



at
CHITRAKALA PARISHATH
Bangalore
1 - 7 February, 2007



PRESENTS

- ANIL KUMAR • BENITHA PERCIYAL • BHAGAT SINGH
- LOCHAN UPADHYAY • LOKESH KHODKE • MAHESH BALIGA
- MAHESH G • PIYALI GHOSH • REJI ARACKAL
- SHEFALEE JAIN • SIJI R KRISHNAN • SUJITH K S
- SUJITH S N • SWAPNA BISWAS

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Return of the Surreal: Works of Art during the Age of Entertainment Politics

Politics has always played a crucial role in the development of art. During the modern period art's engagement with politics had become all the more pronounced. Artists translated the socio-political happenings in and through certain visual idioms that could function both as analytical tools and resistant methodologies. Detached from the quotidian struggles, these art forms could address and intervene (in) the ideological constructs of the society from an elevated platform of informed aesthetics and history. Politics then had been understood as a palpable reality, where distinct units of its formation could have been identified and critiqued. Socio-cultural metaphors brought forth by the artists could go directly into the minds of people as the real politics played a visible role in the lives of the people. Discernable ideologies and hegemonies that structured the society in a way imparted a sense of reality to the people.

The collapsing of reality (into the virtual and the hyper) demarcates the modern times from our contemporary times. Reality, in our times, is understood as a phenomenon that is mediated through and by multiple filters and parameters. Destabilization of the immediate and palpable results in the constant displacement of meaning, forcing the experiential into a chain of apprehensions. Pervasive technologies, while facilitating the man with a sense of abundant freedom, fasten him into the stables of insecurity and anxiety. Politics, hierarchies, hegemonies, ideologies that once played a direct role in the lives of people seem disintegrated in the locations of abundant freedom, while they tighten up the claws through various ways of cultural formations. Of late politics has been replaced by

entertainment. Or in other words, politics has become a form of entertainment, like a combat is acted out in a real time video game player.

What would happen to artists when politics transforms itself into an omnipresent and pervasive form of entertainment? How do, then, artists engage themselves with the deeper issues of life? When politics deconstructs itself into an apparent anti-hegemonic and culturally democratic notion, how do the artists resist and critique its surreptitious manifestations of subjugation? What could be an apt language that could express the trepidations of the artists? It is said that when a society starts believing that it has solved its perennial problems, a kitschy and hyper-real art language can make its presence felt in a predominant way. Hyper-real art, which came to us in the guise of mediatic realism, is now seen and interpreted as something that misunderstood the surreptitious political maneuverings for a 'problems over' condition. Though generally this is the case, those hyper real artists who tried to infuse political critique in their works of art, did it with the verve of the surrealists.

Surrealism is an antidote to the venom of hyper realism. Though, art historically speaking, the death of Surrealism was announced in the year of 1941, with the advent of high modernism (or the advent of international abstractionism), this art lingua has always been one of the critical fronts that stood firmly against any kind of ideological hegemonies. Notwithstanding the fact that the Surrealists themselves had hierarchical problems during the first half of the last century, the surrealist language, with its emphasis on the subconscious feelings, could expose the ills of the society. The psycho-



Tangerine Art Space

No 3, B. P. Wadia Road, Flat No, 103, Kumar Paradise,
Basavangudi, Bangalore 560004
Email : leena@tangerineartspace.com ; Tel : 98862-18518

somatic meanderings of the artists became the overt metaphors of the social psychosis. In this sense surrealist language at once appears as an innocent and strategic visual language.

As far as the Indian contemporary art scene is concerned, the caravan of mediatic realism has now gone to the horizons. Through the curtain of dust we can see a few foot soldiers still trying to hold the fort of mediatic realism. They are not going to last for Surrealism has done everything for seizing the fort. When there are no direct enemies, or when the enemies appear before you as friends, the only way to cajole them is to resort to the tactics of surrealism because it is the utterance of the subconscious. Though it looks funny, eerie and hopeless, in the final count they bespeak of truth. The tortured and perturbed subconscious speaks only truth. Young artists, despite their assured future success, are perturbed souls. They want to speak out the truth. They do it through their strategic surrealist language.

