

Place

Sha Sarwari, Avan Anwar and Elyas Alavi

Place is a new exhibition of works by artists Sha Sarwari, Avan Anwar and Elyas Alavi, whose creative practices explore the ways in which identities are formed through their lived experiences as migrants and refugees.

As we move through space, we create meanings and associations that form integral parts of our identity and our inner worlds. They form the stories that we tell ourselves about ourselves. We need a sense of place to create memories, to form our identities. But what does 'place' mean to those who have been caught in the crossfires of our current geopolitical environments? To those whose places have been denied them due to ongoing conflict and war, and who now need to nourish a new sense of belonging in a new place. While the artists in *Place* employ different artistic techniques—painting, sculpture and installation, they are all interested in representations of memory, longing, and belonging between two worlds.

Narrm-based artist Avan Anwar was displaced from her birthplace Kurdistan. This break led the artist to create a new and highly personal sense of place through site-specific works. These works directly reference her memories of home and in so doing create a new and distinct site for meaning, belonging and identity.

Turrbal/Jagera-based artist, Sha Sarwari reshapes discourse around identity and memory through his experience as an Afghan Hazara artist. In a compelling series of charcoal paintings that allude to both the physical and metaphysical worlds, he employs language and the Farsi 'Nastaliq' script to further imbue a sense of being both in and out of place.

For Kaurna-based poet and artist Elyas Alavi, whose Hazara background has shaped much of his work, references to memory and place are rife throughout his multi-layered practice. In *Place*, we experience Alavi's expressive paintings that both explore a sense of yearning but are also representations of homelands once lived in, referencing popular media and the ways in which we're told these stories by those not experiencing them, and the cycle of remembering and forgetting in the Western consciousness.

Together, the artists in *Place* express the poeticism in place, the intricacies of belonging and memory, and identity between worlds.

Avan ANWAR

Kurdistan

The pattern of my mind 2022

Gouache, dry pastel, acrylic, watercolour and pencil on board
Courtesy of the artist

Avan ANWAR

Kurdistan

***The pattern of my mind* 2022**

fresh roses, string and mesh panelling

Courtesy of the artist

Avan ANWAR

Kurdistan

***Metamorphosis* 2019**

acrylic Perspex, bulb light and electrical wiring
Courtesy of the artist

Elyas ALAVI

Afghanistan

***Where is the homeland?* 2018**

acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Elyas ALAVI

Afghanistan

***Where is the homeland?* 2018**

acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Elyas ALAVI

Afghanistan

***Abu Nasr Parsa's Promise* 2012**

oil paint on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Sha SARWARI

Afghanistan

Left to right

Untitled 2018

from the series *archaeology of memory*, ongoing
charcoal powder and wood glue on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Untitled 2018

from the series *archaeology of memory*, ongoing
charcoal powder, thread and wood glue on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Sha SARWARI

Afghanistan

Untitled 2022

from the series *archaeology of memory*, ongoing
charcoal, charcoal powder and wood glue on marine plywood
Courtesy of the artist