

# PAYSAGE EPHEMERALE

An exhibition of paintings by

Anju Chaudhuri

Curator

Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya

2 March - 10 April, 2024





Picture Courtesy: Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya

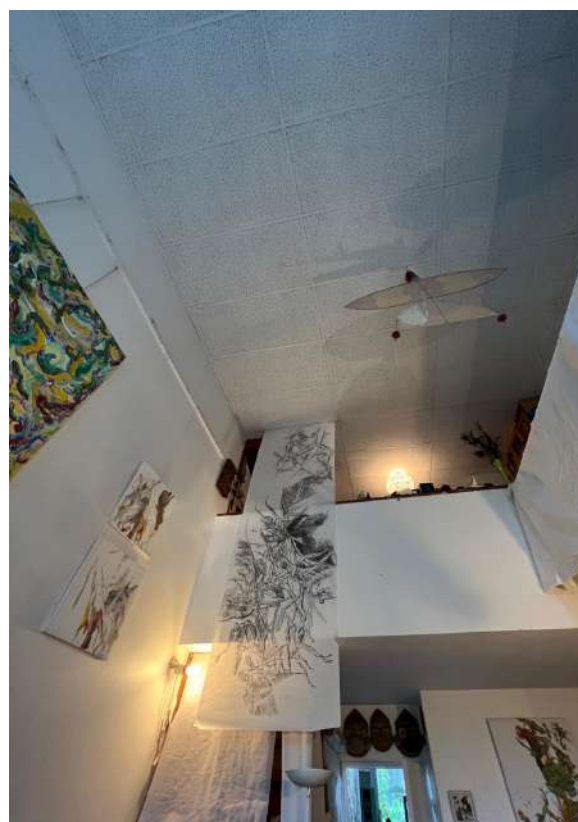


## Curator's Note



Walking along the streets of Paris, I can see the sun is almost gone now and the sky has transformed into a breath taking canvas of vibrant hues. I am looking for a house, and when I am about to give up I see Anju Di, the one I have come all the way to Paris for, waving at me from behind a giant gate. Stepping into her home is an exceptional experience; it's remarkable how one can keep alive the essence of one's cultural milieu after being away from their homeland for decades. It's almost like I am sitting in a Bengali drawing room in the middle of Paris. But perhaps the most enchanting aspect of the house is the warmth and hospitality of its owner. Talking to her implores a sense of familiarity, in other words, I was getting a feeling that we hadn't just met but had known each other for a long time. And as we sit together, drinking wine and sharing stories, I request her to take me to her studio. And so we go to her studio which is right underneath, at the basement of her home.

The basement is unlike anything I have seen before; it's a sanctuary of creativity and talent. Here, amidst shelves of art supplies and brushes sprawled around everywhere stand her masterpieces. Her paintings have a larger-than-life quality as they tower over you; these massive artworks dwarf the observer, inviting them to step into a realm where scale becomes part of the experience. Despite the colossal size of the paintings, there is a feeling of softness to her interpretations of the world around her. Her unique perception is evident from her use of colours that engulf the spectator in a symphony of visual ecstasy. The hanging artworks in her studio demonstrate a profound attachment to her Bengali roots, weaving elements of her heritage into the fabric of her art. One can sense the love and warmth she instils while creating these works, it's like she has knitted her love for art into her paintings. In



In addition to her exceptional way of using colour, she incorporates a unique element to her artworks — handmade paper, which is a work of art in itself. She prepares these papers herself, using things found in nature and this helps her portray a grounded impression of her artworks. Paper or canvas is often just used as a base for art, but Anju Di has been successful in bringing the paper she uses to the forefront of her artworks. Hence, the paper becomes the soul of her artworks, it's almost like art is impossible without the intricately crafted paper. Her artworks evoke a rhythmic passion that is found in both Occidental and Oriental classical music; While getting to know the artist and the art alike, I am reminded of those heartening lines from Tagore's Bhanusingher Padabali...

মগ্ধায় সব নাচ নাচ  
 মধুর গীতি গাওয়ে,  
 চঞ্চল মঞ্জির রাব  
 কুঞ্জ গগন ছাওয়ে।  
 সজনি জেব উজার মাদিরা  
 কনক দীপ জ্বলিয়া,  
 সুবাস্তি স্বরূপ কুঞ্জ ভবন  
 গন্ধ মলিল জালিয়া।  
 মলিকা চমেলি বেলি  
 গান্ধা তুলি বালিকা,  
 গান্ধা জুতি, গান্ধা জুতি,  
 গান্ধা বকুল মালিকা।  
 (জল্পসিঁথি শঙ্করের পদাবলী)

Sahchari Sab Naach Naach,  
 Madhura Geet Ga-o-re,  
 Chanchala Manjir Raba  
 Kunja Gagan Cha-o-re.  
 Sajni Ab Ujar Madira  
 Kanak Deep Jyaliya,  
 Suravi Karacha Kunj Bhavan  
 Gondha Solil Dholiya.  
 Mallika Chameli Beli,  
 Kusuma Tulah Balika,  
 Gantha Juthi, Gantha Jati,  
 Gantha Bakula Malika...

