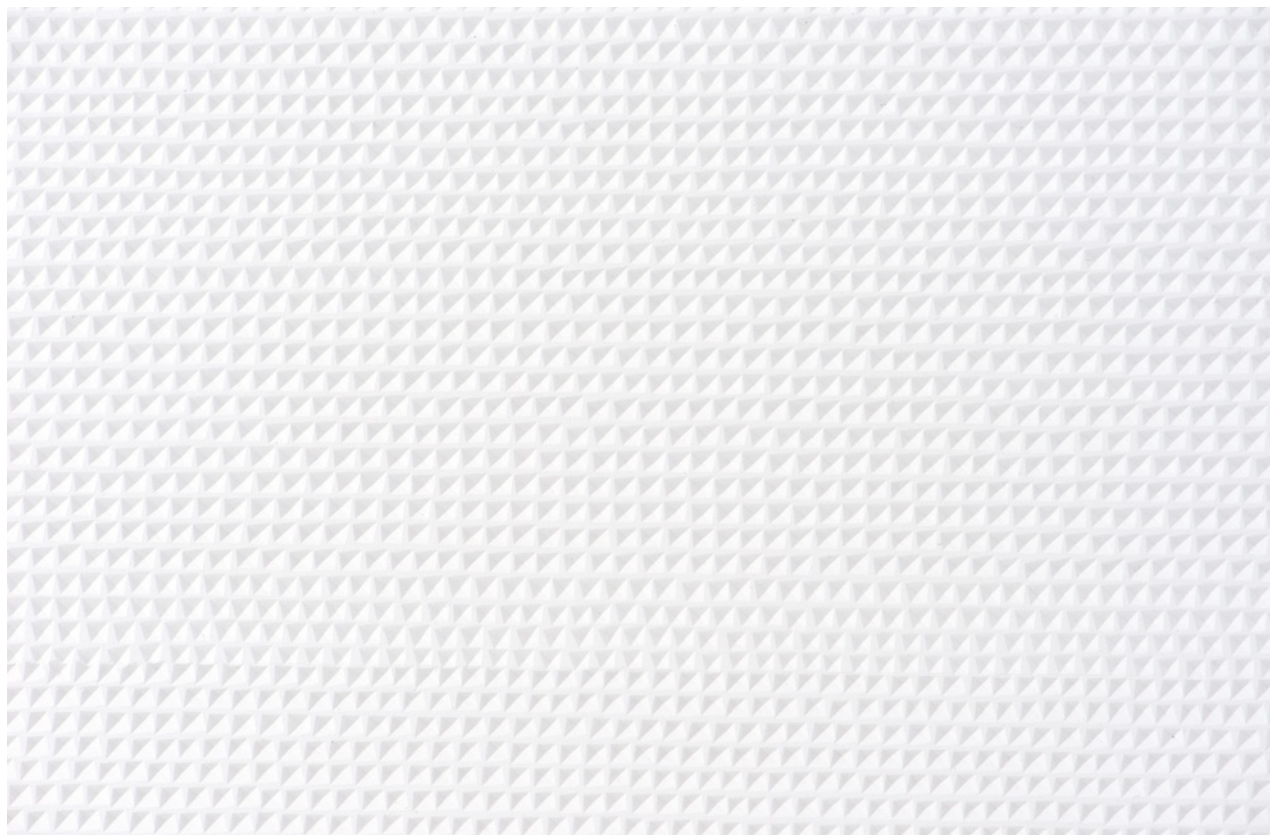


# Esther Schipper

Prabhavathi Meppayil

**b/seven eighths**

June 8–August 11, 2018



Prabhavathi Meppayil, **se/hundred and eight**, 2018 (detail)  
Gesso panel stamped with thinnam, 45,7 x 45,7 x 3,8 cm each, 4 panels  
Photo © Manoj Sudhakaran

Esther Schipper is pleased to announce Prabhavathi Meppayil's first solo exhibition with the gallery, entitled **b/seven eighths**. The exhibition will include four ensembles of works.

Prabhavathi Meppayil transposes in her works the techniques and materials associated with the ancestral craft of goldsmithery into a contemporary plastic language that belongs to the modernist canon, whether by embedding metal wires in layers of white gesso, or by marking its surface with tools traditionally used by goldsmiths. Meppayil's practice is process oriented, focusing on materials and tools. As she says herself, "the panels filled with tool marks [are] the abstraction of the tapping sound of the tool."

**se/one half**, 2017-2018, is a 12-part installation of the artist's gesso panels with embedded copper wires. Engaging with the architectural properties of the gallery, the 12 horizontal panels are supported by low plinths, and appear to be floating above ground below the space's skylight.

**se/hundred and five**, 2017, **se/hundred and eight**, 2018, and **se/hundred and nine**, 2018, consist of three sets of gesso panels stamped with thinnam—a device used by artisans to make patterns on gold bangles. The shape of the panel is determined by the shape of the tool mark. The traces and imprints left on the panels vary according to the force and angle with which the metal tip hits the surface of the lime gesso.

The reference to the jewelry tool is also present in a new body of work specifically conceived for this exhibition: two concrete sculptures—or molds—with copper details that take the much enlarged shape of the tools/molds as point of departure.

For **se/hundred and twelve**, 2018, a wall installation composed of found objects made of steel, Meppayil worked with the actual tools used to make jewelry. The almost obsolete tools are original and are traditionally handmade by imprinting a master pattern on beaten hot metal. By arranging them on the wall as a grid/composition, freed from its original purpose and context, the tool becomes a porous object, open to many possibilities and readings.

Prabhavathi Meppayil was born in 1965 in Bangalore, India, where she currently lives and works. She studied at Bangalore University and Ken School of Art, Bangalore.

Meppayil's work has been exhibited at numerous institutions, particularly in India and Europe. In 2014 she had a solo exhibition at the American Academy in Rome, **nine seventeen: Prabhavathi Meppayil**, and in 2013 her work was shown in the 55th Venice Biennale exhibition, **The Encyclopedic Palace curated by Massimiliano Gioni**. Recently the artist participated in the Dhaka Art Summit 2016 in Bangladesh, the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, 2016, the 2017 Yokohama Triennale, and earlier this year in the 21st Biennale of Sydney.

Her work is held in the collections of: Kasturbhai Lalbhai Museum, Ahmadabad; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Pinault Collection, Paris, and Samdani Art Foundation, Dhaka.

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