

Human Face & Urban Space

Paintings and Drawings by
Bikash Bhattacharjee



Human Face & Urban Space

Paintings and Drawings by
Bikash Bhattacharjee

From Artists Family Collection

8th January-6th February 2016

www.aakritiartgallery.com

Sales:

Aman Bachhawat aman.chisel@gmail.com
+91 9874881111

Ravi Gupta kolkata@aakritiartgallery.com
+91 9163302044

Enquiry:

Sampurna Chakraborty relation@artnewsnviews.com
+91 33 22893027

Administration:

N. G. Rao admin@aakritiartgallery.com
+91 9830411115

Accounts:

Manoj Kumar Singh accounts@aakritiartgallery.com
+91 9830411119

Creative:

Sayan Paul webadmin@aakritiartgallery.com
+91 33 22895041

Published by: Priya & Vikram Bachhawat for
Aakriti Art Gallery Pvt. Ltd.

Mobile: +91 9163302044

Text: Mrinal Ghosh

Printed by: CDC Printers Pvt. Ltd.Kolkata

Price: ₹ 350.00

© Aakriti Art Gallery Pvt. Ltd. Kolkata, 2016

All rights reserved. No part of this publication can be reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying & recording or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

HUMAN FACE & URBAN SPACE

Paintings and Drawings of Bikash Bhattacharjee

'Bikash is a painter of our time, whose browns are burnt like in Rembrandt' – M.F. Husain, the celebrated artist of our country wrote this about Bikash Bhattacharjee (1940-2006) in the foreword of a book on him by Manasij Majumder on 29th November, 2006 just nineteen days before the premature demise of Bikash on 18th December, 2006. Rembrandt's browns had deep melancholic tune that had established him as the explorer or originator of gloom in European painting, a poet of affliction, as the famous Bengali poet and scholar Buddhadeb Basu commented in an article on Rembrandt in 1965. Bikash Bhattacharjee also expressed his reverence for Rembrandt. In an article written by him and published in Illustrated Weekly on 8th April 1990 he said that both Rembrandt and Vermeer had influenced him to a considerable extent. But Rembrandt (1606 – 69) and Vermeer (1632 – 75), the glorious artists of two succeeding generations of Dutch baroque painting were not similar in their expressions. While Rembrandt fantasized realism to enter deeper into the mystic void of existence, Vermeer celebrated existential reality, yet he was quiet, possessing the quality of high seriousness. Probably Bikash combined in him both the diverse attributes of high seriousness in expressing reality and rebelliousness to challenge the corruption in it.

These are two very important characteristics of the works of Bikash Bhattacharjee. He was a skilled naturalist, a portrait painter of perfection. But in his creative painting he mostly fantasized naturalism and carried it to the brink of surrealism, as Geeta Kapoor in the catalogue introduction of the exhibition 'Pictorial Space' held at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi in 1978 commented: 'since Bikash is interested in magic metamorphosis, his point of reference is the surrealists.' Metamorphosis is an apt epithet to indicate the formal characteristic of Bikash Bhattacharjee. He used it sometimes as humour, often as sarcasm, also to express his impervious pain as a reaction to the devastating reality. He lived in a temporal space, where human values decayed to an extent of tragic annihilation. He structured his art as a rebellion against this decomposition of values.

As an artist coming to limelight during 1960-s Bikash confronted two streams of dominant expressive forms. One was academic naturalism and the other the traditionalism of neo-Indian school. The artists of 1940-s tended to reject both of the trends. They had to distort the natural form to enter into the void of reality. They looked towards European modernist modes. Modernism in India was started with the paintings of Rabindranath and preceded through the works of Ramkinkar, Husain, Souza, Satish Gujral, Paritosh Sen and others. Though naturalism was at the core of some of the artists like Ramkinkar, Gujral and Sen, but every body distorted and metamorphosed it through assimilation with primitivism, folk and Western modernist modes. Resistance against the revivalism of neo-Indian school was the basic trend of the artists of the forties.

