

PRESS RELEASE

The Human Dichotomy; group show by TAZEEN QAYYUM, ATTIYA SHAUKAT, AISHA HUSSAIN & REHANA MANGI

Aicon Gallery, Palo Alto

October 17 – November 29

Opening reception, Friday October 17, 2008, 6-9 p.m.

PALO ALTO, Calif., October 17, 2008- Aicon Gallery, 535 Bryant Street, Palo Alto will present a group exhibition of the works of Tazeen Qayyum, Attiya Shaukat, Aisha Hussain, and Rehana Mangi from October 17 through November 29, 2008. An opening reception will be held on Friday, October 17 from 6-9 p.m. This will be the artists' first exhibition with Aicon Gallery.

Throughout the ages, art has evolved as a medium by which its creators are able to contradict, question, and explore the confounding dichotomies that make humanity so intriguing. Questions of human nature, underlying worth, emotion, and fragility have pervaded artists' thoughts endlessly, and in turn have given way to artwork that challenges its viewers. Four artists have done exactly that with their new exhibition: Tazeen Qayyum, Attiya Shaukat, Aisha Hussain and Rehana Mangi have assimilated their surroundings and experiences to produce work that is, at the very least, an exploration of the human condition, and at the most an avenue for contemplation of one's own nature.

Tazeen Qayyum explores the intricacies of humanity in a body of work which focuses on the repeated image of a cockroach. The insect serves as a symbol of dehumanization, and the diminished value of human life. The methodic and detached treatment of the cockroach communicates an attitude of homogenization which calls into question how political systems regard their multitudes of constituents. From afar the patterned work is attractive; it is only when the viewer inspects each image closely that they are faced with the unpleasant reality. The contrast between beauty and death is inescapable.

Attiya Shaukat delves into a far more individual and personal aspect of humanity. The artist's work explores how the human body and mind respond to physical trauma: the voyage from experiencing the trauma itself to the recovery from such an experience. Feelings of pain, fear, bewilderment and resolve are illustrated by two distinctly opposite visuals: the mechanical and the organic. Images of cold and impersonal medical instruments are in sharp contrast with those of the organic and fragile vertebrae, creating a dichotomy between the human and inhuman.

Aisha Hussain's body of work is a compelling collection of dualities: personal and political, organic and structured, story-telling and somehow illegible. Hussain's script begs to be read, but instead is understood as pattern work, texture, a foundation on which her images and graphics can find a place to sink in and be part of a whole. The form recalls that of a book, yet the content is chaotic and not meant to be "read" in the most logical sense of the word. Hussain's intention is a commentary on any and all dualities; her oeuvre, in turn, is a physical tribute to the contradictions one may come across in all walks of life.

Rehana Mangi incorporates a very personal facet in her work: human hair, an aspect of the body that is exceptionally representative of life and personality. Mangi's utilization of this medium continuously calls the viewer to recognize the organic and life-infused nature of her medium, but the artist simultaneously applies the human product in gridded, linear, structural ways. There is an apparent rift between life and mechanism, emotion and void, which shows in Mangi's collection. Emotions and humanness give way to an invasive sense of nihilism and vacancy.

For further information and images please contact Shona Dutta, Gallery Director, at 650.321.4900 or shona@aicongallery.com