

RASHEED ARAEEN

Frieze Cork Street
29 June – 15 July



Image: Rasheed Araeen (1975)

From **29 June – 15 July**, Grosvenor Gallery will be exhibiting work by Rasheed Araeen at Frieze Cork Street.

The exhibition is titled **SIXTY-THREE YEARS OF THE FIGURAL** and will feature a curated and focused view of the figure in his practice, from early drawings to political works and performances. Works in the exhibition will largely date from the 1970s and 1980s. We will be screening Rasheed's seminal performance **Paki Bastard (Portrait of the Artist as a Black Person)**, originally staged at Artists for Democracy in 1977.

Simultaneously we will be exhibiting historical work by Araeen at the Grosvenor Gallery on Bury Street as well as his minimalist Constructions.

Other events:

On Monday 5 June, Rasheed will be in discussion with Rana Begum RA and Dr Devika Singh at the Courtauld Gallery to discuss his career and his new book *Islam and Modernism* from 6 – 8 pm.

On Friday 21 July **Rasheed Araeen's Zero to Infinity** will be opening the Tate Modern Turbine Hall, part of the **Uniqlo Tate Play Series**. The largest iteration of Araeen's seminal work, it is a large scale interactive public work involving 400 cubes.

About the Artist's political work:

"Araeen found himself increasingly sidelined by the artworld establishment. Rejection coupled with experiences of racial prejudice led to his politicisation during the 1970s. Works from this period addressing racism and colonialism include the biting four-panel collage *For Oluwale* (1971–1973), dedicated to a Nigerian immigrant who was found drowned following systematic police harassment. [In another work] photographs show officers protecting the National Front in *When they meet* (1973), while the slideshow '*Paki Bastard*' (*Portrait of the Artist as a Black Person*) (1977/2016) documents Araeen's stirring 1977 performance where he was gagged, ostensibly attacked and left for dead. But without the artist's presence, the power of the original is barely approached.

Araeen's convictions regarding cultural imperialism led him in 1978 to found *Black Phoenix* as an outlet for his critical writings. Relunched in 1987 as *Third Text*, the journal was soon leading the debate on postcolonialism and art. Indeed, the scope of his activities is intriguing, pivoting on a conspicuous vacillation between aesthetic sensibilities and political consciousness. Occasionally the two meld elegantly, as in the lesser-known *Cruciform* series made between 1985 and 1996. These slick, nine-panel grids – incorporating photographs, Arabic texts and green monochromes – interrogate the economic, military and cultural hegemony of the West and its relationship with the Middle East". *Anything goes in Post Modernity* (1996).

David Trigg, Art Review, review of Araeen's Touring Retrospective in 2018

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Biography:

Rasheed Araeen is an artist, writer and the Founding Editor of *Third Text*. As an artist, he began his journey in Pakistan in 1953, whilst also studying civil engineering. After doing some important works in Karachi, seminal to his subsequent pursuits, he came to the UK in 1964 and has since lived in London.

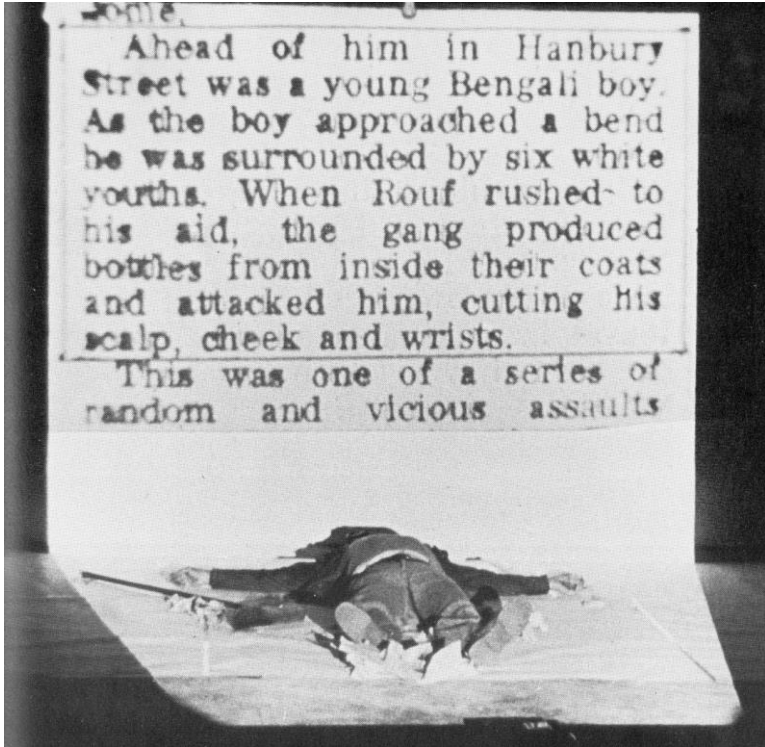
In the 1960s and 1970s, he became active in various groups supporting liberation struggles, democracy and human rights, which led him to writing '*Black Manifesto*' (1975-76); and then to numerous publications: *Black Phoenix* (1978-79), *Third Text* (1987-2011), and *Third Text Asia* (2008-09). His present concern is with the Muslim world, for the promotion of its past achievements and what it can now do to be part of the modern world according to its own world view, values and vision.

