Thresholds of Memory, an exhibition of works by Namita Paul, examines the emotional imprint of architecture—the way that built environments hold our stories, form us, and become part of who we are. Rooted in thresholds—between home and displacement, containment and unraveling—Paul's artworks engage themes of longing and loss.

Working with natural, painted, and dyed canvas, gold and silver leaf, textile adornments, small objects, and written words, Paul creates layered installations that are deeply personal. The canvas is often cut into rectangular shapes resembling bricks, then arranged in a grid. This foundational structure is used in *W.M.265*, her earliest work in this exhibition, and continues with *Manifest*, *Red Threshold*, and *Devil's Slide*. Even *Exuvia,* a work which examines the threshold between life and what remains after death, is constructed with canvas bricks, albeit irregularly arranged.

Paul's abstractions begin with memories and experiences of a place, both physical and metaphorical. She is interested in pushing the boundaries of materials, transforming canvas into architectural forms such as walls, windows, doors, or nooks. In her most recent work, *Devil's Slide*, rich fabric trims sourced from India are used to represent the terrain and textures of the formidable cliffs that line the road near the work's namesake location. Additional trims and salt crystals are used to depict the ocean's waves, sandy shores, and tidepools of this Northern California coastline.

Paul's work is intrinsically an investigation of being and becoming. For her, home is a place of belonging that we carry within us—a source of grounding, visual reference, and inspiration. When those bonds are ruptured, they can lead to an unraveling of identity and a profound sense of grief. Negotiating the tension between fragility and resilience, her work invites sustained reflection on longing, loss, and the enduring capacity for grace.

Curated by Judy Koong Dennis, Lucas Artists Program Manager and Assistant Curator.

This exhibition is organized by Montalvo Arts Center's Lucas Artists Program in conjunction with its current Marcus Exhibition, *The Art & Architecture of Maybe*, on view through November 8, 2026.

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Namita Paul, born in Jalandhar, India, and now based in the San Francisco Bay Area, is an interdisciplinary artist who constructs material “thresholds” that hold memory, rupture, and repair. Working with stitched canvas, cultural and ritual objects, glass, and accumulated fragments, she creates artworks that function as both architectural structures and bodily skins.

Her practice engages the emotional afterlives of space, where histories of home, displacement, and loss are embedded into form. Through processes of stitching, layering, and material accumulation, she constructs walls and surfaces that act as containers—holding traces of what has been broken, carried, and reconstituted. Rather than representing memory, Paul embeds it physically, allowing material to register time, impact, and transformation. Her work operates as both structures and witnesses, translating personal experience into shared spatial and emotional encounters.

Paul holds a BA in Interdisciplinary Visual Arts and an MA in Cultural Studies from the University of Washington, and an MFA from the California College of the Arts. Her work has been exhibited at the ICA San José, Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, Henry Art Gallery (Seattle), and soon, at the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver. She is a 2023 Lucas Artists Program Fellow.

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