Chapter-II

From Would-be-Woman to a Mother Archetype: In Bikash Bhattacharya’s Paintings
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2.1 Introduction:

Feminist art critic Jo Anna Isaak dedicated her book *Feminism and Contemporary Art* to a "would-be-woman" or future woman and told in the page of "dedication" of the book:

'My study window overlooks the St Stephen's School Playground. The school is a private Catholic school for children from kindergarten through grade school. It has separate entrances for girls and boys and the children daily line up outside the doors marked "Boys" or "Girls". One day I overheard a little boy tell a little girl she couldn't play on the swing because it was on "the boys' side." Clearly there was something in the gender divide the school was underlining that the little boy understood as privileges his sex. The little girl turned to him and said, "This is the playground. There's no boys' side on the playground." It is to that five-year-old future feminist, who has such an unshakeable grasp of the fact that the playground is hers to enjoy, that I dedicate this book.' (Issak, 1996, page of Dedication.)

The image of future woman or would-be-woman arrived in the *Doll* series of Bikash Bhattacharya’s paintings in 70’s and later those images had mutated in an impression of mother archetype\(^1\) in the series paintings of deity *Durga* in 80’s. Representation of woman image as a figure of mother epitome is arrived in the images of various iconic identities through the age old time. These archetypal images of mother are apparently constructed by the continuous practices of patriarchal activities. This society has evolved in an environment that included a mother or mother-substitute. In this Connection Dr. C. George Boeree’s article titled *Carl Jung*, 1875 – 1961, where he explained Mother Archetype and told, ‘The contents of the collective
unconscious are called archetypes. Jung also called them dominants, imagoes’, mythological or primordial images, and a few other names, but archetypes seem to have won out over these. An archetype is an unlearned tendency to experience things in a certain way. So the mother archetype is our built-in ability to recognize a certain relationship, that of "mothering." In his e-article titled ‘Carl Jung’ C. George Boeree told:

‘Jung says that this is rather abstract, and we are likely to project the archetype out into the world and onto a particular person, usually our own mothers. Even when an archetype doesn’t have a particular real person available, we tend to personify the archetype, that is, turn it into a mythological "story-book" character. This character symbolizes the archetype.’ (Boeree, 2006, p. 4)

These images of mother are celebrated in the notion of empowerment to show her presence in an opposition to patriarchal norms. Her mother image is celebrated here by the idiom of mother archetype, an archetype that is empowered in the image of mother.

It is not confirmed even today, which term could be appropriate for a painter like Bikash Bhattacharya, surrealist, neorealist, photo-realist, expressionist or hyperrealist. Painter Bikash Bhattacharya has owned an individual visual language in the contemporary art of India. Any particular trademark never restricted him because he was a man of continuous experiments with multifaceted nature of ‘real’ life under high skilled academic performance in various mediums and contents. Bikash flourished his own style in the beginning of 70’s. He was not an artist of any particular ‘ism’ and was not a feminist nor directly against the patriarchy, but it could be gleaned that the women images of his paintings speak the voice of Other in strong and vivid resistance.

Bikash Bhattacharya was born in North Kolkata in 21st June of 1940, when Indian society was under the deep insecurity of political unrest and economic disorder and the art and culture of the country was fragmented in different groups and individual styles. The decade of 40 is also significant for the raise of New Leftist ideas that inspired a large number of young intellectual to show new ways of political, economical and cultural freedom.
2.2 1940’s and 50’s Bengal: A Background Study of Bikash Bhattacharya

The artistic trend of Bengal had started searching its own origin by rejecting the nationalistic hologram of 'Bengal School' from the end of 30s and the beginning of 40s. The wounds of World War II and increasing cruelty of British dominance in Indian soil also opened the opportunity of thoughts and ideas in the cultural and political fields. The over whirling waves of new thoughts and ideas in every aspect of cultural field such as art, literature, drama etc. were unified in an intellectual integrity and concentrated into a fight against the dominance of colonial rulers. The play ‘Navanna’ had brought up one of the first intellectual protest and introduced new political thoughts through different cultural forums. ‘Gana Natya Sangha’ (Indian People’s Theatre Association: IPTA) of Bengal was established at 1942. Some of the pioneer members of the group were Prithviraj Kapoor, Bijon Bhattacharya, Ritwik Ghatak, Utpal Dutta, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Salil Chowdhury, Pandit Ravi Shankar, Jyotirindra Moitra, Niranjan Singh Maan, S. Tera Singh Chan, Jagdish Faryadi, Khalili Faryadi, Rajendra Raghuvanshi, Safdar Mir etc. The group was formed in the background of the Second World War, Bengal famine of 1943 and starvation deaths in India on one hand and repression by the colonial masters in the wake of the Quit India Movement on the other. All India People’s Theatre Conference was organized in Mumbai in 1943 where the group focused its idea and concept of representing the crisis of the time through the medium of theatre and to make people aware and understand their rights and responsibilities to the society. The movement not only dealt with theatre, also it inspired other fields like music and visual art. In 1944 IPTA staged the drama Navanna written by Bijan Bhattacharya and acted by the new faces like Sambhu Mitra, Sudhi Pradhan, Manoranjan Bhatacharjee and many others, The play Navanna exerted a new genre of performance where they showed the exceptional use of stage, light and choreography. Rejecting the glittering gimmick of dress and props of professional theatre, Navanna had executed the essence of zonal distributions in a stage first in Indian theatre. The drama successfully conveyed the primary message for the oppressed classes
of the society. In the same scene and same proscenium Navanna showed two different zones, one is occupied by the luxurious monuments of wealthy Zamindars and other zone is presented in the contrast view of oppressed and struggled people. Artists were also becoming aware about their responsibility for the society. This intellectual revolution was perhaps rooted in two important incidents of 30s. The first one a group of students was expelled from the art college after joining of Mukul Dey as a principal in Govt. art College, and the second incident was those students had formed an art group in the name of ‘Young Artists Union’ on 1932. This group again changed and formed a group named ‘Art Rebel Centre’ in 1933 by the artists like Abani Sen, Gobardhan Aash etc. These two incidents had given an immense encouragement to the young artist to make a challenging protest against the discipline and order of the institutional power.

Two major disastrous incidents were happened in India in the 40’s decade of 20th century. One was Famine4 of 1942-44 and other was the Cyclone of Bengal and Orissa, which almost ruined the social and economic stability of Bengal as well as India. The decade of 40 was already suffering from the emergent crisis of World War II; along with such crisis, these two incidents had smashed the socio-economic backbone of the country. The disaster of Famine of 1942-44 in Bengal had demolished all hopes and future planning of the economically struggling people of India. In 16th October 1942 the whole east coast of Bengal and Orissa was hit by a thrusting Cyclone. A huge area of rice cultivation up to forty miles inland was flooded, causing the autumn crop in those areas to fail. This meant the peasantry had to eat their surplus, and also the seed that should have been planted in the winter of 1942-43, had been consumed by the time. Apart from the conventional analysis of these two incidents of 40’s and the causes of socio-economic disaster, economist Amartya Sen holds a different idea in this connection. According to his view, there were no overall shortage of rice in Bengal in 1943 and the availability was actually slightly higher than in 1941. With some other economist Amartya Sen also believes that it was a man made famine. The disaster took this drastic image due to sluggish response of the officials of the government. The root of this famine lay in the rumors of shortage that made rice stocks an excellent investment. Bengal had enough
resource of crops and rice to feed itself, but the common people were suddenly too poor to buy it because of the huge storage of the major part of the food by the extremely rich merchants of the Bengal markets.

