

**THE LONDON MAGAZINE
THE LONDON MISCELLANY
and TRESPASS MAGAZINE**

Press Release



**The London Magazine, The London Miscellany and Trespass Magazine
proudly present the well-known, controversial Indian artist**

Papia Ghoshal

At THE UPPER GALLERY

***Lauderdale House
Highgate Hill
Waterlow Park
London N6 5HG***

4th September to 16th September 2007

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The essence of her work is transformation, which one critic has aptly named 'trans-creation'. The male body, specifically the penis, is endlessly re-imagined, re-worked into many startling and original forms, often drawn from the tree.

"There are paintings I delight to see again and again in museums, there are paintings I wish I could have on my walls at home and there are paintings that live in my heart. These last are by Papia Ghoshal, a uniquely daring and confident artist."

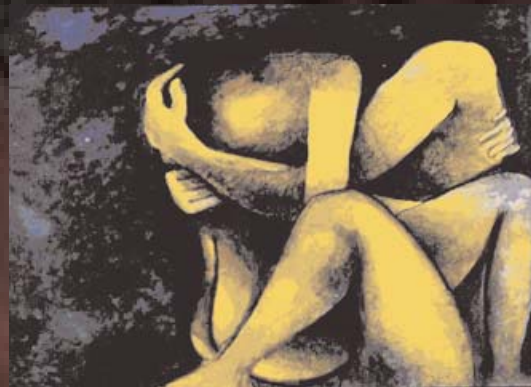
Christopher Arkell, writer and collector.



Papia Ghoshal is one of the leaders of the new wave of Indian painting attracting the attention of buyers and critics round the world. Well known and highly controversial in her home city of Kolkata, she has also established a following in London as a result of the success of her previous exhibitions here.

"I have been an admirer of Papia's works ever since they were first exhibited at The Nehru Centre in London in 2005 when I was its Director. Apart from her natural talent as a very skilled painter, she is animated by a very deep consciousness of her being as a woman, and the relations between the sexes. She is also deeply immersed in the mythologies of her soil. The result is that her paintings have a very powerful message. I am not an art critic, but I have been sufficiently exposed to the best in art to say that in Papia we have an exceptionally gifted artist and a human being who has the courage of her convictions. I have little doubt that she will be recognized in due course as one of India's finest artists."

*Pavan Varma, Director ICCR, New Delhi, India
Former Director, The Nehru Centre, London*



'Papia's work has a strongly feminine quality, shown in her 'trans-creation' of the goddess Kali, who radiates the freshly-rediscovered power of the modern liberated woman. Her images are rooted in the Hindu religion, in which women can be portrayed as goddesses of liberation whose many arms express the inner range of female capabilities which are otherwise often hidden and disregarded. Papia has a particular affinity with flying kites. Their presence in many of her works often indicates freedom of thought.

Prokash Karmakar, artist and founder member of the Society of Contemporary Artists in India.

A close study of Papia Ghoshal's work brings two major tendencies to the fore: the remarkable continuity with the traditions of India painting, which themselves are rooted in the artist's personality; and the works are firmly located in the contemporary currents of art around the world.

For example, her vibrant colours bring to mind particularly the pastel and crimson tones of the ancient Pallava dynasty paintings or the intense colour-tones of the Ajanta murals. However, this is not mere imitation or repetition. Rather, it is plain that these traditions are deeply embedded in the soul of the artist.

Papia Ghoshal's sense of plasticity and her formal inventiveness can readily be appreciated in the light of the long Indian tradition of sculpture and relief work, notably a part of Indian cave architecture as in the temple at Tanjore and other locations. The dynamic compositions of her female figures and dance elements can equally be admired and these again can be found throughout the history of Indian art, for example in representations of Shiva absorbed in his cosmic dance or in images of female temple dancers.

Erotica is also deeply rooted in Indian art as evidenced in the sculptures at Konarak, a temple dedicated to the Sun God. These connections are made to point out the deep aesthetic roots in the traditions of Indian art, of Papia Ghoshal's philosophy of painting. Only then can it be understood that her works are not driven by fashion.

When contemplating Papia Ghoshal's paintings, one is moved by transcendental knowledge - jnana in Sanskrit. The viewer receives pleasure from eternal life, as the fourteenth mantra goes; and experiences a state of fulfilment, or samadhi, when the mind is detached from material activities and one is able to perceive the self by pure mind alone. The colours on the canvasses are full of energy in just the same way as, according to tantrism, the cosmos is full of energy.

