

Adeela Suleman *Not Everyone's Heaven*

Aicon Gallery Exhibition May 25th – June 24th, 2017
Press Preview & V.I.P. Reception: Thursday, May 25th 6:00pm – 8:00pm
35 Great Jones St., New York NY 10012

Aicon Gallery is proud to present From ***Not Everyone's Heaven***, a major new solo exhibition by Karachi-based artist **Adeela Suleman**. The exhibition hinges on a new body of work made up of meticulously painted landscapes and battle scenes, either tinged or awash with blood, framed within or painted directly on objects such as hand-carved window frames and decorative plates found by Suleman in the bazaars of Karachi, Pakistan. The works address the ways in which the continuous and escalating cycle of violence and unrest plaguing Pakistan is not only leaving its mark on the awareness and memories of individuals, but has begun seeping into the very spaces and landscapes of its citizens' daily experience and collective consciousness.

Over a career now spanning nearly 20 years, Adeela Suleman has returned again and again to the juxtaposition of nature and violence. The recurring motif is fitting given the country in which Suleman lives and works. Pakistan plays host to some of the most breathtakingly beautiful natural landscapes in the world, yet with each passing year, the world has also grown increasingly familiar with the country's darker side, in which religious and sectarian divides have led to ever increasingly horrific scenes of violence and bloodshed. As the outside world looks on in horror at the escalating violence and tragedy, the residents of Karachi, Lahore and the rural countryside have begun to sink into a sort of necessity of acceptance of the chaos that has become a tragic part of daily life. This situation in which one becomes numb to the constant threat of violence simply in order to continue to live a semblance of a normal life, is a theme often central to Suleman's work and is reflected in the macabre and haunting video *Don't Despair, Not Even Over the Fact that You Don't Despair*, in which one can hardly fathom the casual horror unfolding in front of us.

This seemingly inherent natural state of violence perhaps manifests itself most powerfully in Suleman's new series of works *Not Everyone's Heaven*. In these pieces, ornately hand-carved window frames open onto scenes of stunningly beautiful landscapes from Pakistan's Northern provinces, which unfortunately have seen some of the most appalling acts of terror and violence over the past 10 years. Thus, Suleman's landscapes have become tinged with blood and populated by historically sourced warriors doing battle, undeterred by the intense beauty which surrounds them. The paring of these landscapes with elements of blood and violence, sees Suleman posing a difficult question that has likely become all too common to many living amidst the increasing tensions and instabilities of South Asia and the Middle East. That being, whether continuous violence throughout history is as natural a part of the human condition as the physical world that surround us.



Adeela Suleman, *Not Everyone's Heaven - 3*, 2017, Wood, Polish & Enamel Paint Hardener and Lacquer, 80 x 46 x 5 in.

This seemingly natural condition of violence and conflict finds further resonance in the figures found doing battle in Suleman's landscapes or lying prone and bloody upon her ornate plates. These figures, painted in the miniaturist tradition, seem to arise from both deep history, i.e. crusaders and medieval Islamic warriors, as well as from contemporary images of the carnage and aftermath of contemporary scenes of terror and violence. The fact that it is often impossible to tell who is fighting who, who is on which side, or indeed when these scenes might be taking place, points once again to the ubiquity of violent conflict that stretches across our entire shared history as a species and shows no signs of disappearing even in the so called modern and civilized societies of today.



Adeela Suleman, *I Will Meet You by the Water* - 7, 2017, Metal Cleaver with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 5.5 x 12.5 in.

