

# तालपीठ

DRAWINGS . PAINTINGS . INSTALLATIONS

by

SHRIDHAR IYER





The artist has plunged himself to a spiritual connection with the universe, for him all the energy fields surrounding us are stayed, compressed, powerful, ethereal and friendly



Presents

# तंबुलहाल

DRAWINGS . PAINTINGS . INSTALLATIONS

by  
**SHRIDHAR IYER**

curated by Rahul Bhattacharya

**16 MARCH - 06 APRIL 2019**

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## अमिया और चम्पा के पेड़

- श्रीधर अय्यर

मैंने लगाये अमिया और चम्पा के पेड़  
जवानी की दहलीज पर  
पहली दस्तक पर  
मैंने लगाये अमिया और चम्पा के पेड़।।

सुबह का उठना, मुँह धोने के पहले उनको  
उनको निहारना  
उनके इर्द-गिर्द घूमना  
दिन हफ्ते महीनों में बदलता समय, जिज्ञासा,  
भीतर पल रहे  
कोपल

फिर निकला एक दिन छुटका पत्ता  
फिर छोटी छोटी टहनी  
अगल-बगल  
तेरे मेरे बढ़ते जैसे संबंध इर्द-गिर्द,  
देखा मैंने तेरा बचपन  
देखा मौसम का बदलना  
तेरा बढ़ना  
बसंत और बसंत  
चिड़िया आई, साथ मैना, बुलबुल  
कौआ लाई  
बसंत और बसंत  
फूटे फूल बिखरी खुशबू  
भौरे नाचें इर्द-गिर्द  
संग मेरे  
चहचहों के साथ तय हुआ  
सुबह का उठना  
आते जाते कुशल क्षेम का सिलसिला भी तय हुआ  
एक मूक संबंध  
फिर भोर के साथ  
आयी छोटी-छोटी अमिया  
महकी चम्पा

चम्पा नाची  
अब तो तुम पूरे पेड़ बन गए हो  
मेरी बत्तीसी बाहर  
सिलसिला अनवरत, रिश्ता मजबूत  
अगल बगल और भी बिखरे फूलों  
और लताओं के बेल  
बन गया कुटुम्ब  
उनके बीच टप्पर का बना मेरा सृजन घर  
बड़ा सुख देता था  
मेरे लगाये अमिया और चम्पा के पेड़  
उस सुबह  
लम्बे प्रवास के बाद मेरा घर लौटना  
तुम्हे न पाना  
एक  
और जंगले का मकान  
निःशब्द  
उन गलियारों को घूरता रहा

लगा  
हठात किसी ने किया मुझ पर  
प्रहार  
जन्मजात संकोची  
चाहता तो मैं रोक सकता था  
फिर न मैना, बुलबुल, न गौरयों के  
झुरमुट  
न भँवरों की गुनगुन

पहाड़ों जंगलों, पेड़ों के झुरमुट में  
तुम्हे ही ढूँढ़ता हूँ  
बसंत  
हर बसंत  
मैंने लगाये अमिया और चम्पा  
के  
पेड़।।

### AMIYA AND CHAMPA TREES

- Shridhar Iyer

I planted Amiya and Champa trees  
at the inception of youth  
at the first knock  
I planted Amiya and champa trees.

Early morning, before even brushing  
first thing I looked at them fondly  
took a round around them  
in the days, weeks, months gone by

Time, curiosity changed  
While saplings grew inside.

Then one day grew a tiny leaf  
Then came tender stems  
Side by side  
like our growing relationship  
I saw your childhood  
Saw the changing season  
Saw your growth  
Spring to spring  
birds came,  
along came myna, bulbul  
and crow  
Flowers came,  
came fragrance dancing around  
I woke up with their chirping  
then started exchange of pleasantries  
between us  
a silent relationship grew along  
Then came small fruits  
from the blooming flowers.

Champa danced,  
bloomed with fragrance  
I laughed and said  
You are grown up now  
as a full tree  
This continued  
our relationship strong  
more flowers and shrubs grew around  
we were habitats of a family  
In the midst was my small creativity  
home  
It brought bliss  
I planted Amiya and Champa trees  
One morning  
I returned home after a long gap  
Didn't find them  
Saw a new concrete house  
I stared at the passage in utter silence  
I was struck by a sudden blow  
then there was no myna, no bulbul, no  
sparrow.

