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*Codes of a future,
traces of the Ancient*

By Anni Kumari
Curated by Sanjana Shah

We all carry with us imprints of the past, guiding our every sense and pre-empting our future pathways. The very basis of nature, everything around us and within us, is made up of these imprints presenting themselves as shapes, spaces, structures and fundamentally – patterns. Recognition and repetition is essential to the human way of making sense of the world and expressing it in our unique interpretation. In order to survive, functionality has always been deeply ingrained in all aspects of life, especially aesthetics. Anni Kumari embodies this unique balance by being both a native of methodological scientific temperament and a practitioner of fluid creativity to express her inner self and thoughts.

On the surface her works seem simple, minimal, almost decorative. Today we take that to usually mean non-complex and hence by default non-intellectual or lacking in depth. However, one of the most ancient and primal tendencies in humans is to seek basic order, rhythm and beauty. It is seen in all the areas of the arts, like dance, music, poetry, design and architecture, thereby proving that searching for simplicity in visual pleasure is our evolutionary heritage. Anni de-clutters these over-intellectualized ideas and goes back to that original minimalism that is coded within us. Ironically, despite this relatable exterior, the works are built on nuanced modules and grids from Mathematics using concepts like the Fibonacci Series, Fractal Geometry and prime number sequencing.

Mathematics is a universal theme applicable to all fields of life from Geography to Biology and Cosmology. Hence this multi-layered alignment of form and intention presents Anni's works in an awe-inspiringly synchronized manner. When asked about this mastery she humbly pays homage to one of her major sources of inspiration: Indian traditional art and temple architecture. Alignment was ingrained in every area of ancient Indian culture with our temples emulating the primordial shapes of the circle and square and calculated precision being used in even the simplest of things like the rangoli design pattern of Kolam in Tamil Nadu or the monochrome geometry in the Khovar folk art of Jharkhand. These cultural synergies were rooted in ideas of growth and consciousness, with these spaces and practices being energy centers for people. Interestingly, this basic mathematical foundation is still incredibly relevant even today in our modern lives with prime numbers and such being used actively in computing and creating unique codes for digital algorithms.

