

CURATED BY
ZAHRA EBRAHIM
NAILA MAHMOOD

 GALLERY
KOEL

Sohail Abdullah
Khadija-tul-Kubra —
Architects
Open Door —
Workshop
Sibt-e-Hassan Azad
Nida Bangash
Arshad Faruqui
Ustad Hanif Khan
Raasmia Haque
Sarosh Hebatzai
Madiha Hyder
Junaid ul Islam
Fraz Mateen
Zoral Naik
Anushka Rustomji
Usman Saeed
Asif Sinan
Raka Studio

INGRAINED
WOOD IN A CROSS-SECTION
OF TIME

INGRAINED

WOOD IN A CROSS-SECTION OF TIME

Curated by Zahra Ebrahim and Naila Mahmood

12th August — 6th September 2025

In the architecture of wood,
time quietly reveals itself.
Trees carry the memory
of growth, rupture, and
renewal within their
bodies. Yet they are more
than material; they are
metaphors of rootedness
and resilience, of belonging
and displacement, of
innovation and legacy.

As living witnesses, trees
mirror our personal and
collective histories.
Their forms hold the weight
of national identities,
cultural memory, and the
struggle over land and
ecology. To read wood is
to enter a dialogue with
time — layered, resilient,
and profoundly alive

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

INGRAINED: Wood in a Cross-Section of Time

In the architecture of wood, time quietly reveals itself. Trees carry the memory of growth, rupture, and renewal within their bodies. This exhibition invites you to read the language etched into wood and to listen to their stories of abundance and scarcity unfolding across centuries.

Trees are witnesses to our becoming — they have sheltered our ancestors, fueled hearths, inspired musical resonances, and furnished the spaces where we have loved, argued, created, and dreamed. They have stood as silent guardians while empires rose and fell, while borders shifted, and while stories were told and retold beneath their canopies.

In the artisans' hands, wood is not only a subject, but also a medium — a vessel of texture, grain, and warmth, inviting touch and transformation. As they carve, join, turn and finish, they read the wood's memory, responding with awareness and understanding. In the artistic imagination, trees become metaphors for rootedness and growth, for family lineage and national identity. In political discourse, they stand as symbols of heritage, environmental stewardship, and the contested terrain of belonging. In mythological and spiritual consciousness, trees are the bridge between earth and sky, between what was and what might be. In South Asian literature — particularly in Sufi and folk traditions — trees such as Keekar (Acacia), Jund (Tamarisk), Neem, Bargad (Banyan), Sundal (Sandalwood) and Suro (Cypress) appear as recurring metaphors of devotion, endurance, and spiritual rootedness. The exhibition explores this intricate tethering between humans and trees — a bond we have too often betrayed, felling forests without reverence and denying the sanctity with which they hold our ecosystems, our histories, and our lives in balance.

This exhibition also asks you to listen beyond the marks of time in weathered surfaces — to hear the tree's regenerative force: its persistent reaching toward light and its quiet accumulation of strength. Trees have long held space for other lives — becoming a country for birds nesting in their branches, for fungi partnering with their roots, for humans finding solace and reflection in its shade.

Here, wood becomes a spatial and temporal medium where geological deep time meets the intimate scale of human memory, like the grain that runs through its heartwood. In this space, the anatomy of trees becomes a map of interconnection, revealing how we have been shaped by these beings even as we have shaped them — how their stories and ours are bound together in the same living text.

Zahra Ebrahim and Naila Mahmood

درختوں کے لیے

اے درختو! تمہیں جب کاٹ دیا جائے گا
اور تم سوکھ کے لکڑی میں بدل جاؤ گے

ایسے عالم میں بہت پیش کشیں ہوں گی تمہیں
تم مگر اپنی روایت سے نہ پھرنا ہرگز
شاہ کی کرسی میں ڈھلنے سے کہیں بہتر ہے
کسی فٹ پاتھ کے ہوٹل کا وہ ٹوٹا ہوا تختہ بنا
میلے کپڑوں میں سہی لوگ محبت سے جہاں بیٹھتے ہیں
کسی بندوق کا دستہ بھی نہیں ہونا تمہیں
چاقو چھریوں کو بھی خدمات نہ اپنی دینا
ایسے دروازے کی چوکھٹ بھی نہ بنا ہرگز
جو محبت بھری دستک پہ کبھی کھل نہ سکے

اے درختو! تمہیں جب کاٹ دیا جائے گا
اور تم سوکھ کے لکڑی میں بدل جاؤ گے
کوئی بیساکھی بنائے تو ہمارا دینا
اور کشتی کے لیے اتنی محبت سے تم آگے بڑھنا
کہ سندر کی فراخی بھی بہت کم پڑ جائے

فاضل جمیلی

Listen to the wood

It whispers stories of seasons past

Each grain, a hymn of life

Each knot, an elegy of loss

Each ring, a slow waltz through time

Lend your ear to the bark

Hear the ridges etch fables:

The lash of tempests, the sigh of winds

The roar of battles, the song of feasts

Of homelands remembered, soils reclaimed –

In the annals of ancient roots

entwined with quest and belonging

And the heartwood pulses

To the breath of the earth –

Dusk after dawn

Life after life...

Listen

By Naila Mahmood

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It whispers stories of seasons past

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Each ring, a slow waltz through time

Hear the heartwood pulse

To the breath of the earth –

Dusk after dawn

Life after life...

Listen





ANUSHKA RUSTOMJI

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.

Anushka Rustomji is an alumna of the National College of Arts, Lahore and was a participant in the Pilotenkueche artist residency (Leipzig, Germany, 2015). She has exhibited her work internationally, including at 'Way of the Forest' (Colomboscope) (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2024). Her work has been published in 'Lines in the Sand; Contemporary Art from Pakistan', (Imago Mundi, Luciano Benetton Collection, 2017) and 'Between Quarantine and Quest', (Vasl Artists Association, 2022). She is currently a faculty member at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Rooting (I) and (II) is an invitation to consider the Banyan (Bargad) tree as a site between physical and metaphysical realms. The imagery seeks to explore the connection of human forms with plant entities, through the lens of myth and story-telling.

A narrative which explores this connection is that of the mythical Waq-waq tree, which features in the Shahnameh epic. The half-human half-arboreal entity appears at a catalytic moment; when Alexander of Macedon, having conquered and pillaged for material gain, believes himself to be immortal and meets the talking tree, which then conveys the truth of his (imminent) mortality. The appearance of the tree consequently takes on multiple interpretations in illustrations of the story, which transmute across cultural and linguistic spheres, regions and eras. Rooting (I) (II) illustrate a non-verbal dialog, articulated by the movement of hands and feet- gestures which have been imbued with meaning through ancient Indian sculpture.

The story can also be reinterpreted in the contemporary time, as foretelling of ecological consequences; of parallels between the activities of extractive economies which have propelled us into the age of the Anthropocene.



Rooting (I)
Graphite on canvas
51 x 63 inches
2024



Rooting (I)
Graphite on canvas
51 x 63 inches
2024



ARSHAD FARUQUI

Arshad Faruqui did his B.Arch from DCET Karachi, Pakistan and M.Arch from IIT Chicago, U.S.A. He has been teaching at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi since 1992 till date. In 2006 he established his Design House under the banner of 'Copper and Steel' where he practices Architecture, Interior Design and Landscape Design. He has been reviving the crafts of copper and works with local craftsmen and incorporates it in his tableware, fountains and furniture designs. He served as the Chairman Institute of Architects (IAP) Karachi Chapter and as Chairman Board of Architectural Education for the National Council of IAP. Faruqui has won the Design Excellence award and ADA Award and was also awarded the Fellowship from the Institute of Architects Pakistan. He has participated in several group and solo exhibitions and has also been curating shows all over Pakistan.

ARTIST STATEMENT

This body of work explores the fundamental form of the stool as a vessel to celebrate the inherent beauty and diversity of wood. By keeping the structure deliberately minimal, attention is drawn to the material itself — its grain, texture, and natural character. I have worked with various types of wood, experimenting with finishes, polishes, and mark-making techniques to uncover the expressive potential of each surface. The simplicity of the form becomes a quiet stage for the wood to speak — highlighting its warmth, depth, and individuality.



The Basic Stool
Different types of wood
18" dia 18" height.
2025





ASIF SINAN

Asif Sinan is an internationally acclaimed fusion musician from Pakistan, known for blending Indian Classical and Jazz traditions and making the guitar sound like a sitar. He has performed at Deutsches Musikfest by invitation of the Chancellor of Germany and at World Islamic Economic Forums in London and Dubai, hosted by the govt of UK, Malaysia, and UAE. He has performed at TED India, the Zihuatanejo Guitar Festival in Mexico, and the SAMUR residency in Chennai. Sinan's work is featured on the album *Indus Raag II*, which received a Global Music Award.

Asif is an alumnus of the U.S. State Department's Leadership Program and a recipient of the Fulbright-Hays award. A qualified music therapist, Sinan teaches music as a force for healing and positive change worldwide.

ARTIST STATEMENT

This soundscape offers an immersive auditory journey into the forest ecosystem, where every creature—interdependent and interconnected—contributes to a collective voice of harmony. It captures the sounds of growth, decay, and regeneration, echoing the rhythms of a living, breathing world. More than just a listening experience, it is an invitation to step into the sonic fabric of the forest and recognize ourselves within it—as participants, not outsiders, in the intricate balance of life.

