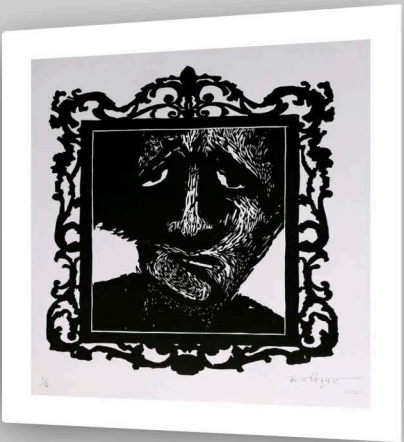
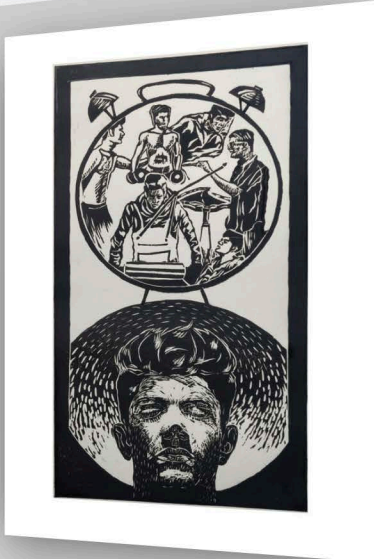
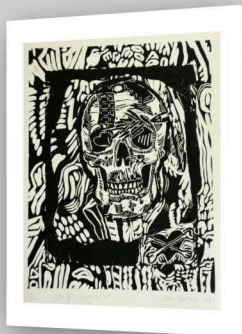


THE HEALER

Yet, while mankind suffered, nature prospered. For the green grass, the fruit on the tree, the flowers in the meadow, the butterflies that drink their nectar, the birds that sing in the open sky, and the animals that call in the forest, the night has been neither dark nor long. While we have remained confined, nature has healed not only herself, but healed us too. Through this endless night, it is she who has provided us, who thought ourselves invincible, succour and hope. We have learnt that we must nurture rather than destroy, take cognisance of the earth that harbours us in her breast, understand that it is she who will endure - not us.



LIVING A DARK NIGHT



LIVING A DARK NIGHT

Curated by Paula Sengupta
in collaboration with The Kala Chaupal Trust

*Let us harken back today to the original role of printmaking,
the most democratic of all art making processes.*

www.livinginadarknight.in

Dear viewers, participants and well wishers,

These last few years we have seen the pandemic wreak havoc in myriad ways.

The first wave of the pandemic got buried in the catastrophe of the lockdown. None of us were certain which was the bigger tragedy - the pandemic or the livelihoods that got devastated in the wake of it's management leaving people and animals unable to fend for themselves.

As an organisation that works towards an arts and cultural ecosystem we were left floundering with the sheer magnitude that an already beleaguered system would need to overcome. In the first wave we did two things - crowdfunding to support 37 artists left marooned during the lockdown, and then we launched a multi-layered documentation with the support of our curator Helen Frederick - newsletters, webinars and an open instagram handle called 'The Environmental Situation Room' to host contextual artworks from across genres of arts and artists.

And then came the brutal second wave. This is when Dr. Paula Sengupta and we spoke on how printmaking should participate in creating a reflection of the time - a virtual and physical archive that could reflect the anguish of humanity and the systemic breakdown of structures we all depend on. By this time digital fatigue had become all consuming and artists needed something purposeful and physical to engage in so they could participate and express their sensitivity to the world around them.

The campaign was planned and launched on 12th May 2021 amidst a raging pandemic. The submission date was extended multiple times due to practical challenges that artists were facing - access to paper, tools, printing facilities. We have finally been able to sift through works with Paula at the helm to create a story telling narrative.

This exhibition is now available on a dedicated portal www.livinginadarknight.in to honour a time where humanity rose to the occasion despite a larger structural collapse. The physical works from this collection will be available as folios for purchase by keen collectors and the funds collected will then be placed at the disposal of young printmakers for support in their practices.

