MARIE JULIA BOLLANSÉE

images of field work
India, Ahmedabad
January- February 2025

The visits and interviews were conducted during my artist residency at Boathouse Ahmedabad, from January 20 until February 28.
The residency was supported by the Flemish Governement.





Mr Lalaram Ahiwar
labourer at masterbatches production plant in Ahmedabad DEEP POLYMERS LIMITED
work: mixing of the blue pigmented masterbatch



Mr Pappu
labourer at masterbatches production plant in Ahmedabad DEEP POLYMERS LIMITED
work: mixing of the red pigmented masterbatch



meeting Mr Ramesh Patel
at masterbatches production plant in Ahmedabad DEEP POLYMERS LIMITED
work: Founder, leading 3 manufactories
Founding these factories 40 years ago, at the time with ‘filler products’, later, when plastic industry arose, switching to masterbatch providing colours for this industries.
He is nicknamed ‘the Godfather of colour’ by his colleagues
https://deeppoly.com/about/



Mr Richef, CEO of Gujarat Craft
He gives us a long interview about the history of his factory. The company was set up by his father in 1984. His father had a jute factory but saw this tarpaulin industry in Korea and immediately realised that this was a profitable ‘industry of the future’. So his father imported machinery from Korea and set up this factory.
Here, we are allowed to interview five workers, whom they have chosen themselves.
https://www.gujaratcraft.com/



interviewing labourers at Gujarat Crafts, Ahmedabad
Priyashi Valia communicating in Gujarati language.



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visiting the work floor at Gujarat Crafts, Ahmedabad
women labourers posing for our camera



Meeting Mr Abhishek Bhutoria at GRIL, Gujarat Raffia Industries Limited, Ahmedabad.
This company produces the tarpaulins for United Nations, tents in disaster regions.
He could't give us permission to film inside the factory or interview labourers, due to strict UN policy.



visiting the work floor at Shree Ambica Geotex, Ahmedabad
here I coud film the production process, from weaving to laminating



SHREE AMBICA GEOTEX
The raw material: the granules are a petroleum derivative. This factory sources them from oil fields in India. The granules are melted down and drawn into threads.



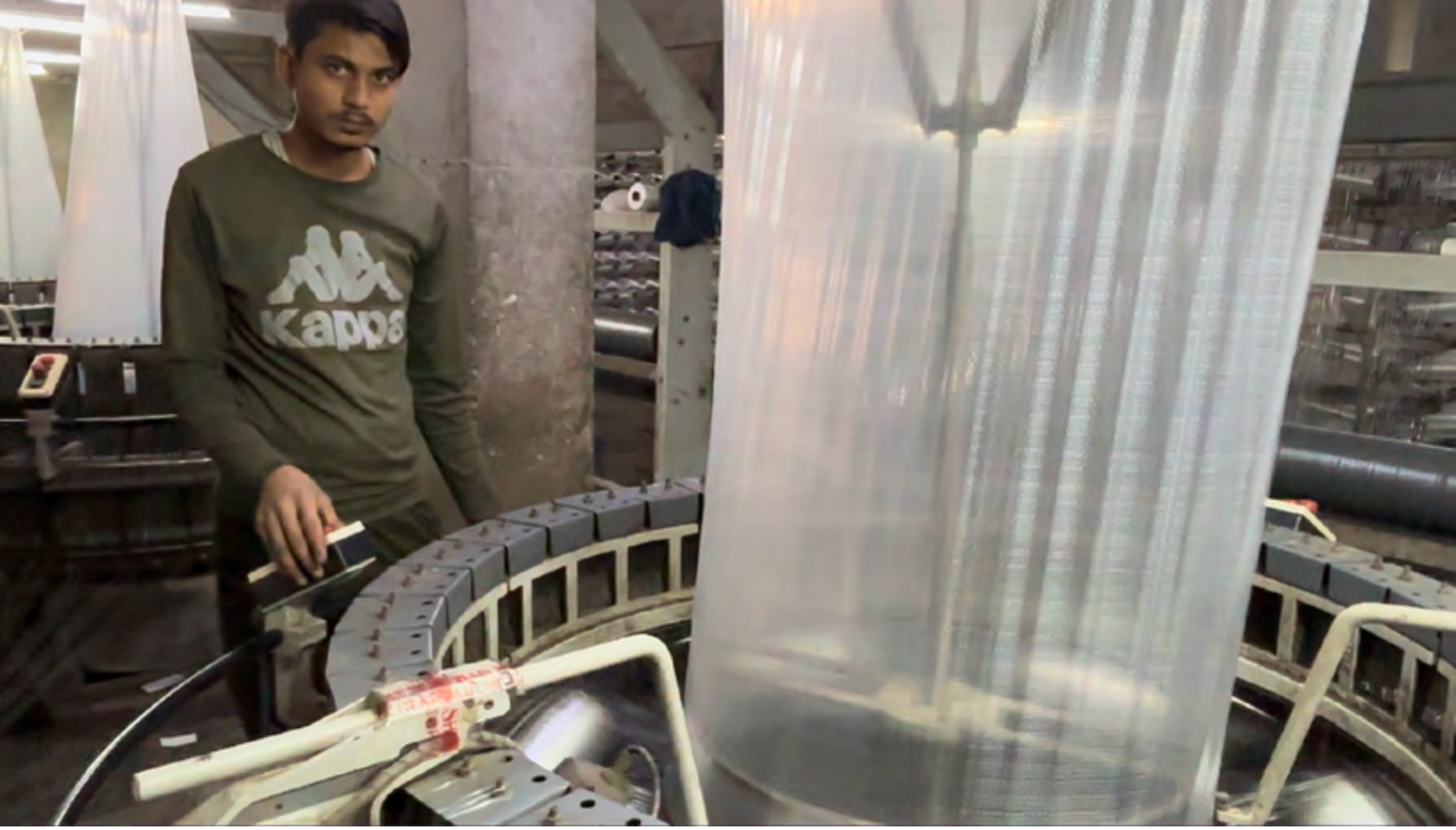
SHREE AMBICA GEOTEX
The plastic threads are wound onto spools.
Workers keep a constant eye on the process and replace the full spools with empty ones. I can see that this is the job of the youngest workers.



