

SADEQUAIN

THE STRANGER
IN PARIS

*'My primary concern is humanity, its tragedies
and its struggles to rise above the privations
of physical existence.'*

SADEQUAIN, 1974



Syed Ahmed Sadequain Naqqash (1930-1987) was arguably one of the most important South Asian artists of the 20th century. Sadequain was born in Amroha, today's India, in 1930 to an educated North Indian Shia family, to which calligraphy was a highly valued skill.¹ Following his education in Amroha and after a number of years working at various radio stations in Delhi and Karachi as a calligrapher-copyist until 1946, he enrolled at Agra University, graduating in 1948. Following Partition, Sadequain moved to Karachi, and it appears he worked as an art teacher at an agricultural college from 1948-1951. He was then employed by Radio Pakistan in the early 1950s, abandoning this around 1953 to dedicate himself to his artistic practices.²

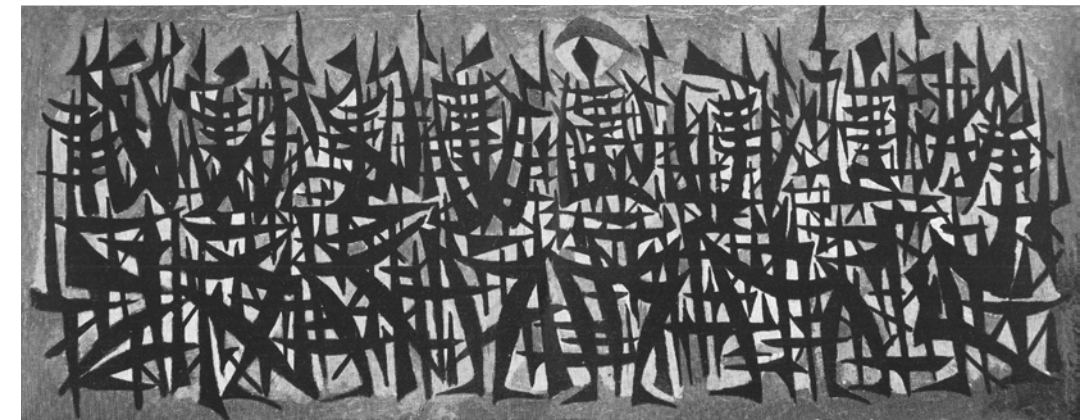
According to the author Amjad Ali, Sadequain “burst dramatically on the scene with his first one-man show was organized in 1955 at the residence of Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy.”³ Suhrawardy was a liberal patron of the arts and would become Pakistan's 5th president in 1956. Soon after this, Sadequain received important governmental commissions for municipal murals, which led to a number of solo exhibitions in Pakistan. In the late 1950s Sadequain's stay at the coastal town of Gadani and his exposure to the sprawling, prickly cactai on the beaches would influence his work in the coming years.

*“In the anatomy of these gigantic plants I found the essence of calligraphy. Everything that I have painted since then – a city like Rawalpindi, buildings, a forest, a boat, a table or a chair, a man, a mother and child, or a woman – has been based on calligraphy, which in itself issues from the structure of the cactus.”*⁴



Evolution, 1960, Private collection. UK

In 1960 Sadequain won the Pakistan National prize for painting and was invited by the French Committee of the International Association of Plastic Arts to visit Paris. The following few years were to be some of the most important for the young artist in terms of his artistic development, and it was whilst in Paris that he began to achieve international critical acclaim. In September 1961 he was the laureate winner in the category ‘Artists under 35’ at the 2nd Paris Biennale for his painting *The Last Supper*. He was awarded a scholarship which allowed him to remain in Paris.



The Last Supper, 1960, Private collection, Pakistan

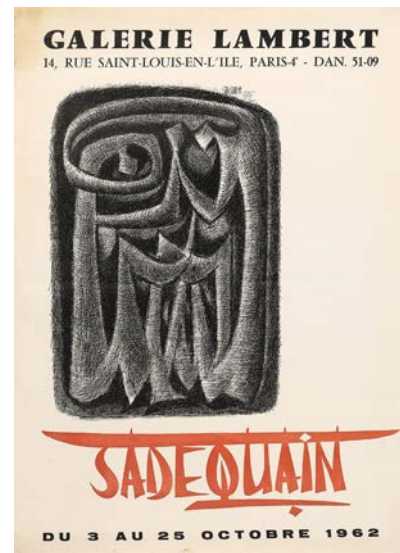
The announcement was made in the newspaper *Le Monde*, on the 7th October 1961:

“The international jury of the Biennale de Paris, chaired by the American art critic James Sweeney, ‘striving in its choices to discover young artists, rather than confirming acquired successes’, awarded its prizes yesterday. Here are the main winners in the main sections:

Foreign artists. Painting - Six five-month stay grants in France: José Hernandez Delgadillo (Mexico), Piero Dorazio (Italy), Sadequain (Pakistan), Flavio Shiro (Brazil), Marko, Sustarsic (Yugoslavia), Brett Whiteley (Australia).”

The Biennale was established in 1959 by the author and journalist Raymond Cogniat, a great admirer of Sadequain's, and in October 1962 he wrote the following in Le Figaro:

“His grand compositions in black and white demonstrate what close links exist between this art and its traditional sources, notably calligraphy, whose influence the artist himself recognises. The abstract art thus takes on the value of a mysterious language. On this secret significance of the manuscript, Sadequain adds up the impression of space, density, volume and the reality of matter, which transforms an abstract thought into a material fact in plastic.”



The grant allowed him to remain in Paris, for a while at least, and the years following were amongst the busiest and most successful for Sadequain. He held solo-shows in Paris at Galerie Lambert, Galerie Mona Lisa and Galerie Presbourg and at the Musée Maison du Culture in Le Harve. Shows also took place in the USA and London (New Vision Centre Gallery, Commonwealth Institute Galleries, and in 1965 as part of the Commonwealth Arts Festival at the Royal Academy of Arts). Sadequain also returned to Pakistan intermittently for municipal commissions. (Image left Courtesy Saffronart.)

Letters from the Artist in Paris to his family in Pakistan, published in 1979, are mentioned by Iftikar Dadi in his book *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*. From his correspondence it is clear that Sadequain found great success in Paris in his early years. He also had gallery representation, as well as regular patrons in Paris. Despite the successes, Paris Post-War was in a depression with food rationing and his personal life in the French capital was difficult. In May 1964 he wrote that he had no exhibitions scheduled, and in February 1965 that his gallery had been sold due to the death of its financial backer, and that it was to be turned into a bar.⁵ He also found French difficult to master, and like many artists lived a hand to mouth existence.

1964 saw Sadequain awarded one of the most important and challenging commissions of his years in Paris, the illustration of Albert Camus' existential masterpiece *L'Étranger*. Albert Camus was a French author, journalist and philosopher and was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1957. Originally published in 1942,

L'Étranger (The Stranger/The Outsider), was his first novel and opens with the famous line; *“Aujourd’hui, maman est morte. Ou peut-être hier, je ne sais pas”*, (Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday, I don't know). It is considered a masterpiece of French literature and in 1999 was voted number 1 in Le Monde's list of the '100 greatest books of the 20th century'.

“It must be noted that the French concept of ‘l'étranger’ is fundamentally different to the ‘outsider’ of English”, said the poet and author Ben Okri in a 2018 interview. *“In France it can mean strange or alien to humanity – while English society is formulated as a club, so it's more about not being one of us.”*⁶

In early 1964, four years after Camus' untimely death in a car accident, Sadequain was commissioned to produce a series of lithographs for a special edition of the book, published by 'Les Bibliophiles de l'Automobile-Club de France' (l'A.C.F.), a society founded by the early motoring pioneer the Marquise de Dion in 1895.

In a letter to his elder brother on 1 February, 1964, Sadequain writes:

*“The Camus book is a very special project. I am being given only 60,000 francs but, even if I were getting nothing, even then it would have been a great project and I would have happily done it for free. The work is lengthy but I will complete it [on time] and it will be part of a deluxe book.”*⁷

The book was published in a folio, contained in a similar green cloth-bound slipcase. The edition was limited to 150 copies, printed on vélin de Rives. 130 copies bore the names of members of l'A.C.F., with the remaining 20 copies numbered A to T. In addition, there were 12 bound suites of Sadequain's coloured prints on Japan nacré paper, 12 bound suites of colored prints on vélin de Hollande, and 10 bound suites of the black and white lithographs printed on vélin de Rives.

In a letter dated 30 January, 1965, Sadequain notes the progress and details about the book. *“The last few paintings for the Camus book are now being made according to my wishes. The picture spread over two pages is the summation of my experiences and my own critique on society. Other than this, the book has 12 chapters and the space left over after every chapter will feature an image in black and white. All this work should be completed in the coming week, and then I will leave for a bit of sightseeing.”*⁸

Sadequain created 35 images for the book; 22 colour lithographs to illustrate key scenes in the text (one frontispiece, 18 full page, 3 double page), and 13 monochrome lithographs to mark the end of each chapter. The editions were printed by the Paris atelier of Jacques Desjobert. Founded by his father Edmond Desjobert, they printed for Picasso, Dali, Chagall and Matisse.

L'Étranger was launched in Paris on the 27 October 1966 at a gala dinner held at the Place de la Concorde. The lithograph menu for that dinner was also illustrated by Sadequain, and features an image of Meursault, Marie and Raymond that does not appear in the book.

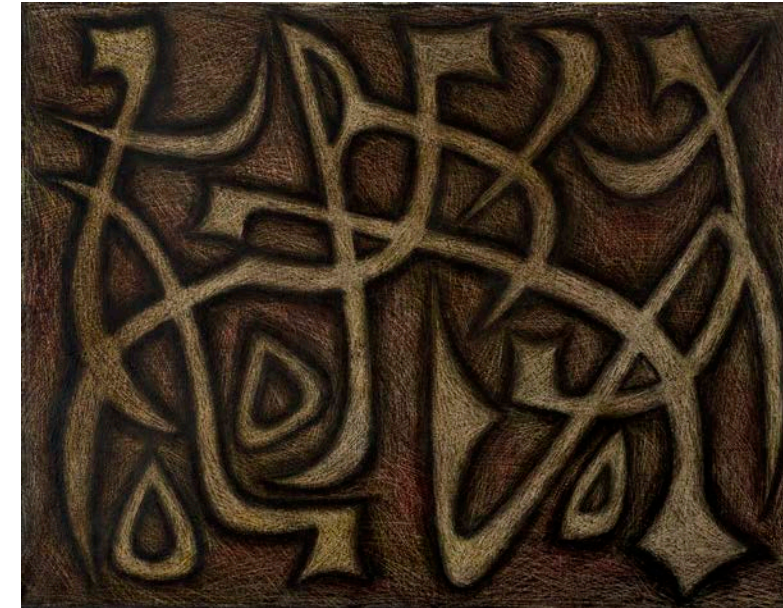
Sadequain wrote on October 29, 1966; *“Right after the banquet, an auction was held for the preliminary sketches. People put up large bids, and all the sketches were sold. Besides this, there were some of my drawings that were also sold. Before the dinner, the Automobile Club president praised me to the skies.”*⁹

Certainly, the *L'Étranger* commission was the high point of his career in Paris and he worked extremely hard, as recounted in his letters, and demonstrated by the number of studies he produced in preparation. A number of his preparatory sketches form part of this exhibition, showing the development of his ideas and forms over time, and how he incorporated his own characteristic themes and style into the work. It is remarkable that Sadequain, by whose own admission struggled with the French language, was able to not only comprehend and digest the themes of Camus' text internally, but also externalise and manifest them in the images he created for the manuscript.

On 20 October, 1966, Sadequain wrote to his brother:

*“A week from today, the grand celebration of Camus's book L'Étranger will be held at the Place de la Concorde. It is the grandest place in Paris. I hope, following all of this, my exhibition will also be held there. The book is quite magnificent and, after its launch, things should be even better for me.”*¹⁰

Sadly, Sadequain would encounter no further success in Paris. There are no records of any other exhibitions of Sadequain's work in the city following the October 1967 launch of *L'Étranger*. He was however, still supported by a number of patrons, and was prolific in his output; the 1966 publication *'Sadequain - Editions Mystique: Sketches and Drawings'*, features sixty works produced during April and May that year alone. He was also amassing a body of work which was to form part of a major exhibition in provincial France.

