

May 10, 2013

RUINS ~ Richard Stone & Saad Qureshi at ArtEco Gallery in London thru 18 May 2013

By lance aram rothstein

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(http://labeuratoire.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/img_8182c.jpg)

Serendipity is a wonderful thing.

While in London last week to review the major **Schwitters** (<https://labeuratoire.wordpress.com/2013/05/09/schwitters-in-britain/>) & **Lichtenstein** exhibitions, I was looking for a good local pub in the Wandsworth neighborhood where I'd rented

a room. (The Alma (<http://www.almawandsworth.com/>)) fit the bill perfectly.) There I came across a great little gallery and to my surprise they were having an opening that very night.

The **ArtEco Gallery** (<http://www.artecogallery.com/>), at 533 Old York Road, is run by **Kristin Hjellegjerder** (<https://twitter.com/ArtEcoGallery>). It has a wonderfully welcoming atmosphere and offers a spacious, well-lit environment for viewing and socializing.

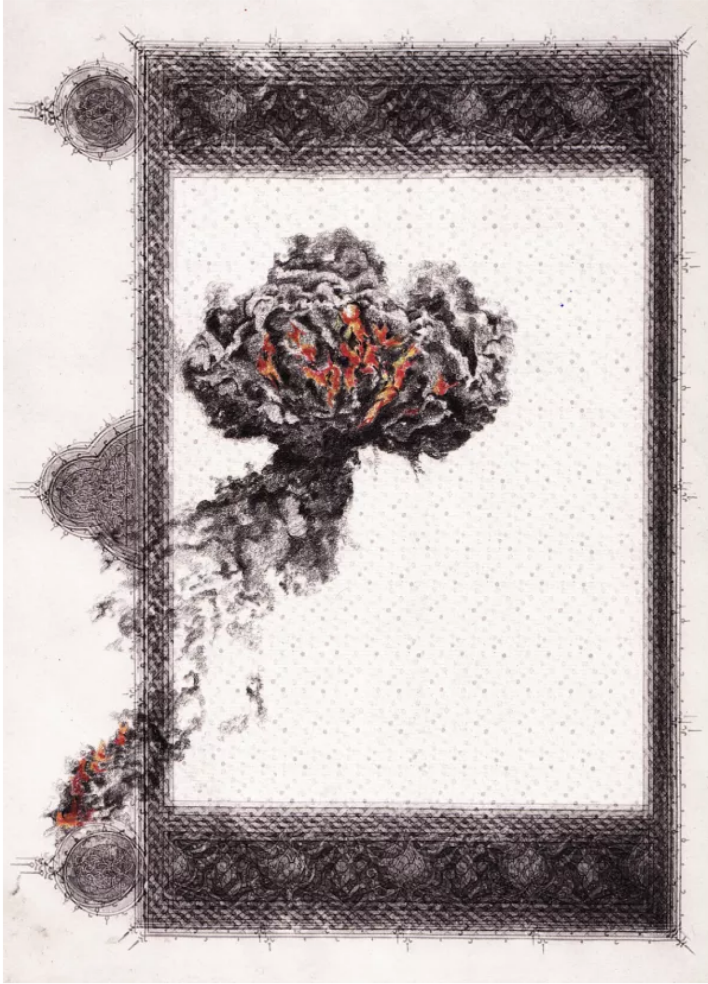
Their current show “**RUINS**” features the work of **Richard Stone** (<http://www.richardstoneprojects.com/>) & **Saad Qureshi** (<http://www.saadqureshi.com/>) and runs through 18, May, 2013.



(http://labeauratoire.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/img_8175c.jpg)

Works by Saad Qureshi on display at ArtEco Gallery.

Saad Qureshi (<http://www.saadqureshi.com/>)’s (<http://www.saadqureshi.com/>) work is not easily categorized. His large, framed pieces feature intricately printed designs that are reminiscent of illuminated manuscripts, but instead of calligraphic scripture or princely portraits, the ornate designs seem to be framing something that isn’t there, or perhaps isn’t there any more. The sooty clouds of explosive destruction suggest that the once main subject of these works has possibly been obliterated, leaving only the borders and smoke.



