



Jamil Naqsh. Picasso with Pigeon.

*Jamil Naqsh pays homage
to Pablo Picasso*





Jannibagh. Picasso with Pigeon.

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Nitanjali Art Gallery is the brain child of Anjali and Nitin Bhalla. Being art collectors for the past 30 years, their dream came true seven years ago with the first gallery in Palam Vihar (now a working studio for young artists). The impetus behind the collection as well as the gallery itself was one of reaching out to art lovers. Though run by the members of the immediate family, Nitanjali Art Gallery follows professional policies, from having an external member panel (consisting of curators & art historians) for artist selections to financial consultation from eminent individuals from the corporate world.

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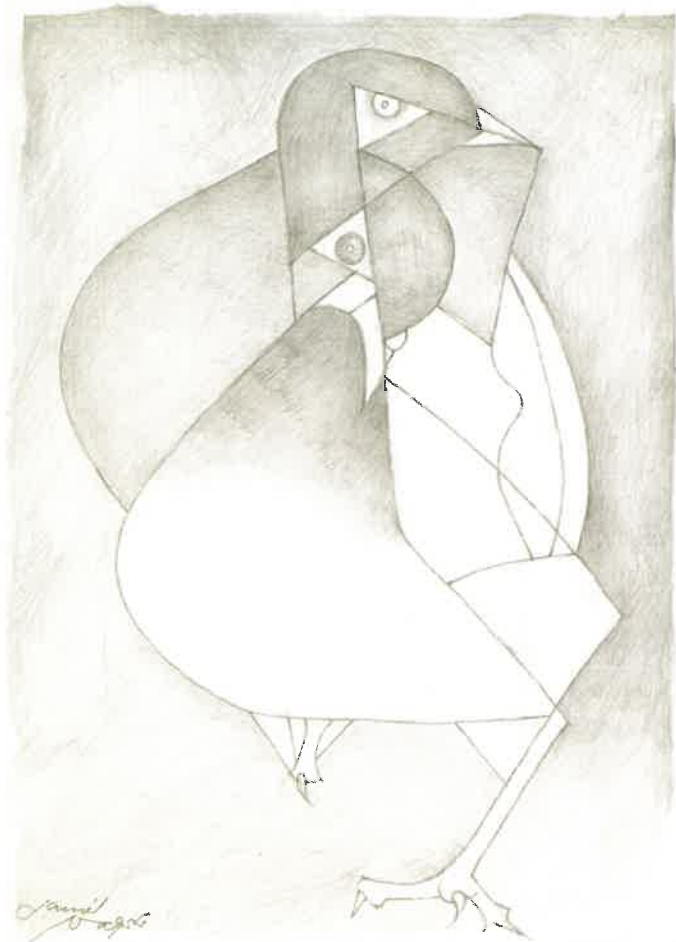
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Janni/6-05



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Foreword

Jamil Naqsh and the Nitanjali family relationship dates back four years to the time when Mandira Lamba first saw his works at his retrospective exhibition at the Mohatta Palace Museum in Karachi. Immediately drawn to his masterpieces, she returned to Delhi to recount her impressions to Anjali and Nitin Bhalla. Shortly after they decided to meet this living legend in person. Mandira traveled to their house in Europe and met Najmi Sura and Jamil Naqsh. Instantly they struck a connection as if they had known each other for many years. She returned to Delhi with one of his works, which was truly an inspiration.

Thereupon unfolded the journey. Anjali and Ridhi Bhalla met Najmi and Jamil for the first time and this was one of the most captivating introductions that they had ever experienced. Jamil with his empowering voice and immense knowledge made an everlasting impact on them. They spent hours together. He said *“An artist needs to know everything not just art, then only will he be a responsible artist.”*

Finally, it was Nitin who met Jamil and discussed the publication of his second major book, *A Retrospective*, to be launched in India for the first time. The first, as cited above, was launched in Karachi at The Mohatta Palace Museum. This will follow early next year with major text and works from his lifetime. Currently in process, the publication will travel to five major cities across the globe.

After major discussions over Jamil's works and book launch, he gradually disclosed this collection of works, which he described as, “the spirit of Picasso”, to Nitin. This was the naissance of ‘Homage to Picasso’. The show was visualized

and finalized for marking its first launch in Delhi, his first ever solo in India. The show will then proceed to Mumbai, Karachi and London.

Jamil is one of the rare artists who have gone beyond the borders of the Indian subcontinent to be known as a global contemporary master. Though his works are present in auctions, museums and major collections, but this humble, reserved artist prefers his solitude. This makes the Nitanjali family even more privileged to have such a close association with him and Najmi Sura. Besides the work done together, it is an honor to have him as a Friend (to Anjali and Nitin), as a Mentor (to Ridhi and Mandira) and as their favourite Uncle (to Hans and Sameera Bhalla).

Our sincere thanks to Najmi Sura for helping us bring together this project. Herself a brilliant artist, she has been Jamil's muse and inspiration. Also, our deep appreciation to Sobia Naqsh, Shammi Ahmed and Marjorie Husain for their invaluable input and collaboration from Karachi without which this endeavour would not have been possible. Gratitude as ever to the Lamba family whose unfailing support enriches our lives and projects. We would also like to express our sincere thanks to Shahid Akhtar Alvi from Lahore for his continuous assistance.

We are proud to be the only gallery in India to present Jamil Naqsh's works and it is our honour to be a part of the Naqsh Family.

Nitanjali Family



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/052-S)

Jamil Naqsh: A Life in Art

The artist recognized as Pakistan's Modern Master Jamil Naqsh (b. 1939), left his home in Kairana, on the banks of the river Jamuna as a small boy, destined to make a new home in Pakistan. From the beginning he was an independent spirit whose experience of life led to deeply examined conclusions on life and art. As a teen-ager he travelled alone through Chittagong, Calcutta, and Kathmandu to Colombo, and a fascination and respect for the art traditions of the past was the outcome of the youthful journey. These factors were to influence Naqsh in his life and work for years to come.

In 1953 he was an art student who absorbed the aesthetics of modern art but focused on a thorough study of the various schools of traditional miniature paintings. In this way he eschewed the carefree years of an art student's life to become a disciple of the master miniaturist Mohammad Sharif. Thus he learnt to sit for long hours at his work. Obsessed with the idea of 'line', the young artist sought an ethos that addressed his work in the decades to follow.

Jamil Naqsh began to paint pigeons in the early 1960s, his

subject referred to childhood memories of pigeons strutting through the courtyard of his ancestral home and flying freely through the open windows. The artist's references also encompassed the painted pigeons of the miniature schools of art, tiny perfectly formed transient visitors. Years later these recollections were to be diffused into a symbol of domestic harmony.

Naqsh paints the people he loves; by combining the mobile birds with the classic forms of women, the artist created a wondrous melding of movement and stillness using muted colours and creating textures of tactile pigments. For over three decades he has painted his companion Najmi Sura, constantly loved and beautiful, forever transcending the mundane. Though modern in his idiom, Naqsh alludes to the discipline of miniature painting, never abandoning his roots in the classic traditions of the east.

Marjorie Husain

Karachi, Pakistan

(Excerpted from the author's essay for the forthcoming Nitanjali Art Gallery book on Jamil Naqsh to be published in 2009.)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/065-S)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 24" x 24" (JNN/0032)

Conversations:

Jamil Naqsh with Nitin Bhalla in London, May 2008

(The following texts have been recorded, transcribed and translated by Ridhi Bhalla, then edited and excerpted by Elizabeth Rogers.)

In reference to Picasso, elements of a painting such as form, line, color, and composition were never a problem in terms of his works. Form was the only thing of relevance – the distribution of the form. Every other element is sidelined. So what I have done in my own work, whether in colour, on canvas or a drawing, only one factor is relevant – how to project the form.

Then there is the rhythm of the form; just as in music there is continuity. So that is what I want to know if it exists. So I think it is not that Picasso did not have the knowledge, he just did not feel the need. In that age and era of art, the artists were striving for change. Refinement of form, its interrelationships with details, and the total composition of light and line, these were not primary.

Concurrently, the Milan-based group of Italian Futurist artists led by Giacomo Balla (1871-1958), Gino Severini (1883-1966), and Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916) all sought to implement a change. The Italians were more logical, they were more futurist-oriented, but some of them did embrace cubism. Even though at that time Picasso was in Italy, but he was very different from the members of that group.

Picasso use to call his style *crystal cubism* - as in the mirror you see all different images disintegrated/fragmented. Later, writers named it *synthetic cubism* or *analytic cubism*. Apart from this there is only one topic – ART. In essence, the form, line, color, light – how to project and render them.

In particular, specific oeuvres of Picasso which have inspired my work include, as follows: *La Toilette* (1906), *Les Desmoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), *A Woman Reading* (1911), *A Seated Woman* (1920), *Three Women at the Fountain* (1921), *The Muse* (1935), *Guernica* (1937), *Reclining Nude with Musician* (1942), *War* (1952), and *Peace* (1952).

So my work does not directly relate to Picasso, rather to say it is connected to his spirit. With full independence I can do whatever I like with the figure. When I went to the Picasso Museum, I felt like asking Najmi to take off all her clothes so that I could take her picture like that next to Picasso's work. This is the independence I feel- that you can break anything and create a new order. Everybody wants a change. This independence to break forms and create a new order is in every artist. Take for example, the painting *Peace*, in which there are two figures dancing. So I have taken the dancers, and drawn them in a different but my own way unlike Picasso.



Nitin: How do you feel your work has evolved in the recent years?

The most important thing is that in the last 3-4 years I have stopped writing the year of the work on the painting/drawing. I strongly feel that I am the same as I was years back. There is no change save for refinement. I have only become more expert in my execution. However the style of thinking is the same. You may look at and perceive it to be a 2008 or a 1960 work.

Painters all over the world reject medium. It is irrelevant whether it is oil, acrylic, canvas, or watercolor. I read that once when the Aragonese Spanish painter Goya (Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, 1746-1828) was standing somewhere he suddenly felt the urge to paint. There was a horse cart nearby, so he used the figures and the grease on the cart and started to paint.

Colour is just an illusion, so if I only have green in front of me I will paint with only that color. It is just a minor factor in a painting, and if that colour finishes I will use another.

Picasso's *Blue* or *Pink Periods* are just titles or definitions given by writers. The painter El Greco ('The Greek', 1541-1614) used to paint in yellow and blue. Now if we mix these two colours you get green. However, his works were always distinctly yellow and blue in color. About fifteen to twenty years back, I painted a nude in yellow and blue where both colours were maintained separately without mixing. So an art critic labeled it as of a blue period!

Medium is not important. My pencil drawings are a complete painting. There is line, form, and shade of light minus color. Colour does not convey anything for me. These small drawings are complete as if painting on canvas with one colour. Colour theory is that if in an area you put yellow and in another blue then you've defined the areas respectively but now if you add a black line to it, both become grey.

Nitin: Do you think of the visual effect of your works?

Completely. In my Picasso series of works, everyone cannot appreciate this. Some will. For example, Jogen Choudhury will appreciate it. Whatever he has done is different and I really like his works.



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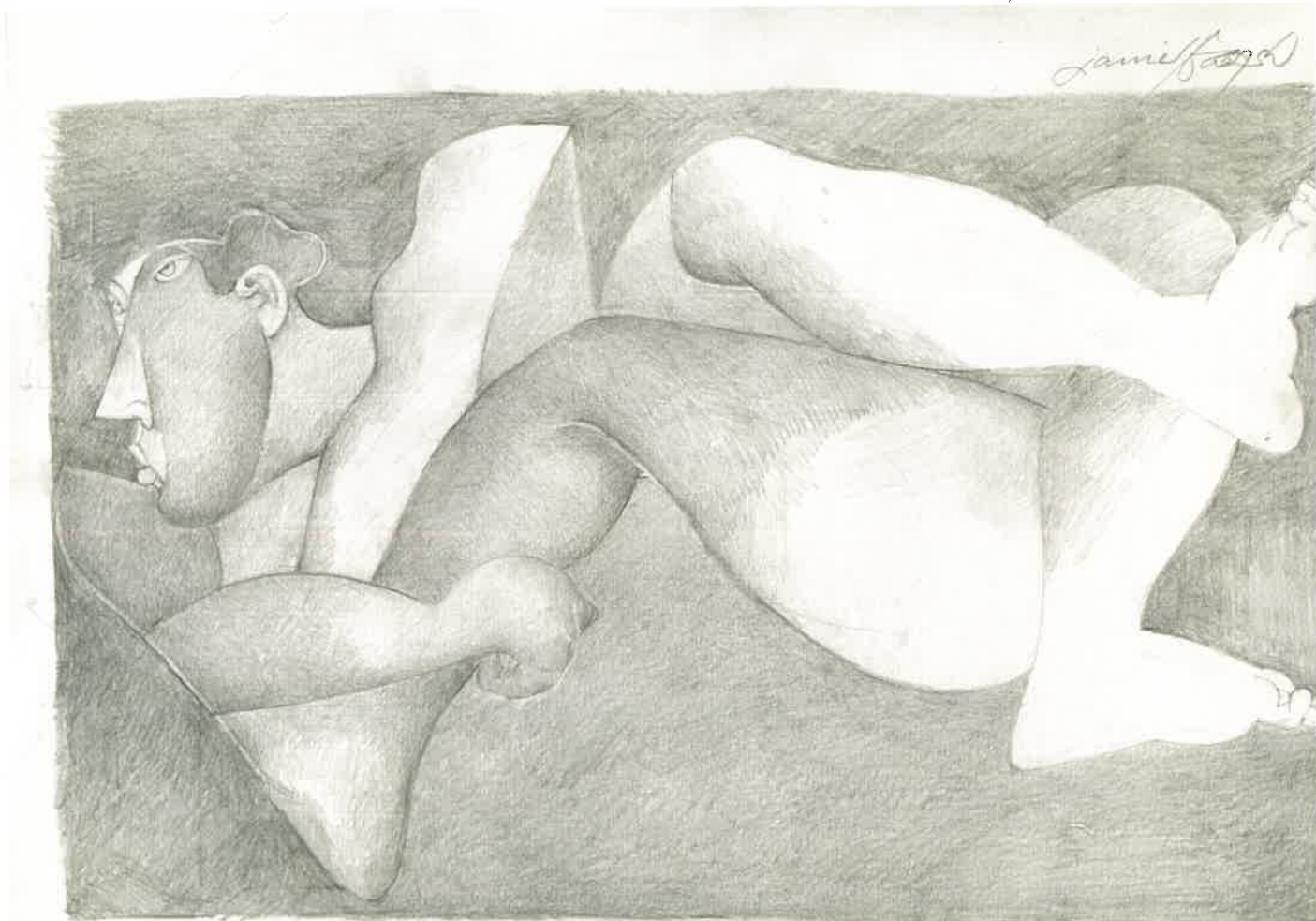


