

YOSSI MILO GALLERY



For Immediate Release:

Asif Hoque

Before Sunrise

February 10 – March 19, 2022

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 10, 6-8 PM

Yossi Milo Gallery is pleased to present *Before Sunrise*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Asif Hoque. The show will open with a reception on Thursday, February 10 from 6-8 PM and will be on view through March 19. This is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery.

Asif Hoque began 2021 looking at a sunrise. He and his younger brother traditionally do so whenever Hoque goes home to Florida: a soothing way back to his roots, quieting his head from the ambient noise of urban life and, as the sun ascends from the ocean's horizon, taking in the energy of a world everyday made anew. This personal grounding ritual profoundly informed *Before Sunrise*, a body of work that captures the atmosphere, vibrancy and very unique weight of transitional light casting life into existence.

Developing from Hoque's earlier works, these new paintings are populated with the signature figures of his personal mythology, borne from traditions of his Bangladeshi heritage, birthplace of Rome, and upbringing in southern Florida. However, the pieces presented in *Before Sunrise* embody growth at their core. Familiar characters, such as cupids, phoenixes, lions, and ceramic vessels, meet novel forms such as the Bengal tiger. While the feminine/masculine balance central to Hoque's universe is still predominant, the duality seems here softened in a newfound synchronic togetherness. Larger in scale, these paintings become immersive in a way that does not allow their lively Brown figures to be ignored. Inspired by Peter Paul Rubens' compositional energy and use of sfumato, the artist blends oil paint deeply into linen, allowing his ethereal scenes of Brown joy and intimate leisure to claim their space and firmly belong.

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The birth of a sun (2022) consists of three linen panels, the centermost of which displays a ceramic vase bearing the likeness of a female figure. Emerging from a wave's crest, the vessel conjures images of Venus, the Roman goddess of love born from seafoam. It is flanked on one side by a winged Bengal tiger, on the other a lion. Each feline is steeped in personal significance for the artist: the tiger, a reference to Bangladesh's national animal, and the lion, a symbol of courage with roots in European heraldry. Beneath them, angels break the surface of the water, sheathed in bubbles. The scene reads as an homage to the artist's layered identity, each element carrying its own personal and cosmic significance.

Departing from his usual earthy gamut, the artist employs a lighter, more vibrant color palette in this new series of paintings. Hoque's choice of tones materializes an inner 'renaissance,' a transformation further accentuated through dynamic brushstrokes instilling the urgency of a moment as precious and fleeting as our time spent on earth. The incandescent glow emanating from these works, in part influenced by Agnes Pelton's visions of meditative stillness, manifests one of Hoque's recurring technical inquiries: how to materialize what happens when light hits the body. In *Hey Google play... Lay it Down by Lloyd* (2022), bright greens and deep turquoises bounce off of the warm, orange-tinted coats of the reappearing lion and tiger. The animals splash playfully in the shallow waters of the seashore while a sunrise lightly tinges the morning sky behind them. The lighthearted scene spans across two linen panels forming an 8-by-15-foot diptych. This grandiose format elevates the scene to a level of religious veneration, speaking to Hoque's penchant for telling simple stories by extraordinary means.

Asif Hoque's work has been exhibited at Taymour Grahne Projects, London, UK; Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels, Belgium; New Image Art Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, FL; Kapp Kapp, New York, NY, among others. He was born in Rome, Italy in 1991 and studied fine art at Pratt Institute and Hunter College. He currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Text by Anne-Laure Lemaitre and Yossi Milo Gallery

For more information, please contact Alissa Schoenfeld at 212.414.0370 or alissa@yossimilo.com, or visit the gallery's website at www.yossimilo.com

Image: *You're so smooth*, 2022, Oil on Linen, 60" x 50" (152.5 x 140 cm)