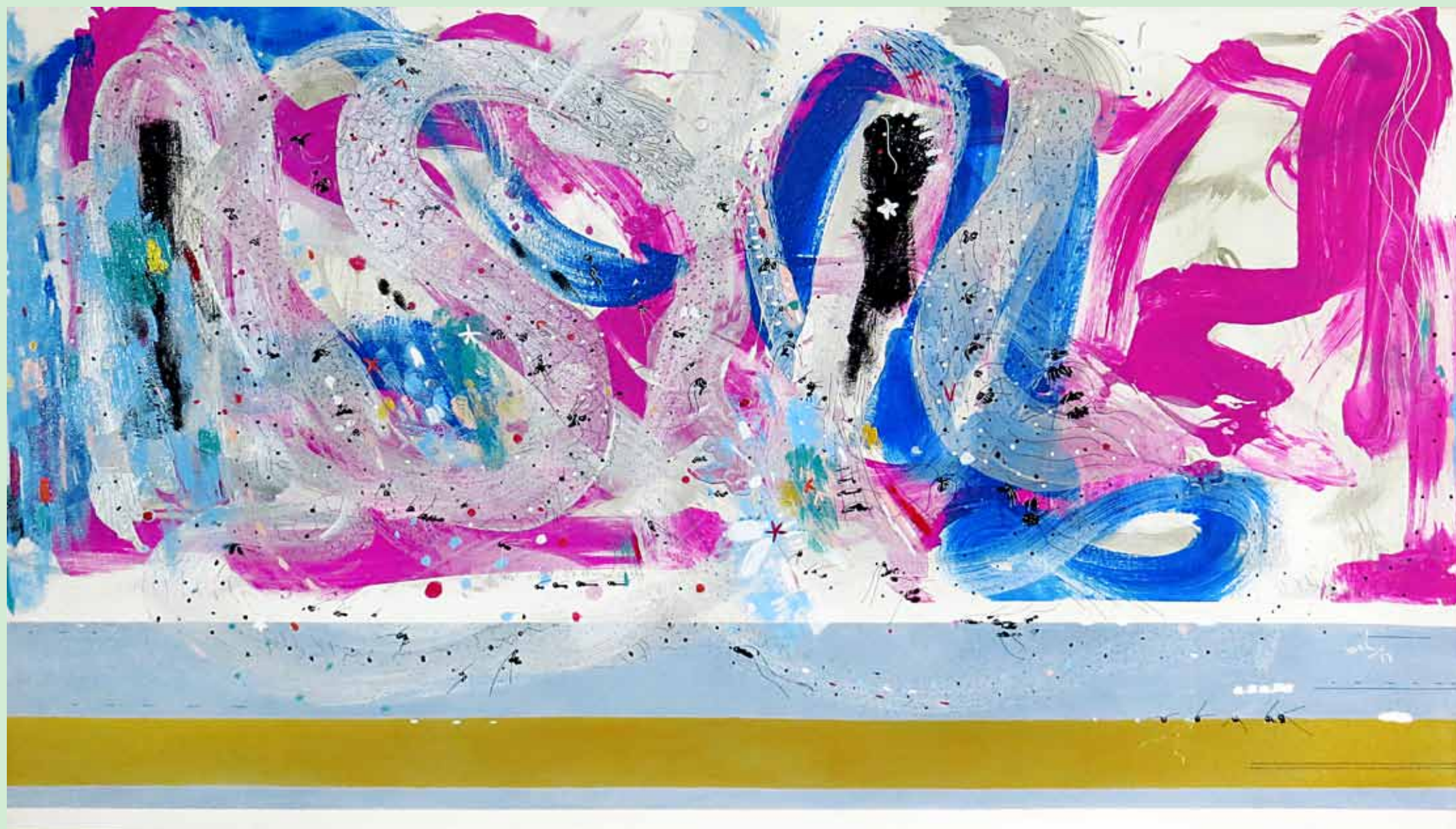
No shrubs, no soft song of the honey  
bees  
I the habitual hesitant man  
Could have stopped this if I wished  
I look longingly for you  
amidst mountains, forests, other trees  
In every spring  
Spring after spring  
I planted Amiya and Champa trees.



### **A MAGICIAN AND HIS OFFERINGS NOTES ON TAMBULAM**

I have been visiting Shridhar Iyer's studio over some years now, and every time I realise that it a very different kind of space, a kind we are not used to these days. Most established artists have a very clear home studio distinction, and in this distinction, their homes have become much sanitised spaces. However every time I visit Shridhar Iyer's studio, I feel as if I have walked into a magician's house where life, art and spiritualism come into one melting pot, and a spell is being cooked , or being imagined. The studio is an intrinsic part of his practice and his exploration of abstraction. Over the years, the artist has taken up studios, built them from scratch, lived in them, produced shows, and then just let it all go...moving into a new place with just a suitcase and starting all over again. This reflects an artistic philosophy





Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
36 X 60 inches, 2017

exploring the journey of between the possibilities of assimilation and letting go. Over the last decade, Iyer has been working around the disconnect between nature and civilization, a disconnect which for the artist symbolises our inability to understand the forces of the universe and our place inside it. Tambulam, his new body of works is his offering to nature, as well as healing touch to the bonds which are on the verge of being lost forever.

