RASHEED ARAEEN

RECENT WORK

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RASHEED ARAEEN

RECENT WORK

May 23 – June 9, 1984

THE PENTONVILLE GALLERY

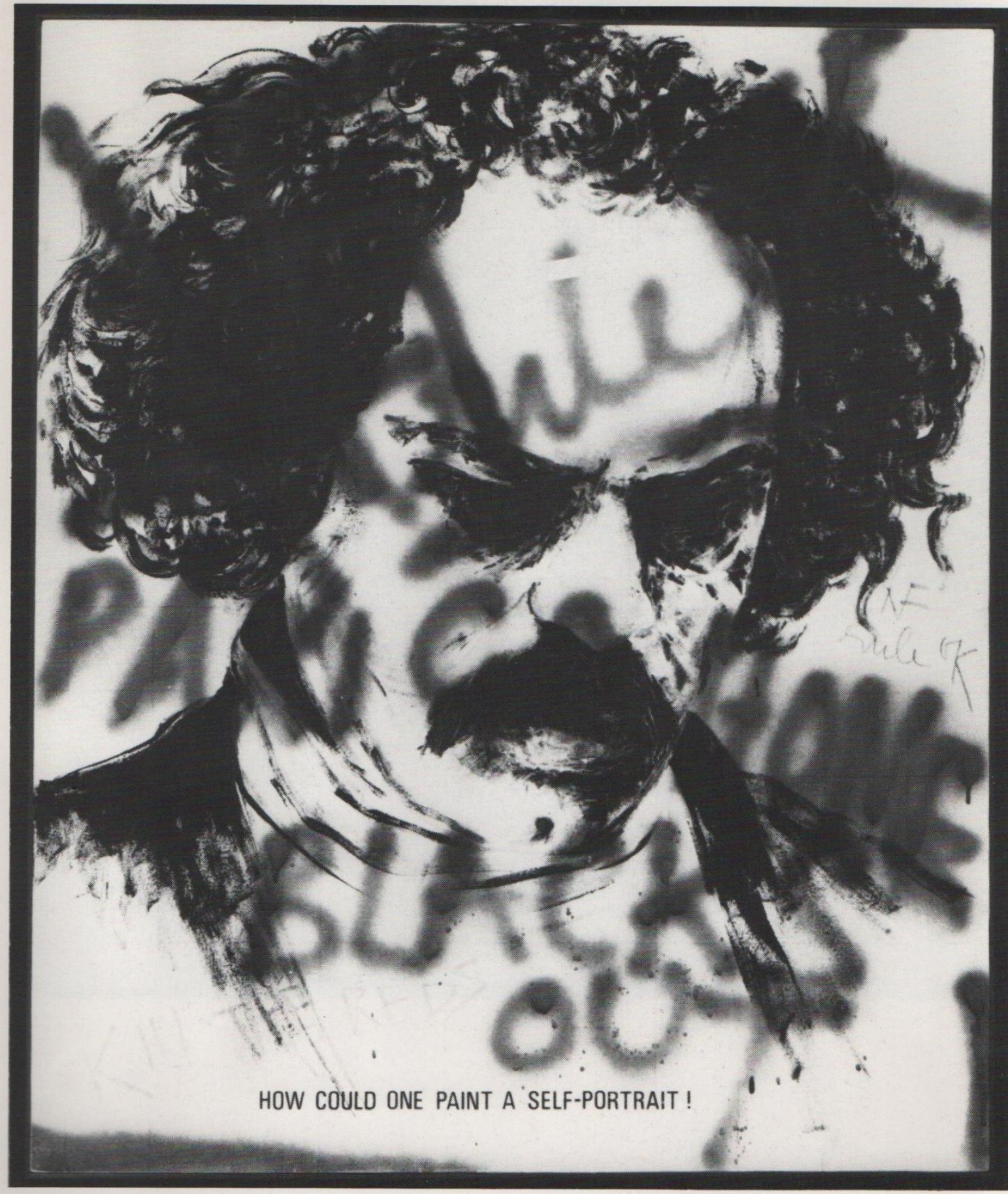
47 LAMBS CONDUIT STREET, HOLBORN, LONDON WC.1. Tel: 01-242 8629.

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Burning Ties 1976–1979 (a photo-sequence of 8 colour photographs).

