

## Abdullah M. I. Syed

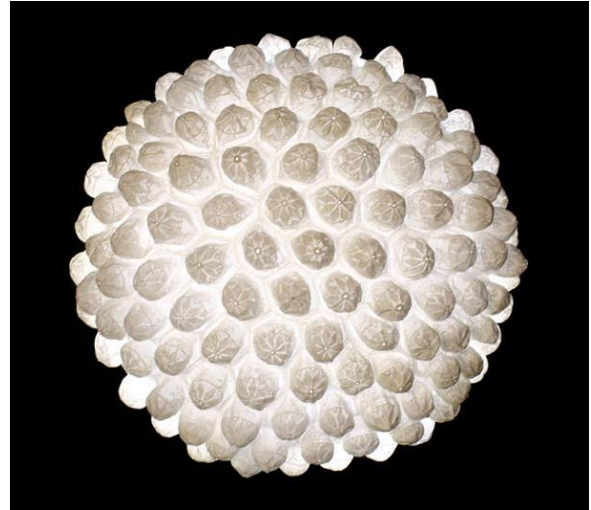
### *Scotiabank Nuit Blanche | 10 for 10<sup>th</sup> – Memory Lane*

October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, 6:00PM – 6:00AM

TIFF Bell Lightbox (Cinema 5)

350 King Street West, Toronto, ON M5V 3C6, Canada

Aicon Gallery is delighted to announce the participation of **Abdullah M. I. Syed** in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of **Scotiabank Nuit Blanche**, an annual all-night arts festival in which hundreds of Contemporary artists transform the city of Toronto for an evening. As part of the festival's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary milestone, the City of Toronto is collaborating with 10 major cultural partners and 10 Contemporary artists in a city-wide exhibition called *10 for 10<sup>th</sup> – Memory Lane*, curated by **Che Kothari** and supported by **TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival)**. *Memory Lane* explores the rich and textured terrain of memory, the personal, the shared, the sacred, the nostalgic, the iconic and the political. As part of this exhibition, Syed will unveil an immersive sculptural light installation entitled *Light upon Light* at the prestigious TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto. Aicon Gallery is proud to support this collaboration and looking forward to introducing Syed's work to the roughly one million visitors expected at Scotiabank Nuit Blanche 2015.



**Abdullah M. I. Syed**, *Light upon Light*, 2015, Hand-stitched white skull-caps, Perspex sphere and LED light, 60 in. (Dia)

Syed's sculptural installation *Light upon Light* consists of a glowing spherical moon, whose surface is comprised of hundreds of prayer caps (taqiyah) emanating light from within. The work rises from Syed's memories and fascination with the full moon, its reflection and his obsession with finding ever more perfect parables, shapes and materials that are praised throughout history for their purity and Divine attributes. The arabesque design of the caps follows Islamic tessellation principles repeated seamlessly, suggesting the remembrance of Divine unity.

As a light sculpture, it addresses Islamic consciousness using signs of divine beauty (jamāl) and majesty (jalāl). It reflects a lifelong pursuit of the transient nature of beauty and perfection, presenting the viewer with a physical experience of a concept that is sublime and abstract in nature. These qualities are created as a halo, inviting viewers to both contemplate and be surrounded by the work, which is reflected in a pool of ocean-blue glass below. The suspended sculpture and the reflective surface on the floor are expressions of the balancing act and harmonious spiritual dualities of the Islamic concepts of beauty and majesty, in an era when Islam finds itself constantly drawn toward narrative extremes.

**Abdullah M. I. Syed** is an artist, designer and independent curator. Born in Karachi, Pakistan, he lives and works in Sydney, Australia. Syed has had seven solo exhibitions and participated in many international group exhibitions. He has been awarded the Individual Artist of Oklahoma Award for Installation, USA and UNSW's Postgraduate Research Scholarship. Syed holds a Ph.D. (2015) and MFA (2009) from the UNSW Art & Design, Sydney, Australia and M.Ed. (2001) and B.A. in Design (1999) from the University of Central Oklahoma, USA.

More information about Scotiabank Nuit Blanche can be found at: <http://www.scotiabanknuitblanche.ca/>

Please contact Aicon Gallery ([Andrew@Aicongallery.com](mailto:Andrew@Aicongallery.com)) for more information about the artist.