

EMAMI ART

Arunima Choudhury

āraṇyaka  
আরণ্যক

Recent Works on Nature

June 27 – August 9, 2025

Gallery 1, Ground Floor



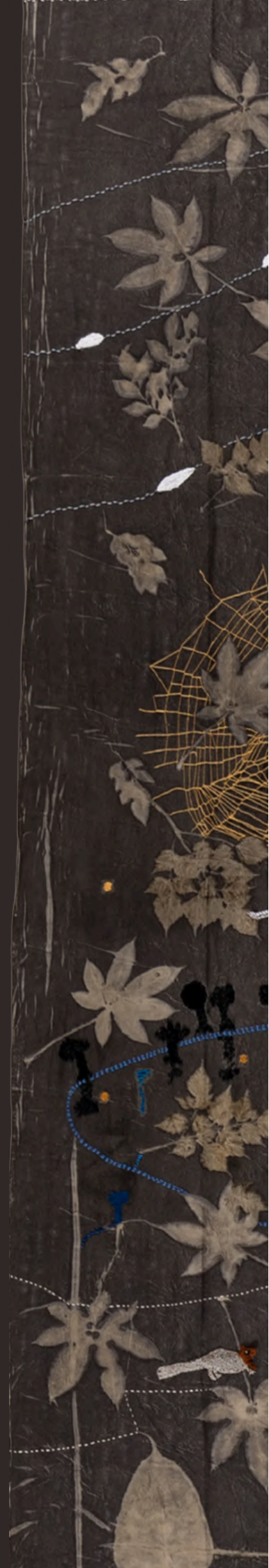
My eyes desire green  
My body desires a green garden  
Bring the trees and plant them here  
Let me look at them

- Shakti Chattopadhyay, *Let Me Look at Them*  
(tr. Arunava Sinha)

Arunima Choudhury's (b. 1950) recent works in the exhibition evince a deep familiarity with the natural world, which appears both as a theme and a medium and also as a position informed by the long and troubled history of environmental change. For an avid gardener who spent her childhood in the lush green hill towns of North Bengal, her love for nature comes innately. However, although nature has long been a recurring presence in her work, she does not view it through a romantic lens by simply celebrating its unblemished beauty. Much like her favourite poets – Shakti Chattopadhyay, Jibanananda Das, and Binay Majumdar – she locates nature at the heart of our modern urban experiences, suggesting schisms and interconnectedness between humans and the natural environment, as well as a symbiosis between life, desire, and death.

Working across mediums, from eco-printing to hand embroidery, and in various formats such as long hanging scrolls and paintings, Arunima Choudhury prefers to call herself a storyteller. She utilises her work to tell stories, which encompass both personal thoughts and memories and widely familiar narratives, such as the decay of ecological sensibilities, the unquiet woods, and the rapid growth and expansion of techno-economic modernity, which results in the unprecedented destruction of natural habitats – including rivers, forests, and mountains – and the indigenous people who live there. Choudhury always takes sides with the victims, evoking a primal sympathy that builds a more profound kinship, holding us together. Having said so, in spirit, Choudhury is no environmental activist, and her paintings are by no means protest messages. They are profound in meaning, like poetry, in which form and content are inextricably intertwined.

We have said that nature holds centre stage in her entire oeuvre. However, it has increasingly gained intensity and complexity over the last two decades. In 2006, Choudhury made a deliberate decision to prepare colours derived from organic sources to use in her paintings, choosing them over industrially produced paints sold in tubes. This resolution led to extensive experimentation with natural colours, exploring the various possibilities of creating a compelling painting





style. She had to start almost from scratch, travelling to places and collaborating with experts in textiles to learn methods that best suited her style and cause. It shows her profound sense of medium specificity, echoing the spirit of Nandalal Bose. Her tiny notebook of methods and materials reminds us of Nandalal's *Shilpa Charcha*.

"I go where I can find leaves," says Choudhury in one of her conversations with us. A keen explorer, she is busy experimenting with the new medium of eco-printing – a technique specific to natural textiles – to create paintings on rice paper. She is drawn to this method of directly transmitting the shapes of leaves or flowers onto the pictorial surface because it allows her to engage more closely with nature in her work as a trace of memory rather than a visual representation. In her 'eco-prints' in this show, the impressions of both ferns and roses convey a sense of aesthetic-botanical territoriality, encompassing weeds symbolising resilience, renewal, and endurance, as well as flowering plants that require special human care to grow. Leaves overwhelm Choudhury's work; the synthesis of eco-printed leaf patterns, fluid brushstrokes, and patches gives her paintings a unique visual charm, rhythm, and organic feel – pointing to a new direction in her decades-long practice with natural colours.

