



PRESS RELEASE

Profane Illuminations; solo exhibition

MUHAMMAD ZEESHAN

Aicon Gallery, New York

March 6 – April 13

Opening reception, Thursday March 6, 2008, 6-9 p.m.

Conversation with Artist and Jonathan Goodman, Thursday March 6, 2008, 7 pm
open to the public

Jonathan Goodman is a New York City-based editor and writer who specializes in modern and contemporary Asian art. He regularly reviews for *Art in America* and *Sculpture*, as well as writing about south Asian art for *Arts India*. He currently teaches at Pratt Institute and the Parsons School of Design, where he works with art students on thesis writing, contemporary art criticism, and contemporary culture. He is traveling to China this summer to further research contemporary art there.

***Artist will be in attendance**

NEW YORK, March 6, 2008- Aicon Gallery, 206 5th Avenue, 5th Floor, New York will present a solo show by Muhammad Zeeshan from March 6 through April 13, 2008. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, March 6 from 6-9 p.m. This is the artist's first solo exhibition both at Aicon Gallery and in the United States. This exhibition is a collaboration with Canvas Gallery of Karachi.

Whether through hallucination, reverie, or the staging of an interior psychological theatre, Muhammad Zeeshan engages in conscious acts of self-dramatization that constitute a resistance to patriarchal norms even as they open up unprecedented domains of pleasure. Balancing precariously on the seesaw between the conventions of art and the feeling of the viewer, the artist desires simultaneously to console and shock his parent culture. Zeeshan presents objects as fetishes from a novel point of view with a sophisticated urban sensibility. The erotic art in this show arouses us in many different ways, but in particular through its focus on details and through its motifs of transformation, whether theatrical or religious.

Predator and prey coexist in a symbiotic embrace in his work, presenting a scene of unquestionable horror and violence and yet portraying a paradoxical yielding of flesh with flagrant sensuality. Zeeshan utilizes the avant-garde methods of the twentieth century ironically, making miniatures that are habitats for unusual objects and playing clever games with viewers, deliberately provoking their 'bad habit' of interpreting the work. To present the situation precisely, Zeeshan appears to be unlearning the reflexes of *homo ideologicus*, joyfully giving up himself to the instincts

of *homo ludens*. Even after becoming aware of having been caught in the trap of his humour, one is induced to stay by the sheer poetic richness of his work.

Zeeshan was born in 1980 in Mirpurkhas, a south eastern city in Pakistan. This was also the home province and stronghold of the late Benazir Bhutto, the Muslim world's first female leader. The artist lives and works in Lahore now. He has exhibited internationally since 2003 and has three upcoming shows this year including a preview at Rohtas II Gallery in Lahore and solo show at Anant Gallery in Mumbai. Zeeshan has a BFA in miniature painting from the National College of Art in Lahore, Pakistan.

For further information and images please contact Süreyya Wille, Artist Relations Associate, at 212 725 6092 or sureyya@aicongallery.com.