

Artist Statement

"Art is a question of constant choice, and choice is a creative process" says the Norwegian painter Kai Fjell.

My art is an outward expression of my inner turmoil as an artist. The choices I have made and my life experiences are channeled through a kaleidoscope of bright colours into something universal and provocative, yet accessible. My palette reflects who I am – someone who took a big, bold step ten years ago and jumped out of a comfortable but ultimately unsatisfying corporate job into the vibrant and uncertain world of art. Therefore, my palette is always bold. Yellows, blues, shades of mauve and varying hues of red are my colours. They help me tell my tale even if it is a grim one. ([The colours of betrayal](#), [Just Breathe](#), [Aakrosh](#)).

To begin with, I was an explorer. I tried different mediums, techniques and experimented with scale. This drew me to work on large installations in public spaces. It was wonderful to be able to reach all kinds of people at once. When I collaborated with a fellow artist and designer to do commissioned work for the **Delhi Metro** ([Delhi Hues](#), [Khwabon ka Karvan](#), [The Jan Path](#), [You are Here](#)) and saw people taking selfies in front of the artwork we created, it made me realize how powerful a public platform can be.

Gradually, my work began to reflect the environment around me—the polarization across the globe, governments adopting a false sense of nationalism, authorities taking the high moral ground, multinational corporations seeking profits at all costs—these questions found expression in my work. The angry bulging eyes in [Saffron Gaze](#) asks the fundamental question—how can the self-proclaimed moral police be expected to protect our basic fundamental rights as citizens? The lonely branches of the tree reaching out into a flaming sky and surrounded by tall menacing tangles of industrial scrap in [She is beautiful when she is angry](#) asks how can we talk of development of the society and protection of the environment in the same breath without taking any responsibility for our actions?

The questions began to turn inward as I began to look at how the outer self mirrors the way personal relationships play out. As a woman artist concerned more and more with deeply human questions of existence and morality, violence and humanism, I wondered about how vulnerable we are willing to be to ask for what we truly desire. I found that no matter how a woman behaves—whether she conforms or rebels—she will be labelled. The sudden suicide of a friend threw these questions of rights, liberty and the line between the personal and political into much sharper relief. I asked why we put up a facade of calm for others to see while we struggle with an inner turmoil. "[Beyond the Moment](#)" was a result of this churning. Disembodied breasts fall from the top of a building as the deeply troubling questions of existence spiral out of control. The work threw open the floodgates to a series that constitutes my present body of work.

The series I have been working on is titled Kashmakash—a Hindi word that translates loosely as the conundrum of existence—to be or not to be. To be reduced to desire or elevated by it...captured in my painting from this series called [What's the point?](#) Digitally mapped bodies focussing on hyper-sexualized body parts—the breast and the erect penis. Or in the deep blue spherical scans of the personal and private by vigilante groups in the painting titled [Sssh Koi DekhRaha Hai](#) (Sssh...Someone's Watching). Or the juxtaposition of personal in the holding of hands with the aspirational, the wine glasses thrown into sharp relief by a stark barren tree growing out of a hard rock surface in my painting [Sahastitva – Co-existence](#).

Are my questions universal? Where do they fit into the larger framework of ideas and conundrums that the world throws up? This is what I hope to understand through this

body of work. My series – [Kashmakash – To Be or Not To Be](#) is designed as a continuous and expanding set of philosophical questions that can only grow and evolve if the series travels. Which it indeed already has, moving from Delhi to Mumbai and is expected to go to other cities in India as the work progresses. At these various platforms I hope to see the collision and combustion in greater intensity as I continue to ask whether there is a space for imagining a world that goes beyond black and white monochromatic ideas of existence or where only one colour is right, one texture real.

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