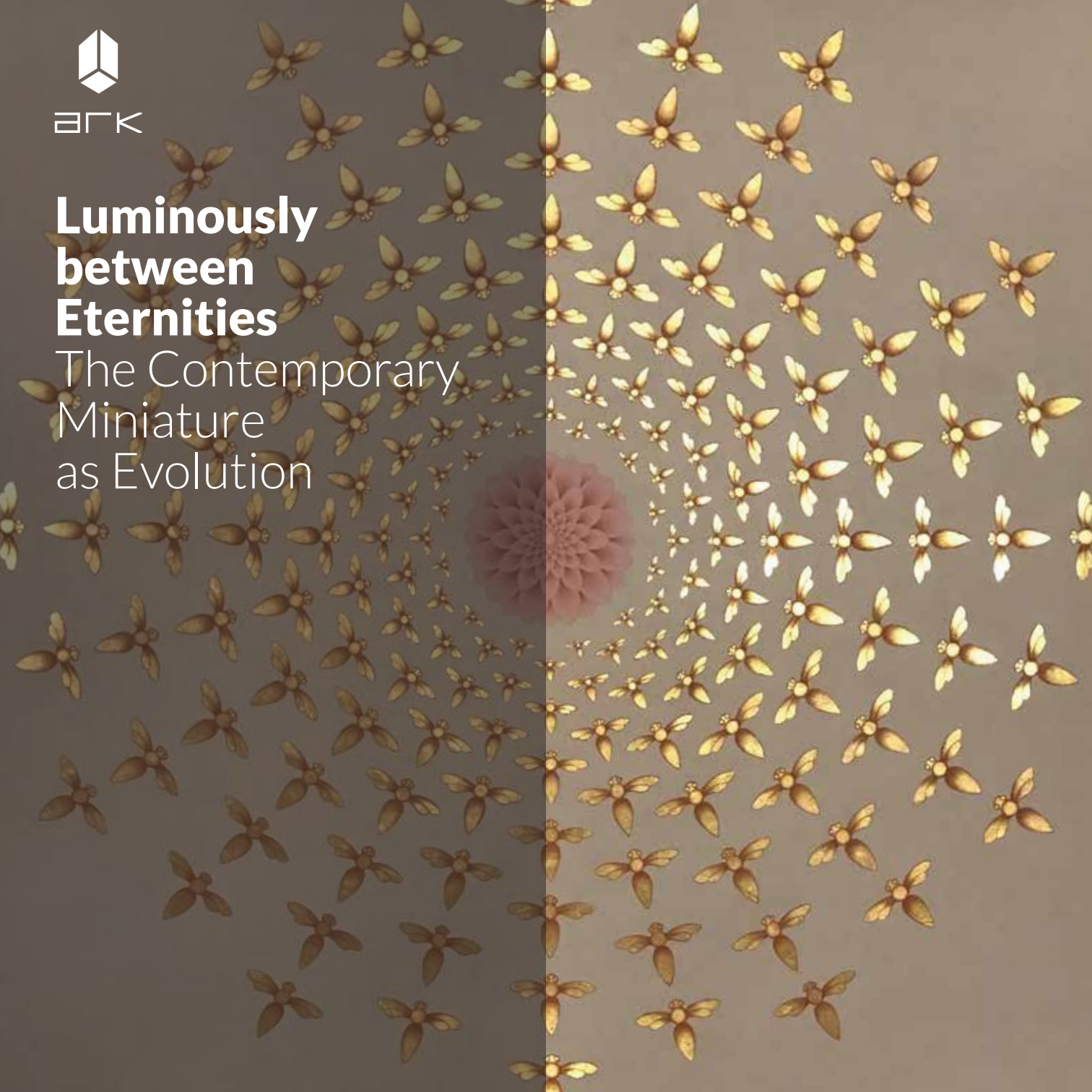




ARK

# Luminously between Eternities

The Contemporary  
Miniature  
as Evolution



“Before my birth there was infinite time,  
and after my death, inexhaustible time.  
I never thought of it before: I'd been living luminously  
between two eternities...”

- Orhan Pamuk , **My Name is Red**

# Acknowledgements

It was with great appreciation and utmost humility that I accepted the call to guest curate this exhibition at Gallery Ark in Baroda. It has been an exciting opportunity, and I have relished the chance to put together a group of artists that represent the ways the Indian miniature genre has continued to influence contemporary work. An exhibition like this takes many hands, from curatorial advisors to carpenters, but I would like to take this space to thank the following: Mr. and Mrs. Atul and Seema Dalmia for creating and maintaining the incredible exhibition space that is Gallery Ark, Gallery Curator Pratiti Shah for her never-ending advice and hard work, Kadamboor Neeraj for his constant attentiveness to schedule and detail, Vinit Vyas for his perceptive introductory catalogue essay and short texts on the vintage miniatures that constitute a part of this display, and to all of the artists involved, without whose work the exhibition could never have happened.

Waswo X. Waswo

Udaipur

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# Pravaah :

The changing waves  
of Indian painting

- Vinit Vyas

## Acknowledgements

I am honoured to be involved with this exhibition. I am immensely grateful to Waswo X Waswo, Varunika Saraf, Pratiti Shah and Kadamboor Neeraj for giving me this wonderful opportunity to write. I am indebted to Waswo for allowing me to write on the paintings from his collection. This essay owes much to Dr. Isabella Nardi, who kindly read a draft of the essay and whose scholarship, encouragement and guidance has made me ask important questions. My thanks to Anubhav Mathur and Yash Raj Goswami for their guidance on the Pushtimarg sect. I am also grateful to Aishani Gupta, Parag Uday Yadav, Foram Chandarana and my family for their support.

देहनिःसृज्यते देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा |  
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ||१३||

As the embodied soul continually passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. The self-realized soul is not bewildered by such a change<sup>1</sup>. This verse,

from chapter two in the Bhagavad Gita, summarises what exactly change is. The transformation of Indian painting, much like a body from young to old age and then to another body, makes us aware how the tradition of Indian painting has been on a constant move. Change is inevitable and whether it is Mughal or Rajput painters, we have many examples of how, over the course of a millennium, Indian painting has shaped into what we know it today. But here, my intention is “to pluck a flower from every meadow, an ear from every sheaf”, much like Abu'l Fazl did, in his A'in-i-Akbari while talking about painters of the Mughal atelier<sup>2</sup>. It is important to note that, when I use the expression ‘Indian painting’, I refer to manuscripts and portable paintings from circa 1000 to 1800 CE. But before we even begin, I would like to encourage you to become a rasika (connoisseur) to experience a painting, understand how to “read” a painting by scratching its layers and by immersing yourself in its realm.

The earliest surviving paintings are mostly on palm leaf or birch bark. It was in 13th century that paper replaced them. This long journey of Indian

painting has been told many times, but it has to be retold and especially re-looked at, to understand it better. The Buddhists and the Jains, who developed an astounding manuscript culture, have left us many masterpieces. One can imagine a Jain monk holding a manuscript from the Jnana Bhandara and reciting the verses while flipping through the visual clues painted on it. Undeniably, the illustrations contained in those manuscripts inspired the pre-Mughal, Mughal, Rajput and later painting traditions, which further developed their own 'styles' and 'sub-styles'. Whether those are conscious pictorial choices, experimentations with European realism or playing with colours and lines, much has to be unravelled. As Robert Del Bonta notes: "The traditional Indian artist constantly plays with various approaches – including conflicting ones, such as realism and abstraction – often within a single work."<sup>3</sup>

Now hung on the walls of many museums in the world, these paintings were made for intimate viewing and were often held in hand, revealing the true mastery of the artist and the eye of the connoisseur. The delicate detailing of a necklace or shaded greens of a forest come to light when viewed with a careful observation. But further research has opened to us a whole new world of paintings which are monumental in size and were made for collective viewing in the court. Surviving examples, such as the Mewar Ramayana painted in Udaipur in the late 17th century, the large cloth paintings from Kotah and Nathdwara, and the monumental paintings from 18th and 19th century Jodhpur, unravel the performative and story-telling traditions of pictorial narratives.

Often referred as Ustad, Musawwir or Chitaro, the Indian painter's ability to juxtapose the ideas of space, time and narration using different narrative modes within a single frame may seem strange and illogical to us initially, but it also gives us an opportunity to enter the painter's psyche. Though few painters are known

till the 1500s, we see a drastic change as Mughal and Rajput masters start gaining recognition signing their names, at times even gifting a painting (Nazar) to their patrons. The expansion of Mughal and Rajput ateliers saw the arrival of new artists, such as Farrukh Beg, who came from Iran, Chokha who travelled to Udaipur from Devgarh, or Dalchand who came to Jodhpur from Delhi. Wherever a painter travelled, he brought his own ideas, style and skill to new courts, dissolving them in the patron's atelier, still maintaining his own identity. Stylistically, Mughal and Rajput paintings may not look similar. But as one begins to observe carefully, a Mughal ruler painted in Rajput style or a Rajput ruler painted in Mughal style speak of the artists' ability to work in one or more styles. About the Mughal artists, Kavita Singh writes: "In such paintings, Mughal artists are showing us that they do not belong to a style; rather, many styles belong to them, and they can use these styles to say many different things."<sup>4</sup>

As we know about Indian literature, whether Puranas or epics, these literary gems have been morphed over time with their regional adaptations, changing the characters or narrative which is certainly true in the case of Indian paintings. This brings us to the idea of copying, repetition and citation in Indian painting. The ingenuity of the artist in either using a figure in a different composition or copying the entire composition changing certain elements speaks of "a conversation" between the artists and how they responded to different styles or masters, as noted by Dr. Molly Emma Aitken<sup>5</sup>. In other words, a 'copy' is not merely a copy but represents a whole set of ideas, amalgamations, responses, and the morphing of compositions over time.

Now let us delve into three masterpieces to further enlighten our understanding of Indian painting. Fig. 1 is a typical portrait representing Diwan Bhim Singh riding a horse. Flanked by two attendants holding flying whisks, the nimbate elite seems to march like a

true warrior- a shield on his back and a dagger tucked in the sash. The genre of portraiture transitioned over a long historic span. Before the arrival of the Mughals, the concept of portraiture was quite different, something which we may not even recognize as a portrait. It was an idealized depiction emphasizing the lakshanas or attributes of a great personality. No individualized portraits are to be found. In his *Spirit of Indian Painting*, B.N. Goswamy superbly notes: “It is only from the time of Akbar onward that what can be called ‘true portraiture’ in the sense best understood in Western terms comes into its own in India.”<sup>6</sup>



Fig. 1- Diwan Bhim Singh on a horse, circa 1820 CE, Mewar, Rajasthan, India. Collection of Waswo.X.Waswo

Soon after, individualized portraits entered the Rajput world. Apart from this, kings were often transformed into divinities or vice-versa. An excellent example to understand this is an enigmatic painting from Nathdwara or Kota (Fig.2). One of the most important sects in Vaishnavism, the Pushtimarg sect or the Path of Grace, has been very active in promoting visual arts in its main pilgrimage centre of Nathdwara, near Udaipur, where their main deity, Shrinathji- the 6 or 7 year old Krishna lifting Mount Govardhan is located. Enrapturing aesthetic sense, elaborate rituals with emphasis on devotional music (Haveli Sangeet), temple wall-hangings (Pichhwai), and picture worship (Chitra Seva), this ‘Path of Grace’ is an important example in understanding the tradition’s existence and continuity from early 16th century, the period when Vallabhacharya founded it. Often referred to as Goswamis or Tilkayats according to their position, the priests were ardent devotees (sevaks literally “servants”) of Shrinathji, but did not miss the opportunity to get their own portraits painted, even as kings. In Fig. 2, a haloed priest flanked by attendants holding regalia, is seen riding a horse signifying his priestly yet royal status. Like his horse, he is heavily bejewelled in red turban adorned with a sarpench (turban ornament). His face reminds us of Tilakayat Govardhanlalji (1862-1934), an important figure in Nathdwara’s history.

Another masterpiece shows an elaborately adorned Shrinathji while a Goswami is performing the aarti of Rajbhog Darshan, the fourth one from the eight Jhankhis (literally “glimpses”) of Shrinathji in the day. In the Pushtimarg tradition, paintings, along with sculptural icons are considered to be God’s own manifestation, forming a personal relationship with the viewer. Chitra-Darshan (literally ‘painting vision’), believed to be as old as the sect, shows how paintings became an important part of the sect’s tradition. Though Shrinathji does not literally look at the viewer,





Fig. 2- Equestrian portrait of a Pushtimarg priest, circa 1880 CE, Nathdwara or Kota, Rajasthan, India. Collection of Waswo X Waswo

the icon's frontal view, his graceful attire adorned with an elegant turban, the shimmering golden cows and the aura of the painting transfers us into the original shrine at Nathdwara. In such paintings, one seldom sees names of the artists. Perhaps it was because of the artists' choice to remain anonymous as this painting the lord was as much sacred as adorning or worshipping him.



