

SHUVAPRASANNA

recent works

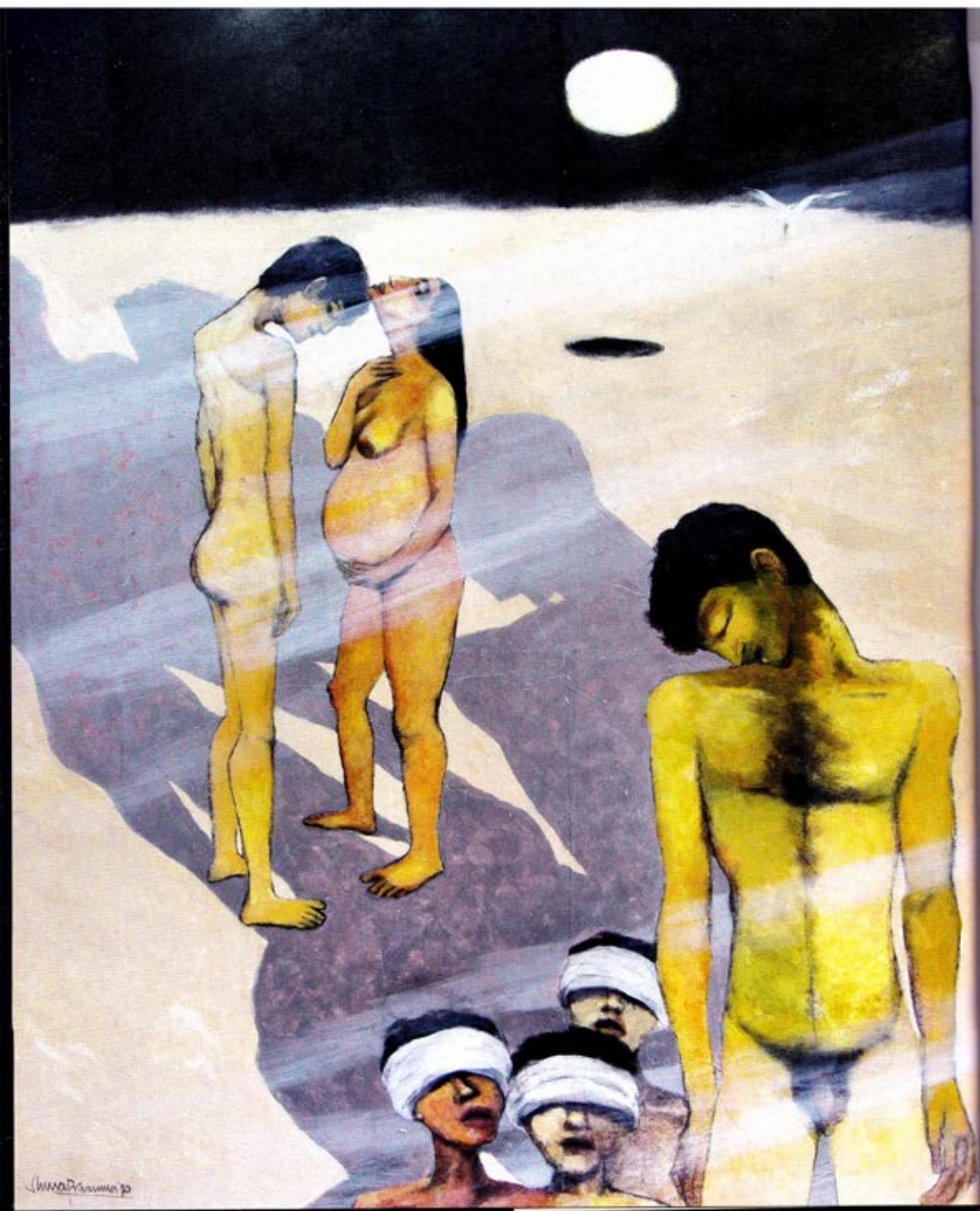


SHUVAPRASANNA

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18 March – 14 April, 2011

CIMA
CENTRE OF INTERNATIONAL MODERN ART



SHUVAPRASANNA : BRIDGING ART & REALITY

Sometime in the 60s and 70s, modernism shifted its emphasis from character to personality as the driving force of an artist's creative practice. This was a major source of tension for the artists of that generation. An artist's character and personality are generally believed to be complementary in defining his creative identity. But in modernism's aesthetic expressive context these two interact somewhat dialectically. For, character tends to conform to prefigured values absorbed from without and personality blooms within, separating the self from the other. Character shapes itself within the mould of skill, craft and content as well as the societal values that play a major role in the training of an artist and making his art respond to an established norm. The artist's personality seeks unique statement of the self through inventive forms, style and expression marked by total independence from received values or by values responsible for making him an artist apart. During the post Independence decades of an emerging social and political process, the artist could not avoid the tension due to this conflict between his character and personality. There was a challenge for him to remain committed to the social realities of the day as well as to the modernist values insisting on the autonomous effects of art.

