

Swiss Re's Art Collection in Bangalore



People are
continually
crossing paths,
sharing opinions.
**Their dialogue
inspires, excites
and sparks ideas.**

Commissioned
Artwork

Artwork that has been created and produced by the artist specifically for the chosen site
and in collaboration with Swiss Re

Why we collect art

Why would a global re/insurer like Swiss Re ever engage in art, build a prominent collection and even commission art projects? Re/Insurance is first and foremost about enabling risk, encouraging progress and making societies more resilient. That is how economies can develop, entrepreneurs thrive, knowledge build. Swiss Re is recognized as a thought leader and it is one of the most admired companies in its industry. It has a long tradition, a strong identity and extremely loyal employees.

Re/Insurance products and services, however, are complex, intangible and require explanation. That is one of the reasons why Swiss Re has always engaged in art and architecture. They both inspire, they create an emotional profile, they foster dialogue. They express core values of the corporation, support its brand recognition, and establish a link to society. Moreover, clients and other stakeholders benefit from the experience of the unique atmosphere and quality of Swiss Re's workplaces and its iconic buildings.

But there is more to it. While art and architecture have become an important visual expression of the company's identity, they also underpin Swiss Re's commitment to offering a stimulating work environment and to bringing diversity to life – every day.

Anne Keller Dubach
Head Art & Cultural Engagement Swiss Re, Zurich

The art at Swiss Re's Bangalore office

India's cities are growing at a fast pace. Bustling, sprawling, bubbling, full of energy, vigour and innovation, but also full of contrasts and sometimes contradictions and certainly conflicts. Bangalore, the location of Swiss Re's Global Business Solution Centre in India, emblematically stands for this development, with slightly more than 4 million people in 1990 and approaching 13 million today in 2018.

Urbanization is strongly reflected in contemporary Indian art. So it was almost a given that urbanization was selected as a guiding theme for the art at the Swiss Re office at Bangalore. 13 artists, some up and coming, others more established, from the state of Karnataka and all over India, examine and scrutinise notions of identity, displacement, gender roles and stereotypes and how these artistically relate to urbanisation. The artworks explore new vistas and terrains, they layer the traditional and the modern, the colourful and the drab, the realistic and the fantastic. The art making is as much a comment on the associated complexities and anxieties, as it is a celebration of the resilience and endurance of the human spirit. And from this, a unique language and a striking grammar forms on canvas and paper, with oils, water colours and acrylics, on stand-alone pieces and assembled groups of images, offering narratives that intertwine and range from the personal to a shared milieu.

Nalini Malaviya
Art consultant, Bangalore

SHANTHAMANI MUDDAIAH

Drop, 2019

'Drop' is a visualization of a single drop of water, frozen in the moment that it splatters onto the ground – a monument to the significance of every drop of life-giving force. In the urban context, drinking water is scarce and arrives from a distance, carrying with it, stories of deprivation, nourishment, sustenance and resilience.

Deconstructing the decorative elements of Hoysala temple architecture from the 12th century, temples that are in close vicinity of Bangalore, and isolating a prominent facet of the carvings – the "S curve" – has been incorporated into the artwork. The sculpture in copper encapsulates its multiple associations of fluidity and resilience through its form and material. The materiality of copper with its warmth and reflective quality and its interplay with light creates an evocative experience with light and space. The drop descends with force, disperses into ripples and subsides gently towards the periphery.

Commissioned
Artwork

Details

Copper

76" x 70" x 70"; pedestal: 6 x 178 x 178 cm blockboard

© 2019, Shanthamani Muddaih
(artist's name engraved on work)



GIGI SCARIA

*1973 in Kerala, India

 Lives in New Delhi

 Works with painting, sculpture and digital art

Commissioned
Artwork

Twisted wind, 2018

Gigi Scaria has explored the idea of migration ever since he moved to Delhi from his hometown in Kerala. Engagement with the environment and urbanization have dominated his work for over two decades now. His works address the past, present and the distant future. The impermanence of urban structures, relocations of territorial boundaries and the repositioning of fragments of reality create layered narratives in his art.

Twisted wind

In a futuristic vision, Scaria plays with structural dynamics and architectural elements, while commenting on the density, growth and the constant flux inherent in urban spaces.

