

BHAVNA KAKAR PRESENTS

THE PERSONAL IS MYTHICAL

BHAJJU SHYAM
NEHA SAHAI
VIRAJ KHANNA

EXHIBITION DATES:

25 JULY - 18 AUGUST 2025

F 208, First Floor, Old M B Road,
Lado Sarai, New Delhi 110030

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The Personal is Mythical examines how contemporary artistic practices in India are engaging with and reorienting the mythic—not as a static or folkloric residue of the past, but as an insurgent mode of storytelling. It serves as a meditation between private memory and collective imagination. Positioned within a long-contested field of cultural production, the exhibition confronts entrenched hierarchies that have historically produced binaries such as “folk” and “high” art, “craft” and “concept,” and the “vernacular” and the “global.” In doing so, it asserts the capacity of myth to function as a living site of knowledge production, shaped by contemporary concerns and rearticulated through diverse artistic languages.

Foregrounding the work of Bhajju Shyam, Neha Sahai, and Viraj Khanna, The Personal is Mythical resists reductive taxonomies and instead presents an embodied, polyphonic articulation of artistic practice. The exhibition does not propose a homogenous fusion of indigenous and contemporary forms, but rather a strategic engagement with the socio-aesthetic exclusions that have marginalised non-canonical practices within dominant art discourses. It consciously avoids a simplistic celebration of hybridity for its own sake. Instead, it insists that the lineages of image-making in India—whether drawn from tribal, artisanal, or urban contexts—possess both conceptual depth and aesthetic vitality, and that their modes of narration are acts of memory, resistance, and invention.

Bhajju Shyam, a leading figure within the Pardhan Gond tradition, constructs intricate visual cosmologies that honour ancestral knowledge systems while remaining attuned to the exigencies of the present. His work operates simultaneously as preservation and provocation—insisting that oral storytelling and visual inheritance are dynamically evolving rather than fixed in time.

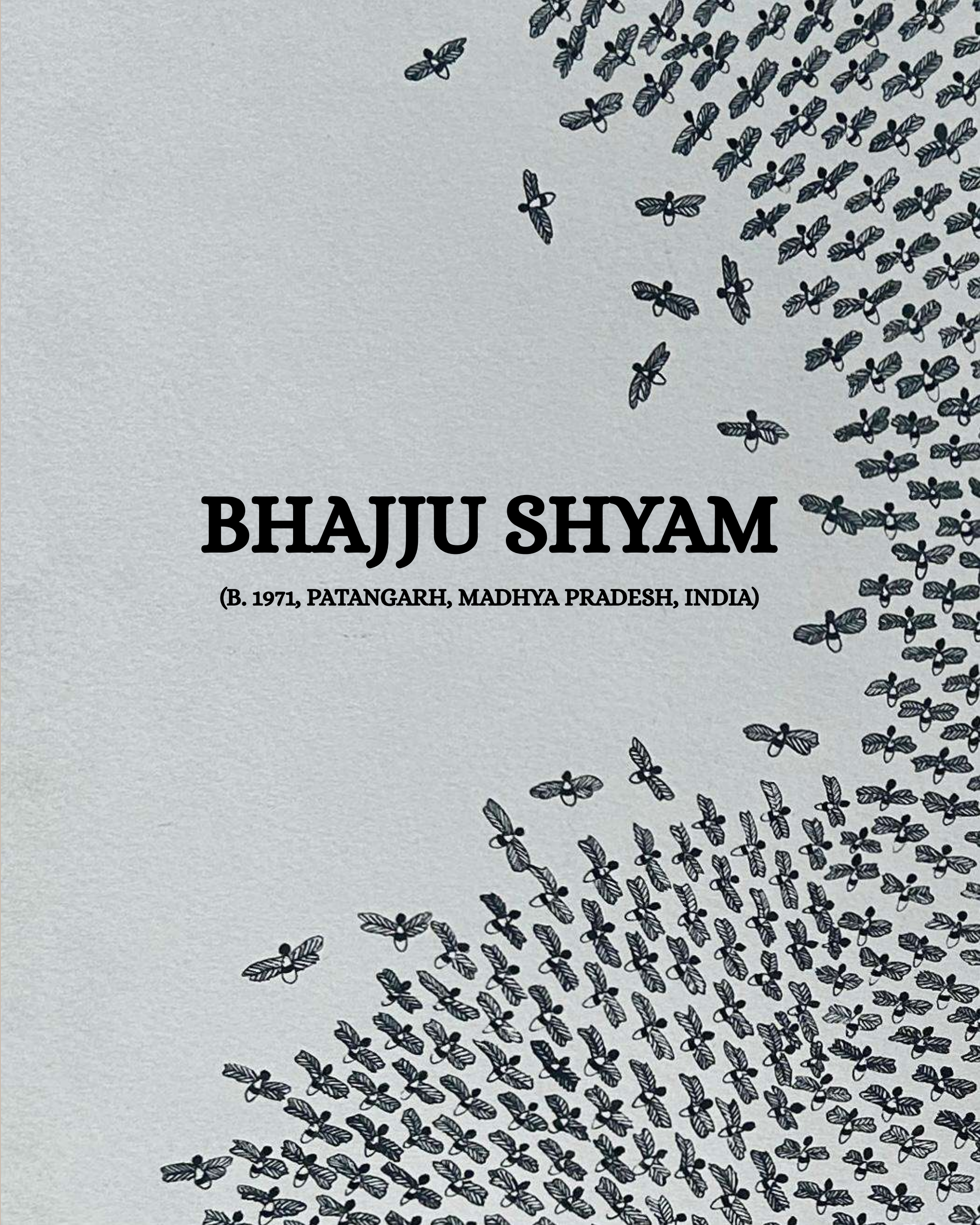
Neha Sahai, by contrast, inhabits a more introspective and surreal terrain, employing watercolour, ink, and oil to depict liminal feminine worlds where memory, stillness, and dream converge. Her reimagined goddesses and moonlit figures defy patriarchal idealisation, asserting instead a tender, radical femininity rooted in embodied poetics and emotional intelligence.

Viraj Khanna's practice draws from the overlapping domains of textile, performance, and post-pop collage. His use of masks, stitching, and fragmented forms speaks to the constructed nature of identity itself, suggesting that selfhood—like myth—is performative and contested. Khanna interrogates the very notion of the “authentic” as it has been shaped by consumer culture, modernity, and inherited ideologies.

Through these divergent yet dialogic practices, *The Personal is Mythical* articulates a curatorial framework that honours difference without instrumentalising it. It refuses to reduce the “traditional” and the “contemporary” into binary oppositions and instead posits the mythic as a critical methodology—one that enables artists to grapple with rupture, reclaim marginalised histories, and forge new iconographies. The exhibition contends that myth, far from being a retreat into fantasy, functions as a grammar for reworlding through memory, resistance, and transformation.

By centering these artistic vocabularies, *The Personal is Mythical* offers a powerful counterpoint to hegemonic art histories and affirms the urgency of reclaiming narrative sovereignty within an extractive cultural economy.