Shuvaprasanna who emerged on our art scene at the end of the seventies is one of the most powerful painters of his generation who addressed this challenge by firmly anchoring his identity as a many-sided personality in his character. In his art the two opposites—relevance to social reality and his passionate engagement with formal expressiveness, more precisely, representation and abstraction—uniquely coincide. From quite early on in his life, even as a child, Shuvaprasanna's practice as a painter had embedded in it two major concerns—vivid evocation of the life and reality of his immediate perception and a wonderful freshness of creativity and craft that independently engage the viewer. Born in a crowded part of Calcutta, he grew up with an inescapable awareness of dense human presence, of dingy urban spaces teeming with poverty. His father was a doctor and Shuvaprasanna loved to watch and portray faces of sickly people that he saw in his father's chamber, and the shapes and forms of the wretched he observed on the pavements of Calcutta. A large part of his oeuvre is the portrait of life in urban environs and in fact not only his art but his soul is soaked in social realities. At the same time he takes passionate care for the facture of his imagery with all the wealth of technical and formal means under his command. Each of his canvases sports a meticulous handling of its plastic components. Deft and judicious treatment

of form, space, colour and bristly lineal and sensitive textural details lend to his canvases an evident finesse of execution which not only adds to the expressiveness of the image but also lifts the paintings to a realm of pure aesthetic abstraction.

Whether he evokes a human face or an avian form or a feline figure or a blow-up of a winged insect or simply a long-necked earthen or ceramic pot, what strikes the viewer first is not the compulsive realism of the frame's semantic content but the autonomy of the picture's pure aesthetic effects. In some the metallic sheen of colour blue, bronze and silvery white or lovely glowing orange of a goldfish, dusky velvety gray of a cat—exude a feel close to that of a mystic perception of beauty as a joy for ever. Still, it is not for mere aesthetic abstraction that Shuvaprasanna includes these small frames of beasts and birds in a show dominated by two sets of charcoals and acrylics as the main focus of his art originating in the artist's perception of a broad spectrum of life stretching between social and existential limits. A cuddly cat, a sombre owl or a meek calf, a flower with a core of erotic suggestion or a ceramic artefact undoubtedly contain signs and symbols defining the existential segment of that spectrum marked by life's primal gifts of sensuous beauty, native vitality of body and mind and an innate creative drive.

At the opposite extreme are the large acrylics evoking in a wide range of middle tones the social and political realities of the day. Life-scapes in the city and in the countryside loom across the canvases with cast shades and shadows of unrelieved drabness or of nightmarish gloom. Canvases crisscrossed by long Chirico shadows in dull grays upon pale yellows etch a surrealist sprawl of dingy dwellings suggesting the squalid life of the poor urban underclass. An anaemic moon on the black sky exudes a dismal spell of desolation upon the contours of figures and forms below, dejected young people in their wretched nakedness standing stolid in a bleak space of life or a pair of huge hands up atop the slum tenements, waving in the void in an anguished cry for relief. One of the acrylics enacts the traumatic scene of political terrors currently stalking rural Bengal. Another treats the current shift in Bengal's political destiny with a punch of satire on the sly to a complex spell of mixed impact. In either instance Shuvaprasanna's art participates or intervenes more directly in the on-going socio-political process nearer home. Still his visual language is not merely tempered with necessary obliqueness but also charged with a splendid aura of uncluttered aesthetic articulation.

Located between these two sets are the series of portraits— each an imaginary face but likely to be seen in crowds and masses— and those of the two great 20th century personalities of India, Tagore and Gandhiji. These two groups of portraits represent Shuvaprasanna's life-long interest in exploring the diverse facets of human reality as well as his profound zest for studying and



Left Cat - 2 mixed media on paper 20.9cm x 14.8cm 2010
Right Cat - 3 mixed media on paper 20.9cm x 14.8cm 2010
Overleaf The Shadow mixed media on canvas 139.7cm x 114.3cm (approx.) 2010

drawing human faces, a passion he acquired quite early in life, when he portrayed not only faces seen in the processions down the streets near his home but also did instant on-the-spot sketches of great national leaders, including President Rajendra Prasad and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and of foreign dignitaries, such as, the US ambassador, John Galbraith and the Soviet President, Marshall Voroshilov, when they addressed public meetings in Calcutta. Over the years he has added to his well-honed skill as a portraitist, a philosophical quest, with both detachment and empathy, for the facial contours of man in his element. As a result, these charcoal-and-acrylics portray not only ordinary individuals, each a man out of the masses, but also a visage of common humanity, bare and unadorned. There is often a subtle distortion in their frontal features or profile outlines. It lends them an odd look that exudes an air of something funny or cranky or subhuman. Nevertheless each face is a transparent index of a simple honest indigent overworked individual crushed under the burdens of life. Each frame is executed with a penchant for drawing with stark bristly lines, dense hatching and charged passages of charcoal smudges of edgy expressiveness.