Details

Acrylic and automotive paint
on canvas

90" x 60"

© 2018, Gigi Scaria



MURALI CHEEROTH

*1966 in Kerala, India

 Lives in Bangalore

 Works with painting,
performance and video art

Landscape, 2016

Murali Cheeroth's current explorations include the architecture of the city and urban cultures. He looks closely at the ideas of re-construction, infrastructure, technology, speed and change, intersections of the local and the global. Weaving different levels of reality in multiple layers, he create several points of perspectives. Their collage-like structure makes the content of the paintings enigmatic and difficult to fathom.

Landscape

In this narrative, architectural elements from a cityscape are placed in the foreground to emphasise the constant state of construction, instability and development associated with urbanization. Imagery with distorted scale and perspectives in the process of constructing layers, summarises the trepidations and complexities associated with urban spaces.



Details

Oil on canvas

66" x 66"

© 2016, Murali Cheeroth



PRATUL DASH

*1974 in Orissa, India

 Lives in New Delhi

 Works with painting
and video art

Saving for the future, 2016/17

Pratul Dash continues with his engagement on issues concerning urbanization, class conflicts, migration and displacement of the self. As cities expand further to push their own limits, space challenges along with human-nature conflict occupy central space in Dash's practice.

Saving for the future

The artist uses flora and fauna as motifs to represent the vulnerability associated with the ever sprawling expansion of cities, employing aesthetics and stylistic juxtaposition as painterly tools. He presents his concerns about climate change and ecology.



Details

Acrylic on canvas

120" x 60"

© 2016/17, Pratul Dash

SHANTHAMANI MUDDAIAH

*1967 in Karnataka, India

 Lives in Bangalore

 Works with drawing, painting and sculptural installations

Landscape-D, 2017

Shanthamani is a sculptural artist who uses ephemeral natural materials in her visual art work, such as paper and charcoal. Her ecological concerns explore the aftermath of transition and transformation through cultural impacts. Examining the expanding and ever changing metropolis, she explores issues related to the growing urban space and its impact on the environment.

Landscape-D

The splintered forest of “Landscape D” with its split image forms a cityscape mimicking high-rise buildings with its reflection in the water below. The use of charcoal in her drawing and as a motif highlights the interdependence of upward growth of an urban space with mining for natural resource.



Details

Ink and acrylic on cotton rag pulp paper

137 x 96 cm

© 2017, Shanthamani Muddaiah



RAVIKUMAR KASHI

*1968 in Karnataka, India

 Lives in Bangalore

 Works with drawing, painting, photography and installations

Leaking Legacy, 2017

Ravikumar Kashi explores the principle of proximity that triggers nonlinear and suggestive narratives. The images of objects emanate from an urban situation – objects that one encounters in a city environment, but the contexts that are associated with these objects are disrupted and reconstructed.

Leaking Legacy

A canvas painting depicting a legacy which is renewing itself in innumerable ways. Multiple symbols related to power, politics and essentials such as water are in proximity to comment on the cyclical nature of life and sustenance. It triggers possibilities of several narratives emerging from the immediacy of dissimilar objects.



Details

Acrylic and oil on canvas

72" x 36"

