



Masterpieces 2021

Aakriti Art Gallery



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71/3 Canal Circular Lane (Ghore Bibi Lane)
Kadapara, | Phoolbagan | Kankurgachi | Kolkata 700054
+91 9830411112 | chiselarts@gmail.com
www.chiselarts.com

Masterpieces 2021

Aakriti Art Gallery

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www.aakritiartgallery.com



12/3A, Hungerford Street, Kolkata- 700017, West Bengal, India
Phone: +91 33 22893027, 22895041, Mobile: +91 9830411116
e-mail: kolkata@aaakritiartgallery.com

Aakriti Art Gallery

12/3A, Hungerford street, Kolkata - 700 017
Phones : +91 33 22893027 | +91 33 22895041
Mobile : 9830411115 | 9830411116
Email : kolkata@aaakritiartgallery.com

Concept:

Vikram Bachhawat

Design:

Sayan Paul

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Sales :

Komal Jaiswal

9830411116

artshop@aaakritiartgallery.com

Ravi Gupta

9830411117

konarkcollectables94@gmail.com

Administration :

N.G. Rao

9830411115

admin@aaakritiartgallery.com

Accounts :

Manoj Kumar Singh

9830411119

accounts@aaakritiartgallery.com

Creative :

Sayan Paul

+91 33 22893027

webadmin@aaakritiartgallery.com

Aakriti Art Gallery

12/3A, Hungerford street, Kolkata - 700 017

Phones : +91 33 22893027 | +91 33 22895041

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Masterpieces

2021

This essay centers around the works done by Masters in the collection of Aakriti Art Gallery and some fine contemporary artists mainly from Bengal that provoke a dialogue that will not question our own notion of culture and society but will also affect how we imagine ourselves. The practice of arts in the sub continent exists within a spiritual past, a history of place. To the present generation of artists, the medieval texts and icons and colonial heritage are living reminders of their cultural past, a conditional presence within collective awareness. Chandraketugarh, Pala and Sena sculptures, mythological texts, Charupanchashika, Mughal, Jain miniatures, Pahari, Rajasthani, Deccani, early Krsna Lila paintings and the Company School Engravings or aquarelles are more than familiar motifs. Such time absorbed sites and legends and by extension those of other cultures have recently gained renewed meaning as mnemonic touchstones of a dislocated past. The present volume also showcases works done by Masters and contemporary practitioners who have contributed to the making and evolution of Indian art. The Masters showcased here recite to us in grand verse from the depths of the soul and reaches out to us in a world of infinitely rich theatre of their souls that entwine and intertwine a rich spell for all of us who have the effrontery to share in the drama. The Masters' presence and grace are remarkable, and thus becomes a rare visual experience- visual texts that lead to a sort of sensation of meaning and connected with a deeper understanding that from the application of paint, its articulation and of gesture, the paint that are largely capable of an immediate registration of the movement in time of an intuitive-subjective experience with the reaching of a climax of a romantic apotheosis arousing our sensation and reception. Only by identifying, tracking down and determine and connect at the same time the supreme practices of these great Masters allow us to acknowledge those legacies and make them blossom in such a way as to give our life to something original and sublime.

The works are irradiate, compositions of moments adorned

with a visual felicity by a total expressive efficacious visual text, but it never slips into an external sign but rich in solitude and inwardness revealing the legacy and aesthetic beliefs reminding us that the passage and journey of a painter's work are always toward comprehensibility, clarity and revelation of the soul.

This volume will help us to investigate and take an overview the complex processes of westernization of our art world, the shifting status of artisans and artists, the permeation of Western standards and techniques that both created a new Indian 'high art' and transformed popular commercial art that thrived and operated in the middle class art culture. For the modernists it was the question of scrutinizing the living reality, which is diverse, but direct and different position of art confront the viewer in an overwhelming and dizzying fashion- exciting that it contrasts the work of major artists with widely disparate styles. What our contemporary artists desire is a renewal of a visual language, and the return of its object to the richness and range of experience.

This essay attempts to touch broadly on the various schools and genres being showcased here but a final conjecture should never be drawn in a field of open ended space and possibilities.

The art practice in India especially Bengal flourished with the rise of Calcutta as a metropolis and its phenomenal growth as the headquarters of East India Company home to the ruling elite of the John Company. The colonial rule impressed its presence in Calcutta through the demarcation of new world of 'high art' and exclusive category of 'artists'. European painters and engravers who frequented India from the 1780's with a monopoly over the patronage of the emergent colonial elite, epitomized the new definition of the 'artist'. Emulating the European example, a similar identity of an artist evolved in indigenous society by the mid-nineteenth century. While the western category of 'artist' was gradually loosening to accommodate Indians of middle class backgrounds, privately trained in oil painting by European tutors the category of 'artisan' included a mixed community of local painters, the draughtsmen and printmakers, who were responding equally to the pressures of westernization and new market demands. Mughal painters from Patna, Murshidabad, Lucknow who had drifted to Calcutta (as the provincial Mughal courts declined, and locus of power and patronage shifted to the British in these old seats of Nawabi culture, European painters stepped in where the traditional court artists had once thrived. Though the Early Bengal Oil paintings lack any proper

documentation, these painters were believed to be descendants of miniature painters from Murshidabad, Bengal and Bihar. They moved to Calcutta and commissioned by rich elite Hindu families. The oils were inspired by the oils paintings of the European artists resulting in three disparate traditions namely Mughal Miniature, Western Naturalism and indigenous Patas. It resulted in a blending of West and indigenous cultures. Not very clear of western perspective, this genre was a language that dwelt upon an organic evolution of volume, style, architectural elements and own crafted perspective. The early paintings from 1800-1850 carry marked influence of miniatures done in oil being the only element of an amalgamation of styles followed by a more matured traditional style works marked by realism and perspective and improved handling of oil.

And later there was a marked departure from the style and execution of earlier period and an affinity for an alternate iconography and rapid brushwork instead of a smooth finish during 1850-1900. This particular genre gave away to the popularity of the academy style paintings of Calcutta Art School and the rise neo- Bengal School.

The eclecticism of visuality brought to effect an ambivalent language of collage and citation facilitating juxtaposition of Indian and Western, traditional and modern, national and subaltern, sacred and erotic elements, between the mythical and colonial, between celestial and terrestrial, shifting of locales and characters, transfer from one time, place and genre to another, on a single receptor surface and later around 1930's a mode of articulation of an anti-colonial allegorical and metaphorical infrastructure in place for politics and piety. Also the paintings of this period till the 1930's bear the testimony that how the production of Hindu cultic and mythological imagery underwent a major aesthetic and conceptual transformation done earlier.

The shifts in the tastes of Nawabs and the dwindling of court patronage reduced the latter to the state of 'bazaar' painters- a new colonial category) and were using western techniques, were picked up by British officials and civilians and made to learn the 'right' conventions of shading, perspective and naturalized drawing and commissioned to paint their masters' houses and servants, genres or ethnological specimens of different Indian 'trades' and 'castes'. These paintings including birds, beasts, flowers and fauna produced under the supervision of East India Company officials came to be known as 'Company School paintings'. There were painters in Chinsurah and Chandannagore who produced

paintings that were 'iconographic' representation of Hindu epics, gods and goddesses, popularly known as 'Dutch Bengal' or "French Bengal"- still an undefined school. These traditional gouache artists were trained to handle aquarelles, engravings and lithographs. The skills of these miniature artists were valued primarily for their adaptability to western naturalistic conventions and for the flair for their precision and detail in the pictures and diagrams ordered for them. Caught in changing demands, the traditional artist was reduced to a mere 'copyist' – the result was a hybrid manner of painting.

It is clear from these facts that the art activity of the Company men and amateur British painters did help in the setting up of an art school along the western lines. Towards the middle of XIXth century, art schools in Madras (1853), Calcutta (1854), Bombay (1857), and Lahore (1875) were opened and the syllabi offered were derived from London's Kensington School.

Around the lanes and by-lanes that led Calcutta's famed Kali Temple in Kalighat where migrant patuas settled, a unique school developed between 1830-1920 known as the 'Kalighat school'. Like some classic nineteenth century Bengali satires and a vast body of 'street literature' emanating from Battala in North Calcutta, the Kalighatpatuas graphically represented the manner and life style of a decadent culture to serve the dual purpose of instruction and delight where hypocrisy, particularly religious received savage treatment with elliptical sweeps of heavy contour lines, embellished with coloured parallel shades-giving the feeling of bodily volume with water-soluble inks and colours, on stark surfaces sans background on cheap mill- made paper. Hypocrisy was a favourite theme among the patuas- possibly the most famous representation of a religious hypocrite was the pat showing a cat with religious marks on its forehead and tulsi beads round its neck holding a lobster in its mouth. Lustful family gurus were shown both in paintings and in the drawings, being beaten up with brooms by their nubile female disciples for trying to take advantage of their obvious charms. Kalighat pats flourished as colonial and urban, the basic values, which they reinforced both visually and socially, remained largely rural. The whole thrust of social satire in these paintings reflected the dislocation of the village patuas and their alienation from the westernized babu society of Calcutta which they painted as fop, dandy, dissolutely womanizing and corrupt. Transferred to the city, these painters continued to stick rigidly to the village clans from which they had emerged, with the same hereditary caste affiliations.

The sweep of lines and the bloatedness of faces and figures

lent itself brilliantly to the nature of their satires. Kalighat images, repeating the same stock of satire, mocking the dandyish babu, his corrupt life-styles and his subjugation by immoral women.

