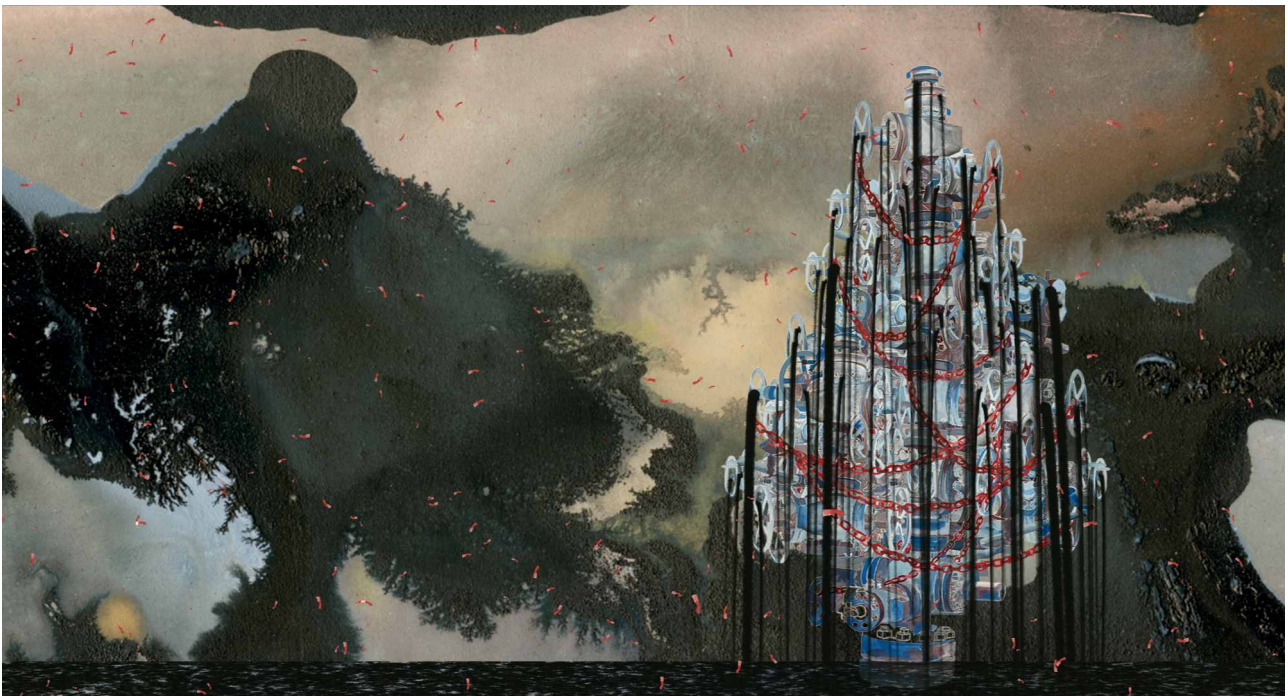


**Nikolaj Kunsthal, Copenhagen Contemporary Art Centre  
June 14 - July 31 2014**

# **”SHAHZIA SIKANDER: PARALLAX”**



*Shahzia Sikander: Parallax, 2013, detail from video installation*

**THE EXHIBITION IS OPEN FROM 12 PM, SATURDAY  
JUNE 14 2014**

The new exhibition this summer at the Upper Gallery of Nikolaj Kunsthal presents the opportunity to meet the internationally known and renowned Pakistani artist Shahzia Sikander and her – literally speaking – living innovation of the Indo-Persian miniature painting.

Shahzia Sikander is known for transforming the traditional small paper format of the miniature into detailed, living, and magnificent digitally animated stories. Just like the miniature itself, Sikander’s works overflow with colour, details, and meanings.

The exhibition presents her most recent video installation *Parallax* (2013), previously shown at the Sharjah and Istanbul Biennales, the video work *The Last Post* (2010), as well as a selection of works on paper.

In 2011, Shahzia Sikander went to the Arab emirate Sharjah to be a part of the local biennale. On her car trips around the country, she met the desert and not least the coastline at Hormuz – the historical hot spot from which one fifth of the world's oil is shipped from the Persian Gulf. This meeting has resulted in the 15 metres long, cinema-sized video installation, *Parallax*.

In *Parallax*, hundreds of Shahzia Sikander's miniature drawings and gouaches (paintings made with a special watercolour technique) are transformed into living animations, isolating and copying her own images, millions of them, until they become an immensely detailed and overwhelming work. The perspective changes from details resembling close-ups of soil, sand, water, and blood, to a kind of bird's-eye view of this strategic area, only the next moment to change into something which looks like flocks of thousands of birds, then flowing black oil, then swarms of people... Put together, *Parallax* becomes a complex and beautiful story of power and control.

The other major work of the exhibition, *The Last Post*, is a story about the powerful British East India Company. This company held sway as one of the world's most powerful corporations from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and for another 250 years, mainly in what today is India and Pakistan, and had immense influence on global trade and politics.

*"Shahzia Sikander breaks with all known formats with her beautiful paintings and drawings which she transforms into large and spectacular animated films, interweaving culture, history, politics, and religion. It is rare to see video works that are able to compete with the scope of the cinema screen and its impressive sound – but Sikander can, and we are very thrilled this summer to be able to offer the Copenhagen audience this experience",* says Andreas Brøgger, curator at Nikolaj Kunsthal.

The exhibition is arranged in co-operation with the Bildmuseet Umeå Universitet in Sweden where it was presented in the spring of 2014.

## **ABOUT SHAHZIA SIKANDER**

Shahzia Sikander was born in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1969 and was educated at the National College of Arts Lahore in 1991 and at Rhode Island School of Design, USA, in 1995.

Shahzia Sikander's practice takes as its starting point the Indo-Persian miniature painting, but she challenges and breaks with its normally very strict idiom as far as scale, symbolism, and choice of media are concerned. She employs elements of the miniature painting in animations, video works, installations, and murals.

Her works have given rise to a meteoric international career from the mid- and late 90's, and her efforts have promoted national as well as international interest in Pakistani miniature artists.

Shahzia Sikander was the first artist from the Miniature Painting Department of the Lahore Art Academy to challenge the technical and aesthetic boundaries of this medium. She was educated under Bashir Ahmed who re-introduced the miniature painting as a major subject at the Academy, and she became the first student also to be a teacher, alongside Bashir Ahmed.

Major solo exhibitions include:

*Parallax*, Bildmuseet Umeå Universitet, Sweden (2014); *Transformations*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2010); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (2008); Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2007); Miami Art Museum (2005); San Diego Museum of Art (2004); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2000); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. (1999).

Major group exhibitions include:

National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul (2014); The Istanbul Biennale 2013; The Sharjah Biennale (2013); The Venice Biennale (2011); Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Philadelphia Museum of Art (2010); and San Francisco MoMA.

Prizes:

Shahzia Sikander was awarded *The Medal of Art* by the then American Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in 2012. From 2006-2011, she received the prestigious *Genius Award* from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. She served as a jury member of *The Aga Khan Award for Architecture* in 2013, and in 2006, she was appointed a *Young Global Leader* at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Shahzia Sikander lives and works in New York, USA. Find out more on [www.shahziasikander.com](http://www.shahziasikander.com)

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