



Arunima Choudhury

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EMAMI ART



Dhanalakshmi
(Goddess of Fortune and Wealth)
Detail
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Arunima Choudhury's integrative artistic practice involves a wide range of mediums, often blending nature and femininity. Having grown up in the lap of nature, among the abundance of greenery in the hills of Dooars and Darjeeling, nature has become her lifelong source of inspiration. The relationship between nature and the world of her feminine sensibilities is immensely layered in her works.

A graduate of the Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship, Kolkata, Choudhury was trained in academic realism under the guidance of Bikash Bhattacharjee. Her first trip to Santiniketan in the seventies was deeply influential. She was inspired by the Santiniketan school of artists like Benode Behari Mukherjee, Ramkinkar Baij and later, KG Subramanyan – their love for nature and their experimentation with indigenous mediums and styles.

She has been following closely in their footsteps, embracing their alternative artistic philosophy in which art and craft, tradition and modernity are closely integrated. Her eco-prints on rice paper and enamel paintings on metal sheets shed light on her journey in blurring the boundaries between art and craft within mainstream modern art practices.

Women often figure as the central subject in her works of art like 'Waiting' (2021), 'Nest' (2020), or 'The Woman and the Bird III' (2009) – where she explores the feminine in connection to human desire, society and the ecological crises of our times. Her works delineate a feminist discourse but not with shades of activism. Instead, her muted feminism shines through the recognition and celebration of femininity beyond the patriarchal imagination. The artworks, at times personal, also offer one a peek into the artist's psyche marked by trauma, memory and desire. There is a boldness of expression and, simultaneously, an effort to conceal the wounds beneath the grace of beauty, which lend a layered sensibility and complexity to her artworks.

Exhibition view, *The Dark Edge of Green*,
Emami Art, Kolkata, 2022



Exhibition view, *The Dark Edge of Green*,
Emami Art, Kolkata, 2022

It is important to note that Arunima Choudhury uses natural colours for her artworks. She has been working with botanic colours on handmade papers for a long time. She makes these colours herself from flowers, vegetables and seeds, making the process sustainable in keeping with the theme of nature and femininity. These organic colours provide her work with a rare freshness and an organic feel. Many of her works also reflect her intimate association with the rich literary culture of Bengal.■



Woman in Green
Vegetable colour on
handmade paper
30 x 22 inches
2020



Exhibition view, *The Dark Edge of Green*,
Emami Art, Kolkata, 2022

Overleaf:
Two Sisters
Vegetable colour on
canson paper
29.33 x 43.11 inches
2022



arunima

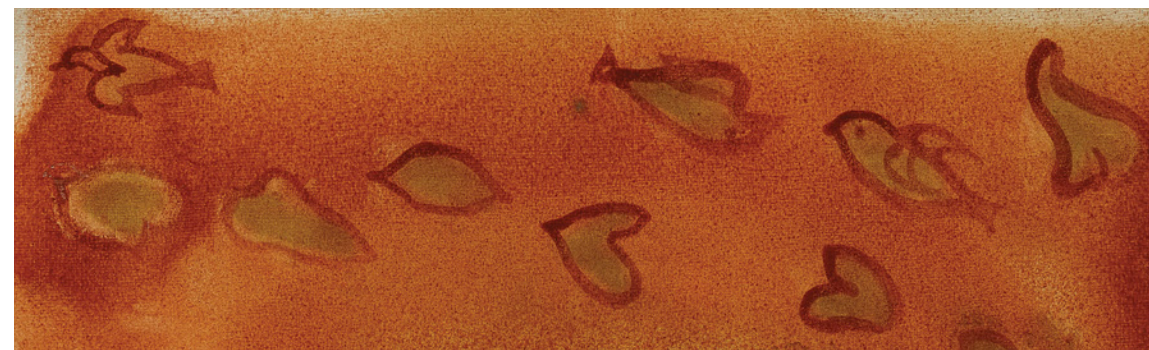
2022



A Bouquet of Pink Flowers
Vegetable colour and gouache on handmade paper
18 x 15.3 inches
2020



Dhanalakshmi
(Goddess of Fortune and Wealth)
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
43 x 29.5 inches
2023



Krishnakali
Detail

Krishnakali
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
29.72 x 22.04 inches
2021



Didi
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
34 x 27 inches
2023



Blessings
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
43 x 29.5 inches
2022

My Mother's Properties
Vegetable colour and
gouache on handmade paper
43 x 29.5 inches
2023



My Mother's Properties
Detail



‘Arunima-di’s women protagonists – bathed in natural colours like turmeric yellow, mustard, moss green and forest green, and indigo – are agile shape-shifters. Renunciates, lovers or mothers, these part-human, part-tree, part-flower beings dream of abundance and light. They could be seen as inhabitants of ‘tree time’, unhurried, rooted, majestic and munificent. They are of the ages and, at the same time, ageless.’

