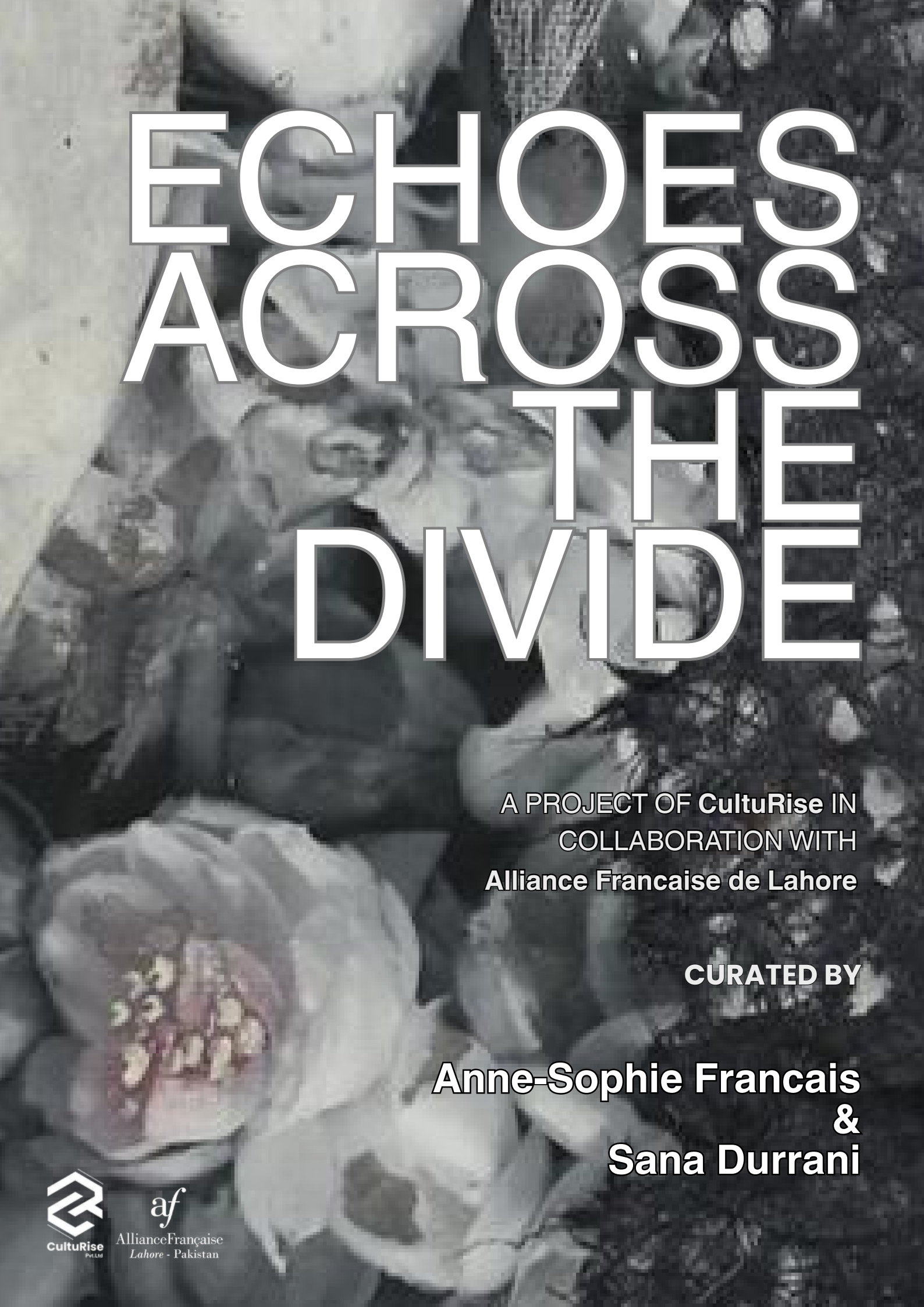

ECHOES ACROSS THE DIVIDE

A PROJECT OF **CultuRise** IN
COLLABORATION WITH
Alliance Francaise de Lahore

CURATED BY

Anne-Sophie Francais
&
Sana Durrani

CultuRise Pvt.Ltd

af
AllianceFrançaise
Lahore - Pakistan

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ABOUT US

CultuRise (Est. 2024, Pvt.Ltd.) is on an unwavering mission to safeguard the vibrant cultural heritage legacy of Pakistan, tangible and intangible. It strives to ensure the preservation of this valuable asset for future generations.

We provide heritage conservation services that combine the protection of neglected sites with urban rehabilitations and revitalizations to enhance cultural value, promote tourism, and support sustainable economic growth. Our work focuses on five key areas: conserving historic sites, rehabilitating and curating spaces, conducting workshops and trainings, creating heritage-inspired souvenirs, and advancing heritage awareness through print and broadcast initiatives.

Presented on the occasion of International Museum Day 2026, Echoes Across the Divide brings together leading contemporary Pakistani artist-curators in response to this year's ICOM theme, *Museums Uniting a Divided World.*

Set within the historic Lahore Museum, the exhibition invites participating artists to engage directly with the museum's collections, reflecting upon historical objects, narratives, and inherited memories through their own contemporary artistic practices. Through diverse mediums and perspectives, the exhibition creates an intergenerational dialogue between past and present, archive and interpretation, preservation and reimagining.

The works explore themes of memory, identity, heritage, fragmentation, and reconciliation, while questioning how museums can move beyond static repositories to become active spaces of dialogue, reflection, and shared cultural understanding. By responding to the collection through personal and artistic lenses, the participating artists reanimate the museum as a living archive — one that continues to evolve through contemporary voices and experiences.

This exhibition is the result of a collaborative initiative by CultuRise, Lahore Museum, ICOM Pakistan, and Alliance Française de Lahore.

Curated by

Anne Sophie Francais & Sana Durrani

CultuRise Pvt.Ltd | af Alliance Française Lahore - Pakistan

ARTISTS

Aasim Akhtar
Atif Khan
Asad Hayee
Imran Qureshi
Irfan Gul Dahri
Laila Rahman
Mariam Hanif
Minaa Haroon
Nashmia Haroon
Nayyar Ali Dada
Rashid Rana
Salima Hashmi
Sheraz Faisal



This exhibition explores how physical items that form the material culture of the dervishes and the faqirs act as vessels for mystical energy, symbolic representation, and spiritual discipline. These objects are viewed as tools to aid in the journey towards the Divine, often embodying the baraka (blessing) and himmah (spiritual energy).

AASIM AKHTAR

Aasim Akhtar is an independent artist, art critic and curator, published in magazines, catalogues, and books. He has been widely exhibited, notably at Whitechapel Gallery, London, as part of a commemorative show entitled, *Where Three Dreams Cross*: *150 Years of Photography in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh* (2010). He was a writer-in-residence at Ledig House, USA, and Ucross Foundation, USA in 2000, and a curator-in-residence at the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum in Japan in 2002. He is the curator of Vanishing Worlds, Enduring Threads and Threads of Connection: Reimagining Traditional Phulkari. He's authored two books, Regards Croises and The Distant Steppe (Alliance Francaise, Islamabad, 1996 & 1997), and taught Art Appreciation and Studio Practice at The National College of Arts. His forthcoming book Threads of Continuity: Traditions of Embroidery in Hazara, Pakistan will be published soon.

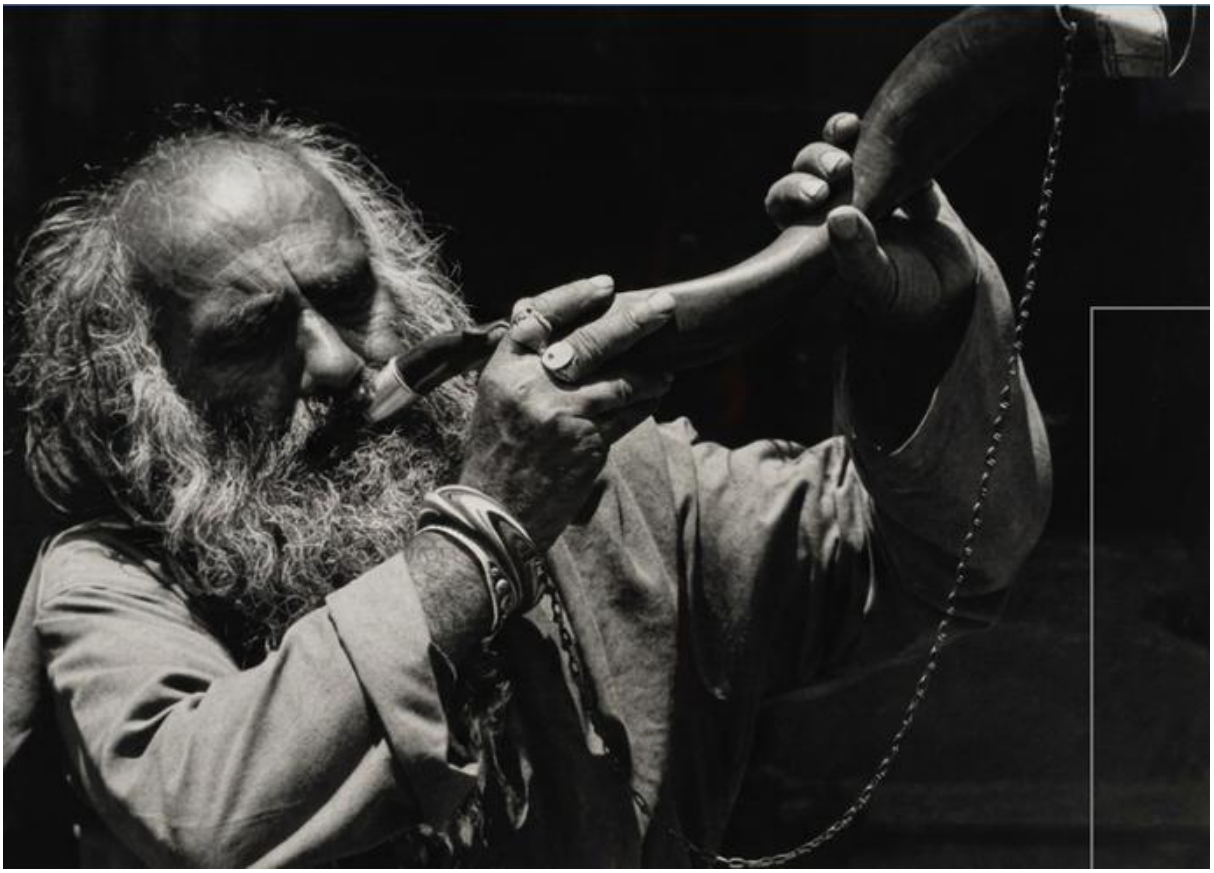
From the 11th century onwards, Sufi brotherhoods of Islamic mystics played a significant role in the society. While dervish, faqir, and malang are all terms for Sufi mystics who renounce worldly possessions to seek God, they differ in their origin and in their specific affiliation with structural Sufi orders. Islamic mysticism expresses itself not only by writings but also by means of material culture, especially through what is called 'dervish paraphernalia'. Regarded as exotic curiosa by the majority of scholars, the objects peculiar to Sufis say a lot about the practice and theory of the ascetic-mystical stream. In order to avoid both prescriptive and reductionist approaches, this exhibition is an attempt to understand the materiality of spirituality, that is, the correspondences between the outer and inner dimensions of Islamic mystical traditions. A dervish is a 'thresholder' – someone who lives between this world and the transcendent. A faqir is 'poor in spirit' who recognises his utter dependence on the Creator. Malangs or the 'unruly friends of God' are wanderers and fall outside the traditional framework of Sufism.





Emblems of Faith

Syed Javed Kazi
Abdul Latif Shah Qadiri Qalandari (Barri **Imam) Urs**
Gelatin Silver Print
Nisar Mirza
Calling the Spirits
Gelatin Silver Print
Asa (a), Asa (b), Asa (c), Kashkul, Kulla, Tabarzin - not pictured here



Abdul Latif Shah Qadiri Qalandari (Barri Imam) Urs
Syed Javed Kazi
Gelatin Silver Print



Calling the Spirits
Nisar Mirza
Gelatin Silver Print


“Rooted in popular culture and tradition, my work reimagines familiar symbols to explore fragile ties between people, politics and the natural world.”

