



# BETWEEN THE SELF AND SILHOUETTES

Soma Das and Anjan Modak

Curated by Adip Dutta



April 8 – June 4, 2022

# Foreword

I have the pleasure of presenting *Between the Self and Silhouettes*, a duo exhibition of Anjan Modak and Soma Das, which shows a large body of artworks, delineating significant aspects of their creative oeuvre. It is also a moment of personal happiness that we have represented the two talented painters from Bengal since the gallery's inception. This exhibition testifies to our incredible journey of working together.

Although dissimilar in style and temperament, Anjan Modak and Soma Das share a common ground of empathy in their portrayal of the ordinary, manual workers, ranging from construction labourers and street vendors to housemaids. Soma Das depicts them from a unique womanly perspective in a rich narrative style inspired by the Indian miniature paintings. Anjan Modak, on the other hand, captures the valence of dialectics in their lives – pain and pleasure, dreams and despairs, resentment and subordination – in sharp graphic clarity, irony and satire. The idea of labour is central to both of their political imagination. However, instead of glorifying it, they see it as a lens to look deep into the life's fabric of the subaltern people, exploring their complex, layered relationship with the prevailing social conditions. I hope that the art lovers of Kolkata will be enchanted to see their artists' works, who have drawn inspiration from the city's everyday life.

For over three years, Emami Art, one of India's most active and multifaceted art galleries, has been committed to projecting the work of exceptionally talented artists to a global audience. The gallery's activities have expanded beyond exhibition-making, creating a meaningful artistic discourse around it through a yearlong programme of seminars, talks, workshops, residencies, and publications. *Between the Self and Silhouettes* is a prominent highlight on our gallery's calendar.

I want to thank the artists and Adip Dutta, who has known the artists and their work for a long time, for curating the fantastic show. I also extend my gratitude to our team at Emami Art for their dedication and efforts.

Richa Agarwal  
CEO, Emami Art and Chairperson, KCC

## Between the Self and Silhouettes

The self extends itself on to others. A simultaneous acknowledgement of the passerby and recognition of the shadow of one's self falling on the other constitute the connection. The works of Soma Das and Anjan Modak centre around a sense of empathy that accounts for a search of the self under the pretext of watching numerous others situated around the artist. The relentlessness of recording figures in action, not only indicates the circumstances of the subjects, but also that of the artists who take both the role of an insider and an outsider in looking at them. Thus the figures are marked with a sense of attachment and detachment at the same time. The physical distance from the figure being quietly observed with the probing eye of a researcher becomes evident from the subject's comfortable body language. But it is that meticulously constructed single moment in the life of the figure in action, that emotionally connects the artist, especially Soma Das, with the one being watched. Anjan, on the other hand weaves the sequences of a latent drama wherein his protagonists perform roles in a poignant visual language. Soma and Anjan, both respond to the site and situation that they share with their protagonists, often as ethnographer-artists, exploring designs of the relationship between people and social conditions. The two artists by virtue of being emotionally connected share the same domestic space which is marked not only by daily chores, but also by several constraints. This space transforms into a site of artistic production, a metaphor of an overlap between the mundane and the celebratory. The process begins with almost compulsive acts of documenting moments that after a point of time begin to transform the banal into the significant. The layout of the exhibition is an attempt to track those passages wherein the artists tread through enumerable silhouettes, looking for the remarkable self.

Adip Dutta

# SOMA DAS

Born in 1979 in Kolkata, West Bengal, Soma Das studied painting at Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, graduating in 2009.

She has been the subject of the solo show Different Facets of Life at Gallery Nakshtra, Kolkata, 2010. She has participated in many group exhibitions in Kolkata including Constellations at Emami Art (2021), CIMA gallery, Weavers Studio, Aakriti Art Gallery and ICCR. Her work has also been featured in the exhibitions and art fairs in Delhi and Mumbai.

She was the recipient State Academy Award in 2008.

Soma Das lives and works in Kolkata.





*The Pond - 2*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on canvas  
48 X 47.5 in. (122 x 121 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

EA1603



*The Courtyard*  
Gouache and natural clay on nepali paper pasted on canvas  
35 x 49 in. (89.5 x 124 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

EA1591

Detail of The Courtyard





*Dupurer Feriwal* (Hawkers in the Afternoon)  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on canvas  
69 x 47.5 in. (176 x 121.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

EA1609

Detail of Dupurer Feriwala (Hawkers in the Afternoon)





*Drowsy Lady in Evening*  
Acrylic and gouache on nepali paper pasted on board  
11 x 10 in. (28 x 26 cm.)  
2013, Kolkata  
Signed in English (Lower right)

C7104



*Vegetable Sellers*  
Gouache on paper  
12 x 12 in. (29.5 x 29.5 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (Lower middle)

C7106

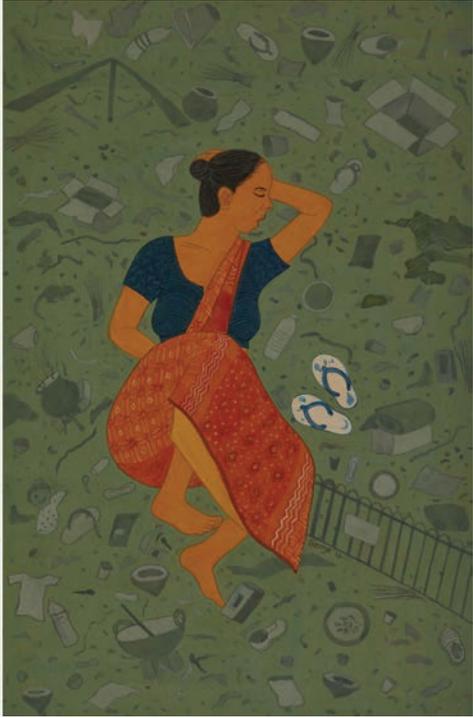
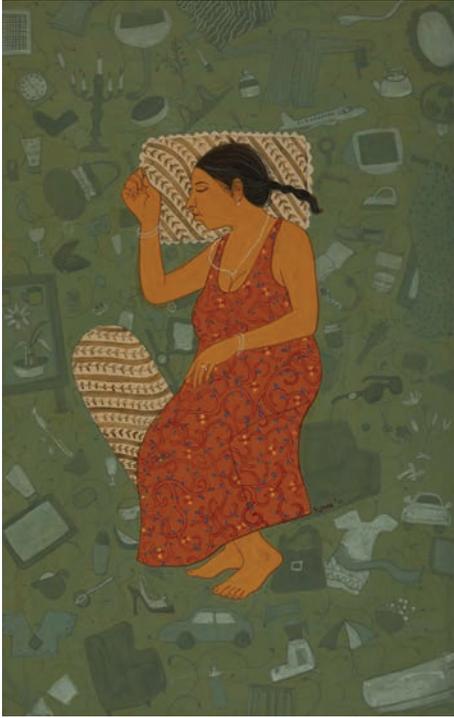


