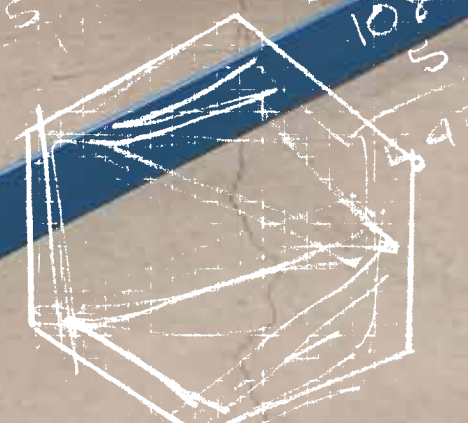
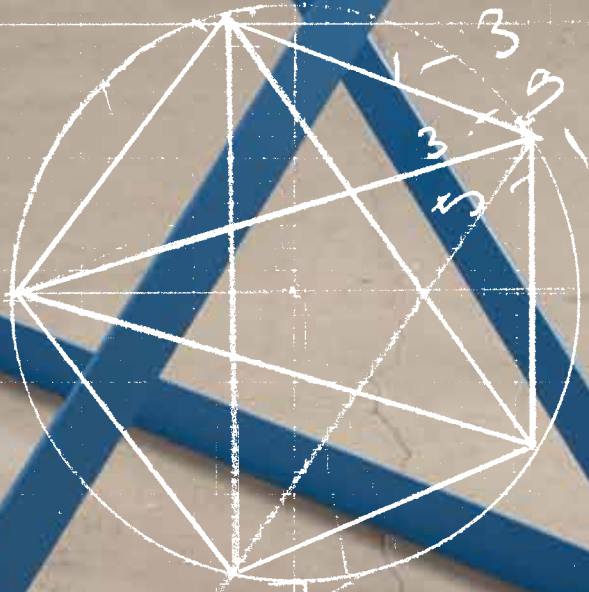


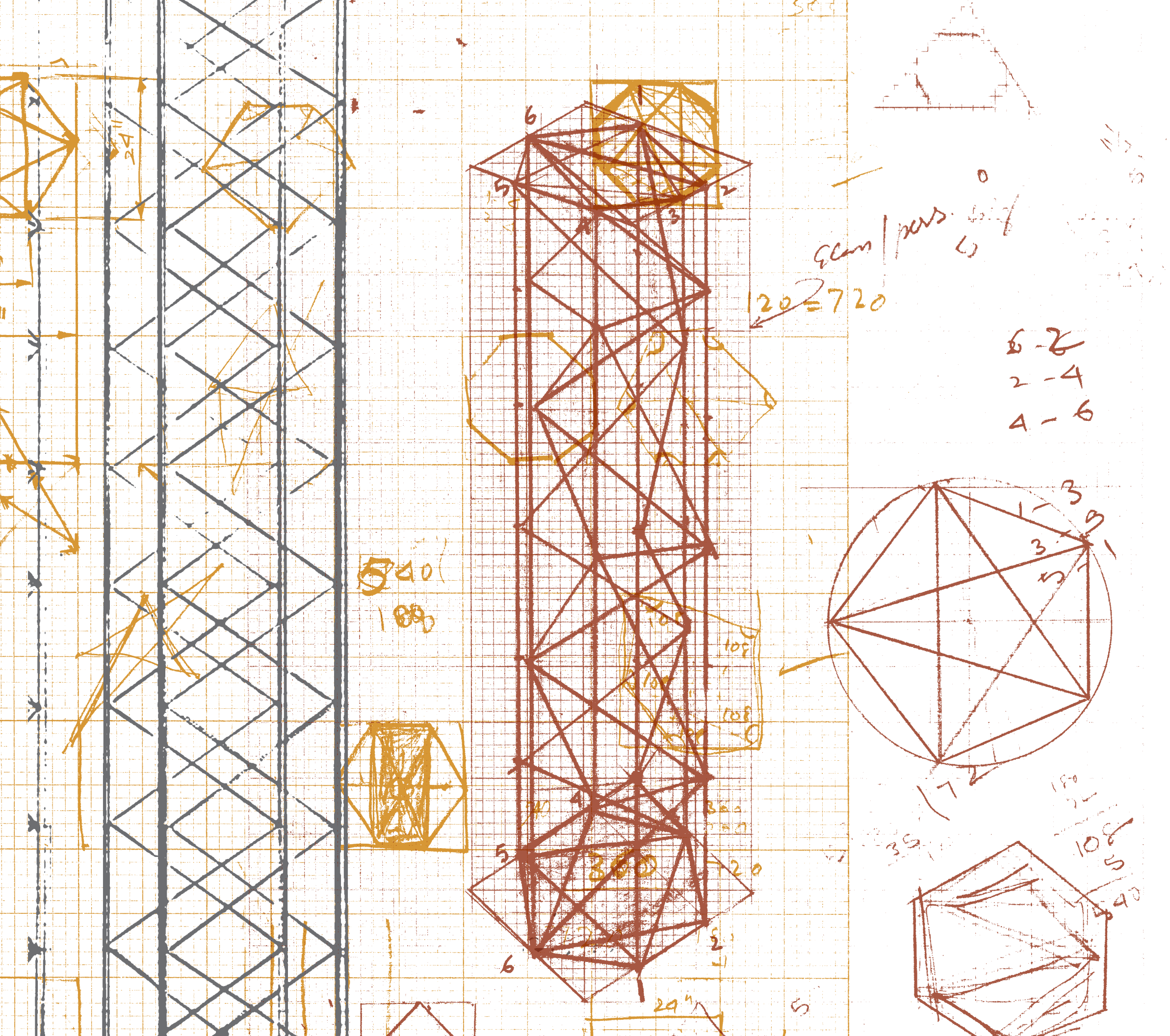
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RASHEED ARAEEN
MINIMALISM THEN AND NOW

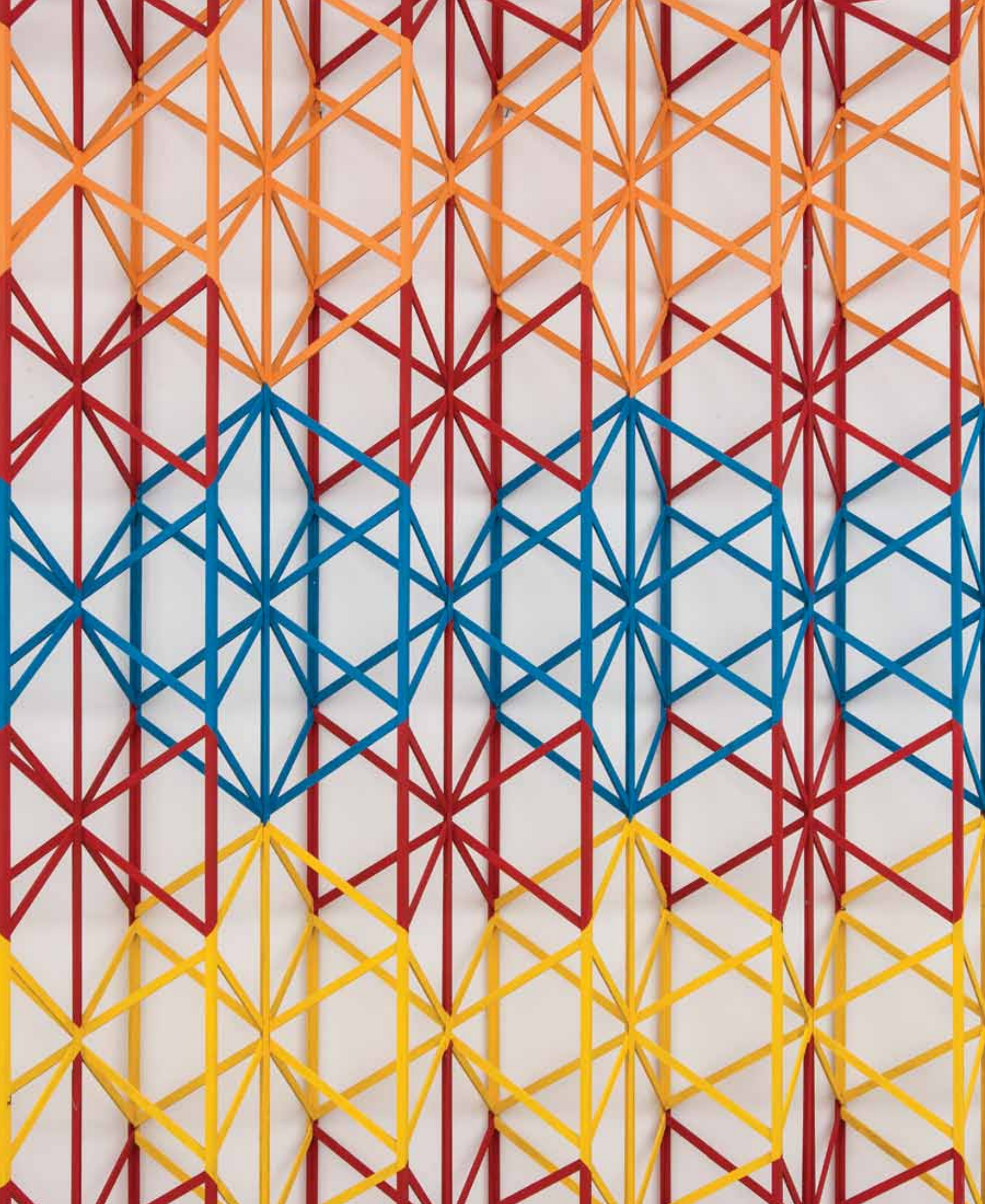
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MINIMALISM THEN AND NOW RASHEED ARAEEN

AICON GALLERY, NEW YORK
MAY 2015

Cover: *Minimalism Then and Now* (Installation View), 2015, Aicon Gallery, New York;
Left: *Original Drawings for Sculpture* (Details), 1965-68



Foreword

Aicon Gallery New York is proud to announce *Rasheed Araeen – Minimalism Then and Now*, the first major survey exhibition of the artist's work in New York City. A pioneering artist and voice for alternative and Non-Western interpretations of Modern art in the 1960s and 70s, Araeen's work in this exhibition spans his oeuvre from his beginnings in Pakistan and London to the present day, and deals with aesthetic and contextual issues not often examined from within the typical cannon of Minimalist and Conceptual art. The exhibition ranges from Araeen's earliest and most iconic sculptures of the 1960s, to his pioneering kinetic, interactive and performance-based works, through to a group of increasingly complex relief constructions from his current practice.

