

RED

The color red is one of the most powerful and complex shades in the visual spectrum. It evokes a range of emotions and holds deep cultural significance across the world. This exhibition, 'RED' aims to explore the various interpretations of red through the works of contemporary artists, offering a vibrant and thought-provoking experience.

Exploring Muhammad Ashraf's celebration of Lahore's landscape, the 'Sumbal – red flower' blossoms in all its glory. His works, a harmonious blend of realism and abstraction, capture the admiration for this vibrant bloom, inviting viewers to lose themselves in its beauty. Moving forward, we encounter Muhammad Atif Khan's captivating pieces. His use of roses and sweets symbolizes happiness and hope, while ants and flies introduce elements of discomfort and negativity. This contrast urges reflection on the duality of life and finding balance within it.

Munawar Ali Syed's installation serves as a reminder of the world's escalating violence and the erosion of truth. Barbed wire, transformed into vessels of wisdom, symbolizes obstacles turned into opportunities for growth and resilience. Saamia Ahmed's thoughtful works delve into the bloodied history of the Mughal empire. The red tomb of the unknown princess evokes the passion and violence of this historical period, painting a vivid picture of a bygone era.

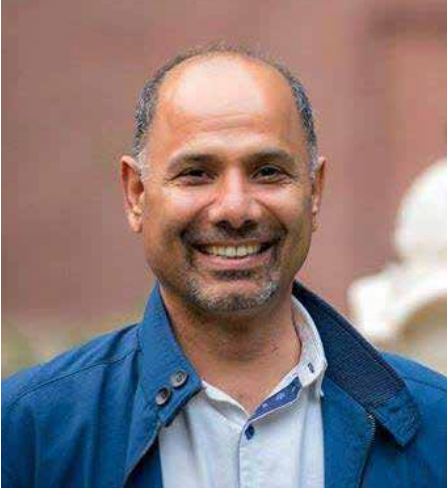
Sana Arjumand's work transports visitors into the realm of mysticism. Using red to signify a transformative spark, her work celebrates the breaking of the self and the emergence of light, challenging conformity and embracing the freedom of being. Inspired by the ancient game 'Snakes and Ladders', Shireen Bano Rizvi's paintings observe societal relationships and the path to enlightenment. Through sacred geometry and classical techniques, she has given profound meaning to her works, emphasizing light and hope amidst life's challenges.

Finally, Zobia Yaqoob's art explores the spiritual realm with various hues of red. Bold yet soft gestures capture the dynamic and subtle nature of existence, portraying the cycle of life and the essence of the inner spirit.

This exhibition offers a unique and enriching experience, highlighting the emotional depth, cultural significance, natural beauty, and innovative uses of red. This exploration will not only deepen our understanding of this vibrant color but also provide a space for reflection and connection with the countless ways red influences our lives.

A celebration of the diverse interpretations and powerful impact of the color red in art.

FS Karachiwala
Curator



Muhammad Ashraf

Artist Bio

Muhammad Ashraf, a fine arts graduate from the National College of Arts, Lahore (1993), furthered his education with an MA in Fine Arts from the University of East London, UK (2003). With a professional career that intricately blends roles as an art educationist, artist, curator, and writer, Ashraf has consistently contributed to the creative field since his graduation.

He has an extensive exhibition record, including eleven solo shows and numerous group exhibitions in both Pakistan and the UK. His scholarly contributions encompass published papers and art reviews in various local and international newspapers, periodicals, and research journals. In 2010, Ashraf founded the art gallery 'Drawing Studio' in Lahore, which he managed until 2014. Currently, he serves as an Associate Professor and the Chairperson of the Department of Art and Design at COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus.