Where the Trees Sing
Soundscape on a loop



FRAZ MATEEN

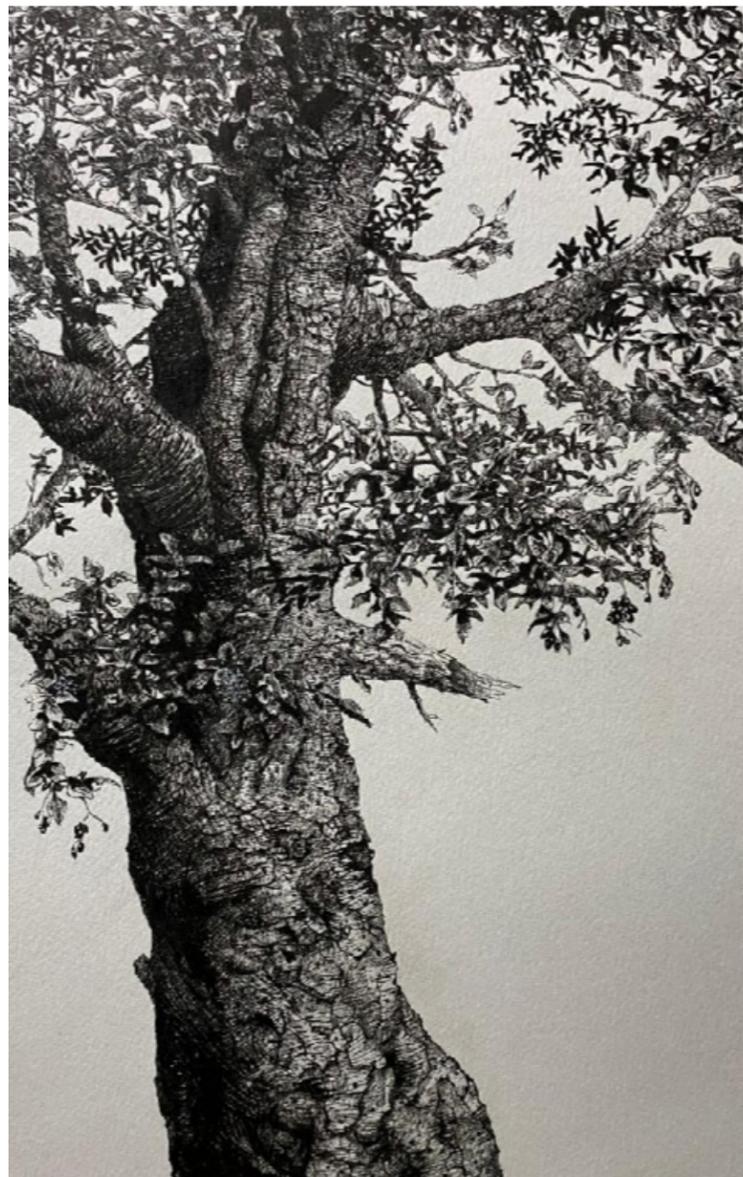
Karachi is my home and workplace, where I was born. I acquired my formal art education from the Karachi School of Art in 2006. My art career spans numerous exhibitions that have shaped my artistic journey. These include “Simply Paper” at the IVS Gallery in 2008 and “Behntreen” for Taza Tareen at Canvas Gallery in 2009, among many others. I have also exhibited internationally, with participation in events such as the “Indian Art Fair” in 2014 and the “Katmandu International Art Festival” in 2012. My recent exhibitions include “Eclectic Mix” at Sanat Art Gallery in 2020 and “Four Forty” at Sanat Art Gallery in 2022.

Throughout my art career, I have worked with a diverse range of materials. I have been showcasing my Paper Carved works since 2007, both nationally and internationally in various group exhibitions, and in a solo exhibition at Art Chowk Gallery in 2013.

My passion for teaching art goes parallel with my art career, as I have been a faculty member at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture since 2006. I have also made significant contributions to the art and production industry, with a substantial portion of my career dedicated to Gameover Productions.

ARTIST STATEMENT

These studies depict three native trees, Jamun (Java Plum), Keekar (Acacia), Deodar (Himalayan Cedar), that are widely used in woodworking, furniture-making, and related practices across Pakistan. These species are commonly found in homes, transformed into everyday objects and architectural elements. This body of work seeks to bridge the gap between the living, organic trees and the functional forms they become—inviting viewers to reconnect the familiar presence of wood in domestic spaces with the trees from which it originates.



Jamun (Java Plum)
Pen and Ink
10 x 18 inches
2025



Keekar (Acacia)
Pen and Ink
10 x 18 inches
2025



Deodar (Himalayan cedar)
Pen and Ink
10 x 18 inches
2025

DEODAR

Name: Deodar or Diyaar

(From devadāru in Sanskrit, meaning "divine wood")

Himalayan Cedar

Cedrus deodara

Region: Mountainous Alpine forests of Swat, Dir, Chitral, Murree Hills, Abbottabad and Azad Kashmir

Height: 213 ft

Annual Growth: 1-1.6 ft

Usage: Highly valued for its straight grain and durability, deodar wood has been widely used in building construction, furniture, and railway sleepers. It features prominently in the architecture of old temples, shrines, hill stations, and colonial churches.

Symbolism: The national tree of Pakistan, the deodar stands as a symbol of pride, stability, and deep rootedness. Sacred in several Himalayan traditions, it embodies cultural identity for mountain communities and appears in Sufi poetry as a metaphor for spiritual strength and divine shelter.

DEODAR:

The Himalayan Cedar, The Divine Wood The National Tree of Pakistan

Timber Lines: The Ruins of Empire in Himalayan Forests

For centuries, ancient deodar forests crowned the Himalayan and Hindu Kush ranges, an expanse of towering cedars that had witnessed the rise and fall of kingdoms. Then came the colonial machine.

From the early 19th century to the mid-20th century, British rule unleashed systematic destruction upon these forests through massive logging operations. The sacred cedars, prized for their straight grain, durability, and resistance to rot, were harvested to fuel colonial expansion — used in railway networks, military infrastructure, churches, and hill stations such as Murree and Shimla. Each felled tree fed the very infrastructure that tightened colonial control over pre-partition India.

The extraction followed a ruthless logic. As accessible forests were exhausted, logging operations pushed deeper into remote valleys and higher altitudes, fragmenting ancient habitats and triggering widespread ecological collapse. Centuries of growth, intricate forest ecosystems, and profound cultural meaning were sacrificed for immediate colonial utility.

Independence in 1947 brought little respite. Deodar remained a commercial resource, with scant focus on regeneration. A 1993 ban on commercial logging proved largely ineffective, undermined by weak enforcement and widespread illegal extraction. Today, climate change, glacial retreat, overgrazing, and continued deforestation threaten these sacred cedars across Pakistan's northern landscapes.

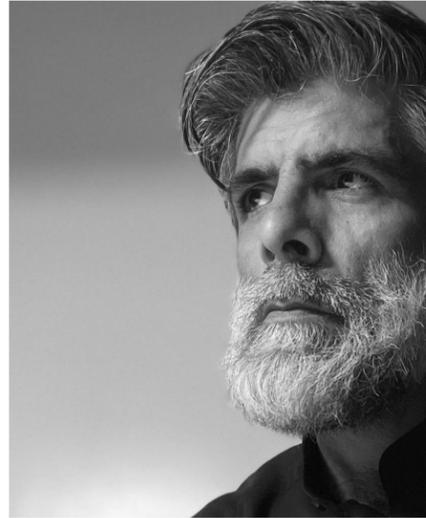
What began as imperial appetite has become an ecological requiem — the slow disappearance of forests that once seemed eternal.

*Let us be trees lined up row upon row
By the roads standing still unnoticed by anyone
Let the climber climb upon us
The one descending, descend
Let us protect within ourselves
The secrets of the ant and the sparrow
Let us bear upon our branches and leaves
This smoke, this rain, this storm of dust
And cradle in our limbs and hollows
A glowing ember for the unseen future*

Translated by Ayesha Nadir Ali

چلو سڑکاں تے رُکھ بن جائیے
پال و پال کھلو تے رہیے، کسے نوں نظر نہ آئیے
چڑھدی چڑھے تے لہندی لٹھے
کیڑی چڑی دا بھیت لکائیے
ٹانٹیاں پتراں اوپر جریے
دھوں دھوڑ دی برکھا
انگ بُکلاں وچ کوئی
بھلک دی چڑنگ جمائیے