Writing on the occasion of Araeen's retrospective at Birmingham's Ikon Gallery in 1988, editor and curator Patricia Bickers argued: "The formal language Araeen began to develop during the Sixties owed much to his critical awareness of Modernist discourse about abstraction, particularly the theories of Mondrian and the Constructivists. Such ideas were then still current in England." Araeen himself pinpointed the influence of Anthony Caro on his developing practice. "I have often talked about my encounter with Anthony Caro's works after I arrived in London in 1964 and its influence on what I myself subsequently arrived at in 1965, which turned out to be a form of sculpture that later became known as Minimalism." For Araeen, it was not so much the forms of Caro's artistry that were interesting but his use of engineering material such as steel girders which, as Araeen recalls, "had the appearance of having been picked up from a discarded heap of demolished engineering works." At the time, Araeen was working as a civil engineering assistant in London, producing drawings of industrial structures. The two influences of Caro and his day-job came together with the drawing for *Sculpture No. 1*, conceived in December 1965, which detailed four steel girders symmetrically placed next to each other. Conceived in the same year, the drawing for *Sculpture No. 2* again showed painted steel girders, this time arranged in four stacked layers.

However, Araeen was keen to move away from what he saw as an ongoing traditional approach to the relationship of work to its surroundings, seen in the work of London's New Generation sculptors and others. Instead, he was keen to explore a more non-hierarchical relationship between the work, the viewer and the work's surroundings. His solution was what he termed his 'structures'—works made in open modular form that theoretically could be re-positioned by the viewer. Moreover, Araeen introduced a lattice structure into the oeuvre of Minimalism, a visual language that had come independently to Araeen at the same time as it was taking root in New York; although, in Araeen's case, it was linked back to his background in structural engineering. Art critic Jean Fisher noted the key differences between Araeen's articulation of Minimalism and that of the New Yorkers: "There are, however, important distinctions to be made between the Minimalist cube and Araeen's Structures, which to my mind resides in the difference between an instrumental, abstract-logical regulation of the world and an organic one."

This acknowledgement of the spectator as being a constitutive element in the work resulted in a further development of Araeen's work. He opined: "My interest in participation emerged from the nature of my own work in 1968. While manipulating four small cubes to see how many different arrangements I could make out of them, I realized the potential in them of infinite movement and transformation." Works such as *Char Yar* (1968) contain this potential of the spectator unmaking and re-making the work through them. However, Araeen himself was moving away from making objects for viewing in galleries towards more participatory and collaborative work, which became increasingly informed by his growing political activism. In 1969, Araeen began working on *Chakras* and its subsequent counterpart *Triangles*, which were his first participatory works outside the gallery space. On the 21st of February 1970, Araeen and members of the public threw sixteen two-foot diameter discs into London's St. Katherine's Dock. This quantity

of sixteen, selected to reference a four-by-four configuration of a Minimalist structure, would immediately be undone by the action of being thrown into water.

Araeen went on to have solo shows at institutional spaces such as the Ikon Gallery (1987), the South London Gallery (1994) and the Serpentine Gallery (1996). In all, mainstream critical discussion of the early part of his career up until the early 1970s was less prevalent, until 2007 when the Tate London purchased and displayed his works from the late 1960s. In 2010, Aicon Gallery, London hosted the first major retrospective of Araeen's work in over a decade, paving the way for a new string of exhibitions and critical attention. In 2014, Araeen's work was a prominent feature in the exhibition *Other Primary Structures* at the Jewish Museum in New York, a long-overdue exploration of Minimalism outside its art-historical canonically Western context. In that same year, a major exhibition hosted by the Sharjah Art Foundation emphasized that the hiatus in critical and institutional responses to Araeen's works had finally passed. A variety of reasons contributed to that hiatus. Araeen's own activist-publisher activities setting up the periodicals *Black Phoenix* and *Third Text*, his involvement in the debates around 'Black Art' and his curating of exhibitions such as *The Essential Black Art* and *The Other Story* meant that the critical and curatorial focus on his artistry was irregular at best. More crucial however, was confusion amongst curators and art historians as to how to account for the appearance of Minimalist sculpture in Britain not directly influenced by the work of contemporaneous New York Minimalists. It has now been over fifty years since Araeen produced *My First Sculpture*, and with the belated institutional recognition his work is now receiving, it seems critical to bring this large survey of his works to New York in order to reconsider the various and overlapping accounts and artistic journeys that can be described as Minimalism.

Rasheed Araeen

by Iftikhar Dadi



Springtime in Euston Square Gardens (Performance Photograph), 1970, London



Springtime in Euston Square Gardens, 1970 (2015), Wood, paint and photographic prints on paper, Photos: 18 x 18 in. (Each), Wood Cubes: 18 x 18 x 18 in. (Each)



Springtime in Euston Square Gardens (Performance Photograph), 1970, London

After his extraordinary, decades-long commitment to the intellectual development and institutional equality in the global art world for the larger cause of postcolonial modern and contemporary art, Rasheed Araeen is now primarily focused on his own studio and artistic practice. During the last few years, he has revisited motifs from his previous works in new ways—Minimalism in particular—and has also forged ahead in new directions such as creating the series of paintings *Homecoming* (2014).¹ What is distinctive to both concerns is an engagement with geometry as an aesthetic practice and as a philosophical investigation, a trajectory that continues to gather intellectual momentum in his recent practice.

Born in Karachi in 1935 and based in London since 1964, Rasheed Araeen has been a pioneer of Minimalism in sculpture, and is distinctive in many ways, not least because his formalism forges another vector into the exploration of quandaries of the self in the modern and contemporary era. Araeen studied civil engineering in Karachi, and upon moving to London worked initially as a civil engineer but continued to develop his artistic ideas, inspired particularly by the sculptures of Anthony Caro.² However, Araeen instinctively realized that Caro’s work retained a language of centrality and hierarchy.³ Based on his civil engineering training, Araeen developed a series of lattice and truss structures in the mid-1960s, a conceptual approach to modularity, industrial fabrication, and phenomenology that corresponds with the rise of Minimalism in the United States

at the same time, and seen here in works such as *Three Cheers for Rodchenko* and *Chaar Neelay Heeray* (*Four Blue Diamonds*). Araeen was also, however, becoming deeply interested in seeing the work of art not as a finished object, but as a collective process, and developed projects and proposals for creating modular structures that would be continually rearranged by participants, creating a dynamic and processual work that continually unfolded, as is evident here in *Springtime in Euston Square Gardens*. Works from both approaches are thus revisited in the present exhibition, as is the evidence of his performance of *Chakras* (1969–70) in which the artist and his friends would throw large flat disks of equal size into a body of water. The subsequent movement of the disks in relation to each other, and to their surroundings, apostrophized values of becoming, movement, and equality, as exemplified by the work *Triangles* in this exhibition. These formalist and participatory works by Araeen need to be situated in an era of decolonization that held the promise of a world no longer being dominated by hierarchies, and in broad accordance with the aims of youth and social movements during the sixties.⁴

The question of “Islamic art” and Araeen’s relation to it with reference to his geometric aesthetic has been a complex one during the last few decades. Initially, Araeen’s work was received in the UK as simply exemplifying his unreflective practice of being a Muslim artist. “You see, this kind of work could have been conceived only by a Muslim. I cannot imagine any European doing this work,”

a critic observed in the late 1960s. This burden of representation was faced not only by Araeen, but by all modern artists of non-Western background, who were expected to conform to their own tradition. All “oriental” artists were to authentically demonstrate their “oriental” credentials, while African artists were required to be primitivist and naïve.

Araeen has long resisted this framing. A compelling reason for his refusal in situating his work in the context of Islamic art is undoubtedly because the latter was formulated as a *discipline* of study only during the age of colonialism, but in terms that denied its practitioners a capacity for thinking and reflection. Islamic art, considered to be essentially non-projective and two dimensional, was opposed to European art that was perspectival and which was considered to be far superior as *art*, of course. But there was also a strange reversal of value in theorizing craft during the nineteenth century, when British and European thinkers and policy makers deemed the design and pattern of oriental crafts to be superior in their aesthetic principles to British products. However, Arindam Dutta has argued that this was a back-handed complement at best, as this motivation to value Oriental craft aesthetics stemmed from a desire to improve the design and surface of the industrially manufactured commodity in Britain in the context of the unfolding Industrial Revolution. Islamic art therefore became discernable as a specific aesthetic category only during the nineteenth century, and was seen to be produced largely by *artisans*, rather than by *artists*.

NOTES

¹Amra Ali, ed., Rasheed Araeen: *Homecoming* (Karachi: VM Art Gallery, 2014). ²Richard Dyer, “Rasheed Araeen in Conversation,” *Wasafiri* 23, No. 1 (March 2008): 22. ³Dyer, “Rasheed Araeen in Conversation,” 24; Guy Brett, “Introduction.” In Rasheed Araeen, *Making Myself Visible* (London: Kala Press, 1984), 8–9. ⁴Araeen, *Making Myself Visible*, 43–54 and 64–65. ⁵Jules Bourgoïn, “Introduction” in Prisse d’Avennes, *The Decorative Arts of Arabia*. Quoted in Arindam Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty: Design in the Age of its Global Reproducibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 85. ⁶Dutta, *Bureaucracy of Beauty*, 84.

This is evident for example from a representative observation made in 1873: “The application of these [geometric] principles essentially constitutes what we mean by the ‘line’ in Arabic art. Now this application is entirely subordinate to the skill of the artisan and in no way supposes reasoned, scientific knowledge of geometry. In fact, we should not imagine that the Orientals ... had a well-defined theory on which to base their richly varied intention...”⁵ Situating these conceptions with the philosophical formulations of Descartes and Kant regarding vision and the capacities of cognition, Dutta observes that the nineteenth century European view held that “Arab art cannot see perspective. Its depthless vision, attributed to religious interdictions against naturalistic imitation, appears as an anthropological instantiation of a prior stage of the synthetic *cogito*.”⁶ The subjectivity of the Oriental creator thus remains arrested on an ahistorical and flattened register whose analogue is the timeless and non-projective surface of the arabesque pattern. This Eurocentric framing of Islamic art relegated the Oriental artisan to a position of subalternity, and at best, to the unreflective reproduction of an unchanging tradition. Its questionable yet influential legacy continued to characterize twentieth century discussions of Islamic art.

It is therefore not surprising that Araeen has been wary in associating his practice in terms of such formulations of Islamic art. Referring to his technical training as an engineer and his interest in transnational modernism, he has earlier noted, “If there is a connection with Islamic art, in terms of a similitude, it only makes the work more complex. How about my experience of the modern, technological culture, and my intellectual endeavor to transform it into a significant representation?”⁷ Instead, Araeen and other modern and contemporary artists of postcolonial background have sought to claim all the resources of modernity and modernism for their own artistic development. Modernism is itself a kind of global aesthetic, which developed by a refusal of European realist and perspectival painting traditions, and the search for aesthetic inspiration from outside the Western world, as I have argued elsewhere.⁸ It therefore charted a new universe of aesthetic forms and processes to which modern artists from across the world felt drawn to, and which they sought to inhabit as equal participants in a universal endeavor. The development of Araeen’s Minimalism is multifaceted and must be situated also via his engineering background, in which his grid-like forms in three dimensions provided an analogue for the process of formation of a new world, in which equivalent elements would provide a type of building blocks for expression, and whose interpellation was oriented towards a new universal subjectivity.

