

Saks Afridi

SpaceMosque

In Collaboration With Ferda Kolatan

Exhibition: January 17 – February 23, 2019

Press Preview & V.I.P. Reception: Thursday, January 17, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

35 Great Jones St., New York NY 10012

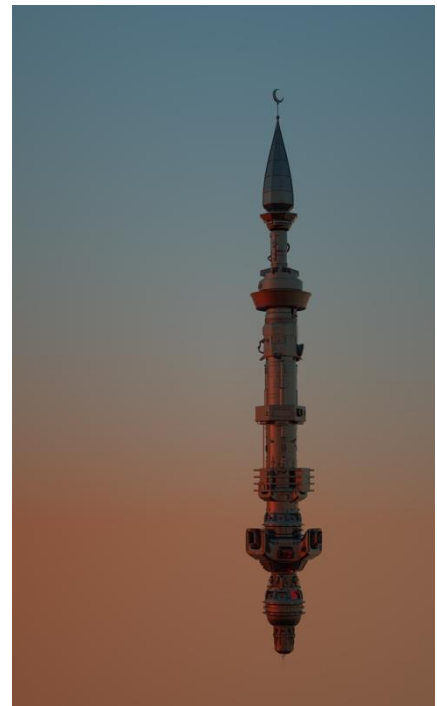
Artist will be in Attendance

Aicon Gallery is proud to present ***SpaceMosque***, the first major U. S. solo exhibition by New York-based artist **Saks Afridi**. The exhibit also features works the artist made in collaboration with architect **Ferda Kolatan** and his team.

This exhibit serves as a memorial and exploration of a para-fictional phenomenon and time period that occurred here on Earth in the near past. Due to the arrival of a strange vessel from outer space, every human being on the planet was granted a prayer answered every 24 hours. Yet somehow this phenomenon has been erased from our memories. The exhibition explores a new genre Saks calls 'Sci-fi Sufism', in which he investigates the idea of 'spiritual machines' that fuse mysticism and technology, bringing humanity closer to understanding itself. The works comprising the exhibition include painstakingly acquired found artifacts, multi-media documentation of various incidents surrounding the phenomenon, and photographs of the vessel's many manifestations, in an effort to piece together the events that transpired during this period.

In the phenomenon's early days, due to the vessel's resemblance to a mosque, the media immediately dubbed it SpaceMosque, however it was really called **The Miraj Mission**. It is now believed that the vessel was a spiritually conscious spaceship, energy station, and prayer gateway. Its divine algorithms and foresight technology determined the selection of prayers it chose to answer. The ship was led by a captain and manned by a crew from the future, however, our findings show that they had no control over the vessel's spiritual functionality. During its time here, the Miraj Mission answered billions of prayers. Our reality changed overnight. The impact of this arrival led to both miracles as well as tragedies. Greed and morality were at constant war and prayer eventually became the de facto global currency.

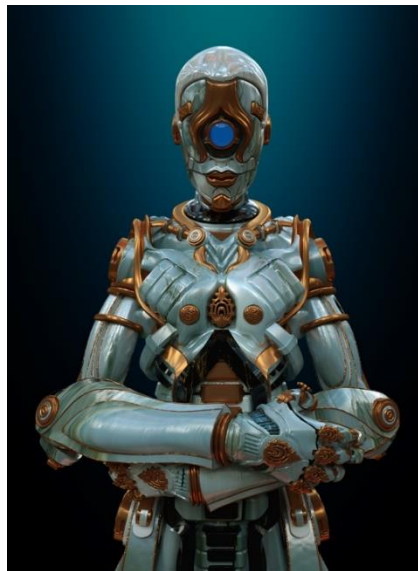
And then one day, the vessel vanished, along with any memory of its existence, except for a few remnants of stories and artifacts scattered around the globe. This is the first time that some of these artifacts and stories are being shared with the world. We do not know the reason for the vessel's departure, but our findings reveal that global riots due to the commoditization of prayers may have led to it. Perhaps enough people grew tired of the chaos and prayed for it all to go away and be forgotten, or perhaps it was an overdue lesson for humanity. At the heart of the exhibition, however, stands a central question; If all your prayers were answered, would it change the world, or just yours?



