

For Immediate Release

Mercer Union presents Aziz Hazara's first solo exhibition in Canada

11 April 2023 (TORONTO, O.N.) — **Mercer Union** presents *Bow Echo*, the first solo exhibition in Canada by **Aziz Hazara**, from **6 May – 22 July 2023**. Guest curated by **Nasrin Himada**, the exhibition features the immersive video installation, *Bow Echo* (2019), for which Hazara won the Future Generation Art Prize 2021. Filmed in the high hills of Kabul Province, the work is a reflection on the enduring destabilization of Afghanistan and the spirit of generations impacted by occupation, invasion, and war.

"*Bow Echo* is a profoundly beautiful and critically urgent work that rouses our humanity, for nothing less is at stake in questions of self-determination," says Aamna Muzaffar, Interim Director & Curator at Mercer Union. "It's been a pleasure to work with guest curator Nasrin Himada to bring this important exhibition to Toronto, which introduces Aziz Hazara's practice to Canadian audiences for the first time. Himada's ongoing curatorial research on the intersection of grief and collectivity in diaspora lends critical insight to Hazara's work and opens boarder conversations around representations of loss and practices of remembrance."

Bow Echo was filmed overlooking Hazara's hometown, in collaboration with friends and local community members. The work shows five boys, each braving harsh winds to climb atop a large rock from which they ceremonially sound a kazoo—a small gesture that hopes to carry an urgent message. In a landscape that bears the marks and mirrors the trauma of its people, the echoing sound of the kazoo becomes both an eerie overlay and a resounding pronouncement of life.

Hazara's practice has long interrogated the mechanics of internal borders, and territories that are negotiated under military occupation. Against these unliveable conditions of colonial violence, the artist's work offers a close study of collective and intimate expression. *Bow Echo* takes up the difficult task of assembling expressions of mourning and empathy, of survival and steadfastness, to draw parallels between a collective life force, and the collective love expressed for home, land, and the people.

Aziz Hazara (b. 1992, Wardak) lives and works in Kabul and Berlin. He works across different mediums, including video, installation, photography, sound, and sculpture, addressing dichotomies such as proximity and distance, migration and memory, life and death, reality and fiction, war and peace. His works have been exhibited nationally and internationally in venues including Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2022); Netwerk Aalst (2021); Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York (2020); 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020); Museum of Contemporary Art, Eupen (2020); Kunsthall Aarhus (2020); the Busan Biennale (2020); the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (MuCEM), Marseille (2019); and Asia Culture Center, Kwangju (2017). He is currently an artist in residence at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, and a grantee of KfW Stiftung. He is the winner of the 6th edition of the Future Generation Art Prize 2021.

Nasrin Himada is a Palestinian writer and curator who currently holds the position of Associate Curator at Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston (ON).

Mercer Union acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council through the Curatorial Projects: Indigenous and Culturally Diverse program.



The exhibition is presented in partnership with Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival.

**SCOTIABANK
CONTACT
PHOTOGRAPHY
FESTIVAL**

Bow Echo is made possible with Leading Support from TD Bank Group.



About Mercer Union

Mercer Union is a non-profit, artist-run centre dedicated to commissioning and producing new works of contemporary art, and providing an engaging program that encourages critical inquiry and conversation. We champion ambitious exhibitions that empower diverse Canadian and international artists in formative and established stages of their practice.

Press kit and photos

Press contact

Abby Kettner, TD Programming and Engagement Assistant
416.536.1519
press@mercerunion.org