

CANVAS

GALLERY

ALL THAT
GLITTERS
IS NOT HOME

MASUMA
HALAI KHWAJA

20 AUG - 29 AUG 2024

Artist statement

My art practice explores pivotal points in recent history with a focus on South Asia. Informed by oral accounts and lived experiences I counter state fed narratives and unilateral textbook versions of history by addressing the psychological and sociological undercurrents of unrest and mass migrations, investigating their impact on languages, dress codes, religion and mindsets that have yet to shed post-colonial baggage. Migrations in the hope of betterment do not always live up to desired expectations. The Urdu term for expats and migrants 'Samundar paar' harkens stories of my mother's migration from Indian Gujarat to Karachi via sea. Sea waves rendered in zardozi recall the trousseau of South Asian brides, drawing parallels between marriage and migration and reflect on the complexity of these transitions and their emotional resonance. The works also question the political agency of the open seas.

Emblematic of world powers, and symbolizing romance, the rose and rose petals take on dual, polar connotations in South Asia. Rose petals are showered on guests to signify a warm welcome and spread on graves to signify commiseration. The rose in my artwork is symbolic of the global west. Its petals however, touch upon themes of internment, whether of ideas, events or theories.

I employ used textiles to investigate regional, cultural and political scenarios. Purchasing tapestries and kilims from flea markets and pairing them with embroideries from Pakistan and the region, I create textile collages by ruthlessly cutting the embroidery into little pieces. I reconstitute the cut-up pieces by stitching an entirely different narrative that includes the stories of both, the embroidered piece and the fabric it is placed on. The ensuing narrative, while pertinent to the present, is detached from both, the individual truths of the base and the embroideries collaged on it. During this process the original identity of the fabric has been altered by imposition of an account it is unfamiliar to, and history is retold from the perspective of one who has lived it, rather than that of the onlooker.



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: For the Love of the Rose
Medium: Oil on canvas
Size: 60 x 60 inches
Year: 2024



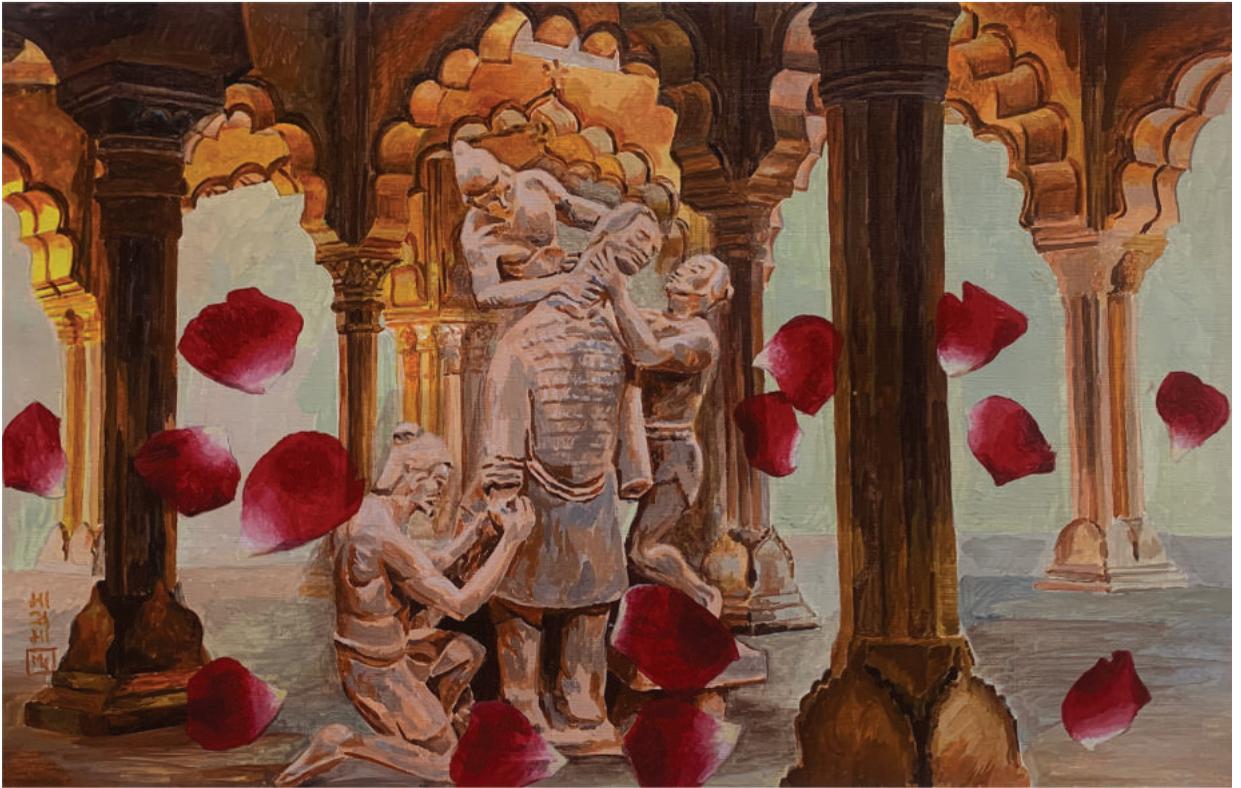
Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: The Arrival of the Beloved I
Medium: Acrylics on paper
Size: 16 x 12 inches
Year: 2024