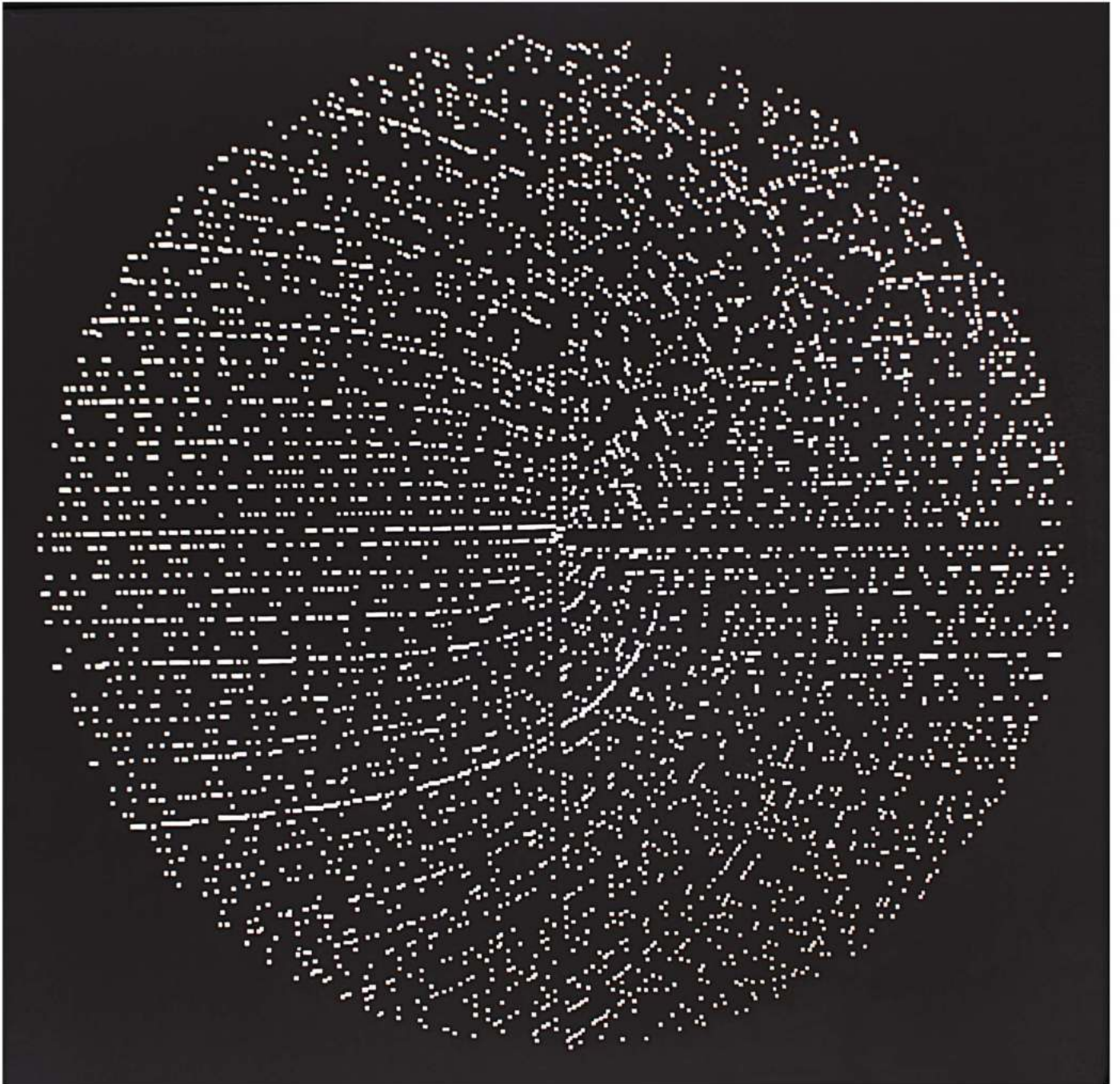
It is therefore an interconnectedness that brings together past and future, real and metaphysical, material and spiritual, and most importantly, experiential. The works are dynamic in motion and continually evolving under the gaze of the viewer. The pattern is reminiscent of something that we have seen before in many forms, from the imprint of our thumbs to the shapes of river deltas, the points on spatial maps to the constellation of the stars. This allows for a multi-reading of it that Anni wants her audience to instinctively and intuitively engage in.

Much like life, the dualities, the subtleties and the synchronicities in her art are easily connected with but also deeply aspirational.