The core theme of the show, the forest, embodying intense nature, exists both within and outside us, in the tropical Amazon as well as in the deeper terrains of the mind, emotions, and desires. In this exhibition, the forest belongs to a woman, more specifically, an ageing woman. Having navigated through mid-life crises and the disintegration of womanhood, she now finds renewed wholeness in nature's deep sensuality, much like Rosalie in Thomas Mann's novella, *The Black Swan*.

- Arkaprava Bose





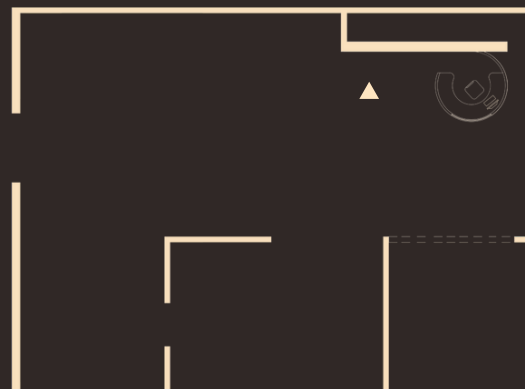
### *Afternoon*

Eco print with natural colours and gouache  
on rice paper pasted on handmade paper

28 5/8 x 22 3/8 in.

2025

In Arunima Choudhury's work, the woman-nature relationship is complex and multifaceted. The beautiful fern imprints symbolize a primal bond between humanity and nature, embodying themes of resilience, vitality, and renewal.







মালিনী (The Gardener)

Eco print with natural colours and gouache on  
rice paper pasted on handmade paper

29 x 22 in.

2025

Arunima Choudhury's passion for gardening deeply informs her artistic vision, as seen in the painting *The Gardener*. The painting features a dark-skinned female nude amidst lush foliage and flowers, symbolizing the profound, multifaceted connection between humanity and the natural world.







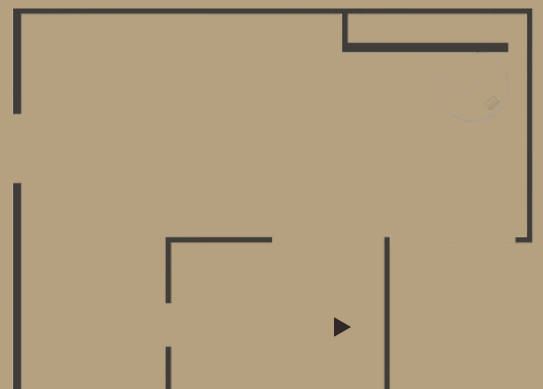
### *Night*

Eco print with natural colours and  
hand embroidery on cotton

156 1/4 x 46 7/8 in.

2025

This large vertical scroll – a new format that Arunima Choudhury has been exploring for the last few years – is a pensive depiction of night-time as experienced in nature. With the cotton scroll printed with various kinds of leaves as the background, Choudhury embroiders a half moon, stars, a pond surrounded by dark silhouettes of trees, spider webs, night-blooming flowers, and nocturnal creatures – owl, bat, snake, and mongoose. Putting her experience-led wisdom to expression through eco-printing and embroidery, she narrates a story of harmony and coexistence between living creatures and ancient forces of nature.

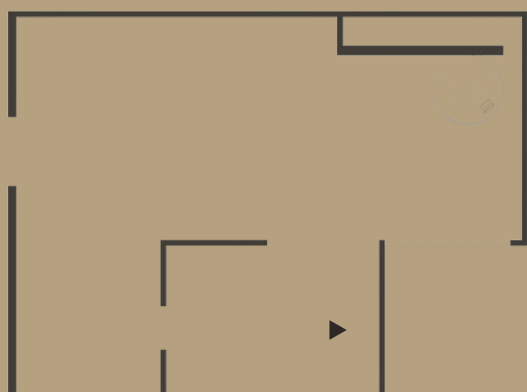




## Day

Eco print with natural colours, hand embroidery, and applique on cotton cloth  
157 1/2 x 46 5/8 in.  
2025

This large vertical scroll is a vibrant depiction of daytime as experienced in nature. With the cotton scroll eco-printed with various kinds of leaves as the background, Choudhury embroiders colourful insects, birds, reptiles, and tendrils weaving their way up towards the sun and the clouds at the top.







