

EMAMI ART

PRESS MATERIALS

EMAMI ART participation in the Kochi Muziris Biennale 2022-2023 Invited Satellite Programme (13 December 2022 to 10 April 2023)

Kochi Muziris Biennale (Kochi Biennale) has invited a few organisations to present works as part of its Satellite Programme. One of those organisations is Emami Art who are based in Kolkata.

The venue for the Emami Art exhibitions is the **Mocha Art Café, Synagogue Lane, Jew Town, Kochi**. A short distance from the main Biennale venues, this well-known cafe will be home to two projects:

1. A solo exhibition by Santiniketan based artist **Prasanta Sahu** titled *Anatomy of a Vegetable – Ruminations on fragile ecosystems*
2. A solo exhibition by Bangladesh based artist and photographer **Shahidul Alam** titled *Singed But Not Burnt*

QUOTE ON PARTICIPATION AS SATELLITE EVENT

by EMAMI ART FOUNDER & CEO - RICHA AGARWAL

"It gives me great pleasure to exhibit at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2022-2023 invited Satellite section. Emami art is presenting two solos of Santiniketan based artist Prasanta Sahu and Bangladesh-based Shahidul Alam. The exhibitions will showcase the most recent as well as seminal works of the artists. Being one of the pivotal institutions of cultural production in the eastern region of India, it is important for us to collaborate with one of the significant art events of the sub-continent.

In addition to the two solos, our represented artist Debashish Paul is part of the Biennale residency programme hosted by HH Art Space Foundation in collaboration with the Kochi Muziris Foundation. We are looking forward to having you all in Kochi for our Shows"

About the artist Prasanta Sahu:

Prasanta Sahu, born in 1968 in Odisha, India is currently a member of the Visual Arts Department at Kala Bhavana, Viswa Bharati University, West Bengal, India.

Education: Diploma in Electrical Engineering 1987; his BFA in Painting, Viswa Bharati University, West Bengal 1998 summa cum laude; Master's in painting from M.S. University, Baroda 2000 summa cum laude.

Over the last twenty years, Sahu one of India's senior contemporary artists has worked across mediums, including painting and drawings, sculpture, installation, and photography.

Solo Exhibitions: Suburban Shadows a solo exhibition of recent drawings at Emami art gallery, Kolkata 2020; Blueprint of a city Kalakriti Art Gallery Hyderabad 2016. Group Exhibitions: India Art Fair 2022; The Politics of Paper, a group show at Emami art, Kolkata, curated by Ushmita Sahu 2022; Hub India-Maximum Minimum at Artissima International fair of contemporary art, Torino Italy, 2021; Disruptive Confluences a museum show with thirteen artists from India, a three-part museum show titled Classical Radical at Palazzo Madama, Museo Civico d'Arte Antica & Multitudes and Assemblages

EMAMI ART

at Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti di Torino, Italy, Jointly curated by Davide Quadrio and Myna Mukherjee, 2021; Asian Higher Fine Arts Education, ASEAN-China Arts colleges alliance, Yunnan artists association and Yunnan arts University 2020; Art: Bengal Now, Bengal Contemporary artists, curated by Pranab Ranjan Ray, Dhoomimal art Gallery, New Delhi 2020; Anthology of Anecdotes, Ganges art gallery, Kolkata 2019; Kursi Sarjan art Gallery, Baroda, curated by Sandhya Bordeweker 2019; 'Blue India' Art Asia art Fair Korea, (2018); Constellations Bihar Museum, Patna 2018; Response Gem Cinema CIMA art gallery, Kolkata 2018; Postcards Busan International art Fair, Korea 2017; Karnataka Chithrakala Parisath, Bangalore 2017; Daegu-India Korean Fine Arts Association South Korea 2015-2017; 7th Biennial of contemporary Indian art, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal 2017; Jaipur Art Summit 2014; International art exchange programme, Faculty of Fine and applied art, Burapha University, Thailand 2014; India Today, Copenhagen Tomorrow sculpture exhibition, Denmark 2013; Small is Big Contemporary Miniature art, Durbar Hall Gallery, Kochi 2012.

About the exhibition

Anatomy of a Vegetable – Ruminations on fragile ecosystems:

Prasanta Sahu is a chronicler of the Indian hinterland. Sahu, who hails from a family of farmers, is the first in his family to have a university education studying electrical engineering before finding his way into art. Now teaching art at his alma mater Kala Bhavana, he has, for more than a decade, turned the lens of his practice towards retelling the rural saga. But rather than an overtly politicised critique of the agrarian crisis, the artist adopts a sensitive, poetic retelling from an insider perspective. Based on the experiences of his upbringing, skillfully interspersed with a documentation methodology that espouses analytical, empirical data collection, Sahu actively engages with the politics of representation and truths hidden from mainstream discourse.

