



Shambhavi
NEW DELHI

Mobile: +91 98715 63722
shambhavi.studio@gmail.com
shambhavisinghstudio@live.com



SHAMBHAVI

SELECTED WORKS

Shambhavi
2011



Panch Tatva, 2014
Cotton pulp and colour pigment
Artist Studio

Shambhavi

Shambhavi Singh is a Patna born, Delhi based artist practicing for over two decades now. She has shown extensively in India and abroad since early 1980s. One of the first artist of her generation to have representation in Europe, she has shown in Amsterdam, Vienna, Durban, Cape Town, New York and Singapore. Her art have been on view at prestigious venues like the Gemeente Museum, Arnheim, Tropen Museum Amsterdam, Pernegg Monastery, Vienna and the National Gallery of Modern Art, Delhi and Mumbai.

In India she has shown in all major cities and has been part of many public art projects. With strong connection with the earth and the farmer, her work is deeply spiritual and an invocation to silence, contemplation and action.

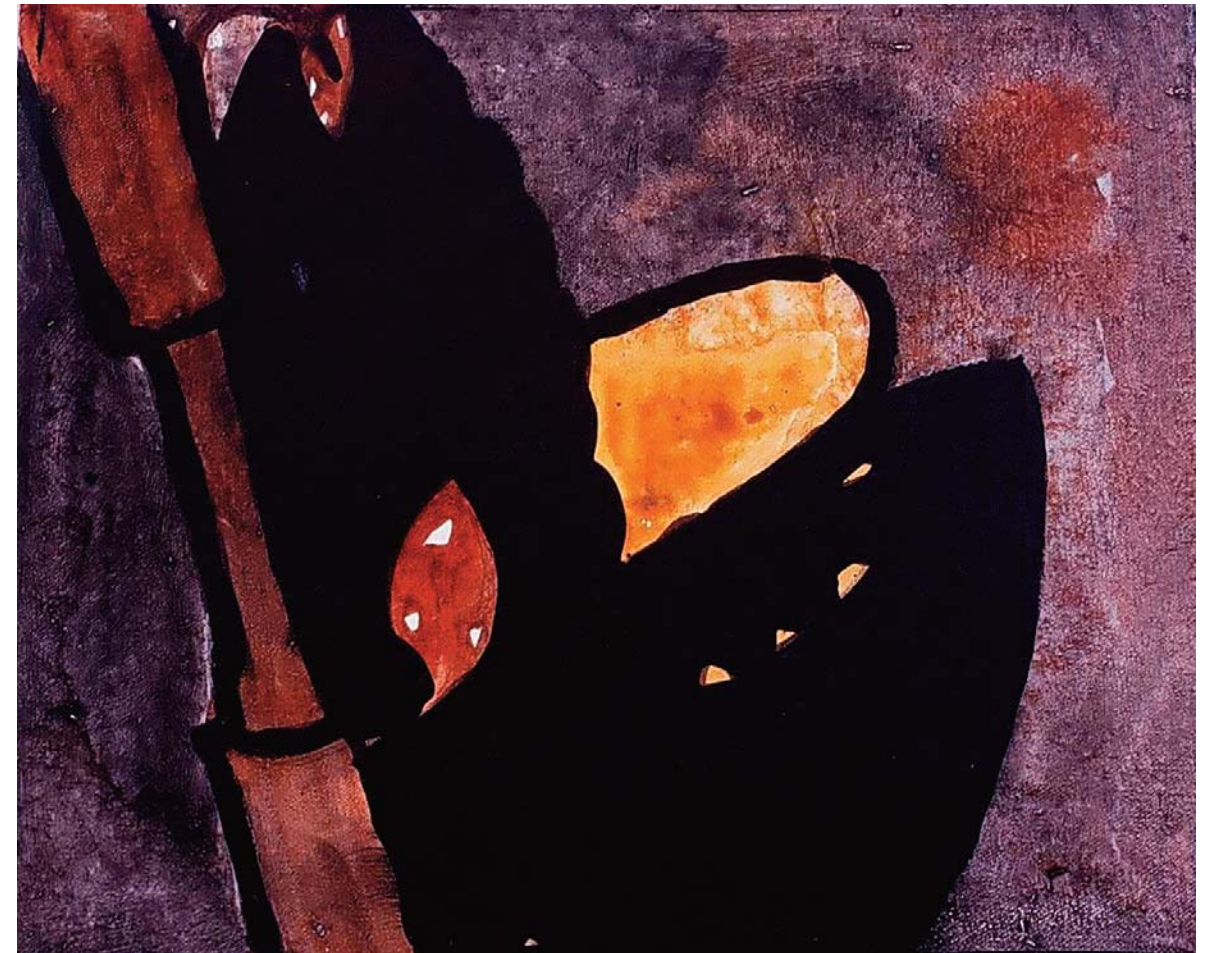
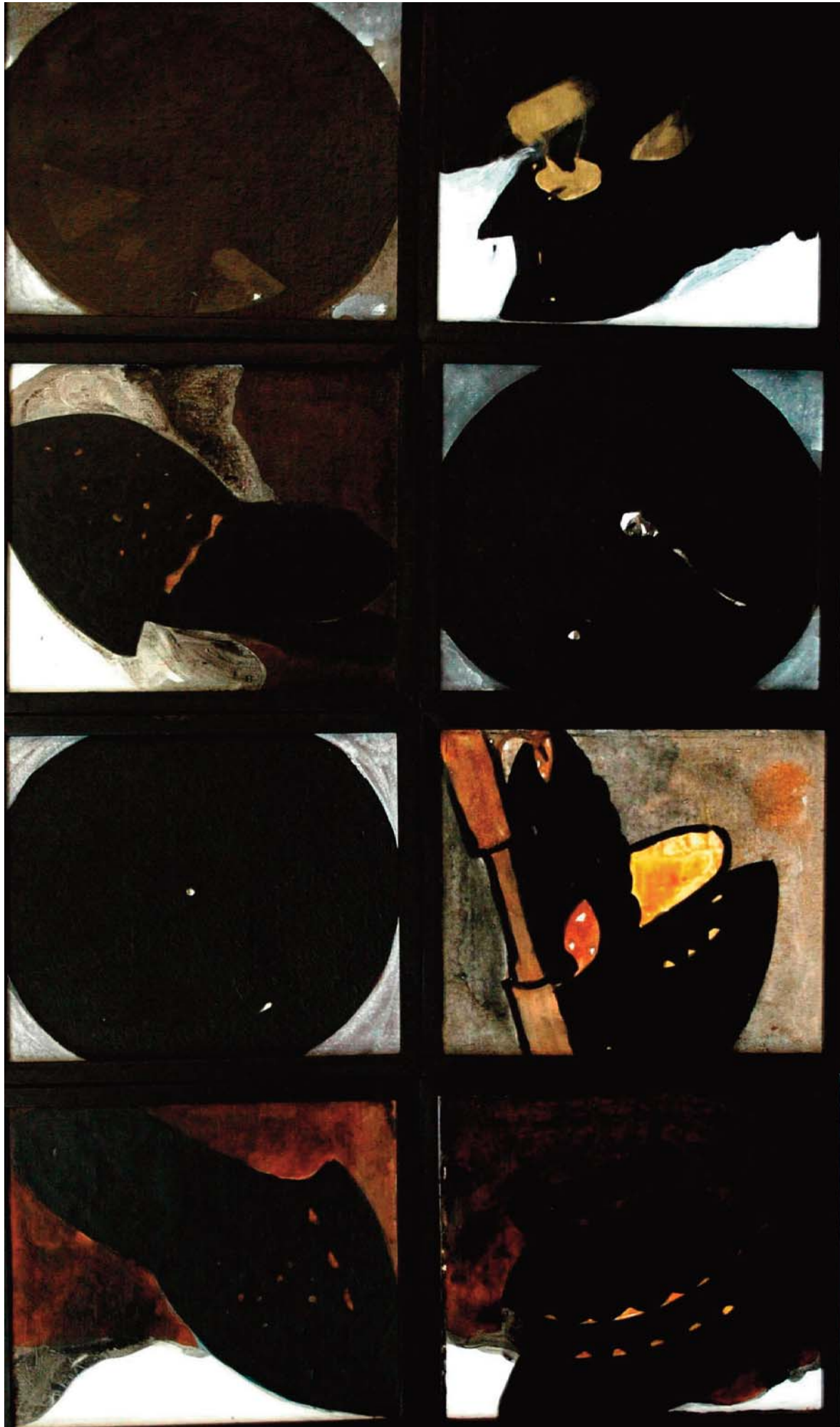
One of her works, Beej Brahmaand Do / Cosmic Seeds Light, part of her exhibition Lonely Furrow in Singapore and New York, has been acquired by Museum of Modern Arts [MoMA], New York in February 2012.



