HOLD STILL

Praneet Soi

2018-19

HOLD STILL

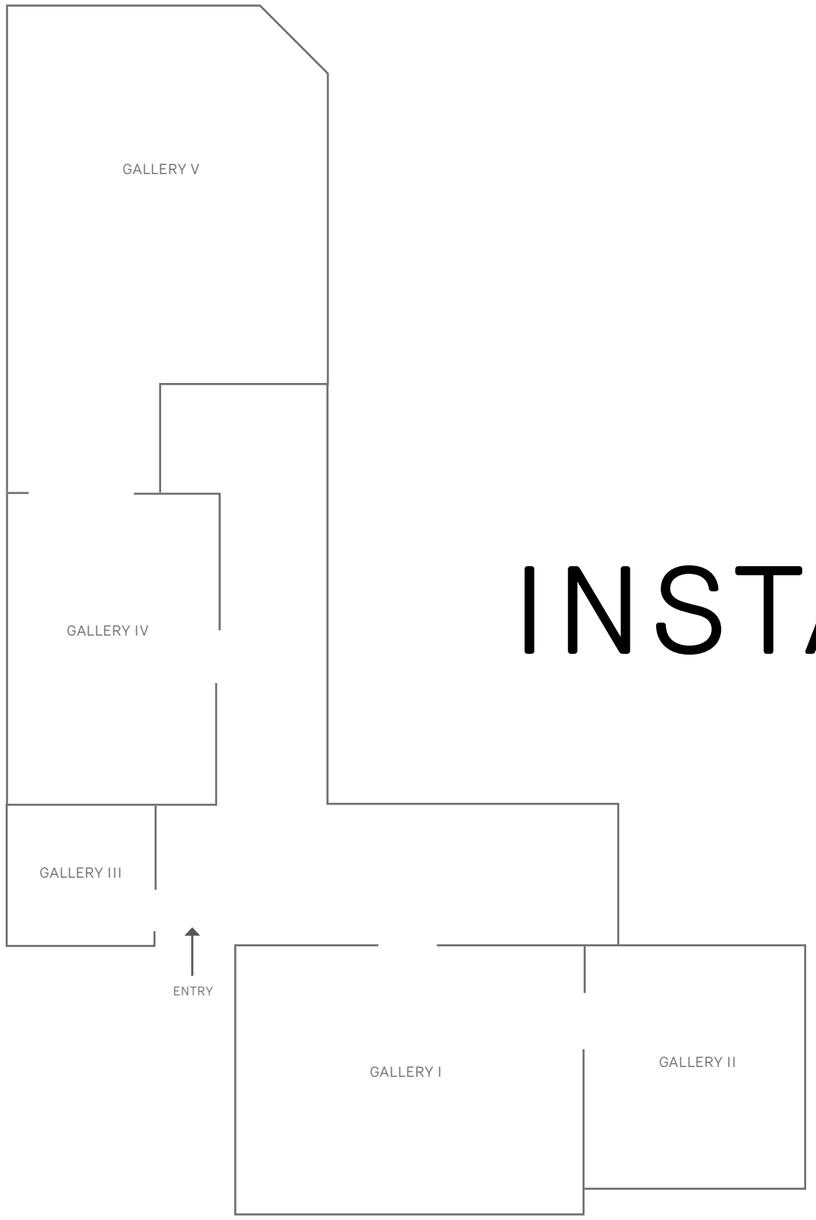
Hold Still titled after Sally Mann's seminal book, lays bare a layered lens through which Soi looks at his surroundings, creating a unique interplay between the narrative and the image. A deep association with the circulated image, its archiving and re-appropriation, remains an essential part of his process, at times leading him to unravel the several transitions – of transfiguring, fragmenting and deconstructing the original form.

