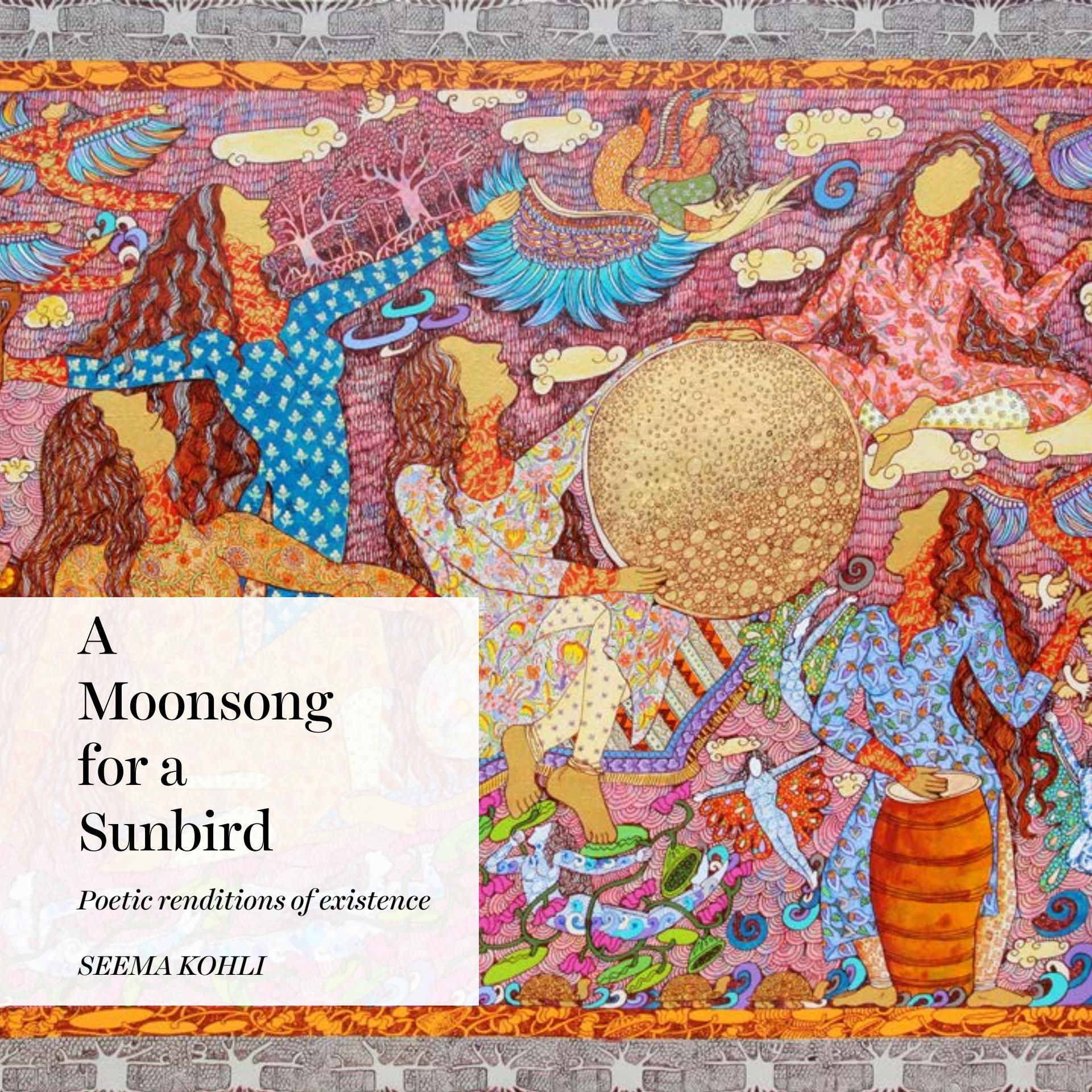
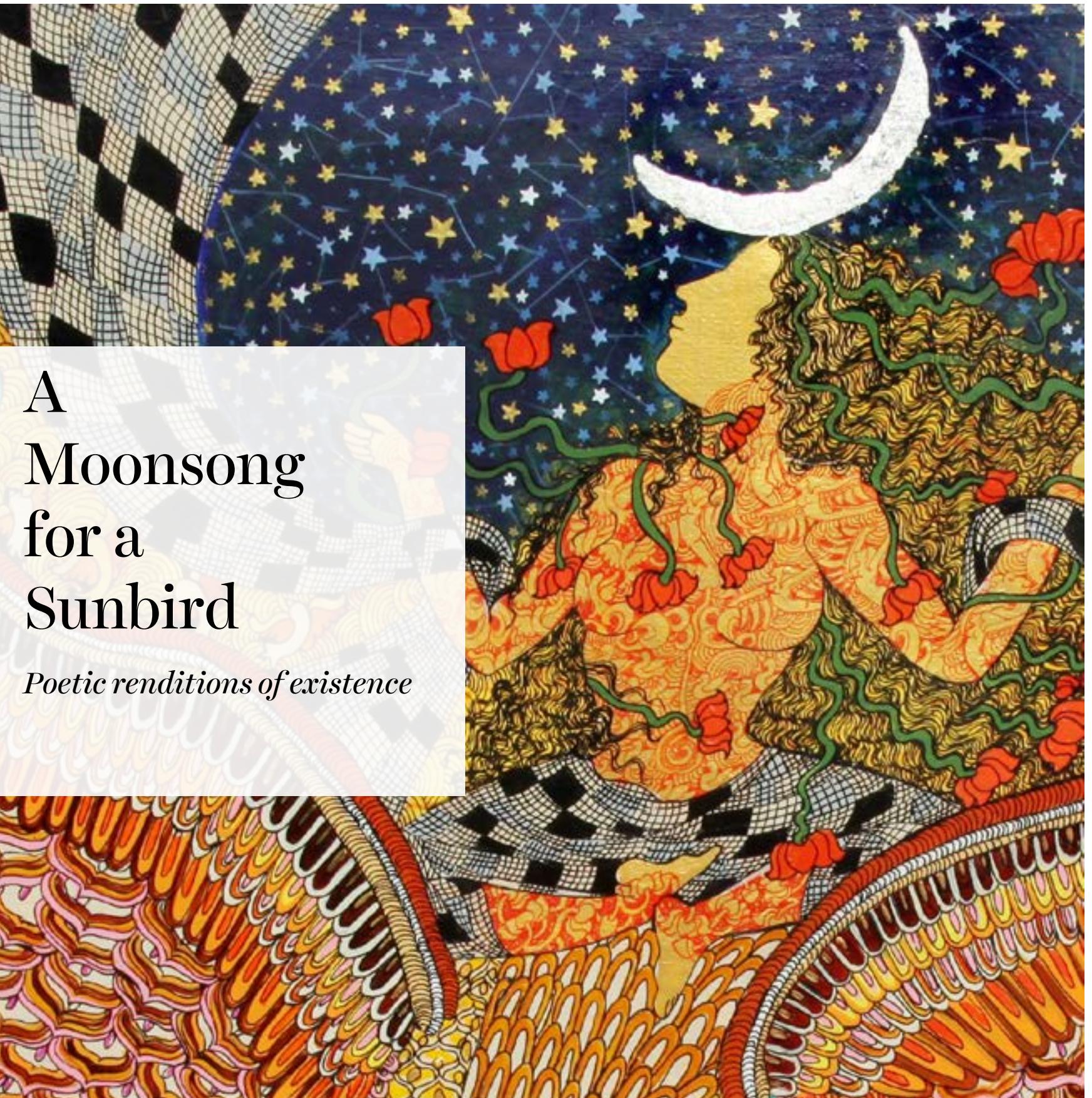