This explains why most of the talented young artists in India resort to the surrealist language. They do not belong to the Automatists Group or the Veristic Group. They are surreal expressionists. The fourteen artists presented in this group show also present their conscience and tackle the ungraspable political problems through the surrealist language. They neither belong to the same locale nor do they come from the same academy. Despite their varied paths of training, eventually they have to come to a language, which is surrealist, but does not confirm with the academic notions of surrealism.

Most of the works done by Anil Kumar, address the issue of human progress in scientific and technological terms. A huge pipe line coming out of an industrial landscape suddenly transforms itself into a bugle. Meanwhile, in the foreground, one could see an excavation sight, where the various layers of earth stand

in for an organic progression of life. The incongruous images find their own kind of harmony in a surrealistic atmosphere. Benitha Perciyal places her self portrait against picturesque backdrops. She presents the protagonist in unfinished forms, which demand fulfilling from the onlooker. Though not overtly political in her concerns, Benitha reclaims the space of the woman through her works.

The faceless protagonists of Bhagat occupy the pictorial format completely. In this act of occupation, his body (as represented) becomes a medium and backdrop for other beings to assert their existence. The physiological and psychological extensions happening in Bhagat's works defy reality and take the onlooker to an ethereal plane of thoughts. Lokesh Khodke represents simple and quotidian objects in his works. A table top comes to be seen as the surface of the earth itself. Patterned lines grow into a mesh that entraps the flowers fallen from the vase. The absence of human presence makes it rather eerie. Lochan Upadhyay's dark doors open to completely lit rooms or exteriors that are blinded by light. The precarious feeling that one gets while looking at the predominant black suddenly gets erased by the seeping in of light. The sudden appearance of objects in the pictorial format catches the viewer unaware.

G.Mahesh portrays the lives of ordinary people in the street. But the view is always from an elevated position. However, this advantage view does not suggest high philosophical statements of the artist. He looks at life rather playfully, tinged with a sense of eroticism. He looks at the world as if through the eyes of a boy. Mahesh Baliga, on the contrary seems to be more philosophical in his renderings. Two people from nowhere suddenly start painting a fence in a green void. This conjuration of ghostly figures comes again and again in his works. A man looks at a tree from three different views

and appears in acrobatic movements simultaneously. His is an inverted world, or an inverted world view.

The creative world of Piyali Ghosh is inhabited by mutant creatures. Human beings turn into beasts and they confront each other against the backdrop of a colorful deluge. Piyali moves away from the quotidian world and creates an imaginary world where the conjured up creatures could express her anxieties of existence. In the meanwhile, Reji Arakkal has a playful way of treating his pictorial surface. Finished to an utter perfection, Reji Arakkal's characters look like ballooned beings about burst. They simultaneously sport the sturdiness of metallic figures and the softness of the cushioned up bodies. Though the images are culled up from the day to day life, through the artistic mediation they are transported to a hallucinatory world where the human avarice, rebellion and other feelings are accentuated with mockery and pun.

Shefalee Jain's pictorial expressions herald freedom and bondage at the same time. In some of her works, objects are placed in mesh like encasements that exude a sense of claustrophobia. While in many other works, she creates a pastoral world limited by urban expansionism, where ferocious and docile animals play hide and seek. The suggestive appearances of animals in her works create a sinister world, which lies beyond the comprehension of the conscious mind. Simplicity that reminds the works of the Chinese and Japanese scroll painters resonates in the works of Siji. She translates the complexity of the urban existence into a pastoral language. A landscape without landmarks permeates the imagination of the artist.

Inversion and juxtaposition are two techniques that the Surrealists had abundantly used in the last century. Using these techniques, they

facilitated the generation of unpremeditated meanings out of unmatched images or objects. Swapna Biswas too, in her works uses the strategies of inversion and juxtaposition in a personalized sense in order to establish her feminine existence in the current cultural discourse. She portrays herself along with the image of a tiger, which is seen inverted quite often. The tiger and the protagonist interchange their sensibilities and traits in an attempt to define the 'other'. Her recourse to surrealism is aesthetically and philosophically informed.

