



Sneha M Lakshman

Portfolio | September 2024

## **Introduction**

As an artist deeply rooted in the exploration of cultural narratives and spiritual themes, my work seeks to bridge the gap between ancient traditions and contemporary artistic expressions. With over 30 years of experience in art and design, I have devoted my practice to investigating the intersections of art, design and Indian spirituality, with a particular focus on the rich cultural heritage of India. This portfolio showcases a selection of my projects that reflect my commitment to exploring identity, gender, community, cultural and environmental consciousness through various mediums.



## Select Art, Design & Photography Projects

- [Art Series: Contemporary Abstract Art based on Indian Cosmology & Philosophy \(2024\)](#)
- [Art Series: Who Am I? \(2023\)](#)
- [Photo Essay: Glorious Namma Hampi \(2022\)](#)
- [Photo Essay: For Sale in Fort Kochi \(2021\)](#)
- [Art Series: Voiceless \(2017\)](#)
- [Photo Essay: Nightfall at the Beach \(2015\)](#)
- [Photo Essay: Thanjavur A day trip \(2012\)](#)
- [Photo Essay: Mcleod Ganj Asceticism & Aesthetics \(2012\)](#)
- ['Ma: One Day in the Life of Vidya Patil' \(2000\)](#)







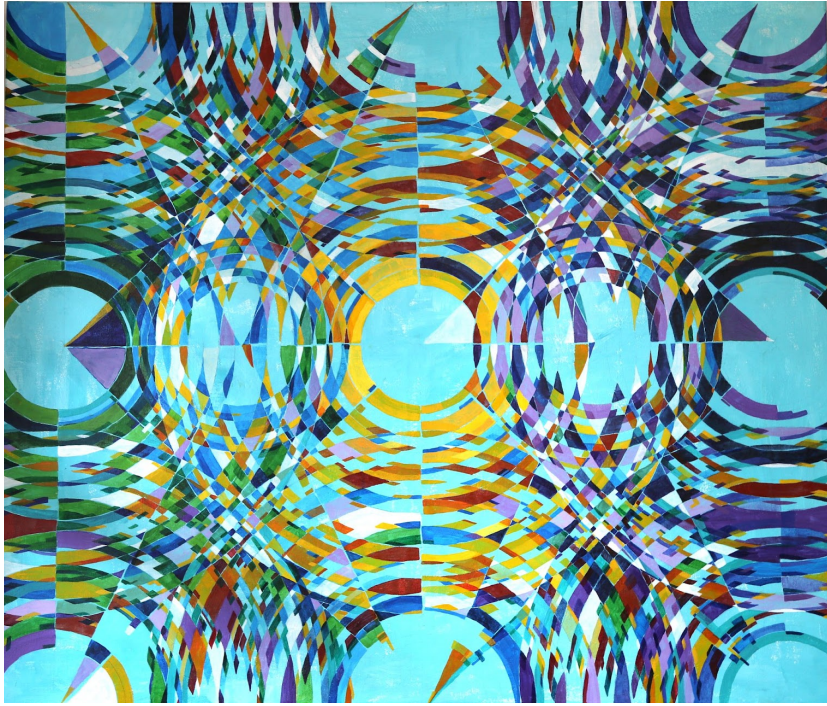
# Art Series: Contemporary Abstract Art based on Indian Philosophy (2024)

## Project Overview

This art series combines contemporary geometric abstraction with ancient Indian philosophy and cosmology, connecting spiritual wisdom with modern scientific ideas. The series seeks to explore simultaneously science and ancient Indian treatises on cosmology - such as the origins and structure of the universe

## Artistic Approach

Each artwork holds a parallel conversation with the viewer. It articulates auspicious geometry inherent in the living cultural practises & beliefs such as Sahasrara (crown chakra), the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara, etc into the modern questions involving geometrical explanations & cosmological treatises such as cycles of creation and dissolution of the universe, universes cosmic cycle, Everything from nothing and other such constructs.







# Namma Glorious Hampi (2022)

## Project Overview

"Namma Glorious Hampi" is an artistic tribute to the ancient UNESCO World Heritage site of Hampi, capturing the grandeur and spiritual significance of this historic location in southern India. The project seeks to reinterpret Hampi's architectural brilliance and cultural heritage through the lens of a rich live cultural heritage. The project reflects the timeless beauty and the living history of this sacred space, highlighting its intricate carvings, majestic temples, and the spiritual energy that pervades the site.

