



Do You Remember Still, How It Was Once, 2019  
Acrylic paint and gold leaf on canvas

## BRINGING INNOVATIVE CONTEMPORARY ARTISTIC LANGUAGE TO THE TRADITIONAL MINIATURE

# IMRAN QURESHI

## EVOKES PERFECTION IN HIS LATEST EXHIBITION IN PARIS



Monologue, 2019, Gouache on paper

The Seeming Endless Path of Memory,' a large scale exhibition of new works by the artist at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris opened in mid-May. Qureshi's performance art piece showcased at the preview evening was an immersive experience for the viewer and the artist as he kept morphing a large scale painting sheet into fluid forms against his painting 'Love Me, Love Me Not' (diptych) 2019.

The exhibition title 'The Seeming Endless Path of Memory' and the titles of the works on display, echo the words of Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984) prevailing throughout Qureshi's work. They reveal human metaphors, with various social and cultural connotations, and subtly reflect the threat of violence as a continuous motif.

Dark layers of red or blue that gradually transform into a light gold appear as one continuous tonal and rhythmic course of action. Elsewhere, Qureshi draws upon the tradition of action painting, welcoming gravity, velocity, and improvisation into the artistic process: through direct physical engagement with the canvas, the act of painting becomes a performative part of the painting's expression.

The miniature paintings with finely painted trees depict the 'Story of Two' — showing two

polar opposites of the same subject. In a new series of self-portraits, the artist, in contemporary dress, is situated within an abstract background, surrounded by the detailed ornamental motifs of the miniaturist style — traditionally commissioned by the Mughal Emperors (1526-1857).

Imran Qureshi, while adhering to the parameters of traditional miniature, uses a contemporary artistic language in an innovative way conveying complex political references and the dichotomy of duality that is a recurring theme amongst most of his works.

The characteristic use of gold-leaf is a recurring motif in Imran Qureshi's work. The luminosity of gold-leaf alludes to the celestial plane, contrasting with the stark splashes of red and ornate vine motifs encroaching the canvas through its multiple folds. Recently, curator Stinna Toft wrote on the occasion of Imran Qureshi's exhibition at the Kunsten Museum of Modern Art in Aalborg, Denmark: 'Applying the valuable gold leaf is a time-consuming task, but its effect on the large formats is monumental. The surfaces of the paintings are like small landscapes, or skin caressing the paper or canvas. The painting's skin becomes a symbol of the vulnerability of the human body. The effect



The Endless Path, 2018, Gold leaf and acrylic on canvas, 12 panels

**While adhering to the parameters of traditional miniature, Imran Qureshi uses a contemporary artistic language in an innovative way**



Story of Two, 2019, Gouache on paper



Story of Two, 2019  
Gouache on paper



Fabric of Heaven, 2019  
Gold leaf and acrylic on canvas



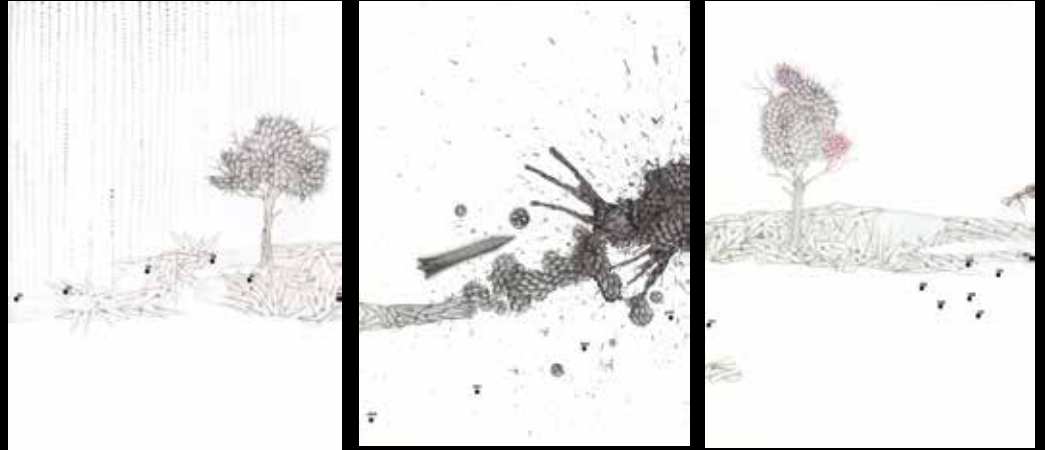
Love Me, Love Me Not (diptych), 2019, Acrylic on canvas



This Leprous Brightness, (diptych), 2019, Acrylic paint and gold leaf on canvas



The True Path, 2009, Watercolour and dry transfer on paper



When I Thought of You, You Were Not There, 2018, Acrylic on canvas



Untitled, 2019, Acrylic on canvas



Midnight Garden, 2019, Acrylic on canvas



Story of Two, 2019, Gouache on paper



Story of Two, 2019, Gouache on paper

is powerful and menacing and makes Imran Qureshi's paintings distinctly physical and sensuous.'

Imran Qureshi's more recent series of relief paintings 'Fabric of Heaven' combine red acrylic paint with a gold-leaf surface, developed singularly along the multiple creases of its folded canvas to create a mesmerising visual experience. What seem like splashes of blood to the viewer at first glance, the flower motifs are also an ode to hope and the possibility of renewal. It can further be deconstructed for the viewer who sees remnants of death in the work to also see life in all its glory and the struggle endured in anticipation of peace and stability. Ultimately, whether presented in large-scale or in miniature formats, his works lean towards an aesthetic, religious and spiritual inquiry on the proximity of creation and destruction and recreation in all aspects of life — engaging the viewer on both a visceral and spiritual level.

Imran Qureshi was born in 1972 in Hyderabad, Pakistan and lives and works in Lahore, and teaches miniature painting at his alma mater, National College of Art, Lahore. One of the most prominent artists from the contemporary miniature movement that emerged out of Pakistan, his work constitutes a unique fusion of traditional motifs and techniques that highlight current issues. The artist came to international prominence following his 2013 renowned rooftop installation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He participated in the 2013 Venice Biennale, The Encyclopedic Palace, curated by Massimiliano Gioni. In the same year in Berlin, at the German Guggenheim, he presented a solo exhibition and received the Deutsche Bank Artist of the Year Award. The following year a site-specific installation was on view for the inaugural exhibition of the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto. From thereon, Imran Qureshi has remained locally and internationally prominent and captivating.



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