

Imran Qureshi:

Deutsche Bank's "Artist of the Year"

19 November 2014 – 25 January 2015

Ikon presents a solo exhibition by Pakistani artist Imran Qureshi, Deutsche Bank's "Artist of the Year" 2013. Comprising miniature paintings and site-specific installations – including new works made for Ikon – the exhibition is Qureshi's first major presentation in the UK.

Born in 1972 in Pakistan, Qureshi studied in Lahore at the National College of Arts with a major in miniature painting—a traditional discipline that he teaches there today. He is considered to be one of the most important contemporary artists on the subcontinent, not least because he reclaims the regionally and historically rooted discipline of miniature painting (a practice that flourished in the Mughal courts of the Indian subcontinent in the late 16th century) and transports it to the present day. His work constitutes a unique synthesis of the genre's motifs and techniques with current issues and the formal language of contemporary abstract painting.

The exhibition presents an array of Qureshi's delicate miniature paintings adorned with gold and blood-red paint and depicting people, blossoms, colours, rain, leaves and abstract forms. In *Self-Portrait* (2009) the artist himself is enclosed in an oval medallion on a gold background holding a blossom surrounded by tiny dragonflies.

The site-specific installations in the exhibition are linked conceptually and formally to recent internationally prominent works the artist created for the roof of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2013, the Sydney Biennale in 2012, and the Sharjah Biennial in 2011. In the installation *I want you to stay with me* (2013), individual dark red pools appear on the floor across the exhibition; upon closer examination they are filled with the artist's signature motif of thousands of ornamental flowers, intricately hand-painted in perylene maroon – a dark shade of red.

In *And they still seek the traces of blood* (2013) images appropriated from Qureshi's earlier works are printed on thousands of sheets of paper that are then crumpled and gathered to form a site-specific mountain that fills a gallery. The title quotes a poem by the poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz whose lyrics the artist heard on the radio as a child; a poem about those who are buried without their lives being honoured or the circumstances of their deaths investigated.

Qureshi incorporates personal observations on everyday life in present-day Pakistan into his work, whilst acknowledging that violence can be met with not only in his native country, but in many cultures and societies worldwide.

The award “Artist of the Year” is positioned as an integral part of the Deutsche Bank art program, which has been opening up the world of contemporary art to the public for the last thirty years—through Deutsche Bank’s own substantial collection, its exhibitions, and its joint projects with partners. Each “Artist of the Year” is presented in a solo exhibition at the “Deutsche Bank KunstHalle” in Berlin. Subsequently, the exhibitions move on to other international institutions. A comprehensive catalogue and an exclusive edition, designed by the artist, have been published concurrent with the exhibition.

Imran Qureshi: Deutsche Bank’s “Artist of the Year” was previously shown in different forms at KunstHalle, Berlin, Museo d’arte contemporanea Roma (MACRO), Rome and Salsali Private Museum, Dubai.

Note to Editors:

1. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 6pm. Admission is free.
2. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council.
3. For more information, high-res images and to request an interview with artist please contact Sophie Campos or Emma Gilhooly at Pelham Communications on 020 8969 3959 or email sophie@pelhamcommunications.com or emma@pelhamcommunications.com

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Example images:

