

KARBATHIANS

2020

A Lahore Biennale Collateral Event



CURATORS



Dr. Sumera Jawad



Muhammad Ashraf

CURATORIAL NOTE

Kar - Baat (dialogue) - the curatorial theme of the debut show - Karbathians 2020, has been borrowed from the work of Amina Cheema who is one of the first Karbath Artist Residency artists. Karbathians, a group of artists, are the participants of two previous Karbath Artist Residency program. The aim of establishing a Karbathians group is to provide them a platform where they can participate in a large scale curated exhibition every year starting this year as the "Karbathians 2020." Have large scale curatorial and installation projects changed the perception of contemporary art? Yes. Contemporary Art is springing up out of events like Manifesta and Documenta and Venues like Venice Biennial, around the world. Considering the curatorial practice as the main driving force behind the artistic practice, the Karbath team has come up with the idea of putting together a Karbathians show, which will be a large scale exhibition format with intentions of providing a dialogue and dimension to the art practice. Karbathians 2020 is the first venture for this purpose. Karbath Artist Residency is a Non-Profit venture, run by a group of artists. It aims at providing the artists with motivational opportunities. Located on Bedian road near the Wahga border, not too far from the Lahore city, Karbath is a small village on the banks of BRB canal. The farmhouse that houses the Karbath Artist Residency was originally built with the intention of holding art and literature activities. The idea of hosting a residency here came from its location. In the middle of lush green fields and right beside the flowing waters of BRB canal, along with the political importance of the location for being adjacent to the India Pakistan border, Karbath provides a stimulating and mind-opening environment. It is a platform for artists working in different genres to come together in a relaxed environment to get inspired by Mother Nature and collaborate with each other to discover new horizons. Karbath Artist Residency offers its participants an escape from the fast-paced city life into the tranquil, naturally composed and organic life of the farmhouse where serenity comes in confrontation with the contemporary urban environment, helping them uncover a new creative side. It is a space where the cosmic collision of God's nature and Artist's nature takes place. The Karbath farmhouse serves as a laboratory for the artists where they get a chance to talk to nature, live with nature and become a part of nature, hence, ensuing the oneness of nature and man.

ABRAR AHMED

Abrar's work explores the syncretic historical and semiotic trajectories of certain symbols, marks, images, and texts present in urban Lahore. He uses various mediums like performance, installation, photography, video, graffiti, and acrylic on canvas.



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Certain supposedly universal signs — specifically for this performance, the hashtag — are evolving, their historical and semiotic trajectories hybridised by routes of colonialism, capitalism, globalisation, and urbanisation.

This installation attempts to explore these hybridised routes by 'hashtag-ging' three surfaces: a slate, a canvas, and a public wall.

Slate: A grid on the slate, like a hashtag sign. In an earlier performance (shown in video), participants were invited to play a game of goodkata — similar to tic-tac-toe, but played with ticks and crosses instead of zeros and crosses. The invitation to play with the sign within the performance was an attempt to explore the semiotic fluidity of the sign. In fact, participants intuitively interacted with the hashtags in multiple ways, drawing and mixing different symbols to create their own games. Some used the sign to express famous Twitter slogans like #BLM.

Canvas: Abrar 'hashtagged' a canvas with acrylic, then played a game of ticks and zeros, a curious combination of goodkata and tic-tac-toe: an encounter with the syncretism of symbols.

Public wall: The area around Lahore Fort is a place that seems almost unreal, or, we can say, its actual reality matters little when faced with all the fictions attached to it. Taxali Gate itself has disappeared under its own narratives and representations. All that is left — even as we walked around the place itself — is a tourist brochure. Abrar's hashtag, conspicuously announcing itself on a public wall in Taxali Gate, becomes a co-conspirator in this game of invisibility, highlighting how our contemporary world often privileges a tidy and accessible virtual reality over the complexities of centuries-old cultures.

AMINA CHEEMA

While teaching western art history for more than a decade I got bored of looking at those pristine perfect sculptures and iconic faces so I thought if there is any new way of looking at the old masterpieces and that was the beginning of this work. Art is to rethink the usual. Before they stop making any meaning to me I devised a new way of building a connection with these historical images that make the substantial basis of the world's art today.