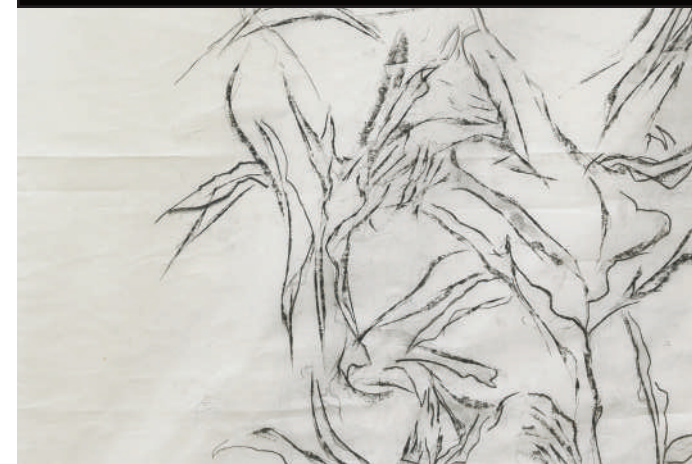
(“Sajani sajani radhika lo” Padabali by  
 Bhanusingha, Rabindranath Tagore)

These lines of Tagore are the only way I can describe the artworks of Anju Chaudhuri. Like Tagore's words, the artist's artworks transcend more than just mere aesthetics; they embody the joy of human life and the unifying power of art and culture that brings people together. She captures the essence of shared experiences and hence celebrates the universality of art. The different blooms in her paintings represent different cultures, which come together to form a beautiful flower garland, depicting the convergence of different civilizations. One feels those same emotions when one observes Anju Di's ineffable paintings as they invoke a feeling of oneness, which travels through the streets of bustling Kolkata, rests in a quaint Bengali village and flows with the river Seine in Paris. The weaving of these diverse cultures and identities has given birth to this exhibition.

-Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya



## Hayter's Note



Stanley William Hayter

In the 19th century, people used to make what was called nature prints. Dried plants, seaweed, or such were indented into a piece of soft lead which was then printed in intaglio with the appropriate colour.

The prints of Anju Chaudhuri for some reason remind me of these artefacts as they are so clearly of and about plants, organic forms. Somewhat like the sort of plants in the sea that turn out to be animals with fancy names like holothorida, foraminifera, gaeteropodia, dendrites, crinoids, sea urchins, and anemones.

Not that her images are copied from these biological specimens nor is the undersea colour of her space studied from actual marine observation, but our own memory of such things associates and recognises her forms as part of our subliminal experience.

*Hayter*

-Stanley William Hayter

Picture Courtesy: Pierre Dimech



Anju Chaudhuri (Born - 1944)



## Artist's Biography



Anju Chaudhuri was born in the year 1944 in an enlightened Bengali family that placed education and tradition above everything else. Her childhood was divided between a quiet South Kolkata neighborhood and a vibrant locality in North Calcutta, where her formative years were shaped by profound influences respecting Nature. One of the great influences which inspires her art to date is the stories of Hindu mythology. Her many childhood trips to beautiful seashores and hill stations sharpened and shaped her sensibilities to its intensity. She received a steady exposure to Indian art and culture. Her artistic trajectory was determined by the synthesis of these Western influences with Indian culture, from her childhood which led her to join the Government College of Art & Craft,

Calcutta. Later, she won a National Scholarship to study art at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Baroda. After being exposed to Western Art in Baroda, she got scholarships to continue her studies at the St. Martins School of Arts, London and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris.

During this time of shift of both locale and intellect, she came in contact with the celebrated English painter and master printmaker, Stanley William Hayter his assistant Krishna Reddy. Chaudhuri learned engraving from her mentor, Hayter at his illustrious art studio Atelier 17, Paris. Artists like Pablo Picasso, Alberto Giacometti, Jackson Pollock, and Mark Rothko used to often frequent the atelier. Anju Chaudhuri's trip to the West is reminiscent of those European artists who gathered inspiration along the roads of Italy during the seventeenth and later eighteenth centuries. The Western Influence intermingled with her Indian culture and gave existence to her artistic trajectory. In the early seventies, she lived between Amsterdam and Zurich but her homesickness dragged her back to Kolkata, where she spent the next four years of her life. Finally, she decided to go back and settle in Paris and since the millennium she has lived and worked between Kolkata and Paris.

The essence of her work lies in the true portrayal of her perception of the environment. For her, the idea of nature is universal as it is persistent all over the world. Hence, nature with its five elements is an integral part of her art. She compliments her vision with her bold brushstrokes, intricate detailing and harmonious use of colour. Her true artistic capability emerges from her incorporating the paper she uses; she



