

Rahul Sarkar

Portfolio





Rahul Sarkar is a contemporary artist whose practice is primarily grounded in printmaking. The thematic terrains of his work include gender, sexuality, and self-expression. The practice expands on the very conditions of identity, not merely through visual representation but also through speculative associations. Beyond representation, the body becomes a site of continuous interventions to explore the speculative nature of gender and its inherent nonconformity. With multiple dimensions of approach, techniques, and narratives, Sarkar creates his own unique lexicon for queer world-building.

Deeply rooted in the subjectivities of his lived own experiences as an androgynous male in society, his work is often radically autobiographical. The positioning of the self itself is the methodology of his practice. Through the work, he navigates through the reality which are of wounds, phobias, and sorrows, and the 'curious' world of intimate subcultures. By making visible the performative and constructed nature of gender, the androgynous figure in his prints becomes a site of powerful interventions as well as a site of resistance that doesn't adhere to the 'legible' social codes. The persistent and enigmatic presence of the body challenges and confronts the historically conditioned gaze.

Watch the artist discuss his practice



Central to his recent work is the sophisticated presence of ornamentation. They are not surface embellishments but a powerful conceptual apparatus that destabilises its conventional signifiers. By reclaiming ornamentation as a critical apparatus, they function as a psychic extension, a reflection of interiority rather than an aesthetic element.

Additionally, his practice is strongly influenced by his surroundings and the space he inhabits, including seasonal shifts and the landscapes around him. The observation of seasonal change becomes a metaphor for, and catalyst to, personal transformation. In terms of the process, the labour intense nature of printmaking, is integral to the thematic connection he makes with the work. He considers the labour-intensive physical act of carving into wood or incising the matrix becomes a metaphor for the inscription of identity onto the self and the social body.



Watch the artist discuss his practice



End of an age
Woodcut, acrylic and glass marker on plywood
96 x 144 in.
2025, Santiniketan



Installation view
Purbachal Sakti Sanghya
Durga Pujo, 2025



Installation view
PURVAI
Printmaking in Eastern India - Pedagogy to Practice
Curated by Dr. Paula Sengupta
2026, Emami Art





This work is titled *The Half Man* as a deliberate contrast to the commonly used term “half ladies”. In many Indian social contexts, calling someone a “half lady” is a subtle but persistent attack on their gender identity. It questions and invalidates who they are in the present, often for the sake of mockery or discomfort. With this work, Rahul Sarkar redirects attention—not toward questioning someone’s gender—but toward the neglected half of masculinity. He aims to expose what remains unseen, unspoken, or unacknowledged in the male identity itself.

The Half Man
Acid-etched zinc plate and oxidised silver beads
24 3/4 x 9 in. (63.2 x 23 cm.)
2025, Santiniketan
Edition: Unique



Detail

The Half Man

Acid-etched zinc plate and oxidised silver beads

24 3/4 x 9 in. (63.2 x 23 cm.)

2025, Santiniketan

Edition: Unique



In his practice, Rahul Sarkar collects ornamental designs – each carrying specific histories and uses, and reimagines them through personal narratives and material experimentation. One such work took the form of a garland, composed of selected motifs from his growing archive, intertwined with his own writing and designs. Crafted from old, unusable zinc plates, this work holds reflections from Sarkar's time in Santiniketan. On them, he has written about his experiences, has sketched fragments from his memory, and has annotated moments with personal comments. By layering these recollections with ornamentation, Sarkar has transformed memory into a wearable form

Garland of Memories
Acid-etched zinc plate and silver beads
141 3/4 in. (360 cm.)
Set of 30 etched plates
2025, Santiniketan
Edition: Unique



Detail

Garland of Memories

Acid-etched zinc plate and silver beads

141 3/4 in. (360 cm.)

Set of 30 etched plates

2025, Santiniketan

Edition: Unique



Untitled

Woodcut, acrylic, and glass marker on plywood

48 1/4 x 155 7/8 x 15 3/4 in. (122.5 x 396 x 40 cm.) overall

2025, Santiniketan

Installation view
IMAGINARIUM 5.0
A 5wards and Exhibition via All-India Open Call
2025, Emami Art



The more a relationship or connection is hidden, the more curiosity it invites. In this work in 5 panels, the first figure on the left has unusually long braided hair that stretches throughout the length of the piece, being tightly gripped by another from above. The entire journey of this bond, except for a faint trace in the middle, remains cloaked in secrecy. There are forces at play: someone wants to damage it, someone wants to expose it, someone conspires to uncover the truth. This piece speaks to the tension between concealment and exposure, the fear of revelation, and the power of the unspoken.