© 2017, Ravikumar Kashi

SHOVIN BHATTACHARJEE

*1976 in Shillong, India

 Lives in New Delhi

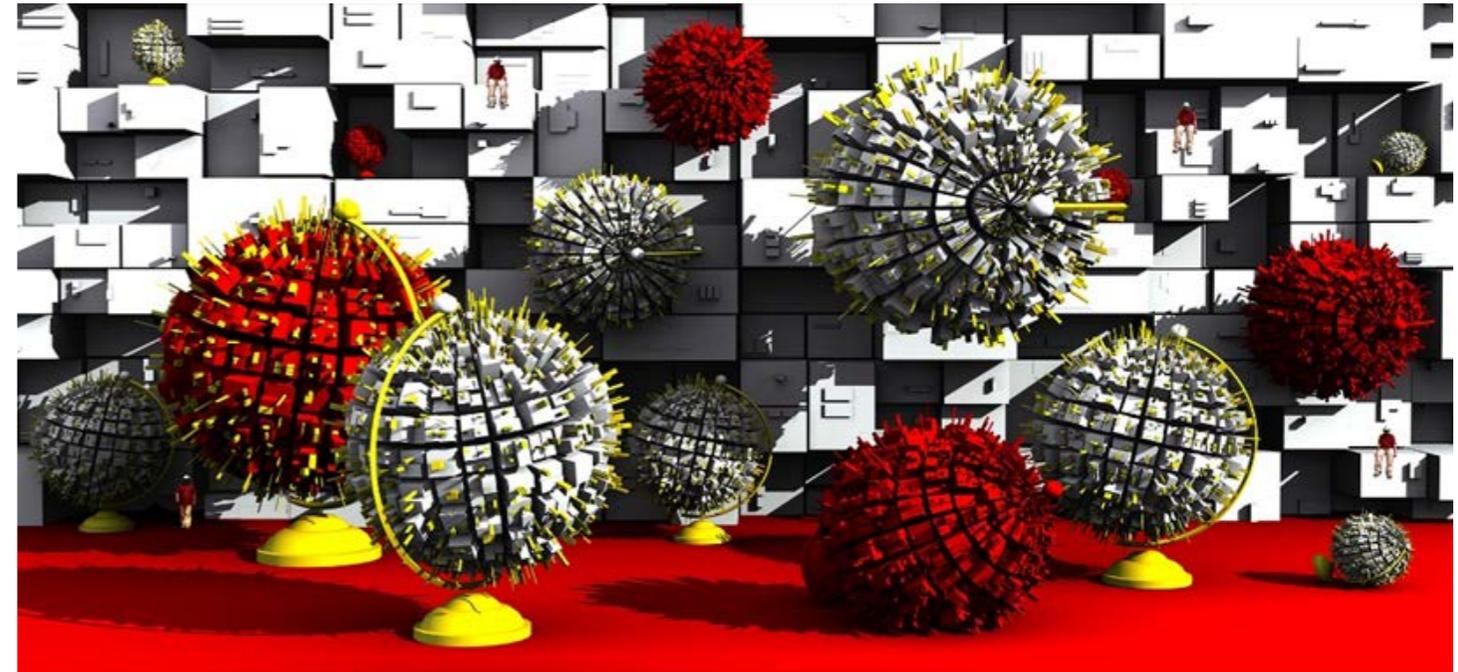
 Works with painting,
digital art and sculpture.

Edition 1/2, 2019

Shovin's practice explores the intangible aspects of human interaction amongst themselves and with nature. In his digital and sculptural installations, scale and construction, and space and light play a vital role in creating an illusion of magnificence.

Red in Universe

The digital artwork depicts the artist's reflections on life and the accompanying humour amidst concrete constructions. Contrasting bright colours in conjunction with the geometrical configuration of a labyrinth, this offers various vantage points.



Details

Archival print on Archival Paper

86" x 40"

© 2019, Shovin Bhattacharjee

V.G. VENUGOPAL

*1976 in Kerala, India

 Lives in Bangalore

 Works with painting, printmaking and video art

Multi-story, 2016

Venugopal explores the dichotomy inherent in situations emerging from urban living. He portrays complexities and dilemmas of reality. An interpretation of everyday reality associated with urban issues like identity, migration, adaptability and existence are explored in collage-like narratives.

Multi-story

The urban silhouettes of glass-cleaners become moving embodiments of an unpredictable future and an irreversible past. The anonymity and loss of identity of workers in urban spaces forms an inescapable trajectory.



Details

Tea extracts, watercolours, pastels and hand-cut archival paper

25.5" x 19.5"

© 2016, Venugopal



MUKESH SHARMA

*1974 in Rajasthan, India

 Lives in New Delhi

 Works with painting,
printmaking and installation art

Commissioned
Artwork

Resonance, 2018

Mukesh Sharma experiments across media, the blurred boundaries of imagined realities, mythologies and technologies and attempts to demonstrate their cultural relevance in our ordinary lives. Keyboards, construction workers and mobile phones represent the aspiration content of the current generation, and they simultaneously highlight dependence on materialism and technology, which he explores in his works.

