

**Grosvenor
Gallery**



OLIVIA FRASER
ANAHAT

ART DUBAI | 15-18 March 2017



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ART DUBAI
The logo graphic for ART DUBAI consists of stylized, geometric shapes in black and white, resembling a grid or a series of connected lines.

OLIVIA FRASER
ANAHAT

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"*Anahat* is a Sanskrit word meaning unstruck, a sound which is unstruck. It is so subtle it comes from nowhere and yet from everywhere. The subtlety of it, of that sound, and the fact that only a few people are entitled to hear it is something which hovers in the background of Olivia's paintings

'If one looks at Olivia's work cursorily, one might think her work is decorative, you might think it is repetitive, but once you spend some time looking at each work, you discover the layers of meaning behind them. Even before talking to Olivia about her work, I was aware of the thought that has gone into the making of these images. Everything means something to her and should mean something to us.

'In a certain sense the subtlety of her work reminds me of a wonderful word that is used in Persian and Urdu poetry – *Chatak*. In Punjabi or Hindi we often think it means a bright colour, but *Chatak* is a sound, a poetic sound, an unheard sound, a notional sound which a bud makes when it opens its petals. That magical moment when a bud turns into a flower and the sound is produced.

'The subtlety of it all, of the sound and of the thoughts which lie behind works like Olivia's have to be savoured, felt.

'Olivia says, rightly so, that she is touched by Indian miniatures. Johdpur work, Nathdwara work, Pahari work is everywhere. However her work has something in common with the totality of Indian miniature tradition. In this tradition the works of art converse with you, and you with them. When one holds a miniature in one's hands a dialogue is set up. It is as if you are talking to the painting, and the painting talks back to you, so to speak.

'Olivia's paintings have this quality, as I see it, of Indian miniatures in general. That is that they invite you in, they are seductive. They not only invite you, they command you to look, a first, a second and perhaps a third look. So from all the time we spend on other things in life, a little time spent looking at one particular painting and trying to understand what lies beneath it is what makes her work come to life.

'These eyes, these lotus petals, are easy enough to dismiss as simply eyes and petals, however when you see the manner in which they have been used and explored, they are a revelation.

'These works are an invitation, and I am happy to accept that invitation.'

Professor B.N. Goswami, December 2016



1. BREATH, 2016

Stone pigment and Arabic gum on handmade Sanganer paper, triptych
91.5 x 64.7 cm, 91.5 x 91.5 cm, 91.5 x 64.7 cm (36 x 25 ½ in, 36 x 36 in, 36 x 25 ½ in)
91.5 x 220.9 cm (36 x 87 in) total

***Itna manoos hoon fitrat se, kali jab chatki,
Jhuk ke maine yeh kaha, mujh sey kuchh irshaad kiya?***

"So much am I in tune with Nature that when the bud made that chatak sound I bent, drew close to it, and asked: "Was it me that you were speaking to?"

- Josh Malihabadi



2. BREATH II, 2016

Stone pigment, gold leaf and Arabic gum on handmade Sanganer paper, triptych
91.5 x 64.7 cm, 91.5 x 91.5 cm, 91.5 x 64.7 cm (36 x 25 ½ in, 36 x 36 in, 36 x 25 ½ in)
91.5 x 220.9 cm (36 x 87 in) total

The lotus flower has ancient roots in the art of India, its deepest association with notions of the sacred.

As a motif in art it was further renewed when it found its way back into the subcontinent through a long journey from China, via the Mongols and the Mughals, appearing as part of the language of sixteenth and seventeenth-century arabesque ornament. Olivia's lotus flowers and buds are most closely evocative of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when Rajput paintings and pichwai temple hangings often featured a lotus-filled lake at the lowest horizontal register of a composition. The Breath series recalls the lotus flower in its various incarnations, both symbolically and stylistically.

Navina Haider, February 2016



3. PAUSE II, 2016

Stone pigment and Arabic gum on handmade Sanganer paper
71.1 x 91.5 cm (28 x 36 in)

I've been looking at how the icon of the lotus - so central to Indian iconography- can be deconstructed and can expand in possible meaning. A lot of my work has been informed by my practice of yoga- and visualizations of lotus chakras play a key role in meditation.