Fig.3 - Gosainji performing aarti of Shrinathji, circa 1880 CE, Kota or Nathdwara, Rajasthan, India. Collection of Waswo X Waswo.

To understand this complex tradition of Indian painting, many more stories are to be told, much more remains to be understood and we are perhaps only beginning to see a whole new world in itself. The tradition is a continuous Pravaah, or 'flow' of ideas in an ocean which seems to keep evolving. But Lallulal, in his Raj-niti concludes it better.



कवबिासी गृहकूप कौ कथा अपार समंद  
तैसीयै कछु कहत हौ मत है जैसी मंद

The poet dwells in his well-like house, yet his tale is as vast as the sea; I have said what little I could, within the limits of my intellect<sup>7</sup>.

Much like the master artists of the past, many contemporary artists use elements, compositions and ideas from this ocean of Indian painting which, as I mentioned before, one needs to look and re-look to understand it. Murad Khan Mumtaz has argued how there was a distinct break in the long continuity of the painting tradition in India when the direct british rule was established in 19th century north India. Regarding the 'contemporary miniature painting' tradition, much more remains to be studied, this exhibition attempts to explore how the contemporary artists get inspired from the past, weaving their own narratives swimming swiftly in this enormous ocean of Indian painting.

<sup>1</sup>See Prabhupada, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. 1998. Bhagavad-Gita As It Is. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Pg.64

<sup>2</sup>Guy, John, and Jorrit Britschgi. 2011. Wonders of the Age - Master Painters of India 1100-1900. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Pg.8.

<sup>3</sup>See Prabhupada, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. 1998. Bhagavad-Gita As It Is. Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Pg.64Singh, Kavita. 2017. Real Birds in Imagined Gardens- Mughal Painting between Persia and Europe. Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute; Pg. 11

<sup>4</sup>Bontà, Robert J. Del. 2017. "Divine Visions, Earthly Pleasures: Five Hundred Years of Indian Painting." Orientations 48 (4); Pg.2

<sup>5</sup>See Aitken, Molly Emma, and Molly Emma Aitken. The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. Pg.155.

<sup>6</sup>Goswamy, B. N, The Spirit of Indian Painting: Close Encounters with 101 Great Works, 1100-1900. London: Thames & Hudson, 2016.Pg.41

<sup>7</sup>Snell, Rupert. 1991. The Hindi Classical Tradition: A Braj Bhāṣā Reader. London: SOAS. Pg.49.

# Luminously between eternities

The contemporary miniature as evolution

- Waswo X Waswo



Waswo X. Waswo was born in Milwaukee, USA, on November 13th, 1953. He has lived and travelled in India for seventeen years, and has made his home in Udaipur, Rajasthan, for the past eleven. There he collaborates with a number of artists, including the photo hand-colourist Rajesh Soni, and the miniaturist painter R. Vijay. Waswo is best known for addressing issues of collaboration and "Otherness" in his art. His photo books include *Photowallah* (Tasveer, 2016) and *Men of Rajasthan* (Serindia Contemporary, 2014), while his painted collaborations with R. Vijay have been documented in Annapurna Garimella's book *The Artful Life of R. Vijay*, (Serindia Contemporary, 2015). Waswo has shown his work widely with self-probing exhibitions such as *Confessions of an Evil Orientalist*, New Delhi, 2011.

"Before my birth there was infinite time, and after my death, inexhaustible time. I never thought of it before: I'd been living luminously between two eternities..."

- Orhan Pamuk, **My Name is Red**

Some months ago, I was asked by Gallery Ark to curate an exhibition on contemporary miniature painting. Though the offer was immediately tempting, I suffered some hesitation. I have worked extensively within the format of miniature painting for over a decade, but my actual training was that of a photographer, a practice that seems as distant from the tradition of the miniature as one can get, and though I come from a family that contained more than its normal share of artists, their art was fully based in the Western tradition. As a matter of fact, up until 2006, the year I first came into contact with the

miniaturist R. Vijay (Rakesh Vijayvargiya), in Udaipur, and began what has now been a twelve-year collaboration with him, I knew next to nothing about miniature paintings at all. For me, initially, the Indian miniature format, which I had first been exposed to in the tourist bazaars of Rajasthan, was simply another means of telling a story; a story that could wander into the realms of self-reflection (or wild fantasy) that my camera could not explore. The reluctance to accept the curatorial call was overcome once I realized that my self-doubt was in large part due to a wrongly thought emphasis that I was placing upon the notions of tradition that the words "miniature painting" evoke, and a too little emphasis upon the word contemporary. As artist Jignasha Ojha puts it, "Tradition is our soul, and Modernity is our body". With that in mind, I have approached this curation from the standpoint of a contemporary artist, a position that allows for fresh

and even unlikely perspectives. I have also tried to suggest links to traditions from which this contemporaneity has grown and/or been referenced.

The sad mistake of the severe traditionalist is his or her inability to perceive, or appreciate, the continuity of tradition as it mutates into the contemporary. As has been said many times before, "tradition" is not static: it reacts to geographies, power structures, pedagogical lineage, patronage, existential threats, praise, new histories, economics, and the pure joy of innovation and discovery. When we speak of the "miniature tradition" we already embrace a lexicon of transmission, transmutation, and distinctly evolved styles. These styles are most often expressed in geo-political terms. There is Persian, Moghul, Ottoman, and even Thai. There is Pahari, Bikaneri, Deccani, Oudh, Mewari and Marwari. And if we choose to break things down further, Uniara, Devgarh, and Nagaur. Each of these geographically defined schools has of course morphed with time. Thus we speak of early Jodhpur as opposed to late Jodhpur; early Moghul as opposed to late Moghul. The point being, nothing within the miniature tradition ever remained constant, but rather, change was the norm.

As I proceeded to put forth a curatorial call to various artists linked to the continuing evolution of this tradition, I purposely kept the proposal broad enough to allow for an array of approach. Rather than curating to a tightly constrained theme, as is the common practice in today's heavily conceptual artworld, I asked that I be sent images of what each individual artist was currently working on, and what they might have available in storage that would be suitable for exhibition. I did not want to interfere with each artist's own pathways of discovery. I did decide upon a title that I hoped would suggest earthly concerns, enlightened imagery, and transcendent spirituality/philosophy. Thus, *Luminously Between Eternities* began along its path.

For the layman, the answer to the question "What is a miniature painting?" is often that of size, and in part, this assumption would be true. Such paintings were firstly painted as a means to illumine (luminously) manuscripts that were meant to be contained within folios only available to royalty. The delight of a miniature was its ability to be held within the hand and gazed at in close proximity while offering up to its owner the exquisite detail contained within. However, definition by size neglects not only the examples of large hunt and battle scenes that Maharajahs were prone to commission, but also the obvious importance of style: the graceful line of well-trained hands, the flattened picture plane, the construction of depth through layering rather than perspective, figures sized according to importance rather than reality, the intricacy of detail, the formal approach to portraiture, the idealization of landscape, the lushness of gardens, the primacy of the border, and the extraordinary subtlety of colorations. Today, a wide variety of artists make reference to this continuity of tradition from a diverse array of perspectives. Not all define themselves as "contemporary miniaturists", but all give acknowledgment to the influence of miniature painting in their work. Proceeding from a framework that emphasizes visuality and technique as a means to express an artist's social and individual concerns, these artists carry forth various threads contained with the idea of miniature that include notions of craft, balance, style and spirituality (a word which today some might define more in terms of a decoupling from the purely materialistic than according to any one strict doctrine).

Perhaps Mahaveer Swami best embodies the full lineage of norms that we expect when we speak of the miniature painting: his technique is precise and meticulous, his pigments hand-ground; his colouration subtly vintage. Swami maintains a small studio in Bikaner, where he paints at a tiny desk upon the floor with legs crossed in the

traditional manner. He often depicts the Hindu deities of Ganesh and Krishna, yet he wanders afield to incorporate hints of modernity into much of his work. Thus we find young women intently at work upon a computer, or a businessman speaking on his mobile phone, all rendered exquisitely, in the manner of a master. Mandeep Meera Sharma follows a similar artistic path, though his works seldom stray as far from the demands of religious imagery. We may find Krishna and Radha riding along on a bicycle, or other such small and playful variants upon this theme, but much more likely we see Sharma pursuing a stylistically updated presentation of Hindu religious themes as we have commonly come to expect them. If Swami's explorations are thematic, while his technique is largely grounded in tradition, Sharma adheres to the themes of religious tradition, while he explores time-consuming and innovative painting techniques and carefully balanced compositions that appeal to a dreamy, romantic sensibility.

Four artists from Udaipur have long been acknowledged to have pushed the boundaries of the miniature style: Yugal Sharma, Lalit Sharma, Chhotu Lal and Rajaram Sharma. For many dedicated years they have fused religious imagery, and a love for their native city, with a modernist update. In this exhibition Yugal Sharma offers small, minimalist renditions of the theme of a traditional Pichhwai: Krishna with Cows. The colouration is almost Pop, and in one a grid of decorated bovines evokes the multiplicity of imagery for which Andy Warhol was known. Another stylistic exploration has been Yugal's series of gold-winged figures that morph peacock and cow with angelic female faces with flowing hair. This free-ranging invention of the mythical Kamadhenu somehow rings true. Similarly, Chhotu Lal gives us, in exquisitely graceful line, yet another remake of a Krishna with Cows, and also a surreal scene from the Ramayana, in his own uniquely modernist style. Krishna again makes his appearance, this time as

Shrinathji, in two large canvasses by Lalit Sharma. Lalit has made a career of exploring, with minimal geometrics, the bare white architecture that typifies his native Udaipur. It is not so much the inclusion of temples that hold versions of Krishna that makes these paintings glow with spirituality, but the sense of endless time and space poetically evoked by the artist. Rajaram Sharma offers us a triptych of mandalas, with Krishna at the center and loving cows on the sides. It is a skillful and elegant warp of the traditional Pichhwai, becoming not an object of worship, but an object of meditation.

Olivia Frazer, who studied miniature painting technique in Jaipur, takes the stylization of miniature painting to an even more minimal, skill-demanding, extreme. The blooming lotus so often found in romantic miniatures becomes a mandala from which emanates a spiritual glow. Her work demands meditative, undisturbed, looking. The large-scale Pilgrimage, which features in this show, hints at the Shiv Shakti, male/female, principle, but references the idea of spiritual quest itself: the difficulty of ascension and the bliss of attainment. Another artist who hails from the UK, Jethro Buck, also studied miniature painting in Jaipur, and also falls under the influence of Eastern philosophies. An artist who sees a linkage between our current environmental crises and the cultural narratives that underlie our approach to nature, Buck says, "Many Western mythologies and stories tell us to go forth, multiply, and tame nature...I'm more interested in 'stewardship' and ancient Eastern traditions and concepts that speak of reverence for nature and all living creatures. The slow process of making a miniature seems more in tune with the timeless rhythms of the natural world."

Aside from strictly devotional imagery and royal portraiture, the Indian miniature is seldom devoid of nature: the symmetry of Moghul gardens finds its unrestrained counter in lush jungles, tree-covered

mountains, wild animals and delicate floral meadows that border shaded streams. The paintings of Varunika Saraf may not at first strike the viewer as related to the miniature tradition, but the manner in which she searches out rare colours, grinds her own pigments, and applies her homemade watercolours with delicate precision, all translate well with India's miniaturism. In the series *Low Tide*, the artist assumes the role of a naturalist, carefully documenting the small gems of shell and coral she has found along the beach. To view the entire series, of which only a small part is presented in this exhibition, is like paging through a notebook illustrated carefully by a person as keen on observing nature as was Jahangir and his painter Mansur. Manisha Gera Baswani's suite of small paintings also examines nature, but in a manner that seems closer to home, familiar, and fragrant with the smells of childhood memories. Ekta Singha's tea-stained suite, *You Are The Most Sensible Definition of Love*, though at first glance similar in concern to the previous two artists, in fact takes a leap from nature to its biological underpinnings in sex. Singha's phallic cacti and spermatozoa-resembling succulents remind us of the gendered realities at the heart of life itself.

Meenakshi Sengupta and Anindita Bhattacharya take this interest in gender and biology to further reaches. Sengupta's work, with its hidden surprises and contrarian optics, sometimes confuses and sometimes shocks. Yet she holds steadfast to a refined miniaturist aesthetic, even as she distorts it, twists it, and playfully subverts it with the twin filmic staples of sex and violence. Her work is boldly aggressive, and yet begs for deeper, more thoughtful understandings. On the other hand, Anindita Bhattacharya's work examines that other biological reality, death and decay, via intricate imagery that hovers between beauty and disgust; the archetypal myth, and the inevitable reality. We are reminded in her work that conception and birth begin the long road to death, and perhaps, rebirth....the continuity of

all things. A series of diptychs by Gopa Trivedi miraculously evokes the above concerns of decay, death, violence and sex with absolutely no use of figuration. An austere, ghostly room that has only two doors and contains for furniture only an "Oriental" carpet, seems to be being consumed by a growth of ever-spreading blood. Like a recurring nightmare, we watch the progression of this defacement of floor and walls, left with only our personal speculation as to the cause of a sequence that becomes hideously captivating. Manish Soni also plays with the ideas of interiors, sex, and privacy, by converting an historical miniature scene into a painting representative of a moral and societal shift of norms.