Sons of Gunendranath Tagore (a cousin of Rabindranath), the three brothers Abanindranath (1871–1951), Gaganendranath (1867-1938) and Samarendranath (1870 - 1951) belonged to parallel branch of the Jorasanko Tagore family of the neighbouring baithakkhana house built by Prince Dwarakanath Tagore. Abanindranath's grandfather, Girindranath (1820-54) is mentioned as 'the first trained artist' of the family, painting portraits and landscapes in oil in European style (see Mukul Dey's 'Abanindranath Tagore: A survey of the master's life and work, 1942). In the next generation Jyotirindranath (1849-1925) was among the early students of the Calcutta School of Art in the mid 1860s. Abanindranath came into the limelight in 1902, with Havell's article in *The Studio*, where he highlighted Abanindranath's resistance to the traps and temptations of Western art education, and his rejuvenation of a Mughal style of painting. "A painting called 'Shah Jahan Dreaming of the Taj' (last of the Taj trilogy, though thematically the first) carried to a new height this primacy of emotion. Accordingly, the delicate drawing of the emperor astride his horse disappears within a smoky thicket of colour, its murky and muted layers characteristic of the artist's new technique of the 'wash', and suggestive of the evanescent quality. Colour had become Abanindranath's main tool of expression, but it was colour almost divested of itself. This painting shows the artist's transition from the intricate design and workmanship of miniature painting to the emotive nuances of 'wash' (-Tapati Guha - Thakurta, 'The making of New Indian Art', p247 - 249). This new 'wash' technique became the hallmark of the "Abanindranath style" of Indian painting.

At the same time, a group of students dedicated as they were to western art revolted against Havell and his new teaching methods (see Nanak Ganguly, 'A Forgotten Age in Painting' *The Sunday Statesman*, October 28, 1990). This group of students containing J.P. Gangooly (1876-1953), Hemen Mazumdar (1894-48), Prahlad Karmakar (1900-46), Satish Sinha (1893-1965), Atul Bose (1898-1977) and others; later known as 'academicians' had to live in the shadow of the Bengal school of artists. Hemen Mazumdar was one of the finest from this group of academicians. In his distinctive mix of artistic technique subscribing to Western Academism, adept in handling oil, watercolour, and crayon, extremely sensitive and gentle in his study of the female form and many of his

portraits.

During a visit to Japan, Rabindranath (1860-1941) had seen a large number of works done by Japanese artists. He realized the path taken by Bengal School artists as deterrent to art higher artistic development. In a letter to Abanindranath, he expressed his dissatisfaction. He was, in fact instrumental in bringing Nandalal to Santiniketan – away from the master's tutelage. Abanindranath's guidance was replaced by the poet's thoughts and guidance. A spirit of joy and freedom pervaded in the new works of Nandalal done among the natural environs of Santiniketan. The ancient, classical iconic representation gave way to landscapes abounding with local Santhals. It was a rebirth for an artist who was lying dormant in his master's shadow. He eventually gave a new dimension to Orissa and pata paintings though his colleagues did not change their ways. He nurtured his own students in the open and free atmosphere of Santiniketan. The result was the emergence of two of our early modernists-Ramkinkar Baij (1906-80) and Benodebehari Mukherjee (1904-80). Another disciple of Abanindranath, Debiprasad RoyChowdhury also produced a significant number of students- Prodosh Dasgupta, K.C.S. Panicker, Gopal Ghosh, Paritosh Sen and Dhanpal, some of whom enriched the Bengal art later on in their own ways. The artists of the 1940s could not accept any of the above trends that they felt sterile and flat, tried to assimilate European modernistic modes of expression/representation with Bengal folk forms. The artists of the Calcutta Group (1943-1953) such as Rathin Moitra, Nirode Majumdar, Subho Tagore, and others outside the group assimilated naturalism into social realism, as in the works of Zainul Abedin or early works of Somnath Hore (1921-2006).

They are something we wish to give for they speak our desire. On the other there is something to observe in these works, even if it is not what we may commonly think, and even if seeing what we commonly see may blind us to another truth, a 'more true' truth that is none-the-less there, though its mode of being there may not resemble anything like a fixed contemporary presence. In other terms, in another language, this would translate as the minimal hypothesis of logic of the subconscious, that our psychic symptoms have causes, origins even that the dreams do not cheat with metaphor, and so it pays to be meticulous and rigorous.

Nanak Ganguly

* NATIONAL ART TREASURE, NOT FOR EXPORT

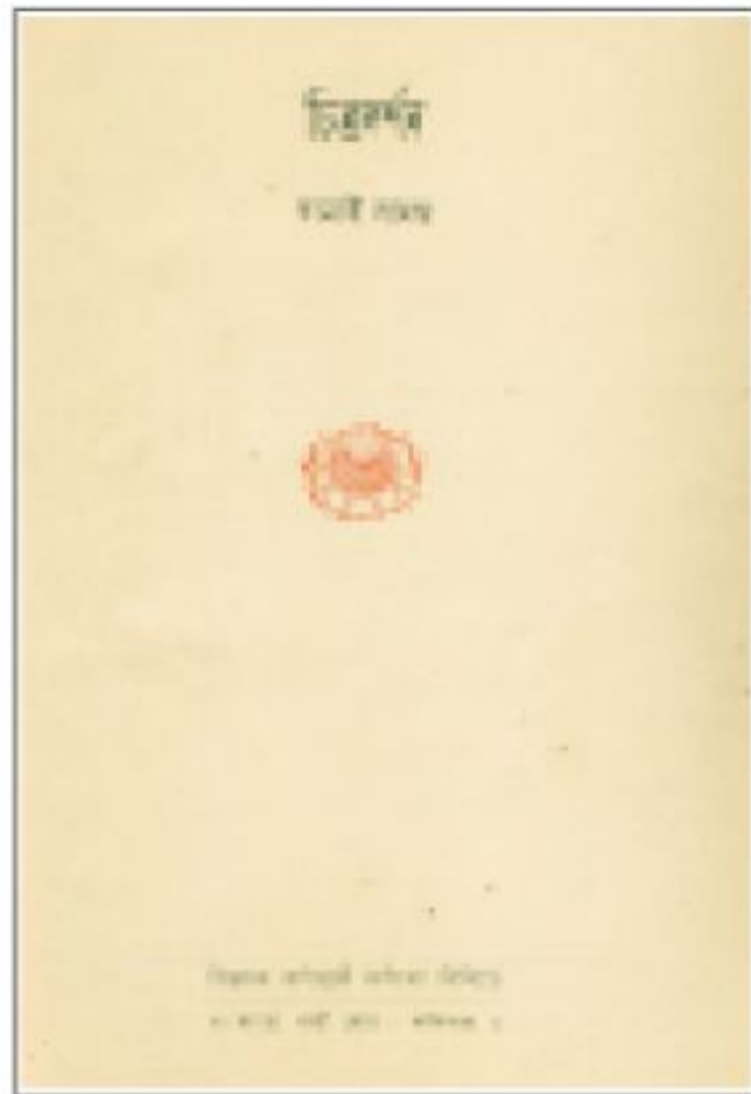
Ref No : 5351

ABANINDRANATH TAGORE
(1871-1951)

tempera on board
5.5 x 3.5 in

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata





Published in 'Chitradarshan', Kanai Samanta, Bidyodoy Library Pvt. Ltd.,
72, Mahatma Gandhi Road Kolkata 700009



Published in Ananda Bazar
Patrika



Published in Bharatashilpi Nandalal,
Vol-II by Panchanan Mandal, Visva
Bharati

* NATIONAL ART TREASURE,
NOT FOR EXPORT

Ref No : AF1089

NANDALAL BOSE
(1882-1966)

pencil on paper
33.5 x 24 in
1946
signed lower right

Provenance

Presented by Indra Dugar to his brother in law
Mr. Ratan Singh Nahar Private Collection, Kolkata



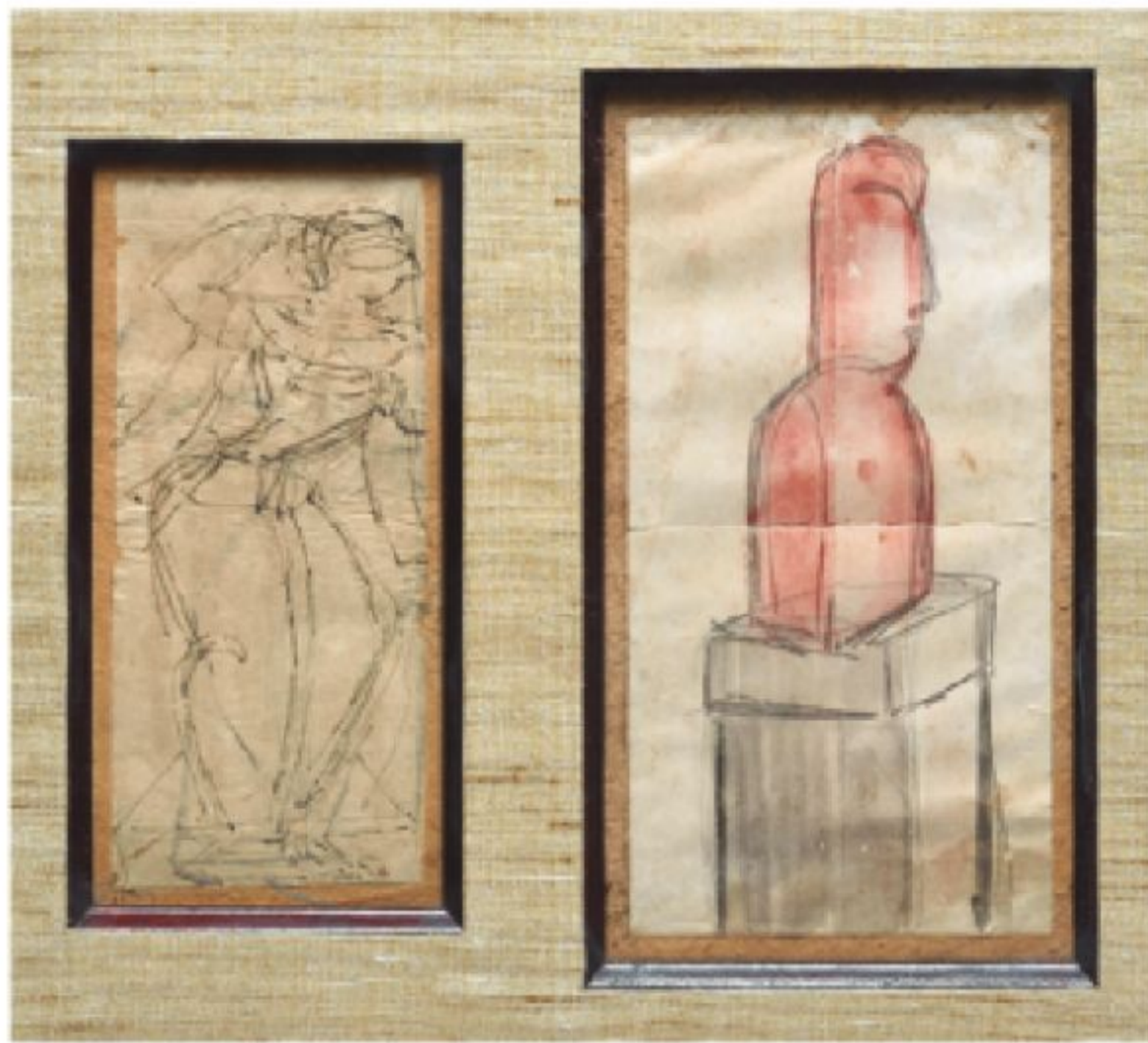


* NATIONAL ART TREASURE, NOT FOR EXPORT

Ref No : 3390
JAMINI ROY
(1887-1972)

