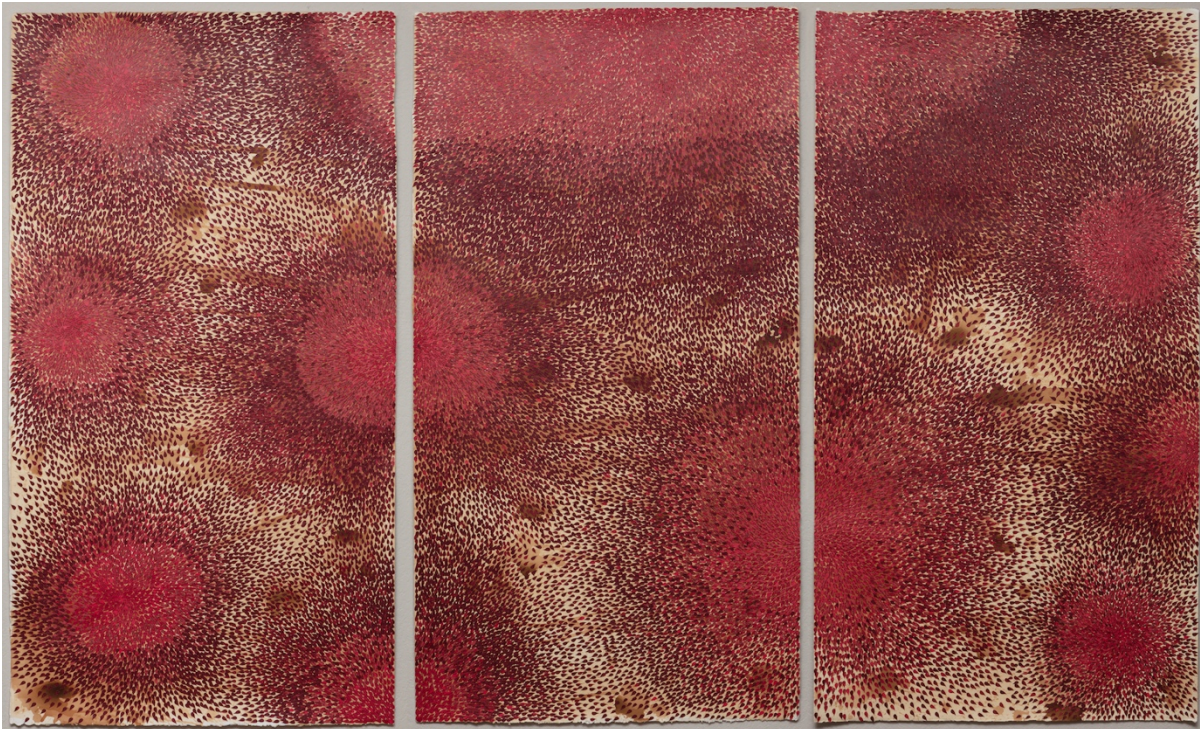


GALLERY
WENDI NORRIS

Gallery Wendi Norris is pleased to present:

AMBREEN BUTT
Say My Name



Ambreen Butt, *Wife and Son of Badr Mansoor*, 2020, printed text on tea-stained paper, 55 x 30 inches each (139.7 x 76.2 cm each), 55 x 90 inches total (139.7 x 228.6 cm total)

Gallery Wendi Norris presents **Say My Name**, a solo exhibition of new collage works by Ambreen Butt. **Say My Name** is Butt's first exhibition with Gallery Wendi Norris; it will also be installed as a physical exhibition in San Francisco later this year.

Created as a means to explore the relationship between power and vulnerability and to pay homage to innocent lives lost, each of the twelve pieces in **Say My Name** incorporates the name and age of a single Afghan or Pakistani child killed in an American drone strike. Butt commences by staining the paper in tea. She then

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separately and repeatedly writes or prints out the child's name, shreds it into pieces, and arranges and glues the shredded fragments to her tea-stained paper in dense, swirling patterns. This process, undertaken with repetitive and transformational urgency, reconsiders the ripping, tearing action of a drone strike in order to elevate the names of its victims into shapes of exquisite grace and enduring strength.

Rhythmic repetition is also mirrored in the works' scale. Eleven vertical compositions are uniformly cut and portrait-sized, a modest 30 x 20 inches. Each work, however, takes on a unique and vibrant monochromatic palette. Presented together, they form a striking rainbow. The twelfth work, a towering triptych by contrast, "Wife and Son of Badr Mansoor" breaks up the careful pattern. A family of three, presented with pillar-like scale and strength, anchor the installation. It's bursting firework-like patterns of deep magenta and cherry red emanate with energetic force. "The wife and the son, whose names we do not know, are the victims," remarks Butt, "But in this case, the person left behind, who is living, is also a victim, so I chose to represent them as a triptych."

In many of the smaller works, Butt includes animal and landscape motifs inspired primarily by 16th century Indo-Persian miniature paintings of hunts that took place in present day territories of Afghanistan and Pakistan. She thereby re-contextualizes the contemporary geopolitical landscape as a layered manifestation of historical forces. For Butt, history is not behind us: It is unfolding around us. The twelve pieces in **Say My Name** present a vision of time that locates the past adjacent to the present (rather than hidden behind it) and a sense of place that maps human action onto the landscape (rather than hovering above it). In their combinations of paper shredded and arranged to resemble individual paint brush strokes with elegant animal motifs and hunting scenes, these artworks illuminate and challenge convenient distinctions between art and politics, beauty and tragedy, then and now, us and them.

Ambreen Butt (b. 1969 Lahore, Pakistan) lives and works in Southlake, Texas. She received her BFA in traditional Indian and Persian miniature painting from the National College of Arts in Lahore. She earned her MFA in painting in 1997 from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston. Butt's work has been featured in solo exhibitions at institutions including the Dallas Contemporary, TX; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA; among others.