From the trappings of a royal court, to the interiors and exteriors of temples, to palaces and fortresses viewed far in the distance, human interventions within nature have always been an element of the miniature tradition. Returning to Yugal Sharma, we see a map-like painting of a small Indian town with viewpoints that alter between the horizontal and the vertical, the frontal and the side. Courtyards are painted as if videoed from a hovering drone, a standard trope of the courtly miniature genre. Yugal's painting on cloth, with its antecedents in many such "map paintings" from Nathdrawra and elsewhere, find a more abstractionist iteration in the work of Vimal Ambaliya, whose canvases become minimalist aerial mediations on foundational remains, or rooftops lit with a thousand points of light, as if seen from a landing plane. The miniature's capacity for abstraction has been well explored by New York artist Alexander Gorlizki, who has long worked in collaboration with the kharkanna (miniature workshop) of Riyaz Uddin in Jaipur. Akin to my own practice, Gorlizki functions as the prime conceptualizer of the work, and, as he explains, when he isn't able to be with Riyaz in the studio, "each work is sent back and forth between New York and Rajasthan, sometimes over a period of two, three or more years accumulating layer upon layer of notes,

revisions and additions". Gorlizki touches upon several other elements of the miniature tradition that I've yet to mention, including the playful and the tantric. Steeped in the New York school of abstraction, but having become acquainted with traditional masters in Jaipur, Gorlizki utilizes fine craftsmanship to obtain flowing, deceptively random forms. He is a master at interweaving patterns, ancient and modern, creating jarringly surprising alignments. At the heart of Gorlizki's work is an obsession with toying with notions of the exotic, history, vintage memorabilia, and the motifs of traditional miniature borders. Gorlizki is unafraid to uncover any stone in this play, which keeps each work happily childlike, yet layered with complexity. In a very different manner, Delhi-based artist Manjunath Kamath also delves into the traditions of the Indian miniature with gleeful abandon. Kamath's immense visual knowledge of the symbology of both the miniature tradition and Hinduism allows him to mix associations in what is often cultural collage. Jignasha Ojha playfully collages objects and personages from different social positions and chronologies in her miniature-inspired watercolours. Some of her works, such as the copper samovar that appears in this exhibition, literally reflect the artist's moment in time (her studio), while suggesting the longevity of the object's archetypal existence within the culture it still inhabits. These simple collages of time and objects foster narratives centuries old.

I end this informal essay with Khadim Ali, because it is perhaps he that most typifies the newly global status of the contemporary miniature genre. Ali's family roots were in Bamiyan, Afghanistan, the site of the famed (destroyed and rebuilt) Buddhas, but Khadim was born in Quetta, Pakistan, as the son of refugees who had escaped the Taliban. He studied mural painting and calligraphy in Tehran, painting in Lahore, and took his MFA at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, in Australia (where he

continues to live). Such are the fluid, but never borderless, lives of our times. Khadim's paintings in this exhibition speak of heroes and devils, hell, or hell on earth. He references the Shahnameh, or "the Book of Kings" which was read to Ali by his grandfather. His paintings may be dark to us, obviously shaped by an artist's youth among a displaced family, and yet Ali's tale is one of survival. As often happens, beauty is often the child of pain. As is so well described in Orhan Pamuk's poignant novel about a miniaturist Kharkhana situated in Istanbul, the "tradition" has always faced internal discord and outside cultural challenge. It has resisted, adapted, morphed and evolved. There is no one tradition or lineage in the world of miniature art, but many. What some believe began at the time that the Singh Sisters and Saira Wasim came to prominence in Pakistan, (a movement soon dubbed "the contemporary miniature"), in fact had existed long before. Miniature painting has always been contemporary, even when it had been reduced to minor variations within the copyists' workshops. It has always been a medium that expands and grows, even if so slow it is sometimes barely detectable. For the miniaturist and the miniature, life is always lived, luminously between two eternities.

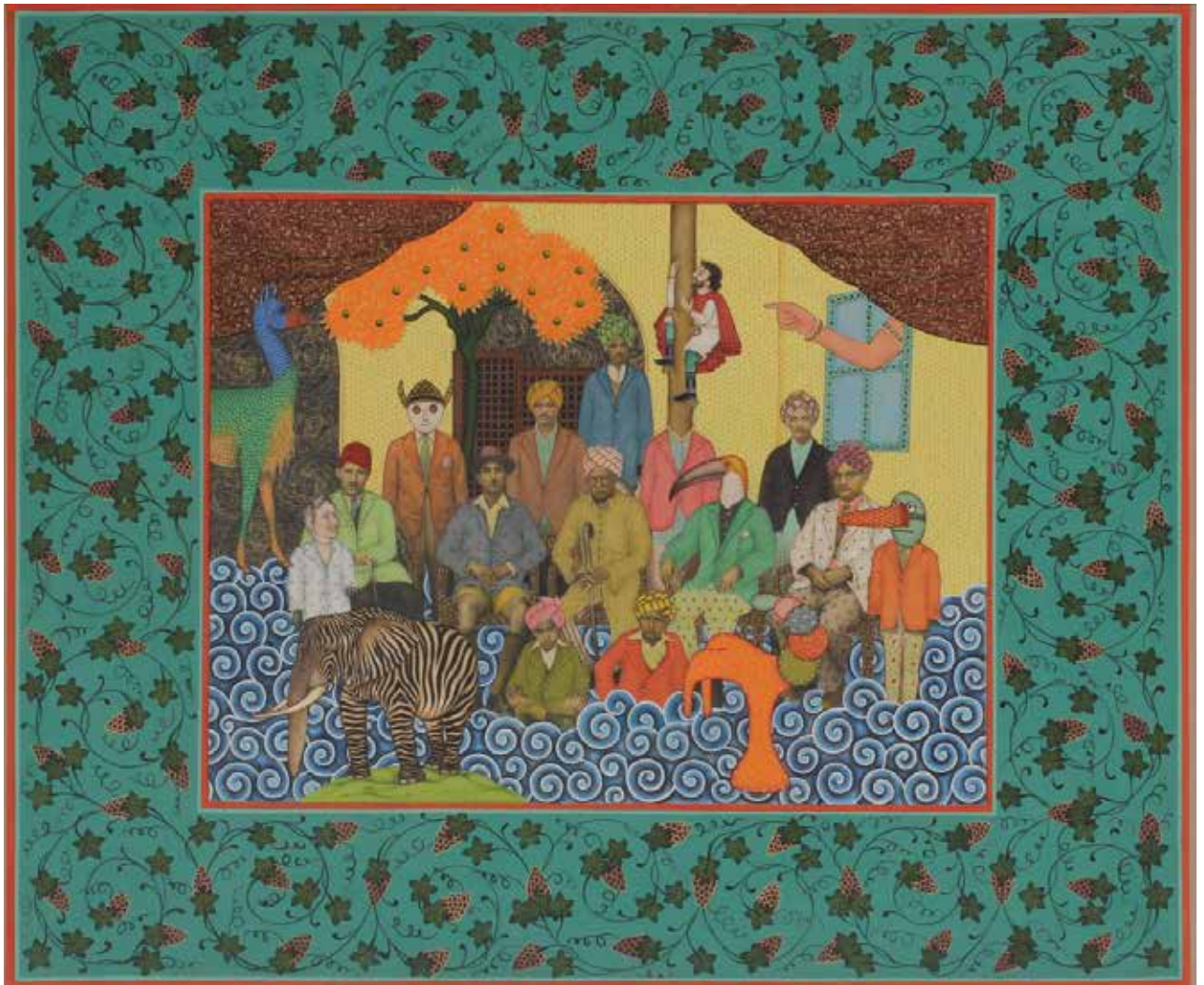


# Alexander Gorlizki

New York, USA

British artist Alexander Gorlizki was born in 1967 and earned a BA Hons in Fine art in Bristol followed by an MFA in sculpture at the Slade School, London. Currently living in New York, Gorlizki has done over 15 solo exhibitions, the most recent ones being Variable Dimensions, Dallas and Special Presentation, New York, both in 2015. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions and residencies while his artworks are a part of the Denver Art Museum, Royal Ontario Museum and Victoria & Albert Museum to name a few. He has also taught at various museums and institutions including the Victoria & Albert Museum, University of West England and Museum Kunstpalast.

Best known for his works on paper, don't be surprised if you encounter a Mughal courtier, a Rajput princess or Chinese clouds popping up in his paintings as his obsession with Indian miniature paintings has made him collaborate with Riyazuddin, a Jaipur based miniature artist. From exploring surreal narratives, juxtaposing eastern and western iconographies and philosophies, pop culture to Islamic designs and photographs, Gorlizki's vast range of work shows his ability to understand and use these in his own contemporary narratives.

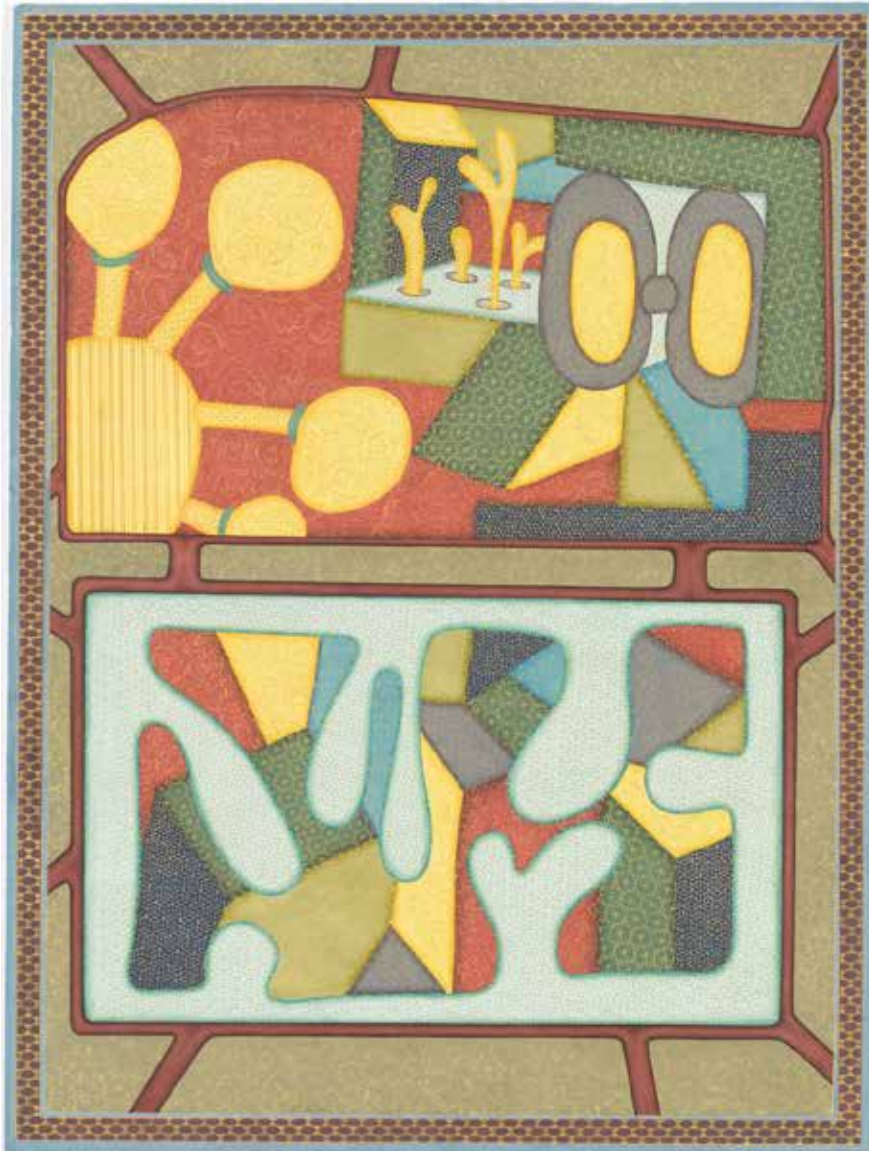


Gathering on the Family Farm

(2017)

