

## PRESS RELEASE

### IMAGINARIUM 5.0

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Exhibition Name: **IMAGINARIUM 5.0**

Date: **November 07 – December 24, 2025**

Preview: **November 07, 5 PM Onwards**

Regular Viewing Time: **11 AM – 7 PM**

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### About IMAGINARIUM 5.0 Exhibition

Is art a model for rethinking and re-imagining the continuum of life on earth? How do we think about the world within its fleeting rhythm and degenerating spaces? The fifth edition of Emami Art's annual open call, IMAGINARIUM 5.0, brings together an exciting line-up of artworks by young and emerging artists in the exhibition titled 'The Promise of the Depth of Being'. The exhibition explores how the emerging contemporary artists explore the fundamental concerns and shifting social dynamics in today's world in its fleeting pace of time. We live in an era of deep disintegration. The modern crisis is not merely a loss of existing social dynamics but a deeper collapse in our experience of reality itself. Life, in all its forms, is perceived as radically fleeting, devoid of lasting substance or promise. In this context, a pressing question emerges: how can we rethink our place in a world that seems to be dissolving? The exhibition looks at how art as a model can respond to the growing crisis, through thoughtful expressions and by building an inclusive social ecosystem.

The fifth edition of IMAGINARIUM, *IMAGINARIUM 5.0*, presents artworks by 10 emerging young artists working across various media, including painting, sculpture, installation, video, printmaking, and lens-based practice. The selected artists are **Abela Ruben, Aman Kumar, Anurag Paul, Farhin Afza, Manoj Kumar Pannala, Mitali Das, Pankaj Sarma, Rahul Sarkar, Sanyukta Kudtarkar, and Tejal Kawachi**.

Additionally, among the 10 artists, **Pankaj Sarma, Farhin Afza, and Rahul Sarkar** have been selected for the first three positions, respectively, for the IMAGINARIUM Awards, supported by the **Emami Foundation** and **Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC)**.

The ten artists featured in *IMAGINARIUM 5.0* Awards and Exhibition were selected by an esteemed jury comprising **Bindi Vora, Umah Jacob, Tallur L. N, Prasanta Sahu, and Ushmita Sahu**.

### About IMAGINARIUM Open Call

IMAGINARIUM is Emami Art's annual all-India open call. This initiative continues to function as a significant gateway for numerous young artists from India, providing a crucial discursive and exhibitionary framework. Conceptualised as a critical incubator, the IMAGINARIUM initiative is

conceived not merely as awards and exhibitions but as a sustained discursive framework. It provides a vital space for artists in the early stages of their careers, offering a professional platform that includes mentorship, public programming, and portfolio building, thereby fostering an inclusive ecosystem for the development of their artistic careers. Launched in 2020, the IMAGINARIUM Open Call has become one of the most anticipated Open Calls in India's contemporary art calendar over the past five years.

### **Awards and Exhibition**

**Pankaj Sarma** – First Awardee  
**Farhin Afza** – Second Awardee  
**Rahul Sarkar** – Third Awardee  
**Abela Ruben**  
**Aman Kumar**  
**Tejal Kawachi**  
**Manoj Kumar Pannala**  
**Sanyukta Kudtarkar**  
**Mitali Das**  
**Anurag Paul**

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### **Quotes from CEO, Emami Art**

*IMAGINARIUM is a project conceptualised to create a critical discursive platform for the young and emerging artists from across India. Throughout the past editions, the initiative has offered critical support and mentorship to numerous artists in the early stages of their careers. The current edition of the open call received an overwhelming response of over 700 applications from across the nation. This enthusiastic participation of young artists reaffirms the project's value and inspires us to sustain and further this endeavour for future generations of artists. I congratulate all the 10 selected artists and the three award winners for their exemplary works. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to the panel of jurors for their dedicated efforts in reviewing the applications and generously contributing their invaluable expertise and insights.*

(Says, Richa Agarwal, CEO of Emami Art and Chairperson, KCC)

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### **About the Artists**

#### **Abela Ruben**

Abela Ruben (b. 2001) holds a BFA from the Government College of Fine Arts, Thrissur, Kerala (2023) and an MVA in Painting from The Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, Gujarat (2025) respectively.