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Untitled, pencil on paper, 8.25" x 11.75" (JNN/074-S)





Janni Lopez
Untitled, oil on canvas, 27" x 27" (JNN/0048)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 8.25" x 11.75" (JNN/067-S)

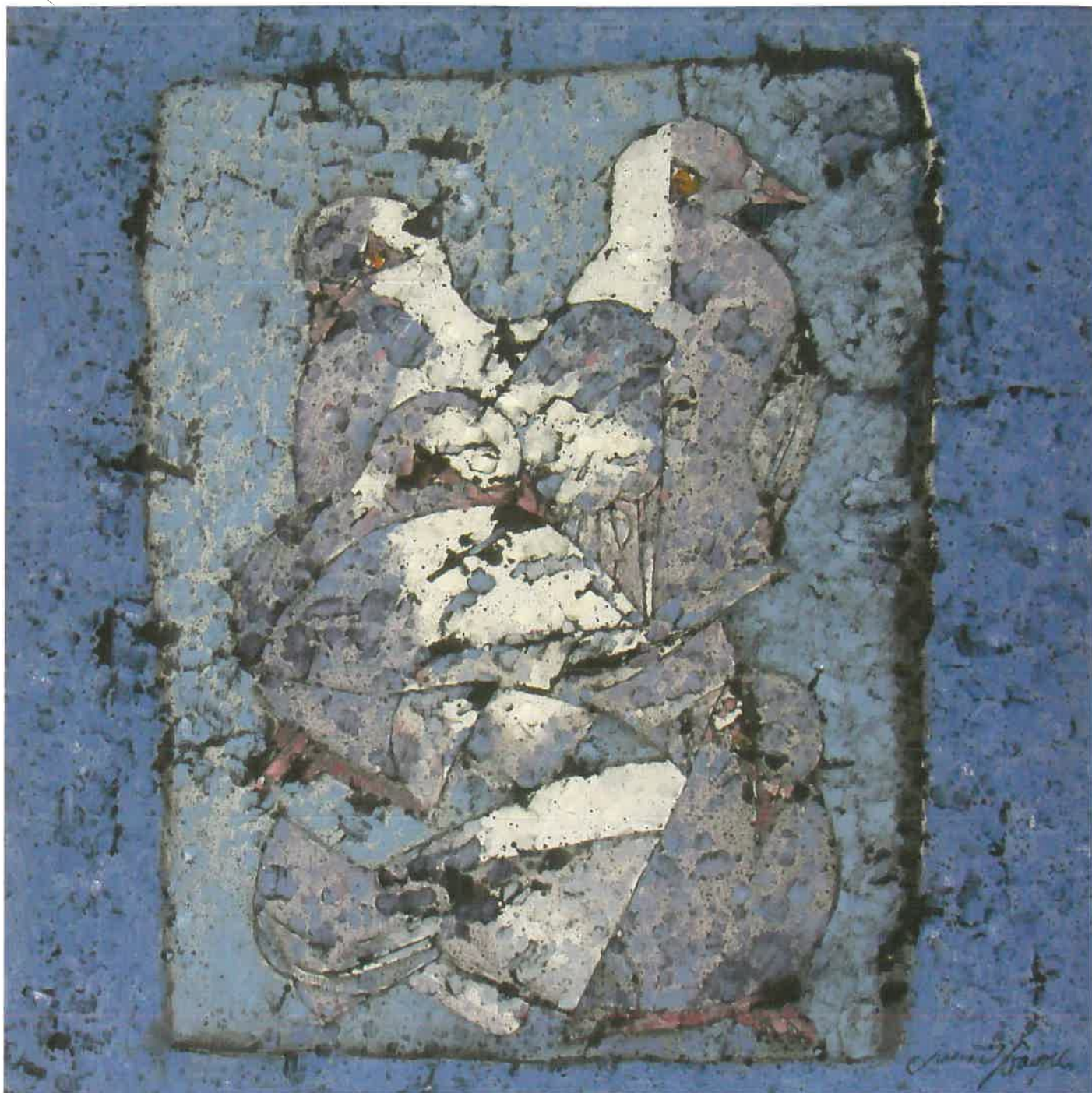
Untitled, pencil on paper, 8.25" x 11.75" (JNN/072-S)

Janni B. Agosh





Untitled, oil on canvas, 24" x 24" (JNN/0034)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 24" x 24" (JNN/029-S)

A Journey/ the Spirit of Form

Much has been written on the influences and experiences unfolding on an individual's path, particularly in attempting to grasp the works of an artist. Deciphering cultural traditions, regional sources and sensorial elements, the sounds and smells of childhood, the crossroads of geopolitical events, and the guidance of teachers and mentors, one arrives at a list of trace materials, an array of valid fossils and echoing remembrances such as letters and photographs, phrases of poetry and song. Art predates recorded history, the creative being and their expressions constitute a broader, quixotic fusion of fact and fable, with unpredictable crescents and troughs like nature.

In this tome, *Jamil Naqsh pays homage to Pablo Picasso*, produced in tandem with the first solo exhibition of the modern master Jamil Naqsh in India, 70 drawings are featured which have been created over innumerable years. With this project, the artist, born in India, completes a vital circle. The twenty one paintings are more recent and complement his figural/ abstract matrix, with some strident side profile heads, upon occasion with pigeons, and group assemblages as well. Drawing upon the myriad metaphors which populate his work, Naqsh construed this project as a tribute to inspiration by another renowned 20th century master, Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). Essentially, this heralds a celebration of shared spirit – continuity and change, in differing art and geographical contexts – each with his own perceptions and adaptations of form. No doubt both of these visionary artists challenged processes and techniques, the status quo of their respective loci, be it Spain, France, India or Pakistan.

As such, Naqsh is one of these rare beings who straddle epochs and boundaries. His language incorporates the earlier miniature traditions, Rajput and Mughal painting, which he studied, as well as architecture and paysage of his childhood. The rhythm of Sufi poetry, and Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib (1797-1869) resonate throughout his oeuvres, whether watercolours, paintings, or drawings. He speaks of continuity, yet orchestrates his own ever-evolving exploration of a trio of metaphors – woman, pigeon and horse. In her

seminal texts on Naqsh based on years of collaboration, the Pakistan-based curator Marjorie Husain writes of the pigeons that “these recollections were to be diffused into a symbol of domestic harmony.”¹

Furthermore, despite inclusion in previous exhibitions, aside from the *Woman and Pigeons* drawing show in 2001, this project showcases a majority of drawings. Naqsh affirms his embrace of all genres, all materials, from the most basic to elaborate. A panoramic palette in many of his celebrated canvases, or as documented herewith in a feast of monochromatic pencil works, proffer them equally. He prefers not to speak of year or medium, rather to let the piece no matter what hue or trace, no matter what period or subject, speak for itself – as part of an overall, unending flowing lifeline.

More importantly are other elements of art, in particular form. As such, his drawings sculpt forms out of the elements- his ether settles and unties shawls of light and shadow to expose

Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/048-S)



its transitory identity. As Eliel Saarinen intoned in *The Search for Form in Art and Architecture*², “Form is something which is in man, which grows when man grows, and which declines when man declines.” Heralding growth, the drawings in this show are each completed upon simple paper, with the most easily accessible material – a pencil. To embrace this huge fecund array of works, the viewer must focus on Naqsh’s fluency within the medium, which facilitates an intuitive rather than rational understanding.

Indian art, similarly, illustrates this tangible, textural thing of comforting, limitless potential. Like the sky, ever changing, reconfigured at each moment of the day and night, when a cloud passes by, a star shines. Naqsh orchestrates his beloved idioms, the peacefulness and liberty of nature (the pigeon), the eternal strength, grace and love of the female, and the romantic bravura and courage of the equine. The horse, beloved being in lore and history, has inspired artists throughout the world. In the West, horses figure prominently in the works of the German artist Franz Marc (1880-1916, of the Munich-based group *Der Blaue Reiter*), and those of the Italian Marino Marini (1901-1980).³ The latter inspired an exhibition by Naqsh in Karachi in 1998. Marc adored horses, he wrote: “We have to learn from now on to relate the animals and plants to ourselves and to depict this relationship in art.”⁴ On another plateau, there are pigeons in groups, pigeons with women, and the featured image of Picasso with a pigeon, recalling earlier canvases from the 1960’s. Other works introduce charismatic and provocative images, such as a cow, an impish devil, a poetic, languid Christ, and intertwined pairs of beings, whether with female or male. Parallel in this exhibition seemingly cubist works on canvas are partially composed of mask-like features, another raga of form, colour and composition.

A blank sheet of paper proffers realms of discourse and expression...to illustrate the Vedic term of *ket* with open expanses to be played. As a young artist in Karachi, while contemplating the work of the French artist Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), Naqsh drew and painted on newspapers. Thick, thin, translucent, strong, fragile...all adjectives describe the multitudinous character of paper. Naqsh triumphs on this surface as well. His figures expand beyond the perimeters of



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/008-S)

the page. Some are sensuous lines, while another figure bends in asanas, bringing her limbs into direct perpendicularity to the picture plane. Shadows and strokes reveal the energies of a male and female (possibly a double auto-portrait?); cross-hatching captures the spirit of other layers from within the mind of the creator. Space is fused with energy even before a single line, smudge, or stroke is applied. This is the essential strength and character of paper: as if it breathes with the artist. It hovers, waiting to be caressed, offering itself like a silent instrument. Such is the nature of things of passion – they call out, tools of meditative expression. ‘Tis foolish to think paper does not demand exactitudes of exertion. Unlike the medium of canvas (oil and acrylic, with whatever additions), which permits over painting, knife scraping, scratching, hacking and other cover-ups and tricks, paper leaves little if any room for mere mistakes. Naqsh cherishes this challenge, and arranges this panoply of light and line in a continuum as if an unfolding narrative tapestry.

To affirm how Naqsh achieves corporeality and abstract energy as somewhat dual facets of an intricate experience, his



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/023-S)

Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/005-S)



feelings about the body bespeak its 'vitality, its vulnerability and mortality'. Similarly, the *paint skin* which he produces with alterations of texture on canvas finds its echo in the denial of colour, and the agile manipulation of graphite. The range of the work suggests the pencil as magic wand in his hands. Naqsh stated that the essence of his work does not lie in his choice of subject matter. "If you must find a plot or a story, music or meter, then you should find them in my treatment of colour, texture, form and composition," cited by the art critic Dr. Syed Amjad Ali in 1971.⁵ As for an explication of his work, Naqsh recently said that 'a creative man's process of thinking is beyond a critic's comprehension.'⁶

Just as the Delhi-based documentary film maker and photographer Benoy Behl in *Eternal India*⁷ pens that "according to the *Chitrasutra*, the treatise on art-making, personalities are too unimportant to be depicted in art. The purpose of art is a noble one: to show the eternal beyond the ephemeral." Grasping the ever-ongoing challenges to the art establishments, predominately nascent in the West, it could be reasoned that the theme or subject of a work is a reflection of the constituent forms, the atomic whole of its protons and neutrons.

Picasso passed through numerous stages of expression, experimenting with colour, realism, caricature, portraiture, medium, primitivism, fauvism, animals, simplified forms of ancient and tribal art, cubism, trompe l'oeil, collage, print-making, ceramics and sculpture.⁸ Not to forget another primary influence upon his work and life, the women in his life who appear in all manner of portraits. His works at the start of the 20th century imbibed the classical figural forms of Greek art. A number of the images by Naqsh in this book also manifest a frontal or distinct profile and larger than life aura. Later, Picasso assumed the forms and lines of African art (cf. the famed *Primitivism* exhibition⁹), and wound his strident shapes into mask like spaces. Naqsh has played upon this melody in works depicting a headless female figure holding or accompanying a mask wound round with rope. The influences of Cubism are decidedly ascertained in his works, "fragmenting of three-dimensional forms into flat areas of pattern and colour, overlapping and intertwining so that shapes and parts of the human anatomy are seen from



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/054-S)

the front and back at the same time."¹⁰ Yet as all evolves from the visual, his inherent miniature prowess and sensibility are concordant within all that he fabricates.

Naqsh fears not - his traces affirm themselves, spreading across the blank blotter. No obscurations come into play. Instead behold: dark shaded strokes or thin harried cross-hatching, thicker patches and matted ink; each movement across a page connects and invites the eye. Unfolding in these moments are undivided expressions of energy. Such work can only arise from true observation, from painstaking attention to the barely perceptible movements and synapses which construct the visible, the identifiable. Ram Kinker Baij (1910-1980), considered by many the "Indian modern master", drew upon his village roots and communion with the Santhals, throughout his life at Shantiniketan and his studies with Western art teachers. Naqsh also straddles these diverse aesthetic worlds, drawing upon both for concordance. Yet, it is in these minute flickers and reflections that the essence exists. Juxtaposition of many illustrations of the supreme consciousness (*Brahmanad*) demands persistent

concentration and effort. Postmodernists like Jackson Pollock and the musician-artist John Cage¹¹ rendered their own type of kinetic consciousness in electric paint drippings and syncopated notes. Like the still photographs sequentially flipped through to simulate cinema, such a multitude of chiaroscuro triggers unconscious reactions. Therein lays the strength of this art.