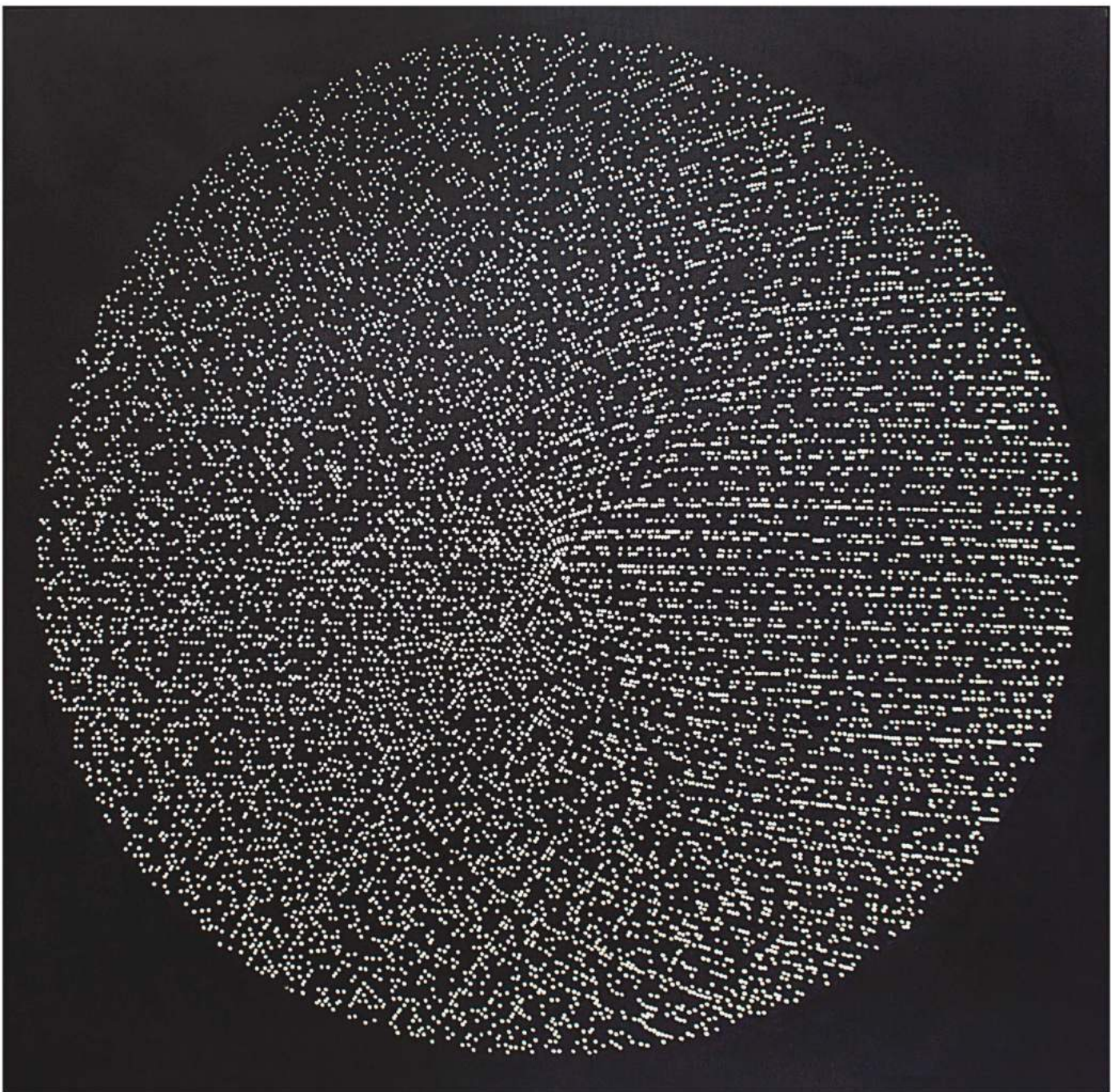
SANJANA SHAH
CURATOR



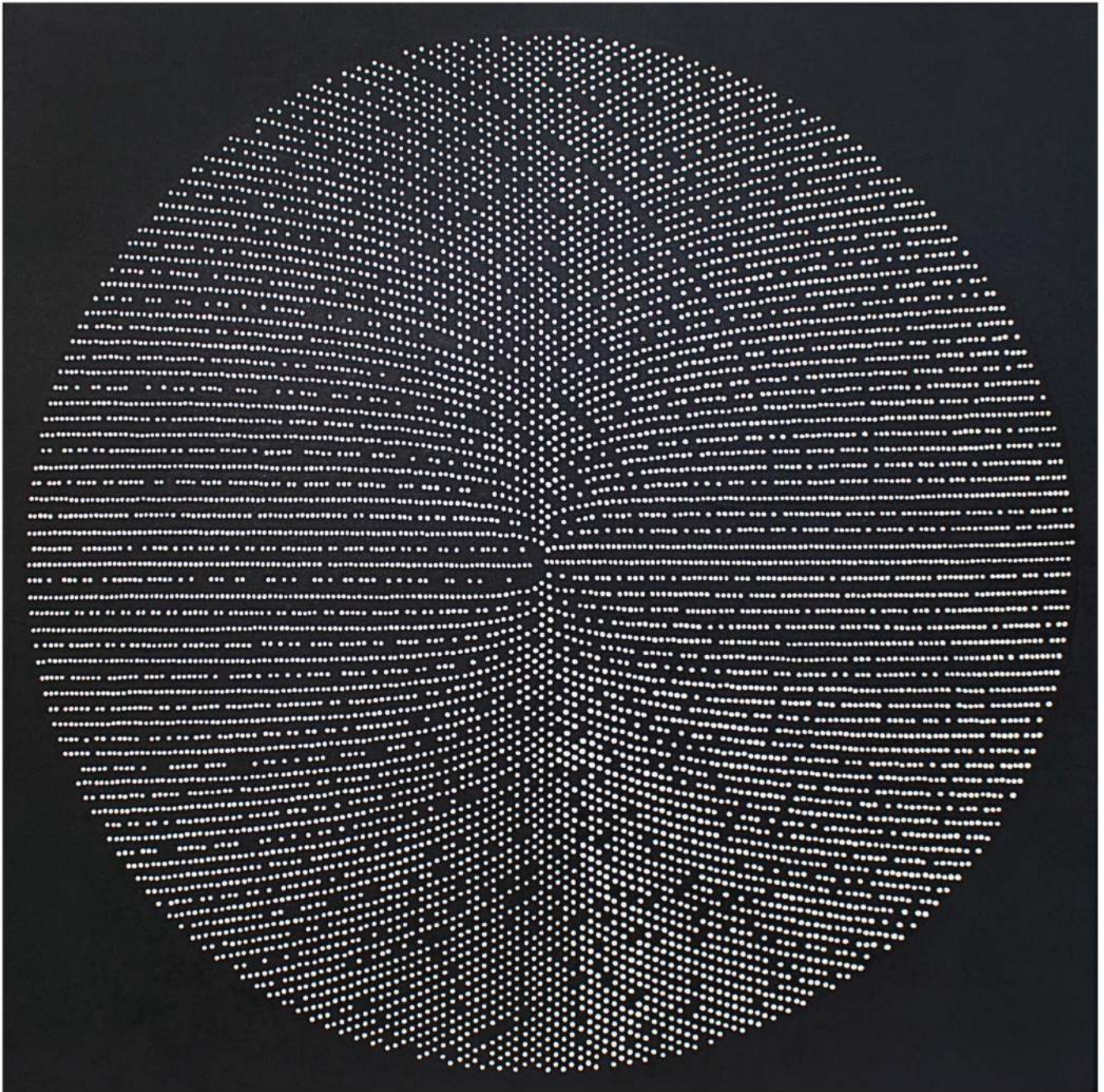
Some equations have multiple identities - VIII, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 inches, 2020



