

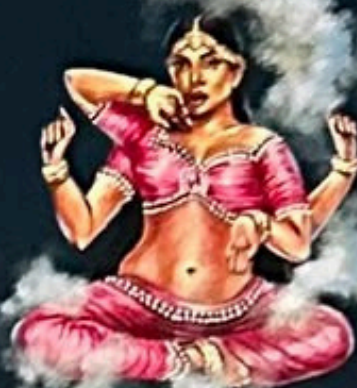


KALAKRITI
art gallery



LIMINAL THRESHOLD

by Sumit Sarkar



LIMINAL THRESHOLD
A Solo Show by Sumit Sarkar

Curated by Ruchi Sharma

On View 20th June - 18th August, 2026

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"An unadorned and ordinary object of everyday use, 'Mattress' forms the very essence of Sumit Sarkar's world. This sounds less fascinating until it is visually experienced. Through this world of his, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. One is immediately drawn towards the bright colors of these painted mattresses denoting a rustic Indian sensibility, stacked on top of each other, taking on their own shape. These are sometimes smooth and at other times have a rough texture, close to that of cloth.

The mattress is not merely an object here. It compresses memories and even energies. One observes various stories embedded within, a saga of everyday life, experiences, nostalgia, joy, grief and much more. Impressions of the past become stories of today and dreams of tomorrow. Each story looks like it was lived by somebody or other. In many places, these are not of today but reach back into our mythological lineage. They evoke the very crux of our existence.

Within the depths of comfort, there are numerous relatable impressions, as each frame leads to further imagination. These works are not just Sumit's experiences, embedded deep in layers of the visible and invisible, but ours too. No experience here can be easily erased as it gets embedded in 'the memory foam'.

A note of Good wishes: Sumit's work always makes me inquisitive to see more. His ability to breathe the weight of lived experience into surfaces as humble as a mattress is an uncustomary yet significant language. With 'Liminal Threshold', he opens yet another series for us to remember, dream and relive. I wish him every kind of satisfaction with this exhibition. May it find the audiences it truly deserves, and may each work carry its stories to many new hearts.

Pooja Iranna
Contemporary Visual Artist
New Delhi, India

"Sumit Sarkar's work comes to us with all the hallmarks of fulfilling art: a remarkable vision merged with tremendous skill and a powerful desire to explore the self and life. These immaculately rolled-up mattresses, with their changing scale, vivid colors, and the unexpected presence of plant and human body parts... are intriguing and draw us in. The deft juxtaposition of hyper-real and unreal elements in these paintings is not an escape from reality but a way to excavate something that is even more real than daily reality, like a dream, a memory or something indefinable in the psyche.

I find the motif of tightly rolled up mattresses fascinating. Sometimes they are new and unopened, perhaps full of possibilities or potential fears? Sometimes they appear used, becoming a locus of intimate, subconscious, everyday truths. These paintings give us a lot to examine, both in themselves and in the reactions they provoke in us.

A Wish for the Exhibition

It gives me great pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations and heartfelt wishes to Sumit Sarkar on the occasion of his solo exhibition, Liminal Threshold: Dreams, Memory and the Sacred. This body of work is the culmination of a sustained and deeply considered artistic inquiry – one that refuses the superficial and reaches instead toward the archetypal, the interior, the ineffable. Sumit has, with rare courage and clarity, built a pictorial language entirely his own. I wish him every success, and I hope that all who encounter these paintings find themselves, as I have, drawn into the profound and poetic world he has so carefully constructed."

K.S. Radhakrishnan
Eminent Sculptor
New Delhi, India

Curatorial Essay

Liminal Threshold brings together a body of work by Sumit Sarkar that explores moments of transition - the spaces between memory and imagination, comfort and unease, reality and dream. Through layered compositions and symbolic imagery, the artist reflects on how personal experiences, emotions, and cultural memories continue to shape our inner worlds.

At the centre of Sarkar's practice are familiar domestic objects such as pillows, mattresses, folded fabrics, and stitched surfaces. These everyday forms become more than objects of comfort; they act as carriers of memory, emotion, and lived experience. The folds, creases, stains, and stitched marks that appear throughout the works suggest traces of presence, absence, healing, and emotional weight.

The exhibition also draws on mythology, with figures such as Hanuman, Narasimha, Ganesha, and other symbolic forms appearing within the compositions. These figures do not tell specific stories but emerge like fragments of memory, connecting personal experiences with larger cultural and collective histories.