## Artistic Approach

Through detailed visual storytelling, to bring attention to the preservation and appreciation of this unique cultural treasure of India's rich spiritual and historical past. The project serves as an offering to a fresh perspective on Hampi's enduring relevance. By focusing on the spiritual and cultural essence of Hampi, the project encourages deeper engagement with India's heritage, inviting viewers to reconnecting the viewer to their practises and beliefs such that it connects to their living experience of the day.













# Photo Essay: For Sale in Fort Kochi

## Project Overview

"For Sale in Fort Kochi" captures an immersive cultural experience that takes visitors on a walking journey through the historic streets of Fort Kochi, leading to the iconic Jewish Synagogue. This project explores the vibrant marketplace that unfolds along the way, where tourists encounter a rich blend of history, art, and culture through the eclectic items available for sale. From antique artifacts and colonial memorabilia to handmade crafts and contemporary trinkets, the journey offers a glimpse into the many eras that have shaped Fort Kochi's identity.

The layered history of the area, from its ancient trade routes to its colonial past, invites visitors to not only purchase unique keepsakes but to experience the cultural stories embedded. The walk is a sensory exploration of the blend of eras, communities, and influences that coexist in Fort Kochi.

## Artistic Approach

"For Sale in Fort Kochi" is an essay through the historic streets that the viewer encounters as a tourist. A glimpse of the colorful array of items that represent different eras of Kochi's past—artifacts from ancient trade, colonial relics, and modern-day crafts. Each collectible is a puzzle piece from the timeline of a vibrant trade center that celebrated all faiths, cultures and beliefs in parallel and is a capture of pre colonial India's welcoming qualities.









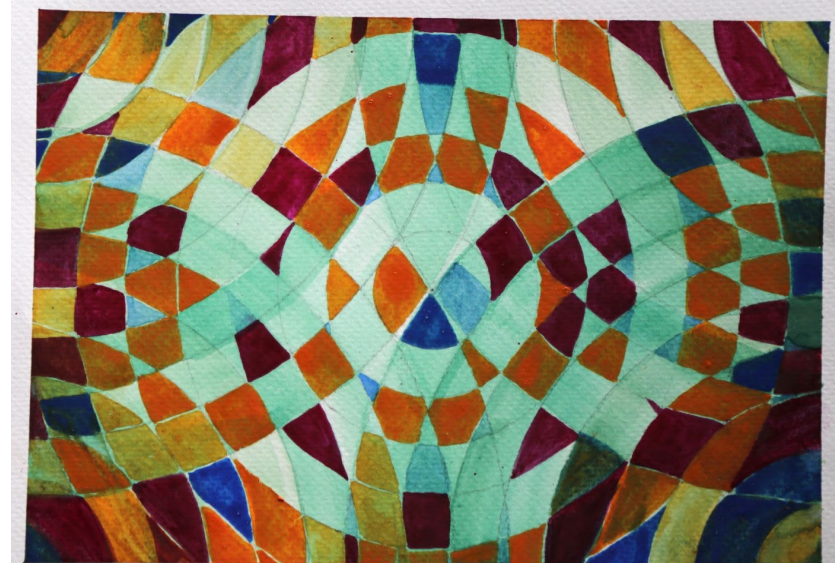
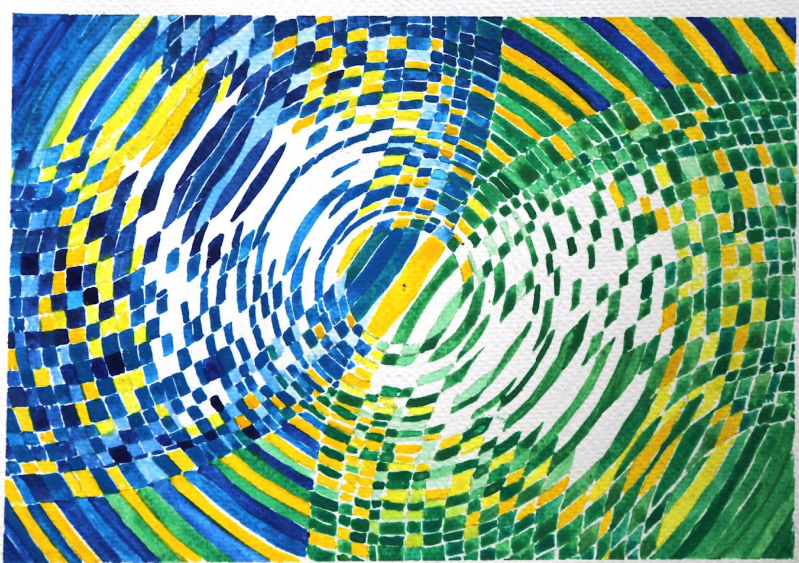
## Art Series: Who Am I? (2023).

