

## Curatorial Note

In *How to Trace a Pattern*, Tazeen Qayyum investigates the language of textiles through clothing design, domestic sewing practices, and the circulation of globalized patterns across generations within her family lineage.

As a young girl in Pakistan in the 1970s, Qayyum wore clothes sewn by her mother using European dressmaking books featuring blonde, fair-skinned children. Western children's fashion became a fixture of family life, and her mother carefully assembled sketchbooks filled with sewing notes, magazine clippings, fabric samples, and design ideas. Decades later, Qayyum, a Pakistani - Canadian multidisciplinary artist who immigrated to Canada in 2003, returns to this family archive of dress patterns and sewing manuals, including a collection of her childhood garments, stirring memories and deepening an already rich connection with her mother, Shaheen Qayyum.

Drawn to the architecture of lines, curves, and angles found in these original pattern pieces, Qayyum transforms functional shapes into complex abstract compositions. In her *Tracing Pattern Series* she builds densely layered visual fields that resemble maps, blueprints, and coded systems. The drawings are made on interfacing, an essential structural fabric hidden inside tailored garments. By bringing this unseen material to the foreground, Qayyum highlights an overlooked participant in the making of clothing and memory.

The exhibition's paintings are executed using traditional South Asian and Persian miniature painting techniques, demanding extraordinary precision and patience. A series of three works, titled after names printed on commercial pattern envelopes, such as Alison, John, and Harold reproduces idealized images of blonde, curly-haired children that served as promotional models for the clothing her mother made. Such mainstream Eurocentric beauty ideals, of course, prevail throughout the world, resonating across generations.

A second series of paintings, *Easy Cutting*, extends the artist's critique more pointedly to the floral designs of British designer William Morris (1834-1896), whose work has been criticized for appropriating motifs originating in Indian chintz traditions. In a gesture of reclamation, Qayyum uses a traditional squirrel-hair miniature-painting brush to meticulously copy Morris's floral designs onto tiny Western garment templates, reclaiming visual forms shaped by histories of colonial exchange and cultural extraction.

Through these acts of recuperation, the artist reverses the flow of cultural appropriation: Qayyum reasserts the South Asian origins of these motifs and reveals the colonial histories embedded within seemingly innocent patterns and garments. Her work challenges the dynamics through which Western culture has often been presented as universal while obscuring the non-Western sources from which it drew inspiration.

*Sarah Quinton*

Independent Curator and Curatorial Director Emeritus,  
Textile Museum of Canada

The artist would like to acknowledge and express heartfelt gratitude to curator Sarah Quinton, artist Sophia Kim, her family and the Ontario Arts Council for their support in making this exhibition possible. A special thank you to her mother, Shaheen Qayyum, for lovingly preserving and sharing all the cherished objects and memories, and for her unwavering love and care.



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## Profile

Tazeen Qayyum is a Pakistani - Canadian multidisciplinary artist and among the first to shape the Neo-Miniature movement at the National College of Arts, Lahore. Qayyum continues to explore new materials and processes through various mediums, including drawing, installation, sculpture, video, and performance. Her work addresses complex issues of belonging, identity, and displacement within a socio-political context, emphasizing empathy and compassion as a counterforce to aggression and conflict while acknowledging the evolving realities of our time.

Qayyum's artwork has been exhibited globally at prestigious galleries, museums, international art biennials and festivals, including the Karachi Biennial 2017, the Bangkok Art Biennial 2022, the Edinburgh International Festival 2025 and the Hong Kong International Festivals 2026. In 2013, she was commissioned to create site-responsive work at the Toronto Pearson International Airport. Her works are part of esteemed collections such as the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada; the Art Mill Museum in Qatar; the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa; the TD Canada Trust Permanent Collection in Toronto; the HBL Art Collection in Pakistan; the Welt Museum in Vienna; the Doris McCarthy Gallery at the University of Toronto; the National Gallery of Amman in Jordan; and the National Art Gallery in Nepal.

Qayyum co-founded Art Address, an interactive space dedicated to fostering artistic discourse, community building, and mentoring young, emerging, and newcomer artists in Canada. She has served on the Board of Directors for Oakville Galleries and on the Advisory Board of the Blackwood Gallery at the University of Toronto, as well as the Arts Council at Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital.

