

Artist statement

The body of work attempts to delve into the personal odyssey of my identity formation and grapples with questions of belonging and being. It's a reflection of the trials and tribulations that come with peeling back layers of vulnerability - exposing fears, grief, hopes, and dreams that shape my varied personas.

The process of creating these works seeped into my veins like a slow - moving tide, disguising itself as nostalgia and yearning. While going through my family archive, I realized that memory isn't a timeline; it's a gravity field. It bends and warps around loss, absence stretching it like an accordion. Memory doesn't archive; it contrives. Somewhere under the ribcage, a chronic hunger glimmers - older than memory itself - rising for things that cannot hold it. Longing is an editor that never sleeps. It doesn't seek resolution; it orbits. It doesn't want to be answered; it wants to continue pulling. Absence becomes its own kind of ritual, sharpening the awareness of being.

These works inhabit the space between translation and interpretation - where confusion lingers and stories evolve, where things are forgotten and remembered as stories change. We keep being born, we keep dying, with mechanical predictability, an insistent return. It doesn't matter how we live and die, but rather do we make a difference with merely our fragile existence on loop.

The work portrays that not all yearning is tragic; some of it forms the tender architecture of hope itself....Some longing expands us, teaching our hearts to grow larger than our fears. The narratives in this series reveal how embracing one's true self, imperfections included, can lead to a deeper understanding of the human condition. The works carry a quiet, profound hope - embodying the possibility of rebirth and new beginnings. These acts of creation underscore the importance of resilience and perseverance as vital forces in personal growth.

Through *The Anatomy of Being*, I've learned that our remedies lie within us, and within us unfolds the entire universe. The challenge is to turn our tragedies into triumphs.

Profile

Mohsin Shafi is an autonomous, Lahore - based creative thinker whose work is deeply informed by his born - and - raised - in - Pakistan experiences and rebellious impersonations. His practice explores themes such as the apprehensions and conflicts of navigating personal identity; the transgression and transformation of masculinity and its stereotypes; the territorial struggles and celebrations of gender expression within religious and spiritual subcultures; the clash between social norms and individual aspirations; and the fantasies and anxieties that exist between attachment and disaffection, love and hate.

By blending tragedy, tenderness, and humor, Shafi creates non-colonial gestures aimed at healing, rebalancing, and repairing the wounds of a colonized past. He is invested in the role of art in social change, transformative healing, and collective justice. In addition to his individual practice, he is a core member of the Awami Art Collective; a unique group of artists and activists intervening in public spaces across Lahore, Pakistan, to promote peaceful coexistence and celebrate diversity.

Shafi works across a range of media including collage, photography, video, text, installation, and performance. Over the past decade, he has exhibited at all major galleries across Pakistan, as well as internationally. His accolades include a studio residency at Niederösterreich in Krems, Austria; 1646 in The Hague, Netherlands; and Atelier Mondial in Basel, Switzerland, supported by Pro Helvetia; to name just a few.

Shafi holds a Master's degree in Visual Arts and a Bachelor's degree in Visual Communication, both from Pakistan's oldest art institution, the National College of Arts, Lahore.

Education

2021 M.A.(Hons.) Visual Arts, National college of Arts, Lahore - Pakistan - dissertation
2004 - 07 BFA - Visual Communication Design, National college of Arts, Lahore - Pakistan

Residencies, Awards And Camps

2024 AIR Niederösterreich, Krems - Austria
2023 Vasl Museum Series Honoree, in collaboration with The Repair Atelier, Karachi - Pakistan
2022 Salzburg summer academy, scholarship award, Salzburg Austria
2021 1646, The Hague - Netherlands
2019 Atelier Mondial, Prvo - Helvetica, Basel - Switzerland
2019 The Growlery, San Francisco - USA
2019 Prvo - Helvetica , Atelier Mondial, Zurich - Switzerland.
2015 Tannery Art Centre, Radius Gallery, Santa Cruz - USA
2012 The Rondo Studios, Graz - Austria.
2010 Vasl Artist Association, taza tareen residency, Karachi - Pakistan.