Significant group shows include Annual Degree Show 2025 – Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University, Baroda; *Everybody's Elsewhere*, Devlalikar Kala Vithika, Indore (2025); *Dtale Archist V* curated by Bose Krishnamachari, Gallery Dtale Archist, Bengaluru (2025); *From Field to Frame*, CONFLICTORIUM, Ahmedabad (2024); *Hold the dandelions, there is no one to be found*, Gallery 27, Kochi (2024); Kochi Biennale Pavilion, Manorama Hortus, Kozhikode (2024); *Contextual Cosmologies*, Keraleeyam 2023, Trivandrum; and the Kerala Lalithakala Akademi State Exhibitions (2023 and 2022); among others.

Ruben was awarded the Vijayaraghavan Endowment Gold Medal for landscape painting by Kerala Lalithakala Akademi in 2021, and the Kerala Lalithakala Akademi Scholarship in 2022 and 2024, in recognition of her academic pursuits.

She currently lives and works between Kerala and Baroda.

### **Aman Kumar**

Aman Kumar is a visual artist born in 1999 in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. He studied painting at the Government College of Art and Design, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, graduating with a BFA in 2021. He completed his MVA in Painting from Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore, in 2023.

Kumar's work has been part of several group exhibitions including *Abir First Take 2023* at L&P Hutheesing Visual Art Centre, Ahmedabad, Gujarat; and *Mapping Representational Space*, curated by Saraswathy K Bhattathiri, at Rangoli Metro Art Center, Bengaluru, 2023. He participated in the Kala Sakshi Memorial Trust Scholarship Workshop held at Sanskriti Kendra, Delhi in December 2022.

He lives and works in Bengaluru.

### **Anurag Paul**

Anurag Paul, born in 1999, is a passionate and accomplished contemporary artist. He completed his BFA from Sister Nivedita University, Kolkata, followed by an MFA from Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida.

Paul has actively participated in numerous group exhibitions and art shows, gaining recognition for his innovative work. Notable exhibitions include the IAF Parallel Show at Method Art, Delhi (2025), and the prestigious Kalanand Merit Grant at the Prafulla Dahanukar Art Foundation (2024). His works have also been showcased internationally and nationally at shows such as *MoCA Lights 2023* in Patchogue, New York; *Paper and Play 2025* at Pulp Society, New Delhi; and the Annual Exhibition of Birla Academy of Art and Culture in Kolkata (2023 and 2024).

Additionally, he has exhibited at the Collaborative Space 2nd Biennale at Tasmai Gallery, Puducherry; *Abir First Take 2022* at Bikaner House, Delhi; the Ravi Jain Memorial Foundation Annual Awards 2022 at Dhoomimal Art Gallery; the 87th All India Exhibition of Fine Arts (2022); and the Finext Awards 2022, among many others.

Anurag Paul moves between Kolkata and Delhi for his work.

### **Farhin Afza**

Farhin Afza (b. 1996) holds a BFA in Applied Arts (2020) and an MA in Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (2022) from Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, and an MFA in Printmaking and Expanded Media from the S.N. School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad (2024).

Her significant group exhibitions include *I, We, Them* organised by Gallerie Splash at Bikaner House, New Delhi (2025); *Emerging Palettes 15*, Srishti Art Gallery, Hyderabad (2025); *Buoyant Landscapes* organised by Goethe-Institut Hyderabad at Hyderabad Literary Festival (Nov 2023 – Jan 24). She has

contributed to the book project *My Name, Not Yours*, published by the Glasgow School of Art, UK (2024).

