

Press Release

Title: ***The Geometry of Ordinary Lives***

A solo exhibition by Prasanta Sahu

Date: April 25 – June 21, 2025

Venue: Gallery 1, Ground Floor, Emami Art

Exhibition Overview

The solo exhibition *The Geometry of Ordinary Lives* presents Prasanta Sahu's decade-long inquiry into the intersection of art, research, and lived experience. This exhibition encapsulates the evolution of his interdisciplinary practice, characterised by a synthesis of diverse mediums and epistemologies to explore the subtleties of rural and suburban life through traditional knowledge, pre-industrial practices, and inherited wisdom

At the core of his work is a critical engagement with generational knowledge and its transmission. He considers the workshops of blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, and craftsmen as dynamic repositories where techniques, philosophies, and stories are orally shared and safeguarded. Sahu's work examines how these traditions persist despite the homogenization of economic and socio-political forces. His research-driven approach incorporates textual documentation, diagrammatic studies, object casting, interviews, and audio recordings of artisans engaged in generational occupations. The numerical, statistical, and diagrammatic elements in his work function as representational devices and indices of traditions, offering a methodological framework for understanding the fluidity of knowledge as it is practiced, adapted, and transferred.

Sahu's artistic vocabulary is shaped by his background in engineering and early engagements with survey mapping and technical drafting. The instruments of cartographic principles profoundly influence his visual lexicon, where spatial logic and geometric structuring serve as conceptual scaffolds to map the interconnectedness of craft, oral traditions, and embodied knowledge. Beyond this systematic approach, poetry plays a vital role in his practice, providing both a conceptual and affective framework. He often locates the inherent logic of certain acts as poetic, registering them within an abstract, almost metaphysical realm. The interplay of absence and presence, along with the non-linearity of narratives, aligns with poetic sensibilities, transforming his work into a site of cultural continuity where practice and memory intertwine.

Ultimately, *The Geometry of Ordinary Lives* reimagines artistic practice as a means of epistemological preservation. By integrating cartographic logic, archival inquiry, and poetic sensibility, Sahu constructs a visual repository that interrogates the resilience of ancient wisdom amid rapid transformations. His work positions art as a space for critical reflection, where craft and ancestral knowledge challenge the monopolisation of selective philosophical discourse and resist cultural erasure.

About the Artists

Prasanta Sahu, born in 1968 in Odisha, India, completed his diploma in Electrical Engineering (1987) before enrolling to study art at Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan. There, he earned his BFA in painting (1998), followed by a Master's degree in painting from M.S. University, Baroda (2000), graduating summa cum laude from both universities.

Sahu's solo shows include *Anatomy of a Vegetable: Ruminations on Fragile Ecosystems* as part of the Kochi Muziris Biennale 2022-23 Invited Satellite Programme at Mocha Art Café, Kochi; *Suburban Shadows* at Emami Art, Kolkata, in 2020, and *Blueprint of a City* at Kalakriti Art Gallery, Hyderabad in 2016.

Sahu has shown widely both within and outside the country and participated in numerous workshops and residencies. Some select participations are *All That is Hidden: Mapping Departures in Landscape, Terrains and Geographies*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024; *The Politics of Paper*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2022; Hub India-Maximum Minimum, Artissima International Art Fair of Contemporary Art, Torino, Italy, 2021; *Disruptive Confluences* at Palazzo Madama, Museo Civico d'Arte Antica, Torino and *Multitudes and Assemblages* at Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti di Torino, a three-part museum show jointly curated by Davide Quadrio and Myna Mukherjee, 2021; Asian Higher Fine Arts Education, hosted by Yunnan Provincial Department of Education, Organized by ASEAN-China Arts Colleges Alliance, Yunnan Artists Association, and Yunnan Arts University, 2020; Lockdown Diaries, CIMA art gallery, Kolkata, 2020; *Art: Bengal Now*, Bengal Contemporary artists, curated by Pranab Ranjan Ray, jointly organised by Gandhara art Gallery, Kolkata and Dhoomimal art Gallery, New Delhi, New Delhi, 2020; *Anthology of Anecdotes*, Ganges Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2019; *Kursi*, a group show of sculptures, paintings and installations, Sarjan art Gallery, Baroda, 2019; Blue India Art Asia Art Fair, Korea, 2018; *Constellations*, Bihar Museum, Patna, 2018; *Response*, a new-media and installation show at Gem Cinema CIMA art gallery, Kolkata, 2018; *Postcards*, Busan International art Fair, Korea, 2017; 16 young contemporary artists, 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; among many others.

