

MINDWATCH

THE OBSERVER, THE OBSERVED

Jeganathan Ramachandram

INTRODUCTION

I first came across Jeganathan Ramachandram's (Jega) sublime works at the National Art Gallery seven years ago and was moved by their remarkable serenity.

When I finally met Jega at his studio in a shop lot in Brickfields there was an incredible sense of tranquility about him. This quiet spirituality is encapsulated within his works and his allegorical paintings contain subtle messages and narratives that are created to stimulate both our eyes and our minds.

Although Jega has been an artist for more than twenty five years he has not until recently shown his works in the mainstream art scene. Thus it is with great pleasure that the gallery is able to present the works of this matured and developed artist at our space.

Please enjoy and experience the beauty of Jega's works in Mind-watch :The Observer;The Observed.

Lim Wei-Ling
Gallery Director
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
January 2010

MINDWATCH : THE OBSERVER, THE OBSERVED

The state of the world's environment has been a major concern for people for some time; sadly, the only thing that seems to be growing is the problem itself, and not the sense of awareness nor the will to do anything about it. Weather-related disasters dominated a fair amount of bad press in the first decade of the current millennium, along with air-bourne diseases carried through the most common food source for a large portion of the world's diet, as well as the rise of medical complications that progress at a frightening pace.

All point to an inescapable conclusion - that if we continue with the way we live modern life, actually living on this planet will become unbearable. More and more species - once abundantly common - are in danger of extinction, and nothing concrete is being done to wean us away from destructive consumerism and towards sustainable ecology, despite the hollow protestations and gestures of world leaders.

Artist Jeganathan Ramachandram feels that something is now missing - a sense of propriety, innocence and steadfast principles washed away as if ravaged by the very typhoons that run rampant across the oceans only to inflict itself upon the shores of the earth and lay waste to all that lie there. The old wisdoms and lessons have been forgotten, their hard-earned knowledge and advice dismissed as irrelevant by societies becoming increasingly more jaded as they abandon both spirituality and scientific reason for more immediate pleasures.

The artist firmly believes that children born now are more brilliant and smarter than ever; thus, it is even more important to leave them symbols that will gain more relevance, not less, as they try to make sense of the world during their time of maturation.

These works form the story that Jeganathan wishes to tell - a new narrative that implores the viewer to take heed and feel the pain which we are inflicting upon Mother Earth, and do something to alleviate that pain. They comprise of: Human Watching (the Female series), Barbeque, World War IV, I Egg, Monkey On My Back, The Premier That Was and The Secret That Is Sacred.

The Human Watching series was based upon the artist's observations of people and personalities as shown through their faces. Across a span of about 14 years, Jeganathan noted that the day upon which a person was born greatly influences their outlook, and the series incorporates this with a gifted use of what he calls symbolic realism. The Female series, being arguably more subtle than the Male series, is on display again, supported with an interesting observation by Japanese architect, urban planner and inventor Shunya Susuki.



WORLD WAR IV (detail) . Wood . Approx. 244 cm x 244 cm . 2010

Whilst creating Human Watching, the artist came to the conclusion that the nature of people is very much tied to the environment as well; specifically, the relationship between man and nature. Jeganathan has become increasingly concerned with the chaos and conflict that arises at the meeting point between the two; he shows this via the depiction of human figures whose internal organs show signs of rot - a clear-cut message which says that the more we hurt our surroundings, the more we hurt ourselves. The stark and pitiful images (skewered creatures in Barbeque, the use of helpless animals who cannot fight back in World War IV) are meant to shock the viewer into feeling outrage and awareness which will result in taking action to right the wrongs inflicted upon Mother Nature.

I Egg has its origins with a story in modern Malaysia, and refers to the frailty of religious sensitivities in the country. Its very existence hangs by slender threads - and if care is not taken, it will shatter; irreparable and irreplaceable, leaving a sense of rot as well as huge mess that can never be never be truly cleansed.

Finally, the final paintings are biographical in nature: each depicts a different set of memories and experiences. The stories they tell say as much about the artist as they do about the people he paints about, and Jeganathan - who firmly believes that art should not merely be decorative but descriptive of social consciousness as well - wants the world to share his vision of how the world is, and how we can make it right again before it really is too late.

Ahmad Azrai

'I am the guardian of the sky, watching the big and small move'

I am the guardian of the big and small
Born of the radiance of the rising sun
I am the keeper of secrets...

...and I speak only when approached

The white bird is my guardian angel
and the many men of distinction
are little cards in my library of influence

I am the administrator who labours in love

I spotted this strangeness even in my teens
I would faint sometimes and the night would bring vivid dreams
...each dream only haunted me even more

I am the self proclaimed dream master
In me lives a man who sits rationalizing life
and the woman within me lives within chains
and both rule me sharing my home in harmony

I smile at the charm of men and admire the other

Strangely but without fail, the fox serves me
and I look to the monkey for wisdom that I seek
...while the dog and ant grace my wall of joy

