CONTEMPORARY INDIAN ARTISTS SERIES

Lines from an Artistic Life

The Drawings of Adimoolam



KRISHEN KHANNA | ADITI DE | JEHANGIR SABAVALA

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Lines from an Artistic Life explores the drawings of eminent Indian artist KM Adimoolam, well-known in India and internationally for his meticulous pen-and-ink drawings on subjects ranging from realistic portraits of Mahatma Gandhi to idealized portrayals of Indian kings and warriors, and semi-abstract depictions of Hindu gods informed by Cubism.

Born in 1938 in Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu, KM Adimoolam's natural aptitude for drawing at an early age made him move to Chennai in 1959. There, under the influence of the sculptor Dhanapal, he enrolled in the School of Arts and Crafts. After completing his Diploma in Advanced Painting in 1966, Adimoolam started a series of black-and-white portraits of Mahatma Gandhi. Sketching from photographs of the great man, he finished nearly 100 drawings that covered over 60 years of the Mahatma's life.

At about this time, Adimoolam came into contact with Tamil writers and began an association with them, illustrating their works, after which he took up oil painting. Colour came into his life, causing him to move from the figurative to the abstract.

Adimoolam now works with equal ease at drawing and painting, combining the two to produce a large body of work. The recipient of many honours and awards, his works are held in numerous public and private collections in India and abroad. This book will appeal to all those with an interest in drawing, contemporary art and Indian culture.

With 260 line drawings

Front jacket: **Radha with Samaram**, pen and ink on paper, 15 x 22", 1986

Back jacket: **Behind the Curtain,** charcoal on canvas board, 16 x 24", 2005



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Mapin Publishing | Lund Humphries

Foreword

KM Adimoolam's studio and residence is a small house set on a plot of land in Injabakkam, adjoining the Cholamandalam artists' village in Chennai. Looking out of the studio makes you feel as if you were in a dense rainforest. It is a place that symbolizes one of Adimoolam's main artistic concerns—the indivisibility of nature and people. One of the most important artists to emerge out of southern India, his simplicity is remarkable. He believes in traditional moral values and it is comforting to visit his home and family.

Adimoolam says, "My drawings and paintings help express my feelings. My drawings are not the exact copy of what I have seen through my eyes; but I feel they are the impressions of beauty, which seem to constantly get imprinted on my inner vision and emerge as black and white forms on paper." These "black and white forms"—intriguing, inimitable drawings of Mahatma Gandhi, kings, warriors, street theatre actors, holy men, still lifes—have



gained worldwide acclaim. Resolute, graceful lines are the quintessence of these drawings, minimal art that speaks volumes and has the power to take you in and make you a part of Adimoolam's inner energy and vision.

Over the years, we have acquired a selection of some of Adimoolam's finest works in our collection. This book is not merely a documentation of his work but a tribute to his genius as an artist and his integrity as an individual.

Tanuj Berry & Saman Malik
September 2007

A reflection on Adimoolam's drawings

I cannot remember a time when there was such a flood of paint attended by expensive looking catalogues and books each seeking to proclaim its protagonist as "great". The ludicrous implication is that we are surrounded by Greatness and there is no place for anything which is not! There is also much talk & mention of struggle, soul etc. There is no discussion, or hardly any, of the way in which a work came about. There is no mention of the journey of the idea to its formulation in paint. It's almost as if they all want to raid a common larder of cliches. to make a killing with their blunt weapons.

This is the background against which an old timer like Adimoolam is pitched. Like most Indian ~~or~~ modern artists, he was susceptible to modern European influences. How could he not given the pervading influence of the Raj coupled with a desire to move forward and not to dally with forms which had lost their meaning. The only avenue available for any kind of authentic work was to turn towards himself in the belief that by thus occupying himself he would touch the true centre of his creativity. He turned to the humble quill & a pot of ink for such an adventure. He, like some others in Madras, had been trained to be professionals. There was no room for art as a hobby. He ~~to~~ had been subjected to a rigourous training of the academic kind.



A Character (in street theatre), charcoal on paper, 21.5 x 18", 2006

In his drawings, there are no flippant gestures, no unfinished passages which might have carried innuendos. There are no suggestive passages, no probabilities. He states all that he intended to state. The drawings are complete within themselves and are at once the strength and shortcoming of his art. Whatever else may be said about them, there can be no doubt about their intentions and certainly there is not the slightest hint of any pretention. They remain a testament to his integrity.

Krishen Khanna

A Life in a Line

The Drawings of KM Adimoolam

Aditi De

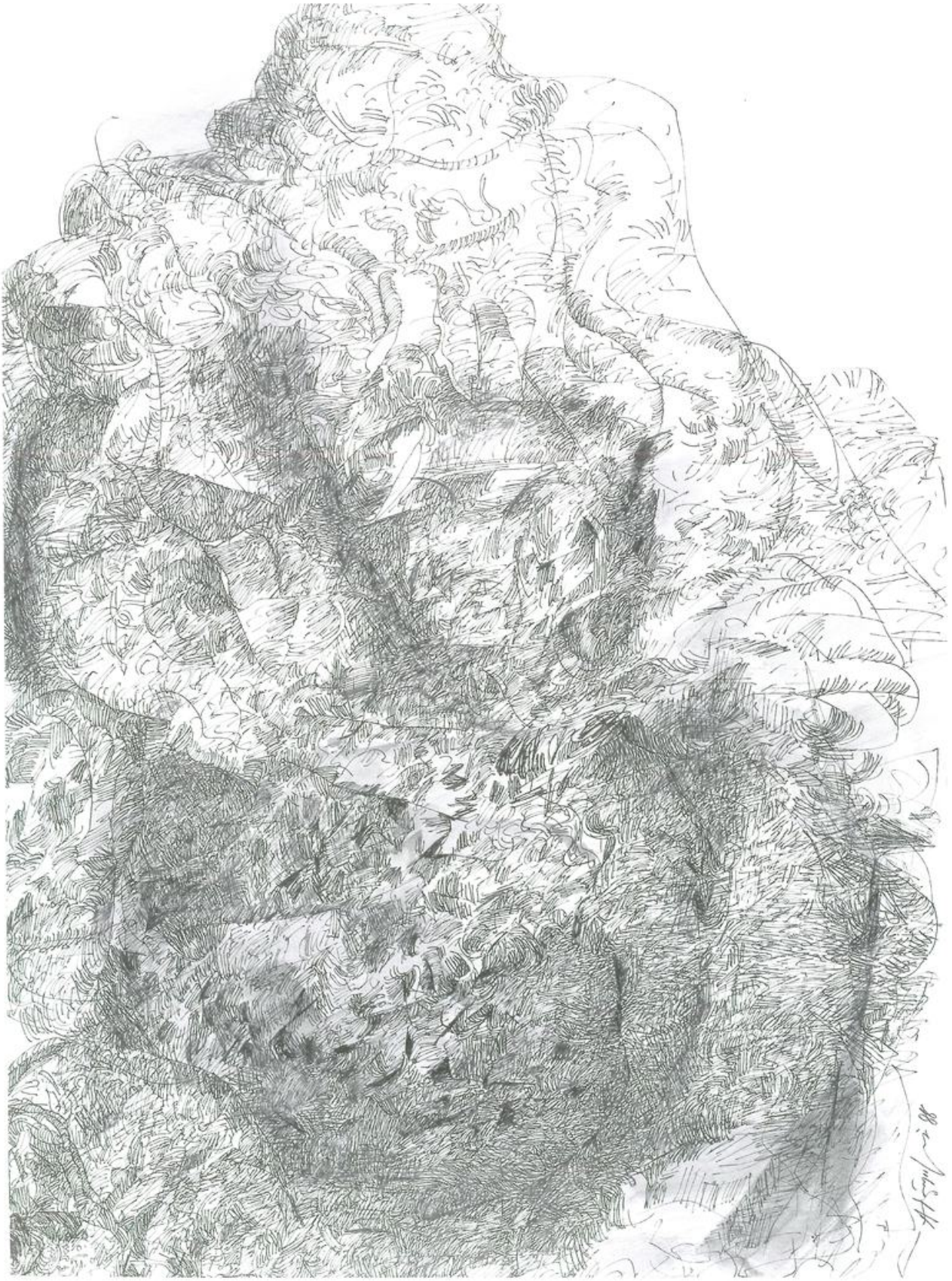
A line, like a lyric, is the purest form of expression. It allows for no camouflage or cant, even less for casual interventions. Its spare essence brooks no artistic journeying away from its bare truth.

What special qualities does the line have for artistic expression? The line follows where the eye leads, interpreting through the fluidity of the hand, the evolved aesthetic sensibility, and accessed traditions, formerly localized, but with global resonance today. The life of the line is inextricably melded with movement. For, as we trace its trajectory, we imbue it with motion.

Artists down the centuries have recognized and respected these truths about the line – whether they were the cave-dwellers of Altamira, around 9000 BCE, or Picasso with his breakaway ideation; whether they were the brilliant muralists of Ajanta, from the 1st century BCE, the artist who cast the Tiruvengadu Nataraja of the 10th century, or even KK Hebbar, celebrated for his "singing line".

While artists in the West have referred back to the line through the architecture of Stonehenge or the Parthenon, the Sistine Chapel, Antonio Palladio or Frank Lloyd Wright, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, Paul Klee and Joan Miro, the eastern eye would take a different route to a contemporary perspective. A route convoluted by history, movements and ideologies. Or even by the everyday impact of a palm-leaf manuscript inherited within a family. Or by a *pattachitra,* painted scroll, prized for its time-tested drawings. Or by the *suf* embroidery of the Kachchh nomads. Or perhaps by the inspiration of the freehand *kolam, rangoli, alpana,* floor designs at the doorstep, on a sun-drenched morning.

To the Indian glance, the line is construed as much through our inherited memories as through historic constructs. Such as the curvilinear approximations at the Sun Temple at Konark. Or the carved stones that dance before the viewer at Chidambaram. Or the awe-inspiring grandeur of ruined Hampi. Or the magnificent *sthapatis,* traditional sculptors who created *Arjuna's Penance* at Mahabalipuram. Or the mythic recreations of the Madhubani *kobar ghar* or nuptial chamber. Or the narrative fluency of the Nathdwara *phad,* painted



Ganesha, ink on paper, 22 x 30", 1988

scroll. Or the lyricism of the Lepakshi murals. Or the ebb and flow of the Indian miniature traditions. Or the muted certitude of *kalamkari,* paintings on fabric with natural dyes, from Andhra Pradesh. Or the impeccable bonding of the weft and warp that create the prized double-ikat silk Patola sari from Patan. Or the liberating, inward-looking lyricism of Abanindranath Tagore and the Bengal School, with its flattened perspective, precursor of the contemporary Indian idiom. Or even the crossover between the folk and the traditional in painting, dance, music and literature that empathizes with individuation.

Inevitably, every student of Indian art would be touched by such influences. As Keerambur Muthukrishna Reddy Adimoolam undoubtedly was, while at the Madras Government College of Arts and Crafts, between 1960 and 1966.

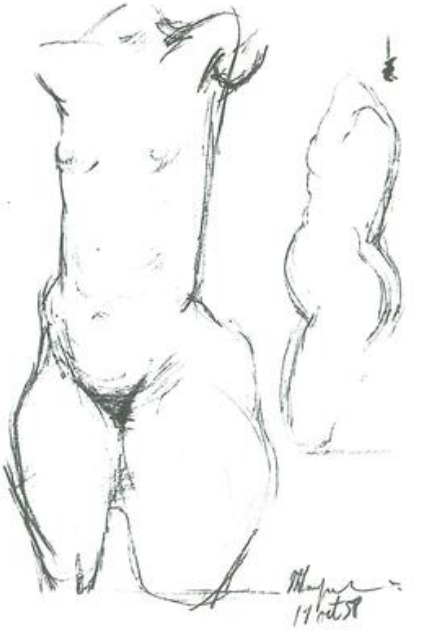
Memories of Keerambur

When Adimoolam first encountered the big city, he carried within him a trove of his village past — its pulsing agricultural community. Within its lode lay memories of a Krishna Temple at Keerambur, in Tamil Nadu's Tiruchirapalli district — a temple that came alive with festive bustle at Gokulastami and Ramanavami, as devotees begged the deity for cures in return for terracotta figures as votive offerings. These almost human figures were imprinted in Adimoolam's mind for life. So were the images of a woodcarver who would create *vahana*s, mounts for a procession of idols. And the full-blooded local theatrical performances that pulsed through his interior landscapes for decades after.

Left: S Dhanapal, **Dancers**,
ink with brush, 14.7 x 10.4", 1951
Courtesy: Ravi Dhanapal

Right: S Dhanapal, **Torsos**,
charcoal study, 10.7 x 16.2", 1958
Courtesy: Ravi Dhanapal









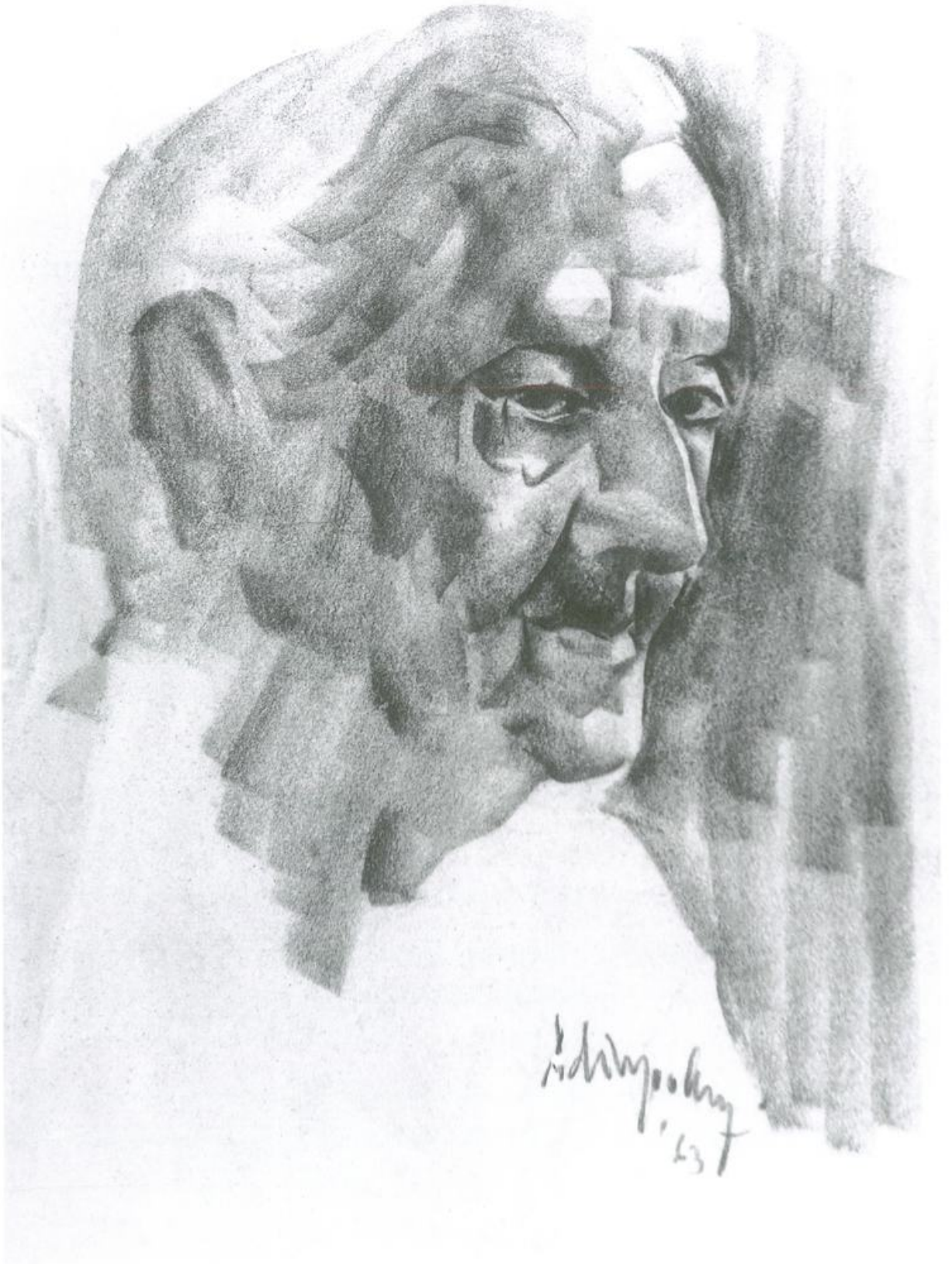
Left: **Portrait of an Aged Woman I**, black ink and wash, 16.9 x 24", 1965

Right: **Portrait of an Aged Woman II**, black ink and wash, 16.2 x 22.7", 1965

Looking back at this idyllic past, Adimoolam recalls, "I started drawing around the age of eight or nine. I was a very bright child in school. My parents, though they were not educated, could appreciate my drawing and painting. In my village, I got a lot of encouragement. I feel my childhood was a very sweet time. After my SSLC exam, I came to Madras (now Chennai). I didn't know art colleges existed. I wanted to get a job as an illustrator or something similar. Then, I was introduced to S Dhanapal, who persuaded me to join an art school."

That chance encounter with the celebrated sculptor Dhanapal, often viewed as the inheritor of the mantle of Pallava and Chola draughtsmanship, surges through Adimoolam's potent line into his drawings. Drawings that remain extremely individualistic, even in the throes of evolution, characterized by the artist's identity.

To the youthful Adimoolam, Dhanapal's mentorship ushered him into a space of wonders. A space where the senior artist demonstrated how the fluid lines of figures and costumes from Lepakshi could be replicated through confident drawing, with no reference to erasure. Or how the power play of Picasso's artistic self-confidence could brush into the drawings of an Indian acolyte, continents away.



"When I was 19 or 20, Dhanapal gave me a book of Picasso's works. I was shocked to see the grotesque, distorted lines he used. I was trying to make my work more realistic. I later realized what a great thing Dhanapal had done for me. He taught me there were other ways to see," stresses Adimoolam in a 2006 interview. "I learnt that if Picasso was like a strong, wild river, Paul Klee was a steady stream."

Opposite page:
An Aged Anglo-Indian Woman,
crayon study, 17 x 23.1", 1963

What did he see? Initially Dhanapal-impacted, he brought a sculpturesque quality to his student drawings, be they the crayon-shaded 1963 portrait of an Anglo-Indian woman, or the cubist feel to the 1965 black ink and wash study of an aged woman, resonating with vibrations from Picasso's portrait of Dora Maar.

Adimoolam's drawing of his alma mater is just as characteristic. Strongly angled, almost like an illustration for a fairytale, this 1965 work challenges realistic renditions. The art college building seems anchored in the imagination, large creepers burgeoning over its sides like a tropical forest, its gabled windows leaning towards each other, as if seeking out creative spaces.

In search of a Madras metaphor

Within this college – the earliest established in India by the British to encourage draughtsmen – was Adimoolam daunted by the presence of a principal like KCS Paniker, or his predecessor, the powerful sculptor DP Roy Chowdhury? Perhaps not. For, unlike composite notions of the Santiniketan or Baroda Schools, there is no distinct Madras metaphor that unites philosopher-painter Paniker's students who coexisted at that time, despite recent art historians' attempts to find a common rubric. Just as Viswanadhan explores the elements through film and casein on canvas, and SG Vasudev delves into *Maithuna* or the *Tree of Life,* their contemporary Adimoolam finds his own voice with confidence.

Artist at Classroom Study,
photograph, 15.4 x 20.5", 1966



But observers do note an overall leaning towards linear rather than painterly trends. This is evident in the oeuvre of L Munuswamy, with its surging line, barely tempered by wash, M Reddeppa Naidu's fine-line deities, and even in the primarily frontal sculptures of PV Janakiram.

Through this linear passage, Adimoolam – a soft-hearted and dreamy individual – chose to almost shy away from colour for the first 15 years of his life in art. He confesses, "As a student I was tempted to stay with line, with only black-and-white drawings. In 1975, I slowly moved to abstract drawings,

Opposite page:
Seated Old Woman, black ink on white blotting paper, 17 x 22.7", 1963

then abstract paintings. I wasn't even bold enough to use colour. I always felt that the line without colour is very strong."

A singular home-truth seethes through that statement. An avowal of the range of colours that are embedded within the line, the wash, the sketch-like shading, the cross-hatching that come alive in the inner eye, in the mind of the attuned viewer. Adimoolam's stance was a double statement of courage. A refusal to take refuge behind swathes of colour camouflage. Or to deny the pristine freedom that the line promises to an artist bold enough to succumb to its lure.

Where's the evidence of this? Perhaps in a 1966 photograph of Adimoolam as an art student, sketching a male nude at college. The muscular appeal of his subject, his loose-limbed brio, leaps at the viewer through controlled lines, sweeping, intense, energized with confidence. The master was in the making, even at that early stage.

Left: **Female Nude I**, pen and black ink, 18 x 24", 1965

Right: Study for **Woman Nude II**, pen and black ink, 16.5 x 22", 1965

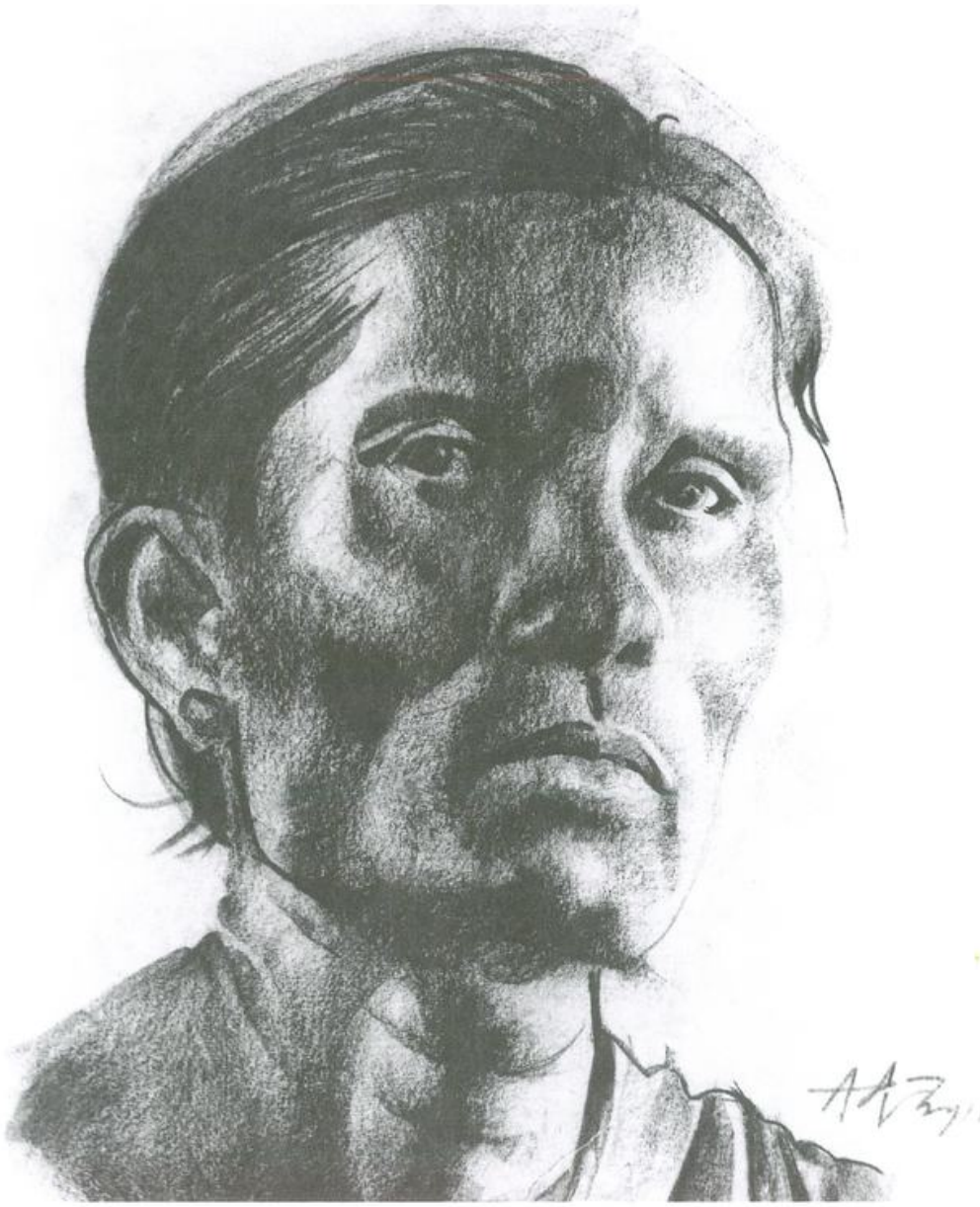






Other hints of the future Adimoolam emerge from a maze of early drawings. From the light and shade, the contoured warmth of a woman's face, sketched realistically as early as 1962. From the dot-like lines of a seated woman in 1963, drawing its direct descent from a sketch by his college teacher, AP Santhanaraj. From a loose-fleshed nude from 1965, stylized by impressions of Picasso's raw energy, the elongated grace of a Modigliani. And a more sinuous, voluptuous nude that refers back to Henry Moore, even at first glance. Subtler resonances reveal the impact of Klee or Raoul Dufy, Munuswamy or Reddeppa Naidu.

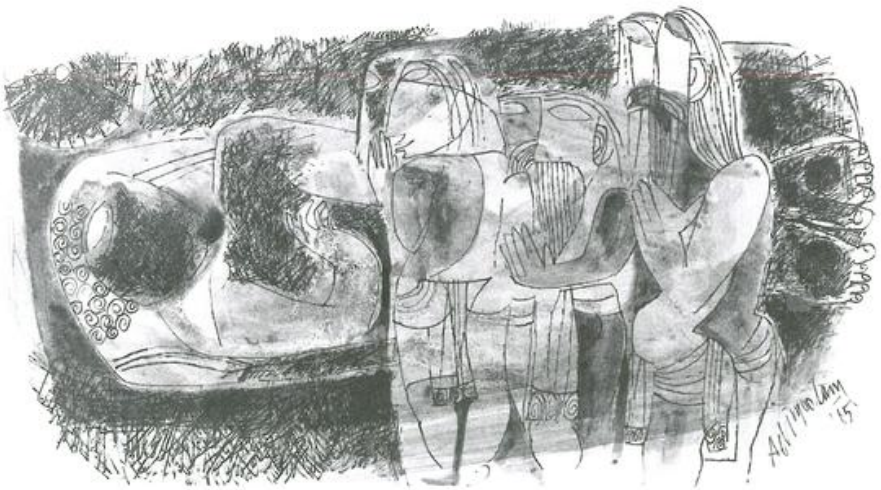
Within this burgeoning feeling for the individual line as a student lie some surprise elements. Such as a mythical beast, baring its huge molars,

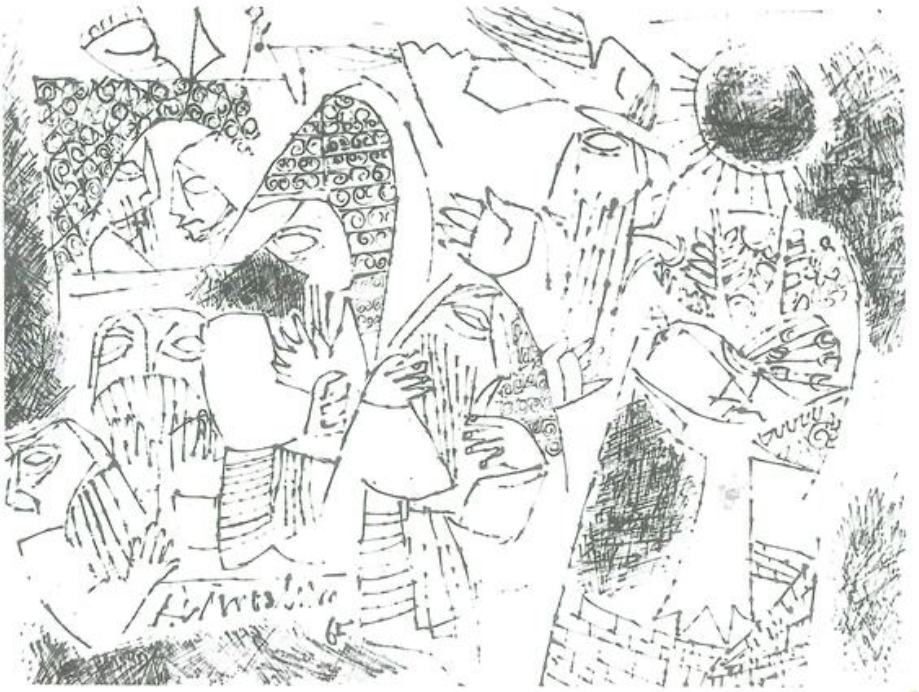


Portrait of a Woman Model,
charcoal sketch, 16.9 x 18.6", 1962

shaded, dappled and coaxed into existence. And two 1965 sequences of worshippers at prayer – one swathed in dark wash through which the focal figures loom towards the deity, the other using black ink on white blotting paper, achieving the calligraphy-like intensity of a prayer shawl. Both acknowledge his debt to Santhanaraj's *Prodigal Son* series.

