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ART

TRADITION, TECHNIQUE, TECHNOLOGY – I

Contemporary artists from Pakistan

Featuring Ayesha Durrani, Ahsan Jamal, Amjad A Talpur and Sumaira Tazeen

Aicon Gallery, New York

July 16 - August 16

Opening Reception, Wednesday July 16, 2008, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

*Ayesha Durrani will be in attendance

New subjects are being broached in an age old art form. Questions are being asked and all kinds of issues are being raised, may they be political, social or gender based. There is a whole new vocabulary of symbolism coming into being.
-Ayesha Durrani

New York, July 16, 2008 - Aicon Gallery, 206 5th Avenue, 5th Floor, New York, presents a group show of contemporary Pakistani miniaturists; artists Ayesha Durrani, Ahsan Jamal, Amjad Ali Talpur and Sumaira Tazeen. These artists are being presented for the first time at Aicon Gallery, though many of them have exhibited internationally already. This exhibition is a collaboration with Canvas Gallery, Karachi.

A tradition of the past, miniature painting is the most popular genre in today's art world. Unavoidable to all who venture into the art practice—artist, collector, and viewer alike—this rich sense of history exists beyond the formal qualities of the works. As with all modern art, there is a complex, often over powering

relationship between this practice and its history. This popularity is in part a result of this relationship.

Priding itself like most societies on its rich heritage, Pakistan struggles with the dilemma of how to deal with her history. Past can turn into a disturbing and often damaging force for all spheres of life. The past presents itself as an ideal solution or formula for challenging the present and this accumulation of conventions and well tried methods can pose a burden for those living in a post modern age.

Working separately in Lahore and Karachi, these four artists reference technique, taste and transformation of heritage as a means of identifying the urgency to address these issues of history and tradition. The artists included in this exhibition each take a unique approach to miniature painting and its history that both challenges the viewer and allows for individual interpretations.

Amjad Ali Talpur, for example, both contemporizes and converts the format of miniature painting into an unusual form as he completely abandons the methods of the past. Rather than creating a small scale piece with a variety of motifs, Talpur constructs works as visual and actual puzzles. In turn, these puzzles invite and require the viewer to participate in the rearranging of its components.

Ahsan Jamal similarly plays with the relationship between miniature painting and tradition by applying the technique of Pardakht (the conventional scheme of building shades with tiny marks of a single hair brush) with a modern tool. However, Jamal moves beyond simply modifying or mutilating the tradition, he allows it to develop a personal, yet contemporary imagery.

Sumaira Tazeen again ventures into the art of miniature making, yet takes a more primitive and primordial approach. Classified as miniature based on scale, her imagery presents a personal narrative—identifying with a woman's world in a male dominated society. In her color, however, Tazeen defies traditional decorative dimensions of the genre.

Similarly, Ayesha Durrani explores the female body through faceless mannequin and roses. She comments on the traditional role of women in a conventionally patriarchal society.

Aicon Gallery 206 Fifth Avenue 5th Floor New York, NY 10010 (United States)

E-mail: newyork@aicongallery.com

Web: www.aicongallery.com (Open in new window | Open without leave this page)

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