

ART  
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AREAL  
x BÖHLER

## Emami Art at Art Düsseldorf 2024 - Booth E05

ARPITA AKHANDA, GHANA SHYAM LATUA & SOMA DAS

Preview – April 11, 2024, | Fair dates - April 12 – 14, 2024

Thursday, April 11, 2024, Preview 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Official Opening Friday, April 12, 2024, 12:00 noon – 7:00 pm

Fair Day 1 Saturday, April 13, 2024, 11:00 am – 7:00 pm

Fair Day 2 Sunday, April 14, 2024, 11:00 am – 6:00 pm

Venue – ART DÜSSELDORF | AREAL BÖHLER | Hansaallee 321 | 40549 Düsseldorf

### Quote by CEO

“It is with great pleasure that Emami Art is bringing the recent critical work of three of our represented artists, Arpita Akhanda, Ghana Shyam Latua, and Soma Das, for the second time to Art Dusseldorf. Emami Art’s presentation, ‘Torment, Transit, Transition,’ delves into the realms of post-colonial tropes and their significant influence on South Asian art practices. Different in artistic approach and realms of concern, the artists in the show broadly deal with the collective impact on an erstwhile colonially divided space burdened by the past and now muffled in contemporary social and political dynamics. The showcased works observe the ordinary and its subjects steeped in meticulous contemplation. The works will be exhibited in the ‘NEXT’ section of the fair. Art Dusseldorf has been a significant space for engagement in contemporary art. I hope this will be a great moment for our artists to engage in critical conversation with the most significant works from across the globe.”

(Says, Richa Agarwal, CEO, Emami Art)

### Exhibition Concept:

#### ***Torment,***

No present can disremember the transition.

#### ***Transit,***

#### ***Transition***

Lamentations on landscapes, memories of migration, and recollections of displaced domesticity are obtrusive themes of artmaking and thinking in post-colonial India. The re-occurrence of such tropes, born out of immense emotional insurgency is politically reactionary and profoundly affects the artist and their worldviews. This presentation combines works by three contemporary artists at diverse junctures of art practice, all based in West Bengal, India. Ghana Shyam Latua (b.1992) lays out the transitioning arid *Rarh* region of Bengal fragmented by corruption and terrorised by real estate strategies. Arpita Akhanda (b.1992) collects ancestral memories of partition and migration and reconnects these aquatic reminiscences to every waterway she transits. Soma Das (b. 1979) embodies motifs from traditional miniature paintings into transited semi-urban, domestic spaces in Kolkata. *Torment, Transit, Transition* unites the works of these artists as they attempt to preserve the memory of rancorous pain, degradation or even redundancy by reconstructing them in the contemporary frame of reference.

Carrying the inter-generational memory history of transit, Akhanda's body, as a post-memorial site, conserves the inherited trauma of the act of covertly crossing the river in search of a home. Beyond cartographic boundaries, questioning political decision-makers that shape the destiny of the migrants, Akhanda's finely sliced and hand-woven photographs equate the recreation of the wounds of displacement. (Art Dusseldorf 2022 featured Akhanda's paper weavings, among which the work titled - I am not a Refugee II was acquired by the K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen Düsseldorf as a part of their permanent collection.)

Latua dissects the expanse of once an uninhabited, eroded, and arid laterite stretch into inept plots. An invisible melancholy expands into global capitalism as the now-scanty landmasses engulfed by hollow spaces interrogate the visuality of the picturesque. His unusual pinprick technique wounds the empty bio-space and perforates the silence apart to take a flight towards a quiet rebellion.

Das finds her pictorial language through a unique combination of tranquil yet detailed motifs referencing miniature paintings. Her detailed studies reflect her empathetic camaraderie for the colloquial and reveal the concealed history of the migrant workers. Das' empathetic vision finds spaces of transit to pronounce these silent moments of contemplation, the repetitive mundane and tacit exhaustion.

Each of these artists draws from the history-memory-politics where bodies and communities have gone through displacement, detachment, and denudation. Akhanda, by relating family history through memoirs, dates, and cartographic information; Latua, by provoking the notion of an evolving site maintained to destroy its natural order and protagonising the displaced ordinary; Das explores the idea of transitioning home in multiple contexts. The *modus operandi* of Latua, Akhanda, and Das may be varied, but each attempt to disrupt by altering the image plane to mark the transition from an earlier concept of romantic geography to political geography. This transitory space underscores the oeuvre of all three artists, who present through their works - an intra-generational, contemporised and contextual reading of South Asia.

### **Brief Bios of the Artists**

#### **ARPITA AKHANDA (b.1992)**

Arpita Akhanda was born and brought up in a family of artists who migrated from Bangladesh during the partition and moved through many locations in India before settling in Cuttack, Odisha. She completed her B.F.A & M.F.A, in painting from Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati University, 2015 & 2017.

She was a part of many exhibitions and art fairs, including Art Dusseldorf 2023, Germany; India Art Fair 2023, New Delhi, India; AAIE Center for Contemporary Art (2022 – 23), Rome, Italy; AD Design show 2022, Mumbai, India; Kunstraum Aarau, Switzerland; Artissima Contemporary Art 2021, Torino, Italy. Akhanda has performed at various international art spaces, including The Prince Claus Fund Biennial Symposium 2023, Sri Lanka; K21, Dusseldorf, Germany; Huis Marseille, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2023; AAIE Center for Contemporary Art, Rome, 2023; India Art Fair 2022, New Delhi, India; Piramal Art Residency 2019-20, Maharashtra, India; Teertha International Performance Platform 2019, Sri Lanka. She is a recipient of Jan Van Eyck Residency 2022-23, Netherlands; 2022-23-Prince Claus Seed Fund; India Art Fair Artist in Residence 2022, New Delhi, India; Inlaks Fine Art Award 2022; Artist in Residence program 2021 Gästeatelier Krone, Aarau, Switzerland and many national scholarships and awards. She is currently based in Santiniketan, India.