*In the Kitchen*  
Gouache on paper  
9 x 12 in. (23 x 30.5 cm.)  
2016, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7453



Soma '16



*The Bed*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on paper  
20 x 24.5 in. (50 x 62.23 cm.) overall  
Diptych  
2011, Kolkata  
Signed in English (Lower right)

C7108



*Obscure I*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on canvas  
29 x 23 in. (74 x 58 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C5660

© 2020, Kolkata



*Obscure II*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on canvas  
29 x 23 in. (74 x 58 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C5661



*Obscure I and Obscure II*

In suite



*Enjoyment in Confined Life II*  
Gouache on paper  
21.5 x 14.5 in. (54.5 x 37 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7595



*Privacy II*  
Gouache on paper  
21.5 x 15 in. (54.5 x 37 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7596

Detail of *Privacy II*





*Towards Destination III*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on canvas  
23 x 49 in. (58 x 124,5 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

EA1604

Detail of Towards Destination III





*Stupa - II*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on canvas  
29 x 23 in. (74 x 58.5 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7102



*Narrow Space of My House*  
Gouache on paper  
34 x 12 in. (86.5 x 30 cm.)  
2015, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left)

C7109



*The First Touch of Rain*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on paper  
14.5 X 5 in. (37.5 x 14 cm.)  
2014, Kolkata  
Signed in English (upper right)

C7110



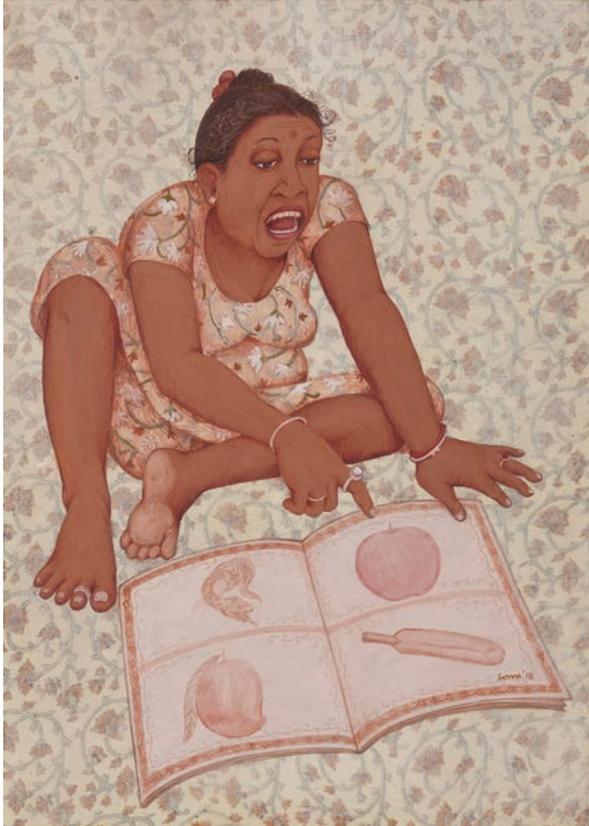
*From Roof at Morning*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on canvas  
24 X 30 in. (61 x 76 cm.)  
2016, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

EA1599



*The Roof Top Party*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on canvas  
36 x 30 in. (92 x 76 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (Lower right)

C7101



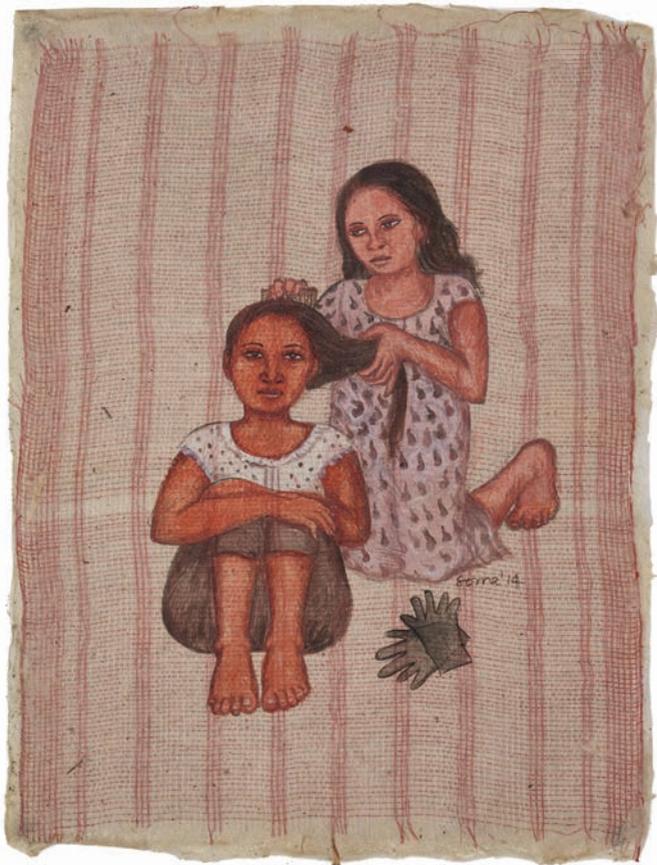
*Untitled*  
Gouache on nepali paper and printed fabric pasted on paper  
16.5 x 12 in.(42 x 30 cm.)  
2018, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7429



*Preparation for Puja*  
Gouache on nepali paper and printed cotton fabric pasted on board  
11 x 9 in. (27.5 x 23 cm.)  
2015, Kolkata  
Signed in English (Lower left)

C7107



Two Sisters  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on fabric  
14 x 11 in.(36 x 27.5 cm.)  
2014, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7430



*Untitled*  
Gouache on nepali paper and cotton fabric (gamchha) pasted on board  
12 x 8 in. (30.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2018, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7438



*Untitled*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on fabric  
14 x 11 in. (34.5 x 27.5 cm.)  
2014, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7470



*Daily Passengers*  
Gouache on nepali paper and silk fabric pasted on board  
16 x 11.5 in.(40 x 29 cm.)  
2016, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7432

Detail from 'Daily Passengers'





