

Ways of seeing

What do artists do during a lockdown? Three leading contemporary practitioners reflect on the works they made in self-isolation and discuss how the pandemic altered not just their thoughts but also their gaze



Painting In The Time Of Corona, 7 April 2020 by Dhruvi Acharya (2020)



THE THINKER

Dhruvi Acharya Δ

Experiences, emotions and things I read about and hear about have always informed my work. So, on March 22, the day of the janta curfew, I went to my studio in my residential building in Mumbai and began painting whatever was on my mind—which, for the fortunate among

us, is the virus (versus hunger, poverty, disease or death)—and continued to do so through the lockdown. These works are about the psychological, social and physical impact of the pandemic: social distancing, loneliness, the fear of touching anyone or anything, vigilance against the virus being transmitted via touch or a cough, and being afraid of the disease and its effects on the human body.

I hope that in these unprecedented times, humans will work together to combat this virus, or it may become a very long-drawn-out world war of a different kind. And I hope, when we do come out

on the other side, that we prioritise health, family, the environment, science and education above weapons, war, religious fanaticism, mindless 'development' (read destruction) and production.

I hope we will pay heed to scientists' warnings about the impending and extreme impact of climate change and learn to respect and value our environment and all living things. And rather than living and dying in a cycle of disasters in different parts of the world, I hope we realise how connected everything and everyone is on our planet, and work together to change our ways.