The attitude of the British government was apathetic to this issue. The then prime minister of UK, Winston Churchill had neglected the problem and he had not taken any action of recovery management to overcome the disaster. However, the disaster happened because of the irregular trade supply of the European market due to World War II. British Government was unable to manage the problem of food. Leo Amery, The Secretary of State for India and Archibald Wavell, The Viceroy of India send an urgent request to Winstone Churchhill for releasing food stocks for India, but Churchill replied a sarcastic comment, which is analyzed by Shashi Tharoor. In the seventh chapter under sub title “A Tryst with Destiny”, 1945-1947 of the book *Nehru: The Invention of India*, where Tharoor told that:

‘The British had not covered themselves with glory during the war. They had claimed to be preparing for democracy. They had presided over one of the worst famines in human history, the great Bengal famine of 1943, while diverting food (on Churchills’s personal orders) from starving civilians to well-supplied Tummies’. (Tens of Thousands of Bengalis perished, but Churchills’s only response to a telegram from the government in Delhi, about the famine was to ask peevishly why Gandhi hadn’t died yet.) Even Lord Wavell, who had been rewarded for military failure (in both the deserts of North Africa and the Jungles of Burma) by succeeding Linlithgow as Viceroy, considered the British government’s attitude to India “negligent, hostile and contemptuous to a degree I had not anticipated.’ (Shashi, 2003, p. 133)

The disaster of famine of 1942-43 made some deep wounds in all layers of Bengali culture. Artists from different field mourned through their own expression and creative appeal. Painter Jainul Abedin made a series of sketches on the victims of famine. Writer Bibhuti Bhusan Bandopadhyaya wrote his novel ‘Ashani Sanket’ which was cinematographed as a film by the director Satyajit Roy in 70s decade. Even in 1970’s Mrinal Sen made his film *Akaler Sandhane* on the topic of famine of 1940’s.
The most important event happened in 40’s after the manmade disaster that a protest began to raise its voice through a forum of writers, artists and performers known as Fasibirodhi Lekhak O Shilpi Sangha. The formation of Calcutta Group by the founder members Prodosh Dasgupta, Subho Tagore, Rathin Maitra, Gopal Ghosh, Paritosh Sen, Nirod Mazumder, Kamala Dasgupta, Prankrishna Paul in 1943. The Calcutta Group established another milestone in the artistic evolution of India. This group was influenced by the Western Art movements of 20th century and denied the trend of the Bengal School of art. The first exhibition of Calcutta Group held at service Club, Calcutta in 1944. Amrita Bazaar Patrika published an article on Calcutta Group where they wrote in Bengali that, ‘...Ai shilpira probalvabe tader Jatiya Paramparakei aswikar korte uthepore legechen’ (Bhattacharya, A 1994, p. 220), means, these artists have started disowning vehemently their national-cultural lineage. The artists of Calcutta group also adopted different styles from great western masters and few of the artists of the group went to European countries to take art education directly from western artists or from the European art institution. They idealized that the history of art solitarily based upon the norms of the western art movements. The artists of Calcutta group started upholding their new ideas through several exhibitions in different corners of the country; they also inspired different Indian artists to form other art groups. Prodosh Dasgupta, the sculptor of Calcutta Group, later told in the journal of Lalit Kala Contemporary (April 1981) that, 'It is better that we consciously discriminatingly choose and integrate foreign influences with our national style and tradition; for otherwise, influences, unconsciously imbibed might distort rather than enrich our art. This is the ideal motivating "Calcutta Group". …art should aim at being international and interdependent.' (Tuli.1997, P-198)

Calcutta group had executed two major exhibitions in Bombay in 1944 and 1945, which inspired six bright young artists to form a new group in Bombay in 1947 under the name of ‘Progressive Artists Group’(PAG). Pioneering six artists were K.H.Ara, F.N. Sauja, S.H.Raja, M.F. Husain, H.A.Gade and the sculptor S.K..Bakre. The group had absorbed vigorous syntheses of various trends of Western art and Indian styles. In 1951 Progressive artists group jointly presented an exhibition with Calcutta group. The group had rejected
all forms of British academic art and the classical artistic trend of Europe. The artists of PAG have taken inspiration in many occasions from the image representations of modernization of western art, but at the same time, they were mostly oriented to the art of Indian culture. New art forums started developing from the 40's. The Delhi based artists established AIFACS; Calcutta Art Society (C.A.S) and Bombay Art Society (B.A.S) established in Calcutta and Bombay respectively. Delhi Shilpi Chakra founded in 1947 with the initiation of the artists like B.C.Sanyal, Kanawal Krishna, Dhanraj Bhagat, K.S.Kulkarni, and P.N.Mago. The art accessories shop at Connaught Place, New Delhi changed into a private art gallery Known as Dhoomimal Gallery by Ram Babu (Ram Chander Jain) who had a good link with the artists of Delhi Shilpi Chakra. Dhoomimal was the first private art gallery of 40's that brought up a professional scenario in post independent Indian art. Another significant political event appeared just before the independence of India in Bengal through a vigorous movement of the farmers. The first leftist movement had taken place in south Midnapare of West Bengal known as Tevaga Movement. Farmers of Nandigram, Sutalhata, Mahishadal of South Midnapore district revolted against the ‘Zamindari Pratha’ (feudal rule). They demanded ‘Abi Nay Tebhaga’ (1/3 of cultivated crop is for Zamindar and 2/3 of cultivated crop should remain for the farmers). Bimala Majee, her husband Ananta Majee and Bhupal Panda were the leaders of Tevaga Movement. Hindu and Muslim peasants fought in a unified manner against the Zotdar and Zamindars. Participation of women in the Tevaga movement was significant until its end in 1949. Tevaga Movement of Bengal was one of the first mass movements in Bengal where women had taken active part and given leadership. The importance of the movement also inspired the artists like Somenath Hore and others. Somenath Hore made graphic prints and sculptures on Tevaga Movement that inspired many contemporary artists to become more involved with the contemporary political and cultural scenario of the country.

A new wave had taken place in the art of writings in the fifty’s. In post Tagore and post Kallol era a different way of writing was innovated by different writers. A new trend introduced in modern Bengali poetry through the little magazine ‘Krittivas’. Also in the field of drama new movements had
begun through group theatres, when some of the members like Sambhu Mitra, Tripti Bhaduri and others came out from Gana Natya Sangha and formed a group known as ‘Bahurupi’. However, the most significant incident that took place in 1950’s was the migration of homeless people as the effect of partition. After independence, millions of landless, roofless people came to the country from the neighboring states like Panjab and Bangladesh without any support or shelter. The Partition of India was the last act of the British Raj for crippling Indian society. It led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands. Camps and colonies developed in the different pockets of the bordering states of India. The culture of those colonies was not at all similar with the place where they had newly settled. As a result there arose some cultural conflict between the people of two soils (majorly in Bengal) but they soon managed to exchange their own cultures with each other and the people of those colonies managed to learn almost everything which were necessary for their survival. From 1949, the enthusiasm of Calcutta group started disintegrating gradually after the joint exhibition along with Progressive Artists Group (PAG) had taken place in 1950-51. The artists of Calcutta group became scattered with individual art practices to make a self identity through their works. The artists of PAG brought a new freedom in art with conceptual use of colour and individualistic expression. The new appreciation of expressionist art in the 40’s Europe inspired the artists of the Progressive Artists Group. The most important thing was that they amalgamated the inspiration of European Expressionism with the signs and symbols of Indian narrative art. The enthusiastic young artists’ movement in the name of PAG, had ended in the mid 50’s, but deeply rooted a new idea in Indian art. According to the artists of PAG the concept of art could be taken from the simplest incidents of relevant ambience where an artist belongs. In an exhibition catalogue of an exhibition of Vajubhai Bhagat in March 1981 at Jahangir Gallery, Karl Khandalavala wrote that, 'Life does not consist only of great events....' (Tuli, 1997. p. 203.) In a review of artist Satish Gujral's work in the journal Design under the title 'Satish Gujral-Contemporary Indian Artists 10' by R.L.Bartolomew, where Gujral himself told: 'It is wrong to believe that the function of art is to make people happy. Art makes us neither happy nor miserable. Art stirs. It elevates man, even the most tragic art. Art does not offer a gospel. It frees your spirit to enable
you to find a truth for yourself. Art speaks to the spirit. If I can create the stir then I am an artist. [S. Gujral.‘Satish Gujral-Contemporary Indian artists 10’ by R, C. Bartolomew, Design 2.4 (April1958)]' (Tuli, 1997, p. 210)

