



## Emami Art hosts 'Of Liminal Beings and Other Spaces' Curated by Ushmita Sahu

An exhibition that brings together five artistic practices that explore intangible, interstitial spaces, which allude to but also elude normative dualistic norms

**Kolkata, 31<sup>st</sup> July: Emami Art**, one of India's leading contemporary art galleries based in Kolkata is hosting an exhibition 'Of Liminal Beings and Other Spaces' curated by **Ushmita Sahu** will bring together five artistic practices that explore intangible, interstitial spaces that inform their practices, which allude to and elude normative dualistic norms. **Arpita Akhanda, Arshi Ahmadzai, Debashish Paul, Maksud Ali Mondal, Prasanta Ghosh** artworks will be on display from 31st July to 28th August, 2021 at Emami Art.

The title of the exhibition is inspired by Foucault's 1967 lecture/essay – 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', in which he rues that we are still governed by "oppositions that remain inviolable, that our institutions and practices have not yet dared to break down." By juxtaposing five distinct practices, the exhibition hopes to create a reflexive re-framing of cognitive and experiential identities, initiate new possibilities of encounters that provide alternative frameworks for thinking, consequently becoming a locus for transitions. Arpita Akhanda quests for identity in past/present, colonised/coloniser dualisms, while Arshi Ahmadzai focuses on women's private vs public chronicles via a language that negotiates text and image. Debashish Paul, who identifies as non-binary, grapples with the dominant male/female-gendered readings. Finally, Maksud Mondal creates nature-identical environments that foreground the cycle of life and death, while Prasanta Ghosh's fictional/factual narratives fluidly move between truth and non-truths.

"We are going through a significant time in history, a period of transition to the post-pandemic era. Waiting at the threshold between yesterday and tomorrow, we are unsure about our existence in the present moment. At this point, it was inspiring to see so many artworks exploring a liminal space in between the normative binaries. They present new and diverse ways of looking at the world. What fascinates me is the level of optimism and compassion offered by the artists. They bring me the ideas of hope and beauty in moments of crisis. I feel privileged to provide a platform for these bright, young artists and their magnificent works." Said Richa Agarwal, CEO Emami Art

"As a curator, I was looking for fresh perspectives on the precarity of the human condition today. Of Liminal Beings and Other Spaces traces the voices of five emerging artists collaborating with leading art institutions of the country and abroad. Maksud and Arshi, the Inlaks Fine Art Awardees, have been part of Five Million Incidents. Prasanta is working on his new project supported by Experimenter Generator. Debashis, the youngest artist of the show, is participating in Kochi Muziris Students' Biennale. Arpita is currently working as an artist-in-residence in Arau, Switzerland. When it comes to process and material, their works are experimental and courageous. It was worth the challenge to collate such a diverse range of visual language." Said Ushmita Sahu, Director & Head Curator, Emami Art

The exhibition is on view from 31st July to 28th August, 2021 at Emami Art 777 Anandapur, E.M. Bypass, Kolkata 700107 and can be also be viewed at [www.emamiart.com](http://www.emamiart.com)



#### About the artists:

Arpita Akhanda, born (1992) and brought up in a family of artists who migrated from Bangladesh during the partition and moved through many locations in India before settling in Odisha. Arpita grew up listening to memories and tries to negotiate self-identity through the lens of the past. Exploring the idea of identity, home, migration, she looks at her own body as a memory collector. Arpita completed her B.F.A & M.F.A. in painting from Kala Bhavana, Visva Bharati University, 2015 & 2017. Presently she works across mediums that include paper weavings, performance, installation, drawing, and video and

has been part of several national & international exhibitions. Akhanda has performed at Teertha International Performance Platform, Sri Lanka and Chittagong Art College, Bangladesh. She was an artist in residence at Piramal Art Residency 2019-20. Arpita Akhanda is a recent Emerging Artist Awardee for the 2020 extended support platform from FICA and Mrinalini Mukherjee Foundation 2021. State Award Fellowship in New Media from Prafulla Dhanukar Art Foundation, 2019 and is also a recipient of National Scholarship by CCRT Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India in Painting, 2016. She is currently a part of an artist in Residency program Arbeitsgruppe Gästeteilnehmer Krone, Aarau, Switzerland, in association with Khoj Kolkata. She lives and works from Santiniketan, West Bengal