Solo Exhibitions

|      |                                                                                                                    |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2025 | ابہی here/now, curated by Ruba Kanaan, Red Head Gallery, Toronto, Canada                                           |
| 2023 | Khayaal, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan                                                                         |
| 2023 | In Parts, Red Head Gallery, Toronto, Canada                                                                        |
| 2022 | A Facade of Beauty and Integrated Fear, curated by Ignazio Nicastro, Riverdale Hub, Toronto, Canada                |
| 2022 | Sakoon, Zalucky Contemporary, Toronto, Canada                                                                      |
| 2020 | Cover the Same Ground, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan                                                           |
| 2018 | Descent, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan                                                                         |
| 2018 | Drawings by Tazeen Qayyum, Boarding House Gallery, University of Guelph, Canada                                    |
| 2015 | Khara Dupatta, mixed media installation, Bradley Museum, Mississauga, Canada                                       |
| 2015 | (IN)SURGE(NT), curated by Zarmeene Shah, Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan                                         |
| 2013 | A Holding Pattern, co - curated by Lee Petrie and Stuart Keeler, Toronto Pearson Airport                           |
| 2012 | Coule dans les veines (flows in the veins), curated by Stuart Keeler, XIT - RM, Art Gallery of Mississauga, Canada |
| 2012 | Viewer Discretion is Advised, Ross Creek Centre for the Arts, Nova Scotia, Canada                                  |
| 2011 | It's Complicated, curated by Nadia Kurd, Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Canada                                           |
| 2009 | Viewer Discretion is Advised, Gandhara Art - Space, Karachi, Pakistan                                              |
| 2001 | Woven Narratives: New Miniatures, Gallery Rohtas II, Lahore, Pakistan                                              |
| 2000 | Contemporary Miniatures, Gallery Jutner, Vienna, Austria                                                           |

Select Performance Projects

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|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2025      | Once More My Mind Wanders in Search of a Word, durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Syed Umar and the students of musicology at the NCA International Triennale, Pakistan                |
| 2025      | ابہی here/now, durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Aga Khan Master Musicians at the Edinburgh International Festival                                                                    |
| 2024      | Isma'u wa'u (listen and learn), durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Aga Khan Master Musicians at the National Museum of Qatar, Doha.                                                    |
| 2023      | Izzat (respect/honour), durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Padideh Ahrarnejad and Ali Massoudi at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada                                            |
| 2020      | Ehsaas, durational drawing performance, in collaboration with Marwan Abado, Salam Orient Festival, Vienna, Austria                                                                                        |
| 2017      | Unvoiced, durational drawing performance, at the 1st Karachi Biennale, Pakistan                                                                                                                           |
| 2016      | We do not know who we are where we go, drawing performance, for Christof Migone's Mixer Project at The Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto                                                               |
| 2014      | ByOb: Bring Your Own Bollywood, collaborative performance and photo - based project, at Parramasala, Parramatta, Sydney, Australia                                                                        |
| 2013      | Lost in Desires, drawing performance at Info Bomb: The Subcontinent, a project with Other Asias, Aam Awaam and SAVAC, Art Metropole, Nuit Blanche, Toronto, Canada                                        |
| 2012      | Threading Encounters, The Door to Door exhibition series, Blackwood Gallery University of Toronto, Mississauga, Canada                                                                                    |
| 2009      | A Feast in Exile, a collaborative inter - disciplinary performance project, Alliance de Francaise Karachi, produced by Vasl Artists' Collective and Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Pakistan |
| 2007 - 06 | Double Date, a collaborative inter - disciplinary performance project, produced by South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC) and AKA Gallery, Saskatoon, Lennox Contemporary Gallery, Toronto, Canada        |