In another set of works, Suleman has painted a similar series of stunningly pristine vistas of the natural beauty of Northern Pakistan, including the Swat Valley and Kashmir, directly onto a set of sharpened weighty meat cleavers. The heft, menace and purpose of these objects once again belies the ominous underpinnings of the beautiful landscapes of mountains, lakes, and sky painted upon them in the sense that these majestic areas often play host to some of the most shocking violence in the whole of South Asia. Paired with Suleman's plates, covered in scenes of mass carnage, death and decapitation, either from historical or contemporary sources, these works pose yet another uncomfortable supposition by linking the communal pleasure of preparing and consuming food with the sinister pleasure certain groups seem to derive from sowing violence and chaos throughout the ages. Throughout the exhibition, Suleman's works tread upon this knife-edge between natural beauty and ever-present violence and chaos that seem to be a permanent fixture of our shared humanity, transcending regions, cultures, religions, and history itself.

Adeela Suleman studied Sculpture at the Indus Valley School of Art and completed a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Karachi. She is currently the Coordinator of Vasl Artists' Collective in Karachi, in addition to being the Coordinator of the Fine Art Department at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. Suleman has participated extensively with group and solo exhibitions worldwide, including *An Atlas of Mirrors - Singapore Biennale* at the Singapore Art Museum, *Phantoms of Asia* at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, the *2013 Asian Art Biennial* at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art, *Hanging Fire - Contemporary Art from Pakistan* at The Asia Society, New York; Gallery Rohtas 2, Lahore; Canvas Gallery, Karachi; Gandhara Art Space, Karachi; Alberto Peola Gallery, Torino; Aicon Gallery, New York; and, the International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, Bologna, Italy (2008). Reviews and features of work appear in Artforum and the New York Times, among other publications. The artist lives and works in Karachi, Pakistan.

Please contact Aicon Gallery (Andrew@Aicongallery.com) for more information.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Not Everyone's Heaven - 1*, 2017, Wood, Polish & Enamel
Paint Hardener and Lacquer, 87.5 x 37.5 x 5.5 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Not Everyone's Heaven - 2*, 2017, Wood, Polish & Enamel
Paint Hardener and Lacquer, 82.5 x 48.5 x 5 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Not Everyone's Heaven - 3*, 2017, Wood, Polish & Enamel Paint Hardener and Lacquer, 80 x 46 x 5 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Not Everyone's Heaven - 4*, 2017, Wood, Polish & Enamel Paint Hardener and Lacquer, 86 x 51 x 5 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Not Everyone's Heaven - 5*, 2017, Wood, Polish & Enamel Paint Hardener and Lacquer, 88.5 x 62.5 x 5 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Untitled (Plate - 1)*, 2017, Wood, Ceramic Plate with Enamel Paint Hardener and Lacquer, 47.5 x 31.5 x 3 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Untitled (Plate - 2)*, 2017, Wood, Ceramic Plate with Enamel Paint Hardener and Lacquer, 30 x 36 x 3.5 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Untitled (Serving Dish - 1)*, 2017, Found Vintage Ceramic Plate with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 12 x 17 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Untitled (Serving Dish - 2)*, 2017, Found Vintage Ceramic Plate with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 11 x 14 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Untitled (Serving Dish - 3)*, 2017, Found Vintage Ceramic Plate with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 11 x 15 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Untitled (Plate Group - 1)*, 2017, Found Vintage Ceramic Plates with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 7 x 7 in. (x6)

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Untitled (Plate Group - 2)*, 2017, Found Vintage Ceramic Plates with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 7 x 7 in. (x4)

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *I Will Meet You by the Water - 2*, 2017, Metal Cleaver with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 5.5 x 12.5 in.

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Adeela Suleman, *I Will Meet You by the Water - 3*, 2017, Metal Cleaver with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 5.5 x 12.5 in.

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Adeela Suleman, *I Will Meet You by the Water - 5*, 2017, Metal Cleaver with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 5.5 x 12.5 in.

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Adeela Suleman, *I Will Meet You by the Water - 8*, 2017, Metal Cleaver with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 5.5 x 12.5 in.

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Adeela Suleman, *I Will Meet You by the Water* - 9, 2017, Metal Cleaver with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 5.5 x 12.5 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *I Will Meet You by the Water - 10*, 2017, Metal Cleaver with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 5.5 x 12.5 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *I Will Meet You by the Water* - 12, 2017, Metal Cleaver with Enamel Paint and Hardener, 5.5 x 12.5 in.

