



I don't want to be there when it happens

11 November – 24 December

Raqs Media Collective | Reena Saini Kallat | Raj Kumar
Chesworth & Leber | Mithu Sen | Adeela Suleman | Abdullah M I Syed

Curated by Mikala Tai, Kate Warren and Eugenio Viola

Principal Education Partner



PERTH INSTITUTE OF
CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Spark Lab
GROWING FUTURE INNOVATORS

RioTinto

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About PICA

Housed in a large and striking heritage building in the heart of Perth, Western Australia, PICA is the city's focal point for those wishing to experience the best of Australian and international visual, performance and interdisciplinary art.

PICA is both a producing and presenting institution that runs a year-round program of changing exhibitions, seasons in contemporary dance, theatre and performance and a range of interdisciplinary projects. It boasts one of the largest and most breath-taking exhibition spaces in Australia and has become known for the leading role it plays in the presentation of significant new work.

PICA's key aim is to promote, support and present contemporary arts and to stimulate critical discussion around the arts and broader cultural issues. Providing a site for experimentation, critical analysis, discussion and debate is fundamental to its charter. PICA is known for the rigour and breadth of its artistic and education programs, high production standards and impeccable presentation.

PICA is an icon of contemporary thinking – it is a catalyst for innovative and groundbreaking art and culture. Not constrained by convention, PICA gives artists and audiences a glimpse of what is possible.

To learn more about our coming program, or to make a booking, visit pica.org.au or call 08 9228 6300.

How to use these Education Notes

In I don't want to be there when it happens, teachers and students are invited to engage with a cross section of contemporary art created by Pakistani and Indian artists.

These Education Notes are intended to support classes visiting the exhibition by providing background information to read and activities to be done before, during and/or after your visit to PICA.

Student Activities

By focusing on specific points while viewing the artworks, students will develop different ways of interacting with and critiquing visual and multidisciplinary art practices. Student learning, in specific curriculum areas is engaged through ideas and techniques embedded in the exhibition.

The activities have been designed to be used Pre, During and Post visit 6 – 12. The questions on 6 – 12 have been designed to foster students' understanding of artworks and themes within the exhibition. These pages can be printed for students to respond to during their visit.

Cross-Curriculum Priorities

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia (AAEA)

General Capabilities

These Education Notes will develop all general capabilities in students.

- 1 Literacy
- 2 Numeracy
- 3 Information and Communication Technology Capability
- 4 Critical and Creative thinking
- 5 Personal and Social Capability:
- 6 Ethical Behaviour
- 7 Intercultural understanding

Learning Areas: Curriculum

Curriculum links specifically related to *I don't want to be there when it happens* cover 7 out of the 8 Subject and Course learning areas:

ENGLISH: Literature, As an additional Language and Dialect

MATHEMATICS: Application

SCIENCE: Psychology

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES: Geography, Modern History, Philosophy and Ethics, Economics, Politics and Law, Religion and Life

LANGUAGES: Asian (Pakistan – Urdu, Hindu, Arabic)

ARTS: Media Production & Analysis and Visual Arts.

TECHNOLOGIES: Building and Construction, Children, Family and the Community, Design, Materials Design and Technology.



We are always looking for outstanding examples of student work that has been sparked by our exhibition content.

If any of your students submit written answers and/or artwork of a high standard in response to the exhibition or the suggested questions and activities, please forward a copy to:

Minaxi May
Education Programs Curator
PICA
GPO Box P1221
Perth, WA, 6844

education@pica.org.au

Share to our Instagram @pica_perth or Facebook PICAARTS

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About *I don't want to be there when it happens*

Emerging from the prevailing tensions and complex socio-political relationship between India and Pakistan, *I don't want to be there when it happens* presents a group of artists who convey the psychology of trauma in an era of perpetual conflict.

A heightened sense of insecurity and anxiety currently dominates our world and this is having a direct effect on how communities interact with each other. Issues surrounding religious intolerance, racial profiling, terrorism and ethnic conflict, today more than ever, merit our attention. Art must face these fragile issues and attempt to foster empathy within the complex web of languages, religion, cultures, and varying historical perspectives that shape our globalized society. A number of problems and contradictions are challenging the world in recent years: a diffused sense of inequality, systemic poverty connected with violence and crime, military imperialism, and the phenomenon of migration which has now reached the dramatic dimension of a mass, multi-origin diaspora. These complex processes have generated an upsurge of intolerance which is expressed in the rising influence of extremist right-wing political parties, in the re-emergence of religious extremism and in the prejudice and discrimination against national minorities.

