

Priyasri Patodia

Presents

## The Uncertain Tales

Opening Reception on: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019

6:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Walk Through – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019

Date: 16th January to 4th February 2019

Time: 11:30 am to 6:30 pm (Monday to Saturday)

Exhibition Organised By

Premjish Achari

Birender Yadav | Dinar Sultana | Mustafa Khanbhai | Navin Chahande | Prajeesh A. D. | Sanjib Mondal |

**Venue** - Priyasri Art Gallery, 42 Madhuli 4th Floor, Shiv Sagar Estate,

Next to Poonam Chamber

Dr Annie Besant Road, Worli, Mumbai 400018

Telephone: 022 24947673 +91 9323582303

[priyashriartgallery@gmail.com](mailto:priyashriartgallery@gmail.com)

## The Uncertain Tales

The arrival of a new year is marked with the wishes for better, peaceful and prosperous times. At least that is what we wish for and that is what others wish for us. Nevertheless, the hope for a better future is now shrouded with deep uncertainties and insecurities. The visions for a better future are stalled by the rise of religious bigotry, unequal distribution of wealth,

rampant invasions and the on-going ecological crisis. The stories of our times are characterized by an uncertainty. We take a pause to narrate the chronicles of the contemporary and every interlude in imagining a future is mired in this doubt. The work of art of our times reflects the precariousness of contemporary human existence. This exhibition features a selection of works from young artists practicing in different parts of India who are redefining the contemporary art. Their works are not mere reflections of the socio-political milieu they inhabit; rather they offer a critical perspective through their practice and question existing conventions. Also, they possess a vulnerability which arises from a sensitivity displayed towards the precarious existence and uphold the values of uncertainty.

But what is the relevance of taking a pause while we embark on this great progression? To be engulfed in uncertainty allows us to retreat into the deepest caverns of our self and introspect on our inner demons and fears. This conceptual retreat allows us to explore the many possibilities of love, friendship, existence, resistance, and commitment in this turbulent epoch. To be uncertain is an act of courage, where the subject is distant from the shared dreams of progress, development and technological advancements. Like the Slovenian Lacanian-Hegelian Slavoj Žižek informs us, “we have to gather the strength to fully assume the hopelessness.” The speculations can wait and let us remind ourselves that there are even more daunting structural and systemic fissures which we need to tackle before moving ahead. According to Žižek, “The true courage is not to imagine an alternative, but to accept the consequences of the fact that there is no clearly discernible alternative: the dream of an alternative is a sign of theoretical cowardice, it functions as a fetish which prevents us to think to the end the deadlock of our predicament.” The works in this exhibition posit a sharper critique by throwing effective punches on these realities rather than being hypothetical. They survey the various challenges faced by the world today and accept discrimination as a fact of our contemporary reality. As much as exhausted, isolated and disorientated we are, the time demands an introspection and a carefully drawn path for liberation. Uncertain tales allows us to recollect the events unfolding before our eyes and etch them into our memories. It cautions us about the impending catastrophe.

## About the Artists

### **Birender Yadav**

Birender Yadav is an artist based in Delhi whose work meticulously dissects the issues pertaining to caste, labour and violence. Through his sculptures, photographs, drawings, paintings, installations, etc. Yadav refers to his experiences, while also using art as a medium to question the formations of identity, critiquing the dominant representation of the marginalized and foregrounding the conditions of itinerant labourers of central Indian region. Yadav's self-reflexive creative endeavours' offers a complex of double narrative which involves his own journey as the son of a coal miner and an empathetic approach towards what he terms as the unnoticed masses, who are the toiling lower castes of this country. In his work The 'Debris of Fate' he has assembled the broken debris from construction sites and re-inscribed them with images of working tools as a beautiful mosaic. The work's beauty is deceptive as a closer observation reveals the paraphernalia of oppression and subjugation.

### **Prajeesh A D**

Prajeesh A.D. hails from Kerala and he has concluded his studies from Hyderabad. Prajeesh delves on the absurd in his body of work and questions our normative understandings of objects. Prajeesh creates objects and in an innovative way transform them to non-functional objects. These dreams like objects transcend their use value and functional purposes and critically interrogate our perceptions of reality. Prajeesh deliberately selects these objects in order to challenge the systems of ordering, measuring, surveying, etc. and introduces an alternative world where these objects have a different life. In his new series of works for the show Prajeesh extends his engagement with objects by transforming them to question how values and functions are formed.

## **Dinar Sultana**

Dinar Sultana is a talented young artist from Bangladesh who has successfully completed her Masters in painting from MS University Baroda. Sultana's detailed material processes in the making of her works, the poignant visual style and the active foregrounding of the self are some significant features of her works. Even at this short span of her artistic career Sultana has been part of several significant exhibitions in Bangladesh, India and elsewhere. Sultana's meditations on nature and the eternal recurrence of birth and life are highly intense. In her painting "I Was There" Sultana juxtaposes exquisitely detailed patterns with the visceral flow of blood. The work is a strong commentary on the ostracisation and discrimination faced by women based on certain beliefs related to bodily fluids and menstruation. The image recasts the female body in its all vulnerability and fragility, yet cautiously departs from any sort of idealization.

## **Navin Chahande**

Navin Chahande's works are one of the most formidable representations of the daily experiences of the Dalits and the lower classes of India. Chahande has attracted significant attention and critical acclaim after his recent exhibitions which feature the use of archival images to re-present historic events related to Ambedkarite politics. Through his painstaking research, collection of oral histories, images, visual culture associated with Navayana-Buddhist tradition and Dalit poetry, Chahande positions caste as an important factor of the art historical discourse. Chahande mobilises these images and symbols from his daily life in search of a radical political identity. In his sculpture "Flexibilism", which is a neologism coined by him, he critiques the mismatch between ideological rhetoric's and practices.

## **Mustafa Khanbhai**

Mustafa Khanbhai is a Delhi based artist whose works draw attention to the importance of history and memory. He works with digital, sculptural, print media and interactive forms. While his earlier works drew inspiration from Islamic history, myths and visual culture, the focus of his recent works have shifted to the ecological crisis looming above us. His works engages with

the lives of the animals and birds who have now adapted to the growing metropolises across India. In his digital collage 'Jinnistan', Khanbhai mobilizes the figure of Jinn or Djinn to comment on the contemporary refugee crisis. In the Islamic lore Jinns are believed to have supernatural powers and are capable of possessing human beings. They are either welcomed or warded off depending on the person. Referring to the iconographic depiction of Jinns, Khanbhai comments on the contemporary plight of the refugees who are characterised as aliens and are non-acceptable in many countries.

### **Sanjib Mondal**

Sanjib Mondal is a West Bengal based artist who has completed his masters in print-making from Santiniketan. Mondal has been part of different shows in Kolkata and Baroda. His images are borrowed from the everyday objects around us and he highlights their relation with our daily life. Through the multiple depictions of these objects Mondal examines our association with these and the symbolic value we ascribe to them. Mondal's set of paintings in this exhibition feature patterns and images of deities from the popular culture on a seemingly empty pictorial surface. They are cornered to a side to emphasize the expanded barrenness of the surface. The empty surface is a metaphor for the desolate agricultural lands and the condition of the farmers he encountered in the various trips undertaken by him. He transforms the aridness onto the pictorial surface by the use of rough pitch-board as the background. Through this series of works Mondal posits a strong artistic take on the environment crisis and the miserable conditions of Indian farmers.