

EMAMI ART



a thousand years
of dreaming

A solo exhibition by
Debashish Paul

Curated by
Mario D'Souza

*Logistics costs include packaging expenses, handling charges, and transportation fees for gallery-to-door delivery

*The dimensions below are for artwork only

OVERVIEW

Emami Art presents 'A Thousand Years of Dreaming', contemporary artist Debashish Paul's first solo at the gallery curated by Mario D'Souza. Centered around the film *Hazaro Saalon ka Sapna*, the body of work includes performance stills, drawings and sculptures. The exhibition examines queer desires against the backdrop of small-town socio-politics, marginalisation and stigma examined through the autobiographical-fantastical lens of the artist's own romantic relationship. Herein mask and costume along with ritual and play become devices of coming to terms with the complexity of leading double lives as queer men, concealing their identities from their families and society.

An excerpt from the curatorial essay reads, "Set in Benares, the artist and his lover meet on the banks of the Ganges in a two-segment film. The first is an enactment of a distant, seemingly impossible ritual akin to a marriage between two men, stemming from the societal and familial pressure faced by queer men in smaller towns and cities to marry women. Complete with a wedding band and a white horse, the barely dressed protagonists are adorned in flowers – their bare bodies in intimate proximity. The second segment follows the process of masking and shedding, washing and soaking, frustration and exhaustion amongst other states resulting from this concealment of sexual identities and constant posturing. The metaphors are sometimes direct, like that of cleaning oneself because of a sensation of impurity or gasping for breath under a false, thick-skinned mask-body.

Paul's drawings abstract the body and its concealing garments into stretched, fantastical bodies that are man, animal, limb and cloth. Using material used in devotional sculptures and as adornment, Paul's repositions and codes these pariah beings as the sacred"



Installation view

Installation view





PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH

a thousand years of dreaming

A solo exhibition by Debashish Paul

A barren, sandy landscape stretches in the distance. As the fog parts, a town glistens on the horizon. It is difficult to determine if it is dawn or dusk, but it seems constant, long and perhaps permanent. This desert is in truth the bank of a perennial river, making lush all that it touches (or almost). Here sinners come to wash their sins and the dead to find the divine. It is believed to drink its waters to liberate the soul. That Debashish Paul chooses this desert-like patch, where no flower blooms, is very simply a reference to an othering, where not everyone is allowed access or can partake in this lushness. His experiences as a queer person, living and loving discreetly in a small, conservative town challenge the selective, privileged ideas of agency and liberation with disarming simplicity.

In these sands, and from a shallow grave, in an image reminiscent of the many unnamed, infected bodies abandoned on such banks in the wake of a pandemic not too long ago, Paul embraces his beloved like the lovers of Hasanlu, of Valdaro. To invoke these references is to speak of abandonment - of those pushed beyond the acceptable margins of civilized societies; of bodies governed or restricted by laws, rendered pariah or vilified

as contaminated - of bodies that are now bones, yet precious monuments to a long struggle for determination. These bodies are a sacrifice, evidence and an archaeological site.

Paul operates beyond these margins, to revel in chosen families. This world is not make-believe, but hidden in plain sight.

Woven around the film *A Thousand Years of Dreaming*, the body of work includes performance stills, drawings and sculptures.

Paul remains with the autobiographical-fantastical lens of his own romantic relationship and the places he calls home. Herein mask and costume along with ritual and play become devices of coming to terms with the complexity of leading double lives but also survival. Amidst all this there is a search for permanence, or some version of it. I return to the image of Paul and his lover, lying in an embrace in a shallow grave, to notice as we all must that in his world a finger-drawn flower blooms in the sand where no real flowers grow.