I don't want to be there when it happens coincides with the 70th anniversary of the Partition of India and Pakistan, (14th August 1947), that saw the departing British colonial power divide the country: West of the Partition became Muslim-majority Pakistan, while the rest of the country was Hindu-majority India. The partition led to one of the greatest forced mass migrations in human history - and one that resulted in over one million deaths. In memory of this tragic event, this exhibition features artists from both Pakistan and India, because art has to create bridges instead of borders and to re-affirm the co-existence of all possible differences.

The artists participating in this exhibition convey the profound existential unease of our age, either directly or indirectly. The alarming signals of such experiences are transmitted through their evocative works as they unravel the present time, dealing with the legacy of history, as well as foretelling the future.

The works in this exhibition were selected because of their consideration of friction and strain in our shifting social fabric, as communities from different cultures, faiths and traditions adjust to living together. In Europe, the Middle East and Asia regional conflicts based upon communities divided by language, religion or ethnicity provide the backdrop for a news agenda dominated by images of violence and seemingly senseless confrontation. Often media and politicians stoke the fire of intolerance and racism instead of raising awareness and challenging ignorance.

I don't want to be there when it happens does not aim to present a simplistic solution, but rather reaffirms the rejection of violence as well as the need for more effective and profound structures that facilitate dialogue through a conscious act of engagement.

PICA Senior Curator Eugenio Viola

Artists

Reena Saini Kallat, Raj Kumar, Sonia Leber and David Chesworth, Raqs Media Collective, Mithu Sen, Adeela Suleman, Abdullah M. I. Syed

See more of the artists' works here:

Reena Saini Kallat:	http://www.reenakallat.com/
Raj Kumar	–
Sonia Leber and David Chesworth:	http://leberandchesworth.com/
Raqs Media Collective:	http://www.raqsmediacollective.net
Mithu Sen:	http://www.gallerychemould.com/artists/mithu-home/
Adeela Suleman:	http://www.aicongallery.com/artists/adeela-suleman/bio
Abdullah M. I. Syed:	http://abdullahmisyed.com/work-avenue-1

Student Activities to do in class, before your visit to PICA

1. Questions & Answers Activity: Cross-Curriculum Priority

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia (AAEA)

ALL YEARS

Students to research and find out the answers to the following questions.

Asia & Its Diversity

- a. What peoples inhabit Pakistan? Is it diverse in its background, traditions, belief systems and religions?
- b. How has war shaped the interrelationships between people in this Asian region, specifically Pakistan and India
- c. How have these relationships impacted globally?

Achievements and contributions of the peoples of Asia

- d. How have the people of Pakistan contributed to world history?
- e. How can elements of this be seen in the exhibition *I don't want to be there when it happens*?
- f. How do Pakistanis continue to contribute globally to human endeavour? What are they leaders in?
- g. What arts and literary practices specific to Pakistan (or India) have influenced creative pursuits/practices or popular culture within Australia, the Asia region and globally?

English and Arts Related Resources:

- <https://www.shughal.com/17-dazzling-arts-crafts-source-pride-pakistan/>
- http://wacanaseni.usm.my/WACANA%20SENI%20JOURNAL%20OF%20ARTS%20DISCOURSE/wacanaSeni_v14/WS-ART%202.pdf
- <https://www.guggenheim.org/blogs/map/miniature-painting-in-pakistan-divergences-between-traditional-and-contemporary-practice>
- <http://www.houseofpakistan.com/historical-art-in-pakistan/>
- <http://pakteahouse.net/2009/08/15/pakistani-literature-evolution-and-trends/>

Asia-Australia engagement

- h. How has Australia collaborated or engaged with Pakistan and its people in times of war?
- i. How has Australia continued socio-political relations with Pakistan today?
- j. Do the Pakistan-Australia relations positively support the Asia region and globally?
- k. How is Australia's history linked with Pakistan both in Ancient and Modern times? You may want to research immigration to and from Australia.
- l. How does Australia significantly contribute to the Asia region socially, culturally, politically and economically?
- m. How have Pakistani and Indian Australians contributed to Australia? How do these peoples continue to contribute to Australia's culture and society through their customs?