But during 1960-s the trend altered. Many of the artists could realize the significance and glory of the forms generated by Abanindranath, Nandalal Basu and Binodbehari Mukherjee and could comprehend that to build up an indigenous identity the essence of the traditional attributes of neo-Indian school might be helpful. Artists like Ganesh Pyne, Ganesh Haloi,

Sanat Kar, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Dipak Banerjee showed their reverence in some form or other towards the forms of neo-Indian school. Even while expressing their anguish against dilapidated reality they structured their form on the traditional ground and transformed the same through assimilation of western modernism. Bikash Bhattacharjee was different. He never showed any sympathy for the neo-Indian school. He was proud that he was adequately trained in academic naturalism. He had, however, great regards for Abanindranath, Gaganendranath and Nandalal. That was due to their greatness of individual talent and genius. He occasionally expressed his awe and wonder for some of the paintings of 'Arabian Nights' by Abanindranath and his landscape like 'Shajadpurer Ghat'. About Nandalal he said in an interview with this scribe that a man of such great stature was never born among our artists, who worked and dedicated his life for a great ideal. Yet nationalist form never attracted him. Only in some of the paintings based on the illustration of 'Dekhi Nai Phire', a novel on Ramkinkar by Samresh Basu and the water colour series of 1987 titled 'Environ' there was some indirect traces of tradition oriented form. Apart from this the metamorphosed naturalism was the dominant trend of his form through out his life.

Bikash Bhattacharjee was basically conservative and traditionalist in his attitude towards life. 'I am essentially an orthodox person', he unhesitatingly said in the article in Illustrated Weekly mentioned earlier. He was a theist. He had faith on the omnipotent power that guides the universe. He once said in the above mentioned interview with this scribe 'If Saraswati (the Goddess of learning) disappears from me, I feel very helpless'. Besides this orthodoxy, faith and traditional attitude there developed an opposite trend in his attitude to life since his childhood due to poverty and a sense of insecurity he had due to death of his father, when he was a child of only six. This dichotomy gave rise to a feeling of defiance and rebelliousness in him that was reflected both in form and content of his art.

He passed out of Indian Art College in 1963 and joined the group 'Society of Contemporary Artists' in 1964. The 'Society' was an important platform that propagated a new movement of modernism in post-sixties Indian art. Bikash was one of the pioneers of that movement. While in art college, he got Arun Basu as his teacher who taught him as a friend. Arun Basu was trained in the studio of Dilip Dasgupta, who used to guide his students to make sketches in French Impressionist technique avoiding the British naturalist way. Bikash was also guided to adopt that trend by his mentor. An assimilation of impressionist simplification on the firm base of naturalism opened a new way for Bikash. His sketches of gradual shattering down of the Senate Hall of Calcutta University in 1959 show the marks of this assimilation.

Since childhood he lived most part of his life in North Calcutta. The slow pace of life, the orthodox values, the traditional setting of religiousness of the people, different festivals, like Durgapuja and others induced in him a love for the life that was reflected in his art. From that environment he earned the essentials of values of nineteenth century. He had seen the great personalities like Haritkrishna Deb, Satyendranath Bose and others. A strong base of cultural idealism had strengthened his emotions and feelings. He has been inspired by the leftist ideals that had developed into a rebellious consciousness.

Coming out of college, he started painting through distortion of natural forms. Between 1965 and 1967 his forms developed towards abstraction. From 1967 to 1969 he worked on collage utilizing process of montage that he learnt out of his experience of viewing cinema

by international artists like Fellini, Antonioni, Kurosawa, Godard and others, who inspired him very much towards his creations. His first solo was held in 1965 at Artistry House Gallery of Calcutta. In this exhibition his paintings were on the subject of cityscapes through distorted forms, often proceeding towards abstraction. After that his forms and ideas gradually transformed. Realism was fantasized. One of the best examples of such transformation was the 'Death of Antique' of 1968 exhibited in Delhi triennial show. Through this painting in oil Bikash came to limelight.

