

SILSILA 2015

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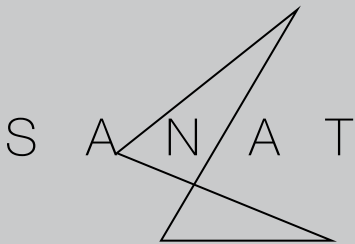
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A TRIBUTE TO TEACHERS







SILSILA 2015



A Project of

STUDIO^{rm}

A Catalytic Convergence - Silsila 2015

Abid Merchant

"In your light I learn how to love. In your beauty, how to make poems. You dance inside my chest, where no one sees you, but sometimes I do, and the sight becomes art."

~Rumi

Silsila 2015 is the second group show of artists, hailing from a diversity of backgrounds and practices, but connected in one way; they all hold links to Studio RM. Established in 1994 by artist and teacher R.M. Naeem, Studio RM has served as a hub of learning and interaction outside of formal education, while also being a launching-pad, of sorts, for artists in the early days of their practice. The initial days post-academics are often fraught with uncertainties. The absence of a structured routine and sudden distancing from teachers and mentors often leaves young artists feeling disconnected. This void is precisely what Studio RM addresses; a residency-meets-Sufi-tavern, where established, mid-career and emerging artists converge and learning continues through practicing and interacting with one another.

Much akin to the medieval taverns and inns of the transient Sufis, Studio RM and its artists are in the long pursuit of enlightenment. For R.M. Naeem and the alumni of Studio RM, education is not solely academic, and has no end, but is a life-long struggle and endeavour. Teaching and learning go hand in hand, modern and traditional methods and concepts intersect, and an artist's formal existence as defined in the academic realm is introduced to its audience, the public.

The focus of the informal education that is imparted at Studio RM is not just the perfecting of skills or networking, as demanded by our globalised world, but rather is a celebration of art and the process of creativity, and everything else that comes in between. Magdalena Abakanowicz describes art as "*...the most astonishing activity of mankind, born out of struggle between wisdom and madness, between dream and reality, in our mind*". From inspiration to execution, a vast majority of an artist's existence is spent in the process of learning and exercising their skills, making them a transient, much like a Sufi seeking ultimate union is on the path of constant learning and reflecting.

In celebrating creativity and art-making, the teaching and activities at Studio RM are centred around the core principles of respect for indigenous knowledge and its masters who teach, as well as piquing interest in new teaching and learning methods, and modern means of practicing and expressing; in a single word, the crux of Studio RM is modernity. Modernity, for the sake of brevity, is perhaps best defined by Marshall Berman, in his publication *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, in which he uses the term to refer to a range of related historical and cultural events, innovations, and phenomena, and their continued impact on us individually and as a society. By keeping modernity at the heart of its artistic mission, Studio RM gears its students with not just skills, but with the confidence to think analytically and approach their work and their ideas critically, while remaining grounded in long respected traditions and fearlessly incorporating new methods into their creativity processes.

The *silsila* of Studio RM links artists in one way or another to R.M. Naeem and they in turn are part of the larger chain of art and artists traditionally, methodically, historically and geographically tied to Pakistan and the Subcontinent. However, it is through imparting modernity that the transient artists who are on their individual paths converge at Studio RM and become part of the larger lineage, connecting the art and artists of Pakistan to the world. Silsila 2015 is but a small and yet catalytic link in the *silsila* of the greater art movement of mankind.

One Look Back. One Journey Forward.
Silsila 2015

Dua Abbas
Coordinator Studio RM

In Pakistan, today, we can see a dominant, curriculum-based education system providing a sort of armature or skeleton for people to structure their lives around. And, at the same time, if we look beyond our degree-granting institutes, and beyond the select but slowly growing circles they cater to, we will see vestiges of – or completely intact, unchanged – systems of learning that are oral, ancient, largely undocumented, and increasingly taken for granted. Now, this isn't meant as a tirade against change, or against the natural and irreversible replacement of the old with the new. It is rather an opportunity to see these two systems side by side and discuss how the best can be extracted from both of them and used to maximise potential and talent.

Since we are prefacing a publication for an art exhibition and since (let's face it) we are artists and like to direct every discourse and conversation to the realm of art, let's look at this conflict from the point-of-view of a visual artist. There are a few important art schools in the country which, however rooted their beginnings might have been in tradition and craftsmanship, are now operating more or less on a pastiche of educational models derived from different international sources. Even the time-honoured art of South Asian miniature painting is, at the National College of Arts (the only institute which grants a degree in it), now a course taught with modules, intersticed with critiques, clinched by graded examinations.

There have been attempts, in these same educational institutes, to reconnect with indigenous systems of knowledge – attempts at a deliberate reversal of values, if you will. One theoretical subject taught, for example, at NCA is History of South Asian Design. And a very important part of the course is first-hand research on one or more traditional South Asian visual practices. Over the years, groups of students have conducted researches on locally made *Tazieh*, *Khidonay* (paper toys), *Ralli* quilts, *Ajrak* products etc. They have travelled to areas (many of them rural centres where time seems to have stopped, in many ways, before the clock struck 21st century) and met and observed highly skilled practitioners and their apprentices, and attempted to incorporate their learnings into dissertations and even their visual work.

The process is commendable – it tries to bring about an amalgamation of two separate worlds of dissemination and implementation of knowledge. But it is exploratory at best and does not achieve a lasting end. Academic art in Pakistan and the art of its past, its romantic wilderness, remain detached, neither corroborating the other or fully benefiting from it. And our society, desperately seeking or re-seeking an identity, is the primary sufferer, because it is trailing centuries of indigenous knowledge but has to accommodate a globally recognised formal system of education – in fact, be more reverential to it in order to survive.

Somewhere along the way, a connection with the indigenous teacher became tenuous and was broken and the traditional *ustad-shagird* (mentor-disciple, teacher-student) relationship became sidelined by academic, curricular training. Ateliers and hospices were replaced with cellular and uniform workspaces in art schools; journeymen years (the years an apprentice would spend as an itinerant craftsman upon completion of his apprenticeship) were substituted with extremely academic and conceptual master's programs, undertaken almost with a sense of urgency after the completion of a regular bachelor's programme.

But education, learning, is a lifelong process and should be sought and gained in ways both formal and informal, modern and traditional. Keeping the artistic practices of South Asia in mind, this is all the more imperative. Our crafts require persistent attention, unwavering patience, exposure to and awareness of the elements, skill and

a loving touch. Hours of keen observation and dexterity gained over time are put into the creation of a single pot, urn, tile, or shawl. And this same devotion can be said to have found its way into the immaculate washes of Abdur Rahman Chughtai; this same energy can be seen running through Sadequain's colossal murals albeit in a masterfully controlled, orderly way.



A commitment to skill, above everything else, and to practice, is what has brought and continues to bring artists together at Studio RM which, since its inception in 1994, has operated on principles that can be seen as derivations of Sufi thought. Much like medieval Sufi guilds that would also offer a hospice for students and artisans, Studio RM has served as both an educational and a communal centre for artists who seek a platform for learning, interacting, and honing their skills outside or after formal education at art institutions. Studio RM also runs an international residency programme, through which emerging and mid-career, local and international artists are offered a space for living and working, and are facilitated in their exploration of new ideas. This is because we believe that education does not stop after a fixed period of time and by continuing to impart or receive it, we are serving our society at large.

A number of artists with successful and steadily evolving practices started on their journeys as independent artists from Studio RM. The studio encourages respect for indigenous knowledge and the teachers who pass it on, along with interest in and curiosity for new means of expression, new methods of teaching and learning. The aim is to provide a bridge between the traditional and the modern, between the institution/academy and the public through an environment that is conducive to both curricular and non-curricular learning. The fact that the studio conducts itself more as a communal platform or crossroads than an organisation is evident from the large number of artists who have arrived at it over the years, learnt from it and through it, and have gone on to become teachers themselves, carrying forth the values of Studio RM and reviving the historical role of the Teacher.

In addition to teaching at major art institutions all over the country, the alumni of Studio RM run their own ateliers where the ethics of their training at Studio RM are put into practice. They also conduct workshops, summer schools, tutorials for a younger generation of artists who look up to them and learn from them. It is refreshing to see that in a world where honouring certain values and codes has become akin to carrying water in a sieve, some codes continue to be honoured. It is this organic and informal spirit that we at Studio RM try to live and educate by. Take, for example, *Silsila* (2011), the first group exhibition of our alumni, and its second chapter – *Silsila* 2015. A number of artists who so wonderfully made the first exhibition successful are now happily educating younger artists and practising on their own in different parts of the world. Their beautiful energy, however, remains in the studio, and their success stories continue to inspire and delight

us. This year, a number of new artists are a part of *Silsila*, and we are equally enthused to have them on board, because *Silsila* – as the name illustrates – means continuation. It is a rich and profound word that implies movement, continuity, fluidity, change and, simultaneously, a connection with the old, a belonging to an older order.

In this spirit of continuation and growth, we have structured *Silsila 2015* around the idea of reinterpreting or reinventing the four genres drawing and painting in Pakistan have conventionally been categorised under – still life, landscape, portrait or figure, and calligraphy. Once considered (in Pakistan and all over the world) important classifications of visual art, these genres have fallen out of use. Their definitions have become defunct in the face of the all-encompassing banner of contemporary art. We invited our artists to redefine these genres, as visual artists working in a contemporary milieu, by engaging with them through a new sensibility. A landscape may not mean an idyllic view to an artist working today, it may not mean a Constable or a Khalid Iqbal; a portrait may not mean an enigmatically smiling face sitting snugly in a frame. What they may mean, our artists have tried to show through their works for *Silsila 2015*.

We are immensely grateful to them for these lovely responses.

Here's to adding new chapters to old texts, and new links to an ancient chain of creativity.



Tracing the Tradition: The Genealogy of Alternate Modes of Knowledge Dissemination

Zarmeeneé Shah

The idea of informal learning, of specialized knowledges passed on from generation to generation, from master to student, is one that is deeply rooted in the history and tradition of the South Asian region. From religion to culture, medicine to art, craft and music, this concept has existed for centuries, evolving through time, transforming and yet remaining intact through political and ideological shifts, and postcolonial influences and effects. Concepts such as the *silsila*, *gharana*, *karkhana*, the idea of *ustad* and *shagird*, all maintain a fundamental position that is common – that of the passing on of a privileged knowledge, shared and thereby continued.

The Arabic word *silsila*, which is applied most commonly to the Sufi tradition, translates as a 'chain' or 'lineage', a (religious) order or group that traces its genealogy through a master or leader, whose Chain of Authenticity connects him directly to the Prophet Muhammad, and establishes the legitimacy of his position. Taking root in the second century of Islam, Sufism finds its basis in the idea of a teacher student relationship, of the transference of (and connection through) a spiritual knowledge passed on through the centuries, through an established line of Sufi masters and saints. Where the establishment of formal institutions and schools as we know them to be today may not have existed at the time, the idea of learning, of a 'school' or order connected through a special system of knowledge, albeit spiritual or esoteric, is undeniably present. In Sufism, this order is referred to as the *tariqat*, derived from the word *tariqa*, i.e. a way, path or method, which necessarily implies an adherence to a set of existing rules, beliefs and behaviors, a body of knowledge that must be learned in order to be passed on – to remain alive.

In the Urdu language, the word *silsila* holds a similar meaning, translating as a 'series', amongst the definitions of which are: a) a mode of arranging the separate parts of a circuit by connecting them successively end to end to form a single path for the current, and b) A number of things or events standing or succeeding in order, and connected by a like relation; sequence; order; course; a succession of things. Viewed in the context of spirituality, this connection then becomes a metaphysical one that cuts across ideas of time, geographical space and distance, connecting those that hold the privilege of this knowledge in an invisible, transcendental space of collectivity.

This system of informal learning is not simply restricted to the transfer of spiritual or other knowledge but also of skills, through the tradition of the teacher and student, or the *ustad* and *shagird*, and was prevalent even in the ancient and medieval village industries and production practices of the Indian subcontinent. The Persian word *ustad*, used widely in Middle, South and South East Asia, is an honorific title given to a man regarded as a teacher, expert or master. Where today, we speak of the preservation of indigenous crafts and specialized techniques that are fast becoming obsolete and disappearing, the *ustad shagird* system served exactly that purpose and was highly

valued as such. Today, guilds may not exist as they did then, but the authenticity of certain practices such as alternative medicine and spiritual healing, miniature painting, carpentry and carving, textiles, music and so on are still maintained through this system, although at a much smaller scale than may have existed in the past. In these cases, and particularly in the context of the passing on of special crafts or techniques, the *ustad* or master becomes head of a kind of training workshop or *karkhana* where a distinctive skill is imparted to his pupils over a span of several years.



The *ustad* then becomes as a repository of knowledge, held in high honor for this position. The *shagird* is seen to have graduated to the level of the master not simply when he has learned the skills of the master, but has in fact been imbued with an inherent sense of his particular information system, being able to move within it yet innovate and find modes of problem solving that arise from this learning, without ever completely breaking out of its intrinsic code. The contemporary miniature painting practice can be seen to be quite accurately reflective of this. Artists such as Imran Qureshi and Shahzia Sikander, having been trained in the traditional modes and techniques in the *karkhana* of Ustad Bashir Ahmad at the National College of Arts in Lahore, the disciple of Ustad Shujaullah, have then gone on to reinvent and contemporize the tradition through an exploration of its fundamentals and principles, drawing from it, pushing its boundaries, pulling threads and links out of it and through it, but always maintaining the connection to its inherent codes and principles. While this may seem to be a much more viable possibility in the modern day, the expansion of the learning of traditional modes of this practice, the introduction of elements and techniques that would serve to do exactly this, to allow for a newer and broader perspective, can be traced back to the studios and ateliers of the Mughal courts.

The development of miniature painting in this region can be attributed firmly to the patronage of the Mughal emperors, beginning under the reign of the emperor Humayun (1530–40 and 1555–56), who first invited two Persian artists, Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwaja Abd al Samad, to work in his court in India. It was under the tutelage of his son and successor, the emperor Akbar, often referred to as the architect of the Mughal empire and the biggest patron of the arts, that the mammoth illustrated volume of 1400 pages, known as the *Dastan e Amir Hamza*, was completed by them. It was also during this time that the *Akbarnama* (or the *Ain e Akbari*) was commissioned, which became one of the most important and influential documents of Mughal miniature painting, being used as an example in the training of further disciples to this practice, far superseding the importance given to the *Jahangirnama* (or *Tuzuk e Jahangiri*) which was to follow some decades later. This is not to take away however from the highly valuable contributions made by Jahangir who was himself an active patron of the arts, setting up his own court

ateliers in Allahabad during his reign. Jahangir had developed his own distinctive taste in the arts and claimed to have the ability to recognize the work of any painter. While one of the criticisms of the Mughal ateliers is that most artists worked in anonymity, this claim supports the idea of the importance given to individual artists who were able to achieve a certain mastery, which would elevate them to the status of *ustad*, continuing the cycle of the dissemination of this specialist knowledge or skill.

Although the discussion on miniature painting is perhaps most relevant to us as practitioners of the arts, and its patronage was continued by Akbar's successors, with the *Badshahnama* being produced in the workshops of Shah Jahan, his time most of all saw an increase in learning and development (through the same modes) of other skill sets such as architecture, marble work, carpentry, gilding, carving, inlay and related practices, culminating in the immensely beautiful wonder that is the Taj Mahal, set on the banks of the Jumna river in Agra, made for Shah Jahan's wife and taking 16 years to complete. While the reduction of this patronage was to follow under the increasingly religious views of (later) emperor Aurangzeb, whose reign is often viewed as the beginning of the decline of the Mughal empire, this also meant that workshops that were decommissioned led to artists moving to other parts of the subcontinent and adjoining regions to find work, thereby ensuring the propagation and spread of these skills and knowledges beyond their initial and immediate court environments.

