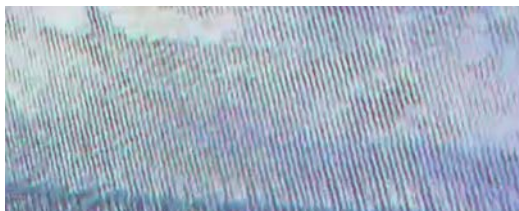


EMAMI ART

OF
LIMINAL BEINGS
AND OTHER SPACES

curated by Ushmita Sahu



ARPITA AKHANDA
ARSHI AHMADZAI
DEBASHISH PAUL
MAKSUD ALI MONDAL
PRASANTA GHOSH

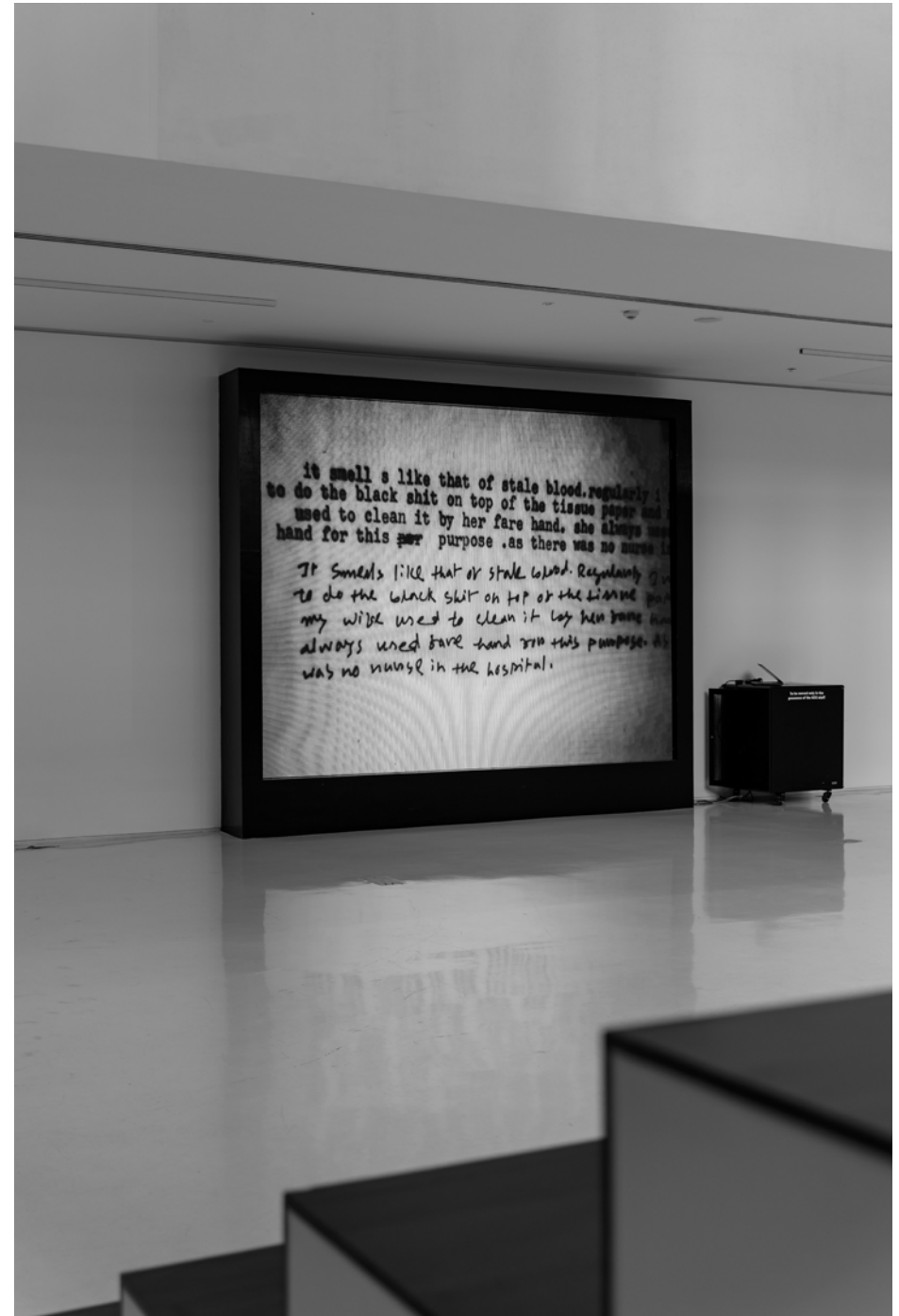
————— 31/07-28/08/2021

5 artists

OF
LIMINAL BEINGS
AND OTHER SPACES

ARPITA AKHANDA
ARSHI AHMADZAI
DEBASHISH PAUL
MAKSUD ALI MONDAL ——— 31/07-28/08/2021
PRASANTA GHOSH

The word 'liminal' comes from the Latin word 'limen', meaning threshold.