Adeela Suleman



Adeela Suleman, *Don't Despair, Even Over the Fact that You Don't Despair*, 2015, Single channel video, 1:40 min.

ADEELA SULEMAN

Born 1970 in Karachi, Pakistan

The mainstay of Suleman's artistry explores a series of dichotomies that point to the fragile and fleeting ephemerality of life. By juxtaposing her intricate – initially pastoralized scenes as rendered in the filigree tradition of Islamic art – against the hard, formidable qualities of the stainless steel medium, Suleman's sculpture is reminiscent of the precarious nature of the human condition inherent in the flux of societies.

The recurring motifs in Suleman's work – organic subjects such as birds and flowers – form detailed, repetitive patterns, which are replete with symbolic meaning. Abstracted notions of loss and disappearance quietly resonate through her sculptures. In lieu of tombs, memorials and funerals, the works confront our earthly fears, but remain suggestive of transcendental relief. They may be seen simultaneously as symbolic representations of the coexistence between love of nature and the chaos of man, in addition to the fragmented documentaries referencing recent violent and catastrophic occurrences within the artist's sociopolitical landscape.

Adeela Suleman studied Sculpture at the Indus Valley School of Art and completed a Master's degree in International Relations from the University of Karachi. She is currently the Coordinator of Vasl Artists' Collective in Karachi, in addition to being the Coordinator of the Fine Art Department at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. Suleman has participated extensively with group and solo exhibitions worldwide, including *An Atlas of Mirrors - Singapore Biennale* at the Singapore Art Museum, *Phantoms of Asia* at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, the *2013 Asian Art Biennial* at the National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art, *Hanging Fire – Contemporary Art from Pakistan* at The Asia Society, New York; Gallery Rohtas 2, Lahore; Canvas Gallery, Karachi; Gandhara Art Space, Karachi; Alberto Peola Gallery, Torino; Aicon Gallery, New York; and, the International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, Bologna, Italy (2008). Reviews and features of work appear in Artforum and the New York Times, among other publications. The artist lives and works in Karachi, Pakistan.

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Education

1999	MA in International Relations, University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan
1995	BFA in Sculpture with Distinction, Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture, Karachi, Pakistan
1992	Bachelor of Arts, St Joseph College. Karachi. Pakistan

Select Solo Exhibitions

2017	<i>Solo Show</i> , Davide Gallo Gallery, Milan, Italy (September 2017) <i>Not Everyone's Heaven</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York, USA <i>Fragmented Landscape</i> , Gandhara Art Space, Karachi, Pakistan.
2015	<i>Dream of Carnage</i> , Canvas Gallery. Karachi, Pakistan
2014	<i>Towards the End</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York, U.S.
2013	<i>Impulse</i> , Aicon Gallery Booth I-5 at Pulse Art Fair, New York, U.S.
2012	<i>I had no choice but to hear you</i> , Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan <i>Solo Exhibition</i> , Alberto Peola Arte Contemporanea, Torino, Italy
2011	<i>Recent Works</i> , Aicon Gallery, London, in conjunction with site-specific sculpture <i>Drained</i> (2011), for the Manchester Cathedral as part of Asia Triennial Manchester, U.K.
2010	<i>After All It's Always Somebody Else...</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York, U.S.
2008	<i>Uncertainty</i> , Rohtas 2, Lahore, Pakistan
2007	<i>Confinement</i> , Commune Artist Colony, Karachi, Pakistan