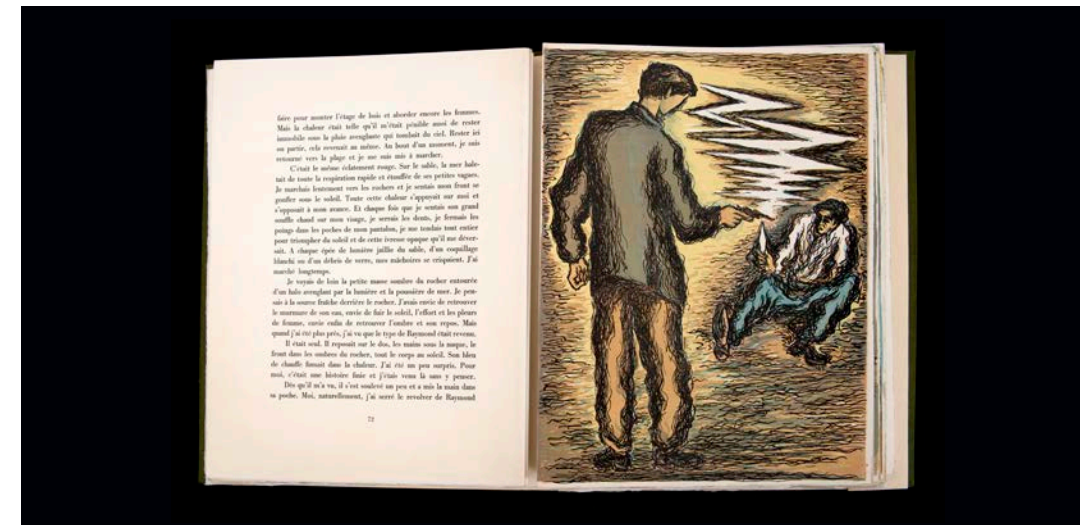
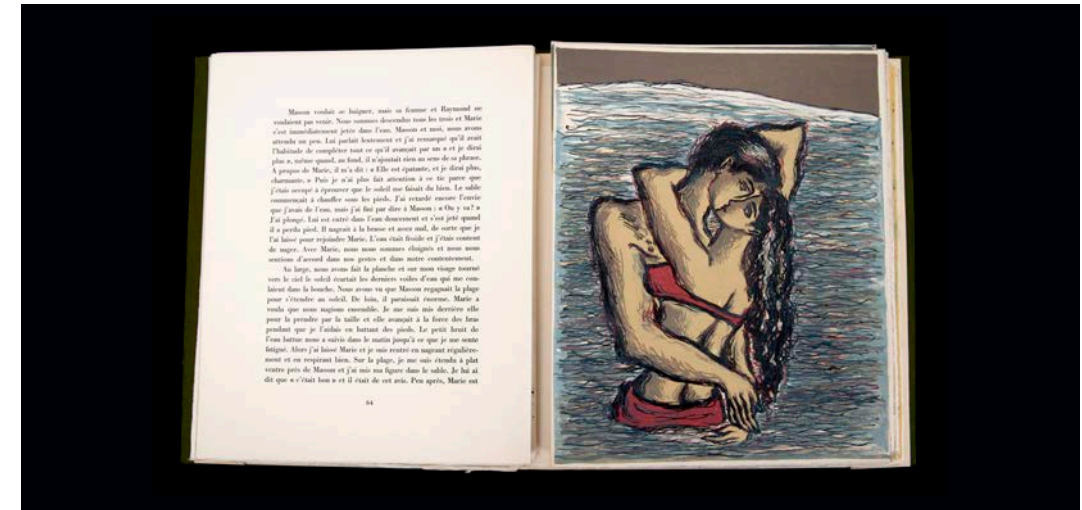
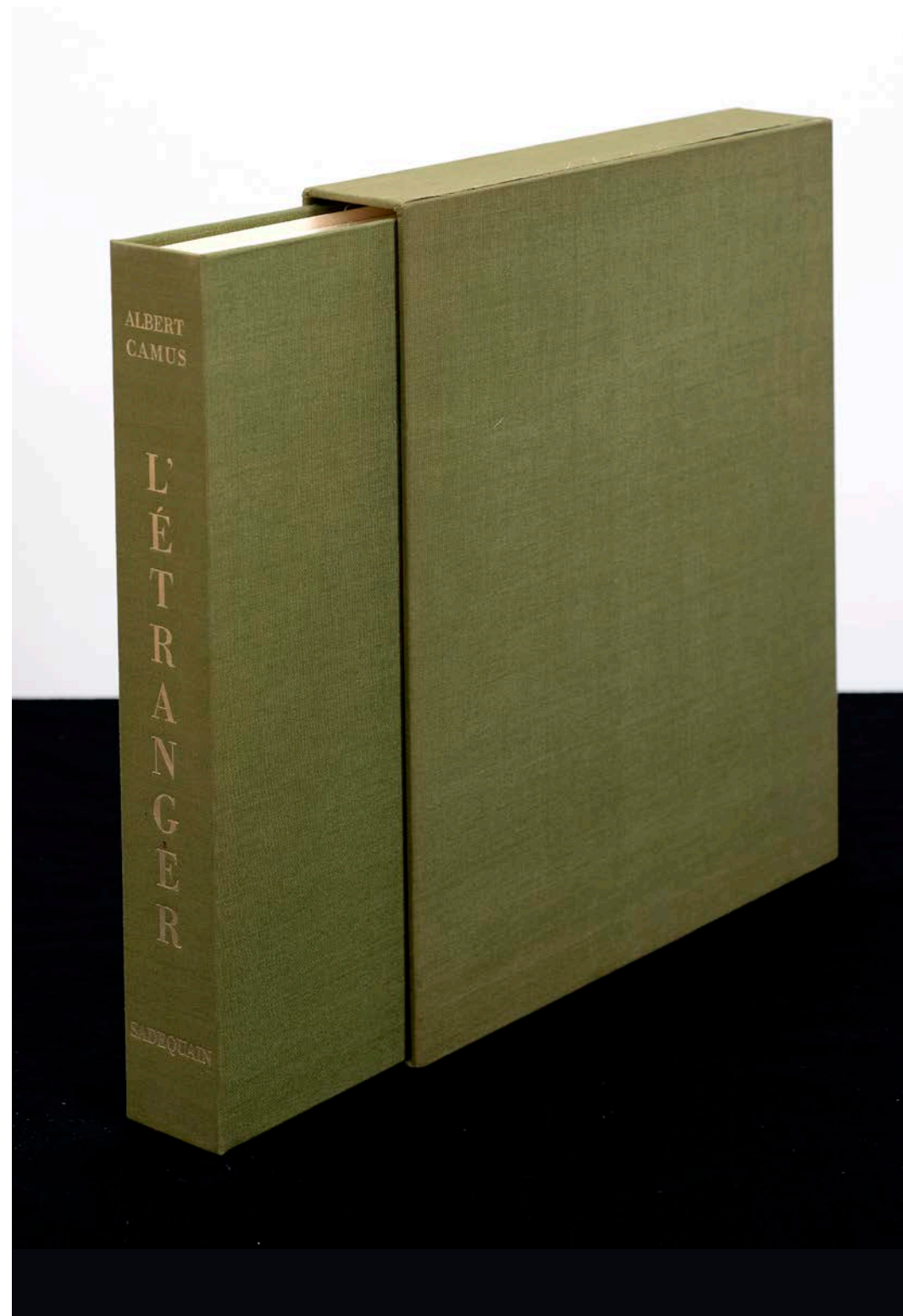


Dancing Figure, 1966

From his letters we see that he was reading a great deal, composing quatrains, and was feeling inspired towards a new, socially progressive artistic form.¹¹ Sadequain's large scale works painted in late 1966/early 1967 depict heavily stylised figures in broad sweeping lines, bearing more influence of the *École de Paris*, and aesthetic features seen in the work of Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso and Jean-Michel Atlan. These works are more akin to his murals than the work produced earlier on in his career, and aesthetic parallels can be drawn between the two. These are works which Dr Salman Ahmad believes belong to the so called 'Lost Exhibition', a show which was to take place in Rouen in 1967.

Sadequain returned to Pakistan in late 1967. The circumstances of his departure are discussed further in our 2015 exhibition catalogue *Sadequain in Paris*. Following his return, Sadequain continued his prolific output, also publishing volumes of poetry and undertaking a number of state-sponsored commissions. Whilst always owing a debt to calligraphy, his work from 1967 onwards became considerably more literal in its depiction of the written word, and in 1970 he published the *Rubaiyat-e-Sadequain*, a collection of over a thousand quatrains of his own composition.¹²

Although the artist enjoyed national fame following his return from France, and an almost mythical aura amongst the population, Sadequain would never return to Paris. However, the years spent there were to impact heavily on the rest of his career. His Parisian years could well be described at the zenith of his life as an artist, where subject and technical ability combined, producing an extraordinary body of work.



1. SYED SADEQUAIN
***L'Étranger*, 1966**

Text by Albert Camus (1942), original lithographs by Syed Sadequain, published by Les Bibliophiles de l'Automobile-Club de France, printed on 'velin de Rives' with deckled edges and issued loose in green cloth portfolio with gilt title on spine and contained in a matching cloth box, pp. 146 with 35 original lithographs, 22 of which are in colour and 3 are double-page, each edition numbered and dedicated to a member of l'A.C.F., from an edition of 150

35 x 5.5 x 27 cm, 13 3/4 x 2 1/8 x 10 5/8 in

The following pages show the Artist's illustrations alongside the relevant text from the book.

*“All existence for a man turned away from the eternal
is but a vast mime under the mask of the absurd.
Creation is the great mime... it is itself an absurd
phenomenon.”*

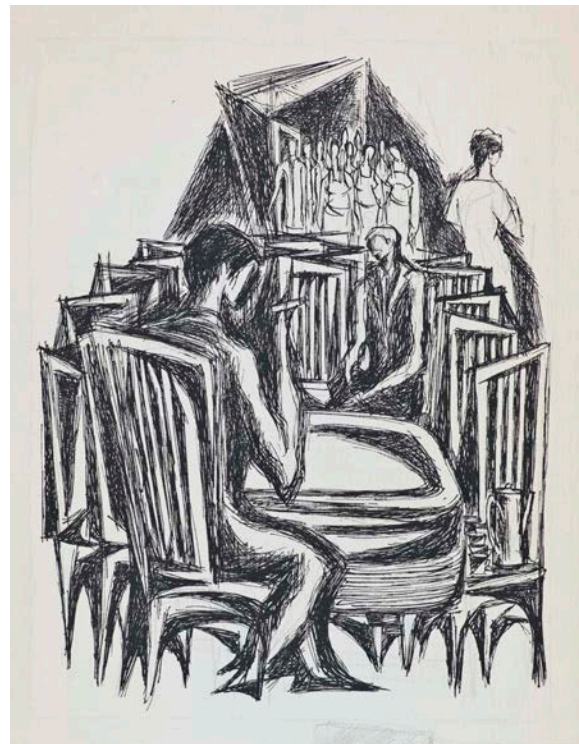
ALBERT CAMUS



'I went inside. The room was very bright, whitewashed, with a glass roof. There were chairs and trestles in the shape of an X. In the centre of the room two of them supported the coffin; the lid was closed. All you could see were its shiny metal screws, barely secured, sticking out from the stained walnut planks...

'At that very moment, Mama's friends came in. There were about ten of them in all and they silently slipped into the room beneath that blinding light. They sat down and not a single chair creaked. I looked at them as I had never looked at anyone before, taking in every detail of their faces and clothing...

'For a split second, I had the ridiculous feeling that they were there to judge me.'



Mother's Friends Were Coming In, circa 1965
Private collection, UK



'The sky was already bathed in sunlight. It was beginning to weigh down heavily on the earth and the heat intensified with every passing minute... But today the sun blazing down upon the shimmering landscape made it inhuman and depressing... All around me the landscape was still glaring, flooded in sunlight. The dazzling sky was unbearable.'



'I asked her if she wanted to go to the movies that night. She laughed and said she wanted to see a film with Fernandel in it...'

'The movie was funny in parts, but then got really ridiculous. She pressed her leg against mine. I stroked her breasts. Towards the end of the movie, I kissed her, but awkwardly. After we left, she came back to my place.'



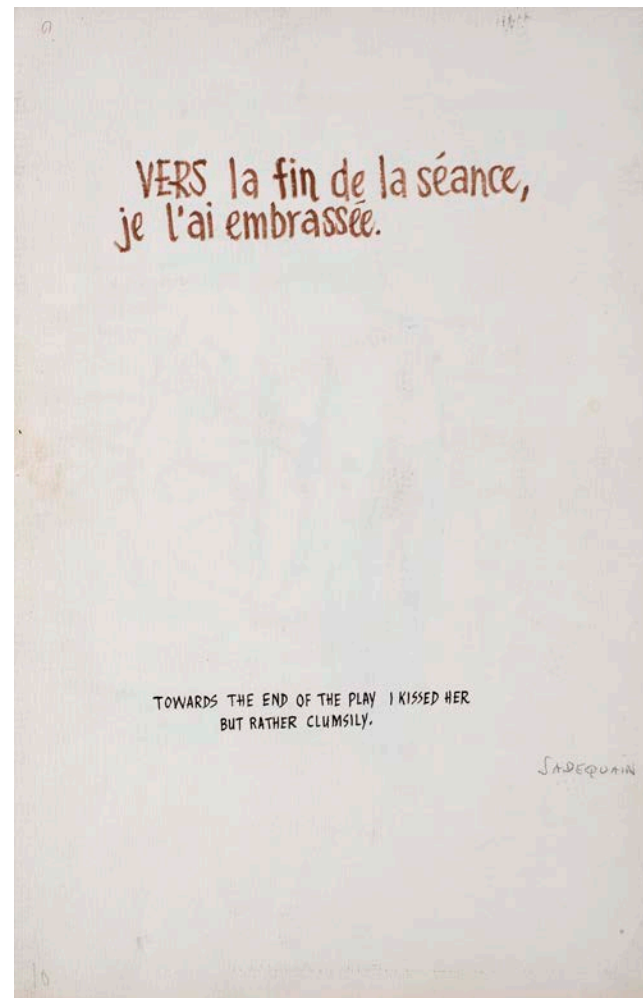
2. *Towards the End of the Play I Kissed Her, But Rather Clumsily*, circa 1965

Felt pen, pen and ink and graphite on bifold paper The cover inscribed with the artist's name and 'VERS la fin de la seance, je l'ai embrassee/ TOWARDS THE END OF THE PLAY I KISSED HER/ BUT RATHER CLUMSILY'

50.2 x 32.5 cm
19 3/4 x 12 3/4 in

Provenance

Private collection, Paris, France

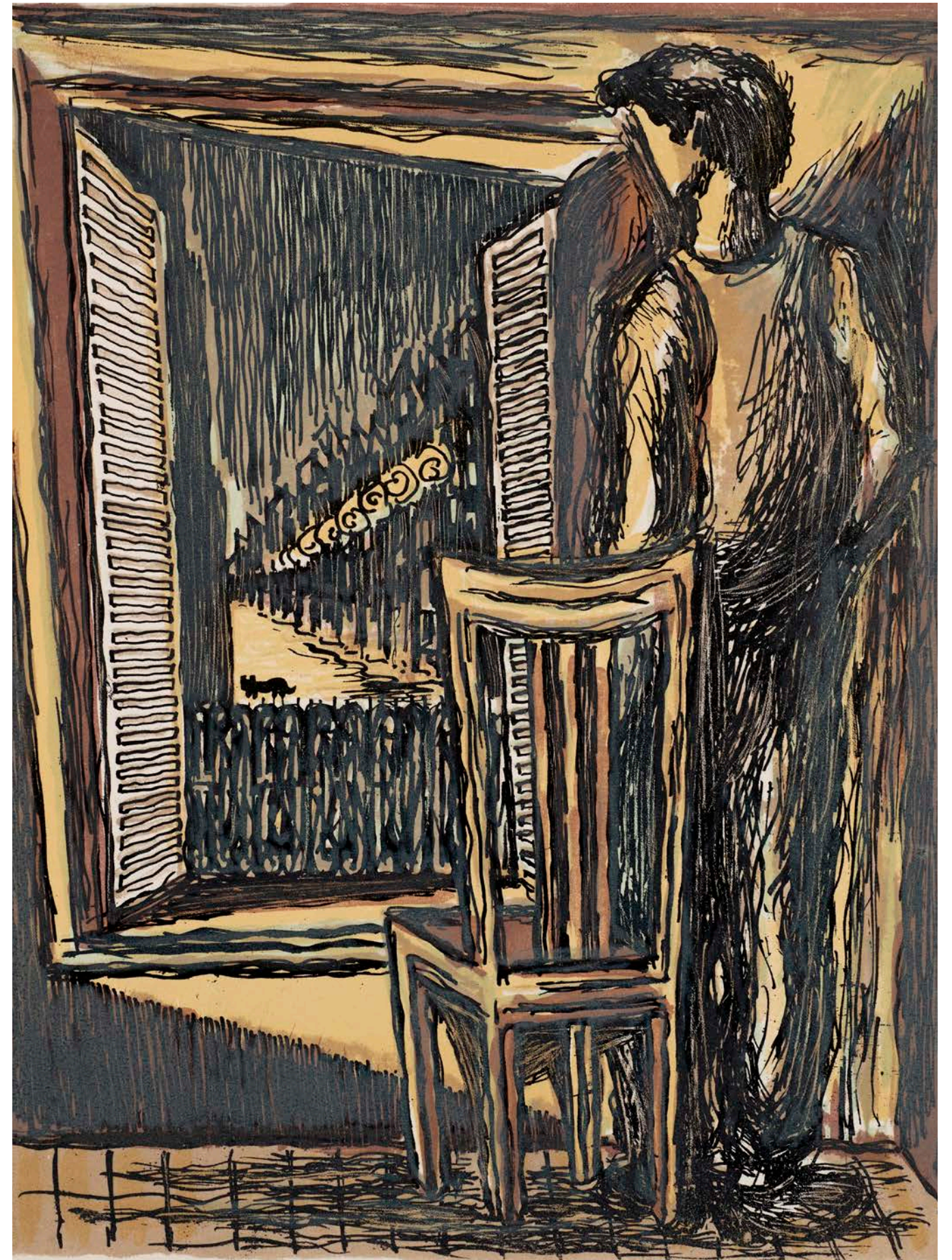


Title Page for '*Towards the End of the Play*'



'I felt my eyes starting to hurt after watching the streets with their lights and masses of people for so long. The street lamps made the damp pavements glisten and every few minutes the headlights of the trams lit up someone's shiny hair, a smile or a silver bracelet.'

