

An Exhibition of recent paintings by

SHUVAPRASANNA

September 19 to October 1, 1992

Presented by

Birla Academy of Art & Culture

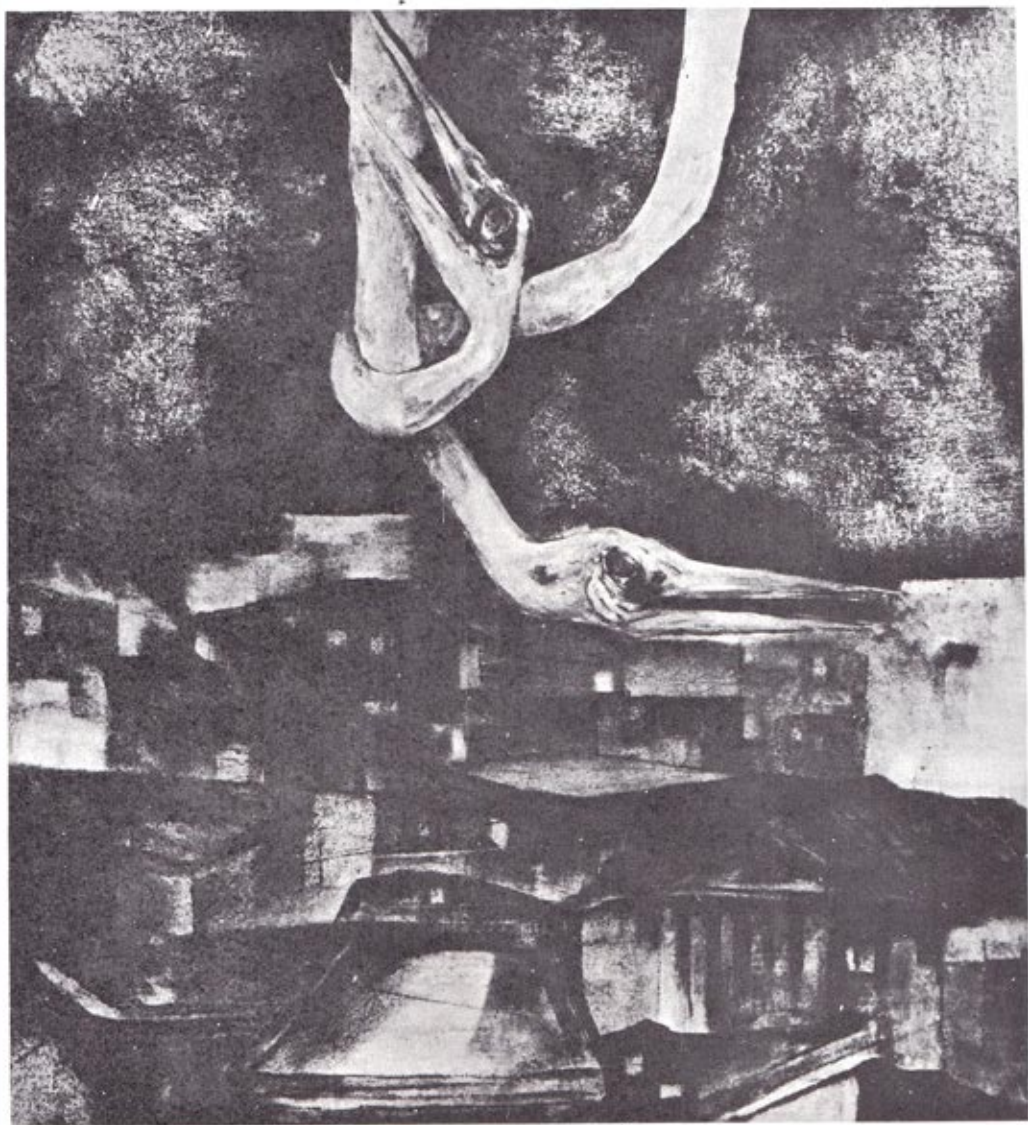
108, Southern Avenue, Calcutta-700 029

Shuvaprasanna '92

of meaning and technical mastery as he progressed from one theme to another. I had not seen any of Shuva's student exercises. Instead, I stumbled straight on to his 1971 work, which he did at age 24. He had by then arrived at a unique personal idiom in his Lament series, which reflected the agony of the Bangladesh War of 1971. He had made his point and that in pictorial form, even as Somnath Hore had achieved poignant equivalence for the human condition in his miniature sculptures of animals in pain and travail.