Such reverie of form bears no reference point save to life itself (i.e. energy). This is difficult to write about, as it is organic and abstract all at once. Something no one can possess like moonbeams on water, or sensations and thoughts that change as quickly as they arise. A manner of the reactive versus responsive aesthetic experience of modern man, reminding of the increasing separation from the organic and spiritual. Citing the multi-faceted Rabindranath Tagore's extensive writings on creative unity, paradoxes and junctures, and man and nature: "Art gives our personality the disinterested freedom of the eternal, there to find it in its true perspective."¹²

Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/063-S)





Jamil Naqsh & Najmi Sura, London 2008

Modern and classical, women populate the works. Inspired by the woman with whom he shares his life and creative passions, as companion, muse, and painter, Najmi Sura (b.1951), who studied the miniature tradition with him. Just as art is his unequivocal passion, so according to Husain is his fascination with the human form and his infinite interpretations thereupon. Overfoldings of images, lines beyond a single perspective, and a mercurial fusion of matter and energy procreate before the viewer's eyes. Subtle fields of colour denote a limb, a curve of the torso, the chignon at the nape of her neck, besides a fracturing of background areas, bearing the work into timeless realms. Works from different eras depict kindred spirits with shared expressions. A previous catalogue, *Jamil Naqsh for Najmi Sura*, published by the Jamil Naqsh Foundation in Karachi¹³, explored this personal and aesthetic intimacy; one which conjures notes throughout the corpus of his artistic legacy.

"Two causes for any creation – the maker and the material. Maker, one responsible for the creation, is called the efficient cause or nimitta-karana. And there must be some material...a creation can never be separate from its material cause..."

-Swami Dayananda, *Talks on Emotional Maturity* (Rishikesh, 1993, pp. 27-30)

Vision (*dhyana*) emanates within the spatial nature of a higher dimension, and therefore is timeless. It transcends thought. The artist does not think through and thereby realise his/her creations; they are visualised spontaneously, largely through a subconscious process, bringing images, feelings, notes, details, references from all facets of time and life together in an assimilated amalgam. In this intuitive realm of awareness, one dwells in a limitless present, surpassing mere space and action. Yet, complete delineation in art falls short of the



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/027-S)

ideal, and one must accept evocation. It is finally left to the viewer to utilise his/her own powers of imagination to carry the flat representation to other levels. For linearity, as such, does not exist. Art renders such impassable explorations, perhaps even shareable, through interplay of portrayal, visual arrangement, and grouping - blending the material and palette. Imagination interweaves symbols, uncovering lost and active layers, even those with culture-specific meaning. As the Swiss psychologist/philosopher Dr. C.C. Jung wrote and noted throughout his legendary work on dreams, universal symbols exist, as a "collective unconscious" in truly disparate cultural nexuses across time and the world.¹⁴

In his eloquent work, *Painting as an Art* (1987), inclusive of *Painting, Metaphor and the Body*, the philosopher and aesthetician Richard Wollheim ponders that the nature of art is "one of the most elusive of the traditional problems of human culture."¹⁵ Jamil Naqsh, the man, the artist, the one who sees, the one who loves; a man who prefers his privacy and discerns his space for creativity, rather than the

pettiness of the public arena. His oeuvres communicate his ideas, his emotions. They undergo the transformation of formal elements and applaud them for their inherent nature which is inextricably timeless. Naqsh's muses are life, in all, its poetic and altered manners, with their pleasure and pain and passion.

Elizabeth Rogers

New Delhi & New York

Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/034-S)



End Notes

1. *A Retrospective*, Mohatta Palace Museum Exhibition, Karachi, 2003
2. Eliel Saarinen (1873-1950), *The Search for Form in Art and Architecture*. New York: Reinhold Publishing Group, 1948 (1950)
3. *Homage to Marino Marini*, exhibition at the Jamil Naqsh Museum and Momart Art Gallery, Karachi, 2008
4. Franz Marc, written in 1912/13, republished in *Partsch* 1993
5. *A Retrospective*, Mohatta Palace Museum Exhibition, Karachi, 2003. Syed Amjad Ali, *Artistic Pakistan*, June 1971; *Painters of Pakistan*, National Book Foundation, Islamabad, 1995.
6. Transliterated excerpt from recorded conversations between Jamil Naqsh and Nitin Bhalla in London in May 2008
7. Benoy Behl, *Eternal India*, Part I, in *Frontline*, Vol. 24-Issue 16, August 11-24, 2007
8. Selected bibliographic reference works on Picasso include: Sir John Richardson and Marilyn McCully, *A Life of Picasso: Volume I, 1881-1906, and Volume II, 1907-1917*; William Rubin (editor), *Picasso: The Early Years, 1892-1902*; Susan Grace Galassi, *Picasso's Variations on the Masters: Confrontations with the Past*; Sir Roland Penrose, *Picasso*, Gertrude Stein, *Picasso*; and Dore Ashton, *Picasso on Art*.
9. Fall 1984, Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York; a second show at the Centre of African Arts (now the Museum of African Art), New York
10. Thomas Hoving, former director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York on Pablo Picasso
11. Pivotal member of the Fluxus Group; refer to the recent exhibition at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi in 2008
12. Rabindranath Tagore, *Creative Unity*, 1922; republished by Rupa Press, New Delhi in 2002, page 40
13. *Jamil Naqsh for Najmi Sura*, exhibition at the Jamil Naqsh Foundation in Karachi, 2003
14. Dr. C. C. Jung (d. 1961), *Man and His Symbols*, 1964
15. Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*. Princeton, New Jersey: Bollingen Series, Princeton University Press, 1987 and 1990

Elizabeth Rogers, since 2005 has collaborated with Nitanjali Art Gallery on numerous international exhibitions in India and overseas. Graduate of Harvard University (B.A., magna cum laude), Institut d'Etudes Politiques (C.E.P.) and Institut des Civilisations et Langues Orientales (Paris, M.A.), Beijing and Fudan Universities (P.R.C.; M.A.), Yale (M.A., and M.F.A.), and Oxford University (Phd. Candidate). Curated exhibitions of Asian art in museums such as the Metropolitan Museum (New York), the Musée Guimet (Paris), the Musées Royaux (Brussels), the Groningen Museum (Netherlands), the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford), the Sackler Museums (Harvard and Beijing), the Japan Society and the Asia Society, the Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg), and the Gotoh and Suntory Museums (Japan). She was the Assistant Director of the Museum at Japan Society (New York), the Director of the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art (New York), and a consultant to the Museum at Tibet House (New Delhi). Award recipient from Whitter Byrner Foundation, Poets & Writers, Yale University, Rockefeller Foundation, UNESCO, and the Warhol Foundation for the Arts, et. al.



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/026-S)

Untitled, oil on canvas, 40" x 60" (JNN/0038)





Untitled, oil on canvas, 27" x 27" (JNN/0047)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 24" x 24" (JNN/0033)

Jamil Naqsh: The Importance of Being

The art of Jamil Naqsh has developed in the period of decolonisation. It is a period that saw the emergence of Afro-Asian and Latin American contemporary art out of the closet. In the colonial era a Western artist like Henri Matisse (1869-1954) could appropriate the style of Persian miniatures but no one called him a copier of Persian art. Even Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) could draw on the stylistic elements of Kalighat painting (introduced by the art lover Krishna Riboud to him) but no one even noticed the connection. The Italian Futurists used the ploy of many hands and feet to connote motion; but no one realized it was exactly this ploy that was much more aesthetically and subtly used in the twelfth and thirteenth century bronze sculptures of the Nataraja. Imperial culture was expected to make the breakthroughs, the rest were merely to follow. And the borrowings of the empire were brushed under the carpet.

Today, however, our art has come a long way from that. It is a part of global art in a period when imperial cultural suppression has given in to a period rather like the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when in a before-the-pounce period of the empire, the culture and artifacts of the East were lionised to attract the pouncers to plunder and appropriate this wealth. But whatever the intent, something else was happening. Artists were integrating into a global culture as never before. Long before Matisse, Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) were acquainted with contemporary Indian miniatures which were distinct from illuminated manuscripts as narrative art. At the same time, sixteenth century miniature artists of the Mughal Court were integrating European paintings and etchings in their work.

Rubens is reported to have said, "I consider the whole world to be my native land." And indeed that is a good summing up of Picasso's world view as well, but in a different period of time, when a multinational Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had already come into existence bringing together Asians and Europeans as equals for the first time in recent history. Picasso, as a member of the Communist party,

shared not only this view but also the clarion call given by the USSR to end colonial rule. Globalisation is nothing if it is not committed to eliminating inequalities on a global scale. That is why Picasso not only openly drew inspiration from African sculpture, started painting his indictment of a German fascist attack on the Basque village of Guernica on May Day, and exiled himself for life from Spain after Franco's fascists had won the Civil War. Such a vision obviously attracted the modern artists of South Asia who grew up fighting British colonial rule. His views shared common ground with theirs. Just as the Tagores found common ground with the Bauhaus (that Hitler closed down in 1934 as a centre of "degenerate art"), so a number of our most 'universal' artists like F.N. Souza (1924-2002), M.F. Husain (b.1915), Paritosh Sen (b.1918) and Jamil Naqsh, among others, found common ground with Picasso.

However, a study of his drawings in this collection shows us that ultimately every artist worth his salt treats such a meeting of souls as a new twist in an already ongoing journey. Naqsh's drawings of pigeons, horses and coupling figures carry us not only to life in our medieval small towns of UP where these birds were once the carriers of messages long before Picasso made them the global carriers of the call for peace after World War II. In the same way the horse is more a reminder of the mount of Husain who died in the battle of Karbala in Iraq. And some of his "trussed horses" in various shapes of contortion bring to mind the pain of an Indian artist for whom Karbala comes alive in the annual Muharram procession led by a white horse with spots of colour on it. This image of the victim is reminiscent not only of Picasso's horse in *Guernica* (1937), but also of Krishen Khanna's (b.1925) paintings of trussed animals being carried to the slaughter. But obviously what all of these artists share is a common identification with the victim but at different periods of oppression in different places.

It is the same with his drawings of coupling figures. Their open eroticism and joy of togetherness are very different from Picasso's highly individualistic and egoistic conquests



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/017-S)

of women. The old man and young woman remind one of the legend of Yayati who had taken over the youth of his son to keep enjoying the pleasures of life. In others I see a flash of the sculptures of Konark and Khajuraho, characterised by a flow of energy rather than a clash of the sexes. One sees too the traces of the "singing line" of K.K. Hebbar (1911-1996) in his works despite the foundations of French cylindrical drawing. Finally, the "finishing" of his drawings and the tightness of his compositions, raising his drawings to the level of complete works of art distinguishes them from these of his Western counterparts.

The West has lost its capacity to create what one would call adequately composed works. The undue reliance on spontaneity often leaves them unfinished. That in itself is no problem. The sculptures at Ellora in some of the caves have been left unfinished. The sculptor felt no more needed to be done. But that was not the case with every work as the rest are fully finished. They require to be assessed as a whole.

The drawings speak to me. They are the voices of living nature, moving and moved by their environment. Interacting with each other and unconcerned with the viewer. Even a crucified Christ looks like the coming together of the male and female elements so central to the Tantric concept of a benevolent exercise of one's power that from another angle appears to be a divine hermaphrodite or *ardhanareshwara*. If two forms in embrace appear like lesbians to some, to another they are two who express the sense of divided selves breaking down all of a sudden. And again, on a more intellectual plane, to one accustomed to the common top-knots of males and females cohabiting together at Konark, making it difficult to tell them apart. The artist reminds one these are forms to speak to the eye. They are art. Life appeals to many more senses.

Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/078-S)





Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/050-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/021-S)

Untitled, pencil on paper, 8.25" x 11.75" (JNN/068-S)

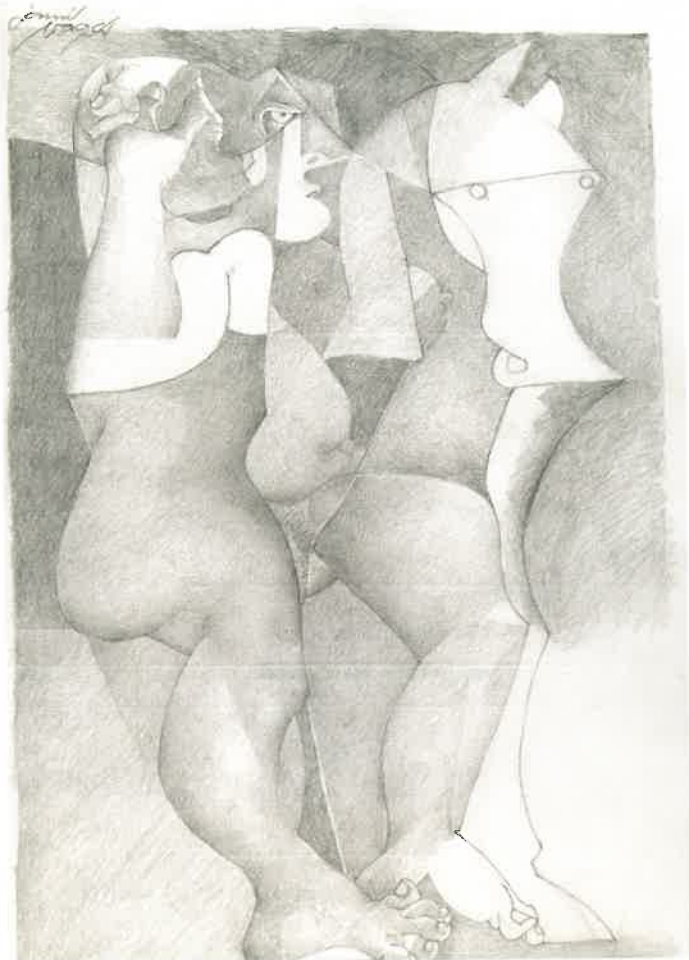


That is why the finished drawings of Asia, blending stroke, line and smudge, create a harmony that goes beyond the mere sign to a complex visual experience. This carries the viewer far ahead of merely being struck by them. One, in fact, is drawn to being engrossed in them. This quality of being emotionally involved is the essence of the aesthetic approach of the East. And I find Jamil Naqsh a sensitive practitioner of it. He awakens one to the reality that though each artist's voice is his own the language he communicates in may not be; but ultimately, each message must be original if it is to be art and not merely branding. From this angle these drawings of his are the cry of his being. And their validity needs no other reference but themselves.

