

Artist statement

This series explores connections between physical and creative action, emotions and growth. Starting a new strength training program to increase flexibility and space around my joints, I became curious about different ways of approaching space in my work practice. I realised that one way for the physical to impact the creative was to focus on movement.

Inspired by stretching and twisting from my training, I created stencils with organic shapes and used them to make unique multi-layered monoprints on paper. During the process I realised that apart from physical and creative development, this was an opportunity for emotional growth. I could use this process of image-making to help me close an emotional door on a difficult memory. Opening a door draws the shape of a quarter circle; I decided that every circle I made would be a positive step towards crossing the threshold from darkness into the light.

For the oils on canvas, I selected sections of the stencils to help me outline and define areas. For the first time in decades, I also used a mixed up black in my colour palette. More than a doorway, the circle started feeling like a globe relating to both inner and outer worlds. For me, the paintings took on a feeling of map-making, as if through this different approach, I was exploring continents.

My initial ideas around space making generated the titles for the artworks. Bringing physical movement and creative expression together to examine a darkness in my heart made me more aware of how the different parts of our lives are connected and can be used to impact one another. My investigations into space, edge and form may have closed one door, but they are opening another that leads to new beginnings.

Profile

Sara Riaz Khan is an abstract visual artist and educator inspired by ideas, emotion and a connection to the natural world. Currently based in Oman, Sara is curious about what a shared humanity and purposeful life look like. A life-changing crisis in 2007 led to Sara's work becoming abstract and she has continued to experiment with it ever since. The artist uses techniques such as staining, sponging and glazing to create her multi-layered oil paintings. Working both instinctively and strategically, Sara often lays down thick areas of oil paint in the early layers, which she can later excavate. This series is Sara's first investigation of working with monoprints and bringing more defined spaces into her abstract practice. Most recently Sara has exhibited installations and digital artwork in Muscat.

The artist has previously exhibited at the VM Art, Chawkandi, Nomad, Rohtas, Canvas and O Art Space galleries in Pakistan, the Omani Fine Arts Society, Bait Muzna Gallery and Affordable Art Fair in Oman, the Art Rooms Fair and Asia House in London. Sara's work has been sold at auction at Bonhams and she was recently invited to become a FRSA.

Sara has a B.A. in Islamic Art and Architecture from SOAS, University of London, earned her M.S. in Multidisciplinary Studies from Buffalo State University of New York and completed a pre-Foundation course at the Heatherley School of Fine Art in London. She was artist-in-residence at the ABA Oman International School in Muscat and taught Design there for many years. The artist has recently co-authored her third book, '21 Visual Thinking Tools for the Classroom: Developing Real World Problem Solvers in Grades 5-10', which can be used with all curricula and was presented at UNESCO conferences.

Education

2007 - 09	M.S. in Multidisciplinary Studies, Buffalo State University of New York
1992 - 93	The Heatherley School of Fine Art, London
1992	B.A. in Islamic Art and Architecture, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies

Solo Exhibitions

2024	2 person - 'The Journey', O Art Space, Lahore
2022	'Even When I Thought I Knew', Artcade, Islamabad
2020	'Oman: Under a Peaceful Sky', Art & Soul Gallery, Muscat
2019	'The Forest as a Dream', Canvas Gallery, Karachi
2019	'Antidote', RB12 Design Gallery, London
2017	Songs of Spring', Chawkandi Art Gallery, Karachi
2015	'Earth in My Bones', Nomad Gallery, Islamabad
2014	'There is Beauty Yet', Bait Muzna Gallery, Muscat
2010	'A Moment of Grace', Chawkandi Art Gallery, Karachi
2006	'Glimmerings', VM Art Gallery, Karachi

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025	'We End Up Building Nests', H1 Art Gallery, Muscat
2024	Oman Affordable Art Fair, Muscat' Art Pages 2', Makan Studios, Muscat
2023	'Humanism', Asia House, London
2023	'National Art Exhibition', Ahmed Parvez Art Gallery, Karachi
2022	'Baagh', Ejaz Galleries, Lahore
2021	'Omuma' - 'Motherhood' Exhibition, Fikra, Muscat
2020	Spring Salon', Matti Sirvio Gallery, Muscat
2015 - 19	Artist's Association of the Punjab Exhibitions, Lahore,
2019	Alhamra National Exhibition, Lahore
2016	'Kaleidoscope', Asia House, London
2013	Taseer Gallery, Lahore
2012	Artist's Association of the Punjab Exhibition, Lahore
2005 - 04	Omani Fine Arts Society, Muscat

Contributions

2022	'Raag Basant Bahar'- ARTAID Flood Relief, Lahore
2020	'A Moment of Grace' print – Flood Relief, Karachi
2019	'Succour'- The Countess of Chester Hospital Comfort Zone, Cheshire, UK
2018	'Human-in-Residence' - Developments in Literacy Auction, Hong Kong
2016	'Earth in My Bones' - Philanthropic Ltd Auction, London
2013	The Citizen's Foundation (TCF) Auction, Dubai

Collections

'At the Land's End' and 'Adventure' from 'The Journey' - Ambiance Boutique Art Hotels permanent collection.
'Oman: Under a Peaceful Sky' 5 paintings - Royal Hospital, Muscat.

Awards

2016	Special Award - Artist's Association of the Punjab
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Other

2025	Bonhams South Asian Modern & Contemporary online Auction, London
2023	Bonhams South Asian Modern & Contemporary Auction, London
2020	'On Our Doorstep'- Community exhibition organiser, Muscat
2019	'People and Planet Over Profit' Panelist, London Design Festival
2010	Art Mural Supervisor - Dar Al Hanan Hospice, Muscat
2000	Pakistan: Another Vision', Brunei Gallery, SOAS - Administrative support and Guide

Publications

Author: Play: Maker of Our Many Selves - Tangible Territories
Sustenance and Sustainability - Humanities, Arts and Society, Volume IV (HAS)
Nature as Sustenance - Center for Humans & Nature

Co-Author - Harbord & Khan
21 Visual Thinking Tools for the Classroom: Developing Real-World Problem Solvers in Grades 5 -10 (2025)
Interdisciplinary Thinking for Schools: Ethical Dilemmas MYP 1, 2 & 3 (2020)
Interdisciplinary Thinking for Schools: Ethical Dilemmas MYP 4 & 5 (2020)

Media

2024	Sharpening kids problem solving skills - Oman Observer
2020	Inspired by nature, colour, emotion - Oman Observer