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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Twelve Gates Arts and Sadaf Padder present ALTER, a group exhibition exploring the material culture and physical spaces in Religion, Ritual and State.



*Wax Monuments, 2021 by Sandy Williams IV*



*A Yakshi Chronicle II by Suchitra Mattai*

**Philadelphia, PA, July 15 2022**– Twelve Gates Arts is pleased to present *ALTER*, a group exhibition offering critical commentary on material culture and physical space in ritual, religion and state. The conceptual, sculptural and installation-based exhibition unpacks patriarchy, heteronormativity and consumerism relating to devotional objects and structures. Drawing from under-recognized historical and ancient influences, the artistic inspiration spans Asia, Africa and the Americas and the Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic religions. The works nimbly traverse the planes of the sacred and secular.

*ALTER* asks the questions, “When does an item become an idol and when does a person become an icon? Alternatively, how does artmaking challenge traditions of worship by way of iconoclasm?” This show posits that there is an emergence of a pantheistic, post-secular, spirituality in contemporary art that draws connections across diasporic identity. The artists are myth makers, linking history to an imagined future and intersecting art and anthropology. They are creating new rituals through their interpretations as they combine references to colonial history and contemporary influences in visually captivating sculptures and installations, implementing their medium in ways that emphasize a spiritually encompassing message.

**Exhibition Information**

*ALTER* features work from Keli Safia Maksud, Leila Weefur, Sandy Williams IV, Samira Idroos, Sanié Bokhari, Shelly Bahl and Suchitra Mattai. Curated by Sadaf Padder. *ALTER* is on view from August 5th to October 12th, 2022 at Twelve Gates Arts, 106 North 2nd St. Philadelphia, PA 19106. Gallery Hours: Wednesday-Saturday 11 AM - 5 PM or by appointment.

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### **Public Programs**

Friday, August 5th: 5 - 8 PM

Opening reception & 7 PM curatorial walkthrough with Sadaf Padder

Thursday, September 15th: 5 - 7 PM

Panel discussion with artists of the exhibition as well as ritual performance

### **About the Curator**

**Sadaf Padder** is a Brooklyn-based independent curator, writer and art dealer. A former educator for nearly a decade, she left her job as a Dean of Students to develop intersections of art and community. She is the founder of Alpha Arts Alliance (A3), a hyperlocal multidisciplinary collective that connects creatives with opportunities and collectors. Sadaf pledges a percentage of all proceeds from sales and events to youth arts programming in Brooklyn & Haiti. Her focus is to amplify artists of the global majority, especially women, through connective themes such as mythology and social justice. Her curation and writing has been featured in ARTSY, Hyperallergic & LA Weekly.

[www.sadafpadder.com](http://www.sadafpadder.com)

[www.instagram.com/pitterpadder](https://www.instagram.com/pitterpadder)

### **Artist Bios**

**Keli Safia Maksud** (she/her) is an interdisciplinary artist and writer. Maksud earned her BFA in Painting from the Ontario College of Art and Design University, a Diploma in Art and Curatorial Studies at the New Center for Research and Practice and an MFA in Visual Arts at Columbia University.

**Leila Weefur** (he/they/she) is an artist, writer, and curator based in Oakland, CA. Through video and installation, their interdisciplinary practice examines the performativity intrinsic to systems of belonging. Weefur is a lecturer at Stanford University and a member of [The Black Aesthetic](#).

**Samira Idroos** (she/her) is an artist born and raised in California. Born to Muslim Sri Lankan immigrants in Los Angeles. Where she currently lives and works. With a foundation in painting her most recent works have been a deconstruction of perception and history of Islamic prayer rugs. Her most recent works explore the confluence of pop culture and religion through an inquiry into abstraction and direct preservation of language.

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**Sandy Williams IV** (they/them) is a multidisciplinary artist and educator currently based in Richmond, VA. Their work is about the persistence of memory, the body, and resistance, tasking audiences with agency, in order to generate both public and private opportunities for collaborative engagement.

**Sanié Bokhari** (she/her) is a mixed media artist from Pakistan. She holds a Bachelor's in Painting from the National College of Arts, Lahore and an MFA in Painting from the Rhode Island School of Design.

**Shelly Bahl** (she/her) is an interdisciplinary artist and decolonizing art trailblazer. She received her BFA (Visual Art and Art History) from York University, Toronto and her MA (Studio Art) from New York University. Her interdisciplinary work in drawing, painting, sculpture/ installation, performance, photography and video has appeared in a number of solo and group exhibitions in North America and internationally.

**Suchitra Mattai** (she/her) is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work tells visual stories that touch on her Indo-Caribbean lineage. The work addresses such topics as the legacy of colonialism, and relationships between culture and gender roles. Suchitra received an MFA in painting and drawing and an MA in South Asian art from the University of Pennsylvania, PA. She is represented by Kavi Gupta Gallery.