



# **SHRINE ROOM PROJECTS**

**ROHINI DEVASHER // PALDEN WEINREB**

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As a site for offering and contemplation, the Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room features sacred objects designed to aid in acts of prayer and devotion. The space often invites reflection on the boundaries of human perception, the nature of existence, and our place in this earthly realm—themes further explored by the two contemporary artists presented on this floor.

The two-channel video installation by **Rohini Devasher**, filmed at one of the longest-operating solar observatories in India, is a meditation on time, space, and our existence in the known cosmos. By tracking the movement of the sun across the sky, the artist investigates how our point of observation influences how we see and relate to the world.

**Palden Weinreb** regularly uses Buddhist ideas and motifs to encourage viewers to question and transcend what they see. In the artist's words, he aims to take our perception "to a space or existence that lies beyond our comprehension." Through video and sculpture, these artists inquire about the expansiveness and limits of our awareness, the space between presence and absence, void and fullness, the cyclical nature of all things, and the power of offerings as a religious and secular practice.



# OFFERINGS

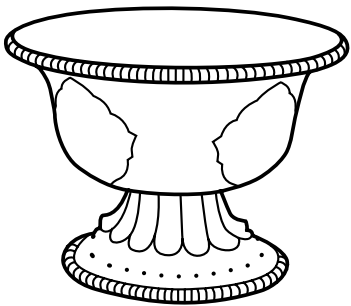
Palden Weinreb (B. 1982, New York, NY)