Nancy Adajania
Art Critic & Curator
(*The Dark Edge of Green* catalogue,
Emami Art 2022)

Nest
Vegetable colour on
handmade paper
30 x 22 inches
2020





Landscape III
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
43 x 30 inches
2022



Untitled
Vegetable colour on acid free handmade paper
8.50 x 6.60 inches
2018



Landscape II
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
43 x 29 inches
2021



Life on Earth
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
29.5 x 43 inches
2021



Late Autumn Afternoon
Vegetable colour and ink on handmade paper
5.3 x 13.3 inches
2015

The Spring
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
5 x 13.3 inches
2021





What the great-grandmother said
 Eco print, applique and stitches on cotton
 41 x 80 inches
 2022



Landscape in Blue series
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
8.6 x 6.6 inches each
2021



Night Sky
Vegetable colour on handmade paper
27.3 x 25.6 inches
2020



Untitled IV
Ceramic
10.4 inches diameter
2020

‘Whenever I handle a new medium, I love to explore what is what. Each experiment throws up new surprises. That includes scratching, spreading colours as watercolour before firing, using a dropper to draw thick lines and firing a little more than two minutes, as it is normally done. Remember Mani-da’s The Magic of Making? It’s that. I enjoy working spontaneously and the result is wonderful most often, though not always.’

Arunima Choudhury

Overleaf
Exhibition view, *The Dark Edge of Green*,
Emami Art, Kolkata, 2022





Where there is Love, there is a Bird
 Enamel painting on metal sheet
 36 inches (diameter)
 2015



Charaibeti
 Enamel painting on metal sheet
 38 inches (diameter)
 2015



Drawings
Enamel painting on metal sheet
8 x 7 inches each
2009



Balgopal
Enamel painting on metal sheet
8 x 8 inches approx
2012



Blue Girl with Red Hibiscus
Acrylic on canvas
35.8 x 24.02 inches
2011



The Thinker
Acrylic on canvas
35.8 x 36.2 inches
2012

‘In Arunima Choudhury’s unorthodox and restorative universe, her unwavering commitment to resurrection and regeneration, healing, and acceptance stands against a world that is violent, obtrusive, and presumptuous. It is also a world of free thoughts and resistance brought to the fore in a time of darkness, reminding one that refusal can be a powerful tool in a time when we need it the most.’

Oindrilla Maity
Curator & Art Critic
(*Beyond the Dark Edge: Exploring the Nuanced World of Arunima Choudhury*, Review in *TAKE on Art: Memory*, Issue 28, December 2022)



Roaming in the Garden
Eco print on cotton
24 x 24 inches
2022

Overleaf:
Diba ar Nisha
Vegetable colour on
handmade paper
29.5 x 42.9 inches
2022





Born in 1950 in Siliguri, West Bengal, **Arunima Choudhury** has a Diploma in Fine Arts from the Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship, Kolkata, 1974 and has studied Graphic Design and Mass Communication at Chitrabani, Kolkata in 1978. She has worked as a teacher of Music, Art and Craft at Patha Bhavan, Kolkata.

Choudhury's solo shows include 'The Dark Edge of Green' curated by Nancy Adajania at Emami Art, Kolkata in 2022; 'Khela' by Seagull Arts & Media Resource Centre, Kolkata in 2007; and 'Nature as I See' at Emami Art, Kolkata.

She has participated in several important group shows such as 'Kolkata: Run in the Alley' curated by Praneet Soi and Manuel Klappe at Marres, Netherlands, 2022; 'Feminine Facets', small-format works by six eminent artists from Bengal, Emami Art, Kolkata 2021; 'Constellations', Emami Art, Kolkata, 2021; An exhibition of works on handmade paper with natural dye and ceramics at Weaver's Studio Centre for Arts, Kolkata, 2018; Manier Art Gallery, London presented by Seagull Arts & Media Resource Centre in 2008; Birla Academy, Kolkata and Hart Gallery, Beijing, China, 2004; Artage, Kolkata, 1999; Chitrakoot Art Gallery, Kolkata, 1989; and Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, 1985. Her works have also been displayed at multiple galleries and art fairs internationally including India Art Fair, New Delhi, 2020 and 2022;

Jointly with husband Gautam Choudhury, Arunima Choudhury founded 'Bihan', a centre for visual and performing arts for young boys and girls in 1974 and 'Bihan Pathsala', a play-school for pre-primary children in Naihati, West Bengal, India in 1979.

Arunima Choudhury 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.

EMAMI ART

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