4. BREATHE, 2016

Stone pigment and Arabic gum on handmade Sanganer paper
91.5 x 91.5 cm (36 x 36 in)

The Garden, an enclosed and cultivated area of landscape that's formalised and acted upon, is fundamental to my work. I take the vocabulary of landscape – trees, flowers, rivers, mountains and sky – and I deconstruct and reduce them to their essence. But I am concerned with inner landscapes rather than the external ones, so the majority of my works are painted or enclosed within a square format reflecting the idea of a mandala with its associations of energized sacred space and meditation.



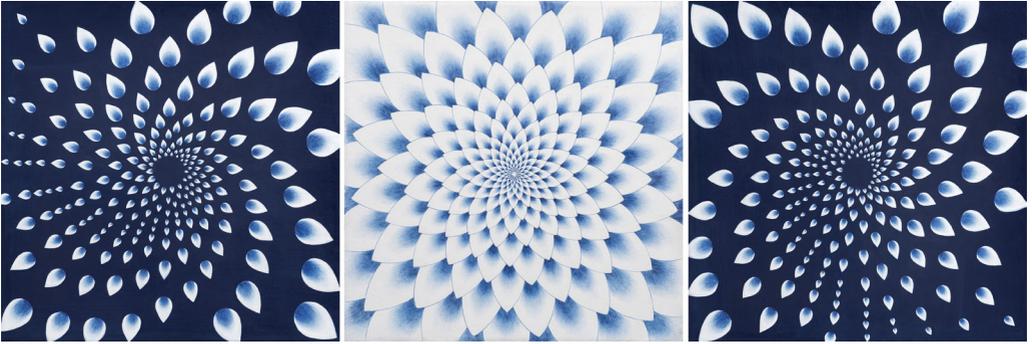
5. BREATHE II, 2017

Stone pigment, gold leaf and Arabic gum on handmade Sanganer paper
91.5 x 91.5 cm (36 x 36 in)



6. CHAKRAS, 2017

Stone pigment, gold leaf and Arabic gum on handmade Sanganer paper
66 x 16.5 cm (26 x 6 ½ in)



7. KALACHAKRA, 2016

Stone pigment and Arabic gum on handmade Sanganer paper, triptych
27.9 x 27.9 cm (11 x 11 in) each, 27.9 x 83.8 cm (11 x 33 in) total

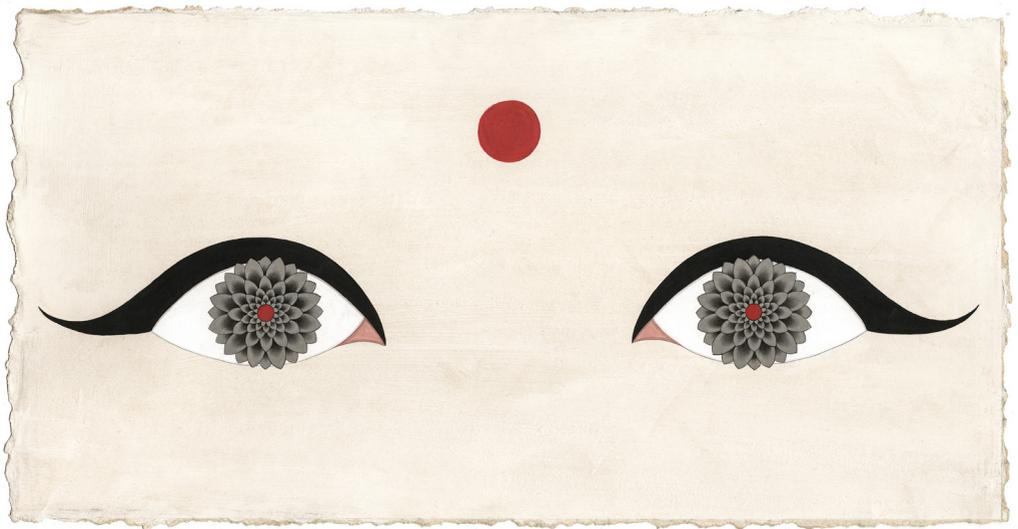
KALACHAKRA (WHEEL OF TIME)

I've been interested in exploring the possible meanings and interpretations of various colours and their associations with the sacred. Here I've used a dark indigo - associated with the gods, in particular Vishnu, and white, associated with the first 'man' Purusha, and in Tantra, with the male principle. The idea of the wheel of Time in Hindu philosophy is associated with the three male gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

In meditation there is both movement and stillness, which reflects, I think, what the concept of the Wheel of Time is about.