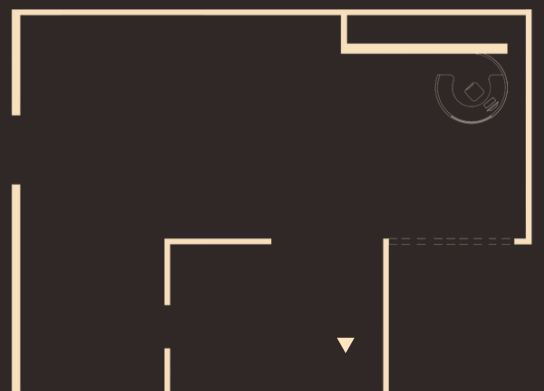
*Dawn*

Natural colours on handmade paper

22 x 14 5/8 in.

2024

Arunima Choudhury's pictorial meditation on nature oscillates between simplicity and complexity, often infused with poetic nuance. This painting captures the serene mood of dawn, with brilliant pink hues evoking both the sky – where birds take flight – and the winding path through the woods.





হলদে গোলাপ (Yellow Rose)

Eco print with natural colours and gouache  
on rice paper pasted on handmade paper

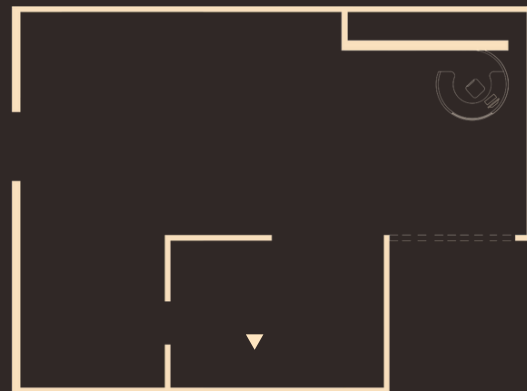
28 x 21 1/2 in.

2025





Woman and nature are recurring, intertwined presences in Arunima Choudhury's work. The evocative depiction of elegant female figures amidst flowers and plants reveals eternal feminine beauty, underscoring the coexistence of nature within and around us, embodying both desire and serenity.



আত্মমগ্ন (In Her Own World)  
Rose petals, eco print with natural colours, and gouache on rice paper pasted on handmade paper  
30 x 22 in.  
2025



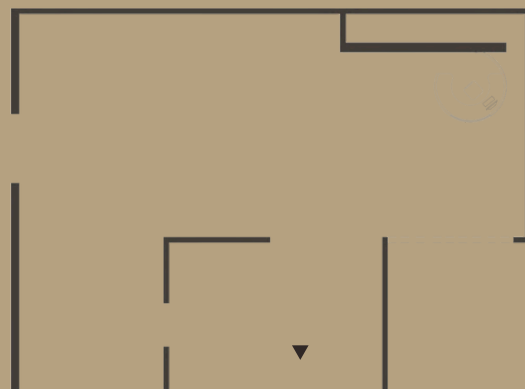




### *Nature II*

Eco print with natural colours on rice  
paper pasted on handmade paper  
28 3/8 x 21 7/8 in.  
2024

As an avid gardener who grew up amidst the lush landscapes of North Bengal, her affinity for nature is deeply rooted. Yet, rather than idealizing nature, Choudhury situates it at the core of modern urban experiences, revealing the fractures and interconnectedness between humans and the environment, as well as the symbiosis between life, desire, and death.







### Tree

Natural colours on handmade paper

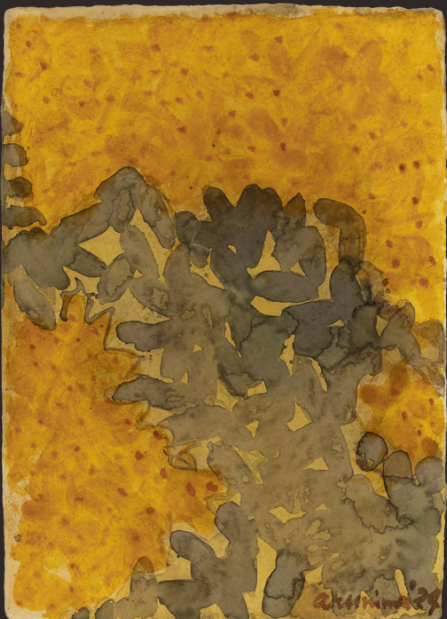
Overall dimension variable

A-C: 11 3/4 x 8 1/2 in.