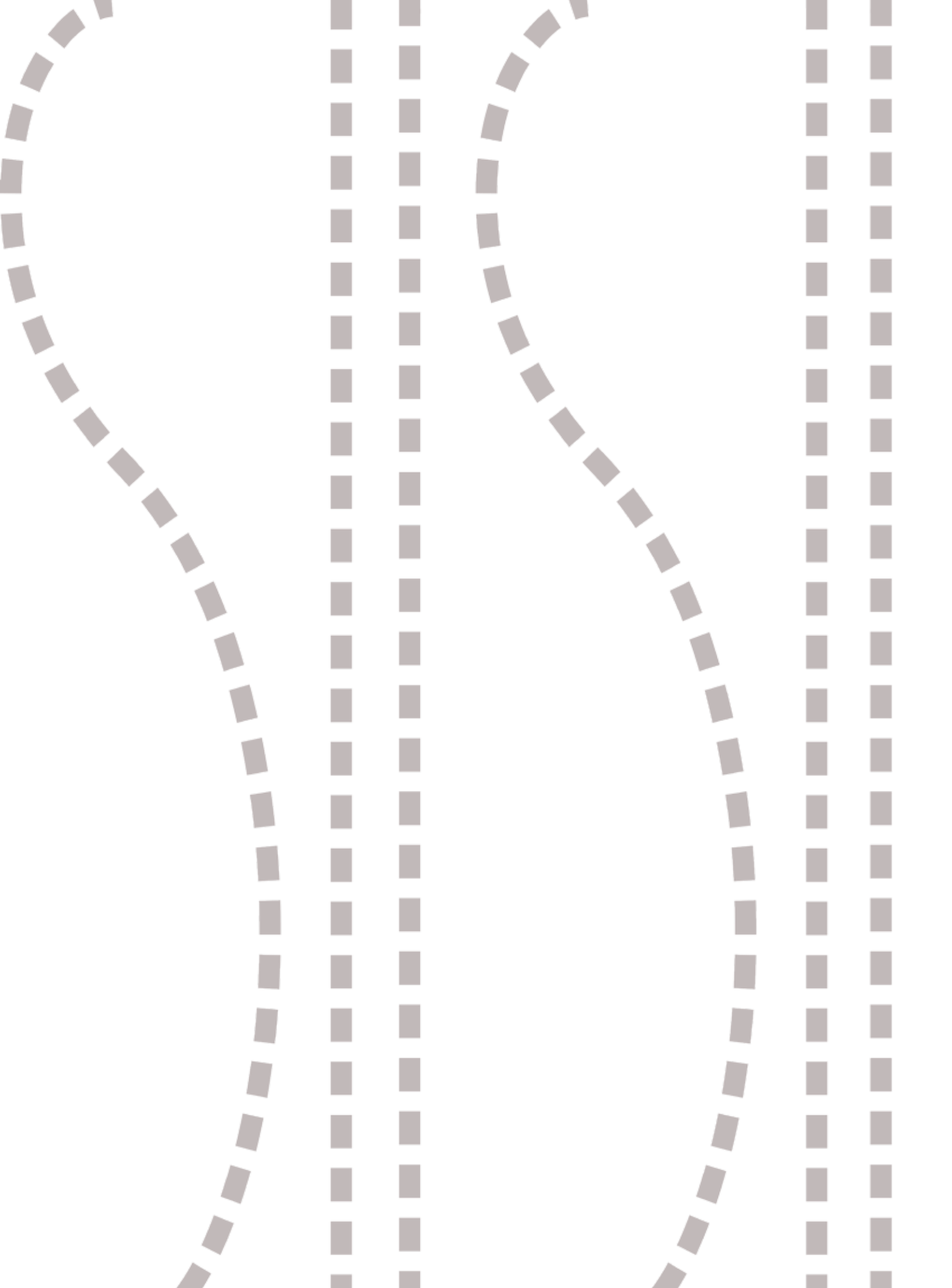
This idea of alternative or informal learning, but through a distinctive master-student relationship and based on the idea of the passing on of a specialist knowledge, also exists in the musical traditions of the subcontinent – as it does in other parts of the world, where it manifests in the form of guilds and associations. In the (classical) musical tradition of the subcontinent, particularly India and Pakistan, this is known as the *gharana* system, with the word in question translating to a 'house' or 'family', implying the house of the teacher, and following his distinctive style in the fields of either dance, or vocal or instrumental music. The *gharana* then becomes as a family of hereditary occupational specialists comprised of members related either by blood and/or musical knowledge (*talim*). Historically traceable particularly to Northern India, the idea and development of the *gharana* was strongly linked with the concept of teacher/disciple, a concept also present in Hindu culture and known as the *guru shishya parampara*. Being entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining a superior standard of musical excellence, the ability to trace one's lineage to a major *gharana* was a critical prerequisite for obtaining a position in royal courts. The names of *gharanas* were usually derived from their geographical location (eg: Agra, Indore, Jaipur), their movement having been greatly influenced by the decline of the Mughal empire and the end of the patronage that it had lent. The tradition of the *gharana* still exists today, with many musical and dance 'families' continuing to practice till date. In Pakistan, for example, Ustad(s) Nusrat and Rahat Fateh Ali came from the *Qawwal Bacha gharana* while Ustad Shafqat Amanat Ali Khan's affiliation is with the *Patiala gharana*.

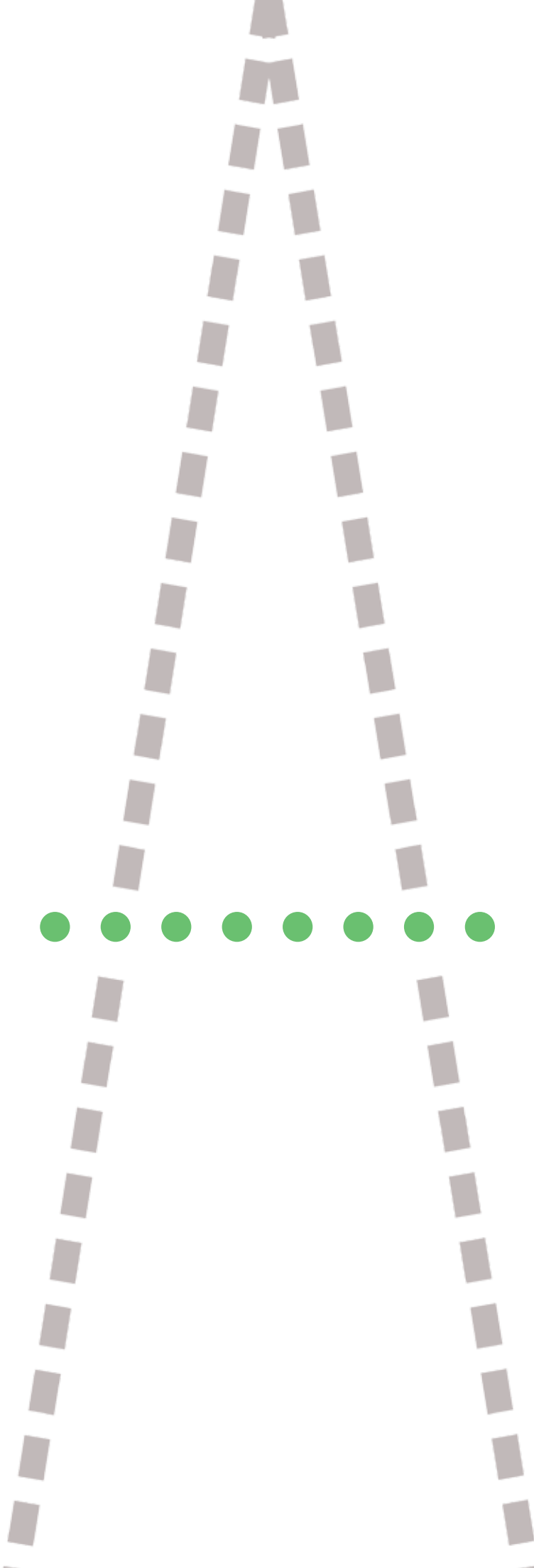
In the contemporary age, the concern with keeping alive the modes and contents of these traditional systems of knowledge dissemination has become increasingly important. Across different fields and arenas, one is able to see the efforts towards the modernization and adaptation of these traditional and historic modes of teaching and learning, in order

to ensure that they are not lost. In the field of music for example this can be seen in the efforts of the now internationally acclaimed Coke Studio Pakistan. Where this does not follow the strict code of the *gharana*, it does serve to not only reinvent and re-formulate (and therefore bring into the modern age) traditional folk songs and classical music of the region, but also often to bring together the masters who wrote and performed this music originally with a younger (contemporary) pool of artists, who through a process of working with and under the masters, are able to understand the inherent principles of the particular style of music the master represents in order to innovate and (re)produce. Where one of the biggest criticisms of the *gharana* system has been that the strict focus on and adherence to one particular style led to its failure to survive the modern era of amalgamation and integration, models such as Coke Studio are able to bypass this by keeping at their heart the idea of the (interconnected) contemporary through creating a fusion of the diverse musical influences in Pakistan, including classical, folk, qawwali, bhangra, Sufi and contemporary hip hop, rock and pop music.

Similarly, in the arts, alternative models of learning can be identified; of the coming together of artists with an inherently similar view, albeit visually highly dissimilar practices, under the tutelage of a singular teacher. Where the strict hierarchical structure of the traditional *ustad shagird* relationship is not necessarily present, such models are indisputably still reliant on the concept of a singular individual whose mastery of the practice allows him to create this situation of bringing together, where the passing on of knowledge becomes possible. This individual then becomes the driving force behind this collective, perhaps not traditionally referred to as an *ustad*, however it is exactly the regard for his expertise that allows him to occupy this position in the first place.

In the particular case of this exhibition, bringing together the works of 20 contemporary Pakistani artists, this link or driving force becomes R. M. Naeem, whose Studio RM comes to act in the manner of the traditional atelier. With the breaking down of strict hierarchical modes of operation however, a more fluid approach becomes possible, resulting in a more organic (and therefore more open) transfer of knowledges and information. Where each of the artists have passed through Studio RM at different points in time since its inception in 1994, this has not in any way acted as a restrictive force upon their practices, it has in fact done the opposite, allowing for a broader approach to practices, to learning and to dialogue, visible clearly in the diversity of approaches to problem solving and to the creation of work in the practice of each of these artists. Just as in the case of the *silsila* or *gharana*, or any comparable traditional model, the linkages between these artists and their works then become almost esoteric, the space of learning and of coming together that connects them acting as an invisible thread that stretches across practices, not restricting but in fact stretching to accommodate, include and innovate, simultaneously ensuring that even in the contemporary era, these systems of specialized knowledges are able to remain alive and to be passed on through the ages.





DUA **ABBAS**
SANA **ARJUMAND**
FAISAL **ASGHAR**
ABID **ASLAM**
MIZNA **BALUCH**
IRFAN **GUL DAHRI**
NAZIA **GULL**
IRFAN **HASAN**
DONIA **KAISER**
ALI **KAZIM**
AMRA **KHAN**
SABA **KHAN**
MUDASSAR **MANZOOR**
RM **NAEEM**
SADAF **NAEEM**
NAVEED **SADIQ**
KIRAN **SALEEM**
AAKIF **SURI**
ADEEL UZ **ZAFAR**
MUHAMMAD **ZEESHAN**



● ● ● ● Dua Abbas



Eurydice
 pastel on somerset paper
 56 x 76 cm
 2013



Orpheus was on the line
 pastel on somerset paper
 76 x 40 cm
 2013

The thematics of nostalgia, loss and memory is a significant motif in Dua Abbas's metaphorical narrative rendered through inanimate objects. The sights and sounds of the ocean when you are parted from it become a distant memory, provoking longing and yearning. How does one then transport and seize time and memory, questions the artist. The strange phenomenon of being able to hear the sound of the ocean in a seashell when you bring it close to your ear is the way nature encapsulates the notion of belonging and the passage of time.

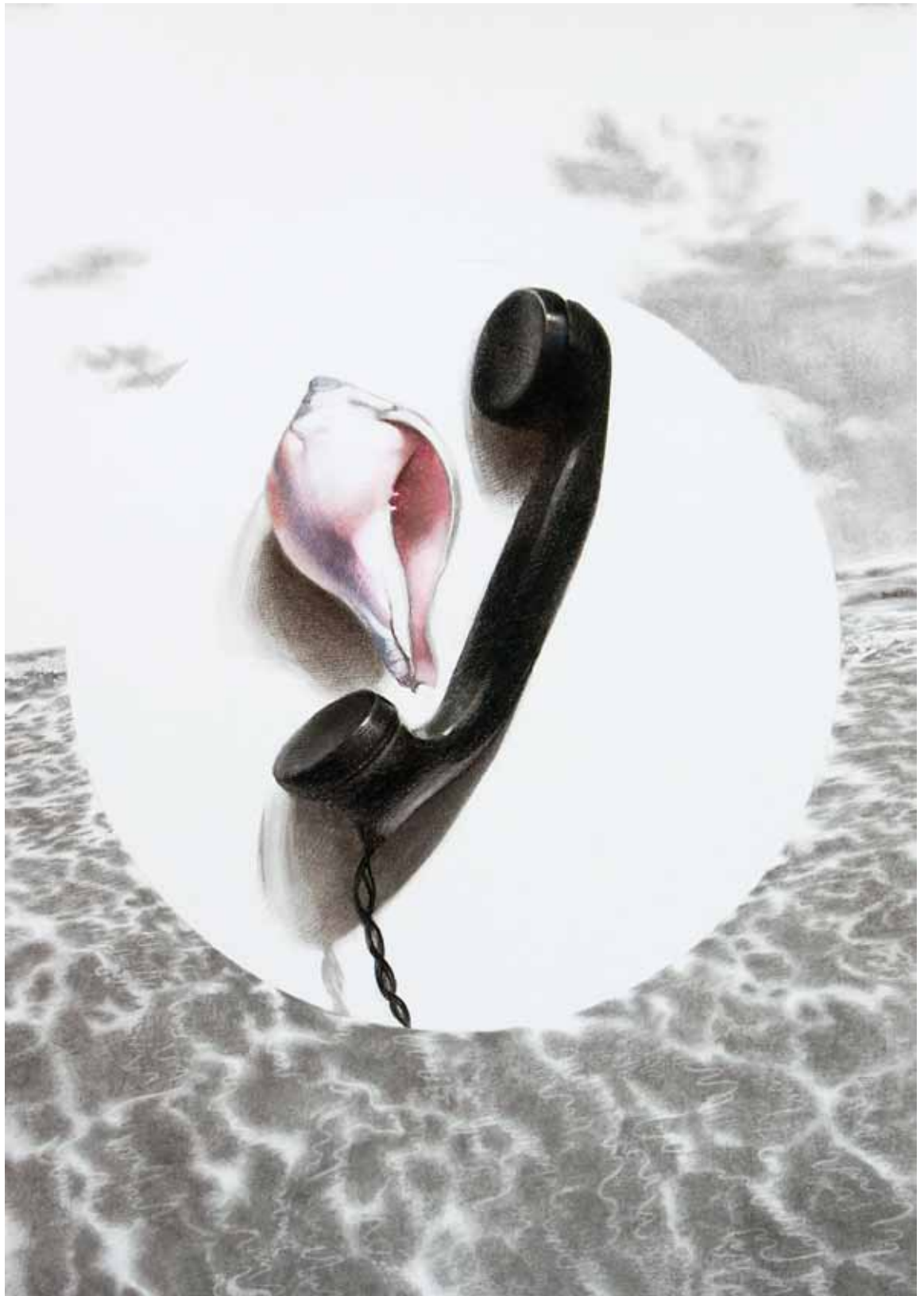
But the human psyche has no such mechanism and Abbas makes it apparent in her artwork. She recreates the image of a seashell and places a phone receiver alongside in an effort to address the idea of transference of the emotive and the intangible. The phone depicted is not a modern-day cellphone but the old black Bakelite instrument, a telephonic device few youngsters today have even seen, let alone used. In today's globalized world, where millions of people are traversing borders every day from areas of conflict or depressed economies, leaving their homes, their memories and all that is close to their hearts, the concerns of loss and yearning have assumed a universal essence.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

I was told, when I was a child, that the sea spoke and sang from conches and sea shells. This was not, of course, a whimsy unique to my childhood as conches, being so universal an accessory to the ocean, feature in so many folklores and narratives from different cultures and eras. Their sensual form, their association with the sea that is itself feminine, and the fact that I always saw them as a means of communication between the shore and the sea led me to explore them occasionally in my work. More recently, the telephone, too, snaked into my work as a prop for my protagonists who are forever trying to get beyond the confines of their miniature worlds.

