

# SELECTIONS

ARTS / STYLE / CULTURE FROM THE ARAB WORLD AND BEYOND

#40



• COLLECTORS SHARE THEIR ARTISTS TO WATCH • GINANE MAKKI BACHO ON THE BARBARIY OF CIVILISATIONS • IN  
CONVERSATION WITH TONY CRAGG • INSIDE BERLIN'S FEUERLE AND BOROS COLLECTIONS • HOUSE OF TODAY'S JUNGLE  
PROTOCOL • IN THE LIBRARY WITH SULTAN SOOUD AL-QASSEMI • EDWARD GIBBS ON PARADISE AS A GALLERY •

ONE TO WATCH

LBP 15-000 / AED 37 / QAR 37

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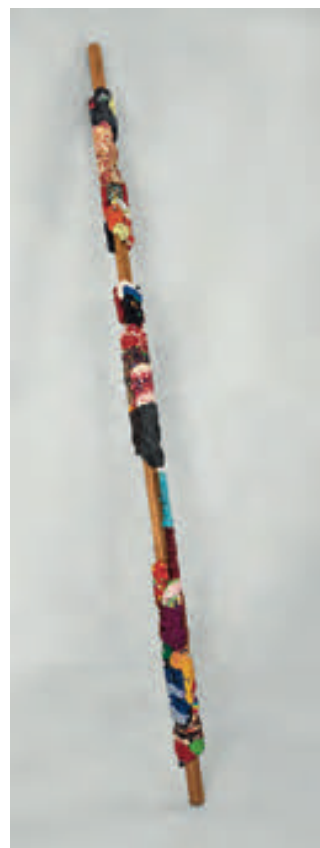




## BETWEEN REPELLENCE AND ATTRACTION

Indian artist **Manish Nai**'s latest solo show at Paris' Galerie Karsten Greve featured powerful works made of tangled fabric and wood