Strikingly, Araeen’s recent thinking and practice is engaged anew with the question of geometry and Islamic art, not via the prior framing of Islamic art



Chakras, 1969–70, Wood, paint and photographic prints on paper, Dimensions variable



Chakras (Performance Photograph), 1969–70, Saint Katharine Docks, London



RRYOYBB, 1971 (2015), Wood and paint, 73 x 114 x 6 in.

outlined above, but precisely in opposite terms, now as a process of reflective and critical investigation. This is possible also because emerging scholarship is finally beginning to map the philosophical and theoretical stakes of the development of geometry and physical sciences in “Islamic” culture. To briefly summarize, during the Abbasid era (750–1258 CE), philosophers, mathematicians, scientists, writers, and theologians formed circles of intense activity and debate. A massive project by the Abbasid caliphs that commissioned translations from Hellenistic and Hellenic philosophers into Arabic, led also to the development of what is now understood to be “Islamic” philosophy. Mathematics, optics, geometry, astronomy and other pure and physical sciences were also developed. However, just as Islamic art is a catachrestic term (as I have argued elsewhere),⁹ so is Islamic philosophy. In other words, calling this philosophy “Islamic” is a misnomer, an awkward label that doesn’t quite characterize it. Nor can it be simply termed “Arab,” as it was contributed to not only by Arabs. Rather, its key texts are in Arabic as well as in Persian.¹⁰ Much of this philosophy—developed in dialogue with earlier Greek thought—is not necessarily “Islamic” in a theological sense either. Rather, it privileges reason over revelation: indeed, the tension between these ideas became a subject of debate and contestation that lasted over centuries, and animated critical intellectual developments in the classical Islamic world and beyond.¹¹ This forms a kind of “tradition” for Araeen’s new thinking, not one from which he appropriates fixed historical forms and

motifs, but rather, the manner in which this historical process constituted the very spirit of inquiry, debate, and contestation on conceptions of the self and the world around us.

We can now place Araeen’s evolving relationship with Minimalism along two axes, the first being the axis of constructivist modernism identified above, in which Araeen engages with structural and aesthetic forms of modernity and modernism, and many aspects of which have been explored by other scholars.¹² Here, I focus on the role of color and diagonality in works such as *Rang Baranga II*, *Pehli Si Muhabbat*, and *RRYOYBB*. Despite their structural truss-like form, the bright chromatic palette in these works creates a sense of levity and optimism that might otherwise have been subdued if their color were confined to industrial hues. The sense of dematerialization is also produced by Araeen’s innovative use of the diagonal as a stabilizing element, which makes the structure lighter and less heavy than otherwise. Beyond its formal significance, the diagonal also evokes as an aesthetic passage beyond rigid conformity to the rectangular grid. This sense of the levity of constructive possibility, and the potential of short-circuiting regimented norms by traversing the diagonal, are important evocations for mobilizing the imagination of artists and thinkers, especially of postcolonial background.¹³

The second axis of reference is Araeen’s renewed engagement with the philosophical and critical potential of “Islamic” geometry and philosophy. As noted above, the European formulation of Islamic art confined it as an instantiation

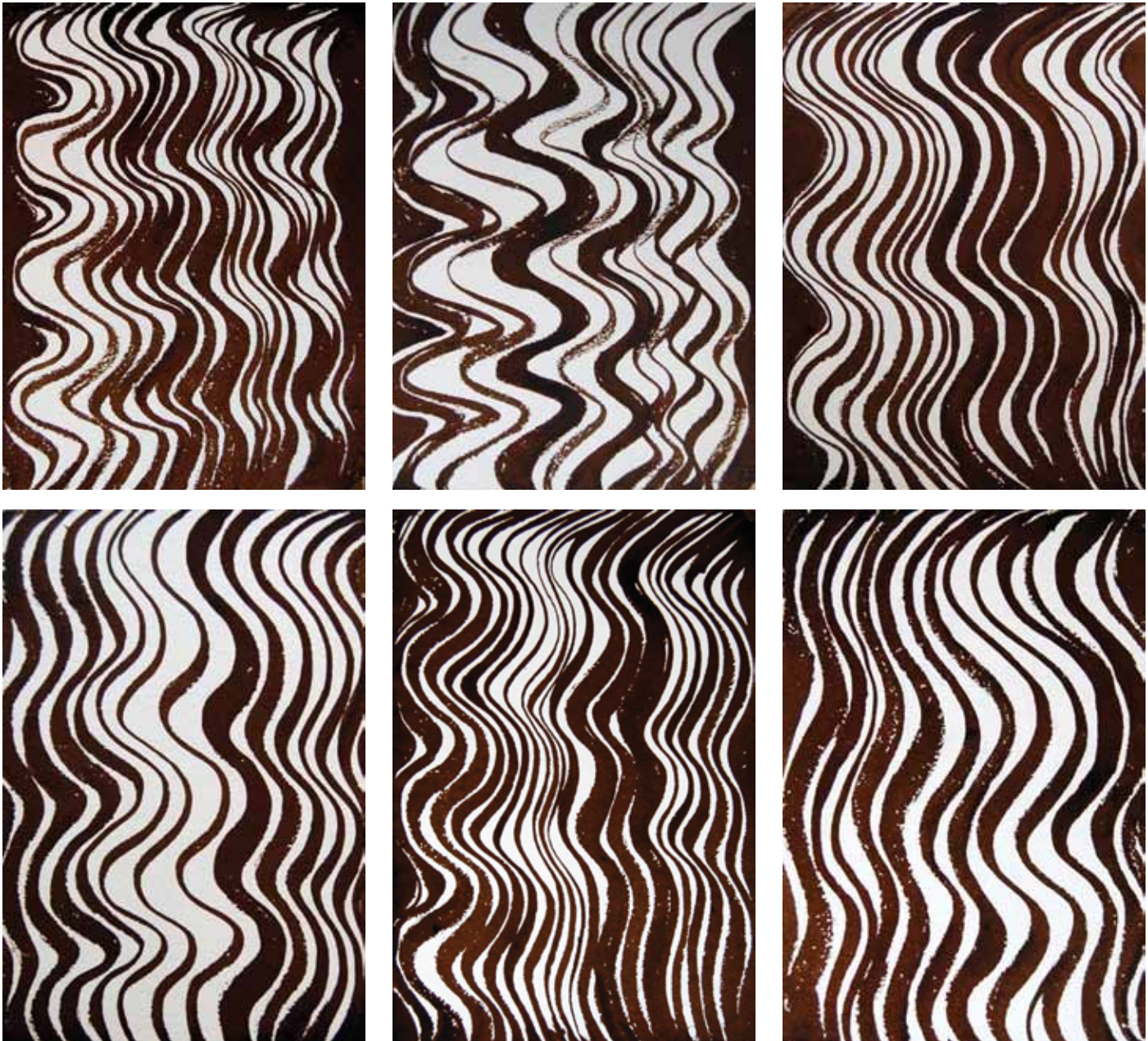
of an unreflective practice which could be derived from rules and schemas that were non-projective and flat. But Araeen’s engagement with geometry has been resolutely sculptural, bodily, and phenomenological since the mid-60s, and thus had already moved beyond the confines of two dimensionality. Even where the truss and lattice forms can be described in theory by rule-based formulations, their experience in the gallery necessarily entails encountering them dynamically as one change bodily location, experiencing shifts of perception necessitated by focusing on how different planes of the structural elements interact with each other, and project inward and outward based on their chromatic contrast and their dimensional emplacement. One cannot help but reflect on Araeen’s precocious choice of his first mature artistic medium, constructivist sculpture, which not only imaginatively engaged his civil engineering expertise and his interest in modernism, but also confronted the stereotypical and reductive formulation of Islamic art for its alleged two dimensionality and stasis. Here, we find ourselves at yet another juncture where Rasheed Araeen has, and continues to be, a trailblazing artist and thinker.