For *Long-Distance*, I wanted to look at the motif of communication in non-figural terms and more as a still life. So I started thinking of stillness in conversations – loaded pauses, bated breaths, apprehensive silences, and intensity of feeling clouded by crackle and stiffened by static.



Long-Distance
charcoal and pastel on card
112 x 81 cm
2015
Genre: Still Life



● ● ● ● Sana Arjumand



Politics of love
 acrylic on canvas
 46 x 46 cm
 2011



Birds of a feather
 oil on canvas
 152 x 91 cm (each panel)
 2008

The influence of cosmic bodies on our daily lives is intense and affecting and yet our approach to it is nonchalant and dismissive. Sana Arjumand draws our attention to the planetary system that runs its diurnal and nocturnal course as part of the larger controlled machinery of the universe. The two moons Arjumand depicts in her work almost resemble organic bodies in a petri dish; so definitive are the concentric circles that surround the explosion of varied and dynamic forms within.

One of the two 'moons' is bright, while the other is dark suggesting the orbiting moon in its different phases of visibility from crescent to gibbous to waxing and then waning. The seeming chaos of the surface painted with a myriad points of pigment along with embroidered tangents and bursts of light point to the inexplicable phenomena that we are confronted with every day, most of which we choose to ignore until things stray from their synchronized path resulting in disorder. The work exudes a metaphysical, even ontologically questioning quality that provokes us into mulling over notions of spirituality and science, cosmic connectivity and confusion, even faith and belief though a play of fundamental shape, colour and linearity.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

The Moon is a Lover

Mysteriously hanging in the sky, it speaks of love, of heaven, of an unknown reality of the other side that pulls so greatly that my heart refuses to look away. It speaks, it sings, it narrates..

The attraction of the moon is far greater than any other element on our landscape. Looking at the subject of landscape through a spiritual perspective it reflects the state of human existence. But the sky and the heavenly bodies which are also part of our visual landscape reflects heaven, eternity, light, a place beyond human drama. The closest heavenly body to us is the moon, majestically taking over all other elements of the landscape with a powerful glowing mist of love.

Mystery of Our Landscape
is the Moon (Waxing and
Waning Moon).

acrylic and embroidery on wasli
79 x 142 cm

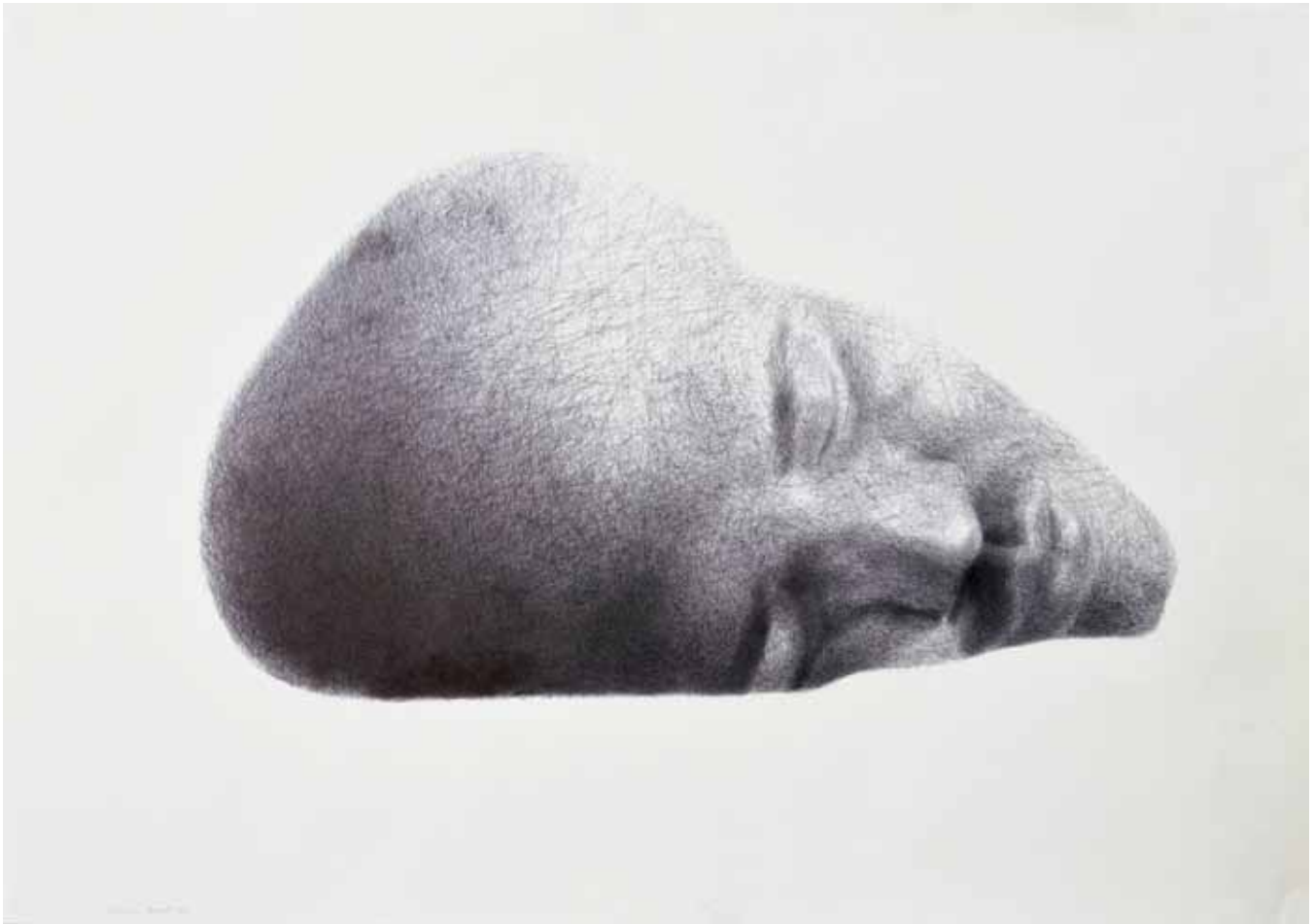
2015

Genre: Landscape





● ● ● ● Faisal Asghar



Sleeping Head
 ballpoint pen on paper
 70 x 100 cm
 2013

Mother
 ballpoint pen on paper
 29 x 20 cm
 2008



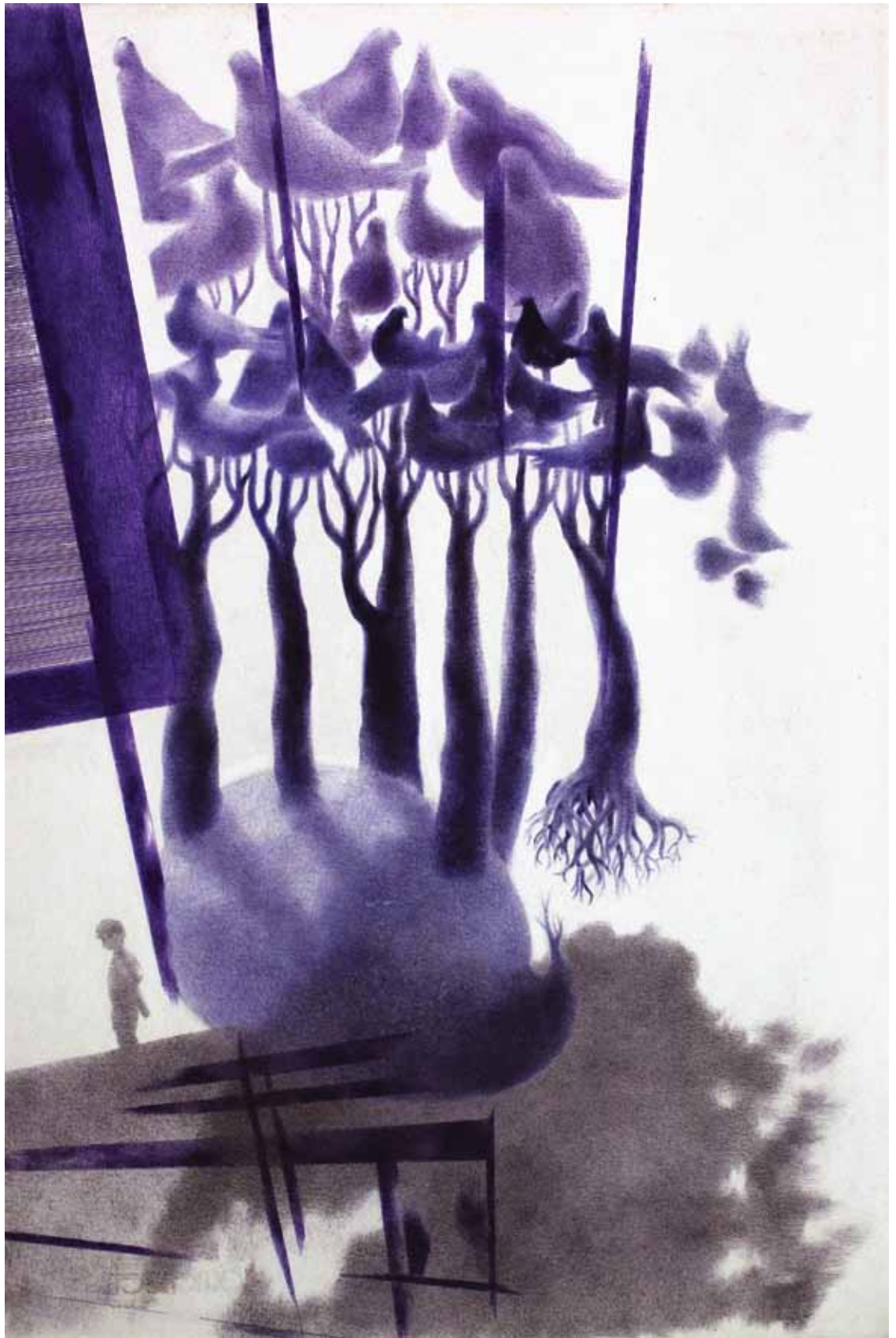
The idea of an idyllic, imaginary world is shared by most children as their young minds are fertile and the world is their oyster. When they grow to adulthood and reality sets in, the fantasy fades and they are left with yearnings and nostalgia of the past. But the loss of the dream is not what makes us nostalgic; it is the ability to dream again that becomes more distant as we gain years and acquire knowledge, not wisdom. In Faisal Asghar's narrative, we see the child of dreamtime.

The metaphysical landscape constitutes a copse of leafless trees that abide on a singular mound of earth. That earthlike sphere however is the orbical seed from which these trees have sprouted, grown into saplings and then risen to their tall magnificence. In the dreamy landscape one tree drifts away from home; its roots still full and diverging, gasping for a place to sink back comfortably. That tree is the story of the displaced migrant who uproots himself due to necessity or choice; the one that will yearn to belong again. In the grove of trees rest a flock of birds, but we see a few restive ones have flown the coop.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

Human survival depends on the health of the ecosystem which is comprised of communities of plants, animals and other organisms in a particular ratio. We humans threaten this ecosystem by producing waste, damaging habitats, producing high amount of green gases and urban development. Urban development and the rapid construction of roads and buildings has changed the earth's natural surface, removing soil nutrients, vegetation and trees that equalize the carbon cycle. Global warming and changes in climatic behaviour are the result of all this intervention in the ecosystem in the name of development.



Another Housing Society
ballpoint pen on paper
56 × 37 cm
2015
Genre: Landscape



● ● ● ● Abid Aslam



Q. A. Library
eyelets on wasli
91 x 203 cm
2013

Inner Memory
mixed media on wasli
66 x 51 cm
2011

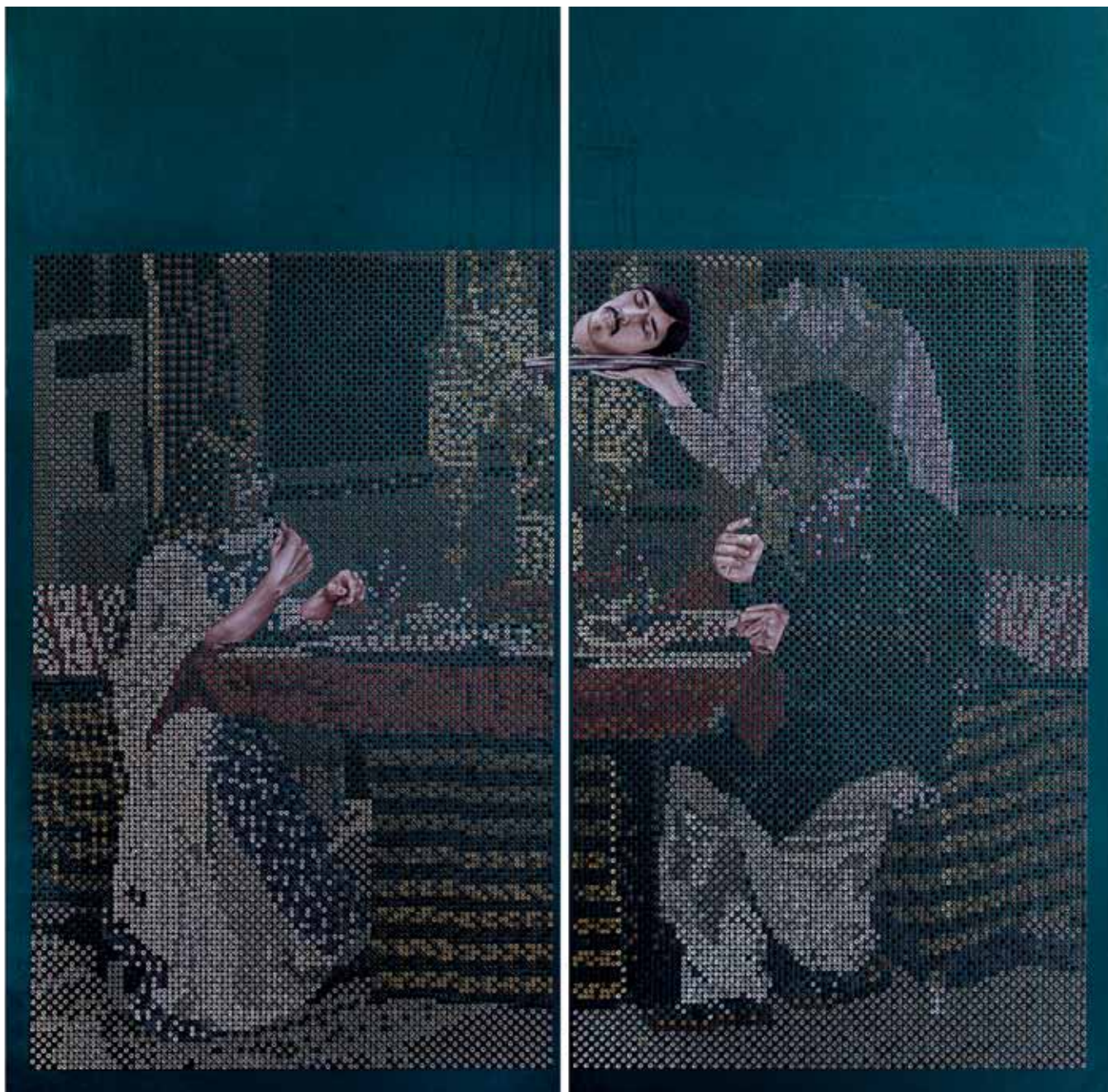
The notion of food as an allegory for sacrifice pervades art history and is commonly found even in contemporary art practice. It harks to the biblical account of the last supper in which food and drink were associated with physical human attributes and the meal became the subsequent source of the ultimate universal sacrifice in Christian terms.

Abid Aslam's technique of using plastic grommets or eyelets on wasli is a mode of expression that in itself articulates a gamut of ideas. The artist punches holes into a smooth, even surface and then systematically restructures and reforms the openings - a demonstrative act that oscillates between violence and reconciliation. The entire work is created with the help of these eyelets, except the hands of the diners, the server and the sacrificial head of the victim on a platter that are painted in the meticulous miniature technique which augments their significance. The work alludes to divisive class systems, brought into focus by the deliberate use of the diptych as a device that physically slits the narrative. There is also the distinctive allusion to the marginalization of minorities, noticeable by the outline drawing of the church spire in the background.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

Punching coloured eyelet into the surface of the wasli, I tend to capture the urban landscape of Lahore. I am interested in the everyday and by photographing the banal I create imagery which although common to the public eye is deep in meaning historically, politically and personally. Influenced by the Neo-Impressionist movement and computer graphic pixilation, I use my medium in such a way that the breaking and coming together of colour becomes the most vital part of the work.



