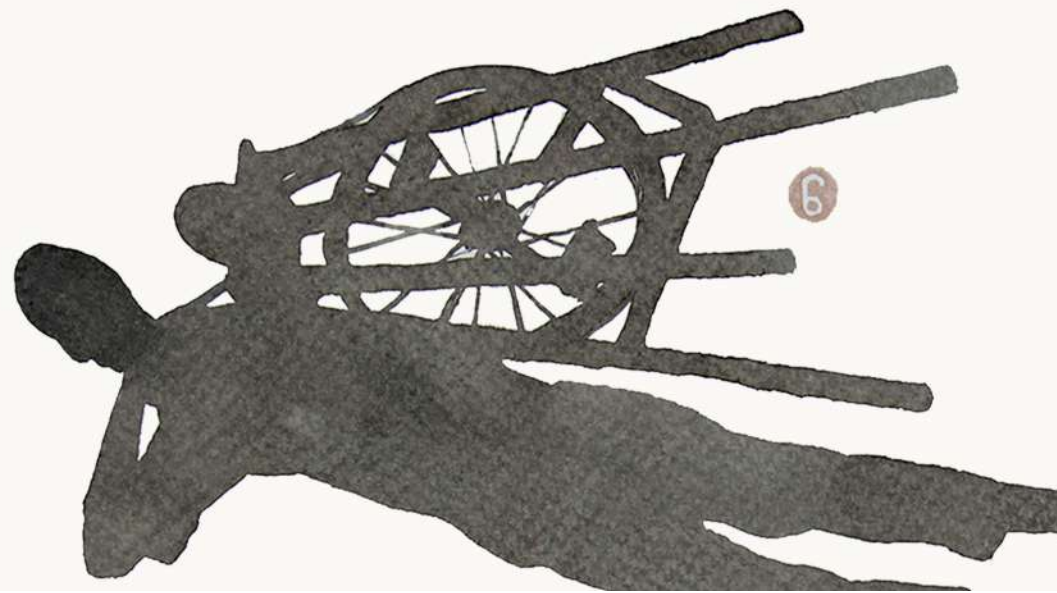


Emami Art

Prasanta Sahu
works on paper
15102020 - 30112020

Suburban Shadows



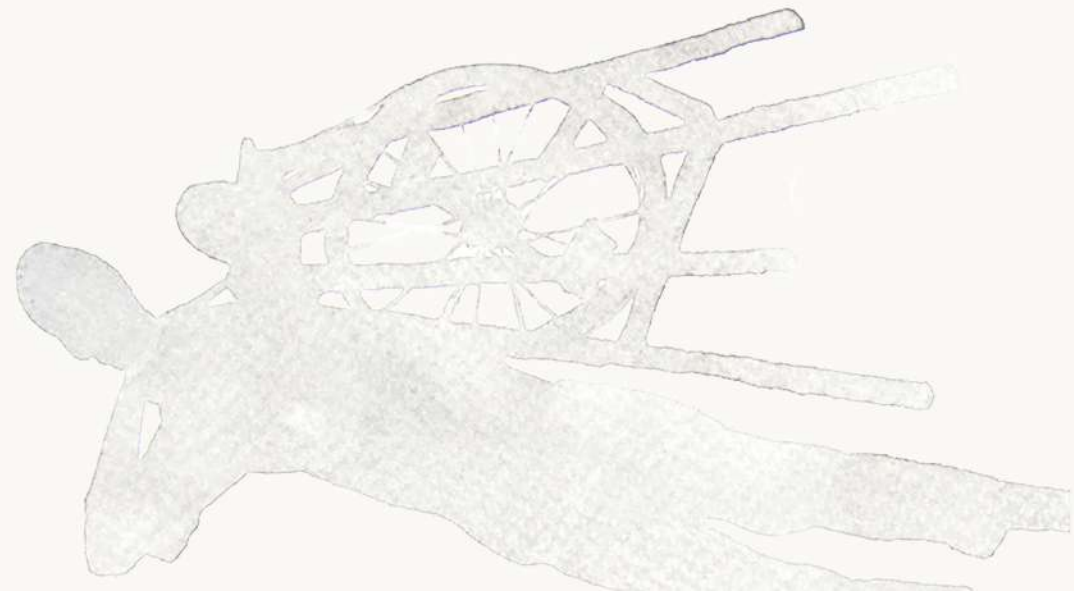
Emami Art

Prasanta Sahu

works on paper

15102020 - 30112020

Suburban Shadows



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Kolkata 700107
033 6623 2300
contact@emamiart.com

Foreword

I am pleased to present *Suburban Shadows*, a solo-show of recent works on paper by Prasanta Sahu, as part of our ongoing series of virtual exhibitions. These critical yet beautiful works are part of Sahu's long-term artistic engagement with the subject of rural and suburban workers from across India. A sharply insightful artist and observer, Sahu studies the life of the marginalised, who provide essential services to us but remain faceless and uncelebrated for their contributions. His works are also very relevant at this particular moment.

As the pandemic threw all plans off-course, Emami Art has pivoted and shifted to online activities, incorporating a wide range of innovative digital programmes, including art talks with eminent artists, documentary film festival, master class and art mentorship programme for emerging artists and virtual exhibitions. I hope *Suburban Shadows* will not only captivate our viewers but also make them think. It is my strong belief that art can and should serve as a catalyst for debate, and that artists seeking truth beyond the visible, offer new perspectives and visions to cajole us into re-assessing our definitions of the mundane.

