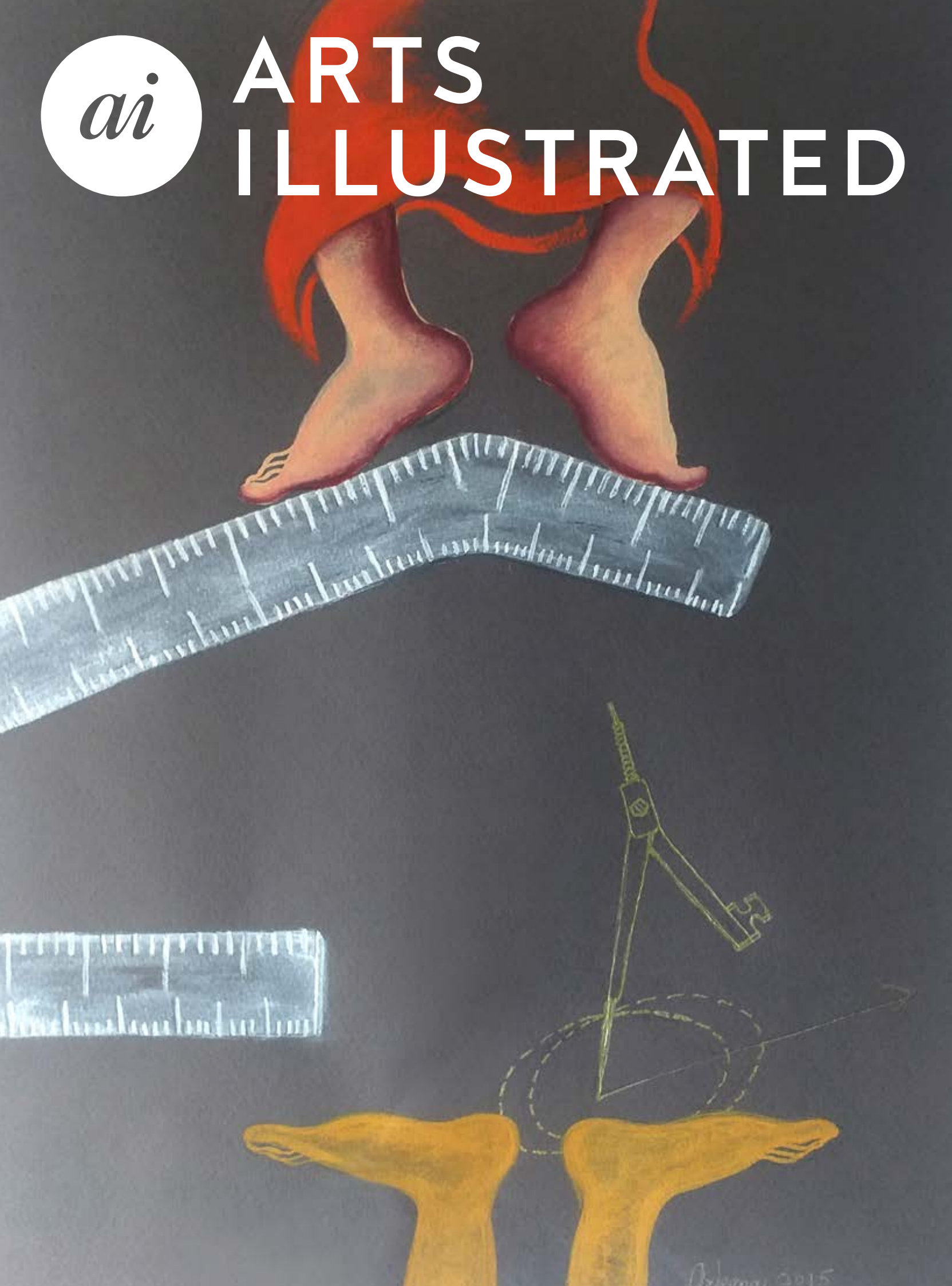




# ARTS ILLUSTRATED



Byron 2015



Sales Offices

*Chennai*  
127 T.T.K. Road, Alwarpet,  
Chennai 600018  
phone +91 82203 08777  
phone +91 44 4216 5100  
sales@artsillustrated.in

*Coimbatore*  
Jenney's Residency  
Opp CIT Avinashi Road,  
Coimbatore Aerodrome Post,  
Coimbatore 641014  
phone +91 82203 08777  
sales@artsillustrated.in

