



ASIM BUTT

Rediscovered works

OPENING
1ST SEPTEMBER
2022
5PM - 8PM

SHOW ENDS
15TH SEPTEMBER

Gallery timings: 11am - 7pm

 IVS
GALLERY

ASIM BUTT – Rediscovered Works

Exhibition Catalogue



Disclaimer - Colours of images may slightly vary when viewed on screen and in person

ASIM BUTT – Rediscovered Works

The exhibition 'Asim Butt – Rediscovered Works' showcases the late artist's contributions to art in Pakistan and provides a unique insight into his early works as a student and graduate of the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVS). It includes a number of paintings and drawings that highlight Asim's studio experience where he was constantly experimenting with new ideas and gestures while negotiating his creative journey. This is evident from works that appear preparatory and experimental in nature, probably ripped out of larger final works. Proceeds from the exhibition will go towards the Asim Butt Scholarship Fund that supports the education of deserving students at IVS.

Mrs. Amna Zahid, Asim's mother, generously donated the works included in the show to IVS, many of which he had made in the Nusserwanjee studios of the Fine Art department some 17 years ago. In the drawings one can see fragments of the Nusserwanjee interior, models and props that were once drawn by many students. It made sense to showcase these works at IVS, a space where they were conceptualized and produced. The curatorial focus then became about carrying Asim's work and experiences as a student and artist across the walls of the institution. We hope this show is able to translate in a literal sense his vigor and enthusiasm so that students, future artists and the public can get a chance to engage with his work and legacy.

Asim was a daring and relentless painter and explorer. During his brief career in the early 2000s, he produced an exceptionally profound and influential body of work. The main draw of the exhibition is an understanding of his process. The physical elements of his practice – from paper to charcoal, canvas to paint, and sketchbooks which were presumably reworked year after year – are as symbolically resonant as they are wide-ranging. They show a sense of urgency and pose questions that were likely answered in his final works. Connecting ideas of art history and literature, painting and drawing, Asim's work engaged events of the everyday, social and political dialogue, narratives of life and decay through an indication of the trauma that lived within him. By expanding and regenerating imagery and techniques, he underlined the importance of the sacred and spiritual, myth and reality.

Asim was born in 1978 in Karachi. He had early creative interests, but went on to study social sciences at the Lahore University of Management Sciences. In 2000, he began a PhD in history at UC Davis in California but chose to leave the programme after two years to pursue formal training in painting. He returned to Karachi and enrolled in the Fine Art department at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, from where he graduated with a distinction in 2006.

Asim's voice as an artist stood out even in his early days as a student. This was because he never treated projects like school assignments. He was purposeful, driven and full of ideas. Intimidating yet charming, he could talk endlessly about painting, art history, his subject matters, and the politics around them. His works were figurative, poetic and emotional – rejecting, in fact, the harsh aesthetics of Conceptual Art. This is something he felt so strongly about that, in 2005, he started the Karachi Stuckists group.

Asim's distinct style was evident from the start: trenchant commentaries on political and social issues that propelled a cultural narrative that still lives on to this day. In 2003, he painted two murals outside the walls of the shrine of Abdullah Shah Ghazi. At the time, the area was home to transients, drug dealers, and beggars – Karachi's forgotten children. One of the murals depicted the Iraq War and the other was of the drug-addicted children he encountered while painting the first mural. Both were eventually white-washed by the authorities. In 2007, he spoke out against military rule by starting a 'protest-art' movement, stenciling a red 'Eject' sign made of a triangle over a red rectangle all across the city, which eventually became a symbol of resistance. This inspired Asim to travel across Pakistan in 2009, stenciling symbols across walls and objects.

Twelve years after his passing, the exhibition aims to celebrate Asim's brilliance and all that he achieved in such a short time. In 2019, Asim's family established the Asim Butt Scholarship Fund at IVS in the loving memory of their son and his contributions to the field of art. It provides need-based scholarships to Fine Art students who are enrolled at IVS and proceeds from the exhibition will go to this Fund, as a fitting way to continue Asim's legacy.

