ANILA QUAYYUM AGHA

Anila Quayyum Agha (b. Lahore, Pakistan) received her BFA from the National College of Arts, Lahore and an MFA from the University of North Texas. Recent solo shows include the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, MA, National Sculpture Museum in Valladolid, Spain, The Dallas Contemporary Art Museum, Cincinnati Art Museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Jacksonville, FL. Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, North Carolina Art Museum in Raleigh, and the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio. For the 2019 Venice Biennale Agha was included in a collateral event, She Persists, with 22 contemporary feminist artists. Agha has received the Efroymson Art Fellowship, Cincinnati Art Museum’s 2017 Schiele Prize, the DeHaan Artist of Distinction Award and the Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors award in 2018 & 2019. Agha’s 2014 ArtPrize entry, titled "Intersections", earned the Public Vote Grand Prize and split the Juried Grand Prize in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She is the recipient of numerous grants from Indiana University like the New Frontiers Exploratory grant. For her creative research, Agha, was awarded the highest research honor by Indiana University in 2016 titled Glenn W. Irwin Research Scholar Award. Recently, Agha received an Endowed Chair position titled Morris Eminent Scholar in Art at Augusta University in Georgia, as well as the prestigious Smithsonian Fellowship in the arts for 2021 and will be working with both SAAM and AAA in Washington DC in 2021. Her work has been collected by both institutions and private collectors; nationally and internationally.

Agha works in a cross disciplinary fashion with mixed media; creating artwork that explores global and environmental politics, cultural multiplicity, and social and gender roles in our current cultural and global scenario. As a result, her artwork is conceptually challenging, producing complicated weaves of thought, artistic action and social experience.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Having lived on the boundaries of different faiths such as Islam and Christianity, and in cultures like Pakistan and the USA, my art is deeply influenced by the simultaneous sense of alienation and transience that informs the migrant experience. This consciousness of knowing what is markedly different about the human experience also bears the gift of knowing its core commonalities and it is these tensions and contradictions that I try to embody in my artwork. Through the use of a variety of media, from large sculptural installations to embroidered drawings, I explore the deeply entwined political relationships between gender, culture, religion, labor and social codes. My experiences in my native country and as an immigrant here in the United States are woven into my work of redefining and rewriting women’s handiwork as a poignant form of creative expression. Using materials such as steel in my sculptural works to show lightness & delicacy in spite of the heavy weight, or embroidery as a drawing medium in my drawings, I reveal the multiple layers resulting from the interaction of concept and process and to bridge the gap between modern materials and historical patterns of traditional oppression and domestic servitude. The conceptual ambiguity of the resulting patterns creates an interactive experience in which the onlooker’s subjective experiences of alienation and belonging become part of the piece and its identity.
Anila Quayyum Agha

Itinerant Shadows  White (Arches)
White laser-cut lacquered steel & light bulbs
24” x 24” x 24”
2019
Anila Quayyum Agha

Itinerant Shadows - White (Bola)
White laser-cut lacquered steel & light bulbs
24” x 24” x 24”
2019
Anila Quayyum Agha

Itinerant Shadows
White (Caged Flowers)
White laser-cut lacquered steel & light bulbs
24” x 24” x 24”
2019
GHULAM MOHAMMAD

Ghulam Mohammad is a Visual Artist, born in Kachi Baluchistan, Pakistan lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan. He graduated with distinction in Fine Arts from Beaconhouse National University Lahore 2013. During his student days, he was selected for Inspire Trip to University of Central Lancashire (student exchange program under British Council). He did his Masters In Art Education form Beaconhouse National University in 2017. Currently he is teaching as an Assistant professor in Fine Arts department at Beaconhouse National University.

Mohammad uses language and script as a medium of expression of both his own identity and cultural, historical and contemporary context. His works are intricate collages of paper cuttings of Urdu text and other local scripts pasted on Wasli-paper, sometimes embellished with gold and silver leaf and Iranian ink. Mohammad was awarded the Beaconhouse Emerging Talent Award for Art, Lahore Literary Festival in 2015. In 2016 he was awarded the Jameel Art Prize 4 from Victoria & Albert Museum London. He has participated as a judge for Bahrain Annual Fine Art Exhibition in January 2017.