Select Group Exhibitions

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2026      | Lines Pattern Action, curated by Ruba Kanaan, Blackwood Gallery, UTM, Mississauga                                                                                                                          |
| 2026      | Daybreak, curated by Erin Szikora, Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto                                                                                                                           |
| 2026      | Past Comes to Present: Miniature Paintings in Contemporary Times, Aicon Gallery, New York, USA                                                                                                             |
| 2026      | Drafts 6: Mapping Diasporic Identities, curated by Soheila Esphani, Grebel Gallery, University of Waterloo                                                                                                 |
| 2024      | Manzar: Art and Architecture from Pakistan 1940s to date, curated by Caroline Hancock, Zarmeene Shah and Aurelien Lemonier, National Museum of Qatar, Doha                                                 |
| 2023      | Being and Belonging: Contemporary Women Artists of the Islamic World and Beyond, curated by Dr. Fahmida Suleman, Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada                                                     |
| 2022      | Chaos: Calm, Bangkok Art Biennale 2022, Museum Siam, Thailand                                                                                                                                              |
| 2021      | Contemporary Chronicles, South Asia Institute, Chicago, USA                                                                                                                                                |
| 2018      | Common Borders, curated by Majid Abbasi Farahani, Sanat Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan                                                                                                                         |
| 2018      | Objects We Behold, curated by Amra Ali, Gandhara Art Space, Karachi, Pakistan                                                                                                                              |
| 2018      | Forward Motion, curated by Noa Bronstein, The Small Arms, Mississauga, Canada                                                                                                                              |
| 2017      | 1st Karachi Biennale, Jamshed Memorial Hall and NJV High School, Karachi, Pakistan                                                                                                                         |
| 2016      | Greater Toronto: New Artist Textiles, commissioned by the Textile Museum of Canada, Textile Arts Centre, NYCxDESIGN, New York and London Design Festival, UK                                               |
| 2015      | Beyond Measure: Domesticating Distance, curated by Ambereen Siddiqui, The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Canada                                                                                        |
| 2015      | Border Cultures: Part Three (Security, Surveillance), curated by Srimoyee Mitra, Art Gallery of Windsor, Canada                                                                                            |
| 2015      | Season X: Celebrating a Decade, curated by Shanley Hanlon, OSilas Gallery Concordia College, New York, USA                                                                                                 |
| 2014      | Arrival/Revival, curated by Abdullah Sayed, Parramata Artist Studio, Sydney, Australia                                                                                                                     |
| 2012      | A Homespun Web: Heather Goodchild, Noelle Hamlyn and Tazeen Qayyum, curated by Cole Swanson, Living Arts Centre, Mississauga, Canada                                                                       |
| 2011      | Veiled: Andrew McPhail, Grace Ndiritu and Tazeen Qayyum, curated by Sarah Quinton, Textile Museum of Canada                                                                                                |
| 2011      | The Pill, curated by Avni Doshi, Latitude 28 Gallery, Delhi, India                                                                                                                                         |
| 2010      | The Rising Tide: New Directions in Art from Pakistan 1990 - 2010, curated by Naiza Khan, Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi, Pakistan                                                                          |
| 2010      | Its a Disaster, curated by Anthea Foyer, CodeLive Metro, the 2010 Winter Olympics, Vancouver, Canada                                                                                                       |
| 2009      | Bazgasht: Traditional Methods and Modern Practices, curated by Ali Adil Khan with Asma Arshad Mahmood and Rob Freeman, Art Gallery of Mississauga, Canada                                                  |
| 2009      | Failing States: recent works by Tazeen Qayyum and Adeela Suleman, Aicon Gallery, London, UK                                                                                                                |
| 2008      | Conversations across cultures, South Asian Imaginaries, curated by Maurizio Pellegrin and Razia Sadik, Macy Gallery, Columbia University, New York, USA                                                    |
| 2008      | Farida Batool, Tazeen Qayyum, and Adeela Suleman, curated by Priyanka Mathews, Aicon Gallery, New York, USA                                                                                                |
| 2008      | The Human Dichotomy, Aicon Gallery, Palo Alto, USA                                                                                                                                                         |
| 2008      | ShContemporary08, Shanghai International Art Fair, Aicon Gallery                                                                                                                                           |
| 2008      | HKArt08, Hong Kong International Art Fair, Gandhara Art Gallery                                                                                                                                            |
| 2007 - 08 | Urban Myths & Modern Fables, curated by Haema Sivanesan, University of Technology, Sydney and 24Hr Art, Darwin, Australia and Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada            |
| 2007      | Homecoming, curated by Atteqa Ali, National Gallery of Pakistan, Islamabad, Pakistan                                                                                                                       |
| 2007      | Women Looking East, curated by Steven Spennel, University of Rhode Island, Providence Campus, USA                                                                                                          |
| 2006      | Gendering Detail, Contemporary Miniature Paintings, curated by Kristy Phillips, Art Square Gallery and SAGA, (South Asian Gallery of Art) Toronto, Canada                                                  |
| 2005      | A Thousand and One Days: The Art of Pakistani Women Miniaturists, curated by Enrico Mascelloni, Salima Hashmi and Duccio K. Marignoli, Honolulu Academy of Arts, Hawaii and Musee des Beaux, Rouen, France |
| 2004      | JALA - Japan Afro - Asian Latin American Exchange Exhibition, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Japan                                                                                                             |
| 2003      | 43rd Suzzara Prize 2003 - Spirit and Body; Between Tradition and Cybernetics, curated by Enrico Mascelloni , Padova, Italy                                                                                 |
| 2003      | Negotiating Borders Miniature Paintings, curated by Salima Hashmi, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Kathmandu, Nepal                                                                                                |
| 2002      | 2nd Painting Biennale, Saba Cultural and Artistic Centre, Tehran, Iran                                                                                                                                     |
| 2002      | 10th Asian Biennale, Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka, Bangladesh                                                                                                                                                 |