Seher Naveed

Assistant Professor | Head, Department of Fine Art



Title Unknown
Oil on canvas
90 x 118 cm



Title Unknown
Oil on canvas
76 x 113 cm



Title Unknown

Graphite, pastel and charcoal on paper

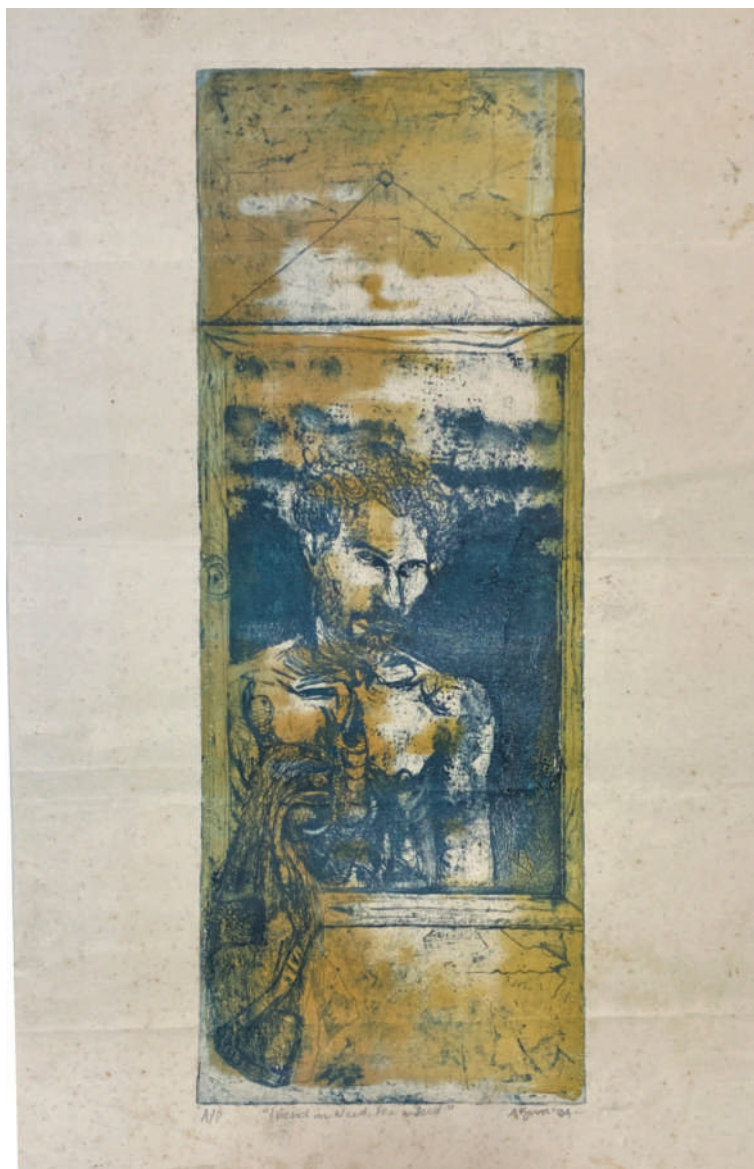
94 x 153 cm



Title Unknown
Oil on canvas
155 x 109 cm



Title Unknown
Acrylic on paper
127 x 76 cm
2004



‘Friend in need, Foe indeed’
Etching and Aquatint on Paper
47 x 18 cm
2004

*Artist's Proof printed by Asim Butt
in the printmaking studio - IVS*



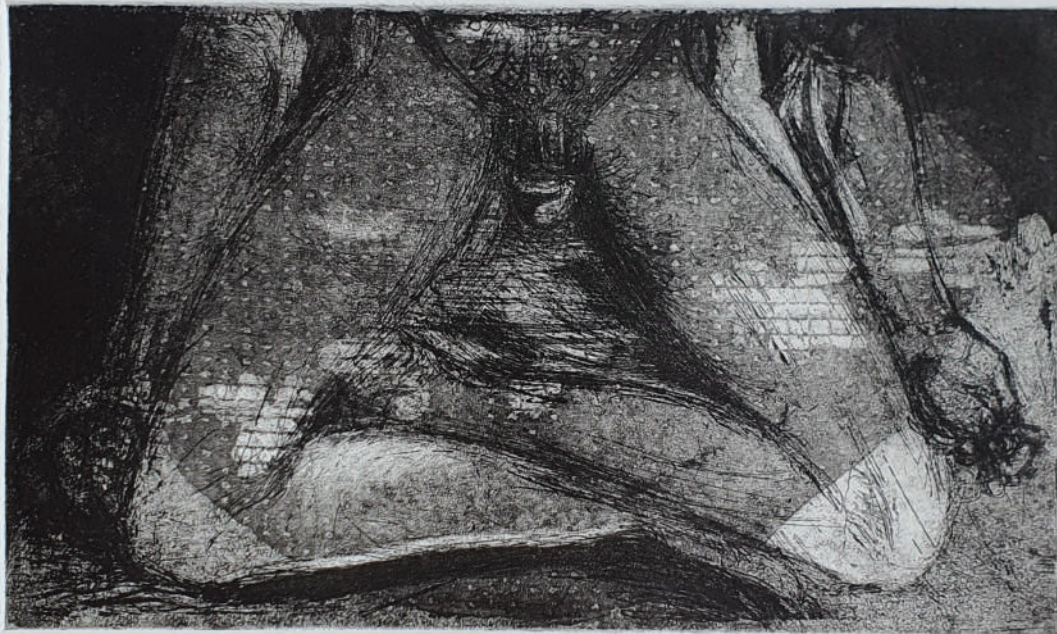
Title Unknown

Etching, drypoint and aquatint on paper (Edition 1/5)

47 x 18 cm

2004

