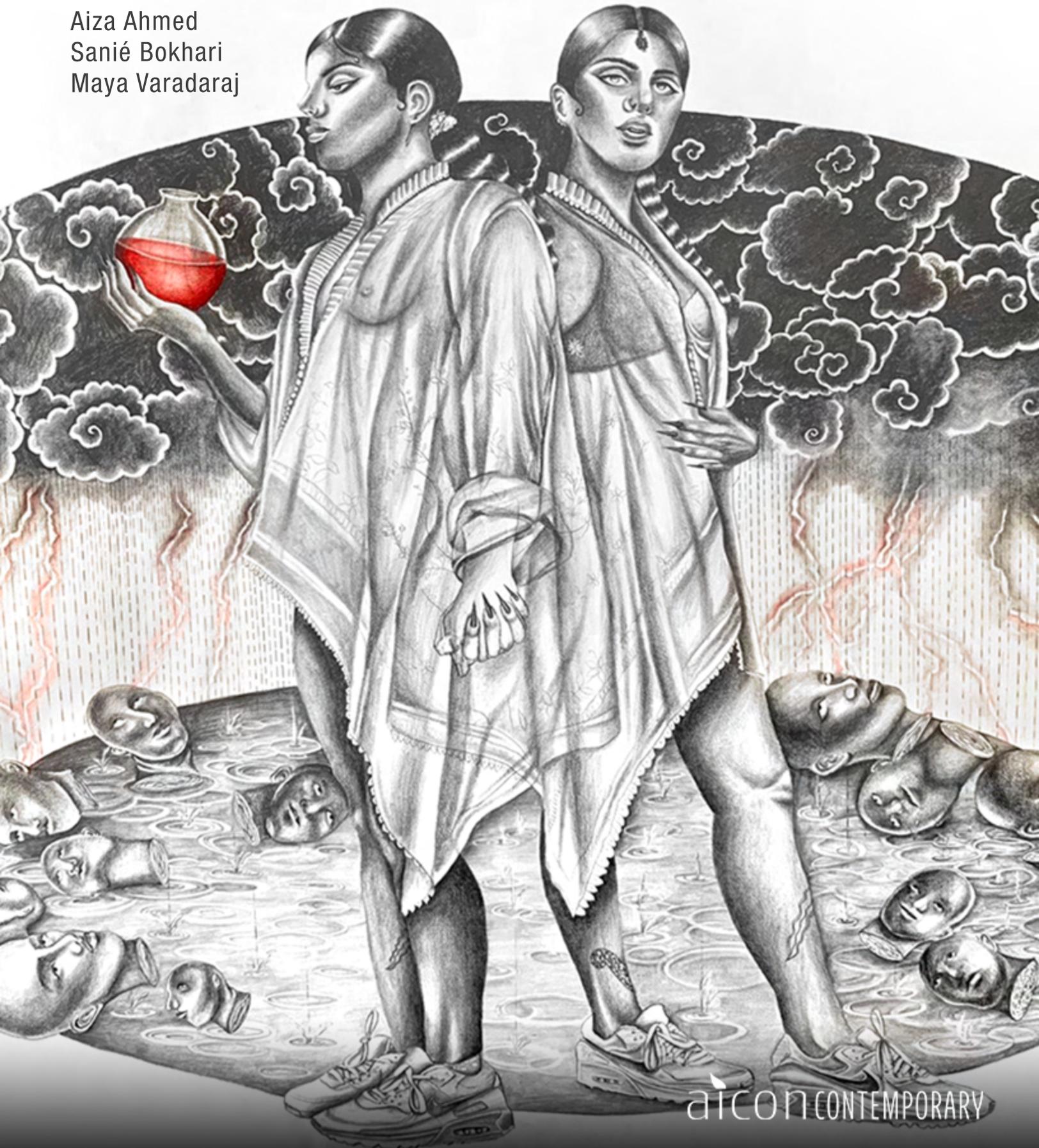


# JUDITH HAS ARRIVED

SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 30, 2021

Aiza Ahmed  
Sanié Bokhari  
Maya Varadaraj



aicon contemporary



## JUDITH HAS ARRIVED

**AIZA AHMED, SANIE BOKHARI, MAYA VARADARAJ**

September 23 - October 30, 2021

Aicon Contemporary proudly presents *Judith Has Arrived*, a group exhibition featuring the work of Aiza Ahmed, Sanié Bokhari, Maya Varadaraj.

The artists in this exhibition dictate their identities and take control of the cultural narratives of their art. *Judith Has Arrived* is inspired by Italian Renaissance painter Artemisia Gentileschi's rendition of Judith slaying Holofernes. Gentileschi inserts herself in this Biblical story by portraying herself as Judith beheading the man threatening her homeland, one of the most profound assertions of feminine identity in all of art history. Ahmed, Bokhari, and Varadaraj reinterpret the role of women amidst patriarchy and challenge what it means to gain agency in the 21st century.

Sanié Bokhari offers direct representations of feminist agency through portraying herself as an idol in her works. The artist reflects on the cultural traditions of her native Pakistan and their societal implications on the perception of women, to which Bokhari responds through depictions of herself gracefully dancing or wielding swords atop severed male heads. Her monumental self-portraits are powerful representations of feminine strength amidst opposition.

Aiza Ahmed examines the class divide within Pakistani culture. Her colorful paintings amalgamate childhood memories and personal experiences navigating opulence and craft in private and public spaces. Ahmed's illusory environments invite elements of magic, humor, and emotion to coalesce.

Maya Varadaraj's collage work incorporates the images of women in calendar posters and advertisements from pre-independent India. Indian women shown in advertisements for Western products have propounded the idea of the liberated Westernized woman - a point of political conflict. In using these images, Varadaraj asks the viewer to consider the subjugation of women for political gain and how we might reclaim these images to take charge of our personal narratives.

The artists in this exhibition draw from their cultural roots, Ahmed and Bokhari reflect on Pakistan and Varadaraj on Southern India. Along with others before them, these artists are making their mark within an art historical canon that for centuries has been overlooked and underrepresented.

*Judith Has Arrived* will be on view in the gallery from September 23 - October 30th and online at [AiconContemporary.com](http://AiconContemporary.com).

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Sanié Bokhari  
Ancestral Mothership (Detail), 2021  
Graphite on paper  
51 x 53 in

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Aiza Ahmed  
Where's The Cake?, 2021  
Oil on canvas  
36 x 36 in

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Maya Jay Varadaraj  
Collage 2, 2021  
Inkjet print collage  
18 x 18 in