ink on paper
3 x 6.5 in

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata



* NATIONAL ART TREASURE, NOT FOR EXPORT

Ref No : 3392
JAMINI ROY
(1887-1972)

drawing on paper
7.5 x 3.5 in & 9 x 4.5 in

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata



* NATIONAL ART TREASURE, NOT FOR EXPORT

Ref No : 3403
JAMINI ROY
(1887-1972)

drawing on paper
6.5 x 4 in & 6.5 x 3.5 in

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata



* NATIONAL ART TREASURE, NOT FOR EXPORT

Ref No : C0668
JAMINI ROY
(1887-1972)

tempera on board
28 x 17 in
signed lower right

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata

* NATIONAL ART TREASURE, NOT FOR EXPORT

Ref No : 3389
JAMINI ROY
(1887-1972)

tempera on board
15 x 12.5 in
signed lower right

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata





Ref No : C0637
HEMEN MAZUMDAR
(1894-1948)

gouache & watercolour on paper
21 x 15 in
1937
signed lower right

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : 4016
RAMKINKAR BAIJ
(1906-1980)

bronze
13 x 5.5 x 10.5 in

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata

Ref No : 4026
RAMKINKAR BAIJ
(1906-1980)

bronze
7.5 x 13 x 5.5 in

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : 3343

GOBARDHAN ASH

(1907-1996)

Young Player

gouache on paper

17 x 10.5 in

1950

Provenance

Acquired from the Artist's Family



Ref No : AD 1011

GOBARDHAN ASH

(1907-1996)

Hilly Woman

watercolour on paper

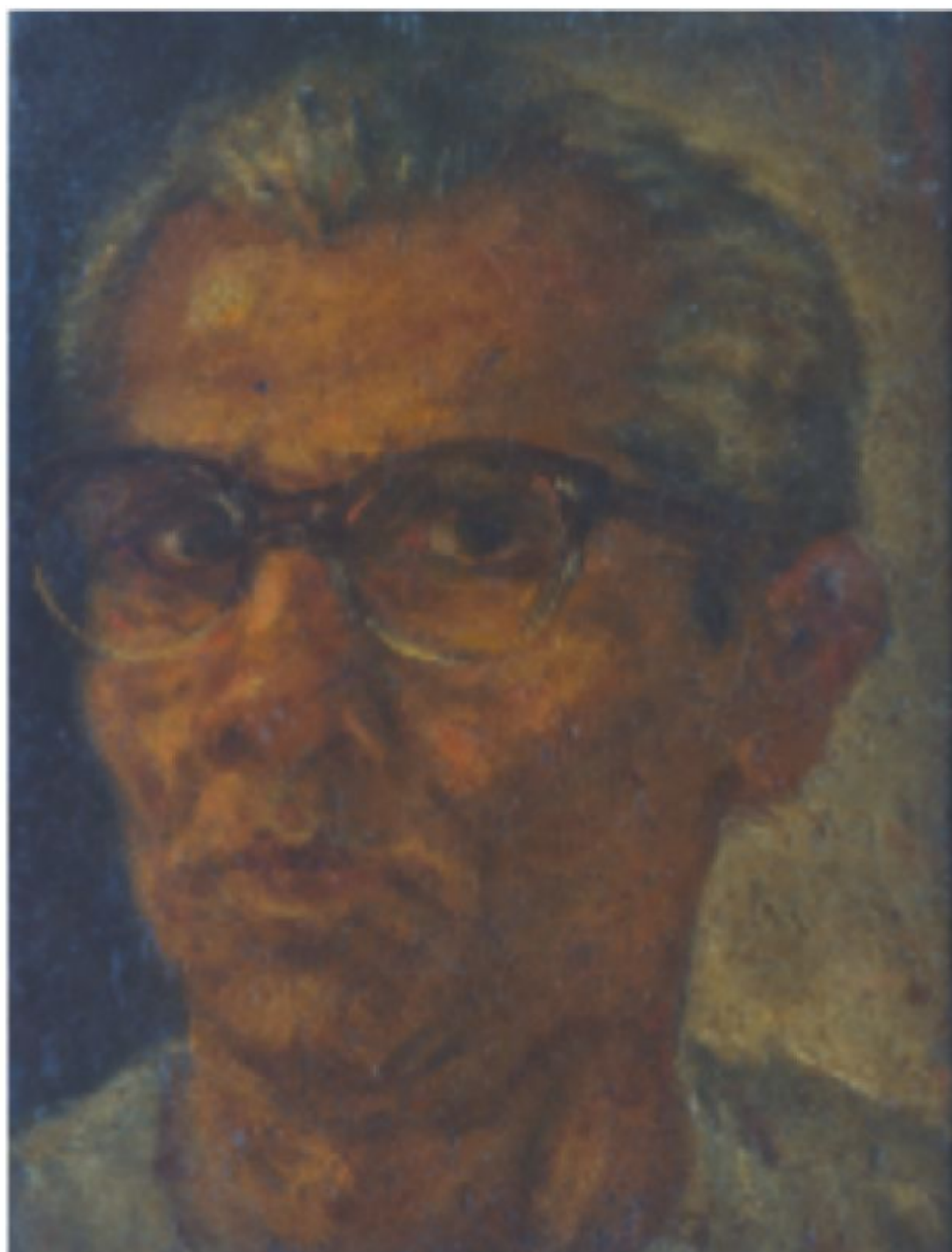
8.2 x 4 in

1929

signed lower right

Provenance

Acquired from the Artist's Family



Ref No : 3344
GOBARDHAN ASH
(1907-1996)

Self Portrait - I
oil on board
10.5 x 8 in
1974

Provenance
Acquired from the Artist's Family



Ref No : 3346
GOBARDHAN ASH
(1907-1996)

Self Portrait - II
watercolour on paper
13 x 9 in
1941
signed lower right

Provenance
Acquired from the Artist's Family



Ref No : 5348
MANISHI DE
(1909-1966)

watercolour & tempera on paper
11 x 6 in

Provenance

Acquired from Nandini Chatterjee who had inherited the work from her father Late Sri Pranatosh Ghatak who was the editor of "MASIK BASUMATI" - a bengali monthly magazine



Ref No : 5346
GOPAL GHOSE
(1913-1980)

watercolour on paper
10 x 14 in
1956
signed lower right

Provenance

Acquired from Nandini Chatterjee who had inherited the work from her father Late Sri Pranatosh Ghatak who was the editor of "MASIK BASUMATI"- a bengali monthly magazine

Ref No : 5347
GOPAL GHOSE
(1913-1980)

watercolour on paper
10 x 14 in
1956
signed lower right

Provenance

Acquired from Nandini Chatterjee who had inherited the work from her father Late Sri Pranatosh Ghatak who was the editor of "MASIK BASUMATI"- a bengali monthly magazine



Ref No : 552

K.H. ARA
(1914-1985)

pastel on paper
14.5 x 11 in
1969
signed lower left

Provenance

Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : C0023

K.H. ARA
(1914-1985)

pastel on paper
17 x 12 in
signed lower right

Provenance

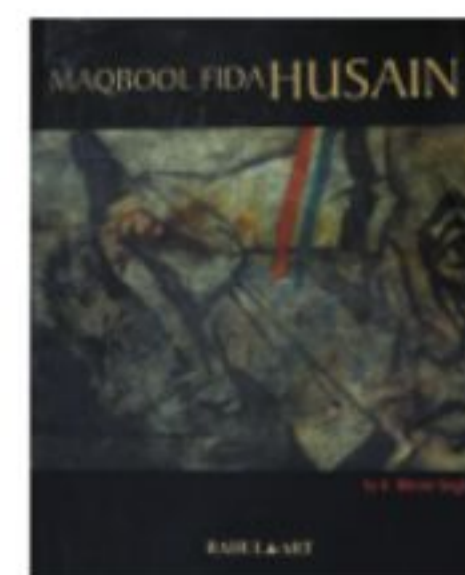
Private Collection, Kolkata

Ref No : C0659
M.F. HUSAIN
(1915-2011)

oil on board
40 x 28 in
1970
signed lower right

Provenance
Vadehra Art Gallery
Private Collection, Kolkata





Published on the cover
Art News & Views
January 2011, Vol-3, No-5

Published in
Maqbool Fida Husain by
K. Bikram Singh
(Rahul & Art) Pg 220



Ref No : CO660

M.F. HUSAIN
(1915-2011)

Rangeen Kaali (Calcutta Series)

acrylic on paper

45 x 32 in

1990

signed top right

Provenance

Vadehra Art Gallery

Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : 5349
M.F. HUSAIN
(1915-2011)

watercolour on paper
20.5 x 28 in
1968
signed top left

Provenance
Saffronart, Mumbai
Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : C0662
M.F. HUSAIN
(1915-2011)

