ANIRUDDHA BISWAS
Pile of Earth

Text by Pierre Duval

A pile of earth can never be held between our fingers. It takes very little for it to change shape and scatter elsewhere. This instability runs through Aniruddha Biswas's work. In his studio, pigments accumulate on the shelves. Small spice jars hold preparations made by hand. Colour studies sit alongside works in progress: diluted greens, brown glazes, shades of grey. Everything seems liable to be moved, mixed or reworked.

His practice emerges from the lived experience of distance. Between the places left behind and those now inhabited, between absent loved ones and presences sustained across a screen, his works question what remains when a connection becomes uncertain. To lay down pigment, apply graphite, erase a surface: each gesture asks what endures when a form dissolves into dust. This enquiry also carries a more understated position. At first glance, there is an expectation of legibility, of a recognisable motif and, above all, of an identity that would reveal itself without remainder. Blur, erasure and dissolution become ways of withdrawing from what others might expect to see in him. Memory, in his work, is made up of fragments, gaps and resurgences.

Talismans (2022), a series of watercolours, offers an initial expression of this concern. A suitcase, a dishcloth, a bag of rice: the objects he brought with him when he left for France are depicted one by one, with an almost documentary attention to detail. Here, humble, everyday things hold more memory than a portrait could contain. These objects become companions on the journey. Once he has left, he leaves behind a home and loved ones. New ways of sustaining these connections must be found. He writes, exchanges photographs and shares fragments of everyday life. Compressed, transferred and altered by digital tools, these images become witnesses to a presence that persists despite distance.

Perforation, deposition, dissolution, erasure: these gestures translate what happens to relationships maintained across distance — time differences, unstable connections, images that deteriorate with each transfer.

En devenir (2022–2023) brings together five graphite portraits made from the first photographs taken by people whom the artist met at the Maison Rester Étranger association in Saint-Denis upon their arrival in France. Laid directly on the floor and held in place by small stones gathered from the street, the drawings remain exposed to the fragility of their surroundings. The installation refuses to fix identity in a definitive representation. It questions both the precarity of individual journeys and the ways in which an image can protect, expose or make a life visible. Today, these portraits have become spectral silhouettes, like shadows inscribed on paper. They appear as provisional forms, still taking shape. They carry dreams and ambitions, but also the uncertainties that accompany them from day to day.

In *Still Connecting…* (2026), Aniruddha Biswas begins with screenshots captured during video calls. Already compromised by low resolution and connection failures, these images are translated into paint before being partially erased with acetone. The image becomes a frequency to be tuned into. Faces emerge in fragments. A gaze remains visible while a gesture hangs suspended midway through its movement. At times, blur dissolves a face into a patch of colour, leaving no recognisable point of reference.

Painting transforms these technological flaws into a visual language. By painting these fleeting images, Biswas does not attempt to repair what becomes disconnected; he makes disconnection itself the substance of the painting. Despite the calls, despite the images, despite the exchanges, something is always missing. Technology now allows us to see those who are far away at almost any moment. Yet this proximity remains incomplete. Bodies are absent. Distances persist. The image brings us closer even as it reminds us of what remains beyond our reach.

Absence takes a different form in *Almost There* (2025–2026), a series based on photographs of the artist's native village sent by his loved ones. Each sheet is first covered with a uniform layer of graphite. The image is gradually erased, as though the drawing were withdrawing from its own presence. Architecture, trees, paths and rooftops slowly emerge in almost spectral tones. The title captures this precise condition: a memory almost recognised, never quite reaching complete clarity. Something resists the return. Out of sight, places continue to exist without us. Houses change. Trees grow. Paths shift. Returning can never restore exactly what has been left behind. And yet we continue to carry it within us.

With *Rizière* (2026–ongoing), this reflection extends to the territory itself. Images of West Bengal are perforated and then traversed by pigments collected in France. The landscape of origin can no longer be reconstructed from its own material. It is reborn through a material that comes from elsewhere. The gesture may seem simple, but it profoundly shifts the question of belonging. Bengal is no longer represented from within itself. It appears through another ground, another geography, another material. The rice fields of Bengal and those of the Camargue enter into resonance.

Biswas understands that a landscape can never be restored exactly as it once was. Rather than reconstructing it, he seeks to produce a third landscape, one that exists nowhere outside the work itself — a space born of their encounter. The perforations, deposits of pigment and accumulations make these passages from one place to another visible. They both shape our inner landscapes and give form to relationships that are now shared across distance.

What we carry with us, what we leave behind. Aniruddha Biswas is less concerned with what we lose than with what continues to circulate. An image, an object, a landscape, a handful of earth can cross borders, change shape and still carry something of the place from which it came. A pile of earth never quite disappears: grain by grain, it shifts and gathers elsewhere, taking another form.

According to the artist, « Becoming (as) Unbecoming — to become, without ever ceasing to crumble. »