2. Research, Interviewing & Writing Activity: General Capabilities, Course & Subject Areas

ALL YEARS with a focus on MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL

Have your students conduct research about the impact of war on Pakistan. This activity will develop students' capabilities in Literacy, Numeracy (dates), Critical and Creative Thinking and Intercultural Understanding, whilst they also think about how conflict impacts on the personal and social.

Consider:

- Websites
- Books, Magazines or newspaper articles
- People – interview someone you know who is from Pakistan or India to find out their perspective or their experience. Use a device to record the conversation – video or audio. Write this as a Q & A interview or a narrative short story.

Questions

- How does conflict between Pakistan and India impact on peoples' experiences of the personal (feelings) and social? Consider their sense of place (geography), citizenship and history (cultural and family).
- How has your research and reading about this long-lasting conflict changed your intercultural understanding of Pakistan and India? How does knowing this information about the conflict make you feel?
- What does your research tell you about Pakistan and India's ethical stand points in relation to their conflict? How has this changed over the years? What is your own ethical viewpoint on this conflict? On war?
- Are there any other wars that are comparable to the Pakistan conflict?



3. Research & Writing Activity: English, Humanities & Social Sciences & Language

PRIMARY and MIDDLE SCHOOL

The name “Pakistan” means "Land of the Pure" in Urdu and Persian.¹

OR

“Land of the Paks, the spiritually pure and clean”.²

AND

“Stan” means “country” in Hindi and Persian.³

ACRONYM for all the homelands:⁴

P Punjab

A Afghans, North-West area

K Kashmir

I Iran

S Sindh

T Tukharistan

A Afghanistan

BaluchistaN

Ask students to research each of these countries and areas to find their location, culture and history.

Questions

Ask students to look at the place names in the acronym “Pakistan” and answer the following questions:

- Where are these countries located on the world map? How many borders does each country share? Draw a map.
- What are the differences in cultures, history, food, art, language?
- How have these places influenced each other or integrated together?
- What does the name say about Pakistan as a whole?
- How does knowing what the name Pakistan means affect your understanding of the artworks in the exhibition *I don't want to be there when it happens*?
- Are there any other countries that have names made from acronyms? What does the name say about the country?



¹ Kamran Riaz. "Pakistan: "The land of the Pure" University of Houston. <https://www.uh.edu/~sriaz/pakistan/> (2017).

² Ibid.

³ Dictionary.com. "Afghanistan, Kazakhstan — How many "stans" are there and what does it mean?" <http://www.dictionary.com/e/afghanistan-kyrgyzstan/> (2017).

⁴ Anthony Tauro. "How did Pakistan get Its Name"? Quora. February 14. <https://www.quora.com/How-did-Pakistan-get-its-name> (2013).

Student Activities to do during your visit to PICA

Research & Writing Activity: The Arts



MIDDLE & UPPER SCHOOL

I don't want to be there when it happens is an opportunity for teachers and students to engage in a cross section of contemporary art. By encouraging students to look at the artworks in the exhibition with a focus on the following points, they will learn ways of interacting with, viewing, critiquing and developing their understanding of visual and multidisciplinary art practices.

This page can be printed for students to respond to whilst visiting the *I don't want to be there when it happens* exhibition. Use the following approaches to further develop students' understanding of artworks and themes within the exhibition. Students should choose ONE artist or ONE artwork on which to focus.

- 1. Artist(s) Concepts & Ideas** Can you see the ideas or concepts behind this work? How? Why do you think these ideas or concepts are important to make art about? What does this work tell you about the artist(s) and society?

- 2. Artist(s) Materials & Techniques** What materials has the artist(s) used? How has the artist(s) employed specific techniques with these materials? How does this add to the reading of the work?

- 3. Own Point of View & Reflection** What is your personal opinion about the topic, themes, material, techniques and the finish of the work the artist(s) has created?

- 4. Exhibition Themes** What themes do you see in *I don't want to be there when it happens*? How have the artists collaborated on these themes? Can you discuss any similarities or differences in how they have tackled these themes?