'A little while later, as the trams passed by less and less often, the night grew even darker above the trees and lights, and the streets below began to empty little by little, until the first cat slowly crossed the road, deserted once more.'

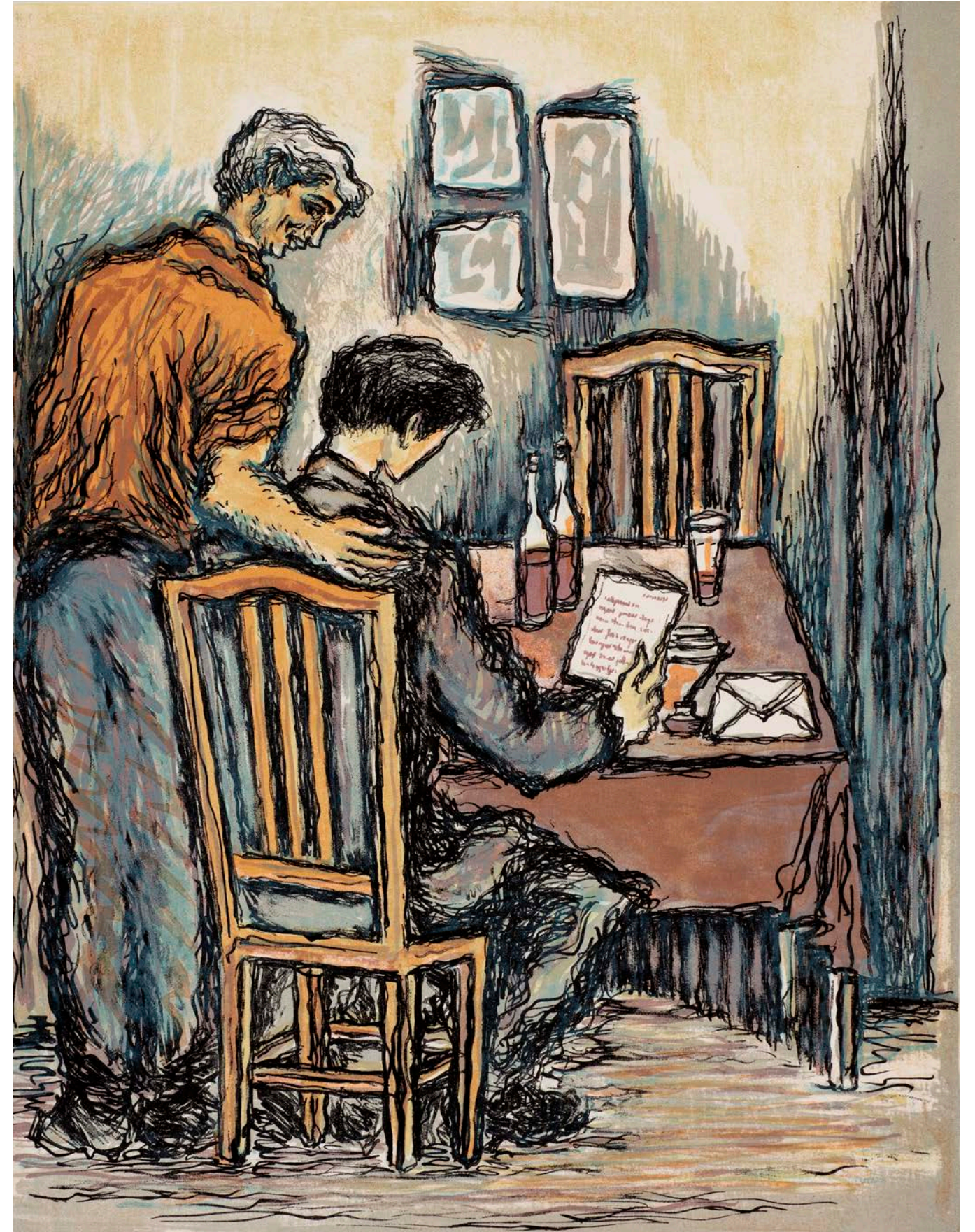


'He wanted to write her a letter, one that would 'hit her hard but at the same time say things that would make her sorry and miss him'...

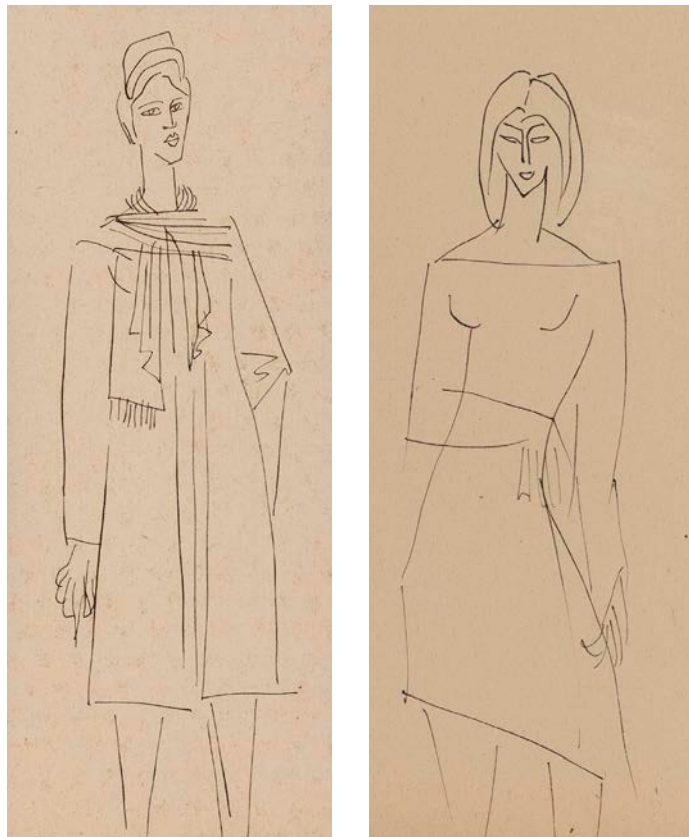
'But Raymond said he didn't think he would be able to write the kind of letter he needed, so he'd thought of asking me to do it. When I didn't reply, he asked me if I would do it right then and there. And I agreed.

'He drank another glass of wine and stood up. He pushed aside our plates and the bit of black pudding we hadn't finished. He carefully cleaned the plastic tablecloth. He got a sheet of lined paper out of the drawer of his bedside table, along with a yellow envelope, a little penholder made of red wood and a square inkwell filled with purple ink...

'Then I read out the letter. He smoked a cigarette as he listened, nodding his head, then asked me to read it out again. He was really pleased with it. 'I could tell you understood life,' he said warmly.'



'Yesterday was Saturday and Marie came over as we'd arranged. I really wanted to sleep wither because she was wearing a pretty dress with red and white stripes and leather sandals. You could see the outline of her firm breasts and her sun-tanned face made her look radiant.'



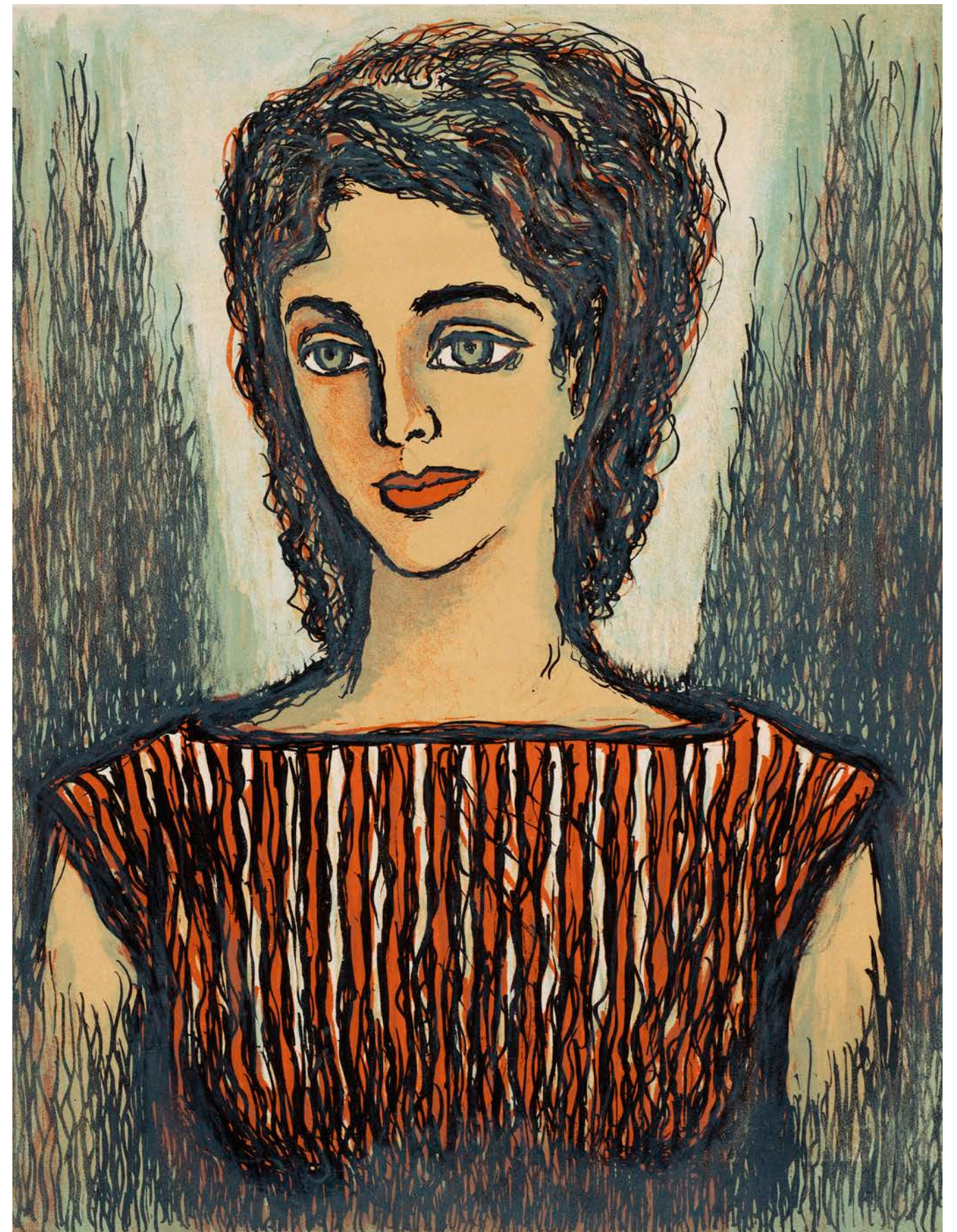
3. Female Studies (details), circa 1964

Double sided work
Pen and ink on paper, 'Atelier Sadequain' stamped lower right

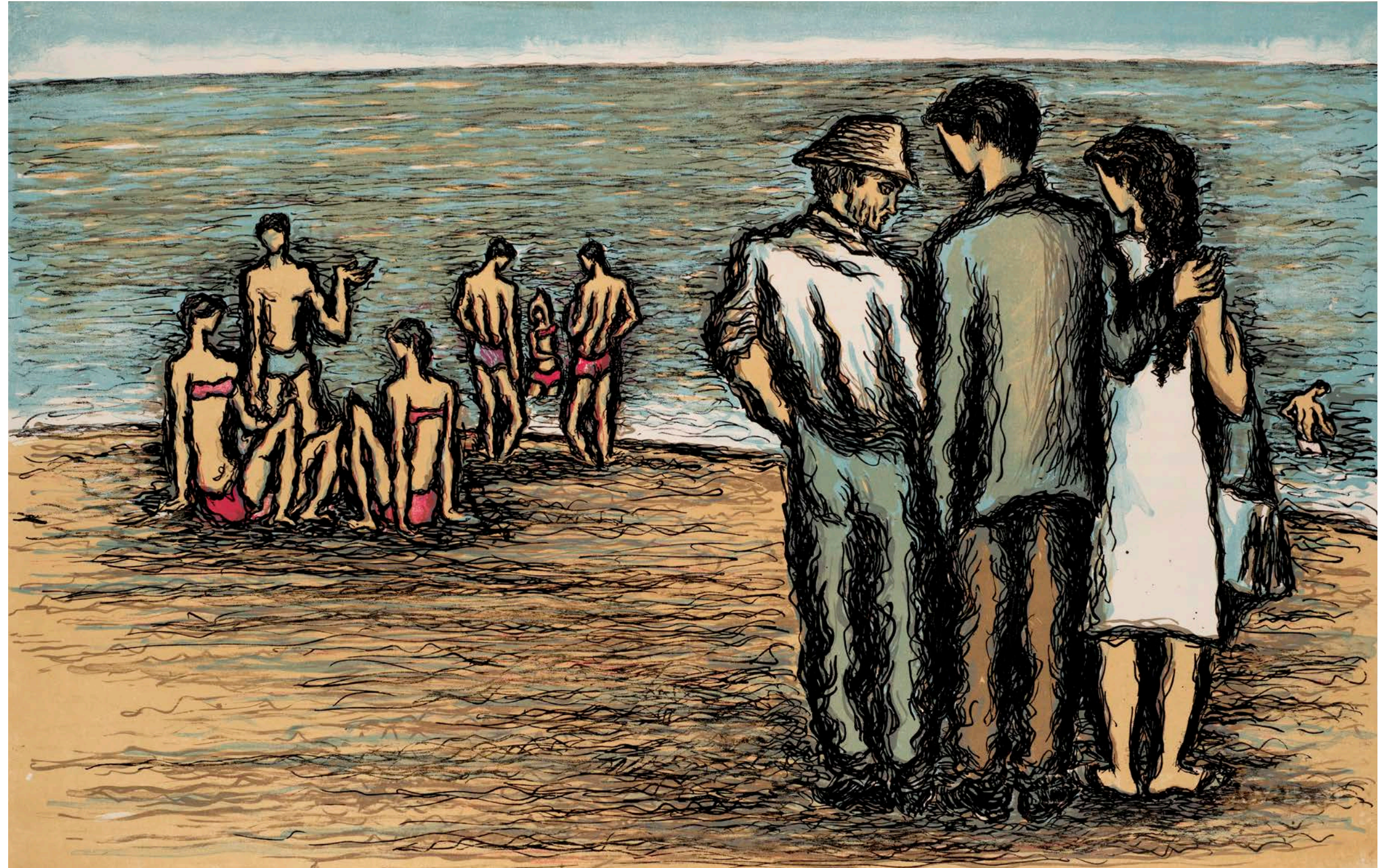
35 x 52 cm
13 3/4 x 20 1/2 in

Provenance

Private collection, Paris, France



'Before reaching the edge of the ridge, we could already make out the still sea and, further away, an enormous deserted promontory in the clear water... From the steep slope leading down towards the sea, we could see that a few people were already in the water.'



