



I think memory is the most important asset of human beings. It's a kind of fuel; it burns and it warms you. My memory is like a chest: There are so many drawers in that chest, and when I want to be a fifteen-year-old boy, I open up a certain drawer and I find the scenery I saw when I was a boy in Kobe. I can smell the air, and I can touch the ground, and I can see the green of the trees. That's why I want to write a book.

*Haruki Murakami*

If you wish to forget anything on the spot, make a note that this thing is to be remembered.

*Edgar Allan Poe*

It is strange how we hold on to the pieces of the past while we wait for our futures.

*Ally Condie*

The memories I value most, I don't ever see them fading.

*Kazuo Ishiguro*

Art consists of the persistence of memory.

*Stephen King*



REALMS OF MEMORY solo exhibition of paintings & drawings  
BIPASHA HAYAT



Bengal Art Lounge  
8 - 29 August 2015



**Subir Choudhury**  
with us, in everything we do

REALMS OF MEMORY solo exhibition of paintings & drawings  
**BIPASHA HAYAT**



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**Oh! It's a Sunny Day** . Acrylic on canvas . 122 x 153 cm . 2015

Previous page : **Holiday in Maldives** (detail) . Acrylic on canvas . 102 x 145 cm . 2014  
Facing page : **Memories -1** (detail) . Korean ink, acrylic and coffee on handmade paper . 20 x 53 cm . 2014

Hadrien Diez  
Bengal Art Lounge

In the seminal performance *Break Down* he made in 2001 in London, British artist Michael Landy methodically gathered, catalogued, then destroyed all his belongings. Everything from bunches of old photography to piles of clothes to (much controversially) artworks by fellow artists was painstakingly dismantled on an industrial-like assembly chain, then shredded and finally discarded in sacks destined for landfill. Widely seen as a comment on consumerism, the performance also cast a light on the constitutive importance of memory. The last thing to disappear, for example, was the artist's father's sheepskin coat. "I really felt I was jinxing my dad by destroying it" he later confessed. Having erased all tangible trace of his past in a few days, the artist suffered another, harrowing break-down in the ensuing year. "I did not want to make any work. I didn't want to do anything. I didn't feel the need to".

Although exploring the subject from a radically different perspective, Bipasha Hayat latest solo exhibition shows a similar interest for the founding nature of memory. Typically divided in irregular fragments of varying colours, her paintings summon the past and endeavour to reconcile it with the present. "The floating forms in my works reflect the broken particles of my memory" the painter explains. "And the lines that separate them evoke my present existence. The canvas provides a space to relate to both times, and to connect with my basic emotions". Bipasha's paintings thus become "Realms of Memory", where she brings long forgotten emotions back to the fore and blend them with her present preoccupations.

But there is more. When Landy erased memory by shattering its most direct recipients, he found himself in an artistic and emotional conundrum. He literally had to re-boot his memory in order to reaffirm his identity. By summoning memory, Bipasha, on the contrary, goes beyond the limits of the self and attempts to connect to something wider. "What struck me is how mankind shares basic emotions that transcend culture, religion or even history" she says. "I have always been fascinated by the ruins of ancient sites like Leptis Magna, in Libya. The old stones and unidentified writings invariably make me feel as if my own stories are written in these ancient remains. We are not different than these long-forgotten civilizations, we carry the same sorrow and happiness. I try to translate this universal aspect of the memory into my paintings".

"Realms of Memory" constitutes an important milestone in Bipasha Hayat's bold artistic pursuit. Bengal Art Lounge is thus delighted to assist the artist in her journey, and to present the result of her ambitious research to the public.

