

IKON

Ikon Gallery
1 Oozells Square, Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2HS
0121 248 0708 / www.ikon-gallery.org
Open Tuesday-Sunday & Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am-5pm / free entry
Registered charity no. 528892

Haroon Mirza

reality is somehow what we expect it to be

30 November 2018 – 24 February 2019



Haroon Mirza, *The National Pavilion of Then and Now*, 2011. Installation view at Venice Biennale 2011. Courtesy hrm199 and Lisson Gallery. Architectural design by GLUE A + D. Photography by Kiki Triantafyllou.

Ikon presents the most comprehensive exhibition of work by Haroon Mirza (b. 1977, London) in the UK to date, running 30 November 2018 – 24 February 2019. The survey includes past works and new, previously unseen pieces, filling Ikon's exhibition spaces with moving imagery, sculptural installation and electronic sound. Involving audio-visual sampling, sometimes through collaboration with other artists, Mirza's practice is characterised by its sheer physical impact and emotive resonance. His understanding of human perception - what and how we see and hear - is combined with countless possible meanings, testing the limits of what we can experience, and what we think we know.

Mirza's early works often mix old-fashioned furniture and electrical equipment, including radios, TVs and gramophones, synthesised with looping film footage and sound to arrive at automated orchestral results. In his work *Taka Tak* (2008), Mirza features a video of a Pakistani street food chef chopping ingredients with two spatulas - like drumsticks, at the heart of a high energy composition - while flashing fairy lights, a turntable and a spinning Sufi statuette provide kinetic accompaniment. Taking inspiration from daily life, this work, and the artist's wider fascination with music, stems from personal experience: "I was brought up Muslim" Mirza explains, "in certain regimes [in Islam] music is sort of frowned upon and related to things like infidelity and other terrible things if you listen to or engage with music."

For the artist sound (and music and noise) is a medium for challenging dogma – not only religiously but also artistically. Subtly questioning the faith required to view art as self-contained and transcendent - art for art's sake - Mirza's output also explores the validity of scientific knowledge, hallucinogenic experience and prehistoric understandings. Examining these belief models, and their inherent complexities, Mirza questions our desire and relentless pursuit for an ultimate truth.

Proposing a minimal approach to installation, circles – loops and cycles - are ubiquitous in Mirza's recent work. Sometimes symbolic, and often inherent in the materials and objects he uses, on the whole they undermine ideas of straightforward narratives, and resolution, and so give rise to a more ambient aesthetic. This was epitomised in his work *The National Pavilion of Then and Now* at the 2011 Venice Biennale, an architectural structure that referred to its context whilst being abstract in the extreme. Lined with grey sound-insulating pyramidal foam, *The National Pavilion of Then and Now* is a chamber in which neither light nor sound is reflected. At its centre, suspended from the ceiling is a halo-like circle of white LED lights which get increasingly bright, accompanied by a crescendo of an electronic buzzing sound.

Other works similarly explore the possibility of the visual and the acoustic as one singular aesthetic form. *Chamber for Horwitz: Sonakinatography Transcriptions in Surround Sound* (2015) takes inspiration from LA-based artist Channa Horwitz's (1932 - 2013) systematic colour schemes on graph paper, translating sound into configurations. Comprised of a ring of LEDs, speakers and pyramidal foam panels, *Chamber for Horwitz* immerses us in Mirza's composition of light and sound. This is an installation that the audience occupies, with their preconceptions and other particularities, and so the experience is not (and cannot be) a direct translation of the artist's gesture. Mirza explains: "I don't wish to make any demands on someone present with the work. If one spends time they will hear and see more. If one thinks and delves then ideas, concepts, methodology, points of reference and narrative will hopefully emerge but that's not something I can or wish to control."

The exhibition is supported by Ampersand, The Arts Club, Lisson Gallery and the Ikon Investment Fund.