Select Public Collections

The Art Mill Museum, Qatar  
Royal Ontario Museum, Canada  
Ali Adil Khan Collection, The Aga Khan Museum, Canada  
TD Canada Trust Permanent Collection  
HBL Art Collection, Pakistan  
University of Vienna, Department of Art History, Austria  
Neubacher Collection, Weltmuseum, Vienna, Austria  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pengzhou, China  
The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Canada  
Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto, Canada  
National Gallery of Amman, Jordan  
National Art Gallery, Nepal  
Federal Chancellery, Vienna, Austria

Achievements and Awards

|           |                                                                                 |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2026      | Finalist, MAX Artist of the Year, Muslims Achieving Excellence, North America.  |
| 2024 - 26 | Awarded Project Grant, Established Artist, Ontario Arts Council, Canada         |
| 2017      | Awarded Canada Council Project Grant                                            |
| 2016      | Excellence in Visual Art Award, by the Canadian Community Arts Initiative       |
| 2014      | Nominated for K.M. Hunter Award, Canada                                         |
| 2013      | Nominated for Jameel Prize, international award for contemporary art and design |
| 2011 - 22 | Awarded Project Grants, Mid - Career Artist, Ontario Arts Council, Canada       |
| 2006 - 22 | Awarded Canada Council Travel Grants                                            |
| 2008      | Awarded Project Grant, Toronto Arts Council, Canada                             |
| 2006 - 16 | Awarded Access and Career Development Grant, Ontario Arts Council, Canada       |
| 2006      | Awarded Project Grant, Emerging Artist, Ontario Arts Council, Canada            |
| 2000      | Awarded UNESCO Bursary for a three - month residency in Vienna, Austria         |
| 1996      | Award of Excellence, performance, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan    |

Education and Residencies

|      |                                                                            |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2025 | Artist in residence, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan            |
| 2020 | Artist in residence, Philomena+, Vienna, Austria                           |
| 2019 | Artist in residence, Bishop Strachan Private Girls School, Toronto, Canada |
| 2018 | Artist in residence, Boarding House Gallery, University of Guelph, Canada  |
| 2014 | 2 week residency at Parramatta Artist Studio, Sydney, Australia            |
| 2013 | 3 month residency at Blackwood Gallery, Mississauga, Canada                |
| 2000 | 3 month residency AIR program, Federal Chancellery Vienna, Austria         |
| 1996 | Bachelors Degree, Fine Arts, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan    |

Professional Contributions

|              |                                                                                  |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2018 to date | Artistic Director and co-founder, Art Address, Oakville, Canada                  |
| 2018 - 26    | Member, Arts Council, Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, Oakville, Canada     |
| 2018 - 21    | Member, Board of Directors and Acquisition Committee, Oakville Galleries, Canada |
| 2020 - 21    | Member, Diversity and Inclusion Action Team, Oakville Galleries                  |
| 2015 - 18    | Member, Advisory Board, Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, Mississauga    |
| 2005 - 07    | Programming Committee member, SAVAC, South Asian Visual Arts Centre, Toronto     |