ARTIST STATEMENT

In my work, I have tried to explore the relationship between language and identity, in a cultural, historical and contemporary context. As a Pakistani citizen, having to experience the decline of our national language in almost every sphere of life, has led me to revisit the relationship of this language with my own identity. The fractures that result within one’s own being, after one feels that he is slowly being dispossessed of a language, fragments the relationship that one has with one’s own self. This fragmentation, confusion and disorder that seem inescapable and overpowering are what have informed my work. This led me towards another aspect of language; its paradoxical nature as both the conveyer as well as the limiter of meaning. I see language as essential to communication but also feel that there is so much that it seems to leave behind in its construction; the mass of abstract emotions, feelings and sensations that inform identity and communication seem to be lost in the structure and system of language. The range and limitation of language, experienced by me on an everyday basis, is also one of the concerns that I try to engage with. Carving out words and recomposing them is also a cathartic act, in which I try to break language down into its most basic constituents and attempt a reconstruction of language and identity, trying to arrive at something more than just itself. The rediscovery of language by freeing it from the page where it is composed in a particular fashion and then recomposing it, changing its meaning, its character as language, is an act of plasticizing language to see what it has the potential to lead to.

-Ghulam Mohammad
Ghulam Mohammad Talatum
Pen and ink on archival paper and Paper collage on wasli
68 x 55 cm with frame
2020
Ghulam Mohammad

Pen and Iranian Ink and Paper collage on wasli
57 x 42 cm with frame 32 x 24 cm without frame
2020
Ghulam Mohammad
Tasalsul I
Pen and ink on archival paper and gold-leaf, paper collage on wasli
68 x 55 cm with frame
2020
Ghulam Mohammad
Firaaq
Iranian Ink and Paper collage on wasli
57 x 42 cm with frame 32 x 24 cm without frame
2020
MUZZUMIL RUHEEL


ARTIST STATEMENT

Muzzumil brings to life non-existent entities that discreetly assimilate into our surroundings. His works integrates his interaction with his space. Ruheel’s trajectory acts as a catalyst for bringing this intangible phenomenon into their physicality; helping their formation from one plane to another. Transporting intangible discourses into a tangible manifestation is based on the discourse that ensues with core observation. He is a storyteller who continuously questions, analyses literature, observe migratory patterns, and their consequent consequences. He uses his findings, tales and fragments in his process to recreate his interactions with time, space, semiotics and history. His works are usually fictional in nature and his mediums vary as per project.
Ticking moment, Ink and acrylics on wasli paper, (Set of 8) 26 x 33 cm each, 2019
Something but nothing, Ink and acrylics on wasli paper, 23 x 31 cm (Set of 5), 2019
SABA QIZILBASH

Born 1977 in Lahore and raised in UAE, Saba Qizilbash has a BFA degree in Painting from National College of Art, Pakistan and a Masters degree in Art Education from Rhode Island School of Design, USA. She was one of the finalists of the Sovereign Asian Art Prize in 2017 and 2018. The same year she was commissioned by UAE Unlimited – funded and supported by His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan of Abu Dhabi- to create a 100 drawings installation for their annual show at Concrete Gallery. She is the first recipient of the Campus Art Dubai Grant, funded and supported by Art Dubai and Art Jameel. Her work has been showcased in New York, Dubai, Hong Kong, San Francisco, Lahore and Karachi. She has designed a number of community art workshops in Dubai, Lahore, New Delhi and Providence, RI.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Qizilbash’s practice focuses on the hemming of divided/disputed land through detailed drawings of urban infrastructural solutions. In her more complex larger drawings, she constructs imagined, labyrinthine yet walkable pathways that hem together cities that were once inseparable due to trade, culture and geography. Her studio in Dubai and frequent travels to India and Pakistan gives her access to viewing the line of contention from both sides. She draws painstakingly detailed drawings suggesting dystopic cities, routes and urban layouts that help transpass territorial interruptions. In her travels, she identifies and isolates images of aloneness and delimitations based on observing lone broken fences, boundary walls, gates and abandoned railway tracks. Her small-scale, finely detailed drawings appear to highlight vestigial sites between the places we occupy.
GTIII Wagha to Kolkatta, Graphite and resin on paper mounted on board, 30 x 120 cm, 2020
Karachi to Lucknow, Graphite and wash on Paper, 81 x 161 cm, 2018
Old GT Road,
Graphite and resin on paper,
mounted on wood
13 x 13 x 4 cm
2019
Sarah Ahmad’s artwork has been featured in exhibitions in galleries and cultural centers throughout the United States and in the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, including the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Sharjah Art Museum in the United Arab Emirates, public art projects at the Nashville International Airport and the Regional One Hospital in Tennessee, and solo shows in Pakistan and the United States. She was recently interviewed by the National Public Radio in the United States as a Focus artist for the Concept show curated by Heather Pesanti, the Chief Curator of Contemporary Austin. She has been selected to create an installation for the Greenwood Art Project in 2021.

