

নীলিমা ও নৈরাজ্য / Anarchy and the Blue
SHUVAPRASANNA

BENGAL
ART LOUNGE



anakh ghatak

Shuvaprasanna '08



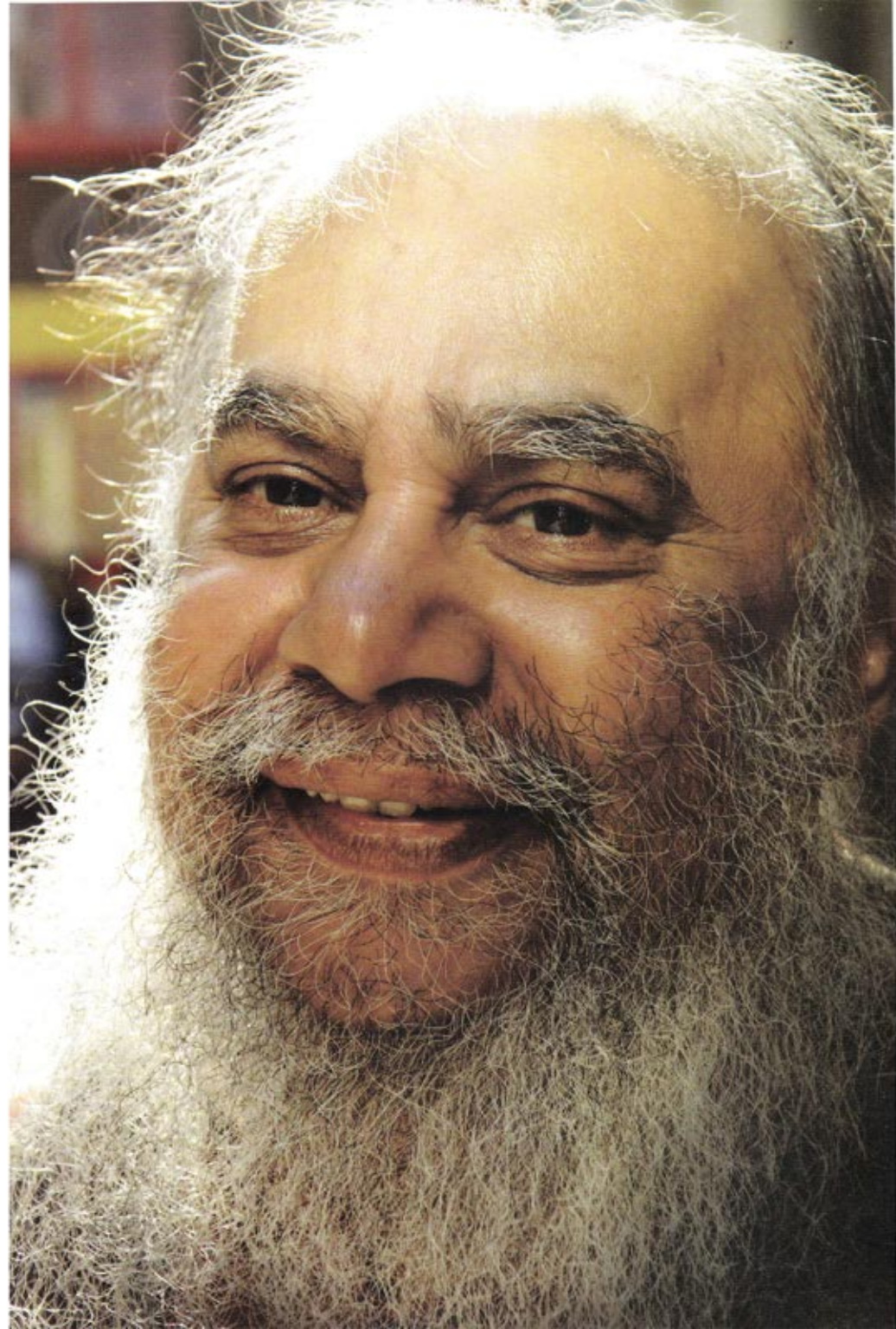
Solo Painting Exhibition
নৈলিমা ও নৈরাজ্য / Anarchy and the Blue
SHUVAPRASANNA

Bengal Art Lounge
16 - 25 March 2012

Organised by **BENGAL
ART LOUNGE**



shuvaprasanna
GALLERY



Bengal Art Lounge

Owls, crows, sea-gulls, vultures and various birds and animals find expression on Shuvaprasanna's imaginative platform. On one hand his artwork is poetic and diverse in its appearance as well as the feelings it invokes in the viewer and on the other hand it reveals itself in a novel light.

After completing his art education he went to Germany and New Mexico for higher studies in printmaking. This journey has left a deep imprint on his creative and artistic spirit.

Shuvaprasanna is adept at etching on his canvas, the anguish and agony felt by Man. His strokes are powerful and profound lending a certain conviction to his paintings and these are clearly visible in his exhibition *Anarchy and the Blue*. His lines, his poetic expression and his creative visualization make this artist unique and distinctive.