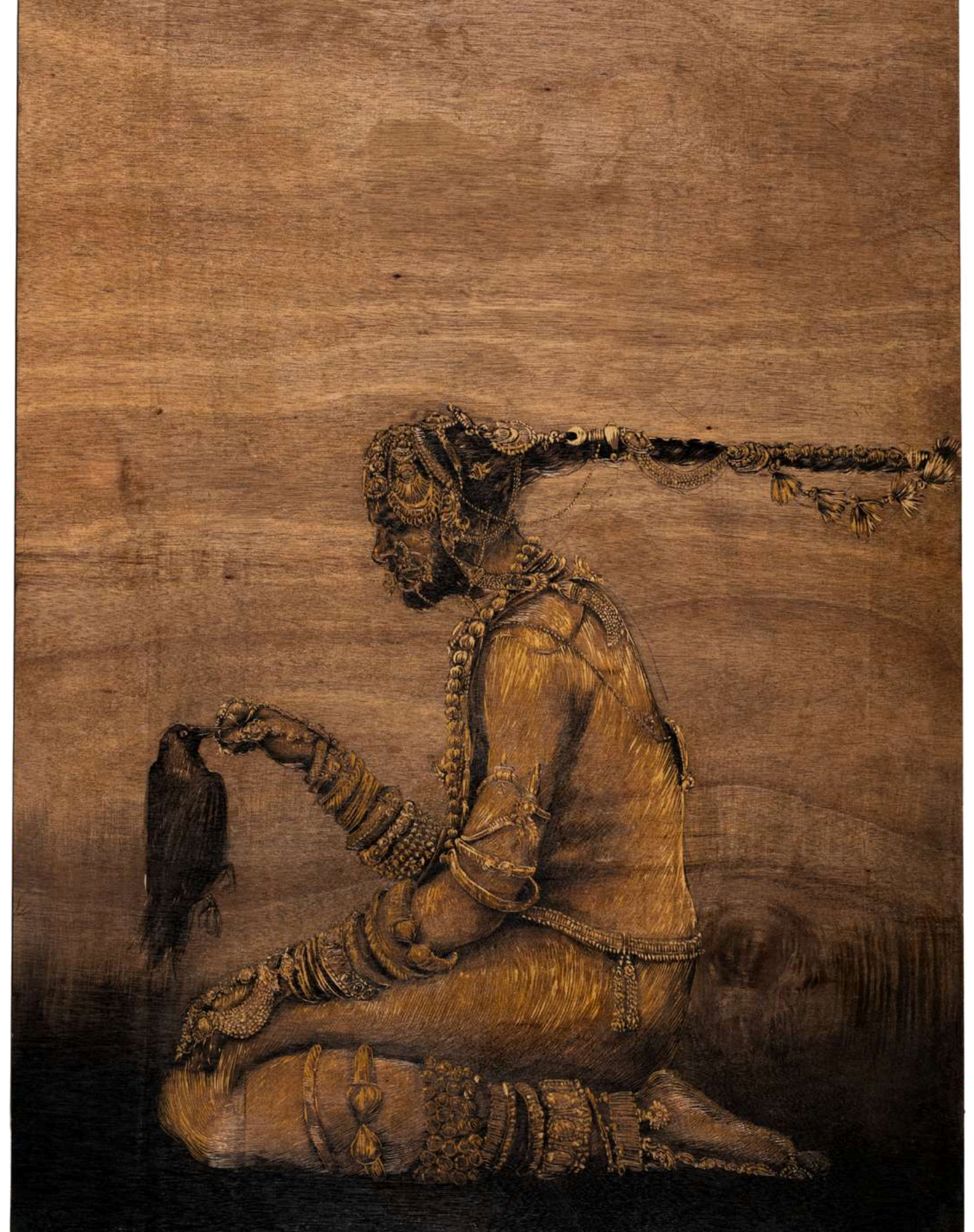
Detail

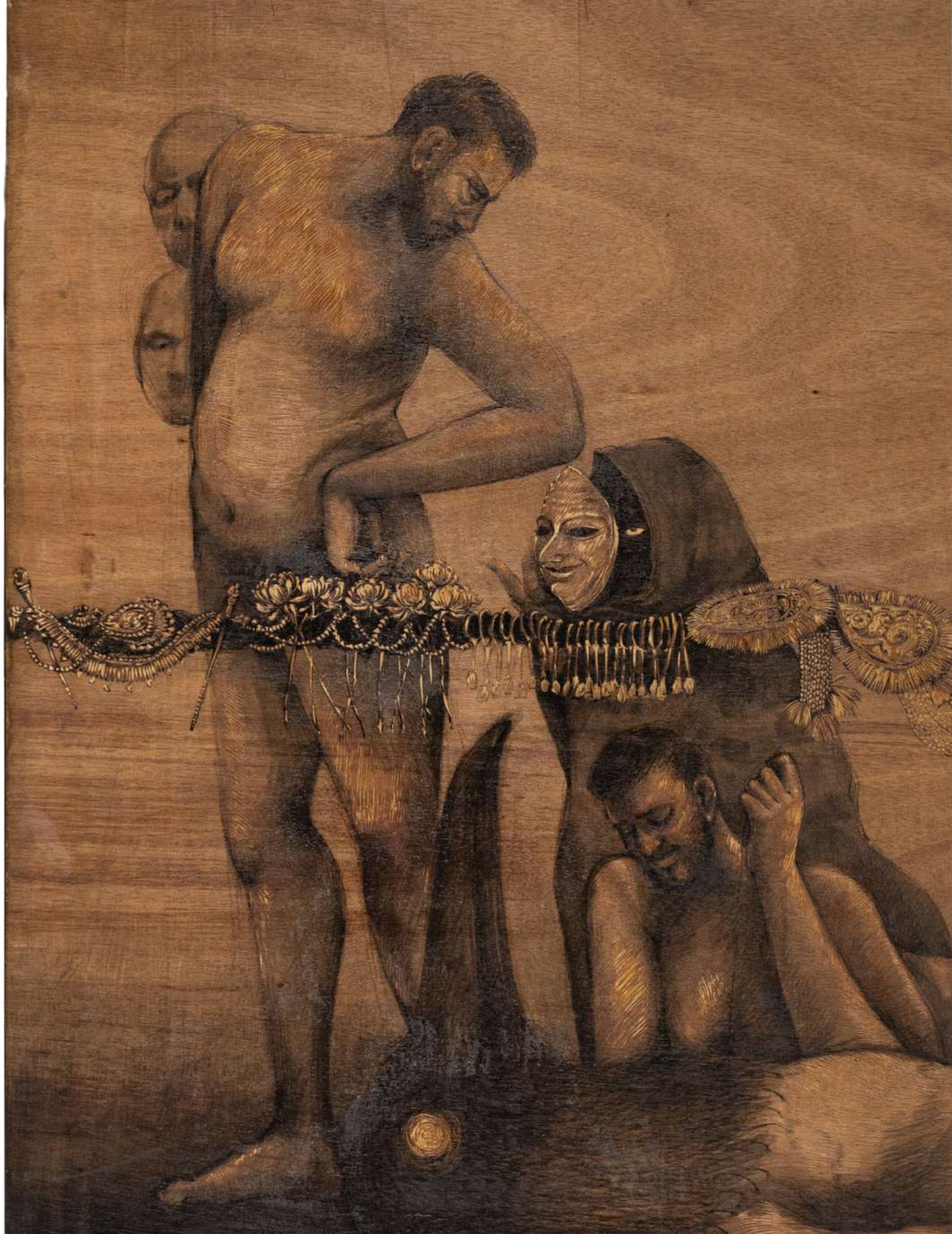
Untitled

Woodcut, acrylic, and glass marker on plywood

48 1/4 x 155 7/8 x 15 3/4 in. (122.5 x 396 x 40 cm.) overall

2025, Santiniketan





Detail

Untitled

Woodcut, acrylic, and glass marker on plywood

48 1/4 x 155 7/8 x 15 3/4 in. (122.5 x 396 x 40 cm.) overall

2025, Santiniketan

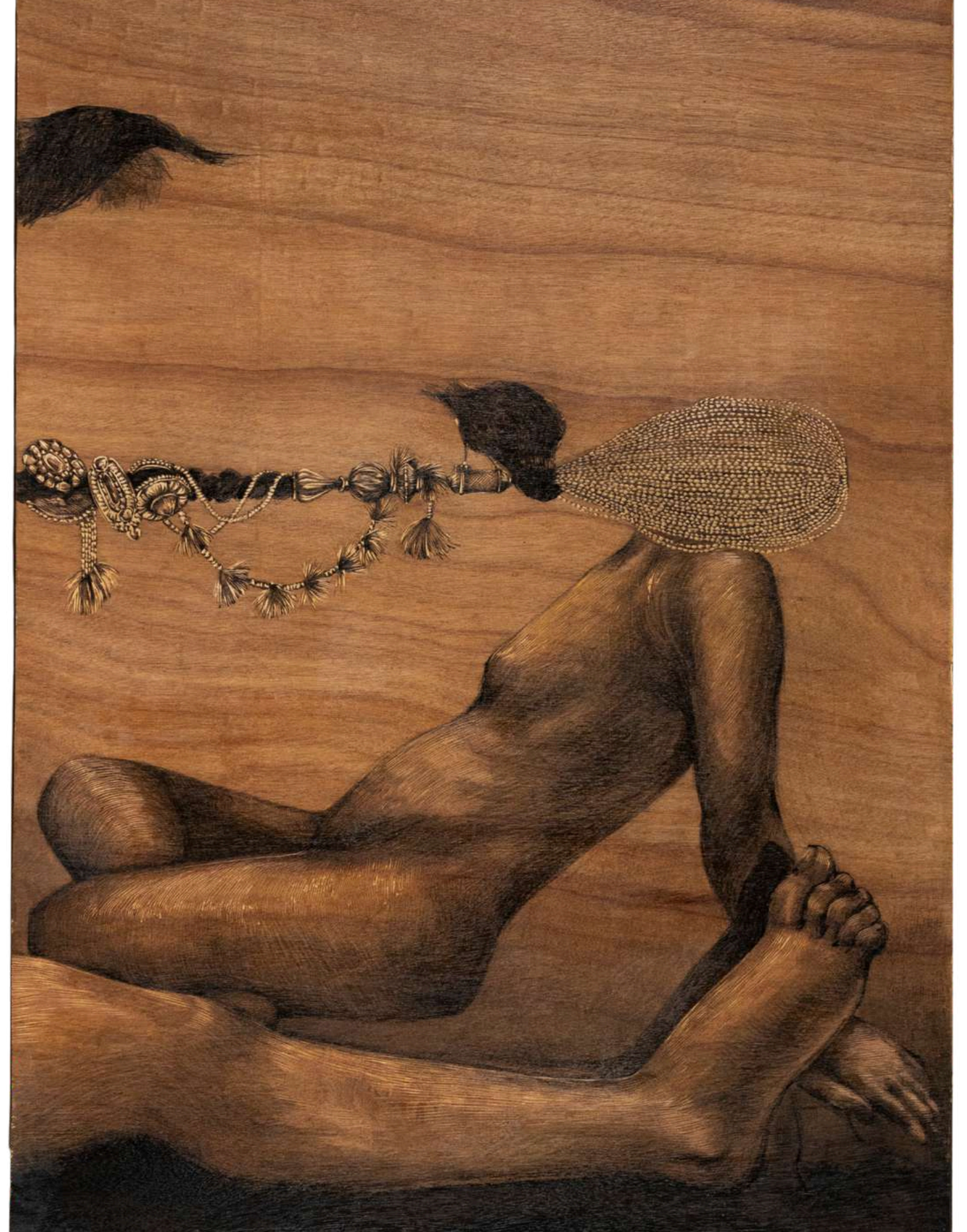
Detail

Untitled

Woodcut, acrylic, and glass marker on plywood

48 1/4 x 155 7/8 x 15 3/4 in. (122.5 x 396 x 40 cm.) overall

2025, Santiniketan





In this video performance *Intaglio Print*, Rahul Sarkar explores the psychological state of desire and the subtle onset of greed. The performance evolved from the artist's realisation that when he reaches beyond what he already has -- whether directly or indirectly -- he tends to become deeply fixated on something for personal gratification, and a form of addiction takes root. This obsession clouds judgment, making it difficult to foresee consequences. This performance aims to reflect on this internal conflict.