*Abu Dhabi*  
Flat No. 701, 7th Floor,  
H.E.Shaikh Tahnoon Bin Moh'd  
Al Nahyan Building, (Arab Bank  
Building), Al Nasr Street,  
Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.  
phone +97 15631 89405  
sales@artsillustrated.in

*Singapore*  
No. 1, Kim Seng Promenade,  
12-01 Great World City (East  
Tower), Singapore 237994  
sales@artsillustrated.in

Views and opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of LA 5 Global Publications, its publisher and/or the editor. It is always our endeavour to verify the information published but we do not take any responsibility for the absolute accuracy of the information provided. The publication, the publisher and editor do not accept any responsibility or liability for any investment or other decisions taken by readers on the basis of information provided herein.

The views expressed by the writers, key contributors, columnists are their own. The publication, the publisher and editor do not accept any responsibility or liability for any investment or other decisions taken by readers on the basis of information provided herein.

Rights of literary content reserved. Artistic elements are meant exclusively for the purpose of fair dealing. Due credit has been given to the extent possible. The publisher claims no rights over artistic elements unless and to the extent expressly claimed by it.

The mark Arts Illustrated is a trademark of LA 5 Global Publications. 2014 © LA 5 Global Publications. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part, without written permission, is strictly prohibited. Arts Illustrated is not responsible for unsolicited material.

RNI reg no. TNEG/2013/51944

*Publisher & Chairman*  
Vincent Adaikalraj

*Editor*  
Praveena Shivram  
*Subeditor*  
Vani Sriranganayaki Vanamamalai

*Senior Graphic Designer*  
Chenchudar Chellakannu

*Copy Editor*  
Sethulakshmy S Nayar

*Editorial Coordinator*  
Moksha Kumar

*Administrative Officers*  
Ramakrishnan

*Sales and Marketing Head*  
Anu Sasi

*Operations Manager, Art Houz Gallery*  
Bridget Shibu

*Administrative Manager, Art Houz Gallery*  
Jayanthi Shegar

*Gallery Assistant, Art Houz Gallery*  
Atreyee Bhattacharjee

*Graphic Designer, Art Houz Gallery*  
Santhosh Kumar

*Sales Head, South*  
Felix Raju

*Published by*  
LA 5 Global Publications  
#127, T.T.K. Road, Alwarpet,  
Chennai 600018, India  
phone +91 44 4216 5100  
info@artsillustrated.in  
editorial@artsillustrated.in  
sales@artsillustrated.in

*Printing*  
Srikals Graphics Pvt. Ltd.  
No. 5, Balaji Nagar, 1st Street,  
Ekkaduthangal, Chennai - 600097

Follow us on:

artsillustratedmagazine

artsillustrated

artsillust

artsillustrated.in

*Special Thanks*  
Arpana Caur  
Jojakim Cortis and Adrian Sonderegger

Julian Voss  
Ron Mueck  
Sadanand Menon  
Sam Mitchell  
Xavi Bou  
Yayoi Kusama

*Special Acknowledgements*  
artatatimelikethis.com  
Club Paradis  
Emami Art, Kolkata  
Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke, Mumbai  
L'Internationale  
M WOODS, Beijing  
Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University, Houston  
Museum of Modern Art, New York  
Sabrina Amrani, Madrid  
Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

*Contributors*

*Paul Abraham* is a banker, art patron and collector, and founder of Sarmaya Arts Foundation. He also serves as advisor and board member at Hinduja Foundation and Sanctuary Asia, and is currently the COO at IndusInd Bank.

*Poonam Ganglani* was most recently Managing Editor, Books, at a Dubai publishing house. She's currently a freelance writer based in India, focusing on books.

*Rehana Munir* is an independent writer based in Mumbai and writes in the areas of art, culture and lifestyle. She has a weekly humour column in HT Brunch and her debut novel, 'Paper Moon', was recently published by HarperCollins.

*Seema Prema Bhagyam Massot* has been navigating the waters of cultural management between France and India since 2009 and is now writing about experiencing art.