It has been a long, complex and breathless journey for him in a mere twenty years since. After 1972 came the Touch series in which he sought to rejuvenate himself by knitting his canvases into a certain reassurance and serenity through the depiction of soothing faces and heads, still-lives, flowers, butterflies, with the use of colours like mauve and violet. Then came the Illusion series, the centrepiece of which was his Caravaggio-like figure on the dissection table. This ushered in his Time or Clock series. Thereafter came his astonishing series of black-and-white, headless, upwardly stretching human groups, to be transformed later into stele—or obelisk-like forms in the desert. These slowly moved into the first Bird series, mostly in charcoal and acrylic on paper, followed by the very moving crop of cityscapes of Calcutta in her tercentenary year. These two series held the key to a very new experience of painting for me which invited me both to think, feel and smell the forms, the designs, the colours as immediately as the shape and the odour, say, of a rose. In short, there was an implicit metaphysical quality to his depiction of the human condition.

I have always wondered whether there can be anything like spontaneity or careless rapture in any finished piece of art, whatever the medium. There can be nothing unplanned in any satisfying work. No effort is incidental, only the theme may have been by happy chance. A painting succeeds only when it leaves little trace of the intolerable wrestle with line, colour, form and space and their meanings and relationships together with the toil, agony and sweat that goes with it, and yet emerges finally as a seemingly effortless creation, where the inner vision and will asserts its supremacy over technical mastery. This exposition will show the territory Shuva has traversed in the last couple of years.



TWIN (Acrylic & charcoal on canvas) 100 × 95 cm

Shuvaprasanna, the painter and organizer, does not need an introduction; at least in Calcutta. Yet, for an inexplicable reason he likes this much misunderstood scribe to write an introductory note. This is perhaps to introduce his new suit of paintings in a little known and somewhat personally improvised mixed media.

The knowledge of methods and skill of transforming materials into media and technique of making art objects, although are necessary equipment of an artist worth the name, they play minor roles in the aesthetic appraisal of an object of art. Curiously, however, only a visible lack of these equipment immediately lessen the value of an object as a work of art.

An invisible shortfall in skill, on the other hand, gives chances to the conservators, preservers and restorers to earn their bread, without in any way diminishing the appeal of the concerned art object. Newness of materials and soundness of methods should not, therefore, overengage us. In discussing a painter like Shuvaprasanna, if not otherwise proved, we must assume a reasonable degree of craft-competence and straight away proceed to talk about issues of concern.

While the logical positivist art theorists like Sir Earnest H. Gombrich would like to maintain that all art activity is symbol generating, symbol sustaining and symbol expanding activity, the hard fact remains that very little of it is consciously symbol formative. Metaphorical substitution of phenomenal objects by constructed images had not been the only pre-occupation of Indian artists and craftsmen. India has traditions of representation of non-visual concepts and ideas by visible images (and just signs and signals) functioning as symbols suggestive of these concepts and ideas. Although on the surface, Shuvaprasanna's paintings do not exhibit a kinship with any of the known traditions of Indian art, he does establish his linkage with Indian idea of art, by elevating his images of birds and cityscapes into symbols of his conception and ideas about the state of social existence, at least in contemporary urban India.