Etching Press Fine Arts Academy, Helsinki



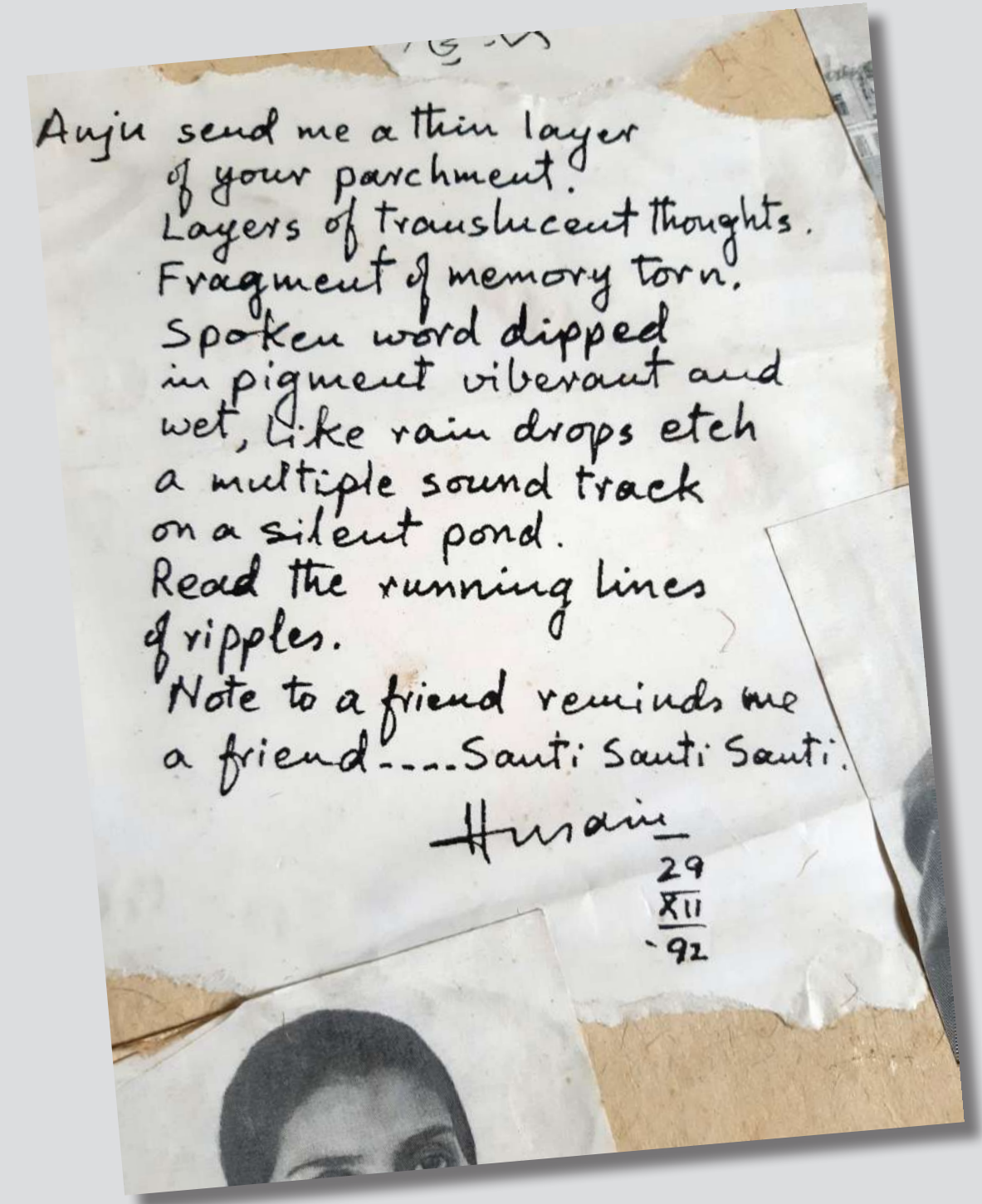
Amsterdam

## Poem by M. F. Husain



Anju send me a thin layer  
of your parchment.  
Layers of translucent thoughts.  
Fragment of memory torn.  
Spoken word dipped  
in pigment vibrant and  
wet, like rain drops etch  
a multiple sound track  
on a silent pond.  
Read the running lines  
of ripples.  
Note to a friend reminds me  
a friend.....Santi Santi Santi

