



Arindam Chatterjee

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EMAMI ART



Untitled
Detail
Page 6

Arindam Chatterjee, belonging to the generation of Indian artists emerging in the late twentieth century, unfolds a potent, dystopian narrative of our world and humanity's intricate interplay. Initially an abstract artist, Chatterjee transitioned to figurative paintings around 2007 in response to the conflictual world and its history. However, the shift from abstraction was not absolute; its vestiges are noticeable in the rich handling of the medium in his figurative works.

Beyond their abstract art origins, Chatterjee's neo-expressionist works draw inspiration from post-Tagorean modernist Bengali literature and local socio-cultural sources. Revealing the shadows of culture's sombre history, untapped potential, and lingering paradoxes, his artistic vision resonates with the creative heritage of artists such as Somnath Hore, Ganesh Pyne, and Bikash Bhattacharjee. Their art bore the imprints of pre-partition riots in Calcutta, the Bengal famine, and the echoes of armed violence reverberating through urban centres. As a proponent of the succeeding generation, Chatterjee is burdened by the weight of vanishing worlds and their values. In the backdrop of the city experience, his works depict a dystopian world, reflecting the fragile times of modernity marked by death, wounds, and suffering of real and imagined beings.

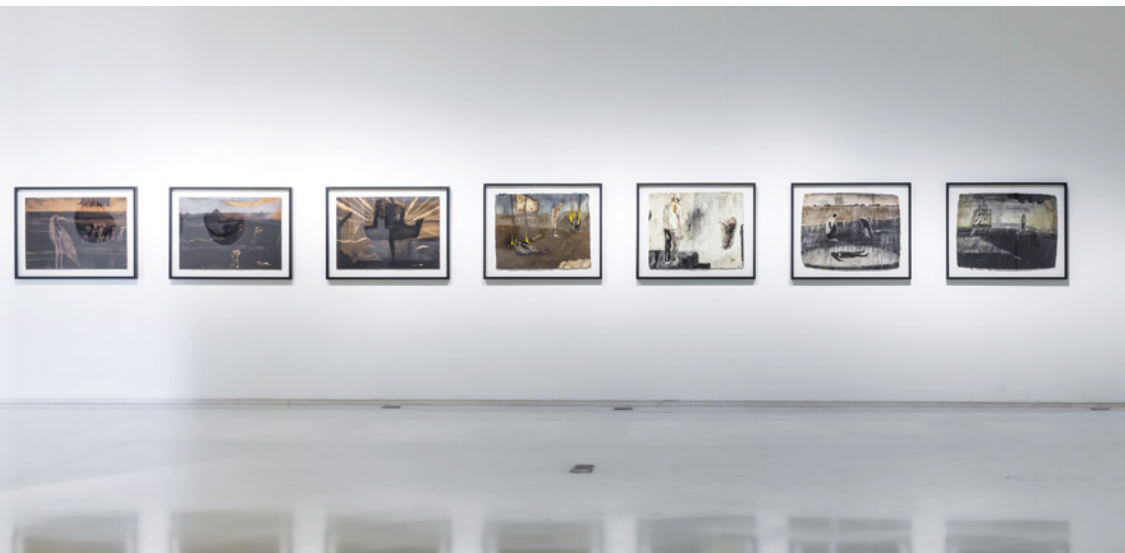
In Chatterjee's mixed media artworks, dynamic currents and swirling energies traverse the surface, giving rise to shape-shifting figures charged with disquiet. Unveiling desolate landscapes and outlined realms of isolation, the evocative formations convey instances of confusion, captivity, or defiance. Certain frames spotlight lone figures – human or amalgams of human and animal – while elsewhere, the artist explores the challenges faced by humans and animals entangled in ruptured communications or captures the metamorphosis of the human form into a more ominous being.

The series 'Observer' draws on an interesting distinction between active and passive engagement. An observer is a person who looks on but does not partake in an unfolding event; they are a coincidental presence, a compliance devoid of purpose, unlike a witness, who, by custom, could be essential in executing justice and restoring balance. For instance, in 'Observer I' (2020), a hopeless man looks on as two birds go up in flame like Icarus, who flew too close to the sun, like moths that perish in the pursuit of light. The possibility of communication breaks down as the man blankly gazes on, mirroring the empty billboard from the backdrop.

Exhibition view, *Constellation*,
Emami Art, Kolkata, 2021



Exhibition view,
India Art Fair 2022, New Delhi.



