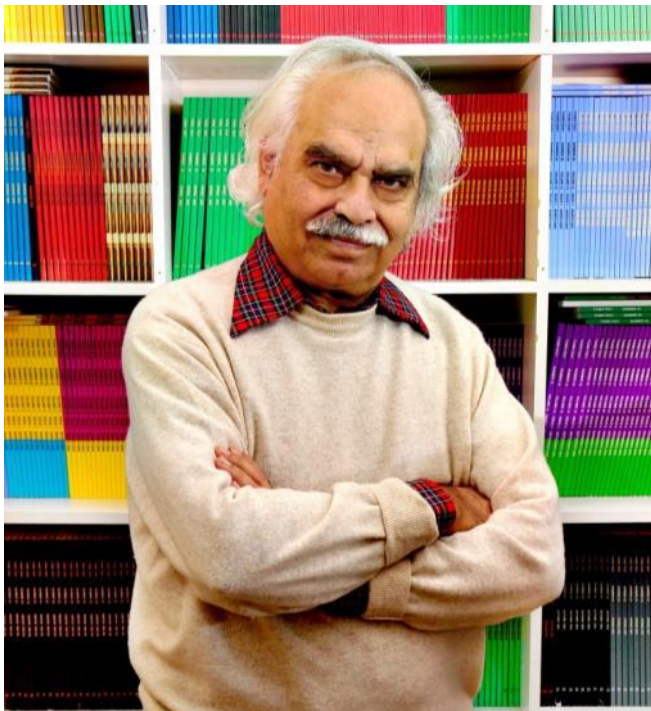


Rasheed Araeen: A Retrospective

02.12.2017 – 25.03.2018

On the 2nd of December 2017 the Van Abbemuseum opens *Rasheed Araeen: A Retrospective*, the first comprehensive survey of the artist. The exhibition, spanning 60 years of work, presents a body of work that has had a profound influence on generations of artists, writers and thinkers. The exhibition is structured across five chapters: from his early experiments in painting in Karachi in the 1950s and early 60s, his pioneering minimalist sculptures carried out after his arrival in London in 1964, key pieces from the 70s and 80s following Araeen's political awakening, his nine panel cruciform works from the 80s and 90s and a selection of his new geometric paintings and wall structures. Alongside this, material relating to Araeen's writing, editorial and curatorial projects will be presented as part of an expanded artistic practice that in its scope and ambition continues to challenge the formal, ideological and political assumptions of Eurocentric modernism.

The opening of *Rasheed Araeen: A Retrospective* on the 2nd of December will include an iteration of *Chakras*, first carried out by the artist in 1969, on the water next to the museum. Hoor Al Qasimi, President and Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, will be the guest speaker.



Rasheed Araeen. Photo Socrates Mitsios

1. In the Beginning (1955 - 64)

The exhibition opens with a gallery dedicated to Araeen's paintings in Karachi in the late 1950s and early 60s. With no formal training as an artist these early works reveal Araeen's pivotal experiments with abstraction (*Boats Towards Abstraction*, 1958 - 62 and the *Hyderabad series*, 1962 - 63), his interest in geometry and natural forces such as water and fire, as well as his initial forays into sculpture with the twisted bicycle wheels of *My First Sculpture* (1959).

2. Geometry and Symmetry (1964 - 70)

The second section of the exhibition examines Araeen's unprecedented contribution to minimalism. Arriving in

Britain in 1964 Araeen embarked on a series of pioneering works, including his Structures and lattice pieces, which drew on his training as an engineer and his interest in geometry and symmetry, which has remained a consistent feature throughout his practice. On display will be, amongst others *Sculpture No. 1* and *Sculpture No. 3* (both 1965-2017), the lattice works *3 Y + 3B* (1968-69) and *BoO* (1969) and the structure *Nine* (1967), Araeen's first interactive piece where viewers could re-position the painted wooden cubes in ever-changing configurations. Documentation from his performances *Chakras* (1969) and *Triangles* (1970) as well as the conceptual project *Disco-Sailing* (1970-73) will conclude this section.