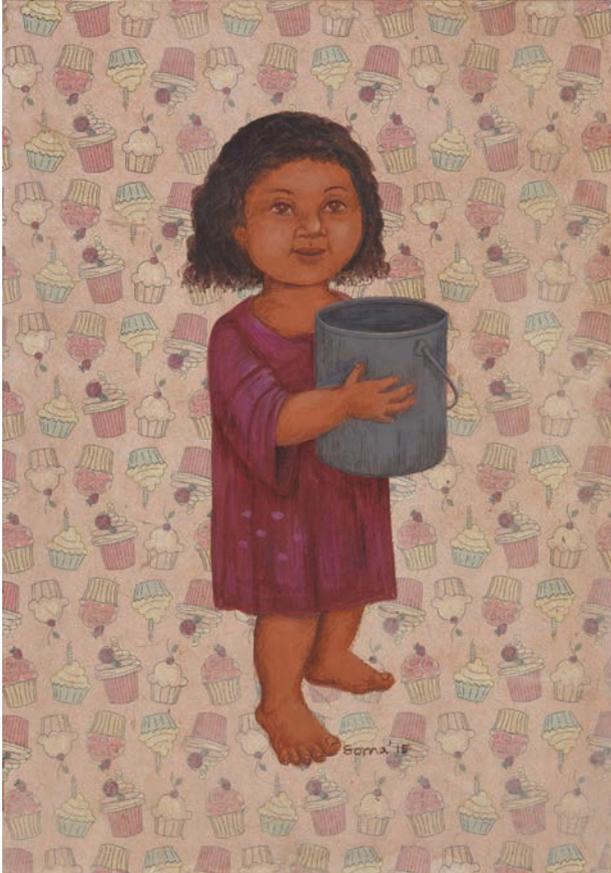
*Untitled*  
Gouache on silk pasted on board  
11 x 8 in. (28.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2019, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7448



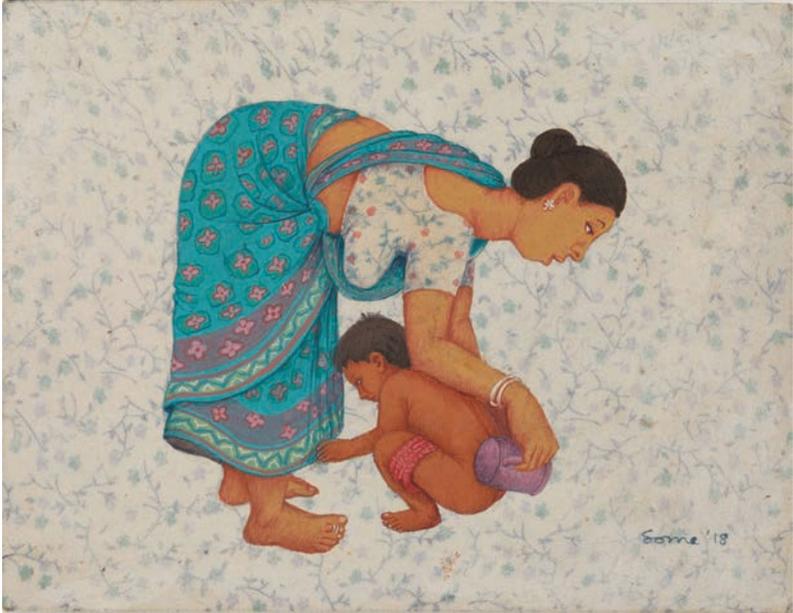
*Untitled*  
Gouache on embroidered silk pasted on board  
10 x 8 in. (25.5 x 20 cm.)  
2019, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7449



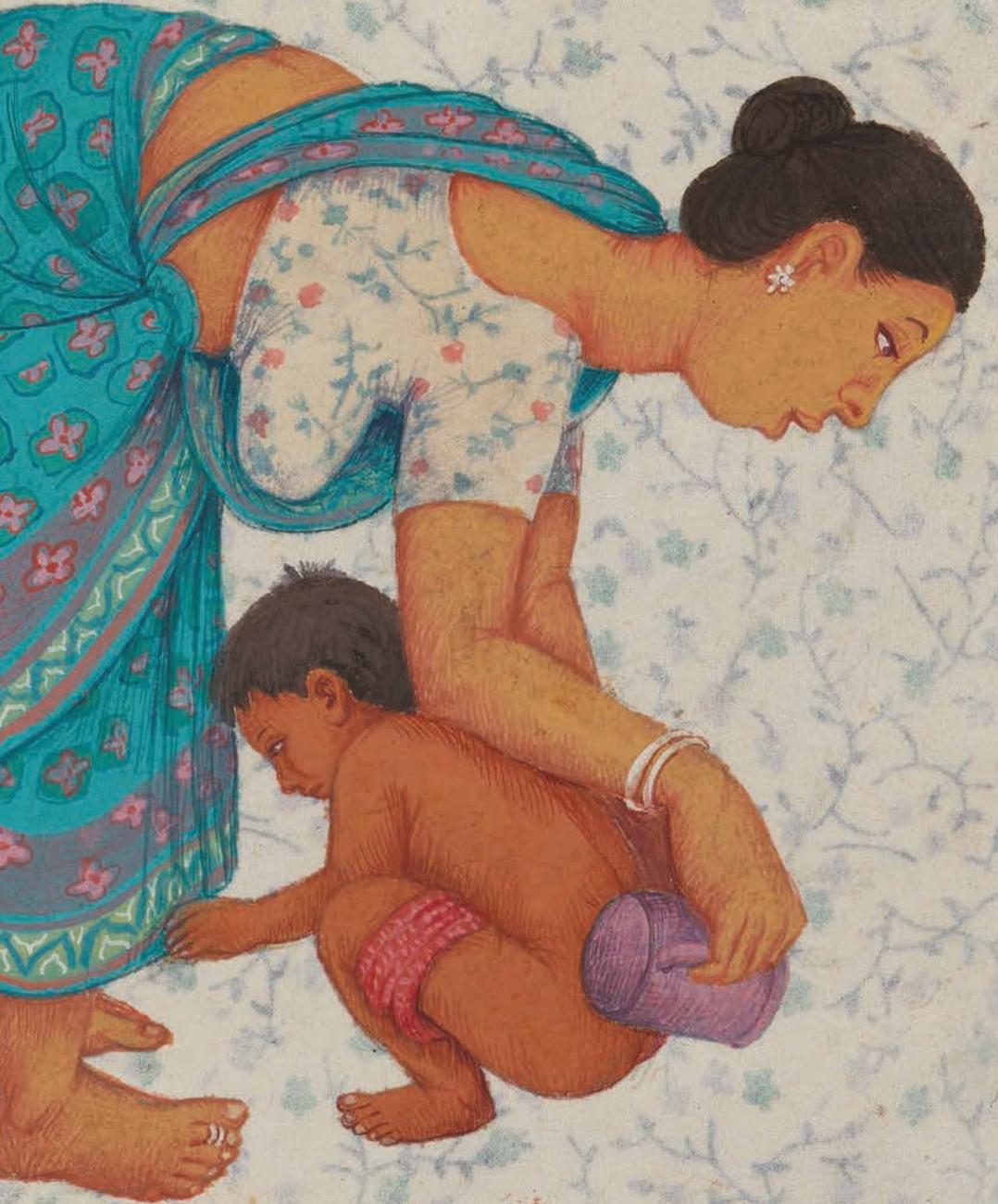
*Untitled*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on printed paper  
11.6 x 20.5 in. (29.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2015, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower middle)