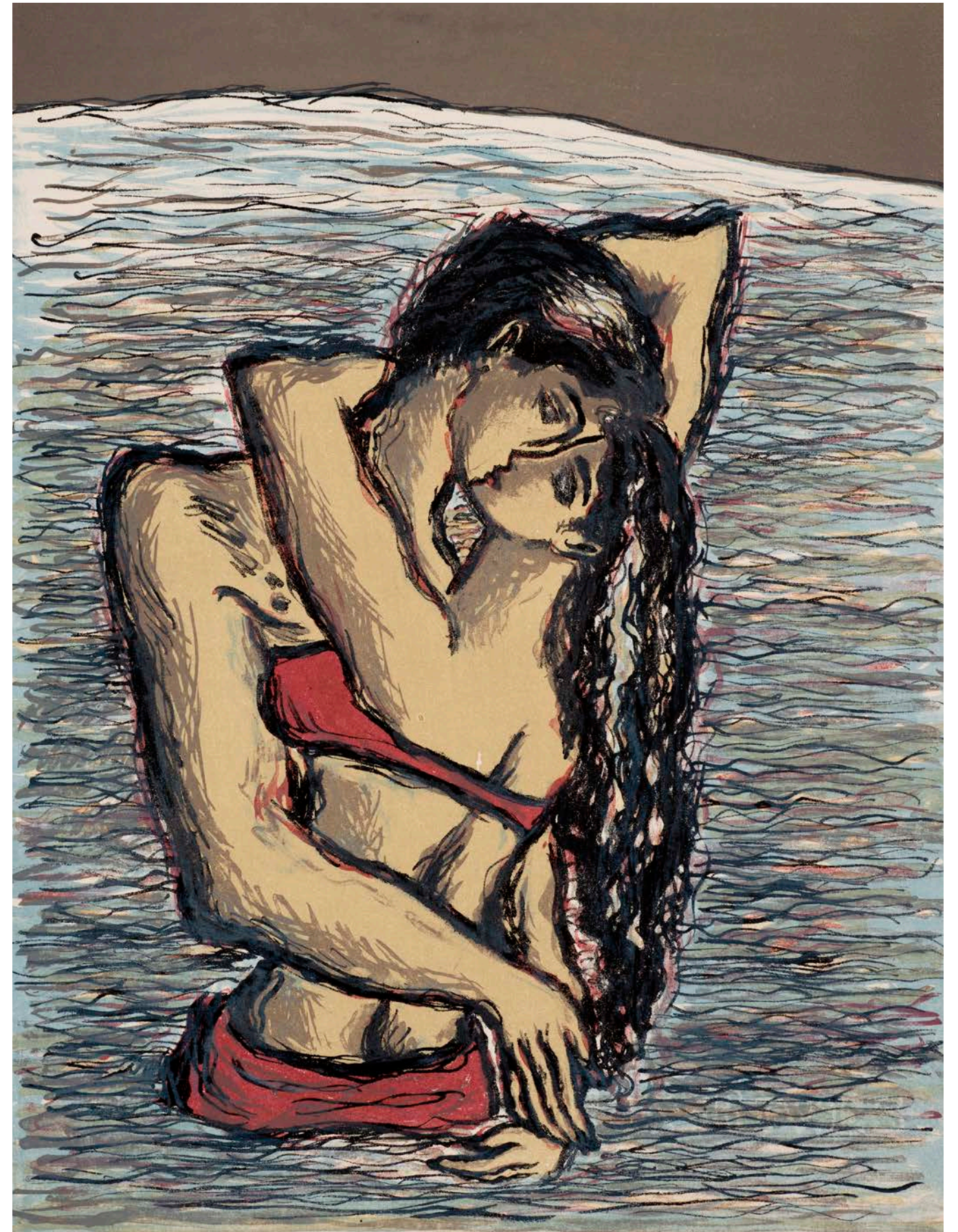
'Come into the water,' she said. We swam for a while and then she pressed her body against mine. I felt her legs wrapped around mine and I wanted her.'



Couple in an Embrace, circa 1958
Private collection, UK



Untitled (Abstract Figures), circa 1964
Private collection, UK



‘Meanwhile, Raymond had hit the other Arab, whose face was covered in blood. Raymond turned around to me and said: ‘Just you watch what I’m going to do to him.’ I shouted: ‘Look out, he’s got a knife!’ But by then, Raymond’s arm was already cut and his mouth slashed...

‘At about one-thirty, Raymond came back with Masson. He arm was bandaged and he had a patch over the corner of his mouth. The Doctor had told him it was nothing, but Raymond looked very gloomy.’



'The Arab pulled out his knife and raised it towards me in the sun. The light flashed off the steel and it was as if a long gleaming blade was thrust deep into my forehead...'

'All I could feel was the sun crashing like cymbals against my forehead, and the knife, a burning sword hovering above me. Its red-hot blade tore through my eyelashes to pierce my aching eyes...'

'The sea heaved a heavy, scorching sigh. The sky seemed to split apart from end to end to pour its fire down upon me. My whole body tensed as I gripped the gun more tightly. It set off the trigger. I could feel the smooth barrel in my hand and it was then, with that sharp, deafening sound, that it all began...'

'It was as if I had rapped sharply on the fatal door of destiny.'



‘The next day, a lawyer came to see me in prison. He was short and chubby, rather young, and his hair was carefully slicked back. In spite of the heat (I was in shirtsleeves), he was wearing a dark suit, a wing collar and a strange-looking tie with wide black-and-white stripes. He put the briefcase he was carrying down on my bed, introduced himself and told me he had studied my file. My case was a tricky one but he was sure we could win if I put my trust in him. I thanked him and he said: ‘Let’s get down to business.’



Study for ‘The Lawyer’, circa 1965
Private collection, Lahore



Study for Meursault in Prison, circa 1965
Courtesy Artcurial, Paris



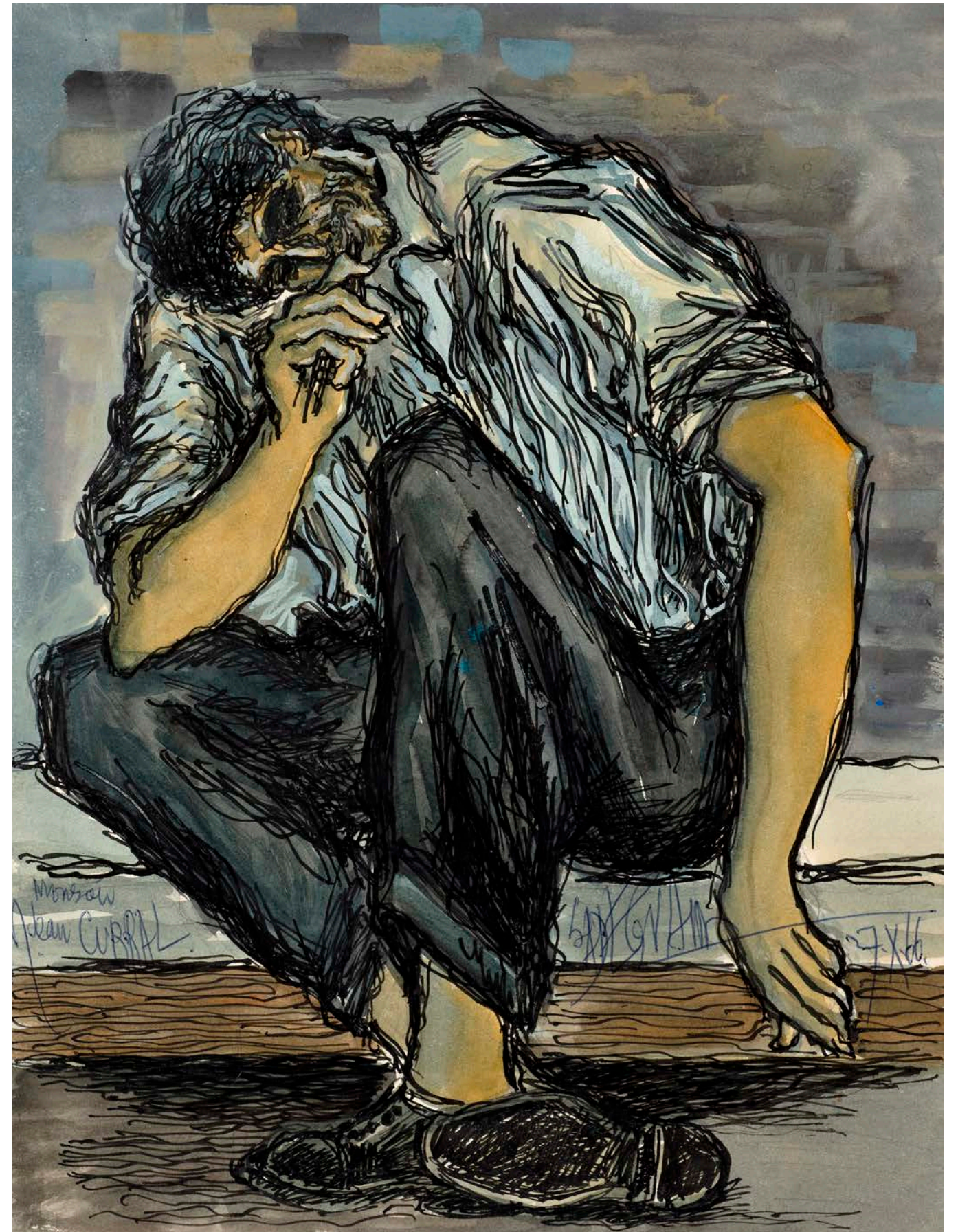
4. *Untitled (Meursault in Prison)*, 1966

Gouache, pen and ink and pencil on paper
Signed and dated 'SADEQUAIN/ 27.X.66' lower right, dedicated 'M. Jean CURRAL' lower left

32.7 x 25 cm
12 7/8 x 9 7/8 in

Provenance

Private collection, Paris, France



'A little while later, I was taken down to be questioned by the judge... Suddenly, he got up, strode over to the other end of his office and opened a drawer of his filing cabinet. He took out a silver crucifix and brandished it at me as he came closer. And in a completely different voice, almost quivering, he shouted: 'Do you know who this is?' I said: 'Yes, of course.'... But he cut me off, drew himself up to his full height and demanded I tell him one last time if I believe in God. I said no... Then he looked at me intently and rather sadly. 'I've never met anyone with such a hardened soul as yours,' he said softly. 'Every criminal who has stood before me has always cried when faced with this symbol of suffering.'



Study for Meursault with the Priest, circa 1965
Private collection, courtesy Sotheby's, London



Study for Meursault with the Priest, circa 1965
Private collection, courtesy Sotheby's, London



