

Simone Subal Gallery
131 Bowery, 2nd floor
New York, NY 10002 T
917- 409 0612
info@simonesubal.com
www.simonesubal.com



Baseera Khan

Simone Subal Gallery



Vaginal Davis and Baseera Khan, *Baseera Khan, By Faith*, September 11, 2020. Rehearsal view at Queenslab. Photo by Ariana Sarwari.

Baseera Khan: By Faith
The Kitchen
September 11 - October 11, 2020



Baseera Khan, Ethan Weinstock, and Logan Jardine, Baseera Khan, By Faith, September 26, 2020. Performance view at Queenslab. Photo ©2020 Paula Court.

Baseera Khan: By Faith
The Kitchen
September 11 - October 11, 2020



Baseera Khan: By Faith
The Kitchen
September 11 - October 11, 2020



Amy Sillman and Baseera Khan, *Baseera Khan, By Faith*, September 20, 2020. Performance view at Queenslab. Photo ©2020 Paula Court.

Baseera Khan: By Faith
The Kitchen
September 11 - October 11, 2020

Simone Subal Gallery



Tell me about yesterday tomorrow
NS-Dokumentationszentrum München, München
November 28, 2019 - August 30, 2020

Simone Subal Gallery



Baseera Khan
iammuslima, 2018
Handmade wool rugs custom designed by artist, made in Kashmir,
India
48 × 30 inches (121.92 × 76.20 cm)

Simone Subal Gallery



Baseera Khan
snake skin
Simone Subal Gallery, New York
November 03 - December 22, 2019



Baseera Khan

Pink Cover Up, 2019

Acrylic, chromatic prints, screen print, custom handmade silk rug
pieces made in Kashmir, India

41 1/4 × 31 1/4 inches (104.78 × 79.38 cm)

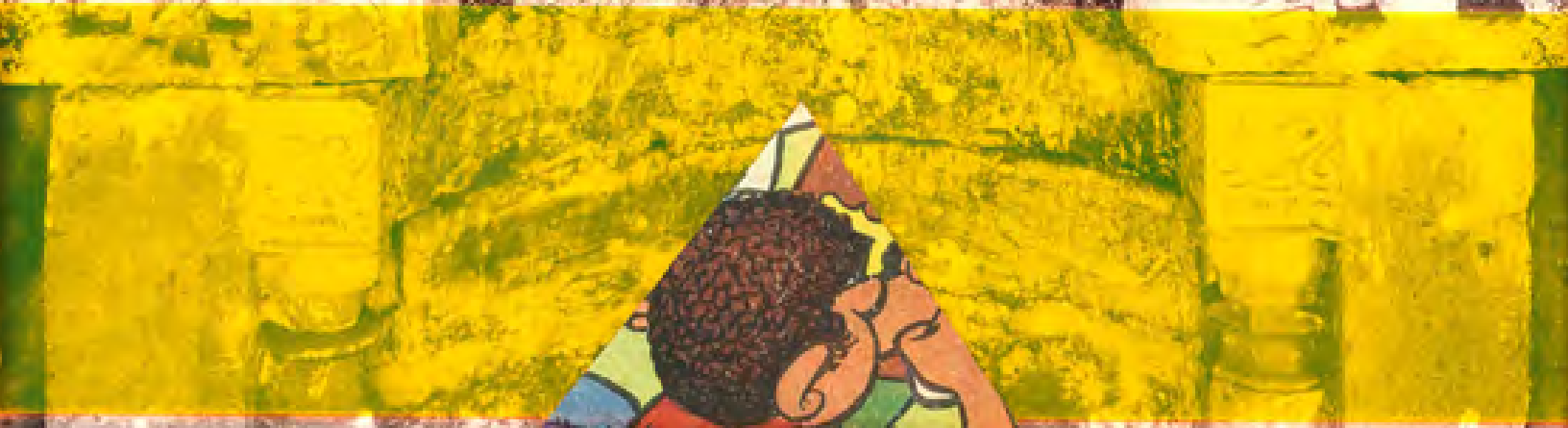
Simone Subal Gallery



Baseera Khan
snake skin
Simone Subal Gallery, New York
November 03 - December 22, 2019



Arabic calligraphy in a horizontal band at the top of the archway.



GOBELINS
MANUFACTURE

Simone Subal Gallery



Baseera Khan
snake skin
Simone Subal Gallery, New York
November 03 - December 22, 2019





Baseera Khan

27 Jain, 2019

Acrylic, chromatic prints, custom handmade silk rug pieces made in
Kashmir, India

31 × 25 1/4 inches (78.74 × 64.14 cm)

Simone Subal Gallery



Baseera Khan
snake skin
Simone Subal Gallery, New York
November 03 - December 22, 2019



Baseera Khan

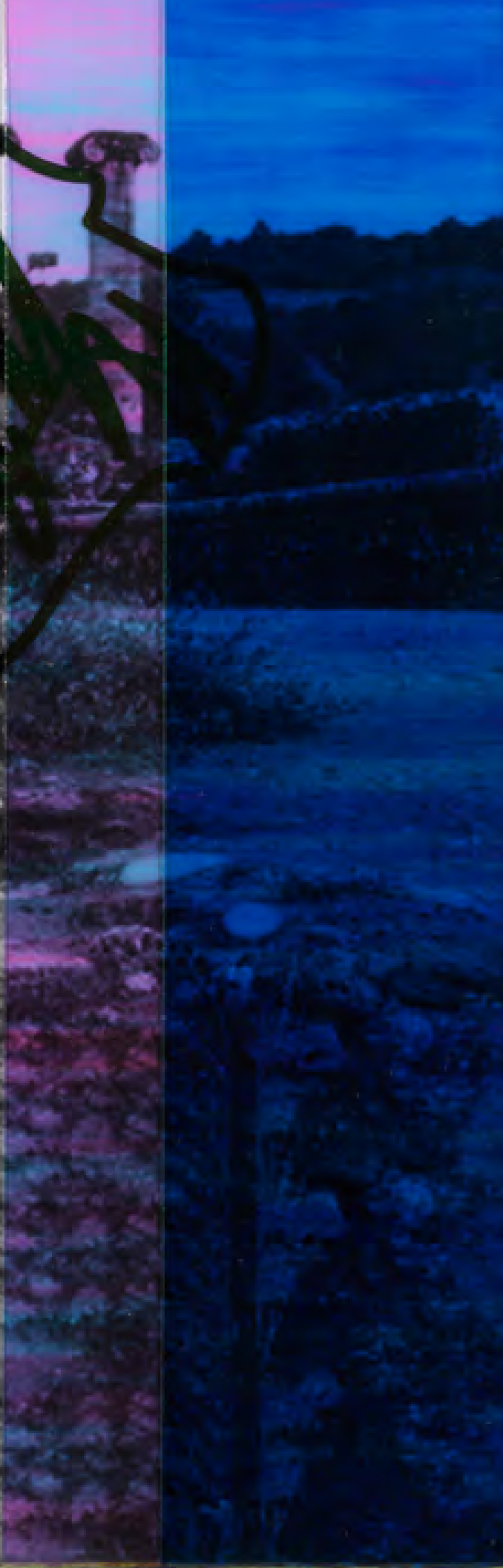
Redacted Frame, 2019

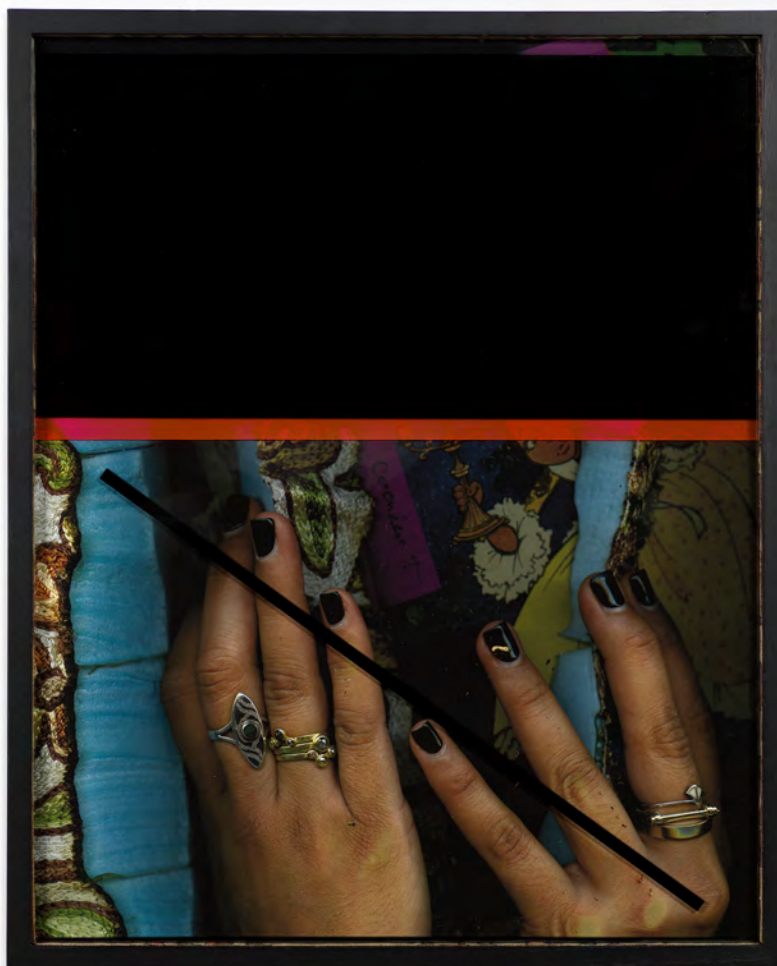
Acrylic, chromatic prints, custom handmade silk rug pieces made in
Kashmir, India

41 1/4 × 31 1/4 inches (104.78 × 79.38 cm)



Baseera Khan
snake skin
Simone Subal Gallery, New York
November 03 - December 22, 2019





Baseera Khan

Holding my Knowledge, 2019

Acrylic, chromatic prints, custom handmade silk rug pieces made in
Kashmir, India

31 × 25 1/4 inches (78.74 × 64.14 cm)

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Radical Love
Ford Foundation
June 11 - August 17, 2019

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Glass Age
Helena Anrather, New York
June 07 - July 20, 2019

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Simone Subal Gallery



Rico Gatson & Baseera Khan: Free to Be
Jenkins Johnson Projects, Brooklyn
April 26 - June 15, 2019

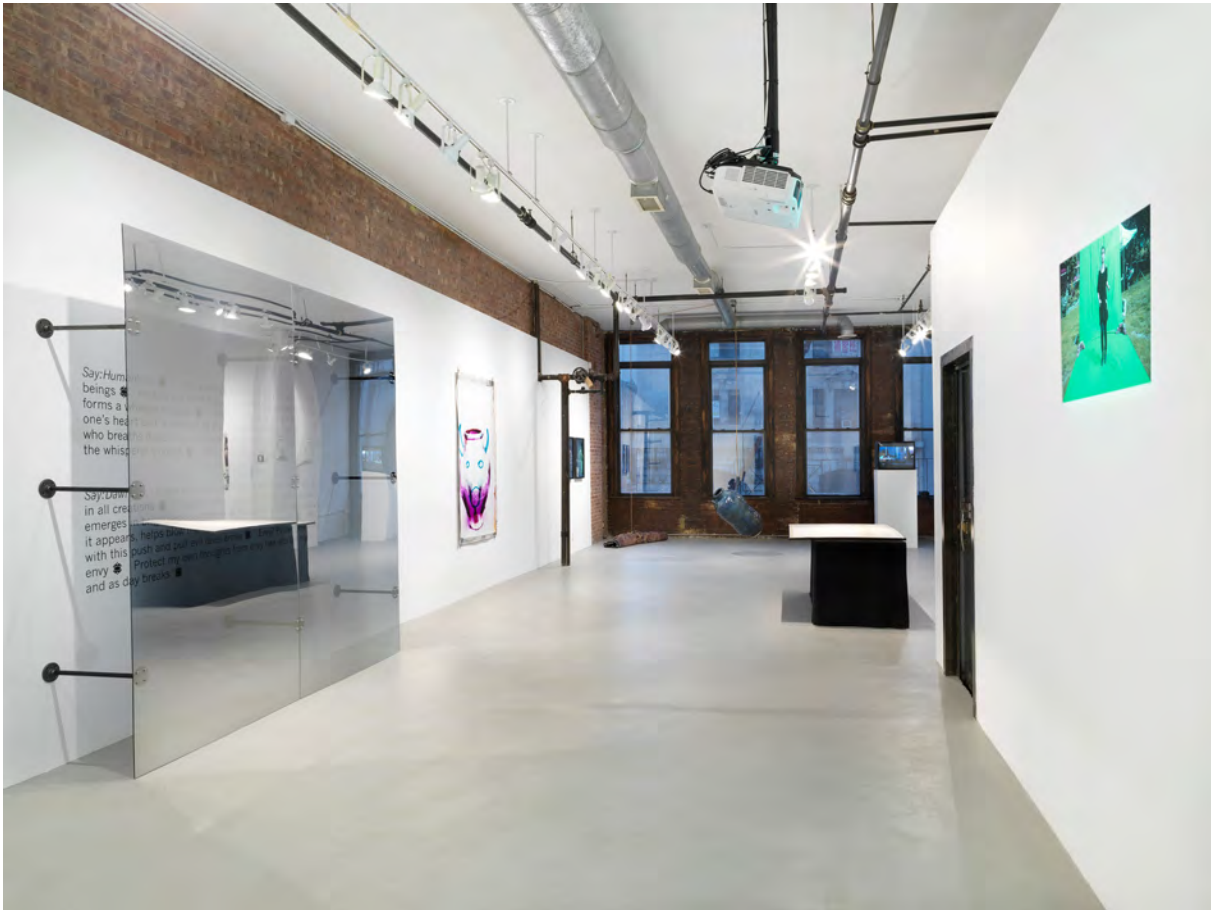


Simone Subal Gallery



Rico Gatson & Baseera Khan: Free to Be
Jenkins Johnson Projects, Brooklyn
April 26 - June 15, 2019

Simone Subal Gallery



Not for everybody
Simone Subal Gallery, New York
November 04 - December 21, 2018



Click on image
to view video.

Baseera Khan
Planet Fitness, 2016
Single channel video, color, sound
24 minutes

Simone Subal Gallery



Baseera Khan

***Privacy Control*, 2018**

Acrylic sheets, two-way mirror film, steel poles, vinyl

98 × 96 × 18 inches (248.92 × 243.84 × 45.72 cm)

Say: Humankind ☸ I seek refuge with the maker of all sentient beings ☸ Protect me from those that withdraw, whose withdrawal forms a whisper's doubt ☸ There is a kind of doubt that sits in one's heart and is planted by the whisperer themselves ☸ Thee who breaths doubt into the breast of humankind ☸ Save me from the whisperer's doubt ☸ And bring me good will ☸

Say: Dawn ☸ I seek refuge at night and at daybreak, from the evil in all creations ☸ That evil, which emerges in the darkness, also emerges in brightness, so intense ☸ The moon, as it sets and as it appears, helps blow the water and the wind into knots ☸ And with this push and pull evil does arrive ☸ Envy? Protect me from envy ☸ Protect my own thoughts from envy late into the night, and as day breaks ☸

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Baseera Khan
Kneeling, 2018
Acrylic, vinyl decal, chromatic prints
24 × 18 inches (60.96 × 45.72 cm)

Simone Subal Gallery



Baseera Khan
The Unknown, 2018
Two way mirror film, acrylic, chromatic prints
24 × 18 inches (60.96 × 45.72 cm)



Baseera Khan
Nike ID #2, 2018
Nike ID Tag customized Nike Air Force One mid-top shoes
Dimensions variable



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The Racial Imaginary Institute: On Whiteness
The Kitchen
June 27 - August 03, 2018

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Ritual
Aspen Art Museum
December 15, 2017 - April 01, 2018

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Baseera Khan
Lunar Countdown, 2017
Handmade wool rugs custom designed by artist, made in Kashmir,
India
48 × 30 inches (121.92 × 76.20 cm)
Edition 1/10



