



Boy Without Reflection 2004
305 x 152 cm
120 x 60 inches
oil on canvas

After Dark (catalogue excerpt)

After Dark Exhibition
(curated by Gayatri Sinha)
28 April to 31 May 2004
Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai

a review by Gayatri Sinha

In the painting *Boy Without Reflection* the centrality of vision belongs to a young boy-man caught up in the vision an apocalypse. In Ranbir Kaleka language and interpretative quality belong to the realm of metaphor and myth, rather than text or reportage. The large howling dog that straddles the painting dominates and determines the destiny of the other elements. In Kaleka's painting water as reflection, multiples and distorts, even as it serves as a mirror image. In the baying, mutilated dogs, the wounded cocks, Kaleka presents an image of devastation, that relates to the boy-man who sits impotently, even as miniaturised cities are dominated by beasts on the rampage As the only human interlocutor the boy man is a helpless visitant, observing but unable to reign in the violence. From the implicit comment of contemporary India Kaleka's vision expands laterally and inwards.

This painting is as much about the forces of conflict as it is about a society rendered infantile, violated and impotent.Like Tomayo's dogs painted in the early 1940's the baying dogs in Kaleka's painting pronounce a universal violence. His work also invites with the girl and dog series of Paola Rego of the 1980's with their manifest symbols of sexual and social violence.