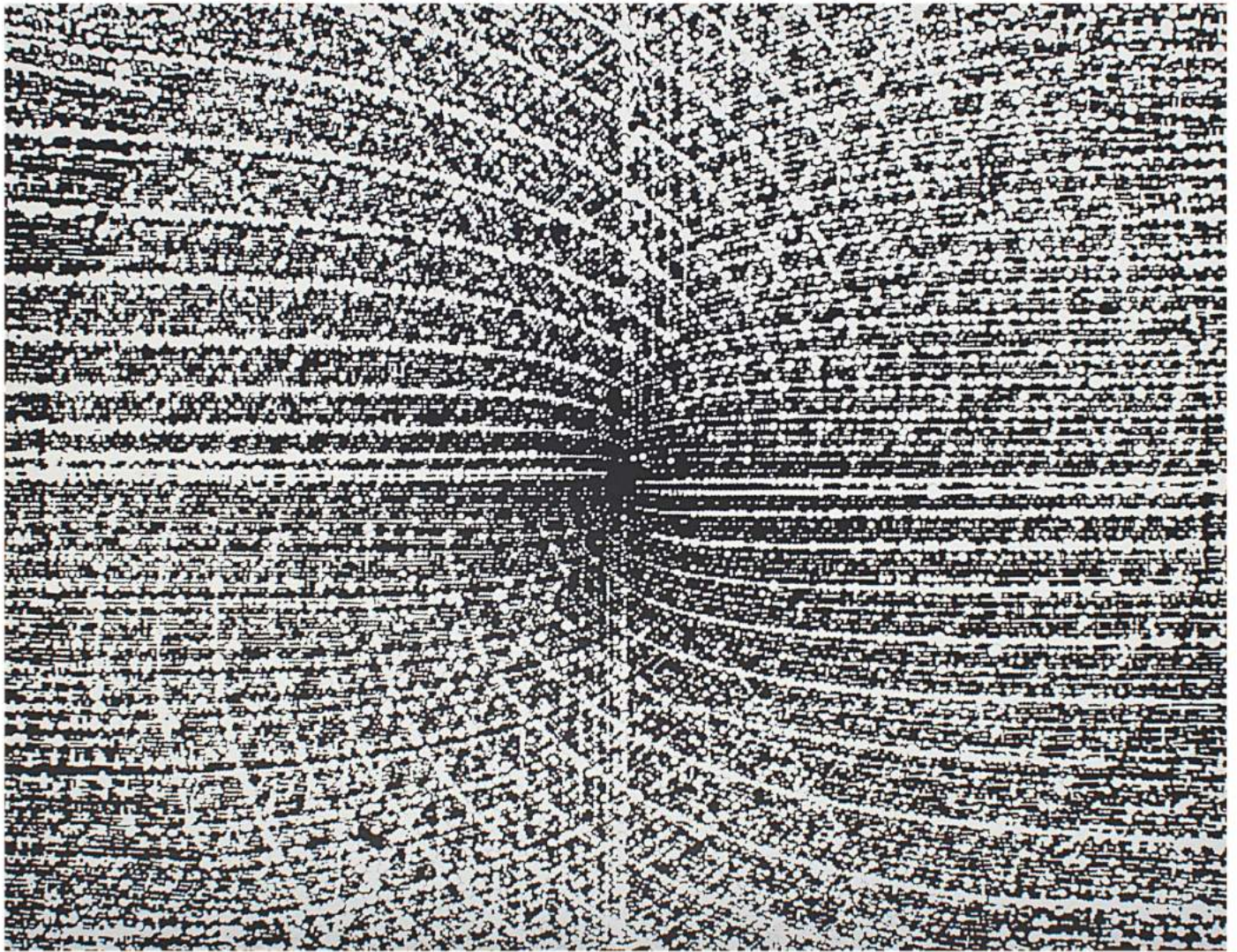
Some equations have multiple identities - VI, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 inches, 2021