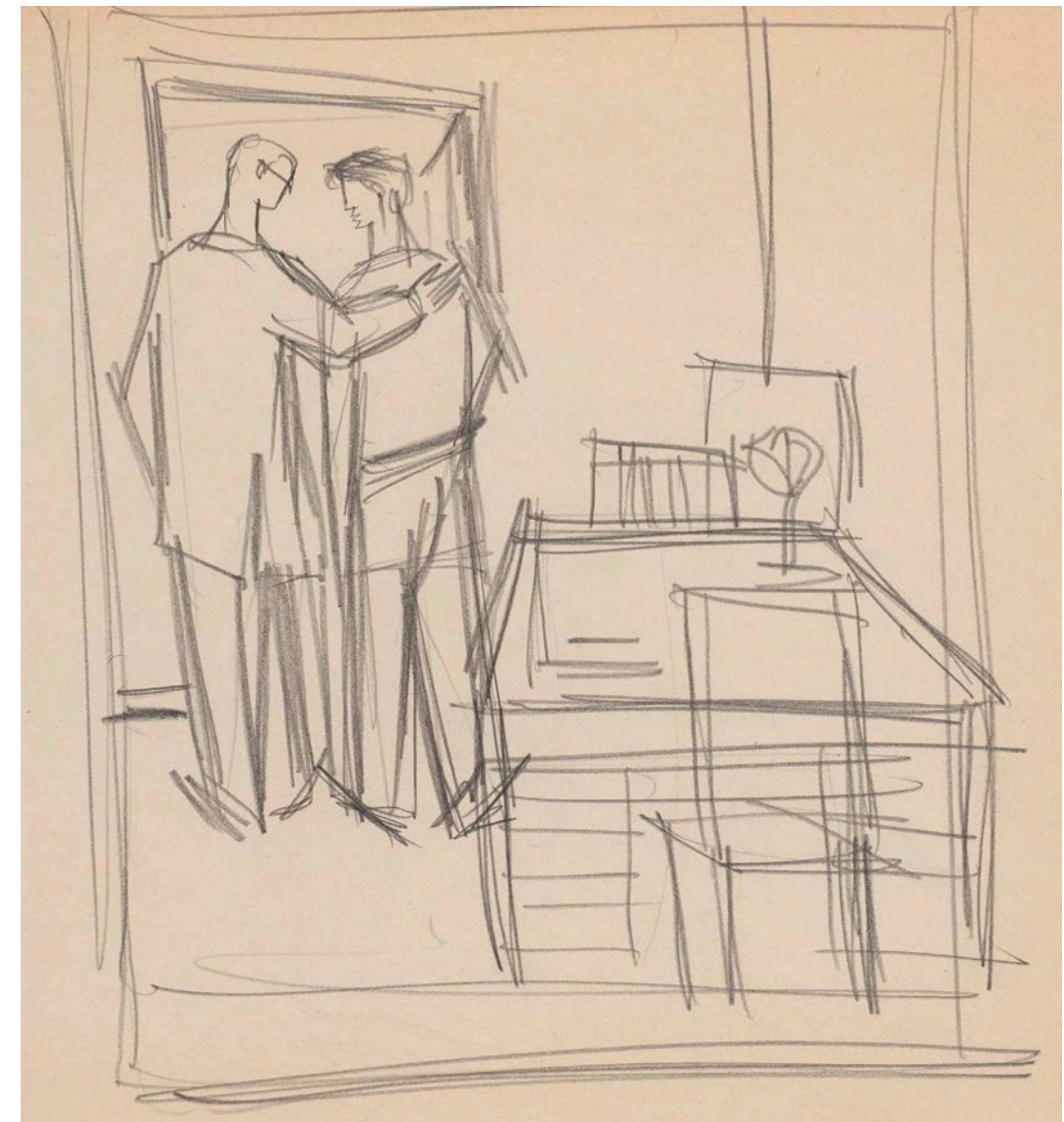


5. *Study for 'Meursault with the Priest' & 'The Lawyer'*, circa 1965

Pencil and pen and ink on paper
'Atelier Sadequain' stamped lower right

35 x 52 cm
13 3/4 x 20 1/2 in

Provenance
Private collection, Paris, France

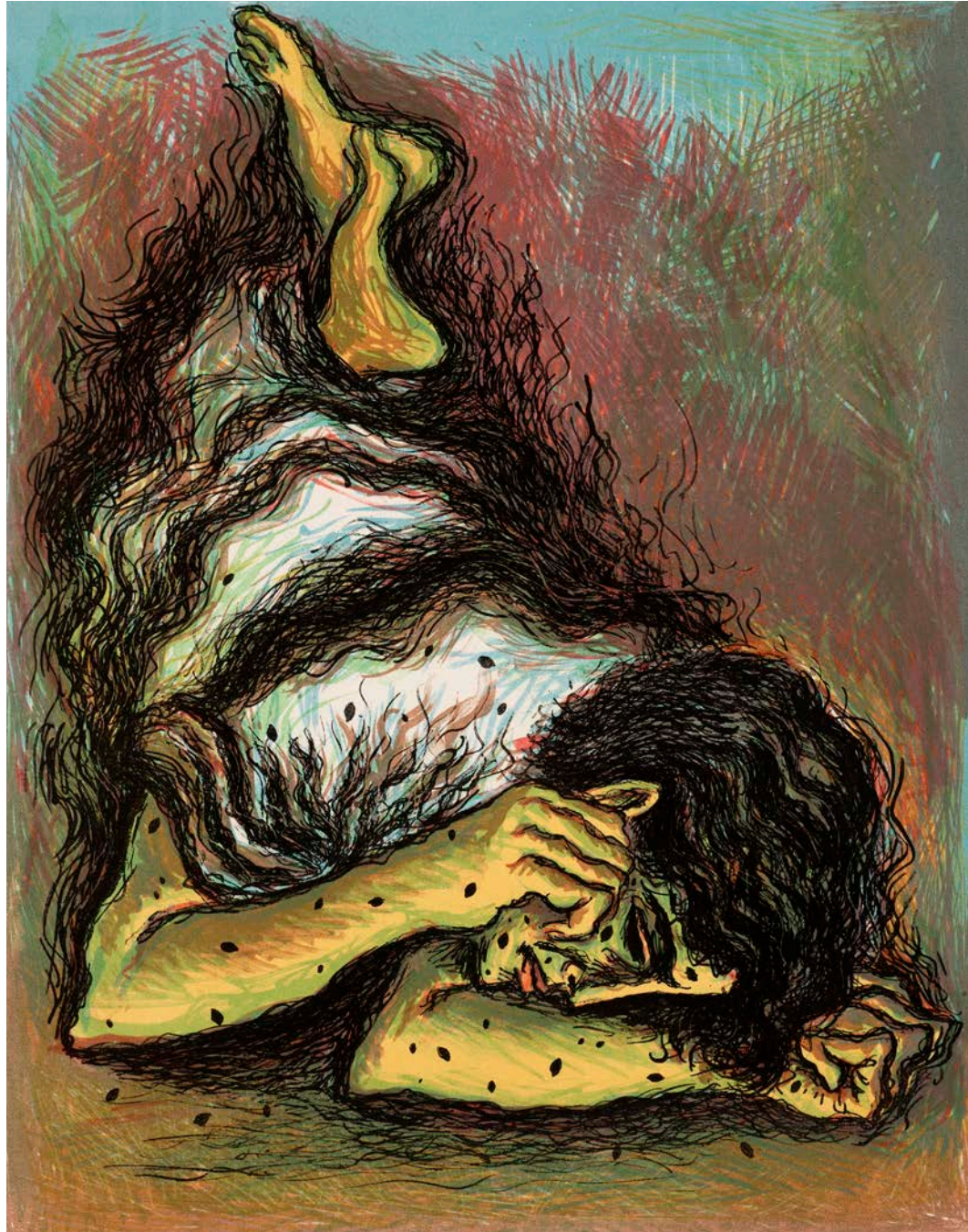


6. *Study for Meursault with The Priest*, circa 1965

Pencil on paper
'Atelier Sadequain' stamped lower left

34 x 51 cm
13 3/8 x 20 1/8 in

Provenance
Private collection, Paris, France



'The day I was arrested, I was locked up in a room with several prisoners, most of them Arabs. They laughed when they saw me. They asked what I'd done. I said I'd killed an Arab and they all went quiet. But a short time later, night fell. They showed me how to set up the mat where I would sleep. By rolling up one of the ends, you could make a sort of pillow. Bugs crawled across my face all night long.'



7. Study for Meursault on Prison Bed, circa 1965

Pencil on paper
'Atelier Sadequain' stamped lower right

53 x 41.5 cm
20 7/8 x 16 3/8 in

Provenance
Private collection, Paris, France



8. Study for Meursault Reclining, circa 1965

Pencil on paper
'Atelier Sadequain' stamped lower left

53 x 42 cm
20 7/8 x 16 1/2 in

Provenance
Private collection, Paris, France

‘At the beginning of my imprisonment, however, what I found most difficult was that I had the thoughts of a free man... But that just lasted a few months. Afterwards, I had only the thoughts of a prisoner... I often thought that if I’d been forced to live inside the hollow trunk of a dead tree, with nothing to do except look up at the sky flowering above my head, I would have eventually got used to that as well.’



After the Crucifixion I, 1966, Private collection, UK

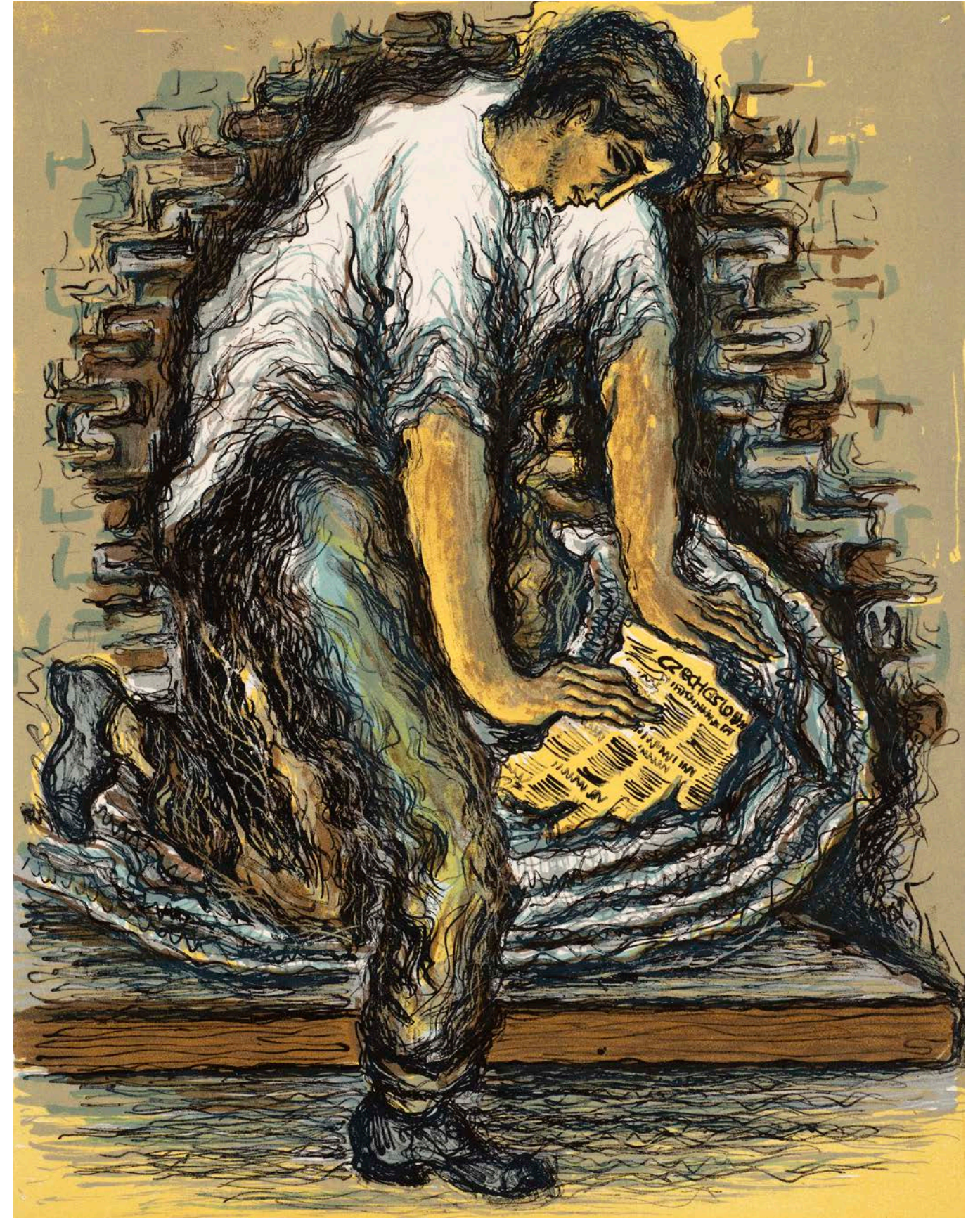
'Flitting across this world we see a Christ-like figure, perhaps meant to be autobiographical, his body one with thorns, his head encircled by the crown of atrophied oblivion.'

Faiz Ahmad Faiz on Sadequain's series *After the Crucifixion*.



'Between my mattress and the wooden bed, I'd found a scrap of newspaper, yellow with age; it was almost completely stuck to the mattress. The beginning of the article was missing, but it was a story about something that must have happened in Czechoslovakia.'

'A man left a Czech village to make his fortune. Twenty-five years later, he was rich and returned to the village with his wife and child. His mother ran a hotel with his sister in the town where he was born. To surprise them, he'd left his wife and child in another hotel and gone to his mother's; she didn't recognise him when he came in. As a joke, he had the idea of taking a room. He'd let them see his money. During the night, his mother and sister murdered him, to rob him, beating him to death with a hammer and throwing his body into the river. In the morning, his wife arrived and not knowing what had happened revealed the identity of the traveller. The mother hanged herself. The sister threw herself down a well. I must have read this story thousands of times. In one sense, it was highly improbable. In another way, it was plausible. In any case, I felt that the traveller had sort of deserved what he got, because you should never joke around like that.'



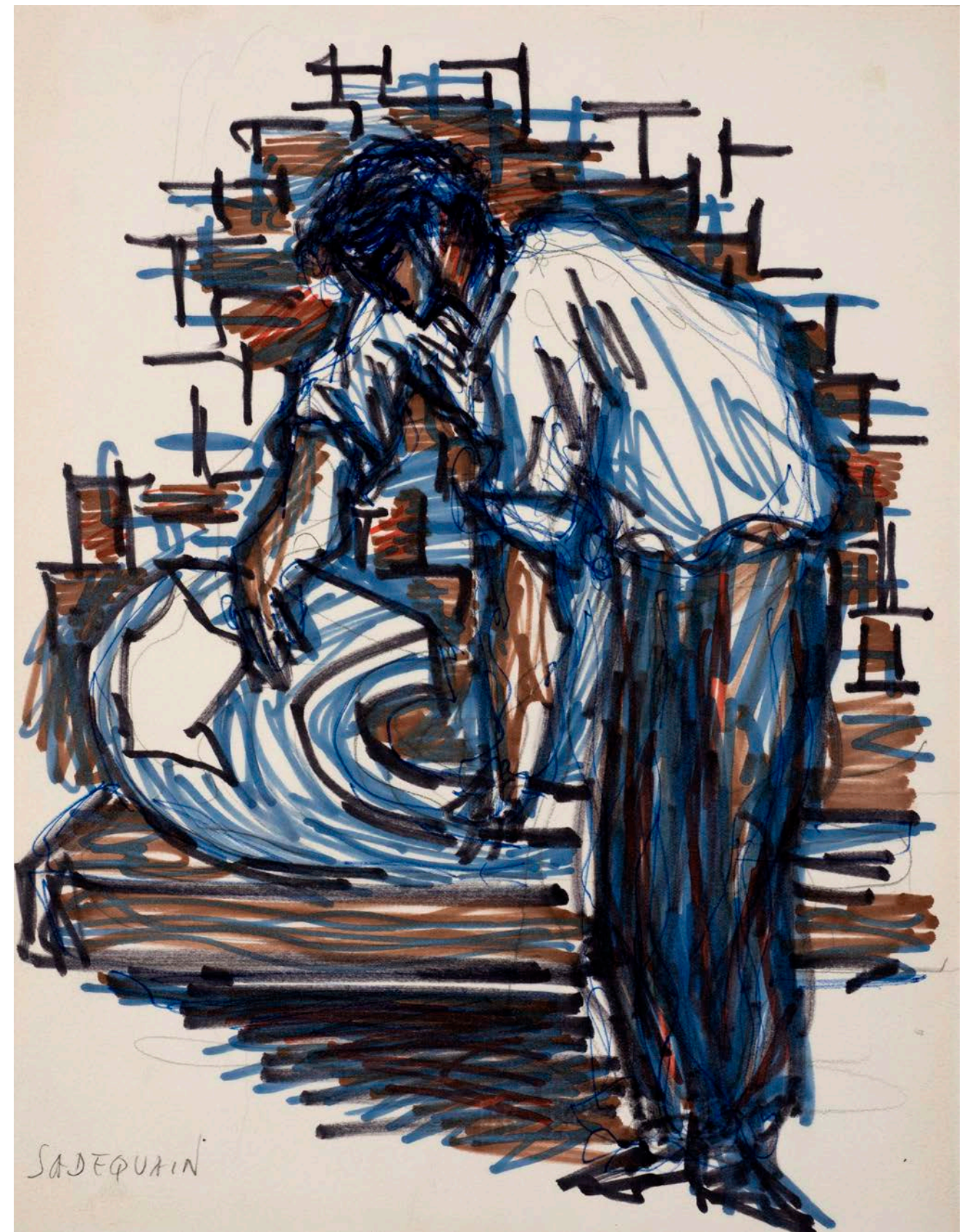
9. Study for Czech Newspaper, circa 1965

Felt pen, graphite and pen and ink on paper
Inscribed 'SADEQUAIN' lower left

32.8 x 25.2 cm
12 7/8 x 9 7/8 in

Provenance

Private collection, Paris, France



10. Study for Czech Newspaper, circa 1965

'Atelier Sadequain' stamped lower right
Pencil on paper

42 x 52.5 cm
16 1/2 x 20 5/8 in

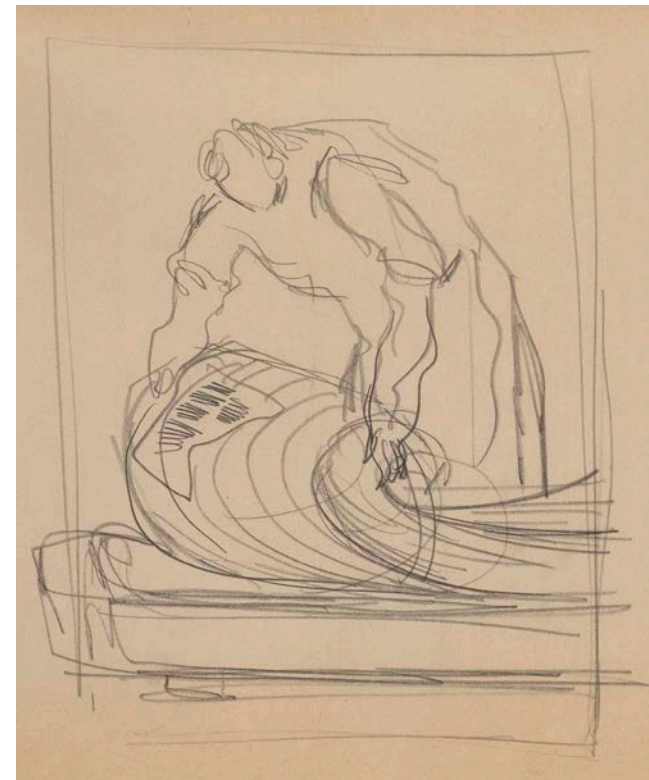
Provenance

Private collection, Paris, France

Study for Czech Newspaper, circa 1965
Private collection, courtesy Sotheby's, London

Study for Meursault in Prison & Czech Newspaper, circa 1965
Private collection, UAE

10



'One day, when the guard told me I'd been there for five months, I believe him but couldn't understand it... That day, after the guard had gone, I looked at myself in my metal dish. It seemed as if my reflection remained grave even when I tried to smile at it. I moved it about in front of me. I was smiling but my face still had the same sad, harsh expression.'



Study for 'Reflection', circa 1965
Private collection, courtesy Artcurial, Paris



‘Then the presiding judge asked the prosecutor if he had any questions to ask of the witness and the prosecutor shouted: ‘Oh no, that will do nicely!’ with such intensity and a look of triumph in my direction that for the first time in many years I felt a ridiculous desire to cry, because I could sense how much all these people hated me.’