Ahmad has been a finalist and shortlisted for various awards, received the New York Center for Photographic Art Juror’s Award, a fellowship from the Vermont Studio Center, and has participated in numerous artists residencies including the LA Summer Residency at the Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles, California, and a residency at the School of Visual Arts in New York. She was awarded the Tulsa Artist Fellowship in 2019 and 2020 and received the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition Grant in 2019. She received an MFA from the Memphis College of Art, MA Education from Union University in Jackson, Tennessee, and BA Fine Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. She is currently teaching at the University of Tulsa in Oklahoma.
Fractured Cosmos III, Pen and Ink on Vellum, 91 x 244 cm
Fractured Cosmos V, Pen and ink drawings on vellum, 91.44 x 167.64 cm, 2018 - 2020

Fractured Cosmos VI, Pen and ink drawings on vellum, 91.44 x 152.4 cm, 2018-2020
SALIMA HASHMI

Salima Hashmi is an artist, curator and contemporary art historian. Professor Hashmi was the founding Dean of the Mariam Dawood School of Visual Art and Design at Beaconhouse National University, Lahore. She was Professor of Fine Art at National College of Arts [NCA] Lahore and was also Principal of the College. Salima Hashmi has written extensively on the arts. Her book “Unveiling the Visible- Lives and Works of Women Artists of Pakistan” was published in 2002, and ‘Memories, Myths, Mutations – Contemporary Art of India and Pakistan’ co-authored with Yashodhara Dalmia for Oxford University Press, India in 2006. She has edited ‘The Eye Still Seeks – Contemporary Art of Pakistan for Penguin Books, India in 2014.

Her publications include:


The Dark Weight of Night series II 
Mixed media on archival paper 
48 x 33 cm 
2020
The separation of darkness and light
Mixed media on archival paper
48 x 33 cm
2020
JASON SEIFE

Jason Seife’s work references old Persian carpets, an art form that in modern times is often taken for granted. Carpets were a large part of his childhood growing up with immigrant parents of Middle Eastern descent. Jason recreates these old weavings by tediously painting them on canvas in colors and mediums that were not normally used in their origin. Jason presents the pieces in a new and exciting way. The creation of these works is both a therapeutic and a spiritual process, being able to channel his obsession with detail into the intricate geometry and compositions of the carpets allows Jason to find himself working hours on end without lifting his brush. What initially drew him to these works was not only the aesthetic but the dense history and meaning behind the imagery. The way the weavers were able to link each rug’s particular pattern, palette, and style with a specific and identifiable geographic area or nomadic tribe really stood out to him. Jason aims to mirror this practice with his take on the carpets by having each color and pattern specifically correlate to what state of mind and emotion he was in while creating the specific work. allowing him to be able to look back and see a chronological timeline of both his mental and emotional state embedded in to the paintings. Essentially creating a language through shape and color that is hidden in plain view..

Jason Seife’s intricate arabesque paintings fuse traditional techniques from his Middle Eastern heritage with modern materials such as ink and acrylic, this captures the essence of a particular historical craft for a contemporary audience. Seife’s paintings are meticulously crafted simulacrum of his oscillating mental states: different colours correlate to the different moods of the artist as he undertakes the therapeutic process of weaving his emotional state into an encoded tapestry. In 2018, Jason Seife’s solo exhibition Nucleus took place at the Sharjah Art Museum in the United Arab Emirates. Since then, Seife has been building towards A Small Spark vs a Great Forest. After undertaking a personal and artistic journey through Iran, Syria and Turkey, Seife will present his first solo exhibition with Unit London.