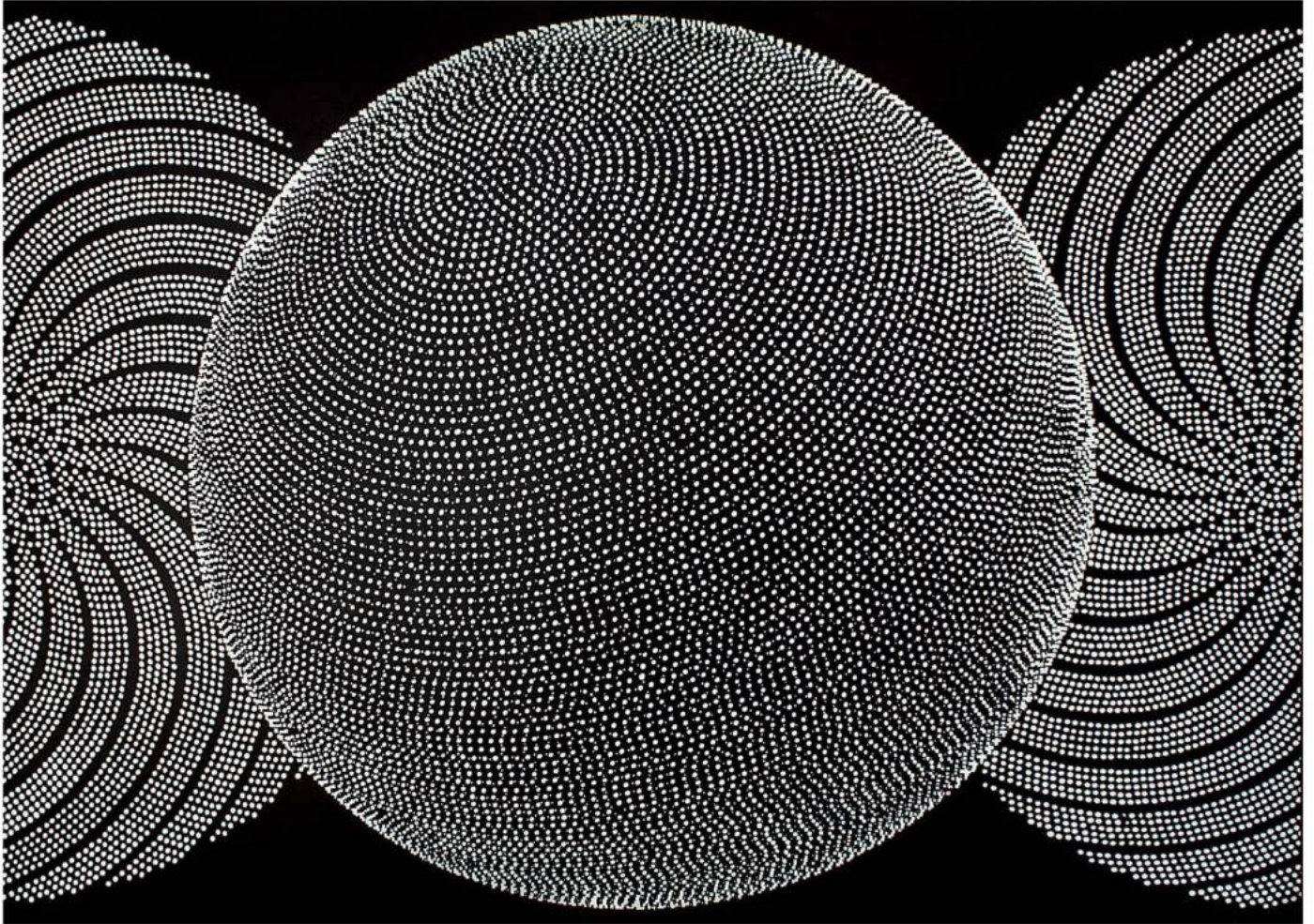
Bluff Point - V, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 inches, 2021.