1. Quoted in Cumming, Tim, "Stuff and Nonsense", The Guardian, 13/02/2002
2. Interview with the author, July 2015







**Resonance of Memories - 1** . Acrylic on canvas . 145 X 145 cm . 2015  
Facing page . **Resonance of Memories - 2 (details)** . Acrylic on canvas . 145 X 145 cm . 2015





My Story - 1, 2 . Acrylic on canvas . 36 x 36 cm . 2015



My Story - 3, 4 . Acrylic on canvas . 36 x 36 cm . 2015



## বিপাশার স্মৃতির অনুরণন

মইনুদ্দীন খালেদ

সব মনেরই নিজস্ব কক্ষপথ আছে। অনেক আলো-অন্ধকারে ভ্রাম্যমাণ মানুষের জীবন। প্রতিদিন নতুন পৃথিবী আর নতুন আকাশকে আবিষ্কার করে অতিসংবেদী সতত চঞ্চল মানুষের সত্তা। একদিকে নতুনের টান, অন্যদিকে স্মৃতির কাতর আহ্বান; এই টানাপড়েনের হিসাব জন্ম দেয় নতুন শিল্প। আজকের সূর্য আজকের নয়, আজকের প্রস্তুতি ফুলটিও আজকের নয়। এই একক প্রদর্শনীতে বিপাশা হায়াতের সৃজনসত্তা যুগপৎ আলোড়িত স্মৃতির রোমস্থনে এবং মনপ্রাণ আকুলিত কুসুমিত সুন্দরে।

চোখচেনা উপরিতলের বাস্তবতা বিপাশাকে আকর্ষণ করেনি। এবার বিপাশা হায়াত পুরু বর্ণপ্রস্থে মোটা ও সরু রেখার আঁচড়ে বিমূর্ত শিল্পভাষার অনুসরণে মনোলোকের মানচিত্র প্রণীত করতে চেয়েছেন। তার চিত্রতলে জ্যামিতি স্পষ্ট; কন্টুর বা প্রান্তরেখা ধরে রঙের কাথ উজিয়ে প্রকাশমান। চৌখুপির মতো গড়নের মধ্যে প্রাচীন দালানের দেয়ালের মতো ক্ষতবিক্ষত অভিব্যক্তি আছে। কখনোবা সেইসব জ্যামিতির মধ্য পরিসরে আছে বর্ণের ললিত বিহার। একদিকে ইমপ্রেশনিষ্ট বর্ণজোটের উজ্জ্বল উষ্ণতা, আবার অন্যদিকে ক্ষয়াটে দেয়ালের ছেঁড়াখোঁড়া রূঢ় রূপ। এভাবে কড়ি-কোমলের সমীকরণে সৌন্দর্যভাবনা ও জীবনভাবনাকে বিপাশা পরস্পরিত করে রেখেছেন। আমরা যখন তাঁর ছবির দিকে তাকাই তখন মনে হয় কোনো পুরাতাত্ত্বিক দালানের বিশাল বিশাল দেয়াল নতুন তুলির ছোঁয়ায় তার পূর্ব রূপ ফিরে পেয়েছে।

বিপাশা প্রত্নপৃথিবীর গন্ধে বিভোর। বয়স যখন সাত তখন উদিত উষার আলোর মতো চোখের মণিতে অবলোকন করেছেন ভূমধ্যসাগরলগ্ন রোমান সভ্যতার ধ্বংসাবশেষ। বাবার চাকরিসূত্রে তখন জীবন কেটেছে লিবিয়ায়। রোমান সম্রাটদের স্মৃতিজর্জর নগরী লেপটিস ম্যাগনার (Leptis Magna) অদূরে ছিল বিপাশাদের বাসা। তারপর জীবনের যখন বয়স বেড়েছে তখনো মিশর, খ্রিস, রোম, পম্পেই ভ্রমণ করে দূর সভ্যতার বিচূর্ণ আয়নায বারবার খুঁজেছেন তিনি নিজের অতীত। ওই দূর দূর সভ্যতায় যারা ছিল তারা তো আমারই মতন অনুভূতির মানুষ। এমনই এক জাতিস্মর সম্মোহনে পুরনো পৃথিবীর দিকে ধাবিত হয় এ শিল্পীর মন। কেউ যেন ছায়ালিপির মতো কম্পমান হরফে তাঁর মনোদেয়ালে স্মৃতিকথা লেখে। সব শিল্পীই তাঁর সৃজনে মনোভূমি উন্মোচন করে দেখান। বিপাশার ছবিতে শোধিত-সুন্দর সংজ্ঞার্থ খুঁজে পেতে চায়। স্মৃতি ও অজানার পিপাসায় এ