ভাষাসঙ্গ বহুমাত্রিক শিল্পসৃজন দ্বারা হয়ে উঠেছেন একজন অগ্রণী শিল্পী। তাঁর শক্তিশালী ড্রইং তাঁর সৃজনত্ববশে যে মাত্রা সঞ্চারণ করে, তা এই শিল্পীকে বিশিষ্ট করে রেখেছে। তাঁর সৃষ্টি হয়ে উঠেছে নানা বৈশিষ্ট্যে ও গুণে উজ্জ্বল।

তাঁর সৃষ্টির উদ্যানে কল্পোলিত হয় পেঁচা, কাক, চিল, পক্ষী ও শব্দনসহ নানা পশু ও পাখির অভিব্যক্তি। এই অভিব্যক্তি একদিকে বৈচিত্র্যময় অনুভূতিময় ও ব্যঙ্গনাথর্ষী, অন্যদিকে তাঁর শিল্পচৈতন্য এই রূপায়ণে নবরূপে উজ্জাসিত হয়ে ওঠে।

চিত্রকলার পাঠ গ্রহণের পর তিনি পাশ্চাত্যে ছাপাই ছবি সম্পর্কে উচ্চতর শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করেন। এই পরিগ্রহণ তাঁর শিল্পিত মানসে ও কলকাতার ছাপ ছবির জগতে গভীর প্রভাব ফেলে।

ভাষাসঙ্গ মানুষের মর্মযন্ত্রণা ও দুঃখের রূপায়ণেও নিহত। এই ভুবনেও তাঁন রেখার শক্তিমত্তা কত যে গহন ও তীব্র স্বাতন্ত্র্যমণ্ডিত সে কথাই মনে করিয়ে দেয়। তাঁর প্রদর্শনী *নীলিমা ও নৈরাজ্য*-তে এই বোধ স্পষ্ট হয়ে ওঠে। এই রেখা, ব্যঙ্গনা ও রূপারোপ নির্মাণ এবং সৃষ্টি এই শিল্পীকে অনন্য করে তুলেছে।

Shuvaprasanna: A Multifaceted Artist

Sushma Bahl

A fine blend of tradition and contemporaneity underlines the creative oeuvre of master artist Shuvaprasanna that includes some amazing charcoal drawings, etchings and paintings around the City of Joy, his abode and playing fields since birth. There are also portraits, still life and narrative compositions. His remarkably vast and multi-vocal creative repertoire also encompasses paintings of winged creatures, clocks, flowers and much-revered icons besides graphics, illustrations, designs and posters. Writing, sculpture, installations and mixed media work, make an additional component of the prolific artist's multifarious out-pouring. A people's person, versatile artist, teacher-mentor, socio-cultural activist and a great organizer, ever ready to engage with challenging and creative ideas, Shuva's colourful life and career has taken many turns and twists. Ranging from the work he did with Calcutta Artists group in the 70s, the College of Visual Arts that he had set up where he trained young artists until the 90s, the Arts Acre centre that was inaugurated by his friend and mentor Gunter Grass in 1983, now re-formed in its bigger and more ambitious avatar as Arts Acre Foundation; all these initiatives form a part of the artist's impressively checkered life and career, focused on creativity in its multilayered manifestations.

'Black Brown & The Blue', the illustrated book with analytical essays on the life and work of Shuvaprasanna, (Roli Books 2011- ISBN: 978-81-7536-827-0), and the accompanying series of retrospective exhibitions of nearly hundred and fifty of his art works including some recent ones, that journeyed throughout 2011 from Delhi to Hyderabad to Mumbai to Bangalore before turning to Kolkata, Shuva's hometown, and now in Dhaka, is a landmark event in contemporary Indian art history, interestingly put together by several different art galleries working jointly.

The Artist & the City of Joy

Born in the tumultuous year of 1947, in a culturally alive and politically volatile Calcutta, Shuvaprasanna Bhattacharya, had to struggle hard, like most of his contemporaries, to forge ahead. After completing his art education, he learnt Intaglio and lithography in Germany and New Mexico and as a member of the Calcutta artists' commune, played a significant role in the development of Bengal's graphic movement. The city as it traversed from being Calcutta to Kolkata, where he belongs- its architecture- humble dwellings as well as palatial bungalows, urban milieu- intellectual depths, culturally thriving scenario, and socio-political under currents, its joys, sorrows and people, have continued to be the cradle of creativity for Shuva's mindscape. The ethos of the city reverberates through his variously 'coloured' representations in Metroplis that highlighted the horrors of Bangladesh strife and its resulting agony while Metroplis Revisited features the paradox of violence and the naxal movement juxtaposed against the city's vitality. In an interface of realism and abstraction his etchings, charcoal drawings, and other paintings on paper and canvas include his famous painting Mute Silence Calcutta 71 that became the poster image for Mrinal Sen's film on the subject. His illusion, Portraits of Calcutta, Abode and Lament series of the 70s and the 80s also mirror the spirit of the city, its existential agony and survival instinct.

The Winged World

There is also a proliferation of the ominous creatures- each differently born composed textured colored and winged - crows, owls, cranes, eagles and storks in the artist's impressive body of work. The Crow omnipresent- occasionally perched on house tops for some rest and respite or swinging merrily from the overhead hanging wires or searching for some crumbs amidst the litter, here there and everywhere, appears in Shuva's repertoire that echoes the sentiment expressed in Noble Laureate Ted Hughes poems around crow. And owl, seen as harbinger of good luck in the regional lore, too makes a recurrent appearance in Shuva's work. There are also other birds, headless compositions with elongated necks and twisted bodies, rendered in

differently entangled forms such as Aves and floating series. On these somewhat menacing and disturbing but not gruesome creatures, the artist says, "I use them because they cannot lie. They don't pretend". There is also an occasional feline- dog, donkey or goat, motifs of the urban milieu- mainly black and white in charcoal, some with a touch of colour. Shuva has also figured crows and animals in bronze, mirroring the dynamics of the time, space and society we inhabit.

And the impermanence of time that evaporates in the thin air is another interesting theme that engages Shuva's art-scape. His interest in cocks or time was triggered by his study of German obsession with punctuality that he observed during his first ever visit to that country, while it also suggests an affinity with Salvador Dali's work. In the 90s though, the innovative artist shifted his focus to paintings of Still Life, with distinct erotic undertones and a closer to reality look, in passion flowers. The sensuous and free flowing oeuvre in the palette and imagery becomes even more up front at the turn of the millennium as the artist moves to metaphysical themes. Marked for a creative breakthrough, is his icon couture- Durga, Kali, Radha and Krishna, in textured hatching and mixed media with occasional use of calligraphy in numerous incarnations, moods and modes, painted in bold blues, yellows, and oranges to represent a joyous ambience. With heads and torsos loosely linked through chord, in playful scenes, the vibrant icon compositions in gold and silver foil are somewhat reminiscent of Indian miniature paintings. There are 5000+ paintings in this lyrical genre that the artist has done to-date.

