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Sales Offices

Chennai

127 T.T.K. Road, Alwarpet,
Chennai 600018
phone +91 82203 08777
phone +91 44 4216 5100
sales@artsillustrated.in

Coimbatore

Jenney's Residency
Opp CIT Avinashi Road,
Coimbatore Aerodrome Post,
Coimbatore 641014
phone +91 82203 08777
sales@artsillustrated.in

Abu Dhabi

Flat No. 701, 7th Floor,
H.E.Shaikh Tahnoon Bin Moh'd
Al Nahyan Building, (Arab Bank
Building), Al Nasr Street,
Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.
phone +97 15631 89405
sales@artsillustrated.in

Singapore

No. 1, Kim Seng Promenade,
12-01 Great World City (East
Tower), Singapore 237994
sales@artsillustrated.in

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Vincent Adaikalraj

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Subeditor

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Contributors

Abha Iyengar

Arti Sandhu

Mahesh Padia

Meera Rajagopalan

Poonam Ganglani

Radhika Iyengar

Rehana Munir

Seema Massot

Siddhartha Das

Susan Mathen

Published by

LA 5 Global Publications

#127, T.T.K. Road, Alwarpet,

Chennai 600018, India

phone +91 44 4216 5100

info@artsillustrated.in

editorial@artsillustrated.in

sales@artsillustrated.in

Special Thanks

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Anagh Banerjee

Debasmita Dasgupta

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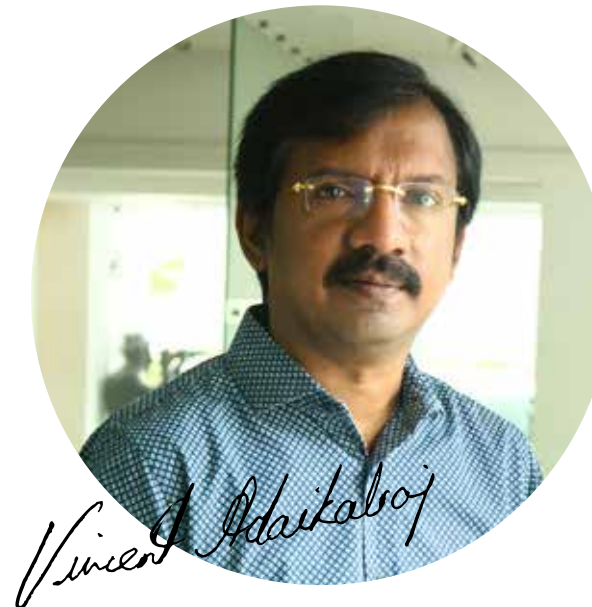
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Publisher's note

The first thing that comes to our minds when we say 'ghosts' is the supernatural; it belongs to another realm, the unexplained realm, and remains a mystery, one that is constantly colliding with the world of science, the perennially explained realm. But, we think, there is more.

This issue we look at what it means to be invisible, to be ghost-like, to be confined to a space behind the curtain and still exist. We look at artist(e)s who truly engage with the word and understand its connotations in real life – in how, often, our reactions to the unknown become the opportunity for morality, philosophy and science to intermingle; in how we carry the ghosts of our memories; in how we create the ghosts of society; and how, even through the use of language (words and the arts), the ghosts of silence remain.

Vincent Adaikalraj



Editor's note

Working on this issue was like rushing with a suitcase full of stories on a trolley against the wall to get to platform nine and three-quarters; sometimes, incredibly, we got through and found what we were looking for – a train, ready to take us into journeys never imagined – and other times, we crashed against the wall, watching the suitcase fly open, scattering stories into the wind like wayward feathers. This issue on 'ghosts' was equal parts awe-inspiring and maddeningly frustrating. That is, till we stopped seeing things the way they were supposed to be seen, and began to see them for what they were.

Ghosts have been such a big part of our collective memories; no childhood is complete without the 'bhoot' or 'poochandi' coming to get you if you don't finish eating, if you don't go to sleep, if you don't listen. We have been taught to fear that which we cannot see, and that we won't ever 'have' to see if we simply obeyed. As a parent today I completely understand (and indulge) in this need to win the everyday survival battle of exhaustion (parent) and stubbornness (child), but also, through this issue, realised just how deep such a layer could go within our minds. As an adult, living in this increasingly chaotic world, 'ghosts' today hold a whole other meaning, relentlessly and urgently hammering through old conditionings of fear.