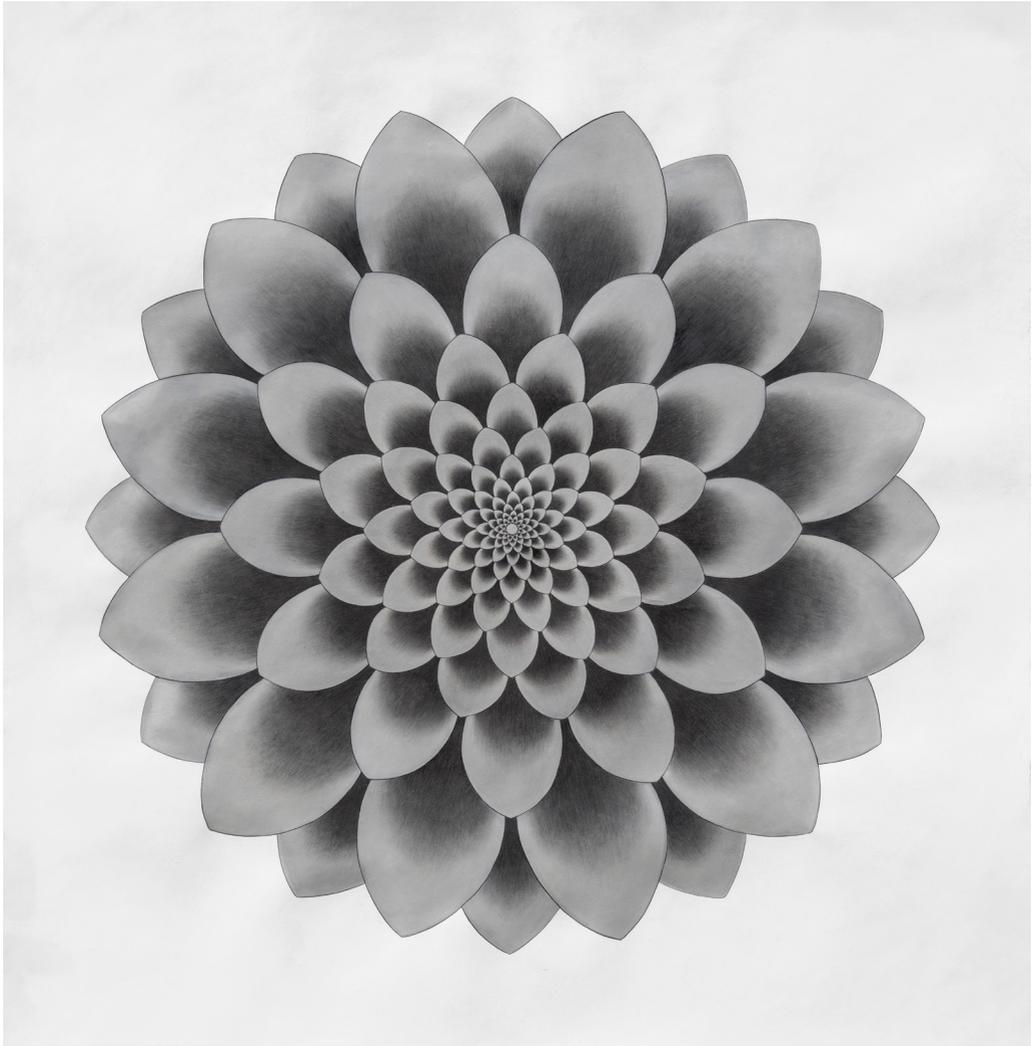
Here I wanted to explore the idea of Time and its revolving nature: from Creation (Brahma), through Preservation (Vishnu) to Destruction (Shiva). I wanted to express the sensation of Time, the sensation of its movement- depicted with spiralling lotus petals turning in one direction (Creation) and in the opposite direction (Destruction) - with both flanking an ever expanding stasis (Preservation) in the central panel.

I wanted to express the essence visually of a complex philosophical idea.



8. LOTUS EYES, 2017

Stone pigment and Arabic gum on handmade Sanganer paper
27.9 x 57.1 cm (11 x 22 ½ in)



9. BLACK STAR, 2017

Stone pigment and Arabic gum on handmade Sanganer paper
91.5 x 91.5cm (36 x 36in)

OLIVIA FRASER, B. 1965

Olivia Fraser, born in London and raised in the Highlands of Scotland, has lived and worked in India since 1989. Deeply interested in the techniques and vocabulary of traditional Indian miniatures, she combines mineral and plant pigments and handmade paper with forms and ideas inspired by modern Western art.

