

# An Artistic Homecoming for Achala Wali '75

By Chris Velardi '95

An ongoing exhibition at Syracuse's Everson Museum of Art spotlighting hometown artists represents something of a homecoming for Achala Wali '75. Wali's complex, layered drawings—including several new pieces—are featured in "Surface Densities;" she is one of six local artists selected to have work displayed as part of the Everson's CNY Artists Initiative.

Wali, who earned a bachelor of fine arts in painting from Syracuse University's College of Visual and Performing Arts in 1975, moved back to Central New York in July 2019 after long stints living and working in New York City and Cleveland. In Cleveland, Wali became very involved in the city's non-profit arts community, exhibiting regularly and working as a grant writer for the Cleveland Museum of Art.

"The whole ecosystem of the non-profit art world is such a valuable support system for artists," says Wali, whose Everson exhibition is supported by funding from The Community Partnership of Tompkins County. Wali lives in the Tompkins County village of Trumansburg, near Ithaca.



Non-representational artwork by Achala Wali

Wali describes herself as a non-representational artist—inspired by the world around her, shaped by her experiences and molded by her Syracuse University education.

"My professors were all very strong," says Wali. "They taught technique, but they were focused on getting students to find their own style and voice."

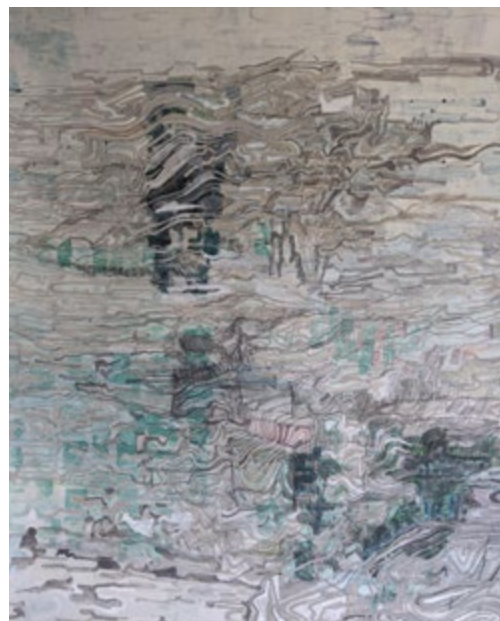
For an artist, finding that unique style and voice is an important process and personal journey, says Wali. She was born in India and emigrated to the United States with her family when she was five. As she grew as an artist and developed her own style, Wali tried to find ways to express her heritage.

"I had to find a way to interpret that in my own way," says Wali.

Recently, she's found a renewed inspiration in nature—specifically Ithaca's famous gorges—which is reflected in the work on currently on display at the Everson.

"If I'm not continuing to evolve as an artist, I'm doing something wrong," says Wali.

"Achala Wali: Surface Densities" will be on display at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse through August 7.



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