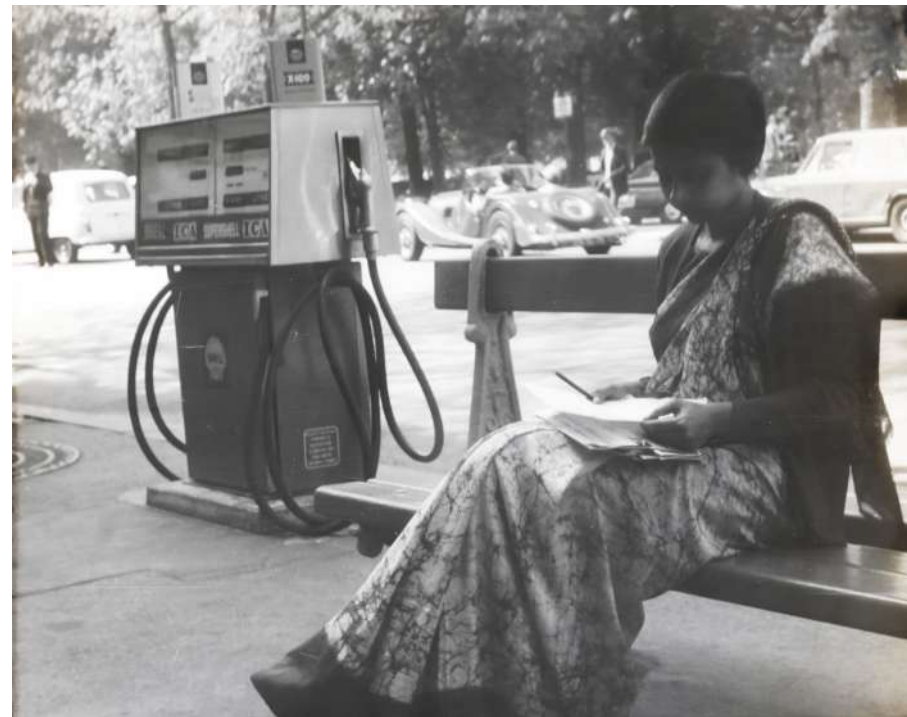
- Husain  
29.12.1992



is a pioneer in making paper where flowers, pigments and glues mingle to create harmony. Oil, acrylic, watercolour, inclusions, calligraphy, pencil, mixed technique, engraving... the medium for her art varies widely but her direction stays constant. Her artworks have been exhibited in many parts of the world, especially in and USA, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Mexico; Notably her work is in the permanent collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Bronx Museum in New York, National Museum in Delhi and has been showcased in places like the Galerie Toni Brechbuhl, Switzerland and the Birla Academy, Calcutta. She is also the recipient of the Certificate of Merit from the Royal Academy of London and the International Arts Guild Prize for engraving in Monte-Carlo.