Set of 3 works

2024

In Arunima Choudhury's nature paintings, natural colours play a crucial role, imbuing the works with mood and emotional resonance rather than merely defining forms. The three depictions of the tree showcase its distinct characters, each evoking a unique connection between nature and human emotions.





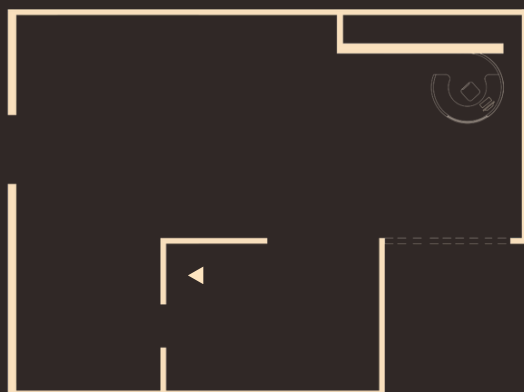
ধরিত্রী (*The Earth*)

Natural colours on handmade paper

34 5/8 x 27 in.

2023

This painting depicts an elderly woman as Mother Earth, weaving together personal memories and a profound love for nature. Choudhury's paintings are akin to poetry, blending deep emotions and sensibilities with elegant forms.





Arunima Choudhury has an extensive body of faces and gestural images in her sketchbooks, complementing her major pieces. These smaller works on paper are characterized by fluid lines, simple yet evocative figurations, and a palette of natural hues, effectively capturing the essence of human gestures, expressions, and emotions.



### Faces

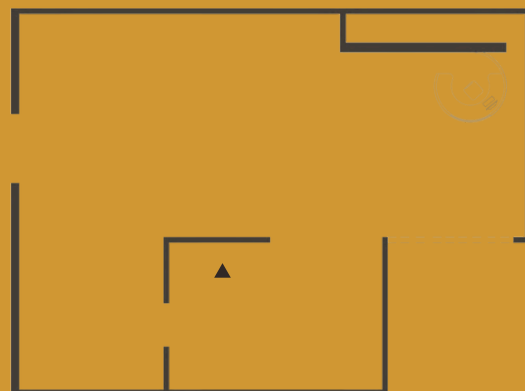
Natural colours on handmade paper

Overall dimension variable

5 3/8 x 4 7/8 in. each

Set of 20 works

2025







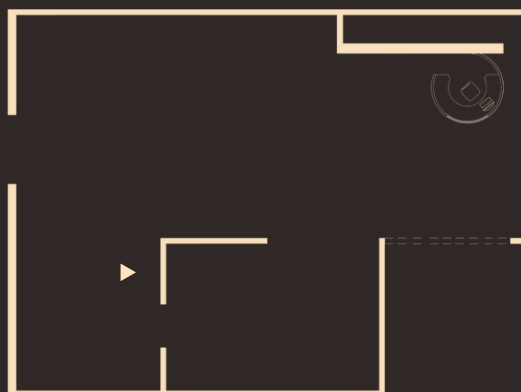
## Female Portraits

Natural colours on handmade paper

Overall dimension variable

Set of 7 works

2024-2025







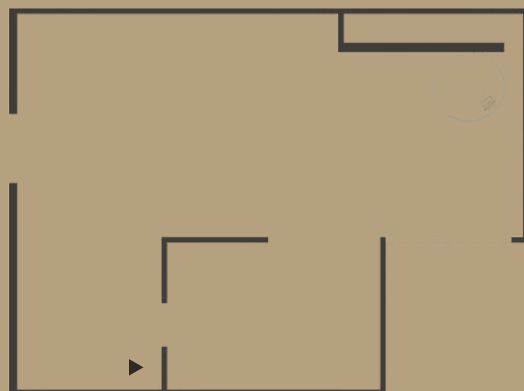
*In the Moonsoon*

Natural colours on handmade paper

25 x 24 1/2 in.