بختم حسین سید



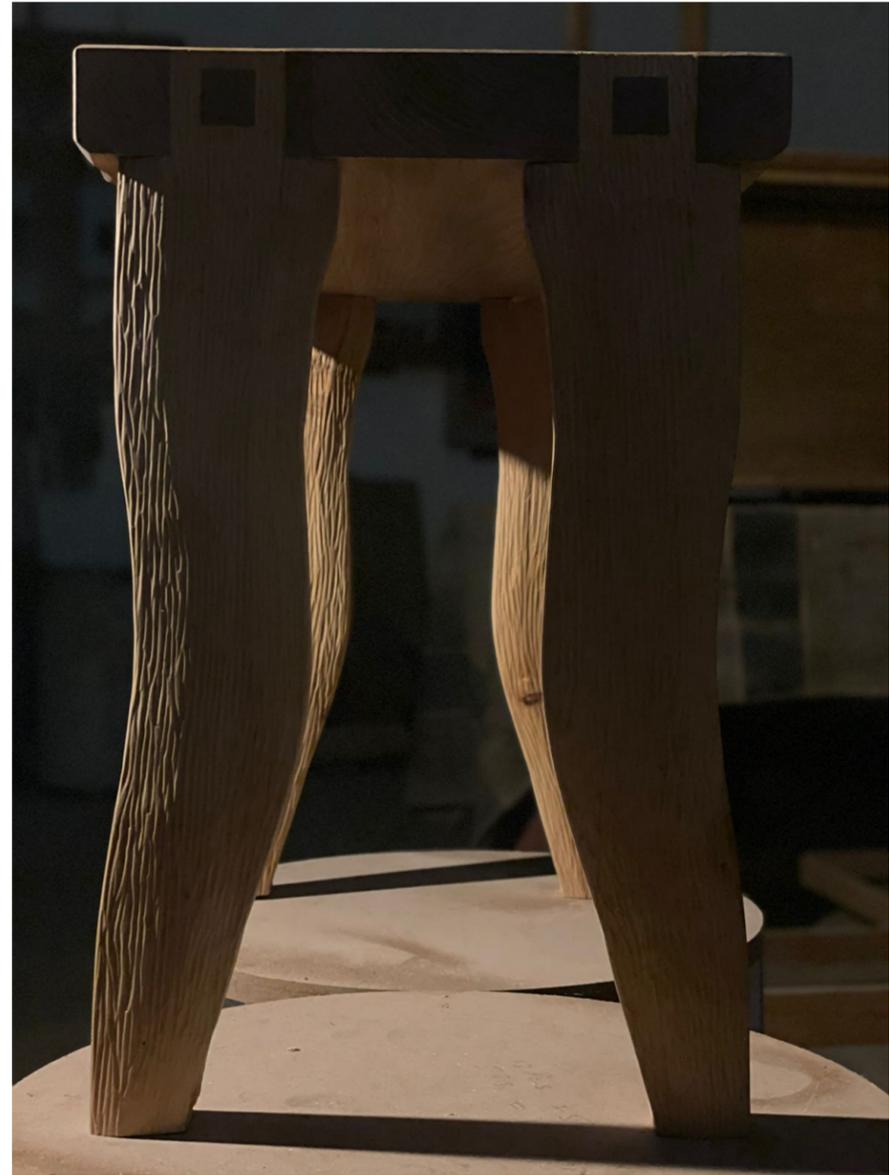
JUNAID UL ISLAM

Junaid ul Islam is a self-taught furniture designer and craftsman based in Karachi, Pakistan. With a natural inclination toward art since childhood, he has been drawing and sketching from an early age. In 2014, he formally established his design studio under the name Junaid & Saif, where he specializes in crafting bespoke residential and commercial furniture.

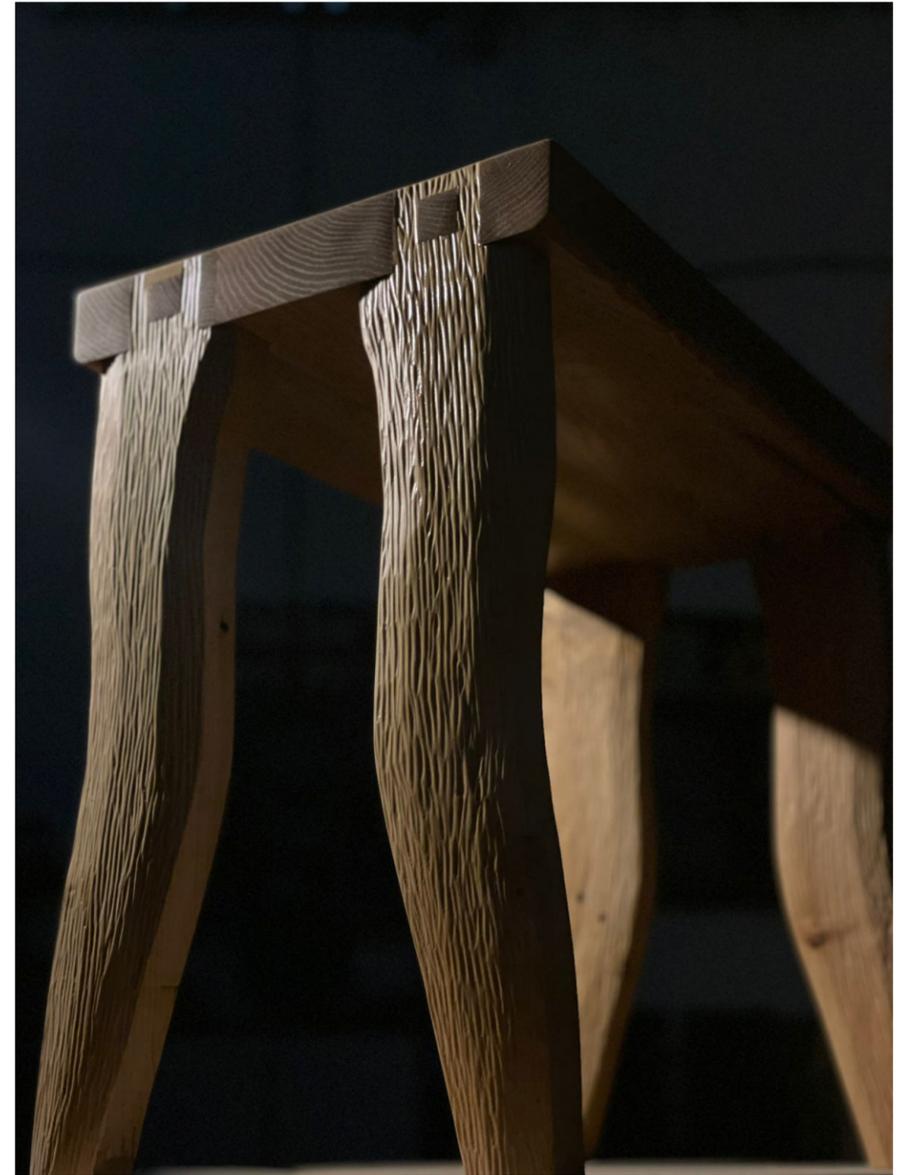
Driven by an intuitive and observational approach to design, Junaid's work is rooted in deep respect for materials, precision joinery, and the quiet intelligence of form and function. With over 15 years of practice, Junaid's journey has been one of trial, learning, and reflection. His process is centered on observing the natural world and recognizing the divine design within it, which he translates into thoughtfully crafted pieces. His work stands as a testament to perseverance, vision, and a passion for meaningful craftsmanship.

ARTIST STATEMENT

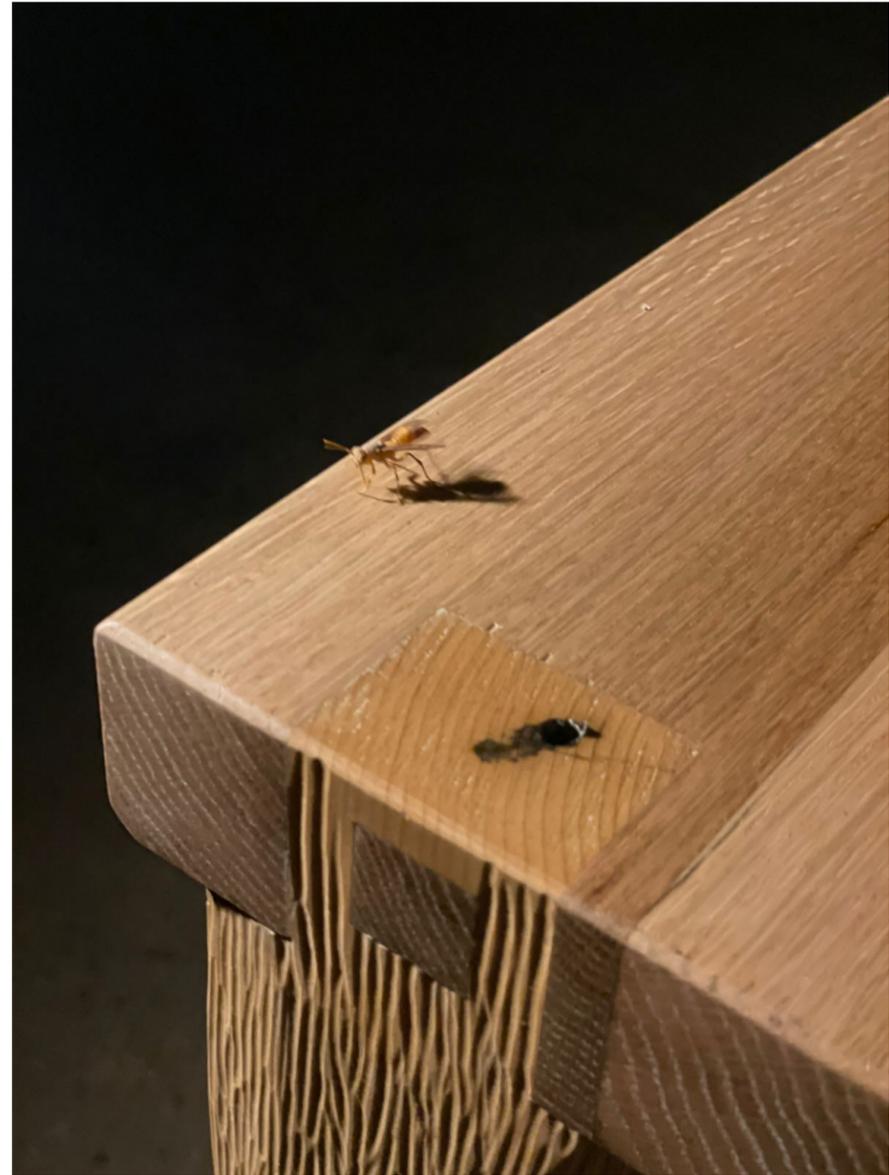
The Fuji Bench and Stools draw inspiration from Terunobu Fujimori's architectural philosophy, which blends playful observation with refined craftsmanship. These pieces were constructed using Kumiki; a centuries-old Japanese joinery technique; by interlocking pieces of wood without the use of nails, glue, or fasteners. A solid red oak plank appears to float atop cedar legs that subtly echo the curves of human limbs, creating a sense of organic unity. This work explores balance and harmony in nature—both imitating and extending it.



Fuji Bench
Red Oak, Cedar
65 x 14 x 18 inches
2025



Fuji Bench
Red Oak, Cedar
65 x 14 x 18 inches
2025



Fuji Stool
Red Oak, Cedar
20 x 12 x 18 inches
2025



Fuji Stool
Red Oak, Cedar
20 x 12 x 18 inches
2025



KHADIJA-TUL-KUBRA ARCHITECTS & OPEN DOOR WORKSHOP

This installation is a collaboration between Khadija-tul-Kubra Architects and Open Door Workshop — practices that converge across material, memory, and place. Together, they explore the sensory life of objects and the layered stories they carry, working at the intersections of craft, architecture, and installation.