Above
Boatsong, 1993
 Watercolour on paper
 Collection, Bombay

Right
General Bogey, 2008
 Oil, acrylic and charcoal on canvas
 90" x 60", 2008
 Collection, New York





Who iron your cloth, 2000
 Oil on canvas
 36 x 72 inches



I Travel with my Art

However far I travel, I walk with memories of my earth with me. Remembrance of sites, sounds, soil, the people and the chaos. Through all this I pursue my art so that my self distils that something which is eternal and simple. As loud as a whisper. I do not crave for attention and my solitude is strong enough to carry me around the world. While I walk alone. Since the beginning my art's pre-occupation is with the workers and the work they did. Their mythic struggles, their stories, their families and the passage which turned them old and proud and strong. Sometimes much before their time. From the boats that ferry people, vegetables and sand on the Ganga to the vast 'hinterland' to which I belong. Their song has that permanence through which my art imagined the dawn, the dusk and the rhythm of the ordinary, monumental lives. While my canvasses veered towards the abstract, my issues, my history were and stay real. For example the darkness which characterised my work till early youth were metaphors of the societal mismanagement I grew with typefied by long power cuts and muggy still evenings. Where darkness would claim the river swiftly and the boat and the boatman along with it. Leaving me with cadences of the boatsong. I painted that memory. Or then the steam engines of my childhood which would take the poor out to the world. Migrant Labourers and Slaves, who went as far as Surinam, Fiji, Carribean and South Africa. And the great Mahatma who was thrown out of steam train carriage he was traveling in Pretoria. One migrant, One incident which changed the destiny of the world. I painted that memory. But my memory is not overtly political. Since I do not claim to understand politics very well. Atleast the details of it. What I understand is injustice, inequality and inhumanity. I also understand impermanance. Because 'this too does pass'. In that lies hope and sunshine. Just like my art keeps seeking light and colour and shape in time so does my thought craves for better days. Much better days. Like my fellow artists all over the world. I paint the labourer, the farmer, the soil, the river, its floods and the cremation grounds. I seek their thoughts, their vagaries, their joys, their triumphs and their seemingly insurmountable failures. I draw and express. I express and I paint. Abstractions that are real reflections of my soul, my world and my centrality in it. Permanent. I work with my people.

Lullaby 1, 2008

Iron cast [left]

96 x 38 x 35 inches

Talwar Gallery, New York



Red Kali
Watercolour on paper, 1997, 216" x 108"
Tropen Museum, Amsterdam

Red Kali

By Shambhavi Singh
1999-2000

The crimson black, rapier tounded mythical Red Kali is my idea of the Woman, the Goddess whose powers of creation can nurture the need for violence against grave provocation.

