



SONGS OF
REBIRTH

NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Songs of Rebirth

Rendered in vivid acrylic on masonite board, Nikhil Chaganlal's recent paintings are animated by a deep and complex affection for Goa, a feeling that combines penumbral melancholia with resurgent joy. These paintings embody the artist's profound and decisive shift away from Bombay and Alibaug, where he has spent much of his life, and his reorientation of purpose in Goa, where he has found emotional repose and artistic renewal. Through these pictorial songs of rebirth, Chaganlal processes the implications of this shift in intuitive ways, savouring the freedom offered by his new and nurturing environment while taking account of the dissonances he has left behind.

Two key motors drive this series of paintings. The first is a passionate regard for Goa's architecture in its life-affirming diversity, a love of Goa's unique placeness as articulated through its shapes and structures of habitation and settlement, congregation and worship. Chaganlal testifies to the vitality of Goa's temples, churches, cathedrals, wayside chapels and guardian deity shrines, not asserted against nature but cradled within its luxuriance of forests, shrubbery, groves and wetlands.

Everywhere, in these paintings, we experience the momentous presence of water in its myriad avatars – as river, sea, estuary, creek, lotus pool, *khazan* reserve, and temple pond. Diving steeply to the edge where land meets water or veering across precarious horizons, Chaganlal's landscapes speak to us of an ecology and a culture under grave threat today from the dangers of runaway real-estate development, unplanned urbanisation, wayward tourism, and environmental catastrophe unleashed in the name of infrastructural improvement.

The second key motor that drives these paintings is an impulse towards abstraction. Drawing on the effects of light, the veils of rain, quivering reflections in water, the passage of wind across rocks and currents, the artist generates a palpable momentum in every frame. Paint relays itself in these works both as vibrant colour and vigorous gesture – as flicker, spatter, swash and spray. Consequently, the contents of every frame appear to be kinetic, at first seemingly askew, then righting themselves, gathering themselves together to burst out of their bounds.

Chaganlal renders homage to the exemplars who have inspired and sustained him. We come upon references here, through image or handling, to Manet and Rouault, to van Gogh, to F N Souza and Manu Parekh. Technically, his palette is incandescent with reds, yellows, blues, greens, and oranges. But each of these colours is inflected with shadow. A luminous darkness forms the matrix of these paintings. Resonant songs of rebirth, they gain in depth and gravity by acting as elegies for the former selves that have now been sloughed off and interred in the past.

Ranjit Hoskote



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Quaint Town
acrylic on board
48" x 32", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Red Town

acrylic on board

48" x 32", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Fishing Village

acrylic on board

48" x 32", 2019 - 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Moon River Town

acrylic on board

48" x 32", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Ancient Town
acrylic on board
32" x 48", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Blue Town

acrylic on board

32" x 48", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Twilight Landscape