Khadija-tul-Kubra's architectural practice spans over 30 years and is shaped by a wide range of experiences and explorations. Her work is marked by a keen eye for detail and a sensitivity to creating engaging spatial experiences. Nature plays a central role in her projects, often blurring the boundaries between indoor and outdoor environments.

Open Door Workshop is an extension of Open Door Design Studio, working at the intersection of architecture, craft, and sustainable making. Through material experimentation and reuse, it creates installations, objects, and spatial works.

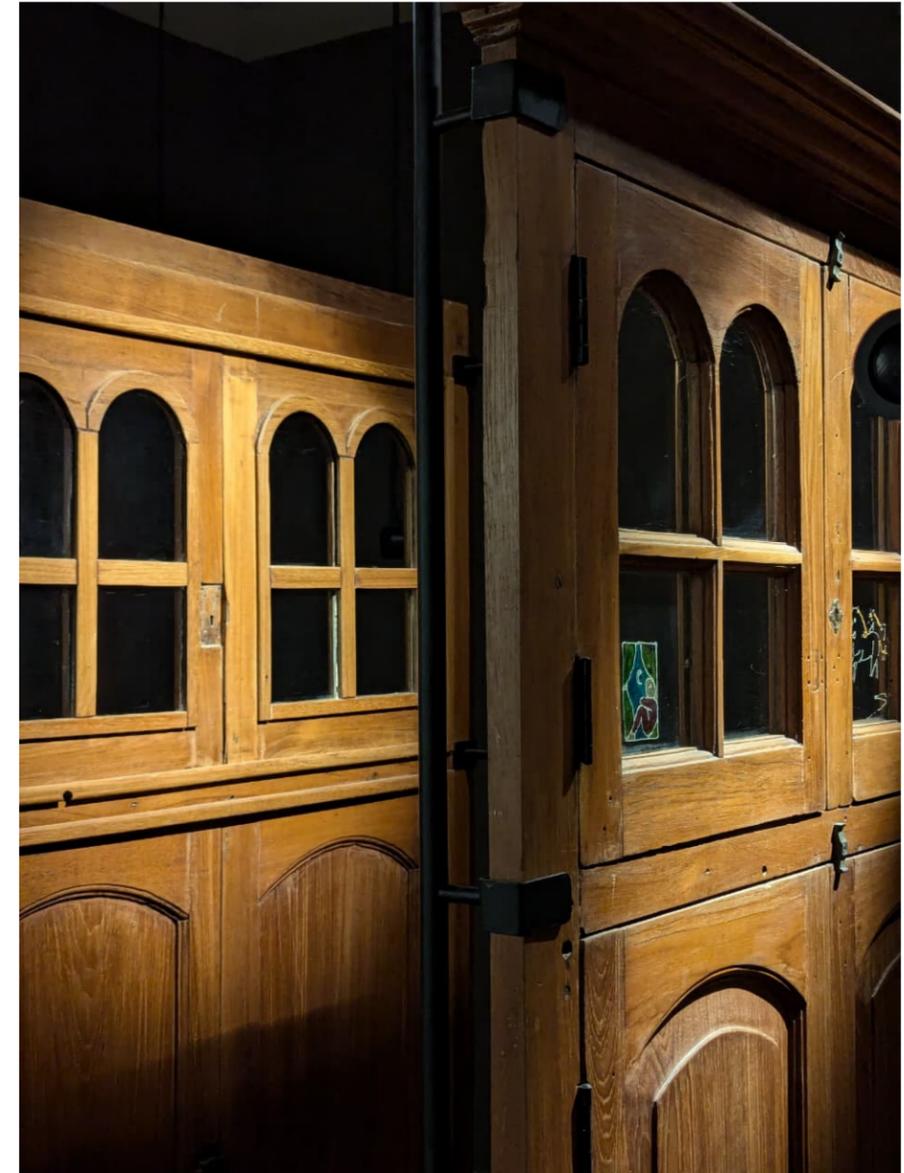
ARTIST STATEMENT

Echoes of Wood is an exploration of memory, material, and sound — tracing the layered life of a pair of wooden doors, once part of a wardrobe in an old haveli. Suspended in the gallery space, the doors invite viewers into their story: a journey from the teak forests of Burma to a market in Karachi.

Accompanied by a custom soundscape — from forest winds to river crossings, from workshop chisels to domestic life — the piece evokes the sonic memory carried within the grain of wood. Partially restored, with their original scars left visible, the doors stand as both relic and witness: a vessel for sound, labor, and time. Echoes of Wood invites us to listen differently — to objects, to histories, to what lingers in the material long after its making.



Echoes of Wood
Burma teak and an accompanying
soundscape



Echoes of Wood
Burma teak and an accompanying
soundscape

Knots in Time







MADIHA HYDER

Madiha Hyder (b.1983) graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVSAA), Karachi in 2006. Hyder leans towards representation as the medium for visual expression and she packs each image with meaningful cues that point to history, popular culture, and notions of power, inequality and diversity.

In her narratives, Hyder addresses on-going socio-political issues while she also explores more personal concerns. She often uses portraiture or zoomorphic symbolism as a means for communication. Her artworks show tropes of everyday reality and tell stories about the contradictions of our times; the traditions we cling to, uncomfortable modernisms we embrace willingly and paradoxes we live with. More recently, Hyder has pivoted towards universal concerns that have skewed the world order, touching the lives of every responsible global citizen. Her current explorations engage themes of resilience and natural systems, as seen in her Banyan Tree series—a meditation on wood as living witness and sanctuary.

Hyder's paintings have been exhibited in innumerable solo and group shows in various galleries across Pakistan since she graduated. While continuing her own practice, she conducts art workshops privately and is part of the adjunct faculty at IVSAA.

ARTIST STATEMENT

The banyan tree is a testament to wood's transformative power—its expansive form emerges from the interwoven complexity of mature trunks, while aerial roots descend as time-worn threads, hardening into enduring pillars. This series examines the banyan's physical presence: the deeply fissured bark of its aged trunk, the gnarled aerial roots, and the organic interplay of its growth. Through focused observation, the banyan reveals wood not as lifeless material, but as a testament to resilience—perpetually shaped by time, weathering, and its own unwavering vitality.



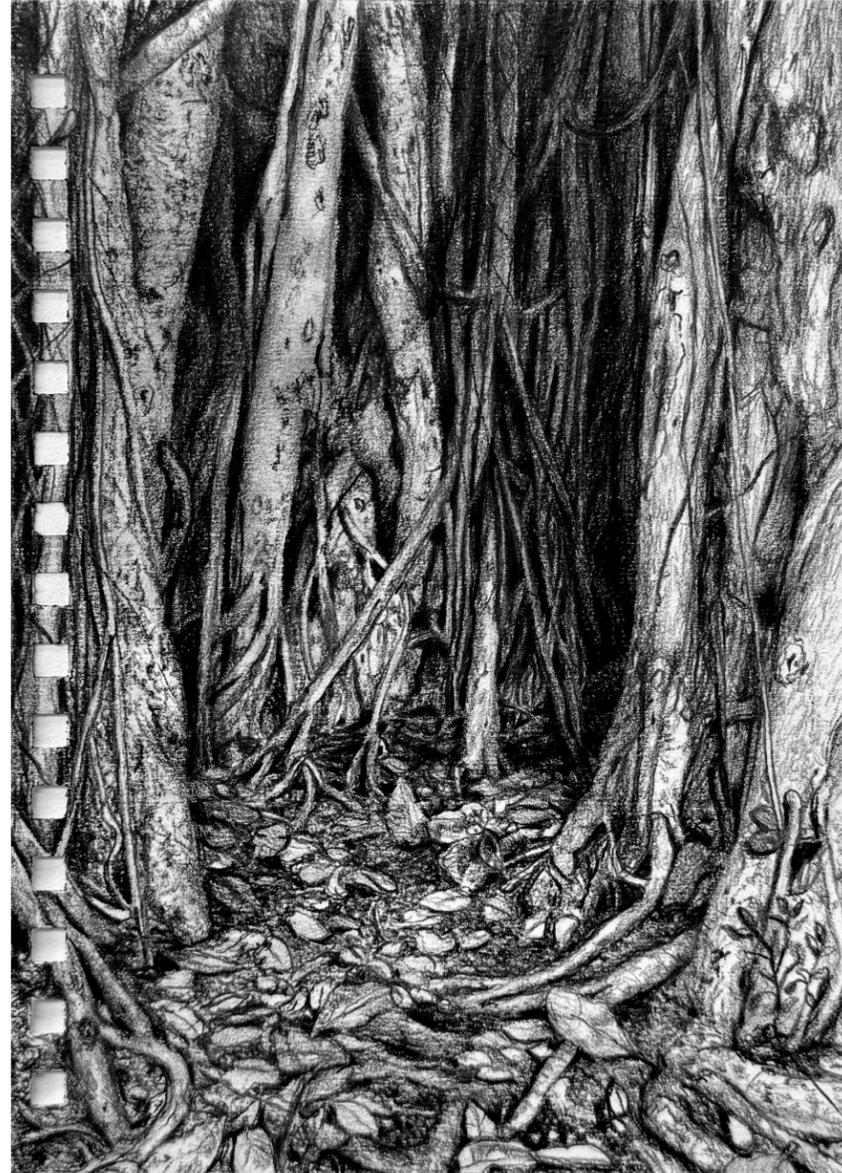
The Sanctuary of Roots & Wings
Charcoal and graphite pencils, powder and sticks
29.5 x 18.5 inches
2025



