaths in the family, and the unmeasured resilience needed to settle in a new land. This was their truth, and that truth guides me to the work I make.*

*In “When we meet again” I share the cyclical nature of the relationship I have to the displacement history in my family and the otherness I observe and feel in the United States. In the beginning of this cycle, at the bottom center section, the work shows a pair of hands about to sink below [the water], symbolizing a violent/traumatic displacement event. Moving clockwise, a few hands emerge out of this struggle and support the further rise of hands separated by a gold border, connoting time and generation. The future generations reach into that struggle and displacement event to pull the ancestors closer and learn about their life and story. In this moment, the ancestors and future generations share an intimate moment where pain, grief and loss are spoken, as well as heard. When the discourse (three hands) and inquiry into the reason for displacement and its impact begins, the trauma of that event is felt as heavily by the future generations. As the trauma weighs down on the individual, a feeling of hopelessness sinks in intensely. The connection and feeling of closeness vanish, as the fear, otherness, and betrayal of the traumatic displacement steer the conversation. Finally, the individual researching this trauma and life story, someone like me perhaps, finds themselves standing (and sinking) in the very moment of struggle, and the beginning of the cycle. Water references the many lives lost literally and metaphorically in the journey from their homelands to a search for place in a new land.*

Rupy C. Tut