He did not have to look back. 'And Three Hands' a collage of 1968, the oil 'Golden Masked Family' of the same year, 'Count' and 'Countess' of 1969 are few of the examples he developed through his identity as a painter and finally between 1969 and 1972, when Naxalite movement was tormenting the city he arrived at 'Doll Series' of paintings that unmasked the tragic void of existence. The 'Durga' series of 1990 showed another aspect of treatment with feminine reality. He thus moved from one peak to another of existential dilemma through reality fantasy and surrealism.

The paintings that are being mounted in the present show of Aakriti Art Gallery are his early works done mostly in early 1960-s in pastel, pencil and water colour. These are studies of human face, body, female nudes and cityscapes. Through strong and stubborn linearity, intricate shades, confident structural assemblage of various geometrical form-units he built up the images that combined the extrinsic reality with intrinsic feelings to vividly portray a person or environ. This duality of inside and out side, one asserting and determining the other has always been the key of his artistic ventures. Here we find a few initial studies through which he rose to the peak of his perfection. In nature-studies and life-studies the artist tries to come to term with impressionistic simplification as a process of transforming the natural. 'Cityscape' in water colour is an ideal example. Here urban space transcends into a rural beauty. A pencil and conte drawing titled 'Urban Space for Human' is a superb example of linear sobriety and intrinsic wisdom to create melodious space around the scattered contemplative life. Another water colour study of the same title is also significant for creation of misty silent space around congregation of rural people. Here also the artist brings out intrinsic silence within extrinsic urbanity. Through all these studies during the early stage of his career Bikash tried to come to term with simplification of the intricate reality, also to find the contemplative inwardness within the complex urbanity.