As a natural corollary, these drawings lead Adimoolam, with reverence and some abstract aptitude, to three dramatic renditions of Siva as Dakshinamurthy. Each an experiment with style, with perspective, with artistic levity. Was he testing his reach here? Or wandering in search of the passion for perfection? The answers are of little significance in his artistic evolution.





Above: **Worshippers II**, black ink on white blotting paper, 20.6 x 15.5", 1965

Below: **Worshippers I**, black ink and wash, 21.9 x 12.2", 1965



Siva as Dakshinamoorthy I,
black ink and wash, 16.2 x 22.5", 1965



Siva as Dakshinamoorthy II,
pen and black ink, 16.5 x 22", 1965



Siva as Dakshinamoorthy III,
black ink with multi-technique, 16 x 22", 1966



Birds on a Tree at Night,
black ink and wash, 14.8 x 20.7", 1966

An individualistic validity

Of what validity, what singularity, is Adimoolam's tussle with the line, uncompromising, honest, and distinguished by its sheer harmony?

Vital cues emerge as early as his portraits of the 1960s. For he renders the late artist Ramanujam, known for his infinitely intricate drawings, almost Escher-fine, in two avatars – as a realistic young man, with a fierce handlebar moustache and beetle-brows, frowning intensely at the world in 1965; then as a more Daliesque watercolour, with a quirky one-eyed gaze, more like a mirage.

Other models are sketched with uncompromising honesty – enhancing facial characteristics through planar angles, honing in on a noble brow, an aquiline nose and a determined chin, to establish personality in an ink drawing, even wrestling with the possibilities of a bearded bald man with the tentativeness of an explorer.

But once realism loosens its hold, Adimoolam questions through an alternate cerebration. Whether couched as impressions of the Chennai suburbs, in the manner of French Fauvist Dufy, or fluid interpretations of animals like the

Left: **Portrait of Ramanujam**, watercolour, 13.9 x 21.4", 1966

Right: **Ramanujam**, pen and black ink, 16 x 21.3", 1965







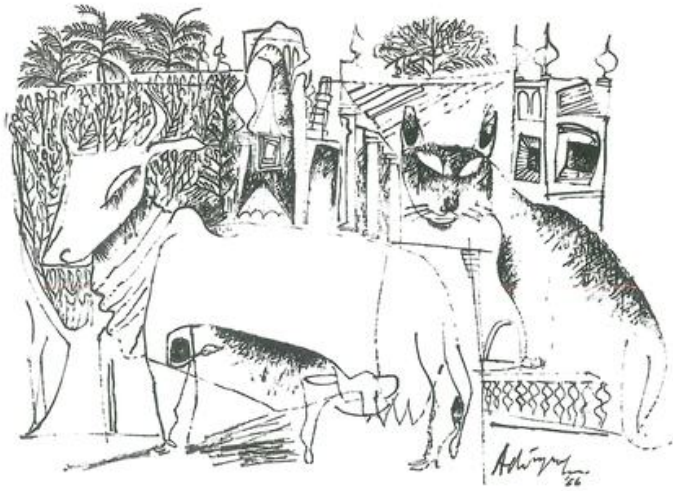
Early Morning of a Lotus Pond, black ink and wash, 22.7 x 17", 1966



Suburb of Madras, black ink and wash on paper, 21.5 x 14", 1966



Feeding on the Street II, black ink and wash, 22.5 x 16", 1966



Feeding on the Street I, pen and black ink, 20.7 x 15.5", 1966



Bull on the Pavement, black ink and wash, 22.6 x 16", 1966



Elephant and a Cow, pen and black ink, 20 x 15", 1966



Heads, pen and black ink, 21.3 x 16", 1983



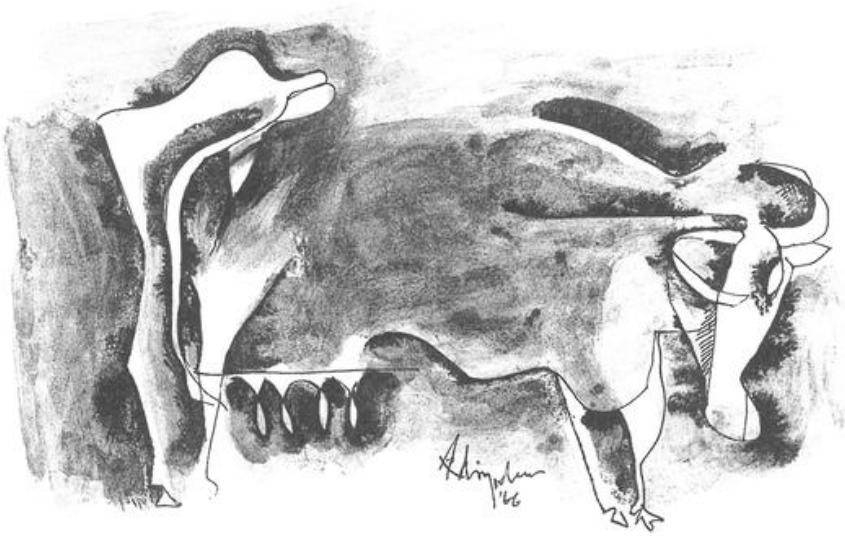
Veeran I, pen and black ink, 22.7 x 16", 1983

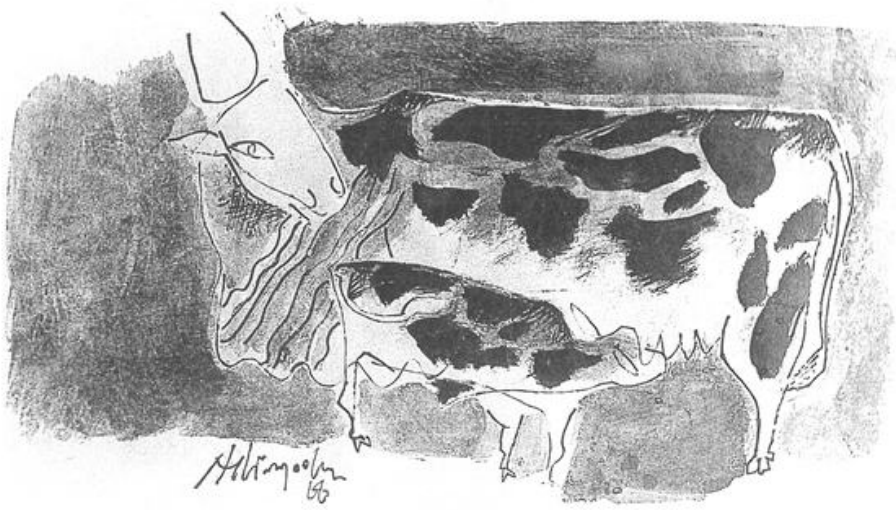


Veeran II, pen and black ink, 22.7 x 16", 1983

buffalo, the elephant and the cow, or even wash expressions of terracotta images from Tamil rituals.

What, then, was the rigour of Adimoolam's drawings before he launched into his first major exposition in 1969? At the very core, the artist appears to have made some unvoiced commitments, even this early in his oeuvre. To seek honesty in practice, rather than the novelty of gimmickry. To reach within himself and his atavistic memory for subject, object and wizardry. To explore art within his chosen equilibrium, no matter the call of market forces or peer pressure from the field. To coil and uncoil himself in repeat encounters with the unforgiving line, until he conquered it at its own game.





Above: **Buffalo**, black ink and wash, 22.5 x 15", 1966

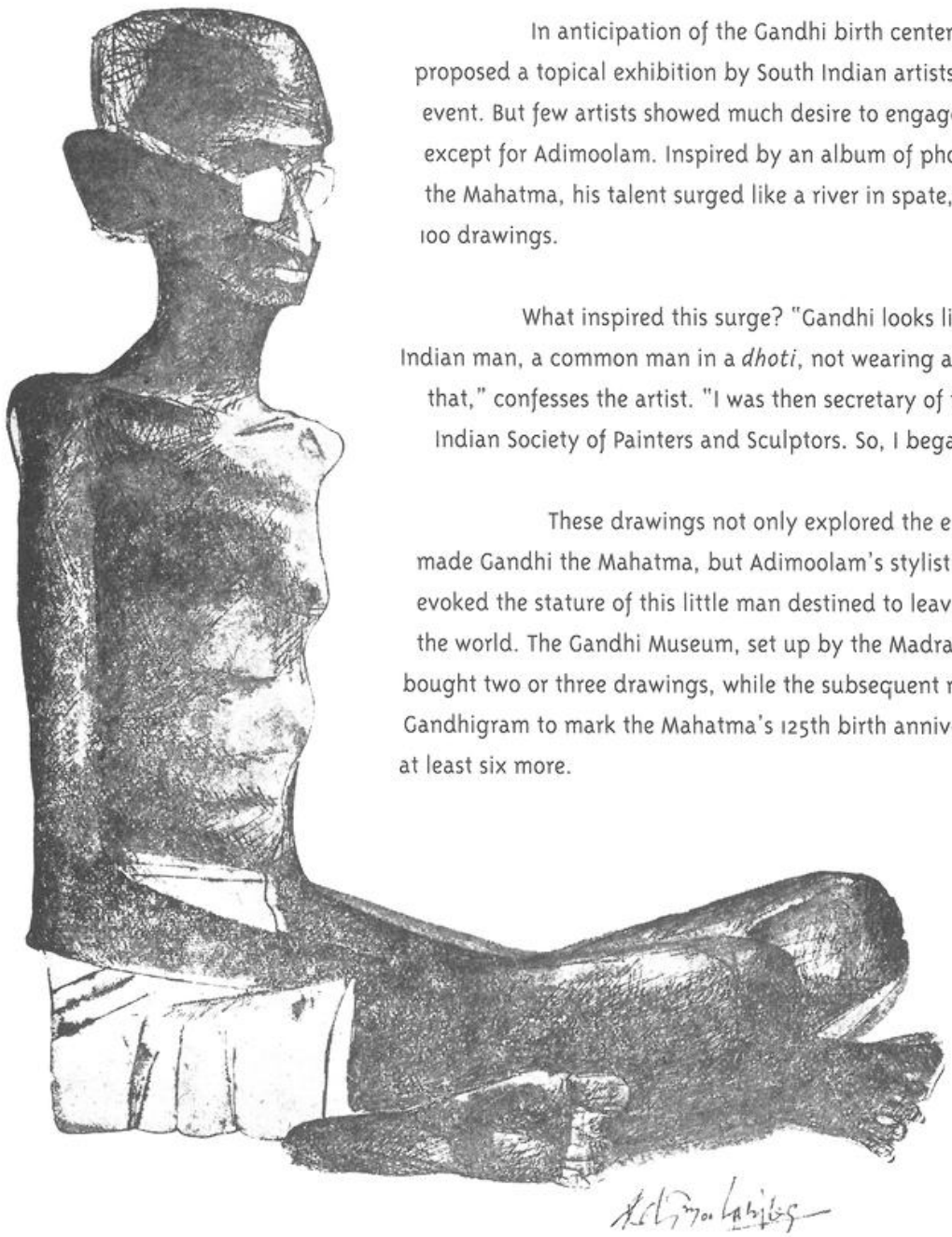
Below: **Cow Feeding Its Calf**, black ink and wash, 22.5 x 15", 1966

Gandhi as a yogi

Opposite page:
Freedom – That Is the Only Thought, pen and black ink, 15.5 x 20.7", 1969

Evening Prayer, black ink and wash, 17.5 x 23.3", 1969

In 1969, Adimoolam seemed ready to take his place centre-stage on the widening canvas of Indian art – with an exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi in Chennai and Bangalore (now Bengaluru). As he sees it, "While in Keerambur as a nine-year-old, I witnessed the celebration of Indian Independence. The rich people in our village distributed sweets to the students every day for a week. Everybody talked about only Gandhiji. There was even a song about how he brought independence to India. I always regarded him as a great man, a yogi."



In anticipation of the Gandhi birth centenary, Dhanapal proposed a topical exhibition by South Indian artists to mark the event. But few artists showed much desire to engage with the idea, except for Adimoolam. Inspired by an album of photographs of the Mahatma, his talent surged like a river in spate, realizing over 100 drawings.

What inspired this surge? "Gandhi looks like a simple old Indian man, a common man in a *dhoti*, not wearing a shirt. I liked that," confesses the artist. "I was then secretary of the South Indian Society of Painters and Sculptors. So, I began to draw."

These drawings not only explored the essence of what made Gandhi the Mahatma, but Adimoolam's stylistic spectrum evoked the stature of this little man destined to leave his imprint on the world. The Gandhi Museum, set up by the Madras Government, bought two or three drawings, while the subsequent museum at Gandhigram to mark the Mahatma's 125th birth anniversary acquired at least six more.







Adimoolam had arrived on the national scene, not with glamour, but with disarming dignity. What set this essentially black-and-white man apart at this juncture? His deep-seated integrity. His receptivity to external influences, that he acknowledges with grace enough to delve into them for individual articulation. He believed in his subject profoundly, so the reluctant artist emerged to face the public gaze.

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Left: **Young Gandhiji in South Africa**, ink, 14 x 19.5", 1969

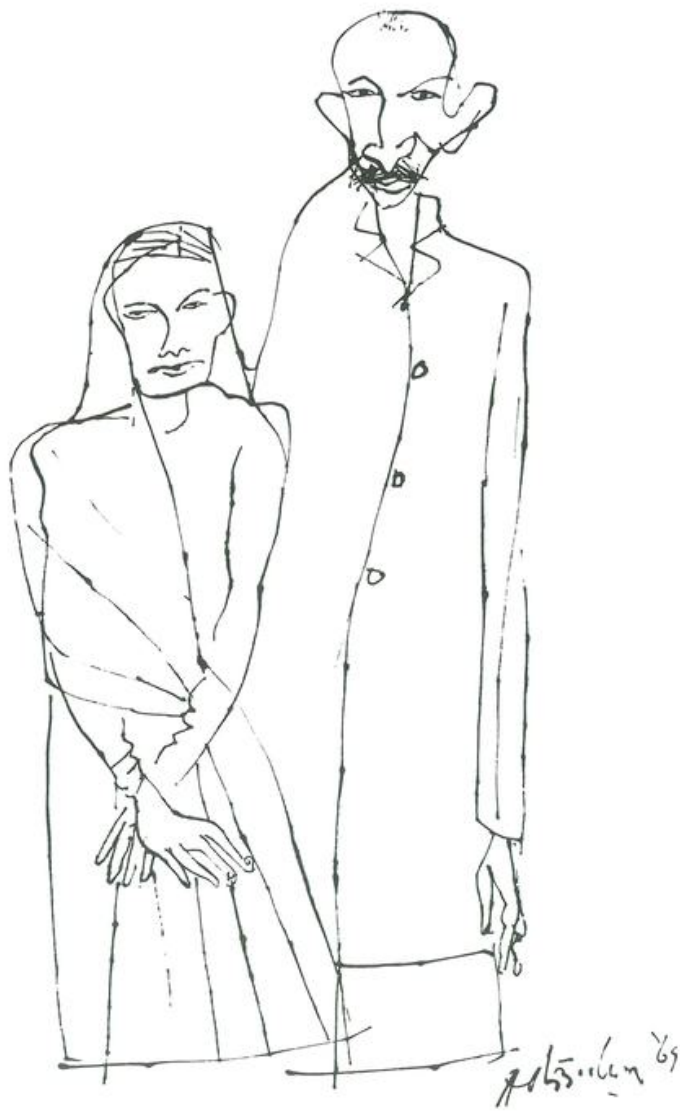
Right: **Gandhiji with His Friends in South Africa**, ink, 17 x 22.7", 1969

The photographic Gandhi recedes from the viewer's frame of reference as Adimoolam's interpretation takes over. We meet a quizzical expression on the face of the youthful lawyer in South Africa. And an elongated man, at ease in a chair alongside European contemporaries abroad, his moral stature relegating his physical being into inconsequence. Alongside Kasturba, the Mahatma differs little from traditional villagers, sketched with telling lines. As a youthful

Left: **Gandhiji as a Young Lawyer (South Africa)**, pen and ink, 17.9 x 24", 1969

Right: **Gandhiji with Kasturba (in South Africa)**, pen and black ink, 16.5 x 22", 1969







Gandhiji with Romain Rolland, black ink and wash, 22 x 16.5", 1969



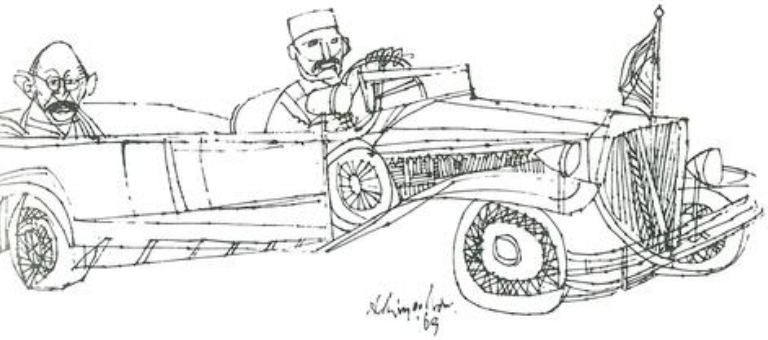
Gandhiji with the Mountbattens, ink, 22 x 28", 1969



Gandhiji with Tagore, ink, 15 x 20", 1969



Gandhiji with Maulana Azad, black ink and wash, 16 x 19.9", 1969



A Rare Four-Wheel Travel, pen and black ink, 21.3 x 16", 1969



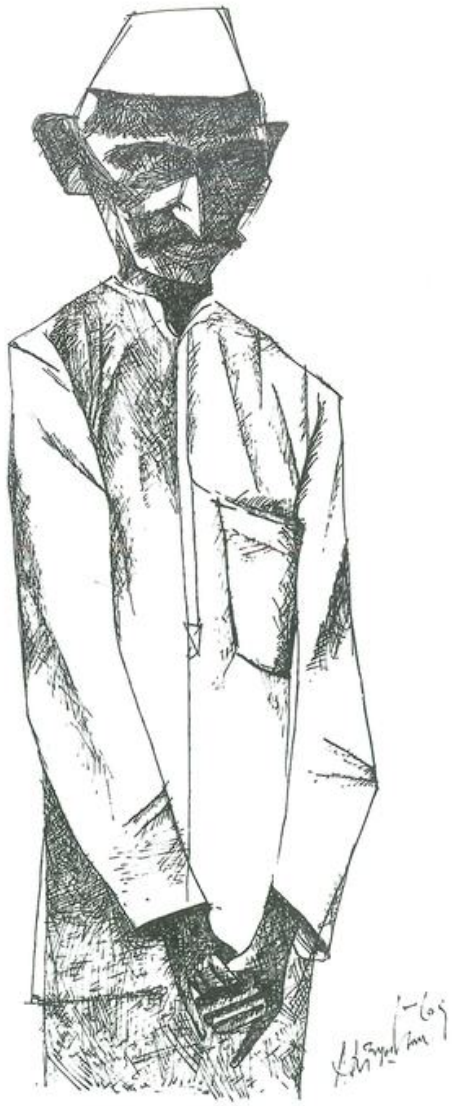
Gandhiji with Sardar Patel, black ink and wash, 17.9 x 16", 1969

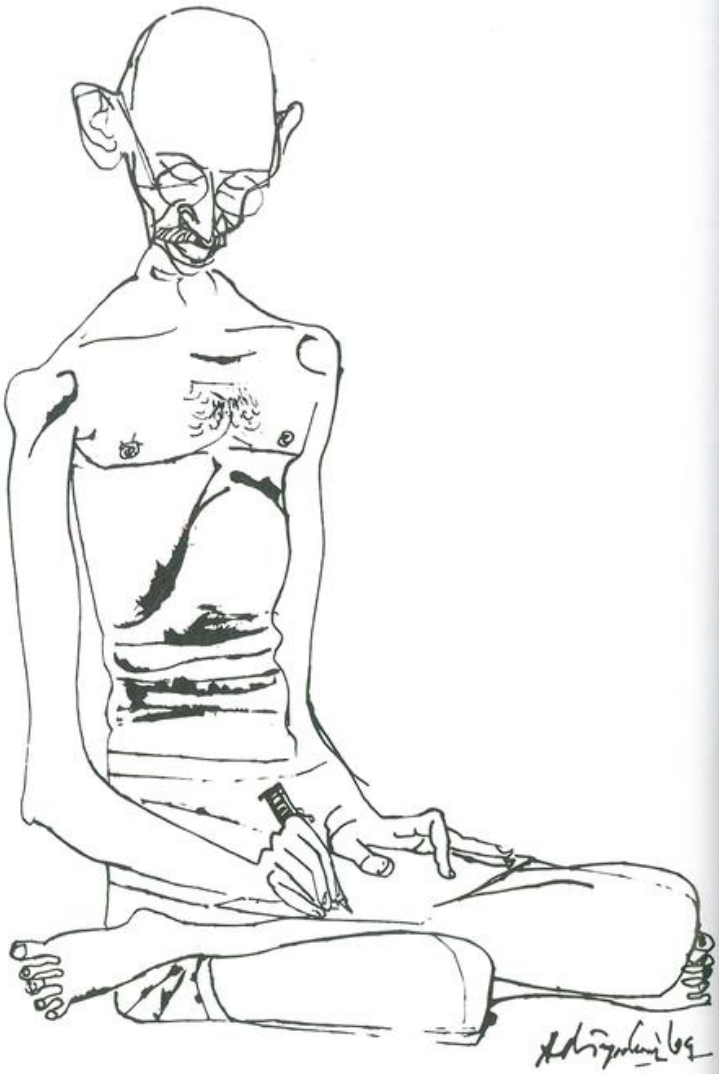


Wishing for Success, ink, 18 x 24", 1969



Morning Walk I, ink, 16.5 x 22", 1969





Left: **Gandhiji as a Congress Man**, ink, 11.8 x 22.4", 1969

Right: **Important Matter**, pen and black ink, 13.5 x 18", 1969

satyagrahi, non-violent protester, walking stick in hand, Gandhi emanates a Buddha-like tranquillity.

Whether depicted through the purely speaking line on his morning walk, or with the added depth of wash enhancing his encounters with Romain Rolland, Sardar Patel or Rabindranath Tagore, Adimoolam's drawings add a telling dimension to Gandhi. That of an accessible human being, rather than a demigod; of a leader of reassuring warmth, more than a statesman. Technically superb, immediately communicative, Bapu's child-like qualities spark a definite chord in the child within the artist. The spontaneity of the drawn encounters between Gandhi and little children is emotionally irresistible. That is the true measure of both the artist and his subject.

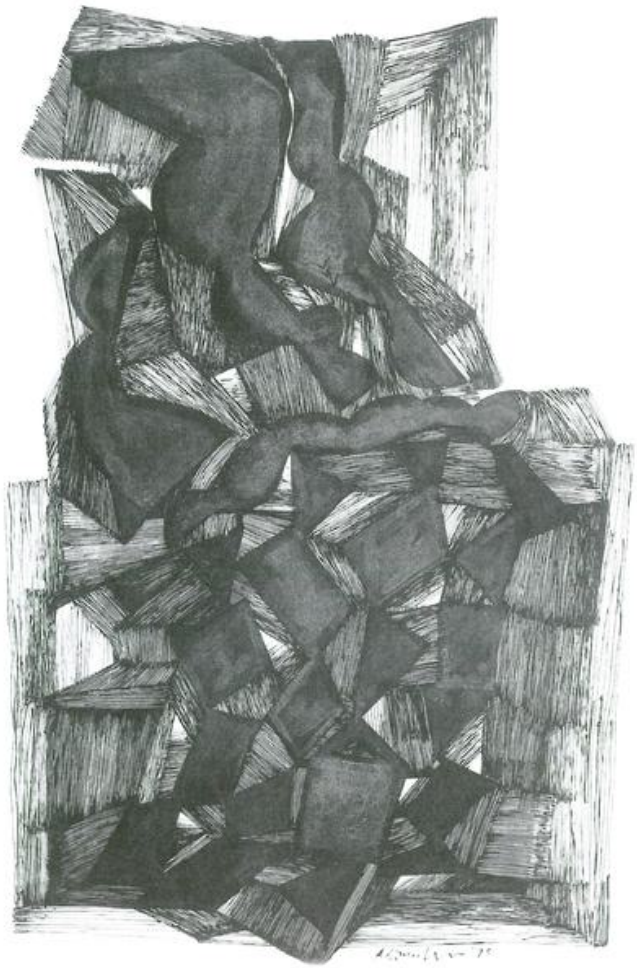
Opposite page:
Gandhiji Holding a Child, pen and black ink, 12.9 x 24", 1969



The call of colour

By 1975, Adimoolam challenged himself to move out of his chosen semi-realistic sphere. The first evidence surfaced in his *Space* series of drawings, and was triggered by his conscious decision to paint in colour. "I had always felt the colour beyond the black and white. So, I took to canvas. I had heard people comment, 'This man does only black and white. He has no colour imagination at all.' But I knew my own limits and how far I could go," he recalls.

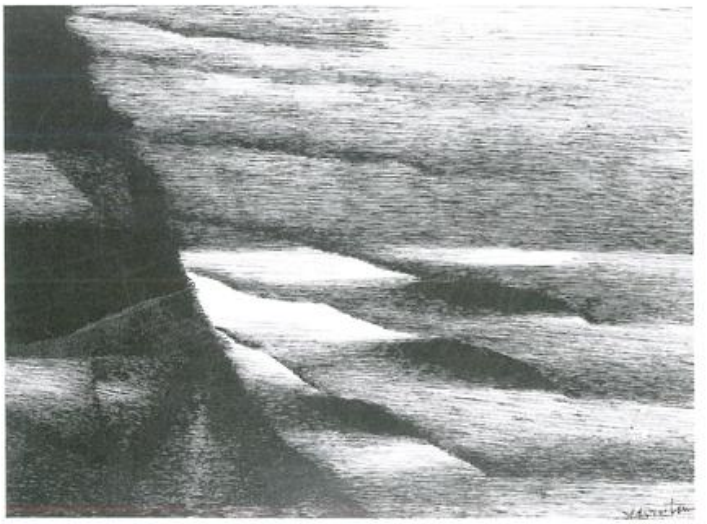
Further patterns emerge along the ideation trail: "While doing figurative drawings, I was satisfied. Even so, after a while, the mind wants to travel further. I distorted the figurative forms, and so I came to abstracts. How much can one distort the figure of a cow? In the beginning, I was inspired by clouds, rocks, planets. Though these looked like realistic forms in my drawings, I actually worked to create a mystic feeling. I exploited light and shade, movement and form."



