

# LATITUDE 28

A Gallery for Contemporary Arts and Ideas

F208, First Floor, Lado Sarai, New Delhi – 110030

latitude28@gmail.com | www.latitude28.com

## PRESS RELEASE



## **Dissensus**

Hit Man Gurung | Khadim Ali | Neda Tavallaei | Priyanka D'Souza | Veer Munshi |  
Waseem Ahmed

Venue: Bikaner House, Pandara Road, India Gate, New Delhi - 110011

Exhibition Dates: 7<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

Latitude 28 begins this season with the group show, 'Dissensus' that continues its commitment to emerging artists, contextualizing their work alongside eminent artists and also brings acclaimed international artists to India for the first time. This year we are introducing Priyanka D'Souza, a young MSU Baroda trained artist, who responds to deeply political and social contemporary issues through work that is inspired by Mughal miniatures. Her work is on display alongside Veer Munshi's collaboration with Kashmiri craftsmen — another instance of maintaining continuity between tradition and contemporary liberal, humanist ideas. Also presented are works by Australia-based artist Khadim Ali, who was recently featured in Art Asia Pacific's list of top 40 artists under 40 in the Asia Pacific region and acclaimed artist Waseem Ahmed. 'Dissensus' also marks the first India exhibition for Iranian artist Neda Tavallaei, who addresses her feminist concerns through the language of Persian miniatures.

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## CURATORIAL PREMISE

Dissensus brings together works by six artists who have been witness to the political and identity crises in regions of ongoing conflict — Nepal, Afghanistan, Iran, Kashmir in India and Pakistan. Even when the issues that are of immediate concern to them range from gender, territorial dispute, anxieties regarding cultural annihilation and ethnic marginalization, these artists withdraw into immediate, everyday contexts, and markers of cultural identity to construct quiet acts of dissent away from the central political stage. These intimate testimonies and observations employ the aesthetic to develop a micro-poetics of the stakes borne by civilians whose concerns are overlooked in media-narratives driven by political figureheads, capital and diplomatic ties. It is not coincidental that several artists find a language in the subtlety of the miniature tradition to voice their politics. Scale and detail evoke the marginal locations of their themes, and the multitude that is united in these narratives.

## ARTISTS' STATEMENTS

### **Hit Man Gurung**

"The Government of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal raised \$4.1 billion in relief and rebuilding funds. It has been more than a year since the earthquake and still thousands of families are living in poor conditions and temporary shelters. The process of reconstruction and resettlement by the government has been slow and leisurely. Additionally, the climatic condition has worsened the situation. Hundreds of people have died in the cold, floods and landslides as they lack a safe place to stay. *We are in war without enemies...I* is from the series 'This is My Home, My Land and My Country...', dedicated to the earthquake survivors who lost their home and beloved ones in 2015."

### **Khadim Ali**

"The pluralistic aspect of *Shahnameh* holds a psychological appeal for me, and it may for other Hazaras. Since Ferdowsi was a defeated poet from a dying era, *Shahnameh*, one could argue, is more of a story of failure, than a saga of heroic enterprise. Almost all of the characters in *Shahnameh* have a defeating fate, including the hero Rostam. Hence, if we consider *Shahnameh* to be tales of killings in a future past, it becomes aligned with the contemporary geopolitics. The Islamic world today, just as the Persian world, is drowning in the Killing(s) of future. A brutal past is destroying the heart of the present."

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## **Neda Tavallaee**

"As a female Persian artist based in Iran, my work focuses on the situation we face as women and as a people. There has always been a sense of mystery about Women in the Middle East perhaps because of the culture that has always required us to hide our bodies, emotions and thoughts or the taboos forced upon us through time. Behind this body of work is the lack of heroes in our society. Coming from an ancient culture abundant with stories of such men, it is ironic that in this day and age we have none of the kind. The work was inspired by some arrests that took place a while back in Iran that were to my knowledge unjust. I decided to use pages of the *Shahnameh*, a book abundant with tales of heroism and patriots as the background in contrast with the image of the damsel in distress, symbolic of Hawa (Eve in Islam) who has to solve all her problems by herself and seek for justice alone."