Arshi Ahmadzai, born in Najibabad (Uttar Pradesh), graduated with a Bachelors in Fine Art from the Aligarh Muslim University and a Masters from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Her practice has focused on the role of women, particularly those that are bound within religious orthodoxies. Inspired by the texts of various poets and philosophers, Ahmadzai's artworks juxtapose image and text to comment on women and their roles, some in love and some victims to political terrorism. Ahmadzai was an artist in residence at 1 Shanthi Road, Bangalore, 2019. Ahmadzai was a recipient of the Inlaks Award in 2019 and has since exhibited in multiple exhibitions in India. She is a recipient of the Five Million Incidents grant from the Goethe-Institute, New Delhi 2020 and the Fine art award, Inlaks Foundation, 2019. Ahmadzai has had a solo outing Nafas (Isolation Diaries) at Blueprint12, New Delhi, 2021. An avid reader of poetry and philosophy, she not only questions patriarchy but demands that her voice is heard and accepted. Her works are in the collection of The Whitworth Museum, Manchester, U.K. She lives between Kabul and New Delhi.

Debashish Paul, born in 1994 in Nadia district in West Bengal, explores the problems of queer identity in a society dominated by heterosexual norms. After graduating from The Indian college of Art and Draftsmanship, Kolkata, Paul is presently pursuing a master's degree from Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. He seeks to expand and explore the tabooed conception of homosexuality by unveiling the body, treating it as a tender landscape, and generating new references to queer identities. Working in the method of automatism Paul's recent sculptural costumes and connected performances indicate no specific gender orientation, male or female, are, in fact, the sensible screens, which both conceal and reveal fragile emotions and desires, always in conflict with society. Paul was one of the winners of the Emami Art open call exhibition-2020. He is also part of the Kochi Student's Biennale 2020-2021 and Kala Sakshi Workshop 2020-2021.

Maksud Ali Mondal, born in Bankura, West Bengal, finished his B.F.A. and M.F.A. from the painting department, Kala- Bhavana, Santiniketan in 2019 and a semester from Royal Academy of Art, the Netherlands in 2016. He deals with biological and feral life in the current environment by observing, growing and transforming over time, interacting with found objects and everyday materials in his work. His site-specific installation "Nature Unconditioned" got an international award in the Kochi-Muziris Students' Biennale, 2019. He is the recipient of the Inlaks award 2021, Fica E.A.A. 2020



comprehensive support platform and the national scholarship from the M.O.C., India 2018. He has participated in an international residency in Sicily, Italy 2018, numerous group exhibitions in India and Serendipity art Festival in collaboration with FICA, Goa 2019. His recent works are deeply concerned critically and creatively with the ecological debates and crises surrounding us today. Maksud currently lives in Santiniketan, West Bengal.

Prasanta Ghosh (b.1986), since completing his Masters from M.S.U. Baroda in 2016 Ghosh has been practising an interdisciplinary and literary art practice. His practice integrates self-developed docu-fiction, isolated text, and discourse of sound, video and visuals entwined with each other. While his works take an Investigative approach, it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. Ghosh has participated in many national and international projects, including Random Variables, a group show curated by Ushmita Sahu in WNDX Festival of Moving Image, Winnipeg, Canada, with his short documentary named "Unsaid", 2019. He received the Generator Experimenter Labs grant from Experimenter Art Gallery for his project "Green is calling back the ancient lost Greenery" in 2020.

#### **About Emami Art:**

Emami Art, one of the most significant art institutions in the eastern part of India, is a key space for cultural production in the region. The organisation is focused on a future-forward, complex, multi-dimensional approach and steadfast in the advocacy of emerging, mid-career and established artists as well as an engagement with contemporary and historical material. The gallery aims to create dynamic, wide-ranging registers of exhibition-making and viewing. Deeply committed to promoting a regional, national and international agenda through innovative and alternative programming, emphasis on community and socially relevant engagements, institutional partnerships and more via a multi-year vision for the future, Emami Art is resolute to be a catalyst of change, research, innovation and inclusivity. Emami Art, Kolkata Centre for Creativity 777 Anandapur off EM Bypass. [www.emamiart.com](http://www.emamiart.com)