

Art Brussels 2017, April 21-23 - Stand D05

Waseem Ahmed *Insinuation*



Untitled, 2016, pigment colors, gold leaf on archival wasli paper, 147.3 x 99 cm



Untitled, 2016, pigment colors, silver leaf on archival

Born in 1976 in Hyderabad Sindh in a family who had migrated from India to Pakistan during partition in 1947, Waseem Ahmed is eyewitness of Sindhi Mahajir conflicts since his childhood, and had several traumatic experiences.

Today the artist is a key player on the scene of contemporary miniature painting. Ahmed joins thus a number of South Asian artists that use tradition as a means towards innovation. Ahmed's works reveal their complexity through their multiple reading levels and, beyond their aesthetic, they tackle social and political issues faced by the Islamic world, to which he is an eyewitness on daily basis.

Crossing cultural borders, Ahmed's repertoire consists of elements which stimulate the semantic reading playing with metaphors and analogies. The animal shape, bearded man, blood splattered surface, burka, black area indicating man's dark side, letters from the Arabic-Farsi-Urdu alphabet suggesting the "religious" rhetoric, revolvers and pistols, rosary, suicide-bomber, suicide-jacket, verdant vegetation of promised paradise, all form Ahmed's visual vocabulary. From these particulars Ahmed generates the universal concern about oppression of the weak by the powerful, of the East or the West, whether they are individuals, groups or countries.

More recently the subjects of Western classical mythology have appeared in the vocabulary of the artist with forms sometimes borrowed from famous reinterpreted and decontextualized ancient sculptures.

For Art Brussels, Ahmed presents a group of recent works, entitled *Insinuation*, shown for the first time. At the center of his reflection is the relation of man to the world, as well as the nature of his violence, and the concept of border as a limit imposed by man. Among the mythological figures that inspired *Insinuation*, Perseus and Medusa and the Greek god Pan. Half-man half-goat, protector of shepherds and herds, Pan is an ambiguous deity with unstable character and libidinous inclination. A monstrous demi-god who devotes himself to deviant practices with young humans, goats, and nymphs, such as Syrinx, who metamorphosed into a reed to escape Pan.

WASEEM AHMED CURRENTLY EXHIBITS IN MEMENTOS: ARTISTS' SOUVENIRS, ARTEFACTS AND OTHER CURIOSITIES, A GROUP EXHIBITION CURATED BY JENS HOFFMANN AND PIPER MARSHALL FOR THE FLAGSHIP ARTISTIC PROJECT SITUATED WITHIN THE FAIR.

Waseem Ahmed was born in 1976, lives and works in Lahore. He studied at the National College of Arts in Lahore. Gowen Contemporary, who is the only representative gallery of the artist in Europe, held exhibitions by Ahmed in 2010, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. Ahmed's works can be found in important private and public collections, such as the Asian Art Museum Berlin; The British Museum London; The Virginia Whiles Collections, UK, The Anupam Podar Collections, India, The Salima Hashmi, Pakistan. Ahmed was the first artist in residency at the Asian Art Museum Berlin participating in the Humboldt Lab project in 2014-2015. The project included a solo show by Ahmed curated by Martina Stoye at the end of his residency. The artist was finalist for the Sovereign Asian Art Prize in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, and nominated to the Jameel Prize in 2011-2012.