Safdar Hashmi
acrylic on canvas
66 x 125 in
1989
signed lower left

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : C0333
M.F. HUSAIN
(1915-2011)

Rajasthani Head
acrylic on canvas
20 x 19 in
signed lower right

Provenance
Saffronart, Mumbai
Private Collection, Kolkata

Ref No : 5321
INDRA DUGAR
(1918-1989)

watercolour on paper
19 x 13.5 in
1983
signed lower left

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata





Ref No : 4440
SOMNATH HORE
(1921-2006)

pastel on paper
8 x 8 in
1991
signed lower right

Provenance
Saffronart, Mumbai
Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : M1541

S.H. RAZA

(1922-2016)

Bindu-Nad

acrylic on canvas

20 x 20 in

2007

signed lower right

Provenance

Vadehra Art Gallery
Private Collection, Kolkata

Ref No : C0030

S.H. RAZA

(1922-2016)

acrylic on paper

9 x 9 in

2005

signed lower right

Provenance

Vadehra Art Gallery
Private Collection, Kolkata





Published in **S.H.Raza**
Catalogue Raisonne 1958-1971 (Vol-I) , Pg 182



Ref No : 5350
S.H. RAZA
(1922-2016)

Voyage
acrylic on canvas
16 1/8 x 13 in
1969
signed lower left

Provenance
Galerie Lara Vincy, Paris
Private Collection, Kolkata



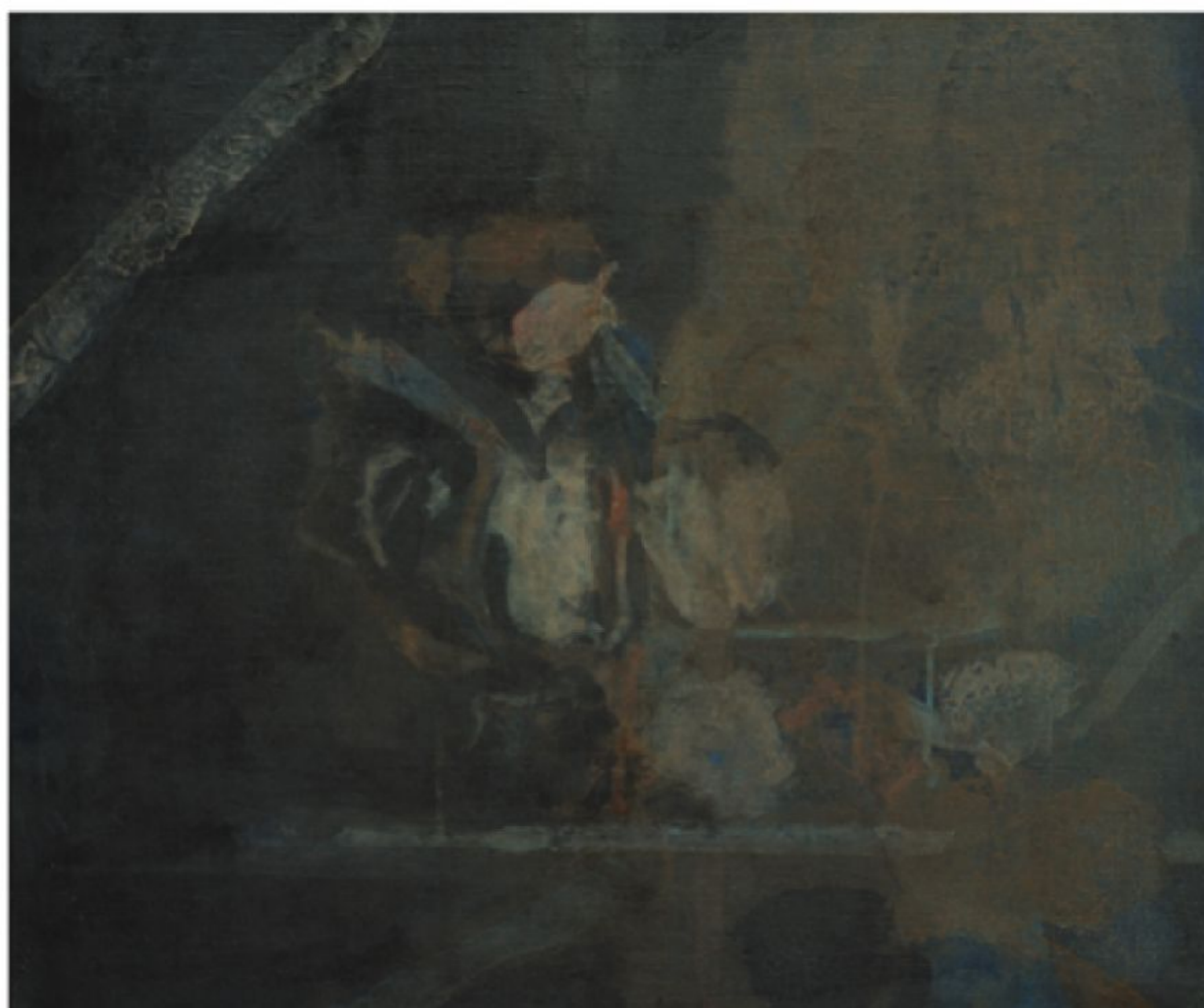
Published in **S.H.Raza**
Catalogue Raisonne 1958-1971 (Vol-I) , Pg. 194

Ref No : C0039

S.H. RAZA
(1922-2016)

oil on canvas
21 x 25.5 in
1970
signed lower center

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata





Ref No : AF1066

RAMKUMAR
(1924-2018)

oil on canvas
36 x 24 in
2015

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist



Ref No : C0041
RAMKUMAR
(1924-2018)

acrylic on paper
22 x 30 in
2005

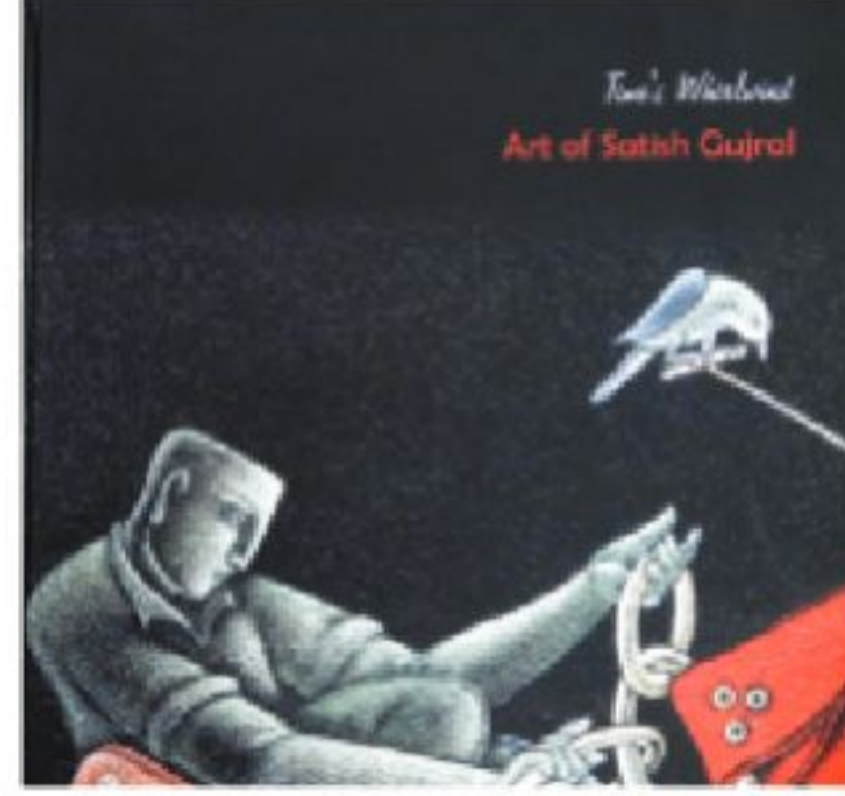
Provenance
Vadehra Art Gallery
Private Collection, Kolkata

Ref No : C0042
RAMKUMAR
(1924-2018)