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2. Arshi Irshad Ahmadzai
3. Debashish Paul
4. Maksud Ali Mondal
5. Prasanta Ghosh

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A Preview

PART 1
Introduction

FOREWORD

The brilliant works by the five talented young artists, Arpita Akhanda, Arshi Ahmadzai, Debashish Paul, Maksud Ali Mondal and Prasanta Ghosh are characterized by an elusiveness and complexity of contemporary art, perfectly captured in the title of the exhibition, *Of Liminal Beings and Other Spaces*. Their intimate yet varied and unconventional artistic practices are antithetical to mainstream art's dominant trends and hierarchy and "subjunctive" because they invite newer possibilities. Wheeling around the concept of liminality, an experience of being betwixt and between on the margin/threshold of identity, their work explore a realm of uncertainty and the pure possibility that resist classification.

I want to thank the artists for participating in this exhibition. Emami Art has long been operating as a platform for alternative thinking and art practices. I am delighted to see how critically and confidently the new generation of young artists are experimenting with new ideas and sensibilities. I also want to say a big thank-you to Ushmita Sahu, the Director and Head Curator of Emami Art, for curating this small but excellent and thought-provoking exhibition.

Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude to my team members at Emami Art, without whose efforts and dedication the exhibition would not have been possible.

Richa Agarwal
CEO, Emami Art

In-betweenness or ‘threshold’ territories believed to exist at the interstices of binaries, are usually ambivalent and fluid, and essentially invisible and bereft of identities which allows for re-inventions.

CURATOR’S NOTE

A climate of uncertain futures and protracted ambiguity combined with an escalating interrogation of binary systems across the world in the past year has increasingly thrown up questions concerning the legitimacy of existing paradigms. This moment of a cultural cusp between the past and an undefined future generates a liminal space for ruminations.

The word ‘liminal’ comes from the Latin limen, meaning threshold. The word has multiple readings and usage in areas as varied as anthropology, psychology, architecture, myth, literature etc. but usually relates to intermediate, transitional states. By extension, ‘liminal beings’ are understood to have a protean identity that defies categorisation.

In-betweenness or ‘threshold’ territories are believed to exist at the interstices of binaries, are usually ambivalent and fluid, and essentially invisible and bereft of identities which allows for re-inventions. These spaces could also be read as creative, where subjectivity is always in flux. From a socio-cultural perspective, such spaces which encourage alternative existences can become catalysts for change.

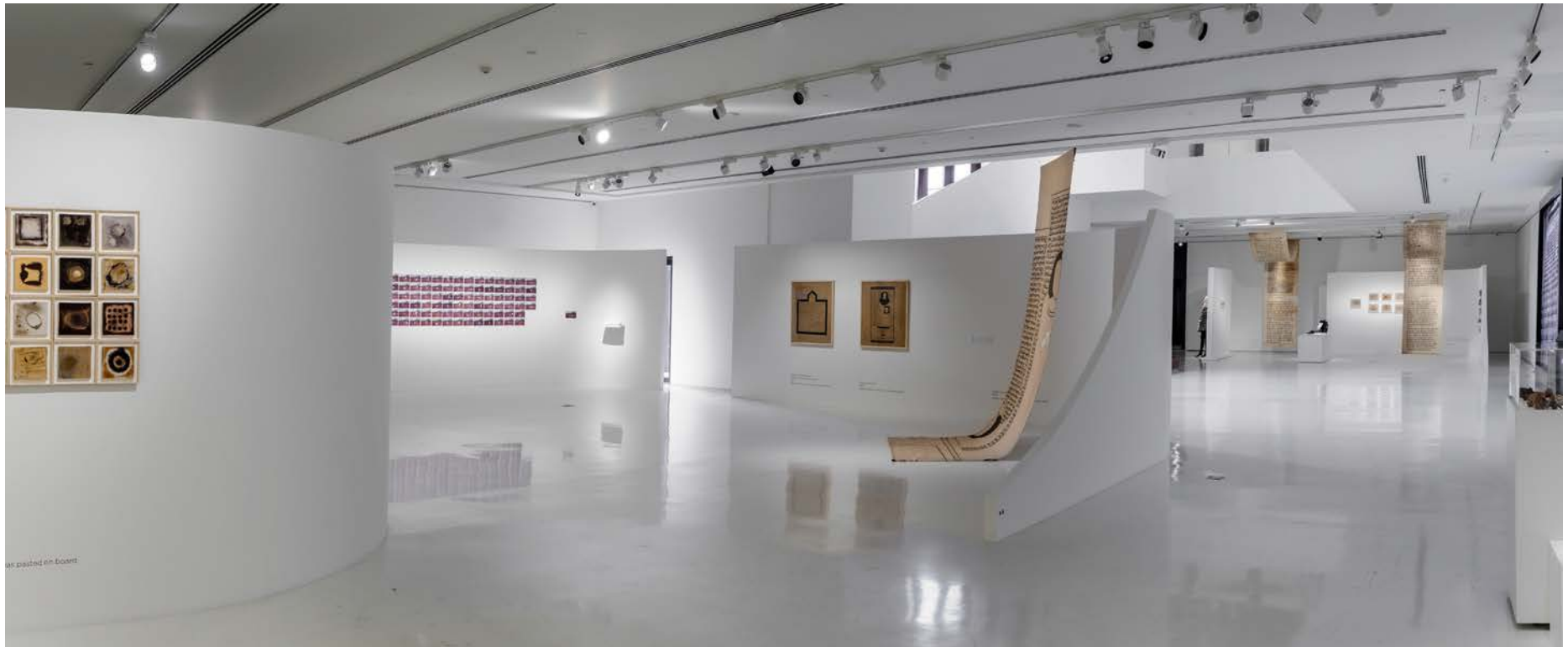
The title of the exhibition is inspired by Foucault’s 1967 lecture/essay - ‘Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias’, in which he rues that we are still governed by “oppositions that remain inviolable, that our institutions and practices have not yet dared to break down.” The essay also refers to an ‘epoch of simultaneity and to spaces of otherness, which are neither here nor there, at the same time physical and mental’.

