

Arindam Chatterjee

Portfolio



Arindam Chatterjee belongs to the generation of Indian artists who began their careers in the last decades of the 20th century and attempted to create a new, more personalised artistic language of global significance. He started as an abstract artist and gained a wider reputation; however, around 2007, having felt the urgency for a more direct and communicative form of expression to respond to the conflictual world and its recent history, he turned to figurative paintings.

In the background of the city experience, Arindam Chatterjee's paintings and drawings speak of a dystopian world, the fragile times of modernity: the death, wounds and suffering of human beings, animals and other creatures, real and imagined. Absent in the glaring narrative of neoliberalism, the dark faces of times can amply be found in the post-Tagorian modernist literature of Bengal. Inspired by them and other sources, Arindam Chatterjee's neo-expressionist-like works create a bleak vision of the world, exposing culture's dark past, unrealised potential and unsolved contradictions. Indeed, he moved away from abstract art; the shift has never been complete. Vestiges of abstract art are present in his figurative works, characterised by the rich handling of mediums and indeterminate figures and emotions.



Photo Courtesy: Shapikhanupa Boby, Emami Art

Watch the artist discuss his last solo



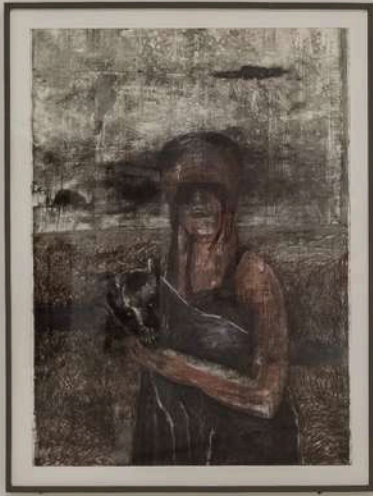
Watch the artist discuss his practice





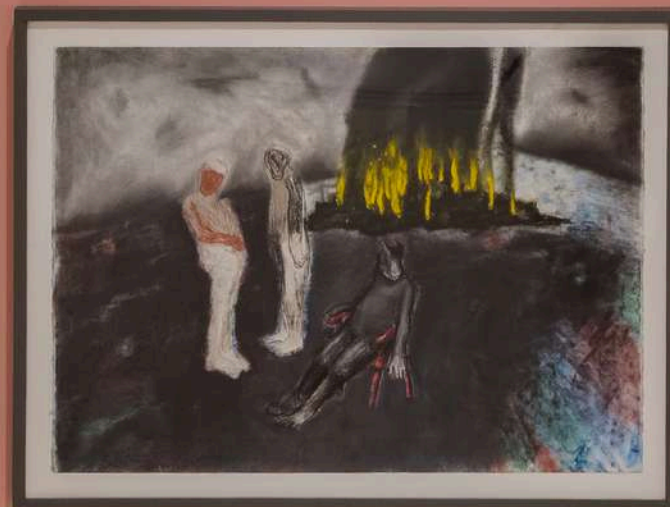
Arindam Chatterjee, having started his career as an abstract painter in the 1990s, began pursuing figurative painting in the mid-2000s. His powerful, often troubling images of man, animal, and man-animal hybrids are deeply linked to our social, political and cultural realities. Over the past two decades, he has forged a singular style producing a large body of work which combines rich abstract pigmentation and experimentation with media with striking images of pathos and irony.

A Flying Creature
Acrylic, ink, dry pastel, and oil on canvas
48 1/8 x 57 7/8 x 1 in.
Undated, Kolkata



"I once made a painting that I haven't shown to many people. Not many liked it, but it was inspired by the migration of 2020 - a bird with several people on its back preparing to go somewhere. Another bird that I drew was one facing Death, standing as the only witness to a dying man. There have been many bird figures like this."

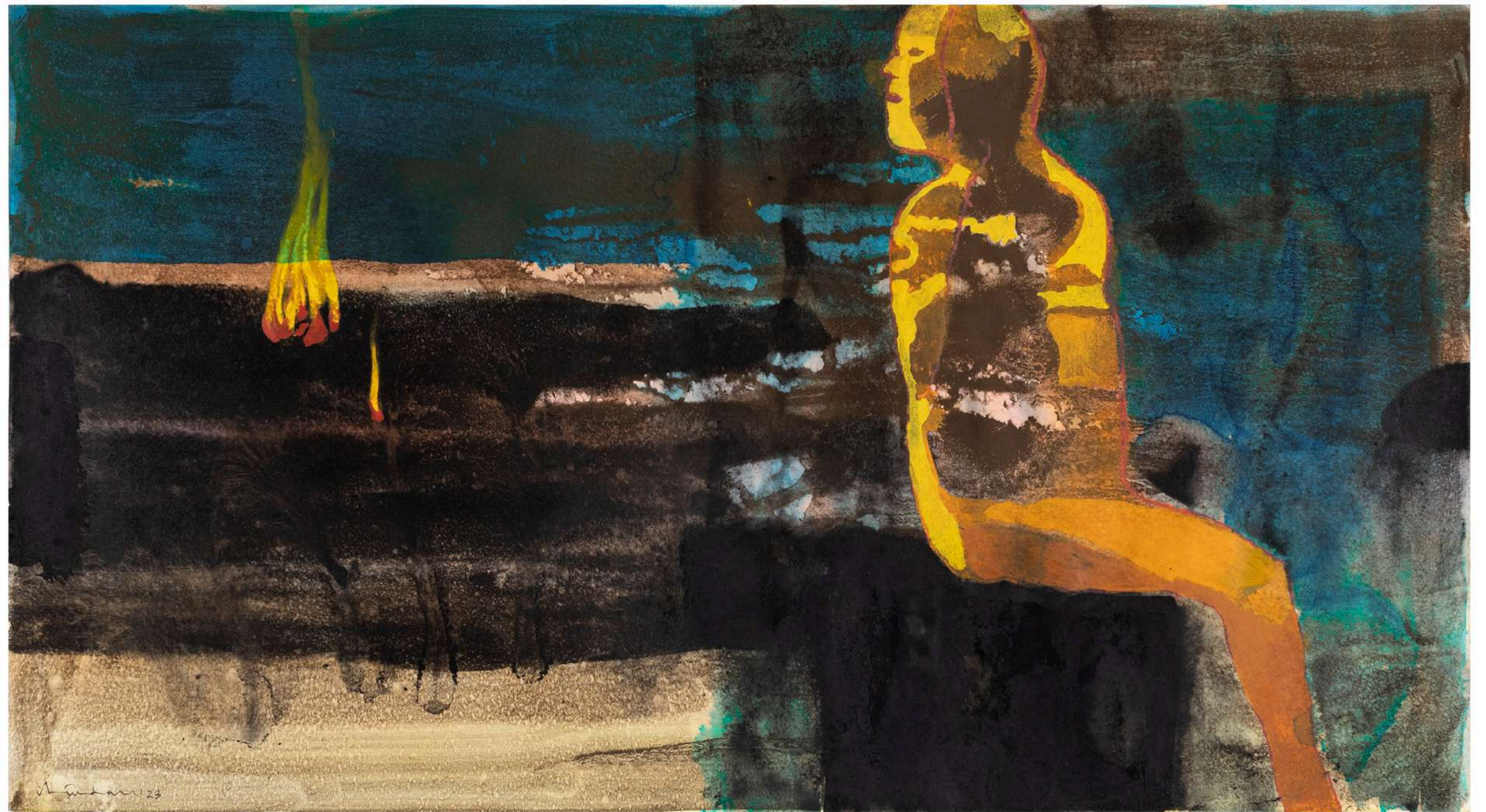
Arindam Chatterjee



Installation view
অবমানব/*avamānava*: A Solo Exhibition by
Arindam Chatterjee
Emami Art, Kolkata
2025

Chatterjee's artworks are often set in a landscape similar to a battleground – devastated barren lands featuring figures with limbs and facial features missing and heads often unlike those of humans. There is little light in these artworks which lay out the artist's mindscape in front of the viewers.