-Bhavna Kakar



BHAJJU SHYAM

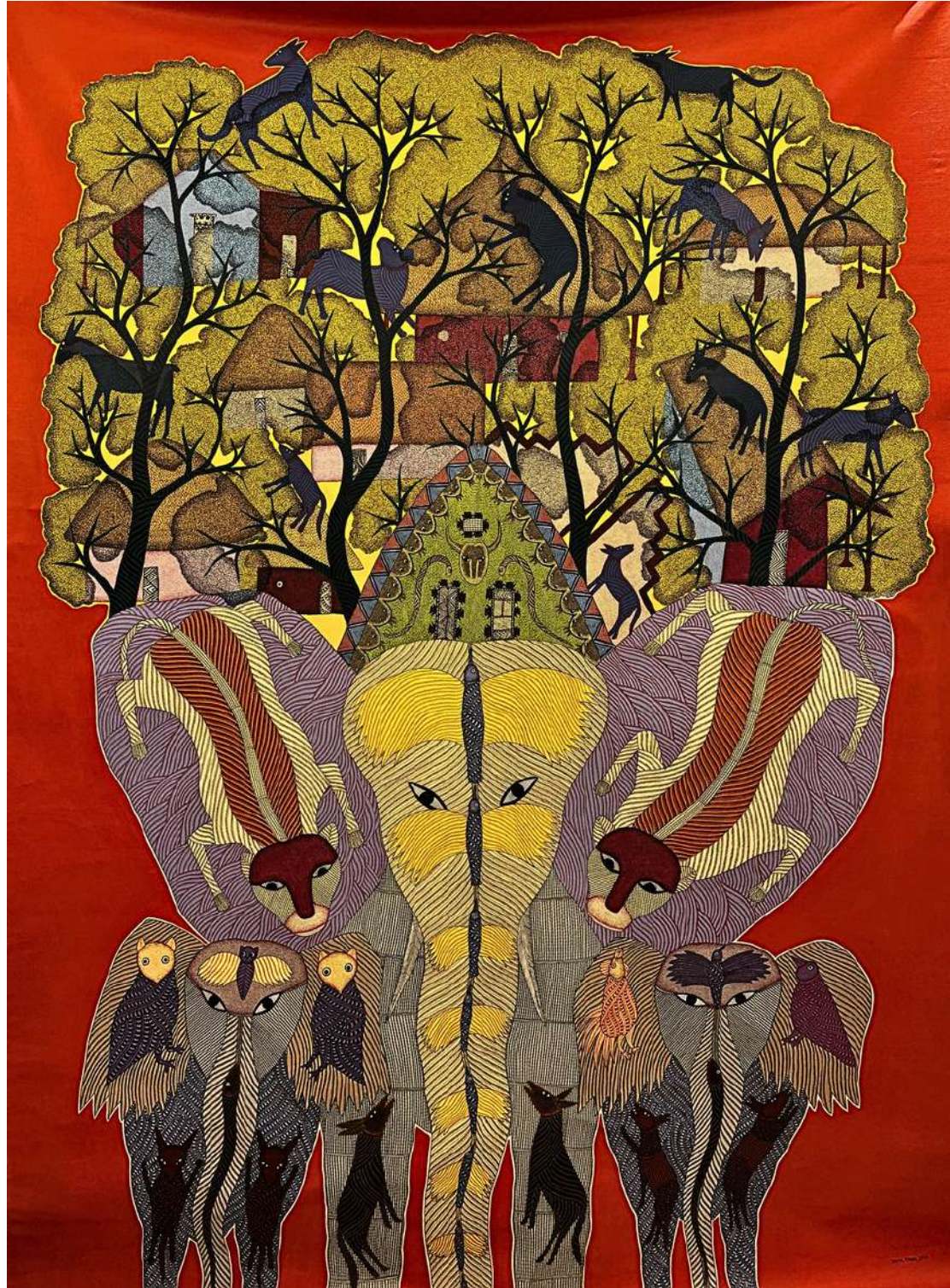
(B. 1971, PATANGARH, MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA)



