



**ARTIST**

Neil Chowdhury

**TITLE**

Laundry Puja

**DATE**

2005

**DIMENSIONS**

22 in H x 33.5 in W

**MEDIUM**

Inkjet Prints

**IMAGE NOTES**

26 x 36

**CATALOGUE NUMBER**

2012.457

**CURRENT LOCATION**

In Collection Closet

---

**NEIL CHOWDHURY**

**BORN**

1966

**BIRTHPLACE**

Stockton on Tees, UK

**GENDER**

Male

**CITIZENSHIP**

United States

**CULTURAL HERITAGE**

East Indian-American

**LIGHT WORK RELATIONSHIP**

Light Work Grant, 2011

**LIGHT WORK PUBLICATIONS**

## Contact Sheet 167

**BIOGRAPHY**

Neil Chowdhury thinks in images.

He uses photography to explore the relationships between individuals, their societies, and environments, concentrating his efforts on exploring his heritage in India.

He has been awarded the 2011 Light Work Grant, and the 2005 SPE Gary Fritz Imagemaker Award. His photography and digital video works have been exhibited widely in the United States and abroad. He has been invited to speak about his work in Dubai, Hungary, India, and in the US. His works are included in the permanent collections of the William Benson Museum of Art, Storrs, Connecticut; Light Work Community Darkrooms, Syracuse, New York; the Tasveer Collection in Bangalore, India; the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago; the National Gallery of Macedonia in Skopja; and in many private collections. He has also participated in artist residencies in India, Spain, Hungary, Macedonia, and most recently at Saltonstall Arts Colony, in Ithaca, NY.

Mr. Chowdhury is assistant professor of photography at California State University, Fresno. He has worked as the director of the Photography Program at Cazenovia College, Cazenovia, New York; taught full time at Zayed University, Dubai; and part time at the College for Creative Studies, Detroit; and at the University of Washington, where he earned his MFA.

Chowdhury worked for several years as a freelance industrial, commercial, and editorial photographer for Ford Motor Company, The Detroit News and other clients. He accepts freelance travel, editorial, and commercial photography assignments in addition to his work as a fine artist and educator.

circa 2018

**ESSAYS**

Light Work awards three grants each year to photographers, critics, and photo historians who reside in Central New York. The Light Work Grants in Photography program aims to foster an understanding and appreciation for photographic arts in the area and is an important part of Light Work's ongoing effort to provide support and encouragement to artists working in photography. The Thirty-Seventh Annual Light Work Grants in Photography were awarded to Neil Chowdhury, Danielle Mericle, and Ahndraya Parlato. Each recipient of the Light Work Grant receives a \$2,000 cash award and an exhibition at Light Work. With the help of the grant, artists have been able to continue long-term projects, collaborate with others, purchase equipment, print and frame photographs for exhibition, promote their work, and continue working toward their goals. Neil Chowdhury (Syracuse) submitted work from his series *Waking from Dreams of India*, which incorporates photography, video, audio, and photomontage. The series chronicles his journeys, physical and imaginative, as he explores and comes to terms with his Indian heritage. During his first trip to India he was able to locate his family's home—the property had been left in the care of Chowdhury's grandfather's servant, Chari. Chari's extended family lived in huts on the property, and the first floor of the house was inhabited by squatters. Since that first trip, he has returned to India several times to continue to photograph for the project. Chowdhury received his BA from Fairhaven College and his MFA from the University of Washington. His work has been exhibited in group and solo shows internationally. He is an assistant professor of photography at Cazenovia College. Danielle Mericle (Ithaca) won the grant for her series *The Principle of Limiting Factors*. In her words, the work "interweaves photographs and video of disparate subjects . . . to meditate on the tenuous state of knowledge and the cyclical nature of history." The work depicts file boxes slated for destruction, trees and tree rings, and more unusual subjects such as Greco-Roman casts undergoing restoration. Although the items may seem to have no connection at first glance, they all allude to our view of the past. Her images question the accuracy of history in which some documents survive and others don't, ask whether restored pieces are authentic, and illustrate the strangeness of the idea of nature living through monumental cultural movements, wars, and more. The work speaks to the complex relationship between history, knowledge, and power. Mericle's photography has been exhibited nationwide. She is the author of *Seneca Ghosts*, noted by Alec Soth as one of the top ten photography books of 2008. She lives and works in Ithaca, NY. Ahndraya Parlato (Ithaca) describes her images as a way to explore "how we structure our personal worlds and imbue them with a sense of direction, purpose, and security, when, in fact, we control very little." Her work looks at how people constantly attempt to shape their lives and worlds into a controllable and ordered place, a goal they will never fully achieve because there are things in life that are "truly unknowable" and uncontrollable. Parlato is interested in the instances where we fail to fit things into controlled spaces, and when "moments of illogic, magic, mystery, and whimsy that lie just below the surface of ordinary life are revealed by instances of rupture and chance." Parlato received her BA in photography from Bard College and her MFA in photography from California College of the Arts. Her work has been exhibited around the world in solo and group exhibitions and in publications. She is currently a visiting assistant professor in the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences at Rochester Institute of Technology. Light Work would like to congratulate all of the winners of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Light Work Grants in Photography and extend a special thank you to our judges: Adam Magyar, Tate Shaw, and Michael Tummings. Adam Magyar is a photographer whose work has been featured in exhibitions internationally. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Deutsche Bank, Hong Kong Heritage Museum, and Bidwell Projects. Tate Shaw is the director of Visual Studies Workshop, a center for the media arts with an MFA program in visual studies. He is co-publisher of Preacher's Biscuit Books in Rochester, NY, and an artist with work in most major collections for artist's books and has written essays, reports, and reviews on artist's books and photography. Shaw has an MFA from VSW and a BA from William Jewell College in Liberty, MO. Michael Tummings has traveled throughout his life, most recently to photograph various kinds of hunting parties for his ongoing series *Hidden*. His photographs are the product of a sustained immersion into diverse cultures. He participated in Light Work's Artist-in-Residence Program in March and April 2011. Jessica Reed