

Born 1980, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Central to Najmun Nahar Keya's artistic practice is the relationship between human behavior and society. Having spent five years in Tokyo, on the prestigious Monbukagakusho Japanese government scholarship, awarded to one emerging Bangladeshi artist every year; these years had a disproportionately high impact on Keya's art, and on her person. The experience of being an immigrant in a country not known to welcome immigrants, brought out in her a talent of finding beauty, even when it is buried deep. Her art, too, embraced Japanese art in nuanced ways.

An underlying thread within Keya's works is the relationship between her personal memories and present experience of living in Dhaka. Coming back to Bangladesh after living in Tokyo was not easy for the artist. Dhaka, the city where she had grown up and lived her entire life, had grown bewilderingly in the five years that she was away. Using the Japanese techniques and concept of wabi-sabi, and kintsugi, Keya draws on her memories of old Dhaka and then gives them a new life.

Najmun Nahar Keya received her BFA and MFA in Drawing and Painting from the University of Dhaka and also an MFA in Drawing and Painting from Tokyo University of the Arts. Her work has been exhibited in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, France and other countries. She has also participated in several artist residency programs. In 2006 and 2007, Keya received a fellowship from the Aminul Islam Trust. In 2010, she won the Grand award in Young painters exhibition, organized by Berger paints Bangladesh limited. In 2018 she won the Charles Wallace Fellowship in the UK and received an Honorable mention award at the 18th Asian Art biennale. Keya was formally a member of the Britto Arts Trust, the first non-profit artist run organization in Bangladesh since 2008.

The artist is currently lives and works in Dhaka, Bangladesh.