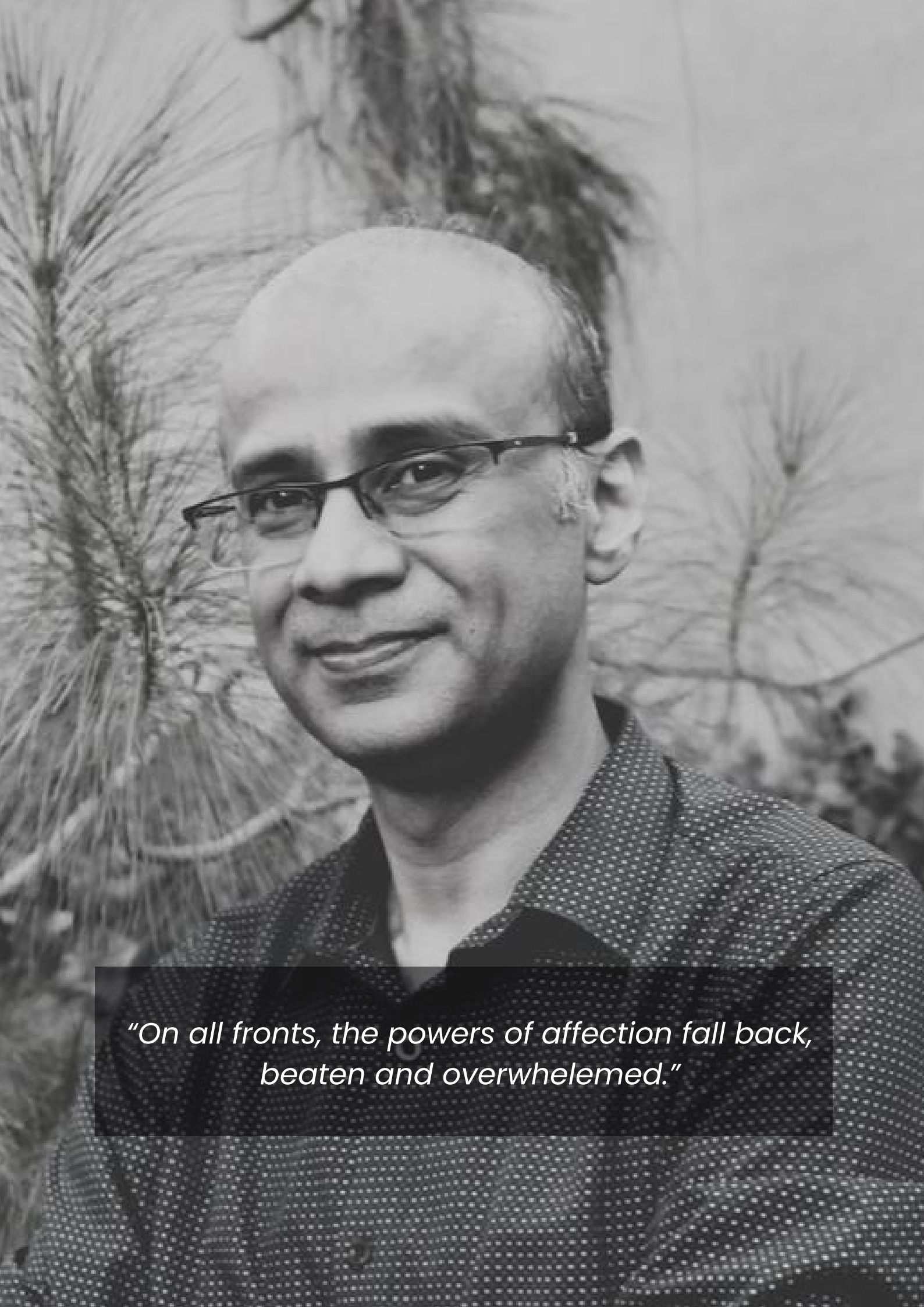
ATIF KHAN

Atif Khan (b. Pakistan) graduated with Distinction in Fine Art from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, where he now practices as an Assistant Professor. His art style spans printmaking, digital art, and large-scale installations, often exploring urban identity and layered histories. Recent exhibitions include a site-specific installation City within a City at Chowk Istanbul, Lahore (2015); participation in the Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh (2022, as co-curator); and shows at the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, and Sharjah Art Museum. Khan has held 23 solo exhibitions internationally and received the Nigaah Art Award for Printmaking (2023) and the ADA Award for Digital Arts (2020–21).

The Lost Garden (I) is a large-scale vertical scroll that reimagines the landscape as a space where harmony, desire, violence, and memory coexist. Across forests, lakes, geometric waterways, and elevated palaces, human figures and animals move through a fragile world suspended between paradise and collapse. Lions wander beside cows, fish fill the blue lake, and a solitary figure rows a surgical heart as a boat, turning emotion itself into a means of survival and passage. The flowing waterways echo the structure of Persian gardens, while streams of red suggest bloodlines, conflicts, and inherited histories. The Mughal Ruler holding modern weapons becomes a symbol of power shaped by colonial and contemporary violence. At the bottom, animals struggle toward an unreachable palace, reflecting the distance between nature, authority, and human longing for belonging within an ideal lost world.







“On all fronts, the powers of affection fall back, beaten and overwhelemed.”

ASAD HAYEE

With degrees in fine arts and art education Hayee has been honoured to be first Pakistani to be part of International Training Programme of The British Museum, 2012 for curators around the world. Hayee has worked as curator with first Pakistani contemporary art gallery, Rohtas 2 in Lahore for 15 years and has liaison with number of art galleries/museums in Pakistan, India, Nepal and USA to showcase Pakistani Contemporary Art. He is currently working with HBL as a curator for its Art Collection. As an artist he has participated nationally and internationally to represent Pakistan.

In 2021-23 he was awarded with OSCH-British Council-Faiz Foundation Trust, Consultant for educational outreach and entrepreneurship program of youth of the Walled City Lahore.

2018-19, he was awarded with UNESCO-Faiz Foundation Trust, Consultant for educational outreach programme for Chitral Museum, Chitral and 2017 The British Museum's Curatorial International Training (Specialization in permanent and temporary museum exhibitions), London.

He has exhibited his work internationally including the 2015 "11th issue of PIX, dedicated to photography in Pakistan, titled Surge". Siddhartha Hall, Goethe-Institute / Max Mueller Bhavan, New Delhi' India (Along with a catalogue).

In 2019 he contributed for an online magazine on art and craft, Issue 16 "Sheraz Faisal ✤ Art becomes jewellery in Lahore". In 2013-14, "Where have all the flowers gone?" Ahmed Zoay, edited by Marjorie Husain, contributed an essay on Zoay's artistic approach and structure of his works. In 2012, he contributed in Art Varta, A Bi - Annual Magazine on Art in India, exclusive issue on photography (Beyond still life... The diversity of photographic practice in Pakistan). He has contributed for online Newsletter of British Museum for International Training Programme since 2013.

He is currently based in Lahore.







'My work is very connected to the tradition that gave birth to it, but it also tells the story of that time in a different language and from a different perspective. I retain my voice when telling the story.'

IMRAN QURESHI

Imran Qureshi studied miniature painting at the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, where he now practices. His art style blends 16th-century Mughal miniature tradition with abstract painting and site-specific installations, using gold leaf and red acrylic to explore violence, beauty, death, and regeneration. Recent exhibitions include his solo show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2013); participation in the Sharjah Biennial (2011); and a major installation at the Deutsche Bank KunstHalle, Berlin (2015). Qureshi has also exhibited at the Liverpool Biennial and the Asia Society, New York. He received the Sharjah Biennial Prize (2011) and was shortlisted for the Deutsche Bank's Artist of the Year (2013).

This body of work reflects on the ways museums preserve history while simultaneously transforming violence, rupture, and lived realities into objects of contemplation. By destroying my own paintings into fragments and reconstructing them into new compositions, I attempt to explore the fragile relationship between memory and preservation. The broken surfaces resemble archaeological remains, damaged manuscripts, or excavated fragments carrying traces of another time. Removed from their original form, these pieces no longer function as complete images; instead, they exist as scattered evidence through which viewers are invited to reconstruct meaning and imagine what once existed.

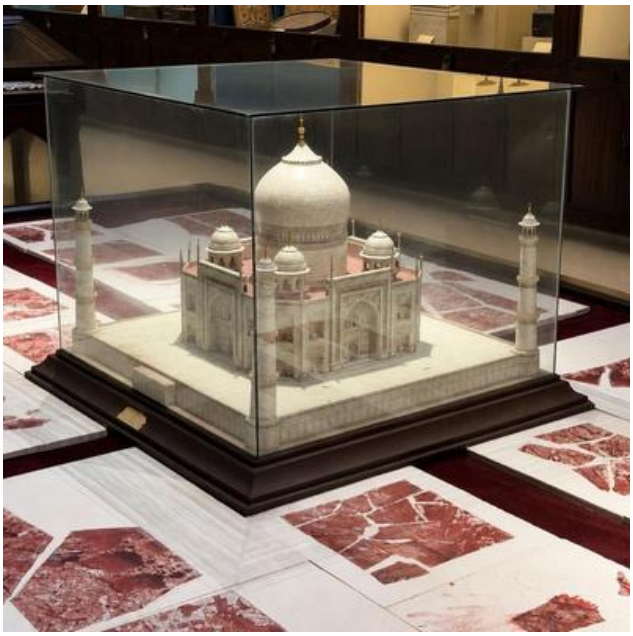

GLAZED POTTERY OF DIFFERENT PLACES
20



Water Tank
2024
Hand Painted/ glazed blue pottery mosaic on PVC water tank
Image courtesy artist





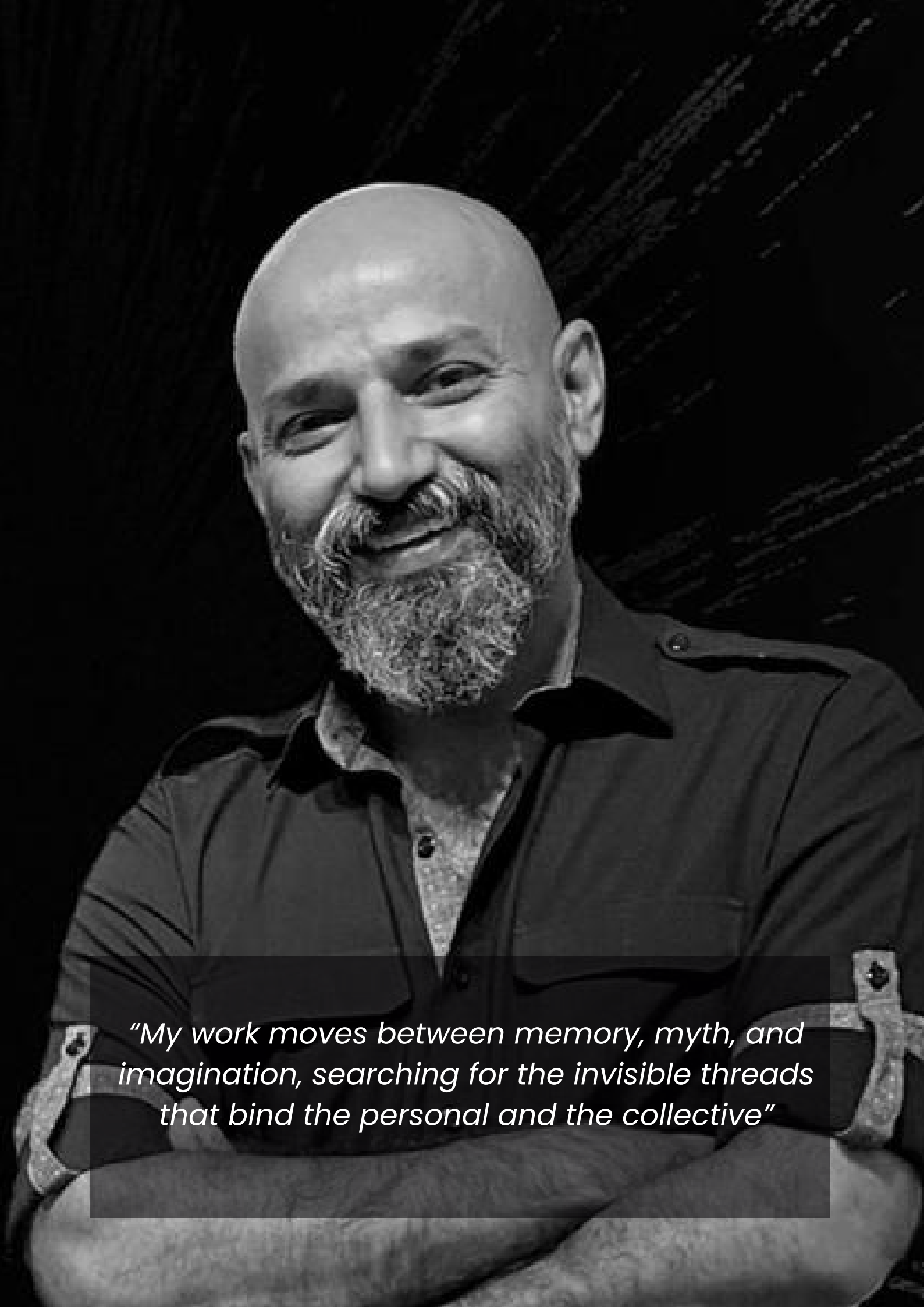


Seeming Endless Path of Memories
2024
Dimensions variable
Hand painted marble tiles embedded in plaster
Images courtesy artist





Water Bodies emerges from observing the growing presence of PVC water tanks across the urban skyline of South Asia. Seen from rooftops, these blue containers have become silent monuments of contemporary survival, replacing domes, gardens, and architectural details that once defined the visual identity of the region.The work reflects on the increasing global importance of water and the political, environmental, and social tensions surrounding it. In a time marked by climate change, scarcity, and conflict over natural resources, water has become deeply connected to both everyday life and larger geopolitical realities. At the same time, the widespread storage of drinking water in plastic containers raises questions about health, the environment, and the normalization of synthetic materials within daily existence. By covering industrial PVC tanks with hand-painted fragments of traditional blue pottery, I attempt to bring together two opposing visual and cultural worlds: the refined craftsmanship of historical ceramic traditions and the mass-produced language of contemporary plastic objects. Installed within the context of the Lahore Museum, these transformed tanks enter into dialogue with historical pottery and ceramic artifacts from the region. The works exist somewhere between sculpture, vessel, ruin, and relic, reimagining ordinary urban objects as carriers of memory, fragility, and cultural transition.