Simone Subal Gallery



In Practice: Another Echo
SculptureCenter
January 29 - April 02, 2018

Simone Subal Gallery



In Practice: Another Echo
SculptureCenter
January 29 - April 02, 2018

Simone Subal Gallery



precious not precious
OSMOS Address
April 30 - June 29, 2018

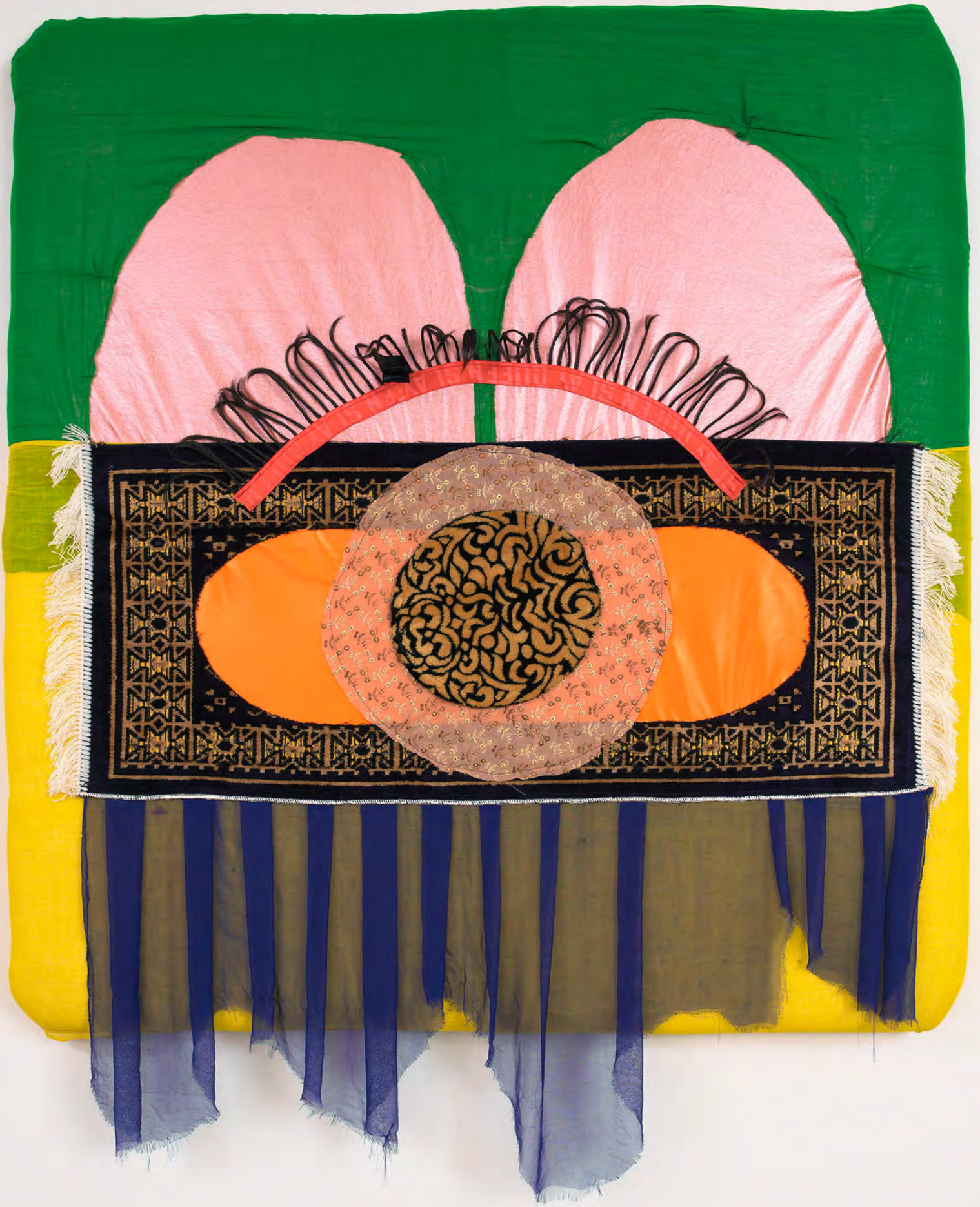
Simone Subal Gallery



precious not precious
OSMOS Address
April 30 - June 29, 2018



Baseera Khan
Seat #7 [Feat.], 2018
prayer rugs, artist's underwear, pleather
42 × 45 × 3 1/2 inches (106.68 × 114.30 × 8.89 cm)



Simone Subal Gallery



Ritual
Aspen Art Museum
December 15, 2017 - April 01, 2018
(curated by Courtenay Finn)

Simone Subal Gallery



iamuslima
Participant, Inc., New York
February 26 - April 02, 2017



Baseera Khan
Acoustic Sound Blanket, 2017
Silk, felt, industrial sound insulation, gold custom embroidering
94 × 85 inches (238.76 × 215.90 cm)
Edition 1/1 + I AP





Baseera Khan
Oneness (Belief in Monotheism), 2017
Monotone screen-print
59 × 50 inches (149.86 × 127.00 cm)
Edition 1/4



Baseera Khan

Braidage: 99 Holds, 2017

Indoor rock-climbing wall made from 99 unique poured dyed resin casts of the corners of the artist's body. Embedded with wearable gold and silver Cuban chains, hair, and hypothermia blankets, Harnesses made from climbing rope braided into chains, charcoal, large synthetic and real hair braid

Dimensions variable





Acoustic Sound Blankets (performance), Study Sessions
Whitney Museum
July 21, 2017



Acoustic Sound Blankets (performance), Study Sessions
Whitney Museum
July 21, 2017



Acoustic Sound Blankets
Moudy Art Gallery, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth
August 21 - September 21, 2017

Simone Subal Gallery

Baseera Khan

Born 1980 in Denton, Texas.
Lives and works in New York.

Education

- 2012 MFA, School of Architecture, Art, and Planning, Cornell University, New York
2005 BFA, Visual Arts Design & Sociology, University of North Texas, Denton, Texas

Solo Exhibitions

- 2021 Public artwork commissioned by the Public Art Fund, New York, NY (forthcoming)
- 2020 *Decade*, Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta, Georgia (forthcoming)
By Faith, The Kitchen, New York
Art on the Grid, Public Art Fund, New York, NY
- 2019 *snake skin*, Simone Subal Gallery, New York, NY
Free to Be (two-person exhibition with Rico Gatson), Jenkins Johnson, Brooklyn, NY
- 2018 *iamuslima*, (third installment), curated by Polly Nordstrand, Colorado Springs Fine Art Centers, Colorado
precious not precious, curated by Cay Sophie Rabinowitz, OSMOSaddress, New York, NY
- 2017 *Reading Room On Purpose*, NADA Projects, organized by Participant Inc, New Art Dealers Alliance, Miami, FL
iamuslima, (second installment), curated by Sara-Jayne Parsons, Moudy Gallery, at Texas Christian University College of Fine Arts, Fort Worth, TX
iamuslima, (first installment) curated by Lia Gangitano, Participant Inc. Gallery, New York, NY
- 2015 *Walk with Me*, organized by 21st Projects, Critical Practices Inc., New York, NY

Selected Group Exhibitions:

- 2021 Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio (forthcoming)
- 2020 *Polymorph! Part 1: Bumpiness*, Contemporary Art Galleries, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT (forthcoming)
50 Artists: Art on the Grid, Public Art Fund, New York, NY
Mending the Sky, NOMA, New Orleans, LA
SOUND OFF: Silence + Resistance, LACE, Los Angeles, CA
We Fight to Build a Free World: An Exhibition by Jonathan Horowitz, The Jewish Museum, New York, NY
Catalyst, Art and Social Change, Gracie Mansion Conservancy, New York, NY
Sound Off, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA

Simone Subal Gallery

- 2019 *Tell me about yesterday tomorrow*, Munich Documentation Centre for the History of National Socialism, Munich, Germany
Beyond Geography, BRIC, Brooklyn, New York, NY
ACE: Art on Sports, Promise, and Selfhood, Albany Museum, University of Albany State University of New York, Albany, NY
Radical Love, Ford Foundation Gallery, New York, NY
Glass Age, organized by Jesse Greenberg, Helena Anrather, New York, NY
The Value of Sanctuary, St. John the Divine Church, New York, NY
- 2018 *Not for everybody*, curated by Allie Tepper, Simone Subal Gallery, New York, NY
Blessed BeBlessed Be: Mysticism, Spirituality, and the Occult in Contemporary Art, curated by Ginger Shulick Porcella, MoCA Tucson, AZ
Long, Winding Journeys: Contemporary Art and the Islamic Tradition, curated by Elizabeth Rooklidge, Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, NY
TAILBONE, curated by Tenaya Izu and Henry Murphy, 47 Canal, New York, NY
SEED, curated by Yvonne Force, Paul Kasmin Gallery, New York, NY
Carry Over: New Voices from the Global African Diaspora, curated by Kalia Brooks, Smack Mellon, New York, NY
On Whiteness, curated by Lumi Tan, in collaboration with The Racial Imaginary Institute and The Kitchen, New York, NY
Mane N' Tail, curated by Katherine Simone Reynolds, Luminary, St. Louis, MI
ROYGBIV, Kate Werble Gallery, New York, NY
I am no bird..., ltd los angeles, Los Angeles, CA
In Practice: Another Echo, curated by Allie Tepper, Sculpture Center, New York, NY
Rituals, curated by Courtenay Finn, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO
LOVE 2018: Purple Hearts, curated by Rachel Stern, LeRoy Neiman Gallery at Columbia University, New York, NY
HyphenAmerica, curated by Rex Delafkaran and Tsedaye Makonnen, Gallery 102, George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
- 2017 *Standard Forms*, curated by Christian Camacho-Light, The Berrie Center Art Galleries, Ramapo College, Mahwah, NJ
Other Romances, curated by Em Rooney, Rachel Uffner, New York, NY
Acoustic Sound Blankets (performance), Sessions, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Otherwise, you don't see me, curated by Rachel Steinberg, SOHO20, New York, NY
Situational Conflict (performance), curated by Nick Faust, 13th Street Repertory Theatre, New York, NY
Acoustic Sound Blankets (performance), New Art Dealers Alliance: Presents, New York, NY
Leaving Home, curated by David Dixon and Cathouse Funeral, Beacon, New York, NY
Acoustic Sound Blankets (performance), Fatal Love, Queens Museum, New York, NY
Acoustic Sound Blankets (performance), curated by Robb Jamieson, Art-POP Montréal International Music Festival, Montréal, Canada
- 2016 *BRIC Biennial*, Weeksville Heritage Center, New York, NY
SKOWHEGAN Performs (performance), at Socrates Sculpture Park, New York, NY
Subject to Capital, curated by Joshua Lubin-Levy, Abrons Art Center, New York, NY

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- 2015 *Of Gentle Birth*, curated by Jonathan Allen, Brooklyn Arts Council, New York, NY
Prisoner of Love Performance, Open Text, organized by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, New York, NY
- 2014 *Arrivals, Out to See (performance)*, curated by Sara Reisman, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs One Percent for Art Program, New York, NY
- 2013 *Texas Biennial, 5th Anniversary, Big Medium*, Austin, TX
Small Work Big Change Auction, Sylvia Rivera Law Project Collective, Judson Memorial Church, New York, NY

Selected Articles

- 2020 “The Kitchen’s new residency programs: Autumn Knight at 512 West 19th Street and Baseera Khan at Queenslab,” Flash Art. October, 2020. Print.
“Es geht um die Grauzone,” Kultur & Medien. January 15, 2020.
- 2019 Freeling, Isa. *Baseera Khan: A Compelling Body Of Work*, ArtLyst. December 15, 2019.
Gilbert, Alan. *Baseera Khan: snake skin*, The Brooklyn Rail. December 12, 2019.
Heinrich, Will. *Baseera Khan*, The New York Times. December 11, 2019.
D’Souza, Aruna. *Baseera Khan: In snake skin, the tricky quest for meaningful transformation*, 4 Columns. December 6, 2019.
Halle, Howard. *Baseera Khan: snake skin*, Time Out New York. December 6, 2019.
Anania, Billy. *Baseera Khan’s Vivid Anti-Imperialist Odes*, Hyperallergic. December 4, 2019.
Fateman, Johanna. *Goings on About Town: Baseera Khan*, The New Yorker. November 20, 2019.
Vickery, Morgan. *Wu Tang x Absolut Art Exhibition*, Flaunt. October 31, 2019.
Holmes, Helen. *Artists Pay Tribute to Wu-Tang Clan in a Limited Edition Series of Prints Starting at \$250*, Observer. October 16, 2019.
Molincorvo, Roberta. *Wall Works, Hunter Fashion Magazine*. Issue 35, Fall Winter 2019.
Pitcher, Laura. *Reflecting on What It Means to Be Muslim Today, 8 Artists Share Experiences in a New Exhibition*, Observer. September 10, 2019.
Jacobs, Julia. *A Sound-and-Art Show Fills a Void for Muslims in Brooklyn*, The New York Times. September 9, 2019.
Vali, Murtaza. *Rico Gaston and Baseera Khan*, Artforum. September 2019. Print.
Steinhauer, Jillian. *New York Galleries: What to See Right Now*, The New York Times. August 7, 2019.
Tine, Patrick. *'ACE' exhibit at University at Albany Art Museum: Show examines issues around sports*, Times Union. August 1, 2019.
Indrisek, Scott. *What Does 'Radical Love' Mean To You? For these artists, there's no one right answer*, Garage. July 2, 2019.
Machado, Danilo. *Rico Gaston and Baseera Khan: Free to Be*, The Brooklyn Rail. June, 2019.
White, Katie. *Settle Into Summer With These 5 Shows by Some of Our Favorite New Emerging Artists*, artnet news. May 31, 2019.
Steinhauer, Jillian. *Spring Gallery Guide: Brooklyn*, The New York Times. April 26, 2019.
Wu, Simon. *Not For Everybody: Baseera Khan*, Gloria Maximo and Hadi Fallahpishch, The Offing. January 25, 2019.

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- 2018 Wheadon, Nico. *The Racial Imaginary Institute: On Whiteness*, The Brooklyn Rail. September 4, 2018.
Baseera Khan, AFRICA'S OUT!, New York.
The AP Questionnaire: Baseera Khan, MFA Art Practice, School of Visual Arts, New York.
Burke, Sarah. *The Artist Creating a 'Karaoke Spiritual Center' to Explore South Asian Identity*, Broadly. VICE.
Smith, Alissa. *Abstractions*, Independent.
- 2017 *A Showing of Art World Solidarity on Inauguration Day*, Hyperallergic.
Diamond, Stephanie. *Artist Features*, Listing Projects.
10 Breakout Artists to Watch at Art Basel Miami Beach, 2017.
Preview NADA Miami, 2017.
Colucci, Emily. *Climbing Generations of Trauma and Muslim Heritage: Baseera Khan's "iamuslima" at Participant Inc*, ArtFCity.com.
Trouillot, Terence. *Baseera Khan's iamuslima*, BOMB Magazine.
Menard, Kate. *Baseera Khan's iamuslima on view at Participant Inc: Interview with the Artist*, ArteFuse.com.
Nada Presents: Acoustic Blankets, audio recording by KNOW WAVE, New York.
Monte, Julia. *Inside iamuslima: An Interview with Baseera Khan*, Informality Art and Culture Blog.
McDonough, Tom. *Osmos Magazine*, Issue #12.
Harris, Jane Ursula. *Baseera Khan*, Art in America Magazine. June 2017.
Godfrey Larmon, Annie. *Baseera Khan*, ArtForum Magazine, Summer 2017. Print.
Baseera Khan, ARTnews Magazine. Print.
Noor, Tausif. *Fatal Love: Where Are We Now*, ArtAsiaPacific.
- 2016 Cascone, Sarah. *14 Emerging Women Artists to Watch in 2017*, artnet.
Howe, David Everitt. *Bomb Artist Profiles*, BOMB Magazine.
Lubin-Levy, Joshua. *Subject to Capital Catalog*, Abrons Art Center, New York.
- 2015 Fellowship Talk, and Travel Journal, organized by Steven Rand, Apexart, New York.

Lectures and Performances

- 2020 Denniston Hill Performance Commission, Triangle Arts, Brooklyn NY
- 2019 An Evening of Performance Art with Nooshin Rostami and Baseera Khan, in conjunction with Beyond Geographies: Contemporary Art and Muslim Experience, BRIC, Brooklyn, NY
Artist Talk at Night at the Museum: Bruce Nauman Closing Party, MoMA PS1, Queens, NY
- 2018 Artist Talk: Carry Over: New Voices, moderated by Kalia Brooks, AFRICA'S OUT!, Smack Mellon, New York, NY
Braidrage Performance, Fine Arts Center at Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO
tba, Artist Lecture and Studio Critiques, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA

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tba, Artist Tour (performance), Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, NY
Summer of Know, Artist Talk, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY
Acoustic Sound Blanket, Performance and Talk, curated by HOUSING at Gavin
Brown's Enterprises, New York, NY

- 2017 Artist Talk and Workshop, Youth Insights Program, Whitney Museum of Art, New York, NY
Braidage Performance, Participant INC, New York, NY
Material of Border Crossing, Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Artist Lecture and Discussion, Bard High School Early College, New York, NY
Artist Lecture and Studio Critiques, MFA Architecture, Art, and Planning, Cornell University, NY
Acoustic Sound Blankets Performance and Talk, Art Pop Montreal International Music Festival, Montreal
Artist Lecture and Studio Critiques, Masters of Fine Arts Photography, Parsons, The New School, New York, NY
Acoustic Sound Blankets, Performance and Talk, Williams College, Williamstown, MA
iamuslima, Performance, Artist Lecture and Studio Critiques, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX
Artist Lecture and Studio Critiques, MFA Art and Practice, School of Visual Arts, New York, NY
Mourning my Freedom (performance), Abrons Art Center, New York, NY
Artist Lecture and Studio Critiques, Graduate Fine Arts, Pratt Institute, New York, NY
- 2016 Artist Talk, Teacher's College, Columbia University, New York, NY
- 2013 Life/Work, Bard Symposium, with Aay Kay Burns, Sharon Loudon, and Mark Stafford, International Center of Photography, New York, NY
The Now and the Visual Arts: Contemporary & Historical Figurations of the Present, co-organized with Anna Horakova and Hannah Mueller Departments of German Studies & Art, Architecture, and Planning at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
Memory and Monuments, NY Integrative Seminar, Parsons, The New School, New York, NY

Selected Curatorial Projects

- 2018 *Queens International 2018: Volumes*, co-curated with Sophia Marisa Lucas, Queens Museum, New York, NY
- 2016 *The Others: An Artist's Studio*, co-curated with Jonatha Manno, 56 Bogart, New York, NY
- 2015–2012 *Artist and Archives Research Fellowship*, Participant Inc., New York, NY
Vaginal Davis: HAG-Small, contemporary, haggard
The Lookout: Luther Price
Greer Lankton: LOVE ME
- 2013 *On Mourning Art and Politics: Facebook Feed Experimental Project*

