

Partha Pratim Deb

Portfolio





Partha Pratim Deb is a Kolkata-based artist known for his experimental works ranging from painting and sketches to three-dimensional assemblages which oscillate between being toy and sculpture.

He pursued formal art education at Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan and then at The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. His mentors at Kala Bhavana included the master artists Nandalal Bose, Benode Behari Mukherjee, and Ramkinkar Baij, with Gouri Bhanja's works profoundly impacting his practice. His time at Baroda later exposed him to Western modernism, where he learnt from KG Subramanyan. Deb absorbed the essence of both these pivotal institutions and gradually forged his own highly experimental and unconventional path, diverging from the narrative-figurative and abstract art trends of his time.

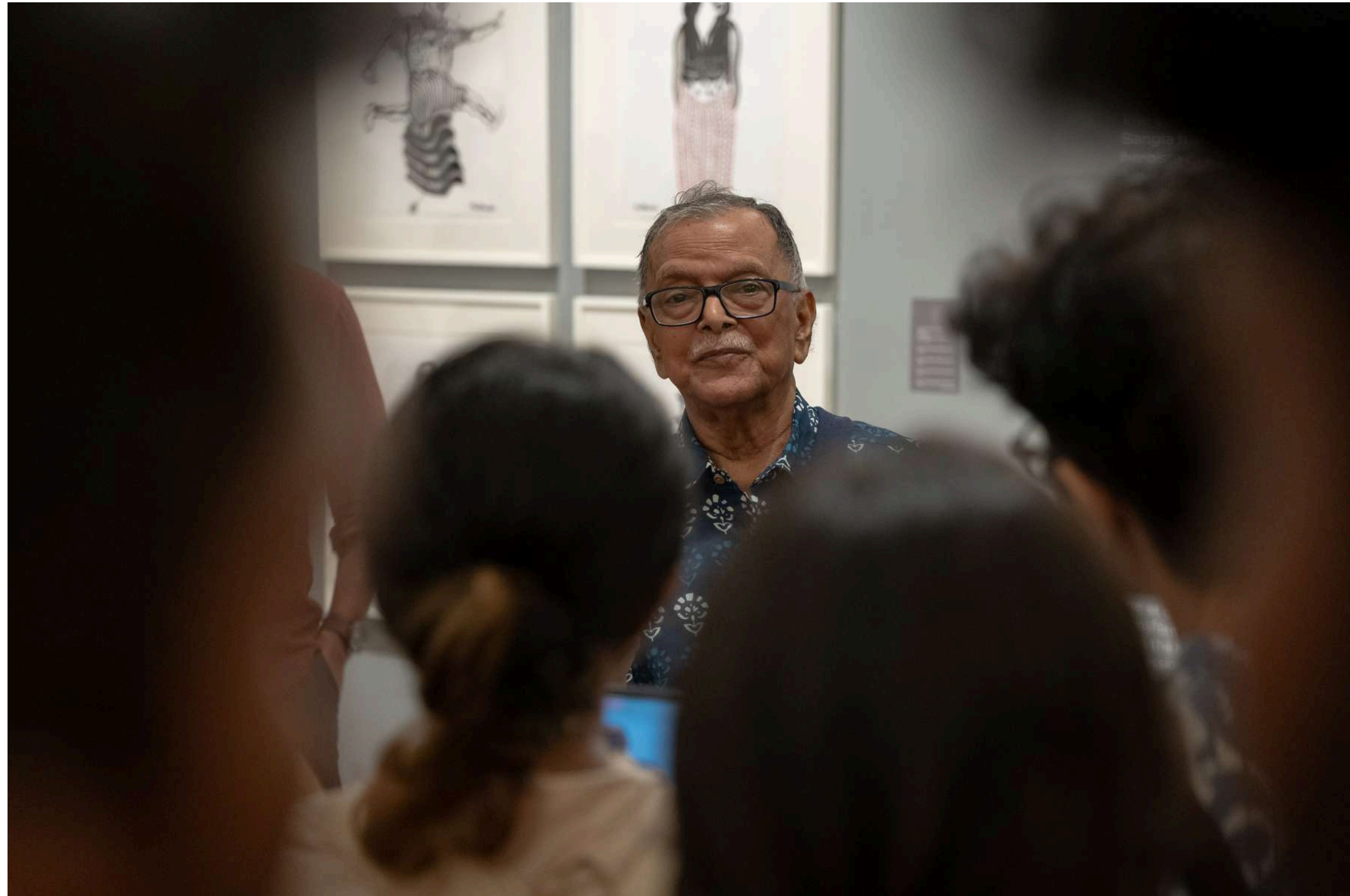
Working across mediums, Partha Pratim Deb does not follow an over-arching scheme of thought in his works. They are created spontaneously, showing a rich assortment of colourful forms, marks, and patches characterised by a playful style and unconventional approach. His works blend action and conception, abstraction and figuration, freedom and control. The mediums he is most fond of are ones that are either dry or dry quickly – graphite, acrylic, and ink. In his mixed media installations, he repurposes found objects and materials, transforming them into art objects that unlock new forms and meanings, exploring the latent potential of everyday things.

Watch the artist discuss his practice



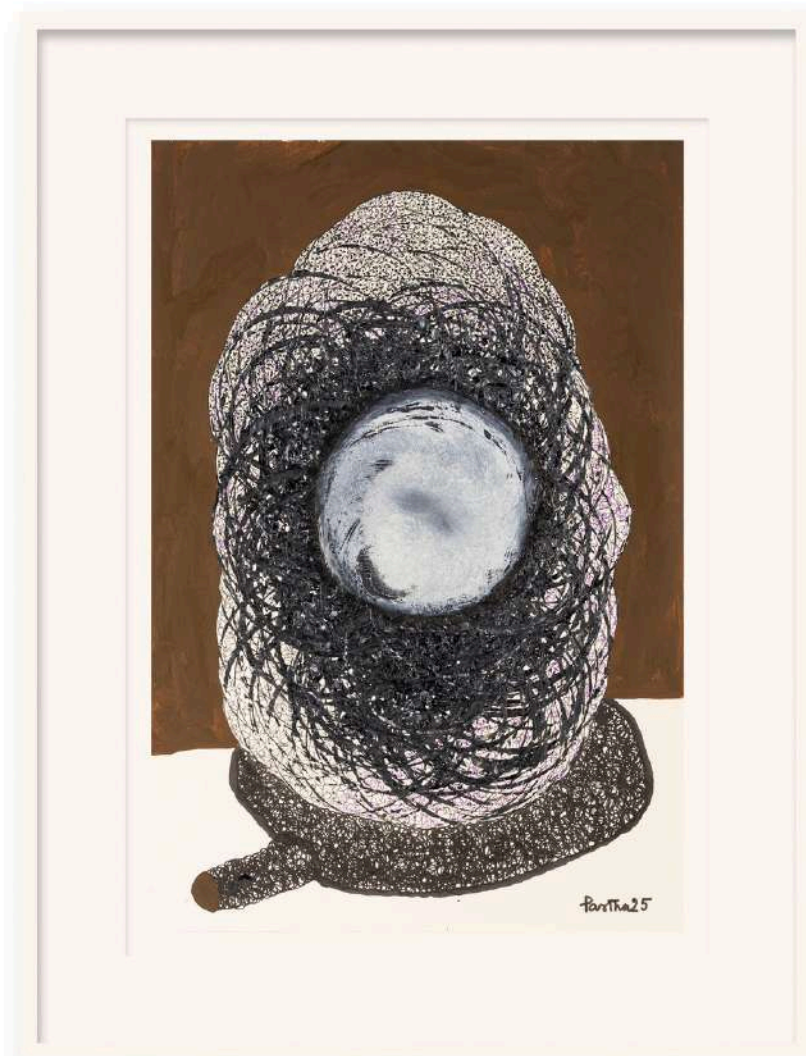
Alongside Partha Pratim Deb's art career of over six decades, developed his 33-year-long tenure at Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata (1972 – 2005) where he was the second full-time faculty member at the institution and was instrumental in shaping its Visual Arts department. He served as the department's Dean between 1998 and 2003.

Deb's artistic position within the Indian art historical canon is that of a bridge-builder and innovator, one who integrated the philosophical approach of Santiniketan with the progressive experimentalism of Baroda, finally coming up with his own pedagogical approach. This, much like his artistic practice, emphasises experimentation and the courage to challenge conventional boundaries.



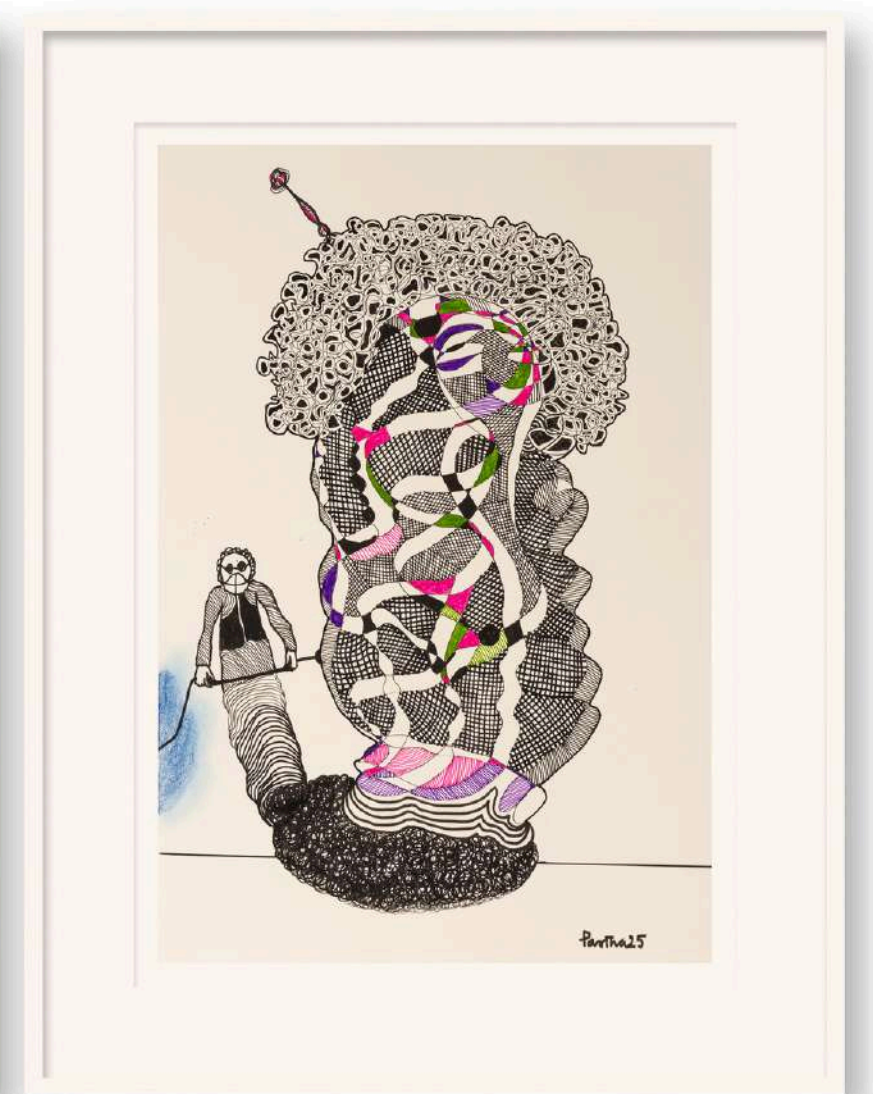
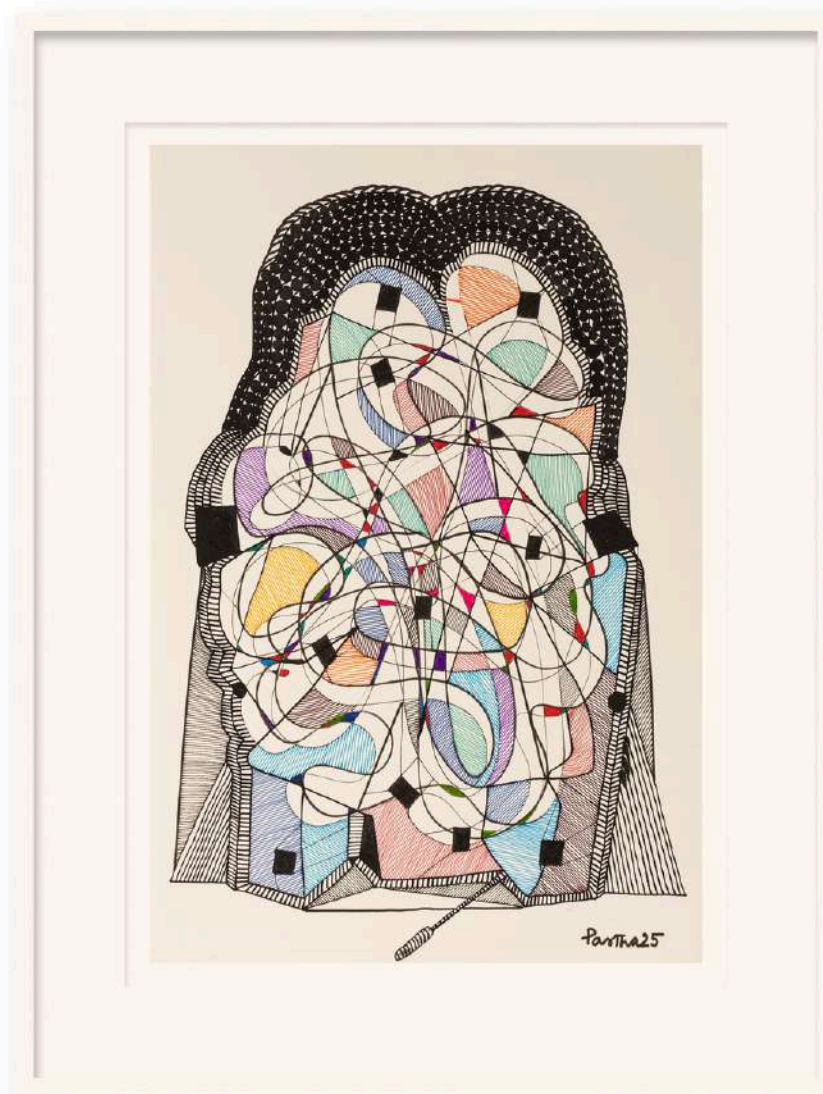