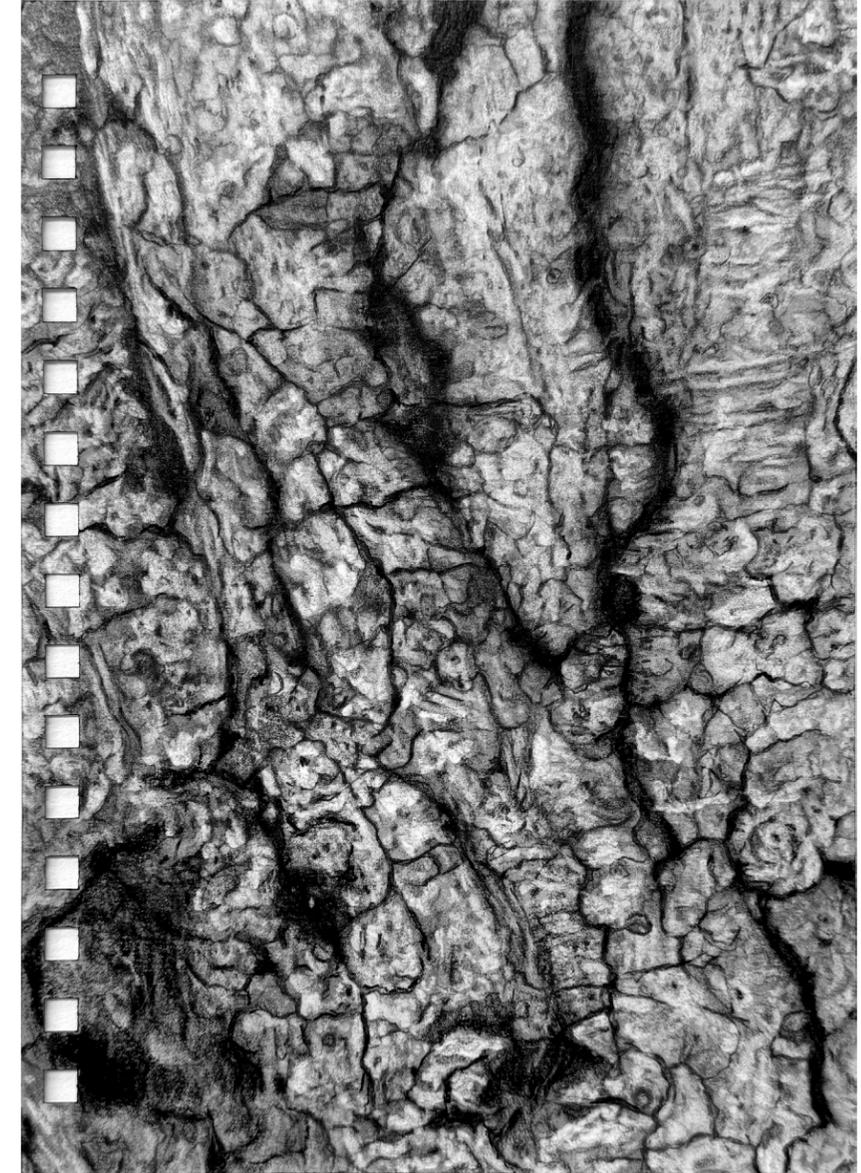
Sanctuary Anatomy I
Charcoal & graphite pencils & sticks
5.8 x 8.3 inches
2025



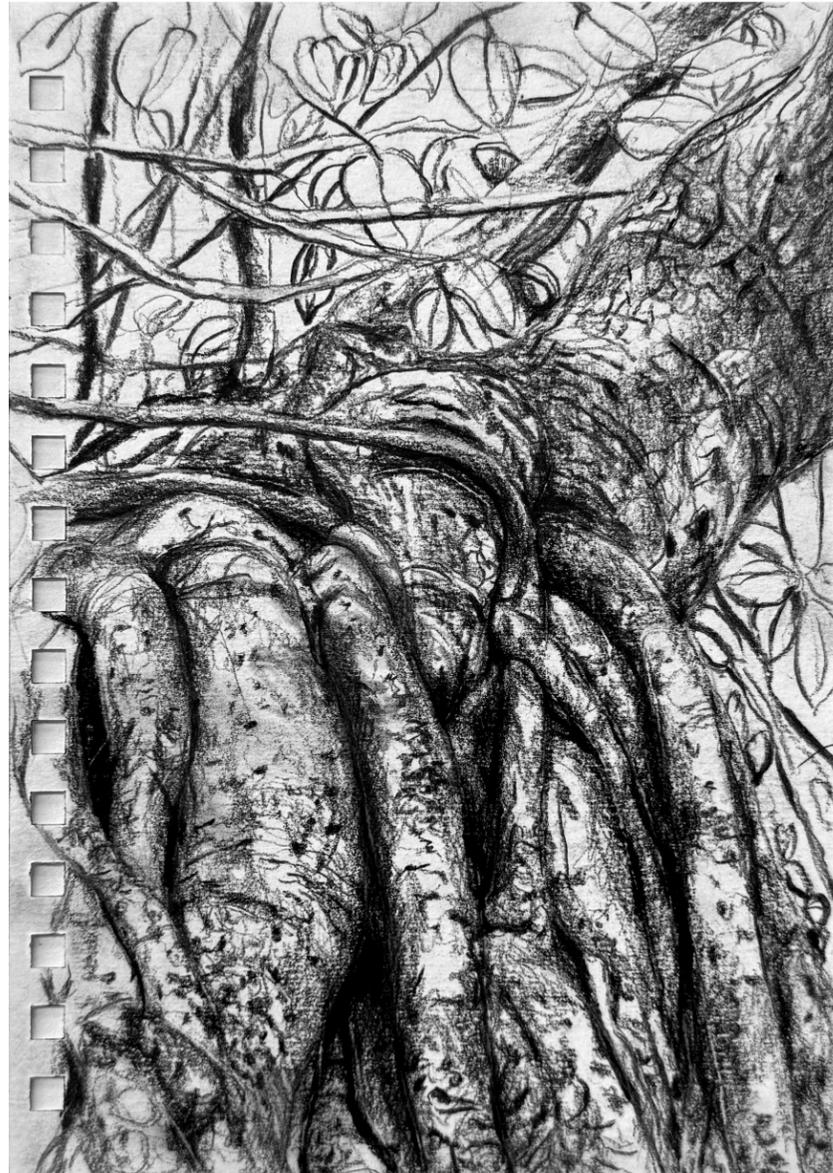
Sanctuary Anatomy II
Charcoal & graphite pencils & sticks
5.8 x 8.3 inches
2025



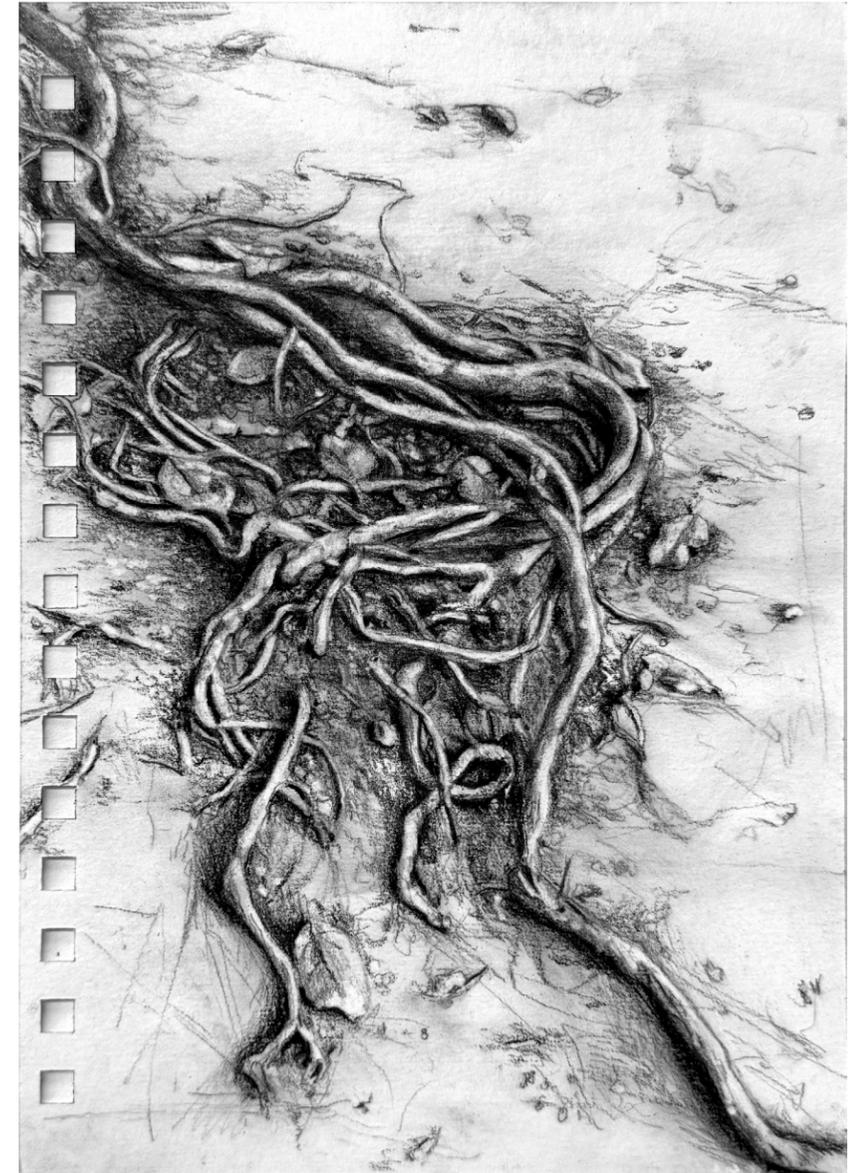
Sanctuary Anatomy III
Charcoal & graphite pencils & sticks
5.8 x 8.3 inches
2025



Sanctuary Anatomy IV
Charcoal & graphite pencils & sticks
5.8 x 8.3 inches
2025



Sanctuary Anatomy V
Charcoal & graphite pencils & sticks
5.8 x 8.3 inches
2025



Sanctuary Anatomy VI
Charcoal & graphite pencils & sticks
5.8 x 8.3 inches
2025

The Paradox of Chandan: The Sandalwood Tree

Few trees embody contradiction as elegantly as the sandalwood — known as Chandan in Hindi, Sundal in Persian and Urdu, and Sri Gandha (the noble, fragrant one) in Sanskrit. A semi-parasite, it survives by sending haustoria — specialized roots that draw water and nutrients from nearby trees.

