

# USC Pacific Asia Museum

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USC PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM ANNOUNCES

NEW ACQUISITIONS BY CONTEMPORARY PAKISTANI ARTISTS ALI KAZIM, IMRAN QURESHI  
AND MUHAMMAD ZEESHAN

FIRST ACQUISITIONS FOR MUSEUM UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP OF USC AND  
DIRECTOR CHRISTINA YU YU



Pasadena, Calif. — USC Pacific Asia Museum announced today the acquisitions of three works by contemporary Pakistani artists Ali Kazim, Imran Qureshi and Muhammad Zeeshan. The new acquisitions add historic continuity and depth to the museum's notable collection of contemporary Asian art and mark the museum's first purchases for its permanent collection under the leadership of the University of Southern California and newly appointed Director Christina Yu Yu.

"We are delighted to add three important Pakistani miniature paintings to our permanent

collection of more than 15,000 objects. These works by young and acclaimed Pakistani artists bring a contemporary perspective to earlier Indian miniature paintings already in our holdings," said USC Pacific Asia Museum Director Christina Yu Yu.

The three works were acquired through a generous matching grant provided by the Pasadena Art Alliance and funds from the USC Pacific Asia Museum's Collectors' Circle and the USC Pacific Asia Museum's Pakistani Arts Council.

All three artists were included in the museum's 2010 exhibition *Beyond the Page: The Miniature As Attitude in Contemporary Art from Pakistan*. Traditional miniature painting traces its lineage to Mughal India, Iran and Turkey and continues to be practiced today. Following pioneering artists like Zahoor ul Akhlaq in the 1970s, it has evolved into a new genre in Pakistan led by a group of artists who were trained in the miniature painting department at the National College of Arts, Lahore and brought international attention to this new style of painting. Addressing the criticism of the old tradition of copying reproductions of historical works, new works by artists such as Kazim, Qureshi and Zeeshan express individuality and creativity and provide an interesting and valuable point of connection between the tradition of Indian miniature painting and contemporary practices.

Kazim's work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum. In 2013 Qureshi had a solo exhibition and a rooftop installation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and another solo exhibition and installation at the Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University. His work has been widely collected and is included in collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum. Zeeshan has shown his work internationally in India, the U.S, the UK and France. His work is included in the Asal collection in London, UK; Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan and the Austrian Consulate in Lahore, Pakistan, among others.

All three newly acquired works are now on view in the museum's permanent collection gallery until June 30, 2015.

Ali Kazim (b. 1979)

*Untitled* (diptych) 2012

Watercolor pigments on paper

38 x 44 cm (14.96 x 17.32 in), 45 x 39cm (17.72 x 15.35in)

(Shown above on the right)

In this diptych, Kazim explores the different aspects of life. The self-portrait during a contemplative moment reveals our duality: the physicality of a body that goes through day-to-day tasks and the emotional and spiritual dimension, that stimulates and regenerates. The image of dark clouds exposes another duality of our life: the storm as both a power of

destruction and a means of generating new life. In creating this diptych, Kazim uses color for his self-portrait but eliminates colors and brushstrokes in the clouds as a conscious effort to further emphasize the duality of our life.

Imran Qureshi (b. 1972),  
*How to cut an artillery pantaloons*, 2002  
Opaque watercolour and Letraset transfer on wasli  
27 x 20 cm (10.63 x 7.87 in image size)  
(Shown above on the left)

Qureshi's work constitutes a unique synthesis of traditional motifs and techniques with current issues and the formal language of contemporary abstract painting. In this work and as an example of his artistic practice, Qureshi chooses the standard compositional formula of the miniature painting or manuscript format and replaces a Mughal emperor or a noble figure that usually occupies the center of the picture plane with a pair of scissors with camouflage motifs. Concrete images that once formed detailed scenes of courtly life are transformed into new visual languages.



Muhammad Zeeshan (b. 1980)  
*Dying Miniature III*, 2008  
Graphite and gold pigment on sandpaper  
25.4 x 91.44 cm (10 x 36 in)

The *Dying Miniature* series represents the chronic debate in Pakistan about the 'death' of miniature painting. Zeeshan sets out to create the anti-miniature by reversing the characteristics of a 'traditional' miniature. He replaces the super-smooth burnished wasli with the abrasiveness of sandpaper; foregoes detailed rendering for pure form; and deconstructs one of the most

iconic composition of the Mughal portrait into a four-panel composition with fragmented portraits. The only obvious link to traditional miniature practice is the courtly subject matter.

USC Pacific Asia Museum's collection comprises more than 15,000 objects, including rare and representative examples of art and ethnographic objects from Asia and the Pacific Islands spanning more than five thousand years. Prominent among these are the Harari Collection of Japanese paintings and drawings from the Edo period (1600-1868); significant holdings in Chinese ceramics and textiles; one of the largest collections of Japanese folk paintings outside Japan; a South Pacific tapa (bark cloth) collection; the Lydman and Snukal Collections of Chinese ceramics; Southeast Asian Ceramics from the Collection of Margot and Hans Ries; a fine collection of Buddhist art from throughout Asia; and the complete prints of Paul Jacoulet. The museum has recently reinstalled its Chinese decorative arts and Japanese galleries. Through its collections, the museum demonstrates the range and diversity of the arts of Asia and uses the arts to explore the region's cultures and history.

#### ABOUT USC PACIFIC ASIA MUSEUM

USC Pacific Asia Museum is the only museum dedicated to Pacific Asia at a major research university in the United States. The museum's mission is to further intercultural understanding through the arts of Asia and the Pacific Islands. USC Pacific Asia Museum presented the first North American exhibitions of contemporary Chinese art after the Cultural Revolution, including in 1987, *Beyond The Open Door: Contemporary Paintings From The People's Republic Of China* and in 1991, *I Don't Want To Play Cards with Cézanne And Other Works: Selections From The Chinese "New Wave" And "Avant-Garde" Art Of The 80's*. The museum is located at 46 North Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, California 91101. Hours: Wednesday through Sunday 10AM-6PM. Admission: \$10 for General Admission, \$7 for Students with a valid ID and Seniors (60+), **Free for Children Ages 12 and Under, Free for all Museum Members, USC faculty, staff, students and alumni with current ID. Free for All Visitors on the Second Sunday of the Month.** For more information, please contact 626.449.2742 or visit [pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu](http://pacificasiamuseum.usc.edu)

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