

Farhan Ali
Jabal Baloch
Samina Islam
Batool Mandvi
Arsalan Nasir
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Sara Pagganwala
Aimon (Saima Salahuddin)





U-Turn

Curated by Samina Islam



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When to take a U-Turn

The concept of 'going against the wind' has always fascinated me. In terms of my art as well as my daily life, I venture to do things differently and have no qualms in taking an unusual route. Hence, it was no surprise to me when I sat at a coffee shop in a street of Karachi more than a year ago pondering over art, and the idea of this show popped into my mind.

Being an educator in art and as well as an artist myself, I am constantly and intimately involved with the artistic process and conceptual development of many students. What fascinates me are the different channels each student takes to reach their destination; some follow a rather linear pattern of creation, while others sporadically come up with ideas, and yet others have their 'eureka!' moments of self-discovery which leads to inspiration. Similarly, practicing artists go through varying degrees of process, and differ in their methods of creativity as well. Indeed, there is no single way to go about an artistic practice; after all there is no 'right' or 'wrong' in the art world.

With these ideas running through my mind constantly as I looked at art, I endeavored to curate a show that addressed them. Questions I wanted to explore were:

What does the artwork communicate about the artist?

Did the artist just come up with the concept or was he/she inspired by some other artist, artwork, event or surrounding?

Is the work a personal outlet of feelings or is it a message conveyed to the rest of the world?

Is the artist 'rebellious' against some earlier art-movement, or is he/she purely looking for commercial success?

And this led me to the fundamental question:

When does an artist decide to take a U-Turn?

i.e., not follow the straight road and look for other ways to get to his/her destination? Does he/she use unconventional media, surfaces and 'out of the box' concepts? If his/her regular process doesn't seem to work, does he/she decide

to scrap it off and begin anew?

Hence, the show, 'U-Turn', is all about exploration, experimentation and daring to take that leap of faith with belief in what you are creating, even if it means going the complete opposite way.

The artists selected for U-Turn are those who embody a variety of disciplines, mediums and methods; artists who work in an intriguing way. Here, you will see conversations between the works of performance artists, installation artists, painters, photographers, fiber artists, sculptors, painters, miniaturists and graphic designers.

Disciplines may be varied, but emphasis has been given to the quality and work process. Hence, the artists have all created an art journal alongside their artworks, so the audience can have a better understanding of their creative processes. Some may be more transparent than others, but this is what makes each one unique and interesting.

Samina Islam

This is a study about an individual and how one is affected by their surrounding and environment. It is human psychology that when you experience or see something in daily routine it becomes normal to you. Our children see different cultures and conditions. Culture is a powerful human tool for survival but it is a fragile phenomenon. It is constantly changing and easily lost because it exists only in our minds and I call this cultural slavery or some kind of a societal pressure.

There are many sources that directly impact the life of human beings like media, language confusion, our way to dress and even in our celebrations etc. The role of media in spreading westernization, movies, animations, cartoons, comic book stories, action heroes from the west and so on and so



Spiderman
Farhan Ali
gouache on wasli
150 x 108 cm
2016

Farhan Ali

forth becomes an authentic way to tackle a young and innocent mind. In all these circumstances we forget about our cultural values, traditions and customs, which are so colourful, rich and glorious.

I graduated from National College of Arts Lahore in 2014 with a major in miniature painting.

