

## Curatorial Note

### In The Break

*break*

an interruption  
a crack  
a pause  
a rupture  
an in – between

When I invited artists for this exhibition, whose practices I have long admired and with many of them relationships built with over time, community and friendship, I was aware of our scatter. All of us live in suspended and in between conditions of diaspora, migrant and home. Events and flows of the world capture our attention. What does it mean to make art in a moment of mediated genocide, anti-immigrant sentiment, political breakdown and climate catastrophe? How do we think of these very large events and where do they dovetail with our daily life? How do we navigate this with the monotonous bureaucracy of the state; daily tasks of caring for ourselves and families, of moving and removing, settling and resettling, milestones of graduation and life – responsibilities that are much more present and visible, the minor key as it were. How to think about practice and the invisible labour of it – especially for artists as mothers, artists as migrants, artists as caregivers, amidst a destroyed ecology – of air that is unbreathable, streets that are unwalkable?

What happens *in the break*?

Viewing the works in this exhibition by Anushka Rustomji, Sara Khan, Maha Ahmed, Nusra Latif Qureshi and Bibi Hajra offers a way to revisit practice that may be produced in/with/against/in proximity to the break. These artists bring together shared concerns around space and time, myth and reality, sacred and profane and ecology and destruction. They depict whole worlds borne out of research and embodied experience. There is deep skill and craft here – developed over slow time – and a shared intergenerational pedagogical relationship to the National College of Arts in Lahore, but also dispersed journeys which take them to Karachi, London, Vancouver and Melbourne. Looking at their works closely one witnesses bodies – human and non-human – suspended in time and space, architectural and urban landscapes – imagined and real, flora and fauna bursting through seams and cracks. There is a feeling of haunting, even amidst much joy and beauty – an eerie sense that the balance may be disrupted, in the tenuous and precarious break. This constellation of artists draws upon diverse mythologies, embodied experiences, diasporic and migrant desires and dreams, to depict worlds that are both fantastical and yet relatable.

Take, for example, the work of Vancouver-based Sara Khan who notes that her work is somewhere between ‘reality and fantasy... grotesque and beautiful’. The sardonically titled *Maal be Ulti (2025)*, depicts the gulf between the imagination and reality of this storied colonial road in Lahore – of how it is desired with its lush green foliage, and the dense smog that envelopes it now. The imagined Mall Road is fantasy – depicted in incandescent dreamy hues of blues and greens that seem romantic; were it not that it represented the enveloping suffocating smog – leading to sickness and a slow death, depicted as a rupture in this otherwise pastoral scene.

In particular, within Khan’s three works – which are not a triptych, per se, but presented and displayed as such, *Pankha*, produced in 2021, may be read as portal between here and there, real and unreal. At once one feels as if they are gazing out of a window beyond which may be a universe aflame, or an invitation to transport into a different reality – a feeling of travel, of *ziyarat*, into another world.

Indeed, it may be that we are moving and traveling through epochs when viewing these works. Circularity is a shared theme – of time as long, of time as endless, of time as looping back. Cyclical time – and the relationship of the human to it, is depicted in Anushka Rustomji’s body of work which draws from a creation myth that has long held her interest – the Bundhashin – an ancient text in the Pahlavi script, with roots within Zoroastrian stories. In the myth, there is a tale of the rhubarb plant and the conception of man as emerging from it. The drawings illustrate this simultaneous growth from human to plant – and of cycle of life reabsorbing one back into the plant after death – particularly as shown in *Bough/Bone (2025)*. In Rustomji’s work, plants and bodies are intertwined, feeling claustrophobic, twisting and turning, threatening to engulf viewer and the world.

Bodies are also central in Bibi Hajra’s paintings, drawing from her long-standing research on mythology, gender and architecture. The grey-red-pink hues envelope the space. Much like in the watercolours by Sara Khan, it is fantastical colours and stories of survival and ritual even amidst tragedy, that act as a base for Hajra’s storytelling. *Rehana Baji Hands over a Van Leaf (2025)* emerges from intimate stories of women picking cotton and their labour, during the floods in Punjab – a reminder of how the body is forced to survive and enact the mundane, even amidst collapse. In this work, there is yet a feeling of community and bonding, of finding each other, and of hope in place, as a means of survival. *The Sky is Falling (2025)*, in particular echoes a whirlpool circularity, where dispersed bodies are in euphony and cacophony while a whirling cracking universe in the horizon seems to be taking over. Bibi Hajra tells me that these vast challenges of the world are told in the stories of the women in the shrines that she engages with – stories of floods, of genocides, of the forced displacement of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. These meta stories interlock with the minor tales of life – of a snake bite, of a birth, of a death. Storytelling becomes a ritual to process grief but also an acknowledgement of deep love. Just like in the works of the other artists, Bibi Hajra’s paintings are layered with dense symbolism in a palimpsest.

It is also in Nusra Latif Qureshi’s work – a new body of prints, a selection of which was shown first at the Australian Print Workshop, and emerged out of a residency there, and which showcases a new direction for the artist in terms of medium (but not thematic), that one also feels a sense of sky falling through which bodies seem to burst free, as if about to jump off the page. The larger duo of prints, still seem to preserve a stylistic sculptural architectural ethos, unlike the smaller trio of prints, where ‘organs and plants’ as the artist mentions, seem to be splattered and shattered – perhaps finally cracking due to the break. Qureshi speaks about the feeling of freedom, of a liquidity when working on this series – the works acquire their own journey ‘flailing around, becoming restless, spitting blood and emotion’. Just like Khan’s work – there is an incandescence in the smaller prints, for example as seen in *Anatomy of a Birth (2025)* acts as an eerie visual – a seeming negative of an image – an ultrasound, a night CCTV, a light shining through, a mistake – a work in suspension.

Light and sky is also central to Maha’s Ahmed’s dreamy pair of works from 2018, small and suspended and delicate – ‘a sky stolen’, as she writes. Examining at the work closely, the viewer may be unsure of where the horizon line is. A shadow looms over the paper. Her work is intricately and meditative, the smallest pieces in the whole show, requiring the viewer to gaze deeply. If one does so, outlines of beings emerge, of otherworldly beings in flight, suspended between heaven and earth. This contrasts with a new work – *A Divide from Within* – where twin beings gaze at the sky within a break from nature.