This quest for the face of common humanity is extended to the faces of exceptional men of our times. Shuvaprasanna selects two great Indians, Tagore and Gandhi, and traces in the contours of their faces the configuration of common human features beneath the aura of their greatness. Even in their cartoon portraits it is difficult to rob these two Indian greats of their natural glow of greatness unless the cartoonist aims at downright vilification or low satire. But both the Poet and the Mahatma in these portraits look like common men robbed of all glow of celebrity without looking an iota less than their familiar selves. Indians have exalted Gandhiji to a high pedestal of sainthood and Bengalis have completed the apotheosis of Tagore especially in this sesquicentennial year. In Shuvaprasanna's portraits done in lucid acrylic washes of soft yellow and pale orange both of them appear reassuringly human in moments and moods they lived like their fellow mortals. Nevertheless they carry a distinctive impression of personality which doesn't clash with the portraits' intended impact.

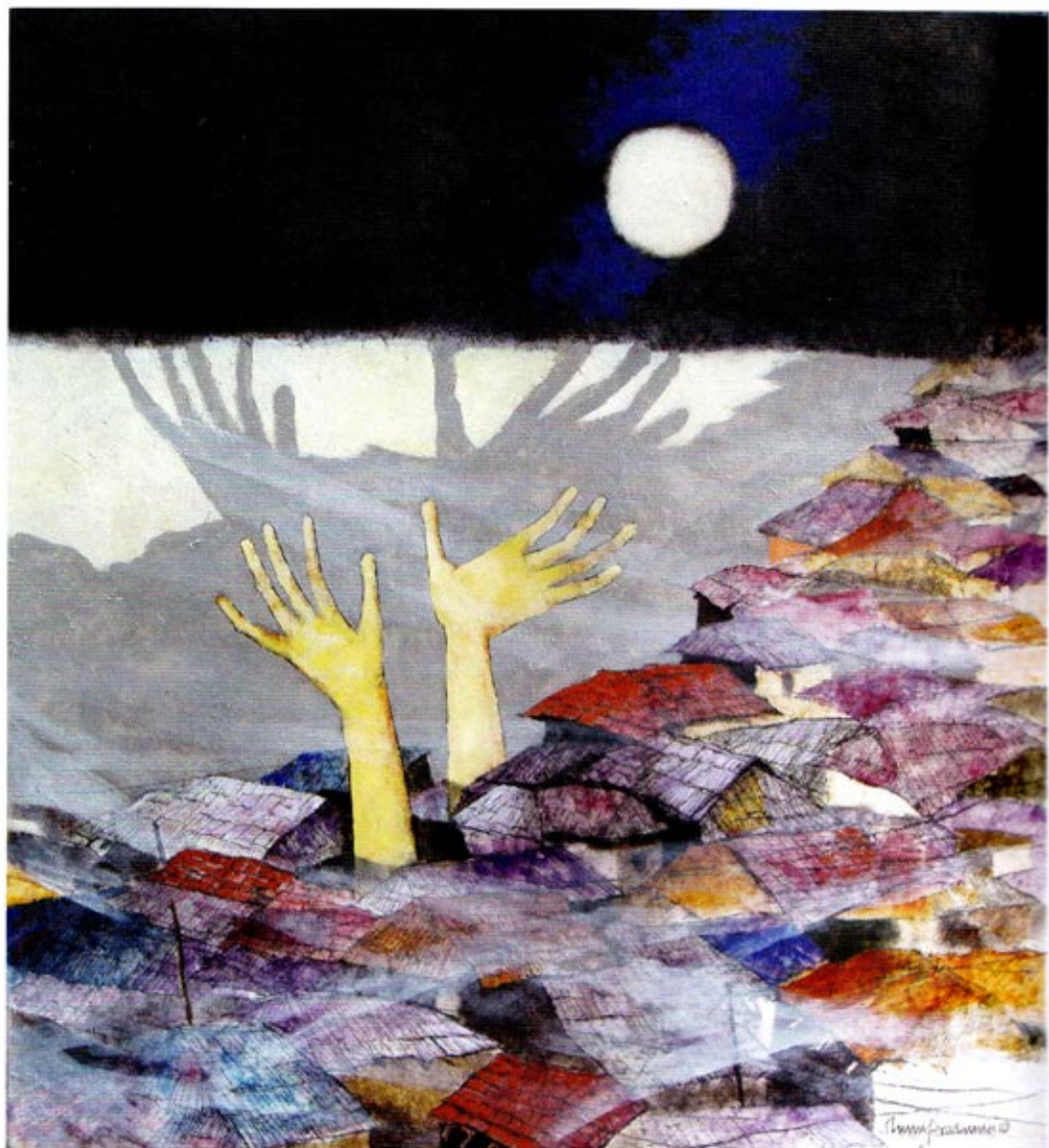
The artist's character in this suite of works is evident in their consistent commitment to the content of his art which relate to the realities of social and human relevance. But his personality continually brings itself to bear upon his handling of ideas, always fresh and explorative, and shaping out of both forms and facts.



