

# Rathin Barman

## Unsettled Structures

*Rathin Barman: Unsettled Structures* draws upon decades of the artist's engagement with the architectural legacy of colonialism in Kolkata. Barman takes as his specific subject the once-grand mansions that were built to house newly rich inhabitants of a city consolidated under British rule. In his reliefs and sculpture, Barman begins with observations of facades and structures, including the ornament that distinguishes the sites as particularly local. Over time, he has come to know the buildings' interiors as well as their inhabitants. Barman notes the accretion of rooms—either by division or expansion—and the living solutions devised within. He registers such spatial and functional shifts in wall reliefs and floor sculptures made with tinted concrete, brass inlay, and steel armature. Housing owners and tenants side by side, these homes have become a refuge for migrant and internally displaced populations—people who have sought the city in response to political upheaval, changing of national boundaries, natural disaster, and also economic opportunity. For The Arts Club of Chicago, Barman has produced a room-scaled installation that places the viewer within a maze of archways that suggest how the microcosm of a building reflects the metropolis. The questions raised in this exhibition come at a meaningful time when the neighborhoods of Chicago are similarly being asked to take new forms in response to changing populations.

*Rathin Barman: estructuras inconformes* se basa en décadas de interacción del artista con el legado arquitectónico del colonialismo en Kolkata y en el proceso de reflexión sobre el mismo. Barman toma como tema específico las mansiones que en una época fueron grandiosas, construidas para albergar a los nuevos habitantes ricos de una ciudad consolidada bajo el dominio británico. En sus relieves y esculturas, Barman comienza con observaciones de fachadas y estructuras, incluido el ornamento que distingue a los espacios como predominantemente locales. Con el paso del tiempo, ha llegado tanto a conocer tanto el interior de los edificios como a sus habitantes. Barman nota la acumulación de habitaciones —ya sea por división o expansión— y las soluciones de vida ideadas en su interior. Registra estos cambios espaciales y funcionales en relieves de pared y esculturas de piso hechas con concreto teñido, incrustaciones de latón y armazones de acero. Viviendas que alojan por igual a propietarios e inquilinos, unos junto a otros, estas casas se han convertido en un refugio para las poblaciones migrantes y desplazadas dentro de su propio territorio, como, por ejemplo, personas que han buscado la ciudad en respuesta a la turbulencia política, el cambio de fronteras nacionales, los desastres naturales y también las oportunidades económicas. Para The Arts Club of Chicago, Barman ha creado una instalación a escala de sala que coloca al espectador en un laberinto de arcos que dejan entrever cómo el microcosmos de un edificio refleja la metrópolis. Las preguntas planteadas en esta muestra llegan en un momento significativo en el que a los barrios de Chicago también se les pide que adopten nuevas formas de respuesta a los cambios demográficos.