Display image from the exhibition





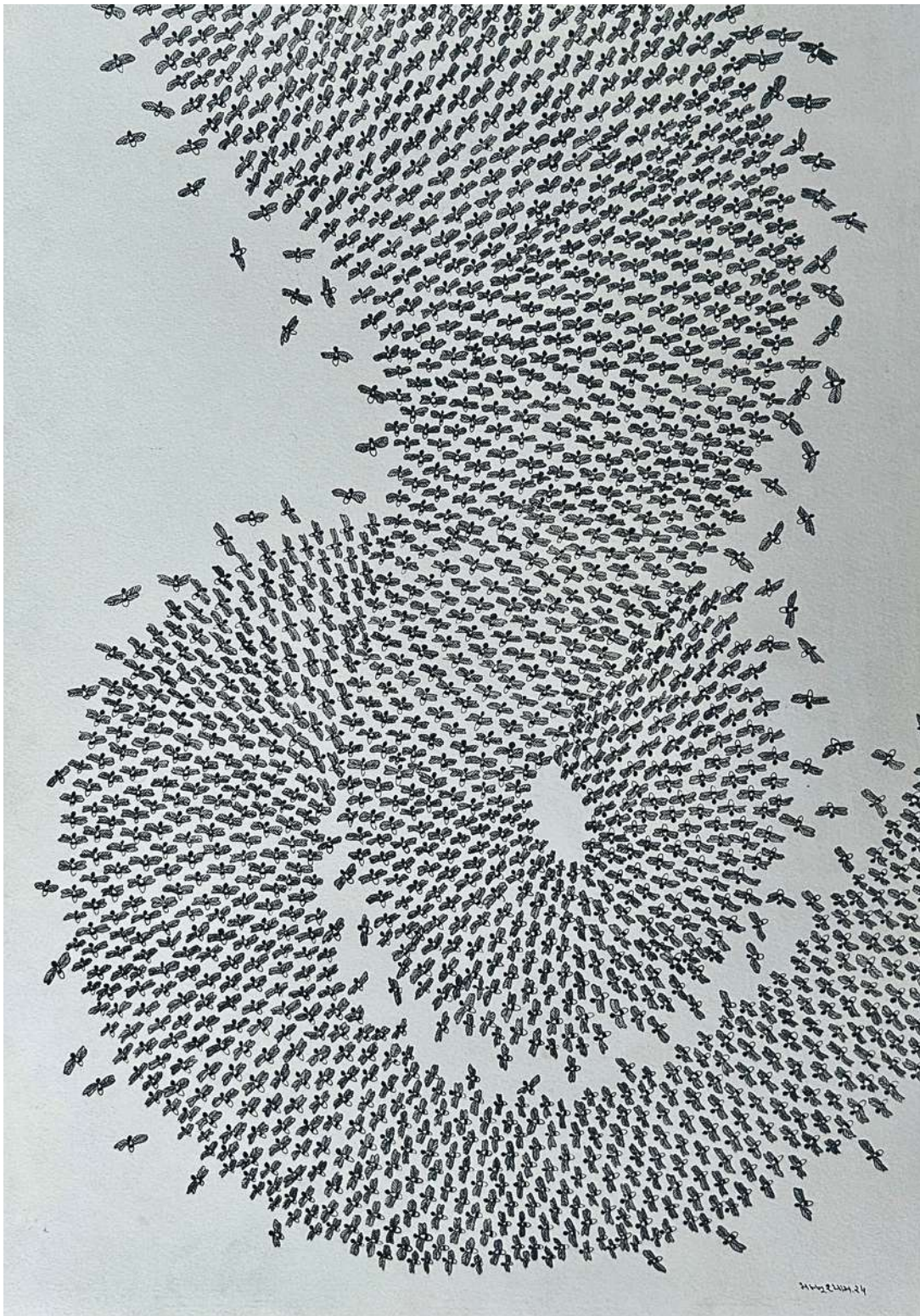


DERA KHOJ | ACRYLIC AND ROTRING INK ON CANVAS | 83 × 60 INCHES | 2022

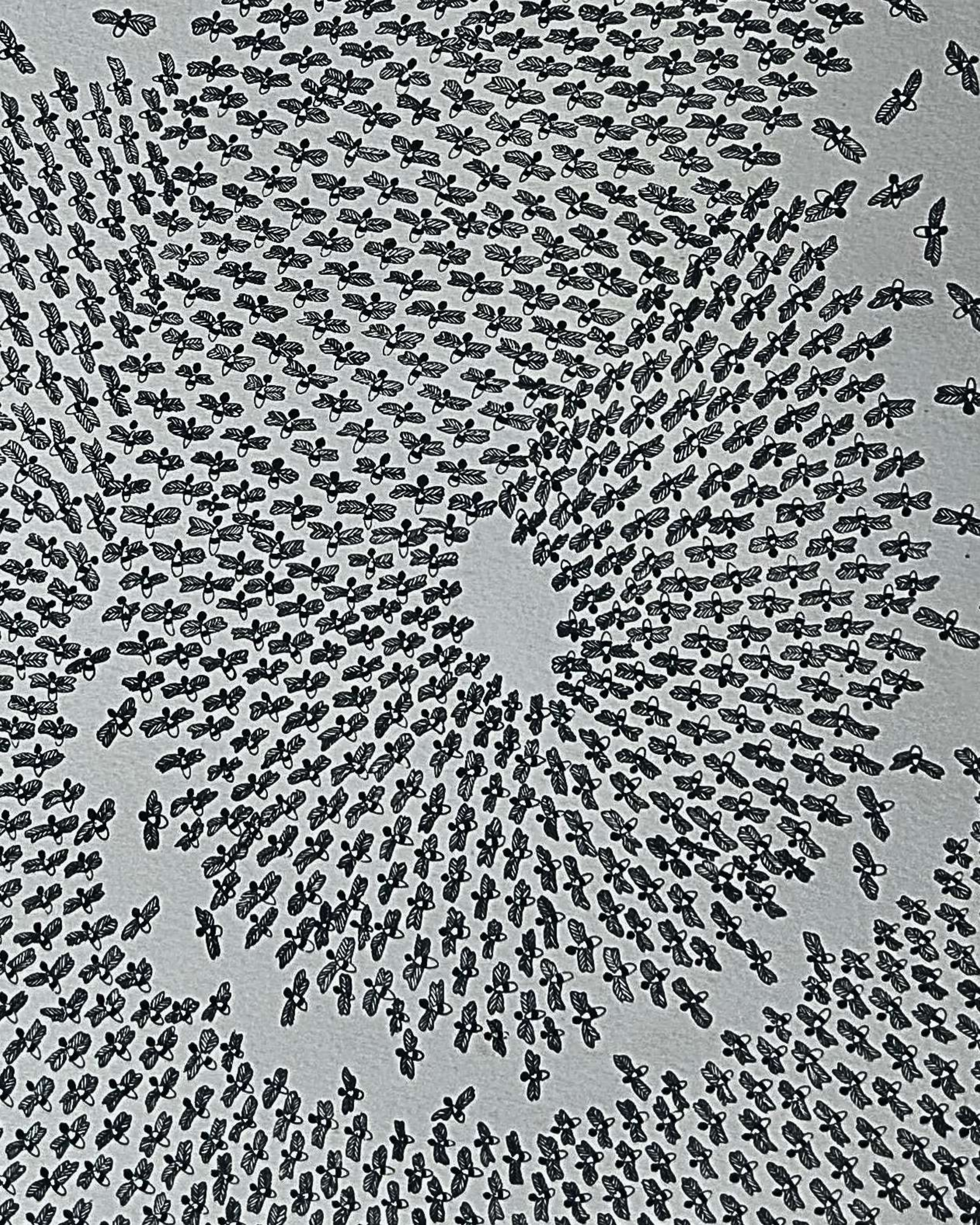








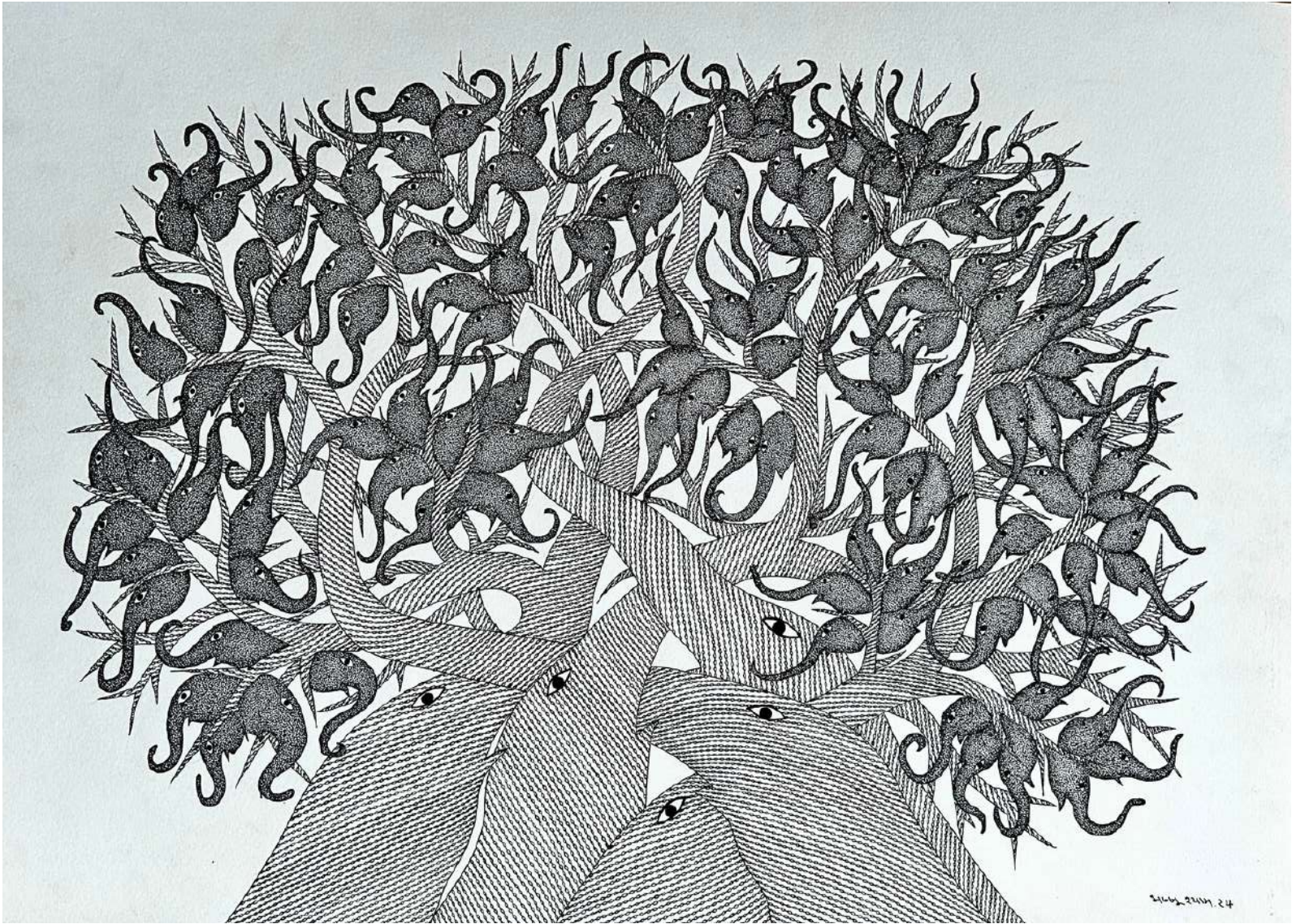
HAWA (MADHU-MAKHI) | ROTRING INK ON BLACK PAPER | 28 × 22 INCHES | 2024





SEHI (PEHRI) | ROTRING INK ON BLACK PAPER | 28 × 22 INCHES | 2024
SOLD



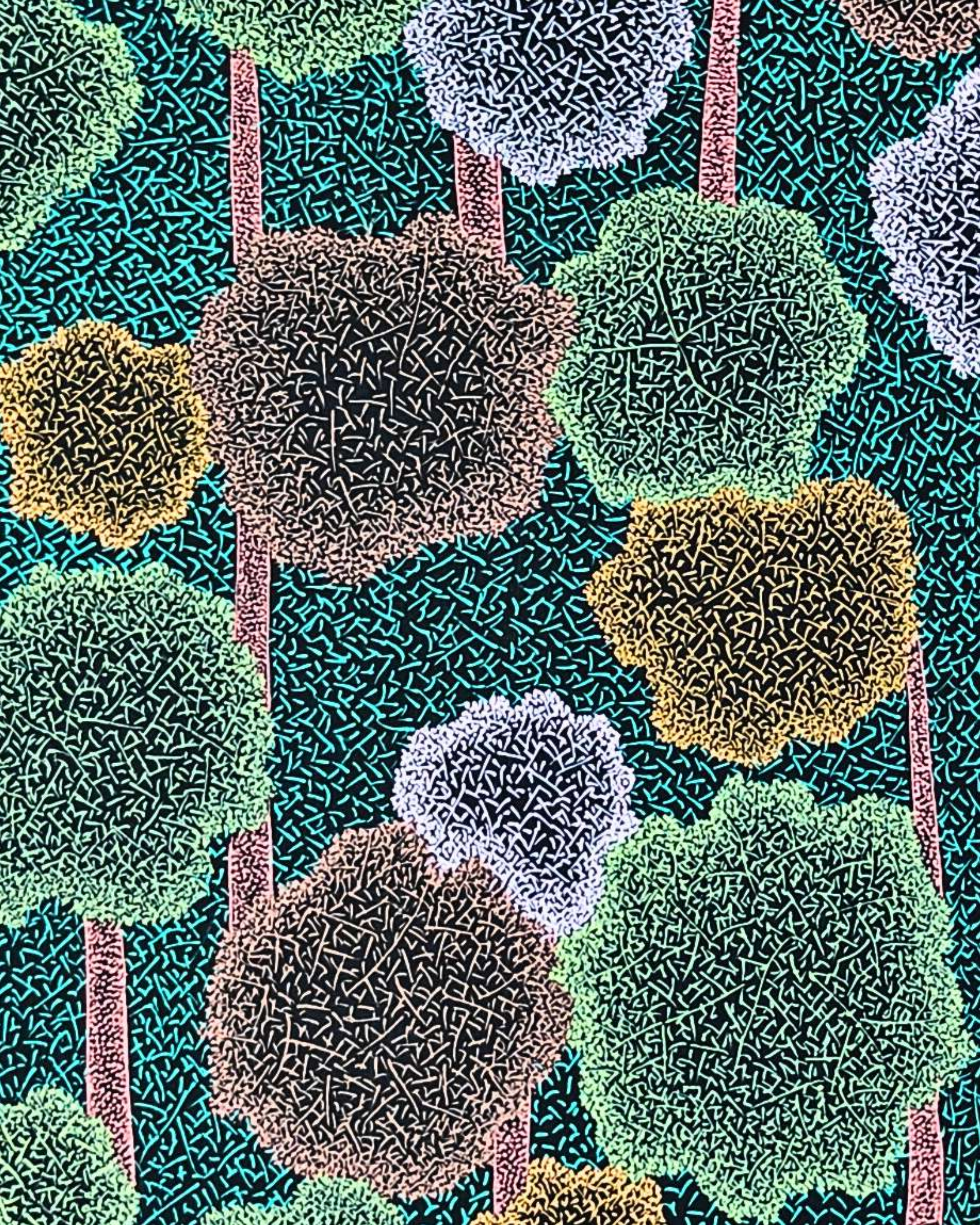


Gaj Rukhwa | Rotring Ink on Black Paper | 28 × 22 inches | 2024





PRAKRTI | ROTRING INK ON BLACK PAPER | 28 × 22 INCHES | 2024



NEHA SAHAI

(B. 1985, PRAYAGRAJ, UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA)



Display image from the exhibition



DEVI GOES ROCOCO (MAA LAKSHMI) FROM THE SERIES DIVINE FEMININE | OIL ON CANVAS |
57 X 44 INCHES | 2025





DEVI GOES ROCOCO (MAA SARASWATI) FROM THE SERIES DIVINE FEMININE | OIL ON CANVAS |
48 X 36 INCHES | 2025





SOME DAYS YOU BECOME A CHAIR, A CHAIR IN SOMEONE ELSE'S ROOM | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS |
48 X 36 INCHES | 2024