2014

Wax, LED lights, wood

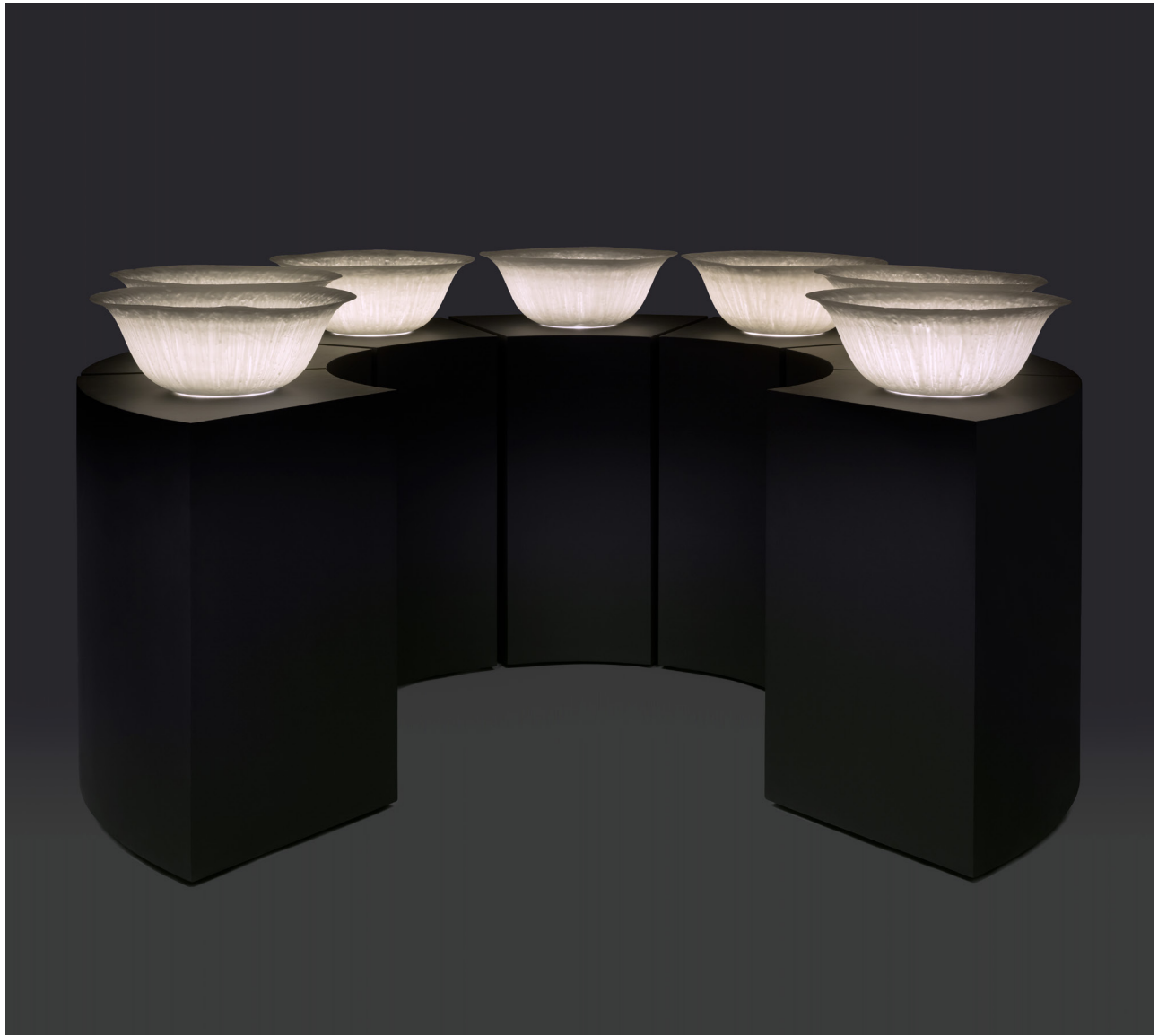
Courtesy of the artist

Making offerings is an integral part of Buddhist practices such as religious rituals and ceremonies. The act can be understood as sharing something and giving it away to a religious community or sacred space. Offerings can take many forms, from words and sounds to fluids, food, incense, and flowers, as well as symbolic and abstract representations.



In the Shrine Room adjacent to this installation, seven stemmed bowls with auspicious symbols function as receptacles to receive offerings. Offerings bowls in a shrine room are usually arranged in a straight line. In the installation *Offerings*, the artist invites us to experience the receptacles in a circular arrangement.

Palden Weinreb often works with shapes and motifs inspired by Buddhism, which he translates into abstracted forms. His use of semitranslucent wax encourages us to look beyond the surface of the objects. The juxtapositions of light and dark, fullness and void, and presence and absence inspire reflection on the act of offering and what might be offered. Is it our presence in front of the bowls radiating light that makes the circle of offering complete? Are we the offering?



# UNTITLED (STUPA)

Palden Weinreb (B. 1982, New York, NY)

2013

Encaustic wax and LED lighting

The Shelley and Donald Rubin Private Collection

A stupa is a heap-like structure with layered meanings. Derived from pre-Buddhist burial mounds, the stupa has taken manifold forms throughout Asia, from simple structures to elaborate, monumental architecture. All stupas share the purpose of being a commemorative religious structure, and many stupas enshrine relics of sacred persons. In religious practice, people walk around, or circumambulate, stupas in a clockwise direction.

Palden Weinreb's stupa radiates light from its core. The artist often invites viewers to consciously question their perception by looking beyond the surface. The luminous quality of the wax, which has found a momentary solid state, may stop us from considering what is inside the stupa, the sacred object that is enshrined and contained within an aesthetically pleasing material. But the light is a reminder that the wax embodies only the form—the true power comes from within the sculpture. Weinreb's stupa also encourages us to contemplate our relationship to illusion, as it points to something that perhaps cannot be seen with our eyes.





# 300 KM OR THE APPARENT PATH OF THE SUN

Rohini Devasher (b. 1978, New Delhi, India)

2020

Two-channel video, one channel with sound; 10 min.