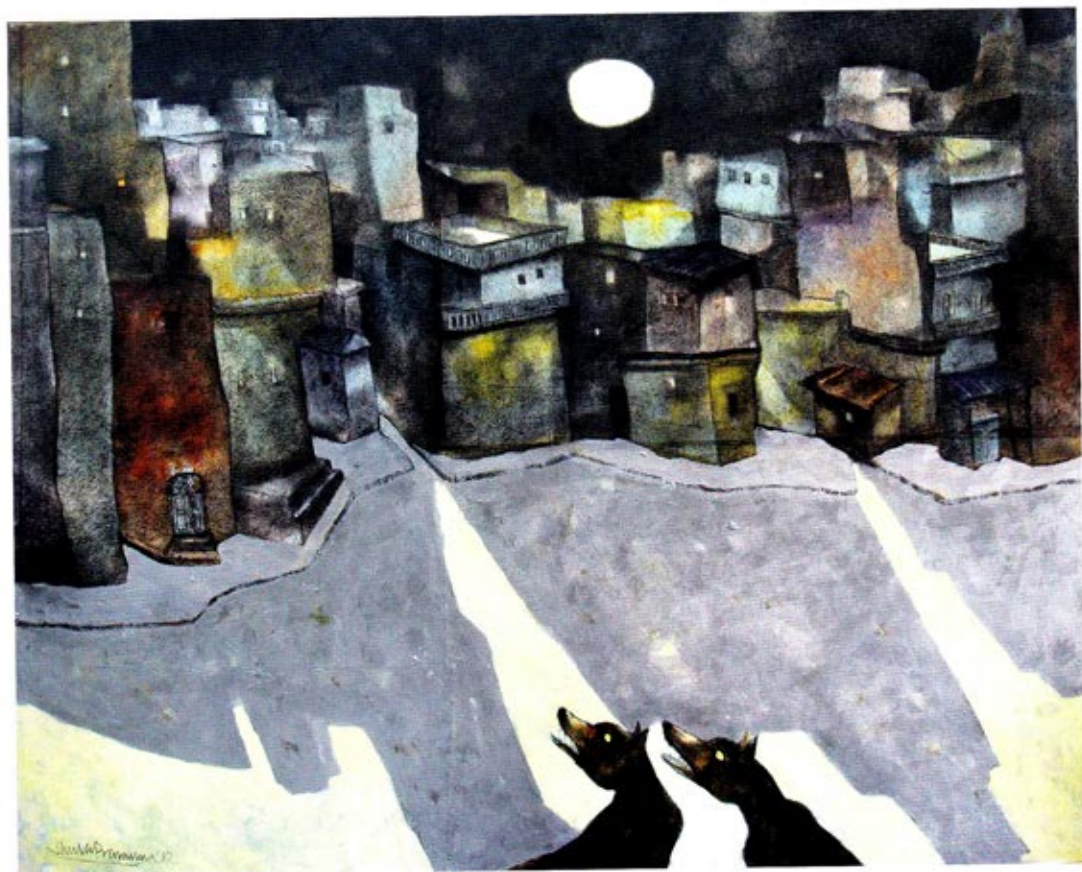
Manasij Majumder
Art Critic & Writer
February, 2011
Kolkata