Shridhar Iyer is one of the rare modern masters whose works have been trendsetters for postmodern and contemporary art practices in India. Known to be one of the greatest living abstractionists in India, Iyer's art practice has always gone beyond pictorial abstraction and he is one of the earliest artists from the subcontinent to embrace installation and video as an integral part of his practice. The artist explores pure contemplation on a spiritual level, almost as a window to the unknown energy and force of the universe. His ability to rasp philosophical abstraction is extraordinary and his works show his painterly deftness as he juxtaposes strong and fragile colours in complete harmony.

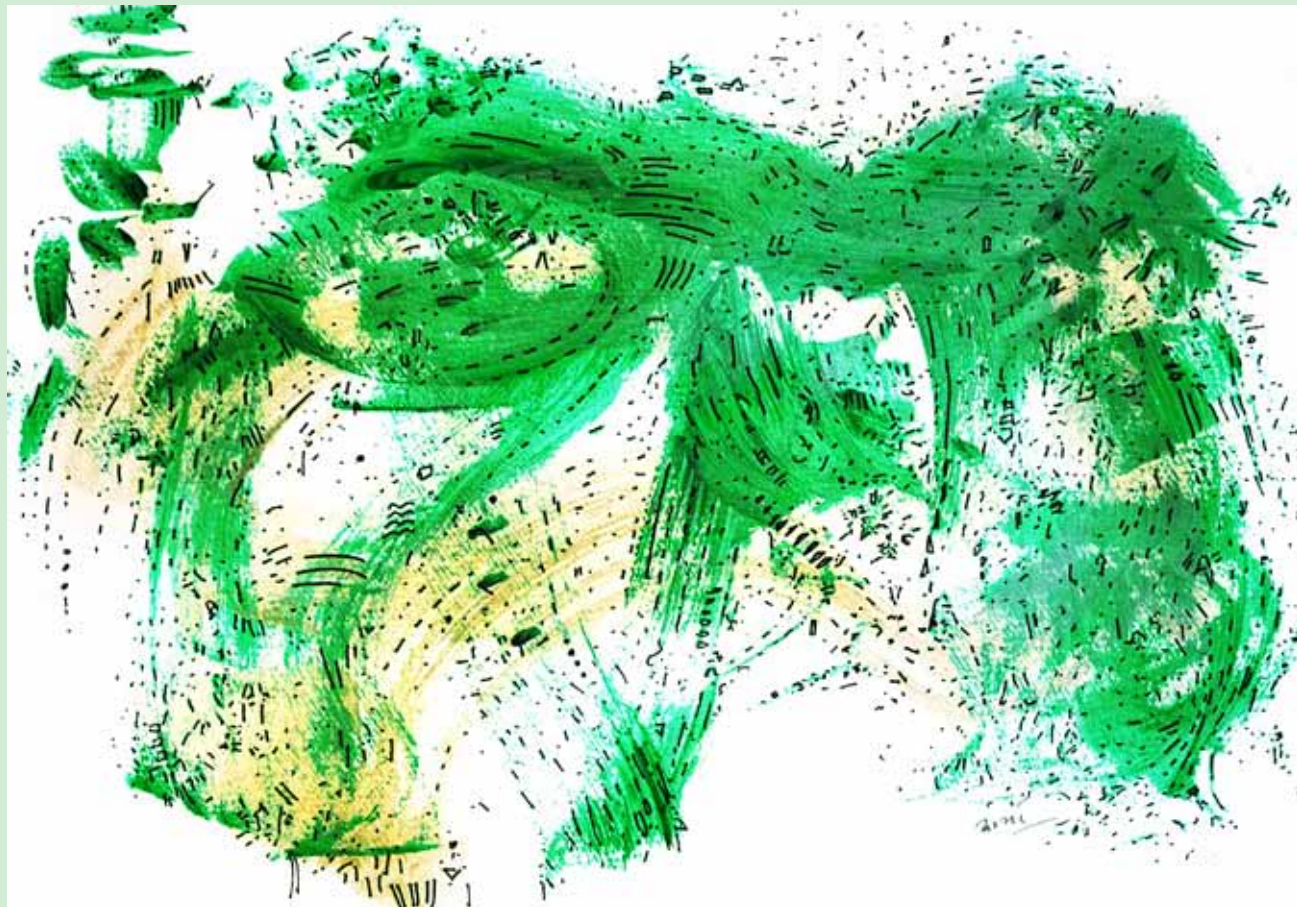
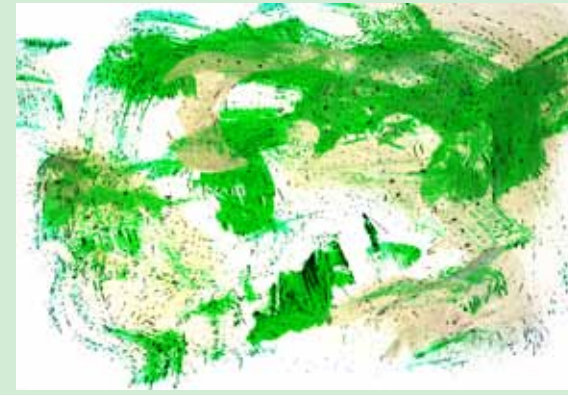
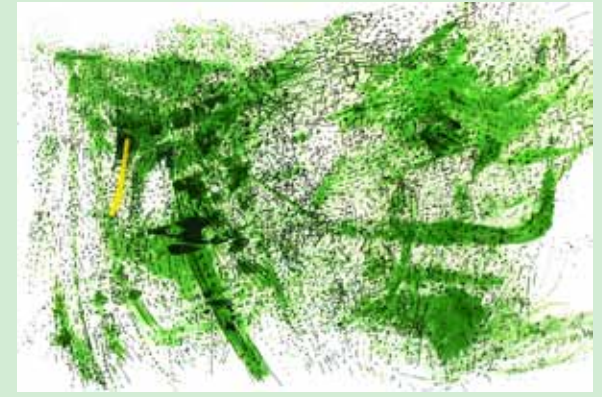
