

Artist statement:

Through these paintings, I attempt to bridge the chasm between two completely different cultures: West and East. I employ appropriation as an art strategy, using Persian, Indian, and Mughal miniature paintings from the 16th and 17th centuries as my primary source of intervention. Moreover, in many paintings, we find similarities between courts of the West and the East, such as a jester's presence or a concubine's charisma. However, most of my paintings focus on the 'demon' or the 'dev,' a symbol seemingly shared between occidental and oriental cultures. After giving a lot of thought to how I could introduce the element of similarity alongside the portrayal of difference, I came up with the idea of finding some common ground. One example of this is found in my painting *Two Demons Fighting Over A Paper Towel*. This documents the evil found in both cultures; it also depicts the paper towel, a familiar item of daily consumption. I thought about using the paper towel as a common frame of reference due to the significant event which took over our lives this year, in the shape of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the onset of the pandemic, things as mundane as a paper towel became subjects of conflict as the supply was scarce, causing people to fight over them. Replacing an animal limb (as shown in the original painting) with a paper towel, I attempt to incorporate a relatable element for my audience.