

EMAMI ART



KOCHI
BIENNALE
FOUNDATION



KOCHI-
MUZIRIS
BIENNALE
2022



Satellite
Exhibition
www.emamiart.com

Kochi Biennale Foundation presents

Shahidul Alam:
Singed but Not Burnt

Prasanta Sahu:
Anatomy of a Vegetable -
Ruminations on fragile ecosystems

Satellite Exhibitions
December 13, 2022
to April 10, 2023

Daily 10:00am to 7:00pm

Mocha Art Café, Jew Town
Synagogue Lane, Kochi

About the Projects

Emami Art was part of the Kochi Muziris Biennale 2022-23 invited Satellite Programme. From 13 December 2022 to 10 April 2023, the gallery presented two synchronous solo shows @ Mocha Art Café, Synagogue Lane, Jew Town, Kochi.

Anatomy of a Vegetable – Ruminations on fragile ecosystems, is Santiniketan-based artist **Prasanta Sahu**'s realisation of a new body of work. Curated by Emami Art Director Ushmita Sahu, each series within the show is an insightful rumination of everyday rural life – objects, memories and desires intertwined with an undeniable bio-political matrix. Based on the experiences of his upbringing, skillfully interspersed with a documentation methodology, Sahu actively engages with the politics of representation and truths hidden from mainstream discourse.

Shahidul Alam: Singed But Not Burnt curated by Ina Puri, presents Bangladesh-based artist, photographer Alam's work selected from his archive in Dhaka, Bangladesh, comprising of early experiments in pictorialism and later experimentation in exploring the political space. Focusing on the under-represented and minorities, Alam creates imagery that is at once protest, reportage and art.

Additionally, Emami Art represented Varanasi-based emerging artist **Debashish Paul** was part of the Kochi Biennale Foundation Performing Arts Programme curated by HH Art Spaces and Nikhil Chopra. The residency ran from 26 November to 12 December and culminated in performances from 13th to 18th December @ Dutch Warehouse, Fort Kochi.



Prasanta Sahu - *Anatomy of a Vegetable* : Ruminations on fragile ecosystems

Prasanta Sahu is a chronicler of the Indian hinterland. Sahu, who hails from a family of farmers, is the first in his family to have a university education studying electrical engineering before finding his way into art. Now teaching art at his alma mater Kala Bhavana, he has, for more than a decade, turned the lens of his practice towards retelling the rural saga. But rather than an overtly politicised critique of the agrarian crisis, the artist adopts a sensitive, poetic retelling from an insider perspective. Based on the experiences of his upbringing, skillfully interspersed with a documentation methodology that espouses analytical, empirical data collection, Sahu actively engages with the politics of representation and truths hidden from mainstream discourse. Rural life connects, on the one hand, to the persistent questions of planetary crises and ecology and, on the other, agriculture and production as a contested social space constituted by a series of links between local farmers and the broader network of the food economy. Yet, Sahu's works strongly propose farming as a way of life, finding an immense capacity for love and joy amidst suffering, capturing intimate, tender observations.

The drumstick tree and other stories consist of a number of drawings on paper and found objects arranged carefully into a tableau of humdrum, symbiotic relationships between humans and non-humans. Some examples include illustrations of green leafy vegetables foraged by the village women when they have nothing to eat but which they cook with care and love. Or farmers with their livestock. Even a traditional wooden tool used to make twine for fishing nets (Sahu helped his grandfather make ropes in his childhood) that a farmer gave him because it is now redundant finds its way into this set. The drawing that lends its name to this installation is that of a drumstick (moringa) tree carefully tended by the farmer's households because every part is edible. These fragments of observations interact and overlap, creating a poignant yet powerful narrative of a marginalised community.

The installation, *Mapping Craters*, is the result of a three years relationship that Sahu has forged with Lakhi Ram, a landless farmer from Amdahara village close to Santiniketan, where Sahu resides. This collection of sixty plaster moulds taken directly from the crops produced by the farmer through different seasons, and his traditional farming tools, are displayed on a rusty iron table like a tray of archaeological specimens in a museum. Although this unique method of documentation of taking moulds appears straightforward and uncomplicated, nevertheless, their figurative familiarity soon gives way to a sense of spectral unreality and a suggestion of profound disquiet—each ghostly crater emphasising the emptiness of hunger for those who toil. This work was part of a museum show at Palazzo Madama in Turin, Italy, in 2021 and is being shown for the first time in India.