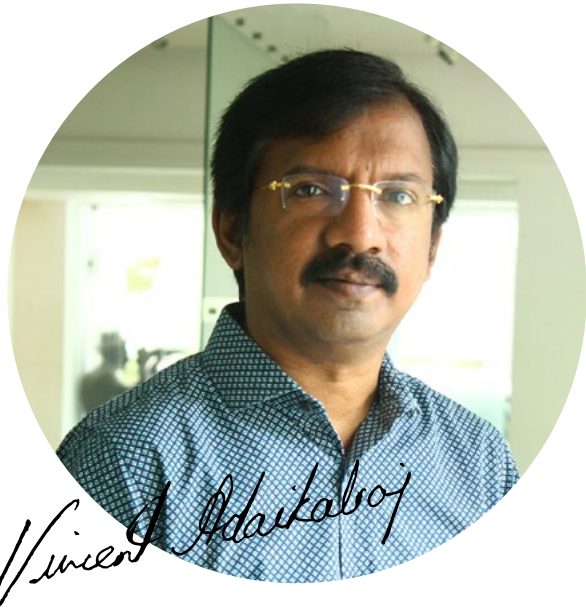
*Susan Mathen* is a brand strategist, deeply passionate about colour semiotics, design thinking and art history, and is the co-founder of www.hueandwhy.com.

*Publisher's note*

An 'epiphany' is often that decisive moment when a sudden realisation shifts our perspectives and subverts that delicate balance of the universe. As the entire world seems to be stuck in a vortex of powerful realisation, from where our seventh anniversary issue takes birth, 'Epiphany' seemed like the perfect theme.

In this issue, we look at what it means to not just have an epiphany but also how it converts into a viable, creative form of expression. We feature artists who give their epiphanies a dynamism that remains true to the fundamental order of things while threading into it the filaments of new thought, giving us the sense of that wonder, that space where the freedom of the new can exist without, and within, the boundaries of the old.

Vincent Adaikalraj





---

### *Editor's note*

---

There is something to be said about words that come in the end, the ones that shake your hand, give you a drink of water, and nudge you along a different direction, where newer words await. This is one of those moments. This is my last edit note for Arts Illustrated.

When we started work on this issue, we were already well into the lockdown way of life, the pandemic way of things, and the theme of 'epiphany' seemed perfect. Every single day was an epiphany, sometimes emerging from the drudgery of housework, sometimes from the endless horizon of the virtual world, sometimes from the relentless footsteps of fellow Indians leaving their indelible marks all over privileged lives, sometimes from a cyclone destroying the tangible and sometimes from moral ineptitude destroying the intangible – there was no space anymore for the epiphany of old, that arrived like a 'sudden realisation' in an otherwise commonplace existence. This epiphany was split into two, like an atom, the 'realisation' colliding with the 'sudden' in a nuclear fission of thoughts rapidly transmuting.

And that is what we have tried to capture this issue through our stories – the changing face of epiphany, its growing influence in our lives, and its deep-seated roots in our collective consciousness, whether we work with beauty, heritage, history, death, desire, colour or words. In fact, each of the stories spoke to me personally – as if, this journey that began six years ago, was culminating in a moment of shared comfort that only a sensitively built community can bring.

To my colleagues, writers, artists, readers, photographers, illustrators, printers, who have enriched this journey beyond what I could have possibly ever imagined, my deepest gratitude. Because of you, I could be. Through you, I could become.

As we celebrate AI's seventh anniversary milestone this issue, in the time of corona, I would also like to celebrate this farewell, also in the time of corona, for the gifts of friendship it has given me, the joy of unparalleled creative confluence, and the triumph of a lived story and its inevitable conclusion.

Like I said, there is something to be said about the words that come in the end. A full stop can only ever be as good as its next chapter.



Praveena Shivram  
praveena@artsillustrated.in

---

### *Cover Artist*

---



Last Supper-Prakriti, Oil on Canvas, 78" x 57", 2020

Bending Time, Gouache on paper, 11" x 16", 2016.

The front cover for this issue of Arts Illustrated on the theme of 'Epiphany' features one of my older paintings, titled 'Bending Time'. All artists, writers, yogis, dream of bending Time according to their own dreams and imagination. Time is, unfortunately, a given reality. The hands of the clock will not stop for emperors or beggars; each leaf will fall from the tree in its given time. Religion tells us to accept this with grace, but it is hard to implement in real life, especially when it comes to our loved ones, for we would be nothing without them. Only objects of art and books and music and films are able to survive beyond their makers, only their makers are able to 'bend' Time.

