



AN INNOCENT STROKE

AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY

SOHAM DAS

Presented by Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya

on 22 - 31 August, 2025

Art Magnum

**60/2C, 3rd Floor,
Yusuf Sarai, Aurobindo Marg,
Indian Oil Complex, New Delhi.**

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'Feet, what do I need them for if I have wings to fly'

These words of celebrated artist Frida Kahlo would be so appropriate for this exceptionally talented young artist, too, whose language is colour and who expresses his deepest emotions through his extraordinary paintings.

Soham is a young boy with intellectual disability and global developmental delay, along with traits of autism, physical problems, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and he has very limited speech. Despite his so-called 'disabilities', he has been continually painting with passionate rigour for the last few years, but without any formal training. His most loving and inspiring parents nurtured his talent all throughout while facing a multitude of hardships from every corner, including social stigma, neglect and rejection. Their toughest but strong-willed journey through Soham's early years till now addresses his medical, educational, occupational, developmental and psychological needs are illustrious, and it has inspired and helped many families in similar situations. Soham, through his vibrant and natural artistic skills, has created a colourful world for us that perfectly echoes what Rodin said more than a century ago- 'the main thing is to be moved, to love, to hope, to tremble, to live'.



Far more than visual effects, art has the power to inspire, to give hope, to heal, change our beliefs, remind us of the human values and create new perspectives. It can provide fresh insights and ideas, and can make the invisible visible. From ancient times, art has been recognised as an important means of expressing, channelling and exploring feelings, attitudes and behaviour. For centuries, artists themselves understood that the healing powers of art and many have been used to cope with their life's challenges. Edward Munch wrote- 'I have suffered from a deep feeling of anxiety which I have tried to express in my art. British neuroscientist Professor Semir Zeki's study shows that when we look at art, there is a strong activity in that part of the brain that is related to pleasure; it can lower stress and anxiety. There are thousands of studies on Neuroaesthetics, a recent and rapidly developing field which proves that art quite literally requires our brain and initiates many positive changes, including wellbeing, resilience and healing.

Soham's authentic self-expression through his art perhaps helps him to feel safe, reducing his social and other anxieties and allows him to cope and regulate his emotions better. However, if we look at it another way, this young artist without meaningful speech is powerfully expressing his internal world through a cornucopia of colours, which in turn touches and moves and perhaps heals any observer of his tremendous work. Jackson Pollock said, 'Painting is self-discovery. Every good artist paints what he is.' Soham, perhaps like Pollock, works with the Surrealist's method of 'psychic automatism', allowing his unconscious mind to take control as he works almost in a ritualistic



manner, with brush and sticks, balls and hands; he pours, drips, splatters and flicks paint from all sides, creating a visual feast in postmodern glee! I personally know Soham from an early age, and I have seen how enormously he struggled to express his basic needs, which used to transpire into emotional meltdown, challenging behaviours or ritualistic stereotypy. As he started painting, he discovered a novel way of 'speaking', colours became his emotional currency, and he could engage himself prolifically in the process of his creation through a plethora of colours, which reminds me of Fauvism, a colourful, emotional art movement, initiated by Andre Derain and Henri Matisse. Matisse discovered the therapeutic benefits of painting when he was 21 and convalescing from appendicitis. Later, at the age of 82, when he went through two operations for his intestinal cancer, he proved the healing power of art on himself. Van Gogh's early paintings were dark, but in Paris, he shortened his brush marks and brightened his colours. During his stay at St Remy's asylum, while suffering from epilepsy and paranoia, he created his most famous works. Agnes Martin suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, but her paintings and abstract expressionism (can aptly also be described as Soham's creative style!) uplift viewers, creating a relaxed mindset, relieving stress! I have seen how Soham paints, he appears to be in a state of 'Flow', described by positive psychologists, fully absorbed in the moment, radically above and excited, almost similar to being in a state of meditation! His scrubbed style and colours fuse with vigorous marks, bold brush strokes and convey raw, dynamic energy.