As we delved into the realm of the invisible, the voiceless, the unseen, it became clear that we largely build narratives around things that are easily discernable, that are adequately explained, that quietly conform, that are proved beyond doubt as something that exists. Basically things that have legitimate Aadhar cards and bank accounts. For those that don't fall into these categories, the supernatural and the spectral does not seem that far-fetched anymore – for in the landscape of the invisible, there are no neatly cut pigeonholes of definitions nor are there nuanced filaments of dialogue. Here, the ghosts run free. And here, we situate this issue.

Because ghosts might mean a certain kind of death, but it certainly does not imply any kind of an end.



Praveena Shivram
praveena@artsillustrated.in

Cover



Cover courtesy Art Macao
Images Courtesy of the Artists and Cultural Affairs Bureau, Macao

Artists João Ó and Rita Machado installation for Art Macao titled 'Sanctuary' perfectly captures the ethos of this issue on 'ghosts'. For one, because we are specifically not concerned with the supernatural, we love that it is a bright blue sky, with the sun pouring in through the bamboo, the red hammocks, a clever subversion of danger or even the urgency of Facebook notifications popping regularly into our consciousness, inviting us to rest a while, within the patterns of shadow underneath. Two, the spaces between the lines of the bamboo, existing between the intricate structure of order, is where we think ghosts exist – they make the rigidity of straight lines bearable and show us that within the beauty of symmetry, there is also the beauty of chaos. And, finally, the use of bamboo, itself – the wood that straddles cultures, mythology, history, economy, ecology, sustenance and design – is symbolic of what ghosts mean to us: that long, immortal silence gradually bleeding into our worlds, into our words and into our pauses.

Tomorrow Belongs to Me

AUGUST 2 TO 4, 2019, NEW DELHI

Reviewed by *Rahul Kumar*

A new body of work from Pallav Chander – 45 works from his new solo show titled *Tomorrow Belongs to Me* – is a commentary on societal psychology and hope. A deeper engagement with his paintings often evokes an emotion of angst emanating from his personal loss. Son of practising artists, he was introduced to art at a very early age. ‘I was born in the world with more canvases around me than food on the table. I am a firm believer that I never chose art, rather art chose me,’ he says. Having studied Fine Arts in the United Kingdom, Pallav practises theatre alongside painting, and the two creative vocations often influence each other. ‘For me, art and theatre go hand in hand. I never make conscious efforts to combine these, but it comes naturally to me. For instance, I have always composed my theatre scenes as a director, and as a painter I have always directed the ‘scene’ in my paintings,’ he explains. However, there is a deep sense of spontaneity in his work, as he likes to begin and let the process itself take the lead. And as the work progresses, the painting reveals itself. He does not focus on preconceived ideas or concepts in his works. ‘I work on what triggers me, on a given day or moment. It can be a person, a situation or just a random click of an emotion. That is why there are lots of different topics I deal with in my paintings, rather than sticking to one series and exploring the same subject over and over,’ he says.

Treatment or style employed to paint a certain imagery is completely determined by the very topic and desired emotion to be evoked for the viewer. A significant work titled *Selfie Couple* attempts to bring out the essence of the emotion of love existing in contemporary times, especially among the young. It references the need for social acceptance and approval, as though the two individuals in love spend more time thinking about perfect angles to take a picture and brainstorming the hashtags they ought to include while posting on social media networks. ‘I used dramatic gestures of artificial expressions through my scratch medium technique in a tight frame,’ he explains.

Paintings created in the past two years that form this exhibit are like pages from his personal diary. It is his subjective take on contemporary society, and, as the title of the show reveals, it is a statement about his perseverance and self-belief with an optimistic view of tomorrow.



Pallav Chander, *Fake World*, Acrylic on canvas.

Pallav Chander, *A Passionate Muse*, Acrylic on canvas, 53" x 34.5", 2018.

Pallav Chander, *The Art of Posing (The Social Influencer Series)*, Acrylic on canvas, 2019.

Pallav Chander, *The Selfie Couple*, Acrylic on canvas, 36" x 53".

All Images Courtesy of the Artist.