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- 2010 *A Wild Gander: Artists from the South Asian Woman's Creative Collective*, BRIC Art Media, New York, NY
Neo-Nomads, co-curated with Aileen Wilson and Anne-Laure Fayard, BRIC Art Media, New York, NY
- 2009 *Moonlighting, Art Worker by Day, Artist by Night*, Hosfelt Gallery, New York, NY
A New Deal, Art and Currency, BRIC Art Media, New York, NY
Portraits of the Artist: Matt Wolf, Charlie Ahearn, BRIC Art Media, New York, NY

Teaching

- 2018 – present: Mentorship Program, New York Arts Practicum, New York
2018 – present: Summer Faculty, MFA Art Practice, School of Visual Arts, New York
2018 – present: MFA Studio Critiques, Columbia University, New York
2017 – present: Part-time Faculty, New York University, New York
2017 – present: MFA Mentorship Program, School of Visual Arts, New York
2015 – 2018: Part-time Faculty, Parsons, The New School for Design, New York
2014 – 2016: Teaching Fellow, Studio Lab, Abrons Art Center, New York
2010 – 2012: Teaching Fellow, Architecture, Art, and Planning, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Publications

- 2018
Be Careful What You Wish, Chaplet Series, Belladonna, New York Unbag, Issue#2, New York, NY
Art, Yoga, & A Culture of Appropriation, interview by Ryan LeMere, Aligned Magazine, New York, NY
MFA Catalog, Parsons Masters of Fine Art Photography, The New School, New York, NY
tba, The Kitchen and The Racial Imaginary Institute, New York, NY
- 2017
Provocations, TDR: The Drama Review, coeditor Julie Tolentino, The MIT Press
Exclusion and Your Own Heart, J20, Whitney Museum of Art, New York

Residencies, Fellowships, and Awards

- 2019 BRIC Colene Brown Art Prize
Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Grant
- 2018 NYSCA/NYFA Interdisciplinary Artist Fellow
Nomination, Art Matters Artist Grant, New York
- 2018–2019 Artist in Residence, Pioneer Works, New York, NY
- 2016–2018 Nomination, Rema Hort Mann Foundation Award
- 2016–2017 Artist in Residence, AIRspace, Abrons Art Center, New York, NY

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- 2015 International Travel Fellowship, Israel/Palestine, Apexart, New York, NY
Artist in Residence, Process Space, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, New York, NY
- 2014 Artist in Residence, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture Program, ME
Matching Funds Award, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, ME
Nomination, Art Matters Artist Grant, NY
- 2012 Michael Rapuano Memorial Award, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- 2010 Nomination, Whitney Museum of American Art, Biennial, NY
- 2009–2012 Participant, Robert Flaherty Film Seminar, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY

Open Wounds by Josetxo Cedán, Work by Dennis Lim
Witnesses, Monuments, Ruins by Irina Leimbacher
- 2009–2010 Experimental Television Center Grant, New York
- 2005 Arch and Anne Giles Kimbrough Award, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas
Nomination, Artpace Artist in Residence, San Antonio, TX
- 2004–2005 Artist in Residence, CentralTrak, the University of Texas at Dallas, TX

Public collections

Kadist, San Francisco, CA
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY

Flash Art



LILIANE LIJN
IVANA BAŠIĆ
GERMANO CELANT
JUAN CORTÉS
IAIN FORSYTH
JANE POLLARD
YONA FRIEDMAN
BANI HAYKAL
BASEERA KHAN
AUTUMN KNIGHT
PHILIPPE PARRENO
ZINA SARO-WIWA
MARINA ROSENFELD
IAN WILSON
JANA WINDEREN
SAMSON YOUNG
20471120



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POSTE ITALIANE SPA SPEDIZIONE A.P. - D.L. 353/2003 (CONVERTITO IN LEGGE 27/02/2004 N° 46) ART. 1, COMMA 1 LO/MI

Questionnaire The Kitchen's new residency programs: Autumn Knight at 512 West 19th Street and Baseera Khan at Queenslab^{180–185}

As part of an ongoing effort to probe contemporary curatorial practices, *Flash Art* reached out to one of New York City's oldest nonprofit spaces, The Kitchen, to discuss the concept of the artist residency relative to current states of art production. We asked the curators to describe their vision for artist residencies, particularly in terms of how curatorial programming can reshape them.

Flash Art: A residency is a way to create a community — a place for debate and confrontation. How do you envision new ways of interaction without taking away from the idea of the “artist residency”?

The Kitchen: The Kitchen's current model for artist residencies responds to the conditions created by COVID-19 by allowing for both in-person production — with the artist-in-residence

working with curators, collaborators, and technical crew in our spaces according to social distance protocols — and virtual presentations. This combination means that the artists have direct contact with their collaborators, and they can decide how to create and connect with an online community. The two artists who have participated in residencies since the pandemic, Autumn Knight and Baseera Khan, have chosen to address this balance in different ways: while Knight worked very closely with a crew that included lighting, sound, and video supervisors; an animator; and multiple camera operators, those interactions took place behind the scenes and were not made visible through the project website or during the live performance streams. Alternatively, Khan has made public the process of creating her experimental television show throughout the duration of the residency through livestreams of rehearsals and film shoots featuring her performers, director/producer Ethan Weinstock, and cinematographer Christina Wairegi. Khan has also been sharing behind-the-scenes documentation on her project website. Whereas Knight's performances were completely improvised, Khan's pilot ultimately will be tightly scripted and shot. During the residencies, the curatorial team is committed to working with artists to determine what formats for dialogue and exchange with audiences best align with and support the aims of their residency projects. The central aim of the residency is to facilitate the creation of a new project, so while any efforts to generate interaction throughout the process are welcome, they are not required:

we appreciate that there will be opportunities to create conversations within a community once the completed work is presented publicly.

FA Can artist residencies adapt to the new normal? Are you considering other ways to work on projects with artists?

TK Under current conditions, the digital space represents an effective interface between the residency and the public. As discussed above, we offer artists a great deal of latitude in determining how they want to represent their residency project online. These considerations of which aspects of a residency are public and which are private have the potential to productively shift the standards of residency programs into the future. While the traditional residency model creates opportunities for artists to work in proximity to one another and to welcome guest visitors periodically, this model typically allows artists to interact with wider audiences on only a select few occasions, often during open-studio days or planned artist talks. As the question of how many people can gather safely in a physical space is constantly under assessment, and the virtual space remains the only consistent site for gathering at the moment, it becomes possible to welcome public interaction with the residency process fluidly through a sustained virtual presence rather than at specific, punctuated moments for in-person open studios or events.

FA The Kitchen's executive director and chief curator, Tim Griffin, said, “For our fall 2019 season, The Kitchen returns in a sense to our loft-culture roots, with artists recasting and redefining our spaces according to the changing contours of their individual projects.” Where does this awareness come from?

TK Before the pandemic, The Kitchen, like many organizations, found itself unsatisfied with spaces that were easily classified as gallery or theater — and, moreover, was uneasy with conventional timelines for projects (which “culminate” in some kind of production). Often, traditionally defined spaces orient the actions within them; other times, actions give shape to the spaces. At a moment when artists were desiring something other than a fixed institutional site, we went back to the drawing board to see how the artists' uses of space might change the shape of The Kitchen itself. This expands on how, in recent years, The Kitchen has been experimenting with presenting projects in different ways across the spaces of our building in Chelsea: while the structure is configured with a black box theater on the first floor, a gallery space on the second floor, and offices on the third floor, we have invited artists to create projects that extend across these spaces, sometimes even pushing against their predefined uses. For instance, in the summer of 2019, artist Kevin Beasley transformed the entire building into a set of stages for the month-long series he co-organized, *Assembly*, and the performances featured musicians and dancers performing amidst these custom-designed sound stages on all three floors. To further extend this way of working, we initiated a partnership with Queenslab, an organization based in

Ridgewood, Queens, to present programming in their expansive building. Their space is roughly eight thousand square feet with forty-foot-high ceilings, and its open layout means that it does not carry a preestablished identity as a theater, gallery, or studio. This openness creates more opportunity for artists to envision projects that respond to the space without having to either subscribe to or challenge its assumed functions. Just as artists devised unique presentation strategies during the organization's seminal years operating out of a loft space in the SoHo neighborhood of New York City (from 1973–86, following two years operating out of the former kitchen in the Mercer Arts Center), those artists who have been in residence at Queenslab have been able to make choices about every aspect of how the space is used — from what elements they are installing in which areas of the room to how they want to spatially orient or direct the audience.

FA The Kitchen's recent residency projects seems confirmed it. In particular Autumn Knight's livestream performances and Baseera Khan's project *By Faith* reshaped the space of the residency to explore new possibilities to performance art and video. Can you delve more into?

TK Our current approach to the residency model during the pandemic turns the artist's studio into a television studio, enabling artists to broadcast their residency process to public audiences. This model relies on the use of livestreaming in order to make performances and scenes of video production accessible to viewers. This is an unprecedented process for the artists we work with, who have had to reconceive their projects (which were already under development prior to the pandemic) to be viewed by audiences through video instead of live in a shared space. And while the livestream platform is a functional medium that facilitates public viewing of work, this platform also introduces a new form of mediation between performance art, video, and audiences. This new approach has prompted us to confront a series of questions: What is the difference between watching a performance that is streaming live on Twitch versus watching the recording of a performance after the fact? What is the relationship between a livestreamed video of the production process and the edited scenes that result from this process when both are shared on the same online platforms? What is lost when the viewpoint of the camera is the only one available? Where is the audience acknowledged in these online performances? Together with Knight, Khan, and the other artists with whom we are working, we are thinking about and exploring these lines of inquiry through different formats of sharing performances and video content during residencies.

Autumn Knight's residency took place at 512 West 19th Street from July 24 through August 10, 2020.

Baseera Khan's residency took place at Queenslab from September 11 through October 11, 2020.



Baseera Khan, *By Faith*, 2020. Rehearsals with Vaginal Davis, Rico Gatson, and T De Long. Photography by Ariana Sarwari. Courtesy of the artist and The Kitchen, New York.

The New York Times

WILL HEINRICH | December 11, 2019

ART REVIEWS

What to See Right Now in New York Art Galleries: Baseera Khan



Installation view of Baseera Khan's "snake skin," her new show at Simone Subal Gallery.
Credit: Baseera Khan and Simone Subal Gallery; Dario Lasagni.

There are eight mesmerizing photo-collage constructions in "snake skin," Baseera Khan's new show at Simone Subal Gallery. Brightly colored plexiglass cutouts alternately highlight and obscure a mix of found and original imagery that includes a view of the oldest surviving mosque in India — which happens to be in Gujarat, the site of terrible anti-Muslim pogroms in 2002.

There are images of the artist's own slender hands, ornamented with rings and black nail polish, holding an essay by Arundhati Roy about the politics behind those pogroms; and of another

Indian mosque, this one built in Delhi on the site of a former Jain temple, using pieces of the ruined temple in its own design.

There are also shots of Ms. Khan holding annotated copies of *Mosaik*, an East German satirical comic book with an anticapitalist bent and the occasional racist or anti-Semitic caricature, that she bought in Berlin. And then there's the 14-foot-high fluted foam column, upholstered with custom-woven Kashmiri carpet. Sliced into two-foot sections and arranged across the gallery, it looks like the cogs of some enormous, surreal machine.

It's a lot of elements, but they all come together as incisively as scissor blades. There are the impersonal forces that shape people's lives — religion, empire, ideology — and there are the individuals who, like Ms. Khan, shape them right back. But as deeply as the forces and their subjects seem to affect each other, they can never truly communicate.

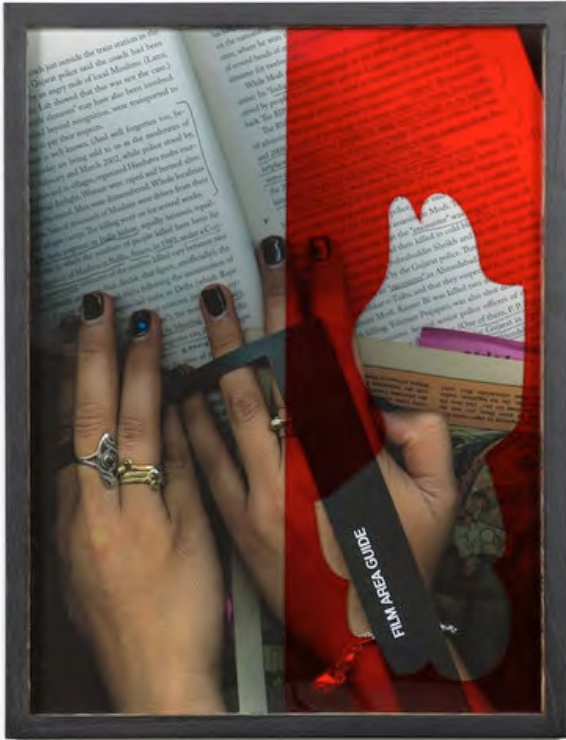
Baseera Khan: *snake skin*

By Alan Gilbert | December 12, 2019



Installation view: Baseera Khan: *snake skin*, Simone Subal Gallery, New York, 2019. Courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery, New York. Photo: Dario Lasagni.

Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem "Ozymandias" memorably describes the eventual fate of all empires: "boundless and bare / The lone and level sands stretch far away." And while it has been difficult to imagine alternatives to the current world order that arose after the collapse of the Berlin Wall three decades ago, cracks in the façade are multiplying. At Baseera Khan's exhibition *snake skin*, a fourteen-foot-tall by six-foot-wide column constructed from pink foam insulation is horizontally sliced into seven similarly-sized pieces that are stacked, stood upright, and leaned across the gallery. The column's fluted shaft is relatively architecturally anonymous, but Khan has wrapped it in a patchwork of handmade silk rugs sourced from Kashmir. Exposed sections show the column to be hollow at its core. Precise in conception and form, the work is also exact in its dismantling, including smaller vertical incisions into its surface of rugs and foam.



Baseera Khan, *Censored Hands*, 2019. Acrylic, chromatic prints, custom handmade silk rug pieces made in Kashmir, India, 25 x 19 inches. Courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery, New York. Photo: Dario Lasagni.

A signifier of the ruins of empire, *Column Number One – Seven* (all works 2019) is also the product of technological and cultural intermixing. It combines industrial materials with traditional ones, minimalist sculptural aesthetics with ornate patterning, and individual studio practice with collective craft technique. Like the global networks on which they rely for their transmission, these various elements are both woven together and interrupted: the wrap of the rugs around the column is not meant to be continuous or seamless. In one of her best-known pieces, Khan intervened in this process of international exchange when she had Nike stitch the word “Muslima” into the back of a pair of customizable sneakers after the company included “Muslim” in its list of words consumers were forbidden to use (*iamuslima* [2017]). Apparently, market neoliberalism has its limits, even for the company that practically perfected the current version of globalized production.

The rest of the work in Khan’s show utilizes a strong collage aesthetic that combines prints, rug fragments, and colored plexiglass acrylic. In *The Shaft is 5/6 of the Total Height of the Column*, a black-and-white image of a section of

the column appears in a stony landscape beneath layers of thin blue, yellow, and pink acrylic sheets along with a gestural green squiggle—the mark of the artist’s hands, which appear more literally in *Censored Hands* (2019) where they hold a copy of Arundhati Roy’s *The End of Imagination* (1998) open to a passage on sectarian violence in India or in *Redacted Frame* (2019) over copies of *Mosaik*—a comic book magazine originally published in the former East Germany—from which cartoon images appear in a couple other collages. *27 Jain* (2019) features a triangle of black acrylic beneath a photograph of a destroyed temple complex—a “colossal Wreck” as Shelley might describe it. The visually impenetrable black pyramid highlights the play of transparency and opacity in which all of these collages engage in relation to both medium and message.

The repeated image of scissors is another indication of the artist’s hand and technique in an exhibition that mostly avoids autobiography and references to figuration. Although the collages use photographic images as their foundation, they also resemble assemblages in their layering of acrylic sheets and silk. Framed and encased, these materials take on a sculptural component that pushes against the imagery—like bodies refusing to be contained. As a whole or in pieces, *Column* is also a body, ornamented and disfigured. In this sense, *snake skin* asks what has

Simone Subal Gallery

been shed—both voluntarily and involuntarily—and what is to be retained. It also indicates that there is not only one skin to shed, nor one world. The intersecting lines of flight and of repression are many.



Baseera Khan, “snake skin”

Howard Halle | FRIDAY DECEMBER 6 2019

Dominating Baseera Khan’s exhibition, a partially toppled column of Ozymandian proportions towers over the viewer’s head, its exterior incongruously upholstered in a patchwork of silk carpets embroidered with floral and geometric patterns. They come from Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region placed under lockdown by the Indian army last summer, and by giving the piece an Orientalist veneer, Khan evokes the subcontinent’s history of British occupation and the bitter irony of having one form of colonialism replaced by another, more local variety.

Three chipped drums from the truncated monument lie nearby, revealing cross sections clad in foam sheets of turquoise and pink surrounding an orange resin core. They resemble chunky mandalas or abandoned cogs from some enormous machine. Without being specific, these elements suggest fallen empires, ethnic tensions, adaptive camouflage, trippy spirituality and a system that has broken down—all appropriate markers of our current moment in history.