Artist Statement

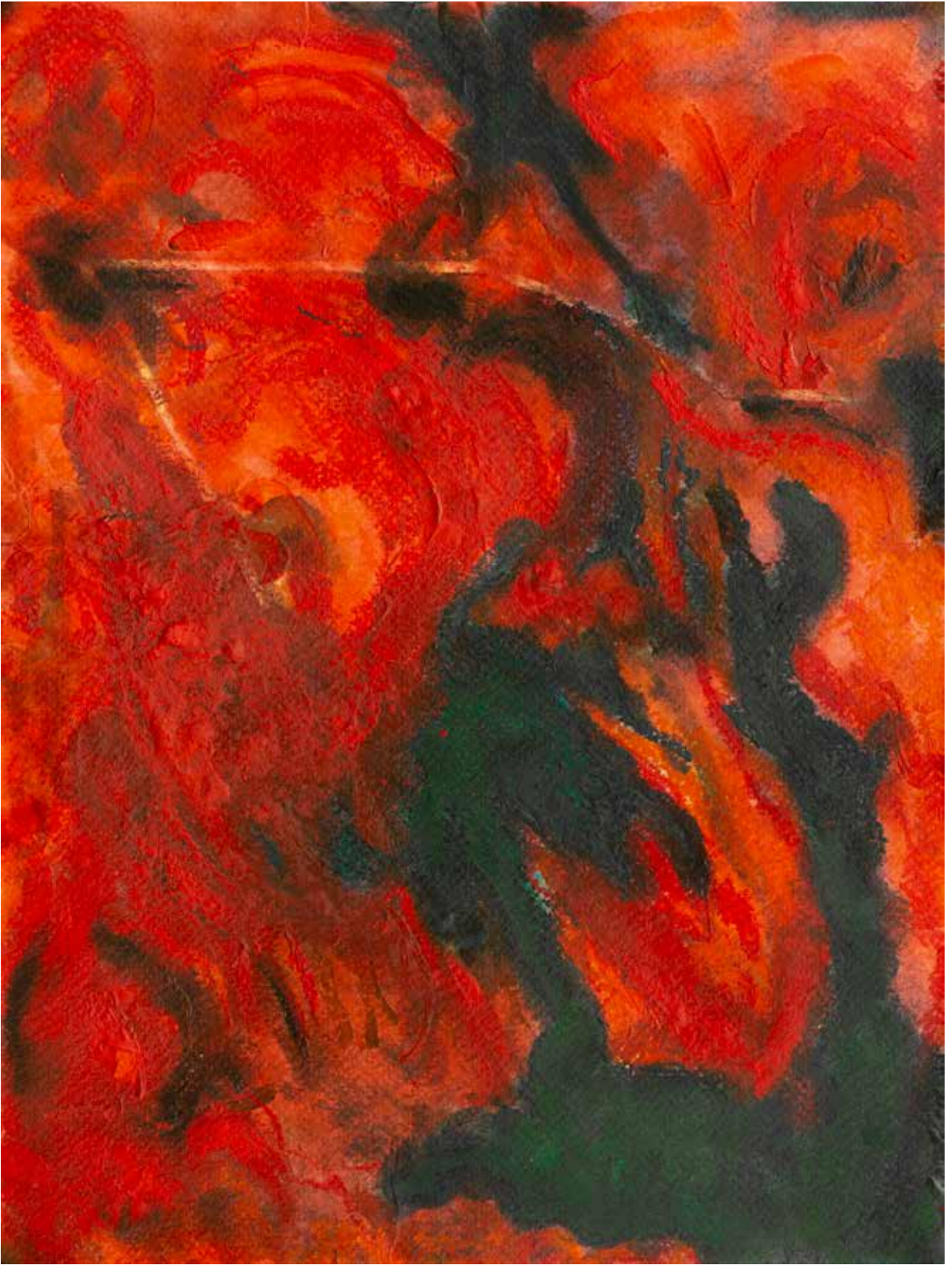
The subject of these works comprises “Sumbal – red flower” a tree that matches its name in beauty. Lahore, the city of gardens, appears mind-blowing at the time of the bloom of these trees and the works attempt to articulate awe and admiration for this bloom. I have a nostalgic relation with Lahore’s landscape painting. My initial art training – drawing – ensued with Khalid Iqbal, a Pakistani maestro of landscape painting who painted Lahore’s landscape throughout his life. I paint the happenings in everyday life, from the pleasure that natural beauty yields to an effrontery of socio-political systems. The process results in uncanny abstraction of subject, materiality, and method. Neither it’s realism nor pure abstraction. It is a process-oriented distortion.



Untitled I, 2023
Oil, and Charcoal on Paper
30 x 22 Inches



Untitled II, 2023
Oil, and Charcoal on Paper
30 x 22 Inches



Untitled III, 2023
Mixed Media on Academie Water Color Paper (cold pressed, acid-free 300g).
12.5 x 9.5 Inches



Untitled IV, 2023
Mixed Media on Academie Water Color Paper (cold pressed, acid-free 300g)
12.5 x 9.5 Inches



Muhammad Atif Khan

Artist Bio

Muhammad Atif Khan graduated with Distinction in 1997 in Fine Art from the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. An illustrious career spanning 27 years has seen a plethora of international awards, residencies and workshops. In 1998, he was awarded the 'UNESCO-ASHBURG Bursary for Artists', and was appointed Artist in Residence at the Darat-Al-Funun in Amman, Jordan.

