

## ***Nae Azadi (A New Freedom)***

In collaboration with the Kara Film Festival  
PIIA Auditorium, Karachi  
December 6 - 17, 2006

*Nae Azadi* explores the influences of Pakistani film poster and billboard painting on the work of artists Shezad Dawood, Naeem Rana, Rashid Rana, Saira Wasim and Mohammed Zeeshan. The exhibition is curated by Green Cardamom for the annual KaraFilm Festival in Karachi,

Based within and outside Pakistan, these five artists have drawn on the aesthetics of popular cinema and billboard advertising in Pakistan for their work. Both Shezad Dawood and Rashid Rana have also collaborated with billboard painters to create a body of work. Each of these five artists crosses cultural boundaries with ease; their works appropriate the camp appeal and visual vocabularies of the originals, engaging the viewer on multiple levels. Included in the exhibition is a film directed by Farjad Nabi, which documents the four-day process of artist S. Iqbal's painting of a poster for the Japanese classic *Seven Samurai*.

While the long-established medium of the film poster or hoarding painting may be under threat, by new printing technology, its aesthetic, spirit and popular appeal is fertile ground for exploration and revival in diverse artistic practices. The ongoing reinvention of miniature painting in Pakistan today offers an instructive parallel as these artists chart their course to a 'new freedom'.

### **Shezad Dawood**

Dawood creates popular cultural icons – using the visual language of the street to question notions of hybridity, and pushing audiences to connect cross-cultural references. His work has been exhibited at the Tate Modern, The Institute of Contemporary Arts and Camden Arts Centre, London. Shezad Dawood lives and works in London and has an MPhil and MFA from the city's Royal College of Art.

### **Naeem Rana**

Rana creates digitally manipulated prints that explore consumer culture and its infatuation with popular subjects or products. His work has been shown widely in Australia and is currently in exhibitions at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester and Maison Folie Wazemmes in Lille, France. The title of this exhibition is taken from one of his works. Naeem Rana has a BFA from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore and a Graduate Diploma in Visual Art from the University of Melbourne. He lives and works in Melbourne.

### **Rashid Rana**

Rana was a finalist for the Sovereign Asian Art prize 2006. He won the Hathor Prize at the Cairo Biennale in 2003, and was included in the 2006 Singapore Biennale. His work is currently being exhibited at Manchester City Art Gallery and the Asia Pacific Triennial in Australia. The works in this exhibition are from his *Non-Sense* series (2000) examining ideas of masculinity in popular Pakistani visual culture. Rana has an MFA from Massachusetts College of Art, US, and lives and works in Lahore.

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## **Saira Wasim**

Wasim trained as a miniature painter and works in this small-scale format to create epics based on contemporary political events. Her contribution to this exhibition is a tongue-in-cheek celebration of the wedding of fellow artists Imran Qureshi and Aisha Khalid. She has shown at the Whitney Museum, NY and is currently part of the *Karkhana* exhibition at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco. Wasim has a BFA from the National College of Arts, Lahore and lives and works in Chicago.

## **Mohammed Zeeshan**

Working mainly in the contemporary miniature style, Zeeshan responds to the socio-political landscape of Pakistan. He has developed his own vocabulary of repetitive symbols, and combines them with appropriated imagery from commercial cinema, advertising and western art. His work has been exhibited in Pakistan and Dubai. Zeeshan has a BFA from the NCA in Lahore and lives and works in that city.

## **Sarfraz Iqbal, Durriya Kazi and Farjad Nabi**

S. Iqbal and his father S. Khan are credited with developing a definitive style for the film poster: this is characterised by an innovative use of typography as an expressive element, with the visual rendition informed by the genre of the film. S Iqbal lives and works in Lahore.

*The Final Touch*, a film directed by Farjad Nabi and researched by Durriya Kazi, was commissioned to accompany an exhibition of Pakistani film art at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan. It documents the four-day process of S. Iqbal's painting of a poster for the Japanese classic *Seven Samurai*.

## **About KaraFilm**

The KaraFilm festival is now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year. It has successfully created a space for alternative and independent filmmakers in Pakistan and continues to gain in popularity and critical acclaim for bringing international cinema to an ever-increasing audience in the country.