

Press Release

Hell, Purgatory and Paradise

Adeel uz Zafar

Exhibition Period: 22 September – 19 November 2017



Adeel uz Zafar
Purgatory Mountain 1
2017
Ø22.9 cm (polyptych)

Events

Opening Reception
Friday, 22 September 2017, 7-9pm

Artist's Tour
Friday, 22 September 2017, 6.30pm

About the Exhibition FOST Gallery is pleased to present *Hell, Purgatory and Paradise* by Adeel uz Zafar.

The exhibition title references Dante's 14th century epic poem, *The Divine Comedy* [*Divina Commedia*]. The allegorical poem details the afterlife journey of the soul toward God in three parts. Dante had not intended this work to be purely theological, even though the poem was representative of the medieval world-view as propagated by the Western Church at that time. Rather, it was a literary *tour de force* that reflected a deeper desire to understand the mysteries of life and death. It inspired Adeel uz Zafar to embark on a similar quest to make sense of the new world order, or rather, disorder.

uz Zafar's earlier monumental works of plush toy animals wrapped in reels of bandage allude to the socio-political situation of his home country. In most of these works, the three-dimensional form of these characters are suggested only by the undulating folds of the bandages, there is an eerie hollow blackness beyond the weave. It is a hint to his country being in a perpetual state of limbo, always healing from a previous wound, but never fully recovering, before another wound is inflicted.

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In first stage of *Hell*, uz Zafar reflects on some of the major conflicts around the world. The *Sacred Scriptures* series are a set of three open 'books' which feature detailed images of the bandage weave. There is no orientation to which the abstracted images can be read, the viewer is invited to circle around the plinth, listening to the accompanying soundtrack of scraping and incising sounds, recorded while uz Zafar was making the respective work. One is encouraged to make out what one wills, depending on his or her perspective when viewing the work. A nuclear holocaust is no longer just a threat, but a reality in the triptych *Inferno*.

The second stage of Purgatory is rooted in Roman Catholic theology, Purgatory is an intermediate state after physical death in which some of those ultimately destined for heaven undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven. uz Zafar represents the catastrophic event of an erupting volcano with a polyptych of 7 images. The volcanic lava obliterates every thing in its path but leaves the land, with a clean slate on which to start afresh.

Paradiso, the last work the viewer encounters in the gallery, is hung at the end of a dark corridor. Miniscule in size, and set within an ornate Vicotrian-inspired vintage frame (the only framed work in the exhibition). The image is not discernible until it is before one's eyes. And then the viewer is rewarded with a beautiful, ideal landscape in miniature. A promised land that is seemingly so close, yet unattainable. Perhaps life is about the journey, not the destination.

This is uz Zafar's second solo exhibition in Singapore after his successful inaugural solo exhibition.

About the Artist

Adeel uz Zafar (b. 1975, Pakistan) graduated with a degree in Fine Arts from the National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan in 1988. Adeel has since participated in numerous exhibitions in Pakistan, including the coveted RM Naeem Residency. In 2010 he participated in a group show, *On The Brink* at FOST Gallery, Singapore and exhibited at Slick Art Fair in Paris. Most recently, the artist has been invited by the Parramatta Artist Studios in collaboration with Cicada Press (College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales) for an international printmaking residency from 15 April – 17 May 2013.

He lives and works in Karachi, Pakistan.

About Gillman Barracks

Gillman Barracks is a new contemporary art destination in Singapore. Nestled amid lush greenery, this former colonial barracks is now home to local and international art galleries, dining, and creative businesses, as well as the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) that opened in late 2013. The CCA enhances the region's contemporary art landscape through its international artist residency, research and exhibition programmes. For more information, visit please www.gillmanbarracks.com

GILLMAN BARRACKS

Location	FOST Gallery 1 Lock Road #01-02, Gillman Barracks Singapore 108932
MRT	Labrador Park
Bus	Opposite Alexandra Point: 51, 57, 61, 93, 97, 97e, 100, 166, 175, 963 or 963e
Gallery Hours	Tue–Sat: 11am–7pm Sun: 11am–6pm Mon/Pub Hol: Open by appointment
Admission	Free
Enquiries	Call 6694 3080 or e-mail info@fostgallery.com
