

A Note on “Curating” this Residency

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At Khoj, we’re never sure what to expect when we put a residency together. When we invite artists to be in residence, it is on the basis of the *potential* work or *potential* research they will be doing. This becomes simultaneously the most exciting and most challenging aspect of “curating” at Khoj. If the residency is a space in which we truly give artists the room to take their vision in a direction that works best for them, then what happens when the residency begins to take a course that we, as curators, didn’t anticipate?

When we originally began putting this residency together, we decided to bring artists whose works could be read through the lens of masculinities into dialogue with each other. Deciding to use sport and the warrior/mythical-hero trope as a jumping off point, I thought to invite Franco, Sahej, Mandeep and Anay—who had all previously also worked with performance—to create new work that could elicit conversations about “masculinity”. In constructing and deconstructing what “masculinities” might mean, I thought, perhaps, that the works could fit into a meta-comment about how iconography in sport, and other popular culture, influences the way we think of “masculinity” in the everyday.

Looking back, this was my rookie mistake because I think I had too specific an outlook on what the residency would produce.

From the very first day, the works and the artists began to move in completely different directions and there was a point in the residency where I just didn’t see how all the work could be read together. This changed, however, when I came across Jennifer Doyle’s essay, “Art Versus Sport.”

Although the essay speaks largely to the idea that Art and Sport are both “sites for fantasies about being “with” people,” reading it opened me to the possibility that Art and Sport are also spaces in which practitioners can mediate the experience of both watching a body and also being in a body. Essentially, to me this means that all the works in this residency can be read together if we think of Art as an arena that can be used to activate our imaginations about masculinities—their embodiments, their projections, their related desires and their potencies—and in doing so, can give us insight into how we experience both watching a body and being in a body.