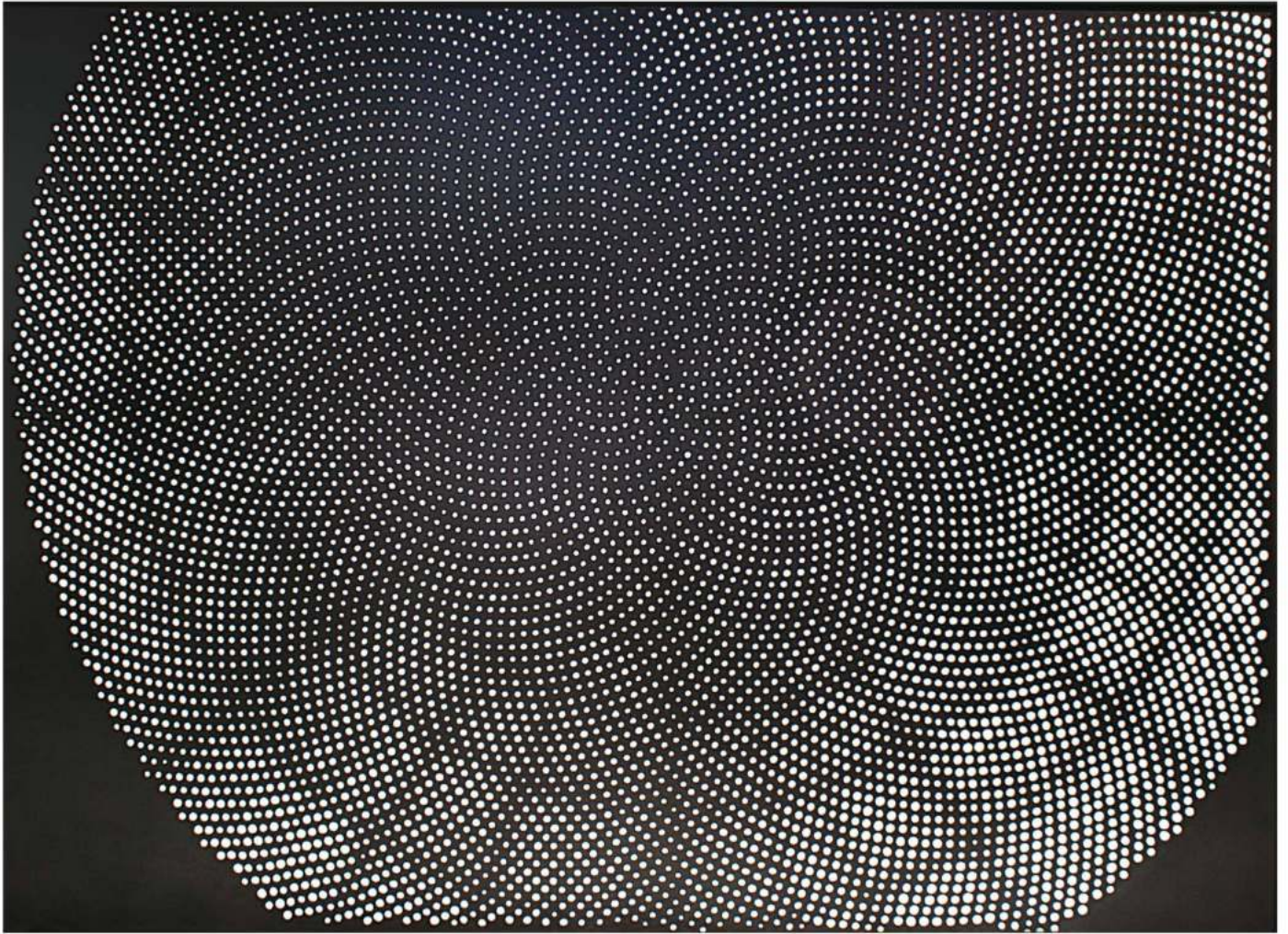
Bluff Point - IV, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 inches, 2021



