

RUPESH
PUSHPA
SATYENDRA



“**ART WITHOUT
PHILOSOPHY
HAS NO PLACE
IN CULTURE**”



Artist Statement

In Hinduism, Brahman is the supreme consciousness and every being – human and non-human emanates from it. Guided by this philosophy, my work explores the religious and symbolic connotations attached to non-human animals across various cultures. Through the critical exploration, an intersection of animal and human identities is realised, allowing me to comment on contemporary socio-political events.

With an interest in understanding the complex relationships we share with animals, each painting represents a multifaceted narrative, employing tools such as iconography, mark-making, and textured colour juxtaposition. The foregrounded subject matter, set in mock-mythologized predicaments, aims to encourage viewers to reflect on the layered connections between humanity and the animal world.

THEY SAY I AM AN AVATAR OF LORD HANUMAN

Acrylics on Panel
80 x 120 cm



PROJECT

STREET AFFAIRS

2024

The project Street affairs aims to reinvigorate my personal childhood memories in order to highlight the paradoxical nature of animal devotion and crowd gathering spectacle within Indian culture through a series of paintings. With the aim to comment on the socio-political issues of the present – such as animal sacrifices, rape cases, mob lynching among others, these set of paintings, while individually standing as a commentary on chosen subject and theme, aims to critique the culture of spectatorship while challenging the animal representation in contemporary art. The core inspiration for these works stem from the lived experiences of growing up in India. Growing up in a religious Indian household with initial studies in vedic school where the dictum revolved around religious texts such as Bhagavad Gita has shaped my perception of looking at the world as a part of cosmic Brahman or the absolute where every being – human and non-human, occupy the same cosmic plane of existence.



STREET AFFAIRS

In the summers of 2000s, the small town streets of Patna in Bihar, India would turn into an arena of spectacles. Occasionally, a madari(monkey trainer) would visit with a chained Indian macaque monkey which would dance in an unchoreographed manner to the rhythmic sound of damru (power drum) being played by his master. It was a strange spectacle, watching a wild animal submitting to the tunes of a human. We kids would laugh and clap our hands hard in a futile attempt to make the monkey dance more. On other occasions, the streets were shaken by the presence of majestic elephants brought by Mahouts. These Mahouts would offer a ride in exchange for some token money. While most of us kids were scared to conquer this giant, adults would climb and feel royal in having conquered the beast -perhaps a reminiscence of our royal past. **We would clap again.**

This interaction and intersection of animals with humans is deeply rooted in Indian culture. From the religious epics boasting of animal participation to household calendar wallpapers of Gods and Goddess riding animals as their chosen vehicle; from offering the first cooked bread to cows to feeding milk to King Cobra around Naga Panchami, the identity of animals is interlinked to the many gods in Hinduism and ultimately their symbolic association. Years have gone by and while the animal street performers could be witnessed only in the remote parts of India, the **spectacle culture still persists.**





