



Bholanath Rudra

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Displacement
Detail

Bholanath Rudra, a contemporary Indian artist, orchestrates an intricate dialogue with the profound crises of our era through his expansive watercolours. After graduating from Rabindra Bharati University in Kolkata, Rudra boldly ventured into uncharted territories, infusing the traditionally subtle medium of watercolour with a remarkable vibrancy and layered richness. In the footsteps of luminaries like Abanindranath Tagore and Shyamal Dutta Ray, he views the act of painting not as a mere technical pursuit but as a vessel for delving into the intricacies of reality, skillfully capturing its elusive essence.

In his recent body of work, Bholanath Rudra confronts the pressing challenges of the Anthropocene era with a profound artistic inquiry. Themes such as deforestation, the unbridled expansion of urban landscapes, and humanity's escalating exploitation of the natural world recur as central motifs in his exploration.

Through monumental watercolours like 'Plantation' and 'Press Conference', Rudra delves into the exploitative assault on Earth's resources, a consequence of an insatiable appetite for relentless development. His apocalyptic vision starkly exposes the vulnerability embedded in humanity's unrestrained pursuit of material growth. With masterful strokes that diffuse and create a celestial atmosphere, Rudra portrays the ominous potential of a descent into servitude, vividly symbolised by the mules decked up with industrial gumboots. The omnipresence of CCTV cameras in 'You're under CCTV Surveillance' accentuates the dehumanisation that extends even to the upper echelons of power.

Exhibition view, *Fluid Boundaries*,
Emami Art, 2020



Exhibition view, *Fluid Boundaries*,
Emami Art, 2020

In the midst of the sombre narrative, Rudra skillfully captures subtle acts of defiance. In 'Plantation,' a faithful dog boldly relieves itself at the base of a CCTV post, symbolising a rebellious gesture. Additionally, a solitary mule, striding in the opposite direction, begins to sprout a human foot, hinting at the transformative power embedded in individual dissent. Notably, Rudra steers clear of didacticism; his compositions, expansive and desolate landscapes adorned with fluid, luminous hues, transcend mere instruction to evoke the sublime. Just as Rudra's awareness of the world around and beyond, often gleaned from digital and print media, informs his art and anchors it to the contemporary time, the vastness of space and the dispersed symbolic imagery across the canvas lend an ethereal quality to his work, turning sober subjects into surreal dreamscapes that linger with the observer. ■