We remain ever grateful to artists, art educators and art students in India and globally who strove to submit their works despite many constraints, and to a supportive team made up of Dr. Paula Sengupta, Helen Frederick, Nilanjan Das, Avni Bansal and students of O.P. Jindal University. Without their hard work and perseverance this project would not be possible.

We hope you enjoy the exhibition in the spirit of collective sharing and healing as it was envisioned.

Leenika Jacob

Managing Trustee for The Kala Chaupal Trust

www.kalachaupal.org



www.livinginadarknight.in

“The private confiding disclosing character of a print makes it especially appropriate to shadowed and urgent subjects. Strong black and white marks, whether in shaped abstraction or with figures in cross-hatching of a relief print, provide movement and empathy for subjects of social misery and calls for justice. Considering the medium lends itself well to depicting public events with personal interpretation, the many prints in this exhibition draw their inspiration from themes related to the dramatic suffering of personal and communal loss.

A surprising bit of information about the origin of printing itself, came to me while researching relief printing in particular. The idea of printing was set in a brand by which shepherds branded their horses or cows. From that relief in the flesh, fast forward to today, when relief printing has become popular across so many cultures as it presents an opportunity to make a print without heavy duty equipment. It can communicate social and political ideas rather immediately. Posters and broadsides with political messages, billboards, and large-scale relief printed images glued and mounted to buildings act as protagonists across the world. Thus “branding” has moved on to become a much more democratic print concept, an actualized outcry emblazoned often in the economy of black and white. Herein lies our LIVING A DARK NIGHT, a world-wide call for artists to contribute expressions in relief printed images drawn from the pandemic disasters.

*May these expressions reveal the torment of lives disrupted
and a world struggling to find a new dawn.”*

Helen Frederick

Organizational Curator for the Kala Chaupal





The Covid-19 pandemic first arrived at India's doorstep in January 2020, with the country going into a sudden, unplanned and draconian lockdown by 25 March the same year. Amongst other disasters, in the blazing summer of 2020, the country witnessed the exodus of millions who form the backbone of the nation's economy, making journeys of the scale that India had not seen since her borders were drawn. Journeys to find shelter and escape starvation, away from the big cities that shunned so many overnight.

On 10 June, India's recoveries exceeded active cases. Daily cases peaked mid-September with over 90,000 cases reported per day, dropping to below 15,000 in January 2021. The country grew complacent, imagining that India had beaten Covid. Governments turned their attentions from managing the pandemic to winning elections and hosting mammoth religious congregations, throwing caution to the winds.

Even as the first rays of the sun shone dimly through the dark, a black night descended in the spring of 2021. While some made hay, a dreaded, unbridled beast unleashed its fury on an unsuspecting people. With unspeakable stealth, the beast gained ground, now striking young and old alike. Its victims gasped for breath, thirsting for the very air that every living creature on this planet is entitled to breathe. And when they gasped no more, their pyres burnt on sidewalks, in parking lots, and in crematoriums where flames did not die down in weeks. Even in death, there was no dignity. The night only got darker ... dawn never broke.

And through this, there were those that provided succour to the suffering ... medical facilities, of course, but also places of worship, citadels of education, civic buildings, and citizens. All struggling to rise to the occasion and help India heal.

Living a Dark Night was born in the wake of the deadly second wave of the pandemic. We sent out a call to students, fellow educators and artists to rise and raise their voices, harkening back to the original role of Printmaking, the most democratic of all art-making processes. Since the 18th century, European artists such as William Hogarth, Francisco Goya, Honore Daumier, William Blake, and later the German Expressionists invoked the medium of printmaking to register human anguish. Similar histories exist in the backdrop of the Chinese Communist Revolution or in protest movements in Latin America. But I will cite closer to home the inimitable artist quartet Zainul Abedin, Qamrul Hasan, Chittaprosad Bhattacharya and Somnath Hore as our points of reference. This quartet, realising the potential of printmaking as a medium for the masses, fiercely used the burin and the bully to depict the wounds of Hungry Bengal and arouse the patriotic fervour of an enslaved people. Agitating against the British 'scorched earth' policy implemented in the Chittagong countryside during the Second World War, these artists moved from village to village as volunteer workers, sharing the suffering and poverty of famine-stricken Bengal. Led by Chittaprosad, printmaking assumed a new role as an instrument of protest.