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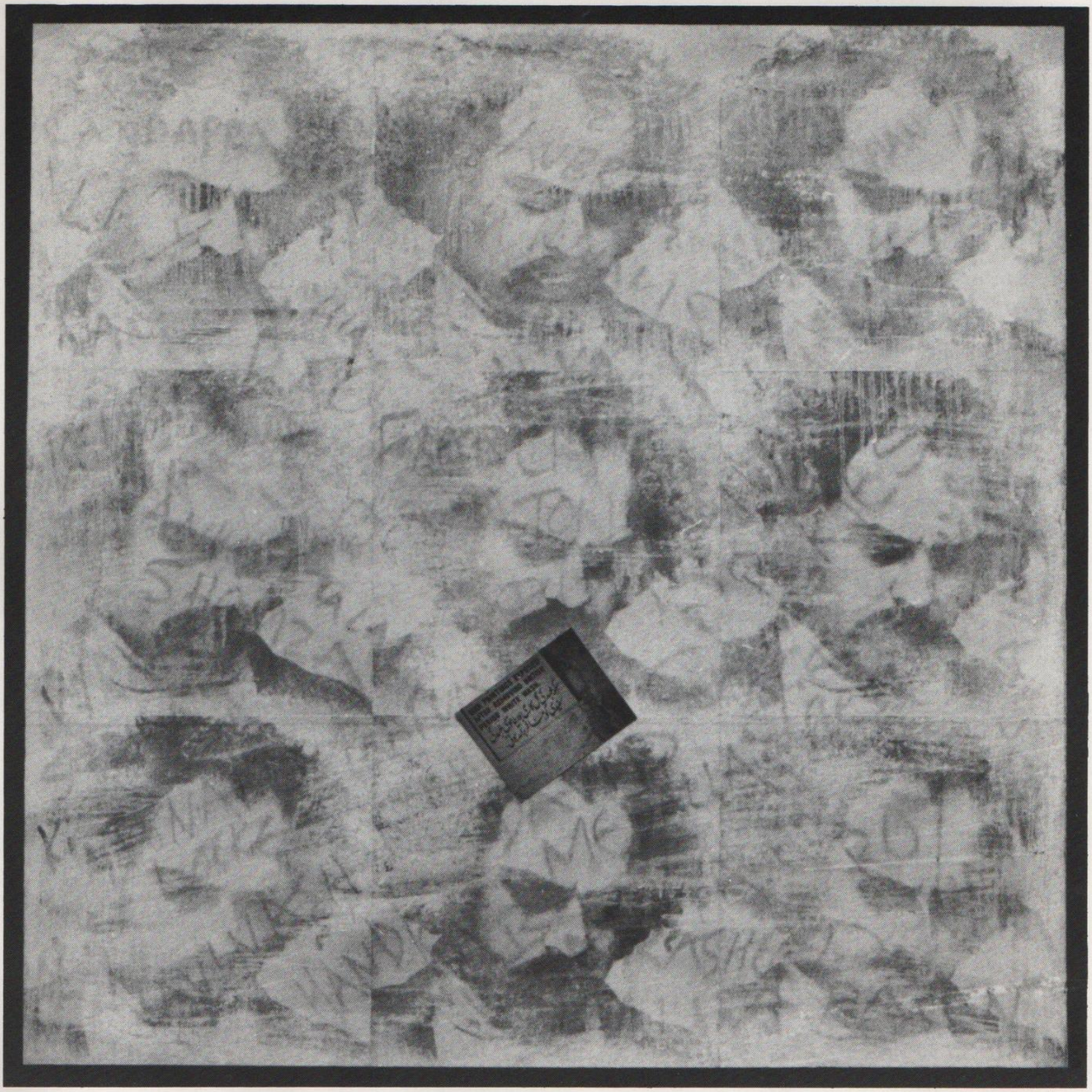
How Could One Paint a Self-Portrait! 1978-79

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Gastkünstler! 1980

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White Wash: We are Privileged! 1980