Swiss-born born famous German artist Paul Klee suffered tremendously at the hands of the Nazis, but he used the process of art as meditation, saying it helped him to live in an intermediate world. He was a 'Transcendentalist', believing his creativity came from someplace beyond consciousness. In my humble opinion, some of Soham's art has a mystical quality and perhaps points towards a depth of the Spiritual realm beyond our rational grasp and hence his art has to be felt rather than understood. Like Klee, through his art, he perhaps points us towards the recent concept of 'Post Traumatic Growth', and that our inner capacities and the strength of the human spirit are limitless and never cease to surprise us. One of the pioneers of abstract art, Wassily Kandinsky, was influenced by Theosophy, and he sought to express spirituality through his art. Similar to Soham, he painted with bright colours, inspired by Fauvism, and he famously said- 'Colour transmits and translates emotions'. I feel colours give Soham a voice, as he creates the essence of life through his art and allows us to feel his 'soul vibrations'.

Van Gogh once wrote, 'Art is to console those who are broken by life'. I never felt that Soham is 'broken', but he has indeed shown us how to celebrate life in colours and express ourselves fully, how to breathe with a different kind of joy that moves us and gives us hope!

Dr. Amit Ranjan Biswas

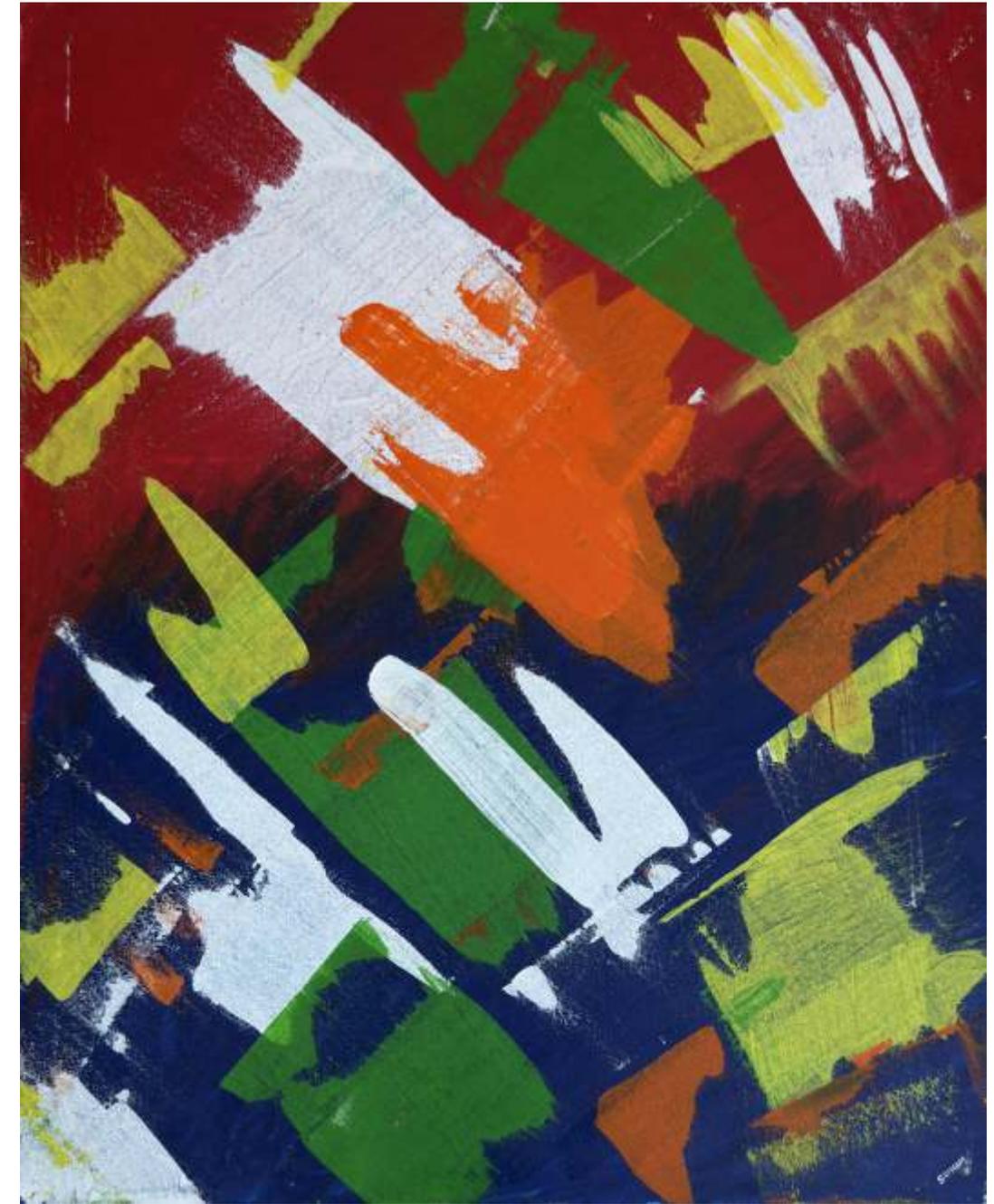
The writer is a poet, playwright, multi-award-winning film director and consultant child & adolescent neuropsychiatrist. He teaches globally on well-being self self-mastery, and mindful leadership using interdisciplinary subjects and ancient wisdom.