Though they have similar names, the works of Sujith SN and Sujith KS differ considerably. Preoccupied with the definitive roles that the urban and rural architectures play in human lives, Sujith SN paints urban-scapes. Arranged in multiple perspectives, objects and architectural edifices create a dynamics of their own in these works. The throb of Eros is visible in Sujith SN's works as they sometimes transform into abstract erotic organs. Meanwhile, Sujith KS has a different path to pursue. He creates a dreamland where the local flora and fauna disguise themselves as fairy tale creatures. These kitschy and surreal creatures are seen involved in act of eating, an alternative to copulation. The charged erotic feeling is further accentuated by the human figures, who are seen adoring (themselves and the phallic lethal weapons). The critique on politics is skillfully and playfully done in the works of Sujith KS. When politics becomes entertainment, it is quite natural too see entertainment turning in to politics. But in the contemporary works of art, as seen in this show, often it happens in a surreal plane and that is the only outlet for the time being our artists are left with to give vent to their socio-political thinking.

JohnnyML

January 2007



Magic hat of colonial king,
Pastel, lead pencil on paper
54" x 30"

ANILKUMAR

Born in Kerala. BFA (Painting) at College of Fine Arts, Trivandrum ,Kerala 2005,Now studying in MFA Painting in faculty of fine arts Baroda. Exhibition and camp: Group exhibiton at Kalidoscope gallery in Baroda - 2006, 10th Harmony show in Mumbai-2005, 46 th National Exhibition Central Lalitkala Academy in Kerala-2004, State Exhibition Kerala Lalitha Kala Academy 2003, Natonal Art Meet - Open Eyed Dreams in Kerala 2006, Young Artist Show & Camp Govt of India in Jharkhand-2004.





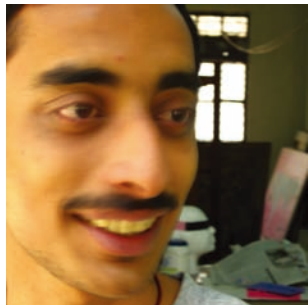
'Distant within'
Mixed media
19.5" x 29.5"

BENITHA PERCIYAL K

Born in 1978, did her BFA and MFA in Painting & Printmaking-2002, from Government College of Arts & Crafts, Chennai. Has participated in various exhibitions at Tamilnadu ovia nunkalai kuzhu, Chennai, 1996-2003 Genesis-II Print show 1997 AIFACS Jubilee Exhibition-2000National Exhibition of Art-2001 'Vedu' group show at Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai-2002 Three man show in Palazzo Art Gallery-2002 'Museum' solo exhibition at Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai April 2003 Solo display at Max Muller Bhavan, Chennai-sep 2003 ABC show at Apparao Gallery 2003 'Perturb me not' solo exhibition at Alliance Francaise, Madras, April 04. Group show at Apparao Gallery 2004 The Camlin, sixth southern regional art exhibition, Bangalore 2004 Indian art exhibition in Accra, Ghana 2005Expression: The art within 2005, Coimbatore Woman @rt 2005 Forum Art Gallery, Chennai 2005 Self; An identity, group exhibitions, Habitat Centre, New Delhi 2005, Bombay & Maldives 2006 Pachmadi camp 1 and 2 group show at Lanxessads Gallery, Baroda. 'Chennai exite' New works from South India at Noble Sage Art Gallery London April-July 2006 'Trilogy 2006' a group show at Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai. Sathyagraha centenary exhibition Sep New Delhi, Oct Durban S.Africa 2006 "Hybrid trend"

contemporary art show Seoul, South Korea-'06 Promising artist – exhibition by Art India & Visual Gallery Nov 06, Delhi
Awards won : State award 2000 by Lalit Kala Akademi Best student from college of arts & crafts 2002 Arnawaz Vasudev charities scholarship 2002-2003. Scholarship to young artist, Dept of Culture, Govt of India 2003-2005 Research grant 2003-2004 from Lalit Kala Akademi The Camlin 6th southern region art award 2004 Natl winner-Camel Euro art tour '05 to visit galleries of London and Paris.
Camps participated:Young artist camp 96-97 state Lalit Kala Akademi Chennai. International snow camp 1999 at Japan.Seminar cum workshop 2001 Delhi. Utilitarian camp - Lalit Kala & Krishnamurthy foundation, B'lore-'02. Utilitarian sculpture camp in Thrissur Museum-2003 Recreation workshop cum exhibition at Lakshana Art Gallery, Dec'03 Peers '04 residency camp cum exhibition at Khoj studios, Delhi. Artist camp at Lalit Kala Akademi Gangtok & Sikkim Govt '05 Non-toxic and safe-etching process at Lalit Kala Akademi '05. Artist camp at Pachmadhi, Madhya Pradesh 2005. National Womens camp at Kerala 2005 National camp at Dhakshinchitra 2006. Presently lives and works in Chennai.