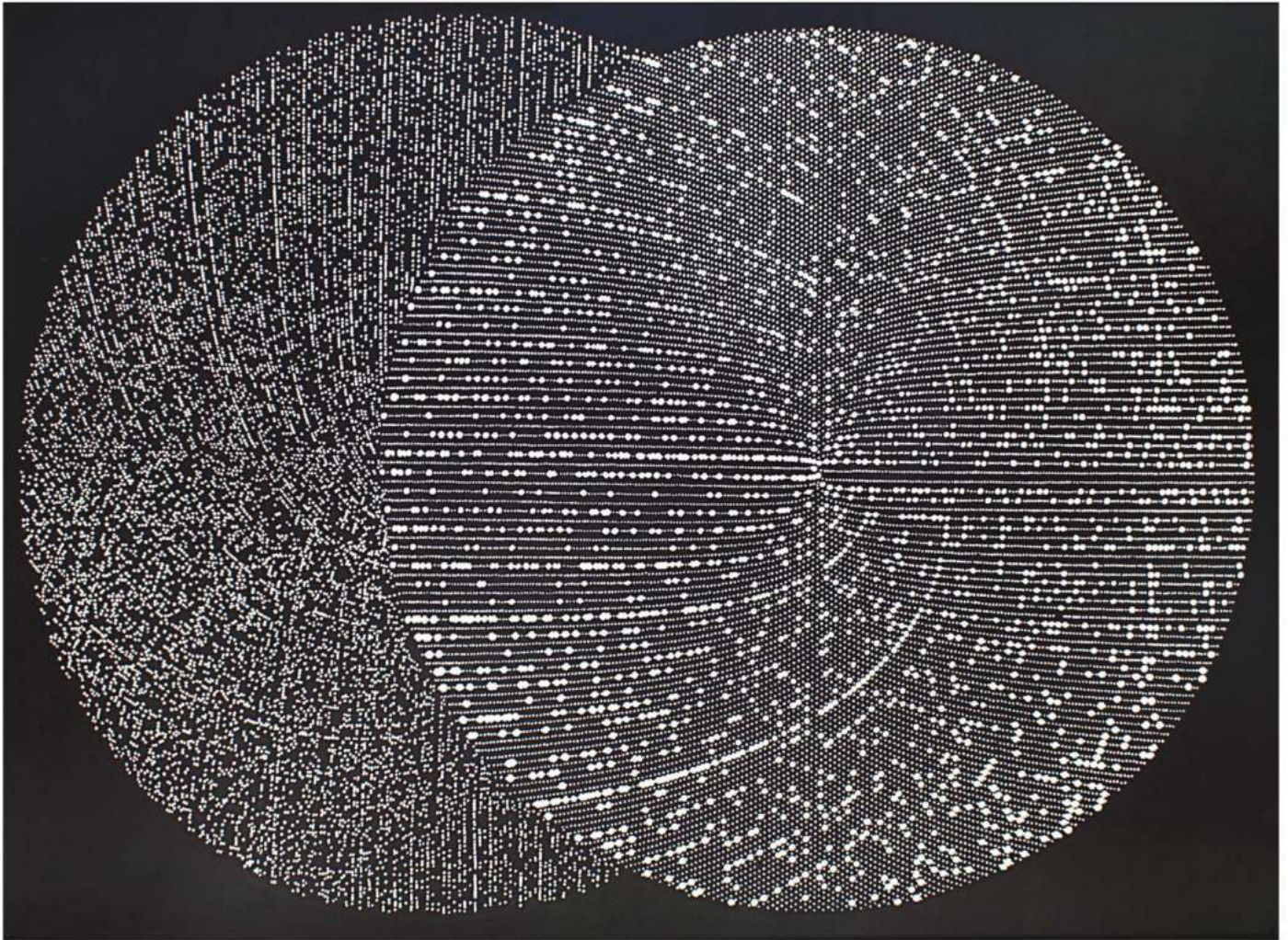
Echo - III, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches, 2022