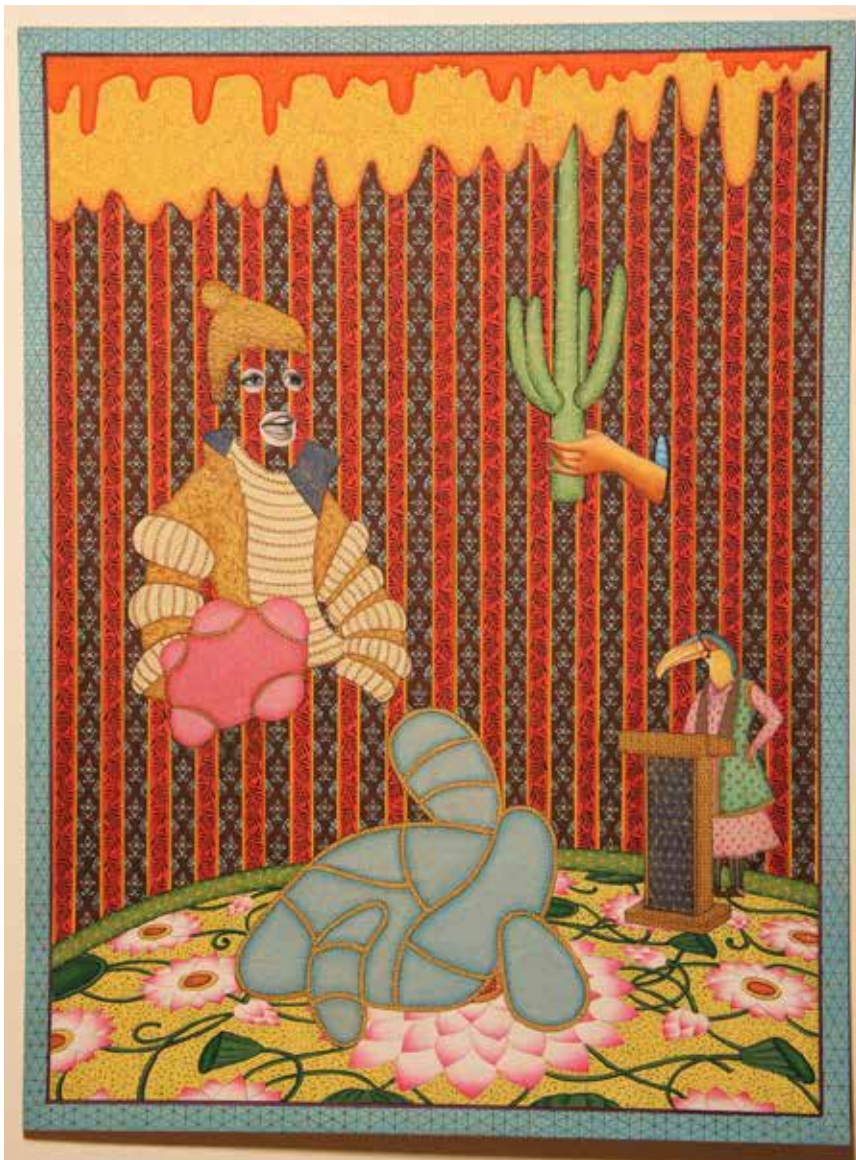
Pigment and gold on vintage photograph

10.43" x 12.59"



Chapter and Verse  
(2013)  
Pigment and gold on paper  
15.35" x 11.61"





The Apparition Has Something to Say  
(2013)  
Pigment and Gold on Bookprint  
12.4" x 9.25"

# Anindita Bhattacharya

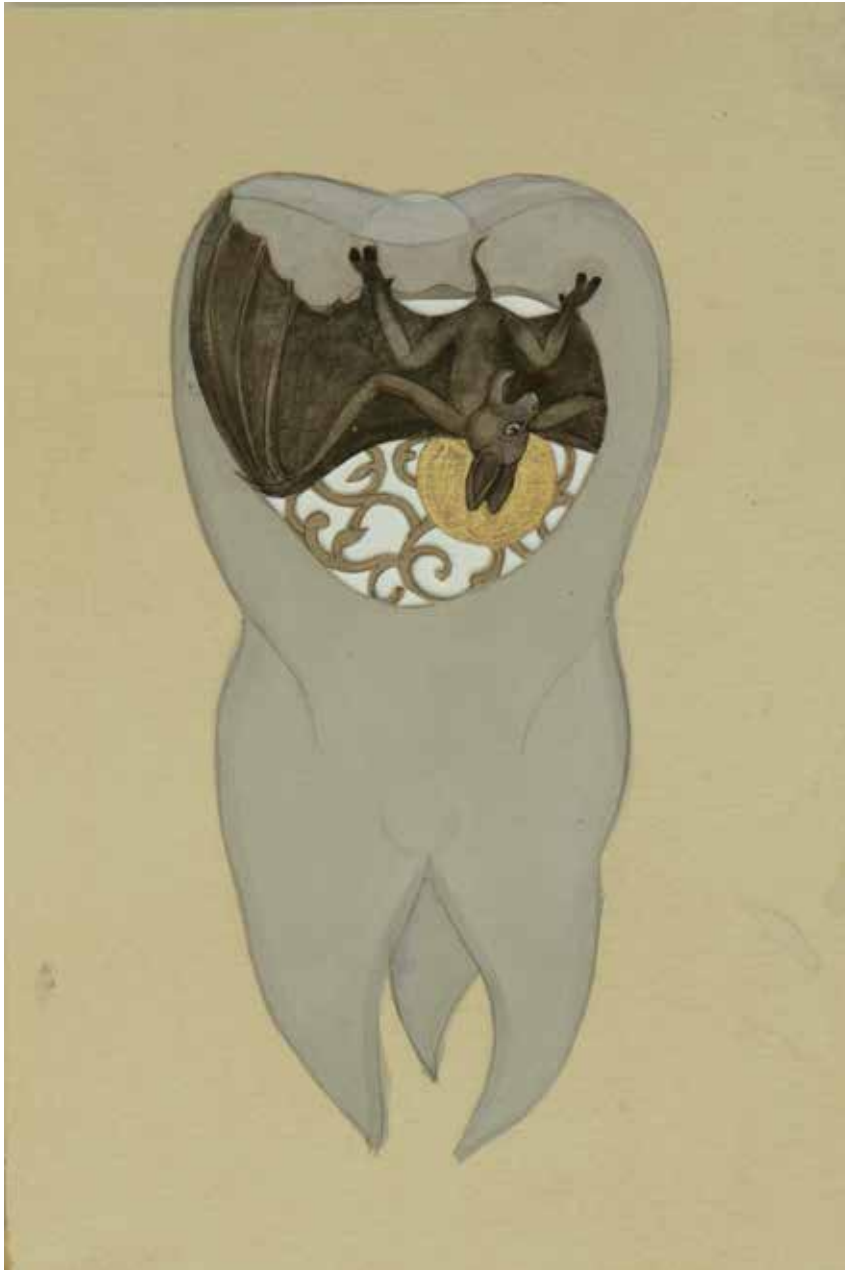
New Delhi, India

The experience of my immediate environment, both tangible and intangible, the cities I have lived in and the act of negotiating these spaces, are woven into my work. The lines between what is personal and political blur. Personal space has been subverted by the political; my art cannot but embody it. While the aesthetic trope of the vocabulary allures and encourages the viewers to travel through thousands of year of art history across various cultures and traditions; the content is often paradoxical. These narratives are expressed in multiple layers in my paintings allowing me to compare various experiences from different time frames, working on many levels of partial revelation; and knowledge trying to capture something reminiscent of the past; but in a manner that isn't attempting to reproduce it.

Ornamentation and creating patterns are an integral part of my work, serving as a means to camouflage the

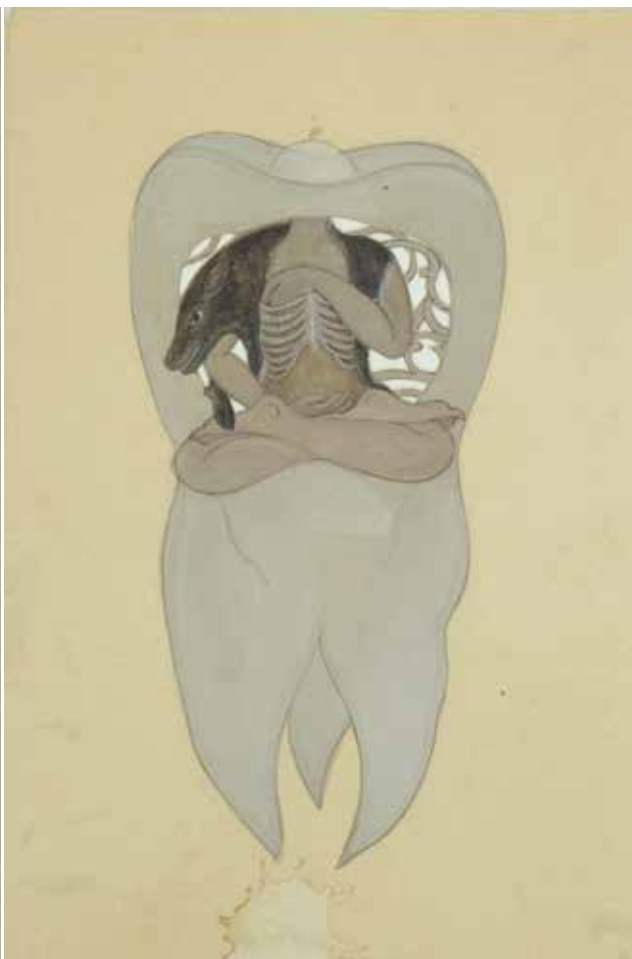
images. Ornamentation is universal across cultures while patterns can create bridges between time, tradition and cultures, therefore forming a universal, global language. Transcending their traditional purpose, ornamentation is no longer benign but conflicting in more than one respect. Though they appear harmonious, on a closer glance one might observe that they are layered and infused with imagery of subtle violence and chaos. The margin, an integral part of the many illuminated manuscript art traditions, moves away from the periphery and becomes the central image in my work. Over the years my engagement with detailed motifs and patterns coalesced with the search for an identity that was syncretic as a response to the political mobilization and monolithic culture constructs about the idea of a nation.

- Anindita Bhattacharya



Untitled (2018)  
Gouache and cut out on paper





Untitled (2018)  
Gouache and cut out on paper



Untitled (2018)  
Gouache and cut out on paper

# Chhotu Lal

Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

Born in 1957, Chhotu Lal is an acclaimed artist based in Udaipur, Rajasthan. He received an MA in Drawing and Painting with a gold medal from MLSU (Udaipur). Apart from his two solo shows at the LTG Art Gallery and Nitanjali Art Gallery in New Delhi, he has been honoured with many awards and has actively participated in many dual and group shows in India and abroad. His dual shows have been exhibited at Jehangir Art Gallery (1991) and Taj art gallery (1995) in Mumbai, LTG Art gallery, New Delhi (1996), Birla academy of Art and culture, Kolkata (2003). Notable group exhibitions include India International exhibition (1996), Harmony organized by Reliance Industries Ltd, Mumbai (2002-2009), Drops from the Ocean, Gandhi Memorial Center Library, Washington DC (2007) and most recently Through the Looking Glass and Retelling Stories show, Art Pilgrim gallery, New Delhi. (2016-2018).

His training in traditional Indian miniature painting and his interest in mythology is reflected in his artworks. He writes "At present, the content of my paintings derives from renowned mythological books, such as the Shreemad Bhagwat Gita, the Sukh-Sagar, the Kabir Bani, and other references. I strive to render their universal value and philosophy in modern compositions using Indian traditional miniature painting techniques, colour and brushes. During the process of creating these oeuvres, the philosophy of omnipresent meaning becomes apparent. Such truth gives me a quiet peace of mind and eternal pleasure. Furthermore, my chosen mode of painting grants me great passion."



The Divine Melody

(2018)

Gouache and gold on acid free  
paper

10.23" x 14.17"

# Ekta Singha

Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Ekta's works for the show, "You are the Most Sensible Definition of Love" is a series of botanical images – blooming cacti mostly as seen through a window pane. The effects of time as seen through the yellowed panes of the window, and resilience of the cacti are symbolic of what she calls "antinomical love". Ekta talks about love and longing by trying to seek the complex within the simple.

An alumna of the Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU, Ekta lives and works in Vadodara.



You Are the Most Sensible Definition of Love - II  
(2018)  
Gouache and Khadia on tea toned, acid-free paper  
5" X 6"



# Gopa Trivedi

Gurugram, Haryana, India

Taking inspiration from seemingly insignificant everyday spaces, Gopa Trivedi's work process incorporates characteristics and implications related to space, time, degeneration, and fragmentation. Gopa sees the space as a cocoon that envelops the inhabitants and acts as an agency of biographies of the lives that inhabit them. These spaces encompass the lives within them and bear traces of what has and what still dwells in them.

Gopa Trivedi was born in 1987. She earned her B.V.A and M.V.A in Painting from MS University, Baroda, in 2010 and 2012 respectively. Her prominent group shows are 'Ijtema' Lahore, 2017; 'Contraband' New

Delhi, 2017; 'We have some Stardust' NIV, New Delhi, 2015; 'Reconstructing Home' Serena Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan, 2015. Her solo show 'In Pursuit of Silence' was organised by Art Konsoult, New Delhi in 2014. Since 2016 she has been associated with Art1st Foundation, which works towards improving art education in schools and developing art curriculums.