He received the 'Commonwealth Arts & Crafts Award' in 2007. Atif Khan was Artist in Residence at the Swansea Print Workshop in Wales (2005- 06), London Print Studio in England (2008) and Glasgow Print Studio in Scotland (2008). He has shown his work in several prestigious museums; 'Bradford Museum' in UK, 'Aga Khan Museum' in Toronto, Canada, 'Sharjah Art Museum' in UAE and 'Islamic Museum of Australia' in Melbourne, Australia. He has also participated in art workshops in Bangladesh, India, Jordan and UK. He has had 23 Solo shows in Pakistan, UK, Jordan, Switzerland and India.

In 2022, he was appointed co-curator of the Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh which is the oldest and largest art biennale in Asia. In 2015, he won the Lahore Biennale Foundation's Open Call competition; 'Intersections' and developed a large scale, site-specific installation 'City within a City' at the Chowk Istanbul of Mall Road in Lahore, Pakistan. Also, Atif Khan won the ADA Award; 2020-21 in the category of Digital Arts and Nigaah Art Award; 2023 in the category of Printmaking.

Alongside his independent art practice, Muhammad Atif Khan serves as Assistant Professor in the Department of Fine Art at his alma mater, National College of Arts in Lahore.

Artist Statement

In this body of works, I have used images of roses and sweets as symbols of happiness, hope, and positivity. These images represent the beautiful moments in life that bring us joy and remind us of the sweetness that surrounds us. On the other hand, I have also incorporated images of ants and flies to symbolize the uncanny, discomfort, and negativity present in our lives. Through these contrasting elements, I aim to convey that every happy moment has an element of incompleteness in it while every sorrow carries a glimmer of hope within it. Life is a combination of both positive and negative experiences, and it is through embracing this duality that we can truly appreciate the beauty in all its forms. My artworks serve as a reminder to find balance amidst this dichotomy and to cherish each moment with acceptance and gratitude.

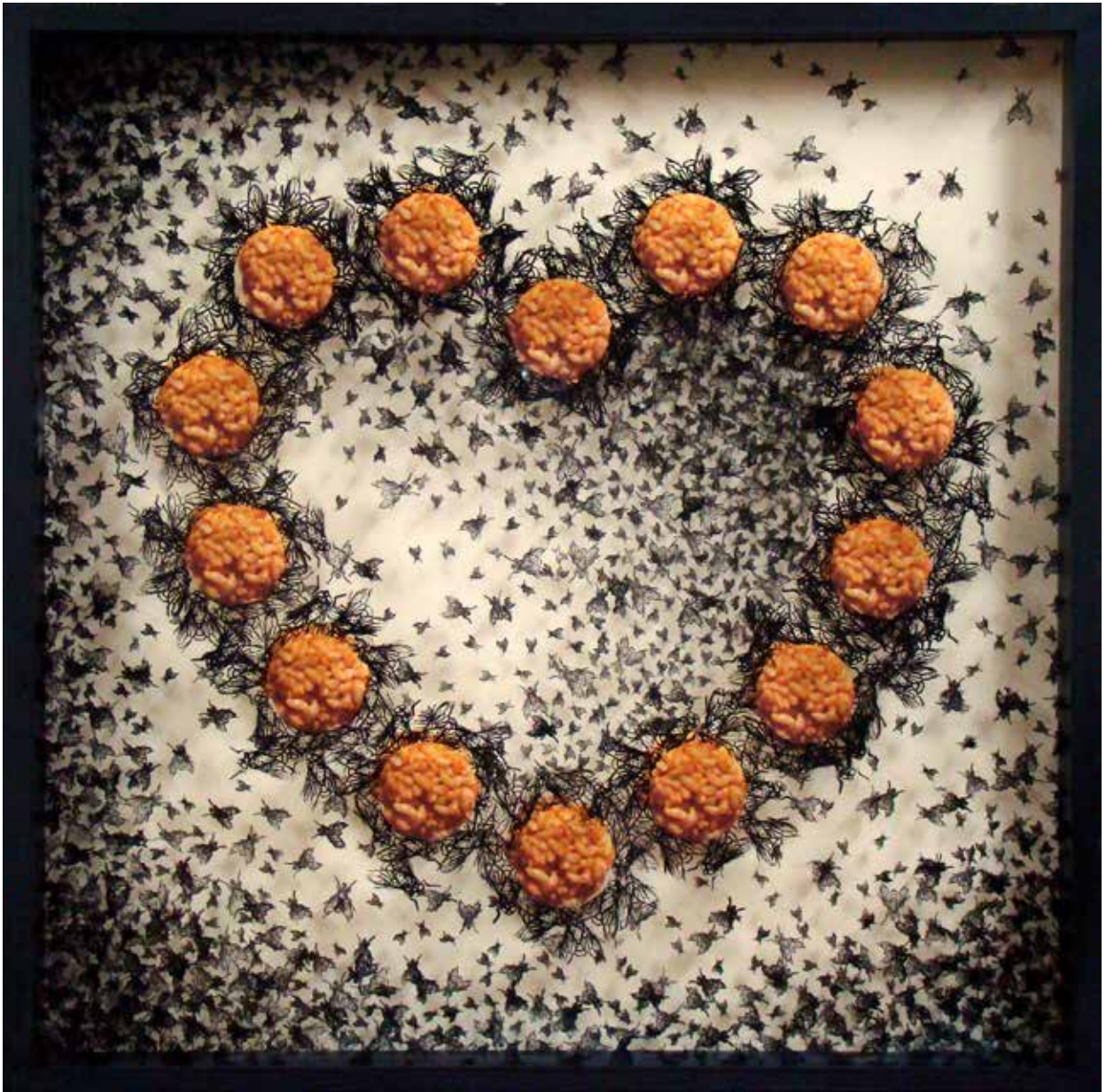
Through the use of hand-stamping and pigment print cutouts on composite layers of acrylic sheets, installed in wooden box frames, I aim to create a visual representation of the complexities of human emotions. The delicate beauty of roses and the sweetness of treats are contrasted with the unsettling presence of ants and house flies, creating a sense of unease and mystery. However, my works are open-ended in nature and I want the viewers to connect with my pieces on a deeper level by recognizing their own emotions within them.