Saks Afridi, *Sighting #4*, 2018, C-pint on aluminum, 48 x 36 in.



Saks Afridi and Ferda Kolatan, with Hart Marlow, Amir Ashtiani, Brendan Wetzel.
The Prayer Catcher, 2019, High density foam, 3D printed acrylic, paint and brass leaf, 50 x 35 x 18 in.



Saks Afridi, *A.N.G.E.L.S. I*, 2019, Vibrachrome print on aluminum, 48 x 36 in.

According to Saks, the project has had countless early influences ranging from Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End*, Hiroshi Sugimoto's *Lost Human Genetic Archive*, and the Islamic mythological story of *Isra and Mi'raj - The Night Journey*. Partially inspired by *AfroFuturism*, Saks sees this para-fictional approach to Islamic folklore and mythology as a contemporary sister movement he calls *Subcontinental Futurism*. Addressing the broader intent of the project, which is intended to grow over time into ever more ambitious exhibition iterations, Saks has stated:

"In today's political climate, I believe it's very important for people, especially Americans, to experience something associated with the Islamic world that is not connected to extremism and terrorism. Sadly, the religion of Islam is secretly feared in the hearts of many, and I want to show that Islamic folklore and mythology can also have a contemporary and imaginative voice. Let's expand old perceptions. This project uses science fiction and Islamic mysticism to create a new thought-provoking experience aiming to promote cultural understanding and challenge stigmas in an engaging and current way. It tackles the biggest 'what if' scenario through a para-fictional (fiction made to look real) style of narrative and intends to remind us that no matter what belief system we follow, we are all vulnerable."

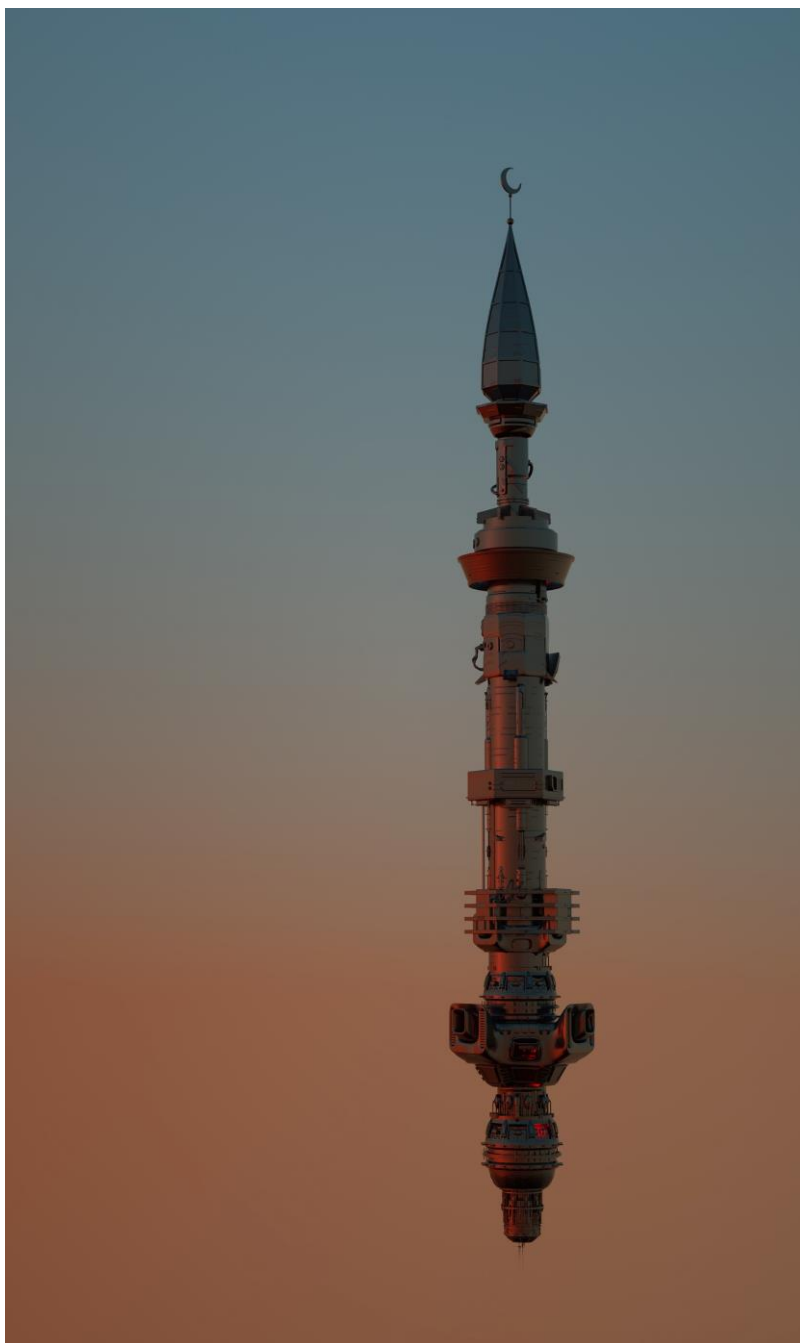
Saks Afridi is a multi-disciplinary artist, born in Pakistan and raised in several countries; he now lives and works in New York City. Saks's art practice is two-fold: Collaborative and Personal. His personal work investigates the predicaments and perplexities of the life of an 'Insider Outsider'. This is the practice of achieving a sense of belonging while being out of place, finding happiness in a state of temporary permanence, and re-contextualizing existing historical and cultural narratives with the contemporary. His collaborative work has tackled themes around human rights, Islamophobia, drone warfare and social justice in general. Saks comes to art with a background in advertising, as a Creative Director on brands such as Mercedes-Benz, White Castle and MTV. He studied at the Academy of Art and later sculpture at the Art Students League of New York.