Around this sculptural ensemble, Khan has hung collages that feature photographs overlaid with carpeting, colored paper and pieces of cut Plexiglas. The photos themselves depict Islamic ruins, and in one instance, a vintage East German magazine affixed with Post-it Notes bearing the artist’s comments on its cover: a cartoon of the notorious anti-Semitic character, Jew Süss. A soundtrack of Khan singing the Smiths’ “Please, Please, Please, Let Me Get What I Want” fills the room, adding a plangent touch to an idiosyncratic, cross-cultural installation redolent of failed utopias and unfulfilled aspirations.

Baseera Khan

In *snake skin*, the tricky quest for meaningful transformation.

Aruna D'Souza | December 6, 2019



Baseera Khan: *snake skin*, installation view. Image courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery.
Photo: Dario Lasagni.

The Muslim-American artist Baseera Khan, born in Texas to undocumented parents who traveled from India to raise their family in the United States, has long sought in her performances, sculptures, installations, and deft use of readymades to explore the complications of articulating an identity that is understood by many as irretrievably other, no matter where she turns. *snake skin*, her first solo outing at Simone Subal Gallery, comes two years after her breakthrough 2017 exhibition *iamuslima* at Participant, Inc., which segued into an extremely prolific period of working and showing for the artist. With the new pieces on view

here, all of which were made in 2019, Khan continues her study of the ways that people must fit themselves into inhospitable structures—cultures, languages, aesthetic forms, and architecture itself—sometimes by wrapping themselves tightly around what will not let them in, sometimes by shedding what does not serve them. But if in earlier work she honed in on American pop culture, fashion, the strictures of Islam, the authority of the state, and so on, here she turns her critical lens as well toward modes of resistance and subversion themselves, revealing them to be imperfect tools—necessary, but also provisional, vexed, and as unwelcoming to some as the structures they’re trying to oppose.

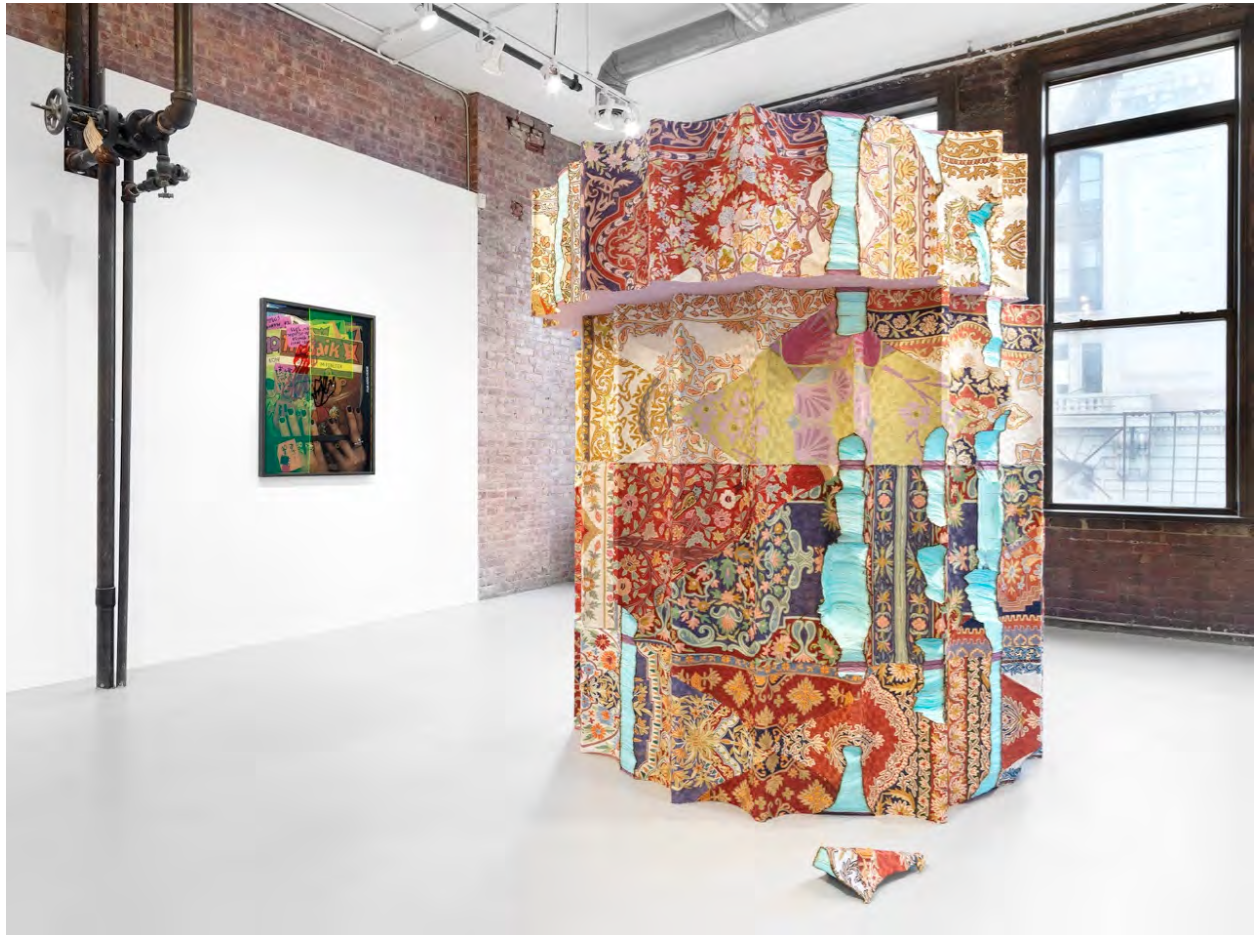
The centerpiece of the installation is a series of seven slices of a Corinthian column, each six feet in diameter and fashioned from rigid foam insulation, plywood, and resin dye panels, so light that they can be moved around with relative ease (*Column 1–7*). If they were stacked one atop the other, like one of the ancient forms that they replicate, they would stretch fourteen feet high, but here some are piled up while others collapse on the floor or are propped on their sides.



Baseera Khan, *Column 3*, 2019. Pink Panther foamular, plywood, resin dye, custom handmade silk rugs made in Kashmir, India, 72 x 22 x 72 inches. Image courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery. Photo: Dario Lasagni.

The classical column is an architectural element that conveys the enduring power of Western Civilization, and is still ubiquitous in our contemporary landscape (as conveniently demonstrated by the columns on the façade of the building across the street from the gallery, visible through the large windows).

Though laid low in Khan's refashioning, these pillars are not ruins so much as reclamations, thanks to the skin that's been applied to their surfaces—handwoven Kashmiri rugs, collaged together so that their geometries and palettes clash and morph as they wind their way around their supports. The wrapping reflects a common practice in mosques, where carpets are used to obscure the architecture of repurposed buildings, including columns—a process of claiming space that attempts to leave behind what came before, a form of renewal that is also a veiling of the past. (These acts of architectural *détournement* are sometimes dramatic, as with the Masjid Malcolm Shabazz in Harlem, which was originally built as a casino and which Khan cites as a reference.) The carpets were commissioned by the artist from Kashmiri artisans, with whom she



Baseera Khan: *snake skin*, installation view. Image courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery.
Photo: Dario Lasagni.

worked closely to achieve her designs; after India's deeply anti-Islamic Modi government rescinded Kashmir's status as an autonomous territory in August, putting the region's Muslim population under a strict curfew, closing borders, and imposing a media blackout, the weavings had to be smuggled out—a covert operation, art as contraband.

The repurposing of these columns is treated by Khan as a metaphor for the ability of immigrants to make space for themselves by creative, even veiled, ingenuity, and simultaneously for the ways in which the toppling of one form of authority is often just replaced by another, so that any act of resistance is by nature an unfinished project. At the foot of the stacked slabs lies a small



Baseera Khan: *snake skin*, installation view. Image courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery.
Photo: Dario Lasagni.

chunk of carpet-wrapped foam—a remnant of a destructive act Khan has visited on her sculptures wherein she carved away the fluting, leaving rough, striated gouges in her wake. This bit of detritus functions as a kind of conceptual key for the installation, suggesting a flake of reptilian shed skin—if one rejects both Western cultural power and that of Islam, another form of repression will simply grow back to replace them.

The rest of the show, consisting of eight framed prints and an audio piece, similarly asks us to think about the slippery nature of the quest to achieve a meaningful and enduring transformation. On the hour, an *adhan*—the Muslim call to prayer—rings out in the gallery. But instead of a male muezzin intoning a statement of faith, we hear Khan’s sweet, plaintive, decidedly feminine voice singing the classic 1984 song by the Smiths, “Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want.” Khan subverts the gendered constraints often associated with Islam, but does so by underlining the fact that Western pop culture is no deliverance: with its opening line “Good time for a change,” the song may have seemed like a plea for renewal when it came out in the Thatcher era, but it sounds awfully different now that the band’s angsty lead singer Morrissey has revealed himself as a supporter of right-wing, Islamophobic political parties and causes.



Baseera Khan, *Redacted Frame*, 2019. Acrylic, chromatic prints, custom handmade silk rug pieces made in Kashmir, India, 41 1/4 x 31 1/4 inches. Image courtesy the artist and Simone Subal Gallery. Photo: Dario Lasagni.

Likewise, the framed collages lining the walls of the gallery refer to the endlessly renewing nature of power, and the constant need to resist—even when that power is wielded by our comrades. To make them, Khan amassed photocopies, books and magazines, and a variety of objects including commercial photo frames, neon sticky notes, and scissors, and placed them on a scanner bed; her own ring-laden hands are often visible resting on the glass. She then overlaid the resulting prints with neon-colored, calligraphic, acrylic cutouts, and framed it all using bits of embroidered carpet as spacers. Her source images are largely drawn from a hugely popular East German comic book series called *Mosaik*, which began publication in 1955. (The color palette of the *Mosaik* pages are, if you look closely, precisely echoed in the Kashmiri rugs found elsewhere.) While *Mosaik* was tolerated by the GDR authorities, who saw it as Disneyesque without the capitalist exploitation attached, its light-hearted narratives of international adventures contained subtle and subversive jabs at the state; some scholars believe it contributed to the fall of the Berlin Wall. But for all the comic book's

stealthy political agenda, Khan is acutely aware of its blind spots: its pages are filled with anti-Semitic and racist caricatures, which the artist “redacts” by placing the semi-transparent acrylic scribbles on top, or screen-printing scribbles over them.

In these prints, Khan juxtaposes the cartoons with other images—views of a devastated mosque, some tumbled Roman columns, handwritten pink Post-it notes, marked-up pages from Arundhati Roy's *The End of Imagination*, and so on. While Roy's pages, visible in the panel *Censored Hands*, speak of the rise of violence against India's Muslim minority under Modi's rule, first as chief minister of Gujarat and then as prime minister of the whole country, Khan is careful to have chosen for two other works (*Baarwaada*, *the Oldest Walk* and *27 Jain*) images, on the one hand, of one of the world's longest extant mosques, sited in Gujarat and now in a grave state of disrepair, and on the other, the Quwwat ul-Islam mosque in Delhi. The former survives against the odds, while the latter was built on top of, and at the expense of, twenty-seven Jain temples—an act of cultural assertion that is simultaneously an act of erasure. There is no

uncomplicated innocence to be found here, no form—yet—of liberation that makes everybody free.

*Aruna D'Souza is a writer based in Western Massachusetts. Her book *Whitewalling: Art, Race, and Protest in 3 Acts* was published by *Badlands Unlimited* in May 2018. She is editor of the forthcoming *Lorraine O'Grady: Writing in Space, 1973–2019* (Duke University Press, 2019), and is a member of the advisory board of *4Columns*.*

HYPERALLERGIC

Baseera Khan's Vivid, Anti-Imperialist Odes

snake skin is a corporeal study of the body politic, in which Khan wields the tools of cultural autopsy in her dissections of ancient ruins and traditions.

Billy Anania | December 4, 2019



Installation view, Baseera Khan: *snake skin* at Simone Subal Gallery, New York, 2019.
Image courtesy of the artist and Simone Subal Gallery, New York, photo by Dario Lasagni.

On the responsibilities of intellectuals, Arundhati Roy once said, “Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it.” This was in 2003 on the eve of the Iraq War. Nearly two decades later, the Indian activist’s words continue to inspire generations of artists who long for the liberation of oppressed Muslim cultures.

For her latest exhibition, Baseera Khan sliced a 6×4-foot column into seven flat cylinders. She wrapped them meticulously with silk Kashmiri prayer rugs — pieces of contraband smuggled



Baseera Khan, “*Column 5*” (2019), Pink Panther foamular, plywood, resin dye, custom handmade silk rugs made in Kashmir, India. 72 x 22 x 72 inches.

Image courtesy of the artist and Simone Subal Gallery, New York, photo by Dario Lasagni.

by artists under Indian military occupation. Colors abound in each cross-section, perhaps unexpectedly. While the rugs display elaborate patterns in auburn and burgundy, the columns’ foam insides are solid shades of hot pink, baby blue and neon orange. This juxtaposition seems absurd at first but resonates within the context of the show, which is titled *snake skin*. The artist suffocates a fallen imperial structure with serpentine materials, hacking it to pieces and exposing its soft core.

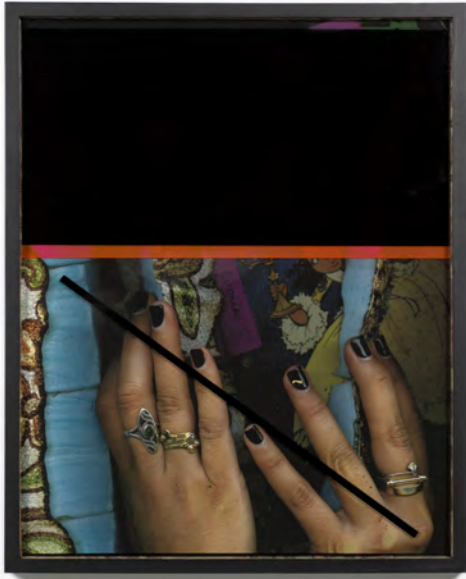
snake skin is a corporeal study of the body politic, featuring her installation “*Column Number One – Seven*” as well as framed chromatic collages. Khan wields the tools of cultural autopsy in her dissections of ancient ruins and traditions, and it appears that we have caught her in the act. Throughout Simone Subal Gallery, Khan lays some column pieces flat on the floor and leans others upright — almost forensically — so that visitors can observe them from every possible angle. A few pieces appear in a large stack, with tattered and peeling bits of foam fallen along the wayside. The scene is a bit macabre, like the aftermath of a gruesome dismemberment. All the while, she holds her own hands up to the viewer in photographic prints, showing that she takes full responsibility for her actions.

While much of Khan’s previous work adapted Islamic symbolism to critiques of contemporary fashion, these new works draw inspiration from historic mosques — such as the Masjid Malcolm Shabazz in Harlem, which has floor-to-ceiling carpeting — to address broad suppression in Muslim-minority countries. Cutting up a downed imperial structure is an act of catharsis, and Khan goes one step further to mutilate the pieces into non-recognition. The appearance of rugs throughout the exhibition is an attempt to empower the people of Kashmir, who face travel lockdowns and information blackouts from the administration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Khan’s ornamental wrappings are thus a glorification of the art form and an indicator of their creators’ quiet resistance.

snake skin connects the oppression of Muslims in Kashmir to other places of corrupted empire, offering tributes to artists who defy surveillance and silencing. In small vertical collages, she pairs archival photographs of Roman ruins with colorful cutouts from the German Democratic Republic’s *Mosaik* magazines, which published socialist perspectives and satire of state power during the Cold War. Once again, the artist conjoins ancient architecture with robust colors. In “*Baarwaada, the Oldest Walk*,” Khan brings together an illustration of a brown-skinned, barefoot peasant with a photograph of India’s oldest mosque in sharp shades of yellow and blue. Despite its political influence, *Mosaik* leaned toward caricature in its depictions of race

and class. Khan accordingly leans into this historical fallacy, appropriating the cartoon for her own purposes. A comical depiction of poverty loses its controversy when placed in the context of worship, as the peasant strides toward a source of refuge.

In "*Holding My Knowledge*," Khan reveals herself to the viewer and makes peace with her actions. The photo-collage depicts the artist's own hands — bejeweled with rings and perfectly manicured black nails — holding the fragments of her columns. The rest of the frame is pitch black, separated by a blood-red border. Her essence remains intact as shadows lurk above. This solemn process may occasionally enshroud Khan's entire being, but she has learned how to navigate the darkness.



Baseera Khan, "*Holding My Knowledge*" (2019), acrylic, chromatic prints, custom handmade silk rug pieces made in Kashmir, India. 31 x 25 1/4 inches.

Image courtesy of the artist and Simone Subal Gallery, New York, photo by Dario Lasagni.



November 20, 2019

Goings on About Town: Baseera Khan

In this show, titled “snake skin,” the New York-based artist has wrapped a column in cut-up custom Kashmiri silk rugs and sliced it into seven pieces that suggest sunbursts, the cogs of otherworldly wheels, or the cross-sections of a massive tree. (The “snake” is the column, the textiles are the “skin,” and Khan thinks of their weavers as her collaborators.) Some of the sections are stacked, to display the patchwork of the woven designs (and also chunks of the column’s core of turquoise foam). Others rest on the floor, showing off stratified surfaces that are pink with fiery resin-dyed centers. The intricate textile exteriors have become something like contraband since the Indian government’s crackdown on Kashmir; elements of them also appear in the artist’s wonderful framed collages. These layered works, featuring images of ruins, vintage covers of the East German magazine Mosaik and a text by Arundhati Roy, are a vibrant sidebar to Khan’s modular, ornate, and wholly impressive centerpiece.

