





FRAN BULL
TRANSITION

For Sylvia Perera

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INK DRAWINGS FROM A TIME OF TRANSITION

I made these drawings, rapidly and intuitively, for a period of about four years starting in the late 1980s.

After many years of making very exacting, photo-derived painting, I felt a need to open the Pandora's box of my imagination and use what I found there as a source of inspiration for the art.

I set rules for myself as I began: no judging, no second-guessing, no editing or correcting. I obeyed the faintest of impulses as I filled sheet after sheet with pictures in pen and ink. No erasing allowed – nor possible. The aim was to accept and examine whatever emerged.

I was able to investigate the imagery with my Jungian analyst, who saw value in the drawings and offered encouragement. In this way I gained an abiding confidence in the ability to rely upon instinct and vision as I made my work. The art I make today has developed from this seminal time.

I have held these drawings as somehow private, maybe even sacred in the sense that they are relics of transition and transformation in my artist's life. For this reason I have rarely exhibited them, although in 1990 they provided the visual component of an award-winning book *Mordant Rhymes for Modern Times* designed by Yolanda Cuomo with text by poet Ann Salwey.

My gratitude goes to the esteemed designer Josep Bagà for this elegant volume. The sometimes transatlantic collaboration, our second to date, has been harmonious and great fun.

FRAN BULL
Brandon, Vermont 2012



KATIE BULL

Writer, jazz singer, composer, and whole body voice coach, Bull has work published in *New York City Jazz Record* and *Vox News*, as a columnist.
www.katiebull.com

FRAN BULL TRANSITION

The artist is excavating traces of her own and collective psyche. She takes her ink tool and spills a chiseling cut into the white paper void. Bull is a visual art archaeologist, exhuming her own ruins. In the act of digging she unearths vibrant temples. Black against white faces peer from the caves of her soul substrata. She brushes the dust off timeless entwining ghost bodies, foreshadowing her most recent epic mixed-media sculpture. "What I am doing now began with these drawings." (Bull)

Bull's ink-on-paper drawings could be footprints; imprints of an ancient inner civilization. What is primal merges with what is in the Here and Now. Alien forms appear; Japanese brush figures melt away and disappear; nakedness and costume alternates; gnarled conglomerates of family come into focus; sternum-attached lovers whip and lash; wild birds escape mouths; wombs envelop; mothers and babies enwrap. Full disclosure: Fran Bull is my mother. I see Eggs. Heads shaped like eggs. Heads cracking open with multiple inner voices; choirs in conversations. Her own face, inked behind a mask, and then, inked unmasked, reveals the artist's intensity, and her desire to peel away barriers. If this series were a dream the images might reveal that Fran Bull is unearthing an inner terrain bursting with signs of life. How do we read her signs?

Bull's ink-on-paper images are the remains of an intrapsychic evolutionary chain. They are missing-link images on paper walls. In the 1970s her focus was on creating realistic images via photorealism; yet, to create those images she had to live within the smaller abstracted unit on the photorealistic grid. When I was a teenager I went to visit my mom in her studio. I vividly remember witnessing one of her photorealistic images in process – a group of zebras standing in reflecting water. That day, she said, "I have to stay present and stay true to just what I am actually seeing within this small one-inch box," she laughed. "I have to let go of my concept of the whole image, and trust that what I am seeing right here and now, is part of it." I remember the way she took the paintbrush and waved her hand into the air creating a free-flowing arc as she said the words



"I have to let go of my concept." Where she was *living* in the technique of photorealism at that time, mirrored where she realized she was living in her personal life. The technique asked her to live in the box, in the matrix of the image, and find freedom. As she underwent personal changes, she took that gestural moment of the wave in the air, and rode it. The making of the images was an act of letting go of psychic imprisonment. And ironically, although the images are nothing like photorealism, to this viewer they do have the simplicity of photographic negative images.

To my eye, the images have a Rorschach effect in reverse; Bull creates the ink image and the image tells her who she is, what she feels to be true, and what she cares about. From particular to universal – the image therefore has the potential to reveal to us who we are, what we feel to be true, and what we care about, in this very moment. What do you see? A mother and child? That's what I see in this moment. Then in the next: I see skywriting. In the next: ceremonial robes. What is her intention? Ah, but what is your lens? Bull's lens includes many zooms, including two stated fascinations of particular relevance – physics, and her dedication to the exploration of Jungian psychology. Bull's work illuminates by living the questions surrounding the very nature of reality. I submit that the question "What is real?" provides the context for these ink-on-paper images. Bull's interest in the interplay of external reality and inner truth is her artist's journey: This is real. What is "this"? What is under "this"? What is inside what is under "this"?

Fran Bull enacts a ritual of blood-ink spilling as a kind of offering. In this paradoxical act of reverence and irreverence – sacred ink spilling, free-form images appearing – Bull captures a flow of life force from her own veins. Encountering these extraordinary works on paper, you feel your own pulse. You dig, with Bull, discovering bones, ways of life, echoes, and sacred burials. There is no trampling; this is an act of honoring what was and what is.

Witnessing ink on paper, you climb with Bull out of the box within the grid, and step deeper into reality.



FRAN BULL

ELIZABETH MICHELMAN

A free-lance curator, Michelman writes art criticism for Artscope Magazine, a New England publication on the arts. She is an interdisciplinary artist whose art forms encompass sculpture, painting, poetry, drawing, site-responsive installation, public art, and video.

Fran Bull has many gifts. She easily expresses herself in words and poetry. As an operatic singer, she personifies melody. And as a painter, printmaker, and sculptor she is a scrupulous observer of her surroundings, peers, and internal emotions.

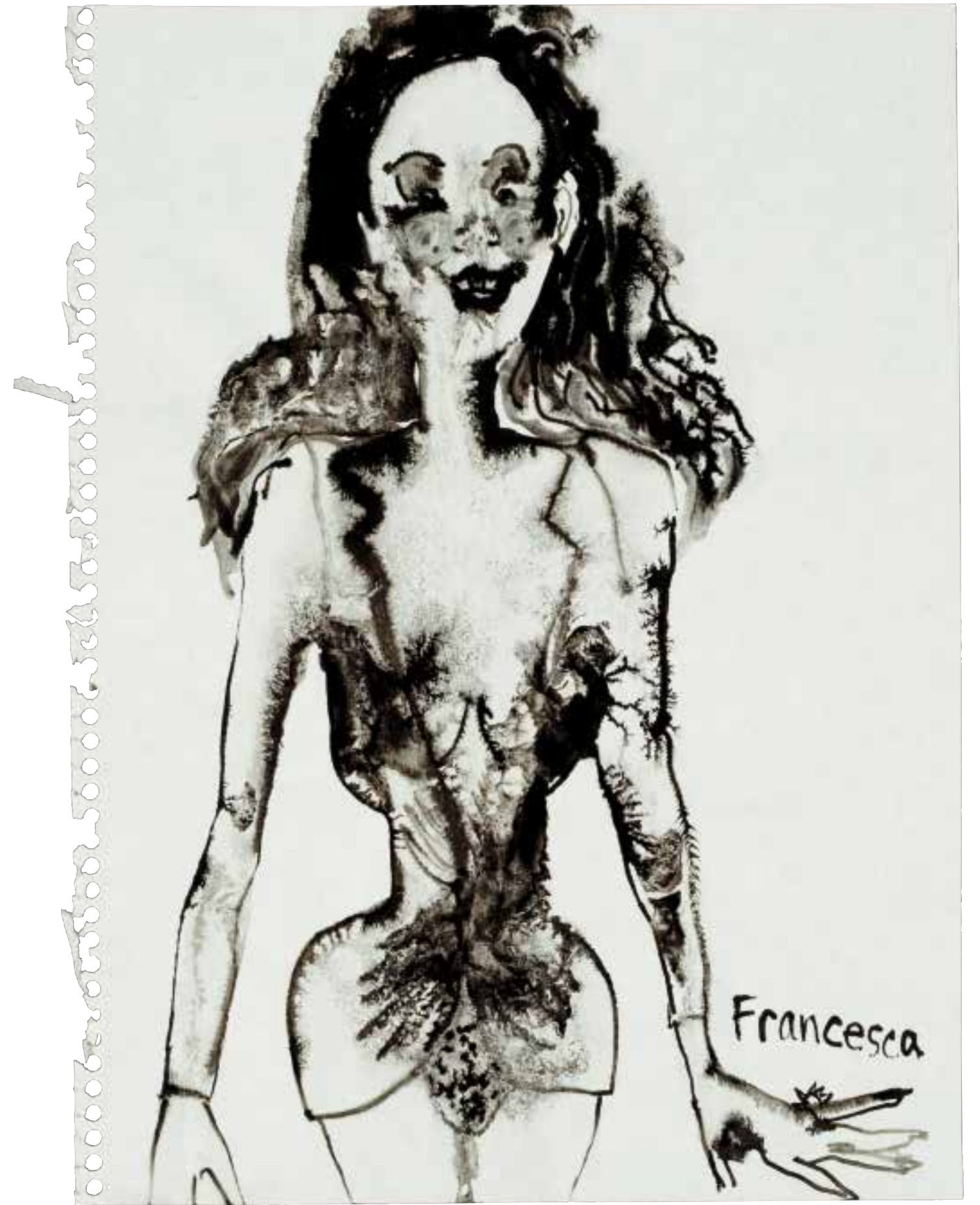
The drawings and paintings included in *Transition* are culled from small notebooks and sketchbooks made over a distant four-year period when Fran engaged in intensive Jungian analysis. With scant descriptive language she suggests categories to re-state and reimagine her life.

One can picture her daily at her worktable, dredging once more from expectant paper... record of an uncertain journey. Fran Bull's work in any genre... has an inclusive and generous brilliance.

