

Artist's Statement
Momin Zafar | *Within the Lie of the Land*

~ *here and there* ~ *land and sky* ~ *process and outcome* ~

Monsoon season and I am being driven through Gilgit-Baltistan for the first time. 70% of daylight time is spent in a vehicle, and the sense of distance between traveller and terrain is insidiously increasing; such a gulf of unknowing has welled around these regions that I long to know deeply yet remain apart from.

When raindrops on the windows force me to acknowledge how sensorily isolating the vehicle is, that separateness becomes concrete. Suddenly, throwing the landscape out of focus becomes a metaphor for not just how far, but how much *farther* one has to travel to gain understanding of any depth. Simultaneously, it opens a window to that sense of *knowing* only imagination can offer; a romance between the semi-glimpsed and intuitively understood.

(It is almost akin to empathy, this delicate aqueous embrace.)

Wherever we go, topographic clues communicate the landscape in continually inventive ways; in particular, the fluidity that addresses the separation between land and sky. They dip in and out of each other, interacting not as combatants but self-assured components of a singular entity. How subtle the role of the spectator here, in situating and resituating the self... And how limited our lives on the plains seem.

(It is not lost on me, the irony of this understanding being a gift of distance.)

One last approach towards a boundary and I am able to reiterate both: the sensory quest and the curiosity of the delineating edge. Deckle-edge prints on textured paper respond to the slickness of the contemporary photographic experience—only made possible, however, by a millennial printing technique. The scale makes even the droplets edge in and out of focus, and asks the viewer to shift in physical space—to appreciate both the primacy of the rain-speckled plane and (re)emergence of the mountain ridge.

(Where do *one* and *other* really begin and end?)