

Artist statement

Stars have forever whispered to humanity from the vast canvas of the night sky. They are quiet yet radiant, glorifying the heavens and igniting dreams in our hearts. For centuries, they have symbolized guidance, wonder, and hope—whether illuminating the traveler’s path or adorning the narratives of poets and mystics.

This body of work draws from a deeply personal yet universally resonant inspiration: the star imprinted on Pakistan’s official affidavit paper. A small yet significant mark that carries layers of identity, formality, and trust—often overlooked but inherently powerful. In its simplicity lies a profound symbolism: stars are witnesses to our promises, anchors of accountability, and silent companions through life’s many journeys.

Beyond bureaucracy, stars have transcended time and culture. They guide the night sky, appear on the flags of nations as emblems of unity, and stand as symbols of achievement and excellence—whether in the celestial realm or on school report cards. In religion, art, and design, they remain timeless icons of spirituality and beauty, reflecting our connection to something far greater than ourselves.

This work reimagines the star not just as a celestial body but as a symbol of light and transformation. Drawing from the rich heritage of the region, the works explore the quiet power of stars—how they watch over our celebrations, solemn moments, and unspoken vows. Whether embedded in the sky, on paper, or in our imagination, these stars become silent witnesses to our lives, holding within them the weight of stories both personal and shared.

Profile

Bushra Waqas Khan (b. 1986) graduated summa cum laude from the National College of Arts, Lahore (2008) with a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts, specialising in Printmaking. In her current practice, Khan reimagines the intricate designs of a state document better known as an Affidavit or Oath Paper. These papers, often associated with legal ownership and rights, particularly of men, symbolize systemic exclusion and the perpetuation of patriarchal norms. By manipulating and strategically repeating these patterns, she creates visually elaborate and conceptually charged works.

Khan's practice is multidisciplinary, encompassing both 2D and 3D forms. Her work ranges from intricate paper-based compositions to sculptural installations and meticulously crafted textile pieces. These creations highlight the interplay between printmaking techniques and the materiality of textiles, merging the traditional and the contemporary. Through this approach, she critiques the lingering impact of colonization in South Asia, exploring themes of identity, power, and societal fragmentation.

By pushing the boundaries of form and medium, Khan transforms symbols of state control into powerful expressions of resistance, creating a dialogue that challenges historical and cultural hierarchies.

Education

2008 Bachelors in Fine Arts (BFA) National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, Pakistan

Experiences

2023 Visiting Faculty of Painting at National College of Arts, Lahore, (NCA), Pakistan

2022 Co Founder Nathuu

2012-14 Faculty of drawing at Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, (PIFD), Multan, Pakistan

2010-11 Visiting Faculty of Printmaking and Drawing at Multan College of Arts, Bahauddin Zikriya University (BZU), Multan, Pakistan

Awards

2022 TAF Emerging Artist Award South Asia

2021 Shortlisted for Jameel Prize, Poetry to Politics at Victoria & Albert Museum London, UK

2021 ADA Award in Fashion Design

2009 Best Works Award at the Young Artists' Group Show entitled Fresh Cream at Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan

2009 National Youth Award Art/ Culture Category, Islamabad, Pakistan

2008 Distinction in Degree Show National College of Arts (NCA) Lahore, Pakistan

Group Shows

2024 Haryali, Embassy of Denmark, Islamabad, Pakistan

2024 Simultaneity as Design; Pakistan and Beyond, Lahore Fort, Lahore, Pakistan

2024 Dil Na Umeed to Nahi, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan

2023 Poetry to Politics, Jameel Prize, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, UAE

2023 Eve's I/Eye III, Fasting Eve, O Art Space, Lahore, Pakistan

2022 Asian Art Week, Francesca Galloway, London UK

2022 Poetry to Politics, Museo Franklin Rawson, San Juan, Argentina

2022 Sculptor/Sculpture, COMO Museum, Lahore, Pakistan

2022 Poetry to Politics, Jameel Prize, Centro Cultural La Moneda, Santiago, Chile

2021 Rehang, Anant Art Gallery, New Delhi, India

2021 Poetry to Politics, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK

2021 Patterns of the Past: Weaving Heritage in 'Pakistani' Art, Grosvenor Gallery, London, UK

2020 Wearable Variable, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan

2019 Microcosm 3, AAN Gandhara-Art Space, Karachi, Pakistan

2018 Box Print, Zahoor UI Akhlaq Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan

2017 Box Print, AAN Gandhara Art Space, Karachi, Pakistan

2014 Sydney to Lahore, Saeed Akhtar Studio, Lahore, Pakistan

2011 Group Show at American Embassy, Islamabad, Pakistan

2010 Through Other Eyes, Travel Show, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry, UK

2009 Print More, Khaas Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan

2009 Group Show at VM Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan

2009 Fresh Cream, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan

2008 The Print, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan

2008 I'm the only one, thesis show, National College of Arts Lahore, Pakistan

Solo Exhibitions

2022 Fairy Tales, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan

2021 The Red Carpet, Khaas Contemporary, Islamabad, Pakistan

Public Collections

Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK

The Arts Family Foundation TAF, London, UK

Faizal & Shabana Foundation, Sharjah, UAE

Art Fairs

2024 Asia Now, Paris Asian Art Fair, O Art Space, Paris, France

2024 India Art Fair, The Arts Family (TAF), New Dehli, India

2024 India Art Fair, Anant Art Gallery, New Dehli, India

2024 Art Singapore, Anant Art Gallery, Singapore

2023 Art Abu Dhabi, Canvas Gallery, Abu Dhabi, UAE

2022 India Art Fair, Anant Art Gallery, New Dehli, India