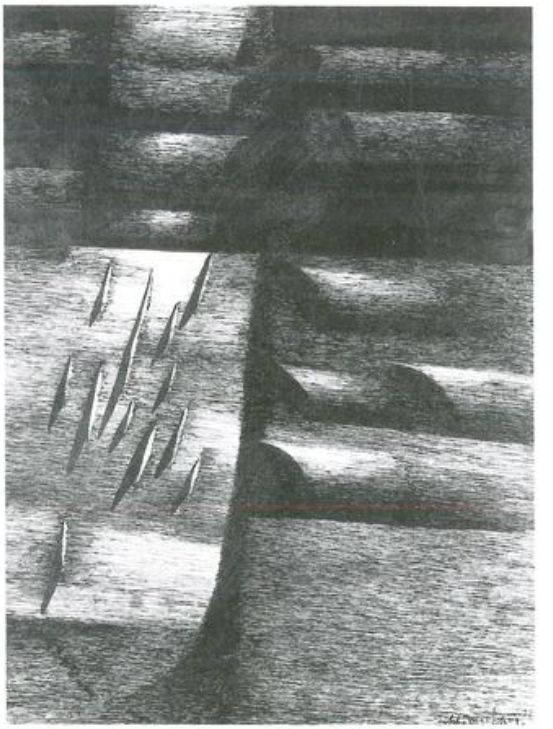
Structure Falls, ink and wash, 16.3 x 21.8", 1975

A twofold experiment surfaced. Of strokes that rained on canvas, as boulder-like forms floated free in unfettered space, amidst rough wedges, fleecy cutouts, wood-like blocks. Or purest abstractions realized in oil with the palette knife over brush, nebulous patterns engaging with the play of light and shadow.

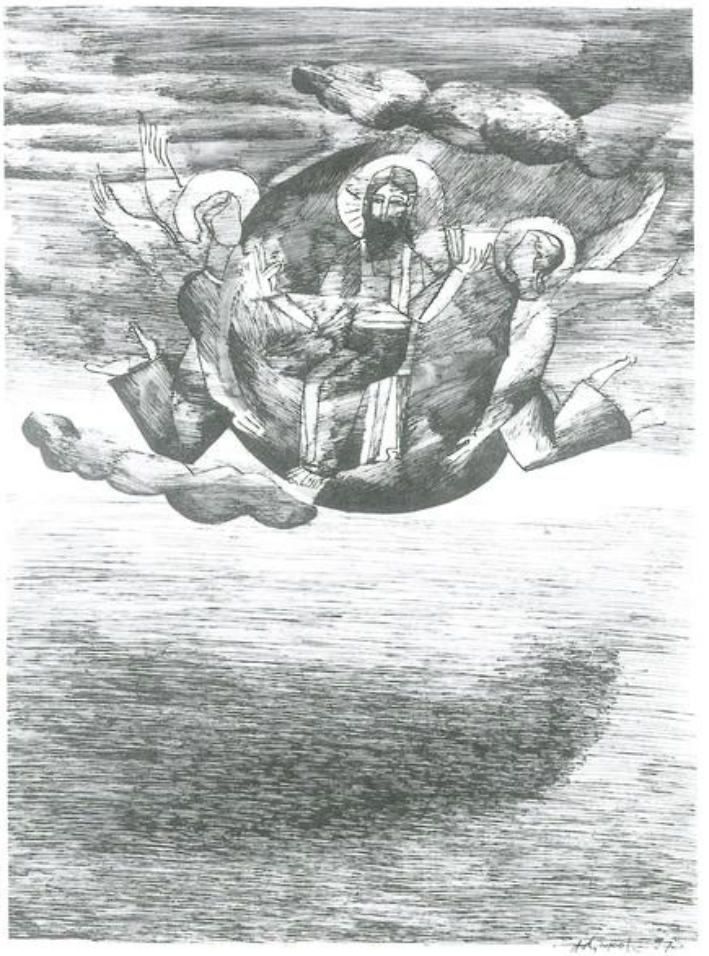
With equal fluency, Adimoolam's vision engaged with forms and shapes, fine lines in their horizontal and vertical, diagonal and serrated avatars. Are these floating forms celestial bodies or space landscapes? Are they unrealized sculptures or unstructured structures? Are they communicated as blurred images or as movement without moment? The emerging whole resembles a terrain of the mind, mysteriously indefinable, yet binding the disparate, amidst the aura of abstraction.



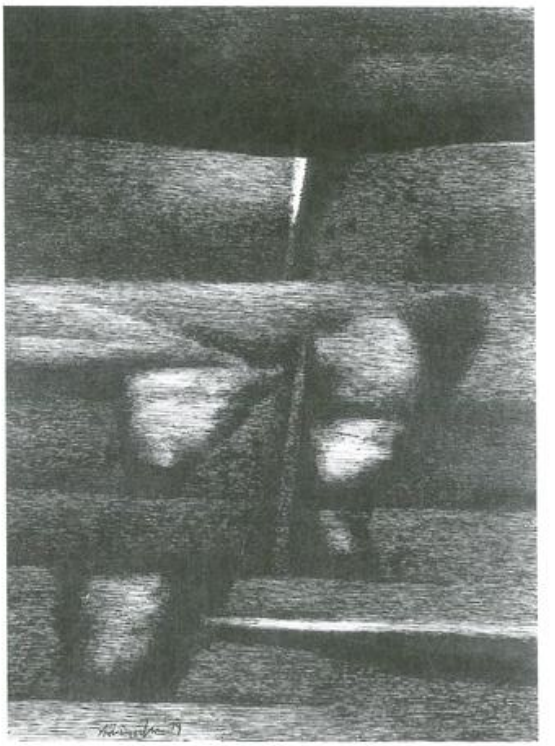
Uncertainty of Forms I, pen and black ink, 19 x 14.2", 1978



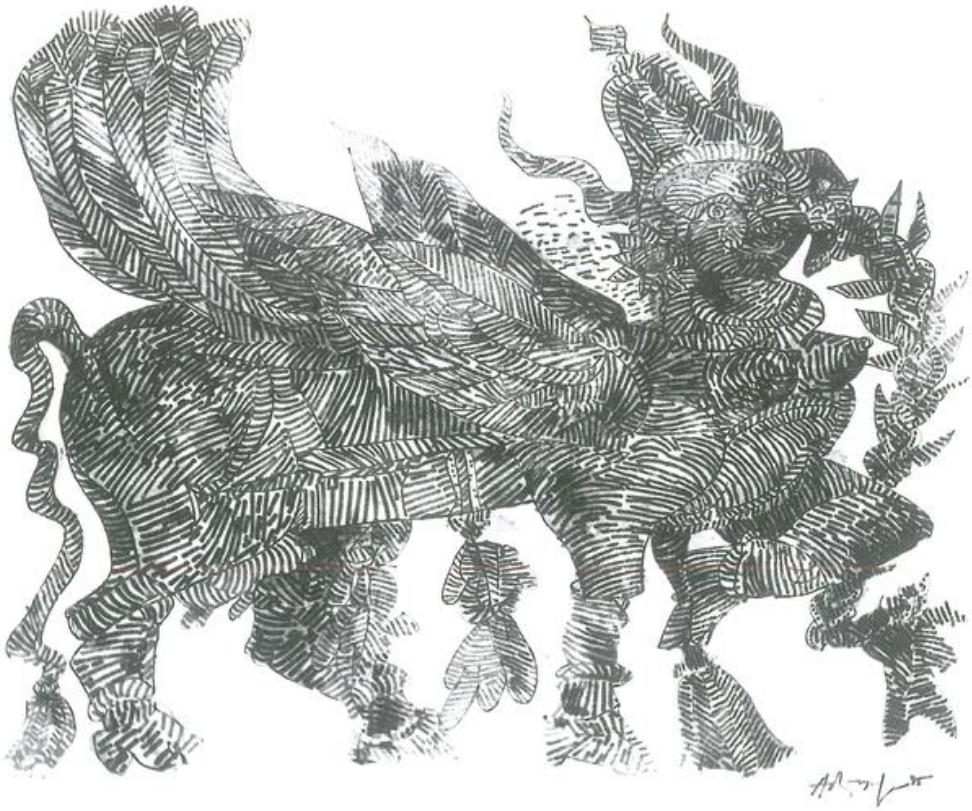
Uncertainty of Forms II, pen and black ink, 12.1 x 16.5", 1978



Christ with Angels, black ink and wash, 14.2 x 19.3", 1977



Uncertainty of Forms III, pen and black ink, 12.2 x 17.1", 1979



Kamadhenu, black ink and wash, 22.7 x 16.9", 1985



Raju at Study (the Artist's Son), pen and black ink, 22.7 x 17", 1983

Scenes from a sketchbook

By the 1980s, interfaces with students led the artist to explore nuances of drawing once more. What kept them from realizing what they saw? Demonstrating that a chair, a table, a book, a terracotta form could be drawn through different lenses, his *Sketchbook* series from 1983 to 1985 teems with styles, with jabs, squiggles, with dashes that metamorphose into dynamic visuals.

Through the bylanes of Adimoolam's creative mind, these stylized interpretations offer engaging suggestions. Marching musicians fluidly evoke notes in progression as they come to life on paper, the lines enhanced by wash. An intricate Kamadhenu, benevolent divine cow, is rendered from an 18th-century



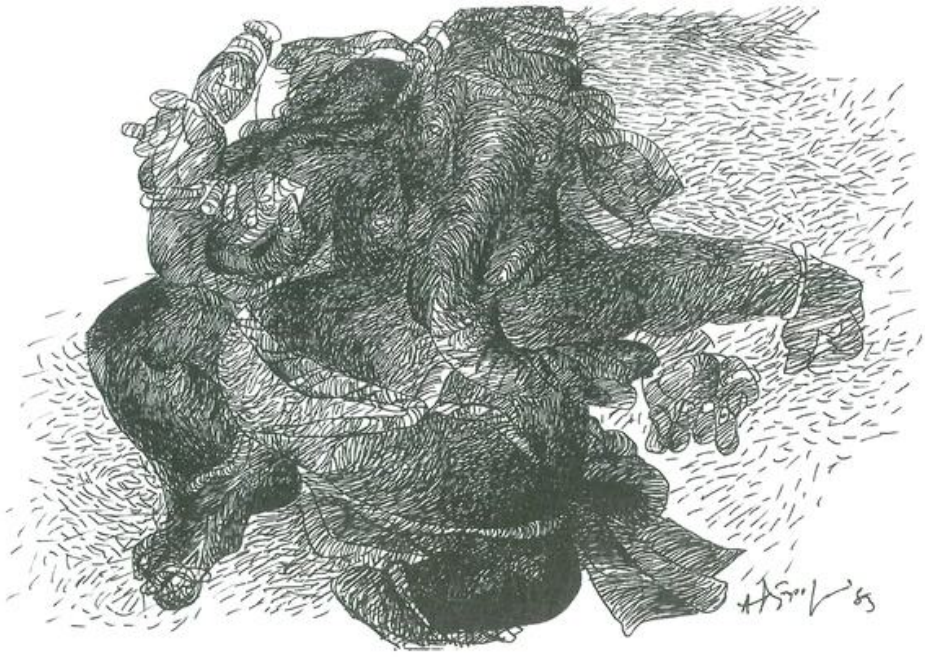
Musicians on March, pen and black ink, 17 x 22.7", 1979



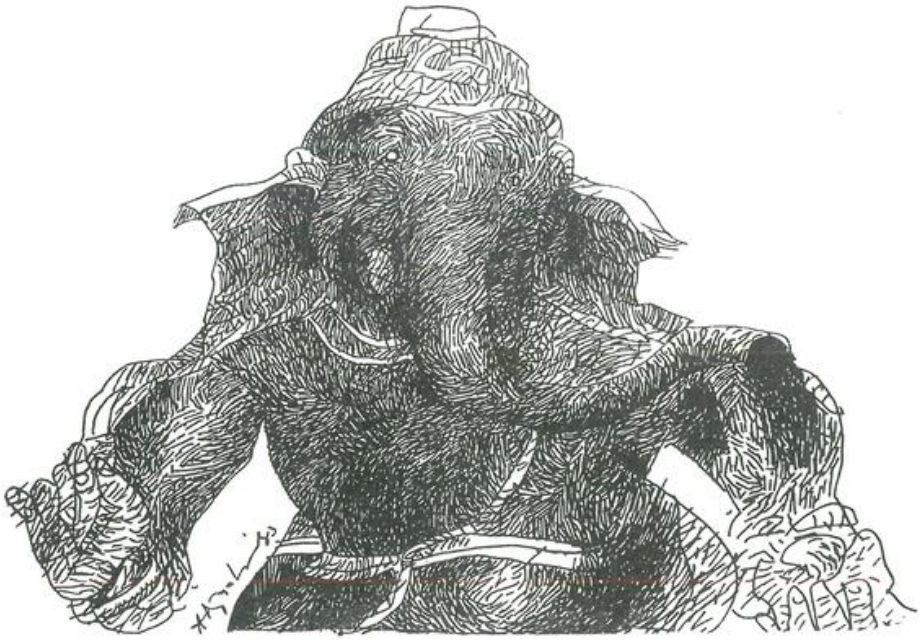
Charcoal, 11 x 15", 2004



Standing Ganesha, pen and black ink, 18 x 24", 1983



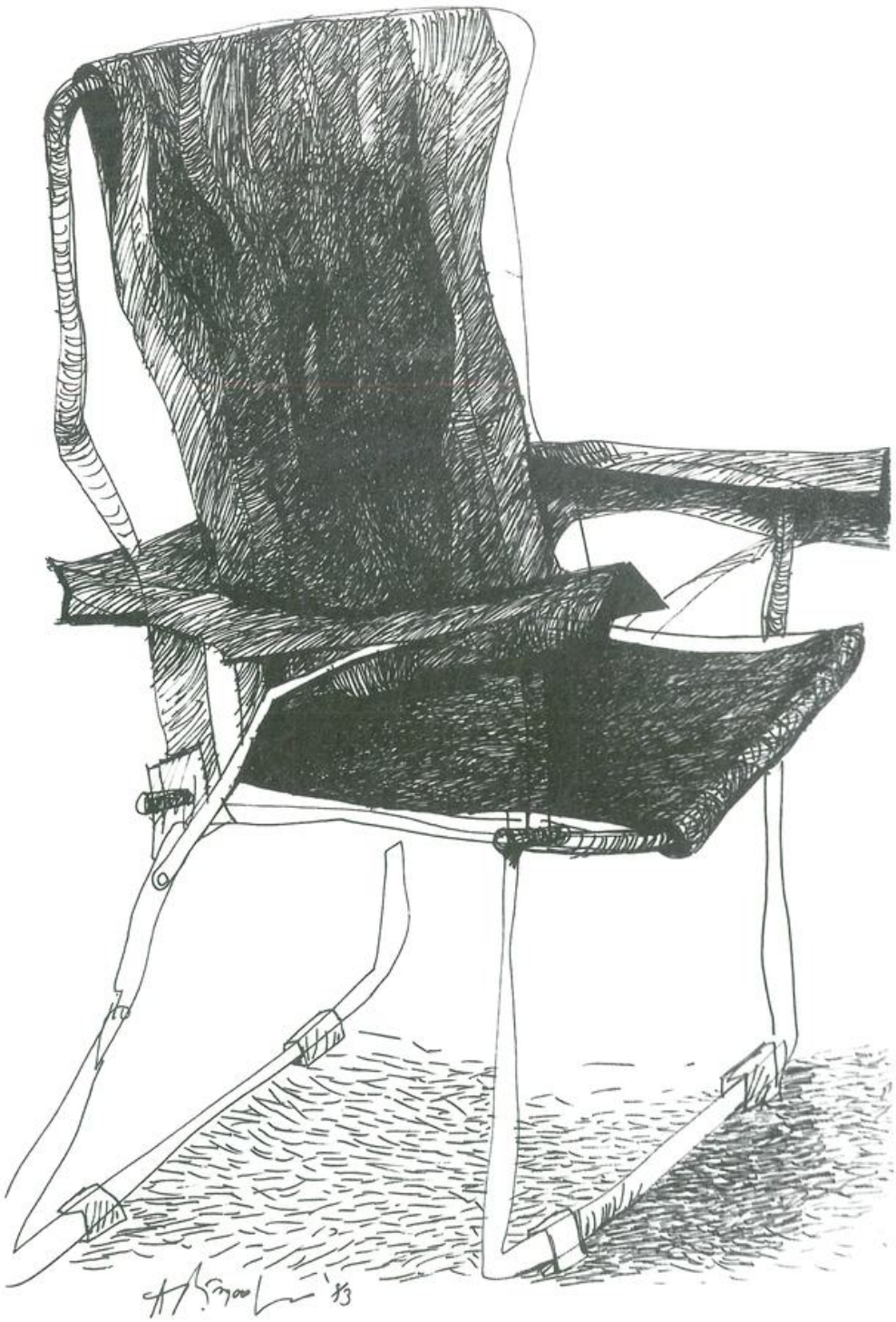
Dancing Ganesha, pen and black ink, 16.7 x 12", 1983



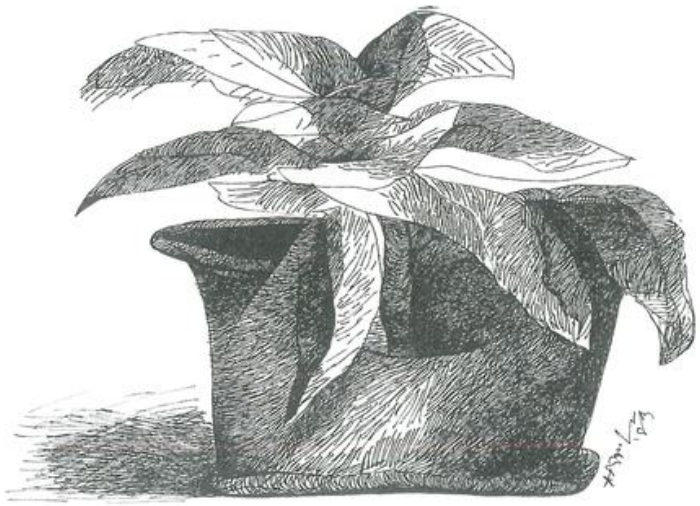
Ganesha, pen and black ink, 21 x 14.8", 1983



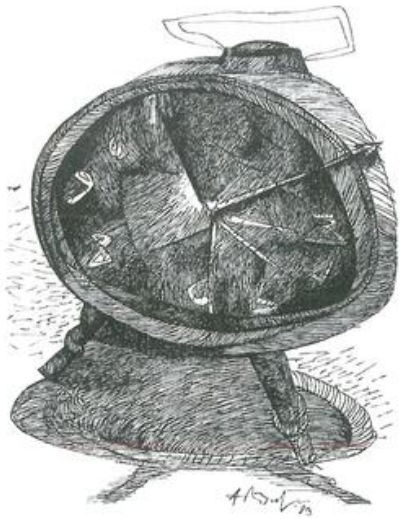
Ganesha, pen and black ink, 17.4 x 17", 1984



Chair, pen and black ink, 14.5 x 19.3", 1983



Potted Plant, pen and black ink, 20.7 x 15.4", 1983



Clock, pen and black ink, 15 x 20", 1983



Lamp Holder, pen and black ink, 19.3 x 14.5", 1983

Opposite page:
Seated Maharaja with Sword,
pen and black ink, 10.9 x 22", 1983

traditional Tamil cloth painting. A narrative sequence in fluent lines refers to a scene from a Sivapura wall-hanging. Ganesha is adapted to a flurry of strokes, to the barest of lines, to complex cross-hatching, to a blur of dark ink with light as contrast, to evocative moods. Other sketches share the posture of his own son at study, a chair that tells of all it has seen, a clock intent on times gone by and those to come.

Left: **Prince**, pen and black ink,
16 x 21.3", 1983

Right: **Worshipping Maharaja**,
pen and black ink, 16 x 22", 1985

But significantly, amidst these sketches, are signs of a series to come. Of a maharaja seated, his sword by his side, his features blurred. Of a regal prince with a turban, his stance somewhat self-conscious. Of a monarch at worship, his raiment gorgeous, his face in shadow.







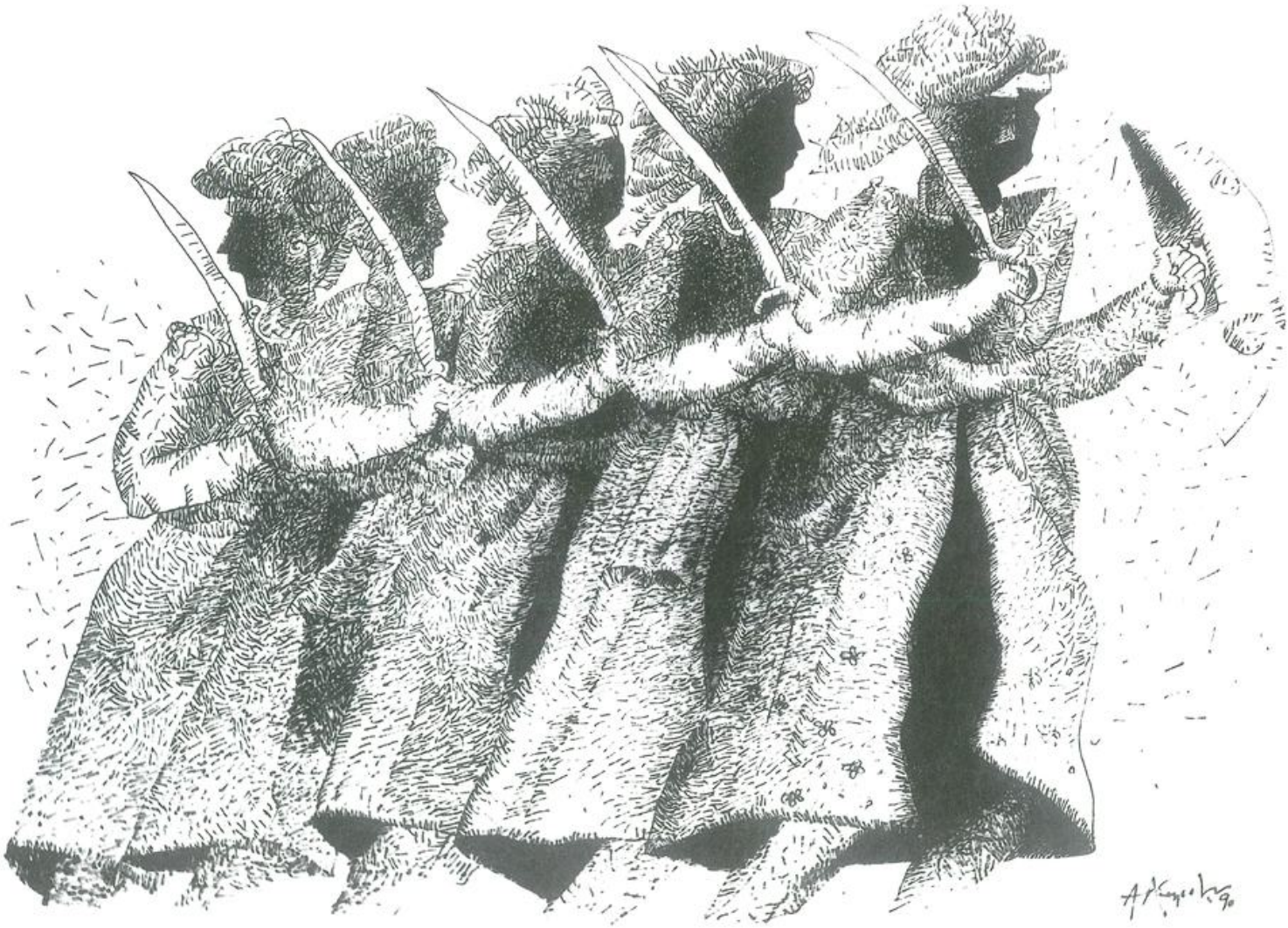
Evocations of a royal past

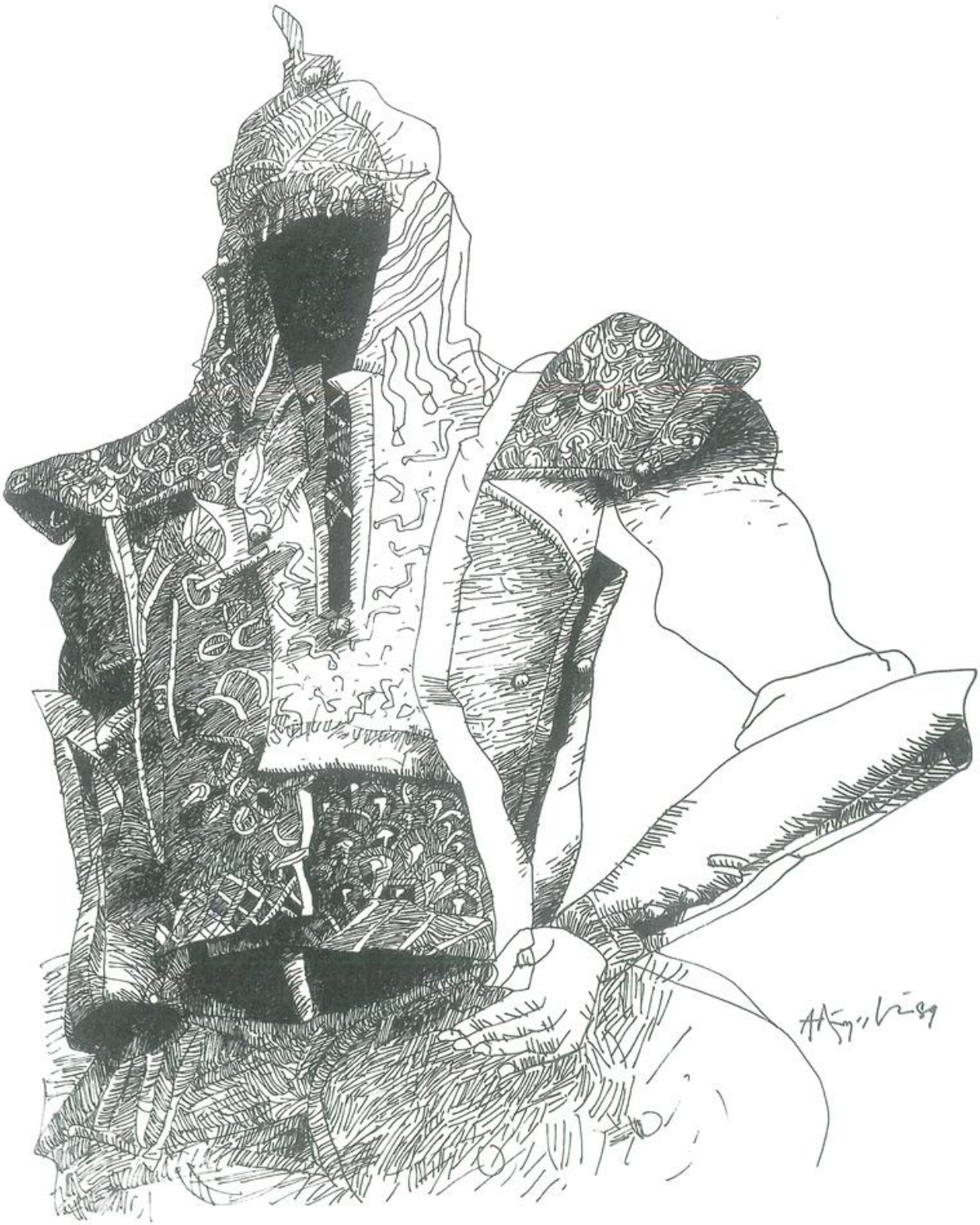
These are precursors to one of Adimoolam's most celebrated series, *King/Maharaja,* executed from 1989 onwards. Employed at the Weavers' Service Centre in Chennai, the artist began to sketch in the interstices between designing. His mind, engaging with photographic portraits of Indian royalty, wondered at their reality. They had been immortalized by photographers like Raja Deen Dayal, by the famed Lafayette Studio. But what transpired in their inner lives?

Opposite page:
King as Warrior, pen and black ink, 15.6 x 20.8", 1989

March towards the Warfront, pen and black ink, 20 x 15", 1990

Empathetic, bordering almost on illustration, yet richer by far, Adimoolam's drawings of these former potentates are stylized renditions of a bygone era. Playful, almost tongue-in-cheek, they barely glance back at Thanjavur paintings, at Indian miniatures, at photography as an archival form.