Courtesy of the artist and Project 88

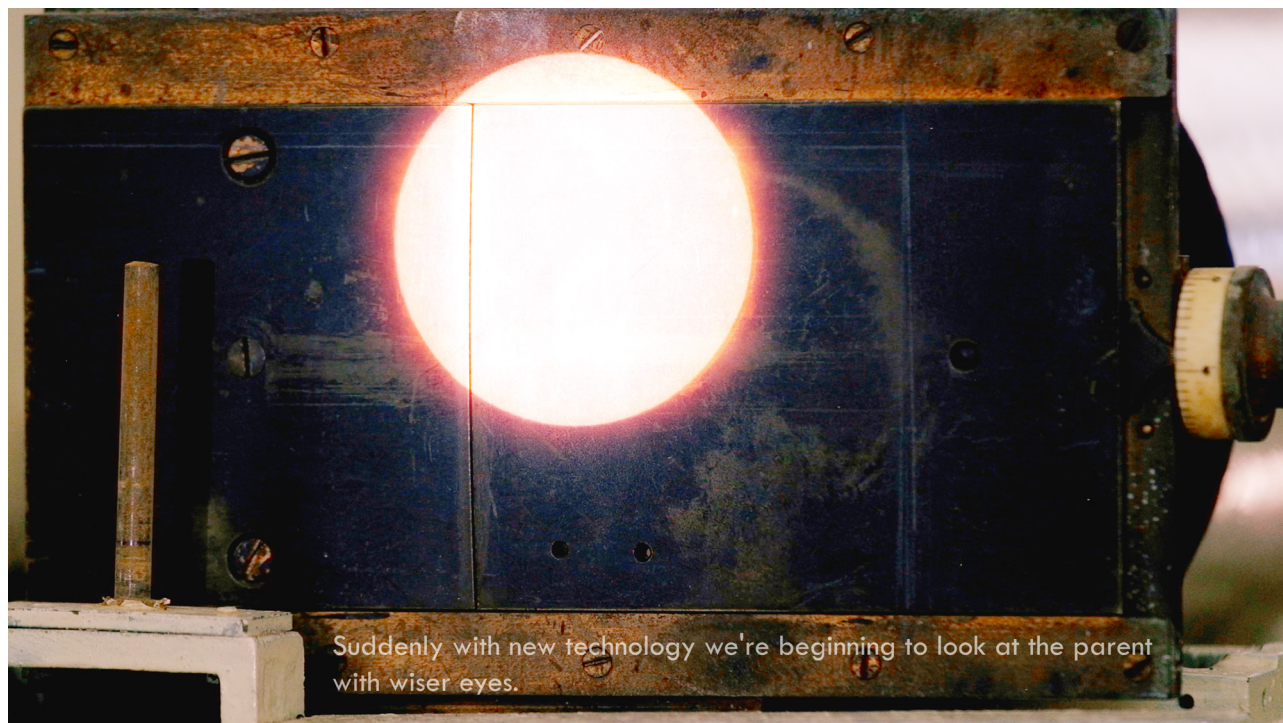
For millennia humans have observed the sky and been captivated by its celestial bodies. Looking beyond the earthly realm invites us to contemplate the vastness of the universe and measure time and space, putting our own small, short existence into relative terms.

One of the oldest solar observatories, the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory in Tamil Nadu, India, has been recording images of the sun since 1904, only a few decades after the Spectroheliograph—a device for photographing the surface of the sun—was invented.

Rohini Devasher's two-channel video shows the trajectory of the sun across the metal plate of the partially disabled Spectroheliograph. The resulting image appears to show the sun orbiting the earth instead of the earth moving around the sun. Over the course of ten minutes, the sun is recorded traveling 300 kms (186.4 miles) at a speed of 460 meters (1,590 feet) per second. The artist also dives into the philosophical dimension of the relativity of human perception in one video by including subtitles of a meditation on the sun by amateur astronomer Raj Shekar.

Devasher explores the role of observation and the power of the site and perspective from which we're observing, inspiring us to think about time, space, and movement in new ways.





Suddenly with new technology we're beginning to look at the parent with wiser eyes.

# **THANK YOU!**

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