

A black and white photograph of a hillside. On the left, a large, craggy rock formation rises. In the center, a cluster of ancient stone ruins, including a large dome and several smaller structures, are visible. A modern, multi-story building with a flat roof is built into the hillside among the ruins. The foreground is a rocky, uneven path. The sky is dark with some clouds.

Radiant spaces:

in search of lost time

Sanjay Das



art exposure



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Radiant spaces:

in search of lost time

a collection of works by
Sanjay Das



art exposure



The belief in time as agent and guiding thread is based on the mechanism of memory and on that of combinatory discourse.

- Valery, Tel Quel



The present exhibition at Art Exposure titled "Radiant Spaces: In Search of Lost Time", an exhibition of photographs by Sanjay Das recreates Das's many visits to the esoteric Himalayas and the temple sites of Bengal as a symbol of our identity and cultural heritage. The omnipresent images: our clay temples, Ladakh monasteries or the grandeur of Spiti valley that pervade our lives. These are not merely grand studies of our heritage and pride but a grand study of our history and past vis a vis the presence. A great work of art. Photography is one such medium through which Sanjay Das expresses his state of mind and how he perceives things around him.

He is an avid Travel Photographer whose visual story telling is emphasized on different parts of India for more than two decades. His gaze is the proof and it is yours and finally we are left with the image of a cultural space which is a reflection on language, sign systems, texts and penetratingly one's own self. India's rich and diversified culture has been the main source of inspiration for him. The photographer's tool rejoins priceless heritage at grips with something else in an embalmed gesture. His recent series of work is an extension of the unending story telling process, the untold stories of our culture and heritage which the artist has tried to showcase to a larger audience.

Our association with Sanjay has been quite for some time. His execution with detailed intricacies shows his sensibility as a human being. Sanjay is very focus and dedicated towards his assignments. His diligence and perseverance get reflected in his works with ease. Being in the world of creative realm for more than a decade, I consider myself privileged to have the opportunity to work not only with some of the stalwarts but with someone as talented as Sanjay. The way he captures the images reflects his hardship through which the artist channelizes himself in order to reach his desired goal.

"Radiant Spaces: In Search of Lost Time", the solo show of Sanjay Das at the gallery will give everyone a chance to experience the untold stories of our diverse culture. I wish him all the best for this upcoming show as well as his future endeavours.

Uma Mitra
Art Exposure



Untitled 24" X 30" Archival print on Paper

Sh. Sanjay Das is an excellent photographer who has a passion for photographing cultural and heritage objects and sites. His sense of form, colour, light and shade and texture is meaningful and have all the qualities of a creative artist. Shri Das is young. With in his short span of career he has been able to attain a remarkable position as a photographer of eminence, who has exhibited his works in numerous major exhibitions in India and abroad. I admire his works of photography.

20.08.2019

Jogen Choudhury



Who authors a photograph?

In front of the lens, I am at the same time: the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am, and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art.

Who is the author of a photograph? The photographer? The subject? The camera? You can't have a photograph if any of the three is missing, but who or what is actually in control of the resulting image?

-Camera Lucida

Door-II
30" X 45"
Medium: Archival print on Paper

"The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent. From a real body, which was there, proceed radiations which ultimately touch me, who am here; the duration of the transmission is insignificant; the photograph of the missing being, as Sontag says, will touch me like the delayed rays of a star."[- Camera Lucida, Roland Barthes].

Society is concerned to tame the Photograph, to temper the madness which keeps threatening to explode in the face of whoever looks at it."