## **Priyanka D'Souza**

"This body of work was my response to Manash Firaq Bhattacharjee's poem, *No Urdu In Dilli, Mian* which uses rather delicately, the imagery of the wall to encapsulate a very political statement, its language in keeping with the lyricism of Persian and Urdu poetry. I've tried to understand 'the writing on the wall' (a phrase taken from the Judaic narrative of Daniel common to Islam) as scripture, drawing from the rich bibliophilic tradition in Islam. Script, therefore, as a signifier of a community and its engagement with the political was of interest to me. Visually, the nuances of the Nastaliq script and quiet sensibilities of surface textures and qualities, appealed to me. As the body developed, the wall took on even more connotations as a metaphor of separation, with recent political events like Donald Trump's wall and his Muslim ban, contextualizing the work in a manner differently yet not opposed to the original intent."

## **Veer Munshi**

"*Relics from Lost Paradise* is an expression of the situation in Kashmir, which happens to be my homeland. I perceive my position in this war-like situation as an outsider-insider, where the personal becomes political to condemn the human loss be it soldier or civilian. It made me often think, *why war?* Followed by the questions: 'What is war?' 'What causes war?' 'What is the relationship between human nature and war?' 'Can war ever be morally justifiable?'

The answers lead to more specific ethical and political questions. The philosophy of war is complex. The subject matter lends itself to metaphysical and epistemological considerations, to the philosophy of mind and of human nature. The bones in the casket here belong to both victims and victimizers for reasons indifferent to their ideologies. They are decorated in *papier*

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*mache* by Kashmiri craftsmen as a tribute if declared a martyr, or for peace or to retain their rich heritage of craft and belonging.”

## **Waseem Ahmed**

“My work is based on current social and political issues and the incidents in my surroundings where religion is the base of every conflict. I depict these harsh realities using images from the past to show how only names have changed and stories of war and conflicts remain the same. My inspiration mostly comes from common people I interact with on a daily basis such as shopkeepers, milkmen, electricians, and the imam of the mosque near my house where I pray and their views regarding society and politics. I observe how these people change with changing (social, religious and political) times and create a common ground between their opinions and the ideas of intellectuals.”

## ABOUT LATITUDE 28

Through curated shows, careful strategizing and discovering emerging artists with exciting practices, Latitude 28 over the years has become synonymous with cutting edge art coming out of the country, seeking out fresh perspectives in its attempt to stimulate commercial interest in new waves of art-making. The establishment aims to cultivate a space where collectors and art enthusiasts can interact with younger artists and their practices. It provides a horizontal environment where younger artists are able to contextualise their work alongside the masters of Indian art, experiment with medium, material and institutional critique. We have supported Kartik Sood, Anindita Dutta, and Shweta Bhattad in their innovative practices, exhibiting them alongside veterans such as Anupam Sud and Baiju Parthan. The gallery collection consequently includes cutting edge contemporary alongside modern masters.

Latitude 28 has been imagined as an incubation space, generating ideas through curatorial projects, site-specific artworks, artist talks and curated walks. Exhibitions such as ‘In You Is The Illusion Of Each Day’ (curated by Maya Kovskaya, 2011), ‘Slipping Through The Cracks’ (curated by Meera Menezes, 2012), ‘Crossing Over’ (curated by Ambareen Karamat, 2013) and ‘Sacred/Scared’ (curated by Nancy Adajania, 2014) tried to initiate renewed readings of artworks within art historical/socio-political contexts. Latitude 28 frequently travels to International art fairs, and supports our artists’ presence at biennales around the world. The gallery has been part of Art Gwangju (2012), Art HK (2013) [solo booth project by Prajakta Palav], Dhaka Art Summit (2014), and Art Dubai (2015) [solo booth project by Dilip Chobisa].