Rathin Barman: Unsettled Structures  
The Arts Club of Chicago

September 19 – December 22, 2023

1. *Restructured Living Space*, 2021

Charcoal, pigment and brass inlaid on concrete

240 x 128 x 1 in

609.6 x 325.1 x 2.5 cm

120 cast concrete panels, each 16 x 16 x 1 in

2. *One, and the other (Site 2)*, 2016

Coated mild steel, brass and concrete

35 x 23 x 28 in

88.9 x 58.4 x 71.1 cm

3. *One, and the other (Site 3)*, 2016

Coated mild steel, brass and concrete

32 x 25 x 31 in

81.3 x 63.5 x 78.7 cm

4. *One, and the other (Site 4)*, 2016

Coated mild steel, brass and concrete

33 x 24 x 26 in

83.8 x 61 x 66 cm

5. *Unsettled Structure I*, 2023

Brass and painted mild steel

114 1/4 x 236 3/4 x 96 in

290.2 x 601.3 x 243.8 cm

6. *Unsettled Structure II*, 2023

Brass and charcoal on concrete

36 x 48 1/4 x 6 1/2 in

91.4 x 122.6 x 16.5 cm

7. *Unsettled Structure III*, 2023

Brass and charcoal on concrete

27 1/4 x 55 1/4 x 6 1/2 in

69.2 x 140.3 x 16.5 cm

8. *Unsettled Structure IV*, 2023

Brass and charcoal on concrete

44 x 36 3/4 x 6 1/2 in

111.8 x 93.3 x 16.5 cm

9. *Unsettled Structure V*, 2023

Brass and charcoal on concrete

22 3/4 x 68 1/2 x 6 1/2 in

57.8 x 174 x 16.5 cm

10. *Unsettled Structure VI*, 2023

Brass and charcoal on concrete

36 x 57 1/4 x 6 1/2 in

91.4 x 145.4 x 16.5 cm

11. *Space Count IV*, 2023

Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete

16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

12. *Space Count V*, 2023

Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete

16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

13. *Space Count XIII*, 2023

Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete

16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

14. *Space Count XVIII*, 2023

Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete

16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

15. *Space Count VII*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

17. *Space Count XVI*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

16. *Space Count VI*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

18. *Space Count VIII*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

19. *Space Count XIV*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

20. *Space Count XIX*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

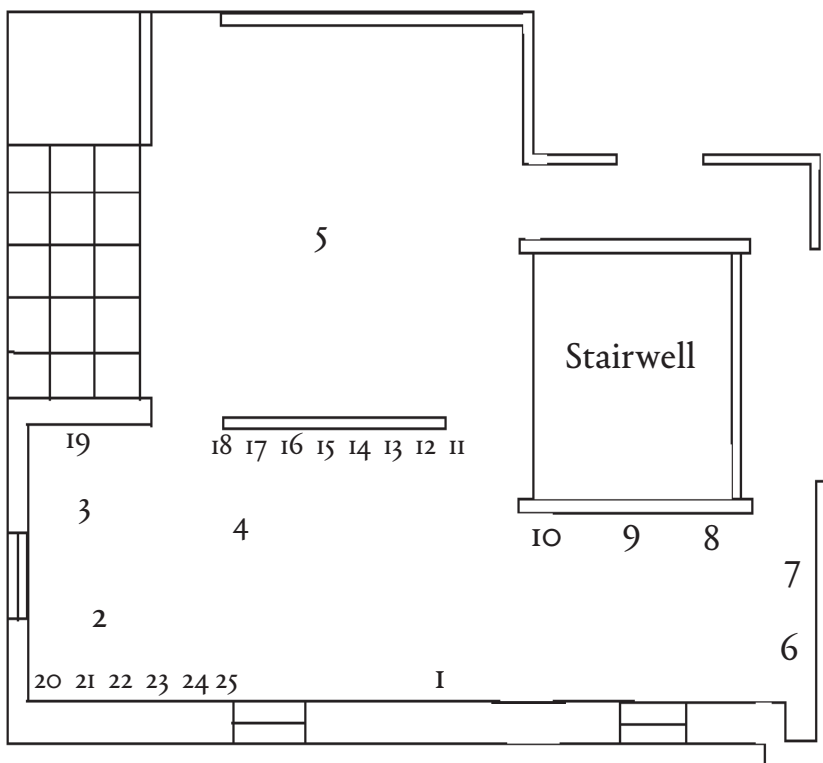
21. *Space Count III*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

22. *Space Count XII*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

23. *Space Count XX*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

24. *Space Count X*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches

25. *Space Count XI*, 2023  
Charcoal on brass inlaid concrete  
16 x 16 x 1.25 inches



Rathin Barman lives and works in Kolkata, India. Barman completed both undergraduate and graduate degrees at Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata; and has been exhibited in select solo exhibitions such as *There is Now a Wall* (2022), *Dimensional Distortion* (2020), *Experimenter*, Kolkata; and *Home, and a Home*, curated by Suman Gopinath, Singapore Biennale, Singapore (2016). Select group exhibitions include The 10th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT10); Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia; and *Deeper within its Silence*, curated by Sumakshi Singh, Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi.

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