The back cover is more prescient to our times. 'The Last Supper', done in these dark, frighteningly silent, early months of 2020, laments the passing of all things beautiful and necessary for human life – trees, birds and animals, silent co-inhabitants of our planet which we have increasingly concretised and swallowed up. I still remember a time when hundreds of sparrows would come to our homes daily and fill our lives with their chirping – this has totally disappeared in Delhi. Finally, this is Nature's revenge on a voracious humanity.



*Arpana Caur*



Q&A  
Arts

## *In Search of a Witness*

In conversation with legendary artist  
Arpana Caur on all things epiphanic,  
on all things pandemic, and on all  
things artistic

*Praveena Shivram*



Day and Night, Oil on canvas, 5' x 7', 2009.



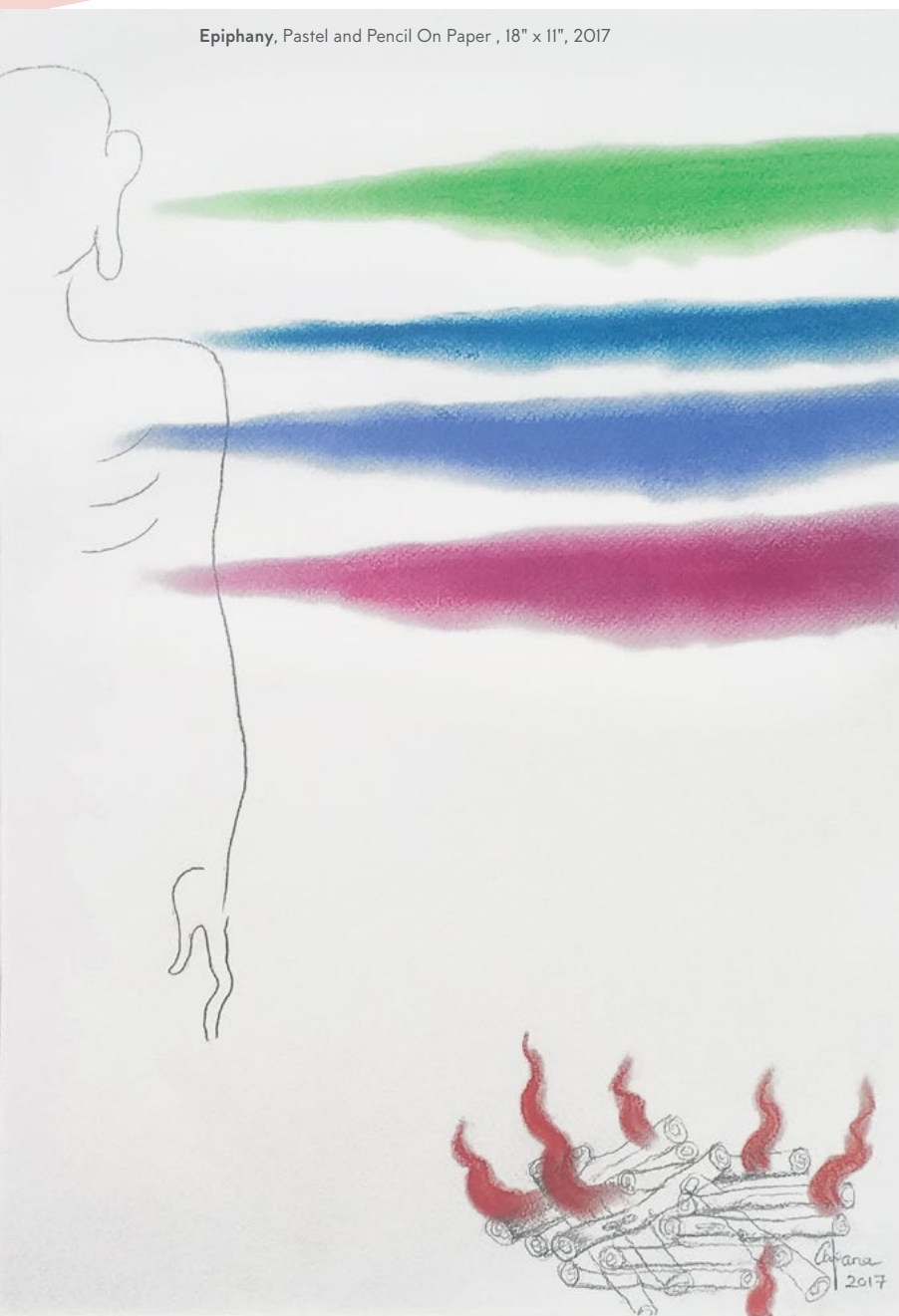
When the ease of the e-mail arrived and pushed the charm of a letter to the dusty attic, the transition seemed somehow quiet, weighed down by the gravity of the past, like mourners leaving a wake in silent groups. The idea of words and images travelling across virtual distances in binaries, in ones and zeroes, and not in stacks loaded on to trains and vans and aeroplanes, was so revolutionary, the 'inbox' such a treat, that no one noticed the empty post boxes. So when Arpana Caur managed to invoke that sense of an inland postcard being dropped through the slot of the letterbox by the door with an e-mail, you somehow knew, much like her paintings, that in this space, there is no one or the other, there is no this or that, there are no reducing binaries, but only the earthy scent of an unfolding horizon, the comforting grip of moist nostalgia that carries with it the soft cadence of the old and the rhythmic skips of the new. With Arpana Caur, contrasts are contained in the palm like a pebble, smoothed over time, that when