Untitled, Acrylic and ink on paper, 17 7/8 x 12 in. each, Set of 4 works, 2024-2025, Kolkata

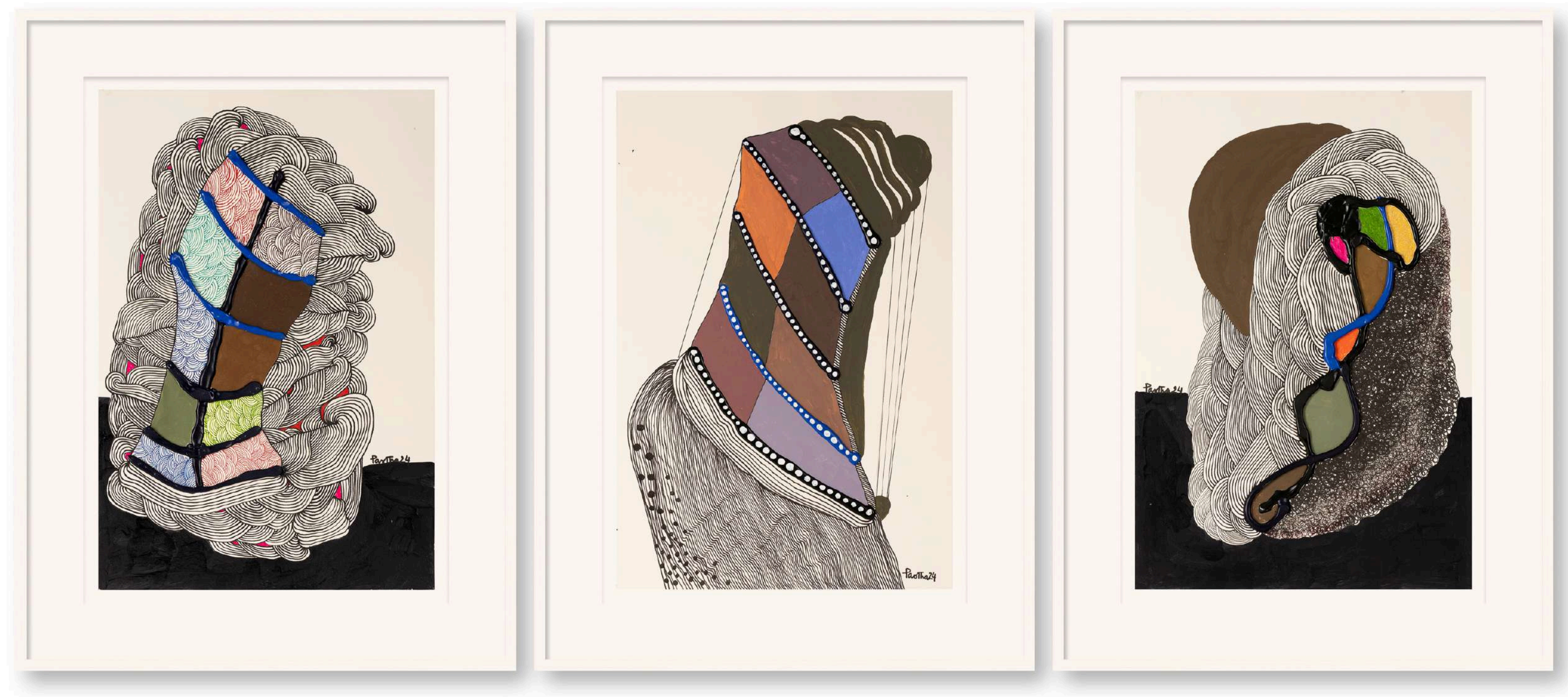


Detail
Untitled
Acrylic, and ink on paper
17 7/8 x 12 in. each
Set of 2 works
2025, Kolkata





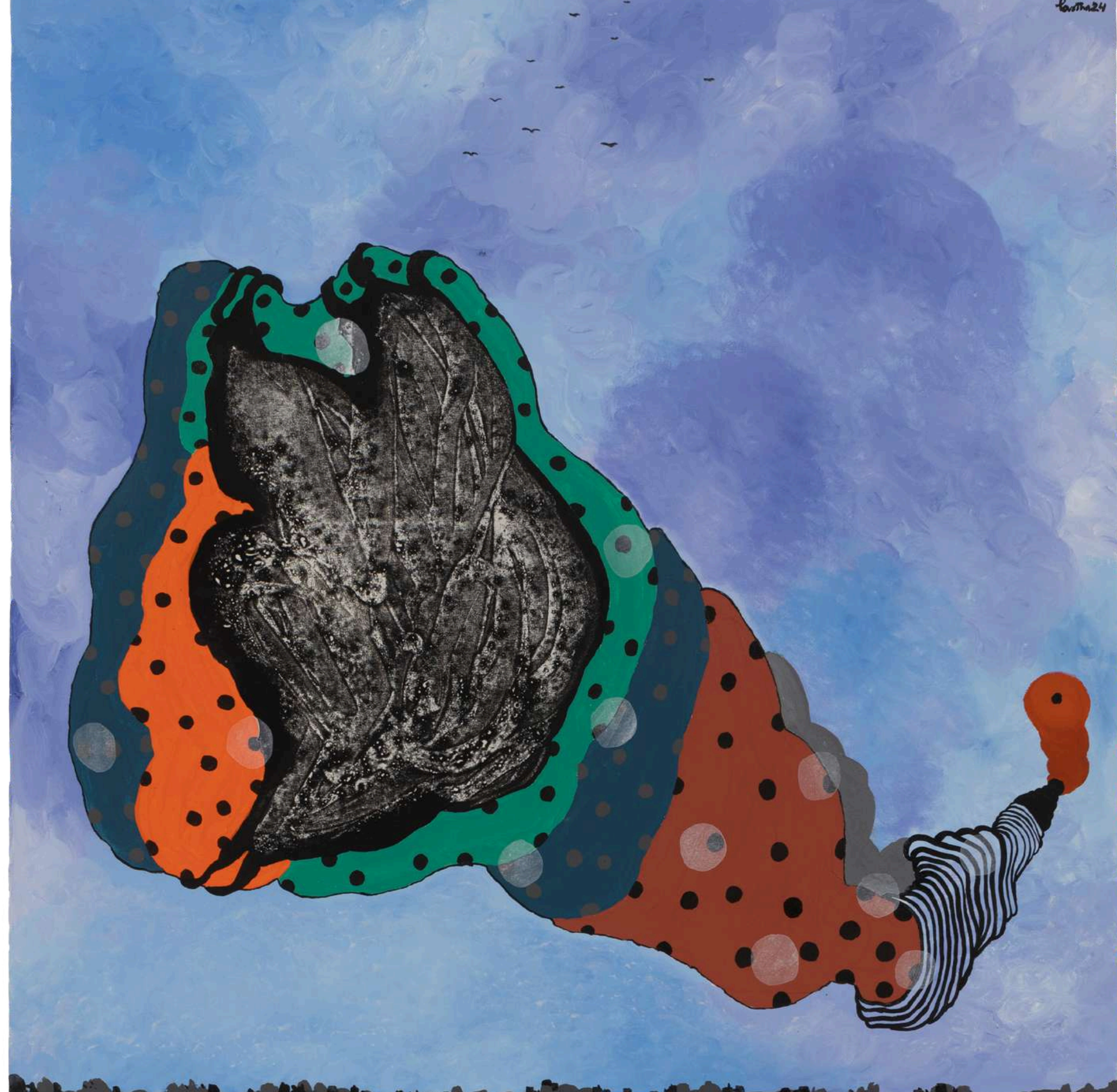
Untitled
 Acrylic, and ink on paper
 17 7/8 x 12 in. each
 Set of 2 works
 2025, Kolkata

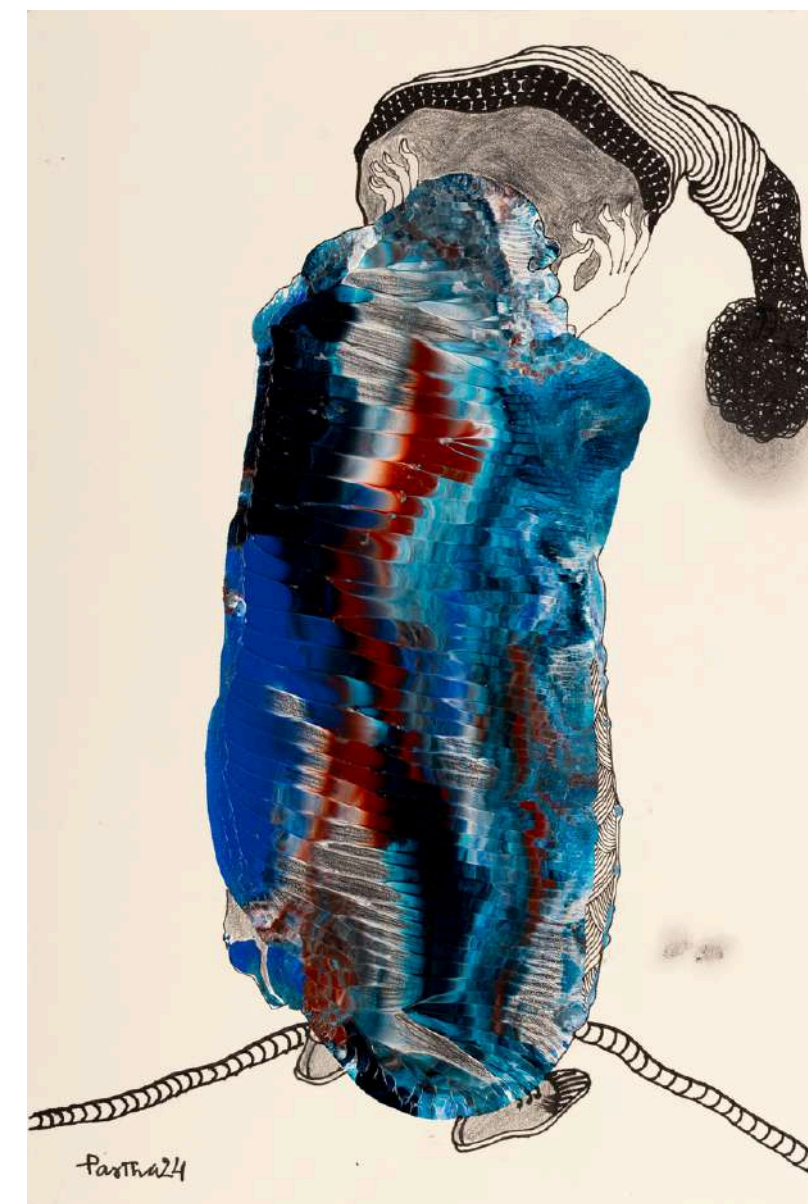
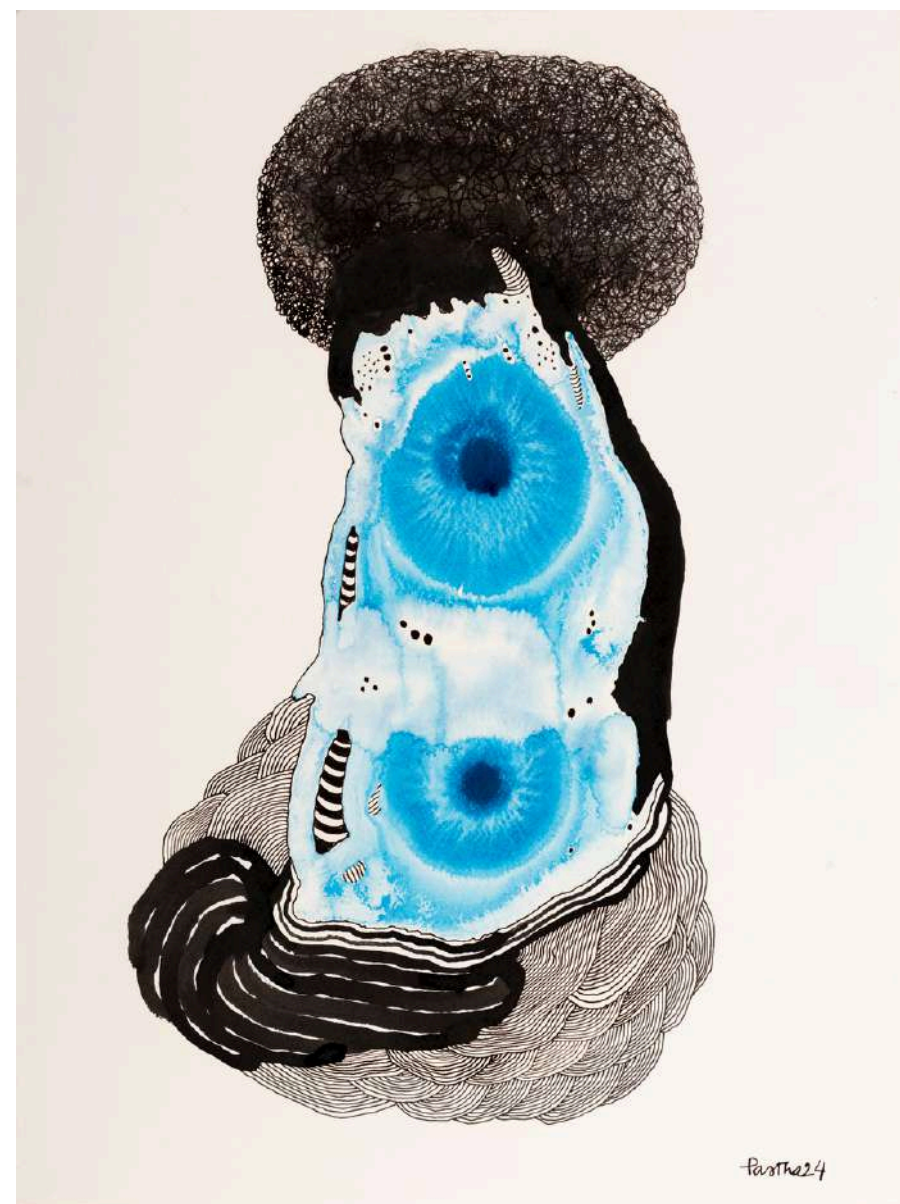


Untitled, Acrylic, and ink on paper, Overall dimension variable, Set of 3 works, 2024, Kolkata

Partha Pratim Deb's vibrant works showing colourful forms, marks, and patches are characterised by a playful style and unconventional approach, evoking a sense of freedom. Without pre-planning or adhering to specific themes, he lets his mind and hand act freely, allowing the artwork to unfold organically. Consequently, he refrains from titling his works, emphasising their origin in action rather than in thought or concept. His works blend action and conception, abstraction and figuration, freedom and control. They don't narrate a specific story; instead, they reveal their creative journey, showcasing the joyful artistic adventure that brought them into being.