A Moonsong for a Sunbird

Poetic renditions of existence

SEEMA KOHLI





A Moonsong for a Sunbird

Poetic renditions of existence

Diverse philosophies have attempted to explain and understand the unmanifest world and dimensions of the subtle mind beyond the gross level. In that largely unknown space, we are all connected. Perhaps being tuned into that space allows one certain intuitive abilities, which sometimes can be made visual. In a kaleidoscope of fluid patterns, forms and markers, Seema Kohli taps into this multiplicity of dimensions and unites the poetic and whimsical with the profundity of philosophy. The compilation of works in 'A Moonsong for a Sunbird' is built around the interconnectedness of the vast web of life, and the central role of feminine energy in human and cosmic understanding.

In constant visual and conceptual acknowledgment, Seema relives her awareness of the varied layers of consciousness: She contemplates the Self, the creation of the universe, time and space, energy and life. Her artistic language continually grows and shapes itself to organize the fluctuating world, bringing meaning into every experience. Through her works, she seeks to understand the organic and unceasingly evolving processes of all beings and matter. Absorbing and interpreting timeless cycles of sights and sounds, movement and rhythm, her work emerges from an open channel that brings past, present and future into a palpable sphere of existence at the micro and macrocosmic level. She consciously surveys differences and builds pathways between extremes - sacred and secular, reality and fantasy, objectivity and subjectivity - offering to viewers the perceptions of a balanced mindscape. These themes transcend myopic views of reality and arise from an evolved understanding of ancient knowledge systems and recognition of dimensions within and beyond the material world.

Her core identification with feminine energies appears prominently within her visual language – whether as powerful Goddesses in the Indian context, or more universal energies constituting aspects of nature and the divine. She dwells on the concept of Hiranyagarbha or the Golden Womb, which is the primordial and eternal womb that nourishes, generates, and revives the cosmic order. As a space within a space, it encompasses all universes, and also the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and ether.

Within the content of her work, Seema embraces history, spirituality, social concerns and cultural reflections, as well as gender discussions and feminism in a subtle way – connecting her personal context with a universal one.



PRINT

In daily life lies the seed of fiction, the embodiment of a dream, and the transformation of memories. The etching series ‘Memoirs’ is a poetic exploration of the various fragments of reality and imagination that come together in a jigsaw of experience. Subdued and soft, the series also accentuates various elements that exist in larger painted narratives. These highly imaginative, and diminutive picture planes, blend essences of timelessness with references to an everyday, urban world spliced in between. Here Seema diversifies from painting’s traditional methodologies by taking lessons out of its own history and evolving a personalised device of line and silhouette that is expressionistic of her realities.

Line drawing is akin to breathing for Seema and she enjoys investigating the evocative quality of thin, thick, curved and straight lines through the intaglio processes. The series of etchings and monochromatic prints reveal a palimpsest of forms, these often morphing into each other, revealing traces over which to ponder, and yielding mysterious forms and states of matter. The works are intensified with an energy articulated through the minimal. Seema responds to the technique, invoking a new silence in her language. The muted tonal variations of aquatint and crisply incised intaglio accentuate the relationship of positive and negative space, the yin and yang, darkness and light. In her own account, this continues the narrative of decay, death, transformation and recycling; new identities created out of the old. It is the reshaping of belongings, an intimate gauge of life and its trappings; a dialogue of myth, matter and memory. In between all, there remains a celebration of the female form and energy the source of the twin forces of creation and destruction.

Seema’s work while not being directly autobiographical reflects parallel explorations of the Self and its physical, mental, spiritual and emotional encounters. As a woman, a mother, a daughter, a ‘woman-human’ as author Kishore Singh puts it, she processes aspects of sensuality and sexuality, digging deep into feminine sensibilities, revealing powers and energies, and balancing what is within and without.



SCULPTURE

Developing sculptural forms and performative pieces came about in an organic way for Seema, as certain imagery in her paintings began to demand different dimensions and spatial engagements. The essences of drawing and painting continue to frame or contextualise the visual explorations in a measured code. The pervasive and intuitively committed lines and designs transform themselves variedly in etchings, on the surfaces of bronze sculptures as well as the sculptural paintings and bronzes.

The painted cows are extravagant areas of richness – their bodies tattooed in design from head to toe. These forms find reference in the sweetness and grace of cow-depictions in Indian miniatures. Each of the bodies are stylised and rhythmic, as they become repositories for story telling without rigid boundaries of a frame, and the rounded contours create an organic pathway for the eye to follow the narrative. Paintings cover the topography of the animal body, depicting scenes of both mythical and contemporary origin. Here memory and imagination, which come to Seema from her childhood, inform her practice and visual articulation. This is a cosmology built from a complex language of forms and motifs both representational and abstract. One can seem to be spinning through multiple territories – each layer richly signifying a specific experience or portion of the narrative, with elements of decorative adornment to fulfil characteristic aspects of feminine power.

Working intuitively, Seema presents her belief that every idea or concept has to be contained in a time, space and signified by a name; in that way, she symbolically explores the varied and multifarious incarnations of feminine energies, that are constantly expanding and developing newer forms. Her sculptural depictions of feminine forms bring to life her studies in three dimensionality – integrating the textual and philosophical understandings within instinctive responses to the context. Utilising a heavy material like bronze, she transforms the idea into linear, harmoniously structured sculptures that defy the solidity of the material.

