

PRESS RELEASE

Dying Miniature

New works by Muhammad Zeeshan

Dates: 12 December, 2008 – 6 February, 2009

Opening: 11 December, 2008. 6.30 – 8.30 pm

Green Cardamom presents new works by Pakistani artist, Muhammad Zeeshan, in a fascinating portrayal of the anti-miniature.

Known for contrasting violent and disturbing imagery with beautifully rendered paintings that create a palpable tension, Zeeshan's new series 'Dying Miniature' embraces a new twist that is more formal in its nature.

Zeeshan, who has worked most frequently using techniques associated with the Mughal-era miniature, now turns to formal explorations that critique the idea of the miniature as a dying form. As he explains, 'let me see what I can do with its materials, let me concentrate on one technique out of the many present and work with that, but change my materials, surface and tools.'

Swapping the smooth burnished surface of the wasli for the coarse ground of sandpaper, Zeeshan rubs layer upon layer of graphite, alternated with fixative, onto its surface. This meticulous yet vigorous process creates something akin to the anti-miniature - tossing aside its quintessential jewel-like quality, bright and vivid with colour - as Zeeshan pares the miniature down to forms and line, a strategy emphasised further through the unconventionally large scale of his works. Similarly the preciousness of the materials used traditionally in the miniature - natural pigments and dyes carefully held in shells and applied with a fine brush - are swapped for the residue of base materials as the artist calls into service the humble pencil and metal sticks used for welding.

The results are astonishingly beautiful images, large, still silhouettes in monotonous interrupted occasionally with a metallic glint; a glimmer of familiarity of the gold highlights found in traditional miniature painting. While the artist inverts the very process of making a miniature – burnishing the work, onto the surface rather than creating the work on a burnished surface – the flatness and composition bear the unmistakable mark of the miniature.

For interviews, images or further information please contact

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Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday 11.00 – 5.00; Saturday 11.00 – 14.00

Nearest Tube: Marble Arch, Edgware Road

Gallery closed December 20, 2008 – January 12, 2008

Green Cardamom Gallery

Green Cardamom is an arts organisation that develops and runs visual arts projects in collaboration with public museums and galleries. The organisation works on a not-for-profit basis and is supported by the Rangoonwala Foundation. Green Cardamom runs a regular gallery programme in its London space, where it also develops new curatorial projects. The organisation's primary focus is international contemporary art viewed from an Indian Ocean perspective. Green Cardamom's programme is informed by artistic practice in Pakistan, South and Central Asia, and the Middle East.