Rural life connects, on the one hand, to the persistent questions of planetary crises and ecology and, on the other, agriculture and production as a contested social space constituted by a series of links between local farmers and the broader network of the food economy. Yet, Sahu's works strongly propose farming as a way of life, finding an immense capacity for love and joy amidst suffering, capturing intimate, tender observations.

For the Kochi Muziris Biennale Satellite Exhibition Sahu realises three works

- *The drumstick tree and other stories* – Drawing and found objects
- *Mapping Craters* – A table installation of plaster moulds of vegetables
- *Tilling Lessons* - Video

The drawings in *The drumstick tree and other stories* consist of around 150 works on paper and found objects arranged carefully as a large installation, touches upon tableaux of humdrum, symbiotic relationships between humans and non-humans. Some examples include Illustrations of green leafy vegetables foraged by the village women when they have nothing to eat but which they cook with care and love. Or farmers with their livestock. Even a traditional wooden tool used to make twine for fishing nets (Sahu helped his grandfather make ropes in his childhood) that a farmer gave him because it is now redundant finds its way into this set. The drawing that lends its name to this installation is that of a drumstick (moringa) tree carefully tended by the farmer's households because every part is edible. These fragments of observations interact and overlap, creating a poignant yet powerful narrative of a marginalised community.

The installation, *Mapping Craters*, is the result of a three years relationship that Sahu has forged with Lakhi Ram, a landless farmer from Amdahara village close to Santiniketan, where Sahu resides. This

EMAMI ART

collection of sixty plaster moulds taken directly from the crops produced by the farmer through different seasons, and his traditional farming tools, are displayed on a rusty iron table like a tray of archaeological specimens in a museum. Although this unique method of documentation of taking moulds appears straightforward and uncomplicated, nevertheless, their figurative familiarity soon gives way to a sense of spectral unreality and a suggestion of profound disquiet—each ghostly crater emphasising the emptiness of hunger for those who toil. This work was part of a museum show at Palazzo Madama in Turin, Italy, in 2021 and is being shown for the first time in India.

In the third work, *Tilling Lessons*, a video, Sahu uses the interview format of newsreels interspersed with a recording of himself learning/relearning how to till the soil. However, he creates a visual disturbance by placing the video behind half-open window blinds. Combined with the farmers' unrecognisable, slowed-down, distorted voices, the work counteracts the simple logic of documentary reality, highlighting the subaltern and the considerable absence of knowledge and sympathy that separates 'them' from 'us' who encounter the 'other' through mediated reality.

Each work here is an insightful rumination of everyday rural life – objects, memories and desires intertwined with an undeniable bio-political matrix. By connecting the personal and intimate to the political and immediate, Prasanta Sahu offers a complex, nuanced portrayal of the power relationship and interdependence between the neglected farming community and a modern, capitalist food economy.

QUOTE ON PRASANTA SAHU

by EMAMI ART FOUNDER & CEO - RICHA AGARWAL

“Emami Art is delighted to present Prasanta Sahu’s solo exhibition in Kochi. Sahu’s works contribute to the ongoing national conversation on the interdependence between the neglected farming community and a modern capitalist economy.”

About artist and photographer Shahidul Alam:

Time Magazine Person of the Year 2018 and National Geographic Explorer at Large, photographer, writer and curator Shahidul Alam has championed human rights throughout his career. Recipient of the Shilpakala Award, the highest national award given to Bangladeshi artists,

Alam obtained a PhD in chemistry before switching to photography. Returning to Dhaka in 1984, he began documenting the democratic struggle to remove General Ershad. A former president of the Bangladesh Photographic Society, Alam’s work has been exhibited in leading galleries like MOMA, Centre Georges Pompidou and Tate Modern. A speaker at Harvard, Stanford, UCLA, Oxford and Cambridge universities, Alam is a visiting professor of Sunderland University and RMIT and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. He has chaired the international jury of World Press Photo. He has also received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Arts London.

Alam is the founder of the Drik Picture Library, the Pathshala Media Institute, the Majority World Agency and the Chobi Mela festival of photography. He is also a new media pioneer and introduced email to Bangladesh in the early nineties. He is currently setting up a centre for investigative journalism in Bangladesh.

About the exhibition Shahidul Alam: Singed But Not Burnt

EMAMI ART

An exhibition of works selected from Alam's archive in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the exhibition comprises of his early experiments in pictorialism and later experimentation in exploring the political space. Focusing on the under-represented and minorities, Alam creates imagery that is at once protest, reportage and art.

Senior Curator Ina Puri has described Alam's work as follows: 'Especially relevant at a time when freedom of speech and expression is being challenged the world over, Shahidul Alam's work is like a beacon of light and hope. From the epic horror of landscapes devastated by climate change to unflinching images of the ordinary man in the streets fettered by poverty and social inequality to make ends meet to the intimate images of strangers who have become friends over time, Shahidul Alam's searing portraits bring alive a world that he has embraced as his own.'