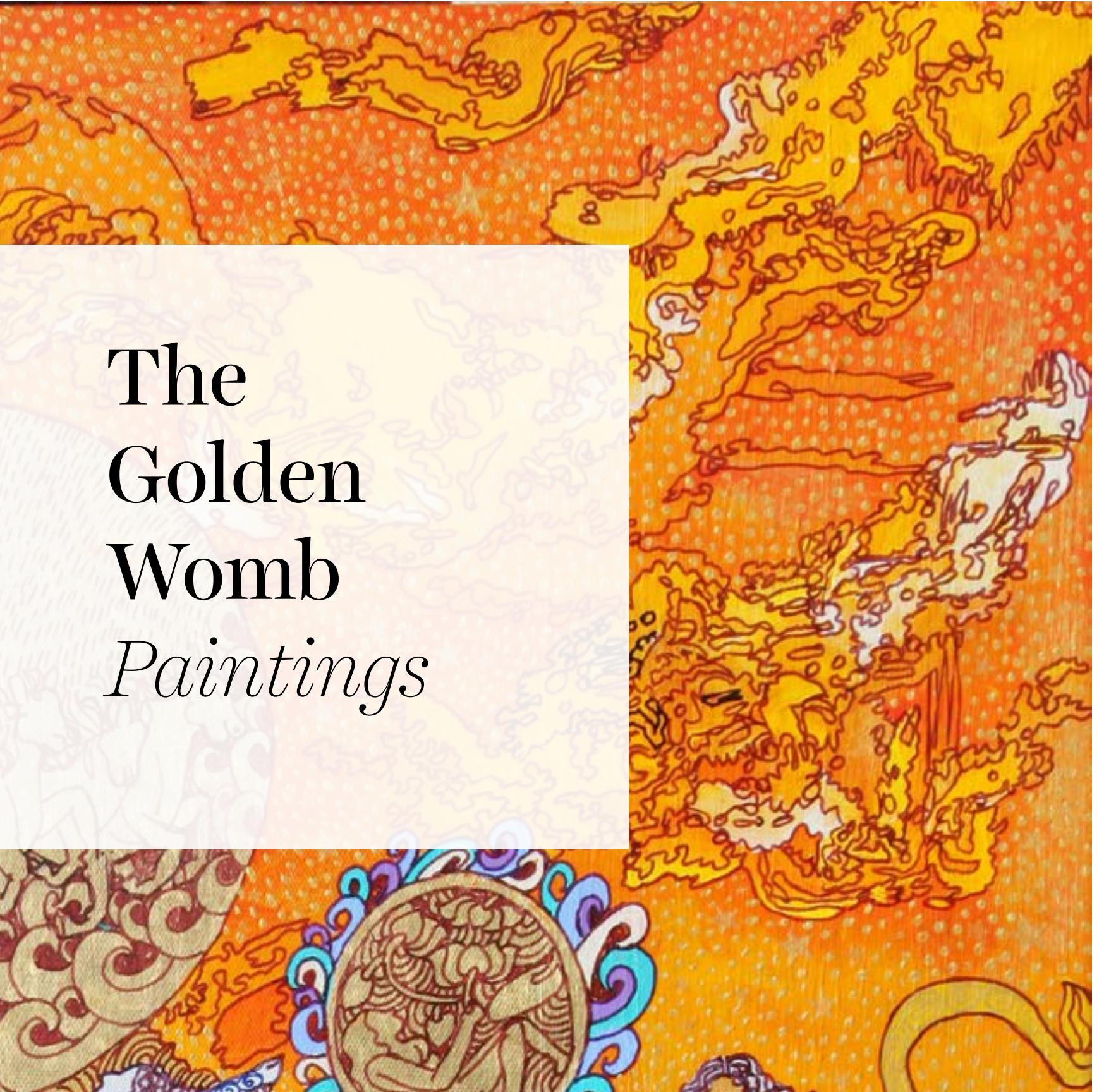
Several decades of multi-disciplinary practise have contributed to Seema’s layered visual vocabulary, in an oeuvre that features paintings, drawings and prints, more voluminous objects like sculpture and relief work, as well as performative acts extended through the body. In an exploration of conversations between her conscious and subconscious mind, she interprets memory, experience, imagination and desire, with heightened awareness of the self and the senses. Her imagery flows between observation of the physical world and reflections of intuition and creativity synchronized with the universal mind. Being both a dreamer and doer, she is able to build relationships between past and present, simplicity and complexity, reality and fiction.

A Moonsong is a figment of an illusory, magical space that symbolizes the poetics that exist in Seema’s visual world. The series of paintings, sculptures and prints reflect a transcendence of space and time; a narrative that seeks the here and now as much as what lies beyond.

TEXT AND CURATORIAL INPUT – Lina Vincent

Lina Vincent has worked as an arts professional for over fifteen years, dividing her time between research, curation, educational art programming and cultural project management. Her work presently occupies an interdisciplinary space that is inclusive to varied forms of knowledge and expression. Her current projects, both Indian and international, incorporate environmentally and socially engaged art practices. Lina lives and works out of Goa and Bangalore.

The Golden Womb *Paintings*



3ft dia / Renewal / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019



2x2 ft / Allergy of Creation / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2016 (Left)

3ft dia / Renewal / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019 (Top)





4x6 ft / Altered reality / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24kt gold and silver leaf / 2018