Sanjay Das is a traveller in the physical as well as the metaphysical, a photographer-flaneur of formidable learning and intelligence. His photographs fascinate because of what they are about and they may awaken a desire for a further divestment of the self. Depth is born only at the moment the spectacle itself slowly turns its shadow toward man and begins to look at him as "we live in old chaos of the sun, or old dependency of day and night" (-Ashbery) That of work, that of the spectator, can create only a platitude, since it is no more than the capture of a spectacle of India from its early days of settlement by a photographer-voyeur. "Humankind still lingers unregenerately in Plato's cave, still reveling, its age old habit, in mere images of the truth" (-Sontag). The complex web of cultural currents that emerged with the arrival of colonialists in the eighteenth century, and India's final tryst with destiny can only be presented adequately in an exhibition like "Radiant Spaces: In Search of Lost Time" and thus become an experience. It is an occasion to adopt the warmest kind of realism: If former simple presentation models are put aside and the dialogues between cultures as open process, the exhibition space transforms into a site of an inverted 'European' gaze. It is because of the gaze of those early photographers of nineteenth century institutes a final interlude of history in Das's photographs, in Himalayas, terracotta temples of Bankura and Murshidabad, 108 ethereal Shiva temples of Kalna; Sanjay's various journeys undertaken to Ladakh and Spiti Valley for over 20 years and numerous other places, that our intellect is not satiated, that its class orientation culminates as represented in various exhibits after all in something which also belongs to other men. The present show provokes a dialogue that will not question our own notion of culture and society but will also affect how we imagine ourselves. Photographers seem to need periodically to resist their own knowingness and to remystify what they do. This gaze on the other side of the lens is without adjectives. It neither judges the viewer or makes an appeal but posits us, implicates and makes us exist. "Gazing on other people's reality with curiosity, with detachment, with professionalism, the ubiquitous photographer operates as if that activity transcends class interests, as if its perspective is universal. In fact, photography first comes into its own as extension of the eye of the middle class flaneur, whose sensibility was so accurately charted by Baudelaire."(-Sontag) This creative gesture is endless, it keeps us being born, sustained, carried to the end of movement which is one of infinite origin, source and appears in an eternal state of suspension. All history of South Asia reaches the grandeur of its own mystery in an endless look. "History is pushing us to the brink of a realistic age" - Abbott.



Terracotta Panel-IX 16" X 17" Archival print on Canvas



An epic panel of ducks in different moods. The image of the detail from a terracotta panel of temple in Bishnupur looks like a dream, like the sketch of a fragile and deserved halo. But remains suspended in the air. The photographer lights a cigarette and we sniff. And you remember: "The banian puts forth its shoots, which strike into the ground, and produce rapid succession of younger trees. It is the asylum of animals ...who subsist on its fruits, and are protected by its foliage. The peacock here unfolds its splendid plumage, doves nestle on the topmost boughs and monkeys live and chatter among its branches. Beneath its shade, the herdsman watches its flock, the manufacturer plies his loom, the musician touches his pipe, whilst the Bramin, abstracted from all sublunary objects, performs his solitary though not silent devotions. And the Native is thus born." [-from the Diary of an Unknown European Traveller]. Through the clay in Bishnupur flows immortality into you.

The flâneur observes with painter's eye the exciting vision of life around. In other words, the photographer Das, a solitary walker establishes himself in a space carefully emptied of any gaze but its own to collect photographs is to collect the world. And the region that is ours to breathe again. His gaze is the proof and it is yours and finally left with the image of a cultural space which is a reflection on language, sign systems, texts and penetratingly one's own self. And what they have to tell us about the concept of the human. In a sense, the early photographers [and keeping in mind the European painters and lithographers of John Company what we today know as Company School] used the best technology of their time to obtain exact perspective control: the camera obscura and an innovative reproduction method for serial printing so obtained- a modern aesthetic of silence. But for a contemporary practitioner Sanjay Das as if the destiny of Ladakh, Kalna, Murshidabad, or Char Bangle- a Shiva temple situated in Murshidabad; a cluster of four temples facing each other with a courtyard in the centre, to be transformed from an elemental infinity to the plenitude of the "108 Shiva temples in Kalna" is a grand study of lost time. The temple panel, are linked by an infinite blue sky and in the isolation of the sky. Here men are not inscribed upon space, and intentions. It is objects which articulate the space, Das has embellished this process with an imaginative use of artistic license in the final composition in order to convey a greater sense of the overall site than a narrow perspective could accurately portray. Scenic wonders of Ladakh, the monasteries, such as Spiti in various moods or the distant snows of the Himalayas offering the most resonant examples of the British vision of sublime and picturesque India but here his play is not as an voyeur but an insider. The better we know the more we can take in trust: his vision of a sub-continent, which in actuality we can never see. But having seen it, the landscape of Spiti Valley with its many moods takes on a new dimension which transcends modernity. Shall they not stem and close in our own steps? Because each image is only a fragment, its moral and emotional weight depends on what it is inserted. The interpreter's ruses have an open field and he does not forget his own interests'.