Flame on the Other Bank
Gouache and dry pastel
on acid-free paper
18 3/4 x 33 7/8 in.
2023, Kolkata





Burning Pyres by Arindam Chatterjee depict a burning mound in the background artworks are set in a landscape similar to a battleground, with predatory birds and drudging humanoids. There is little light in these artworks which lay out the artist's mindscape in front of the viewers. Allegories of melancholia, existentialism and isolation draped in a unique vision of reality help this artwork break away from conventions.

Burning Pyres
Dry pastel on acid-free paper
21 7/8 x 30 1/4 in.
2021, Kolkata



The *Jijñāsā* (the desire to know) series by Arindam Chatterjee features massive birds standing upright, their wings anchoring them to the ground instead of assisting them in flight, looming large over the human-alien-animal hybrid forms who are standing or seated or even lying supine. The birds often look quizzical, their gaze quiet and direct, as if standing witness to the state of the world and posing a question to its inhabitants at the same time.

Jijñāsā I
Dry pastel, charcoal, and oil on rice
paper pasted on board
32 x 44 in.
2019, Kolkata

Jijñāsā II
Dry pastel, ink, charcoal, and oil
on rice paper pasted on board
31 7/8 x 44 in.
2019, Kolkata





Jijñāsā III
Dry pastel, and oil on rice
paper pasted on board
32 x 44 in.
2019, Kolkata

Abandoned Quarters
Dry pastel on acid-free paper
25 5/8 x 30 1/8 in.
2013, Kolkata



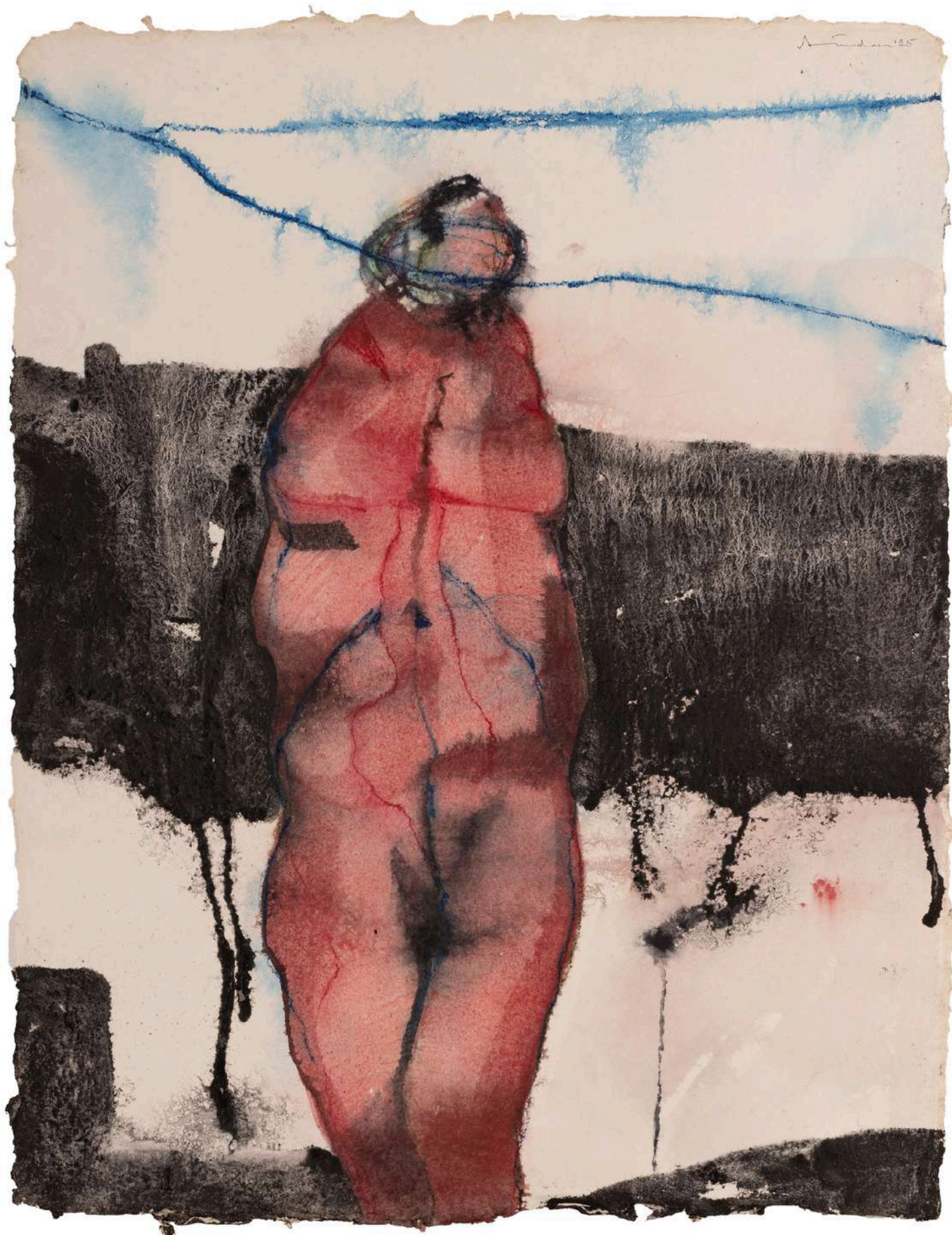


Questions of existence, isolation and alienation of humankind are raised through Arindam Chatterjee's works. The depth of the artist's mindscape has been translated into tales of isolation and otherness. Chatterjee proposes a dystopian world view through his art, rediscovering human existence.

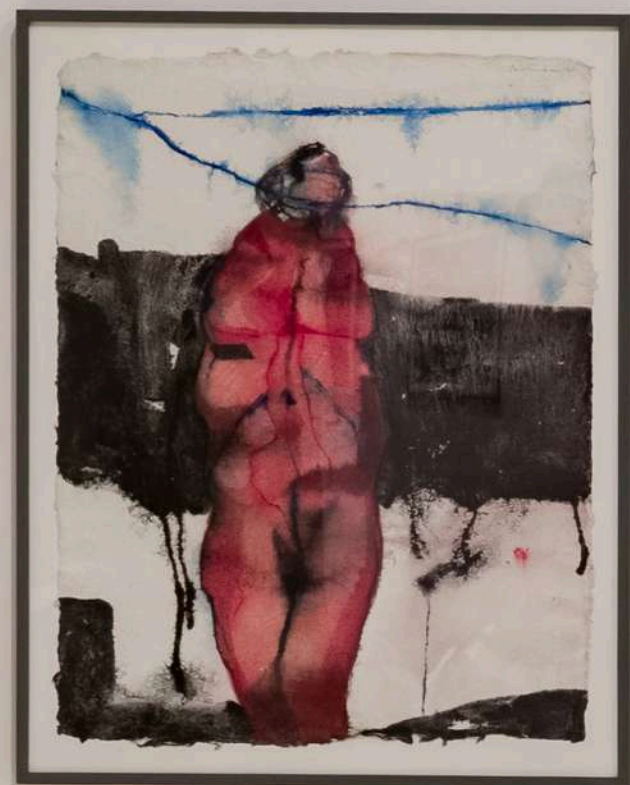
Shadows and the Empty House
Charcoal, dry pastel, and oil on paper
29 7/8 x 41 3/8 in.
2022, Kolkata