Art flourished in 50’s with new ideas through different new art institutions. The M. S. University, Baroda was established with new educational prospect to promote art and aesthetics in 1950 under the aspiration of Markhand Bhatt, Hansa Mehta, N.S.Bendre and Shankho Chowdhury. Artist K.G.Subramanyum also joined this institution one year later in 1951. Through these famous artists of the then contemporary India and their early students, such as G.R.Santosh, Shanti Dave, Jyoti Bhatt, Ratan Parimoo, Ghulam. M. Sheikh etc. from M. S. University flourished a new kind of school of art with the thoughts and ideas oriented with contemporary critical theories and contemporary art practices. After independence Government of India implemented Five Years Plans. In First Five Years Plan, (1951-56) government adopted a Cultural policy, and began to create the national infrastructure of art. The first step was taken by the government in 1954 with the establishment of Lalit Kala Akademi and The National Gallery of Modern Art at Jaipur House, New Delhi. Lalit Kala Akademi Organized their first National Exhibition of art in 1955 and this exhibition became the most important event in Indian art. Till today this exhibition has been continuing to promote many young artists along with the senior artist of India every year. Apart from the exhibition, Lalit Kala Akademi regularly publishes its journal, Lalit kala Contemporary and offers the Gallery Rabindra Bhavan for exhibition and Garhi Artists Studio for studio work, at New Delhi to promote art of contemporary India. The famous Jahangir Gallery established in 1952 in Bombay (Mumbai) to promote art in all levels.

These socio-economic and cultural fluxes of 1940’s and 1950’s had affected the future artist Bikash Bhattacharya deeply, who passed his childhood and boyhood in North Calcutta. He lost his father in his very early age. The consequent struggle for survival left him with a deep sense of insecurity as well as empathy for the underprivileged, which often featured in his works.

Form his early childhood, the rooftops and alleyways of north Calcutta, the crumbling walls of the old buildings, the types of people living in footpaths
and the rooftop chamber (Chilekotha) created a magical and mystical network in his mind. This imaginative reality of the life of a city led a young man to the doors of an old building of an Art Institution named Indian College of art and Draftsmanship at the end of the 50s. Bikash Bhattacharya finished his study in Art College and became a graduate in painting in the year 1963. He began his student life in higher education in the decade of 50s, just after the independence.

2.3 Search of an Indian Identity: 60's Decade and Bikash Bhattacharya

After the completion of his graduation in art Bikash Bhattacharya got engaged in searching for his self-identity throughout 60's; and the total outcome of his early career served as a strong ground in the decade of sixty. The oscillating socio political situation of 60's was also responsible for the changing cultural ethos of the decade that reflected in the fields of art, literature, theatre, and politics. Two important wars had taken place (with Pakistan and China) in India, which made a severe damage in Indian economy and built an unfaith to the common people upon the Government, first after the independence. The dream of independence and romanticism of freedom fight got a sudden thrash after the devastation and inflation of Indian economy. Leftist politics became more popular and understandable to a portion of common mass and left political parties gradually organized their political policies to fight in constitution with parliamentary democracy. West Bengal was one of the important places where left politics flourished through the Communist Party of India (CPI). Many artists, performer, writer became directly or indirectly involved with left politics and a new socio-cultural scenario began to flourish in India. The new generations of intellectuals’ revolted against the institutional practice of art and literature. An anti-establishment ideology flourished through the poets of Hungry Movement.

In the area of visual art various changes and new perspectives were introduced in the decade of 60’s. Art became more professional and the big business persons began to take art as a matter of business. That resulted in the growth of new possibilities in art marketing and several new art galleries were constructed in the decade of 60’s. Calcutta became one of the important centers of art and several art galleries were established in
Kolkata. In 1960 Himani Khanna made Ashoka Gallery in Theatre road and in same year another two art galleries were formed, one was Arts and Prints Gallery in Park Manson and the other was Kumar Gallery in Oberoi Grand. In 1965, Chitrakut Art Gallery (now in Bullygunge, Kolkata) was established in Park Street. In 1967, Chitram Art Gallery was formed in Tollygunge and in the same year the Birla Academy established their private art gallery at Kolkata. Those Private art galleries started a new mission to make artists for their own respective galleries besides the selling of the art objects. Eventually new and young artists were promoted by the gallery owners, which gave impetus to young generation of artists to be more involved in this profession. Through this art market, some young artists were motivated to make new artist's groups in Calcutta. In 1960 the most important art group was established by the name The Society for Contemporary Artists' in Calcutta by the initiation of artists like Nikhil Biswas (1930-66), Bijan Choudhury (1931), Shyamal Dutta Ray (1934-), Sanat Kar (1935), Ganesh Haloi (1936) and others. Bikash Bhattacharya became a member of the group, Society of Contemporary Artists In 1964.

Some other art groups were also founded in the same decade such as Painters and sculptors Association formed by Lalu Shau, Subhas Singha Roy, Jyoti Bhatt, Amarendraal Choudhury, Isha Mohammad etc. Shyamal Dutta Roy, Nikhil Biswas and others formed the Artist's Group Chitrangshu. Arun Bose, Sukanta Bose, Sanat kar etc founded another group named, Artist Circle. In the same year Prakash Karmakar, Jogen Choudhury, Gopal Ghosh and others, established Calcutta Painters. At the beginning of 60's, a new feeling of Indianness entered into the thoughts and works of the visual artists. The postcolonial idea of Indianess was not oriented to Nationalism or Bengal school and mainly spread in the cultural periphery of Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi. Artists began to refuse the imitation of glorious traditional art of India practiced by Bengal School. Artists of 60's also rejected the influence of Modern European art upon Indian artists. Artists of Bombay and Calcutta (mostly the artists of Calcutta Group and Progressive Artists Group) were familiar with the Western Modern art, and they borrowed the idea of Western art in India in 40's and 50's. However, in 60's artists realized that there was enough possibility to explore art in the idiom of
Indianness. F.N.Souza's painting *Eros Killing Thanos* (oil on canvas, 1964) is a typical example of post independent Bombay art, where the new Indianness is prominently evident. Here the use of red and yellow carries the symbolic character of Indian architectural mural paintings. In addition, the use of deep contours is evoking the exaggeration of lively nudes of ancient or medieval art of India. The artists of Calcutta were also in the search of new Indianness with the inspiration from western modernism. Nevertheless, their basic deference from Bombay artists was that the Calcutta artists were more influenced by Surrealism and neo realism rather than the Expressionism and the artist Bikash Bhattacharya was one of them. N.Tuli referred in this connection: 'Thus by the mid-1960s the manner and reasons for interacting with modern western art was the pivotal debating issue. To discover an 'Indianness' within the modern art idiom continued to dominate the aspiration of most artists.' (Tuli, 1997, p. 230)

The vision of the Indian artists became clearer about the trend of global art after observing an exhibition by the American artists of two decades, organized by Clement Greenberg at Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi in 1967-68. So far, Indian artists concentrated on the artistic trend of Europe, mainly Paris. On the other hand, after the experience of American art Indian artists got a confidence in themselves that they could do something beyond European Modernism. In addition, that exhibition showed several abstract arts of American artists, which inspired Indian artists to create formative abstraction and distortion in their works. Art of Print making became once again popular (which was almost finished after the caricature lithographs taken in Vichitra studio by Gaganendranath Tagore) after this exhibition of American art through the prominent inspiration of the works of Pop artists.