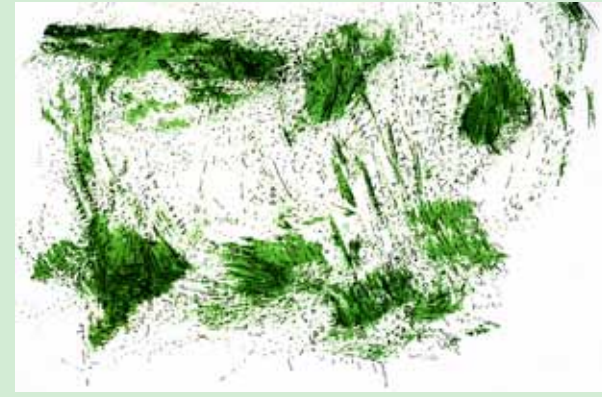
*"The lines and forms of tribal art always play with the idea of meaning and reality; the forms invent their own geometry based on their context, play and rhythm. I realised that to be an artist, one has to go beyond mirroring reality and only through developing an extremely personal language, and one can generate new forms and meanings for the world.... what tribal art taught me is that through spontaneity and rhythm, lines could be transformed into something magical. You could say that since then, the 'line' has become key to my artistic practice; it helps me to explore and understand my own imagination. Over the years I have grown to realise that possibilities of new forms and ideas are deeply embedded in the exploration of 'line'."*