Sweet Dreams I
Hand-stamping with ink and archival print cutouts on
composite layers of acrylic sheets, installed in wooden box-frame
21.5 x 21.5 inches



Sweet Dreams II
Hand-stamping with ink and archival print cutouts on
composite layers of acrylic sheets, installed in wooden box-frame
21.5 x 21.5 inches



Sweetheart I
Hand-stamping with ink and archival print cutouts on
composite layers of acrylic sheets, installed in wooden box-frame
21.5 x 21.5 inches



Sweetheart II
Hand-stamping with ink and archival print cutouts on
composite layers of acrylic sheets, installed in wooden box-frame
26 x 18.5 inches



Munawar Ali Syed

Artist Bio

Munawar Ali Syed (b.1975) is a multidisciplinary artist and art educator based in Karachi. He holds BFA from National College of Arts (1999) and MA (Art Education) from Beacon House National University (2017) Munawar continues to explore and express through new materials and processes through drawing, installation, sculpture and performance. He received two ADA National

Awards (2019) for his performance and site-specific works. Munawar was the winner of Sovereign Asian Art Public Choice award (2019). He is an Associate Professor at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi. Syed's artworks have been shown in eight solo exhibitions and numerous national and international group exhibitions including Karachi Biennial 2017-19. He has also collaborated with local Pakistani artists and craftsmen such as Truck artist and produce several public artworks as accessible public art initiatives also such as 'Rung dey Karachi' (2010), "Reimagining Walls of Karachi" and "Great wall of Truck Art" (2017). He was a working group member of Vasl Artist Collective. Syed participated in international residencies and workshops including Burragorang International Artist's Workshop, Australia (2003), The Vasl International Artist's Workshop, Pakistan (2004), Braziers International Artist's Workshop, UK and Westburry Farm Residency, UK (2005). In 2016, Syed was awarded the SATHA innovation award for his contribution to the public art.

Artist Statement

Read red

Within the intricate lattice of barbed wire, I find a poignant commentary on the world's escalating violence and the erosion of truth. Each twist and intersection symbolize the complexities inherent in our collective journey. My work challenges societal norms, blending harsh materials into structured forms. This sculpture invites contemplation on how obstacles—both physical and intellectual—can transform into vessels of wisdom. In a world where false knowledge proliferates, this piece stands as a testament to resilience and enlightenment.



Read Red I, 2023 - 24
Brass electroplating on metal
16 x 9 x 1.5 inches



Read Red II, 2023 - 24
Brass electroplating on metal
16 x 9 x 1.5 inches



Read Red III, 2023 - 24
Brass electroplating on metal
16 x 9 x 1.5 inches



Read Red IV, 2023 - 24
Brass electroplating on metal
16 x 9 x 1.5 inches



Read Red V, 2022 - 24
Acrylic on Fiber glass
23 x 16 x 4 inches



Saamia Ahmed

Artist Bio

Researcher, PhD Art History/ Archaeology candidate, artist, educationist, and home- maker, Saamia Ahmed began her career in 2000 as a Fine Art graduate from the NCA, obtaining an MA (Hons) in Visual Art in 2003.