Ferda Kolatan is the Founding Director of Architecture+Design firm su11 and an Associate Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania. He received his Architectural Diploma (Dipl.Ing) from the RWTH Aachen and his Masters in Architecture (MSAAD) from Columbia University. To learn more about Ferda, please visit www.su11.com

Project Collaborators: Architectural Collaborators: Ferda Kolatan with Hart Marlow, Amir Ashtiani, AliReza Kabiri, Brendan Wetzel, Lilli Zhang, Zhenyu Wang, **Other Collaborators:** Adam Rodgers, Nancy, Mansoor Ahmed Khan Mani and Salima Hashmi.

Please contact Aicon Gallery (Andrew@Aicongallery.com) for more information.

Saks Afridi



Saks Afridi, *Scout 1*, 2018, Vibrachrome print on aluminum, 50 x 30 in.

Saks Afridi



Saks Afridi, *SpaceTime*, 2018, Vibrachrome print on aluminum, 30 x 30 in.

Saks Afridi



Saks Afridi, *Sighting 3*, 2018, Vibrachrome print on aluminum, 48 x 36 in.

Saks Afridi



Saks Afridi, *Sighting 4*, 2018, Vibrachrome print on aluminum, 48 x 36 in.

Saks Afridi



Saks Afridi, *The Prayer Catcher*, 2019, High-density foam, 3D printed acrylic and brass leaf, 50 x 35 x 18 in.

Saks Afridi



Saks Afridi, *Hovering Minaret*, 2019, High-density foam, electromagnets, wood and paint, 24 x 4 x 4 in.

Saks Afridi



Saks Afridi, *Will Engine Component*, 2019, 3D printed acrylic, paint and brass leaf, 15 x 15 x 15 in.

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Saks Afridi, *A.N.G.E.L.S. Hands*, 2019, 3D printed acrylic and brass leaf, 12 x 6 x 5 in.

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Saks Afridi, *Artifact: Dua Receptor*, 2019, C-print on archival paper, 36 x 24 in.

