

Hyperreal

Exhibition March 1st – March 31st, 2018

Press Preview & Opening Reception: Thursday, March 1st, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

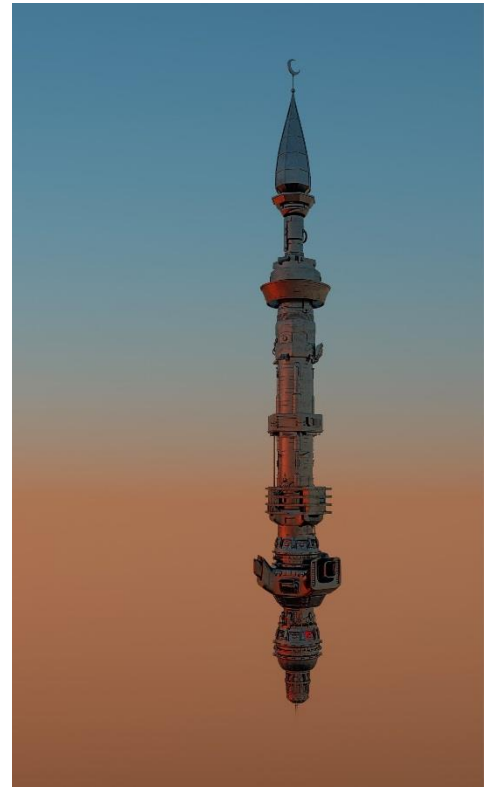
35 Great Jones St., New York NY 10012

Aicon Gallery is pleased to present *Hyperreal*, a group exhibition featuring the work of **Jaishri Abichandani, Saks Afridi, Marcy Chevali, Mariam Ghani, Nitin Mukul, Aakash Nihalani, M. Pravat** and **Salman Toor**. The exhibition looks at the various means through which artists explore realms either beyond or outside of reality, while not abandoning representation for the purely abstract or conceptual. Whether through visual or narrative devices, the artists in this exhibition seek to depict, in widely different ways, scenes that on the surface appear to be derived from recognizable forms and figures; but upon closer inspection reveal themselves to be operating in worlds that either do not, cannot, or should not exist...at least not yet.

Throughout millennia of art history and up until the late 19th century, visual artists strove to create objects and paintings that came ever closer to perfectly representing the forms, figures and stories they wished to present to us in a visual language based on the real observable world around them. However, with the advent of photography, where a simple device could perceivably capture reality more perfectly than any master of the figurative arts, the goalposts of painting and sculpture were moved, and modernism, arguably, was born. Indeed, this turning away from skillful representation of the real to an art that would focus more on conveying emotions, concepts, and ideas, would become the very foundation of modern visual art. Thus came in rapid succession modernity's art movements ranging from impressionism and expressionism through abstraction, conceptual and performance art, and on to the postmodern and even, ironically, photo-realism, to name just a handful. But what about an art that does not shy away from the figurative or representational, but rather uses those very means to realistically depict the unreal?

The concept of "hyperreality" was originally developed by French sociologist Jean Baudrillard who defined it as "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality." In the context of postmodern art, this idea was taken up as a way of visually blending reality and fiction to create images and narratives where neither the real, nor the representation of the real, exists any longer, and one is left viewing something entirely outside the realm of experiential reality; the hyperreal.

Saks Afridi, born in Pakistan but raised in several countries, takes a multi-disciplinary approach in his artwork. Saks's art practice is two-fold: collaborative and personal. His personal work investigates the predicaments and perplexities of the life of an 'Insider Outsider'. This is the practice of achieving a sense of belonging while being out of place, finding happiness in a state of temporary permanence, and re-contextualizing existing historical and cultural narratives with the contemporary. His work *Scout 1*, in this exhibition, marks the beginning of a hugely ambitious multi-disciplinary unfolding project known as the *SpaceMosque Series*.



Saks Afridi., *Scout 1*, 2018, C-print on aluminum, 50 x 30 in.



Aakash Nihalani, *Passage (Orange)*, 2014, Acrylic, flashe, mixed media, canvas, corrugated plastic, wood, and magnets, 30 x 25.5 in.

Brooklyn-based artist **Aakash Nihalani** is best known for his street installations and his ability to playfully transform and manipulate the way we see the very city around us. Using brightly colored tape and conventional shapes, Nihalani transforms everyday streets into fantastic illusionistic environments where walls and sidewalks become visual playthings that reintroduce citizens to their everyday surroundings. Also operating from Brooklyn, **Jaishri Abichandani** has intertwined art and activism throughout her long career. Her work in this exhibition blends imagery from her feminist activist background with her long-standing investigations into terra cotta artifacts from 3500 B.C until the advent of stylization of the female figure (predating the emergence of Goddess Kali in the Hindu pantheon) in India. Through her sculptural and drawing practices, Queens-based artist **Marcy Chevali** creates places of ambiguity, where dualities are identified and explored within space, place and situation. By articulating these moments, her objects generate parallel duplicities, rather than a singularity of meaning. In her work, *Cirrus*, from the current exhibition, she uses flame worked glass as an artifice to create a sense of duality.

Being a first-generation Indian born in America, **Nitin Mukul's** hyphenated-identity plays a crucial role in his collages and paintings. Combining images from a variety of sources, including his own photographs, Mukul reveals threads of his dislocated heritage through his work. His work is a confluence of perceived and imagined realities and landscapes based on the visual world around him, but heightened by the histories and futures which have and will shape our perceptions of that world. In a similar vein, **Mariam Ghani's** haunting dream-like video works feature diverse architectural, natural, and urban environments, which she plumbs to examine the complex histories of both the geographic and cultural landscapes in which they're set. Known for her visually captivating imagery, Ghani's videos create an all-encompassing experience for the viewer, using landscape, sound and the human body to tell a unique story of her filmed sites.

Delhi-based artist **M. Pravat's** works predominantly begin with the examination of architectural forms or plans - some iconic, and some imagined - which are then deconstructed and built up again, in a visual manifestation of the process undergone by our personal memories of environments and events as they shift, blur and break down over time. Brooklyn-based painter **Salman Toor's** works pay homage to Renaissance-era masters but present a unique vision of the complexities and exchanges between South Asian popular culture and the historical traditions of Western idealization. Toor paints intuitively, from memory, embracing the surprise of the transformations he encounters as an image comes to life. His paintings moves seamlessly between abstraction and representation. He uses text and figures to carve out a psychological space or site of fantasy, memory and deconstruction.

Please contact Aicon Gallery (Andrew@Aicongallery.com) for more information.