“My work moves between memory, myth, and imagination, searching for the invisible threads that bind the personal and the collective”

IRFAN GUL DAHRI

Irfan Gul Dahri (b. 1979, Shahdadpur, Sindh) holds a Master's in Visual Art from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, where he has been a faculty member since 2006 and currently practices. His art style engages with traditional craft sensibilities, climate change themes, and community-based visual narratives. Recent exhibitions include the Karachi Biennale (2019), Lahore Biennale (2020), and participation in Art for Climate Change Art Residency (2018). Dahri received the Sadequain Pride of Performance Award (2021), the Arjumand Painting Award (2017), and the Charles Wallace Visiting Artist Fellowship (2013–14) at The King's Foundation School of Traditional Arts, London. He co-founded Art Otaq (2021) and Numaish Gah gallery (2023).

Courtesy Vaslart

My work moves between memory, myth, and imagination, searching for the invisible threads that bind the personal and the collective. Rooted in the visual language of painting, I create imagined worlds where faith, love, loss, and longing unfold as quiet allegories. Over the years, my practice has evolved from direct responses to violence and social trauma into a more inward and poetic exploration of human experience. Whether addressing grief, resilience, or desire, I approach these themes through the lens of metaphor, translating them into dreamlike narratives that hover between the real and the unreal. In my recent series, Paradise and Other Fairytales, I construct alternate worlds that reimagine the notion of paradise not as a distant reward, but as a fragile state of coexistence between people, nature, and spirit. The figures, often hybrid or mirrored, inhabit spaces that feel both sacred and suspended.



خُواب ***(Dream)***
2022
45″ X 45″
Acrylic on canvas


38
کشمیر مجاہد



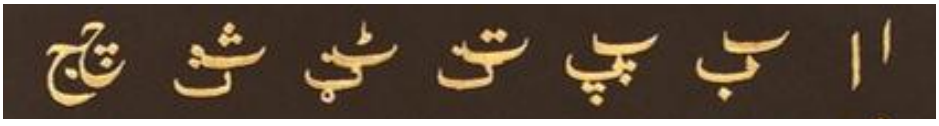
“My work interrogates divisions and looks closely at overlaps in lands, territories and languages. I refer to the pomegranate as a rich figuration or map of the 'East' as well as of the feminine form“

LAILA RAHMAN

Laila Rahman studied at Central Saint Martins, the Slade School of Fine Art, and the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, where she now teaches in the Department of Fine Arts and practices. Her art style meshes painting and printmaking, blending technical precision with conceptual depth. Recent exhibitions include a solo show following her Fulbright Award at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2010); participation in group shows at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and works exhibited at Cartwright Hall, Bradford. Rahman's work is held in permanent collections including the House of Commons (London), Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), and NCA. She received the Fulbright Award in 2010.

The pomegranate fruit is a symbol of Mashriq, the East, for me. It is pictured in Mughal and Persian miniature paintings, and it is mentioned in texts dating to earlier than the fifteenth century. It is considered to be beneficial in all its properties. The pomegranate is beautiful in its form, fragrance, and taste. For me, it is also essentially a feminine form. I have used it as a repeated symbol in my circle of life series. Here, it emphasises the twin pillars of symmetry and design, on which Islamic art is founded. The collection of miniature paintings in the Lahore Museum, many with pomegranates, have been part of my visual learning since my student days at the National College of Arts.

Text on paper, on clay tablets, or carved in stone speak to ways of life that may be lost to us forever. The mysteries of those tongues remain hidden. The two overlapping texts that I have used in ‘Do Raastay/ Aik Dil’ speak to my childhood, growing up in the two provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, or Frontier as it was known. The two languages of Urdu and Pashto, dissimilar and similar, remind me of divides, cultural differences, and prejudices that exist side by side with the familiar and the beloved. Thinking of the Ashokan edicts that I regularly visited on family outings in the Frontier and then seeing the treasures of the Moenjodaro collection at the Lahore Museum, while I was a student at NCA, must have been in the back of my mind while working on this image. The unreadable shapes that emerge with the overlapping letters make almost for a third language...one where there is no division or strife.





***Majma* (I)**
2018
36" x 50"
Etching and aquatint











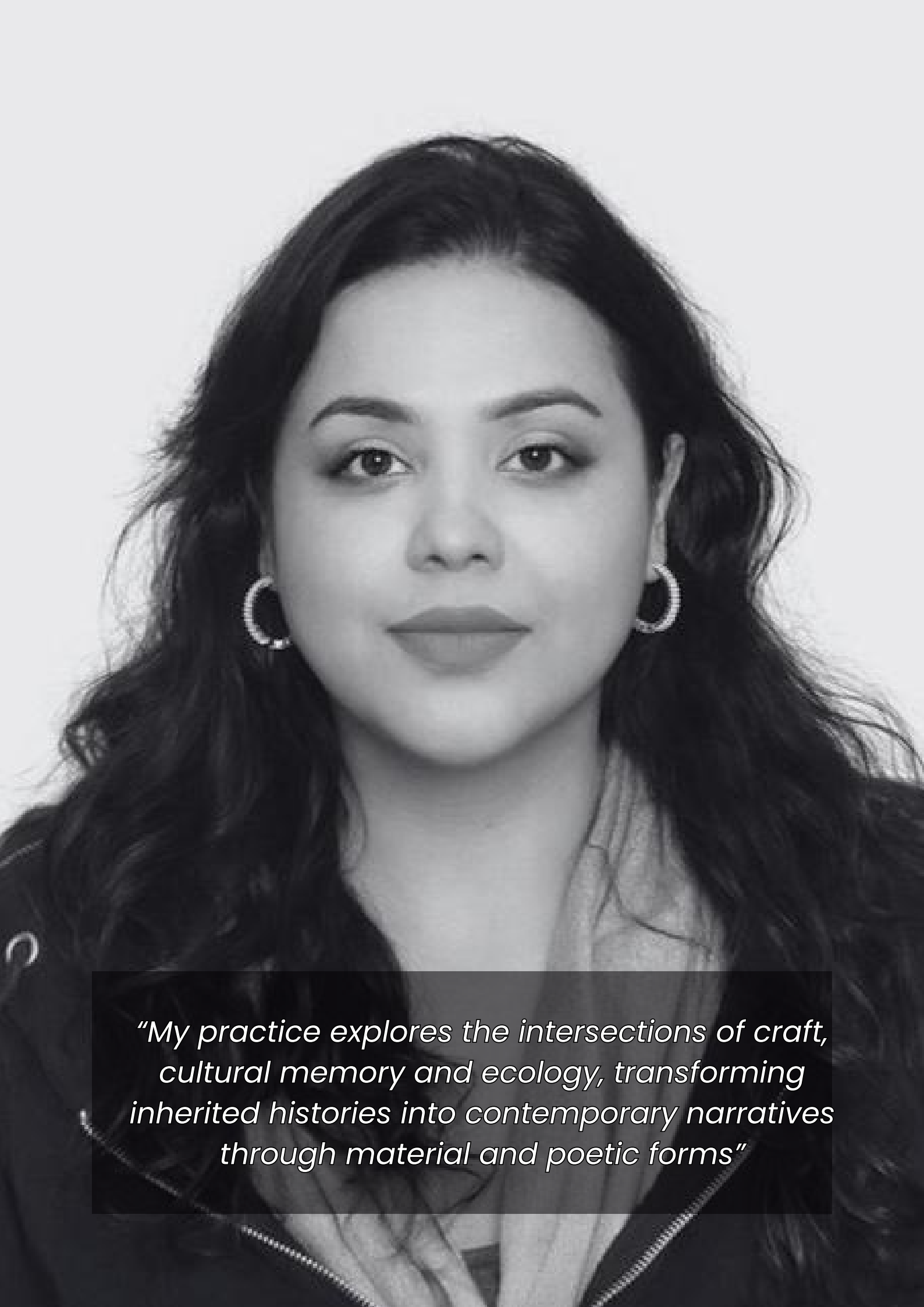








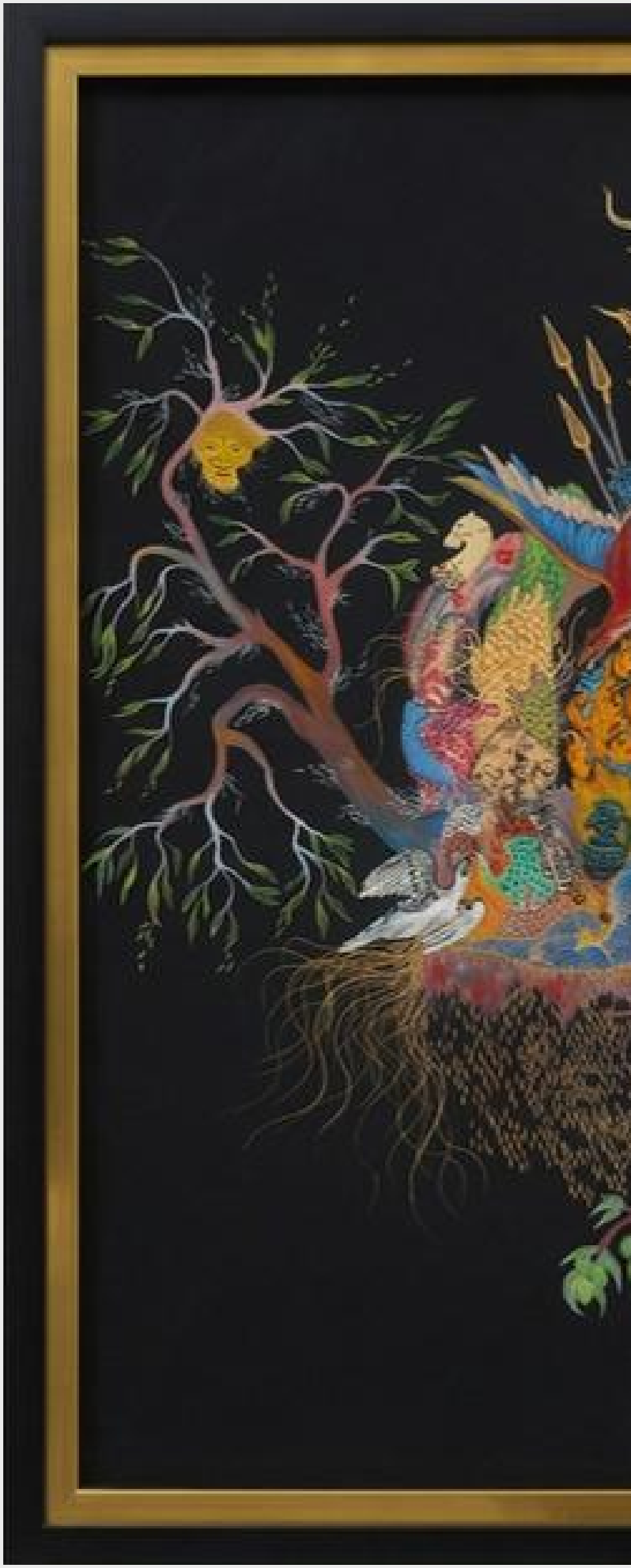



“My practice explores the intersections of craft, cultural memory and ecology, transforming inherited histories into contemporary narratives through material and poetic forms”