The first Triennial organized by the Lalit Kala Akademi in the year 1968 was also important in the new formation of Indian art because it gave a chance to the Indian Artists to interact directly with the artists of abroad. Apart from the above incidents there was one important event in the southern part of India in 60's. The Cholamandal Artists Village was established near Mahabalipuram in February 1964. The basic intention of cholamandal project was to highlight Indian art and its originality and to negate the popular influence of western art. The idea of Cholamandala was clarified by

‘Life in India today seems to provoke her artists to begin to think more pertinently of their aesthetic requirements, and to evolve in their own mind a clearer picture of what they are looking for in the art of their time. They fairly accepted that what passes for modern Indian art in many quarters here is, at best, an almost sterile Indian version of a European way of art expression. It still lacks vital Indian inspiration, which alone can ultimately fuse the apparent contradictions into an acceptable pattern... The intent of the Cholamandal project was to create an alternative to the artistic derivativeness from western norms.’ (Tuli, 1997, p. 215)

The changing scenarios of 60’s brought forth several new idioms in Indian art and influenced Indian artist to build their own individual approach to art. Bikash Bhattacharya was also engaged in searching for his own individual identity in 60’s. After completion of his graduation from Indian College of Art and Draftsmanship Bikash Bhattacharya was appointed as an art teacher in the same institution in 1968, where he worked till up to 1972. In the beginning of his artistic career Bhattacharya was an abstract painter, like many other abstract artists (such as V. S. Gaitonde, Prabhakar Kolte, Jeram Patel, Ramkumar, S. H. Raza, Swaminathan, J. G. R. Santos, Krishna Reddy etc) of 1960’s. The effort of abstraction in Bikash Bhattacharya’s works did not last for long time; soon he left abstraction and started his work in a self-conscious manner with high academic skill of naturalism. The evolution of abstraction in Bikash’s work started at the time of his student days in Art College where he made some semi-distorted painting. One of them was ‘City Soul on the Stage’ (pl. 28). Here he painted a group of figures adjoined in a manner of worms with distorted limbs and under those adjoined figures he painted several rooftops from the perspective of bird’s eye view to exaggerate the monumentality of the composition. Soon he realized the limitations of abstraction in his paintings and started painting in a highly skilled and realistic manner. He painted *Visitation* (pl. 29) in 1968 where he showed the episode of *Santur Didima* (Santoo's grandmother) and
juxtaposed the hands and the bust of *Didima* with the legs of a boy named *Santu* in same alignment. Through which he created a new kind of imagery in the contemporary paintings of India; this could be associated with the concepts of surrealism or neo realism or the art of fantasy. The western realism had immense influence upon Bikash's work from late 60's, and whistler and Sargent were the prime artists who had inspired Bikash. He was also very much fascinated by the works of Vermeer, Goya, Degas, and Rembrandt from the time of his art education. Also, he was very much keen to show the high skilled naturalistic practice of the western oil paintings. Later in the beginning of 70's artist Andrew Wyeth’s series Painting, *'Christina's World' inspired* him to paint the Bengali middle class women in different ages. He told about his own inspiration: 'But when I stand in front of an easel, what drives me on is my leftist thinking, my ambience my urge to live, and my struggle for survival. I have never been part of any art revolution that was merely form-oriented and cerebral. So, in the first phase of my painting career, I had had to fall back on Rembrandt, Vermeer, Goya, Monet, Manet, Toulouse Loutrec and Degas. It is necessary to mention that I do not consider my style absolutely original. In fact, I think people who claim to be original are being dishonest. I do not hesitate to admit my indebtedness. At a later date, I was influenced by Sergeant (John Singer Sergeant) and Whistler (James Abott Mcneil Whistler). But after my graduation, as I was about to immerse myself in the world of art, the man who widened my vision of North Calcutta and opened up infinite possibilities before me was Andrew Wyeth. As a coincidence, I had come across an Andrew Wyeth album and an issue of the Span then. Wyeth's Christina and other subjects, and even his ambience merged with subjects very familiar to me-Santoo's grandmother, Women on the terrace on a late afternoon, those who peopled red light areas, innumerable others-and the differences of country, period and characters melted away.’ (Bhattacharyya, 1997, Catalogue)

Bikash Bhatacharjee depicted the life of the average middle-class Bengali through his paintings; he tried to show the aspirations, superstitions, struggles, and even the political violence ingrained in the life of the common people. These middle class factors used to surface as regular phenomena
during 70's in Calcutta. He worked on almost all media - oil, acrylic, watercolour, conte or soft pastel and collage. His ability to penetrate and portray the inner psychological undercurrents of the painted characters made him one of India's most powerful artists. In 2003, he was awarded the highest award of Lalit Kala Akademi, India's National Academy Fellowship for Art.

Bhattacharya also received the Padma Shree award in 1988. He hailed from a middle class family residing in congested locality of North Kolkata. He drew inspirations from such surroundings, which were translated into the canvases with the humanist pursuits.

In 1972 Bikash Bhattacharya left the job of Indian College of Art and Draftsmanship and began teaching at the Government College of Art & Craft, Calcutta in 1973 and taught there till 1982. His first solo exhibition was organized at Kolkata in 1965. From late 1960’s, his paintings started getting displayed in exhibitions outside India; such as in 1969 in Paris, between 1970-72 in Yugoslavia, Checkoslovakia, Romania and Hungary, in 1982 in London and in 1985 in New York. Creating an illusionistic reality on canvas, Bikash Bhattacharya has left behind him legacy of his creations worth-recording in the history of contemporary Indian art. Bikash Bhattacharya is credited for bringing back realism into Indian art at a time when the artists in India were leaning more towards distortion of figures and abstraction. The city and its people that he knew so well from his boyhood days became the main subject of his works. Bhattacharya is also an accomplished portrait painter. Bikash had earned fame by painting portraits of famous persons like Rabindranath Tagore, Indira Gandhi, Satyajit Ray and Samaresh Basu. The painting of Indira Gandhi in a blurred and white face after her murder earned wide accolades. Realism is the crux of Bhattacharya’s works. In his realistic pursuit he explored the possibilities of oil as a medium to the extent that he could depict the exact quality of drapery or the skin tone of a character. He also achieves mastery in capturing the quality of light that signifies his works with the quality of Baroque painting. His love of cinema had a lot to do with this chiaroscuro effects. Bhattacharya has also worked extensively with pastel. He painted illustrations for a sequel novel on the life of another great artist, -- Ramkinkar Baij. The novel written by Bengali
novelist Samaresh Basu could not be completed for Basu’s sudden demise, but Bikash’s works have remained as some of his bests. The artist collaborated with writer Samaresh Bose and illustrated a fictionalized biography of sculptor Ram Kinkar Baij and it was a series work published in a Bengali magazine ‘Desh’.