A recurring idea throughout the exhibition is that of the threshold - a space between one state and another. Gates, pathways, folds, and layered surfaces appear as symbols of movement, change, and transformation. They suggest journeys between the outer world and the inner self, between what is remembered and what remains hidden.

Works such as *Journey*, *Folds of Stories*, *Untitled Composition*, and *Beneath the Silence* reflect on the ways memory and emotion are carried through everyday life. The paintings move between stillness and tension, familiarity and mystery, creating spaces where the domestic, the sacred, and the subconscious quietly come together.

Rather than offering clear narratives, Sarkar's works leave room for reflection. They speak about the experiences we carry within us, the memories that remain embedded in objects and places, and the moments of transition that shape who we are. In *Liminal Threshold*, the threshold becomes a space of possibility - where different realities meet, and new meanings begin to emerge.

- Ruchi Sharma



Sumit Sarkar is a visual artist whose multidisciplinary practice explores the relationship between materiality, identity, and contemporary experience. A graduate of Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan (M.A. in Painting, 2016), and The Indian College of Arts and Draftsmanship, Kolkata (B.A., 2014), he currently serves as an Assistant Professor at the School of Visual Arts, World University of Design, Sonipat (Delhi NCR).

Sumit has participated in several national and international exhibitions and residencies across Scotland, South Korea, Italy, Thailand, Dubai, China, and Bangladesh, including the Beijing and Bangladesh Biennales. His works have been featured in The Telegraph (My Kolkata edition) and various global art platforms.

Recipient of multiple accolades, including the Kala Sakshi Memorial Trust Award, Bombay Art Society Award, Camel Art Foundation Award, and Ministry of Culture Scholarship, Sumit continues to expand his artistic language through painting, installation, and research. His current work investigates the intersection of masks, human emotion, and identity in contemporary visual culture.



Untitled Composition, 2018
Acrylic on Canvas
96 x 186 inches (Triptych)

In **Untitled Composition**, the artist transforms everyday objects such as pillows, bolsters, and mattresses into a rich, layered visual landscape. Filled with deep reds, blues, and pinks, the work evokes warmth, intimacy, and abundance. What first appears soft and familiar slowly reveals deeper emotional and psychological layers.

Hidden within the composition are anatomical hearts, dried roots, and organic forms that quietly emerge through the surface. These elements introduce a sense of vulnerability and remind us that beneath spaces of comfort and rest lie memories, emotions, and unseen inner worlds that continue to exist.

The large scale of the work draws the viewer in, almost like stepping into a dream or a subconscious space. The painting becomes a reflection on the body, the mind, and the emotional weight we carry within our most private and intimate moments.





Manthan, 2019
Acrylic on Canvas
63 x 60 inches

Manthan, the great cosmic churning, finds its contemporary form in this canvas, where a vast, serpentine mattress rises and coils across a deep indigo void. Through this work, the humble domestic object becomes a vehicle for mythological storytelling: as the rolled fabric churns and spirals, it mirrors the ancient Samudra Manthan, the churning of the cosmic ocean from which deities, treasures, and poisons emerge. Miniature divine figures, a luminous goddess, a celestial elephant materialise within the vapor and smoke rising from the object's surface, revealing how the sacred inhabits the ordinary without announcement.

Here, a Bellwood-inspired feminine grace meets the grandeur of Hindu cosmology, while the contemporary object, the mattress, so rooted in personal daily life, becomes the axis of transformation. Through dreams and close looking, the deity emerges from the fold: mythology is not something distant or past but alive within our most intimate objects and our most personal stories.





The Red Coils

I began with some familiar folded mattresses. Painted in lush, pulsating reds, they appear soft, rhythmic, almost comforting at first: a surface full of winding forms coiled neatly like something resting, something secure. But these coils carry much more than what meets the eye. As I painted, I wasn't just building a visual pattern, I was layering memory, pressure, and silence. Each coil holds something buried; each fold contains a quiet tension, like a breath held too long. What might seem warm and tender is, to me, a space of discomfort of being contained, of not being able to stretch out fully. These folded mattresses became a metaphor for my body, my identity, my space. They speak of the ways I have felt compressed, wrapped in expectations, confined by surroundings. Sometimes I look at them and think how many of us live like this? Neatly rolled up, quietly hiding, and holding stories that no one sees?