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: The Arrival of the Beloved II
Medium: Acrylics on paper
Size: 12 x 18 inches
Year: 2024



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: When will we be Enough I
Medium: Acrylics on canvas
Size: 14 x 20 inches
Year: 2024



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: When will we be Enough II
Medium: Acrylics on canvas
Size: 14 x 20 inches
Year: 2024



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: Under the Shadow of another Sun I
Medium: Textile collage on tapestry
Size: 30 x 24 inches
Year: 2024



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: Under the Shadow of another Sun II
Medium: Textile collage on tapestry
Size: 18 x 18 inches
Year: 2024



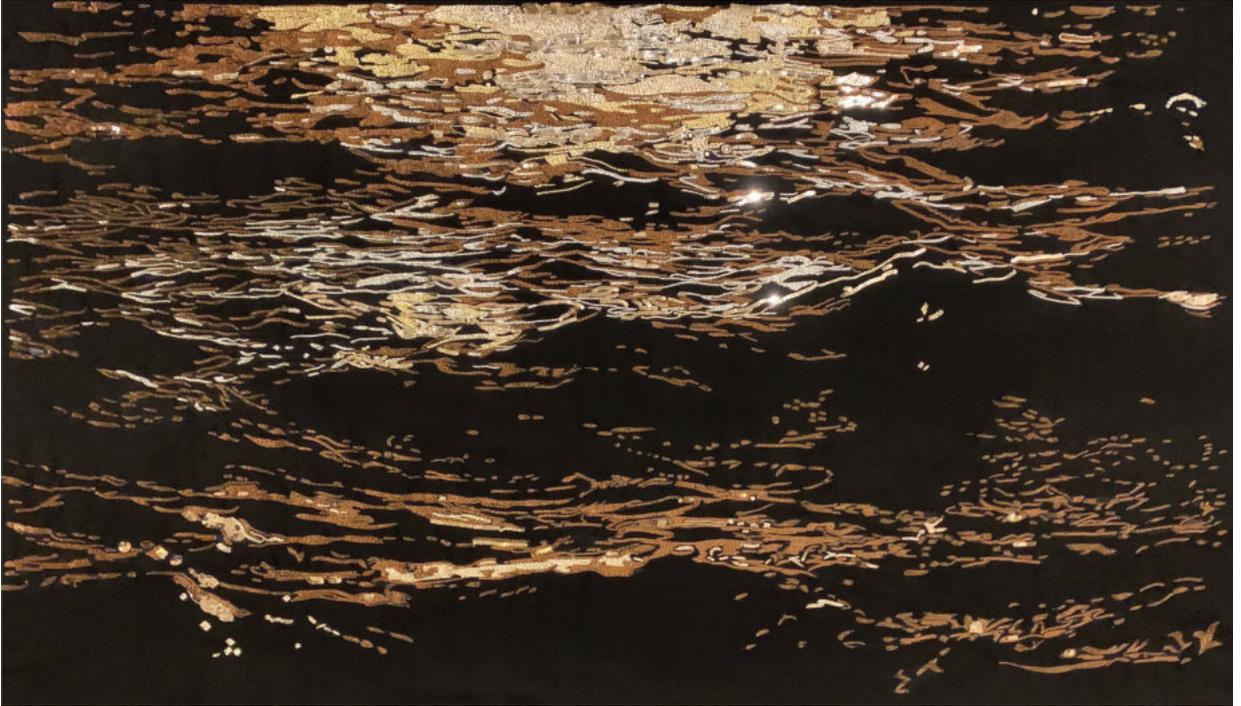
Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja

Title: Under the shadow of another Sun III

Medium: Textile collage on tapestry

Size: 37 x 70 inches

Year: 2024



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja

Title: All that Glitters is not Home I

Medium: Zardozi / gold and bronze work and sequins on fabric

Size: 33 x 60 inches

Year: 2024



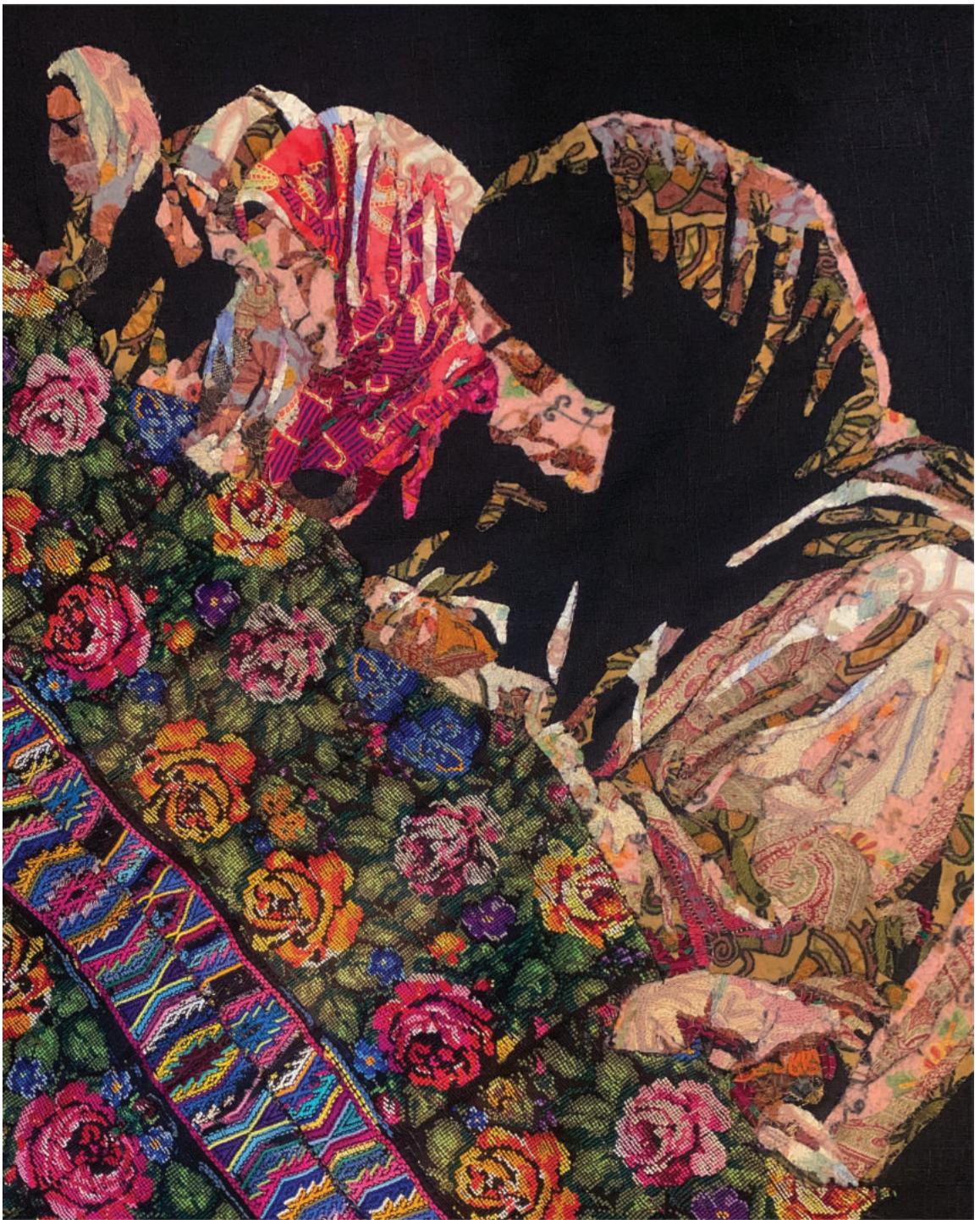
Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja

Title: All that Glitters is not Home II

Medium: Zardozi / gold and bronze work on fabric

Size: 32 x 48 inches

Year: 2024



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: The Branch that Bears the Rose I
Medium: Textile collage
Size: 29 x 23 inches
Year: 2024



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: The Branch that Bears the Rose II
Medium: Textile collage on tapestry
Size: 47 x 36 inches
Year: 2017



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja
Title: Exodus
Medium: Textile Collage on Kilim
Size: 52 x 37 inches
Year: 2017



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja

Title: Casting Nets at the Ebbing Tide

Medium: Textile collage and embroidery on tapestry

Size: 18 x 53 inches

Year: 2024



Artist: Masuma Halai Khwaja

Title: THE SEA WILL BE THE SEA WHATEVER THE DROPS PHILOSOPHY

Edition: 1/4 + AP

Medium: Video

Duration: 73 seconds

Year: 2023

Profile

An artist and a curator with a strong network in the art community, Masuma graduated with a distinction in fine arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore. She has had six solo shows to date and her artworks have been part of group shows in Pakistan and abroad.

She has exhibited her work at the 9th, 10th and 11th iterations of the Fibre Art Biennale 'From Lausanne To Beijing' held in Shenzhen and Beijing, The First Art Embroidery Biennial in Chaozhou, The Dafen Art Biennale in Shenzhen and The First Material Art Biennale in Beijing China. Her works have also been part of The International Public Art Festival in Karachi, Nord Art, Germany and the 2nd and 3rd editions of the South Asian American Art Festival.

Her works are held in private collections in Dubai, Qatar, Germany Denmark, Singapore, England, Canada, USA and Pakistan. In her recent work she employs South Asian garments like the sherwani, burqa and sari blouse to position incidents in culturally and politically relevant contexts. She uses kilims carpets and embroideries from Pakistan and the region to investigate contested histories and challenge accepted norms. Since 2019 Masuma has also started working with moving images and short films centered at the intersections of migrations and cultural loss. She has won many awards, the most recent being The Excellence Award at the 9th and 11th Fiber Art Biennales in China in 2016 and 2020.

Masuma curated the first retrospective exhibition of Aisha Khalid at the Frere Hall in Karachi in 2021 and her 2nd retrospective show at The Govett Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth, New Zealand in April 2023. In 2019 Masuma curated a show of artworks created by fashion designers at Alkaram Textiles. She has also worked with Trade and Development Corporation of Pakistan (TDAP) to curate art exhibits during their trade shows in Belgium and Sri Lanka.

As a cultural practitioner Masuma has served on the advisory committee of the International Public Art Festival in Karachi. She is a founder member and former trustee of the Karachi Biennale. In 2017 she was chairperson of its Public Outreach Committee and initiated the 'Reel On Hai' Project which was one of the largest public art/ outreach programs in the country, aimed at converting a hundred empty discarded cable reels into artworks through an open call to artists' architects and designers who worked on site to engage the community living around the area.

In 2020 Masuma worked with Mediamatic-Amsterdam toward a project that looked into the spice trade of the Dutch East India Company under the umbrella project Olfactory History of Oosterdok. In the same year she collaborated with a Bangladeshi cultural practitioner towards a series of digital podcasts aimed at connecting creatives from Bangladesh Birmingham and Pakistan for Transforming Narratives, the project was supported by the Arts Council of England and the British Council.

In 2018 Masuma co-authored a book about Public Art in Karachi, titled; 'Public Art, Thriving in Urban Chaos'.

Masuma has been a mentor to many emerging, young artists both in a formal and informal capacity. She has taught at the National College of Arts Lahore the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture Karachi and The Karachi University Visual Studies Department. She has also been a panelist at talks in forums at the Aga Khan University, The Citizens Archive, T2F ('The Peace Niche') Karachi Literature Festival and the Habib University.

SOLO SHOWS

- 2022 The Veils of Our Soul, Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
2017 Encounters of the Third Kind, Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
2012 Life is a Song Khaas Gallery, Islamabad.
2007 Identity Crisis Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
2005 Womanhood Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
1993 The Invisible Shroud, Gallery Rohtas, Islamabad.