In Shahidul Alam's words: 'As journalists, we need to feel the heat, to stand close to the fire, but then we also risk being burnt. If we were to take one step back, we become ineffective. The trick, therefore, is to get singed but not burnt'.

QUOTE ON SHAHIDUL ALAM

by EMAMI ART FOUNDER & CEO - RICHA AGARWAL

"Emami Art is delighted to be presenting Shahidul Alam's solo exhibition to local and visiting audiences in Kochi. A small window into the world of South Asia's most talented artist and photographer through works curated from his archive."

In addition to the above Emami Art represent Varanasi based emerging artist Debashish Paul. Paul will be participating in the KBF Performing Arts Programme curated by HH Art Spaces and Nikhil Chopra

The residency from 26 November to 12 December will culminate in performances from 13 to 18 December in Dutch Warehouse, Ground Floor, Fort Kochi.

About the artist Debashish Paul:

Debashish Paul born in 1994 in Nadia district in West Bengal, explores the problems of queer identity in a society dominated by heterosexual norms. Paul has a BFA from The Indian college of Art and Draftsmanship, in sculpture, Kolkata, and he completed his master's degree in sculpture from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi in 2021.

He works across mediums including sculptural dress, performance, video, photo and drawing. 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. 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: **Prince Claus Seed Fund 2022, Inlaks Fine art award 2022, India; Allegro 1st prize 2021, Contemporary LYNX, UK: Of Liminal Beings and Other Spaces -2021, Emami Art,**

EMAMI ART

Kolkata; India Artist Relief Fund-2021 (MAP in partnership with 1Shanthiroad Studio/Gallery); Student's Biennale -2021, Kochi, Kala Sakshi Workshop-2021, Emami Art Open Call Exhibition -2020, Kolkata.

QUOTE ON DEBASHISH PAUL

by EMAMI ART FOUNDER & CEO - RICHA AGARWAL

"We are delighted to support a young artist like Debashish Paul in his personal and professional journey. This has been a significant year for Paul. He recently received the Prince Claus Seed Award as well as being selected as an artist in residence at the 2023 edition of the India Art Fair."

About Emami Art

Emami Art is a contemporary art gallery based in the green purpose-built Kolkata Centre for Creativity building in Kolkata, India.

Promoting emerging, mid-career and established artists and engaging with contemporary and historical material, the gallery produces exhibitions of modern, contemporary and cutting-edge art as well as commissioning artists to create site-specific pieces.

The gallery programme includes a regular lineup of talks, seminars, panel discussions and conversations with artists, curators and key partners. The gallery delivers its commitment to providing a long-term supportive environment for emerging talent through free access to mentorship programs, workshops, residency opportunities and innovative educational activities that facilitate artistic development.

It also stages events across the cultural spectrum, such as concerts, performances, symposiums, publications, collaborative projects, film screenings, and learning orientated incubator programmes.

In addition to Kochi Biennale, Emami Art will be participating in AD Design and Luxury Show in Mumbai from 16th to 18th December 2022 and India Art Fair, Delhi from 9th to 12th Feb 2023.

Instagram handle : [emami_art](#)

Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/emamiart/>

About Mocha Art Cafe

Mocha Art Cafe is located on Synagogue Lane in the historic area known as Jew Town - the heart of the once thriving Cochin Jewish community served by the Paradesi Synagogue which was built in the 16th century. Surrounded by heritage buildings the cafe is housed in the restored Dutch building that once housed rabbis for the neighbouring synagogue.

Mocha Art Cafe is located within walking distance to the KMB Students Biennale sites. The TKM warehouse (Invitations Programme) is located at a four minutes' drive down the road from the cafe/jew town area.

<http://www.mochaartcafe.in/>

EMAMI ART

Address: Mocha Art Cafe, VI/179, Synagogue Ln, Opp Paradesi Synagogue, Jew Town,
Kappalandimukku, Mattancherry, Kochi, Kerala 682002

About HH Art Spaces Foundation

HH Art Spaces Foundation in Collaboration with Kochi Biennale for the live art and performance residency at the Kochi Muziris Biennale 2022-2023:

HH Art Spaces Foundation in collaboration with Kochi Muziris Biennale is developing a critical program for a long term engagement in Live Art and Performance with a pedagogic vision. The program will span 3 years with 3 phases/iterations over 2022, 2023 and 2024. During this time they will explore, platform, and produce works of live art and performance through a series of residencies, public events, and exhibitions.

Each year, HH Art Spaces will curate and invite artists to participate in a month-long residency at Fort Kochi. For this year's iteration, the residency will culminate in a series of live performances during the opening week of the Biennale, where the invited artists will be encouraged to share their research and discoveries with the public. The artists will showcase and produce new work in performance and live art.