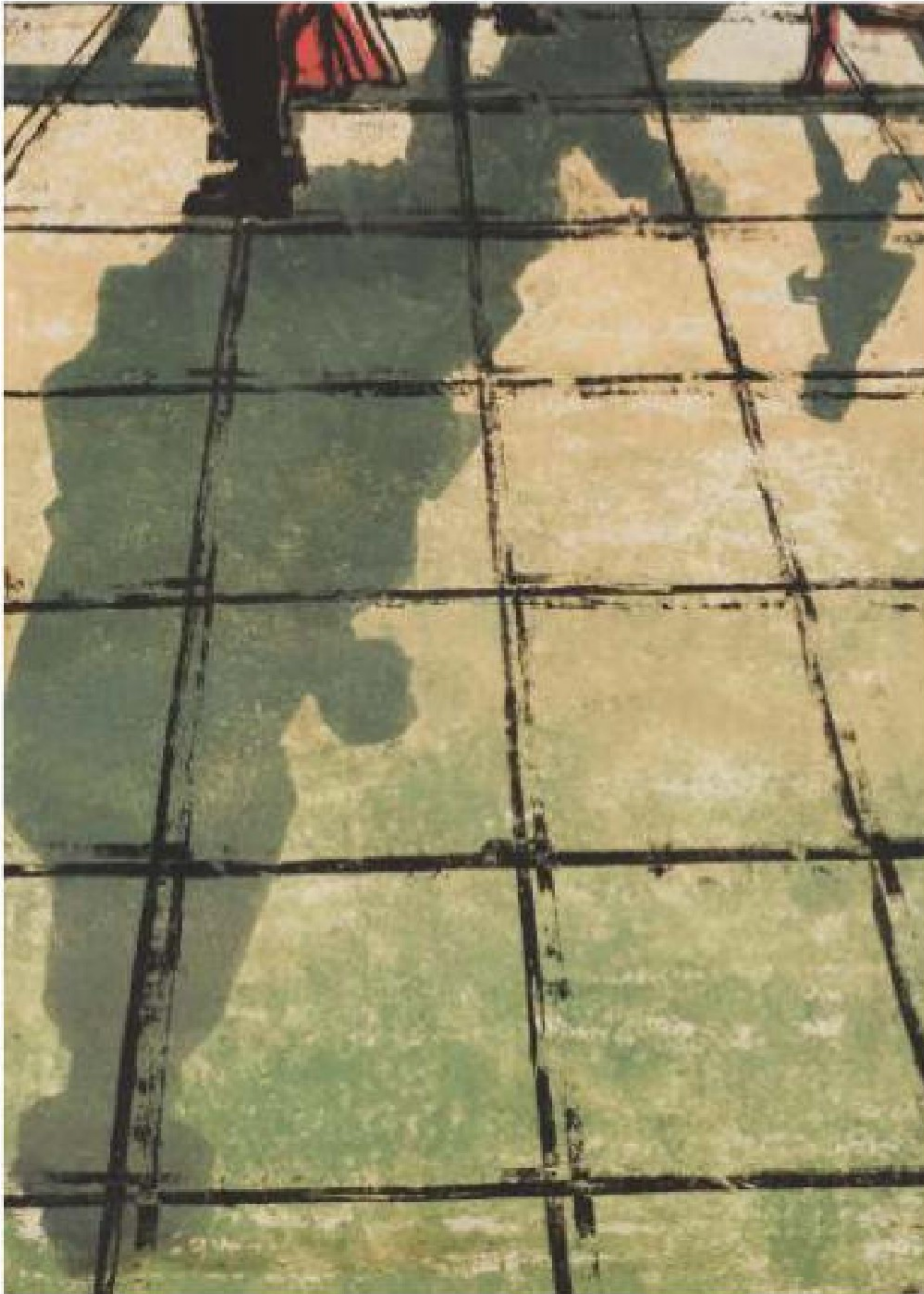
Mrinal Ghosh



Ref. No. 4410
Watercolour on Paper
21" x 14"

Ref. No. 4446
Urban Space for Human-I
Pencil and Conte on Paper
14.25" x 20.25"





Ref. No. 4447
Urban Space for Human-II
*Monoprint off Collagraph
on Paper*
19.75" x 13.25"

Ref. No. 4448
Urban Space for Human-III
Watercolour on Paper
12.75" x 15.75"



Ref. No. 4450
Watercolour on Paper
14.25" x 21.25"



Ref. No. 4451
Watercolour on Paper
14.25" x 21.25"



Ref. No. 4449
Watercolour on Paper
17.75" x 22.5"



