

BEYOND BORDERS

Who I Am Between Homes

Canvas and silk works by Sunanda Khajuria



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Opening Aug. 7, 6 pm | Until Aug. 30

9 Hillyer Court, NW, Washington, DC



The River of Remembrance, 2025, Acrylic on linen, 48 x 60 inches

Beyond Boundaries: Tracing the Flow of Sunanda Khajuria's Evolving Practice

Over the past two decades, Sunanda Khajuria has developed a distinctive visual language through sustained experimentation, cultural engagement, and conceptual inquiry. Working across acrylic, Chinese ink, natural pigments, silk, printmaking, installation, and mixed media, her practice has expanded while remaining deeply connected to storytelling and symbolism. Her artistic journey has evolved from personal observations of everyday life to broader explorations of gender equality, migration, transformation, and social experience. Through the recurring use of the female figure, symbolic objects, natural elements, and expressive color, Khajuria creates enduring psychological and emotional landscapes that connect personal experience with universal human concerns. Across three solo exhibitions, this evolution has culminated in a powerful exploration of identity and the shared experiences that connect people across cultures.

Khajuria grew up in a family unfamiliar with the art world, but, through her own determination and the support of her family—especially her father—she completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the Institute of Music and Fine Art, Jammu (2003), followed by a Master of Fine Arts at the College of Art, New Delhi (2005). It was not until 2008, however, that Sunanda had her first solo exhibition, *World of Dreams*, after completing residencies and art camps in Australia, Tanzania, Italy and Russia. Encounters and visual experiences during her international travels were clearly absorbed into her work, yet Khajuria repeatedly returned to memories of her hometown. Her paintings were anchored in the familiar: women, rural life, family, local landscapes, and traditions, including the migration of Kashmiri communities in Jammu. The works were composed as expansive narrative scenes, populated by full-bodied human figures—often presented singly, but at times in pairs or groups of three—that curved, undulated, and moved across the surface of the work, interacting with one another as well as with the surrounding landscape. The rich colors in these rhythmic compositions, together with symbolic imagery, spoke to the aspirations, feelings, and psychological experiences of everyday life, particularly those of South Asian women. These early works were rooted in personal memories and lived experiences and explored themes of interpersonal relationships and the enduring connection between humans and nature.



Echoes in the Silent Mind, 2025
Acrylic on linen
28 x 24 inches



The Night Thought, 2019
Acrylic on linen
32 x 38 inches

After first visiting China in 2009 to participate in the Red Gate Art Residency, Sunanda entered into a sustained engagement with its culture and philosophy. This relationship further intensified between 2010 and 2012, when she undertook an Advanced Research Program at the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, studying the Chinese language, calligraphy, landscape painting, and the meditative principles of *Shan Shui* painting. Equally significant was her engagement with Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian philosophies during this time, particularly their ideas of harmony, movement, nature, and becoming. As a result, China evolved from being a source of artistic inspiration into a place through which Khajuria re-examined her artistic practice.

The Forgotten Journey, 2022
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 48 inches

Some of the most dramatic influences of her immersion in Chinese culture were apparent in her 2016 solo exhibition, *Moving Landscapes*. The multiple, full-bodied figures of *World of Dreams* gave way to singular female figures, some masked, often shown in profile, with the face, head or upper torso in sharp focus. The landscapes were no longer clearly defined or densely populated with recognizable physical elements, rather, they became increasingly symbolic and psychological. They open into expansive, sometimes seemingly infinite painted spaces, within which mountains, clouds, animals and symbolic forms appeared as fragments of an inner world. Indian references remained present in these works, but they were no longer evident as direct statements of origin. In this body of work, Khajuria's practice expanded from exploring the individual's thoughts, emotions and desires, to a broader investigation of an understanding of the self, transition and migration – and an examination of how cross-border encounters and lived experiences reshape one's sense of belonging.