In the third work, *Tilling Lessons*, a video, Sahu uses the interview format of newsreels interspersed with a recording of himself learning/relearning how to till the soil. However, he creates a visual disturbance by placing the video behind half-open window blinds. Combined with the farmers' unrecognisable, slowed-down, distorted voices, the work counteracts the simple logic of documentary reality, highlighting the subaltern and the considerable absence of knowledge and sympathy that separates 'them' from 'us' who encounter the 'other' through mediated reality.

Each work here is an insightful rumination of everyday rural life – objects, memories and desires intertwined with an undeniable bio-political matrix. By connecting the personal and intimate to the political and immediate, Prasanta Sahu offers a complex, nuanced portrayal of the power relationship and interdependence between the neglected farming community and a modern, capitalist food economy.

EMAMI ART

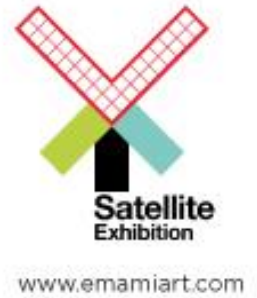
Prasanta Sahu

Brief Bio

Prasanta Sahu, born in 1968 in Odisha, India is currently a member of the Visual Arts Department at Kala Bhavana, Viswa Bharati University, West Bengal, India. Education: Diploma in Electrical Engineering 1987; his BFA in Painting, Viswa Bharati University, West Bengal 1998 summa cum laude; Master's in painting from M.S. University, Baroda 2000 summa cum laude. Over the last twenty years, Sahu has worked across mediums, including painting and drawings, sculpture, installation, and photography.

Solo Exhibitions: Suburban Shadows a solo exhibition of recent drawings at Emami art gallery, Kolkata 2020; Blueprint of a city Kalakriti Art Gallery Hyderabad 2016. Group Exhibitions: India Art Fair 2022; The Politics of Paper, a group show at Emami art, Kolkata, curated by Ushmita Sahu 2022; Hub India-Maximum Minimum at Artissima International fair of contemporary art, Torino Italy, 2021; Disruptive Confluences a museum show with thirteen artists from India, a three-part museum show titled Classical Radical at Palazzo Madama, Museo Civico d'Arte Antica & Multitudes and Assemblages at Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti di Torino, Italy, Jointly curated by Davide Quadrio and Myna Mukherjee, 2021; Asian Higher Fine Arts Education, ASEAN-China Arts colleges alliance, Yunnan artists association and Yunnan arts University 2020; Art: Bengal Now, Bengal Contemporary artists, curated by Pranab Ranjan Ray, Dhoomimal art Gallery, New Delhi 2020; Anthology of Anecdotes, Ganges art gallery, Kolkata 2019; Kursi Sarjan art Gallery, Baroda, curated by Sandhya Bordeweker 2019; 'Blue India' Art Asia art Fair Korea, (2018); Constellations Bihar Museum, Patna 2018; Response Gem Cinema CIMA art gallery, Kolkata 2018; Postcards Busan International art Fair, Korea 2017; Karnataka Chithrakala Parisath, Bangalore 2017; Daegu-India Korean Fine Arts Association South Korea 2015-2017; 7th Biennial of contemporary Indian art, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal 2017; Jaipur Art Summit 2014; International art exchange programme, Faculty of Fine and applied art, Burapha University, Thailand 2014; India Today, Copenhagen Tomorrow sculpture exhibition, Denmark 2013; Small is Big Contemporary Miniature art, Durbar Hall Gallery, Kochi 2012.

Sahu has been invited as visiting faculty by several universities including the Faculty of Fine and Applied arts, Burapha University, Thailand; University of Dhaka, Bangladesh; University of Hyderabad, Sarojini Naidu School of Fine Arts and Communication, Hyderabad. Among his other interests are writing poetry in his mother-tongue Oriya; he is a talented Hindustani classical violinist and an avid biker.



Prasanta Sahu

The drumstick tree & other stories

Watercolour, ink, graphite, Tracing and
Nepali paper, plaster and found objects
150 drawings + found objects
Size variable

2022

(Detail from proposed installation)



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The drumstick tree & other stories