These artist books, Art Through the Gages I, Art Through the Gages II are an act of destruction and disassembly yet also about regeneration and largely speak about the ideas of control and unpredictability.

Amina Cheema did her MA Fine Arts with distinction in painting along with Mphil Art History from the College of Art and Design, the University of Punjab Lahore. Amina is currently teaching as Assistant Professor at the College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab Lahore and a contributor to The Nation & ArtNow Pakistan. She is a researcher, writer, and visual artist. Amina lives and works in Lahore.

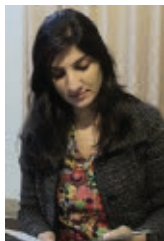


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AREEBA KHAN

Areeba Khan completed her MFA in visual arts from the College of Art and Design, the University of Punjab in 2017 and currently working as a lecturer at GSCWU Bahawalpur. Areeba's oeuvre is in the quest for breaking the boundaries of commonalities. Her artwork challenges the contradictions and popular narrative of society by giving a new perspective to the viewer for consideration. she works on patterns and amalgamates them with the cultural beauty of Desert.



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ASAD ALI ABID

I love to play with metal-wires, without actually melting them. I twist, weave and even knot these wires to create a visual narrative of my own, inspired by my imagination and perception. However, I see and utilize the elasticity hidden behind the hardness of the metal wires that allows me to encompass my expression as an art form with the language of geometry and define space with wires. My work is based upon waves, layers and visual composition. These layers, waves and curves correspond to the vibrancy of the life that resonates around me all the time.



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عردو پا قسطان تی کومی ضبان ہے

ATIA JAVED

Atia has done her MA in Painting (2009) and MFA in Sculpture (2015) from the College of Art & Design, Punjab University, Lahore, Pakistan. She got the first position in MFA (sculpture). She has been serving as a lecturer in the same institute since 2016. Atia has attended some art residencies along with participation in a number of exhibitions.

My sculpted forms encounter subjects like uncertainty, existence, values, ethics, and morality in personal and as well as social aspects. The work questions the state of uncertainty particularly in a subjective manner when the mind gets baffled and perplexed by unanswered questions.



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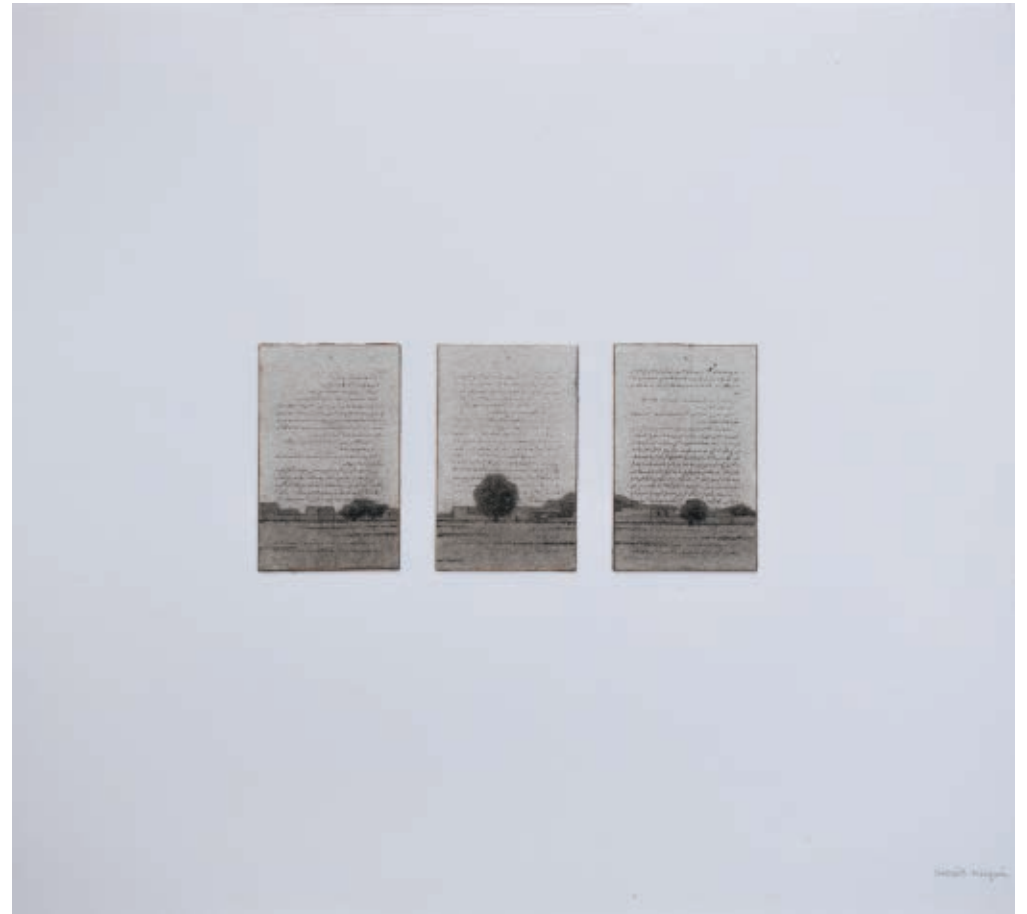
A W A I S N A Q V I