She is currently Associate Professor Fine Arts at the National College of Arts and one of the founding members of the Collective Research on Mughal Lahore (CROMLahore). She resides in the city of her ancestors, and continues to make mind- blowing discoveries about Lahore's artistic history.

Artist Statement

The Tomb of the Unknown Princess located at the corner of the Punjab Secretariate is a lone 17th century architectural icon nestled between Ranjit Singh's General Ventura's mansions and pleasure garden. A vaulted interior containing a carved marble sarcophagus etched with Salim Akbar's name sits in a niche. Was she Anarkali or some other unfortunate paramour- stories abound. As the plaster crumbles, paintings reveal themselves, biding their time.

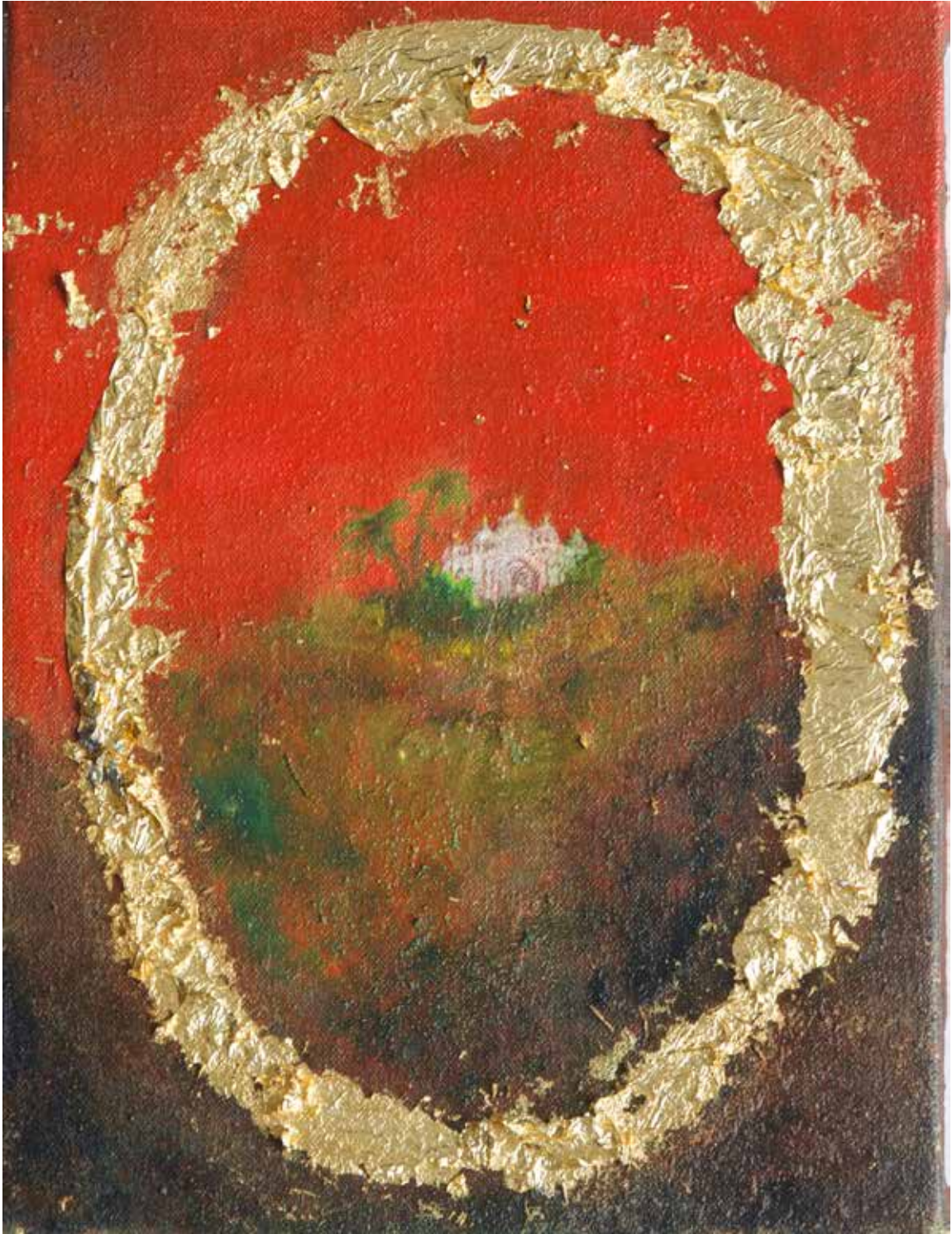
This body of work allows the imagination to sink in thoughts of the bloodied history of this beautiful monument. The viewer is asked to contemplate through the artist's eye the idea of the forlorn woman so deeply connected to the violent and passionate history of the Mughal empire- which still resounds today with human emotion and imagination. Red is the perfect colour for her tomb and her story and the stories of all those who resided thereafter.