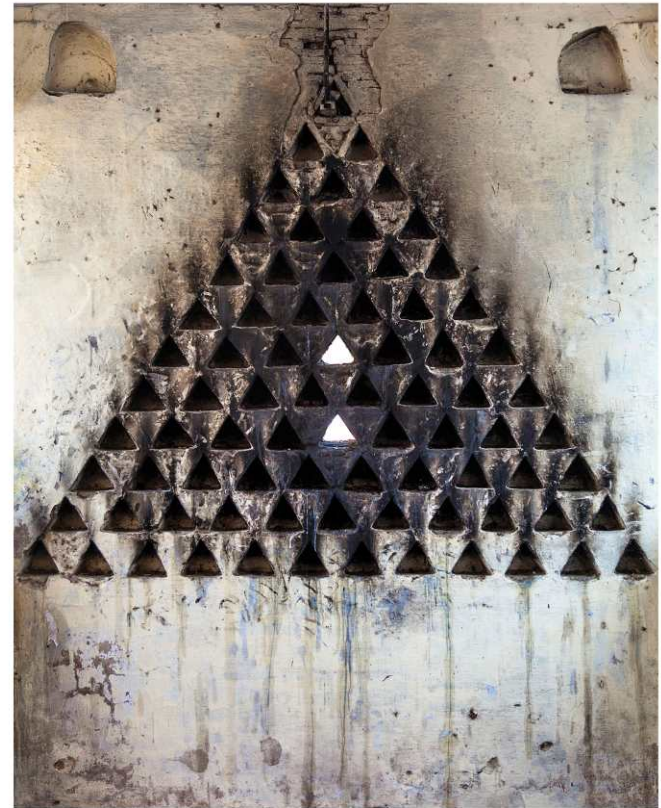
The dialogue is a continuous process, the being of our sentences in the climate that foster them: it has little to do with past concepts of edification but emerges as a vital process, a landscape where we become familiar with the changes influencing our lives where we are merely spectators, though subject to its vicissitudes. There are interpreters everywhere. To be without, alone, and desperate. Each speaking his own language, even if he has some knowledge of the language of the other. The photographer is an armed version of the solitary walker reconnoitering, stalking, and cruising. 'Radiant Spaces: In Search of Lost Time' thus signals out how an eclectic range of imagery from the present world of post-colonial India that we are living today has become instrumental in evolving a visual language of collage and citation, which in turn, acted as a vehicle of cultural force, creating and negotiating as the sacred, the erotic, the political and the post-colonial modern and traces the elliptical turn from pre-modern to modern and post-modern. It's not one linear progression but epistemological capsules. Das uses his photographs only as far as he uses them as an instrument of memory. The very idea of historicizing carries with it some peculiarly early European (read colonialists) assumptions of disenchanted space, secular time and human sovereignty and thus Europe becomes original site of the modern. Photographer's description, to cite one among the hundreds will confirm that feeling of enchantment: for all its perceptiveness is somewhat nostalgic.

