



## **SYRA Arts & Muse District**

**Present**

**Saadia Hussain's**

**From the Land of Peacocks**

**November 2 – 26, 2017**

**Opening Reception to meet the artist November 2<sup>nd</sup> from 6 – 8 pm**

SYRA Arts is pleased to host, in collaboration with Muse District, and for the first time at the gallery an exhibition for Pakistani artist Saadia Hussain.

"From the Land of Peacocks" pays homage to the 1.1 million Indian soldiers who served in World War I. Of these, sixty thousand died and more than nine thousand were decorated for their valor. Yet they are the forgotten heroes of the horrific bloodshed that eventually led to the defeat of Germany. Nearly one third of the soldiers came from the Punjab state. This exhibit explores the sacrifices of the forgotten soldiers from the Punjab, especially relevant and poignant at a time today when immigration and ethnic diversity are seen as threats in the western world.

Saadia Hussain's art practice was based on the concept of presenting her physical anatomy (body) through the medium of graphite on plywood. These drawings explored lines and alphabets in abstractions. The mediums she explored were watercolor, nitric acid, needle tool, pens, color pencils, coffee and tea stain. Compounded by her hearing disability, her work subsequently progressed to become more illustrative and often incorporating feminism as the main subject matter. Hussain's most recent work is focused on translating the pictorial language and interpretation presented by her photography into her own visual vocabulary. Vintage family photographs, both monochromatic and color, and other mediums such as collage, photo construction, meditative drawings, and paintings are the means to create her work. In addition, her images have been part of negative and positive spaces by overlapping figures, landscapes, architectural texts and the use of military history to create the illusion of a complex reality. Photography is a way to tell her story and evoke certain feelings. She has utilized her camera as a tool to create imagery that is both real and surreal. Her goal is to translate history into a story of which fantasy is an essential element.

Saadia Hussain was born in a small town, Mansehra, in Northern Pakistan on the 30th of June 1972. The oldest of three siblings, she was born with a hearing disability, which was a challenge during her school years. However, she did excel in one academic aspect of curriculum: Art. What she lacked in communication, languages and the other subjects, she made up for with creativity in drawing, painting, and photography. She was accepted to the National College of Arts in 1994 where she chose painting as her major and the disciplines of photography, printmaking and textile as her minor subjects. She graduated

in 2010 after finishing an MA (Hons) in Visual Arts from the same institution in 2010. Married with two children and based in Lahore, Saadia has been teaching at the National College of Arts in Lahore since 2013 in addition to working as an independent artist developing her talents across many fields, mainly digital work, painting, drawing and photography. She has had frequent shows in major cities of Pakistan like Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi.

**SYRA Arts:** Based in Washington DC and Cairo, SYRA Arts is a contemporary art gallery dedicated to presenting Middle Eastern and Iranian artists and designers. Founded by art collectors, Sylvia Van Vliet Ragheb and Randa Fahmy Aboul-Nasr, the gallery presents a dynamic program of exhibitions with an emphasis on fostering long-term relationships with both emerging and established artists. Reaching out to art lovers, collectors as well as institutions around the world, SYRA has expanded its programming by organizing exhibitions in satellite locations around the United States. We believe that by introducing artists' work in different cultural spheres around the globe we can facilitate a process of cultural exchange, thereby raising awareness and understanding between the varied heritages.

**Muse District:** Is a creative space promoting Pakistan's & South Asian inter-cultural dialogue through art, music, literature and other forms of artistic expression. Founded by Nausheen Ilahi, Muse District has brought various art exhibits by Pakistani artists to the US.

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