



***Amitesh Shrivastava:  
Earthly Delights***

**10.04.2024 - 25.05.2024**

**Paseo del Faro 33, 20008, Donostia-San Sebastian, Guipúzcoa, Basque Country, Spain**



*Amitesh Shrivastava: Earthly Delights*

April 10 - May 25, 2024

## Press release

Villa Magdalena is thrilled to announce Amitesh Shrivastava's (Khairagarh, India, 1975) first exhibition with the gallery and his first solo presentation in Spain, *Earthly Delights*, in close collaboration with Gratin, New York.

Landscapes entangled with bodies evoke familiarity and strangeness at once. In a fundamental way, the enigmatic appearances in Shrivastava's paintings are fueled by the artist's upbringing in the heavily forested state of Chhattisgarh in central India; characterized by his immersion in the natural world and close contact with animals, water, plants, and trees. All of these elements carry their own texture, or *Fur*, as the artist refers to it. These textures create fleeting sensations which Shrivastava transfers to his canvases in the form of layered brushwork, thick applications of paint, and a chromatic palette that combines blue, ochre and flesh tones. What he feels towards this array of stimuli overcomes any kind of forceful attempt to accurately depict the physical world.

In Shrivastava's new paintings, one becomes witness to the infinite mystery that lies beyond the limits of mankind. The two largest canvases in the exhibition, *Untitled* (2023) and *Untitled* (2023), recall the psychological tension arising from what is felt and heard but not seen. At once haunting and filled with imaginary potential, these pictures reveal the artist's fascination with the forest's ability to conceal the appearance of animals' whose existence is confirmed by sounds. In these situations, one thinks of all sorts of scenes and creatures, uncertain whether what is barely perceivable poses a real threat or not. The range of fictional scenarios make this experience the perfect point of departure for paintings which feel like melting pots where elements are indiscriminately absorbed into the picture like a vortex. As a result of the artist's meticulous observation of organic matter the imagination is subject to mind tricks and figures begin to appear in a hallucinatory manner. Beneath these unstable swaths of grass all forms of life and death create rhythmic movements that make nature breath and pulsate. Bucolic scenes possessed by spirits create nightmarish rural visions.

Skulls as symbols of death have an extensive presence throughout art history especially in a Western Christian context. In several works, Shrivastava renders these subjects and other iconic themes (mother-child, archangels ) which reinforce his classical sensibility. The artist situates these idols in terrestrial settings that evoke primitive motifs. In these pictorial visions, we return to a primordial state where nature has been stripped to its very essence and fossil figures are unearthed from the soil. Shrivastava discusses his lived experience with mud as a loose inspiration for his unstable imagery. In this layer of dirt many things happen at once: things grow and dissolve, insects crawl, moisture and dryness interact, and animals dwell. A certain light and temperature becomes palpable. Mud constitutes an overarching reality that activates the artist's visual sensibility. The artist uses expressionistic brushwork that evokes premodern masters (Munch, Van Gogh, Goya) to depict death as a fantasy where skeletons have been summoned back to life. Shrivastava's palette and textures become extensions of the earth creating an overall sense of desolation where remnants of modern life have been completely extinguished.

Shrivastava's work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions internationally: Gratin, New York (2023); Project 88, Mumbai (2022); Project 88, Mumbai (2020); Project 88, Mumbai (2017); Cona Foundation & Mumbai Art Room, Mumbai (2015); Wechselstrom Gallery, Vienna (2014). *Earthly Delights* at Villa Magdalena is the artist's first solo presentation in Spain.



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Amitesh Shrivastava  
*Untitled*  
2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
152 x 216 cm  
(60 x 85 inches)



Amitesh Shrivastava  
*Untitled*  
2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
152 x 216 cm  
(60 x 85 inches)



Amitesh Shrivastava  
*Untitled*  
2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
61 x 51 cm  
(24 x 20 inches)



Amitesh Shrivastava  
*Untitled*  
2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
91 x 91 cm  
(36 x 36 inches)



Amitesh Shrivastava  
*Untitled*  
2023  
Acrylic and oil on canvas  
51 x 61 cm  
(20 x 24 inches)



Amitesh Shrivastava  
*Untitled*  
2023  
Acrylic and oil on canvas  
51 x 61 cm  
(20 x 24 inches)



Amitesh Shrivastava  
*Untitled*  
2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
31 x 31 cm  
(12 x 12 inches)



Amitesh Shrivastava  
*Untitled*  
2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
31 x 31 cm  
(12 x 12 inches)



Amitesh Shrivastava  
*Untitled*  
2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
38 x 38 cm  
(15 x 15 inches)



Installation view: *Amitesh Shrivastava: Earthly Delights*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián.  
Photography by Idoia Unzurrunzaga



Installation view: *Amitesh Shrivastava: Earthly Delights*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián.  
Photography by Idoia Unzurrunzaga

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Installation view: *Amítesh Shrivastava: Earthly Delights*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián.  
Photography by Idoia Unzurrunzaga



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Installation view: *Amitesh Shrivastava: Earthly Delights*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián. Photography by Idoia Unzurrunzaga



Installation view: *Amitesh Shrivastava: Earthly Delights*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián.  
Photography by Idoia Unzurrunzaga

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Installation view: *Amitesh Shrivastava: Earthly Delights*, Villa Magdalena, Donostia-San Sebastián.  
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