

mumbaimutai

Muhanned Cader
8 January 2010 - 22 January 2010

I.

"The forms in my work are usually always abstracted from close observation of things around me"

Muhanned Cader is an observer of certain things not all things. What he edits out of his work is as relevant as what remains. The affinity of one seemingly unrelated thing to another thing, such as a Sinhalese beetle nut-cracker and a brigadier's helmet or the marrying of a horizontal landscape within a curvilinear frame is germane to Cader's images and the processes behind their creation. From afar the pairings and juxtapositions often appear beguiling, often non-sensical. Up close things are more wittingly crafted. When things are connected they are never more than details; the beak of a bird but never its entire body; the partial reflection of a setting sun upon the water's edge or the hilt of a sword but never with its blade. The detail is a carefully excavated fragment. Each fragment is a piece of information removed or cut free from its mooring. The specificity of what thing came from where doesn't concern Cader other than the fact everything arises from observation of his physical surroundings as well as from the assorted printed matter that passes through his hands. In a related manner, Cader does not use abstraction to reduce content into form to capture an essential meaning or message. What matters, more tellingly, is his deployment of abstraction to relinquish a form from its original reference, just far enough so that it is neither this nor that. Cader's drawings take us back, as it were, to an imagined moment before form and meaning are aligned into perfect registration when ideograms and hieroglyphs described the world through the associative power of the image.

II.

"My drawing practice has been concerned with the non-linguistic representation of objects and ideas themselves"

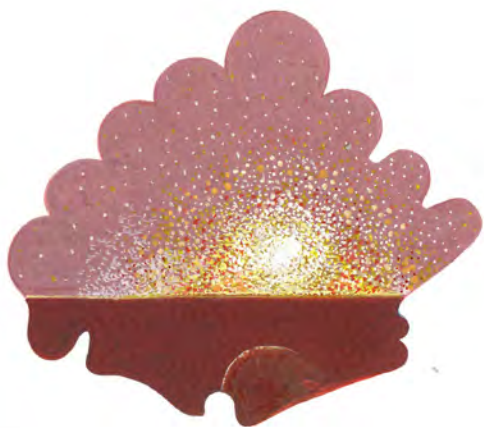
Like all writing, comprehension rests on being able to identify the appearance of characters, which then gives rise to their meaning or legibility. In *Figures of Thought* (2009) the legibility of the characters is deliberately held in abeyance. Their suspension of meaning is part of a conceptual conceit that lies behind Cader's creation of an ongoing series of pictographic scripts, which when broken down in their constituents parts reveal a jigsaw of visual shapes culled from a range of printed matter. Covering a diverse list of bibliographic references, each drawing is formed by meticulously copying fragments of imagery, selected by the artist across a range of books and comics. Taking a detail of an existing illustration, such as the outline of a building and joining it with a random, detail of a rooster Cader creates a new family of font-like forms that take on the legibility of writing but are ultimately no more than the sum of their parts, holding the promise of coherence but laying bear to nothing more than a visual silhouette of calligraphic-like shapes.

III.

"Whilst I try not to be obviously political, my work seeks to problematise the inherent politics of image making"

Along with fragments, Cader deploys stencil cut-outs and collage to create his drawings and paintings. Preferring the landscape over the figure, his scenic vistas are notable for being non-rectangular. The landscape appears instead within a cloud or a bubble like form. The effect is reminiscent of the way the world might be naturally framed as a reflected image through a puddle of water or across the surface of a tank or reservoir. Through the course of a day these naturally occurring mirrors reflect the imperceptible changes in the landscape over time. By contrast an image, whether in the form of a drawing or a painting, is necessarily limited to a singular view. One that is fixed and stationary. The conceptual reckonings of such a predicament are what interest Cader. "This is why I remove the rectangle frame that surrounds the landscape in my drawings. It is similar to asking what surrounds our understanding or do we only ever know part of the truth? This for me is true politics, where one never sees the real or whole picture". Though we quest to grasp life in its totality, Cader's work underlines that we are by the same token limited to seeing it in fragments, through certain angles, perspectives and narratives. A series of cut-out forms containing delicately rendered light-filled spaces, wittingly titled *Casting Light* (2009), ponders such a proposition yet further. To what extent can an artwork voice opinion? Is an image ultimately better equipped to cast doubt rather than light on subject? While Cader's work is not obviously political he is a political artist with a capital 'A' to pose such questions.