Suneet Chopra

Art Critic & Writer

New Delhi



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/030-S)

Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/015-S)



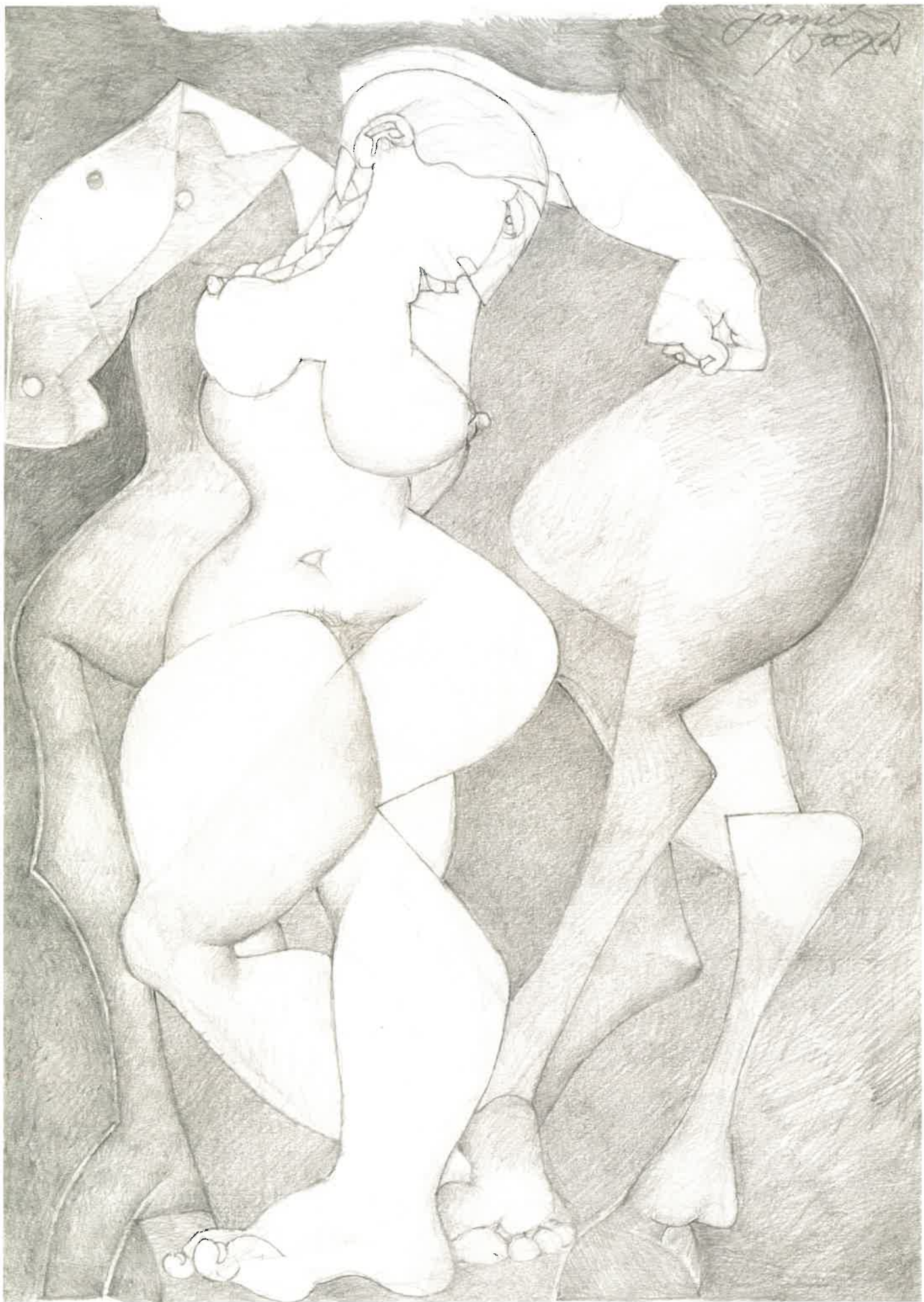
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Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/010-S)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 30" x 24" (JNN/0044)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/018-S)

Jamie Foss



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/006-S)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 40" x 60" (JNN/0036)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 40" x 60" (JNN/0037)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/035-S)



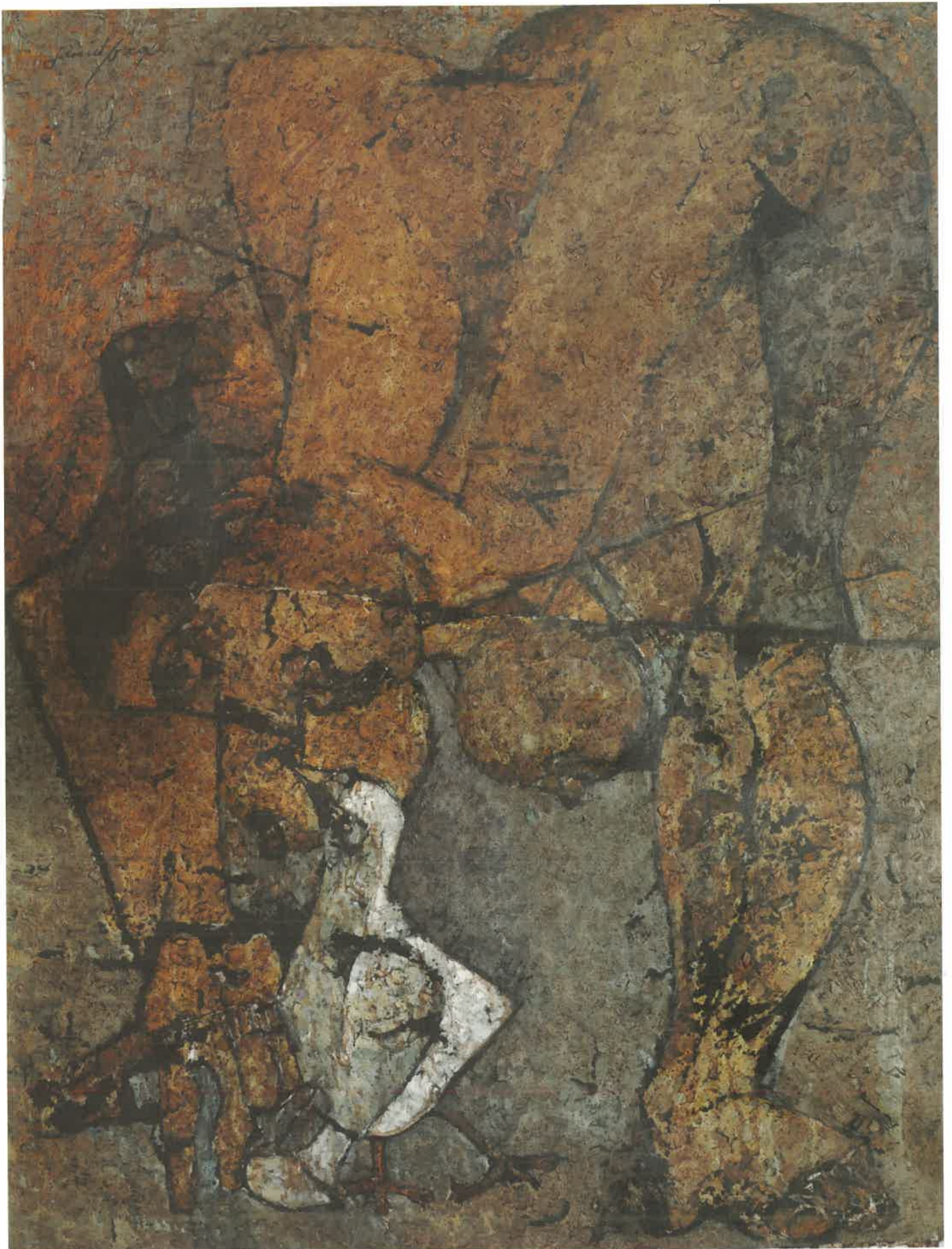
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Untitled, oil on canvas, 24" x 24" (JNN/0031)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/041-S)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 40" x 30" (JNN/0042)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/007-S)





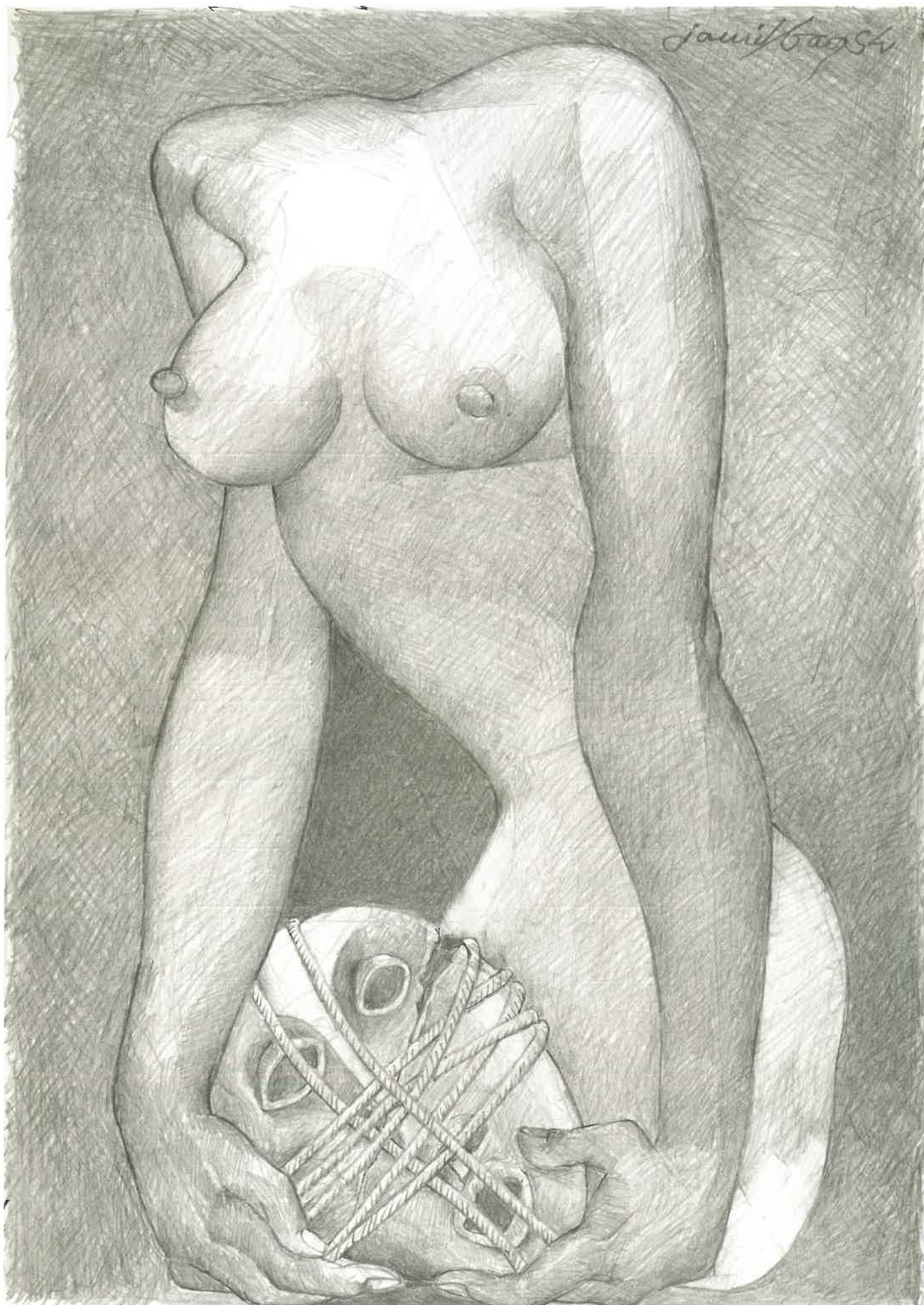
Untitled, oil on canvas, 40" x 60" (JNN/0039)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/006-S)



Untitled, watercolour on paper, 14.5" x 18" (private collection of the artist)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/060-S)

Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/080-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/037-S)





Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/044-S)

Untitled, pencil on paper, 8.25" x 11.75" (JNN/069-S)