— Johanna Fateman

OBSERVER

Reflecting on What It Means to Be Muslim Today, 8 Artists Share Experiences in a New Exhibition

By Laura Pitcher | 09/10/19 8:00am

From September 13 to November 17 at BRIC in Brooklyn's Fort Greene neighborhood, 1,001 hand-folded and painted paper boats will be displayed, along with a fiber rug piece and multiple other works of photography, sculpture, video, painting, drawing and performances. All part of the "Beyond Geographies: Contemporary Art and Muslim Experience" exhibition, curated and organized by BRIC and the Brooklyn Historical Society, the collection explores the dimensions of the contemporary Muslim experience through the work of eight New York based artists: Morehshin Allahyari, Laylah Amatullah Barrayn, Mona Saeed Kamal, Baseera Khan, Nsenga Knight, Umber Majeed, Asif Mian, and Nooshin Rostami. The show is co-presented with the Brooklyn Historical Society, where a sound and art installation will also be open to the public with audio drawn from the institution's "Muslims in Brooklyn" archive of first-person recordings.

All artists being from Middle Eastern, South Asian or African-American descent, the exhibition will delve into their identities as members of diasporic communities through their multiple lenses and experiences, exploring themes of mythology, spiritual philosophy and ritual, science, and social and political history.



Baseera Khan, *Privacy Control*, 2018-2019, Double-sided mirror, steel pipes, and vinyl text.
Image courtesy of Baseera Khan and Simone Subal Gallery, New York.

For Brooklyn-based artist Baseera Khan, this takes form in a sculptural installation with mirrored acrylic sheets that symbolize a space of protection as well as the screens that separate men and women in mosques. Performing before and behind the sheets, her work is a visual representation of her own personal experiences. “My identity is one of fluidity,” she explains. “It’s profound how little I know about my heritage. A lot of my work is to uncover this heritage filling in much of what I don’t know with well-researched mythologies.”

Photographer Laylah Amatullah Barrayn, also featured in the exhibition, believes that there’s a need in the art world to have “a more expanded and nuanced conversation about Islam, specifically Islam in Africa and it’s diaspora”. She further explains, “It’s a smart curatorial move to have this conversation visually.”

Barrayn’s featured work is an ongoing series of photographs on the Baye Fall, a sect of the Muslim Mouride Sufi order in Senegal. The daughter of a photographer, Barrayn travels often to Senegal, where she captures work that explores religion and spirituality, “specifically how that looks on the African continent and throughout the Black diaspora”.

Featured artist Asif Mian’s work explores masculinity, power and violence. Creating vest-like sculptures referencing armor and basketball jerseys, Mian explains that the works featured in “Beyond Geographies” redefine everyday objects to allow the viewer to connect with their own experiences.

Born in New Jersey, Mian says that he had to seriously consider his involvement in the exhibition. “While Muslim voices are vital and underrepresented in contemporary art and culture, my own practice is focused on exploring aspects in and around violence.” He says. “My aim is not to explore my own identity as a way to separate and elucidate, but rather, when using instances of my history and experience, it is to broaden the notion of what is ‘American.’”

Like the exhibition intends, each artist comes to the table bringing a diverse range of experiences and areas of interest to inform their work. Through this, “Beyond Geographies: Contemporary Art and Muslim Experience” examines the many nuances of being Muslim, giving viewers a broader and deeper understanding of what that means today.

Vali, Murtaza. "Rico Gatson and Baseera Khan," Artforum. September 2019. Print.

REVIEWS

Rico Gatson and Baseera Khan

JENKINS JOHNSON GALLERY

Conceptualized in the aftermath of the sociopolitical upheavals of the late 1960s and released in November 1972, *Free to Be . . . You and Me* was an award-winning children's record album and illustrated book that promoted a vision of self-determination minus the strictures of traditional gender norms. Organized by actress Marlo Thomas, the album featured songs and stories recorded by celebrities such as Alan Alda, Carol Channing, Roberta Flack, Michael Jackson, and Diana Ross. Drawing its title from that pioneering franchise, this two-person show, featuring Rico Gatson and Baseera Khan, subtly extended its progressive message of self-empowerment to include other social categories—namely, race and religion, which often serve as the basis for discrimination and hate in the United States—by paying homage to the many activist women of color at the front lines of the ongoing struggle for equality and justice.

Across his multifaceted practice, Gatson introduces difference into the canon of Western abstraction, aligning the refined geometries of constructivism with those of African textile designs, while infusing Bauhaus color theory with the red, black, and green of pan-Africanism. In *CBP #1*, 2019—the title is an acronym for Customs and Border Protection—he substitutes the familiar rainbow bars of the television test pattern with a darker, earthier spectrum. In the basement gallery, a selection from his ongoing works-on-paper series, "Icons," 2007–, featured five African American women active in the struggle for civil rights and the Black Power movements: Kathleen Cleaver, Angela Davis, Aretha Franklin, Nikki Giovanni, and Afeni Shakur. In each work, a portrait excised from a vintage photograph is framed with radiating beams, meticulously done in color pencil, that fan out from behind the subject's head like a halo or a force field. With the graphic clarity and power of political posters, these images triumphantly recast the activists as saints and superheroes. Such veneration was repeated in *Throne III*, 2016—as much a Minimalist sculpture as a regal high-backed chair, its surface emblazoned with vivid geometric ornamentation.

Gatson's hard-edge geometries contrasted nicely with Khan's "Seats," 2019, a series of cushioned, biomorphic, wall-mounted sculptural forms that evolved out of her karaoke lounge-inspired installation at New York's SculptureCenter in 2018. Each is upholstered with a kitschy mélange of materials: Patches of slick polyester and iridescent tacky pleather abut the soft patterned weave of prayer rugs, embellished with

delicate dangly fringes and grommets, which echo the golden embroideries that have appeared in some of Khan's other works. Together, these surfaces and textures conjure the look and feel of a middle-class, Muslim American household without directly representing it. Some of the forms were suggestively ambiguous, while others, featuring head-shaped holes, were more easily identifiable as hijabs. Khan deployed the motif of the veil more conceptually in a pair of works featuring black-and-white photographs of her relatives: *My Family Seated* and *My Family Standing*, both 2019. In each, a neat arch of punched-out circles obscures the snapshot's legibility while revealing hints of a color photograph underneath. Though the subject of the hidden image remains uncertain, glimpses of soft, fleshy-brown tones peek through, merging the two layers and enacting a solidarity between their subjects through their shared skin color. The array of circles, a schematized interpretation of the seating chart of the House of Representatives, indicates Khan's ostensible subjects: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, and Rashida Tlaib, the dynamic and progressive congresswomen of color whose headshots, though overlaid with a band of brown pleather, appear more legibly in *House I*, 2019, one of the largest "Seats."

Khan's indirect tribute deftly reinforced how these young women have completely shaken up the American political establishment by demanding and claiming their rightful seats at the table of power. And like their foremothers from the civil rights era, this current generation is not cowering before the threats of bullies. Unfazed by the growing racism, misogyny, and xenophobia sweeping the country, they continue to assert their inalienable right as citizens to define the contours and limits of their selves, their communities, their country, and their future, free of any and all prejudice.

—Murtaza Vali

Roger Brown

MUSEUM OF ARTS AND DESIGN

"The mainstream art world hierarchy—a system of dealers, writers, artists, critics, and pundits—presumes to define what art is for the rest of us," Roger Brown (1941–1997) wrote in 1990. ". . . Whatever category one chooses—folk, naïve, outsider, or so-called regionalist—it is very evident that real artists exist and continue to be nurtured outside the mainstream hierarchy. In fact I would venture to say that the only real artists are nurtured there . . . on the outside." Known as one of the leading Chicago Imagists, Brown could hardly be called an "outsider artist." He was, however, a voracious collector and cannibal of America's material culture, from the "trash treasures"—as his teacher Ray Yoshida called them—he scavenged from flea markets to the undulating landscapes of self-taught artist Joseph Yoakum. Elvis paintings and Mexican retablos, Nemadji ceramics and commercial signage, comic strips and old farm implements: All of this and much more went into the stew of references that informed Brown's rigorously stylized but intoxicatingly moody painting.

Organized by Shannon R. Stratton, the Museum of Arts and Design's former chief curator, "Roger Brown: Virtual Still Lives," is the first New York museum show devoted to his work. It is titled after the artist's final major series, painted between 1995 and 1996, shortly before he passed away at fifty-five from AIDS-related illness. In these altar-like assemblages, Brown veers away from the negative sublimity of his earlier desert tableaux and the disaffected mediation of the movie theater interiors in order to approach the "decorative"—long the feminized and repressed "other" of modernism. The focus on this late body of work makes perfect sense at the MAD, given the institution's dedication to "skilled making" across and between the so-called fine and applied arts.

View of "Rico Gatson and Baseera Khan," 2019. From left: Rico Gatson, Panel Painting #41, 2019; Baseera Khan, My Family Seated, 2019; Rico Gatson, Panel Painting #42, 2019.



ARTFORUM

The New York Times

ART REVIEWS

New York Galleries: What to See Right Now

Margot Bergman's doll images, Harald Szeemann's quirky tribute to his grandfather, and the neo-Classicists rising again.

JILLIAN STEINHAUER | August 7, 2019

'Radical Love'

Through Aug. 17. Ford Foundation Gallery, 320 East 43rd Street, Manhattan; 212-573-5000, fordfoundation.org.

With colors and patterns exploding against the red-painted walls in the Ford Foundation Gallery, almost every piece in this jam-packed show demands your attention, yet the artworks manage to coexist without competing.

"Radical Love" is the second exhibition in a trilogy focusing on justice. The first examined inequality; this one centers on practices of care, affirmation and celebration. For Baseera Khan and Thania Petersen, that means turning prayer rugs into objects of intimate expression. Sue Austin's and Jah Grey's videos treat the liberation of oppressed bodies with an ethereal touch.

A few artists create opulent works from ordinary materials, among them Raúl de Nieves, whose kneeling figures represent his mother. Others revise historical scripts to put the important roles of black people front and center. The team of Bradley McCallum and Jacqueline Tarry, for example, contributed a wall-size installation of images of protesters arrested during the 1956 bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala.

The work, titled "Evidence of Things Not Seen" (2008), is arrayed like a deconstructed photo album, its 104 portraits, carefully visualizing the forgotten individuals who made up a powerful group. Looking into their faces, I was struck by something that's radical only because of how easy it is to forget: that paying attention is a form of love.

timesunion

'ACE' exhibit at University at Albany art museum

Show examines issues around sports

By Patrick Tine | August 1, 2019



Baseera Khan, Nike ID #2, 2018, Customized Nike Air Force One mid-tops, size 8.5 women's. (Photo: Gil Gentile; Courtesy of the artist and Simone Subal Gallery, New York).

Most of the work on display in "ACE: art on sports, promise, and selfhood" at the University Art Museum at the University at Albany would be out of place in a sports bar, Nike store or any approximation of a "man cave." And thank God for that. Running through Dec. 7, "ACE" could not have come at a better time. There are encouraging signs that the American public might finally be willing to embrace a far broader definition of who our sports heroes can be. As of this

writing, the most popular athlete in America right now is a voluble lesbian soccer player with purple hair and we are better for it. Likewise, perhaps the American public might be willing to expand its horizons on what art centered on sports can look like. The nation, I suspect, has reached its carrying capacity for maudlin oils of yesteryear's superstars. We can go further than LeRoy Nieman and his imitators. The paintings, sculptures and visual installations on offer here are not only proof that we can but that the results can be trenchant, spellbinding and occasionally spectacular.

After passing through the entrance and Juni Figueroa's installation "Tropical readymade landscape," a collection of soccer balls and cleats that have sprouted leaves and which reads as a tribute to the organic nature of the game at its most simple and spontaneous, we come to four pieces by Ecuadorian-American artist Ronny Quevedo in the the main gallery. The largest and most impressive is "La Gran Patria," an imposing 10-by-17-foot wall onto which the abstracted lines of a basketball court have been laid in in yellows, grays and blues. It's arresting on its own but with just a tiny bit of knowledge about Quevedo's recurring themes about the pre-Columbian Americas, you can be forgiven if you begin to see some rudimentary Nazca lines on the hardwood. His three other pieces stretch the purview of the show more than any other on display. They are baffling and they are wonderful. One piece, which appears to be a bird's-eye view of a track with indigenous motifs, is named in honor of Atahualpa. I won't insult you or the artist by claiming to understand it, but when we get to a place where a show ostensibly centered around sports has a piece affirming the slain last king of the Incas, we know we are somewhere bracing, new and cool.

Not far from Quevedo's pieces are two more contemplations of soccer from a fellow Latin American artist, the Guatemala-born Darío Escobar. There is not a trace of Figueroa's optimism to be found in these. By all accounts, Escobar sees the game as a blood-soaked warren of bigotry and international corruption. "Obverse & Reverse (Cloud XI)," a carbuncle of grayed-out soccer balls with trailing string like a weeping willow hangs from the ceiling. In front of it, a bloody Real Madrid jersey entitled "Ecce Homo" hangs on the wall behind Plexiglas. You could do worse for compelling visual metaphors of the violent machismo, racism and oceanic graft that makes the international game resemble a criminal syndicate at times.

It is in its video installations that "ACE" really shines. The pieces on display represent some of the best and most interesting video work at the University Art Museum in recent memory. The centerpiece is unquestionably Sondra Perry's "IT'S IN THE GAME '17," a 16-minute exploration of who owns black bodies and indigenous cultural patrimony. It is mesmerizing. The film centers on Perry's brother, a former Georgia Southern University basketball player who, like thousands of other collegiate basketball and football players, had his likeness used without permission or compensation in a series of highly popular and high grossing sports video games.

Perry tells this story with such aplomb. It's about the money, of course, but it's also about a greater theft. Her brother and his teammates – real men of flesh and blood – have been callously reduced to fungible, pixelated gaming units. From there it's off to the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, repositories of a different type of theft. The connection through the centuries becomes clear without being obvious. This is all done with a bold visual style, using the game itself as well as alienating superimpositions and distorted music. A feature-length version of this would be audacious and spellbinding cinema.

Simone Subal Gallery

Paul Pfeiffer has some fun with "Caryatid," a three-monitor, primary color meditation on flopping that will, if time allows, eventually elicit peels of laughter if slapstick is even remotely your thing. On the back wall of the first-floor gallery is the show's most serene piece, Ari Marcopoulos's "The Park." It's 58 minutes of kids on a public basketball court; coming and going, shooting and missing. It's all set to an improvised jazz soundtrack by Jason Moran that has the syncopated rhythms of a shoot around. It's blissful.

Then there is the best sculpture in the show, Baseera Khan's "BRAIDRAGE." It looks like a health club rock-wall but the hand and footholds are made up of 99 resin casts of the corners of her body. It's not beautiful in any traditional aesthetic sense but "BRAIDRAGE" sits at the perfect meeting place of creativity, execution and vulnerability that signal truly daring and exceptional high art. And there's more. On Oct. 22, Khan will be in the gallery and will scale the wall. The World Series is supposed to start that night, too. Make it a doubleheader.

GARAGE

What Does 'Radical Love' Mean To You? For these artists, there's no one right answer.

SCOTT INDRISEK | Jul 2 2019

What exactly is “radical love”? It’s a slippery question that a new exhibition—on view through August 17 at the Ford Foundation in New York—sets out to answer. (Perhaps co-curators Jaishri Abichandani and Natasha Becker are GARAGE readers, as the current print issue of the magazine explores the same expansive theme.) In an effort to help define what is essentially undefinable, we asked 4 of the participating artists to expound on what “radical love” means to them.



Baseera Khan, "Seat #14 [Feat.]" and "Seat 15 [Feat.]"

Baseera Khan

“Radical love is hard to come by, although it appears to be everywhere,” says the New York-based artist, whose contribution to the show involves a sculpture of pleather, prayer rugs, Islamic garments, and other evocative media. “This act of kindness is at once an attempt to defend a deep emotional element of the human condition, but on the other hand a selflessness where you carve out flesh from your own soul to place on the plate of another. Even if you are hungry, to fill the belly of another is joy.”

Was there a time, I wondered, when she had been the one to give radical love? “I’ll answer this with an aspect of romance, but one that is elusive,” Khan said. “For the past four years my love and attention, my care, has gone mostly into my art. This has come at the cost of my personal life, family, partner, home, self...My father passed away and I divorced from my partner who was also my best friend. So much of my social infrastructure changed with this loss and all the loss that was cutting me into pieces transformed into my work, and the attention given to share the work with whomever wanted to join me. I’m now just recently coming up for air and looking for a kind of romance that is radical love. Are you out there? I know I am.”

BROOKLYN RAIL

Rico Gatson and Baseera Khan: Free to Be

by Danilo Machado



Baseera Khan, *My Family Seated*, 2019. Chromatic print on paper with cutouts, pleather, 22 x 33 inches. Courtesy of the Artist and Jenkins Johnson Projects, New York.

Free to Be You and Me, the progressive 1970's children's album and television special produced by Marlo Thomas, is the jumping off point for Brooklyn-based artists Rico Gatson and Baseera Khan, who present new and recent work in *Free to Be*. The exhibition is a bold curatorial collaboration: Gatson and Khan shine both individually and together at Jenkins Johnson Projects, a Prospect Heights art space connected to the community around it and highlighting artists of color.

Gatson continues his *Icons* series, exhibited at the Studio Museum in 2017 and, recently, as part of the 167th Street Station in the Bronx. The new pieces in *Free to Be* feature iconic women

—including Aretha Franklin, Angela Davis, and Nikki Giovanni—photo-collaged with his signature bands of color haloed outward. Also represented are Gatson’s vivid panel abstractions, compositions with an acrylic Pan-African palate on wood recalling Sol LeWitt, and his kaleidoscopic video portrait *Memphis* (2019), which features landmarks like the Music Hall of Fame, the National Civil Rights Museum, and the home of Aretha Franklin.