MARIAM HANIF KHAN

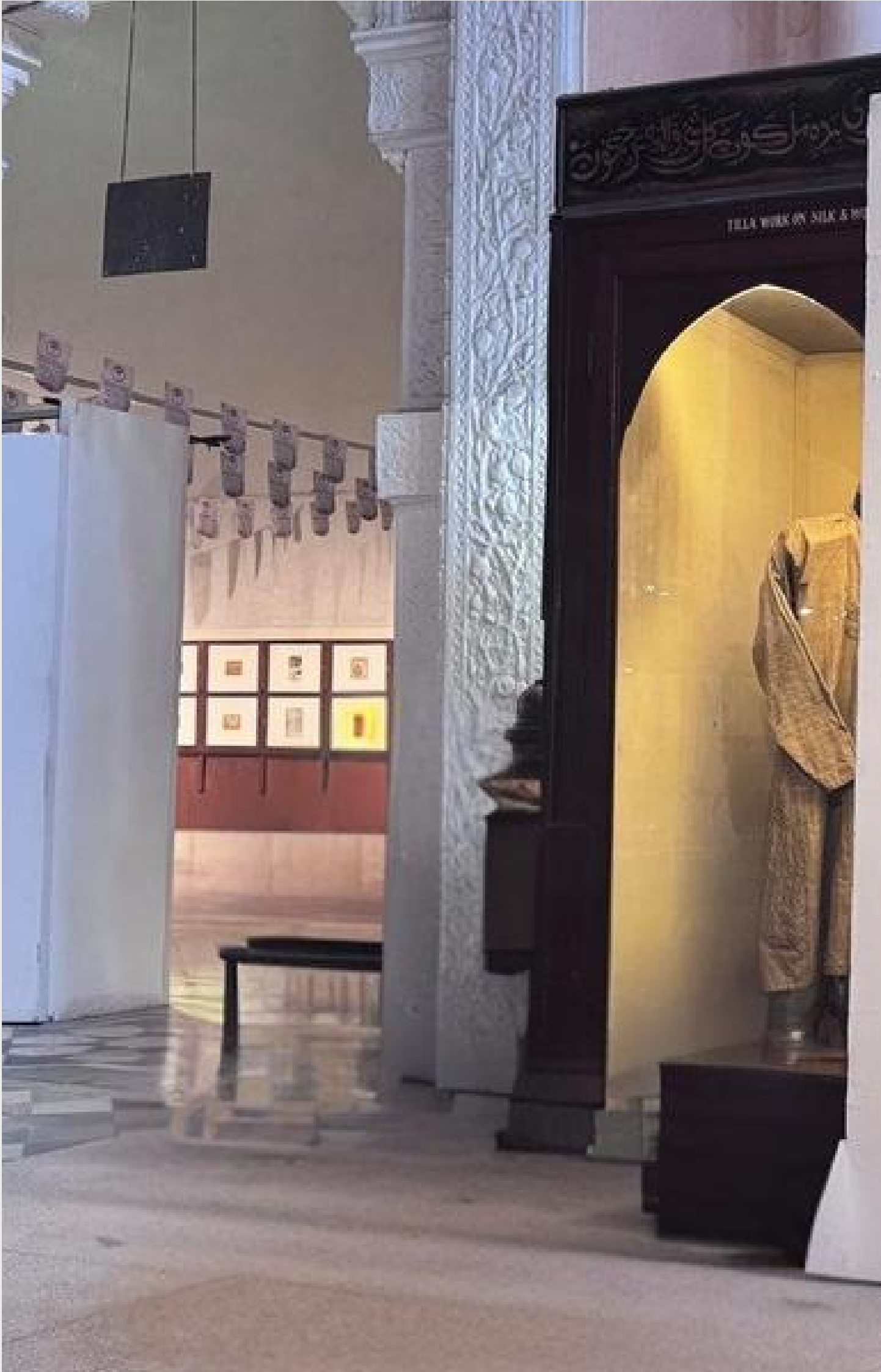
Mariam Hanif Khan received her BFA and MA (hons.) in Visual Arts from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, where she is based and practices as a visual artist, curator, and educationist. Her art style spans drawing, painting, and meditative practices, often engaging with contemporary South Asian diaspora narratives. Recent exhibitions include ilham at Chelsea, New York (NYFA Rockefeller grant, 2013); Colors of Hope in New Delhi (2014); and selection for the Imago Mundi project at the Venice Biennale (2017). Her work is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Immigration and Empathy in Bursa, Turkey. She founded ArtSoch Contemporary gallery (2020) and curated collateral exhibitions for the Lahore Biennale (2018, 2020).

In this work, I reinterpret the historical crown through my own language, transforming it from a symbol of fixed authority into a layered reflection on memory, inheritance and cultural hybridity. I am interested in how objects of power carry traces of migration, craftsmanship, trade and conquest within their surfaces. The crown becomes more than an imperial object – it becomes a meeting point of histories, artisans and evolving identities.





Inherited Crowns: Reimaging Power Through Textile Memory
2026
20″ X 30″
Gouache on Valsi Paper







“My practice engages with memory, materiality, and cultural inheritance, transforming personal and collective histories into layered visual narratives through object-based inquiry.”

MINAA HAROON

Minaa Haroon (b. 1989) is a Lahore-based contemporary visual artist, curator, and arts administrator . She received her BFA from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, followed by an MFA in Art and Design Studies from Beaconhouse National University (BNU), Lahore, where she received Honors for her efforts . Since 2017, she has served as Assistant Director (Fine Arts) at the Lahore Arts Council (Alhamra), Government of Punjab, where she has curated approximately 50 exhibitions, including the Young Artists' Exhibition and the Alhamra National Exhibition, and has also held additional charge as Deputy Director and Curator of the Alhamra Art Museum . Her artistic practice, which spans miniature painting, drawings, sculptures, installations, and digital works, is deeply engaged with themes of inheritance, memory, and material culture.

The works investigate inherited jewellery and feminine accessories as vessels of memory, identity, and lineage. Beginning with my mother's treasured pieces, I explore how intimate objects carry histories across generations. Works such as Hujla-e-Aroosi translate these personal archives into visual narratives. I approach materials alchemically, guided by transformation rather than preservation. Using gouache, 24-karat gold leaf, archival ink, plant fiber, and paper, I tear, dissolve, and reassemble the paper into new configurations. Geometric patterns — derived from traditional ornamentation — interweave with carved, gilded surfaces prepared for miniature painting. Through this layered, ritualistic process, materials evolve while carrying histories. The past and future coexist, echoing the Urdu concept of kul — yesterday and tomorrow. I reimagine adornments as living artifacts where personal histories, cultural memory, and feminine identity converge.










TRADITIONAL SILVER JEWELLERY 4


ENGRAVED METAL WARE IN BRASS

Hujla-e- Aroosi V (Bridal Chamber)
2025
20″ x 31″
Gouache, 24k gold leaf, archival ink, dye pigment on mix plant fiber and paper

Zebaish VIII (Adorning)
2025
20″ x 31″
Gouache, 24k gold leaf, archival ink, dye pigment on mix plant fiber and paper

Alchemy of Zeest
2025
Sizes variable
24k gold leaf, archival ink, dye pigment on plant fiber and paper



“My practice revolves around the changing urban landscape of major cities, presenting a clear metaphor of the regressive nature of these so-called progressive ideas of politically weak structural developments and decisions”

NASHMIA HAROON

Nashmia Haroon (b. Lahore) received her BFA in Painting (2004) and MFA in Visual Arts (2012) from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, where she is based and practices as a multidisciplinary artist and educator. Her art style spans painting, photography, video, sculpture, and drawing, moving fluidly between media — from large-scale scaffolding installations to abstract oil and pigment paintings. Recent exhibitions include The Aesthetics of a System Default (2013), a scaffolding installation at NCA's courtyard fountain; Unfinished Conversations with Lahore (2018), a photographic series engaging with Foucault's concept of heterotopia; and a 2023 exhibition at Tagh'eer Lahore Creative Space, which she founded. Haroon serves as the creative head of Tagh'eer, a venue for exhibitions, workshops, and performances.

Lahore is my city. Through my practices as an artist and curator, and reasons one of many, I seek to preserve its physical and historic presence at a moment when it is in constant transformation and expansion. Historically, time alters all landscapes—urban and natural—as a continuous process of evolution. Cities, like individuals, possess distinct personalities, and we are drawn to familiar points of reference that acquire a shared, collective sense of belonging. My practice, presently and in the past, focuses on specific landmarks throughout the city, with slight alterations introduced to articulate a clear metaphor. Two such examples are the Qalma Chowk area, which exists only in name presently and has been replaced by an overhead bridge, and the Dome of the Punjab Assembly being constructed. These works seek to establish a bridge between the past and the uncertain future of these landmarks' physical form. Thus, sustaining this impulse to produce artwork with hard materials like scaffolding, cement, brick etc., that are associated with the built environment.

In the process of my research, much of the region's historical practice of urban planning is missing behind, for example, bazars and pedestrian culture, water systems, city layout patterns, indigenous flora and fauna, and much more. Questions arise through my installation project at the Lahore Museum, where a connection is built from materials placed within the Islamic gallery. These materials and techniques are now less commonly used in practice within urban planning and architecture. If the function of scaffolding and other building materials is to provide support, then here that support becomes an obstruction.

This contradiction has expanded into a systematic condition: the subject of significance remains unapproachable and, therefore, potentially irreversible. Its temporary nature, situated within the Lahore Museum and subsequently to be photographed as the final archived artwork, allows the space to engage directly with the ongoing process of a changing and expanding built environment, and with the issues attendant upon it. This form of temporary intervention within the museum initiates a dialogue that questions the notions outlined above. Does this process affect the heritage and collective memory of the built environment? Does it provide equitable consideration to its present and future inhabitants, and offer viable options for sustainability?







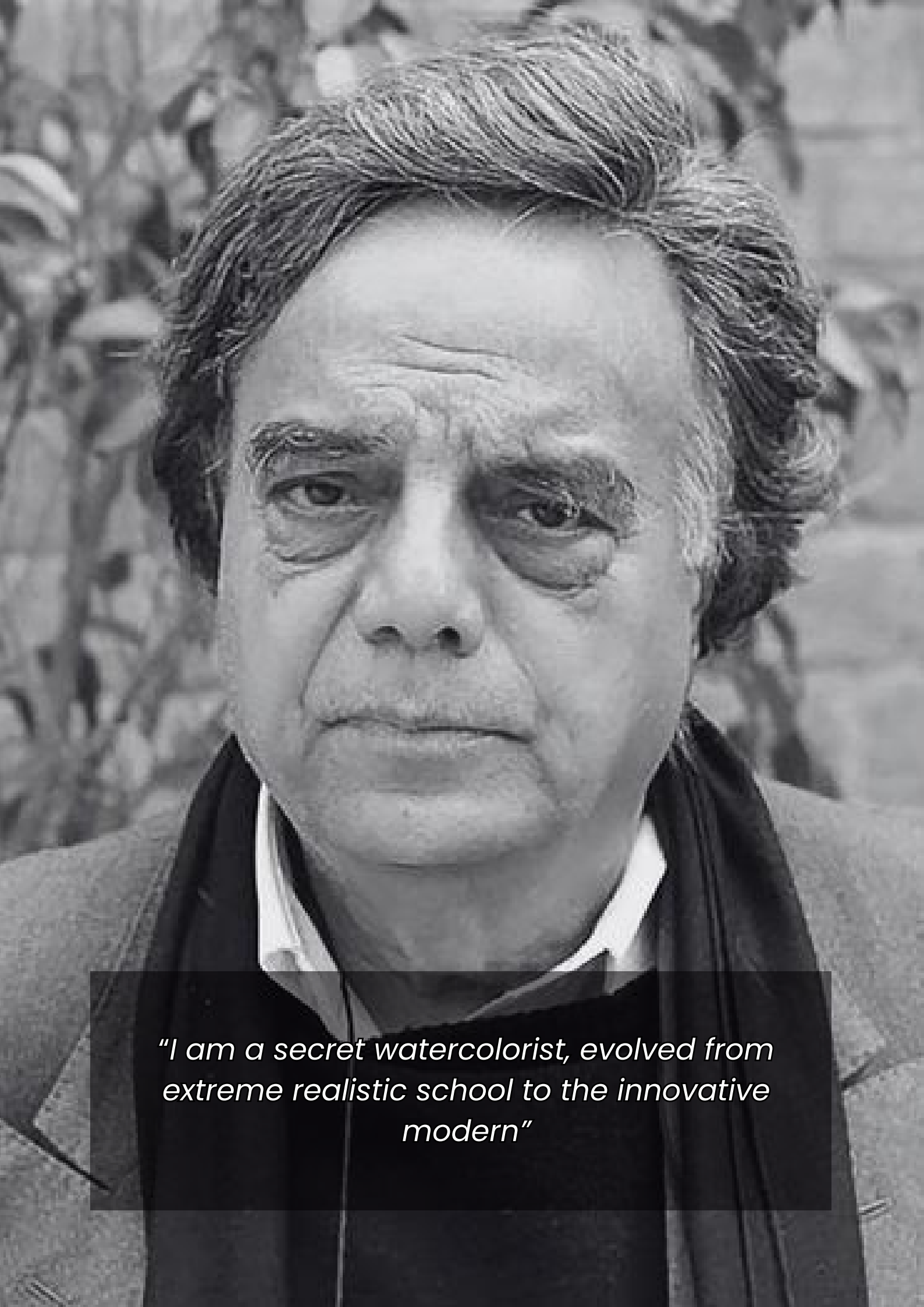




Ground, Obstructed
2026
7″ X 12″
Scaffolding materials, brick, water, sand, crush, cement, enamel paint and indigenous plants







“I am a secret watercolorist, evolved from extreme realistic school to the innovative modern”

NAYYAR ALI DADA

Nayyar Ali Dada (b. Delhi) migrated to Pakistan in the 1950s and received architectural training from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, where he has lectured since 1965 and practices as an architect and watercolorist. His art style is expressed through watercolor painting, often capturing architectural and urban landscapes with precision and sensitivity. Recent exhibitions include shows at his private gallery in Lahore, as well as participation in group exhibitions across Pakistan. Dada pioneered conservation in Pakistan as a founding member of the Lahore Conservation Society. He received the President's Pride of Performance Award (1992) and the Aga Khan Award for Architecture (1998) for the Alhamra Arts Center. He was named an NCA Fellow in 1976.