শিল্পী যেসব চৌখুপির মতো গড়ন জুড়ে বহুবর্ণা চিত্রতল রচনা করেছেন তাতে অনেক কালের অনেক ভূগোলার চিহ্ন সমবেত হয়ে এক সুরেলা আবহ তৈরি হয়েছে। এসব চিত্রতলের দিকে তাকালে দর্শক অনুভব করবেন এই সত্য যে, একজন সৃজনপিয়াসী মানুষ সুরকে বর্ণরূপময় করে প্রকাশ করেছেন। দূর পৃথিবীকে শিল্পী শুধু চোখের অভিজ্ঞতায় নয়, কান পেতেও শুনতে চাচ্ছেন। শিল্পকে যে শেষাবধি সংগীতে উত্তীর্ণ হতে হয় এই সত্যে বিপাশা ঘনিষ্ঠ থাকতে চেয়েছেন বোধহয়। প্রাকৃতিক অনুষ্ণের রেখায়ন নয়, কোনো রূপকেও বর্ণে প্রতিপন্ন করা নয়, বরং রূপের মাধুরী বা নির্যাসটুকু সচল মেঘের মতো বর্ণযোজনে প্রকাশ করার প্রবণতা আছে তাঁর। তাই ছবির উপরিভাগে উষ্ণ হলুদের সহসা প্রকাশ সূর্যমুখী ফুলকে ইশারায় জানান দেয়। একই নিয়ম মেনে বিরচনের শীর্ষে অন্য রঙের লহরিও অব্যাহত করেছেন বিপাশা।

তবে বর্ণ লেপন বা বর্ণের প্রলেপনে চিক্কন ভাব ফোটানোতে বিপাশার আগ্রহ নেই। বর্ণকে পুরু ও উত্তোলিত করে প্রয়োগ করে নিজের অভিপ্রায়কে স্পষ্টতা দিয়েছেন শিল্পী। মসৃণতা বা অতিশোধনের ফলে শিল্প কখনো কৃত্রিমতার সমীপ্যবর্তী হয়ে পড়ে। এ শিল্পী তা চাননি। তিনি বর্ণের স্বভাবগত সজীবতা অক্ষুণ্ণ রাখার পক্ষপাতী। তাঁর ছবিতে রঙের প্রস্তরীভূত পুরু কাথ পুরাতাত্ত্বিক দালানের স্মৃতিকে সরব করে দিয়েছে। অনেক পরত রঙের আরোপে যে পুরু বর্ণতল বিপাশা তৈরি করেছেন তা সুফলা ভূমির মতো। নানা হাতিয়ারে চষে দিলেই তাতে নানা ফর্ম, রেখা, রেখার কুণ্ডলী, বর্ণের উদ্গিরণ উদ্ভাবিত হয়ে পড়ে। এভাবে প্রত্নতাত্ত্বিকের মতো বর্ণতল খুঁড়ে শিল্পী ভাঙাচোরা জ্যামিতিতে নির্বস্তক (abstract) শিল্পভাষার সম্ভাবনা যাচাই করেছেন।

বিমূর্ত ধারার সব শিল্পীই বর্ণের সঙ্গে নিভূতে আলাপচারিতায় মগ্ন হন। বিপাশাও রঙের স্বভাবকে নিঃশর্তভাবে বুঝতে চেয়েছেন। কখনো রঙের নীরব নিস্তন্ধতা তাঁকে আকর্ষণ করেছে। করোগেটেড সিটে কালো রং ঢেলে দিয়ে কালোরই দুই রূপ প্রদর্শন করেছেন তিনি। রংকে তিনি তুলি বা অন্য কোনো অস্ত্রে এতটুকু আঁচড় দেননি। খাঁজকাটা অংশের ভেতরে আর সমতলে ফুটে উঠেছে কালোরই দুই রূপ। গহনে নিকষ কালো আর উপরিতলে দীপ্তময় কালো। তাছাড়া করোগেটেড বোর্ড কেটে কতগুলো গভীরতর অঞ্চল রচনা করে যখন তাতে কালো রং ঢেলে দিয়েছেন শিল্পী তখন সেখানে আমরা আরো নিবিড় সুকোমল কালোর মাহাত্ম্য অনুভব করি। কালোর মধ্যে কালো অবলোকন; এ এক সুপ্রিমাসিস্ট (suprematist) যাত্রা।