Untitled – Suite of five paintings

(2018)

Gouache on Wasli

7.08" x 9.84" each

# Jethro Buck

Oxford, United Kingdom

A young artist who draws parallels between ancient and contemporary India, Jethro Buck was born in 1986, in Oxford, UK. After gaining a BA in Fine Arts from Falmouth College of Arts, he received the Farjam scholarship to pursue an MA in Traditional Arts at the prestigious Prince's School of Traditional Arts, London. In 2014, he was honoured with the Ciclitira Prize for outstanding work presented by HRH The Prince of Wales, Prince Charles. From the time he received a grant from INTACH in 2012, he has been studying Indian miniature painting under the master artist Ajay Sharma in Jaipur.

As an artist who believes in finding truth while enjoying the process of making an artwork, his work is focused on celebration of life, preservation of ancient culture, and wild spaces. He writes "Many Western mythologies and stories tell us to go forth, multiply and 'tame nature' and I think the world has taken that a bit far by now. We are currently going through the 6th mass extinction. I'm more interested in 'stewardship' and ancient Eastern traditions and concepts that speak of reverence for nature and all living creatures. The slow process of making a miniature seems more in tune with the timeless rhythms of the natural world."



The Night of the Glowing Sembar  
(2018)  
Oil on linen  
55.11" x 39.37"

# Jignasha Ojha

Vadodara, Gujarat, India

An alumna of the Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU of Baroda, Jignasha's work is based on the interaction of two cultures: the culture of globalized, contemporary India, and that of the tradition bound – the present and the past. Jignasha's inquiry is basically a quest to seek what is exchanged in this interface.

Jignasha brings together traditions and motifs from the miniature painting style, and images from the popular aesthetic of today. Jignasha views her work as a time machine; shuttling back and forth through time to dwell upon learnings and memories from the past, and placing them in the present scenario. Valuing the stories and experiences of the past is key in Jignasha's practice – retrospection is mirrored and visually depicted in her paintings.



Inside Story - 1 -10  
(2018)  
Watercolor on paper  
11" x 10"



# Khadim Ali

Sydney, Australia

Now dividing his time between Sydney, Quetta and Kabul, Khadim Ali was born in 1978 as an Afghan refugee in Quetta, Pakistan. Belonging to the Hazara minority in Afghanistan, his family had to move and settle in Pakistan. With his obsession towards miniatures, he first studied mural painting and calligraphy in Tehran (1998-99) and later received a scholarship to do his BA in miniature painting at the prestigious National college of Arts, Lahore (2003) where he was awarded with Haji Sharif award in miniature painting. He was further honoured by two artist residencies in Japan and went on to do an MA in Fine arts at the University of South Wales, Sydney. Apart from his solo exhibitions in Chawkandi Art Gallery in Karachi, Green Cardamom in London and

other places, he also actively organized and participated in The Haunted Lotus: Contemporary Art from Kabul, Cross Art Projects (2010), and The Force of Forgetting, Lismore Regional Gallery, Australia (2011).

Ali's work reflects his deep interest in his culture, especially looking at Persian tales and miniature paintings while experimenting in different mediums and scales. Known for depicting gigantic demons, Ali is inspired by the famed Shahnameh of Persia and weaves his own narrative using them.

- Khadim Ali's works are presented in association with Gallery Latitude 28, New Delhi.



Forlorn Foe 7

(2016)

Gouache and gold leaf on Wasli paper

13" x 10"



Forlorn Foe 5

(2016)

Gouache and gold leaf on Wasli paper

13" x 11"





Forlorn Foe 8

(2016)

Gouache and gold leaf on Wasli paper

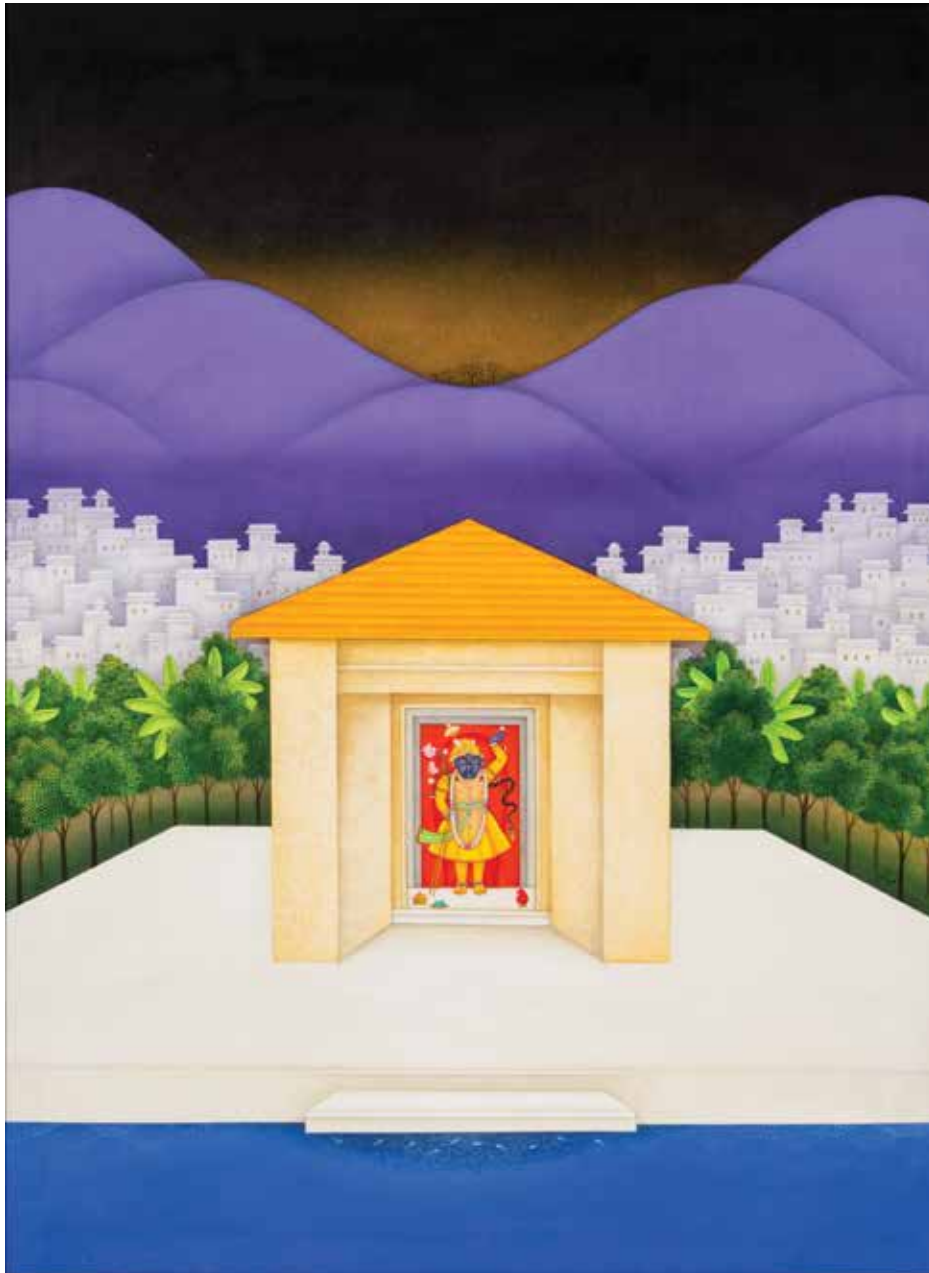
18" x 14"

# Lalit Sharma

Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

Born in 1953 in Nathdwara, Lalit Sharma inherited his unique artistic skills from his father Ghanshyam Sharma and earned a Master's Degree in Drawing and Painting from the University of Udaipur. His work has been a part of numerous collections including the Taj Group of Hotels in Mumbai, New Library in Cardiff, Jawahar Kala Kendra and LKA in Jaipur. He has been honoured with Rajasthan Lalit Kala Academy Award thrice, AIFACS Award, Tulika Kalakar Parishad Award and Udaipur Gold Medal. He was also an artist in residence in the Wales, UK.

His work is rooted in the Indian miniature painting tradition but his uniqueness shines due to subtle variations of forms having modernist sensibilities. Architectural spaces including buildings, palaces of Rajasthan and especially his beloved city Udaipur and its lakes, streets make a regular appearance in his artworks.



Shrinathji in My City  
Oil on Canvas  
36" x 48"



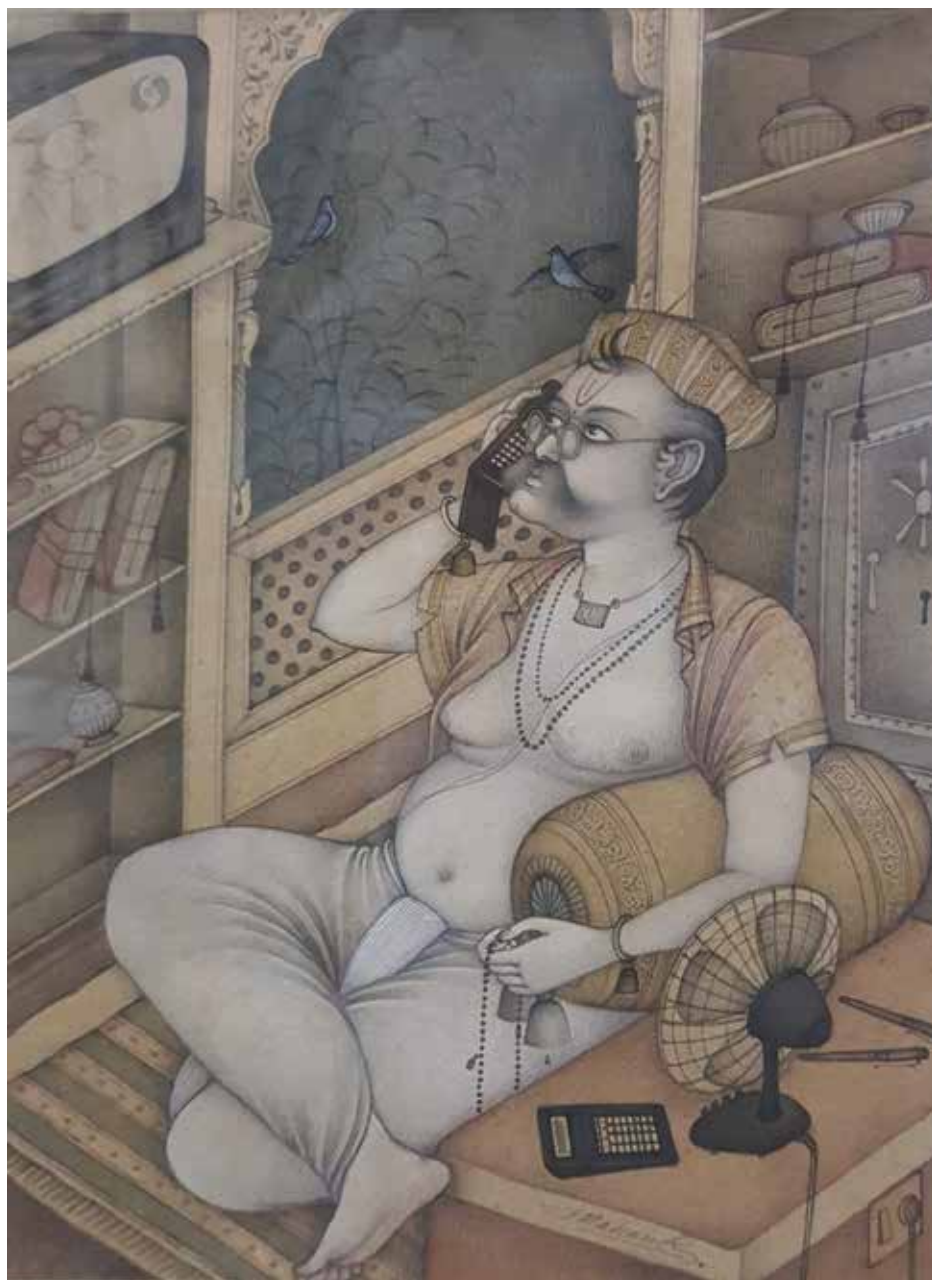
# Mahaveer Swami

Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Born in 1959, the master artist Mahaveer Swami has descended from a family of traditional painters from Bikaner. Apart from having a Diploma in painting and sculpture from Jaipur, he trained under his grandfather, father and the famed late Shri Ved Pal Sharma “Bannu ji”. From exhibiting at the Richard Kimball Gallery in USA (1993), National Craft Museum and Bikaner house in New Delhi (both in 1996), Gallery Horikawa, Japan (2005), Swami has also done paintings demonstrations in India, Paris, Cairo, Dubai and beyond. He has been felicitated with many awards and honors including the National award in 1986, Sanskriti award in 1992, Padmashree Isamudeen Ustad award in 1995 and most recently,

the Rajiv Ratna award in 2002. His paintings are a part of collections in India and abroad like Gallery Mansur, New Delhi, Gallery 88, Kolkata and World Erotic Museum, Berlin.