...yet the cockroach seems to only shade my course

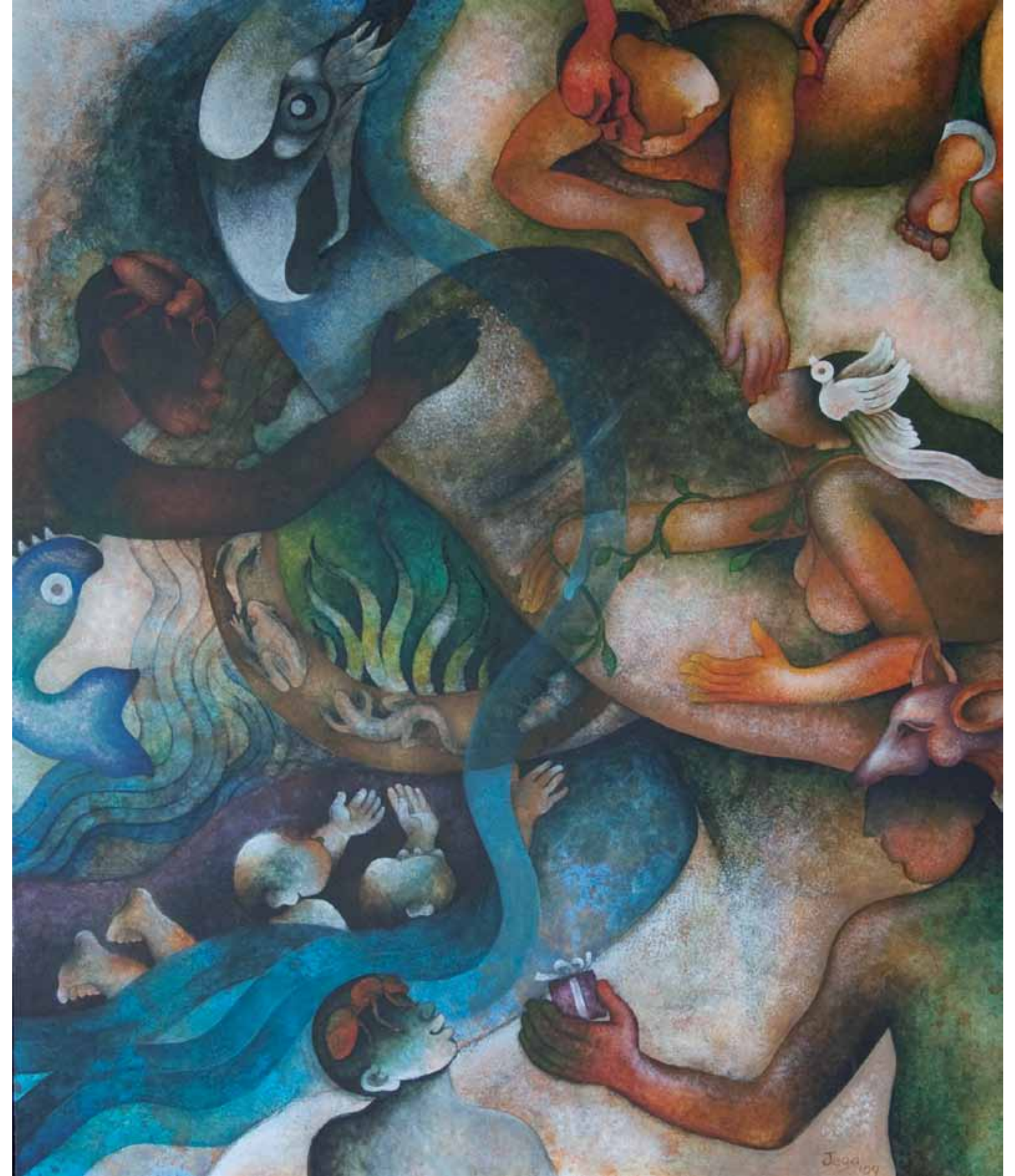
I seek wisdom
and the ever youthful mind is my trusted ally
My mind, body and spirit seem to speak to each other

...I only seek to see me become truly a spark of joy

...and the bird of mystery says "share your love
and share it the way you would to yourself. Your destiny lies within
the hearts of the many that come to share their pain and joy..."

SUNDAY FEMALE

Acrylic on Canvas
183 cm x 152 cm
2009





MONDAY FEMALE

Acrylic on Canvas
183 cm x 152 cm
2009

‘I am the observer tracing life and its wonder’

they call me the owl eyed One
what can I say, I need to know everything
am I not the scribe of life

...tracing the records and placing them in order

my thoughts roam,
Romeo, Juliet, Laila Majnu, ali, anna and many nameless ones
...they all come and go, staging drama after drama

and I live in fantasy fulfilling age-old desires

my mother said I mature faster than the rest
...been fashionable too since young
and I will dance and sing soothing my unrest mind

...I am the artist who kneads beads of hope

Many come to leave behind their sorrows and pain
...and part in happiness, relieved off their pain
...while I hurl angry words and show tantrums not mine

I am the healer who treats the broken heart..

The ant takes good care of me
while the monkey and the cockroach share their fantasy
...the dog howls when I'm sad

but I still cant understand why the chameleon..????

Being ancient in thought and sensuous in mind
I leave traces knowingly for the unattached in mind
...I am not a flirt but live within the secret wall of love

...my love knows no boundary, I see no difference

...and the bird of mystery says “time has its own course,
so look not at the tomorrow; the unpredictable nor the yesterday;
a mere dream...just be in the moment true and the clouds will bow in reverence”

‘I am the healer who serenade the aroma of passion’

Some call me the slithering One
yet I only live by the confidence of my inner beauty
Well, is it my fault that I attract onlookers

It is destiny that blessed me with such a gift...