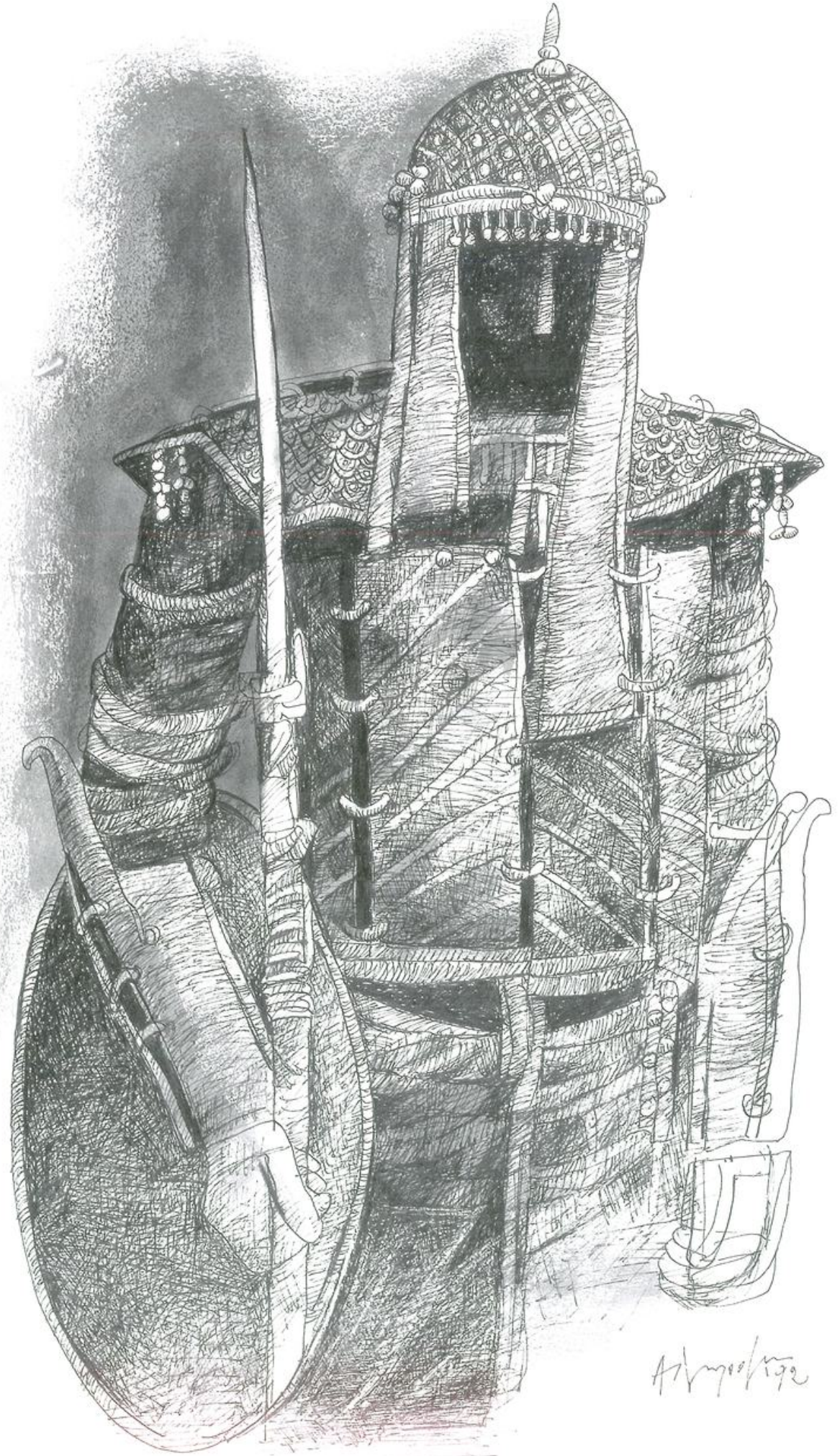


Noble with Sword and Shield, pen and black ink, 15 x 23", 1989



King with Sword and Shield, pen and black ink, 17 x 22.7", 1990

Opposite page:
Warrior, pen and ink on paper, 22 x 30", 1992



Cross-hatched to life in black-and-white or captured in a sweep of line, their faces often undelineated, their figures semi-realized, these regal identities are imbued with artistic sophistication, captured by Adimoolam's semi-figurative genius. Bereft of colour, shorn of abstraction, these figures appear folk-inspired. These moustachioed maharajas and their consorts are quite distinctive. They are confident in posture, rich in brocaded outfits, often with epaulettes, enhanced by embossed swords and ornate jewellery.

"I happened to see photographs of Indian royalty in a book. They looked like groups or individuals standing stiffly, with fierce moustaches. I knew they had compromised with the British rulers. They had to pay the British taxes, in return for the privilege of leading luxurious lives in their palaces. I felt their lives were empty. They had no real power," explains Adimoolam. "So, I detailed their costumes and weaponry, while the faces remain blank. They had lost their faces."

King with Beard III, pen and black ink, 21.3 x 16", 1989



The procession of powerless potentates is magical, among the most brilliant rendered by any contemporary Indian artist. Take the armour-clad warrior monarch, his visage jet black, his muscular biceps full of power, the toolwork on his metal suit resembling embroidery. What is his story? How does he link to life? Look at the Maratha noble with his fierce moustache, his billowing garment, his neat headgear, cross-hatched with supreme artistic control. Is he a supreme ruler? To whom does he owe obeisance? Observe the king with his sword, his grandiose exterior a contrast to the hollowness of his existence, the two at loggerheads as suggested by the partial line-drawing, partial impassioned hatching of the rendition.

As the powerful series evolves with swift, sure strokes, we travel into this imaginary realm with Adimoolam. We learn to discern the invisible elements – the over-bright colour palette, the ostentatious wardrobes, the arrogant accoutrements of regalia, the decadent palaces, liveried staff and drum-thumping

Left: **King**, pen and ink on paper, 14 x 20", 1989

Right: **Maharaja with Beard III**, pen and black ink, 17.9 x 23.9", 1992







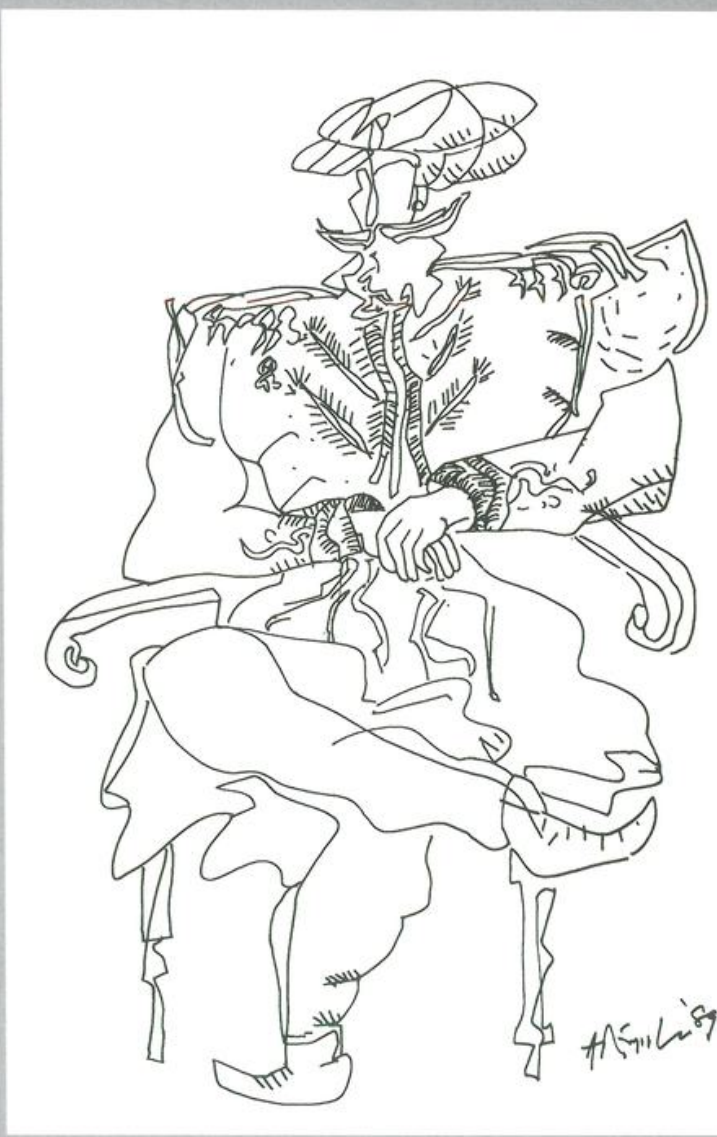
Maharaja with Sword I, pen and black ink, 18 x 24", 1989



Noble with Musical Instrument, pen and black ink, 13.5 x 20.2", 1989

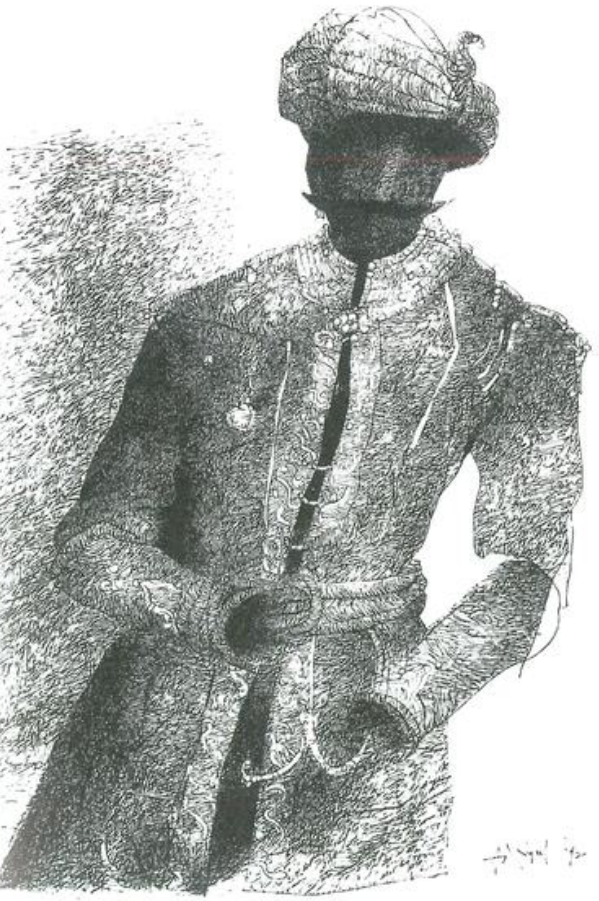


ted King III, pen and black ink, 16.5 x 22", 1989



Seated King II, pen and black ink, 16.5 x 22", 1989





The Prince, pen and black ink, 18 x 24", 1992



The Seated King I, pen and black ink, 16.6 x 22.5", 1992

Opposite page:
King, pen and ink on paper, 14 x 20", 1990



Prince with His Beloved, ink on paper, 18 x 23", 1986



Royal Woman I, pen and black ink, 15 x 20", 1989

Opposite page:
Noble with Sword, ink and wash on paper, 13 x 19", 1993

armies beyond the serrated black lines on white, beyond the zigzag patterns that evoke a lifestyle, beyond the control and power that bring art to creative life. These quirky monarchs emerge through the undrawn, the unpainted, the unvoiced – as degenerate descendents of once worthy crowned heads, unfit to bear the responsibility thrust on them.

This is most apparent in two portraits of bearded kings, dated 1990. In both, Adimoolam's rapid-fire and consistent line vocabulary suggests layered meanings – of trappings of grandeur, of braggadocio gained from inheritance, of notional values beyond what meets the eye. The series continued till about 1992.

If these semi-realistic portraits declare Adimoolam's affinity to the line unambiguously, they naturally find echoes in his illustrations for notable Tamil books, whether the calligraphy-linked cover for Sa. Kandaswamy or the stories by Sundara Ramaswamy, dating back to 1981. Linking back to his linear assets, the artist's power is apparent in his portraits of Jawaharlal Nehru and CV Raman, or major Tamil literary talents like Mouni, Ka. Na. Subramaniam or Pudumaipithan, or the ideologue M Govindan, who inspired a generation in ferment in the 1960s.

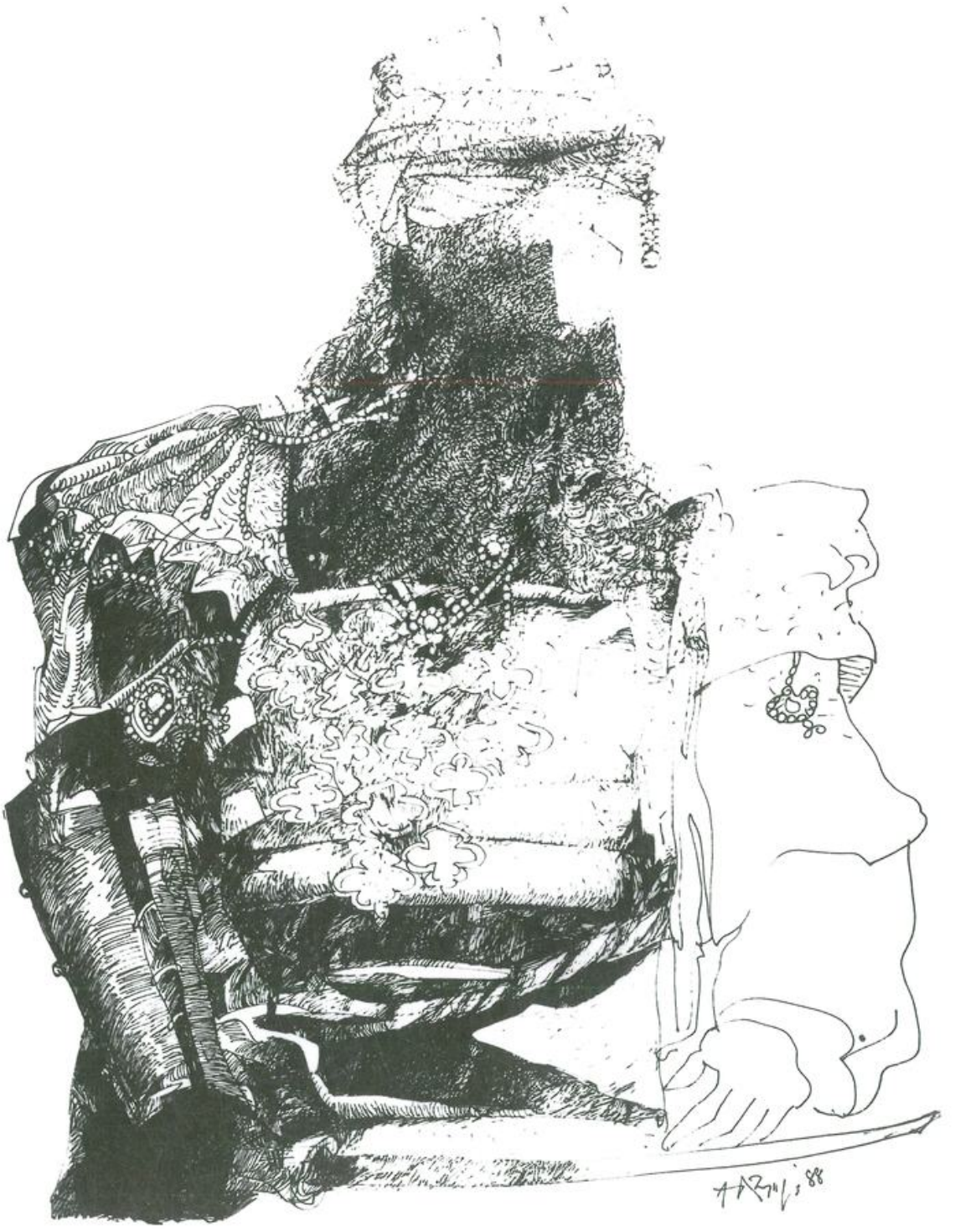
Left: **Seated Maratha Noble I**, pen and black ink, 15.2 x 22.4", 1989

Right: **Maratha Noble**, pen and black ink, 14.5 x 21.5", 1989





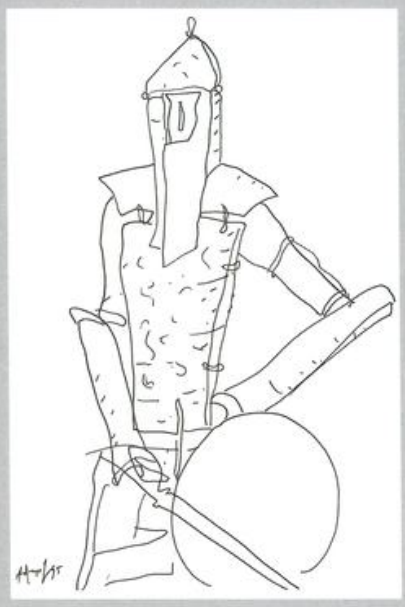




King with Beard, pen and black ink, 15 x 19.6", 1988



Pen and ink on paper, 22 x 28", 1995



Pen and ink on paper, 22 x 30", 1995



Pen and ink on paper, 22 x 30", 1985



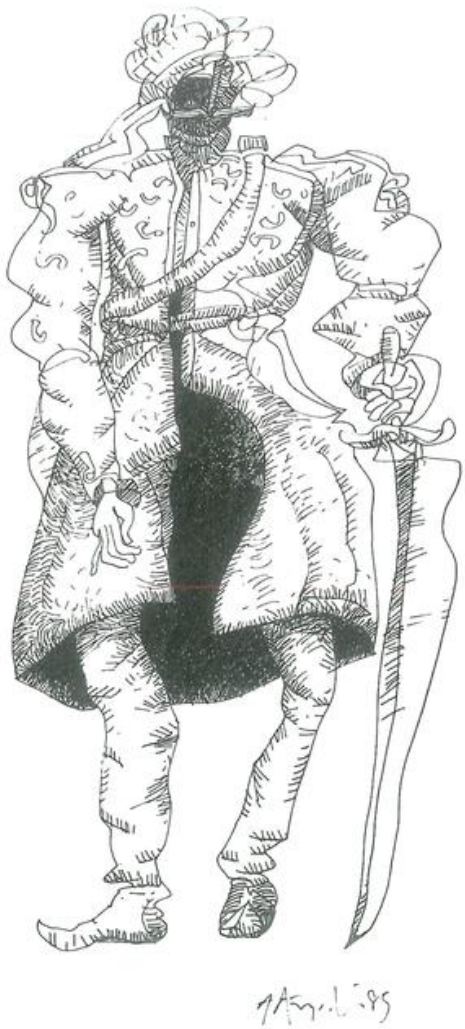
Noble, pen and ink on paper, 22 x 28", 1995



Seated Noble, pen and ink on paper, 22 x 28", 1995



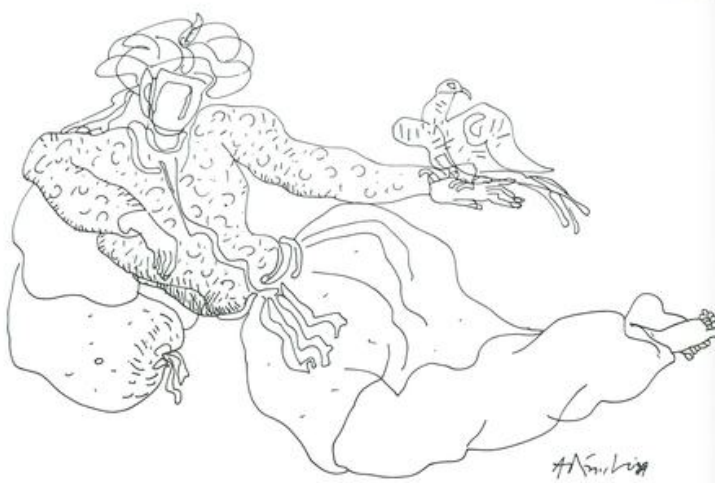
Maharaja with a Flower in His Hand, pen and black ink, 18 x 24", 1989



Maharaja with Sword II, pen and black ink, 17.5 x 23.3", 1989



Lady with Hookah, black ink on paper, 15.2 x 22.4", 1989



Prince with a Bird, pen and black ink, 24 x 17.9", 1989

The stage of life

Most lives go full circle in odd, non-transparent, idiomatic ways. This is equally true of Adimoolam's drawings. Since 2005, his mind has surged back to childhood spaces, to rustic idylls, to echoes from a mythical past, even to the Therukoothu performances of the days he was growing up in Keerambur.

What sparked these ongoing drawings, as intense, as chronicled, as engaging as Adimoolam's *Gandhi* or *King* series? "After the harvest, I recall costumed street performances of the *Mahabharata* or other epics by the light of petromax. They are still vivid in my mind – the singing, the acting, their expressions, which I value," the artist reflects at his studio house outside the Cholamandal Artists' village in Chennai. "My son Aparajithan, who is also an artist, has some connection with the Chennai-based Koothupattarai theatre troupe. He brought me some photographs. The troupe is now encouraging a family of hereditary theatre performers, including Natesa Thambiran and Kannappa Thambiran, who live near Thiruvannamalai. Every February or March, they perform a major portion of the *Mahabharata* at Purasai, an all-night performance that lasts till about 9 a.m."

Therukootthu Player, pen and black ink, 15.8 x 21", 1988



Adimoolam's engagement, distilling their dramatic spirit through his drawings, continues for reasons he defines clearly: "I was inspired by the photographs. I value the spontaneity of their storytelling. Their language is very typical of the village, including local slang. I admire that. And the amazing way they bring alive the emotional character of Duryodhana or Dusshasana! These are reasons enough to begin doing these drawings again."

Again? In a sense, because folk performers, alongside the terracotta images used in rural temples as votive offerings, had earlier cropped up in Adimoolam's oeuvre in a riveting 1988 line drawing of a Therukootthu player, his performing gear in brisk motion, his ankle bells reverberating, his expression summoning the fabulous into immediate existence.

Adimoolam's dramatic series engages with and continues the Therukootthu performance on paper. Through the movement of larger-than-life players in verbal dissonance and heroic combat, through family feuds and tangled intrigue, through jest and poetry, through double-entendre and physical jousting, through wordy duels with the audience and local references. The artist, in a magnificent act of evocative condensation, summons all these into play on paper.

But his imagistic play surmounts the immediate and the temporal, for his echoes go back to the origins of folk theatre, to all the performers who have hallowed its ranks, to the oral traditions that safeguard myths and epics for future generations. Rooted in today, Adimoolam's keen observation recounts scenes off the main screen too, such as a player in performance gear who gathers his creative energies in quiet communion with his *beedi*, a handmade *tendu* leaf-wrapped Indian cigarette, offstage.

Left: **Folk Dancer II**, charcoal on paper, 22 x 30", 2006

Right: **Folk Dancer I**, charcoal on paper, 20 x 27", 2006





Off-stage, centre-stage

Has the artist's idiom, his contemporary perspective, his connection with the global canvas, been mediated by the Cholamandal Artists' Village at Injambakkam that Paniker and his students brought into existence in 1965? "There never was a Cholamandal school," Adimoolam avers. "Some of us – Viswanadhan, RB Bhaskaran, Dakshinamurthy, Jayapal Panicker and I – shared a common shed when our community was first set up. In a spirit of adventure, we slept under thatched roofs. We shared a library. We could see each other's work. But this is not inspiring for a serious artist. It's not correct for so many creative persons to live and work together."

Adimoolam, within the context of contemporary art, is both unique and relatively untroubled by transient trends. He has, to date, resisted the siren call of installations, video art and conceptual art, remaining true to the powerful abstract oils on canvas that are his forte. And to his first true love, the pure line.

"I was once watching a film on Matisse, when I saw him erasing a line many times over. But I've never corrected a line. If I feel it isn't flowing or lacks strength, I abandon the attempt, pick up another sheet and try again until my idea is realized perfectly in an hour or two," Adimoolam asserts quietly, affirming his lifelong bond with this toughest taskmaster in art. "I see all the drawings as my own portrait, almost a mirror. They reflect my personality, no matter what the subject. I am free to make a line, or a sketch. The movement decisions are mine. Some drawings appear on paper beyond my expectations. That is the greatest joy to me."

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Thinking the Line

Jehangir Sabavala

I was surprised to receive a call from Chennai from my old friend, the well-known artist Adimoolam. I spontaneously accepted his request of writing an 'appreciation' for a forthcoming publication on his drawings. I would not usually do this, so I have to ask myself why I acceded to his invitation so easily. Was it perhaps, because it gave me the chance to explore what has always intrigued me – especially his shift from realism to the abstract idiom in painting?

Adimoolam, whose work I have followed for a long time, is a fine draughtsman whose whole career has been based on the understanding of drawing, the mastery over line and the wizardry of charcoal and pencil, of pen and ink.

Left: **Artists and the Model I**, pen and black ink, 14.7 x 19.5", 1965

Right: **Portrait of an Old Man**, black ink and wash on photo mount, 14.9 x 18.3", 1965





The line was man's earliest means of communication, before the emergence of language. It is the foundation on which the edifice of art is built. It is the inevitability of line which determines the quality and the intensity of one's own creativity.

An earlier book deals exhaustively with his works from 1962 to 1996. It amply displays his unquestionable talent in black and white, and it is with admiration that I observe Adimoolam's drawings.

In his early Art School studies the heads are well-formed, the bone structure accurately observed, with chiaroscuro illuminating the whole. There are vigorous charcoal line drawings, swiftly executed pen and ink works, where shape and form are deliberately distorted, but no matter what the medium, Adimoolam always captures the personality of the individual? Some credit for that perhaps goes to his mentors – Dhanapal, Santhanaraj, and Munuswamy – all of whom taught him so well and so assiduously.

Adimoolam has drawn his inspiration from iconic Indian ideography as well as from Western influences such as Picasso, Matisse, Moore and Dufy. These are picked at random but pervade his work.

His *Gandhi* series is moving; he brings the Mahatma alive with deft stroke and line, and the history of *Swaraj*, self rule, leaps at you from his evocative work. It shows the work of a humanist, not a satirist.

Later, he turned to intricately wrought and complex techniques with his *King* series. He brings alive the erstwhile legendary India of pomp and circumstance – the firmament of nawabs, rajas, maharajas.

The answer that remains teasingly out of reach is how an artist with such a pronounced academic background transformed himself into the Adimoolam of today? In his abstractions, the subject dissolves in a cascade of colour-form; reality is almost totally absent, even when you decipher a landscape as the source of his inspiration. Upon careful investigation, a connection between stroke and form can be established with the original black-and-whites.

One thing that does stand clear, however, is that no one will find it difficult to relate to the warm and transparent persona that emerges from Adimoolam's drawings.