Soi's personal experiences, during his time as a student in a changing political climate in the late 90's in the United States, marked a shift in his work, rooting it further into the politics of representation. The devastation in Manhattan in 2001, during the fall of the Twin Towers were caught by western media in ways very different from those of the consequent attacks by US forces of Taliban controlled Afghanistan, where the same media propelled a primitive narrative of the land and its people. This moment marked for Soi, the beginning of an engagement with circulated media and he has since collected and compiled an archive that throws light upon this dichotomy.

Over the years Soi has repeatedly referenced and often subverted, conflict-zone images. He frequently merges such abstracted images with spatial aspects of architecture in an attempt to shift the imbalanced perception of conflict zones, such as he has done with Srinagar, Kashmir. Since his first visit to strife-ridden Srinagar in 2010 and meeting master craftsman Fayaz Jan, Soi delved into ideas linked to the depiction of the city's cultural fabric and slippages in the public understanding of its rich historical legacy, not limited to those of violence, loss and the longstand- ing misrepresentation of Kashmir in mainstream media.

Hold Still, continues Soi's oblique allusion to the circulated image and its public memory. Several works in this exhibition such as Falling Figure, Hold Still, Memento Mori, transform this archive of images. The fragmented form of the falling figure juxtaposed by the abstracted façade of the twin-towers or the image of the screaming man from Gaza for instance, find themselves represented in paintings as well as craft processes such as coir weavings that lie on the mosaic patterned floor of the gallery. Soi's use of the archive manifests itself through drawings that are meticulously rendered to reveal correlations of the body and architectural elements. The links between the human body and architecture is a subject than Soi has often attempted to articulate within his work through a process of creating a repository of mapped images, and in this exhibition, through paintings such as Two Architectures, October and Mumbai Diptych.

Hold Still offers a point of entry into the the densely populated world of images that co-inhabit Soi's mind and explores the construction of meaning through the manipulated and layered visual. It includes traditional practices, such as miniature-painting and coir-weaving and enmeshes them with contemporary techniques such as digital printing and moving image. Soi places the archive of motifs he has built over two decades at its centre, and unravels how he constructs, expands and then rebuilds recurring narratives in his work.