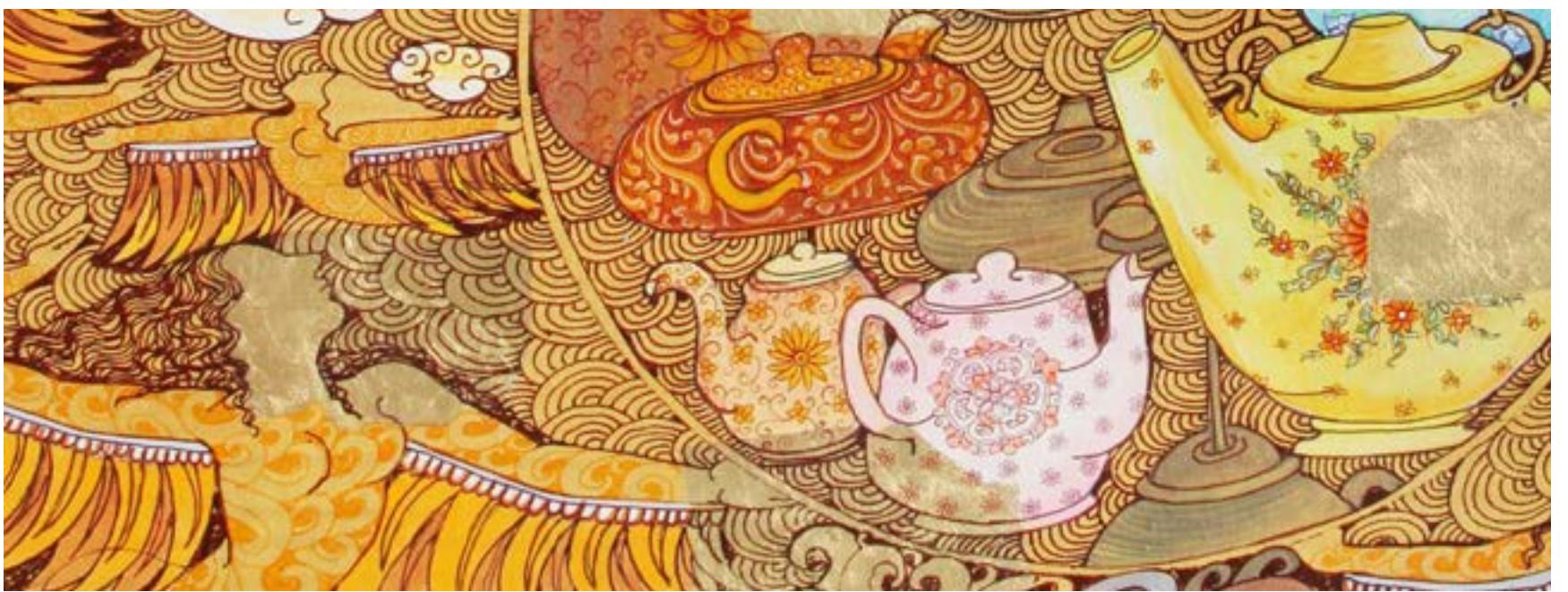




3x4 ft / Transcendence / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019



3ft dia / Wings of epiphany / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24kt gold and silver leaf / 2017



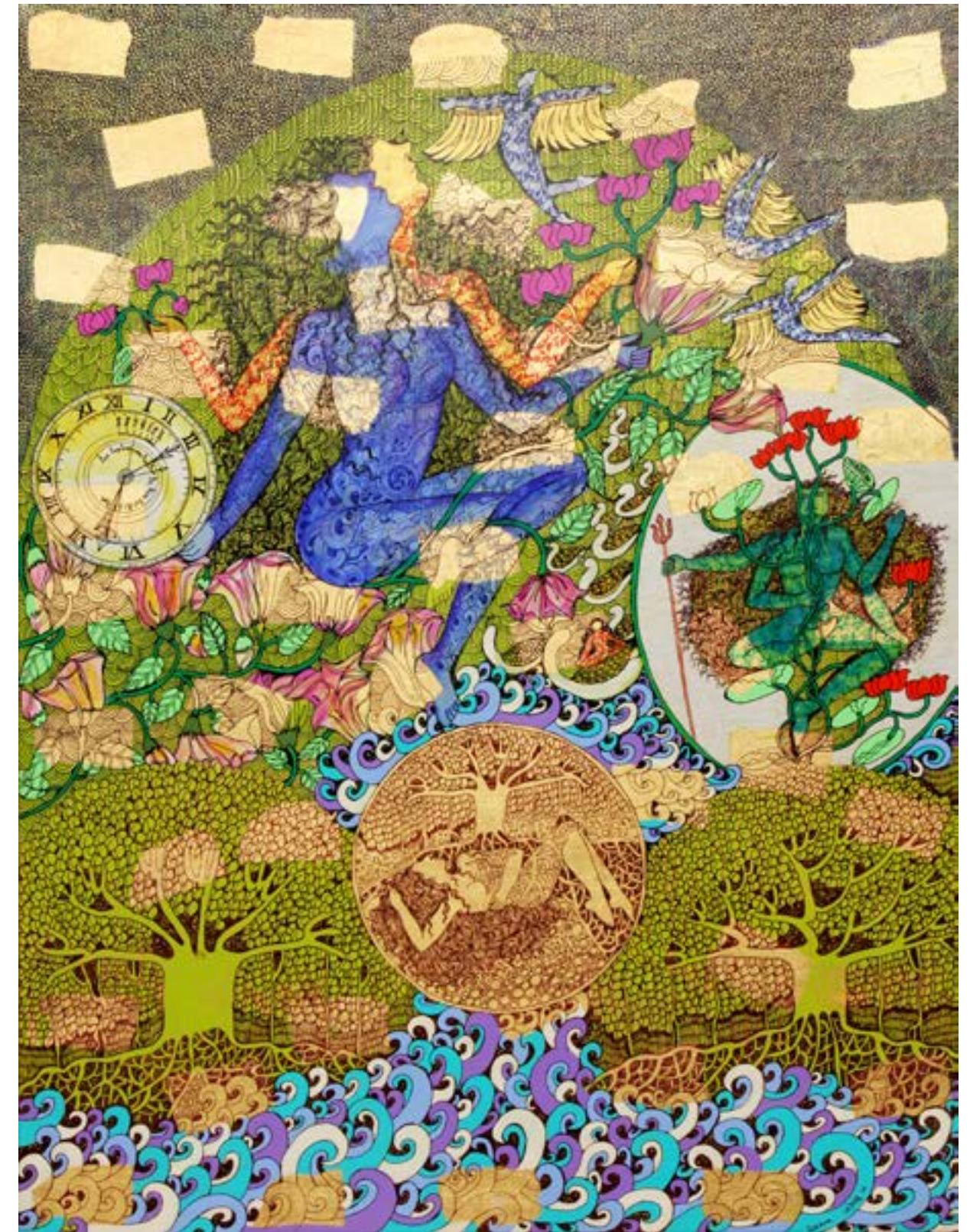
4x3 ft / Pure me a dream / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ctgold and silver leaf / 2016



¹
10x10" / Harmony / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019 (Left)



10x10" / Synergy / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019 (Right)



4x3 ft. / Paradigms of Faith / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24kt gold and silver leaf / 2016



3x2 ft / Riding the mind / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2018.