Courtesy Lahore Biennale Foundation

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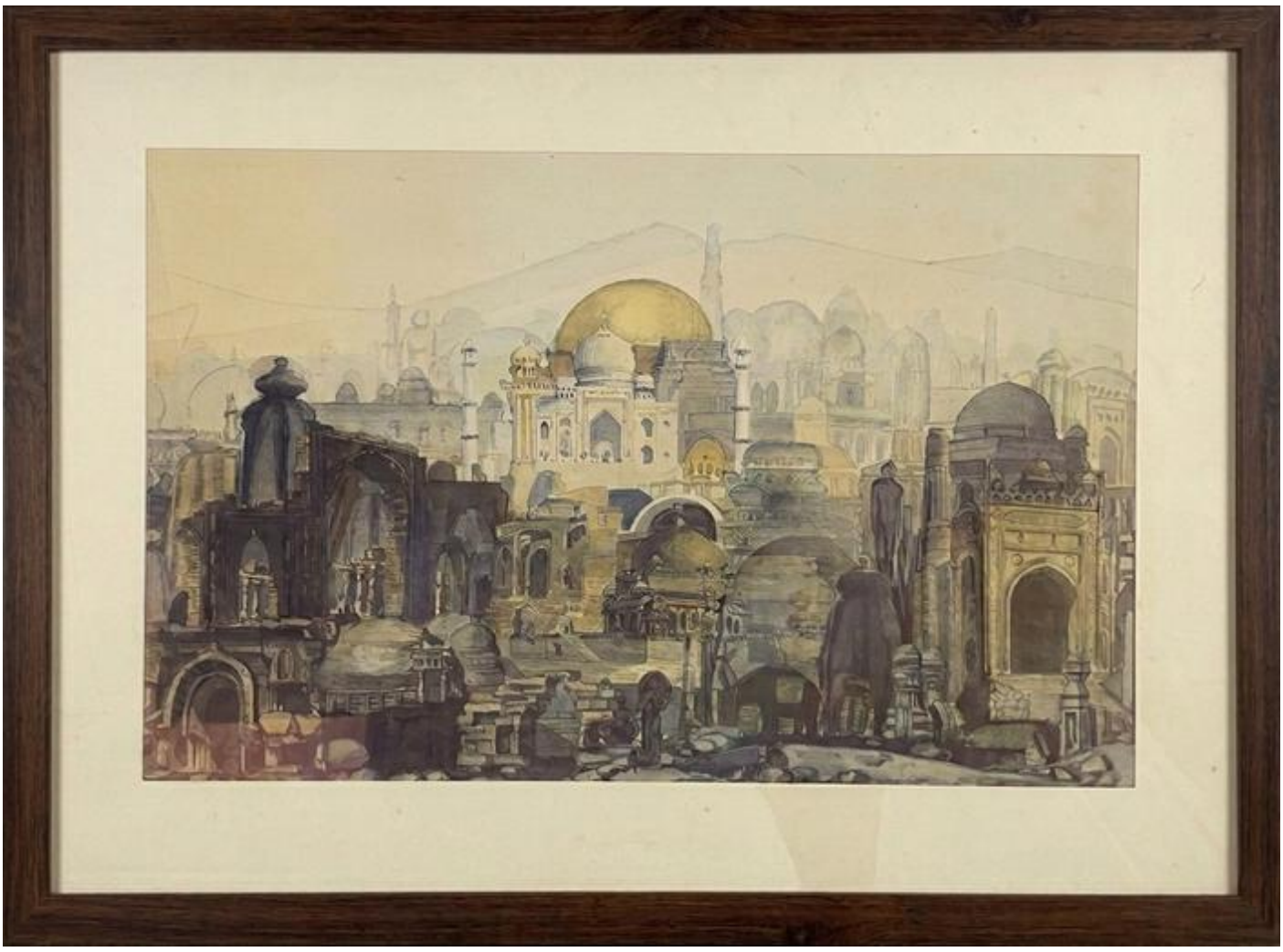
Lahore Walled City Cityscape cubism



Birds on Wire in a Street in Walled City Lahore



Composition of Subcontinent’s Monuments


"Tradition is an illusion of permanence"

RASHID RANA

Widely considered to be one of the leading artists in South Asia today, Rashid Rana is known for conceptual innovation and dramatic visual strategies. He has exhibited extensively at various galleries and museums globally, with works in significant public and private collections including the British Museum London, Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, Fukuoka Museum of Art, Japan and Saatchi Collection, London. He is the recipient of Game Changer Asia Art Award, and was awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz by the President of Pakistan in 2022.

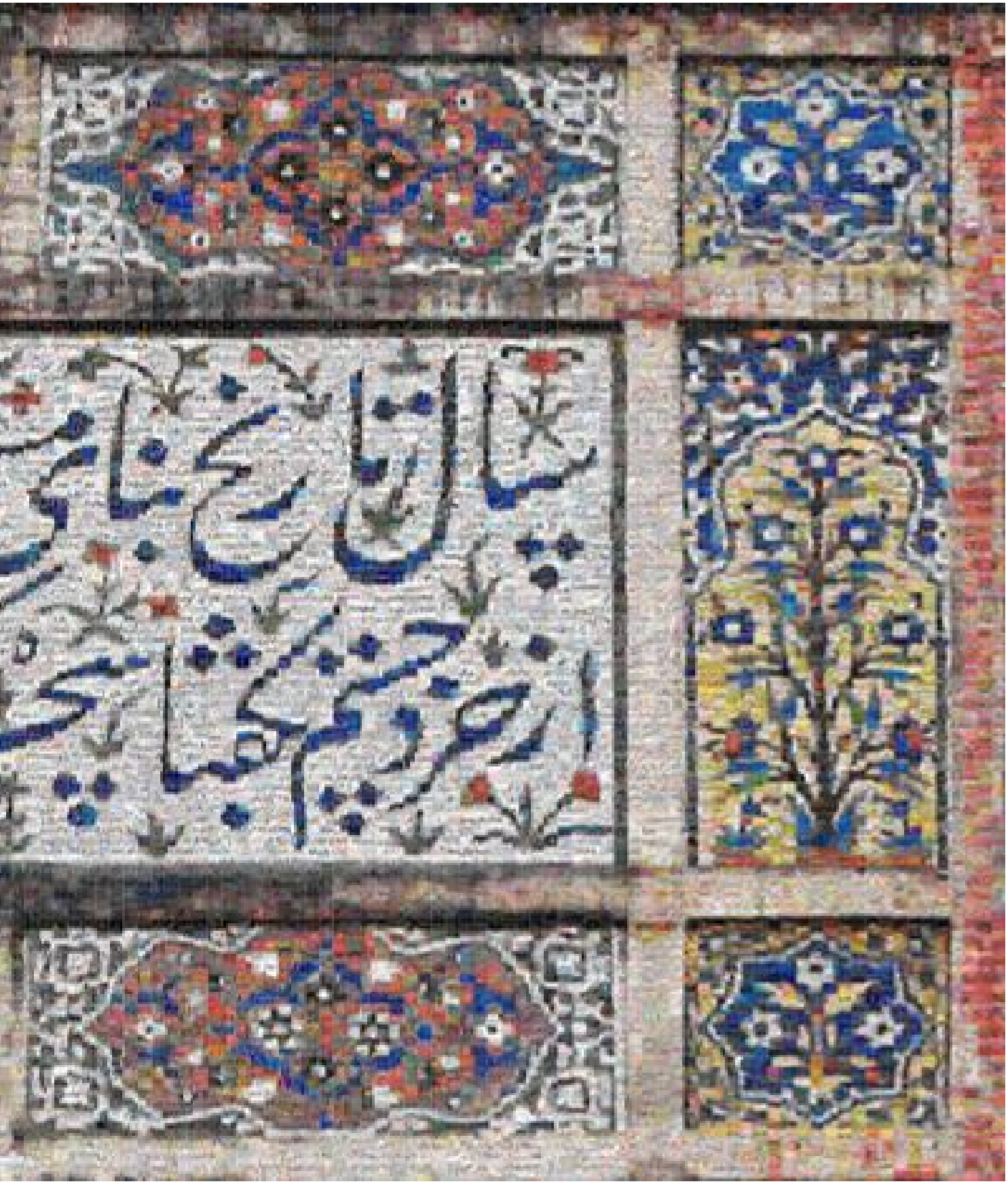
Rashid Rana is currently the Dean of School of Visual Arts and Design at BNU, and the Chair holder for UNESCO Chair on Inclusion through Art.

Re-Ornamented series (first produced in 2004) talks about the absence of the past, which exists as an illusion. Up close, we only see the present, which is also destined to become the past. The works take ornate patterns from historic architectural sites such as the Wazir Khan mosque (Lahore) and the Shah Jahan mosque (Thatta) and reconstruct them using photographs of texts found in public places in Lahore, including wall chalking, signboards, graffiti, and posters that Rana has photographed over the years. The image of the text itself carries our history of colonization. It is Persian written in the Urdu script, which often appears to be Arabic to people outside the country, while locals read it as Urdu. Everyday signage in the city, such as 'Easyload' and 'Political Rally', all English words written in Urdu script, depict how cultural and socio-political histories are embedded in popular language across our cities.