acrylic on board

32" x 48", 2018- 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

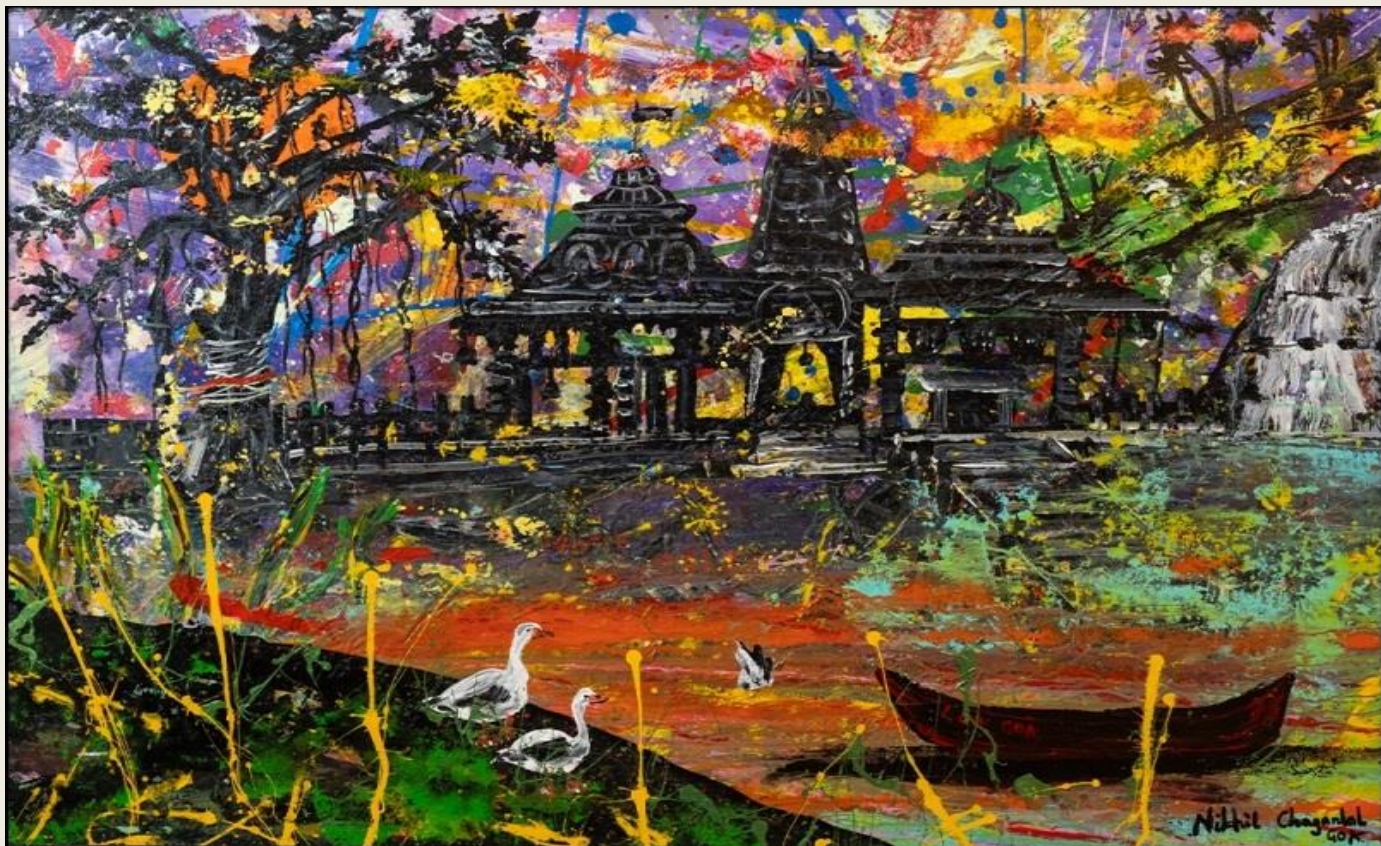
My Playground
acrylic on board

32" x 48", 2019 - 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Cathedral Town
acrylic on board
32" x 48", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Temple Town

acrylic on board

32" x 48", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Bodhi Tree

acrylic on board

48" x 36", 2021 - 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Church Hill Park
acrylic on board
48" x 36", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Shanty Town

acrylic on board

48" x 36', 2018 - 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Mystical Falls

acrylic on board

48" x 36", 2018 - 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Beach Shack

acrylic on board

47" x 35", 2020 - 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Off the Beaten Path

acrylic on board

36" x 48", 2022 - 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Heaven on Earth