Following pages:
Pen and ink on paper, 27 x 20", 2006

Below: **Young Model II**, pen and black ink, 8.5 x 20.3", 1966









Two Studies of an Old Person, pen and black ink, 16 x 21.3", 1965



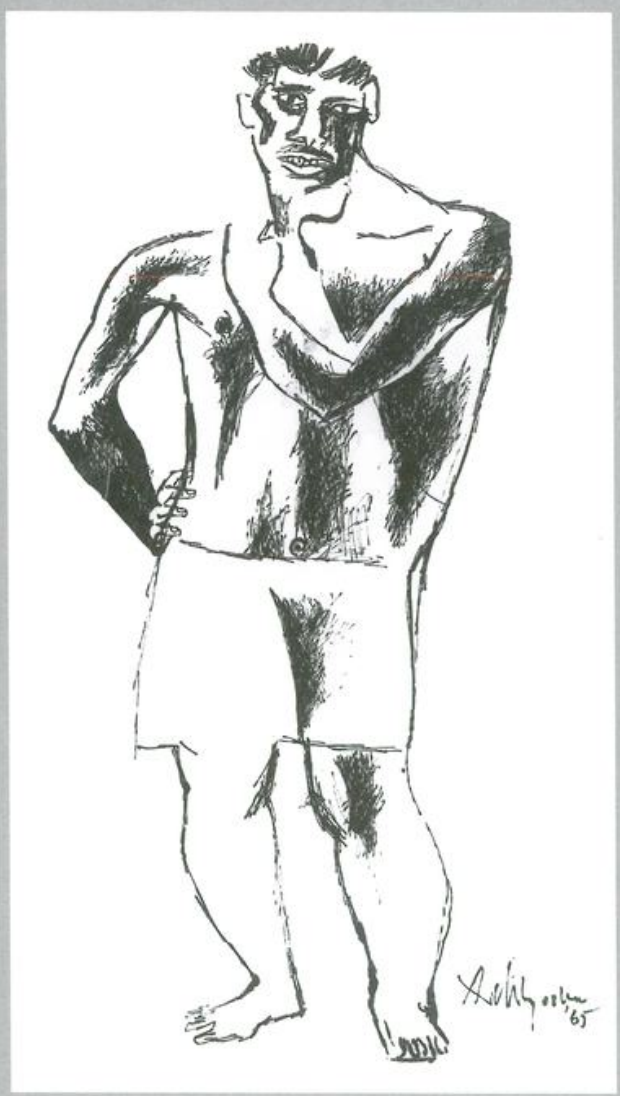
Seated Male Model, pen and black ink, 16.5 x 22", 1965



Man Seated on Cane Chair, black ink and wash, 15 x 20", 1966



Youth Standing II, pen and black ink, 17.5 x 23.3", 1965



Youth Standing I, pen and black ink, 17.9 x 24", 1965



Seated Male Model I, black ink and wash, 15.5 x 20.7", 1966



Seated Male Model III, pen and black ink, 16.4 x 22", 1966



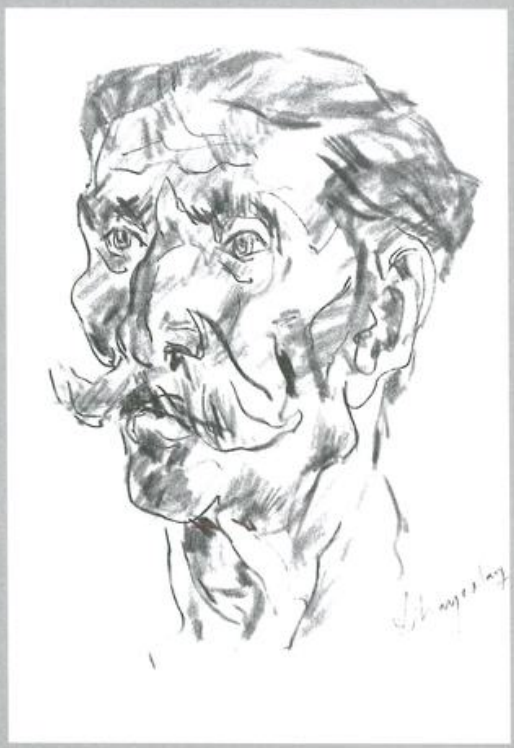
Seated Male Model II, pen and black ink, 16 x 22", 1966



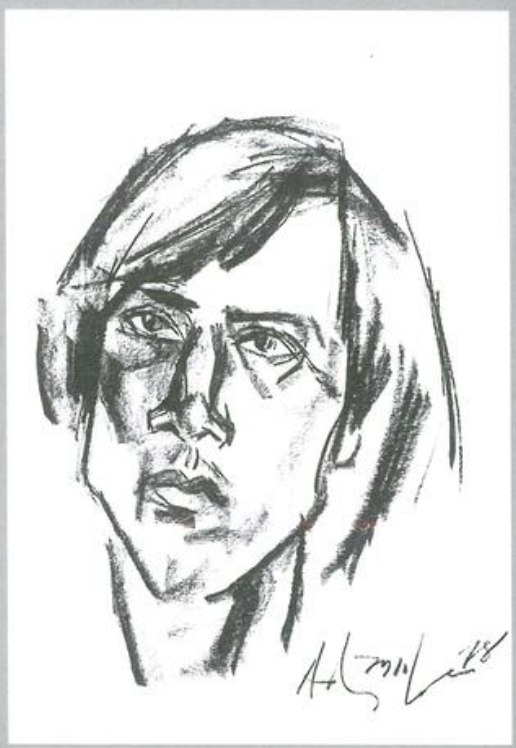
Seated Youth, pen and black ink, 16 x 22", 1966



Young Model I, black ink and wash, 11.5 x 21.3", 1965



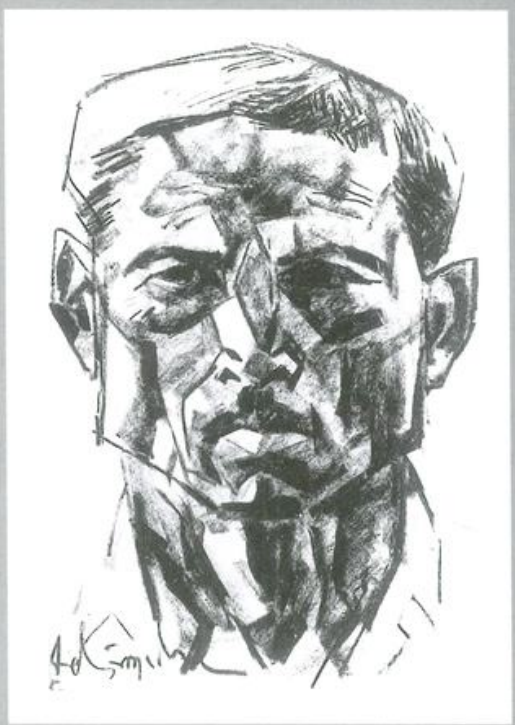
Man with Moustache, black charcoal, 16.5 x 23", 1962



Portrait of a Youth, black crayon, 16.1 x 20", 1978



Teashop Boy, charcoal sketch, 18 x 24", 1987



School Attender, crayon sketch, 18 x 24", 1978



Portrait of an Old Man I, pen and black ink, 12.8 x 22", 1966



Portrait of a Male Model, oil sketch on paper, 15.3 x 22.4", 1966



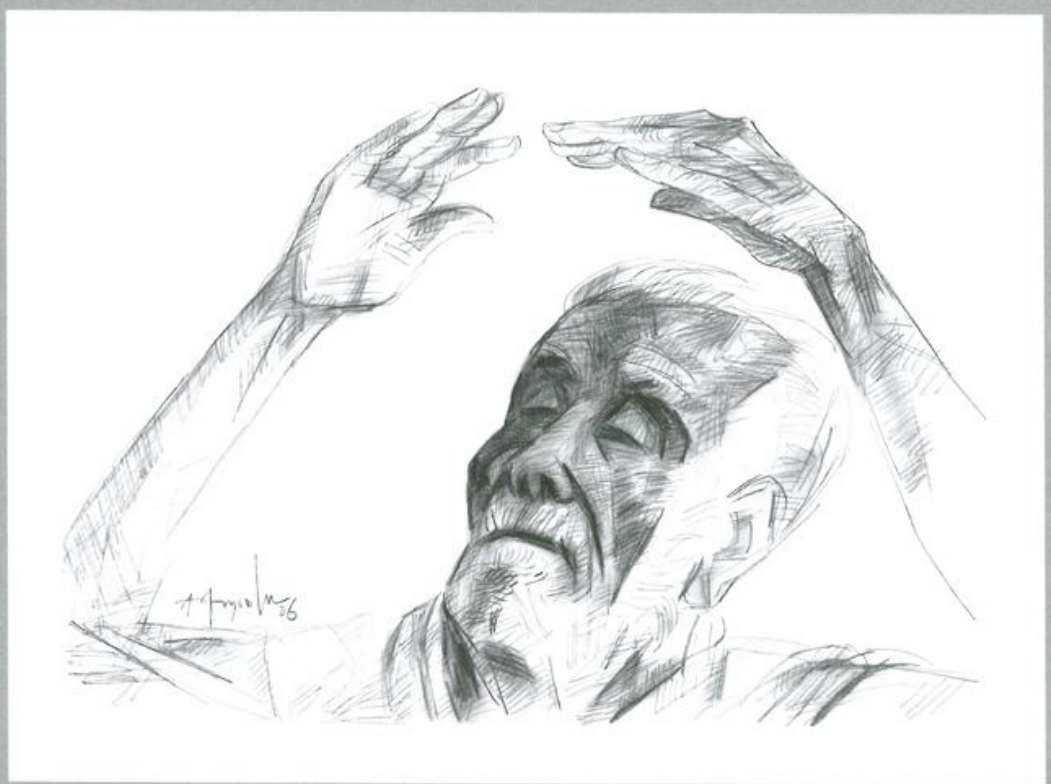
Portrait of an Old Man II, black ink and wash, 16 x 22.7", 1966



Portrait of a Bearded Man II, black ink and wash, 14.3 x 22.3", 1966



My Uncle at 99 I, charcoal on paper, 27 x 20", 2006



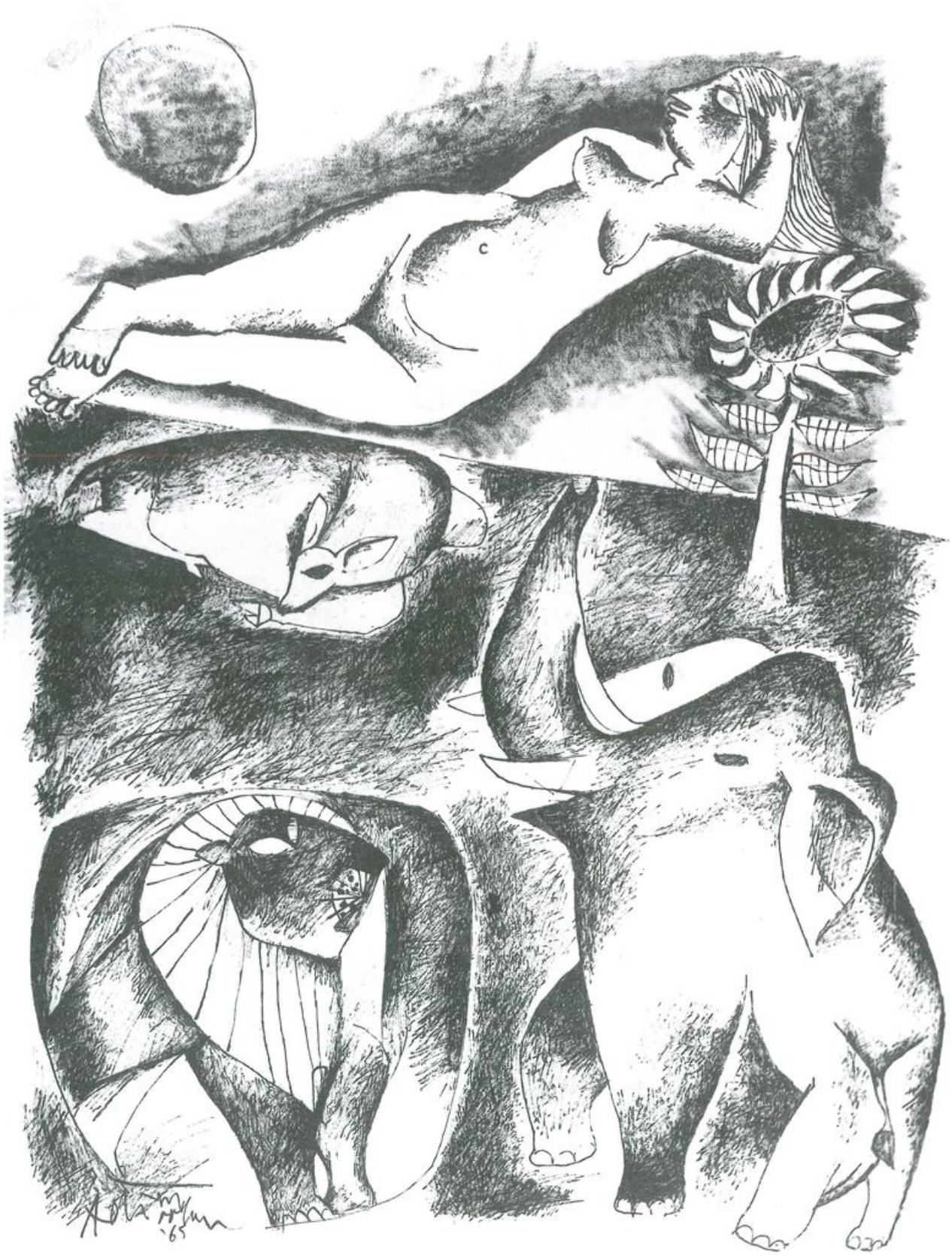
My Uncle at 99 II, charcoal on paper, 27 x 20", 2006



Raju (artist's son at the age of 4), ink on paper, 7 x 8", 1976



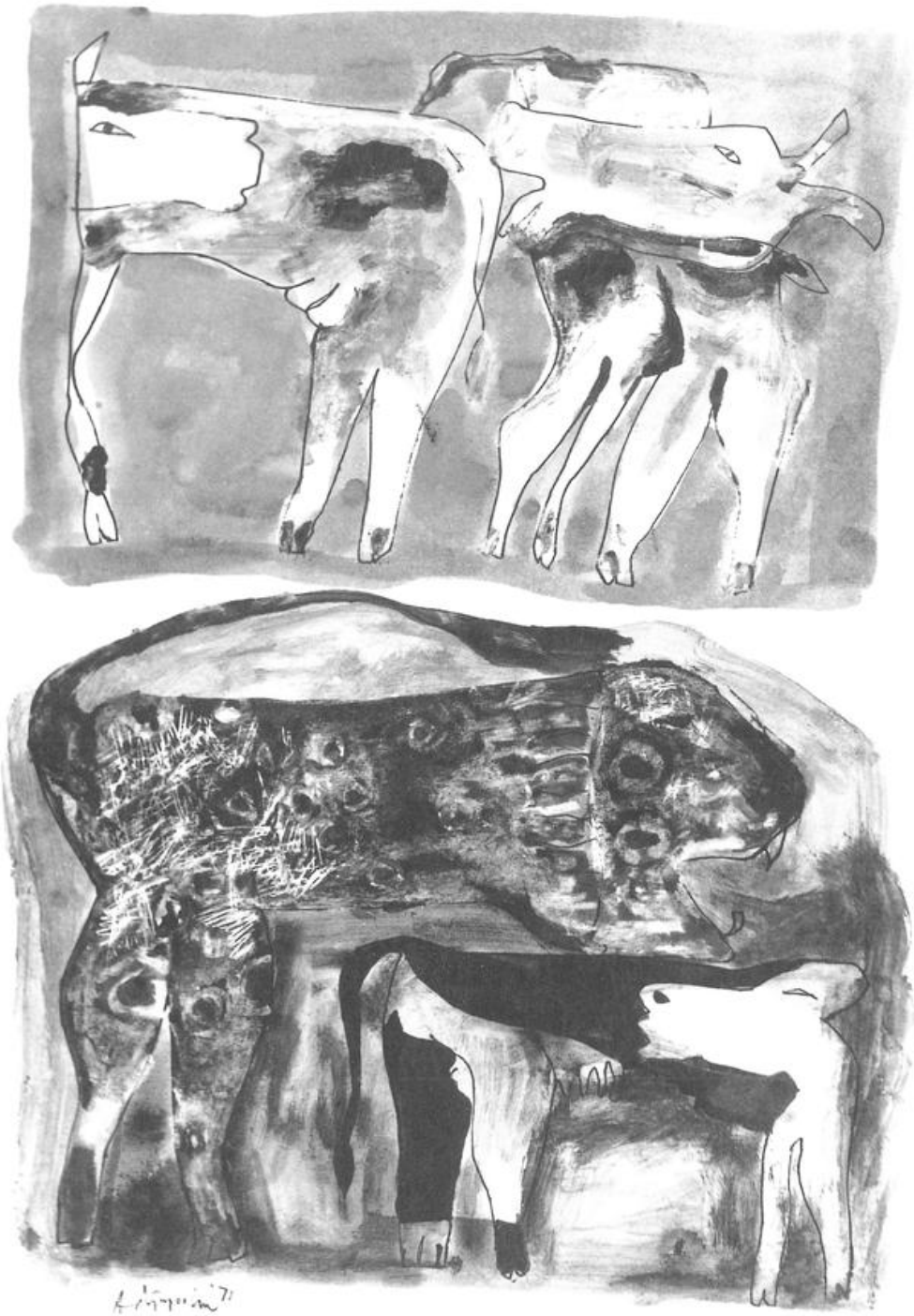
Abi (artist's son at the age of 5), ink on paper, 7 x 8", 1975



Harmony, black ink on grey paper, 17 x 23.1", 1965



Reclining Nude, black ink and wash on handmade paper, 22.3 x 16.3", 1965



Affection and an Attack, black ink and wash, 15.2 x 21", 1971



The War, black ink and wash, 20.5 x 15.5", 1969



Veeran Mounted on the Horse, black and colour ink wash, 21.4 x 16.4", 1969



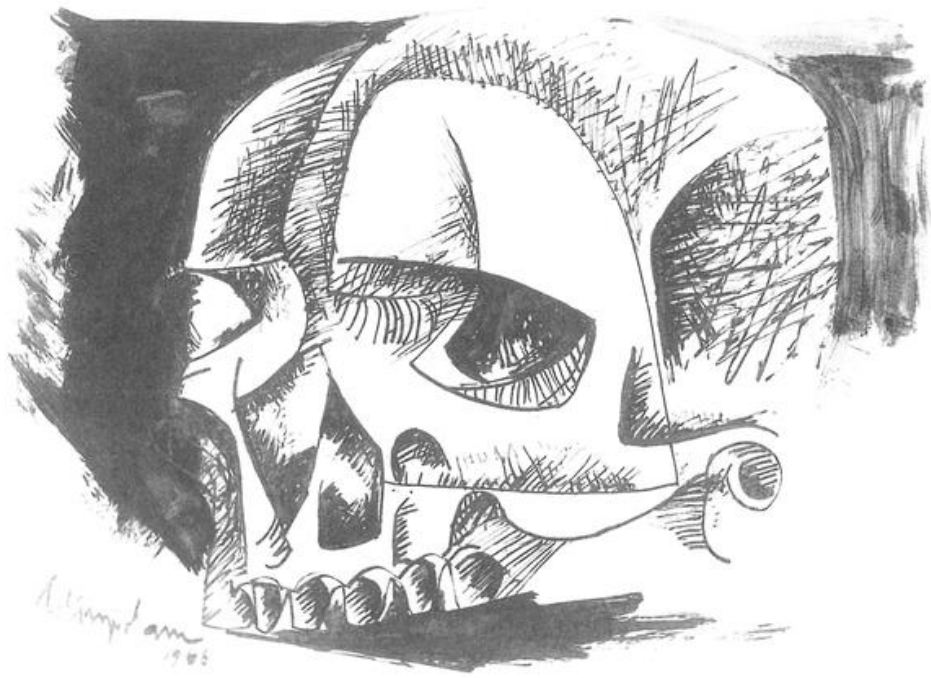
Mourners, black ink and wash, 15 x 20.9", 1969



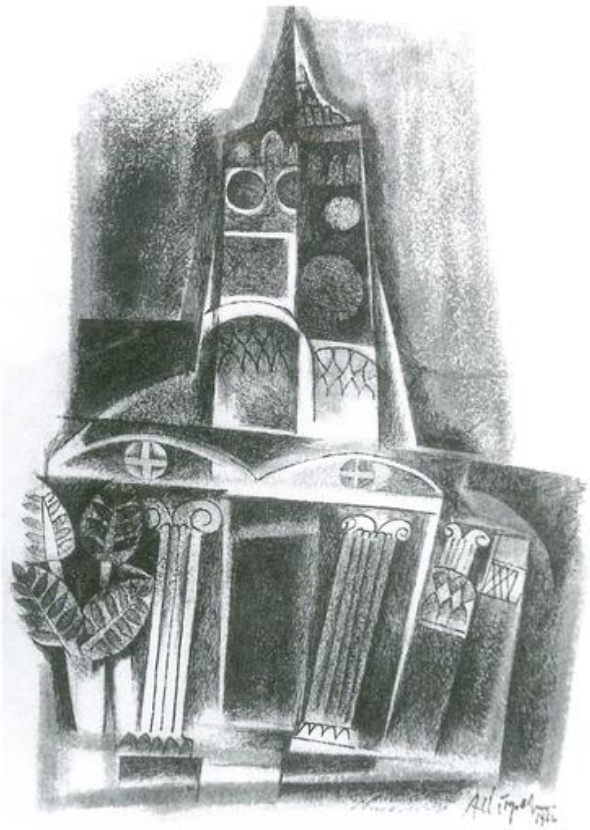
Study of **Human Skull III**, black ink with oil brush, 15.9 x 22.7", 1966



Study of **Human Skull IV**, black ink and scrape, 16.5 x 22.4", 1966



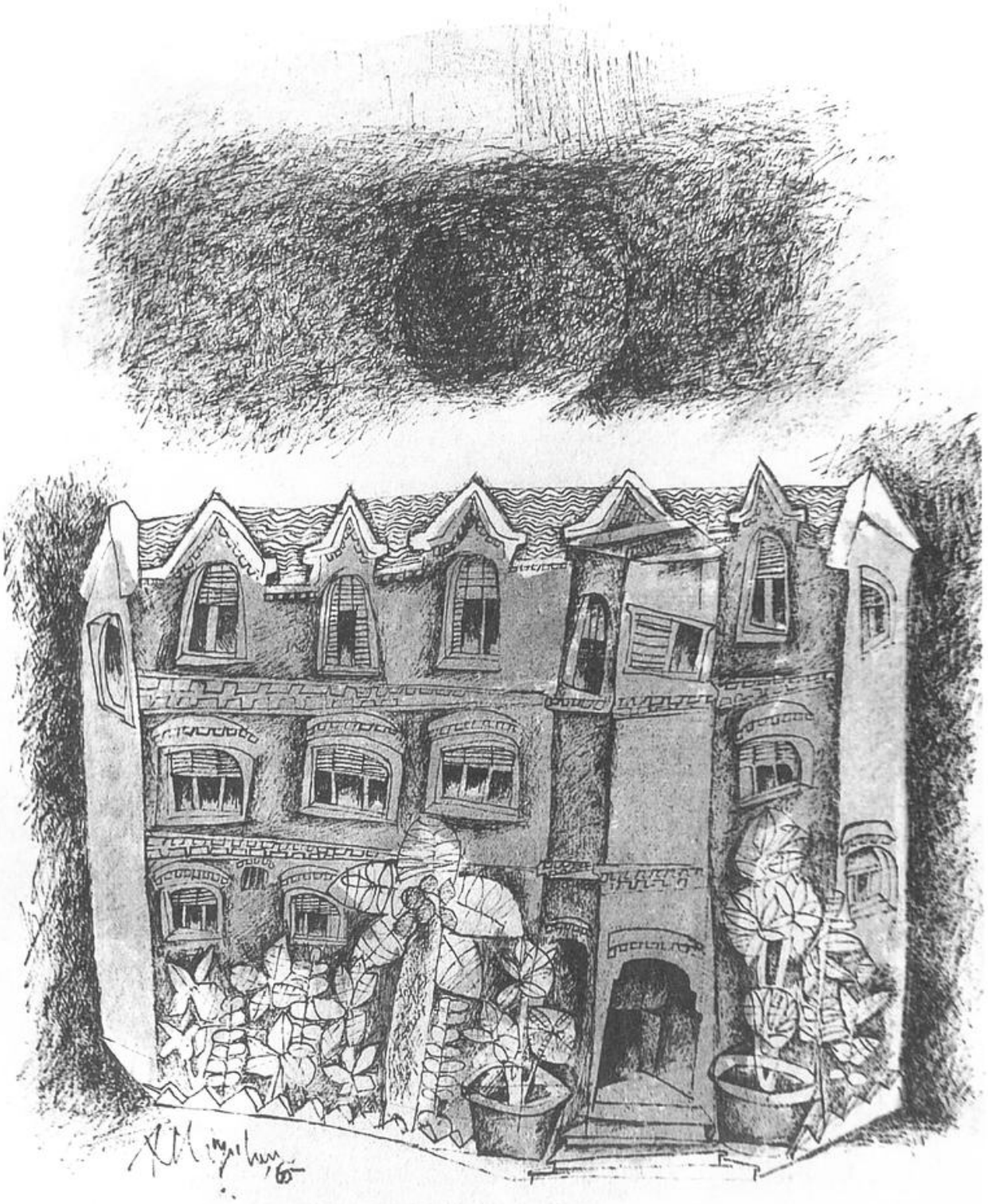
Study of **Human Skull I**, black ink and wash, 20.7 x 15.5", 1966



Cathedral, black ink and wash, 16 x 21.7", 1966



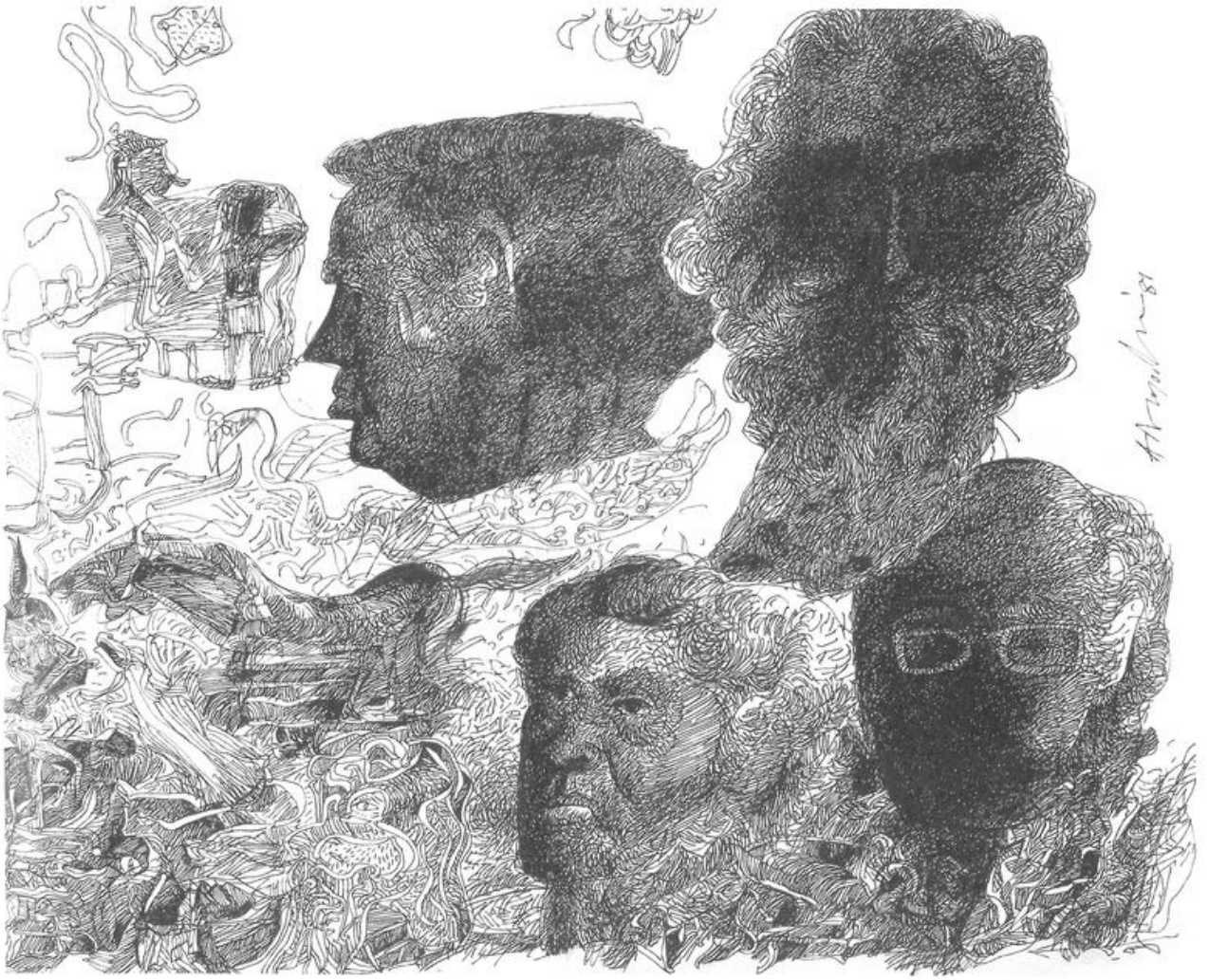
A Devotee Worships, black ink and wash, 16 x 22", 1965