Richa Agarwal

CEO Emami Art & KCC

Suburban Shadows: Recent works by Prasanta Sahu

Over five years, Prasanta Sahu has been working on what he calls “the unknown multitudes,” the marginalized population of peasants and urban workers, who provide essential services to us but remain unacknowledged and under-represented in the society.

Concerned with farming and agriculture in the context of modern life and the representation of daily labourers of various occupations in the suburban localities, his works in the exhibition revolve around the particular notion of the study, understood not as a regular academic practice – a drawing or sketch done in preparation for a finished piece – but something close to the anthropological idea of case-study: the contextual analysis of the everyday life and actions of an individual, group or community that exhibits the morphology of the social structure.

Rooted in the empiricism of “being there,” Sahu’s work involves the scientific method of photo documentation, field notes and drawings and interviews which he later reworks in his studio. He prefers to see himself as a compiler, as opposed to an original creator, who reconstructs the reality, drawing on elements and styles from diverse scientific and artistic disciplines and discourses. In his work, this process of citation operates on multiple levels, subverting the idea of painting as a medium of invention and originality. The strategic juxtaposition of the visual and textual signs, of diagrammatic and realistic images and of technically produced and transferred images that relate to the “industrial aesthetic” and hand-drawn ones create hybridity that defies the linearity of the visual discourse, challenging the ideological and institutional demands placed on art.

The human body holds the centre stage in many of Prasanta Sahu’s major works. In the exhibition, he deals mostly with the marginalized male farmers and daily labourers, representing them not merely as the physical bodies in action, but a contested site of biopolitics. Reducing the bodies to their bare silhouette, Sahu highlights the economy of their gestures, underlines the non-figurative quality of his works, which are documents, as opposed to portrait or descriptive representation. He is not only interested in visual effect and compositional arrangement of his work but also confers upon them a socio-political status.

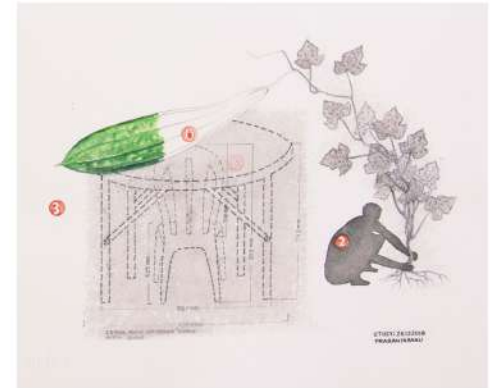
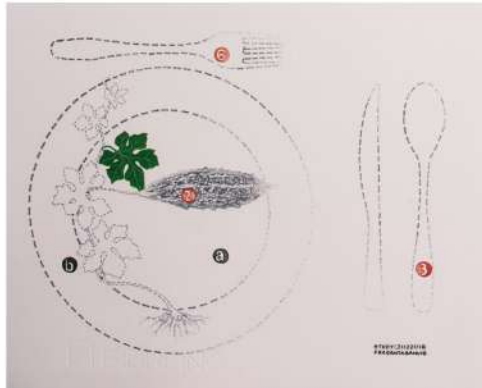
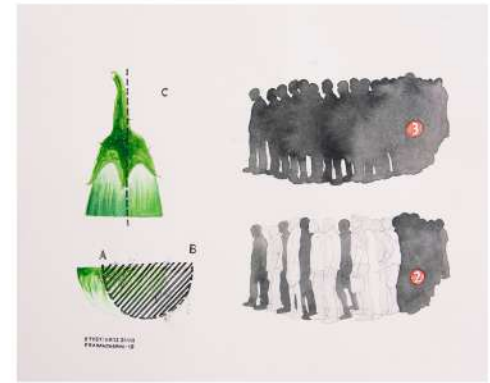
A trained artist, Sahu also has a background in electrical engineering. His work thus shows both the pictorial intelligence and imagination of an artist and the analytic approaches of the scientific disciplines. There are contradictions, and his work encompasses them. More often than not, the fieldwork documents, data table and photographs veer abruptly from a scientifically oriented daily account to an avant-garde oneiric montage of images, texts and numbers. Instead of being enclosed in a singular aesthetic idea, the works, composite, fragmentary and hybrid, compel an interrogative meaning.

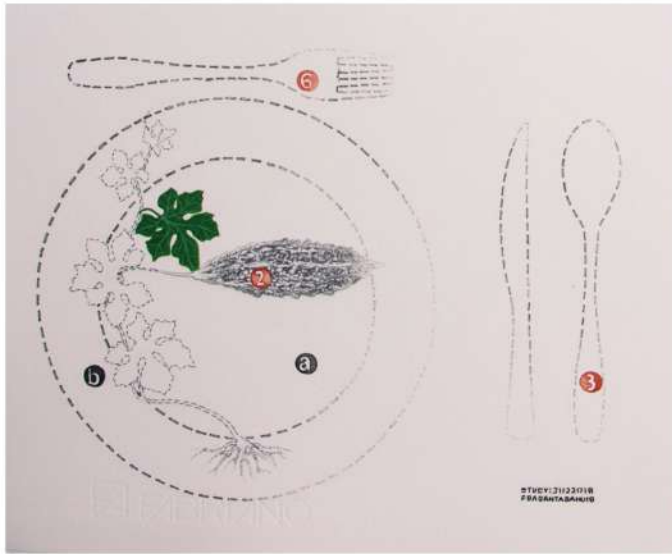
[works](#)

