

Artist statement

An Ode to Empty Bottles delves into the pervasive internal emptiness of the human condition. I perceive this as reflecting life's chaotic outside and exhibitory nature. This provokes me to seek – the incomprehensible, the transient, and the elusive, which I try to execute theatrically. I painted with my hands and with loose brushstrokes on a large scale. By incorporating found objects – old, damaged, discarded glassware and empty bottles- I transform these into symbolic chandeliers, bridging notions of grandeur and decay. The work process gave me the freedom to embrace spontaneity and fearlessness. It's a breaking away from the constraints of often in-demand subjects in contemporary art from colonized countries. My work challenges these expectations with a sense of irreverence and subtle sarcasm, reflected in the Informality of the titles and gestures within the pieces.

Profile

Masooma Syed is a Pakistani visual artist whose life and art practice have been profoundly shaped by years of living and working across South Asia. This unique experience has significantly influenced her studio practice, teaching art and her understanding of the world. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial (Japan), Lahore Art Biennale (Pakistan), Harris Museum, Blackburn (England), Metropolitan Museum Tokyo (Japan), Apex Art (New York, USA), Kunsthalle Fridericianum (Kassel, Germany), Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (Delhi, India), Devi Art Foundation (New Delhi, India), and NGMA, Mumbai (India). She has also shown with prominent galleries such as Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Rohtas Art Gallery, Lahore, PNCA Islamabad, Gallery Ske (Delhi/Bangalore, India), Vadehra Art Gallery, Delhi, Red Dot (Colombo, Sri Lanka), and Art Dubai. Her teaching has spanned renowned institutions including the National College of Arts, Beaconhouse National University, and Indus Valley School in Pakistan, as well as School of Culture and Creative Expressions, Ambedkar University (Delhi, India), Kathmandu University (Nepal), Theertha School of Art (Colombo, Sri Lanka), and Swami Vipula Anand School of Aesthetic (Batticaloa, Sri Lanka). Masooma Syed has received numerous accolades, including the Commonwealth Fellowship of Art and Craft, the 'HAT' Here and There, Art and Craft fellowship, and a Research Fellowship at Kelaniya University (Sri Lanka). She has participated in residencies at Khoj (Delhi, India), Vasl (Karachi, Pakistan), Theertha (Colombo, Sri Lanka), Guild Art Gallery (New York, USA), and the Puducherry Blue – SAARC International Artists Camp (Puducherry, India).

Education

2000-02 MA (Hons) Visual Arts, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan
1993 B.F.A (Painting), National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan

Fellowships & Awards

2017 Research Fellow Art and Craft Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, Kelaniya University, Sri Lanka
2007 HAT International Research Fellowship, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, England
1996-97 Common Wealth Foundation Fellowship Award Art & Craft for Australia: Artist in Residence at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Artist Residencies & Workshops

2016 Body And Adornment - residency / exhibition at Theertha International Artist collective, Colombo, Sri Lanka
2013 International Artist workshop in Jutland, Denmark
2011 Intimate Architecture/Materials at play - Khoj International Associate Residency, Delhi, India
2010 Puduchery Blue - Saarc International artists camp at Pondicherry India Residency at Guild Gallery, Bombay, India
2009 International Artist Residency - VASL, Karachi, Pakistan
2008 The Guild Art USA INC, New York
2006 Vasl International artist workshop, Karachi, Pakistan
2003 Khoj International Artist Residency, Delhi, India

Solo Shows/Projects

2020 The Art of Eye Contact - Conceptual Jewelry exhibition
2020 The Actress- project at Sagar Theatre on Queens Road, Lahore, Pakistan
2018 Last Name Isabella - Lahore Art Biennale 01, Lahore Museum's Indus Valley Gallery
2018 SPRITS - Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2017 Delhi, Lahore, Colombo and the Worn Object', Taseer Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
2014 Sublime West - Gallery Ske, Delhi, India
2013 Black Labael Kalyani - Rohtas Gallery Lahore, Pakistan
Everybody Must Get Stoned - Rohtas Gallery Islamabad, Pakistan
2000 Untitled, Rohtas Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan
1997 Notes - Art Space, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
1996 Untitled Rohtas Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan

Selected Group Shows

2024 The Path of Metaphors, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore Literature Festival 2024.
2023 Wayfarers of the Last Night, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2020 Sunday Effect, Bikaner House, Delhi, India
2016 Body And Adornment, The Red Dot Gallery, Theertha, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Voices Breaking Boundries, Houston, USA
2015 India Art Fair at the Gallery SKE
Dubai Art Fair at the Gallery SKE
2014-15 Where Do I End and You begin - Edinburgh Festival, Commonwealth
2015 Construct and Constructions, Kiran Nadar Museum, Delhi, India
In other Rooms, Group show, Gallery SKE, Bangalore, India
2013 Zones of contact, Kiran Nadar Museum, Delhi, India
2012 Tactile, Gallery Latitude 28, Delhi, India
Moving Matter, Alliance francaise, Delhi, India
2011 Intimate Architecture/Materials at play Khoj Studios, Delhi, India
2010 Fragility, Art Alive Gallery, Delhi, India
Fiction and Reality, two person show at Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
Strange Days, The Uncanny in Contemporary Pakistan
Art, The Drawing Room Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
The state of things Recent Art from Pakistan, Aicon Gallery, London, England
Resemble Reassemble, at Devi Art foundation, Delhi, India
2009 Three Women artist, Vadehra Art Gallery, Delhi, India
Art against Terrorism, Emami chisel Calcutta, India
2008 Six degrees of Separation, Khoj project, Anant Gallery, Delhi, India
2007 Thread of Silk Ars Ornata Europeana, Manchester, England
Skin - Two person show at Rohtas Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
2005 Parallel Realities, Fukuoka Triennale, Museum and Art Gallery Third Asian Art Triennale, Japan, September
Asian Art Now, a touring exhibition of work from the Third Fukuoka Triennale Japan to Blackburn Museum, UK
Beyond Borders - Contemporary Art in Pakistan at NGMA, Bombay, India
2003 Darmiyaan, Nehar Ghar Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
2002 Threads, Dreams, Desires Contemporary art from Pakistsn, Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston, England
Playing with the loaded gun exhibition at Apex art in NewYork and in Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel Germany Darmian in view of 11th Sept at Rohtas Gallery 2, Lahore, Pakistan
2000 Another Vision - 50th Anniversary of Pakistan, Brunei space, London, England
12th Afro - Asian, Latin - American exhibition, Metropolitan Museum, Tokyo, Japan
1994 Traveling Exhibition of Pakistani Artists to Cairo, Damascus and Oman

As Curator

2022 The Peacock Garden 'Taos Chaman': Post Colonial Identity and Parallel histories in the Artistic Practices of South Asia, Virtual Museum Art Project of Lahore Art Biennale Foundation and British Council, Pakistan

Teaching Experience

2011 to Date Visiting faculty as Associate prof National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan
2016-17 Visiting Associate professor, Theertha School Of Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka
2016 to Date Visiting Associate professor at Eastern University, Swami Vipula Ananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka
2016 to Date Adjunct faculty, Beaconhouse National University, School of Visual Arts and Design, Lahore, Pakistan
2014 Visiting faculty, School of Culture and Creative Expressions, Ambedkar University, Delhi, India
2009 Visiting Faculty, Indus Valley School of Arts, Karachi, Pakistan
2007-08 Visiting Lecturer, Centre for Art & Design, Kathmandu University, Nepal
2004-06 Assistant professor, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, Pakistan, Dept of Design and Visual Arts
2002 Designer Enterprise Development, Kashf Foundation Developing Craft Unit
1996 to Date Visiting lecturer, National College of Arts Lahore, Pakistan

Taught Studio Course

Painting Major Studio
Sculpture /3-D Studio
Drawing as History
Jewellery as Sculpture
Jewellery as Concept - Tool and Techniques

Theory Course

Art from the Muslim World

Hybrid Course

Material Culture Of South Asia in the Dept of Cultural Studies, Body and Adornment, City As A Mirror.