A central theme in all of these practices is either a use of fantastical, rich, incandescent colour – of chromatic hues of blues, reds and greens in particular – as seen in the works of Bibi Hajra, Sara Khan, Maha Ahmed and the smaller prints of Nusra Latif Qureshi; or of an almost complete withdrawal from colour – such as the use of graphite and monotone black/white as seen in Anushka Rustomji’s set of drawings, and the larger prints of Qureshi. One may read this binary with the idea of a contrast of the two sides of the break – of how rupture or in betweenness may be depicted – either with fantasy and otherworldliness, or sombre yet rich monochromatic detail. Taken together, these artists remind us to look at the in between/at the break, beyond what is seen and not seen. This show emerges out of artistic labour and curatorial gratitude, a display that cannot embody the labour of the artist as enacted in studio or one’s own life journey, but perhaps some glimpses may be visible, if one were only to stay, for a bit, in the trouble.

**Aziz Sohail**  
Curator

## Profile

Aziz Sohail is a Pakistani-passport holding curator and writer whose work builds interdisciplinary connections between art, history, archives, literature, theory, and biography and supports new cultural and pedagogical infrastructures. Their research and resultant projects honour and recognise the power of queer and feminist collectivity, sociability, joy, and wayward encounter and unfold through slowness, collaboration, and tentacularity.

From 2020-2023, with The Many Headed Hydra, they *co-lead a language where yesterday are the same word. Kal.*, a trans-oceanic headed practicing enacting queer pasts/futures and de-colonial ecologies in South Asia and post-migrant Europe. The platform had residencies and presentations in Berlin, Karachi, Colombo and Philadelphia as well as a radio channel and a series of workshops and publications.

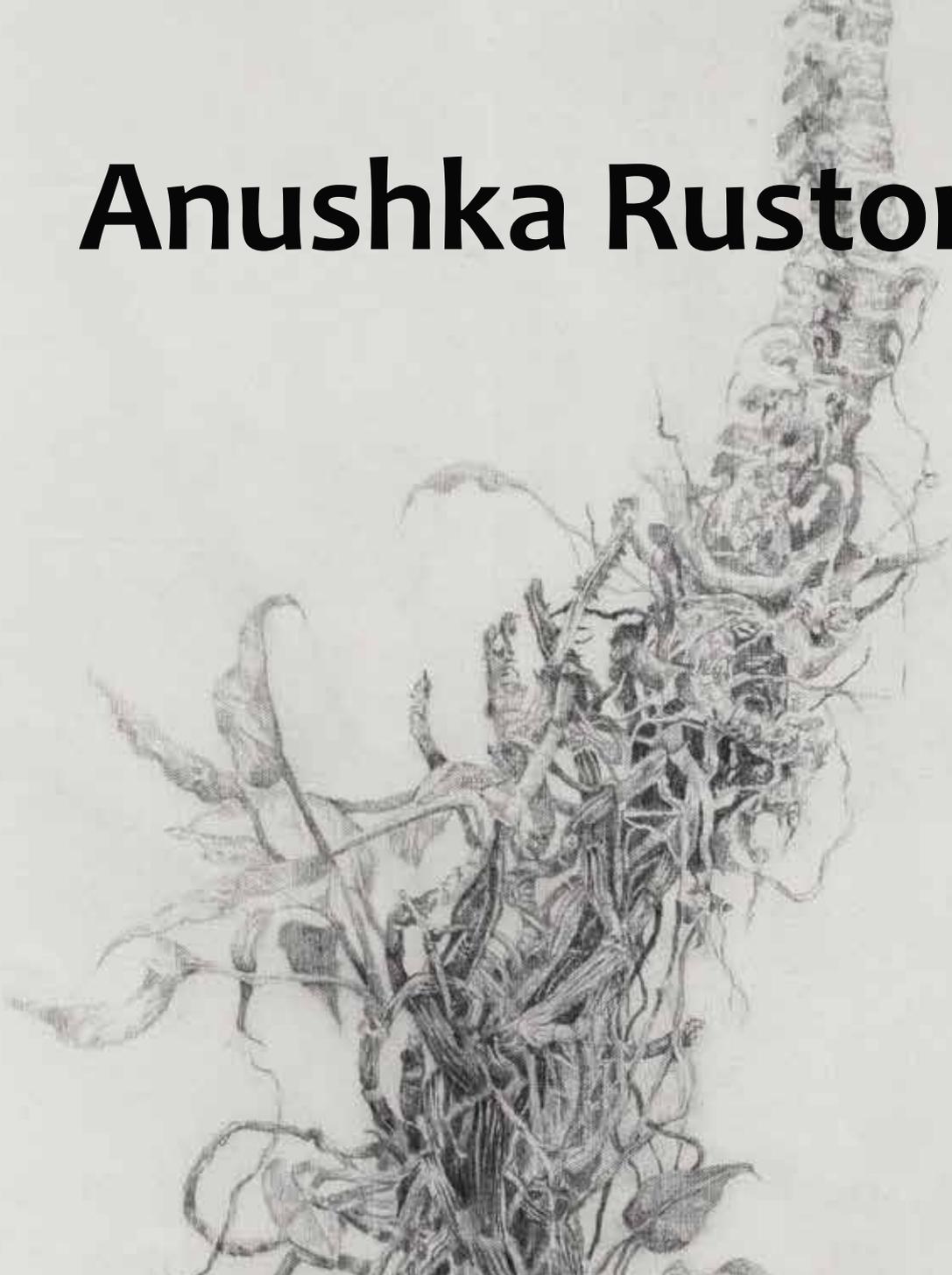
Aziz’s other projects include Archival Intimacies: *Queering South/East Asian Diasporas (2022)*, at the ONE Archives/USC Pacific Asia Museum, Los Angeles, co-organised with Alexis Bard Johnson; *Very Very Sweet Medina: Artistic Innovation in 1990s Karachi* at the Sharjah Art Foundation, co-organised with Bani Abidi; and *The World that Belongs to Us (2023)*, at The New Art Gallery Walsall, England. Aziz was the 2024 Monash University Curator-in-Residence, researching and presenting the project *To Forever Ebb and Flow: Queer Time/Migrant Time*.

Aziz has given and moderated talks and events globally including at SOAS, London, Stanford University, Center for South Asia, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, Paul Mellon Center, London, Prince Claus Fund, University of California, Santa Barbara, Brandeis University, Waltham and the Beall Center for Ith+Technology, Irvine. They have been part of residencies and workshops with Cornell University, Ithaca (2017), Khoj, New Delhi (2018), the Nepal Picture Library (2019), Maxim Gorki Theater, Berlin (2019), ICA Philadelphia/Raw Material Company, Dakar (2022), T:>Works, Singapore (2024) and Photo Kathmandu (2025). From 2015-2018, they worked with organisations such as the British Council and the Lahore Biennale Foundation to build new cultural initiatives and spaces in Pakistan. Their practice was supported by a multi-year grant from the Asian Cultural Council, New York (2019-2022) and their global projects have received funding from a range of sources including the British Council, Goethe-Institut, Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion, the Gwaertler Stiftung and the Foundation for Arts Initiatives.