Sharmini Pereira



1. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



2. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



3. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



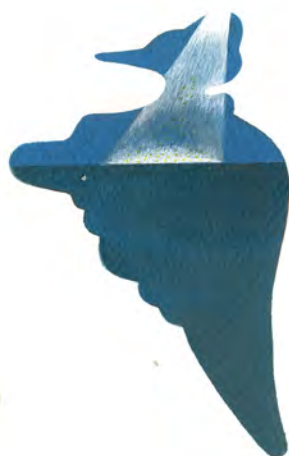
4. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



5. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



6. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



7. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



8. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



9. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



10. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



11. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



12. CASTING LIGHT
2009
ACRYLIC ON PAPER
16.5" X 20"



13. FIGURES OF THOUGHT
TRIPTYCH
ACRYLIC INK ON PAPER
16.5" x 42"



14. FIGURES OF THOUGHT
TRIPTYCH
ACRYLIC INK ON PAPER
16.5" x 42"



15. FIGURES OF THOUGHT
TRIPTYCH
ACRYLIC INK ON PAPER
16.5" x 42"

MUHANNED CADER

1966, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Education

1990-94 Bachelor of Fine Arts (BA), School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA.

1989-90 Kendall College of Art & Design, Michigan, USA.

Solo Exhibitions

2007 Drawing Sculpture (Nov) Barefoot Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

2004 Landscapes (May) Zahoor-ul-Ikhlaq Gallery, National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, Pakistan.

2004 Exhibition of Drawings (Jan) Paradise Gallery Colombo, Sri Lanka.

2003 Birth of Un-Cool (Dec) Vibhavi Gallery Colombo, Sri Lanka.

2002 79 days in Lahore (Apr) Zahoor-ul-Ikhlaq Gallery, National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, Pakistan.

2001 In Black & White (Nov) Barefoot Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1999 Nightscapes (Oct) Barefoot Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1998 Exhibition of Paintings & Sculpture (Oct) Heritage Art Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1997 Untitled Drawings & Paintings (Mar) Heritage Art Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1996 Untitled Drawings & Paintings (Mar) Sri Lanka Foundation Institute, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1995 Untitled Drawings (Oct) Barefoot Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1994 Untitled Paintings (Jan) Rodrigo Gallery, Chicago, USA.

Selected Group Exhibitions

2009 One Year Drawing Project (May-Aug) University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto, Canada.

2008 Drawn from Life: Drawing Form (Jul) Green Cardamom Gallery, London, UK.

2008 Drawn from Life: Drawing Process (Jun) Green Cardamom Gallery, London, UK.

2008 Recent Developments in Contemporary Sri Lankan Painting (May-Jun) Gallery Art Korner in coll. with Barefoot Gallery, Bezuidenhoutseweg 407, The Hague, NL.

2006 Belief: Singapore Biennale (Sep) SB2006, Singapore.

2005 Curry side of the Moon (Feb) Barefoot Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1999 No Groups Show (Sep) Vibhavi Academy of Fine Arts (VAFA) Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1998 International Artists Camp (Oct) Colombo National Art Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1998 In-dependence Group-Show (Feb) Lionel Wendt Art Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1997 KOJH International Artists Workshop, New Delhi, India.

1996 Student & Faculty (Sep) Vibhavi Academy of Fine Arts (VAFA) Gallery, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1994 Untitled (Mar) Below Nine Gallery, Chicago, USA.

1993 Faculty & Student of Colour Show (Dec) School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA.

1992 Untitled Group-Show (Sep 92-Jan 93) Gallery X, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA.

Upcoming Exhibitions

2009 One-Year Drawing Project; an Exhibition of Drawings (Aug) Devi Foundation, New Delhi, India.

2009 Drawn from Life: Drawing Space (Oct) Green Cardamom Gallery, London, UK.

2009 Art Asia Pacific Triennial One-Year Drawing Project; an Exhibition of Drawings (Dec), Brisbane, Australia.