Strongly inspired by Mughal and Rajput paintings, Swami has revived the best characteristics of Bikaner style of painting with his extraordinary skills and sophistication. Mythological themes, daily Indian life, ascetics and the juxtaposition of the tradition and contemporary are clearly reflected in his works.



Merchant  
(2012)

Natural pigments on  
layered handmade paper  
10" x 6.5"

# Mandeep Meera Sharma

Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

Mandeep Meera Sharma was born in Udaipur in 1982. He Graduated with an M.A. in Drawing and Painting from the Department of Visual Arts, M.L. Sukhadia University, Udaipur. He has practiced miniature painting for over fifteen years, developing his own unique style; winning numerous awards, and seeing his work placed in prestigious collections in both India and abroad. He continues to live and work in Udaipur.



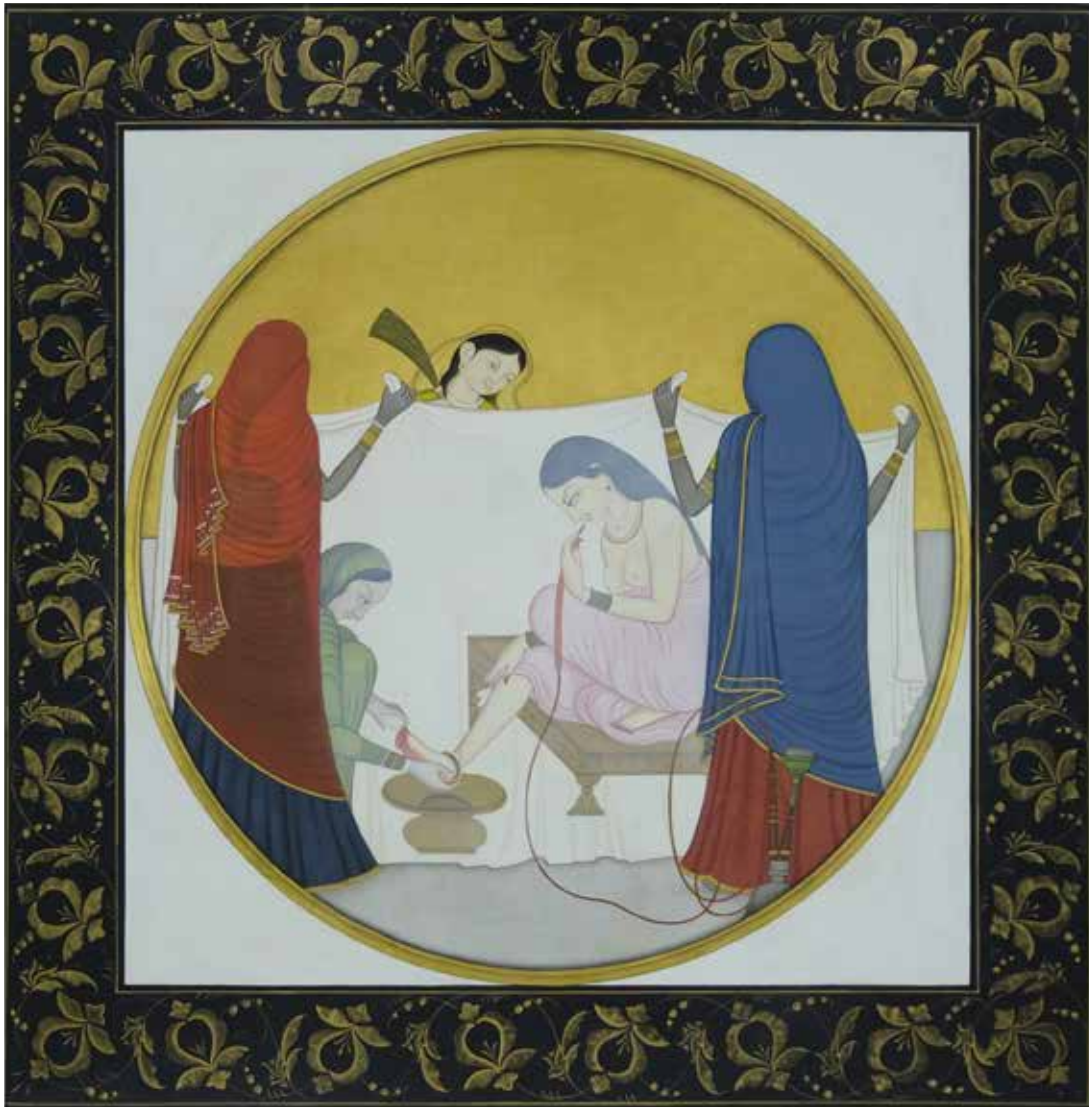
Untitled  
Pigment on synthetic bone

# Manish Soni

Bhilwara, Rajasthan, India

Manish Soni comes from a family of traditional artists based in Bhilwara, Rajasthan. Graduating in Commerce from Ajmer University in 2003, his training in miniature painting from a young age, he has tutored many students from India and abroad and has held many workshops in Museum Reitberg, Zurich, Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU, Baroda and Amar Palace, Jammu. His solo exhibition Chitram at the Jehangir art gallery, Mumbai (2011) and his participation group exhibitions like Paramparik Chitralla in 2012 at the Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU, Baroda and an exhibition of traditional paintings at the Museum Reitberg, Zurich are well known.

His project works include 10 long scrolls for permanent display at the Grand Hyatt, Goa (2003) and artworks for the Museum of Sacred arts in Belgium (2013-2016). Apart from being the Art director in Amit Dutta's acclaimed film Nainsukh, he also starred in the role of the protagonist, the Pahari painter Nainsukh. Most recently, from 2016, he has collaborated with the Sarmaya foundation in creating the painted series of Isa Namah based on the 16th century Mughal paintings of Hamzanama. Highly inspired by the legendary Pahari artist Nainsukh, his work reflects his knowledge and skills in understanding the old masters and re-creating them in the societal context of the modern world.



The Other Side of a Beloved's Toilet  
(2018)  
Natural pigments and gold on cotton  
60" x 60"



# Manisha Gera Baswani

New Delhi, India

Manisha Gera Baswani is a painter/photographer, based in New Delhi. She completed her masters and bachelors from Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi in 1992. Simultaneously, she also received her Bachelors in French Language at the Alliance Francaise de Delhi.

Manisha received the French Government scholarship to study art in Paris in 1992. She returned to India and subsequently, joined the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts in 1993 where she worked with Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan and Dr Ranjit Makkuni on a multimedia project on the famous poet Jayadeva's 13th century Sanskrit poem 'Gita Govinda'. This project delved into the far reaching influences of this

magnificent poem on other art forms of India. It later traveled to some major museums of the world.

Post Paris and while working on Jayadeva's project in 1991, Manisha continued to paint. Her works drew from Indian miniatures and Buddhist murals. Her guru, A Ramachandran's vast knowledge of the visual culture of India now became a distinctive learning tool in her personal visual expression. Her work became reflective of a global citizen equally at home with the India she was growing in and the India she was proud to belong to. Hollywood, MTV and icons such as James Bond and Elvis Presley, all shared her visual space on the canvas along with insects, galaxies, ancient Indian murals and monuments.

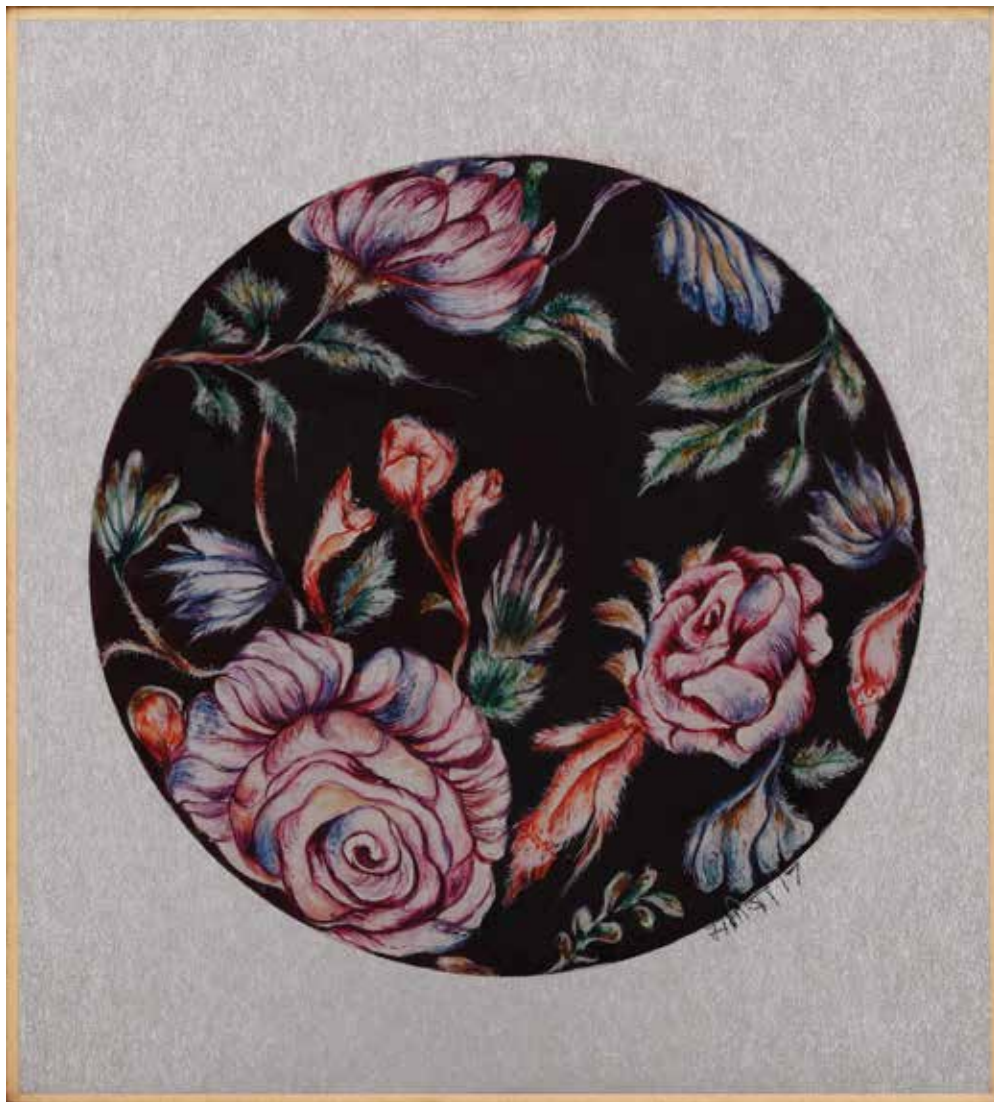


Nishaat

(2017)

Watercolor and gouache on shikishi board

5.25" x 4.75"



Shalimar

(2017)

Watercolor and gouache on shikishi board

5.25" x 4.75"



Sheetal

(2017)

Watercolor and gouache on shikishi board

5.25" x 4.75"



# Manjunath Kamath

New Delhi, India

Manjunath Kamath was born in Mangalore, India, in 1972. He has been living and working in New Delhi (India's capital city) for over 20 years now. Kamath follows a certain rhythm in his works rendered in clay (terracotta), he mocks and distorts forms leading to moments of unexpected recognition creating an imaginary space in which emptiness serves as perspective where anything can happen. Objects morph into animals and vice versa, creating bizarre chimeras that tickle the fancy and stimulate the imagination.

Manjunath Kamath's, series of drawings on paper and wasli, are derived from a vast range of references-

classical sculpture, medieval architecture, religious manuscripts, Buddhist Thangkas and Indian miniature paintings. His hybrid forms comprise fragments of each art historical style similar to a puzzle, that when pieced together as a whole, lends itself to the narration of a multitude of new stories, divergent from those of its individual parts. No single viewing is the same, for each viewer accesses a story through his/her own knowledge, memories and cultural gauges.

