

Labyrinths....

Anita Dube

January 5th – February 15 2013



Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum
At the Special Project Space (1 & 2)
at 91A Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar
Road, Byculla (E)

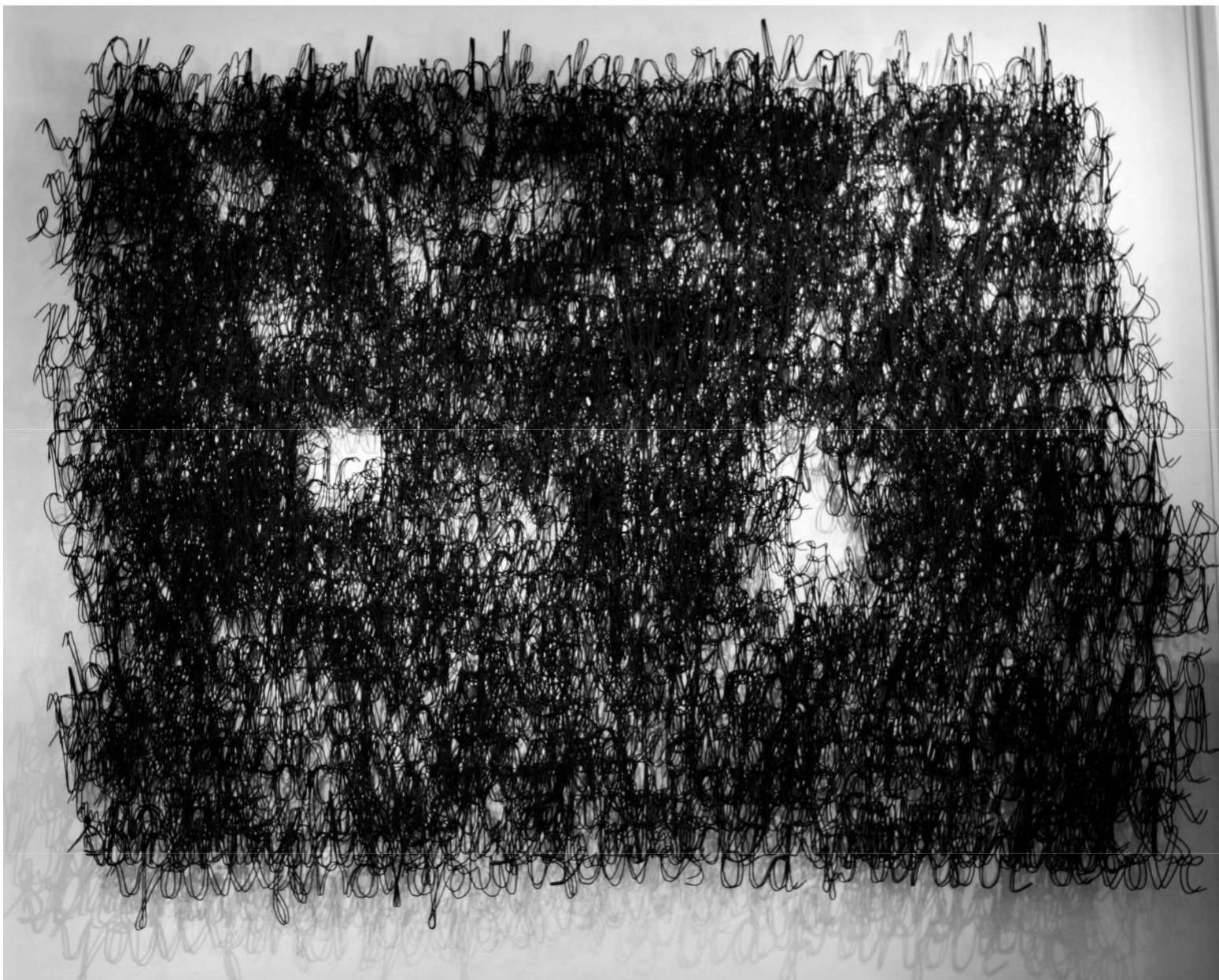
LAKEEREN
The Contemporary Art Gallery
6/18, Grants Bldg., 2nd Floor, Opposite Basilico
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In L a b r y i n t h s