MRS. CHATTERJEE FROM THE SERIES FISH WOMAN | OIL ON CANVAS | 54 X 54 INCHES | 2025



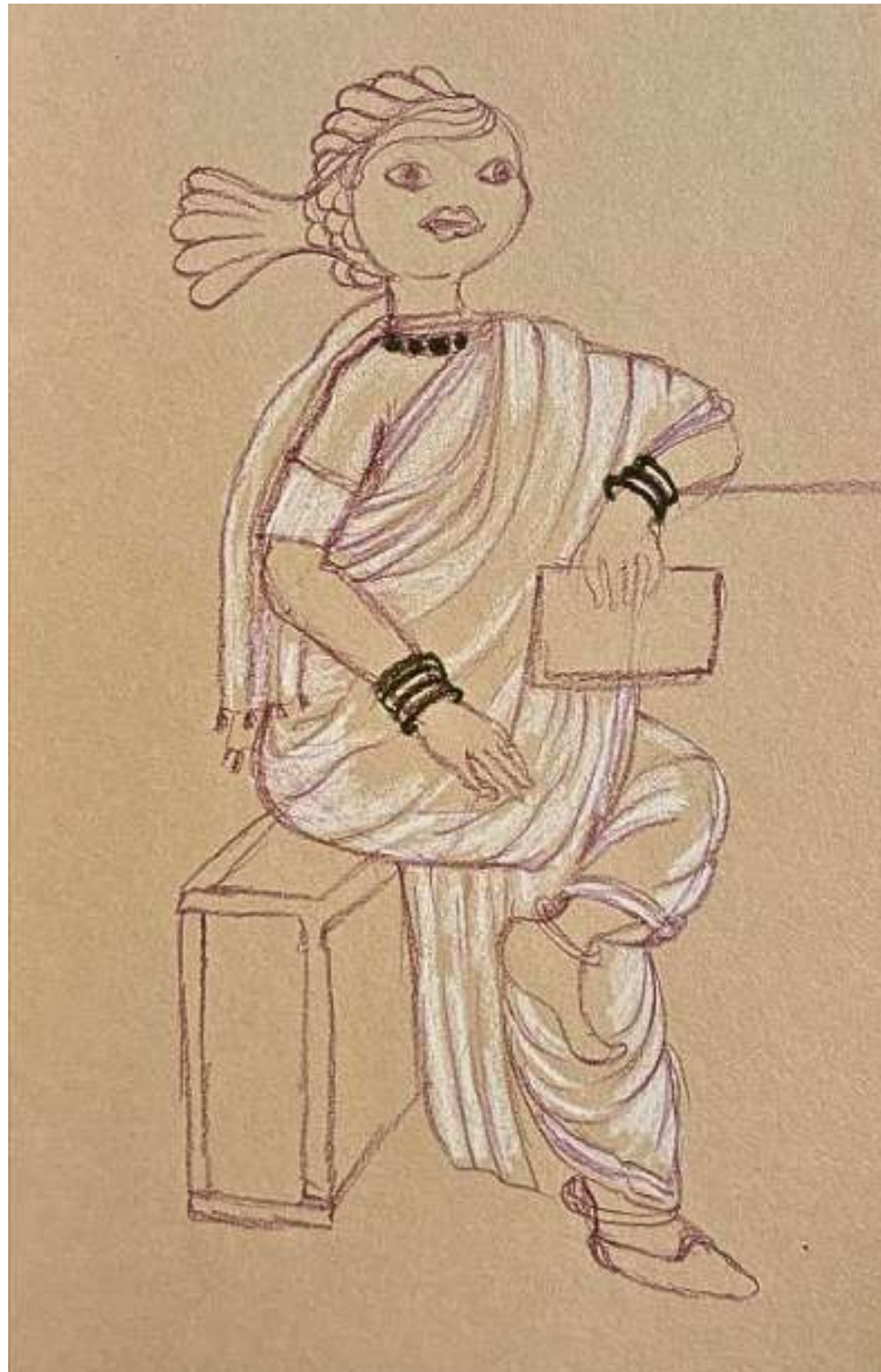


Neha Sahai



RENUKA DEVI FROM THE SERIES FISH WOMAN | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | 16 X 12 INCHES | 2025
SOLD





SULOCHANA TAI FROM THE SERIES FISH WOMAN | PENCIL ON PAPER | 8 X 5 INCHES 36 X 24 INCHES
(WITH FRAME)| 2023



DELNIA PESTONJEE FROM THE SERIES OF FISH WOMAN | PASTEL AND CHALK ON PAPER |
10.5 X 7.5 INCHES, 35 X 24 INCHES (WITH FRAME) | 2023



TO THE FRIEND I NEVER HAD FROM THE SERIES FISH WOMAN | PENCIL COLOUR AND CHALK ON
PAPER | 10 X 8 INCHES, 24 X 22 INCHES (WITH FRAME) | 2023





VIRAJ KHANNA

(B. 1995, KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL, INDIA)



Display image from the exhibition



UNTITLED | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | KHAHA MADE BY SEKH IDRISH | 8 X 10 INCHES | 2025

VIRAJ KHANNA

LATITUDE 28



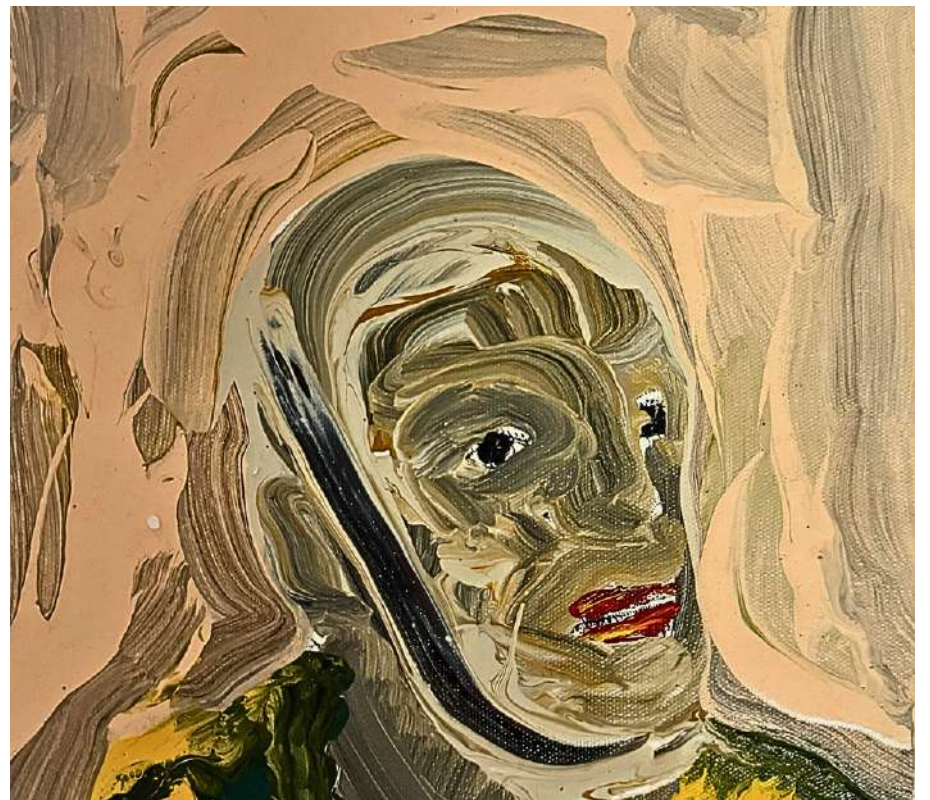
UNTITLED | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | KHAKA MADE BY SEKH IDRISH | 10 X 8 INCHES (EACH)

2025



VIRAJ KHANNA

LATITUDE 28



UNTITLED | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | KHAHA MADE BY SEKH IDRISH | 12 X 10 INCHES (EACH) | 2025



VIRAJ KHANNA

LATITUDE 28



UNTITLED | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | KHAKA MADE BY SEKH IDRISH | 12 X 10 INCHES (EACH) | 2025