Lovers' Dinner
mixed media on wasli
203 x 193 cm (diptych)
2015
Genre: Portrait



● ● ● ● Mizna Baluch



Landscape
 etching on somerset paper
 18 x 27 cm
 2012



Untitled
 etching on somerset paper
 30 x 23 cm
 2012

The drone attacks are now so ubiquitous in Pakistan that they have become part of the popular culture and language of the political, social and cultural narratives. While talking heads on television screens 'drone' endlessly about drones, images of strikes and subsequent killings have cropped up in art and language exercises of children as small as eight and nine. This ubiquity has in fact dulled us to the profound sadness of the result of the drones. By depicting none of the gory, all-inclusive violence wreaked by UAVs, Mizna Baluch in fact relates a saga of modern-time war. Her work is viewed through a plane's navigational guidance system and records an almost frame-to-frame account of a strike. A tiny village is located, pinpointed and seconds later it disappears from the face of the earth

The complete emotional detachment and lack of human participation with which these attacks are orchestrated from as far as 12,000 miles is chilling. Unfortunately the mechanical precision of the strikes is not anywhere equivalent to the accuracy of on-the-ground intelligence and thus the occurrence of infinite innocent fatalities -- old men, women and children torn asunder by the bombs that appear in near silence, according to accounts of survivors.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

Gulf War, being the first virtual war, allowed the drones to carry out aerial strikes via technology into the war zone. The proponents of virtual war, see this reliance on technology as a milestone towards revolutionizing the warfare, but I see it as an excuse for not finding solutions to the real issues. Squeezing trigger sitting in front of the screen and dropping a missile on bases of suspicion is almost similar to attacking targets in a video game. With the only difference that this war is real, very much physical and it is inhuman to respond with such insensitivity. In my practice I am interested in understanding the relationship between man and machine and how it is affecting our perspective towards life. I believe that as the technical infrastructure is becoming more extensive and relationship between man and devices is getting smoother, we are increasingly losing the ability to distinguish between reality and the simulation of reality. The fine line between reality and fiction is blending together.

We belong to a world which is radically transformed by virtual technology where reality is saturated with an abundance of images. The idea of using real life war imagery and screenshots of battleground computer games as a starting point for my paintings reflects on our inability to distinguish between grave realities of life and digital illusions. All the four paintings have a similar painterly effect, intricate details and translucent washes of paint, almost appearing like beautiful ancient maps or fading photographs of World War are a reflection of sugar-coated reality we choose to live with. As in our society these images not only control but also manipulate reality, I am interested in exposing the other side of the picture and its traumatic dimensions.



"So we fired! And six seconds before missile impacted, something small ran down the building. The screener told me, it was a dog. But I don't think so. Was I seeing things? Ultimately I believe there was a child killed."

top left to bottom right - I, II, III, IV

oil on linen

62 x 82 cm (each)

2014

Genre: Still Life



● ● ● ● Irfan Gul Dahri



The Council (Grey series)

acrylic on wasli

55 x 95 cm

2014

Billa

pigments and acrylic on wasli

68 x 53 cm each panel

2011

Deception in art has played a vital role in creating dramatic tension in the thematic composition of paintings adding layers of meaning and intriguing viewers by tricking the eye. *The Ambassadors* by Holbein (1533) includes a human skull in anamorphic perspective and even after all these years it is a source of curiosity for viewers, while it makes a statement about death and mortality.

Irfan Gul's work is teeming with a complex narrative, played by shadowy figures of men, women and children in a tangle of torsos, limbs and extremities. In the foreground is the remnant 'head' or inflorescence of a flower encircled by faded yellowing leaves. This is the protagonist of the 'knight's tale' and we decipher this part of the account because the head is encased in what seems to be a knight's helmet. It is a startling discovery because the gentle organic texture of the playing field suddenly turns disarmingly into a battlefield at the sight of this metallic symbol of medieval war. We then begin to unravel the mystery of the work in this new-found context – is it a standard, a flowing robe a form...Eventually we are not meant to solve the riddle but enjoy the intense multifariousness of the work.

Nafisa Rizvi

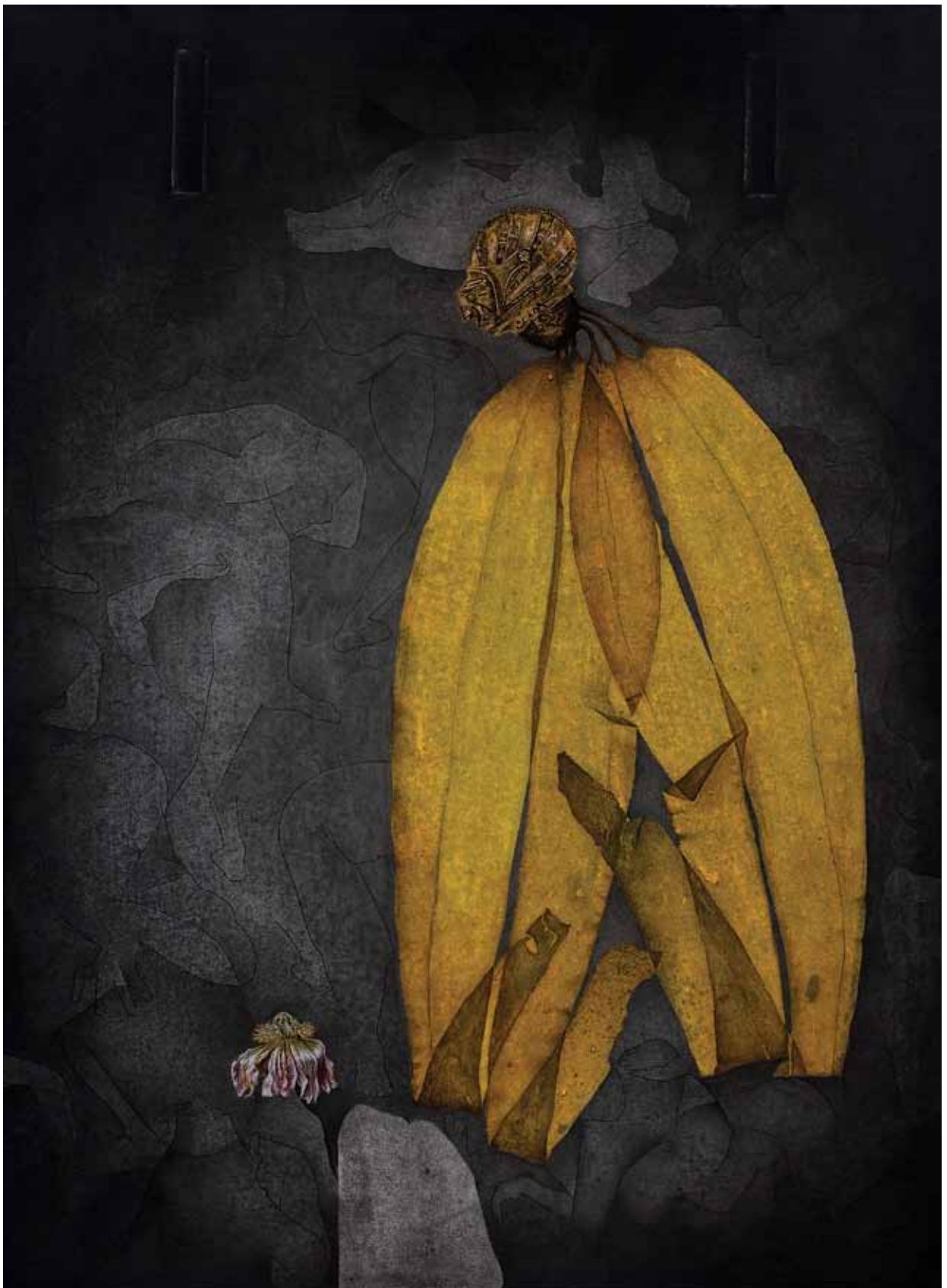
● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

Sir, would you like some water?

Thank you Son but I think we are content. Go on- there might be others, please help them. God bless you!

So...what do you think? It's been quite an adventurous one- hasn't it? You have been a great companion and we have come a long way, but I think we should give up now- it's never going to stop any way! Oh...never mind, because I can see you are still being optimistic or should I say stubborn-like those stupid flowers blooming over rocks. Just tell me one thing- don't you ever get it? Haven't you grasped the beauty of destruction yet!?

Have you?



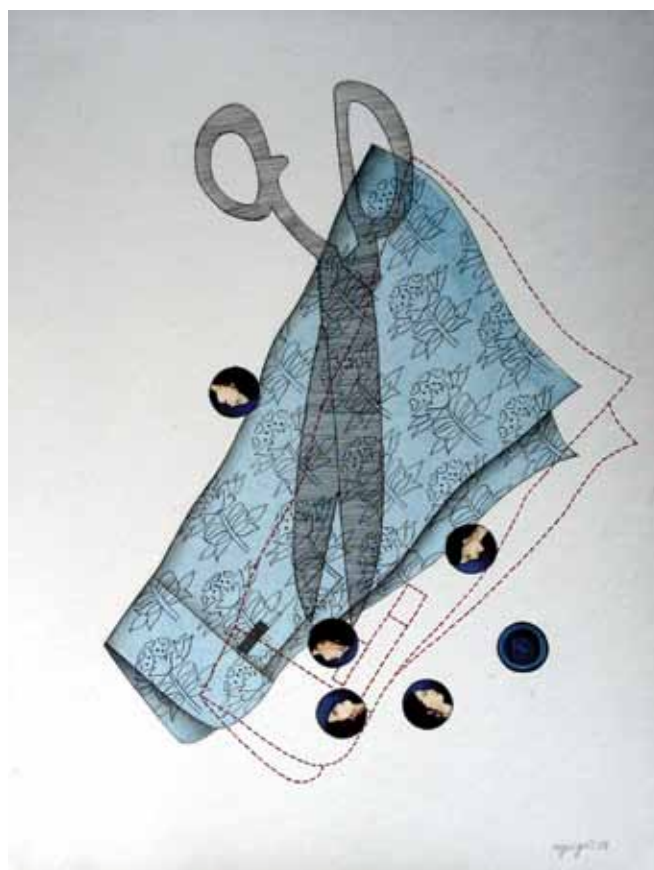
Still Untitled
acrylic on wasli
96 x 71 cm
2015
Genre: Still Life



● ● ● ● Nazia Gull



Persona
gouache on wasli
51 x 33 cm
2010



Cutting-edge
gouache on wasli
33 x 25 cm
2009

The photographic selfie has captured the imagination of people across the world, from celebrities to presidents, athletes to tourists. Nazia Gull's contemporary miniature of a photographic device addresses concerns of self and other. If a day ever arises when the fad fades, sociologists and psychologists will have a field day theorizing about the phenomenon; its beginnings, its impact as a tool for archiving ubiquity, and its psychological influence in enhancing narcissism or deepening insecurities. But while we live through the experience of being surrounded by selfie-takers, we are not taking the time to think about the act. The power one exerts on the image frees the narcissist in each of us. We want to know what face to wear. We want to control how others see us. In a photographic session, the photographer retains control and the trepidation we feel about not knowing how the image will eventually turn out is disarming. The selfie hands us the reins to ourselves.

Nazia Gull's interpretive selfie is a fish-eye perspective, distorting foreshortening values, perceiving and augmenting inaccuracies rather than diminishing them. She re-imagines herself in the act and stance of taking the selfie by depicting the shadow of her feet but the result is contrarily hyper-real.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

We are experiencing the beginning of cyber age, words as well as their meanings are changing; 'as soon as possible' has been deciphered into 'ASAP', technology is shrinking in size day by day. The world is becoming increasingly compact and computer chips are used to auto mobilise everything, people are making room for a wider social circle and eventually getting close to the true meaning of global village. Our perceptions and concepts towards various things are changing; when we talk about modern day self-portrait, the only thing that flashes to the mind at once is 'Selfie' – while there are many who literally hate this word, the selfie has become a worldwide phenomenon. I tried to capture the feel of this digital age and cater contemporary self-portraiture in a single painting using exaggerated lens distortion with foreshortening to create the feel of Micro-lens as well as a peephole through which one can see the fast pacing changing world.



Selfie
gouache on wasli
51 x 76 cm
2015
Genre: Portrait



● ● ● ● Irfan Hasan



Blue Salute
opaque watercolor on paper
71 x 56 cm
2007



After American Gothic
opaque watercolor on paper
102 x 152 cm
2014

To reexamine classicism at any stage of an artist's praxis is an absorbing rediscovery through which emerges the understanding of art as a discipline. Tropes, techniques, metaphors, narratives, symbols all reveal a universality that is surprisingly fresh and we can identify with if we take the time to do so. Irfan Hasan takes the time. He re-creates a painting by neo-classical German artist Johann Zoffany, a self-portrait as David with the head of Goliath painted in 1756. It is a befitting 'self-portrait' because Zoffany's wit mirrors that of Hasan in many respects. Zoffany was known for his audacious behavior that distinguished him from his more unassuming but respectful peers.

That Hasan's skill is remarkable in his re-representation of Zoffany's David is the least of the points to marvel in the painting. The theme is a universal one, which the artist suggests is a personal one by association. Impishly he alludes to his stature as an under-recognized artist who will one day sweep the world of art by storm. Politically and socially, he insinuates that we are perpetually waiting for a David that will vanquish Goliath who stands between us and the freedom to live as a nation proud and strong

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

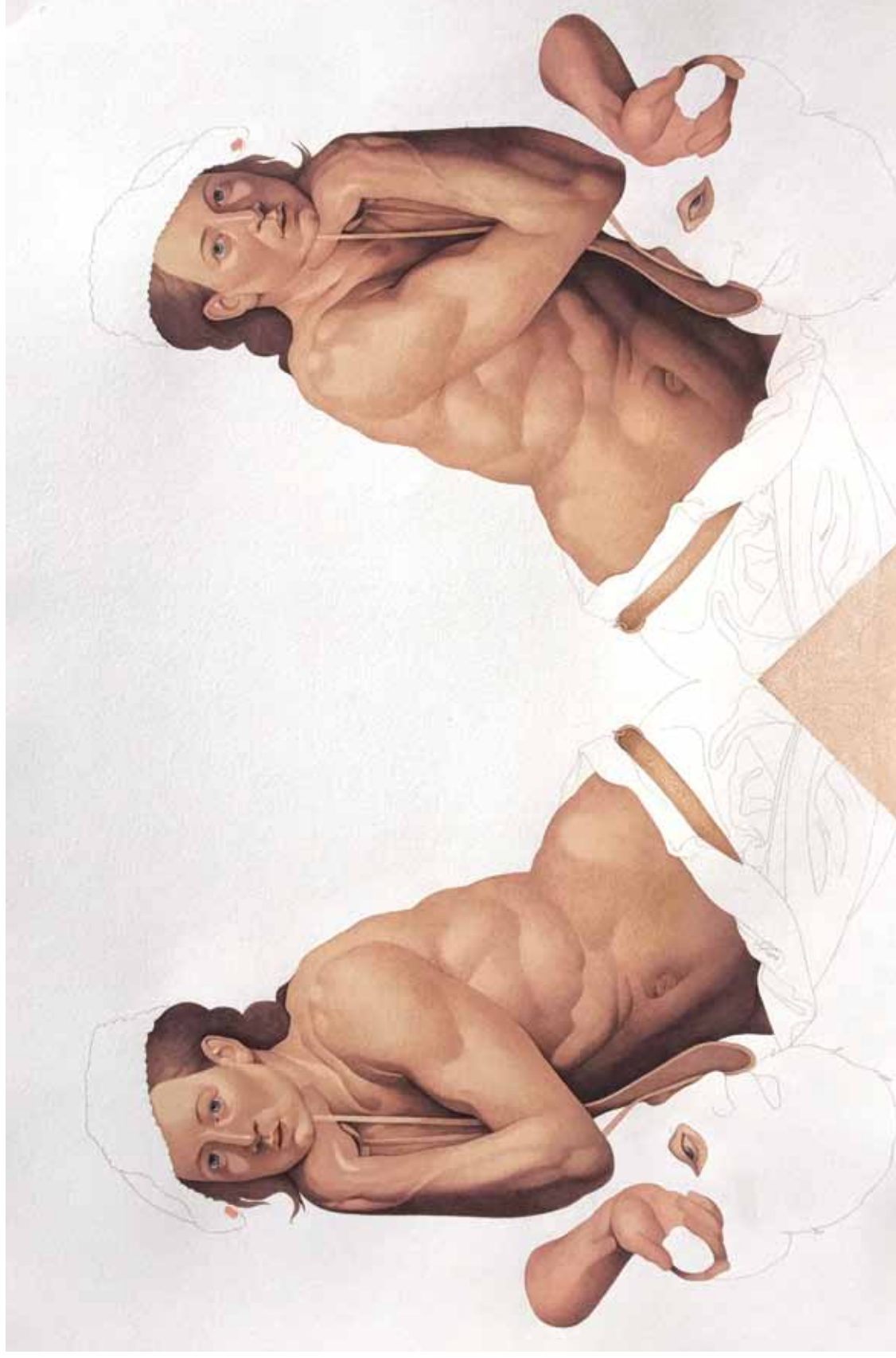
Realism has stimulated and informed my art practice for over a decade now. It led to studying Da Vinci's drawings, sculpting heads after Rodin and painting the self-portrait with Courbet as a reference – forming the basis of my training in Indo-Persian miniature painting.