Aziz currently serves on the Artistic Advisory for Next Wave. From 2024-2025 they served on the Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA) Advisory Committee and was on the advisory committee for the 2024 Creative Time Summit.

Aziz holds a BA in Art History from Brandeis University, Waltham (2009-2013) and an MFA in Art (Critical and Curatorial Studies) from the University of California, Irvine (2018-2021). They are currently a PhD Candidate in Curatorial Practice at Monash University working on ‘We Cannot Cross Until We Carry Each Other: Queer Unschooling as Making Kin in South Asia and its diaspora(s)’. As part of their PhD, they founded *Queer Unschool South Asia*.

# Anushka Rustomji



## **Artist statement**

The work in this series seeks to explore the connection and coalescence of the human form with plant entities. These amalgamations result in drawings of forms of imagined beings, whose bodies are rooted in the commonplace of cross-cultural mythologies focusing on ancient arboreal stories (some originating from subcontinental sacred art references, and others being depictions found in ancient Near-Eastern texts). The myths themselves emphasize the idea of hybridization, not just of bodily form, but as manifestations of the sacred and the earthly, that seek to access divinity within humanity.

## Profile

Anushka Rustomji is a visual artist whose practice examines themes of cultural and historical erasure, duality, and transcendence. Her works are influenced by the visual representations of mythologies and cross-cultural sacred practices and traditions of the Global South.

She is an alumna of the National College of Arts, (Lahore) and was a participant in the Pilotenkueche artist residency (Leipzig). Rustomji has exhibited her work internationally, including at *Way of the Forest*, Colomboscope (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2024), *The Land Sings Back*, (Drawing Room, London, 2025) and is a faculty member at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi.

# Anushka Rustomji

## Education

2012	Bachelors of Fine Arts (Painting), National College of Arts, Lahore
2024	Masters of Visual Arts (candidate), National College of Arts, Lahore

## Grants

2008 - 11	Merit Scholarship, NCA, Lahore
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## Teaching Experience

2020 to present	Faculty at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi
2018 - 19	Adjunct faculty at Beaconhouse National University, (School of Visual Art and Design)
2018 - 19	Adjunct faculty at Kinnaird College for Women (Fine Art department)
2017	Visiting faculty at the National College of Arts, Lahore (Painting elective, Fine Art department)
2015 - 17	Faculty at the Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, Lahore

## Residencies/ Workshops

2018	'Curatorial Workshop' in Association with American Institute of Pakistan Studies and Lahore Biennale Foundation, conducted by Dr Iftikhar Dadi, Elvira Dyangani Ose, Sadia Shirazi, Mariah Lookman, Lahore
2017	'Introduction to the art of story-telling through art and design', for residents/ volunteers at the Social Innovation Academy (SINA), Mpigi district, Uganda
2017	'Introduction to critically reflective practices for Studio Faculty' by Dr. Razia Sadik, Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, Lahore
2017	'Faculty Mentoring Workshop 2017' by Vasl Artists' Collective, conducted by Dr. Iftikhar Dadi, Dr. Kamran Asdar and Dr. William Glover, Karachi
2015	Pilotenkueche Artist Residency, Spinnerei, Leipzig

## Solo Exhibition

2024	Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, AAN Art Space and Museum, Karachi
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## Selected Group Exhibitions

2025	The Land Sings Back (in collaboration with Colomboscope), curated by Natasha Ginwala, Drawing Room, London
2025	Ingrained; Wood in a Cross section of Time, Koel Gallery, Karachi
2025	Mapping the Invisible, AAN Art Space and Museum, Karachi
2024	Knowledge of the Ancients, Barkat Ali Islamia Hall, Lahore
2024	Legacies of Crossings, Shahnaz Gallery, London
2024	Creation in Translation (01) supported by British Council, Gasworks, Vasl artists' association, at the Theosophical Society Library, Karachi, and at Zahoor Akhlaq Gallery, NCA, Lahore
2024	Colomboscope; The Way of the Forest, (curated by Hit Man Gurung, Sheelasha Rajbhandari, Sarker Protik, director Natasha Ginwala) Colombo
2025	Eine Kleine Nachtmusik (solo), AAN Art Space and Museum, Karachi
2023	The Fairy Fountain (curated by Pilotenkueche artist residency), Haus der Statistik, Berlin
2023	Among The Trees, Koel Gallery, Karachi
2022	Threshold (a virtual exhibition, curated by Zohreen Murtaza), Lahore Biennale Foundation
2022	Well, Come Back Home, Koel Gallery, Karachi
2022	The Unwritten, Satrang Art Gallery, Islamabad
2022	In The Deep End, AAN Art Space and Museum, Karachi
2022	Who is an Artist? VM Art Gallery, Karachi
2021	Khat-o-Kitabat, O Art Space, Lahore
2021	Nomad, Full Circle Art Gallery, Karachi
2021	Spinning and Unspinning, O Art Space, Lahore (curated by Laila Rahman)
2021	Summerscape, Koel Gallery, Karachi
2021	Circus Excursus (a public art project by the Roadside Art), Mochi Gate, Lahore
2021	Archival Memory, AAN Gandhara Art Space, Karachi, (curated by Malika Abbas)
2020	'I Love You' and Other Works From the AAN Collection, AAN Gandhara Art Space, Karachi
2020	Unmaking History, Research and Publication Center, Lahore
2020	Self portraits in the Age of the 'Selfie', COMO museum, Lahore,
2020	Crossing Lines, Satrang Art Gallery, Islamabad
2018	Transition of Tradition, Taseer Art Gallery, Lahore (co curated by the artists)
2018	River In An Ocean (a collateral event of Lahore Biennale 01)
2017	Of Other Spaces (a Creative Process group Initiative), Lahore
2015	Sensory Spices, My Art World gallery, Islamabad
2015	Anonymous Drawings 2015, Kunstverein Tiergarten, Berlin
2015	About Time..., Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore
2015	Dididididieh!, Spinnerei, Halle-14C, Leipzig
2015	Pilotenkueche Artist Residency, Leipzig
2014	Making of Meaning, (curated by Salima Hashmi), Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore,
2014	Zahoor ul Akhlaq Gallery, Lahore, Indus Valley School Gallery, Karachi
2013	Drawing Conclusions , Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore
2012	Emerging Points , Vogue Art Gallery, Lahore
2012	Young Artists exhibition , Nairang Art Gallery, Lahore
2012	The Young Artist's exhibition, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore
2012	National College of Arts Thesis Show, NCA, Lahore
2012	Day After Tomorrow, Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore
2008	Transformation, Zahoor Akhlaq Gallery, NCA, Lahore

# Bibi Hajra



## Artist statement

Bibi Hajra's landscapes show bodies scattered in different topographies, engaged in complex relationships with the organic and non-organic material formations to break hegemonic orders of spaces and produce new meanings. Her work presents transposable entities—bodies and landscapes that merge through soft, dissolving strokes. In this fluidity, she unsettles the logics of scale, proportion, and perspective, disrupting the rationalities of architecture and the infrastructures of control.

