



Children of the Mother

The his-story of
nature

Revelation Research
bytes and Inspirations •
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Sujata Tibrewala's art and life's learning, in her own words

Feminine Facts from one of the most developed countries in the world

- Somewhere in America, a woman is raped every 2 minutes, according to the U.S. Department of Justice
- One woman is beaten by her husband or partner every 15 seconds in the United States. (Uniform Crime Reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1991).
- Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44 in the United States, more than car accidents, muggings, and rapes combined.
- Women make only 77.5 cents for every dollar that men earn.
- The more education a woman has, the greater is the disparity in her wages.
- Women may work longer to receive the promotions that provide access to higher pay.
- Women account for 46% of the labor force, but 59% of workers make less than \$8 an hour.
- Only 53% of employers provide at least some replacement pay during periods of maternity leave.
- Four in ten businesses worldwide have no women in senior management.
- Women earned less than men in 99% of all occupations.

- According to a University of Michigan study, a husband added into your home life creates an extra seven hours of housework a week. From a man's viewpoint, however, having a wife saves men about an hour of housework a week.

Children of the Mother

The his-story of nature

I was sleeping in the temple “**dharmshala**” (**rest house**) when I heard a 100 bells ringing for “aarti” (prayer) in the temple. It seemed to me that my grandma was summoning me to come. I left my husband and my daughter still sleeping and went inside, without even being done with my morning ablutions. **I sat there with my eyes closed and suddenly I felt the presence of all my ancestors over there;** my great grandmother, grandfathers and all in between. They seemed to be complaining why I had not come to see them in the past 8 years, but were happy to see their child, and told me they will take away all my illness (I was ill for past 8 months). Sure enough I knew everything is going to be all right.

An hour later, I, my husband, my daughter and my parents were doing the rituals of what I thought was “inducting” the additions to our family lineage. But after the rituals were over; when the ancestors were being offered “water”; the priest instructed that only my parents could do so, now that I was married into another family...**Suddenly I realized that the ritual was my farewell from the lineage rather than induction of my family into it.**

So what was the presence I felt in the temple? **It was very strange that I out of all the people had felt it.** I was a non believer in all respects. I had ceased to believe in god, the moment the keepers of my religion told me that I was impure because of my gender. I had ceased to believe in “sati” the moment I came to realize; it meant the wife had to burn herself at the funeral pyre of her husband. This and numerous other hypocrisies and inequalities had turned me away from my customs and traditions. This trip was one of the things I was doing for my parents...

But when I felt my ancestors’ right there, I felt I was meeting my long lost mother. My attempt to even describe the feeling in words belittles the experience...**So who are “they” to tell me they are not my “ancestors” any more.** This question led me to explore the making of the patriarchal society, the history, the nuts and bolts, the how’s and whys...

I found surprisingly that patriarchy is the norm in most of the thriving cultures today. **And though on the surface some look more liberal towards women than the rest; each are the same and in some respects even worse than the ones which appear regressive on the surface.** I encountered opposition, detractors, supporters, fellow women, but I was surprised and saddened to find the magnitude of the problem which exists even today.

I found motivation to dig deeper, to look at whether it was how the world was from the beginning! I ended up exploring world history, history of various religions, societies and even anthropology... **The subjects I had only studied for marks in school.**

I was surprised to find that there was a time in all cultures when people would have laughed if anyone said women were weaker or inferior to men. Women were warriors, priestesses, monarchs, intellectuals and many times they were powerful than men, may be because none had told them yet that they were weak. **And the story of their oppression is no different than how kings oppress their subjects or capitalists the working class.** Men were successful in controlling women, by controlling history;

making them feel inferior, even by the most basic thing they had “their bodies”; inventing demeaning moral s and rituals in the name of religion, culture and civilization.

As I dug deeper, I also found that this was also the time, when humans knew how to live in harmony with nature, respecting it, revering it and even sometimes worshipping. Trees were considered sacred and would not be fell without reason, and if they did end up being cut, every part of the tree would be used, no part being wasted, realizing, the greatness of sacrifice humans had asked the tree to make. Earth wasn't mutilated for its “hidden treasures”; the metals, without being prayed for, a constant reminder to those who were mining, how great the sacrifice meant to the fertile womb of mother earth. Nature wasn't a resource, it was the mother... It was so with animals and fellow humans too... And these practices were found throughout the world including, west and the east, Africa, India, France, Germany, Celtic region.

The feminine side of nature, the power of creation and qualities of nurturing and emotions were considered supreme, not weakness, which seems to be the prevalent culture today ...

This body of work is the result of my research so far. **And hopefully the “other” point of view I present here gives the “loser’s” perspective into the intertwined woman’s & nature’s history.** Even if it makes one person question their prejudices and ways of living; I would think that this journey has been worthwhile.

I do not have any answers or conclusions. But hopefully my journey raised more questions than answers...

“ai shamma bata kya dard tera

Ghat-ta hai, pighalte rahne se...”

**O candle tell me whether your sorrows diminish, as you melt
away....**

Women's History Fact File

- In the Human Cell Women's is the basic 'X' chromosome, a female baby simply requires another X at the moment of conception, whereas the male requires the "divergent" Y...
- Scientists now calculate that all living humans are related to a single woman who lived roughly 200,000 years ago in Africa. They traced the ancestry through Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) in every living person, which directly descends without recombination from Fathers...
- Hunting in only provided for 20% of food which came far in between be reliable, rest 80% came from scavenging and gathering, and women were the authorities in both. They needed to identify edible from inedible among thousands of plant varieties...
- The more important but highly undervalued inventions like "food digging sticks", "swag bags" to collect food and "sling bags" for babies, and sanitary napkins played an important role in the struggle for survival.
- Women's invention of food sharing as part of the extended care for their children would have been as important as group co ordination and team work in hunting.
- **The women's pelvis had to evolve to carry the larger human skull.**
- **We owe our right handedness to the early woman, who used to carry their babies on the left hand side to soothe them from their heart beat, leaving the right hand free to work.**
- **Women's moon rhythms awakened in the human kind the capacity to recognize abstracts, to make connections and to think symbolically.**
- Female monthly reproductive cycles ensured human's survival, vis-à-vis our closet cousins; chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans who can conceive only once in a couple of years, and hence are threatened for extinction.
- On "man the hunter" myth, Charles Darwin said human was a social animal, working as a corporate body, hunting in groups, devising ways of avoiding hand to hand combat with their prey like frightening them with noise, trapping them etc, and only become aggressive to "protect".
- "Man the hunter" myth can be used to justify every act of male aggression from business chicanery to wife battering and rape, to "right to dominate".