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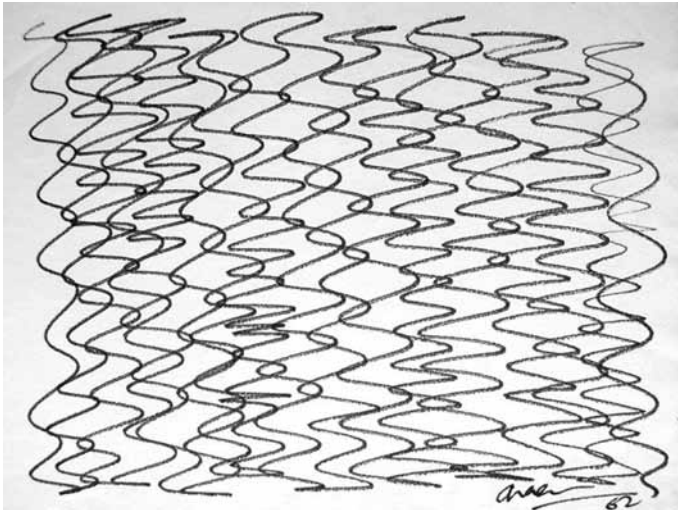
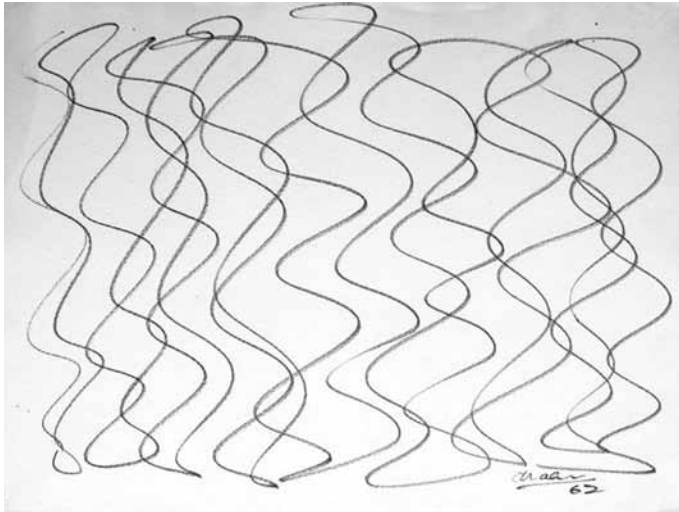
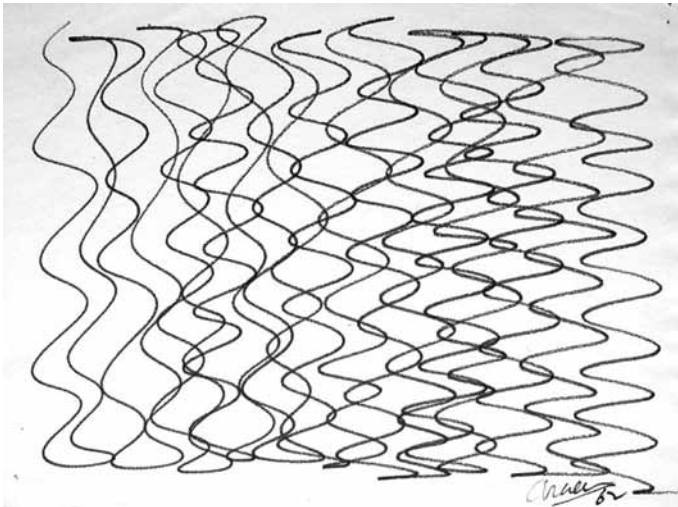
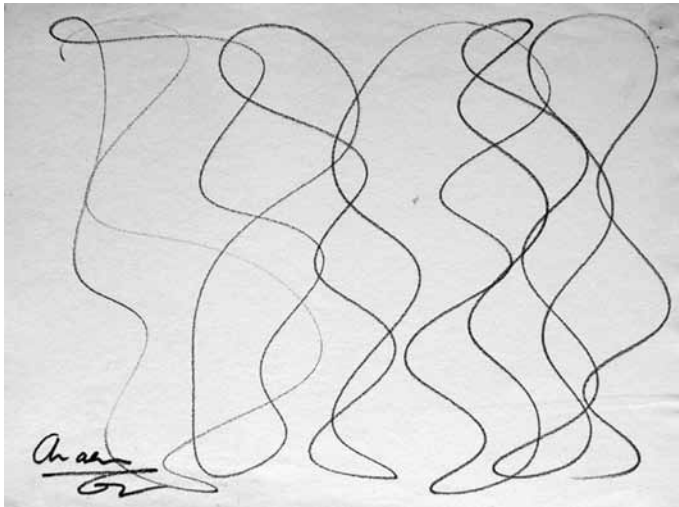
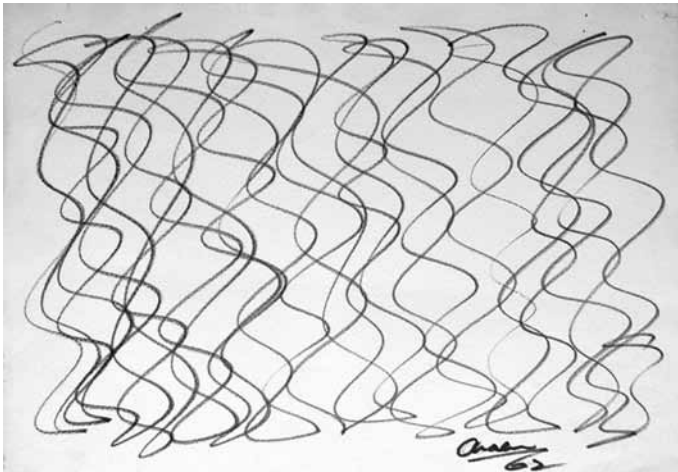
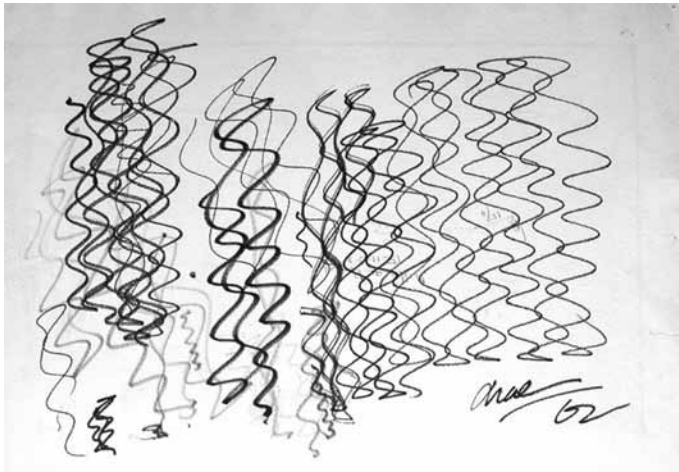
⁷ Araeen, “How I Discovered My Oriental Soul in the Wilderness of the West,” *Third Text 18* (Spring 1992): 95. ⁸ Iftikhar Dadi, “Introduction,” in *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010). ⁹ Dadi, “Introduction,” in *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*. ¹⁰ It needs to be stressed that in comparison with the Umayyad caliphate (661–750 CE), the Abbasid caliphate was far more multicultural and where non-Arabs played defining roles. ¹¹ A standard account is Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 3rd edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). Also see Peter Adamson and Richard Taylor, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). On the transmission of “Islamic” philosophy and science to the West, see for example, De Lacy O’Leary’s pioneering book, *How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul) first published in 1948; and George Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011), an updated account of the spread of scientific knowledge from the Islamic world to Europe. Also see Hans Belting, *Florence and Baghdad: Renaissance Art and Arab Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011). ¹² See especially the essays by Patricia Bickers, Courtney J Martin, and Paul Overy in *The Triumph of Icarus: Life and Art of Rasheed Araeen*. Ed. Jean Fisher (Karachi: Millennium Media, 2014). ¹³ Frantz Fanon has vividly analyzed the psychology of dependency in colonial subjects in his writings such as *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

Drawing Series A

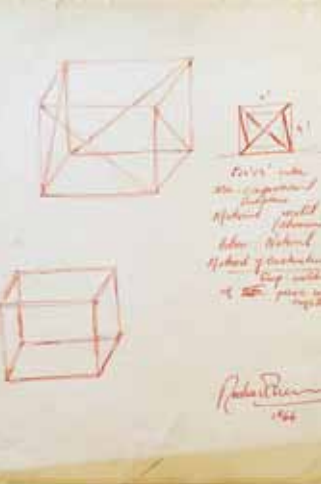
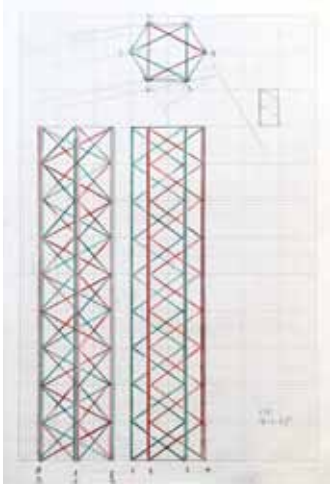
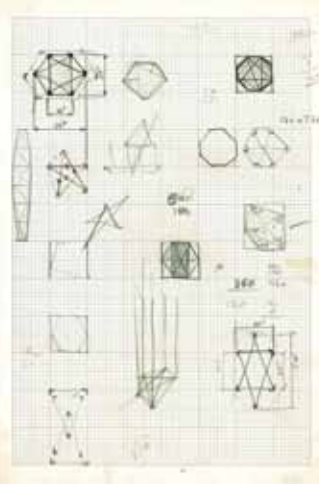
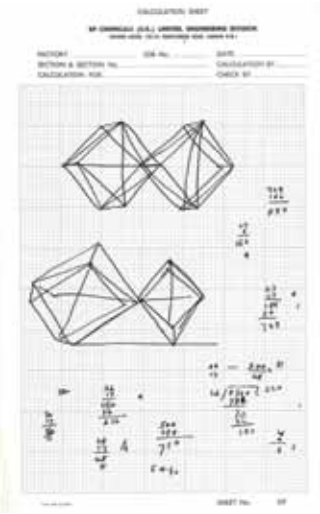
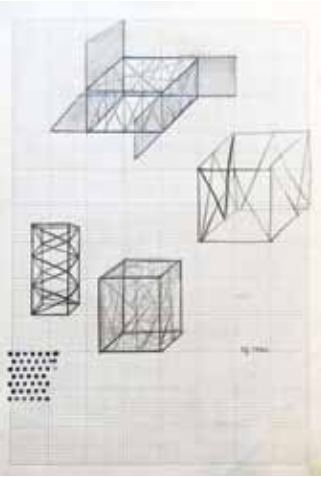
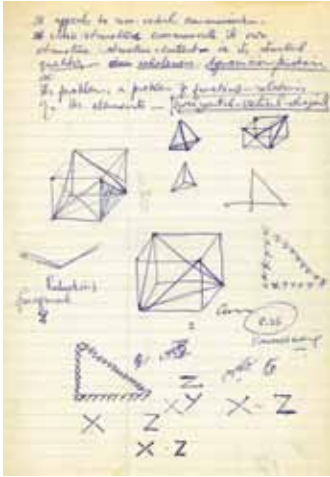
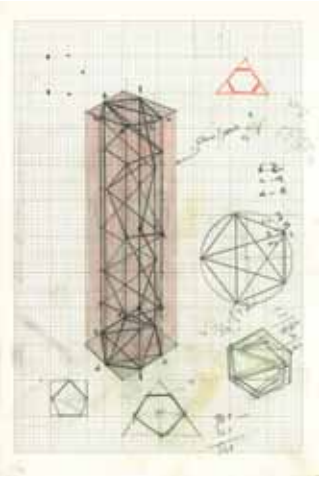
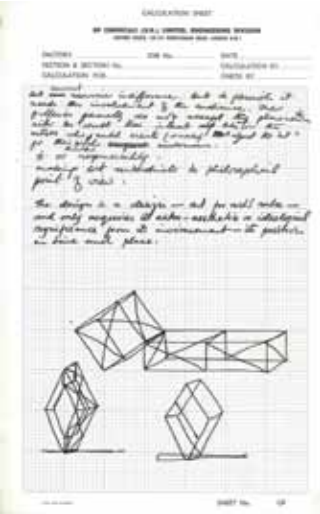
Trained as a civil engineer during the 1950s, Rasheed Araeen’s early drawings seem to have been born from both his extensive background in preparing engineering sketches, as well as his desire to invest simple abstract lines and forms with a sense of movement, which would later become a hallmark setting his sculpture apart from his minimalist contemporaries. Although his ‘Original Drawings for Sculptures’ do not correspond directly to particular sculptural works in the sense of a blueprint or schematic drawing, they remain historical documents of an essential process through which Araeen determined what he hoped to achieve through sculpture. Concepts such as disrupting the minimalist cube with diagonals to add a sense of visual movement or the proliferation of rectangular modules that could be replicated and combined in ways that avoided a hierarchy of form can be found first in these early sketches. Similarly, his drawing series from 1961-62, composed of various wavy bands and overlapping corkscrew patterns, can be seen as two dimensional illustrations of the dynamism found in his sculptural work to this day, a quality which radically broke with the predominantly static minimalist sculpture prevalent throughout the 1960s and 70s.