I didn't drunk water from that well
Dry pastals and water colour
32" x 32"

Bhagath Singh.E.K.

Born in Kasaragod, Kerala in 1982. Has done his B FA in Sculpture at College of Fine Arts, Tiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Is now pursuing his MFA (Sculpture) at S N school, Hyderabad Central University. **Camps & exhibition:** Has attended the artist's camp at Pachmadi against water exploitation by coals in 2003. Degree show - 2005, CFA, Tiruvananthapuram.





Transaction
Charcoal drawing
30"x 22"

Lochan Upadhyay

Born in 1983 in Partapur. Has done his BFA, Faculty of Fine Arts, M S University Baroda. Is currently pursuing his MFA, Faculty of Fine Arts M S University Baroda. Workshops : 2006 Site - specific Sandarbh project. 2005 Site - specific International workshop [Sandarbh project] 2004 Site - specific camp at Samod, Raj, organized by JKSMS 2004 Site - specific workshop the Vagad project Raj. 2003 Site - specific workshop the Vagad project Raj. 2002 A Metamorphosis from rural to urban - the Vagad project raj. Awards : 2001-02 Rajasthan Lalit Kala award 2002-03 Rajasthan Lalit Kala award 2003-04 Rajasthan Lalit Kala award

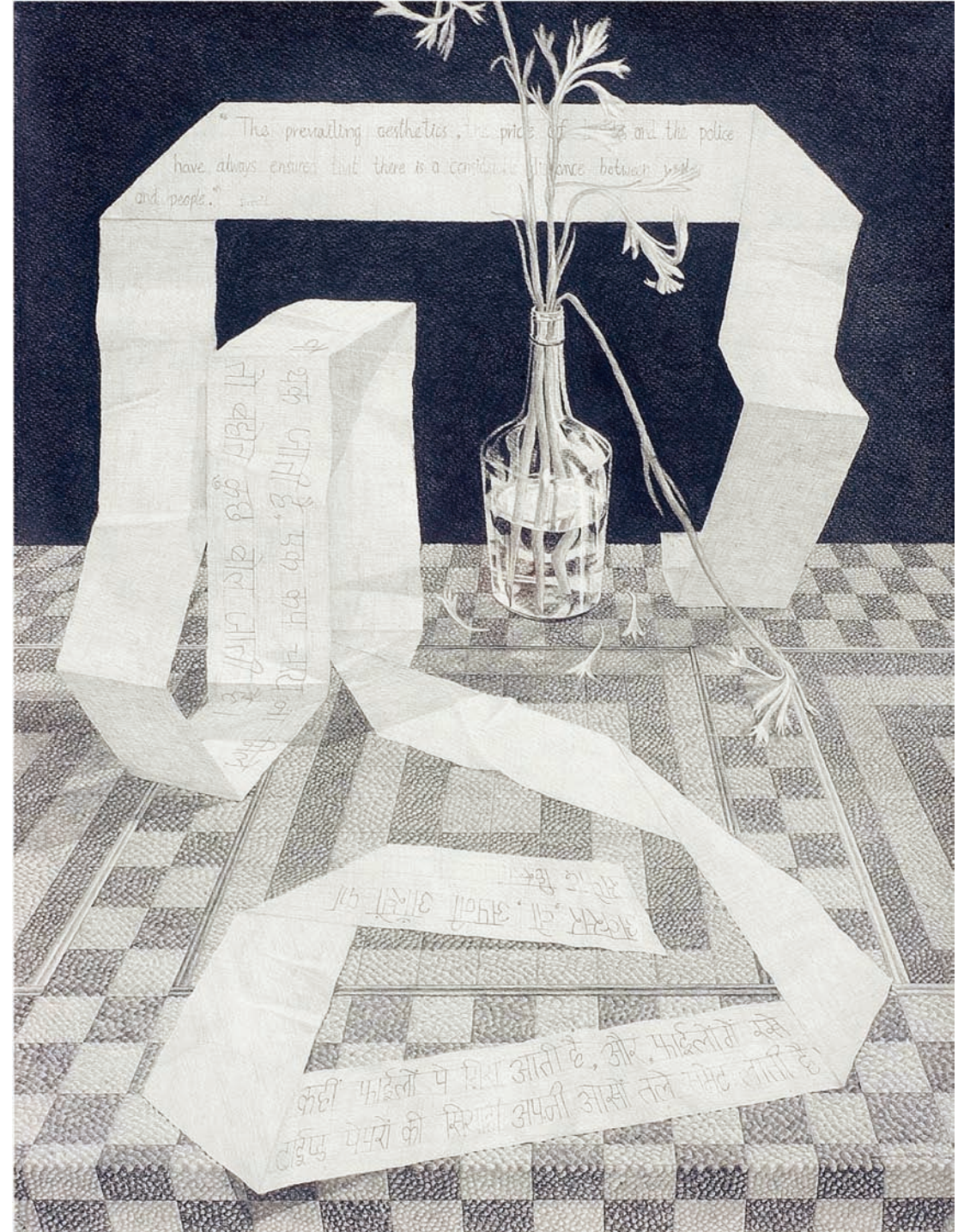




Portrait of my mother and critique of the self as an artist
Graphite on paper
30" x 24"

LOKESH KHODKE

B.F.A. from Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, (Gujarat) –Yr. 2002, M.F.A. from Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University Baroda (Gujarat) – Yr 2004, gold medal for the yr. 2004 **Scholarships** : Nasreen Mohammadi Scholarship for the yr. 2001-2002, Faculty Of Fine Arts Baroda, Junior