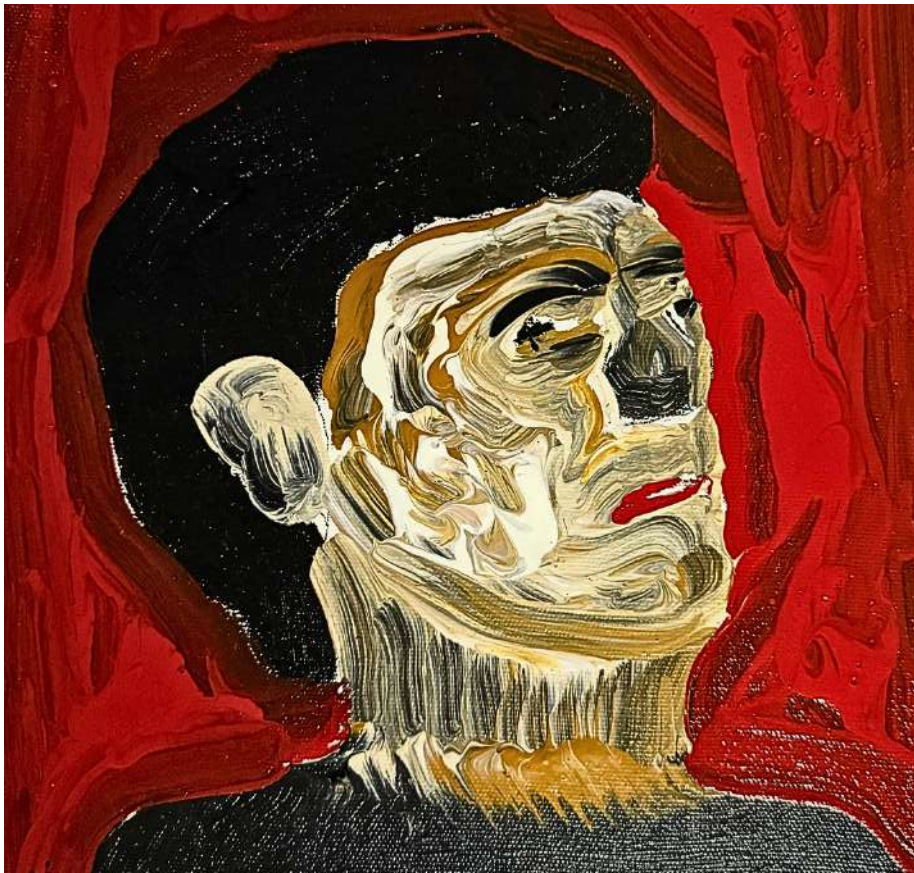




UNTITLED | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | KHAHA MADE BY SEKH IDRISH | 12 X 10 INCHES | 2025

VIRAJ KHANNA

LATITUDE 28



UNTITLED | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | KHAKA MADE BY SEKH IDRISH | 12 X 10 INCHES (EACH) | 2025





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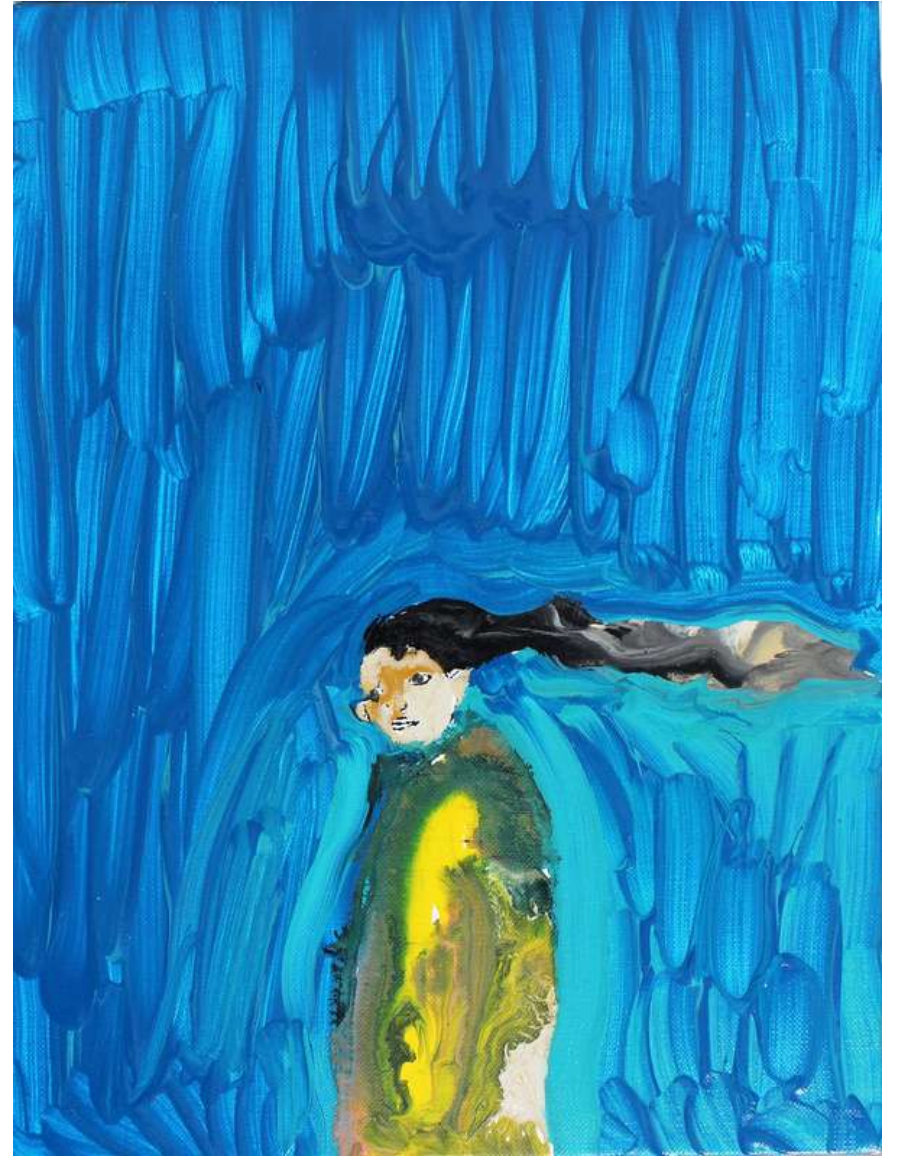