Moving Landscapes also demonstrated Sunanda's command of water-based media—natural pigment and Chinese ink—on an entirely new substrate: silk. Unlike their acrylic-on-canvas counterparts, these works were more intimate in scale, unfolding within rectangular or circular fields and through less densely populated scenes. Rather than rendering every image in full, Sunanda allowed the silk's golden ground to define the skin and clothing of human and non-human figures. Pictorial elements seemed to emerge from the surface itself, rather than merely being placed upon it. The resulting works possessed a distinctive flow and grace, generating a quiet yet poetic intensity.

In 2017, Sunanda began her doctoral studies at the Wuhan University of Technology, China, further immersing herself in Chinese philosophy, calligraphy, and ink traditions. A significant milestone also came in 2020, when Khajuria was awarded the Visiting Artist Fellowship by the Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute at Harvard University. Positioned at the intersection of academic inquiry and contemporary art, her research during this period analyzed the practices of contemporary Asian women artists including Lin Tianmiao (China), Arahmaiani (Indonesia), and Mariko Mori (Japan), to examine how they negotiated personal and collective histories within contemporary visual culture.





Where Thoughts Touch the Sky series, 2025
 Natural color and Chinese ink on silk
 Diameter: 16.9 inches

Box of Memories, 2022

Acrylic on canvas

60 x 48 inches



In her third solo exhibition, *I Have Lost Me: Birds of Passage* (2022), the female figure remained the central protagonist, evolving from a personal self-representation into a universal symbol of women's resilience and dignity. Rather than existing independently and engaging with, or floating within an imagined landscape, as she had in earlier works, the figures became incorporated into objects such as Chinese porcelain jars, boats, suitcases, boots, birds, garments, and architectural structures. These amalgamations functioned as visual metaphors: extensions of a psychological state that reflected the interconnected experiences of identity, metamorphosis, migration, and cultural exchange.

Across her three solo exhibitions, certain concerns remain constant: nature, women, color, and symbolism. In her work, nature is never merely decorative—each element carries deep emotional, philosophical, and biographical meaning, thereby functioning as a symbolic language. For example, *mountains* represent strength and spiritual ascent; *clouds* evoke dreams and transformation; *flowers* symbolize renewal; birds suggest freedom, protection, resilience, and migration; *water* reflects memory, the unconscious, and the unknown depths of human experience. The female figure—perhaps the most recognizable presence in Khajuria's work – inspired by self-reflection has over time extended beyond autobiography: she embodies motherhood, nurture, and the enduring strength of women. Through this recurring figure, Khajuria also challenges conventional gender roles, while affirming the significance of women's voices within contemporary society. Finally, her color palette serves

The Inner Voyage II, 2025
Image detail and full scroll
Natural pigment and Chinese ink on silk
48 x 21 inches; Scroll size: 78 x 28 inches