'Tales of Homecoming' is yet another important series. The labourers' migration from India's bustling cities to rural landscapes amid the pandemic-induced lockdowns inspired its first two iterations. In 'Tales of Homecoming II' (2020), a scavenger bird sharply watches as a migrant family traverses homeward through a desolate terrain. In 'Tales of Homecoming II' (2022), accompanied by migrants, a snake slithers in, suggesting the looming troubles trailing from urban centres to villages. The crisis is not represented here as a particular event but as an eternal, almost epic episode recurring throughout human history. The narratives within these artworks transcend temporal boundaries, capturing the perennial nature of human struggles within the environment of their own making. ■



Untitled
 Oil, watercolour and dry pastel on paper
 35.8 x 33.8 inches
 2023

Detail





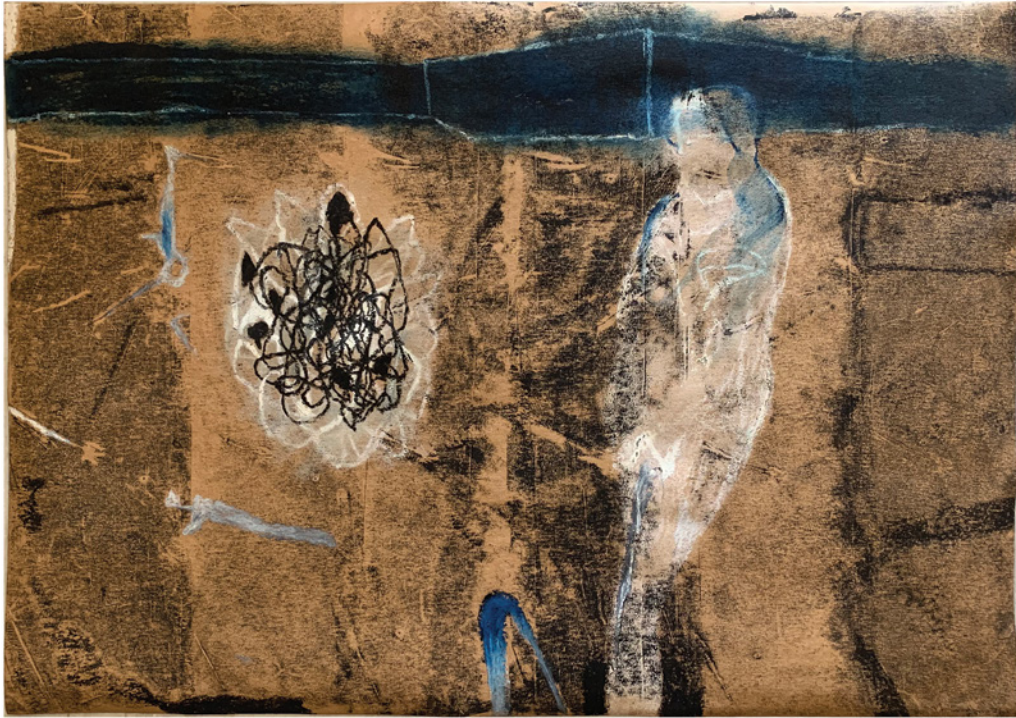
Untitled
Oil and dry pastel on paper
35.8 x 33.8 inches
2022



Untitled
Oil and graphite on paper
35.5 x 34 inches
2022

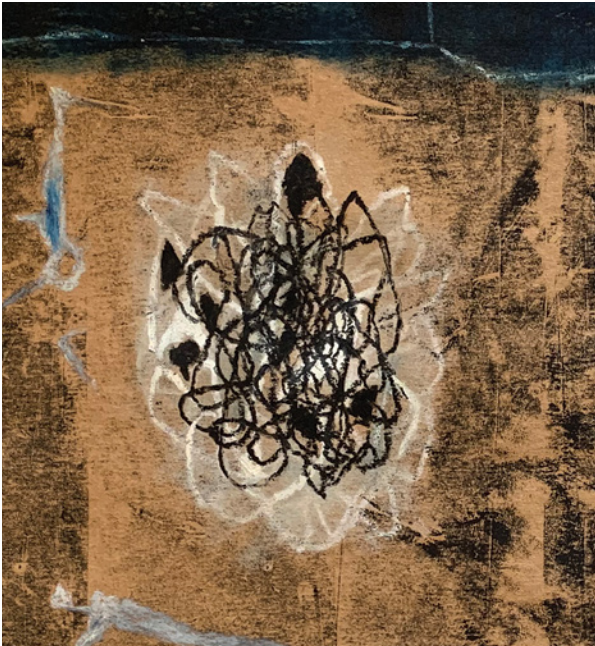


Untitled
Acrylic and oil pastel on paper
27.5 x 34.7 inches
2023



Untitled
Oil on board
25.4 x 36 inches
2022

Detail



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...Arindam Chatterjee's neo-expressionist-like works create a bleak vision of the world, exposing culture's dark past, unrealised potential and unsolved contradictions.