-Shridhar Iyer

In Iyer's artistic practice, there has always been an attempt to propose an alternative to the contemporary fascination with the spectacular image. Since his early days at Bharat Bhawan, though his paintings, drawings, videos and installations, Iyer has been a part of aesthetic trajectories which nurtured painterly abstraction as a mode to develop languages different from the figurative, data dense visual culture with images that are designed to jump at you, craving for that attention that bounces off into the recesses of your overfed conscious. His works have explored between chaos and calmness with an emphasis on tactility and playfulness. This life, lived in an overdose of spectacles has numbed our senses forever. When we travel we are busy clicking and hardly ever just seeing. Our eyes cannot rest, and are constantly bored. In these times Iyer's works have offered us a different mode of seeing. This mode of seeing is not only operational in the viewer, but has had to be first digested by the artist. The painted surface is not just a residue of pictorial mark making and rendering, it is also a reflection of the artist own gaze, the way he engages with the world, and how images form inside our head.

The manner in which he mixes his media, the self-consciousness about the aesthetic values of Form and possibilities of play, and the manner in which he appropriates the spiritual and the political into the





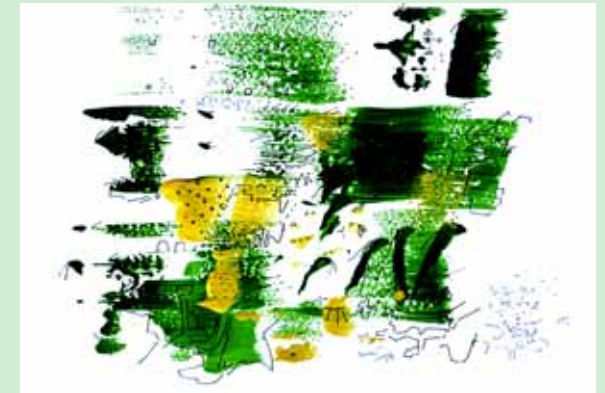
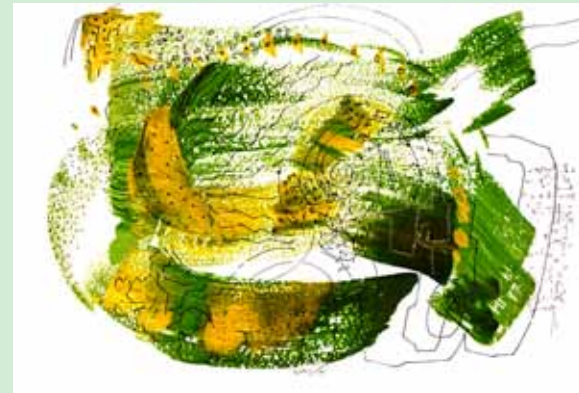
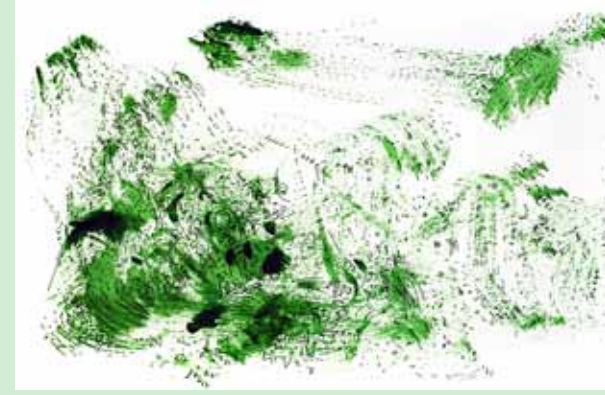
Jatra  
Mixed Media on Paper  
12 X 17 inches (each), 2017- 19

'painterly'; speak of a deep entrenchment into the history of visual vocabularies. Deeply influenced by modernism and tribal art Iyer extends awareness of the historical/aesthetic frameworks of social consciousness and the subversion of the spectacular. This consciousness is significant it a time when aesthetic consciousness become marginal in the globalised imaginations and desires. The works celebrate a resistance to the homogenization of the human condition. It is this postmodern critique of contemporary, which strongly marks Tambulam as an artistic intervention.

The installations in the show are layered with prayer, wishes, nostalgia and love. 'Still, I Love You' and Ámia and Champa Trees are steeped in a sense of deep loss and endless hope. This dialogue between hope and loss is a layering of Iyer's relationship with assimilating and letting go. Wood becomes an important metaphor and so do shadows. It is difficult to understand whether they stand in anticipation or in defeat, but both contain a prayer and a song. They are attempts of the artist to remind himself, stretch the envelope of his spirituality to be able to retain hope even as one remains a witness to the anthropocene. Yet, for the artist there are no gaps between the personal, the spiritual and the political, he seeks to negotiate the space through beauty, balance and hope.

Tambulam is a complex body of work, a lot of it is in continuation of the artist's explorations over last five to six years, yet in this body, there are also seeds of the new directions where Iyer's practice is heading towards. His art is becoming more conceptual and one can see a conscious attempt to experiment with pushing the boundaries of