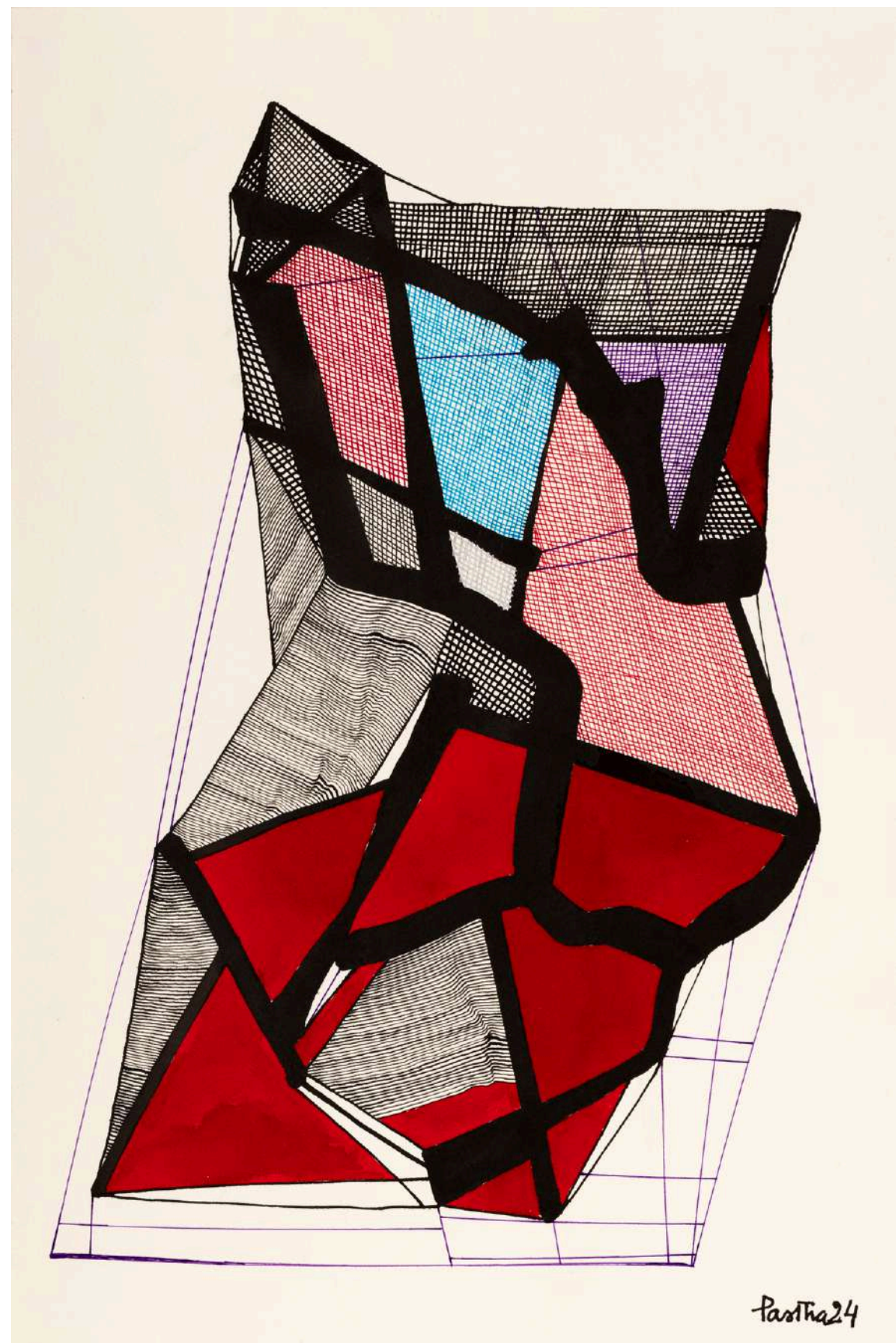
Untitled
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 50 in.
2024, Kolkata





Untitled
Acrylic, ink and graphite on paper
18 7/8 x 14 1/4 in. each
2024, Kolkata

Untitled
Ink and watercolour on paper
17 7/8 x 12 in. each
Set of 2 works
2024



Besides his paintings and drawings, marked by a playful and spontaneous style, Partha Pratim Deb is also renowned in Bengal's art community for his sculptural assemblages crafted from familiar household objects (ephemera, bottles, newspapers). These works blur the line between toys and sculptures, as he delights in transforming mundane objects and their meanings into something aesthetically unique. In this piece, he used old trousers, fabric, glass bottles to create a sculptural installation, combining craft with free imagination.

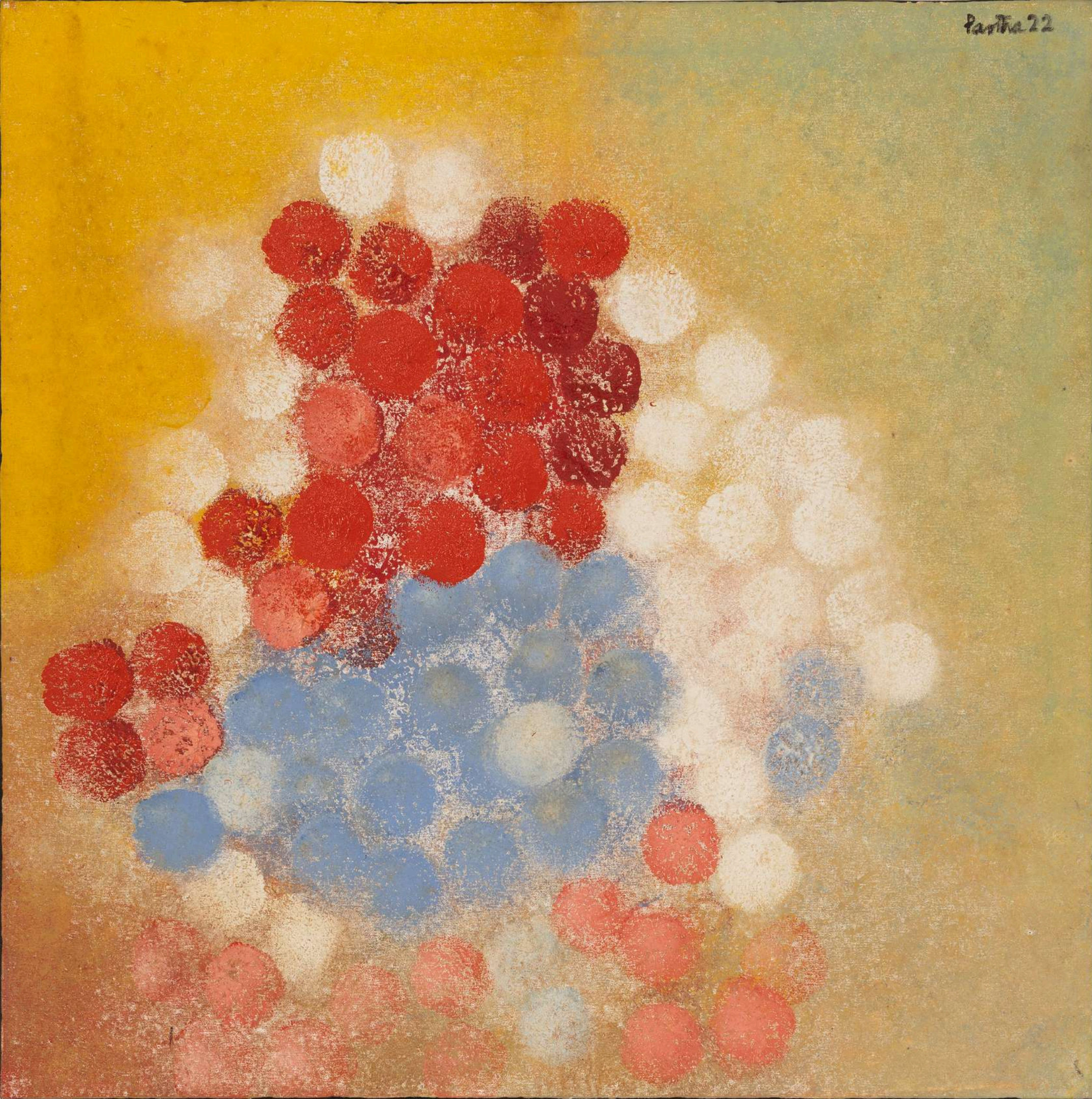


Untitled, Used trousers, glass bottles, found objects, fabric, threads, and cotton,
21 3/4 x 40 3/8 x 19 3/4 in. approx. overall, Set of 9 works, 2023, Kolkata

Untitled
Fabric, thread, and cotton
36 1/4 x 15 3/4 x 18 7/8 in. approx.
2023, Kolkata



Partha 22



Untitled
Oil and acrylic on canvas
36 x 35 7/8 in.
2022

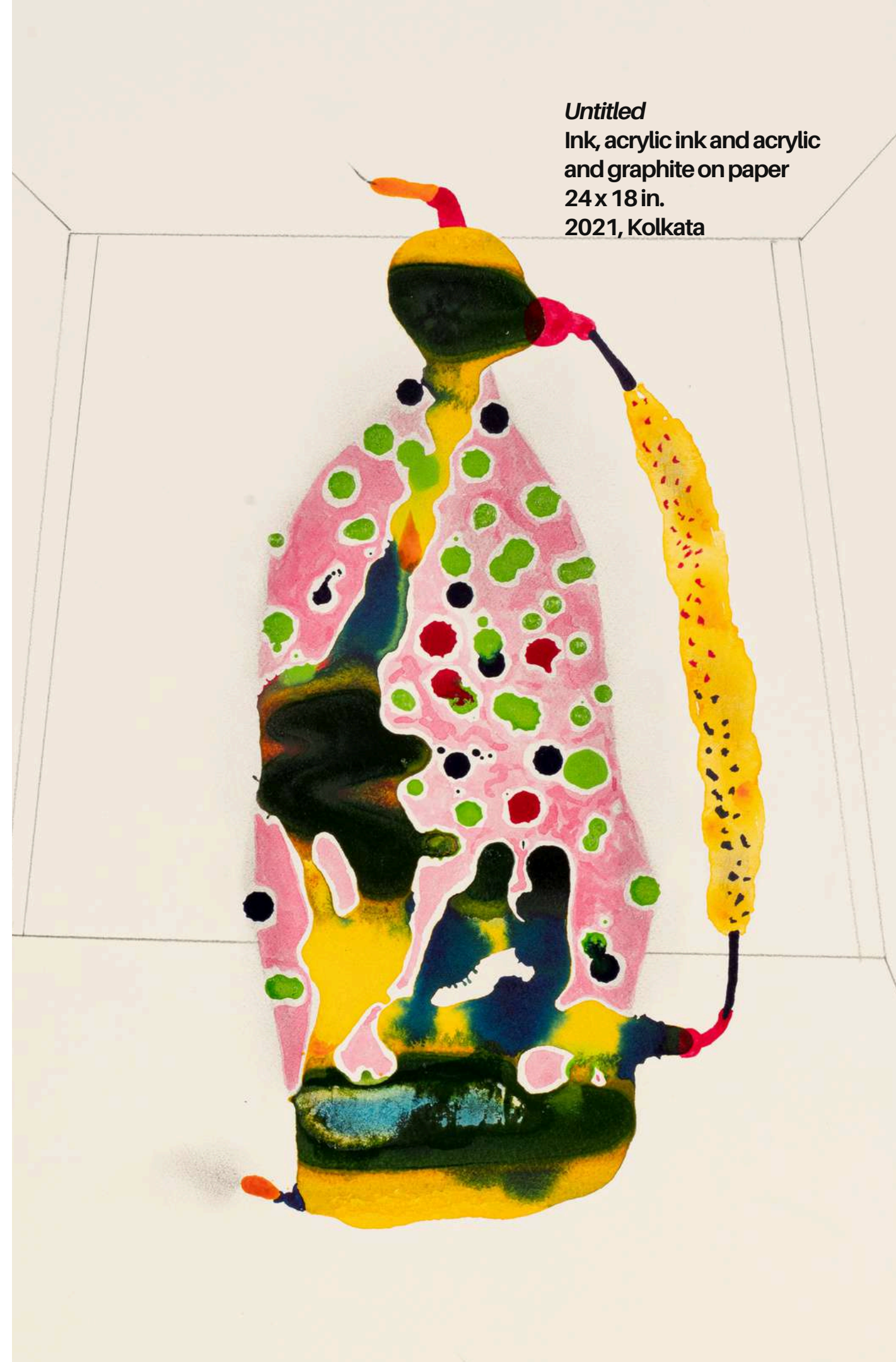


Partha Pratim Deb's vibrant works are powerful design architectures composed of fluid lines, pigments, and impressions, executed in a hurried, spontaneous style. His drawing is a graphic event, a free mark-making process that unfolds without pre-planning. Working with ink, he creates lines and shapes that reveal the trajectory of his inner psychic processes, unencumbered by specific ideas or concepts. This approach showcases his experimental attitude and willingness to let the unconscious play an equal role to consciousness.