[pages from diary](#)

[photographs](#)

[thoughts](#)





Study:12122018 details



STUDY: 10122018
FRASANTASAHU-18

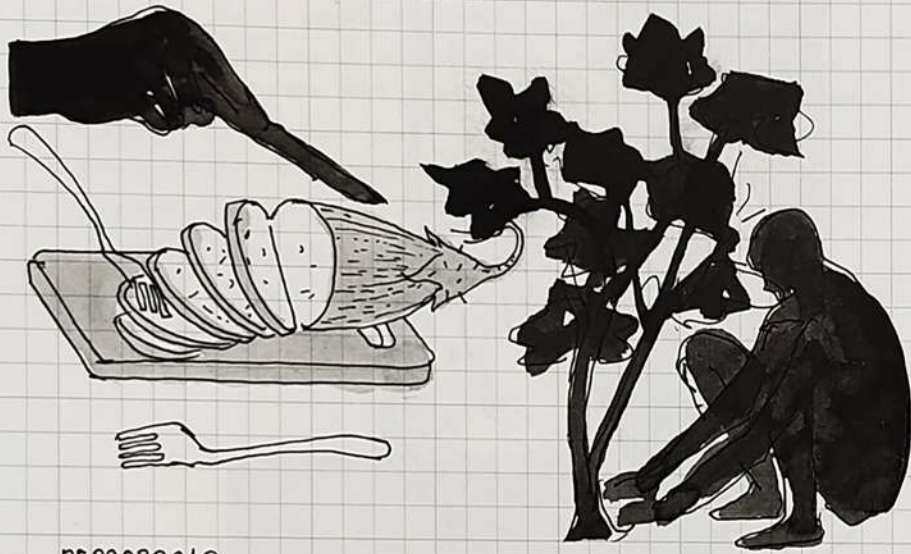
DATE/TIME IN UTC
IST = UTC + 0530 HRS
WML: WELL MARKED LOW
D: DEPRESSION
DD: DEEP DEPRESSION
CS: CYCLONIC STORM
SCS: SEVERE CYCLONIC STORM
VSCS: VERY SEVERE CYCLONIC STORM
ESCS: EXTREMELY SEVERE
SUCS: SUPER CYCLONIC STORM
OBSERVED TRACK
FORECAST TRACK
CONE OF UNCERTAINTY



STUDY:15092020
CYCLONIC STORM
BAY OF BENGAL
PRASANTASAHU-20



Food...as I see it, there are two distinct areas linked to food. On one side are the consumers, who are dependant on the farmer, but this is a faceless connection. On the other side exist the farmers, small scale producers and the agrarian crisis. As I come from a rural family, I have seen the struggles related to this profession up close. For me each tomato, or ladyfinger in a supermarket aisle is imprinted with the touch of the hands that has cultivated it, lovingly tended it... and as a consumer what I intake links me to thousands of untold, unknown stories deep in the hinterland.



PS09022018

Paper work for (cinema)

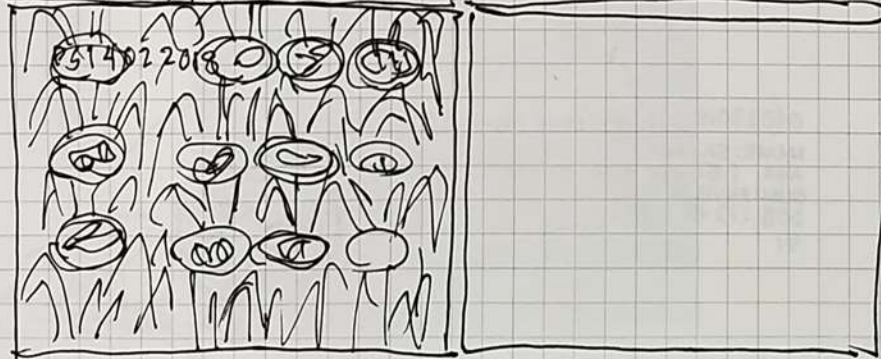
4 pc.



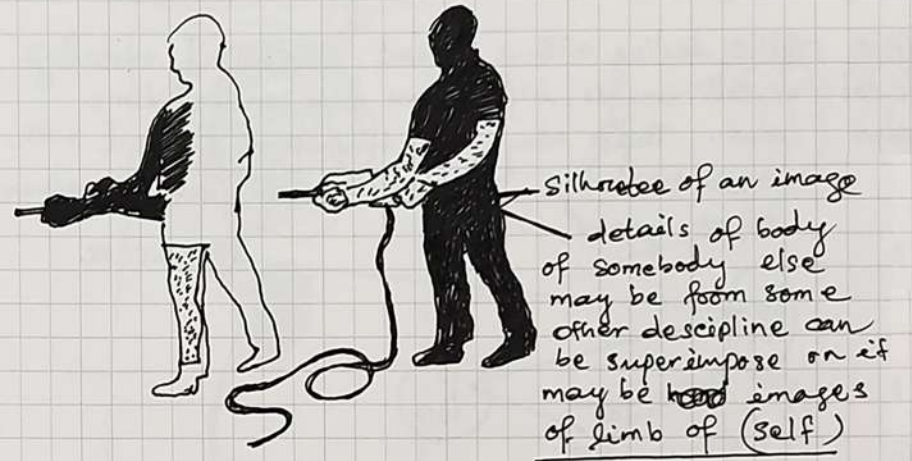
PS14022018

Food items,
Sophisticated
Colour.