...I am an artist who sees meaning within the wonder of life
I learn by looking at the others move
and copy the essence of that which is real

I am the storyteller who is mistaken for the one who lies
I climb trees, run chasing and playing with the boys
I'm a tomboy who loves to push the limits
To experience the joy of living

I am sharing the home of the one called manwoman

I dance to the rhythm of the body and paint beautiful pictures
I too speak and decorate words with meanings
making the young ones follow me, mesmerized by my simplicity

I am the motivator of all sorts

The monkey understands me well
and I have this special bond with the ant
the rest too are friendly

but I cannot say the same for the fox...

My destiny lies within the unknown and the mysterious
and my palms ooze heat that heals the weak
I am seeking to know the absolute and enjoy the bliss therein

I am the seeker and the enjoyer..
...and the little white bird of mystery says "seek the mighty and fall not to temptations.
Seek the mysteries in life and make truth your destiny"

TUESDAY FEMALE

Acrylic on Canvas
183 cm x 152 cm
2009





WEDNESDAY FEMALE

Acrylic on Canvas
183 cm x 152 cm
2009

'I am the seed of innocence that blooms for love'

Yes, I do smile..
I'm only the reserved one, not a snob
It's only innocence that spreads within, masking my emotions

So I am known as the sensitive One

I possess a mind that works 25/7
I think between a yawn and wander all the time
...of all the wonders of the world, in obeisance of its magnificence

I am the ancient one who treasures the beauty of life

I don't remember being a child
As maturity has been steps that I took to walk
Hurt the lesser and I will sue the world for the crime

I am a part of the law that makes all things mutual, the science, poetry and the arts

My head pains even at the slightest discomfort
As my hunger knows no bound..
yet my mind is all the while swearing on being slim and fine

I am the executioner of my own health, I failed many a times..

Every book on life is safely tucked below the pillow
and I know they are but essentials that shelters me in my hour of pain
The treasure within them, the many reaffirmations that strengthens one's belief

Don't think I'm a mere bookworm, I am but alice in wonderland!!!

I long for comfort, I love the easiness in life
yet no chain should lock me indoors, away from the freedom of life
As I am not a meek housewife neither am I the ignorant One

I am the reader of the tales of goodness and I will live only longer in its existence..

I adore the monkey and the ant and dog are special to me
the frog though is dominant, sits tamely on my lap
yes, I feel comfortable with the friendly chameleon

but why does the fox behave so whilst treating me like a queen?

...and the little white bird of mystery whispers "keep the seat warm and waver not much
for the secret of your existence is within your very self. Enjoy that which comes your way and observe life's mysteries"

‘I am the balance of the mind and the spirit’

I am in mind and heart balanced
Hmmm, we are unique thirsty creatures with such great virtue
Where else will you find an artist in heart and a genius in mind

...packed in a frame, we are the technically creative machines

I am likened to a camel, lean and tall and rarely decorated
I do come smaller sometimes but we make up with the hyper energy within
All stuffed within myself, it gets harder to listen without taking notes

I am the manager who manages time, the family and the very self in order

Many of us though independent, work for others before managing their own
We are cautious, sometimes a little more than needed
...that our completeness is rarely seen till the hair greys and turn white

...too vary, too conscious, within the strength lies our weakness

The hills, wild tracks, rugged streams and naked forest
Within them all lies our healing...
We become part of the world that is around us, near and far

We are the border between the two, the male force and the female light

I can see the chameleon, eye to eye
and the elusive monkey plays with my senses
the cockroach adores me

but the naughty fox...

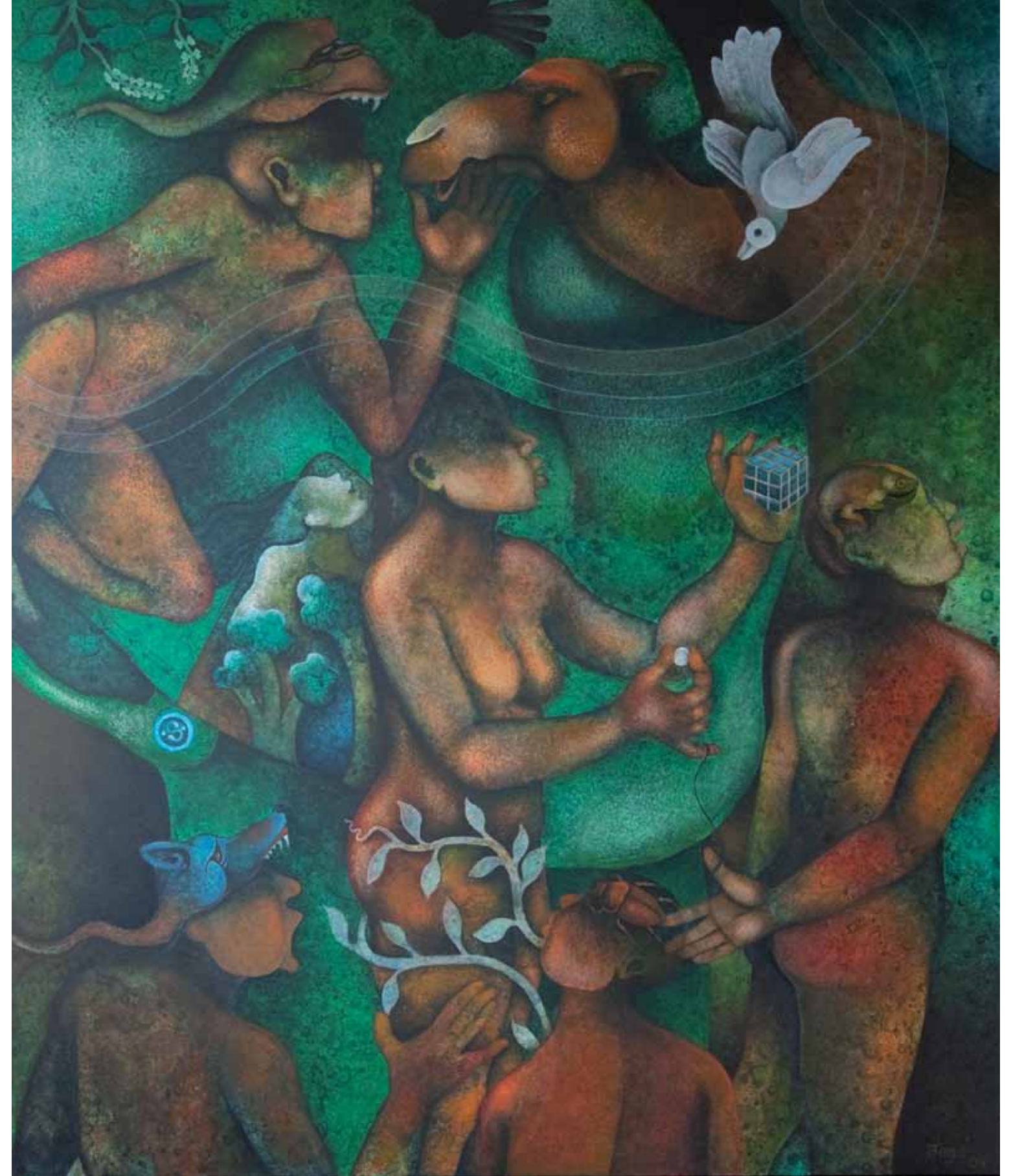
We are the travelers, always seeking a newer path
The men in our lives too go through this cycle all the while
Sadly very few in mind and spirit cross our path, making it an endless task