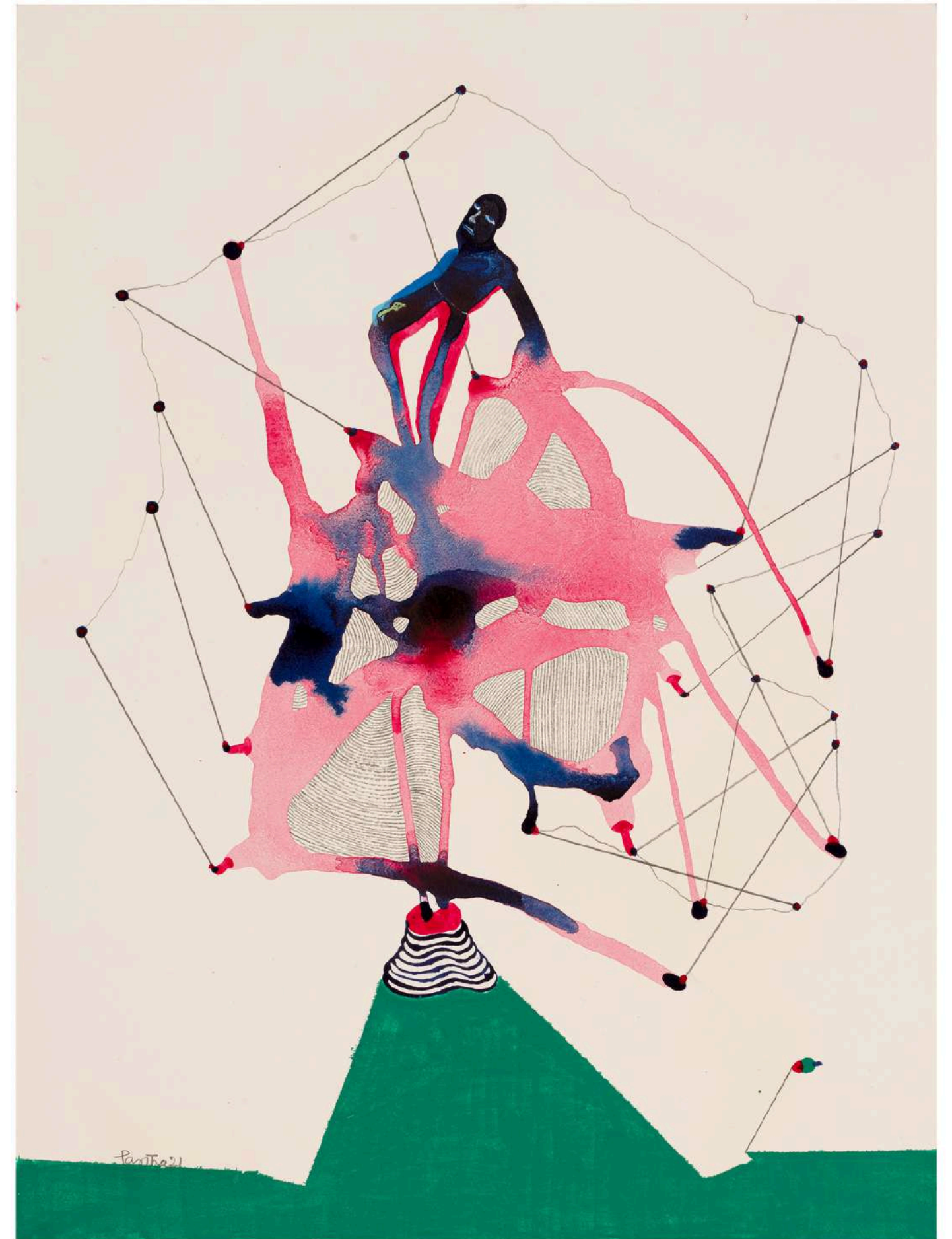
Untitled
Ink on paper
44 x 30 1/4 in.
2022, Kolkata



Untitled
Ink, acrylic ink and acrylic
and graphite on paper
24 x 18 in.
2021, Kolkata

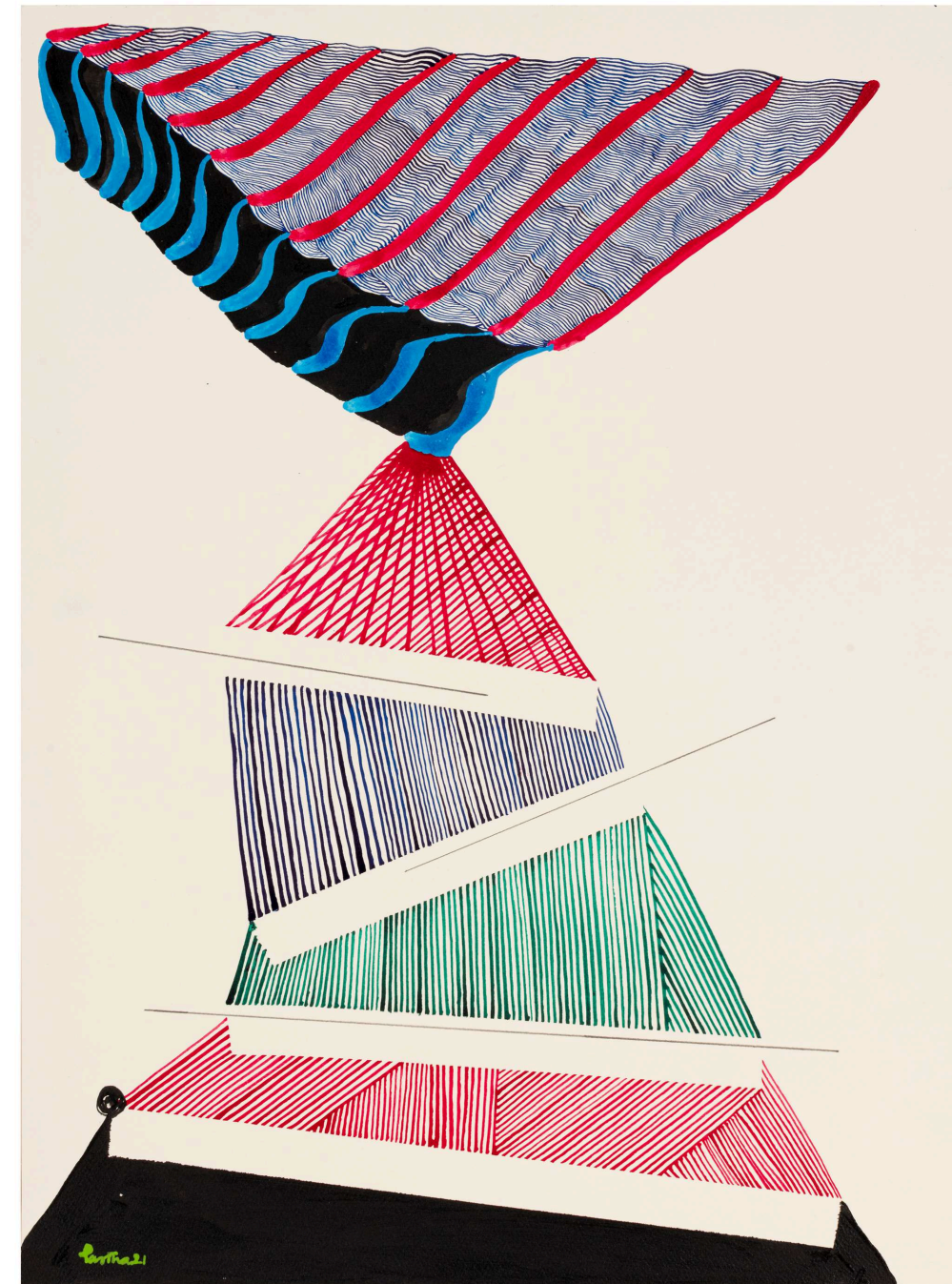
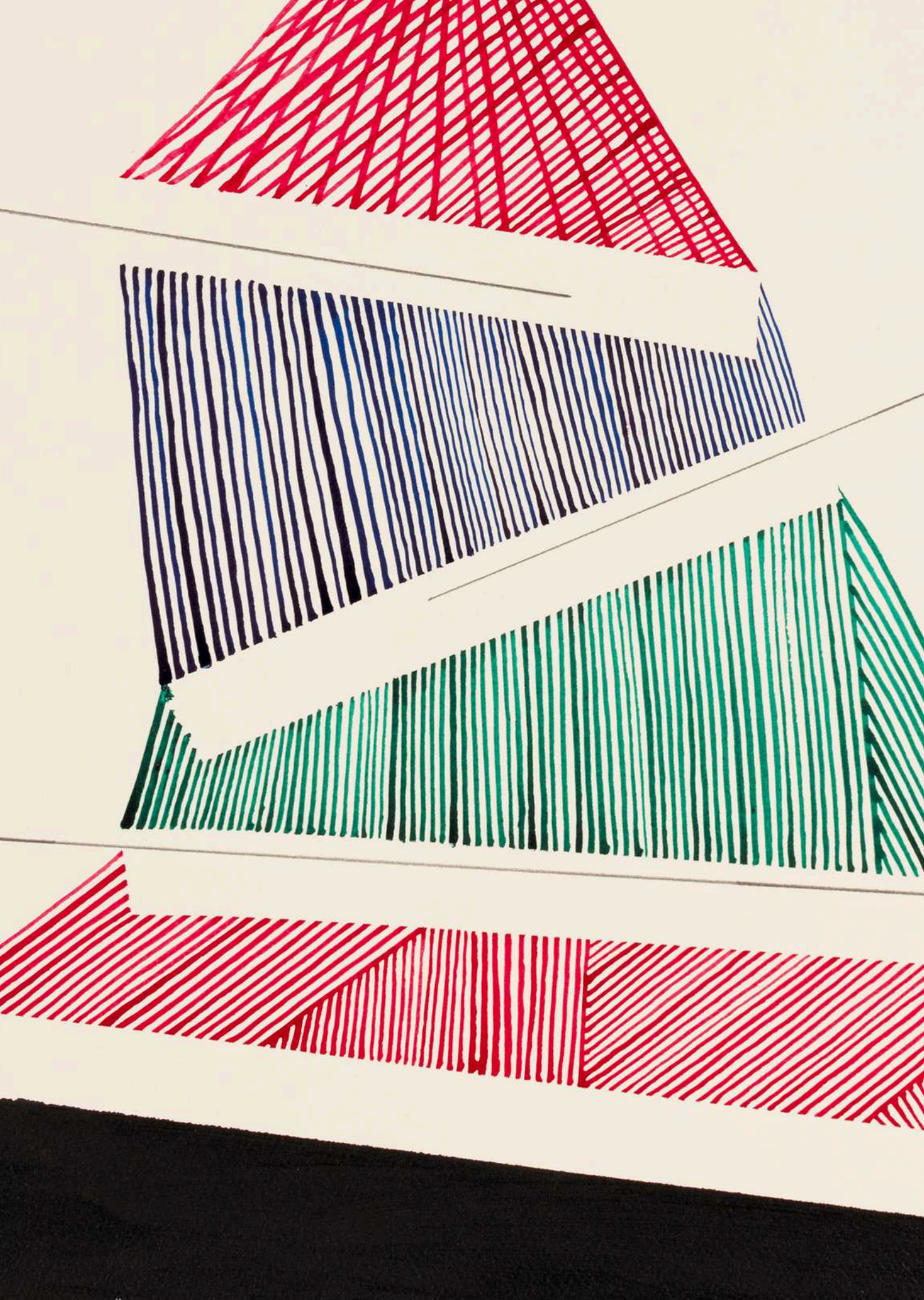


Untitled
Ink, acrylic ink and acrylic and graphite on paper
24 x 18 in.
2021, Kolkata





Untitled
Ink, acrylic ink, acrylic
and graphite on paper
24 x 18 in.
2021, Kolkata



Untitled
 Ink, acrylic ink, acrylic and
 graphite on paper
 24 x 18 in.
 2021, Kolkata