The universe I was born to has been blasted by fate. Divined by a cruel Goddess, the time and space which have shaped me belongs to people who have seemingly lost all traces of a proud heritage and magnificent history. In modern times all that can ail a society gets reflected into the city in which I was raised. A permanent blight afflicts us and is seen in all aspects of life within it.

Its University naturally is quite symbolic of it. Teachers don't or can't teach. Most of the students move about shambolically, totally unconcerned of the precious time being lost. And exams are held under the shadow of the gun. The ancient history department faces the road and its visage is beyond ancient. Or rambling. It crumbles every day, significant piece by piece. Just like the young souls totally unaware of things like ambition, aspirations and purpose.

The lane on its side leads to a grand palace by the Ganga Front. While the edifice is of the palace there is nothing grand about Darbhanga Palace's visage now. Donated to the Patna University in post-independent India, the building holds classes in English Literature. Though most classes seem to be empty even in peek education season. Still, the palace is a sight to behold. Curiously enough, within this temple of secular education, there are two temples within its huge portals. One holds the ShivaLing, the phallic fount of all creation. The other facing north and the Ganga is a Temple of the angry goddess Kali.

According to our myth, angered by the demonic forces of the Asuras, Kali went on a killing spree. In this orgy of extreme violence where she severed the heads of all her adversaries, hung their skulls around her neck and drank their blood, she could only be calmed when Shiva lied as a corpse in Kali's killing field. In that moment Kali was aware that she

can't step on her consort / husband and thus gradually got her calm back. In all Indian iconography she is shown dark – indigo bodied, crimson tongue hanging and eyes staring out, red and angry.

Growing up I was always drawn to her as the embodiment of eternal feminine powers of creation and destruction. The Kali Temple on the banks of Ganga thus became the supreme junction of my awareness of growth into a woman. Two Goddesses merging into me behind a temple of learning. On the river bank.

When the time came for me to create Kali in my vision, I was seized more by the abstract reflection of Kali's powers in all our lives rather than the animistic iconography used by Kali's devotees everyday. My prayers to Kali did not have to see her in an anthromorphic form. Instead the triangular, rapier edged formation of her tongue, the red hot depth of the triangular fire altar within the temple and her wide open angry eyes denoting ceaseless vision all inspired me to create an abstract depiction of the angry Goddess Kali. It was her tongue, hungry for blood, which held centrality in my vision. Her rage screamed at me just like Kali must have screamed, first in helplessness and then each time she must have drawn her sword to cut down the asura – the evil force.

Thus the dark Goddess'es dark, black tongue held centrality in my depiction of her on my canvas. The tongue set on a dark crimson background portrayed my mental state while thinking of Kali. Her powers for anger, her capability for violence so that goodness triumphs over evil and her profound strengths guided towards annihilation. This inevitability of violence in the face of evil has always intrigued me, because it lends itself to multiple interpretations, subjective analysis and the grey areas within a sea of darkness. Somehow one has to see the light within all of it.

This work I must mention was made first in 1999 and my thoughts on Bihar are from that time of my young self growing up, within violence.

Postscript:

Since the time of the first coming of my RedKali, my home state Bihar has seen a resurgence in hope and pride because of altered, improved socio-political dimensions. I hope that it keeps up.

However, as recent events prove, women of my country have to go a long way in creating not just parity but to find respect in a nation which has been been regularly disrespecting its women in the most abonimable ways. In the most cruel, depraved and malevolent fashion in this profoundly democratic, liberated, liberal nation. It is ironic indeed.



Lullaby 3, 2008
 Iron cast installation
 Artist Collection

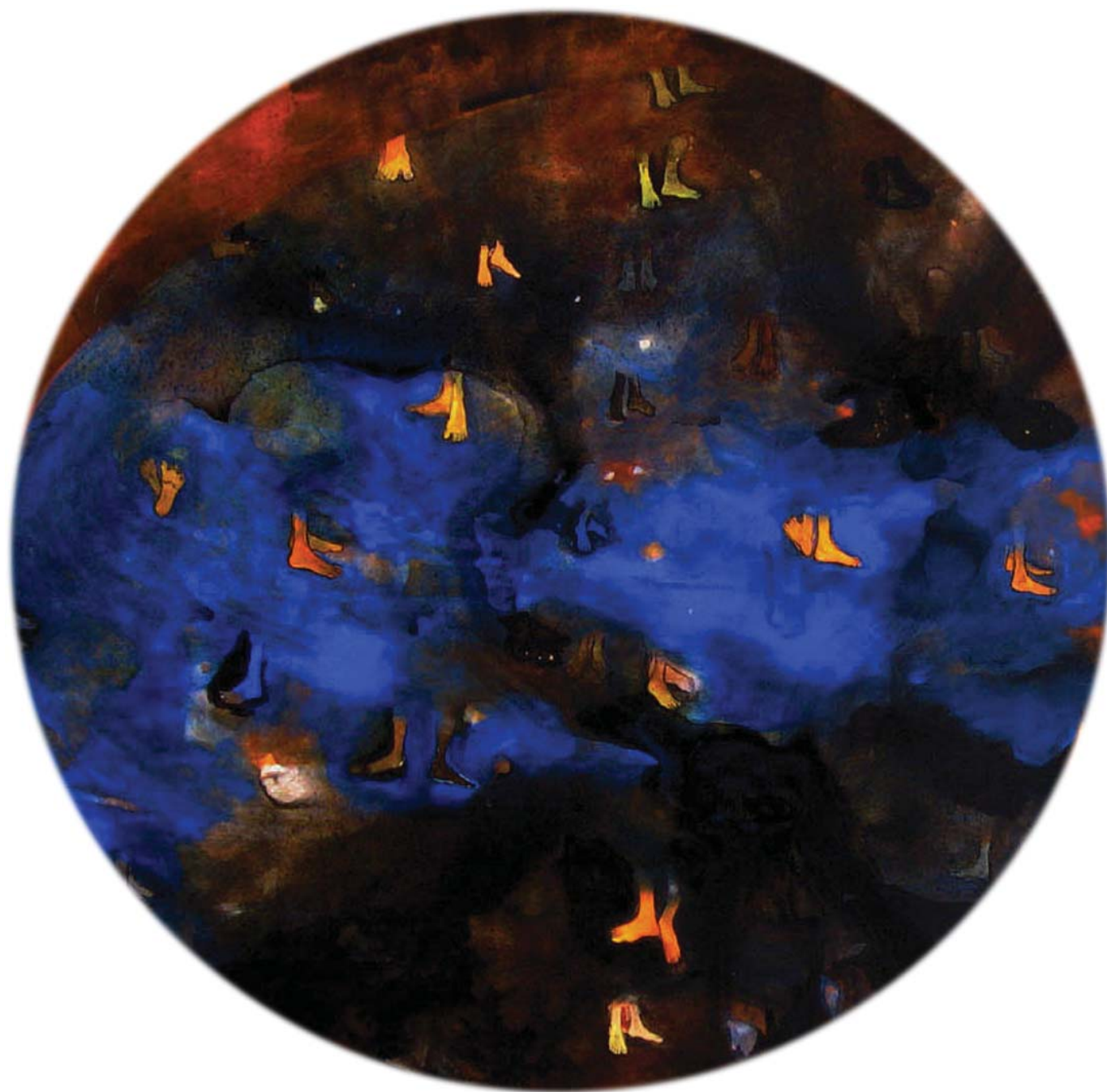
Dhibri / Lamp, 2011
 Iron cast
 6 x 18 x 4 inches
 Artist Collection