PLATES

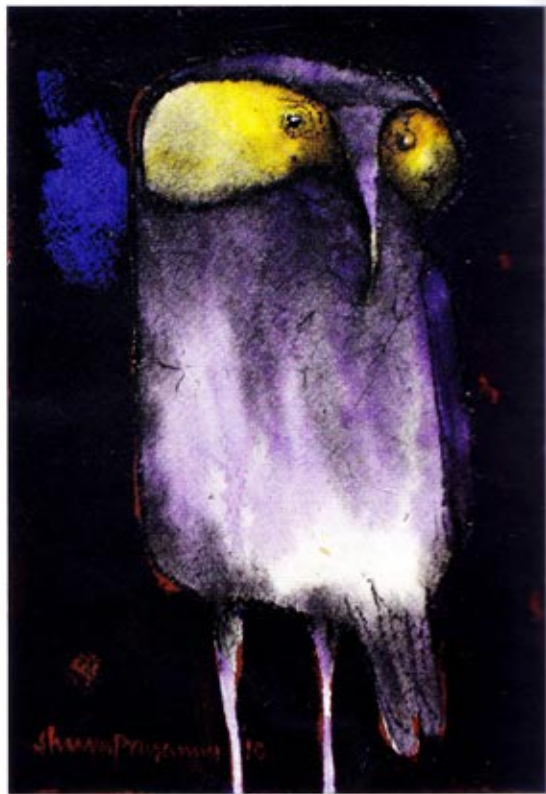




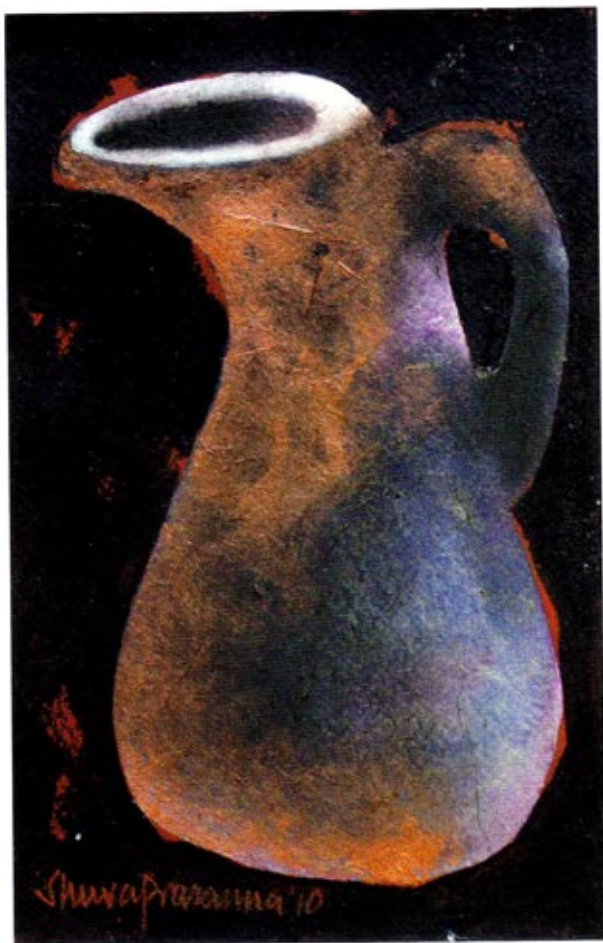
The Shadow mixed media on canvas 91.4cm x 91.4cm (approx.) 2010



The Shadow mixed media on canvas 101.6cm x 127cm (approx.) 2010



Left Owl - 3 mixed media on paper 20.9cm x 14.8cm 2010
Right Owl - 2 mixed media on paper 20.9cm x 14.8cm 2010



Vessel mixed media on paper 20.9cm x 14.8cm 2010





Above Icon mixed media on board 30.5cm x 30.5cm (approx. each) 2011
Overleaf The Shadow mixed media on canvas 167.4cm x 258.5cm 2011



Shiva Prasadanna 2011

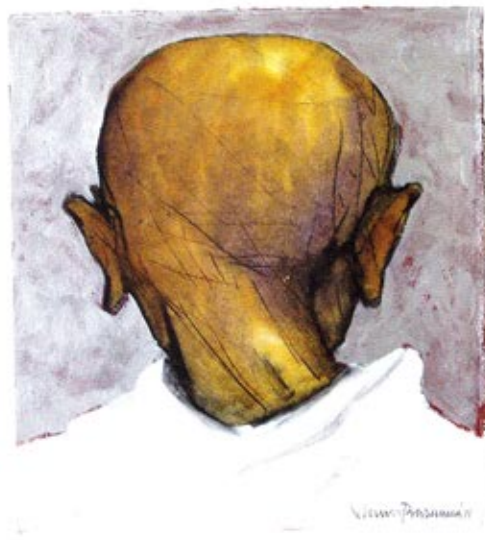
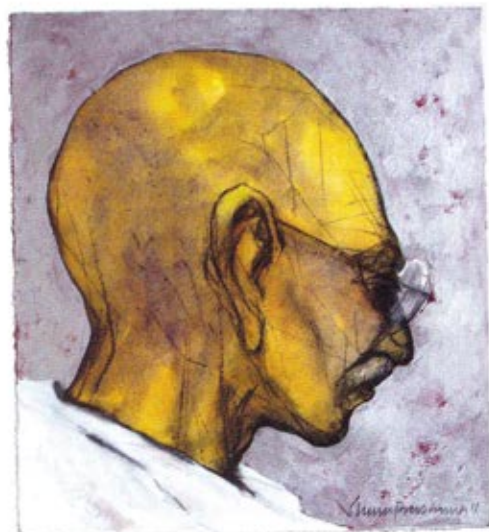
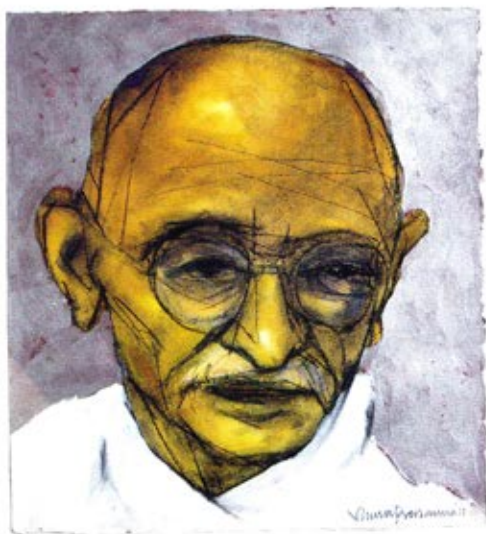
Icon mixed media on board 30.3cm x 30.3cm 2011