Perhaps best known for his Geometric structures, first produced in the early 1960s, in which vertical and horizontal lines are held together by a network of diagonals (like the bracing struts used to strengthen latticed engineering constructions). These sculptures play on the links between Eastern and Western thought and the frameworks of social institutions and aesthetics. His most famous iteration of this concept is his interactive work *Zero to Infinity* (1964 – ongoing), which through audience participation, creates an infinite and ever-changing sculpture.

Islam and Modernism:

“Can art from the Muslim world be authentically modern and also express the spirit of Islam? The answer to this is yes. But this answer has little significance unless it is underpinned theoretically and legitimised institutionally; and the Muslim world does not yet have the ability to do this. The prevailing theories of modern art are Eurocentric within which there is no place of Islam. And although there is now tremendous creativity in the Muslim world, with its art festivals and biennales, and the success of its artist worldwide, it does not have its own art institutions, with the ability to recognise, theoretically and historically, what its artists do. All this is still dependent on the West. The task for the Muslim world now is therefore to establish its own institutions, according to its own view of things and values, to develop and promote scholarship, involving theories of art based on its own understanding of history, which would not only liberate it from its subservience to the West but also enable its modern artists to think and create freely and independently. This work of Rasheed Araeen is an attempt towards achieving these objectives.”

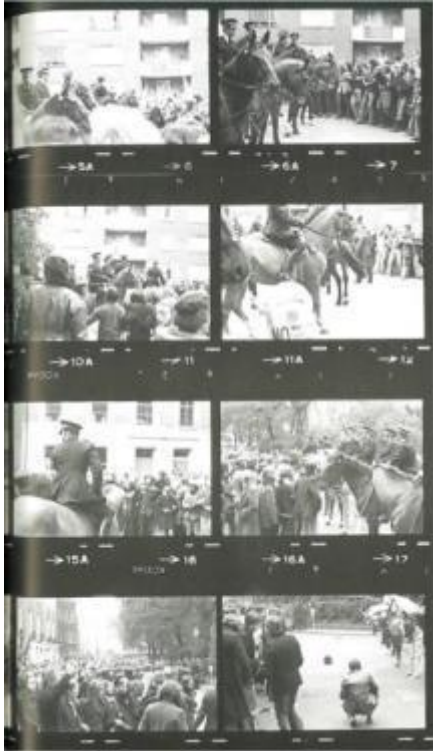
- Rasheed Araeen, 2022



Stills from: Rasheed Araeen, *Paki Bastard (Portrait of the Artist as a Black Person)*, 1977, live event with slides and sound, Artists for Democracy, London



Rasheed Araeen, *Discs in the River (Chakras IV, Paris, La Seine)*, 1970
16 polystyrene discs and 16 colour photographs



Rasheed Araeen, *When they Meet*, 1973



Rasheed Araeen, *The Golden Series*, 1974, collage on board

High resolution images on request

All images Courtesy Rasheed Araeen and Grosvenor Gallery

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Gallery opening times:

Weekdays: 10am – 5.30pm

Saturday: 12 – 4pm (By appointment)

Sunday: Closed