Anita Dube acts as a story teller drawing us to texts and stories that have held a special meaning for her, such as Franz Kafka's, The Married Couple, The Silence of the Sirens, The Truth about Sancho Panza and Pier Paolo Pasolini's touching poem The Poetry of the Tradition. Her retelling of these texts takes them towards abstraction materiality and conceptual frames within the contemporary to gain another agency. Dube is interested to see everything in sculptural and visceral terms, even texts; embodying intimacy and a primacy of touch. There is a deep melancholia, a feeling of absurdity and doom. A wake up call to a generation trapped within the 'labyrinth' of bureaucracy and consumerism, warning us of lessons unlearned from Hiroshima, spelling out 'kaal' or the end of time.

Anita Dube studied B.A. (honors), History, University of Delhi 1982 M.F.A., Art Criticism, Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda. Her solo exhibitions include Kal/ Tomorrow , Lakeeren Art Gallery, Mumbai , 2010, Recent Works, Bose Pacia Gallery, New York, 2008 and "Inside Out"- Bombay Art Gallery, Mumbai, "Phantoms of Liberty"- Gallery Almine Rech, Paris, 2007 to name a few. She has shown widely internationally and important group shows including Beyond Globalization, Beyond Art Space, Beijing, 2009, "Santhal Family Positions around one Indian Sculpture"- Mukha Museum, Antwerp "The Audience and the Eavesdropper"- Phillips de Pury, London, 2008 "Bombay Maximum City"- Lille 3000, Lille, 2006 and "Indian Summer"- Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, "Icon: India Contemporary"- Venice Biennale, Venice in 2005. The Artist Lives and Works in New Delhi



***Labyrinth*, 2011-12**

(Writing a Pasolini poem in steel and velvet)

10 feet 3 inches x 8 feet 2 inches

The Poetry of The Tradition :

Pier Paolo Pasolini Poem

Oh unfortunate generation !
What will happen tomorrow, if whatever ruling class -
when they were fledglings
they didn't know the poetry of the tradition their experience of it was
unhappy because since they lacked a realistic smile it was
beyond them
and even for what little of it they came to know, they had to slow
they wanted to know it yes but as detached spectators. Oh
unfortunate generation!
who in the winter of '70 wore fanciful overcoats and shawls
and were spoiled
who taught you not to feel inferior-
you repressed your divinely infantile uncertainties-
he who's not aggressive is an enemy of the people! Ah!
The books, the old books passed before your eyes
like the belongings of an old enemy
you felt obligated not to yield
to beauty grown in the soil of forgotten injustices
you were in the end devoted to good sentiments
against which you defended yourselves as against that beauty
with a racist's hate against passion;
you come into the world, which is vast and yet so simple,
and encountered those who laughed at the tradition,
and you took literally that mock-ribald irony,
erecting juvenile barriers against the ruling class of the past,
youth passes soon; oh unfortunate generation, you'll
become middle-aged, then old
without enjoying what you had the right to enjoy
and can't be enjoying what you had the right to enjoy
and can't be enjoyed without anxiety and humility
and thus you'll realize you've served the world
against which, so zealously, you "carried on the struggle":
it was that world that wanted to discredit history-it's;
it wanted to wipe the slate clean of the past-it's;

oh unfortunate generation, and you obeyed by
disobeying! It was that world which asked its new children
to help it contradict itself, in order to continue;
you'll find yourselves old, without a love of books and life:
perfect inhabitants of that world renewed
through its reactions and repressions, yes, yes, it's true,
but above all through you, who rebelled,
just as it wanted, an Automaton because Unanimous;
your eyes didn't fill with tears
against a Baptistry of masters and apprentices
intent from season to season
you didn't weep for a fourteenth-century octave
you didn't even know what tears were (intellectuals, in hock to
pure reason); you didn't recognize your ancestors' tabernacles
or the headquarters of boss fathers, painted by and all those
other sublime things
you won't be astonished (with those burning tears)
by the lines of an anonymous symbolist poet who died in the-
the class struggle lulled you, prevented you from weeping:
hardened against anything that didn't ooze the right sentiments
and desperate aggressiveness
you spent your youth
and, if you were intellectuals
you didn't want to see that through-
though this was your true duty, among many others,
and why did you commit this treason?
for the sake of the workers; but no one asks a worker
not to be a worker all the way
the workers didn't weep in front of masterworks
but they didn't perpetrate treasons leading to blackmail
and thus unhappiness
oh unfortunate generation
you'll weep, but lifeless tears
because perhaps you won't even know how to return to
what, not having had, you couldn't even lose;

