

Celebrated artist Paresh Maity's work on display at CIMA and Birla Academy of Art and Culture

Ahead of two shows in the city, celebrated artist Paresh Maity opens up about how nature has always played a crucial role in his artistic journey

Sharmistha GhosalPublished : 12th November 2021 12:00 AM



Seeing how the idol makers brought the Goddess Durga to life, a seven-year-old child from a remote village in Midnapore's Tamluk area tried his tender hands in clay molding and even managed to sell a few pieces at the local fairs for as little as 10-15 paise in the early 70s. Who would have thought back then that some 48 odd years later that very child's artwork would sell at a premium all over the country and beyond? That's Paresh Maity for you.

The prolific artist, celebrated for his paintings, sculptures and installations, is ready to immerse the city's art connoisseurs in his creative journey

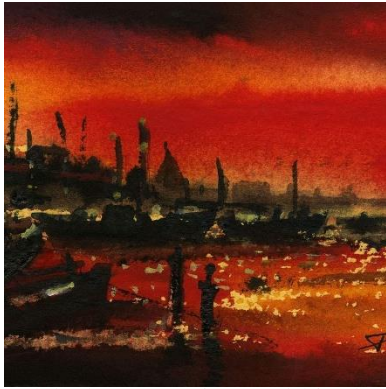
with his 82nd and 83rd solo shows, both opening back to back in Kolkata on November 12 and 13 at **CIMA Gallery** and **Birla Academy of Art and Culture** respectively. Noise of Many Waters has been curated by CIMA's director founder Rakhi Sarkar and will be on display at CIMA from today.



The bull installation

It takes one through the vibrant maze of Maity's illustrious career spanning across 40 colourful years and consists of 120 artworks comprising watercolour paintings, drawings, sketches, video art and a film and sound installation about water. It highlights the watercolours which are his principal tour de force — from miniatures of student days to gigantic works from recent years.

This show aims at capturing the melancholy, impermanence, fears, and intense transient nature of life itself. Being born and brought up in a coastal region, water has played an important and integral part in Maity's life as an artist and he draws deep inspiration from it. "I have always been very close to nature and all my works have been inspired by various facets of nature. In fact, I believe no artist can flourish without borrowing from nature. This retrospective exhibition will showcase a few watercolour paintings, mostly landscapes that I have drawn at various stages of my life. They had all been drawn at the very places I visited and give a peek into my wanderlust," shares Maity.



Watercolour on paper by Paresh Maity

Besides the paintings, there would also be an installation comprising an illuminated screen, a boat and a 20-feet rain curtain accompanied by sounds and sights of rain. “It depicts the importance of water, rains and monsoon in our life,” he explains.

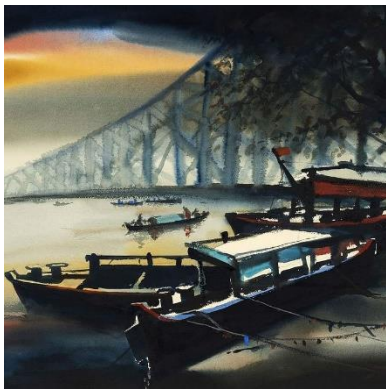
While Noise of Many Waters explores the wanderlust in Maity, Cast, presented by **Art Exposure** and Birla Academy of Art and Culture underscores the sculptor in him and showcases some of his recent sculptures and installations. “My interest in art was piqued for the first time when I witnessed idol-making as a child.

With time, my focus shifted more on paintings. But about 15 years ago, on an idle day, I suddenly felt the urge to sculpt. I did some clay sculptures on bronze and brass casts,” tells Maity.



Watercolour on paper by Paresh Maity

Cast will display nine humungous exhibits in bronze and brass. “There will be human forms, for instance, a sculpture showing four stages of life (inspired by the Vedic phases of Brahmacharya, Garhastha, Banaprastha and Sanyasa), another sculpture depicting parents and their child, and yet another showing an inseparable male and female figure. There’s also a 26-ft bull installation which is a symbol of force and power, a 24-feet tall brass Tree of Life, and a life-size tempo moulded and cast in brass carrying chillies. The chillies are symbolic of how bland life could have been without some spice,” explains Maity.



Watercolour on paper by Paresh Maity

The busy artist, who had always drawn inspiration from nature and its bounty, got more time to see things at his own pace and time during the pandemic. “I have always followed a slow pace of life to soak in all the goodness of nature, and this pandemic has only enhanced that process further, making me concentrate even more. I have always been very precise in life and believe in simple things. You need minimum work and maximum expression and derive happiness from basic things in life,” he tells us.

Also, Maity is equally thrilled about the immense prospects that the pandemic has opened up for artists in terms of online or digital exhibitions and shows. “The opportunities have opened up a lot with digital art exhibitions. Now, people can see an artwork sitting anywhere in the world, be it in San Francisco or Japan. Though digital shows can never match up to the wholesome, tactile experience of physical exhibitions, I believe the virtual exhibitions will co-exist parallelly with the physical ones,” observes Maity.

And that makes us ponder whether Paresh Maity, who is always open to new ideas and thoughts, will ever take up NFT art? “Surely, I find it very interesting and I will very soon try out this medium in a big way. Right now, I am busy with a lot of new installations, big paintings (14-15 ft tall) and

mixed media work. I have a few ideas in my head, you will soon see me coming up with the same,” concludes the humble painter.