"Looking at certain photographs, I wanted to be a primitive, without culture"- Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida. We have indeed learned how to fix shadows, but not to secure their meanings or to stabilize their truth values. They still flicker on the walls of ancient caves. Which is being depicted here is not market-driven and collective hallucination. Yet we never got around to discussing adequately what photography was all about or determining what it actually meant for us. Only a reliable witness? The photographer's tool rejoins priceless heritage at grips with something else in an embalmed gesture. Here the matrix of the human face is not of an ethical order; it consists not of a community of intentions, an identity within a class, size, wrinkles, veins, the very order of biology separates the patrician caste from the functional substance [cultural markers, heritage sites, landscapes] and imprisons it within its own authority. "How does meaning get into the image? Where does it end? And if it ends, what is there beyond?"

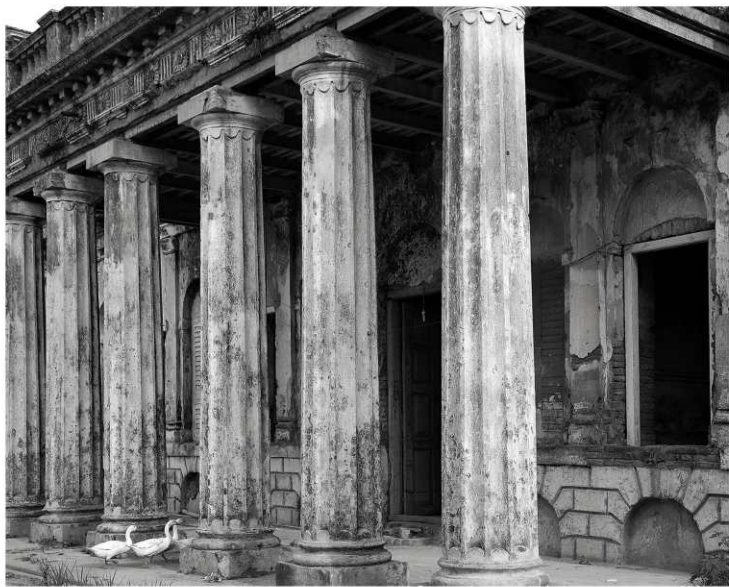
It is quite a formidable challenge to bring out such a huge output of esoteric photographs of South Asia in an exhibition such as this. Leading the life of an itinerant traveler, an astute photographer himself, how do we call him- Is he a social anthropologist? A raconteur? A commentator, an archivist or a critic. He sets out to uncover stories, new and old, accompanied with historical monuments. Das has been assiduously taking photographs of our temples, shrines, towns, Himalayas, our cities in the spirit of a flâneur, the zeal of a missionary for the last two decades and come up with an eclectic body of work, which is any researcher's delight and thus becomes an archive, the list of photographs- few shot in Bankura- the plates from the walls of a Krishna temple made of laterite and stucco work done on them provides a sustained conversation between historical thinking and postcolonial perspectives in respect to artistic and cultural activity, images that revolve in infinite space, worlds even after lapse of time send us still each one its radiance. In the 19th and 20th centuries the photographers armed with their early 'Daguerre' typed cameras combined their artistic talent with dogged endurance, determination and character; and once traveled the innermost parts of virtually unknown Hindoostan, as the frangis lovingly referred to, from 1840s onwards. But here nearly two centuries later the strategy of Das's realism presumes distance from what is normally experienced as real, the present, in order to reanimate what is usually available only in remote and images; the past which is where the present becomes his sense real, that is, something can be possessed and belong to us. [But this is not because a photograph cannot evoke memories depending on the viewer rather than the photograph depending on an imaginative recall, that it not just extensive and accurate but give the texture and essence of things- Susan Sontag]. In Camera Lucida, Barthes adds a new term to his photo dictionary: the punctum. A word he derives from Latin, meaning to prick, punctum refers to an unexpected detail in certain photographs that affects us on a personal level. It catches us off guard, eliciting an instant, visceral response. The punctum cannot be anticipated by the photographer and is rarely shared among viewers. It shouldn't be confused with the shocking, in a general sense, which is typically a collective experience, foreseen as the shutter is clicked or the photograph is printed. The punctum sneaks into the photograph; it is a surprise every time. The detail that Barthes might experience as the punctum in a photograph is different from the one that I might experience, which, in turn, is different than the one you might experience [-Cory Rice].