Is it You?, 2024
Convex mirrors and metal
7x5 inches



Looking for a Leader, 2023-4
Mixed media on camel skin,
convex mirrors, backlit with remote
Diameter: 26 inches
Height: 3 inches



Tomb of the Unknown Princess/ Anarkali, 2024
Oil on canvas
12 x 9 inches



Tomb of the Unknown Princess/ Anarkali (Detail from Wall)
Oil on canvas
12 x 9 inches



Sana Arjumand

Artist Bio

Sana Arjumand is a contemporary multidisciplinary visual artist specializing in painting. Born in Karachi in 1982 and currently based in Lahore, Pakistan, she graduated in 2005 from the National College of Arts, Lahore. Her work explores mysticism and spirituality, featuring intricate layers of paint, hypnotic figures, and birds symbolizing higher dimensions.

Influenced by miniature and Renaissance painting, her unique style includes perspectives, halos, and organic shrubs symbolizing growth and positivity.

Sana has exhibited globally, including solo shows at the Columbia Museum of Art, Museo Diocesano in Milan, and the Nake Art Museum in Korea. Her work has also been shown at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, Aicon Gallery in New York, and various international art fairs and biennales. Recognized by Blouin Artinfo as a "Top Ten Rising Star," her work is featured in prominent publications and collected by notable institutions worldwide.

Artist Statement

My new body of work is an exploration of Mysticism. A calling to look at the mundane as the profane; to observe the Illusive Reality, creating a doorway to witness a trance like state, even for a moment.

The symbol of the bird as a higher being remains central, although in my new work the experience of how these beings intersect with the human form is a focal subject. The impact of the higher being on the human consciousness is the transformative spark and catalyst for these works.

This spark initiates the momentum of the breaking of Self, signified in these pieces by the illuminated eyes; a representation of breaking form, allowing the Light to shine through. Old patterns are shattered and there is a letting go of the definitive Self. Like illuminated manuscripts that offered a glimpse into another world when it was shrouded in darkness, this work acts as an experience of a higher place, which is always present and always calling to us.

These paintings journal my personal inner journey and offer a space for everyone to reflect on their own inner realm. The light realms and mystic beings I paint flow fluidly into multiple incarnations, offering many streams for people to grasp. If we forget the world for a minute, we may remember the higher reality we are all born to.

In this way, my work is defiant of conformity. There is a freedom of being, a kind of 'is-ness' that doesn't shape itself to comfort others. A higher realisation of fearlessness and hope, abundance and growth, compassion and perseverance, all encompassed by love.

In this work there is an ebb and flow of tension between energies that contrast, but are paired, like red and green on the colour wheel. Each colour is independent and full of beauty on its own, but it's in their pairing and the tension between them never touching, that we see their full brilliance. Red is the colour of activity and expansion, green of stability and grounding and where they come together you have movement in stillness, this is where the door to Light lies.

In between movement and stillness lies the force of searching for the Essence. The Essence is like the fragrance of the blooming rose, a pinnacle of beauty amidst the thorns, wherein lies the Truth. Truth is what every heart seeks.



Surmount-tree, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
24 x 24 inches



Shireen Bano Rizvi

Artist Bio

Ms Shireen Bano is a fine artist / painter – has worked extensively in the area of miniature painting with concentration in Mughal and Persian style. She has also worked in contemporary art, is well versed with water and oil paint, and has done tempera, sculpture and graphics in printmaking. Ms. Bano has a master's degree in the Visual Arts from the National College of Arts (NCA), where she

has also taught Miniature, Drawing, and History & Heritage courses. She has also been a visiting faculty member at the Department of Miniature at the Oriental School of Arts, Lahore, and Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, Lahore. She has done numerous exhibitions in Pakistan and abroad, and is currently the Coordinator for the MA Visual Arts Program at the National College of Arts, Federal Chartered Institute, Lahore.

Artist Statement

You can find the essence of me in geometry

Gautam Buddha

The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.