My work comes as an inspiration taken from the idea of partition, the partition of land. The land is the most important commodity of human civilization. Since the institution of private property land became an item of pride, honor, wealth and power. Every major civilization fought for territorial integrity and expansion, those who did not were lost in oblivion. People of every land have their own way of living. My work is a symbolic representation of the relationship between man and land. Borders remind me of the stories of Partition. Among those stories was also the story of my own family. After the creation of Pakistan half of our family migrated to the new country and the rest of the family chose to stay at the other side of the border.

I completed MFA in 2017 from the College of Art & Design, the University of Punjab. I have participated in several group shows including Islamabad Art Festival 2019, Karbath 02 second wave artist residency 2019. I have also won prizes in art competitions: Young Artist Award, 13th Annual Young Artist Exhibition 2017. Currently, I am working as a visiting lecturer in Sargodha University.



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BANEEN NAZIR

“Verily! After Hardship comes ease” (94:6). This is one of the many beautiful promises that Allah has made to mankind. And this thought is not only theological but philosophical. This work is a reminder, a statement, a promise, and a hope; that after every breakage and destruction, there is an unseen and imaginable gift waiting at the other end.

Baneen is a visual artist, MPhil scholar and a lecturer from Faisalabad. With a deep understanding of human emotions and personal philosophies, she produces work in a mixed medium and displays them as an installation. Keeping diversity and newness alive in each work, she strives to put forth multi-dimensional aspects through her work. She has been a part of Karbath 01 residency, BQ Studio residency, and Tasweerghar residency. In 2019 she was accepted by Praxis Residency in Oslo, Norway. She has several group shows to her credit throughout her career as an artist. Currently, she is supervising young artists at GC University Faisalabad.



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B U S H R A K H A L I D

Between the Lines of Need and Want

To acquire the best result and full bloom, one requires a specific environment. Thus the cycle to inaugurate keep going. Nature has its own ways and develops the specific compound of traits with its possibilities. But where panoptic society starts to play its role to mold the nature of individuals in order to build the cultural orthodox, there occurs the plight contrary to the expectations. The required natural environment for the growth of personality is “Need” but what society requires from one is “Want” and the difference in this need and want is gargantuan. My work narrates the divergence of these states.

The transparent acrylic boxes filled with vegetation interpret the impaired personality or traits because of the unfavourable environment and confinement. The vegetation inside is decaying even starts to produce hideous odour for the same cause. Ditto happens with the personality; it starts getting distort and causing problems. The purpose for which all this procedure of molding is being done, is depicted by the play wood box with one side painted. This box with appealing visual on it is the mimesis of the 1st day of acrylic box. But, it is painted to present what is wanted and, yes, temporary results. Thus actual consequence can be experienced with the acrylic box placed along with, portraying the reality.



Bushra Khalid

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BULAND IQBAL

Time spent at karbath 02 artist residency in 2019 offered me countless visuals where I could feel and narrate myself with figures and objects such as logs, stray dogs and fellow residents. Considering these topics as my extension, I adore them and adorn them with a very personal palette of colors and execution. Each of the ordinary subjects becomes a celebration of my being as it finds its way on my canvas.

