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Mumbai: This exhibition at TARQ explores personal and political ideas through the lens of social media

'You Are All Caught Up'—Sameer Kulavoor's second solo documents life in the urban metropolis as well as our restless mental state during a time of political turmoil

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THE MIGRANTS HAVE LEFT, 2020 Acrylic on canvas. 36 x 72 inches

Two years ago, Sameer Kulavoor's first solo exhibition 'A Man of the Crowd' held at TARQ was the Mumbai-based visual artist's unique observation of urban spaces and the people who inhabit those spaces. A lot has happened since then and his second solo show brings under the scanner, personal and political ideas. "We have seen protests, concerns around privacy, censorship, the worrisome problem of fake news and its effects, the media circus. Most works in the show revolve around these themes with social media and devices being the catalyst," he says of his new exhibition, 'You Are All Caught Up'.

Impact on Art

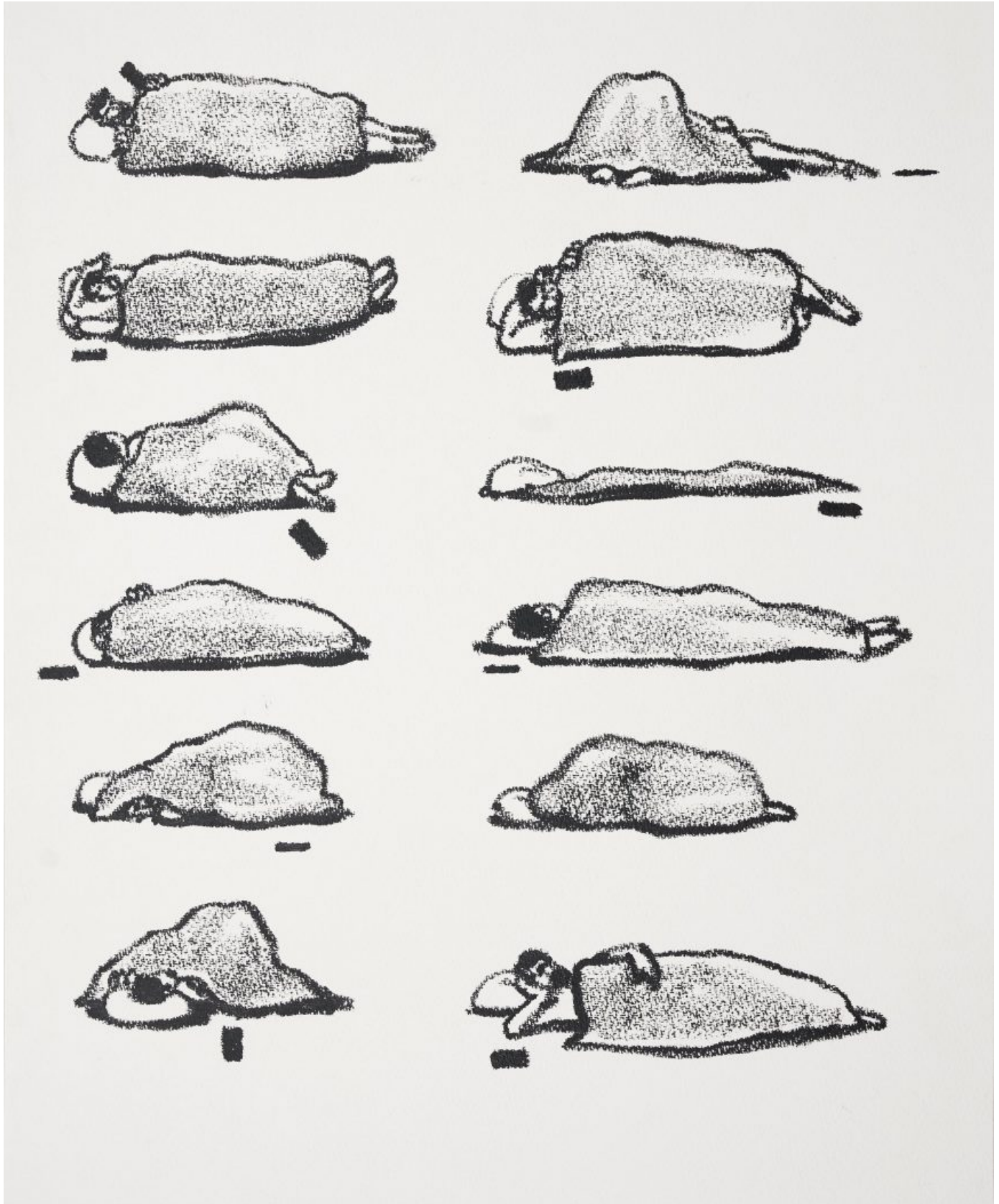
Like the rest of the world, it was a strange time for the artist, who felt disoriented during the initial few weeks of the lockdown. "News and social media updates were gloomy with different kinds of humanitarian crises unfolding. I was away from home and studio and did not have access to most of my work materials," he recalls. Slowly adjusting to the new ways of working, Kulavoor decided to shield himself from news, moved out of Mumbai for a month with his partner and began to find some rhythm—work wise and otherwise.

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of man-made structures (architecture, infrastructure) and their functions. I returned to watercolours long time—probably after more than a decade,” he shares.