EARLY WORK











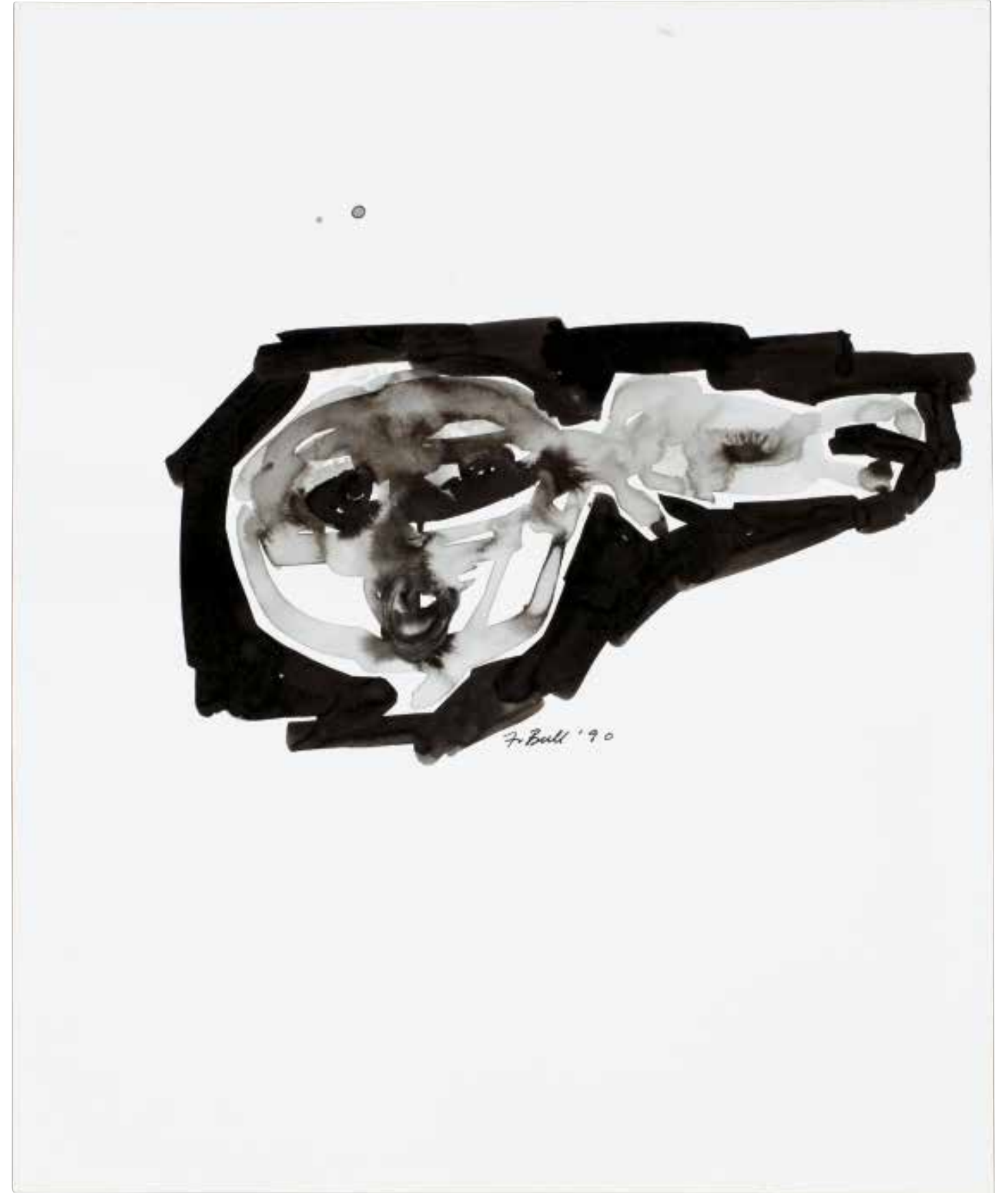




FETUS













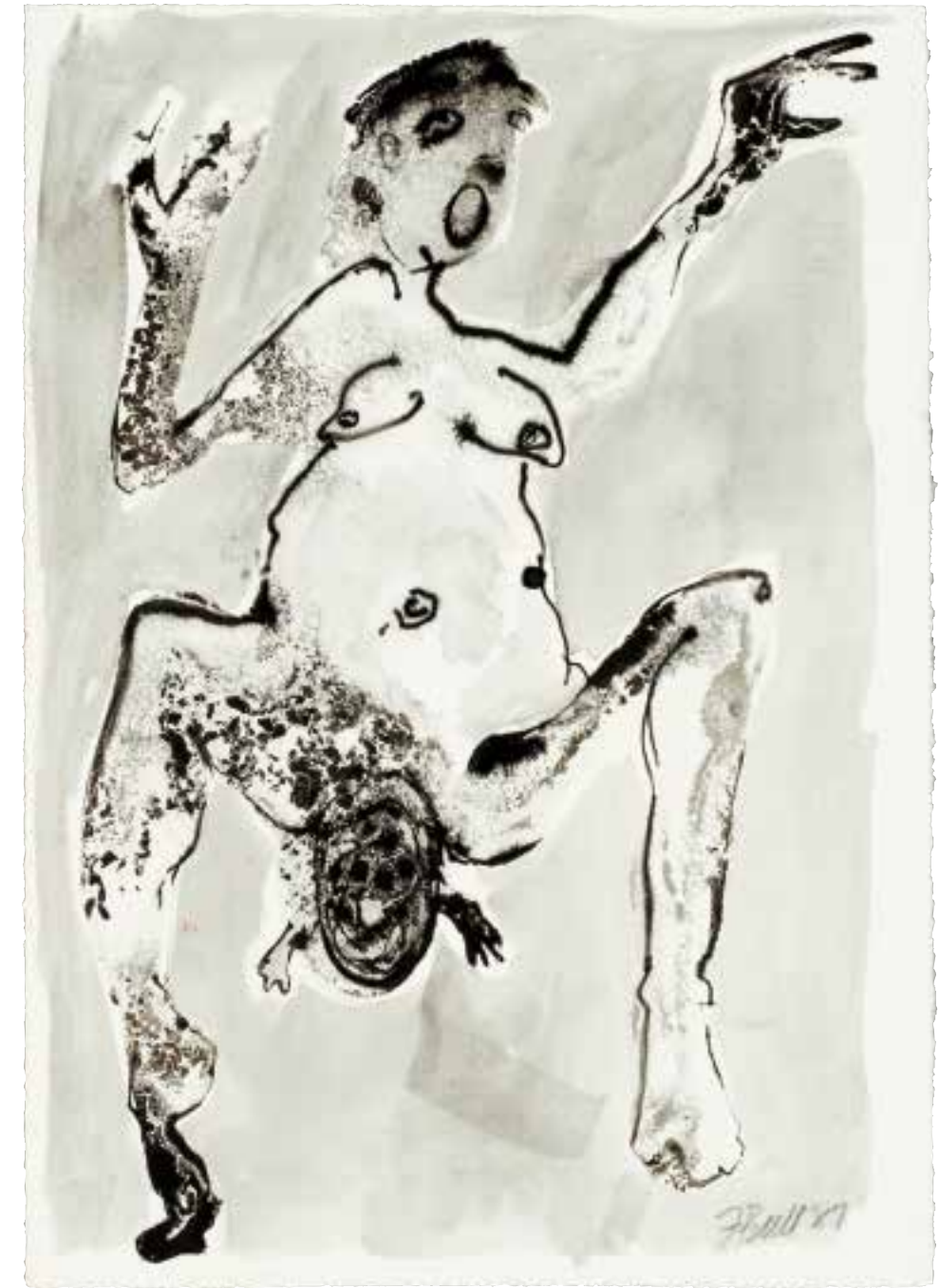


PREGNANCY



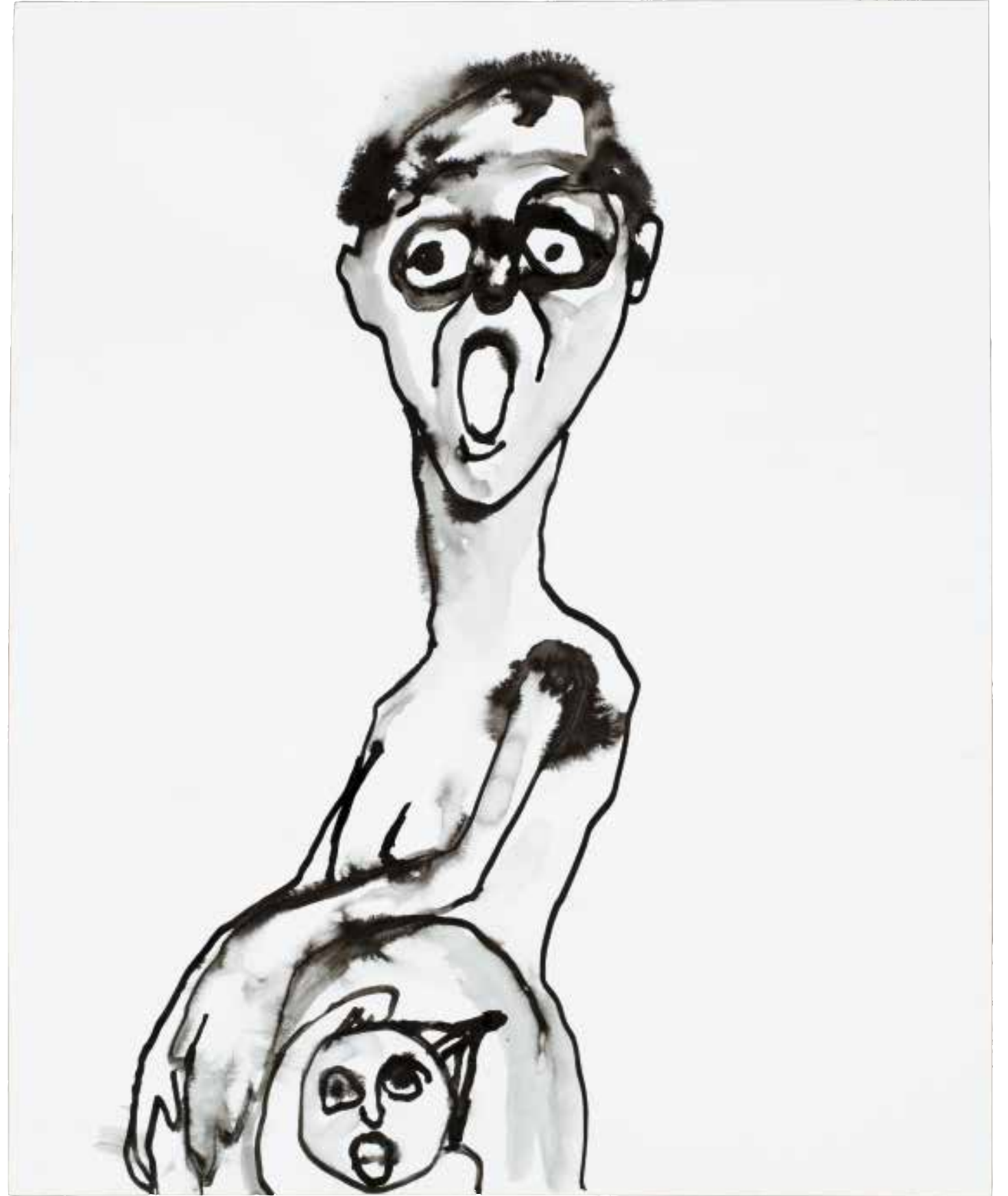












MOTHER AND CHILD