#### **GHANA SHYAM LATUA (b.1992)**

Born in 1992 in West Midnapore, Ghana Shyam Latua studied painting from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, graduating in 2017.

Latua was a part of many Group Exhibitions and Art Fairs, including 'All That is Hidden: Mapping departures in Landscape, Terrains and Geographies' at Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024; 'The Garden of Infinite Desires', Emami Art, Kolkata, 2023; India Art Fair, 2023; 'Takshila Fine Arts Scholars Show' Arthsila Santiniketan, 2022; 'Patterns of Intensity' at Art Alive (New Delhi, 2021); *Dih-Pahr-Cher* at Ganges Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2020; 'Inside the Fibre' at Arts Acre Museum, Kolkata, 2020; 'Annual Exhibition' at SSVAAD, Santiniketan, 2019; 'CIMA Award Show' and 'Summer Show', Kolkata in 2019; 'Inward Vision' at Arts Acre Museum, Kolkata, 2018; 'Pentamerous' at Art Exposure in 2028;

'The Shape of Things' curated by Ushmita Sahu at Ganges Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2017; 'Maitreyi', an Ind-Bangladesh Group Show at Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata, 2016; Group Exhibition at Russian Centre for Science and Culture, 2013 and many more.

His last solo show, *The Lament of the Red Earth*, was at Tapetenwerk Gallery, Leipzig, Germany (2022) as part of the International Artists Residency Program by the Kira A. Princess of Prussia Foundation in collaboration with Emami Art. His other notable solo shows are, 'Khoai Landscape' at Emami Art (online exhibition), Kolkata, 2021 and 'Occupying Space' at Gallery Exposure, Kolkata in 2018. Ghana Shyam Latua is the recipient of the Inception Grant (2021) from Artincept Artpilgrim, New Delhi, the Dhi Support Grant (2020), the National Garhi Scholarship (2017) from Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and Takshila Santiniketan Fine Art Scholarship from Takshila Educational Society (New Delhi 2020). He lives and works in Santiniketan, West Bengal.

### **SOMA DAS (b. 1979)**

Born in 1979 in Kolkata, West Bengal, Soma Das is a contemporary Indian artist who graduated with a First Class in her B.V.A. and M.F.A. in Painting from Rabindra Bharati University in 2007 and 2009 respectively.

Das' major shows include a duo show 'Between Selves and Silhouettes' featuring her work and curated by Adip Dutta was held at Emami Art, Kolkata in 2022 and 'Different Facets of Life' at Gallery Nakshatra, Kolkata, 2010. Some of her group participations include 'Bengal-Nama' curated by Ina Puri at Bikaner House, New Delhi and presented by Gallery Art Positive, 2022; CIMA Awards Show at CIMA Gallery, Kolkata, 2015 and 2017; Summer Show CIMA Gallery, Kolkata in 2015 and 2017; Lalit Kala Academy, Kolkata 2015; Emami Chisel Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2015; Annual Exhibition Rajya Charukala Parshad, Kolkata 2014 - 2017; Annual Art Exhibition, Emami Chisel Art Gallery, Kolkata 2014 -2017; Group show organised by Sensorium at Abanindranath Tagore Gallery ICCR, Kolkata, 2014 and 2015; Lalit Kala Akademi Regional Centre, Kolkata, 2015 and 2016; A group show organised by CRY, 2014, Annual Exhibition, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata, 2010, 2013, and 2015, among several others.

She has participated in multiple art fairs throughout India including Arts Acre Art Fair by Sensorium, Kolkata, 2017; Mumbai Art Fair, 2016 and 2018; CIMA Art Fair, Kolkata, 2015; India Art Fair, New Delhi, 2015 and 2020; Art Fair, Chemould Art Gallery, Kolkata in 2015; Art Fair, Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata in 2014 and 2015; Art Fair organised by Emami Chisel Art, Kolkata, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2015, and 2016; and Kala Mela at Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata in 2009, among others.

Das has participated in the International Artists' Residency Program at Kira A. Princess of Prussia Foundation (Germany, Italy), in collaboration with Emami Art, 2022. She was awarded a Certificate of Merit by Academy of Fine Arts in 2009 and the State Academy Award in 2008. Soma Das lives and works in Kolkata.

### **About Emami Art**

Emami Art is a leading Indian contemporary art gallery and a platform for cultural production. Established in 2017 in Kolkata, Emami Art represents emerging, mid-career and established artists and organises a dynamic programme of exhibitions and public seminars. Since its inception, the gallery has curated and hosted intimate and large-scale exhibitions and regularly participates in national and international art fairs and conferences. With a focus on a future-forward, complex, multi-dimensional approach that echoes South Asian history, the programme explores socio-cultural and geo-political narratives in relation to visual art practices today. As part of its knowledge-sharing and archiving activities, Emami Art regularly hosts talks, seminars, panel discussions and conversations between artists, curators and audiences to create a safe space for critical engagement. Deeply committed to promoting a regional, national and international agenda through innovative and alternative programming, the gallery places emphasis on knowledge production and socially conscious themes. Emami Art aspires to be a catalyst of change, research, innovation and inclusivity and welcomes all sections of society.