For twenty months now, India is living a dark night, from which we are yet to awake. It would not be incorrect to say that the anguish that India is suffering today has not been seen since the Bengal Famine of 1943 or the Partition of 1947. Along with every other sector, artists too have suffered an existential crisis, with avenues and livelihoods wearing thin with every passing day.

As creators, Living a Dark Night invited artists to come together to hear this anguish and register it for posterity, lest history forgets. The works in this initiative encapsulate a time of despair and anxiety, when artists withdrew into the studio as the only space of refuge. Executed in a space of isolation, these prints look from deep within to the spectre without ... but also from darkness to light.

Artists responded in large numbers, some expressing solidarity even from overseas. Submission deadlines were extended many times, with artists facing paucity of materials, lack of mobility, erratic courier schedules, all brought on by interminable lockdowns, yet keen to join hands with us. Even as we prepare to launch the initiative virtually, prints continuing to trickle in.

Living a Dark Night is about the power of the print, the bare brutality of black against white referenced again and again by artists since time immemorial, about standing together as only printmakers can, about returning printmaking to its original democratic role. Even as we in India await a possible third wave, Living a Dark Night stands as a stark reminder of our folly.

Dr. Paula Sengupta

Curator for Living a Dark Night

Dr. Paula Sengupta is an artist, academic, curator, and art writer. She is Professor at the Department of Graphics-Printmaking at the Faculty of Visual Arts, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. She is author of *The Printed Picture: Four Centuries of Indian Printmaking* published by the Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi in 2012 and *Foreign & Indigenous Influences in Indian Printmaking* published by LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, Germany in 2013.

THE ONSLAUGHT

In the spring of 2021, a black night descended on India. A dreaded, unbridled beast unleashed its fury on an unsuspecting people. With unspeakable stealth, the beast gained ground, striking young and old alike. Its victims gasped for breath, thirsting for the very air that every living creature on this planet is entitled to breathe. Not a home, not a family remained untouched.

DEATH & SUCCOUR

The dark night engulfed all in its long shadow. When victims gasped no more, their pyres burnt on sidewalks, in parking lots, and in crematoriums where flames did not die down in weeks. Even in death, there was no dignity. The teeming metropolises of India were now citadels of death and decay.

As quarantine became the order of the day, suffering and dying became a solitary act. Yet succour was not shortcoming. Medics, civic workers, social and religious groups, citizens forums, and neighbourhood initiatives rallied forth. All struggling to rise to the occasion and help India heal.

In the shadow of night, cities that never slept, came to a grinding halt. Skyscrapers that trembled as commuter trains screeched past, froze in mid-air. Neighbours ceased to meet as neighbourhoods became “contained”.

LOCKED AND DOWN

Chimneys spewed their last cloud of smoke as factories shut shop across the country. Human beings retreated into contained capsules in an attempt to “stay safe”, leading surreal virtual lives, looking outside with anxiety, fear and distrust.

As India locked down, livelihoods dried up. In the blazing summer of 2020, the country witnessed the exodus of millions who form the backbone of the nation's economy, making journeys of the scale that India had not seen since her borders were drawn. Journeys to find shelter and escape starvation, away from the big cities that shunned so many overnight.

It was a march of migrants that shook the world.

It was also the march that took the pandemic to the remotest corners of India and beyond even her borders.

THE EXODUS

THE DOMESTIC SPACE

The home now became the primary space of occupancy, out of which people both lived and worked. This created new equations, anxieties and tensions within the domestic space, as people packed in like sardines. The brunt of this was borne by women, who's traditional role as homemaker emerged as doubly challenging. Even as the lives of children, office-goers, and the elderly became increasingly dysfunctional in the pandemic, women performed with enhanced efficiency, keeping home and hearth together through a time that is both endless and trying.

