

# Working with Family

Siblings Sancintya Mohini Simpson & Isha Ram Das  
discuss working together ahead of their collaborative project  
*New Old Prayers.*

**Isha:** I feel that you can tell a lot about an artist by the people they choose to work with. Whether they share a similar practice, or materiality, or expertise— or, I guess, how you might know them. Collaboration is definitely a commonality in the way that we both seem to work.

**Sancintya:** That is true. I think your background in the music industry definitely makes you more open to collaboration. Whereas for me the impetus for collaboration often comes from the work itself and focuses on the relationship between family or community surrounding and through the making. How have you found your collaboration with family and myself, different from working with other artists or musicians?

**Isha:** Yes totally. Collaboration is almost auto-pilot for me. But with you it seems like collaboration is functional or is core to the conceptual grounding of the work. That's something I really like about working with you. Knowing my reason for being there and the parameters of interplay from the get-go. I suppose your work in particular is imbued with a sense of personal duty that can be difficult to share. How does that factor into your decision-making in a collaborative exercise?

**Sancintya:** I think this is why I mostly work intensely with family. Collaboration forms part of the work of healing through addressing a history of intergenerational trauma, our ancestors' experiences and this continuing impact on the present. As the subject matter is not just mine, it is naturally a part of the work. Whereas when I collaborate with other descendants of the indentured diaspora and POC the approach is quite different in intensity and becomes more of sharing experience and process of mutual generosity and listening. This year along with your collaborative work you have started to shift to independent projects. How have you found this shift in comparison?

**Isha:** Ah, great question! It's strange not having to share the conceptual burden in a lot of ways. Having a collaborator is a good way to hold a mirror to yourself. Your choices pass through the sieve of another perspective. This shift toward independence has been, in many ways, a necessary act of abandoning cowardice. I think that's partially why it feels so nice to return to the familiarity of our shared practice.

