

**Art Fairs**

## Dealer Spotlight: Aicon Gallery

Find out what this gallerist has to say about art fairs and working with musicians.

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artnet News, March 3, 2015

**Name:** Harry Hutchison  
**Title:** Associate Director  
**Age:** 30  
**Hometown:** London  
**Gallery Name:** Aicon Gallery  
**Location:** New York  
**Gallery Specialty:** South Asian Art  
**Artists Represented:** Abdullah Syed, Anila Quayyum Agha, Adeela Suleman, G.R. Iranna, M.F. Husain, S.H. Raza, F.N. Souza, Ram Kumar



Aicon Gallery is a contemporary art gallery specializing in emerging Indian and Pakistani artists. Formerly Gallery ArtsIndia, Aicon Gallery was one of the first platforms for Indian art in the United States. Today, the primary goal of the gallery is to foster dialogue between South Asian and Western art at their New York and London locations.

Their current New York exhibition “Eat Pray Thug” is curated by Himanshu “Heems” Suri, former member of Brooklyn-based, hip hop group Das Racist. Aicon Gallery’s associate director, Harry Hutchinson, shares with artnet News his experience of working with musicians and the challenges of an active art fair schedule.

**Tell us about your background in art and what led you here.**

I studied art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art (in London) and always knew I wanted to

stay working in the arts. I had traveled around India and loved it, so after graduation, I put the two things together and worked in an auction house in Mumbai.

**How did the idea for “Eat Pray Thug” come about? What is your experience working with curator/former rap artist Himanshu “Heems” Suri? Are you interested in continuing to collaborate with musicians?**

Himanshu was great! We all loved working with him; he is a talented artist, curator, and rapper. We will of course keep with him, but I don't believe we will work with another musician in the near future, they party too hard!

**What was the most difficult artwork to part with? Why?**

I find parting with a work I truly adore very difficult. But the more I like a work, the more I want to sell it, so it's a double-edged sword. I have, of course, got used to this feeling, but the work that sticks out in my head was a sublime G.R. Iranna from his “Monk” series.

**What is the most important thing your gallery can do to gain exposure? Is it attending art fairs? What kind of online presence is important?**

We take part in a very active art fair schedule. We do around six or seven a year, and, in some cases, back to back. For example Frieze NY is the week before Art15 London, and we are doing both. We see art fair participation as crucial for exposure, hence why we do so many. In 2015, our goal was to become much more online focused, so we are actively engaging with Artsy, Paddle8, 1stdibs, and, of course, artnet, to name a few.

**What advice can you give to a first-time collector?**

Buy what you love because those that buy for love are winning every time they look at it. I would also suggest doing careful research so you know you are paying the right price; it doesn't take long, and there is data readily available for all to see.

**What is the best show you've seen recently?**

The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi has not been built, but I nevertheless really enjoyed an exhibition they put on called “Seeing Through Light: Selections from the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Collection.” They have collected some brilliant works, and the show was fantastic; the exhibition was held next to the Abu Dhabi art fair.

**If you could own any artwork, what would it be and why?**

Piero della Francesca's frescoes in Arezzo, because they are, without a doubt, my favorite paintings in the world. It would be a little difficult to install in my New York apartment so I would probably have to move homes, into the church itself.

**Why did you choose to participate in Art Dubai?**

We have done Art Dubai since its inception; we have not missed a year.

**How many artists are you bringing to the fair, and how did you select these artists?**

We are only bringing three artists this year, Abdullah Syed, Anila Quayyum Agha, and Adeela Suleman. We feel these three artists will work well together in a booth setting and will appeal to collectors in the region.



Adeela Suleman, *Mubarizun - No More Series 1* (2014).  
Courtesy of Aicon Gallery.



Abdullah Syed, *Assembly III Blitzkrieg* (2014).  
Courtesy of Aicon Gallery.

**Where are most of your buyers from? Which countries?**

Our collectors are global, but most are in Dubai, Singapore, London, and, of course, New York.

**What are some of the challenges that you and your team face when participating in an art fair?**

When the Internet doesn't work, it makes our lives miserable, and this has happened once or twice. Flying to India, Singapore, or even Dubai from New York isn't quick, and the long flights (depending on your seats) can get your trip off to a bad start.

**What has been your most memorable experience at the art fair?**

An Adeela Suleman sculpture was heavier than we thought it would be; we didn't have the correct walls in place for such a work. The sculpture started to pull down our wall, and our neighbors, and his neighbors...and so on. It was like a domino effect, and I thought we might bring the whole fair down with us. Not fun at all, especially when you are the one everyone is looking at with rage.



Anila Quayyum Agha, *Untitled* (2015).  
Courtesy of Aicon Gallery. © Pamela Bevelhimer.