The historian's hermeneutic as suggested by this exhibition, proceeds from an unstated and assumed premise of identification that is later disavowed in the subject- object relationship. What fundamentally rends the seriality of historical time and makes any particular moment of historical present out of joint with itself. The exhibition produces a strictly human interrogation and proposes an infinite postponement of history.

Nanak Ganguly



Cosmic Rhythm-1 40" X 50" Archival print on Canvas



Untitled 24" X 30" Archival print on Paper



Untitled 24" X 30" Archival print on Paper



Untitled-VII 24" X 36" Print on Metal Sheet



Terracotta Panel-I 50" X 59" Archival print on Paper



Timeless Facade-I 16" X 18" Print on Metal Sheet



Timeless Facade-II 16" X 18" Print on Metal Sheet



পাল শাসনের পর বাঙালি পৃথক ও স্বতন্ত্র জাতি হিসেবে প্রকাশিত হয়। শুধু ফুল স্বাশ্রিত্য ও শিল্পে যে উৎকর্ষতা লাভ করেছিল তা পাল ফুলে আরো সন্মুখ হয়।

বাংলায় শিল্পের এই ধারাটিকে পূর্বী ধারা কল্পা হয়। সেই সময় বিটপাল, ধীমান ছিলেন পূর্বী ধারার বিখ্যাত শিল্পী। সেই সঙ্গে টেরকোটা শিল্পেরও প্রভাব উল্লেখ্য হয়। পাহাড়পুরের মন্দিরে (আনুমানিক খ্রিষ্টাব্দে নবম শতক) টেরকোটার অনেক উৎকৃষ্ট নিদর্শন পাওয়া গেছে।

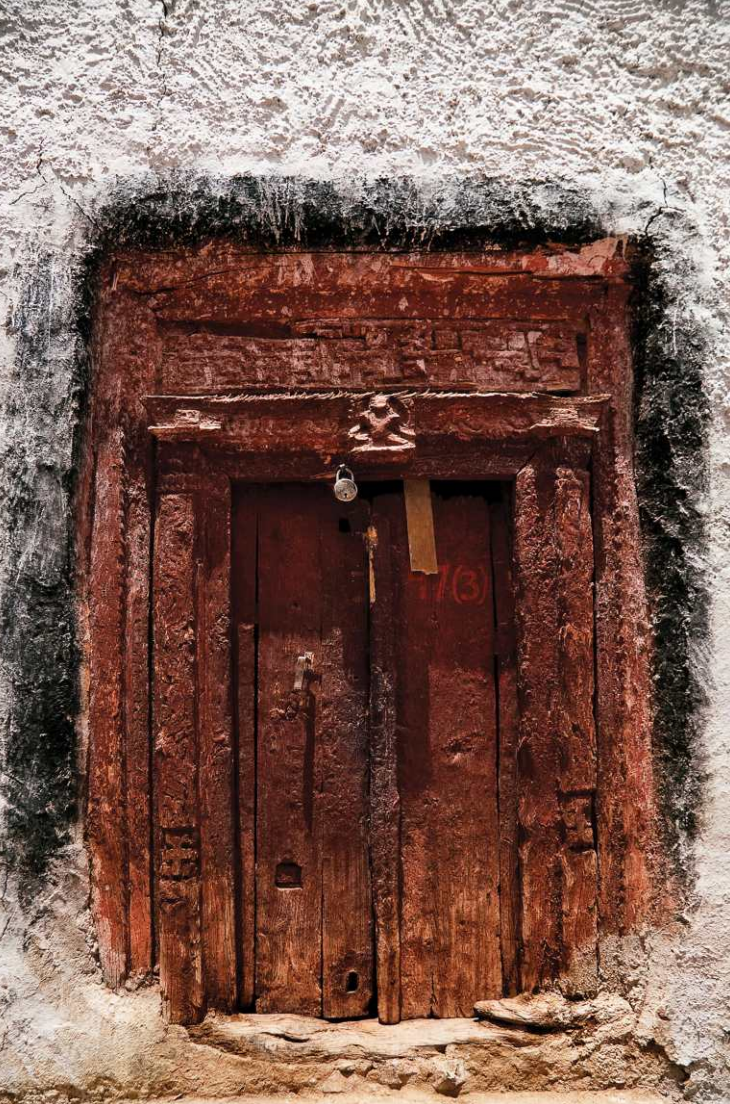
Char Bangla-I
48" X 72"
Archival print on Paper



