

and gesticulating humans.

She has been doing it for more than fifteen years. The visual ecstasy that she harps on has struck a different chord in many a mind. However, the recent solo show at Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, showcases her already familiar art form and more. She displays her own brand of horticulture.

"I used to throw away a good portion of the tree trunks after I have finished my sculptures.

And suddenly one day I thought, why not use them as handmade pots for my plants," she confides. This process of turning tree trunks or even roots into a plant-pot has started a whole new cycle in her life. The results are displayed in the gallery, but these experiments in plantation took years to master.

"The Pakur tree that you see in the gallery, has been with me for last fourteen years," says the artist. She makes it a point to treat these trees as part of her family. She is always on the look out for a roadside sapling or a small tree that soon will be uprooted by anyone next to us.

Both with the material for her sculpture and plant, Priyabhashini remains an artist dependent on indigenous resources. Hers certainly is an independent and alternative way. "Even if I go somewhere to attend a seminar and I stumble into a sapling or a tree trunk, I pick it up and take it home," she reveals how she accumulates her raw material. At one time she couldn't help nullify her husband's request to keep her hands off a tree that she desired to save.

It was during a funeral and she was as usual adamant to get her tree to replant it in one her pots. To make things look civilised, she went back in the evening to pick up her tree.

Though a certain sense of beauty governs Priyabhashini's world, she makes it a point that things don't get bogged down in the desire to decorate the house. Although her plants are meant for urbanites who lack proper space for planting trees, she says, "It is more about bringing a patch of green in your own home than about decorating the home. It is mostly about saving the trees."

In her effort to keep this process going, she has made many an attempt to rescue roadside saplings. She, in this respect, is true to her word. Her total presentation comprises only of the indigenous variety that we often ignore, as they do not easily appeal to the urban sets of eyes.

Apart from the huge sculptural pieces or plants, there are simple craft-like presentations. The best example of this is the Pakur tree and



An afternoon of rain clouds.



the way it was adorned with encircling boats. The tree itself is of human-height and she turns it into an occasion to create a virtual miniature ghat -- a river station where boats are anchored under such trees. To make her small boats, Priyabhashini uses the buter coverings of the pod from which the coconuts emerge at the early stage of flowering. Their beauty is in their simplicity. She is crafty, but never too much to make her works look like products.

What is it that makes her work so fraught with emotion? It is the seemingly pristine look and the feel of the natural. The manipulation is so subtle that her work gives the impression as if they each were formed through a long natural process. The patina of the old and weathered wood also adds to the aura that she strives to create. Usually she sticks to colours that hide any sign of sanding. And polishing is avoided altogether. Yet in this show a couple of new works veer to a different look -- they are sand to show the true colour of the wood, which is yellow-white. The work titled "Emon diney tarey bola jaey" (In such a day you could tell one) is one human-like form growing out of another. They are a couple -- mutating towards an unknown end.

The same sense of metamorphosis is brought into the work "Shey rater kotha" (The story of that night). The suggestion of humans are even fainter in this tangle of roots embracing one another. The effect of having to confront piece like this lying on floor, presented without a stand or plinth, is a surreal one. It seems like a naive or expressionist version of the celebrated Laocoon sculpture of the