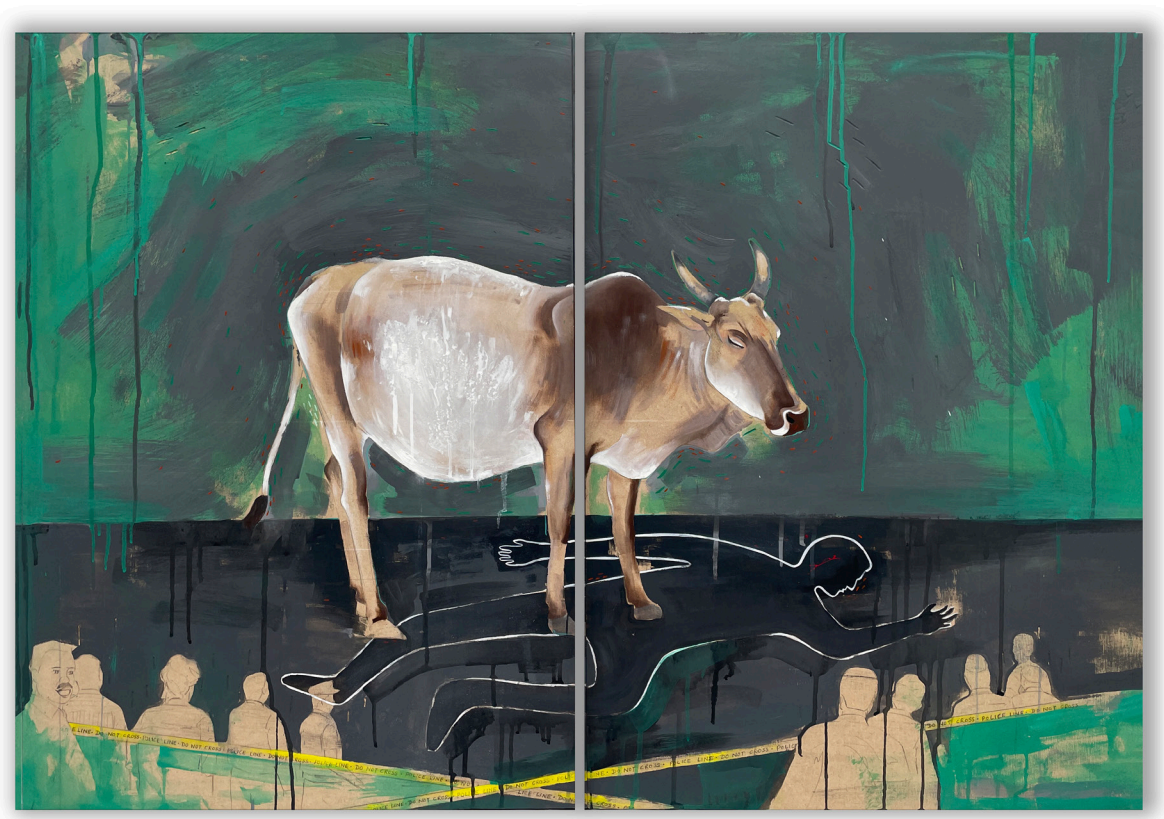
**IMBALANCED
DEVOTION**

Oil on Panel

80 x 120 cm

SUSPECT

Mixed media on
diptych panel
80 x 120 cm (each)



ZARATHUSTRA

Oil on canvas

50 x 65 cm



ONLOOKERS

Mixed media on panel
158 x 106 cm





TAINTED MEMORIES | SACRIFICE | RITUAL

Acrylics on Paper
53 x 78 inches

HUNTING | SPECTA- TORS | WITCH-HUNT

Acrylics on Paper Board
65 x 78 cm





**LAUNDA NAACH | NATA-
RAJ | TRANSCENDENCE**

Mixed media on acrylic sheet
80x120cm

STREET AFFAIRS

Exhibition View



Herbert Read Gallery, University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury, UK



ARE WE GODS?

Oil on panel
16 x 17 cm





BLOODY HOLI

Acrylics on Canvas Paper
30 x 42 cm

PROJECT

ROOTS

2023



This project was aimed at understanding the tribal art form of Jharkhand, known as Sohrai/Khovar, and finding a unified approach to merge the traditional with the contemporary. This art form is practised heavily in the remote villages of Hazaribhagh by the womenfolks of the local tribal communities and could be traced to the primitive cave art sites of ISKO located nearby. My artistic interest with this project was to document this disappearing art form, critically engage with the artisans to understand the process and materials used in order to rejuvenate the tradition in my own artistic sensibilities.

Timeline:

December 2022 - August 2023

Location:

Hazaribhagh, Jharkhand, INDIA

Research methodology:

Literature review

Field Study

User Interviews





Sangeeta Devi



Malo Devi



Sita Kumari



Aarti Devi



Sohrai/Khovar is a sgraffito technique art where natural pigments such as black mud, yellow ochre is used as pigment to paint the mud house walls in celebration of harvest season as well as marriage ceremony. In Khovar, a dark base coat of black mud is applied to the wall and then left to dry after which a thin coat of white mud is applied while traditional motifs inspired by local flora and fauna is scraped off using a comb.



