

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

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## A collision of space and time

**Pakistani artist Rashid Rana's first solo exhibition on show in the UAE at the Leila Heller Gallery**



Rashid Rana, War Within VI, 2017, C print + diasec

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**By Jyoti Kalsi, Special to Weekend Review**

Leila Heller Gallery is also hosting the first solo exhibition in the UAE by Pakistani artist, Rashid Rana. The Lahore-based artist is well known for his Transliteration series, where he transforms imagery from masterpieces in art history into pixels of form and colour, and plays with the fragments to create contemporary photomontages. Through careful manipulation, repetition and rearrangement, he thus transposes imagery from one time and place to another. "I want to see more than one image, more than one time, more than one location in the same image," he says.

1-87, Alserkal Avenue Al Quoz 1, Dubai, UAE | 568 West 25th Street New York, NY 10001 USA

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In earlier works, such as *Veil* from 2004, he superimposed lascivious imagery onto the silhouette of a burqa; and in *Red Carpet* from 2007 he wove together graphic images of slaughterhouses to create his own version of Persian rugs. Later, he similarly telescoped politics, civilisations and time in a series of three-dimensional works, titled *Desperately Seeking Paradise*, by splicing Lahore's humble streets and houses with the architecture of modern skyscrapers.

In his latest works from the *Transliteration* series, featured in the Dubai show, Rana has applied the same splicing and stitching technique to deconstruct and reconfigure some of the most famous paintings from art history. Using a grid structure, he has scrambled compositions by classical masters and rearranged them into pixelated and codified jigsaw puzzles, creating new, fragmented images that tell a different story. The artworks are intriguing because the pictorial language is so familiar but it is presented through the lens of a new spatial and temporal context.

The fragments in Rana's images seem to be randomly rearranged, but are in fact very deliberately placed. There is a sense of movement, akin to a churning of the universe with the promise of endless creative possibilities. The titles, such as *Scattered in Time*, *Familial Unfamiliar*, and *A Seen Unseen* indicate the intention behind the artist's digital manipulations.

"My aim is to force space and time to collide, allowing new scenarios, new meanings, and new relationships for the present and the future to emerge from the past. I want to uproot the imagery from the classical and European contexts, and place it in a contemporary, global context, leaving it up to viewers to interpret it from their own perspectives," Rana says.

Rashid Rana: *Scatter in Time* will run at Leila Heller Gallery in Dubai until April 22.