## Profile

Based in Lahore, Bibi Hajra works as an architect, academic, and visual artist. Her practice is currently centered on a prominent shrine of a female saint, documenting and depicting the lives and beliefs of women devotees who gather there.

# Bibi Hajra

## Education

2017	MA, Urban Studies, Erasmus Mundus Scholarship, 4 Cities Program, A consortium of 6 Universities, Europe
2013	BA, Architecture (Hons.) National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan
2012	Summer School, "Stories from the City" Architecture Association School of Architecture, London, UK

## Selected Exhibitions

2025	Group Exhibition, "16 Days of Activism", Pakistan National Council of Arts / PNCA (Curated by the United Nations Information Centre, Usman Ahmed and Fang Wang)
2025	Group Exhibition, "", Asia Now 2025: The Soil is Fertile, Yet..", Paris, France (Curated by Nashmia Haroon)
2024	Group Exhibition, "Imperial Silhouettes: Shadows of Sovereignty", Rizq Art Initiative, Abu Dhabi (Curated by Premjish Achari)
2024	Group Exhibition, Knowledge of the Ancients – Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF- collateral curated by Zahra Khan)
2023	Group Exhibition, 'Body Ecologies', Canvas Gallery, Karachi (Curated Aziz Sohail)
2023	Group Exhibition, 'Walk Amongst Trees', Koel Gallery, Karachi (Curated Zahra Khan)
2022	Group Exhibition, 'Let there Be Night', VM Art Gallery, Karachi (Curated Mallika Rangoonwala)
2022	Group Exhibition, 'The Unwritten', Satrang Gallery, Islamabad (Curated Zahra Khan)
2021	Group Exhibition, 'As We Are', Dominion Gallery, The Colony Lahore, Pakistan (Curated Usman Ahmed)
2021	Group exhibition, 'Improvising Rhetorics', The Roadside Art, Lahore
2021	Group Exhibition, 'People and Banyan', Thx Again Berlin, Karl Marx Allee, Berlin, Germany. (Curated by Benjamin Merten and Zara Sajid)
2020	Group Exhibition, 'Karachi Ki Khoj (Re)defining the Metropolis', IPAF Show, NED University, Karachi (Curated by Sophia Balagamwala)
2020	Group Exhibition, 'A Sight for a Site', Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF), Lahore, Pakistan (Curated by Rameesha Azeem)
2019	Group Exhibition, 'Crossovers', Alhamra Art Gallery, Mall Road, Lahore, Pakistan (Curated by Asim Raza)
2019	Solo Exhibition, 'Dhaak Kay Teen Pat' (three leaves of the Dhaak Tree), Lahore University of Management Sciences. LUMS, Lahore (Curated Dr.Saba Peerzada)
2019	Group Exhibition, 'Development Induced Displacement', Lahore Management University, LUMS Lahore (Curated Hala Bashir)
2018	Group Exhibition, 'Soft Bodies', Indus Valley School of Architecture Gallery, Karachi (Curated Sophia Balagamwala)
2018	Group Exhibition. Pakistan National Council of arts (PNCA), Islamabad
2018	Group Exhibition, London Art Fair, London (Curated Zara Sajjid)
2018	Two persons Exhibition, 'City of Dreams and Nightmares', Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore

## Publications

2025	"Canal View" Book Chapter in A. Maqsood, C. Moffat and F. Sajjad (eds). Lahore in Motion: Infrastructure, History and Belonging in Urban Pakistan (pp. 199-207). London: UCL Press
2021	"The Production of Muslim Space: Celebrating the Prophet in Pakistan's Urban Neighborhoods". Book chapter co-authored with Dr. Amen Jaffer In I. Keul (Ed.) Spaces of Religion in Urban South Asia (pp. 72-86). London: Routledge

## Grants and Awards

2016	Winner for competition 'Where the Bus Stops'. Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF), Lahore
2014 - 15	Erasmus Mundus category A scholarship for two years Masters
2013	Graduated with Honors, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan
2010	Awarded Rubens Trophy, NASA convention, Chennai, India

## Work Experience

2018 - 20	Lecturer in Architecture and Design COMSATS University, Lahore Taught daily 4th year studio classes to groups of 15 to 40 students for three years Taught urban theory to 3rd and 4th year for two years Supervised a group of 6 thesis year students for 1 year
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# Maha Ahmed



## Artist statement

Ahmed's work grows from feelings of isolation, wonder, and quiet observation. She creates intricate, dreamlike worlds inhabited by mythical and hybrid creatures that appear gently at odds with their surroundings. These imagined landscapes are calm and contemplative, belonging to no single place and no one in particular.

Drawing inspiration from Persian and Mughal manuscripts and classical Japanese painting, Ahmed's compositions unfold slowly, speaking through the flow of water, the colours of plants, the formations of rocks, and the movement of animals. Her paintings reflect on identity as something ever-changing, unresolved, and continually in dialogue with itself.

## Profile

Maha Ahmed (b. 1989, Pakistan) is a miniature artist currently based in London. She completed an MA in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, London, on the Caspian Art Foundation Scholarship (2015), and a BFA in Miniature Painting at the National College of Arts, Lahore (2012). She has lived and worked in Lahore, London, Tokyo, and Dubai.

