

Press Release

SAGARIKA SUNDARAM: RELEASE

14 October – 15 November 2025

Private view: Tuesday 14 October, 6-8pm



Sagarika Sundaram, *Atlas* (detail), 2023 © Sagarika Sundaram

Alison Jacques presents 'Release', the first UK exhibition of new work by Sagarika Sundaram (b.1986, Kolkata, India; lives and works in New York). Working primarily with raw natural fibres, Sundaram's intuitive practice of 'painterly sculpture' or 'textile painting' defies material, spatial, and linguistic boundaries. This new body of work deepens her connection to fibre and felt; nuanced in colour and complex in form, she sculpts space as well as material, incorporating felt reliefs and glass mosaics, as well as a large-scale installation. This exhibition anticipates Sundaram's forthcoming solo show, curated by Laurence Sillars, at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, in 2026.

'Release' alludes to an aliveness in Sundaram's practice. Born out of the internal space in the body that gives rise to breath or laughter, and driven by a kind of letting go, her works take shape through embedded pockets that are cut open in a single, irreversible gesture, releasing form from within. The exhibition showcases new avenues of expression, including the exploration of glass to create wall-based sculpture. A constant across Sundaram's experimentation is her interest in colour, as she describes: 'there's an alchemy to it'. This colourful 'alchemy' is both precise and playful, as she told *Vogue India's* Radhika Iyengar, 'a true test of a dyer is not whether you can make colour, but if you can make the same colour twice.'

A large-scale installation, suspended in the gallery's naturally lit back space, is cut from one piece of cloth. The work transforms its environment, energising the spatial void with material encircling a central axis. Across the exhibition, works reference the mandala: a holistic concept integrating the body with itself, grounded in a flat geometric design and structured around one central point. In its multidimensional activation through space – from wall relief to suspended sculpture – Sundaram breaks open this traditional symbol. As she observes: 'with each new work, I develop new pathways.' Informed by the modern dancer Chandralekha's (1928-2006) interpretation of movement, artist Mrinalini Mukherjee's (1949-2015) natural fibre sculptures, and Anish Kapoor's (b.1954) large-scale investigation of matter and non-matter, Sundaram's artwork choreographs the dynamic between the individual and the gallery space.

At age 11, while Sundaram was a student in Andhra Pradesh, India, she experimented with textiles for the first time, specifically batik – a wax-resist technique. Two decades later, in London, Sundaram made her first felt work, cleaving it open with a knife, later describing this process as 'cutting it open felt like discovering a secret inside'. In her studio, Sundaram transforms wool into felt through an organic process that involves a physical, embodied performance of dyeing, tearing, and compressing raw fibre. She handles material as if sketching, layering fibres like cross-hatching to make a mesh. Soaking her composition in soapy water, Sundaram then applies pressure to fuse the fibre into its final form. 'By the time things are humming along, the ending makes itself obvious', she describes. 'The work is complete when I can feel it talking to me.'

Sundaram was born in Kolkata into a Tamil family and spent much of her childhood between India and Dubai, and now lives and works in New York. In 2020, following her studies at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, Sundaram graduated with an MFA from Parsons School of Design, New York. She has exhibited at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York; Al Held Foundation with River Valley Arts Collective, New York; the Moody Center for the Arts at Rice University, Houston, Texas; British Textile Biennial, Liverpool, UK and the Chicago Architecture Biennial. In 2022 she was awarded The Hopper Prize.

Earlier this year, Alison Jacques presented Sundaram's monumental installation, *Released Form* (2024), commissioned by UBS, at Art Basel Unlimited, and her forthcoming solo exhibition at the Henry Moore Institute will open in 2026.

Forthcoming Exhibition: 'Roy Oxlade', Preview: Tuesday 25 November, 6-8pm

For further information:

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