Untitled

Fabric, thread, acrylic, and newspaper

22 1/2 x 63 1/4 x 10 7/8 in. approx

2020, Kolkata



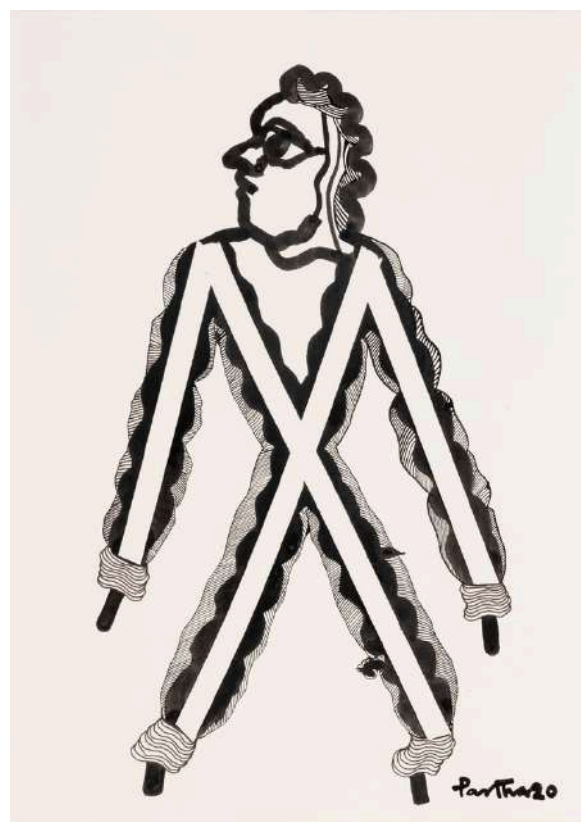
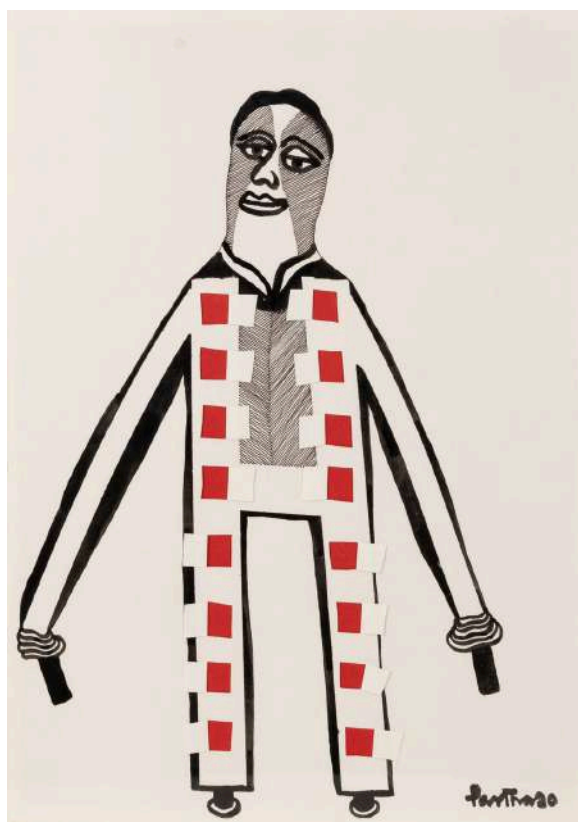
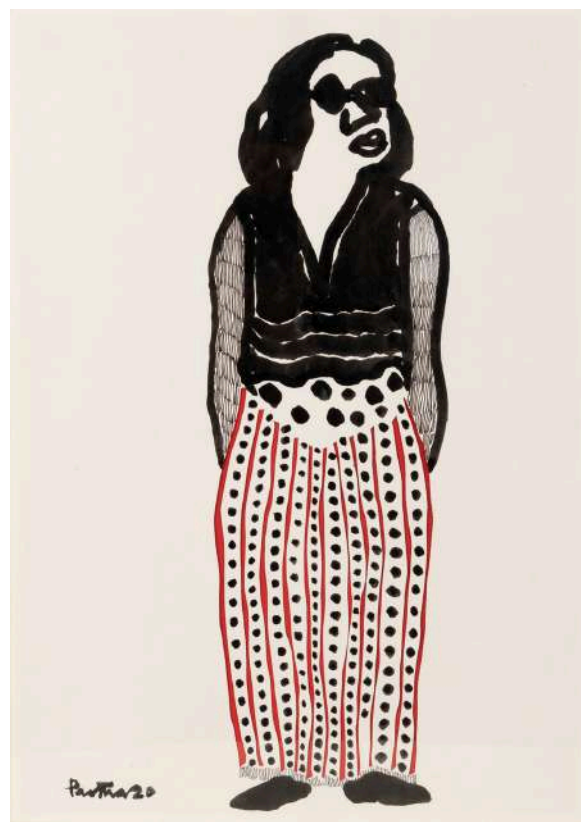


Installation view
Play-Forms: Recent Works
by Partha Pratim Deb
Emami Art, Kolkata
2025



In this work, Deb uses acrylic, ink, and acrylic ink – which dry quickly – to create lines and shapes that reveal the trajectory of his inner psychic processes, unencumbered by specific ideas or concepts. This approach showcases his experimental attitude where the process is considered more significant than the product. Deb's drawings are powerful design architectures composed of fluid lines, pigments, and impressions.

Untitled
Ink, acrylic and acrylic ink on paper
24 x 18 in. each
Set of 6 works
2020, Kolkata



Partha Pratim Deb's drawings showcase bold figuration executed in a hurried, spontaneous style. As a keen observer, he captures the essence of human expressive gestures, attaching no specific meaning to them. Deb's drawing is a purely graphic event, emphasizing mark-making and design aspects over optical details, and combining abstraction with figuration. In his work, the process is considered more significant than the product.

Untitled
Ink on paper
16 1/2 x 11 5/8 in. each
2020



"As I age, a host of different ideas swarm into my mind, and I can't help but wish it had happened sooner in life. Back then, I had my family and finances to worry about. Now, as a senior citizen and pensioner, I feel a newfound freedom and an urge to create — it arrives almost like a responsibility. Selling art is no longer my priority; creating something meaningful is. My years of teaching at Rabindra Bharati University have granted me a fulfilling retirement, allowing me to live and work independently, now realise I have a profound obligation to art."

The above quote by Partha Pratim Deb, an excerpt originally in Bangla from his diary, speaks to his artistic lateness and the heroism of intransigence reflected in all his works on display. After he retired from Rabindra Bharati University, where he had taught for more than three decades, Partha Pratim Deb (b. 1943) devoted himself entirely to creating art, freely and without abdicating its rights in favour of the demands of the art market. Deb works daily and has produced an immense body of work — the energy, prolificity, and delicacy of which prove that ill health and old age do not necessarily produce senility/serenity. There is no over-arching scheme of thought behind his works; they are created spontaneously, as days pass by, becoming more wayward and eccentric, without proposing wholeness. For Deb, it is not great ideas but artistic habits that hold his late works together, give them unity, and make them more than a mere collection of fragmented creations. For him, art is what an artist does.

Working across mediums, from painting to assemblage, Partha Pratim Deb has developed his artistic style, combining elements of radical avant-garde practices from the West with the teachings of his renowned mentors in Santiniketan and Baroda. Santiniketan, where he explored dance, music, and theatre beyond visual art, was an occasion for him to discover his artistic self. He learned a great deal from the masters, particularly Gauri Bhanja, Nandalal Bose's elder daughter, who taught design and textiles at Kala Bhavana. Her ingenious dexterity, Deb recalls in one of our conversations, in linear decoration — the ability to transform an object — a flower or a leaf — into a design motif with the help of a few flowing lines, always surprised him. If his obsession with bold, rhythmic lines and patterns has some connection to Santiniketan, Gauri Bhanja, and Benodebehari Mukherjee, it was KG Subramanyan in Baroda who sparked critical

thinking in Deb, encouraging him to work in diverse, often unconventional materials. Partha Pratim Deb's art embodies a remarkable effort at eclecticism, a thoughtful synthesis of styles and ideas, mediums and approaches from diverse, incommensurable sources. An admirer of Marcel Duchamp's nominalist spirit, he patiently studied Nandalal Bose's drawings alongside the Pop and OP art grammar without subscribing to their ideologies.

For Deb, art is a pure event or activity and can begin without preplanning or a theme. It is the reason why he does not name his artworks, which are invariably titled 'Untitled'. He prefers to start simply by allowing his hand to move freely (a skilful habit), creating lines, strokes, and form — in short, the graphic event — or incorporating chance elements like throwing or spraying paint (an accidental event). While the initial stage relies largely on automatism and the unconscious, the later stage shows the artist gradually gaining control over his work. He develops it through a playful additive process, ending up either with an abstract or a figurative composition. The figures are mostly human beings, male figures, wearing humorous faces and making gestures. When asked why they appear comical, like clowns, Deb replied that it is because they are the inhabitants of the strange and imaginary landscape he had created for them. Working in a style that is hurried and spontaneous, he prefers mediums that are quick to dry, such as waterproof ink and acrylic.

Unlike his paintings and drawings, his intriguing three-dimensional objects at the show, which oscillate between the realms of toy and sculpture, have not been widely shown. Deb, who firmly believes in the afterlife of objects, reuses discarded items to create art. He offers ordinary household materials, such as old shirts, trousers, and socks, often stuffed with cotton and newspapers and stitched together. In this, Deb fuses modernist assemblage with handicraft in his near-abstract forms, which link objects and materials, articulating a personal and cultural history. At the heart of these works, which shed new light on Deb's artistic practice, lies the idea of frivolity — a playful urge to create curious forms devoid of deeper meaning out of materials regarded as banal and unworthy of aesthetic evaluation.