# Maha Ahmed

## Education

- 2013 - 15 MA Fine Art with Honours, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London
- 2008 - 12 BFA Miniature Painting, National College of Arts, Lahore

## Solo Exhibition

- 2023 Where Worlds Meet, Leighton House Museum, London, UK
- 2022 Of Holding On & Letting Go, Galerie ISA 9, Mumbai, India
- 2020 A Place that Cannot Be, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London
- 2019 An Island of Truths, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Berlin
- 2016 A Mute Land, Display Gallery, London
- 2016 A Seed Once Planted, Asia House, London

## Group Exhibition

- 2025 What the eye brought back, P420, Bologna, Italy
- 2025 Growth of the Soil, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London
- 2025 Art Dubai, with Madinat Jumeirah, Dubai, UAE
- 2024 Expo Chicago, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Navy Pier's Festival Hall, Chicago Artissima, Turin, Italy
- 2023 Art Dubai, with Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Dubai, UAE
- 2021 Facing the Sun, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Schloss Görne, Germany
- 2021 10th Anniversary Exhibition, Galerie Isa, Mumbai
- 2021 Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Galerie Isa, Abu Dhabi
- 2021 A gentle breeze, curated by Jamila Adeli, Galerie Isa, Mumbai
- 2020 Art Dubai, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery
- 2019 Microcosm III, AAN Gandhara Art Space, Karachi, Pakistan
- 2019 Art Dubai, with Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Dubai, UAE
- 2018 River in an Ocean, Lahore Biennale 01, Lahore, Pakistan
- 2018 I, too, am a part of history, Fakir Khana Museum, Lahore, Pakistan
- 2017 BODY, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London
- 2017 Istanbul Contemporary, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2017 And the Horizon is Dying over the Tourist, Republic Gallery, London
- 2017 One Summer Night, Crypt Gallery, London
- 2017 Dentons Art Prize Shortlist Exhibition, Denton Offices, London
- 2016 Asia House Benefit Auction, Asia House, London
- 2015 Aestivation, Central Saint Martins Annex, London
- 2016 Saint Martins Annex, London
- 2015 GRAN-faloon, Lethaby Gallery, London
- 2015 BIG SPACE IV, Central Saint Martins, London

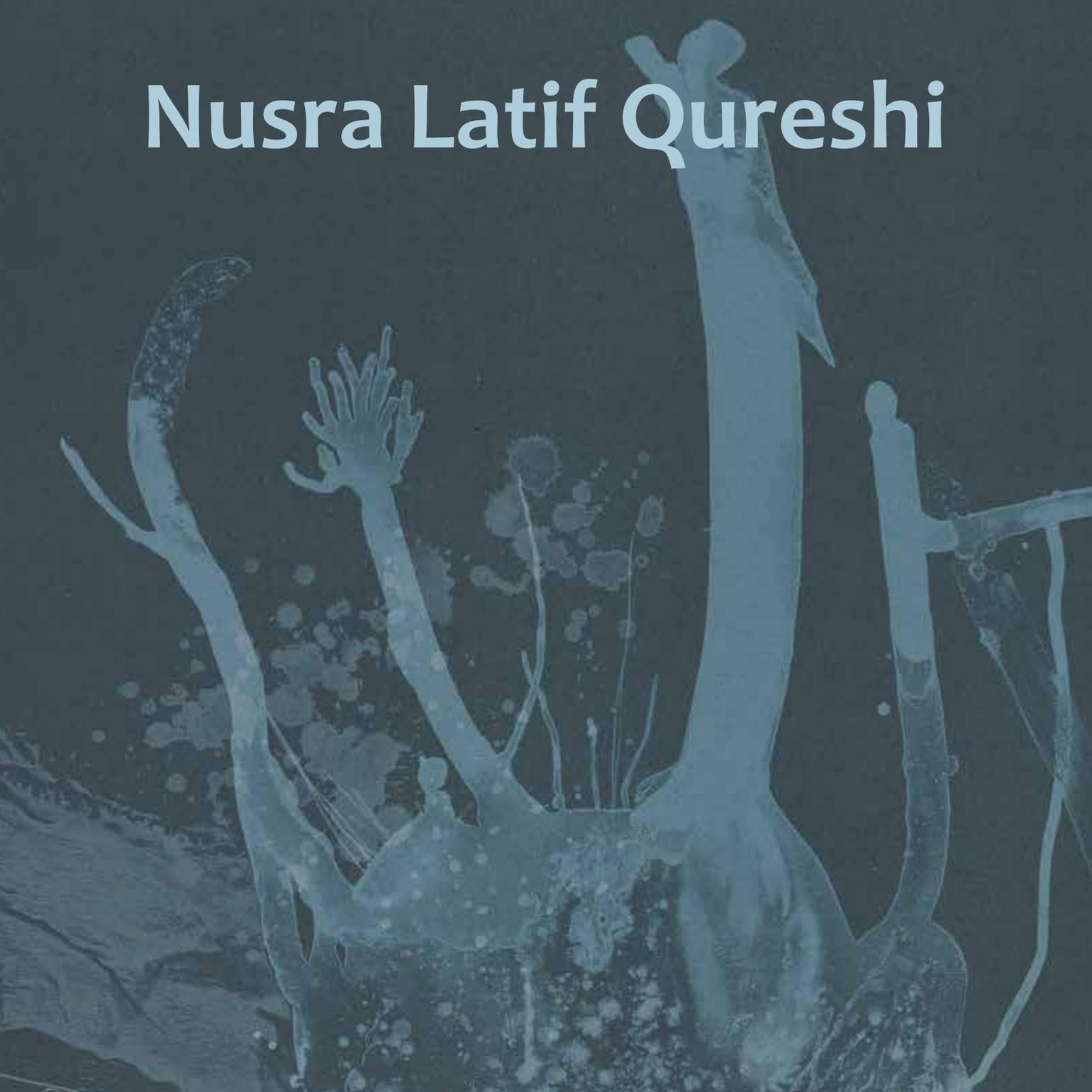
## Prizes

- Nominated for Sovereign Asian Art Prize
- Dentons Art Prize – Special Commendation

## Collections

- Kiran Nadar Museum Collection
- David Roberts Art Foundation (DRAF), London
- A.R.M holding art collection, Dubai (UAE)

# Nusra Latif Qureshi



## Artist statement

How to address a mountain that breaks your soul one day and rekindles it the next dawn?

This body of work stems from a drawing exercise based on the idea of encounter. The drawings on which the large prints are based explore the awe felt in the presence of a group of mountains and their intense beauty and immense might. The smaller lithographs were developed while experimenting with plate lithography in all of its unpredictability and with the freedom that comes with the process. Unlike my usual painting practice, where the images are planned and executed in a particular order, printmaking can lead to unforeseen outcomes in the shape of colour and free-flowing, organic looking forms, the final result of which is apparent in these works.

## Profile

Born in Pakistan, Nusra lives and works in Melbourne. She attended National College of Arts, Lahore and completed her Masters of Fine Art at Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne. She is currently a visiting artist at The Peter Doherty Institute as part of the Lionel Gell Art in Science Initiative Fellowship.

