

An abstract painting featuring a large red shape on the left, a greyish-blue shape in the center, and a yellow shape at the bottom right. A horse's head with a red mane is visible in the upper right, and a figure in a green robe is in the lower right. Two faces are visible at the top left.

EMAMI ART

THE (IN)  
**VISIBLE &**  
THE (UN)  
**REVEALED**

A Survey Show

Inside the Secret Worlds of  
**Kartick Chandra Pyne**

March 18 - June 12, 2021



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**KARTICK CHANDRA PYNE** (1931 - 2017)

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## Foreword

This year marks the ninetieth birth anniversary of Kartick Chandra Pyne, one of the finest modern painters of India. Although he was a prolific and highly original artist, he has not been a part of the larger art discourse, even in Bengal. One of the aims of the carefully curated exhibition is to discard this veil of apathy by showing a large body of his significant paintings, drawings and prints from the different phases of his intensively productive creative life, along with two documentaries and display of archival items that enable the viewers to have a wider and informed understanding of the artist's life and work.

Kartick Chandra Pyne's work is characterized by the eclecticism of his style and enigmatic visions. Trained in academic realism, he seeks the untutored freedom of the child. Many of his mature paintings look childlike, but they are thoroughly planned; naïve, but based on a profound understanding of both indigenous art and global trends of modernism. His unique artistic genius lies in his ability to create an imaginary, fantastic world in which dream, reality and personal memories are inseparably interconnected. As it is indicated in the show's title, the truth of Kartick Chandra Pyne's paintings is by no means a matter of exposure that destroys the secret or mystery of his artistic vision, but a revelation that does justice to it.

The exhibition has had a long gestation period, but the support that we have received from many individuals and institutions has been overwhelming. Our deep gratitude goes out to Apan Pyne, Kartick Chandra Pyne's only son, for his generous help with information, allowing access to archival objects related to his father from his personal collection. Emami Art is indebted to Jogen Chowdhury for encouraging us to work on the exhibition, for his note on the artist and for facilitating the screening of a documentary on the artist produced by Rajya Charukala Parshad, Government of West Bengal. A note of appreciation goes to the eminent writers – Pranabranjan Ray, Nanak Ganguly and Samit Das whose contributions towards the catalogue shed light on various critical aspects of Kartick Chandra Pyne's work and its enduring relevance in our contemporary times. We also thank Prakash Kejriwal of Chitrakoot Art Gallery and Vikram Bachhawat of Aakriti Art Gallery for their support and for loaning artworks of Kartick Chandra Payne from their galleries' collection, which make the exhibition more complete and comprehensive.

Finally, we applaud our team at Emami Art, without whose effort and dedication this exhibition would not have been possible.



## Exhibition Note

A prolific and highly original modern painter, Kartick Chandra Pyne (1931-2017) embarked on his long artistic career in the 1950s when the world and the very criteria of what constituted an art object were rapidly changing. He was deeply influenced by the experimental spirit of the time and adapted to the languages of modern Western art, moving away from academic realism which he excelled in as a student of the Government College of Art & Craft, Calcutta. His early mature works, including *Bird in a Cage*, which fetched a record price at a Sotheby's auction in New York, 2005, an event that made Kartick Pyne overnight a big name in the artworld, reflect unique assimilation of the different styles and elements of both indigenous art and the modern art of the West.

The genius of Kartick Pyne lies in his ability to create in his paintings a unique imaginary and fantastic world, differentially and not representationally connected to our habitual, real world. For Jogen Chowdhury, he is the foremost surrealist painter of his generation. A significant part of the show is devoted to the paintings of the imaginary world, which reveals an enigmatic phenomenon combining the visible and subliminal, mimetic and metaphorical in a rich affective pictorial language of eroticism. An inveterate introvert, deeply immersed in the world of religious devotion, Kartick Payne attempts at the eclectic synthesis of the Indian imagery and international idioms of modern art. His famous painting *Moon Bath*, shown in the landmark exhibition *Asian Artists Exhibition: Modern Asian Art* at Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan in 1979, was inspired by both Matisse and the Purnima night at his ancestral *Thakur Bari* (temple house).

