



Prem Sahib  
*Heron*  
07/09 – 07/10/2017

It is with great pleasure that Mendes Wood DM Brussels presents *Heron*, Prem Sahib's first solo exhibition in Brussels. The artist has occupied the gallery's two floors with installations and sculptures that utilize different materials, including glass, metal and ceramic tiles, many of which are found in the interiors and exteriors of public spaces.

The title of the exhibition *Heron* references a bird commonly found around park lakes. This solitary animal features in numerous mythologies and cultures and is renowned for its patience in devouring its prey. As a starting point, Sahib draws a parallel between the bird's observant and stealthy nature and the practice of cruising. In an attempt to explore the sense of unnoticed presence, the artist has made interventions within the gallery that encourage the viewer to consider the interior and surrounding architectures.

In the main stairwell of the gallery, Sahib hangs two rings that connect the first and second floors. Made from steel and rubber, the rings touch each other slightly forming a clear relationship with one another. They evoke the image of a pleasure object suggesting the impending absence of the body.

This notion of absence permeates the exhibition as a whole, continuing in the lower gallery with an oversized piercing inserted into the wall. *Flesh Tunnel* reveals little more than the space behind it and inverts the gaze of the viewer back into the gallery space, pursuing Sahib's treatment of the gallery as a body that is adorned. *Helix II*, an ornate relief, is attached to the wall by enlarged piercings. Sahib's interest in jewelry is a way of thinking about objects that mediate value through aesthetic conventions.

Sahib became interested in the domestic past of the Brussels gallery and has covered the ground floor space with black carpet, in an attempt to emulate a traditional family environment. In the same room, items of clothing are compressed between glass sheets held in the form of benches, presented as materials examined under a microscope.

On the second floor, Sahib has installed *Heron*, a large sculpture that is deliberately positioned to face the church seen through the gallery windows. The form itself references a kneeling body and is conceived as an abstract nest, presenting various objects as a still life. A duvet, a discarded ring and willow branches are positioned over the surface to counter the hard finish of the tiles, balancing discomfort and pleasure.

The exhibition questions the body and its aesthetic limitations, using objects and architecture as a space of representation. Such limitations flirt with the latent sexuality present in Sahib's works, its relationship to the act of observing, the cult of forms and the responsibility of absence.



Prem Sahib (b. 1982, London) currently lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include *Balconies*, Kunstverein in Hamburg (2017); *Cruising the House*, curated by Milovan Farronato, residency at Inclusartiz, Rio de Janeiro, *Grand Union*, Grand Union, Birmingham (2016); *Side On*, ICA, London, *END UP*, Southard Reid, London (2015); performance and presentation of work made in Stromboli as part of *Forget Amnesia*, Fiorucci Art Trust, *Tongues*, Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai (2014); *Night Flies*, Southard Reid, London, *Back Chat*, Lorcan O'Neill Gallery, Rome (2013).

Selected group exhibitions include *Si Sedes Non Is*, curated by Milovan Farronato, The Breeder, Athens, *ISelf Collection: Self-Portrait as the Billy Goat*, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2017); *CRUISING*, SALTS, Birsfelden; *NEON: The Charged Line*, Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, *Prediction*, curated by Milovan Farronato, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, *Secret Surface*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2016); *Sensorium*, Sunaparanta, Goa Centre for the Arts, *fig-2 25/50* in collaboration with Celia Hempton and Cecilia Bengolea, ICA Studio, London, *Britain Can Make It*, Hayward Gallery, London (2015); *Burning Down The House*, Gwangju Biennale, *LISTENING*, Hayward Touring Contemporary Open (2014).

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