

NEWS

B R I E F

met such fellow artists as Kho Wan Gie, Tan Lip Poen, and Lee Man Fong and created the Yin Hua group. He exhibited in China, Singapore, and Indonesia.

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HONG KONG

The Havelian Express

Cais Gallery, Hong Kong, in collaboration with guest curator Whitney Ferrara, will present a group show of thought-provoking Pakistani miniatures, *The Havelian Express*, January 9 through February 14, 2010. The exhibition will feature works by Hasnat Mehmood (b.1978), Muhammad Zeeshan (b.1980), and Imran Channa (b.1981).

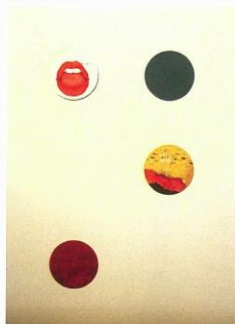
The Havelian Express is the proposed first passenger train between Pakistan and China. Aptly named, the exhibition hopes to provide another metaphorical link between these two countries whose histories are intertwined through centuries of artistic dialogue, influence, and nomadic incursion. Vestiges of Persian, Mughal, and Indus Valley civilization portrayal in China can be seen from the first mosque built in the Tang dynasty, to Buddhist art and blue ceramic floral motifs from the Yuan dynasty.

Since partition from India in 1947, Pakistan has often been viewed through a slim prism of cynicism over the tumultuous societal and ongoing political conflicts. Painted with a culture of contradictions, the country offers a fertile ground for artists to explore and engage in the semiotics of Pakistani life through contemporary sensibilities.

Mehmood, Zeeshan, and Channa's individual practices are daringly different reinventions of a demanding discipline.



Muhammad Zeeshan, *Dying Miniature*, 2009, graphite on sand paper, 40 x 66 inches.

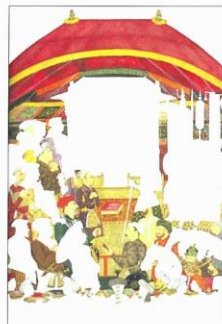


Hasnat Mehmood, *I Love Miniature* (detail), 2009, mixed media on wasli, 14 pieces, 21 x 14 in each.

Looking beyond the potent domestic climate, the works in and of themselves carry an immense beauty with the hope of serving as cultural ambassadors to present a more nuanced picture of Pakistan.

Cultural connoisseurs of their genre, each artist defies and reinterprets the *oeuvre* in remarkably intricate and complementary minimalist styles while inviting the audience into a critically charged debate over the accuracy of historical accounts and paying homage to time-honored traditions.

Hasnat Mehmood's tranquil imagery questions the role of the artist in society by offering moments of contemplation. A poetic and undulating prose of philosophy visually balances the form of his work with its content. Appropriating images from



Imran Channa, *Untitled*, 2009, digital print, 78 x 57 cm, ed.1/3.

Kangra School Pahari paintings, Mehmood juxtaposes his sound figurative abilities and explores the parameters of miniature art through geometric scrolls.

Muhammad Zeeshan shows maturity beyond his years with works akin to anti-homage; he layers graphite on coarse sandpaper to make shimmering silhouettes. The two dimensionality of Zeeshan's work carries the same intonations of miniature paintings, but are a stark contrast to the light and colorful traditional scripts of the 16th century. Zeeshan's ability to synthesize innovation and cultural context on a larger scale is revealing of his nature as an artist.

The youngest of the three artists, Imran Channa adds a 21st century element to the show with his inimitable digitized

works dissected from the renowned official book of Mughal history, the *Badshahnama*. Translating to "The Book of Kings", Channa posits that if the perspective of one man solely guided the book, how can one trust the accuracy of a pre-scripted and determined history? A refreshing twist in contextual subject matter offers the viewer a modern day interpretation of painterly form.

Cais Gallery Hong Kong is located at UG, 54 Hollywood Rd, Central. Tel: (852) 2527 7798. Fax: (852) 2527 7768.

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TAIWAN

Art And Museum

Taipei Fine Arts Museum is presenting *Cai Guo-Qiang Hanging Out in the Museum*, through February 21, 2010.

This is Cai's second collaboration with the Taipei Fine Arts Museum and his first exhibition inside the grand space of the museum. Through the positioning of the installation works within the architectural space, Cai looks back at his works and places them in new contexts, challenging and energizing the museum space in unusual ways.

The 35 works on exhibition are drawn from museum and private collections, and include three specially created new works. His *Cultural Melting Bath* (1997) invites audiences to join the medicinal bath located in the outdoor courtyard. The three new works are: *Day and Night*, a gunpowder drawing based on the physical diary of a female nude; the classical Chinese landscape *Toroko Gorge*, inspired by Cai's recent visit to the spectacular landscape in eastern Taiwan; and *Strait*, a Quanzhou rock curved as a cross-section of Taiwan Strait transported by sea, literally through the ancient journey from the mainland China.