For more information, high-res images and to request interviews please contact Milly Carter Hepplewhite or Lisa Hopf on 020 8969 3959 or email milly@pelhamcommunications.com or lisa@pelhamcommunications.com

Social Media Handles:

Instagram, Twitter and Facebook:
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Links

www.ikon-gallery.org
www.hrm199.com

Note to Editors:

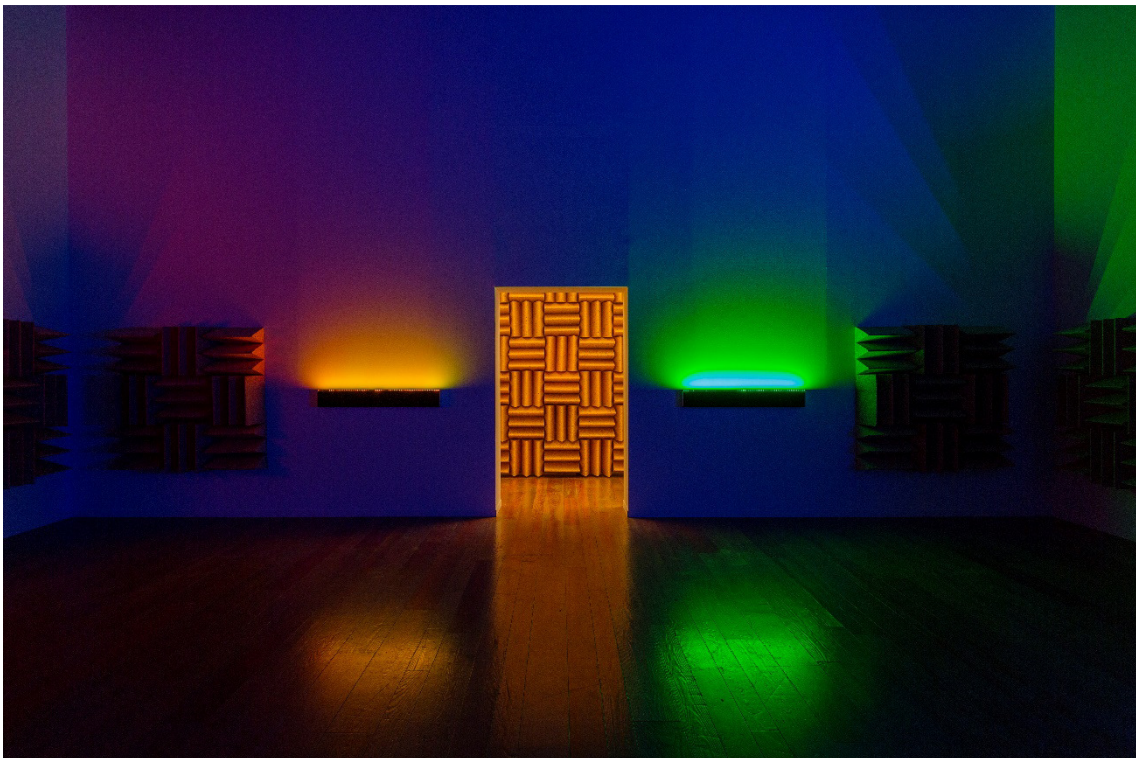
1. Ikon exhibition opening: Friday 30 November, 6-8pm.
2. Born in London in 1977, Haroon Mirza studied at Goldsmiths, University of London and Chelsea College of Art and Design. He has exhibited widely in the UK and abroad and was awarded the Silver Lion for a Promising Young Artist at the 2011 Venice Biennale. Selected solo exhibitions include at: Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, TX, USA (2018), Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, UK (2017), Nam June Paik Art Center, Seoul, South Korea (2015) and Museum Tinguely, Basel, Switzerland (2015).
3. Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue situated in central Birmingham. Established in 1964 by a group of artists, Ikon is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. The gallery programme features artists from around the world and a variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation. Ikon's off-site programme develops dynamic relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery. Projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, Ikon's Learning Team aims to build dynamic relationships with audiences, enabling visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art.
www.ikon-gallery.org
4. Ikon is open Tuesday – Sunday and Bank Holiday Mondays, 11am - 5pm. Admission is free. Ikon Gallery is supported using public funding from Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. For the latest news and events follow [@ikongallery](#) on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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Haroon Mirza, *Taka Tak*, 2008. Courtesy British Council Collection, Lisson Gallery and hrm199.



Haroon Mirza, *A Chamber for Horowitz (detail)*, 2015. Installation view at Museum Tinguely, Basel, courtesy hrm199 and Museum Tinguely. Photography by Bettina Matthiessen.