



**Ghana Shyam Latua**

**Ghana  
Shyam  
Latua**





*Excoriated Land*  
Detail

Ghana Shyam Latua is a contemporary artist known for his landscape paintings which he creates using novel pinprick techniques. A student of Visva-Bharati in Santiniketan, Latua's artistic journey is steeped in a profound appreciation for the unspoiled beauty of nature, tinged with a palpable sense of sorrow over its gradual erosion at the hands of rampant urbanisation and unchecked tourism. His formative years at Santiniketan were marked by a deep immersion in the works of luminaries such as Nandalal Bose, Benodebehari Mukherjee, and Ramkinkar Baij, whose artistry served as both a source of inspiration and a catalyst for his evolving aesthetic sensibilities. Initially drawn to the serene landscapes and pastoral scenes that characterised the oeuvre of his predecessors, Latua's artistic trajectory took a decisive turn as he delved deeper into the complexities of contemporary socio-environmental issues. There is a transition from his earlier concept of romantic geography to political geography in which nature is both destroyed and maintained by modern society. At the heart of Latua's artistic vision lies a profound sense of responsibility—a commitment to witness the unpleasant transformations unfolding in the landscape and, by extension, in society's collective consciousness. His paintings serve as a mirror, reflecting the beauty of the natural world while simultaneously reminding us to contemplate the urgency of its preservation.



Latua's departure from the conventional representation of Santiniketan's landscape epitomises a departure from the romanticised depictions that historically dominated artistic renderings of the locale. Through a meticulous dissection of the picturesque, Latua endeavours to interrogate the socio-political undercurrents pervading the terrain, thus transcending the mere portrayal of aesthetic beauty to delve into the intricate tapestry of power dynamics and environmental degradation. Emerging as a bastion of artistic and intellectual exchange over a century, Santiniketan has metamorphosed from a pristine and uninhabited expanse into a crucible of shared communal identity.

Installation view from 'The Lament of Red Earth', Leipzig, Germany, 2022



Installation view from 'All That is Hidden: Mapping Departures in Landscape, Terrains and Geographies' at Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024

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Central to Latua's oeuvre is his innovative pinprick technique, which deftly ruptures the tactile surface of the image plane, symbolically mirroring the fractured state of the landscape under siege. The fusion of inked elements with spectral, white pinpricked motifs within his compositions creates a multifaceted sensory experience, both tactile and visual. This technique elucidates the dynamic relationship between the artwork's foundation and imagery and the interplay between presence and absence. This approach serves as a conduit for exploring the dialectics inherent in the intersection of nature and culture, poignantly commenting on contemporary political and ecological concerns.



*Exhibition view from 'Garden of Infinite Desires' at Emami Art, Kolkata, 2023*



*Excoriated Land 2*  
Pen, ink and pricking with needle  
42 x 59.5 inches  
2018-19



*Excoriated Land*  
Pen, ink and pricking with needle  
42 x 59.5 inches  
2018-19



*In the Vicinity of Birbhum I*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
45 x 69.5 inches  
2024



*In the Vicinity of Santiniketan III*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
11 x 16.5 inches  
2023



*In the Vicinity of Santiniketan IV*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
11 x 16.5 inches  
2023



**Ghana Shyam was deeply fascinated by the landscape paintings of the Santiniketan artists when he first saw them as a student of Kala Bhavana. In his paintings of Khoai, he, however, has consciously chosen not to follow the tradition of the Santiniketan artists, for the sublime presence that once inspired the artists and poets of Santiniketan is now largely lost and threatened by the rapid spread of tourism and urbanization.**



*In the Vicinity of Santiniketan I*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
11 x 16.5 inches  
2023





*In the Vicinity of Birbhumi II*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
22 x 30 inches  
2024



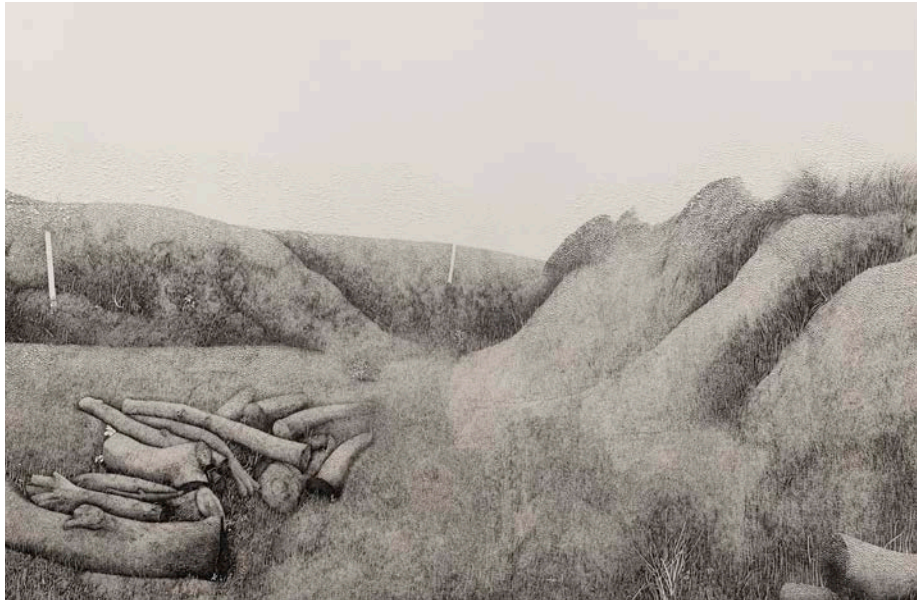
*In the Vicinity of Santiniketan VI*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
11 x 16.5 inches  
2023

