

# SOUTH

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## Chemould Prescott Road: Art Basel 2022 | Booth

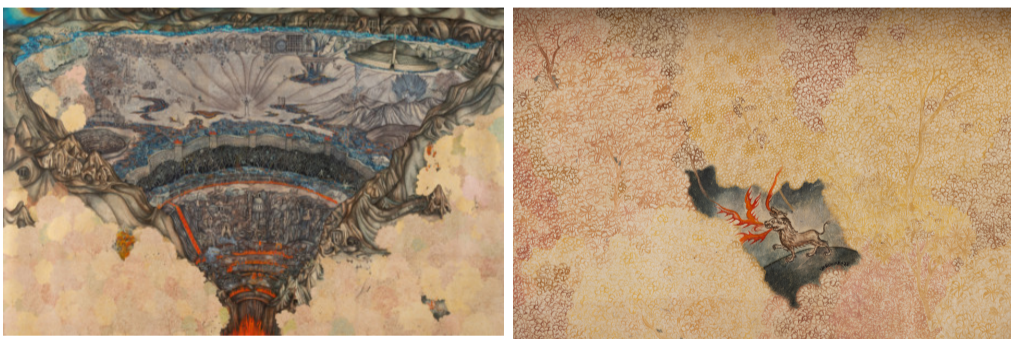
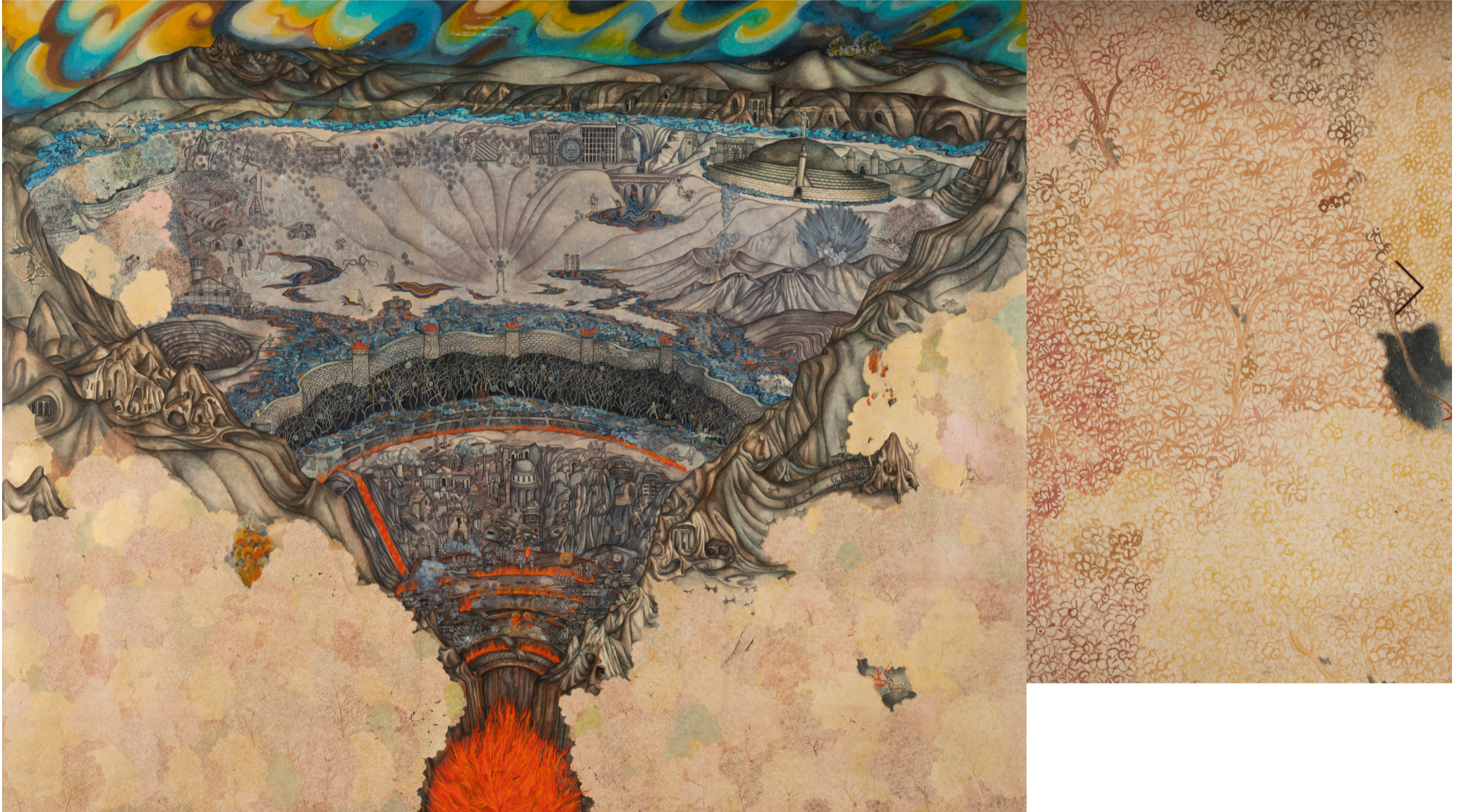
### J10

(<https://south-south.art/ovrs/art-basel-2022-booth-j10/>).

MUMBAI

([https://south-south.art/ovr\\_artwork/aliou-diack/](https://south-south.art/ovr_artwork/aliou-diack/)).

([https://south-south-art/ovr\\_artwork/gabriel-rico/](https://south-south.art/ovr_artwork/gabriel-rico/)).



**Varunika Saraf**

*An infernal realm of our making, 2021-2022*

Watercolour on Wasli backed with cotton textile

67.25 x 85 in

Varunika Saraf's "An infernal realm of our making" is based on Sandro Botticelli's "Map of Hell", a visual interpretation of "Inferno", the first canticle of Dante's Divine Comedy. By discarding the biblical conception of sin and punishment, Saraf reconfigures Botticelli's depiction of the nine circles of hell to present a telling account of human society. "The abysmal valley of pain", or the landscape of death, despair and suffering to which one is subjected in the 'afterlife' as a consequence of wrongdoing, is posited as the reality of our time.

Saraf subverts the fantastical and the otherworldly to navigate a world structured by inequality and a system that rewards wrongdoers. A world shaped by predation of natural resources, climate change, biological and chemical disasters, and a society marred by ever-increasing political strife and newer forms of oppression. A time where detention camps still exist and where war still rages.

Layered with references to other drawings by Botticelli, Stradanus and Federico Zuccari, Saraf situates the work in the larger tradition of illustrated Apocalypses but at the same time diverges completely from their focus on the mysterious and the supernatural. She chooses not to ground the work in theology. Instead, Saraf uses diverse references from the art historical past as tools to explore and consequently develop a vocabulary through which we

can better address the horrors of our time. Weaving different visual languages together, Saraf locates the 'hell' firmly in the here and the now. And, more importantly, portrays it as an infernal realm of our own making.

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