ANGUISH & ANXIETY

In this long, dark night, portraits of anguish and anxiety stand testimony to the nightmare that we are living. Our masked visage no longer allows us to smile. Our isolation gives us no cause to smile. A glance in the mirror tells us that nearly two years have passed us by. Our desolate homes are mirrors of our desolate lives. Our screams of despair echo within the four walls that we inhabit or through ghosts towns that may never rise again from the ashes.



Lynn Sures

Nothing in our world stays unchanging. My thoughts on the struggle in our time, because it encompasses both love and death, lead my print to depict an environment of activity, growth, and even lushness surrounding the image of death. My questions: imagine the scale of loss? Imagine your own and your loved ones' mortality? Imagine every leader working selflessly for others? Imagine a future of safety and security in coexistence?



'Can you Imagine?' 12" x 15"

THE HEALER

Yet, while mankind suffered, nature prospered. For the green grass, the fruit on the tree, the flowers in the meadow, the butterflies that drink their nectar, the birds that sing in the open sky, and the animals that call in the forest, the night has been neither dark nor long. While we have remained confined, nature has healed not only herself, but healed us too. Through this endless night, it is she who has provided us, who thought ourselves invincible, succour and hope. We have learnt that we must nurture rather than destroy, take cognisance of the earth that harbours us in her breast, understand that it is she who will endure - not us.

ART EDUCATORS

Anil Kumar H.A
Anirban Dhar
Anne Burton
Debraj Goswami
Dr. Raj Kumar Mazinder
Jayanta Naskar
Jimin Lee
Kashyap Parikh
Mahesh Chand Rai Prajapati
Parag Roy
Paula Sengupta
Sanjib Roy Pakhadhara
Srikanta Paul
Sunil Darji
Swarup Basak
Tara Sabarwal
Vijay Bagodi

ART STUDENTS

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Anshuka Mahapatra
Anubhab Paul
Aranya Sengupta
Arpan Sadhukhan
Bhagyashri C Dange
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Kartika Bagodi
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Mayuri Joshi
Mishika gupta
Nabamita Majumdar
Pathik Sahoo
Prakruti Maitri
Priyojit Senapati
Purabi Jana
Rachel Quinn
Ritwika Ganguly
Sagnik Samanta
Saheli Podder
Sanskriti Awasthi
Santanu Maity
Shuvra Biswas
Simran Yagyik
Snigdha Rana
Soham Chakraborty
Soura Chatterjee
Spriha Maurya
Srishti Gupta
Sudipta Sikdar
Vinay Gusain

ARTISTS

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Aruna Mondal
Avijit Mukherjee
Avni Bansal
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Basavachar S
Bharatesh GD
Conrad Pinto
Danish Khan
Dattatreya Apte
Debojyoty Dhara
Deepika Chatterjee
Dimple B Shah
Dushyant Patel
Farzana Rahman Bobby

Heena Pari
Helen Frederick
Hemavathy Guha
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Karagowni Nagesh
Karen Kunc
Kavita Nayar
Kavita Shah
Khokan Giri
Koustav Nag
Laura Pharis
Leticia Alvarez
Lynn Sures
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Menka jain
Mohit Mahato
Monoj Baidya
Moumita Paul
Nandini Bagla Chirimar
Neelam

Neeraj Singh Kandka
Nilanjan Das
Nirmalendu Saha
Obayya
Portia Roy
Preeti Singh
Pritam Mudhukar Deuskar
Priyanka Batra
Purnima Ngangom
R S Sham Sunder
Rajashree Dutta
Choudhury
Rajat Subhar Halder
Ramendra Nath Kastha
Ravikumar Kashi
Sabeena Dewan
Saibal Karmakar
Santosh Kumar Verma
Satyajit Roy
Seema Kachroo
Shanthy Kasiviswanathan
Shuvra Biswal Jumal
Sidhartha SN
Silvia Lissa
Soela Bose
Sreyashi Saha
Sunandita Bandhu
Surekha
Susanta Pal
Susmita Barua
Swapan Kumar Das
Tarun Sharma
Uday Panchal

