

## PRESS RELEASE

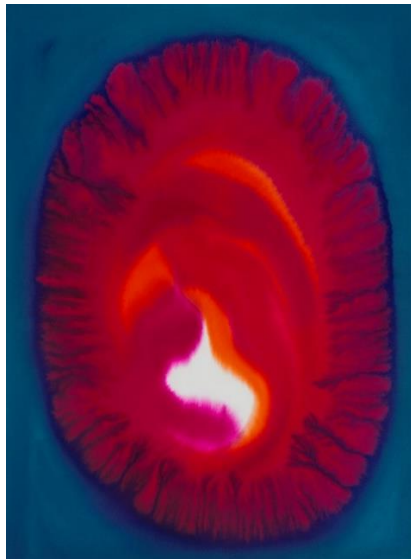
### *Village Letters*

#### An exhibition of works by Prafulla Mohanti

Tuesday 27 September 2022 – Friday 20 January 2023

Stuart Hall Library, 16 John Islip Street, SW1P 4JU

Opening event: Tuesday 27 September 2022, 5.30pm - 7.30pm



“Kalika” by Prafulla Mohanti

Opening on Tuesday 27 September 2022, iniva presents, ***Village Letters***, the first solo exhibition in London since 2008 of works by artist **Prafulla Mohanti**.

The exhibition includes drawings that have never been seen in public before, alongside the artist’s emblematic paintings and textiles. Speaking to the exhibition’s setting in the Stuart Hall Library, *Village Letters* centers on Mohanti’s six published books: ***My Village, My Life: Portrait of an Indian Village*** (1974), ***Indian Village Tales*** (1975), ***Through Brown Eyes*** (1985), ***Changing Village, Changing Life*** (1990), ***Longing: Poems*** (2004) and ***Shunya: Prafulla Mohanti, Paintings*** (2012), and reflects on the artist’s fundamental relationship with his village. Born in Nanpur (Odisha, India), Mohanti still visits his village every year, where he also runs an educational project for young people.

A public programme alongside the exhibition includes a reading session, led by iniva’s Curator, **Beatriz Lobo**, which will reflect on the social, political, spiritual and artistic aspects of stories presented in Mohanti’s books; and artist Meera Shakti Osborne will lead on a series of workshops with local students, creating a zine in response to the work.

**Beatriz Lobo**, iniva’s Curator said, *“It has been a privilege to work with Prafulla Mohanti. The process has been rooted in care from both of us, allowing us to connect as curator and artist, and as friends. **Village Letters** focuses on Prafulla’s six published books. He’s a prolific writer and his stories have helped me to better comprehend the social, political and artistic contexts in Britain and India in the last six decades. I hope his generous honesty and resilient kindness touches everyone else’s hearts as it has touched mine.”*

**Prafulla Mohanti** said, *“My identity is Prafulla, a villager, an artist. Artists belong to the world, without geographical borders, free like air and light. Artists bring so much beauty and joy to the world and should be more supported and appreciated. My aim in life is to create a spiritual world where everybody is happy and smiling. I’m very honored that iniva has given me the opportunity to exhibit my books, drawings and a few paintings, to share with the world what I have learned from my village.”*

**A limited-edition print, 'Kalika', will accompany the exhibition.** This will be a rare opportunity to own a giclée print of one of Mohanti's iconic watercolour originals, featuring his eye-catching motif of bright concentric circles. For more information contact Jenny Starr, [jstarr@iniva.org](mailto:jstarr@iniva.org).

The show in London follows the recent *Full Circle* exhibition at The Hepworth Wakefield, curated by iniva's Curatorial Trainee, Amber Li, as part of iniva's Future Collect programme, and which brought Mohanti's body of work to new audience.

The exhibition at Stuart Hall Library runs until 20 January 2023, and is supported by Freelands Foundation and Arts Council England.

Prafulla Mohanti (b. India, 1936) was born and brought up in the village of Nanpur (Orissa), and moved to England in 1960 after graduating as an architect in Bombay. In 1964 he gained a diploma in town planning at Leeds where in the same year his first solo exhibition of paintings was held. He worked as an architect-planner for the Greater London Council (1965 to 1969) but gave this up to devote himself to painting and writing. His paintings have been exhibited all over the world and are in several private and public collections including the British Museum-London, the Gallery of Modern Art, The Hepworth Wakefield, and ICCR- New Delhi.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

**Download high resolution images here:**

[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ojmhhjkvf6za5w2/AABZ9f3HNmJ4snvD\\_9iMbOyXa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ojmhhjkvf6za5w2/AABZ9f3HNmJ4snvD_9iMbOyXa?dl=0)

**For press queries please contact:**

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**Limited Edition information:**

For pre-orders of 'Kalika' and more information please contact Jenny Starr: [jstarr@iniva.org](mailto:jstarr@iniva.org)

## **ABOUT INIVA**

iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) is an evolving, radical visual arts organisation dedicated to developing an artistic programme that reflects on the social and political impact of globalisation.

With the Stuart Hall Library acting as a critical and creative hub for their work, iniva collaborates with artists, curators, researchers and cultural producers to challenge conventional notions of diversity and difference. iniva engages a wide audience, particularly young people, in discourse and debate on issues surrounding the politics of race, class and gender.

iniva's programme supports artists at different stages in their careers, offering residencies, commissioning new work and promoting practice which enables artistic ambition and development. By cultivating innovative thinking, iniva is committed to disseminating research across a wide cultural spectrum and geographical network. Their ambition is to build a greater body of knowledge around each of the artists with whom they work to ensure the legacy of their practices for future generations of researchers and audiences. [www.iniva.org](http://www.iniva.org)

Iniva is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.