Gerard Dufrene Portrait



Picture Courtesy: Marie Zhuhai

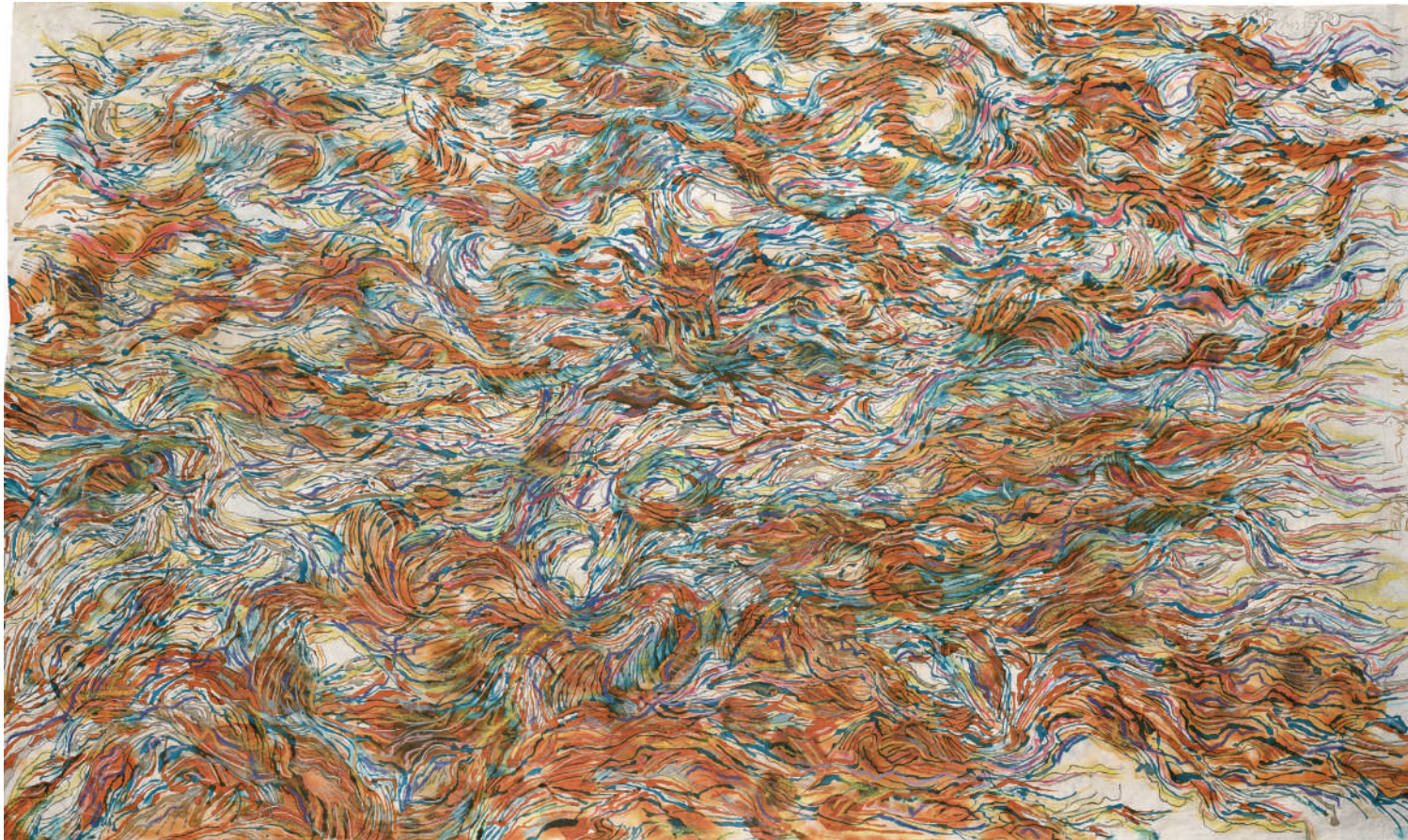
## PAINTINGS



Ink, Pencil, Pigment on Rice Paper, 17.8 X 43 in, 2020



Pigment, Ink on Rice Paper, 18 X 47 in, 2020



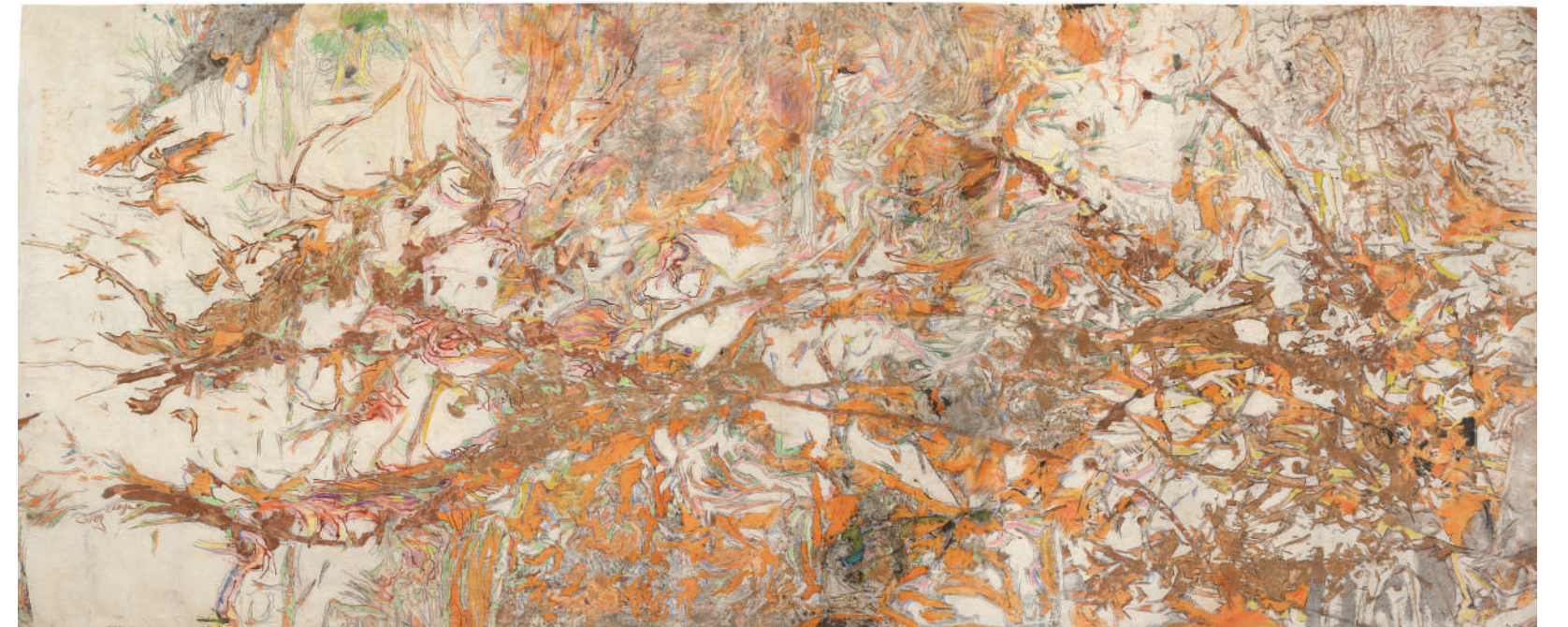
Ink, Water Colour on Rice Paper, 17.8 X 29 in, 2021



Water Colour, Ink, Pastel on Rice Paper, 19 X 29 in



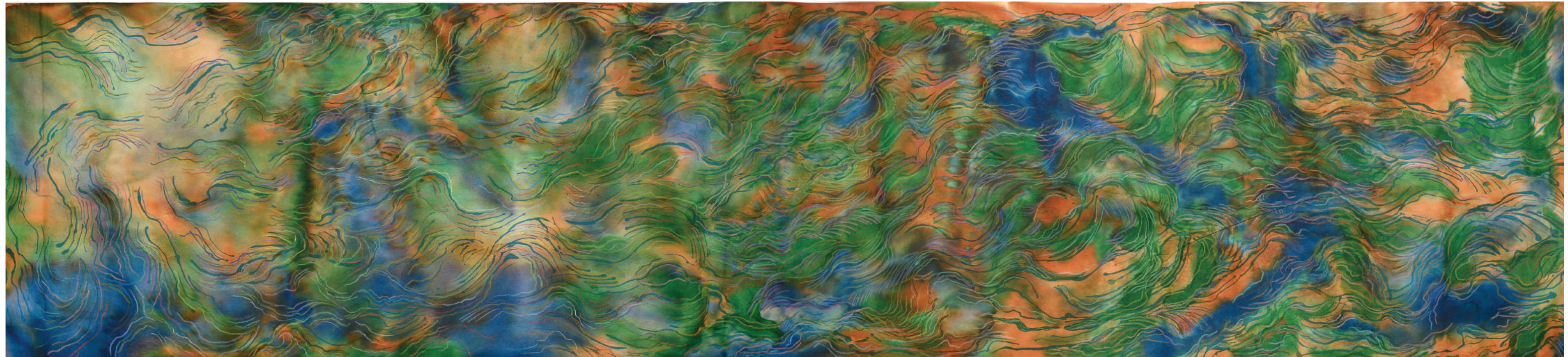
Ink, Water Colour, Pastel on Rice Paper, 18 X 38.5 in, 2020