The Red Coils, 2025
Acrylic on Canvas
24 x 24 inches (each)



Crossing the Gateway Stories, 2022
Mixed Media on Canvas
30 x 24 inches

Crossing the Gateway Stories

In this ongoing body of work, the idea of sacred space emerges through memory, silence, and personal experience. Inspired by Santiniketan - a place where nature, architecture, and stillness exist in quiet harmony, the artist creates spaces that feel both intimate and reflective.

The recurring black-and-white building is not simply an architectural form, but a carrier of memory. It recalls solitary walks, the mural traditions of K.G. Subramanyan, and the quiet atmosphere of moonlit nights. These moments become sacred not through grandeur, but through their emotional depth and sense of presence.

Architecture in these works feels alive, holding traces of lived experience and unspoken emotion. The gate repeatedly appears as a symbolic threshold - a space between memory and reality, between inner and outer worlds. Through repetition and quiet observation, the works invite viewers into moments of pause, reflection, and transformation.





Journey, 2019

Acrylic on Canvas, Image Transfer, Stitching on Canvas, Synthetic Cloth

16 x 12 inches (each)

In **Journey**, domestic objects such as pillows and mattresses move beyond their functional presence to become symbolic spaces of transition, memory, and introspection. Rooted in the familiarity of everyday life, these forms act as emotional thresholds - suspended between states of rest, imagination, and subconscious reflection.

Through drawing, layering, and painterly intervention, the artist transforms these surfaces into intimate psychological landscapes. Traces resembling maps, drifting smoke, and fragmented markings create a sense of movement and instability, suggesting journeys that are as emotional as they are physical. The works evoke the shifting nature of memory - how it travels, settles, disappears, and resurfaces over time.

The Journey series exists in a space between the real and the imagined. It reflects on the body, the mind, and the quiet emotional weight carried within domestic spaces. By elevating ordinary objects into sites of contemplation, the artist invites us into a deeply personal yet universally relatable inner terrain.





Fold of Stories, 2026
Acrylic on Canvas
12 x 12 inches (each - set of 10)



Folds of Stories reflects on how memory, emotion, and lived experience quietly surface every day. Across ten vivid canvases filled with deep magentas and pinks, folded fabric becomes both subject and metaphor - carrying traces of solitude, tenderness, silence, and emotional weight.

The folds are not simply formal elements, but spaces where personal and collective narratives begin to emerge. Hidden within the creases are subtle mythological forms of Ganesha, Narasimha, Hanuman, divine couples, and celestial animals - appearing almost like memories surfacing from within the material itself. These presences are not loudly declared, but gently discovered, suggesting the stories and spiritual associations we unconsciously carry within familiar domestic spaces.

The scattered arrangement of the panels mirrors the fragmented nature of memory and recollection. Moving between the works becomes an act of piecing together emotional fragments, where connections unfold slowly and intuitively rather than linearly.

Together, the series creates an intimate inner landscape where mythology, memory, and the domestic quietly coexist. Through the language of folds, the artist transforms ordinary objects into vessels of reflection, presence, and lived experience.



Narayan on the Sheshnag, 2026
Acrylic on Canvas
33.5 x 11 inches

Narayan on the Sheshnag, in this arresting vertical composition, stacked and folded fabric becomes something far more than domestic material; it transforms, before our eyes, into the great cosmic serpent Sheshnag, upon whose coils Lord Vishnu reclines in his eternal dream. The rhythmic undulation of the fabric's folds mirrors the ancient iconography of the Anantashayana, the sleeping Vishnu, a motif so embedded in the subcontinent's visual culture that it has become the logo of corporations and the emblem of sacred sites alike. Here, Sarkar draws a quietly subversive parallel; the same image that serves as a company trademark is also the deepest symbol of cosmic rest and creation.

The folds of cloth do not merely suggest the serpent they become, each crease a coil, each wrinkle a scale. Within these undulations, mythological stories breathe the divine resting upon the ordinary, the cosmic emerging from the everyday. The work asks us to look again at the objects that surround us to see that the sacred and the commercial, the mythological and the mundane, are separated by no more than the depth of a fold.

Beneath the Silence reflects on emotions and experiences that often remain hidden beneath the surface. A pair of bare feet appears within a dense network of intertwined forms, evoking tension and restraint. The work speaks about vulnerability, endurance, and the quiet strength that exists even during difficult moments. Through its layered imagery, the painting explores the inner worlds we carry within us but rarely express.