Watercolour, ink, graphite, Tracing and
Nepali paper, plaster and found objects

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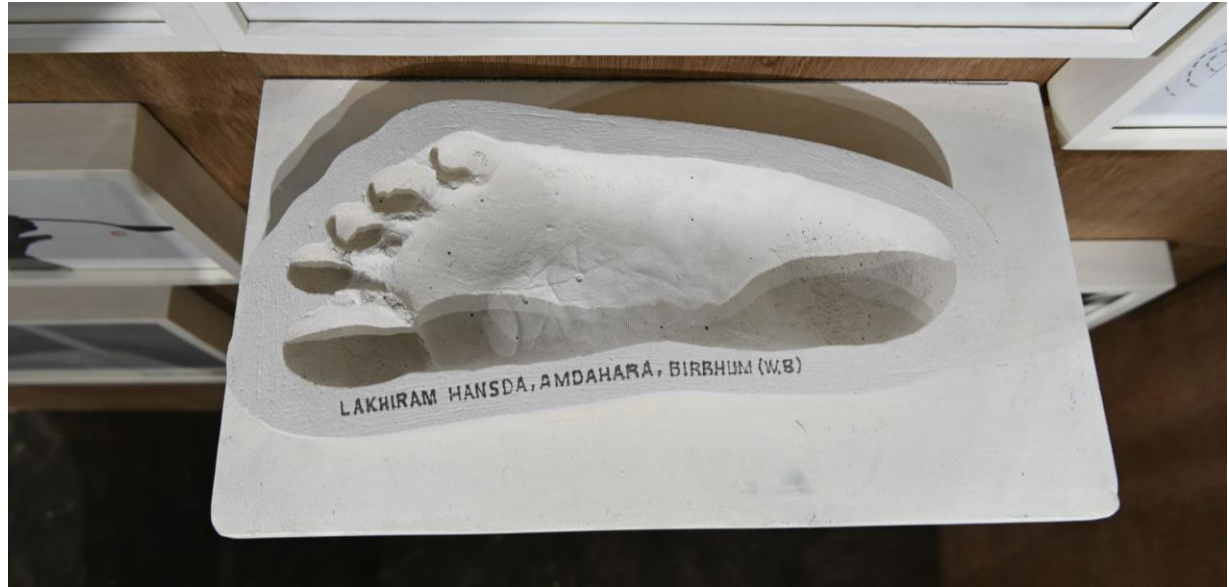
2022

(Detail from proposed installation)





Prasanta Sahu. *Anatomy of a Vegetable – Ruminations on fragile ecosystems* 13th of December 2022 to the 10th of April 2023. Emami Art @Kochi Muziris Biennale 2022-23 Satellite exhibition



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Prasanta Sahu

Mapping Craters II

Year-long documentation of
a landless farmer from Amdahara
Birbhum, West Bengal

2021-22

Installation

Plaster of Paris objects approx. 60 pcs.

(Size: variable)

Repurposed iron table 14'-0" Length x 2'-

4" Width x 30" Height,

Pamphlet 12" x 8" (Folded) 24" x 16"

(open)

Repurposed iron stand for pamphlets 14"