Drawing Series B



Original Drawings for Sculpture



THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2015

N C21

Art in Review



A Picasso-influenced portrait in oil by David Park of his wife, from 1938-9: "Lydia Park (Before)." It is part of an exhibition of American figurative paintings by unsung artists during the early 20th century, on view at Kraushaar Galleries.

rease Walter and Dora Maar at a time when New York artists were gripped by his Cubism.

The other draw is "Bea Ault," a 1923 portrait by the resourceful Marguerite Zorach (1887-1965), an early adopter of Fauvism who was included in the 1913 Armory Show. The painting is bold in every way: its size, its palette of reds and blues, and especially its sophisticated mix of Cubism and folk art. Pictured in a rocking chair, smoking, its subject stares us down.

ROBERTA SMITH



Joan Snyder's "Symphony VII" includes berries and dried sunflowers among its materials.

on that uses a painter's eye. For Ms. Snyder, as a cry, garden bird. Her show is tinged with further being further to longtime surfaces in straw, pasta-thick ink, which she generated efflike and — especially — the and unfin-

Rasheed Araeen

'Minimalism Then and Now'
Aicon Gallery
35 Great Jones Street, near the Bowery, No.L1ta
Closes on Saturday

Born in Pakistan in 1935 and a London resident since 1964, Rasheed Araeen has been an art-world legend since the 1980s, when he founded and edited Third Text, a journal that not only gave a voice to contemporary non-Western and nonwhite artists but also helped initiate an entire rethinking of 20th-century art history. Mr. Araeen also produced some of the most influential writing of the time (I still have his clips from 30 years ago) and organized shows like "The Other Story" in London, which laid the foundation for the concept that modernism, far from being a Western phenomenon, had happened all over the world, on different schedules.

Overlooked amid all these accomplishments was Mr. Araeen's art, a selection of which is at Aicon Gallery in his first New York solo exhibition. Trained as a civil engineer, he became an artist after seeing Anthony Caro's sculptures. His own early pieces combined Mr. Caro's use of industrial materials with openwork structures adapted from architecture. In the early 1960s he developed a version of what would come to be called Minimalism before its introduction in New York by Donald Judd and others.

Mr. Araeen's sensibility is quite different from that of the American artists. His sculptures are conspicuously handmade,



"Punj Neelay (Five Blues)," a 1970 work by Rasheed Araeen, is part of this show at the Aicon Gallery. It is Mr. Araeen's first New York solo exhibition.

often brightly painted, and configured to form — in some cases — layers of geometric patterning. Many of them were originally meant to be interactive. Viewers were invited to rearrange components and, in the case of a modular 1970 floor piece called "Triangles," to toss parts into the River Thames and watch them reconfigure as they floated away.

Now in his 80s and busy writing, editing and making art, Mr. Araeen is one of many overlooked artists who should at last be finding a permanent place in the global picture. A number of them appeared in the important exhibition "Other Primary Structures" at the Jewish Museum in New York last year. Mr. Araeen was one. That the show existed at all was largely because of his efforts as a multitasking pioneer.

HOLLAND COTTER

Torbjorn Rodland

'Corpus Dubium'
Algas Greenspon
71 Morton Street, near Hudson Street, West Village
Through June 20

A Norwegian artist who lives in Los Angeles, Torbjorn Rodland creates photographs that are formally acute, conceptually playful and psychologically evocative. The most intriguing of the large color prints in his show have eccentric religious overtones.

"Drunken Man" depicts a large-bodied, balding and bearded fellow, naked from the waist up and evidently happily inebriated. A young woman is glimpsed to either side of him, and that brings to mind the biblical story of Lot, whose daughters conspired to get him drunk and then laid with him in order to have children and continue the family line.

"The Mirror" is the curiously



Torbjorn Rodland's photograph "Drunken Man" (2014-15) is part of his show at Algas Greenspon.

size: The glare from an electric light strategically placed behind her simultaneously obscures and draws attention to the place where her legs meet. This brings to mind thoughts about photography and voyeurism. But also, as in an image of the Annunciation, the burst of light suggests the miracle of human life's conception in the female body.

In "This Is My Body," a young girl looks up. A man uses his hand to hold her at her neck while, with his other hand, he inserts his index finger behind her lower lip. The gesture and title suggest the administration of a communion wafer, yet the image of a child submitting to a man's dominance also hints at something far more disturbing.

KEN JOHNSON

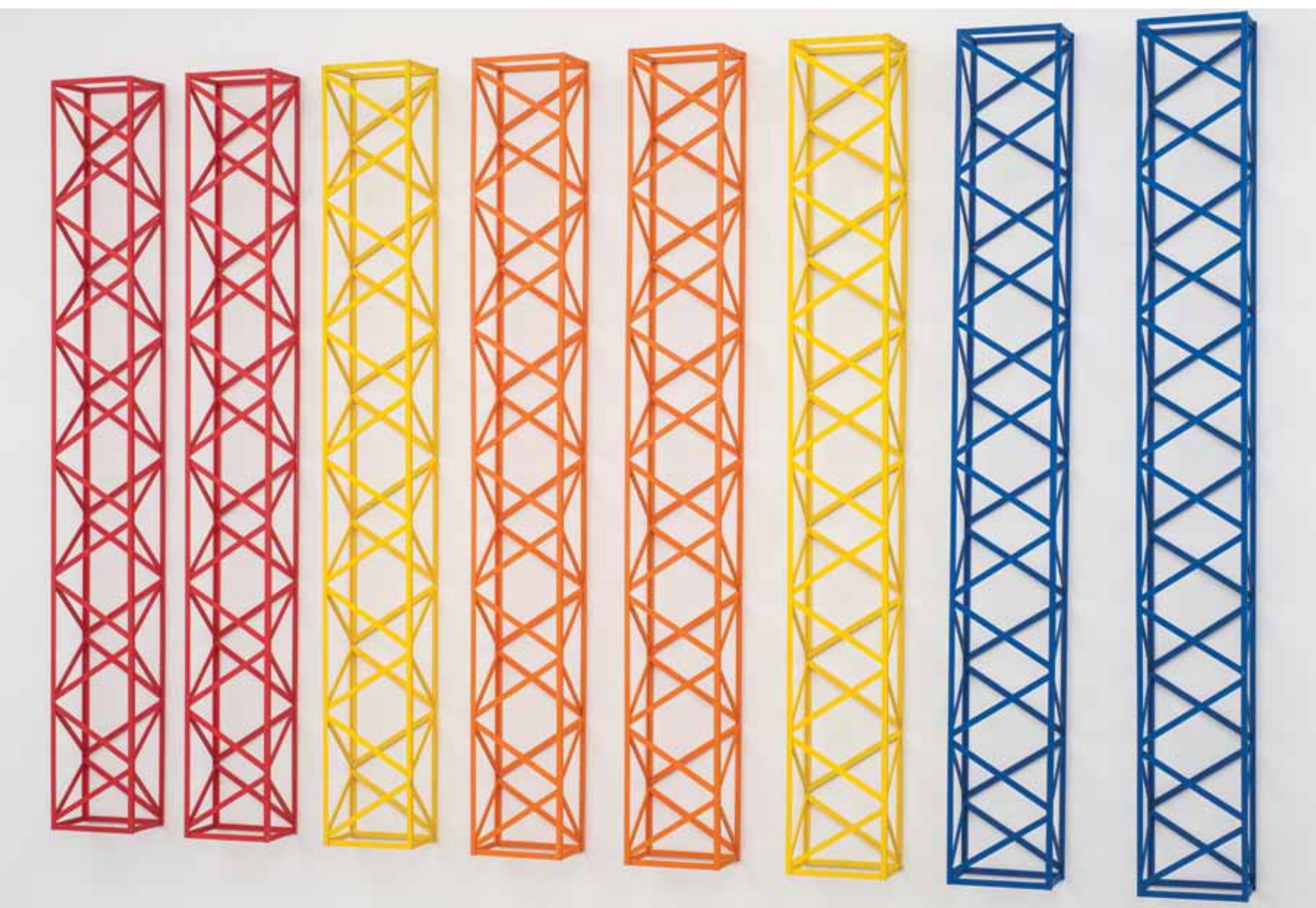
Punj Neelay (Five Blues), 1970, Installation View (2015), The Art Institute of Chicago

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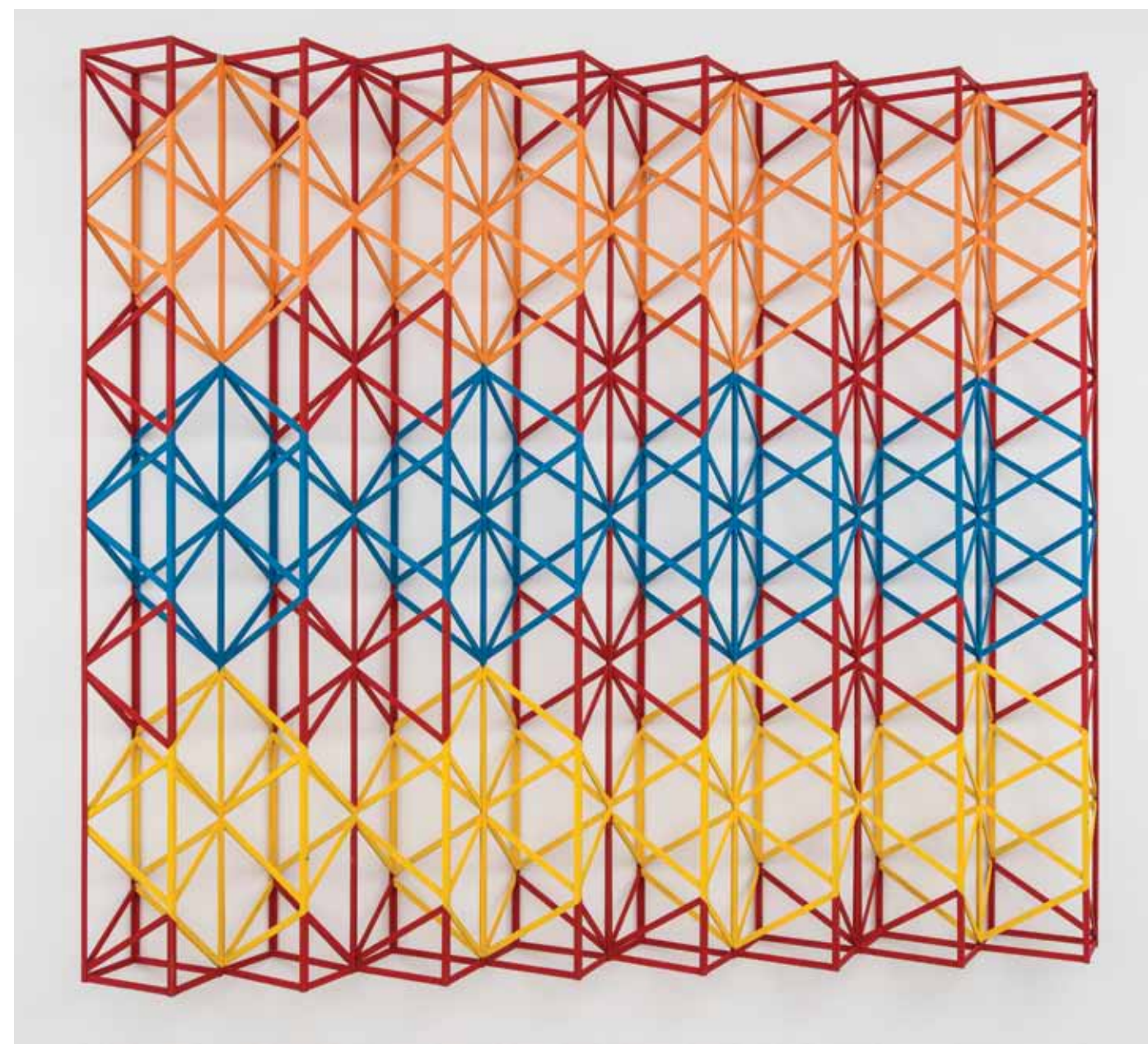
Works