Beneath the Silence, 2018
Acrylic on Canvas
28 x 48 inches (Triptych)



The Red Coils, 2017-2018
Acrylic on Canvas
96 x 196 inches (Quadriptych)

There are artists one encounters as students, and there are artists one has the privilege of watching evolve over the years through silences, uncertainties, and the slow, solitary labour of discovering a language entirely their own. Sumit Sarkar belongs to the latter. I have known Sumit since 2015, when he received the Kala Sakshi Memorial Trust Award. From his years as a student to his current role as a faculty member at the World University of Design, I have watched that early promise mature into a practice of remarkable depth and conviction.

What has always distinguished Sumit's work is its refusal to remain on the surface of things. His paintings are not observations; they are excavations. Rooted in genuine psychological introspection, they transform the most intimate and overlooked objects of daily life, pillows, mattresses, and folds of fabric into sites of profound emotional and existential inquiry. These are not symbols imposed upon the ordinary; they are the ordinary, observed with such attentiveness that they begin to reveal what has always lain dormant within them.

His paintings inhabit the space between dream and waking, between memories and forgetting. Within the folds of painted fabric, ancient presences emerge not as illustrations of mythology, but as its contemporary echoes. The sacred reveals itself through the everyday: a mattress, a pillow, a crease in cloth. The familiar becomes uncanny, and the mundane becomes a portal to deeper states of consciousness. Sumit does not seek to resolve the tensions he uncovers. He holds them open and, in that openness, invites viewers into a richer, more honest encounter with themselves.

Liminal Threshold marks an important moment in the trajectory of an artist who has steadily and thoughtfully earned his ground. It is a body of work shaped by patience, introspection, and an unwavering commitment to inquiry. I wish Sumit every joy and success with this exhibition, and with the many journeys that lie ahead.

Kavita Nayar
Eminent Printmaker
New Delhi, India



About Kalakriti Art Gallery:

Established in 2002, Kalakriti Art Gallery is one of South India's leading art spaces, dedicated to showcasing a wide spectrum of artistic practices from the region and beyond. Founded by Rekha & Prshant Lahoti, the gallery has built a strong reputation over the decades for its commitment to both contemporary and modern Indian art, presenting works by established masters, post-independence pioneers, and emerging contemporary voices.

Spanning 7,500 square feet, Kalakriti has hosted numerous groundbreaking exhibitions, featuring stalwarts such as Jogen Chowdhury, Thota Vaikuntam, K.G. Subramanyan, Shuvaprasanna, Orijit Sen, Avijit Dutta, and Vinita Karim, while also championing younger contemporary talents including Anupama Alias and Priyanka Aelay. The gallery has also introduced several international artists to Hyderabad for the first time.

Beyond exhibitions, Kalakriti actively fosters dialogue and scholarship through talks, panel discussions, workshops, book launches, film screenings, and artist interactions. The gallery regularly collaborates with institutions such as the Alliance Française, Goethe-Zentrum, and the University of Hyderabad, and has participated in national and international art fairs, including the India Art Fair in New Delhi and the Kochi-Muziris Biennale.

Kalakriti has also been at the forefront of public art initiatives in Hyderabad, with projects such as the Street Art Project, the IKEA India Underpass Mosaic Mural, the IKEA India Median Sculpture, and the iconic LOVE HYDERABAD installation.

In 2003, with the vision of enriching Hyderabad's cultural landscape, Kalakriti founded the Krishnakriti Foundation, its philanthropic arm. The Foundation organizes the annual Krishnakriti Art and Culture Festival, supports scholarships such as the Krishnakriti French Scholarship, and conducts art camps, residencies, and public art projects, advancing the pillars of art, culture, and education.

Kalakriti also houses one of the largest private collections of antique maps and vintage photographs of South Asia, preserved under the Kalakriti Archives (KA), offering a valuable visual record of the subcontinent's cultural history. Its initiatives also extend to The Gallery Café and Art Café, which blend art with hospitality, lifestyle, and culinary experiences.

Over two decades, Kalakriti has remained steadfast in its mission: to promote diverse artistic perspectives, expand the cultural narrative, and build enduring platforms for Indian art on both national and international stages.



KALAKRITI
art gallery

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Open on all days (11 am - 7 pm)



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