Resonance

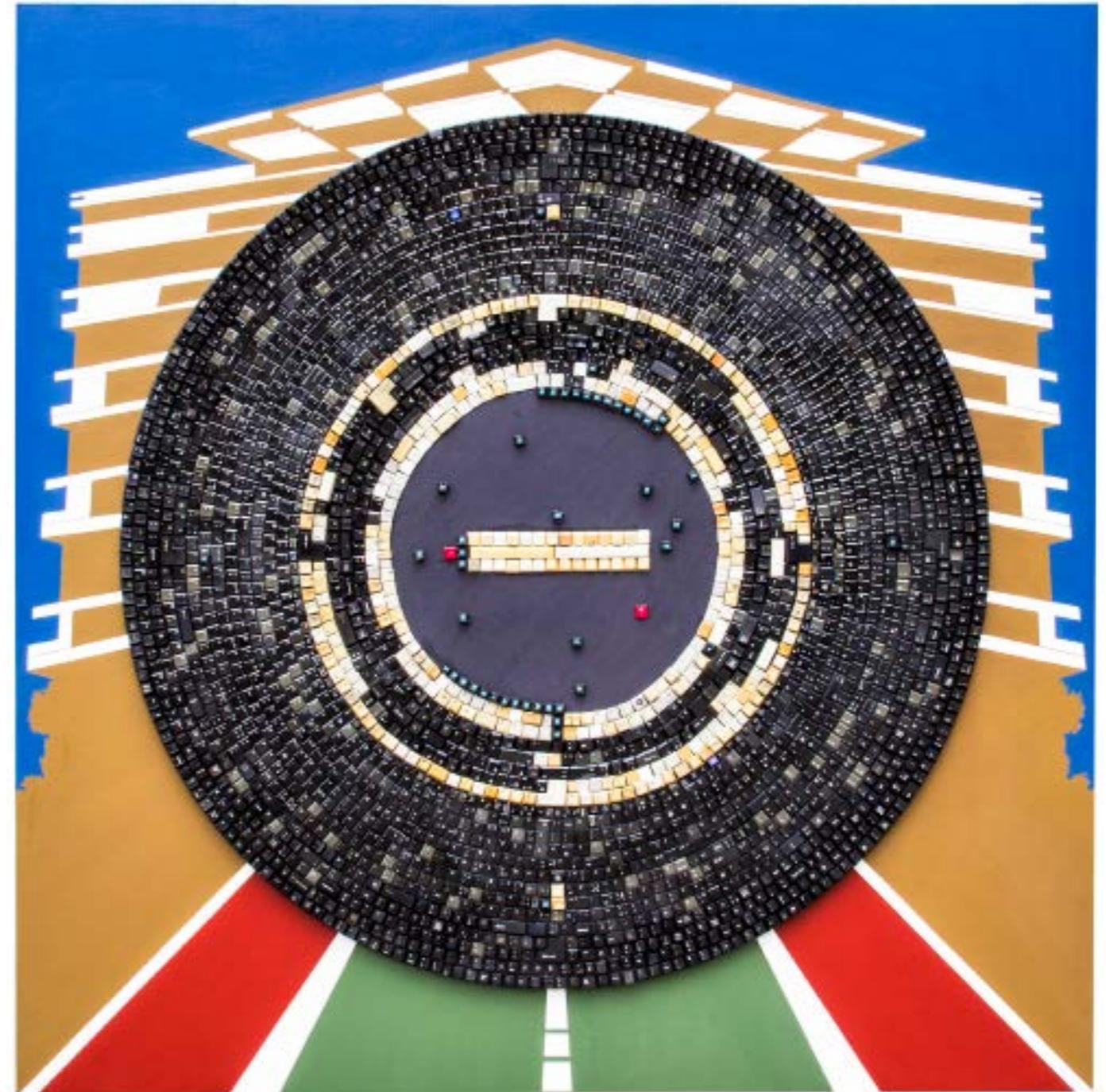
The work attempts to synthesize the artist's experience and connect with technology and cricket, of which the latter is a passion that dominates the Indian ethos across cities, irrespective of caste, class, gender and age. The use of material as an aesthetic device lies at the core of Sharma's practice.