Zero to Infinity

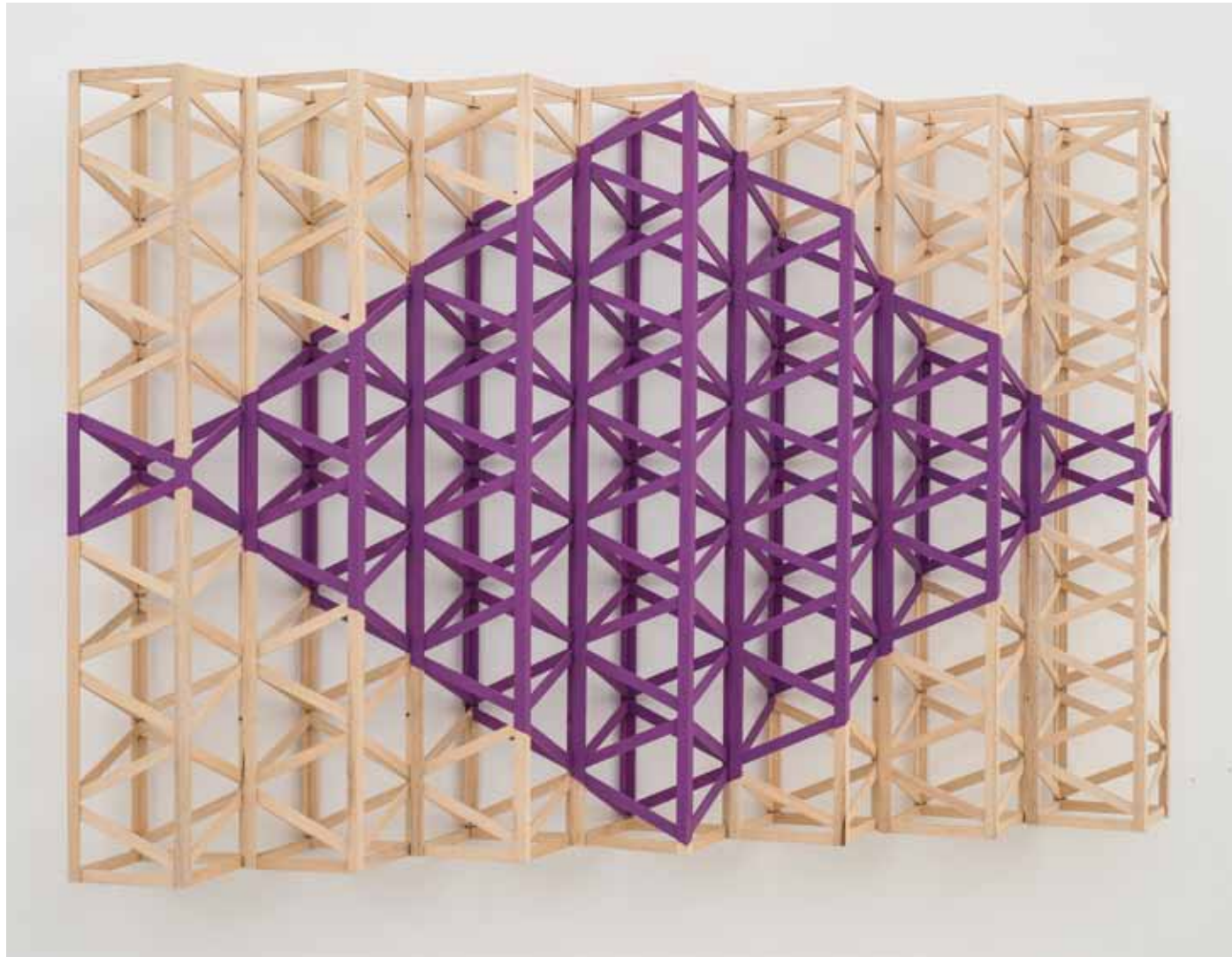
Zero to Infinity was originally conceived in a written proposal to the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1968. Araeen revisited the work in 2004 for an exhibition at the 198 Gallery in London. Subsequently the work was exhibited by Tate Modern, London in *The Tanks: Art in Action*, 2012–13, with a version comprised of 24 cubes included in the current exhibition.

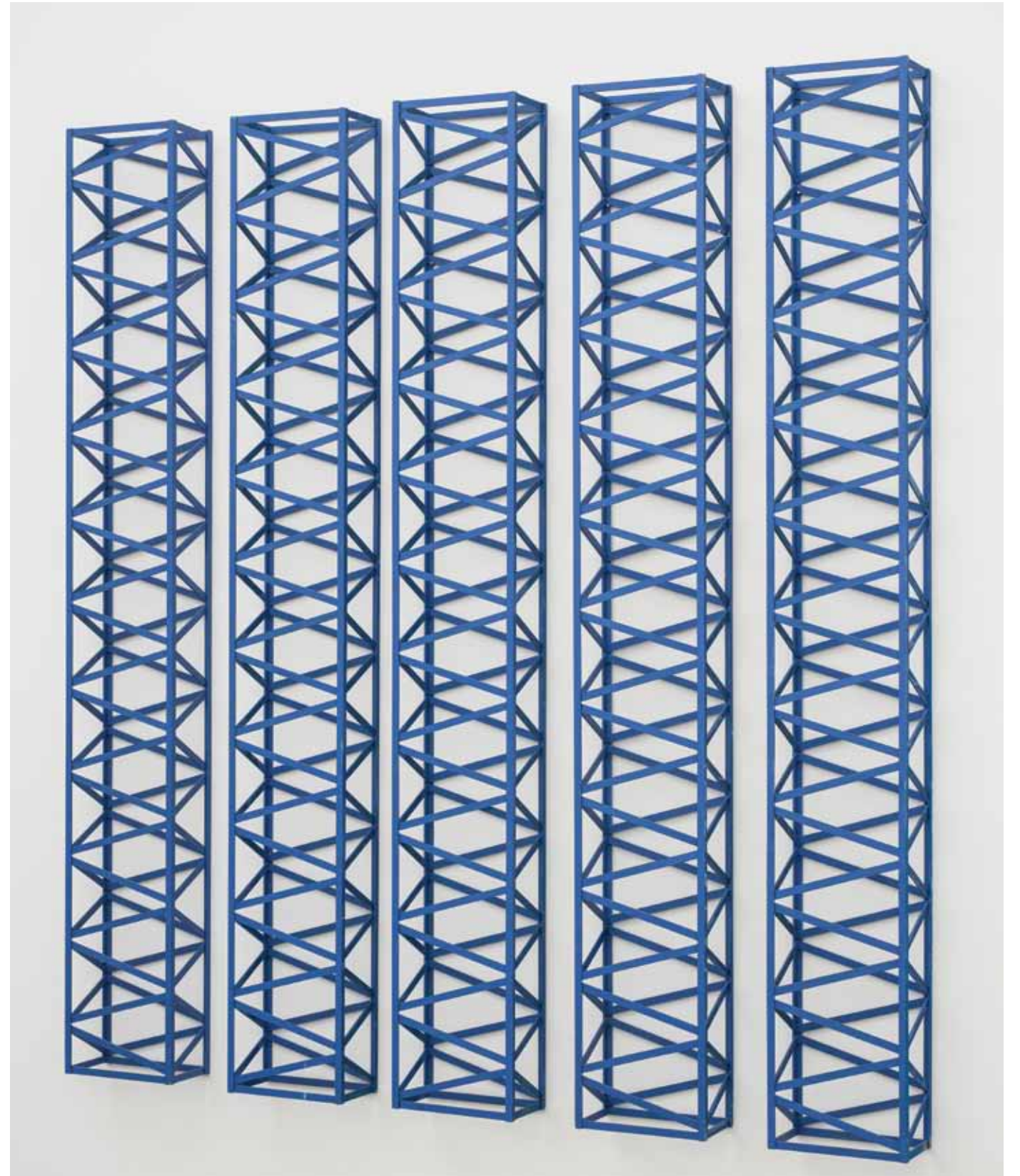
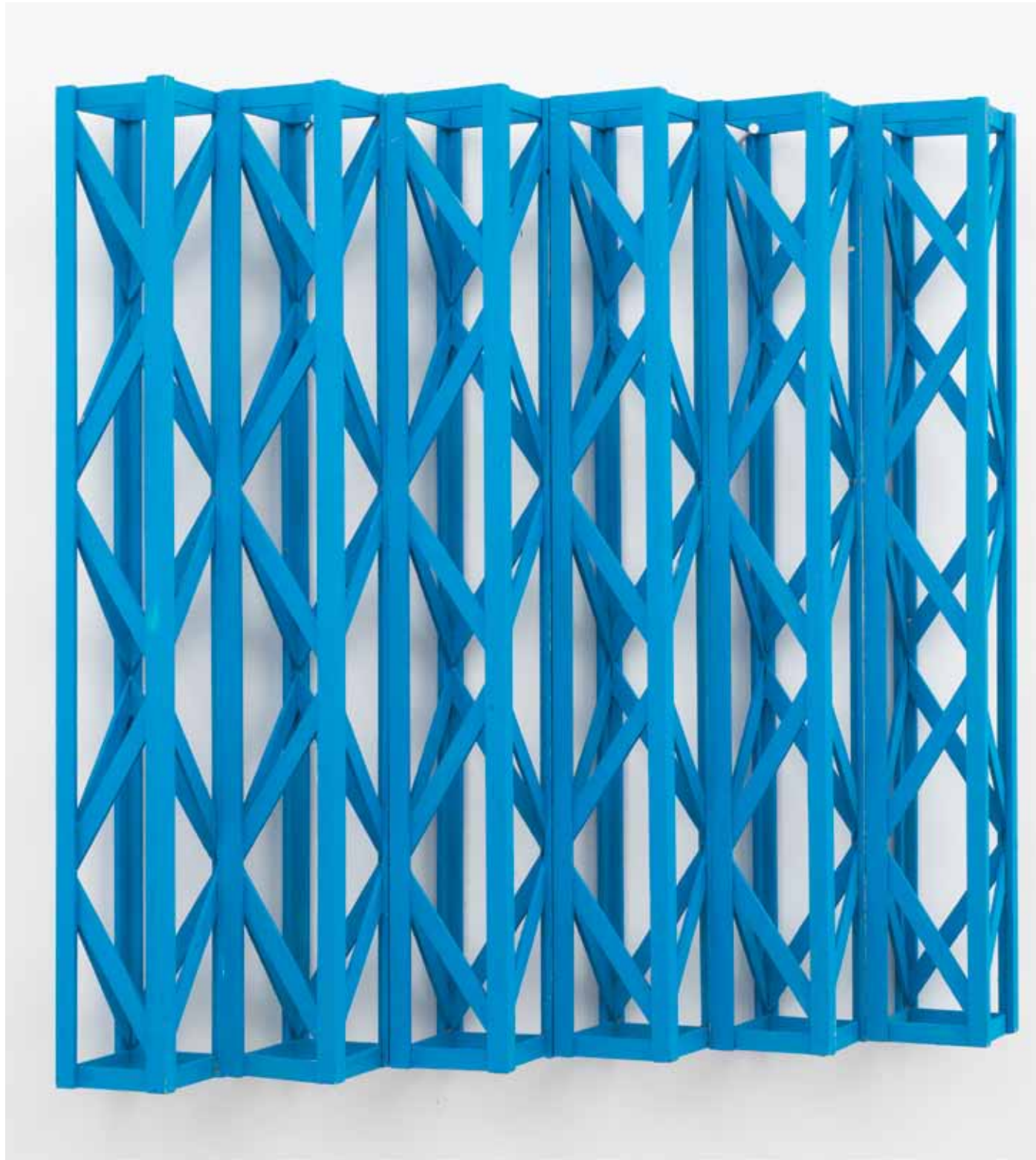
The program of the installation is a grid formation of up to 100 painted wooden cubes. With each showing, Araeen arranges the cubes systematically, thereafter allowing viewers to deconstruct (and reconstruct) the scheme by shifting and relocating the smaller cube units as parts of a new whole. This democratized approach within Minimalist art reasserts the uniform collective, alluding to dynamic egalitarian socio-political relationships devoid of hierarchy. This is especially important within the context of the formal inequalities inherent in the decorative traditions of Islamic and even contemporary Asian art. The evolving nature of the work, in its adaptations and dependency on participation from viewers, highlights the flux of a system and progressive growth in every axial direction – a hallmark of Araeen's unique modernism.