acrylic on paper
10.5 x 14.5 in
1996

Provenance
Vadehra Art Gallery
Private Collection, Kolkata





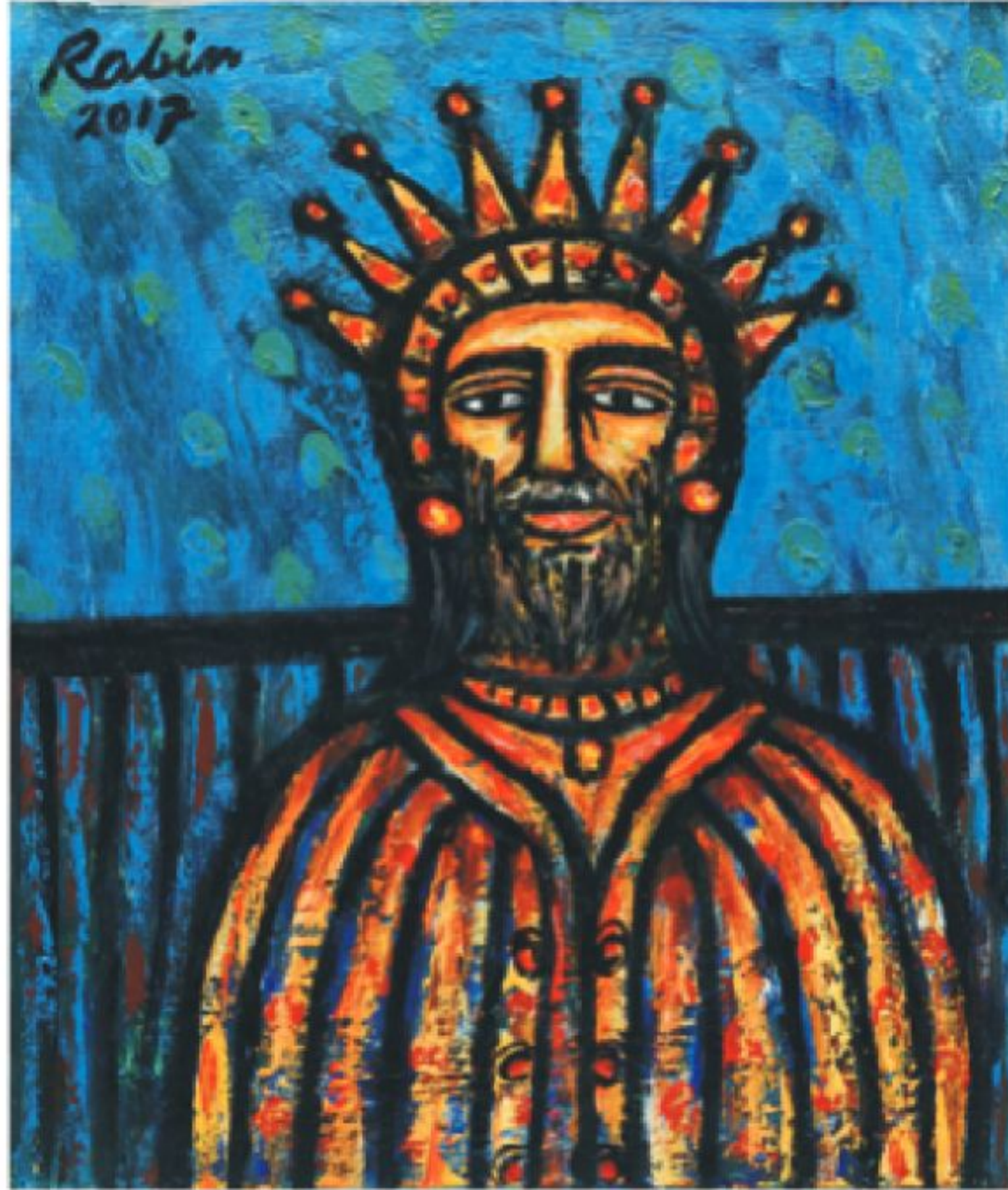
Published on the cover **Time's Whirlwind** & Pg 46

Ref No : AD 3416
SATISH GUJRAL
(1925-2020)

acrylic & gold on canvas
24 x 36 in
2009

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata





Ref No : 5161
RABIN MONDAL
(1929-2019)

King
acrylic on canvas
24 x 20 in
2017
signed top left

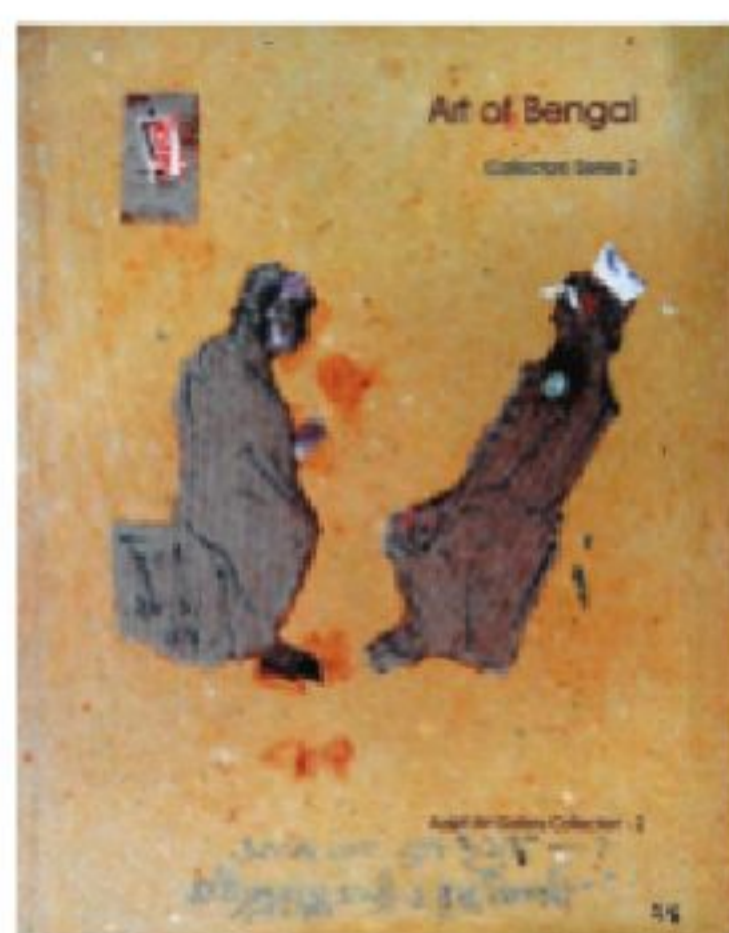
Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata

Ref No : 5265
RABIN MONDAL
(1929-2019)

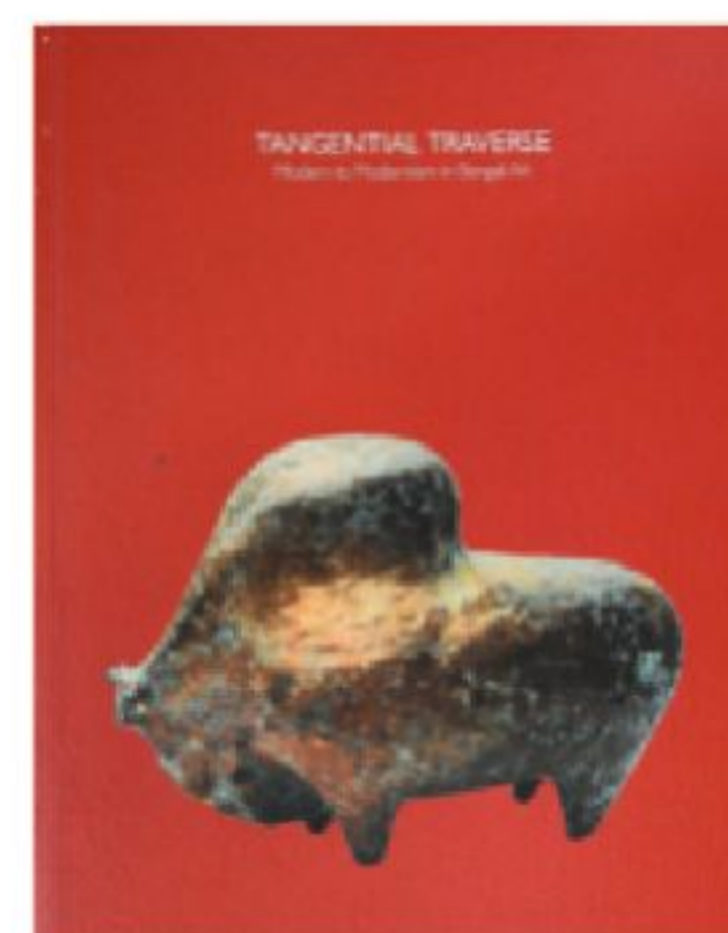
Twins
acrylic on canvas
40 x 36 in
2013
signed top left

Provenance
Acquired directly from the artist





Published in
Art of Bengal (Collectors' Series 2) Pg 7



Published on the cover
TANGENTIAL TRAVERSE
(Modern to Modernism in Bengal Art)



Ref No : 2791

AJIT CHAKRABORTY
(1930-2005)

bronze
5.5 x 8 x 4 in
1997

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata



Published in the Book
Art of Bengal (Collectors' Series 2) Pg 9

Ref No : 2794
AJIT CHAKRABORTY
(1930-2005)

bronze
7 x 12.5 x 3.5 in

Provenance

Acquired from Society of Contemporary Artists'
from their Annual Exhibition at
Birla Academy of Art and Culture, 2005,
by the current owner
Private Collection, Kolkata





Ref No : 5339

KARTICK CHANDRA PYNE
(1931-2017)