Curator's Note

Those fortunate enough to witness the true essence of a free mind will understand the remarkable ability of my dear friend, Soham, to infuse life and vibrancy into his canvas. The rare talent he possesses, shaped by the intentions of a creator, sets him apart from others. Soham's mind and consciousness cannot be confined by the harsh realities of life. The way he styles his colours and creates his paintings reflects an abstraction that invites exploration; one must journey to a beautiful, luminescent beach to fully appreciate it. Here, warmth fills the air, and a stunning rainbow stretches across the sky, offering a glimpse into Soham's brilliant mind at work, crafting something exquisitely beautiful. We are merely awed spectators of his creative journey. His exceptional talent reminds me of the poem by Rabindranath Tagore: "Amar mukti aloye aloye ei akashe..." (19.09.1926, Germany).

Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya
Curator



Acrylic on Canvas, 30" x 24"



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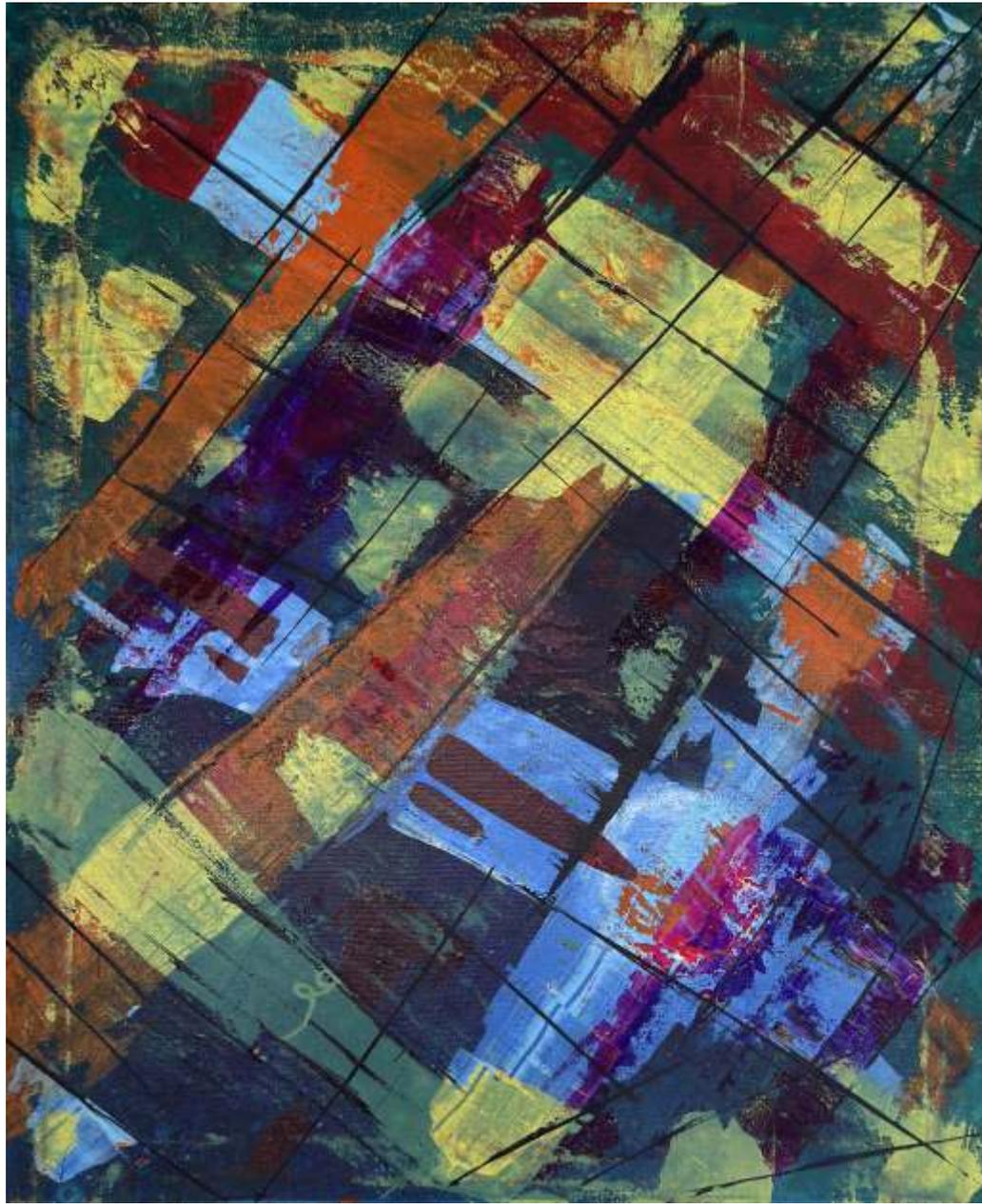
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Acrylic on Canvas, 30" x 24"



Acrylic on Canvas, 36" x 24"



Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 36"



Acrylic on Canvas, 20" x 30"



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Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 30"