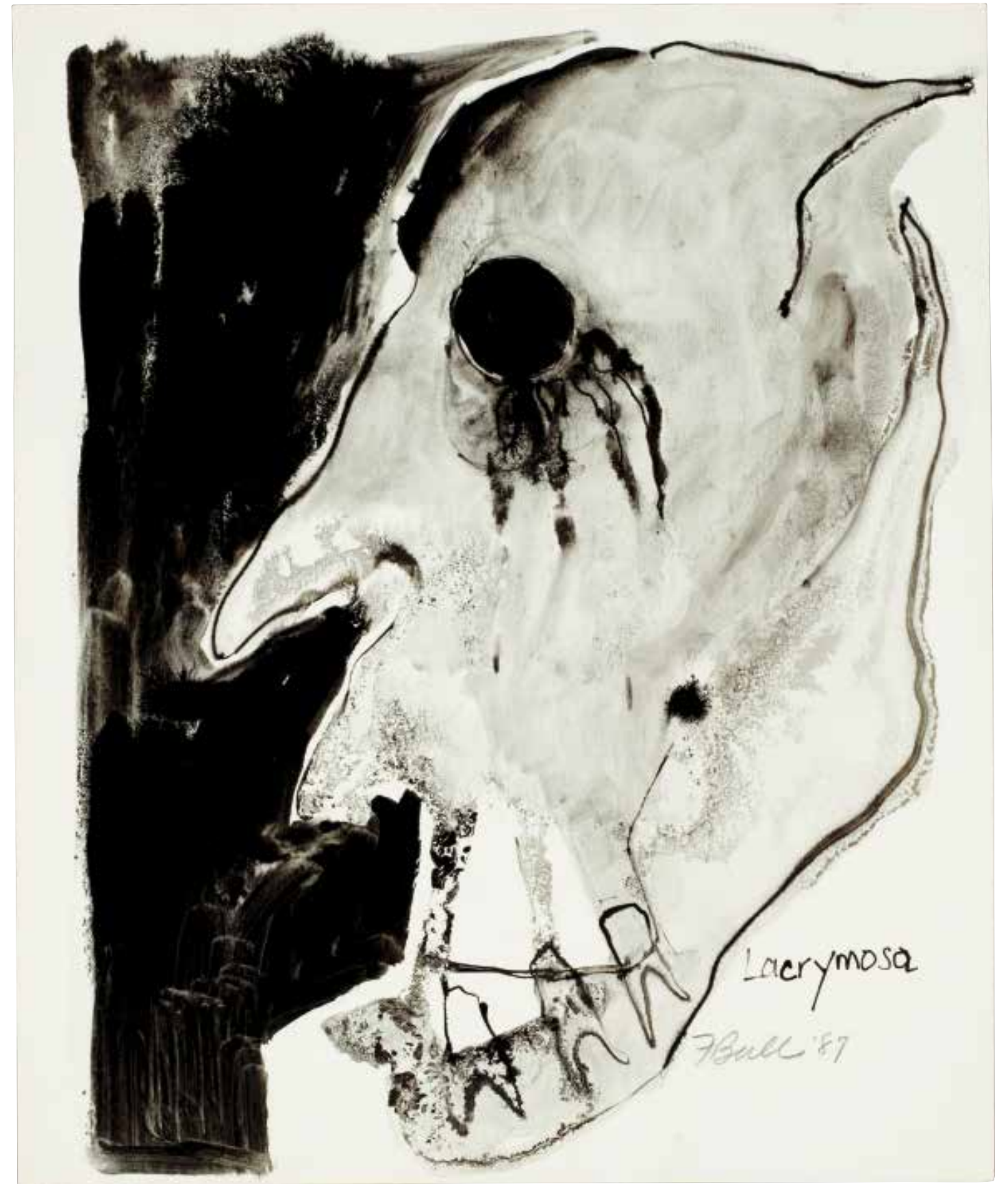


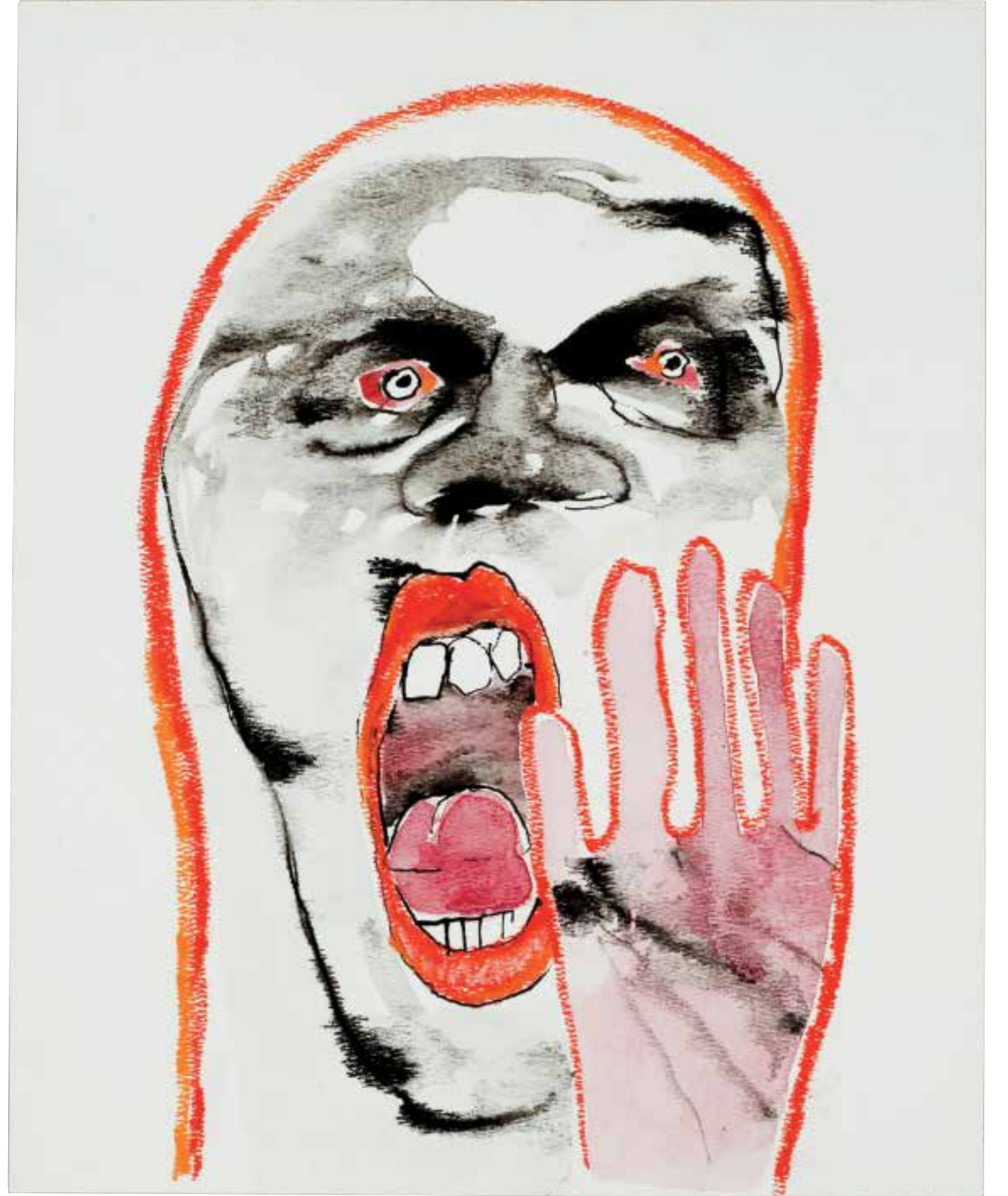


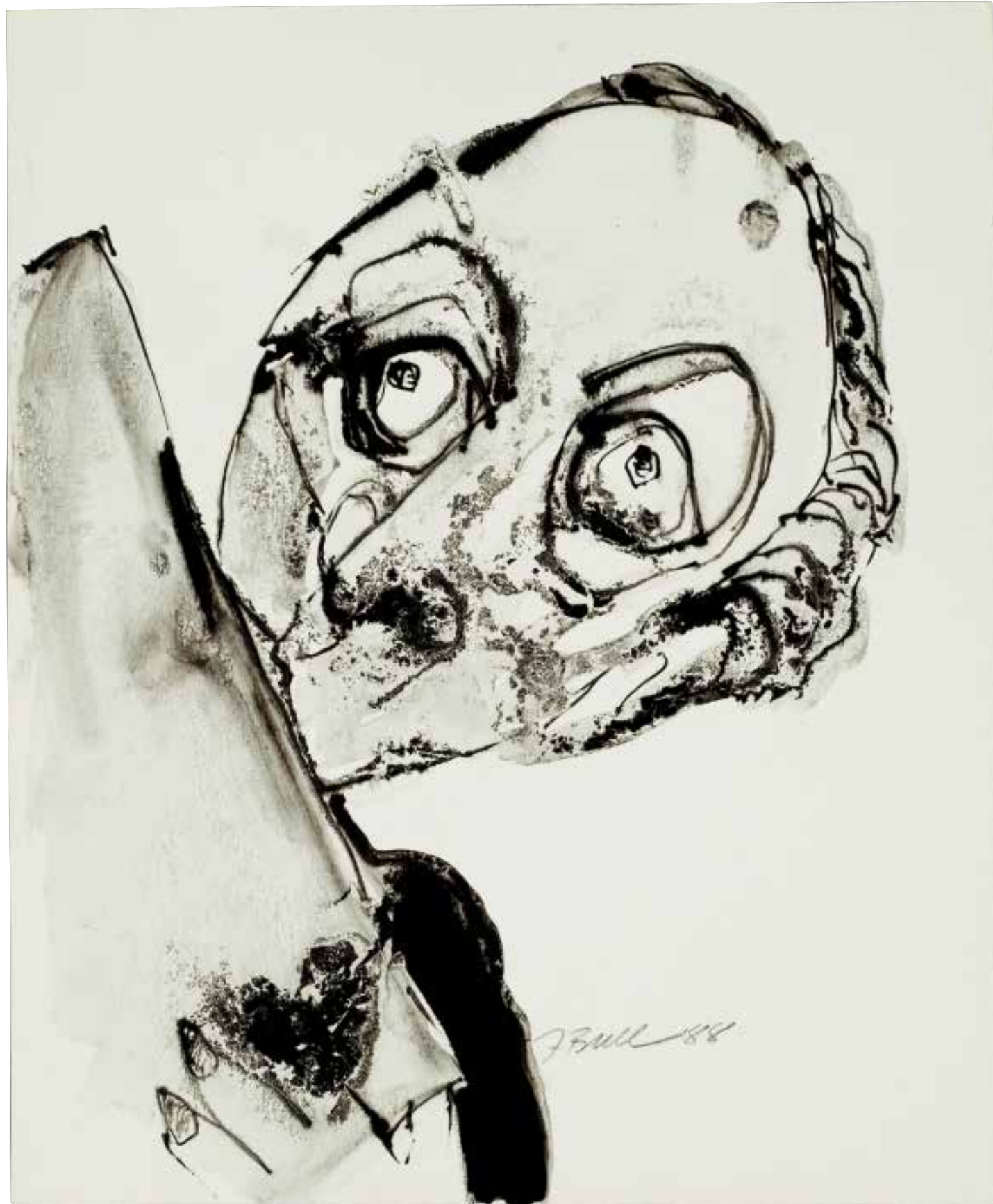


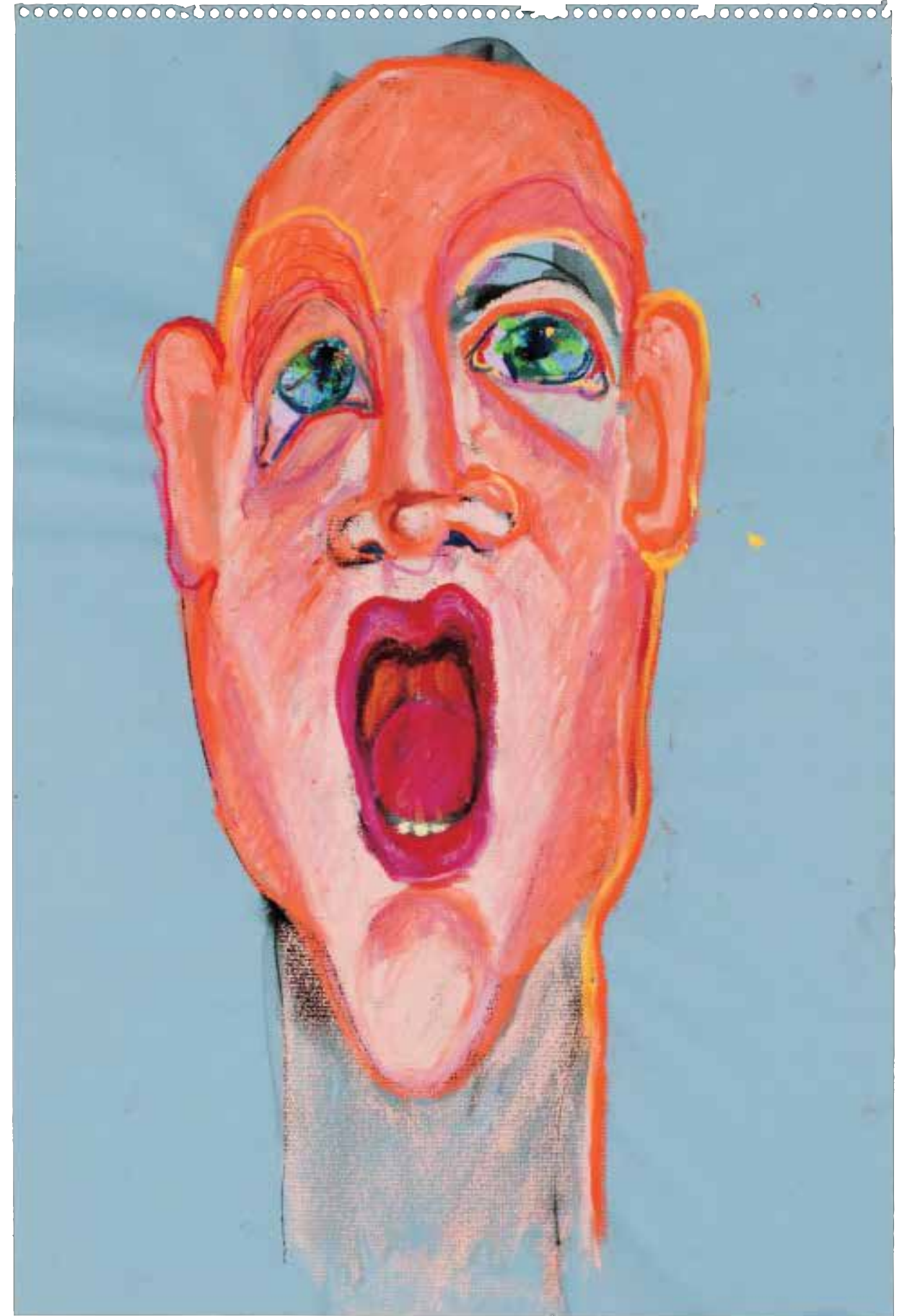
LARGE HEAD

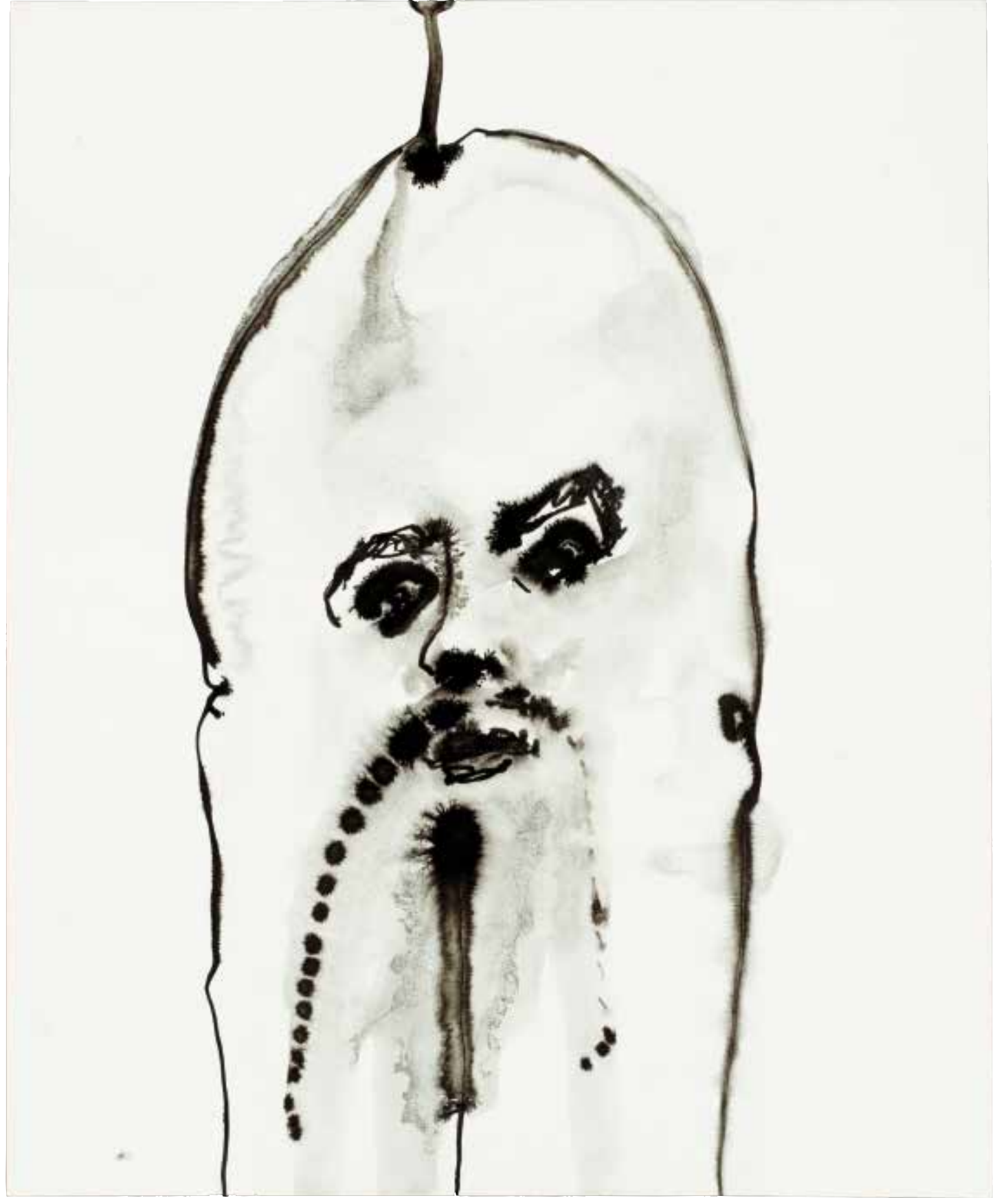