I graduated from the College of Art & Design, the University of Punjab, Lahore, 2012 with a major in sculpture. I did Masters (Hons.) in Visual Arts, from the National College of Arts, Lahore in 2015. My keen interest in Portraits and the human figure led me to explore various mediums of visual arts, such as drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, and sculpture.



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DURE NAYAB

In the continuity of my previous art practice, I would like to draw the attention of viewers to another angle of life called "Presentation" where life struggles in hardship and conscientiousness; where you are being judged by people, how you present yourself. The current work presents both halves where one side is getting prepared for its destiny - where the other half holds a tough reality or I must say surprised whether good or bad But whatever happens - a true being will brace itself and ready to face the world again with its full potential. This loop depicts the iterations we face before or after we felt broken but we chose not to give up and start all over again.

Dure Nayab is trained under the umbrella of the Collage of Art and Design, Punjab University Lahore, where she completed her MFA in Visual Arts in 2017. Throughout her academic training she has produced site specific installations, each more magnanimous than the previous one.



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FAIZA GELANI

My work presents the abstracting of my inner garden. A place where I keep fragile and lost memories. The drowning voice from the past slowly destroys me. All that remains are extinct remembrance, dried flowers, and broken pieces. I am imitating a shadowy backyard from my unconsciousness where I preserve everything that I have felt.

I am a visual artist and punched into photography, installation art, and painting. My work represents melancholy, fragility and minor mood of the past. While nursing the art field, I embarked on exploring more mediums which led me to study MFA in Visual Arts from the College of Art and Design, the University of Punjab in 2017. I have also participated in several group shows such as at Shakir Ali Museum, Alhamra Art Gallery, Mussawir Art Gallery and recently In 2018, I was selected amongst 8000 other artists in Delphian Gallery, London. Another successful Group show initiative by Karbath02 Art Residency was held in Mussawir Art Gallery, Lahore.



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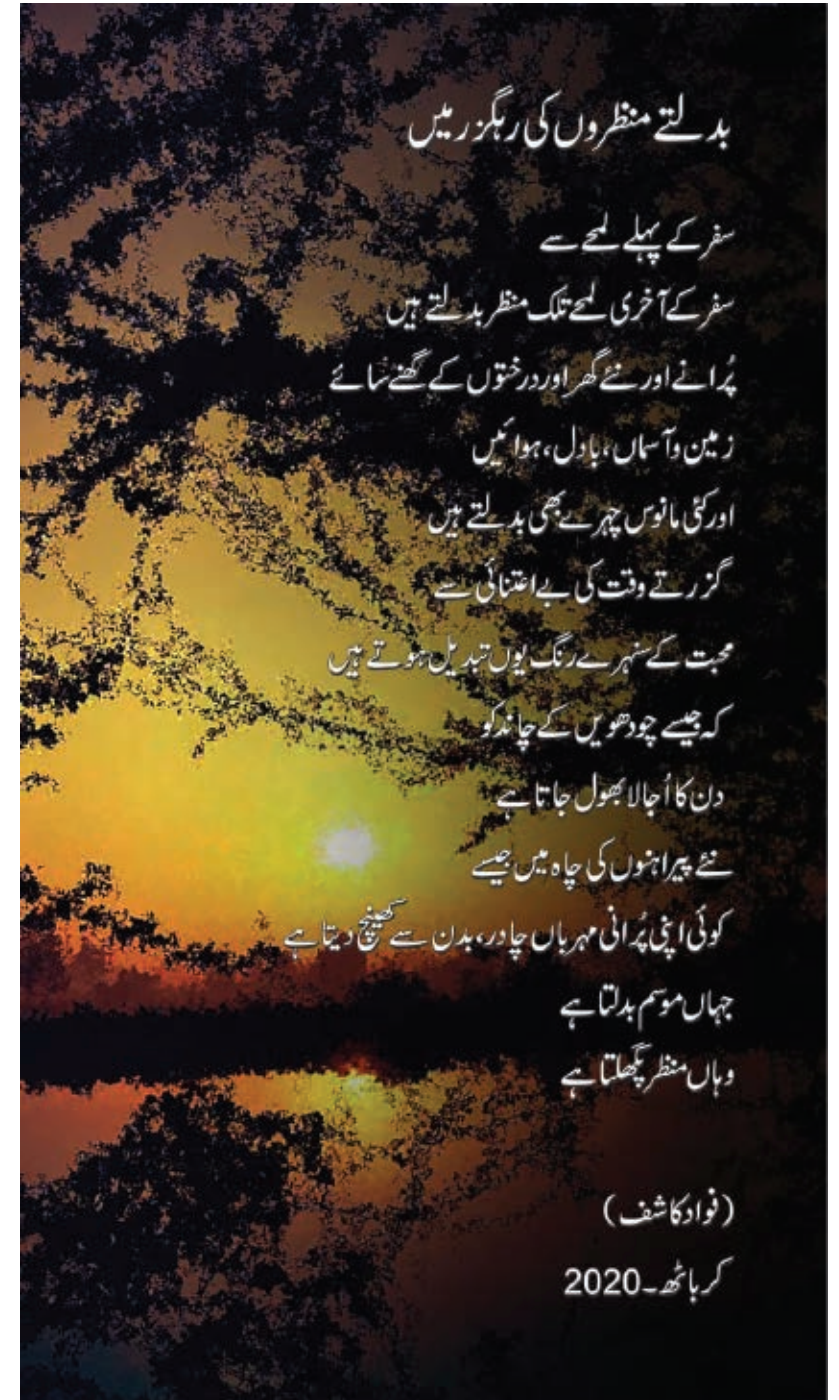
FAWAD KASHIF