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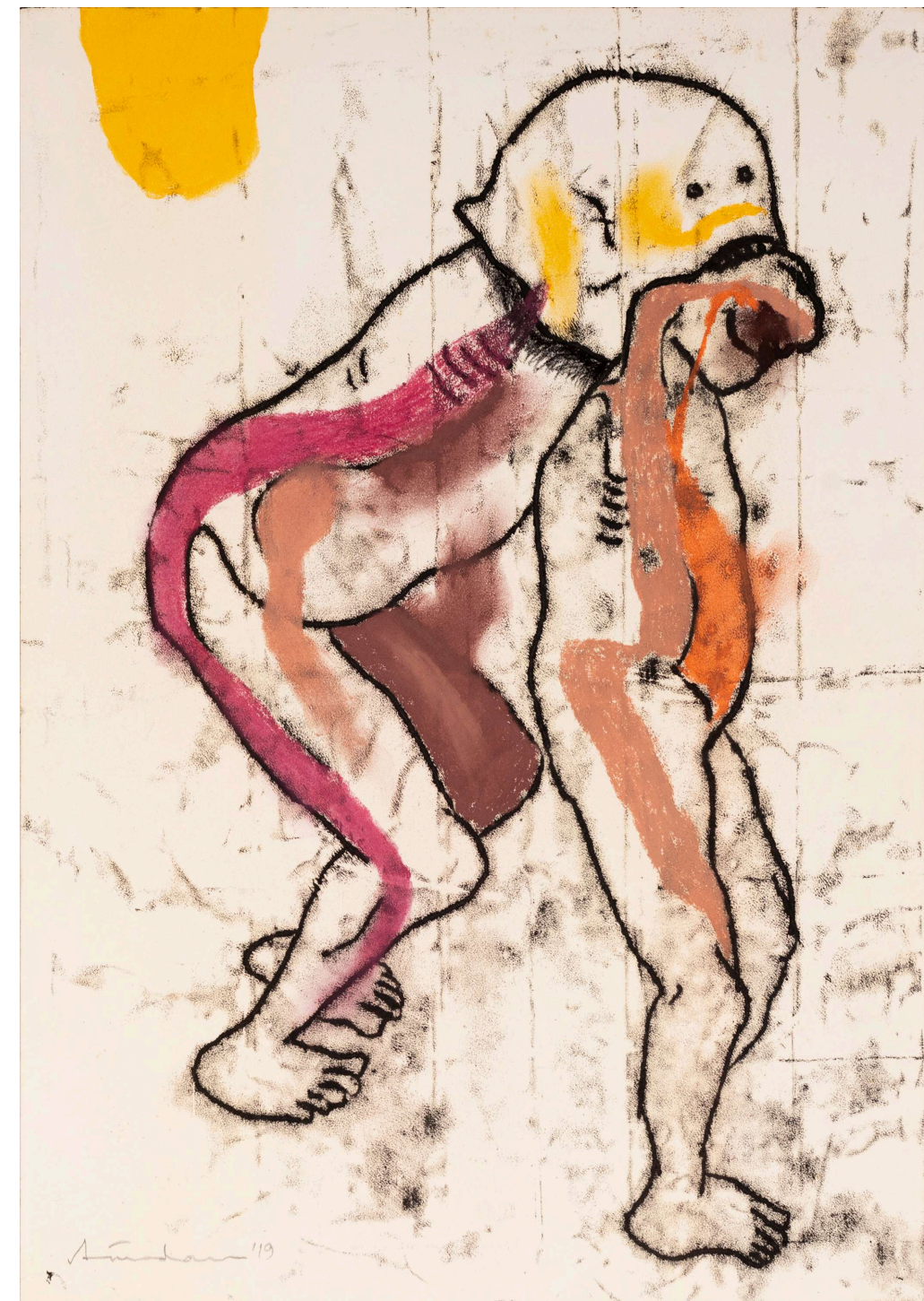
Untitled
Watercolour on handmade paper
34 5/8 x 27 in.
2025, Kolkata



Installation view
অবমানব/*avamānava*: A Solo Exhibition by
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2025



Detail
Untitled
Dry pastel and oil on acid-free paper
20 1/8 x 14 in. each
2019, Kolkata





Untitled
Dry pastel and oil on acid-free paper
20 1/8 x 14 in. each
2019, Kolkata



Jijñāsā IV
 Oil and watercolour on handmade paper
 11 3/4 x 7 5/8 in. each
 Set of 3 works
 2025, Kolkata



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Voyage
Dry pastel, oil, and ink on
rice paper pasted on board
32 x 44 in.
2019, Kolkata