-Arkaprava Bose

Gallery 2

PlayFORMS

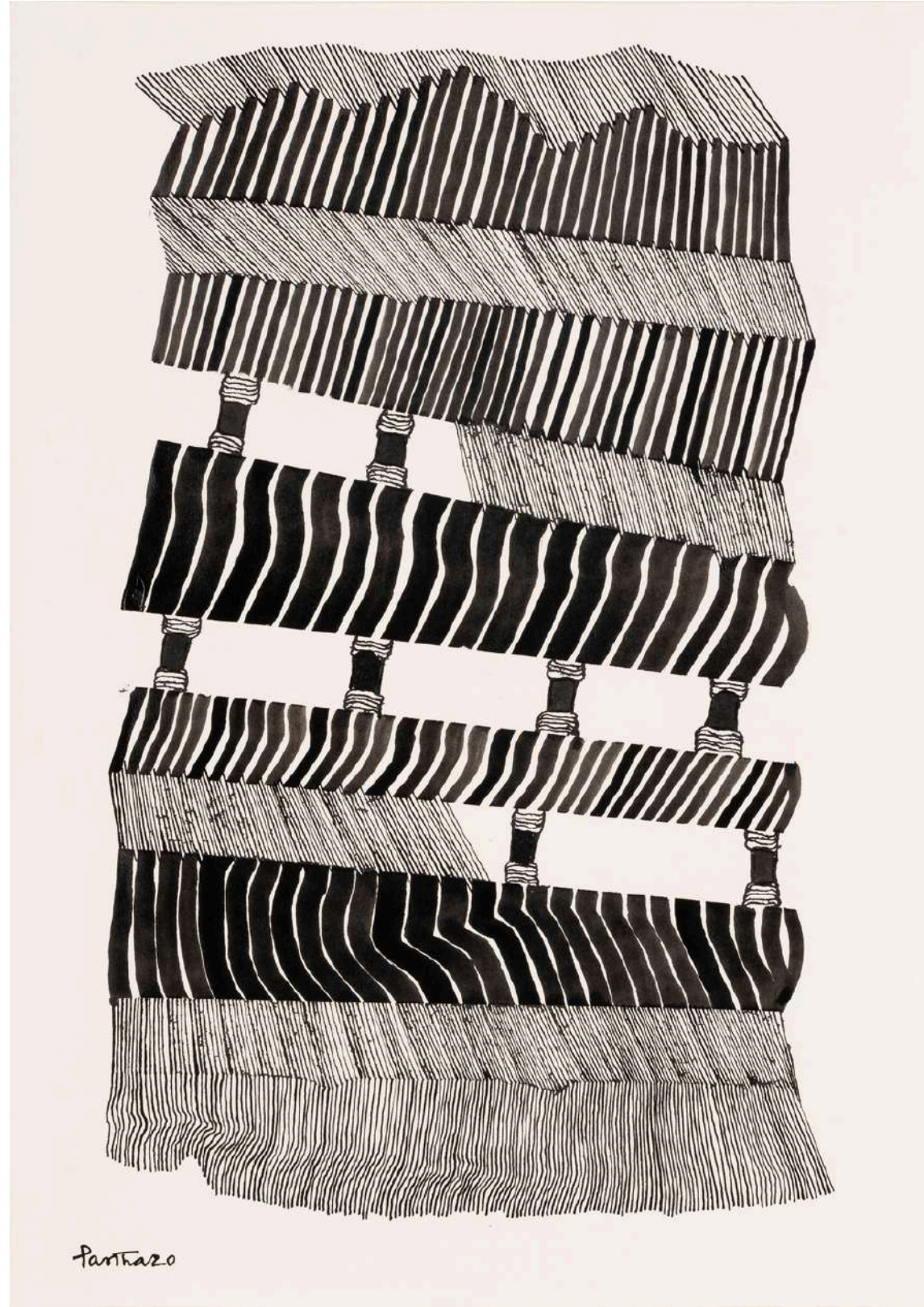
Recent works by
Partha Pratim Deb



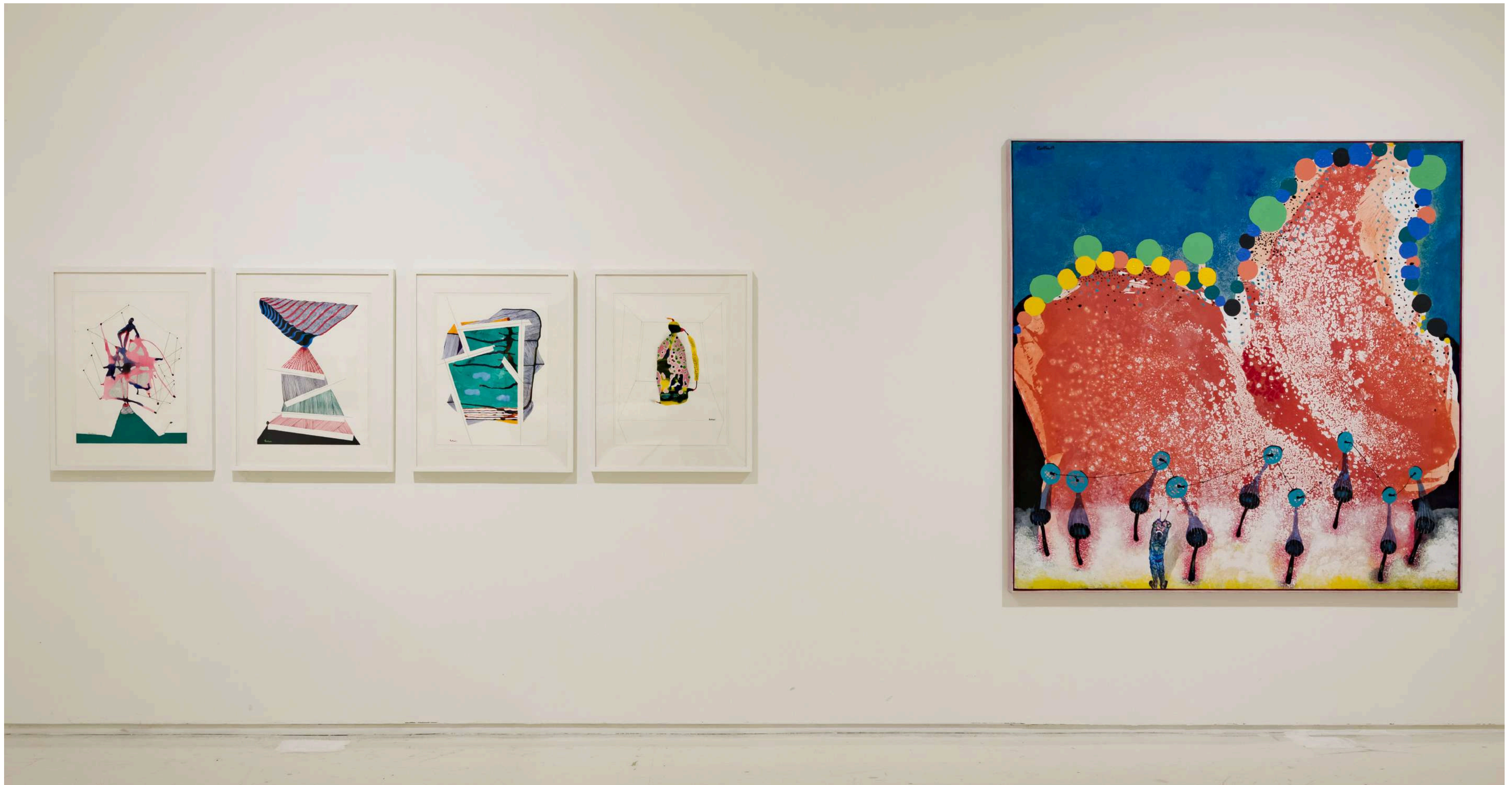
Installation view
Play-Forms: Recent Works
by Partha Pratim Deb
Emami Art, Kolkata
2025



Untitled, Ink on paper, 16 1/2 x 11 5/8 in. each, 2020, Kolkata



Untitled, Ink on paper, 16 1/2 x 11 3/4 in. each, 2020, Kolkata

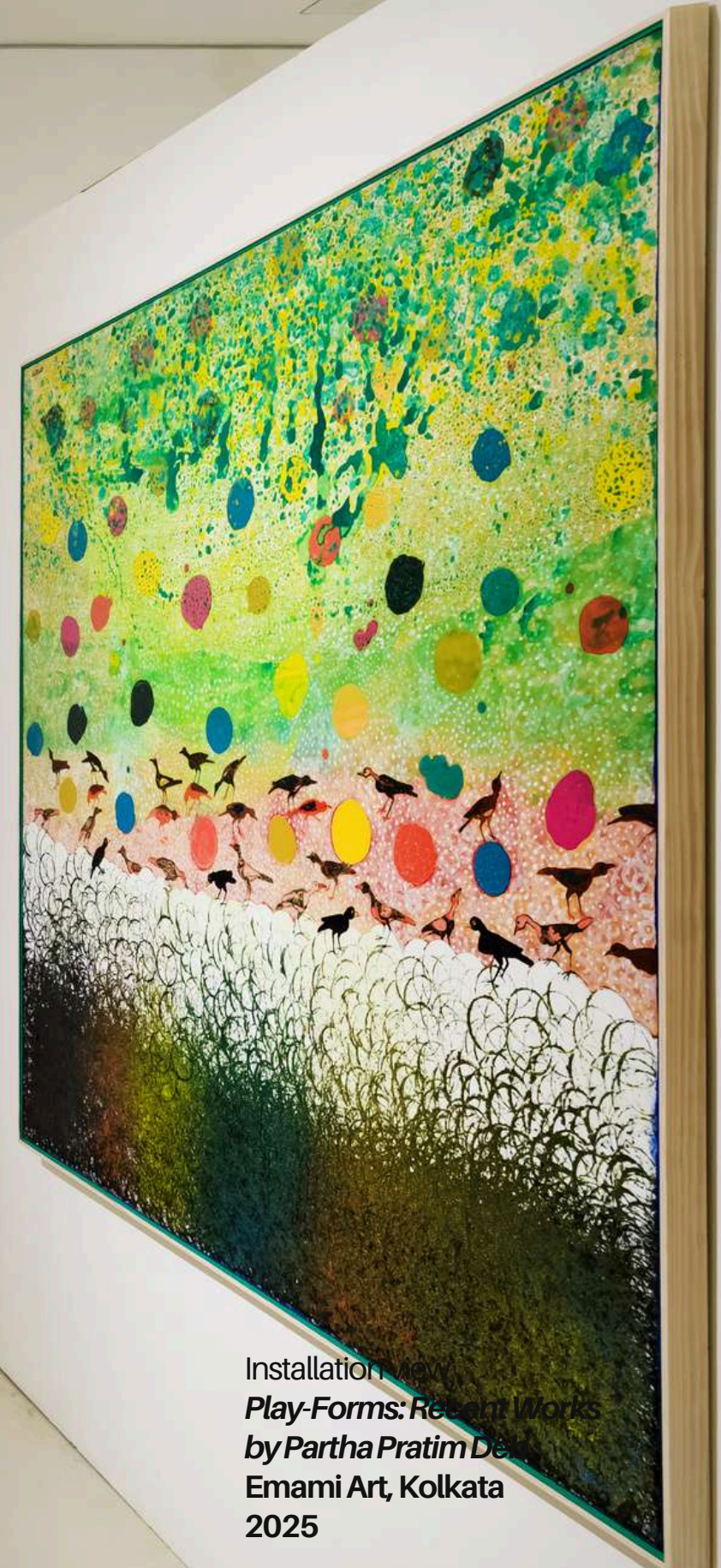
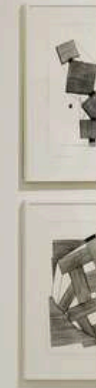
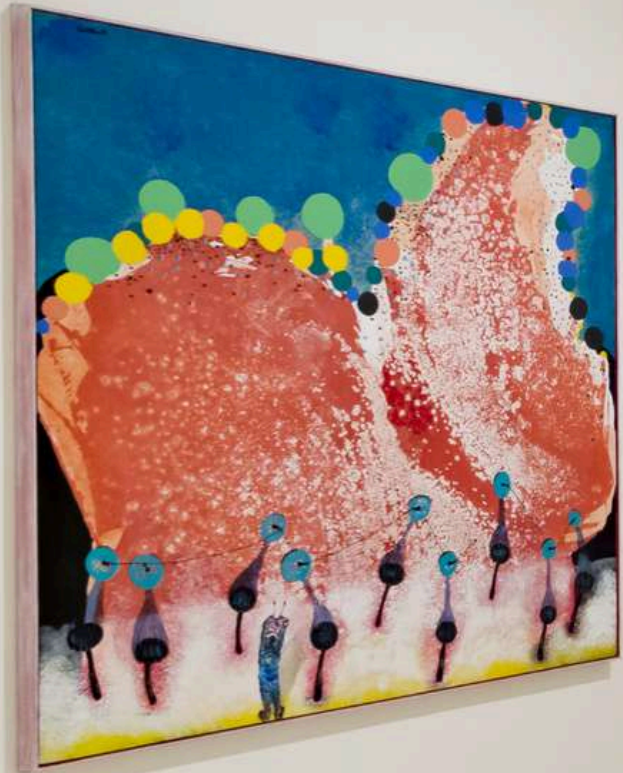


Installation view | ***Play-Forms: Recent Works*** by Partha Pratim Deb, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2025



Partha Pratim Deb's vibrant paintings, featuring an arrangement of bright colours, are characterized by a playful style and unconventional approach, evoking a sense of artistic freedom.

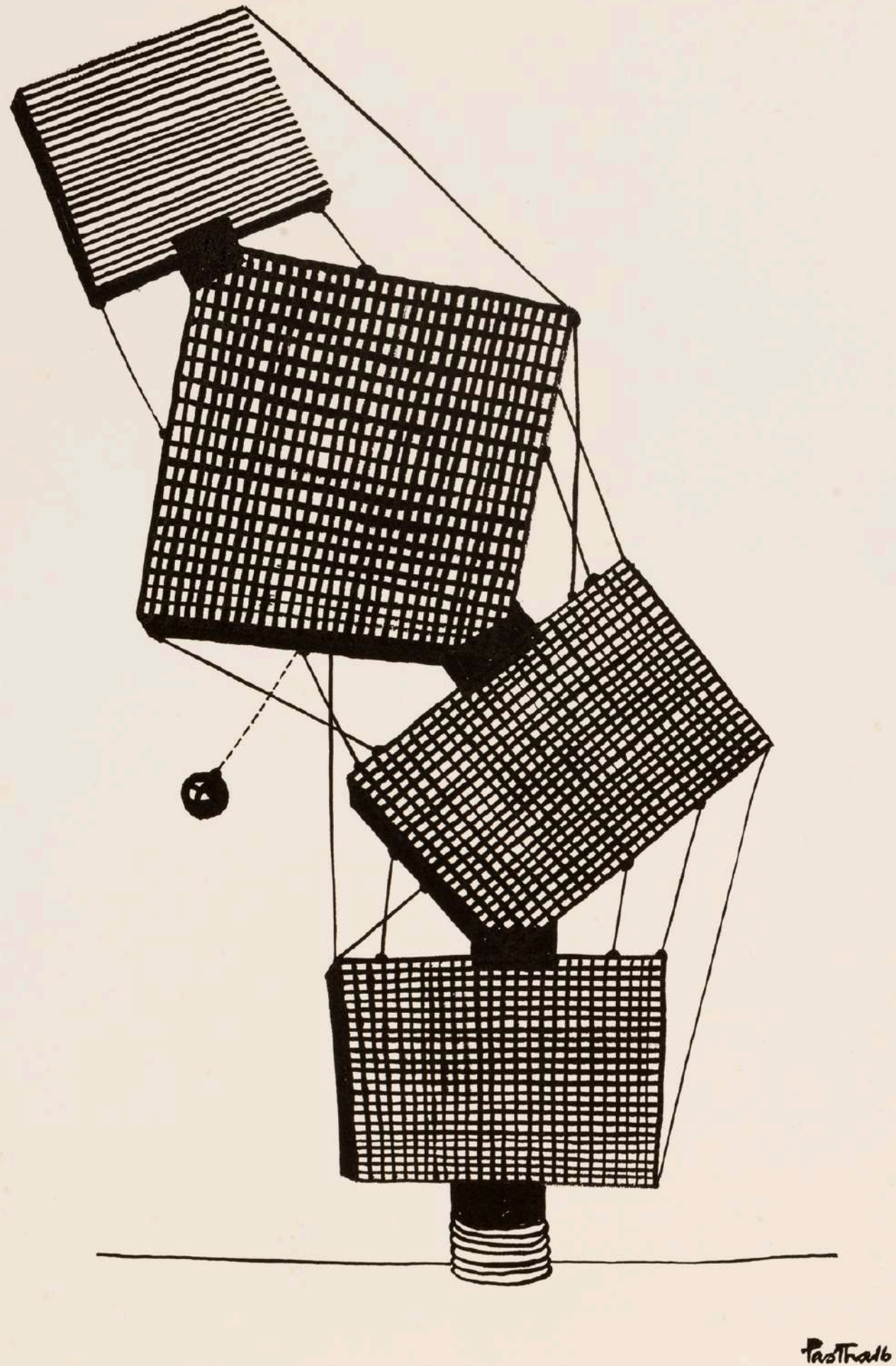
Untitled
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 59 7/8 in.
2017, Kolkata