Khan also shows work that is part of an ongoing series, her *Seats Series*, which at Jenkins Johnson Projects are hung hugging the walls rather than as seats. The works are skillfully constructed from scraps of silks, undergarments, rugs, pom-poms, and other materials—in part from her mother’s hoarding. Their distinct shapes are silhouettes of figures wearing headpieces, symbols of spirituality and protection. The Seats are shown alongside Khan’s *Nike ID #2* (2018), which is displayed atop a clear customized shelf containing books such as Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, and *The Practice of Diaspora* by Brent Hayes Edwards. Also on view is her video *Brothers and Sisters*, where the on-screen “scene notes” describe the “permanant [sic] fixture” of the couch where her father is “positioned consistantly [sic] . . . directly in front of the television.” As she sits down and asks about his siblings, it becomes a meditation on location, family history, and the “round edged, inarticulate . . . apolstery [sic] of wellness.” The blurring of memory is manifested visually in the video as Khan’s misspellings act as reminders of the distances between viewer and subject, between migration and second language, between children and parents. The practice, which she describes as “disarming” English, underscores her exploration of instability in relation to domestic spaces, materiality, and furnishings. It is also deployed in her Nike ID sculpture, which spells *iamuslima* between two pairs of Air Force One mid tops. Made after the company banned “Muslim” and “Islam” from being custom embroidered on their sneakers, the series suggests a loophole—or even protest.



Baseera Khan, *Nike ID #2*, 2018. Customized Nike Air Force One mid tops, 6 x 15 inches. Courtesy of the Artist and Jenkins Johnson Projects, New York.

Khan's *My Family Seated* (2019) and *My Family Standing* (2019) are two stand-out pieces in the show. The works each show a black and white family portrait crowded with holes. They are made using the same leather hole punch utilized for grommets in Khan's other work and arranged like the seating of the House of Representatives. The underlying images are photographs of Representatives Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, enlarged so that mostly shades of brown and black are visible through the holes. Their historic presence as the only two Muslim women in Congress is marked by a patch of pleather in both works. (Omar and Tlaib are also present in *House 1*, a photo print on cotton silk mix with pleather, trimmings, and gold grommets.) The works recall the canvases of Byron Kim's *Synecdoche Series* (1991- present) or Fred Wilson's sculpture *Grey Area* (1993), which also deploy representations of skin's politically-loaded ascriptions of color.

Both artists present distinct, developed visions but also create memorable moments of convergence and contrast. Formally, Gatson's sharp flat lines juxtapose the shiny organic curvatures of Khan's *Seats*, but conceptually, both practices contemplate the presence of the body. The body is absent from Khan's *Seats*, countering the presence of Gatson's icons. Two pieces in memorable proximity are Khan's *Seat 34 Black with Lace* (2019), whose negative space stands in for an absent head, and Gatson's *Throne III* (2016), which lacks a sitter. Another striking coupling is *My Family Seated*, placed above the mantle in the gallery (the way a middle class television might be) across from Gatson's *CBP #1* (2019), composed of bands of television color in acrylic. This work not only connects to *Free to Be You and Me's* television special, but to the racist history of television coloring calibrated to white skin tones.

In conversation, the two artists described their curatorial process as fluid and honest, which comes across in the feel of the space they have created. Indeed, there is care and intention present throughout the exhibition: care for family, for history, for materials, for one another's work. The seriality of their practices emphasizes an ongoing and evolving contemplation of these ideas. Khan and Gatson, working in trusting proximity, exhibit a dialogue which values simultaneity over singularity, community over competition. What is most political about the show is not the fact that Khan's *Seats* utilize materials with specific cultural associations or her centering of images of Muslim figures; it is not Gatson's choice of illuminating political black women or his Pan-African palate—it is that these two artists are asserting agency and freedom, together, in a space which encourages it.

Settle Into Summer With These 5 Shows by Some of Our Favorite New Emerging Artists

Here are a few rising stars with exhibitions open this month.

Katie White | May 31, 2019

With Memorial Day already fading to memory, we've finally arrived on the summery shores of June and the art calendar is slowly beginning to lull into its more tranquil warm-weather pace (or will after Basel, that is).

And while you may be opting for sculpture gardens and sandals right about now, the quieter cultural months are also an ideal time to check out the work of emerging artists you may have missed amid the hubbub of the spring. To that end, here's our list of five up-and-coming artists whose work you can see this June.

5. Baseera Khan in "Free to Be" at Jenkins Johnson Gallery



Baseera Khan, *Seat 20 Pink and Red* (2019).
Courtesy of Jenkins Johnson Gallery.

Simone Subal Gallery

Taking its title from *Free to Be You and Me*, the progressive 1970s children's program that explored the idea of identity, this two-person exhibition pairs the work of Brooklyn-based artists Rico Gatson and Baseera Khan. Here, "Seats," Khan's newest series of sculptures, steals the show. Rendered in various degrees of abstraction, her sculptures are intended as oblique portraits of each of the new members of the House of Representatives' unprecedentedly diverse freshman class. Ranging from the silhouette of a head scarf to objects that call to seat cushions or neck pillows, the sculptures are fabricated from a hodgepodge of materials cut from prayer rugs, traditional Islamic wardrobes, undergarments, silk photographs from family albums, and come together to underscore how fabrics and textile designs, in and of themselves, can express cultural, racial, and gender identity.

Baseera Khan is on view in "Free to Be" through June 15 at Jenkins Johnson Gallery, 207 Ocean Avenue, Brooklyn.

The New York Times

Spring Gallery Guide: Brooklyn

By Jillian Steinhauer | April 26, 2019

Like so much else in Brooklyn these days, the art scene there seems to be in flux. Galleries that were familiar presences have closed; others have changed names and moved to Manhattan. Neighborhoods that previously served as linchpins now have fewer dedicated art spaces; rents are high, and other parts of the city promise greater foot traffic.

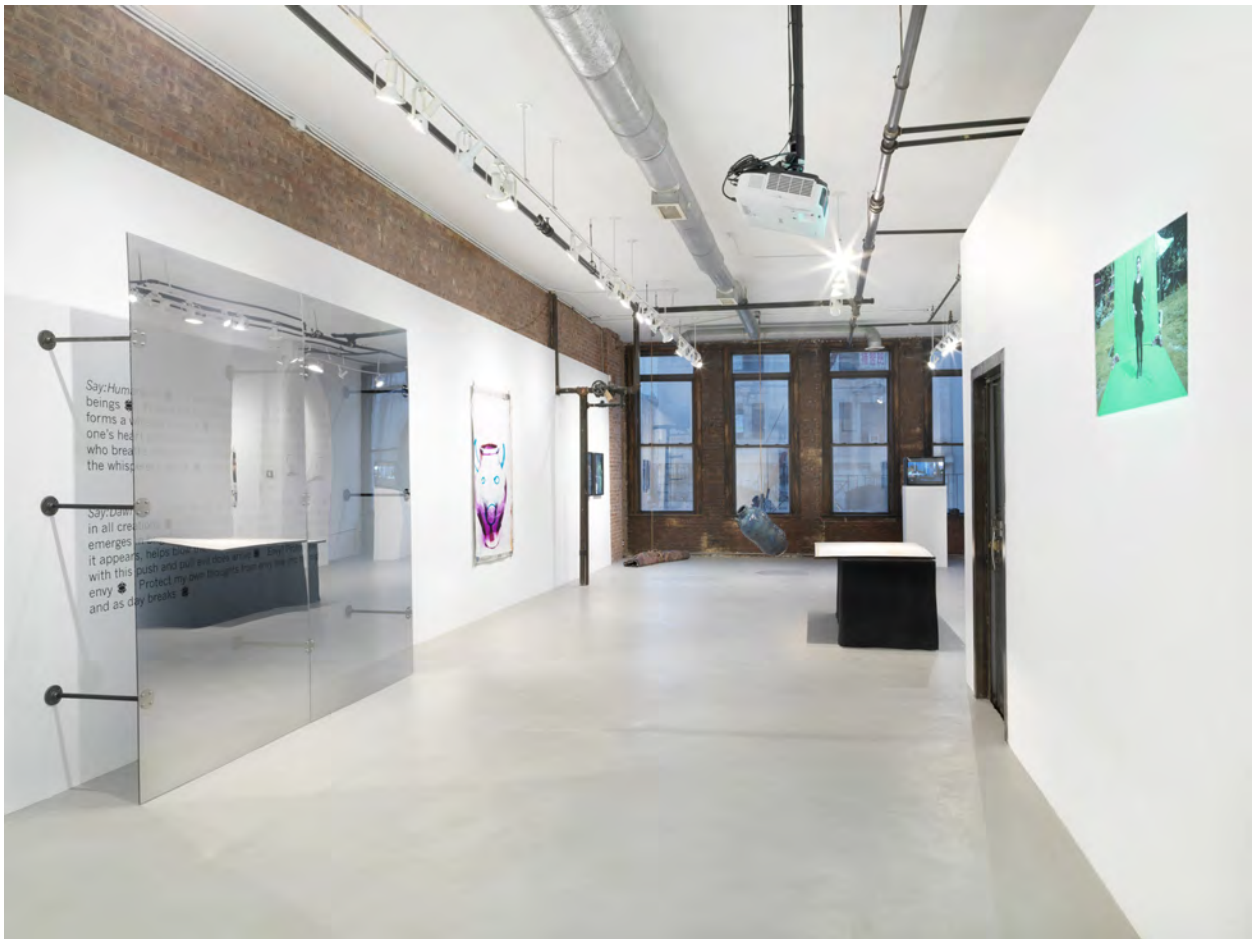
Yet in a way, transition has always been central to a geographically scattered scene that's uneven in its offerings and anchored by a handful of larger nonprofits alongside a rotating cast of small spaces run as labors of love. Even commercial operations seem to work differently here: Jenkins Johnson Gallery's outpost aims to build a relationship with the surrounding community (and its coming show "Free to Be," featuring Rico Gatson and Baseera Khan, should be worth a visit). Part of the thrill of seeing art in Brooklyn is that you don't quite know what you're going to get.

This list is just a sample of what Brooklyn has to offer. It will take you from Bushwick down to Park Slope and focuses on exhibitions that are, quite loosely, about identity. These artists are exploring how cultural, national, social and other factors shape us, even as they take very different approaches. It's a fitting theme for a borough that, despite becoming a brand, is still a haven for those looking to make a creative life in New York City.

the Offing

Not For Everybody: Baseera Khan, Gloria Maximo and Hadi Fallahpisheh

By SIMON WU | 25 JAN 2019



Not for Everybody (installation view). Simone Subal Gallery, New York. Photo: Dario Lasagni.

How to address the paradox of visibility, in which the circulation of one's image carries both the affirmation of representation but also the threat of its exploitation? Recent years have seen increased exposure of artists of color in the spaces of art exhibition with major exhibitions and gallery shows organized around identity markers. As these subjectivities gain exposure, what remains to protect them from being consumed without recourse to structural change? What to do, when museums seem to want our art but not our bodies? These questions, endemic but not unique to the art world, were navigated in *Not For Everybody*, a recent group show that closed in December, organized by Allie Tepper featuring

Baseera Khan, Hadi Fallahpisheh and Gloria Maximo at Simone Subal Gallery in New York. Considering “the process of adapting—or refusing to adapt—to a society whose messages and policies are increasingly unaccommodating,” the artists in the show don’t propose answers so much as practical strategies to this condition: how do we navigate the dangers of representation?

One way, they suggest, is to refract the representation of identity through artistic process. The artists in *Not For Everybody* work across mediums, through painting, video, sound, photography, sculpture, as well as performance. This multidisciplinary response is important, as it reads as one proposition of the exhibition: abstraction as armor. It is maybe what Martinican philosopher and poet Édouard Glissant called the “right to opacity.” For Glissant, opacity refers to the ways we remain unknowable against the transparency required from the institutions of “understanding” in western thought. Opacity is both an ethical and an aesthetic practice of un-understanding, of “unknowability,” a resistance to representation. The artists in *Not For Everybody* build and complicate this idea, arguing for a more complex interaction between opacity as well as transparency.

Consider Hadi Fallahpisheh’s *The Truth Has Four Legs (Hidden in Translation)*, a large, ghostly photograph of a ceramic vessel with the outline of a body within the frame itself. Fallahpisheh works with camera-less photography, using a special darkroom process to expose objects to photographic paper, blocking out chunks of light with his own body. This process is a performance, and his body becomes a hidden actor, a material, and an object in the work.

The sheltering body can also be found in *The Truth Has Four Legs (On Hold)*, where a rolled up carpet (one that Fallahpisheh has used for his performances) counterbalances a large ceramic vessel. An audio work hidden in the vessel emits cries for help in several languages, further evoking the obscured and imperiled body.

Yet in other aspects of Fallahpisheh’s practice, this body is made transparent, dematerialized into fictions of identity. *The Truth Has Four Legs (Punishment II)*, another photograph in the show, is mounted on clippings from *The New York Times* referencing reductive narratives foisted upon him in an environment of anti-immigration policies. Fallahpisheh responded directly to this condition in a 2016 show at Kai Matsumiya, where he constructed a fictional character “Hadji,” weaving social constructions with his personal biography. In both cases Fallahpisheh’s work asks us to consider not the wholeness of identity so much as an ongoing process of identification, where we interpellate various fictions other produce for us into those that we produce for ourselves.

These fictions are not without their material precarities, and Gloria Maximo explores this in her *Upward Mobility* series, comprised of two horizontal plaster painting installations and a video work. “I am not portraying a fiction,” Maximo says about a related video work titled *Client States* on view at the Queens Museum International, “I am instead enacting a performance as myself, a painter, to create an abstraction that has a realist subject.” *Upward Mobility*, like *Client States*, transiently moves between realism, a form of art that unmasks social laws and circumstances, and abstract painted marks. Delicate lines follow the softly referenced underlying structure, both the societal and plaster form, and the liminal space of a woman at work, rest, and in death.

The three works in the exhibition represent a cycle that speaks to the precarity and vulnerability of a human relationship with low income attempts at upward mobility, respective survival strategies, and transiency. The subject in her video *Upward Mobility (Woman Working)* sits at a promotional table in Jamaica, Queens, with brochures soliciting the attention of passersby. At times, she looks down at her hands and they glow with a warm light. This small moment of contemplation depicts what Maximo has called the “interiority necessary to maintain hierarchical power relationships.” It is, in part, the tension of navigating the terms of your identity with the sites of its public display. It is a precarity embodied in the installation of her paintings as well. A plaster panel carved with the markings of a section of sidewalk is positioned on top of the same folding table from the video, as if just removed from the wall. A black

tablecloth sits under the painting, which juts off the edge sharply in a vulnerable fashion. The other lies on the floor, as if discarded or sheltering in the corner. Both evince a state of in-betweenness.

Precarity also alludes to some of the tension behind the idea of abstraction as armor, that this sheltering so often results in fractured, or dual, or multiple selves. It may function as a tool to resist the tokenization of identity, but it might also whittle away at our sense of self. We see this fracturing in Baseera Khan's collages, which incorporate photographs of her family, past performances, and geometric cutouts into a visual assemblage of references and lineages. Dawn, the only collage of Khan's that contains no personal material, speaks to this break. A simple collage that reveals the light refraction that occurs when clear mylar is scanned, it acts as a key to understanding the way the personal material in the other collages interacts: like so many particles of light refracting, colliding, within one identity.

This strategy is not only an obfuscation but also a negotiation of transparency, of protecting and revealing strategically. Khan's Privacy Control develops that duality, placing a feminist translation of the Quran's prayers for protection behind a two-way mirror. The installation, in practice, serves as both a selfie station and a clouded view, a play on the transparency and the occlusion of one's identity.

Even when the body does appear, as in Khan's video Planet Fitness, her immateriality is foregrounded by the green screen behind her. Dancing to a self-produced mix between Southasian music from Sufi musician Nustrat Fateh to more western pop music like Robyn, the artist dances in a way that looks like work, as if her body, of the queer Muslim artist, were a hologram to keep running. The projection of identity seems tiring, it says, and it might make one unfamiliar to oneself.

Abstraction, as a salve to the dangers of display and representation, presents its own challenges and pitfalls. The artists in Not For Everybody refigure Glissant's opacity to include more porous identity-forming processes. They move us towards different formations of representation: between exposure and refraction, obscurity and self-preservation, as they are calibrated to pressing material circumstances. The strategies presented in Not For Everybody are not the bare-all light of exhibition nor the darkness of obfuscation, but rather an in-between twilight. It is a sentiment echoed in each artist's process: Hadi Fallahpisheh working almost entirely in darkness to produce his photographs; Baseera Khan translating the Quran to emphasize the "refuge at day break," the time between night and day, and Gloria Maximo exploring those things "unspoken but felt, brought out, not into the light of day, but the edge of night."

Seo Hyung Lee, Diana. "Like Oil and Water: Interview with Baseera Khan," *Art Asia Pacific*, December 2018.



LIKE OIL AND WATER: INTERVIEW WITH BASEERA KHAN

BY DIANA SEO HYUNG LEE



Portrait of BASEERA KHAN in her studio at Pioneer Works, New York. Photo by Walter Włodarczyk. Courtesy the artist.