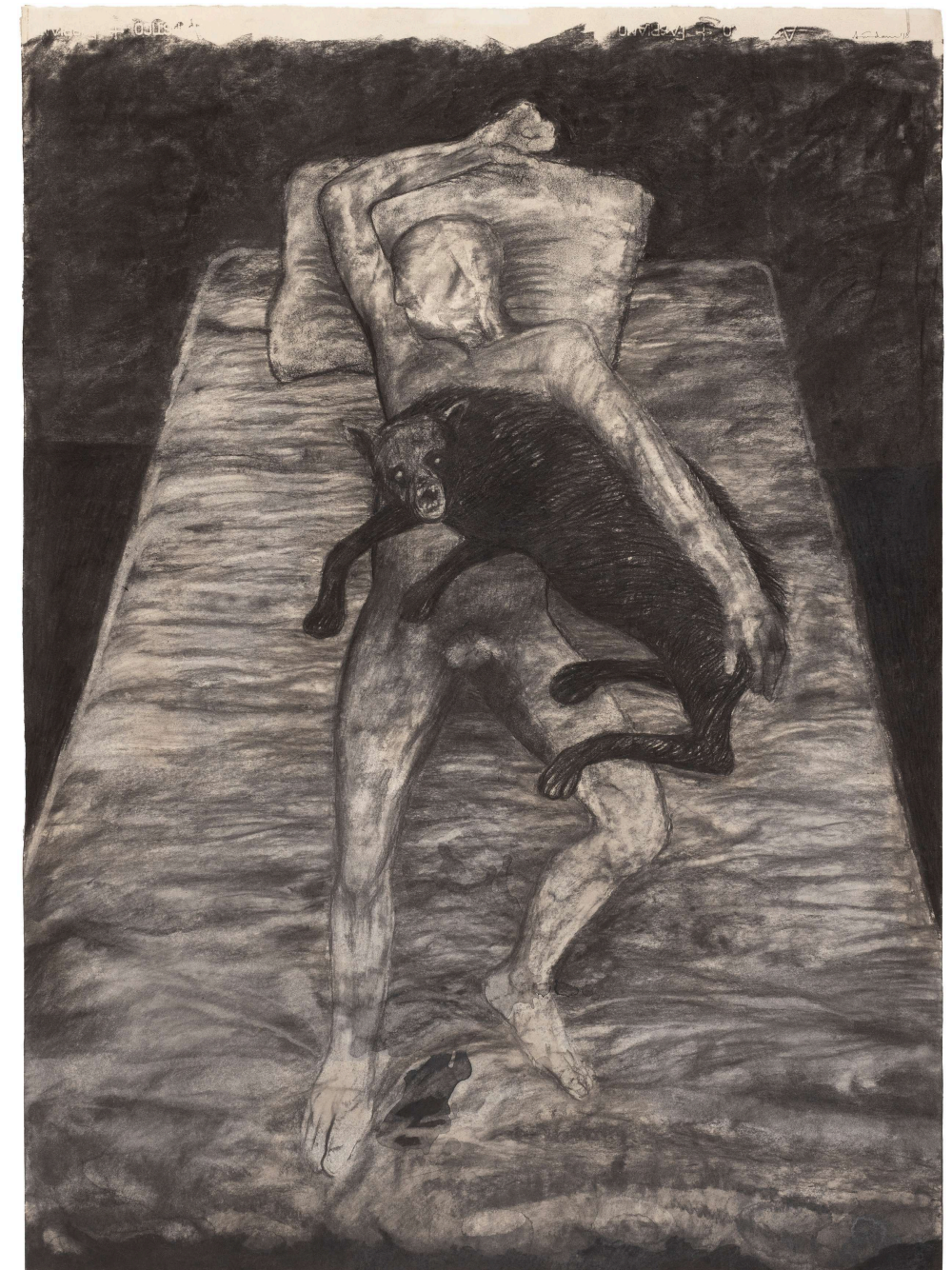


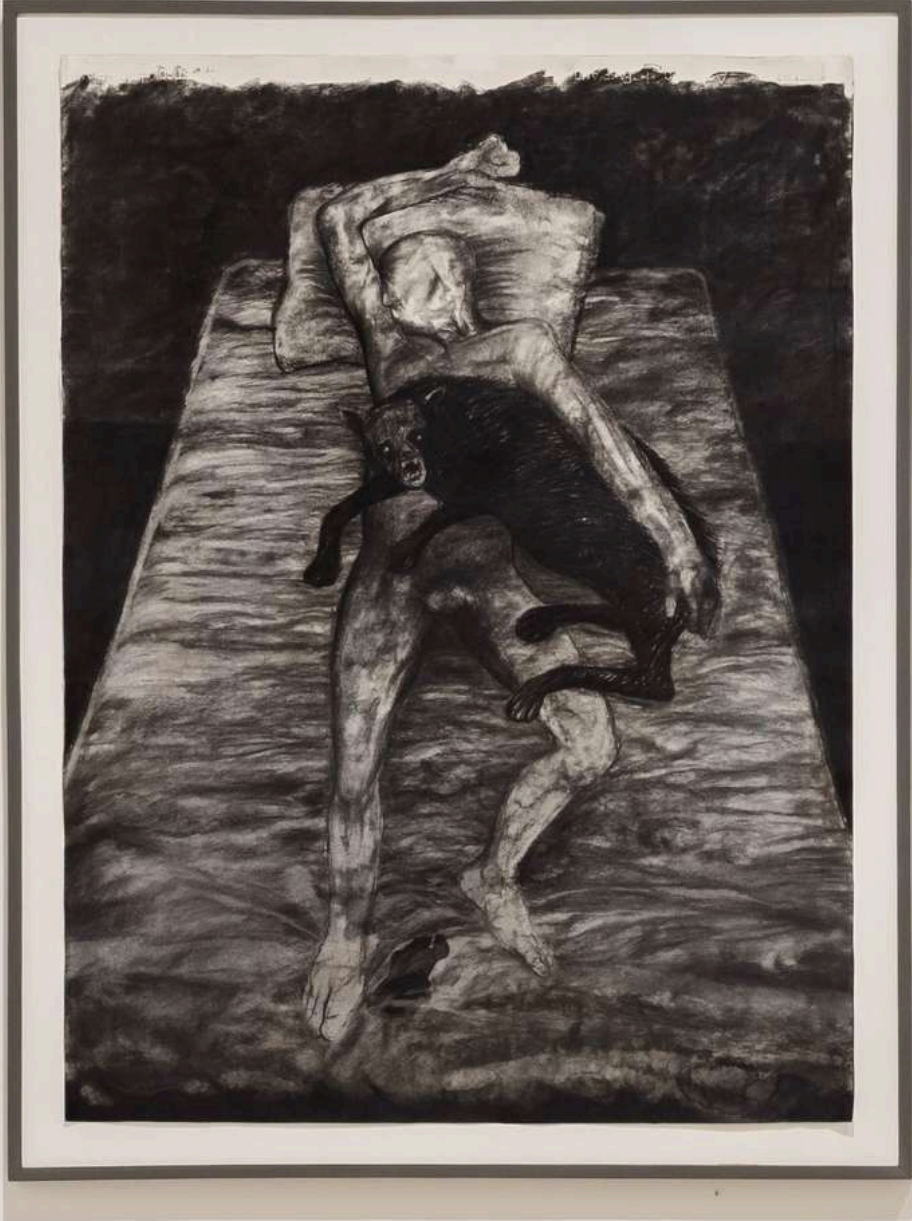
Dog by Arindam Chatterjee is a study in pathos. Here he depicts the figure of a small white dog, chained and lying on a dark couch, with an empty bowl on the floor nearby. The artist found inspiration for this work from a photograph posted on social media by a friend that only had the dog. Using charcoal, he has added elements of his choice, revealing a grim reality where isolation and oppression play out as important themes telling the naked truth.

Dog
Charcoal on acid-free paper
41 3/8 x 30 1/8 in.
2018, Kolkata



Detail
A Bad Dream
 Charcoal and wash
 on acid-free paper
 46 3/4 x 34 3/4 in.
 2018, Kolkata





Small text label on the right wall, likely providing information about the artwork.



The *Encounters* series by Arindam Chatterjee feature different kinds of interactions – man with animal, man with man, man with dead man, animal with the viewer. Chatterjee bends, buckles, and berates the human form, corrupting and contorting what is thought as “normal”, evoking *jijñāsā* (desire to know), terror, and menace.

Encounters VI
Oil on board
13x11 in.
2020, Kolkata

Encounters II
Oil and dry pastel on board
12 1/4 x 12 1/2 in.
2020, Kolkata





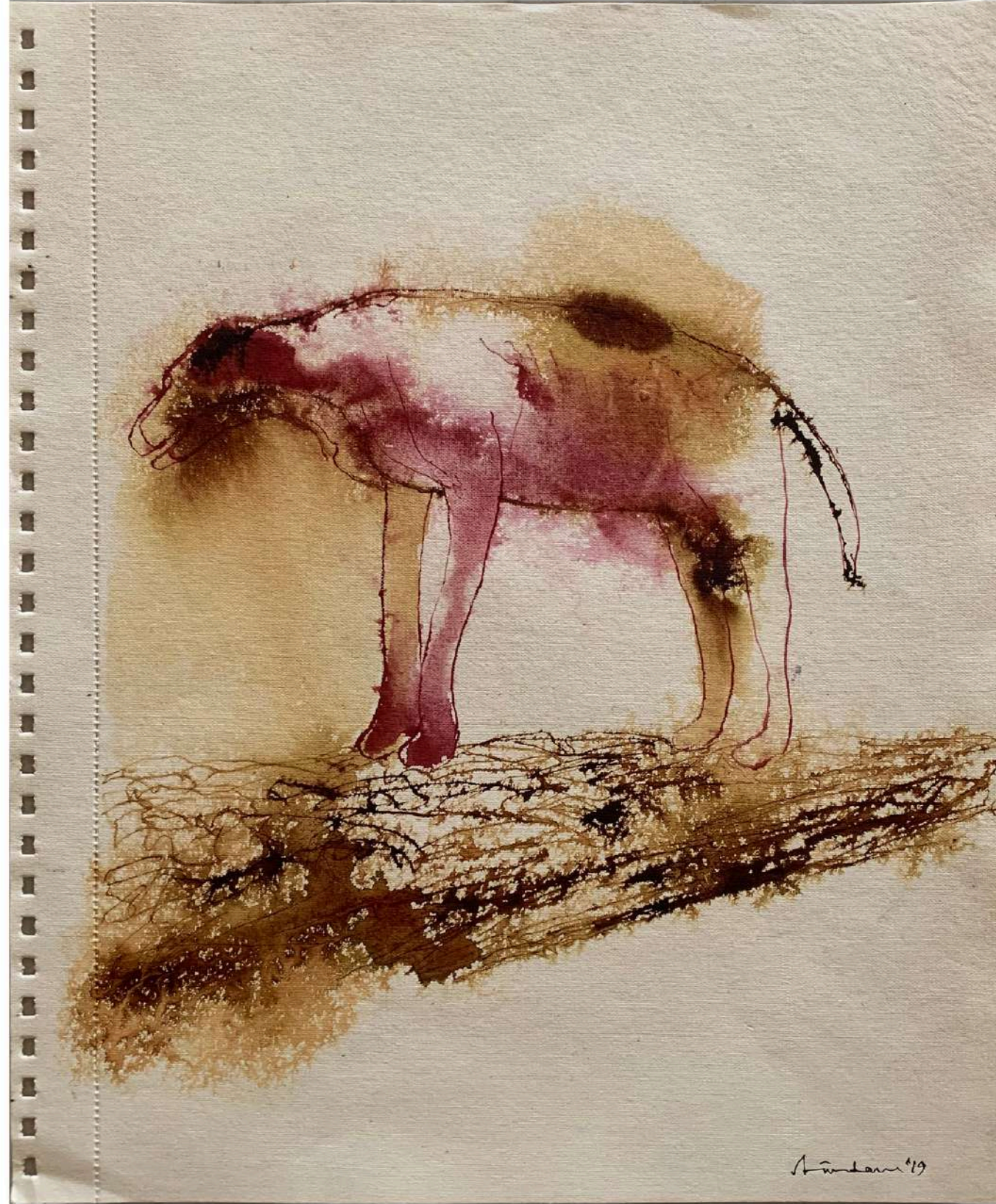
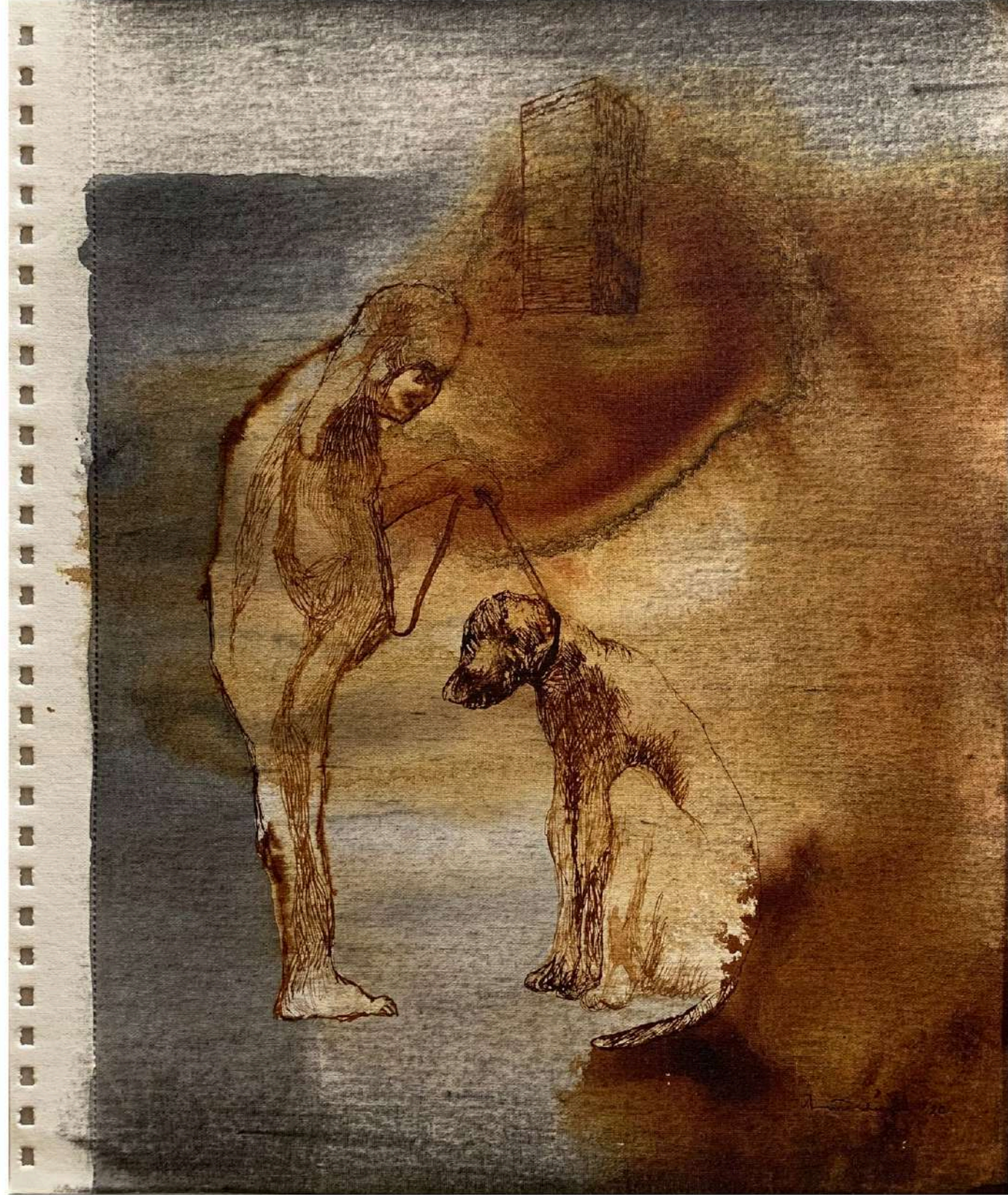
(L)
Encounters V
Oil on board
12 3/8 x 10 in.
2020, Kolkata



