

# Brishty Alam

## Death by Powerpoint

Interview by Sonia Leimer  
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*SL: You've chosen to use two tables in the office as a pedestal to exhibit your work. Does your work always change in response to the space, and how did the furniture and space modify this specific piece?*

BA: This work, and even the entire exhibition, emerged from the space. I enjoy responding to a space and its settings, whether that means creating specific works or choosing which pieces to exhibit on a particular occasion. Assisting objects or works in moving around a space and finding a suitable place for them within a given constellation is one of my favourite parts of exhibitions. The way in which this interaction occurs depends on my interests at the time and on the context of each exhibition, including the person behind the space. For this show, I had the luxury of time – being invited a while before my exhibition and already having a relationship with the space as a visitor, and you of course. I got to mull it over, *'the Office'*, in the back of my head and carry it with me through different contexts.

BA: I had spent some time with the work *'Fish finger length trigonometry'* and was interested in gathering together more of these Excel sheet drawings at the time. Then the exhibition title arrived, *'Death by PowerPoint'*, reflecting endless hours of presentations at work. Slides, projections, hybridised Zoom, *'Next!'*

BA: The table was always very present in my understanding of the space and, in dialogue with the needs of the sculpture, determined its size and placement. The series that I'm reopening here, *'Variations of white solids'*, requires the sculptures to be of a particular size that relates to my body. Either it had to be on the table or be big enough to stand next to the table. Since the door and room limited the size, and sculptures on prints was part of my practise, I went down the first route and tried the photo to the size of the table. It's the first time I'm showing the photo, which has actually existed since 2017. The series also has existed since 2018.

BA: Death, re-birth, things endings, new beginnings – it makes sense that we are in Scorpio now.

*SL: Regarding the photo you mentioned: What does it show? What are the Excel sheet drawings about? How do both works relate to the sculptural work 'Another white solid'?*

BA: The photo shows an arrangement of objects related to the work in a chemistry lab that I was playing around with at the time. Observing them, getting to know them better in different relations.

BA: As for the work in the lab, the Excel sheet drawings come out of my process—measuring sculptures, applying for funding, setting up a studio space, health, work, making to-do lists on top of photos of drawings on my phone—the infrastructure.

*SL: Do you enjoy this aspect of the work, or does it evoke mixed feelings?*

BA: It's somewhat akin to what you also do in chemistry, analysing workflows and approximations. Hopefully, they relate on different layers, but we will see when they are together in the space. Perhaps they have a sense of propositions, sketches, or processes.

*SL: They do! It works well with the 'office', a part of my studio serving this other aspect of being an artist — making Excel sheets, calculations, drinking coffee and having long conversations. What about the yellow sweaters occupying my office chair? What's written on the textile?*

BA: It says `Kleiner Brauner`, as in the Viennese coffee. As I was learning German I realised that `ein Kleiner Brauner` means `a little brown one` ...like me... and wanted to have a jumper with that on it. Celebrating brownness, something I struggled with growing up. And also in a space like Vienna. Then I thought maybe more people would want one too.

BA: And the yellow – I spent two years trying to find the right shade of yellow nail varnish, every time I bought one and tried it on, it wouldn't look good. Similar with buying jumpers – at the time there was no good shades of yellow. So I dyed the jumpers shades of yellow that look good on my skin.

BA: I found the yellow nail varnish in Portugal in the end.

Exhibition text for 'Death by Powerpoint' by Brishty Alam, 2023–24, the Office, Vienna.