Her practice has developed through an in-depth study of conventional South Asian painting techniques in conjunction with image manipulation softwares. Her work ranges from small, highly detailed paintings to large scale digital prints that engage with the visual histories of South Asian region and Australian culture, pulling apart and reconfiguring the found patterns to construct new narratives. While heavily referencing 17 th century Mughal painting with its exquisite detail, she interjects contemporary images to create a dialogue that offers new insights into both the past and the present while maintaining a visually appealing aesthetic.

Her exhibition history includes shows in Australia, USA, Europe and Asia. Recent survey exhibitions include The House of Irredeemable Objects at MUMA, Melbourne, and Birds in Far Pavilions at Art Gallery of New South Wales, solo shows Dreams Woven into Water at Chawkandi Art Gallery in Karachi and Shallow encounters in Deep Waters at Sutton Gallery, Melbourne. Other major solo shows were held at Warrnambool Art Gallery in 2021 and at 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney in 2019. Major projects: Digital Witness: Revolutions in Design, Photography and Film at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Beyond the Page: South Asian Miniature Painting and Britain, 1600 to now at Milton Keynes Gallery, and The Box, Plymouth, UK, The Shape of Time at Kunst Historisches Museum in Vienna, So Fine: Contemporary women artists make Australian history at National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, San Francisco Asian Art Museum, USA, Sherman Galleries, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Manchester Art Gallery, Cincinnati Art Centre, National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, India, and Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan. Nusra's work features in several private and institutional collections around the world, including the British Museum, National Gallery of Victoria, QGOMA, and Fukuoka Asian Art Museum.

She has been involved in designing and offering public programs in collaboration with art institutions on an ongoing basis. Here most recent project was at Templestowe College, funded by Creative Victoria, and exploring the restorative impact of art in a collaborative environment after the imposed isolation of Covid lockdowns. In 2019, her design was selected for the ART Tram project as part of Melbourne Art Festival; Nusra was the recipient of Bulgari Art Award in the same year. Nusra is also a board member of 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art and member of Arts and cultural Advisory Committee at Nillumbik Shire Council.

# Nusra Latif Qureshi

## Selected Solo Exhibition

2025	THE HOUSE OF IRREDEEMABLE OBJECTS, MUMA Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, Australia
2024 - 25	BIRDS IN FAR PAVILIONS, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
2024	DREAMS WOVEN INTO WATER, Chawkandi Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2023	SHALLOW ENCOUNTERS IN DEEP WATERS, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2022	THE LAND I SEE IS NOT ELSEWHERE, Shepparton Art Museum, VIC, Australia
2021	PROMISES OF A PARALLEL COSMOS, Warrnambool Art Gallery, VIC, Australia
2019	STRATEGIES OF INTENT, Gallery 4A, Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney
2018	VIEWS FROM THE GOLD PAVILLION, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2015	Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2014	Chawkandi Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2013	SIMULACRA-STRATEGIES OF SELVES, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2013	DESIRES OF MEMORY, Rohtas 2 Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
2012	FOREVER AND EVER, Green Cardamom, London
2011	Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, USA
2009	THE INVISIBLE GUN, Chawkandi Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2007	FAMILIAR MEMORIES, Anant Art Gallery, New Delhi, India
2005	ACTS OF COMPLIANCE, Green Cardamom at Studio Glass Gallery, London
2004	Counihan Gallery In Brunswick, Melbourne
2004	THE WAY I REMEMBER THEM, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA, USA

## Selected Group Exhibition

2024 - 25	DIGITAL WITNESS, LACMA, California, USA
2023 - 24	BEYOND THE PAGE: South Asian Miniature Painting and Britain 1600 to Now, Milton
2023 - 24	Keynes Gallery/ The Box Plymouth, UK.
2023	SHARJAH BIENNALE 15: Thinking Historically in the Present, Sharjah
2023	SELZER EXHITION AND PRIZE, Fiona and Sidney Myer Gallery, Melbourne
2021	SOUL FURY, Bendigo Art Gallery, VIC
2020	Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2019	Bunjil Place Art Gallery, Narre Warren, VIC
2018	National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
2018	THE SHAPE OF TIME, Kunst Historisches Museum, Vienna
2017	Ballarat International Foto Biennale, Ballarat, VIC
2016	Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane
2013	The Academy of Arts, Brandenburger Tor, Berlin
2012	National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
2012	SUB-TOPICAL HEAT, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, Aotearoa, New Zealand
2011	National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
2011	Zentrum Fuer Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, Germany
2011	Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, UK
2010	Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi, Pakistan
2010	Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, CA, USA
2009	EAST WEST DIWAN, 53rd Venice Biennale, Italy
2009	National Art Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan
2008	Turquoise Mountain, Kabul, Afghanistan
2008	AN EVER EXPANDING UNIVERSE, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, WA
2008	Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada/ 24 HR Art, Northern Territory Centre for Contemporary Art, Darwin, NT, Australia
2008	Ingrao, New York, USA
2006	Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
2006	San Francisco Asian Art Museum, USA
2006	The Drawing Center, New York, USA
2006	The Asia House, London/ Manchester Art Gallery, UK
2005	Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT, USA
2005	Sherman Galleries, Sydney
2005	Honolulu Academy of Arts, Hawaii, USA
2005	Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan
2004	Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane
2005	Rochdale Art Gallery, Rochdale, UK
2003	K3 Project Space, Zurich, Switzerland
2003	18th Street Arts Complex, Santa Monica, California, USA
2003	The Fine Art Resource, Berlin, Germany
2002	Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan
2002	Span Galleries, Melbourne
2001	International Arts Centre, New Delhi, India