Intersections - III, Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 60 inches, 2022



Intersections - I, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 84 inches, 2022



Intersections - II, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 84 inches, 2022

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Descent of the Ganges, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches, 2018

ANNI KUMARI (B.1983)

Anni Kumari's work is based on her understanding of how we are connected with geography through spatial and temporal events and processes. These Geographical experiences are also cosmic experiences which go beyond the earth, speaking of a relation with spiritual and metaphysical landscape. The artist lives in different geographical regions as she has a studio in Rishikesh but lives in the metropolitan city of Delhi. So the contrast between different geographical spaces comes through her work.

Anni uses mathematical ideas in her work process as a means to achieve the form. She often uses mathematical concepts of the Fibonacci Series, the prime number sequence and the concept of fractal geometry where one pattern is repeated to create a magnified pattern or form. In her work, one can see repetition of patterns.

These patterns are mostly in circular form in different ways. While looking at a microscopic level, the astral-like projections draw you in and when looked at the large composition as a whole, it gives you a cosmic experience.

Anni also developed her work from her interest in ancient Indian temple architecture which is also based on Fractal Geometry. The understanding of fundamental forms like the square and the circle and how diagonals are used to divide the space based on geometric principles has also helped her to conceptualise her art. Her work is also based on her research of floor drawing tradition from Tamil Nadu called Kolam.

With her geometric vocabulary, the artist is trying to blur the boundaries between design and craft. Her lucid language in monochrome speaks volumes of time and space. She doesn't see confines between the disciplines of drawing, design, craft, painting and therefore her objective is to create large cosmic spaces where she feels connected. It's a very spiritual and laborious process that involves all of the senses, Body and Mind.

Anni Kumari (b.1983/Jamshedpur/ India) studied BA (Hons.) Political Science at Miranda House, Delhi University (2002-05), BFA (Painting) and MFA (Painting) from the College of Art, Delhi, (2007-2013).

Her works have been exhibited in curated group shows in India, including, 'Life is better in Black & White' curated by Pranamita Borghain, Art Positive, Delhi (2021), 'All that is life', curated by Saloni Doshi, Space 118, Mumbai (2021), 'Spiralling into the absurd', curated by Amit Jain, Anant Art, Delhi (2021), 'Shifting Positions', India Art Fair (2020), 'Mirrored Questions', Art District XIII, Delhi (2019), 'Again & yet again', curated by Shruti Ramalingaiah, OED gallery, Kochi (2017). She has had a solo show, titled - 'Algorhythms', jointly organised by Anant Art + Apparao Galleries (2021) and a two-person show titled - 'Blurring Boundaries' at 079 Stories, Ahmedabad (2021).

Additionally, she is a visiting professor in the Department of Visual Arts, Ashoka University, Sonapat and has been a grantee at Sahapedia-UNESCO (2018), Artreach India (2015/17), Lalit Kala Akademi (2013), Ministry of culture, GOI (2014-16) and the University Grants Commission (2015). She has been an artist-in-residence at the Piramal Art Foundation, Thane, Maharashtra (2016).

The artist lives and works in Delhi, India.

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