

Guns & Roses

Mumbai Exhibition, October 26th – November 1st, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, October 26th, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Chatterjee & Lal, 01/18 Kamal Mansion Floor 1, Arthur Bunder Road Colaba, Mumbai

Aicon Gallery proudly presents our second exhibition in India, *Guns & Roses*, at **Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai**, opening on October 26th, 2017. It features artists **Saks Afridi, Anila Quayyum Agha, Jagannath Panda, Promotesh Das Pulak, Revati Singh, Sujith S. N., Adeela Suleman, Abdullah M. I. Syed, and Salman Toor**. The exhibition is part of a collaborative exchange with Chatterjee & Lal, whose sister exhibition we enthusiastically look forward to hosting in 2018 in New York. The exhibition explores the delicate interplay and shifting borderlands between cruelty and beauty, violence and celebration, and chaos and order in a world of ever increasing social fragmentation and political instability.

Whether the result of seemingly endless and more horrific natural disasters fueled by our inability to deal with an increasingly unpredictable climate, or the proliferation and escalation of both hot and cold conflicts between nation states and the sectarian factions within them, it is difficult today to escape the sense that the forces of chaos, intolerance, and violence are firmly in ascendance. Indeed, in our current circumstances it can often seem that simply getting through a single day without some terrible new natural or manmade catastrophe is a triumph in itself for the forces of order and humanity. This exhibition seeks to understand how it is possible in today's world for artists, particularly those practicing in regions prone to sociopolitical instability, to strike a balance between art, usually perceived as a force for humanism, understanding and beauty, and the increasingly depressing and violent feedback loop of external events in which we now find ourselves.



Jagannath Panda, *Untitled*, 2016, Mixed media on canvas, 48 x 36 in.

In Dhaka-based artist **Promotesh Das Pulak's** sculptural pieces, composed of combat equipment assembled by small Shola flowers, usually used as a decorative material for weddings, he deftly juxtaposes the organic with the militaristic, suggesting a betrayal of innocence and beauty that he finds in the current social and political state of his home country Bangladesh. Similarly, Karachi-based **Adeela Suleman** has painted a series of stunningly pristine vistas of the natural beauty of Northern Pakistan directly onto a set of sharpened weighty meat cleavers. The heft, menace and purpose of these objects 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.

Amidst this current backdrop of global instability, **Anila Quayyum Agha's** work turns inward towards the intricacies of the human condition, reflecting on the complexities of love, loss and gains, personally experienced by the artist over the past two years. Through the use of a variety of media, from large sculptural installations to embroidered drawings, she explores the deeply entwined political relationships between gender, culture, religion, labor and social codes. Addressing a similar set of concerns, Brooklyn-based artist **Salman Toor** uses his paintings of chaotic, surreal, and sometimes grotesque social gatherings, brimming with figures who blur the lines between cultural identity and stereotype, to reflect upon how our individual



Adeela Suleman, *I Will Meet You by the Water 8*, 2017, Meat cleaver with enamel paint and hardener, 5.5 x 12.5 in.

cultural baggage can all too easily spill over into attitudes of intolerance and violence at the collective level if not successfully mediated.

Prominent New Delhi-based artist **Jagannath Panda**'s work often reflects the rapid changes of his environs, not just in his local area of Gurgaon, but within India as a whole. His work typically expresses the anxieties of displacement and alienation, where human progress collides with nature, humans with animals, and the sacred with the profane. Based in Karachi and Sydney, **Abdullah M. I. Syed**'s practice is founded in

personal observations and experiences as a Muslim male artist straddling multiple and frequently conflicting cultures. His work explores political instability, religious and secular tensions, Orientalism, Post-Colonialism, Capitalism, diasporic issues and the tragedy of 9/11 as powerful factors in the construction of contemporary Muslim identity. Throughout his work, Syed deploys a host of recurring metaphors, symbols, imagery, including box-cutter blades arranged in Islamic geometric patterns, to construct a labyrinthine yet self-referential evolving narrative of personal and shared cultural conflicts.

Aicon Gallery's curatorial vision begins in the Indian sub-continent but reaches outwards internationally from there. The New York gallery provides a vital platform for Modern and Contemporary artists from South Asia, as well as the Middle East and, finally, diaspora artists, to realize their vision in a global and ever-shifting world. Alongside in-depth, focused solo shows, the gallery presents a program of curated group exhibitions that are international in their scope and ambition. The program deliberately links together art produced recently with art made in the latter half of the 20th Century. Through this, we hope to produce unexpected congruencies, shed light on multiple modernisms and nuanced designations of "contemporary".

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