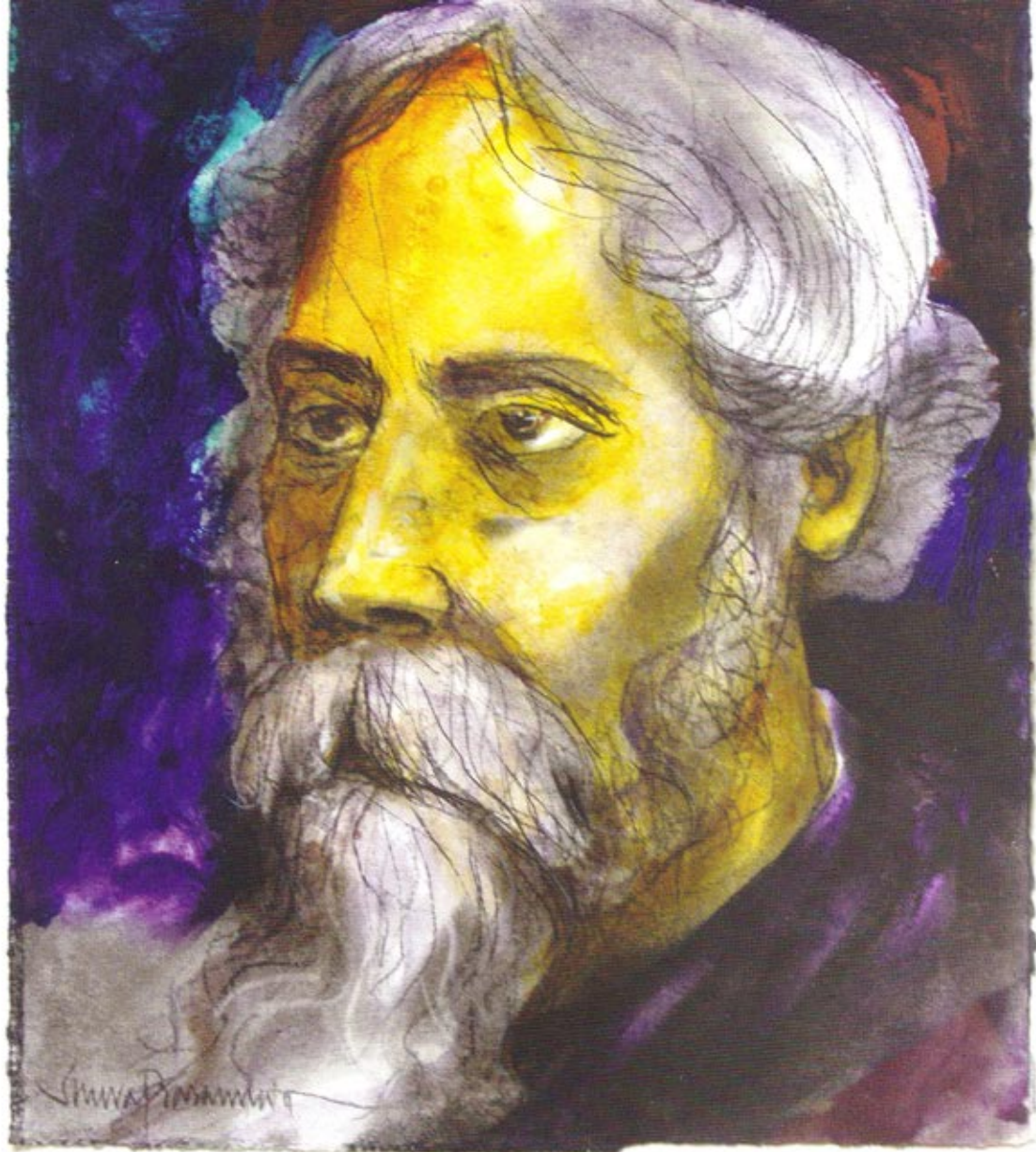
Vessel mixed media on paper 20.9cm x 14.8cm 2010



Crow mixed media on board 30.5cm x 30.5cm 2011



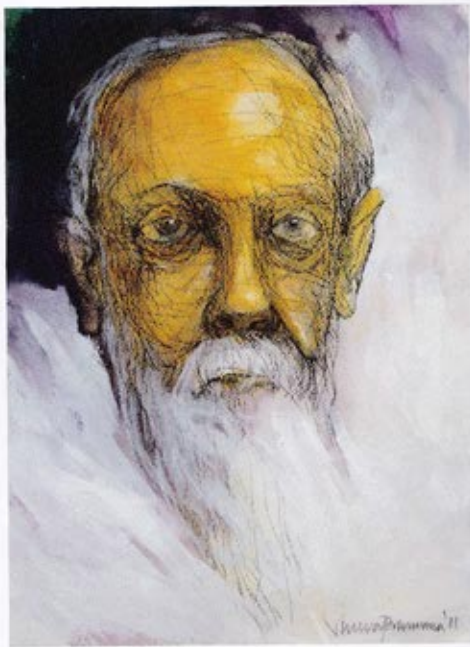
Icon mixed media on paper 28.5cm x 25.2cm (approx. each) 2011



