

Canvassing for Japan



Nandita Chaudhuri; one of her works depicting the tsunami

VANDANA KALRA

A SHORT distance away from the hustle and bustle of the Venice Biennale 2011, are displayed two works that bring back memories of the recent tragedy in Japan. The artist behind these is the London-based Nandita Chaudhuri, who was shortlisted from among several participants of a Pre-Biennale show in May. "It was rather unexpected," she says. "I am exhibiting at a group show at the Scoletta of San Giovanni Battista, alongside the Venice Biennale. The venue is just five minutes away from the main venue of the Biennale, Arsenale and Giardini, and a lot of people are trooping in. At any other time, my work would not have been seen by as many people."

The two works on display form a series called "The Islands have Shifted". When Japan was struck by a tsunami in March, the artist had followed the tragedy from her London apartment. It wasn't only the faces that



moved her, when news reports said that the earth's axis had shifted due to the tsunami and the island had moved a distance of eight feet, she found herself pondering over the "fragility of set co-ordinates and land mass when confronted by forces beyond control". She vent her angst by painting in thick brush strokes, with torrent waves of the tsunami in the backdrop.

The 52-year-old, who was born in Ahmedabad and raised in Mumbai, is a mid-level artist who holds an endorsement from the Royal Academy of Arts, and exhibited at the Prague Art Fair and Brussels Art Fair in 2010, and at Frieze in London in 2009. Coming up are exhibitions in Rome, Prague and the Florence Biennale.