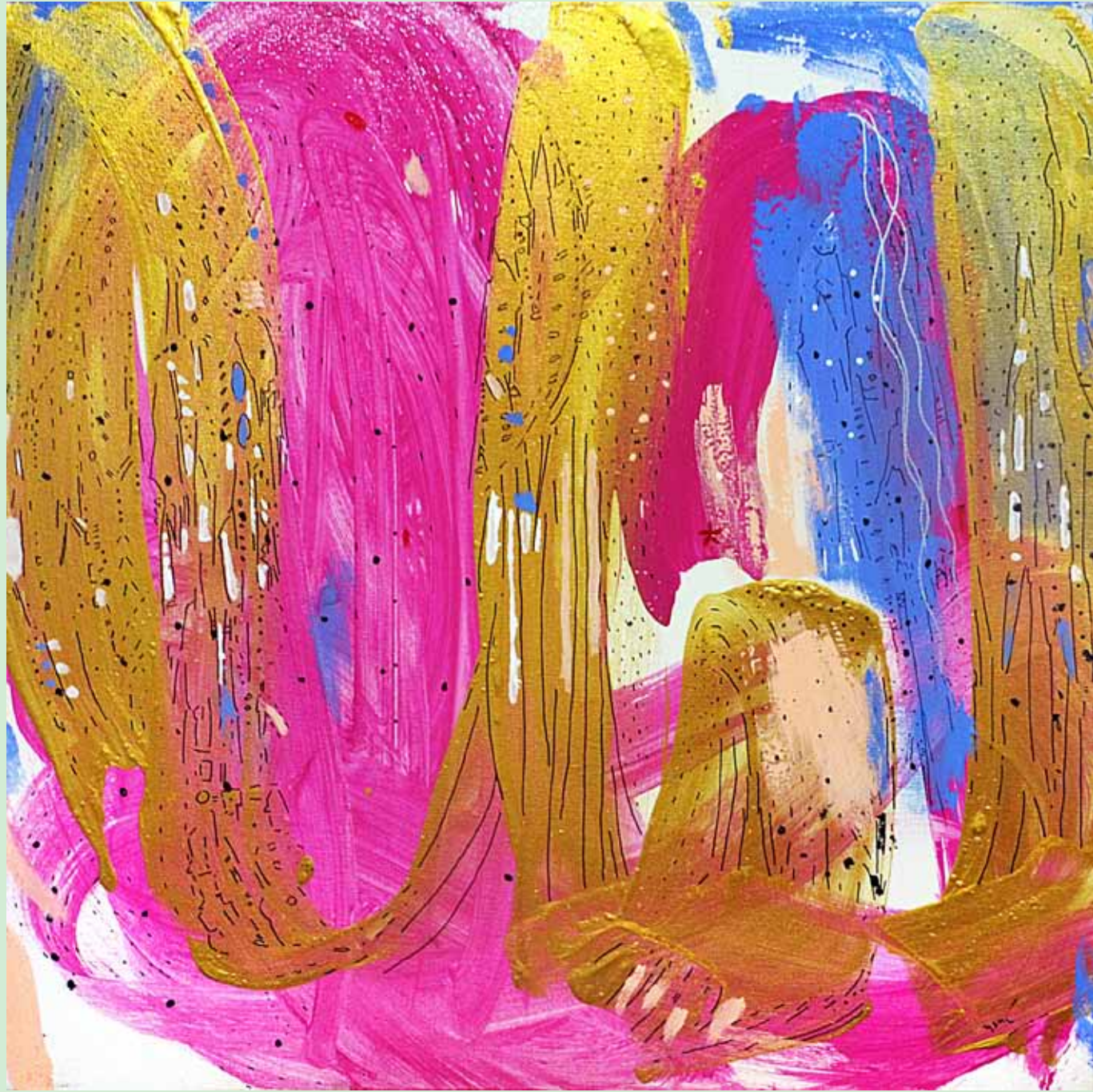
drawing and painting as separate forms. In his paintings, leisure and hints of boredom become fundamental to the experience of time and problems of meaning, creating that hint of tension between notions of existence, consumption and taste. The artist is able to arrive at visual language that goes beyond exploring the self with the paint and the line as the primary tools, here we see artist trying to communicate the thin, almost invisible state of interdependence and order that guides all transitions of life.

Abstraction, for Iyer is not just a visual language, but a strategy that initiates dialogue compassion and understanding. In this respect, 'Tambulam' is not just a body of works, but a space which the artist offers, pushing us to rethink our relationship with the Anthropocene. The show presents drawings, paintings and installations stylistically ranging from gestural to minimal. Iyer has always made art as a way of connecting to the cosmos, as an endeavor to expand his spiritual self. Yet nature is an integral part of the cosmos, and as the artist realises how fragile it has become, it brings out of Iyer a mellow, tender reaction, almost like singing a song to an ill parent, sad yet hopeful. A large set of very fine drawings, largely mono chromatic, aesthetically anchor the show. They are like gentle drifting, the marks on paper become a residue of the artist's process of seeing, hiding, masking, and preserving. The exhibition is carefully constructed through interplay of form, colour and media centered on the conceptual metaphors of nature and hope.

