

TRACES OF TIME

Time-etched landscapes fascinate me beyond the merely visual. The way the natural world bends and blends, yields, changes and transforms over time is an expression of the meaning of life itself.

A ripple preserved in stone
Eons piled up in strata
Time rings in a tree trunk
Conflict written into ribbons in a rock
A thunderstorm embossed on a desert
Seasons painting a forest
Sunlight prowling round a mountain crevice
Time moving, Time still

In the silence of the Spiti Valley I saw Time in motion. Land shifting, sliding, yet menacingly still. In the Grand Canyon, I was compelled to listen as Time-past spoke so eloquently in strata-stories while the Colorado River continued to flow in Time-present. In the pristine blue waters of Pangong Tso in Ladakh, the world's highest saltwater lake, I witnessed Time standing still as seagulls hovered and tiny shrimps washed ashore and spoke of the great ocean of which they were once a part.

To witness a river in spate flow through a mountain gorge – the Colorado, the Sutlej, the Zaskar – is to witness two conflicting elements, water and earth, make way for each other, shifting, bending, yielding. In conflict, yet in harmony. Changing form but never essence. Sometimes volatile, violent. Sometimes serene, silent. Once this, once that. Both earth and water transforming over Time with unspeakable beauty.

If we look and listen, we will see our time and place in the universe.



The process of paper-making – where fibers yield to water, break down, only to bond again in water and form a fragile, translucent sheet – fascinates me. If left to itself in the sun to dry, paper shrinks. And as it does, it warps. Twisting and dancing in slow motion, sometimes taking forms that are quite simply sculptural. Working with paper for the past ten years, I have observed silently, but there came a time when I decided to participate. What you see is the result.

My raw materials are fibres from the banana plants of Kanyakumari and the mulberry trees of the north-eastern states, okra from Gujarat and cotton rags from Tirupur. The works are simply sheets of handmade paper created in the traditional way, without the use of additives and chemicals, but with varying beating durations. I have kept my intervention to a minimum, adding thread or copper wire at a crucial stage as a sheet is being made and then just leaving it to dry. Water and the Sun have been great collaborators.

Making large sheets: For the first time I made 6 ft sheets, which sometimes required 4 people to lift it out of the vat.



Time Maps

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With the Flow...

You can never step into the same river,
as new waters are always flowing



Water Stories

Water wrote the story of civilization. It will re-write its future



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The Art of Papermaking Jenny Pinto

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