

Saad Qureshi

Tanabana

June 11 – July 10

35 Great Jones St, New York NY 10012

Opening Reception: Friday, June 11, 4-7pm



Saad Qureshi, *Bengal Tiger*, 2021,
woven paper, 26.57 x 19.09 in.

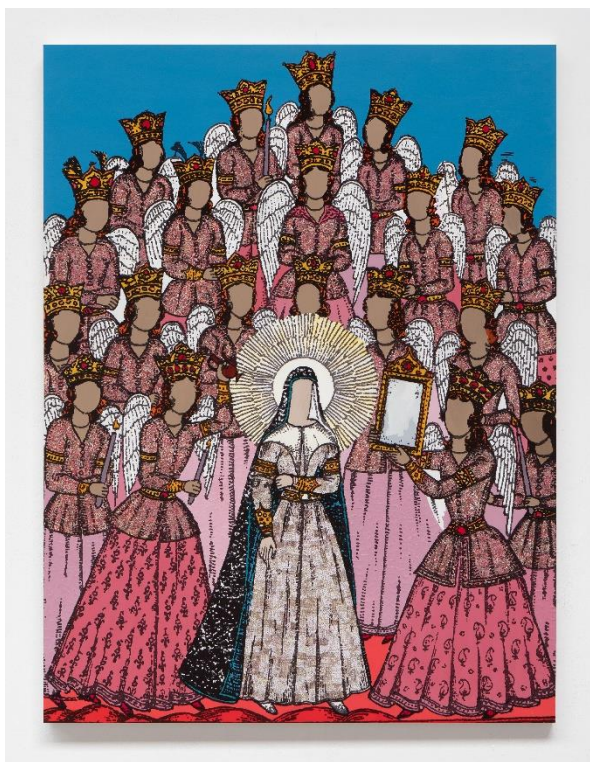
textiles he grew up with, cutting them in strips and re-weaving them into paper tapestries and bringing several patterns together to form completely new designs. The action of weaving, at once intimate and meditative, provided a still centre amid the ebb and flow of Lockdown domesticity. Using many different rugs in each Tanabana tapestry, Qureshi pays homage to craft and the fruit of many lifetimes of practice, and re-interprets it, bringing his own skills as a maker into a dialogue with those of generations before him.

We are delighted to present *Tanabana*, Aicon Art's exhibition of the works of **Saad Qureshi**.

Tailoring and needlework are the central pillars of Saad Qureshi's heritage. It was his grandfather's profession, as a tailor for the British Army, that first brought his family from Pakistan to the UK, and Qureshi was brought up to think of textiles as objects of artistry and skill. Conceived in the context of a lockdown spent embedded with his extended family, Qureshi's fourth exhibition at Aicon Gallery presents a selection of works that reflect and celebrate the oral and craft traditions that form the wellspring of his sensibility as an artist.

As a child, Qureshi was impressed with the solemnity of the relationship between human and cloth: from the moment of birth, when it's the first material a baby comes into contact with. He grew to regard his grandfather's sewing machine and the other tools of his trade as sacred. For his mother, an accomplished needleworker, not only is sewing and crocheting a basic survival skill, but part of her very identity. Steeped in a home where cloth formed the warp and weft of family and of life itself, textiles have always been an important inspiration and motif in Qureshi's work.

Qureshi never stopped working throughout this past year, shifting his activities to his home studio. Collecting rugs and books from their library, he photographed all the important



Saad Qureshi, *Sighting the Hereafter*, 2021
Acrylic, ink, paper on birch plywood, 78.74 x 59.1 in.

Taking his unique new Tanabana textile designs and referring back to the family library, Qureshi has also conceived seven new monumental works. He took inspiration from the Sabaq-Amoz Kahaniyan, exemplary tales shared for generations as moral stories to instil good character in children. Each story illustrates a particular lesson, serving either as a caution or as a salutary example to follow. Homing in on passages or moments from these books, Qureshi brings their protagonists and landscapes to life and clothes them in his Tanabana designs. Removed from their immediate narratives, these faceless figures connect to folk traditions of storytelling dating back thousands of years, and across continents. A celebration of ornament and colour, the works combine drawing, collage and screen-printing in his most intricate and exuberant series to date.

About the Artist

Saad Qureshi lives and works in London and Oxford. He received his BA in Fine Art from Oxford Brookes University in 2007 and an MFA in Painting from The Slade School of Fine Art, London, in 2010.

Recent solo exhibitions include Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Aicon Gallery, New York and Mumbai, and Gazelli Art House, London. Group exhibitions include I'Institut des Cultures d'Islam, Paris; Museum Arnhem; Kunsthall 3,14, Bergen; Bo.Lee Gallery, London; Saatchi Gallery, London; Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London and White Project Gallery, Paris.

Qureshi has had public commissions at Oxford Brookes University, Oxford and Victoria, London and his work has been acquired by public collections including the Dipti Mathur Collection, California; The Farjam Foundation Collection, Dubai; the UNESCO Creative Cities Collection, Beijing; The Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; the Boston Consulting Group; and the Almarkhiya Gallery, Qatar as well as British and international private collections.

Qureshi has been shortlisted for the 2021 SkyArts LANDMARKS public art commission. He has received two ACE awards; the Celeste Prize, Rome; the Royal Society of British Sculptors bursary award; the Red Mansion Foundation Prize; and he was shortlisted for the Lecturis Award, Amsterdam.

He features in the 2020 Thames & Hudson book 100 Sculptors of Tomorrow.

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