acrylic on board

36" x 48", 2019 - 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Mangroves

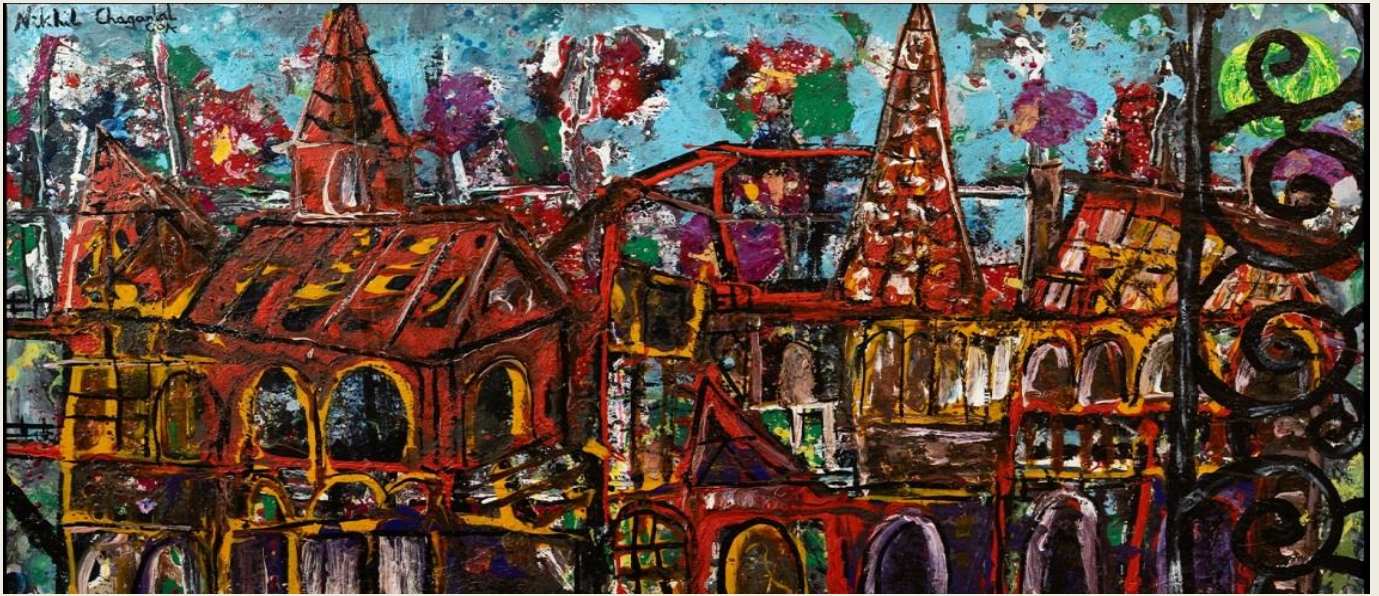
acrylic on board

30" x 48", 2018 - 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Hill Side Town
acrylic on board
48" x 24", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Old Town

acrylic on board

24" x 48", 2023



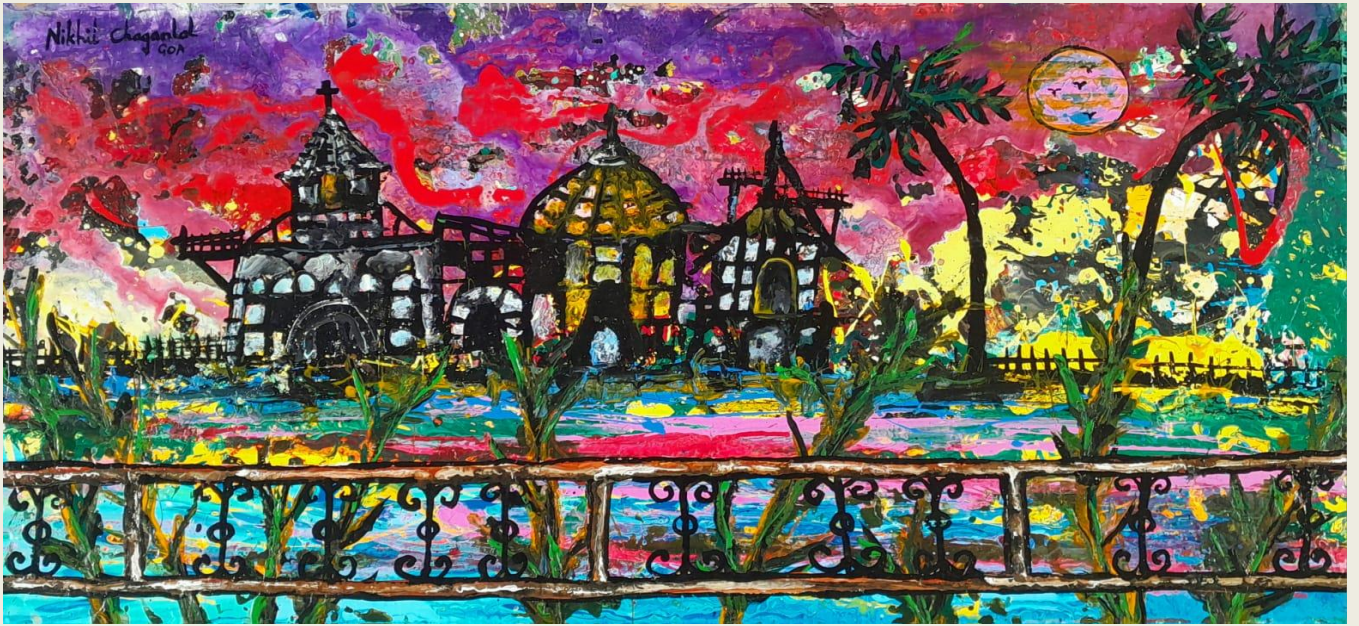
NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Vintage Town
acrylic on board
24" x 48", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Sleepy Boats
acrylic on board
24" x 48", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Gothic Town

acrylic on board

24" x 48", 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Riverside Town
acrylic on board
24" x 48", 2023