Research Fellowship, UGC- yr. 2005 Exhibitions : **Solo show** : Dvelalika kala vithika Indore –1995 **Group shows**: "Two by Two", Sarjan art gallery, Baroda, Dec 2006, " Setu", Artist camp & show, Guwahati, Assam, Nov 2006 "Parivritti", Nagarjuna foundation, Hyderabad, sept 2006 "New Voices", The Guild art gallery, New York, July 2006 " Con-Figure", Hues art gallery, Chennai, June 10-2006 Pachmadhi Show ABS Lanxes Art Gellary, Baroda, Feb-2006 " Thresholds & Distances" The Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai, Nov. 2005 " Workshop with Painters/ sculpters" , Panchmadhi (mp), Nov.2005 "Workshop with Painters/ sculpters" , Panchmadhi (mp), March 2005 "Are We Like This Only" Vadhera art gallery, New Delhi, Feb 2005 " Preview Show" , Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda, Sept 2005 "The Bridge Show" Lalit kala Academi (Ravindra Bhavan) New Delhi –Feb, 2004 "13 Artists Show", Sarjan Art Gellery, Baroda, 2004 Avantika Bawa drawing exhibition at various countries, 2002 **Workshops** : Camlin landscape workshop- Rangapur, show at Art gallery, Faculty Of Fine Arts, M.S.U Baroda – 1999, Jaidev Thakur's workshop of water color and show at Mumbai – yr.1999





Wallet
Mixed media on canvas
70"x28"



Mahesh Baliga

Born in 1982, has studied B.F.A (painting) from CAVA, Mysore, been a gold medalist. Is at present pursuing his Post Diploma in Painting at MSU Baroda. Camps- A K Raja Memorial Camp Kozhikode 2004 2005 Delhi College Annual Seminar 2005 2006 Sandharbh at Baswada Rajasthan 2006 2007 Scholarships- Arnawaz Scholarship 2005 2006 Group show-Trance Local 2006 at Faculty of Fine Arts Baroda.