'I didn't look over at Marie. I didn't have time to because the presiding judge told me in a strange official way that I would have my head cut off in a public place in the name of the French people. At that moment, I thought I understood the feeling I could read on all those people's faces. I believe it was a kind of respect... The judge asked me if there was anything I wanted to say. I thought about it. I said: 'No.' Then I was taken away.'



The Webbed XIX, 1966, Private collection, UK

'Sadequain has once more reverted to direct social comment to depict a loveless and macabre world – a world of the scarecrow acting as the Lord of bloodthirsty crows, of the harridan decked out as a beauty queen, a world of debased flesh and servile manners.'

Faiz Ahmad Faiz



11. Study for Meursault in the Courtroom, circa 1965

Pencil on paper
'Atelier Sadequain' stamped lower right

35 x 52 cm
13 3/4 x 20 1/2 in

Provenance

Private collection, Paris, France

12. Study for Meursault in the Courtroom, circa 1965

Pencil on paper
'Atelier Sadequain' stamped lower right

35 x 52 cm
13 3/4 x 20 1/2 in

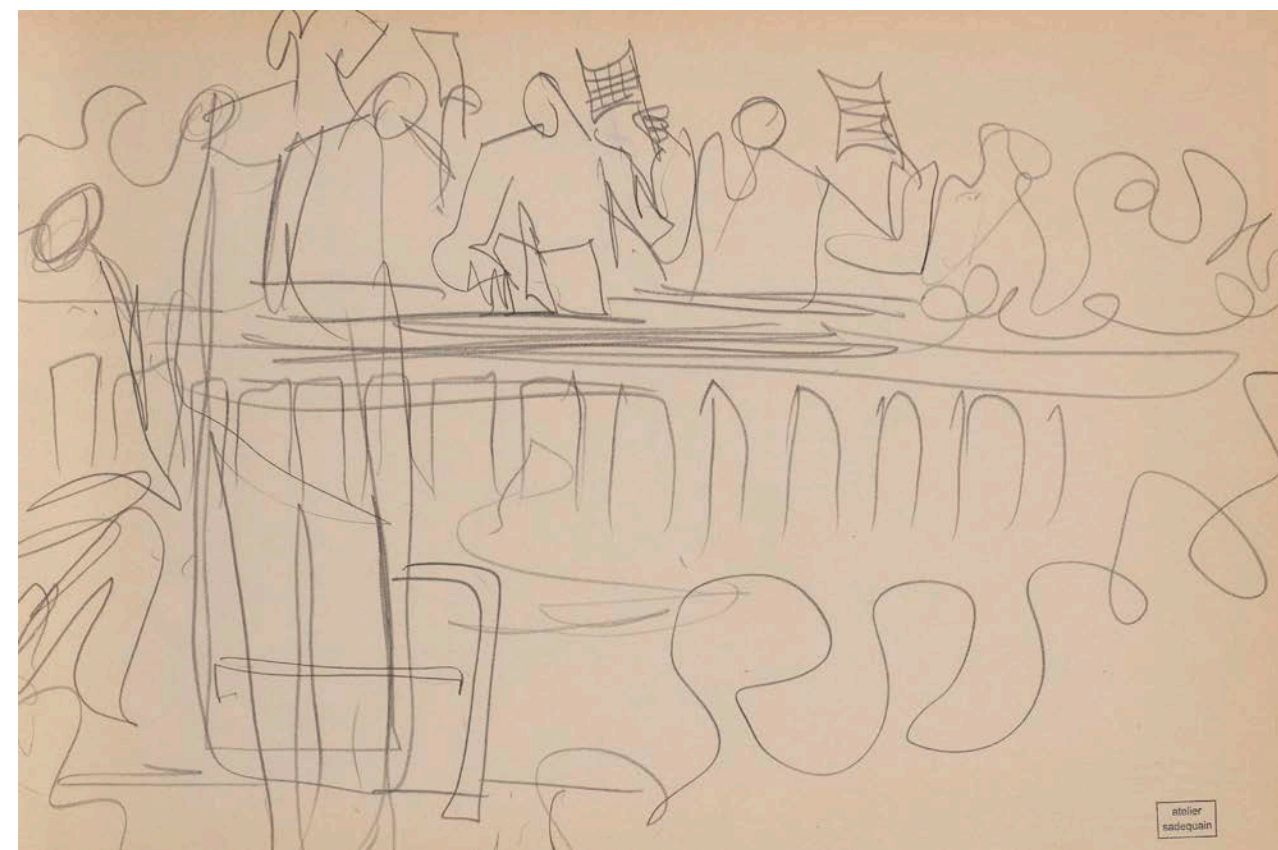
Provenance

Private collection, Paris, France

11

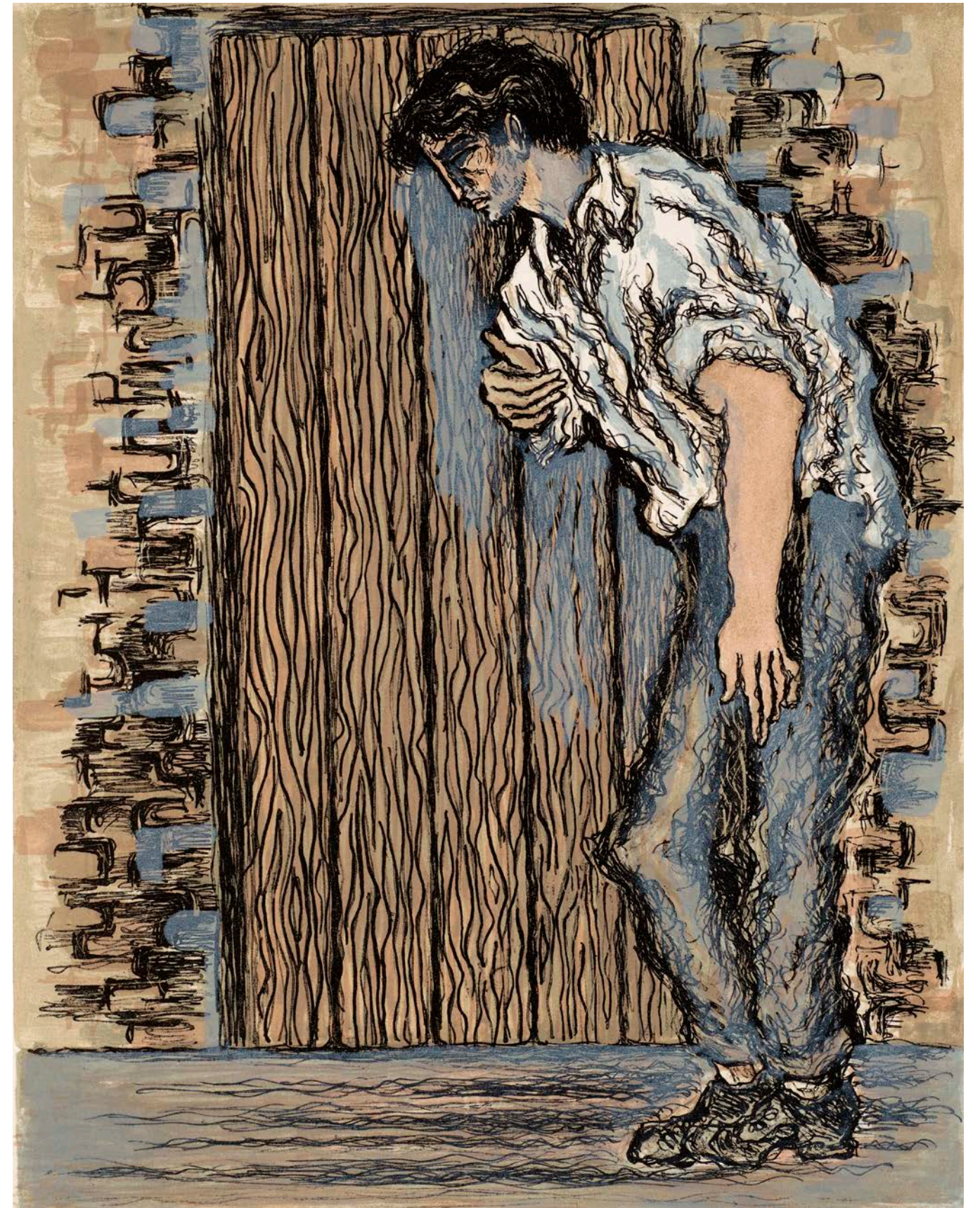


12



'Mama often said that no one is ever really entirely unhappy. I agreed with her here in my prison, when the sky took on so many colours and the light of a new day gradually flowed into my cell. Because I might have heard footsteps and my heart might have burst.'

'Even though the slightest sound of something slipping past my door made me rush over to it, even though I waited, horrified, my ear pressed against the wood, until I could hear my own breathing again, terrified to hear it sounding so hoarse and so like a dog in its death throes, when all was said and done, my heart did not burst and, once more, I'd won another twenty-four hours.'



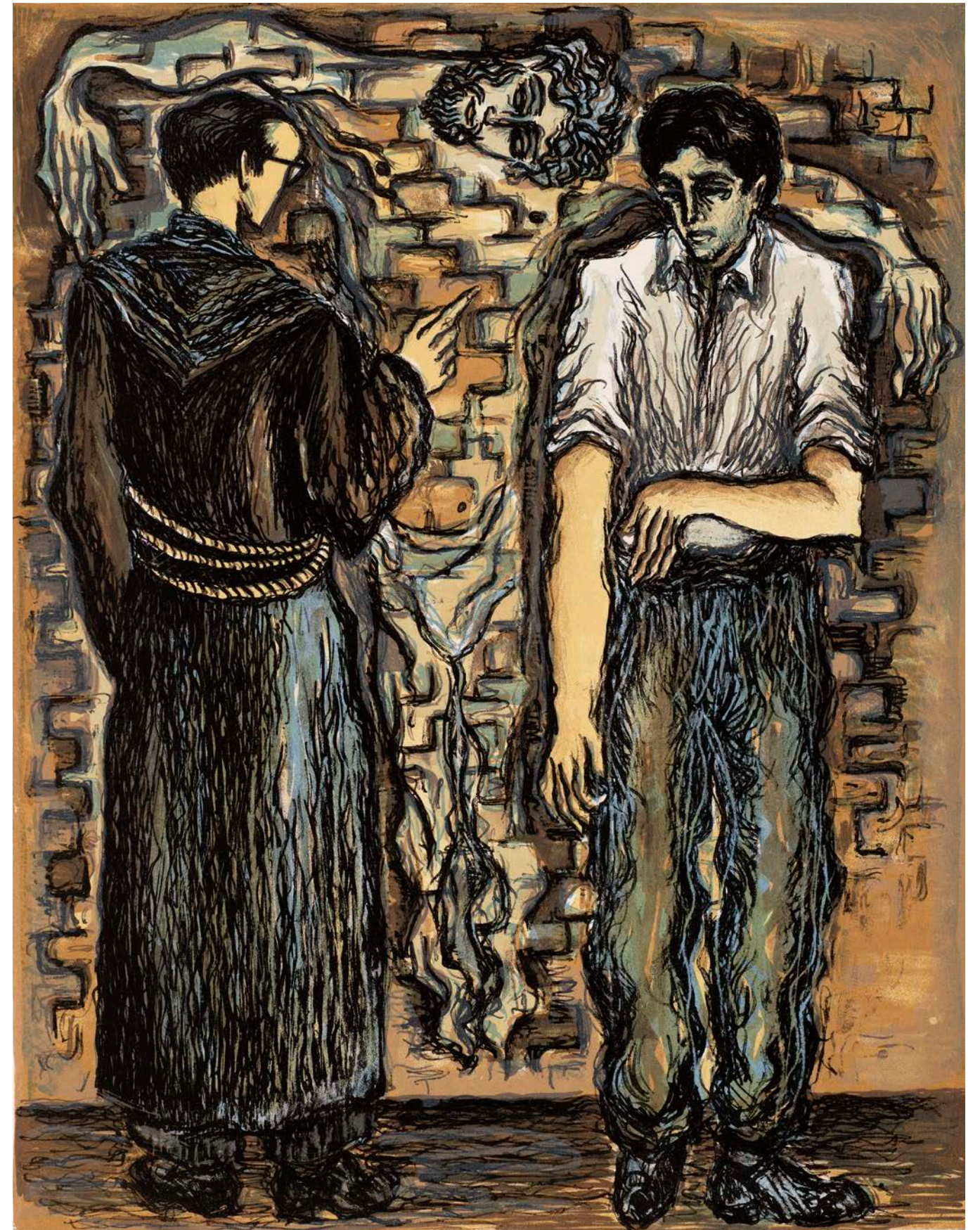
'He looked up at the sky through the bars on the window. 'You're mistaken, my son,' he said. 'More could be asked of you. Perhaps it will be asked of you.'

'What do you mean?'

'You could be asked to see.'

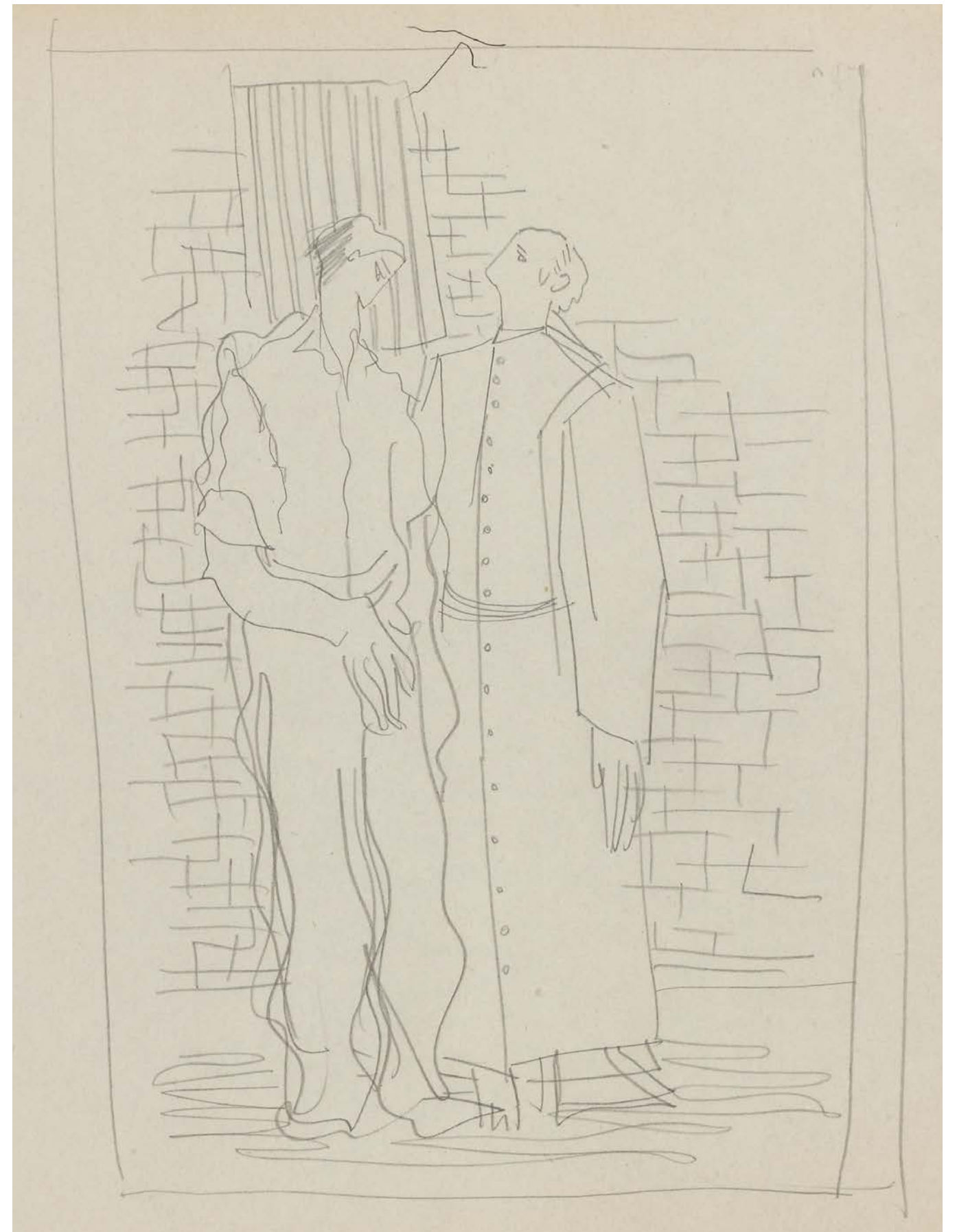
'To see what?'