3x4 ft. / Cosmic strides / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24kt gold and silver leaf / 2017

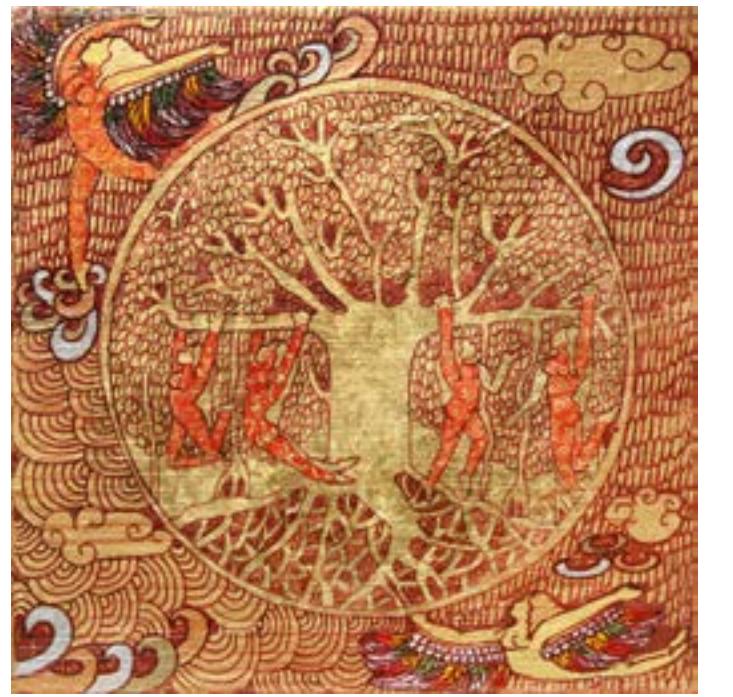


Moon Myths- Revathi, Abhijit, Vishakha, Purva Bhadrabada (Left to right)
1ft. diameter / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silverleaf / 2019



3x4 ft. / San Kirtan / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24kt gold and silver leaf / 2019





¹
10x10" / Balance / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019 (Left)

10x10" / Equanimity / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019 (Right)

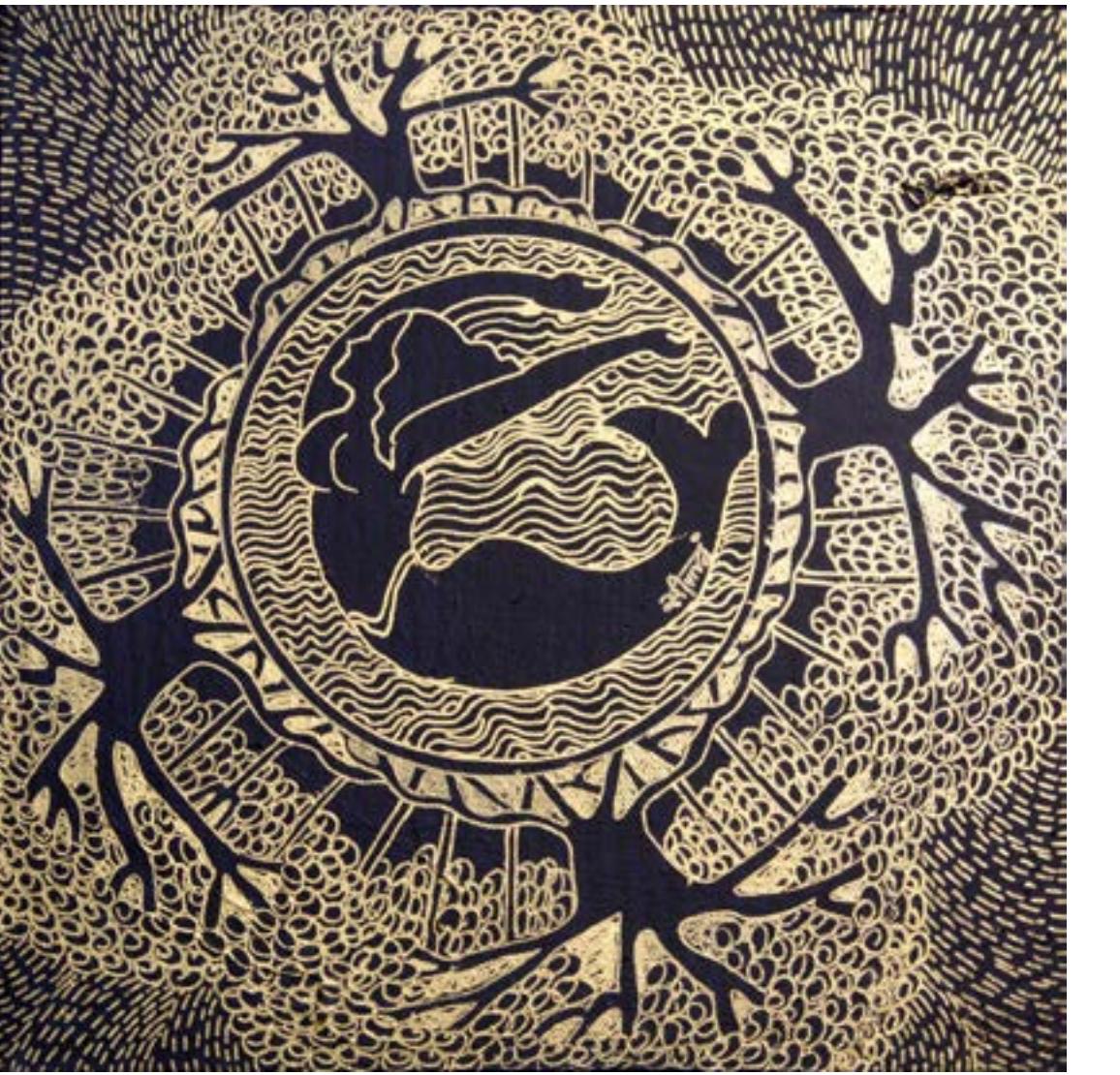
3x4 ft. / Transcendence / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24kt gold and silver leaf / 2019



2x2 ft. / The Golden Womb / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019



3x4 ft. / Transcendence / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24kt gold and silver leaf / 2019



10x10" / Victory / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019



2x3 ft / The Golden Womb Series / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver leaf / 2019