New York-based artist Baseera Khan employs music, fashion photography, textiles, installations and performances to grapple with capitalism and its exertion on our bodies, religions and cultures. Rather than considering her art as a form of "activism," however, her research-based practice brings to the surface the non-neutrality of the spaces that our bodies occupy, especially for those who are disenfranchised by capitalist-driven societies like the United States. In her works, she makes room for "exile and kinship," as she describes, and the simultaneous existence of rage, vulnerability and tenderness.

Born in Texas to an Afghani-Indian family, Khan received her BFA from the University of North Texas in 2005 and MFA from Cornell University in 2012. Over the past five years, her art practice has garnered increasing attention, and she continues to receive acclaim through notable exhibitions such as The Sculpture Center's "In Practice: Another Echo" (2018), her first solo exhibition "iamuslima" at Participant Inc (2017), as well as performances at the Whitney Museum of American Art and Queens Museum, among others. She is currently an artist-in-residence at Pioneer Works in New York, and was recently invited by Sophia Marisa Lucas, assistant curator of the Queens Museum to co-curate "Volumes," the 2018 edition of the biennial exhibition Queens International. I sat down with Khan to discuss her art practice and how it informed her curatorial work in the ambitious "Volumes" exhibition.

Could you tell me about your work iamuslima (2017), which comprises a pair of customized Nike Air Force One mid-top shoes?

In early 2017, Nike launched its new female performance wear targeting athletes who are interested in modest gear. The sweat-wicking hijab, designed to cover one's hair, was savvy marketing by Nike for its female consumers. Female sports icons from all over the world photographed in these hijabs made the company appear to advocate for Muslim-Americanism while the United States government had just imposed travel bans against Muslim Americans and countries with large Muslim populations. One year before, Nike was rejecting the embroidering of "Muslim" or "Islam" on their ID customization platform, so the hijab could have been an attempt for them to bring back "diverse" clientele after enduring a widespread boycott and lawsuit. Nike also began to restrict the degree of customization with their Air Force One shoes. Now, customers are only allowed to embroider their first, middle, or last names on their tailor-made sneakers. In my project, I work against the new customizable platform that limits the chances of the brand being associated with "offensive" or polarizing messages.

I managed to customize a pair of Nikes for the project, iamuslima, through a strategy in my practice called, "misspelled, on purpose." The shoes, embroidered with the statement, "iamuslima," visualize how our corporate environment, like our nation, is inherently Islamophobic with its historical anti-black policies. Corporations are known to work solely in service of their bottom line. Their net profit is affected by shareholders and the politics that surround these individuals. I was looking at a matryoshka doll of complex people politics through the sneakers.

My art is not activism—that's not my job—but this particular work documents the steps a company like Nike is taking to cover up larger systemic problems, and this is exciting to me. It reminds me that it is not about good or evil, but that there is capitalism. And individuals can be quite powerful when we come together. Boycotts change the directions of bottom lines and affect policy. Ultimately, let's face it y'all, black and brown bodies all over this world have a lot of money. Duh, Nike!

My next step with this project is to customize multiple shoes together to spell out, or literally write out a letter to Colin Kaepernick, the former quarterback who began kneeling during the United States anthem before games as an action of protest against the country's injustice towards black Americans, and who has now been embraced by Nike as the face of the "Just do it" campaign. It would be great and interesting if Nike saw the profit in sponsoring me and my practice, as I know they are at this moment cherry-picking young black and brown artists to "sponsor" or place at the forefront of their marketing, just like they have done with Kaepernick. I'm ripe for the picking. Just saying.

Could you tell me about your performance Braidrage (2017)?

Braidrage is an endurance performance that involves me making my way up an indoor rock climbing wall. The performance comprises 99 Holds—unique dyed resin casts of different corners of my body that are embedded with traditional gold wearable chains, braided strands of hair and gold hypothermia blankets commonly given to refugees. The work came together after several infuriating situations in my life. I was left with nothing more than instinct to move past the hard times, and rage. Rage protects my softness when softness is not an option. Rage is also a strategy in my practice. It allows me to swing towards madness as a form of resistance and to tackle historical pain and displacement.

Braidrage gave me a chance to grapple with tracing the movements of my body while climbing the synthetic corners of it, with the resin casts, dispersed on the wall, symbolizing the different fragments that form my collective self. There's a sense of intimacy but the work is also very much about the way I understand the female body in painting and the structures of inclusion, which I imagine as being vertical. I wanted to see how high I could climb on this metaphorical ladder. There is also a connection to jewelry, heritage and ownership. The gold and silver chains represent the materials with which women's bodies are traded, bought and sold. The hair and refugee blankets are similarly symbolic of a contemporary system of trading and the totemization of "the marginalized" in Western media.

These components form the DNA of the installation. The Holds, or corners of my body, can be collected individually, but later, a curator could bring them all back together again. The paperwork accumulated from this would become a part of the work. It would show a diaspora of how the pieces lived, where they've been installed, and who has been grabbing on them. I like to visualize the lives of my artworks in both long and short terms. That's a major part of how I build my practice.

Could you tell me more about being a Muslim femme and how it informs your practice?

I grew up hearing stories about how Islam became a religion. One of the stories that stuck with me was about prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) meeting his first wife Khadija. Supposedly, she had short hair and was super hot, and he was like, I want to be with her! And then he goes to the mountains and comes back down with the first chapters of the Quran. The anecdote showed me how powerful women are—I wasn't thinking of Islam as a religion or anything like that, and the story is a cherry-picked vignette, but because of it, I assumed women ruled the world. Also, when I was growing up, Benazir Bhutto was the president of Pakistan and Ann Richards was the governor of Texas (lowkey, I didn't understand she wasn't the president of the United States. I didn't really understand what feminism was, I didn't feel that struggle and I didn't develop any kind of way around gender politics. I was young and confused. But then when I was older my family started to push me to get married and I started to realize that I have no power. I'm going to be handed off to another tribe and given a gold necklace to symbolize that I am owned. My new tribe would continue to control me like with my family. I began to see the patriarchy in my everyday. So all that was like oil and water. While on one hand I thought we (femme owned the world, I also came to understand that our destinies are predetermined. We have no sovereignty over our own bodies.

I recently wrote a grant, which asked me to explain why it is important in this moment for me to receive the funding. I decided to say it's because I would not be here without the sacrifice of many Muslim women and undocumented, or marginalized peoples who have gone without voices. I don't know them but I know that their struggle is why I am here.

Could you tell me about your installation Karaoke Spiritual Center of Love (2018)?

The Karaoke Spiritual Center of Love incorporates elements from karaoke lounges, like chandeliers, LED lighting, padded seats, a disco ball and televisions. I also lowered the ceiling of the room where the work was installed because it was important that people know the space is not neutral. I wanted to bring people into my world, and I wanted to bring attention to the space so people feel the architecture around them. The lowered ceiling hopefully gives one pause to think through all the layered structures one does not necessarily see when they move through space.

The materials covering the seats, on the other hand, are prayer rugs, underwear and fabrics from my mom, who is a hoarder. When she finds these things, she gives them to my sisters, nieces, or me.

Playing on the television screens are homemade Karaoke music videos. The visuals in karaoke videos are typically completely disjointed from the lyrics—sometimes in offensive, or beautiful, or confusing ways—so I used the same strategy to convey my sense of displacement, alienation and disorientation.

The work was very popular and I was able to show it in different capacities, for example, at the Sculpture Center's 2018 show, "Another Echo," curated by Allie Tepper, presented as part of the In Practice program. For that iteration of the work, I pulled the tops off the seats and put them on the walls, and created cabinets for people to sit and listen to the music coming from the seat itself. When you sit down your butt vibrates from the base, which may also cause a sense of discomfort.

What is your relationship to sound?

My relationship with sound began with my mother teaching me to recite the Quran as a child. I grew up trying to understand the text as poetry and music, not a theology. I was good, but never became great at reciting the scripture. Eventually I did understand the spiritual aspects of the text, but at that point I was also moving on in terms of musical taste and was more interested in American music. I saw a lot of similarities in the tonality of the Quran with rap, R&B, and indie rock. This all feeds into a branch of my practice that investigates music, pop culture and representation. I'm curious: Bollywood movie soundtracks are the single most popular kind of music in the world, but why aren't there Asian-American pop stars? We have MIA, but MIA won't have us—America didn't treat her very well either.

The art world and the art market may find your work illegible because you do not neatly fit into a prescribed category. Could you tell me about how you have moved forward in making your work regardless of this and how you have responded to limitations via lack of or projected context?

My works were illegible for a long time. When I did my show "iamuslima" at Participant Inc with Lia Gangitano, in early 2017, I took it as an opportunity to think through all of my previous material.

I am primarily an installation artist—that means I use the materials that I can in a given space. Installations artists are taught that nothing in the room is neutral and I see this kind of artmaking as a political tool and a transformative one at that. There was a long period of time when I didn't have a studio. I made works in my bedroom, which is why sleep became an important component in my work. I feel that sleep can provide a space for imagination, for ideas to grow, evolve, and sometimes even be resolved. So I consider myself to also be making art while sleeping. I'm very responsive to space, and shows help me articulate certain concepts not because of the audience but because of the context of the space.

I wonder if being an Afghani-Indian-Muslim woman allows for creative privilege in some way, because no one can fully “claim” you. Do you feel privileged, or that maybe the “failure” to belong can be a good thing?

The main culture that we dealt with in my family was Islamic culture. Or, at least, the kind of Islamic culture instilled by my parents, which was Arabic, but a South Asian version. There would be total disconnect when I met with someone from India because, first of all, it's a huge country that has been cut up into territories, each with their own dialects and cultures. But also, the Khans are hybridized peoples who came from different spaces of war and conflict, such as Iran, Afghanistan and Africa. We are like the other among the others.

I think if you are working from a space of negative return, you may be the only one in the room who has the chance to imagine a new way of being and becoming. That might be why I, or someone who looks and thinks like me, might be such a threat. And that perceived threat silenced my vocal cords at times. My Acoustic Sound Blankets (2017 installation of silk, felt, industrial sound insulation and gold custom embroidering, allowed me to shout while hiding me at the same time. Art saves me in that way, or at least the way I'm building my long-term practice does. For a while I felt like I wanted to be a part of something. I'm not going to lie about that. I wanted a normal charming Texan life with gritty subcultural themes of art and music; I wanted to be the goth, industrial, indie girl with great politics and fashion sense. Then I realized no one is claiming me, so I'm going to do my own thing and make my own legacy. When I started to build my own sense of self, I understood that the chic goth girl I tried to be in order to fit in was deeply colonized and was scared of being a brown Muslim femme in America. I saw that there is inherent patriarchy, racism and misogyny in even the most progressive subcultures of art, music and film. So it felt natural to call me something of my own design. I'm calling myself “iamuslima.”

Formal considerations are clearly important for me in my art but setting a standard for my lexicon, and creating a kind of legacy is more important, in a way. If I were to graft myself into art history I'd say there is a link to minimalism, and that links to performance and sculptural ideas set into my mind early on when my family was teaching me about Islam.

Creating your own lexicon is particularly important because this lexicon—your narratives and ideas—also relate to your performance, curatorial and pedagogical work?

It made sense when I was approached by the assistant curator of Queens Museum, Sophia Marisa Lucas, to co-curate the 2018 Queens International, “Volumes.” I had knowledge that I felt ready to tap into and I knew that putting together the exhibition with Sophia could also be a learning experience. Most importantly it was a way for me to give other people space and time to say what they need to say. The show opened on October 7 and will be on view until February 24, 2019 with many public programs.

How do you relate to Queens as a locale?

I have always seen Queens as a home because I see people that look like me walking around everywhere, and Queens Museum is really the only place predominantly showing people of color. Many museums are trying to radicalize their programs but no one talks about how Queens Museum was always doing this work.

Simone Subal Gallery

It was really important for Sophia and I to not only make sure we research artworks extensively and think precisely about the thesis of the exhibition—which, very briefly, is about analogue and digital knowledge and information coming together to make a third space—but also that we expand the definition of this survey that happens every two years. Sophia had been given this opportunity well before approaching me, to make relationships with the Queens Public Libraries and a key artist in the show, Milford Graves. Upon meeting we had an immediate kinship, which developed as we worked together over this past nine months to mount the show. We were given extensive floorspace for the exhibition, so along with the open call we included important figures in the Queens area such as Graves, Mary A. Valverde, Jack Whitten and Cullen Washington Jr.

We are in this culture where we spotlight emerging artists and established artists. But what happens to the mid-career artists who are sort of stuck in a space where they are illegible? “Volumes” tried to

complicate these categories and set up an ecosystem where all of these artists get to do their best work and can have conversations with each other.

We also conceived the authorless project “Volumes Cyanotype,” which involved everyone—museum staff, curators and artists—getting together to have dinner, and to pay respects to the land we were occupying. We invoked that through having an indigenous caterer who walked us through pre-Columbian foods native to the region. Everyone brought an object and those got put on a light-sensitive surface so the sun exposed the uncovered areas. The fabric was used at the dinner party and hoisted in the exhibition.

Do you see Queens International as your curatorial “debut”? I know you have curated before but this is the first time that you’re in the foreground as the artist-curator.

I don’t see myself as a curator like Sophia. She is very methodical, five steps ahead, and thinks through all the scenarios. She truly is there to care for the work and has little interest in speaking for the artwork—she wants only to give it the best platform and expand its readability. I’m an artist so at times I really had to take a step back from my opinions. However, I tap into a social, emotional geography, and think through connections because I am hyper-imaginative and a risk-taker. Sophia and I are mutually impressed with each other’s abilities.

The hardest part about putting together the exhibition as a co-curator was that I am an artist, but at the same time that was my strength. I gave my show at Participant Inc. everything that I had, and I want to keep and build on the foundation and momentum I made there. Curating is just another way for me to be legible as an artist. It is all in service of maintaining my position as an artist and researcher.

Queens International 2018: “Volumes” is on view at the Queens Museum, New York, until February 24, 2019.

“Not for Everybody,” a group show curated by Allie Tepper and featuring Baseera Khan, Hadi Fallahpisheh and Gloria Maximo, will be on view at Simone Subal Gallery, New York, until December 21, 2018.

Harris, Jane Ursula. "Baseera Khan," *Art in America*, May 26, 2017.

Art in America

REVIEWS May 26, 2017

Baseera Khan

NEW YORK, at Participant Inc., by Jane Ursula Harris



Baseera Khan's first solo exhibition in New York, "iamuslima," was titled after a term, "Muslima," that she had Nike stitch on a pair of sneakers to protest the company's refusal to allow the word "Islam" or "Muslim" on its customizable sneaker models. While Nike recently removed those words from its banned list of "content construed to incite violence," the New York-based artist's positioning of the sneakers at the exhibition's entrance suggested their ongoing critical relevance—particularly in the wake of Trump's travel ban targeting Muslim-majority countries. Invoking as well Khan's self-identification as a "queer femme Muslim," the shoes were a perfect introduction to the intersectional and autobiographical themes explored throughout the show.

The sneakers, placed on clear acrylic shelving, were adjacent to three "Psychedelic Prayer Rugs" (all works 2017). Made in collaboration with Kashmiri artisans, the rugs have brightly colored designs combining personal symbols and markings meaningful to the artist—a pink triangle, an excerpt from an Arabic poem, the Purple Heart medal—with those traditional to Islam, such as the lunar calendar and the star and crescent. Viewers were

encouraged to take their shoes off and interact with the rugs, meditating on their political and poetic allusions or performing the traditional salat, the daily prayers that constitute one of the five pillars of Islam, the others being faith, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca.

Khan reenacted the five pillars in a series of large-scale monotone screen prints. Based on photo-collages, the prints adapt and personalize the pillars' foundational principles through performative self-portraits. In Oneness (belief in monotheism), for example, which corresponds to faith, Khan layers photos of herself in profile such that she appears as a goddesslike figure with multiple legs and faces. The image suggests a multitude of identities coalesced into one—a vision of oneness that is feminized and collective.

Simone Subal Gallery

In four of the five prints, Khan wears one of her “Acoustic Sound Blankets,” a group of black textile sculptures that were also on view. They consist of sound-dampening material cut with head-size holes. The margins of the holes are embroidered with elaborate gold patterns passed down through generations of women in the Khan family. In the prints, the blankets abstract and obscure her body, their ghostly forms recalling, alternately, hijabs, body bags, robes, and moving blankets. As sculptures, they exert a physical presence that is weighty and funereal. Huddled together against a wall, they seem to protect secrets carried within. In the past, the artist has employed them for intimate discussions (often sexual), inviting people to join her inside one of the muffling cloaks.

Khan’s performances are not always private or hidden. In a public performance on opening night, she activated the exhibition’s dominant installation, Braidrage, a rock-climbing wall made from bits of cast body parts. Swinging from a giant black braid suspended from the ceiling, she climbed on the resin body fragments, most of which were filled with hair and gold chains and tinted in shades of brown or black to conjure a vast spectrum of skin tones. The symbolism of hair and gold reflects her Indian heritage, and in the context of the performance referred to the struggle and ascent of her immigrant family members who came to the States before she was born.

Khan’s interpretive explorations of Muslim identity are complex, offering a recuperative, adaptive model at odds with the reductive stereotypes Islamophobia breeds. At a time when many—feminists and liberals alike—still question whether Muslim women can be empowered by their faith and culture, the works in “iamuslima” were testament that they can.

Trouillot, Terence. "Baseera Khan's iamuslima: Exploring Muslim femininity through the politics of love," *Bomb Magazine*, 2016.