Aristotle

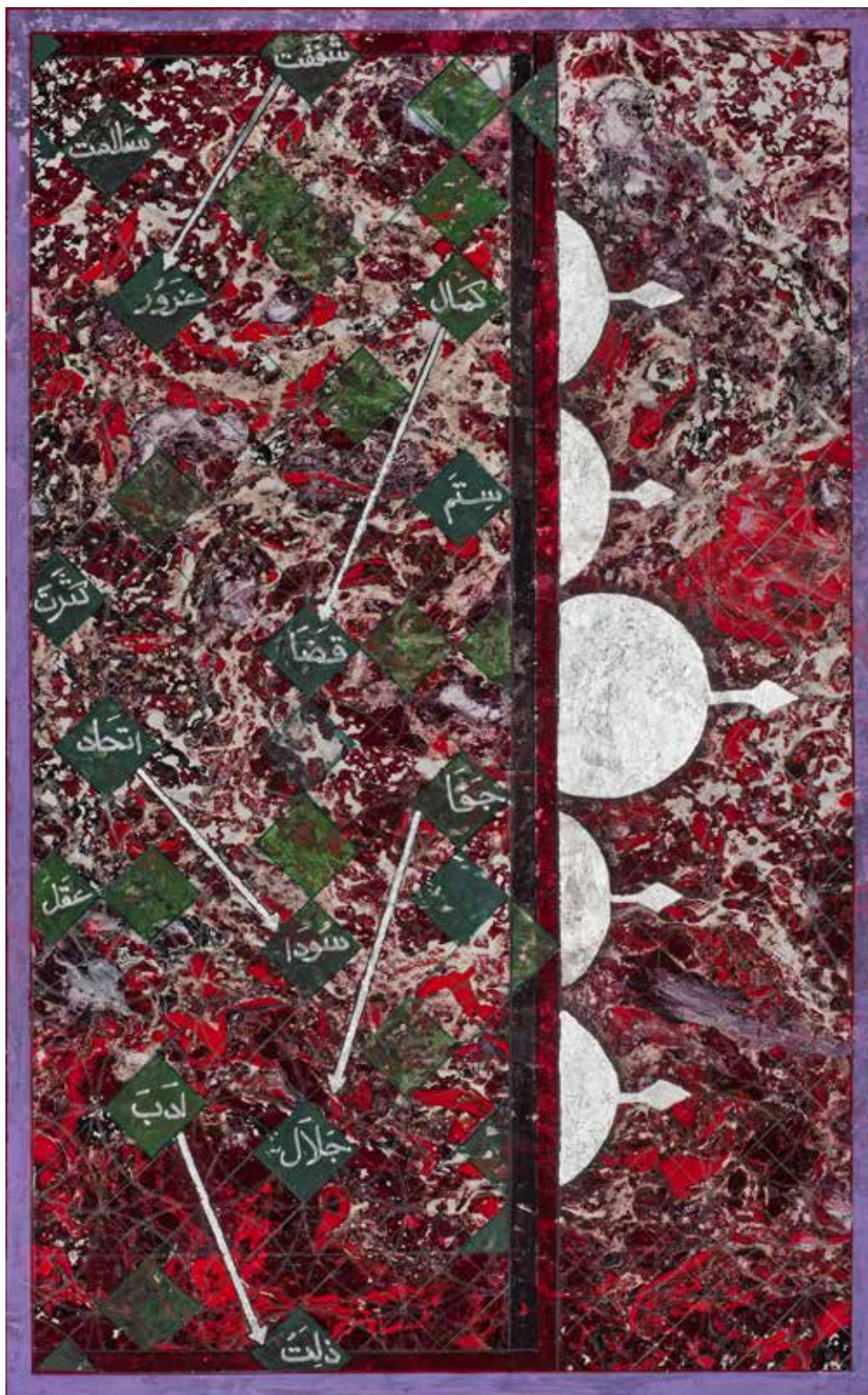
Shireen Bano Rizvi's works draw inspiration from the concept of Shatranj ay Arifeen, which is the Persian word for the game 'Snakes and Ladder'. As Arundhati Chauhan states 'Snakes & Ladders' was originally adopted from the Indian game, "Gyan Chaupar", also known as the moksa-pata (board of enlightenment), parampada sopanam (steps to the highest place) and gyanbaz (game of knowledge). It was used in the ancient times to learn Karmic theory cosmic philosophy.