CAPITALISM COBWEB

Acrylics on Canvas

157 x 104 cm

2023

CULTURAL ANNIHILATION

Acrylics on Canvas

144 x 101 cm

2023



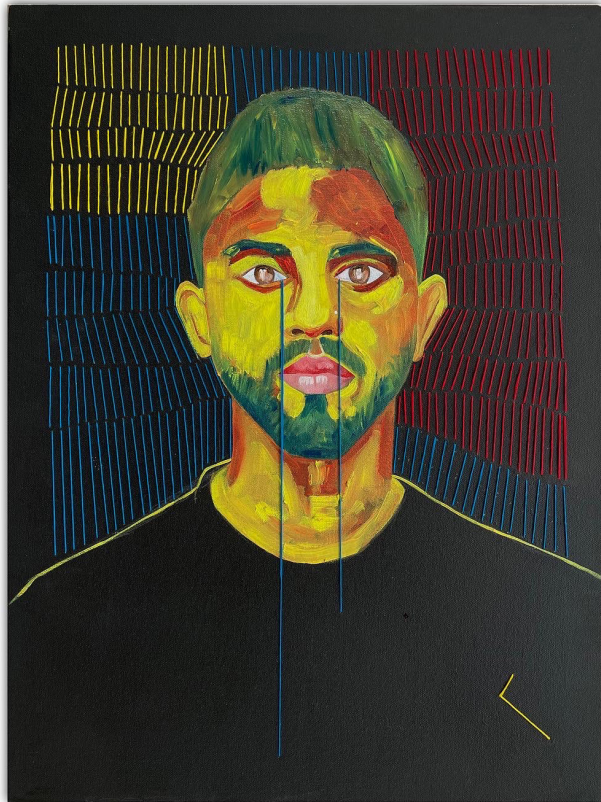
RAT-RACE

Mixed media on Canvas

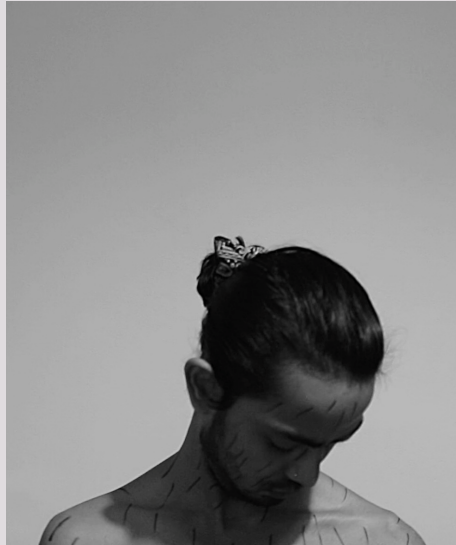
63 x 50 cm

2023

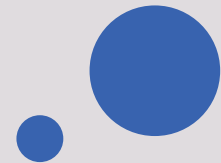




UNMASK
Embroidery on Canvas
45 x 60 cm
2023



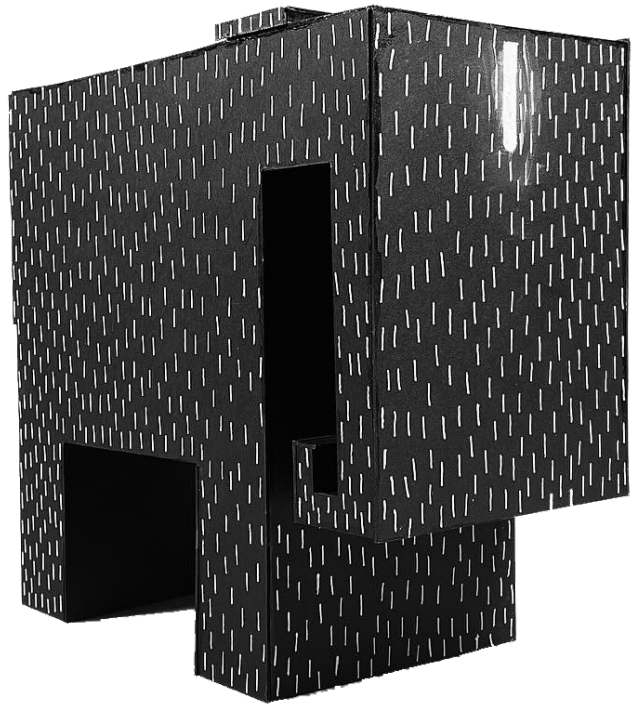
*Mark making | Ritual
Performance to Camera
2023*

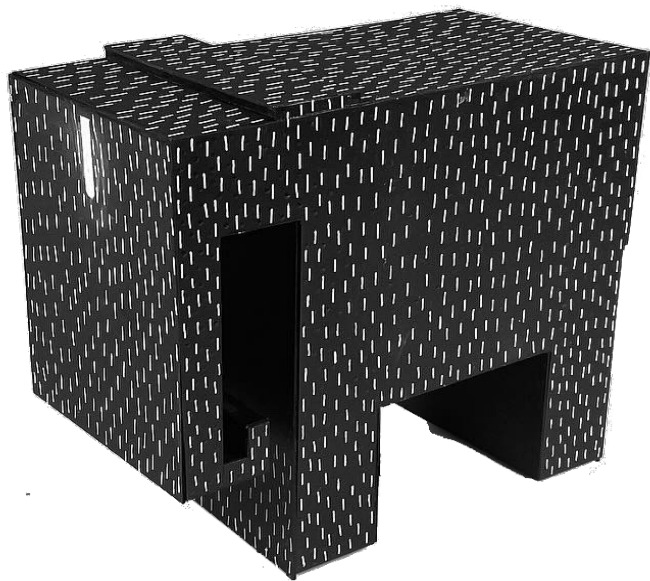




MARK MAKING

Inspired by the Sohrai/Khovar tribal art, and Hinduism ingrained belief of omnipresent cosmic energy in each being, mark making is a tool employed across my artistic practice to invoke deep connection to Brahman or universal consciousness. Each mark aims to represent the life form energy within us.