'The priest looked all around him and spoke in a voice that seemed suddenly very weary: 'Pain and sadness are seeping out of all these stones, I know that. I've never looked at them without feeling anguish. But deep within my heart, I know that even the most despondent of men has seen a divine face emerge from the darkness, and it is that face I am asking you to see.'



Below: *After the Crucifixion II*, 1966
Private collection, India

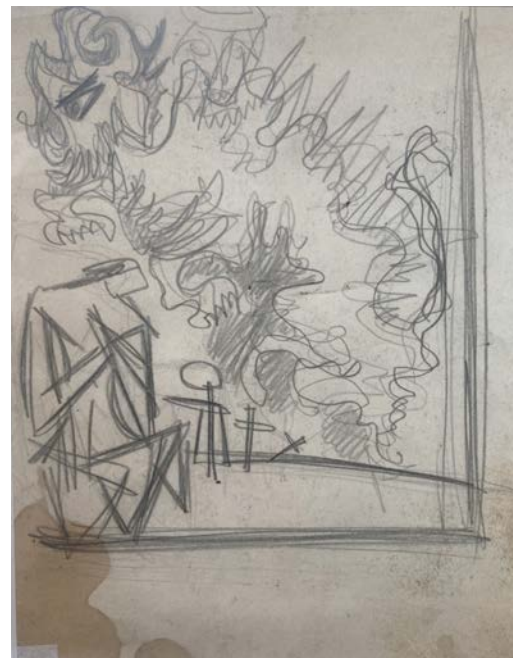
Opposite: *Study for Meursault and the Priest*, circa 1965
Private collection, courtesy Artcurial, Paris



'So close to death, Mama must have felt set free, ready to live once more... And I as well, I too felt ready to start life all over again. As if this great release of anger had purged me of evil emptied me of hope; and standing before this symbolic night bursting with stars, I opened myself for the first time to the tender indifference of the world... I could only hope there would be many, many spectators on the day of my execution and that they would greet me with cries of hatred.'



Study for 'Anger', circa 1966
Private collection, India



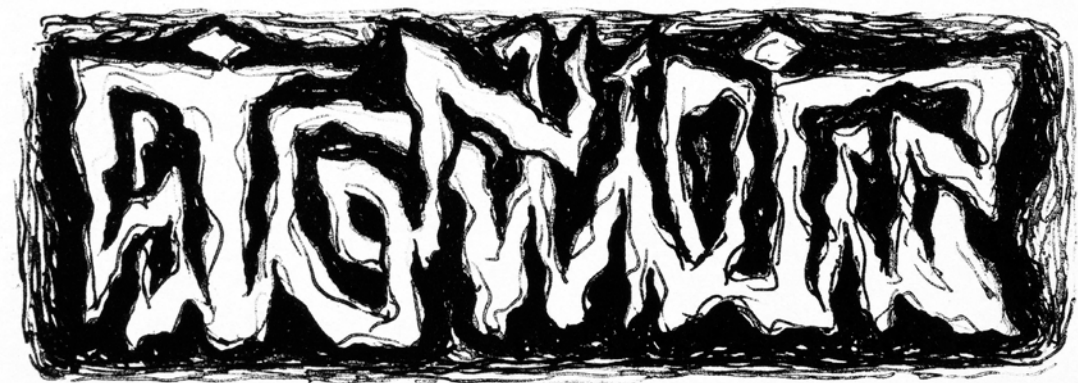
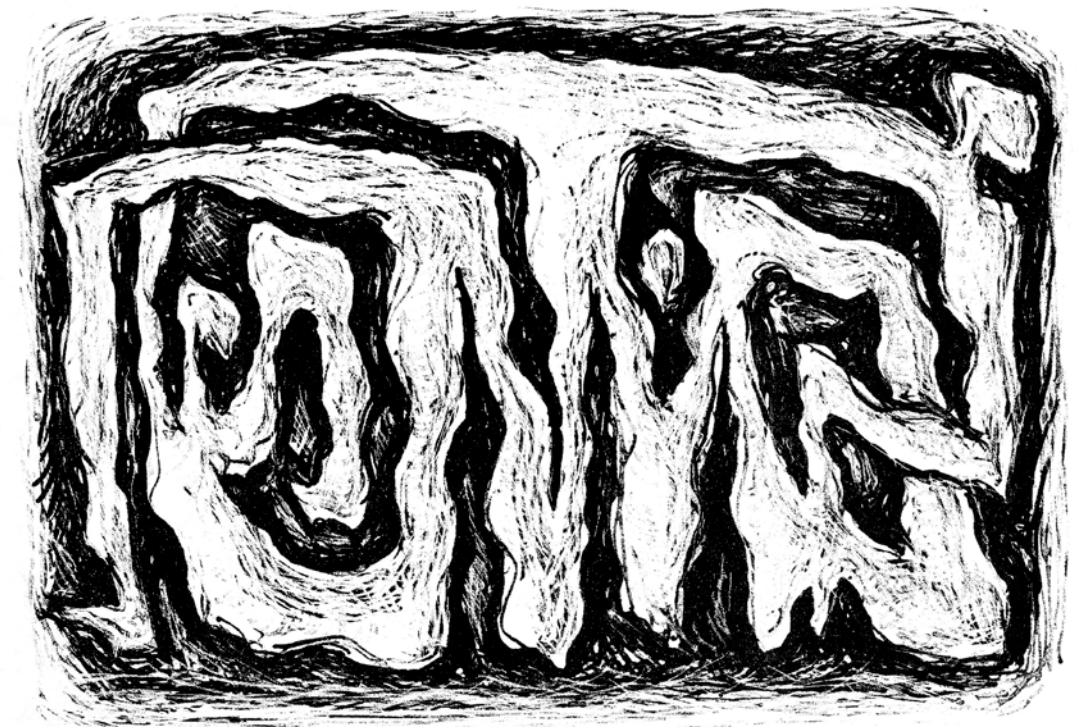
Study for 'Anger', circa 1965
Private collection, UK

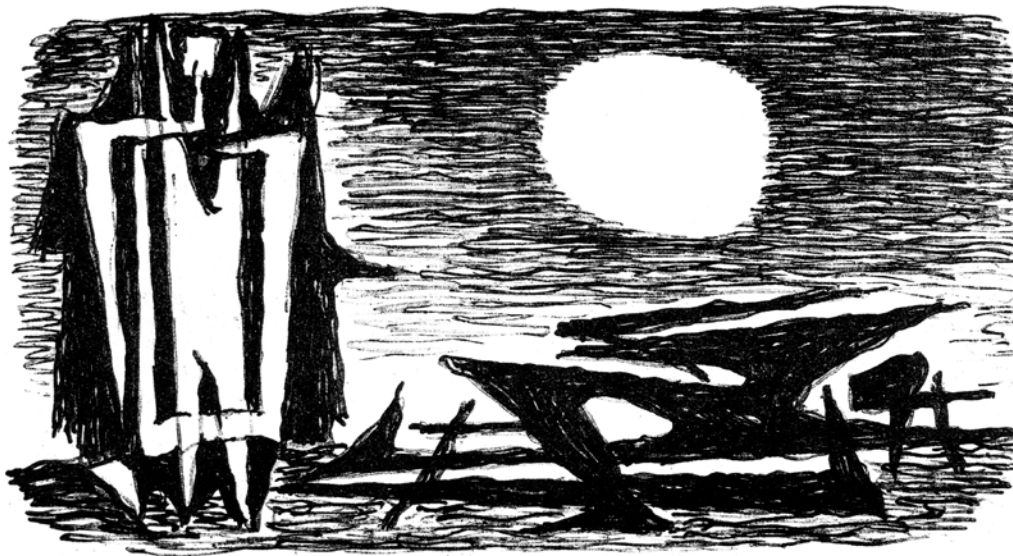
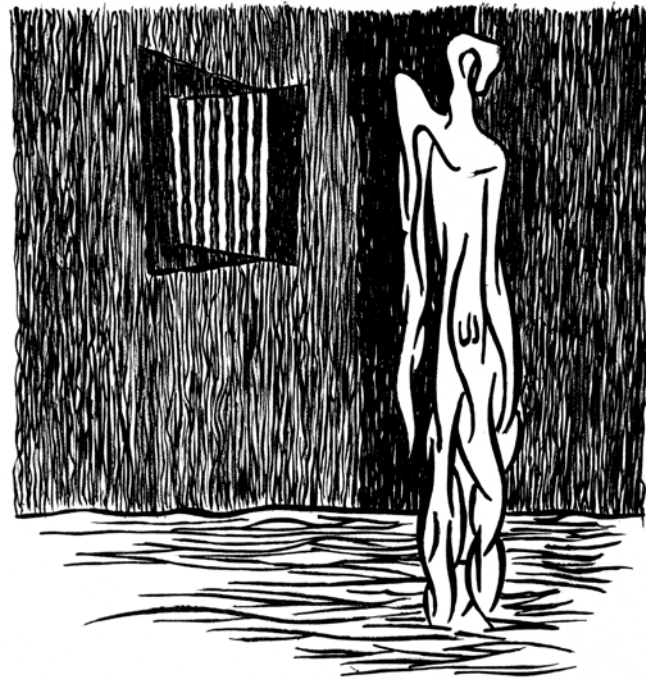
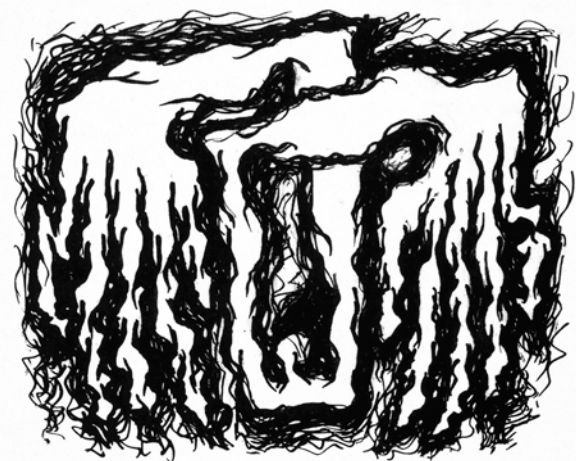
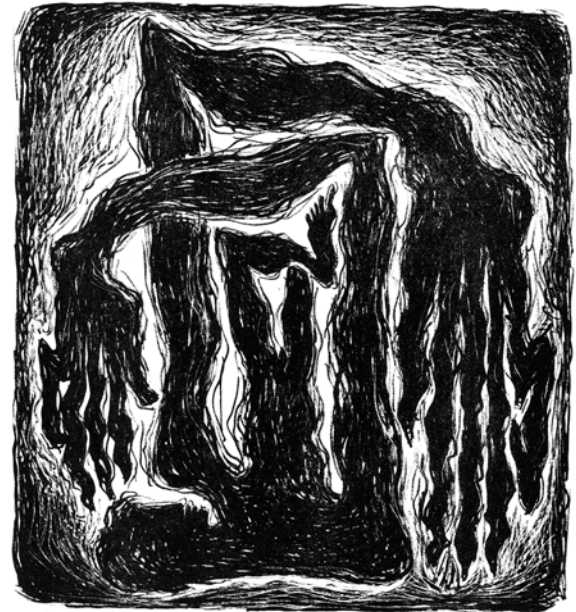


Below is reproduced the suite of thirteen black and white lithographs created to mark the end of each chapter, as well as the beginning of parts I and II of the book. Sadequain employs characteristic subjects and aesthetic treatments often seen in his work from his Parisian period.

“I admit I am grotesque. I paint ugly things because ugliness, in grotesqueness, in immorality, I seek truth. People ask why I don’t paint flowers or butterflies. I tell them that I am after reality. I am not a drawing-room artist. I am a painter of the dustbin, of the gutter.”

Sadequain, quoted in Herald, July 1985





II

Untitled (Meursault, Marie and Raymond), 1966

Lithograph on paper

Signed and dated 'SADEQUAIN/ 27.X.66' lower right

32.7 x 25 cm

12 7/8 x 9 7/8 in

Provenance

Private collection, Paris, France

'Out in the street the sun was already so hot that it felt like a slap across the face... then we heard Raymond closing his door. He was wearing blue trousers and a short-sleeved white shirt. But he'd put on a boater, which made Marie laugh, and his skin was very white under the dark hair on his forearms. I found it a little repulsive.'

'Raymond suddenly gestured to me to look across the street. I saw a group of Arabs leaning against the window of the tobacco shop. They were watching us in silence, but in a way that was particular to them, looking through us as if we were rocks or dead trees...'

'Marie didn't understand what was going on and asked us what was wrong. I told her they were Arabs who had a grudge against Raymond. She wanted us to leave right away. Raymond stood up tall and laughed, saying we'd better hurry up.'



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DINER

DU

27 OCTOBRE 1966

Filet de sole Calypso

Canard à la chaud-froid

Macédoine de légumes

Fromages

Pommes meringuées Vaccarès

Café

VINS

Sancerre

Château Montauguillon 1962

“If Sadequain had done nothing but his drawings, he would still be among the inventors of modern art in the country.”