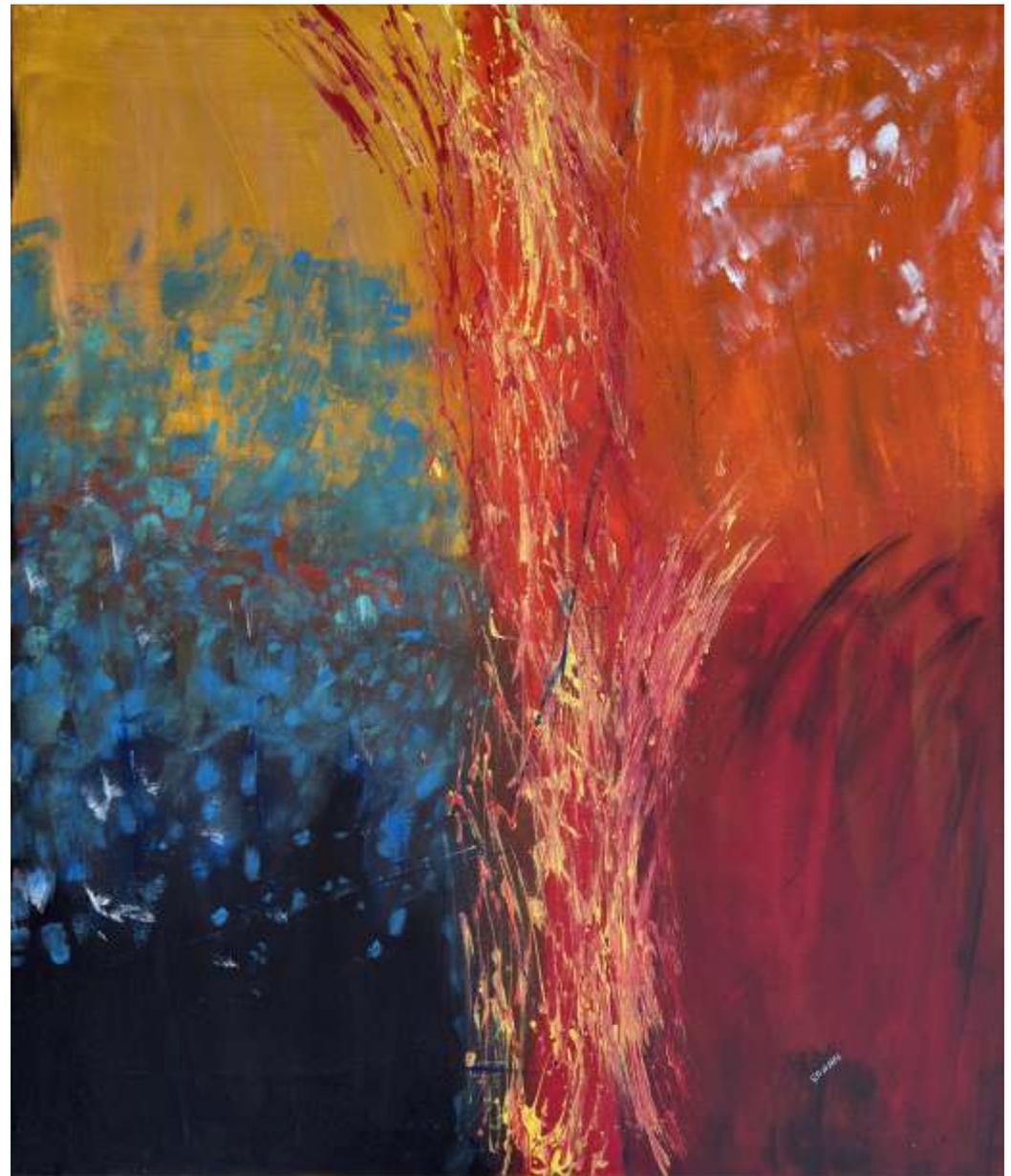
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