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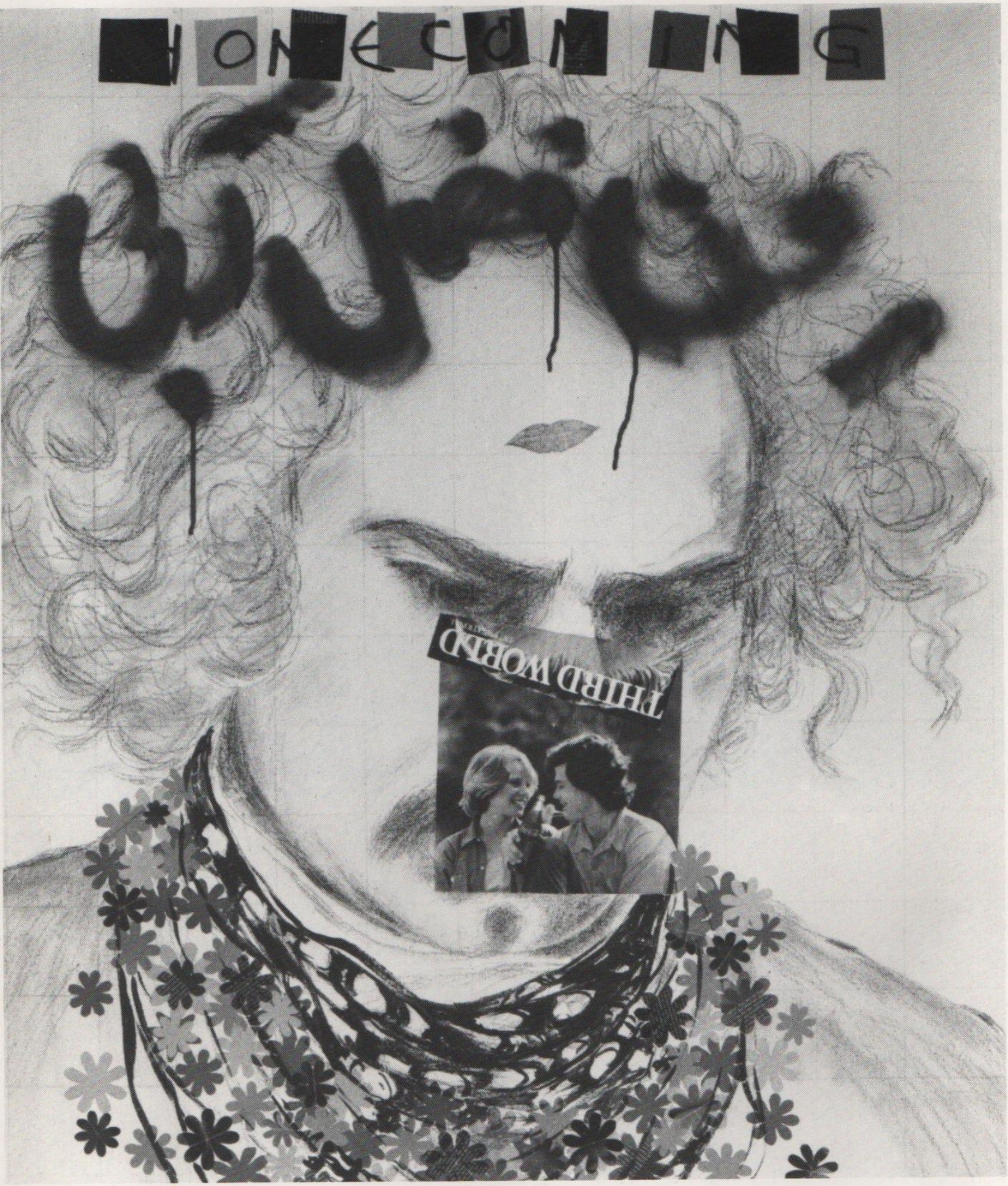
Ethnic Drawings 1982