Reprinted by the Fine Art Department - IVS, with the permission of artist's family



Title Unknown

Etching and aquatint on paper (Edition 1/5)

47 x 18 cm

2004

Reprinted by the Fine Art Department - IVS, with the permission of artist's family



Artist's proof for work titled 'fragments'
'fragments' is in the collection of Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy

Triptych
Screenprint on Paper
159 x 97 cm
2008



Title Unknown
Triptych
Charcoal on Paper
213 x 97 cm
2004



Title Unknown
Triptych
Charcoal on Paper
107 x 112 cm



Title Unknown
Diptych
Graphite and pastel on paper
120 x 90 cm
2005



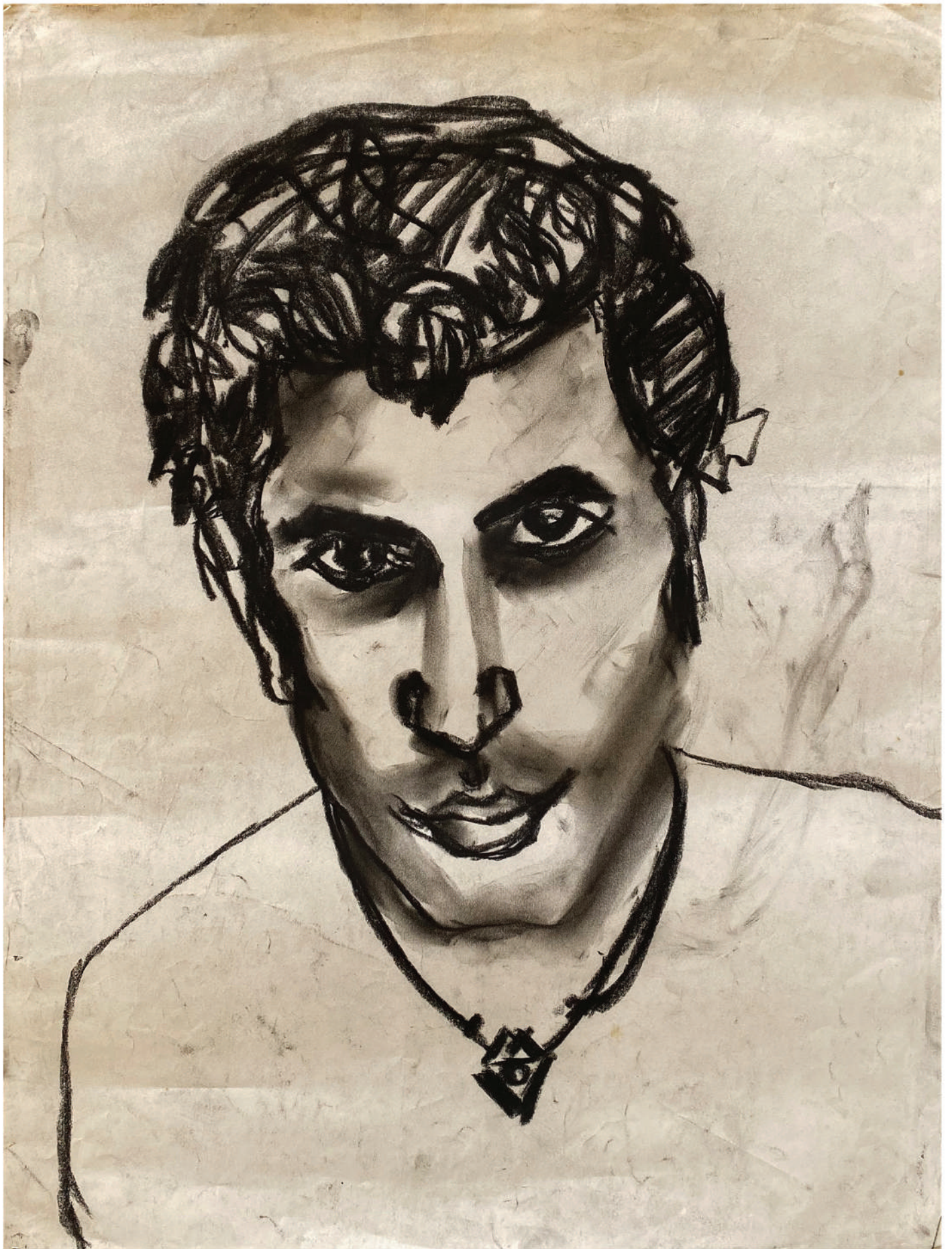
Title Unknown
Charcoal on paper
56 x 36 cm