Yet, its most treasured quality lies deep within its richly aromatic heartwood that makes it one of the most valuable trees in the world.

Here lies the paradox: while alive, sandalwood is scentless. Its legendary fragrance remains locked away, only released when the tree is cut. Only in death, it yields the woody perfume it has nurtured in silence for decades — a humble tree that lives through others, yet in dying, becomes incense that purifies temples and hearts alike.

In Urdu and Persian poetry, sandalwood is a symbol of purity, beauty, and devotion. In Sufi tradition, its burning scent signifies the ultimate sacrifice — the soul dissolving into fragrance for the Divine, revealing its essence only when broken by suffering.

چل سکی سر پہ لیے خواجہ کا پیارا صندل
آبِ اُفت کو ملا کر جو بنا یا صندل
چاند تاروں کی طرح ہو گئے چہرے روشن
جن و انساں نے جبیں پر جو لگا یا صندل

مولود چشتی

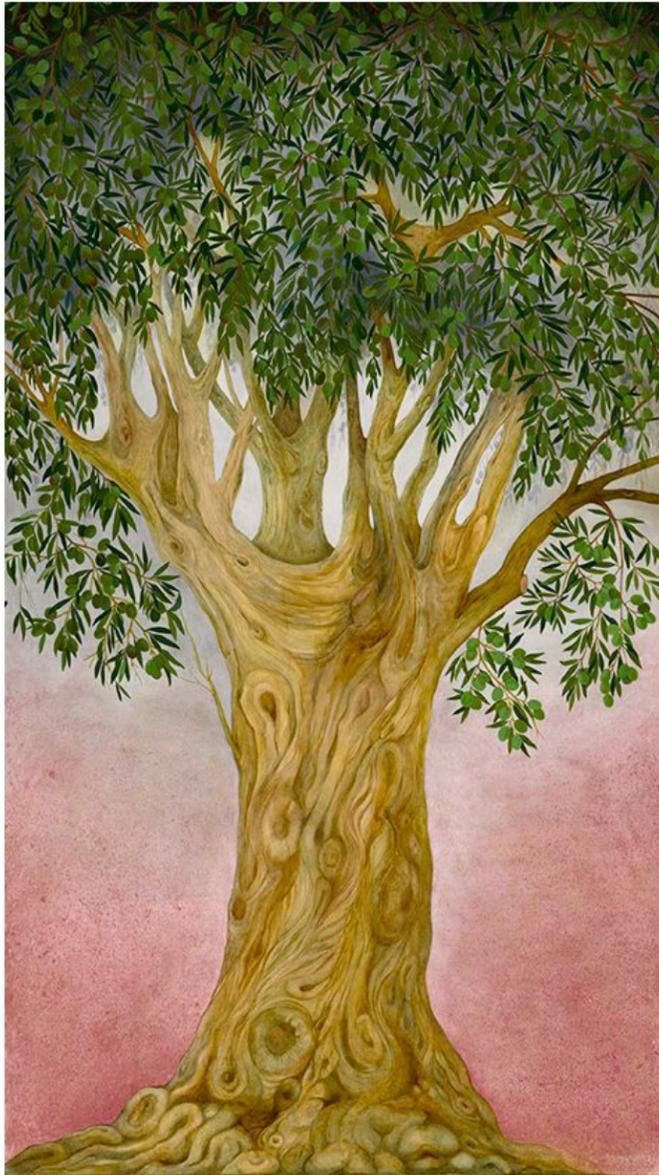




NIDA BANGASH

Interdisciplinary artist Nida Bangash was born in Iran, raised in Pakistan, and currently lives in North Texas. While she works in a variety of media, Bangash was formally trained in Persian and South Asian miniature painting. Utilizing intricate patterns and precise details, Bangash's works weave in personal identity and experience to investigate the complexities of immigration, colonialism, culture, and race. Bangash earned an MA (Hons.) Visual Arts degree from the National College of Arts in Lahore and an MFA from Southern Methodist University. Additionally, Bangash received the Charles Wallace Arts Fellowship to study at the Prince's School of Arts in London.

Bangash's artwork has been shown in the Crow Collection of Asian Art Museum, Dallas; The Reading Room, Dallas; Kent Gallery, Florida State College Jacksonville; Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design; Idea Store, Whitechapel Gallery, London; Belconnen Arts Center, Canberra, Australia; thejamjar, Dubai; Saeed Akhtar Studio, Lahore; Zahoor-ul Alkhlaaq Gallery, National College of Arts, Lahore; Drawing Room Gallery, Lahore; and Canvas Gallery, Karachi.



Living Archives - The Olive Tree

Watercolor and gouache on watercolor paper

42 x 72 inches

2025

ARTIST STATEMENT

Living Archives is a series of painted trees that carry stories of displacement. From the bergamot tree that lost its Southeast Asian origins and took new roots in Italy (later steeped into English breakfast tea). Also, the Persian orange tree that migrated to Greece, or the Chinese mandarin tree transplanted across Europe, each tree speaks of movement, adaptation, and survival. And then there is the Palestinian olive tree—some uprooted and burned by Israeli forces, others quietly replanted in distant lands like Pakistan—all bearing witness to loss, resilience, and longing.

The first in this series is the Living Archives-The Olive Tree, inspired by a 900-year-old olive tree that still stands amidst one of the last remaining orange orchards in Reeha, Palestine, lovingly tended by Najati and his daughter Nisreen.



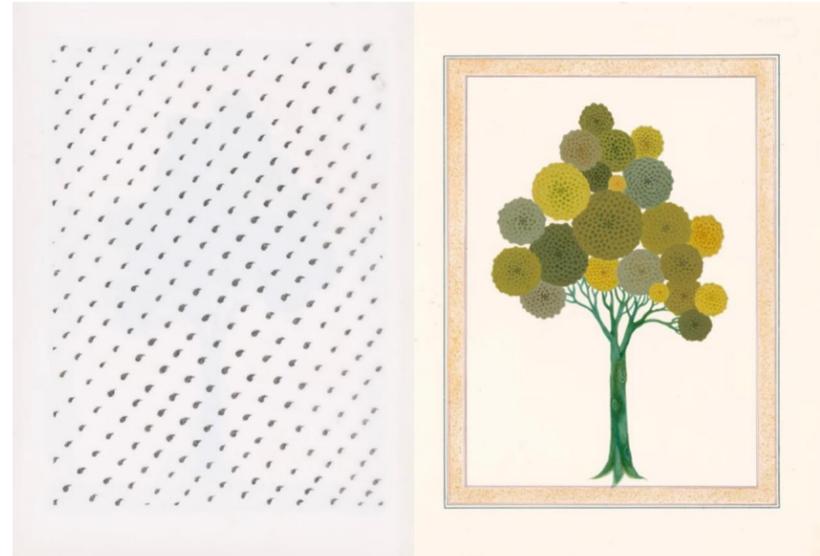
I Am A Tree – Artist Book Video
23 leaves; 31 x 40 x 3 - cm
2013

ARTIST STATEMENT

This body of work is inspired by a chapter from Orhan Pamuk's novel, *My Name is Red*. The story is narrated by an incomplete drawing of a tree which was lost and doesn't know which story it belongs to. It's a story of longing, an expression of a yearning to find its place within the narrative.

Colophons/Notes: This book was produced in 2013 during an Artists' residency in Canberra, Australia. It features nine paintings conceived and created over a ten-year period and is bound using traditional Coptic binding. The hard cover was made of Australian Oakwood veneer. Inside are nine paintings on 950gm watercolor paper and nine drawings on mylar paper, using letterpress printing in collaboration with Caren Florance.

The nine paintings and nine drawings of nine trees are displaced from their original painting and story, re-homed in the book creating a new interwoven narrative.



I Am A Tree – Artist Book Video
23 leaves; 31 x 40 x 3 - cm
2013

Falling from my story like a leaf falls in fall...

Extract from *My Name is Red* by Orhan Pamuk,
translated by Erdag M. Göknar

I am a tree and I am quite lonely... They allege that I've been hastily sketched onto non-sized, rough paper so the picture of a tree might hang behind the master storyteller. True enough. At this moment, there are no other slender trees beside me, no seven-leaf steppe plants, no dark billowing rock formations which at times resemble Satan or a man and no coiling Chinese clouds. Just the ground, the sky, myself and the horizon. But my story is much more complicated.

The essential reason for my loneliness is that I don't even know where I belong. I was supposed to be part of a story, but I fell from there like a leaf in autumn.

... I know nothing about the page I've fallen from. My Request is that you look at me and ask: "Were you perhaps meant to provide shade to Mejnun disguised as a shepherd as he visited Leyla in her tent?" or "Were you meant to fade into the night, representing the darkness in the soul of a wretched and hopeless man?" How I would have wanted to complement the happiness of two lovers who fled from the whole world, traversing oceans to find solace on an island rich with birds and fruit! I would've wanted to shade Alexander during the final moments of his life on his campaign to conquer Hindustan as he died from persistent nosebleed brought on by sunstroke. Or was I meant to symbolize the strength and wisdom of a father offering advice on love and life to his son? AH, to which story was I meant to add meaning and grace?

I don't want to be a tree, I want to be its meaning.



RAASMIA HAQUE

Raasmia Minal Haque is both an architect and footwear designer based in Karachi, Pakistan. Haque has been formally trained in her disciplines at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi, at Polimoda in Florence, Italy, and at the University of Arts London.