Throughout the course of art history, various artists have responded to art movements; styles and techniques preceding them; such as Francis Bacon's study of Velázquez, Lucian Freud's painting of Cézanne, Rembrandt's drawings of Mughal miniature and 19th century Company painting in colonial India.

This work is the extension of my series called 'AFTER'. 'AFTER' is my homage to European classical portraiture and the practice of stylization in Indo-Persian miniature painting through synthesis of segments of classical figures and portraits with miniature painting.

Technically this work is done in opaque watercolor on paper with the single hair squirrel tail brush. The technique and the sensibility of stylization are inspired from Indo-Persian miniature painting.

Self Portrait as David with the Head of
Goliath, After Johann Zoffany
opaque watercolor on paper
102 x 147 cm
2015
Genre: Portrait





Donia Kaiser



Run
gouache on wasli
23 x 30 cm
2011

Sun & the Moon
gouache and mud on wasli
17 x 25 cm
2014

Sleep disorders are commonly associated with psychological and emotional trauma, although medical science has disproved any connection between somnambulism and psychological distress. But Donia Kaiser paints a dark picture; literally and metaphorically, using the idea of sleepwalking as reflecting great angst. The composition is theatrical in its starkness. The pitch-black night has darkened the landscape completely and blurred the boundaries between inside and out, between reality and fantasy, between presence and absence.

The scene looks extraordinarily like a scene from a play. A spotlight reveals an unmade bed suggesting it was occupied until a few minutes ago, with the bedside lamp still on. The moon is red epitomizing impending doom and the neon Prussian blue tree is bare and dry exemplifying the lack of life or growth. It issues from a wooden bedside table rather than the earth drawing attention to its own destruction at the hands of man. The title of the painting suggests the temporary absence of the human form as if we are to wait for the somnambulist's return as soon as the episode is over or he/she has been woken by a well-wisher. The stillness and overriding melancholy is vividly re-created as is the sense of anticipation.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

I have chosen to work in the genre of landscape because in my previous work, I have found landscape a significant element that describes my imagination, where I place any object and it begins to communicate with me. It tells the story of itself in a different dimension. I see my landscapes as in-between the realistic world and ethereal time. I believe that we exist in both the world as humans and in a space parallel to reality having different meanings. I don't consider my work as religious or coming from some mystical phenomena in terms of style, concept or genre, rather it is connected solely to my own personal spiritual and worldly experiences. It is my response to that communication where I try to understand a higher reality, placing my loved ones and the ones who I feel apologetic for being ignored but also sometimes just to glorify a being in my Landscape.



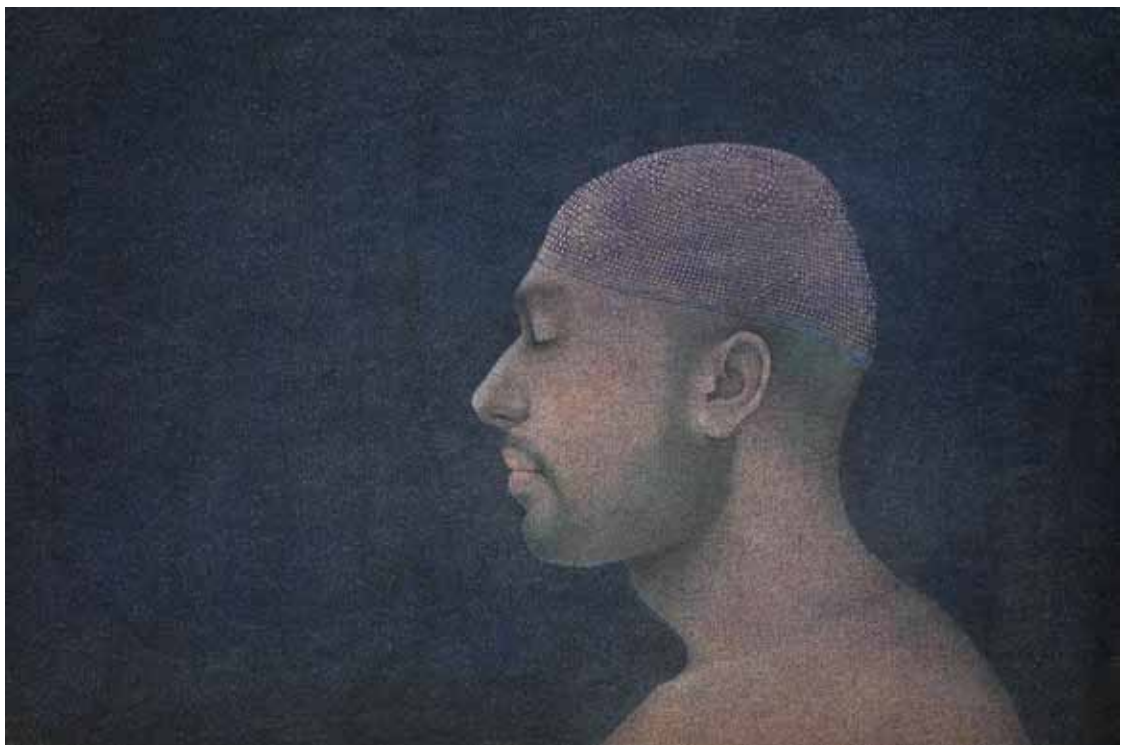
Sleep walking
gouache on wasli
52 x 67 cm
2015
Genre: Landscape



● ● ● ● Ali Kazim



Untitled
human hair, hair spray,
invisible thread
size variable
2015



Topi Walah II
pigments and pressure
printing on wasli
49 x 75 cm
2006

The cerebral or transcendental understanding of a natural phenomenon is usually possible only when a physical or temporal distance is established between the event and the viewer. Ali Kazim portrays a desert storm, a singularly common but no less terrifying or destructive experience, occurring frequently in the vast, arid sandy tracts of Pakistan and the Middle East. He captures the sand cloud roaring towards you, leaving groves in the dunes and gaining momentum as it moves -- a profound allusion to the geo-political circumstances of the world today. The difficulty lies however, in the viewer's complete and utter immersion in the portentous, malevolent event.

The work as a series of two plays out like an animation of sorts. There is a connectivity between the two outlooks of the storm; one is an on-rushing prospect and the other a passing away--- or, if the order is reversed, an impending view. Whatever the order, the notion of perpetuity and cyclical continuum is significant in the scheme of destructive acts of nature as well as human-instigated incidents of violence. The result of the happening is visible in the field of debris that lies strewn on the sand – these are allusions to lost dreams, fragmented families and broken lives.

● ● ● ● ●

Nafisa Rizvi



Untitled I (The Storm series)
pigments on polyester drafting film
32 x 50 cm
2015
Genre: Landscape



Untitled II (The Storm series)
pigments on polyester drafting film
32 x 50 cm
2015
Genre: Landscape



● ● ● ● Amra Khan



The 3 Libras
 oil on canvas
 213 x 183 cm
 2008



Perfect in Her Imperfections
 ink, tea, coffee on paper
 76.2 x 51 cm
 2010

The sacrificial goat or lamb is a common metaphor in religion, literature and visual art but Amra Khan uses it as an anthropomorphic element to reiterate the dystopian landscape of our political and social landscape. In a country where the consumption of meat is an everyday occurrence but rises to alarming proportions during the religious festival of *Eid-ul-Azha*, the goats are as almost as ubiquitously sacrificed as people. An unruly pile of goat heads fills the canvas and to make the piece more ironically poignant, Khan categorizes it in the genre of still life -- a tongue-in-cheek reference to the act of snuffing out a life without a thought for man or animal.

The compositional structure of Amra Khan's painting is significant to its thematic framework. The open mouths revealing teeth point to a perplexity between life and death; from a frontal perspective, the goats look mirthful, smirking – on their side, they look very much in the throes of death. The close crowding of the heads suggests copious numbers of animals and humans living and dying each day but most acerbic of all is the connotation of the suicide bomber who is recognized only by his head as there is usually little to gather of his torso.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

"Words have no power to impress the mind without the exquisite horror of their reality".
– Edgar Allan Poe

They once lived, now stillness surrounds their life, yet they still smile but soon their smiles too shall decay slowly into the abyss of nothingness, as they become a part of a very still life. I like things to be simple and not complicated. I tried to play with the idea that was fluid and moved from one genre to another, the subjects were once portraits now a part of a very still life, just like the rest of us.



A very still life I
oil on canvas
38 x 46 cm
2015
Genre: Still Life



A very still life II
oil on canvas
38 x 46 cm
2015
Genre: Still Life



● ● ● ● Saba Khan



Shooting off to Paradise
acrylic and gel on canvas
168 x 152 cm
2010



Raja Rani
acrylic on canvas
183 x 122 cm
2008

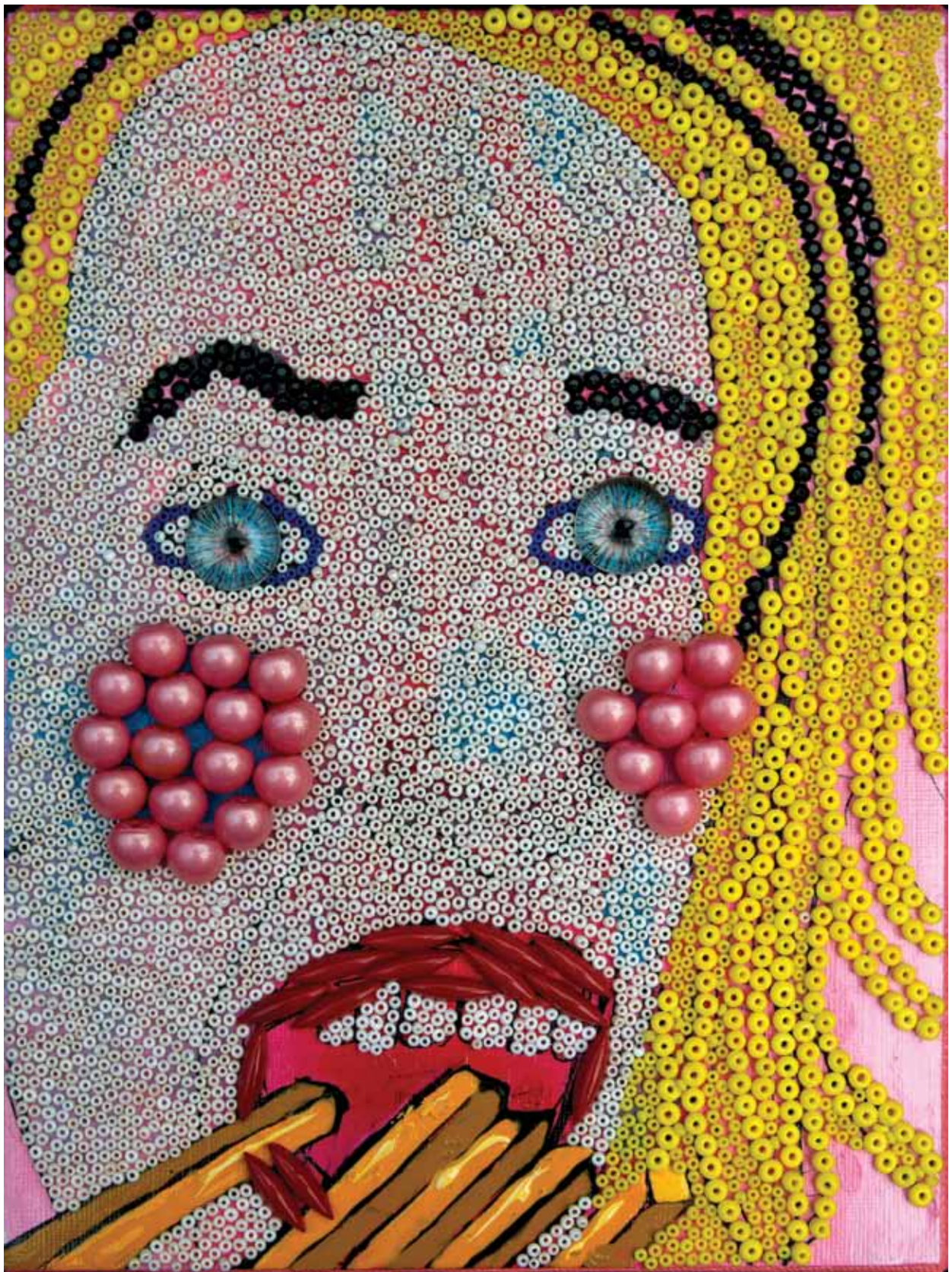
While multiculturalism brings with it many shifts in local cultures and traditions, food habits is perhaps one of the first few changes that occur. Multinational fast food outlets impose their diet on the local populace enticing middle-income families with controlled prices and a western ambience. Scientists say that for the first time in the history of the Chinese people, obesity in children is growing to alarming proportions because of the proliferation of American fast food chains the country.

There are no studies to prove similar trends in Pakistan but the indications are evident. Saba Khan's work detailed with beaded embellishments is a statement about the shiny allure of western culture amongst our people. She creates an image of a woman with yellow hair, bright blue eyes and rosy pink cheeks eating French fries – a bizarre visual suggesting an incongruous foreignness. It is not a pretty picture, but a stilted, absurd, pretentious one, driving home the point that importing external ideals and standards heedlessly can be jarring when forced upon a local context. The food metaphor extends beyond the fries and connotes the mounting need for a great many other needless inclusions of luxury in our way of life.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

Work inspired by the infiltration of outside cultures that influence our local aesthetic. With access to imported luxury items, the tastes of especially the elite ape foreign cultures. Access to social media, easy visa to neighboring middle eastern states, and mass trade with China, these new trade routes whether physical or through the Internet, shape our aesthetic. References are taken from instagram and transformed into kitsch objects of allure, excess, cornucopia and mass production.



Eating Fries

beads and acrylic on Hahnemühle paper

24 x 19 cm

2014

Genre: Portrait



● ● ● ● Mudassar Manzoor



Precious Treasures of Pain

gouache on wasli

51 x 66 cm

2014

Belief series

gouache and punching on wasli

46 x 30 inches

2007



The repetitive prolific use of an organic leafy motif in Mudassar Manzoor's work constructs the primal layer of his narrative. A leaf taken from traditional *Pahari* or *Kangra* miniature paintings is transformed into a patterning symbol which takes on varying metaphors, dimensions, meanings and implications and we are able to see this diversity even within one artwork. When the leaves amass as an orb of gold, they connote the sun with its blazing tongues of flame exuding a palpable power. When they swirl around the human form in currents of blue, they become the waves of the ocean, ready to swallow the hapless human into their watery depths.