Women image is a major preoccupation of Bhattacharya. Along with the women images, he also created a varied cast of characters in his canvases, such as old men and women, children, animals etc. “Doll” and “Durga” of Bhattacharya are two important series of paintings to be discussed here in the spectacle of women’s resistance. The Doll series has an ambiguity in replicating a girl’s survival strategies amidst chaos and the Durga series celebrates womanhood in the form of mother archetype. Durga, in Bikash’s painting, is not anyone in particular, but someone who stays next door. The artist knew that these women are exploited and overlooked by the society and he tried to project the social exploitation contrasting it with love and tolerance of love and tolerance. His series on Prostitutes are also well recognized in different reluctant postures revealing his realistic bent. These prostitute images showed the resistance with their silence and vulnerable position. Bikash was deeply influenced by the surrealists and Salvador Dalí had been his favourite painter. Bikash infuses surrealist themes in his realistic set up. That was his painterly challenge to create an individual dimension of personal style. In the major retrospective exhibitions at the Aakriti Art Gallery in Kolkata from Aug 17th to Sept 9th 2006 and at the Vadehra Gallery in New Delhi from 6th Oct to 5th Nov 2006, more than 70 works of Bikash were displayed. Bikash Bhattacharya was credited with bringing back life-like realism in modern art in the 1960s and 70s that helped the common person to identify the free flowing spontaneity of Bikash’s art. The retrospective proved Bhattacharya’s ability to show the psychological undercurrents of human beings. Bikash Bhattacharya, was also not spared by this strange twist of destiny. For seven years before his death on December 18, 2006 (aged 66), at Kolkata, Bikash was completely disabled by paralysis which stopped him from painting for a long time.
2.4. 1970’s and the Image of Would-be-Woman

1970’s Calcutta was a turning point of socio–political events and played a catalyst role for many artists of different fields in favour of a changed perception of their surrounding life-world. and to create a new terminology of individual ideology(drop). Bikash used to stay in his maternal uncle’s house at North Calcutta with his mother after the death of his father at the age of six. Bikash Bhattacharya was inspired by the ruins of the monumental buildings, narrow lanes, and intersected roof tops of North Calcutta at the decaying phase of Bengali elitism of Babu Culture. Perhaps he watched his own problematic social status and uncertain future at a very early age within a gradual abjection of social ambience of Calcutta. After words when he was a student of 2nd year, the distorted antiques of the senate hall appeared in his canvases with a metaphor of cultural catastrophe. Once he wrote his own feelings about those broken stone sculptures in a catalogue of his exhibition at Birla Academy in 26th April to 11th May 1997. There he depicted his vision about those nude antique beauties in empathy of personal relationship to the non-living women statues; as if he could see their pains, agonies, and could feel their breaths of sorrows. He said, “I have seen many wide balconies and halls with mosaic or marble floors. Even in the Seventies, when we had our studio at 52 Chowringhee, there were ancient, cool rooms and balconies bathed in a mysterious half-light. The upper floor lay empty except for the old owner who lived alone. All this excellingly matched my thoughts and reflections and found a niche in my works. I have come across many magnificent palatial buildings that are now in ruins, spent day after day looking at the sculpted stone beauties in various postures in the once-tended gardens which surround these places. With neglect, and the passage of time, these gardens have been overtaken by weeds. The stone beauties are dusty, ravaged. But their wait has not ended. As I go closer, I hear them sigh. They return to my paintings over and over again.” (Bhattacharya, 1997, Catalogue)

The insecurity of his early boyhood chased him all through of his career. He described his father’s death and boyhood struggles in an autobiographical article\textsuperscript{10} in ‘Desh’. The guardian-less portrait of a dream boy came back to
his work in several occasions, where artist depicted the passion and the pain of the past of a wretched boy, portrayed in expression of a common beggar of the railway platforms. The painting ‘Cheleti’ (pl. 30), where a Boy is painted with deep and wide eyes and the wings at his back show his dreams and desires in front of a wall of a ruined palace. This deep-seated forlornness and anguish was combined with the social psyche of the artist formed in the context of socio-politically tumultuous situation of 70’s Calcutta and West Bengal. The nature of a kind of highhanded patriarchy expressed in the form of administrative ruthlessness legitimized for countering violence provided further impetus to the artists’ minds for imaging women in an alternative mode with resistance either at the background or frontally focused. A recent exhibition was organized on Bikash Bhattachariya by Emami-Chisel Art with 79 paintings, and the exhibition was dedicated to the artist on his 79th Birth day. The only poster made by the artist in 1976 was exhibited in this show. The political turmoil of 70’s led Bikash Bhattacharya’s aesthetic and sensitive mind to create many paintings which were displayed in this exhibition. Out of these paintings there was one painting called ‘Poster’ (pl. 31) which was not only shockingly futuristic speaking of the concentration of power in the name of political stability but also an aesthetic document of where the love for power can lead a society. It was, as if, an artistic trajectory to indicate what would happen in Singur movement in 21st Century or an image of resistance showing a transition from the 'would-be-powerful' to 'the archetype of the powerful'. This aesthetic proclivity and the resistant mind of Bikash revolutionized the images of woman too.

The women images in the paintings of the 70’s painters like Dharma Narayan Dasgupta had recalled the existence of women from their pale and dark imprisoned past. The paintings of Ganesh Pyne also conveyed the scenes of mystery in obscure chiaroscuro, as if it is acting the last scene of a tragedy in front of a theatrical proscenium. The pictures of Bikash Bhattacharya also narrated the uttered silence of a dumb society and the ruined structure of the land and it’s people of 70’s decade. The works like ‘Letter Box’ or ‘A Death of a Hiro’ are imbied with the passion and agony of 70’s struggle. In the work of ‘Letter Box’ (pl.32) artist executed a red letter box and it is sinking in the muddy-ochre water with some floating heads
scattered randomly. The big stones are showing the unsmoothed flow of the water that denotes the claustrophobic condition of the society. His large canvas titled ‘Death of a Hero (pl.33) is an imaginary tale of neo-classic hero who holds the neck of horse and his body is bare. The skeleton face of the hero, which he unconventionally represented, is showing the tragedy of destruction. In 70’s Bikash Bhattacharya did his master achievement through the works of the Doll series. He had owned a studio in Grant Street of Kolkata, where he painted his most important works in 1970’s. One day a small girl of the same house where Bikash made his studio came to the artist and asked him to remake the destroyed eyes of her doll with his paints. This Doll gave a new turn in his thoughts. After seeing that doll many unanswered questions came to artist’s mind; such as, can this doll be born or die? Is this doll mortal like human being? If it (Doll) is not an alive being then what remains within an image of a doll? Through these questions, Bikash came to the conclusion that the immortal soul of a being is synonymous to the immortal existence of a doll.11

The paintings of ‘Doll’ series had always played a super natural role in different metaphor imageries. Sometimes doll is peeping behind a wall, sometimes the doll is watching the violence of destruction in the ‘Raj path’ (Road), sometimes the doll is hanging from a rope on the terrace of old North Calcutta building. His dolls are as usually small girls who could be the representative of future women. These very images of the girl child in the representation of dolls are executed within the invisible patriarchal dominance. Through them Bikash showed how patriarchy spreads its dominance upon the woman from the beginning of her girlhood. The images of the dolls in this series became the image of the future woman who already had started her revolution against the body of the supreme powers. However, his doll series was initially criticized by the contemporary art historians. It is more specific in his own voice when he told in Bengali: ‘71-e ‘Doll’-er prodorshoni jakhan dillite hay taken to okhane bimurta Kalar ramrama. Dakabuko shilpi, shilpo rosik boddhara to pray re re kore uthechilen’ (Bikash, 1993, p.194)

In a picture from Doll series,- ‘Doll-1’ (pl.34) painted in oil- Bikash showed a small girl-doll is holding a brick wall and is either peeping from behind the
wall or is trying to escape from the obstruction of the wall. The crimson and mauve tint over the surface of the painting played a super natural melody of colour with the real images of the objects. Jaya Appasamy wrote about this, painting in the ‘Art Heritage Journal’, Published from New Delhi, titled, Two artists of Distinction: Bikash Bhattacharya and Sarbari Roy Choudhury, : ‘...It is apparent that Bikash uses reality only as a point of departure; his real goal is fantasy where the improbable assumes a new reality. For this purpose he puts together people or objects in startling juxtaposition; or isolates fragments which fulfill an unexpected role...” (Tuli, N. (1997). p. 133)