2022

This captivating painting masterfully captures the essence of the rainy season in all its nuance. Arunima Choudhury is arguably one of India's most powerful nature painters, whose works transcend mere spectacle, instead, evoking a realm of emotion, imagination, and memory. This piece lyrically reveals the monsoon landscape of Bengal, rendered with the sensitivity of a poet or musician.







### Parrots

Natural colours on handmade paper

24 x 24 in.

2023

This beautiful group of parrots – common in Bengal – shows Arunima Choudhury's unique free-flowing style of figuration and her deep love for nature. She uses natural colours, which play a constituent role in her painting, giving her work a unique organic feels and freshness.







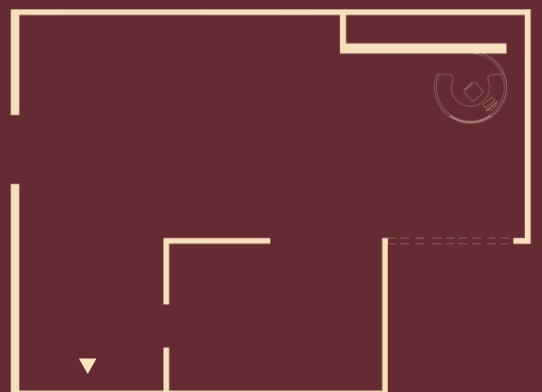
### *The Girl and the Bird*

Gouache on rice paper pasted on handmade paper

24 1/8 x 24 3/8 in.

2022

This painting showcases Arunima Choudhury's ingenuity as a storyteller, weaving a narrative through an additive process that combines memories, desires, sights, and emotions. In this work, a young girl chases a bird through a serene pink-hued landscape, filled with trees, ponds, and flowers, capturing a moment of innocence and wonder.







*In Conversation*

Natural colours on handmade paper

24 x 24 in.

2024

The painting shows a naked woman in conversation with a hairy naked man by a lake, evoking an erotic mood. In Arunima Choudhury's meditation on nature, human erotic desire plays a vital role, and her painting can be seen as an effort towards the rehabilitation of the sensible in the reified world.







*Odd Man of the Jungle III (Series: Odd Men of the Jungle)*

Eco print with natural colours and gouache on rice paper pasted on handmade paper

28 5/8 x 22 1/4 in.

2025

A dark-skinned man peers out from behind a host of fern leaf impressions. One hand appears to pull the ferns closer to himself in a protective manner while the other is half-raised, facing the viewer, as if asking us to halt. This series is a profound depiction of the indigenous populations that are forcibly displaced from their homeland due to corporate greed and made to feel out of place in their own land.







*Odd Man of the Jungle I* (Series: *Odd Men of the Jungle*)

Eco print with natural colours and gouache on rice paper pasted on handmade paper

28 5/8 x 22 1/4 in.

2025

In this gouache painting on rice paper eco-printed with indigo – the first work in Choudhury's *Odd Men of the Jungle* series, she depicts a bare-chested dark-skinned child – a native of the forest, surrounded by patterns of leaves and a single white flower. With this, Choudhury voices her empathy for the original inhabitant of the forest who is made to feel out of place in his own land.







*Odd Man of the Jungle II* (Series: *Odd Men of the Jungle*)  
 Eco print with natural colours on rice paper pasted on  
 handmade paper  
 29 x 21 7/8 in.  
 2025

In this painting on rice paper – the second work in Choudhury's *Odd Men of the Jungle* series, Choudhury depicts a dark-skinned figure sitting amidst impressions of fern leaves framing and overflowing over his body – a profound depiction of the original inhabitant of the forest made to feel out of place in his own land.







