

PARALLEL LINES

CONTEMPORARY ART FROM LAHORE, PAKISTAN



CARTWRIGHT HALL ART GALLERY, BRADFORD

an exhibition curated by Gérard Mermoz

exhibition continues: 13 DECEMBER 2008 TO 15 FEBRUARY 2009

PARALLEL LINES_CONTEMPORARY ART FROM LAHORE, PAKISTAN presents a selection of contemporary miniature paintings and photomontages from Lahore, in *dialogue* with each other. The exhibition explores the respective capacity of miniature painting and photomontage, in the hands of young emerging artists, to mediate contemporary realities, in the wake of globalization.

The miniatures represent a new trend within the New Miniature *genre*, characterized by a deliberate move away from the classical Mughal references generally found in the works of the New Miniaturists, and illustrated in the exhibition by early works by **Imran Qureshi**, from the Bradford permanent collection.

Departing from what could be described as a playful form of '*orientalism from within*'—wrapped or not in a post-modern veil—these new works focus on common place objects: a rusty scaffolding (**Sana Mehmood**), burnt matches and a torn page from a personal note book (**Sana Obaid**), an embroidery kit and related patterns (**Rubaba Haider**), entangled threads of textile (**Isbah Afzal**), geometric patterns drawn with pencil and human hair (**Rehana Mangi**), a single fold in a sheet of white paper (**Sobia Zahid**) . . . , to conjure up 'moments of being'. **Ammara Khalid** explores spatial ambiguity with *silhouette*, and by sculpting the page to produce '3D paintings'.

Although privileging the experience of looking, these works do not promote surface realism, but induce, rather, a subtle questioning of what they give us to see; hinting at what lays beyond the skin of appearances. The sustained looking associated with the meticulous application of paint, '*pardahkt*', leads to a state of at-oneness with the object, in which

The exhibition is available for touring.

For all information contact : Nilesh Mistry,
Bradford Museums, Galleries and Heritage,
Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Lister Park, Bradford BD9 5BU.
Tel 01274 431214/431212 or nilesh.mistry@bradford.gov.uk
www.bradford.gov.uk

the secular vision of E. C. Cummings converges with religious forms of meditation. The intention, here, is not to cultivate 'trompe l'oeil' and visual illusion for its own sake, but to use it as a way of opening up other layers of perception.

By contrast, the seventeen PHOTOMONTAGES by **Mehreen Murtaza** presents us with constructed narratives, that interpret the world through pseudo-science fiction scenarios, and attempt to exorcise the take-over of the future by unbridled human hubris :

'Science fiction has reigned over our imaginations since time immemorial. With it's own skewed logic and speculative nature, science fiction is fast becoming a reality. The future is now. Hollywood has created the ultimate clichés in science fiction cinema and the world is fast growing up to these dream realities. Having grown up in a post-modern world with images of The Terminator, artificial intelligence, gene splicing, space-time compendium and sheep cloning culture has predominated and invaded our(my) sensibilities.

I have forayed into a very specific visual culture of pseudo-science fiction cum virtual reality that has come to speak of an irrevocably automatized future that obscures the value implications of human behaviour'.

Two text-based photographic works by **Muzzumil Ruheel**, *Poster 1* and *2* (2008), and a video by **Ismet Khawaja**, *The Covenant*, or '*Listen to me when I talk to you*' (2007) link the works which deal with texts, in particular *Web Page* and '*On and on and on*' by **Aisha Hussain**; and, collectively, highlight the rhetoric of language and the emotional power it carries, in its actualization in speech, writing, film and popular media.

G.M.
gerardmermoz@hotmail.com