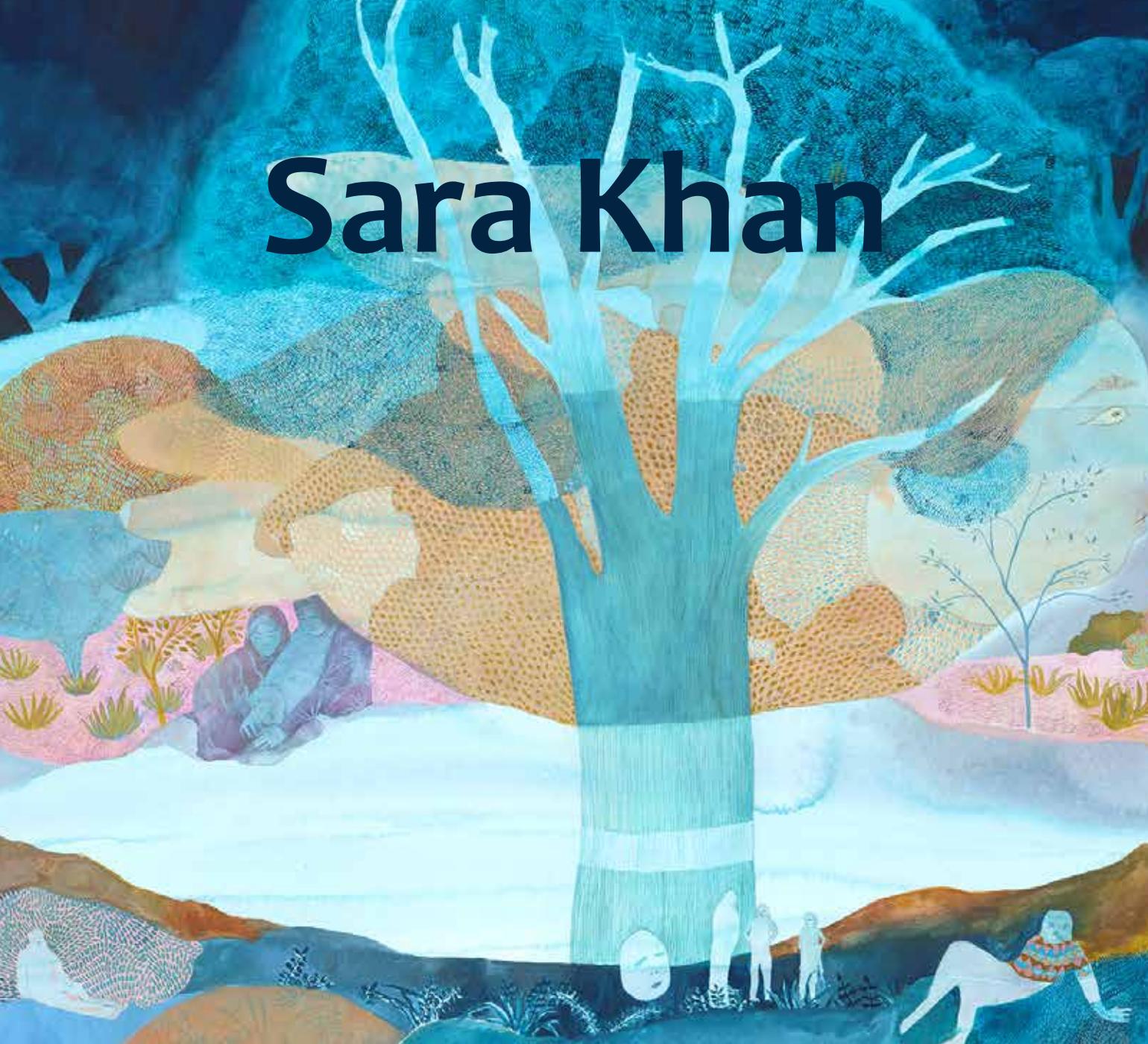
## Collections

Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia  
The British Museum, London  
Monash University, Melbourne  
Parliament of Australia, Canberra  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney  
Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Queensland Art Gallery, Australia  
The Hundal Collection, South Asia Institute, Chicago, USA  
Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, USA  
Honolulu Academy of Arts, Hawaii, USA  
Self Help Graphics and Art Archive, Los Angeles, USA  
ArtOmi International Arts Center, New York, USA  
Landfall Press, Santa Fe, USA  
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, USA  
Melbourne City Council  
Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne  
Darebin City Council, Melbourne  
Moreland City Council, Melbourne  
Stonington City Council, Melbourne  
Nillumbik Shire Art Collection, Melbourne

## Awards and Residencies

2025	Lionel Gell Fellowship at The Peter Doherty Institute of Infection and Immunity, University of Melbourne
2024	Fleck Fellowship and residency at Leighton Studios, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Canada
2021	Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Art-Local
2021	Creative Victoria Grant for New Work
2019	Bulgari Art Award, Art Gallery of NSW
2018	Artist in Residence at The Lyceum Club, Melbourne
2012	Australia Council Grant for New Work
2012	International Programs Grant, Arts Victoria
2009	Residency at Victorian (now Australian) Tapestry Workshop, Melbourne
2009	Co-Recipient, Kultour Grant for OzAsia Festival
2008	Arts Victoria Grant for Creation of New Work
2007	International Programs Grant, Arts Victoria, Export and Touring
2006	Australia Council grant for New Work
2005	Darebin La Trobe Acquisitive Art Prize for Emerging Artist
2005	Ian Potter Cultural Trust Travel Grant
2005	International Programs Grant, Arts Victoria
2004	Australia Council Kultour Grant
2004	Moreland City Cultural Grant
2003	Residency at Hydra Studio, Footscray Community Arts Centre, Melbourne
2003	UNESCO residency at 18th Street Arts Complex, Los Angeles, USA
2002	Residency at Art Omi International Arts Center, New York. USA

# Sara Khan



## Artist statement

My work treads the boundaries between reality and fantasy, drawing from personal experiences to explore complex themes of identity, heritage, and the feminine experience. Through an immersive practice that weaves together watercolors, and ceramics, I delve into the beauty, vulnerability, and strength found in these narratives. Each piece becomes a portal into a world where hybrid forms, unusual creatures, and surreal landscapes reflect the tension between the familiar and the unknown.

Much of my recent work emerges from an autobiographical lens, influenced by motherhood and my connection to cultural history. I am drawn to the way patterns, particularly floral motifs, have been used as a form of storytelling across time and geography. In my paintings, figures often emerge from a dense backdrop of ornamental flora, their silhouettes poised between concealment and revelation. These figures are not static; they embody the fluidity of identity, constantly shifting, evolving, and adapting.

The use of watercolors on paper allows me to work with transparency and layering, qualities that mirror the nuanced emotions I aim to convey. I see this medium as an extension of the body, delicate but resilient, capable of holding a range of emotional and visual intensity. My ceramics similarly play with texture and form, adding a tactile element to my exploration of fragility and strength. These mediums allow me to create both sculptural and functional objects, grounding my work in the physical world while maintaining a sense of otherworldliness.

At the heart of my practice is a fascination with the grotesque and the beautiful, two forces that, in my view, are deeply intertwined. I am particularly interested in the way these dynamics manifest within the female experience, the way that beauty can mask or reveal discomfort, vulnerability, and resilience. By merging these contrasting elements, I hope to create spaces that invite viewers to confront their own perceptions and emotions, challenging the boundaries between the internal and external worlds.

Ultimately, my work is a celebration of complexity, of the multiple layers that make up who we are, where we come from, and how we see the world around us.