Icon mixed media on paper 28.6cm x 25.6cm 2011



2008	Group exhibition, New York, organized by Tao Art Gallery Harvest, Arushi Arts, New Delhi Colours of Life, Cyroza Art Gallery, Mumbai, organized by Cancer Patients Aid Association, Mumbai	2001	A Treasure Trove, Birla Academy, Kolkata Works on paper, CIMA Gallery, Kolkata
2007	Modern Trajectories, Vinyasa Premier Art Gallery, Chennai Power of Peace, Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai Vistaar, Limited Editions Gallery, Delhi, Mumbai Harvest, Arushi Arts, New Delhi Inaugural exhibition, Ganges Art Gallery, Kolkata Femina auction, Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai Round & Round, Polka art Gallery, New Delhi Charity auction, Ashraya Art, Bangalore Indigo, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, organized by Weavers Studio for the Arts, Kolkata Art Addressing Violence, Samrakal Art Gallery, Kolkata The Sacred, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, organized by Galleria Indian Surrealism, Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata Group exhibition, Singapore, organized by Rangoli Art Teheka Art Auction, London, organized by Borham's Art Auction KMCMA - Sotheby's auction, New York Group exhibition, Singapore, organized by Artworld Group exhibition, Dubai, organized by Mystic Inspiration Colours of Life, Cyroza Art Gallery, Mumbai, organized by Cancer Patients Aid Association, Mumbai	2001	The Harmony show, Nehru Centre, Mumbai
2008	Group Show, Maurya Sheraton Hotel, Jointly by External Affairs Spouses Association and Chawla Art Show Krushi- India on Canvas auction, New Delhi Group exhibition, Singapore, organized by Gallery Art Positive Group exhibition, Singapore, organized by Gallery Art Resource Trust Group exhibition, Singapore, organized by Fidia Art The Harmony show 2008, Nehru Centre, Mumbai	2000	Shatsabd, CIMA Gallery, Kolkata Shatsabd, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, organized by CIMA Gallery, Kolkata Art for Spastics, Taj Coromandel, Chennai Contemporary Works of Bengal Artists, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka Water, contemporary water-colour exhibition, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi Small Formal Works, Art Today, New Delhi Art & Cinema, Arushi Arts, New Delhi Krisna, Art Indus, New Delhi
2005	2005 India - Korea Contemporary Art, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, organized by Montage Arts, New Delhi Harvest, organized by Arushi Arts, New Delhi Devotion, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, organized by Gallery Arts Positive, New Delhi 40th Anniversary year, Artworld, Chennai Art for God's Shika, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, organized by The Art Trust, Mumbai Divine Inspiration, Indian Fine Art, Mumbai Palette 2005, Palette Art Gallery, New Delhi	1999	Contemporary Works of Bengal Artists, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka Water, contemporary water-colour exhibition, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi Small Formal Works, Art Today, New Delhi Art & Cinema, Arushi Arts, New Delhi Krisna, Art Indus, New Delhi Devi, Art Indus, New Delhi Indian Contemporary Art, The RPG Collection, Bayer A.G., Germany Confluence - Trends in Contemporary Indian Art, Gallery Surokha, Bangalore Art Connoisseur Gallery, London Gallery Asana, New York First Group Show, The Fine Art Company, Mumbai Exhibition of Modern Miniatures, Gandhara Gallery, New Delhi Indian Contemporary Art Show, Singapore Unmasking, Exhibition of Self-Portraits, Gallery Om, New Delhi Sister Nivedita Girls' School centenary Exhibition, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata The Silent Symphony, Exhibition of Textile Painting, Cyroza Art Gallery, Mumbai
2004	Scenes from a Voyage, organized by Art Voyage in association with Art Pilgrim Parbon 2004, Sheraton Hotel, Dhaka, organized by The High Commission of India in Dhaka, Real Concepts and MAA consortium, Dhaka	1998	Devi, Art Indus, New Delhi Indian Contemporary Art, The RPG Collection, Bayer A.G., Germany Confluence - Trends in Contemporary Indian Art, Gallery Surokha, Bangalore Art Connoisseur Gallery, London Gallery Asana, New York First Group Show, The Fine Art Company, Mumbai Exhibition of Modern Miniatures, Gandhara Gallery, New Delhi Indian Contemporary Art Show, Singapore Unmasking, Exhibition of Self-Portraits, Gallery Om, New Delhi Sister Nivedita Girls' School centenary Exhibition, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata The Silent Symphony, Exhibition of Textile Painting, Cyroza Art Gallery, Mumbai
2003	Call of the Real, by Sanskriti Gallery with Taj Group of Hotels at Kolkata, New Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Colombo 6th EME Triennale Mondiale D Estampes Pett Format 2003, France The 8th Harmony show, Nehru Centre, Mumbai	1997	Contemporary Indian Paintings, Sotheby's, New York Colours of Independence, organized by CIMA - Centre of International Modern Art, Kolkata in association with National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi at National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi Bengal Show, Singapore, organized by Apparso Galleries Indian Beest, New Delhi Within the Frame, New York; London; New Delhi Major Trends in Indian Art, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi Image - Beyond Image, Contemporary Indian Paintings from the collection of Glenbara Art Museum, Japan, exhibited at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi; Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata; Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, Bangalore; National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai Heart, The intuitive-Logic II, Exhibition-Auction-Modern & Contemporary Indian Paintings, The Park, New Delhi; The Nehru Centre, Mumbai Kalaraji, Chitrakala Parishat, Bangalore Indian Contemporary Paintings, Christies', London A Tribute to Mother Teresa, Art Indus, New Delhi Autumn, organized by CIMA Gallery at New Delhi H. K. Kagrwal Collection 1830-1995, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, Bangalore
2002	Ma - exhibition of Indian Contemporary Art, Art Indus, New Delhi Art for Hearts Sake Auction, Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai Three Diamonds, AIFACS, New Delhi	1996	Art from the Heart, Exhibition by the People for Animals, Mumbai; Delhi Bombay - An Artist's Impression, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai organized by RPG The Tree of My Life, The Village Gallery, New Delhi Inaugural Exhibition, La Mare Art Gallery, Kolkata III International Biennial of Prints, Shree Bravan, Bhopal
2001	Art of Bengal- Past & Present, organized by CIMA Gallery, Kolkata in association with National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai at National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai Art of Bengal, CIMA Gallery, Kolkata Scapes 2001, Indian Contemporary Gallery, Hong Kong Harvest 2001 - exhibition of Indian Contemporary Art, Arushi Arts, New Delhi	1994	From India: 28 Contemporary Artists Presents New Graphic Work, Mathwood Art Museum and Gallery, University of Victoria, Canada Sonabangla, Exhibition of Indian Contemporary Art, Mumbai 4th Anniversary Exhibition, Gallery Katayun, Kolkata Shradha Sarinapan, Tributes to the Mentally-Ill downtrodden, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
		1993	4th Anniversary Exhibition, Gallery Katayun, Kolkata Shradha Sarinapan, Tributes to the Mentally-Ill downtrodden, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
		1992	To Encounter Others, Kassel