Of Liminal Beings and Other Spaces invites five artists to share the intangible, interstitial spaces that inform their practices, which allude to but also elude normative dualistic norms. Arpita Akhanda quests for identity in past/present, colonised/coloniser dualisms, while Arshi Ahmadzai focuses on the private vs public chronicles of women via a language that negotiates text and image. Debashish Paul who identifies as non-binary grapples with the dominant male/female gendered readings. Maksud Mondal creates nature-identical environments that foreground the cycle of life and death, while Prasanta Ghosh’s fictional/factual narratives fluidly move between truth and non-truths.

By juxtaposing five distinct practices, the exhibition hopes to create a reflexive re-framing of cognitive and experiential identities, initiate new possibilities of encounters that provide alternative frameworks for thinking, consequently becoming a locus for transitions.

Ushmita Sahu
Director & Head Curator, Emami Art

PART 2
The Art



ARPITA AKHANDA



Exploring the idea of identity, home, migration, she looks at her own body as a memory collector.

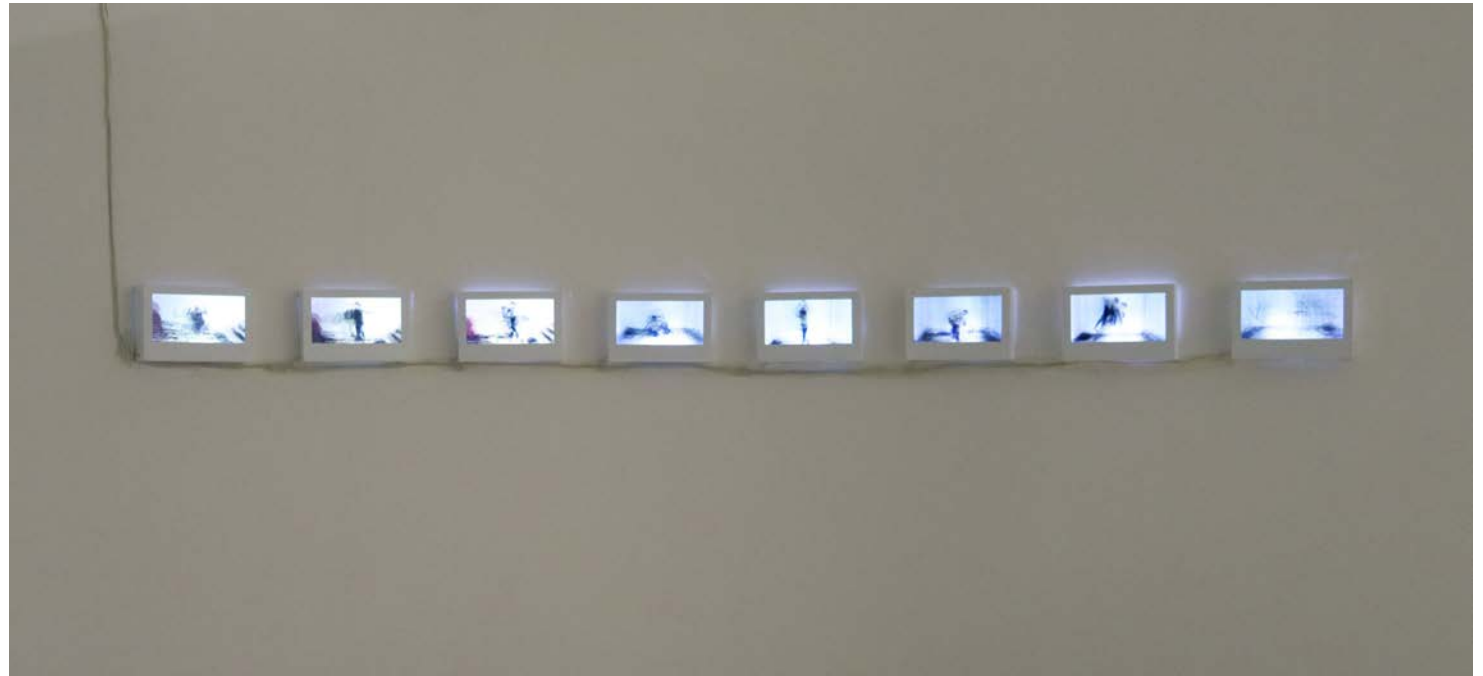
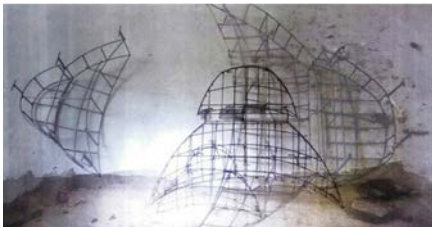
Born (1992) and brought up in a family of artists who migrated from Bangladesh during partition and moved through many locations in India before settling in Odisha, Arpita grew up listening to past memories and tries to negotiate self-identity through the lens of the past.

