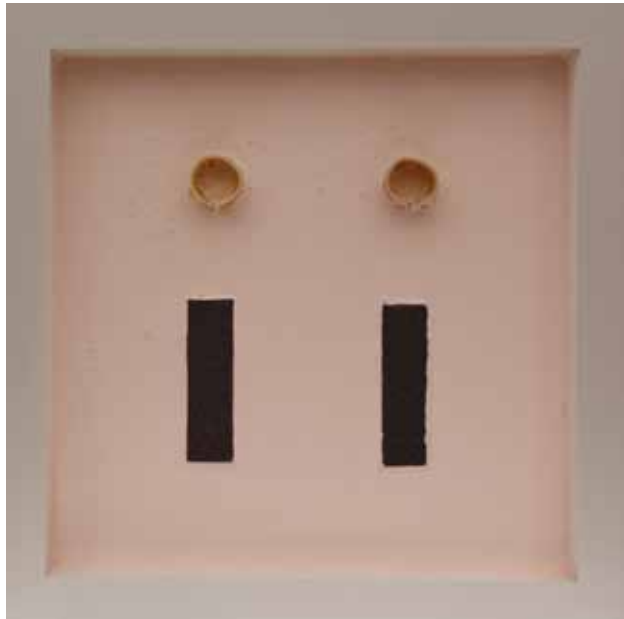


## Zubin Amiri's Geometry of everyday objects

*By Jareh Das*



**A Simple Look, Adams series, 2012, Chewing gum on Paint, 25x25cm.** - Courtesy of the artist.

Geometry is broadly defined as the study of properties of given elements that remain invariant under specified transformations. Iranian artist Zubin Amiri uses the language of Geometry in his minimal paintings as a methodological arrangement of everyday objects or parts that suggest geometric figures. Amiri's use of industrial pastel coloured paint provides a neutral backdrop for these precisely arranged assemblages, which occur as a result of a three-part process. He begins this process by placing the objects on a foam board. He then fills the entire surface with industrial paint through pouring. The paint sets and forms around the objects freely, without the use of a paintbrush. The surface is free to react with the elements forming an uneven surface which resembles a lunar landscape due to the entrapment of air molecules.

These geometric objects are embedded in a sea of colour when one encounters them visually, although they are a neutral palette, the soft hues of the pastel paint illuminates them further. The colours are minimal



**Me, Home & the world, Adams series, 2012, Chewing gum on Paint, 25x25cm.** - Courtesy of the artist.

pastel hues that will fade over time emphasising 'ageing' through this simple but carefully executed method. No one assembled painting is the same, but this is not easily noticeable when the works are viewed individually. When they are assembled together as a group, their collective effect commands the viewer to seek out subtle differences that may not be immediately apparent.

In Adams series, Amiri emphasises materiality whilst still adhering to his signatory minimal aesthetic. Amiri began to collect and assemble geometric patterns found in chewing gum and their wrappers, common everyday objects which he now appropriates as art. These objects are man-made. They are rectangular strips of popular chewing gum brand, "Adams", which mimic a grid-like system and display the intricate line patterns that exist on both the strips of gum and the accompanying wrappers. The word 'Adams' has an interesting history as it has now found its way into the Persian vernacular and translates into English as 'chewing gum'. The words origin is from the brand name of this particularly

make of chewing gum named after its inventor, Thomas Adams. Amiri's recent works, Winter series follows on from an earlier body of work which uses the ethos of Minimal Architecture that has now been translated into assemblage paintings. The works are a combination of graphite drawings and oil pastels on sandpaper which resemble the systematic grid system found in architectural drawing plans. Works start with a sketch on a black background and develop into a contrast between light and dark geometric shapes. The colours are added into the squares and similarities can be drawn between traditional craft making techniques used in mosaics and vitrail (stained glass) compositions. Although influences of the Dutch De Stijl style are immediately recognisable as a source of inspiration, Amiri's paintings present a more industrial take on the historic movement. His lines are near perfect and there is no strive for perfection as the original movement champions. There is however, an ethos of ultimate simplicity and abstraction, both in architecture and painting, by using only straight horizontal, vertical lines and rectangular forms. Amiri's experimentation is born out of his interest in conveying art as a transient phenomenon, as something that continually evolves through time, similar to his personal shifts between formal Architecture and artistic practice. Architecture is regimented whilst Art is more fluid, something which he plays on heavily in all of his works. Amiri says of his work 'It is minimal but profoundly effective'; which contemplative works, ones that commands attention subtly often do. He is interested in creating neutral spaces of engagement that are loosely tied to historicity as such spaces allow for the viewer's own interpretation as opposed to one that is overtly sententious.

**Biography:** Iranian artist and architect Zubin Amiri comes from a family of painters which served as an introduction to art from an early age. During his teenage years, although he had a burgeoning Interest in Art, he began his professional career in Architecture as due to necessity and the economic context of living in Iran at the time. He graduated from Shahid Beheshti University with a Master's degree in Architecture. This drive for more expression led Amiri to art, offering him a freedom which had always coexisted with his other career in Architecture. His on-going interest in the dialogues on the space, society and



**P M T D 1, Adams series**, 2012, Chewing gum on Paint, 25x25cm. - Courtesy of the artist.

topography of the landscape of The Middle East is evident in the art he creates.

#### End Notes

1. "Geometry" Merriman Webster Dictionary, online.
2. In 1869 Thomas Adams popped a piece of rubber stock into his mouth and liked the taste. Chewing away, he had the idea to add flavouring to the chicle. Shortly after, he opened the world's first chewing gum factory. In February 1871, Adams New York Gum went on sale in drug stores for a penny apiece. Bellis M., *The History of Chewing Gum and Bubblegum*, <http://inventors.about.com/od/gstartinventions/a/gum.htm>
3. *The History of Chewing Gum and Bubblegum*, <http://inventors.about.com/od/gstartinventions/a/gum.htm>

#### About the Writer

Jareh Das is a curator, currently working on Communications and Artist Liaison in a Dubai gallery. She has worked between London and Middleborough at MIMA (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art) and holds an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from London's Royal College of Art. Recently curated exhibitions include: *Ubi sunt*, a group exhibition of UK and international emerging and established artists which created an experiential environment in a disused chapel in South London. She has also worked on curatorial projects at 176 Zabłudowicz Collection, ACME Project Space, London and participated in the Manchester International Festival, 2011. She has written numerous articles in various publications in UK & UAE.