Resonance-I 22" X 33" Archival print on Canvas



Butter Lamps
24" X 36"
Archival print on Gorilla Glass



Door-I
22" X 33"
Archival print on Canvas

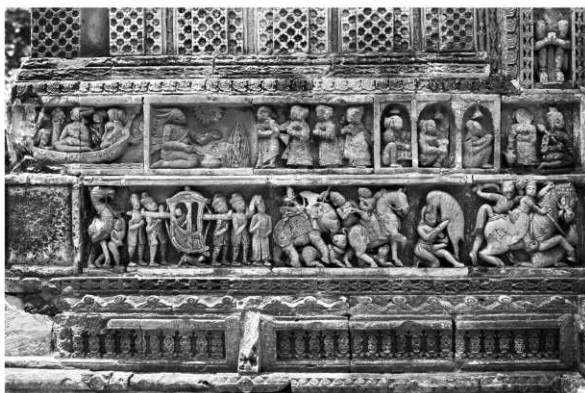


Resonance-II 22 X 33" Archival print on Canvas



Terracota Panel-IV 24" X 36" Print on Metal Sheet

Terracota Panel-V 24" X 36" Print on Metal Sheet



Fleet of Ducks 15" X 62" Archival print on Paper



108 Shiva Temple 15" X 62" Archival print on Paper

A work of art can come from a variety of form. It can be painting, sculpture, music, dance and in many other ways that serves the purpose in expressing an artist's aspiration.

I am a Travel Photographer who chooses to lay particular emphasis on the visual storytelling of the different parts of India since more than two decades. My journey is ongoing, and it has always been an effort to discover the varied interesting known and unknown facets about this country. However, to know them, one may realize that he needs to walk off the beaten track.

India's rich cultural diversity and its many unique customs and traditions have been a major source of inspiration for me. It has always been my endeavor to bring forth the untold stories that this country has to offer and showcasing them to the world at large. My works are a merger of theoretical and conceptual assertions with experiences, interests or fascination which finally forms the image and its meaning. My objective is to create an imagery that tells a story – in texture, and in light and shadow – to form a unique blend, which is spiritually as well as mentally rewarding.

Art is a conversation between the artwork and the viewer. My artistic goal is to evoke a variety of reactions: a sense of place, the joy of this land's beauty.... perhaps a visual conundrum. However, while I have my own take on my images, meanings and their significance; it is your interaction with and interpretation of them that matters.

"I have always been drawn to capture the mystery of
a fleeting moment through my lens"

Sanjay Das

Breathing Space
11" X 16" (9 images)
Archival print on Gorilla Glass





Breathing Space
11" X 16" (9 images)
Archival print on Gorilla Glass



Breathing Space
11" X 16" (9 images)
Archival print on Gorilla Glass

Dashavatara

'Dash' means ten and 'Avatar' means incarnation. Dashavatara refers to the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu on earth, the Hindu god of preservation.

Lord Vishnu is said to descend in form of an avatar to restore cosmic order.

These Avatars play a major role in shaping human evolution through centuries.

In the Bhagavad Gita there is a verse which supports the theory that

God incarnates on earth to guide it on the right course.

*यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥४-७॥*

*परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥४-८॥*

"Whenever there is a decline in righteous and wherever there is a predominance of unrighteousness, I incarnate on earth"

- Bhagavad Gita 4:7



Dasavatara 8" X 8" (10 images) Archival print on Paper

(from left to right) Matsya | Kurma | Varaha | Narasimha | Vamana | Parashurama



Sanjay Das

Born in New Delhi, 1969

Education

1991, Bachelor of Fine Art, College of Art, New Delhi

Selected shows

"Vriksha" [Group Show] at Bharat Bhawan, Bhopal, 2019. "Vriksha" [Group Show] at IIC, New Delhi, 2019. "Breaking Chemistry" [Group Show] at Art Konsult, New Delhi, 2019. "Reliving the Lutyens' Splendour" [Group Show] at Vivanta by Taj Ambassador Hotel, New Delhi, 2019. "Baluchars-The Woven Narrative Silks of Bengal" [works part of the project] at National Museum, New Delhi, 2019. "Kya Baat Hai" [Group Show] at Art Konsult, New Delhi, 2019. "Monumental Terracotta" [Solo Show] at Art Centrix Space, New Delhi, 2018. "Those Days- An Exhibition of Indian Vintage Photography" [Group Show] at Art Konsult, New Delhi, 2018. "Women of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" [Group Show] at Art Konsult, New Delhi, 2018. "One Soul Many Lives" [Group Show] at Bikaner House, New Delhi, 2018. "Looking Beyond" [Group Show] Artpilgrim Live, Gurugram, 2018. "India Art Fair" New Delhi, 2018. "Wall with Stories" [Group Show] at Taj West End, Bengaluru, 2018. "The Contemporary Walk" [Group Show] at Vivanta by Taj Ambassador Hotel, New Delhi, 2017. "50-50" [Group Show] at 50 years celebration of Birla Academy, Kolkata, 2017. "Once upon a time in Black & White" [Group Show] New Delhi, 2017. "New York Art Fair" New York, 2017. "Mediating Dreams" [Group Show] at Visual Art Gallery, India Habitat Center, New Delhi, 2017. "Treasure" Ramada Gurgaon Central, Gurugram, 2017. "India Art Fair" New Delhi, 2017. "Tantra" [Group Show] at Art Konsult, New Delhi, 2017. "The Art Singapore Fair", 2016. "Fourth Dimension" [Group Show] at Shridharni Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi, 2016. "Blue – beyond dimensions" [Group Show] at Visual Art Gallery, India Habitat Center, New Delhi, 2016. "Representing Inward Significance Outwards" [Group Show] at Galerie Romain Rolland, New Delhi, 2015. "Yoga Chakra" [Group Show] at Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi, 2015. "Rediscover Bengal" [Solo Show] at India Habitat Center, New Delhi, 2014. "Timeless" [Group Show] at NCPA, Mumbai in 2013. "Beautiful Bengal" [Solo Show] at Muktaadhar Art Gallery, New Delhi in 2013. "Faith" [Solo Show] at Muktaadhar Art Gallery, New Delhi in 2013. "Timeless" [Group Show] at Lalit Kala Academy, Delhi in 2013. "The Blue Room" [Group Show] at The Stainless, New Delhi in 2012. "Transmundane" [Group Show] at Arpana Caur Gallery, New Delhi in 2012. "Panchetavte" [Group Show] at Birla Academy, Kolkata in 2011. "SDS Ladakh" NDTV Good times sponsored exhibition in Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore in 2010. "Nature" by Art for Prabhat, Delhi in 2010. "Prakrti" [Group Show] at Lalit Kala Academy, Delhi in 2010. "Group Show" at Stupa Art Gallery, NCR in 2010. "Dhyan" at Shridharni Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi, 2010. "Closeup India " [Solo Show] at Open Palm Court, India Habitat Center, New Delhi, 2009. "Closeup India" [Solo Show] at Shridharni Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi, 2009. "ING Vyasa bank. [corporate bank]", [Solo Show] New Delhi, 2008. "The Art Singapore Fair", 2008. "Breathing Space" [Solo Show] New Delhi, 2007.