SHREE AMBICA GEOTEX
The plactic threads are woven, here on flat looms.
Workers keep a constant eye on the process and replace the empty spools with full ones. It are young boys who carry out this monotonous work.



SHREE AMBICA GEOTEX
flat loom
Workers constantly monitor the weaving process.
(The noise is deafening.)



SHREE AMBICA GEOTEX
circle loom
Workers constantly monitor the weaving process.
(The noise is deafening.)



SHREE AMBICA GEOTEX
laminating machine
The plastic fabric is laminated here to make it waterproof and to colour it; the *masterbatch* is used for this purpose.



SHREE AMBICA GEOTEX
young worker at the laminating machine
The machine runs 24 hours a day.
The workers work in two shifts: a day shift and a night shift.



Meeting Mr Sewani, founder of Ambica Traders and KiaRia assembling workplace, Ahmedabad.
The whole family is engaged in the business, his sons leading it, his daughter in law sales managing.
Here we could interview labourers and film on the work floor.



Meeting with Ms Vani Sewani, marketing manager at the KIARIA tarpaulin assembly workshop, Ambica Traders, Ahmedabad
She is the only woman we have met at the top level of the tarpaulin industry. She invited us to lunch. The factory was founded by her father-in-law, Mr Sewani, and is run by her husband and his brothers.
Here, we were allowed to interview and film workers on the shop floor.
https://www.ambicatraders.com/index.html



interviewing labourers at KiaRia tarpaulin assembling workplace, Ahmedabad
Priyashi Valia communicating in Gujarati language



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interviewing labourers at KiaRia tarpaulin assembling workplace, Ahmedabad
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Meeting Mr Dipakbhai Sewani
Ambica Traders, Ahmedabad
we could interview labourers and film on the work floor.



Ambica Traders, Ahmedabad
tarpaulin assembling workplace



Noble Brothers,
Tarpaulin traders since 1960 in Ahmedabad



Noble Brothers,
Tarpaulin assembling workplace in Ahmedabad
we could interview the labourers



Noble Brothers,
Tarpaulin assembling workplace in Ahmedabad where we could interview the labourers.
They come from Rajastan and are living in the factory.