সন্তুণ্ড আত্মা একই মন্ত্র বারবার উচ্চারণ করে শমিত ও সমাহিত হতে চায়। ছককাটা ঘরে বিভিন্ন বর্ণযোজন করে শিল্পী যেন কোনো আরাধনানামা রচনা করেছেন। আত্মাকে অনুভব করার এই আয়োজনও বিপাশার শিল্প রচনার নতুন সংযোজন। তাঁর চিত্রে, অদেখা মনোজগতে স্মৃতির আনাগোনা বা শৈল্পিক-সারণি দর্শককে অভিনবত্বের অভিঘাতে আলোড়িত করবে; যেখানে এ শিল্পীর সম্পূর্ণ নিজস্ব স্বকীয়তা ভীষণভাবে প্রকাশিত।





Joy - 1 . Acrylic on canvas . 76 x 122 cm . 2015  
Facing page : Joy - 2 (detail) . Acrylic on canvas . 91 x 91 cm . 2015





# Bipasha's Nostalgic Resonance

Original text in Bangla by Moinuddin Khaled  
Translation into English by Mohammad Mahmudul Haque  
Adaptation by Hadrien Diez

Every soul goes through its own journey among lights and shadows; it continuously discovers new worlds and unknown skylines. Along the way, art is created out of the brewing tension between nostalgia and new promises of life; for the truth is that today's shining sun has been shining before. The creative soul of Bipasha Hayat is stirred both by the nostalgic resonance of the past and the aesthetic bewilderment of eternity, as she shows in the works displayed in this solo exhibition.

Figurative painting does not attract Bipasha. No surprise that, enthused by her taste for abstraction, she sets out to explore the meanders of the human mind with both lush and light brush strokes. The geometry of her canvas is sometimes crystal clear, as in the vivid contours she etches with flecks and dashes of paint. It is worth to note that her brush strokes often create a vibrant color temperature within the surface of her works. Bipasha is also apt at capturing the battered expression of the walls of ancient buildings within the shape of her quadrangles. Her canvas has this essential composite quality: on one side is the impressionistic melding of warm scintillating colors, whereas on the other, fragments of corroding walls cast a brash stare at the beholders. The stark contrast of the harsh and the dulcet blends in on Bipasha's canvases, and the strokes of her brush give a fresh look to the old walls of antique buildings.

Bipasha is enthralled by the aura of the ancient. She surveyed the ruins of the Roman civilization with avid curiosity. She lived in Libya at the time, as her father used to work there. Their house was close to Leptis Magna, a city redolent with the memory of the Roman emperors. When she grew older, she traveled to Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Pompey and launched a life-long quest to rediscover her past on the shattered mirror of those long-lost civilizations. "People who belonged to those ancient civilizations are humans like me", she thought. Caught in a hypnotic transmigration of souls, she stepped back and tried to acquaint herself with a lost world. As if somebody was trying to inscribe some quivering letters in her mind.

Every artist unveils an inner-world through creation. Bipasha does not make exception: she feeds her sense of beauty through painting, trying to grant a new lease of life to something that might otherwise have perished. Yearning for what was lost and thereby unknown, the artist creates multifarious surfaces on her canvas, which she fits into quadrangles. Vestiges of epochs of history and distant shores of geography blend there, setting the tone for an arcane musical concert. By looking at these surfaces, the audience could almost perceive the creativity of an artist that has composed a musical piece with colors. There is a reason behind this dual

temperament of her creation: the artistic hunger of the painter is never satiated just through mere visualization of a distant world; it craves for its music too. In other words, Bipasha would like to fervently advocate for the idea that every successful work of art culminates in music. As mentioned earlier, she has no interest in capturing various elements of nature as it is out there, neither does she try to transform any of the natural forms into colors. Instead, she aims at reaching into the inner essence of the so called reality and tries to elevate it into a work of art. The warm yellow on the surface of her work hints at a sunflower, a process she repeats with other colors too.