poor Calvinist generation as at the bourgeoisie origins
adolescently pragmatic, childishly active
you sought salvation in organization
(which can't produce anything but more organization)
and you've spent the days of your youth
speaking the jargon of bureaucratic democracy
never departing from the repetition of formulas,
for organizing can be signified not through words
but through formulas, yes,
you'll find yourself using the same paternal authority,
at the mercy of that ineffable power that willed you against
power, unfortunate generation!
Growing old, I saw your heads fill with grief
where confused idea swirled, an absolute certainty,
an assumption of heroes destined not to die-
oh unfortunate young people, who've seen within reach
a marvelous victory that didn't exist!



***Kaal*, 2012**

Found photograph digitally printed on canvas
fiberglass casted roots, velvet
7 feet X 11 feet X 33 inches



A Married Couple

(short story by Franz Kafka) 2012,
Charcoal on Canson Paper
46.5 X 50.5 inches

The Married Couple :

Description of a Struggle and other Stories by Franz Kafka

Business in general is so bad that something when I have time to spare in the office I pick up the case of samples myself and call on my customers personally. Among other things I had long since intended to pay a visit to K.; we used to have a regular business relationship, but for some unknown reason it has almost completely lapsed during the past year. There need in fact be no genuine reasons for this kind of breakdown; in the present unstable conditions a mere nothing, a change of mood, can be decisive, and equally a mere nothing, a word, can put the whole thing again. But it is a little complicated to get access to K.; he is an old man, in very poor health of late, and though he still keeps the reins of his business in his own hands he hardly ever goes to the office nowadays; if you want to speak to him you have to go to his house, and one is only too glad to postpone a business call of that kind.

Nevertheless, yesterday evening after six o'clock I did set out; it was certainly too late for paying calls, but after all it was not a matter of social considerations, but matter of business. I was in luck, K. was in; he had just come back from a walk with his wife, so I was told in the hall, and was now in his son's bedroom, who was unwell and confined to bed. I was invited to join them; at first I hesitated, but then my desire to get this disagreeable visit over as quickly as possible got the upper hand, and just as I was, in my overcoat and with my hat and case of samples in my hand, I allowed myself to be conducted through a dark room into a faintly lit one, where a small company was assembled.

My first glance fell, probably by instinct, on a commercial agent only too well known to me, who is to some extent my competitor. So he had managed to sneak up in front of me. He was sitting at his ease, close by the invalid's bed, as if he were the doctor; with his fine overcoat unbuttoned and ballooning out round him, he sat there powerfully enthroned; his effrontery is unequalled; the invalid may have been thinking something of the same kind too, as he lay there, cheeks faintly flushed with fever, and gave him an occasional glance. He is no longer young either, K.'s son, a man of my own age with a short beard, somewhat unkempt on account of his illness. Old K., a tall, board-shouldered man, but to my astonishment now quite wasted, bent and shaky as a result of

his lingering disease, was still standing there in his fur coat just as he had come, mumbling something to his son. His wife, small and frail, but exceedingly lively, if only as far as her husband was concerned us others she hardly noticed - was busy helping him off with his coat, which was a matter of some difficulty owing to their great difference in height, but she succeeded at last. Perhaps, indeed, the real difficulty was caused by K.'s impatience, for with restless hands he kept groping for the easy chair, which his wife, once the overcoat was off, quickly pushed forward for him. She herself took up the fur coat, beneath which she almost vanished, and carried it out.