My School, black ink and wash, 16 x 22", 1965



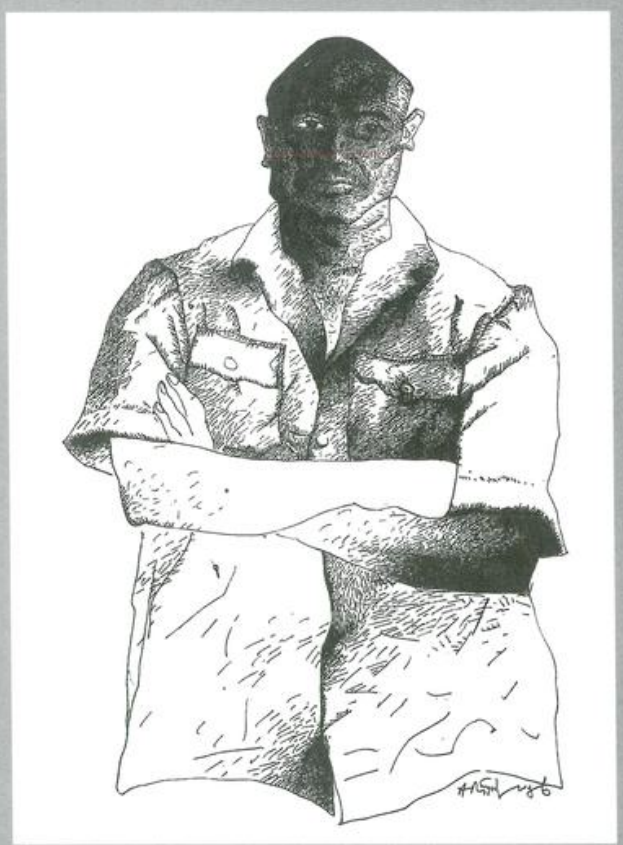
Award Winners, pen and black ink, 21.7 x 15", 1983



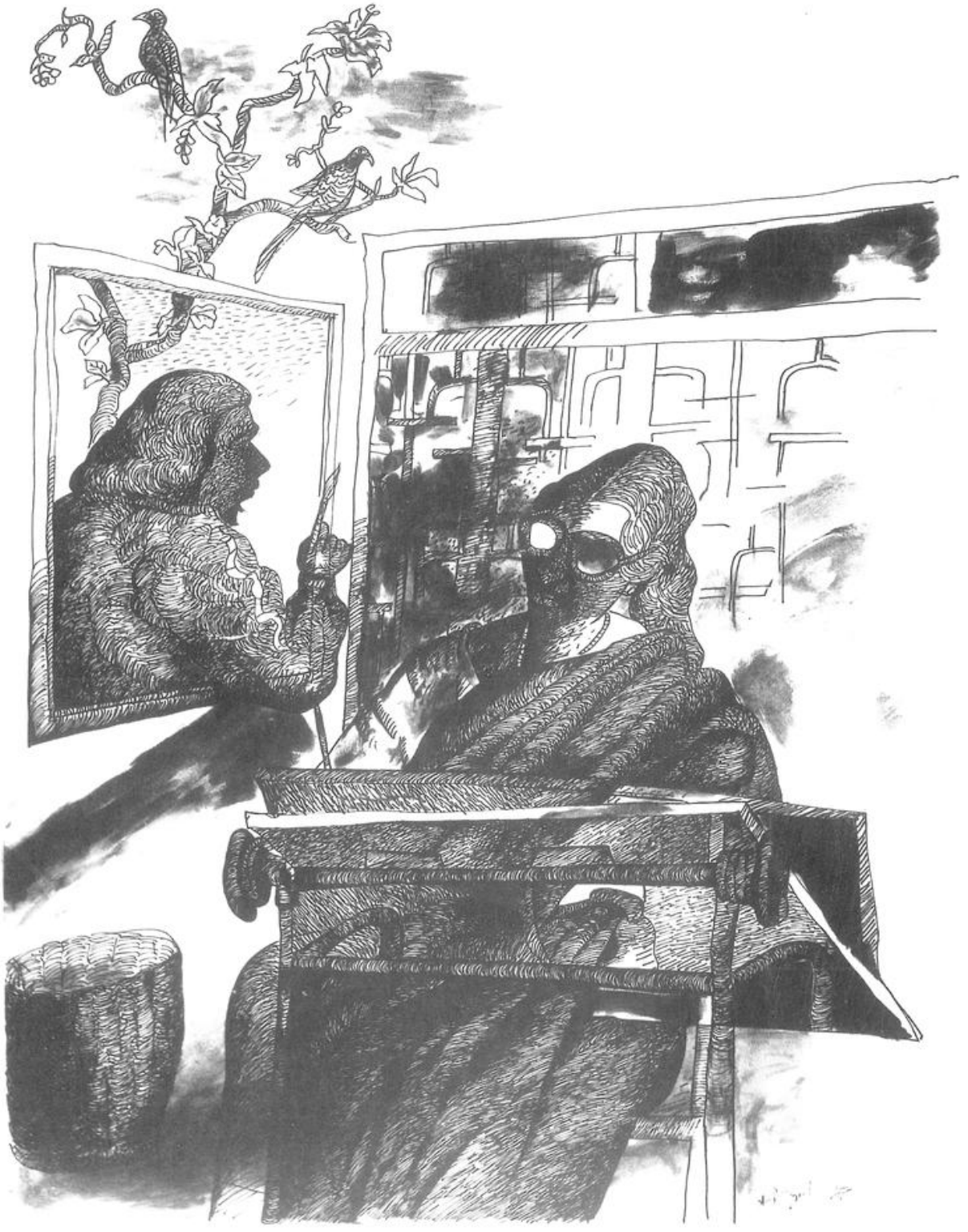
Faces, pen and ink on paper, 22 x 18", 1981



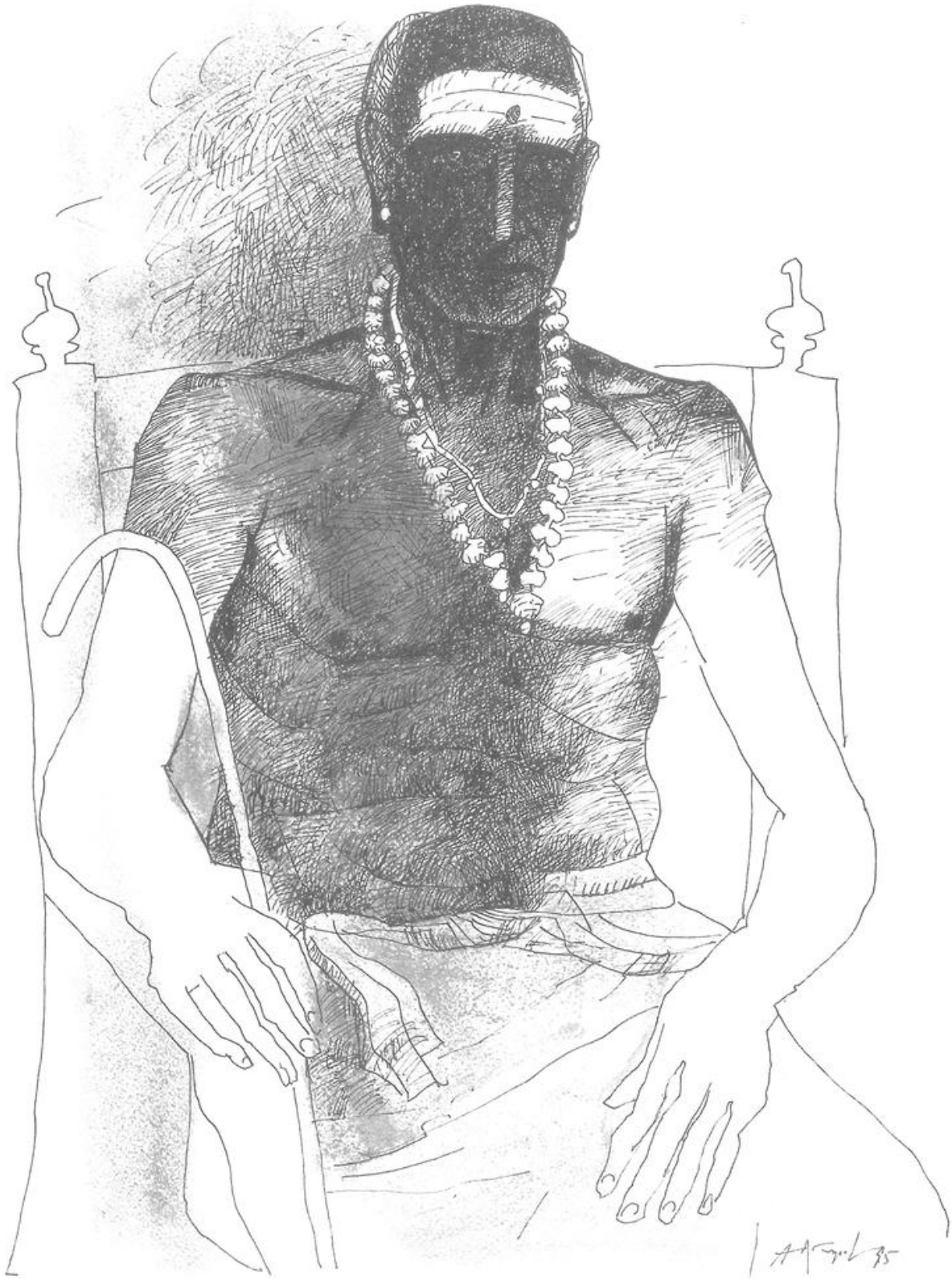
Seated Traditional Woman, pen and black ink, 16 x 21.3", 1983



The Bodyguard, pen and black ink, 17.5 x 22.3", 1986



Artist and a Designer, pen and black ink, 15 x 20", 1985



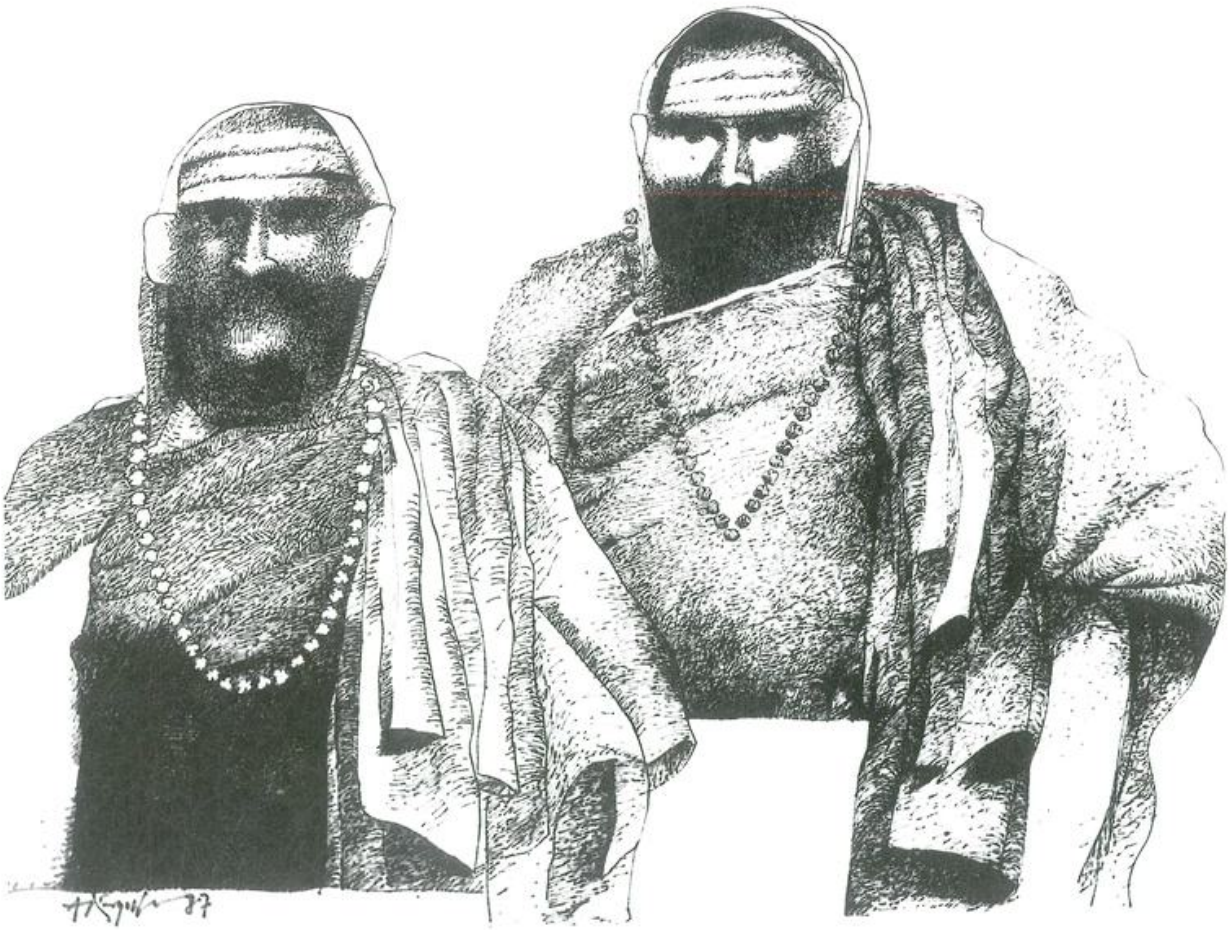
Guru, pen and ink on paper, 18 x 24", 1995



Two Vaishnavites, ink on paper, 22 x 30", 1989



Achariya, pen and ink on paper, 23 x 30", 1989



Two Achariyas, pen and black ink, 21 x 15.8", 1987



Veena Dhanamma, charcoal on paper, 35 x 23", 2005



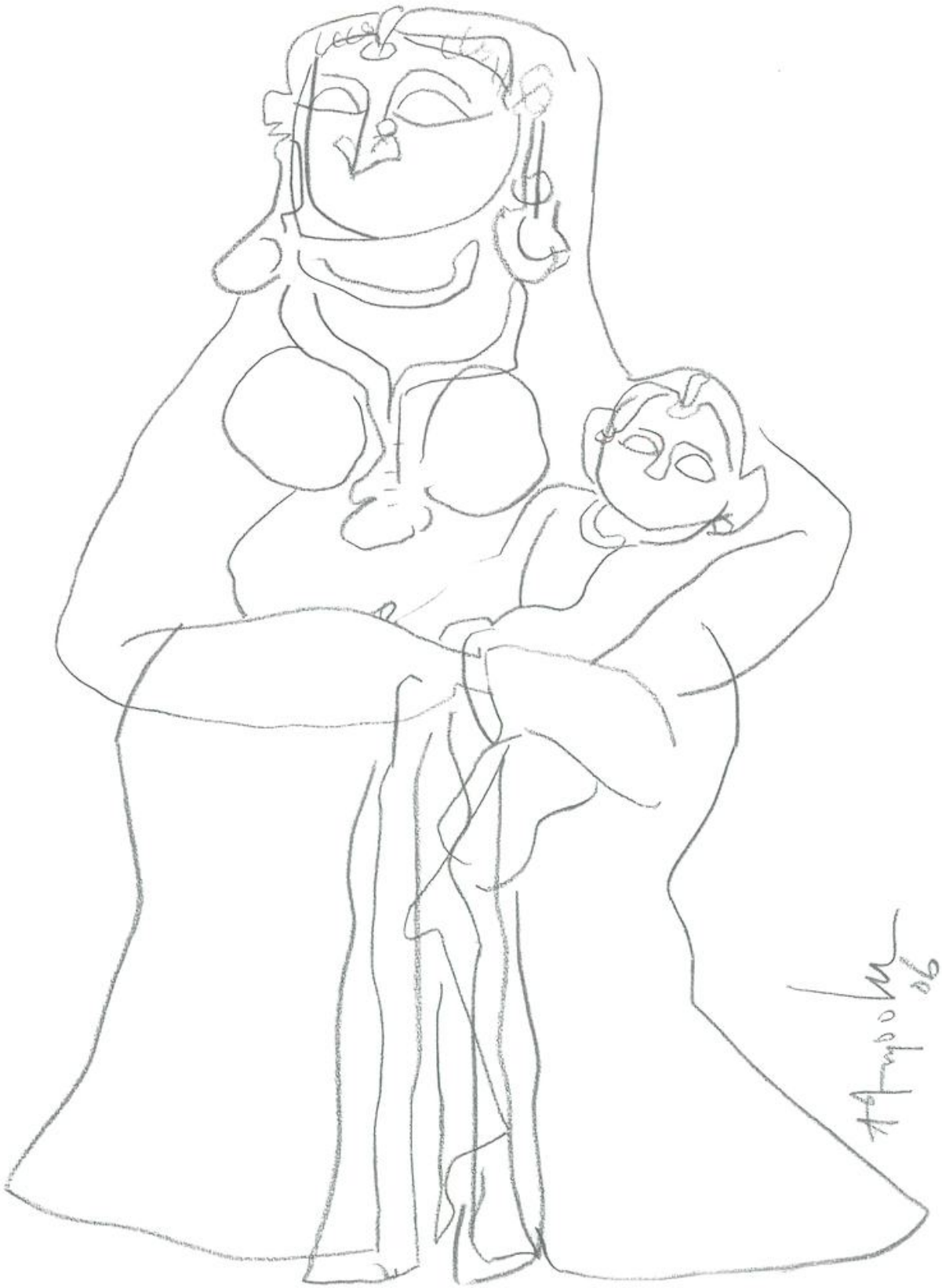
Musician, charcoal on paper, 20 x 27", 2006



Dhanapal and His Sculpture, charcoal on paper, 27 x 20", 2006



Mother and Child, ink on paper, 21 x 14", 2005



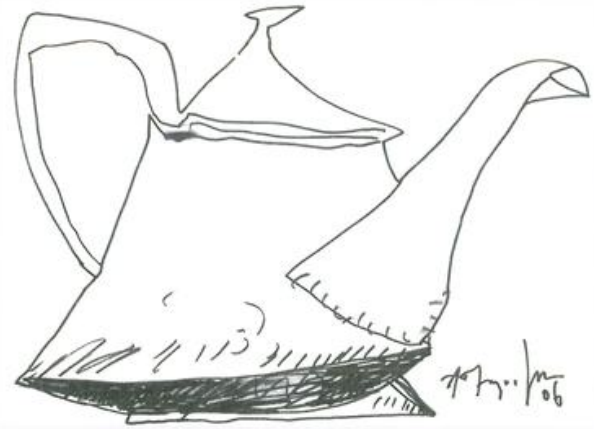
Gypsy with Her Child, ink on paper, 18 x 21", 2006



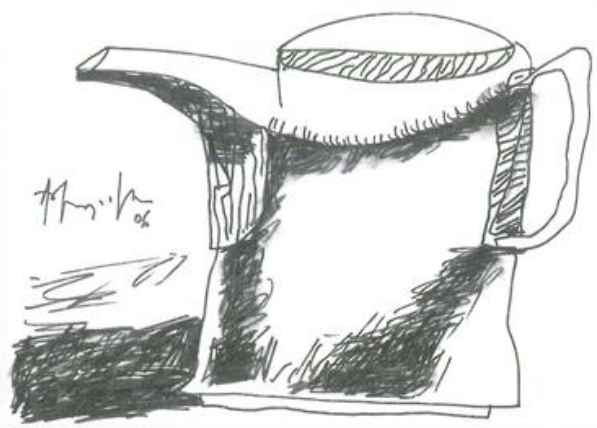
Gypsy with Her Child, charcoal on paper, 18 x 21", 2006



Gypsy with Her Child, charcoal on paper, 18 x 21", 2006



12 x 8", 2006



12 x 8", 2006



8.5 x 12", 2006



8.5 x 12", 2006



8.5 x 12", 2006



12 x 8", 2006



12 x 8", 2006



9.5 x 8.5", 2006



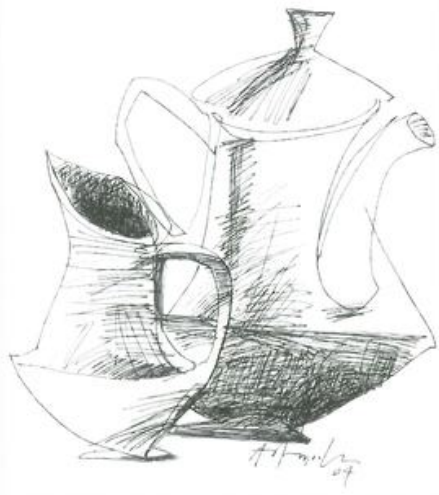
9.5 x 8.5", 2006



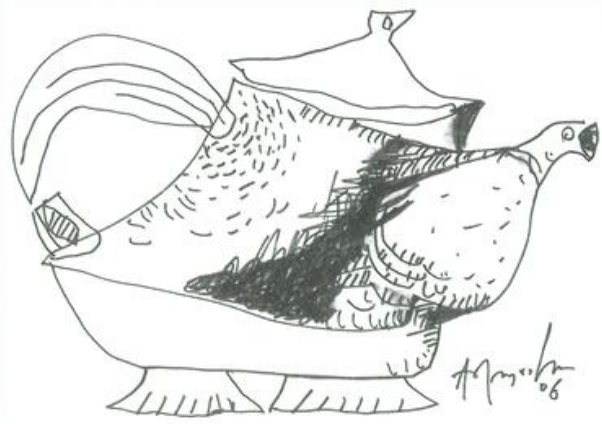
8 x 12", 2006



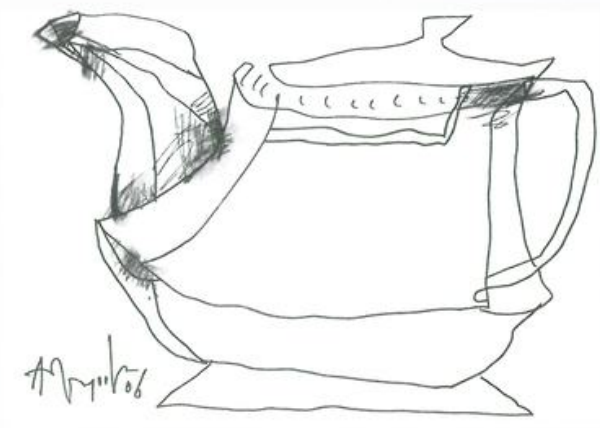
8.5 x 9.5", 2006



11.5 x 15.5", 2004

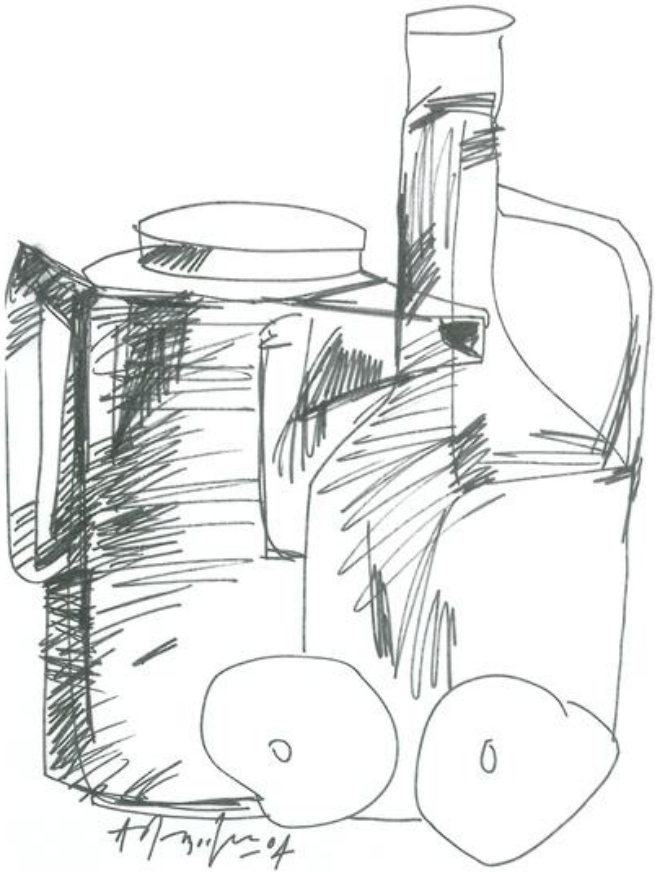


12 x 8", 2006

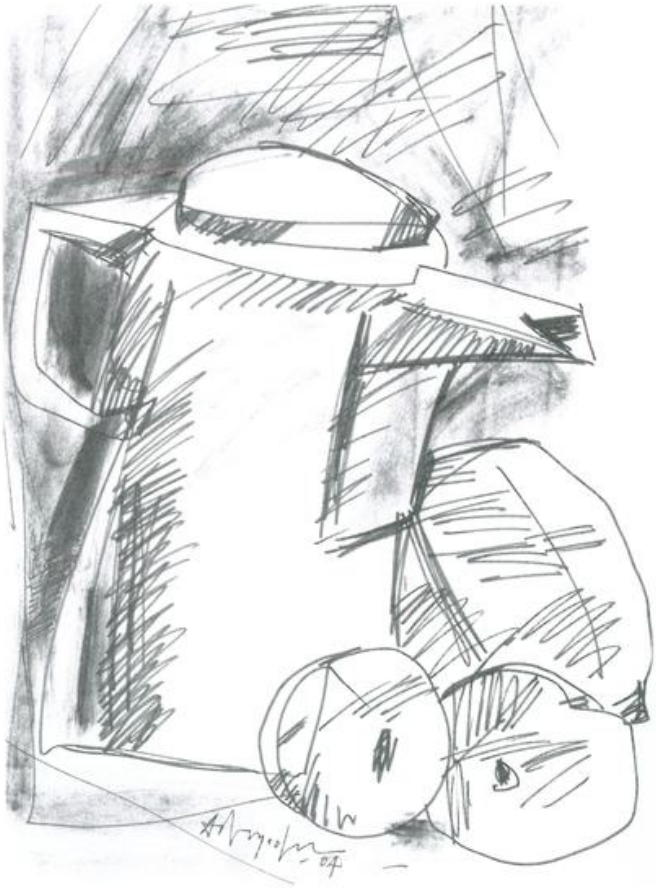


12 x 8.5", 2006

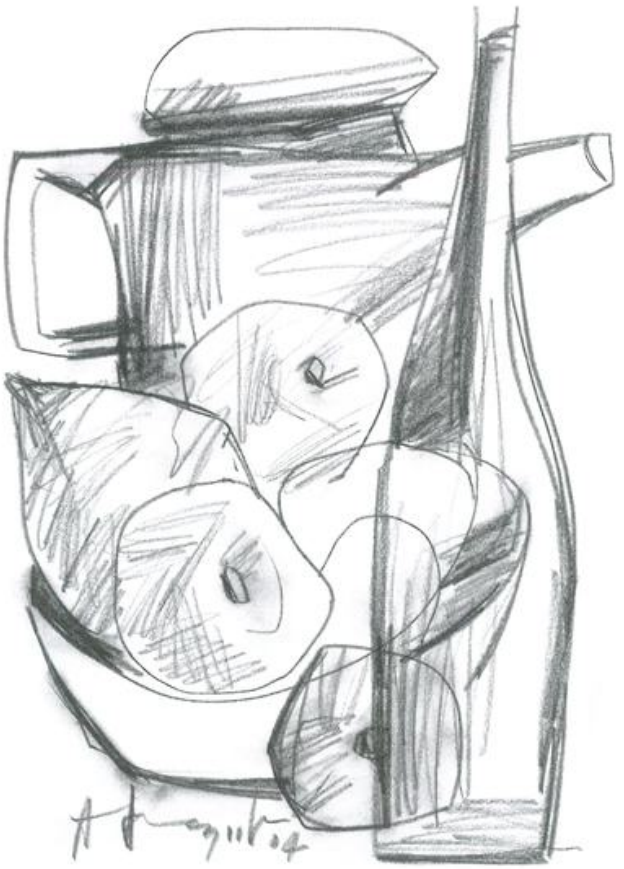
Coffee Pots, ink on paper



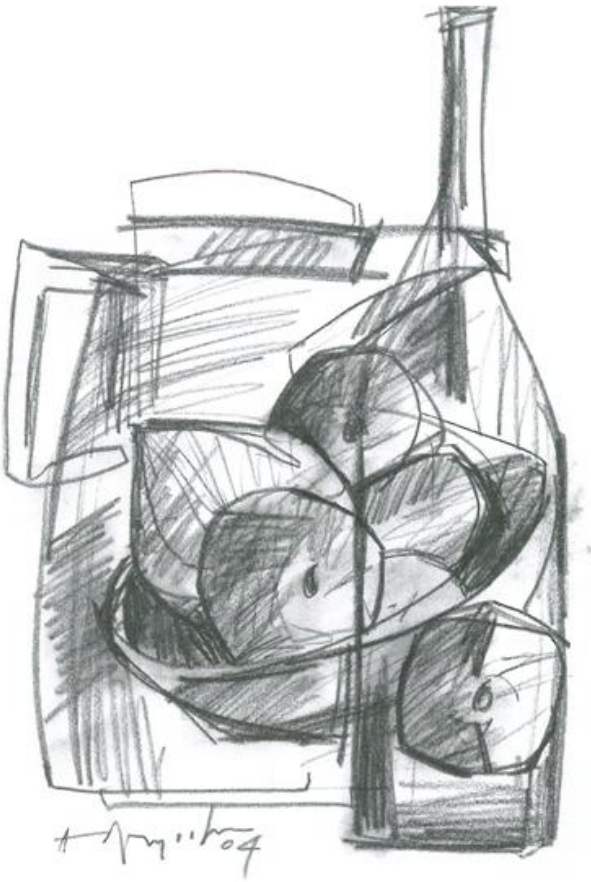
Charcoal and ink on paper, 11 x 15.5", 2004