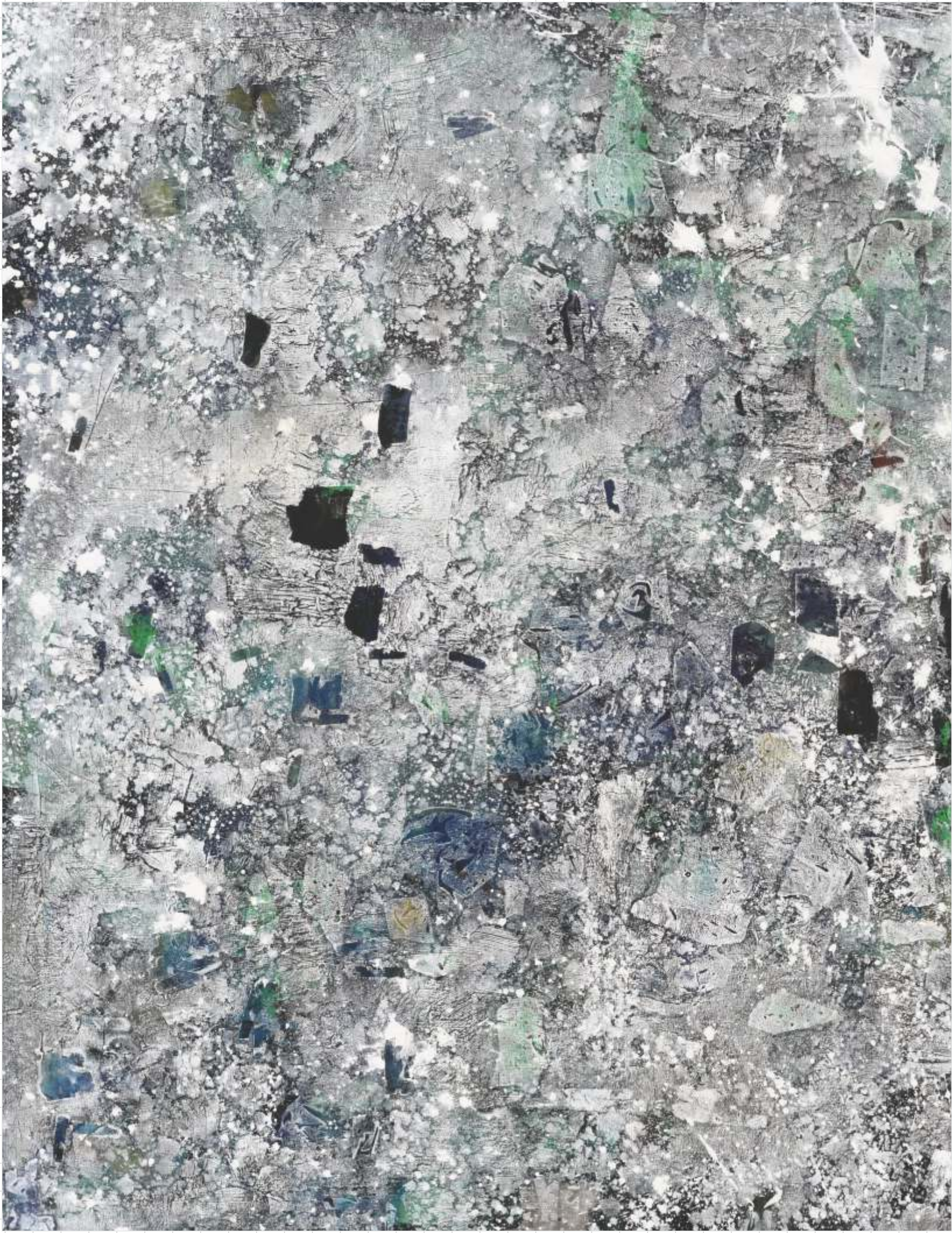
When using color, Bipasha is not interested in etching out a frail impression on her canvas and always prefers to apply a thick crust instead. She is well aware that due to constant smoothing or over purification, an artwork may be robbed of its naturalness, thereby becoming artificial. She wants to preserve the natural vigor of colors. The memory of archeological buildings comes alive with the thick dabs of her colors. On the top of it, the multi-layered surfaces she consolidates in her paintings resembles a bountiful land waiting to be plowed. Once plowed, different forms, lines, curves, and colors erupt out of it. This is how this artist digs out a surface like an anthropologist probes into the potentials of an abstract language of art.