3. Becoming Political (1971 - 84)

The central galleries reveal a body of work from the 1970s and 80s that confront the politics of Imperial Britain, embodied within the British art establishment from which Araeen remained excluded. Collage, writing, performance and photography deployed in key works such as *For Oluwale* (1971 - 75), *Paki Bastard: Portrait of an Artist as a Black Person* (1977) and *Preliminary Notes Towards a Black Manifesto* (1975 - 77) show an artist increasingly placing himself, his politics, subjectivity and self-representation at the centre of his practice, whilst abiding by the formal rigour that has consistently defined Araeen's practice. The installation *Holes in the Earth* (1975), not exhibited since it was originally produced, and *Look Mama Macho* (1984), not shown since it was exhibited in *Magiciens de La Terre* (Paris, 1989), will also be on display from this period.

4. In Pursuit of Significant Language (1984 - 97)

The penultimate section includes a series of Araeen's Cruciform works from the 1980s and 90s. Their piercing nine panels combine green monochromes with photomontage in works such as *Green Painting 1* (1985), and *White Stallion* (1991), referencing high modernist abstraction and contemporary wars in the Gulf and Middle

East. This embodies the violent cultural, ideological and military clash between east and imperial west.

5. Homecoming (Recent work)

The final room of the exhibition includes a version of Araeen's *Zero to Infinity* (1968-2017) consisting of sixty four cubes for visitors to rearrange. Surrounding this is a series of geometric paintings from his recent *Homecoming* and *Opus Series* (2014-ongoing) as well as two new lattice reliefs.



Rasheed Araeen, *Opus F 3*, 2014, courtesy the artist

The Reading Room

In the central gallery of the exhibition the installation *The Reading Room* (2014-17) is on show. It is comprised of copies of the journal *Third Text* that he founded and edited from 1987-2012, displayed for visitors to read on top of his lattice structures.

Curator

Nick Aikens.

Publication

A monograph, edited by Nick Aikens and published by JRP Ringier in collaboration with Van Abbemuseum, MAMCO, BALTIC and Garage includes new essays by Aikens, Kate Fowle, Courtney Martin, Michael Newman, Gene Ray, Dominic Rhartz, John Roberts, Marcus du Sautoy, Zoe Sutherland and Kaelen Wilson-Goldie and an extensive conversation between Aikens and Araeen.

Tour

Following the Van Abbemuseum *Rasheed Araeen: A Retrospective* will travel to MAMCO, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead and Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow.

Support

The exhibition is supported by Mondriaan Fund and Stichting Promotors Van Abbemuseum. The publication is generously supported by Aicon Gallery, New York, Grosvenor Gallery, London and Rossi Rossi, Hong Kong.



For the editors:

For further information and photographs see: www.vanabbemuseum.nl/en/press

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Van Abbemuseum

The Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven is one of the leading museums for contemporary art in Europe. The museum has an intensive international collection of more than 2,700 works of art, including key works by Lissitzky, Picasso, Kokoschka, Chagall, Beuys, McCarthy, Daniëls and Körmeling. Questions in the field of art and society are raised by the museum in an experimental way. An open attitude, hospitality and the exchange of information are important for the Van Abbemuseum and we encourage both ourselves and the visitors to think about different subjects, for example about the role of the collection as a cultural "memory" or about the museum as a public space. As a result of international cooperation and exchange, the Van Abbemuseum is also a place where cultural cross-pollination takes place. It is a source of wonder, inspiration and imagination.

Van Abbemuseum,
Bilderdijklaan 10, Eindhoven.
www.vanabbemuseum.nl

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday 11.00 – 17.00. 1st Thursday of the month 11.00 - 21.00.

Admission

Adults: € 12,00 / Groups of 10 or more: € 9,00 / Young people 13-18 years old, students, CJP holders, Eindhoven city pass (stadspas) holders: € 6,00/ Children under 13 years of age, Museum card: free / Family pass (2 adults and max. of 3 children until 18 years): € 24,00. Tuesday 15.00 – 17.00: free.