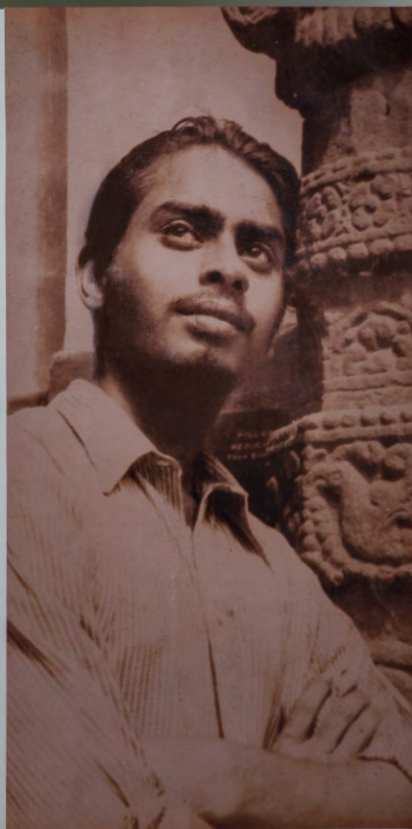
Displaying the work spanning over sixty-year of his artistic career, the exhibition helps us to understand the complexities of Kartick Payne's eclectic style, which, though look naïve or like outsider art, is firmly grounded on the academic training. Although he has often been categorized as a surrealist, he did not see it as a conscious choice: "I did not know that I worked in surreal style still it was pointed out to me. [...] Thousands of thoughts play in my mind but the idea for a perfect picture is to create reality as a complete whole and encompass elements both the conscious and the subconscious" he told to the Indian Express.

The exhibition will provide a glimpse of his lifelong quest for the perfect painting.



“Thousands of thoughts  
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अनिल कपूर



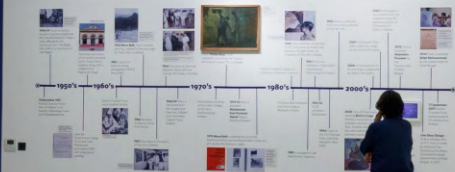


## Kartick Chandra Pyne

Born in 1931 in Kolkata, Kartick Chandra Pyne studied painting at Government College of Art and Craft, Calcutta between 1950 and 1955. A prolific and introvert artist, his work was shown as one of the hundred exhibits representing modern Indian Art in the historic exhibition at Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan, 1979. He was the subject of solo exhibitions at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, Bajaj Art Gallery, Mumbai, Chitrakoot Art Gallery, Kolkata, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, among many others. A retrospective exhibition of his work was organized by Aakriti Art gallery, Kolkata, 2006.

He was the recipient of prestigious Shilpi Maha Samman and Abanindra Puraskar of the Government of West Bengal. Rajya Charukala Parshad made a documentary film on him "Line, Story, Design," released in 2017.

Kartick Chandra Pyne died in 2017.





**“** In Kartik's works, not only the human females but also all living beings, including non-humans confront each other, as if to decide about a future relationship. One of which is a blissful erotic relationship. An initial gaze at the object /objects of relationship, do go long way to offer the mixed feels of bliss. This kind of ambiguity, at the same time gives to Kartick Chandra Pyne's work their richness and their perplexing readability.**”**

**PRANABRANJAN RAY**





“ I remember, when I was in Madras around the 1970s, I used to occasionally visit Delhi for personal reason and whenever I had time, I would visit art galleries in Connaught Place. In one such visit to Dhoomimal Gallery, the owner Mr Mahindra Jain showed me a number of paintings by Kartick Pyne and I was instantly moved by the works which were original, individualistic as well as spontaneous, and depicted indigenous subjects in a surrealist matter. The paintings were colourful and the images were fancifully distorted with free whimsy by the artist. I was amused and instantly liked them. It is interesting to note, that even we who were from Calcutta were unaware of him. But Mr Mahinder Jain had discovered him and used to visit his studio in Calcutta to get his works for the gallery in Delhi.”

JOGEN CHOWDHURY









“ I remember, when I was in Madras around the 1970s, I used to occasionally visit Duff's for personal reason and whenever I did that, I would visit art galleries in Connaught Place. In one such visit to the Occasional Gallery, the owner Mr Mahendra Jain showed me a number of paintings by Karel Čapek. They were mostly covered by the veils which were original, individualistic as well as spontaneous, and depicted religious subjects in a narrative manner. The paintings were colourful and the images were fancifully distorted with lines running by the artist. I was amazed and instantly liked them. It is interesting to note, that even we who were from Calcutta were unaware of him. But Mr Mahendra Jain had discovered him and used to visit his studio in Calcutta to get his works for the gallery in Delhi.”