Pencil, Pigment, Water Colour On Rice Paper, 17.5 X 43 in, 2020



Ink, Water Colour, Pencil on Rice Paper, 14.7 X 84 in



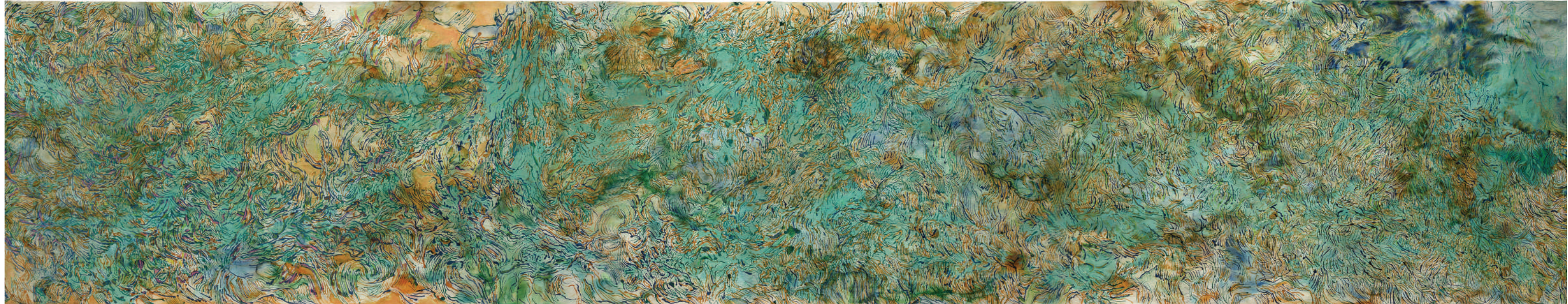
Ink, Water Colour on Rice Paper, 15 X 64.5 in



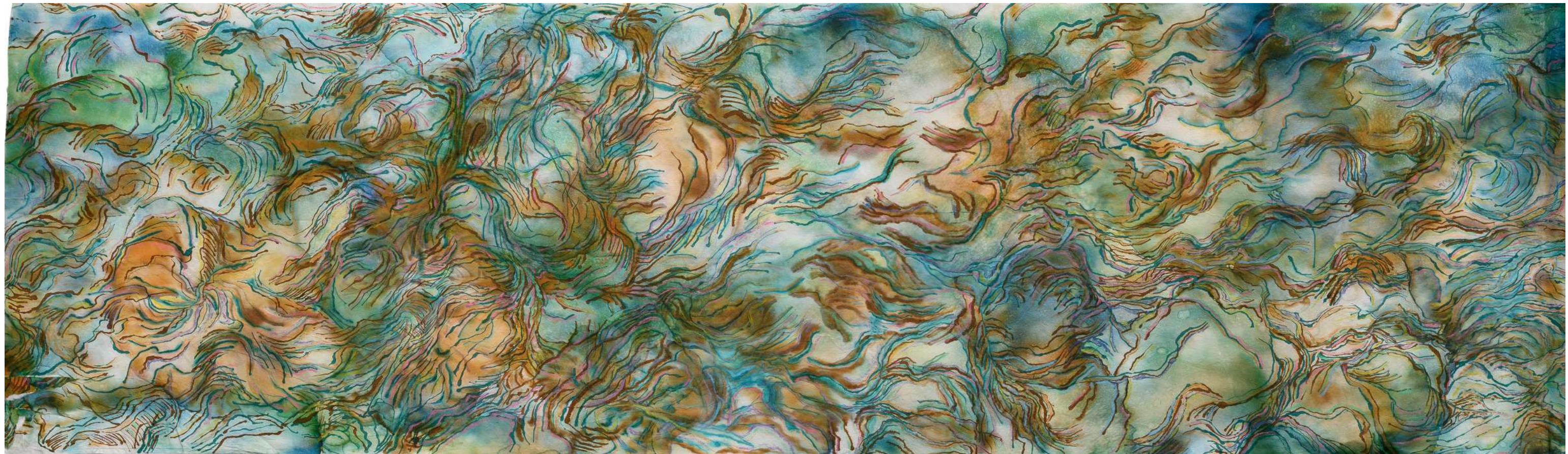
Pastel, Pigment, Charcoal on Cartridge Paper, 18 X 107 in