It is said that every abstract painter is in a silent rendezvous with colors, and Bipasha is no exception as she seeks to understand their temperament and temperature. The quiet silence of colors fascinates her. Pouring black paint onto corrugated sheets, she unclothes the two shades of this very color. She never pokes the paints with her brush or any other instrument. Therefore, two shades of 'black' appear on both the interior and in the plain of the corrugated sheet: jet black inside whereas glossy black on the surface. As the corrugated sheets are branched into several deeper breadths, the audience can decode the different ramifications of the black: its intensity, delicacy, and dignity. One could call it a suprematist journey: studying 'black' within 'black'.

The distressed soul of an artist mutters the same incantations time and again, seeking solace as if it would add variety to the colors of a checker board. In the process, a book of prayer is in the making. This art exhibition can be viewed as Bipasha's attempt to communicate the resplendent nature of the soul to her audience. In response, members of the public are struck by her originality as an artist, as she dabs her brushes to the unseen interior of human minds and revive its nostalgic appeal.











**Blooming Sunflowers at Nokkhotrobari**  
Acrylic on canvas  
145 x 69 cm . 2015



**Gladiolus in My Garden**  
Acrylic on canvas  
145 x 69 cm . 2015





**Hidden Memories** . Korean ink and acrylic on handmade paper . 53 x 74 cm . 2014



**Sign of My Existence on Earth, 23rd March 2015 - 1** . Korean ink and oil pastel on handmade paper . 53 x 74 cm . 2015





Memory of Classic Love Poems . Acrylic on canvas . 61 x 61 cm . 2015  
Facing page : Poems and Stories (detail) . Acrylic on canvas . 69 x 145 cm . 2015





**Dreams** . Acrylic on canvas . 183 x 183 cm . 2015  
Facing page : **Dreams** (detail) . Acrylic on canvas . 183 x 183 cm . 2015





# Bipasha Hayat

Bipasha Hayat (b. 1971, Dhaka) studied painting and drawing at the Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka (MFA, 1998). A polymorphous artist, she has since pursued a thriving career as an actress and playwright, winning numerous notable accolades, such as the National Award and the UNESCO Award for Best Actress. Her contribution to acting in Bangladesh has also been noted globally in interviews by NHK TV, NHK Radio Japan, and BBC London, amongst others.

Alongside her successful acting career, Hayat has always kept practicing as a visual artist, and in 'Realms of Memory', she endeavours to translate the emotions contained in forgotten memories onto the canvas. Her use of a wide-ranging palette of colours aims to recreate past impressions; while her distinctive painting technique, which combines the application of colour with the scratching of selected parts of the painted surface, constitutes a symbolic attempt to penetrate to the essence of memory and to awaken the feelings it contains.

## Education

1998 : MFA (Painting), Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

## Solo exhibition

2015 : Realms of Memory, Bengal Art Lounge, Dhaka

2014 : Faces of Agony - 30 signature paintings, Curated by ARCHT. Mustapha Khalid Polash, Hotbread Gallery, Dhaka

2013 : Journey to the Unseen, Nordic Club, Dhaka

2011 : The Journey Within, Bengal Galley of Fine Arts, Dhaka

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2015 : Confluence of Mind and Interplay with Colours, Yangon Gallery, Myanmar

: 3<sup>rd</sup> Group Exhibition of Contemporary Artists of Bangladesh, Bishwa Shahitya Kendra, Dhaka

: National Exhibition, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

: Celebrating WATER COLOUR, Gallery Sunflower, Nokkhottrobari Resort, Dhaka

: JAATRA International Women's Day Celebration - Gallery 21, Dhaka

: LIFE 2 - International Women's Day Celebration - Cosmos Gallery, Dhaka, Bangladesh