Light Boat, 2011
Iron cast installation
Artist Collection

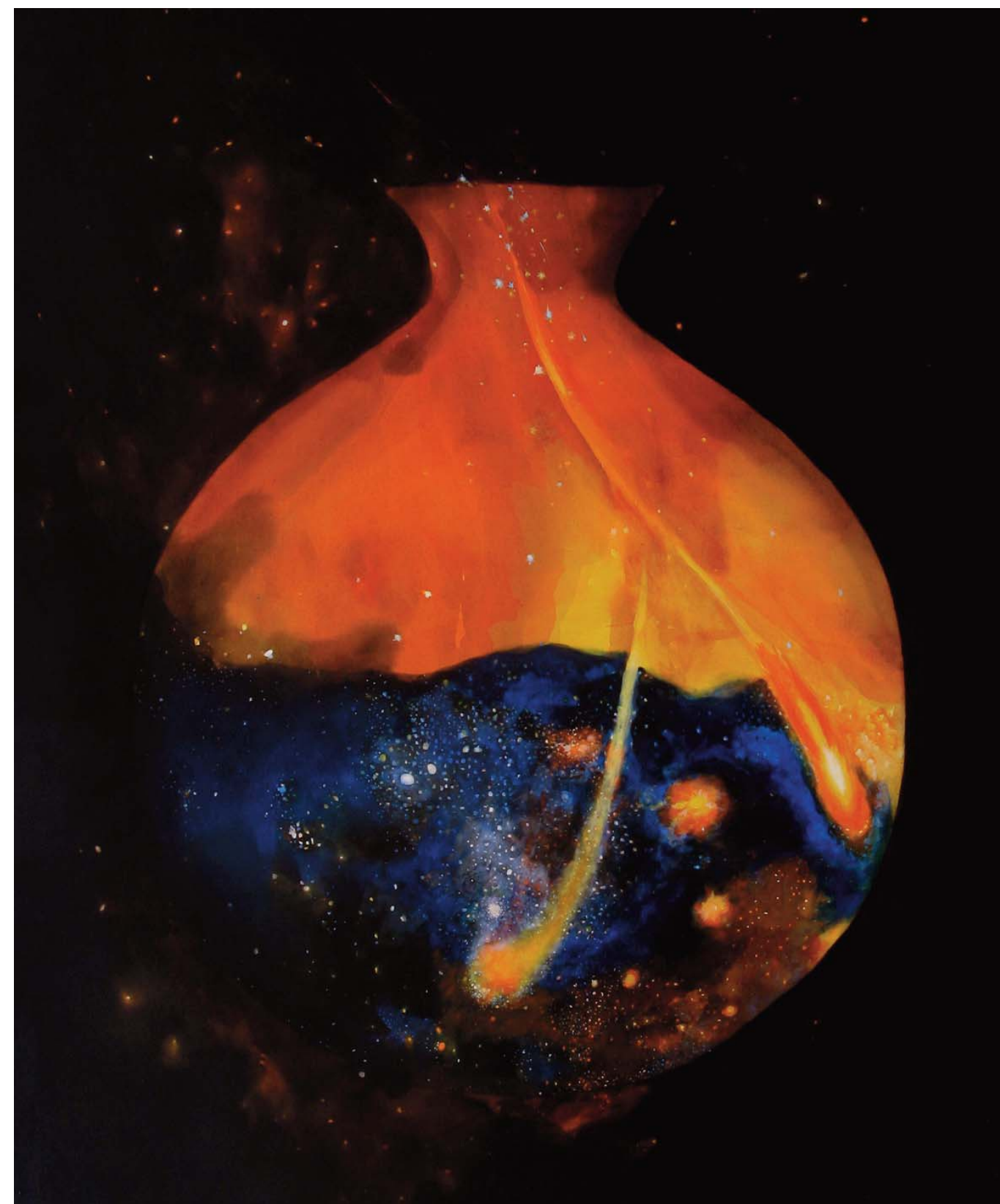






Previous Page
Bird and 2000 echoes, 2001
 Oil and Acrylic on canvas
 8 x 13 feet diptych
 Talwar Gallery Collection, NY

Migrant Labourer, 2008
 Oil and Acrylic on canvas
 6 x 6 feet
 Private Collection, NY



Ghatak 6, 2008
 Oil and Acrylic on canvas
 8 x 6.5 feet
 Talwar Gallery Collection, NY

LULLABY 2006-2008

ARTIST NOTE

This series of work I had made for a solo exhibition. Slowly, I am now processing a line of continuity between my paintings and sculptures – a metaphorical connection. River, water, earth are common to both. The earthenware pot in the *Ghatak* series is one of the first three-dimensional objects to appear in my paintings, as a symbol of transformation of mother earth.