1 Pricky Reds: Undekhee chot

Acrylic on Canvas, 24”X14”



This image captures the moment just after the impact. You can see this one in the image.

But can you see all the wounds you make? Some are deep, some heal...But most of them leave a spot, which never goes...

2 Criminal Yellows: Atikraman

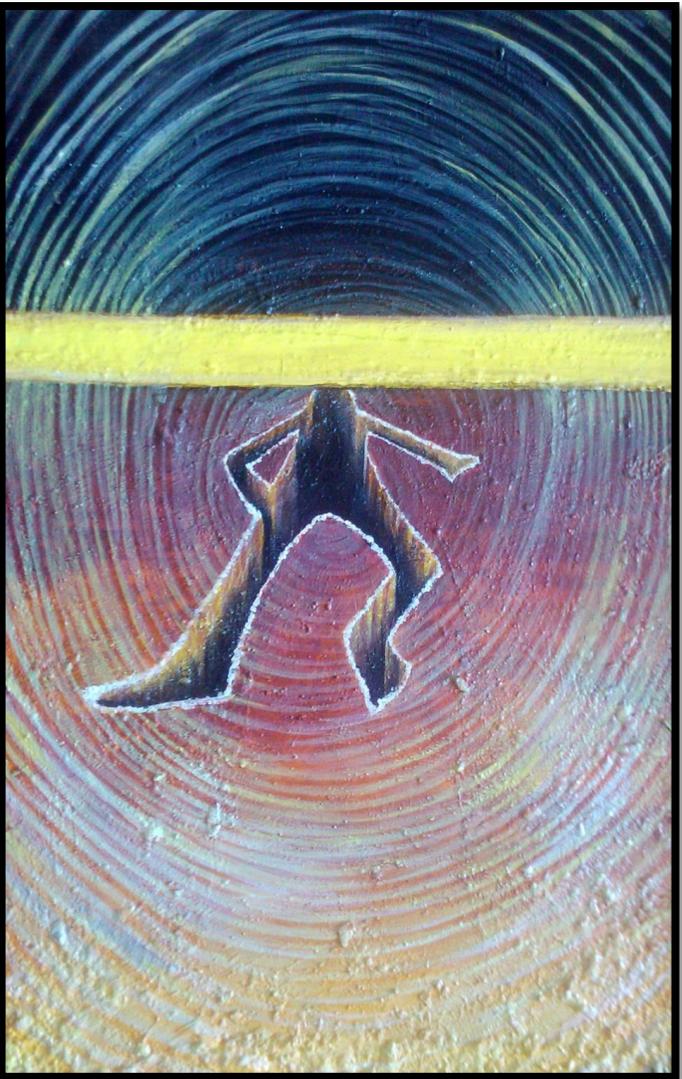
Acrylic on Canvas, 22"x14"

Today the air is rife with crime against women. Domestic violence, marital rape, workplace discrimination and suppression, female feticide, the list is endless.

Some crimes are visible and punishable, whereas there are others which are not visible, yet destroy the victim completely. And the irony is that they are committed by people who love them the most. Most crimes against women, including domestic violence fall under this category!!

3 Vagina Blues: Yoni Vilaap

Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 14"



I the first divine force the mankind knew, the force which gives birth to every living human being on this planet. There was a time when you used to worship me and respect me. But today you abuse me..

I am the original sin. Even though each of you go through me to be born and I also become an object to give you pleasure.

Many a times when I am invaded, I am held responsible for the invasion, instead of the love and sympathy I deserve to rebuild myself. I have immense capacity to forgive. I have forgiven you since ages, and will continue to do so...



Women's History Fact File

- Interestingly women in primitive societies were often far less subjugated than her modern sister. She plays a far more vital role, as nourishers, counselors, wise women, leaders, story tellers, doctors, magicians and lawgivers. No one controlled their bodies or free movement, making no fetish on their virginity or chastity, and making any demands on sexual exclusivity.
- Women with her moon rhythms and power to create were sacred!!!
- She became the goddess, subject of human's first symbolic thought, the "mother goddess" as her children saw her, ripe breasts, rotund belly and buttocks and flaring vulva with tree trunk thighs. Venus figurines found all over the world, earliest one in France, are proofs of Goddess worship.
- She was timeless and endless whereas the males came and went. She could be with or without consort (for ex. Goddess Kali is the wild version of Parvati, who is the one with no consort, as opposed to the domesticated Parvati). This is different in patriarchy where she was always the wife of the father.
- Strong or bright red is associated with genital blood in many religions, where red ochre is called the hematite. The red ocher than is symbolic of rebirth through the potent substance of menstruation and childbirth. In Greece for example they would mix it with corn seed as best possible fertilizer.
- These societies had matriarchy, a form of social organization which is women centric, substantially egalitarian, and where it is not considered unnatural or anomalous for women to hold power and engage in all activities alongside men.
- The power of queen was at its most extraordinary height on Egypt, where for thousands of years she was the ruler, fiercest of warriors, goddess, wife of the god, the high priestesses and a totem object of veneration all in one. Such strong women were found in Celtic Britain, Iran, Iraq, India, China, Japan, and Australia... Almost all over the world history abounds with such women, who may have been forgotten now.

My Reflections

I was reading a news paper article once on a woman who was raped by her colleagues when she went out with them after work for a party. In one of the reactions that the article mentioned someone blamed the girl for going out with her colleagues late in the night and trusting them. In another now famous reaction to rape and murder of a journalist, the politician had blamed the girl for being out on her own late in the night. Being professional how does being a female make me any different than my male counterparts. If I go on a business tour on job with my male colleagues to a strange country am I doomed to sit in my hotel room alone just because I should not trust any male? Can I not network professionally just because I am a female or go out late in the night? Is my gender more important than me?

Sometimes what a woman is capable is not important, if she does not fulfill her duties as a n “empty vessel” who was meant as a companion to men to bring forth children, and an upholder of the age old “patriarchal” traditions. Her Gender seems to win over her other capabilities and the way world view her many times. For example if a woman spends too much time at her career she is “not doing here duties at home, and seen as not caring”, whereas the male is just seen as “hard working”.

As a story goes about one of the early followers of the “Buddha”, Subha; she was the enlightened one, and a rogue tries to seduce her. Subha responds with preaching the doctrines, but he is unable to see beyond her beauty and ignores her words. To show the irrelevance of beauty she takes out one of her eyes and puts it in “his” hand. He is converted at once.