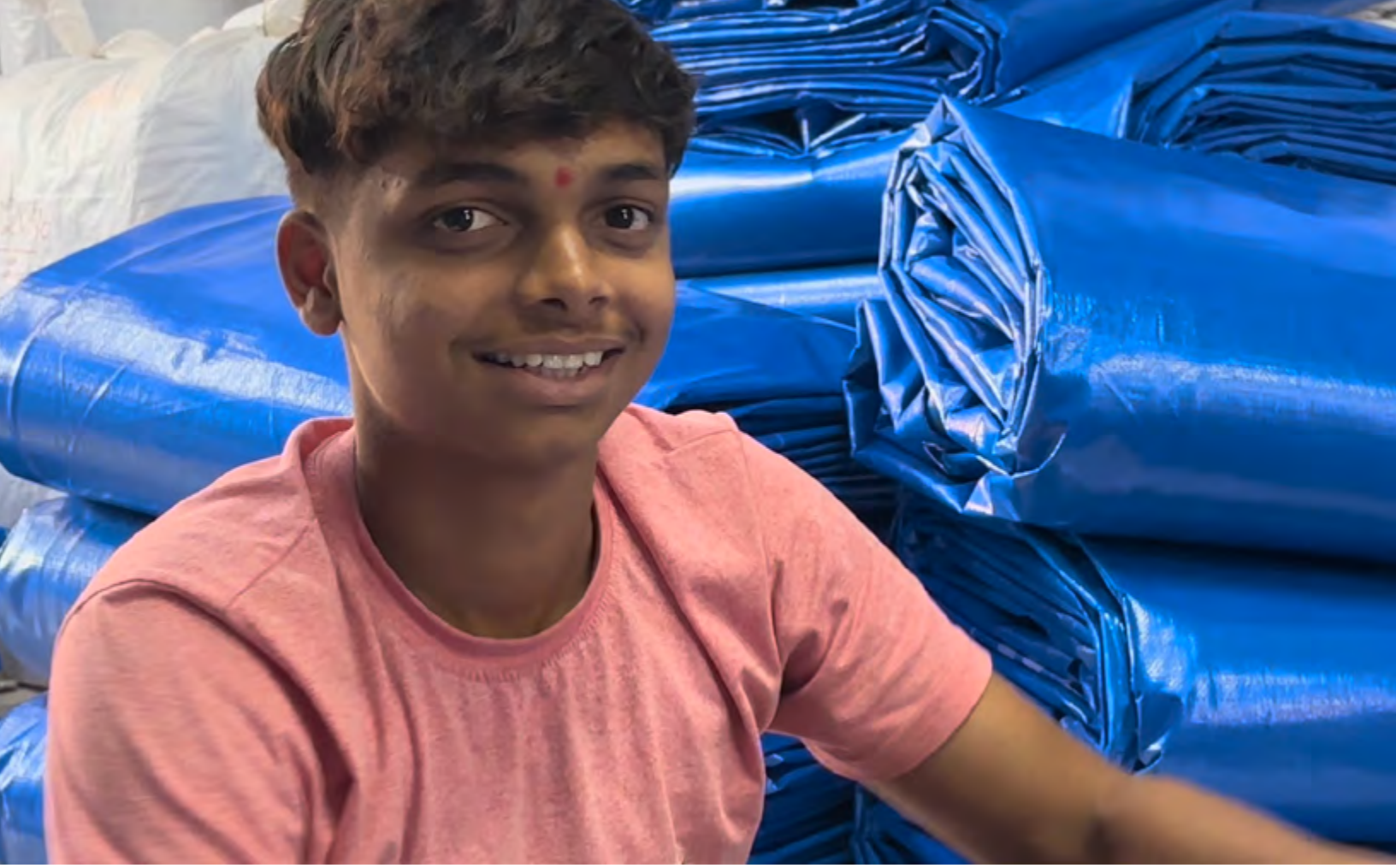
Road construction nearby Nandoli, Ahmedabad
The road construction workers, families, lead a nomad life and move their tarpaulin tents to the next wharf when this road is finished.



The nomad life of the road constructors nearby Nandoli, Ahmedabad
The road construction workers, families, move their tarpaulin tents to the next wharf when this road is finished.



The nomad life of the road constructors nearby Nandoli, Ahmedabad
Priyashi interviewing them, speaking in their own language.



Mumbai
There are many tarpaulin traders based in the Mulund neighbourhood.
We speak to Naël, aged 16, who goes to school and is studying IT. After school, he works alongside his older brothers for Shree Poly Tarpaulin Industries
https://www.shreetarpaulins.com/.



In Navi Mumbai (New Mumbai), I visit Shield Products, the company that supplied me with a consignment of tarpaulins a few years ago. 150 Tarpaulins were shipped by sea to the port of Antwerp, where I collected them.
I meet Mr Bharat Palan and his son Miter Palan, who run the company together. Bharat Palan has been with this family business for 40 years. He has been trading in tarpaulins for the past 15 years; before that, he worked with cotton tarpaulins. They are a true family of traders; they deal in all sorts of things, including building large shelters with bamboo frames and tarpaulins.
Bharat Palan explains that whilst there are no tarpaulin factories in Mumbai, there are traders and assembly workshops. They source their tarpaulins from factories around Ahmedabad, where the tarpaulin industry is concentrated. Land is cheaper there, there is a plentiful supply of labour, and the raw materials are closer at hand. Transport is therefore also cheaper.
His son, Miter, also has one son. He says that son will certainly join the business too.
https://www.shieldproducts.in/



The family tradition is upheld.
Shield Products continues to build on the foundations laid by the grandfather. He is pictured in this photograph hanging in the office.



Pandit Manishar Misha
working since 3 generations in Shield Products.