length x 12" width x 20" height

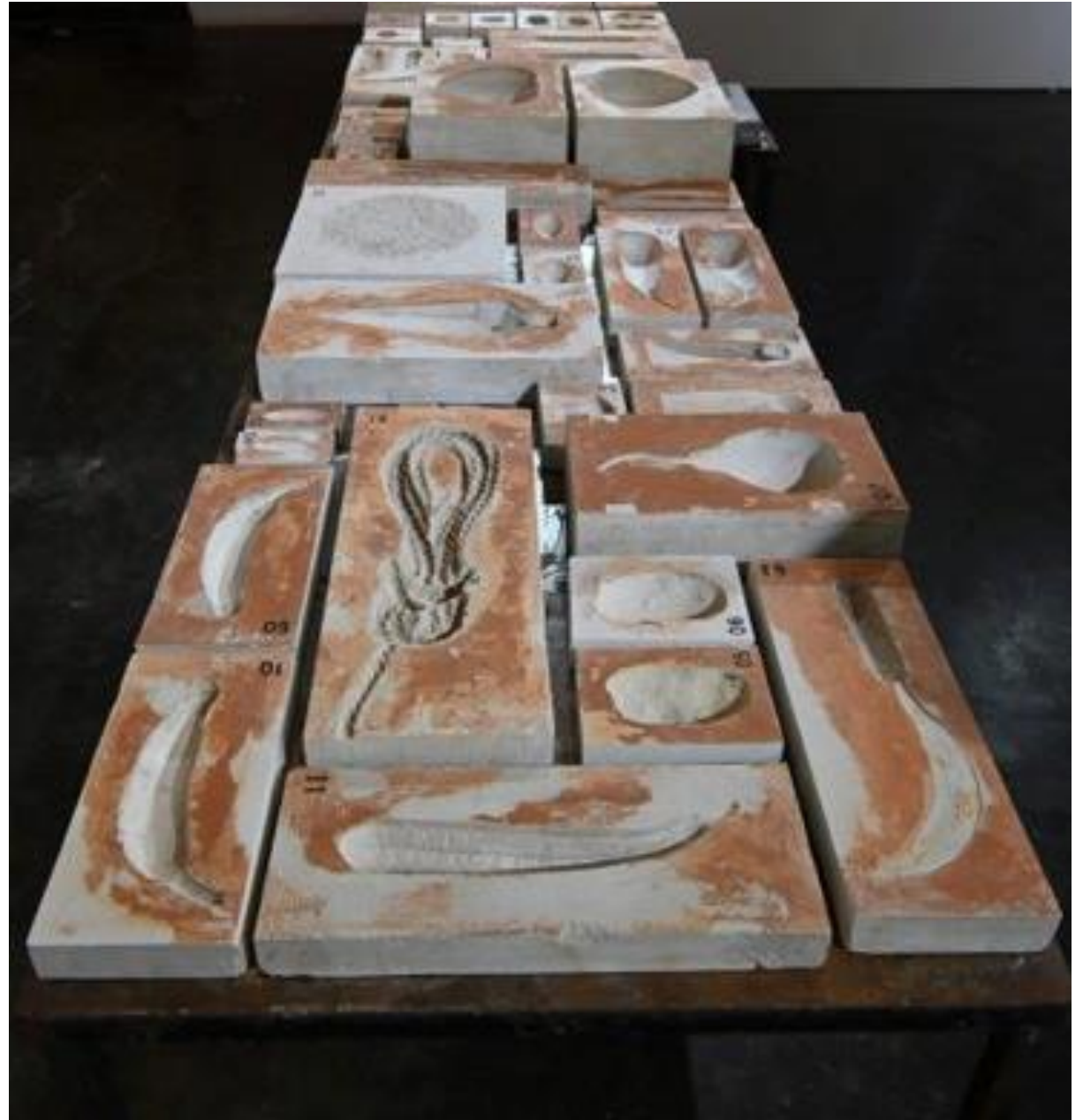
Edition: 2

Credit: Lakhiram Hansda , Basanti Hansda,

Kusum Hansda, Mangla Hansda, Shukhi

Mardi.





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Prasanta Sahu

Tilling Lessons

Video Duration 27 min 49 sec loop

Window blind

Size variable

2022

(Detail from proposed video installation)

Video credit

Camera :Ruma Chaudhury

Editing: Prasanta Sahu and Ruma Chaudhury

Project assistant: Mantu Bhandari

Interviews: Subhodip Mondal(Badhuria), Krishnachandra Mondal

(Badhuria) , Mangal Bhandari (Gobindaopala),Tapan Saha

(Kalaharpur),Nimai Bhandari (Gobindaopala)

Madhuri Bhandari (Gobindaopala), Hridoy Roy (Gobindaopala),

Chandana Roy (Gobindaopala)



Prasanta Sahu

Anatomy of a Vegetable

Ruminations on fragile ecosystems

Dec 13, 2022 — Apr 10, 2023

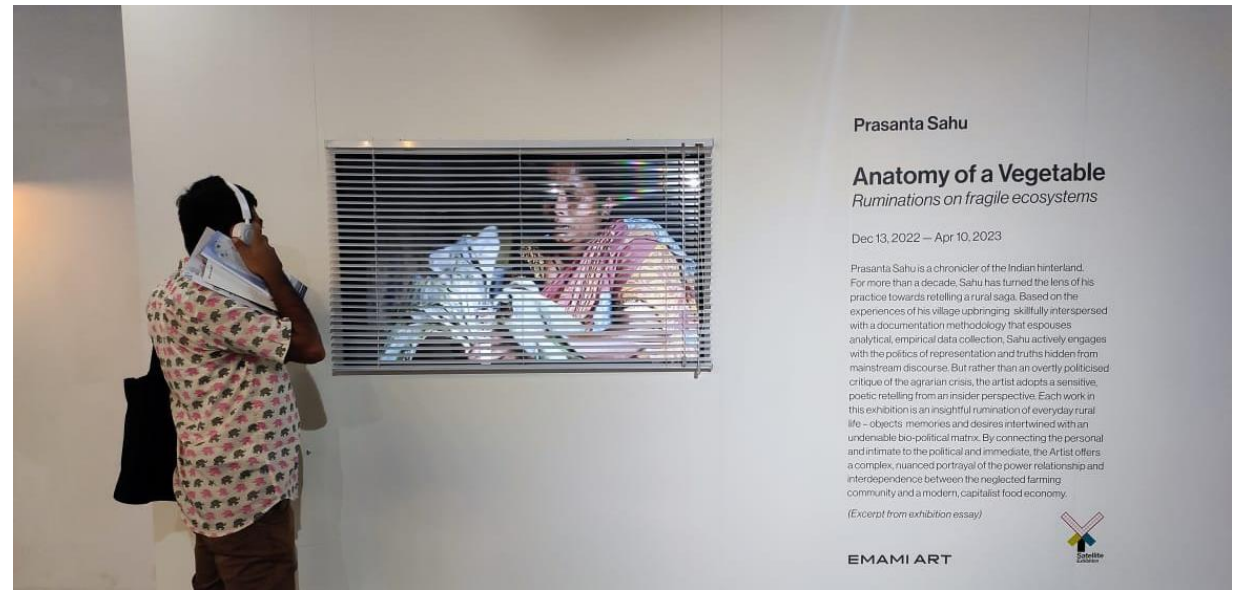
Prasanta Sahu is a chronicler of the Indian hinterland. For more than a decade, Sahu has turned the lens of his practice towards retelling a rural saga. Based on the experiences of his village upbringing, skillfully interspersed with a documentation methodology that espouses analytical, empirical data collection, Sahu actively engages with the politics of representation and truths hidden from mainstream discourse. But rather than an overtly politicised critique of the agrarian crisis, the artist adopts a sensitive, poetic retelling from an insider perspective. Each work in this exhibition is an insightful rumination of everyday rural life – objects, memories and desires intertwined with an undeniable bio-political matrix. By connecting the personal and intimate to the political and immediate, the Artist offers a complex, nuanced portrayal of the power relationship and interdependence between the neglected farming community and a modern, capitalist food economy.

