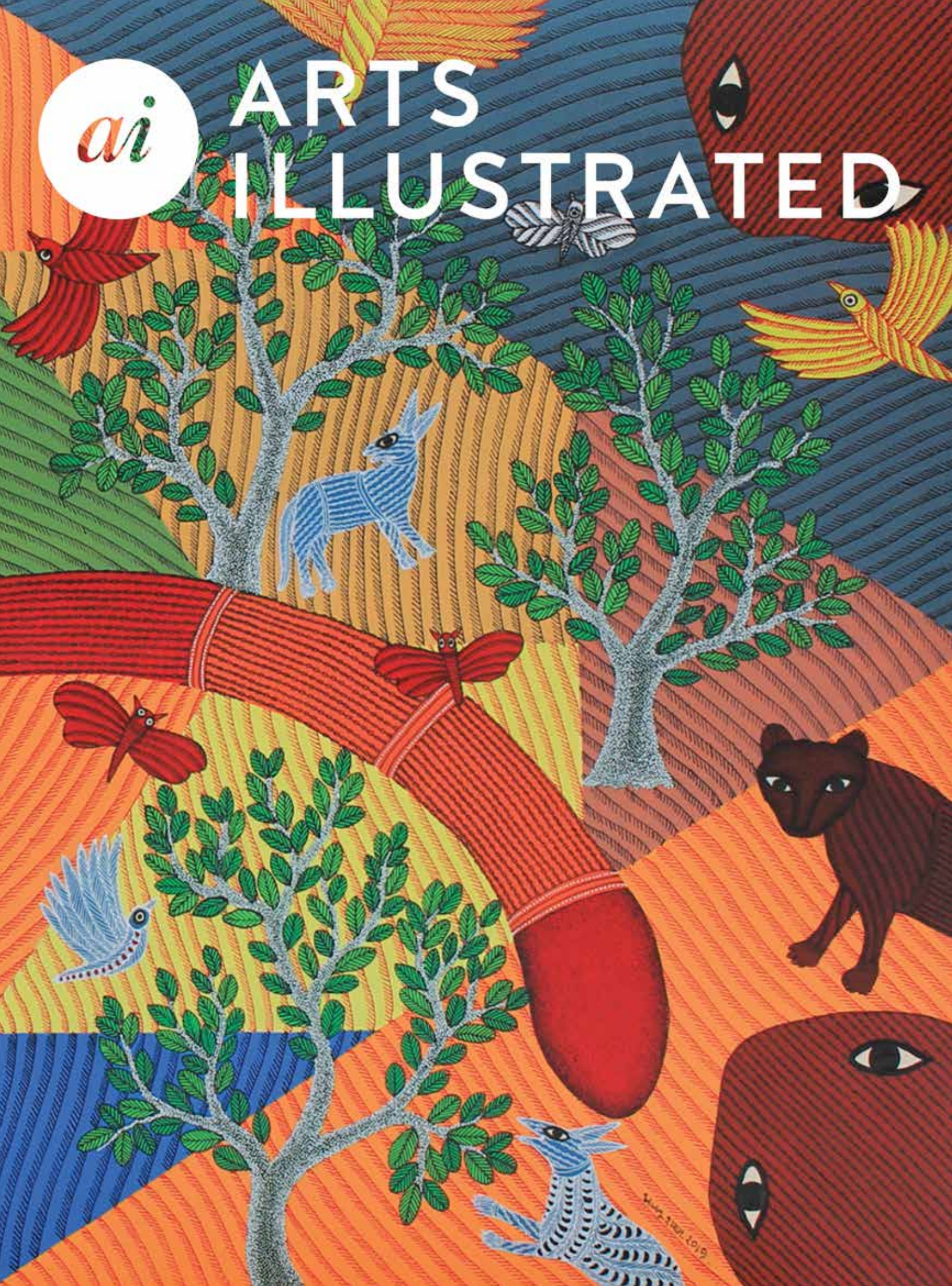




# ARTS ILLUSTRATED



www.artsillustrated.com



## Team

### 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

Views and opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of LA 5 Global Publications, its publisher and/or the editor. It is always our endeavour to verify the information published but we do not take any responsibility for the absolute accuracy of the information provided. The publication, the publisher and editor do not accept any responsibility or liability for any investment or other decisions taken by readers on the basis of information provided herein.

The views expressed by the writers, key contributors, columnists are their own. The publication, the publisher and editor do not accept any responsibility or liability for any investment or other decisions taken by readers on the basis of information provided herein.

Rights of literary content reserved. Artistic elements are meant exclusively for the purpose of fair dealing. Due credit has been given to the extent possible. The publisher claims no rights over artistic elements unless and to the extent expressly claimed by it.

The mark Arts Illustrated is a trademark of LA 5 Global Publications. 2014 © LA 5 Global Publications. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part, without written permission, is strictly prohibited. Arts Illustrated is not responsible for unsolicited material.

