

# **Anatomy of a Painting and the Preserevant Prophet**

Large Print Labels

Raqib Shaw's creative process combines memories and art historical references to trace his personal story of beauty and loss. This gallery evokes the artist's studio. It includes objects of inspiration, staged performances captured in photographs and drawings, and preparatory studies for one painting that marks the loss of Shaw's beloved Jack Russell Terrier, Mr. C.

To make his paintings, Shaw begins with many sketches, drawings, tracings, and watercolors. In the final composition, he draws delicate outlines in gold acrylic, creating tiny wells into which he pours enamel paint. He manipulates the paint with porcupine quills and fine needles.

**Raqib Shaw: Ballads of East and West** unfolds across the Museum in two additional locations. The Hostetter Gallery in the New Wing showcases paintings spanning the past 12 years of his career, while the Museum's outdoor Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade features newly commissioned work **The Perseverant Prophet**. Like Isabella Stewart Gardner, Shaw fuses art from

different cultures to evoke deeply personal meaning.

**Without all doubt, the torments which we may be made to suffer are much greater in their effect on the body and mind than any pleasures which the most learned voluptuary could suggest, or than the liveliest imagination and the most sound and exquisitely sensible body could enjoy.**

—Edmund Burke



Raqib Shaw  
**The Departure**

2021-2022

Acrylic liner and enamel on  
aluminum

This painting reimagines the **Presentation of the Virgin** (about 1556, see open book nearby) by Italian painter Jacopo Robusti, nicknamed Tintoretto. In the original, the young Virgin Mary ascends a staircase to dedicate her life to serving God. Here, Shaw's dear dog and friend Mr C takes Mary's place, surrounded by celestial light.

Shaw himself stands on the left, facing a painting of a waterfall inspired by a landscape near his childhood home in Kashmir. Miniature versions of Shaw's other paintings and some of the objects that inspired them suggest temporarily abandoned props. Above, spirit figures that the artist calls "howlers" are drawn from performance photographs of the artist, including those near the entrance of this gallery.



Raqib Shaw  
**The Perseverant Prophet**  
2023  
Vinyl

In *The Perseverant Prophet*, Shaw took Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *The Tower of Babel* (1563) as his point of departure. Flames engulf the tower and the surrounding Himalayan landscape, igniting a pile of art history books. On the left, the artist Raqib Shaw fights the blaze with a Japanese parasol, never surrendering to catastrophe in the face of perpetual chaos and seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Since 1997, the British-Indian painter and sculptor Raqib Shaw has lived in London. As a teenager, he was forced to leave his childhood home in Kashmir because of growing religious tensions and insurgencies. References to the beauty and trauma of his childhood abound in his work.