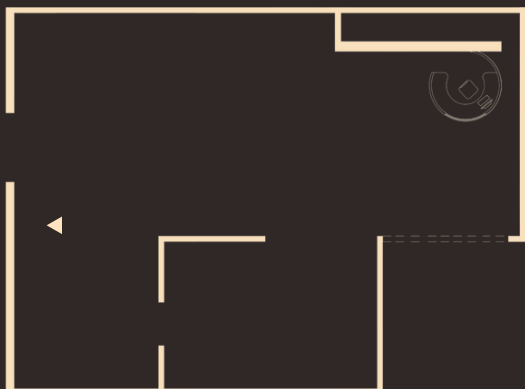
## Faces and Figures

Natural colours on handmade paper

Overall dimension variable

Set of 14 works

2024-2025







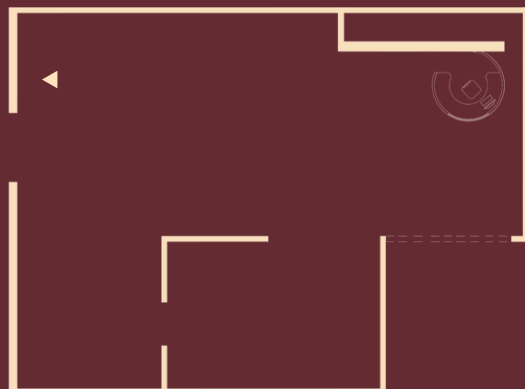
দুই বোন (Two Sisters)

Eco print with natural colours on handmade paper

30 1/4 x 22 3/8 in.

2025

Arunima Choudhury views herself as a storyteller, using her art to evoke emotions and memories rather than tell traditional stories. In this painting, the two sisters personify filial love, which subtly extends to the intimate connection between humans and nature.







*Odd Men of the Jungle (Series: Odd Men of the Jungle)*

Eco print with natural colours on rice paper pasted on handmade paper  
30 1/8 x 22 1/2 in.

2025

In this painting on rice paper – the fourth work in Choudhury's *Odd Men of the Jungle* series, she depicts two figures – one standing behind the other, holding the former from behind. A host of impressions of various leaves surround and overlap into their bodies. The series is a profound depiction of the original inhabitants of the forest made to feel out of place in their own land.







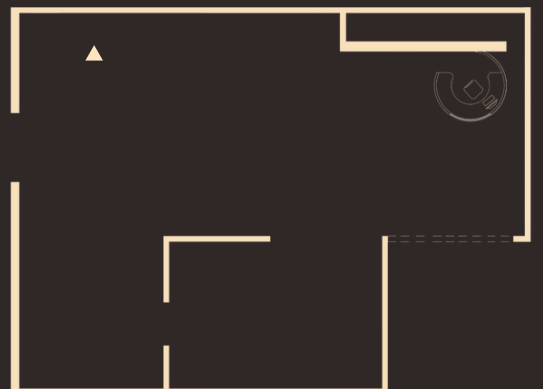
*Lady in the Garden*

Eco print with natural colours on rice paper pasted on handmade paper

28 3/8 x 21 7/8 in.

2024

The woman in yellow, surrounded by foliage, embodies the intimate bond between nature and femininity. The interplay of leaf patterns, fluid brushstrokes, and colour patches lends her paintings a distinctive visual charm, rhythmic quality, and organic texture.

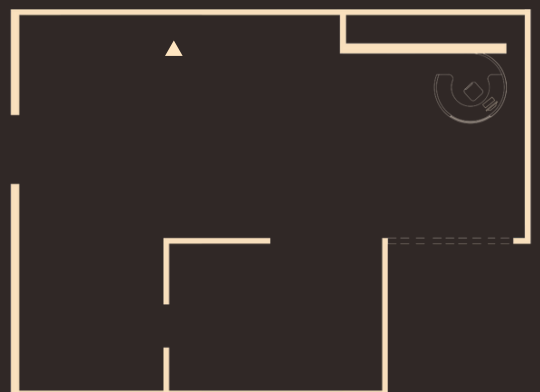






অরণ্যের অধিকারী (Keepers of the Forest)  
Resist dyeing and painting with natural  
colours and hand embroidery on  
cotton cloth  
153 x 45 1/4 in.  
2025

In this large vertical scroll – a new format that she has been exploring for the last few years – Arunima Choudhury paints with botanical colours around a circular resist-dyed pattern. At the centre of the circle is Choudhury's hand embroidery, from which dark tree branches emerge and spread outward. Human figures walk hand in hand in a line through the trees at the bottom. The form and content in Choudhury's work develop simultaneously – the brushstrokes and thread-work are intertwined with the story of the forest and its inhabitants. This cotton scroll puts her experience-led wisdom to expression through resist dyeing, painting, and embroidery.