- 1992 Saitama Museum, Japan
- Birla Academy of Art & Culture Silver Jubilee exhibition, Kolkata
- 1991 The Downtrodden and We, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
- VI International Triennale, New Delhi
- 1990 II International Biennale, Ankara
- 300 years of Calcutta, Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata
- 1989 Bombay Art Society, Centenary Exhibition, Mumbai
- 1987 Indian Drawings Today, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
- 1986 II International Biennale, Havana
- 1985 II Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh
- Graphic Art in India since 1950
- 1977 Gallery 26, New Delhi
- 1975 Gallery Kunsthaus, Stuttgart
- Silver Jubilee Exhibition, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
- Inaugural Show, Decor Art Gallery
- 1971 Calcutta Painters, New Delhi
- 1970 Calcutta painters, Kolkata, Mumbai
- Epar Bangla Opar Bangla, Kolkata
- 1969 Art and Artists, Kolkata

Awards

- 2010 Manavata Vikas Award by IFM
- 2008 Taj Gaurav award by Taj Association for Art, Culture & Heritage
- 1993 Visited Germany under the sponsorship of Inter Nations
- 1991 Visited United States under the auspices of the USA
- Visited England under the sponsorship of British Council
- 1979 All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society, New Delhi
- 1978 State Lalit Kala Akademi, West Bengal
- 1977 Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata

Art Organizational Works

- 2008 Established Arts Acre Foundation at New Town, Kolkata
- 1984 Founded ArtsAcre, An Artists' Village, Calcutta
- 1978 Founded College of Visual Arts, Calcutta
- 1974 Member, CRCA Geneva, Switzerland
- 1972 Jt. Secretary, Calcutta Art Fair
- 1970 Joined Calcutta Painters, Calcutta
- 1969 Founder member, Art and Artists, Calcutta

Publications

- 2008 Published 'Sheeli Ashwo Aar Yasmin O Ornanno Prabondho' a collection of prose
- 2005 Published 'Omro Nagorik' a collection of prose by Shuvrasasanna
- 2003 Published 'Swapna, Swapna Noy' a Bengali short stories for children
- 'Call of the Real- Contemporary Indian Artists of Bengal' published by Mapin
- 2002 Published 'Amar Chhelebeba' an autobiography of Shuvrasasanna
- 2000 Published 'Shuvrasasanna: Vision Reality and Beyond' by Chitroba Mukherjee
- 1999 Published 'Ma Nishad' (Drawings with Poems of Jay Goswami)
- 1996 Published 'Bishanna Swadeshi' (Drawings with Poems of Partha Rajai)
- 1995 Published 'Wondering Silence' (Drawings and Contemporary Bengali Poems)
- Published 'Shuffle' a Portfolio of Graphics and verses by Obergrabenpressa, Dresden and young painters of Arts Acre, Kolkata
- 1993 Published 'Between the Earth and the Sky'
- 1983 Edited Portfolio 'The Eyes of Time' (a collection of drawings)
- 1982 Edited Portfolio 'The Dream and Reality' (a collection of drawings)
- 1981 Editor, Art Today, a journal on movement of contemporary visual arts in India
- 1977 Published 'Artist, A Collection of Woodcut Prints'
- 1976 Edited with Shakti Chattopadhyay, 'Anarchy and the Blue'

Icon: mixed media on paper 31.5cm x 24cm 2011



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VENUE
CIMA Gallery
18 March – 14 April, 2011

CURATOR-IN-CHARGE
Rakhi Sarkar

CHIEF COORDINATOR
Pratiti Basu Sarkar

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Manasij Majumder

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Amit Pasricha

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Gayatri Sharma

COVER

Shuvaprasanna Icon mixed media on board 30.3cm x 30.3cm 2011 (detail)

SHUVAPRASANNA – recent works
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CIMA

CENTRE OF INTERNATIONAL MODERN ART