by Rajesh Punj

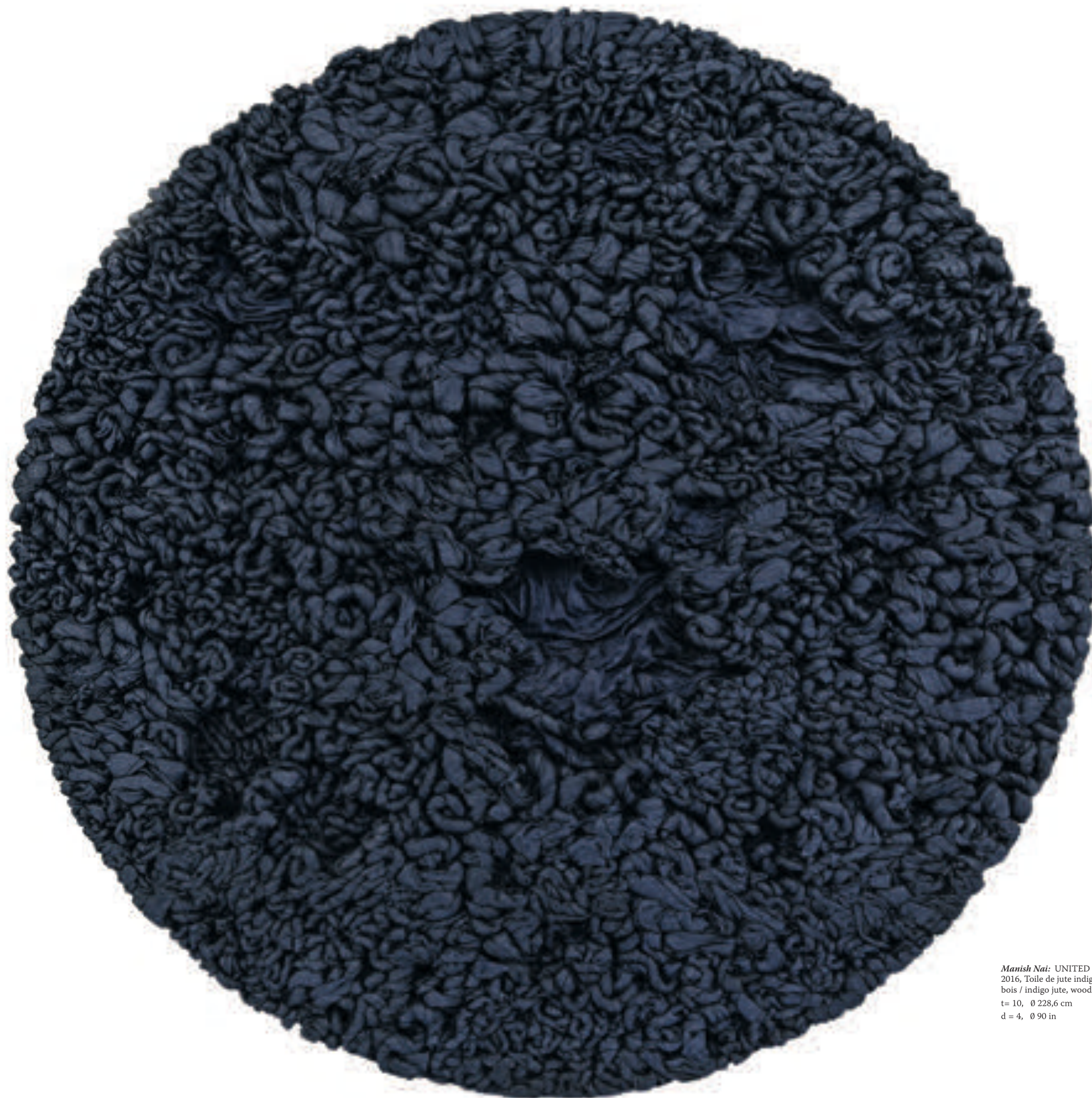


**Manish Nai**, *Untitled II*, 2016, tissu, bois / fabric, 304,8 x 7,3 x 7,3 cm

There is a kind of social science to the work of Gujarat-born, Mumbai-based artist Manish Nai, who looks less a graduate of painting and more a man of mathematics. And just as he might well have successfully deliberated over data in another life, Nai employs the same kind of analytical rigour to the way he holds and handles material. He works as though our removable skins are as mortal as the people they encase for the time they are alive.

For his recent exhibition *Matter as Medium*, which ran from September 10 to October 29 at Galerie Karsten Greve in Paris, Nai collected a launderette of clothing. It appeared in some places to be pinned up for drying, while in others vast swells of fabric were concertinaed and contoured into material membranes to form a series of impenetrable works that can be likened to the anarchic surfaces of Mona Hatoum's *Socle du Monde* (1992-1993). Hatoum's magnetic network of iron fillings are echoed in Nai's material works, which are shaped by something much more substantial, with just as engrossing an effect.

Key works included the fabric-and-wood pieces *Untitled I* and *Untitled II* (2016), an array of compressed clothing that appeared as a washing line tormented by a tornado, with everything tightened around a series of wooden skewers that the artist has turned



**Manish Nai**: UNITED  
2016, Toile de jute indigo,  
bois / indigo jute, wood  
t= 10, Ø 228,6 cm  
d = 4, Ø 90 in





**Manish Nai, *Untitled I*, 2016,**  
toile de jute, bois / natural  
jute cloth, wood, 137 × 99  
137 × 99 137 × 99 5 cm

upright. The materials seem to have been applied to each pole by an uncompromising pressure, as though the collateral damage of people and possessions after a natural or man-made disaster.

*Untitled I* and *Untitled II* (2016), composed of impressionable jute cloth and wood, were another series of works that resembled the topsoil of a devastating detritus of bodies and baggage, pressed into the earth as though buried alive. More gruesome still are Nai's corrugated cardboard-and-wood works, *Untitled I* and *Untitled II* (2016), which recall body bags tightly piled one on top of the other.

Replacing recycled matter with reconstituted fabrics, Nai's large-scale indigo-coloured jute-and-wood works *Untitled* and *Untitled I* (2016), delivered their own tender tensions. Less minimal and more material, Nai's material paintings delved into an impenetrable world that is as chaotic as it is calm, in which every twist and turn of fabric of the circular canvas represents the elemental energies that shape the work and the universe outside of it.

Awash with a concentration of colours, everything of Nai's is as alien and ugly as it proves alluring and attractive. The artist's hand manufactures a tension between the works' brutality and prevailing beauty that is utterly compelling. ■