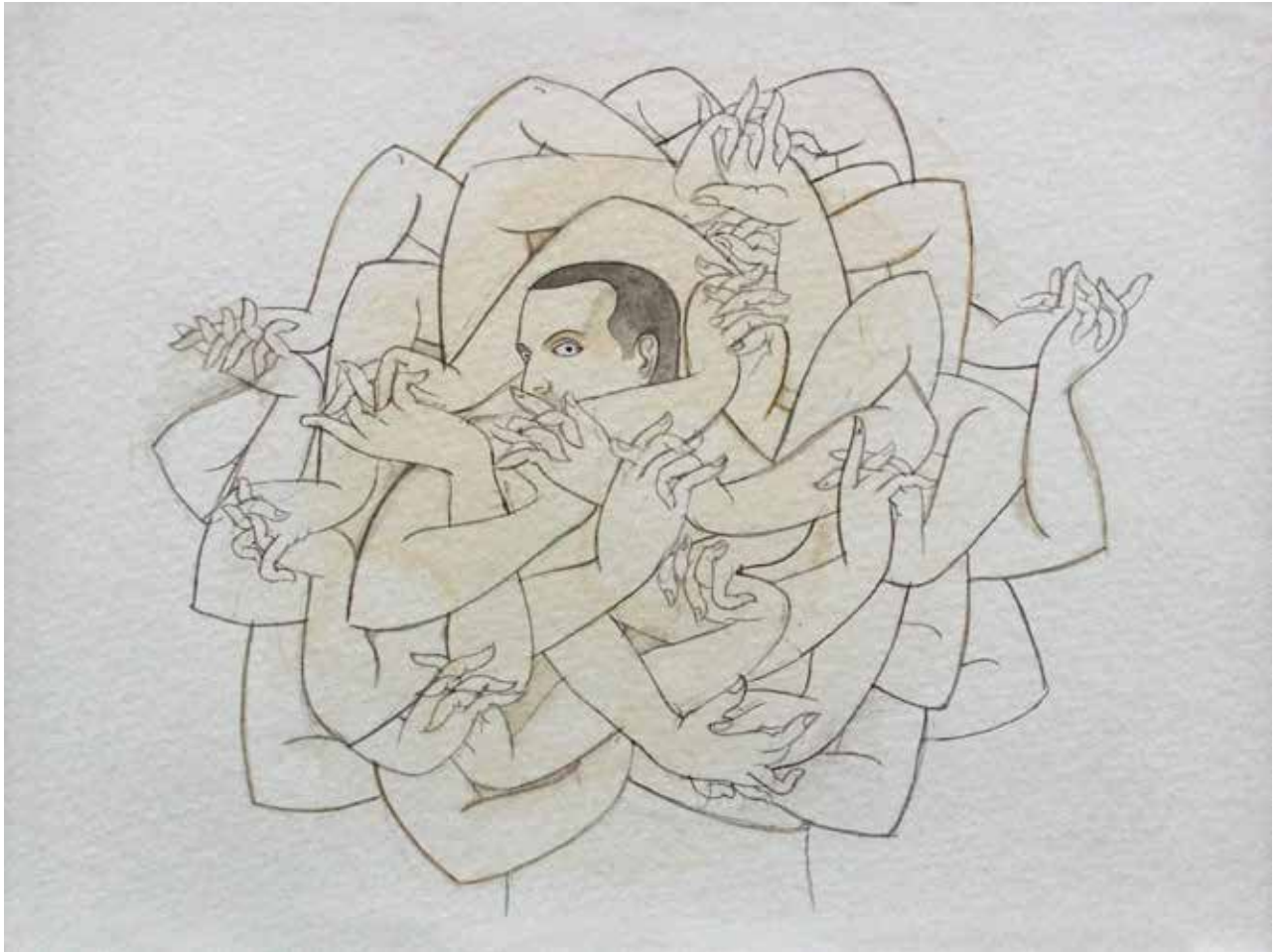
**- Kanika Anand**

Manjunath Kamath's works are presented in association with Gallery Espace, New Delhi.



Untitled  
Gouache on wasli





8 Ritual Drawings  
Drawings on paper



8 Ritual Drawings  
Drawings on paper

# Meenakshi Sengupta

Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Appropriating a variety of familiar motif and themes from both Indian and Western pictorial tradition, I re-contextualize them in light of contemporary issues. I deliberately combine icons of “High” art and those of mass culture with wit and irony to redefine their role as cultural signifiers. The fundamentally hybrid character of my work subverts the obsolete “tradition/modernity”, or “Indian/western” dichotomy. It undermines the perception of art as a mirror of a state of cultural purity, and underscores its discursive character as shaped by history and culture. While working with the icons of Indian Mythology, I came across different local myths and the fantasy regarding them. I look at and study the position of women in the light of religious, historical, social, political, local myths of today and years back. Being at Indian Painting Department during Bachelors (BVA) at the Government

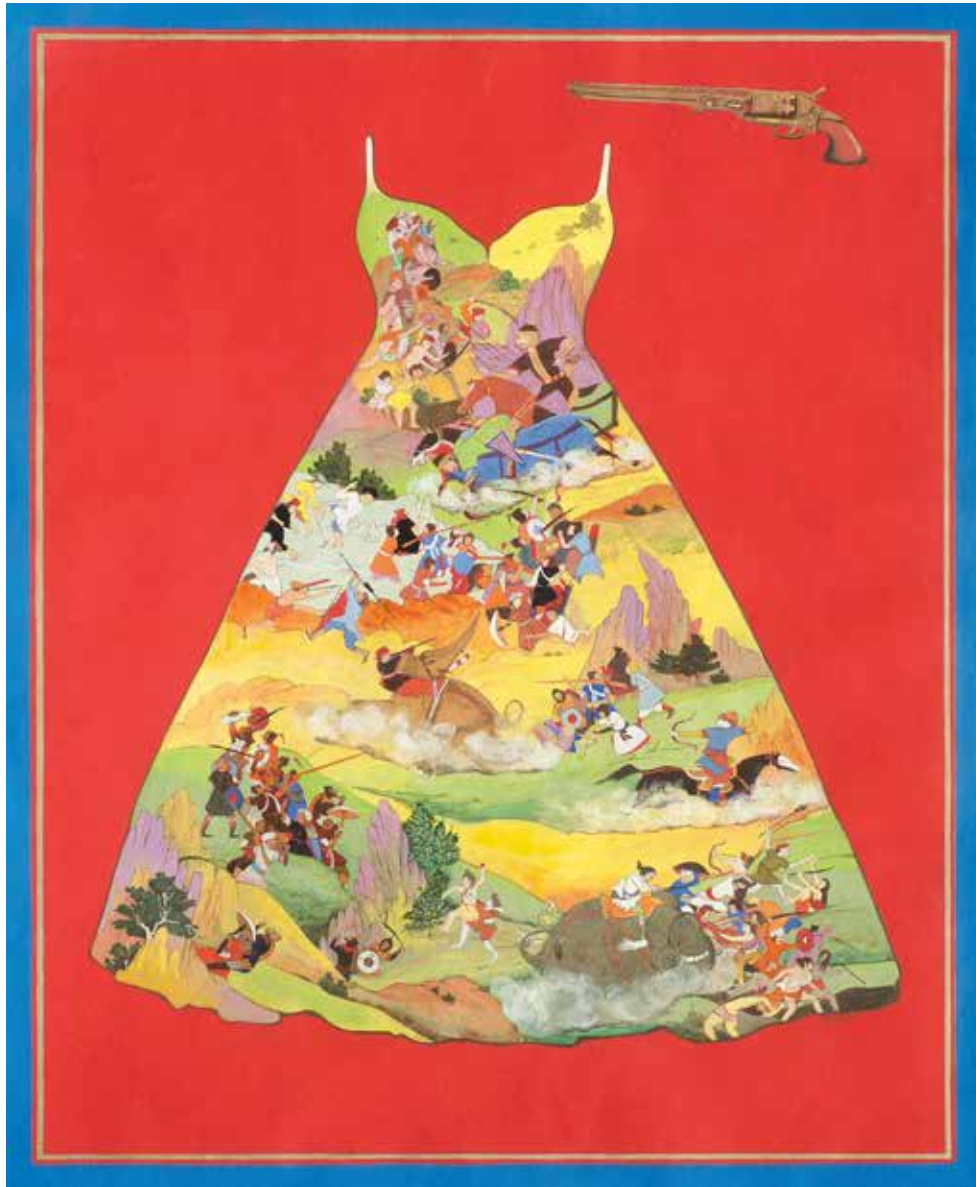
College of Art and Craft, Kolkata, My exposure to court painting was a given. My works gradually shifted from my earlier practice and become more concentrated on elements that propagate stereotypes of the ideal woman image and the constructed politics around this stereotype.

During my postgraduate studies in Vadodara, Gujarat I got the opportunity to explore a vast range of media which helped me understand the possibilities of using different media in my work. My inquiries are chiefly on how a constructed myth reflects and manifests itself in the behavior of the modern woman – that even today, women are barely aware of their own desires and choices, and complies with societal norms.

- Meenakshi Sengupta



Lady with Red Rose  
(2015)  
Gouache on Wasli  
12" x 10"



Wedding Gown  
(2016)  
Gouache on Wasli  
24" x 30"





Horse Power  
(2015)  
Gouache on Wasli  
13" x 10"

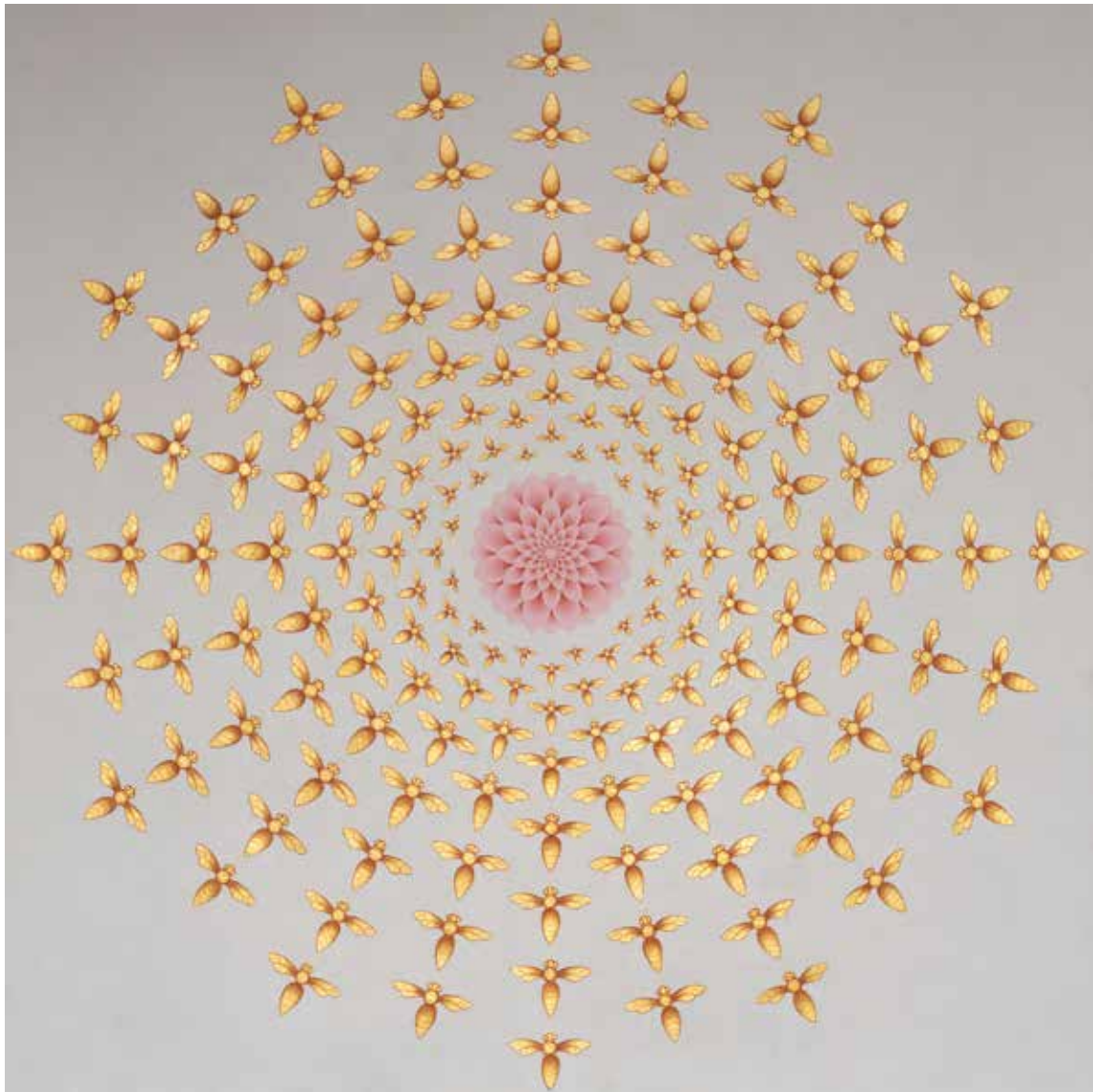


# Olivia Fraser

Scotland. New Delhi

Before moving to India in 1989, Olivia Fraser did an MA in modern languages at Oxford and spent a year at Wimbledon Art College. Her ancestor, James Baillie Fraser, who commissioned the famed 'Fraser album' in company style in the 1800s, was a major source of inspiration behind her early work. In 2005, Fraser decided to study traditional Indian miniature painting technique under masters from Jaipur and Delhi. Influenced by the painted Pichhwais of Nathdwara and the awe inspiring 19th century Jodhpur paintings, her group exhibitions include Venice Biennale, Kathmandu Arts Centre, Nepal, India art fair, New Delhi and Art Basel, Hong Kong and two upcoming shows in New Delhi and New York among other places. With more than 10 solo exhibitions in India and abroad, her most recent solo exhibition was Olivia Fraser: The Lotus Within, 6th-26th June 2018, Grosvenor Gallery, London.