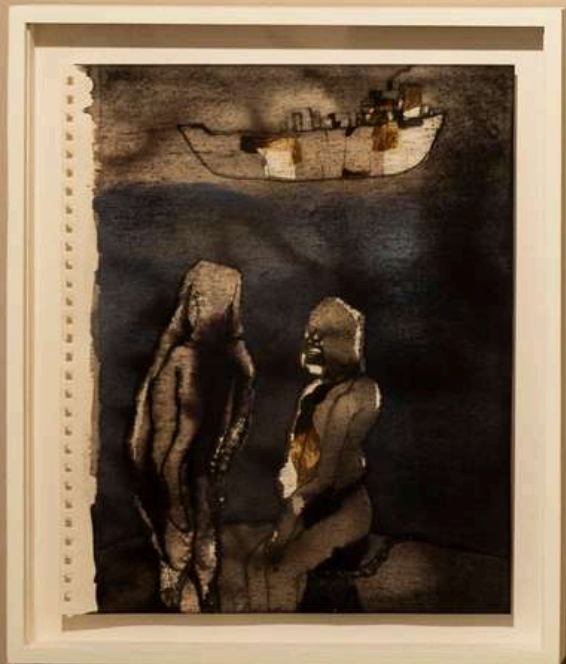
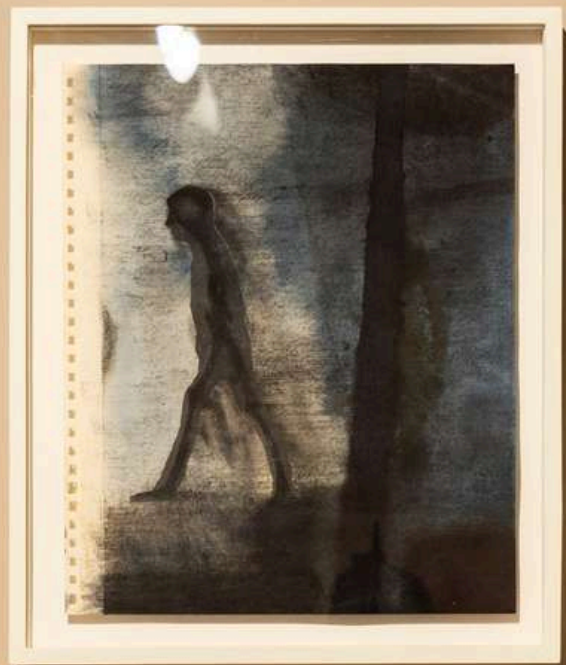
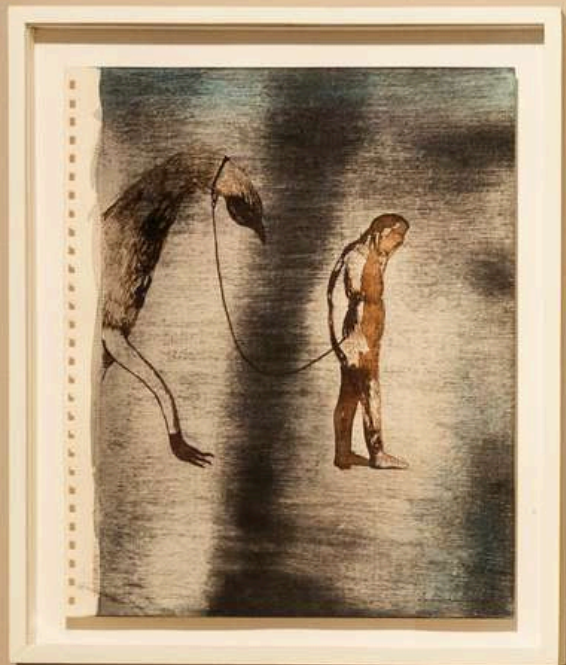
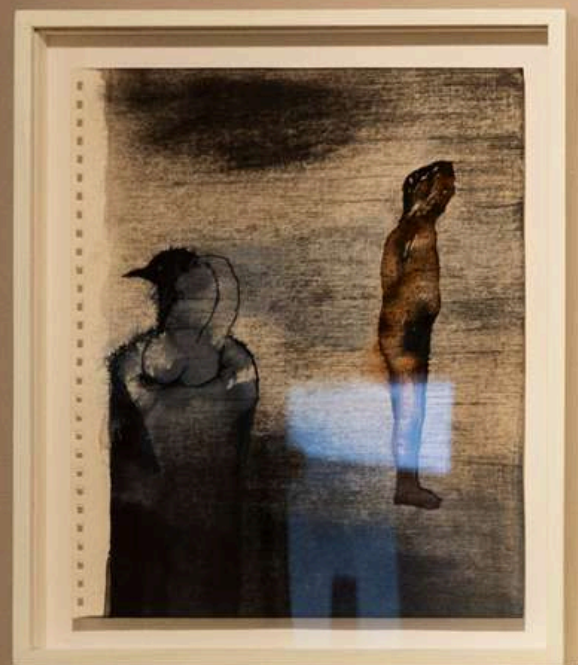
(R)
Encounters IV
Oil on board
12 3/8 x 9 7/8 in.
2020, Kolkata



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Parables of Twilight
Watercolour, charcoal
and ink on paper
15 x 12.2 in. each approx.
2020, Kolkata



Installation view
Not a Dream, Not Peace, Not Love: Recent Works
 by Arindam Chatterjee
 Emami Art, Kolkata
 2024

Arindam Chatterjee
 Not a Dream, Not Peace, Not Love: Recent Works
 Emami Art, Kolkata
 2024

Sheer material exhilaration in Chatterjee's medium use is evident everywhere, indicating his earlier non-figurative dispositions. Through this free improvisatory artistic experimentation, Chatterjee develops a dialogue that crosses the tradition of expressive abstraction with traumatic realism.