Mode Matter & Materials

Entailing research, taking photographs, sketching, thinking, collecting and emulating ideas and tales from the classical, folk and contemporary history and culture, the artist meanders across the genres to carefully plan his art-track befitting the mood, style and form of the work. His oeuvre entailing an expertise in graphics and command in portraiture and painting is manifest in over twenty varied series. Marked for its surrealist undertone, interlaced with satire, his art be it in figuration, narration or abstraction, is relentlessly immersed in contemporary socio-cultural-political realities.

The painter, who has also experimented with sculpture besides designing and illustrations, has evolved a distinct style "through constant trial and error". Shuva's choice of colours is significant as each colour has its own story to tell. His Krishna is blue since born on a dark lunar night. The ocean is also blue as are the clouds. Kali and kal are black. Bhakti and sunshine appear in bright reds, mauves and yellows. Greens denote nature and white evokes feelings of purity. Shimmering gold suggests preciousness. He thinks themes and ideas before starting to draw initially as a sketch before taking to the canvas and pasting sheets of rice paper over it to get the desired texture frisson and 'putty'. Over layers drawn in charcoal, he paints with oil and acrylic in slow and careful brush stokes that endow a density and depth to the work.

With as many facets to his personality as to his art, Shuva is a hard working and focused person, with hundreds of endless tales to tell, all meticulously and eloquently represented in his work. A recipient of several awards including the AIFACS, State LKA and Birla Academy Awards, Shuva's art has been exhibited in over 60 solo and group shows in various Indian cities and around the world including the Biennales at Bangladesh, Havana and Ankara and VII Triennale India and can be seen in the collection at NGMA, LKA and College of Art, New Delhi, Chandigarh Museum Punjab University, Birla Academy Calcutta; Times of India Group, WHO Geneva and Glenbarra Art Museum, Japan, amongst others. This prominent intellectual and a fatherly figure on contemporary Indian art circuit, a man of many parts- a prolific multifaceted artist, an able organizer, an enthusiastic pioneer, a tireless teacher and committed social activist- is all rolled into one!

Sushma Bahl, MBE, the author of 5000 Years of Indian Art and editor-contributor of Black Brown & The Blue- Shuvagrasanna, amongst others, is an independent arts consultant, writer and curator of cultural projects, based in Delhi.

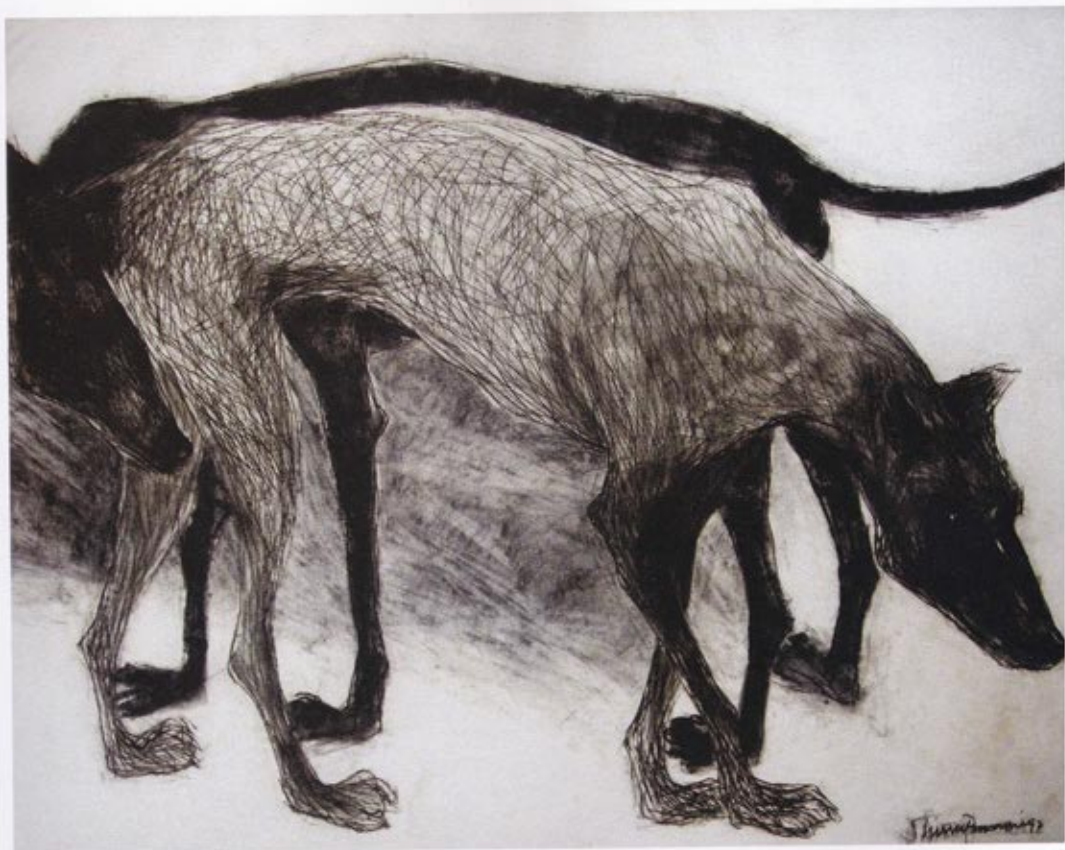
The text is an edited version of the feature that appeared in February 2012 issue of RAIL BANDHU on-board magazine of Indian Railways.