Nilanjan Das completed his BFA and MFA in Printmaking from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. He is presently a PhD scholar under Dr. Paula Sengupta's supervision at the same University. He is a trustee and artist of the Hamdasti Artist Collective, Kolkata. Nilanjan is a printmaker and installation artist based in Kolkata. He is interested in the role of printmaking in the public domain and has initiated several public art projects. His art practice explores the idea of gender interaction and intimacy in the public space. Nilanjan has received awards and participated in artist residencies and exhibitions in India and abroad. Worthy of mention are the Manorama Young Printmaker Award 2021 from India Printmaker House; Pulp Society Artist in Residency, First Edition, Delhi, 2020; the Sponsored Coursework Program Award at Give me space, New Prints 2020 at International Print Center, New York; Socially Engaged Art Practice Grant, Khoj International Artists' Association, Delhi, 2019; Megalo Artist in Residence Award, Canberra, Australia, 2018.



CURATORIAL ASSISTANTS



Avni Bansal completed an MFA from Maharaja Sayaji Rao University in 2016, securing a gold medal, after a BFA from College of Art, New Delhi. She is an independent visual artist and printmaker, resident in Delhi and Chandigarh.

Her practice portrays an awareness of the self being constantly gazed upon and derived by the environment around us. She is currently focused on a project named 'The Keech Indian' which satirizes Indian ways of life by recognizing and taking out inspiration from the subconscious moments, beliefs and follies of life persistent in Indian culture, rituals, habits, behaviour and memories.

She has exhibited in several important shows in India and abroad like the International Biennale of Small Graphics, Inter-Art Foundation, Romania in 2016; Stree Drishti - Contemporary Women Printmakers of India at Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Fine Art and Design, Poland and Regional Museum Guadalajara, Mexico in 2019; 8th Sofia Print Triennale, Bulgaria in 2020; and IPCNY NewYork New Prints Show in 2020. She won the National Award at the 56th National Exhibition of Art, Lalit Kala Akademi, India in 2015. Avni has participated in multiple workshops and residencies, including at the Pulp Society, Delhi for their Screenprinting Residency in 2021. As a professional, she has worked as a textile designer and as a Program Coordinator for Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and RISD Alumni Exhibitions.

Namrata Menon, an undergraduate architecture student from the Jindal School of Art and Architecture, Sonipat was interning with The Kala Chaupal Trust. She worked on the logistics, communication and compilation of submissions for the Living a Dark Night project.



Varnika Dalmia, an undergraduate architecture student from Jindal School of Art and Architecture, Sonipat was interning with The Kala Chaupal Trust. She assisted on designing the website of the Living a Dark Night project, along with running its social media handles.

Divyansh Jain, an undergraduate architecture student from Jindal School of Art and Architecture, Sonipat was interning with The Kala Chaupal Trust. He assisted in managing the archives and the execution of the exhibition on the digital platform Kunstmatrix, including the uploading and arranging of all the artworks.



Nithin Reddy, an undergraduate architecture student from Jindal School of Arts and Architecture, Sonipat was interning with The Kala Chaupal Trust. He assisted in managing and compilation of the virtual submissions from the archives, uploading of the artists details, and communication.

INTERNS

PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT

READ HISTORIES OF PRINTMAKING

<https://livingadarknight.in/histories-of-printmaking/>

LEARN THE JOURNEY OF THE PROJECT

<https://livingadarknight.in/making-of-living-a-dark-night/>

THE VIEWING ROOM

<https://livingadarknight.in/viewing-room/>

BEHIND THE SCENES

<https://livingadarknight.in/team/>

SUPPORT THE PROJECT

<https://livingadarknight.in/collaborative-matrix/>

Host an Exhibition

Purchase a folio of artworks

Share the exhibition link on your social media handles

WRITE TO US- livingadarknight@kalachaupal.org



LIVING A DARK NIGHT

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