My sculpture in iron of the palm leaf from the Lullaby series is ironic. In reality, the fan is a light object but for the villager and people who survive in the streets without electricity, it is part of their ‘heavy’ and arduous life.

I am influenced by both the 15th-century mystic poet Kabir and a scene from the maestro Satyajit Ray’s *Pather Panchali* as inspirations in this series. In a stunning poem that uses reiterative rhythm to build its conceit, with line upon line opening from the phrase ‘is ghat antar’ — within this pot — Kabir mines the fundamental components of the pot clay and space – to explore the entire gamut of human experience. We being the clay vessels.

Kabir, the mystic chants:

is ghat antar baag-bageechey ...

is ghat antar saat samundar ...

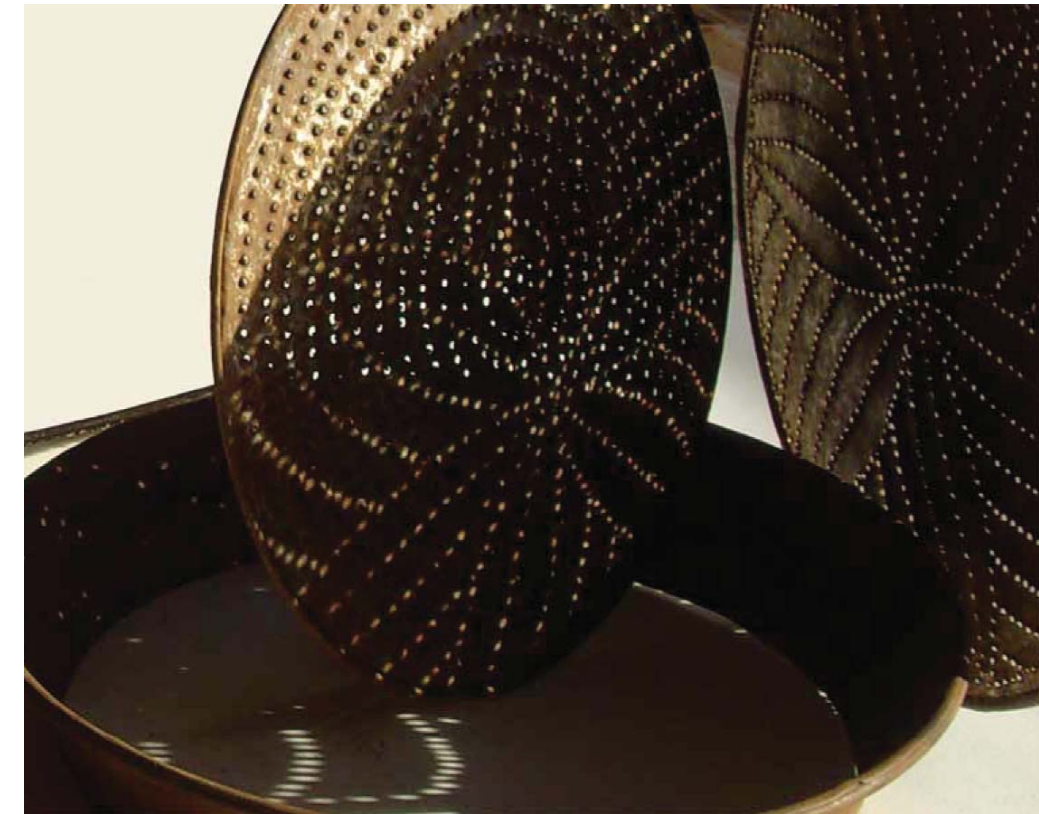
is ghat antar paras moti ...

is ghat antar nau lakh tara ...

is ghat antar anhad garje ...

within this vessel are orchards and gardens
within this vessel are the seven oceans
within this vessel are jewels and pearls
within this vessel are nine hundred thousand stars
within this vessel thunders the unstruck sound

Braille 2, 2008
Iron cast installation
2 feet diameter
Artist Collection



The scene from *Pather Panchali* takes us to a related area: an eye appears, blinking in the darkness, leaving the film-goer momentarily confused about the context, before another frame reveals that the eye belongs to a girl who is looking into a ghatak.

For an instant, we, the audience, are part of the dark interior void into which the child peers – perhaps we are the void. I thought that *Lullaby* needs to be monumental, when dealing with a history that is difficult, with a background so tough.

I thought. The work should speak loud even when it silent.

For me, my roots are very important. Bihar, where I was born is plagued by poor law and order, chaos, violence, illiteracy, poverty, and casteism. My work, *Migrant Laborers* is a large painting with scores of tiny feet, some being golden and luminescent referring to the many thousands of nameless and faceless people forced to leave home. To leave home and hearth behind. To be reviled, cursed. To be considered obnoxious. The butt of ridicule. My people.

Braille is a massive 8’ diameter work modeled on the sieve, which separates husk from grain. The shadow of the objects are as important as the real three dimensional form. The minor but very precise little holes of the sieve create very organized dots on the ground resembling literal Braille. Also, the work comes from the dark land to the cities.