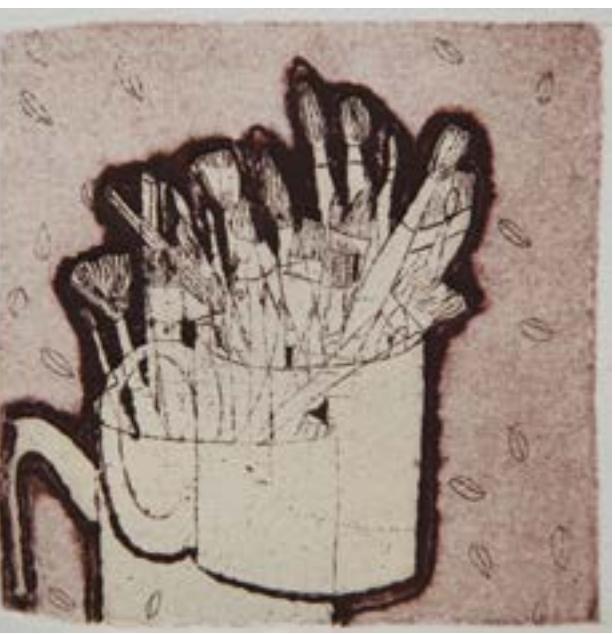
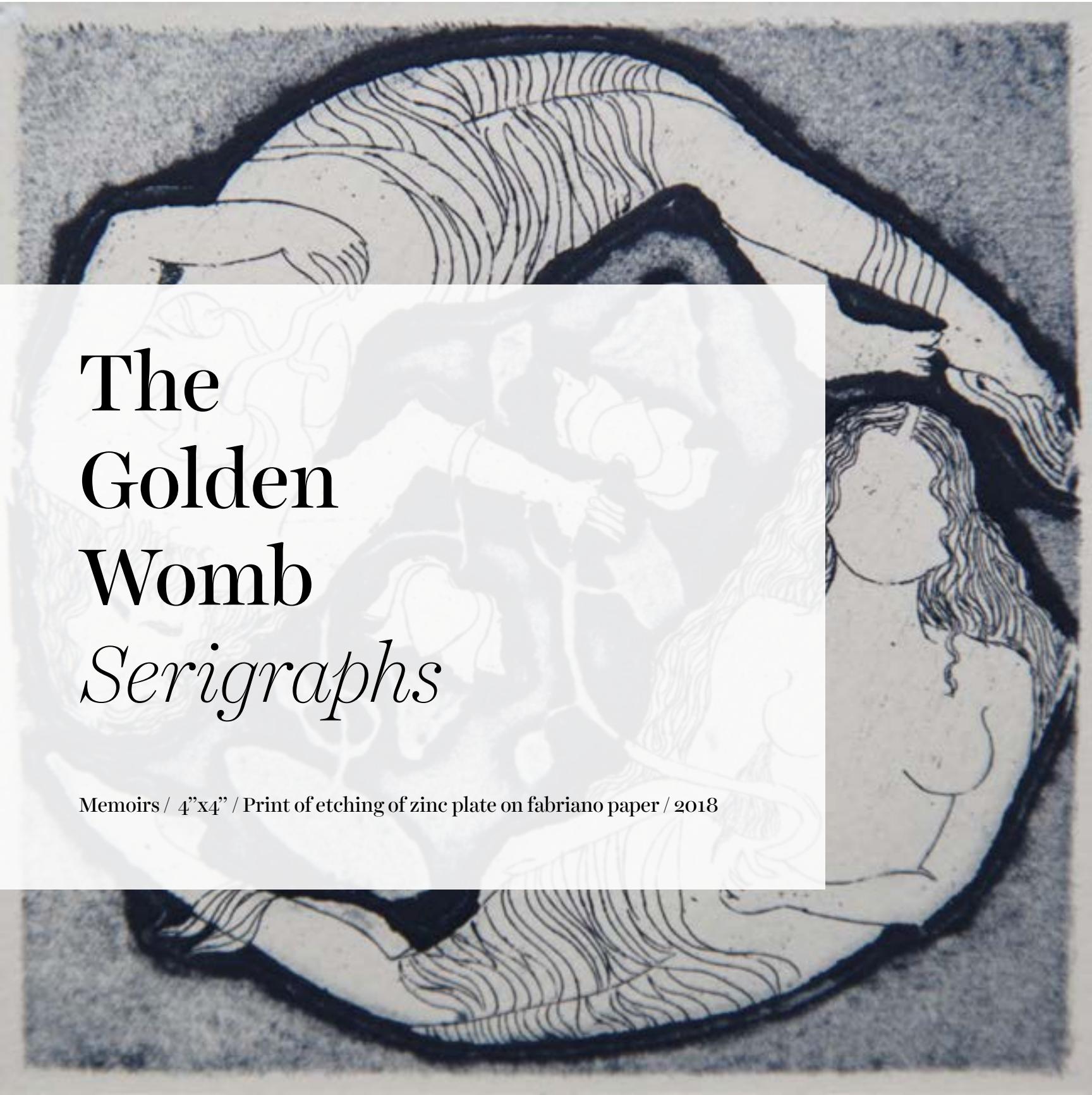
4x6 ft / Dance of desire / Acrylic and ink on canvas with 24ct gold and silver / 2018