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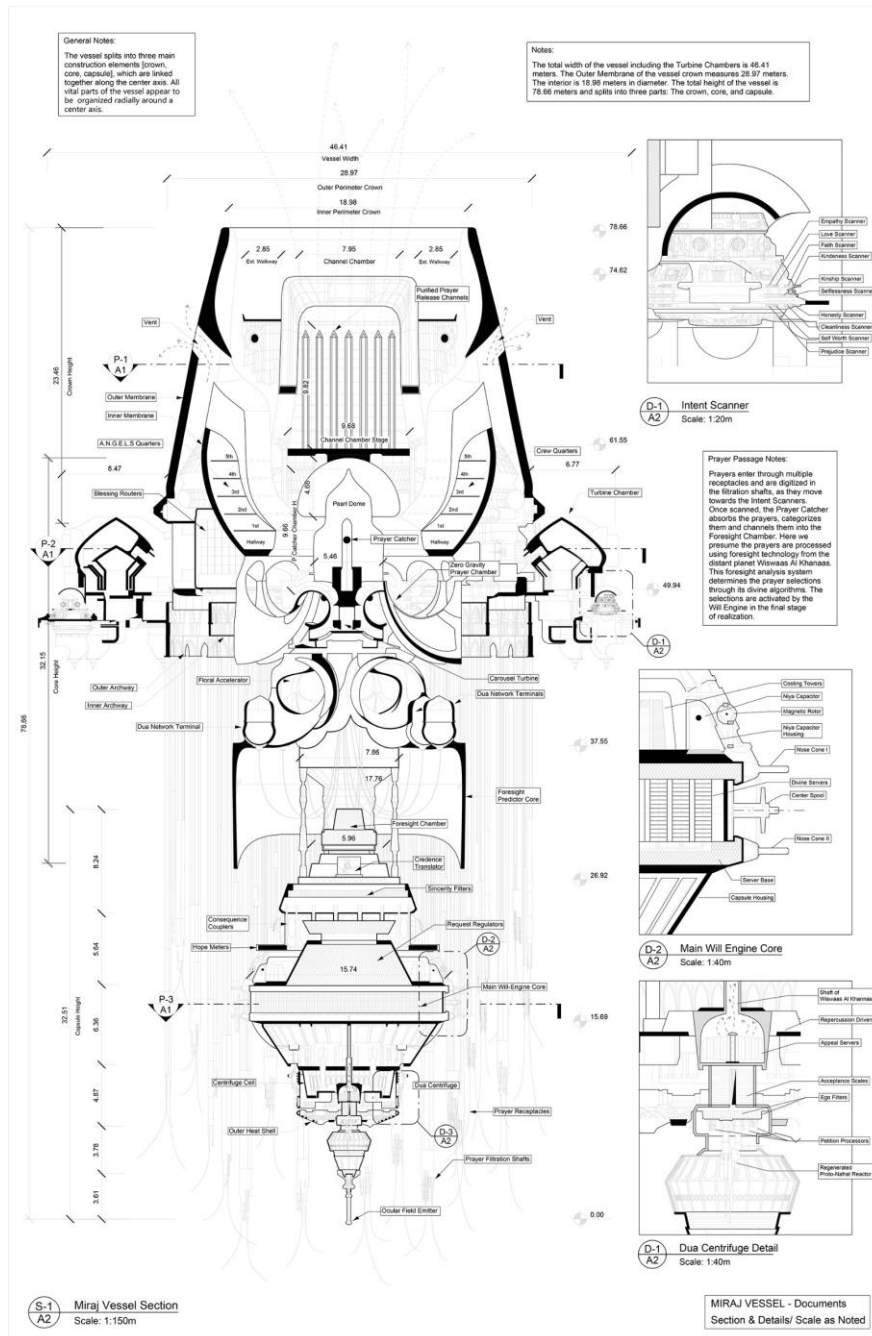
Saks Afridi, *Artifact: A.N.G.E.L.S. Wudu Pod*, 2019, C-print on archival paper, 36 x 24 in.