Dhibri Do / Wick Two
 Cotton Pulp and Colour Pigment , 2011
 137 x 175 cm
 Private Collection, Singapore



Anjor Do / Illuminate 2
 Cotton Pulp and Colour Pigment , 2011
 178 x 137 cm
 Artist Collection

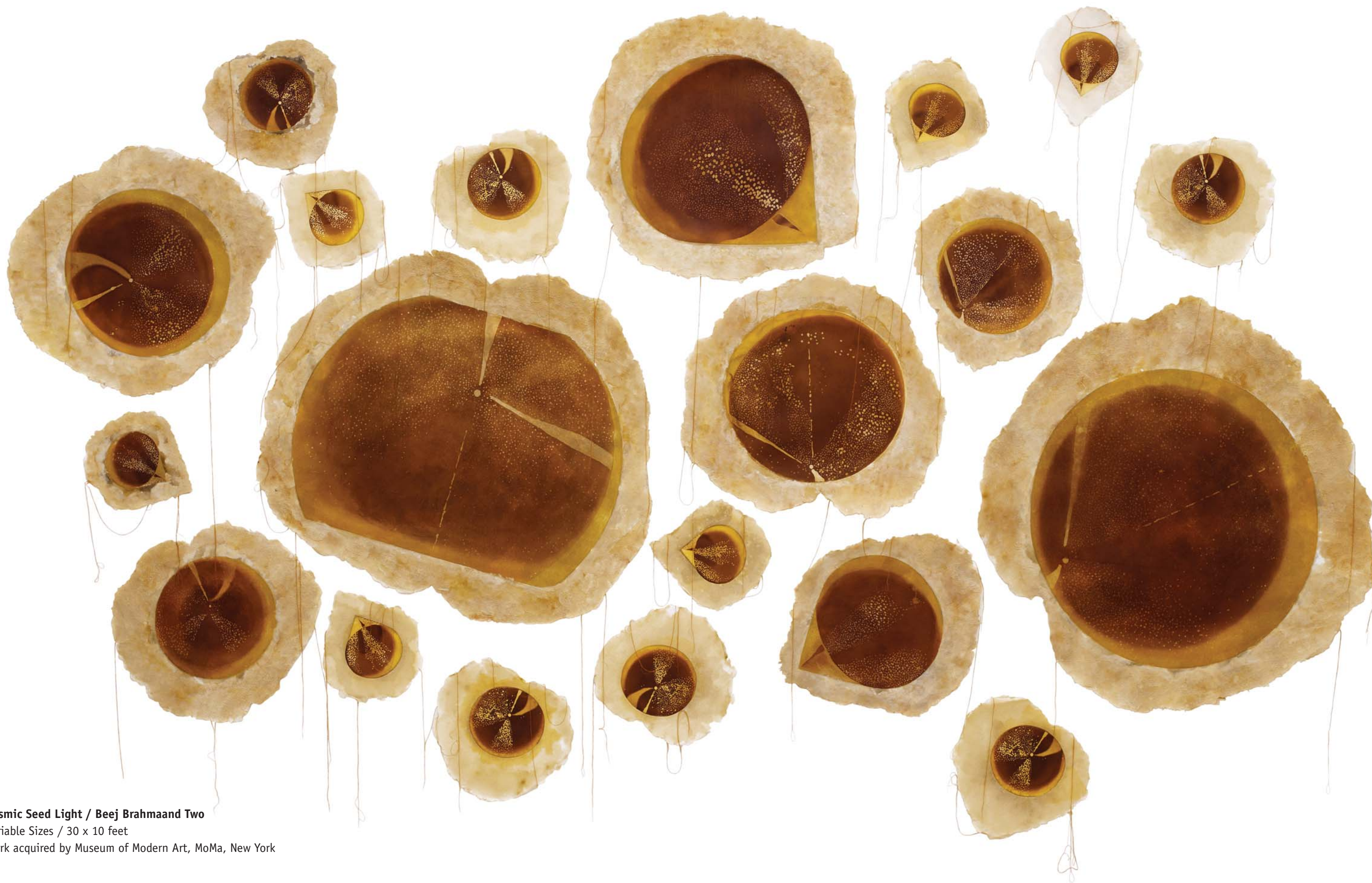


Village Roots in an Ultra Urban Setting

In 2010-11 she was part of the residency at the iconic STPI – the Singapore Tyler Print Institute. Guided by the institute’s impeccable approach towards art, she got gently drawn into creating a body of work that was bound by one singular vision. Lonely Furrow, her twin show in Singapore and New York, was her ode to the farmer. In Singapore she came very close to realising her ultimate vision. Through the enriching collaborations there she kept invoking the farmer’s twin poles of agony and ecstasy and her existence somewhere in between. The Dhibri / Wick, Anjor / Illumination, Griha / Sanctum series were all imaginations embedded in the reality of the farmer’s home.

At STPI Shambhavi also created two set of the same work. Imagined for Light. Expressed for the Dark. The Cosmic Seed / Beej Brahmaand is driven by that huge leap between emptiness and the cosmos. Between nothingness, creation and existence. In this Shambhavi was driven by the vision of the farmer with a triangular, perforated, simple device through which he feeds his welcoming field with seed. Spread on earth, nurtured by her the seed spread out to grow, become trees and plant and nourish us all. In this simple, profound work Shambhavi found truth for herself. Of being able to envision and form that creation which the artist’s mind sought and which nature created. Through her. This dialogue, the Beej Brahmaand, has been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art, MoMA, New York after it was shown at the ART Stage, Singapore as a part of the STPI collection.

Griha / Sanctum, 2011
 Cotton pulp and colour pigment,
 hand made cast paper pulp
 74 x 52 x 2.5 inches
 STPI Collection, Singapore



Cosmic Seed Light / Beej Brahma and Two
Variable Sizes / 30 x 10 feet
Work acquired by Museum of Modern Art, MoMa, New York



The Farmer and Us

Another series which Shambhavi could create at STPI was the Hasiya / Sickle series. Within her mind Shambhavi has always sought to create these conjoined, inter-connected instrument central to a farmer's life, as a three dimensional invocation to his and her's magnamity. Basic, primordial, the Hasiya was portrayed as a sickle being made at the smelter's workshop. Wielded by both man and woman, working together. Seasoned, abrasive like the iron with which it is forged, the Sickle would be sharpened for the farmer. The farmer is guided by thoughts of compassion and kindness as he worships earth to draw out sustenance for us. Central, vital to her being the sickle then becomes central to us all. Not to be consigned to the periphery. This is what Shambhavi sought and created in Singapore, a two dimensional invocation to a three dimensional actuality.