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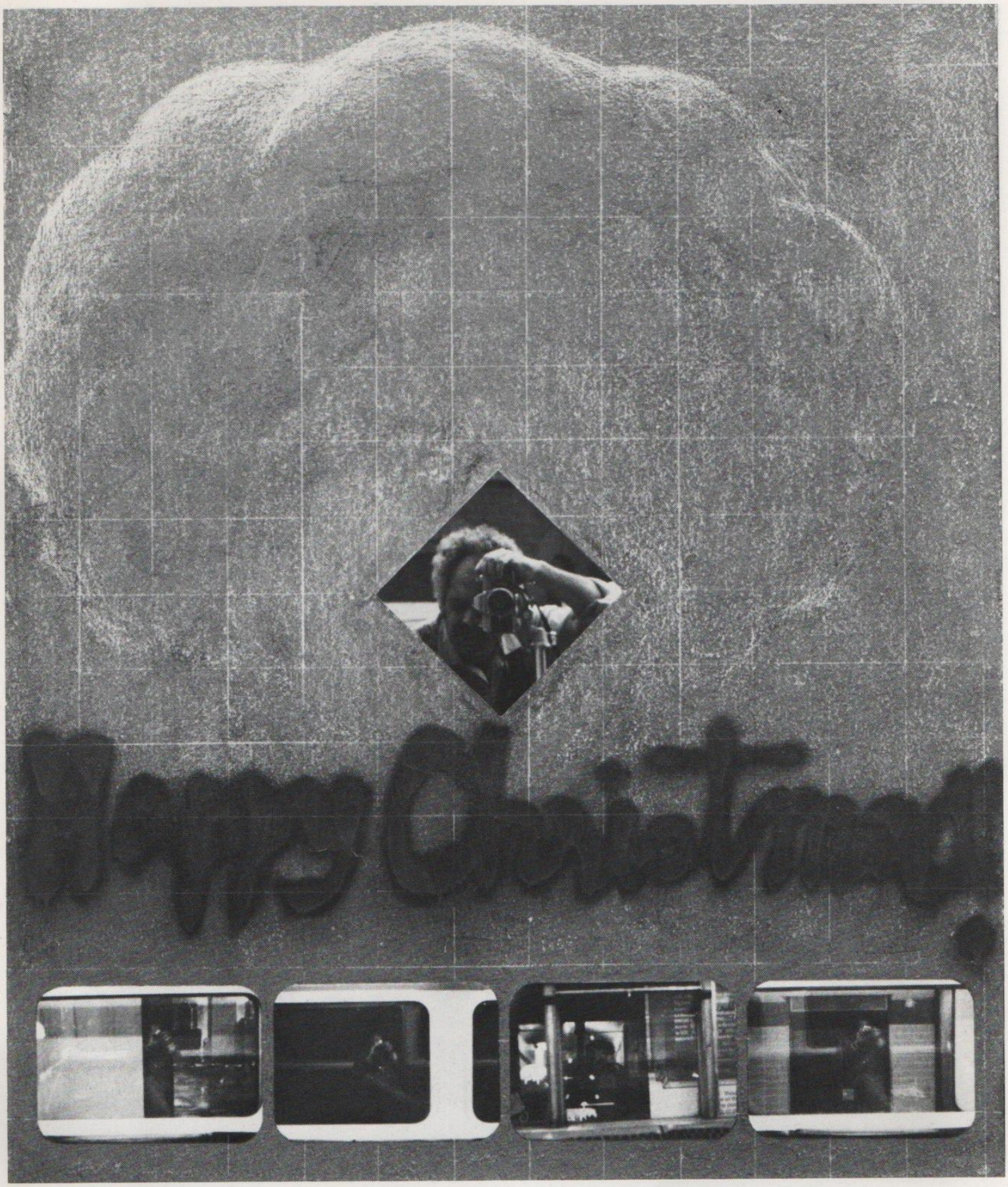