Akbar Naqvi

13. *Untitled (Three Figures)*, 1962

Pen and ink on paper

Signed and dated

‘SADEQUAIN 16/5/62’ upper right

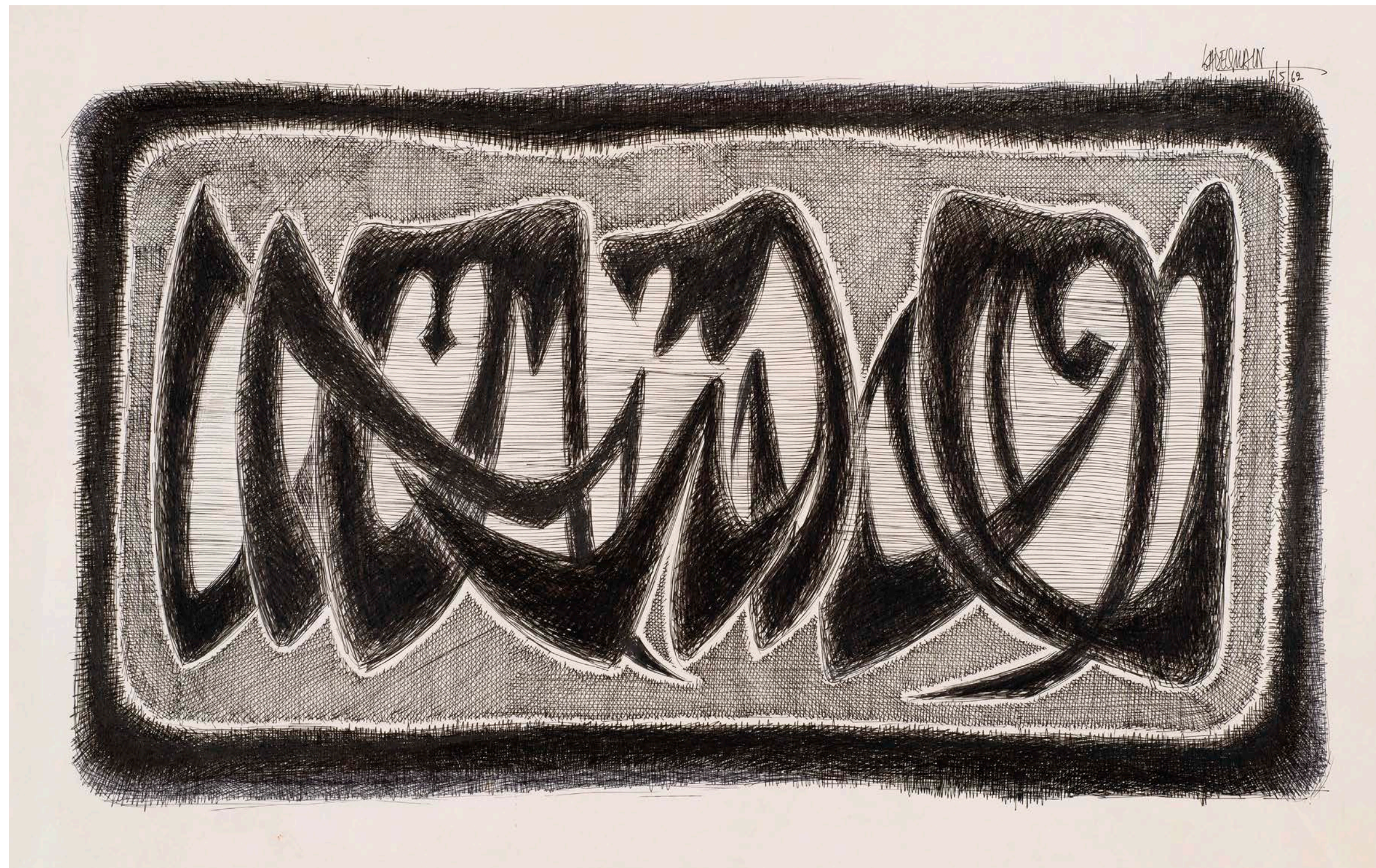
50.5 x 75.5 cm

19 7/8 x 29 3/4 in

Provenance

Private French collection;

Private UK collection



14. *Study for Composition, 1962*

Pen and ink on paper
Signed and dated 'SADEQUAIN 25/4/62' upper right

71.5 x 51 cm
28 1/8 x 20 1/8 in

Provenance

Private French collection;
Private UK collection



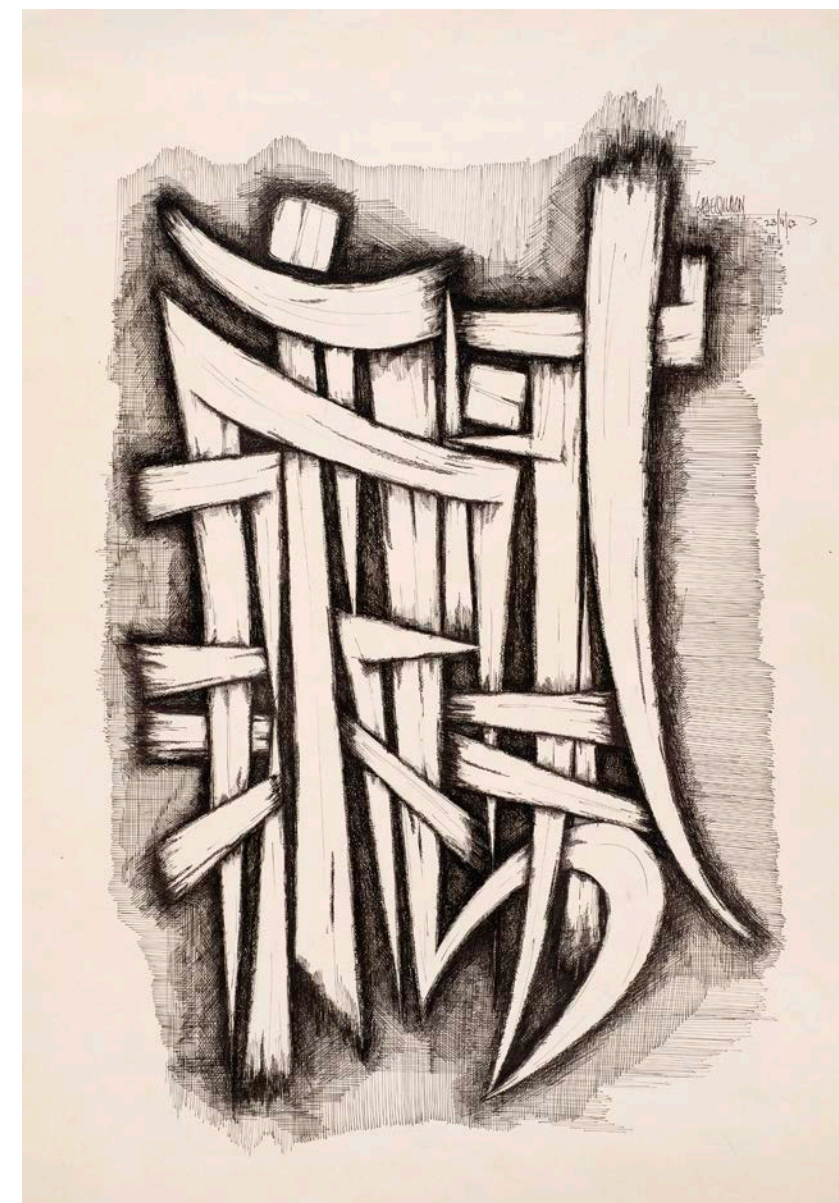
15. *Study for Composition II, 1962*

Pen and ink on paper
Signed and dated 'SADEQUAIN 23/4/62' upper right

71.5 x 51 cm
28 1/8 x 20 1/8 in

Provenance

Private French collection;
Private UK collection



These two works are preparatory works for Sadequain's large calligraphic oil
'*Composition, 1962*'.

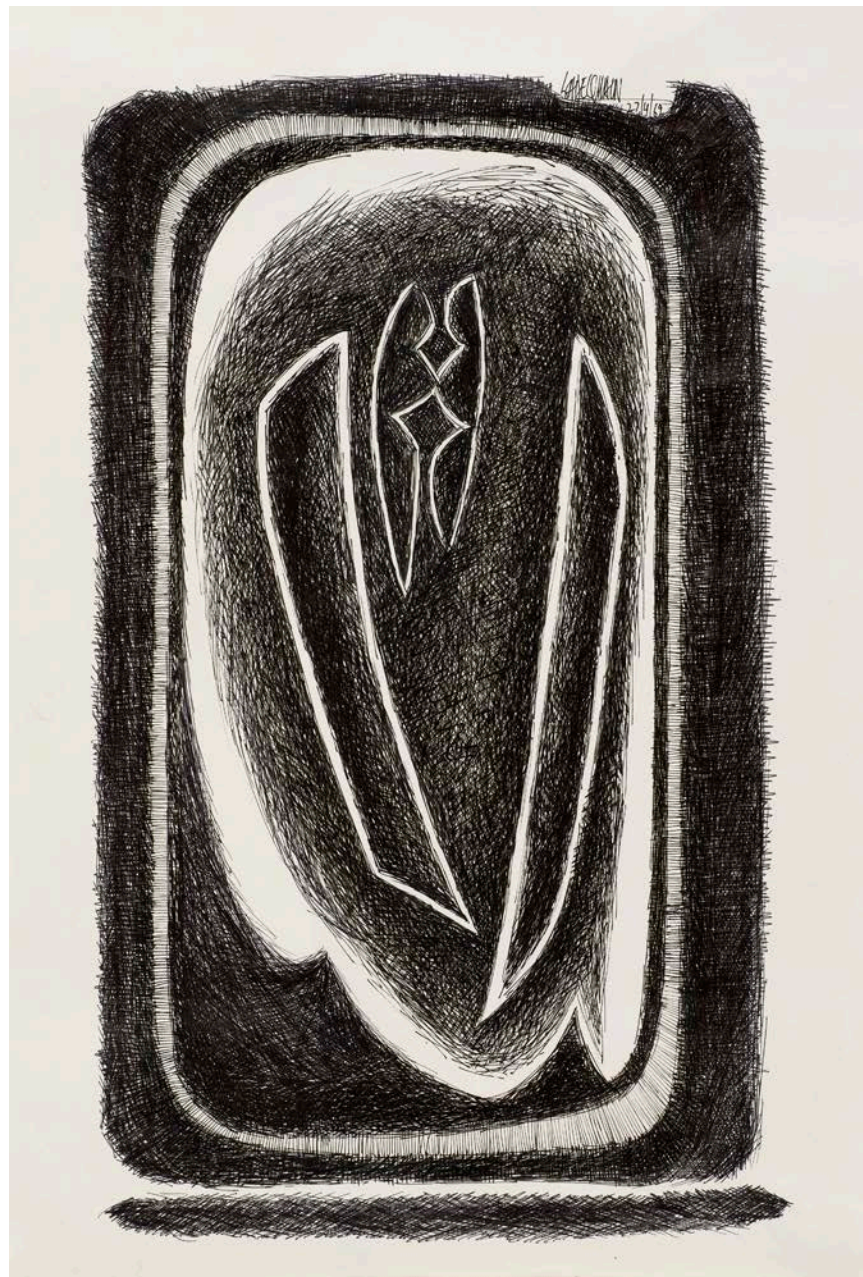
16. *Untitled (Two Figures)*, 1962

Pen and ink on paper
Signed and dated 'SADEQUAIN 27/4/62' upper right

64.5 x 48.5 cm
25 3/8 x 19 1/8 in

Provenance

Private French collection;
Private UK collection



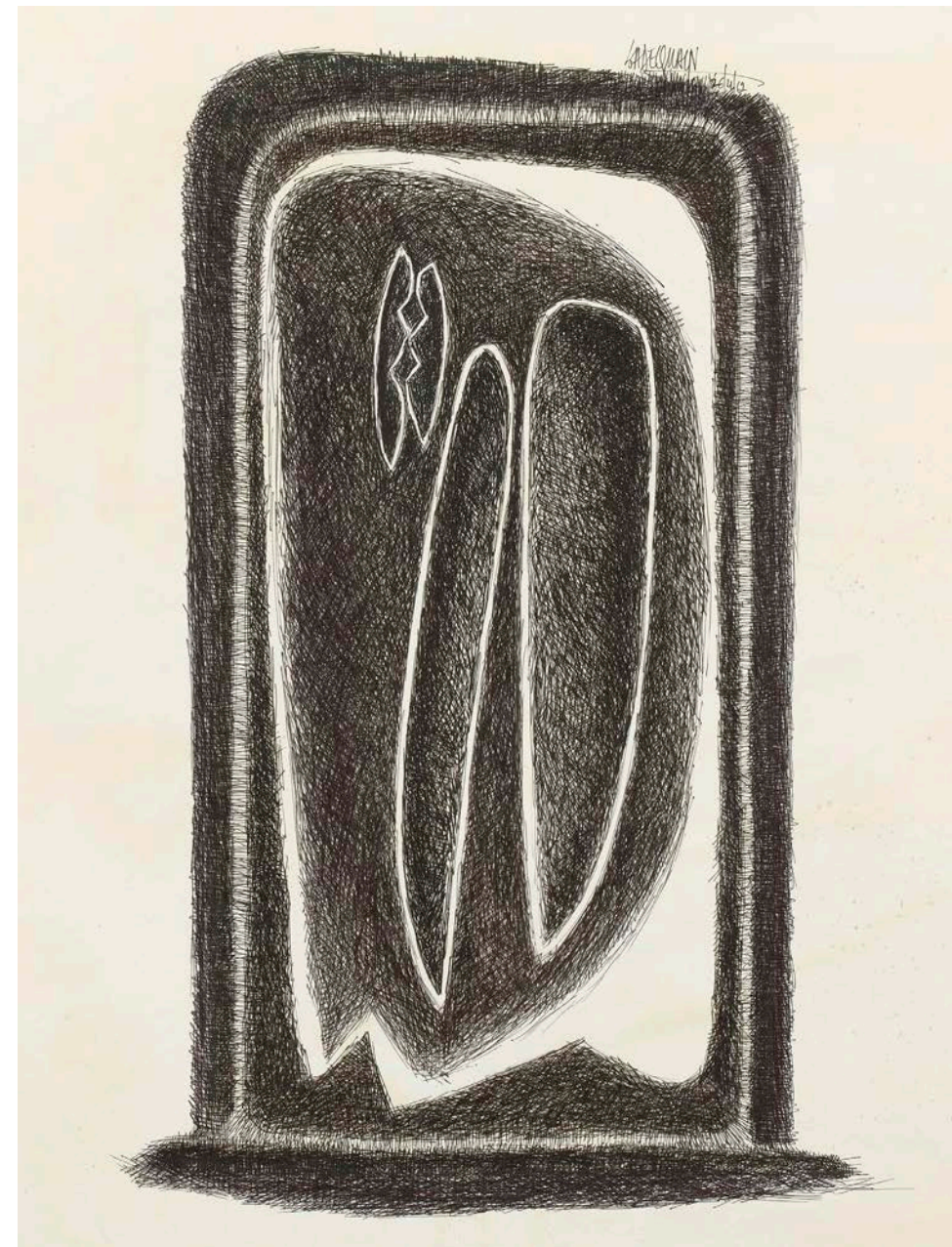
17. *Untitled (Two Figures II)*, 1962

Pen and ink on paper
Signed and dated 'SADEQUAIN 26/4/62' upper right

64.5 x 48.5 cm
25 3/8 x 19 1/8 in

Provenance

Private French collection;
Private UK collection



18. *Untitled (Reclining Figure)*, 1962

Pen and ink, marker and wash on paper
Signed and dated 'SADEQUAIN
15/3/62' upper right

50.6 x 75 cm
19 7/8 x 29 1/2 in

Provenance
Private French collection;
Private UK collection

Reclining Nude, 1961
Private collection, UAE



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4. Akhund et al., Sadequain: *The Holy Sinner*, p. 30, quoted in Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, p. 150.
5. Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, p.158.
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8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
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12. Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*, p.166.

Opposite:

19. Untitled (Self Portrait with Signatures), circa 1963

Pen and ink on paper

'Atelier Sadequain' stamped lower right, the calligraphy to the right of the self-portrait reads 'Sadequain/ Syed Sadequain'

41.5 x 37.5 cm

16 3/8 x 14 3/4 in

Provenance

Private collection, Paris, France



Grosvenor Gallery

EXHIBITION

Sadequain, The Stranger in Paris

29 March – 23 April 2021
Grosvenor Gallery, London

All numbered works are on display at the gallery.

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