(Excerpt from exhibition essay)

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Solo

Shahidul Alam : Singed But Not Burnt

Especially relevant at a time when freedom of speech and expression is being challenged the world over, Shahidul Alam's work is like a beacon of light and hope. From the epic horror of landscapes devastated by climate change to unflinching images of the ordinary man in the streets who has to struggle through poverty and social inequality to make ends meet and intimate portraits of strangers who have become friends over time, Shahidul Alam's searing portraits bring alive a world that he has embraced as his own. The lens of the photographer remains unwaveringly focused on the under-represented and the minority, creating imagery that is at once protest, reportage and art. As committed as he is to his activism, the viewer cannot but conclude that Alam's eye is aware of the beauty in the moment, for the aesthete in him is never too far away. The series of works selected bear testimony to that, as well as to his belief in humanity.

In Shahidul Alam's words: 'As journalists we need to feel the heat, to stand close to the fire, but then we also risk being burnt. If we were to take one step back, we become ineffective. The trick, therefore, is to get singed but not burnt'. Selected from the photographer's vast archives in Dhaka, this exhibition provides the viewer a look at his early experiments in pictorialism and his later experimentations in exploring the political space by developing a new vocabulary. Photographers are storytellers, witnesses of times, and pallbearers of history. Stumbling from one headline-grabbing disaster to another the photojournalist pauses before the human face of tragedy and his camera records amongst other stories, the misfortune of Kalpana Chakma and our exhibition concludes with this thought provoking tribute to the Chakma activist who 'disappeared'. Alam recreates her history with chilling reminders of her fate and her story is retold in the voices of others who salute her spirit in Kalpana's Warriors.

For the record, this is Shahidul Alam's first major retrospective in Asia, an exhibition that touches upon some of the most critical series of his work over the past four decades. Dr Alam is out on bail, returning from his worldwide travels for his next hearing at Metropolitan Magistrate's court on 19th July, 2022.

(Essay by Ina Puri for *Shahidul Alam : Singed But Not Burnt @ Emami Art Kolkata 2022*)