Intaglio print
Video work
2025, Santiniketan

Watch the video work



The act itself draws from both printmaking and symbolism. In the video, Sarkar inked his face using kajal, a traditionally feminine cosmetic and then pressed it onto paper, creating an impression. This gesture not only references the intaglio printing process, but also redefines the boundaries of his identity as a printmaker. Here, he questions the expectation that to be a printmaker, one must always "print" in a conventional sense. The performance itself becomes the print – an imprint of thought, identity, and transformation. Conceptually, he has given as much importance to the visual language.

Intaglio print
Video work
2025, Santiniketan

Watch the video work





This work by Rahul Sarkar speaks of the burden of being put on a pedestal and made the centre of attention, while cloaked in a strange atmosphere thick with meaning and expectation. A figure heavily adorned in jewellery, with a red robe around his shoulders, sits on an impossibly high chair, its legs disappearing into the unknown – there is no arrangement for his return to the ground. This red fabric acts as a symbolic shroud. Like ornaments placed upon the body, and then wrapped again in cloth, it speaks of concealment, complexity, and the tension between visibility and protection.

Untitled
Woodcut, acrylic, and glass marker on plywood
96 x 48 in. (244 x 122 cm.)
2025, Santiniketan



Detail

Untitled

Woodcut, acrylic, and glass marker on plywood

96 x 48 in. (244 x 122 cm.)

2025, Santiniketan



Installation view
IMAGINARIUM 5.0
A 5wards and Exhibition via All-India Open Call
2025, Emami Art



Through the carved surface and the tactile nature of woodcut, Rahul Sarkar attempts to capture that tension between what is absent and what is still deeply felt. As his first attempt in the medium, Sarkar builds on the invisible thread of connection that remains even in the face of emotional and physical distance—both from his earlier surroundings and from people who once felt close. The large scale of the work reflects the richness of this connection, giving form to the silent bonds that persist even in separation.

Untitled

Woodcut, letter press ink, acrylic, and glass marker on plywood

96 x 48 in. (244 x 122 cm.)

2024, Santiniketan

Detail

Untitled

Woodcut, letter press ink, acrylic, and glass marker on plywood

96 x 48 in. (244 x 122 cm.)

2024, Santiniketan





Installation view
IMAGINARIUM 5.0
A 5wards and Exhibition via All-India Open Call
2025, Emami Art

Maternal by Rahul Sarkar arises from his tendency to keep holding on to attachments, relationships, and memories, even when they have faded. This intaglio print shows a figure heavily adorned in jewellery, holding a withered flower — a quiet, symbolic gesture. His eyes, looking head on into the viewer's, capture the fear of loss, the ache of holding on, and the fragility of letting go.



Maternal
Etching on paper
Paper size: 10 x 8 1/8 in. (25.5 x 20.7 cm.)
Print size: 8 1/2 x 6 3/4 in. (21.5 x 17.2 cm.)
2024, Santiniketan
Edition: 11/15



Detail

Maternal

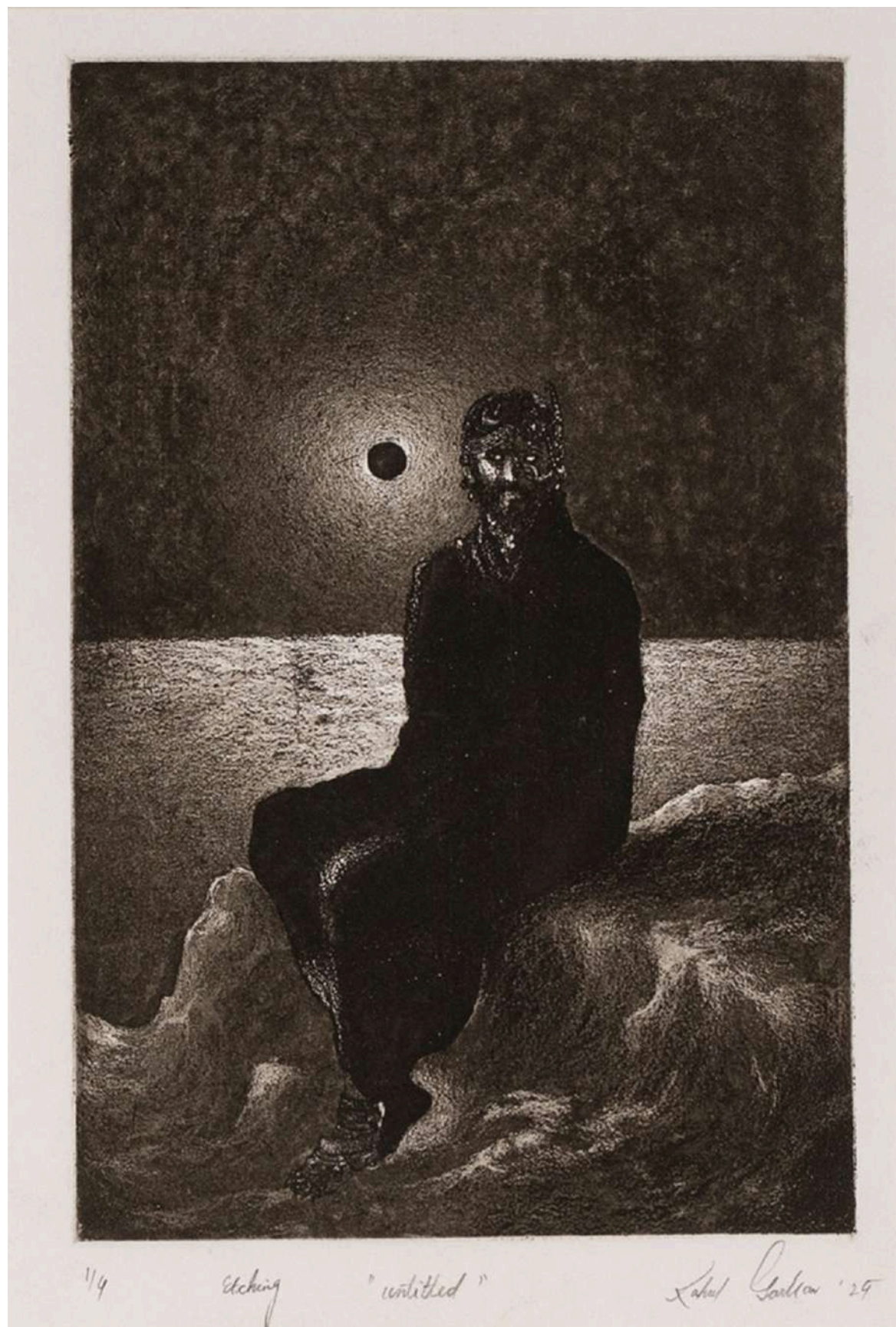
Etching on paper

Paper size: 10 x 8 1/8 in. (25.5 x 20.7 cm.)

Print size: 8 1/2 x 6 3/4 in. (21.5 x 17.2 cm.)

2024, Santiniketan

Edition: 11/15



This work by Rahul Sarkar draws inspiration from Raja Ravi Varma's painting *Radha in the Moonlight*. The figure in this work sits on rocks by a serene water body, looking directly at the viewer, with a lunar eclipse in the background. While Varma depicted Radha enveloped in the soft glow of the moon, Sarkar's piece explores the delicate tension between illumination and obscurity, presence and absence, and the emotional space between longing and revelation.