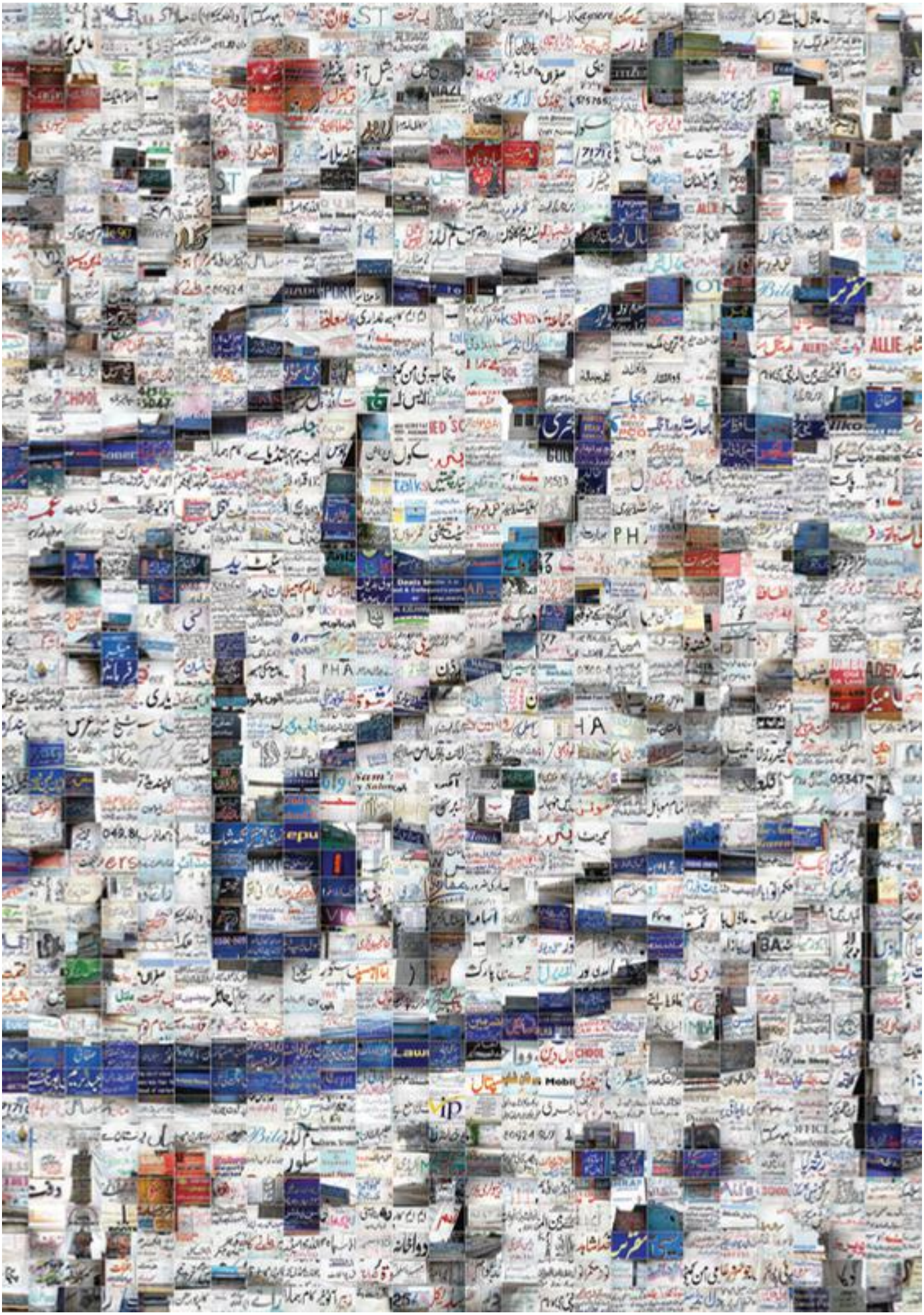








Re-Ornamented 4
2004-2026
84" X 144"
Inkjet Print on vinyl

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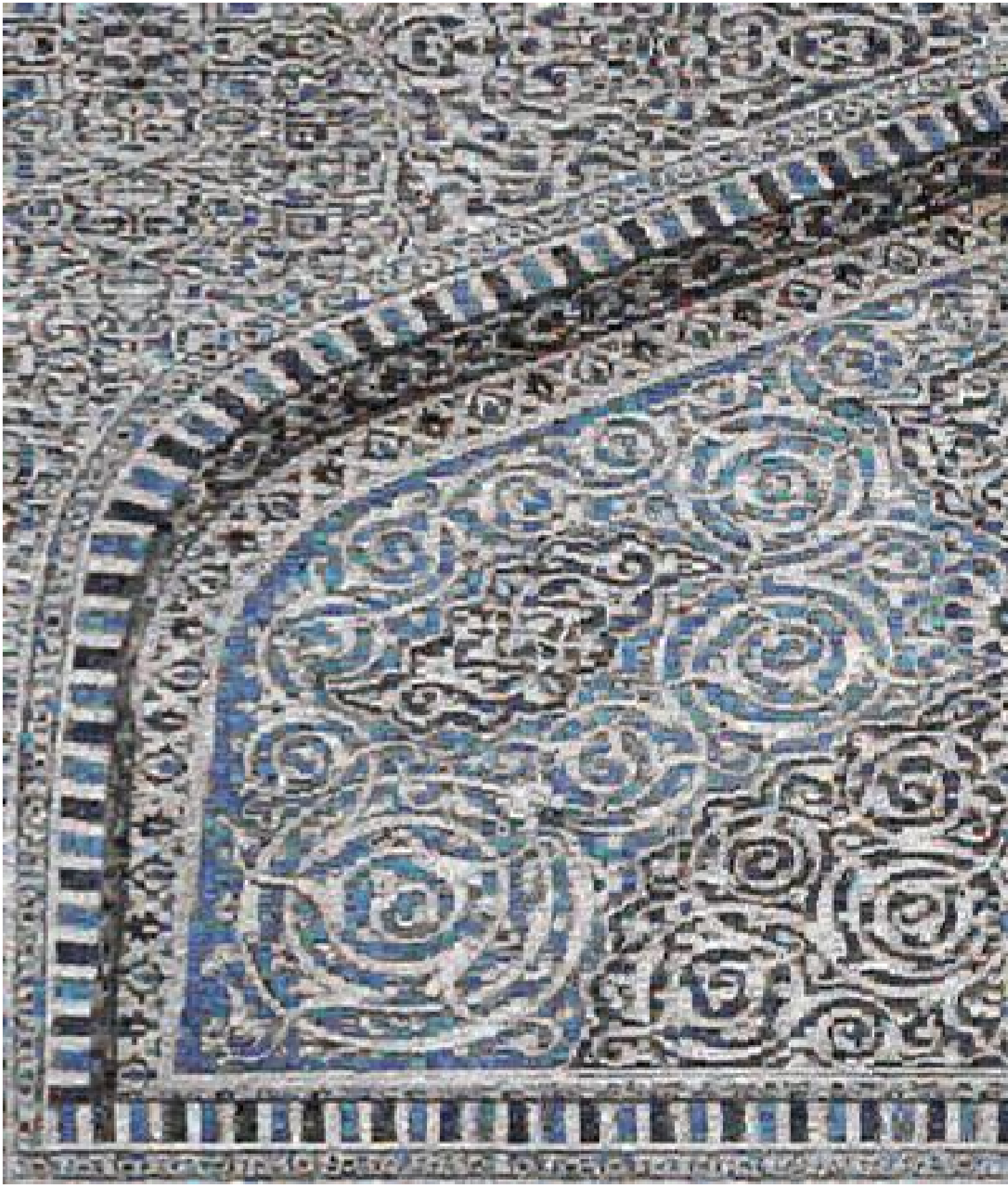




Re-Ornamented 5
2004-2026
84" X 144"
Inkjet Print on vinyl




ULHA
PICASSO
PHONE
FRIDGE CENTER
COMMER
ALINCO ALUM


“A spring passing quickly and dying”

SALIMA HASHMI

Salima Hashmi is an artist (b. 1942, Delhi), curator and contemporary art historian. She was the founding Dean at Beaconhouse National University, Lahore in 2003 where she is now Emerita Professor. She taught at the National College of Arts, Lahore for 30 years. She was also the Principal of the College for 4 years, and held the post of Professor of Fine Arts. She is a painter of repute whose works have been exhibited in Pakistan and in international exhibitions. She has written extensively on the arts, and has curated exhibitions of contemporary art and traditional textile, within Pakistan and internationally. Salima Hashmi was the co-founder of the Rohtas Gallery in Islamabad, established in 1981, and established Rohtas-2 in Lahore in 2001, which has focused on young artists and new art practices. Her book "Unveiling the Visible - Lives and Works of Women Artists of Pakistan" was published in 2002, "Memories, Myths, Mutations – Contemporary Art of India and Pakistan" co-authored with Yashodhara Dalmia for Oxford University Press, India in 2006. She edited "The Eye Still Seeks – Contemporary Art of Pakistan" for Penguin Books, India in 2014. "Nazar Ki Umang," the Urdu translation of "The Eye Still Seeks" for Sang-e-Meel, Pakistan in 2020. Salima Hashmi curated "Hanging Fire," an exhibition of Pakistani Contemporary Art for Asia Society Museum, New York in 2009, which was accompanied by an extensive catalogue. She curated the critically acclaimed exhibition titled "This Night-Bitten Dawn" hosted by Gujral Foundation and the Devi Art Foundation in Delhi, which opened on the occasion of the Delhi Art Fair, 2016. "Watan" by Graciela Magnoni at 1x1 Art Gallery, Alserkal Avenue Dubai, 2024; She recently curated a show of South Asian artists "(Un) Layering the Future Past of South Asia" with Manmeet K. Walia at SOAS Gallery, London. The government of Pakistan awarded her the President's Medal for Pride of Performance for Art Education in 1999. The Australian Council of Art and Design Schools (ACUADS) nominated her Inaugural International Fellow, for distinguished service to art and design education in 2011. She was awarded the Alma Award by Alma Culture Center, Oslo, Norway for promotion of tolerance through performance in 2016. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Bath Spa University, UK in 2016. Professor Hashmi was made Professor Emerita, School of Visual Art and Design, Beaconhouse National University in 2017. She was awarded Sughra Rababi Lifetime Achievement Award in the field of art in 2024. She was awarded Lifetime Achievement Award in the field of art at Lahore Literary Festival in 2024. The government of Pakistan awarded her Sitara-i-Imtiaz in the field of Visual Arts in 2025. She is Council member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.





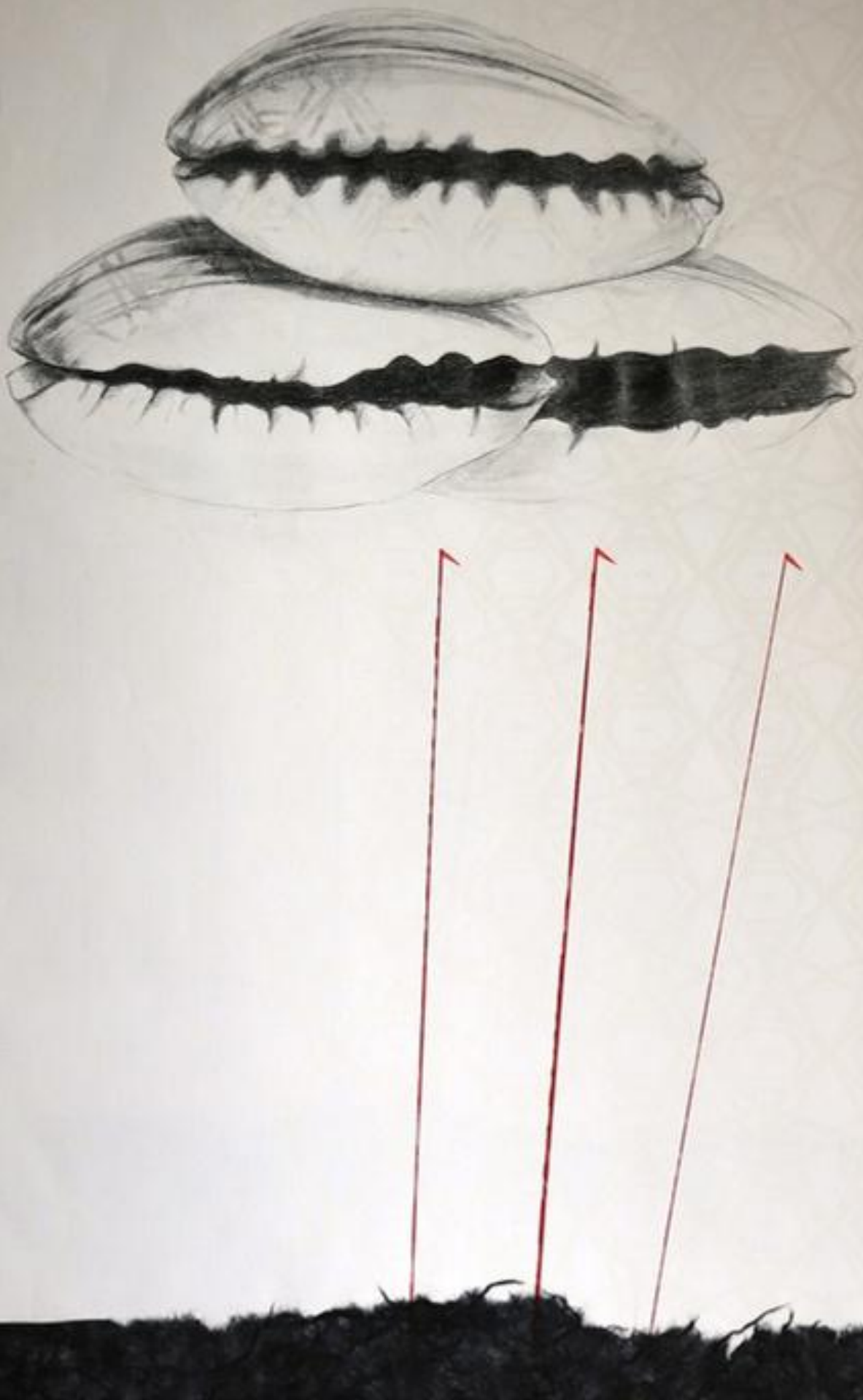
A River Dies of Thirst
2024
13″ X 19″
Mix Media on paper


“Not a single claimant or witness, and the matter is concluded.”

SHERAZ FAISAL

Sheraz Faisal has degrees of Masters in Art Education and Graphic Design. Sheraz critically observes his culture, surroundings and politics to establish his art practice. His art practice varies from Drawings, printmaking to digital medium to address his concerns with the audience. His teaching experiences with Pakistan Institute of Fashion Design led him to understand the diversity of jewelry as a medium and its making. He has exhibited his work nationally and internationally “Tapestry of Fading Gardens - Contemporary art from Pakistan” a group exhibition, at 1x1 Art Gallery, Dubai, 2020, “Art without Boundaries - an Exhibition of South Asian Art” at NM Art Gallery, Dubai. October, 2010. His first solo show “Viscous Rivers” at Color Gallery, Lahore was in 2013. He lives and works in Lahore.

