



Baik Art Seoul is pleased to present, *My Shadow's Shadow* by Ahmad Zakii Anwar. The exhibition will be on view from April 3 until April 28, 2018. The artist has spent his career living in Malaysia where he has been exposed to Muslim beliefs and has presented his work, primarily, outside of the canon of western modernity. Zakii's depictions of nude figures and cultural signifiers allude to religious taboos and personal narratives. This exhibition presents 15 of the artist's most recent works.

Zakii looks to his traumas and life experiences to inform the compositions and discourse in his work. The artist, initially being exposed to nude figure paintings via "Life Magazine," questioned the relationships between historical visual expression and the religious social norms he grew up around as a child. Despite being an Islamic believer, he was as resistive and subversive as the crucified Jesus, a Hindu god or a pig.

The faces of the men in *Nothing to Say*, *Nothing to See* and *Nowhere to Go* are representative works that depict anatomy veiled in smoke. The artist recalls a memory from 1995, where he borrowed a friend's car and drove it to another friend's place simply because he smoked. It's banal fixations such as this that inform the mystified objects within each painting. Zakii's recurring interactions with cigarettes and addiction has led to pivotal turning points in his life. Most memorably with the release of *Thank You for Smoking* and *Anonymous*.

His latest watercolor triptych, *Nothing to Watch*, depicts the face of a man masked by cigarette smoke, a matchstick and a TV shown respectively on each subsequent panel. The matchstick mediates between images, creating metaphorical links between the objects and characters. Its placement alludes to vague discourse like an arrow. The subdued signifiers in the work generate an endless play between viewer perception and artist's intent.

Zakii claims the artist is akin to a midwife, as he or she is merely delivering imagery to a society that yearns to nurture meaning. Every image he creates suggests an interiority, yet the paintings remain mysterious enough that viewers can conceive their own understandings. To the artist, art is a kind of visual journal, in which people live their lives, discover and record their thoughts. When navigating a diary such as Zakii's, it may hold clarity, controversy, beauty or smoke.