

Artist Dhruvi Acharya's watercolours, which are up for sale, are helping tide over this crisis

Ever since the lockdown, Dhruvi Acharya started painting almost compulsively. Now, her watercolours that are on sale on Chemould Prescott Road's online viewing room, are helping secure resources for those deeply affected by the Coronavirus pandemic

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Chemould Prescott Road



Explore this COVID-affected world through Dhruvi's artworks. Photo credit: Dhruvi Acharya, Painting in the Time of Corona, 22 April 2020

“I paint because I almost have to, for my peace of mind,” says artist Dhruvi Acharya, when quizzed about her relationship with art. Painting, for Acharya, is a process that is equally cathartic and meditative, a telling aspect of her practice that reflects in her elaborate, psychologically complex drawings. Ever since India went under a nation-wide lockdown to battle the Coronavirus pandemic, Acharya started painting, almost compulsively, to help untangle her thoughts and take stock of her emotions.

A Reflection of Current Times

“Going to my studio and working helped me come to terms with what was happening,” says Archarya, “and at some point I challenged myself to try and make one watercolour a day— working almost 10-12 hours a day. It was quite exhausting, but equally rewarding.” The works soon became a part of a larger, ongoing series titled *Painting in the Time of Corona*; each artwork a daily reflection of life in India under lockdown. Recognising the immediacy and the importance of the works, Chemould Prescott Road put the paintings up for sale through an online viewing room; the proceeds will go towards helping people who are severely affected by the pandemic, as donations to charities including Aangan, Karwan-e-Mohabbat and Fisherman of Koliwada.

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Photo credit: Dhruvi Acharya, Painting in the Time of Corona, 13 April 2020, Lockdown Day 20



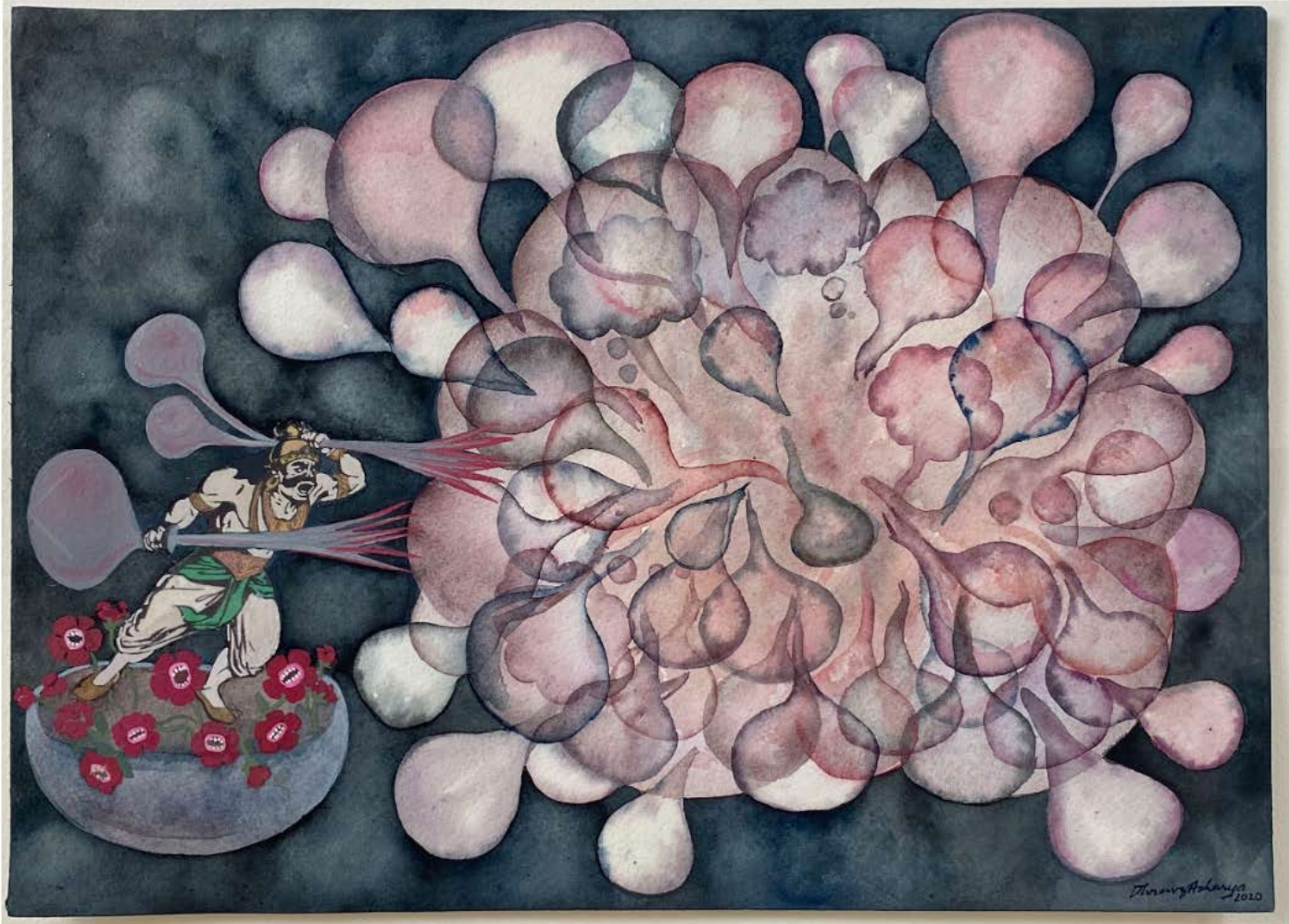
Photo credit: Dhruvi Acharya, Painting in the Time of Corona, 8 April 2020, Lockdown Day 15