Museums, Biennales And Artfairs

2025 Upcoming First solo museum show, The Kunsthalle Krems - Austria
2024 The knowledge of the Ancients, In Collateral with Lahore Biennale 03, Lahore - Pakistan
2024 Is Queer Political, Queer Museum Vienna, Vienna - Austria
2024 With Legs Wide Open, at Schwules Museum, Berlin - Germany
2023 Aligned by Sun, A 'Ghost of a Dream' Collective Project, Ackland Art Museum – USA
2021 Bergen Art Book Fair, Norway
2021 Lahore Digital Arts Festival, Post Reality, Lahore - Pakistan
2020 India Art fair, with Aicon Gallery New York both, Delhi - India
2020 Helios Film Festival, Official Selection, Mexico
2019 Tokyo Art Book Fair, Tokyo - Japan
2018 Delhi Contemporary Art Week, with Gallery Latitude28, Delhi - India
2018 The Fruit Independent Art Book Fair, Improper printing booth, Bologna - Italy
2018 Lahore Biennale, with Awami Art Collective, Lahore - Pakistan
2017 Karachi Biennale, Karachi - Pakistan
2017 The Tokyo Art book Fair, Tokyo - Japan
2016 India Art Fair, Taseer Art Gallery, Delhi - India
2016 The 12 Gates Contemporary Video Art Festival, Asian Arts Initiative, Philadelphia - USA
2016 Forms of Devotion at China Art Museum - Shanghai - China
2015 Forms of Devotion at The Museum of Sacred Art, Radhadesh - Belgium
2015 India Art Fair, ArtChowk the Gallery, Delhi - India
2014 Mosaic International South Asian Film Festival, Canada
2011 International ArtExpo, Liquid Cities & Temporary Identities Croatia / Greece
2010 Phizz Fest, Art Trail, Phibsborough Arts Festival, Dublin - Ireland

Solo Shows / Presentations / Projects

2019 Swiss Honey Moon, Atelier Mondial, Basel – Switzerland
2018 Under the Stars we dance like bohemians, Canvas Gallery, Karachi - Pakistan
2015 Manifesto, Taseer Art Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2014 Sadaism, Sanat initiatives, Karachi - Pakistan
2012 Alien Autopsy, Kuntra La Kunsthre, Graz - Austria
2012 Dirt Under my Nails, Khaas Gallery, Islamabad - Pakistan.
2009 Exposed, The Ireland Institute, Pearse Center, Dublin - Ireland

Two - Person Shows

2019 There is no them , Sanat Initiatives, Karachi - Pakistan
2018 No Mans Land , Nomad Gallery, Islamabad - Pakistan
2017 Qissa Goi ,Taseer Art Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2014 The Circus, Taseer Art Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2014 Being with you and not being....., Twelve Gates Arts, Philadelphia, USA
2012 The Noose, Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2010 Beneath the Surface, Rohtas 2, Lahore - Pakistan
2010 Second Skin, Khaas Gallery, Islamabad - Pakistan