Ref. No. 4452
Vanasthali-I (B. Shankar)
Pencil on Paper
20.5" x 13.75"
1969





Ref. No. 4453
Vanasthali-II (P.N Choyal)
Pencil on Paper
20.5" x 13.75"
1969

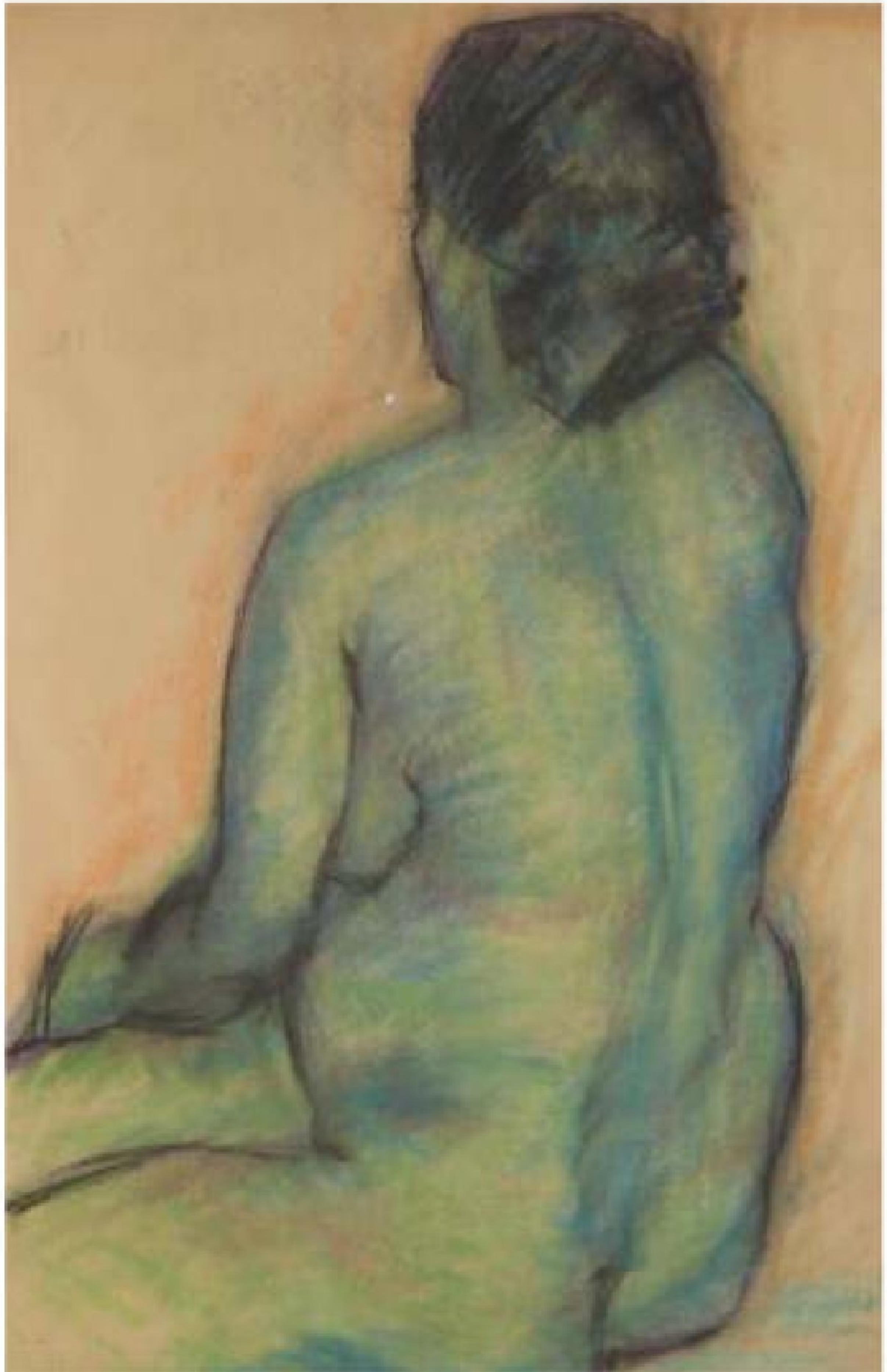
Ref. No. 4443
Body Language II
Pastel on Paper
28.25" x 18.5"





Ref. No. 4444
Body Language VII
Crayon on Paper
35" x 21.25"
1997

Ref. No. 4445
Body Language IX
Pastel on Paper
31" x 19.75"





Ref. No. 4455
Body Language XII
Pastel on Paper
21.5" x 14.5"
0000
₹ 12,00,000

Ref. No. 4454
Body Language XI
Pastel on Paper
29.25" x 18.5"



