

GUGGENHEIM BILBAO

Press release



The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents on July 16, 2015

Shahzia Sikander: *Parallax*

Shahzia Sikander: *Parallax*

- Dates: July 16–November 22, 2015
- Curated by Álvaro Rodríguez Fominaya
- Film & Video Gallery (103)

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents the Spanish premiere of Shahzia Sikander's *Parallax* (2013) from July 16 to November 22, 2015. This is the fifth work screened in the newly-opened Film & Video Gallery of the Museum devoted to video art, video installations, and the moving image since 2014.

Shahzia Sikander (b. Pakistan, lives in New York) draws on traditional Indo-Persian miniature painting to craft a critique and deconstruction of contemporary history. *Parallax* is a multi-channel installation consisting of hundreds of digitally animated gouache drawings. The artist's starting point for this piece is the contested territory of the Strait of Hormuz. In 2012 and 2013 Sikander traveled to the United Arab Emirates to participate in the Sharjah Biennial. It was there that she drew numerous details of the land, sea, and desert, which she expanded digitally to create her audiovisual piece.

Parallax explores ideas of conflict and tension over the control of strategically desired geography, a place where one fifth of world's total oil passes. Historical events that create tumult in colonial territories, naval warfare, the East India Company, imperial air and land travel routes and maritime trade all underlie Shahzia Sikander's oeuvre.

The original score by composer Du Yun includes six poems written specifically for this video by three local Sharjah poets. Poetry occupies a central point in the artist's practice as a way of introducing a plurality of meanings in the themes she explores. These poems, recited in classical and colloquial Arabic, engage the vernacular and the emotional through the powerful and nuanced composition of Du Yun.

Shahzia Sikander pioneered an original interpretation of the miniature painting genre into the realm of contemporary art, and her work has brought about a modern revival of this medium. In 2001 she produced her first video piece after years devoting herself to drawing. She uses animation as a way of incorporating time and sound into her work while employing the language of documentary film to amplify her critical discourse.

Sikander's animations simultaneously combine abstract, representational, and textual elements, underscoring the narrative complexity of the work. She experiments with scale and materials, challenging the strict style of miniature painting and its formal constraints. Her oeuvre ties in with abstraction, and her use of disparate or antithetical visual associations also links her to Surrealism in a certain way.

Biography

Shahzia Sikander is a Pakistani-born international artist whose pioneering practice takes Indo-Persian miniature painting as a point of departure. Sikander received her BFA in 1991 from the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan, and an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1995. She challenges the strict formal tropes of miniature painting, as well as its medium-based restrictions, by experimenting with scale and media including animation, video, performance, and large scale murals and installations. Sikander has been the recipient of solo exhibitions at the Nikolaj Kunsthal, Copenhagen; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., among others. She has participated in notable group exhibitions including the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial, the Istanbul Biennial, the Sharjah Biennial, and the Venice Biennale.

The artist has received many awards and honors for her work, including the Medal of Excellence from the Government and State of Pakistan. She is also a recipient of the U.S. Department of State's inaugural Medal of Arts Award and a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation "genius award."

Film & Video (gallery 103)

The Film & Video gallery opened its doors in 2014 with the aim of displaying video art, video installations, and moving images, both from the Guggenheim Museums and from other international collections. Over the past year the gallery has housed audiovisual works by three internationally renowned artists. The gallery opened in March with Christian Marclay's installation *The Clock*. In June the Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson's *The Visitors* was on display, from October through Mars 2015 the space hosted the video installation *The Crazyhouse (Megan, Simon, Nicky, Philip, Dee), Liverpool, UK*, by Rineke Dijkstra, and from Mars to July, 5 the film series *Thread Routes* produced by conceptual artist Kimsooja was on display.

Cover image:

Shahzia Sikander

Hormuz, 2013

Gouache on paper

30.5 x 40.5 cm.

© Shahzia Sikander. Courtesy of Sikander Studio

Press Images for
Shahzia Sikander: *Parallax* (2013)
Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

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For further information, please contact the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao Press Department: tel. +34 944 35 90 08 and email: media@guggenheim-bilbao.es

1. Shahzia Sikander

Parallax, 2013

Three-channel color animation with sound, 15 min and 30 sec Music by Du Yun

© Shahzia Sikander. Courtesy of Sikander Studio



2. Shahzia Sikander

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6. Shahzia Sikander

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7. Shahzia Sikander

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8. Shahzia Sikander

Parallax, 2013

Three-channel color animation with sound, 15 min and 30 sec Music by Du Yun

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9. Shahzia Sikander

Parallax, 2013

Three-channel color animation with sound, 15 min and 30 sec Music by Du Yun

Installation view at Sharjah Art Biennial

© Shahzia Sikander. Courtesy of Sikander Studio



10. Shahzia Sikander

Hormuz, 2013

Gouache on paper

30.5 x 40.5 cm.

© Shahzia Sikander. Courtesy of Sikander Studio



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