Now, it seemed to me, my moment had come at last, or rather it had not come and in these circumstances it probably never would come, but if I was to attempt anything further at all it must be done at once, for I felt that the conditions for a business interview here could only become increasingly unfavourable; and to take root on this spot for all eternity, as the agent apparently intended to do, was not my way; besides I was not going to pay him the slightest consideration. So without further ceremony, even though I noticed that K. was just inclined to have a little chat with his son, I started to state my business. Unfortunately I have the habit, when I have talked myself into a state of some excitement-which happens very quickly, and in this sick-room it happened even more quickly than usual-of getting up and walking about as I talk. Though a good enough arrangement in one's own office, in a strange house it may be somewhat burdensome. But I could not restrain myself, particularly as I was feeling the lack of my usual cigarette. Well, every man has his bad habits, and I can even congratulate myself on mine when I think of the agent's. What should one say to this, for instance: he holds his hat on his knee, shoving it slowly to and fro there, and every now and then he suddenly, quite unexpectedly, claps it on his head; admittedly he takes it off again at once, as if it had been a mistake, but all the same he has had it on his head for a second or two, and he keeps repeating this performance from time to time. Surely such conduct must be called unpardonable. I am not disturbed by it, however; I walk up and down, completely absorbed in my proposals, and ignore him; but there are people whom that trick with the hat might put off completely. However when I am thoroughly worked up I disregard not only such annoyances as these, but absolutely everybody; I see, it is true, all that goes on, but do not admit it, so to speak, to my consciousness until I have finished, or until I actually hear some objection raised. Thus I

noticed quite well, for instance, that K. was by no means in a receptive state; holding on to arms of his chair, he twisted about uncomfortably, never even glanced up at me, but gazed blankly, as if searching for something, into space, and his face seemed to impassive that one might have thought that no syllable of what I was saying, indeed no awareness of my presence, had penetrated to him. All this pathological behaviour, rather unpromising from my point of view, I took in perfectly well, but I talked on just the same, as if by my words, by my advantageous offers-I was myself alarmed at the concessions I was grating, concessions that nobody asked for-I still had some prospect of getting everything back on to an even keel again. It also gave me a certain satisfaction that the agent, as I had casually observed, had at last left his hat in peace and folded his arms across his chest; my discourse, which I must confess was partly designed for him, seemed to have dealt a severe blow to his plans. And in the elation which this gave me I might perhaps have talked on for a long time yet, if the son, whom I had hitherto regarded as a negligible figure for my purpose, had not raised himself in his bed and brought me to a full stop by shaking his fist. Obviously he wanted to say something out, but he had not the strength for it. At first I put it all down to delirium, but when I then glanced involuntarily at old K. I understood better.

K. sat there, his eyes wide open, glassy, bulging, only momentarily serviceable; he was bent forward and quivering, as if someone were seizing or striking the back of his neck; his lower lip, indeed the whole lower jaw with the gums fully exposed, hung down helplessly; his whole face had gone to pieces; he still breathed, though with difficulty; but then as if delivered, he collapsed against the back of his chair and closed his eyes, an expression of some severe strain passed over his eyes, an expression of some severe strain passed over his face, and all was over. Quickly I sprang to his side and grasped the hand that hung there, lifeless, cold and chilling; no pulse beat there now. So it was all over. Ah well, an old man. Let us hope we all have such a peaceful end. But now how much was to be done! and what was the most urgent? I looked round for help; but the son had drawn the bedclothes over his head, one could hear his interminable sobbing; the agent, cold as a fish, sat right in his chair, two paces away from K., and was plainly resolved to do nothing save await developments; so that left me, and me only, to do something, and the first thing was the

hardest of all, namely to break the news somehow, in some bearable form, that is in some form that did not exist, to his wife. And already I could hear the approach of her eager, shuffling steps from the next room.

Still wearing her outdoor clothes-she had time to change-she brought in a night-shirt that she had been warming on the stove and now wanted to put on her husband. 'He's fallen asleep,' she said, smiling and shaking her head, when she found au sitting so still. And with the infinite trustfulness of the innocent she took up the same hand that I had just held in mine with such repugnance and awe, kissed it with a touch of wifely playfulness, and-imagine the faces of us three others!-K. moved, yawned loudly, allowed his night-shirt to be put on, suffered with a half-annoyed, half-ironical expression the tender reproaches of his wife for having over-experted himself with such a long walk, and said in reply, no doubt to give a different explanation for his having fallen asleep, strangely enough something about boredom. Then, so as not to catch cold on the way to another room, he lay down for the time being in his son's bed; with two cushion hastily brought by his wife, a pillow was made for him alongside the feet of his son. After all that had gone before I no longer found that odd. Then he asked for the evening paper, opened it without regard for his visitors, did not settle down to read it however, but merely looked into it here and there, making several very unpleasant observations on our offers as he did so, observations that showed astonishing shrewdness, while all the time he made disparaging gestures with his free hand and indicated by clicking his tongue that our business methods had left a bad taste in his mouth. The agent could not restrain himself from making one or two untimely remarks; no doubt he felt, even in his own insensitive way that some kind of amends was needed for what had occurred, but of course he was the last person to know how to set about it. I now took my leave rapidly, I was almost grateful to the agent; if he had not been there I should not have had the resolution to leave so soon.

