

## The process of making

by Lipika Bansal

In a conversation with Srikanta Paul, Arunima Choudhury and Maartje Korstanje, we talked about the physicality of the making process.

Srikanta Paul, Arunima Choudhury and Maartje Korstanje get fulfilment from the making process each in their own way. Paul uses various printing techniques such as lithography, etching, serigraphy, etc. Choudhury has experimented with various mediums over the years. Korstanje's large sculptures with organic shapes show the transition between life's beauty and decay.

**Paul's** woodcuts are huge in size, four by six feet, some larger. "I use these big sizes for my work, because I like the physical involvement with my work. The hand process, the physical process: first I chisel the wooden panel, next I put ink on top of the surface. The next step is rubbing behind the surface... gradually the image appears. It is a long process, taking 3 to 4 hours per print, continuously rubbing, rubbing, rubbing... I like sweating while I am printing."



For **Choudhury** the process and the end result are complementary to each other. Each guides the other. For the past 40 years, she has been using earth colours, which until now have remained bright and enduring. In 2006 Choudhury began using water-based vegetable dyes. "I prepare the colours from flowers, peels and seeds of fruits, bark, roots and different parts of plants. Each part of a plant gives a separate hue. After boiling in water extracts are ready to be applied on acid free handmade paper. For brightness and permanency, I mix Alum. Alum is a transparent powder, a mordant that fixates the color."



**Korstanje's** work is inspired by the Great Banyan tree of Kolkata, a tree which is more than 250 years old. "Once I came back to the Netherlands, I looked at the pictures of the Banyan tree that I had taken during my visit, printed these in black and white and stuck them to my studio walls. Just to get started. After a while I removed the pictures; I had to find my own way and break free from the images. I didn't want to just imitate the photos."

While conducting more research on the tree, Korstanje read that it had partially fallen into disrepair; the main trunk had been hit by cyclones and endured various calamities and at some point, some parts had to be sawed off. "I don't only want to show the beauty of the tree, but also its decay."

The tree developed into a sculptural furniture, a two-seater in which you are enveloped by trunks that go vertically into space and can sit softly on cushions with proliferating branches.