Rarity becomes the boundary and so often we fall for the rest

...and the little white bird of mystery says "Do not see very far and away.
What lies beneath the ocean is a beauty only the dwellers there would know,
so be calm and let the the drama of life unveil the gift yours.."

THURSDAY FEMALE

Acrylic on Canvas
183 cm x 152 cm
2009





FRIDAY FEMALE

Acrylic on Canvas
183 cm x 152 cm
2009

‘I am the beauty that sees through the mirror of life’

Hmmm, That's not the way, this is better, why don't you do this
Will it work, are you sure...
Behold the ever wondering One

Am I not born to remould this world?

The peacock of pride and charm, so they call me
I live within a broken world, with many wrongs and weaknesses
What can I do, I see them, so clear and well

I feel I have come to change it the way it should be..

The fact is, I'm simply innocent, sometimes so childlike
that the few who see this carelessness judge me when I make a point
Not realizing I'm also the intelligent One with a mind that is shrewd and sharp

I'm like the sun's ray, I pierce as I get closer, but that's me

I love to dance, love instruments, love the arts, love the artists
I love life and limelight is my humble abode
I'm an orator, like my fellow male mate

I speak from the heart and the audience love to melt in my words

The frog listens to me, the dog listens to me
the cockroach and fox emulate my thoughts
even the chameleon bows in reverence

Yet I feel so close yet so far with the monkey

Yes, I am fickle but aren't great people too
My mind is the culprit, it works faster than my thought
...that when I'm listening, the mind has already moved to the other

I'm the intellectual genius in need of a little bit or maybe a little more adjustment

...and the little white bird of mystery says "Indeed it feels so sad, to know so much
and yet to be the most misunderstood. Keep the mind quiet my dear friend,
bury the laws of justice and get drunk in the beauty of life's innocence"

‘I am the dance, the dancer and the script of joy’

I am known as the gypsy, the aimless nomad
In mind I wander; in emotions I wonder
Do I own this and is it coming my way

I am truly the wanderer; not knowing which to own

I was told my eyes had a strange but mystical charm
and that my feet were wide and long
and my wit knew no match

a certain uniqueness was seen in the way I moved

My presence moves the weak
yet my own weakness, shuns me
I am the lover of me and I'm mine greatest foe

I am the queen of my land and my enemies lurk around

I can stage plays and move my audience...
yet dance to the music of life and lose my very being
...even win a war merely with the weapon that lies within the mouth

I am a warrior who sits waiting for a war

I am only careful yet many think I'm a miser
if only they realise the purity of its worth...
they will then understand why I count my wealth in coins

Wealth is power and power rules happiness...and I work towards them

The fox is a good friend, the chameleon too befriends me
and the dog quietly naps in my presence
while the many of my kind flock towards me

Sometimes I wonder, am I him or is she me?