Hasiya / Sickle_3 Dimension I

Artist with Richard
Hungerford, poet,
philosopher, paper master
and guide, at STPI





Making a point with
Eitaro Ogawa, the master
printmaker at STPI

The MoMA InterAction

ANSWERS SENT TO A QUESTIONNAIRE FROM MoMA, NEW YORK
ON COMPLETING THE FORMAL ACQUISITION PROCESS

Please describe your involvement with prints, illustrated books, and/or multiples. When and how did you begin?

I am a graduate / major in Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts and Crafts, Patna University, Bihar [1987]. Thereafter, I pursued my Masters in Fine Arts in Painting from the College of Arts, Delhi University. My education in printmaking began in school and continued till my university days were over. I was a good adept in printmaking but saw myself primarily a painter, in which I went on to major. However, I was quite fascinated by printmaking in my early days and had done quite a few woodcuts while studying. The fact that the same composition could lend itself to different color combinations did make me experiment with the form for a while before I dedicated myself completely to paintings.

While in university I had started to show my paintings in solo shows in India and abroad. Thereafter I spent a significant part of my life in Amsterdam, traveling and showing in Europe. I would encounter printmakers with whom I experimented in printmaking, but never pursued it as a vocation. A memory which stands out is my stint at the Rembrandt Etching Museum in Amsterdam which I visited and gained from.

I would contribute in the writing and design of the catalogues / publication which would contain my art. Right from the start I would be quite absorbed in the making and publication of them and loved the way in which my art could reach out to more people than they would, confined to a gallery. That they have a permanence makes me value publications that much more. These publications contained my art as illustrations.

Approximately how many prints, illustrated books, and multiples have you made to date and in what mediums? Do you have a preferred medium?

The fact is that STPI, Singapore is the place of origins for my professional printmaking career to begin with. I was truly thrown in the deep end of ocean since STPI is instituted as a tribute to the master printmaker that is Mr. Kenneth Tyler. He invited and worked with great masters like David Hockney, Jasper Jones and Roy Lichtenstein and drew them into the magical realm of printmaking. Ten years old now STP has hosted a number of great artists from Asia and the US and continues in the haloed tradition instituted by Mr. Tyler.



My work even before had transcended itself out of my safe zones and embraced media new to me. For those aware of my work, they would see that my art includes conceptual art, paintings, etchings, new media, cotton pulp and metal sculptures. Working at STPI was a challenge to begin with. For the first time in my life I was truly collaborating with other craftspeople and artists who would help me realise my vision of the Lonely Furrow, the solo exhibition my work at STPI realised.

STPI has two major sections, the printmaking section headed by Eitaro Ogawa and the papermaking section which was then headed by Richard Hungerford. They embraced my ideas readily and it is through my conversations with them that in a very short time we were able to achieve a phenomenal amount of work.

Which publishers and printers have you worked with, and do you feel that you had special working relationships with any of them?

In time it was a great leap which got me intricately connected with printmakers of the calibre of Eitaro Ogawa and his wife Tamae Iwasaki in Singapore. The ideas I went with to STPI were those of a painter. It was them who decided that the *Beej Brahmaand* / Cosmic Seeds and the *Hasiya* / Sickle series were the two ideas which they would like me to explore with them. They not only put me in tune with the intricate printmaking machinery and process but they also showed how the entire team approaches their work.



The collaboration was in the nature of a communication between artists and that is why I think my art was able to establish an extended epiphany through my stay through the residency of six weeks. Both my ideas were quite elaborate and required an intensity and sincerity which was on ample display in my presence and absence. The entire process for the realisation of my vision took over six months of their time — October 2010 to July 2011.

Both series were quite painterly in their composition[s] and orientation and required hours upon hours of deep concentration to achieve the desired results. The fact that both the work do push the limits of printmaking to achieve three dimensional qualities of sculpting and intricate brushstrokes of paintings is owed entirely to the joys of *sangiti* – magic collaboration.

I would not be shy in admitting that the over sixty pieces of work which we could achieve in such a short burst of passionate artistic time entirely owes itself to the deep cross-culture connection we established between ourselves. The fact that an artist from India travelled to Singapore to work and show and then was able to take it further afield to New York for yet another show is a memory I shall treasure forever. Before signing off on this I also would like to thank Richard Hungerford who very patiently and poetically guided me through the cotton pulp papermaking process where I was able to sculpt with cotton pulp.

The catalogue at STPI for Lonely Furrow hence does complete my art in many significant ways. Am grateful to the supreme force of creation. May it continue to guide me and make me meet such evolved souls.

An Aside:

My work at STPI was combination of printmaking, installations and cotton paper pulp and colour pigment paintings.