The aura created is undeniably other-worldly and transcendental due to the merging of the elements in a cosmic palette. The human form in Manzoor's work is a fateful soul, drowning in misfortune. His lithe body bends backwards not in a pose of supplication but suggesting his demise and his forfeiture from worldly misgivings. The overriding aura of spirituality in the painting is marred by the hints of a bloody red background, grounding it suddenly to a violent, earthly residence. Imperceptibly a connection is created between the violence of our lives and the promise of peace in the hereafter.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

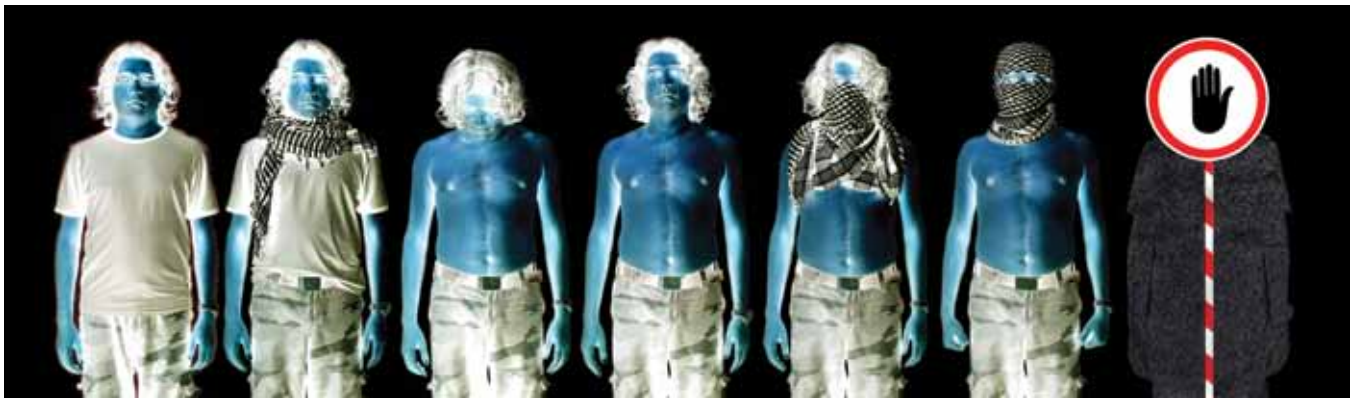
As an artist, the practice of mark making on a wasli is like a meditation. I am in a constant search of 'eternity' and its meaning in today's chaotic conditions, and the ritual of layering the wasli's surface with gouache is almost like adding different layers of my experiences in search of truth and mysticism, which cannot be altered by any social, political or cultural conditions.



Inception
gouache with gold on wasli paper
39 x 39 cm
2015
Genre: Landscape



● ● ● ● RM Naeem



C⁺ (Pakistan Today Series)

acrylic and ink on canvas
102 x 305 cm
2008

Envy

red & green chillies, fiber glass,
perpex and video projection
size variable
2013

The search for truth in an ontological landscape delineates the ideal form, the archetypal man and woman and a system of semiotics that point towards that truth. We are reminded that it is a search and that the process is the prime objective and not the destination for that is ultimately elusive.

RM Naeem's work is based on a formal arrangement of tropes each laden with socio-political, spiritual and metaphysical values. The work is a literal representation of 'laying it on the table', a kind of open call to debate the fundamental and building blocks of humanity. At the heart, the very centre of the piece is the black cube and there can be little doubt that the artist is initiating a theoretical and practical discourse of disambiguation of spirituality rather than formalized religion. The polarities exist at the ends of the spectrum, male-female, religious, a-religious or perhaps spiritual. In between there are many points of view, many perspectives, all of them justifiable and alluring to the vast continuum of thought and belief. Interestingly, there is a firm standoff in the work as the line of vision between the two people interconnects and though we may look for preference on the part of the artist, he offers no judgment.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

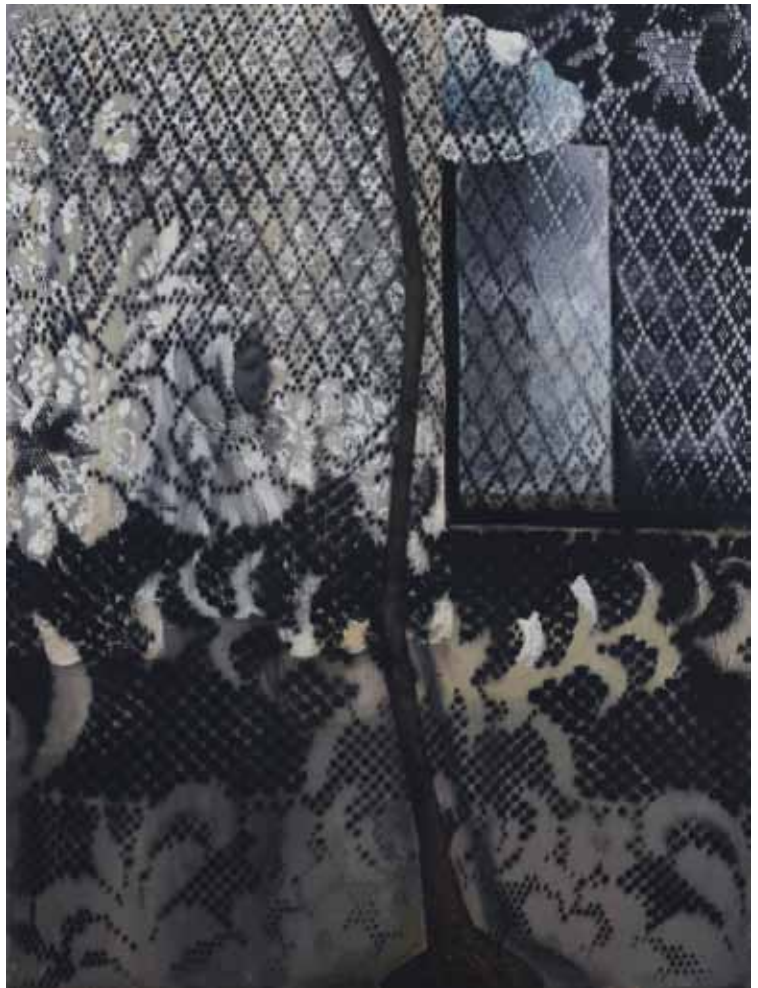
I enjoy the intelligent visual interpretation of literature and poetry. The genre Still life is quite a thought provoking subject matter for me. Still+life, Life can't be still! Perhaps it is another parallel reality which serves our lives very silently. For instance, *The Last Supper* was an incident but when we record it in a certain medium, it becomes slow, fast or still.

Still + Life
acrylic on canvas
102 x 198 cm
2015
Genre: Still Life





● ● ● ● Sadaf Naeem



Intersperse
oil on canvas
61 x 46 cm
2013



Tribute
oil on canvas
91 x 76 cm
2012

The language of art is deceptively simple. The more common the image, the more echelons of metaphor you can expect to derive from it. Pakistani oranges, known for their quality and abundance become Sadaf Naeem's vehicles of expression but the backdrop she creates is as vital to the narrative as the 'protagonists'.

The slabs of wood separated by a dark chasm in the background are portals. Nothing issues from it and it leads nowhere because it is man-made and not metaphysical, as suggested by the skillfully polished surface. The panels may also refer to table tops. The fine lace, also artfully designed and woven is stretched lightly across the wooden panels and does little to hold wood in place or cover them, whatever the purpose indicating their ineffectualness as items of functionality. The oranges, the only Godly, organic items in the work are in a state of disarray and chaos but they are wholesome, luscious and fresh off the trees for they are attached still to their branches. This juxtaposition of plant life, inanimate objects and the nuance of the ontological creates a curious tension offering a dreamlike quality without the need for distortion as dictated by the rigors of surrealist art.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

I have composed some of the symbolic elements from my previous practice like ornamental veil and have painted oranges to experience still life from another perspective to comment on gender.



Still Life
oil on canvas
122 x 91 cm
2015
Genre: Still Life



● ● ● ● Naveed Sadiq



Naveed Sadiq Aur Mein
 colour pencil on paper
 84 x 112 cm (each) (diptych)
 2012

Untitled
 drypoint on paper
 46 x 30 cm
 2012

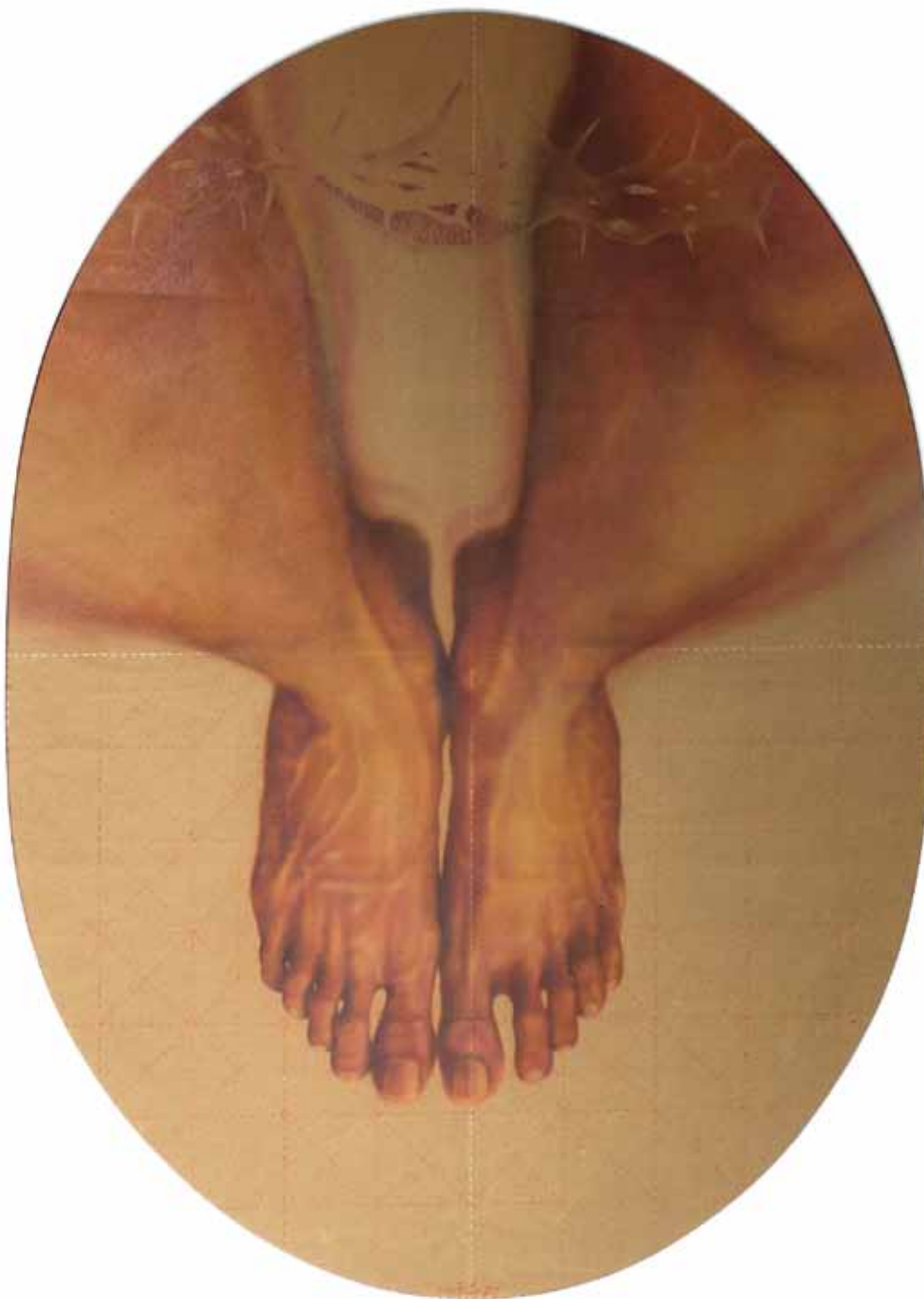
The awkward perspective from which Naveed Sadiq illustrates a pair of feet is so intensely personal that we are immediately aware they cannot be but his own and our response turns disconcertingly voyeuristic. They are drawn to perfection, each vein and sinew anatomically accurate. The cameo format adds to the idea of portraiture as it was the classical presentation for portraits, specially profiles, but the metaphor in the work is highlighted by the choice of the lower extremities as the only part of the human body chosen as the focus of the work. It is then that paradoxes seep into the thematic framework when the notion of universality rather than intimacy starts to become more significant.

The only other element in the painting is a faint train of thorns across the knees and though the feet are not positioned as we commonly see Christ's on the cross and the thorns are not arranged as a crown, they all point to the Christian theological narrative and suggest the idea of martyrdom and sacrifice for the greater good of humanity. In the larger picture, the work becomes symbolic of the growing disenfranchisement of the Christian community in spite of their historical inclusivity and integration into mainstream Pakistan since partition.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

Who can I reveal you to, O agony?
This torment this recognition, is gratifying
That awakens the mere realization of being human.



Untitled
colour pencil on paper
107 x 76 cm
2015
Genre: Portrait



● ● ● ● Kiran Saleem



Untitled 01
resin, acrylic
9 x 15 x 10 cm
2014

Untitled 02
acrylic on MDF
46 x 35 cm
2014



With the reproduction of a self-portrait by Austrian artist Angelica Kauffman (painted circa 1770-1775), Kiran Saleem investigates a multi-layered idea of authenticity and faithful rendering that reaches far beyond a simple theoretical exploration of neoclassical formalism. If Saleem's work is nuanced by feminism, it is not the overriding theme and in fact is a statement about traditional methods of art education and the learning of the rigors of representational art.

The painting depicts a simulated experience of an art student having found an artwork of choice in an art book. The student or artist-in-training proceeds to make a photocopy of the painting and then attaches it with masking tape to the board, like a starting reference point. While the work prompts humour at the deliberate trompe l'oeil with the paper, the tape and resulting shadows, the lengthy process of painting comes into consideration as a vital aspect. Before the advent of the daguerreotype, portraiture was a long, painstaking and wearying endeavour for both the artist and the sitter. Now with photography having become a common means of reference, we are compelled to think about authenticity, physicality, and the intervention of a tool between the painter and her/his canvas.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

I started working with questioning what art is and what it is not. I came across the issues of reality and unreality – a stage where you cannot decide for a certain time whether it's real or not.

My work is about the visual experience of looking at things which could be considered as art. My work revolves around the images that offer an altered perception of the real. By doing this I am trying to stimulate viewers' minds and give them a new way of seeing overlooked images. I intend to explore the fine lines between illusion, delusion and hallucination.

Also, my work talks about contemporary art by questioning what is actually contemporary? Is it the image or the idea? I took images which have been produced hundreds of years ago and seen thousands of times but they are still contemporary as they are painted in a very unusual manner.



Untitled
oil on canvas
61 x 61 cm
2015
Genre: Portrait



● ● ● ● Aakif Suri



Now you see me 06

gouache on wasli
35 x 18 cm
2014



I am Fish

gouache and spray paint on wasli
236 x 99 cm
2014

In an extraordinary meeting between surrealism and the tropes of miniature Aakif Suri unravels a rather lengthy narrative on existentialism and power. In the tradition of surrealism a dream-like sequence is represented -- a human torso melds into a throne-like chair and other body parts like the hand with the Stigmata oozing yellow liquid, the faceless head wrapped by angel's wings topped by a halo make up the eerie picture. It was the surrealists' belief that only through metaphor could the concrete world be understood. The subconscious was represented by the veracity of the world and the images that sprung from the subconscious had to be recorded and chronicled or else they would disperse and truth would be lost. Suri's goal, as was the goal of the Veristic Surrealists is to find images that decode the language of the subconscious and present verifiable truths.

