

JHAVERI CONTEMPORARY

Frieze New York

Stand B37

For Jhaveri Contemporary's fourth participation at Frieze New York, the gallery brings its distinctive intergenerational and transnational approach to exhibition making in a display that considers the male form and erotic male gaze. Artists Ali Kazim (Pakistan, b. 1979), Lionel Wendt (Sri Lanka, 1900-1944), Prem Sahib (London, b.1982), and Salman Toor (Pakistan/USA, b.1983) show together for the first time, presenting new work made across media especially for the fair.

The booth includes carefully observed figurative paintings by Ali Kazim, staged photographic portraits by Lionel Wendt, sensual paintings of queer brown men by Salman Toor, and abstract sculptures by Prem Sahib that are coded with references to contemporary queer culture. By allowing the works of art their own voice – independent of the life histories of their makers – the stand challenges conventional ideas around gender and sexuality, highlighting the systematic exclusion of men, especially queer, of colour from art history.

Of the four artists included, some identify with queer politics, others fall under the queer umbrella, and still others are not queer at all. Combining approaches that are direct and frontal with iterations that are abstracted, subtle and allusive, this exhibition also enables an exploration of the body through the prisms of class and race.

Among the earliest works on the stand are rare vintage photographs by one of Asia's pioneering Modern photographers, Lionel Wendt. Wendt's carefully staged portraits enlist experimental photographic techniques such as solarisation and photomontage, revealing an engagement with Surrealism. His attitude towards the male form is informed by classical Greco-Roman poses and statuary and his models, mostly working-class men, are identified for their defined musculature and idealized bodies. Wendt's prints are largely unknown outside of Sri Lanka; his negatives were destroyed upon his death in 1944.

Ideas of male sensuality, beauty, and religious devotion collide in the work of Ali Kazim. Drawing upon elements of Indian miniature painting traditions, Kazim's solitary portraits of ordinary Pakistani men caught in moments of reverie offer a glimpse into their private lives and preoccupations. Presented with no markers of class or community, their nakedness, often from the waist up, conceals as much as it reveals.

New York-based Salman Toor's seductive paintings play with autobiography, art history, and queer identity. Nudes of young middle-class brown men lounging in bed, reading, checking their phones or asleep, are drawn from memory and fantasy. Toor's intimate depictions betray a certain precariousness and vulnerability, reframing conventional ideas around masculinity.

Rather than offering a figurative representation, Prem Sahib's works stand in for the body. Using a restrained palette and commercially manufactured materials, Sahib's sculptures use the language of Minimalism, inscribed however with intimacy and personal narrative. *Umbra* belongs to a series of sculpture suggestive of domestic furniture. Here, somber-toned hoodies seemingly support a sheet of glass to evoke a ghostly presence. The hoodies, standard uniform of male youth, represent bodies that are seeking refuge, performing, or waiting. *Eclipse* is part of a series of suspended rings modeled on intimate jewelry such as cock rings. Once again, the artist echoes presence through absence, in this instance the absence of the phallus.

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