In an important painting on Doll series, ‘Doll-2’ (pl.35) Bikash was more concerned with reality than fantasy. In that painted composition, he showed a drawer shelf with some partially open drawer and four rows of books and papers hipped upon the drawer. An empty bottle of beer has kept at the corner of the drawer. One drawer of the shelf is full open and a doll is hanging outside of the drawer from the back. Whether that doll is searching something in the drawer or wanting to enter into the drawer is not clear; but beside this huge and intellectual structure of the shelf, the Doll finds herself as a tiny object. The doll is not as high as the shelf but somehow she has managed to climb over the top of the drawer and is searching for something that nobody knows. The unknown presentations of the Dolls are executed in extremely real form and the ambience around the doll has made a hyper-realism (photo-realism/super-realism) in his work. These unexpected presentations of the images of Doll may not be factually real but they are real in their images of non stereotype girl or woman. In this context the review published in the Statesman on Bikash could be taken as a reference, ‘Some years ago, in the Kanika Chemould Gallery, Bikash Bhattacharya showed a series of paintings--- “Dolls”--- of the child rummaging the chest of drawers, dangerously peeping out of impossible windows, lost in street corners. All real but with a distinct aura of the sur-real.’ (“Bikash’s view of Women,” 2002. p. 87) This ‘sur-real' unknown images of the Doll creates the mystery of the paintings and distinguishes these paintings from the mainstream practice of the art of men’s world, which keeps her (Doll) image self-discriminated in the space of Other.
2.5 80’s and 90’s: Durga, A Resistant Image of Mother Archetype

A comparatively peaceful situation appeared in 80’s after the socio-political turmoil of 70’s. However, the so-called peaceful situation was not the real image of 1980’s Bengal, because the decade was a reflection of the total collapse of humanitarian values. The enthusiasm of the youth of last decade was threatened by the fear constructed by power. This unknown fear entered into every corner of the society and penetrated a deep insecurity into the common psyche. The people of Bengal had lost all faith in personal relation and lost the space of consideration for other. People became more self-centered and diplomatic. This static condition of the society was manifest in the work culture of Bengal. After the prolonged unrest in 1970’s Bengal, ‘Left front’ [CPI(M) and other few left parties] government came in the power of the legislative assembly of West Bengal in 1977. In the field of art, 80’s decade also tells a different story in comparison to the 60’s and 70’s. The art market of Calcutta did not flourish much in comparison to the art market of Delhi and Bombay. Art lovers, buyers and gallery owners were not much interested on art merchandising in Calcutta market. Despite of the development of different new art galleries in 1980’s with the mission to make a healthy art market in Calcutta, but the gallery owners did not succeed in increasing the sale of art works in Calcutta market. One of the reasons behind the failure of the market was political problem. Most of the big business industries were starting to shift their business from West Bengal due to the regular political activities of the trade unions. Many small industries were also forced to stop their business due to the sudden Hartal or Bandh of the trade unions. The entire business prospect of Bengal became crumpled and the flow of money gradually reduced from the market for buying selling of art objects. As a result, the intellectual expressions of anti-establishment, which surfaced in the early decades after independence, slowly reduced and the new generation of artists of 80’s Bengal became more individualistic in creating art works. This individualistic approach helped them to be self-responsible to propagate their personal work. Artists, those who were yet to get a position in art field, including the senior students of different art colleges, started moving towards Delhi and Mumbai to sell paintings and organize exhibitions in renowned art galleries.
At the end of the 80's and the beginning of 90's decade, some new galleries in West Bengal were also established, but they were unable to capture the international art market like the galleries of Bombay and Delhi. The important art galleries established in Calcutta were Chitrakut Art Gallery, Genesis Art Gallery, Gallery 88, Gallery Chemuld, Gallery Katyaun, Sanskrit Art Gallery, Gandhara Art Gallery etc. The art groups of previous decades became insignificant and less active; the galleries had taken the responsibility to organize exhibitions with the artists from the beginning of 90's decade and the practice of making of artists started from the time.

Despite his high success in art market painter Bikash Bhattacharya experimented in different mediums and techniques and never turned from his basic ideologies in consonance with his own experiences. He had painted a series of women portraiture in pastel. The women of those paintings were sometimes green or blue to create a super realist atmosphere within the real images of the women. The influence of impressionists like Degas is quite evident in these paintings through the rendering of pastel and Degas’ vision in 'key hole look'. In 'key hole look' the painted character is not aware about the presence of a viewer or she is deliberately reluctant to the peeping gaze of patriarchal world. However, Bikash’s women, such as ‘Silvia’ (pl.36) deliberately ignores the presence of peeping looks to neglect the common gaze of patriarchy. Bikash Bhattacharya painted his 'Durga' series mainly in 80’s and also in 90’s. From the mid-1970s, a woman archetype has developed slowly through the different images of his paintings. The concept of archetype in experiencing things under unlearned tendency came into a feasible form with different mode of expression in the images of Durga. Woman and her image of expression, her personal narratives, her space and her resistance are intricately weaved with high delicacy of brush strokes in each painting of Bhattacharya. Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Calcutta had arranged a retrospective of Bikash Bhattacharya from 2nd to 13th May, 1990 in the name of Durga. There, almost 23 compositions on Durga were shown. In the retrospective, he attributed to the image of Durga several perspectives of women’s existence in present society. Bikash has painted this series of women images with their different attitude and emotions and executed them in the image of mother archetypes of ‘goddess Durga’. The
women are sometimes an image of Bride, holding a box of vermilion and sitting on a wooden slab \((Piri)\) with a flower garland, sometimes she arrives alone in the terrace corner of a lonely mid-day with her third eye \((Trinayan)\), sometimes this archetype changed into the image of Bhairabi, -the partner of \(Baul fakir\), and sometimes she is an image of prostitute talking with her agent wearing only a petticoat. These women images again represented in the tragic story of \('Visarjan'\). \(Visarjan\) is a religious occasion of the last day of Bengali festival of \(Durga Puja\), when all women worship \((Baran)\) \(Durga\) with vermilion and sweets and play with red vermillion among each other. The scene of \('Visarjan'\) became an important subject to realize the roots of Bhattacharya’s unconventional representation of women images in different situations of day to day life. The subject \('Visarjan'\) came to his canvas in different metaphors of women empowerment. The empowerment of the mother archetype denoted that she is holding the matriarchal culture\(^{13}\) rather than the dominance of matriarchy. This culture gives a scope to the woman to accept and acknowledge their presence in an equal space. Bikash had painted his last remarkable painting in 1999, tilled \('Visarjan'\) \((pl.37)\); it was a large triptych with three panels. The deity of \(Durga\) is placed at the right panel in the image of \('Visarjita'\). In the same panel he showed few women who just now have finished their ritualistic performance with vermillion and also showed another deity is going far away with a sailing boat for \(Visarjan\). The middle panel is painted with the scene of sinking image of \('Devi Durga'\), and some floating heads of the human body. The last panel of the painting \((left panel)\) shows a boy who collects the wooden armature from the melted statues after the performance of \(Visarjan\). In this left panel \(Visarjan\) is represented through the lens of the patriarchal gaze, what a man learned from his very boyhood. Here the boy, who engaged in collection of wooden armature, showed in an arrogant gesture by seizing the hair of the deity and pulling her to the shore of the river. The sky is rendered with the burning tint of umber and siena, the setting sun is also pale, and the whole picture is washed with a tint of muddy ochre, which denotes the pathos of mourning at the time of \('Visarjan'\).