Selected Group Shows

2020 If these walls could talk, Village Resturant, Karachi - Pakistan
2020 Lal Jadoo, Karachi house, Karachi - Pakistan
2019 Open Studios, The Growlery, San Francisco - USA
2019 Under a full moon, Inspire Galerie, Dublin - Ireland
2019 Drawing Room Diamonds, Sanat Initiatives, Karachi - Pakistan
2019 Opinion, Knowledge and Truth, 12.0 Contemporary, Islamabad - Pakistan
2019 Self Portrait in the age of selfie, COMO museum of art, Lahore - Pakistan
2019 The end of nature, Aicon Gallery, New York - USA
2019 Naya Pakistan, Sanat Initiatives, Karachi - Pakistan
2019 Small is beautiful, Koel Gallery, Karachi - Pakistan
2019 If you have a garden in your library, AAN Gandhara Art Space, Karachi - Pakistan
2019 Take it like a... , Twelve Gates Arts, Philadelphia - USA
2018 Ship is mine, Inspire Gallery, Dublin - Ireland
2018 Sweeping back the sea ,Aicon Gallery, New York - USA
2018 Ever let the fancy roam, Chowkandi Gallery, Karachi – Pakistan
2018 The Menagerie , Allet Cat Gallery, San Francisco - USA
2018 Top Soil, Inspire Gallery, Dublin - Ireland
2018 Pseudonym, In-spire Gallery, Dublin - Ireland
2018 The Third Muslim, Somarts cultural center, San Francisco - USA
2017 You Selfish Dreamer, Rossi & Rossi, London - UK
2017 Open Field, The National Art Gallery, Islamabad - Pakistan
2016 My head is a cinema, In-Spire Gallery, Dublin - Ireland
2016 Forms of Devotion, Casa de la India, Valladolid - Spain
2016 In Search of Gods, Root Division, San Francisco - USA
2016 Fragmented Epiphanies, Satrang Gallery, Islamabad - Pakistan
2016 The 70's Pakistan's Radioactive Decade, Amin Gulgee Gallery, Karachi - Pakistan
2016 Itwar ka din, Sanat Initiatives, Karachi - Pakistan
2016 Xanadu, Inspire Gallery, Dublin - Ireland
2015 MileStone, Sanat initiatives, Karachi - Pakistan
2015 Parrhesia, Koel Gallery, Karachi - Pakistan
2015 Alternative Methods, Full Circle Gallery , Karachi – Pakistan
2015 Forms of Devotion, Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Art), New Delhi - India
2014 Bookish Intimacies, A.Muse Gallery, San Francisco - USA
2014 Close together, Vbb Living room art, Houston- Texas - USA
2012 Punjab Art Council Show, Alhamra Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2012 Picture Perfect, ArtChowk Gallery, Karachi - Pakistan
2012 Somewhere Else, DrawingRoom Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2012 Just Ordinary Tales, VM Art Gallery, Karachi - Pakistan
2012 Surfaces, Rondo Studios Graz -Austria
2012 Letters to Taseer-II, Drawing Room Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2012 The Dawn of Expression, Embassy of Egypt, Islamabad - Pakistan.
2012 Degree show, Zahoor-ul-Ikhlq Gallery, National College of Arts, Lahore - Pakistan
2011 Imperfection, Rohtas Gallery, Islamabad - Pakistan
2011 Annual group show, RHA - Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin - Ireland
2011 I See You, Nomad Gallery, Islamabad – Pakistan
2011 Red Hot, Alhamra Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2011 Exposure, MadArt Gallery, Dublin - Ireland
2010 Categorical Inaccuracy, Vasl residency, VM Gallery
2010 Lakh War Sadkay, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2010 Art for Change, Phc Calgary, Canada
2010 Penange Print, Penang State Art Gallery, Penang - Malaysia
2010 Print Today, Poppy Seed Gallery, Karachi - Pakistan
2010 Unselected, Bad Art Gallery, Dublin - Ireland
2010 New-s-item, Alhamra gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2010 Print Today, Khaas Gallery, Islamabad - Pakistan
2009 Dear Diary, Poppy Seed Gallery, Karachi - Pakistan
2009 Print Today, The Drawing Room Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2009 Hedding Load, Gallery 39k, Lahore - Pakistan
2009 Redo Pakistan, traveling show, Other Asias, Lahore - London and Bangladesh
2009 Indirect Insight, Gallery 39k, Lahore - Pakistan
2009 Refreshed, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2009 Print More, Khas Gallery, Islamabad - Pakistan
2008 The Print, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2008 Fresh Cream, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore - Pakistan
2008 Jago, Thesis show, National College of Arts, Lahore - Pakistan

Collaborations and Collectives

2022 - 23 Aligned by the Sun in collaboration with "Ghost of a Dream" Collective, September at Penn Station in New York City
2021 Trailer of your life, with Performing Artist/Musician George Kroneis, Porgy and Bess, Vienna - Austria
2017 Nest, with artist Andrew Purchin from Santa Cruz, CA - at Saratoga Springs Retreat Centre, California - USA
2016 Black Spring, Awami Art Collective, walled city - Lahore - Pakistan.
2015 Hum jo tareekh raahon mai, Awami Art Collective, Jinnah Baagh, Lahore - Pakistan
2015 Upside Downland, Radius Gallery, Tanery Art Centre – Santa Cruz - USA
2014 Encounter - al - Akhlaq Gallery, National College of Arts, Lahore - Pakistan

Academia

2022 - Present Permanent Faculty, MA (Hons.) Visual Arts, National College of Arts, Lahore - Pakistan
2012 - 17 Adjunct Faculty, MA (Hons.) Visual Arts, National College of Arts, Lahore - Pakistan
2012 - 13 Adjunct Faculty, Visual Communication Design Department, National College of Arts, Lahore - Pakistan
2018 - 10 Adjunct Faculty, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore - Pakistan
2009 - 10 Adjunct Faculty, Pakistan Institute of Fashion Design, Lahore - Pakistan