Untitled
Charcoal and dry pastel on paper
34.7 x 27.5 inches
2023



Tales of Homecoming I
Watercolour and charcoal on paper
25 x 36 inches
2020



Untitled
Oil on canvas
48 x 48 inches
2022



Untitled
Watercolour, charcoal and
ink on paper
35 x 28 inches
2022



Untitled
Watercolour and pigments
on paper
34.4 x 24.61 inches
2022



Observer I
Watercolour and dry pastel on paper
25.8 x 32.8 inches
2020

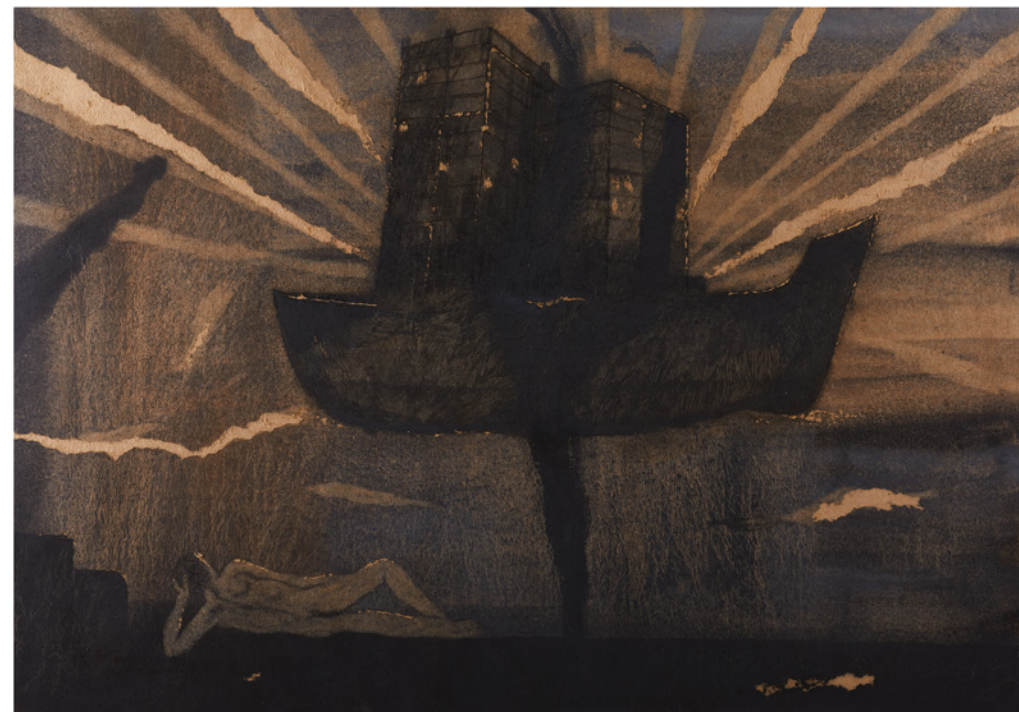


Observer IV
Watercolour and dry
pastel on paper
26 x 33.8 inches
2020



Observer V
Watercolour and dry
pastel on paper
25.4 x 34 inches
2020

Observer VI
Watercolour and dry
pastel on paper
25 x 36 inches
2020



The *Observer* series is a testimony of our time, bearing witness to the remnants of the social, political and even planetary violence. The reality is shown not as representation, but as allegory, the inscription of displaced meanings.