The allegory in Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s poetry depicts a wider interpretation of the suppression of the weak and inspires to stand for the rudimentary human rights. The work pays homage to mankind that has the darkest of times and simultaneously learned to rise.





Certainly, We Too, Shall Witness That Day (II)
2024
30″ X 20″
Screen print, Handmade paper collage and Acrylic on Handmade paper

ICOM international council of museums

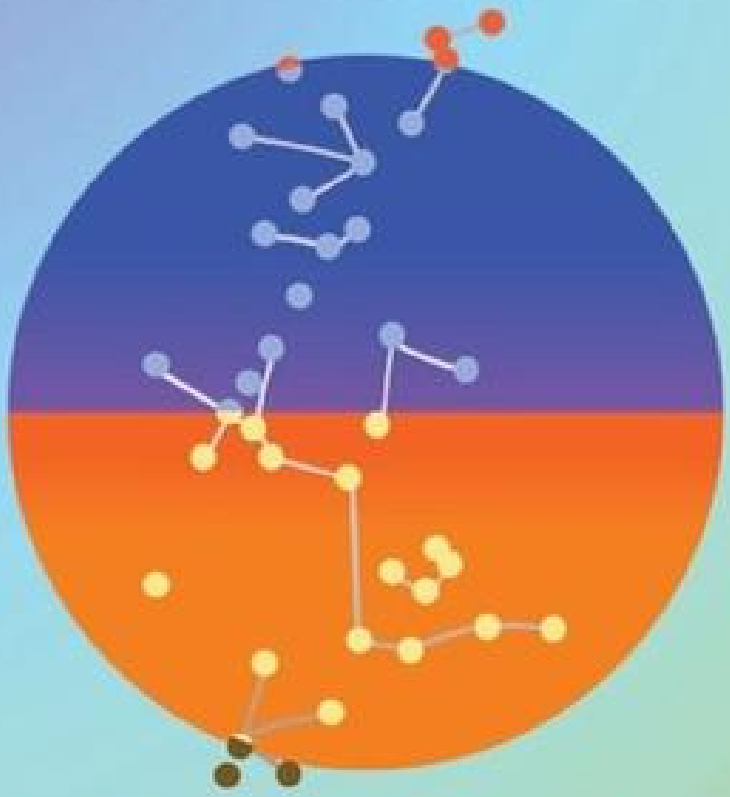
CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY

MUSEUMS UNITING A DIVIDED WORLD

18 MAY 2026

ART EXHIBITION IN DIALOGUE WITH THE MUSEUM COLLECTION

A COLLABORATION OF CULTURISE WITH THE LAHORE MUSEUM, IN ASSOCIATION WITH ICOM PAKISTAN AND ALLIANCE FRANCAISE.



ECHOES ACROSS THE DIVIDE

EXHIBITION CURATED BY **ANNE-SOPHIE FRANCAIS AND SANA DURRANI**



AASIM AKHTAR



ATIF KHAN



ASAD HAYEE



IMRAN QURESHI



IRFAN GUL DAHRI



LAILA RAHMAN



MARIAM HANIF



MINAA HAROON



NASHMIA HAROON



NAYYAR ALI DADA



RASHID RANA



SALIMA HASHIMI



SHERAZ FAI

Culturise

SANA DURRANI

ICOM PAK

Alliance Française Lahore - Pakistan

CURATORS

SANA DURRANI

Sana Durrani is a distinguished multidisciplinary artist and art conservationist based in Lahore, Pakistan. She is a founder of Sana Durrani Studio and a Founding Member & CEO of the cullturise, where she merges her artistic vision with a strong commitment to preserving cultural heritage. Sana has advanced training in painting conservation from Florence, Italy, and is a graduate of ICCROM, having completed the Far CollAsia international course on rethinking disaster risk management for cultural heritage collections in Rome (2021).

As a member of ICOM, Sana has contributed as an author for the ICOM-CC Poster and recently presented a paper at the ICR conference in Taiwan on the "Role of Community-Driven Projects for Museums in Pakistan." Recently, she completed the ICOM-ITC international training on Sustainable Museum Management in China. Currently, she serves as a project manager, curator, and consultant for heritage sites with the Walled City of Lahore Authority.



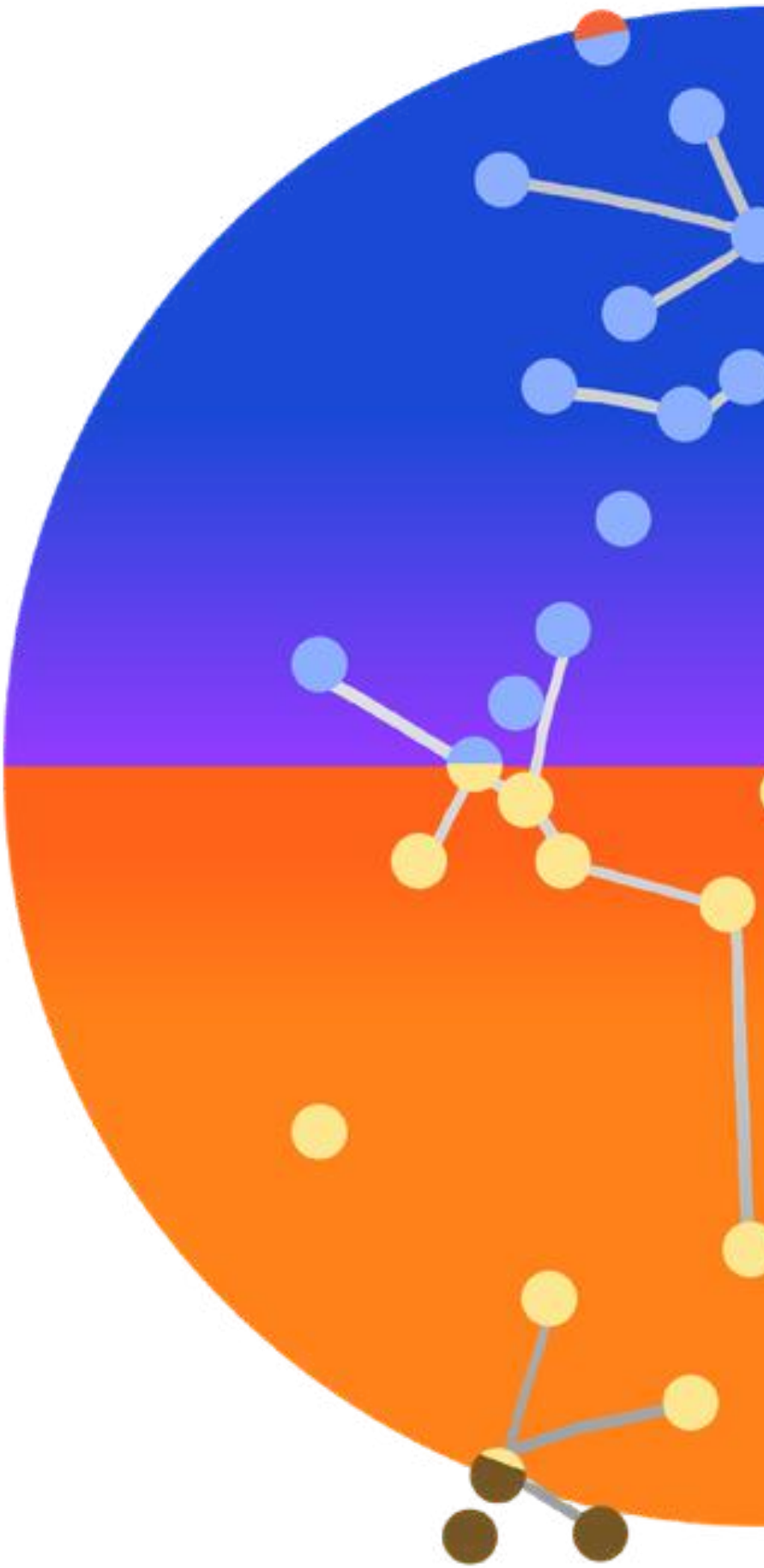


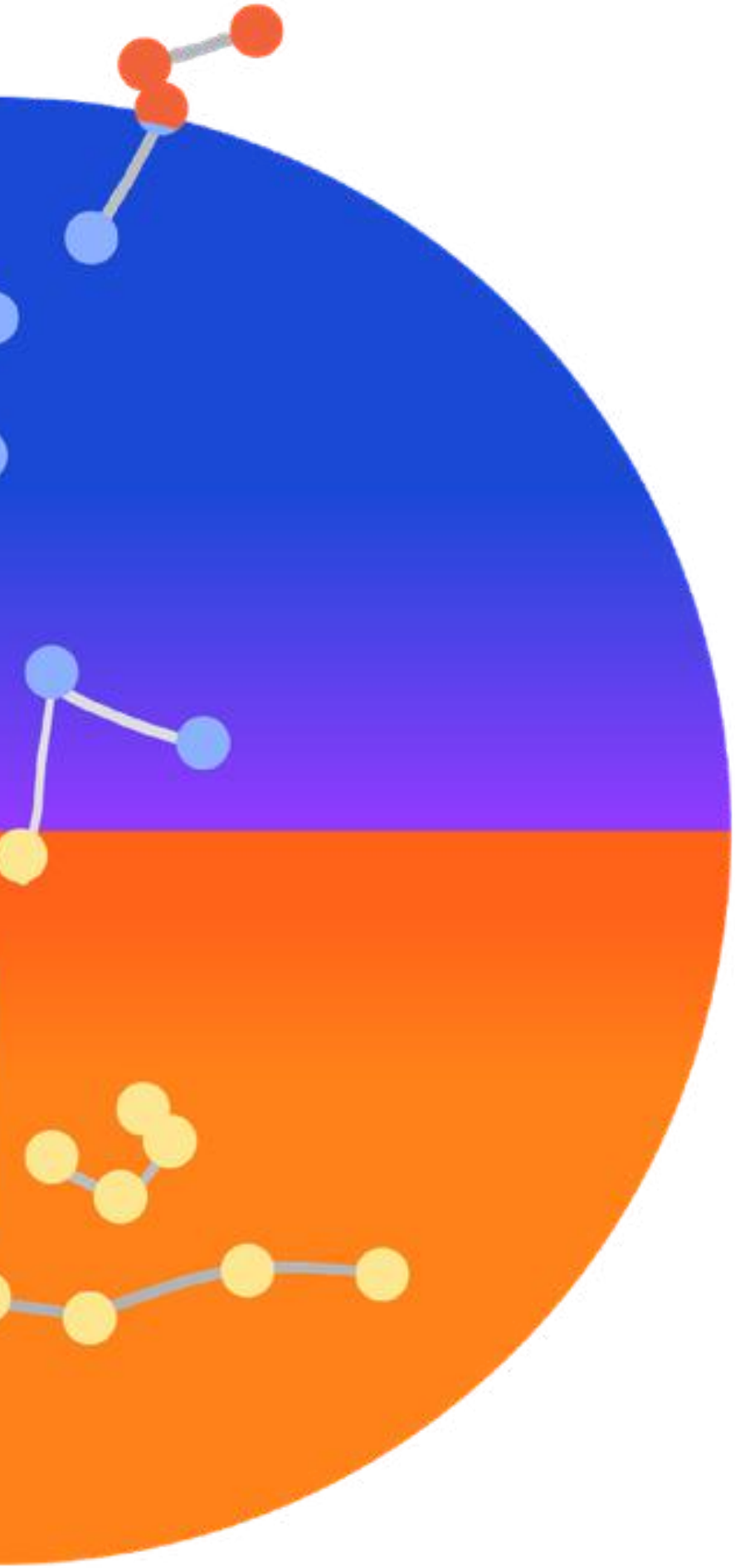
ANNE-SOPHIE FRANCAIS

"Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incidunt ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam, quis nostrum exercitationem ullam corporis suscipit laboriosam, nisi ut aliquid ex ea commodi consequatur? Quis autem vel eum iure reprehenderit qui in ea voluptate velit esse quam nihil molestiae consequatur, vel illum qui dolorem eum fugiat quo voluptas nulla pariatur?"









MUSEUMS AS LIVING ARCHIVES

The world today stands at a complex crossroads. Although technology and globalization promise greater connectivity, societies continue to be shaped by division. Borders, economic inequality, and unequal access to resources separate communities, while migrants, refugees, and diaspora populations navigate multiple cultures, histories, and identities in search of belonging and shared understanding.