Arpita completed her B.F.A & M.F.A in painting from Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati University, 2015 & 2017.

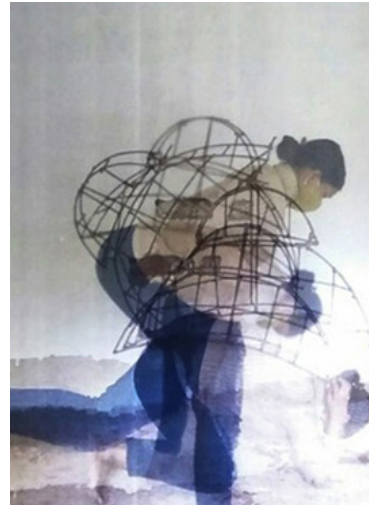
Presently she works across mediums that include paper weavings, performance, installation, drawing, and video and has been part of several national & international exhibitions.

Akhanda has performed at Teertha International Performance Platform, Sri Lanka and Chittagong Art College, Bangladesh. She was an artist in residence at Piramal Art Residency 2019-20. Arpita Akhanda is a recent recipient of Emerging Artist Award 2020 extended support platform, from FICA and Mrinalini Mukherjee Foundation 2021.

She is currently a part of Artist in Residency at Arbeitsgruppe Gästeteatler Krone, Aarau, Switzerland in association with Khoj Kolkata. She lives and works from Santiniketan West Bengal



Ak Chala
Backlit digital prints on vellum paper
12 x 8 x 2.3/4 in. each
Suite of 8 works
2020, Cuttack



Details of *Ak Chala*



The last leap 101 ways
of crossing
2020
101 ways of crossing the river
This video is a series of stills and photos which together
to question the universal notion of 'leaping' and its subject
Rajal Arora

The Last Leap: 101 Ways of Crossing
Installation with video, photographs, dress
worn during performance.
Black & white video (5 minutes 30
seconds)
101 coloured photos 8 x 5 in. each
Size variable
2020, Santiniketan

Video documentation by Ujjal Dey
and Photo- documentation by Ruma
Choudhury

Details of *The Last Leap*:
101 Ways of Crossing



"This series is a meeting point of past and present weaved together to question our understanding of looking at history and its politics."





Recrudescence
Paper, archival prints, black and white
photographs
45 x 32 in. approx. overall
Suite of 5 works
2020, Santiniketan

ARSHI IRSHAD AHMADZAI



Her practice has focused on the role of women, particularly those that are bound within religious orthodoxies.

Born in Najibabad (Uttar Pradesh) Arshi graduated with a Bachelors in Fine Art from the Aligarh Muslim University and a Masters in Fine Art from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

Inspired by the texts of various poets and philosophers, Ahmadzai's artworks juxtapose image and text to comment on women and their roles, some in love and some victims to political terrorism.

Ahmadzai was an artist in residence at 1 Shanthi Road, Bangalore 2019. Ahmadzai was a recipient of the Inlaks Award in 2019 and has since exhibited in multiple exhibitions in India.

Her works are in the collection of The Whitworth Museum, Manchester, UK.

She lives between Kabul and New Delhi.

Ashaar-e-Nashinakhta-e-Saadi
Paper mache, acrylic and ink on
manjarpat fabric
36.6 x 31.1 in. (92.96 x 78.99 cm.)
2021, Najibabad



Ek Adhoora Khat
Paper mache, acrylic and ink on
manjarpat fabric
36.6 x 31.1 in. (92.96 x 78.99 cm.)
2021, Najibabad



“My artworks juxtapose image and text to comment on women and their roles, some in love and some victims to political terrorism.”



Dasht-e Leili wa tanha gul-e Lalah
 Paper mache, ink and gold on Manjarpat fabric (scroll)
 175 x 62 in. (444.5 x 157.28 cm.)
 2021, Najibabad

DEBASHISH PAUL



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.

Born in 1994 in Nadia district in West Bengal, Debashish explores the problems of queer identity in a society dominated by heterosexual norms.