The notion of power is portrayed through the representation of the throne. However, unground the image from a worldly sense of power and glory and the work takes on a deeply spiritual manifestation. In the Quran the "*Kursi*" or Throne that extends over the entire universe is in fact a metaphor for His ultimate knowledge and awareness.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

Still Life –

Two things have been at rivalry in the history of cities and its citizens – that is, intellect and belief or philosophy and religion. We see that the people of intellect and philosophy have never murdered each other. There has never been a clash between the Plato and Demokration schools of thought. The school of thought of Farabi never attacked the philosophers of the convent of Sheikh Shahab ud Din Suhrawardi. There has never been a procession lead from the doors of Ekallatum (Haikal) of Athens who have slaughtered humans and set fire to the cities. Why does the fire of instigator always erupt in the religious sects? This is a question and we need to answer this question. We have the idea that this is not a delectable question. This is the question on which the stamp of crime and sin has been imposed. And the people of our colony will get angry on us because this is that type of conversation. But the problem is that we have never taken the responsibility of making people happy.

– Jaun Elia



Still-Life
gouache, acrylic resin, gold leaf
on wasli
102 x 71 cm
2015
Genre: Still Life



● ● ● ● Adeel uz Zafar



Mickey (3D)
mixed media
51 x 30 x 15 cm
2014

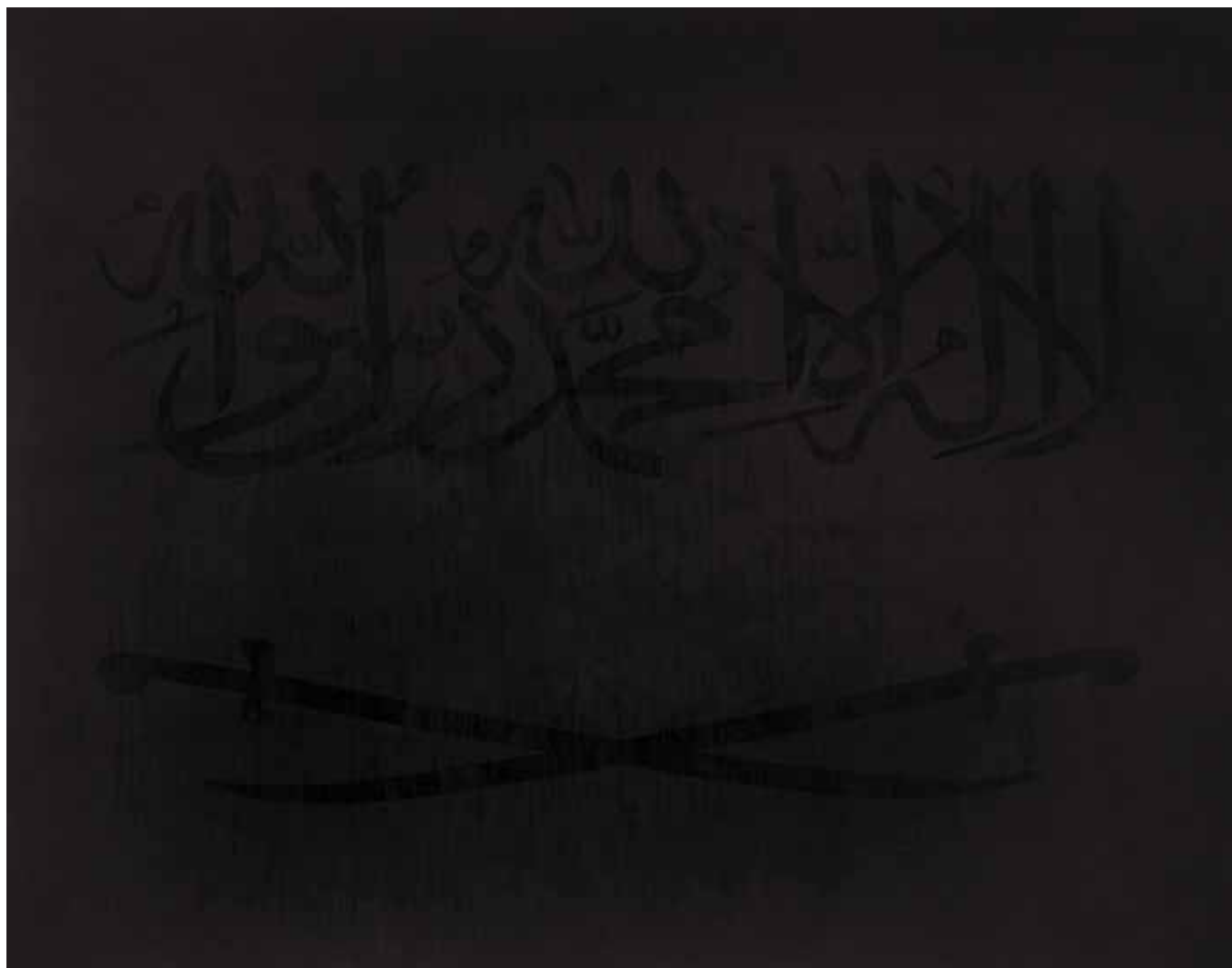


Untitled
engraved drawing on vinyl
152 x 122 cm
2015

Standards or flags have historically been used as identifiers of groups or tribes, becoming more significant at times of war when troops rallied around their banner and looked to as the signal to advance or fall back on the battlefield. In the wars fought by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), it is said the standard was black with the *Shahadat* or *Kalama* inscribed on it, a tradition that has been followed by the creators of the Saudi flag with a change of colour.

Adeel uz Zafar references the myriad connotations of the flag, its colour, the inscription and the swords underlining the words that constitute the first pillar of Islam. He alludes to the present-day standard bearers of the religion and the conflicts they have manipulated as a result of which this image has become one of the most prolific icons in the world after 9/11. Zafar hints at the fractured relationships within the theological framework and the ensuing rupture that is in evidence across the globe. The scratching, and indistinct smearing and daubing of the surface is an attempt by the artist to recreate the obfuscation that has come to frame the religion by its arbiters.

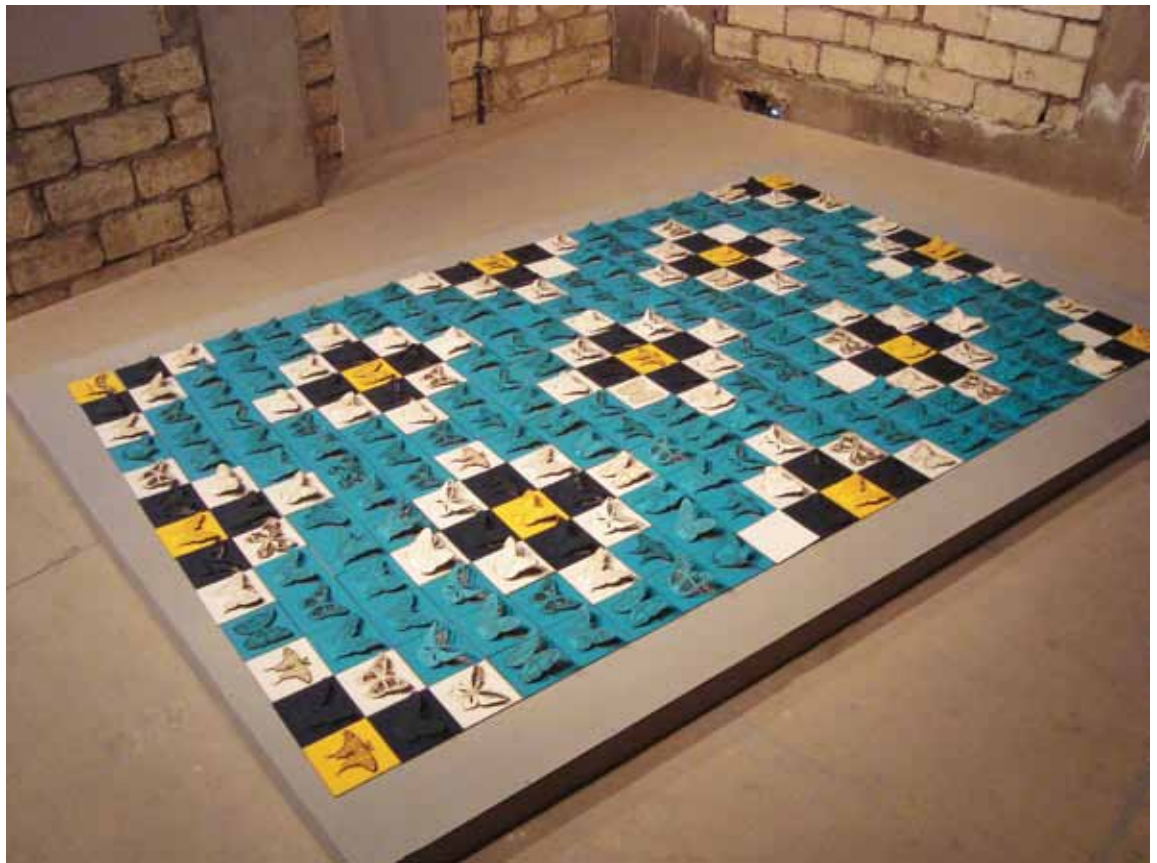
● ● ● ● ●
Nafisa Rizvi



Black Standard
engraved drawing on vinyl
124 x 152 cm
2015
Genre: Calligraphy



● ● ● ● Muhammad Zeeshan



Laal and Mary

oil on canvas, laser scoring and
gouache on wasli
122 x 244 cm
2015

Meeting House

laser scoring and cutting on paper
366 x 274 cm
2012

The hegemonic role of the US in the global political arena since the end of the Cold War has given it the latitude to intervene in all areas of social, religious, financial and even personal freedoms of peoples all around the world. Paradoxically the US has intimate ties of both acrimony and amity with the Islamic world. It is this contradictory relationship that Muhammad Zeeshan refers to in his work, although the hostility is unmistakably poignant. Zeeshan reconfigures the image of the US flag constituting stars and stripes with Arabic text that are pleas for mercy and help from Allah - invocations that all Muslims are accustomed to when faced with adversity or danger.

Ironically enough, the piece is titled In God We Trust, the very words that appear on every dollar bill. Taken literally, Zeeshan re-construes it as a directive to Muslims with the assumption that little recompense or nondiscriminatory judgment should be expected from the US government and only Allah can offer solace, assistance or reparation. The conceptual framework of Zeeshan's work alludes not just to the relationship between Pakistanis and the US Government but to all Muslims living in the US and around the world, making it a statement for the zeitgeist.

Nafisa Rizvi

● ● ● ● ● Artist's Statement

My works tread the thin boundary between found imagery and the originality ascribed to any visual that exists. Prompting the spectator to reflect upon and call into question the connotations attached to strict distinctions between both, I try to push boundaries of self-(p)referentiality in art works to contemplate the nature of images and visual sensibilities.

Obtaining inspiration from any visual that holds my interest I employ images of high-end art, pop images or moving visuals, juxtaposing them together, playing a game of probability of sorts to create a conversation.

'Dying Miniature' operates to create a 'situation' where there is a continuum of 'vs.' regarding what I know miniature technique to be. This locates a field where my curiosity of 'what ifs' regarding soft and harsh; white with black; burnished with abrasive; detail with silhouette; small vs. large; private vs. industrial institute themselves. These questions have allowed an investigation of probabilities and possibilities where I achieved to burnish the works on a coarse surface as opposed to using the traditional method of using a burnished surface to create works.

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Biographical Information

DUA ABBAS (b. 1987. Lahore)

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2010 BFA (Painting) with Distinction, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Dua Abbas is a visual artist and writer based in Lahore, Pakistan. She was awarded the Shakir Ali Award and Sir Percy Brown Prize for excellence in Fine Arts and History of Art. Her work has been exhibited across Pakistan and in group shows abroad. Notable shows include *Elegies, Effigies* (Taseer Art Gallery, Lahore), *Body of Work* (The Drawing Room Gallery, Lahore), *Pakistan Art Today* (Art Junction, The Lalit New Delhi), *New Visions* (Mussawir Art Gallery, Dubai), *Choreographed Encounters* (IVS Gallery, Karachi), *Young Blood* (Canvas Gallery, Karachi), and *Vast Narratives* (Rohtas Gallery, Islamabad). Her paintings are part of private collections in France, USA, India and Canada. She writes regularly about art for *ArtNow* (Pakistan) and *The Friday Times* and has taught drawing, painting and art theory at the NCA, Lahore. Dua lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

SANA ARJUMAND (b. 1982. Karachi)

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2005 BFA (Painting) National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Sana Arjumand has exhibited across Pakistan and internationally. Her work has been shown in New York, Sydney, Hong Kong, Korea, Delhi, Mumbai, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Amman, and London among other places. Arjumand's work appeared in Art Info as one of the top ten rising stars in Pakistan and India. Her practice has also been reviewed in Christian Science Monitor, Canvas supplement, Art Asia Pacific, Times Magazine, H.A.S magazine, Art Now, The News, Dawn, Friday Times, Indian Times, Libas Magazine, Tribune, Blue chip magazine, Hello magazine, Niche magazine. She has been part of residencies such as Art Omi in New York. Sana lives and works in Islamabad, Pakistan.

FAISAL ASGHAR (b. 1978. Lahore)

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2004 BFA (Painting) National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Faisal Asghar qualified for diploma of associate engineering (printing and graphic arts) in 1998. He has been pursuing his career as an artist along with teaching at Lahore College for Women University, National College of Arts (Multimedia and Design dept.), College of Art and Design, University of the Punjab, Lahore and Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi as visiting Assistant Professor. Asghar was awarded the merit scholarship from National College of Arts in 2003, and the Best Young Artist Award from Lahore Arts Council in 2007. His work has been presented at numerous group exhibitions at Alhamra Arts Gallery, Lahore, and at the 2005 *Emerging Talent* group show at VM Art Gallery Karachi; the 2007 NCA Alumni Painting Exhibition; the 2007 *Lantern of the East* exhibition in Korea; the 2009 group show at IVS Gallery, Indus Valley School Of Art And Architecture Karachi; the 2009 group show at ArtsScene Gallery Karachi; the 2010 *A Moment in a Life Long Journey* at The Drawing Room Art Gallery, Lahore and Rohtas Gallery, Islamabad; the 2011 *Silsila* at Koel Art Gallery, Karachi and the 2011 *Khawb aur Ilham* at Khaas Art Gallery, Islamabad. He also participated in the Artist's Residency Show by PNCA at National Art Gallery, Islamabad, in 2013. Faisal currently lives and works in Lahore.

ABID ASLAM (b. 1986. Lahore)

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2010 BFA (Miniature Painting) Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Abid Aslam is presently working as a lecturer at the same institution, simultaneously providing his services as an external juror and examiner at Lahore Women University and Samnabad Women College, Lahore. In 2010, he was awarded the Best Young Artist Award from Alhamra Arts Council. And in 2013, his first solo exhibition was held at Canvas Art Gallery, Karachi. In 2014, Aslam's work was also represented by Marjorie Hussain collection in Canvas Art Gallery, Karachi and Standard Chartered Bank, Lahore. He was also an artist-in-residence at the Sanat Initiative, Karachi, in 2014, and was part of a group show held at Khaas Art Gallery, Islamabad the same year.

MIZNA BALUCH (b. 1991, Lahore)

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2014 BA (Hons) Fine Art (2D Pathway) Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London, UK. Mizna Baluch has also been a student at NCA, Lahore for BFA (Foundation/ First year). She has recently moved back to Lahore and is working in a design and publishing house, Le' Topical. Mizna has exhibited her work at Degree Show 2014, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London. Group Exhibition at Hoxton Gallery, London, 2013. 'An Exhibition' at 1 Granary, London, 2013.