Other Professional Qualification

2018 Researcher / concept developer for the festival Guru Gedara by Chitrasena Dance Company, Colombo, Sri Lanka
2016-17 Developed/designed the course Curriculum for Theertha Artists Collective's Art and Design School, Colombo, Sri Lanka
2004-06 Established Jewellery Design Department and designed Course Curriculum, School of Art and Design, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, Pakistan

Bibliography: Books published my works

2005 Salima Hashmi Art and social change: Contemporary Art in Asia & the Pacific, Pandanus Books
2006 Salima Hashmi, Memory, Metaphor, Mutations: The Contemporary Art of India and Pakistan, Oxford University Press
2005 Salima Hashmi, The Eye Still Seeks: Pakistani Contemporary Art, Penguin, UK.
2010 Virginia While Art and Polemic in Pakistan: Cultural Politics and Tradition in Contemporary Miniature Painting, I.B.Tauris
2020 Batool, F. Of Beginning and Boundaries (pp. 29). Le Topical, & She Wandered A Celebration of Women: Essays & Abstracts (pp.247), The Women's Studies Conference (1995), ASR Publication

Newspapers & Blog

2022 Pakistan – Sehba Sarwar. (N.d.)
2020 Questioning hierarchies and constructed realms
2020 Hair & Nails, Talk & Touch: 4 Encounters with Women Artists in Mumbai. (N.d.) Retrieved February 27, from Art21 Magazine
2020 Straits Of Love Across Pakistan - India Border. (N.d.). Retrieved February 2, from NPR
2018 Spirits, Artnow, 3 March
2018 Flight or Fantasy, newlinemagazine
2018 A Tyrst with History, Dawn, April 1
2018 Spirits, Dawn
2018 Other locations, Quddus Mirza, 11 February
2014 Mountains to Mosque and Other Details, Khoj Studio
2014 Travelling Without Moving, livemint
2011 Images, Meanings and Representations within the Artist's Studio and the White Cube
2002 The News, Gross out aesthetics by Akhtar Asim, April 21st
1996 The Indian, Apotheosis of the ordinary, Sunday edition Lahore by Akhtar Asim, 5th Jan
The Indian Express - Bonding over Art
Intimate Architecture: Materials At Play - A Show Of Art Works By Gabi Schillig And Masooma Syed, New Delhi, MeraEvents.com
And They Lived Happily Ever After: Object narratives from a land far away. (n.d.). Garland Magazine

Catalogues / Magzines

2013 Sumedh Rajendran and Masooma Syed: In Art and War, November 11
2005 Parallel Realities: The 3rd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial (pp.42-43), Japan
2009 Bhattacharya, A. This is Not a Fiction, Vadehra Art Gallery, India
2009 ArtAsiaPacific: Making Peace With Our Partitioned Selves, April
2007 Arts Ornata Europeana, The Silk Road: Contemporary Responses, Manchester
2004 Jamini, November, 'A wished for song' craft in the work of Pakistani women artists by Salima Hashmi - An international arts quarterly Dhaka, Bangladesh - Binimoy printers ltd. (Art magazine)
2003 Contemporary Art from the Islamic World, October 2003, 'playing with the loaded gun', contemporary art from Pakistan, issue 4, (Art magazine)
2002 Art South Asia - Shisha initiated programme, the first international programme of visual culture from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan & Sri Lanka, cornerhouse publications, Manchester (Catalogue)

Publication

Syed, M. (n.d.). Remains and Ravages. Borderlines-Volume III, 14–17.
Sacred Art –photo Essay, Art Now Pakistan
Syed, M- Her last name was Isabella , pg. 121 and 101 - Bano's Companion to Feminist Art, Sadia Pasha Kamran, Ruman Art initiative