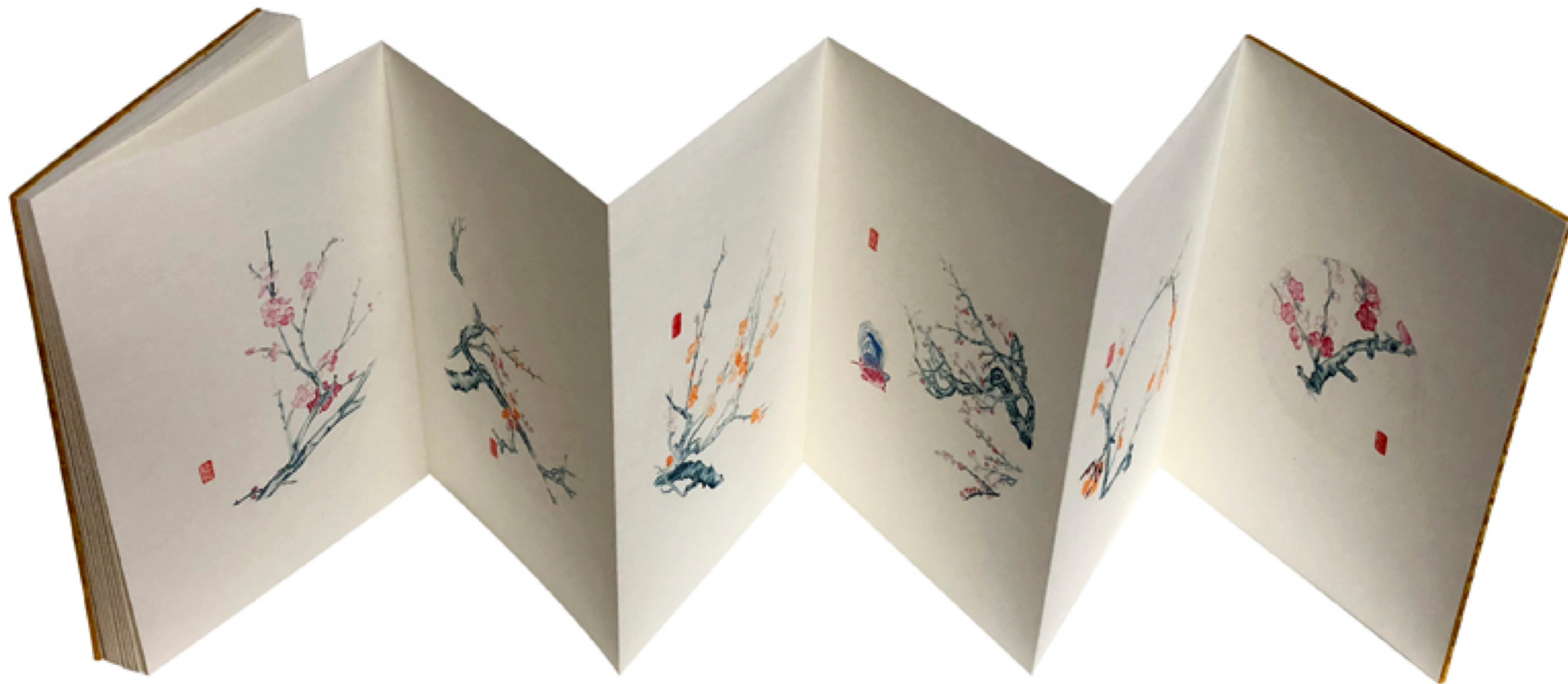
The Sky She Carries, 2026
Acrylic on linen
60 x 48 inches

as an active narrative element rather than a purely aesthetic device, shaping a multifaceted conceptual framework of each work: muted blues and greys evoke memory, distance, and introspection, while warmer reds and ochres suggest resilience and the persistence of cultural identity, and gold speaks of hope. Green is of particular importance for Sunanda as it conveys survival, renewal, and the enduring capacity for growth despite displacement and adversity. It is thus no surprise that female figures in the work are often painted in this color.

In the four years since *Birds of Passage*, Sunanda's more recent paintings have undergone a further refinement, even as earlier motifs endure. Expanses of unpainted linen and open space, influenced by Chinese calligraphic aesthetics, assert themselves, creating moments of stillness that allow resurgent full-bodied figures, colors, and recurrent symbols to emerge with greater clarity and intensity. More recent silk works have also expanded in scale, adopting the distinctive vertical format of the Chinese scroll, while maintaining a contemporary visual language.

A journey that began in Panthal finds its most recent stop in Washington, DC. *Beyond Borders: Who I Am Between Homes* continues Sunanda Khajuria's ongoing exploration of belonging in a globalized world. As the works consider the emotional experience of migration—what we carry with us, what we leave behind, and what can emerge between different places and cultures—they draw from South Asian storytelling traditions and contemporary cross-cultural influences. Ultimately, the exhibition invites viewers to consider how identity is continually shaped through experience, relationships, memory, and the enduring strength of women across cultures.

For a deeper engagement with each stage of Khajuria's practice, the catalogues for her individual solo exhibitions are available upon request.