### Project Overview

"Who Am I?" is an introspective series that delves into the philosophical question of identity. Drawing from personal, psychological and philosophical perspectives, this series explores the concept of the self in relation to another and their context; the larger community. The artwork in this series reflects a journey of self-discovery, questioning the boundaries between the individual and the collective.

### Artistic Approach

In this series, I utilize geometric and abstract forms to represent the complex layers of identity. The use of bold colors and shapes creates a dynamic visual language that conveys the tension between the self and the whole. This exploration of personal and philosophical questions is deeply influenced by ancient Indian thought, particularly the ideas of self-inquiry and the quest for truth.













# Art Series: Voiceless (2017)

## Project Overview

"Voiceless" is a series dedicated to the themes of silence, marginalization, and power even if unspoken. This work seeks to give voice to those who are often unheard, using visual art as a medium to express the nuances of silence and the story of every woman marginalized. The series is inspired by both personal reflections and broader social issues. It particularly invites the viewer to take a feminist perspective. It questions the contradictions by superimposing a revered God on to an everyday woman to instill a quiet discomfort / unresolved conflict.

## Artistic Approach

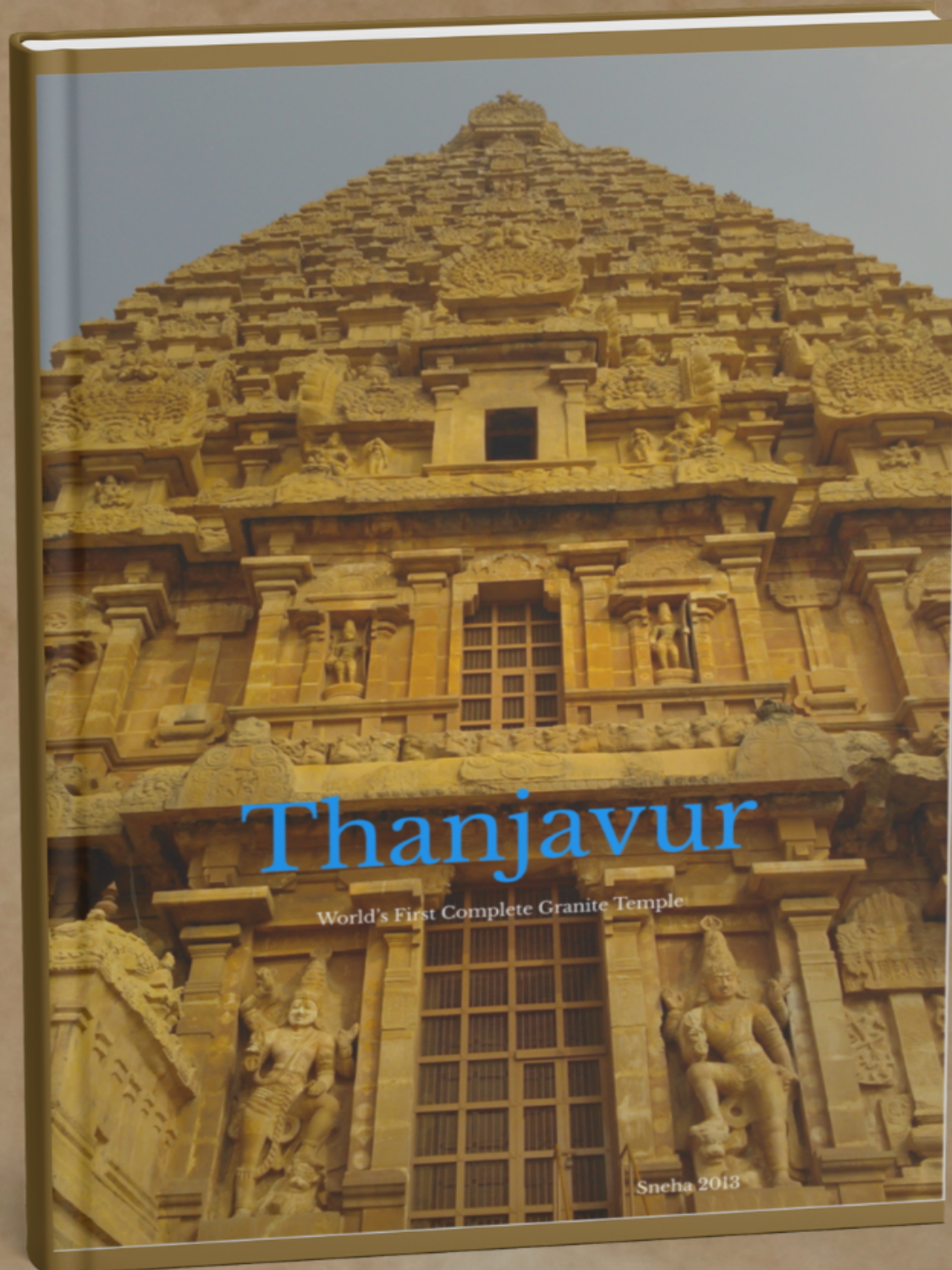
The artworks in "Voiceless" employ minimalist portraits and merges a revered animal form into the woman to evoke a sense of shock with stillness and contemplation. The use of muted colors and subtle textures reflects the quiet strength of the voiceless, while the absence of overt symbols emphasizes the power of what is left unsaid. This series is a visual representation of the underlying ancient power, resilience and dignity of those who endure.