Allegories of Violence VI
Acrylic and gouache on paper
22.8 x 33.8 in.
2023, Kolkata





Many of Chatterjee's paintings are provocative in their celebration of the creaturely. Creaturely metamorphosis dominates his figurative imagination, revealing the crisis in the symbolic order of recognition and identity. In articulating the creature's disfigured images in relation to the human, Chatterjee tends to see humanism and humanlike-ness as different because humanity is not clearly distinguished from animality, often in the guise of one another.

Allegories of Violence IV
Gouache and charcoal on paper
23.8 x 33.8 in.
2023, Kolkata

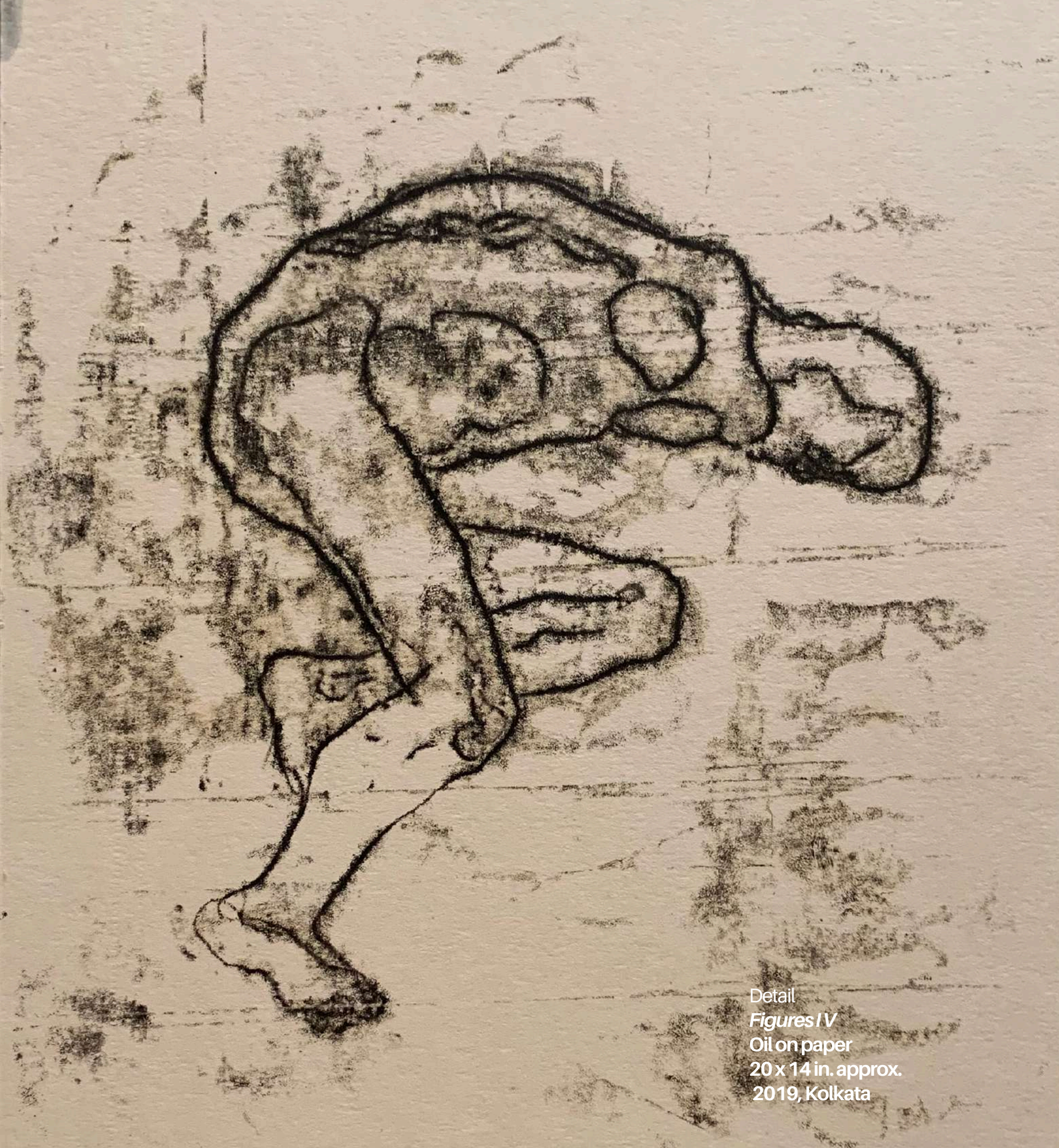
Chatterjee's close reading of Dostoevsky and Kafka, along with Jibananda Das, Binoy Majumdar, Utpal Kumar Basu and several other mid-century Bengali poets and writers, enables him to expose/ explore the dark underbelly of history and society, pulling apart the shiny, beautiful, ambrosial and trouble-free reality-spectacle manufactured and maintained by the market and power. His work, charged with anarchic passion and the dialectical spirit of the negative as distinct from aesthetic utopia/dystopia, speaks of no blow for freedom but the desperate struggle of man as a creature to free himself from a trap.

Allegories of Violence V
Gouache and charcoal on paper
23.8 x 33.8 in.
2023, Kolkata

