

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.