

***Heavy Bend***  
**Nadia Waheed**  
**Gallery 1957, London**  
**September 2<sup>nd</sup> – October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022**



**Nadia Waheed, *Heavy Bend*, 2022, oil on canvas, 183 x 244 cm / 72 x 96 in**

Gallery 1957, London, is delighted to present its first solo exhibition by Nadia Waheed (b. 1992, Saudi Arabia), running September 2<sup>nd</sup> – October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Accompanied by a critical text by Melissa Baksh, this exhibition, titled *Heavy Bend*, will feature entirely new works by the artist, all produced in 2022 and during a time of compounded personal tumult. The result is a collection that excavates the psychic and spiritual maelstrom many have experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic and related crises.

The title of the exhibition references an acutely resonant experience for those who have endured the tribulations of the present moment, or any challenge. *Heavy Bend* marks how one must twist and contort under immense pressure but cannot afford to break under the strain. The works in this exhibition will be achingly familiar to any who have experienced seemingly insurmountable circumstances but whisper “I just have to make it through.” Crisis asks profound questions of us – what it means to be inter-connected, to be responsible for the lives of others, to find ways to survive exhaustion and depletion. These questions become

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Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast  
& Galleria Mall  
PMB 66 – Ministries  
Gamel Abdul Nasser Avenue  
Ridge – Accra  
Ghana  
info@gallery1957.com

Gallery 1957, London  
1 Hyde Park Gate  
London, SW7 5EW  
UK  
london@gallery1957.com  
Instagram: @gallery1957  
gallery1957.com

particularly significant for women, who are called upon to sacrifice themselves to perform care for all others. The female figures in these paintings reference this uniquely gendered burden of care, asking what it means to have to continually draw from an emptying well to replenish others. Waheed's paintings interrogate the personal conflict she experienced between an artistic self devoted to her creative practice and a relational self that bears the commitment to care for others, a conundrum all social beings experience in the tension between the self and the communal. These works offer an evocative visual language for exploring fiercely personal and timely questions, creating space for meditation and catharsis.

The paintings in *Heavy Bend* follow a narrative flow, guiding the viewer through the emotional, psychic, and spiritual journey of the artist. Eschewing reason, logic, and empiricism as the only way to experience the world, these paintings dive into the fantastical. Surreal figures hang from, sprawl across, and float in celestial landscapes, symbolising the interior and cosmic dimensions of the themes Waheed explores. The viewer is invited into a sensational world of deep and subtle emotions, which illustrates what it means to be a keenly sensing and feeling being suspended in the drama of life. These figures – unmistakably self-portraits, which is the artist's oeuvre – appear bound together by string or cords in powerful scenes of tethering. These binds offer a subtle way for Waheed to discuss her racial identity as a South Asian, signifying the cultural obligations of marriage, service, loss, and mourning that mark a woman's role in traditional society. Speaking to the internal and public, material and spiritual, personal and collective, this exhibition responds to some of the most pressing concerns of our times, inviting reflection on what it means to live in relation to ourselves, our work, and others.

## About the Artist

The multiplicity to Nadia Waheed's art reflects the various locations of her upbringing, from her birth in Saudi Arabia to Pakistani parents to her experience living in France, Egypt, Pakistan, and the United States. Having gained her BFA in Painting and Drawing at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, in Chicago, USA, she now lives and works in Austin, Texas. Waheed has several solo exhibitions to her name, such as in Mindy Solomon Gallery in Miami, USA and BEERS in London, UK, among others. A number of group exhibitions have incorporated her work, most recently in the Jeffrey Deitch Gallery, Lyles and King, and Arsenal Contemporary in New York, USA, Nicodim Gallery in Los Angeles, USA, Hashimoto Contemporary in San Francisco, USA, and Patel Gallery in Toronto, Canada. She has been featured in Create Magazine, Artnet, Juxtapoz, and Manifesto XXI, and in the 2020 New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) Fair.

## About Gallery 1957

Based in Accra, with a London outpost opened in 2020, Gallery 1957 has a curatorial focus on Africa and its diaspora. Presenting a programme of exhibitions, installations, and performances by the continent's most significant artists, the gallery serves as a vital platform for promoting Africa's presence within the art scene by hosting ambitious exhibitions, providing resources for residencies, launching the Yaa Asantewaa Prize to support women artists in Ghana and its diaspora, and participating in international art fairs. Founded by Marwan Zakhem in 2016 with an initial focus on supporting the West African arts scene, Gallery 1957 has since expanded to collaborate with leading artists globally, and now

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# Gallery

operates three spaces in Accra – one in the Kempinski Hotel and two in Galleria Mall – and a London gallery in Hyde Park Gate.

**Title:** *Heavy Bend*

**Artist:** Nadia Waheed

**Dates:** September 2<sup>nd</sup> – October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Opening Reception:** Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September, 6-9 pm

**Address:**

Gallery 1957  
1 Hyde Park Gate  
London SW7 5DW

[www.gallery1957.com](http://www.gallery1957.com)

[london@gallery1957.com](mailto:london@gallery1957.com)

**@Gallery1957**

For press information and images please contact Emma Gilhooly or Alison Lopez at Pelham Communications,

Tel: +44 (0) 208 969 3959

Email: [emma@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:emma@pelhamcommunications.com) / [alison@pelhamcommunications.com](mailto:alison@pelhamcommunications.com)

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