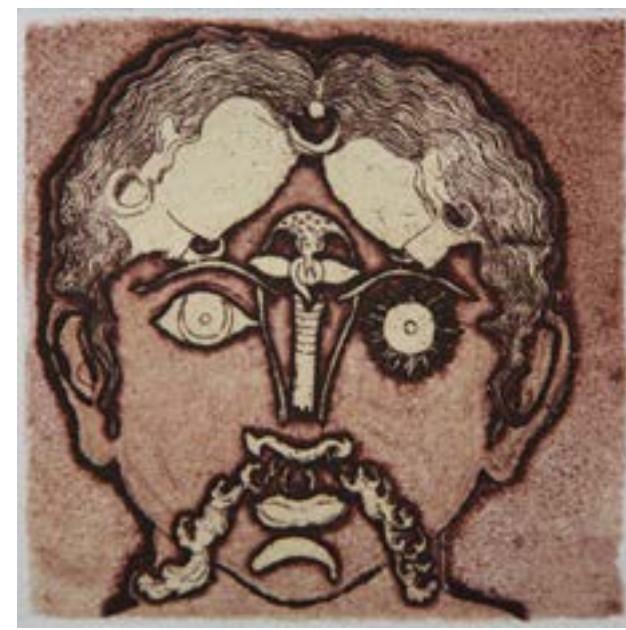


The Golden Womb

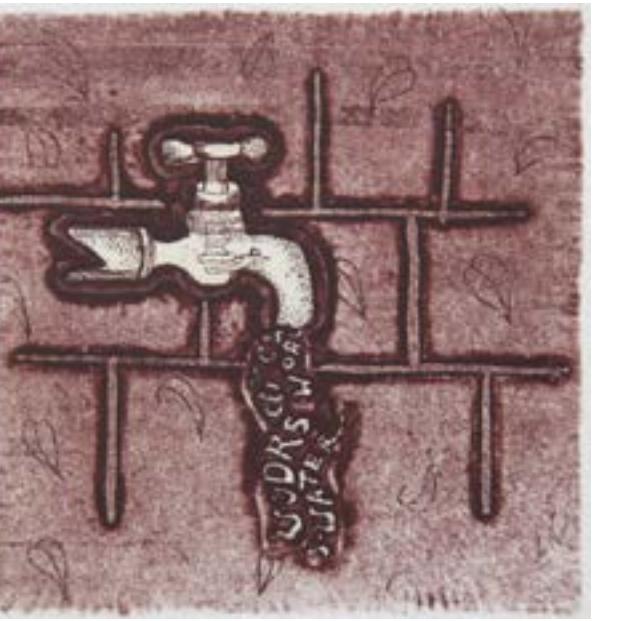
Serigraphs

Memoirs / 4"x4" / Print of etching of zinc plate on fabriano paper / 2018











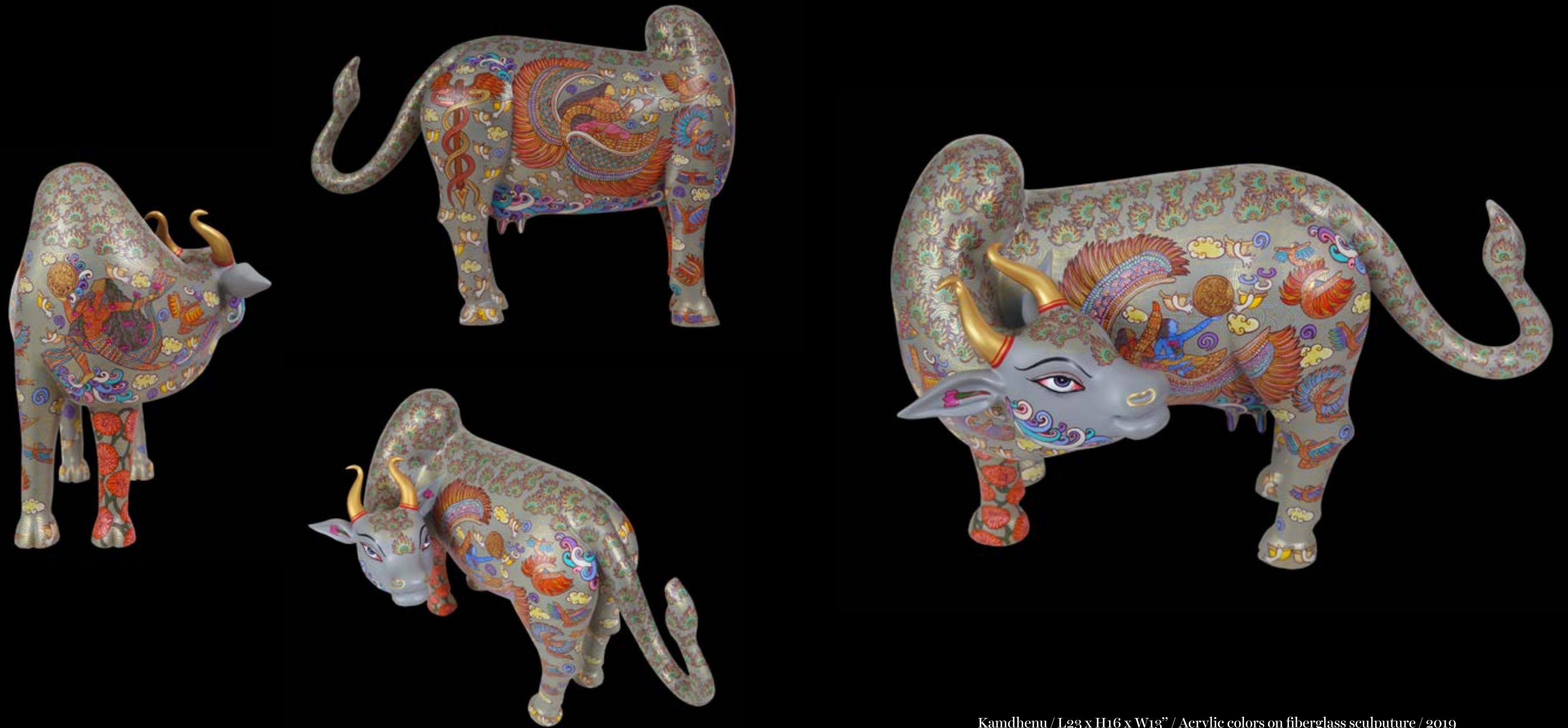


Kamdhenu / 56 x 42 x 18 inches / Acrylic on fiber with 24kt gold leaf

The
Golden
Womb
Sculpture/Fiber



Kamadhenu / 54 x 36 x 24 inches / Acrylic colors on fiberglass sculpture / 2018



Kamdhenu / L23 x H16 x W13" / Acrylic colors on fiberglass sculputre / 2019



The
Golden
Womb
Sculpture / Bronze



L36 x W32 x H43" / Riding the waves of wind and water / Bronze / 2018



Maheshwari / L42 x H33 x W18" / Bronze Sculpture / 2015

Seema Kohli



"People call me a painter; it is what I do. But my art springs from my life's experiences and that which I see around me. I am influenced by our culture, our learnings, our poetry, our spiritual quests and its place in human civilisation. I read, I travel, I listen, I observe; I am a thinker. In my work, you see it in my paintings, you can touch it in my sculptures, you are part of it in my performances, that what I do is connect lines, hues, forms and words in a humanitarian quest."

Seema Kohli's exhaustive practice that spans over three decades embraces a variety of mediums including paintings, sculpture, installation and performance.

The most significant one to emerge out of liner forms and paintings is 'Performance Art'. Decay, hybridization & transformation: Creating new identity; reshaping belongings; intimacy; a dialogue of matter and memory all constitute a visual language of her work.