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Homecoming 1982

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Happy Christmas! 1979-83

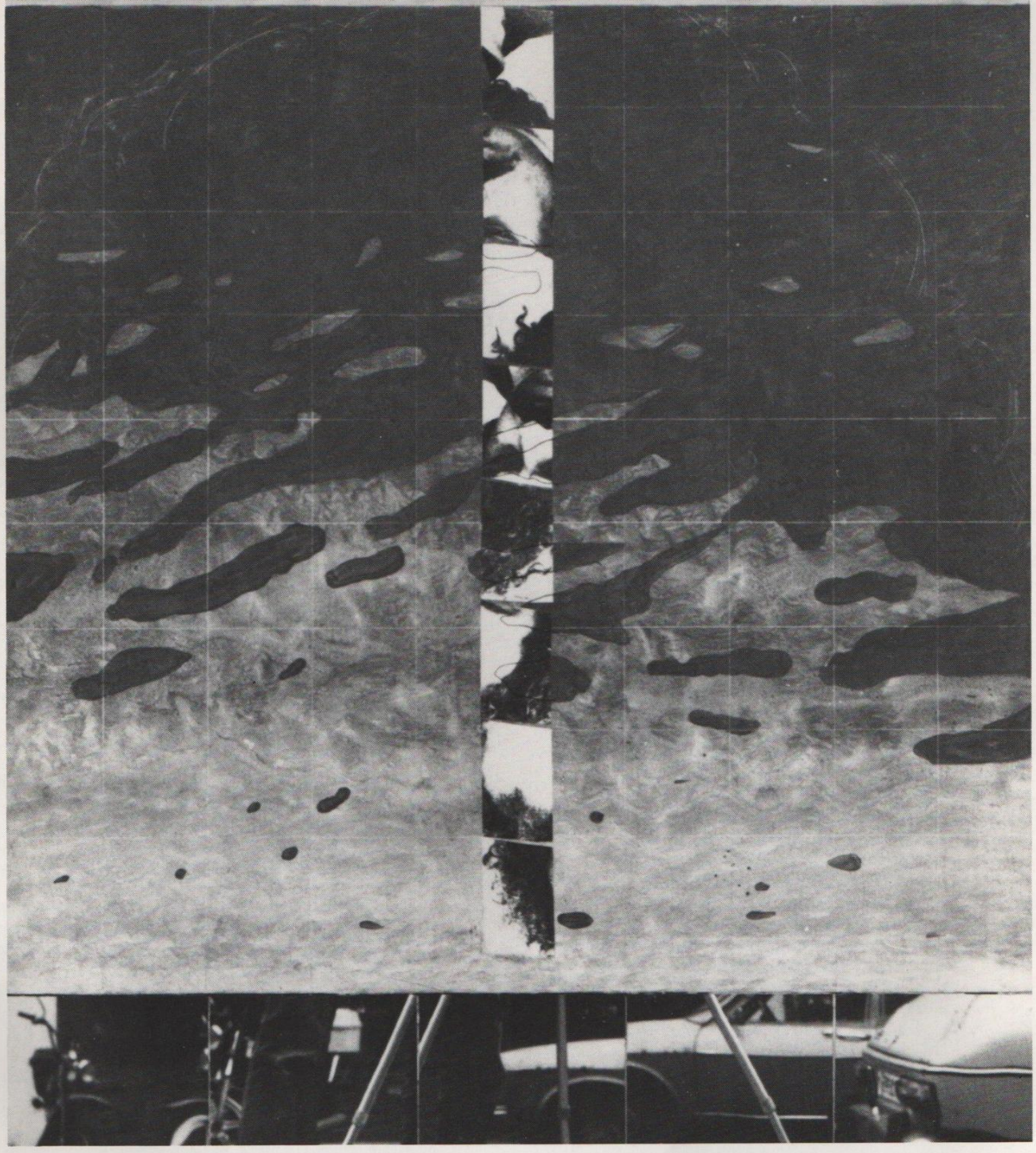
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Black Sheep 1983-84

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ہزاروں سال نرگس اپنی بے نوری پہ روتی ہے بڑی مشکل سے ہوتا ہے چمن میں دیدہ ور پیدا



Narcissus 1979–83

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Biographical Notes

1935 Born Karachi, Pakistan.

1949 Starts painting as a hobby.
NO FORMAL ART EDUCATION.

1949–59 Mainly figurative work.

1959 First 'abstract' painting *(Ham Raqs)*, a seminal work containing ideas which are explored and developed in the following twenty or so years. Soon after also making his first sculpture by *burning* bicycle tyres on a rubbish heap. The resulting TRANSFORMATION, from one form/material (two circular rubber tyres) to another form/material (four twisted metal hoops), also underlines the central concern of his later work.
Decides to take art more seriously and professionally, which in fact interrupts his civil engineering studies for two years.

1962 Finally graduates in civil engineering, University of Karachi.

1962–64 Painting inspired by the wind-tower architecture of Sind, Pakistan.

1964 Decides to leave Pakistan and live in Paris. But the romanticism of Paris does not last long when he faces the actual world. And after a month in Paris he arrives in England on 28 June, and has since been living in London . . . Working in various cafes doing all sort of work in order to survive. Suffers a brief spell of what can be described as schizophrenia, but after a week of intense hallucinations and delusions recovers automatically.