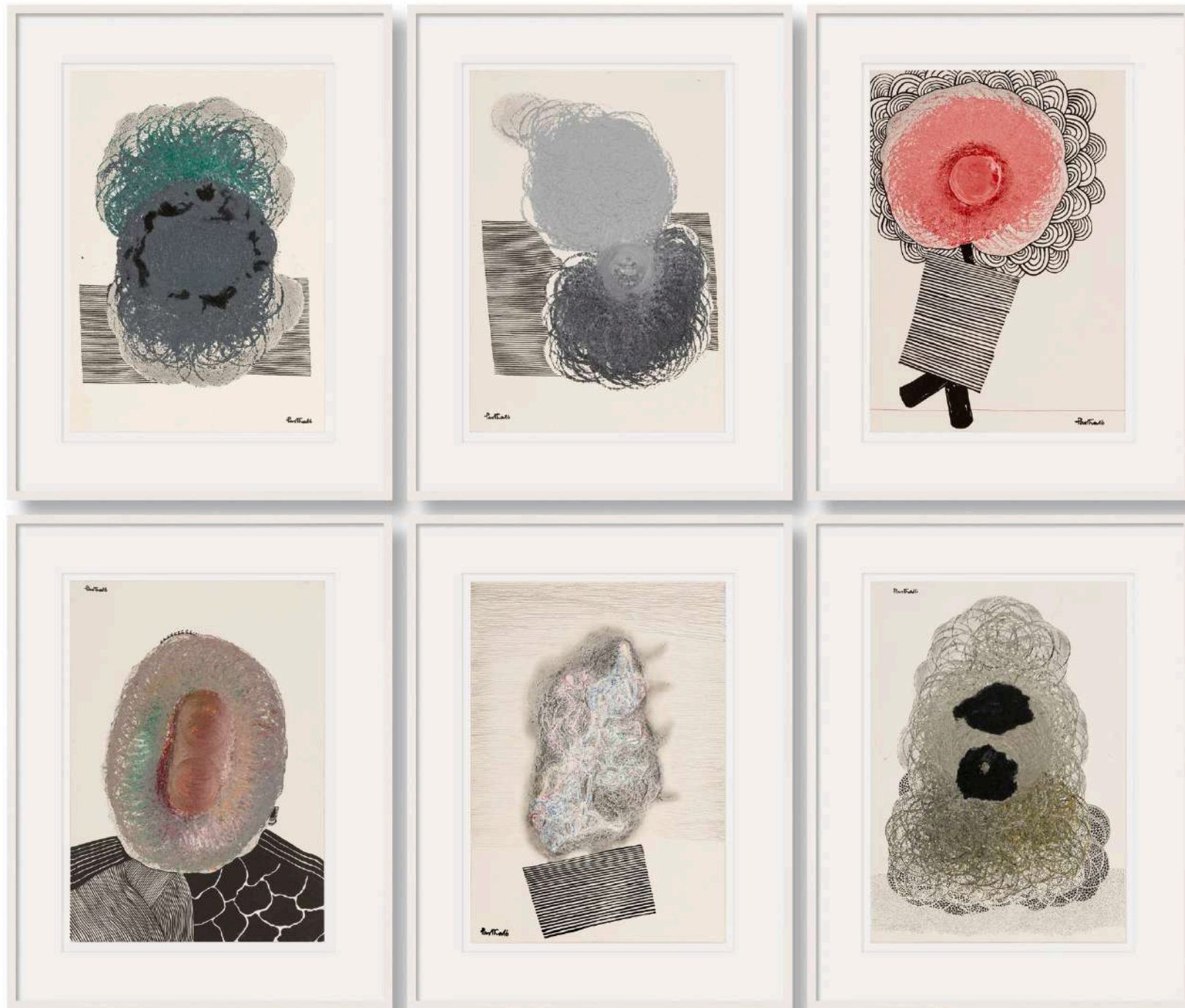
Installation View
Play-Forms: Recent Works
by Partha Pratim Dey
Emami Art, Kolkata
2025

Untitled
Acrylic, and paper pulp
mixed with sand on canvas
59 7/8 x 60 in.
2017, Kolkata



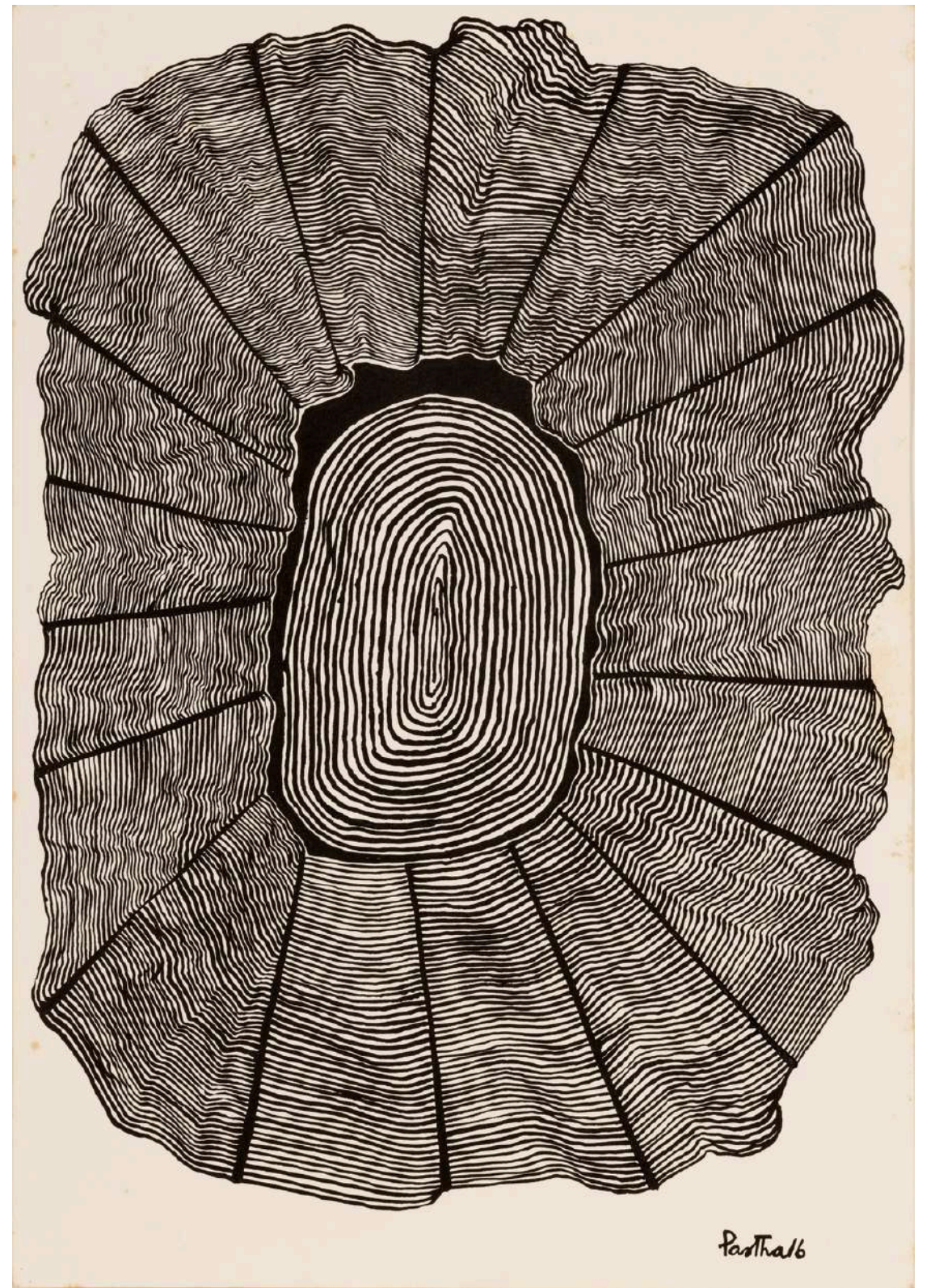
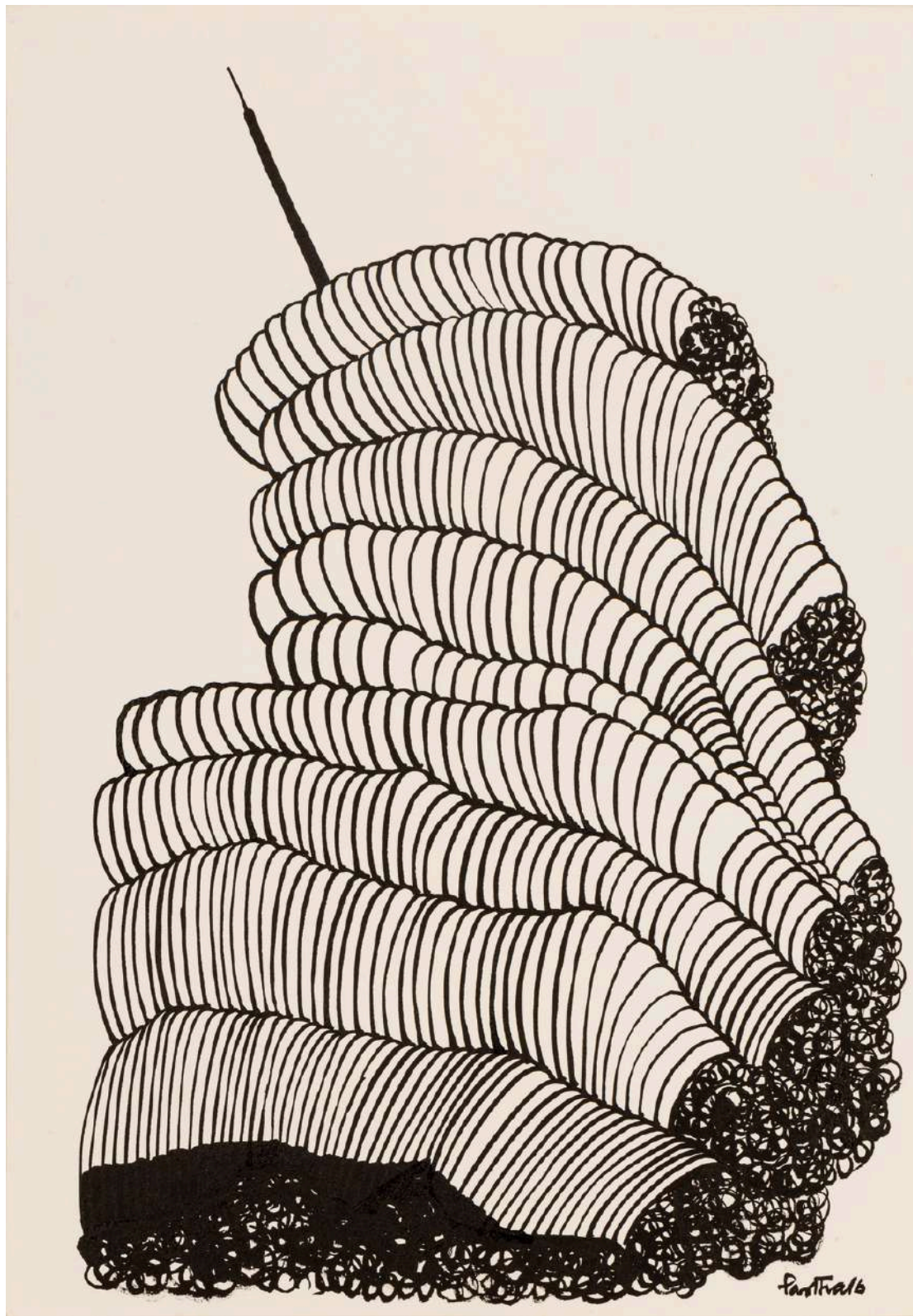
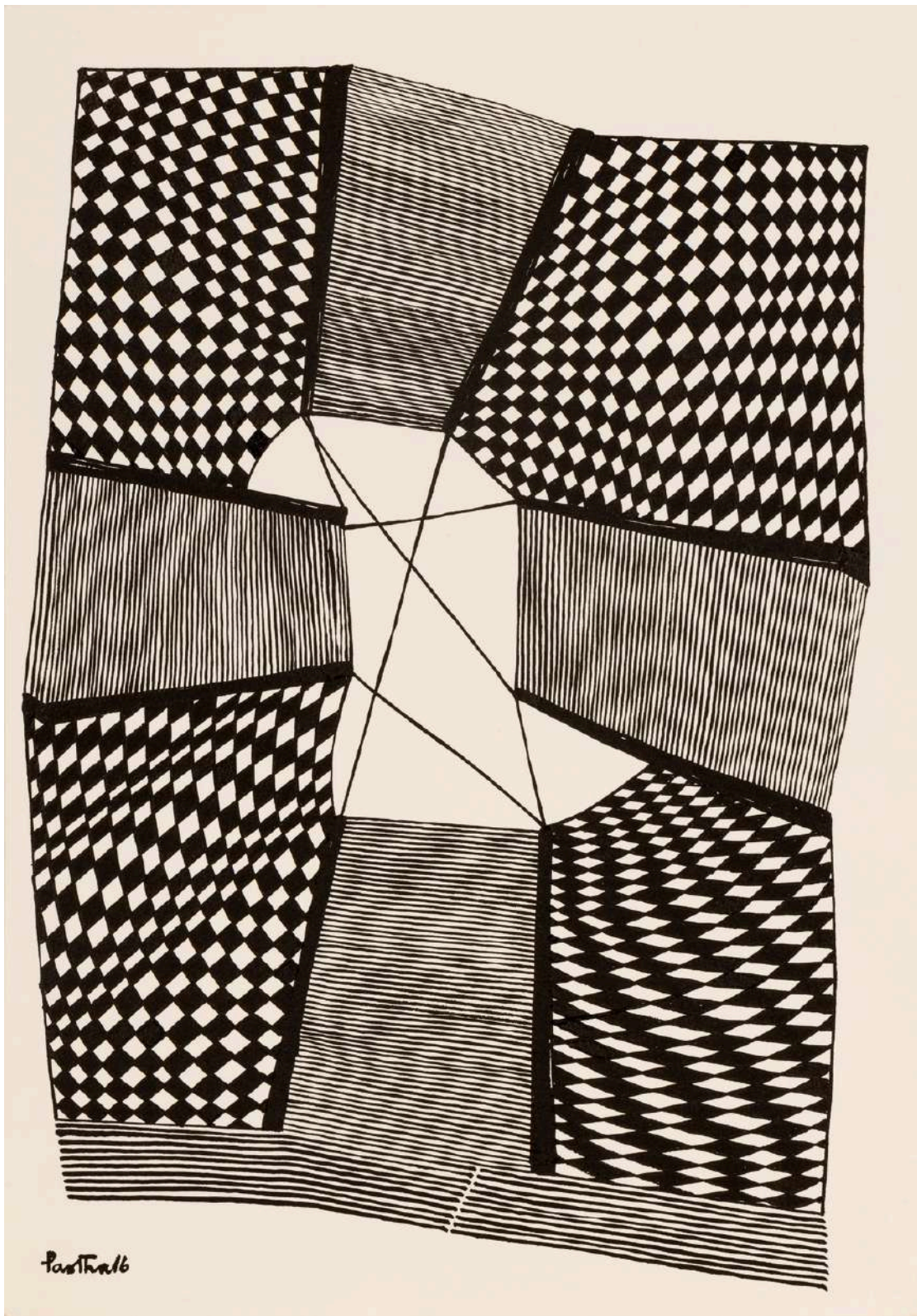