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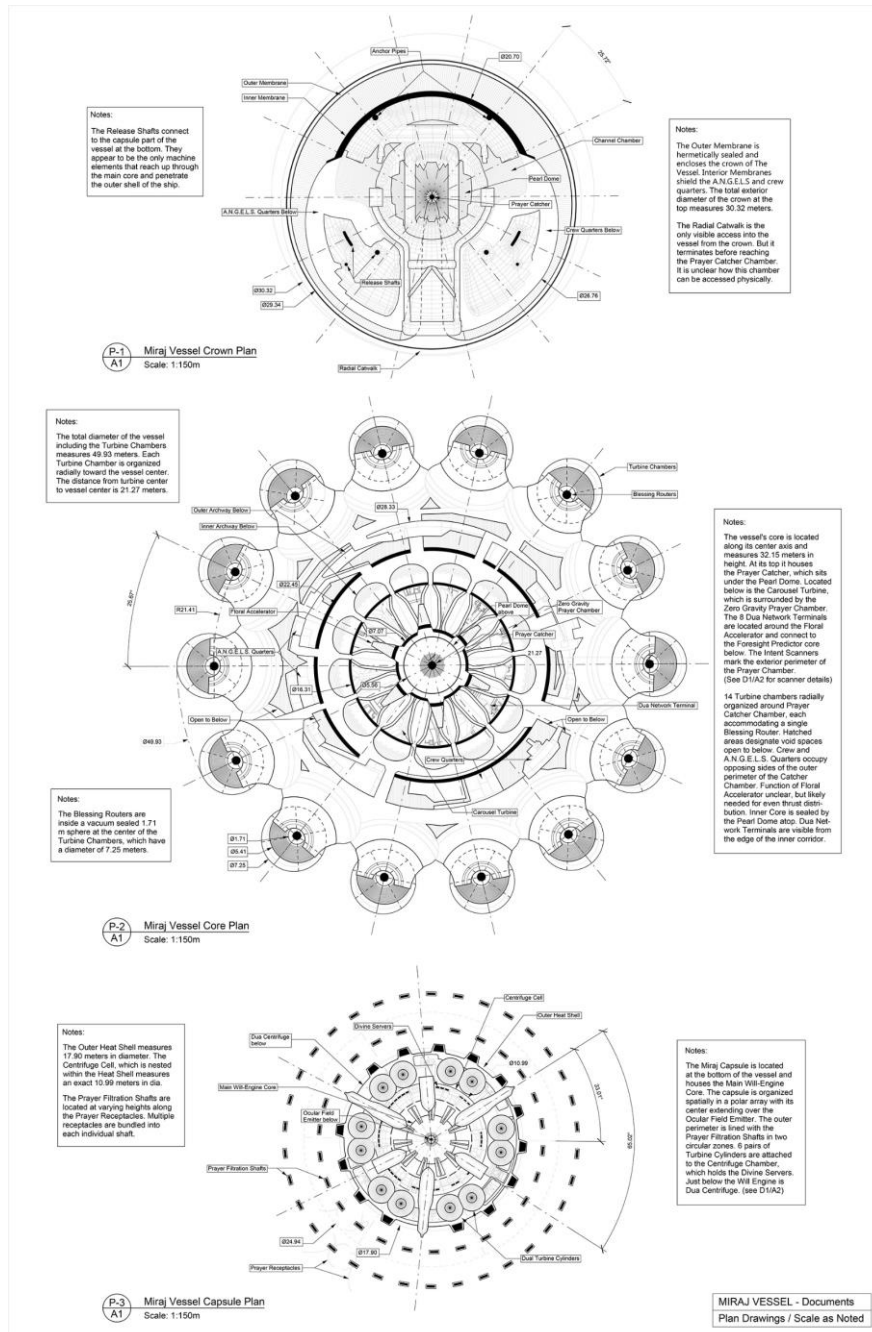
Saks Afridi, *Artifact: Prayer Catcher*, 2019, C-print on archival paper, 36 x 36 in.