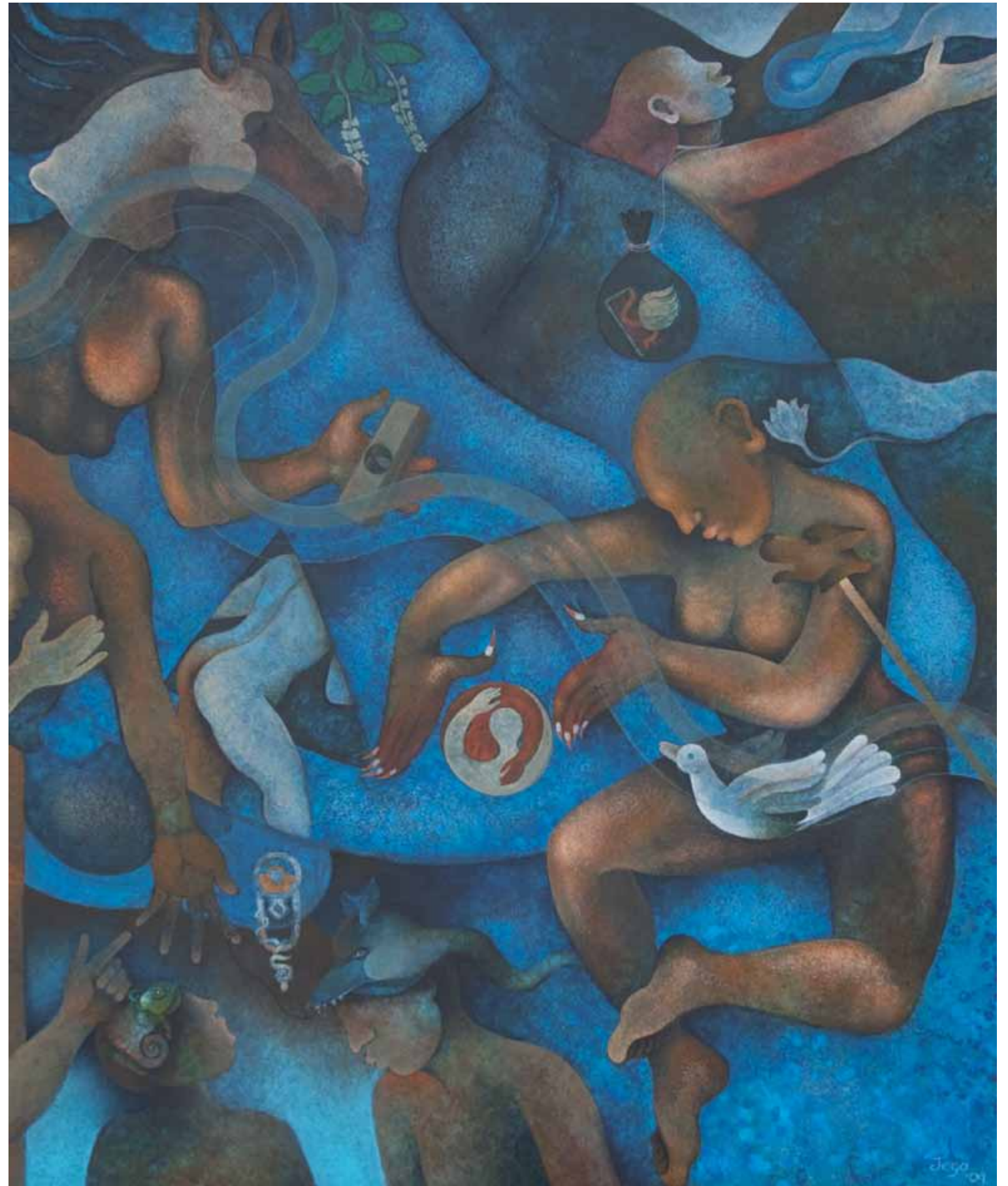
the window of mystery entices me
and I seek blindly using my faith as a torch
...to get a glimpse of the unnamed One

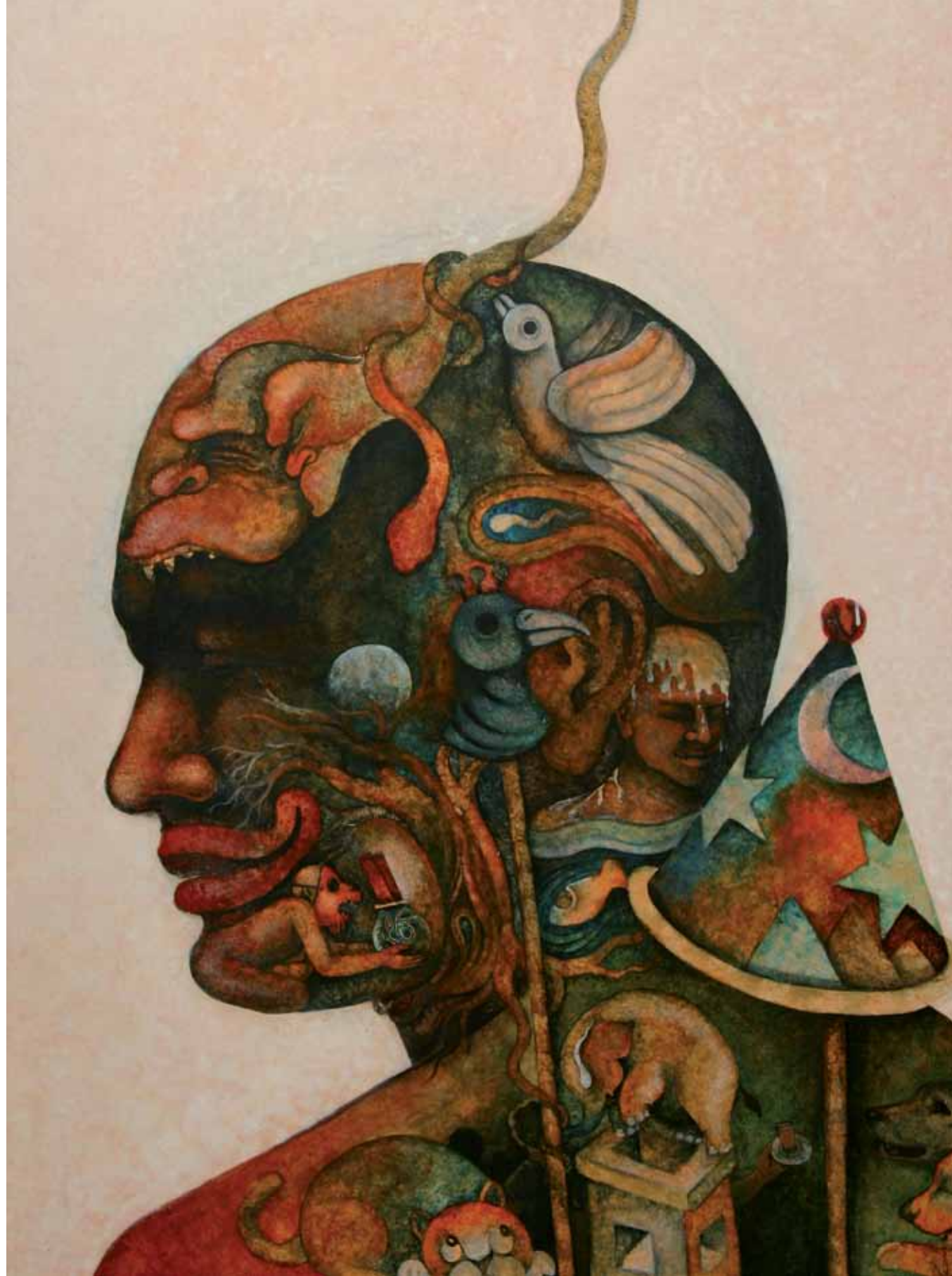
I am the gypsy who sees the world through the crystal of hope