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Shahidul Alam Brief Bio

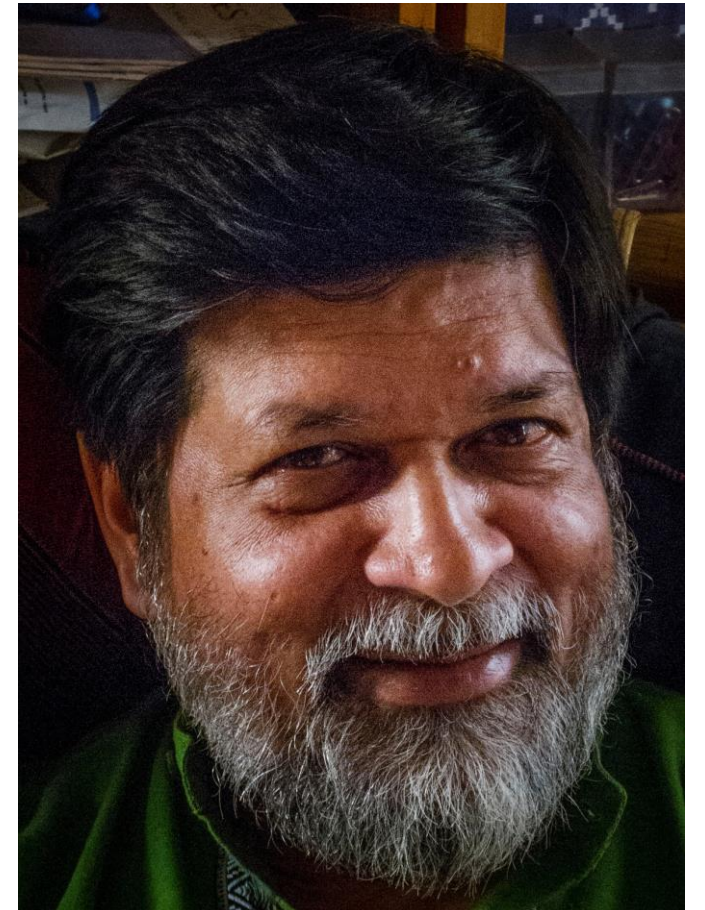
Born 1955
Lives and works in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Time Magazine Person of the Year 2018 and National Geographic Explorer at Large, photographer, writer and curator Shahidul Alam has championed human rights throughout his career. Recipient of the Shilpakala Award, the highest national award given to Bangladeshi artists,

Alam obtained a PhD in chemistry before switching to photography. Returning to Dhaka in 1984, he began documenting the democratic struggle to remove General Ershad. A former president of the Bangladesh Photographic Society, Alam's work has been exhibited in leading galleries like MOMA, Centre Georges Pompidou and Tate Modern. A speaker at Harvard, Stanford, UCLA, Oxford and Cambridge universities, Alam is a visiting professor of Sunderland University and RMIT and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. He has chaired the international jury of World Press Photo. He has also received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Arts London.

John Morris, the former picture editor of Life Magazine described his book "My journey as a witness" as "the most important book ever written by a photographer". His book "The Tide Will Turn" was on the New York Times list of "Best Art Books of 2020". Alam is the founder of the Drik Picture Library, the Pathshala Media Institute, the Majority World Agency and the Chobi Mela festival of photography. He is also a new media pioneer and introduced email to Bangladesh in the early nineties.

Considered a 'Prisoner of Conscience' he was arrested in 2018 for criticising his government and spent 107 days in jail but was released on bail following a massive international campaign for his release. In 2020 Alam won the International Press Freedom Award conferred by the Committee to Protect Journalists and in 2021, the inaugural CASE Award for Humanitarian of the Year. He is currently setting up a centre for investigative journalism in Bangladesh.



Shahidul Alam

Exhibition View





Shahidul Alam: Singed But Not Burnt 13th of December 2022 to the 10th of April 2023. Emami Art @Kochi Muziris Biennale 2022-23 Satellite exhibition



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EMAMI ART

Debashish Paul

Residency

November 26
to December 12, 2022

Performance

December 13 to
December 18, 2022

Venue

Dutch Warehouse,
Fort Kochi

Curated by

**HH Art Spaces Foundation
and Nikhil Chopra**

in Collaboration with
Kochi-Muziris Biennale



**KOCHI-MUZIRIS
BIENNALE
2022**



Debashish Paul Residency & Performance

The River Meets the Sea

Sculptural dress, durational performance, video and photographs

Project duration: 25 days (26th Nov – 15th Dec 2022)

Performance Duration – Total 2 hours

(One hour each on 13th December + 15th December)

Sculptural dress – Rice paper, cloth, charcoal
2022

Sound design in collaboration with Sara Naqvi

Photo Courtesy: Saurabh Singh, Sayanth RS and Emami
Art

This project was realised as part of the Residency & Performance Programme curated by Nikhil Chopra and HH Art Space Foundation in collaboration with Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2022-23, at the Dutch Warehouse, Kochi, India

To view video excerpt

https://www.instagram.com/tv/CmHGfKnpZUR/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link



Day 1 (13th December 2022), Dutch Warehouse, Kochi

Debashish Paul Residency & Performance

The River Meets the Sea

Through his work Debashish Paul, navigates landscapes as he perceives them, as queer ecologies. What he finds in himself around in nature reflects the complexities that lie within, he describes them as conversational exchanges. The river has been his companion since childhood, always forming the periphery of his home. Now based in Varanasi, the cultural significance and knowledge of the river Ganga has become very closely tied to his practice. The artist believes that his body is not separate from this river and is carried within him on every journey he's undertaken.