Untitled
Oil on canvas
55 x 38

G Mahesh

Born in 1980, has done his Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) 2003, CAVA, Mysore and Master of Fine Arts (Painting) 2006, CAVA, Mysore Recognition : Won the Sri. K.K. Hebbar Arts Foundation Gold Medal 2004 Camps : All Indian Youth Festival, Young Artists Camp, Thiruvananthapuram, 2003. 16th A.C.K. Raja Memorial Artist Camp, Calicut, 2005. Workshops attended : Babu Eshwar Prasad, Department of Painting, CAVA, 2001 ; Shanthamani, conducted workshop in Department of Painting, CAVA, 2003 Tallur conducted workshop in Department of Painting, CAVA, 2003 Exhibitions : Group show in CAVA, Mysore, 2003, Group show in C.K.P., Bangalore, 2003, Group show in CAVA, Mysore, 2006 Experience : 1 year freelance work at Baroda, worked as Artist-in-Residence at Bangalore Art Center, Chandapura, Bangalore. Is presently working as Artist-in-Residence at N. Pushpamala's, Rajarajeswari Nagar, Bangalore





Morning Glory
Tempera on canvas
60" x 72"

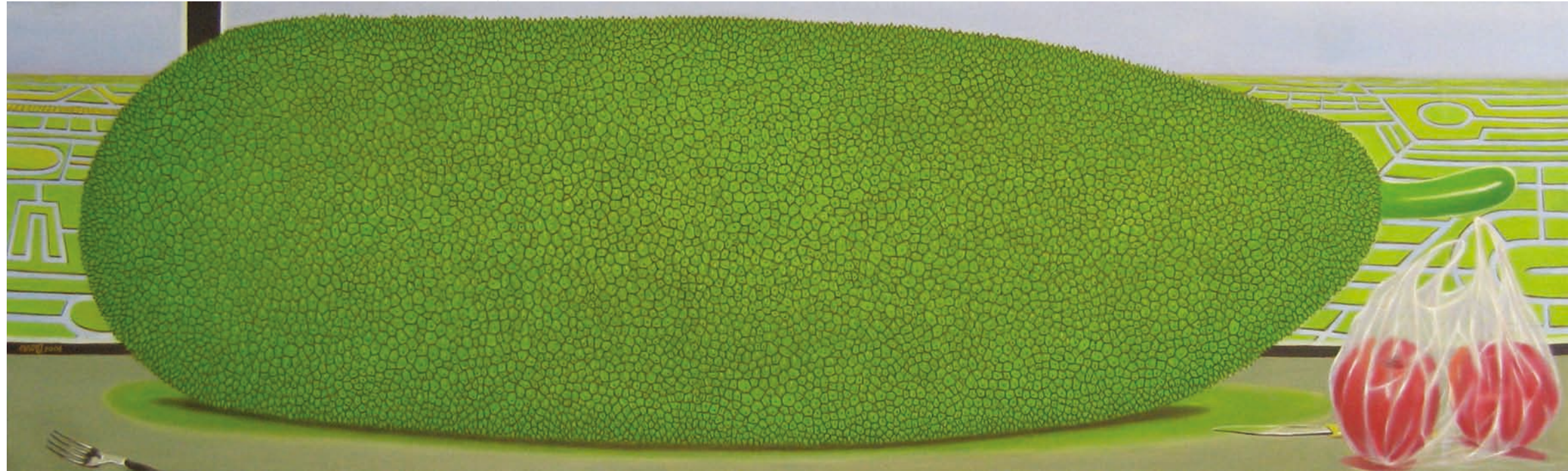
Piyali Ghosh

Born in Kolkata in 1981, has done her BVA in Painting from Indian College of Art & Draftsmanship, Kolkata, 2004, MVA in Painting from Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S.University, Baroda, 2006. Group show: Mahua, The Art Gallery, Bangalore, 2006 Camp: Art camp organized by Gallery Open Eyed Dreams, Kerala, 2006 Lives and works in Baroda





Still life with covered apple
Oil on canvas
68" x 20"



