

## Artist Statement

My work emerges from lived experience—growing up during the civil war in Sri Lanka, navigating displacement, and later resettling in California. In California I attended community colleges to study the different disciplines of art. Drawing is the core of my practice. I work primarily on paper, incorporating Tamil and English text, collage, color, and fabric. Text is often rubbed out, scratched over, or rendered illegible—echoing the ways memory erodes and reforms under pressure.

I am mostly self-taught, with a background in teaching English and working as a translator, interpreter, and administrative assistant for humanitarian organizations supporting communities affected by war and migration. These experiences continue to inform my art, especially in my exploration of violence, injustice, silence, and survival.

My practice is also shaped by my relationship with the natural world. As a certified California Naturalist, I study and observe local ecosystems—this has become a vital part of how I understand place, memory, and belonging. The California landscape, marked by both beauty and catastrophe—especially wildfires—enters my work as both refuge and scar.

For me drawing is an act of excavation and resistance. I rub, smear, layer, add, take away, conceal, and reveal—allowing materials to carry memory, history, and loss. Through this process, I explore themes of home, land, identity, and what remains buried or unspeakable.

As a poet, writer, and naturalist, I approach both language and landscape as living archives. The California wildfires, like the war I fled, mark the land with scars—visible records of trauma, loss, and change. My practice is an act of remembrance and resistance—a reimagining of home and belonging in a world shaped by rupture, resilience, and the enduring need for refuge.

In my work, I invite viewers to engage with the silences and ruptures that shape personal and collective experience—to sit with grief, with resilience, and with the quiet persistence of life.