C7439



*Untitled*  
Gouache on nepali paper and printed fabric pasted on board  
8 x 10 in. (19.5 x 25.5 cm.)  
2018, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7451





*Untitled*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on printed paper  
7 x 10 in. (18.5 x 25.5 cm.)  
2017, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7452



*Untitled 20*  
Gouache on board  
8.5 x 12 in. (21.5 x 31.5 cm.)  
2015, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7454



*Untitled*  
Gouache and clay on nepali paper pasted on board  
15 x 12 in.(38.5 x 29.5 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7435



*Untitled*  
Gouache and clay on nepali paper pasted on board  
15 x 12 in.(38.5 x 29.5 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7434

Detail from *Untitled*

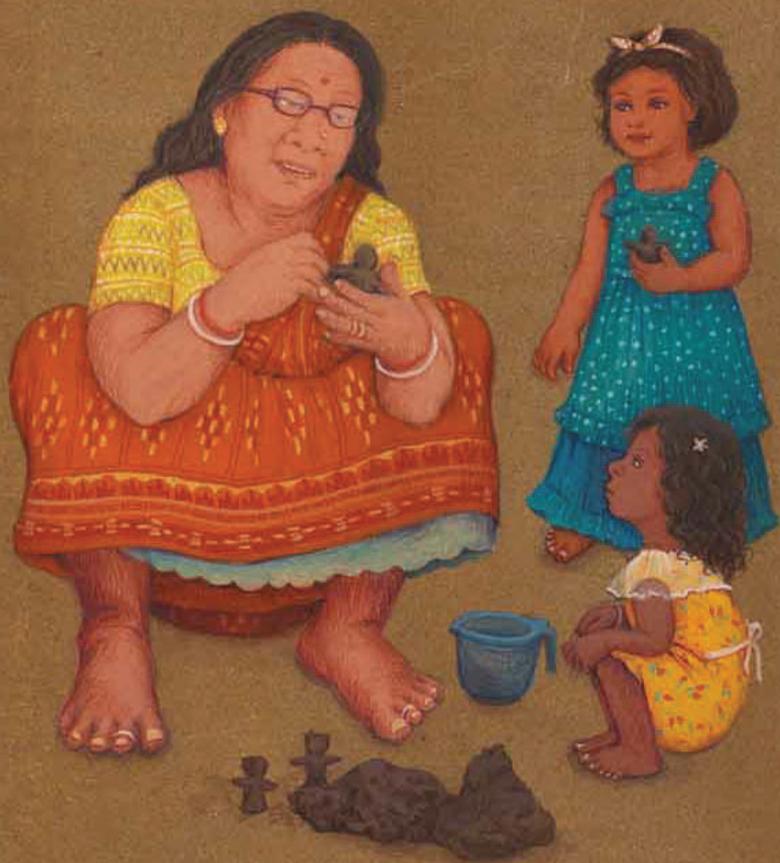




*Untitled*  
Gouache and clay on nepali paper pasted on board  
11 x 8 in. (28 x 20 cm.) each  
Suite of 4 paintings  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7686

Detail from 'Untitled'



Soma 2020



*Untitled*  
Gouache and clay on nepali paper pasted on board  
7 x 7 in. (18 x 18 cm.) each  
Suite of 7 works  
2019, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7687



*Untitled*  
Ink and gouache on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7476



*Untitled*  
Ink, gouache and colour pencil on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 21 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7475



*Untitled*  
Ink and gouache on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7474



*Untitled*  
Ink, natural colour and colour pencil on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7479



*Untitled*  
Ink, gouache and colour pencil on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7477



*Untitled*  
Ink and natural colour on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7478



*Untitled*  
Ink on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7480



Untitled  
Ink and gouache on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 21 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7497

Soma 2020



*Untitled*  
Ink and gouache on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 20.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7498



*Untitled*  
Colour pencil on board  
8.8 x 11 in. (22.5 x 28 cm.)  
2018, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left)

C7514



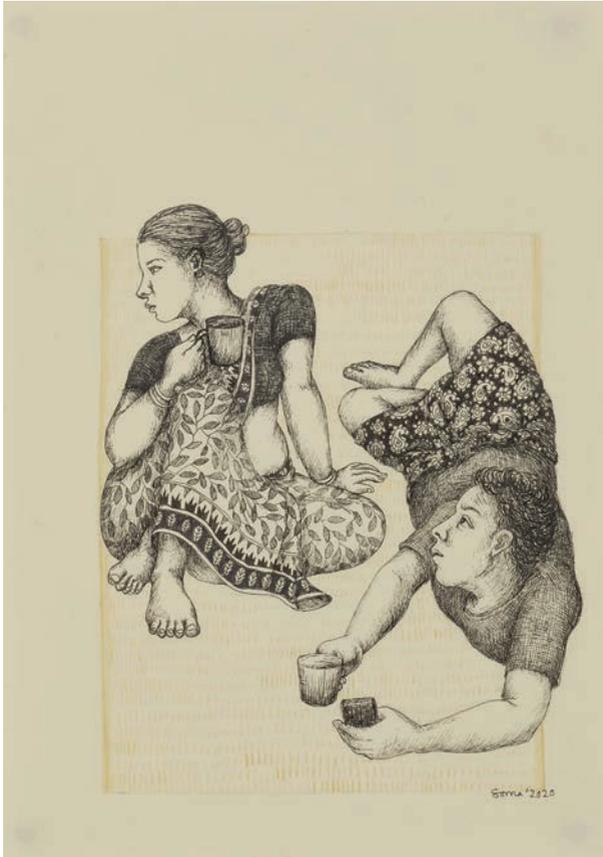
*Untitled*  
Ink on paper  
15 x 11 in. (38 x 27.5 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7518



*Untitled*  
Ink on paper  
15 x 11 in. (37.5 x 27.5 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7517



*Untitled*  
Ink and tea stain on paper  
12 x 8 in. (29.5 x 21 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7530





*Untitled*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on printed paper  
8 x 7 in. (20.5 x 18 cm.)  
2016, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7593



*Untitled*  
Gouache on nepali paper pasted on printed paper  
7 x 7 in. (18 x 18 cm.)  
2018, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7592

# ANJAN MODAK

Born in Kolkata, West Bengal, in 1982, Anjan Modak studied painting at Rabindra Bharati University.

He has been the subject of the solo shows, *Fragmented Life* (2020) and *Black, White and More* (2016), both at Emami art, Kolkata. His work has been featured in many significant group exhibitions, including *Constellations* at Emami Art, (Kolkata, 2021), at Tamarind Art Gallery, (New York, 2008, 2010); Habitat Foundation, (New Delhi, 2008); and Rajya Charukala Parshad, (Kolkata, 2014-2017); CIMA Gallery, (Kolkata, 2017, 2019); ICCR, (Kolkata, 2014); among others.

