

The Male Figure

Faiza Butt (b. 1973)
Anwar Saeed (b. 1955)

Art Dubai
18 – 20 April 2025



Grosvenor Gallery is proud to present 'The Male Figure' at Art Dubai 2025, an exhibition examining the representation of masculinity in contemporary Pakistan through the works of two leading artists, Anwar Saeed and Faiza Butt. Through intimate, thought-provoking works, both artists explore themes of gender, identity, and societal constructs.

Faiza Butt graduated from The National College of Arts, Lahore (1993) and later from the Slade School of Fine Art in London (1999). She is part of one of the most significant generations of artists from Pakistan that include contemporaries such as Imran Qureshi, Aisha Khalid and Rashid Rana.

Of her work for Art Dubai, Faiza comments;

"This diptych draws from the concept of gender and identity, two running themes that are cornerstones to my practice. As we are overexposed to information and remain in a state of hyper-connectivity, in this supposed global village, the biggest questions about our human condition remain unanswered. We witness a polarized world divided on the lines of faith and racial and ethnic identities. As an artist I serve as a social commentator and bear witness to the injustice of our age."

'I've drawn two male portraits, distinct in their spiritual identities. They both display very similar features in their outlooks with head gear and facial hair, however it is clear that they stand at opposing ends of religious identities.'

Practicing in east London, I have witnessed the most vibrant mix of religious communities co-existing without conflict. This balance in existence is a testimony that we are all searching for the same profound answers, no matter what route we take.

My protagonists are positioned against the backdrop of the 'Heavens'. I collect images taken by the Hubble telescope and use that eternal backdrop of 'elements' as a binder or a unifying element for seemingly conflicting identities. I reflect on our collective faith as humans, beyond petty divisions.

'The works are drawn with tiny, fine dots, which is technique I have consistently used in my practice. It's a method that borrows some from the traditional technique of 'Purdhakt' from the Indo-Persian miniature and some from the pixelation of a digital photograph.'

'As these images are derivative of photography, a graphic appeal is maintained. The image somewhere between a technical drawing and the sacred appeal of religious iconography.'

Faiza Butt, March 2025

Faiza Butt's recent exhibitions:

- Venice Biennale (2024)
- Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi (2021)
- Grosvenor Gallery, London (2021)
- Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts (2020)
- New Art Exchange, Nottingham (2019)
- Aicon Gallery, New York (2019)
- Gujral Foundation, New Delhi (2015)

Her work can be found in private and public collections, including the British Museum, London; the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; and the Burger Collection, Hong Kong, amongst others.

In 2025 she will be participating at the *Florence Biennale, Tigers and Dragons* at The Glyn Vybian Museum, Cardiff, and The New Art Exchange in Nottingham.

Exhibited Works:



Work in progress (2025)



Get out of my Dreams 5 (2020)
Ink on polyester film, 63.5 x 84 cm

Anwar Saeed is one of the most prominent painters from Lahore, Pakistan. He graduated from the NCA, Lahore in 1978 and later attended the Royal College of Arts, London (1985).

“Anwar Saeed comes from a generation of Pakistani artists whose student years were marked by the oppressive elements of the 1980s military regime. Since then, he has emerged as a painter and print maker, whose imagery evolves from complex cross-cultural sources. Christian motifs combine with Hindu, Buddhist, Greek mythology to form a personalized language that is at once poetic and compelling.”

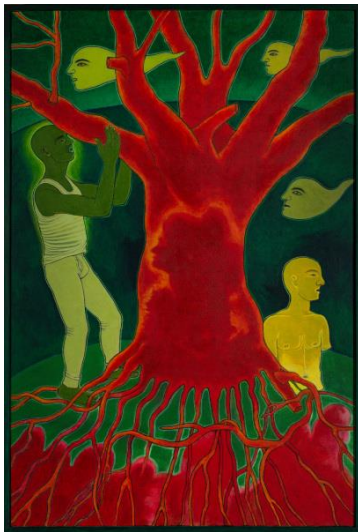
(S. Hashmi, *'The Eye Still Seeks,' Memory Metaphor Mutations: Contemporary Art of India and Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007, p. 26)

A characteristic feature of Saeed's work is the use of the male figure. Saeed uses male figures symbolically to talk about human behavior, while also reflecting on the nature of Pakistani society. Saeed also uses the human body to emphasize different aspects of existence, such as ones' relation with their inner self, as well as their outer realities, encompassing themes such as religion, sexuality and social values. The human body is also used as a vessel to display the conflict between one's personal needs and the boundaries imposed on it by society. A senior artist and a contemporary of Zahoor AI-Akhlaq, he has been an inspirational teacher and voice in Lahore, Pakistan where he still lives and works.

Anwar Saeed's recent museum shows include:

- *MANZAR: Art and Architecture from Pakistan 1940s to Today*, National Museum of Qatar (2024/25)
- *Pop South Asia*, Sharjah Art Foundation and KNMA New Delhi (2022/2023)
- *Lahore Biennale 02*, curated by Hoor Al Qasimi (2020)

Exhibited works:



Evening of the Restless Spirits (2025)
Acrylic on fabric, 91.5 x 61 cm



Wandering Spy Angel (2025)
Acrylic and collage on plywood, 48 x 35 cm

For further details, interviews, or high-resolution images, please contact: art@grosvenorgallery.com

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