

Abstracts

Nick Aikens

Rasheed Araeen: *A Retrospective*

The work presented in Rasheed Araeen's touring retrospective spans over sixty years. It is structured around five chapters that leads visitors chronologically through what Araeen describes as the 'journey' of his aesthetic, conceptual and political investigations. In this paper curator of the exhibition Nick Aikens looks at some of the of the key works and ideas across the different chapters, identifying concerns that appear at different stages of Araeen's artistic trajectory, such as the relationship between geometry and equality or what art historian Michael Newman describes as an engagement with 'critical universalism'. At the same time, the paper will reflect on the strategic choices of *Rasheed Araeen: A Retrospective*, and its potential to allow Araeen's work to speak from both within and against the institution.

Nick Aikens is a curator of exhibitions at the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, where he also leads the research programme Deviant Practice. He is a PhD candidate at Valand Art Academy, Gothenburg and a tutor at the Dutch Art Institute, Arnhem. He is the curator of *Rasheed Araeen: A Retrospective* and editor of the accompanying monograph *Rasheed Araeen* (JRP Ringier, 2017).

Charles Esche

Rasheed Araeen and the problem of the modern

Esche will look at Araeen's development as an artist and will read the changes in his practice through a relationship to the modern. The modern here is understood as both an artistic style (modernism) and a world system grounded in white colonial hegemony (modernity). What happened when a young Pakistani artist took up the tools of the colonial masters? How did his experiences shape his work thereafter? Does Araeen offer a way to say farewell to the modern today?

Charles Esche is director of Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; professor of contemporary art and curating at Central Saint Martins, UAL, London and co-director of *Afterall Journal and Books*. He teaches on the *Exhibition Studies* MRes course at CSM, and at Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht.

Zoe Sutherland
Rasheed Araeen's Cruciform Series

Beginning in 1985 with the work *Fair and Lovely* Araeen made a group of works that would come to be known as the 'Cruciform Series'. Deploying a nine-panel grid and combining photomontage with abstract panels the series embody Araeen's sophisticated investigation into the relationship between different aesthetic, ideological and epistemological systems. In this paper art theorist Zoe Sutherland offers close readings of a selection of works from the series, analysing Araeen's ability to complicate perceived correlations between east and west, core and periphery.

Zoe Sutherland is Senior Lecturer at University of Brighton, where she teaches philosophy, critical theory, radical politics, and aesthetics.

Lucy Steeds
Re-Telling 'The Other Story'

In an image-led presentation, Lucy Steeds will reflect on Rasheed Araeen's artistic contribution to the exhibition he curated in 1989–90: 'The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain'. This hugely prescient and belatedly influential exhibition brought together the work of 24 artists largely overlooked, if not scorned, by the British establishment at the time. Lucy will anchor the first part of her talk in photographs of the show's initial installation, at the Hayward Gallery in London – drawing on recent work to and analyse this iteration online (<https://www.afterall.org/exhibition-histories/the-other-story>). Then turning to shots of the show on tour, she will ask: how did the hang of 'The Other Story' in London and Manchester vary; and how might we understand the differences now? Her talk is made possible by the documentation of 'The Other Story' in London by Rasheed Araeen and in Manchester by contributing artist Eddie Chambers.

Lucy Steeds is Reader in Art Theory and Exhibition Histories at University of the Arts London (UAL). Developing over a decade of research into Rasheed Araeen's exhibition 'The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain' (1989–90), she recently launched a microsite dedicated to this historic show: <https://www.afterall.org/exhibition-histories/the-other-story> Lucy is Senior Research Fellow for the Exhibition Histories book-series published by Afterall at Central Saint Martins (CSM) and she is core to the teaching team for the research-based masters in Art: Exhibition Studies at CSM (which she co-founded in 2011).

John Roberts
Race and the Critique of Identity

John Roberts is Professor of Art & Aesthetics at the University of Wolverhampton, and the author of a number of books including *The Reasoning of Unreason* (2018) *Thoughts on an Index Not Freely Given* (2016), *Revolutionary Time and the Avant-Garde* (2015), *The Necessity of Errors* (2011), and *The*

Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade (2007).

Stephen Wright

Sundering art from itself

What happens when art is taken off the artificial life-support system of the global artworld, allowing it to operate on the *1:1 scale* and to develop in more *permacultural* art-sustaining environments? Instead of remaining on the merry-go-round of autonomous art and its regime of specificity, art adopts a logic of *compatibility* as it seeks usership elsewhere. There are of course those who fear that sundering art from itself in this way is tantamount to stripping it of its very ontology. Let's hope they're right, because in keeping with arguments laid out by Rasheed Araeen, this deontologisation is nothing to fear but may be exactly what is required to renew art's world-transformative potential in our post-artistic times, allowing variable *coefficients of art* to inform, invigorate and energize any number of objects and activities.

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Stephen Wright is a writer and co-director of the research program Document & contemporary art at the European School of Visual Art in France. His writing has focused primarily on the politics of usership, particularly in contexts of collaborative, extradisciplinary practices with variable coefficients of art. His current research examines practices of artistic permaculture, where art escapes its ontological specificity and the artificial life-support systems of the autonomous artworld, seeking instead forms of compatibility with other modes of activity and art-sustaining environments. He lives and works on a permaculture farm in Corrèze, France.