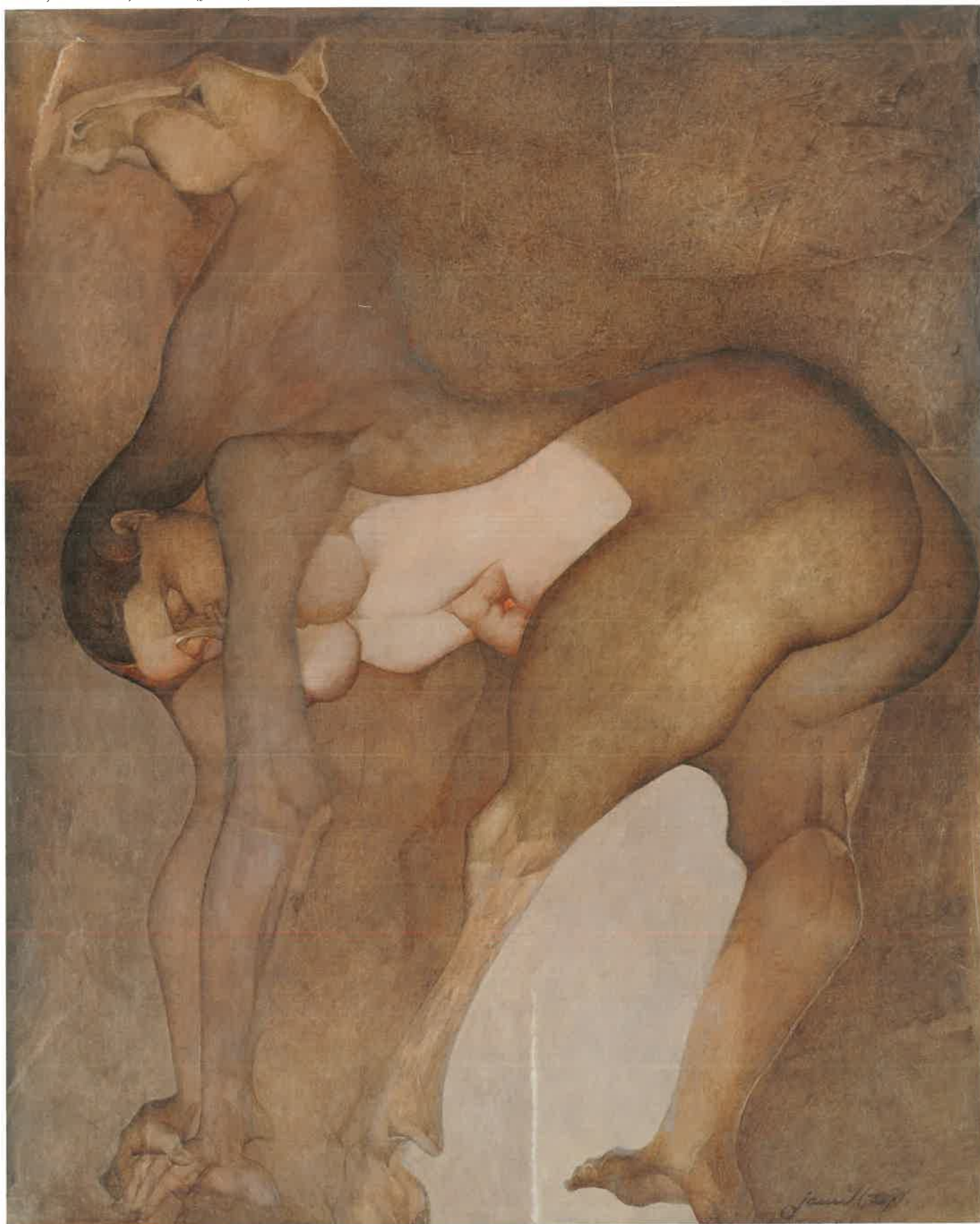
Jamie Baggs



Untitled, oil on canvas, 27" x 27" (JNN/0046)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 30" x 24" (JNN/0045)

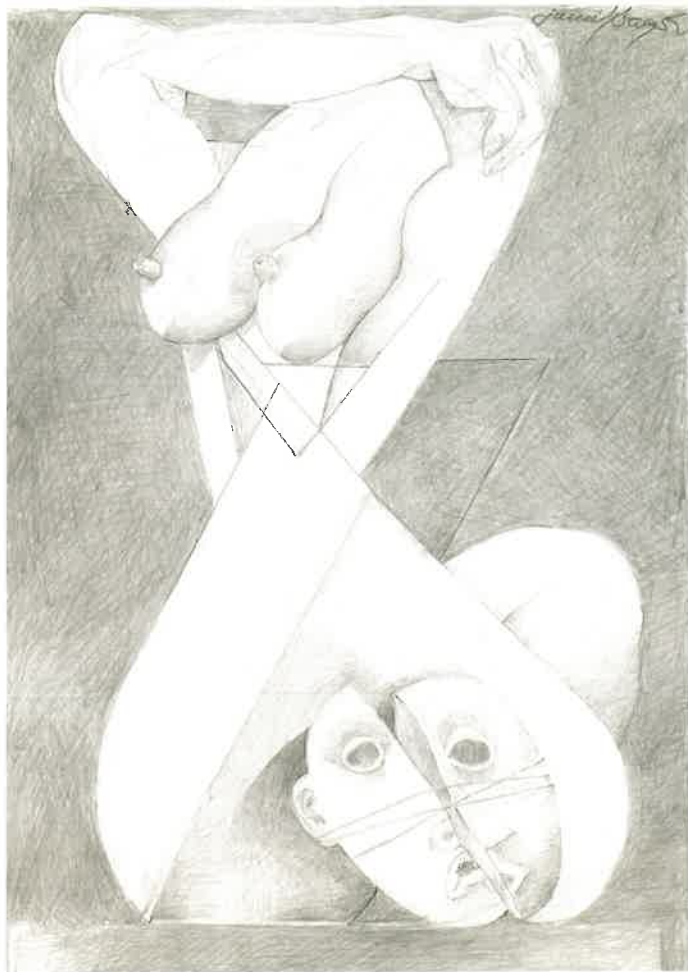


Untitled, oil on canvas, 30" x 24" (JNN/0045)

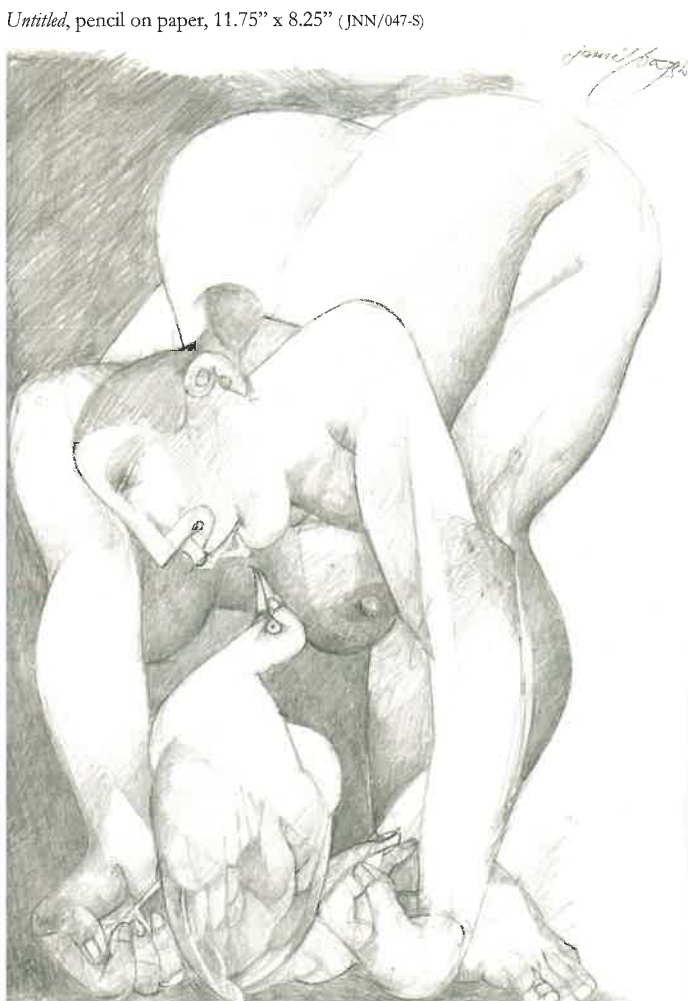




Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/077-S)



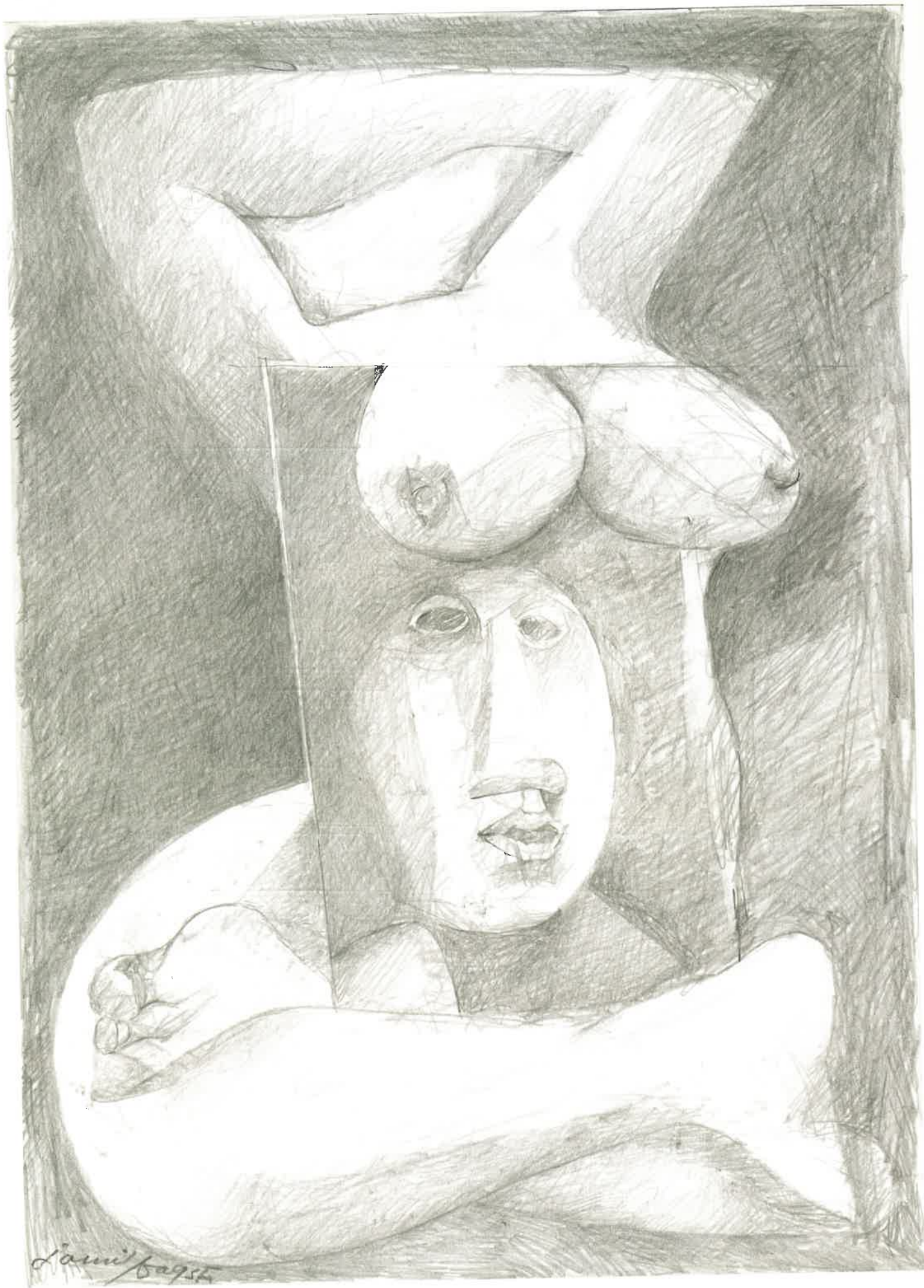
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Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/047-S)



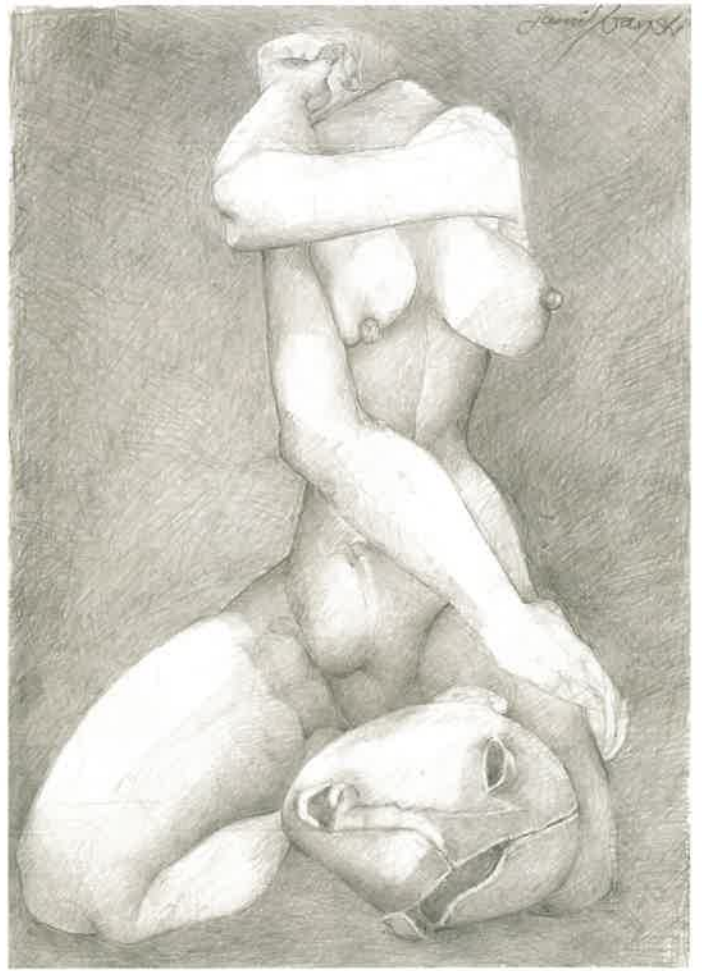
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Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/053-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/062-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/055-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/062-S)