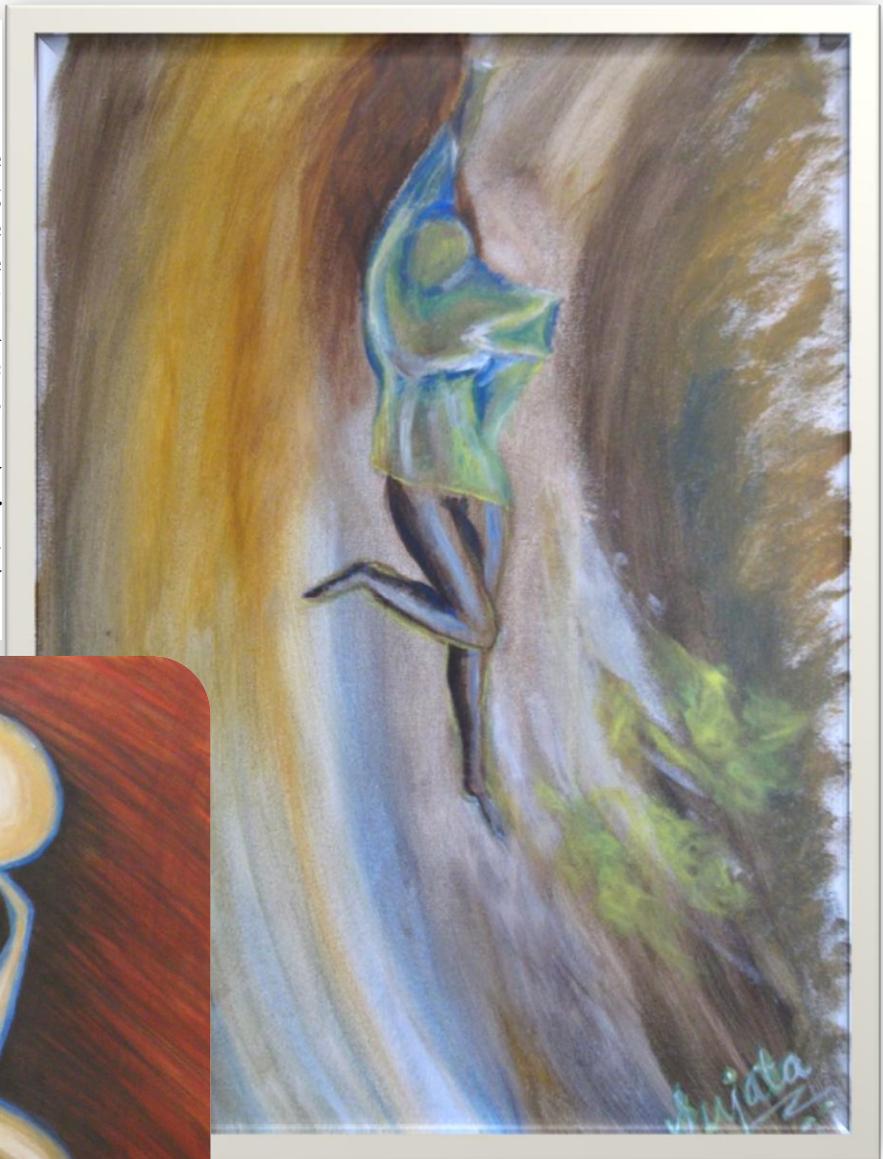
The story of fall of women is no different from how races subdue each other or corporations and politicians subdue the masses. The winning side destroys the losing sides’ stories, the written word, and controls the losing sides thinking by setting up new rules and laws in the name of morality, religion or tradition. They plant a sense of inferiority in the losing side to ensure that they remain weak and their rule is secure.

5 Honor

Acrylic on Canvas, 16" X 24"

Are women born weak? Do they have function in the society beyond giving birth and nurturing? Was there always a time when women were dependant on men on existence? What is a parent? What is a child? Is a male child different from female child? Do they have different rights and responsibilities?

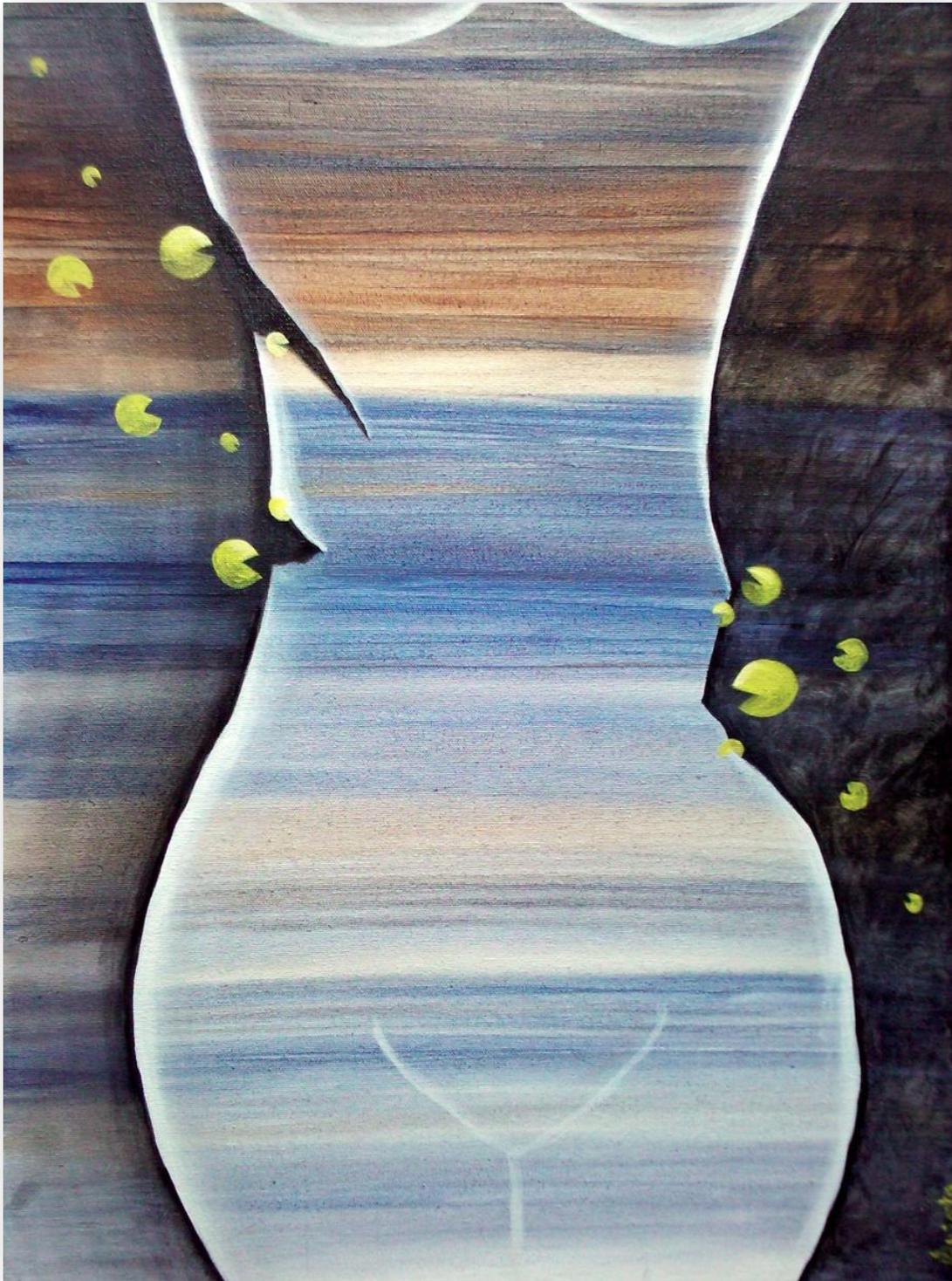
Can I ever meet people before my "gender" meets them, can I ever break free? Can I ever be more than the custodian of honor "between my legs" ever?