On his arrival to Kochi, he found himself drawn to the water bodies that surrounded this small island. A meeting of the river he holds within and the sea that has called for his presence. The vastness of this meeting, of river and sea, has spiritual ties. The artist draws parallels to the nature of our bodies, what we are capable of feeling, to the subliminal nature of the sea.

In this performance, the artist has created two costumes that represent the river and the sea. On each panel of these garments, he has intricately drawn out narratives that describe his personal experiences against the landscapes they are presented in. Debashish's stylistic visual language is influenced by his past and present, bound by his care for nature and calm.



Day 1 (13th December 2022), Dutch Warehouse, Kochi

Debashish Paul Residency & Performance

The River Meets the Sea

Day 1 (13th December 2022), Dutch Warehouse, Kochi





Debashish Paul Residency & Performance

The River Meets the Sea

Day 2 (15th December 2022), Dutch Warehouse, Kochi





Debashish Paul Residency & Performance

The River Meets the Sea
Site visit



Debashish Paul Residency & Performance

The River Meets the Sea
Process of making

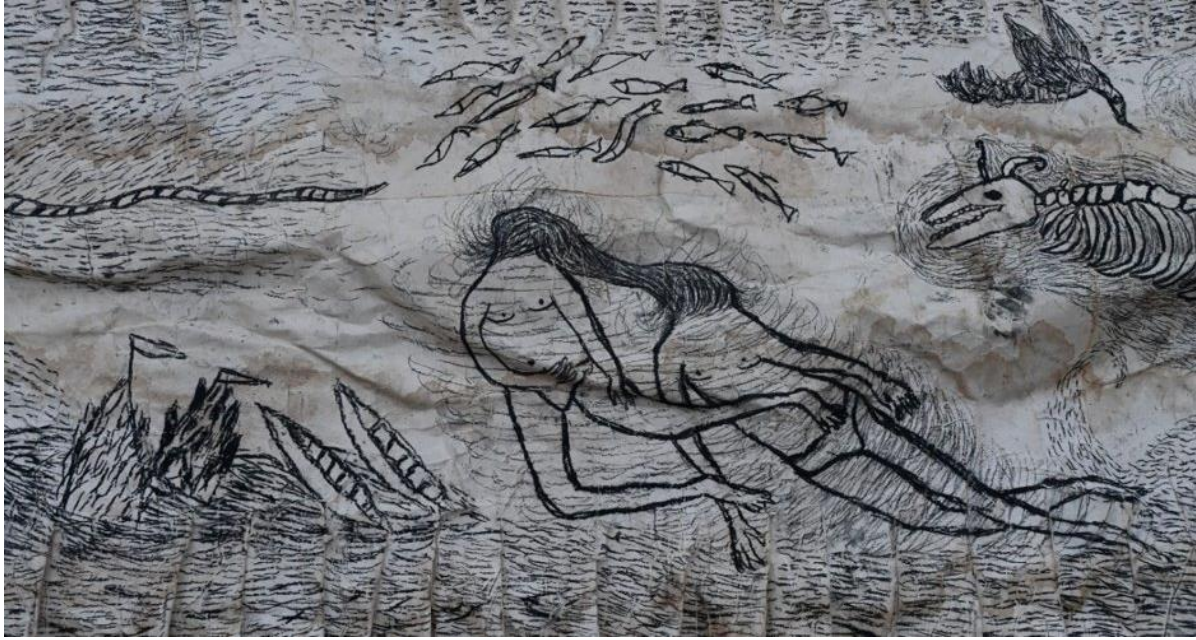


Debashish Paul Residency & Performance

The River Meets the Sea

Process of making





Debashish Paul Residency & Performance



Durational Performance : Videos & Photography

The River Meets the Sea

Display at Dutch Warehouse, Kochi



Debashish Paul Brief Bio

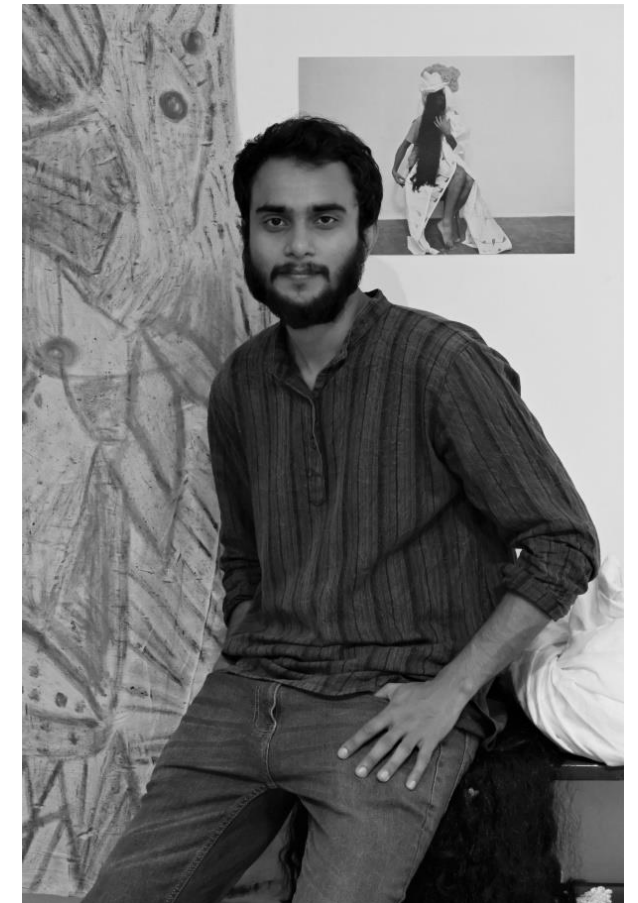
Debashish Paul born in 1994 in Nadia district in West Bengal, explores the problems of queer identity in a society dominated by heterosexual norms. Paul has done his BFA from The Indian college of Art and Draftsmanship, in sculpture, Kolkata, and he completed his master's degree in sculpture from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi in 2021.

He works across mediums including sculptural dress, performance, video, photo and drawing. He seeks to expand and explore the tabooed conception of homosexuality by unveiling the body, treating it as a tender landscape, and generating new references to queer identities. Working in the method of automatism. Paul's recent sculptural costumes and connected performances indicate no specific gender orientation, male or female, are, in fact, the sensible screens, which both conceal and reveal fragile emotions and desires, always in conflict with society.

Paul was part of the Residency & Performance Programme by HH Art Space Foundation in collaboration with Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2022-23, Kochi, India (Residency 26th November – 12th December & Performance 13th – 18th December 2022)