Ink on paper, 11 x 15.5", 2004

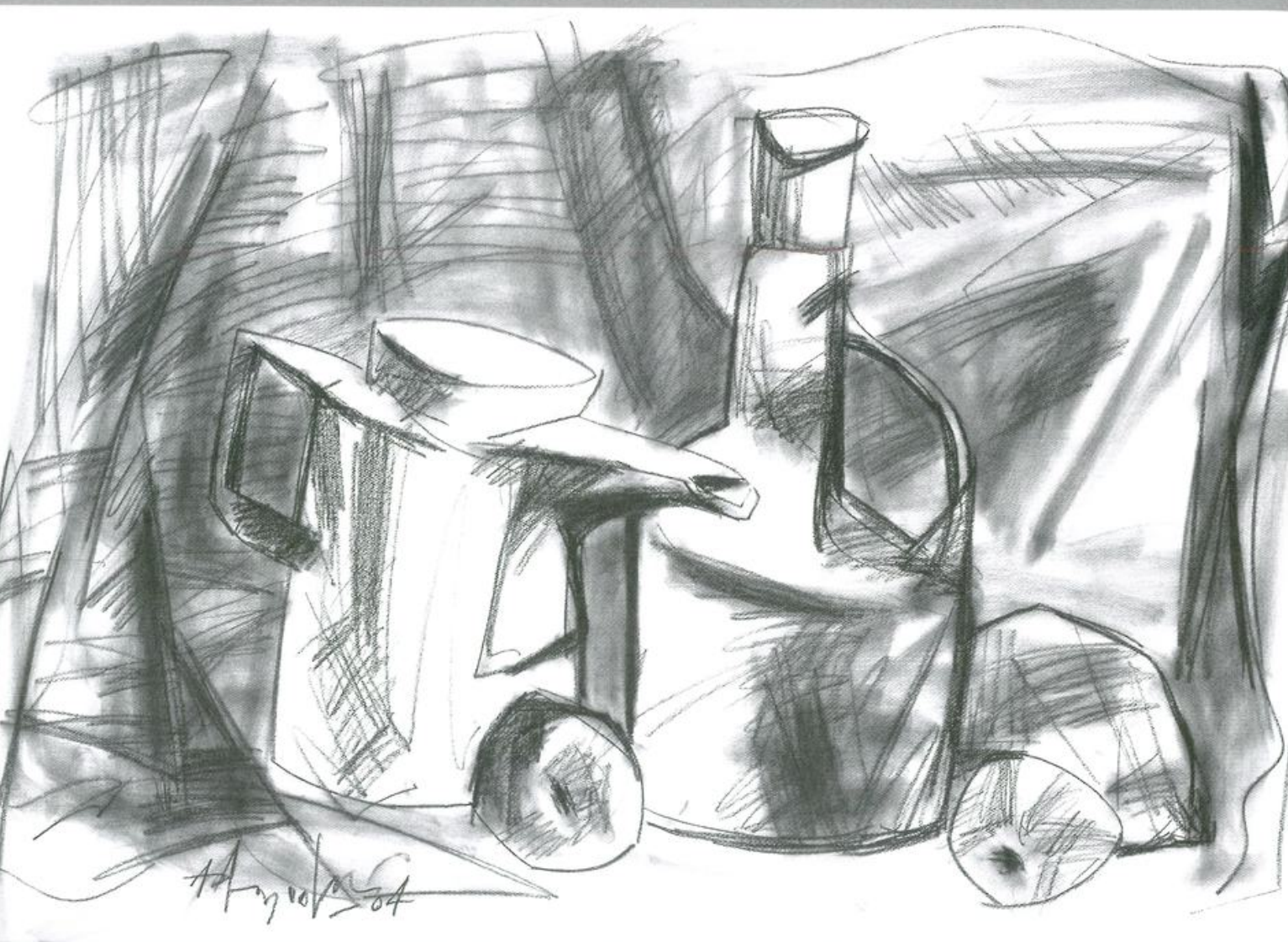


Charcoal on paper, 12 x 16", 2004



Charcoal on paper, 12 x 16", 2006

Coffee Pots and Fruits



Still Life, charcoal on paper, 35 x 23", 2004



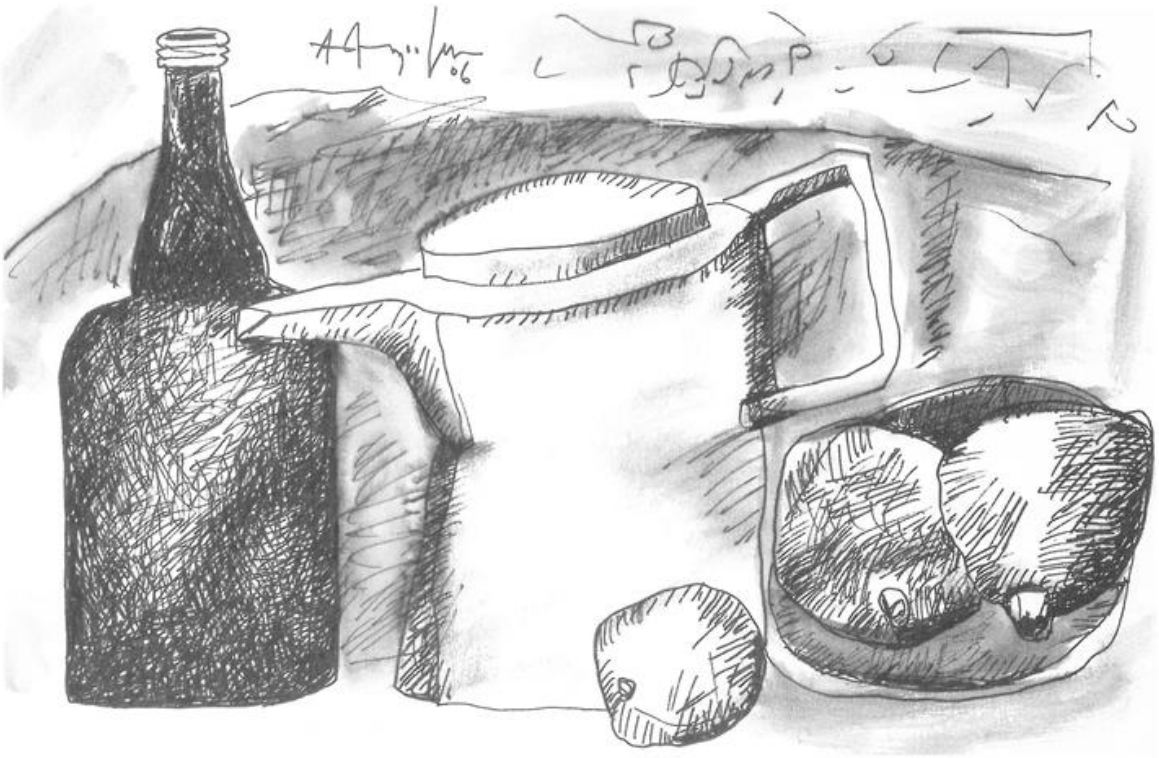
Charcoal on paper, 11 x 15.5", 2004



Bottle with Jugs, ink wash on paper, 11 x 15.5", 2004



Coffee Pots with a Bottle, ink on paper, 19 x 12.5", 2006



Bottle, Coffee Pot and Fruits, ink and wash on paper, 19 x 12.5", 2006



Still Life, charcoal on paper, 22 x 30", 2004



Still Life, charcoal on paper, 11.5 x 15.5", 2004



Still Life, charcoal on paper, 11.5 x 15.5", 2004



Bottles, Coffee Pot and Fruits,
ink on paper, 32 x 22", 2004





Still Life, charcoal on paper, 11.5 x 15.5", 2004



Bottles, ink and wash on paper, 11.5 x 15.5", 2004



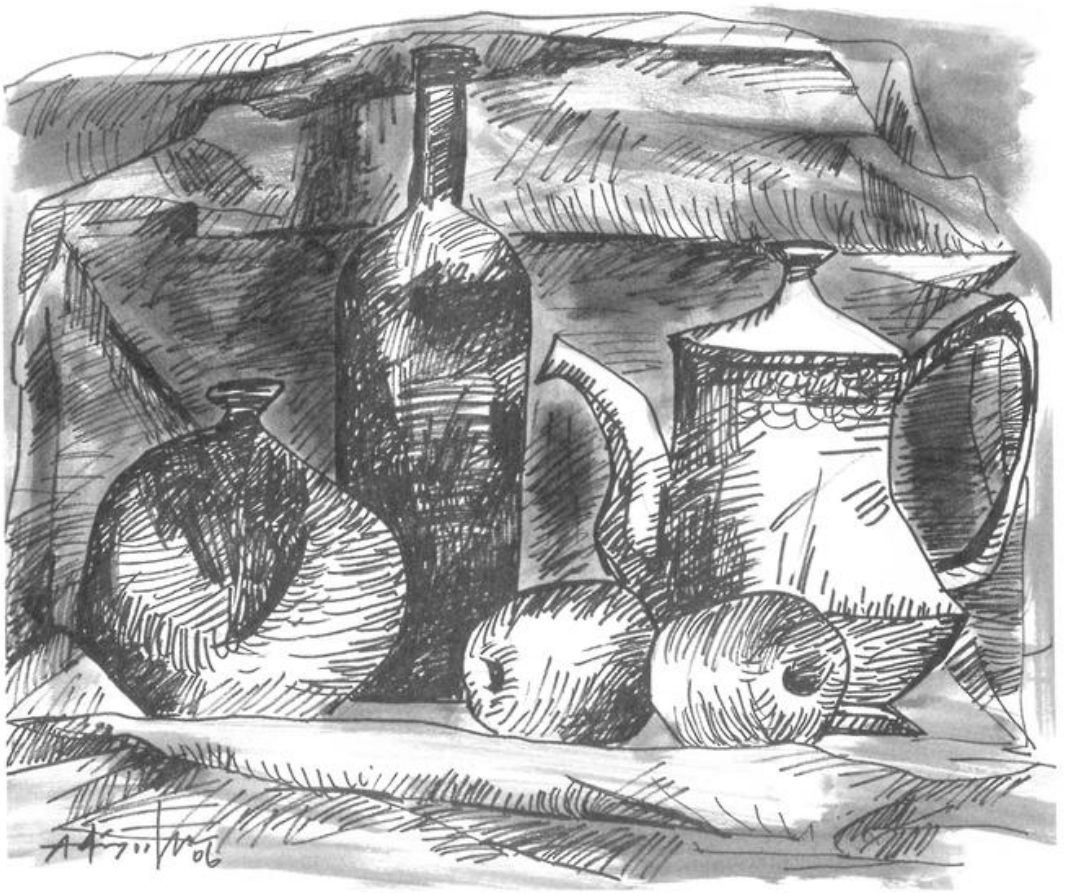
Bottles and Fruits, ink and wash on paper, 18 x 21.2", 2006



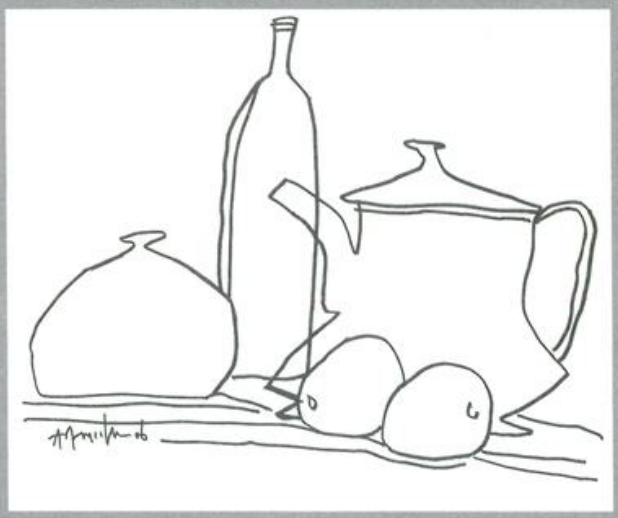
Still Life and a Horse Image, ink and wash on paper, 12.5 x 19", 2006



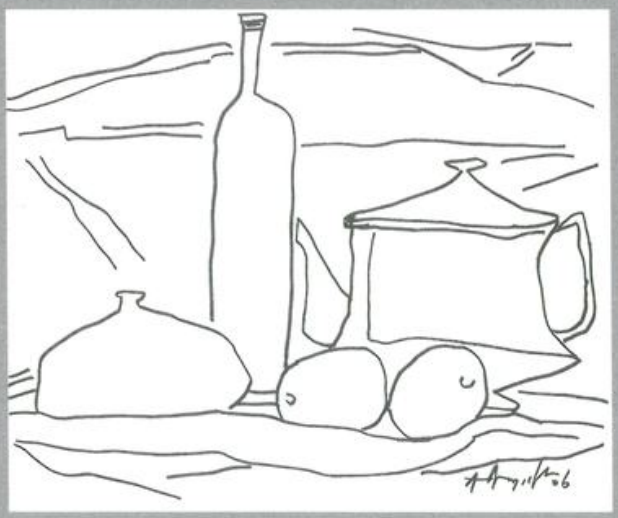
Still Life with a Clock, ink and wash on paper, 19 x 12.5", 2006



Still Life, ink and wash on paper, 21.5 x 18", 2006



Still Life, ink on paper, 21.5 x 18", 2006



Still Life, ink on paper, 21.5 x 18", 2006



Coffee Pots and Apple, ink on paper, 21.5 x 18", 1983



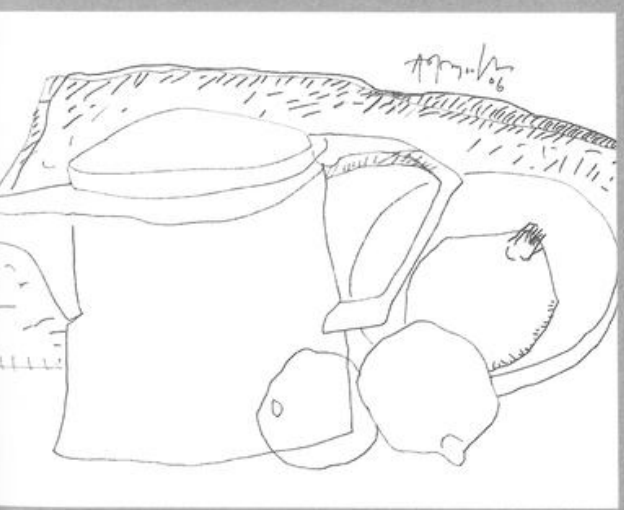
Coffee Pots and Apples, ink on paper, 21.5 x 18", 1983



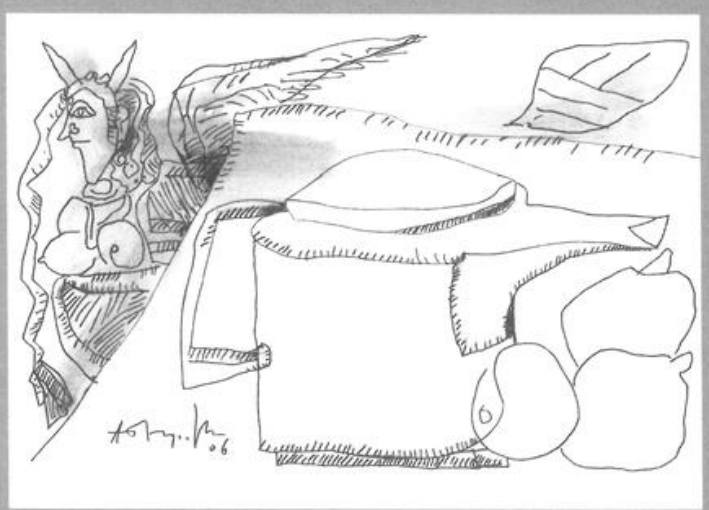
Still Life with a Clock, ink on paper, 19 x 12.5", 2006



Coffee Pot, Mug and a Bottle, ink on paper, 19.5 x 12.5", 2006



Coffee Pot with Fruits, ink on paper, 19 x 12.5", 2006



Still Life with Kamadhenu, ink on paper, 19 x 12.5", 2006



Pen and ink on paper, 11 x 15", 2005



Pen and ink on paper, 14 x 21", 2005



Pen and ink on paper, 14 x 21", 2005



Pen and ink on paper, 12 x 16", 2005



Pen and ink on paper, 11 x 15.5", 2005



Pen, black ink and wash on paper, 11 x 16", 2006



Pen and ink on paper, 14 x 21.5", 2005



Pen and ink on paper, 14 x 21.5", 2005



Pen and ink on paper, 12 x 16", 2005



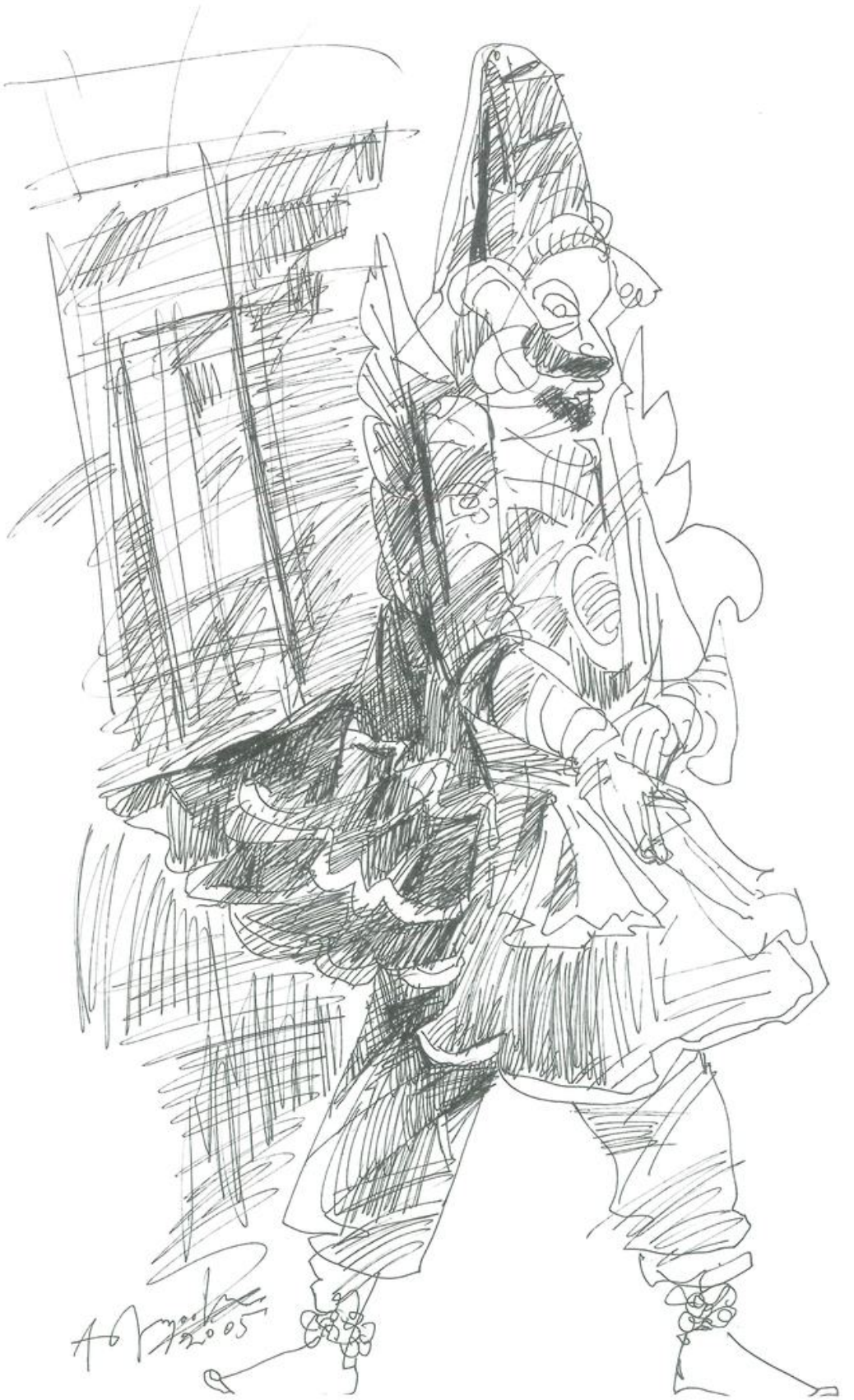
Pen and ink on paper, 12 x 16", 2005



Pen and ink on paper, 12 x 16", 2005



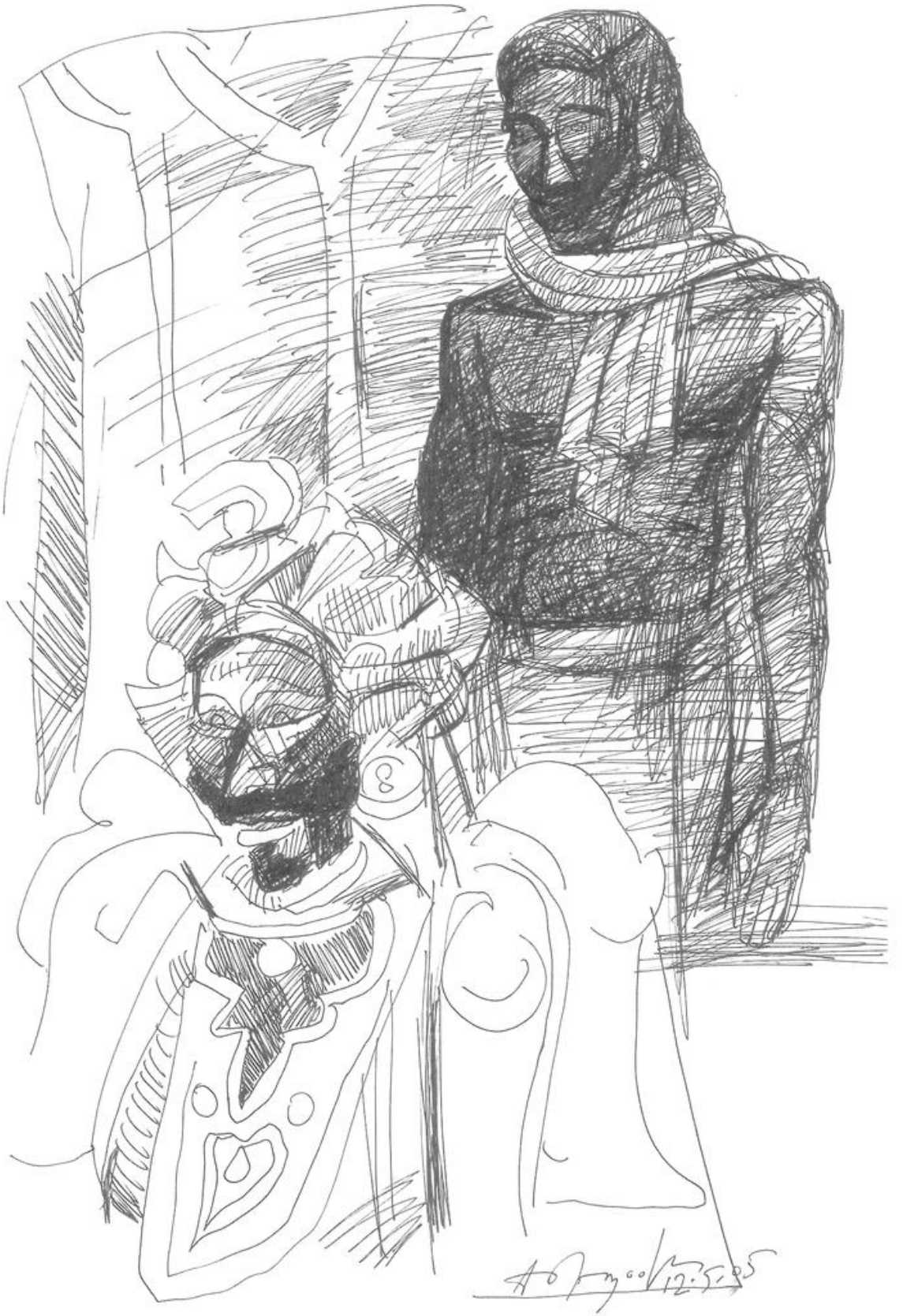
Pen, black ink and wash, 12.5 x 19", 2006



Pen and ink on paper, 14 x 21", 2005



In the Green Room, ink on paper, 12 x 16.5", 2006



Ready to Perform, ink on paper, 14 x 21", 2005



Behind the Curtain, charcoal on canvas board, 16 x 24", 2005



Pen and ink on paper, 18 x 21", 2006



Pen and ink on paper, 18 x 21", 2006



Pen and ink on paper, 14 x 21.5", 2005



Pen and ink on paper, 14 x 21.5", 2005



Charcoal on canvas board, 15 x 23.5", 2005



Pen and black ink on paper, 13 x 19", 1993



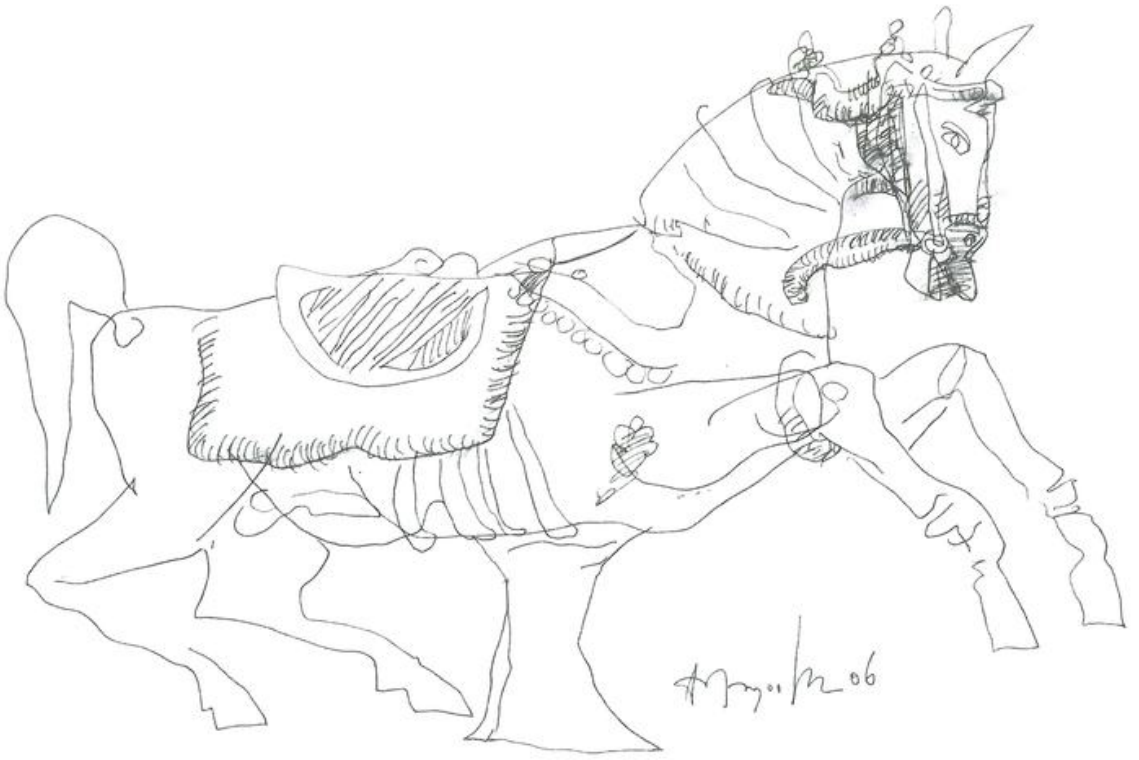
Pen and ink on paper, 11.5 x 16.5", 2006