Reji Arackal

Born -1979 has graduated in painting from Govt. College of Fine Arts, Thrissur, Kerala, and currently pursuing a masters degree in painting at Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal. Exhibitions: 2004, "Devotional Signs", Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi Art Gallery, Thrissur 2005, "Clouds", Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi Art Gallery, Calicut Group Exhibitions: 2003, Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi Annual Exhibition 2005, International Print Exhibition of Art & Photography, Durbar Hall, Kochi 2006, Central Lalit Kala Akademi, National Exhibition, Modern Art Gallery Mumbai 2006, "Pratiti", Birla Art Gallery, Kolkatta 2006, Open Eyed Dreams Exhibition, Mumbai 2006, "Hybrid Trends", Seoul Art Centre, Korea 2006, Open Eyed Dreams Exhibition Series - VIII, Kochi Camps: 2005, Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi North Zone Painting Camp at Mahe, Kerala 2006, National Artist Meet, Conducted by Open Eyed Dreams at Wayanad, Kerala 2006, National Students Art Camp, Jamiamillia Islamia University, New Delhi. Scholarships: Visva - Bharati Merit Scholarship, 2005, 2006



When desire becomes memory
Oil on canvas
72" x 33.5"



SHEFALEE JAIN

Born in 1979, has done her B.F.A, Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S.U. Baroda, 2005. Is currently in final year M.F.A, Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S.U. Baroda Scholarships: Ila Desai scholarship, B.F.A, Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S.U. Baroda Merit scholarships for the years 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04 Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S.U. Baroda Exhibitions: 'Con-Figure', A Group show, Hues Art Gallery, Chennai, June 2006. 'Sprouts' A Group show, Kaleidoscope Art Gallery, Baroda, Feb 2006 'Parivritti' A Group show, Kalahita Arts Foundation, Hyderabad, September 2006



Stephanie 1
water colour
7.5” x 11”

Siji .R .Krishnan

Born in 1983, has done her B.F.A, Raja Ravivarma College of Fine Arts, Mavelikara,2005, is now pursuing her MFA, is in the II Year at Central University, Hyderabad Awards: Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi special mention Award 2004, Award of Student Assistantship 2006 [H.C.U] Exhibition : Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi State Exhibition, 2004, “Ponds Says to Trees” - a group exhibition 2005, Raja Ravivarma College, Solo show - “Depression from Solitude 2003 [R.R.C.F.A], Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi State Exhibition 2006 Camps participated in : Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi Camp – 2003, Workshop in H.C.U 2005, Workshop with German Contemporary , Julia(2006)





Mamma's territory
acrylic on canvas
48" x 54"

Sujith.K.S

Born in 1982, is currently pursuing his MFA, Sculpture at College of Fine Arts, Trivandrum Awards : Kerala State Lalithakala Academy Award For drawing 2004 Scholarship: Kerala State Lalithakala Academy Scholarship For PG Students Camp: Participated in Kerala State Lalithakala Academy Regional camp National Art meet at wayanadu conducted by VNM Art Gallery Exhibition: Kerala Lalithakala Academy State Exhibition-2004,05,06 (Group Show) Participated Group Show of Sculpture in thrissur Participated in Under Current; Exhibition Paintings: Conducted a Solo Exhibition of Paintings in Ernakulam





SUJITH S.N.

Born in Kerala Camps:Kerala Lalithakala Akademy District camp 2004 Palakkad. A.C.K.Raja Camp 2005, Kozhikode National Art meet 2006, Wayanad Awards: Kerala Lalitha Kala Akademy special mention award 2004. Kerala Lalitha Kala Akademy State Award 2005. A.C.K. Raja Award 2005 Scholarships: Merit Scholarship Hyderabad Central University. At present studying MFA SN School of Fine Arts, Hyderabad Central University, Hyderabad





Untitled
Oil on canvas
60 x 60

SWAPNA BISWAS

Born in 1982, did her BFA in painting from Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharathi, ShantiNiketan '06 Won the Visva Bharathi Merit Scholarship 2002, 2004,2005. Awards : First Prize in all India Colour Contest - Camlin Ltd. 1994-95 First Prize Academy of Creative Art - 1997, Third in the Divisional Sports Control Board, Kolkata - '97 Exhibitions: Group Show - Air Gallery, London -2006, Group show at Gandhara Art Gallery, Kolkata-2006, Annual Exhibition Nandan,Kala Bhavana 2002-06, Group Show Nandan Kala Bhavana-2005 Participation:Workshop of Lacquer Toys,Shora Paintings, Kala Bhavana 2001-05, 50th Anniversary - Open Air Art Competition. Experiments: Acted in a feature film titled "Prithvi" directed by Sisir Sahana.

