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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Dalhousie Art Gallery presents Nova Scotia's first exhibition of works by Sameer Farooq**

**HALIFAX, NS – September 5, 2023** – This Fall, Dalhousie Art Gallery will show Nova Scotia's first exhibition of works by Cape Breton born, Toronto based interdisciplinary artist Sameer Farooq. Curated by Mona Filip, *The Fairest Order in the World* will be on display from October 5, 2023 until December 22, 2023. The exhibition presents a poetic and thought-provoking exploration of museums' colonial histories through a mixed media installation that probes notions of provenance, repatriation, and repair.

In *The Fairest Order in the World*, Farooq arranges a series of new and recent sculptures and images to articulate unique ideas for repurposing the emptied spaces of museums devoid of their spoils. The works prompt reflection on the fraught and violent histories that have prevailed in these institutions over time and suggest what they might become through the mechanics of restitution, what they may shift to collect and document, and what kind of experiences they could nurture.

The exhibition entices visitors to spend time with the objects, contemplating their physical and emotional presence as well as the absences they evoke. The artworks may serve as tools for meditation, revealing a deeper potential that transcends their aesthetic value. An audio environment composed by Farooq's collaborator Gabie Strong (Los Angeles, CA) sets a deliberately slow pace, encouraging six-minute intervals at each vantage point. Lyrical texts contributed by poet Jared Stanley (Reno, NV) unsettle the rigid format of institutional labels and imagine the objects' own voices. Farooq's film produced in collaboration with Mirjam Linschooten (Amsterdam, NL), *The Museum Visits a Therapist*, offers a reflection on trauma and recovery, personifying the museum and imagining therapeutic strategies for healing historic wounds.

The exhibition takes its title from a text fragment of Ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus: "The fairest order in the world is a heap of random sweepings." Considering the idea that the most organized and just attempt at a universal order is equally as flawed or filled with balance and beauty as an arbitrary pile of refuse, Farooq's meticulously choreographed assembly invites us to interrogate our relationship with art objects and museum displays, as well as the ordering narratives they uphold.



Sameer Farooq *If it were possible to collect all navels of the world on the steps to ASCENSION*, 2019. Fired clay, stepped display. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid

Sameer Farooq is a Canadian artist of Pakistani and Ugandan Indian descent, born in Cape Breton and based in Toronto. Farooq has held exhibitions at institutions around the world including The Venice Biennale of Architecture (2023), Fonderie Darling, Montréal (2022); Susan Hobbs, Toronto (2022); Koffler Gallery, Toronto (2021); Patel Brown, Toronto (2021); Lilley Museum, Reno (2019); Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (2017); Institute of Islamic Culture, Paris (2017); Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2016); The British Library, London (2015); Maquis Projects, Izmir (2015); Artellewa, Cairo (2014); and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2011). Reviews dedicated to his work have been published by Art Forum, Canadian Art, The Washington Post, BBC Culture, Hyperallergic, Artnet, The Huffington Post, and C Magazine. He is an alumnus of the prestigious Bemis Center Residency.

Mona Filip is a contemporary art curator and writer based in Toronto. Originally from Romania, she received her BFA from the Corcoran School of Art, Washington DC, and her MFA from SUNY at Buffalo. With an idea-driven and dialogue-focused approach, Filip collaborates with artists to produce experiential installations that engage the public on sensorial, emotional and intellectual levels. Filip's curatorial experience spans over forty exhibitions and site-specific projects, collaborations with guest curators, and a broad range of public programs. She is currently Curator at the Art Museum of the University of Toronto.

The exhibition will open with a reception on October 5<sup>th</sup> from 5 –8 pm. The artist and curator will be in attendance, and the reception will feature a performance by Mi'kmaq dance artist Sarah Prosper presented in partnership with Prismatic Arts Festival.

Dalhousie Art Gallery is always free to the public. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. For more details, please visit [www.artgallery.dal.ca](http://www.artgallery.dal.ca). Media inquiries can be directed to Director/Curator Pamela Edmonds at [pamela.edmonds@dal.ca](mailto:pamela.edmonds@dal.ca).

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