: Connecting with Nile - Ahmed Shawky Museum, Cairo, Egypt

2014 : Asian Art Biennale Bangladesh

: Be Smart About ART, Athena Gallery, Dhaka

: Glimpses of ANNAPURNA, Gallery Cosmos, Dhaka

: A Group Exhibition of Eminent Artists of Bangladesh, Athena Gallery, Dhaka

: KALASANGAM, Bangladesh-Nepal Joint Exhibition, Sirjana Academy of Arts, Kathmandu ,Nepal

: THE NEW YORK ART CONCLAVE, exhibition by female artists of Bangladesh and America, New York

Art Connection, USA

: BANGLADESH-KOREA Group Exhibition, Mokkumto Gallery, Seoul, South Korea

: Contemporary Art, Art & Soul Gallery, Dhaka

: LIFE- International Women's Day Exhibition, Gallery Cosmos, Dhaka

: NOW & THEN, 2<sup>nd</sup> Dhaka Art Summit, Athena Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhaka

2013 : An open air exhibition on the occasion of Victory Day, Institute of Fine Arts, Rayer Bazar, Dhaka

: Colours Across the Bengal Delta, Hanoi, Vietnam

: Exhibition on Peace, Cosmos Gallery, Dhaka

: Contemporary Painters of Bangladesh, Gallery 21, Dhaka

: National Exhibition, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka

: Exhibition organised by the women artists group - SHAKO, Radius Center, Gulshan, Dhaka

: Katechu Makes Brown, Group Exhibition at Bengal Art Lounge, Gulshan, Dhaka

2012 : A Group Exhibition on Traffic of Dhaka City, IAC, Dhaka

: Exhibition by 18 Renowned Artists of Bangladesh, Gallery Sunflower, Nokkhottrobari Resort, Dhaka

: Joyeeta, A Women's Group Exhibition, Dhaka Art Center, Dhaka

2011 : Exhibition by Renowned Artists of Bangladesh, Gallery Sunflower, Nokkhottrobari Resort, Dhaka

: Exhibition on the occasion of the Victory Day of Bangladesh,

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka

: Exhibition Commemorating Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka

: Paintings on Rabindranath Tagore by 150 Artists of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka

: RABINDRANAMA ,Printmaking Exhibition on Tagore's 150th Birth Anniversary, Dhaka Art Center, Dhaka

: Exhibition at the Italian ambassador's residence, organised by Bengal Foundation and Italian Embassy, Dhaka

2009 : Exhibition for acid surviving women, organised by Purple Magazine, Standard Chartered Bank, Dhaka

2008 : Exhibition for the Street Children of Bangladesh, Radisson Hotel, Dhaka

2002 : 'Spontaneity', duo exhibition by Bipasha Hayat and Biplob Saha, Institute of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka

## Art Camps

2015 : ART CAMP between artists of Bangladesh and Myanmar.

: Celebrating WATER COLOUR - 3 day Art Camp, Gallery SUNFLOWER, Nokkhottrobari Resort, Dhaka

: Day-long Art Camp, organised by the Buddhist community, Dhaka, Bangladesh

2014 : Day-long Art Camp, Sirjana Academy of Fine Arts, Kathmandu, Nepal

2012 : 2<sup>nd</sup> Nokkhottrobari Resort Art Camp , Gazipur, Dhaka

: International Women's Day Art Camp, organised by Creators Museum, Lalbagkella, Dhaka

2011 : Bengal-Nokkhottrobari Resort Art Camp, Nokkhottrobari Resort, Gazipur, Dhaka

: Art Camp with Natural Dyes, organised by Aranya and Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhaka

2010 : Art Camp on the occasion of Bangladesh Victory Day, Bengal Foundation, Dhaka

## Collections

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Bangladesh Bank, Bengal Foundation, Bangladesh Embassy Vietnam, Danish Embassy Bangladesh, Canadian Embassy Bangladesh, Govt. of India, Bangladesh Embassy Myanmar. Several private and office collections at home and abroad.

**Books Published** : Hridoy Rajje, Shomoy Prokashoni; Ghum Bhanga Manusher Golpo Shobdoshilpo

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Next page : **Memory of Mediterranean Sky** (detail) . Acrylic on canvas . 91 x 91 cm . 2015