Pen and black ink on paper, 14 x 21.5", 2006



Pen and black ink on paper, 14 x 21.5", 2006



Pen and ink on paper, 19 x 12.5", 2006



Pen and ink on paper, 19 x 13", 1993



Pen and ink on paper, 11 x 15.5", 2004



Pen and ink on paper, 12.5 x 19.5", 2006



Horseman, pen and ink on paper, 22 x 29", 1992



Horseman, pen and black ink, 15.5 x 14.5", 1985



Animal, charcoal on paper, 27 x 20", 2006



Cat, pen and black ink, 24 x 17.9", 1984



Horseman (based on South-Indian leather puppet), charcoal sketch, 18 x 24", 1981





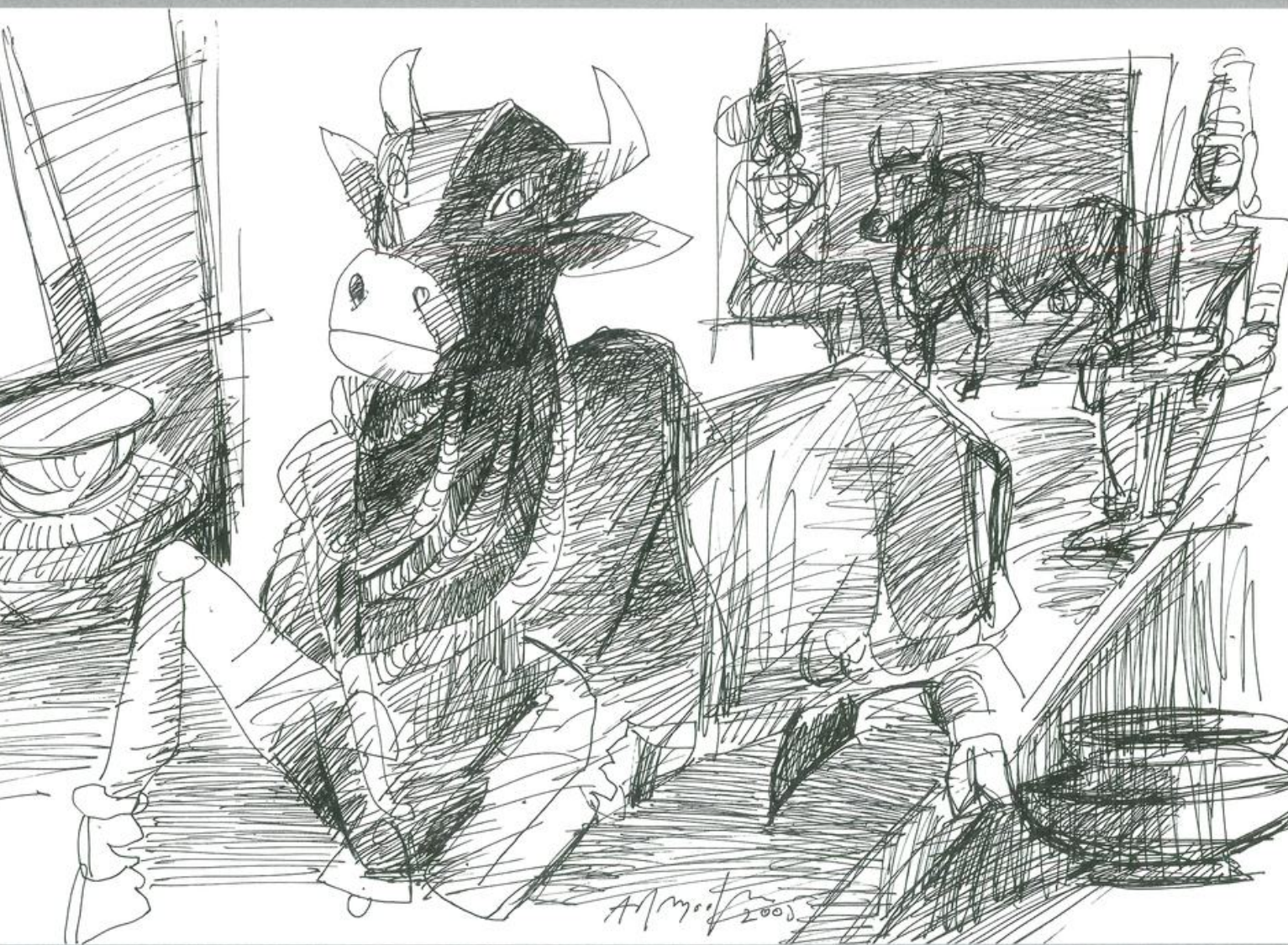
Untitled, pen and ink on paper, 21 x 10", 1981



Animal on the Prowl, pen and black ink, 24 x 18", 1983



On the Prowl, black ink and wash on paper, 21.2 x 14.3", 1974



Bull, ink on paper, 21 x 14", 2005



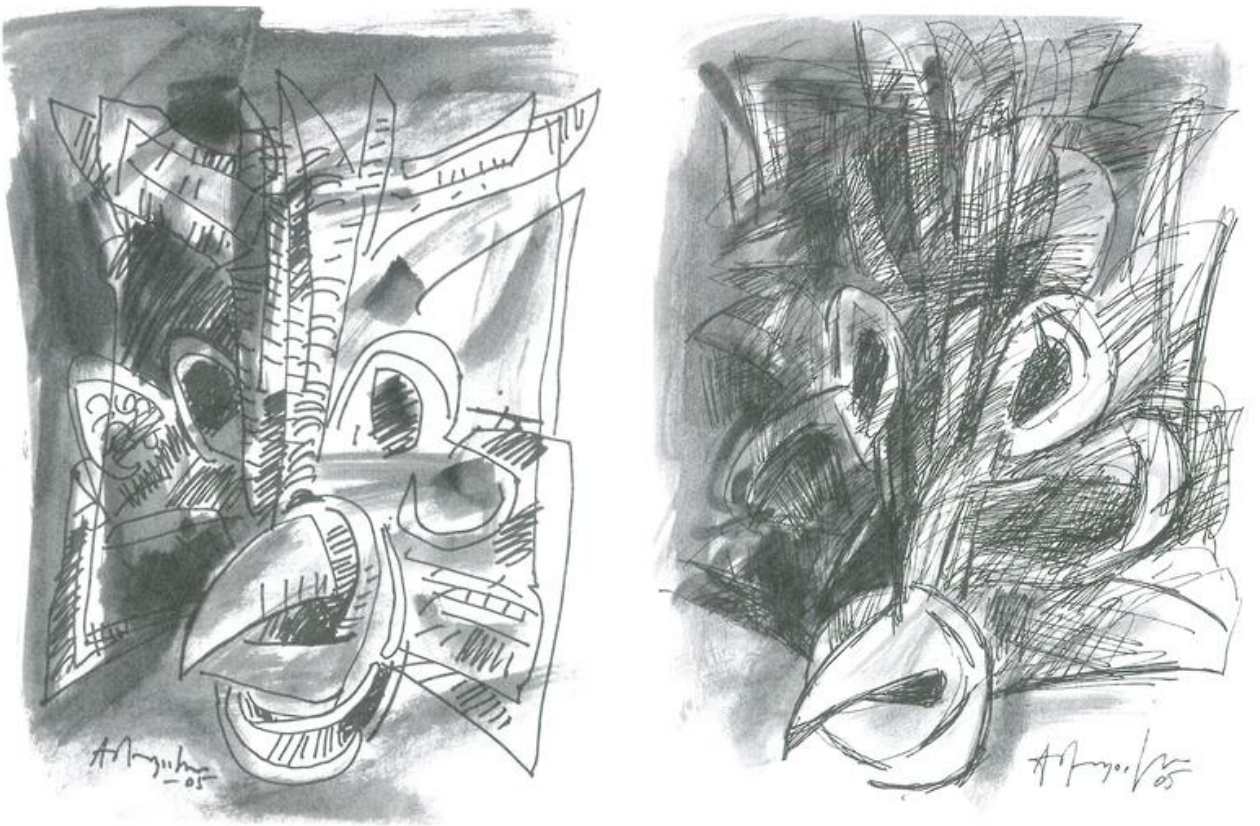
Untitled, ink on paper, 15 x 11.5", 2004



Untitled, ink on paper, 11.5 x 15.5", 2004



Birds Watch, ink on paper, 11.5 x 16.5", 2006



Left and right: **Mask**, ink and wash on paper, 11 x 15.5", 2005





Above and below: **Hamsa Vahana**, charcoal on paper, 21.5 x 18", 2006



Bird, charcoal on paper, 18 x 21", 2006



Krishna, pen and ink on paper, 24 x 17", 1985



Hanuman I, black marker, 14 x 18", 1985



Hanuman II, black marker, 14.4 x 18.5", 1985



Varaahaa, pen and black ink, 18 x 24", 1979



Hanuman, ink on paper, 15 x 22", 1988



Images, pen and black ink, 21 x 16", 1985



Radha and Krishna, pen and ink on paper, 22 x 30", 1985



Pen and ink on paper, 13 x 19". 1994



Goddess II, pen and black ink, 15 x 20", 1983



Goddess I, pen and black ink, 15 x 20", 1983

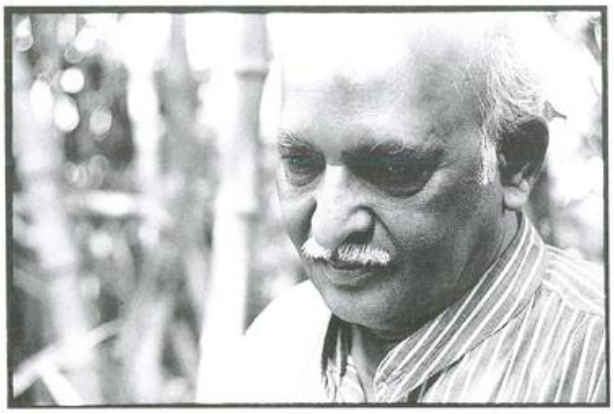


Kamadhenu, charcoal on paper, 27 x 20", 2006



Vahana, charcoal on paper, 18 x 21", 2006

Chronology



Born 1938

Studied Government College of Arts and Crafts, Chennai (1960–66)

Exhibitions

Solo & Group

1963–85 National Exhibition of Art, New Delhi

1966 First one-man show, Chennai

1969 100 Drawings on Gandhiji to mark his birth centenary

1969 One-man show, Sarala Art Centre, Chennai

1972 '25 Years of Indian Art', New Delhi

1973 'Seven South Indian Painters', Australia

1981 One-man show, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

1983 Art Heritage Show, New Delhi

1983 & 84 'Sketch Book Series' (drawings), Sarala Art Centre, Chennai and Kritika Art Gallery, Bengaluru

1986 'Sixth Triennale – India', New Delhi

1986 & 89 'Kala Yatra Show', Bengaluru

1987 One-man show, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

1987 '19th Sao Paulo Biennial', Brazil

1988 Sakshi Gallery, Chennai

1989 'Nature and Environment', exhibition organized by L.K.A., New Delhi

1990 Sakshi Gallery, Chennai

1990 Dhoomimal Art Centre, New Delhi

1990 & 91 'Touch Stone' shows by Sakshi Gallery, Chennai and Bengaluru

1991 Joint show, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

1991 '9 Indian Artists' by Walk-in-Gallery, Singapore

1991 'Rimbaud-91', group exhibition by Alliance Française de Chennai, in Chennai and France

1992 Sakshi Gallery, Bengaluru

1992 Southern Region Art Exhibition by Birla Academy, Kolkata

1993 'Wounds', exhibition at Kolkata and Delhi, by CIMA Gallery, Kolkata

1993 Joint show at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

1993 One-man show, Crimson Art Gallery, Bengaluru

1994 One-man show presented by the British Council at Chennai

1995 Joint show, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

1995 'Save the Children', charity exhibition at Mumbai

1995 Group show of Indian Artists by Sarala's Art Centre in Tokyo, Japan

1995 'Three Indian Artists' Show', May Gallery, Hong Kong

1995 'Gandhiji in Postcard', exhibition touring various cities in India

1996 'Madras – An Emotion', a major group exhibition by Values Art Foundation, Chennai

1996 Group exhibition to raise funds for Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

1997 'Retrospective Exhibition of Drawings (1962–1996)' by Values Art Foundation, Chennai

1997 The same exhibition was jointly sponsored by Crimson Art Resource and Max Muller Bhavan in Bengaluru

1997 'Major Trends', group show to commemorate 50 years of India's Independence by L.K.A., New Delhi

1999 One-man show of small formats at Crimson, Bengaluru

1999 'Small Formats', group show of six artists at Chennai, Bengaluru, Mumbai and Hyderabad, by Art in Crafts, Bengaluru

1999 Group show of six Indian artists at London, by Maya Art Gallery

2000 One-man show by Art Heritage, New Delhi

2001 Joint show at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

2001 Group show by Art.Motif, New Delhi

2002 Group show on 'Landscapes', Art.Motif, New Delhi

2002 Three artists' show by Gallery Anant, New Delhi

2003 Major exhibition of Indian and Korean artists at Korea

2003 Joint show, Forum Art Gallery, Chennai

2003 One-man show by Crimson Art Resource with Windsor Sheraton, Bengaluru

2003 'Five Chennai Artists' Show', Vinyasa Art Gallery, Chennai

2004 Art.Motif Gallery, New Delhi

2004 'Still Life', Art.Motif Gallery, New Delhi

2004 'Indian Artists' Show', Prakrit Gallery, Hong Kong

2005 One-man show sponsored by Berkeley Square Gallery, London

2006 One-man show (online), Saffron Art Gallery, New York

2006 Group show, Vinyasa Gallery, Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai

2006 Group show, Art.Motif Gallery, New Delhi

2006 Group show, India Fine Arts, Mumbai

2007 'Abstract', Art.Motif Gallery, New Delhi

2007 'Six Abstract Artists' Show', Akar-Prakar Gallery, Kolkata

Honours

1963 Lalit Kala Akademi Award, Chennai

1963 Chitra Kala Parishad Award, Bengaluru

1964 Lalit Kala Akademi Award, Chennai

1965 Lalit Kala Akademi Award, Chennai

1965 & 66 Mumbai Art Society's Award

1965 & 66 Hyderabad Art Society's Award

1973 The Award of the Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata

1978 Lalit Kala Akademi Award, Chennai

1979 Lalit Kala Akademi National Award, New Delhi

Collections

National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi

Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi

Lalit Kala Akademi, Regional Centre, Chennai

National Art Gallery, Chennai

Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata

Birla Academy, Kolkata

Gandhi Museum, Chennai

Chandigarh University

Oviam Nunkalai Kuzhu, Chennai

Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi

Karnataka Lalit Kala Akademi

Mumbai Art Society, Mumbai

South Zone Cultural Centre, Thanjavur

South Central Zone Cultural Centre, Nagpur

Kala Yatra Gallery, Bengaluru

Crimson Art Gallery, Bengaluru

Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai

Walk-in-Gallery, Singapore

CIMA Gallery, Kolkata

College of Fine Arts, Gulbarga

Larsen & Toubro Ltd., Mumbai

Micro Land, Bengaluru

Titan Watches Ltd.; Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Vizak, Pondicherry, Thiruvananthapuram, Trissur, Calicut, Thanjavur, Trichy and Cochin

Air India, Mumbai

Kirloskar Electricals, Bengaluru

Brooke Bond India Ltd., Bengaluru

Morarji Mills, Mumbai

Premier Automobiles, Mumbai

M.R.F. Ltd., Chennai

Sita Travels, Chennai

Bengaluru Knits, Bengaluru

Times of India, Bengaluru

Sanghi Textiles Ltd., Hyderabad

L.V. Prashad Eye Institute, Hyderabad

Raymonds, Bengaluru, Chennai

Hong Kong Bank, Chennai

Chemplast Ltd., Chennai

Colour Chem Ltd., Mumbai

City Bank, Chennai

Standard Chartered Bank, Chennai

British Airways, Chennai

Taj Coromandal Hotel, Chennai

Adyar Park Hotel, Chennai

Maurya Sheraton Hotel, New Delhi

Rajendran & Associates, Chennai

O.N.G.C., Dehradoon

Majorda Beach Resort, Goa

Sahyatri Tools Marketing Pvt. Ltd., Pune

Air India Office at London Airport

ICI India Ltd.; Chennai, Kolkata

Kitty Steels Ltd., Hyderabad

Tower Insurance & Reinsurance Services (India) Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai

American Express Bank Ltd., Chennai

G. Tech Stone Ltd., Chennai

Maya Art Gallery, London

Rediffusion Advertising Ltd., Mumbai

Gandhi Memorial Museum, Gandhi Gramam, Madurai

Kothari Pvt. Ltd., Chennai

Concord Showroom, Chennai and Bengaluru

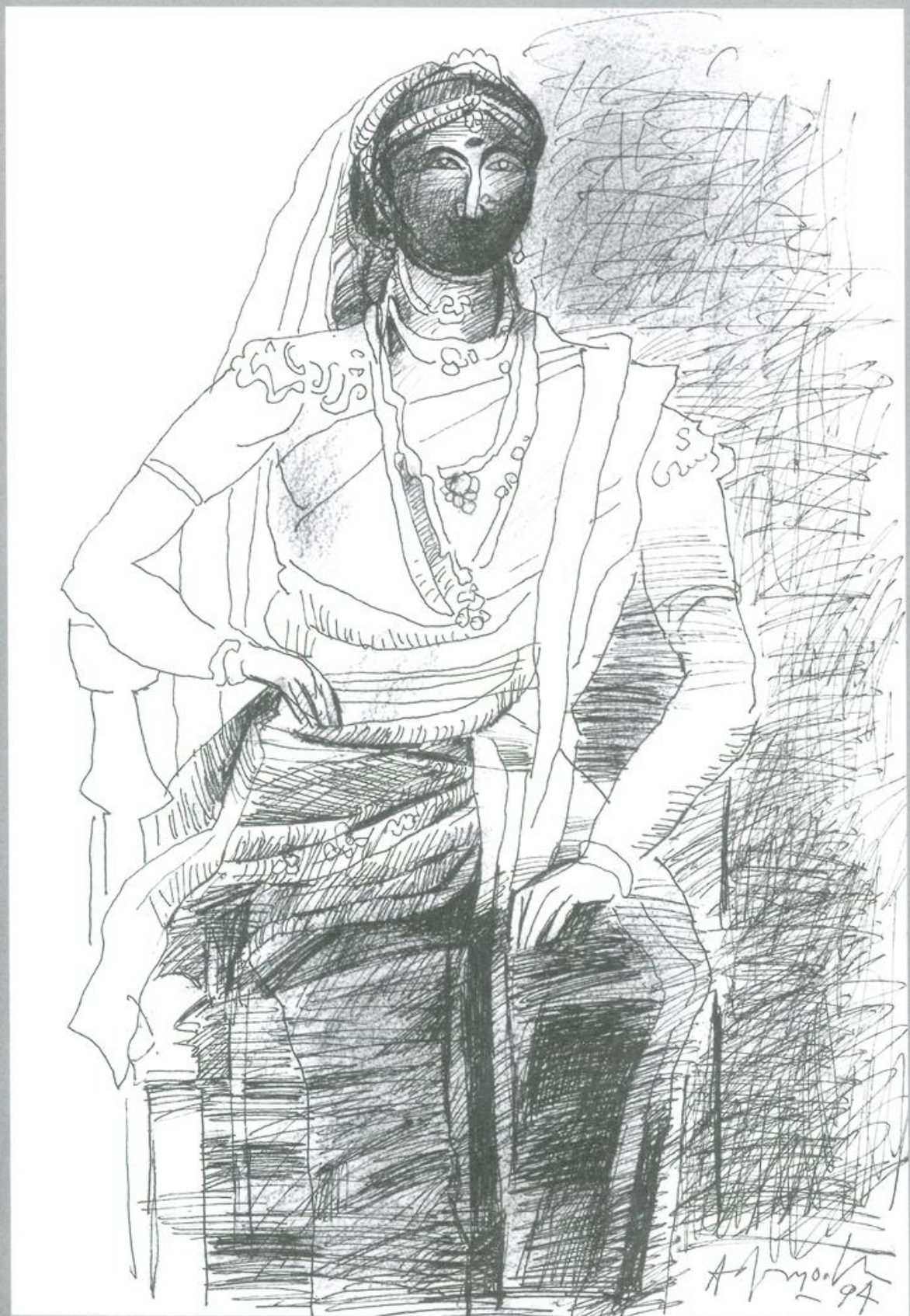
B.P.L. Showroom, Mumbai and Pune

OSIAN's, Mumbai

Apeejay Surendra Group, Chennai

Art Heritage Gallery, New Delhi

Tanishq Jewellery Showroom, Chennai and Mumbai



Royal Lady, Pen and ink on paper, 13 x 19", 1994

Dabhol Power Company, Mumbai
LARS Consultant, Mumbai
SPIC, Chennai
K.T.S. Minerals, Chennai
Paradigm Management Knowhow Pvt. Ltd., Chennai
Retail Design & Merchandising, Bengaluru
Gallery Sumukha, Bengaluru
Indo Stosec Pvt. Ltd., Mumbai
Foster Wheeler, Chennai
Alliance Française, Chennai
Wilson Impex Pvt. Ltd., Singapore
Nrityalaya Aesthetics Society, Singapore
Allied Ceramics Corporation, Chennai
Taj Palace Hotel, New Delhi
Art in Crafts, Bengaluru
Tulsyan Technologies Ltd., Chennai
Windsor Manor Sheraton, Bengaluru
Biocon India Ltd., Bengaluru
Raney & Company, Mumbai
Balcke-Durr & Wabag Technologies Ltd., Chennai
Merlion Technology (India) Pvt. Ltd., Chennai
Miot Hospital, Chennai
Mysore Sales International Ltd., Bengaluru
Moorthy's, Mumbai
Deutsche Bank (Vikas Arora), Mumbai
Azure Travels, Chennai
U.B. Group, Mumbai
Owens Corning, Mumbai
Park-Li, New York
Namtech Business School, New Delhi
Infosys, Bengaluru
Quintifes, Bengaluru
Zuari Cements Ltd., Kolkata
Akar-Prakar, Kolkata
Prakrit Arts, Chennai
India Fine Arts Co. Ltd., Mumbai

And many private collections

Commissions

Mural painting done for P.I. Industries, Udaipur at their office complex, New Delhi

Mural painting done for Titan Watches at their new showroom, Bengaluru

Mural painting done on the ceiling of the new Tanishq Jewellery showroom, Chennai

Mural painting done for the reception counter at the Royal Meridien Hotel, Chennai

Artists' Camps

Tamil Nadu State Lalit Kala Akademi camp at Ooty, 1979
Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1980
Kasualy Artists' Camp, 1980
Kerala Lalit Kala Akademi, 1981
SAARC Camp, Bengaluru, 1986
Lalit Kala Akademi Art Camp, Andaman, 1987
International Painters' Camp at Lucknow, 1989
Mumbai Art Society Camp, 1989
ONGC Camp, Dehradoon, 1990
South Central Zone Cultural Centre Gwalior, 1991
Welcome Group Hotel, Mangalore, 1991
All India Painters' Camp, Kanpur, 1992
National Level Painters' Camp, Pondicherry, 1992
Artists' camp by Taj Hotel & Art World Gallery at New Delhi, 2000
Artists' camp at Hampi, Karnataka by Mysore Sales International Ltd., 2001

Special Work

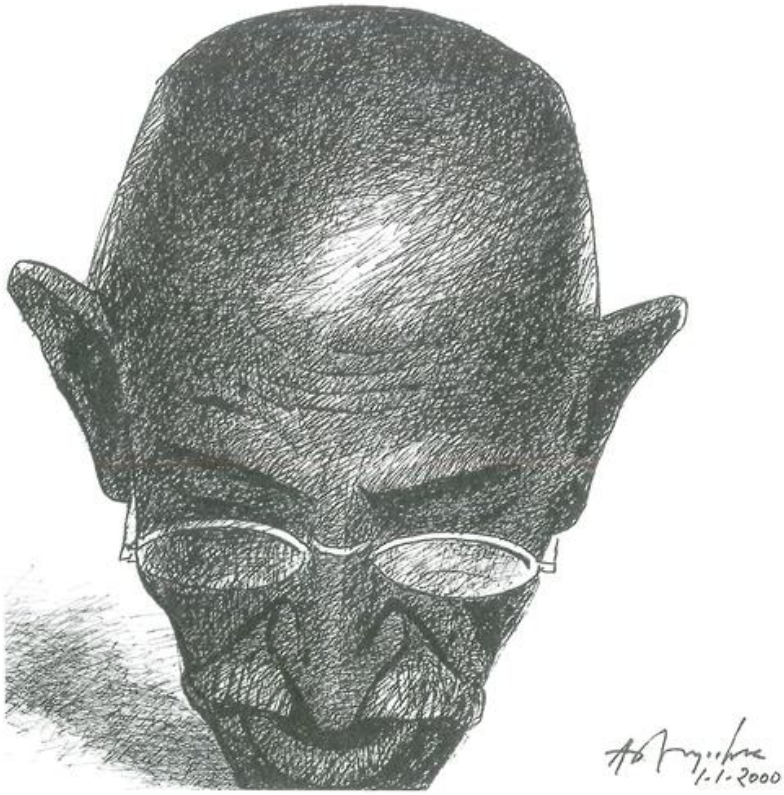
Associated with Modern Tamil Writer's Group, since 1966 and did a large number of illustrations, book-cover designs and book layouts. Initiated revival of early Tamil calligraphy to the present situation and need.

Served

1986 As jury member for the National Exhibition of Art
1990 As commissioner for the Indian Section, Third Ankara Biennial, Turkey
1991 As convener for exhibition by Lalit Kala Akademi, Drawings India-91, New Delhi
1992 As convener, National Level Painters' Camp at Pondicherry
1992 As jury member for Mumbai Art Society's annual all-India art exhibition
1993 As one-man jury for the National Exhibition of Art, New Delhi

Publications

Between the Lines, a book on his drawings done between 1962 and 1996 was published by Values Art Foundation, Chennai.
Art of Adimoolam, Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd., 2005.



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Captions:
Page 1: **Gandhiji in a Serious Mood**, ink, 16 x 21.3", 1988
Page 2: **Gypsy with Her Child**, ink on paper, 14 x 21", 2005
Page 5: **Portrait of Tanuj Berry**, pen and ink on paper, 10.5 x 14", 2007
Page 164: **Gandhi**, pen and ink on paper, 12 x 12", 2000