The theme \('Visarjan'\) was a common subject of Bikash’s painting and this subject is explained by different art critics in different pro-women
perspective. Some of the explanations were in the context of the contention that goddess or worldly being, women always remain in the image of ‘Visarjan’. Some explanation was that the sinking image of the deity Durga is symbolizing the appearance of mother archetype and she narrates the story of ‘Visarjan’ to the other women surrounding her image. Art critic Sovon Shome mentioned that in the context of this painting, the women are born to sacrifice themselves as the image of ‘Visarjita’ in the patriarchal society.

Art critic Kishore Chaterjee once wrote a review on the Durga series under the title Bikash Explores Fresh Possibilities, which is referred to in the catalogue of the retrospective exhibition of Bikash Bhattacharya in Emami Chisel Art Gallery, Kolkata, in which he posits:

‘Bikash Bhattacharjee’s latest exhibition “Durga” at Birla Academy showed the acknowledged apostle of super realising “Shedding a skin” to use an expression of cardus and move towards fresh possibilities. The result was tantalizing for the viewer and probably for the artist himself who, in these canvases, seemed to be bidding an affectionate farewell to his popular style.’ (Chatterjee, 2009, p. 87)

The magnificent canvas ‘Visarjan’ arguably one of his most powerful paintings. Even though the focal point of this painting was the floating form of the woman, crimsoned with all the blood of hatred without the perfumes of Arabia, the eye could not ignore the near-abstract rockscape with the wings of death whose sheer grandeur was overpowering.’ The news paper cutting of the review has printed in the catalogue without the reference of date and the name of news paper. Probably the review was done after the exhibition of Durga at Birla Academy in 1989-90, because the review is carrying the cover photograph of the catalogue of that exhibition. Bikash Bhattacharya painted his ‘Durga’ series with the references of the women of the society around him. Her women are typically Bengali in look with large and open eyes and wearing sari with the grace of smiling lips. These Durga images, though represented in the figures of sensuousness, still retain some differences from the conventional portraits of women beauty. Here they are not concerned with the viewer of the painting. The women are reluctant and deeply involved in a personal territory and they are portrayed in a space of
intimate emotion. Through this reluctant attitude the women images have made a resistance to the other world which is controlled and ruled by the men. This is the central vicinity where artist Bikash Bhattacharya had searched out the resistant images of women. These images might not be real in the society but would be real for the dream and desire of a woman.

According to artist’s description, *Durga* inspired him from his early boyhood in the image of his own mother. He tried to transfer the pale appearance of his widow mother into a gorgeous image of *Durga* in his paintings; where he often used red and white saris, colourful ornaments and gorgeous lights.\(^{15}\)

The work, titled ‘*Mirror*’ (pl.38) is a scene of bedroom of a newly married bride. A mosquito net is hanging from a stand of the cot and ‘*Durga*’ or ‘*Uma*’ is gracefully watching through a whole of the net towards his husband *Shiva*. Here *Shiva* is represented with closed eyes and stoned texture with an old garland; as if he is in the image of a reluctant husband who used to lose all attraction of the yesterday’s night as soon as the morning comes. This is a common patriarchal negligence acted by men to their women. But Bikash Bhattacharya narrated a different story through the satire of the fully opened eyes and the smile of the slightly curved lips of the *Durga* image. Through this smiling satire, she swept off entire patriarchal dominance and made her presence sound with a silent resistance. This painting is titled as *Mirror*, carrying the metaphor of a reflection of the self image, through which Bhattacharya may have conveyed a resistant image. He tried to show a woman who can resist by her counter negligence or reluctance against all patriarchal expressions. The painting ‘*Swapnamoyee II*’ (pl.39) showed a typical ambience of mid-day rooftops of North Calcutta. *Swapnamoyee* is an image of woman and she has a third eye like the other deity images of *Durga*. Here the woman is sitting at the corner of the roof wall with an expression of loneliness. She can share her loneliness only with her own self. Here she may engage in an intimate interaction with her own mind. The time caught in the canvas as mid-day with a mystic chiaroscuro of lights in bright ochre and shadows in sepia-mauve. The woman and her folded hands rest upon the knees, half open face with black thick hairs came down at her breast and the whole image has created a dreamy ambience in the canvas. Artist gave the name of this work as ‘*Swapnamoyee*’ means a
A woman is in dream, fully knowing that nobody could able to gaze her dream but will try. The gaze is a most common practice of men and it invades upon the private space of women. It happens because there is a taken for granted factor work in favour of men by which man can explore all privacy of any woman. Here, the image of the Swapnamayee is totally reluctant about the gaze surrounds her dream. As if she made an invisible wall around her personal space where the triumph of patriarchy will certainly be restricted and resisted. An interesting picture was executed in the same exhibition in 1990, titled as Shyma II (pl.40). Bhattacharya showed in this work a huge figure of a black cow with blue tint is sitting at the front of the canvas in an alley way of North Calcutta. At the far away end of the way a small boy is standing with a comparatively elder girl who might be shown in the metaphor of Apu and Durga, the characters of Pather Panchali of Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay. The black cow is symbolizing the deity of goddess Shyama an incarnation of Devi Durga. The novel Pather Pachali was an inspiration for Bikash Bhattacharya. In some article he wrote that he feels himself as Apu of Pather Pnachali and somewhere he wrote Durga the sister of Apu in Pather Pachali came to him in the image of goddess Durga. However, a dialogical interaction continued throughout his life between Bikash and Apu and Bhattacharya become a part of the novel Pather Pachali. He told in the small write up of his own catalogue, ‘There are somethings that totally envelop the course of some people’s lives. There seem to be no apparent rhyme or reason for such phenomena. Such as the role played by ‘Durga’ in any life. I have known her intimately from my early childhood. Bibhutibhusan Bandopadhyay created her as the daughter of Harih from Nischintapur. In Pather Panchali Satyajit Roy portrayed this same Durga as someone very familiar but quite unknown who was determined to make the most of the joy of living despite the harsh realities of daily life.16

Resistant image of woman is absolutely manifested in the painting ‘Darpamayee’ (pl.41) from the series works of Durga. Bikash Bhattacharya painted his archetype in an expression of woman empowerment. Here the woman is imaged in a typical tribal look, is standing in the edge of a cascade in a deep forest holding her kid in her lap. He showed this woman image
from the back and the face of the woman twisted towards the viewer, as if she is looking at the lens of a camera. An armed soldier is presented at the right most corner of the composition, who is watching the lady. The background he painted in hazy appearance of colour with the effect of suggestion preference and even the foreground where soldier figure is painted is also obscure. Only the centre position of the composition is clear as if the focus of the lens is concentrated upon the figure of ‘Darpamayee’. This panoramic vision is an evidence of Bikash Bhattacharya’s passion for cinematographic view that made his paintings more than real. In this context he agreed that, ‘I could not avoid surrealist elements, specially in cinema (a medium I feel immensely attracted to), in the memorable creations of famous filmmakers.’ (Bikash, 1997)

The turning face of ‘Darpamayee,’ her fully open confident eyes, her umber complexion, her long bow-like eyebrows and strong and straight stance of tribal figure throws a challenge against the arrogant gaze of an armed soldier, who is here a representative of patriarchal power. This mother archetype of Durga named as ‘Darpamayee’, indicates that she is a woman of pride consciously discriminating herself as unaided in a dense forest away from the chaos of society, and thus she becomes a real image of Other.