Displacement
Watercolour on paper
44 x 59.50 inches
2020





Untitled
Watercolour on paper
11.20 x 16.10 inches
2020



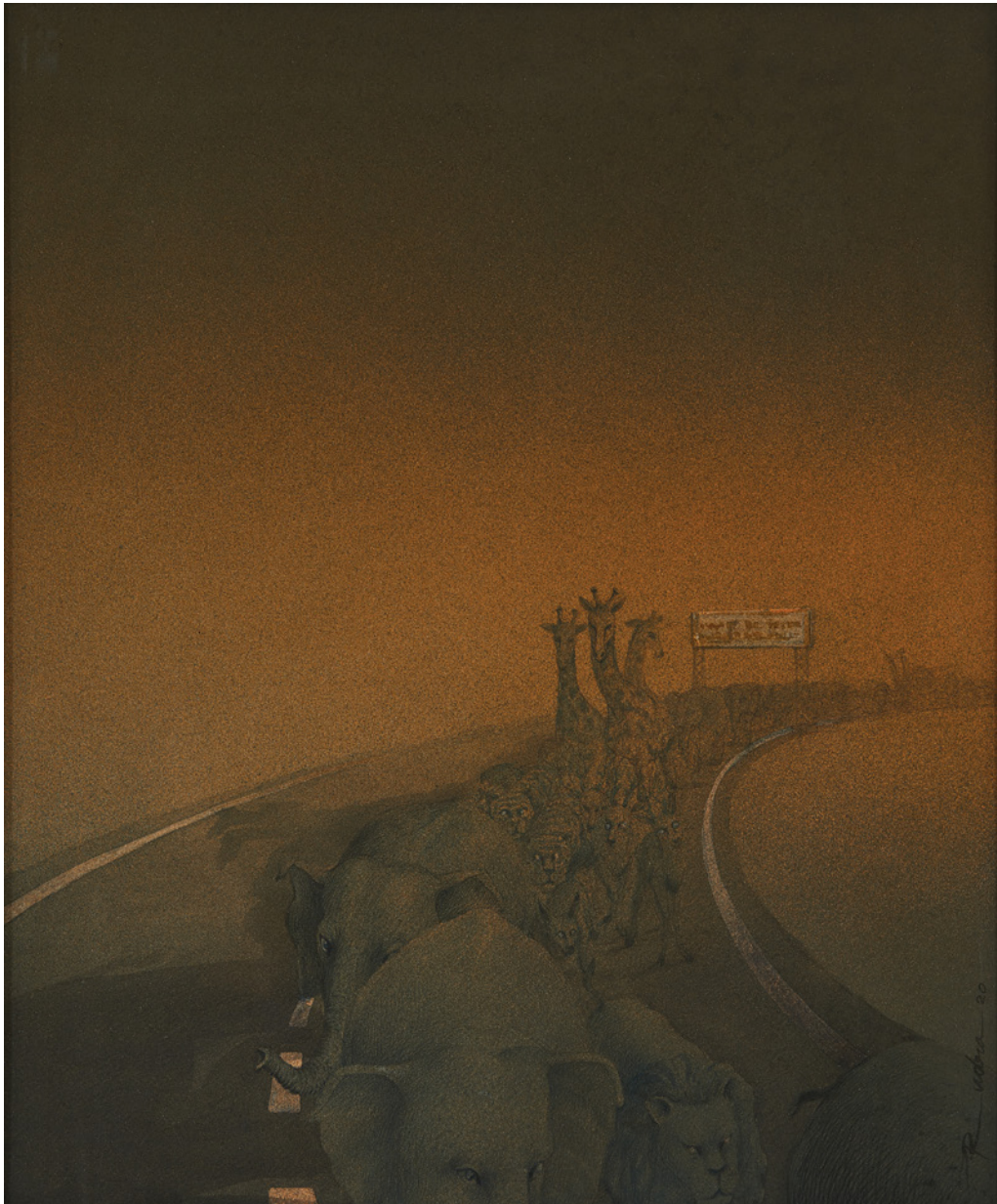
Observers
Watercolour on paper
18 x 18 inches
2020



Enlightenment I
Watercolour on paper
32.5 x 44 inches
2022



Untitled
Watercolour on paper
26.96 x 44.68 inches
2021



Victory I
Watercolour on paper
21 x 17.50 inches
2020



Press Conference
Watercolour on paper
58.6 x 72 inches
2020



Beyond the Horizon II
Watercolour on paper
56.3 x 37 inches
2023



Beyond the Horizon I
Watercolour on paper
56.3 x 37 inches
2023



Beyond the Horizon III
Watercolour on paper
30.5 x 22.4 inches
2023



Beyond the Horizon IV
Watercolour on paper
30.5 x 22.4 inches
2023

Bholanath Rudra skillfully employs symbolic imagery to infuse his paintings with a sublime quality, navigating beneath surface appearances to capture the essence of reality. Through surreal, dream-like scenes and a touch of satire, he creates captivating images that transcend sombre themes, offering viewers a bizarre and fantastical experience.