TIP: Remember to take photos of artworks in the exhibition (no flash) for your in-class activities and as a memory.

Student Activities to do in class after your visit

1. Research, Speaking & Writing Activity: Course & Subject Areas

ALL YEARS

The following is a list of key concepts and themes in *I don't want to be there when it happens*.

ENGLISH:

Literature

English as another language

MATHEMATICS:

Application

Multiplicity & Assemblage

SCIENCE:

Psychology

Perspectives

Trauma

Uncertainty

Non-resolution

Big-Brother

Co-existence

E.g. Artists – Mithu Sen, Adeela Suleman

LANGUAGES:

Asian (Pakistan e.g. Urdu, Hindu, Arabic)

ARTS:

Media Production and Analysis

Visual Arts

Art practice

Interpretation

Emotion – trauma

Pattern / repetition

Multiplicity

Art as therapy

Commitment

Tradition / Contemporary

TECHNOLOGIES:

Building and Construction

Handicrafts

Materials Design and Technology

Technology

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES:

Geography

India

Pakistan

South East Asia

Australasia

Region – war, conflict

Ancient History / Modern History

India

Pakistan

War

Colonisation

De-colonisation

Diaspora

E.g. Artist – Abdullah M. I. Syed

Philosophy and Ethics

Tolerance

Respect

Politics & Law: Socio-politics

War

Conflict

Media

Politics

Representation

Partition (70th anniversary)

Bridges, not border

Islam

**E.g. Artists – Raqs Media Collective,
Reena Saini Kallat**

Religion & Life

Tolerance

Prayer

Faith

Islam

E.g. Artist – Raj Kumar

a) PRIMARY

Get students to memorise or repeat appropriate key themes.

Ask students to recall an example e.g. one of the artworks from the exhibition or something from their experience.

Create a word or picture sleuth and ask students to state or reproduce the words or images.

b) MIDDLE SCHOOL

Look at the Key Themes list and ask students to:

- a. Understand the themes by researching and identifying the meanings as a writing activity.
- b. Brainstorm, applying the definitions by using or interpreting the themes with an example.
- c. Analyse by using compare and contrast techniques e.g. the terms under Religion & Life – How are prayer & faith similar or different?

c) UPPER SCHOOL

Students should evaluate, have a position e.g. argue; appraise in relation to key theme examples the teacher gives. Ask students to divide into five groups – one for each of the 5 areas listed e.g. HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES. Ask students to evaluate each term listed in their area e.g. Religion & Life – give examples from the exhibition and from their research or experience.



TIP: When coming to the exhibition, bring answers to this activity and use them to understand the artworks.

2. Analysing & Evaluating Activity: English, The Arts & Technologies

UPPER SCHOOL

Ask students to research artists, performers or writers who comment on war. You may want them to consider other Pakistani creatives who are not included in *I don't want to be there when it happens* and comment on the Pakistani-India conflicts OR artists who communicate about other wars or conflicts.

Using their research, get students to analyse and evaluate the poetry, writing, or arts piece, paying particular attention to:

- Concept
- Techniques
- Materials
- Principles related to the specific disciplines e.g. poetry

How does the work they have considered compare or contrast to works in *I don't want to be there when it happens*?



3. Creating Activity: English, The Arts & Technologies, using Mathematics, Science, Languages or Humanities and Social Sciences

UPPER SCHOOL

a) Using ONE artwork or ONE specific artist from the exhibition *I don't want to be there when it happens*, together with ONE key theme from question 1, ask students to create - construct, write or formulate something in response to ONE specific theme e.g. Colonisation.

Research and perhaps use the techniques, processes & materials included in the exhibition:

Traditional Islamic Handicrafts

Assemblage

b) Compare, Contrast & Critique

Have students look at their inspiration and ask the following questions:

- How does your creation compare and contrast with the artwork or artist you were inspired by? How are they similar? How are they different?
- What have you learnt about the art piece/artist and your own way of working from doing this exercise?
- What key themes from the exhibition as listed in question 1 can you see in the work you created? How are they used? How are they similar or different to works in the exhibition?



Image Credits

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All works created in 2017 unless specified.