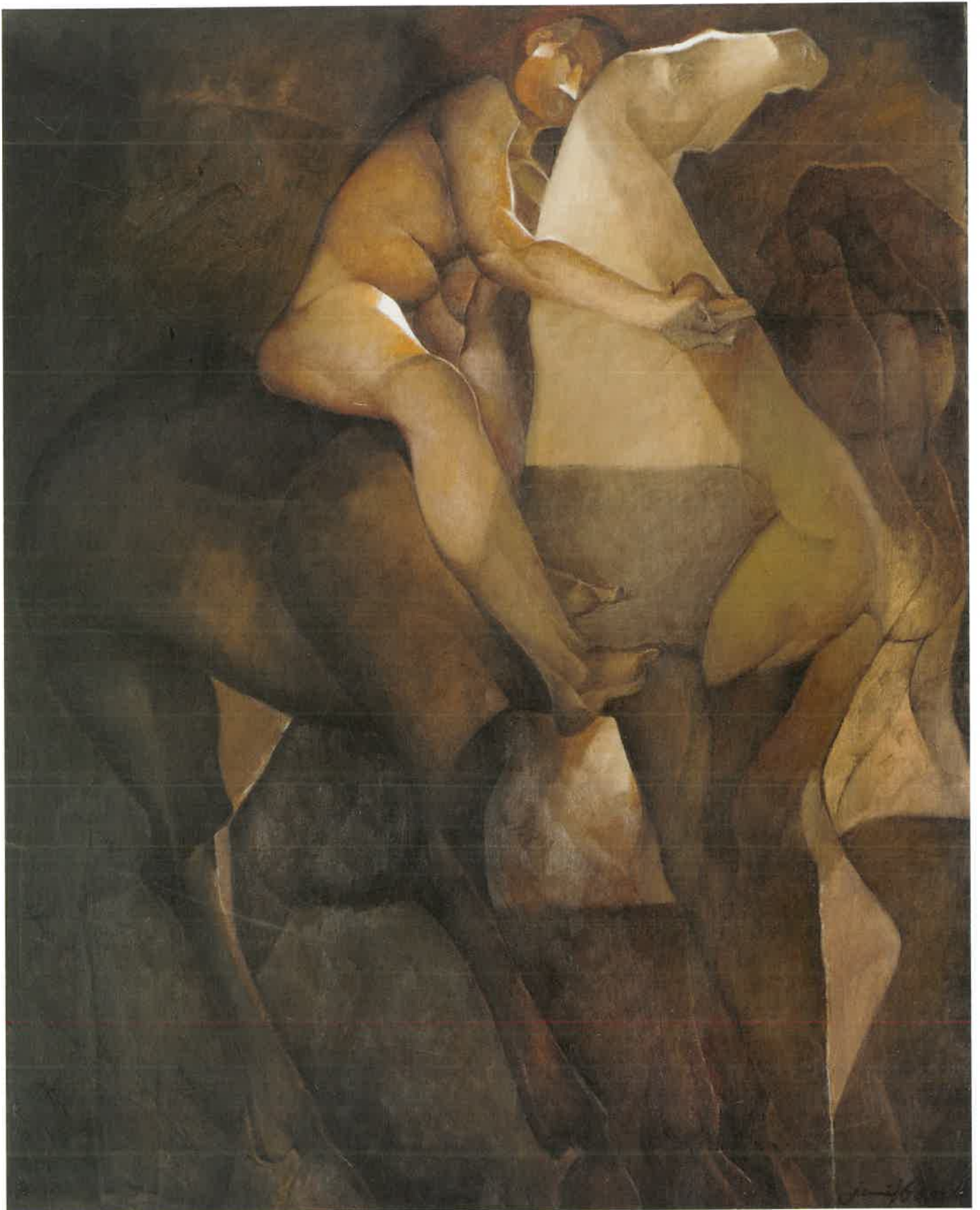
Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/055-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/061-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 8.25" x 11.75" (JNN/070-S)

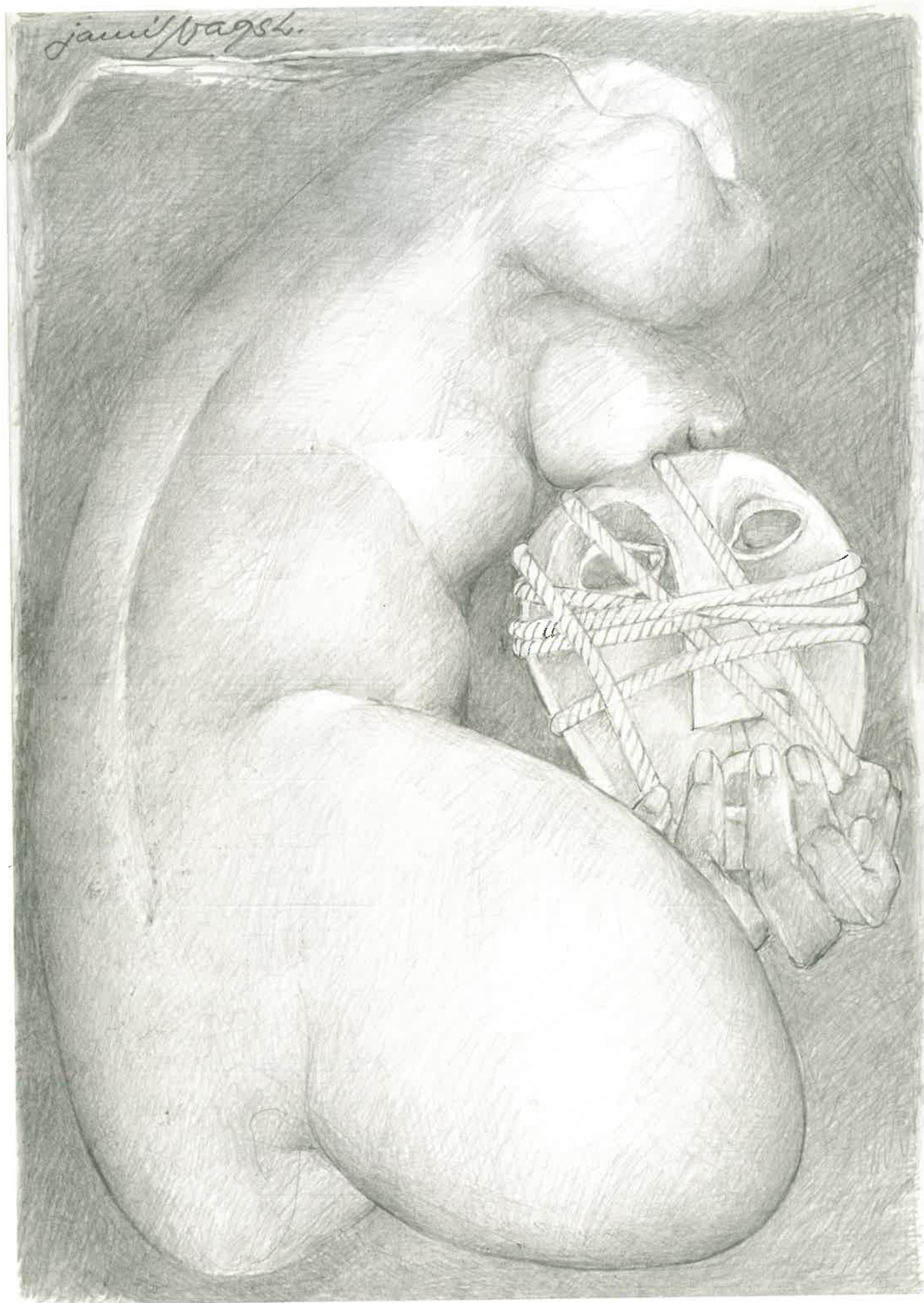


Untitled, oil on canvas, 30" x 24" (JNN/0043)

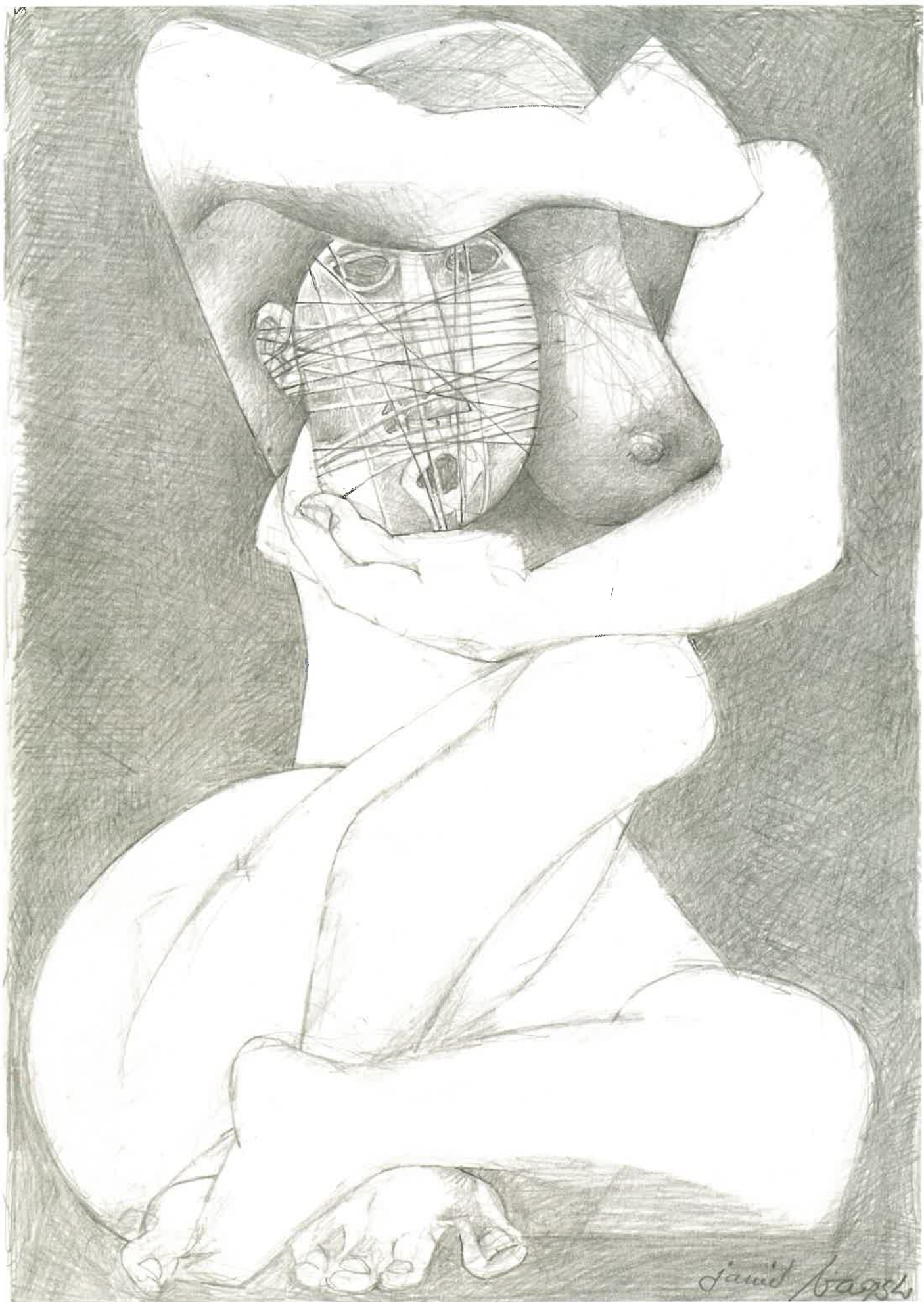


Jonni Fatti

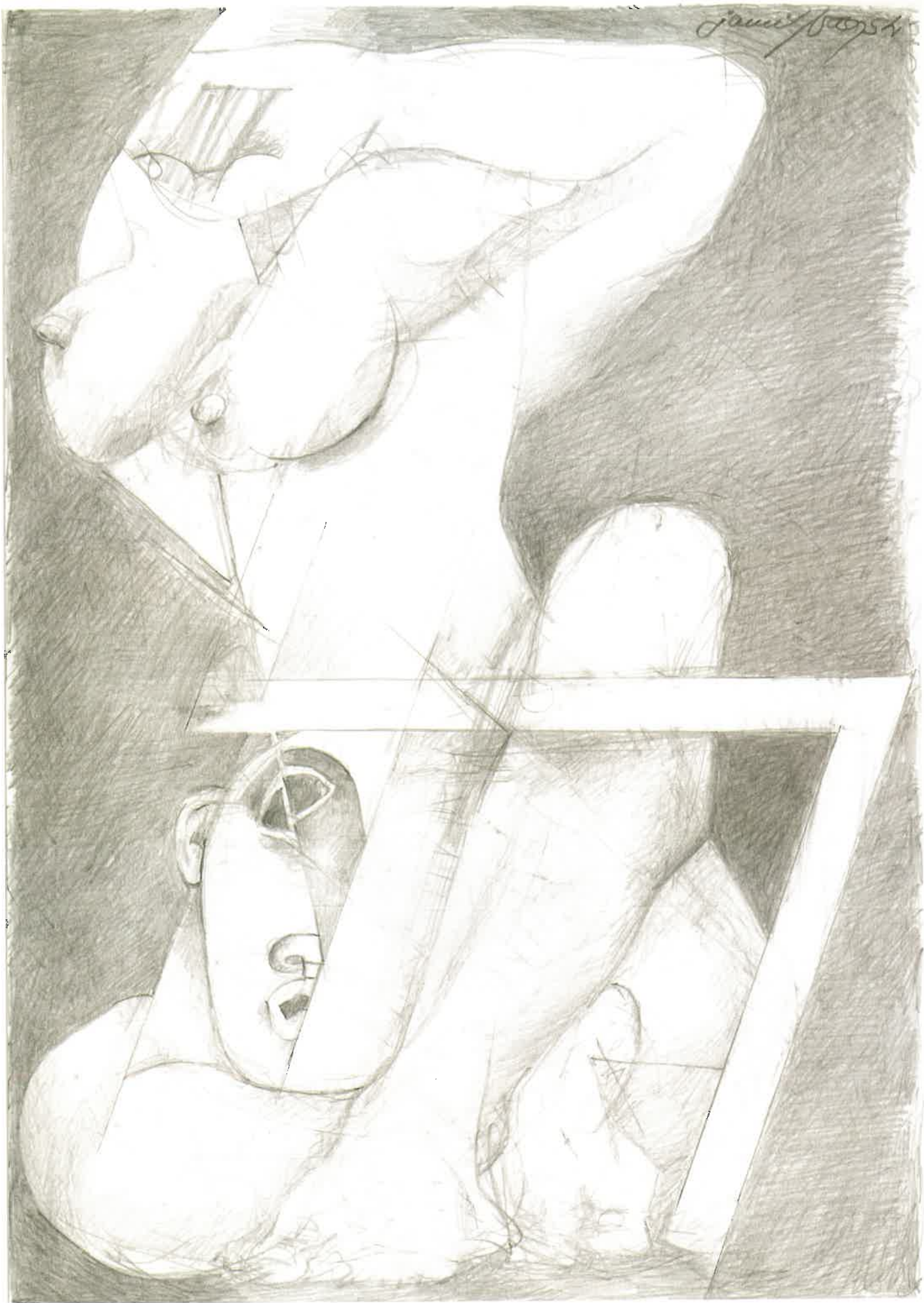
Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/076-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/059-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/058-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/057-S)

