

Artist Statement

Growing up in Pakistan and then living and working in various countries, my aspiration to be Kundan, an individual who has opened their heart to draw from the Divine Light, is constantly challenged by my desires, corporeality, longing, ego and displaced identity. In my art practice, my spiritual side contemplates these concerns and distils them through my repeated performances of mark-making, erasure, purification, and seeking of the visible spectrum of light that measures physical and emotional maturity and spiritual growth. This process of purification, when shared through the immersive gaze of the audience, reveals one's essence of love, in which an old identity is relinquished for that of a higher identity that exists within oneself. In this sense, the resulting pearl white and smoked black porcelain roses, porcelain thorns, and self-portrait hand cut on rose petals suggest the tangible and intangible dualities of a balanced identity.

Biography

Abdullah M. I. Syed (b. 1974) is a Pakistani-born contemporary artist living and working between Sydney, Karachi and New York. Trained in diverse disciplines, Syed utilizes a variety of mediums and techniques including sculpture, video installations, drawing, performance and texts to investigate collisions between art, religion, economy and politics. Syed earned a PhD in Art, Media and Design (2015) and a Master of Fine Arts (2009) from University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Syed's work has been featured in ten solo exhibitions and several national and international curated group exhibitions and performance events such Time of Change, ACE Open, Adelaide (2018), I don't want to be there when it happens, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth (2017), Asia Contemporary Art Week (ACAW) Thinking Project, Asia Society Museum, New York (2017); Karachi Biennial, Karachi (2017); Between Structure and Matter: Other Minimal Futures, Aicon Gallery, New York (2016) and Future Archaeology, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney (2015) In 2017, Syed was the recipient of National Association of Visual Arts Australia's prestigious 2017 Carstairs Prize, 2009 Blacktown City Art Drawing Prize and Individual Artists of Oklahoma's 2003 Installation Artist of the Year award.