In this context, museums hold unique potential. Beyond preserving objects and histories, they can serve as spaces where diverse narratives meet, where multiple perspectives coexist, and where dialogue, empathy, and reflection can inspire more inclusive futures. As living archives, museums do not simply store the past. They actively preserve, interpret, and reexamine objects, memories, and narratives in relation to the present. Yet this potential is not automatic. It requires intentional engagement, critical reflection, and thoughtful curation.

On 18th May 2026, CultuRise, in collaboration with the Lahore Museum, will host a one day conference “Museums as Living Archives" to mark International Museum Day under the global theme Museums Uniting a Divided World. Bringing together heritage professionals, scholars, artists, students, and community stakeholders, the programme will explore how museums can cultivate dialogue, understanding, and social cohesion across cultural and social divides. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 10 on Reduced Inequalities, SDG 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and SDG 17 on Partnerships for the Goals, the conference positions museums as living spaces where knowledge, memory, and heritage function as bridges rather than barriers. The event will be followed by a curated exhibition titled “Echoes Across the Divides” in the museum galleries, extending these discussions into public engagement and lived experience.

SPEAKERS

Anas Nasir is an aspiring art historian and filmmaker with a bachelor's degree in Comparative Literature and Creative Arts and a minor in Art History from LUMS. He is currently working as a Research Associate at MGSHSS, LUMS, and Kashi House (CIC, UK), contributing to projects involving archival research, cultural documentation, and heritage interpretation. Alongside this, he serves as the Creative Director and Marketing Head for the Naqshepaa social platform, where he leads visual strategy and narrative development. His academic and creative interests revolve around Indo-Persian art, material culture, and the broader histories of South Asia.

Antonio Rodríguez was elected President of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) at the 40th General Assembly during the ICOM Dubai 2025 General Conference, succeeding Emma Nardi for the 2025–2028 term .

A distinguished museum consultant from Venezuela, he previously served as Chair of the ICOM Advisory Council from 2022 to 2025. He holds a Master's degree in Communication, Culture and Technology from Georgetown University in Washington DC, a postgraduate degree in Ibero-American Cultural Cooperation from the University of Barcelona, and a Bachelor's in Art History from the Central University of Venezuela. Rodríguez has held executive positions including Director General of the Inter-American Culture and Development Foundation (ICDF) at the Inter-American Development Bank, and Director of Exhibitions at International Arts & Artists in Washington DC . He has also served as President and founder of several ICOM international committees, including the Exhibition Exchange Committee. He resides in Washington DC, USA.

Asma Ibrahim is Pakistan's first woman archaeologist and founding Director of the State Bank of Pakistan's Museum, Archives and Art Gallery Department, where she established the country's first monetary museum. She previously served as Curator of the National Museum of Pakistan and holds a PhD in Numismatics from the University of Karachi, plus a Fulbright post-doctoral fellowship from Wisconsin-Madison. She gained international recognition in 2000 when she exposed the infamous 'Persian Princess mummy' as a forgery using CT scan analysis. She is founder of SEAS Pakistan, an NGO for heritage conservation, and currently serves as Chair of ICOMON, the International Committee for Money and Banking Museums. She is based in Karachi.

Dr Cristina Menegazzi is a culture and heritage specialist working at the intersection of international policy, emergency safeguarding, and field based capacity building. Her recent work in Pakistan has been notably hands on. UNESCO reports show that she led a 2024 disaster risk reduction workshop for safeguarding cultural heritage at Moenjodaro, helped lead a January 2026 national training in Peshawar on World Heritage site management, documentation, and boundary delineation, and has spoken publicly about cultural rights and the importance of access to culture in UNESCO's work on cultural and creative industries.

Fauzia Hussain Qureshi is an architect, heritage conservation specialist, and Director of FHQ & Associates (SMC-Pvt.) Ltd. She taught at the National College of Arts for nearly four decades, retiring in 2011 as Professor and Principal. She served as President of ICOMOS Pakistan for two terms (2017–2023). Her professional work focuses on heritage conservation, planning, museums, and the built environment, with assignments for UNESCO, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Government of Pakistan. She has contributed to conservation and management plans for major World Heritage Sites, including Rohtas Fort, Lahore Fort, and Shalimar Gardens. Alongside professional practice, she has been an active advocate for heritage, culture, environment, and women's issues, and has written and presented widely at national and international forums on conservation and cultural heritage.

Kamran Lashari is a retired Pakistani civil servant of the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) who reached the highest bureaucratic grade of BPS-22 . He is renowned for his work in urban development and heritage conservation . He served as the Director General of the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) from 2012 until his resignation in April 2025 . Before this, he was the Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) from 2003 to 2008, overseeing significant infrastructure projects in Islamabad .

He also held senior federal positions, including Federal Secretary for Petroleum and Federal Secretary for Housing and Works, and served as Chief Secretary of Sindh . His notable conservation projects with the WCLA include the Shahi Hammam restoration, which received a UNESCO Award of Merit.

Kamil Khan Mumtaz is a renowned Pakistani architect, educator, and author, trained at the Architectural Association in London in 1963. He served as head of the National College of Arts in Lahore from 1966 to 1975, where he re-established the five-year architecture course. He is the author of 'Architecture in Pakistan' and 'Modernity and Tradition.' He served on the Steering Committee of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and as a Visiting Critic at Harvard and MIT's Aga Khan Program. He is a founding member of the Lahore Conservation Society and the Save Lahore Movement. He has been awarded the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz and Sitara-e-Imtiaz. He is based in Lahore.

Nasir Al-Darmaki is Vice President of ICOM, elected at the ICOM General Conference in Dubai in November 2025 —the first time that conference was hosted in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia region. He also serves as Chair of ICOM UAE and was the head organizer for that historic conference, which brought together over 4,500 museum professionals from 120 countries.

He is Deputy Director of the ICCROM Regional Centre in Sharjah, a UNESCO-affiliated intergovernmental organization for cultural heritage conservation. He also led the development of the UAE's first comprehensive national museum guide, a project under the Ministry of Culture and Youth that maps every museum across the country. He is based in the UAE."

Nicolas Engels holds a master's degree in Afghan archaeology from the EHESS and has been curator of the Afghanistan-Pakistan collections at the Musée Guimet since 2022. He was previously curator at the Cernuschi Museum from 2003 to 2009 before serving as Deputy Director of the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan (DAFA) from 2009 to 2013, contributing to field missions and the preservation of Afghan heritage. From 2014 to 2017, he was the curator of religious and civil artworks (COATC) for the City of Paris, then museum advisor at the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs (DRAC) - Île-de-France from 2018 to 2021. He was co-curator of the exhibition The Sasanian Persians: The Splendor of a Forgotten Empire in 2006, curator of the exhibition Luristan Bronzes: Enigmas of Ancient Iran in 2008, and most recently of Afghanistan: Shadows and Legends at the Guimet Museum (October 26, 2022 – February 6, 2023). He also led the publication of the eponymous book, highlighting Afghan archaeological treasures and the challenges related to their conservation while participating in expert committees with UNESCO and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Dr. Rukhsana David served as the Principal of Kinnaird College for Women in Lahore, a position she has held since 2010, till 2024. With over 30 years in education, she has served on the boards of governors for Forman Christian College, the National College of Arts, and Lahore College for Women's PhD program. She planned the curriculum for Kinnaird's four-year Bachelor of Fine Arts program and represented the college at the International Conference on Women Empowerment in the Philippines. She has completed leadership training at the British Council in Glasgow and at Harvard University in Boston. She is the recipient of the National Cultural Award for Minorities in Art. Under her leadership, Kinnaird was granted university status and now offers 13 MPhil and 23 undergraduate programs. She is based in Lahore.

Sajida Vandal is the former founding Vice Chancellor of the federally chartered Institute for Art and Culture (IAC) and the former Principal of the National College of Arts, Lahore is an Architect, Educationist, and a Rights Activist. She is also the current CEO of THAAP, a Section 42 Non-Profit Company, and the only UNESCO accredited organization from Pakistan under Convention 2003. THAAP is dedicated to research, protection and safeguarding cultural heritage and community's inalienable rights to their culture. She is an expert member of the Governing Council of UNESCO-Tehran Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage & also UNESCO Global Facilitator for ICH. Prof. Vandal has a varied portfolio of professional work including in the heritage sector from developing Integrated Site Management Plans for Heritage Sites to the conservation and preservation of heritage buildings and the safeguarding of the Living Heritage of communities.

Saman Rai Information about Saman Rai's specific background as a former Director of the Lahore Museum is not available in the current search results. Her role as a panelist is recorded as Former Director, Lahore Museum.Information about Saman Rai's specific background as a former Director of the Lahore Museum is not available in the current search results. Her role as a panelist is recorded as Former Director, Lahore Museum. Information about Saman Rai's specific background as a former Director of the Lahore Museum is not available in the current search results. Her role as a panelist is recorded as Former

Dr. Shaila Bhatti is an anthropologist whose academic interests span material and visual culture of South Asia, colonial/postcolonial social and object histories and identities. In particular, she is interested in comparative museologies and the social life of museums in the non-west. Currently, Head of Department for Cultural Studies at the National College of Arts, Lahore, where she has taught for the last 10 years. Based on her expertise and research of over 20 years in museums and visual culture of South Asia, she developed

and teaches courses that deal with museum history, theory and practice, and colonial/postcolonial museology. Bhatti gained her PhD in Anthropology from University College London, where she was also the Economic and Social Research Council's Postdoctoral Fellow. She has published widely on museums with articles appearing in major international journals and is the author of the first monograph on a South Asian museum: Translating Museums: A Counterhistory of South Asian Museology, published by Routledge.

Dr. Tarunjit Butalia is Research Associate Professor at The Ohio State University. He is an Honorary Envoy of Aitchison of College and has deep roots in South Asia. He serves as the Executive Director of Religions for Peace USA - a national faith-based membership organization of the major and minor faith traditions of the United States. He has significant expertise in the Sikh heritage of Pakistan.

Taseer Ahmed is the Director of Lahore Museum, where he oversees one of Pakistan's foremost cultural institutions. His work focuses on the stewardship of the museum's collections, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the advancement of exhibitions, research, and public engagement that celebrate Pakistan's rich artistic and historical legacy.

Tausif Ahmad Khawaja is a Senior Development Executive and has been working with Aga Khan Development Network for almost a decade. He has spearheaded the heritage restoration and area development works in the Walled City of Lahore for the last 6 years. This includes the projects like Picture Wall, Wazir Khan Mosque, Imam Gammu Tomb, Spice Market (Akbari Mandi), Akbari Gate and Sheesh Mahal at Lahore Fort. Mr. Khawaja has spent a considerable time of his career in multinationals in Pakistan & Central Asia besides carrying out several small stints in Germany and China. Mr Ahmad also writes blogs on cultural issues and has published two books

SCEHDULE

Session 1

Museums as Custodians of Heritage

Moderated by Sana Durrani

12:15- 13:00

Session 2

Museums as Spaces of Dialogue, Not Authority

Moderated Amina Ali

13:00-14:00

Session 3

From Archive to Experience: Activating Collections Through Storytelling

Moderate by Q. Sonia Kashmiri

14:00-15:00

MODERATORS

Amina Ali Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incidunt ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam,

Q. Sonia Kashmiri Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incidunt ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam,

Sana Durrani Sed ut perspiciatis unde omnis iste natus error sit voluptatem accusantium doloremque laudantium, totam rem aperiam, eaque ipsa quae ab illo inventore veritatis et quasi architecto beatae vitae dicta sunt explicabo. Nemo enim ipsam voluptatem quia voluptas sit aspernatur aut odit aut fugit, sed quia consequuntur magni dolores eos qui ratione voluptatem sequi nesciunt. Neque porro quisquam est, qui dolorem ipsum quia dolor sit amet, consectetur, adipisci velit, sed quia non numquam eius modi tempora incidunt ut labore et dolore magnam aliquam quaerat voluptatem. Ut enim ad minima veniam,

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS









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A River Dies of Thirst, Salima Hashmi, 2024

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Imran Qureshi
Tagh'eer Lahore
Rashid Rana Studio

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E-Catalogue

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Artist bios and artwork descriptions courtesy the artists.

Editors
Abdul Samad Ahmed
Rashid Rana Studio
Sana Durrani



Exhibition: Echoes Across the Divide
Curator(s): Anne Sophie Francais &
Sana Durrani
Occasion: International Museum Day 2026
Type: Group Show
No. of Artists: 13
Opened: 18.5(Private) & 19.5(Public)
Closed: 30.5
Year: 2026
Venue: Islamic Gallery, The Lahore Museum

Aasim Akhtar
Atif Khan
Asad Hayee
Imran Qureshi
Irfan Gul Dahri
Laila Rahman
Mariam Hanif
Minaa Haroon
Nashmia Haroon
Nayyar Ali Dada
Rashid Rana
Salima Hashmi
Sheraz Faisal