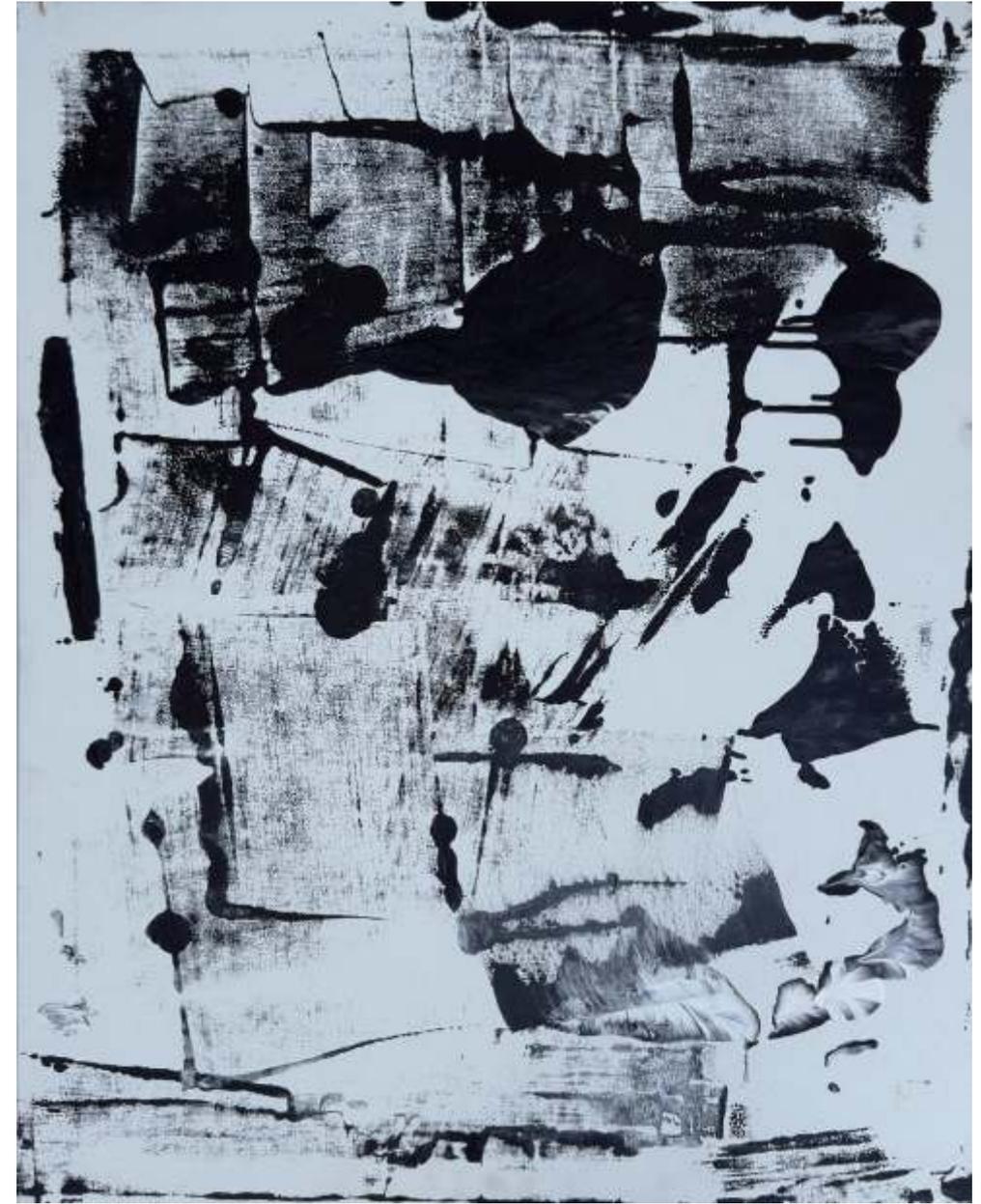
Acrylic on Canvas, 30" x 24"