INSTALLATION VIEWS

GALLERY I

a
b
c
d
e

DETAIL OF WORKS

FALLING FIGURE

Silverpoint and acrylic paint on linen canvas
170 cm x 140 cm, 2018

MEMENTO MORI

Acrylic paint, silverpoint on linen canvas
105 cm x 105 cm, 2018

MEMENTO MORI, Detail

HOLD STILL

Acrylic paint, silverpoint on linen canvas, 200 cm x 140 cm, 2018

HOLD STILL

Acrylic paint, silverpoint on linen
canvas, 200 cm x 140 cm, 2018, Detail

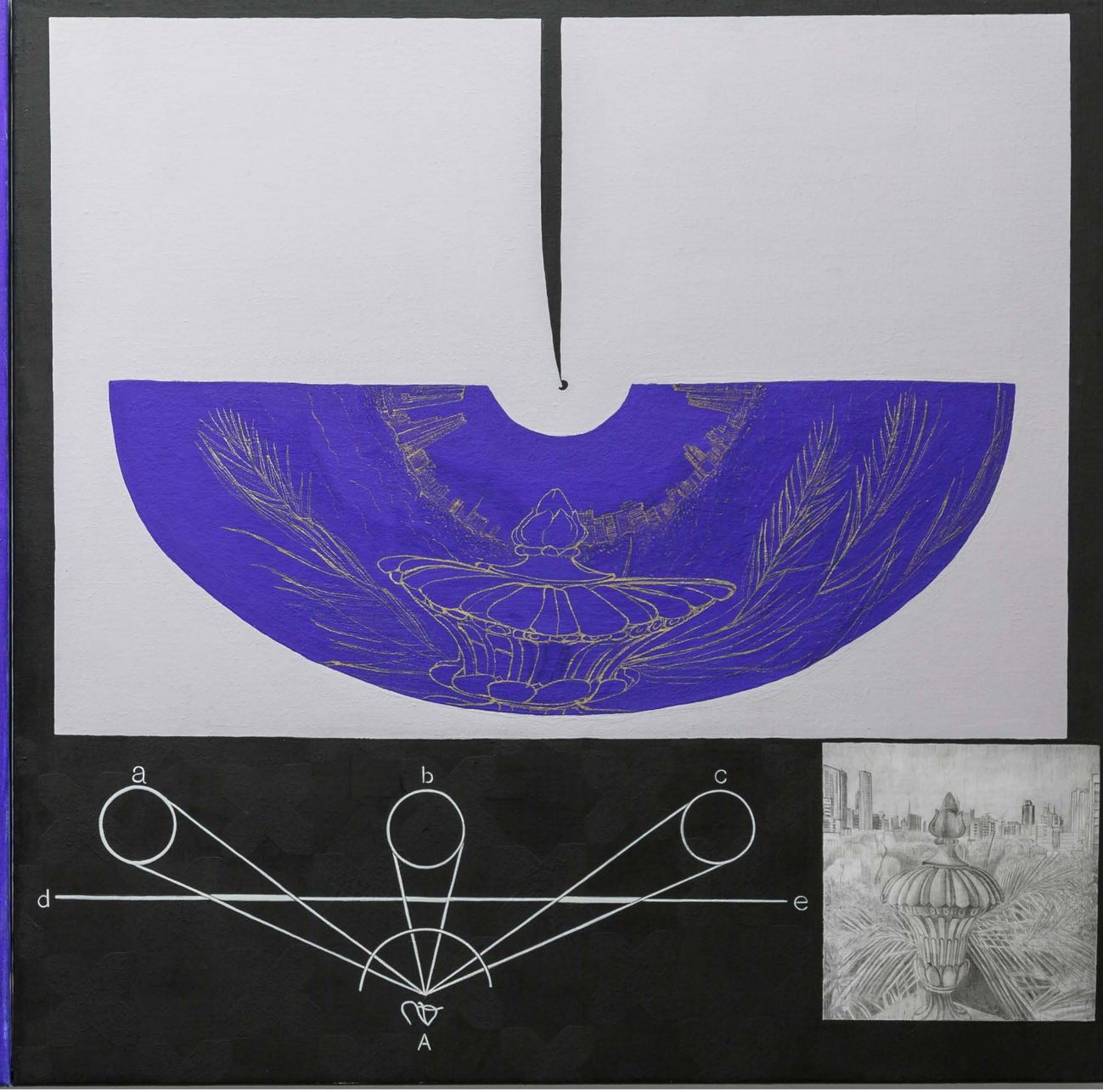
“The painting, October, is a map of the artists’ references from the architecture (of the twin towers), patterns from Kashmir and an image from war torn syria. A book-cover by Massumeh Farhad under whom I studied at the Smithsonian and a photograph, I have kept with me from my time in America. This was my view from the studio I lived in, while in Williamsburg in 1999. To the left corner I could just about make out the Twin Towers. This photograph was taken in the early morning with the haze making the towers appear faintly, perhaps a premonition of their eventual destruction.The decision to work on the image of Syria by silverpoint is a conscious decision to link the history of photography to drawing. Photography initially involved the use of silver halide as a photosensitive material. The use of silver-point here references this context. Initially used by artists (Da Vinci, Rembrandt) before graphite was discovered, is a non reversible process. The image turns warmer over time as it is exposed to air and oxidises. Decades from now, or a century from now, this image will look sepia tinted while retaining its sharpness. “

- Praneet Soi

OCTOBER

Acrylic paint, silverpoint on linen canvas,
80 cm x 80 cm, 2017

OCTOBER, Detail



MUMBAI DIPTYCH Acrylic paint, silverpoint on linen canvas, 80 cm x 80 cm each, 2017