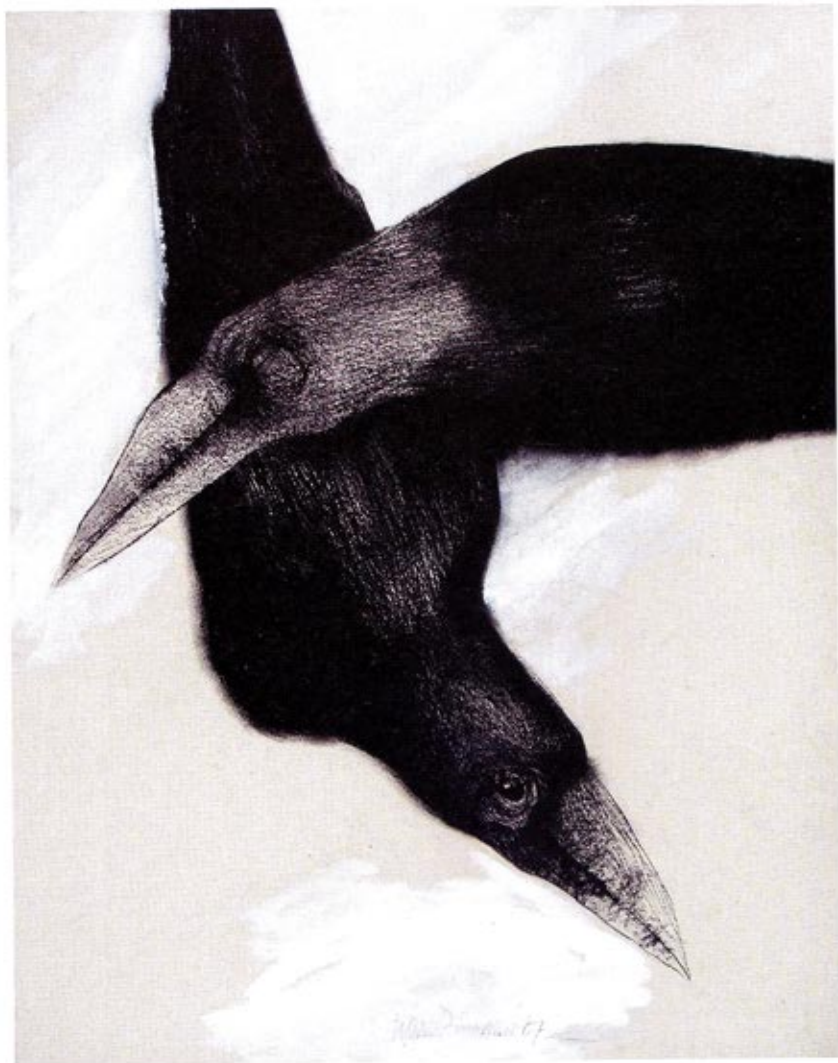
The Fish, Mixed media on paper, 56 x 76 cm, 1993