In the hall I met frau K. again. At the sight of that pathetic figure I said impulsively that she reminded me a little of my mother. And as she remained silent I added: 'Whatever one may say, she could do wonders. Anything we destroyed she could make whole again. I lost her when I was still a child.' I had

deliberately spoken with exaggerated slowness and distinctness, for I suspected that the old lady was hard of hearing. But she must have been deaf, for she asked without transition: 'And how does my husband look?' From a few parting words I noticed moreover that she confused me with the agent; I should like to think that otherwise she would have been more forthcoming.

Then I went down the stairs. The descent was more wearisome than the ascent had been in the first place, and not even that had been easy. Oh, how many business calls come to nothing, and one has to struggle on somehow under the load.



The Silence of Sirens
(short story by Franz Kafka) 2012,
Charcoal on Canson Paper
46.5 X 50.5 inches

The Silence of the Sirens :

Description of a Struggle and other Stories by Franz Kafka

Proof that even inadequate, indeed childish measures can suffice for one's preservation:

To protect himself from the Sirens, Odysseus stopped his ears with wax and had himself chained to the mast. Of course all travellers from the very beginning could have done something of the kind (apart from those whom the Sirens lured even from the distance), but it was known to all the world that this could not possibly help. The song of the Sirens pierced everything, even wax, and the passion of those they seduced would have burst more than chains and a must. But Odysseus did not think of that, through he had perhaps heard tell of it; he trusted completely to his handful of wax and his bundle of chains, and in innocent pleasure over his little resources he sailed towards the Sirens.

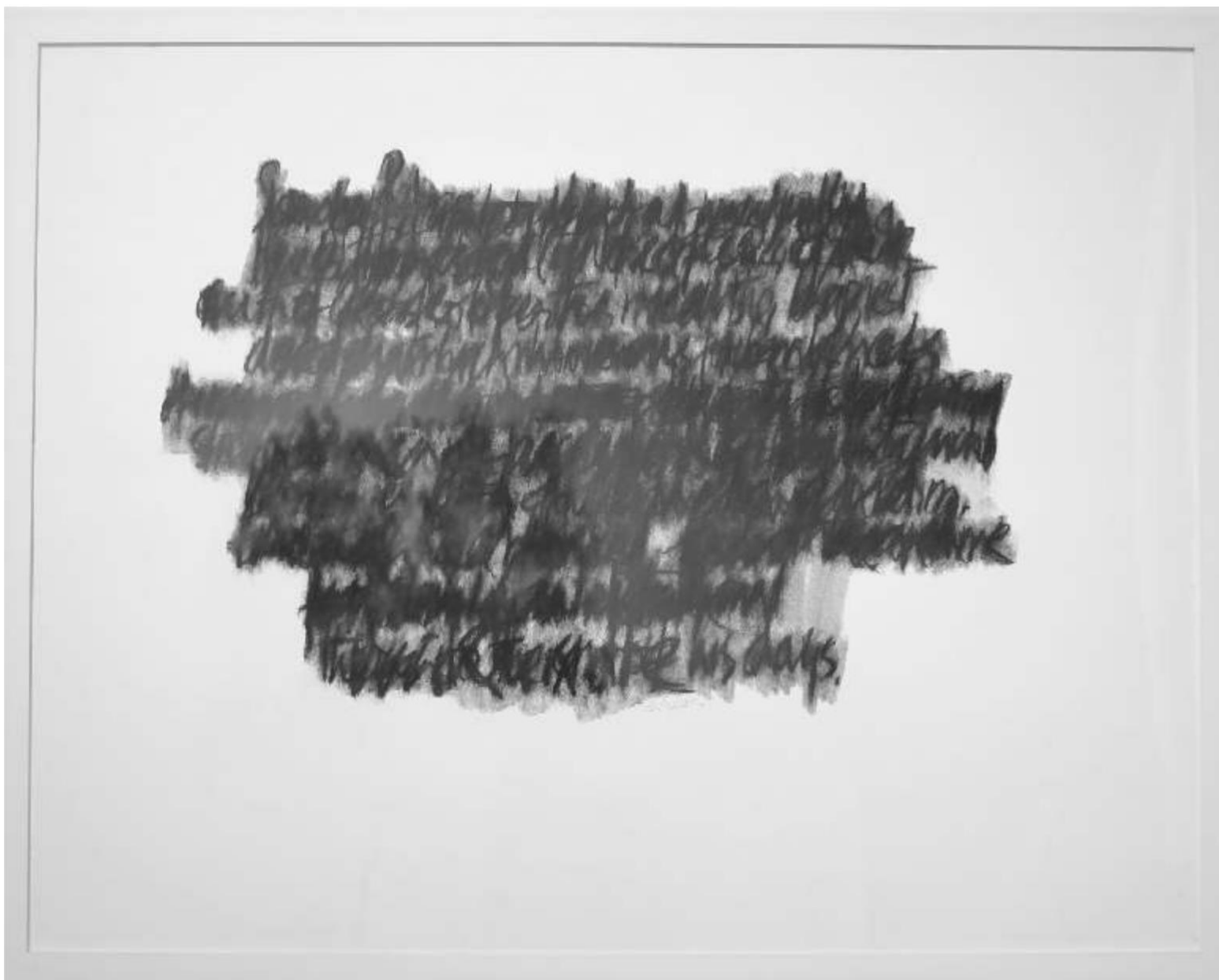
Now the Sirens have a still more terrible weapon than their song, namely their silence. Though it has never happened, it is perhaps conceivable that someone might have escaped from their singing, but from their silence certainly not. Against the feeling of having overcome them by one's own strength, and against the resultant arrogance that sweeps everything with it, no earthly resistance is possible.