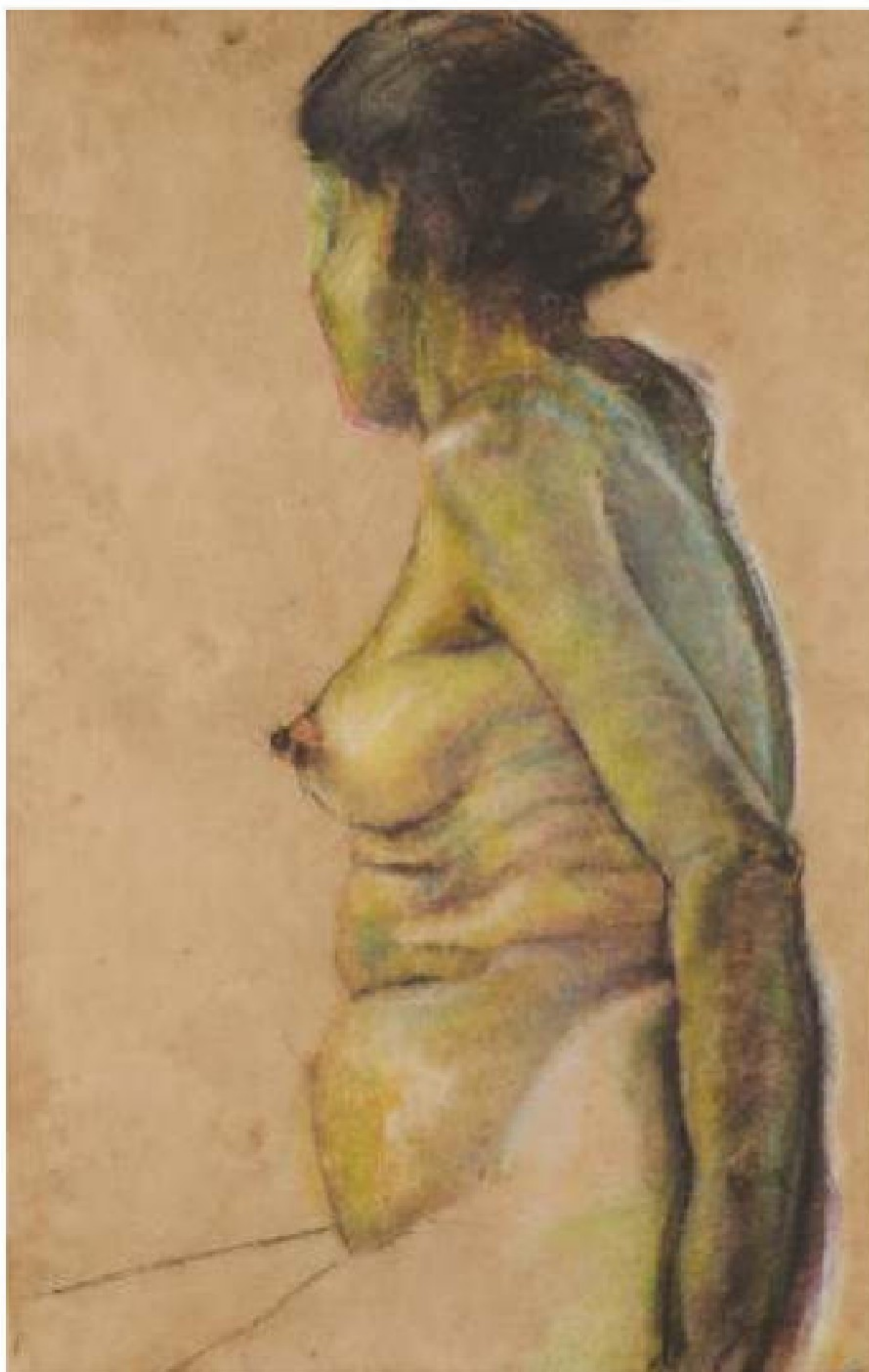
Ref. No. 4455
Body Language XII
Pastel on Paper (Double Sided)
21.5" x 14.5"