Afza won the Kala Sakshi Memorial Trust art award 2023 and participated in the KSMT national residency in Delhi (2023) and the Arthshila All India Art Camp residency and open house show in Siwan, Bihar (2023).

She lives and works in Hyderabad.

### **Manoj Kumar Pannala**

Manoj Kumar Pannala (b. 2000) is a visual artist from Mulugu, Telangana, whose multidisciplinary practice spans painting, sculpture, printmaking, and installation. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Painting from Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University, Hyderabad (2023), and a Master's in Graphic Arts from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (2025).

Pannala has actively participated in various prestigious art exhibitions and events including the All-India Art Exhibition Hyderabad in 2018 and 2019; the Get Together Camp in 2021, and the All-India Art Camp-cum-Competition in 2022. In 2023, he also took part in the Hyderabad Literature Festival curated by Amshu Chukki.

He lives and works in Hyderabad, India.

### **Mitali Das**

Mitali Das is a visual artist born in 1995 in Nadia, West Bengal. She graduated with a BFA from the Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship, Kolkata, and an MFA in Painting from Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata.

Her work has been featured in a series of thoughtfully curated group exhibitions, including *The Music Makers* at APRE Art House, Mumbai (2025); and an India Art Fair Parallel Show at Method, Delhi (2025). In 2024, she participated in artist residencies at Dotwalk Ajitara Art Residence in New Delhi. Das received an Award of Merit at the Rajya Charukala Parshad Annual Exhibition in 2023 and has been consistently active in national and regional exhibitions since 2017.

She is currently based in Kolkata.

### **Pankaj Sarma**

Pankaj Sarma (b. 1993) is a multidisciplinary artist working across painting, sculpture, design, photography, and multimedia installations. He holds a BVA (2019) and an MVA (2021) from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, where he was awarded the Late Milind Madhukar Bhade Gold Medal for Painting.

He has exhibited widely in India and internationally. Recent presentations include *Peers Share*, KHÖJ Studios (2025); *Sach Kahe Toh... Truth Be Told...*, Immerse 4.0, Somaiya Vidyavihar University (2025); and *আ অরতবীয়া বতাহ*, a project by Anga Art Collective at Sharjah Biennial 16, 'To Carry' (2025). Previous exhibitions include *Zero to Hundred*, HH Art Spaces, Goa (2023); *Surface Encounters & Strange Beings*, HH Art Spaces (2022); *Untitled IX*, Priyasri Art Gallery, Baroda–Mumbai (2021); the

Kochi-Muziris Student's Biennale 2021; and *Khaal Gaon*, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi with Anga Art Collective.

Sarma's work has received multiple recognitions including the First Award at *IMAGINARIUM 5.0*, Emami Art All India Open Call (2025); the *Immerse 4.0 Artists Fellowship* at Somaiya Vidyavihar University (2024); and support from the Generator Co-Operative Art Production Fund (2024).

As a long-time member of Anga Art Collective, Sarma contributes to collaborative projects engaging with site, ecology, and community. He currently lives and works in Patacharkuchi, Assam.

### **Rahul Sarkar**

Rahul Sarkar (b. 2001) holds a BFA from Rabindra Bharati University (RBU), Kolkata (2023) and an MFA from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan (2025).

His works have been part of multiple exhibitions including SSVAD's *10<sup>th</sup> Young Santiniketan Artist's Exhibition*, Santiniketan Society of Visual Art and Design, Santiniketan (2025); *Printed Voices from India: Social and Cultural Reflections* curated by Saad Ghosn of SOS ART at Kennedy Heights Art Center and Off Ludlow Gallery, Cincinnati (2024); *Voices from India & Human Rights: Social and Cultural Reflections* curated by Saad Ghosn at Nine Fish Art Gallery, Mumbai (2024); the RBU Student Annual Exhibitions 2022 and 2023; the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Art Exhibition in London (2022) and a group exhibition (2019) by Sarbabharatiya Sangeet-o-Sanskriti Parishad, Kolkata. He is the third awardee at *IMAGINARIUM 5.0: Emami Art All India Open Call 2025*.