Title Unknown
Charcoal on paper
46 x 61 cm



Title Unknown
Charcoal on paper
61 x 46 cm



Title Unknown
Charcoal on paper
61 x 46 cm



Title Unknown
Charcoal on paper
61 x 46 cm



Title Unknown
Graphite on paper
56 x 71 cm



Title Unknown
Charcoal on paper
91 x 61 cm



Title Unknown
Charcoal on paper
56 x 36 cm



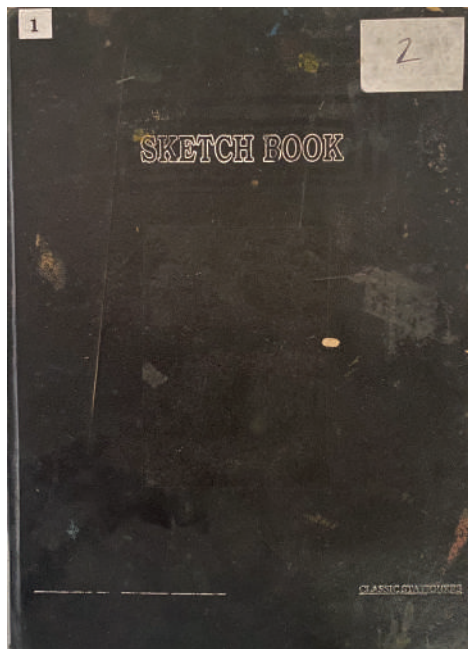
Title Unknown
Photograph
17 x 12 cm



Title Unknown
Photograph
12 x 17 cm



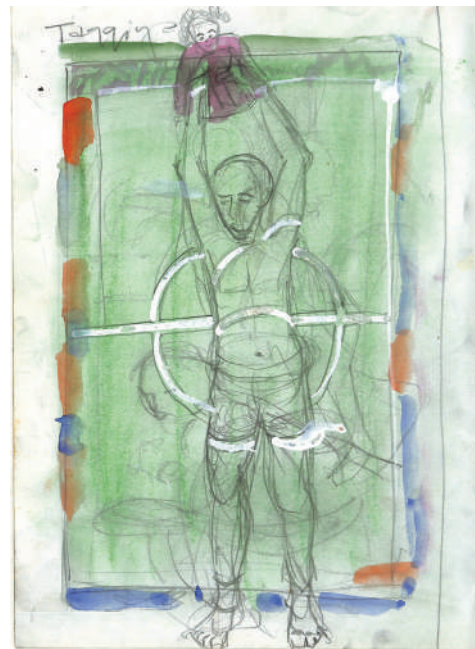
Title Unknown
Photograph
12 x 17 cm
2006



Sketchbook 1 (Cover)



Sketchbook 1 - page no. 15



Sketchbook 1 - page no. 31

Set of 15 sketchbooks
2003 - 2009 (probable timeline)

Acknowledgements

The completion of this project could not have been accomplished without the support of: Amna Zahid (Asim's mother) for being the drive behind the exhibition; Sameera Raja for lending her expertise and guidance at every stage of the process; Haider Ali Naqvi for spearheading the exhibition and bringing it to its final form; Dr. Faiza Mushtaq for her interest and encouragement in bringing this very vital exhibition to the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. I would also like to put forward a special thanks to Qasim Ali from Gallery One, Arsalan Nasir, Muhammad Abdul, Javed Ali, Muhammad Afaq, our two student interns, Alishba Sohail and Rida Fatima Solangi and the Department of Fine Art for their generous support and help.

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