Untitled
Etching on paper
Paper size: 10 3/4 x 7 1/4 in. (27.2 x 18.5 cm.)
Print size: 9 1/2 x 6 1/4 in. (24 x 16 cm.)
2024, Santiniketan
Unique

Detail

Untitled

Etching on paper

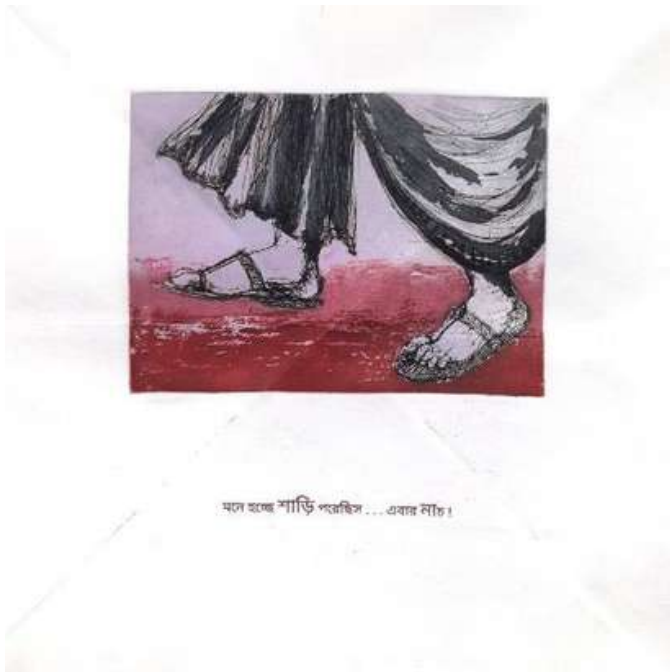
Paper size: 10 3/4 x 7 1/4 in. (27.2 x 18.5 cm.)

Print size: 9 1/2 x 6 1/4 in. (24 x 16 cm.)

2024, Santiniketan

Unique





Untitled
Etching and serigraphy on paper
8 X 6 in.
2023, Santiniketan



Growing up being called derogatory names, being the target of snide comments and pranks owing to his gender expression, Rahul Sarkar developed a distinct penchant for comments. Although there is a lot of simplicity in the comments from his childhood, but what he heard after growing up is very distasteful, inhuman, and baseless. This book is based on these comments.

Detail

Untitled
Etching and Serigraphy
8 X 6 in.
2023, Santiniketan



দাদা একটু অসুবিধা হচ্ছে, পা টা সরিয়ে বসুন।
এখন ছেলেরা শাল পরে নাকি ?

Detail

Untitled
Etching and Serigraphy
8 X 6 in.
2023, Santiniketan



বাড়ি কোথায় ? কোন স্টেশন থেকে উঠলে ?

কোথায় নামবে ? ভালো আছে ?

তোমার নম্বরটা পাওয়া যাবে ? তোমার ঘর আছে ? আমার নম্বরটা নাও ... বাড়ি

গিয়ে call করো ... এই ট্রেনেই যাওয়া আসা করো ?

একটু এদিকে এসে দাঁড়াবে ? আমার সাথে নামবে ? তোমায় খুব ভালো দেখতে ।

তোমায় শিল্পী শিল্পী দেখতে ... কি করো ?

Detail

Untitled
Etching and Serigraphy
8 X 6 in.
2023, Santiniketan



মনে হচ্ছে শাড়ি পরেছিস... এবার নাচ!

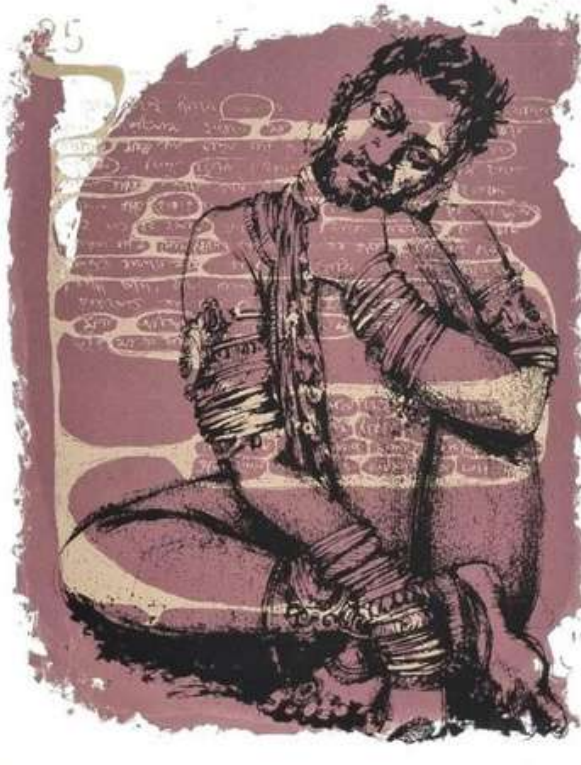
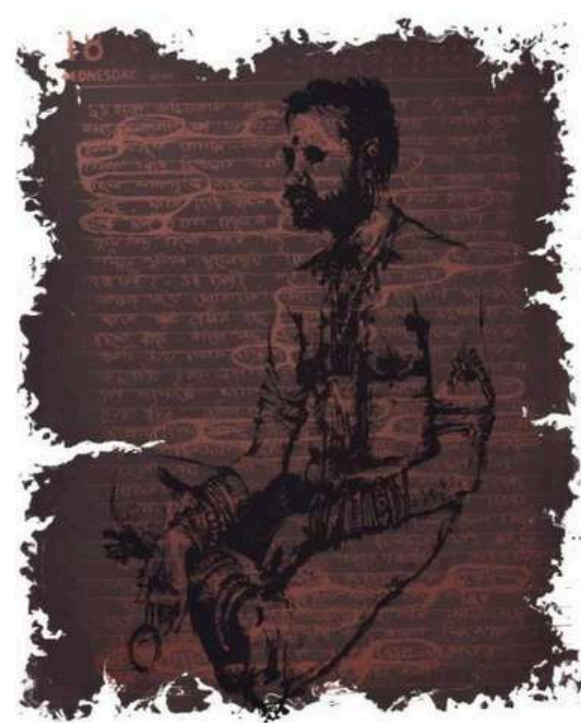
Detail