Cosmic Seed Dark / Beej Brahmaand One
Variable Sizes / 30 x 10 feet
Talwar Gallery, NY



Untitled 01
3 x 4 feet
Artists Studio



Untitled 02
3 x 4 feet
Artists Studio



Untitled 03
3 x 4 feet
Artists Studio



Untitled 04
3 x 4 feet
Artists Studio



Holy Dip

Acrylic on Canvas Board, 2013
12 pieces, 2.5 feet diameter, 30 feet high
integrated art installation
Artist Studio

Shambhavi

BORN IN PATNA, BIHAR, INDIA.
LIVES AND WORKS IN DELHI

EDUCATION

1990 - 1992	Master of Fine Arts, Painting College of Arts, New Delhi, India.
1988-89	Research grant scholarship from Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi, India. Worked at regional centre in Lucknow. Bachelor in Fine Arts Painting, College of Fine Arts & Crafts, Patna, India.
2004-2006	Visiting lecturer at Collage of Art and Craft, Patna University, Patna.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2011	<i>Lonely Furrow</i> , Talwar Gallery, New York
2011	<i>Lonely Furrow</i> , Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Singapore.
2008	<i>Lullaby</i> , Talwar Gallery, New Delhi.
2007	<i>A bird and 2000 echoes</i> (works from 2001-2006), Talwar Gallery, New York.
2002	<i>A bird and 2000 echoes</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi.
1998	<i>Passage from India</i> , Association for Visual Arts (AVA), Cape Town, South Africa.
1998	Natal Society of Art Gallery (NSA), Durban. curator Mirjam Asmal, South Africa.
1997	<i>Earth And Sky</i> , Foundation for Indian Artists (FIA), Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
1995	<i>Birds Eye</i> , Foundation for Indian Artist (FIA), Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
1994-	<i>Vigorous</i> , Gallery Chemould, Bombay, (Studio Show, New Delhi).
1993-92	<i>Passion For Home</i> , Foundation for Indian Artists (FIA), Amsterdam, NL. The Gallery, Madras.
1990	<i>Dawn</i> , Shridharani Gallery, New Delhi.
1989	Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay.

RESIDENCIES

2010-11	Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Singapore.
2001-2004	Greatmore Studios, Cape Town, South Africa. With participation in Exhibition Holland South Africa Line (HSAL) at The Castle,WillamFehr Collection.Cape Town, South Africa.
2000-2001	<i>Midnight Song on Twelve pages</i> at Greatmore Studio, Cape Town, South Africa.

WORKSHOP

2013	Art 1st Mumbai, workshop held in artist’s studio in Delhi
2010	Art+Public at Perifery on Brahmaputra river in Guwahati,Assam.
2009	International workshop, Khoj Bihar, Taru Mitra, Patna.
2007	International Workshop, Khoj Kashmir, Srinagar.
2005	“Public Sphere –Private Sphere: is the boundary collapsing in contemporary Indian art practice”? Multi-media Art workshop and symposium, on the closing ceremony of the golden jubilee at the Lalit Kala Kendra, Bhubaneswar, Orissa.
2002	6th KHOJ International Workshop Mysore, India.
1995	Artist of India / IPCL Baroda, Invited by Nagji Patel.
1993	Young Artist of India, CMC Gallery, New Delhi.

PROJECTS

2008	The SoilBite Project, International Artist Workshop, Patna, Bihar
1995	Light and Enlightenment organized by Foundation for Indian Artist Amsterdam at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
1996	Skin of A White Lady. Curator: Els Reijnders (FIA), Eindhoven, The Netherlands.
1997	Project on “Kali” Tropen Museum, Amsterdam, Holland.
1998-99	The search within: Art between Implosion and Explosion Pernegg Monastery, Vienna; Bildungshaus,Virgil, Salzburg; National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, (NGMA) National Gallery of Modern Art, Bombay, (NGMA).
1990	Ambassadors’ Collection, NGMA, New Delhi.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013	<i>Mythopoetic</i> , Women Artists from India and Australia, Griffith University Art Gallery / QCA Project Gallery, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane, curated by Marnie Dean.
2005	<i>We are like this only</i> , curated Vidya ShivDas. Abstraction is still kicking and alive, curated by Himanshu Desai, at gallery beyond,Mumbai
2004	Amrita Sher-Gil Revisited: Celebrations of Women by Women Artists, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi.
2003	<i>Unshackled Spirit</i> , Lalit Kala Academy New Delhi.
1999	Edge of the Century, curator: Amit Mukopadhya. Art Ink.New Delhi.
1999	<i>Bilkool</i> , The Next Wave Festival of young artists, curator LouiseParamore, Perth, Australia.
1999	Gallery artist group show, Curated by Louise Winjinberg, Gallery FIA. Amsterdam.
1998	New perceptions, image, media, Centre for Art & Literature, Delhi organized by CIMA, Calcutta.
1997	Colours of Independence, NGMA, New Delhi. curator Rakhi Sarkar, CIMA, Calcutta.
1997	<i>Gift for India</i> , SAHMAT.
1995	<i>Kaleidoscope</i> : art from a transcultural perspective, ISIS in Utrecht (NL). Collecting Curator: Louise Winjinberg, Gallery F.I.A. <i>Post Card for Gandhi</i> , organized by SAHMAT. Young Generation from Bihar Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda.
1994	Drawing 1994, Gallery Escape, New Delhi. Curator: Pryag Shukla.
1993	Indian Contemporary Art and Le Corbusier in Chandigarh, India, Kunsthal, Rotterdam (NL).
1992	Six young Artists, Gallery Escape, New Delhi.
1991	Nine Contemporary Indian Artists, Gemente Museum, Arnheim, The Netherlands.
1991	Nine Contemporary Indian Artists, Gallery Foundation for Indian Artist, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
1989	National Art Exhibition, Rabindra Bhawan. Contemporary artist of Bihar, at Rabindra Bhawan , New Delhi.
1988	National Art Exhibition, Madras.
1987	Young Painters of Bihar, Patna, Jehangir Art Gallery, Bombay.
1986	Inter University National Youth Festival, Madras.
1983	Group ‘AB’ Exhibition Patna, Bihar. All India Drawing.

AWARDS

1989	<i>‘Vishisht Sewa Samman’</i> , Journalist Association,Patna, Bihar.
1988	Research Grant Scholarship, Lalit Kala Akadami, New Delhi.
1986	Prem Chand Yuva Mahotsava, Patna, Bihar.
1995	All India contemporary women art exhibition, AIFACS, New Delhi.