Springtime in Euston Square Gardens, 1970 (2015), Wood, paint and photographic prints on paper,
Photos: 18 x 18 in. (Each), Wood Cubes: 18 x 18 x 18 in. (Each)







Triangles, 1970 (1987), Wood and photographic prints on paper,
Photos: 19 x 19 in. (Each), Floor Sculpture: 72 x 72 in.



Rang Baranga II, 1969–2014, Wood and paint, 73 x 24 x 24 in.

WORKS

Cover: *Minimalism Then and Now* (Installation View), 2015, Aicon Gallery, New York

Inside Cover: *Original Drawings for Sculpture* (Details), 1965–68

Page 2: *Pehli Si Muhabut* (Detail), 2014–15, Wood and paint, 73 x 84 x 10 in.

Page 4 (Top): *Springtime in Euston Square Gardens* (Performance Photograph), 1970, London

Page 4 (Middle): *Springtime in Euston Square Gardens*, 1970 (2015), Wood, paint and photographic prints on paper,

Photos: 18 x 18 in. (Each), Wood Cubes: 18 x 18 x 18 in. (Each)

Page 4 (Bottom): *Springtime in Euston Square Gardens* (Performance Photograph), 1970, London

Page 6 (Top): *Chakras*, 1969–70, Wood, paint and photographic prints on paper, Dimensions variable

Page 6 (Middle): *Chakras* (Performance Photograph), 1969–70, Saint Katharine Docks, London

Page 6 (Bottom): *RRYOOYBB*, 1971, Wood and paint, 73 x 114 x 6 in.

Page 9: *Drawing Series A*, 1961, Ink on paper, 11 x 8 in. (Each)

Page 10: *Drawing Series B*, 1962, Felt tip pen on paper, 11 x 16 in. (Each)

Page 11: *Original Drawings for Sculpture*, 1965–68, 13 x 8 in. (Each)

Page 13: *Punj Neelay (Five Blues)*, 1970, Installation View (2015), The Art Institute of Chicago

Page 15: *Minimalism Then and Now* (Installation View), 2015, Aicon Gallery, New York

Page 16: *RRYOOYBB*, 1971 (2015), Wood and paint, 73 x 114 x 6 in.

Page 17: *Sculpture No 2*, 1965 (Blue, 2015), Steel and paint, 48 x 48 x 48 in.

Page 18: *First Structure*, 1966–67 (Blue, 2010), Steel and paint, 55 x 55 x 55 in.

Page 19: *Sculpture No 1*, 1965 (Red, 2010), Steel and paint, 12 x 12 x 72 in. (x4)

Pgs. 20–21: *Chaar Yaar II (Four Friends)*, 1968 (2010), Wood and paint, Dimensions variable

Page 22: *Three Cheers for Rodchenko*, 2015, Wood and paint, 61 x 132 x 7 in.

Page 23: *Pehli Si Muhabut*, 1971 (2014–2015), Wood and paint, 73 x 84 x 10 in.

Page 24: *Minimalism Then and Now* (Installation View), 2015, Aicon Gallery, New York

Page 25: *Minimalism Then and Now* (Installation View), 2015, Aicon Gallery, New York

Pgs. 26–27: *Zero to Infinity*, (New York, 2015), Wood and paint, Dimensions variable

Pgs. 28–29: *Springtime in Euston Square Gardens*, 1970 (2015), Wood, paint and photographic prints on paper,

Photos: 18 x 18 in. (Each), Wood Cubes: 18 x 18 x 18 in. (Each)

Page 30: *Jaamni (Purple Diamond)*, 2014, Wood and paint, 31 x 47 x 7 in.

Page 31: *Chaar Neelay Heeray (Four Blue Diamonds)*, 2014, Wood and paint, 71 x 94 x 7 in.

Page 32: *Cricklewood Broadway*, 2014, Wood and paint, 23 x 23 x 4 in.

Page 33: *Punj Neelay (Five Blues)*, 1970, Wood and paint, 67 x 61.5 x 5 in.

Pgs. 34–35: *Triangles*, 1970 (1987), Wood and photographic prints on paper, Photos: 19 x 19 in. (Each), Floor Sculpture: 72 x 72 in.

Page 36: *Rang Baranga II*, 1969–2014, Wood and paint, 73 x 24 x 24 in.

Inside Back Cover: *Original Drawings for Sculpture* (Details), 1965–68

Back Cover: *Cricklewood Broadway* (Detail), 2014, Wood and paint, 23 x 23 x 4 in.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

RASHEED ARAEEN

BORN 1935, KARACHI, PAKISTAN

Rasheed Araeen is a civil engineer, artist and writer. In 2009, he was granted a US patent for an invention, which is both a floating sculpture and water sport, followed in 2001 by a full international Patent. Trained as a civil engineer, Araeen eventually turned to art as a profession. As an artist, he began his career in 1953, continuing his pursuit art while studying civil engineering at Karachi’s NED Engineering College. While still in Karachi in 1959, he pioneered the concept of making sculpture by burning and transforming an object from one material (or form) to another. After establishing himself in Karachi, he left for London in 1964 (where he presently resides). In 1965, he pioneered minimalist sculpture, representing what is arguably the only Minimalism in Britain. After being active in several groups for liberation struggles, democracy and human rights, he began to write in 1975, and published his own art journals: *Black Phoenix* (1978), *Third Text* (1987) and *Third Text Asia* (2008). He also established online versions of *Third Text* in Cape Town, South Africa, entitled *Third Text Africa*, and the Spanish language *Tercer Texto* in Lima, Peru—both available free of cost to readers. He curated two significant exhibitions: *The Essential Black Art* (1987), *The Other Story* (Hayward Gallery, 1989); and, he is a recipient of three honorary doctorates (PhDs) from the universities of Southampton, East London and Wolverhampton (UK). In 2011, he developed a project that generated a comprehensive and inclusive history of art in postwar Britain, which was inclusive of all artists from all cultures who have contributed within the historical framework of modern developments. Rasheed Araeen published an autobiographical book, *Making Myself Visible* (1984), along with a second book, *Art Beyond Art / Ecoaesthetics: A Manifesto for the 21st Century* (2010).

SELECT SOLO EXHIBITIONS

| | |
|------|--|
| 1963 | The Arts Council Gallery, Karachi. |
| 1974 | Indus Gallery, Karachi. |
| 1975 | Artists for Democracy, London. |
| 1984 | Pentonville Gallery, London. |
| 1986 | Pentonville Gallery, London. |
| 1987 | ‘From Modernism to Postmodernism: Rasheed Araeen, A Retrospective: Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Cornerhouse, Manchester; John Hansard, Southampton; Chapter, Cardiff. |
| 1988 | The Showroom, London. |
| 1991 | The Central Space, London. |
| 1993 | ‘Strife and/or Strugure’ Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka-Shi, Japan. |
| 1994 | SKUC Gallery, Ljubijana, Slovenia. V Habana Bienal, Havana, Cuba. South London Gallery, London. |
| 1995 | John Hansard Gallery, Southampton. |
| 1996 | The Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Luthuania. ‘To Whom It May Concern’ Serpentine Gallery (external project), London. |
| 1997 | The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Middlesbrough Art Gallery, Middlesbrough, UK. |
| 2010 | ‘Before and After Minimalism, 1959 – 1974’, Aicon Gallery, London |
| 2012 | ‘Zero to Infinity’, Tate Modern, London |
| 2014 | ‘Before and After Minimalism’, Sharjah Art Foundation Art Spaces, Sharjah ‘Homecoming’, VM Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan |
| 2015 | ‘Rasheed Araeen – Minimalism Then and Now: 1960 – Present’, Aicon Gallery, New York |

SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

| | |
|---------|---|
| 1957–64 | Numerous group exhibitions in Pakistan. |
| 1970 | ‘Manufactured Art’, Camden Arts Centre, London. |
| 1971 | ‘SPACE’, Midland Art Gallery, Nottingham, UK. |
| 1973 | ‘Artists from Five Continents’, Swiss Cottage Library, London. |
| 1975 | ‘Vietnam Festival’, Artists for Democracy, |
| 1978 | ‘Art for Society’, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. |
| 1979 | ‘Art from the British Left’, Artists’ Place, New York. Tape/Slide Show’, Audio Arts, Riverside Studios, London. |
| 1980 | ‘Accrochage’, Gimpel Fils, London. ‘Koffer fur Rottweil’, Forum Kunst, Rottweil; and Kunstverien, Freiburg. ‘Kontakt: From Contemplation to Agitation’, Gelleria MDM, Warsaw. |
| 1982 | ‘New Art Platform’, Midland Group Gallery, Nothingham, UK. |
| 1983 | ‘New Beginning’, Pentonville Gallery, London. |
| 1984 | ‘Creation for Liberation’, Brixton Art Gallery, Brixton, London. |
| 1985 | ‘Roadworks’, Brixton Art Gallery, London. |

| | |
|------|--|
| 1986 | ‘Conceptual Clothing’, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK. ‘From Two Words’, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. |
| 1987 | ‘Heros’, Air Gallery, London. ‘State of the Nation’, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, UK |
| 1989 | ‘Magiciens de la terre’, Centre George Pompidou / La Villette, Paris. |
| 1989 | ‘The Other Story’, Hayward Gallery, London. |
| 1990 | ‘New Necessity’, First Tyne International, Gatehead, UK. |
| 1991 | ‘Lost Illusions’, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada. ‘‘IV Habana Bienal’, Havana, Cuba. |
| 1995 | ‘Dialogue for Piece’, Palais de Nations, Geneva, Switzerland. |
| 1996 | ‘Inklusions:Exklusions’, steirischer herbst, Graz, Austria. |
| 1997 | ‘2nd Johannesburg Biennale’, South Africa. |
| 1998 | ‘every day’, Sydney Biennale, Australia. |
| 1999 | ‘Art–Worlds in Dialogue: From Gauguin to the Global Present’, Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany. |
| 2000 | ‘Live in Your Head’, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London. |
| 2001 | ‘Live in Your Head’, Museu do Chiado, Lisbon, Portugal. |
| 2009 | ‘The Death of the Audience’, Wiener Secession, Vienna |
| 2010 | ‘Raising Dust—Encounters in Relational Geography’, Calvert22, London ‘A Rock and a Hard Place’, Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Greece ‘A Missing History: The Other Story Re–visited’, Aicon Gallery, London |
| 2011 | ‘Situation Z art–cade’, Galerie des grands bains douches de la Plaine, Marseille ‘3 rd Thessaloniki Biennial of Contemporary Art’, Greek State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki ‘3 rd Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art’, Old Intersections – Make it New, Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki ‘The Global Contemporary’, Art Worlds After 1989, ZKM Zentrum fur Kunst and \ |
| 2012 | ‘Medientechnologie Karlsruhe’, Karlsruhe ‘Super Farmer’s Market’, Handel Street Projects, London |
| 2014 | ‘9 th Gwangju Biennale’, Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju ‘Migrations, Journeys into British Art’, – Tate Britain, London ‘Dark Waters Group exhibition’, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris ‘Other Primary Structures’, The Jewish Museum, New York, USA ‘As Exciting As We Can Make It: Ikon in the 1980s’, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK |

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Guggenheim, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK.
Arts Council of England
CANAL PLUS, Paris.
Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukueka-Shi, Japan.
Wifredo Lam Centre, Havana, Cuba.
Tate Gallery, London.
Imperial War Museum, London.
Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Luthuania.
Museu de Arte Moderna Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro
Arthr Gallery, Jeddah
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, US
The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, US
Albright–Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, US
Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India

OTHER BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

| | |
|---------|---|
| 1962 | Graduated in civil engineering, N.E.D, University of Karachi. |
| 1964 | Moved to London |
| 1964–65 | Architectural draughtsman with Wimpey Construction Co. |
| 1965–69 | Assistant architect/civil engineer, BHC/BP, London |
| 1978 | Founded/edited an art magazine, <i>Black Phoenix</i> (3 issues). |
| 1982–84 | Initiated and developed multiracial art/art education programme, as a result of which the Arts Council in 1994 established INIVA in London. |
| 1984 | Published a collection of writings, <i>Making Myself Visible</i> , Kala Press. |
| 1987 | Founding Editor of art journal <i>Third Text</i> (107 issues so far). |
| 1989 | Initiated and curated ‘The Other Story’ exhibition, Hayward Gallery, London |
| 1995 | Honorary Doctorate of Letters (PhD), University of Southampton. |
| 1997 | Honorary Doctorate of Arts (PhD), University of East London. |
| 1998– | Member, Advisory Board for the School of Communication, Design & Media, University of Westminster. |
| 2001 | Received an International Patent for an invention. |
| 2003 | Honorary Doctorate of Arts (PhD), University of Wolverhampton. |

The artist lives and works in London, UK.

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1986 Araeen, Rasheed, Serota, Nicholas, Kirby, Rachel and Whitechapel Art Gallery. *From Two Worlds*. Trustees of the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1986. (exh. cat.)

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Rasheed Araeen | *Minimalism Then and Now: 1960s – Present*

Exhibition dates: May 7 – June 13, 2015

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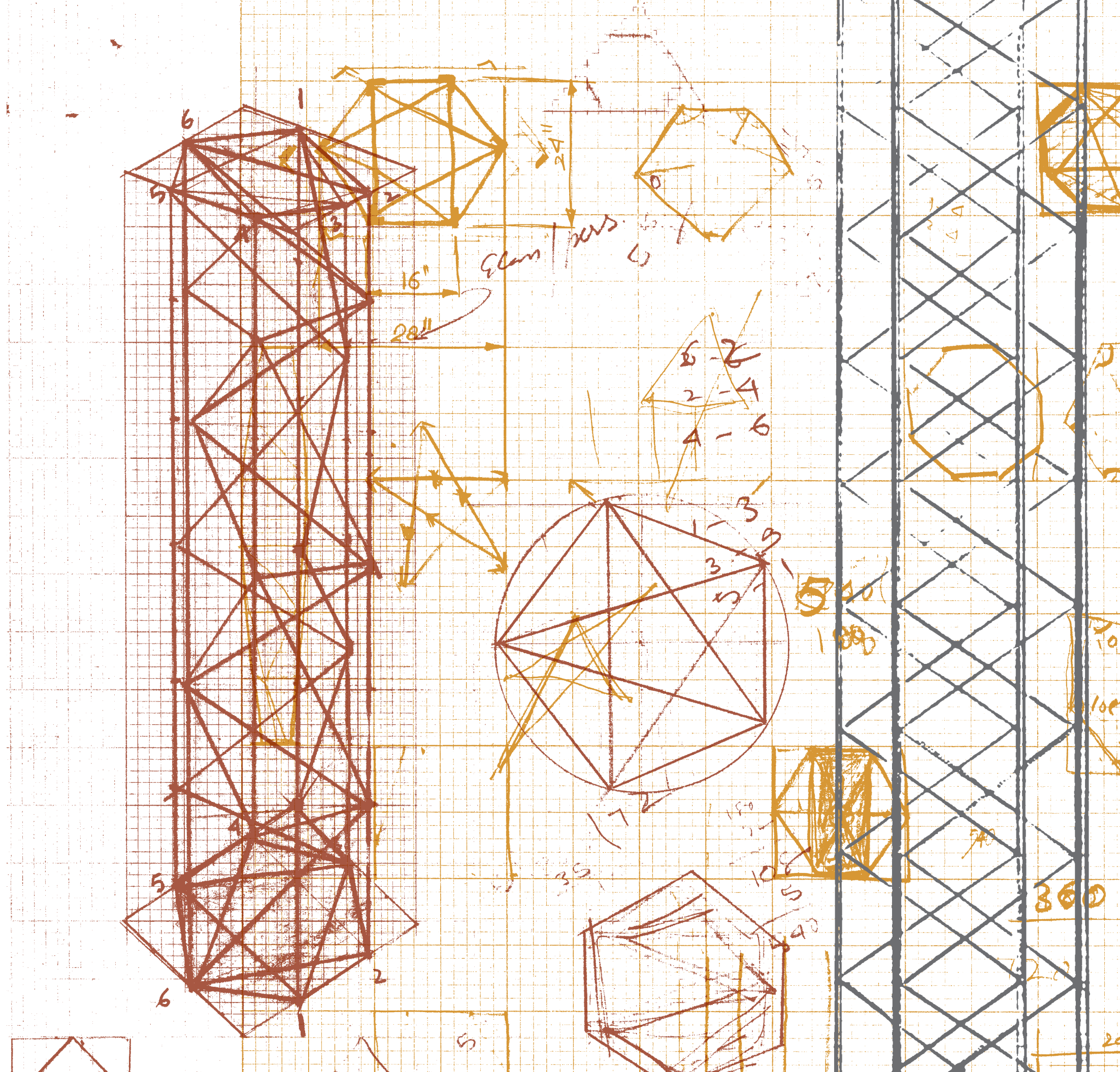
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AICON GALLERY, NEW YORK

Aicon Gallery's curatorial vision begins in South Asia but reaches outwards internationally from there. The New York gallery provides a vital platform for Modern and Contemporary artists from South Asia as well as the Middle East and, finally, diasporic artists to realize their vision in a global and ever-shifting world. Alongside in-depth, focused solo shows, the gallery presents a program of curated group exhibitions that are international in their scope and ambition. Following recent debates in institutional curating, the program deliberately links together art produced recently with art made in the latter half of the 20th Century. Through this, the gallery hopes to produce unexpected congruencies, shed light on multiple modernisms, make complex the designation "contemporary" and signal a shift away from simple survey exhibitions.

In solo shows, Aicon has shown the work of established artists such as M. F. Husain, F. N. Souza, Rasheed Araeen, Rachid Koraichi, Rekha Rodwittiya and S. H. Raza. The gallery has also presented ambitious solo shows of younger artists, such as Abdullah Syed, Abir Karmakar, Salman Toor, Adeela Suleman, and G. R. Iranna. Group shows have included *Readymade: Contemporary Art from Bangladesh* as well as *Between Line and Matter: Impulse of Minimalism in South Asia and the Middle East*. The gallery has collaborated with museums such as the Art Institute, Chicago; Guggenheim Museum, New York; Kiran Nadar Museum, New Delhi; Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; Jewish Museum, New York and the Louvre, Abu Dhabi. Exhibitions have been reviewed and the gallery has been profiled by the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The Times of London*, *Art Asia Pacific*, *ArtForum* and the *Financial Times*.





aicon gallery

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