Mocking Bird
Oil on canvas
36 x 36 inches
2013



Death of a River
Oil, acrylic, charcoal and pastel on paper
42 x 48 inches
2013



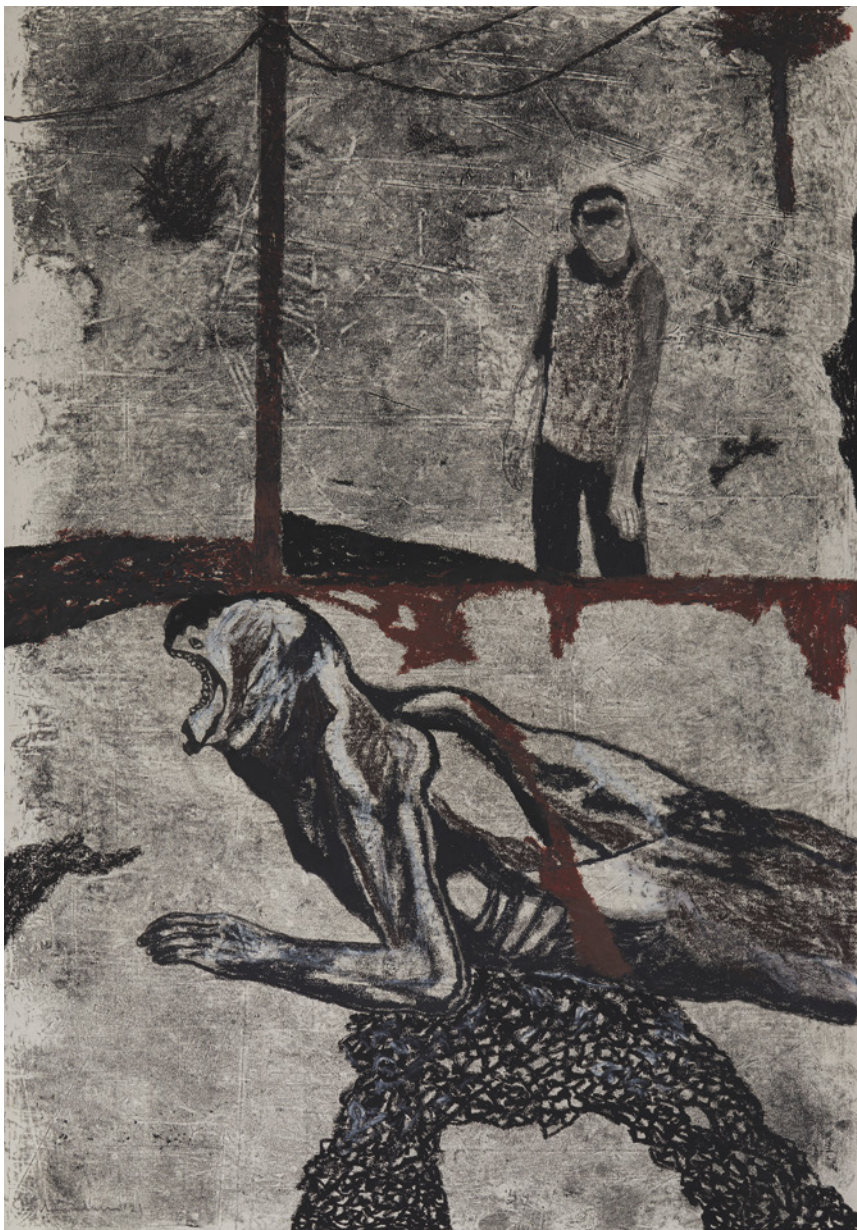
Untitled
Charcoal and watercolour on paper
29.9 x 41.3 inches
2016

‘Chatterjee’s works suck the viewer into an abject cosmos populated by mutant zoomorphs. These bestial hybrids probably allude to a breakdown of both internal, psychological environment as well as an ongoing desecration of social and moral structures while his brutalised landscapes are symbolic of ravaged beauty as well as expressions of deep rooted angst. The artist creates a heterotopia in which all control patterns and configured behaviour fall to pieces.’

