



## Studio Language with Professor Nora Schultz Video Transcript

*Nora Schultz, Assistant Professor of Art, Film, and Visual Studies at Harvard University, taught the first virtual seminar for the Mittal Institute's 13 current Visiting Artist Fellows on "Studio Language," bringing the artists together to learn more about the intersection of text, language, and visual work in art. In this excerpt from the course, **Bunu Dhungana** discusses the combination of photography and the written word with Professor Schultz.*

### Speakers in This Video

- **Nora Schultz**, Assistant Professor of Art, Film, and Visual Studies, Harvard University
- **Bunu Dhungana**, Photographer, Nepal

### BEGIN TRANSCRIPTION:

**Bunu Dhungana:** I have a — I don't know if it's a question or comment with regard to language and how we always think about written words or spoken words — you know, the first thing that comes to your mind. And then again, in which language are you communicating.

In our previous discussion we were talking about how we need certain kind of vocabulary and English language now to put [our art] into context, you know, and how that takes away a lot from the work. So, what about the regional language, then? What about our mother tongue — whose language [do we work with]? All these things, but somehow we always keep going to spoken or written words somehow and forget that there are other languages through which we could communicate.

With photography especially, this is a cycling problem, you know, of it being contextualized always and of it coming with caption or coming with a description and this has always been sort of a debate with photography. Is it not a language in itself? And if it is, then why do we always need to have these words coming with it? Can we understand it like a language rather than [doing that]? So, I think for me it's also sort of interesting to think [about] after seeing so many examples, and I also try to work with written words or audio sounds, but thinking about photography and language and then written or spoken words and then art in general just makes me rather curious, always.

**Nora Schultz:** Yeah this is super interesting — I mean, photography because in itself it's like this index, right? It's always between or both — it's both, it's like this proof of something that was there that is pictured; a different reality and different situations that then gets into that picture and forms it. But then it's also a picture just in itself.

And so, isn't that extremely parallel to language and words by nature, right? There's so much inter-involved somehow, [and] how language works that we almost photographically associate words and shift them in our understanding of these images through the sentences that we hear or read [alongside them].

Yeah, I think this is very related, and I'm also very interested in it.