Bird in the cage

oil on canvas

33.7 x 27.8 in

signed middle center & lower right

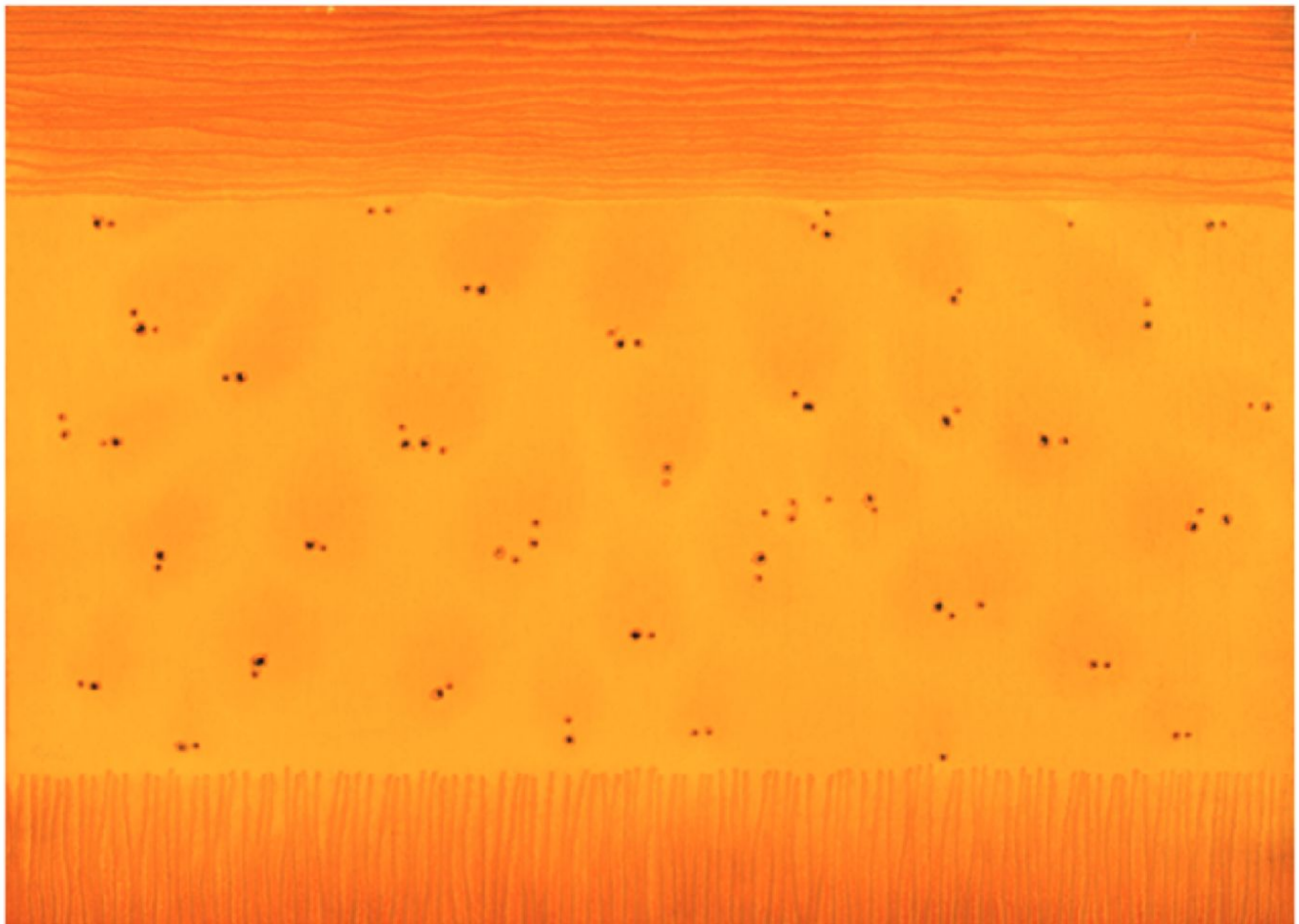
Provenance

Sotheby's Auction, New York
Private Collection, Kolkata

Ref No : AD 3414
SOHAN QADRI
(1932-2011)

ink & natural dye on paper
39.5 x 55 in
2003
signed lower left

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata





Ref No : 4027

PHUL CHAND PYNE
(1933-2000)

The Owl

brass
17 x 9 x 9.5 in
signed at the base

Provenance

Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : 4019
PHUL CHAND PYNE
(1933-2000)

terracotta
5.5 x 6 x 5 in
signed lower right

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata

Ref No : 4012
PHUL CHAND PYNE
(1933-2000)

terracotta
15.5 x 4.5 x 3 in
1973
signed lower right

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata





Ref No : 5299
BIPIN GOSWAMI
(1934-2019)

bronze
13.5 x 14 x 9 in
Edition - A/P

Provenance
Acquired directly from the Artist

Ref No : 4958
GANESH HALOI
(b. 1936)

bronze
8.5 x 11.5 x 2 in
Edition - 3/9
2015

Provenance
Acquired directly from the Artist





Ref No : C0339
GANESH PYNE
(1937-2013)

Head of a Woman
conté on paper
18.5 x 14.5 in
2006
signed lower right

Provenance
Vadehra Art Gallery
Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : 4932
LALU PRASAD SHAW
(b. 1937)

Head
bronze
13 x 10 x 10 in
Edition - 1/10
2015

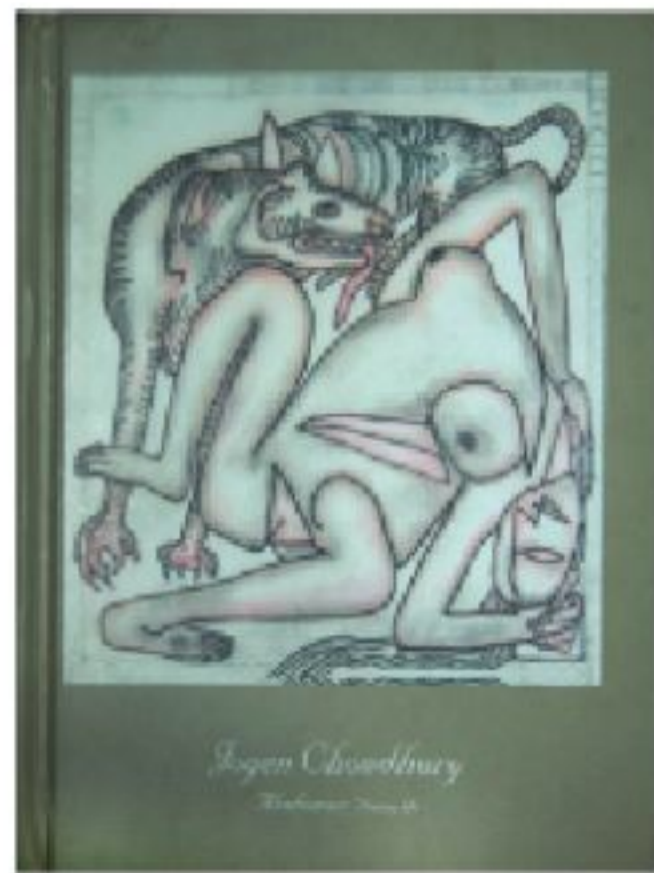
Provenance
Acquired directly from the Artist

Ref No : 5310
LALU PRASAD SHAW
(b. 1937)

Bibi
tempera on board
23.5 x 19 in
2016
signed lower middle

Provenance
Acquired directly from the Artist





Jogen Chowdhury in front of the Painting at INDIA ART FAIR 2016

Ref No : 4389

JOGEN CHOWDHURY

(b. 1939)

mixed media on canvas

72 x 72 in

2007

signed top left & lower middle

Provenance

Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi

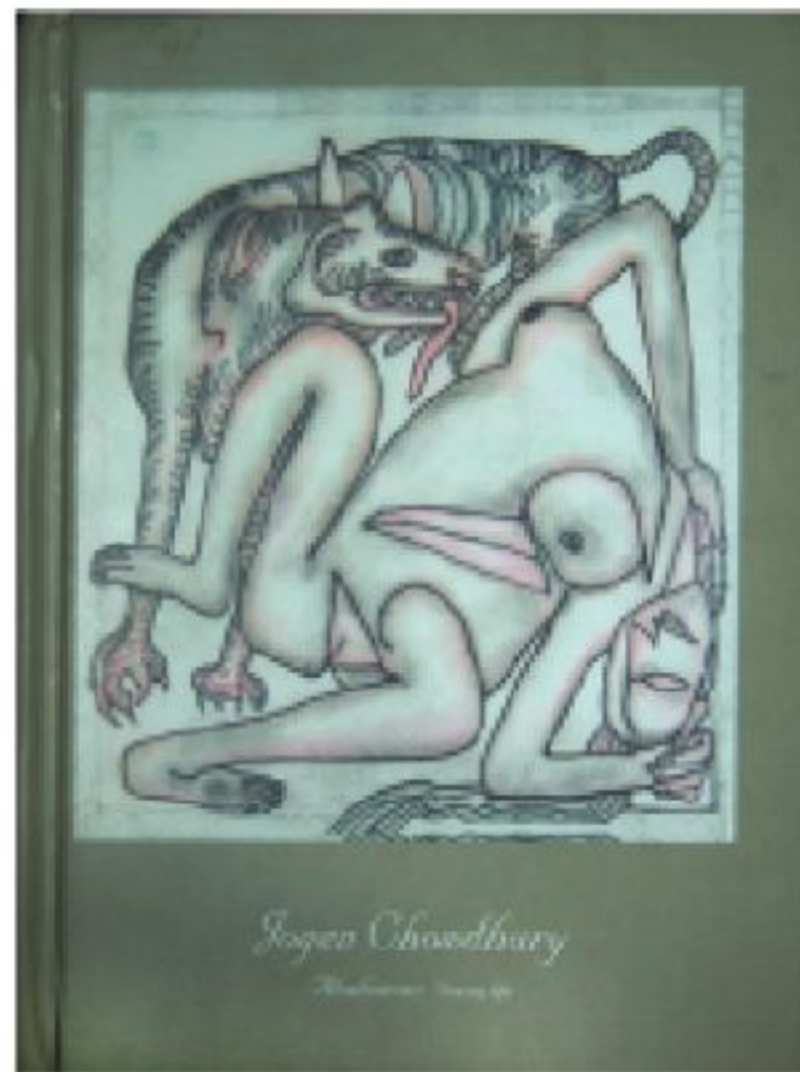
Saffronart, Mumbai

Private Collection, Kolkata

Published on the cover of Abohoman: Flowing Life Vadehra Art Gallery, 2007

The artwork image is also reproduced inside the book on Pg 131





Ref No : M1632
JOGEN CHOWDHURY
(b. 1939)

mixed media on canvas
72 x 108 in
2007
signed top right & lower right

Provenance
Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
Saffronart, Mumbai
Private Collection, Kolkata

Published in **Abohoman Flowing Life** by Vadehra Art Gallery. Pg 125



Ref No : C0661
MANU PAREKH
(b. 1939)