JOGIN CHOWDHURY



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*Krtick Chandra Pyne*





**1946-47** Purni's ancestral house in Calcutta Street near the Calcutta Medical College is badly affected by the communal riots. The family later shifts to a new house at Hali Bagan.



Purni stops and works at his family's ancestral home, Thakur Barua, Solder, along with a wall-hung lamp. Rajchoudhury Singh.



**1942 Moon Bath.** Purni's notable painting, inspired by the moonlight at Thakur Bari, is painted.



**1961** is part of a two-man show alongside AFACS.



**1968** Solo show at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and Jhingeri Art Gallery, Mumbai.



**1969** *Water Bridge* is probably inspired by the Hussaini Movement in early 1970s in Bengal.



**1980** Solo exhibition of portraits titled 'Years that we were in the dreams and nightmares' at Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata.

**1987** First solo exhibition in New Delhi's Jhingeri Art Gallery.

**1994** After a decade the artist becomes involved in the left jobs.

**2007** Purni's exhibition at the Calcutta Museum with his artworks, among the teachers primarily at Chitralok Art Gallery, Kolkata.



**2013** Purni is awarded **Ashoka Puraskar** by the Government of West Bengal.

**2014** Purni is awarded **Siraj Mahumman** by the Government of West Bengal.

**1950's**

**1960's**

**1970's**

**1980's**

**2000's**

**1971**

Purni is

invited to

participate

in the

exhibition

**1968-69**

Purni is

invited to

participate

in the

exhibition

at the

Academy

of Arts

and

Calcutta

University.

**1973-74**

Purni is

awarded

**Mahatma**

**Kali Puraskar**

**Award** for

Best

Painting

in

West

Bengal.

**1979**

**Moon Bath**

is

selected

as one

of the

hundred

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paintings

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**1994**

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Portrait  
Watercolour on paper  
10.5 x 7.5 inches  
1950  
Lower left in English  
C1955



Portrait of an Old Man  
Drypoint on paper  
3.5 X 3 inches  
1953  
Lower right in Bengali  
C1963



Detail of 'Portrait of an Old Man'



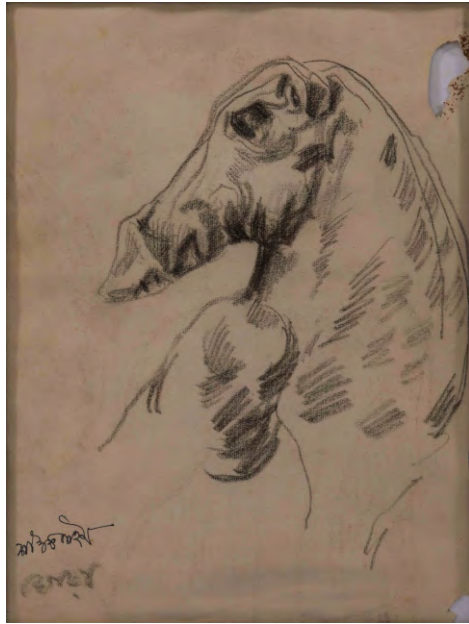




Figure Study  
Etching on paper  
4.5 X 4.5 inches  
1953  
Lower right in Bengali  
C1968

Detail of 'Figure Study'





Study of a Horse  
Crayon on paper  
7.5 X 6 inches  
1950  
Lower left in Bengali  
C1969



Portrait (front)

Figure Study (reverse, not shown)

Pencil on paper(front)

Conte on paper (reverse)

16.33 X 13.38 inches

Undated

Lower middle in Bengali

C1990





Street Scene  
Pencil on paper  
14 x 10 inches  
1952  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2109

Detail of 'Street Scene'







Refugee Family  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 44.5 inches  
1996  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2380



Untitled  
Watercolour on paper  
22 x 15 inches  
Undated  
Lower left in Bengali  
C1954





Untitled  
Watercolour on paper  
19 X 30 inches  
2001  
Lower right in Bengali  
C1958



Untitled  
Watercolour on rice paper  
14.5 X 19 inches  
Undated  
Lower right in Bengali  
C1996