#### Publisher & Chairman

Vincent Adaikalraj

#### Editor

Praveena Shivram

#### Consulting Editor

Rahul Kumar

#### Subeditor

Vani Sriranganayaki Vanamamalai

#### Copy Editor

Sethulakshmy S Nayar

#### Graphic Designers

Chenchudar Chellakannu  
Santhosh Kumar

#### Administrative Officer

Ramakrishnan

#### Gallery Manager, Art Houz Gallery

Lakshmi Krishnakumar

#### Operations Manager, Art Houz Gallery

Bridget Shibu

#### Administrative Manager, Art Houz Gallery

Jayanthi Shegar

#### Gallery Assistant, Art Houz Gallery

Atreyee Bhattacharjee

#### Sales Head, South

Felix Raju

#### Area Sales Manager

Punitha Vijayakrishnan

#### Contributors

Abha Iyengar

Arti Sandhu

Meera Rajagopalan

Poonam Ganglani

Rehana Munir

Romain Maitra

Saritha Rao Rayachoti

Seema Massot

Shantanu Prakash

Siddhartha Das

Suzanne McNeill

Swati Negi

#### 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

Bandana Kumari

Bhajju Shyam

C. P. Satyajit

Dr. Sunil Awachar

C. S. Krishna Setty

Krithika Subrahmanian

Pa. Ranjith

Prabhakar Kamble

Priya Thuvassery

Rajyashri Goody

Sajan Mani

Shakti Maira

Shalini Passi

Sumitabha Pal

#### Special Acknowledgements

Art Spire, Chennai

Chennai Photo Biennale Foundation

Claudine Colin Communications, Paris

Club Paradis, Brussels

Flint PR, New Delhi

Galerie Alice Mogabgab, Brussels

Hamiltons Gallery, London

InKo Centre, Chennai

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi

Lévy Gorvy, New York

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Ojas Art, New Delhi

Palais de Tokyo, Paris

SaveTheLoom

Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai

The Kolkata International Photography Festival

Transform, Chennai

Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi

#### Printing

Srikals Graphics Pvt. Ltd.

No. 5, Balaji Nagar, 1st Street,

Ekkaduthangal, Chennai - 600097

#### Distributed by

I B H Books & Magazines

Distributors Ltd.

### Publisher's note

After the rains, that unmistakable smell of wet earth – *mann vasanai*, as we say in Tamil – is like an old, weathered hand reaching out from the depths of the earth to meet us. In that gesture of reaching up, it carries with it a deep-rooted sense of knowing. We see that gesture in a young sapling or an ancient tree, and are reminded, time and again, that it is the soil beneath our feet that makes us stand tall.

And, so, our theme this issue is simply that – Soil – with all the images, metaphors and symbolism it carries: the politics of caste, identity and belonging; the artfulness (and earthworm-y quality) of constant restructuring and relevance; the power and influence of privilege and perceived dominance; and even those sensory filaments of memory and nostalgia unconsciously (and consciously) conditioned with dollops of prejudice.

Vincent Adaikalraj



Vincent Adaikalraj

Editor's note

Science textbooks in middle school will tell you about the different layers of soil and the different kinds of soil, and record books will carry intricate drawings with careful pencil shading, and, maybe, if you are lucky, a field trip will happen to understand it all better. And yet, between school and what is now scarily called adulthood, what we understand about the various nuances ingrained in this ground beneath our feet inexplicably floats on the surface like oil in water.

This issue was a revelation in so many ways. Our original vision was to look at ways in which the idea and ideology of soil can be interpreted, but where it took us instead was to examine our own ideas and ideologies; roots buried so deep that it took a lot of spadework to even realise that the premise where we began was flawed; our lens was narrow, our world-view sensitive but not sensitised, and our understanding mostly dust-filled like textbooks and record books in the attic.

For me, this issue and its collection of compelling perspectives were also stories that were filled with hope. Not the kind born out of despair, but one born out of beauty, of the need to create and express and dialogue and build spaces that inform rather than explain by virtue of its existence, like soil itself, delighting more in its presence than in its action, and trusting more in its effect than in the promise of consequence, reacting always to the connections it makes.

Like words.  
Colours.  
Thoughts.  
Ideas.  
Expression.

Innumerable and inexhaustible, like non-judgemental, accepting, tolerant grains of sand. Lessons learnt much? Yes. But also, strangely, lessons discarded much.



Praveena Shivram  
praveena@artsillustrated.in



With the intention of creating the universe, *Bara Dev* (the Supreme God), floating on a lotus leaf, rubbed the dirt off his body and created a blue crow. He ordered it to fetch some mud. Flying for several days in search of mud, the crow sat on what he thought was an island, but was actually a snake, whose poisonous breath turned the crow black, as we see it today. The crow asked the snake for help in finding mud. The snake directed him to *Kekramal Shatri* (crab warrior).

*Kekramal* was resting with his head in the sky, body in water and hind legs in the netherworld. He held the crow in his claws and took him to the netherworld, the abode of the *Kenchua* (earthworm) king. Mud was food to the *Kenchua*. So, on hearing about the request, the king swallowed all the mud to save it for his subjects and refused to give any of it to the crow. *Kekramal* squeezed the head of *Kenchua* with his claws to disgorge seven lumps. The squeezing of his neck left a ring that can still be seen on all earthworms. The crow then rolled the mud into three balls, held one in its beak, two in its claws, and took them to *Bara Dev*.

*Bara Dev* flattened the mud balls across water to form a floating layer of crust. However, *Sutaikeda* (dung


beetle) cracked and crumbled it. In anger, *Bara Dev* tossed the *Sutaikeda* into the water. *Sutaikeda*, along with *Jalharin Mata* (water goddess), emerged from the water and divided the earth into *Khands* (divisions), each invested with its own special qualities. Some full of minerals, some fertile, some with red clay and some filled with sand.

The Great *Khand* was still unstable. To secure it for eternity, the four corners were pinned down by four snakes. On this now-stabilised earth, *Bara Dev* created trees, rivulets and mountains. With the remaining mud, he created man and woman and breathed life into them. Meanwhile, *Jalharin Mata* created *samaya* (time), the moon, and the sun. *Bara Dev* and *Jalharin Mata* beheld with joy the creation of life and disappeared.

For this issue of Arts Illustrated I have depicted The Great *Khand* with 14 divisions. The back cover represents everything below the ground and underwater. The front cover is the *Shrishti* (universe) above ground. The earthworm runs across both, since it is one animal that lives in water, underground and above it. It also links back to the mythological story of the creation of this planet.



Bhajju Shyam



*ai*