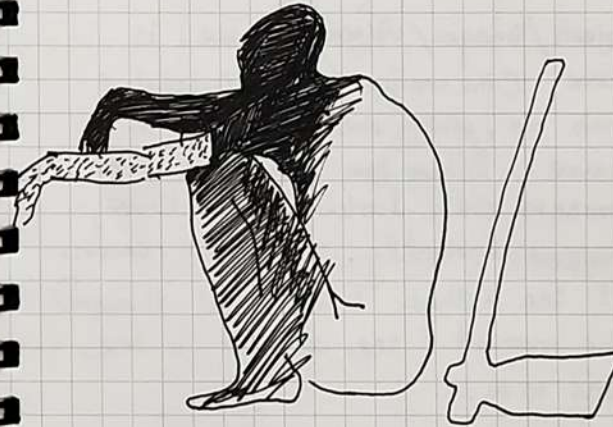
Fields
monochrome
(B/W)



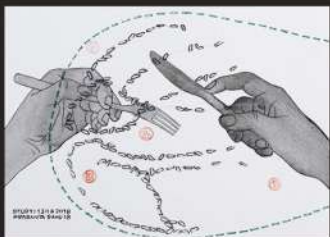
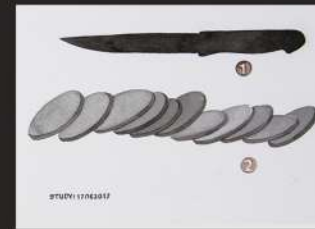
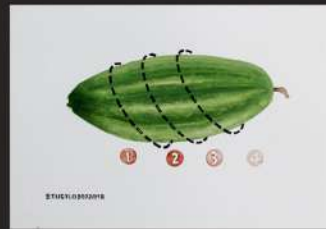
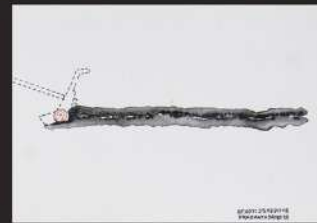
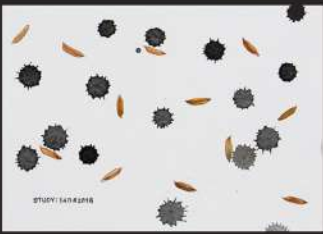
PS14022018



Silhouette of an image
details of body
of somebody else
may be from some
other discipline can
be superimpose on it
may be ~~had~~ images
of limb of (self)



- SHIBARAM SAHOO
GOBARDHAN BLOCK - KEONJHAR SADAR.
KEONJHAR
QUALIFICATION - +2
MALE AGE - 26
MARRIED - UNMARRIED
FAMILY MEMBER 2
MOTHER AND SELF
NAME - SREKA SUPHALA SAHOO
PROFESSION: JCB OPERATOR.
WORK EXPERIENCE - SINCE - 2009





STUDY: 14062018



above photograph by artist

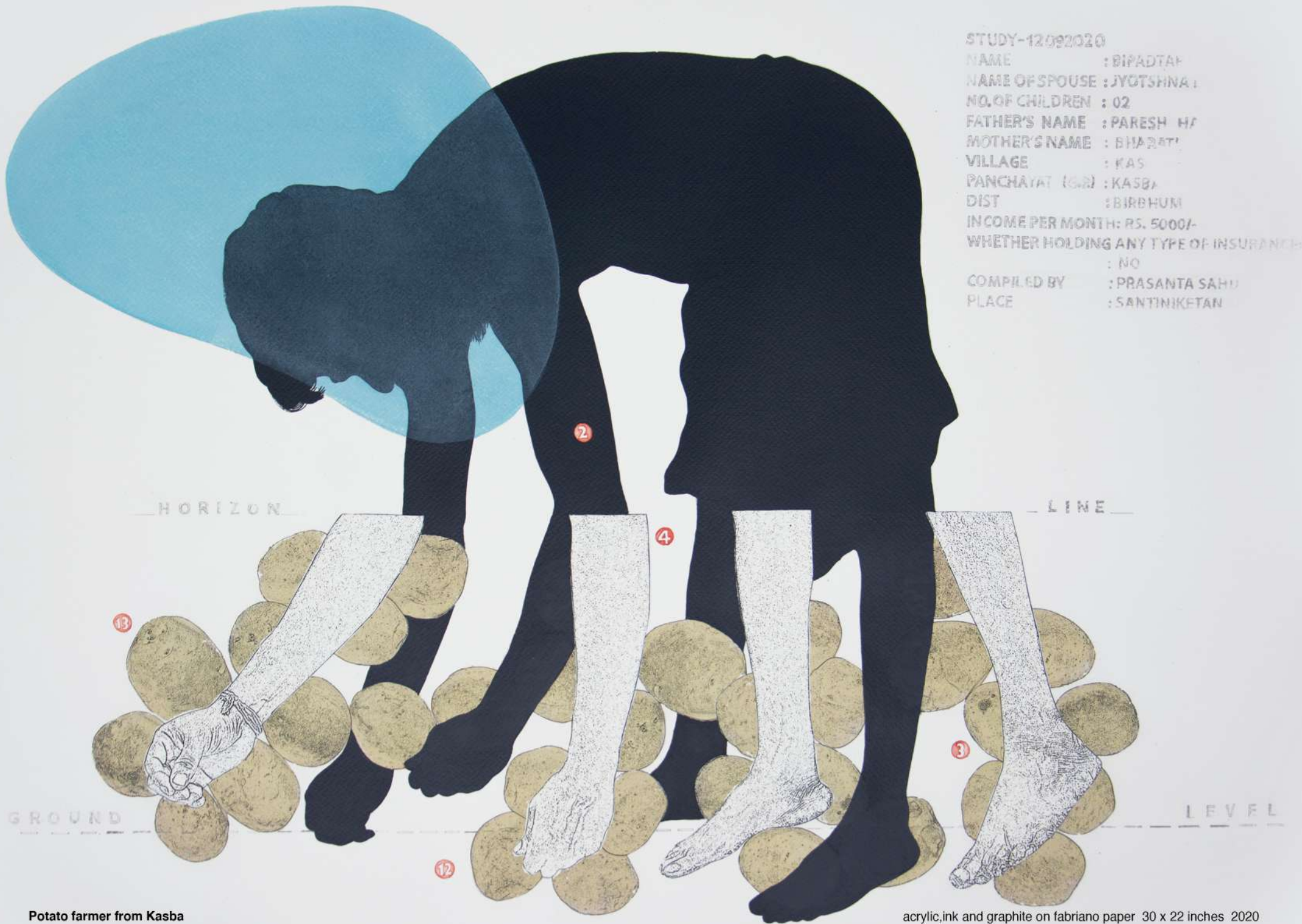
next **Potato farmer from Kasba** acrylic, ink and graphite on fabriano paper 30 x 22 inches 2020