...and the little white bird of mystery says "Oh my ancient seer;
I have seen you dance in the arena of life,
and have seen the bliss that becomes you.
You are the messenger of mystery...await your moment"

SATURDAY FEMALE

Acrylic on Canvas
183 cm x 152 cm
2009





I have finally realised, this is my home, I was born here and no matter what I might experience in this land, my spirit only knows this to be it's motherland!

TO DEFECT OR NOT TO DEFECT
Acrylic on Canvas
151 cm x 120 cm
2009

The Premier That Was

listen my friends,
the story of a "kampung boy"
who wore a panda mask of the east
...to mould the native mind

...he shifted time,
changed the clock half of an hour fast
and spoke of a religion
so unique in mind and soul

he spoke of a freedom
...and strewn fine threads
that held us all...
tight and strong

his memory erased the memory
...of the long tusked one
and history was no more
what we thought it was then after

Good man stay out, the bad stay in
the few who were different
sat within the walls of a detention camp
in the land of grace and tin ore

Go London, go Siam
but the land of the amazing eagle
is the other home
for this friday born

is it the calmness of that land
or the eeriness of its night sky
...or does it hold a mystery
that he knows, not us at all

some say he is not ruled by the law
some say he is the law
some feel he made the law
...yet no one knows what is the law

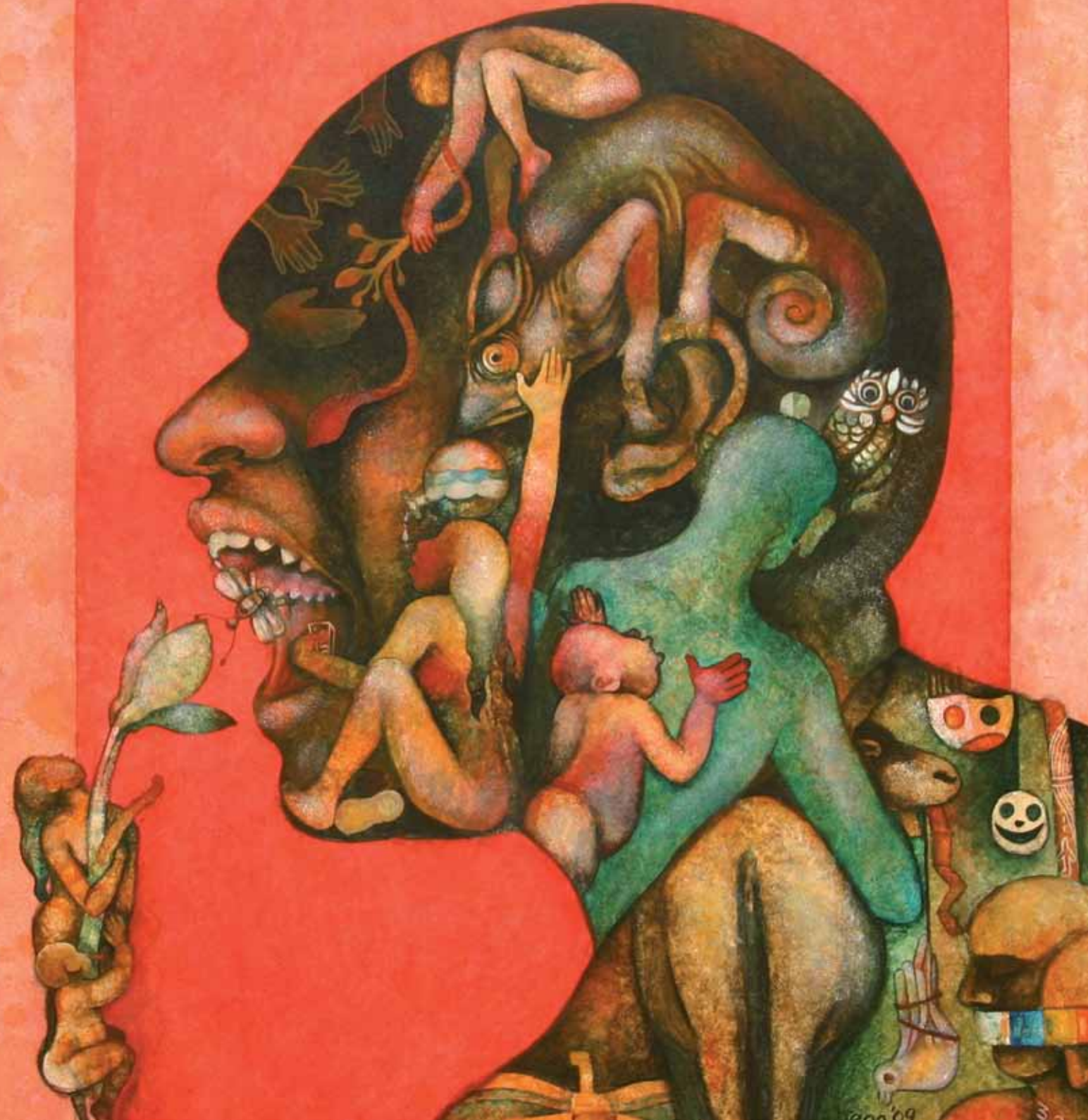
within the mind of an orator
within the trader of all kinds
within the breathe of every man
...he stood with a vision so far