Untitled, Ink on paper, 20 x 14 in. each, Set of 8 works, 2016, Kolkata



Detail
Untitled
 Acrylic and ink on paper
 20 x 14 in. each
 Set of 6 works
 2016, Kolkata

Parthiv



Detail | *Untitled*, Ink on paper, 20 x 14 in. each, Set of 8 works, 2016, Kolkata



Installation view
Play-Forms: Recent Works
by Partha Pratim Deb
Emami Art, Kolkata
2025



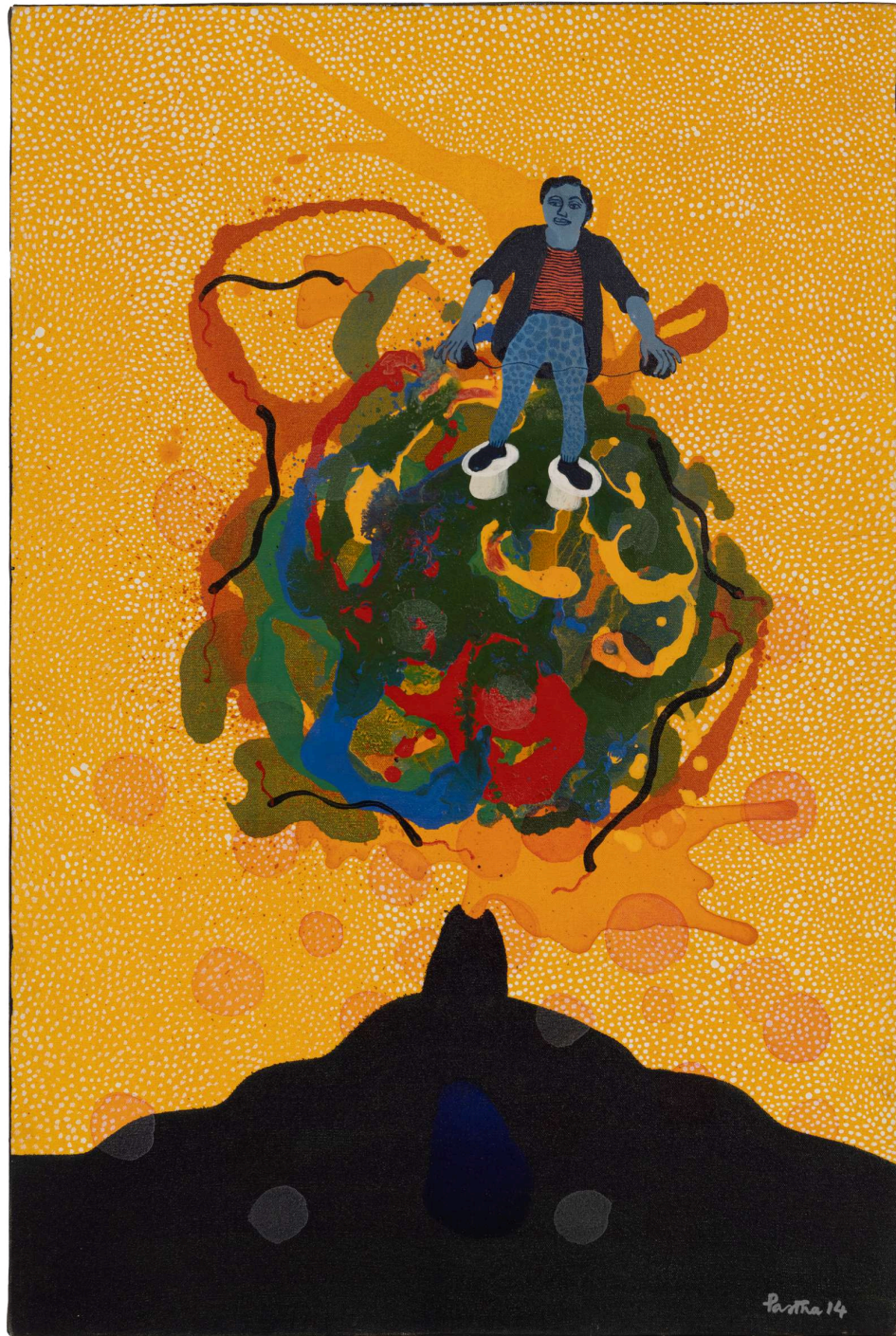
Partha Pratim Deb's vibrant paintings, featuring an arrangement of bright colours, are characterized by a playful style and unconventional approach, evoking a sense of artistic freedom.

Untitled
Acrylic on canvas
59 7/8 x 59 7/8 in.
2015



Partha Pratim Deb's vibrant paintings, featuring an arrangement of bright colours, are characterized by a playful style and unconventional approach, evoking a sense of artistic freedom.

Untitled
Acrylic on canvas
59 7/8 x 59 7/8 in.
2015



Detail
Untitled
 Acrylic on canvas
 36 1/8 x 24 in.
 2014



Partha Pratim Deb's vibrant paintings, featuring an arrangement of colours, are characterized by a playful style and unconventional ap evoking a sense of artistic freedom.

Untitled
Acrylic on canvas
36x36 in.
2011, Kolkata

Partha II



Untitled
Acrylic on canvas
29 3/4 x 29 7/8 in.
2008, Kolkata



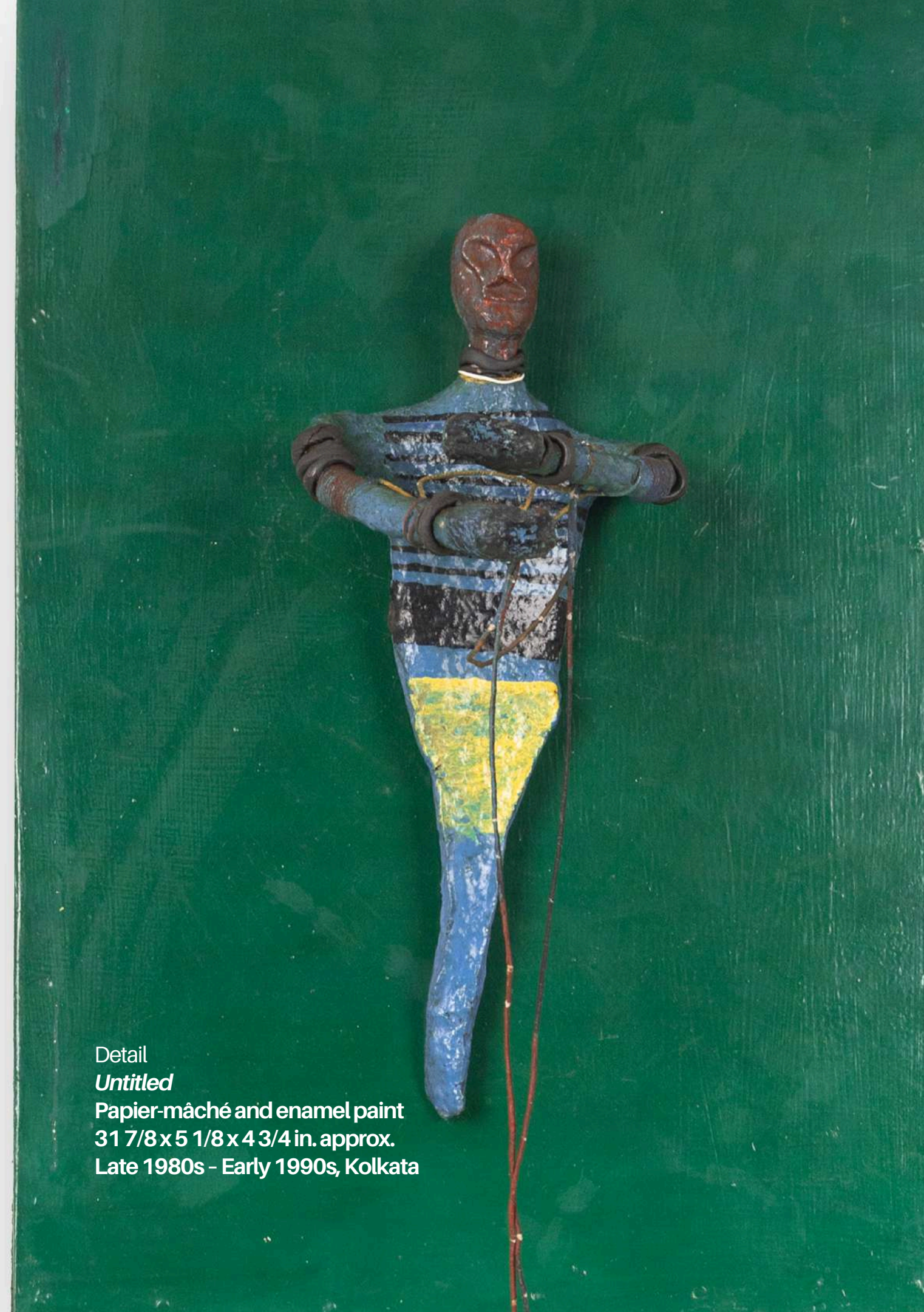
Untitled
Acrylic on canvas
30 x 30 1/8 in.
2007, Kolkata

Untitled
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 24 in.
2006

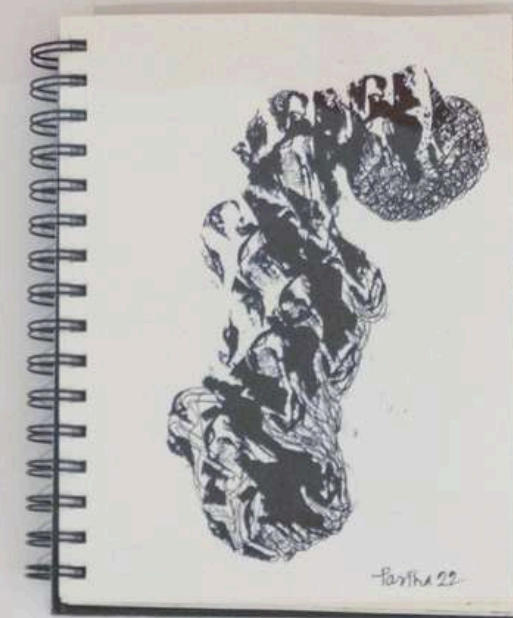




Untitled
Papier-mâché and enamel paint
11 5/8 x 8 3/4 x 3 in. approx.
Late 1980s - Early 1990s, Kolkata



Detail
Untitled
Papier-mâché and enamel paint
31 7/8 x 5 1/8 x 4 3/4 in. approx.
Late 1980s - Early 1990s, Kolkata



Alongside his paintings and large drawings, Partha Pratim Deb has sketched profusely throughout his career, amassing an almost unending number of sketchbooks. His sketches range from pensive to comical; the mediums change, and the forms mature over the years. He finishes his sketchbook rapidly, often within a few days, swiftly moving on to the next. For this he prefers quick-drying mediums like ink, acrylic, and collage. He also repurposes printed catalogues as sketchbooks, experimenting with mixed media.



Partha Pratim Deb was born in 1943 in Sylhet District, now in Bangladesh. In 1948, soon after the Partition, his family migrated to Agartala, Tripura, where he received private training in painting from renowned artist Shailesh Chandra Deb Barma, a disciple of Nandalal Bose. Deb later studied fine arts at Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, and MS University, Baroda. Between 1972 and 2005, he taught painting at Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, and served as the Dean of the Faculty of Visual Arts, RBU from 1998 to 2003.

Deb has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including *Play-Forms: Recent Works by Partha Pratim Deb*, Emami Art, Kolkata (2025); *Gestures*, Emami Art Gallery, Kolkata (2020); *Play for Joy of Seeing*, Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata (2006); and solos at Aicon Gallery, New York (2006); Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata (1997); and Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata (1974, 1976, 1978).

His work has also been showcased in various duo and group exhibitions, such as *Vichitra/विचित्र* organised by Emami Art and Kolkata Centre for Creativity in collaboration with Bihar Museum, Patna (2026); *Leela*, Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata (2009); *Indian Surrealism, Diversified Fantasy, Endangered Earth*, Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata (2008); *Glimpses of Contemporary Bengal Art*, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata (2006); *Folk in Modern*, Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata (2006); *Lines*, Birla Academy of Art & Culture, Kolkata (2005); *New Wave in Bengal Art*, Akar Prakar, Kolkata (2005); *Contemporary Art Exhibition*, Chitrakoot Art Gallery, Kolkata (2002); and *Art of Bengal*, CIMA, Kolkata (2000), among others. His works were presented by Emami Art, Kolkata at India Art Fair 2026; Art Mumbai 2025; and India Art Fair EDI+IONS Hyderabad 2025.

A member of Painter's Orchestra, an artists' group in Kolkata, Partha Pratim Deb lives and works in Kolkata.

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.

