



# A SIMPLE LIFE

Santanu Debnath

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12 NOV - 31 DEC, 2021



*A Simple Life* presents a series of works on paper by Santanu Debnath, painted during the prolonged isolation of the Covid-19 pandemic. Portraying scenes from a village, Betpukur, where he hails, the paintings reflect his intimate ways of seeing, revealing the subtle layers of the idyllic rural life. Born and raised in Betpukur, a small village in Burdwan, West Bengal, Santanu has moved to Kolkata to study Painting at the Government College of Art. Living in the complexities of urban life, he carries a deep sense of belonging to his birthplace.

With the closing down of the schools and colleges due to the pandemic lockdowns and subsequent restrictions, students left the campus and returned home. As Santanu returned to Betpukur during the monsoon, he could not but enjoy the simple beauty of his village, and the lush greens flooded his palette. He noticed families coming together, the return of the lost games, melancholic leisure amidst the acute financial crisis and loss of work and education. The beauty and peace of the pastoral life thus seeped into the anxieties of modern life. Pensive and poignant, this series of paintings holds onto this wavering pause, assured of its temporality, tinged with a sense of both loss and longing.

Santanu Debnath is the only painter in his village. Working alone in his studio, he merges visions, memories, and imaginations spontaneously in the compositions. His fine, delicate brushstrokes resemble, with patient repetition, the patience of nature itself. His paintings, created in style akin to hatching/cross-hatching, have the sensibility usually present in detailed naturalistic drawings. It draws one closer to the pictures, the people and their lives, the murmur of leaves, the rustle of the grass, animals' habits, and so on. His paintings, however, do not narrate stories. Instead, they depict moments suspended in time. The alienation of modern city life infuses into his ways of seeing his village – a quiet solitude.

## Santanu Debnath

Born in Betpukur, a village in Bardhaman, West Bengal in 1995, Santanu Debnath did his Bachelor's in Painting from Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship(Rabindra Bharati University), Kolkata in 2018 and is presently pursuing MFA at Government College of Art and Craft (GCAC), Kolkata. He was the subject of the solo show at Nippon Gallery, Mumbai (2020). He has participated in ICAD Annual Exhibition, Kolkata (2015-2018); group show in the Institute de Chandannagar, Hoogly (2017); West Bengal State Academy, Kolkata (2018-19); KCC Art Fair (2019); GCAC Annual Exhibition (2019-2021); among others. He has won Gita Das Award, GCAC Annual Exhibition (2019) and Certificate of Merit in West Bengal State Academy Annual Exhibition (2018-19). He is the recipient of the prestigious Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Scholarship (2020-2021). He also participated in the Open Call exhibition titled Imaginarium(2021), presented by Emami Art.

Santanu Debnath lives and works in Kolkata



*Letter for My Father*  
Watercolour on paper  
16.53 x 11.61 in.  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (reverse)

C7037

*Detail of 'Letter for My Father'*





*Serene Greenery*  
Watercolour on paper  
16.53 x 11.81 in.  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (reverse)

C7038



*Down Pouring Negotiations*

Watercolour on paper

16.33 x 11.61 in.

2021, Kolkata

Signed in English (reverse)

C7039



*Detail of 'Down Pouring Negotiations'*





*Glimpses of the Rare*  
Watercolour on paper  
11.61 x 16.53 in.  
(29.5 x 42 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (reverse)

C7040



*Album: Convalesce*  
Watercolour on paper  
11.61 x 16.33 in.  
(29.5 x 41.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (reverse)

C7041



*Palli*  
Watercolour on paper  
22.04 x 29.92 in.  
(56 x 76 cm.)  
Undated, Kolkata  
Unsigned

C7042



*Profession of Hope*  
Watercolour on paper  
10.82 x 13.77 in.  
(27.5 x 35 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (reverse)

C7043

Detail of 'Profession of Hope'