*Overleaf*  
*In the Vicinity of Santiniketan VII,*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
11 x 16.5 inches  
2023









*In the Vicinity of Birbhum III*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
22 x 30 inches  
2024



*In the Vicinity of Santiniketan V*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
11 x 16.5 inches  
2023





*Khoai Landscape IV*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
10 x 16.5 inches  
2020



***Khoai* in Bengali refers to a lateritic landform in the Rarh region of Bengal, the eroded and arid land surrounding Santiniketan. Spreading to the horizon on all directions, the rural beauty of the vast, undulated and sparsely timbered Khoai attracted the early Santiniketan artists. They produced a large body of paintings and drawings, transforming the geographical features into a landscape trope, in which the scopic and aesthetic imagination of the self, place and nature are inextricably intertwined.**



*Khoai Landscape I*  
Pen, ink and pin-work on paper  
10 x 16.5 inches  
2020



*View from the Canal at Sonajhuri I*  
Pen, ink and pinprick on paper  
30 X 44 inches  
2022



*View from the Canal at Sonajhuri II*  
Pen, ink and pinprick on paper  
30 x 44 inches  
2023





*View from the Canal at Sonajhuri*  
Pen, ink and pin work on paper  
17 x 10 inches  
2022



*View from the Canal at Sonajhuri*  
Pen, ink and pin work on paper  
17 x 10 inches  
2022



*View from the Canal at Sonajhuri*  
Pen, ink and pin work on paper  
17 x 10 inches  
2022



*View from the Canal at Sonajhuri*  
Pen, ink and pin work on paper  
17 x 10 inches  
2022

**Ghana Shyam Latua's group of carefully executed monochromatic landscapes on paper are constructed of scratches, with webs of delicate lines floating in a void. The landscape is in motion; in particular, the visceral red undulating laterite sites of Birbhum district in Bengal are central to his work, transforming these works into speculative mappings of change.**

Ushmita Sahu, Director and Head Curator, Emami Art



*View from the Canal at Sonajhuri*  
Pen, ink and pin work on paper  
17 x 10 inches  
2022



Despite the meticulous nature of his artistic process, Latua's creative journey extends far beyond the confines of his studio. His dedication to observing and studying nature and its various forms underscores his commitment to authenticity and depth in his work. Each piece is a testament to his lived interaction with the natural world, imbued with a reverence and intimacy that resonates with the spectators on many levels. Thus, while Latua may spend considerable time perfecting each artwork, his creations are not merely products of solitary introspection but reflections of a rich and ongoing dialogue with the world around him.

Landscape Study  
Image Courtesy: Artist



In the Studio



In the Studio



**‘Through my works, I try to explore the spiritual affinity and relationship between man and nature. By getting divorced from nature day by day, we have murdered our own divine and spiritual self.’**

Ghana Shyam Latua



*Excoration*  
Pen, ink and pin work with needle  
8 x 24 inches overall  
2022





Born in 1992 in West Midnapore, Ghana Shyam Latua studied painting from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, graduating in 2017.

Latua was a part of many Group Exhibitions and Art Fairs, including 'All That is Hidden: Mapping departures in Landscape, Terrains and Geographies' at Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024; 'The Garden of Infinite Desires', Emami Art, Kolkata, 2023; India Art Fair, 2023; 'Takshila Fine Arts Scholars Show' Arthshila Santiniketan, 2022; 'Patterns of Intensity' at Art Alive (New Delhi, 2021); *Dih-Pahr-Cher* at Ganges Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2020; 'Inside the Fibre' at Arts Acre Museum, Kolkata, 2020; 'Annual Exhibition' at SSVAAD, Santiniketan, 2019; 'CIMA Award Show' and 'Summer Show', Kolkata in 2019; 'Inward Vision' at Arts Acre Museum, Kolkata, 2018; 'Pentamerous' at Art Exposure in 2028; 'The Shape of Things' curated by Ushmita Sahu at Ganges Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2017; 'Maitreyi', an Ind-Bangladesh Group Show at Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata, 2016; Group Exhibition at Russian Centre for Science and Culture, 2013 and many more.

His last solo show, *The Lament of the Red Earth*, was at Tapetenwerk Gallery, Leipzig, Germany (2022) as part of the International Artists Residency Program by the Kira A. Princess of Prussia Foundation in collaboration with Emami Art. His other notable solo shows are, 'Khoai Landscape' at Emami Art (online exhibition), Kolkata, 2021 and 'Occupying Space' at Gallery Exposure, Kolkata in 2018.

Ghana Shyam Latua is the recipient of the Inception Grant (2021) from Artincept Artpilgrim, New Delhi, the Dhi Support Grant (2020), the National Garhi Scholarship (2017) from Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and Takshila Santiniketan Fine Art Scholarship from Takshila Educational Society (New Delhi 2020).

He lives and works in Santiniketan, West Bengal.

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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