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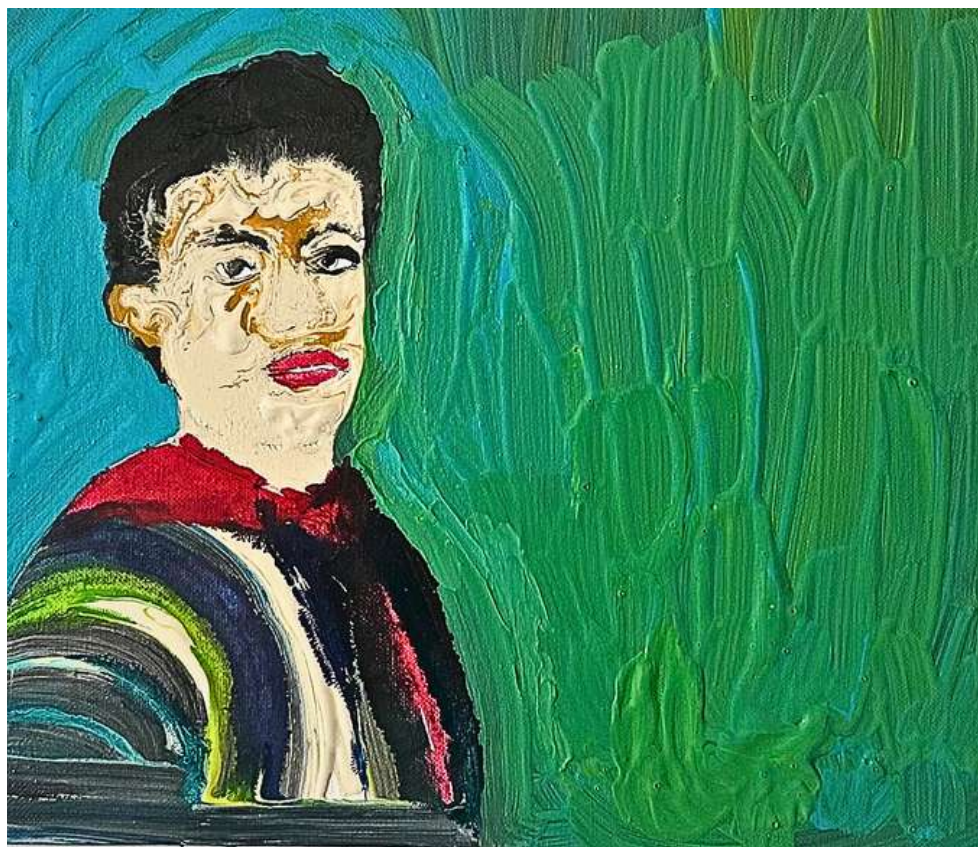
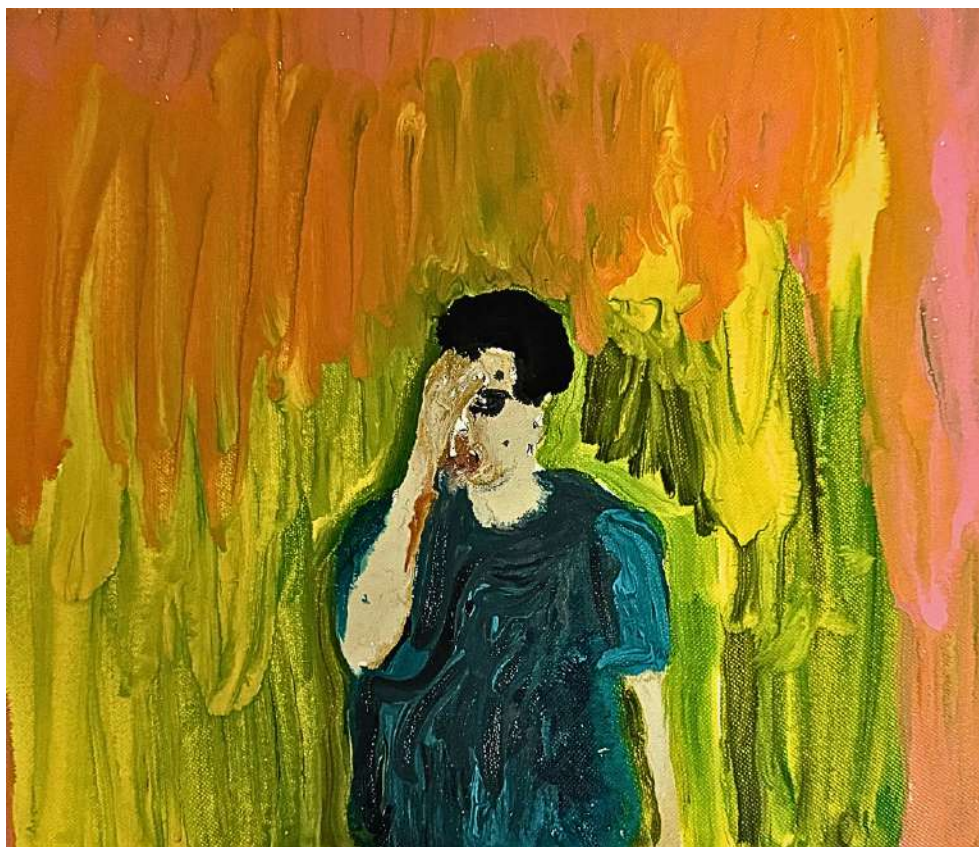


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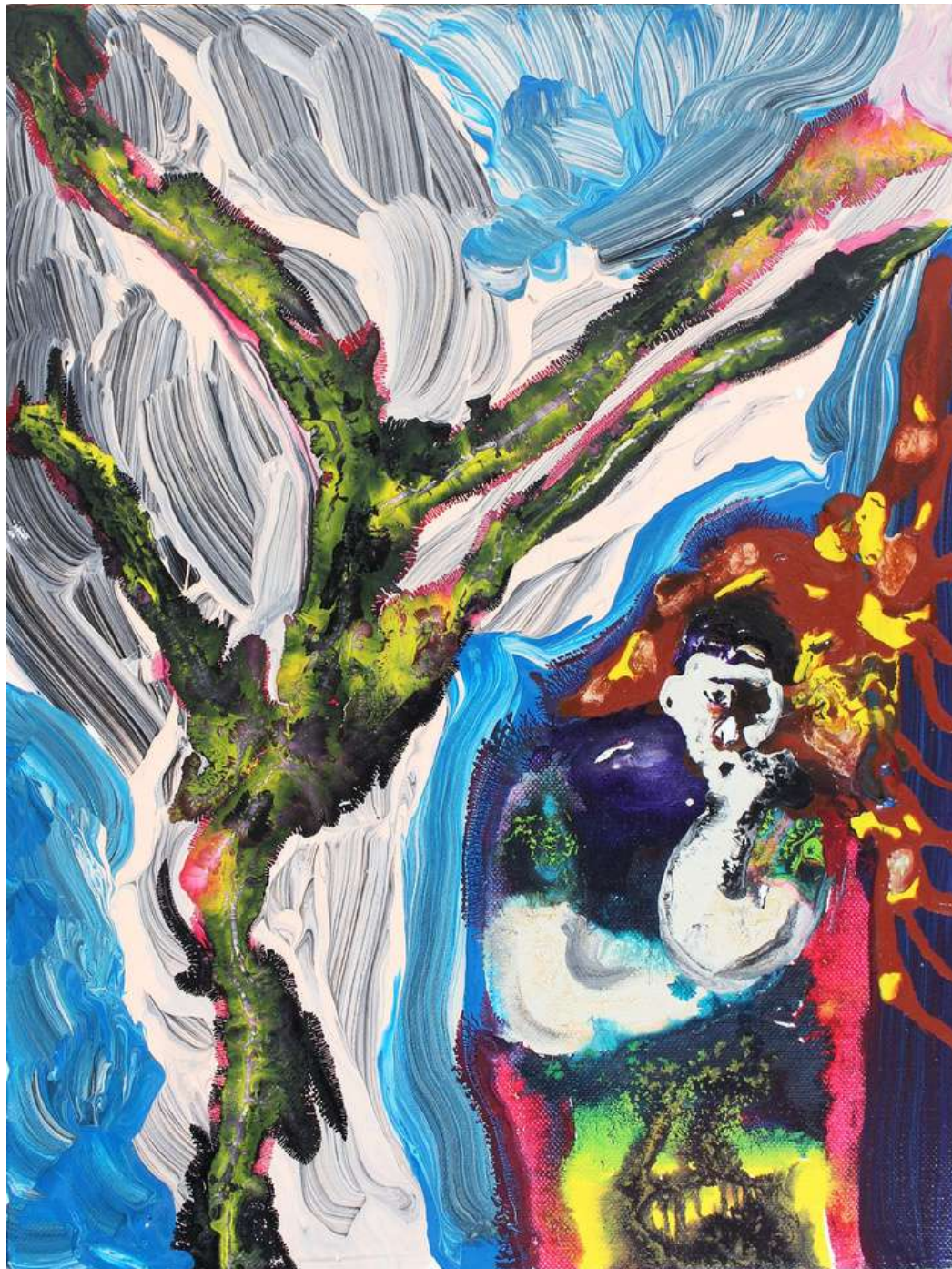
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UNTITLED | ACRYLIC ON CANVAS | KHAHA MADE BY SEKH IDRISH | 12 X 16 INCHES | 2025

BHAJJU SHYAM

(b. 1971, Patangarh, Madhya Pradesh, India)

Bhajju Shyam is a contemporary Indian artist from the Gond-Pardhan community whose practice is rooted in the rich storytelling traditions of central India. Shyam's narrative-based works are focused on transforming inherited tribal motifs into strikingly modern visual languages. He draws deeply from Gond myths, folktales, and the rhythms of nature to depict a world animated by ancestral spirits, animals, and cosmic forces. Storytelling is central to his art. He reimagines traditional symbols using intricate patterns of dots and lines, translating the world as seen through a Gond imagination into contemporary contexts. His work highlights how memory, perception, and cultural roots transform one's experience of place. His practice is also responsive to new influences and modern life, from cityscapes to ecological concerns. He believes there are new elements in his work but that its essence remains the same: a way of seeing the world through the Gond worldview. His approach underscores the continuity of cultural memory while allowing for reinvention and experimentation.

