

Bare Bones

Ayesha Sultana

Experimenter – Ballygunge Place

11 February – 10 April 2021

Experimenter presents Ayesha Sultana's third solo at the gallery, *Bare Bones* bringing together an intensely personal yet acutely revealing body of work, that deals with the body and stillness, its relationship with space and movement, breaking down the act of painting to express an intimate moment, where physical and emotional limitations are stretched, tested and broken.

As visceral and instinctively material as the act of painting can be, Sultana's gaze on what surrounds her immediate space and field of sight, her inner perceptions and emotional entanglements occupy her work. The paintings seem to form a mode to express several contradictory lines of experiences tugging at a central nervous system. Forms of bark of a tree feel skin-like, over a fragile body, indicating a space of futility and transience – others, paintings of skies – blue, resplendent and lush point to life, hope and fruition. Seen together the exhibition feels like a void – an infinite landscape of space between empty sky and sea where vistas in the foregrounded paintings meet colour-fields on the background walls and light gives way to vacuity. For Sultana, who has often described her practice as a verb, of splicing, scratching, and mark-making, the measurement of space between things, even if the space is minuscular – such as a space between breath or infinitesimal – such as that between panoramas, is sensed.

Solitude is exacting, taking away more than it gives. Studio practice, for Sultana, is often an act of solitude, one fraught with silence, of deep reckoning and distance. The distance that can sometimes be comforting, can also be intensely painful. To live with oneself and to paint in expressing this solitude, one has to cut off the hand that offended, cut, slice, peel, scrape, and tear away, until what one is left with, are stripped-down bones. Sultana attempts to make two ends of the horizon of her vision come together in *Bare Bones* that coalesce in seemingly transient moments. Paradoxes appear, where secludedness, introspection and a solitary gaze, further suggest a constant oscillation of emotions that underscore this exhibition.

The exhibition in its physical form will be open to the public between 11 am to 6 pm every day except on Sundays and other government mandated closure dates. Visitors to the gallery must wear facemasks at all times. Physical distancing and other safety measures will be followed at the gallery.

Ayesha Sultana (b. 1984, Jashore, Bangladesh) completed her Bachelors in Fine Art (2007) and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Art Education (2008) from Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, where she also taught for two years. **Recent solo and group exhibitions** include: 2020 Pulse, Experimenter, Kolkata; Seismic Movements, Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka; Line, Beats and Shadows, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; 2019 Art Basel, Basel; Searching for Stars Amongst the Crescents, Experimenter, Kolkata; New Configurations, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; 2018 Lahore Biennale 01, Mubarak Haveli, Lahore; Planetary Planning, Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka; 2017 FIAC, Paris; Making Visible, Experimenter, Kolkata; 2016 A Space Between Things, Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka; welcome to what we took from is the state, Queens Museum, New York, NY; 11th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea; You Cannot Cross the Sea Merely by Staring at the Waves, Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna; 2015 Immateriality in Residue, Experimenter, Kolkata; Approaching Abstraction, Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai; 1mile2 Dhaka, Shyam Bazaar, Dhaka; 2014 Ethereal, Leila Heller Gallery, New York; The Language of Human Consciousness, Athr Gallery, Jeddah; Blue Velvet, Galleria Valentina Bonomo, Rome; Outside the Field of View, Experimenter, Kolkata; B/Desh, Dhaka Art Summit, Dhaka; Cross-Casting, Britto Space, Dhaka. Sultana's works are in the collection of SFMoMA; KNMA, New Delhi; Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi; X Museum, Beijing; Samdani Art Foundation, Dhaka; Tate Modern, London; amongst others.

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