

Press Release

Raqib Shaw

Echoes Over Arabia

Thaddaeus Ropac at Art Basel Qatar
Booth M113
3—7 February 2026



Echoes Over Arabia I, 2025.
Acrylic liner and enamel on birch wood. 109 x 137 cm (42.91 x 53.94 in.)

*My work, in great parts, is a negotiation with the shadow: what we inherit,
what we bury, and what insists on returning in the form of light.*

— Raqib Shaw

In *Echoes Over Arabia*, Raqib Shaw unveils a cycle of nocturnal paintings and layered marginalia on mounted paper that merge myth, memory and psychological terrain, hence pointing towards a new direction in the artist's oeuvre. These pieces echo the luminous artistry of sacred Islamic manuscripts while omitting calligraphy, leaving behind a visual language that speaks of memory, longing and the fragility of existence.

Shaw's formative years in Kashmir, a region steeped in mysticism, have profoundly shaped his sensibility. The ethos of Kashmiri Sufism – with its emphasis on transcendence through love, beauty and inner reflection – is deeply embedded in the works. Even when they address conquest, destruction and societal turmoil, the pieces resonate with a spiritual undercurrent. Shaw reimagines the Orientalist night



Echoes Over Arabia: The Firefly Priest in the Temple of Hope, 2025.
Acrylic liner and enamel on paper mounted on aluminium.
64 x 55.5 (25.20 x 21.85 in).

from within, drawing on the contemplative chiaroscuro of Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, the devotional stillness of Francisco de Zurbarán and the dramatic flair of Eugène Delacroix. Firelight, moonlight and shadow become agents of introspection, illuminating the artist as he navigates visionary animals, spectral visitors and symbolic companions that occupy the threshold between recollection and archetype.

The works on paper deepen this inquiry. Conceived as marginalia slowly eroded by insects and fire, they function as living palimpsests: burnt apertures peel back layers of miniature painting, historical photographs and the past remembered through distance. Their perforated surfaces echo a psychological process rather than an aesthetic effect.

Shaw's lifelong engagement with Carl Gustav Jung moves through these works as a structuring current. The insects operate like unconscious forces tunnelling toward buried material; the burn-holes mimic psychic ruptures that open onto deeper strata of the self; and the recurring watchful eye becomes the inner witness of individuation. Here, memory is an active field in which the self reshapes its inner landscape.

Presented in the heart of Doha during Art Basel, *Echoes Over Arabia* draws on the cultural resonance of Arabia as both a geographic and

symbolic landscape: a place where ancient traditions reverberate against modern struggles and where Shaw's own journey unfolds through layers of memory and ornament. *Echoes Over Arabia* offers not a narrative but a psychological passage, where myth, unrest and the soft radiance of fire and moonlight form a contemplative map of the self in transformation.

About the artist

Born in Calcutta and raised in Kashmir, Shaw now lives and works in London. He enrolled at Central St Martins in 1998, completing his MA in 2002. His work has been the subject of important solo exhibitions at institutions including the Art Institute of Chicago (2025); The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino (2024); The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2024); Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2024); Frist Art Museum, Nashville (2023); The Little House, Dries van Noten, Los Angeles (2022); Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2018); The Whitworth, Manchester (2017); Rudolfinum, Prague (2013); Manchester Art Gallery (2013); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2008); Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami (2006); and Tate Britain, London (2006). Shaw's work is housed in prominent public collections, including that of Tate, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Echoes over Arabia: The Peacock Bard and the Garden of Recalled Worlds, 2025.
Acrylic liner and enamel on paper mounted on aluminium.
137 x 115 cm (53.94 x 45.28 in).

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