In 2020, Haque founded her architectural firm, Lakeer, through which she has led the design and execution of large-scale residential and commercial projects. Her practice is rooted in a thoughtful exploration of space, form, and function—balancing conceptual rigor with material sensitivity. Driven by a persistent curiosity for new forms of creative expression, Haque launched TheSideProject, a small label of handcrafted footwear. Designed by her and produced in Karachi, the label reflects her architectural sensibilities translated into minimal, wearable design.

Haque's artistic practice combines architecture, design and critique. Through her research on traditionally gendered spaces and objects, she creates unique artefacts which have been displayed both on Pakistani and International gallery platforms.

ARTIST STATEMENT

This body of work is crafted with oak wood to form utopian artefacts – part critique, part proposition. Drawing from household objects traditionally associated with women, the forms are reimagined through collective and multifunctional use. They explore, sometimes literally, what it means “to be in another’s shoes.”

Embedded within are gestures of daily care: cradling a child, winnowing grain, sieving flour, straining tea, grinding spices, preparing meals. These artefacts serve as quiet suggestions toward futures where care is shared, and domestic labor is no longer bound by gendered expectation.



As the word Godh indicates lap in Urdu; hence a godi jhoola. This artefact was derived from the beautiful engagement of the body into the act of gently rocking a child to sleep, while also considering the limitation of the parent not being able to multitask. A simple curved wood mechanism with a woven comfortable lying spot ensures a space for the child without compromising their body structure. The minimally protruded foot rests create a push and swing motion.

The Godi Jhoola (Dock Swing)
Stained Oak wood, Metal, leather
2020



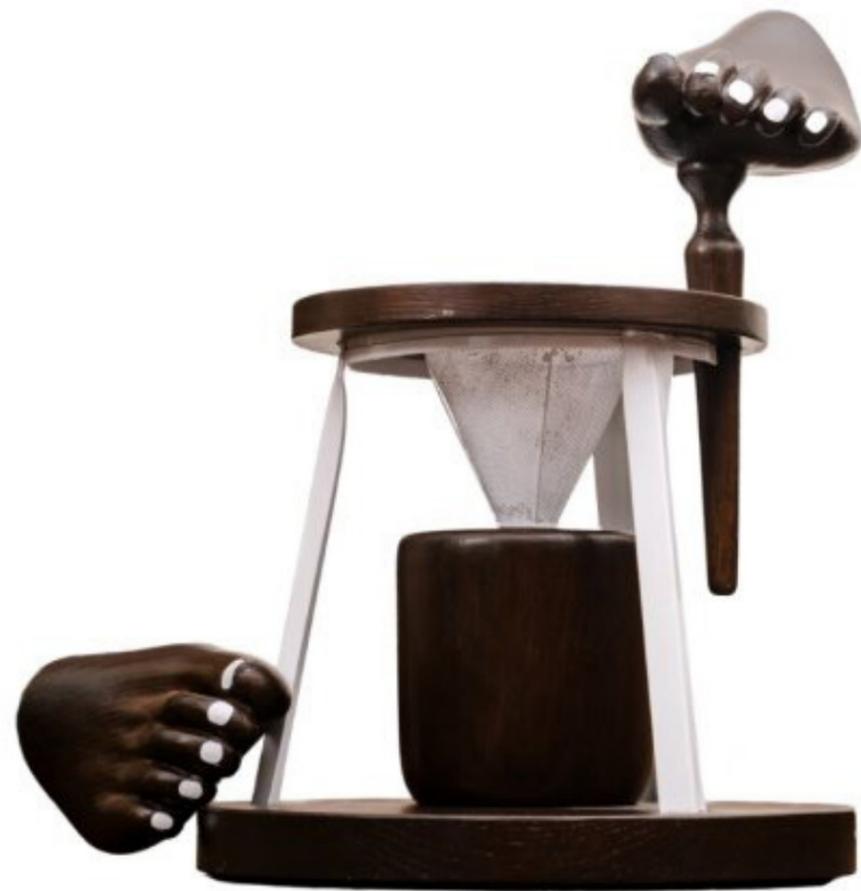
The notion of grinding one's own spices is hereditary and has been a known women's task. This footwear artefact subtly breaks the years of patriarchy and places itself into a gender indiscriminating mould; this artefact structures itself with the usage of calf muscles and strength to grind/smash wet and dry spices for cooking, salads, marinades and chutneys.

The Hawan Dasta (Mortar and Pestle)
Stained Oak wood, Metal, leather
2020



This artefact is designed for one of the 'basics' of the traditional kitchen. Sieving and sifting flour; the act of achieving refined wheat without lumps or any visible impurities. The stained oak and protruding steel sifter propose the act to be alternatively achieved through feet movements.

Aata Chalni (Flour Sieve or Sifter)
Stained Oak wood, Metal, leather
2025



An artifact reminiscent of a chemistry laboratory tool, the tea and milk strainer functions exactly as its name suggests. Its design thoughtfully incorporates the placement of feet to ensure stability during use. The elegant structure features an embedded oak cup, intended for holding a warm beverage.

Chai/Doodh Chalni (Tea and Milk Strainer)
Stained Oak wood, Metal, leather
2025



A widely used device across all labor classes in the country due to fuel shortages, the portable gas cylinder stands out as a compact and functional design artefact. Here paired with stainless steel beakers with stained oak foot stabilizers, the portable gas stove suggests blurring class and gender distinctions, serving as a unifying tool in everyday life.

Portable Gas Choolha (Portable Gas Stove)
Stained Oak wood, Metal, leather
2025





RAKA STUDIO

The Studio was co-founded by three brothers in 2017 at their family home. With no training in craftsmanship or design, they started experimenting and creating their first pieces using the ancient Japanese techniques of bending wood. Later they sought assistance of experienced masters to direct them in various steps of crafting a piece, enhancing the skills of the designer-makers. Their works now mainly consist of furniture, illumination and sculpture.

They have created a unique design language inspired by the flows of nature, which allows the Studio to explore the variance that can be achieved in design. Each piece is handcrafted using free-form methods allowing each piece to be unique.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Saleh, Waleed, and Rayan explore the creative possibilities of free-form wood bending techniques. The works presented here highlight the versatility of wood and its transformation into functional pieces of art—fostering a unique connection between the material and those who engage with it. Each piece is distinct in its details, telling a story not only of how it was crafted, but also of how the wood responded throughout the process.

The work is broadly divided into two series featured in this exhibition: the Vrksa Series and the Fluentum Series. The Vrksa Series employs thinner wood, allowing for light, flexible forms. In contrast, the Fluentum Series uses broader wood, enabling more intricate designs shaped through refined techniques, developed over years of experimentation.



Chair No. 5 - Vrksa Series
Ash wood and velvet
W 31.5" x D 24.5 x H 29" - SH 16"
2025



Chassis No. 1 - Fluentum Series
Oak, sheesham and velvet
W 74" x D 19 x H 37" - SH 18.5
2025

The image features a wooden sculpture composed of multiple thin, light-colored oak strips. These strips are intricately woven and curved into a complex, organic form that resembles a stylized leaf or a branch. The sculpture is positioned on a light-colored, reflective surface, which creates a clear, dark shadow of the object below it. The lighting is soft and directional, highlighting the texture and grain of the wood. In the bottom left corner, there is a block of text providing details about the piece.

Form No. 9 - Vrksa Series
Oak
W 93.5" x D 29" x H 22"
2025



SAROSH HEBATZAI

I am Sarosh A. Hebatzai, a 2023 Film graduate from IVS and a storyteller at heart. My passion lies in capturing and crafting narratives through photographs, videos, and diverse forms of content. For me, storytelling isn't bound to a single medium—it's about evoking emotion and preserving moments in their most honest form.

One of my most meaningful works emerged in a quiet meadow at the foot of Nanga Parbat. Surrounded by silence and raw beauty, I realized that stories often live in the spaces between words and images. That moment shaped my approach: rooted in authenticity, inspired by nature, and driven by a desire to connect.

Whether behind a camera or weaving a narrative, I aim to tell stories that linger, resonate, and reflect the world as I see and feel it.



The Tabla's Journey
Documentary film
6.20 mins
2025



SIBT-E- HASSAN AZAD

Sibte-Hassan Azad graduated in 2016 from the Department of Communication Design at the Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture. Raised in the conflict zone of Quetta, Balochistan, he turned to philosophy and poetry at a young age to make sense of the world around him. This early engagement shaped him into a resilient artist, and his photographs and films reflect the depth of his perspective and lived experience.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Mulberry Trees of Mariabad is a short documentary inspired by a group of passionate individuals from the Hazara community in Quetta, Pakistan. Each evening, they walk through their neighborhood planting fast-growing, fruit-bearing mulberry trees— an act that blends environmental commitment with personal ritual. Known for their deep roots, generous shade, and resilience, these trees have become symbols of sustainability and hope in the Hazara neighborhood. In spring, Mariabad comes alive as residents and visitors gather to enjoy the berries, fostering a sense of joy and connection. Through intimate interviews and evocative cinematography, the film celebrates nature, community, rootedness, and the quiet power of collective action.



Mulberry Trees of Mariabad
Documentary film
6.19 mins



SOHAIL ABDULLAH

Sohail Abdullah is a visual artist based in Karachi. He is a Fulbright Grantee and has an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University, School of the Arts and a BFA from The Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture.

He has been an artist in residence in Karachi, Bangalore, and Bombay. His commissioned works have been shown in Richmond VA, Dubai, Manama, Leeds, Glasgow, London, and over a dozen cities across Pakistan. He presently works out of his studio and is adjunct faculty at the Indus Valley School.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Velum vivarium is a work made of living (and dying) plants; it is a work of fiction, an assemblage, a ruse. Real Epiphytes pretend-inhabiting a piece of root-wood, leftover from a tree that that fell in a Karachi storm.

Perhaps the plants are more like hopeful offerings tied to the trunk of a tree, or garlands on a deity in a linen shrine. Planting into a site of desecration and decay, fecundity and plenty. An ode to the ruthless death at the core of nature and its unseizing urge to regenerate.