Rahul Sarkar lives and works in Santiniketan, West Bengal.

### **Sanyukta Kudtarkar**

Sanyukta Kudtarkar (b. 1998) is a painter from Sawantwadi, India. Born in Goa, her work is built on memories, captured moments, and exploration of the local.

Kudtarkar graduated with a BFA from Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai in 2022 and an MVA from MSU, Baroda in 2025. She was part of a college scholarship program at the tropical lab at Lasalle University, Singapore, and *Mycelial Legacies IV: The Ground We Share* curated by Deeksha Nath at Anant Art, Noida (2025). She has exhibited in galleries like Bikaner House and IGNCA, Delhi and Rukshaan Art in Mumbai. She has been a recipient of the awards by Abir First Take, Camel Art Foundation, Prafulla Dahanukar, Bombay Art Society, and Art Society of India. At present, she is a part of the Studio Catalyst Program by Anant Art.

Sanyukta Kudtarkar is currently based in Baroda.

### **Tejal Kawachi**

Tejal Kawachi (b. 2000) is an emerging visual artist. She completed her B.A. (Hons.) in Economics from Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi University, in 2021. Following this, she became interested in photography, began practising on her own, and later joined the National Institute of Design, Gandhinagar in 2023, where she is currently pursuing her Master's in Photography Design.

Her practice often draws from lived experience, weaving together personal histories and shared narratives. Her recent work reflects on the emotional complexity of dependence, examining how objects of necessity embody both fragility and resilience.

She is one of the 10 young artists selected at the *IMAGINARIUM 5.0* All-India Open Call under Emami Art, Kolkata, 2025.

Tejal Kawachi is based in Odisha, India.

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### **About the Jurors**

**Bindi Vora**, Interdisciplinary Artist and Senior Curator at Autograph, London

**Umah Jacob**, Director of External Relations & Outreach at India Art Fair

**Tallur L.N.**, Multidisciplinary Artist

**Prasanta Sahu**, Interdisciplinary Artist and Head of Painting Department at Kala Bhavana, Santiniketan

**Ushmita Sahu**, Director & Head Curator, Emami Art

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### **About Emami Art**

Emami Art is a prominent contemporary art gallery and cultural production space located on the ground floor of the Kolkata Centre for Creativity's Green Building. Established in 2017, it adopts a forward-looking, multi-dimensional approach that reflects South Asia's history, socio-cultural, and geo-political narratives. Emami Art operates within an inclusive framework where profitability supports sustainable resource regeneration and public service.

The gallery features a dynamic program of curated exhibitions, ranging from large-scale presentations to more intimate displays. It actively participates in both national and international events and art fairs. Emami Art represents a wide spectrum of contemporary artists, including emerging, mid-career, and established talents, with a special emphasis on the East and North Eastern regions of India. Several of its artists' works are featured in prominent national and international collections, including public foundations and museums.

A key initiative is the annual Emami Art Experimental Film Festival, which provides a platform for alternative and experimental filmmaking, video art, and moving image practices. This festival brings together internationally acclaimed artists and filmmakers alongside recent critical productions from India.

Through short- and long-term projects, Emami Art supports the local and regional arts community by offering regular mentorship programs, workshops, residency opportunities, and innovative educational activities. These initiatives foster artistic development, build collaborative networks, and provide a supportive environment for emerging talent. The gallery also organizes regular talks, seminars, panel discussions, and conversations with artists, curators, and key partners, creating a space for critical engagement.

Committed to promoting a regional, national, and international agenda, Emami Art emphasizes community engagement, socially relevant initiatives, and institutional partnerships. With a multi-year vision for the future, it continues to be a catalyst for change, research, innovation, and inclusivity.

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**Date:** 25.10.25

**Place:** Kolkata