And in fact, when Odysseus came, these mighty singers did not sing, whether because they believed that against this opponent only silence could achieve anything, or whether because the look of bliss on the face of Odysseus, who was thinking of nothing but wax and chains, made them forget all about their singing.

Odysseus, however, if one may so express it, did not hear their silence, he believed they were singing and that only he was protected from hearing it, for a first fleeting moment he saw the movements of their necks, their deep breathing, their tearful eyes, their half-open mouths, but he believed this went with the arias that were echoing unheard around him. But soon all this slipped from his gaze, which was fixed on the distance, the Sirens positively vanished from his awareness, and at the very moment when he was nearest to them he knew of them no longer

But they-lovelier than ever-craned and twisted, let their gruesome hair float free in the wind, stretched their claws wide on the rocks; they wanted was to catch for as long as possible the reflected radiance from the great eyes of Odysseus. If the Sirens had possessed consciousness, they would have been annihilated at that moment; as it was they remained, only Odysseus escaped them.

There is moreover a supplement to this, which has also come down to us. Odysseus, it is said, was so wily, was such a cunning fox, that even the goddess of fate could not see into his heart; perhaps, although this passes human comprehension, he really did notice that the Sirens were silent, and confronted them and the gods with the above mock episode merely as a kind of shield.



The Truth about Sancho Panzo

(short story by Franz Kafka) 2012,
Charcoal on Canson Paper
46.5 X 50.5 inches

The Truth about Sancho Panza

Description of a Struggle and other Stories by Franz Kafka :

Sancho Panza - who has incidentally never boasted of this - succeeded in the course of the years, by supplying numerous romances of chivalry and banditry during the evening and night hours, in diverting his devil - to which he later gave the name don Quixote - so effectively from himself that this devil there - after, quite out of control, performed the craziest deeds, which however for lack of their predestined object, which should have been precisely Sancho Panza, did nobody any harm. Sancho Panza, a free man, followed this Don Quixote imperturbably, perhaps from a certain sense of responsibility, on his travels, and he found great and profitable entertainment therein to the end of his days.



Silence , 2012
Steel and Velvet
8 inches X 18 feet

Text in Art work : Mystery on the border of death lay a finger on your lips silence, silence, silence. A poem by Nelly Sachs (Nobel Lauriet)