Ushmita Sahu
Director & Head Curator, Emami Art

A Very Old Night
Charcoal, water colour,
oil pastel and oil on paper
41 x 30 inches
2018

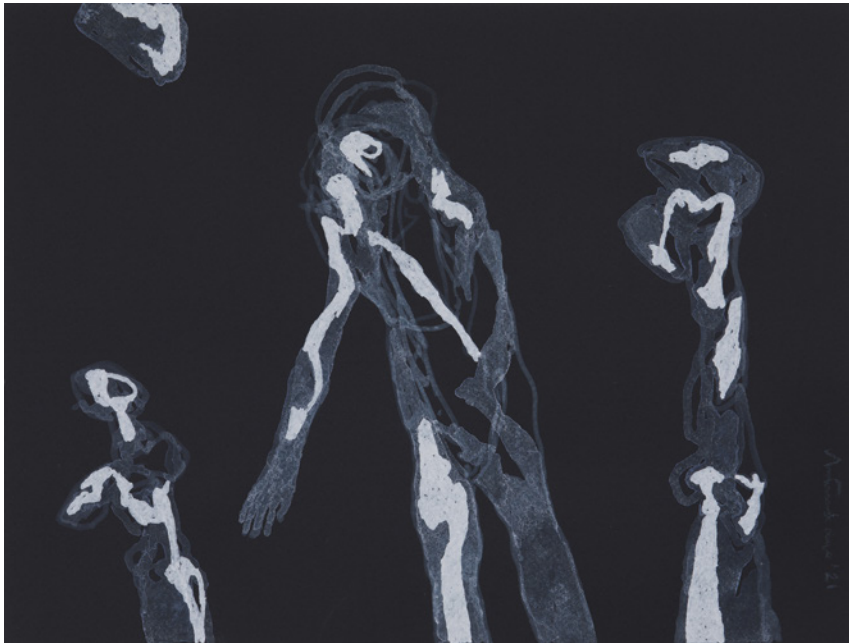




Untitled
Oil on paper
40 x 28 inches
2021



Untitled
Charcoal on paper
29.8 x 22 inches
2020



Untitled series
Acrylic, marker and dry pastel on paper
9 x 12 inches each
2021





Drawing 1
Oil and charcoal on paper
19 x 14 inches
2019



Drawing 2
Oil and charcoal on paper
19 x 14 inches
2019

Overleaf
Untitled
Oil, ink and watercolour on paper
Overall dimension variable
12 x 9 inches each
2023



‘I have never tried to tell a definite story; rather, my intention has always been to find varied sources of narratives. We are usually forced to confront these stories by our surroundings’ scattered incidents and visuals. Our consciousness tries endlessly to construct and destroy these visual elements to justify its being. They attack our understanding as well as our sense of security. Probably, I have been trying to paint these ceaselessly evolving visual beckonings, or maybe they are compelling me to do so.’

Arindam Chatterjee
(A translated excerpt from Chatterjee's writings in Bengali)



Untitled
15 x 12.2 inches
Watercolour and charcoal on paper
2020



Arindam Chatterjee born 1972 in West Bengal, studied painting at the Government College of Art & Craft, Kolkata and Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan and has since exhibited extensively.

His solo exhibitions include *The Lightning Should Have Struck Me: Recent Work by Arindam Chatterjee* at Gandhara Art Gallery, Kolkata 2015; *Recent Work by Arindam Chatterjee* at Akar Prakar, Kolkata 2012; *Monologues* at Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai 2006; *The Airborne Stories* at Chitrakoot Art Gallery, Kolkata 2005. He has also shown in many group exhibitions including India Art Fair, 2022, 2023; *Constellations* at Emami Art Kolkata, 2020; *Black Hole Project* at AM (Art Multi-Discipline) Kolkata, 2018; *ENVISION: An Exhibition of Paintings and Sculptures by the Artists of Open Window* at Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata 2014; *Beneath The Black* at Gandhara Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2012; *Remixing Charm: Post Painterly Art of the Local* at Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata, 2015, and XI Triennale India, New Delhi, 2005.

He is the recipient of Navonmesha Puraskara 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 is a leading Indian contemporary art gallery and a platform for cultural production. Established in 2017 in Kolkata, Emami Art represents emerging, mid-career and established artists and organises a dynamic programme of exhibitions and public seminars. Since its inception, the gallery has curated and hosted intimate and large-scale exhibitions and regularly participates in national and international art fairs and conferences.

With a focus on a future-forward, complex, multi-dimensional approach that echoes South Asian history, the programme explores socio-cultural and geo-political narratives in relation to visual art practices today. As part of its knowledge-sharing and archiving activities, Emami Art regularly hosts talks, seminars, panel discussions and conversations between artists, curators and audiences to create a safe space for critical engagement.

Deeply committed to promoting a regional, national and international agenda through innovative and alternative programming, the gallery places emphasis on knowledge production and socially conscious themes. Emami Art aspires to be a catalyst of change, research, innovation and inclusivity and welcomes all sections of society.

EMAMI ART

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