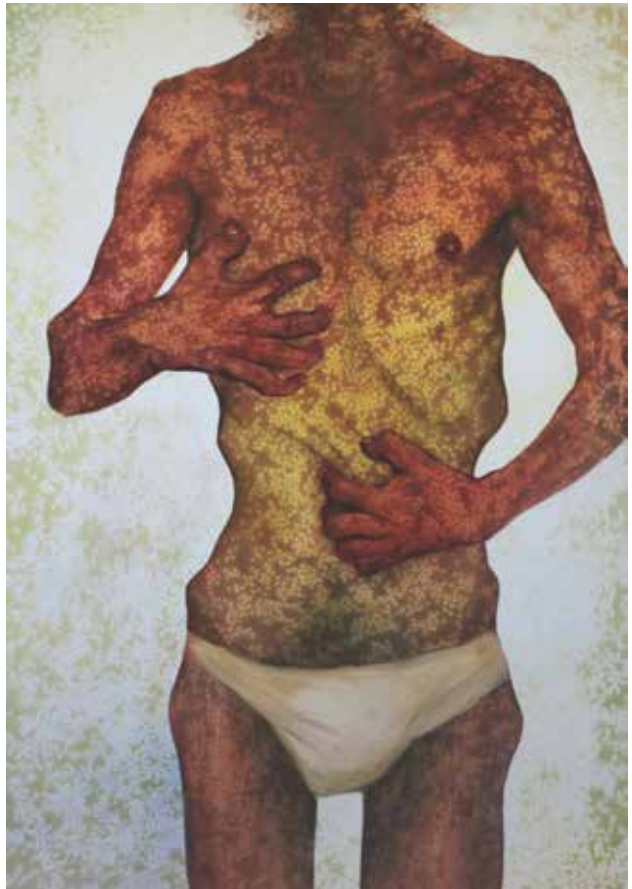


Desi Spiderman
Farhan Ali
gouache on wasli
150 x 108 cm
2016

“Unquiet Souls”

My work is based on the theme of our reductive materialist conception of organic life. Exhilarated despair, loss of selfness, moral masochism, sickness and disease are what I find to be its starkest and relevant expressions. Visually, via the organic texture comprising dots, I have tried to create the microscopic feeling of the cellular structures of biology and human evolution. Colour-wise, by using two tones, fleshy healthy red and infected dead green, I have tried to juxtapose the two extremes of ‘health’ and ‘ill-health’, ‘good’ and ‘evil’.

I have attempted to give expression of the reality of the human condition in its Darwinian evolutionary sense. To say that our hopes and desires, our loves and hates, dreams and all are nothing other than the activity of flesh and bones, guided by the unhurried dictates of nature puts the individual in a very disturbing situation. The soul, mind and self become merely functions of the body, and nothing else remains; where mystery is to be had, there is mecha-



Unquiet Souls II
Jabal Baloch
mixed media on canvas
91 x 61 cm
2016

Jabal Baloch

nism. Indeed, I want to reflect in my paintings human nature in its truthful scientific and biological manifestation. My symbolism is an allusion to the innumerable aspects of our corporeal selves that guide our base nature. I have tried to give visual vocabulary to the grand worry of the materialistic world, that against the age and majestic splendor of the universe, an individual stands oddly out of the picture, a work of marvel that in essence could be said to the measure and measurer of the universe.

Born in Quetta in 1987, I received my Bachelor in Painting from The University of Balochistan and MPhil from National College of Arts Lahore. Currently am a Lecturer in the Fine Arts Department of The University of Balochistan.



Unquiet Souls I
Jabal Baloch
mixed media on canvas
91 x 61 cm
2016

My artwork takes a critical view on social and cultural issues. While I use a variety of materials and processes in each project, my methodology is consistent. Although there may not always be material similarities between the different projects, they are linked by recurring formal concerns and through the subject matter. The subject matter of each body of work determines the materials and the forms of the work.

Hands we can touch with, they make us feel, they let us communicate. The pose of a hand conveys a message and gives you a certain feeling. Hands can love, hurt, create, damage, help or destroy. The stitches used in the artwork

This coat fits us all
Samina Islam
needlework on inkjet print on canvas
86 x 173 cm
2016



Samina Islam

are essential and give the work a certain textural richness. Use of colour or no colour is another important element in my work.

I am a Fiber artist currently leading the Art Department at KGS College Section.