Details

Acrylic on canvas and computer
keys, woodboard

60" x 60"

© 2018, Mukesh Sharma



MINAL DAMANI

*1979 in Maharashtra, India

 Lives in Mumbai

 Works with drawing,
painting and installations

Commissioned
Artwork

Natural lines 2, 2018

Minal Damani's works are quietly detailed and form abstract patterns that appear as maps or gentle terrains. They are based on observations from her travels, an internalization of issues related to migration and dislocation. There is a quest for harmony in the paintings, and each of them reveals a narrative related to the self and they also explore larger issues related to land, territories and the rural urban conundrum.

Natural lines 2

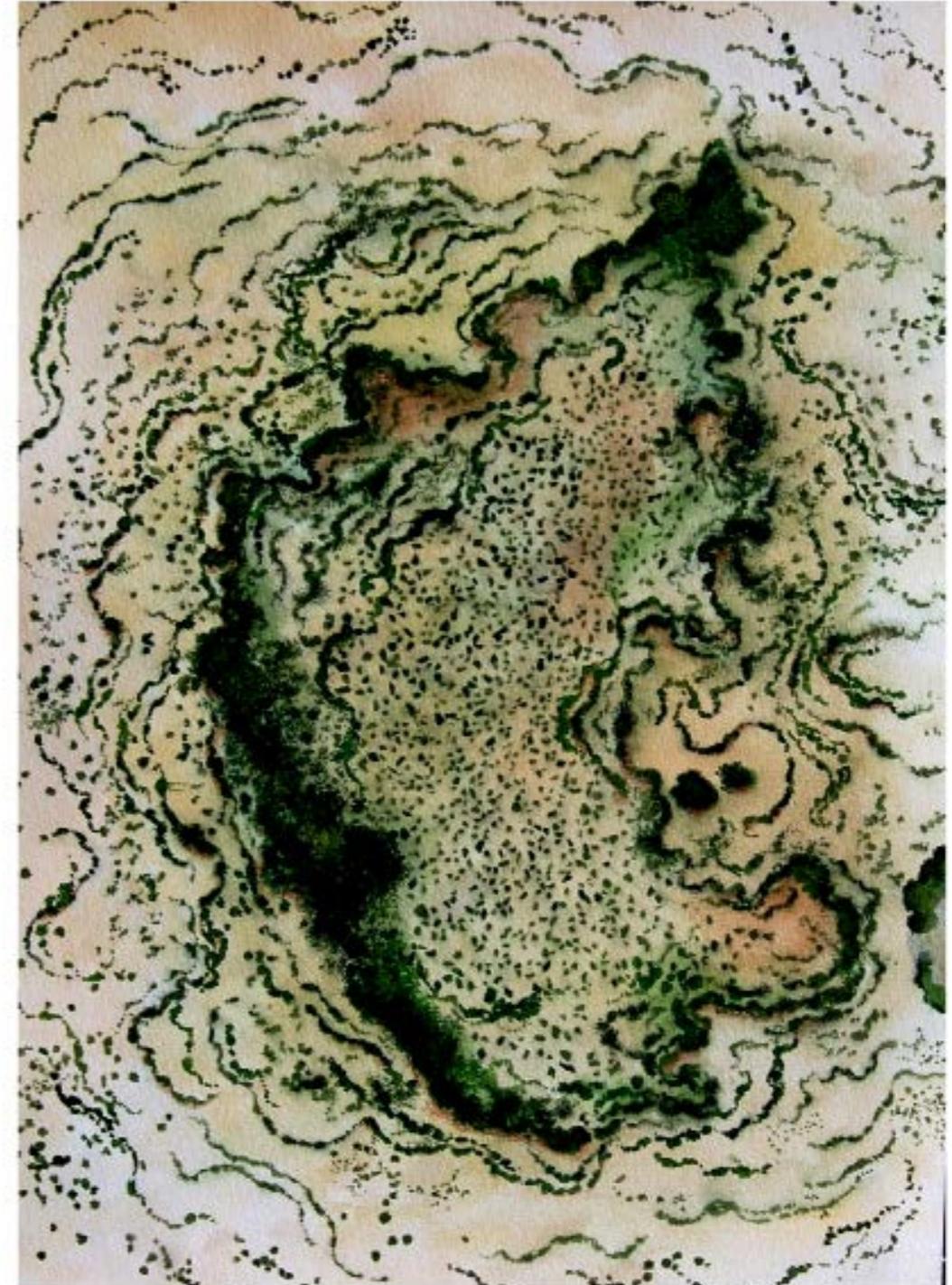
An areial view of land looks like an even tapestry, but as one goes closer, it appears to have interruptions that breaks its wholeness. Like a fractal, the land opens up into more spaces and more territories endlessly. For instance the outline of Karnataka as a manmade boundary explores the notion of land and territory, and as a space of coexistence between natural and manmade.