Untitled
Etching and Serigraphy
8 X 6 in.
2023, Santiniketan



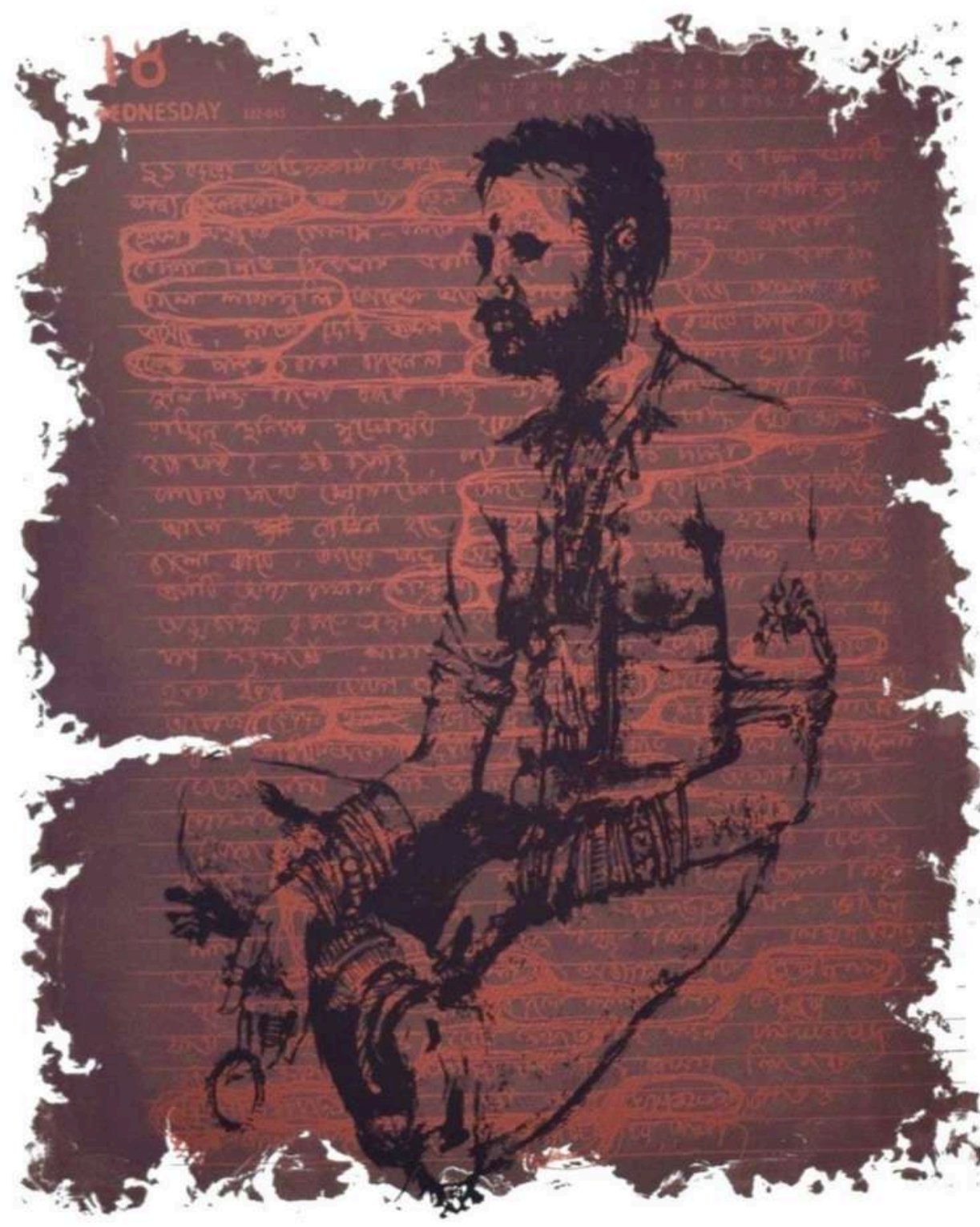
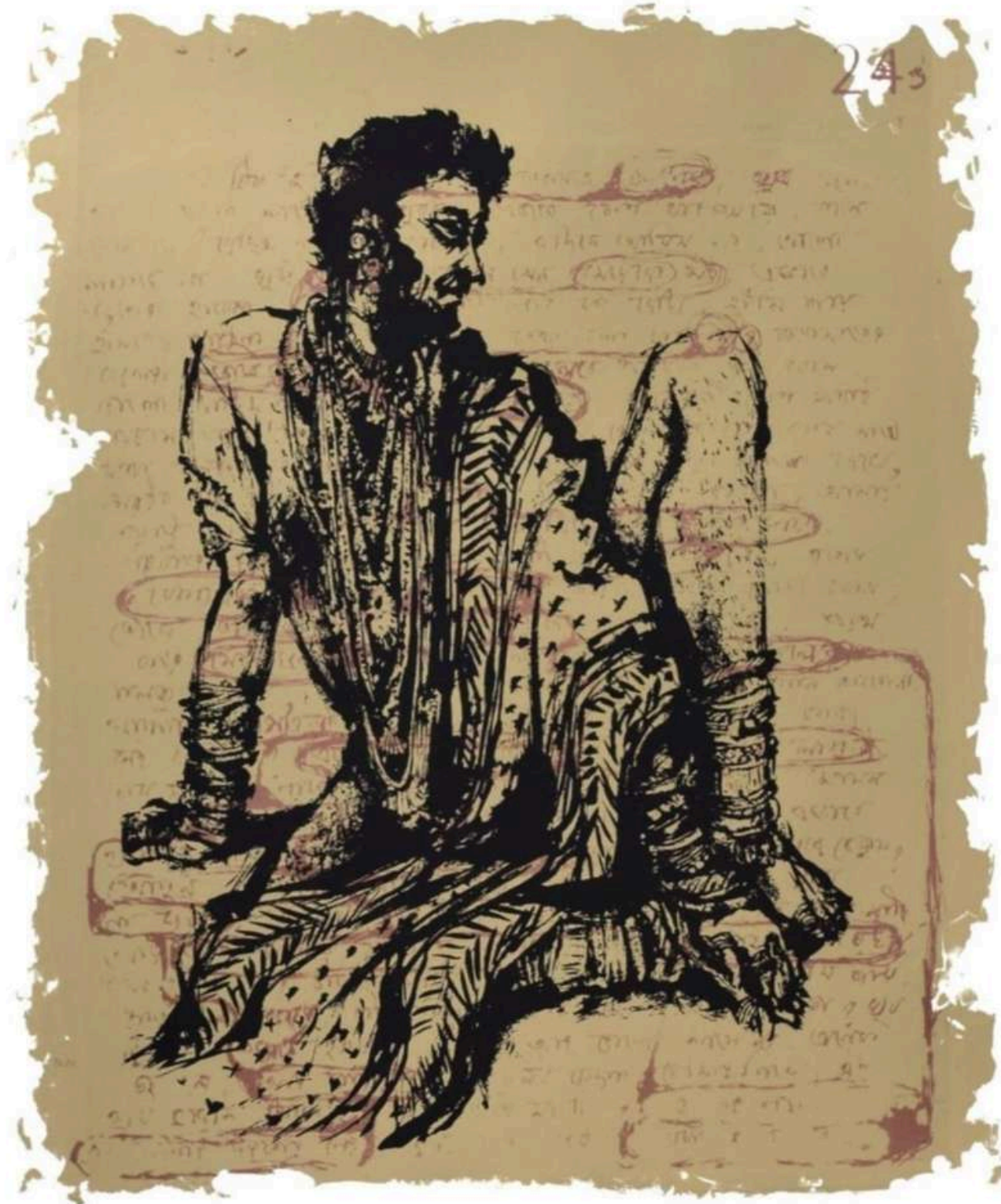
Ever since he was a child, Sarkar has found the subject of marriage very interesting. As an androgynous person, he always wanted to see himself as a bride. Here too, he shows the distortion caused by the weight of the ornaments, using the “kajal kanta” (kohl container) as a metaphorical object in the print.

Untitled
Multiplate Woodcut
18 X 18 in.
2023, Santiniketan



In this series of six works in serigraphy, through the use of a muted palette, Rahul Sarkar attempts to understand certain phases of one's life. The reason for placing impressions of pages from his personal diary on the image is to add another dimension to the image – an impression of the mental state of the time when he was working on the print. In the prints, he has drawn the androgynous figure to represent himself, with ornaments that look a bit distorted. The ornaments are used in the prints to cover internal wounds and secrets. Here, he wishes to show the distortion caused by the weight of the ornaments.