Poetry, I have always believed, has been in my blood. It is my form of expression. My country is my love and my family is my strength. These are the two things that have always been my muse. For most people in today's zeitgeist, poetry is a decaying art form. I find inspiration in nature, in faces, in music and in everything that holds beauty. Poetry is full of emotions. It plays on words and sounds. This has always been enthralling to me. It is amazing how intricate the words and sounds can flow in a piece of poetry. The rhythm and rhyme make a piece of poetry stand out.

Bano Qudsia, Haseena Moin, Mustansar Husain Tarrar, Intezar Hussain, Hammad Zia, and Faiz Ahmed Faiz are some of my favorite poets and source of inspiration. Fawad is a Drama and Documentary script writer. Currently resides and works in Lahore.



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H A R O O N M U G H A L

Haroon Mughal is a Lahore based multidisciplinary artist, his work ranges from photo collages to texts and installations. Mughal did his graduation from BNU and since that time has been teaching and practicing art. Mughal has done a solo and numerous group shows in his career. He is trying to generate a dialogue about the significance and functionality of the frame and how important it is, in various aspects through his practice.



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Inviting the gaze and focussing it.

I Q R A A Y Y A Z

بندہ تسبیح نہیں فیردہ
بندہ تسبیح وچ فردہ

Man does not whirl the praying beads
Man whirls within the praying beads



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ISTRAHAT BHATTY

From the urban humdrum into the pocket of nature I came across and discovered the unusual and unconventional experience of serene ambience at Karbath. Obviating the diurnal life, silent language of Karbath dawned upon me unending tales. The exposure to nature in its raw state enhanced my concentration level which marked a productive impact on my mind. Invented and reinvented relationship with the elements infused in me the urge to visualize and practice meditation. Certain kind of shapes present in interior of Karbath instinctively appealed and inspired me to play art with its characters. Investigating the relationship between space, mind, change of time and meditational impact on me, shaped an association with the surroundings in artistic approach. Shouting hiraeth, hiraeth Karbath; silently and patiently.



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M U H A M M A D A S H R A F

In my creative practice, I am not only the painter of canvas and paper but also have experimented on various surfaces. I don't produce classical literal artwork rather present intuitive marks in poetic gaze. My subjects are mundane and I operate them in a broad range of styles, supported by intense technical skill. 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.

Presently Ashraf is working as an assistant professor at COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus Dept. of Architecture & Design.



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SABA TANVEER

My work is the result of experiences that occur in a certain kind of situation. There were many situations during Karbath 02 art-residency. There were a lot of questioning going on amongst my fellow colleagues. Often they asked me common questions related to me but the baffling experience was that; I was unable to answer their questions. I felt like sitting in an examination hall and the questions are just unknown to me. The perplexity of those experiences helped me in finding my answers which were lost within me. The residency helped me to explore my mental state of thinking which give me the idea of living more and exploring more.