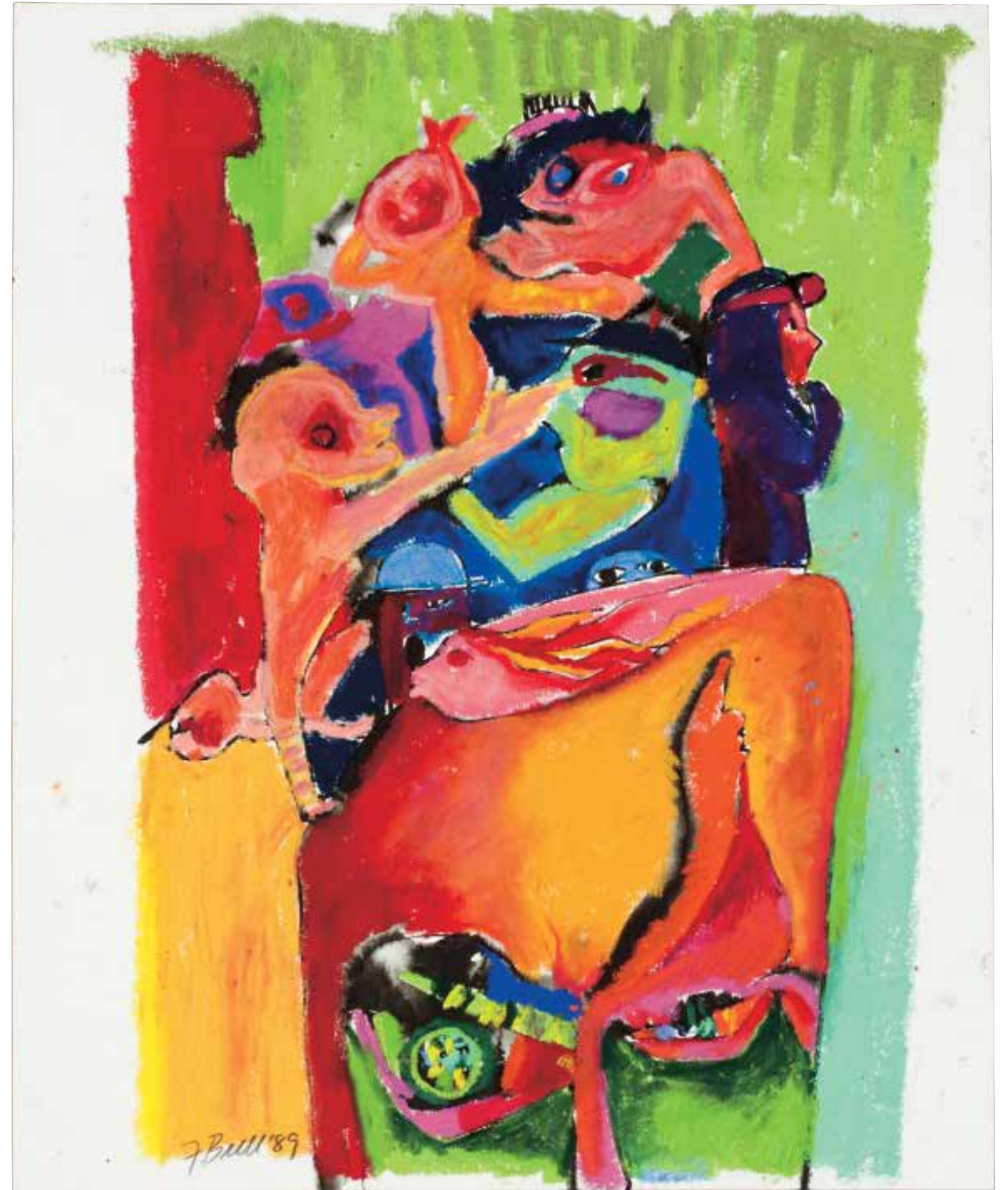








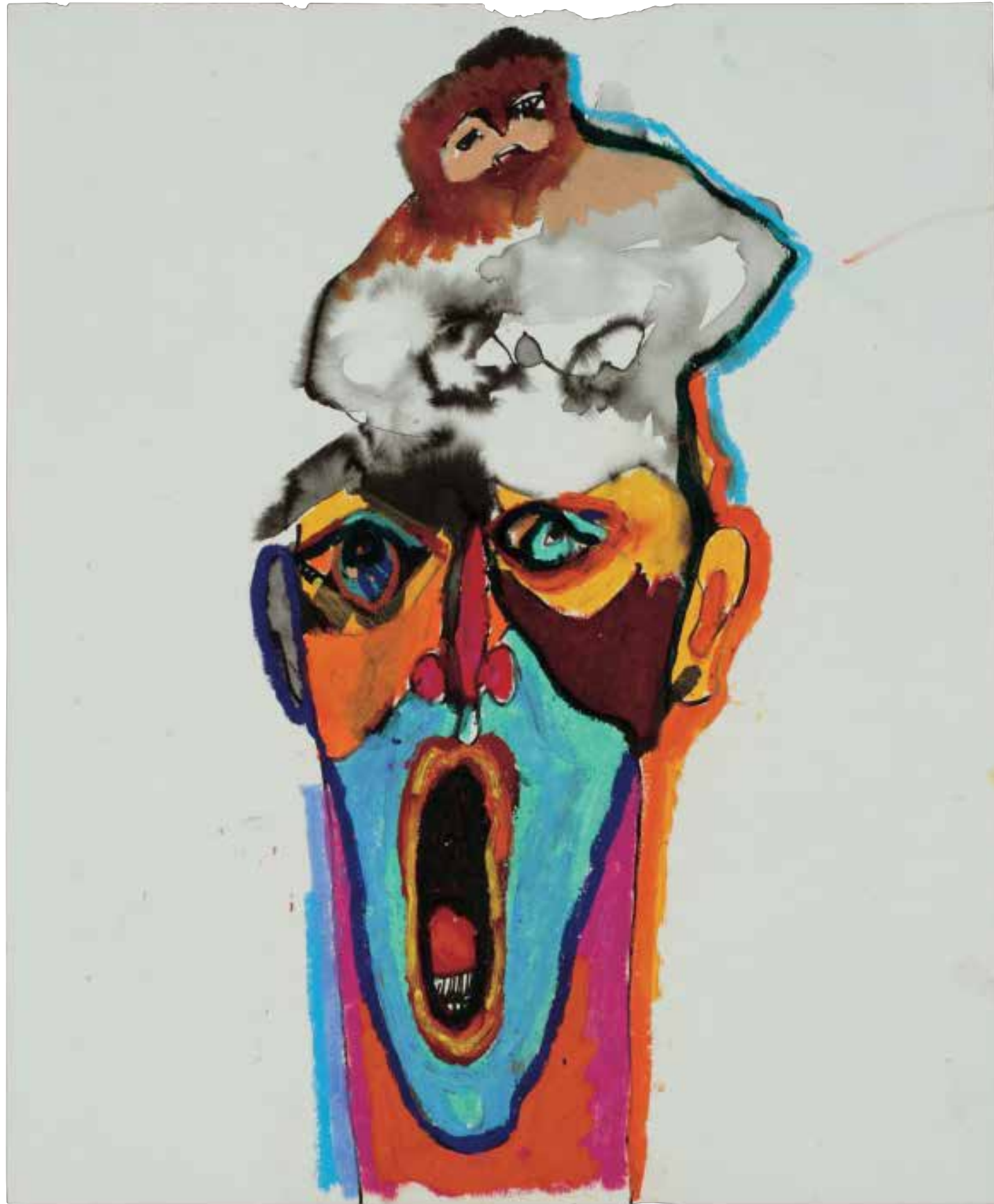


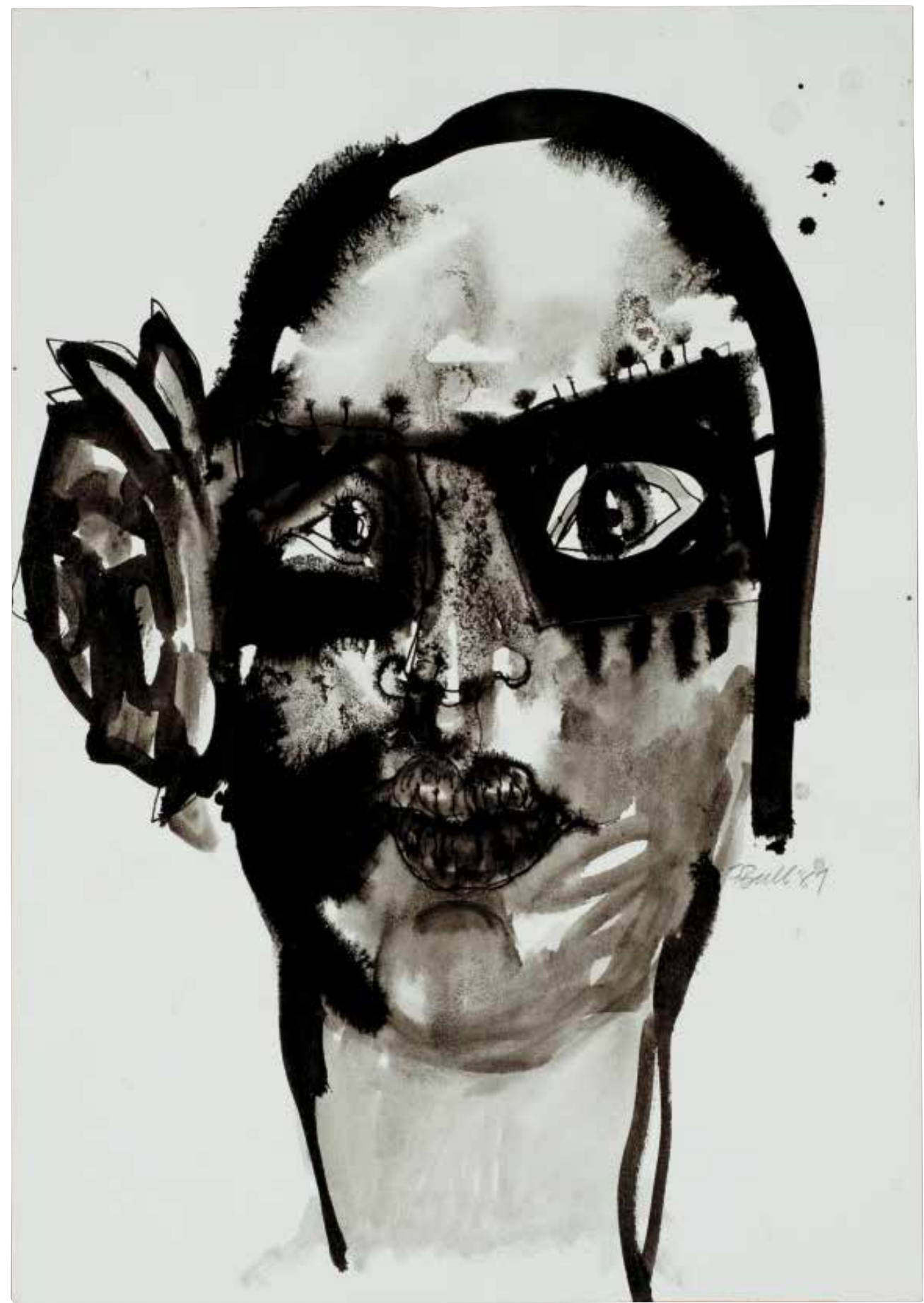


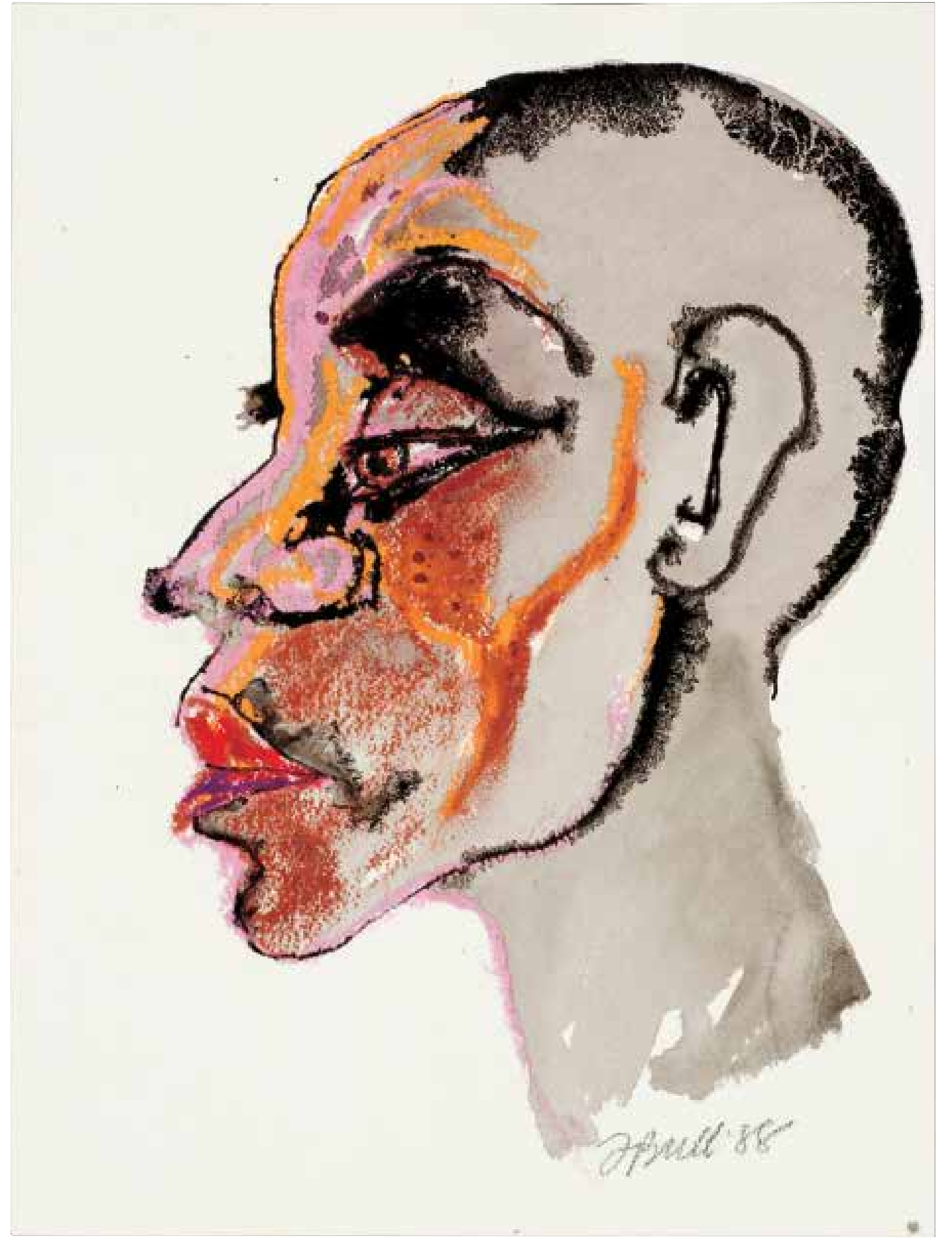






