

Promotesht Das Pulak: *Sugar Blades*

Aicon Contemporary New York is proud to present *Sugar Blades* the second U.S. solo exhibition of Promotesht Das Pulak.



The Bangladesh based artist Promotesht Das Pulak is endlessly fascinated with the aesthetics of violence – the gracefulness of guns, the beauty of bombs. Like aircraft safety videos, which have gone from being tongue in cheek to outright hilarious, Pulak's art seems oblivious to that which is at the core of violence, and like swords in the court of Versailles, focused only on the ornamentation. But that, the viewer quickly realizes, is only a way to draw us in, to make us think.

Pulak questions the rising tide of religiosity in Bangladesh, a country founded on diversity. This tide, like his ornamental AK 47 machine gun, uses divine, some would say beautiful, citation of scripture, to justify a narrow bigoted vision. It is a sweet blade, which cuts deep into the fabric of Bangladeshi society. "Sugar Blades" is a verbatim translation of a Bangla phrase, something like a coup de grace delivered with a smile.

In *Sugar Blades* Pulak continues to use his signature white flowers made from a reed native to the Gangetic delta, *shola*. In a departure from before, he does not stop there. He draws upon a long history of golden embellishment of weapons of

war, and works with traditional goldsmiths to create metallic floral patterns on gas masks, hand grenades, and the like. The ornamentation is so fantastic that it eclipses these objects, which maim and kill. The art, like the society that it holds up a mirror to, blinds us to the underlying pain with an overlay of guilt.

Pulak was born in 1980 in Bangladesh. He completed his MFA in 2004 from the Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka and was trained as a painter. Nevertheless, the use of diverse material has played a pivotal role in his artistic practice. The juxtaposition between the organic natural elements and the combat equipment suggests a betrayal of innocence and beauty. The artist often incorporates other media such as painting, video, image manipulation, photography, and installation in his work.

Promotesht Das Pulak's work was in the **54th Venice Biennale**, in the Bangladeshi Pavilion. He was the runner-up in the sculpture category, for the prestigious Asia-wide **Prudential Eye Awards** in 2016. He has exhibited in Bangladesh, India, Singapore, the United States, and other countries.

The artist lives and works in Dhaka.