BIENNIALS AND ART FESTIVALS

- 2022 1st International Contemporary Material Art Biennale, Beijing, China.
2020 From Lausanne to Beijing, 11th International Fiber Art Biennale, Online.
2020 International Public Art Festival, Karachi.
2019 Islamabad Art Festival, Islamabad.
2019 International Public Art Festival, Karachi.
2018 1st International Art Embroidery Biennial, Chaozhou, China.
2018 1st Dafen Art Biennale, Shenzhen China.
2018 From Lausanne to Beijing, 10th International Fiber Art Biennale, Beijing, China.
2017 Nord, Art - Annual International Art Show, Budelsdorf Ger.
2016 From Lausanne to Beijing, 9th International Fiber Art Biennale, Shenzhen, China.
2010 3rd Annual South Asian American Art Festival, Santa Monica, USA.
2009 2nd Annual South Asian American Art Festival, Santa Monica, USA.

AWARDS

- 2020 Excellence Award- 11th Fiber Art Biennale, Online, Beijing, China.
2106 Excellence Award 9th Fiber Art Biennale, Shenzhen, China.
1994 Medal of Star Girl by South Asia Publications for outstanding achievements in the field of Fine Arts.
1993 Sadequain Award for Painting, Karachi, Pakistan.
1992 Sadequain Award for Painting, Karachi, Pakistan.
1991 Certificate for Outstanding Student, N.C.A. Lahore.
1987 Sindh Scholarship for Outstanding Students, N.C.A. Lahore.
1986 Sindh Scholarship for Outstanding Students, N.C.A. Lahore.
1979 Medal for Best Artist; Child Art Festival, Rafi Peer Theatre Workshop, Karachi.

PUBLICATION

- 2018 Co-authored book 'Public Art, Thriving in Urban Chaos'

CURATORIAL

- 2023 Aisha Khalid Retrospective at Govett Brewster Gallery, New Plymouth.
2021 Aisha Khalid First Retrospective, Frere Hall, Karachi.
2019 Fibre Form And Other Stories, Alkaram Studio, Karachi.
2016 Pakistani Photographers' single country trade fair, Colombo.
2015 Co-curation: Pakistani Art Ghent.

ART PROJECTS/OUTREACH PROGRAMS

- 2020 Angon-Podcast Series; Project Lead Pakistan; connecting creatives from Bangladesh, Birmingham and Pakistan
Digital Grant from Transforming Narratives.
2020 Olfactory History of Oosterdok; The Spice Project - Mediamatic, Amsterdam.
2019 Fibre Art Workshop; Alkaram Studio, Karachi.
2017- 2018 I AM Karachi Walls; 3rd phase of IAK Walls replacing hate graffiti with murals.
2106-2017 Reel On Hai; Public Art Project of the Karachi Biennale Trust
Envisioned and spearheaded the conversion of empty cable reels into artworks.
2013 Deaf Reach School; Workshop on creating art with recycled material.