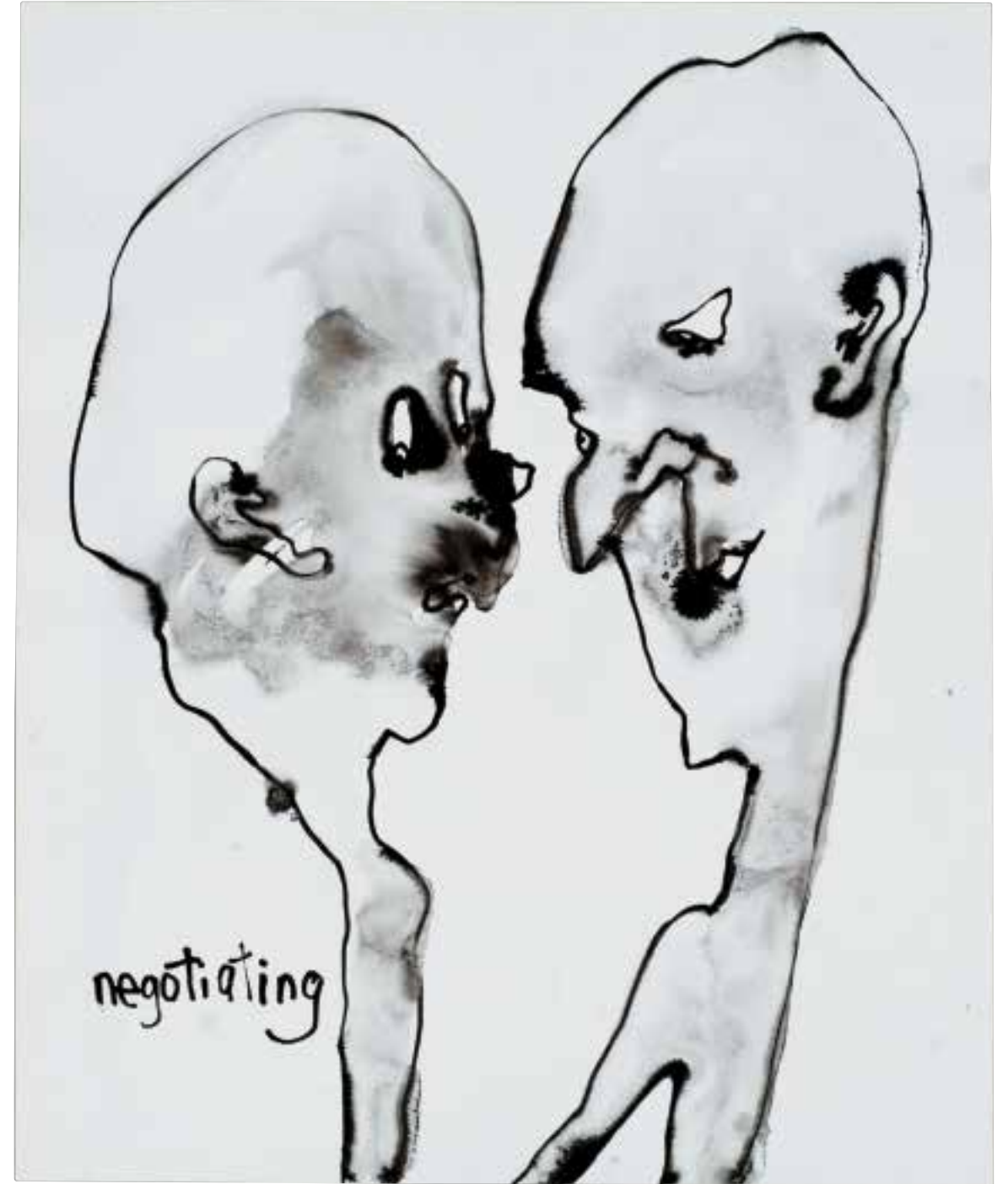






DUETS





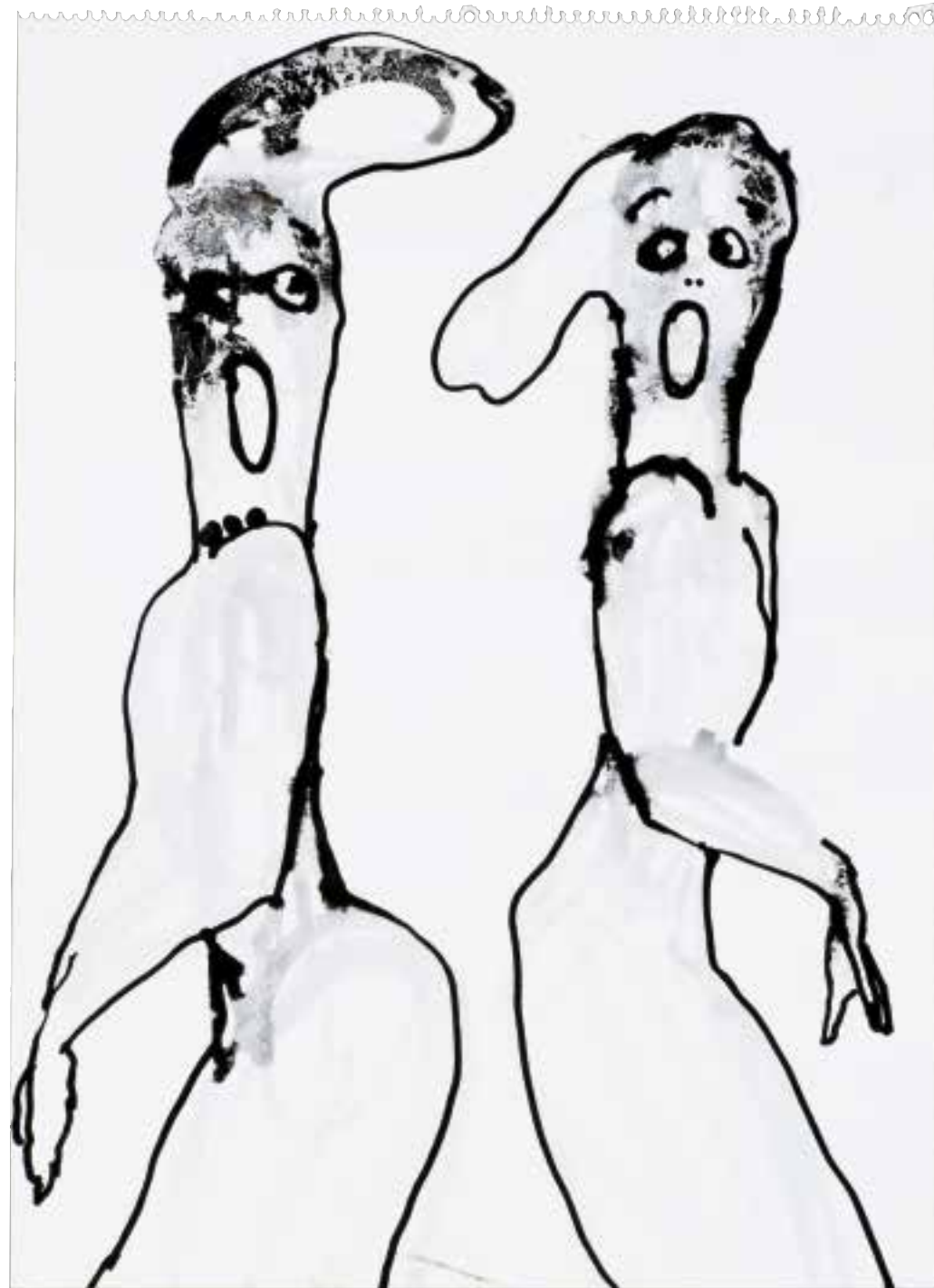


Small

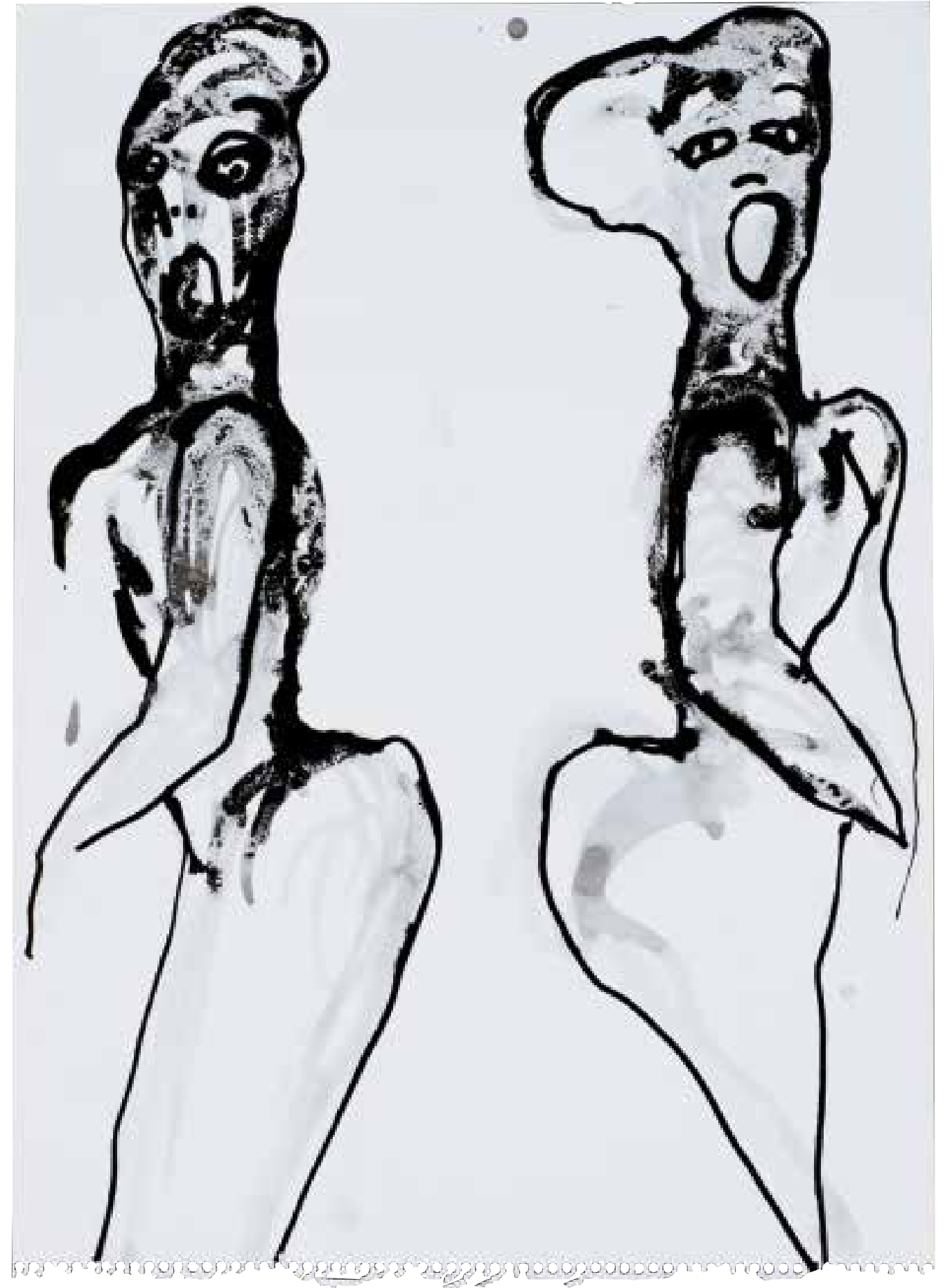






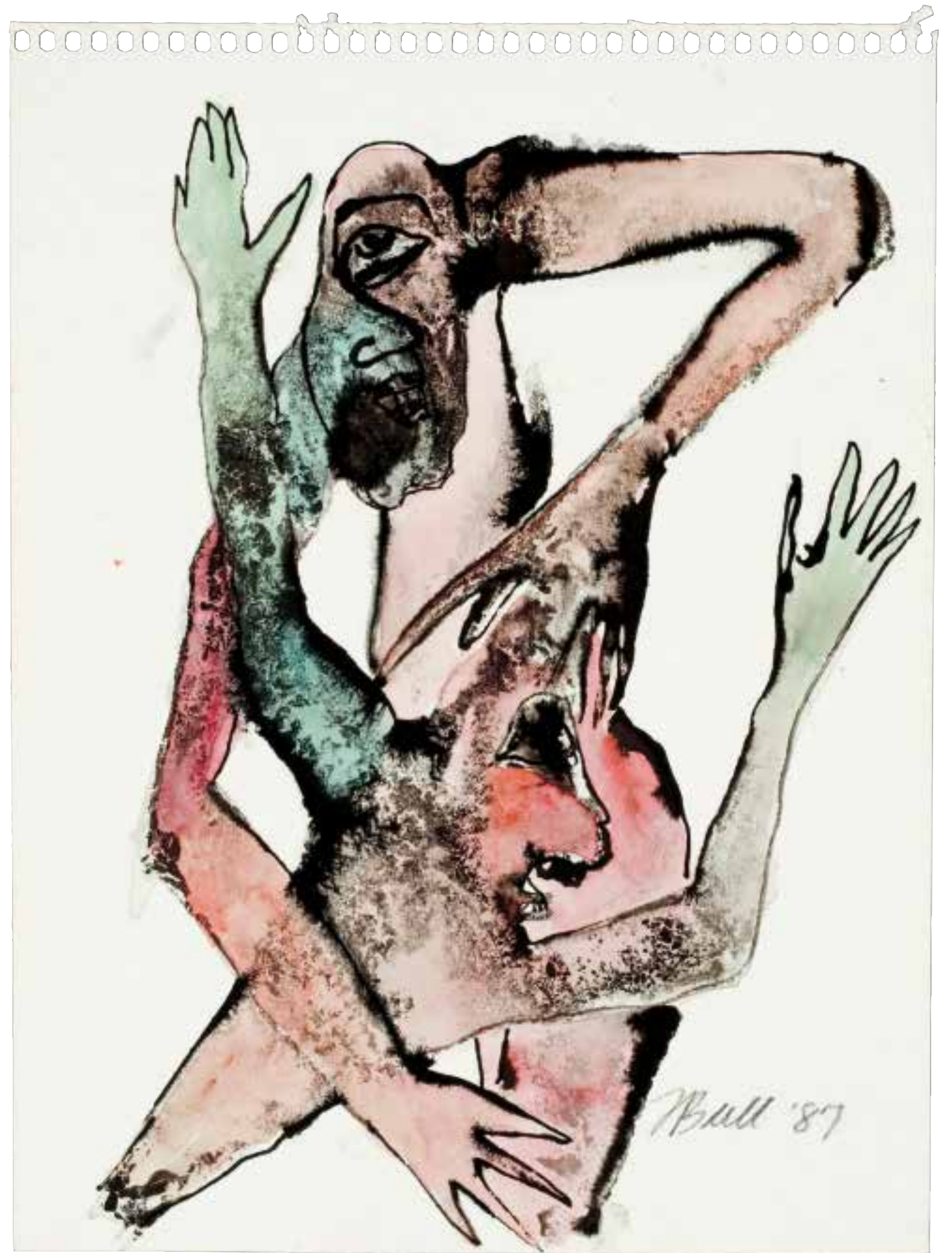












PORTRAITS