The rural urban linkage:

My current series of works, especially drawings are based on the ecosystem of urban and rural spaces. I don't know how many of us are aware about the ~~unseen~~ invisible connection between these two spaces.

I feel ^{urban} people are not sensitive enough to recognise, notice the contribution of rural India.
① The role that rural-urban linkage has on urban development has overlooked, ~~and~~

~~and~~ In my childhood days, I remember the exchange/barter system where a cloth merchant used to sell his cloths by taking rice from a household, where the scope of recognising the individual from whom you are getting food is possible. In post-industrial time and with the development of trade, transport, co-operatives, which works as a middleman between these two ends. The service provider and the consumer.



STUDY-12092020

NAME : BIPADTA
NAME OF SPOUSE : JYOTSHNA
NO. OF CHILDREN : 02
FATHER'S NAME : PARESH H/
MOTHER'S NAME : BHARATI
VILLAGE : KAS
PANCHAYAT (G.R) : KASBA
DIST : BIRBHUM
INCOME PER MONTH: RS. 5000/-
WHETHER HOLDING ANY TYPE OF INSURANCE:
: NO
COMPILED BY : PRASANTA SAHU
PLACE : SANTINIKETAN

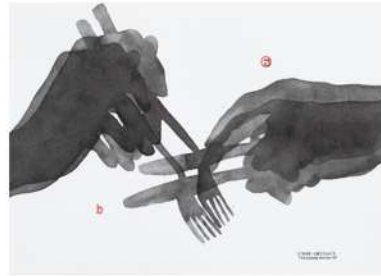
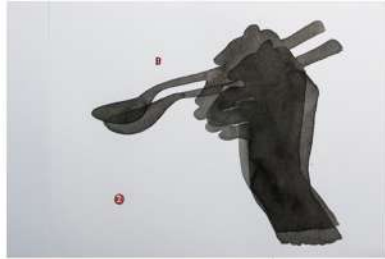
Potato farmer from Kasba

