

Cranes and Cubes

Asma Kazmi's *Cranes and Cubes* is a hypnotic witnessing of a collision between dissonant temporalities and the complex belief systems animating them, as well as the long relationship between religion and commercialism. The whirring drone of construction sounds and a forest of

ASMA KAZMI

text by Sarah-Dawn Albani

cranes that signify the neoliberal urge for unfettered growth are the backdrop for the artist's exploration of place, pilgrimage, time, memory, and a longing for meaning in a world driven by a manic desire for the new. The call to prayer sings out to the viewer as we are confronted by looming sculptural forms suggestive of broken monuments, shrouded and disused. A cube among these forms, suggesting the Kaaba but remaining something other, a signifier of the holy site, but not the thing itself. Amid piles of rubble, fragments of architecture suggest a history discarded – hulking, menacing, and impossible to identify. We are left to wonder, what story is being covered up, what history is being dismantled, and what is being built on these ruins? The desire to uncover these mysterious objects, to define or understand their presence is constantly thwarted and our passivity is reiterated by the retreating, rotating, and veiled forms. This is an experience where we must wait to catch a glimpse of the objects we are confounded by. We must sit, be present, and watch and listen for the understanding we desire, piecing together the fragments as if we are inside of a palimpsest of a city impossible to locate now.

Cranes and Cubes
2018, Asma Kazmi
Programming by Adam Hutz



بادو آشم نئے باوہ نیاجہم مہی نئے
حرم کعبہ نیاجہم مہی نئے تم مہی نئے

*The wine-seekers have changed,
the wine, even the decanters are new*

*The sanctuary of the Kaaba is new,
the idols, even you are new*

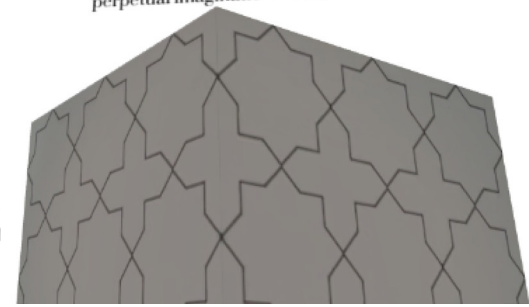
— MOHAMMED IQBAL
(India, 1877–1938)



The Holy City

Sprawling, hyperbolic, ancient, and new, Makkah is part urban metropolis, part holy city, part entertainment theme park, part slum.

Three million people from around the world congregate here every year. Sobbing, they set eyes on the simple black cube, the Kaaba—the object of their perpetual imagination—which now faces them.



stills from *Title of Piece*