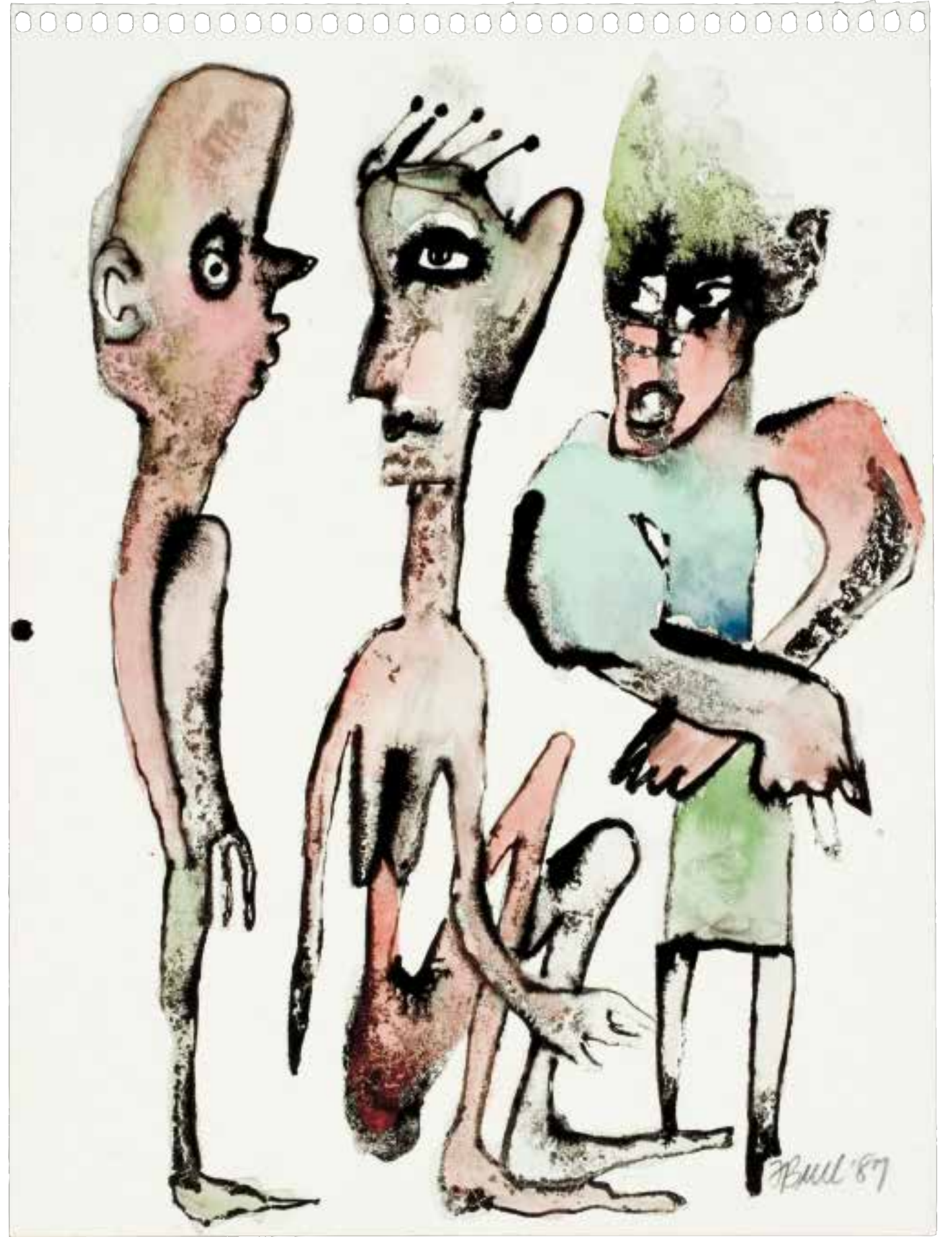




GROUPS











STATES OF BEING







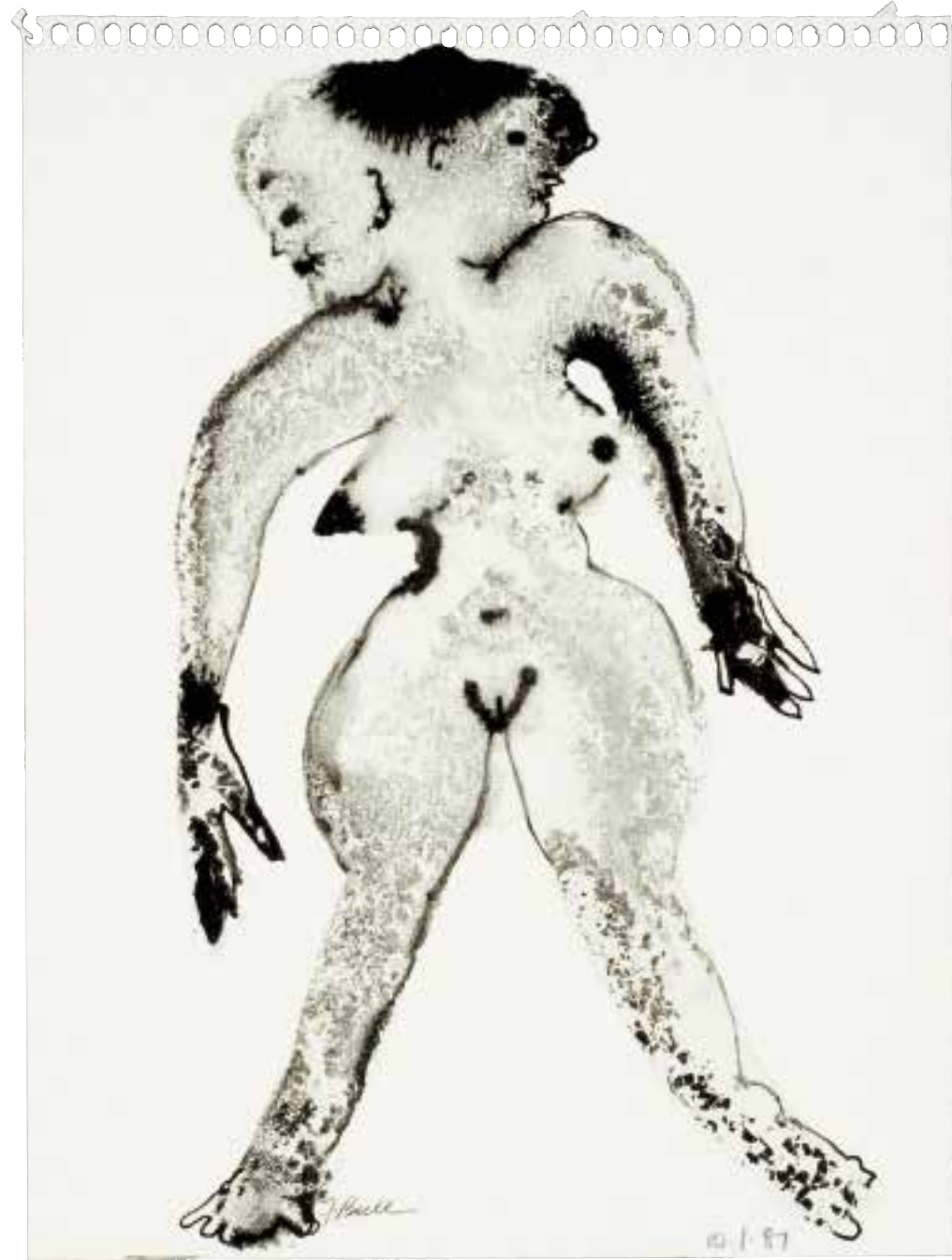










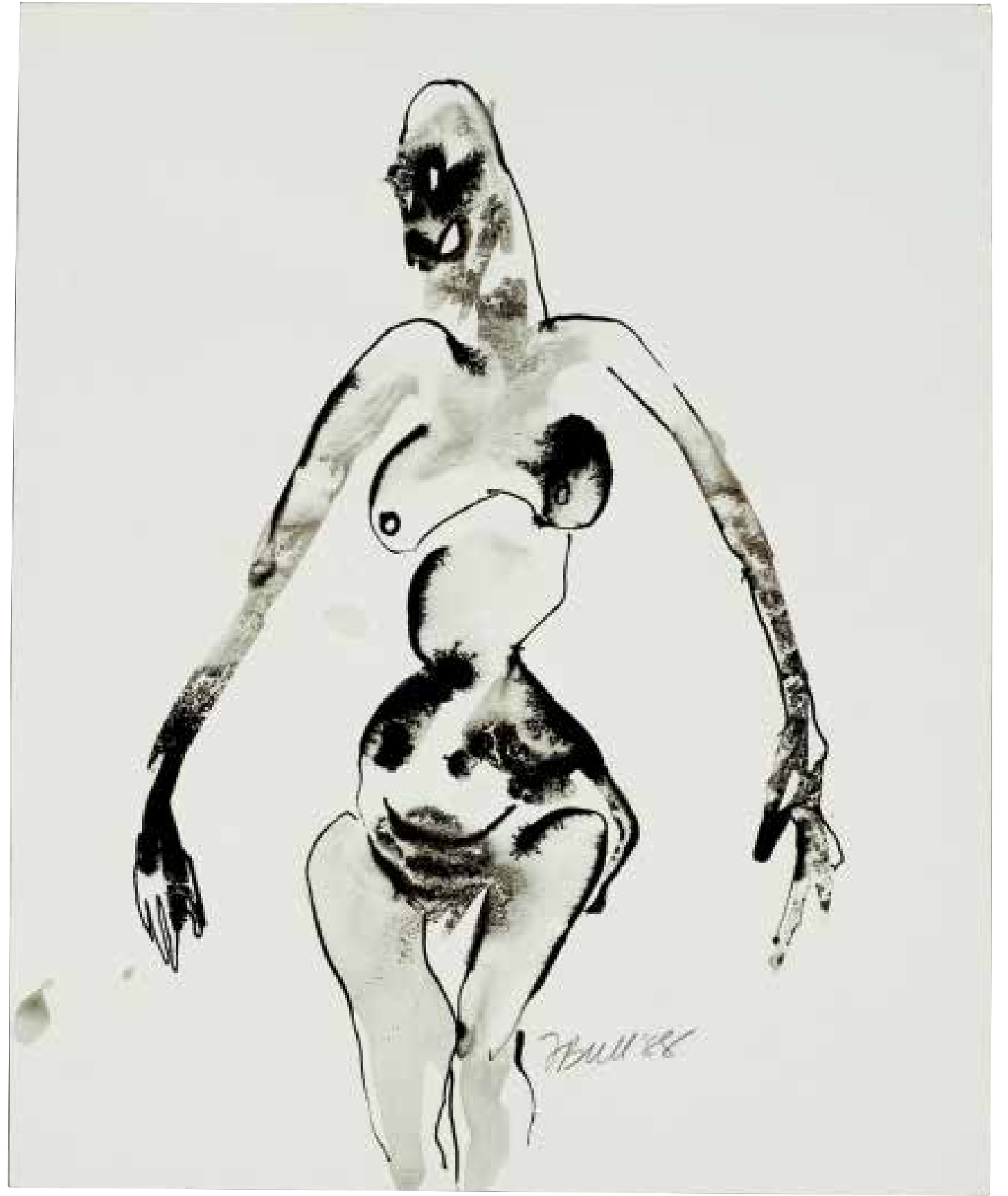
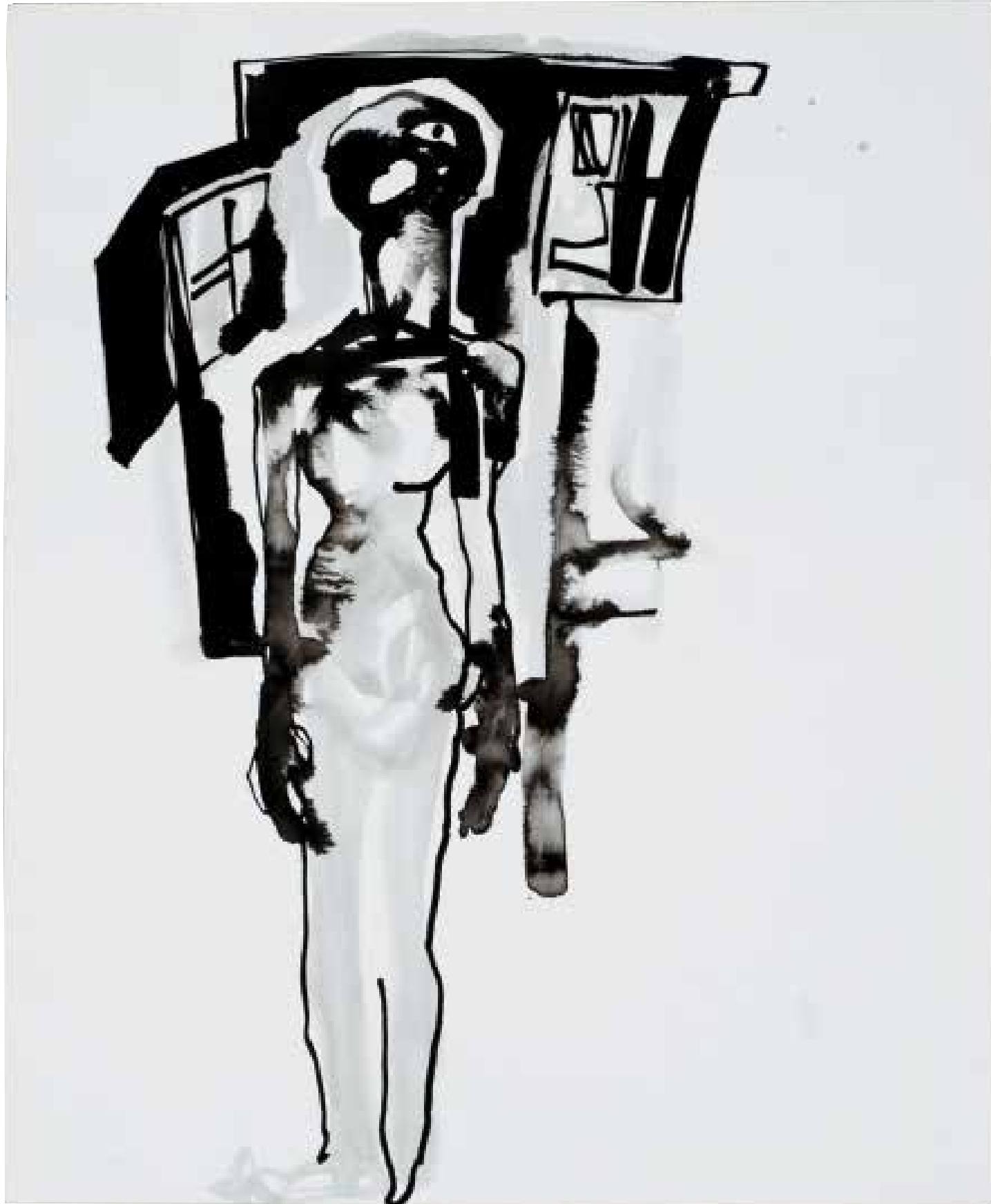