The images of the women Bikash created in his Durga series are never defeated by any fear of power; they are always confident about their appearance as a resistant woman. He told at the end of the catalogue of 1990's exhibition at Birla Academy:

‘I believe, and have to continue to believe, that ‘Durga’ may have lost out that day but actually she never admitted defeat, never will. That Durga is at times mother, at times sister, at times wife, at times daughter. Again, sometimes, she is 'she’...’ (Bikash Bhattacharya 1990. Back Cover Page)
Notes: Chapter II

1. Archetype: A central term to Jung’s analytical psychology. It is conceptually related to the term IMAGO, introduced by Jung (1911) to describe an unconscious prototypical figure of a mother, father or sibling. In 1912 Jung begins to describe such figures as “primordial images”; he introduces the noun “archetype” in 1919. The adjective “archetypal” is applied by Jungians to the overall pattern of a life-cycle that goes from childhood to early maturity, to the mid-life transition and finally to death…

Archetypes are by definition unconscious, but they can be activated by specific circumstances and can thus affect or even dominate conscious life. They are held by Jung to be part of a collective memory and experience, and are described as spontaneous products of the psyche that are present within the individual psyche from birth onwards… The animus is a woman’s archetypal image of man; the anima, man's archetypal image of woman. (Macey, 2000, p. 290)

2. Carl Jung had epitomized the idea of archetype through the essence of collective unconscious. World War I was a painful period of self-examination for Jung. It was, however, also the beginning of one of the most interesting theories of personality the world has ever seen. Jung’s (1875-1961) theory of archetype developed in three stages beginning in 1912 when he wrote the primordial images what he recognized in his own as well as his patients’ dreams and unconscious life. By 1917 he had begun to refer to a “non-personal dominant” in the individual psyche which he saw as attracting particular energies to it. By 1919 he started to call these nodal points of energy attractions as archetypes and distinguishing these nodal points of energies from the images themselves. The term he chose therefore, archetype, was to distinguish between these points of energy attraction and the actual images prone to being thrown into the awareness. Furthermore, Jung saw how the archetype was a psychosomatic concept which linked body and psyche. Jung's theory divides the psyche into three parts. The first is the ego, which Jung identifies with the conscious mind. Closely related is the personal unconscious, then Jung adds the part of the
psyche that makes his theory stand out from all others: the collective unconscious.

Sex and the life instincts in general are, of course, represented somewhere in Jung’s system. They are a part of an archetype called the shadow. Jung also referred the personal image in public as Persona and how it varies in the perspective of male and female, what he termed as Anima and Animus.

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3. See, the article ‘Navannar Aage’ (Roychowdhuri, 1997, p. 23)

4. The Bengal Famine may be placed in the context of previous famines in Mughal and British India. Deccan Famine of 1630-32 killed 2,000,000 (there was a corresponding famine in northwestern China, eventually causing the Ming dynasty to collapse in 1644). During the British rule in India there were approximately 25 major famines spread through states such as Tamil Nadu in South India, Bihar in the North, and Bengal in the East; altogether, between 30 and 40 million Indians were the victims of famines in the latter half of the 19th century (Bhatia 1985).


6. Indianness is the term used by N. Tuli to establish a genre of post independent art in the realm of conceptual practice of individual identity. In this connection N. Tuli referred J. Swaminathans comment in the early manifesto of ‘Group 1890’, that, ‘Thus by the early 1960s the first stage of a national assimilation of modern western art was nearing completion. Many seeds of reaction against this influence and towards an Indian identity-cum-
modern idiom had been shown. One such seed came with the “Group 1890” exhibition in October 1963, New Delhi. With Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s Inauguration and Octavia Paz’s support, the spokesman J. Swaminathan let loose his tired for change: “We reject the vulgar naturalism of Ravi Varma and the pastoral Idealism of Bengal School, down through the hybrid mannerisms resulting from the imposition concepts evolved by successive movements in modern European cosmopolitanism, toward alternately by memories of a glorious past born out of a sense of futility in the face of a dynamic present and the urge to catch up with the time so as to merit recognition…”[J. Swaminathan, ‘Group 1890’ Manifesto, 1963]. (Tuli, 1997, p. 217)

7. Pop, a newly developed idea of American art by the negating of authoritative role of Paris in the field of visual art. Introduced art as an object of nothing, and a subject of everything. N. Tuli wrote, ‘Ironically one trigger is bringing about this gradual shift, came from the exhibit of ‘Two Decades of American Art (1967-8), curated by Clement Greenberg, at the Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi, Reddeppa Naidu tells of the significance to the Indian artists of this exhibition: “It was a big eye opener for Indian contemporary artists. The reason is; until then they were looking to Paris now to see how the Americans had freed themselves from their French influence, and could be of themselves in their abstraction… it revealed that the free mind is the biggest asset, that you can do a painting out of nothing, you can do a painting out of everything, to use tomato can soup labels,... it was a new experience.” [Reddappa Naidu, Conversation with the Author, Madras, 17 July 1993].’ (Tuli,. 1997. p. 230)

8. The New York times published an article on the Cholamandalam art and artists under the title, Arts Abroad by Stephen Kinjerin29th January; 1898 (James, 2004, p. 51)
Artistic Career of Bikash Bhattacharya

Born June 21, 1940 Kolkata
Died December 18, 2006 (aged 66), Kolkata

Painting collection to be found in the following Museums and Archives:

National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi
Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi
Ministry of Education, New Delhi
Chandigarh University Museum, Chandigarh
Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal

Awards and honours:

Academy of Fine Arts Award, Calcutta (1962)
National Award, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi (1971)
Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Calcutta, National Award, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi (1972)
Banga Ratna (1987)
Padma Shri (1988)
Shiromani Purashkar (1989)
Nivedita Purashkar, Ramkrishna Vivekananda Ashram (1990)
Lalit Kala Akademi Fellowship (2003)

10. See, Desh, Sahitya Sankhya 1399 (Beng.), 1993. p. 189

11. See, The review of the exhibition held at Emami Chisel art gallery in 2009 on Bikas’s 79th birth day, where Sovon Some analyzed the discursive aspects of existence from the image of the doll to the people of the society of 70s. (Some, 2009, p. 54.)
Hyperrealism is a genre of painting and sculpture resembling a high-resolution photograph. Hyperrealism is considered an advancement of Photorealism by the methods used to create the resulting paintings or sculptures. The term is primarily applied to an independent art movement and art style in the United States and Europe that has developed since the early 2000s. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyperrealism_(painting))

‘Among the new forms of the figurative that arose after Pop Art, hyperrealism has polarized options more than most with respect to its aesthetic validity. It is also been called radical realism, photo-realism, ultra-realism and even precisionism. Veritable and exact representation, the dependency on photography (pre-existing or taken ad hoc), the restoration of certain traditional values, the subjection of the eye to a deceptive fidelity, the always magnified real dimension, prompted many to describe hyper-realism as artifice and regard its postulates with some suspicion.’ (Tibol, R. 2011, http://www.hyperrealism.net)

Rajeswari Sunder Rajan has explained this matriarchal culture and told: 'Those who assert that the Hindu goddess is feminist celebrate, first, the Hindu religion's richness and plurality of traditions. In contrast to the singular patriarchal god of the Judio-Christian tradition, Vedic Hinduism had female deities and (arguably) a "matriarchal worldview". Joanna Liddle and Rama Joshi are quoted frequently in this context:

*The worship of the mother goddess does not constitute a matriarchy, but it does constitute a matriarchal culture, in the sense that it preserves the value of women as life-givers and sources of activating energy, and it represents the acknowledgement of women’s power by women and men in the culture’ (55).' (Rajan, 2004, p. 320)

See, the review ‘Chakhsuser Arale’ in Desh, 2009, where Sovon Some discussed the patriarchal politics by making the notion ‘sacrificing’, which only suits for the women. (Some, 2009, p. 55)
15. In an autobiographical article, titled ‘Ami, Amar Chabi’ Bikash derived his fillings for Durga through the inspiration of his own Mother. (Bikash, 1993, p. 195)

16. See, the back cover Page of the catalogue released at the time of Bikas’s exhibition on Durga. (Bhattacharya, B. 1990. Back Cover Page)