

Insubordinate Matter

Group exhibition under IMAGINARIUM 6.0: Emami Art's Annual All-India Open Call for Young and Emerging Artists

Dates: 9 October - 26 December 2026

Venue: Gallery 2 & 3, Ground Floor, Emami Art

Overview

Emami Art presents *Insubordinate Matter*, the exhibition of the sixth edition of IMAGINARIUM, Emami Art's Annual All-India Open Call for Young and Emerging Artist.

Emami Art is committed to nurturing and supporting the practices of emerging and mid-career visual artists across India. Launched in 2020 as an urgent response to the pandemic's disruption of artistic livelihoods, the annual IMAGINARIUM Awards and Exhibition has since evolved into a vital ecosystem of support, offering cash awards, exhibition, mentorship, and sustained discursive engagement for young visual artists. Over the past five years, IMAGINARIUM Open Call has grown into one of the most anticipated open calls in India's contemporary art calendar.

This year, the open call drew 1200 + portfolios, which were shortlisted and then reviewed by a jury of prominent personalities led by **Ibrahim Mahama**, **May Makki**, **Siddharth Somaiya**, and **Shaunak Mahbubani**, and Emami Art Director and Head Curator **Ushmita Sahu**. Ten artists have been selected for the exhibition, three of whom receive the IMAGINARIUM Awards.

The IMAGINARIUM Awards

IMAGINARIUM gives substantial awards in support of artistic practice: a First Award of INR 2 lakh, a Second Award of INR 1.5 lakh and a Third Award of INR 1 lakh, supported by the Emami Foundation and the Kolkata Centre for Creativity. This year the First Award is conferred on Bhagyashri Dange, the Second on Sonu Pujar, and the Third on Subhash Deka. All ten artists are presented in the exhibition.

About the exhibition

Insubordinate Matter brings together ten emerging artists who share a striking commitment to making by hand and to working with material: clay and glass, cloth and natural dye, wax, wood and reclaimed rubber. The exhibition takes as its starting point a simple idea, that material is not passive but active, that it holds memory and carries meaning of its own. The works move between two concerns, the body and what it inherits, and the natural world under strain, and together they make a case for the enduring power of the made object at a time when so much dissolves into the immaterial.

Participating artists

1. Bhagyashri Dange
2. Sonu Pujar
3. Subhash Deka
4. Srijita Raha
5. Tithi Das
6. Annanya Dhanda

7. Ayushi Shukla
8. Dibhya Mudi
9. Shibayan Halder
10. Siya Raju

Quotes

“IMAGINARIUM began from a simple conviction: that talent in this country far exceeds the opportunities available to it, and that an institution like ours has a responsibility to help close that gap. Six editions on, that commitment has only deepened. What matters to us is not recognition alone, but giving emerging artists the standing and the support a young practice needs at the moment it is most fragile.”

Richa Agarwal

Founder-Director, Emami Art

“The strength of this year’s cohort lies in its materiality. These are artists who think through substance, through clay and glass, cloth, wood and reclaimed matter, and who treat the made object not as a surface for ideas but as something living, that holds memory and carries a fragile world. What they share is a trust in material, in what the hand can coax from it, and Insubordinate Matter is finally an exhibition about that trust, and about the resilience of making at a time when so much dissolves into the immaterial.”

Ushmita Sahu

Director and Head Curator, Emami Art

About the artists

Bhagyashri Dange (b. 1996) holds a Bachelor's in Drawing and Painting from Sir J. J. School of Art, University of Mumbai (2020) and a Master's in Printmaking from Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan (2022). She works across drawing, painting, and printmaking to explore the body as a site of memory, perception, and conditioning. Using a personal vocabulary of geometric forms and symbols, her practice examines how lived experience, particularly within the female body, is embodied, transformed, and translated into evolving visual languages of sensation and selfhood. Notable group exhibitions include *Fresh Produce*, Method Delhi, New Delhi (2025); *Nabh Sparsh: Indian Women Printmakers*, NGMA, Mumbai (2024); *Bodies, Space, & Time*, Method Kala Ghoda, Mumbai (2023); and *What Remains*, Method Kala Ghoda, Mumbai (2021).

Sonu Pujar (b. 1999) holds a BFA in Sculpture from Chitrakala Parishath, Bengaluru (2021), and an MFA in Sculpture at Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan (2026). Her practice spans sculpture, installation, and performance. Working with textiles, organic matter, and domestic materials, she explores the intersections of body, memory, gendered labour, and care. Rooted in her cultural context, her work reflects on embodied experience, ecology, feminist thought, and the material traces of personal and collective histories. Notable group exhibitions include Young Santiniketan Artists Exhibition, SSVAD, Santiniketan (2026); and Students' Biennale, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi (2025–26). She was awarded the PJMT Saroj Jain Sculpture Award (2026), the Karnataka Shilpakala Academy Scholarship (2025), and a 1-year fellowship under Musui Art Foundation, Santiniketan (2025-26).

Subhash Deka (b. 1997) holds a BFA in Sculpture from Kokrajhar Music and Fine Arts College, Kokrajhar, Assam (2021) and an MFA in Sculpture from Indira Kala Sangeet Vishwavidyalaya, Khairagarh, Chhattisgarh (2023). Drawing inspiration from the rhythms, movements, and material qualities of nature, he creates sculptural forms that translate

everyday environmental phenomena into poetic explorations of place, perception, and the interconnectedness of human and ecological experience. Notable group exhibitions include Hyundai Art for Hope: Season 5, Travancore Palace, New Delhi (2026); Jaipur Art Week Edition 5.0, Jaipur (2026); *Ehsaas: To Connect*, Archer Art Gallery, Ahmedabad (2026); and the 2nd Edition of *1X1X9*, Vis-à-vis Art Studio and Gallery, Vadodara (2024). He was part of the residency programme at Vis-à-vis Art Studio and Gallery, Vadodara (2024).