Banaras in Green
oil on canvas
24 x 48 in
2017
signed lower right

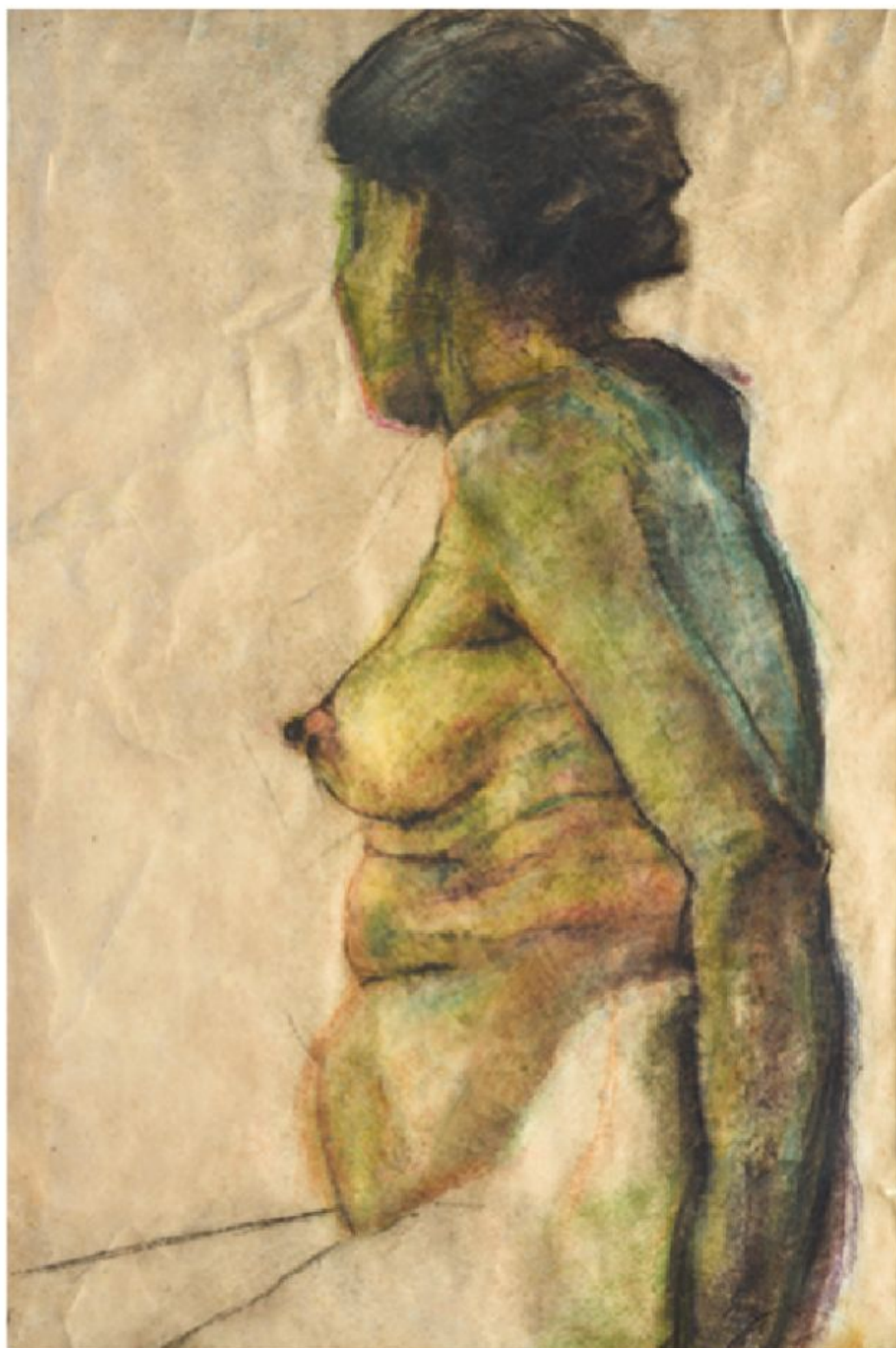
Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata



Ref No : M1565
JOGEN CHOWDHURY
(b. 1939)

Female Head
bronze
5 x 6.5 x 4 in

Provenance
Acquired directly from the artist



Ref No : 4457

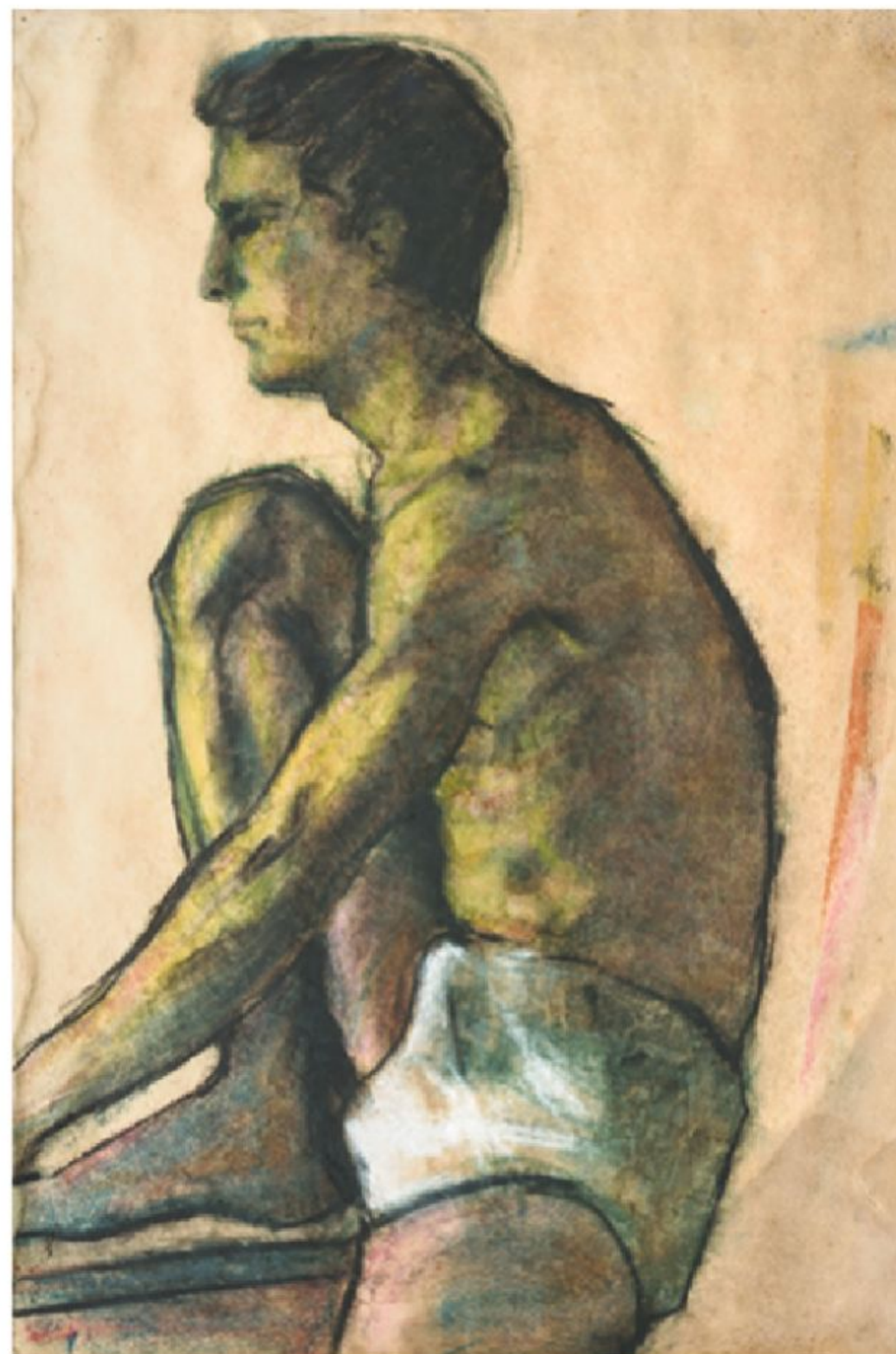
BIKASH BHATTACHARJEE
(1940-2006)

Body Language - XIV

pastel on paper
29 x 18.75 in
1960

Provenance

Acquired from the Artist's Family



Ref No : 4458

BIKASH BHATTACHARJEE
(1940-2006)

Body Language - XVI

pastel on paper
29 x 18.5 in
1960

Provenance

Acquired from the Artist's Family

Ref No : 5005
BIKASH BHATTACHARJEE
(1940-2006)

Salvationist
oil on canvas
65 x 78 in
1997
signed lower right

Provenance
Acquired from the Artist's Family

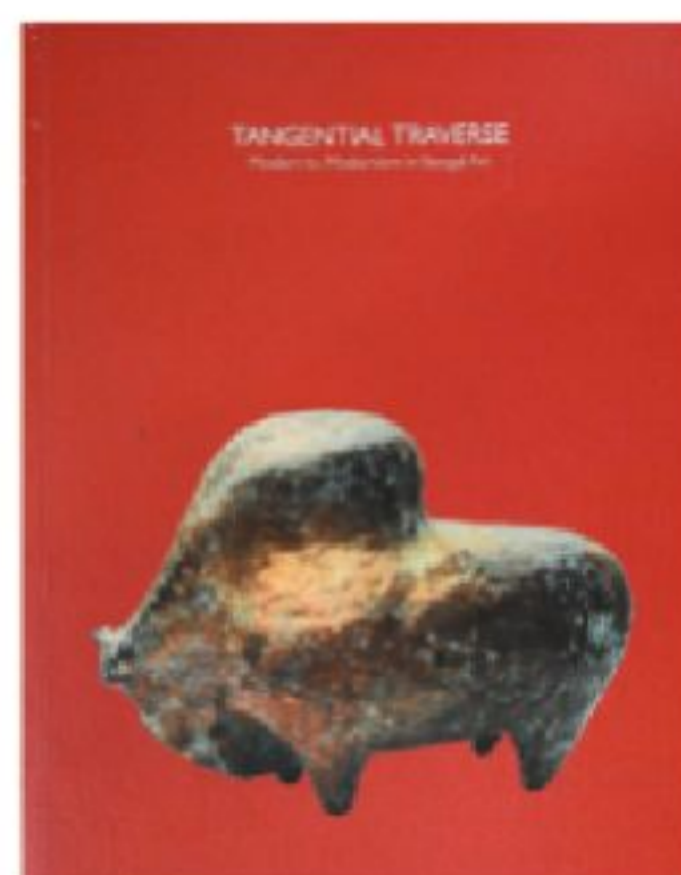


Ref No : M1635
K. LAXMA GOUD
(b. 1940)

acrylic on canvas
72 x 72 in
2016
signed lower left

Provenance
Acquired directly from the Artist





Published in the Book **Tangential Traverse**
(Modern to Modernism in Bengal Art) Pg 39