4 Opression

Acrylic on Canvas, 21" X 28"

The story of how kings, priests and popes, tribes, countries, suppress those without the power. Men suppress women, men suppress men, and women suppress women, and the cycle goes on... But will there be an end to it, can we break free and become one? If we stop listening to our "reptilian" brains we indeed can...



6. Empty Vessel

Acrylic on Canvas, 18" X 24"

Is a woman just a body, the empty vessel, the empty vessel? Is there a way we can separate our souls from our bodies, for who we are, not what bodies we are in...

Women's History Fact File

- **The respect accorded to women within marriage mirrors the autonomy they frequently enjoyed before it.**
 - **In Greece they led a free open air life and got training athletics and gymnastics which promoted both fitness and beauty.**
 - **In Crete chosen young women trained as “toreros” to take part in the ritual bull-leaping, while Ionian women joined in boar hunts with nets and spears**
 - **The daughters of Sparta “were never at home”, mingling with young men in wrestling matches, “casting their clothes off just for the match, just like the men”, according to a travelers accounts.**
 - **In India the freedom with which women expressed physicality and sexuality is evident in the tradition of “gandharva vivah”, “swayamvar”, accounts of “kama –sutra”, “Vasantsena” and depictions on sites like Ajanta and Ellora and many other temples of this period.**
- **There were women monarchs and warriors all over the world at this time Queen Sammuramat (Semiramis), Hatshepsut (Egypt), “The white women” of Natchez Indians of the Gulf of Mexico, Himeko, the priestess Queen of Japan (AD 220-264),**
- **Deborah the leader of Israelites, Jewish Princess Judith, Roman heroine Cloelia, Tamyris, The Scythian Queen of the Masagetae tribe, Egyptian Queen Cleopatra, Warrior Queen Maedb (Maeve) , Boudicca, queen of Iceni, Amazons of the Mediterranean region, Greek warrior poet Telesilla and the list goes on and on.**
- **“The physical autonomy expressed by these women through sports and military activity speaks of a deeper freedom, and one that later ages found most difficult to tolerate or even adequately explain. Customs varied from country to country but women at the birth of civilizations enjoyed a far more freedom from restraint, rather than the impositions of “modesty” and “Chastity” afterwards. In addition to the warriors and gymnasts, many cultures practiced “cult-nakedness”, frequently disrobing for high ceremonials and important rituals either of a solemn or joyful kind...**

My Reflections

Red symbolizes celebration, colour and festivity. No “pooja” or celebration is complete without the use of red in the form of “sindoor”, “hirmach”, or “kumkum”. Does anyone know where the red got this meaning from? If it was just from the blood, it should have been a more negative connotation of bloodshed. But anyone who knows the history of goddess worship, know that the auspicious red is actually the menstrual blood, which was once considered the celebration of life. *The tragedy today is that the very things that celebrate womanhood have become their curse.*

Dali thought women were evil, re enforcing the original sin of Eve. Freud blamed every problem of human mind on sex or lack of it. The west has a history of witch hunting, where any women who refused to stay within the norms of the society, were declared witches and persecuted. One of the most successful myth in subjugating women is the myth of eve. She is born of “god” the male in a role reversal, and is the one who leads Adam to “the original sin”, hence all her daughters should repent for that!!!

Gandhi ji thought the problems of humanity existed because the male found “willing” slaves in their female counterparts. We do not know who is right, but the relation of men and women is such that if one is suppressed, the other cannot be happy. May be that is the reason why, the world today is the way it is, and the humanity is destroying the only mother they should save, “the mother nature”.

Men and Women were meant to be together, made for each other. But the war of the sexes has created a winner and a loser. Though we do not know much about the early matriarchies, but the surviving matriarchies of today do not have different status for men and women. It is just that the families are centered on the female rather than the male. But the male has complete freedom to do whatever he wants or keep his relations with his family of birth, as opposed to the patriarchy where the female is “given” in marriage to the male’s family. In most civilizations they have ceremonies which symbolically represent the termination of the bind between the girl and family for example burning of the chariot which is used to carry the girl to her new home, the custom of “kanyadaan”, “giving off the bride” etc . It is a tragedy that the sexes who were meant to love are at war with each other.



6 Bleeding

Acrylic on
Canvas, 36" X
36"

I was painting this rose and when I was finishing it, I saw it Cry/Bleed. I start a painting and by the time it is being completed it gains a life of its own and it starts speaking

to me. Hence I had to make it as I saw. Probably It is bleeding, because it will die soon a natural death, or at the hands of a plucker. Or it is crying for it is no longer cared and respected by people like it was once upon a time. Or is it just showing the ephemeral nature of things.



7 Mother Nature

Oil on canvas, 17" X 29"

The pure love of mother with the baby and of the man and wife is as close to mother nature as can be. At the time of the Goddess, everything related to her, including the woman and the Mother Nature were sacred. Today in a "God" dominated world, we abuse both who gives us everything like a true mother. Yet she has a big heart and forgives all our sins and fills us with her bounties instead !!