Siya Raju (b. 1999) holds a BFA in Sculpture from the College of Fine Arts, Thrissur, and an MFA in Ceramic and Glass Design from Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan. She works primarily with ceramics and glass to explore the interconnectedness of human relationships and natural forms. Inspired by nature's cycles of growth, transformation, and adaptation, her practice combines organic structures with experimental material processes, expanding the expressive possibilities of ceramic and glass while reflecting on attachment, coexistence, and interdependence. Notable group exhibitions include the Chola Art Award Exhibition, Chola Art Gallery, Thrissur (2024); the Kerala Lalithakala Akademi annual exhibition, Durbar Hall Art Gallery, Kochi (2023); and *ACROSS BOUNDARIES: Contemporaries from the Fine Arts*, Charcoal Ponnani, Ponnani, Kerala (2023).

Srijita Raha (b. 1998) holds a BFA in Textile Design from Government College of Art & Craft, Kolkata (2024) and an MFA in Textile Design from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan (2026). Her textile-based practice explores the intersections of body, memory, and psychological space. Working with cloth and natural dyes, she creates intimate works that examine girlhood, vulnerability, and emotional displacement, using material transformation to reflect the layered, fragile, and evolving nature of memory and lived experience.

Ananya Dhanda (b. 2002) holds a BVA from Dada Lakhmi Chand State University (2024) and an MVA at The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (2026). Drawing on personal and familial histories, particularly mother-daughter relationships, she explores memory, materiality, and gendered experiences through domestic objects, transforming everyday materials into evocative forms that examine desire, intimacy, the body, and emotional inheritance. Notable group exhibitions include *Convergence: Time, Ecology, Place* curated by Satyajit Dave, Gallerie Splash, Gurugram (2025); *Aagam*, Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU Baroda, Vadodara (2024); and *Telling Time Under The Soil* curated by Aranya Bhowmik and presented by Gallerie Splash at Bikaner House, New Delhi (2024). Dhanda was the recipient of the inaugural Friends of The Collective Studio Baroda Art Award 2026.

Ayushi Shukla (b. 2002) holds a BFA in Sculpture from Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur (2024) and an MVA in Sculpture from S.N. School, University of Hyderabad (2026). Her practice draws on classical and traditional visual languages to explore time, cultural memory, and the transformation of historical landscapes. Inspired by the heritage of the Ganga, her work examines the tensions between modernity and tradition through fragmented forms that reflect loss, continuity, and collective identity. Notable group exhibitions include *When We Return*, a culminating exhibition of six curated projects by the Curatorial Intensive South Asia 2025 Fellows, Khoj Studios, New Delhi (2026); and Kanpur Literature Festival, Kanpur (2021).

Dibhya Mudi (b. 1997) holds a BFA in Sculpture from the College of Art & Design, West Bengal (2021) and an MFA in Sculpture from Government College of Art & Craft (GCAC), Kolkata (2026). His practice combines traditional craft techniques with contemporary sculpture. Working primarily with discarded industrial rubber, he employs weaving, stitching, and fibre-based processes to transform waste into expressive sculptural forms, exploring materiality, sustainability, and the enduring relationship between craft, labour, and making. Notable group exhibitions include the 59th Annual Exhibition, Birla Academy of Art and Culture (2026); GCAC Annual Exhibitions (2025, 2024); and Charukala Exhibition, Rajya Charukala Parshad (2025, 2024). He received a certificate of merit at the Paschimbanga Rajya Charukala Utsab 2024 and the GCAC Annual Exhibition Award 2024.

Tithi Das (b. 2001) holds a BFA in Painting from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati (2023) and an MFA in Painting from the Faculty of Fine Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (2025). Working with archival photographs and layered acrylic on canvas, she creates figurative works that examine emotional inheritance, identity, and the uncanny, revealing the unseen traces of grief, care, vulnerability, and lived experience. Notable group exhibitions include *Slow Rot*, Method Delhi, New Delhi (2026); *An Ocean in a Drop*, Indigo Art Museum, Ahmedabad (2026); *Fresh Produce*, Method Delhi, New Delhi (2025); and *Splendor*, Kritika Arts Space, Santiniketan (2024). She was selected for the Artist Incubator Residency, Indigo Art Museum, Ahmedabad (2024) and received the Kala Sakshi Memorial Trust Award (2023–24).

Shibayan Halder (b. 1993) holds a BFA (2016) and an MFA (2018) from Government College of Art & Craft, Kolkata. Spanning wood carving, sculpture, installation, performance, photography, and video, and using natural and found materials, he reflects on environmental transformation, marginalisation, and the evolving relationship between people and place. He has contributed in projects like *The Shadow of Luster*, Röda Sten Konsthall, Sweden (2025); *The Whispering Sea* in collaboration with Arijit Bhattacharaya (2024); and *From Forests We Are And Forests We Will Be* curated by Nuno de Brito Rocha in collaboration with Arijit Bhattacharaya, exhibited at Kunstverein Braunschweig (2023). His works were part of *Conflicting Spaces* as a curatorial node for the Srinagar Biennale (2017). He received the Khoj Support Grant 2020.

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.

Press Contact Information

Name: Sreyashi Sircar

Phone: +91 98306 85017

Email: sreyashi.pr@emamiart.com

Social Media

Website: www.emamiart.com

Instagram: @emami_art

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

Swift Link: <https://linktr.ee/emamiartIN>

Address

Emami Art

777, Anandapur

EM Bypass, Kolkata 700107

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