"what do you think"
 Serigraphy
 24 X 19 in.
 2023, Santiniketan



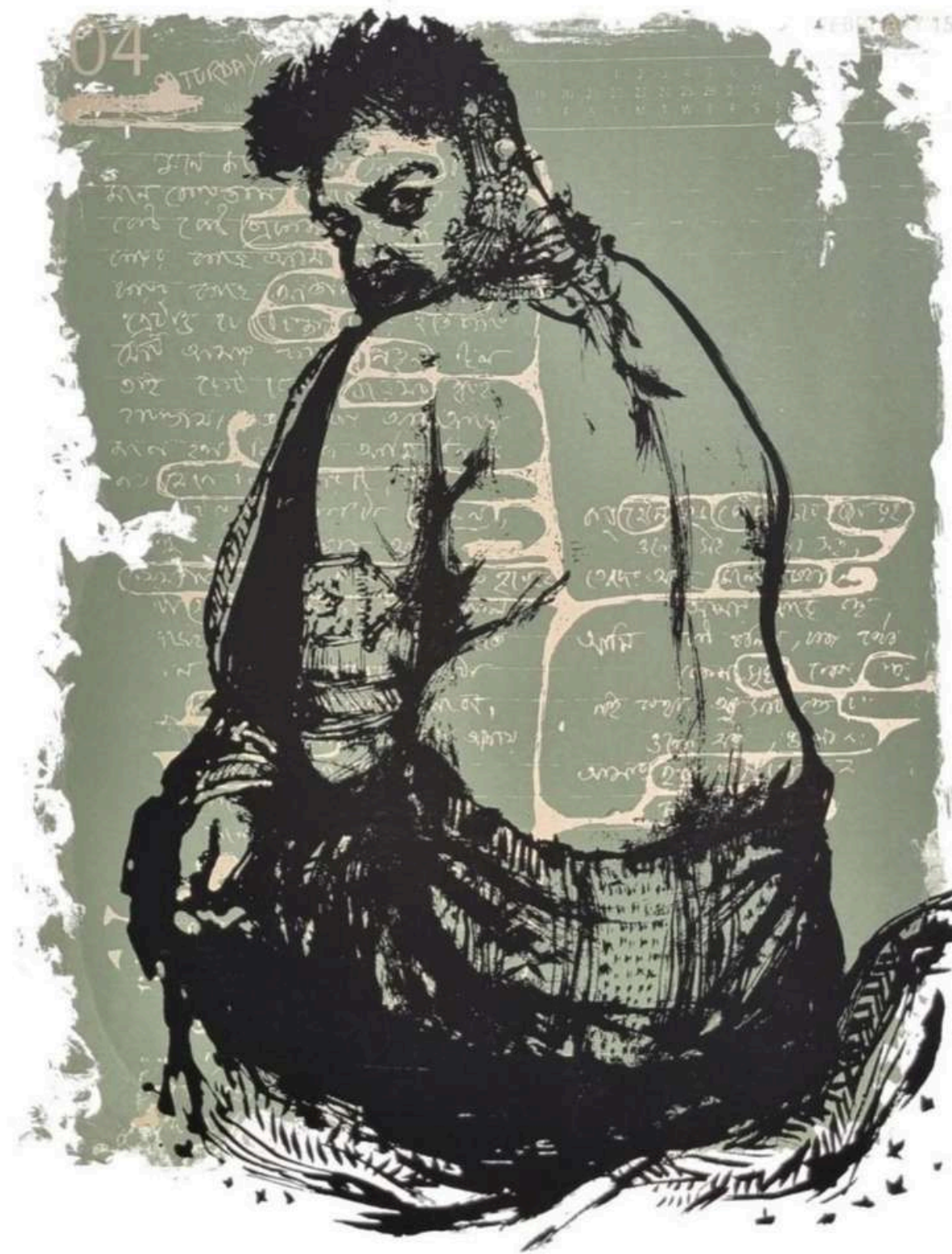
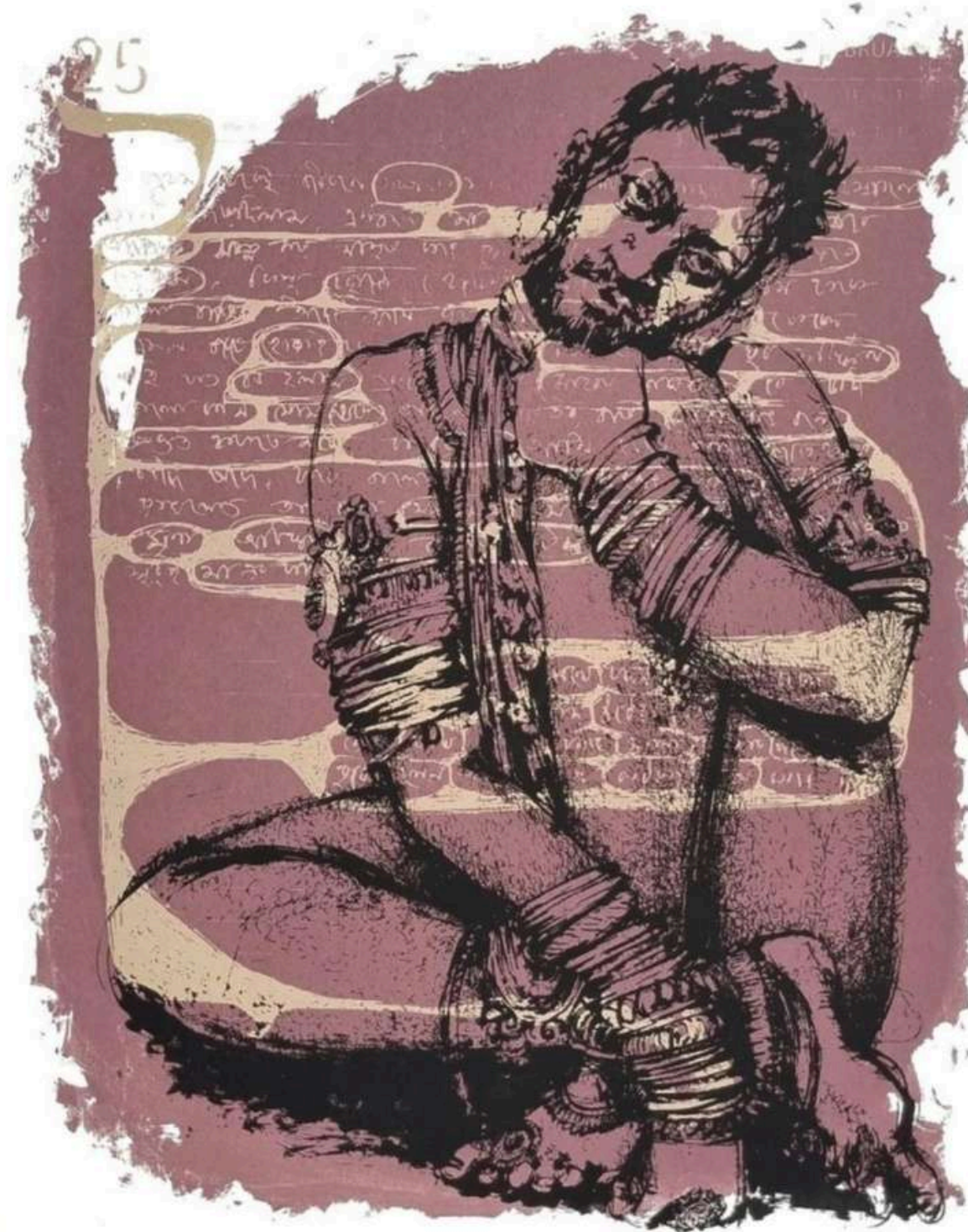
Detail

"what do you think"
Serigraphy
24 X 19 in.
2023, Santiniketan

Detail

"what do you think"
Serigraphy
24 X 19 in.
2023, Santiniketan

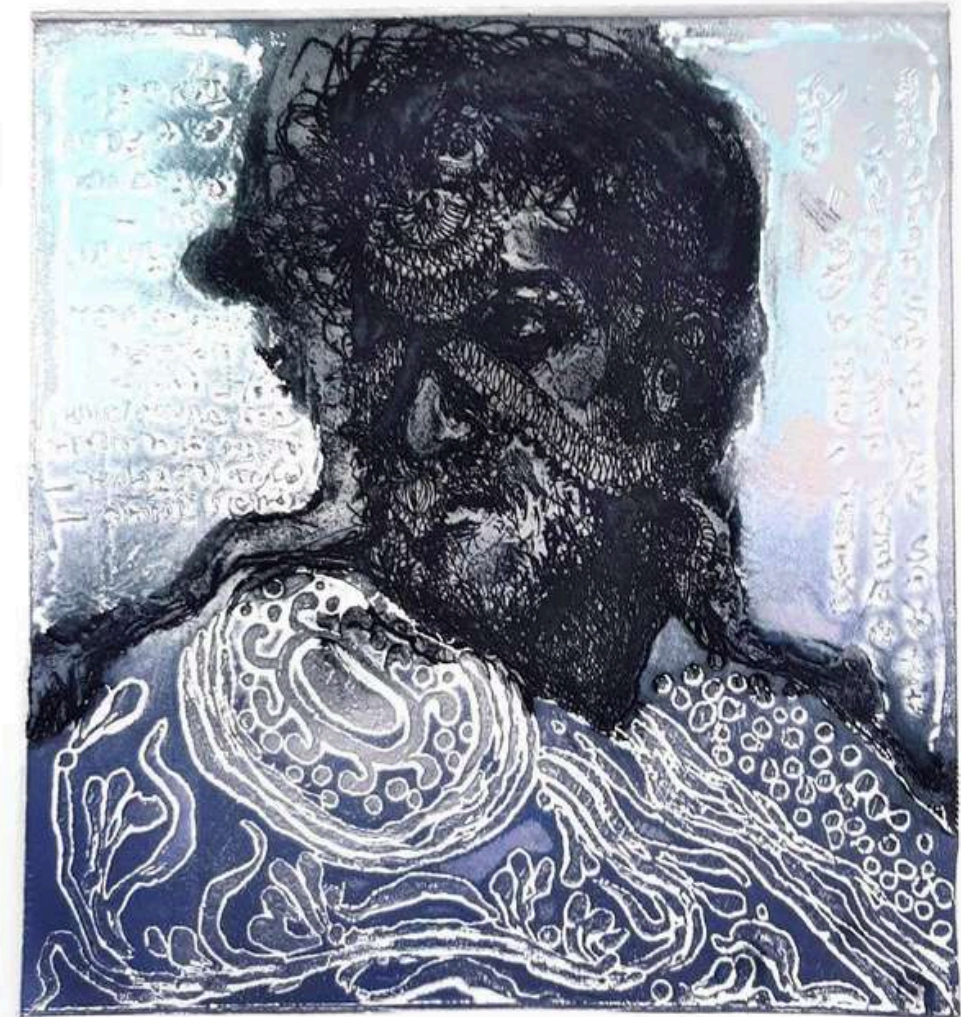




Detail

"what do you think"
 Serigraphy
 24 X 19 in.
 2023, Santiniketan

The Grumble
Viscosity
9 X 9.5 in.
2023, Santiniketan



V/P

Untitled
Woodcut
72x60 in.
2023, Santiniketan



2/2

WOODCUT



Whenever Sarkar got a reprieve from the burden of over-masculinity that he experienced in childhood, he wanted to dress up as he liked. But he always had the fear of being caught. In this work, he has retained the impression of that fear in this painting – the fear of being caught unawares.

