

Hello, this is Melissa Havilland again, and this, You Can't Take It With You: Tea Tides is the last within the show. And it came together very recently. It is also a crossover to another body of work of mine, which is called Flourish, which is thinking about, or talking about cash crops and colonialism in particular like colonial cash crops. Tea is a significant one. What you're seeing here is three prints, printed on both sides, similar to the other print works in the show, printed with repeat prints, like a wallpaper. Each of these pieces of paper that you're seeing are between 30 and 32 feet long, and they're hung in a way to sort of feel like a waterfall, and also feel like a continuous wall of wallpaper, right...

And they sort of settle onto the ground or flow right off of the wall. The imagery within it is directly referencing what's in You Can't Take It With You and in Sediment. So these references to China, and you'll notice that this is a direct reference to that teacup book again. So in this case, you can see the little seedlings within the cups. The waves in this case are also referencing teafields or hills within the areas that grow tea. So the places that I have been in tea fields is in Kerala, which is a Southern state in India that grows a lot of tea. And they look sort of like this, the tea hills look like this, and they're just tremendously beautiful, luscious green. Images of Darjeeling in India are similar to this.

And I've talked to a bunch of people who have traveled and they have concurred, that most places where tea has grown will sort of have these beautiful striated hills. So I was drawing the hills, but printing them in blue to reference waves as well. So sort of tying it all together. And then this is directly referencing my sort of coming to age with the political issues of tea in India. My first time there, I was there in 2007, and of course fell in love with drinking chai a couple of times a day, it's practically a religious situation there. And I would often drink the tea out of the cups that you're seeing here, which are called bhar [also Kulhar], or...[?] and they are what we might call the first disposable cup in India.

They are a semi bisqued cup, clay cup. They're usually sort of like a reddish brown and they are not bisqued enough to be completely...anyway, what happens is you drink the tea out of them, and then you are to throw them to the ground, right, where they break and eventually turn back into mud. They get ground under the feet, they get washed away with the rain, and they were made for this for single use purpose. And in some areas of India, they're still made. In 2015, I went back to India and was able to be in Varanasi which still uses bhar quite heavily and was able to do some video and photo work with them and really talk to people a lot about them. So I wanted to reference them here as a very specific kind of teacup.

But also, you know, when it comes to the ideas of cash crops, tea was not always as ubiquitous in India. Really not until the late forties when they had their independence from great Britain, from England, did they start to drink tea pretty heavily and sort of own it as their own individual thing. Prior to that, they were primarily forced to grow tea for export. Most of it would go to the British colonies. And I love that. I love the idea that it was only, you know, 60, 70 years ago that India started to really love and own drinking tea. And when there, you drink tea and it's, again, it's just part of life. It's so interesting that things can change so dramatically within a culture. And so they had to come through colonialism, right, through being, you know, lorded over, right, and into independence to come into their own with tea, and I love that. And again, because of my research with teacups in particular, tea is special to me. So this particular piece feels like a really coming together, and I'm happy that it will be included in the show.