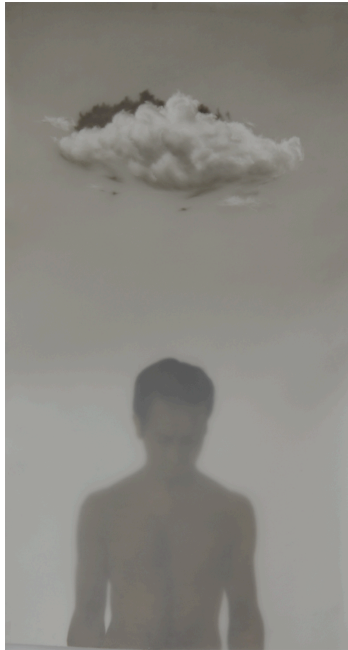


LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

ETHEREAL

A GROUP SHOW CURATED BY DR. AMIN JAFFER
OCTOBER 23 - DECEMBER 13, 2014



Ali Kazim, *Untitled (Self Portrait with Cloud)*, 2014,
Pigments on watercolor paper and polyester film, 26.7 x 15.7 in / 68 x 40 cm

Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to present 'ETHEREAL', a group show curated by Dr. Amin Jaffer at the gallery's Chelsea location from October 23 through December 13, 2014. 'ETHEREAL' offers a new take on the history of South Asian art bringing together the transitory, insightful, and spiritual sensibility of works by 16 leading contemporary artists from the region.

The visual arts of the Indian Subcontinent are typically associated with abundant ornament, rich encrustation and riotous color. However, the region has also given rise to a tradition of quiet restraint, evident both in spiritual practice and in forms of representation, whose cultural manifestations are spare, fragile, and even tentative. Whether sculpture, photography or experimental video, each artwork in this exhibition is marked by an ethereal quality that challenges our senses and questions our perceptions.

Video and photographic works take nature as a subject, capturing the gracefulness and ethereality found from within our natural surroundings.

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Such harmony converges in **Shilpa Gupta**'s photographs of water considered holy in different faiths. Arranged in a quadrant formation *Untitled (Holy Waters)*, (2012) is a contemplative reflection of the spiritual qualities of water. **Sonia Khurana**'s video *Surreal Pond I (Epiphany)* (2013) presents an idyllic landscape that fades into a mystical experience as a pond slowly evaporates into nothingness. Khurana's art practice explores the poetics of inner experience and the polemics of being in the world.

Ali Kazim captures that moment in natural landscapes just before a physical transformation occurs – a serene moment of haunting stillness. In *Taker XII* (2014) **Prem Sahib** explores both formalism and autobiographical themes through a minimal palette of grey, black and white. His glossy slate grey resin 'sweat' panels replicate the steamed up windows of a bathhouse with the traces of hands smears stretched across.

Working on a larger scale, some artists in the show demonstrate that the essence of ephemerality can be explored through working with 'heavier' mediums. **Rashid Rana** compiles pixilated fragments of macro images and themes, creating paradoxical juxtapositions of contrasting realities. In his new work *War Within II* (2013), Rana revisits the famous neoclassical painting *Oath of the Horatii* by Jacques-Louis David, bringing together the contemporary idea of nations as the new form of tribes.

Noor Ali Chagani explores the ways that walls in society – that work to both maintain the sanctity of home – can also divide and obscure. Chagani's surreal sculptures are made of small handmade bricks transformed into tactile textiles and carpets that appear to be suspended in the breeze.

An illustrated catalogue with an essay by art historian, critic and independent curator Deepak Anath will accompany the exhibition.

Artists in the exhibition:

Rana Begum // Faiza Butt // Noor Ali Chagani // Dilip Chobisa // Shilpa Gupta // Irfan Hasan // Ali Kazim // Sonia Khurana // Prabhavathi Meppayil // Manish Nai // Rashid Rana // Raqs Media Collective // Prem Sahib // Ayesha Sultana // Mohammad Ali Talpur // Thukral & Tagra // Saira Wasim

About the Curator:

Dr. Amin Jaffer is International Director of Asian Art at Christie's. He joined Christie's in 2007 after 12 years as a curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London where he published several books including *Furniture from British India and Ceylon* (V&A, 2001), *Luxury Goods from India* (V&A, 2002) and *Made for Maharajas: A Design Diary of Princely India* (2006). He also co-curated and co-edited the accompanying books for the exhibitions *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe, 1500-1800* (2004), which explored the artistic and cultural encounter between Europe and Asia and *Maharaja: the Splendour of India's Royal Courts* (2009), which examined court culture in India over three hundred years. He is also Editor of *Beyond Extravagance: a Royal Collection of Gems and Jewels* (2013). Dr. Jaffer lectures frequently in Europe, America and India and contributes regularly to journals and major newspapers.