Illusion, Mixed media on paper, 76 x 56 cm, 1998



Street Dogs, Mixed media on paper, 56 x 76 cm, 1998

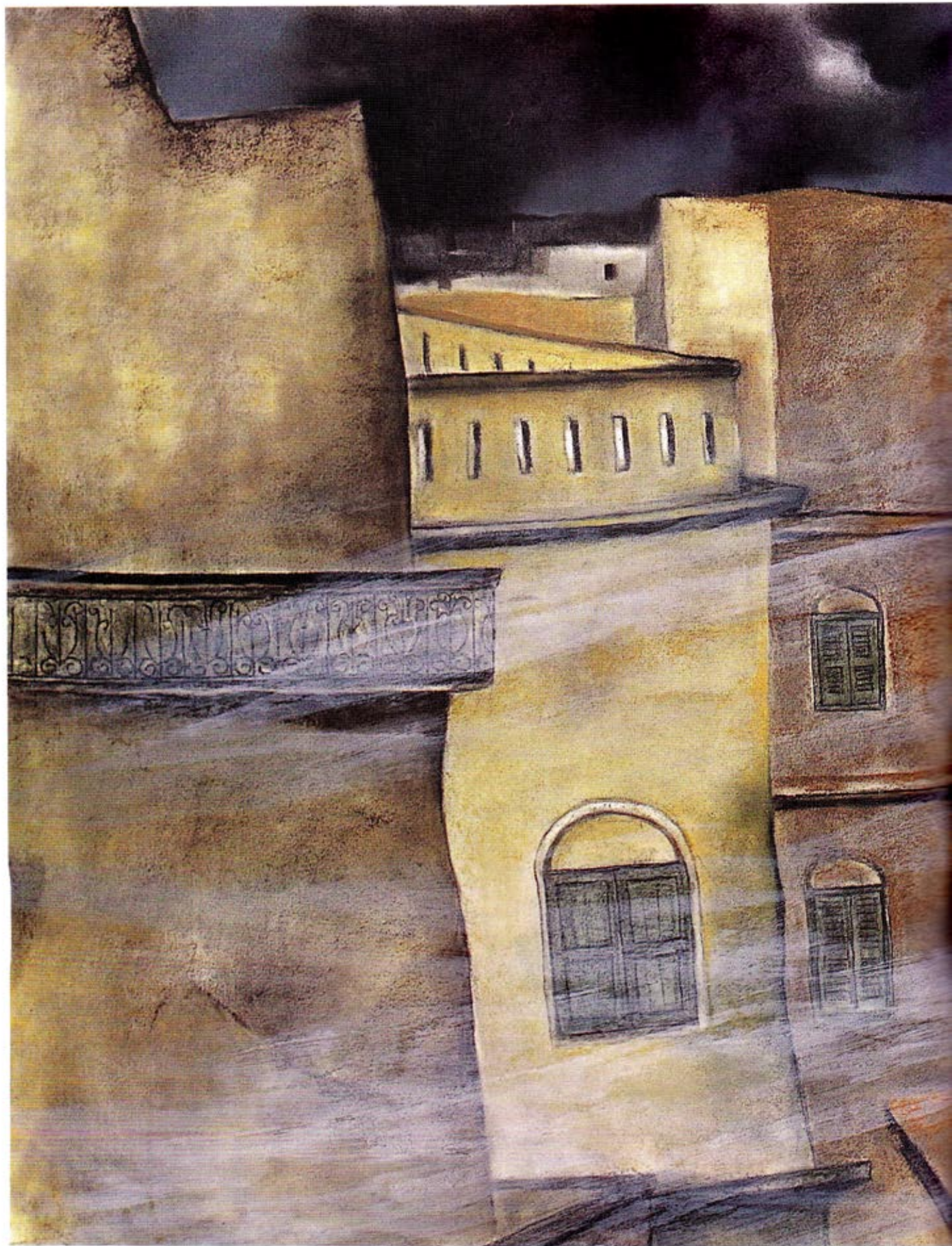


Crows, Mixed media on paper, 76 x 56 cm, 2007

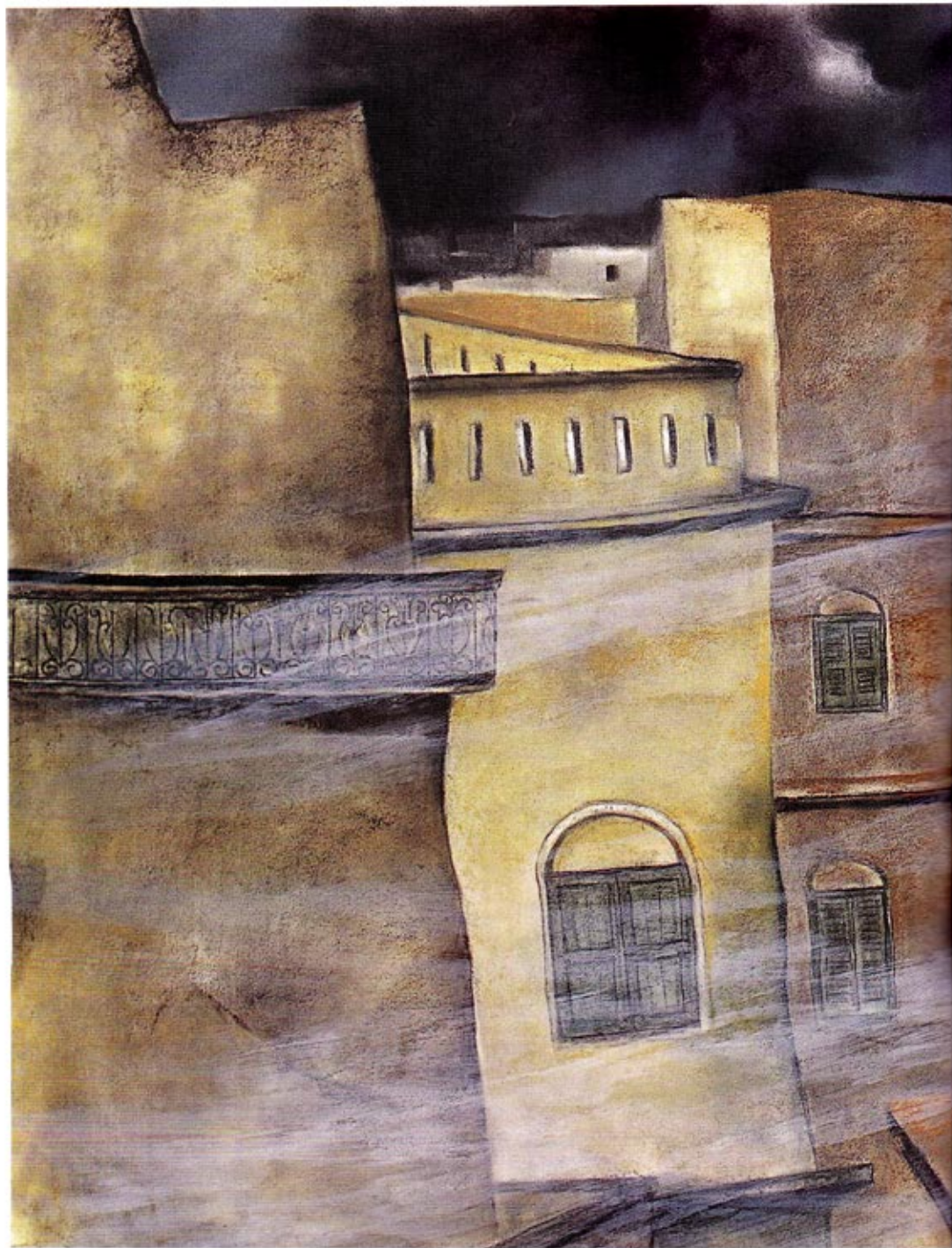


Illusion, Mixed media on paper, 56 x 76 cm, 2007
Opposite: Middle tone, Mixed media on paper, 152 x 92 cm, 2007