At the heart of A Small Spark vs a Great Forest is an understanding of the collective nature of humanity: in Seife’s mind we are all trees in the same forest. Whether from North or South, East or West we are, in essence, cut from the same cloth. This kind of ubiquitous humanity has been emphasised by the Coronavirus pandemic. Covid-19 has no concern for the borders that humankind have drawn; it spreads indiscriminately, irrespective of race, nationality, gender or religion, one more wildfire in our burning world. Jason Seife looks to take this renewed appreciation and understanding of cultural equality and explore it by connecting with his Middle-Eastern heritage.
By studying the skills of craftsmen from different cultures and adapting these aesthetics, Seife is striving to find a way of making these processes relevant to new generations. Embedded in this process is the desire to absolve people from the anxiety associated with an uncertain identity; just as the pandemic was a great leveler, so too is art. Seife’s process is tripartite: travelling from hand to machine, and then back to hand. He begins by sketching an ‘outline design’ inspired by carpet makers in the Middle-East, these often include byzantine arabesques and the intricate intertwining of floral shapes.

This hand-drawn foundation is then rendered in 3D using computer software that manipulates colour and light, producing a reference image that has a sense of relief. This software also allows for the introduction of negative space in the reference image, conveying a poignant sense of decay. Seife then zooms in on certain sections of this digital work - certain segments of his forest - and begins to meticulously hand paint these areas without the aid of any technology.

This physical-digital-physical process not only allows Seife to induce a more affecting visual experience in the viewer, it also stresses the notion that craftsmanship in art is given power by the physical expression of an artist’s actions. Although these ideas are evolving and there are numerous contemporary artists that have never picked up a brush, A Small Spark vs a Great Forest is a testament to the past ideals of both the artistic process, and the effect it can have on anybody in the world.
Jason Seife
Xray 2
Oil on canvas
91.4 cm x 60.9 cm
2019
Jason Seife
Diptych study
Oil on canvas
40.6 cm x 40.6 cm each
2021
Sumakshi Singh is an artist and an educator who has taught for five years at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and lectured at Oxford University, Columbia University and has mentored residencies for the Victoria and Albert Museum, and was a visiting artist advisor at KHOJ Delhi. Singh received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and a BFA from Maharaja Sayajiro University, Baroda, India. Her works have been presented in solo and curated group show at Kochi Biennale, Kochi, India, Museum of Contemporary Art, Lyon, France, MAXXI Museum, Rome, Italy, UCCA Beijing, Mattress Factory Museum of Contemporary Art, Pittsburgh, PA, Van Harrison Gallery New York, NY, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL, Illinois State Museum, IL, Kashya Hildebrand Galerie, Zurich Halsey Gallery, Charleston, SC and ArtHouse Texas, TX. She was awarded a Zegna Grant in 2009, an Illinois Arts Council award in 2007 and was a finalist for the Rolex Mentor Protege Award 2014 & the Rijksakademie in 2006. In 2019 Sumakshi Singh curated the acclaimed show “Deeper Within its Silence- Form and Unbecoming” for The Devi Art Foundation. In October 2019, Singh became the first ever Indian artist to be invited by Hermès to create an Artist Window Display. Her large scale architectural thread drawings have been shown at The Kiran Nadar Museum, Saket, January 2020.

The fragile architecture of memory and home in the context of time and the temporary is the framework for Sumakshi Singh’s renditions of her family home, 33 Link Road, built soon after partition, when her grandparents migrated to Delhi from Pakistan. Skeletal elements of 33 Link Road’s building structures appear in fragments and snatches of laced memory windows and fragile iron gates. The illusion of space and perception akin to stretched cobwebs of memory stray like tensed strings about to snap, occasionally losing form and collapsing into the knots of visual memory. Singh’s work renders familiar forms into mirages, illusions and ethereal surfaces of lace and thread. The embroidered structures switch between referencing the levitating apparitions of memories (on the verge of disappearance), and threads that are embedded deeply into the layered paper pulp of weighted time. Emotions resonate in these works as the artist tethers back to this structure as her idea of a permanent home: represented as such in all documents while she lived across several cities in India and the world. The space becomes a site of story-telling for the viewers who gather here in a remembrance room that holds potent memories of knitting in the sun, family weddings, births and deaths. Panels of gates, doors, staircases and other sections of the home tremble to hold form while evoking raw and tactile surfaces of veiled memories preserved and layered with built time of want, association, belonging and loss.
Sumakshi Singh - Untitled - Thread Drawing and Embroidery on Fabric - 43" x 35" - 2021
Sumakshi Singh - Untitled - Thread Drawing and Embroidery on Fabric - 43" x 31" - 2021