A vivarium is an enclosed semi-natural environment to house living fauna; literally 'place of life'. Velum is membrane from the latin velum, meaning cloth, curtain, or veil. The work is a proposition for a new terrarium: a semi permeable ecosystem, sustained on electro-powered light and mist. It's linen veil allowing only an obscured view but also making possible a breathing-through. An alternative to a familiar lucent encasement, as in a green house, or a bell jar, or a vitrine.



Velum Vivarium
Wood, MS, Plant material, Substrate, humidifier,
lighting, fabric
4'- 0"x 6'- 5"x 9'.8" inches
2025



Velum Vivarium
Wood, MS, Plant material, Substrate, humidifier,
lighting, fabric
4'- 0"x 6'- 5"x 9'.8" inches
2025



USMAN SAEED

Usman Saeed is a Lahore-based gardener, artist, researcher, and educator whose work draws deeply from nature's resilience. He works out of his garden studio, Bagh-e-Sadia, named in loving memory of his late mother, Sadia Saeed (1942, Occupied Jammu and Kashmir – 2001, Lahore). A graduate of both the National College of Arts and the Royal College of Art, Saeed's multidisciplinary practice bridges historical traditions with contemporary ecological concerns.

ARTIST STATEMENT

These scrolls bring together dialoguing art traditions from early 17th-century China (Ming dynasty) and Mughal South Asia (the reign of Jahangir and Noor Jahan), depicting natural history in a lucidly carefree, mildly urgent, and spontaneous manner. They belong to the ongoing series Gardenfinds, produced in Bagh-e-Sadia, Lahore—a little paradise garden that is part restaurant, part rest house, and forever home to innumerable species, appearing in life, death, and beyond.

One of these is a family of birds known as Peelak or Golden Orioles, sought by the gardener for their outward charm and inner musical beauty. He studied their portraits from the early 1600s—looted from Mughal South Asia and now housed in the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford. This act of time travel becomes an exercise in acknowledging the timelessness of nature.

In *Din (Day)*, they are shown singing while perched on the wood of a Conocarpus tree, feasting on hairy caterpillars that indulge in its flowers and fruit. The battle to defend this tree from being branded harmful by the most invasive species of all—humans—becomes easier because Cono trees give rise to Peelak songs.

In the more abstract *Raat (Night)*, the gardener reflects on a personal accident during a violent storm (exacerbated by human-induced climate crisis), in which even a fallen Cono tree remains a beacon of music and light.



Peelak Songs - Din & Raat (from Gardenfinds series)
17 x 8.7 x 0.7 inches each
Watercolour, Gouache, Walnut and Korean ink on Wasli paper
2025



Peelak Songs - Din & Raat (from Gardenfinds series)
17 x 8.7 x 0.7 inches each
Watercolour, Gouache, Walnut and Korean ink on Wasli paper
2025



USTAD HANIF KHAN

Ustad Muhammad Hanif began his musical journey under the tutelage of Pandit Chandan Das and Ustad Parvez Paras. He also received intensive training in Dhrupad music from Ustad Hafeez Khan, the eminent exponent of the Taalwandi Gharana. His bansuri (bamboo flute) recitals reflect a unique amalgamation of Dhrupad and Khayal, characterized by emotive depth, volume control, and the expressive use of meendh (gliding notes).

A professional flautist since 1998, Ustad Hanif has performed extensively on national platforms such as PTV, All Pakistan Music Conferences (Lahore and Karachi), Lahore Music Forum, Al-Khayal Music Society, NAPA, and many others. Internationally, he has recently represented classical music in the United Kingdom, with live performances in London, Birmingham, Manchester, and Southampton.

In addition to performing, Ustad Hanif is deeply involved in the making of his own bamboo flutes, which he also crafts for his students. Since 2014, he has been researching and building the Swarmandal—a string instrument resembling a harp—reviving and exploring its musical potential.





ZORAL NAIK

Zoral Naik is a photojournalist and an architectural photographer based in Karachi, Pakistan. He runs Zoral Naik | Architecture Photography — a specialized practice focused on documenting the built environment across residential, retail, and institutional sectors.

Alongside his architectural work, Naik is also an internationally published photojournalist. His photographs and visual stories have appeared on all major local news platforms, as well as leading international outlets including The Guardian, Al Jazeera, The Telegraph, Voice of America, and TRT World.

Beyond commissioned work, Zoral explores visual details within the urban landscape as part of his personal practice, capturing the not-so-obvious elements of everyday surroundings. His work often leans toward painterly, abstract compositions that challenge photography's nature as a realistic medium, inviting viewers to see the familiar in unfamiliar ways.
www.zoralnaik.com

ARTIST STATEMENT

Cut tree trunks, photographed in their rawest state — just after being sliced, numbered, and measured — reveal an unexpected intimacy. As a photographer drawn to detail, I became increasingly fascinated by the quiet drama within these surfaces: cracks like fault lines, rings like memory, and ink markings that feel almost like autopsy notes.

Each log carries a story — not just of nature, but of time, trauma, and use. The numbers scribbled across them

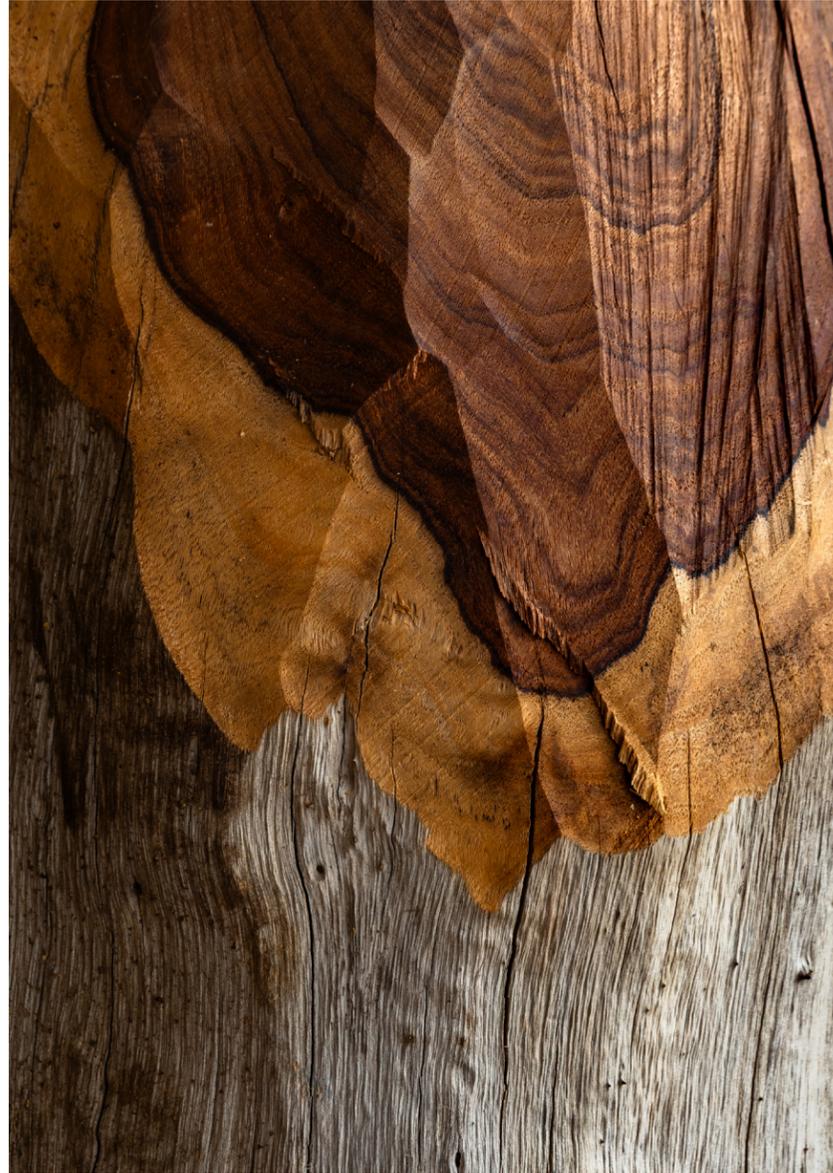
are cold and functional, yet they linger like unresolved questions: What was this tree before it was reduced to a resource? Trees don't speak, but they remember. These prints offer a glimpse into those memories — revealing both the raw origin and quiet rebirth of something once alive



Autopsy No. 1 Sheesham
Archival pigment print on Canson Rag
Photographique (Inkjet)
19 x 25 inches
2025



Autopsy No. 2 Kekar
Archival pigment print on Canson Rag
Photographique (Inkjet)
19 x 25 inches
2025



Autopsy No. 3 Sheesham
Archival pigment print on Canson Rag
Photographique (Inkjet)
19 x 25 inches
2025



Autopsy No. 4 Walnut
Archival pigment print on Canson Rag
Photographique (Inkjet)
19 x 25 inches
2025



Autopsy No. 5 Kekar
Archival pigment print on Canson Rag
Photographique (Inkjet)
19 x 25 inches
2025



Autopsy No. 6 Jamun
Archival pigment print on Canson Rag
Photographique (Inkjet)
19 x 25 inches
2025

Special gratitude to all who supported us in making this exhibition possible, and to those who generously lent artworks and artifacts from their collections.

Noorjehan Bilgrami

Bader Munir

Nasra & Najeeb Omar

Sharif Awan

Arshad & Sara Faruqi

Fazil Jamili

Ayesha Nadir Ali

Ustad Hanif Khan

Abdul Salam Kamboh

Naheed Yahya

Irfan Haider Tabla Nawaz

Ustad Yunus Khan Sagar

Atiqa Zehra, Hamza Muslim

and the team at Zahra Ebrahim Workshop

Rishm Syed

Sadiqa Tayyebaly

Sohail Zuberi

The Team at Koel Gallery