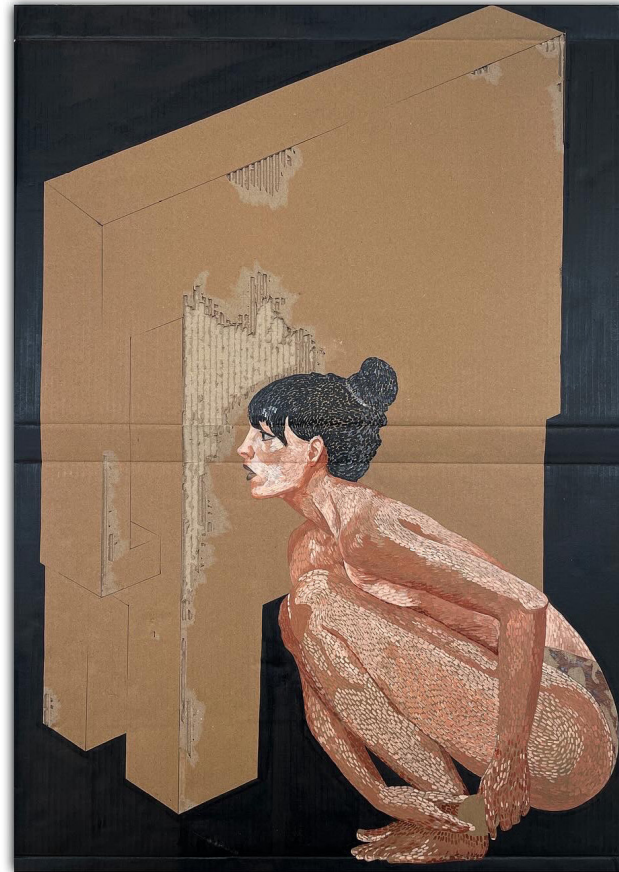


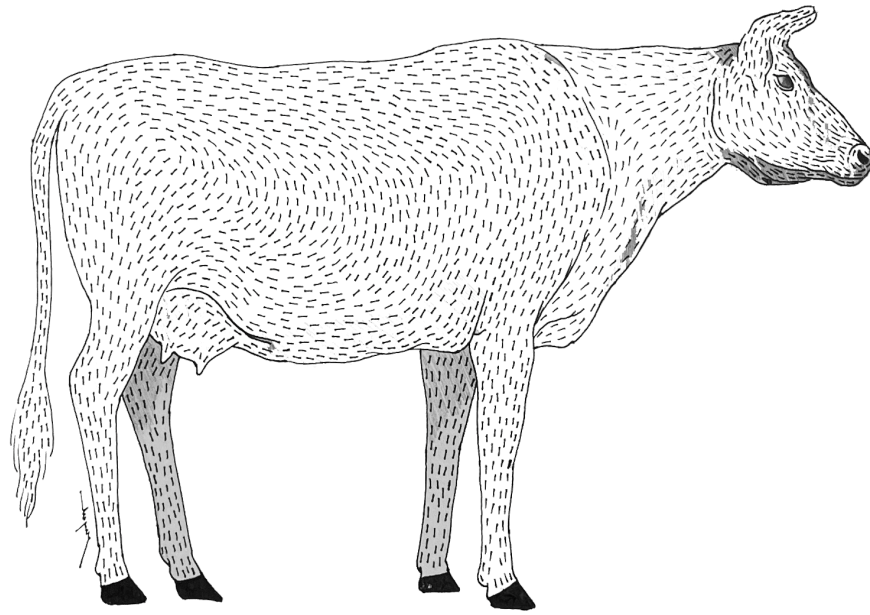
ONE EARED ELEPHANT

Paper Sculpture
2023

VULNERABLE TOGETHER

Acrylics on Cardboard
80 x 70 cm
2023





SACRED COW
Pen on Paper
2023

CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

- 2023-2024 MA Fine Art
University for the Creative Arts,
Canterbury, United Kingdom
- 2017-2019 Masters in Design
Indian Institute of Technology,
Guwahati, India
- 2023-2024 Bachelors in Engineering
Birla Institute of Technology,
Jharkhand, India

GROUP EXHIBITION

- 2024 MA Fine Art Interim Show
Hebert Read Gallery, UK
- BA Fine Art Curated Show
UCA, Canterbury, UK
- 2023 Snapshot Exhibition
UCA, Canterbury, UK
- 2021 Optikal Asylum
Bira Taproom, Bengaluru
Karnataka, India
- 2020 Chitra Santhe
Karnataka Chitrakala Parisath
Karnataka, India
- 2019 The India Story
Kolkata, India
- 2017 ArtRefurbish
Antisocial, Hauz Khas,
New Delhi, India

CONTACT

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