These paintings are about the interplay of the supposedly same and yet opposing sides in the context of our society. They depict the relationships of various groups within our society especially the major and the minor and how they are trying to inadequately resolve the issues of their survival to try to reach the state of perceived equilibrium, but their efforts become more about keeping the status quo than to change it. Only the path of the "Flag Bearer" could lead to real salvation and enlightenment... of dying... and living as 'ishq' ordains.

Rizvi's work incorporates sacred geometry, and classical miniature techniques. Colors and geometrical patterns have always been of significance and similarly play an important part in assigning meaning to both these paintings. Light and hope... always remain, even in the dark abyss of the untruth...and this interaction of patterns, red and other colors, and spaces try to comprehend the real meaning of all we call our lives.

The art of the ever true – arithmetic, geometry, and music

Aristotle



Mirage, 2024
Pigment, Water color, Oil Paint, silver leaf on Vasli
20.5 x 12.5 inches



Flag Bearer, 2021
Flag Bearer, Pigment, water color on Vasli
13.4 inches radius



Hanging, 2024
Pigment, Water color, Oil Paint, gold leaf on Vasli
20.5 x 12.5 inches



Pouray Sau, 2021
Pigment, Watercolor, Oil Paint, Gold leaf on Vasil
21.5 x 27 inches



Zobia Yaqoob

Artist Bio

With a degree in MA(hons)Visual Arts from NCA, the artist is engaged in teaching since 2013 till present at National College of Arts, Lahore. Her work revolves around contriving the complexities of the existence by keenly observing nature in context to philosophy of 'Tree of Life' and Golden Ratio.

Alhamra Gallery , Lahore & Khass Gallery Islamabad , Imago Mundi Project, Venice Biennale, Italy, Zahoorul-ikhlaq Gallery NCA.

Philanthropist at heart she also participated in a training workshop with Alif Laila Book Bus (Artist/ Creative practitioner) and CCE a UK based NGO, which stresses upon activity based education at government level schools. Recently she has participated "Women Manifesto Children Book Project (Thailand)" where she worked with kids and designed a book on Pottery and Solar system.

In 2001-2002 she was a research assistant to Dr Marcela Sarhandi for her book on south Asian artists. She has two research papers to her credit, one on "kasha, Blue Pottery" and the other on "Symbolism in Patterns of Wazir Khan Mosque".

Artist Statement

My artistic journey is rooted in exploring the ideology "matter is spiritual" and how it is shaped by the customs and traditions which have been transferred through sublimation for centuries. In my recent body of work to explore this very notion I have made use of various hues of reds in variable oil mediums. The rectangular form of the canvas symbolizing the vessel which holds the spiritual realm in which the emotions are explored through gestures which are bold yet very soft like feather. For me art making is a process which can be leisurely peaceful and at the same time a very complex and in-depth study of existence in relation to light and movement. This exploration has lead me to a better understanding of the cycle of life in it, the inside spirit, the rhythm and the movement, the transitional phase we are constantly in, which is very dynamic and yet so subtle.



Rose Madder, 2024
Oil on Canvas
36 x 48 inches



Scarlet lake, 2024
Oil on Canvas
36 x 48 inches



FS Karachiwala

With several years of experience in the arts and culture sector, FS Karachiwala has established himself as an art curator and consultant with a perspective of bridging cultures and communities through art. As an Art Curator, he has curated and organized numerous notable exhibitions that explore diverse themes and narratives, ranging from the intersection of tradition and modernity to the exploration of urban life. His exhibitions serve as platforms for critical discourse and reflection. Karachiwala has had the privilege of curating

and collaborating with renowned artists, including Ahmed Ali Manganhar, Aqeel Solangi, David Alesworth, Faiza Butt, Farida Batool, Huma Mulji, Jamil Baloch, Masuma Halai Khwaja, Mughees Riaz, Noor Ali Chagani, Sahar Ansari, Shaukat Ali Khokhar, Shireen Bano Rizvi, and others.

Karachiwala aims to explore various opportunities and support the profound cultural legacy of Pakistan globally. He hopes to create spaces that inspire dialogue, provoke thought, and resound with creativity. This may involve supporting emerging artists or implementing educational programs that promote cross-cultural understanding.

Furthermore, his contributions to the arts have been formally recognized by the Government of Dubai, where he achieved Accreditation as an Art Curator—marking him as the first Pakistani to receive this accreditation—and was granted the UAE Golden Visa. Karachiwala is also a recipient of the Creative Activism Award from the Cultures of Resistance Network. Most recently, he initiated the EcoVision Art Awards, a global narrative dedicated to exploring and promoting the theme of sustainability through visual arts.

Karachiwala lives and works between Dubai and Karachi.



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