

# JASON MCCOY GALLERY

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## WASEEM AHMED

March 3 – April 3, 2020



Waseem Ahmed, *Untitled*, 2019

Dry pigment color on handmade archival Wasli paper, 57 9/10 x 39 1/2 inches (147 x 100.2 cm)

Jason McCoy Gallery is pleased to present both new works on paper and a sculptural installation by **Waseem Ahmed**. Based in Lahore, Pakistan, Ahmed creates finely rendered miniatures that address various social, political and cultural issues in an attempt "to consistently decry social attitudes that promote suppression, hatred and bloodshed among human beings."

Crossing cultural borders, Ahmed's vocabulary is rich in metaphors and analogies. Here, animals, letters from the Arabic-Farsi-Urdu alphabet and silhouettes of imposing figures heralding from Western classical mythology make up an eclectic trove of images. In addition, references to nature's bounty weave through the compositions like steadfast reminders of the wonders that society is bound to lose if we do not change the status quo. To this end, Ahmed fuses notions of fragility and violence, chaos and calm. It is up to the viewer to determine whether this is a world that can be salvaged; whether these are scenes of hope emerging or of an inevitable doom-in-progress.

Ahmed's sculpture was completed during a residency at the *Artist and Institution Residency Program* in Istanbul in 2019 as one of five such unique large floor installations. Consisting of many fragmented forms that remain tied together by means of color and texture, the work was inspired by the shape of a traditional waterskin, used by travelers and soldiers for centuries when embarking on desert crossings. While manifesting as an abstract, associative brainstorm or a layered dreamscape perhaps, Ahmed's installation also speaks to the worldwide threat of water scarcity and by extension, to the oppression of the weak by the powerful.

**Waseem Ahmed** (b. 1976) was born in Hyderabad, Pakistan. Ahmed grew up in a *Muhajir* (immigrant) family who, because they were Muslim, had migrated from India after Partition in 1947 to settle in the newly independent state of Pakistan. He attended the National College of Arts Lahore in Pakistan, receiving his Bachelors in Fine Arts with Honors from the Department of Miniature Painting in 2000. He has exhibited extensively in Pakistan and internationally, including a solo exhibition at the Asian Art Museum, Berlin (2014/2015). His work is in the permanent collections of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin; The British Museum, London; Virginia Whiles Collections, United Kingdom; The Stern Collection, New York; The Jindal Collection, India; Anupam Poddar Collections, India; and the D. Daskalopoulos Collection, Switzerland, among others. He was a finalist for the Sovereign Asian Art Prize (2012-2013, 2013-2014), and he was nominated for the Jameel Prize (2011-2012). Ahmed lives and works in Lahore.