acrylic, ink and graphite on fabriano paper 30 x 22 inches 2020



Study:03072019 diptych

watercolour and ink on fabriano paper 7 x 5 inches x 2 works 2019



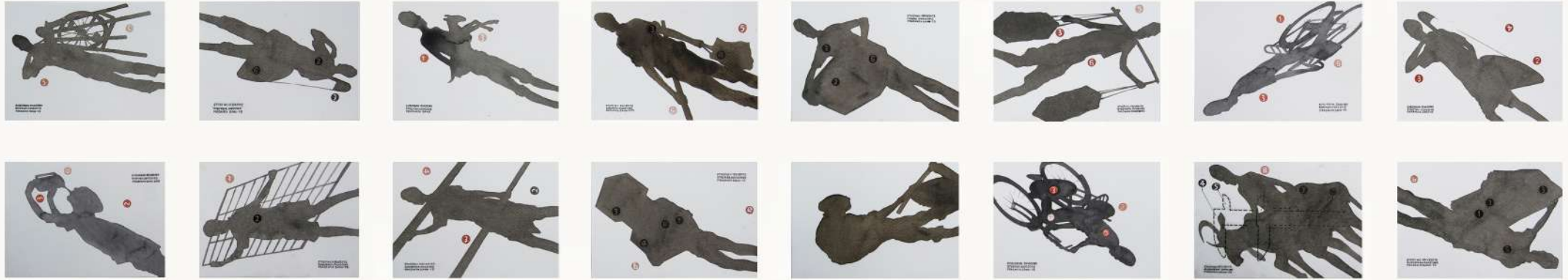


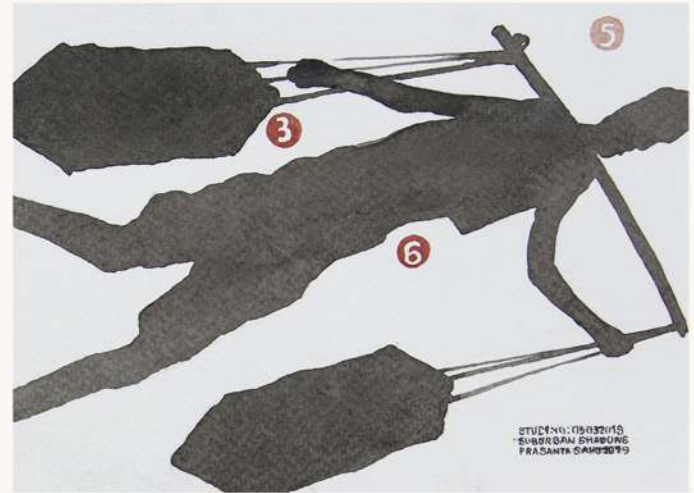
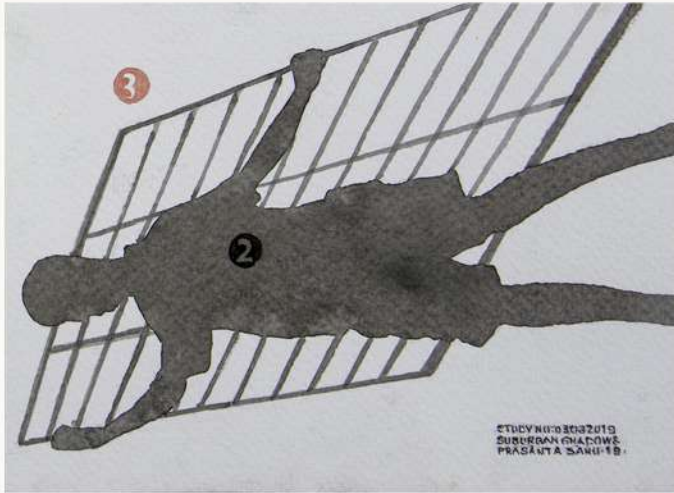
In my recent paper-works I use the title 'Study: followed by an 8 digit number'. For instance "Study : 15082020". Here, the use of the word 'study', alongside a date, an event, or a person, indicates an action of analysis or investigation, or even an intervention. To me, it is also suggestive of an experiential forensic recovery of evidential material from the mundane events that surround us.

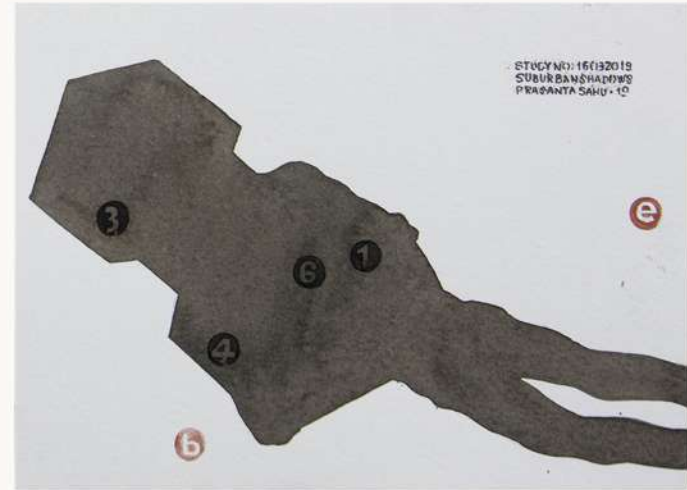
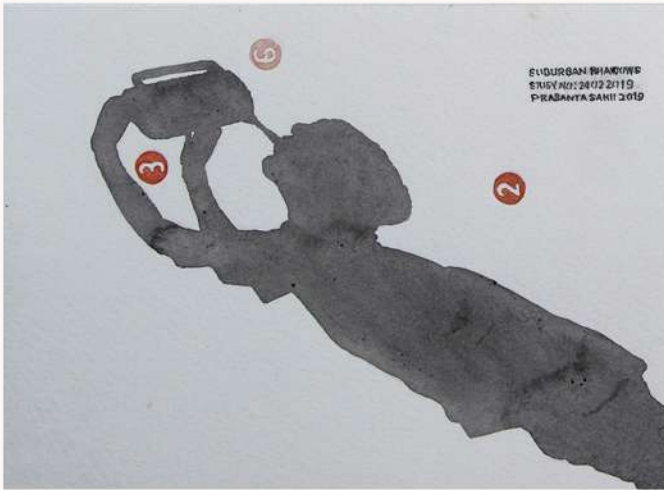
above **artist's quote**