Acrylic on Canvas, 36" x 30"



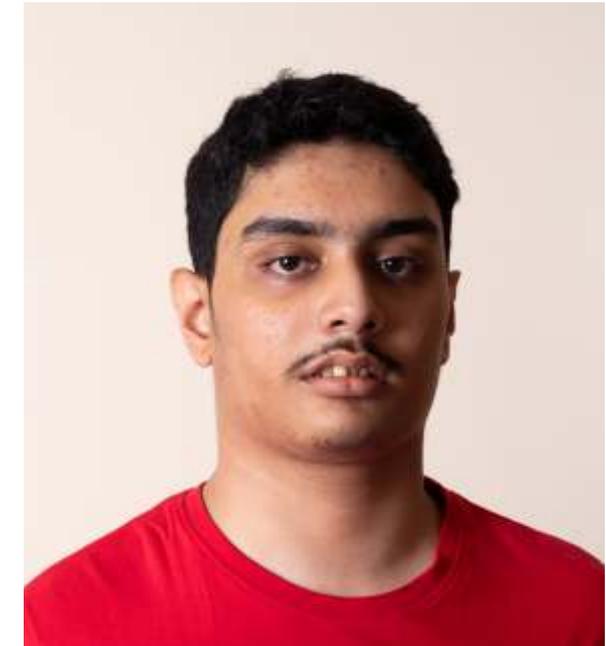
Acrylic on Canvas, 40" x 30"



Acrylic on Canvas, 30" x 24"



Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 36"



Soham Das

Soham is a talented boy. He is non speaking child with Autism/learning disorders/ADHD with several medical issues.

Soham with his limited abilities has burning Passion for abstract painting which has earned him many recognitions and awards in National and international level in his bucket list. Recently received West Bengal Government State Award as Role Model.

His passion for colours is magical wonders for many.