Proceed to Work  
Watercolour on paper  
18.5 X 24 inches  
1997  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2021





Desert Dawn  
Oil on canvas  
28 x 24 inches  
2008  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2054



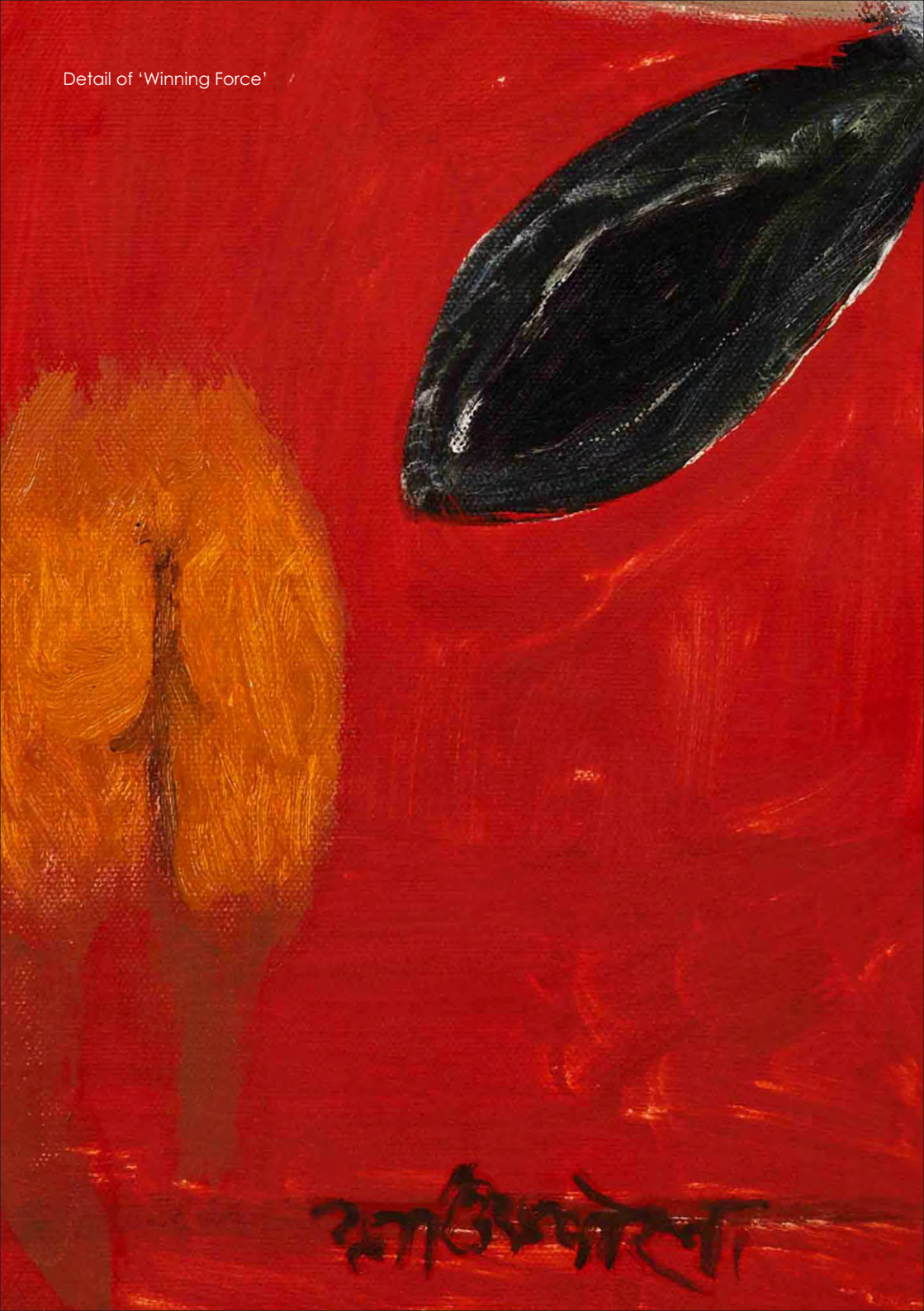
Undying Love  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 30 inches  
2007  
Middle right in Bengali  
C2075



Winning Force  
Oil on canvas  
24 x 20 inches  
2007  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2076



Detail of 'Winning Force' /





Dissatisfaction  
Oil on canvas  
30 x 36 inches  
Undated  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2085