Middle tone, Mixed media on paper, 92 x 152 cm, 2007



Middle tone, Mixed media on paper, 92 x 152 cm, 2007



The Cat, Mixed media on paper, 56 x 76 cm, 2007

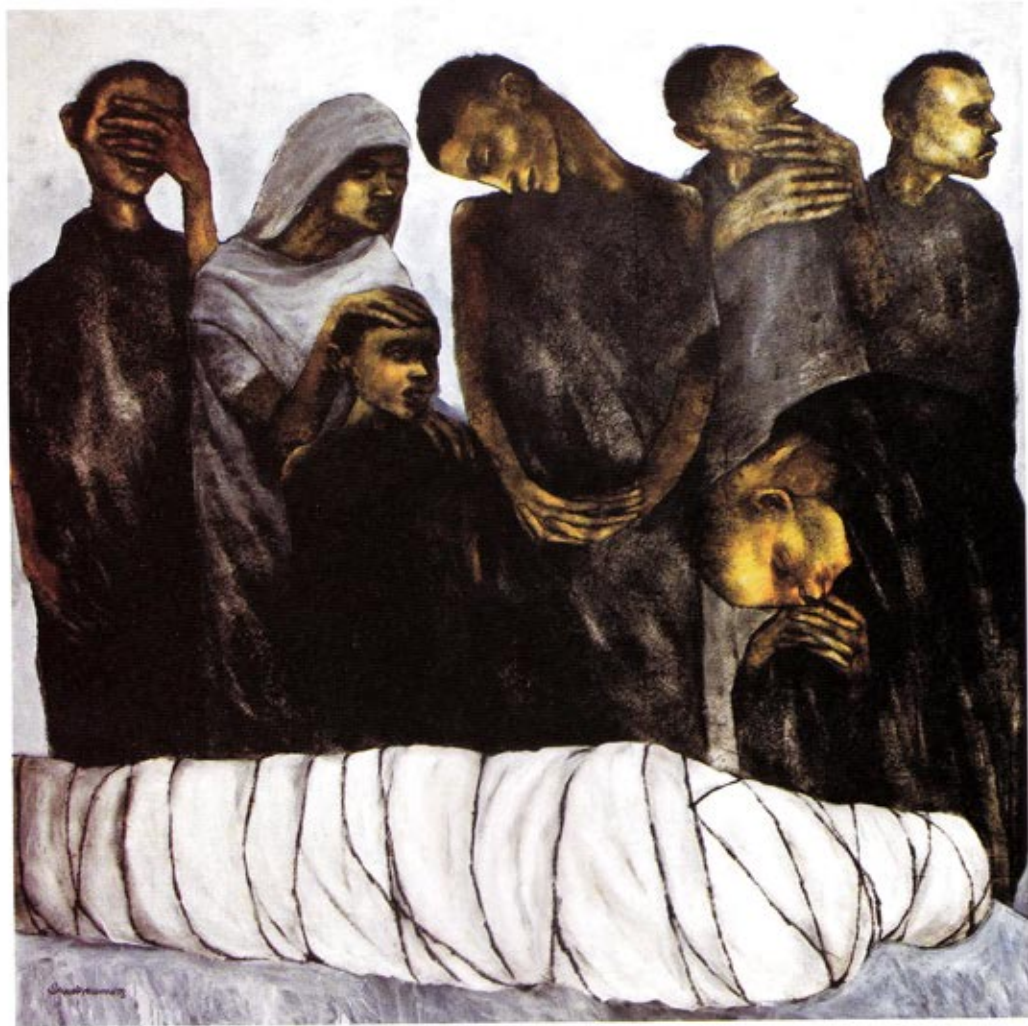


The Goat, Mixed media on paper, 72 x 102 cm , 2007



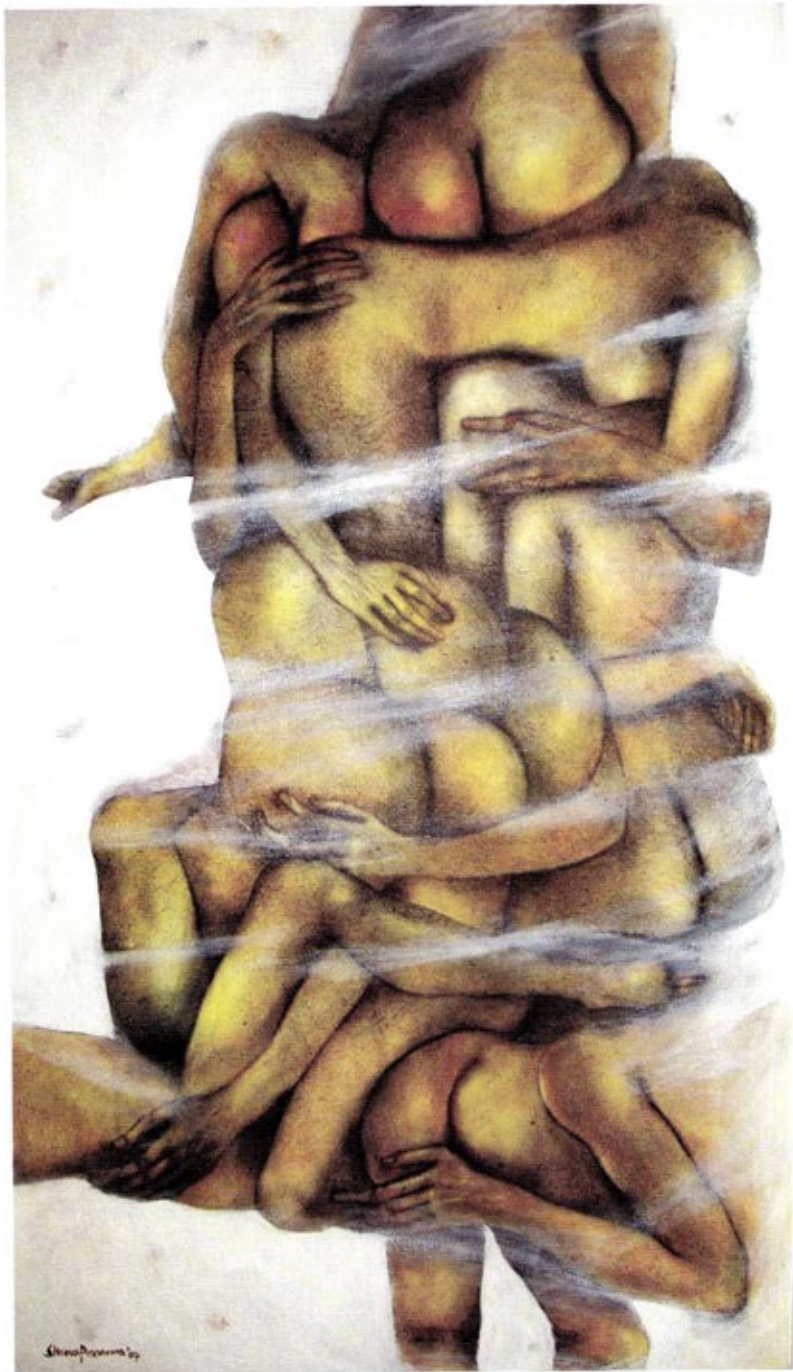


The Owl, Mixed media on canvas, 122 x 122 cm, 2008



The Black & Brown, Mixed media on canvas, 122 x 122 cm, 2008





The Illusion, Mixed media on canvas, 152 x 89 cm, 2009



The Icon, Mixed media on canvas, 152 x 89 cm, 2006



The Dance, Mixed media on canvas, 76 x 102 cm, 2010



The Owl, Mixed media on paper, 76 x 56 cm, 2010



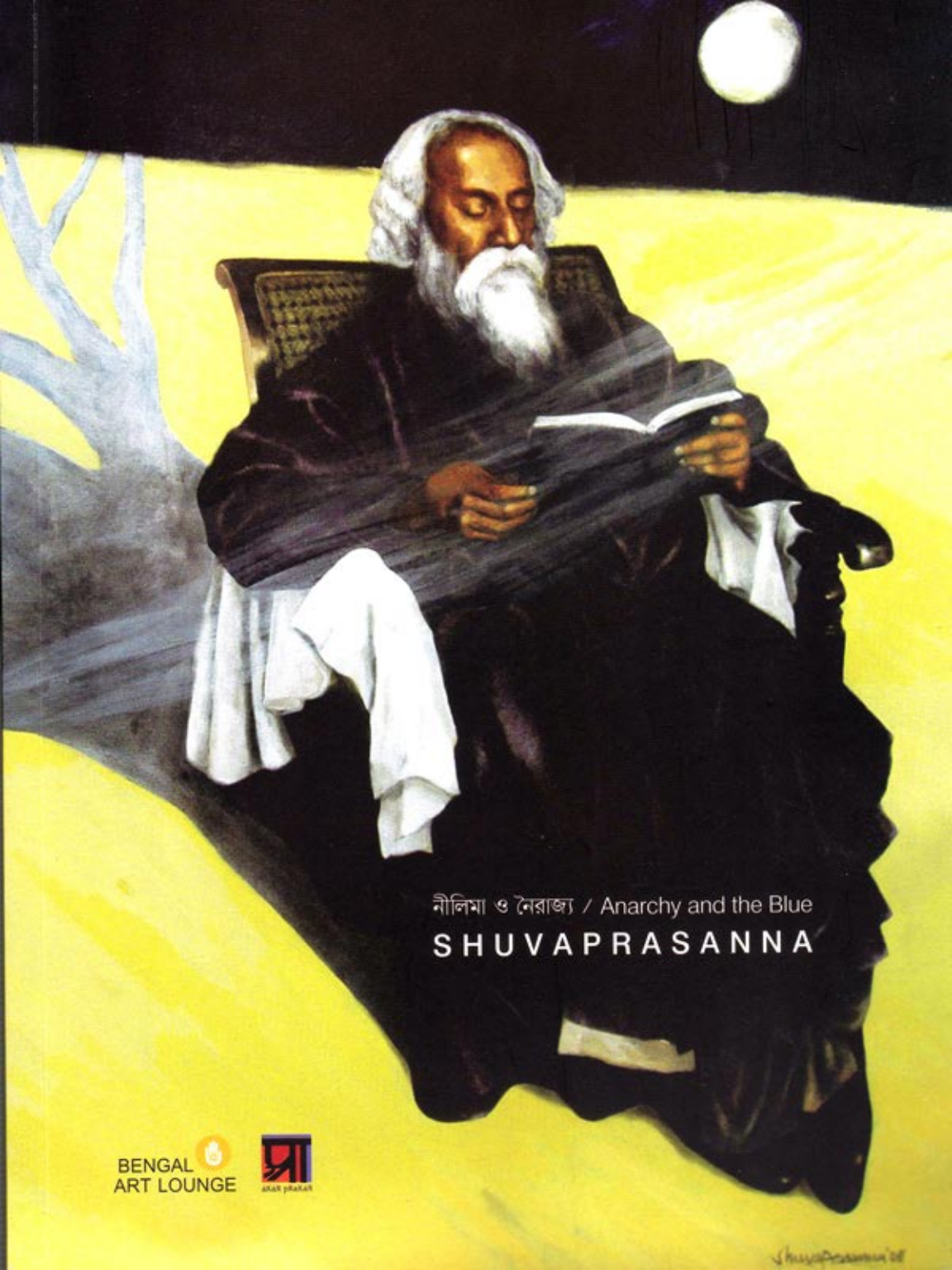




Illusion, Mixed media on ply-board, 76 x 76 cm, 2011



Icon, Mixed media on ply-board , 30.5 x 30.5 cm, 2011



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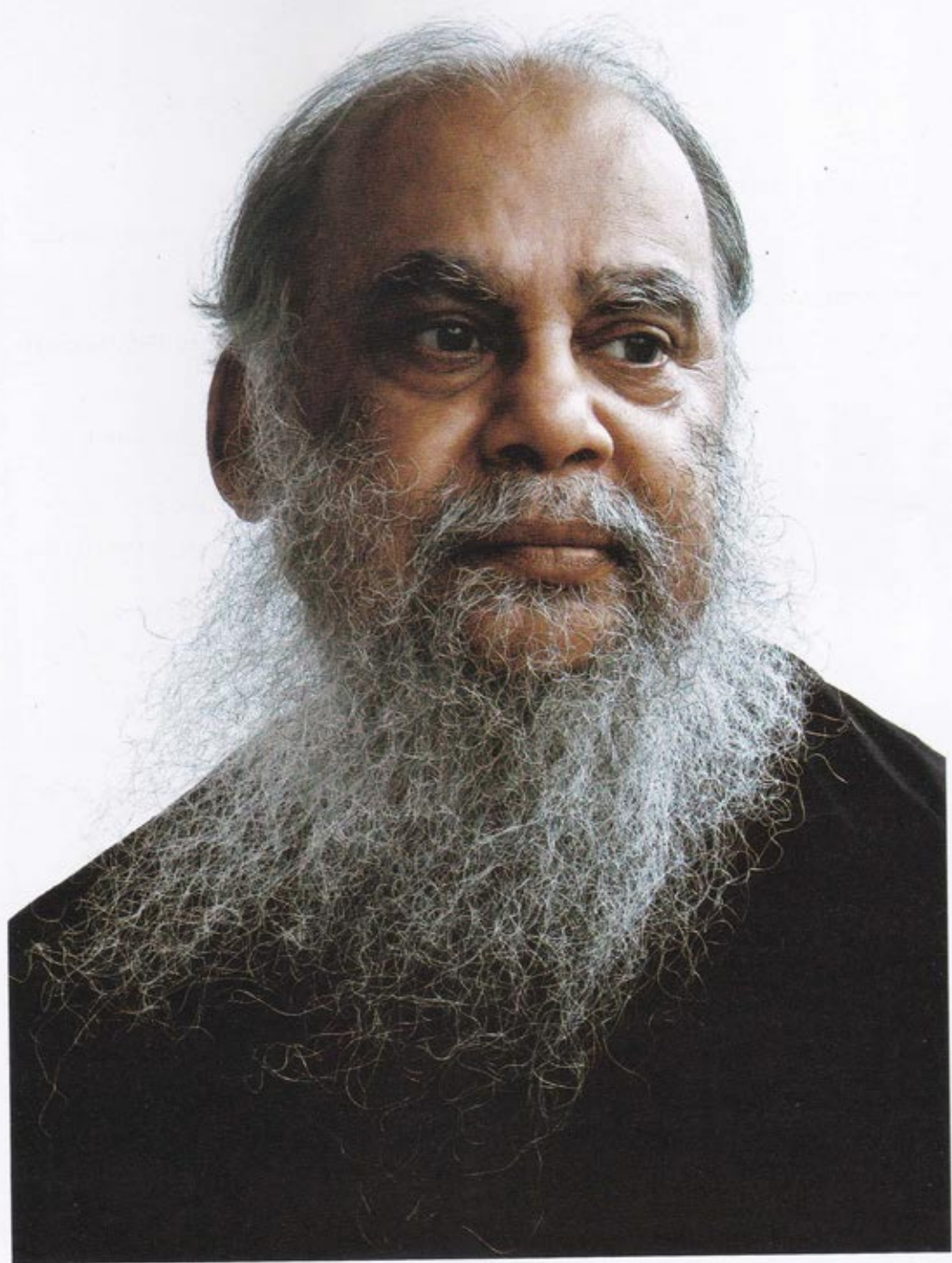
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Shuvaprasanna '08







Shuvaprasanna

Born in 1947, Kolkata, India

Graduated in fine art from the Indian college of Art (under Rabindra Bharati University) Kolkata, in 1969.