Her work deals with the idea of a metaphysical journey within using iconographic symbols whether of the body - like feet- or those associated with meditation, and the sacred, like the lotus or even the bee. She writes: «A lot of my work has developed out of my interest in and practice of yoga. It is about connecting the mind, body and soul and harnessing the senses in an ever-flowing movement towards liberation, or the Absolute, which in yogic philosophy lies as much within the body as without. There is a tradition of assisting yoga practitioners to achieve this by providing what are in effect visual roadmaps to spiritual enlightenment. These take many different forms, ranging from mandalas and yantras to maps of the Subtle Body, which represent the idea of the body as a microcosm of the universe. Combining both these ideas, in PILGRIMAGE I am using a part of my own body, an iterated template of my feet, to explore the idea of a road map to salvation.”



Scent of the Lotus

(2018)

Stone pigments, Gum Arabic and gold leaf on  
handmade Sanganer Paper

32.5" x 32.5"





Pilgrimage

(2011)

Stone pigments, Gum Arabic and gold leaf on  
handmade Sanganer Paper

29.5" x 29.5" each

# Rajaram Sharma

Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

Currently based in Udaipur, Rajaram Sharma was born in 1963 and learned the sacred art of Pichhwai painting and miniature painting under two renowned master artists, steeped in the 'Guru-Shishya Parampara' from 1976. Most recently, in 2010, he was honoured with All India Award of Traditional Art in Kolkata and Ujjain and also received a gold medal in traditional painting at All India Art Exhibition in Warangal, 2002. He has participated in more than 10 group shows, most recently in 10 Master painters of Rajasthan, Lalit Kala Akademi Galleries, New Delhi, 2016. With 9 solo shows, most notably at the Nehru

Centre, Cultural Wing of High Commission of India in London (2013) and Victoria Monroe Fine Art gallery in Boston (2008).

His works are part of some of the most prestigious collections including the Shrinathji temple at Nathdwara, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, Jnana Pravaha Varanasi and Lekha Poddar.



Lalan Triptych  
Mineral pigments on paper  
18" x 36"



# Varunika Saraf

Hyderabad, Telangana, India

## Low Tide : Meditations on Loss and Longing

Natural history drawings are entrenched in the scientific enterprise of observing and illustrating subjects found in nature. The discipline of Natural history strives to capture both the archetypal and the rare, it belongs to an encyclopaedic tradition that discovers, observes, describes to classify and order. Its history is inextricably intertwined with colonial enterprise, scientific innovation and global expansion. It is a tradition that presupposes scientific objectivity and rationality. But, is it possible to collect and then describe something objectively with detachment? Do our feelings shape the way we represent objects? Are the objects not transformed by our emotions and interpretation? And, conversely, are we not changed by what we observe and render?

Low tide is a series of watercolors that depict objects – broken shells, bleached corals, wave-washed pebbles, and

porous limestones fused with bones and other aquatic remains, left behind by retreating tides. This series, though it draws upon the language of Natural history illustrations, does not represent perfect examples of any genus. These watercolors are studies of debris, mutilated and transformed, marred by the same passage of time that weighed heavily on me. These images are not colored simply by the rich pigments ground to fine dust in a mortar and pestle, but also by the overwhelming feeling of pain and loneliness. These works were created amidst personal loss, isolation and uncertainty, and are therefore inscribed by mourning and a longing to relate to something beyond my immediate circumstances. They are an attempt to hold on to the essence of things before it fades. These watercolors are painted in memory of all those loved whose absence slowly corrodes the recesses of our heart with the hope that someday we will be reunited on a sandy shore sheltered from time.

- Varunika Saraf



Low Tide - Suite of thirty paintings.

(2015)

Watercolor on paper

5" X 6" each

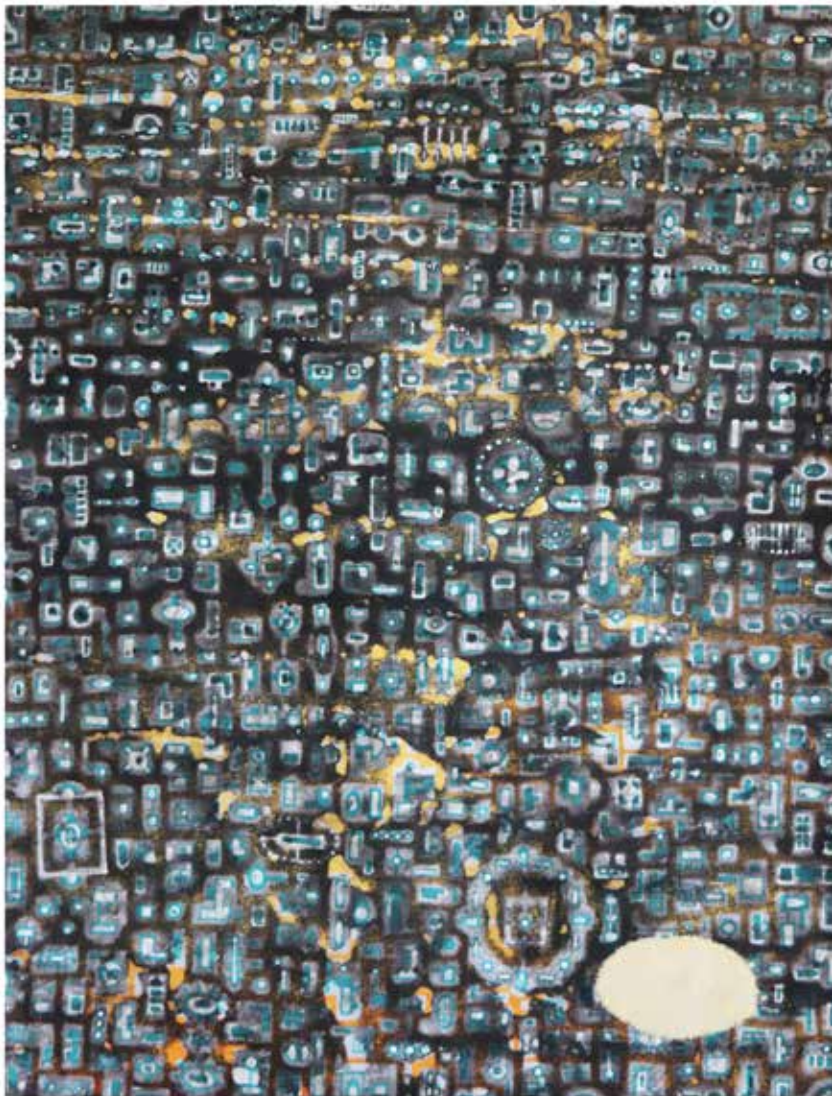
# Vimal Ambaliya

Vadodara, Gujarat, India

Born in 1986, Vimal Ambaliya is a young artist based in Baroda, India. Along with a BVA and MVA (Diploma and Post Diploma) from the Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU, Baroda. Some of his group exhibitions include Indian vocabulary, ZOCA Contemporary Art, Ahmedabad ni gufa, Ahmedabad (2013), Baroda March, Mumbai (2015), Vadodara's Heritage, Faculty of Fine arts, M.S.University, Baroda (2016) and most recently Interlude 1, Faculty of Fine arts, M.S.University Baroda (2018). He recently exhibited his first solo show Makan ki kheti, West Zone Culture Center, Bagore ki haveli, Udaipur (2018).

Apart from other awards, his most notable

achievements are Jeram Patel Award, M.S, University, Baroda (2012), Gujarat Kala Pratithan Award, Surat (2013). Looking at the detailing, precision and simplicity of Indian miniature paintings, he attempts to reconstruct the history of Baroda drawing upon elements related to archaeology, architecture and city planning. He adds "the pertinent issue central to my work is the transformation of the city into visual language. What are the symbols and signs that represent the city? How they can be transmitted formally? The subconscious influence of the city with its complex set of relations and interaction attracts my interest and practice as an artist."



One Light  
(2018)  
Mixed media on paper  
24" x 18"

# Yugal Sharma

Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

Udaipur based artist Yugal sharma is the eighth generation artist from the lineage of the traditional artists who paint the Pichhwai paintings of Nathdwara, and spent his childhood assisting his father and grandfather in finishing large scale Pichhwaits. Earning an MA and PhD in painting from MLSU, Udaipur, he has exhibited widely in India and abroad. Apart from receiving the Jr. Fellowship in Painting from the Dept. of Culture, Govt of India, M.H.R.D, New Delhi, he has been honored with numerous awards like Maharana Raj Singh Award, Mewar Foundation, Udaipur, State Award of Art, Rajasthan Lalit Kala Akademi, Jaipur, Kalidas Award, Kalidas Academy, Ujjain.

As a traditional Pichhwai artist whose work is deeply rooted in Krishnaite imagery, his encounter with modern art during his college led him to explore, experiment and juxtapose mythological themes contextualizing them in a different way. He writes “I try to explore different forms and images and in the end there is an absolute amalgamation of myth, culture and tradition in contemporary sensibilities. Kamdhenu, a wish fulfilling cow of Lord is meant to be very auspicious mythological character and it is one of my favorite subjects. Havelli architecture painting is fused with Krishna image to embody the omnipresence of the Lord in his all quarters of Havelli and world around.

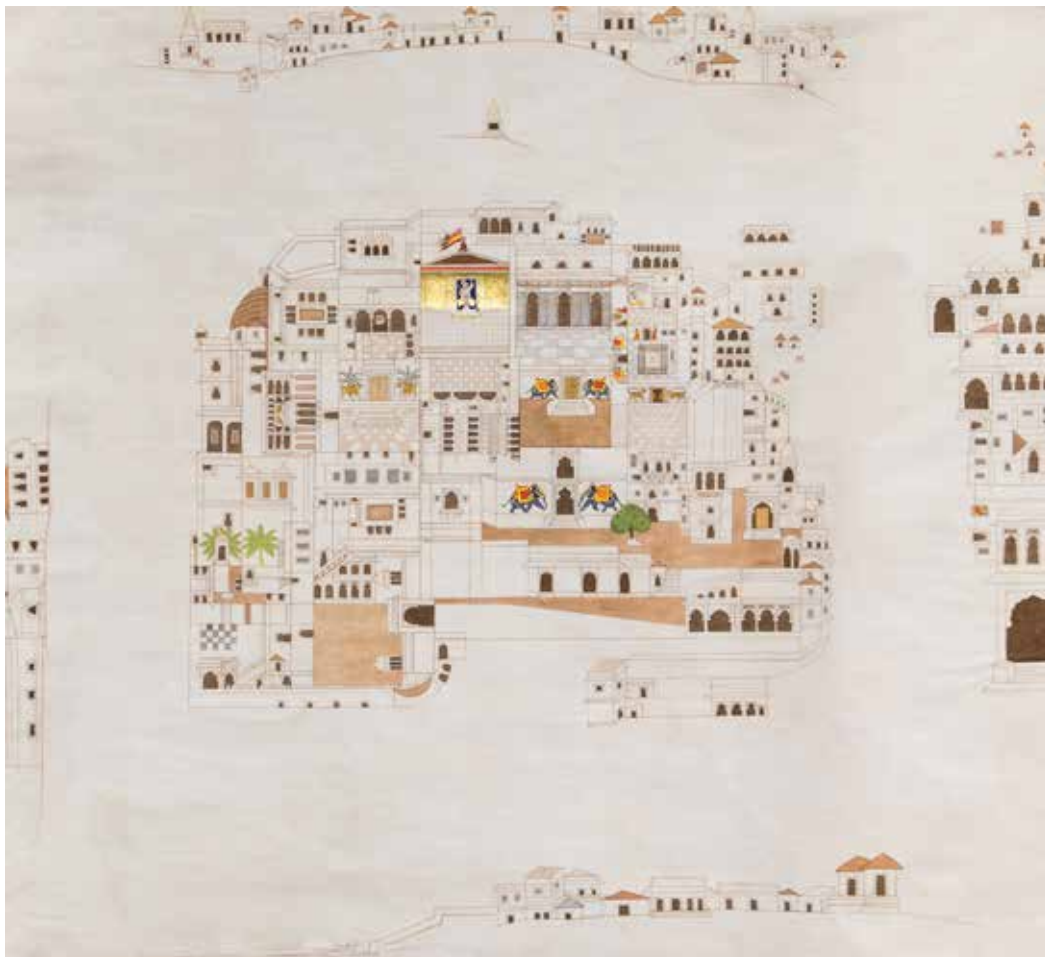


Kamdhenu 1  
(2016)  
Gouache and gold leaf on paper  
18" x 18"





Krishna – Suite of three paintings  
(2017)  
Gouache and gold leaf on paper  
11" x 11" and 15" x 15"



Temple View

(2018)

Gouache and gold leaf on cloth (pichwai)

46" x 40"





# Luminously between Eternities

The Contemporary  
Miniature  
as Evolution



Luminously between Eternities The Contemporary Miniature as Evolution

blackaestheticstudios.com

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