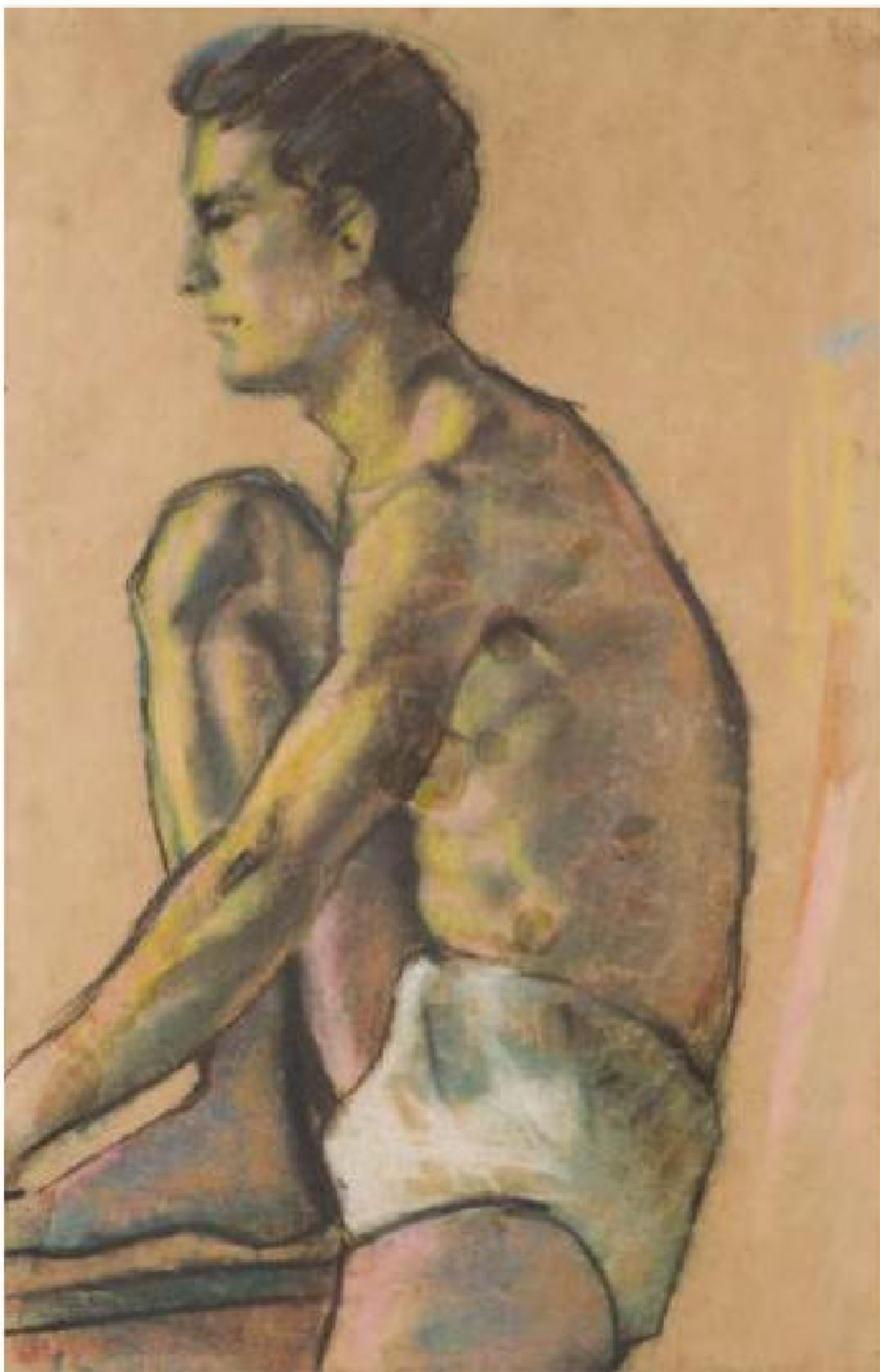




Ref. No. 4456
Body Language XIII
Pastel on Paper
29.5" x 19.5"

Ref. No. 4457
Body Language XIV
Pastel on Paper
29" x 18.75"