IRFAN GUL DAHRI (b. 1979. Shahdadpur)

irfanguldahri@gmail.com

2011 M.A (Hons.) Visual Art, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan and Prince's School of Traditional Arts, London, United Kingdom. Irfan Gul graduated in Textile Design from National College of Arts Lahore, Pakistan in 2003. From 2003 to late 2006 Irfan worked as a designer for the textile industry meanwhile he wrote and illustrated many books for kids while continuing his passion for painting alongside. In 2006 he joined his alma mater (NCA) as permanent faculty and is still serving the prestigious institute. He got Charles Wallace Visiting Artist Fellowship 2013/14 in London and was selected for 8th Neerja Modi International Art Camp 2012 in Jaipur, India. As a resident artist at Studio RM from 2008 to 2013, Irfan remained an active member in different community projects regarding student counseling and training through lectures, seminars, discussions and formal art classes. He has participated in Vasl Residency, Karachi in 2007 and is recipient of the Chughtai Award, Principal's Honors Award, and Merit Scholarships at NCA. Irfan had his latest solo show in 2014 at Koel Gallery, Karachi while his first solo show was viewed at Art Chowk Gallery, Karachi in 2010. He has been participating in charity shows and art auctions since 2009. Along with numerous group shows, art auctions and charity shows in Pakistan since 2004, he has been showing his work at Bastakiya Art Fair and Modula Conceptio Dubai, Affordable Art Fair Singapore, Gallery 27 London and ICAC India. Irfan lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

NAZIA GULL (b. 1982. Mirpurkhas)

nz.gull@gmail.com

2006 BFA (Miniature Painting) with Honours, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Nazia Gull was the recipient of the merit scholarship at NCA in 2005 and 2006. Her work has been exhibited in numerous national and international group shows, notable being *Sindh*, Koel Gallery, Karachi (2014); *Aihad Karo*, part of Pursukoon Karachi, Karachi Arts Council (2013); *Usman aur Mein*, Koel Gallery, Karachi (2012); *Mein*, Koel Gallery, Karachi (2012); and *Diverse Visions*, Omani Society of Fine Arts, Muscat, Oman (2010). Gull taught drawing at Studio RM from 2008 to 2009, and since 2011, she has been teaching drawing and miniature painting at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi. Nazia lives and works in Islamabad, Pakistan.

IRFAN HASAN (b. 1982. Karachi) Represented by Canvas Art Gallery Karachi

hasanirfan@yahoo.com

2006 BFA (Miniature Painting) with Distinction, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Irfan Hasan's work has been exhibited at numerous solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally. His solo shows include *Decoded*, The Drawing Room Art Gallery, Lahore (2010), *The Social Animals*, Koel Gallery, Karachi (2013), and *After*, Canvas Art Gallery, Karachi (2014). His group exhibitions include *The Moving Image*, Poppy Seed Gallery, Karachi (2009), *Letters to Taseer II*, The Drawing Room Art Gallery, Lahore (2012), *Seven*, Full Circle Gallery, Karachi (2013), *Stop Look Listen*, Canvas Art Gallery, Karachi (2013), and *Present Re-Invention*, Grosvenor Gallery, London (2014). Hasan's work has also been shown at Slick Art Fair 2010, Paris and Art Expo Malaysia 2010, Kuala Lumpur. He was awarded the Commonwealth Connection International Artists Residency Award in 2010, and has had residencies at Commonwealth Connection International Artist Residency at GCAC, Kolkata, India, Storefront Artist Project and Ferrin Gallery at Berkshires, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, USA, and Art Omi International Artist Residency, Ghent, New York, USA. Irfan lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

DONIA KAISER (b. 1984. Lahore)

doniakaiser@gmail.com

2011 BFA (Miniature Painting) with Distinction, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Donia Kaiser has been exhibiting her work both locally and internationally. Her first exhibition was a group show in Canvas Art Gallery, Karachi (2011). She has done two solo shows at Chawkandi Art Gallery (in 2013 and 2014), and another solo at GallerieSteph, Singapore (2014). She has been selected twice for *Spot Art*, which is a juried art festival held annually at ARTrium, Singapore. Her work was also shown in a private exhibition held at Deutsche Bank, Singapore. Donia lives and works in Lahore.

ALI KAZIM (b. 1979. Pattoki)

alicazim@gmail.com

2011 MFA. Slade School of Fine Art, London, United Kingdom. Ali Kazim graduated with Distinction in Painting from National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. His work has been exhibited widely in solo and group shows nationally and internationally. His group exhibitions include: *Portraits*, Selma Feriani Gallery, Tunis and London; *Heritage Reinvented*, Tryon St Gallery, London; *Be a Man*, Summaria Lunn Art Gallery, London; *Chosen*, Artgate Gallery, NYC; *Drawn from Life*, Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, UK; *Beyond the page*, Asia Pacific Museum, USA; *Drawn from Life: Drawing Form*, Green Cardamom Gallery, London, UK; 12th and 13th Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh. His solo shows include: *Untitled* (hair installation), Rohtas II Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan; untitled solo show at Jhaveri Contemporary Mumbai, India; solo presentation at the Hong Kong Art Fair 2012; *Rider*, Green Cardamom London, UK and Rohtas II Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan; *Sacred Souls, Secret Lives*, Ethan Cohen Fine Arts Gallery, New York, USA and Green Cardamom Gallery, London. Kazim is the recipient of numerous awards, such as The Land Securities Studio Award, London, UK and Melvill Nettleship Prize for Figure Composition, UCL, London in 2011, and being selected as a finalist for the Catlin Prize, UK, in 2012. He has also participated in several artist residencies such as The Art House Residency, Wakefield, UK (2014), Art OMI, New York, USA (2012), and ROSL Travel Scholarship: Residency at Hospital Field, Scotland, UK (2005). Kazim's work is in the collection of Metropolitan Museum, NYC; Asia Pacific Museum, USA; British Museum, UK; Victoria and Albert Museum, UK; Queensland Art Gallery, Australia; Burger Collection, Hong Kong; Creative Cities Collection, Beijing; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India; Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India; Samdani Foundation, Dhaka.

Kazim lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan, where he is also a visiting Assistant Professor at the National College of Arts.

AMRA KHAN (b. 1984. Islamabad)

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2011 M.A (Hons.) Visual Art, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan and École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA) Paris, France. Amra Khan graduated in (Painting) with Distinction from National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. She is skilled in oils, acrylics and miniature painting and often expresses her talents through sculptures and video installations. Her work tends to work around having two poles and different ideas or personalities living in the same body. Conflicting gender, power and identity, she works to speak through and incite the observer to question tangibility. She has exhibited her works in galleries across Pakistan and internationally. Her first solo show *Gender Nectar* was held at Galerie Sauvaget, Paris, France and was also a part of *Looking through the wider lens* – a group show of Pakistani women artists at Jankonssen Gallery, Basel, Switzerland. Amra lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

SABA KHAN (b. 1982. Lahore)

1k.saba@gmail.com

2010 MFA, Boston University, United States of America on Fulbright Scholarship. Saba Khan graduated in Painting with Distinction in 2005 from National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. She won the best painting award at Alhamra Arts Council, 2006. She has attended artists' residency programs in Italy (Civitella Ranieri Foundation, 2007), and Jaisalmer, India (SEHER foundation, 2007); she won the UNESCO Aschberg Bursary award for Civitella Ranieri Foundation, Umbertide, Italy. She also won a scholarship to attend Vermont Studio Centre, USA, in 2014. Khan's short film was screened at Monitor 4, SAVAC, Toronto, 2008 and at Kara Film Festival, Karachi, 2007. She participated in the International Art Festival, Kathmandu, Nepal, 2009, and was a juror for UNESCO Aschberg Bursary, Civitella Ranieri Foundation for 2011 session. Khan has had solo shows in Karachi (Canvas Gallery) and Lahore (Rohtas 2 and Drawing Room Gallery), and group shows at Lawrie Shabibi Gallery, Dubai, and Bangkok Art and Culture Center, Thailand. She was shortlisted for The Future Generation Art Prize, Victor Pinchuk Foundation, 2012. Her work has been published in n.paradoxa International Feminist Art Journal, Tran-Asia, and SohbetJounal, Pakistan. Saba is currently teaching at National College of Arts as an Assistant Professor. Saba lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

MUDASSAR MANZOOR (b. 1979. Lahore)

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2005 BFA (Miniature Painting) with Distinction, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Mudassar Manzoor served his alma mater in 2007 and 2010 as a visiting lecturer. He has had numerous solo and group shows. His solo shows include: *I washed the dust of the eyes with blood*, Koel Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (2015); *Once we were in Heaven*, Artscene Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (2014); *The River Runs Dry*, Rohtas II, Lahore, Pakistan (2011); *Fallen*, Gandhara Art Space, Karachi (2009); *Contemporary Miniature Paintings*, Frey Norris Gallery, San Francisco (2009); *Surreal Narratives*, Experimental Gallery, Hong Kong Art Center, Hong Kong (2008) and Gandhara Art Space, (2008); *Belief*, Ejaz Galleries, Lahore (2007). His group shows include: *Resilient Ambassadors*, Gallery 6, Islamabad, 2014; *Indo-Pak Masters*, International Creative Arts Center, Mumbai, 2013; *Contemporary Shahnama Exhibition*, Prince's Foundation Gallery, London, 2010; Slick Art Fair, Paris, 2010; Art Expo, Malaysia, 2010; Hong Kong Art Fair, 2009, 2008; *Different Drummer*, IVS Gallery, Karachi, 2009; Galery Artes, Paris, 2008; East-West Center Gallery, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, 2008; Pyeongtaek Art Festival, Korea, 2007; *From Lahore to Montmartre*, Paris-Nice, 2007; Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore 2007; National Exhibition, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore 2006; ITC Mourya Sheraton, Delhi, 2006, 2005. Manzoor has also received many scholarships and awards including Best Young Artist Award by Lahore Arts Council, 2006; Merit Scholarship, NCA, Lahore, 2005. Mudassar lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

RM NAEEM (b. 1968. Mirpurkhas)

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1993 BFA (Painting) with Distinction, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. RM Naeem is serving his alma mater as assistant professor. In the past twenty-one years, he has held sixteen solos shows both in Pakistan and abroad, curated various important shows of local artists and international artists. In addition his work has been exhibited in numerous important group shows nationally and internationally, including The Asian Art Biennale Dhaka Bangladesh 2004, 2006, The International Artists' Biennale Iran 2006, The Pyeongtaek International Art Festival Lake Museum Korea 2006, 2007, Art Expo Malaysia 2010, Slick Art Fair Paris 2010 France, AAF Affordable Art Fair Singapore 2011 and in 2012 Melbourne, Australia. 2012 Selected artist for Saatchi online, 100 curators 100 days show, 2014 India Art Fair, Delhi, 2014 Sindh art fair, Karachi, Pakistan, Jaipur art summit 2014, Jaipur, India etc. Other nations that have shown his work various times are Sri Lanka, India, Oman, Bahrain, UAE, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Paris, USA, UK, Germany, Norway and Canada etc. As an avid participant of art residencies, he has attended Seventeen various art camps and residencies abroad over the course of his career. He has also conducted various art-counseling workshop in Pakistan and abroad.

Since 1994 promoting art through art education at his created place STUDIO RM. In 2008 he initiated the Studio RM (International) Residency program in Lahore, Pakistan. RM Naeem's work has garnered

several scholarships, awards and prizes in Pakistan, including the Provincial best painter awarded first prize twice, 2014 first prize best short film category in Punjab film festival, Lahore, film screening in summer film festival Mianz , film screening at Kunsthalle Mainz and National Award of Excellence in 2003. His work can be seen in various private and official collections and has been featured in both local and international art publications. RM lives and works in Lahore .

SADAF NAEEM (b. 1978. Lahore)

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2001 BFA (Painting) with Honours, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Sadaf Naeem has been involved in teaching since her graduation at various professional colleges including Pakistan Institute of Fashion & Design and Kinnaird College for women University. She is also a board member and coordinator of studio RM residency, Lahore. She has conducted Art Counseling Programs at Central Model School, Shaikhopura, Pakistan, stain glass workshop for special children at Hamza foundation school and painting workshops with Sanjan major school system for children's literature festival Lahore.

She was a selected artist for Artist camp at Habarana organized by George kyet foundation Colombo Sri Lanka in 2003 and artist for the exhibition "Euphonic palate" organized by Nitanjali art gallery, Delhi and Mumbai at Alliance Françoise, India in 2006. Sadaf showed her work in solo exhibitions 'Unspoken' at Ejaz Galleries, Lahore in 2007, 'Silhouettes' at Taseer art Gallery, Lahore in 2013 and 'Unknown' at Koel Gallery, Karachi in 2015. She has been participating in national and international group shows in London, India and Korea and Sri Lanka. Sadaf lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

NAVEED SADIQ (b. 1982. Hyderabad)

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2006 BFA (Miniature Painting) with Distinction, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Naveed Sadiq has had three solo shows, 'Sepia Voyage', 'Umeed-e-BaharRakh' and 'Tamasha Merey Aagey' at Koel Art Gallery in Karachi, in 2010, 2012 and 2014 respectively. He has exhibited in numerous group shows nationally and has participated in, and conducted, various workshops. He has taught drawing and miniature painting at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi (2009-2013). He is enrolled for his Masters for 2015 at P.S.T.A (Prince's School of Traditional Arts) in London. Naveed lives and works in Karachi.

KIRAN SALEEM (b. 1987. Faisalabad)

gemini_bfa_1@yahoo.com

2013 M.A (Hons.) Visual Art, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. 2009 BFA (Painting) with Distinction, College of Art & Design, GC University Faisalabad. Kiran Saleem is highly skilled in oil and acrylic painting. Her work tends to revolve around images that offer an altered perception of the real. She was awarded the Best Young Artist Award by the Lahore Arts Council in 2013 and was an artist-in-residence at the first Sanat Initiative Residency held in Karachi in June 2014. She has exhibited her work in various group shows in Pakistan. Now she is teaching at NCA, Lahore, as visiting faculty. Kiran currently lives and works in Lahore.

AAKIF SURI (b. 1982. D.G.Khan)

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2006 BFA (Miniature Painting) National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Akif Suri has been serving as an Assistant Professor at PIFD (Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design), Lahore, and National College of Arts, Lahore since 2009. His work has been exhibited in Paris, at Slick Art Fair 2010 – the prestigious contemporary European Art Fair held in France. In 2012, Suri participated in *Contemporary Art of Pakistan* at Art Basel, Switzerland. His work has also been exhibited at the Melbourne Art Fair 2012, Australia. Suri has been showing locally and internationally in major group shows in Pakistan, UK, Canada, Switzerland, India, UAE, and Muscat. He has also conducted juries, workshops, and artist talks in various professional institutes. His work can be seen in private and official collections and it has been reproduced in different art publications locally and internationally. Akif lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.

ADEEL UZ ZAFAR (b. 1975. Karachi)

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1998 BFA (Painting) with Distinction, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Adeel uz Zafar is an artist, illustrator and art educator. His works have been featured in several local and international group exhibitions, notably *Let's Not Talk About Politics* at Gandhara Art, Karachi (2012), *Stop Play Pause Repeat* at Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai (2012), *Silsila*, Koel Gallery, Karachi (2011), *The Rising Tide: New Directions in Art from Pakistan 1990-2010*, Karachi (2010) and *Size Does Matter* at V M Art Gallery, Karachi (2008). He has also presented works in international art fairs such as Singapore Art Stage (2015), Art Basel Hong Kong (2013-14-15), Pulse Art Fair, New York (2012) and 2nd Kathmandu International Art Festival, Kathmandu (2012). In 2013, Zafar held his first national solo exhibition *Stranger than Fiction* at Gandhara Art, Karachi (2014) and international solo exhibition *Protagonists* at Fost Gallery, Singapore (2013). He has participated in both national and international artist residencies including *Studio R.M Residency*, Lahore (2011), *Parramatta Artists Studios* and the *Cicada Press* (COFA, UNSW), Sydney, Australia (2013) and most recently the Creative Fusion Artists Residency, Cleveland, USA. Adeel uz Zafar currently works and resides with his wife Nehdia and two daughters in Karachi.

Adeel uz Zafar is represented by *LawrieShabibi*, Dubai, *FOST Gallery*, Singapore & *Gandhara-Art*, Karachi-Hong Kong.

MUHAMMAD ZEESHAN (b. 1980. Mirpurkhas)

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2003 BFA (Miniature Painting) National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Muhammad Zeeshan is a critically acclaimed visual artist who is currently an Adjunct Faculty of Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi, Pakistan. Zeeshan has several gallery, Art Fair, museum and institutional exhibitions to his credit including exhibitions at Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Herbert F. Johnson Museum at Cornell University, Abbot Hall Art Gallery at Kendal, Pacific Asia Art Museum at Pasadena, Art Gallery of Mississauga, British Museum, Gemak/Gemeente Museum, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum and Metropolitan Museum at Tokyo. He has been represented at the Dubai Art Fair, India Art Fair, Hong Kong Art Basel and Pulse Art Fair. Zeeshan's works are also a part of the permanent collection of British Museum, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Zeeshan lives and works in Karachi.

Thanks to all the Artists for making this project successful and sharing their best with the society.







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