BOMB

Baseera Khan's iamuslima by Terence Trouillot Exploring Muslim femininity through the politics of love



Baseera Khan. iamuslima, 2017, NikeID-customized Air Force One mid-top shoes. All images courtesy of Participant, Inc, New York. Photo by Andrew Bourne.

At a time when draconian measures are being implemented to deny Muslims entrance into the US and white mansplaining increasingly has the audacity to criticize and define the cultural identity of Muslim women (e.g., Bill Maher, who on his HBO show *Real Time*, supported the meme "A woman should be... whatever the fuck she wants," then lambasted those who dress in burqas), it's no wonder that Muslimas feel unfairly portrayed and scrutinized by conservatives and liberals alike. As author and activist Samila Ali solemnly points out, "the only women it seems permissible to judge and even ridicule today are Muslim women."

Baseera Khan's *iamuslima* at Participant Inc., her first solo exhibition in New York City, presents work that, at least in part, challenges such sardonic views in an effort to excite, complicate, and open dialogue about Muslim femininity and by extension Islam. The show features five large screen prints, each representing the artist's interpretation of the Pillars of Islam; silk prayer rugs designed by the artist and handcrafted in Kashmir, India; a fifteen-foot-long braid of hair suspended from the ceiling; a climbing wall; embroidered sound-dampening blankets; and a display case of family photographs, letters, jewelry, and other archival materials.

At the entrance of the gallery sit stacks of Plexiglas boxes, each with a pointed arch-shaped opening at either side, and together serving as bookshelf and shoe rack. On display is a modest selection of books, most notably two copies of Jean Genet's *Prisoner of Love*—one old and filled the artist's marginalia, the other brand new. This book, a memoir of Genet's experience living in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan in the 1970s, sets the stage for Khan's own observations on love. She grapples with desire, compassion, obsession, and admiration. A piece that might encapsulate this idea of a multivalent love is *Acoustic Sound Blankets* (2017), a collection of large, black shrouds reminiscent of the burqa but here ostensibly used to protect one from stun grenades at violent protests, or alternately just big enough to invite multiple people to stay warm or safe in the company of others.

The exhibition's title comes from *iamuslima* (2017), an edition of customized Nike Air Force One sneakers designed by the artist. The words "Muslim" or "Muslima" were not allowed to be stitched on the sneaker as they did not fit the guidelines of NikeiD customization features. While the misspelling of "iamuslima" was permissible—a loophole the artist came across—the discriminatory practices of Nike connote a certain Islamophobia suffused through Western capitalism. NikeiD has since lifted its own ban and "Muslima" is now allowed, but what's most telling about this anecdote is how the artist relates to object fetishism, fashion, and popular culture—that is, with a love for the superficial that then becomes subject matter to investigate notions of identity as a Muslim Indian American woman.

At the opening, the artist, dressed in all black, kneels on the floor methodically rubbing her feet, hands, face, long braided hair, and body with dusty black chalk. Surrounded by a swarm of viewers, she performs her ritual ablution or *wuḍū'*, the ceremonial act in Islam of washing different parts of the body before prayer. This purifying gesture, here, almost irreverently—or with tongue in cheek—suggests the artist is paradoxically sullyng herself, an antithetical if not heretical move. However, she dutifully preserves the sanctimony of her action (at least theoretically), knowing all too well that, in the absence of water, ablution can be performed with either sand or dust.

Notwithstanding the wry sensibility her inaugural performance proposes, the seriousness of the deed is all the more palpable given the artist's slow and meticulous motions. Following her ablution, she moves through the crowd of onlookers, leaving a trail of black footprints behind her, to reach a fifteen-foot climbing wall at the back of the room. There she climbs the partition with the help of ropes that dangle from the ceiling. As she attempts to scale this massive object titled *Braidrage* (2017), finding her footing or gripping onto several translucent resin holds that are cast from different parts of her body—each filled with a combination of hair, gold chains, and gold thermal blankets—the artist swings precariously back and forth, marking the white wall with black soot.

Using secular and religious motifs, Khan incorporates her body in ways that are both playful and introspective. What looks like an attempt to bridge her Muslim heritage and a Western conception/obsession with fitness and the body, she effaces what the world seems to perceive as irreconcilable dichotomies: sexuality and piety, secularism and religion, materialism and altruism. Moreover, Khan's work seems to both embrace and criticize these polarities.

While Khan's approach to love—that of the body, of tradition, of family—may verge on solipsism, I can't fault it as means for self-exploration—an attempt to keep the complexities of her own identity from being flattened while celebrating opposing signifiers of her selfhood. In Michael Hardt's essay "Procedures of Love," part of dOCUMENTA (13) Notebook Series 100 Thoughts/ 100 Notes (2012), he explicates how love "can be the central, constitutive mode and motor of politics." Warning that this love is not based on "the process of unification in which differences are erased," but rather—in referring to works by Spinoza, Deleuze, Proust, and Genet—love's aim is to investigate multiplicities, both in harmony and in conflict, among all of us. It's not without deference that Khan welcomes love in this way—positively embracing difference and conflict. And as sappy as it may sound, as a form of agonism, her practice seems noteworthy.

Baseera Khan's *iamuslima* is on view at Participant Inc., New York, until April 9, 2017.

Terence Trouillot is an art writer, editor, and BOMB's Andrew W. Mellon Fellow for Oral Histories.

Godfrey Larmon, Annie. "Baseera Khan," *Artforum*. Summer 2017. Print

ARTFORUM



Baseera Khan, *Braidage*, 2017, ninety-nine unique poured, dyed resin casts taken from the artist's body; synthetic and human hair; hypothermia blankets; five unique harnesses made from wearable Cuban chains and rock-climbing cords; black chalk. Installation view. Photo: Thomas Barratt and Mark Waldhauser.

Baseera Khan

PARTICIPANT INC

SOME FAMILIES STACK THE DOLLA BILLS. MY FAMILY STACKS THE TRAUMA. NOW I'M TRYING TO MAKE SOME MONEY OFF UNDERSTANDING MY MAMA'S DRAMA. These lines appear in the print *Prayer (prostrating in submission five times a day to an entity outside of your body)*, the first work encountered in "iamuslima," Brooklyn-based artist Baseera Khan's New York debut. One of five works interpreting the five pillars of Islam (we see also *Pilgrimage, Fasting, Oneness, and Zakat*), *Prayer* has a brassy transparency that is typical of Khan's project. The artist often levies the contradictions underlying contemporary discussions of identity and oppression—particularly the ways in which artists and institutions mobilize such topics without acknowledging their own complicity in the markets that reify those very subjects. Here, in a series of performance-oriented sculptures, prints, and a selection of her personal archive (all works 2017), the artist mused on intergenerational trauma, the violence of

neoliberalism, and mythologies of upward mobility via her own body and family history and the images and narratives they've produced.

The show's locus was *Braidrage*, a rock-climbing wall comprising ninety-nine resin holds, each cast from the artist's body. Khan arranged these elbows and ankles on the wall in a jock's exquisite corpse; they also spilled onto the floor, where their valence was darker, the scattered body parts evoking the aftermath of a toppled boat. A girthy black braid of synthetic and real hair sourced from factories in India and sold in downtown Brooklyn and Harlem hung from the ceiling alongside several chains—a talisman of globalization and outsourcing. During the opening, Khan performed an ablution with black chalk and scaled the wall, leaving a score of inky marks. Her climb was also into a lineage of ritualistic 1990s performance from the heyday of identity-politics, recalling both Janine Antoni's 1992 *Loving Care* and Matthew Barney's various ascensions through institutional architectures. If Antoni, mopping the floor with her blackened hair, instrumentalized her body in a feminist critique of both the marginalization of domestic labor and the machismo of AbEx and Barney sought to destabilize his own hegemonic subject position, Khan places herself in a field of herself, wherein she must constantly navigate her own body—strategize its usefulness—differently.

Arranged against a wall were the eleven pieces making up *Acoustic Sound Blankets*, some hanging, some sloughed off on the ground, all reminiscent of Robert Morris's corporeal Minimalism. These soundproofing blankets—each with a hole cut in the center, around which was embroidered patterns drawn from family heirlooms—invited the body, rather than represented it. In performances preceding the exhibition, and in one at the show's finissage, Khan brought friends and strangers under the blankets with her, cocooning them in an intimate, secret space—unsurveillable and uncensorable.

In the past, Khan, a Muslim American and specifically a feminist Indian-Pakistani-Afghani woman who was raised in Texas by a family threatened with deportation, has written about being excluded from racial solidarity movements in America. She produced "iamuslima" before the executive order that banned Muslim immigration, an event that has inevitably shaped the work's reception—suddenly, it is "timely." This is a problem of art in an age of crisis: Unforeseen events have the power to retool or reframe the objects around us. Of course, Khan's perspective has always been essential. Her project, moreover, exceeds what the market has pivoted toward—it is unrelenting in its insistence that identity is contingent and that we are all, together, implicated.

—Annie Godfrey Larmon

Menard, Kate. "Baseera Khan's iamuslima on view at Participant Inc: Interview with the Artist," *ArteFuse.com*. 2017.

ARTE FUSE

Baseera Khan's iamuslima on view at Participant Inc.: Interview with the Artist

04/03/2017 by KATE MENARD



Installation view of iamuslima by Baseera Khan at Participant inc.

In 1985, when she was very young, growing up in Denton, Texas, Baseera Khan saw a photograph of a young girl on the cover of National Geographic magazine. The girl was Sharbat Gula, a refugee fleeing war in Afghanistan who became widely known as "the Afghan girl." Her image was captured by American photojournalist Steve McCurry at a Pakistani refugee camp, her identity unknown to him.

Baseera saw herself in this girl visually, and although both her father and mother immigrated to the United States from India, Baseera's paternal grandfather was from Afghanistan, giving her an ethnic connection to the girl in the photograph as well.

The National Geographic cover serves as the inspiration for Khan's screen-print entitled Zakat (or donation). The piece features several vertical rectangles, skewed left and right in layers, in various shades of black, white, gray, and beige. At the center is the smallest rectangle, a thin, crisp white frame that mimics National Geographic's iconic yellow border and contains white lettering that makes up the cover's original text. In Zakat, it is only these reprinted words that are clearly visible and neatly contained. Khan's face in profile lies within the central rectangle, while her embroidery covered shoulder area spills

into other frames. Enlarged photographs of family jewelry, including her father's wedding ring, positioned on top of Khan's head—almost like an elaborate hat or crown—lie within and beyond the central frame as well. And only very faintly can be seen a portion of the cover's original subject, Gula's left eye, positioned directly left of Khan's right. The right eyes of each woman share the same point, at the direct center of the piece.

Khan's connection to "the Afghan girl" and her reworking of the National Geographic cover are integral strings in the web of family history, geopolitical commentary, and inner and outer journeys that make up Khan's first solo exhibition *iamuslima*, currently on view at Participant, Inc through April 9th.

iamuslima is a multimedia show that is structured around five 50 x 59 inch monotone screen- prints on Stonehenge paper and in identical black frames. Each print is an interpretation of one of the five pillars of Islam and titled accordingly: Zakat, Fasting, Prayer, Pilgrimage, and Oneness. With Zakat, Khan seems to indicate that she both sees and recognizes the suffering of others as she journeys with it herself.

Across from Zakat, along the opposite wall, is a sculptural piece entitled *Acoustic Sound Blankets*, made up of several acoustic blankets both pinned to the wall and structured into various humanoid shapes on the ground. Khan uses these acoustic sound blankets for performance pieces, and they are featured in four of the five screenprints. Khan spoke about the significance of the blankets:

These blankets came into my life because I feel like I've always been vocally on exhibition in my family. . . . When you finish the book, the holy book, you have to recite several things in front of people and you have to have a really beautiful voice, and parents are really into that. . . . It's like a pageantry. And so I've always had to perform and record. . . . Later on in my life, I got really interested in underground music, and that was really the only way I could kind of think through who I needed to be for myself, and it was a very private thing. I worked at Rubber Gloves Rehearsal Studios, a music venue that's still in Denton, Texas. . . . Music is a way I incorporate a lot of interests. I think through music as a language because I do feel like words fall short.

Cut into each acoustic blanket is a hole that Khan refers to as the neck hole, meant to resemble the circular patterns that can be seen on the holy book. These holes are rimmed with golden embroidery based on patterns that have been passed down for generations through her mother's family to mark special occasions such as births, marriage, and death. The holes in these blankets also resemble the sound holes of acoustic guitars rimmed by intricate rosettes. That acoustic blankets are often also used when moving possessions feeds into the mobility Khan gives the blankets, including their use as protest march gear. The black blankets bring to mind a variety of divergent and interconnected concepts, from womb-like safety to self-discovery to body veils to, on the darker end of the spectrum, Khan says that they can even be seen as body Bags.

Lying between Zakat and *Acoustic Sound Blankets*, by the back wall of the gallery's main space, is an installation piece entitled *Braidrage*. The piece consists of a large braid that is 15 feet and 6 inches in length, made of synthetic and real hair, which, as Khan points out, is usually sourced from South Asia. The braid hangs from a hole in the ceiling. The end tip forms a small pile of hair on the floor below. Strewn on the floor surrounding the braid, are unique poured dyed resin body parts embedded with additional hair, Cuban chains (in gold and silver), and gold leaf made of hypothermia blankets. Khan has also attached these body parts to the back wall of the gallery, turning it into a 12 x 15 foot rock climbing wall where the Cuban chains included in the piece double as harnesses.

On opening night, Khan included the climbing wall in a performance piece, as well as a pair of customized mid-top Nike sneakers bearing the word "MUSLIMA" on the back and "IAMUSLIMA" on the velcro strap across the front. These sneakers were so named, in part, due to Nike's prohibition of the use of the word "Muslim" on its products (a ban now lifted). Opening night, before climbing the wall, Khan removed the sneakers from her feet and placed them in a compartment of clear acrylic shelving that can be seen by the gallery entrance, also containing ablution items and sociological textbooks. There she rubbed black

chalk on her body like performing ablution, then, barefoot, walked over to the wall and started to climb. After the climb, she returned to the shelving to put the sneakers back on her feet.

Viewed in its totality, the installation resembles both a battlefield or sea of sunken bodies and the type of obstacle course used in military training. The silver and gold colored Cuban chain link—a type of chain link often used in Men’s Jewelry and “bling” jewelry—when observed with the black and brown body parts on the floor, bring to mind concepts of bondage and exploitation, while viewed on the wall, hanging as harnesses, they appear to be re-appropriated as symbols of strength, means over a hurdle. The metallic chains may also be seen to work in tandem with the golden embroidery patterns passed down through Khan’s mother’s family, looped in with the bonds and strength of lineage. The gold colored hypothermia blankets, most often seen worn by refugees or athletes, bring to mind devastation, displacement, and greed, as well as safety and perseverance.

Speaking about the significance of the materials used in Braidrage, Khan said that they:

Do relate to a system of colonization that clearly still exists all over the world and has created so much confusion and institutional racism in America. . . .We see how labor is a way around abusive relationships with regards to exploiting one’s work and resources for little or no pay to a large entity that has a vast amount of monetary return. And . . . to add, a woman—because ultimately I am a woman, but I call myself femme—a femme person is picked apart and sold in many ways in every society, gold is traded, your hair defines you, and you are without agency, like a refugee wearing a hypothermia blanket at the edges of a new life if you do not behave as that status quo, or behave in patriarchal ways.

Braidrage, along with Zakat, directly ties in with Khan’s screen-print entitled Prayer, which can be seen by the gallery entrance across from the acrylic shelving. In Prayer, various bodies wearing and surrounded by Khan’s acoustic sound blankets, including one body that can be clearly identified as Khan’s, appear to have been cut out of a polaroid picture. Layered on top of the images in black lettering, the text of the print reads:

Some families

stack the dollar bills.

My family stacks the trauma.

Now I’m trying

to makes some money

off understanding my mama’s drama

You feel me?

Ameen Summa Ameen

-Baseera Khan

Khan clarified that her name is not meant to be read as a sign of authorship, but rather the traditional signing off of a prayer. Like Braidrage, Prayer also brings to light the ways in which personal and public, familial and geopolitical narratives can overlap and intertwine, can be stories of exploitation or triumph. The lyrics in Prayer will also be featured on an upcoming album Khan will be putting out as well.

On a more colorful plane, a bit further into the gallery beyond Prayer and the shelving, lie Khan’s Psychedelic Prayer Rugs, three small rugs laid out next to each other on a diagonal. Lunar Count Down,

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woven in Islam's symbolic colors of green and white with a large amount of yellow is related to the lunar calendar and the counting down of days (concepts also touched upon in Fasting). Act Up features a two-shaded pink pyramid and a poem in Urdu passed down to her from her mother, which pays tribute to the iconic poster the organization put out featuring the gay pride pink triangle and the words "SILENCE=DEATH." Purple Heart is rooted in the relationship between religion, war, and global trans communication.

Khan invites viewers to use the rugs for their own meditation. And iamuslima as a whole can be viewed as Khan inviting viewers into her life perspective while beckoning viewers to see themselves in it. Speaking about Pilgrimage, a very dark screenprint where only a faint pair of hands wrapped round braided chains poking through an embroidered hole of one of the acoustic sound blankets can be made out, Khan stated:

Pilgrimage is this place where it promotes you to only think about yourself, and it absorbs you. And this idea of absorption and darkness is a really beautiful thing. And I think it's interesting how in cultures darkness, especially in America, darkness is a scary thing. And black is usually used for mourning. It's usually used for showing that something is scary, so I wanted to problematize that and just have a conversation if anything about that.

Khan both challenges and welcomes her audience to gaze at themselves as they make meaning out of what it is to be femme, Muslim, and American.