The Cart Puller  
Oil on canvas  
42 x 36 inches  
2005  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2086





Enchantment  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 30 inches  
2008  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2093



Vagabond  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 30 inches  
2007  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2106



Passionate Past  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 30 inches  
2008  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2110





Bull Fight  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 42 inches  
2008  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2111



Brave Birth  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 42.5 inches  
2007  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2128



Old and Young  
Oil on canvas  
42 x 36 inches  
2008  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2130





Rickshaw Puller  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 42 inches  
2008  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2132



Vexation  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 29.5 inches  
2008  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2133



Family  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 29.5 inches  
2008  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2136





Life Curtain  
Oil on canvas  
42 x 36 inches  
2008  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2137

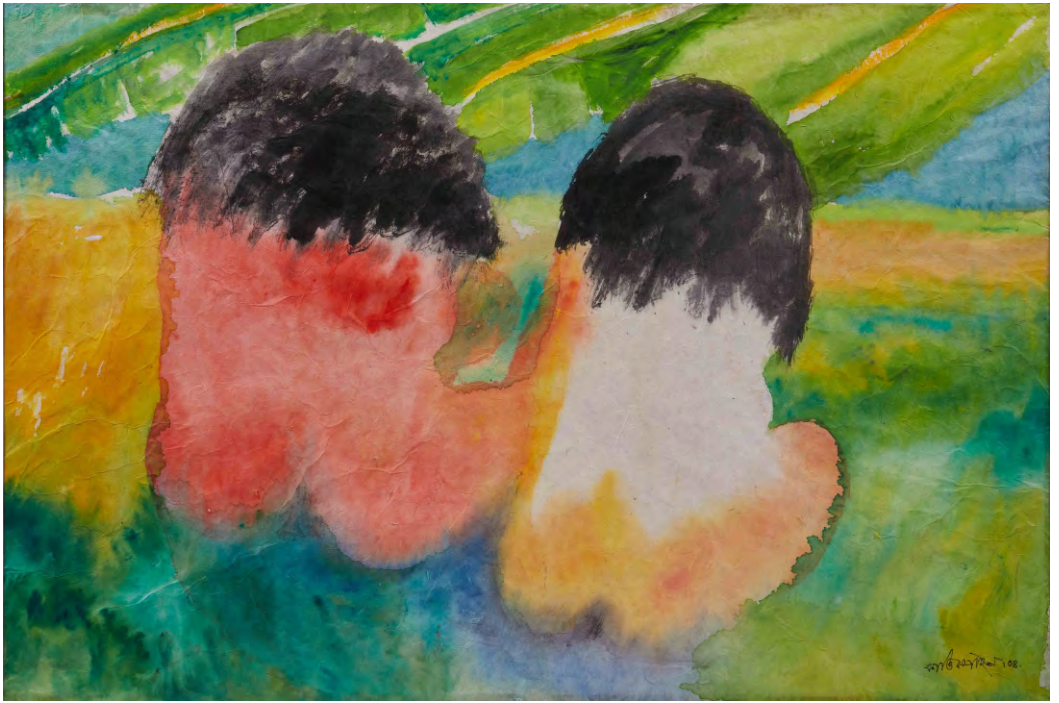


Crane  
Watercolour on rice paper  
pasted on board  
20.5 x 15.5 inches  
2003  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2265

Detail of 'Crane'



