

# Whole within Fragments

## Amritah Sen

Amritah Sen is a Kolkata (India) based Visual Artist, studied Fine Arts in Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan. As an artist, Amritah is obsessive about stories. For long she has been curious about people's stories, and narratives that create the larger parallel history beside its main course. This led her to study the flowing history, changing cultural aspects of the place where she belongs.

Amritah has shown her works frequently in group shows in different venues in India, South East Asia, Europe and USA. She has also done ten solo shows till date in Kolkata, New Delhi and Mumbai and has participated in different art fairs including Dhaka Art Summit, India Art Fair and United Art Fair. She has done residencies in different South Asian countries with her own project and also participated in research projects organized by Khoj Kolkata, Art Ichol in Maihar, Hamdasti in Kolkata, Shop-art Art-shop in Himachal Pradesh and NexUs in Kathmandu. She had been finalist of Sovereign Asian Art Award, Hong Kong in 2018, 2020. She currently specializes in making Artist Books.

## C. Douglas

Born in Kerala, India, 1951; lives and works in Chennai, India. Douglas started his career as a painter at the age of 20 when he travelled to Chennai (then Madras) to enrol himself at the Government College of Arts and Crafts. His works from the mid 70's with the foetus motif show an influence of K. Ramanujam's line and K.C.S. Paniker's moods. In his works, that imbibe all his various experiences – from Kerala to Choramandal to West Germany and back. When he lived in West Germany his paintings gradually became softer and less structured imbibing stains, scribbles, tears and dirty tones. After arriving back to India, using mud, charcoal and watercolours on crinkled fryer paper, he arrived at a universalized subliminal figure. Douglas has had several solo exhibitions and has received several awards. In 1990 he won the Bharat Bhavan award in Bhopal and the Lalit Kala Akademi Chennai award. He lives and works in Chennai.

## Sanatan Saha

Sanatan Saha's oeuvre of works intertwines the celebration of ephemeral landscape of Birbhum region, the mundane livelihoods of the village people, the spontaneous encounter with the indigenous culture and the effect of construction and urban development on the natural and cultural landscape of the Rarh region, specially Shantiniketan. The overlapping images, the juxtaposed tonality and the monotonous colour palette create a tapestry of the isolated patches of land, the ochre greenscape of forest, the abundance of pasture and the joy in triviality; it reflects an in-depth communication with the artist's personal accounts and memory. The incoherent images, the fragmented drawings and the erasure and the abstraction of surface somehow connect the fading away of memory and the changing landscape into a concrete and walled space, with the rapid pace of urbanisation. Saha's works highlights the concern on hindrance of the physical landscape of Birbhum region as well as the everyday livelihood of the people.

Saha's works shed light upon the conceptual overlapping of the paradox of mundane interweaving a visual perspective of social relationships through human experience. The pliability and resilience that human needs to survive in the changing circumstances of life are so intensely reflected in his works. With increasing urbanised realm the urge to seek 'a space for respite' is even getting stronger. Along with the patches of wilderness Saha emphasises that the flora and fauna are not figments rather deeply associated with the mundane lives of Birbhum region. The ashes of construction is slowly eroding the socio-cultural and environmental picturesque. The artist extracts the residue of the impermanence from the the ochreous landscape of the region as a patina to his memory. However, land acquisition and construction in the form of urban development shrink the landscape mapping of the world and eventually, it has become a global threat to the environmental and socio-cultural ecology. Saha's reflection on the plight of evolving terrain not only highlights his concern for a particular region, his practice interprets broader visual perspective on the global alarming situation as well and makes it relevance in contemporary time. Sanatan Saha currently lives and works in Shantiniketan, West Bengal.

## Purusottam Chakraborty

I am a suburbanite. Since my career is city oriented, I have to travel through many levels of traffic to reach destiny. Therefore, one has to gradually state highways and national highways, from narrow road to wide ones and from rural areas. On way to this visits I see a range of objects situated in my surroundings. I look at every steps on my path and how it changes gradually as I move on. According to my work, referencing urban infrastructure and human presence, the work reflect transition, displacement and observation. The interplay between sculpture solidity and pictorial narrative revels quiet tensions within contemporary movement, migration and the constructed environment.