it is still here, he had already left the field
and the little globe
that he presented to the children of time
is yet to show its mind...

THE PREMIER THAT WAS

Acrylic on Canvas
92 cm x 92 cm
2009





THE SECRET THAT'S SACRED

Acrylic on Canvas
92 cm x 92 cm
2009

I Egg

This is the egg that brought all of us into this world
The egg that hatched billions of times
...that which brought the beast that became an animal and now man

It is hatching again a conscious breed
...uniting people and land

No! they are is not merely the same

...but like a brother, sister and a friend in one distinctive land

...within the womb of the One mother of this land!

ONE EGG
Acrylic on Canvas
168 cm x 244 cm
2010





Barbeque

The land is burning
and all that, that stand still and the ones that move
...the innocent one to the ill mannered man
to the little grass that save man from heat
...to the vehicle that moves time

...we are all being scorched
skewed to a rod
in the barbecue pit of life
regardless of race
regardless of worth

...the cooking has started

the bloody man has a bloated wall
his manliness that rose in pride
now only releases stains of black mucus
...his light that once lit bright
is now only dimly lit

the sea is boiled, the corals are breaking
and as the little cat that in fear hides its head
...the poor child is helplessly here

the milk pot has dried
and a bloody growth sits there now
and the womb that once took care
is now strangling the seed there
which is to bloom soon

the long trunk One is crying
so are the croaking guardians of the moon light
skewed and without a mind
all that, that stand still and the ones that move
...roasted and turning to waste

...yet there is hope
if only the little white egg down below
were to hatch and bring true spirits
in pureness and care
and unite us all within a moment

...to live in contentment...to live without much noise

BARBEQUE

Acrylic on Canvas
153 cm x 214 cm
2010

World War IV

We came into this land
well before you humans were even born
ours was a need to live and serve
and our nights and the day
were moving within the moment of time

all was well
...we killed to feed our young
and only ate the shoots and leaves
leaving the tree unhurt and fine

we quenched our thirst in the nearby water holes
and moved away when the land had shared enough

it was all fine until You came
we gave you a home within our homes
and allowed you to also hunt

but you did something we normally won't
you trapped us, tamed us
stripped us off our pride
and made us slaves and finally took our home

the monsters you built
have ravaged the little land and raped our forest
and now your greed is poisoning the fruits and leaves

water doesn't taste the same now
...and the smell of burning corpses fill the skies