8 Ecstasy

Acrylic on Canvas, 30.5" X 30.5"

Nature has given us the power to experience ecstasy without the need to be enlightened. When we are in the moments of ecstasy we are one in with nature and the Supreme Being. A moment once considered to be sacred, part of worship to the goddess, celebrated like a festival, has taken the form of lust, and the battle ground of the sexes.



My Reflections

If you watch **the women in villages** they will lift the load of water for miles, and help in the fields, take care of the cattle, give birth to the children and go back the work soon after, even then they are called physically weak, and are the ones who have to face the domestic violence. **I once knew a help** who used to get beating from her husband for money, even though all he used to do was drink away her money. **I feel guilty, even today for being partially responsible for his suicide, since I tried to give her my feministic principals.**

Women in the middle class freed by the industrial revolution of the numerous tasks they used to do traditionally, like weaving, stitching, tending to the kitchen garden, cleaning, cooking, child rearing etc, could go out and work in the factories or offices. Yet they still have to do tasks at the home front, and remain the male properties. **Statistics show that 80% of the earning female are not free to use their own money in the way they like, in order to keep domestic peace.**

The upper class is worried about not losing what they have, hence are always skeptical. It is surprising that they are the ones, who are most worried about their lineage which traditionally can only go through male children, **hence are the ones who participate majorly in female foeticide.**

Even in this game of suppression there have been many women who rose above the customs and traditions and paved the path for other women. Sometimes they did so to uphold the family traditions. Rani Lakshmi Bai, Salma Sultana, Alamara, Noorjehan, Indira Gandhi etc fought to uphold the family traditions, taking up their role in absence of a male heir, or simply backing the “legitimate” male patriarch.

Some others like Meera bai had to leave the family, for she was trying to create something new, something larger than family, kingdom, religion or even nation. She had a voice which has transcended her time, in an age where women were supposed to be invisible shadows of their men who weren't supposed to have any opinions whatsoever. In west the nuns, freed from the cares of raising a family and not having household chores could devote their time to learning and contributing to the community in other ways. From Brigid of the fifth century who founded the first women community in Ireland, to her Swedish namesake who established a new order “the Bridge tines” in 1970, to the numerous saints including Mother Teresa who contributed to humanity in a way no “household” women could.



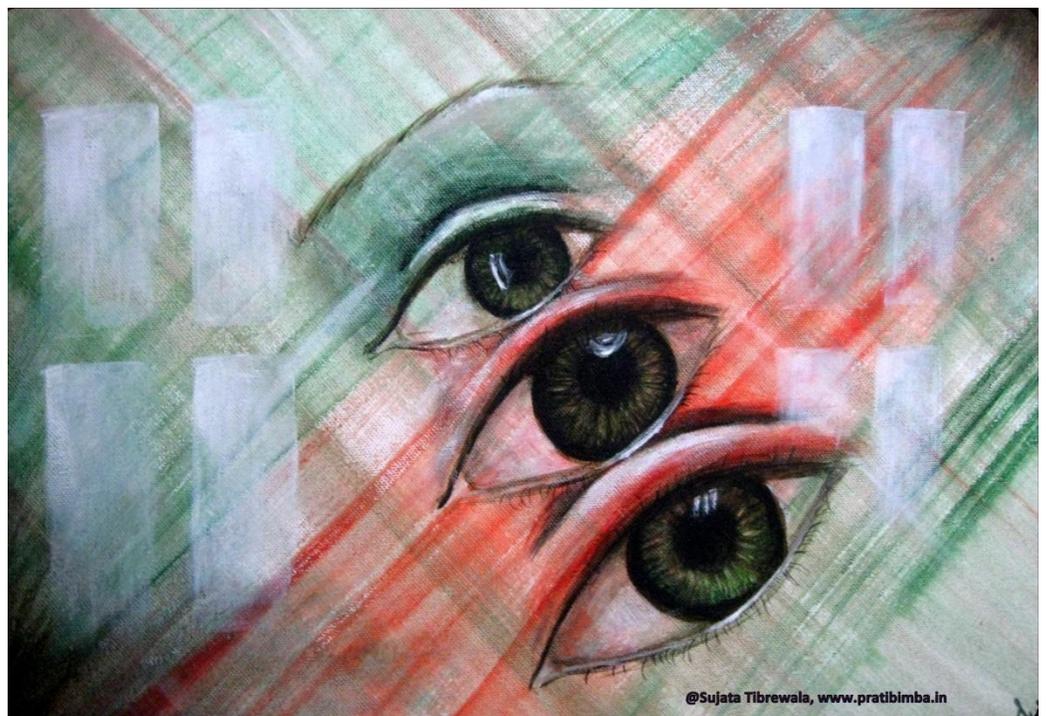
10 Material Reflections, Acrylic on Canvas, 16" X 14"

A look into myself or at the infinity...Am I of this world or of a world none knows about?

11 Windows to the world

Acrylic on Canvas
15" X 11"

I hope my eyes can
tell you enough for
you to understand me
and I to understand
you!!



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12 The Game of Life, Acrylic on Canvas, 36" X 36"

“World is a playground for the games of children, by dawn and by dusk I see the drama unfold in front of my eyes...”

Women's History Fact File

- From when all meaning, all magic, all life lay with women, men had no function, no significance at all. "The baby, the blood, the yelling, the dancing, all that concerns women" declared an Australian Aboriginal: "Men have nothing to do but copulate".
- To take over women's function they invented male-centered rituals (called male initiations today) to mimic the biological actions of women's bodies, a debt openly acknowledged by many surviving stone age cultures today: "in the beginning we had nothing... we took these things from women". (Miles, 1989) The aboriginal word for split "penis" derives from the term for the vagina, and the title "processor of the vulva".
- For Jung, the secret of all male rituals lay in "going through the mother again", embracing the fear, the pain and the blood in order to be born anew not as a child but as a man and a hero.
- As humanity crossed the threshold of symbolic thought, to analyzing the cause and effect, they understood the role of the male in reproduction. Now the women's rhythms were seen as human not "divine". Historian Jean Mark dale sums it up:

When man began to assert that he was essential to fertilization, the old mental attitude suddenly collapsed. This was a very important revolution in man's history, and it is astonishing that it is not rated equally with wheel, agriculture, and the use of metals... As the males had been kept away from centuries, the then prevalent "equality" was not enough. He now understood the full implications of his power, and was going to dominate.