Untitled (Mural) Acrylic paint and pencil on wall, 2018

HUISDUINER CHURCH

Acrylic paint, silverpoint on linen canvas,
50 cm x 50 cm, 2018

TWO ARCHITECTURES

Acrylic paint, silverpoint on linen canvas,
50 cm x 50 cm, 2018

PIGGYBACK

Acrylic paint, silverpoint on linen canvas,
200 cm x 140 cm, 2017, Detail

PIGGYBACK, Detail

MINIATURE FRAGMENTED BODY ARCHITECTURE

Acrylic paint, silverpoint on linen canvas,
30 cm x 30 cm, 2018

FALLING FIGURE

Coir, acrylic paint, UV Matt Varnish, plywood, metal,
Dimensions Variable, 2018

FALLING FIGURE

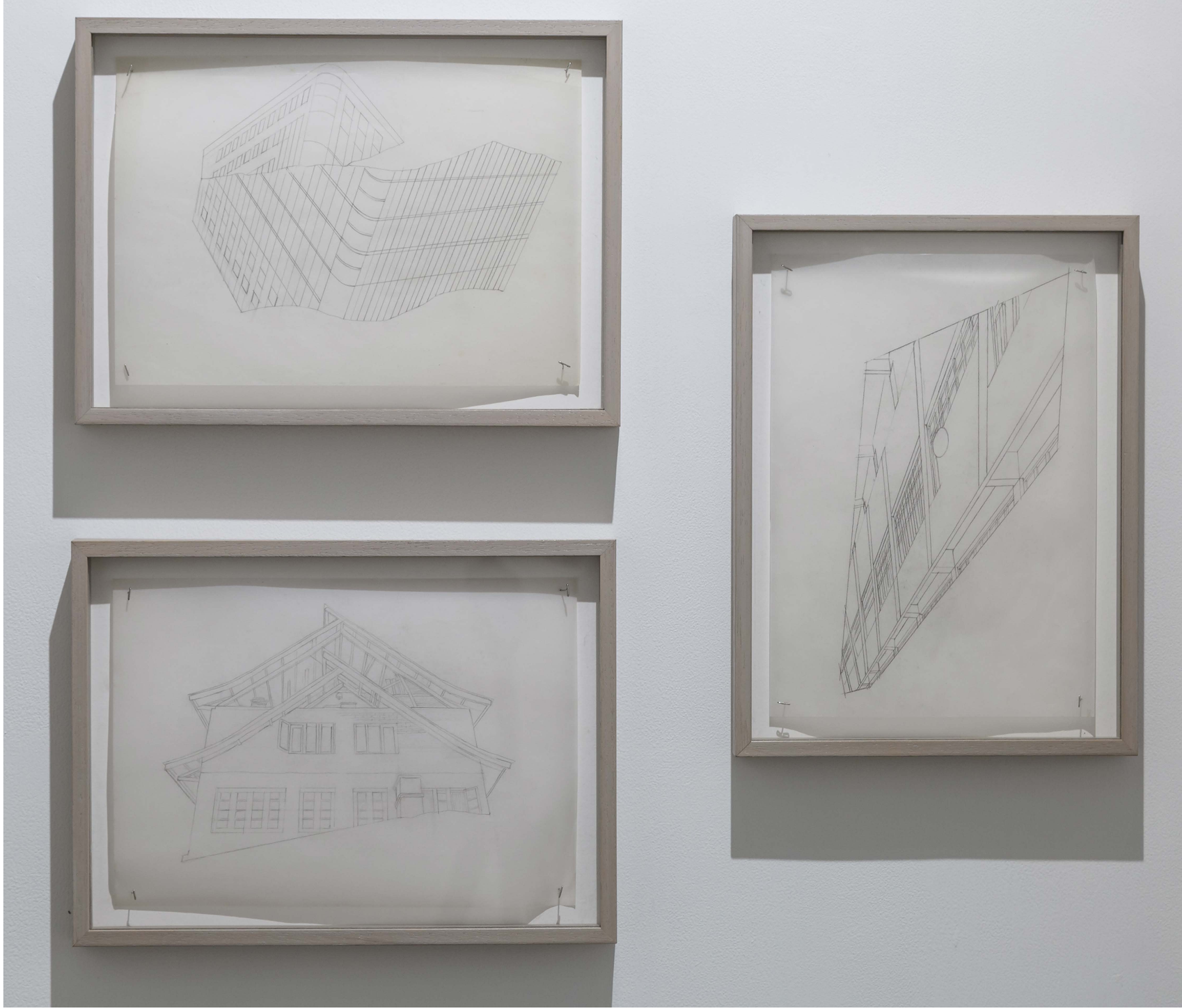
Coir, acrylic paint, UV Matt Varnish, plywood, metal,
Dimensions Variable, 2018, Detail