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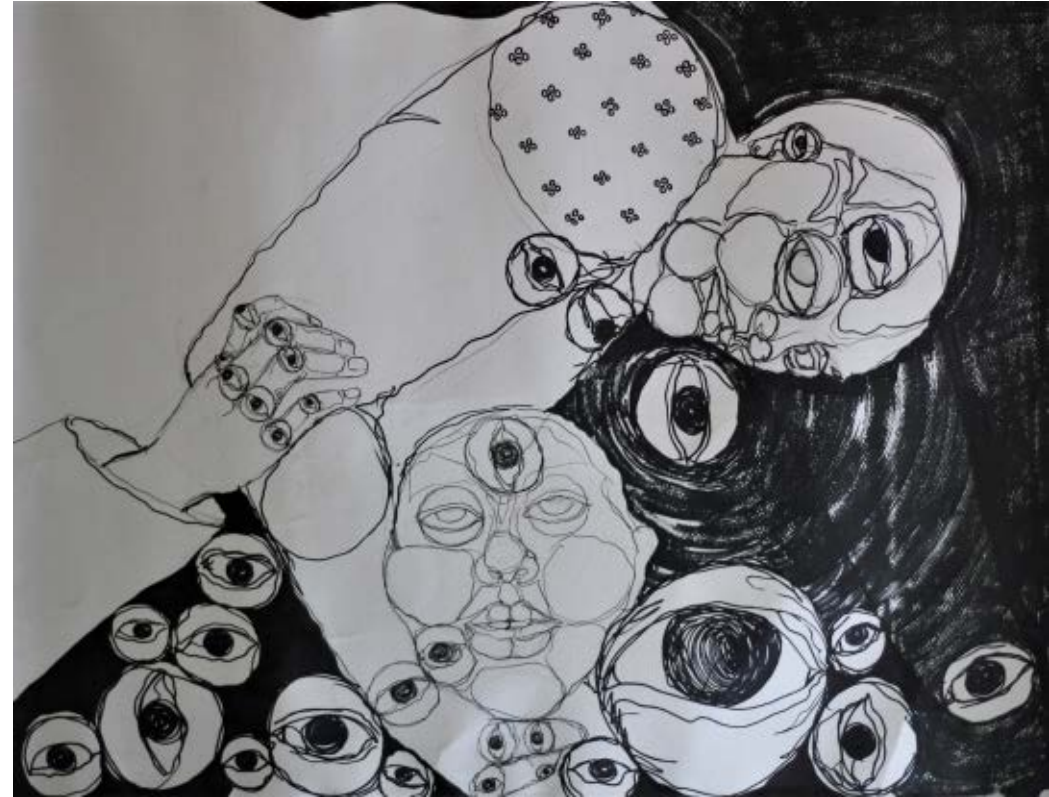


SIDRA SALEEM

Our relationship with things starts early, the idea that we can own something. The same is the case with our attachment with the environment and people but firstly we are fond of ourselves. We get attached easily, usually because of personal bonding or incident, which could be good or bad. As I own my thoughts, my ideas and my memory, which is mostly “negativistic”. My negativist icy turned into curiosity, the curiosity of recreating that unappealing memory. The content defines a socio-political situation around us, how I am dealing with those circumstances.



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SHAHID MALIK

Industrial revolution is considered as transition to new manufacturing process in Europe between the period 1760 to 1820. This revolution changed the destiny of many nations and brought prosperity to the masses. However I would call this prosperity a vector which was carrying the issues that we are facing today i.e. trash. One of the most harmful constituent is the polythene whose half life is about 1000 years. Today we can see the huge mounds of trash forming a new type of landscape within the existing natural landscape and these new type of landscapes exist for centuries due to the presence of polythene. One of such sites is "Mehmood Booti" a famous landfill zone in Lahore, Pakistan. The height of this huge mound is approximately 100ft. It looks like a hill from a certain distance although the land of Lahore is 100% flat. On my first encounter with it I was really fascinated by the diversity of material on this site. Every type of material from every class of society can be observed here. In other words this is the single site which represents every individual of this area because every individual has contribution in it regardless of the amount. Today when we are about to enter a city our first encounter is with these trash zones. They can also be called the modern cities inside which there are some settlements of the individuals. These are the external crust inside which the internal city is encapsulated. This diversity of material, color palette, a new form of landscape and cityscape intrigued me to paint it. According to me I feel it like a still life within a landscape or a landscape made up of still life.