Mario D'Souza
2024



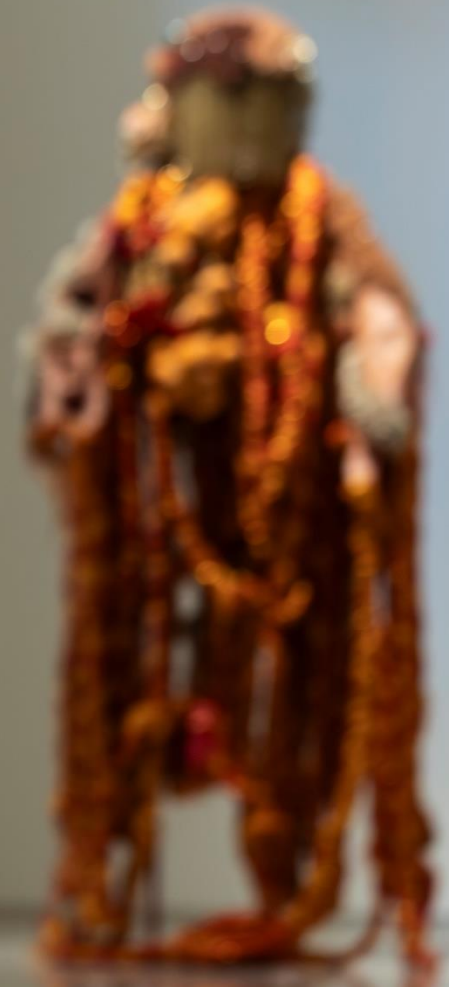
Installation view



Installation view



Installation view



Installation view



Debashish Paul (b.1994)

The Ancient Dream 2

Acrylic ink, acrylic, stone eyes, cowries shell, and threads on 100% cotton on Fabriano paper
42.12 x 20 in. (107 x 51 cm.) approx.

Polyptych

2024, Varanasi

0.300 kg.

Signed and dated in English (on the reverse)

AB2988





Detail of *The Ancient Dream 2*

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

The Ancient Dream 1

Acrylic ink, acrylic, stone eyes, cowries shell, and threads on 100% cotton Fabriano paper
46 x 37.40 in. (117 x 95 cm.) approx.

2024, Varanasi

0.290 kg.

Signed and dated in English (on the reverse)

AB2991





Detail of *The Ancient Dream 1*



Detail of *The Ancient Dream 1*

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

The Ancient Dream 3

Acrylic ink, acrylic, stone eyes, cowries shell, and threads on 100% cotton on Fabriano paper
89.7 x 33 in. (228 x 84 cm.) approx.

Polyptych

2024, Varanasi

0.450 kg.

Signed and dated in English (on the reverse)

AB2998





Detail of *The Ancient Dream 3*



Detail of *The Ancient Dream 3*

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

Anatomy of a Dream

Acrylic ink, charcoal, stone eyes, and threads on Fabriano paper

112.9 x 46.4 x 1.5 in. (287 x 118 x 4 cm.) approx.

2024, Varanasi

1.230 kg.

Signed and dated in English (on the reverse)

AB2990





Detail of *Anatomy of a Dream*



Detail of *Anatomy of a Dream*

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

Skin of Unfolding Desires

Latex rubber, acrylic ink, threads, stone eyes, cowrie shells, and brass washer

127.9 x 45.6 in. (325 x 116 cm.) approx.

2024, Varanasi

8.160 kg.

Unsigned

AB2993



Detail of *Skin of Unfolding Desires*





Detail of *Skin of Unfolding Desires*

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

The Skin of Dreams 2

Latex rubber, plastic and crystal beads, acrylic ink, threads,
cowries shell, plastic helmet and brass washer

Overall dimension variable

A- 17.71 x 15.15 x 15.15 in. (45 x 38.5 x 38.5 cm.) approx.

5.650 kg.

B - 68.11 x 68.11 x 1.37 in. (174 x 174 cm.) dia. approx.

Set of 2 works

8.940 kg.

2024, Varanasi

Overall weight - 14.59 kg.

Unsigned

AB2994



Detail of *The Skin of Dreams 2*





Detail of *The Skin of Dreams 2*

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

The Skin of Dreams 1

Latex rubber, plastic and crystal beads, cotton, threads, cowries shell, fabric, and plastic helmet

Overall dimension variable

75.1 x 31.8 x 19.2 in. (191 x 81 x 49 cm.) approx. .

2024, Varanasi

20.6 kg.

Unsigned

AB2997



Detail of *The Skin of Dreams 1*





Detail of *The Skin of Dreams 1*



Installation view

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

Shells of Past Life 1

Latex rubber, plastic and crystal beads, threads, and cowries shell

72 x 18.1 x 10 in. (183 x 46 x 25.5 cm.) approx.

2024, Varanasi

8.490 kg.

Unsigned

AB2995





Detail of *Shells of Past Life 1*



Detail of *Shells of Past Life 1*



Installation view

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

Shells of Past Life 2

Cowrie shells, acrylic ink, crystal and plastic beads, threads, stone eyes, and brass washer

76.7 x 40.1 in. (195 x 102 cm.) approx.

2024, Varanasi

9.350 kg.

Unsigned

AB2989





Detail of *Shells of Past Life 2*



Detail of *Shells of Past Life 2*



Debashish Paul (b.1994)

Veils of Rebirth

Latex rubber, acrylic ink, threads, stone eyes,
and brass washer

Overall dimension variable

53.1 x 12.2 x 5.5 in. each approx.