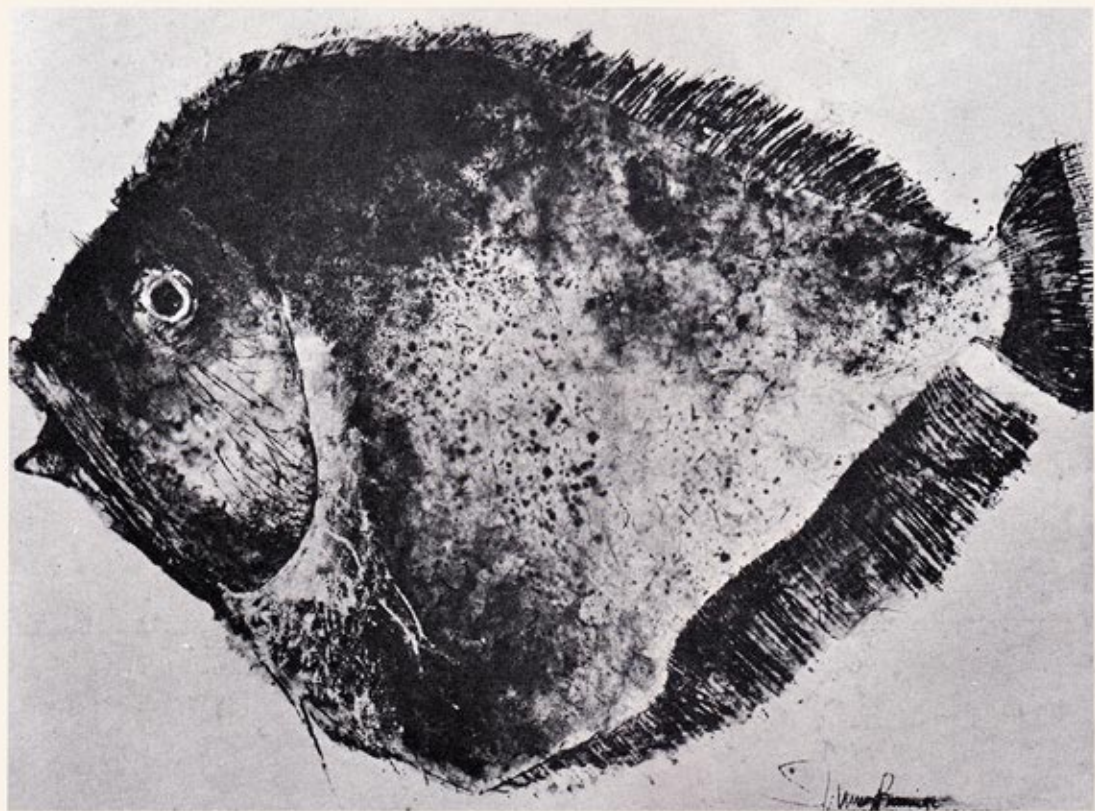
THE CROW (Acrylic & charcoal on canvas) 100 × 95 cm

To transform the images of not so uncommon Indian birds into symbols of concurrently predatory and vulnerable beings, Shuvaprasanna exaggerates certain selective parts of their anatomy and postures by the well recognized expressionist means of gestural strokes and postural hypertwists. At the same time, he undervalues many of the phenomenal details as unnecessary. Similarly, to elevate familiar city-scapes into symbols of man's unfriendly physical environment, he depopulates, deforms and skeletalises the huddled-together buildings and narrow suffocative streets. He does not end there. Irrespective of whether it is day or night, monsoon, summer or winter—giving different colours to the sky, Shuvaprasanna's city seems to be perpetually covered by overhanging mists of dark smoke. Occasional gloomy greys and yet smaller areas of pale lights throw no rays of light (or is it life) to his painted situations.

— Pranabranjan Roy



THE BIRD (mixed media on wood) 68 × 68 cm



THE FISH (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm



THE BIRD (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm

CATALOGUE

1. Wing of no end (Acrylic on canvas) 159 × 110 cm
2. Wing of no end (Acrylic on canvas) 73 × 94 cm
3. Wing of no end (Acrylic on wood) 95 × 100 cm
4. Twin (Acrylic & charcoal on canvas) 100 × 95 cm
5. The Crow (Acrylic & charcoal on canvas) 100 × 95 cm
6. The Bell (Acrylic & charcoal on canvas) 123 × 110 cm
7. The Bird (Acrylic & charcoal on canvas) 123 × 123 cm
8. The Bird (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
9. The Bird (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
10. The Bird (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
11. The Bird (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
12. The Bird (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
13. The Bird (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
14. The Fish (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
15. The Fish (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
16. The Fish (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
17. The Bird (mixed media on wood) 68 × 68 cm
18. The Bird (mixed media on wood) 68 × 68 cm
19. The Bird (mixed media on wood) 68 × 68 cm
20. The Bird (mixed media on wood) 68 × 68 cm
21. The Bird (mixed media on wood) 68 × 68 cm
22. The Bird (mixed media on wood) 68 × 68 cm
23. The Bird (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
24. The Bird (mixed media) 55 × 36 cm
25. The Bird (mixed media) 55 × 36 cm
26. The Bird (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
27. The Bird (mixed media) 78 × 59 cm
28. Signal (Acrylic & charcoal on canvas) 366 × 184 cm
29. Signal (Acrylic & charcoal on canvas) 366 × 184 cm



THE BELL (Acrylic & charcoal on canvas) 100 × 95 cm



- 1947 Born in Calcutta
1969 Graduated from Indian College of Art
(R B University) Calcutta