*Reference: Below are the animals in their divine devotional forms revered in temples.*





# Thanjavur

World's First Complete Granite Temple

Sneha 2013



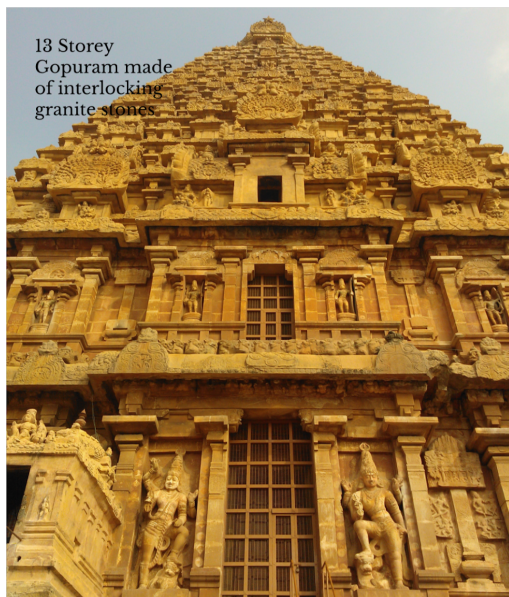
# Photo Essay: Thanjavur (2013)

## Project Overview

This 32 page photo essay captures the essence of Brihadeeswara Temple, an ancient temple renowned for its rich cultural heritage, architecture, and artistry. This temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and its classical art forms, is the world's first complete granite temple.

## Artistic Approach

Through carefully composed photographs, this essay aims to document both the grandeur of Thanjavur's historical temple and the glimpse of the tourists for whom this is the abode of Lord Shiva. The visual narrative journeys through the country's timeless architecture, intricate sculptures, and vibrant local life, offering a time warp into the ancient Thanjavurian - RajaRaja's ambition to build the largest temple from resources many kilometers away with engineering that is marvelous even today.







A lizard  
on the temple  
entrance









# Photo Essay: McLeod Ganj Asceticism & Aesthetics (2012)

## Project Overview

This photo essay captures the unique atmosphere of McLeod Ganj, a Himalayan town known for its blend of ascetic spiritual practices and vibrant cultural aesthetics. Home to the Tibetan government-in-exile and the Dalai Lama, McLeod Ganj is a spiritual and cultural hub where ancient Buddhist traditions coexist with rich visual artistry. The essay explores how the town's ascetic beliefs, marked by simplicity and spiritual devotion, are intertwined with its colorful aesthetics, detailed Tibetan Tantric art evident within the monasteries, deities and scriptures.

## Artistic Approach

The images aim to highlight contrasts and harmonies: the austerity of ascetic life and the vibrancy of cultural expression. Photographs capture the meditative calm of Buddhist monks alongside the intricate murals, colorful prayer wheels, and the breathtaking landscapes that define McLeod Ganj. This combination reflects the town's spiritual depth and its cultural richness, making it a place where inner reflection and external beauty coexist.