The Cloud of Cherry Blossom, 2018
Artist Book, Natural color & Chinese ink on rice paper
Book size: 17.5 x 12.5 inches

Beyond Borders: Who I Am Between Homes

Sunanda Khajuria

Opening: Friday, August 7, 2026, 6 pm
IA&A at Hillyer, 9 Hillyer Court, NW, Washington DC
Until August 30, 2026

Additional event: August 20, 2026 at 6.15 pm
In Conversation: Sunanda Khajuria and Tariq Allana (Art Heritage)
IA&A at Hillyer, 9 Hillyer Court, NW, Washington DC

Beyond Borders: Who I Am Between Homes explores Sunanda Khajuria's ongoing interest in identity and belonging in a globalized world. Having lived between India and China, Khajuria reflects on cultural displacement and the ways people find a sense of home across different countries, languages, and traditions. Using figurative symbolism, her work considers the emotional experience of migration: what we carry with us, what we leave behind, and what can emerge between different places and cultures. Drawing on South Asian storytelling traditions and contemporary cross-cultural influences, Khajuria questions fixed ideas of origin, nationhood, and cultural identity.

The exhibition includes acrylic paintings on linen, natural pigment and Chinese ink on silk, and ink-and-color drawings in traditional Chinese book forms.



Sunanda Khajuria (b. 1979, Jammu) is an Indian artist, researcher, and academic, currently serving as Assistant Professor at Wuhan University of Technology, China. She earned her Ph.D. from Wuhan University of Technology (2024), an MFA in Painting from the College of Art, New Delhi (2005), and a BFA in Painting from the Institute of Music and Fine Art, University of Jammu, Jammu (2002). She also completed an Advanced Research Program at the China Academy of Art, Hangzhou. She has received numerous honors, including the Second National Award by the Chinese Government (2024), the Princess Sirivannavari Fellowship (Thailand, 2020), and the Suzhou Art Award (2017). In 2020–2021, she was a Visiting Artist Fellow at Harvard University's Lakshmi Mittal South Asia Institute. Her work has been widely exhibited, with solo exhibitions including *I Have Lost Me: Birds of Passage* (2022) and *Moving Landscapes* (2016), Art Heritage, New Delhi; and group shows at the International Triennial of Graphic Art Bitola, Macedonia (2025), ASEAN Culture and Art Creation Season-6, Xiamen, China (2025), Geumgang Nature Art Biennale, South Korea (2025) and the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum (2023). Her work has also been featured in *Art & Deal* magazine (cover and interview, 2022) and *Harper's Bazaar India Art Issue* (2022). She has also participated in multiple editions of NADA Miami (2023, 2025), the India Art Fair (2015–18 and 2020–26) and at the Mumbai Art Fair (2024).

Sunanda Khajuria is represented by Art Heritage, New Delhi (www.artheritagegallery.com).



Art Heritage
(New Delhi, India)

Since its inception in 1977, Art Heritage has championed experimental approaches, providing a space wherein artists can be vulnerable and exposed at the same time. Located in the iconic Joseph Allen Stein–designed Triveni Kala Sangam in New Delhi, Art Heritage is dedicated to advancing modern and contemporary Indian art. Established with a dual mandate of commerce and education, we seek to foster both the appreciation and acquisition of art, creating a deeper engagement between artists and audiences.

Over nearly five decades, Art Heritage has presented more than 650 exhibitions and produced over 450 catalogues, celebrating the work of both distinguished masters and emerging voices from India and abroad. Our annual programming includes six to eight curated exhibitions and participation in art fairs in India and the United States. Many of our exhibitions highlight the practices of unrecognized artists who have made significant contributions to particular media or art forms. In addition, several exhibitions showcase less frequently represented mediums within the Indian gallery ecosystem, such as printmaking, ceramics, and photography. Several of our educationally focused projects are developed in collaboration with foundations and institutions, complemented by public talks, webinars, artist interactions, and curated walkthroughs that encourage accessibility and dialogue.

Through our initiatives, we support artists, engage collectors, and cultivate audiences, furthering artistic discourse and the cultural criticism essential to a vibrant and evolving democracy.

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