dropped into even an e-mail interview, creates ripples of change.

As we try to wade through the debris of an unequal society now glaringly manifest through this global pandemic and, for us, closer home, through this humanitarian catastrophe unfolding around us, it becomes imperative that we turn to an artist who has been witness to this widening rift that we see only now as it bursts at its seams, right from when the threads began to fray. We turn to Caur, who has, over the many decades of dialoguing with art – 'There has never been a gap of even a day when I did not paint. It is the greatest gift I was given and leads to unbelievable self-discovery and new challenges every day!' – also managed to coalesce her own unravelling through it all, a valuable lesson for us today as we grapple with the personal and the collective, without the fulcrum of certainty, however fragile it was. 'Painting, for most artists, is always a release, a self-discovery and upliftment. Rarely does any artist think of the "returns", the only return being immense, unimaginable freedom and joy, which I too have been fortunate to experience, even in these very dark times when images of lakhs of migrant labourers trudging hundreds of miles on empty stomachs to their small hamlets. What can one do but weep for them and share a bit of the art earnings (of the past) with the free kitchens (langars) being run? One image I did a large canvas of in these times is *The Last Supper*, about the rape of our God-given natural resources that led to this crisis,' she says.

In an interview with Rajiv Mehrotra for his 'In Conversation' series, Arpana speaks with measured unhurriedness, like she knows the road of sentences is already laid out and getting to the words any quicker is not going to make its meanings any easier. That tone stayed through this interview, much like her artworks that sing softly yet powerfully, in a voice as inherently embedded in our skin as our mothers' lullaby transforming the terrifying darkness into an explosion of dreams.

Epiphany, Pastel and Pencil On Paper , 18" x 11", 2017



Ascension, 70"x48" , Oil on Canvas, 2012-Collection Swaraj Archive, Delhi



### Excerpts from the conversation

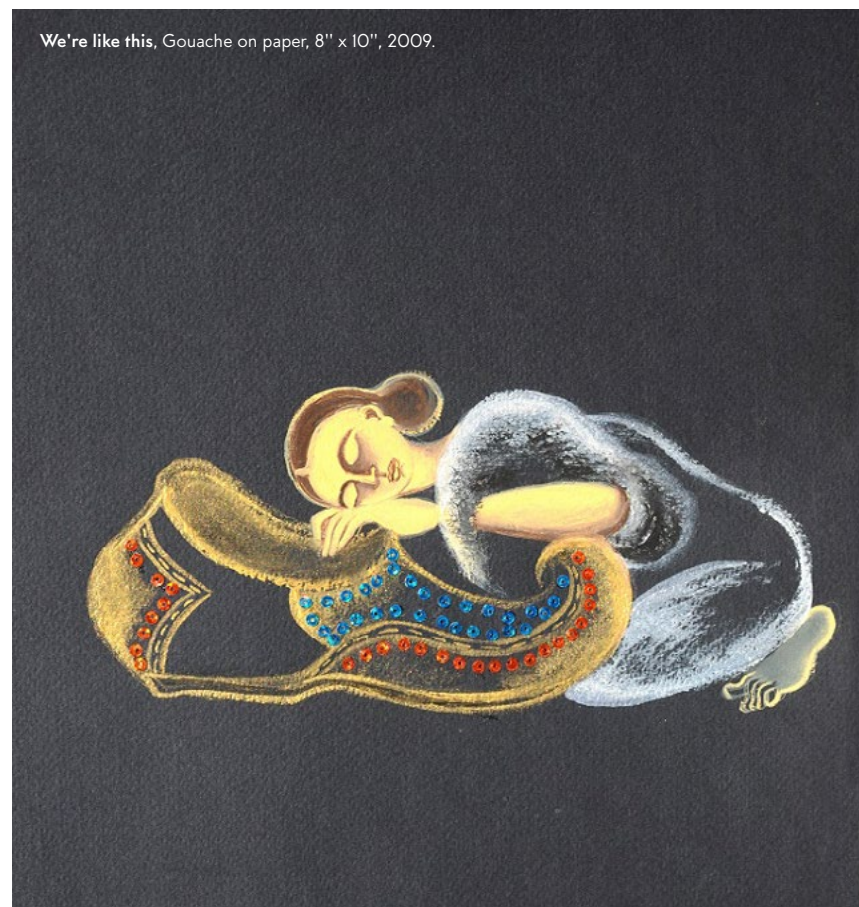
*You have been a self-taught artist, largely influenced by your mother and her writing; and you are a literature student yourself. Was there ever a conscious moment when you decided you wanted to pursue painting? Because when you began, art was not a viable career option. And it continues to be riddled with politics of the economy.*