He began his journey apprenticing with his uncle, the legendary Jangarh Singh Shyam, in Bhopal before striking out on his own. His solo exhibitions include: Narrative Spinner (Kathakar) at To - Ji Temple, Kyoto, Japan, (2023); 'Untitled' at Ojas Art, New Delhi (2022); 'Van Katha' at Akriti Art Gallery, Kolkata (2022); Bhopal Literature Festival, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal (2019); Festival of India, Bonhams Gallery, Hong Kong (2018); Indian Summer Art, Vancouver (2017); and Maa Matre at Ojas Art, New Delhi (2016). He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions, such as: He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions, such as: 'The Personal is Mythical' at LATITUDE 28, New Delhi (2025), India Art, Architecture & Design Biennale, Red Fort, New Delhi (2023-24); Karmabhoomi at Artisans' Art Gallery, Mumbai (2023); India Art Fair with Ojas Art, New Delhi (2024); The Conference of the Birds at British Council and Ojas Art, New Delhi (2022); and Bookaroo Children's Literature Festival on 'The London Jungle Book', Sanskriti Kendra, New Delhi (2008).

He has executed major public art projects including Dilliwale, a 95ft x 35ft mural in New Delhi with St+Art India Foundation (2019), and Dancing in Unison, a 7-storey mural in Singapore (2021). His accolades include the Padma Shri by the Government of India (2018); Ojas Art Master Artist Award (2015); Bologna Ragazzi Award for The Night Life of Trees (2008); IBBY Honour List for That's How I See Things (2010); and State Award for Best Indigenous Artist by the Government of Madhya Pradesh (2001). His work is part of several notable museum collections, including the Horniman Museum (London), Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (Bhopal), National Museums Scotland, the Rebecca Hossack Gallery (London), and more.

NEHA SAHAI

(b. 1985, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India)

Neha Sahai's practice occupies a luminous intersection between autobiography, myth, and memory. Drawing from design and narrative traditions, her work conjures a visual folklore of quiet surrealism, where moonlit fish women, star-gazing moths, and cross-species romances unfold in still, dreamlike spaces.

Emerging at 33 into painting as her primary language, Sahai's practice resonates with feminist explorations of self and interiority. Her recurring Fish Woman figure, often draped in sarees and immersed in solitary rituals; reading, resting, or gazing into distant worlds; functions as a mythic double or alter ego. In these soft, sensorial landscapes, Sahai collapses distinctions between the remembered and the imagined, the personal and the archetypal. Her work aligns with a lineage of artists who have used figuration and myth to explore identity and interiority — from the narrative intimacy of Bhupen Khakhar, to the feminist poetics of Paula Rego and the introspective sensuality of Amrita Sher-Gil. Like them, Sahai weaves the deeply personal into visual vocabularies that transcend the self, creating spaces where memory becomes myth.

She has participated in group exhibition, such as: 'The Personal is Mythical' at LATITUDE 28, New Delhi (2025)

VIRAJ KHANNA

(b. 1995, Kolkata, West Bengal, India)

Viraj Khanna is a visual artist from India who primarily works in the medium of textile. Khanna's narrative-based works are focused on 'styling' the image. The artist is intrigued by eye-catching moments, which are particularly shared on social media. We save memories which are most exciting or meaningful to us in different ways and sometimes share them on social media. The artist reflects upon how people always share their best moments and underscore only the best parts of their lives on social media, thereby creating an image of perfection. The different materials available in embroidery help the artist achieve different moods. One can also highlight certain aspects of the image using 3D materials as and when required. For the artist, threadwork is far more subtle yet striking than Zardosi's work. The material helps the artist create a dream-like imagery, which is open to interpretation. There is a marked distinction in the final work produced when compared to the original image; this resonates with the artist in regards to the concerns of 'social appearance.' He is also enthralled by oil paints, which he uses on his canvas. These often depict figures with oversized or distorted features, which he says represents the impact of societal influences on our natural selves.

He pursued Business Administration at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles (2018) before embarking on his artistic career. He also holds a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree from the Art Institute of Chicago (2025). His solo exhibitions include: Gallery Art Exposure, Kolkata (2021); 'What My Mother Didn't Teach Me,' Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai (2022); 'What My Mother Didn't Teach Me Part 2,' Gallery Art Exposure, Bikaner House (2022); 'In My Fever Dream,' India Art Fair, Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai (2023); 'Brain Rot: The Life You Live?' Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai (2025); and 'Why Did I Say Yes?' at Rajiv Menon Contemporary, Los Angeles, USA (2025).

He has also participated in numerous group exhibitions, and fairs such as: 'The Personal is Mythical' at LATITUDE 28, New Delhi (2025), Art Dubai with LATITUDE 28, Dubai (2025); India Design with LATITUDE 28, New Delhi (2025); 'Love me Love my Dog' at India Art Fair, Kalakriti Art Gallery (2025); Space 118 (2022); 'Yours in Truth,' curated by Saloni Doshi, Snowball Studios (2023); 'Chivas Alchemy – Kaleidoscope of Time,' National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai (2023); 'Sutr Santati,' curated by Lavina Baldota, Rajiv Menon Contemporary (2024); 'Now Streaming,' Rajiv Menon Contemporary (2024); 'Like, Share, Subscribe,' HarpersBooks NYC (2024); '36 Paintings,' Harper's East Hampton, New York (2024), .

His work is part of several notable museum acquisitions and collections including The Bunker Art Space, Miami; The Diane Allen Collection; The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA); and The Michael and Susan Hort Collection.

ABOUT LATITUDE 28

Established in 2010, LATITUDE 28 has redefined contemporary gallery practice with its lateral, avant-garde approach. The gallery stands as a vanguard in nurturing, and showcasing emerging South Asian artists by championing experimental material-based practices while fostering meaningful connections among stakeholders -artists, collectors, patrons, arts professionals, and enthusiasts. By prioritising mentoring and capacity building, it shapes creative practices, through programs that drive cultural discourse across the region and beyond.

The gallery's commitment to inclusivity and accessibility makes it a critical nexus for cultural exchange, connecting artists with leading institutions worldwide. Through curated exhibitions that weave together art, history, and socio-political narratives, LATITUDE 28 facilitates an understanding of the forces shaping contemporary society. This approach ensures that each exhibition is a dynamic, immersive experience that engages and challenges audiences.

As an incubator of innovative artistic expressions, the gallery facilitates dynamic exchanges through site-specific artworks, artist talks, and immersive curatorial experiences, setting new standards for what galleries can achieve. Its influence in shaping artistic discourse and inspiring collections is felt across continents, making LATITUDE 28 an essential player in global cultural conversations.

Under the strategic leadership of Founder and Director Bhavna Kakar—also the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of TAKE on Art, South Asia's premier contemporary art publication—LATITUDE 28 has cultivated a robust network of collectors and patrons. This network extends deeply into the Global artistic ecosystems, bridging continental divides and enhancing cross-cultural dialogues.

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