Overall weight - 3.03 kg.

Set of 7 works

2024, Varanasi

Unsigned

AB2992

Detail of *Veils of Rebirth*



Detail of *Veils of Rebirth*





Installation view

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

Remnants of the Dream

Synthetic resin, fibre, plastic, thread, glass, silicone and metal

Overall dimension variable

A- 35 x 14.56 x 20.07 in.(89 x 37 x 51 cm.) approx.

5.480 kg.

B- 12.59 x 5.51 x 3.54 in.(32 x 14 x 9 cm.) approx.

0.710 kg.

C- 3.93 x 3.93 x 3.54 in. (10 x 10 x 19 cm.) approx.

0.450 kg.

Overall weight - 6.64 kg.

Set of 3 works

2024, Varanasi

Unsigned

AB2996





Detail of Remnants of the Dream



Detail of *Remnants of the Dream*

Debashish Paul (b.1994)

A Thousand Years of Dreaming

Digital video

Project duration: 75 days

Performance duration: 4 days

Video duration: 13 minutes approx.

Single-channel colour video with sound

2024, Varanasi

Video Edition 1/3 + 1 AP

Credits

Concept, Direction and Costume: Debashish Paul

Cast: Debashish Paul, Vinod Kumar Patil and Munna Azad Band

Director of Photography, Editing and Colouring: Karim Rahman

Camera Operator: Anirudha Das

Project Assistant: Ritesh Gupta

[VIDEO EXCERPT](#)

AB2987





Debashish Paul (b.1994)

A Thousand Years of Dreaming Photo 1

Digital print on non-archival paper

Archival ink on archival paper

16 x 24 in. (40.6 x 60.9 cm.)

2024, Varanasi

Unsigned

Edition - 1/5

AB3071

Detail of *Thousand Years of Dreams* Photo 1



Detail of *Thousand Years of Dreams* Photo 1



Debashish Paul (b.1994)

A Thousand Years of Dreaming Photo 2

Digital print

Archival ink on archival paper

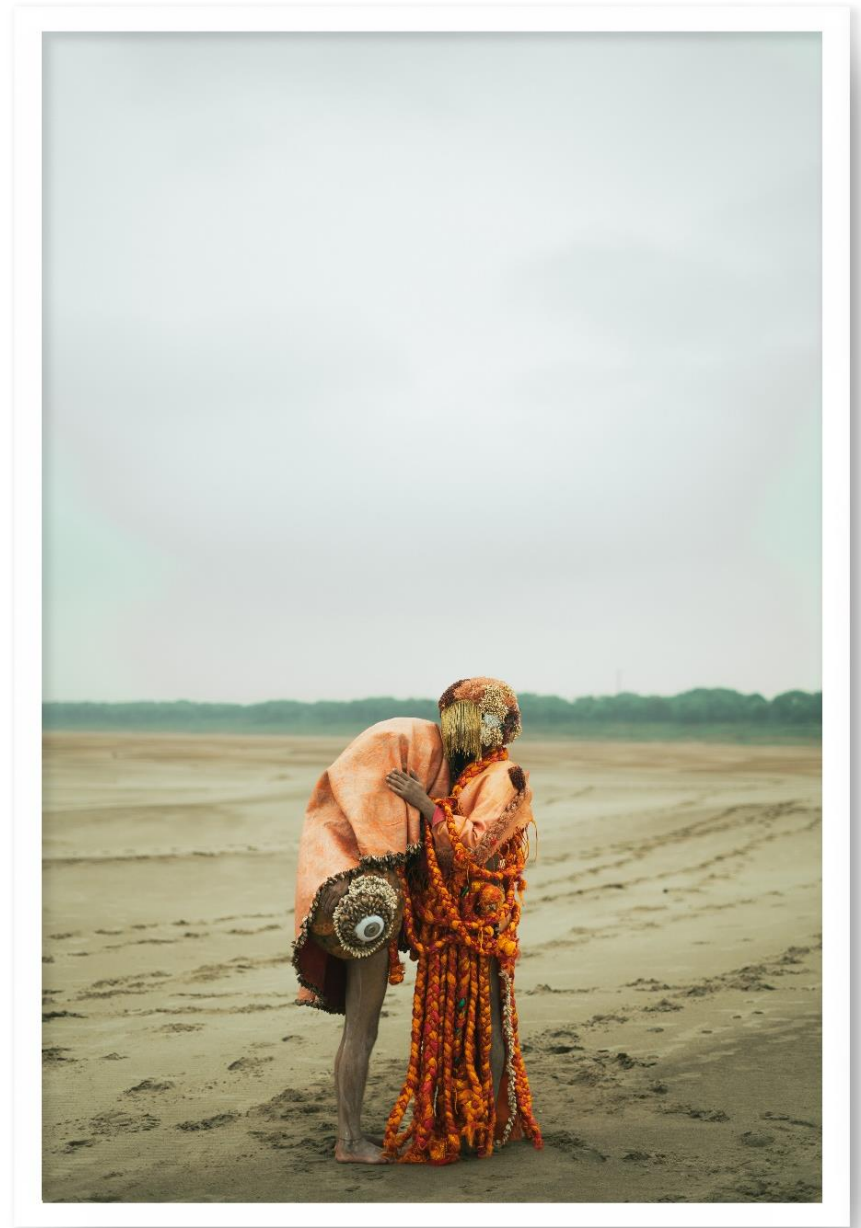
24 x 16 in. (60.9 x 40.6 cm.)