Ref No : 1502
BADHAN DAS
(1944-2002)

mixed media on canvas
46 x 30 in
1998

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata

Early Bengal

The Raj European era saw the emergence of some of the most exquisite artworks done by unknown artists of Bengal which are termed as the Early Bengal oils. These paintings mainly started emerging in present day's pre-colonial cities on the west bank of Hooghly like Shrirampur and Chinsurah. These paintings were mainly focused on religious and mythological subjects. The early Bengal oils are paintings which could be an epitome of the beautiful blend or amalgamation of Indian subjects and inspirations of miniatures with European oil technique and contemporary additions, which was a very unusual aspect to be found during that time in solely Indian paintings. They often depicted contemporary architectures, very familiar in the European art styles like Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders or columns and windows like Louvred shutters. We also find traces of the portrayal of contemporary attires in the paintings depicting religious aspects. The landscapes in the early Bengal oils were heavily inspired by the European style of depicting mountains with snow, trees etc. These paintings were applied with oil varnishes giving them a dark tone. Some artists were trained in government art school under Western art ideals, whereas some were untrained, and the latter at times received knowledge from the former. Sunlight is quite ephemeral in the Netherlands, because of its geographical location, thus making the surrounding to be always pretty dark. This darkness was adopted by the Dutch artists, which was conspicuous in their paintings. On the other hand, these particular artists were mentored in Italy during Renaissance, and thus from Italian beaches they adopted the beautiful sunlight which again was implemented in their paintings. The resulting painting was on the darker side yet there was one bright light which shone. This light was called 'Italianate light'. This Dutch painting character was applied in the Bengal oils as well, thus also naming it 'Dutch Bengal oils'.

Debdutta Gupta

This is a very beautiful indigenous artwork that we can relate to 'Madonna and Child'. It shows Yashoda carrying infant Krishna in her arms. Krishna and Yashoda maa has been adorned in beautiful pearl and silver ornaments, the reason being - pearl as the interpretation of ocean, sea, Vishnu and Lakshmi. A bright halo shines behind Krishna's head. The 'bhangi' or the posture seems to be quite dramatic and Yashoda's expression makes her emotion very lucid, showing the motherly feeling. Both Yashoda and Krishna have been shown wearing the Rasakali sign on the bridge of their noses depicting this to be a part of the bhakti movement. There is a beautiful amalgamation of the Western style with the Indian subject which brings out the extraordinary in the painting. The background of the artwork is pretty dark with hints of 'Italianate light' which has been derived from the Dutch style, doing justice to the name 'Dutch Bengal oil'.



Ref No : OB67
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

Yashoda and Krishna
oil on canvas
26 x 21 in

Provenance
Rai Bahadur Ganpat Singh who
lived in Murshidabad and Kolkata, West Bengal
Private Collection, Kolkata

A mythological story depicting goddess Kali with 8 hands, presumably who has come to warn. There are multiple stories of torture and imprisonment of the good by diabolical characters, where different powerful deities pay visit to warn the latter to stop them from making mistakes. One such story narrates about the evil King Kansa, where he was about to kill the eighth child of Vasudev and Devaki presuming that the child was Krishna - his slayer- when Goddess Yogmaya with eight hands appeared from the infant girl, threatening Kansa that his slayer was already born and nurturing in Gokul. In this particular artwork the goddess Kali is symbolised by the blue skin colour which is called Shyama and Shyam is another name of Krishna as well. This painting is also a part of the Bhakti movement.



Ref No : OB66
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

Maa Kali's visit to warn
oil on canvas
34 x 24 in

Provenance
Rai Bahadur Ganpat Singh who
lived in Murshidabad and Kolkata, West Bengal
Private Collection, Kolkata

Another painting as the part of Bhakti movement shows the birth of Krishna in the prison of Mathura right before Vasudev took him away for securing his life, to Gokul. Krishna is depicted here as a cupid. Lord Shiva and other Gods come together to greet him. The securities outside the prison are shown in deep slumber or in some trance, might be due to the power, or possibly Goddess Yogmaya dozed them off to sleep. The familiar Dutch attribute of lighting and darkness is pretty visible in this painting as well.



Ref No : OB61
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

Birth of Krishna
oil on canvas
34 x 24 in

Provenance
Rai Bahadur Ganpat Singh who
lived in Murshidabad and Kolkata, West Bengal
Private Collection, Kolkata

Another early Bengal oil where we get to see Goddess Durga (with a Halo) driving with her son Ganesha riding her vahana, the lion, followed by Nandi and Vringi, where assumably her father King Himawan comes forward to greet her followed by Queen Ma Menaka and other attendants. Here in the architecture we get to see pediments and Louvre windows familiar in the European architecture, and others like Doric columns and arches as well. The landscape is again very much inspired by the Western style along with the Dutch style of lighting and shadowing where Italianate light is visible.



Ref No : OB69
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

**Goddess Durga's arrival
to her paternal house**

oil on canvas
24 x 30 in

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata

Another composition shows Parvati sitting with her mother and is very sad. She is going back to her husband's abode from her paternal house. The main entrance gateway depicts an European arch where Shiva stands, greeted by two women probably waiting to take Parvati home. The house shown here is very inspired by the Mughal architecture and the landscape is done in the European style. The female standing around Parvati and her mother are all dressed in miniature styled attires. Just like other early Bengal oils this composition shares the Dutch darkness and the Italianate light.



Ref No : OB65
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

**Parvati's time to return to
her husband's abode**

oil on canvas
24 x 34.5 in

Provenance

Rai Bahadur Ganpat Singh who
lived in Murshidabad and Kolkata, West Bengal
Private Collection, Kolkata

A composition depicting Shri Chaitanya in Nabadwip is being offered food by his disciples surrounding him. This artwork shows architectures inspired by the Europeans along with aatchaala temples and huts, a masjid is shown far away in the extreme right hand side. The temples demonstrate Bengal Terracotta architectures and the masjid is interpreting the Sultanate period. A farming scene is also shown in the backdrop. This composition also demonstrates the transition of a village to a town. The familiar darkness is again visible here with certain application of light.

Ref No : OB60
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

**Shri Chaitanya being offered
food by his disciples**
oil on canvas
25 x 34 in

Provenance
Rai Bahadur Ganpat Singh who
lived in Murshidabad and Kolkata, West Bengal
Private Collection, Kolkata



This composition is probably the depiction of Ram and Sita's marriage, which is being held in a palace, with very contemporary looking palace's architecture, like the pillars and all. Again the people who are shown here presumably the guests, wear turbans and the head gears which appears like contemporary local king's attires, that used to be. The light here again makes the vignette effect where the Italianate light fades into the Dutch darkness.



Ref No : OB64
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

**Probably the marriage
of Ram and Sita**
oil on canvas
25 x 34 in

Provenance
Rai Bahadur Ganpat Singh who
lived in Murshidabad and Kolkata, West Bengal
Private Collection, Kolkata

This composition depicts the story of Jagai and Madhai - who used to attack people, and take away their belongings, - running after a man, possibly attacked him, when Shri Gouranga and Shri Nitai is to that man's rescue. Both of them, Shri Gouranga and Shri Nitai has been depicted with Halo behind their heads. The architecture again has European influences, and also huts have been depicted here, along with the landscape also being westernized. The light and shadows are the same as the others Dutch Bengal oils.

Ref No : OB63
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

**Shri Gouranga and Shri Nitai
rescuing a man**

oil on canvas
24.5 x 34 in

Provenance

Rai Bahadur Ganpat Singh who
lived in Murshidabad and Kolkata, West Bengal
Private Collection, Kolkata



This beautiful composition filled with cows, Krishna, Balaram and his friends carrying trees and plants on their head, claims that they are only the nature. This artwork holds up the beauty of the nature, and makes us realize that we should protect it, no matter what. This story belongs to the stories of Krishna leela. The architecture shown here is deeply influenced by the Rajput style, which is very decorative. The landscape is again pretty Westernized.



Ref No : OB59
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

**Krishna and his
friends as the nature**
oil on canvas
24.5 x 34 in

Provenance
Rai Bahadur Ganpat Singh who
lived in Murshidabad and Kolkata, West Bengal
Private Collection, Kolkata

On a Purnima, or a full moon night, multiple bhaktas come together to perform the nagar kirtan in front of Sultan Gazi's house. The artist meticulously debates each and every character engrossed in singing Nagar kirtan. This composition witnesses the beauty of Islamic architecture like the dome, the minarets, the arches and all. The westernized landscape, indigenous subject, Islamic architecture blend together to produce this beautiful composition.

Ref No : OB62
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

The Bhakti movement
oil on canvas
25 x 34 in

Provenance
Rai Bahadur Ganpat Singh who
lived in Murshidabad and Kolkata, West Bengal
Private Collection, Kolkata



On the extreme right of this composition is Jaban Haridas who joined the nagar kirtan, and along with Shri Chaitanya and Shri Nitai and The bhaktas, has travelled all along to Puri via Tarakeswar. Tarakeswar is depicted by the Tarkeshwar temple and Puri is depicted by the kings house behind the bhaktas, which has the Louvre windows. The pandits of Puri comes to welcome them, and the main pujari, is shown prostrating on the ground. The flags behind also has the Muslim flag, which heavily demonstrates unity. The landscape shown is influenced by the miniature style.



Ref No : OB68
ANONYMOUS
Early Bengal

Nagar kirtan
oil on canvas
15.5 x 19.5 in

Provenance
Private Collection, Kolkata



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Humayun Court | 20 Lindsay Street | Kolkata - 700087 (Behind Citi Mart)

Ph: 033 22497657 | 22490739 | 983041117

E-mail: konarkcollectables94@gmail.com

Web: www.konarkcollectables.com



Aakriti Art Gallery

12/3A, Hungerford street, Kolkata - 700 017

Phones : +91 33 22893027 | +91 33 22895041

Mobile : 9830411115 | 9830411116

Email : kolkata@aaakritiartgallery.com | Web : www.aakritiartgallery.com