Dark Land
Watercolour on paper
18 x 18 inches
2020

Overleaf
Untitled I
Watercolour on paper
11 x 15.5 inches
2021





Empty Space I
Watercolour on paper
11.22 x 15.95 inches
2021

Power I
Watercolour on paper
11.22 x 15.95 inches
2021

Disrupt
Watercolour on paper
6.1 x 11.61 inches
2021

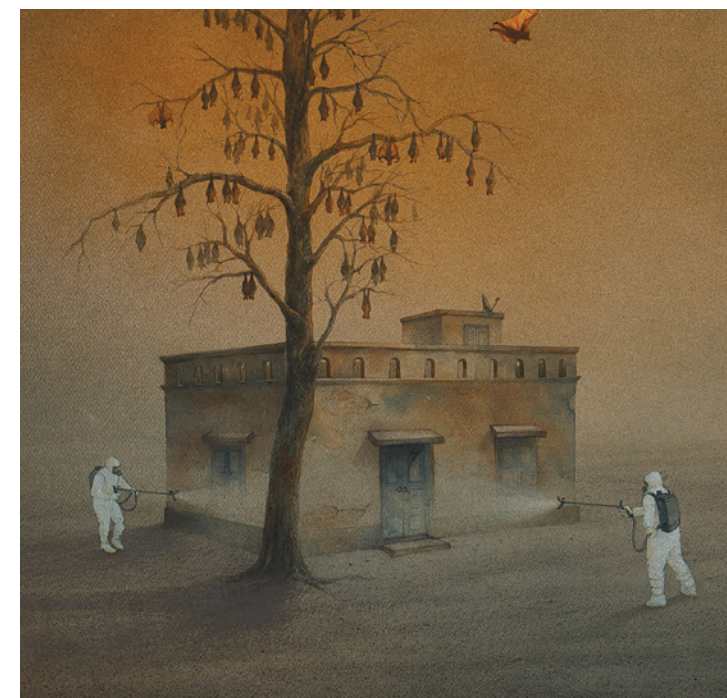




Plantation
 Watercolour on paper
 92.5 x 324 inches
 2020



Evening light I
Watercolour on paper
44 x 59.5 inches
2020



Evening light
Detail

Evening light II
Watercolour on paper
45 x 59 inches
2021



‘I believe that the unpredictability of life, with its constant ups and downs, makes it fascinating. Watercolour too has this unpredictable trait that I enjoy. The scale of the painting is as important to me as the medium. My watercolours mostly deal with nature and I try to capture it’s vast immensity as well as the challenges that Anthropocene poses to the same through large-scale works.’

Bholanath Rudra

Untitled III
Watercolour on paper
86.6 x 59.6 inches
2022





Image of an Image
Watercolour on paper
30 x 39 inches
2022



Limited Horizontal
Watercolour on paper
44 x 59 inches
2016



Beauty
Watercolour on paper
58 x 44 inches
2018



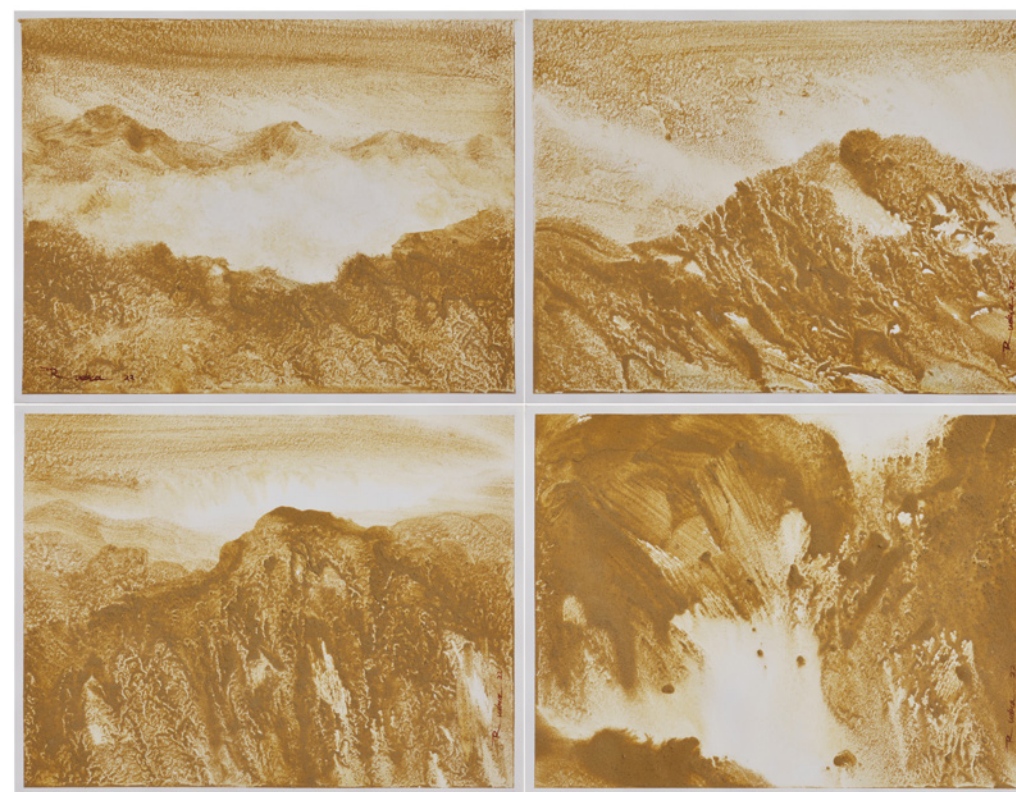
Beautification
Watercolour on paper
48 x 72 inches
2019