When one considers Papia Ghoshal's works in the context of contemporary world art, one realises, in the words of the American art historian Susanne Langer, that they are representations of feelings in symbolic form where music has an important role to play in painting. Tonal analogies to the life of the emotions sound throughout the paintings. American aesthetics theory also helps to an understanding of the values of what may be called virtual time in Papia Ghoshal's works.

They also form a part of the world-wide postmodernist movement, with an emphasis on features defined by French philosopher Lyotard as plurality and experiment. Two additional features may be stressed: heterogeneity and incommensurability. Above all there is a graciousness which presumes experimentation and demands representation of the invisible. Post-modern aesthetics and philosophy are, after all, closely linked to Indian philosophy, transcending it at the same time towards the disciplining of the senses.

Prof. PhDr. Miroslav Klivar, CSc.: Prague University of Art



'A revolution has been under way for quite some time- a revolution in human relationships, attitude, morality, institutions and outlook. It has yet to find sufficient expression in the organised life of societies and nations. However, its presence and power may already be felt in music, literature and the fine arts, which are the antennae of peoples. In Papia Ghoshal's paintings I sense vivid intimations of this revolution. They are a total rejection of the patriarchal or male-dominated complex of taboo-ridden cultures and civilizations that has exerted its influence for several millenia. But she is not an ideologue. Unlike Mary Wollstonecraft or Kate Millett, her medium is not words or revolutionary prose, but a colour; in other words, the art of painting. She rejects all taboos and imparts to her visualisation of sexuality on canvas the power and pain, the ecstasy and agony, the thrust and the tortuousness, the mystery and the 'bad faith', that this primal desire of our existence contains unremovably within itself.

Papia seems to have chosen as her signature Kali, the fearless nude goddess of freedom and power, the timeless dancer whose wild looks rule the winds of heaven, and at whose feet lies her consort Siva who, in the patriarchal scheme, was the omnipotent Lord of all space and time, the quick and the dead. Shorn of his attributes of power, the Lingam yields its amazing resources to the equally resourceful and dynamic Yoni. Papia has worked on this explosive theme with a rare sensitivity and a remarkable command over line and colour. I admire her daring nearly as much as her technical skill and evocative power.'

Sibnarayan Ray

Former chairman, Indian Studies, Melbourne University
Former Director, Rabindra-Bhavan, Visvabharati
University Emeritus Fellow on Literature
Dept. of Culture, Govt. of India
Former Chairman, Raja Rammohan Roy Library Foundation
Founder-Editor, Jignasa, a journal of ideas and enquiry
Senior research Fellow, Indian Council of Historical Research.

Papia Ghoshal

PREVIOUS EXHIBITIONS



Lapidarium Gallery, Prague 2007
The many Colours of Aisa Exhibition, Stone Bell House, Prague 2007
John Bloxham Gallery, London 2006
Woburn Gallery, London 2006
Nehru Centre, London 2005
Central Gallery, Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata 2005
The Chitrakoot Art Gallery, Kolkata 2005
Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, London 2004
Diorama Art Gallery, London 2004
Gender Studies, Prague, 2004
Lalit Kala Academy, New Dehli, 2004
Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata 2003

'My new series of paintings, Menstruation, which I began in May 2006, is a development of work done for my book of poems, *Days of Menstruation*, published in 2004. The Menstruation series takes the ideas from my poems and combines them with the paintings I have been making in the last four years. Each of these new works is painted using my own menstrual blood. I have thus drawn from my very core images of the world around me. I am 'transcreating' my inner self, at its most intensely female, into the sinews and muscles and rhythms of the world we all share, thus feminising it beyond the interpretive reach of the male. I have also shaped penises from my own blood, with a deliberate intention of imposing my creative dominance on this most widely worshipped symbol of male authority.



Female artists have already worked in the medium of their menstrual blood before; I am only giving my paintings a different form, maybe. I am also mixing semen, another natural flow of men, into my blood - in a further exploration of the transcreative processes which so fascinate and empower me - the flow of male semen ejaculated specifically at my behest for me to paint with. That union of blood and semen is for me one of the few that approaches real gender equality. I offer my Menstruation paintings to women everywhere - as tokens of our determination to gain a true and permanent liberation from our age-old confines. *Papia Ghoshal - Interview with Trespass Magazine, July 2007*



Papia Ghoshal is available for interview from 1st September 2007.

Private viewing on 5th September 2007

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