

# ARPANA CAUR

## Artist Statement



My subjects are not just women. I moved from 'women in interiors' series of the 70s and 80s to wider social issues like the 1984 Sikh massacre, Widows of Vrindavan, Kabir, Nanak, Buddha, 1947 partition, Hiroshima, Environment (begun in 1988, when I saw Delhi changing and trees disappearing), Sohni – the love story, Yogis and Yoginis and my favourite subject of Time in my 'Day and Night' series where a yellow Day embroiders the thread of life and black night cuts using the motif of scissors for time.

For a large canvas painter, small scale is challenging, especially the 25 etchings I did from 1980 – 1993 in Delhi's Lalit Kala Academi studios as it was a technical challenge for a non-technical mind like mine.

Some of the other paper works in pencil and gouache said everything in a small scale, like Gandhiji's ECG sent to me by AIIMS for a seminar on 'Gandhi and Health'.

My mother has gifted me a separate museum space to house the paper works of the last 45 years and thanks to Gautam Bhatia, the architect-writer designed forest to hand them in an exciting and surprising way with moving panels.

Very few people visit galleries so I began taking art to the streets by making murals in 2000 in Delhi, followed by other cities. All the murals were non – commercial as I don't believe in asking for grants for what I want to do. That applies to my mother's Academy of Fine Arts and Literature, which was a single woman's vision, has run since 1977 without any grants, and which I help her to run through my art.

Like the murals, I wanted to take my sculptures to the places of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh ji in Punjab and Patna. They are for the common man who relates to them in a deeply spiritual way.