I was never confident of my work. My early works were influenced by Amrita Sher-Gil and M. F. Husain, but the subjects were always contemporary, such as lack of an audience for art (Missing Audience series of 1980) or the socio-economic disparity (Maid Servant series of 1975). There were no collectors in Delhi when I began to show in 1974, and everyone seemed to go to Mumbai where mainly Parsi collectors were patrons even of young unknown artists. Artists from Chennai, Kolkata and other places did the same, I think! So after two shows in Delhi and one in London in F.N. Souza's wife's gallery in the 1970s, I took my work to Mumbai in 1980 and came back empty handed, as in, my paintings sold out! The press response, too, was overwhelming. It was a huge injection of confidence which I totally lacked, and I began to go back to Mumbai every two or three years.

*For many of us, this pandemic has come as a rude awakening, of how dysfunctional our systems are and how broken society is. But for someone who has actively engaged in the politics of socio-economic identities and the environment, does this pause in the world seem like a reaffirmation of all that you have spoken about through your work?*

I began my Environment Series in 1988 when I saw my Delhi change from a quiet languorous city to one of chaotic construction, tree-cutting and greed. It has been 32 years, now, of witnessing. In my first work in the series, *Green Circle*, I took the Sita myth where she





draws her own green circle in the middle of crazy traffic, construction and pollution. Now we are choking. After which, there were many Dhartis and Prakritis and free, non-commercial murals in Delhi, Bengaluru and Kathmandu. Also, my mother and I have fought court cases for trees and parks, in the Supreme Court, High Court, the Green Tribunal, and succeeded half the times at the cost of immense time and energy, but one is driven to actively participate and not just paint.

Now, staring us in the face in 2020 is the loss of our beloved National Museum with its huge undocumented collection and the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, to office spaces in one of the greenest iconic areas of Delhi – the India Gate. This big decision to change land use was made by the government in the middle of the COVID crisis at the end of March. And I continue to witness and protest.

*Tell us a little bit about your Gouache paintings. How differently does space dialogue with you when you work on large-scale paintings as against the smaller Gouache paintings?*

I have always done Gouaches – drawings and etchings – from the very beginning, and that means for the past 50 years. As a large-scale painter who likes life-size figures and murals, a smaller format expresses images that are appropriate only for that format. I know instinctively. Images always flood my mind and I decide which one needs what kind of scale. Some images need large empty spaces of canvas, some need only that much and would not look good in a larger size. Somehow, I know!



*And, finally, if you had to look back at your life and think of moments when you knew life as you knew it would change irrevocably, what would those moments be?*

If you ask about life-changing moments, I'm afraid they're not happy ones, and I would be the last person to expose wounds. My mother has written powerfully and movingly about these in her autobiography *Weaving Water*. Maybe art was the great therapy for me. It is the death of loved ones at an early age – my only sister, my grandparents – that led me to an acute consciousness of life and death that I continue to paint, for the past three decades, as the 'Day and Night' series. These memories remain with you like shadows, even as you enjoy your painting, your walks, your trips to ancient places, the rich flavours of each region of this country. So, for me, the freedom of the new always coexists with the boundaries of the old.



Arpana Caur

All Images Courtesy of the Artist.