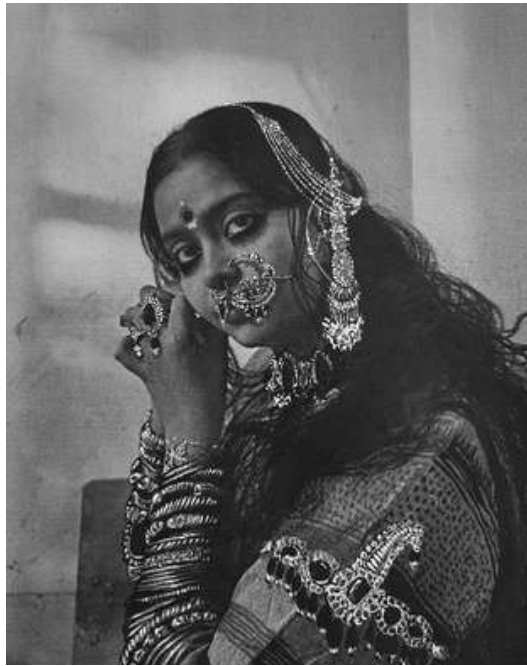
Untitled
Woodcut and glass marker
60x48 in.
2023, Santiniketan



Untitled
Etching
8x7 in.
2023, Santiniketan



Peace for a while
Charcoal, acrylic, and golden enamel on brown paper
82 x 43 in.
2023, Santiniketan

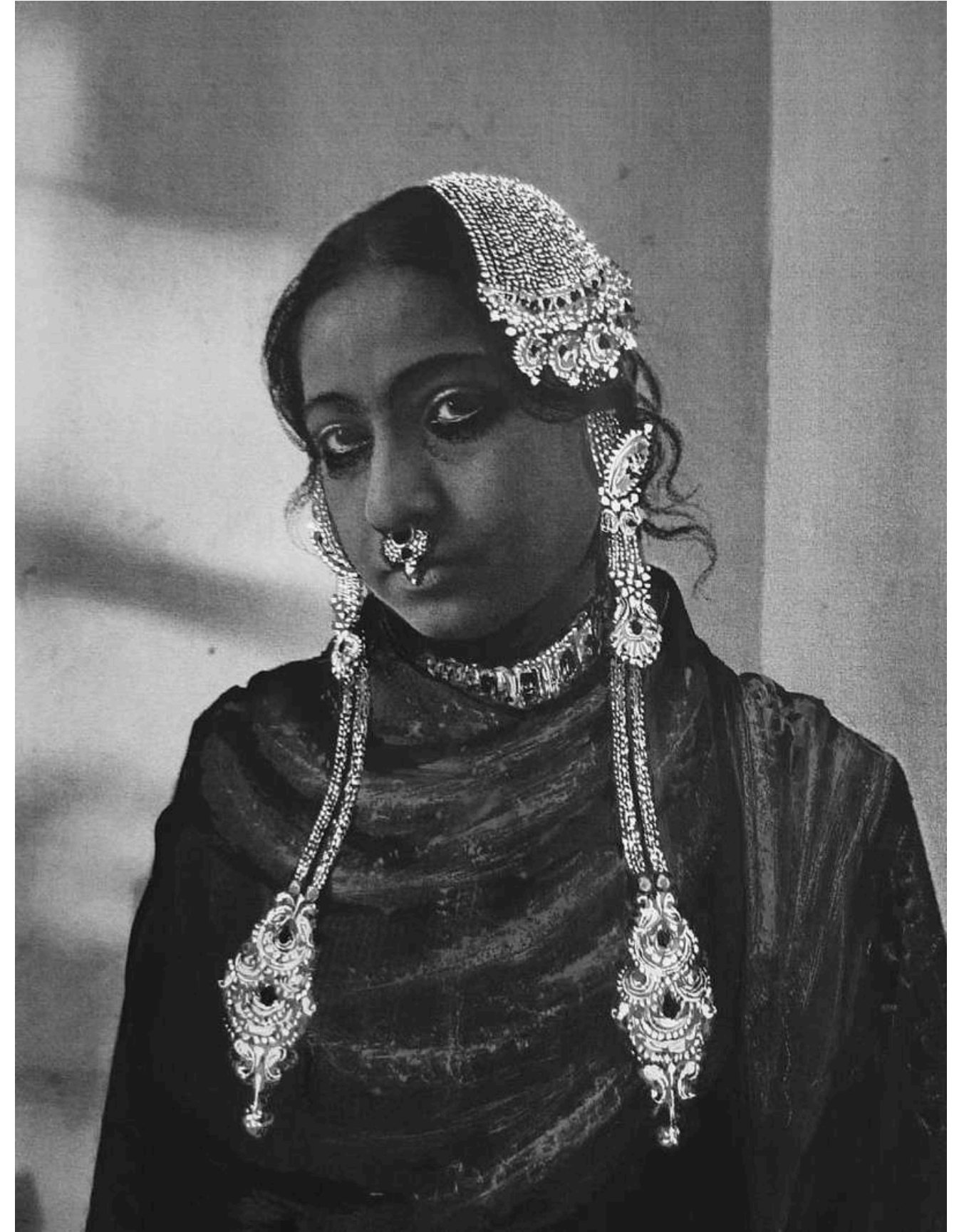
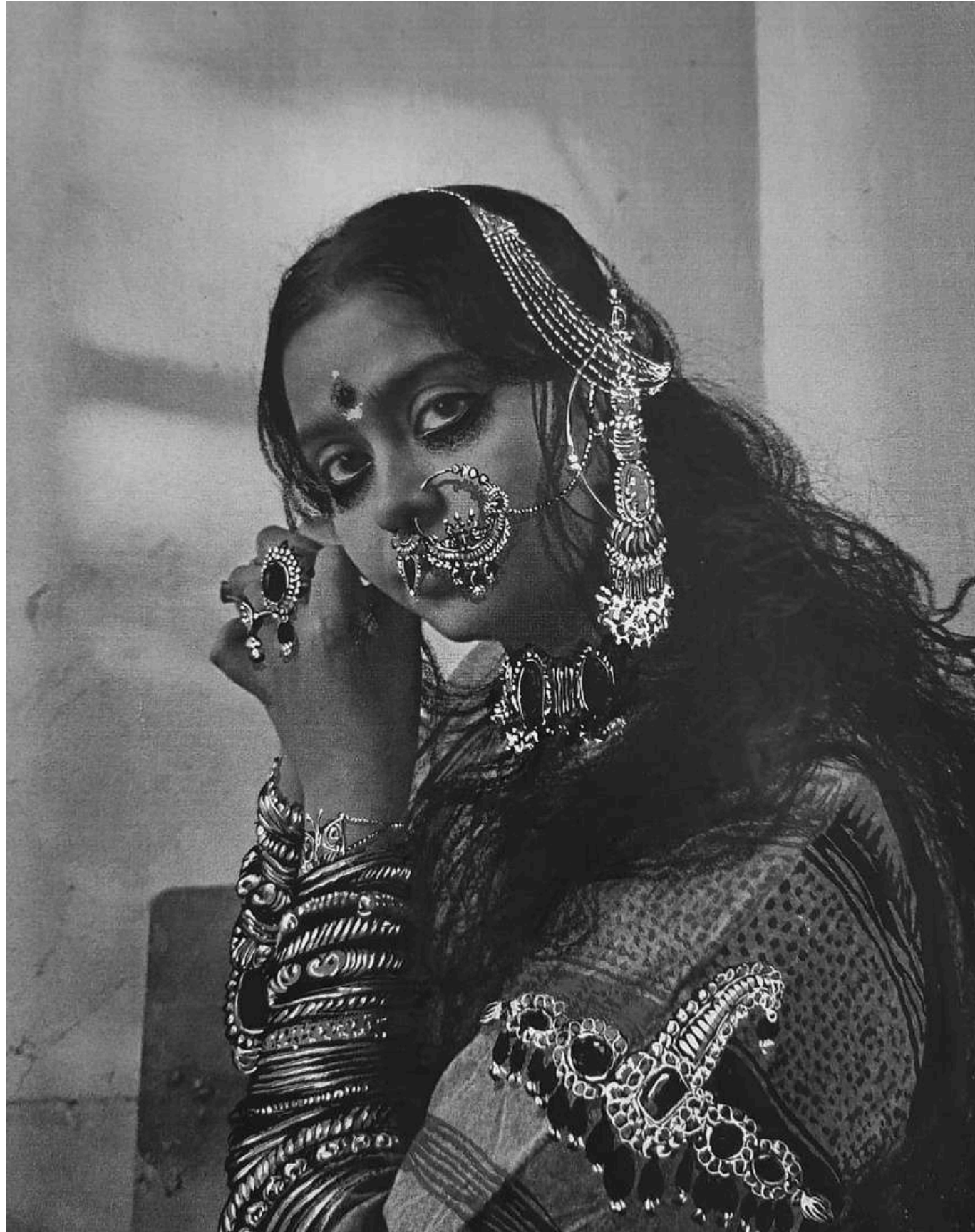