After graduating from The Indian college of Art and Draftsmanship, Kolkata, Paul is presently pursuing a master's degree from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

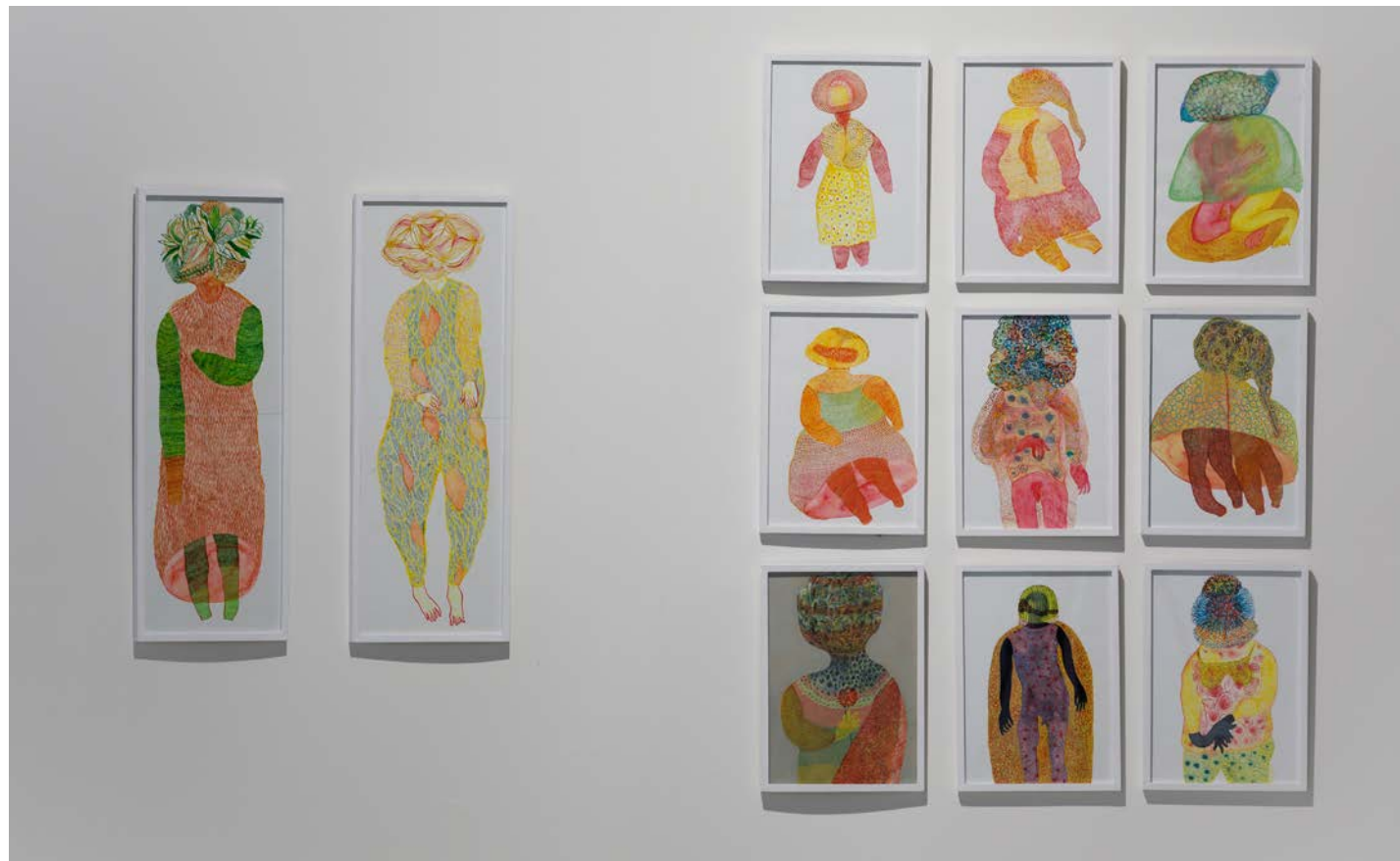
Working in the method of automatism Paul's recent sculptural costumes and connected performances, indicate no specific gender orientation, male or female, are, in fact, the sensible screens, which both conceal and reveal fragile emotions and desires, always in conflict with society.

Paul was one of the winners of the Emami Art open call exhibition-2020. He is also part of the Kochi Student's Biennale 2020-2021 and Kala Sakshi Workshop 2020-2021.