स्त्री बाल शक्ती



# 'Ma: One Day in the Life of Vidya Patil'

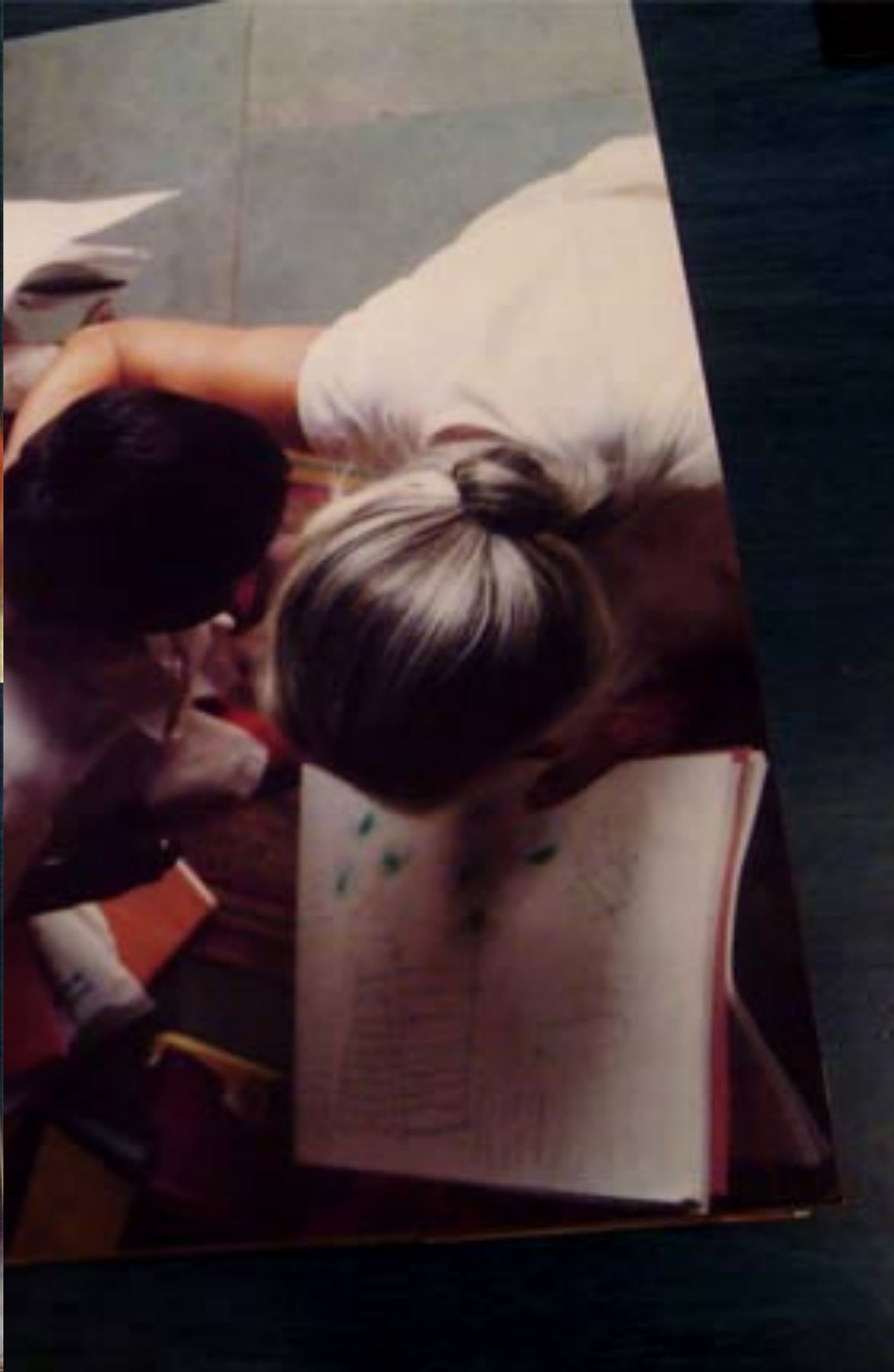
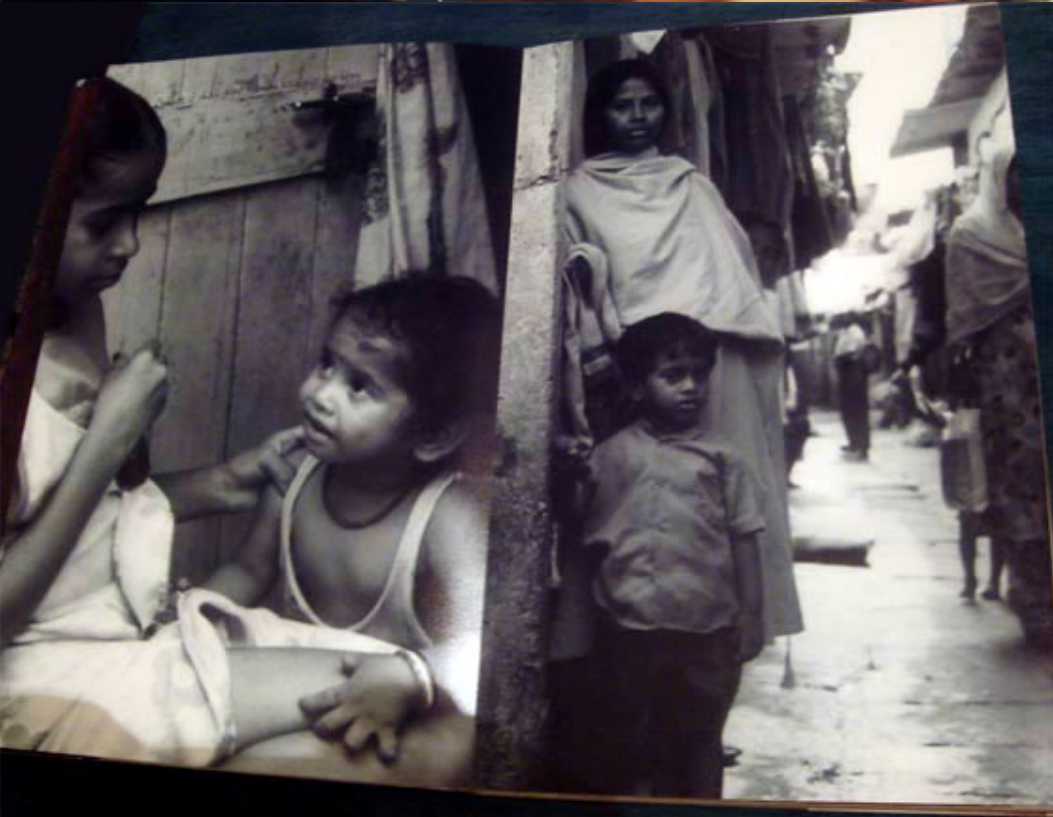
## Project Overview