Select Group Exhibitions

- 2017 *The Artist / Knight*, Gassbeek Castle Museum, Belgium (Upcoming)
I don't want to be there when it happens, Curated by Mikala Tai and Kate Warren - 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney, Australia
Witness, Karachi Biennale, Karachi, Pakistan
South Asian Design - Exploring how South Asian traditional crafts are inspiring exciting contemporary art, design and fashion, Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester, UK
- 2016 *An Atlas of Mirrors*, Singapore Biennale, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
Hopes of Paradise, Contemporary Art of Pakistan, Grosvenor Gallery, London, UK
The 70's Pakistan Radioactive Decade, Curated by Niilofar Farrukh & Amin Gulgee. Amin Gulgee Gallery, Karachi Pakistan
- 2015 *The Lay of The Land*, Curated by Anushka Rajendran, Latitude28 gallery, New Delhi
Headlines, Curated by Munawar Ali Syed, April 3-13, at the Frere Hall, Karachi
- 2013 *SEA Triennale 2013*, Curated by Jim Supangkat. Suwarno Wisetrotomo, Asikin Hasan, Rizki A. Zaelani, and Rikrik Kusmara. National Gallery of Indonesia. Jakarta, Indonesia
Everyday Life - Asian Art Biennial, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Art, Taiwan
- 2012 *Phantom of Asia*, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, U.S.
Band Baaja Baarat, IVS Gallery, Dubai Art Fair, Dubai, UAE
Indian Art Summit, New Delhi, India
Mein – the Artist and the Self, Koel Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2011 *Reprise*, Aicon Gallery, New York, U.S.
Asia Triennial Manchester 11, Manchester Cathedral, U.K.
Home Spun, Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India
Group Show, Drawing Room Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
Mad in Karachi 3D, Art Chowk Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2010 *Rising Tide*, Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi, Pakistan
In Defisa, Fondazione 107, Torino, Italy
Svelando l'Utopia, Alberto Peola Arte Contemporanea, Torino, Italy
Resemble Reassemble, Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India
- 2009 *Failing States: Recent works by Tazeen Qayyum*, Aicon Gallery, London, U.K.
Steel Life, La Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy
Hanging Fire: Contemporary Art from Pakistan, Asia Society, New York, U.S.
The Emperor's New Clothes: Dress, Politics and Identity in Contemporary Pakistani Art, Talwar Gallery, New York, U.S.
Signs taken for Wonders: Recent Art from India and Pakistan, Aicon, London, U.K.
- 2008 *Farida Batool, Adeela Suleman and Tazeen Qayyum*, Aicon Gallery, New York
Tradition, Technique, Technology – II; Contemporary artists from Pakistan
Featuring Farida Batool, Ayaz Jokhio and Adeela Suleman, Aicon, Palo Alto, U.S.
Video Loop 08', Barcelona, Spain
Fiera Internazionale d'Arte Contemporanea International Exhibition of Contemporary Art-Bologna, Italy
Women of Light, Galerie Davide Gallo, Berlin, Germany
- 2007 Preview Berlin, The emerging art fair, Berlin, Germany
An Intensity of Space & Substance, National Art Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan
Love, National Art Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan
Articulating the Subtext, Alliance Francaise, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2006 *Flights of Fancy*, Royaat Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
Body, Amin Gulgee Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
Calligraphy, Amin Gulgee Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2005 *Urban/Culture*, CP Open Biennale, Jakarta, Indonesia
Beyond Borders, National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai
- 2004 *Spielen mit Geladenem Gewehr* (Playing with the loaded gun), Kunsthalle Fridericianum Kassel, Germany
- 2003 *Twenty-four Shots per second*, Kara Film Fest, Karachi, Pakistan
43rd Premio Suzzara, Associazione Galleria Del Premio Suzzara, Italy
Playing with the loaded Gun, Apex Art, New York
Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2002 *Imagined Workshop*, Second Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial, Fukuoka, Japan
- 2001 *The Thakhti Show*, Freer Hall, Karachi, Pakistan

Collections & Public Commissions

Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, Florida, U.S.

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India

Devi Art Foundation, Haryana, India

Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi, Pakistan

Flame Towers, Baku, Azerbaijan

Four Seasons Hotel, New Delhi, India

Art in Embassies, U.S. Dept. of State, Islamabad & Karachi, Pakistan

Barts Health NHS Trust, London, U.K.