Details

Acrylic on canvas

48" x 60"

© 2018, Minal Damani



SHIVANI AGGARWAL

*1975 in New Delhi, India

 Lives in New Delhi

 Works with painting,
sculpture and installation art

Sin, 2012

Shivani Aggarwal's practice delves into an exploration of issues of gender and the human condition, drawing a connection between the society and its effect on our minds. She uses emotional and sensuous connotations related to her personal experiences, which she translates into her art practice by choosing elements and exploring their possibilities in not just painting but photography, sculpture and video.

Sin

Drawing from human traits and society, the work metaphorically speaks of the seven sins and visually interprets them, in response to a poem by Laxmana Dalmia. Dreams and desires intersect to create a pictorial motif where realities merge and warp in an alter space. A surreal image of objects and situations is created, such as the rose petals and the hammer which bend and distort, representing a desire to free oneself from these shackles.



Details

Photography and acrylic on canvas

14" in diameter, set of seven

© 2012, Shivani Aggarwal



MUKTINATH MONDAL

*1982 in West Bengal, India

 Lives in Vadodara

 Works with painting and installation art

Spirit of anticipation, 2011

Muktinath Mondal's works emerge from his rural background and narrate the unheard and unknown stories of his cultural roots. Paradoxes associated with political, social, economic and cultural agendas surface in his works consciously and subconsciously through various images, narratives and mediums.

Spirit of anticipation

This painting composed as a medallion attempts to create a mythic imagery of the process of anticipation. Broken mud vessels suspended from a banyan tree are an amalgamation of daily practices of mundane lives, religious and spiritual beliefs. The work transforms itself into a device to portray the non-urban touch yet with a desire to reveal the naked truth of existential crisis of environment, tradition and culture.



Details

Oil on canvas

77" in diameter

© 2011, Muktinath Mondal



GHANA SHYAM LATUA

*1992 in West Bengal, India

 Lives in Shantiniketan

 Works with painting

Occupying Land 2, 2017

Migration from rural to urban areas and loss of nature form the crux of Latua's art practice. He explores the relationship of material process as a metaphor of erasure and transformation to interpret the changing landscape both in natural and man-made situation. He attempts to capture the character of time as it transitions through the prisms of memory.

Occupying Land 2

The whole surface of a tinted paper is intended to be a transformed land, the under surface of the paper is exposed through nibbling, which metaphorically suggests a psychological search for nature as it existed in memory in rural and pristine areas. Narratives of human intervention on vacant spaces for their vested interest emerge on the skin of the paper as a metaphor for land.



Details

Water colour tint wash,
nibbling with needle

60" x 42"

© 2017, Ghana Shyam Latua



SUCHENDER P

*1976 in Karnataka, India

 Lives in Mysore

 Works with drawing and painting

Commissioned
Artwork

Peripheral, 2018

Suchender's works explore the effects of urbanization on wild animals in a subtle and nuanced style. The issue of wild migration in view of boundaries and the dangers of crossing over into uncharted territories – human space – have dangerous repercussions in current times.

Peripheral

Deploying aesthetics as a tool and animals as a motif, the painting highlights and discusses adverse circumstances as a direct result of urbanization. The demarcation of natural habitats and territories, migration and displacement are real issues affecting animals – and humans, too.

Details

Oil on canvas

72" x 48"

© 2018, Suchender P



Facts and Figures on Swiss Re's Art Collection

Global collection
focusing on contemporary art



3800 works
by around 830
international
artists

20 locations
Placed in 20 group-wide
locations

**Commissioned
artworks**
Various commissioned
art works, being the most
prominent artistic
expression of
the collection



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