Oil, Ink on Rice Paper, 18 X 116 in, 2023



Pastel, Pencil, Ink, Water Colour on Rice Paper, 17.5 X 89 in



Ink, Water Colour, Pastel, Pencil on Rice Paper, 14.7 X 50 in



Ink, Water Colour, Pastel, Pencil on Rice Paper, 18 X 82.3 in



Ink, Water Colour, Pastel, Pencil on Rice Paper, 17.5 X 93.5 in



Oil on Rice Paper, 38 X 153 in



Oil on Kraft Paper, 39 X 166 in



Ink, Water Colour, Pastel, Pencil on Rice Paper, 13.5x52.5 in



Ink, Water Colour, Pastel, Pencil on Rice Paper, 13.7 X 83 in



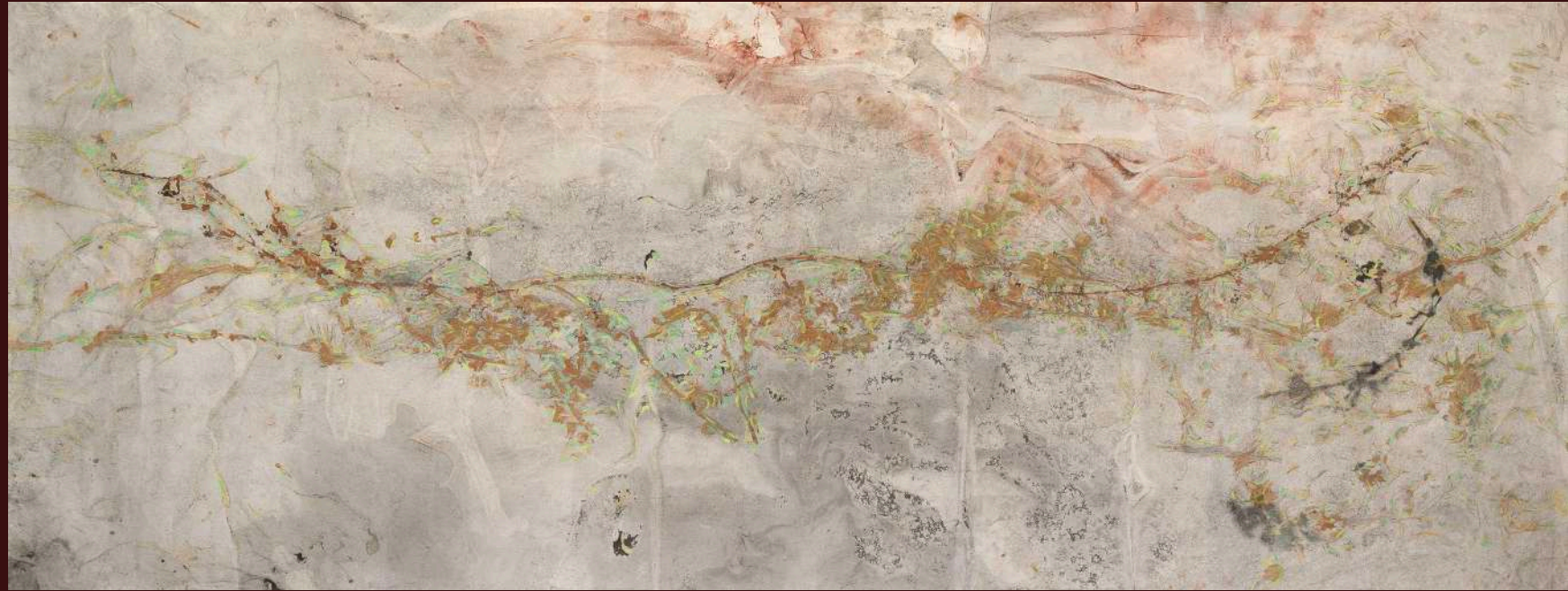
Ink, Water Colour, Pastel, Pencil on Rice Paper, 13.7 X 53 in



Ink, Water Colour, Pastel, Pencil on Rice Paper, 13.5 X 53 in, 1998



Ink, Water Colour, Pastel, Pencil on Rice Paper, 13.5 X 52.5 in, 1999



Ink, Pencil, Pigment on Rice Paper, 18 X 45 in



Pigment on Rice Paper, 17.8 X 43 in, 2020



Pigment, Charcoal on Thai Paper, 36 X 106.5 in



Water Colour, Ink on Rice Paper, 37.7 X 90.5 in



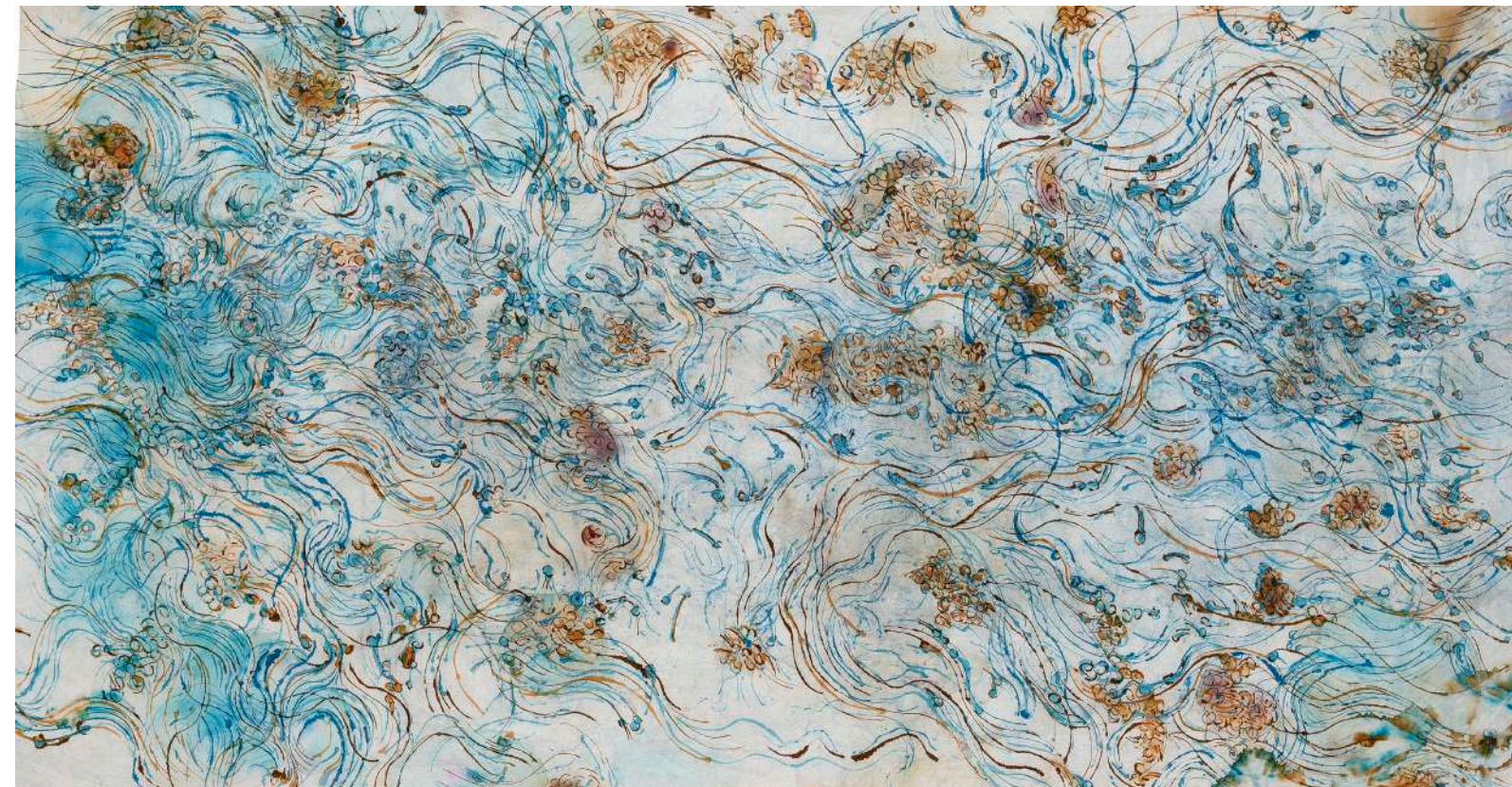
Ink on Dentelle Japanese Paper With Bamboo Support, 39.5 X 78.5 in