GROUP SHOWS

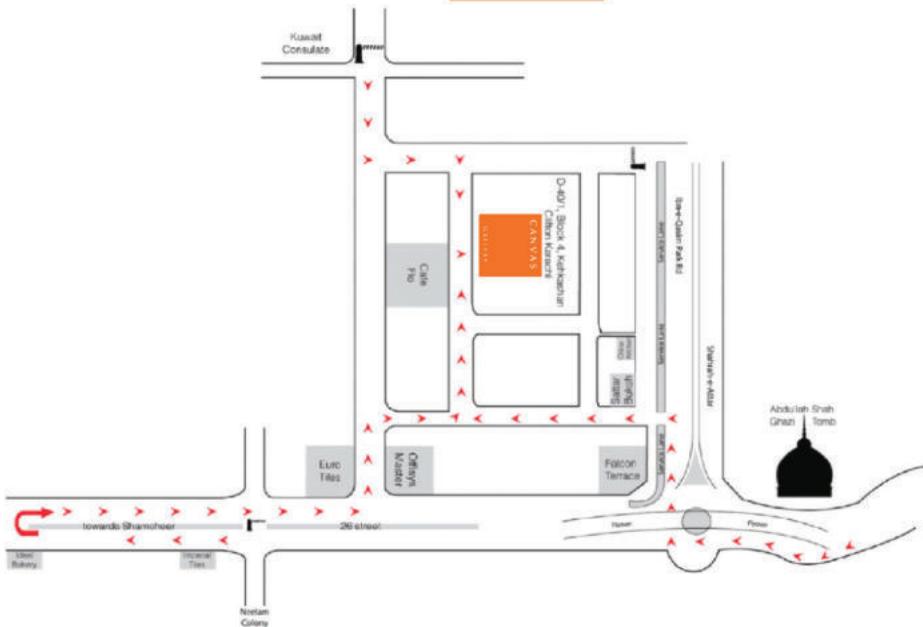
- 2023 Through Life University of Caldas, Manizales.
2023 Boundaries, VM Art Gallery, Karachi.
2020 The Road To Mecca, Eiwan Al Gassar, Doha.
2021 An Ode to Windows, Chawkandi Art Gallery, Karachi.
2020 Wearable Variables, Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
2018 No Filter, Alliance Francaise, Karachi.
2108 The Silk Road, Gongwang Palace Museum, Beijing.
2018 The Evolving Status of Women, Art House, Singapore.
2018 In a Different Voice, Tsinghua University Gallery, Beijing.
2017 Safar - The Journey, Al Hamra Art Gallery, Lahore.
2017 The Thread Unraveled, VM Art Gallery, Karachi
2015 Two person show, Flanders, Expo Ghent.
2013 Mad in Karachi, Art Chowk Gallery, Karachi.
2012 Past Perfect, Zahoor-ul Akhlaq Gallery, Lahore.
2012 Celebrating Art: 30 Years of Rohtas National Art Gallery, Islamabad.
2011 Contending Change, Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
2011 Soul of Pakistan, Artrium MICA, Singapore.
2010 Art beyond Boundaries, Total Arts, Gallery Dubai.
2010 Good Things Come in Small Packages, IVSAA Gallery, Karachi.
2009 Give and Take, Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
2009 Going Places, Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
2008 A Road Less Traveled, DIAC, Dubai.
2007 2nd Faculty Exhibition, IVSAA Gallery, Karachi.
2006 Beyond the Veil- Art from Pakistan, Alliance Francaise, Singapore.
2006 Visual Arts Faculty Exhibition, IVSAA Gallery, Karachi.
2000 Group Show of 4 Women Artists, Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
1999 Urban Voices III- Art Fest, Hotel Sheraton Karachi.
1997 Group Show of Punjab Artists, Al Hamra, Arts Council, Lahore.
1995 7th National Exhibition, PNCA, Islamabad.
1994 Show of Prominent Pakistani Artists, Al-Maty.
1994 Show of 13 Women Artists, Gallery Rohtas, Islamabad.
1993 6th National Exhibition of Pakistani Artists, PNCA, Islamabad.
1992 Show of Artists Under 30, National Art Gallery, Islamabad.
1991 Group Show, Gallery Rohtas, Islamabad.
1991 Through a Woman's Eye, National Art Gallery, Islamabad.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2018- 2020 International Public Art Festival, Member Advisory Committee,
2017 I AM Karachi, Project Manager Walls.
2015-2018 Karachi Biennale 2017, Founder Member/ Trustee/ Chair -Public Outreach Committee.
2015-2018 The Lyceum School, Karachi - Art Teacher - AS level.
2005- 2011 Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi, Department of Fine Arts
Drawing / Painting: 2005-2007 and 2010.
Thesis Supervisor: 2005 and 2006.
Department of Textile Design.
Drawing for Post Graduate Diploma: 2010.
2009-2010 University of Karachi, Department of Visual Studies, Part Time, Faculty Drawing and Painting.
1996-2001 National College of Arts, Lahore, Department of Academics: Assistant Teacher, History and Heritage Program: 1996- 2000
Coordinator, History and Heritage Program: 2001
1991 Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi.
Painting Teacher: summer school.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

- 1991 Bachelors in Fine Arts (Distinction).
National College of Arts, Lahore.



D-40/1, Block 4 Kehkashan, Clifton, Karachi 75600 Pakistan
P: +92 21 3586 1523

 canvasgallery2014@gmail.com  www.canvasgallery.net

 [canvasgallerykhi](https://www.instagram.com/canvasgallerykhi)  [canvas.gallery](https://www.facebook.com/canvas.gallery)  [CanvasGallery](https://twitter.com/CanvasGallery)