A Seamless Outlet

Channeling the versatility of watercolour, the paintings unfold as spontaneous, visual mental maps of Acharya's fears, thoughts and hopes. "When I paint with watercolours, I do not make any preliminary drawings or sketches; it just begins with a paintbrush on paper. Making watercolours for me is a meditative process, and I respond to the image as it develops on paper," says Acharya. "So, for me it is the perfect medium for expressing my emotions related to this strange experience of living in a pandemic, when one is basically learning to navigate, prepare for, and accept a new normal."

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Shravya Ahluwalia 2020



Photo credit: Dhruvi Acharya, Painting in the Time of Corona, 2 April 2020, Lockdown Day 9

A Spectrum of Emotions

In the paintings, Acharya's immediately recognisable women—who almost always become the protagonist of her artworks—are enveloped by recurring motifs of nebulous thought bubbles, open-mouthed flowers and visceral pools of liquids oozing out of bodies; while some—like the diaphanous masks—are symbolic of our times, others, such as the flowers, hint at nature: in this case, the ravaging virus. “I am basically painting what I feel, read, think about, see and hear,” says Acharya. “So, the ideas I’m trying to explore through these paintings range from loneliness, isolation, the plight of the daily wage labourers, the birds and animals who have almost found a new life in the absence of humans, and the new-found fear of the virus, and of human touch itself.”



Photo credit: Dhruvi Acharya, Painting in the Time of Corona, 6 April 2020, Lockdown Day 13

