

Zaam Arif

I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty

April 23–26, 2026

Solo Booth at Art Brussels, Expo Heysel



Zaam Arif
Tarkovsky's Forest, 2026
oil on linen
76.2 x 21 cm
30 x 8 in

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Zaam Arif
I Dream Therefore I Am, 2026
oil on copper plate
30.5 x 46 cm
12 x 18 in

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MARUANI MERCIER is delighted to announce *Zaam Arif: I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty*, a solo booth of new paintings by the artist opening as part of Art Brussels on 23-26 April 2026. Portraying enigmatic moments of stillness that shift between interior scenes, portraiture and landscape, Arif's paintings probe the veracity of memory and images gleaned from the past. Distinct references to Modernist cinema and literature fuse with personal experiences that the artist invariably reconstructs from memory. Mingling passages of broad brushwork with moments of luminous detail, each composition evokes the flickering and fragmentary quality of images that remain, as if imprinted on the retina over time. As the artist remarked, "I was never an observer – instead, I remember, and look for a feeling I had during that moment, or an emotional response I had when I looked at an image, and that comes into my work."

The title of the series references *As I Was Moving Ahead Occasionally I Saw Brief Glimpses of Beauty*, the avant-garde film by Jonas Mekas composed of home movies of landmark personal events that span more than 30 years. Reflecting on the personal significance of disparate images that emerge in the film, the work reflects on the nature of moments we hold on to and the relationship between memory and identity – themes that are also key to Arif's artistic practice.

Evading a specific narrative, Arif's paintings powerfully allude to the interiority and experience of their protagonists. In *Tarkovsky's Forest* (2026), a dark figure is enveloped by a staccato of strokes in blue, green and ochre that configure into a glimmering surface of the forest floor after rain. Remaining in the shadows of the trees, he steadily considers the sheets of paper on the ground – they seem illuminated by an external light source, drawing our gaze and mimicking the character's pensive state. Looking onto the figure from an elevated, cinematic viewpoint, one invariably senses a distance that echoes the longing for vivid yet irretrievable moments that permeate Arif's visual language.

Zaam Arif (b. 1999 in Karachi) lives and works in Houston, Texas. Arif's work was exclusively featured in *The New Yorker* in 2021, making him the youngest Pakistani artist to be published in the magazine. In the same year, his work was selected to be exhibited in the Malamegi Lab Award and was awarded the Malamegi Lab Research Grant in Italy. Arif has shown in both solo and group shows internationally, where he has been critically acclaimed for showing new frontiers in the crossover of South Asian and Western culture, literature, and philosophy. His work can be found in prominent public and private collections, including the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; The Rachofsky Collection; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi; Samdani Art Foundation, Dhaka; X Museum, Beijing; CC Foundation, Shanghai.