He has had over 50 solo exhibitions in India and abroad. Participated in major group exhibitions including III Asian Art Biennial, Bangladesh; II International Biennial, Havana, Cuba; II International Biennial, Ankara, Turkey; VII International Triennial India, New Delhi; III International Biennial of Prints, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal; 6th EME Triennale Mondiale D'Estampes Petit Format 2003 in France.

He visited the United States under the auspices of the USIA, England under the sponsorship of British Council, Germany under the sponsorship of Inter-Nations. He has participated in a number of international projects, workshops and art camps, more important amongst which are the Museum of Modern Art, Sitomo, Japan; To Encounter Others at Kassel, Germany; Workshop in Horniman Museum; Art in Nature, an Indo-German Workshop during the German Festival in India. Some of his paintings have been auctioned by Christies' of London, Sotheby's of New York and Osian's of Mumbai.

He has written, edited and published several books on art, literature and is a regular columnist in various newspapers and journals. He is a founder member of Art and Artists, Calcutta; Joined Calcutta Painters, Calcutta; Jt. Secretary of Calcutta Art Fair; Member, CIRCA Geneva; Founded the College of Visual Arts, Calcutta; Founded Arts Acre, An Artists' Village, Calcutta.

He received numbers of awards including the AIFACS Award, State LKA Award and Birla Academy Award, etc,

Works with NGMA and LKA, Delhi; Govt. College of Art, New Delhi; UP State Lalit Kala Akademi; Chandigarh Museum; Punjab University; NCERT, New Delhi; Birla Academy, Calcutta; Air India; Taj Group of Hotels; Times of India Group; WHO Geneva; Kratel SA Stuttgart, Germany; Glenbarra Art Museum, Japan; HEART, India; Radisson Ffort, Raichak, West Bengal; The Museum of Modern Art, Sitomo, Japan; Gujarat Heavy Chemicals, Delhi; Telecom Venture Group, Hong Kong, etc.

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Bengal Art Lounge

House 60 . Ground Floor . Road 131
Gulshan 1 . Dhaka 1212 . Bangladesh
Cell : +880 1191002663
Mail : art.lounge@bengalfoundation.org
Web : www.bengalfoundation.org



Akar Prakar

P 238 Hindustan Park
Kolkata 700 029, India
Tel : +91 33 24642617
Mail : info@akarprakar.com
Web : www.akarprakar.com

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