Untitled
Watercolor on paper

2 drawings
23.4 x 8.3 in. overall (59.43 x 21.08 cm.) overall
9 drawings
11.7 x 8.3 in. each (29.71 x 21.08 cm. each)

2021, Banaras

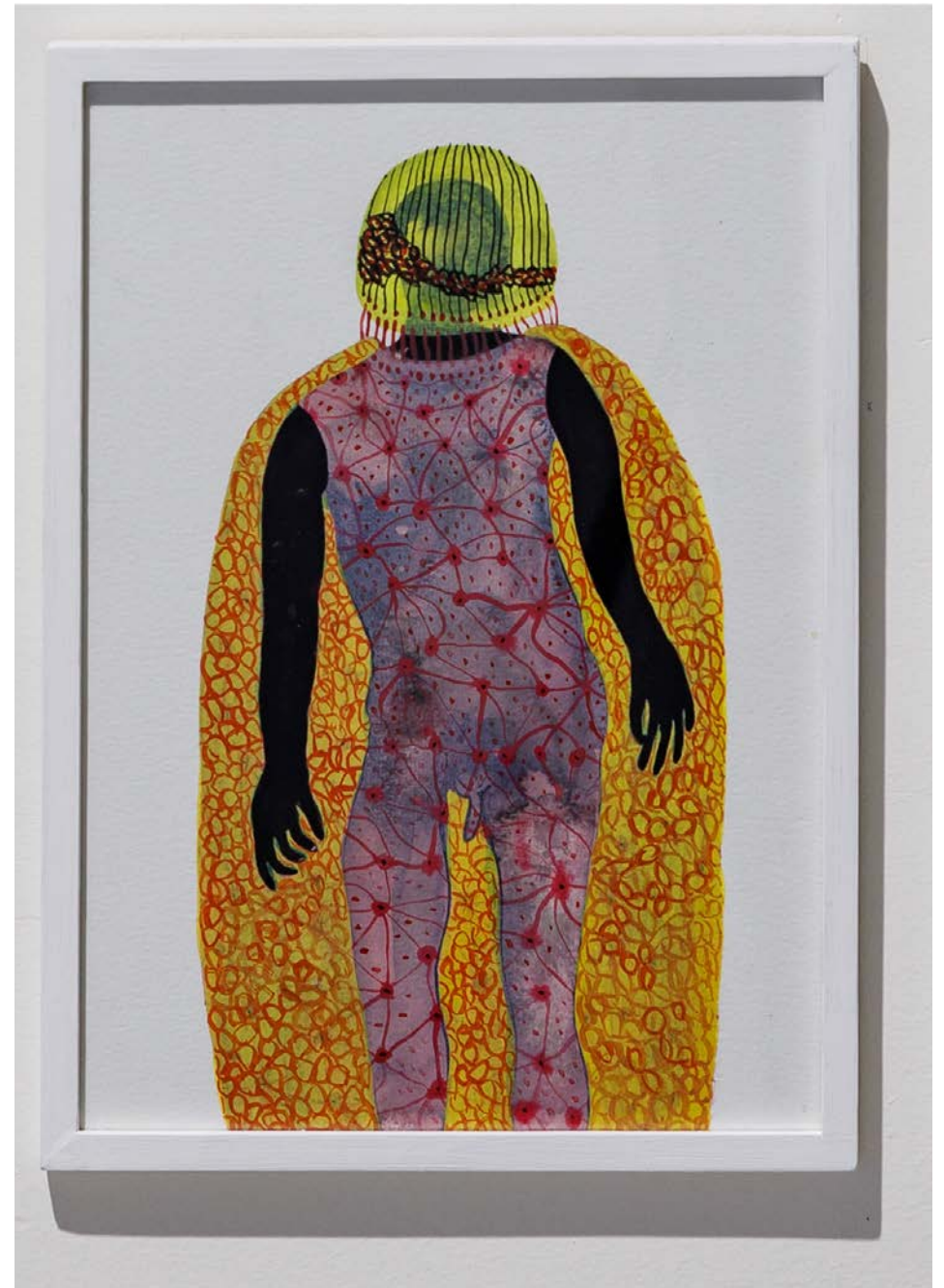


Details of *Untitled*



"My recent sculptural dresses, which indicate no specific gender orientation, male or female, are, in fact, the sensible screens, which both conceal and reveal my fragile emotions and desires, always in conflict with the society."

Details of *Untitled*





Beyond The Body And Gender I
Video with sound (6 minutes 57 seconds),
sculptural dress (nepali paper, watercolour,
ink and charcoal)
2020-2021, Banaras

Details of *Beyond The Body
And Gender I*





Debashish Paul
Beyond the body and gender II
2021
Video, photos, sculptural dress



Beyond The Body And Gender II
Video with sound (10 minutes),
sculptural dress (shells)
2021, Banaras

MAKSUD ALI MONDAL



He deals with biological and feral life in the current environment by observing; growing and transforming over a period of time interact with the used found objects and everyday materials in his work.

Born in Bankura, West Bengal, Maksud finished his BFA and MFA from department of painting, Kala- Bhavana, Santiniketan in 2019 and a semester from Royal Academy of Art, Netherlands in 2016.