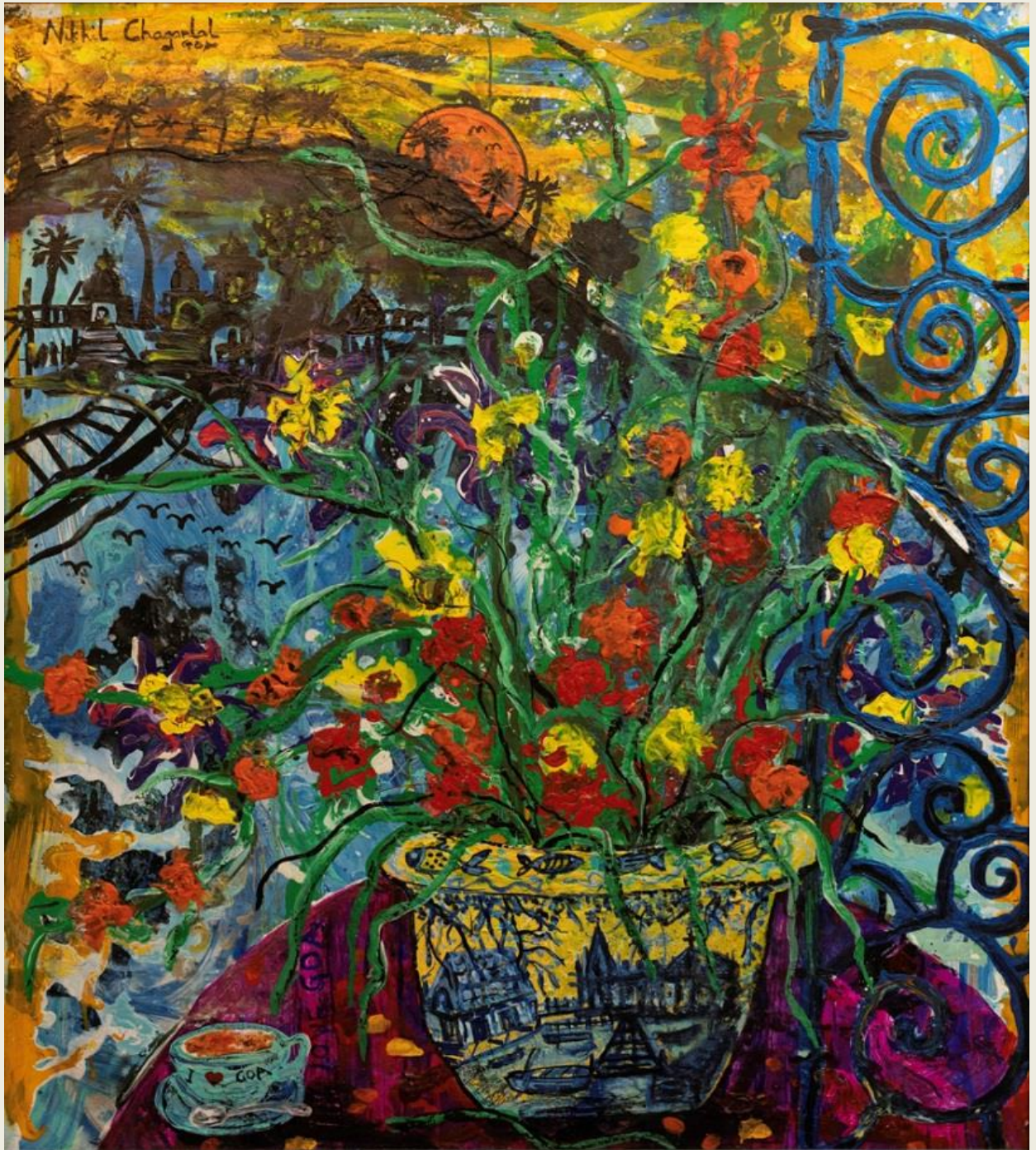


NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Woodlands

acrylic on board

24" x 48", 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

The Window Sill

acrylic on board

48" x 42", 2021 - 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Lakeside

acrylic on board

48"x 48", 2018 - 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

The Old Jetty

acrylic on board

48" x 48", 2018 - 2022



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Barefoot on Golden Sand

acrylic on board

48" x 48", 2018 - 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Grazing Goats

acrylic on board

48" x 48", 2020 - 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

The Lotus Pond
acrylic on board
48" x 48", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Waterfalls by Moonlight

acrylic on board

48" x 48", 2020 - 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Heritage Townscape

acrylic on board

24" x 60", 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Goan Landscape with Still Life
acrylic on board
60" x 24", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Dawn

acrylic on board

48" x 60", 2018 - 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Tranquil Tapestry

acrylic on board

48" x 60", 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Fort Town

acrylic on board

48" x 60", 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Forgotten Church

acrylic on board

48" x 60" 2019 - 2023



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

The Picnic Spot
acrylic on board

48" x 72", 2021 - 2024



NIKHIL CHAGANLAL

Balcony by the Sea

acrylic on board

48" x 71", 2018 - 2024