Dasavatara 8" X 8" (10 images) Archival print on Paper

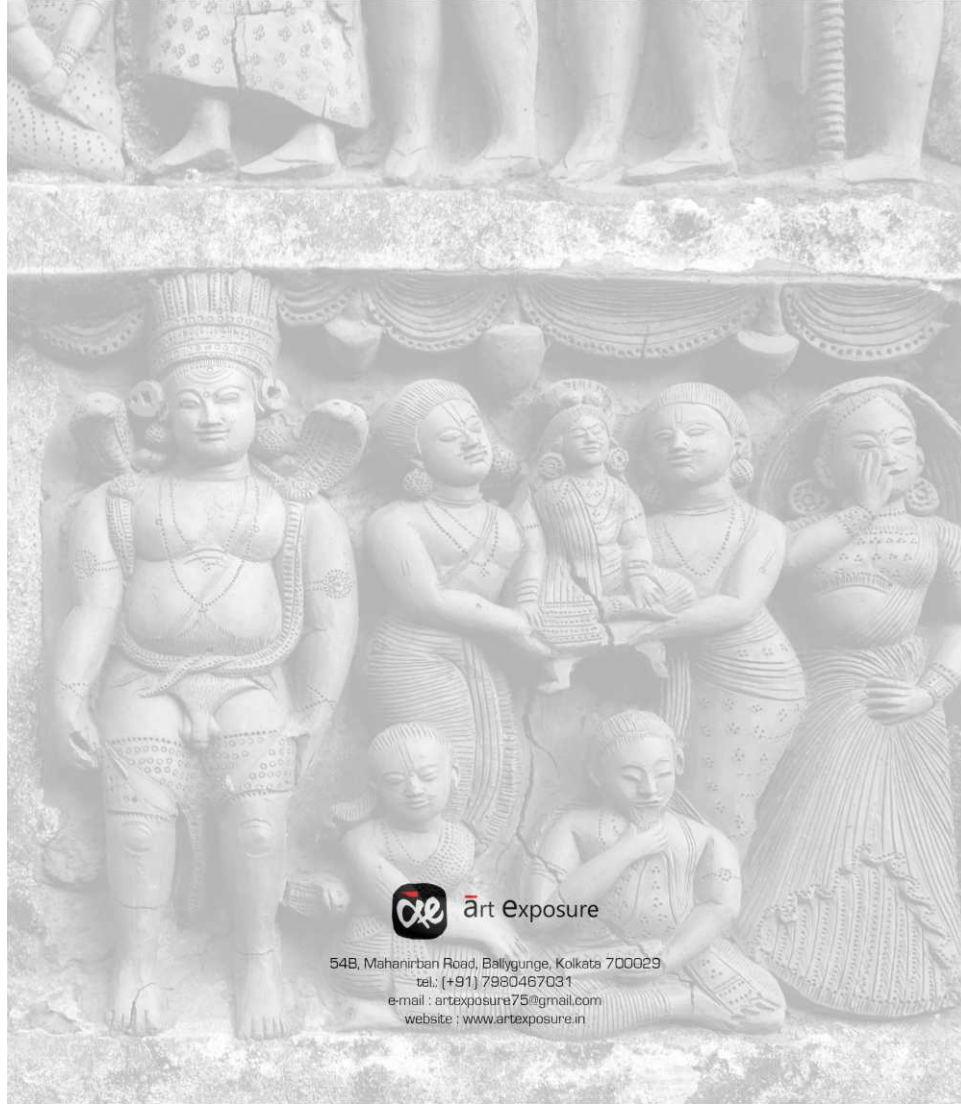
(from left to right)

Rama

Krishna

Buddha

Kalki



art Exposure

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