

# Tales From The East:

Embers, Echoes, and Stories of Shifting Earth

Curated by Prayag Chakradhar

Suryakanta Swain | Sareena Khemka | Ronny Sen | Mohd. Musa | Ajay Chakradhar

The exhibition evokes imagery of transformation and emerges as a cerebral odyssey that navigates the complex tapestry of toil, subterranean procurement, and the metamorphosis of landscapes. It's an investigation that weaves together the histories of laborers, the realities of mineral procurement, and the fluidity of urban topographies. Stories of migration which reshapes cityscapes, leaving behind relics of abandoned structures and evolving landscapes that narrate the silent stories of change and deconstruction. As cities pulse with the rhythms of incoming and outgoing residents, the landscapes are marked by cycles of construction and decay, resonating with socio-economic and cultural shifts within the urban fabric. The exhibition captures these dynamics through visual narratives highlighting the interplay between human intervention and natural decay.

Exposing the tough realities of workers in mica and coal mines in the Eastern Ghats, shedding light on the exploitation of workers, the severe living conditions, and the environmental fallout of unregulated mining activities. This underscores the urgent need to reform and support vulnerable communities. Amidst the grim backdrop of hazardous work and exploitation, the exhibition also showcases the resilience and survival of individuals, who find moments of beauty in their camaraderie and the simple joys of life.

Inspired by the concept of the Anthropocene, connecting with the insights of scholar Anna Tsing. Anna Tsing's concept of "friction" highlights the complex interactions between species and landscapes, reminding us that "In chaos, there's beauty and possibility." These perspectives underscore the exhibition's theme of navigating the intricate narratives of change, transformation, and the potential for beauty and resilience amidst chaos.

The exhibition features a diverse array of artworks that poignantly capture the essence of transient urban contours, the harsh realities of labor, and the beauty that emerges from chaos. Through visual narratives, decaying objects, and landscapes, the artworks serve as a cerebral odyssey, drawing a vivid connection between past and present, navigating the intricate change, movement, and transformation.

**Curatorial Note by Prayag Chakradhar**

# Ajay Chakradhar

Ajay Chakradhar is a self-taught artist known for his innovative use of ground and powdered minerals. By mixing these materials with paint, oil, and adhesive, Chakradhar's work evokes a compelling interplay of desolation and vigor, disruption and beauty. Over the years, he has held numerous solo exhibitions, including at the Alice Boner Institute in Varanasi (2022), JEHANGIR ART GALLERY in Mumbai (2019), and the Lalit Kala Akademi in New Delhi with his exhibition "SUKMA – I am still alive" (2014). His notable shows also include "REJUVENATION OF EARTHEN COLOURS" at the India International Centre, Art Annexe, New Delhi (2007), and several others across India. His residencies include ART HEART ARTIST RESIDENCY at Chinmaya Vibhuti Mission, Lonavala (2023), and WHITESPACE ART STUDIO in Delhi (2022).

Chakradhar's distinctive approach has garnered significant media attention, with features in Hindustan Times (2013), Jansatta (2013), Marie Claire (February 2008), and Vogue (Spring Summer Collection 2008 and December 2007). His artistic achievements have been recognized with awards from the All India Fine Art & Craft Society (2006) and The Indian Academy of Fine Arts, Amritsar (2006). In 2022, he became the first Indian resident at the Alice Boner Institute in Varanasi, further cementing his influence in the contemporary art scene.

**Ajay Chakradhar** delves into the politics of mining in Jharkhand, revealing the governance issues, labor exploitation, and environmental degradation associated with this industry. His art portrays the irregularities, displacement, and tensions within this coal-rich region, serving as a powerful call to action for responsible resource management and advocacy for the rights of marginalized communities. Ajay's work underscores the necessity of addressing the socio-political dimensions of mining and the broader implications for society and the environment.





Untitled  
9.5" x 13"  
12" x 12"

Mica, Manganese, Iron Ore, with acrylic on canvas.  
2022



From the series - Canary in a coal mine  
Mica, manganese and acrylic on canvas  
13 x 10 inches | 12 x 12 inches  
2021 - 2020

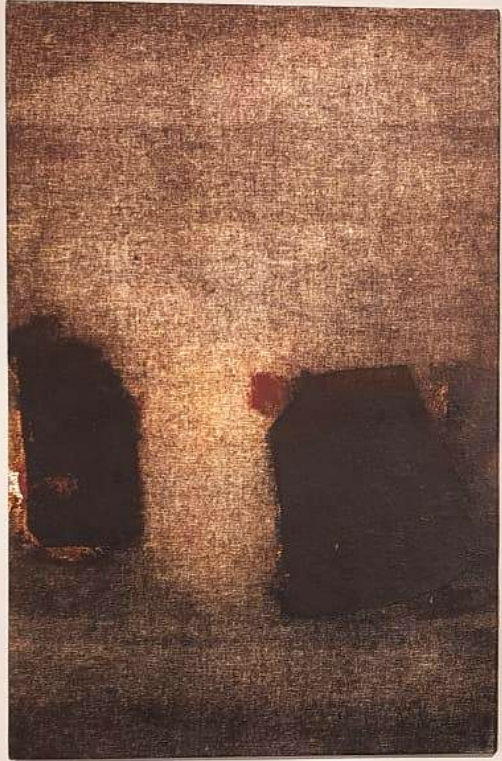
INR - 50,000/- each





From the series - Canary in a coal mine  
Mica, manganese and acrylic on canvas  
22 x 14 inches  
2021

INR - 90,000/-







From the series - Canary in a coal mine  
Mica, manganese and acrylic on canvas  
32 x 24 inches  
2022

INR - 3,20,000/-







From the series - Canary in a coal mine  
Mica, manganese and acrylic on canvas  
20 x 13 inches each  
2021

INR - 80,000/- each





## About Us

Exhibit320 showcases contemporary art from India and the subcontinent, creating a platform for new thoughts and ideas. The emphasis of the exhibition space is on new media, and it structures as a place for creative endeavor, aesthetic exploration and furthering visual dialogue. Our aim is to discover and encourage new and emerging talent.

Exhibit 320 also organizes seminars, lectures, discussions, and talks that contextualize art within critical discourse. Exhibit320 is located in the heart of Lado Sarai, in the capital city of New Delhi. The space is envisioned by Rasika Kajaria, an avid admirer and art collector. She is committed to sharing her philosophy and understanding with the growing viewership.

Exhibit 320 is a dynamic and creative hub for artists, the arts and its audience.

### Contact Us

Website	- <a href="http://www.exhibit320.com">www.exhibit320.com</a>
Email	- <a href="mailto:exhibit320@gmail.com">exhibit320@gmail.com</a>
Instagram	- <a href="https://www.instagram.com/exhibit320">exhibit320</a>
Facebook	- <a href="https://www.facebook.com/ExhibitThreetwenty">Exhibit Threetwenty</a>

**EXHIBIT320**

F - 320, Lado Sarai, New Delhi - 110030