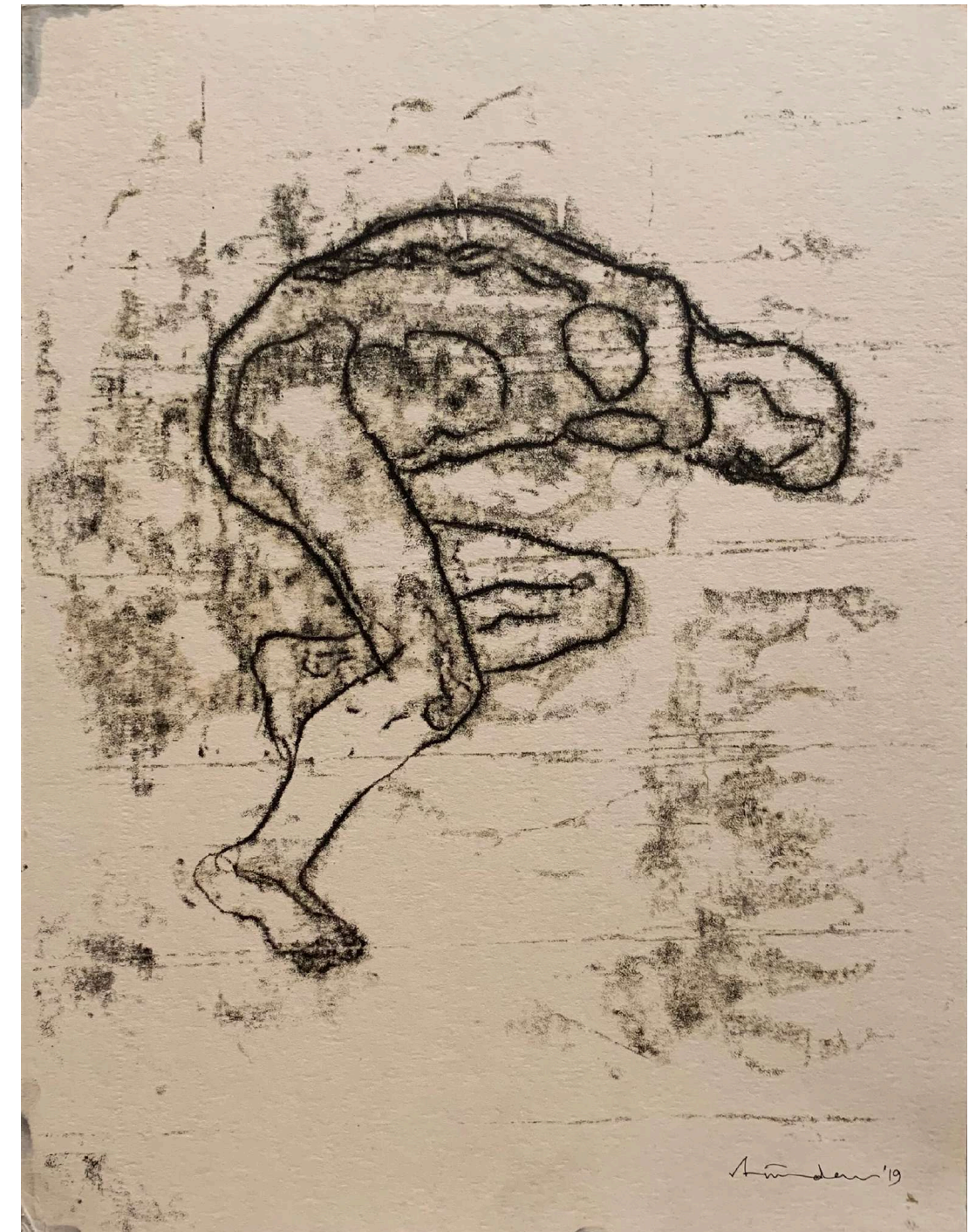




Installation view
Not a Dream, Not Peace, Not Love: Recent Works
by Arindam Chatterjee
Emami Art, Kolkata
2024



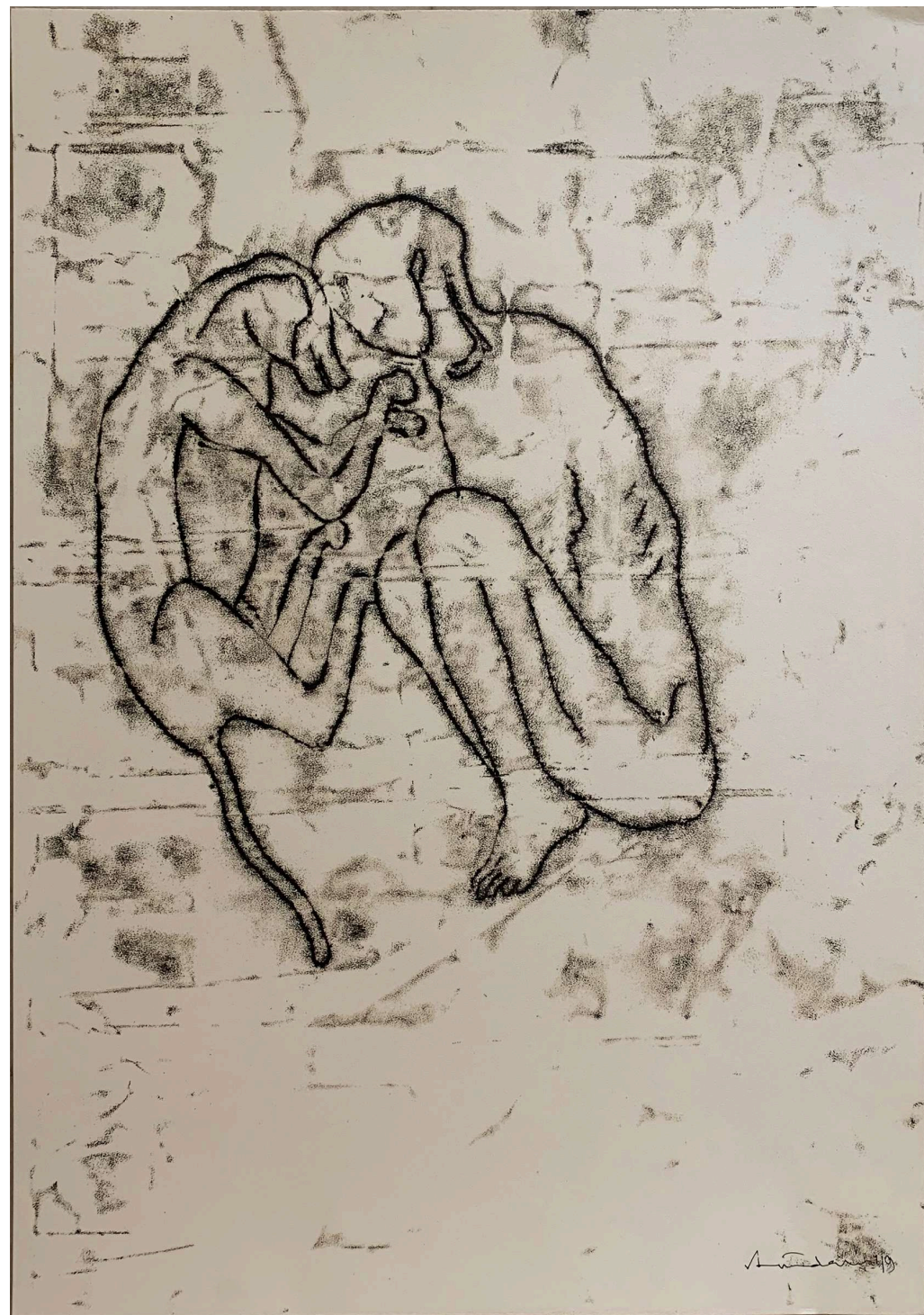
Detail
Figures I V
Oil on paper
20 x 14 in. approx.
2019, Kolkata