*Nabanna*

Clay and earth colour on paper

30.11 x 63.18 in. overall

(76.5 x 160.5 cm.) overall

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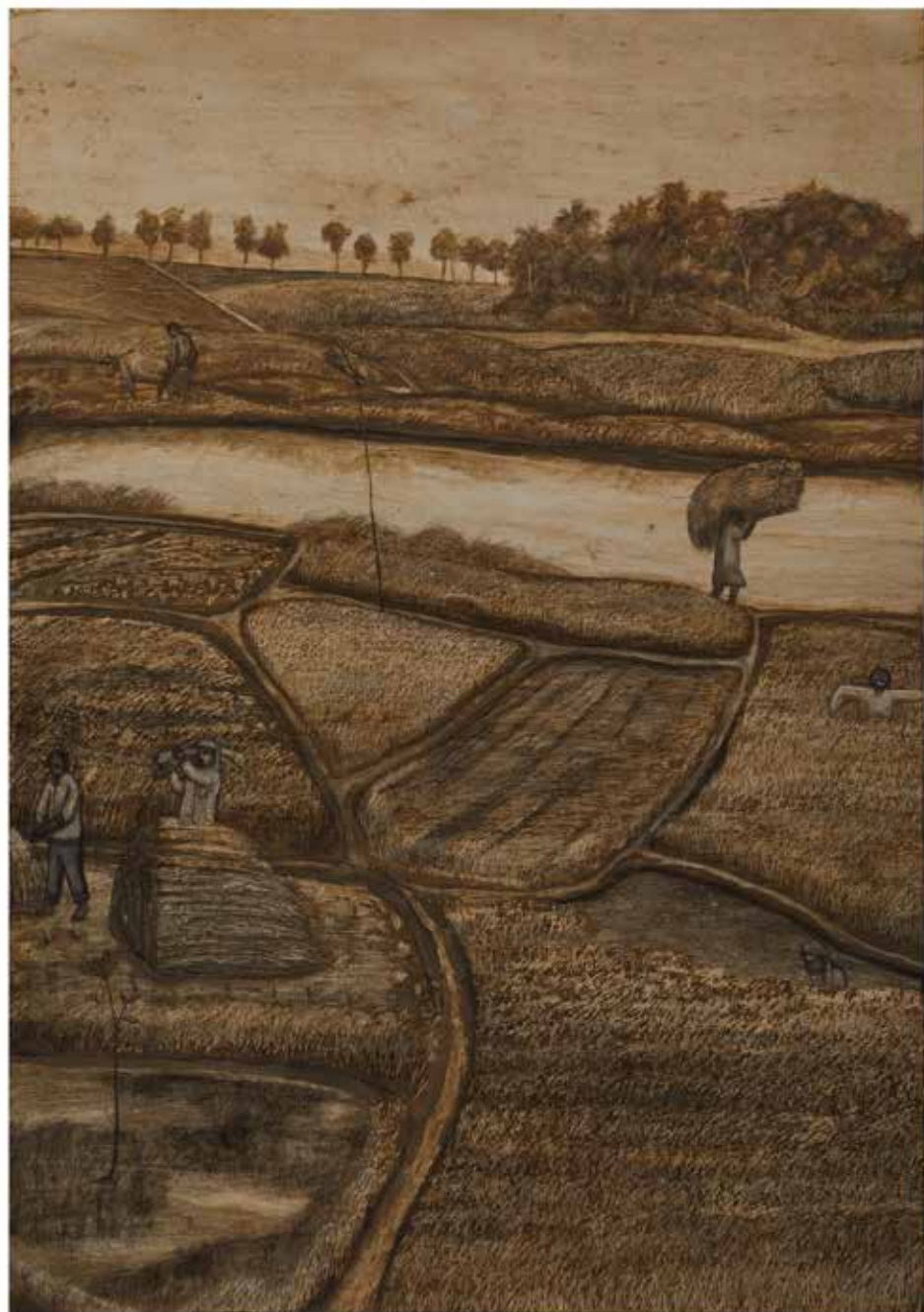
2020, Kolkata

Signed in English (reverse)

C7044











*Bathing*

Clay and charcoal on paper

21.06 x 30.11 in.

(53.5 x 76.5 cm.)

2021, West Bengal

Unsigned

C6518

*Detail of 'Bathing'*





Emami Art, one of the most significant art institutions in the eastern part of India, is a key space for cultural production in the region. The organisation is focused on a future-forward, complex, multi-dimensional approach and steadfast in the advocacy of emerging, mid-career and established artists as well as an engagement with contemporary and historical material. The gallery aims to create dynamic, wide-ranging registers of exhibition-making and viewing.

In addition to hosting exhibitions, participating in art fairs and events of national and international import, Emami Art has a diverse parallel programming. With a focus on engagement with the region and beyond through continuous short and long-term projects, Emami Art has launched **EA Locus in Focus**, **EA Co-labs** (Collaborative Programme) EA Initiative (Public art endeavors) and **EA Hybrid** which integrates both the physical and virtual interfaces. Other programs include **EA Incubator** that comprises of mentorship programs, workshops, residency opportunities and innovative educational activities that facilitate artistic development, help build networks of collaboration and provide a supportive environment for emerging talent. As a centre of excellence, Emami Art wishes to be identified as a platform rather than just a facility.

Critical discourses, interactions, documentation and exchange are also essential to our agenda. Under the umbrella of **EA Discourse**, we are committed to developing and producing original writing, artist's books, monographs, periodicals and catalogues that will focus on artistic, creative and pedagogical materials. Furthermore, the **EA Communicator** lineup of talks, seminars, panel discussions and conversations with artists, curators and key partners provides a space for critical engagement as part of our knowledge-making and archiving process.

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.

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