Represented by Emami Art, over twenty-five paintings by Anjan Modak entitled *The Common Man* were shown in the India Art Fair, New Delhi (2020).

Anjan Modak lives and works in Kolkata.

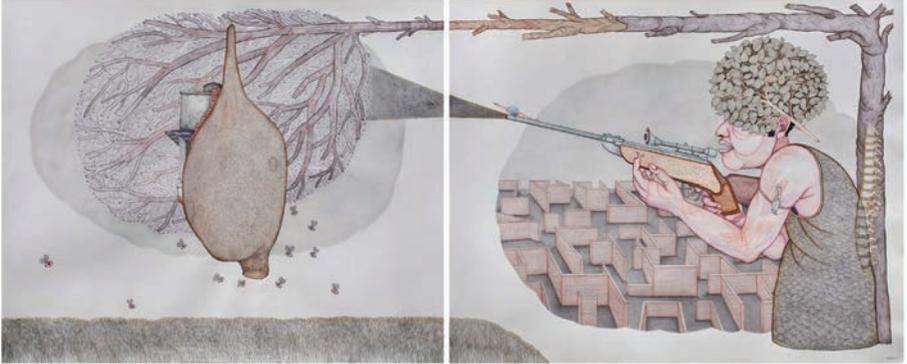


*Exile in the City*  
Watercolour and graphite on paper  
60.03 x 36.02 in. (152.5 x 91.5 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left)

EA1485

Detail of Exile in the City





*Lakshya Veda*  
Watercolour and graphite on paper  
47.8 x 59.8 in. (121.5 x 152 cm.) each  
Diptych  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

EA1484



*The Clenching Life*  
Watercolour and graphite on acid free paper  
60 X 48 in. (152 x 122 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

EA1483



*Confronting*  
Watercolour and graphite on paper  
48 X 60 in. (122 x 152 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left)

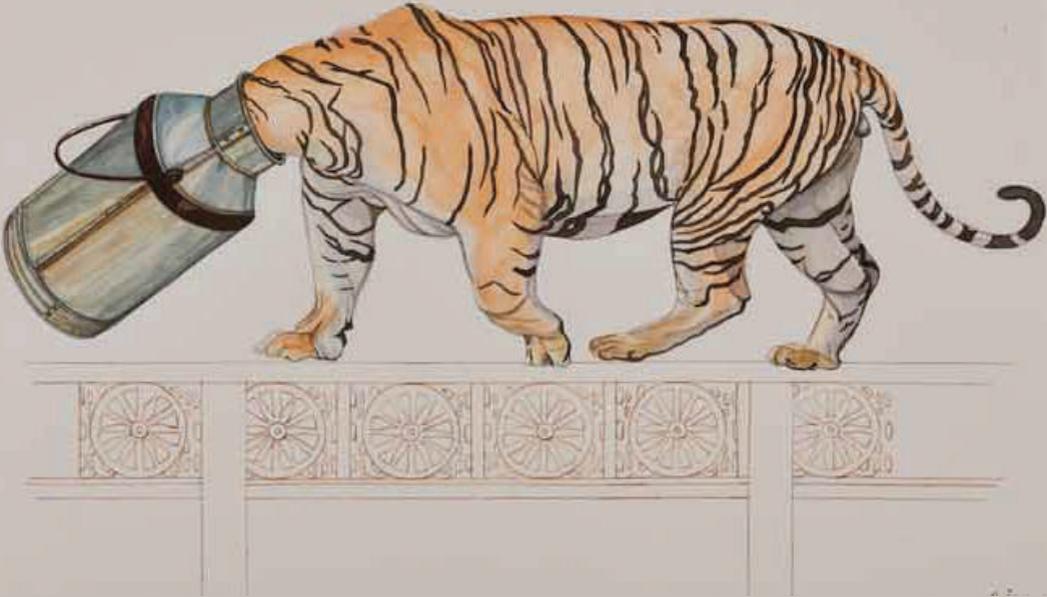
EA1482



*The Greedy Tiger I - V*  
Watercolour on paper  
12 X 16 in. (31 x 41 cm.) each  
Suite of 5 works  
2018, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left)

EA1671

Detail of *The Greedy Tiger IV*





*The Raider I - IV*  
Watercolour on paper  
12 Xx16 in. (31 x 41 cm.) each  
Suite of 4 works  
2018, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left and right)

EA1672

Detail of *The Raider II*



01/11/2018

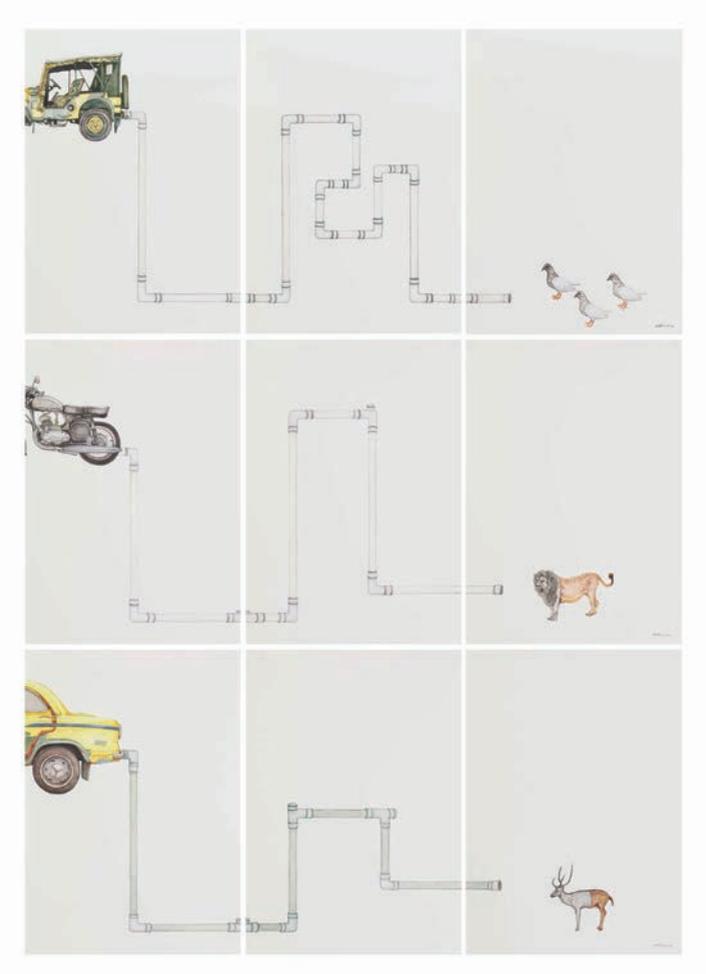


*Tiger Without Ring Master I*  
Watercolour on paper  
11.81 x 87.40 in. (30 x 222 cm.) overall  
Suite of 5 works  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7112