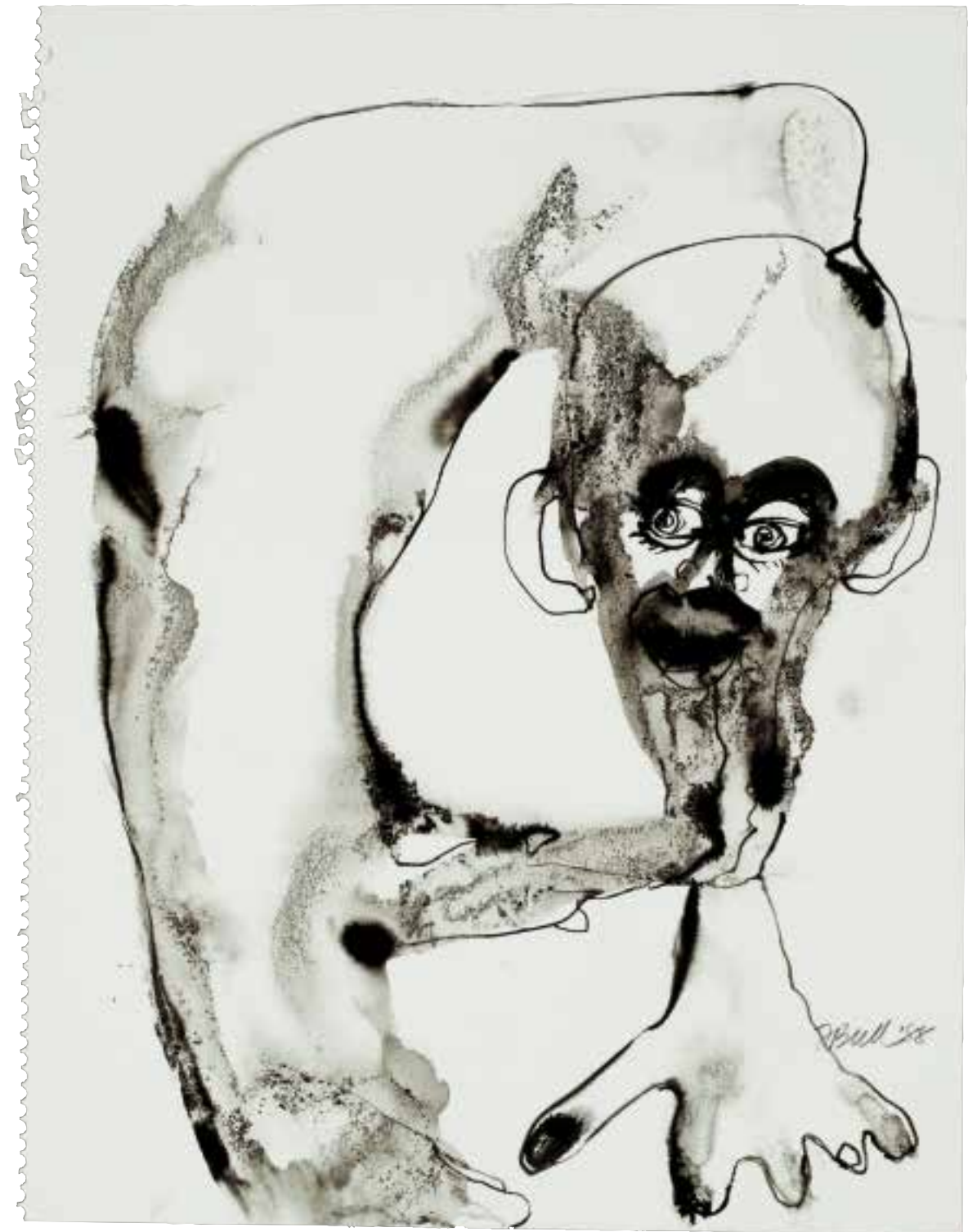












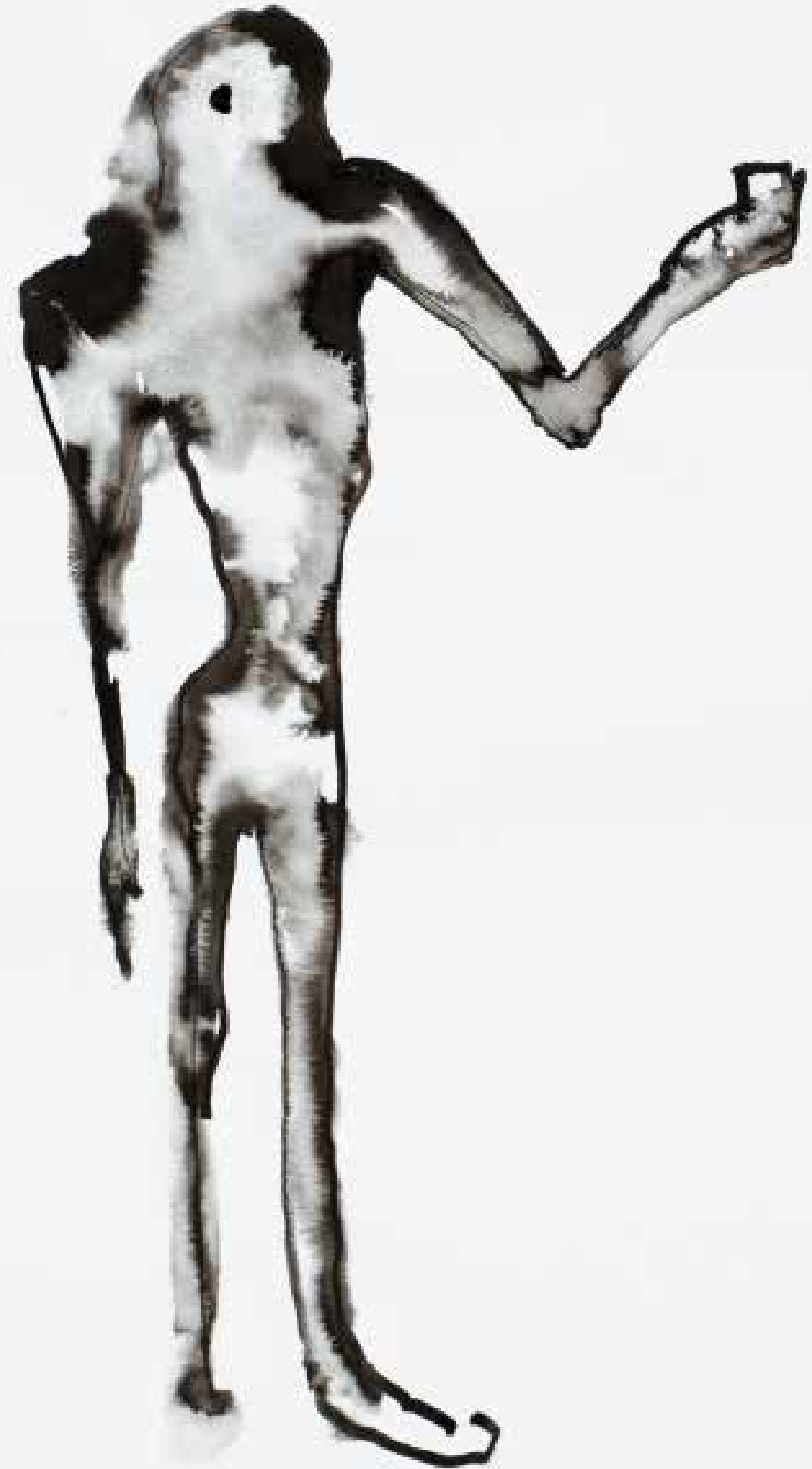


t.v. image

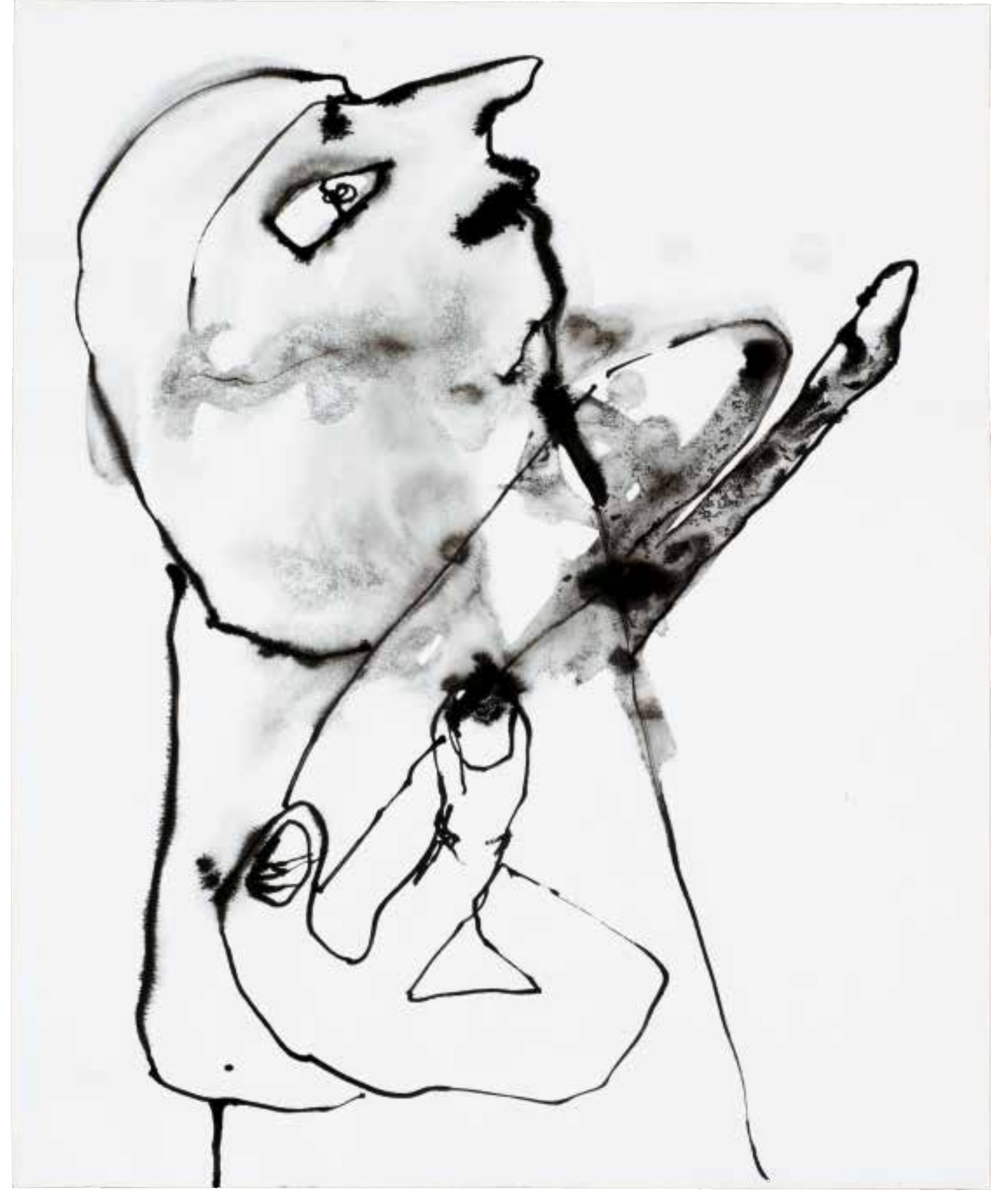
F. Bull '89

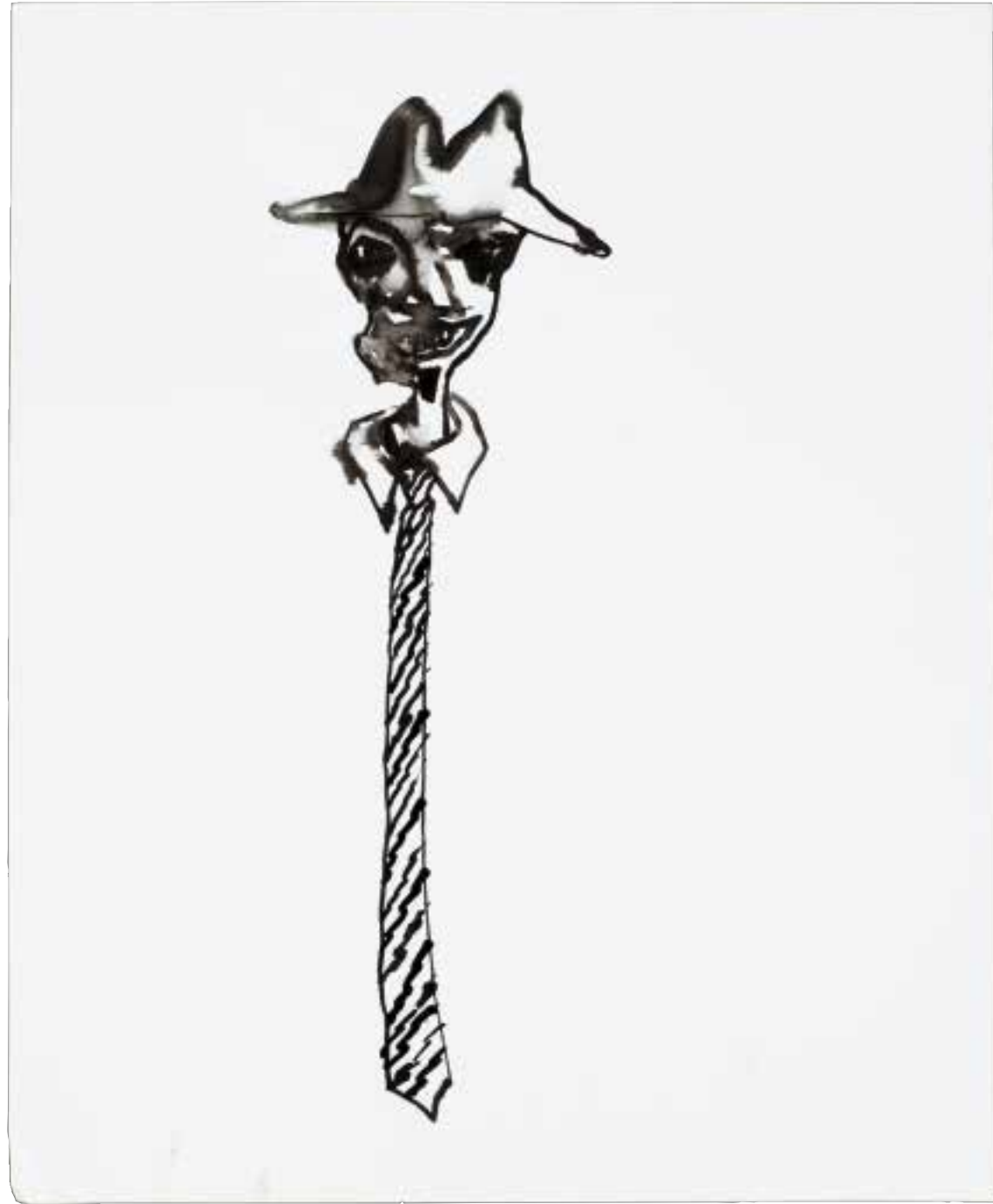


F. Bull '88



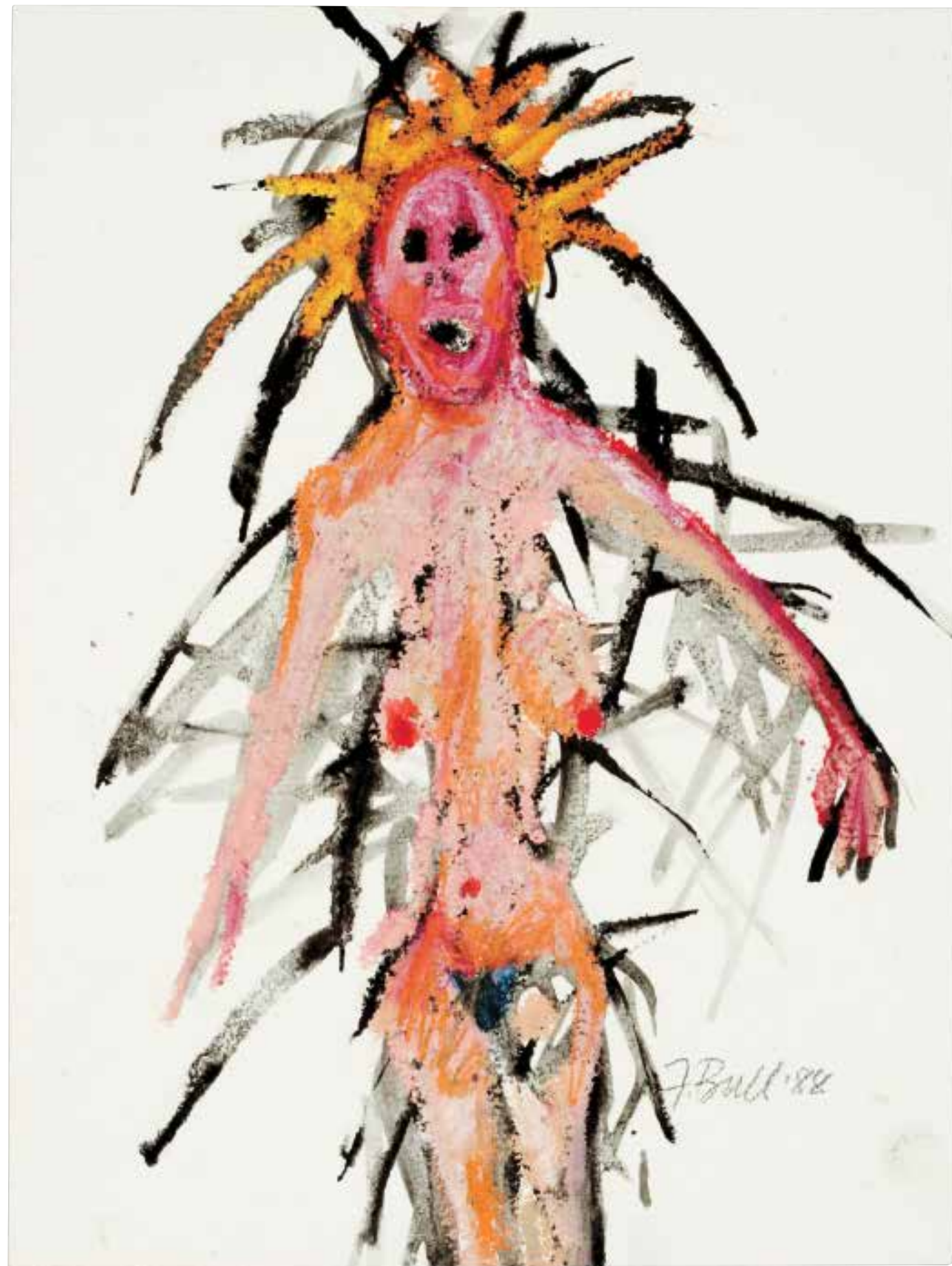


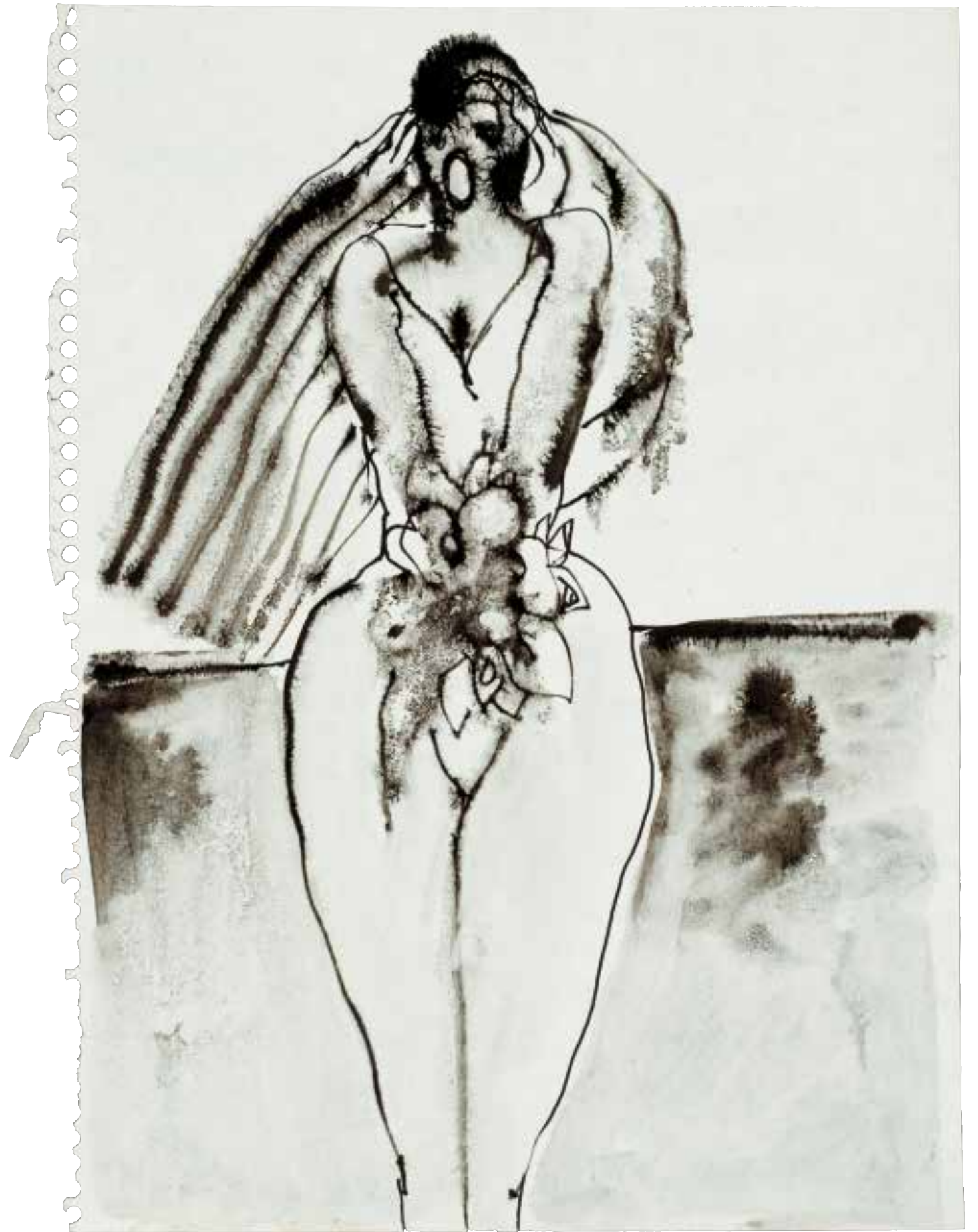






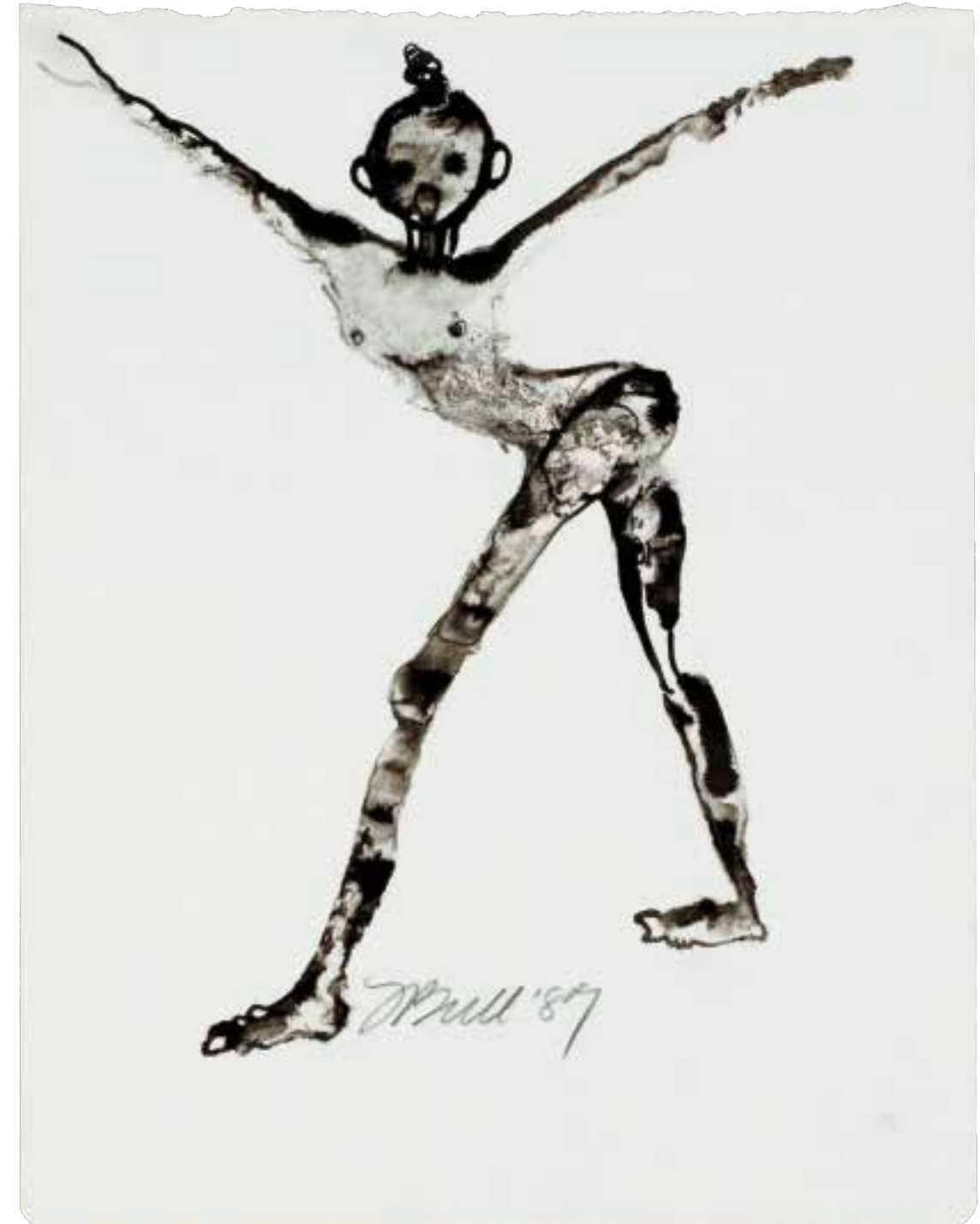




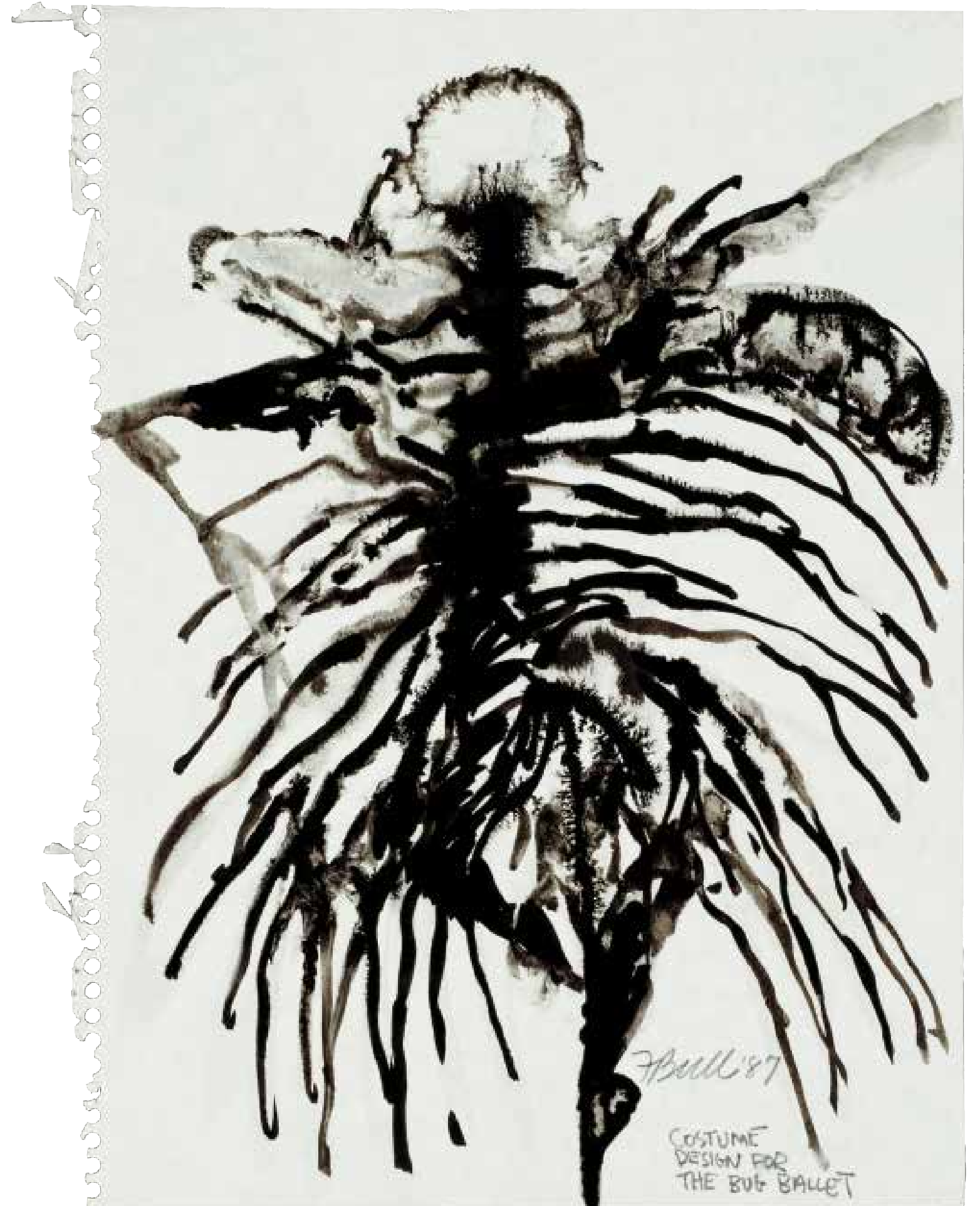








ANIMALS AND BUGS







CATALOGUE

1. *Triangle*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
2. *We're Almost Certain*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
8. *A Certain Ecstasy*
Oil crayon on paper
17"x 14"
10. *Self Portrait with Mask*
India ink and watercolor
16"x 12"
12. *Childhood*
India ink on paper
16"x 12"
14. *What Party Is This?*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
13.7"x 11"
- EARLY WORK
17. *Begin*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
18. *Ascension*
India ink on paper
12.5"x 9.5"
19. *The Great Dictator*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
20. *Yoga for Angels*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
21. *Ciao, Bella*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
22. *I Like Her Shoes*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
23. *Hand Me the Loot*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
24. *Streets of Barcelona*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
25. *Windy Day*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
26. *Lollipop Head*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
27. *Suburbs*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
28. *O Sole Mio*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
29. *Very Sassy*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
- FETUS
31. *Solitary Journey*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
32. *Here & Now*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
33. *Waiting for His Entrance*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
34. *Earthling*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
35. *Bird's Eye View*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
36. *I'd Rather Stay*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
37. *Still Attached*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
38. *Meditation*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
39. *Just a Glimpse*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
40. *Walking Out the Door*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
41. *How Do I Look?*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
42. *Can't Let Go*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
43. *Whole New Solar System*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
- PREGNANCY
45. *Feeling Just Fine*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"

46. *Are You Serious?*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
47. *Waiting*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
48. *How Did This Happen?*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
49. *I'm Smoking Hot*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
50. *What Do I Do Now?*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
51. *Glorious Moment*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
52. *As I Was Saying*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
53. *Do We Choose Our Parents?*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
54. *Are You Mad?*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
55. *Bumpy Ride*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
56. *Mother-To-Be*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
57. *Hi*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
- MOTHER AND CHILD
59. *Got It Made*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
60. *Old Mother Hubbard*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
61. *Giver of Life*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
62. *Safe & Sound*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
63. *Reversal of Fortune*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
64. *Der Mutterhaus*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
65. *First Born*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
- LARGE HEAD
67. *Head Study*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
68. *Mad Poet*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
69. *Lacrymosa*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
70. *Bright*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
71. *Shout Out*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
17"x 14"
72. *Bad News*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
73. *Used Persona*
India ink on paper
14"x 12"
74. *Drag*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
75. *Preaching to the Choir*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
18"x 14"
76. *Mardi Gras*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
14"x 10"
77. *Inflated*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
78. *Tourist*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
79. *Royal Smile*
India ink on paper
13"x 10"
80. *Old Mother Hubbard, Again*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
81. *The Egg Man*
India ink on paper
19"x 13"

82. *Glamour Head*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
17"x 14"
83. *Mind Games*
India ink and oil crayon on
paper
17"x 14"
84. *Smoke Gets in Your
Eyes*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
85. *Self Portrait*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
86. *Queen of the Prom*
Oil crayon on paper
12"x 9"
87. *Brunhilde*
Oil crayon on paper
6"x 9"
88. *Visionary*
India ink on paper
14"x 11"
89. *A Little Bird Told Me*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
90. *Lost in Thought*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
17"x 14"
91. *Green Man with Beret*
India ink and oil crayon on
paper
17"x 14"
92. *Back of My Mind*
India ink and oil crayon on
paper
16.5"x 12"
93. *Carmen*
India ink on paper
13"x 9.5"
94. *Self Portrait*
India ink on paper
12.5"x 9.5"
95. *Head of a Woman*
India ink and oil crayon on
paper
12.5"x 9.5"
- DUETS**
97. *Inspired Conversation*
India ink on paper
7.5"x 9.5"
98. *Not So Convincing*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
99. *Negotiating*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
100. *Cotton Candy*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
101. *On the Town*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
102. *Monkey See*
India ink on paper
15"x 12"
103. *Papageno*
India ink on paper
12"x 8.5"
104. *The Kiss*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
105. *I Knew It Was You*