# Valsan Koorma Koller

Valsan Koorma Koller came to Madras to study in 1971 at a time when the sculptor Dhanpal headed the College of Arts and Crafts; and a Artists' Village, under the guidance of K.C.S. Panicker offered several possibilities for practicing artists to continue working without the anxiety of having to find other means of physical sustenance. Working initially with the geometrical abstraction which originated from the study of the human body in its structural configuration and in movement, Koller would cast plaster and concrete in single and multiple modules, later assembling them into totemic formats which created a startling dialogue between the primitive and the urban. Subsequently, in the late 80's and 90's, he cast two significant bodies of work in bronze, with fragments of organic and geometrical forms, braising the pieces together in the manner of sculptural collage, and in the process combining brass pots, machine parts and other finds gathered during forages among the assorted scrap in the junkshops situated in the older quarters of Madras. From the late 90's he moved quite naturally into the area of environment and architecture, via projects conceived by local municipalities or private organizations which promoted the idea of incorporating sculpture into recreational spaces. In Subhash Bose Park in Kochi, for example, he used the stucco technique to build a central skeletal pyramid surrounded by smaller units, spaces in which visitors to the park could recline or dream. The range of materials which he now uses has widened to include wood, leather, bones, hair, nests and hives, things which have been outgrown or discarded, having aged or lost their value in the quest for novelty. Turning loss to advantage, he creates a theatre where these things are reinstated, pending further use; by virtue of their relationship to their surroundings, they encompass a space which far exceeds their immediate limits.

Koller has an affiliation with working processes which marginalizes any message that stands apart from the act of putting a piece together. As he asserts, concept apart, the placement of the object or the angle of inclination which it finally assumes is in fact the sculpture, the instant of intervention creating a value hitherto non - existent.

## Jyotirmoy De

Kitsch from Kirnahar : My Vision of Stich

I, myself, Jyotirmoy De try to create vibrant textile artworks that stitch a vision of village life, where kingfishers, butterflies, hornbills, fishes, cats and boys playing cricket jostle within densely layered compositions. Learning at and inspired from Kala Bhavana's pedagogy and after getting training at M.SU. Baroda, I collaborate with local women from my native village Kirahar to craft works that critique the rapid transformation of my rural surroundings. Instead of traditional earthen homes, monumental buildings and construction dominate the backgrounds of my pieces of art work with a burst of colours that hints at the erosion not only of my village's natural and cultural order but also of a simpler, more authentic, aesthetic.

Inspired by Miskin, plays out in a jarring tableau of unlikely encounters, a dissonant assembly where creatures that would never meet in nature are placed side by side. There is a restless energy here, an unsettling mix of species forced together. In my paintings, there is no sense of harmony in rural Bengal's natural order, instead, an artificial convergence occurs, as if nature itself has been thrown off balance.

Rather than illustrating symbiosis, these creatures appear almost trapped in a parody of growth, where copulation and propagation are symbols not of continuity but of unchecked frantic reproduction. The scene feels overgrown, almost invasive, as if growth itself has lost its direction. My work hints at the pressures of urbanisation that push all things into tight quarters, creating a mockery of natural ecosystems, In this dense, eclectic crowd, the viewer sees not a symphony of nature but a jarring spectacle of misplaced coexistence, and cunsetting foreshadowing of nature forced to adapt.

I try to insert famous paintings into these scenes, referencing Icons like making these emblems of high culture appear almost incidental within his crowded rural panoramas. By embedding such iconic images into my work. These types of work comments on the dissonance of cultural heritage amidst modernity's encroachment.

Planes labelled across the skies as vehicles of globalisation intrude into the displacement of the local by the global as if the countryside once-untouched village landscape. These tabels highlight constantly under observation by entities far removed from it. Yet, rather than simply resisting these intrusions, the art work absorbs them, reflecting the absurdity of a place where elephants and rhinos may feel just as at home as hens and ducks.

My artwork doesn't merely borrow from the vibrancy of kitsch: It reconstructs it as a language of critique. In his hands, the bright colours, stylised animals, and intricate patterns of Kantha embroidery an art steeped in the everyday lives of Birbhum's artisans become a kind of hyperreal theatre, each thread carrying a double meaning. The stitched surfaces glow with colours so saturated they verge on surreal, as if to suggest that behind this luminosity lies a deeper, more troubling truth. This is not merely an homage to local craft. it's a confrontation with its commodification and the erosion of its cultural depth in the exaggerated scenes, beauty becomes unsettling. This simplifies elements that might seduce viewers with nostalgia familiar forms and lush colours-only to reveal them as artificial, their allure hollow. The animals, plants and landscapes in his compositions are not mere decorations: they are symbols critiquing the commercial forces that distort and displace traditional crafts, reducing them to tokens in a consumption-driven world. I am sure that my approach forces viewers to confront the tension between surface beauty and cultural loss. The effect is a poignant dissonance, where kitsch, often dismissed as shallow or sentimental becomes a potent reflection of identity and erasure as if every stitch were both a celebration and an elegy.

Rembracing elements of kitsch alongside the intricate textures of traditional Kantho embroidery, I endeavour to reimagine local crafts as vehicles of social critique, weaving threads that speak as much of preservations of disruption of animals, landscapes and self-portraits--where it appears as both observer and participant form a stitched vision of a world in transition. Here, nature, culture, and kitsch collide in a vibrant yet uneasy spectacle, each stitch drawing attention to the layered, sometimes conflicted heritage of a rural life redefined. Through this interplay I venture to question what remains of identity as the familiar rural world shifts under the pressures of modernisation, asking if its essence can withstand the forces that diminish it.