1965 Becomes fascinated by then new British sculpture produced by Caro et al (New Generation Exhibition), but the fascination does not last very long as he begins to look at the whole thing critically. The realisation that the basic structuring principle of the new sculpture is really traditional – compositional, pictorial and hierarchical – gives him a new starting point for his own work.
Conceives a series of works comprising of symmetrically arranged equal-size girders.

1966 Development of the CUBE, with its sides diagonally divided, as the basic unit of sculpture which is non-compositional, non-hierarchical, as well as dialectical in the sense that the notion of change (TRANSFORMATIONS) here is the expression of the movement of the spectator . . .
Returns to Karachi for a brief visit.
"Prostitute is a Person" (December 31): a live event in which a conspicuously looking *native* prostitute takes part by merely being a consort to the artist (who has returned from England) in a party of respectable *Westernised* Karachi elite that has gathered in a *gallery space* (The Gallery) to celebrate New Year.

1967 Back in London. Begins to concentrate on the Structural work, which remains limited to some maquettes done on the kitchen table. Also works with a series of collage by taking images from the glossy magazines and putting them together at random, without consciously attempting to juxtapose them meaningfully.

1968 Giving up an engineering job with BP and then devoting all the time to sculpture. Starts doing full size works.
Summer: meeting Nicholas and Fiona Longsdail of Lisson Gallery who show immediate liking for his sculpture. November: hearing from a friend in Paris about the work of Sol LeWitt: the first contact with New York 'Minimalism'.

1969 Taking up an open studio at the SPACE STUDIOS, St. Katherines Docks.
Starts making large and ambitious works.
Conceiving environmental work that undergoes change with 'natural' forces (wind, water . . .), comprising of floatable discs which are released on to the water in lakes, ponds, rivers, etc. . . . with public participation.
Won a prize in John Moores Liverpool Biennale.

1970 February 21: actual throwing of 16 discs on to the water of St. Katerines Docks; followed by many similar events in London and Paris. Meeting William Townsend who tells him that his work is very Islamic, both in form and spirit, which surprises him as he is not pursuing such a direction consciously. Although the Structural work of the '60s can be seen as a modern transformation of Islamic geometric art, the fact that it was actually conceived within an historical period of mainstream modernism is important. This body of work is perhaps the only original and major British contribution to the development of 'Minimalism' in the '60s.
Moving to a new studio in Stepney Green, East London.

1971 Going through a period of identity crises, and by the end of the year begins to lose interest in formal art activity.
Reading a lot of literature on black/Third World struggle, in particular Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Also reading in a newspaper about the death of Oluwale, caused by the police in Leeds and then thinking about making an art work dedicated to him.

1972 Giving up the studio in Stepney Green, but continuing the work at home in West Hampstead. Starts taking interest in the activities of radical black groups. Going to Pakistan in Autumn and travelling in the country for two months.

1973 Active member, Black Workers Movement (formerly Black Panther Movement).

1974 Going back to Pakistan and doing a public participation environmental art event in Karachi. Also issues a statement.

1975 Member Artists for Democracy, London.
October: begins to write *Black Manifesto*.

1976 March: first draft of *Black Manifesto* is completed.
Back in Pakistan: conducting a series of talks concerning the position of Third World in contemporary or modern art which is international but is dominated by the West, Central School of Art & Crafts, Karachi.
November: sending the revised version of *Black Manifesto* to *Studio International* for publication.

1977 July: first performance of *'Paki Bastard'*, Artists for Democracy.

1978 Founding and editing (with the help of Mahmood Jamal) *Black Phoenix*, an art magazine which deals with contemporary art from a radical Third World perspective.
Participating as a panelist in the debate, The State of British Art, I.C.A. London.
Receives an Award from the Arts Council of Great Britain.
November: going back to Karachi to celebrate the

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Muslim festival of Eid-ud-Daha; and as part of the festival doing a photo-performance piece based on the ritual killing of goat/sheep by Muslims in celebration of Abraham's sacrifice of lamb: titled, *I Love It, It Loves I.*

1979–80 Member, Visual Arts Advisory Panel, Greater London Arts Association.