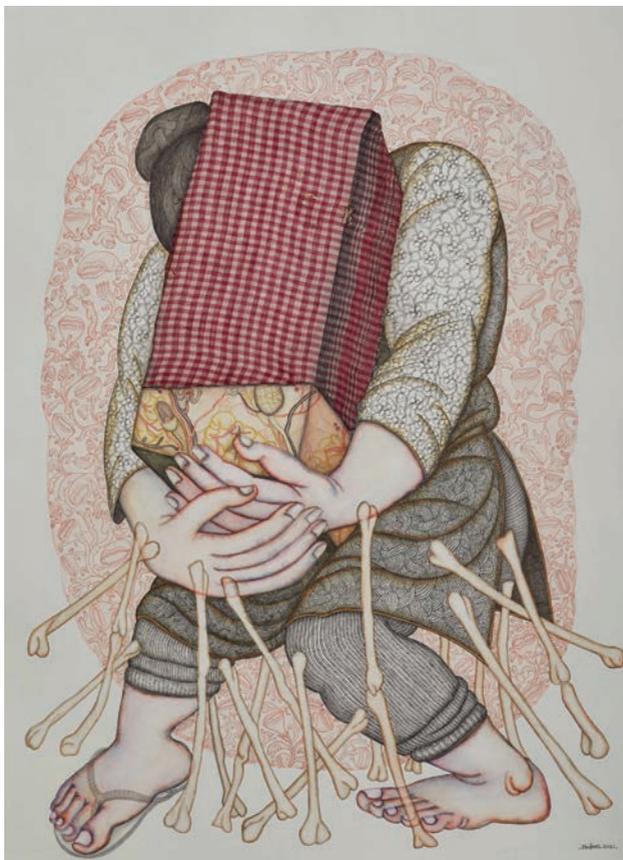
Detail from *The Raider I, II, III, IV*





*Untitled*  
Watercolour on paper  
52 x 37 in. (132 x 94.5 cm.) overall  
Suite of 3 works  
2018, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7374



*Life Under the Yellow Eye I*  
Watercolour, charcoal and graphite and cotton  
fabric (gamchha) on paper  
29.52 x 21.65 in. (75 x 55 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7120



*Life Under the Yellow Eye II*  
Watercolour, graphite and cotton fabric  
(gamchha) on paper  
29.5 X 21.5 in. (75 x 55 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7121

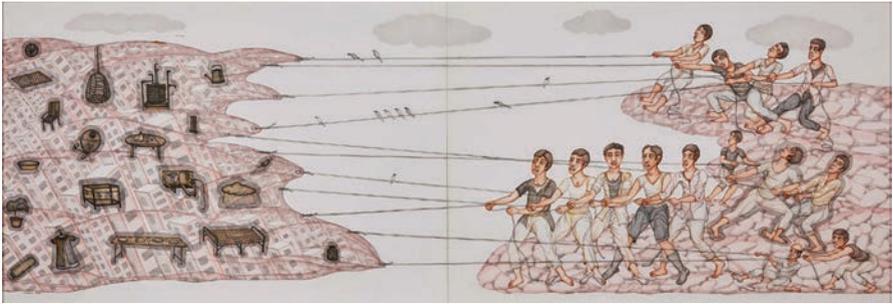


*Life Under the Yellow Eye II*  
Watercolour, graphite and cotton fabric  
(gamchha) on paper  
29.5 X 21.5 in. (75 x 55 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7122

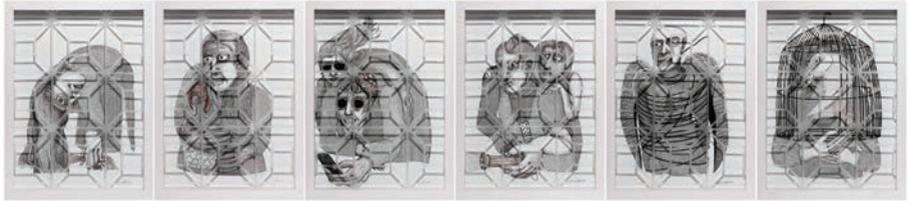
Detail of *Life Under the Yellow Eye II*





*Canopy Over the Geography*  
Watercolour, ink and graphite on paper  
29.50 X 86.50 in. (74.9 x 219.7 cm.)  
2016, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left)

EA1475



*Life in Hanging Cage II*  
Archival ink on paper and etched acrylic sheet  
16 x 64 in. (40.5 x 163 cm.) overall  
Suite of 6 works  
2016, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7401





a - d

*Life in Footpath*  
Archival ink on nepali paper  
14.56 x 9.64 in. (37 x 24.5 cm.) (a)  
14.56 x 9.84 in. (37 x 25 cm.) (b - d)  
2016, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left)

C7685

Detail of Life in Footpath (b)





*Untitled*  
Archival ink on paper  
52 x 17 in. (132.5 x 44 cm.) overall  
Suite of 4 works  
2013, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left)

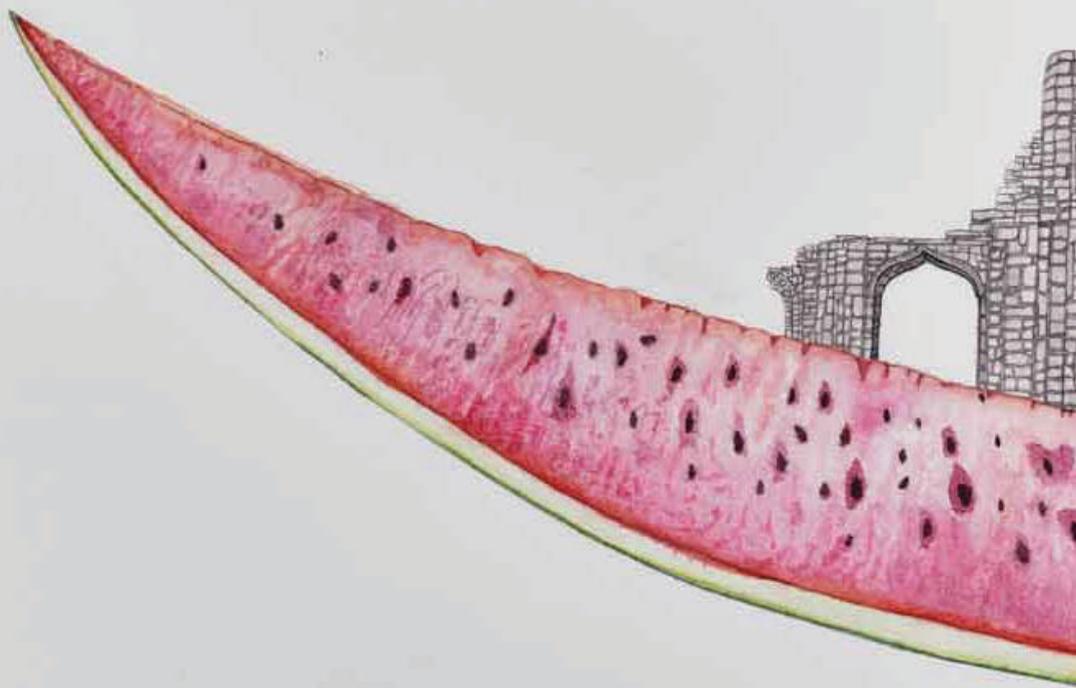
C7375



*The Mughal Wall*  
Watercolour on acid free paper  
10.5 X 58 in. (26.7 x 147 cm.) overall  
2017, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