Transformation
Watercolour on paper
44 x 59 inches
2019



Untitled
Soil dust with watercolour on paper
22 x 28.5 inches overall
Quadriptych
2022, Italy



Untitled
Soil dust with watercolour on paper
22 x 28.5 inches overall
Quadriptych
2022, Italy

‘The vast desolate spaces, the spread of fluid, bright colours and scattered, often symbolic imagery across the picture plane give Bholanath Rudra’s work an exalted quality of the sublime. While carrying grim contents, his paintings do not appear as shocking images but as surrealistic, dream-like spectacles that captivate us.’

Bholanath Rudra

Untitled I
Watercolour on paper
7.75 x 5.35 inches
2023





Born in 1984 in Kolkata, West Bengal, **Bholanath Rudra** is a contemporary Indian artist who graduated with a B.F.A. and an M.F.A. in Painting from Rabindra Bharati University in 2009 and 2013 respectively. Since 2019 he is a member of the Society of Contemporary Artists, Kolkata.

Rudra has exhibited widely all over India in numerous group exhibitions such as 'Brink' at Art Centrix Space, 2022; 'Fluid Boundaries' Emami Art, Kolkata, 2020; 'Insights' Emami Art, Kolkata, 2020; 64th Annual exhibition of 'Society of Contemporary Artists', Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata, 2018 – 2022; Annual Art Exhibition at Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata, 2014, 2016, and 2018; State Art Gallery, Hyderabad in 2019; Kolkata Centre for Creativity, 2018, CIMA Gallery, Kolkata, 2017; Rajya Charukala Parshad, Kolkata, 2017 -2019; Karnataka Lalit Kala Akademi, 2017; Annual Exhibition, Emami Chisel Art, Kolkata 2015 and 2017. His solo shows include 'States of Mind' at Society of Contemporary Artists, Kolkata in 2018 and 'Mechanical Libido' at Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata in 2013.

Rudra has been a part of several art fairs including India Art Fair, New Delhi in 2020 and 2022; and 'Hub India – Maximum Minimum', Artissima, Torino, Italy, 2021. He has also participated in several art residencies, including The International Artists Residency Program at Kira A. Princess of Prussia Foundation (Germany, Italy), in collaboration with Emami Art, 2022.

He was awarded the State Gallery of Art Award by the Telangana Government in 2019; The Birla Academy Annual Exhibition Award in 2018; The Rajya Charukala Parshad Annual Award in 2017; The National Exhibition Award by Lalit Kala Akademi, Karnataka in 2017; and The All-India Watercolour Exhibition Award by AIFACS in 2017.

Bholanath Rudra lives and works in Kolkata.

Emami Art is a leading Indian contemporary art gallery and a platform for cultural production. Established in 2017 in Kolkata, Emami Art represents emerging, mid-career and established artists and organises a dynamic programme of exhibitions and public seminars. Since its inception, the gallery has curated and hosted intimate and large-scale exhibitions and regularly participates in national and international art fairs and conferences.

With a focus on a future-forward, complex, multi-dimensional approach that echoes South Asian history, the programme explores socio-cultural and geo-political narratives in relation to visual art practices today. As part of its knowledge-sharing and archiving activities, Emami Art regularly hosts talks, seminars, panel discussions and conversations between artists, curators and audiences to create a safe space for critical engagement.

Deeply committed to promoting a regional, national and international agenda through innovative and alternative programming, the gallery places emphasis on knowledge production and socially conscious themes. Emami Art aspires to be a catalyst of change, research, innovation and inclusivity and welcomes all sections of society.

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