Following in the footsteps of her kinsman, James Baillie Fraser who painted India, its monuments and landscape in the early 1800's, Olivia set out to continue where he had left off, painting the architecture of Delhi and its people. James Baillie Fraser also commissioned local artists to paint what has become the famous 'Fraser Album' – the greatest masterpiece of Company School Painting portraying different types of people and their jobs, crafts or castes against stark white backgrounds. This hybrid form of painting, where Indian artists created works with mixed techniques and ideas from the East and West, greatly influenced Olivia's early work during the 1990s.

In 2005 she formally studied traditional Indian miniature painting under Jaipuri and Delhi masters. The use of gem-like stone colours, exquisitely detailed miniature brush work, and elaborate decorative and burnished surfaces became a major part of her oeuvre. Having been especially influenced by Nathdwara pichwai painting and early 19th century Jodpuri painting, Olivia has been exploring its visual language, reaching back to an archetypal iconography strongly rooted in India's artistic and cultural heritage that can breach borders and be relevant to her twin life between the East and West.

Her latest body of work is deeply rooted in her fascination with and practice of yoga and the ways in which yogic meditation involves visualisations of the garden, particularly the sahasrara (thousand-petaled lotus), which serves as a visual aid in reaching enlightenment.

Olivia's paintings have been shown in various galleries and art fairs around the world. They also reside in well-known collections in India, UK, France, Belgium (Museum of Sacred Art), UAE, Singapore, Australia, China (China Arts Museum) and the USA. Glen Lowry, Director of MOMA has been an avid supporter and collector of her works since the very beginning. Olivia's works were shown as part of *Frontiers Reimagined*, a collateral event of the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. Her work was most recently exhibited at the Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh, India, in December 2016.



Olivia Fraser in her studio, 2014

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2017 Art Dubai Contemporary, Dubai
2017 Sacred Garden, Government Museum and Art Gallery, (Chandigarh Lalit Kala Akademi), Chandigarh
2016 The Sacred Garden, Sundaram Tagore, New York
2014 India Art Fair, Grosvenor Gallery Booth, New Delhi
2014 Subtle Bodies, in association with Art18/21, Norwich
2014 Olivia Fraser, M on the Bund, Shanghai, China
2013 Sunaparanta Centre for the Arts, Goa
2012 Miniatures, Grosvenor Gallery, London
2007 Triveni Gallery, New Delhi
2003 Indar Pasricha Fine Art, London
1998 Indar Pasricha Fine Art, London
1994 Andrew Usiskin Fine Art, London
1991 Carma Galleries, New Delhi

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017 India Art Fair, Grosvenor Gallery, New Delhi
2016 India Art Fair, Grosvenor Gallery, New Delhi
2016 Deck of Cards, British Council, New Delhi
2015 Unfolding Perspectives, Deck gallery, Singapore
2016 Gandhara Art, Art Basel Hong Kong
2015 Frontiers Reimagined, Venice Biennale
2015 Yoga Chakra, LKA, New Delhi
2015 Forms of Devotion, China Arts Museum, Shanghai
2015 Grosvenor Gallery, India Art Fair, New Delhi
2014 Kullu Perceived, The Prince's Drawing School, London
2013 Modern & Contemporary Miniatures: Grosvenor Gallery, London
2013 Miniature Rewind: Art Dubai
2013 India Art Fair, Grosvenor Gallery, New Delhi
2012 Asian Art in London
2012 Iconographic investigations: Nature Morte, Gurgaon
2012 Interrogating Conventions: Nature Morte, New Delhi
2012 India Art Fair, Grosvenor Gallery, New Delhi
2011 The Path of the Lotus: Grosvenor Gallery, London
2010 Kathmandu Arts Centre, Nepal
2010 Apparao Galleries, Chennai
2009 Apparao Galleries, New Delhi
2008 Kathmandu Arts Centre, Nepal
2004 Presteigne Art Gallery, Wales
1999 The Portland Gallery, London
1996 The Clarendon Gallery, London

COLLECTIONS

Her works are included in Public and Private Collections in Australia, Belgium (Museum of Sacred Art), France, India, Singapore, UAE, USA (MOMA, NY) and the UK

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