



Oil on Canvas, 40x40 inches, 2021



Oil on Canvas, 6x9 inches, 2021

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sangeeta Thapa,  
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Founder | Chair - Kathmandu Triennale, Nepal

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Acrylic on Canvas, 60x40 inches, 2021



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## GALLERY STATEMENT

Sangeeta Thapa

Founder/Director - Siddhartha Art Gallery / Siddhartha Arts Foundation

Founder/Chair - Kathmandu Triennale

## LOST IN TRANSITION II

Mann Gurung



Oil on Canvas, 42x48 inches, 2021

Mann Gurung's solo exhibition at the Siddhartha Art Gallery is a departure from his earlier exhibition Power, Politics and War, which was showcased in 2017.

Gurung's paintings presented the grim spectre of global politics shaped by greed, violence and its bludgeoning impact on humanity. His drawings and paintings conjured a mandala made up of guns and bodies torn asunder, thus posing powerful questions: have we lost our moral integrity as we continue to gamble with human lives, is the cost of any war justified and is world peace just a dream? In 2018 selected works from this series were showcased at the Serendipity Arts Festival in Goa.

This exhibition is a continuation of his second solo show at the Siddhartha Art Gallery in 2019, titled "Lost in Transition ". Gurung continues to turn his gaze on Khorla village, perched high in the mountains in the Gorkha district where he was born. Startled by the changes that he witnessed in the remote hinterlands of Nepal - of a community and peoples caught between tradition and modernity, the artist has chosen to address these ruptures and dissonance through his work.

The decade-long civil war resulted in an exodus of youth from the villages into the cities and then from the cities even further to distant lands to toil as migrant labourers. Today, the absence of youth in the villages across the nation is a striking reality. He paints portraits of the elders left behind, heroically eking out a livelihood and grappling with the socio-cultural, political and economic changes that have accelerated in the post-earthquake scenario. These elders are the last cultural retainers of the indigenous people of Nepal.

Thus Gurung immortalizes them in his canvases, in the style of the 19th-century photographers whose sepia prints inspired a generation of artists across the world. Using burnt umber and raw umber as his base colors the artist painstakingly pays tribute to the men and women, whose loneliness and stoicism is exquisitely etched in every wrinkle and furrow of their faces.

A portrait of a group of women and children against the coloured logos of remittance firms brings into focus multiple realities: the sad state of the nation, the story of poverty and hope, of migrant labourers and families torn asunder in the absence of a husband, father, son or mother. In 2021, Mann Gurung won the prestigious 'Special Award' for this painting, showcased at the National Exhibition. With this series of works, "Lost in Transition II", Mann Gurung continues to address issues that we as a Nation need to ponder and address.



## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

### LOST IN TRANSITION II

Mann Gurung

Rapid changes in lifestyle triggered by the globalised market-driven economy are encroaching in every nook and corner of our remote villages today. These changes seem inevitable, causing the degradation or extinction of our indigenous culture, tradition, knowledge, and way of living. Our society is in a transitional phase towards Western-driven modernity.

Tales we heard about our ancestors from the elders always seem surreal compared to what we witnessed in our time around our society a few decades ago. We can certainly sense drastic changes in society around us right now compared to our past. These changes are unavoidable unless we realise the urgency and do something to halt the moment.

In the current day scenario, it is often hard to find a grown-up male in remote villages because of the foreign labour market. Elders, women, and children are the ones left behind. These elders, women, and a few underprivileged people are vulnerable to unwanted changes. Their hesitance to wholeheartedly embrace the mass-produced cheap market goods, for now, has kept them in touch with their tradition for the time being. These villagers are in limbo as they can neither accept nor can avoid the changes. They are the ones that are clinging to the indigenous cultural identity. Once this generation is lost, we lose our cultural identity along with them. The situation is real, and it is unavoidable.

Through 'Lost in Transition II,' I want to visually capture the vulnerable state of the people of these remote corners who were caught off guard by changes they did not choose. I try to capture the visual expressions of these people through paintings. I take it as my artistic duty to represent the people of these remote villages y archiving their images in visual form, for they are the generation retaining our culture, tradition and identity.

This exhibition represents people from the villages of Khorla, Uhiya, Singla, Laprak, Yamgaun, and Runchet of the Northern Gorkha along the Budhi Gandaki River. In order to capture the lives of these people, I travelled from one village to another, knocking door to door and collecting visual data. As of now, few of the characters represented in this exhibition are no longer with us.



Oil on Canvas, 9x12 inches, 2020

Oil on Canvas, 20x30 inches, 2021

Oil on Canvas, 9x12 inches, 2021