Jatra  
Mixed Media on Paper  
12 X 17 inches (each), 2017- 19

**Rahul Bhattacharya**  
Spring 2019, New Delhi





Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
24 X 24 inches, 2018



Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
24 X 24 inches, 2018





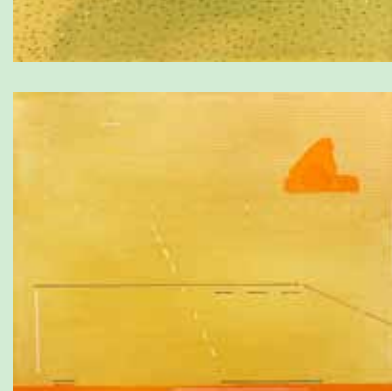
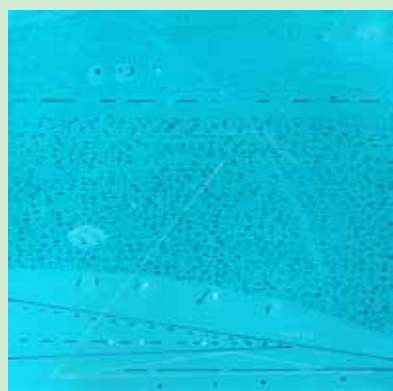
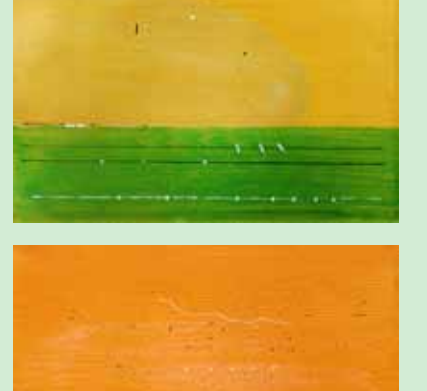
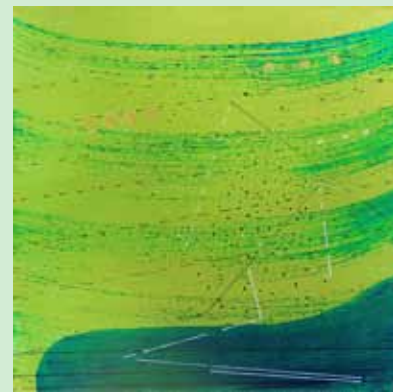
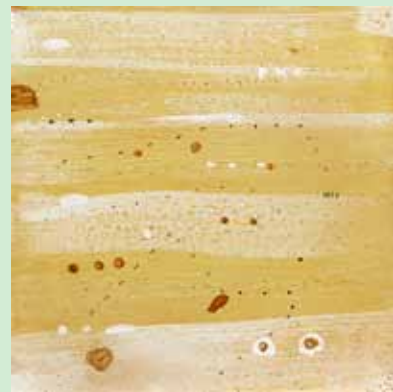
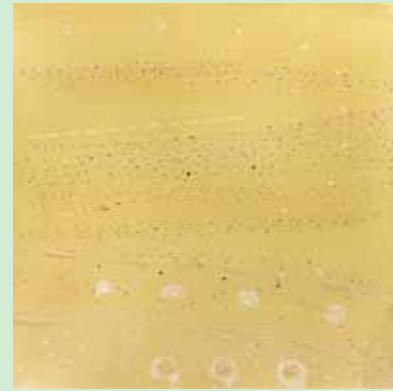
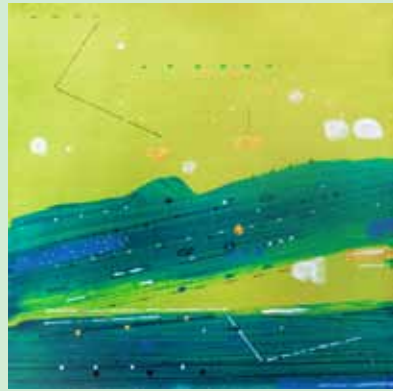
Jatra, Mixed Media on Canvas, 36 X 60 inches, 2018