*Sky, Land, Water*

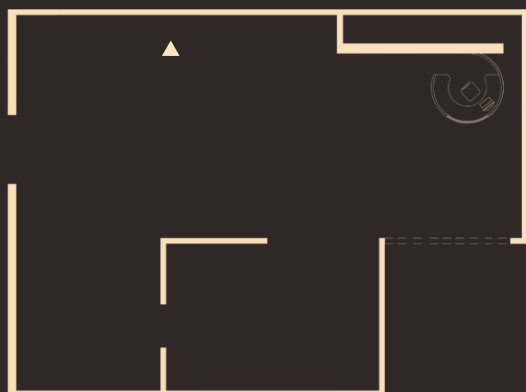
Eco print with natural colours

on cotton cloth

155 7/8 x 45 1/8 in.

2025

For the last few years, Arunima Choudhury has been working on large cotton scrolls, exploring her ideas of nature in a new medium and format. It is one of the four such scrolls she has created for her solo exhibition at Emami Art. In this work, Arunima Choudhury uses vibrant botanical colours to depict the sky, land, and water – the boundaries of each sphere covered with vegetation, both terrestrial and aquatic. The painted eyes in the sky look down at the Earth below. Choudhury's subject and primary concern, as always, is Nature. This cotton scroll blends her deep fascination with the vastness of Nature with her decades-long experience in painting and printing with natural colours and elements.





Arunima Choudhury's paintings reflect a profound connection to the natural world, revealing its beauty and design. Yet, rather than idealizing nature, she situates it at the core of modern urban experiences, revealing the fractures and interconnectedness between humans and the environment, as well as the symbiosis between life, desire, and death.



*Nature I*

Eco print with  
natural colours on  
rice paper pasted on  
handmade paper  
28 x 21 7/8 in.  
2024



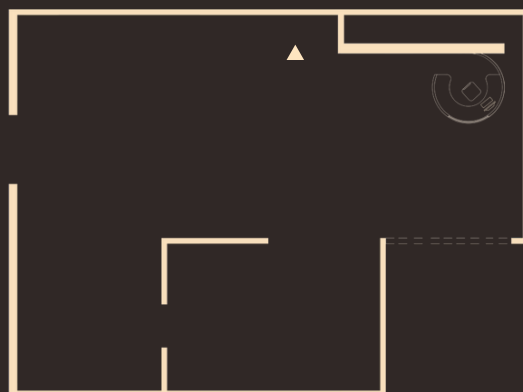


*Landscape*

Eco print with natural colours on rice  
paper pasted on handmade paper

29 3/4 x 21 in.

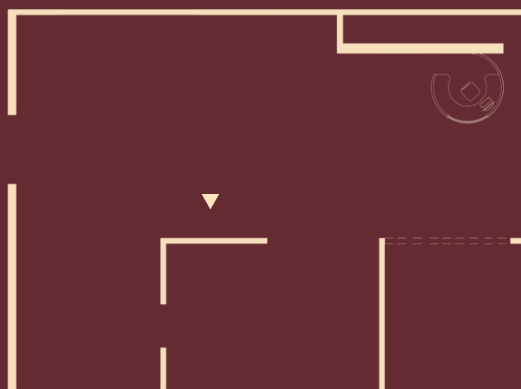
2024







*An Image in Stone*  
Natural colours on handmade paper  
43 1/8 x 29 1/2 in.  
2023







Born in 1950 In Siliguri, West Bengal, **Arunima Choudhury** holds a Diploma in Fine Arts from Indian College of Arts & Draftsmanship, Kolkata, 1974, and a Certificate in Graphic Design & Mass Communication from Chitrabani, Kolkata, 1978. Working primarily with natural colours on handmade papers, she is known for her works depicting the languid world of nature and human being, their intimacy and coexistence.

Her solo shows include *The Dark Edge of Green* curated by Nancy Adajania, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2022; *Khela*, Seagull Foundation of the Arts, Kolkata, 2007; and *Nature as I See*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2020. She has participated in several important group exhibitions including *Freedom & Awakening: Phases I & II*, Kolkata Centre for Creativity in collaboration with Alipore Museum, Kolkata, 2023; *Unconnected Yet*, Bengal Boston Bridge, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, 2023; *Garden of Infinite Desires*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2023; *Kolkata: Run in the Alley* curated by Praneet Soi and Manuel Klappe, Marres, Netherlands, 2022; *Feminine Facets*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2021; *Constellations*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2021; and *Seven Women Artists*, Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata, 1996. among others.

Arunima Choudhury was awarded the Shilpi Maha Samman by West Bengal Rajya Charukala Parshad in 2022. She lives and works in Kolkata.