Sahu has been invited as visiting faculty by several universities, including the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Burapha University, Thailand; University of Dhaka, Bangladesh; University of Hyderabad, Sarojini Naidu School of Fine Arts and Communication, Hyderabad.

Since 2001, Sahu has been teaching in the Department of Painting at his alma mater, Kala Bhavana (Faculty of Fine Art), Visva Bharati University.

Prasanta Sahu is the head of the Department of Painting at Kala-Bhavana, Santiniketan, India. He lives and works there.

Quote by Prasanta Sahu

I am deeply fascinated by the concept of individual case studies, which involves delving into the complexities of a single person's life and connecting their experiences to the broader social context. This unique research methodology provides a nuanced and detailed understanding of real-life situations, offering a rich source of information. By exploring the intricacies of an individual's life, we can gather valuable data that highlights their role within the larger social ecosystem. Ultimately, this approach recognizes that every individual is an integral part of a larger whole, and that their unique experiences and perspectives are essential to understanding the complete picture.

(Prasanta Sahu, Artist)

Quote by Richa Agarwal

The solo exhibition 'The Geometry of Ordinary Lives' presents Prasanta Sahu's artistic journey, capturing both his recent and decade-long explorations. Through paintings, drawing installations, video, and mixed media, the exhibition reflects his deep engagement with life and its everyday nuances, approached through both artistic expression and research. Many of these works stem from his decade-long interactions with communities in Santiniketan and his hometown in Odisha.

At Emami Art, we are committed to supporting artists whose practices challenge conventions and bring fresh perspectives. Prasanta Sahu's work stands out for its experimental nature and thoughtful exploration of human connections. I hope this exhibition offers viewers an immersive experience, drawing them into the richness of his artistic imagination and unique vision.

(Richa Agarwal, CEO, Emami Art)

About Emami Art

Emami Art is a prominent contemporary art gallery and cultural production space located on the ground floor of the Kolkata Centre for Creativity's Green Building. Established in 2017, it adopts a forward-looking, multi-dimensional approach that reflects South Asia's history, socio-cultural, and geo-political narratives. Emami Art operates within an inclusive framework where profitability supports sustainable resource regeneration and public service.

The gallery features a dynamic program of curated exhibitions, ranging from large-scale presentations to more intimate displays. It actively participates in both national and international events and art fairs. Emami Art represents a wide spectrum of contemporary artists, including emerging, mid-career, and established talents, with a special emphasis on the East and North Eastern regions of India. Several of its artists' works are featured in prominent national and international collections, including public foundations and museums.

A key initiative is the annual Emami Art Experimental Film Festival, which provides a platform for alternative and experimental filmmaking, video art, and moving image practices. This festival brings together internationally acclaimed artists and filmmakers alongside recent critical productions from India.

Through short- and long-term projects, Emami Art supports the local and regional arts community by offering regular mentorship programs, workshops, residency opportunities, and innovative educational activities. These initiatives foster artistic development, build collaborative networks, and provide a supportive environment for emerging talent. The gallery also organizes regular talks, seminars, panel discussions, and conversations with artists, curators, and key partners, creating a space for critical engagement.

Committed to promoting a regional, national, and international agenda, Emami Art emphasizes community engagement, socially relevant initiatives, and institutional partnerships. With a multi-year vision for the future, it continues to be a catalyst for change, research, innovation, and inclusivity.

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