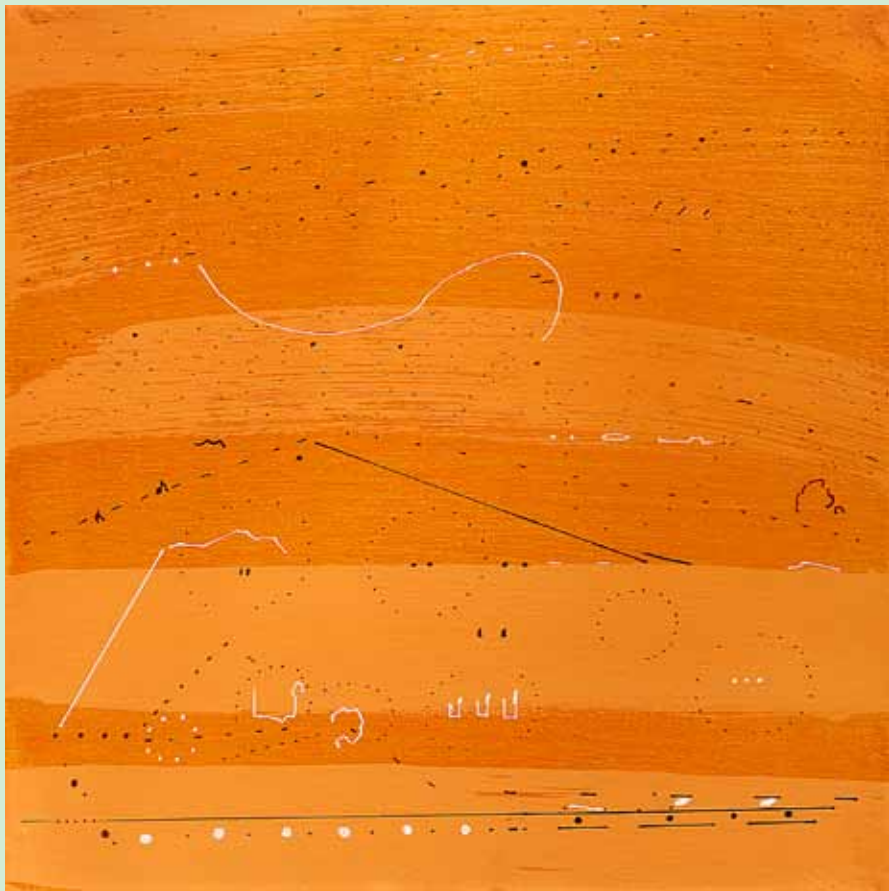
Jatra, Mixed Media on Canvas, 36 X 60 inches, 2018





Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
12 X 12 inches (each), 2018





Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
12 X 12 inches (each), 2018



Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
12 X 12 inches (each), 2018





Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
48 X 96 inches, 2018





Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
48 X 96 inches, 2018





Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
48 X 96 inches, 2016-17





Jatra, Mixed Media on Canvas, 24 X 36 inches, 2018





Jatra, Mixed Media on Canvas, 24 X 36 inches, 2018



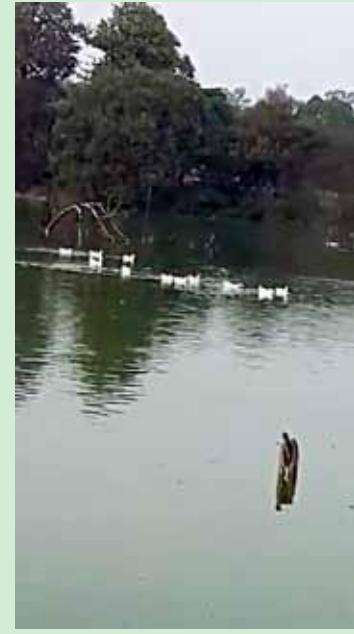


Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
36 X 60 inches, 2019



Jatra  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
24 X 36 inches, 2018









## **SHRIDHAR IYER**

**Born.** 1961

**18 Solo shows:** Bombay, Delhi, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Chennai & Bhopal

**10 Installations:** Delhi, Bhopal and Chandigarh, Kolkata

**6 Films:** Blue Bull Grey, On the way New Delhi, On the way Bhopal, On the way Chandigarh, Dream House, Swayambhoo, One Day I went Inside The Tree and few short Videos.

**250 Group Exhibition:** India & abroad (Perth, Melbourne, California, San Francisco, Paris, London, Myanmar, Singapore, Damascus, Dubai, Munich, Holland, Barcelona, Hong Kong, South Korea)

**Participation:** Collected Folk and Tribal Art from MP for Roopankar Museum of Fine Arts, Bharat Bhawan, Bhopal and Southern Region for Festival of India in Japan.

Served as Jury in various State and National Institutions.

**Awards:** Recipient of all Major State and National Awards and recipient of Junior Fellowship and Senior fellowship, HRD, New Delhi including Raja Ravi Verma award.

**Camps:** Attended various camps in all over India.

**Collection:** Mr. I K Gujral (Former Prime Minister of India), Art Patron, Mr. Naresh Gujral (Member of Parliament), National Gallery of Modern Art, Birla Academy of Art Calcutta, Chandigarh Museum, Bharat Bhawan Museum, Lalit Kala Akademi, Artsacre Foundation, Vidhan Sabha Bhavan Bhopal, Art Span in India and International, Swaraj Archive, New Delhi, Hero Corp. and major private collections in India and abroad.

"My gratitude to Shanawas, Mudassar, Rehan, Narendra Rai, Rajesh, Siddhartha Tagore, Sangeeta Gupta, Rahul Bhattacharya, Prashanta Seal, Rinchen Dolma, Rajul Bisht, Upasana Bhattacharya, Aditi Singh, Rajkumar Singh and Bishan."

- Shridhar Iyer





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