Jamifajest



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/043-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/079-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/003-S)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 27.5" x 27.5" (JNN/0049)



Untitled, oil on canvas, 27.5" x 27.5" (JNN/0041)

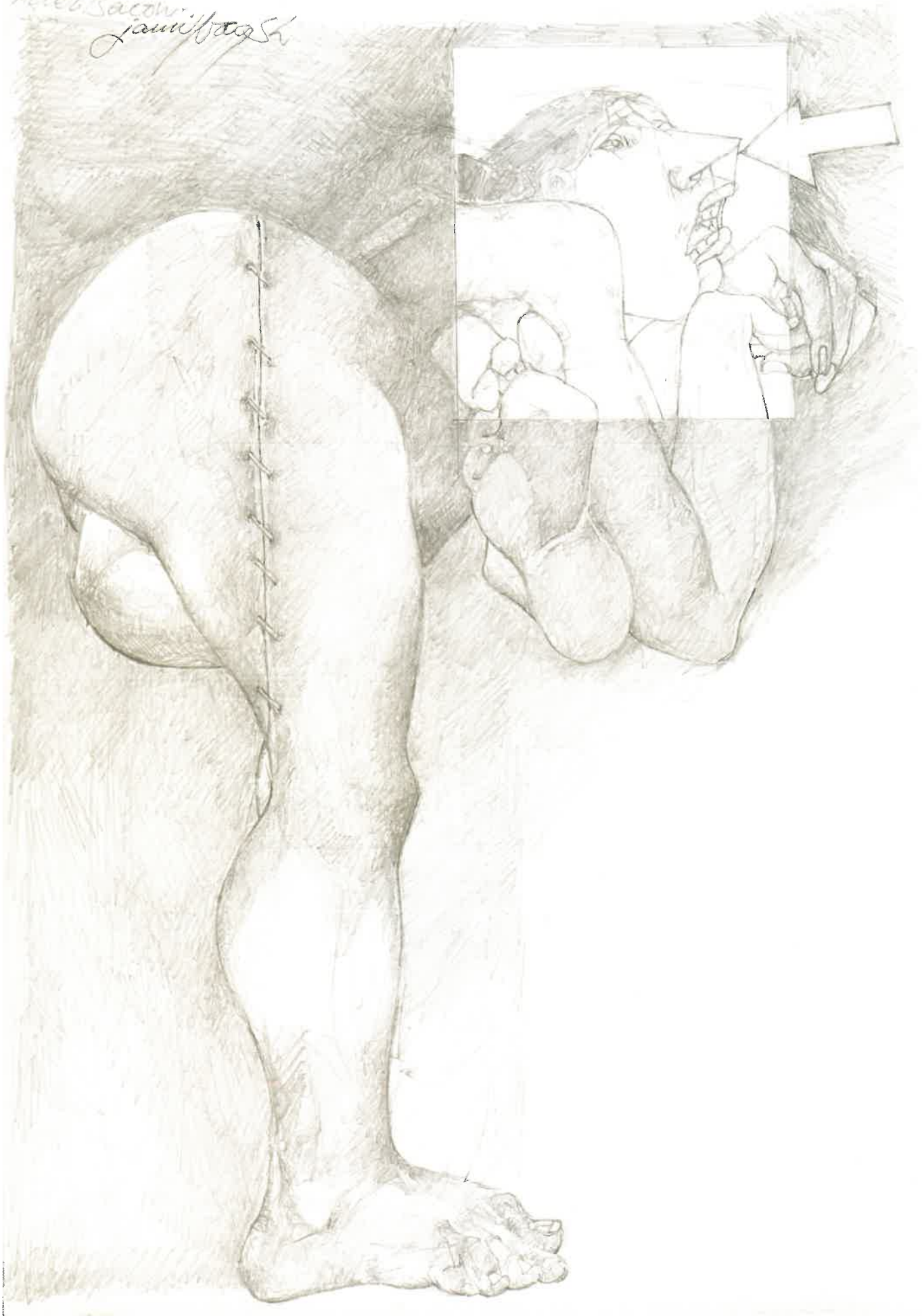


Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/051-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/019-S)

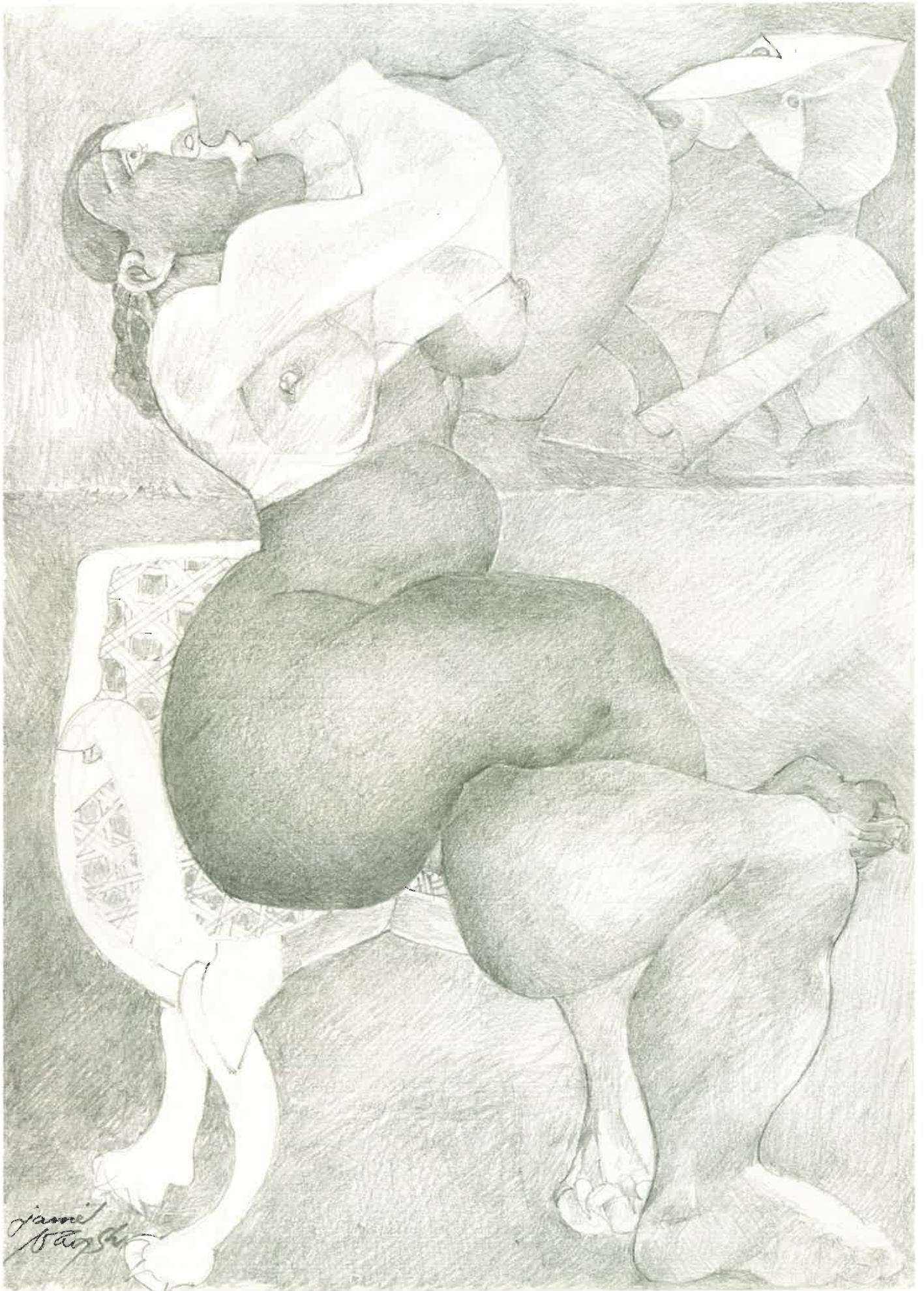
After Bacon
Jannibaghi



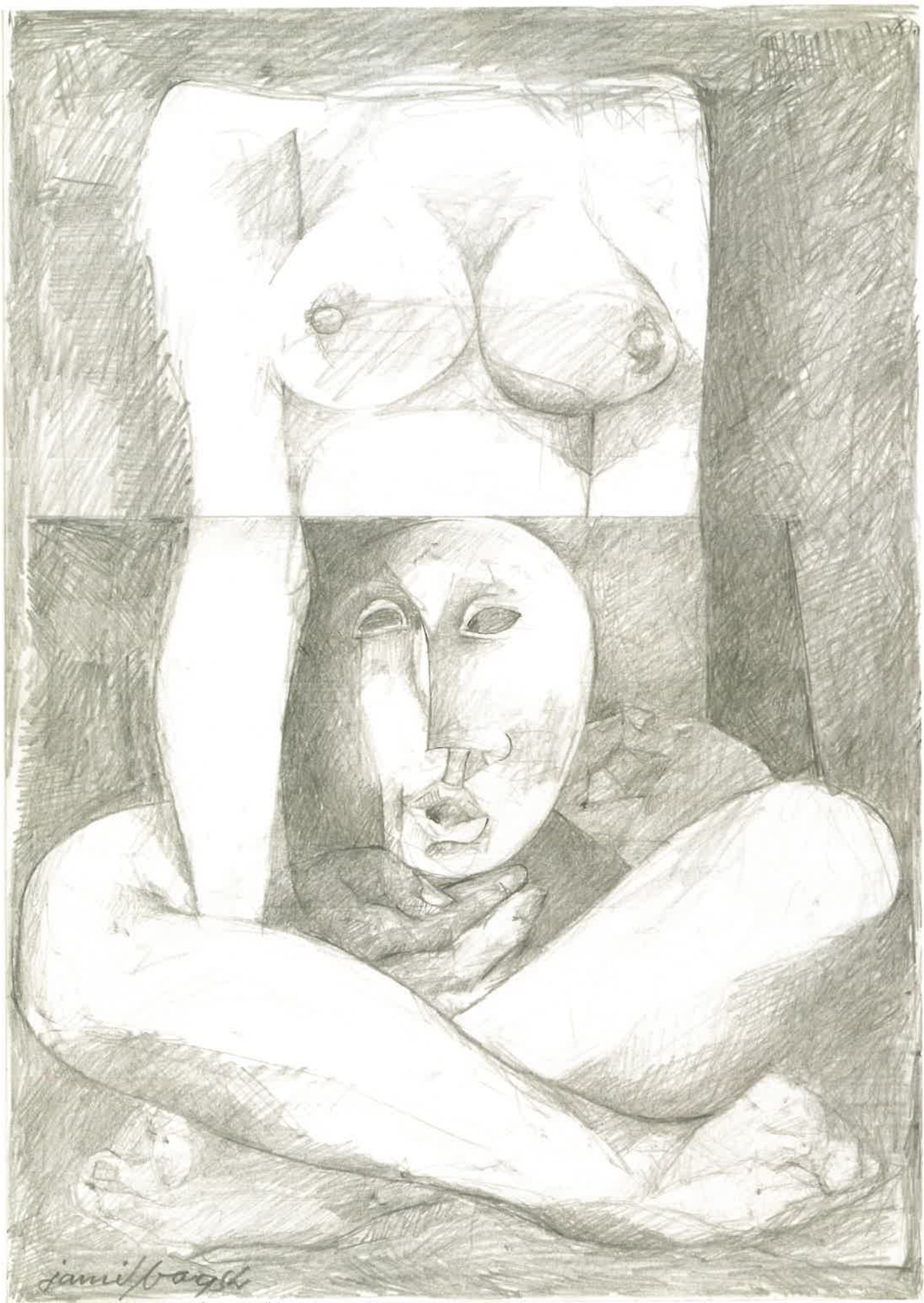
Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/024-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 8.25" x 11.75" (JNN/073-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/028-S)