Purify
Samina Islam
needlework on inkjet print on canvas
94 x 139 cm
2016



When the word 'object' is used in my work it includes everything that a person can take ownership of, from furniture to books to photographs. My work is about interpreting and excavating objects; by opening layers within layers to find the archaeological story or journey of the object enlightening the viewer as to how it became real.

The idea that energy can neither be created nor destroyed made me question the notion of an unfathomable energy stored within. I wanted to explore the unmapped territory within the object to elicit this energy. I came about the idea of using texts and audios which gleans new meanings from the object. From here emerges a narrative that is personal and universal at the same time, a kind of optimism to form a connection with the object sometimes pursuing a sense of nostalgia.

This impact created on the viewer could further be explained with the aid of the Lacanian theory, which talks about the subject object relationship. How the object mirrors the gaze of the viewer; when the viewer places her/himself in front of the object, both are being watched; the object by the viewer and the viewer by the object.

Untitled
Batoool Mandvi
video
68 seconds
2016



Batool Mandvi

In my work layers play a fundamental role, inspired by the palimpsest method a common practice of the medieval ecclesiastical circles. Where an earlier piece of writing is erased by means of washing or scraping the manuscript in order to prepare it for new text. In the same method I bring layers either by removing some part of the object or adding layers on it with different mediums. I add and scrap text to change its context and use technology to make audios.

The audio is the medium through which the object connects with the viewer. The sound pieces are carefully designed with the layers of music, scripted dialogues and ambient sound to give objects a character of its own. Deferring and disconnecting the preconceived idea and narrating its own lived memory.

I received my BFA from Department of Visual Studies, University of Karachi in 2014.

Untitled
Batool Mandvi
mixed media
variable
2016



This is an investigation about the concerns related to memory. My work sets around individual stories which are developed from a collective recollection. Re-exploring and informing my own art practice and questioning the idea of recalling, recollection, and imagination. It investigates how technologies of representation and personal memories of time allow self-presentation and function as a productive means of self-knowledge. In particular, it investigates how human creative energy is so capable and key to mental procedures that it can produce thoughts of things not existing in fact, but rather introduce them as though truly existing. And how, these complex structures affiliate with mutual perceptions.

I was born in 1990 in Karachi and received my BFA with distinction from Department of Visual Studies, University of Karachi in 2013. Have exhibited

Parallel Landscape
Arsalan Nasir
C-type print, photograph
10.15 x 15.25 cm
2016

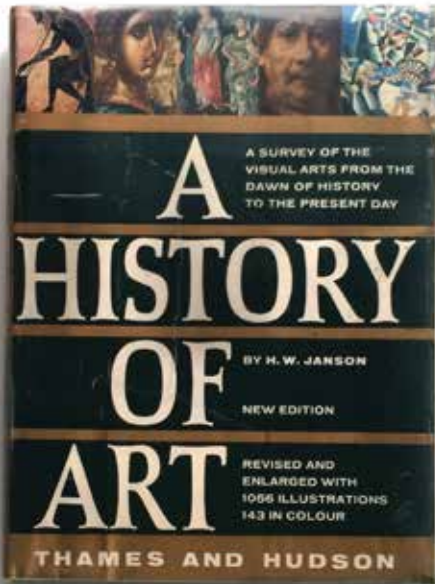


Tasman Spirit
Arsalan Nasir
C-type print, digital manipulation
10.15 x 15.25 cm
2016



Arsalan Nasir

my work in several shows since graduation. In 2014, I was selected for the 1st Sanat Residency in Karachi. Currently pursuing MFA at the Beaconhouse National University in Lahore and working as a scale model artist at KSEW Pakistan Navy. My work practice includes drawing, painting, sculpture, print-making, installation and new media and manual photography which makes me a multi-disciplinary artist. My thrust to explore new techniques and mediums brought me to develop interactive technologies in fusion with content of my ideas and thought process.