2024, Varanasi

Unsigned

Edition - 1/5

AB3072



Detail of *Thousand Years of Dreams* Photo 2





Detail of *Thousand Years of Dreams* Photo 2



Debashish Paul (b.1994)

A Thousand Years of Dreaming Photo 3

Digital print

Archival ink on archival paper

16 x 24 in. (40.6 x 60.9 cm.)

2024, Varanasi

Unsigned

Edition - 1/5

AB3073



Detail of *Thousand Years of Dreams* Photo 3

BIO

Debashish Paul, a multidisciplinary artist born in 1994 in the Nadia district of West Bengal, explores the problems of queer identity in a society dominated by heterosexual norms. Paul graduated with a B.F.A. in Sculpture from the Indian College of Art and Draftsmanship Kolkata, and an M.F.A. in Sculpture from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi in 2019 and 2021 respectively.

Paul has exhibited and performed nationally and internationally including *'Samudra Manthan or The Stir of the Milk Ocean'* at Tenerife Espacio de las Artes, Tenerife, Spain, 2024 as part of a residency; *'The Magic of the Silver Swan'* curated by Kinnari Sariya, Bowes Museum, Bernard Castle, UK, 2023-24; Prince Claus Fund Biennial Symposium in Sri Lanka, 2023; Performance program with HH Art Space, supported by Pro Helvetia's "To-gather" International Collaboration, 2023; Cite internationale des arts, Institut Francais Paris Residency supported by Prameya Art Foundation, and the French Institute in India in 2023; Kochi-Muziris Biennale Performance Residency in collaboration with HH Art Space and Nikhil Chopra, 2022-2023; The Students' Biennale in Kochi, 2021; *'Of Liminal Beings and Other Spaces'* at Emami Art, Kolkata, 2021; *'Beyond Binaries: Sensing Art through Queer Lensing'* at KCC, Kolkata, 2021; and *'Emami Art Open Call Exhibition'* at Emami Art, Kolkata in 2020.

Emami Art has shown his works at various art fairs, including Art Dubai 2024 in the 'Bawwaba' section as a solo project curated by Emiliano Valdez; India Art Fair 2023 in New Delhi, where he was also the India Art Fair Artist in Residence; and Art Dusseldorf, Germany, in 2023.

Paul has several awards to his credit, including the Inlaks Fine Art Awards and Residency at 1 Shanthi Road Studio/Gallery, Bengaluru in 2022. He has participated in the Kala Sakshi Workshop in 2021. Paul was awarded the Kalanad Scholarship 2022-23 by the Prafulla Dahanukar Art Foundation; the Seed Award by the Prince Claus Fund in 2022; the Inlaks Fine Art Award by Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation in 2022; the Allegro 1st prize by Contemporary LYNX, London in 2021 and the Indian Artist Relief Fund 2021 by Museum of Art and Photography in partnership with 1Shanthiroad Studio/Gallery.

Debashish Paul lives and works in Varanasi and Nadia, West Bengal.



EMAMI ART

KOLKATA, INDIA

Emami Art, Kolkata, is a leading contemporary art gallery and space for cultural production. Based 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.

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 resolute to be a catalyst of change, research, innovation and inclusivity.

Artists represented by Emami Art:

- Ali Akbar PN
- Anjan Modak
- Arindam Chatterjee
- Arpita Akhanda
- Arunima Choudhury
- Bholanath Rudra
- Debashish Paul
- Ghana Shyam Latua
- Janhavi Khemka
- Prasanta Sahu
- Santanu Debnath
- Shilpi Sharma
- Sibaprasad Karchaudhuri
- Soma Das
- Suman Dey
- Ujjal Dey

To know more about the artist, please click below:

<https://www.emamiart.com/artists/>