"Time" as a factor, is central to her practice, whether it's a wrapped object or a performance. She uses time as medium, which is extended, assembled and captured in all her media, be it painting, sculptures or installations. The aspects of continuity, repetition, vulnerability, duration, temporality, awareness, situation and public involvement are also inherent qualities that inform her art practice. The process before and after the performance is important and challenging

Her work is primarily a celebration of the female form and energy the source of the twin forces of creation and destruction. Shakti, the divine cosmic energy manifest through female embodiment has been extensively explored, engaged with, re-narrativised and retold through Seema Kohli's works.

Engaging with a wide circuit of references like religious iconography, world mythology, philosophical and literature, Kohli weaves together a story to recover the lost feminine narrative in cultural history. Appropriating ancient Indian iconography and philosophy, it is Kohli's modernist chronicling of the ancient myths and mythological figures which makes Kohli's work prolific and contemporaneous. Inserting herself into the narrative of Shakti and Saptamatrikas, the artist becomes the carrier of the seed of procreation and creativity. Her works become above all an exploration into the journey of the self and the relationship of the self with the spiritual cosmos. Continually nudging at the boundaries of myth and reality, self and the other, Kohli has extended the boundary of her practice spilling it across the canvas of life. For Kohli, art and life truly intersect.

She has had 20 solo shows and has been a part of numerous national and international shows. She has participated in prestigious art fairs and Biennales like collateral event at Kochi Muziris Biennale-2015, collateral event at Venice Biennale-2015, 2014, Hong Kong Art Fair-2015, Venice Architecture Biennale-2014, Art Basel-2009, ARCO Spain-2010, Shanghai Art Fair-2011, Art Stage Singapore-2012, Beijing Biennale-2012, India Art Fair-2010, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19. She received further acclaim for her creativity at the Florence Biennale-2009 where she received a Gold Award for her video *Swayamsiddha-Myth, Mind and Movement*. She has also received the Young FICCI Ladies Organization Women Achiever's Award in 2010 and the Lalit Kala National Award for Women in 2008.

Her works can be seen as public art at the Delhi International Airport, Mumbai International/ Domestic Airport, the Defence Ministry, Sardar Patel Bhavan-Patna, Tata Residency, Tata Steel, Jindal Steel, Manipal University and Hotel Leela Palace, New Delhi. Seema was also a part of the Art for Freedom at Bonham Auction [2007], Akshay Pratisthan at Christies, London [2009] and CRY Auction at Sotheby's NY [2012-13] and Florence Biennial [2008].

Her latest installation work has been acquired by ONGC, New Delhi for display in their public atrium. Her paintings are in collections with H.E. The President of Singapore Mr. S.R. Nathan; Chairman of the Arts Council of Singapore Mr. Liu Thai Ker; Norway High Commissioner Mr. Aryne Walther; Camlin, UNDCP, Raj Niwas, Pondicherry; Northern Railways, Indian Railways, CCS India, Bharat Bhawan Bhopal, Lalit Kala and Sahitya Kala Akademi, Goa museum Of Art and more recently Rubin Museum, MOSA Brussels and many more collectors in India and abroad.

Seema has also held interactive sessions and lectures about her works at Ted X Chennai [2012], NGMA Bangalore [2011, 2013, 2017], Modula Conceptions, Dubai [2011], IFRD, Mumbai [2012], Indo-Bangladesh Crossover, New Delhi [2012], The International Women Forum, Chennai [2012] and WIN Conference, Rome [2012] and Prague [2013], Film screening "Questioning life through films", Organized by Habiart foundation and Hungarian International cultural Centre, New Delhi (2015) "Remembering Sabeen in Delhi" organized by Sahar Zaman in New Delhi (2015). She has been invited by various universities in India and all over the world including UConn, Chico, Harvard and Davis.

She currently lives and works in New Delhi, India.

079 STORIES



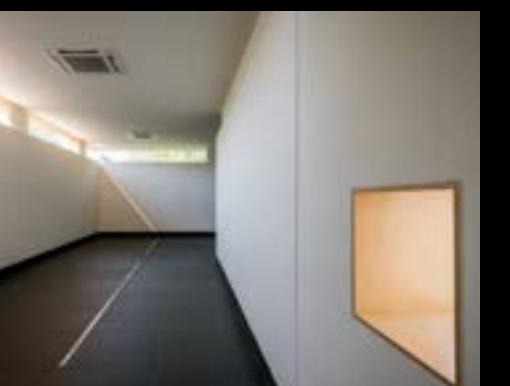
079 / STORIES is the brainchild of Purva Damani who is an art enthusiast. The place is born out of a dream to create a cultural space in the city that caters to the need of #design, #art and #creativity

It is a sincere effort to create a microcosm of #Ahmedabad, now a #WorldHeritageCity, where local, national and international talent can showcase their skills, whilst becoming a part of the bigger #story that emulates life in its most beautiful form.

The Founder Director of 079 / STORIES, Purva Damani is an art enthusiast. She started her journey with Communications & Marketing at Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. Armed with interpersonal skills and coupled with a diploma in Human Resources and Marketing, she worked as a Human Resource Consultant in Mumbai before moving back to Ahmedabad.

Back in her hometown, and in an endeavor to create a platform to bring #art and #culture together and make it accessible to the people, 079 / STORIES was conceptualized.

079 / STORIES was born out of a dream to create a cultural space in the city that caters to the need of #design, art and #creativity. Designed by Khushnu & Sönke Hoof- the partners of Pritzker laureate Balkrishna Doshi, 079/Stories unfolds itself as a promenade which houses an artgallery, exhibit cum #workshop space and an #amphitheatre.



TAO ART GALLERY



Established in the year 2000, Tao has developed into a well-recognized brand in the Mumbai art space. Guided by connoisseur and self-taught artist, Kalpana Shah, it has seen the art market in all its highs and lows. From the days when the gallery's walls were resplendent with the works of Indian Masters like Hussain, Raza, and Tyeb Mehta in the early 2000's, to recovery after the financial crisis with a new younger crop of artists, Tao has experienced many waves of change.

In its 19-year history, Tao has curated uniquely conceptualized shows highlighting diverse art forms like painting, photography, sculpture, video, performance as well as installation arts in its two exhibition galleries. The Gallery is very open-minded towards any creative expression and emphasizes on the powerful and innovative presentation of artistic ability, building a thought-provoking experience for all its viewers and inviting dialogue on culture, aesthetics and the tradition of visual arts. Tao has also been actively involved in publishing various art books and organizing art education workshops, interactive sessions with artists and other knowledge-based lectures that aim to propagate love for art, and boost the presence of Indian Art in the global arena. Tao's macro-vision sees art not in isolation, but as having a cohesive relationship with life itself.



