



Erasure rooms

VISUAL ARTS

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“Existence is illusory...” Albert Camus had argued in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. That thought hangs heavy over *We Need to Talk in Whispers*, Soumya Sankar Bose’s ongoing solo exhibition at Experimentier, Ballygunge Place. The exhibition begins with a diary Bose found on a train journey, filled with fragments about suicide, disappearance and mental distress. From these scattered notes, he builds a body of work that dwells on death and the traces that it leaves behind in our everyday lives and around the neighbourhood.

Mortality is like an oppressive force in every room of the gallery — not dramatic but the kind that permeates quietly into daily life. A rented tuition centre, a modest middle-class home, an ordinary neighbourhood lane, a hotel room in Puri: Bose repeatedly turns to familiar spaces and reveals them as sites of private, personal ruin. The horror lies in their familiarity. These are places people pass through all the time without noticing

the grief lodged inside them.

Many of the photographs slip slightly out of focus. The blur feels deliberate, as though the images themselves are struggling to hold their shape. Streets appear smudged at the edges, faces dissolve into shadow, rooms seem suspended between memory and hallucination. Bose avoids the cold clarity of documentary photography. Instead, the images carry the texture of recollection: unstable, fragmented, impossible to fully trust.

The archival photographs are among the exhibition’s strongest works. Family portraits, children at the beach, women standing stiffly before the camera are rendered as negatives, draining them of warmth and immediacy. The people in these images no longer seem entirely alive, yet they are not absent either. They hover uneasily in between, like spectres retrieved from damaged memory.

Some of the most devastating images are edited to resemble faded watercolours, especially those that are by the sea. Bose captures loneliness without forcing sentiment onto it. The silence of these photographs stays with the viewer long after leaving the gallery.