Charcoal, Conte on Rice Paper, 38.3 X 117 in



Oil on Japanese Paper, 20 X 28.8 in



Ink, Pencil, Pigment on Rice Paper, 18 X 34 in, 2020



Picture Courtesy: Jayat Basu

## Anju Chaudhuri

**Born:** Calcutta 1944

### Education:

- ◆ Diploma in painting. Govt. College of Arts & Crafts, Calcutta
- ◆ National Scholarship, MS University, Baroda
- ◆ Commonwealth Scholarship, St. Martins School of Arts, London
- ◆ French Govt. Scholarship, Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris
- ◆ Atelier 17, Studied under Hayter & Krishna Reddy

### Solo Exhibitions:

- ◆ Calcutta: 1967, 68, 71, 74, 80, 81, 82, 86, 91
- ◆ London: 1967, 69, 88
- ◆ France: 1970, 71, 76, 81, 82, 83, 85, 86, 92, 95, 96, 2000
- ◆ Switzerland: 1971, 87, 90
- ◆ Holland: 1972, 77, 85
- ◆ Vienna: 1978
- ◆ New Delhi: 1980, 1995
- ◆ Germany: 1982, 83, 85
- ◆ Finland: 1983, 91, 98
- ◆ Bombay: 1989, 93, 97, 2000

### Selected Participations:

- ◆ Commonwealth Institute, London 1968
- ◆ International Arts Guild, Monte Carlo 1970
- ◆ Etching Exhibition, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam 1973
- ◆ Tallinvitti, Helsinki 1978
- ◆ Mini Print International, Cadaques 1981
- ◆ Gallery Soleil Bleu, Paris 1982
- ◆ Gallery Blanca Lahti, Finland 1983
- ◆ Seignohoki Museum, Finland 1983

- ◆ National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi
- ◆ Birla Academy, Calcutta
- ◆ Victoria Albert Museum, London
- ◆ Bibliotheque National, Paris
- ◆ Ministry of Cultural Affairs, France
- ◆ Asia Society, New York
- ◆ The Albertina Museum Vienna

## EXHIBITIONS

- ◆ Gallery Chemould, Bombay 1983
- ◆ Biennale of Etchings, Sarcelles 1984
- ◆ Biennale of Etchings, Digne-les-Bains 1984
- ◆ Four Indian Painters Gallerie Benados, Paris 1984
- ◆ Biennale of Etchings, Ljubljana, Yugoslavia 1985
- ◆ Petite Salle, Centre Pomidou, Paris 1985
- ◆ Biennale of Etchings, Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal 1986
- ◆ Premio Internazionale Biella Per L'Incisione, Italy 1987
- ◆ Kanagawa 88, Yokohama, Japan 1988
- ◆ Mini Print Triennale, Auvergne, France 1988
- ◆ Bharat Bhavan Biennale, Bhopal 1989
- ◆ International Biennale, Auvergne 1989
- ◆ Intergraphik 90, Berlin, D.D.R. 1990
- ◆ Confluence, Birla Academy workshop, BF Gallery, Salt Lake, Calcutta 1992
- ◆ L'Aquarelle, Recent Paintings, Galerie Allais, Paris 1993
- ◆ Verma Biennale, Bulgaria 1995
- ◆ Bharat Bhavan Biennale, Bhopal 1995
- ◆ International Contemporary Prints, Kuala Lumpur 1996
- ◆ Asian Prints, Japan 1998
- ◆ Strasbourg Fair, Saga, F.I.A.C. France
- ◆ Galerie du Haut Pavé, Paris, 1981

## COLLECTIONS

- ◆ Taidehall Museum, Seijocki, Finland
- ◆ Duphar, Wesh, Holland
- ◆ Zaier, Assendelft, Holland
- ◆ Arts Council of England, London
- ◆ Bronx Museum, New York
- ◆ Alvar Alto Museum, Finland
- ◆ Chandigarh Museum, Chandigarh

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