India ink on paper
10"x 8"
106. *Off to Church*
India ink on paper
17 x 14"
107. *Encounter*
India ink on paper
10"x 8"
108. *Two Sopranos*
India ink on paper
17.5"x 12"
109. *Embraceless*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
110. *Dorabella & Her Sister*
India ink on paper
17.7"x 12"
111. *Hansel & Gretel*
Oil crayon on paper
17"x 14"
112. *Cigars after Dinner*
India ink on paper
14"x 11"
113. *Madame Butterfly
& Her Maid*
India ink on paper
17.5"x 12"
114. *Mother & Child*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
115. *Baubles*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
116. *At the Café*
India ink on paper
11"x 8"

117. *Puzzle*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
118. *Piggyback*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
119. *Agon*
Oil crayon on paper
12"x 9"
- PORTAITS**
121. *You Called*
Oil crayon on paper
18"x 11.5"
122. *The King Is Dead*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
123. *Punk Is In*
Oil crayon on paper
12"x 9"
124. *Notes in One Basket*
India ink on paper
19"x 11"
125. *As Beautiful
As the Sun*
Oil crayon on paper
14"x 11"
126. *Winter*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
127. *The Body of Christ*
India ink on paper
14"x 11"
128. *Cubist King*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
18"x 12"
129. *Cocktail Hour*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
- GROUPS**
131. *In Therapy*
Oil crayon on paper
17"x 14"
132. *Family Drama*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
133. *Analytically Speaking*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
134. *Through a Glass
Darkly*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
135. *On the Carpet*
Oil crayon on paper
12"x 9"
136. *Another Session*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
137. *Who Invited Them*
India ink on paper
14"x 11"
138. *Triplets*
India ink on paper
5"x 6"
139. *Speak No Evil*
India ink on paper
14"x 10"
- STATES OF BEING**
141. *Rolling Around*
India ink on paper
18"x 14"
142. *Holding Forth*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
143. *Light Transfusion*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
144. *Cliff Dweller*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
145. *In Recital*
India ink on paper
15"x 10.5"
146. *Fright Flight*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
147. *Naked*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
148. *Loose Thread*
India ink on paper
18"x 14"
149. *Royal Headdress*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
18"x 12"
150. *Chanteuse*
India ink on paper
15"x 11.5"
151. *Thinking Cap*
India ink on paper
18"x 12"

152. *Cocktail Party*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
153. *Clutch*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
154. *Attachment*
India ink on paper
14"x 11"
155. *Reclining Nude*
India ink on paper
9.5"x 12.5"
156. *So Many Decisions*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
157. *Body Language*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
158. *In a Strange Land*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
159. *Hand on Hip*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
160. *A Cheery Note*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
161. *Easter Sunday*
India ink on paper
18"x 12"
162. *Skinny Bones*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
163. *Fat Cat*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
164. *Rainbow Madonna*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
12"x 9"
165. *Scientist*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
166. *Librarian*
India ink on paper
14"x 12"
167. *Birthday Suit*
India ink on paper
14"x 12"
168. *Fashion Clown*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
17"x 14"
169. *Personage*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
17"x 14"
170. *A Winning Smile*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
171. *Solipsist*
India ink on paper
18"x 14"
172. *T.V. Image*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
173. *Sudden Crisis*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
174. *Dream of Childhood*
India ink on paper
18"x 14"
175. *A Penny for Your Thoughts*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
176. *Tales & Tails*
India ink on paper
17.5"x 12"
177. *A Nickel for Your Thoughts*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
178. *Basso Profondo*
India ink and oil crayon
on paper
17"x 14"
179. *Baguette*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
180. *Fedora*
India ink on paper
14"x 10"
181. *Night Visitation*
India ink on paper
18"x 14"
182. *A Spec of Dust*
India ink on paper
10"x 8"
183. *The Whole World in Her Hands*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
184. *Teenager*
India ink and oil crayon on
paper
17"x 14"

185. *Rose Dress*
India ink and oil crayon on
paper
14"x 8.5"
186. *How May I Help You*
India ink and oil crayon on
paper
12.5"x 9.5"
187. *Tar & Feathers*
India ink and oil crayon on
paper
12.5"x 9.5"
188. *New Suit*
India ink on paper
11"x 8"
189. *Here Comes the Bride*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
190. *Inflatable*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
191. *Contained*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
192. *Home Alone*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
193. *Something's Happened*
India ink on paper
10"x 8"
194. *Seated Figure*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
195. *Broadway Routine*
India ink on paper
10"x 8"
- ANIMALS & BUGS**
197. *Costume Design for the Bug Ballet*
India ink on paper
12"x 9"
198. *Amphibious*
India ink on paper
14"x 11"
199. *Bug Brigade*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
200. *Jack*
India ink on paper
17"x 14"
201. *Creature*
India ink on paper
12"x 11"
208. *Self Portrait*
Copperplate etching
Paper 17.25"x 14"
Plate 7.75"x 4"



FRAN BULL

Award-winning printmaker, painter, and sculptor Fran Bull has been exhibiting her work worldwide for over 30 years. Her art is included in numerous museum and university collections, ranging from the Museum of Modern Art in New York, to the Guilin Art Museum in China. She makes her art in Brandon, Vermont and Barcelona, Spain.

Bull's early photorealistic drawings and paintings brought her international acclaim, but in the mid 1980s this more identifiable approach burst open; she began to create work that could best be described as elaborate investigations of the unseen. Today Bull's work seeks to connect ordinary life to larger mythic and historical motifs, themes, and narratives.

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