A History of Art
Arsalan Nasir
drawing book
28 x 22 x 4 cm
2016



"There are things known and things unknown and in between, are the doors."
– Jim Morrison

My work is a reminder that no matter how fast or overwhelming life becomes, there is a stillness and vastness within our everyday lives that you can return to. This piece has been a purely meditative exercise, with every tiny star and cloud painstakingly scratched onto a hard surface to resemble light and softness that goes against its physical nature. I chose a found object on which to carve that had been left abandoned in the open and had weathered in the sun, dust and rain for years. It felt like me, hardened and damaged over time with the experiences of living in this city and aimlessly floating amongst the millions of pieces of discarded things, lost to the fact that it is in reality made of stardust and energy.

What I tried to create is a metaphor for a search for a space within my own self where I can let go of being someone who fits into the confines of a society or a body, to realize that we are all, at the end of the day, cosmic creatures animated for a time. I find it a comfort to create an escape through this process and gain a freeing perspective in a day and age when anyone can access your virtual space and more and more material things distract us from leading and pursuing meaningful lives.

Thus my own portal, a strip in the fabric of time and space, a connection, an escape, a way to free myself without moving an inch. A way to cross over within and without. To find an exit anywhere.



Sana Nasir

I graduated from Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture, Karachi in 2009 and am currently associated as a Graphic Designer and Illustrator at PeaceNiche (T2F) and Thesis Advisor at Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture, Karachi.



Exitstance
Sana Nasir
acrylic, spray paint, etching on wood
213 x 122 cm
2016

When My Mind Leaks, The Drops Drip

Skins I

Entity lies within a metaphysical animism which precedes realities. Entity using our body as a vessel. Illusionary outline filled in with our contiguous surroundings within the chrysalis of the contemporary mind. Individualism transcends to dividualism. A being that is and goes on just being; skin after skin.

-December 2015

Skins II

The being that was, is and goes on just being; skin after skin.

-October 2016

Skins II series
Sara Pagganwala
resin
detail of work in process
2016



Skins II series
Sara Pagganwala
resin
detail of work in process
2016



Sara Pagganwala

I received my Bachelor in Fine Arts from Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London in 2013.

Currently am a Lecturer at IVS, Karachi, a Freelance Writer for ArtNow Magazine, Pakistan and Assistant Curator Karachi Biennale 2017.

Skins II series
Sara Pagganwala
resin
detail of work in process
2016



'Enter Satan'

This idea came to me a year ago, when I bought my first 'Book of Ideas' and started thinking about what I wanted to say through the art of photography. 'The MOUTH' is a concept I began with. An instrument in the body, so neglected, yet so powerful and very responsible for steering our lives in a certain which way. Though it serves the basic purpose of eating it also causes hurt, pain, confusion, and chaos. Many a hearts have been broken by words spoken with the mouth, many a lies have been told, and much evil has been committed through this same source. It is what connects us and it is what disconnects us. Everyday. As my work developed further I realized that the mouth is actually the gateway for the devil. It is very much his instrument as well.

For the execution of this series I wanted to create dramatic, theatrical portraits, revealing the devil as he amuses himself while at work. Previously I

Enter 1
Aimon (Saima Salahuddin)
photograph
38 x 56 cm
2016



Enter 2
Aimon (Saima Salahuddin)
photograph
46 x 56 cm
2016



Aimon (Saima Salahuddin)

have done a lot of photo manipulation work, creating stories out of nothing but this time I wanted to focus on pre-production, with the shot itself and things one can do in the studio.

I have come a long way in photography, starting with simple portraits, but the more I dive into it the more fascinating it becomes, and the more challenges await me.

Through the art of image making, I want to reach the deepest part of the human soul, where things lay hidden, buried, and very much in need of tending.

I graduated from National College of Arts Lahore in 2015 and am working as a professional photographer.



Enter 3
Aimon (Saima Salahuddin)
photograph
30 x 79 cm
2016

This catalogue accompanies the exhibition

U-Turn

Curated by Samina Islam



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