## Profile

Sara Khan is known for her explorations of magic realism and the blurred lines between the real and imagined through watercolour paintings, textiles, and ceramics. Interested in how something grotesque and seductive can converge to become immensely captivating, she has developed a language distinctly her own.

Aside from her solo show at The Reach Gallery Museum, Abbotsford, BC (2021) select group exhibitions include “Let Me Take You There” at The Doris McCarthy Gallery, Scarborough, ON (2023) and “Hope”, Two Rivers Gallery, Prince George, BC (2022). She has been artist-in-Residence at The Burrard Arts Foundation (2021). She was also commissioned by Simon Fraser University to create work for the 50th Anniversary celebration of their Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (2020). She was also the featured artist for The Indian Summer Festival (2019).

Khan holds a Bachelor of Fine Art from the National College of Arts, Lahore. She grew up in Lahore, Pakistan and now lives and works in Vancouver, Canada.

# Sara Khan

## Education

2004 - 08 National College of Arts, Lahore. B.F.A. (with honours), Specialization in Painting; Minor in printmaking.

## Selected Solo Shows & Two Person Exhibitions

2024 (Two person) Stories for Futures: Real & Imagine, ACT Art Gallery, Maple Ridge, BC  
2023 (Two person) Rise, Art Gallery at Evergreen, Coquitlam, BC  
2022 Mitti Ke Teelay (Mounds of Soil), Seymour Art Gallery, North Vancouver, BC  
2022 Sandha Rd Key Dhund (Mists of Sandha Rd) Burrard Arts Foundation, Vancouver  
2021 Roshni Key The Mein (In the Fold of Light) The Reach Art Gallery, Abbotsford, BC  
2019 Suraj Kinare, Surrey Art Gallery, BC  
2017 (Two person) Silent Disparities, Deer Lake Gallery, Vancouver  
2012 Unsolicited Sidekick, Canvas Gallery, Karachi

## Selected Group Shows

2023 Let Me Take You There, Doris McCarthy Gallery, Ontario  
2022 Hope, Two Rivers Gallery, Prince George, BC  
2022 In the Deep End, Aan Art Space & Museum, Karachi  
2022 Open Encounters, Artco Gallery, Berlin  
2021 Show: Mother Tongue, CityScape Community Art Space North Vancouver  
2019 If You Have A Garden In Your Library II, AAN Gandhara Art Space, Karachi  
2019 Somebody Anybody, South Main Gallery, Vancouver  
2018 Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious, South Main Gallery, Vancouver  
2018 Vancouver Mural Festival: Year three, Burrard Arts Foundation, Vancouver  
2018 Discovery, Seymour Art Gallery, Vancouver  
2018 Chowkandi Art Gallery, Karachi  
2018 Neither Here Nor There, South Main Gallery, Vancouver  
2017 Bad People, Hot Art Wet City, Vancouver  
2017 What is Seen and Not Seen, With or Without Seeing, Gandhara Art Space, Karachi  
2016 Aerial Cartographies, Canvas Gallery, Karachi  
2015 They Really Live the Real Reality, Twelve Gates Arts, Philadelphia  
2013 Pakistan Rising, Bonhams, London  
2013 Three person show, Canvas Gallery, Karachi  
2013 My Name is Khan, IVS Gallery, Karachi  
2012 Band Baaja Baaraat, IVS Gallery, Karachi

## Murals and Public Projects

2021 Mural for City Seen, mural mentorship program for The Reach Art Gallery  
2018 Mural for Vancouver Mural Festival

## Awards and Art Residencies

2023 Grant from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation  
2021 Burrard Arts Foundation Residency Program, Vancouver, BC  
2018 Carole Badgley Emerging Artist Award, Seymour Art Gallery, Vancouver  
2012 Shortlisted for the Sainsbury Scholarship in Painting and Sculpture: Rome  
2012 BAG Art Camp: International art residency for artists of all disciplines, Bergen, Norway  
2007 Fine Art Scholarship: National College of Arts Lahore  
2006 The 13 Satellites of Lahore: Public art workshop, Lahore, Pakistan

## Professional Experiences

2023 Collaborative Youth Art making Workshop, Art Gallery at Evergreen, Coquitlam BC, Canada  
2022 Art workshop, Seymour Art Gallery, North Vancouver, BC, Canada  
2022 Artist Talk at Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Vancouver, Canada  
2022 Weekend Course (figures, patterns and silhouettes) at Canvas Method, Vancouver, BC, Canada  
2022 Artist in Residence/Workshop, Artists for Kids + Gordon Smith Gallery, North Vancouver, BC, Canada.  
2020 Art Workshop, Present Art studio, Vancouver, BC, Canada  
2019 Indian Summer Festival: Selected Artist, Vancouver  
2008 Naked Punch (magazine): Illustrator. London, United Kingdom  
2003 Simorgh (womens resource and publication centre): Illustrator, Lahore Pakistan

## Selected Publications

2018 Danielle Kryza, The Jealous Curator, Art for Your Ears (Podcast)  
2018 Thalia Stopa, Scout Vancouver, Vancouver, 7th Aug  
2018 Alexander Varty, Georgia Straight, Vancouver, 1st Aug  
2018 Danielle Kryza, The Jealous Curator, Canada, 16th Feb  
2017 Katherine Chan, July's Featured Artist, Sad Mag, Vancouver, July Issue  
2017 Nimra Khan, Pushing the Boundaries of Contemporary Drawing, Dawn, 26th Feb  
2017 Numair A Abbasi, And the Marks We Make, Art Now Pakistan, March Issue  
2016 Shireen Ikramullah, Mindforking: An insight, Art Now Pakistan, December Issue  
2016 Nimra Khan, Mapping the Self, The Friday Times, Aug 26th  
2016 Fatima Nadeem, Aerial Cartographies, Art Now Pakistan, August Issue  
2016 M. Saeed Qureshi, Floating Projections, Dawn Aug 14th  
2013 Up Close and Personal With Sara Khan, Sunday Times, Pakistan, 4th- 10th Aug  
2013 Zarmene Shah, Faces of Femininity, The Herald, June 11th- 20th  
2013 Salwat Ali, Indeterminate Spaces, Art Fiend, Dawn, June 23rd  
2013 Dua Abbas Rizvi, My Name is.. (catalogue), April  
2012 Gemma Sharpe, Unity in Diversity, The Herald, April  
2012 Saima Salman, Artists' Work: Of Unfinished Business and Unsolicited Sidekick, Dawn, March  
2012 Peerzada Salman, Unfinished Business and Unsolicited Sidekick, Dawn, March 6th  
2010 Rahim Khan, Themes of Fear and Anguish, The Express Tribune Dec 29th