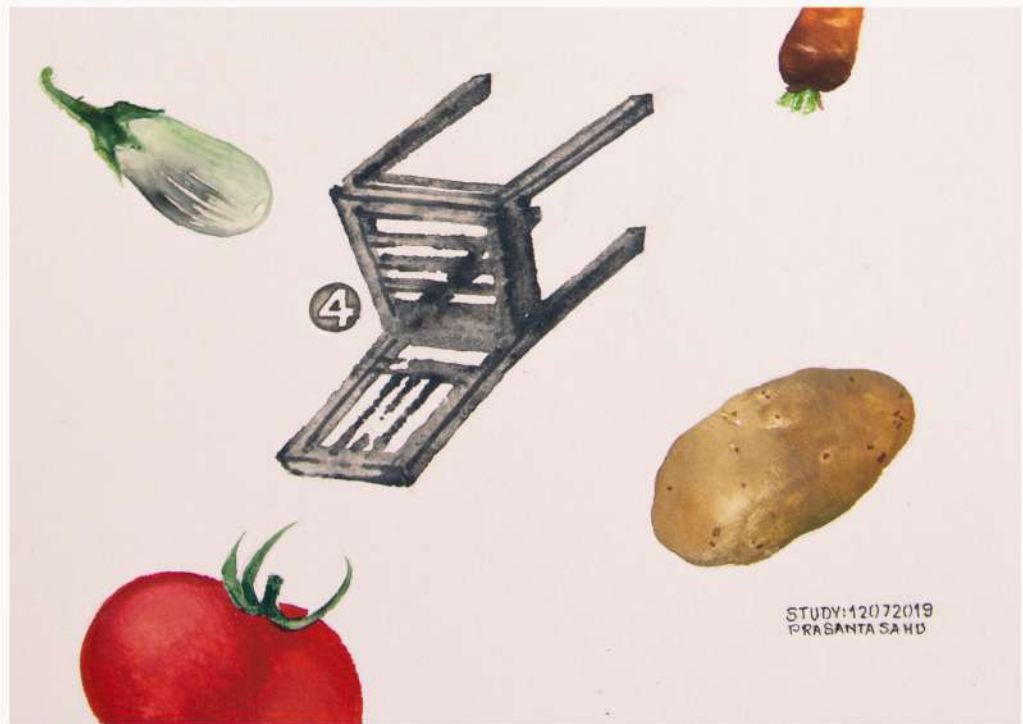


above **photograph by artist**









STUDY:12072019
PRASANTA SAHA



Study:24062019 diptych

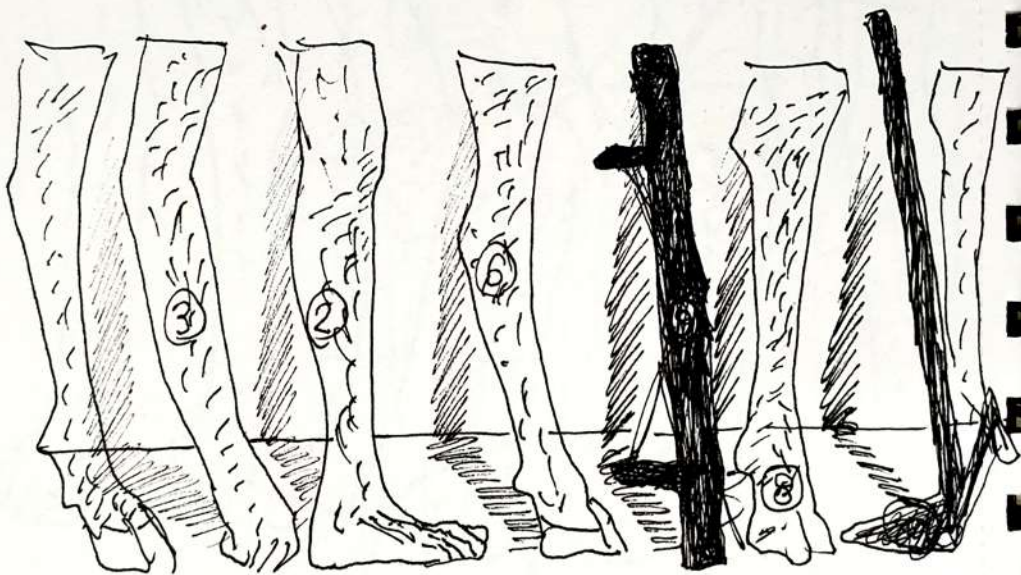


ink and watercolour on fabriano paper 7 x 5 inches x 2 works 2019

16072018

Process

I really enjoy my profession as it allows me to enter into other peoples profession/life, how they work, what they think, ~~how~~ etc. In our day to day affairs, ~~we~~ we encounter with so many things starting from taking ~~my~~ the breakfast in the morning to reading a newspaper, buying some groceries from the store etc, and handling we give a ~~so~~ second thought to ~~to~~ all those mundane acts, because we took them for granted. If you dissect any of them and try to understand how the whole cycle works, you will see, a complex system within. The moment you touch a packet of lentil in a grocery store, ~~you~~ have you ever thought the whole journey behind it.