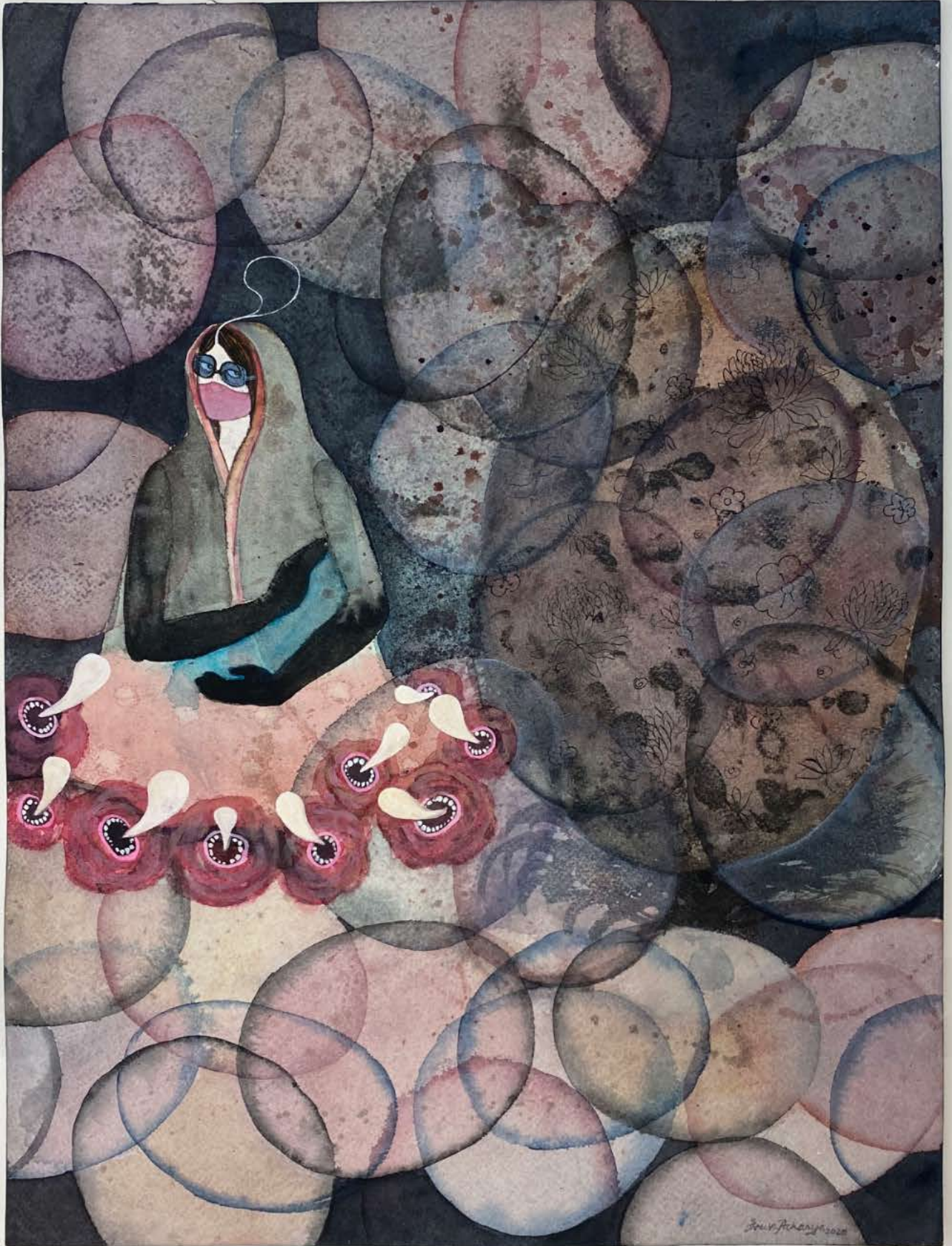




Photo credit: Dhruvi Acharya, Painting in the Time of Corona, 4 April 2020, Lockdown Day 11

Life Post COVID

For Acharya, the act of putting paint to paper has led to a renewed understanding and appreciation of her craft. “The last month has just re-confirmed that I really love painting, that working helps me face uncertainties in life, and that I hope to continue painting for the rest of my life,” reflects Acharya. “I have learnt that although I quite enjoy working alone, and didn’t step out much before the pandemic anyway, I do miss meeting my friends and family in person, and will make more of an effort to do so once we are on the other side of this weird tunnel.”

As she busies herself creating a new narrative everyday, her work has already begun to help imagine a better future for those in dire need of resources, giving them a way to tide over the crisis, creating a path to a secure, more reliable life on the other end of the tunnel that Acharya talks about.