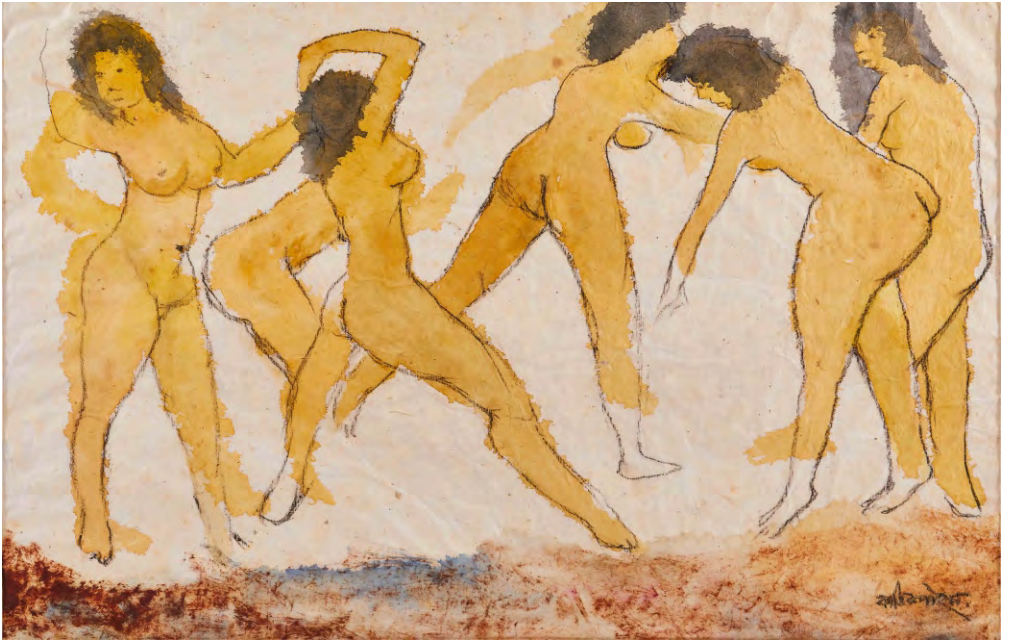




Untitled  
Watercolour on rice paper  
30.5 x 20 inches  
2008  
Lower right in Bengali  
C2151



Way to Bath  
Oil on canvas  
42 x 36 inches  
2007  
Lower left in Bengali  
C2073



Dance  
Watercolour on rice paper  
18.5 X 28 inches Undated  
Lower right in Bengali C1985  
INR 00000





Group of Deer  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 42 inches  
2005  
Lower right in Bengali  
EA539



**1946-47** Pyne's ancestral house in Colabata Street near the Calcutta Medical College is badly affected by the communal riots. The family later shifts to a new house at Hatt Bagari.



Pyne stays and works at his family's ancestral home Thakur Bari at Sodepur along with a college friend Raghunath Singh.



**1962 Moon Bath** Pyne's notable painting, inspired by the moonlight at Thakur Bari, is painted.

**1961** is part of a two-man show arranged by AIFACS, New Delhi.



**1968** Solo show at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai.



Pyne's 'Poster Boys' is probably inspired by the Naxalite Movement in early '70s in Bengal.



**1980** Solo exhibition of portraits titled "Faces that we meet in life, dreams and nightmares" at Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata.

**1994** After a stroke the artist becomes paralysed on the left side.

**2007** Participates in an exhibition with his students whom he teaches privately at Chitrakoot Art Gallery, Kolkata.



**2014** Pyne is awarded **Shilpi Mahasamman** by the Government of West Bengal.

**2013** Pyne is awarded **Abanindranath Poraskar** by the Government of West Bengal.

**2007** Art Kunsult, New Delhi organizes a large survey show of his work.

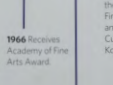
**2006** A retrospective of his paintings is organized by Aukriti Art Gallery.

1950's 1960's 1970's 1980's 2000's

**15 November 1931** Kartick Chandra Pyne is born in Kolkata to his parents, Gobindadas Pyne and Chandrabati Pyne.



Kartick Chandra Pyne meets Sayabati Mullick.



**1966** Receives Academy of Fine Arts Award.

**1968-69** Wins a fellowship from the Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata and from Indian Cultural Trust, Kolkata.

Pyne teaches painting at the Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship, Kolkata.

**1973-74** Pyne is awarded **Mahakoshal Kala Parishad Award**, Raipur, Madhya Pradesh.

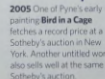
**1979** **Moon Bath** is selected as one of the hundred exhibits representing Modern Indian Art at Fukuoka Art Museum, Japan.



Works at Birla Industrial and Technological Museum, Kolkata.

**1991-92** ICCR exhibition, Bangladesh.

**1994** is part of the VII Triennial India, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.



**2005** One of Pyne's early painting, **Bird in a Cage** fetches a record price at a Sotheby's auction in New York. Another untitled work also sells well at the same Sotheby's auction.



**2007** A dog is made by Pyne.

**17 September 2017** Kartick Chandra Pyne passes away at his residence in Kolkata.

**Story Design** - A documentary film about Pyne is made by Chaitanya Raychaudhary, Kolkata of West Bengal.

# EMAMI ART

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