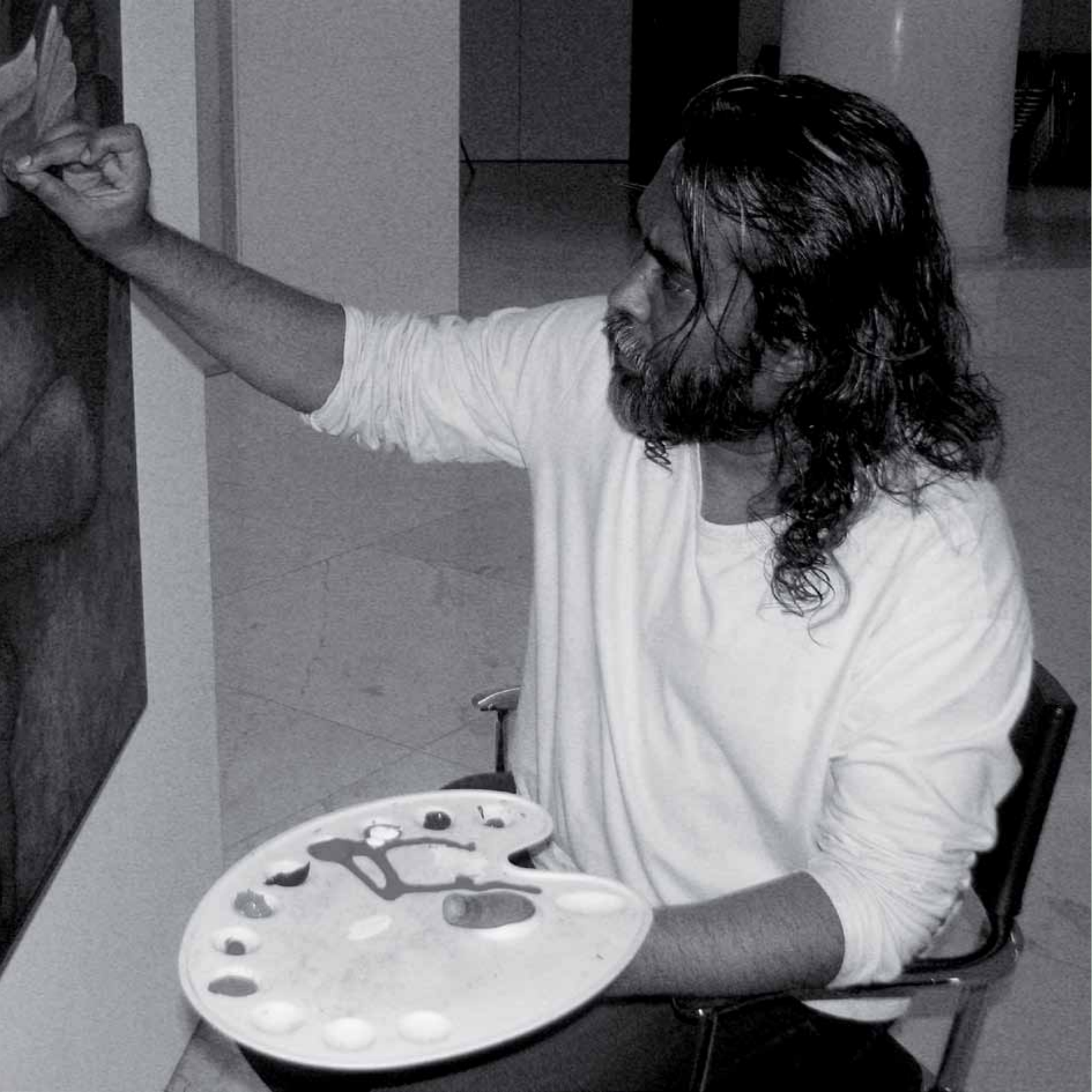
we cannot take it anymore

so we have come together, painted in red, like our red brother ant
and are calling all of you to cease this madness
stop raping our forest
stop polluting air
stop contaminating the water
STOP! STOP! STOP!!!

...just remember this, we are only the first few to come
...you might not want to see what is coming after this!!!!



WORLD WAR IV
Wood
Apprix. 244 cm x 244 cm
2010



JEGANATHAN RAMACHANDRAM B.1962

EDUCATION

- 1982 Fine Arts and Traditional Indian Painting (Tanjore Art), Chennai, India
Granite Sculpturing (Sthapathi Thangavelu Achari) Thirupathi, India
Wood Carving (Muthusamy Achari), India
Indian Classical Music ('Vithvan' Veena Arjuna) Madras, India
Tantric Art (under Bootha Muni), India

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 Human Watching, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2008 In Devotion, Symbols House of Natural Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2007 Divine Experience, Sithi Vinayagar Temple, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
Insights, Symbols House of Natural Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2006 Ganesha Art, Symbols House of Natural Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2005 Images of Sound (Laman Seni KL), National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2004 Vaastu Windows To Time, Sutra Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 I8@8 - I Malaysia : Beyond The Canvas, Wei-Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Channel 6, R K Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Charity Art Auction by Bukit Damansara House Owners, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Asian International Art Exhibition, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2008 Residency Programme, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Stirring Odissi, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Semesta, Exhibition in La Galleria, Pall Mall, London, United Kingdom
In Devotion, Symbols House of Natural Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
The Year That Was, Wei Ling Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2007 Sacred Structures, Badan Warisan Malaysia
A Path and A Meeting, Symbols House of Natural Art, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2006 Harmony Exhibition, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia
Pameran Seni Angin Timur, Galeri Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
- 2005 National Open Art Show, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Artist in Residence, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 2003 Little India, Sutra Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Identity, Hyatt Saujana Hotel, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia

- Nava Raas, Crown Princess Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Renga, Japan Foundation Programme, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 2002 National Open Art Show, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Group Exhibition, Mawar Art Gallery, Johor, Malaysia
Bara Hati Bahang Jiwa, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
RAAS Art Gallery, City Square Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 2001 Face the Act, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Bharathi Art Festival, India

- 2000 Landscape Beyond Landscape, Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Malaysia Nature Society (MNS) Art Exhibition, Malaysia

- 1999 'Aku', Galeri Petronas, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 1998 Philip Morris, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 1997 Philip Morris, Kuala Lumpur, National Art Gallery, Malaysia
Group Exhibition, Mauritius, Republic of Mauritius

- 1996 Philip Morris, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 1994 Malaysian Young Contemporary, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- 1992 Malaysian Young Contemporary, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1986 Malaysian Open Art Show, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1985 Berita Publishing Group Exhibition, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Malaysian Open Art Show, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- 1984 Contemporary Art Exhibition, Madras, India

AWARDS

- 1998 Special Mention Philip Morris Art Award, National Art Gallery, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

COLLECTIONS

The Aliya & Farouk Khan Collection
The National Art Gallery, Malaysia
Exxon Mobil, Malaysia
Prince Court Hospital, Malaysia