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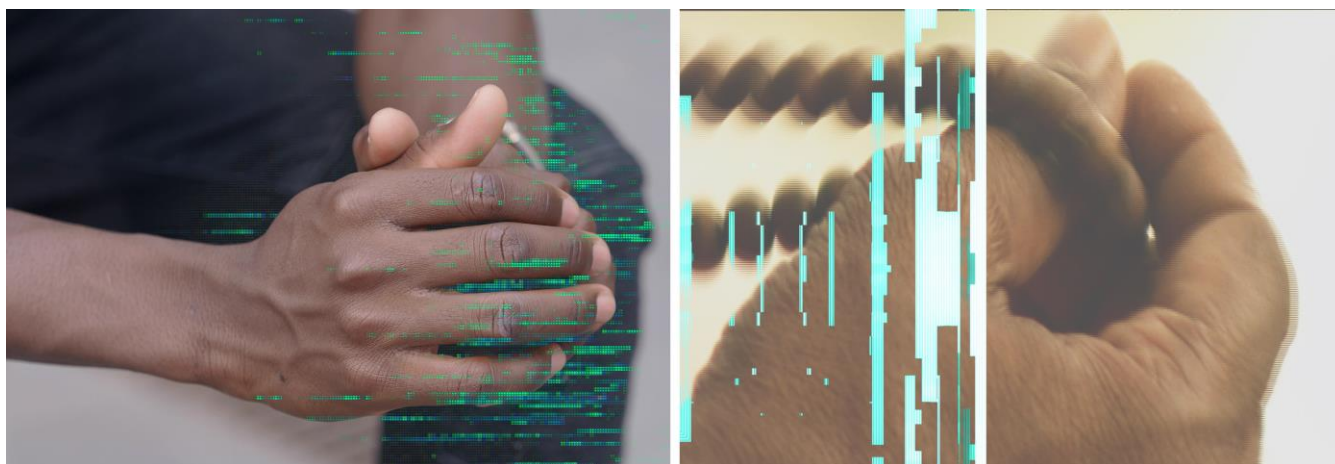
Saks Afridi, *Vessel Architectural Drawing 1*, 2019, Print on archival paper,
48 x 36 in.

Saks Afridi



Saks Afridi, *Vessel Architectural Drawing 2*, 2019, Print on archival paper, 48 x 36 in.

Saks Afridi



Saks Afridi, *Hope, Doubt, Doubt, Hope*, 2019, Lenticular prints, 24 x 36 in. (x2)

SAKS AFRIDI

Born 1975, Peshawar, Pakistan

Saks Afridi is a multi-disciplinary artist who was raised in several countries. Saks's art practice is two-fold: Collaborative and Personal. His personal work investigates the predicaments and perplexities of the life of an 'Insider Outsider'. This is the practice of achieving a sense of belonging while being out of place, finding happiness in a state of temporary permanence, and re-contextualizing existing historical and cultural narratives with the contemporary.

His latest project 'SpaceMosque', exists in a new genre he terms as 'Sci-fi Sufism'. Here he explores the idea of 'spiritual machines' that fuse mysticism and technology, bringing humanity closer to understanding itself. Inspired by AfroFuturism, he sees this para-fictional approach to Islamic folklore and mythology as a contemporary sister movement he calls Subcontinental Futurism.

Saks comes to art with a background in advertising, as a Creative Director on brands such as Mercedes-Benz and MTV. He studied at the Academy of Art and later sculpture at the Art Students League of New York. He speaks English, Arabic, Urdu and Pashto. Saks is the proud recipient of 2 Gold Cannes Lion Awards, 3 D&AD Pencils, 2 OneShow pencils and a United Nations Award for Peace & Understanding. His work has also been featured in The New York Times, The Guardian, Al Jazeera, CNN and The Colbert Report.

The artist lives and works in New York City.

Education

2016	Art Students League of New York, Sculpture
2004	Academy of Art University, Commercial and Advertising Art
1998	Eastern Connecticut State University

Selected Exhibitions

2019	<i>SpaceMosque</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2018	<i>Delicate Bond of Steel</i> , Aicon Gallery with Marta Hewett Gallery, Cincinnati
2018	<i>Something Else – Off Biennale</i> , Cairo
2018	<i>Hyperreal</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2017	Pulse Art Fair, Miami, Florida
2017	National Art Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan
2017	Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Abu Dhabi, UAE
2017	Governors Island Art Fair, New York
2017	Aljira Center for Contemporary Art, New Jersey
2017	<i>Sown Together</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2017	Whitebox Gallery, New York
2016	Salt Arts Festival, London
2016	Children's Museum of Manhattan, New York
2016	Whitebox Gallery, New York
2014	Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Netherlands
2014	Dumbo Art Festival, New York
2014	Miami Art Basel, The Fridge Art Fair
2014	The Society of Domestic Museology, New York
2013	Phyllis Harriman Mason Gallery, New York
2012	<i>Artists in Advertising</i> , The Gartner Gallery, New York

Awards & Residencies

Cannes Lions

D&AD

UN Award for Peace and Understanding

The One Show

The Clio

Art Directors Club

Communication Arts (Advertising, Design & Typography)