EA1421

Detail of *The Mughal Wall*





*Another Nature II*  
Watercolour on paper  
29.5 x 22 in. (75 x 55 cm.)  
2013, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower left)

C7400



*Another Nature III*  
Watercolour on paper  
29.5 x 22 in. (75 x 55 cm.)  
2013, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7688



*Separation*  
Watercolour and graphite on paper  
29.52 x 21.65 in. (75 x 55 cm.)  
2017, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7134



*Adjustment*  
Watercolour on paper  
16.5 x 24 in. (42 x 61.5 cm.) overall  
Suite of 2 works  
2019, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7373



Anjan 2021.

Untitled  
Archival ink on paper  
8.5 x 6 in. (21 x 15 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

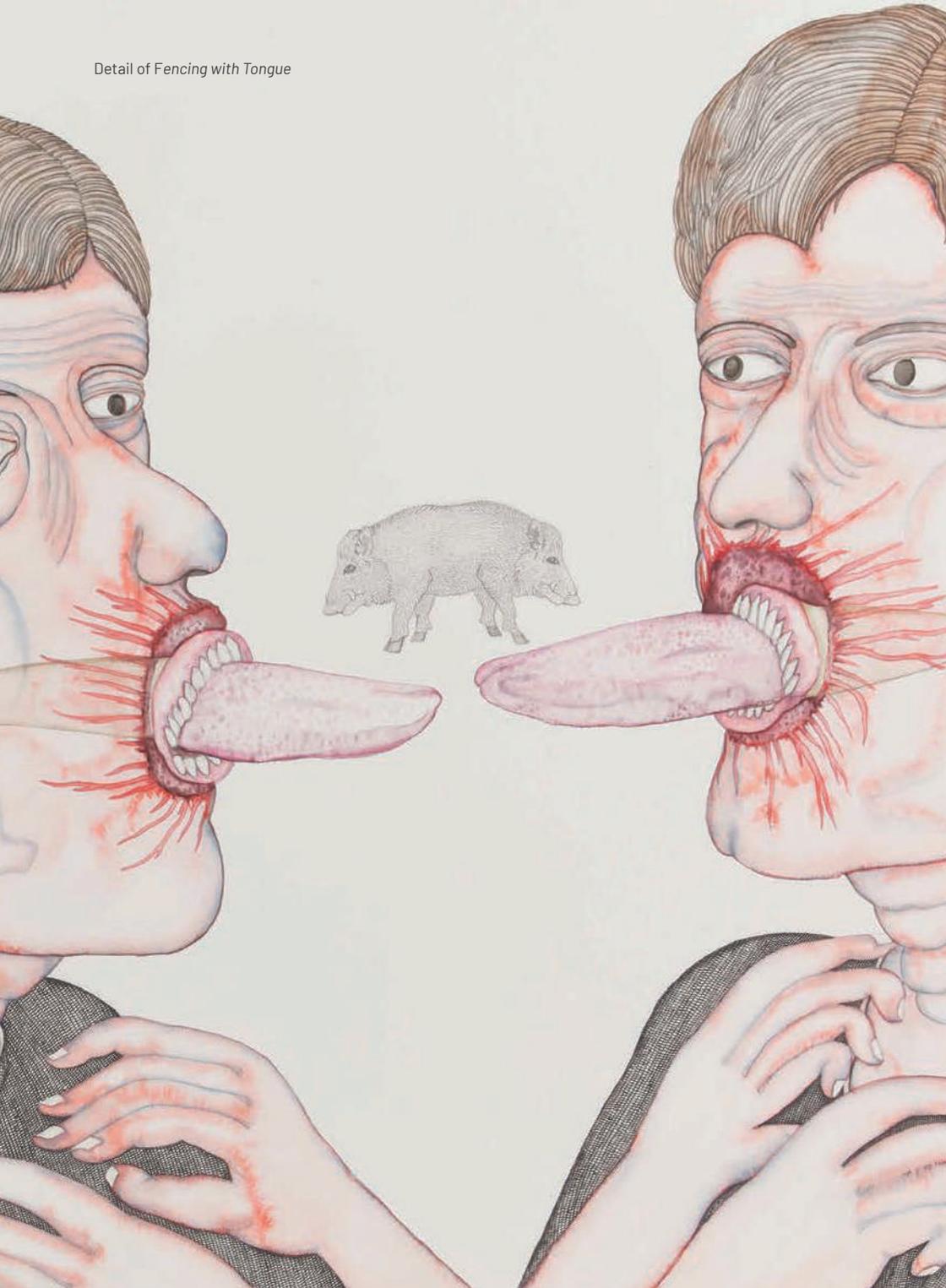
C7421

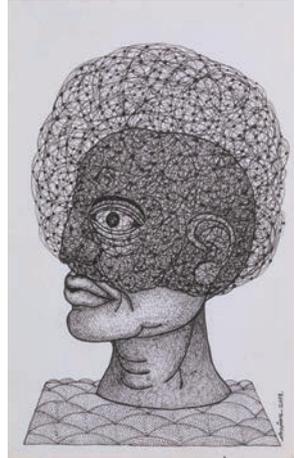
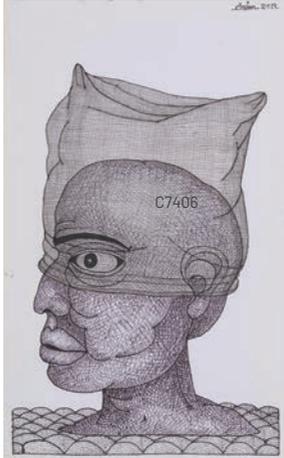


Fencing with Tongue  
Watercolour on paper  
29.5 x 22 in. (55 x 75 cm.)  
2014, Kolkata  
Signed in English (upper left)

C7399

Detail of Fencing with Tongue





*Untitled*  
Archival ink on paper  
8.5 x 5 in. (21 x 12.5 cm.)  
2019, Kolkata  
Signed in English (upper right)

C7402 - C7406



*Untitled*  
Watercolour and archival ink on paper  
22 x 15 in. (55 x 37.5 cm.)  
2012, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7392