Farming Tools / Found in Birbhumpol
wooden cutouts - @



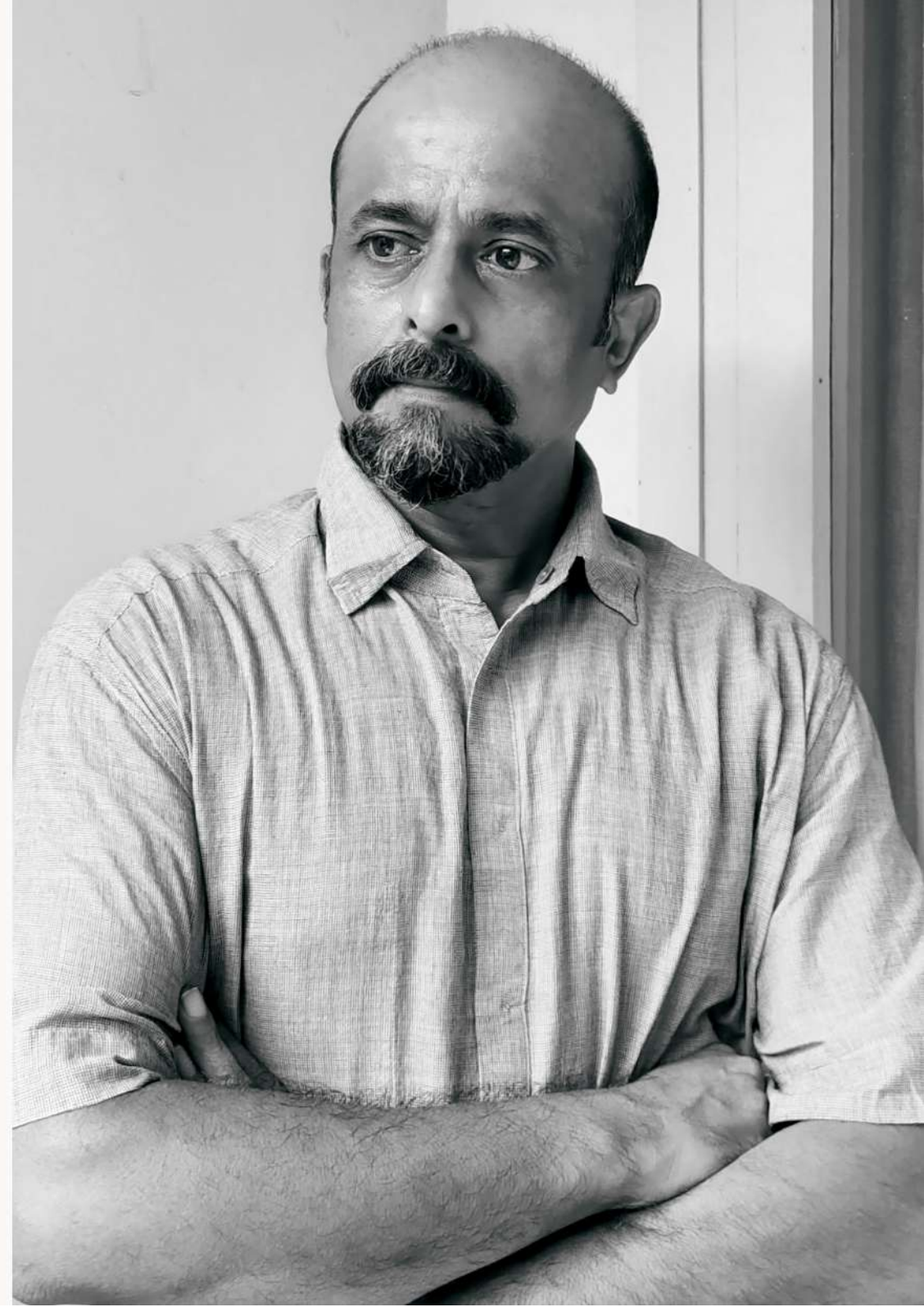
right Study:30092020 acrylic, ink and graphite on fabriano Paper 30 x 22 inches 2020

Prasanta Sahu, born 1968 Odisha, India completed his diploma in Electrical Engineering (1987) before enrolling to study art at Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan. Here he earned his BFA in painting (1998) followed by a Masters degree in painting from M.S. University, Baroda (2000), graduating with summa cum laude from both universities.

Over the last twenty years, Sahu has worked across mediums, including painting and drawings, sculpture, installation, photography. His works find meaning in revealing details hidden within the quotidian. His rural upbringing and agrarian background offers an empathetic, insider view of the plight of small-scale farmers and migrant labourers who inhabit his works. Sahu's process of studying and representing these 'unknown and faceless' essential service providers, is rooted in reality. The artist takes an investigative approach in documenting his subjects through in-depth interviews. Subsequently by introducing parts of this collated data along with personal ruminations and experiential reinterpretation of evidential material, Sahu flawlessly melds the fictive and real in a move towards poetic exegesis.

Sahu has shown widely both within and outside the country. Some selected participations are: 'Blue India' Art Asia art Fair Korea, (2018); 'Constellations' Bihar Museum, Patna (2018); 'Response' a new-media and installation show at Gem Cinema CIMA art gallery, Kolkata –(2018); 'Postcards' Busan International art Fair, Korea (2017); Daegu-India Korean Fine Arts Association South Korea-(2015-2017); 7th Biennial of contemporary Indian art, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal-(2017); 'Blueprint of a city' Solo Show at Kalakriti Art Gallery Hyderabad (2016); International art exchange programme, Faculty of Fine and applied art, Burapha University, Thailand, (2014); 'Urban Discord' gallery Romain Rolland Alliance Francaise de, Delhi, and Hong Kong-(2009) ; Art for Freedom' organized by Tehelka art and Aicon gallery, London (2008) ; 'A-MAZ-ING' Jehangir art gallery, Mumbai, RPG Enterprises (2008); 'The Promissory Maze' 1x1 Art Gallery Dubai (2008); 'V I S (V) A' a chronicle of difference, three person show at Aicon art Gallery, New York-(2008); International Art Fair, Rome (2007); 'Emerging India'– The Henry Moore Gallery, Royal College of Art, London (2007); 'Ways of Seeing' India Habitat Center (2005) ; 'The Sense of Touch' – a two person show at Guild art Gallery, Mumbai, catalogue essay by Nancy Adajania (2005).

Sahu has been invited as visiting faculty by several universities including the Faculty of Fine and Applied arts, Burapha University, Thailand; University of Dhaka, Bangladesh; University of Hyderabad, Sarojini Naidu School of Fine Arts and Communication, Hyderabad. Since 2001, Sahu has been teaching in the Department of Painting at Kala Bhavana (Faculty of Fine art), Visva Bharati University. Prasanta Sahu lives and work in Santiniketan, India.



Acknowledgements

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Emami Art team

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Catalogue design Ushmita Sahu





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