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SUNDUS QURESHI

I have played with non-physical absences while creating physical existences made up of repetitive triangular shapes which represent the construction of my discursive memory and thoughts, I am crowded with. But it also leaves a true portrait of the self. The non-physicality of the gaps represents the void that the conflict of conscious thoughts and unconscious automatism has created. This struggle is described by Friedrich Nietzsche in simple words i.e.

"There are no beautiful surfaces without the terrible depth."

This depth is not easy to describe but the way it connects with my soul on a deeper level, it gives me a realm where I can ease myself out. The emergence of conscious thoughts highlights the crucial relation of context with concept. My main focus is primarily on the exploration of something as simple as blank spaces against the linear drawing of shapes in the interpretation of form and movement. The only thing one can take away from my work is silence and depth. My journey is very much a process of letting go of pre-establish concept about art and to practice genuineness and loyalty to nature and to myself.

Sundus Rafi, born in Bahawalnagar in 1988, did her MA Fine Arts from Sheffield Hallam University, UK in 2017 and MS Studio Practice from Lahore College for Women University in 2015. She has served as Visiting Lecturer and Assistant Professor of Visual Arts at the Institute of Design & Visual Arts, LCWU.



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S U M E R A J A W A D

Pakistan - The Land of the Pure. A place which holds and narrates time in its geography, in its heritage, in its people. A keeper of a thousand secrets, enveloping its inhabitants with a proud identity and ownership. Just like the rivers that run through it, sustaining and developing its history since the last 10,000 years. Not giving away the secrets of its rapid motion and the tempest beneath its surface, no moment the same yet to the unobservant, standing still. Worshipped like the deities on its banks of the years gone by and rewarding with great bounty. Never the one to give into subjugation. A paradoxical river holding in it the fire and flames of adventure and excitement. Every turn and twist giving hints of subtle symphonies and colours, passionate rage blessing some and taking away the blessings from some. The Land of the Pure; promising love and glory as a mother would to her sons and daughters, heralding a meteoric rise to it's predestined place amongst the brightest stars in the heavens.



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U M E L A I L A

My work revolves around the study of relationships within the context of my family and the factors that alienate us from each other. The idea of fully being present and happily living together is becoming a utopian reality for me. I feel that our quality of relationships, as a society, is deteriorating. Our busy lifestyle has resulted in us being alienated from our surroundings and the people we interact with regularly. Miscommunication is destroying our ability to connect with people, even with our loved ones. This is creating isolation that is solely distorting the true essence of life.

In my work I try to capture that feeling of alienation, while being surrounded by family, living at home. I am interested in the unspoken stress between relationships. I am also concerned about what creates that sense of isolation. Is that home, a materialistic entity as space or its dweller; our family members are the reason. I play with images and spaces. I am trying to express the distance I feel between people while living in the same place. Through the exploration of multiple layers and a play between two and three-dimensionality, I try to recreate the places which look like home but at the same time are alienating. It seems convincingly real or strangely artificial. Although I use silhouettes to exclude the presence of the person, I find that the figure becomes all the more prominent and visible. I work in layers and pieces which when put together complete the picture, similar to our lives which can be divided into phases and layers of memories.



Ume Laila

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ZAREEN ASHRAF

It is God's will to accept and appreciate the things as they are. My work depicts the acceptance and appreciation of things as they are happening and as they are apparently. I believe that we cannot restart anything without accepting and appreciating them, no matter what. It is the principle of life that things get finished and gradually vanished and new things take place to fill the damage. In my work I have drawn smoke, flowers and crows as symbols to show the break and continuity of life. Things get change after the breakdowns and the acceptance of the whole scenario and move on. Moving on itself is a miracle that gives birth to different more miracles happen in life. Tragedies and the restarts both are the Divine things.



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THE KARBATH TEAM



Atia Javed



Haroon Mughal



Istrahat Bhatti

THE KARBATH TEAM



Amina Cheema



Sumbul Natalia