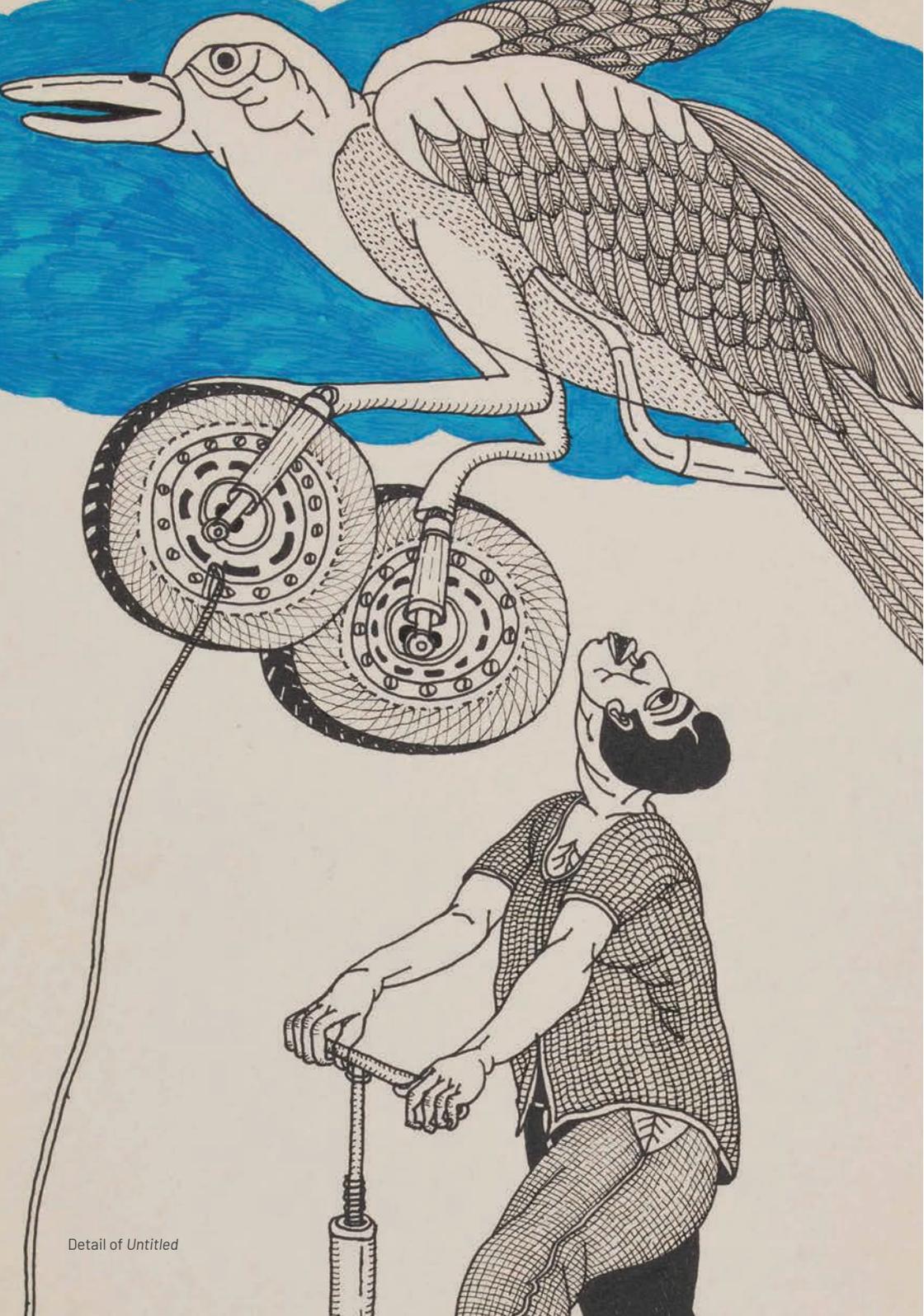
*Untitled*  
Watercolour and archival ink on paper  
22 x 15 in. (55 x 37.5 cm.)  
2012, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7393



*Untitled*  
Pen and ink on paper  
10 x 8 in. (26 x 21 cm.) each  
2018, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7379-C7383



Detail of Untitled



*Page from Injustice I*  
Watercolour and archival ink on paper  
16.5 x 11 in. (42 x 28 cm.)  
2020, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7385



*Page from Injustice II*  
Watercolour and archival ink on paper  
16.5 x 11 in. (42 x 28 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7386



*Daily Observation XI - XII*  
*Daily Observation IV - V*  
Archival ink on paper  
4 x 3 in. (10 x 7.5 cm.) each  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)  
C7343, C7344, C7336, C7337



*Daily Observation XV*  
*Daily Observation XXVIII*  
*Daily Observation XXIX*

Archival ink on paper  
4 x 3 in. (10 x 7.5 cm.) each  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7347, C7360, C7361



*Untitled*  
Archival ink on paper  
8.5 x 5 in. (21 x 12.5 cm.)  
2019, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)  
C7407 - C7411



*Daily Observation VII*  
Archival ink on paper  
4 x 2.5 in. (9.5 x 6.5 cm.)  
2021, Kolkata  
Signed in English (lower right)

C7339

Emami Art, one of the most significant art organization in the eastern part of India, is a key space for cultural production in the region. The organisation is focused on a future-forward, complex, multi-dimensional approach and steadfast in the advocacy of emerging, mid-career and established artists as well as an engagement with contemporary and historical material. The gallery aims to create dynamic, wide-ranging registers of exhibition-making and viewing.

In addition to hosting exhibitions, participating in art fairs and events of national and international import, Emami Art has a diverse parallel programming. With a focus on engagement with the region and beyond through continuous short and long-term projects, Emami Art has launched **EA Locus in Focus**, **EA Co-labs** (Collaborative Programme) **EA Initiative** (Public art endeavors) and **EA Hybrid** which integrates both the physical and virtual interfaces. Other programs include **EA Incubator** that comprises of mentorship programs, workshops, residency opportunities and innovative educational activities that facilitate artistic development, help build networks of collaboration and provide a supportive environment for emerging talent. As a centre of excellence, Emami Art wishes to be identified as a platform rather than just a facility.

Critical discourses, interactions, documentation and exchange are also essential to our agenda. Under the umbrella of **EA Discourse**, we are committed to developing and producing original writing, artist's books, monographs, periodicals and catalogues that will focus on artistic, creative and pedagogical materials. Furthermore, the **EA Communicator** lineup of talks, seminars, panel discussions and conversations with artists, curators and key partners provides a space for critical engagement as part of our knowledge-making and archiving process.

Deeply committed to promoting a regional, national and international agenda through innovative and alternative programming, emphasis on community and socially relevant engagements and more via a multi-year vision for the future, Emami Art is resolute to be a catalyst of change, research, innovation and inclusivity.





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