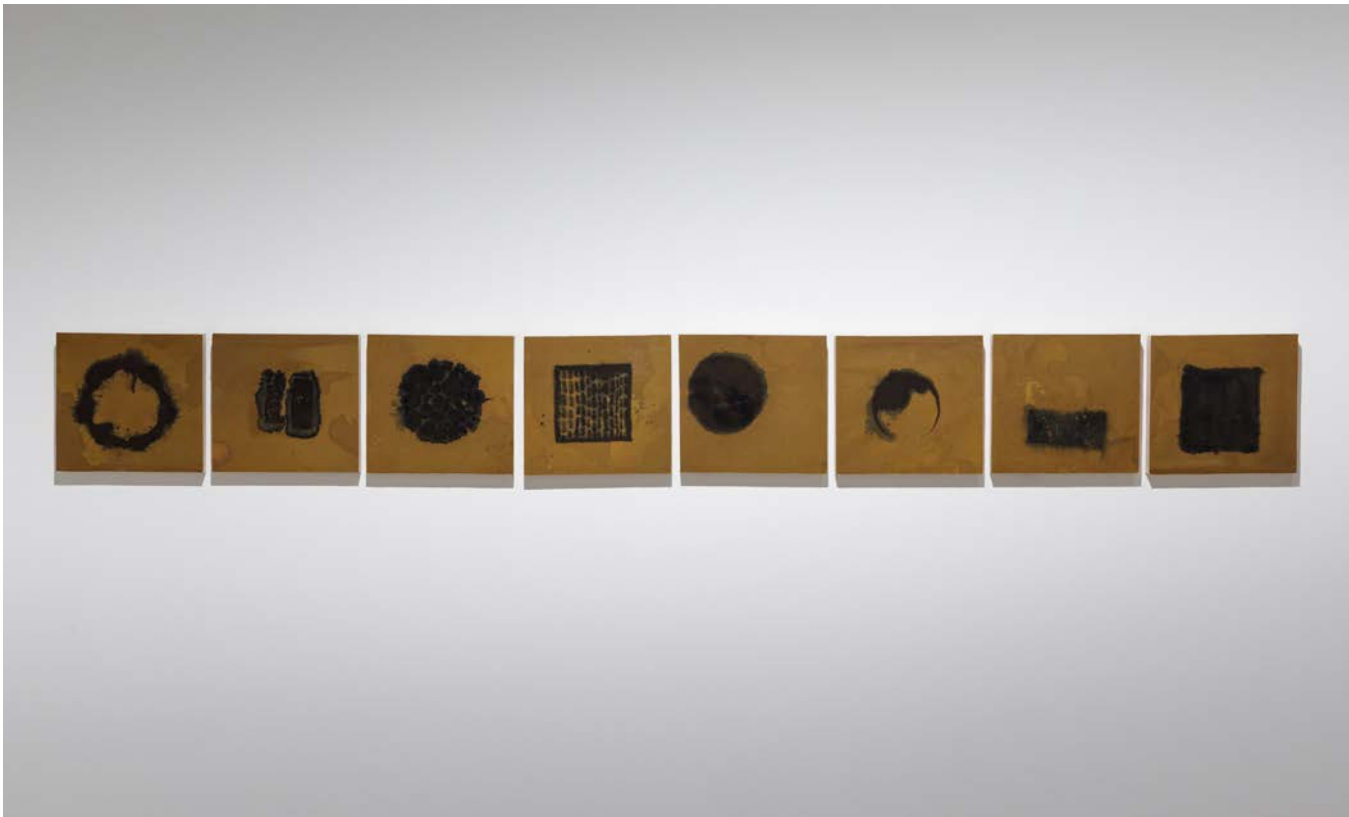
His site-specific installation "Nature Unconditioned", got international award in the Kochi- Muziris Students' Biennale, 2019. He is the recipient of Inlaks award 2021, Fica EAA 2020 extended support platform and the national scholarship from the MOC, India 2018.

He has participated international residency in Sicily, Italy 2018, numerous group exhibitions in India and Serendipity art Festival in collaboration with FICA, Goa 2019. His recent works are deeply concerned critically and creatively with the ecological debates and crisis that surround us today.

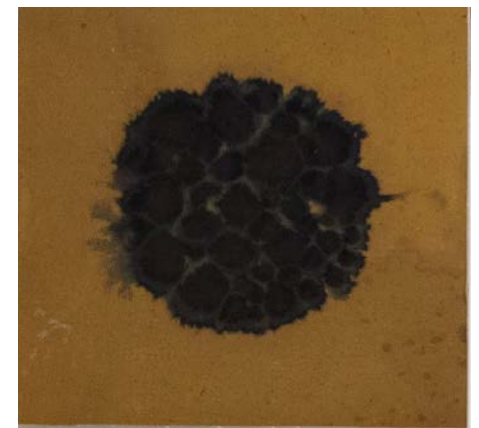
Maksud currently lives in Santiniketan, West Bengal.



