

**Henry Lee**

B. 1981, Singapore



**An Awakening**

2022

Charcoal, Pencil and Acrylic on Canvas  
H 101.4 cm x 76.2 cm



**Bodhi/Sacred Fig (*Ficus religiosa*)**

*A fast-growing, large semi-evergreen with a majestic crown, gigantic aerial roots and distinctive heart-shaped leaves, the bodhi (also peepul, ashwattha) tree or sacred fig is native to India and Indo-China, and is revered in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. It is believed that Buddha attained enlightenment while meditating under an ancient sacred fig tree at Bodh Gaya, which then became known as the bodhi tree (tree of awakening) and a sacred pilgrimage site for devotees. This work is symbolic of the journey of a seeker striving towards enlightenment and infinity. The bodhi tree, and next to it, the Mahabodhi Temple built to commemorate Buddha's enlightenment, appear swathed in mist in the distant horizon, while a fig sapling emerges from an earthly tangle of bodhi roots and vines in the foreground. For those just beginning on their path towards personal cultivation, enlightenment may sometimes seem like an unattainable goal.*