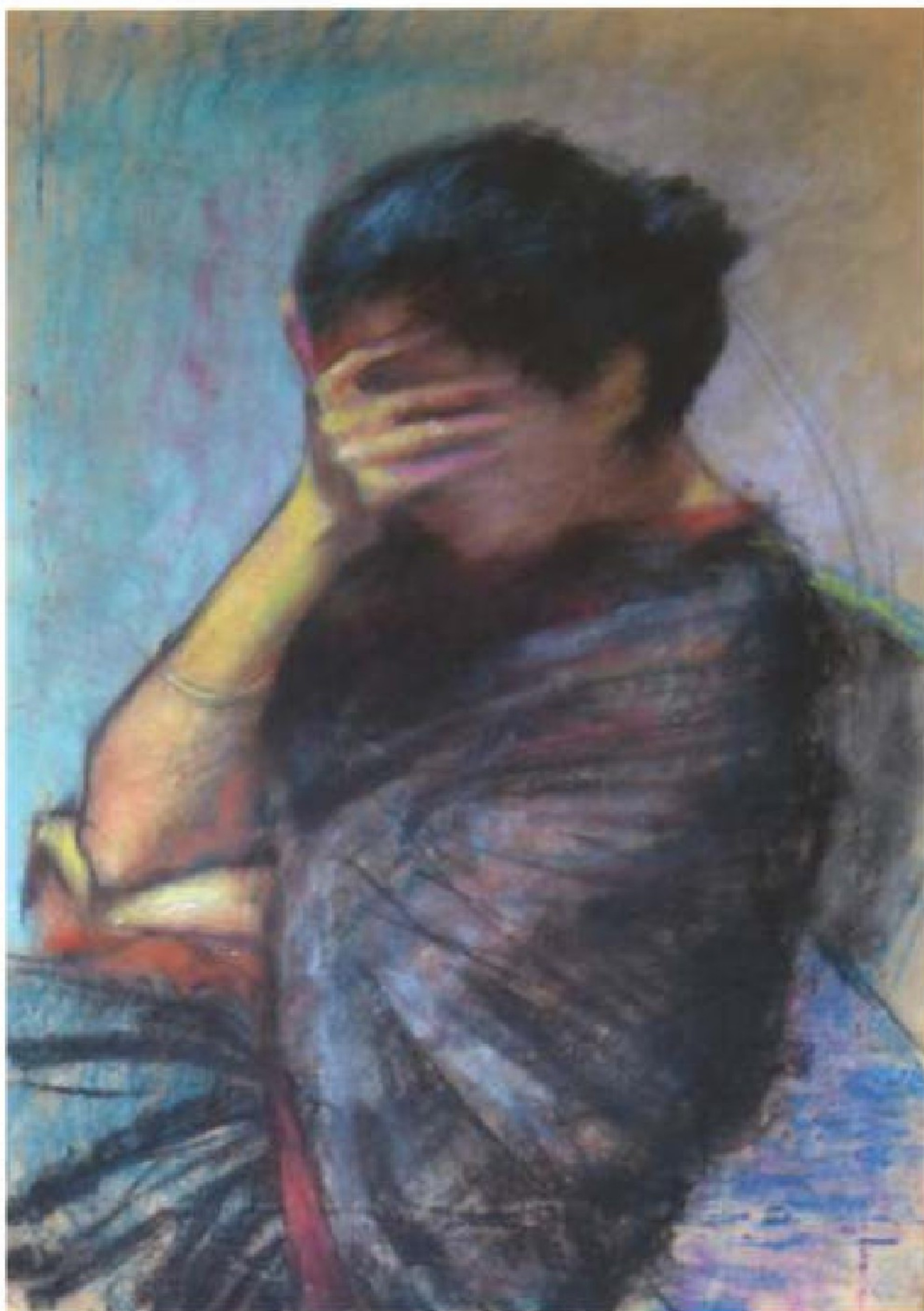
Ref. No. 4458
Body Language XVI
Pastel on Paper
29" x 18.5"

Ref. No. 4459
Body Language XIX
Pastel on Paper
29.25" x 19.25"





Ref. No. 4460
Body Language XXII
Pastel on Paper
34" x 21.25"



Ref. No. 4490
Pastel on Paper
33" x 21"



Ref. No. AD 1028
Pastel on Paper
34" x 22"
1960



Ref. No. AD 1029
Pastel on Paper
30" x 20"



Ref. No. AD 1030
Pastel on Paper
29" x 18.5"

28th-31st January 2016
Visit us at
Aakriti Art Gallery
Stall No E11

Ramkumar
Laluprasad Shaw
Jogen Chowdhury
Partha Pratim Deb
Asim Basu
Aditya Basak
Chandra Bhattacharjee
Akhil Chandra Das
Tapas Biswas

INDIA
art FAIR

NSIC Exhibition Grounds New Delhi

RAMKUMAR

Lines and Colours



Pastel, Charcoal & Ink on Paper | 8" x 6.5"

30th January–28th February 2016

Aakriti Art Gallery Pvt. Ltd.

F-213/A, Old M .B Road, Lado Sarai
New Delhi-110030 | India

Phone: +91 11 46130500 | Mobile: +91 99719 61972

E-mail: delhi@aakritiartgallery.com

Web: www.aakritiartgallery.com

Aakriti Art Gallery

(A Unit of Chisel Crafts Pvt. Ltd.)

1st Floor, Orbit Enclave | 12/3A Hungerford Street
Kolkata 700017 | India

Phone: +91 33 22893027, 22895041 | Mobile: +91 9163302044

E-mail: kolkata@aakritiartgallery.com | Web: www.aakritiartgallery.com