ONE MAN EXHIBITION

- 1972 Birla Academy Calcutta
1973 Triveni Kala Sangam New Delhi
1974 Gallery "Les Hirondelles" Geneve, Switzerland
1975 Triveni Kala Sangam New Delhi
Gallery Atlantis Ex-En-Provence France
1976 Gallery Denbarg, Geneve, Switzerland
1977 Decor Art Gallery Calcutta
1978 Triveni Kala Sangam New Delhi
1979 Walburgisschule Werl West Germany
Max Muller Bhaban Calcutta
1980 National Museum Singapore
Triveni Kala Sangam New Delhi
1981 Max Muller Bhavan Calcutta
Triveni Kala Sangam New Delhi
1983 Calcutta Art Gallery Calcutta
Jehangir Art Gallery Bombay
Kreissparkasse Ludwigsburg Germany
Volkshochschule Essen Germany
1985 Painters Home Gallery Calcutta
1987 Birla Academy Calcutta
1988 IDM Gallery Munich Germany
St Paulus Fastelte Ludwigsburg Germany
1989 Jehangir Art Gallery Bombay
The Gallery Madras
1990 Indian Museum Calcutta
Jehangir Art Gallery Bombay
Sridharani Art Gallery New Delhi
1991 Artage Gallery Calcutta
La Gallerie Dhaka Bangladesh

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1969 Arts and Artists Calcutta
1970 Calcutta Painters Calcutta and Bombay
Epar Bangla Opar Bangla Calcutta
1971 Calcutta Painters New Delhi
1975 Gallery Kunsthau Stutgart Germany
Silver Jubilee Exhibition Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi
Inaugural show Decor Art Gallery Calcutta

- 1977 Gallery 26 New Delhi
1985 Graphic Art in India Since 1950
1987 Indians Drawings Today Jehangir Art Gallery Bombay
1989 Centenary invitees show of Bombay Art Society
1990 300 years of Calcutta show by Birla Academy
1991 Art for Spastics Auction Madras
1991 "The Downtrodden and we" by Lalit Kala Akademi
1992 Silver Jubilee exhibition of Birla Academy Calcutta

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

- 1985 III Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh
1986 II International Biennale Havana Cuba
1990 II International Biennale Ankara Turkey
1991 VII International Triennale India New Delhi
1991 Visited United States under the auspices of the USA,
and visited England under the sponsorship of
British Council
1992 "To Encounter Others" in Kassel, Germany
SATTOMO Museum, JAPAN

WORKSHOPS

- 1982 Poster workshop in British Council Calcutta
1983 All India Painting workshop of Max Muller Bhavan
1988 Workshop in Horniman Museum London
1990 Indo-German Artists camp at Max Mueller Bhavan
Calcutta
Painting workshop in Coonoor Madras
1991 Advance Lithography workshop with Tamarind
Institute USA and Lalit Kala Akademi Madras

AWARD

- 1977 Awarded by Birla Academy Calcutta
1978 Awarded by State Lalit Kala Akademi West Bengal
1979 Awarded by AIFACS New Delhi

ART ORGANIZATIONAL WORKS

- 1969 Founder member Art and Artists Calcutta
1970 Joined Calcutta Painters Calcutta
1972 Jt Secretary Calcutta Art Fair
1974 Member CIRCA Geneve Switzerland
1976 Founded College of Visual Arts Calcutta
1984 Founded Arts Acre an artists Village Calcutta

PUBLICATIONS

- 1976 Edited with Shakti Chattopadhyay Anarchy and
the Blue
1977 Published ARTISTS a collection of wood-cut prints
1981 Editor Art-Today a journal on movement of
contemporary visual arts in India
1983 Edited Portfolio The eyes of Time a collections
of drawings

PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

- National Gallery of Modern Art New Delhi
Lalit Kala Akademi New Delhi
Govt College of Art New Delhi
U P State Lalit Kala Akademi
W B State Lalit Kala Akademi
Chandigarh Museum
Punjab University
NCERT New Delhi
Birla Academy Calcutta
Air India
Taj Hotel
Times of India
W H O Geneve
Kratel SA Stuttgart Germany
Fukuoka Collections Japan etc...

STUDIO

The Painters Home Gallery : 37/C College Row
Calcutta-700 009, Phone : 311372



THE BIRD (mixed media) 55 × 36 cm