PIGGYBACK

Coir, acrylic paint, UV Matt Varnish, plywood, metal,
Dimensions Variable, 2018

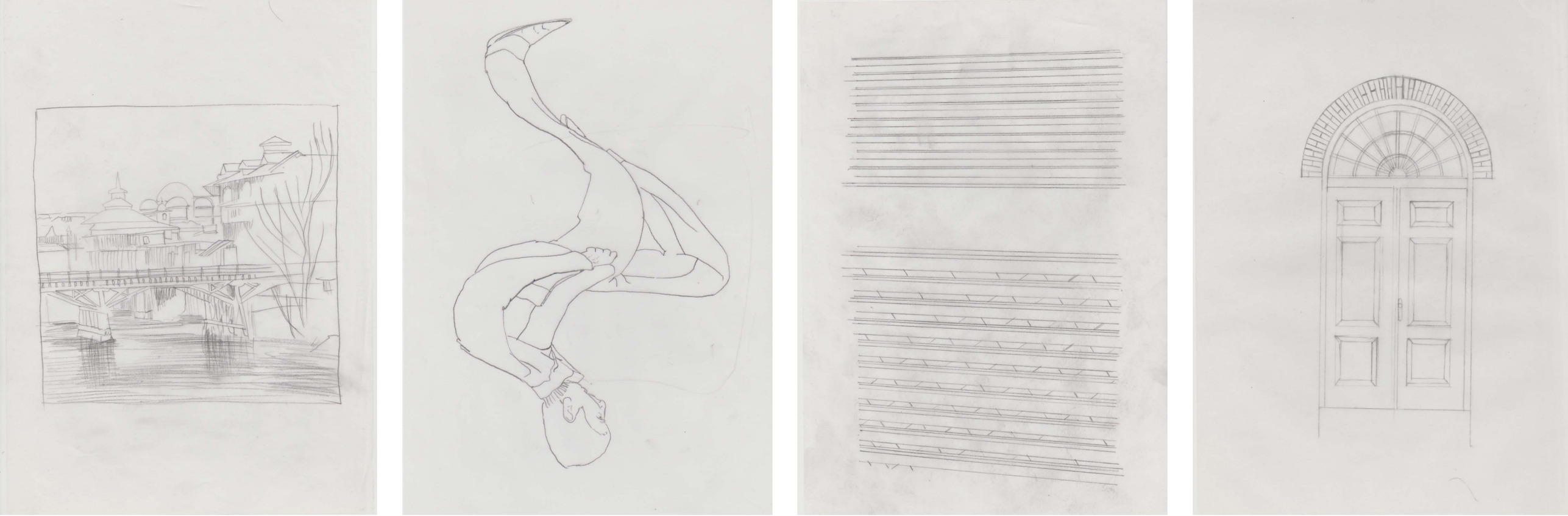
STUDIES

Pencil on tracing paper, 29.7 cm x 21 cm each,
Suite of 3, 2016



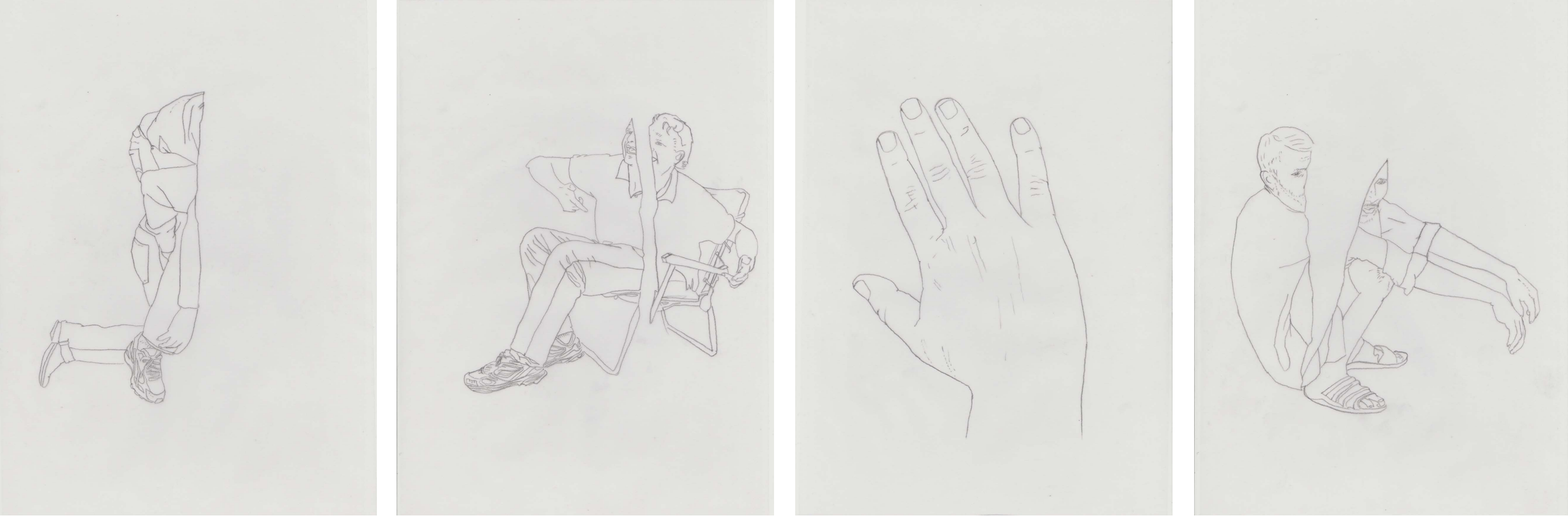
UNTITLED DRAWINGS (I)

Pencil on tracing paper, 29.7 cm x 21 cm each,
Suite of 8, 2018



UNTITLED DRAWINGS (I)

Pencil on tracing paper, 29.7 cm x 21 cm each,
Suite of 8, 2018, Detail



UNTITLED DRAWINGS (I)