Untitled
Earth colour, fermented ink and iron on
canvas pasted on board
6 x 6 in. each
Suite of 25 works
2020, Santiniketan

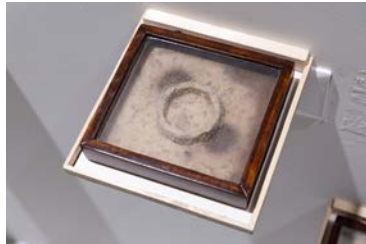
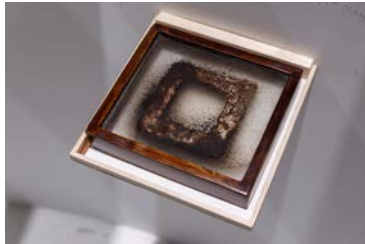
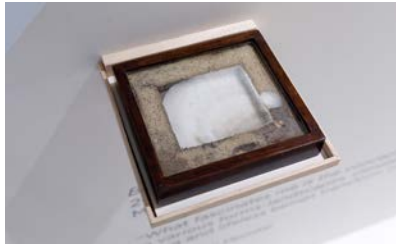


Untitled
Iron, ink on canvas
9 x 10 in. each
Suite of 8 works
2020, Santiniketan



Biotope
Mixed media
6 x 6.5 in each
(15.24 x 16.51 cm. each)
Suite of 12 works
2021, Goa and Santiniketan





Details of *Biotope*



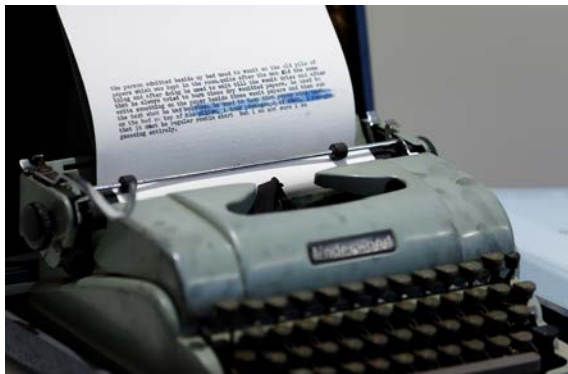
While his works take an Investigative approach it is difficult to separate fact from fiction

Prasanta Ghosh was born in 1986. Since completing his Masters from MSU Baroda in 2016 Ghosh has been involved in an interdisciplinary and literary art practice.

His practice is an integration of self-developed docu-fiction, isolated text, and discourse of sound, video and visuals entwined with each other.

Ghosh has participated in many national and international projects including Random Variables a group show curated by Ushmita Sahu in WNDX Festival of Moving Image , Winnipeg , Canada with his short documentary named " Unsaid",2019.

He has received Generator Experimenter Labs grant from Experimenter Art Gallery for his undergoing project " Green is calling back the ancient lost Greenery" in 2020.



Conversation with Dibyendu Ganguly and Priyambada Ganguly
 Mixed media installation with sound (11:04 min/ 5:55 min), typed text, inkjet prints, pieces of paper, scrolls and watercolour wash on paper.
 Size variable
 2021, Kolkata

Details of *Conversation with Dibyendu Ganguly and Priyambada Ganguly*



“The onsite documented video, self-orated audio connects the undercurrent of reality with the fiction developed by me in the stories. “

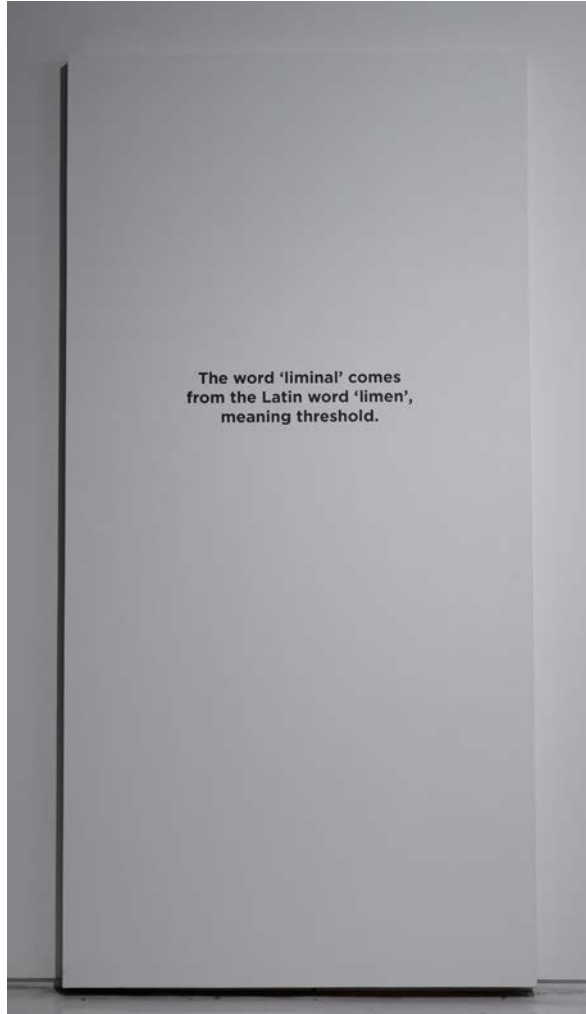


The Torn Remains of Past
Watercolour and wash on rosaspina
paper
8 x 11 in. each (20.32 x 27.94 cm. each)
Suite of 9 works
2021, Kolkata



PART 3
The Exhibition

















OF LIMINAL BEINGS AND OTHER SPACES

Curated by Ushmita Sahu

July 31 - Aug 28 2021

ABOUT EMAMI ART

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. 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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