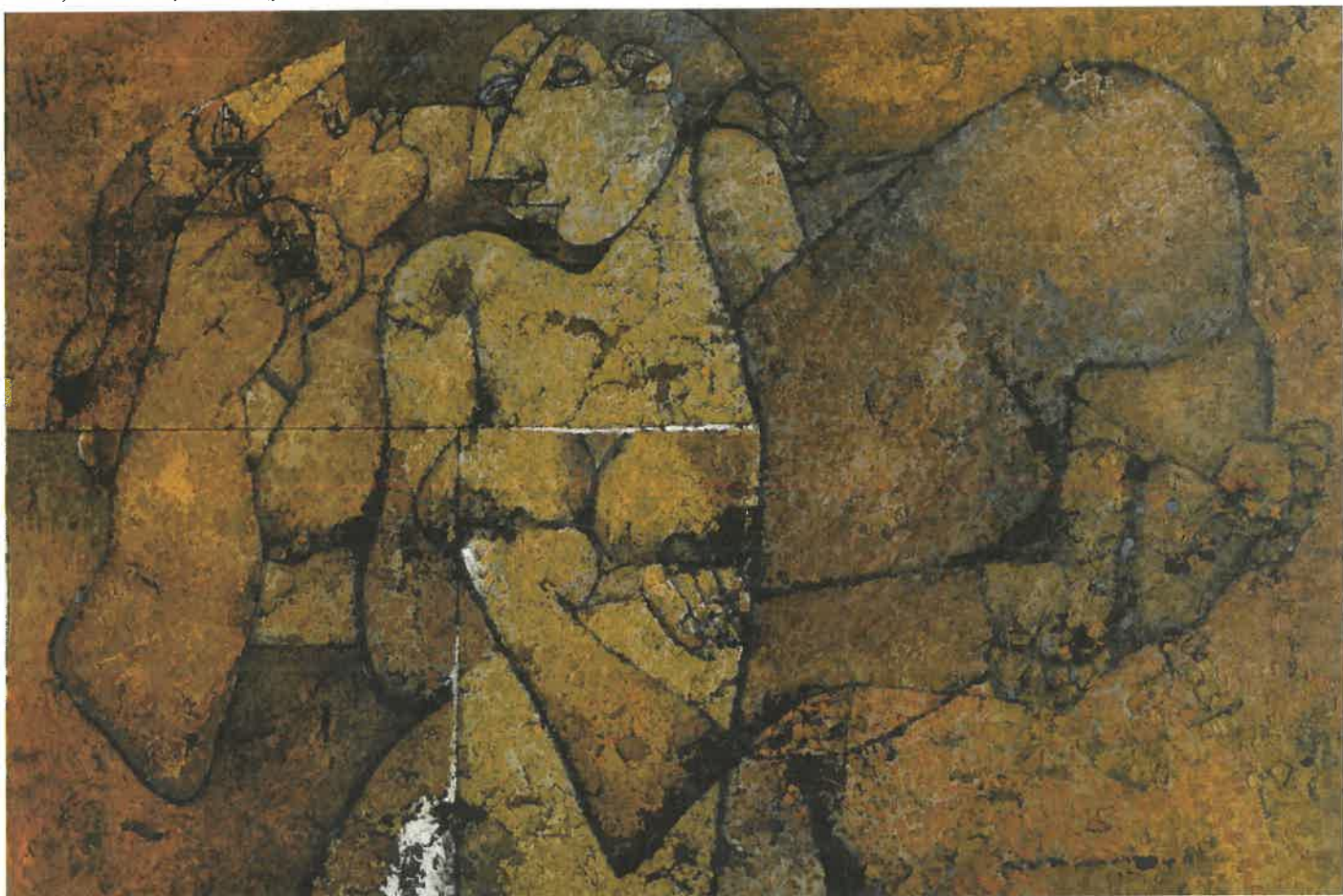


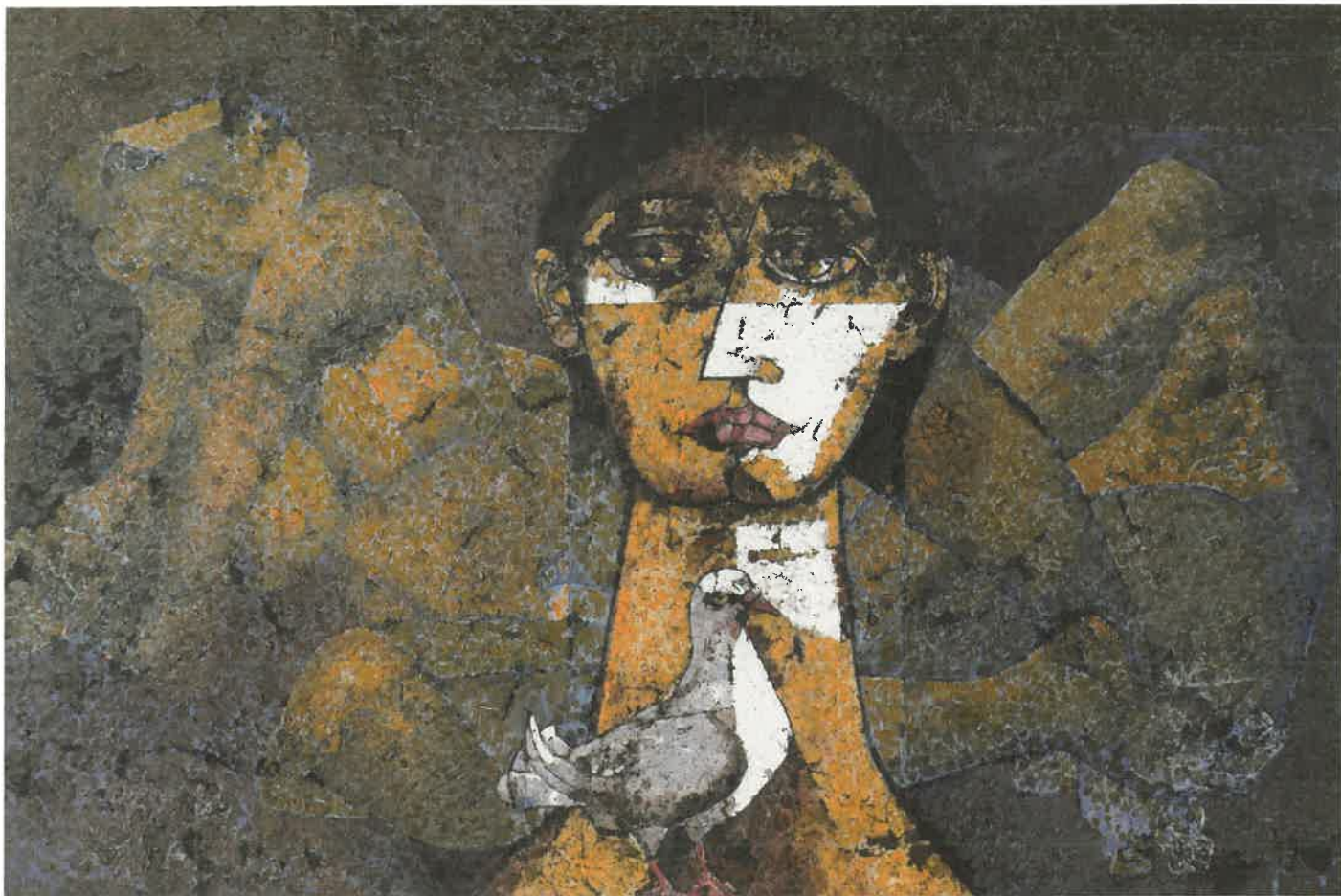
Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/039-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/038-S)

Untitled, oil on canvas, 40" x 60" (JNN/0040)





Untitled, oil on canvas, 40" x 60" (JNN/0035)

Jamil Baqshi



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/013-S)



Untitled, pencil on paper, 11.75" x 8.25" (JNN/009-S)

Jamil Naqsh : a profile

- 1939 25th December, born in Kairana, Uttar Pradesh, India
- 1953 Studied Indian miniature painting with the late Ustad Muhammad Sherif
National College of Arts, Lahore

Honours and Awards

- 1961 First prize, Women's International Club, Karachi
- 1962 Gold Medal, Pakistan Arts Council, Karachi
- 1980 Shakir Ali Award, Ministry of Culture,
Government of Pakistan
- 1982 Contribution of 20 years as a painter,
Arts Council of Pakistan
- 1989 President's Pride of Performance Award
- 1989 Pursuit of Excellence Award, the Artists
Association of Punjab, Pakistan
- 2003 Subject of an extensive retrospective exhibition
at the Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi,
to date the only artist to have been thus
honored in his lifetime.

Solo Exhibitions

- 1962 Pakistan Arts Council, Lahore
- 1963 Pakistan Arts Council, Karachi
- 1963 The Pak-Brazil Friendship Association,
beach luxury hotel, Karachi
- 1967 Pakistan Arts Council, Karachi
- 1971 Pakistan Arts Gallery, Karachi
- 1996 Establishment of Jamil Naqsh Foundation
and Museum, Karachi
- 1996 *Homage to Marino Marini*, Momart Art Gallery,
Karachi
- 1996 *Beyond Words*, The Art Gallery, Islamabad
- 1996 *Modern Manuscripts*, Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 1996 Private viewing hosted by Amina and Jehangir
Tareen, Trustees of the Jamil Naqsh Foundation,
Lahore
- 1997 *Mother & Child*, dedicated to Dr Faridon Setna,
a private viewing hosted by Meher and Husain
Sheiff, Trustees of the Jamil Naqsh Foundation,
Karachi
- 1998 *Homage to Marino Marini*, Jamil Naqsh Museum
and Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 1999 Formal Inauguration, Jamil Naqsh Museum,
Karachi
- 2001 Jamil Naqsh Museum, Karachi
- 2001 *Magic of the Line*, at Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 2003 *Private Collection of Najmi Sura*, Jamil Naqsh
Museum and Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 2003 *Jamil Naqsh: A Retrospective*, Mohatta Palace
Museum, Karachi
- 2005 Studio Glass Art Gallery, London
- 2008 *Homage to Picasso*, Nitanjali Art Gallery,
at Galerie Romain Rolland,
Alliance Francaise de Delhi

Group Exhibitions

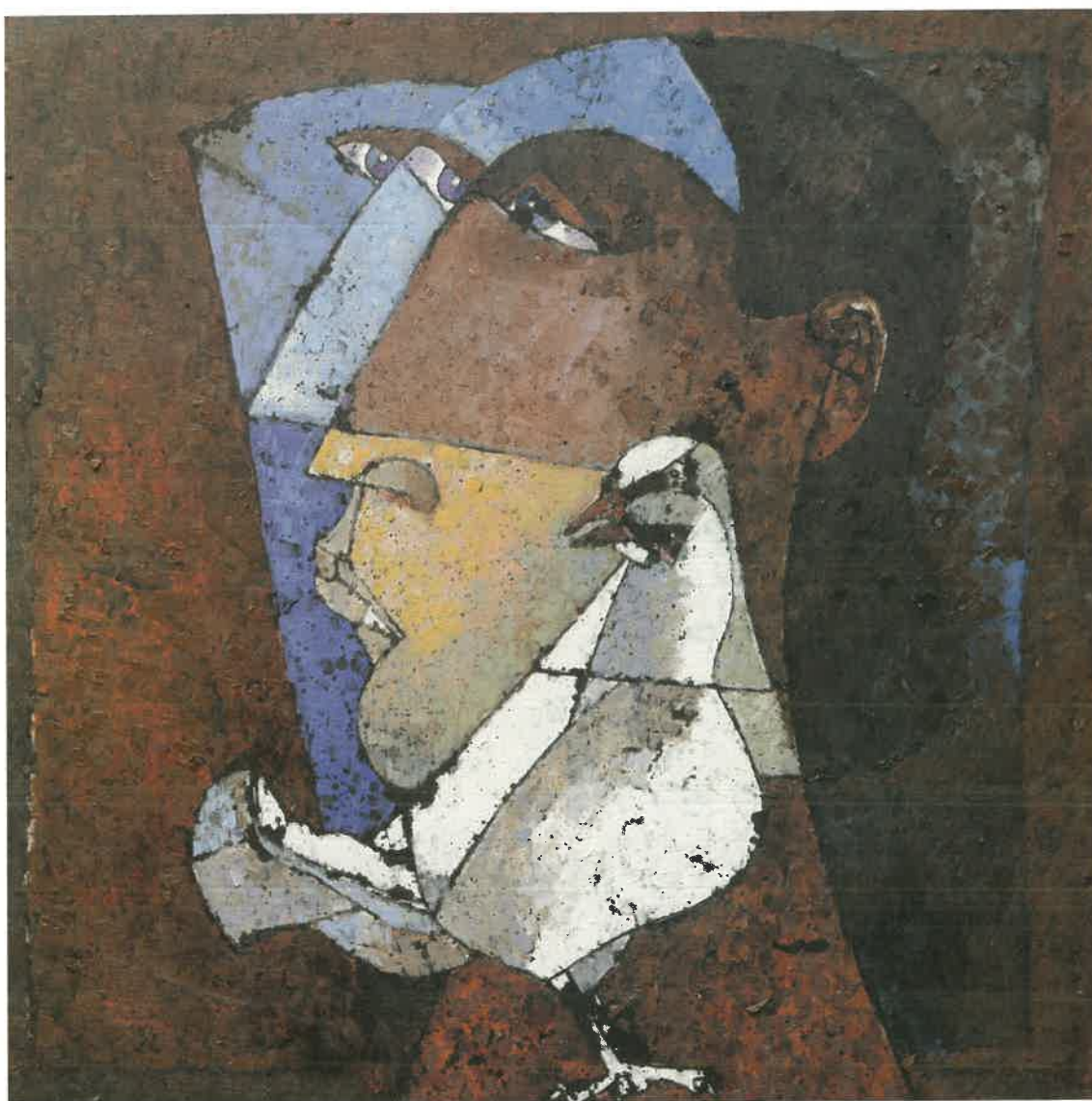
- 1953 National Art Competition, Multan
- 1963 *Painters from Pakistan*, Nepal
- 1964 *Painters from Pakistan*, Ceylon
- 1970 Gallerie Christoph Durr, Munich, West Germany
- 1972 *Painters from Pakistan*, Pakistan National Council of the Arts, in Paris, London, Italy, Munich, New York, Sao Paulo, Tokyo, Libya, Morocco, Ghana, and Sudan
- 1992 Trivandrun and New Delhi, India
- 1992 Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, CA, U.S.A.
- 2005 *Indian Art Unbound II*, by Nitanjali Art Gallery, at the Grand Hyatt Dubai
- 2006 *Ibtada-The Beginning*, at gandhara-art.com (Pakistan's first virtual exhibition)
- 2006 *Pakistani Master's Show*, at the Park Hotel, New Delhi, India
- 2006 *Euphonic Palettes*, Nitanjali Art Gallery, at the ITC Grand Central, Mumbai
- 2006 *Euphonic Palettes*, Nitanjali Art Gallery, at Galerie Romain Rolland, the Alliance Française de Delhi, sponsored by Deutsche Bank
- 2006 *Euphonic Palettes-Dubai*, Nitanjali Art Gallery, at the Grand Hyatt Dubai
- 2007 *Uninterrupted Journeys*, by Nitanjali Art Gallery, at ITC Grand Central, Mumbai
- 2007 *Resplendent Reveries*, Nitanjali Art Gallery, at the Grand Hyatt Dubai
- 2007 *Rhythms of Illumination*, Nitanjali Art Gallery, at the Grand Hyatt Dubai

Special Projects

- 1960 – 68 Co-editor of *Seep Urdu Literary Quarterly* and *Arts International*
- 1968 First prize, national competition by Hamdard National Foundation for poster design to find a cure for cancer, for display and distribution by the W.H.O.
- 1970 – 73 President, Pakistan Painters Guild
- 1973 Calligraphy executed in oil on canvas for the Hamdard National Foundation
- 1974 Mural executed in oil on canvas for the Cancer Society of Pakistan, Karachi for display and distribution by the W.H.O.
- 1977 Mural executed in oil on canvas for the Shakir Ali Museum, Lahore

Auctions

His art has regularly been sold in International Auction Houses such as Bonhams and Christies.



Untitled, oil on canvas, 24" x 24" (JNN/0030)