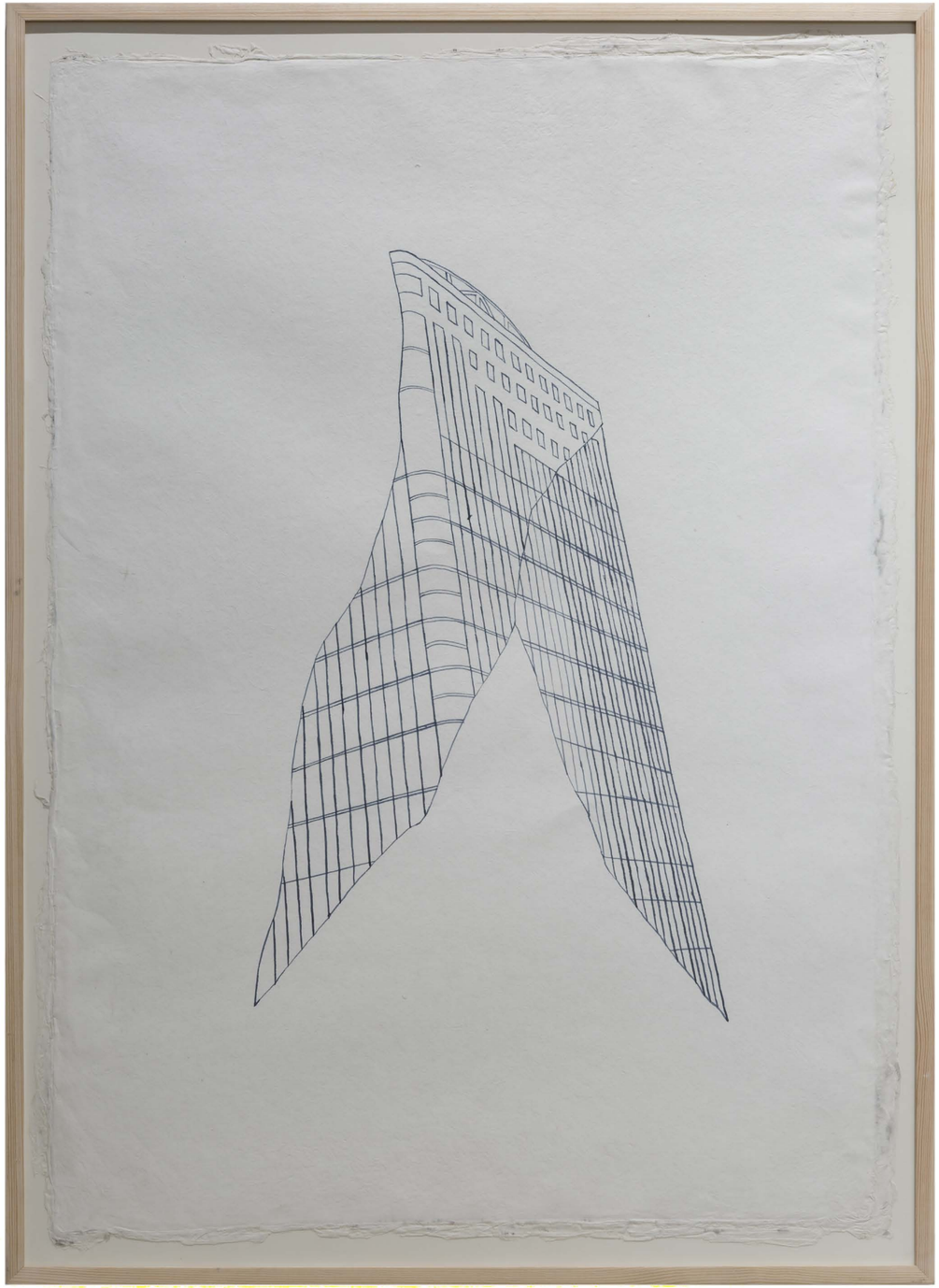
Pencil on tracing paper, 29.7 cm x 21 cm each,
Suite of 8, 2018, Detail

DRAWINGS (SUITE OF 2)

Acrylic on handmade paper , 100 cm x 70 cm, 2018

DRAWINGS (SUITE OF 2)

Acrylic on handmade paper , 100 cm x 70 cm, 2018



IRENE (STUDY)

Acrylic on handmade paper , 100 cm x 70 cm, 2018

TREE, MARINE DRIVE, MUMBAI

Acrylic on handmade paper , 100 cm x 70 cm, 2018

DRAWINGS (SUITE OF 3)

Acrylic on handmade paper , 100 cm x 70 cm, 2018

DRAWINGS (SUITE OF 3)

Acrylic on handmade paper , 100 cm x 70 cm, 2018

DRAWINGS (SUITE OF 3)

Acrylic on handmade paper , 100 cm x 70 cm, 2018