

PRESS RELEASE

Name of the Exhibition: *Elemental Encounters: Practice as Ecological Archive*

Solo exhibition by **Ruma Choudhury**

Exhibition Date: **8 August – 19 September, 2026**

Preview: **5 PM Onwards, 8 August, 2026**

Venue: **Gallery 1, Ground Floor, Emami Art**

Exhibition Overview

In her solo exhibition at Emami Art *Elemental Encounters: Practice as Ecological Archive*, Ruma Choudhury presents an expanded understanding of paper as a medium of environmental awareness and archive, where time, nature, and material come together. Her artistic practice reimagines paper not simply as a surface for writing or image-making, but as a material that records the forces of nature itself. Throughout history, paper has preserved knowledge, memory, culture, and human experience. In Choudhury's work, however, paper becomes a living surface where climate, geography, seasons, and natural elements leave their own marks directly onto the material.

The process begins with an intensive engagement with raw fibres, with which she has been experimenting for more than a decade. The fibres are harvested, boiled, washed, soaked, and slowly ground into pulp through a labour-intensive process rooted in care, patience, and close attention to material. Once transformed into sheets, the paper is exposed to sunlight, rain, humidity, dust, and wind. These environmental conditions gradually alter the surface in unpredictable ways. The rain leaves stains and ruptures, wind deposits particles and residue, and sunlight changes the colour, texture, and strength of the material over time. The season of monsoon is particularly significant in her practice. In this part of the subcontinent, monsoon is a season that shapes landscapes, agricultural cycles, memory, labour, and everyday life. Its arrival transforms the atmosphere, saturates the soil, alters textures and surfaces, and leaves behind traces of erosion, growth, decay, and renewal. So, in her practice, monsoon is an active agent.

By employing locally sourced and seasonal plant materials, Choudhury situates her practice within specific ecological and geographical contexts, where each sheet of paper functions simultaneously as sculpture, document, archive, and ecological record. Rather than documenting a single moment like photography, these fibre-based works record the slow passage of time and the lasting impact of seasonal change. Even the tonal and textural qualities of the fibre embody broader environmental histories.

Quote by CEO

"Ruma Choudhury is one of the most promising emerging artists working with natural fibres and handmade paper. Her practice is deeply connected to environmental awareness and careful material research. Through her sensitive and thoughtful process, she creates works that reflect changes in nature, time, and the environment. We are delighted to present her debut solo exhibition, *Elemental Encounters: Practice as Ecological Archive*, coming soon to Emami Art. The exhibition brings together a wide range of works that explore the relationship between paper, material practice, and ecology, inviting viewers to see paper not only as an artistic medium but also as a record of the natural world."

(Richa Agarwal, CEO of Emami Art and Chairperson, KCC)

About the Artist

Born in 1990 in Birbhum, West Bengal, Ruma Choudhury completed her BFA and MFA in Painting from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan in 2014 and 2016 respectively.

She has been part of several exhibitions including *Convergences: A Shared Ground — Lineages, Practices, Futures*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2026; *Material as Metaphors: A Dialogue of Art Forms*, National Gallery of Modern Art, Kolkata, 2025; *There are Tides in the Body: Indo-Swiss Group Exhibition*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024; *All That is Hidden: Mapping Departures in Landscape, Terrains and Geographies*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024; *Departure*, Ganges Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2020; Kolkata Festival, Calcutta Pavlov Hospital in collaboration with CIMA Art Awards 2019; *Inside the Fibre*, Artsacre Foundation, Kolkata, 2019; *Raconteur*, A.M. (Art Multi-disciplines) Studio, Kolkata, 2018; *Images and Impressions: Profile and Persona of Pranab Mukherjee*, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, 2017; *I am*, A.M. Studio, Kolkata, 2017. Her featured solo performances include *hairy strokes* at Gallery Onkaf, New Delhi and *Multi Hues* at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 2018. Her works were presented by Emami Art, Kolkata at India Art Fair 2026.

Ruma Choudhury was selected for the Arthshila x Anant Foundation for the Arts Residency at Parivartan, Siwan, 2025. She is the recipient of JK Paper Award for the Arts: Propositions in Paper — Honourable Mention presented by Anant Foundation for the Arts in partnership with JK Paper and Arthshila Trust, 2025; the India Artist Relief Fund, MAP in partnership with 1 Santhiroad, 2021; Musui Art Foundation scholarship, 2020; Best Painting Award, Academy of Fine Arts Award, Kolkata, 2016; and the National Scholarship, Government of India, 2015-16.

She is currently working as an independent researcher and has conducted paper-making workshops with Suchana Foundation in 2020 and Arts Acre Foundation, Kolkata in 2019. She was also a part of Barbil Art Project III organized by Utsha and Arys, Odisha and has conducted a paper-making workshop in the project curated by Ushmita Sahu in 2017.

Ruma Choudhury lives and works in Santiniketan.

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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