Saad Qureshi "Beyond oracle and doubt" 2013
mixed media, wax pencil on giclee print 45×51 cm

They purposefully challenge the expected concepts of spacing and placement within their frames, often drawing the viewer to the edges of the work. The multiple overprinting at first seems like someone went a bit overboard with the unsharp mask tool, but when combined with the smoke clouds, they actually give the feeling that perhaps the whole scene is still rattling from an explosion that the viewer has just missed by a matter of seconds.

More intriguing to me were Qureshi's engravings on carbon paper.



http://labeauratoire.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/img_8174c.jpg

Persistence of memory / Untitled, I-V
Saad Qureshi 2012 carving on carbon paper

These finely worked, fragile pieces are framed between two pieces of glass that protrude out into the gallery space so they can be viewed by both sides.

Qureshi also has several other mixed media, installation-type sculptural pieces in the show.

The work of **Richard Stone** (<http://www.richardstoneprojects.com/>) really took me by surprise and I must say I became an instant fan. What on first glance may appear to be a faded, unfinished, or barely begun painting is actually a complete reworking and obscuring of an antique landscape painting. Reminiscent of Rauschenberg's "*Erased de Kooning Drawing*" (<http://www.sfnoma.org/explore/collection/artwork/25846>), these works actually go much farther and seem to investigate the very nature of existence.



after (private collection)
antique oil on board, surface partly removed, lime wood moulding, waterwhite miroguard AR glazing
approx 20x16"

<http://labeuratoire.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/screen-shot-2013-05-09-at-17-36-16.png>

Only patches of the original paintings peek through the abrasions and the appearance is very pleasing to the eye. These ruins are genuine, and like an ancient tempera painting, unearthed from a Byzantine bath house, the viewer searches the remaining details attempting to decipher the original, secret subject matter.



days of violent light
antique oil on boards, surfaces partly removed, lime wood mouldings, waterwhite miroguard AR glazing
approx 15x12" and 10x9"

<http://labeuratoire.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/screen-shot-2013-05-09-at-17-39-17.png>

But Stone isn't giving-up the secret. Instead we quickly give in, and are content to appreciate the results of the process as a new work of art, incorporating the past and the present together as one.



(http://labeauratoire.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/img_8170c.jpg)
Detail from Stone's "days of violent light."



waiting for england
four parts - antique oil on boards, surfaces partly removed, whitewashed, lime wood mouldings, waterwhite miroguard AR glazing
from bottom right to bottom left counterclockwise - 25x35"x2" | 12x11x2" | 21x18x2" | 15x20x2"

(<http://labeauratoire.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/screen-shot-2013-05-09-at-17-20-51.png>)

In his four-part “waiting for england” series, Stone’s destruction is almost complete, and yet the spirit of the original painting, or perhaps just our perception of the original, offers us a sense of serene perfection. The kind of perfection found in dreams or in the anticipation of a great love affair, when the real thing seldom fulfills our expectations.

Stone’s work surpasses expectations and the only thing we’re left wanting is more of it.

Stone also featured several of his obscured sculptural pieces in the show.



(http://labeauratoire.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/img_8176c.jpg)

Richard Stone “trophy” 2012

brass, wood & wax

On these vintage figures of porcelain, spelter, wood & brass, Stone uses a thick wax to obscure most of the details.

In a similar way to *The Belvedere Torso* (http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/x-Schede/MPCs/MPCs_Sala06_01.html) and other ancient sculptural fragments, we’re forced to appreciate the remaining details for what they offer, and can only speculate as to what is hidden by Stone’s shroud of wax.

There are plenty of other interesting works I have not shown or discussed, so if you’re anywhere near London, take this opportunity to catch these two artists in the comfortable venue of the ArtEco Gallery before the show closes next weekend.

“RUINS” features the work of **Richard Stone** (<http://www.richardstoneprojects.com/>) & **Saad Qureshi** (<http://www.saadqureshi.com/>) and runs through 18, May, 2013.

Links:

ArtEco Gallery (<http://www.artecogallery.com/>), at 533 Old York Road, London

Website of **Richard Stone** (<http://www.richardstoneprojects.com/>)

Website of **Saad Oureshi** (<http://www.saadqureshi.com/>)

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