

Intimate traces

VISUAL ARTS

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standing that an object touching the body can retain its fears. However, her work offers no named victim and fixes no single event. Its reticence gives the viewer room to recognise private grief beside the public horror of bodies that become casualties of wars.

The small photographs deepen this uncertainty. A fountain throws white water against pink flowers. Rumpled sheets glow red while a distant city turns green. A rug twists into a barricade. Boys stand apart on a metallic shore. Paper chains hang from a ceiling fan and seem strangely heavy. Feathers lie dragged across asphalt. A tattoo of Saint Sebastian

fades inside the crease of an elbow, close to beads and a cord knotted at the wrist. These images are precise, yet their connection remains withheld. They recall Christian Boltanski's use of photographs to evoke lives that cannot be fully recovered, and Ana Mendieta's tracing of a body absent from the scene.

That absence gives the exhibition its force. Dodiya refuses the rapid certainty encouraged by the endless stream of catastrophe on a screen. Her fragments demand slower looking. *Grid for a Disappearance* is sombre without becoming theatrical; it leaves viewers at a threshold, aware that disappearance is never quite

permanent. The body remains present through every structure built to carry its vulnerable human weight.

Across the city, in her ongoing solo show, *Nitya Notun: The New in the Everyday*, at Emami Art, Soma Das paints domestic life with the sociological precision of Kalighat paintings. Women comb their hair, drink tea, gather flowers and thread garlands. A couple sits beside an enormous jackfruit (picture, right). A new bride opens a cardboard box dense with possessions. These modest actions acquire ceremony through Das's attentive arrangement. Her protagonists are family members, vendors and homemakers. Yet, their gestures possess the measured grace traditionally granted to royal lovers and legendary heroes in miniature paintings.

Das's household is never idealised; labour, cramped space and social roles remain visible. Yet pleasure survives within these conditions. In this humane world, domestic life becomes worthy of sustained looking because its smallest rituals already contain character and beauty.

Biraaj Dodiya's *Grid for a Disappearance* (on view at Experimenter, Ballygunge Place) deals with objects meant to support a body when it can no longer support itself. Headboards from hospital beds rise through Experimenter's rooms like gates (picture, left) — or are these tombstones? They are abandoned, their surfaces reduced to a dry, matt effect that gives the impression that the metal is bruised from use. Paintings, wood, gauze and photographs gather around these. Nothing explains what occurred, yet, everything suggests that the scene is an aftermath of something sinister.

Modern art has often turned ordinary furniture into a witness — Mona Hatoum transforms beds, cots and domestic objects into threatening forms while Doris Salcedo embeds histories of political violence in battered chairs, wardrobes and tables. Dodiya shares their under-