"Ma: One Day in the Life of Vidya Patil," is a deeply introspective project that tells a story without words, using photography to capture the life, work, emotions, and thoughts of a 73-year-young woman. The project reflects the quiet complexities of everyday life, particularly the nuanced and often unspoken experiences of women. Through this series, I aimed to present the subtle beauty of routine moments, the resilience and grace of aging, and the emotional depth that resides in the ordinary.

## Artistic Approach

The power of photography to communicate tender, poignant moments is central to this project. Each image is carefully juxtaposed to create a narrative that evolves with every encounter, inviting the viewer to find new meanings in each scene. The visual narrative is designed to be inspirational, encouraging the viewer to reflect on their own lives and make meaningful changes. The absence of words allows for an open interpretation, where the visual flow of the day speaks to universal themes of life, age, and emotion.











# Photo Essay: Twilight at the Beach (2015)

## Project Overview

"Twilight at the Beach" is a serene photo essay capturing the ethereal beauty of the beach at dusk. Located along Kerala's scenic coastline, Cheriya Beach transforms as the sun sets & the beach welcomes into calm stillness. It focuses on the transition from the fading golden light of dusk to the deep blues and blacks of night, creating an immersive visual experience of the beach after just sunset. The interplay of light and shadow underlines the peaceful solitude that envelops the beach as day turns to night and the people return home.

## Artistic Approach

The photographs are designed to capture the interplay between natural elements and the approaching darkness -, capturing the textures of the sand and water as they respond to the diminishing light. The waves, now quieter under the night sky, are photographed to reflect their soft, rhythmic flow. The aim is to evoke a quiet sense of solitude, contemplation, and peace, where the beach becomes a retreat from the day's activity, as the kites, boats and people return home.







## **Thank you!**

This aims to capture my lifelong dedication to exploring and preserving cultural narratives through art. From the ancient splendor of ganges to the quiet strength of the voiceless, my work is driven by a deep respect for tradition and a desire to engage with contemporary issues. I believe that through public engagement and creative expression, we can foster a greater appreciation for the cultural and environmental heritage that shapes our world.