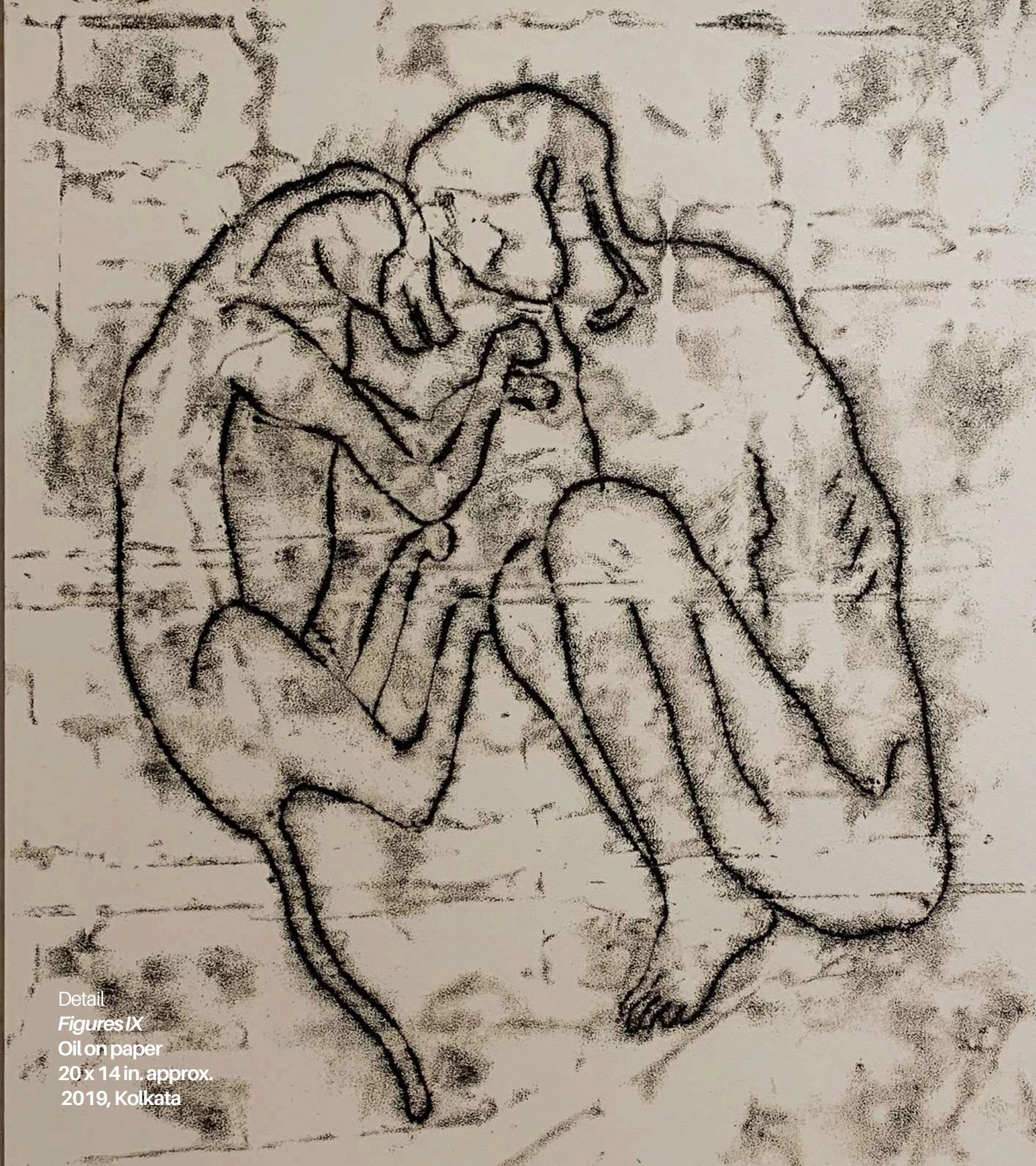
Amrita '19



Installation view
Not a Dream, Not Peace, Not Love: Recent Works
by Arindam Chatterjee
Emami Art, Kolkata
2024



Detail
Figures IX
Oil on paper
20 x 14 in. approx.
2019, Kolkata

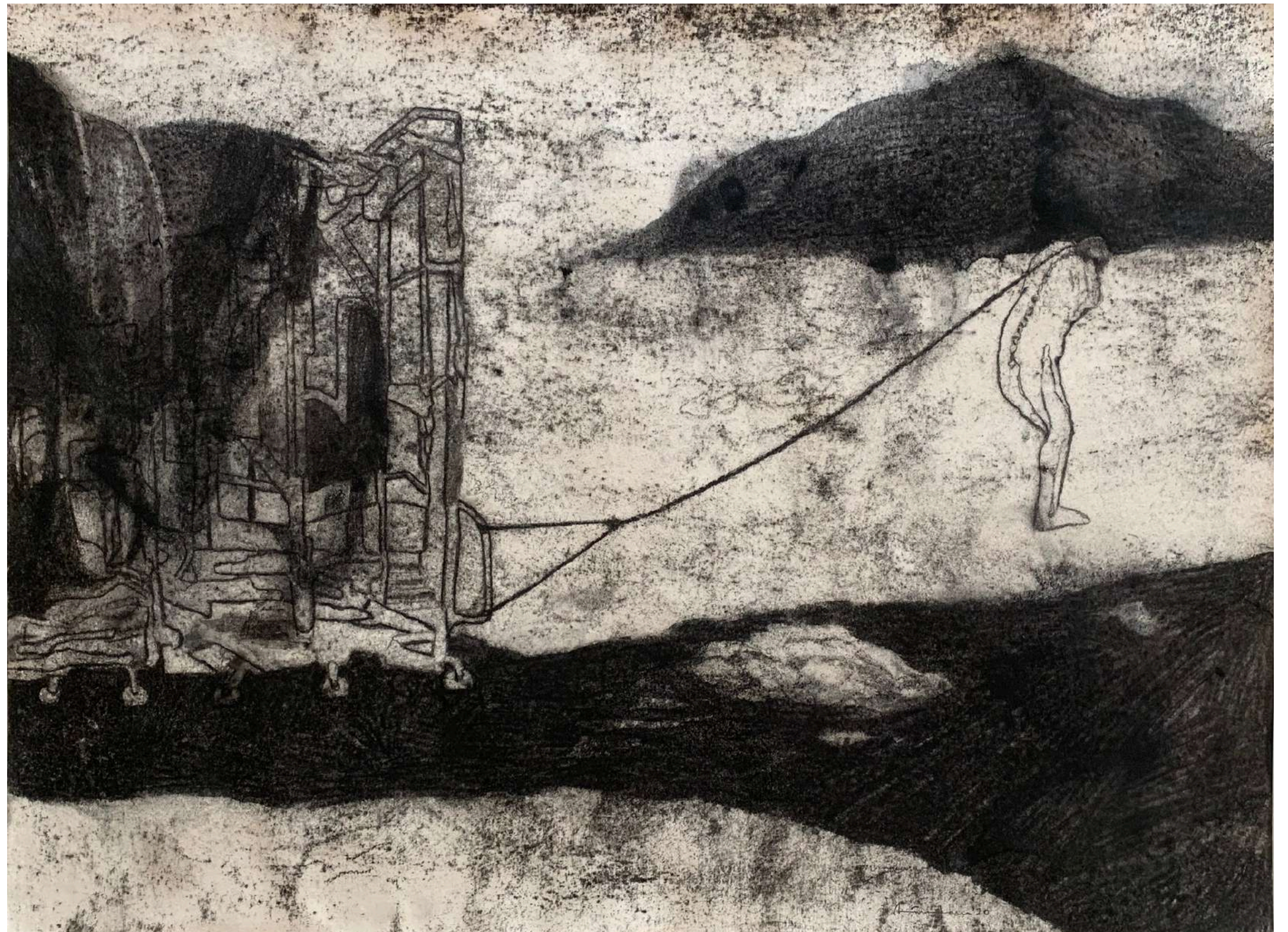




Created between 2017 and 2023, through the Covid phases, this body of works in the 2024 solo exhibition shows the high maturity of Chatterjee's figurative style, expression and critical approach to understanding the fabric of our life undermined by killings and torture, psychic and physical experience undone by hunger, misery and fear. While not directly pointing to any historical testimony of violence, these paintings speak of inner turbulence and ethical discomfort, addressing what might be called, following Hegel, the state of disreption [Zerrissenheit].

Weight of Heaviness I
Oil and charcoal on paper
22 x 30 in.
2019, Kolkata

Weight of Heaviness II
Charcoal on paper
22 x 30 in.
2020, Kolkata





Arindam Chatterjee, born in 1972 in West Bengal, India, studied painting at the Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata and Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan.

His solo exhibitions include *অবমানব / a v a m ā n a v a: A Solo Exhibition by Arindam Chatterjee*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2025; *Not a Dream, Not Peace, Not Love: Recent Works by Arindam Chatterjee*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024; *The Lightning Should Have Struck Me: Recent Works by Arindam Chatterjee*, Gandhara Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2015; *Recent Work by Arindam Chatterjee*, Akar Prakar, Kolkata, 2012; *Monologues*, Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai, 2006; and *The Airborne Stories*, Chitrakoot Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2005.

Chatterjee has participated in many group exhibitions including *Vichitra/विचित्र* organised by Emami Art and Kolkata Centre for Creativity in collaboration with Bihar Museum, Patna, 2026; *All That is Hidden: Mapping Departures in Landscape, Terrains and Geographies*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2024; *Constellations*, Emami Art, Kolkata, 2020; *Black Hole Project*, Art Multi-Discipline, Kolkata, 2018; *ENVISION: An Exhibition of Paintings and Sculptures by the Artists of Open Window*, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata, 2014; *Beneath The Black*, Gandhara Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2012; *Remixing Charm: Post Painterly Art of the Local*, Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2015; and XI Triennale India, New Delhi, 2005. His works have been presented by Emami Art at India Art Fair 2026, 2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, and 2020; and Art Mumbai 2024.

He received the Navonmesha Puraskara in 2003 and the National Cultural Scholarship and Junior Research Fellowship from the Government of India. He was awarded the H K Kejriwal Memorial Award in 1997 and the Silver Prize in the Drawing and Design Exhibition in Kyoto, Japan.

Arindam Chatterjee 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.