1981 Panelist, the National Conference on ART & DESIGN THROUGH EUCATION, Imperial College, London

1982 Setting up PROJECT MRB to research into the contribution of black artists to postwar art in Britain, with the aim of writing a book.
Delivering a paper "Art & Black Consciousness", the First National Black Art Convention, Wolverhampton Polytechnic, Wolverhampton.
Going to Karachi and staying there for two months.

1984 Setting up "Black Umbrella", which once funds are available will become Afro/Asian Peoples' Visual Arts Resource & Information Centre and which will provide facilities for research, training, production, publication, promotion, films, video, etc. regarding visual art practice by Afro/Asian people in Britain.

One Person Exhibitions

1961 PACC Gallery, Karachi.
1963 The Arts Council Gallery, Karachi.
1964 Hotel Metropole, Karachi.
1974 Indus Gallery, Karachi.
1975 Artists for Democracy, London.
1984 Pentonville Gallery, London.

Selected Group Shows

1959 National Exhibition of Painting, Karachi.
1963 National Exhibition of Contemporary Art, Lahore.
1965 Pakistan Pavalion, World Fair, New York.
1969 John Moores Liverpool Biennale, Liverpool.
1970 "Manufactured Art" Exhibition, Camden Arts Centre, London.
1971 SPACE at Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham.
SPACE at Geoffreye Museum, London.
1973 Artists from Five Continents, Swiss Cottage Library, London.
1975 Vietnam Festival, Artists for Democracy, London.
1979 Art from the British Left, Artists' Place, New York.
ART/POLITICS, Keen College of New Jersey, U.S.A.
Tape/Slide Show, Audio Arts, Riverside Studios, London.
1980 Forum Kunst, Rottweil (and then to Kunstverin, Freiburg), W.Germany.
Kontact Exhibition, Krakow (and then to Galleria MDM, Warsaw), Poland.
1982 NEW ART PLATFORM, Midland Group Gallery, Nottingham.
1983 New Beginning, Pentonville Gallery, London.

Some Important Unrealised Projects/Performances

1968 SPATIOSTRUCUTRAL PLAY: an indoor installation, comprising of 100 same size (18 x 18) structural cubes which are placed in a gallery in 10 x 10 arrangement. The audience is expected to dismantle the intial symmetrical arrangement (by the artist) of 10 x 10 cubes and then recreate their own arrangements, changing every day during the period of the exhibition. (The proposal was in fact sent to the I.C.A. in 1968 but received no response.)

1971 WATERPLAY: 16 people floating on the water together with the help of large discs and especially-made life jackets incorporating manipulatable sails. The event is performed in some lake or pond, preferably of a circular shape.

1974 DOWN WITH CULTURAL IMPERIALISM: A Third World Art Project. An international art participation event by which the people of Third World will collectively and symbolically denounce Western cultural dominance in the world. The basic structure of the project comprises of throwing of equal-size floatable discs simultaneously from various parts of the Third World on to the water in the Sea. The project will be carried out once a communication network is established between the artist and some groups of people in various parts of Third World.

1976 TOWARDS THE CENTRE & BACK . . . : The 1st part of a series of three performances, forming a trilogy called "I'm Noble Savage, Come & Find Me!". The 2nd part called "Paki Bastard" has been performed several times.

1977 BLOOD SAUSAGES: the 3rd part of the above trilogy, comprising of performance with slides and background sound (a sort of ballad in Urdu sung by the artist).

1978 NAKED MAYA: an installation on two floors of a gallery, so that the work is continous from one floor to another through the stairs. This piece, which involves four slide projections on the upper floor, deals with the relationship between the Nude in European art and contemporary pornography (girlie magazines) as well as West's relationship with the people for whom 'to be naked' has been essential part of their existence and culture.

1980 BABA GOES TO BIRMINGHAM: a performance/installation with video, especially conceived for Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, on the invitation of its then director Mr. Stoddart (see correspondence reproduced in the book).

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1963 Sultan Ahmad, introduction to the exhibition catalogue, the Arts Council Gallery, Karachi.
M.T. Bokhari, *The Stateman* (July 20), Karachi.
1974 Hammed Zaman, *Morning News* (April 9), Karachi.
Javed Ansari, *The Sunday Sun* (April 14), Karachi.
1975 Frank Popper, Art: Action & Participation, Studio Vista, London.
1978 An Interview, *World Times* (June 22), London.
1979 THIRD WORLD INTERNATIONAL, Nos 5 & 6, Karachi.

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