My reflections

I was in the hospital room, doing what countless other women have done before me and will continue to do so in future. As they say, economy may do well, or do worse, people will always make “babies”. I had been practicing deep breath for the past 24 hours in synch with my contractions just like my doctor had taught me. I had been walking continuously to enable baby’s head to come down, so could I have a “normal” delivery. To begin with I had dreaded the labor pain, but after talking to many other experienced mothers I realized that chances of coming back to pre natal shape is better if you had a normal delivery. Turns out no labor pain in C section, means a life time of damage in the body, some had back ache, others still felt the stitches and so on.

So here I was on the labor table, going through the labor pains. That was a feat considering a week back my doctor had declared she will have to do a C section due to my pre natal sugar. Now all I needed to do was “push”. It was as though I had been pushing all night with all my might. Yet I kept hearing “push harder” from the nurses and the doctors. Oh god will I be the only mother, to have a C section, just because she could not push? Just when I had given up hope of being able to push any further or harder, I heard exclamations that they had spotted the baby’ s head!!! Rest is history.

The moment I met my daughter formally, cannot be described in words. It was such a wonder to meet her finally, after all the nine months of imagining how much she would have grown each month. She was tall, skinny and red, and crying profusely. My “dad” promptly noted the time when had had heard her cry for her horoscope. I wondered how exact the horoscope would be, because how would you define the moment of her birth. When she was conceived (no one knows the exact time of that), or the process of her coming out, when the contraction started, or when they spotted her crown, or the split second when she came out fully, and then the second she cried. Well another of such things which you do not question, but just accept.

Weeks later, one night when she had woke me up the umpteenth time for having milk. I had not even slept even one night uninterrupted ever since she was born. And here I was ever ready to wake up for her and tend to her needs. I asked my mother why it that I did not feel angry on her? I had never thought me being capable of staying awake a single night, let alone so many nights in a row... She just said one sentence “you are not angry because she is your own blood”...

I felt one with all the mothers in the world at that moment. My African mother who lives 200000 years ago, my own mother, mother earth....

“I am your mother, your earliest known ancestor... I am not a myth; you have found me through the spirit of quest and proofs. Hope after finding me you will not lose me... For I alone can protect you and nurture you. You do not have another one whom you can rely on. “

13 Finding Strength: Atmavishwas ki khoj

Acrylic on Canvas, 30" X 24"



If you ask today what is the role of women in society.

They will say complement each other. If you dig deeper they will say that women are nurturing, sacrificing and physically weaker. I was surprised to find out that there was a time in world history for about 4000 years when someone would have laughed at this. The invention of "male the hunter" and "survival of the fittest" were terms invented to continue male domination.

In truth the societies thrived and survived on female strength (still surviving as goddesses), now dismissed as "primitive matriarchies". The irony is you do not have to kill anyone, just convince them they are not good enough or inferior, and they will die automatically...



14 Mitochondrial Mother Acrylic on Canvas, 36" X 24"

I am your mother, your earliest known ancestor.. I lived 200,000 years ago.

You found me through the mitochondrial genes which I gave to you, and not by a myth. Hope after finding me you will not lose me...

Scientists could trace our ancestry through Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) in every living person, which

directly descends from Mothers without recombination. From fathers .

15 Green Reflections

Acrylic on Canvas, 21" X 30"

I am the original treasure, something you can never manufacture!!

I used to be the forefront of your lives, but you seem to have forgotten me. But I haven't, hopefully one day you will come back to me, for I know you are my true love...



Women's History Fact File

- As soon as the tribes switched from “horticulture” to more aggressive agriculture, due to increase in number of mouths to feed, they needed to move to “greener pastures” once the soil of one area was “exhausted”. Hence humans became nomads. In such a culture there were always wars of the original settlers with the “invaders”. In such a scenario men came forward to fight as women were voluntarily tied with children and babies.
- Once the humans realized the importance of the “male phallus” in the process of reproduction, it started occupying a place of importance with the “yoni” of the goddess. The worship of the phallus started as a consort to the goddess, but slowly started getting worshipped all over the worlds as the “celestial rod”.
- When all life flowed through the female, creation had been a unity; when the elements got separated out, male became the moving spirit and the female was reduced to matter.
- But the dominion was not absolute, the Goddess who had reigned for 25,000 years could not come down just based on an organ. There had to be more potent power, the power of “one” male god, “God the father”.
- There goes the theory that with the rise of monotheism, and its influence on other cultures, the man was a reflection of male god, but the woman was reflection of none. When the goddess reigned, everything connected to her feminine self, her female organs, her female body rhythms, everything was sacred, but these now became dirty and hence she lost her self esteem and turned into a willing slave of men. Who knows the truth, but it is food for thought. In a world rife with goddess worship, how did the monotheistic religions take hold? Women were at the fore of these foundations which provided them a central role and opportunity, in a world apparently confused with many gods.

The first devotees of both Gautam and Buddha were their wives. Khadijah, the brilliant business woman and prominent member of the leading Mecca tribe of the Quraish, actually discovered Mohammad when at the age of forty she gave an ill –educated, epileptic shepherd boy of twenty five regular employment, and took him as her husband and encouraged his revelations.

Judaism was also saved by the mother of Maccabees, who stood by her seven sons while each in turn were tortured and burned to death in the holocaust of 170 BC, urging them to stand firm. Very first Christian churches in Rome and elsewhere were houses donated by wealthy widows, and all Christian communities in the acts of the Apostle recorded as meeting under the woman's roof. It was the result of faith of these early women that these religions spread so far and wide. It is ironic that the very steps these pioneer women took would prove a nail in their coffin of their own freedom...

16 The devotee

Acrylic on Canvas, 20" X 24"

You were supposed to be my eternal lover. But you betrayed me, why did you make the "weaker" the "fairer", the "other" side of the coin. Or was it not you, but your devotees who used you did that. I do not know, I still worship you for you will be nothing without my love.