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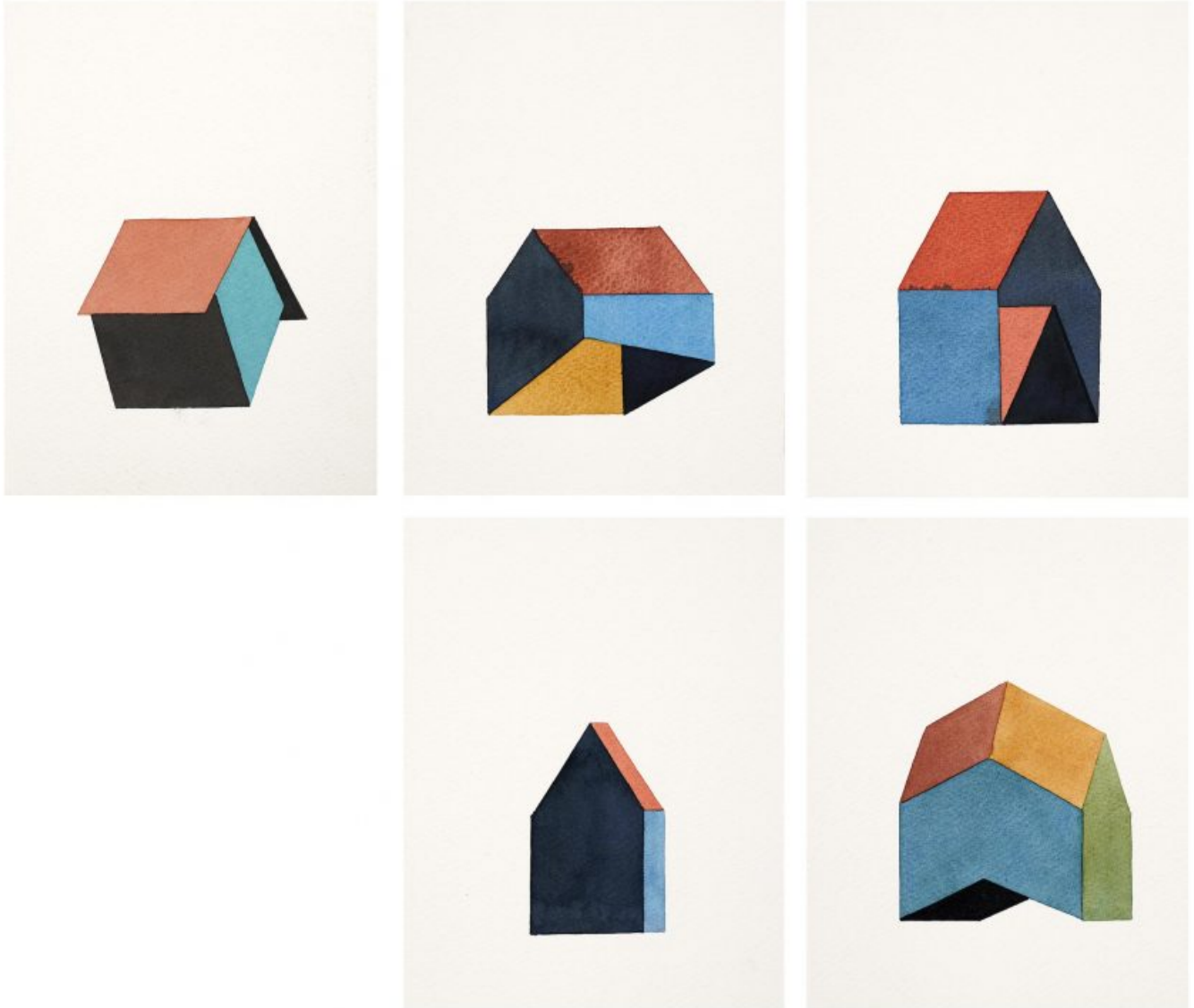
PSYCHOSOMATIC, 2020 Solid Marker on paper. 19 x 14 inches

In his latest work, Kulavoor's fascination with the social media and how people consume content comes to the fore. The title 'You are All Caught Up', therefore has more than one connotation. "It is about the sense of being caught up in the social media and how people consume content," he says.



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Broadly, in terms of materials and approach, Kulavoor shares that the show has two parts. "There are representational works on canvas with acrylic that were made before the pandemic and rather non-representational solid marker drawings and watercolour works that were made after the pandemic began (with the exception of 'The Migrants Have Left'). The works made after March are non-figurative," he says.



DISCOMFORT 5, 2020 Watercolours on acid-free paper 8 x 6 inches each. Set of 5

Unique Ideas

When asked to elaborate on some of the works, Kulavoor decided to take us through two that were made at different times in the last three years. "I Like It. What Is It?" takes its name from the popular poster by UK-based graphic artist and printmaker, Anthony Burrill, and closely looks at our current fascination with liking something but not knowing why. Whether this is through recording, collecting, and taking pictures of an object, followed by a need for others to then look at and obsess over the same thing, I look at this obsession by placing

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Chronologically, the last work made for the show, 'The Migrants Have Left' is based on his preliminary drawings of 'Infrastructure', 'Dysfunctional' and 'Discomfort'. "Often, in my previous work, I have shown the



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I LIKE IT. WHAT IS IT?, 2019 Acrylic on Canvas. 48 x 48 inches

Mundane Matters

Whether it was his earlier works or the latest, Kulavoor's fascination with the mundane continues. "I feel that we get de-sensitised by our surroundings and things we see on a regular basis and that is why travel feels so good. Some of my work deals with de-familiarising commonly seen objects and things to bring back focus on to one's own surroundings. For example, *ZeroxwallahZine* (about the commonly seen yellow-black zeroxwallahs) or *BLUED* book (about the usage of blue tarpaulin sheets) are projects where I went beyond the surface of





58, 2019. Acrylic on canvas 72 x 36 inches

'You Are All Caught Up' opens today and will run till January 7, 2021 at TARQ, Mumbai

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