This work takes inspiration from Sarkar's childhood practice of doodling ornaments and facial makeup on printed portraits on newspapers and magazines. He recreates this by photographing a few of his batchmates and departmental juniors and seniors at Rabindra Bharati University, printing them out, and then adding ornamentation in poster colour, glass marker, and ink.

A few acquaintances
Poster colour, glass marker, and
Chinese ink on printed paper
11 x 8 in.
2023, Santiniketan

Detail

A few acquaintances
Poster colour, glass marker and
Chinese ink on printed paper
11 x 8 in.
2023, Santiniketan





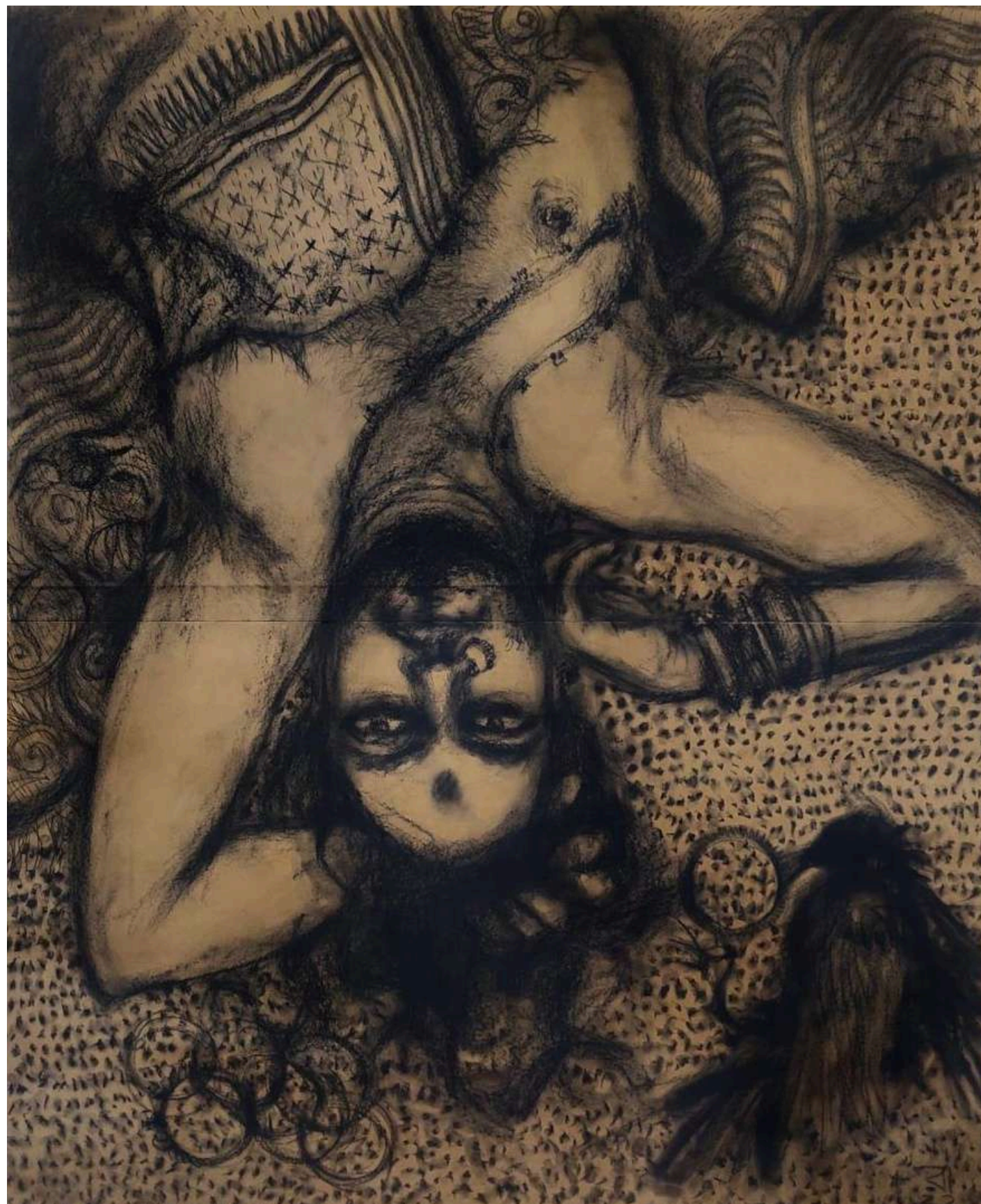
Detail

A few acquaintances
Poster colour, glass marker and
Chinese ink on printed paper
11 x 8 in.
2023, Santiniketan

Detail

A few acquaintances
Poster colour, glass marker and
Chinese ink on printed paper
11 x 8 in.
2023, Santiniketan





In the environment Sarkar grew up in, other boys were often attracted to feminine boys. The latter were considered more available or approachable than girls. This led to him getting involved in a few relationships while growing up – relationships that had no present and no future. At that time, some very familiar faces suddenly became unfamiliar. In this work, black dots in the image indicate anxiety, distraction, or dark memories, while the dead black crow on the right denotes a dead relationship. Sarkar has also used the motif of the "kantha" as a metaphor for time, because whatever happens in life, eventually the cloak of time blurs everything.

Untitled
Charcoal on brownpaper
55 x 43 in.
2023, Santiniketan



Rahul Sarkar, born in 2001 in Barasat, West Bengal, holds a BFA from Rabindra Bharati University (RBU), Kolkata (2023) and an MFA from Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan (2025).

His works have been part of multiple exhibitions including *PURVAI: Printmaking in Eastern India - Pedagogy to Practice* curated by Dr Paula Sengupta, Emami Art, Kolkata (2026); *IMAGINARIUM 5.0*, Emami Art, Kolkata (2025); SSVAD's 10th Young Santiniketan Artist's Exhibition, Santiniketan Society of Visual Art and Design, Santiniketan (2025); *Printed Voices from India: Social and Cultural Reflections* curated by Saad Ghosn of SOS ART at Kennedy Heights Art Center and Off Ludlow Gallery, Cincinnati (2024); *Voices from India & Human Rights: Social and Cultural Reflections* curated by Saad Ghosn at Nine Fish Art Gallery, Mumbai (2024); the RBU Student Annual Exhibitions 2022 and 2023; and the 2nd International Art Exhibition in London (2022) and a group exhibition (2019) by Sarbabharatiya Sangeet-O-Sanskriti Parishad, Kolkata.

Rahul Sarkar was the third awardee at *IMAGINARIUM 5.0: Emami Art All India Open Call 2025*. He lives and works in Santiniketan, West Bengal.

EMAMI ART

Emami Art is a prominent contemporary art gallery and cultural production space located on the ground floor of the Kolkata Centre for Creativity's Green Building. Established in 2017, it adopts a forward-looking, multi-dimensional approach that reflects South Asia's history, socio-cultural, and geo-political narratives. Emami Art operates within an inclusive framework where profitability supports sustainable resource regeneration and public service.

Committed to promoting a regional, national, and international agenda, Emami Art emphasizes community engagement, socially relevant initiatives, and institutional partnerships. With a multi-year vision for the future, it continues to be a catalyst for change, research, innovation, and inclusivity.