17 Which One of These is me

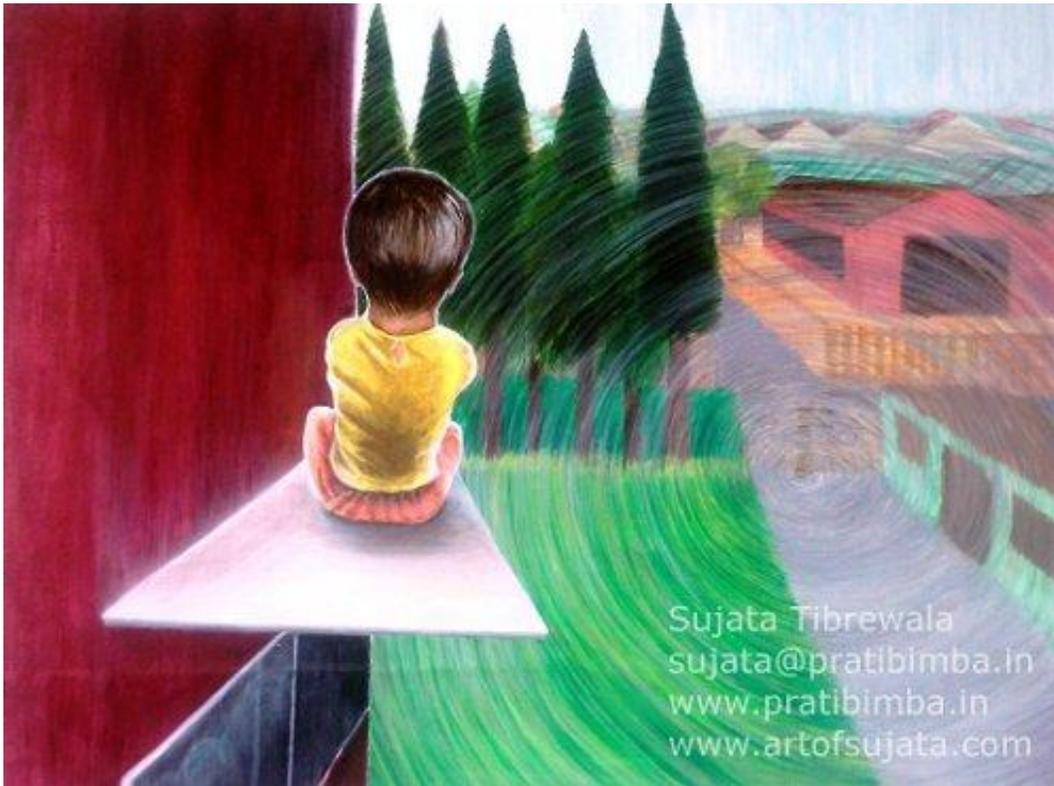
Acrylic on Canvas, 36" X 24"

There are so many of me going around I am not sure which one is me any more.....Mother, daughter, wife, sister, doctor, cook, nutritionist, grocer, cleaner, driver, teacher, preacher, custodian of honor, upholder of religion, and a work horse too...

18 First Flight

Acrylic on canvas,
21" X 28"

I was just hitting my one year mark. But I was not told that I was weak then. So I could climb a ladder to a window sill which was on the second floor, may be about 20 feet from the ground. I just sat there looking at the world, while there was a commotion around me from everyone to find me.



Those who are parents know that little girls are as strong as boys. My three year old could beat a five year old boy, and snatch his toy, and the boy would cry and go to his mama for help. That she was shorter than him did not matter. But I was the one who was worried because no one would like to play with her, as she would end up hurting kids and bossing them around. I tamed her to a point that she would come back crying to me if someone had beaten her, by the time she was five. I had made a perfect child out of her!!!

World history abounds with examples of women warriors, amazons, and even violent women. The British empire under the rule of queens was the most aggressive empires of all times. The women in villages and farms do as much heavy work as men. So why do women in daily life feel they are not physically strong.

So why do women in daily life feel they are not physically strong. Is it because our cultures tells them that any activity which will make them use their muscles, will make them grow them and they will look ugly, or may damage their reproductive systems? No one knows the deep meaning behind these well meaning myths, and the impact it has on women's bodies.

Eve the so called "king of the jungle" a lion becomes incapable of catching his own prey after living in the zoos, where they are fed without moving a muscle, as opposed to the ones who are out there, run, leap, and use their ferocious power to catch their own prey.



19 Hope

Acrylic on
canvas, 16" X 20"

Being a bright girl I was my mother's hope since she thought I could become independent and something she would be proud of, like a few other girls we knew. Her words gave me a purpose in life, and I became what she could not. And since I was one of the first girls to do so, I made it easier for the girls who followed me. But I could do what I could because there were many other such girls in our country who were doing what I was doing silently, proving their worth to the world, and asserting their right to live.

20 Fire Forward

Acrylic on Canvas, 22" X 32"

I am a woman. I know I am capable of things which people do not think I can do, being a woman. I know the generation of women before me could not even dream of stuff I can imagine now of doing. But even today my accomplishments are measured by more of what I am as mother/wife, daughter and daughter in



law, rather than what are my "other" abilities.

Hence I feel I am balancing myself on a very fragile, "rope" which may pull me down anytime.

They say, a woman who wants to work outside the family is only a problem of today, the modern society. But there are accounts of women shamans, priestesses, scholars, warriors, rulers etc etc throughout history and across cultures. Many societies in villages and indigenous societies do not have any distinction of "home work" or outside work. Before the industrial age the family produced as a unit and sold as a unit, so housework and commercial work everything was taken care of as a family.

The concept of work outside home, and hence working women is a concept of

Industrial age, not an invention of feminists. I have to only fight the demons inside me, which force me to conform to people's expectations. I have to learn to say no, de priorities certain things when I have to, to do what is important to me in life... Once I can do it, can anyone stop me from reaching the dizzying height?

18 Sita

Oil and Acrylic
on Canvas, 60"
X 36"

As legend goes when Sita was two or two and a half year old, her father Janak, found an enormous bow called "Shiv Dhanush" buried under ground. While it was lying in its box, Sita could lift it herself with her little hands. Seeing this Janak was surprised because it had



taken four soldiers to lift it before. This was when Janak decided her husband would be required to lift the "Shiv Dhanush", to ensure he can match her strength.

But then as she grew up she became a docile woman waiting to get married and then a shadow of her husband Rama after her marriage. Even though she is supposed to be a goddess re incarnate, adhering to the norms of then society, she did not exercise her powers when Ravan kidnapped her, for she wanted her husband to fight him, lest she takes away the credit herself of destroying a "demon" king.

After her rescue she has to go through a fire test "agni pariksha" to prove her purity. She passed it of course and went home to be the queen. But the ghosts of her kidnap came back, when on a washer man's questioning, she was sent on an exile, even when she was pregnant, on the premise of her having stayed out of "home" for so long...

In exile she gives birth to twin sons. After years when her sons grew up to be very skillful in the art of warfare, and the kingdom is in need of "heir", she needs to be back. The question of her "purity" returns.

Not able to take it any longer, she "goes back to the womb of mother earth, just as the legend goes...."