Paul is a recipient of the 2022-23- Prince Claus Seed Fund. He was the first award winners of the: Allegro 1st prize 2021, Contemporary LYNX, UK .He has also received the 2022 Inlaks Fine Art Award, Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation ; The India Artist Relief Fund-2021 (MAP in partnership with 1Shanthiroad Studio/Gallery).

He has participated in Beyond Binaries: Sensing Art through Queer Lensing-2021 at KCC, Kolkata; the Student's Biennale -2021, Kochi, Kala Sakshi Workshop-2021, Emami Art Open Call Exhibition -2020, Kolkata. Of Liminal Beings and Other Spaces curated by Ushmita Sahu -2021, Emami Art, Kolkata



MAP



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Mocha Art Café, Jew Town
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ABOUT THE GALLERY

Emami Art, Kolkata, is a leading contemporary art gallery and space for cultural production in Kolkata, India. The gallery focuses on a future-forward, complex, multi-dimensional approach. It is steadfast in advocating for emerging, mid-career and established artists and engaging with contemporary and historical material. The gallery also aims to create dynamic, wide-ranging registers of exhibition-making and viewing.

In addition to hosting exhibitions and participating in national and international events and fairs, Emami Art has diverse parallel programming. Emami Art has launched the EA Locus in Focus to provide a voice to local and regional communities through ongoing short and long-term projects. EA Incubator & Learning integrates both the physical and virtual interfaces. It helps the arts community free access to regular mentorship programs, workshops, residency opportunities and innovative educational activities that facilitate artistic development, help build collaborative networks and provides a supportive environment for emerging talent. As a centre of excellence, Emami Art identifies as a platform rather than just a facility.

Critical discourses, interactions, documentation and exchange are also essential to our mandate. Under the umbrella of EA Discourse, we develop and produce original writing, periodicals and catalogues that focus on artistic, creative and pedagogical materials. As part of our knowledge-making and archiving process, our regular lineup of talks, seminars, panel discussions and conversations with artists, curators and key partners is helping to establish a safe space for critical engagement.

Emami Art has adopted the inclusive, symbiotic framework, where profitability supports sustainable resource regeneration and public service. The gallery is a green building and strictly maintains free access to all policy.

Deeply committed to promoting a regional, national and international agenda through innovative and alternative programming, emphasis on community and socially relevant engagements, institutional partnerships and more via a multi-year vision for the future, Emami Art is a catalyst of change, research, innovation and inclusivity.