The way I see it Sita as a child was most alive, but she killed herself as she grew. She passes through different life stages from childhood, adolescence, marriage, post marriage. But her final act of decision and control when she ends her own life, is a moment when she lives again....



19 Goddess

Acrylic on Canvas, 36" X 24"

“The Great mother bursts on the world of men in overwhelming wholeness and perfection.”

Ever since human struggle for survival eased, the goddess the mother was the first one for their symbolic thought. Goddess statues have been found all over the world, the first one found from 2500-1500 BC from Egypt, Nile, and then found all over the world, Mohenjo-Daro /Harappa, Africa, Celtic belt, Greece, Rome Turkey, Iraq, and many more. All these early goddesses were just the mother encompassing all other qualities both negative and positive, and attributes have been added and subtracted to the goddesses who survive today.

The watery abyss, the primeval waters, of which the world came out was Maat (also the goddess of Truth) is Egypt, whereas it was Nammu in Sumerian mythology that gave birth to An (heaven) and Ki (earth) and

the first gods, representing the Apsu, the fresh water ocean that the Sumerians believed lay beneath the earth, the source of life-giving water and fertility in a country with almost no rainfall. In China it was Goddess Nu Gua who made the humans out of clay, and gave them life, after seeing her own reflection in the mirror. In Tibet it was Grol-ma (Tara) who fell in love with saintly Bodhisatva in the form of a monkey Pyan-ras-gzigs (Avalokiteshwara), persuaded him and later on gave birth to six children who were ancestors of all Tibetans. In Hindu Mythology it was the Goddess Vaak/Saraswati who gave birth to all living creatures. Similarly Gaia was the Greek goddess and Magna Mater was the roman goddesses of creation. Isis represented motherhood and fertility in Greek mythology, depicted in this painting. Demeter is the grain mother, goddess of earth in Greece.

Goddesses in Indian iconography when appear as a consort to a god are “tamed” and benign, Parvati, Saraswati, lakshmi. But when the goddess is independent she is wild, is to be feared on one hand because she can destroy, or be your protector, because her power surpasses all the male deities put together. For example Durga is the angry version of Parvati and Kaali the angry version of Durga. Neith was the goddess of Wisdom, War and Hunting in Greece. Sekhmet was the mistress of dread, Lady of slaughter, and goddess of healing in Sumerian Mythology. Ishtar was the Babylonian goddess of love, sex, war and fertility in a counter part of Inana in Sumerian Mythology. In Greece Athena is the Virgin, war goddess and bringer of peace, cunning intelligence, skilled craft, female domestic activities like spinning and weaving, inventor of vase and flute.

Vaak, Saraswati is the Mother of life forms, Knowledge, Wisdom, Word, Arts, Music, Moksha. In China Guanyin is the bodhisattva or enlightened being associated with compassion, purity and regeneration, and power over the seas and role as protector of fishermen. In Greek Mythology Aphrodite is the goddess of War, Love, marriage and physical attraction. Her name means “born of foam”, she was believed to be born of the sea. Sitala (the goddess of smallpox and other skin diseases), Manasa: goddess of snakes, hariti and Shashti (goddess of Childbirth), Kanyakumari (the virgin goddess), Minakshi (fish eyed) who succeeded her father to rule the world. She goes to challenge Shiva to fight with him, but when she actually meets him, falls in love with him, and acquires feminine modesty. This image of warrior queen pacified or domesticated by Shiva mirrors the myth of Parvati domesticating Shiva’s wildness.

These stories myths and stories teach us that there are no absolute truths. Men and women were supposed to live together peacefully and make love, not war. We had enough battle on the sexes, and prejudices on what women can do, or what men can do. Examples abound of evil and good, weak and the courageous, strong and the weak, simple and intellectual, leaders and followers, famous and inconspicuous, both men and women. Now time has come to drop the prejudices in the name of “two sides of the same coin”, for the role of men and women, their emotional needs, responsibilities and duties. If one side loses and the other wins, both loose because none can live without the other...

20. My Beautiful World, Acrylic on Canvas, 36.5" X 24"

My world is very beautiful. But it needs lot of care, because it is held together by very delicate balance of nature. We need to take care of the balance of nature; else it can soon disappear into nothingness!! But I have faith in us and Mother Nature and I am certain she will bounce back albeit after going through a total destruction.



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Genetic Heritage

Acrylic on Canvas 36" X 24"





About Sujata Tibrewala

Born in Jaipur Rajasthan, the Pink City of India, Sujata inherits her love for art from her maternal grandmother. Her grandmother loved to keep herself occupied with "creative works of the hand." Although she trained as an Image Processing expert, and worked as network engineer, her toddler daughter's experiments with the paints and her husband's literary interests instilled a new spirit in her as an artist. She gave up her career in 2008 for her first love art, and has had several successful exhibitions and workshops at various venues all over India and now also in the US including **Regional Commission**

of arts St Louis, Mindworks gallery Chesterfield, Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi. She has also served as a Docent and adult art education advisor at Brooks's Museum in Memphis, TN.

Comments from ART Critics Viewers/readers

"I think your artwork strongly reflects your views written below, and that is probably my connection to it. I have studied a moderate amount of Eastern philosophy and religion and it appeals because it is so much more inclusive than Western philosophy and religion. I think, as you say, we are all connected in ways that we will probably not fathom in this lifetime. They way things work together is pretty amazing, both simple and incredibly complex simultaneously. It's cool that your artwork reflects such philosophical notions." **Wendy Walker, Cultural Center Manager, Regional Arts Commission, St Louis**

"Artist Sujata Tibrewala says we should take inspiration from our past, and give women the respect and position they deserve" –**The Pioneer, June 2011**

"Circle of Life: Women are central in the paintings of Sujata Tibrewala, and IT professional turned artist"- **The Hindu, June 2011**

"Many of her paintings, including her self portrait, stress on humanity's singular plight and aimlessness" **The Hindustan Times, October 2009**

"Unconscious prophecy made visible, keep it up." **Maharaj Devraj Singh (Singh of Jaipur, Grand SON, Maharani gayathri Devi)**

"A very good combination of Art and Nature. Every painting speaks something. Very Nice, God Bless.", **Justice N L Tibrewala, ex Governor Rajasthan**

"Such deep thought for one so young! You will go far. Best wishes for your future." **Mrs Damyanti Singh**

"Such a talented young lady" on the work he commissioned Shared Heritage , Prof Dr Satindar M Bhagat (University of Maryland)