

An Exhibition on Celebration of
International Museum Day

REIMAGINED CONTEMPORARY ART AND ECOLOGY

Curated by
OZMA BHATTI
DR, WARDAH NAEEM BUKHARI

Fakir Khana Museum

(The House of The Humble Ones) is one of the biggest private museums in Pakistan, and has been open to public since 1901. The building originally belonged to Raja Todar Mal, Finance Minister of Akbar. It was later renovated in the 20th century as a mansion housing almost two centuries of history of the eventful life of some of the greatest personalities of the region and period. Fakir Khana Museum is actually a house turned inside out in the sense that what is actually private in the house, has been made public. Access to all parts of the building is unhindered. The Fakir Khana Museum is now being run by the 6th generation of the Fakir family. It is situated barely five minutes walk from Bhatti Gate, one of the famous 13 gates of the walled city of Lahore. It is the only privately owned museum recognized by the Government of Pakistan. The history of the museum can be traced back to that of the Fakir family that settled in Lahore in 1730, where it established and ran a publishing house. Over the years, the family has acquired a collection of ten thousand manuscripts. The Fakir Khana Museum currently houses over twenty thousand specimens of art and artifacts encompassing three centuries, from the 18th to the 20th. The Miniature Hall is the most impressive of all the sections of Fakir Khana Museum, with exhibit arrangement having been maintained for three quarters of a century.



Introduction of Internation Museum Day

Every year on May 18, the International Museum Day, which was founded by ICOM, provides a worldwide forum for highlighting the contribution museums make to the advancement of cross-cultural dialogue. Together, museums all across the world will plan activities, displays, and educational initiatives based on the subject, highlighting the priceless value that museums bring to society. The purpose of this project is to highlight the value of museums as vibrant learning environments that promote exploration, learning, and cross-cultural understanding.



Since 2020, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have been supported by the International Museum Day. In 2024, the fourth Sustainable Development Goal set up by the United Nations is "Quality Education." Ensure that everyone has access to a high-quality, inclusive, and fair education, and offer opportunities for lifelong learning. International Museum Day 2024: "Museums for Education and Research" highlights the vital role of museums in promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. This year's theme emphasizes the importance of museums as dynamic learning spaces that foster critical thinking, creativity, and cultural awareness.

Museums have the power to unlock knowledge and make it accessible to diverse audiences, breaking down barriers to education and promoting social cohesion. Through innovative exhibitions, interactive programs, and digital resources, museums provide unique learning experiences that cater to different learning styles and abilities.

Exploring Museums for Research and Education: An Expression of Contemporary Art

Museum spaces offer numerous areas for exploration, not only for art enthusiasts but also for artists looking for interaction and inspiration in the dynamic interplay of art, history, and education. The museum becomes a forum for discussion, interpretation, and expression for the modern artist rather than just a place to store artifacts. Within this framework, museum education becomes a versatile research instrument that offers artists the chance to explore historical collections and create original stories. The museum collection acts as a catalyst as well as a canvas for contemporary artists. The artist gives new life to the silent echoes of the past by carefully observing and researching hidden narratives and unwritten stories.

Furthermore, the artist goes beyond the simple act of creating in their research-based involvement with museum education. It starts a conversation with the audience and asks them to join in on the interpretation and meaning-making process. The artist fosters a deeper understanding of history and its significance to modern culture by bridging the gap between the past and present through interactive installations, artist presentations, and workshops.

In this regard, museum education has turned into a medium for creative expression and an enduring artistic journey. Contemporary artists discover hidden treasures and create new links between the past, present, and future as they make their way through the museum corridors. They encourage us to embrace the transformational potential of art, to reinterpret history, and to challenge our preconceptions through their work. Ultimately, museums can become hubs for inclusive and equitable quality education, empowering individuals and communities to thrive and reach their full potential.

Curatorial Note

Reimagined contemporary art and ecology

Ecology is one of the many complex threads that weave our existence as humans into one with the natural world. Its importance lies in investigating our interaction with the environment as well as in protecting it. Fundamentally, ecology refers to the fragile balance that exists between living things and the environment; it includes both the physical components of nature and the spiritual energy that underlies all living things.

Ecology in historical museums is a powerful reminder of humankind's historical relationships with the environment. Exhibitions showcasing the respect and dependence of ancient societies on nature highlight the close relationship between humans and the ecosystems that support them. By utilising natural materials and ancient techniques, artisanship embodies a healthy coexistence with the environment, echoing this sentiment.

Ecology is a source of inspiration for artists in the field of aesthetics, going beyond its practical applications. The intricacy and beauty of the natural environment serve as inspiration for contemporary artists, who include ecological themes into their works. Free from realistic constraints, artists use symbolism and metaphor to examine the relationship between people and the natural world. They encourage viewers to reflect on the significant ramifications of our ecological footprint and imagine a more sustainable future through powerful images and thought-provoking ideas.

In addition to serving as an insight into the present, "Interwoven Ecologies" is a historical memorial to the ongoing conversation that exists between humans and the natural world. It is a tribute to our interdependence, an appeal for action, and proof of the eternal ability of art to effect change. This exhibition challenges us to reconsider our place in the world and accept our responsibility as caretakers of the planet through its investigation of ecology, nature, history, and artistic expression. We are presenting the works of Dr Wardah Naeem Bukhari, Faiza Bhatti Hassnain Awais, Maria Waseem & Waseem Ahmed, Muhammad Atif Khan, Muhammad Umer Jamil and Ozma Bhatti. These visual artists contributed these art works in their styles.

Wardah Naeem Bukhari is connecting with indigenous craft and cultural practices, she attaches with deeper appreciation for history, wisdom and creativity of indigenous peoples and combine with the honest effort to preserve their cultural heritage for the future generation. She connected her work by fusion of phulkari garden indigenous craft of Punjab and Persian Char Bagh garden theme and developed rich and diverse traditional of arts and craft in the contemporary time and find significance of ecology in the indigenous craft and Persian Mughal south Asian art in way by using the futuristic approach.

Faiza Bhatti chooses images of different works that already exist in the archive and changes them in her own way, developing new images based on their content. As a digital artist, she revives past eras in the present. She creates beautiful miniature painting landscapes, showcasing the natural beauty of cultural landscapes and emphasizing their significance and spiritual connection emphasis on ecology in present time as an artist.

Hussnain Awais chooses personal archiving to reshape his sense of identity and belonging, weaving memories into a powerful approach connected with historical perspectives and nature. He translates complex emotional landscapes into a rich visual tapestry, experiencing an emotional relationship with the natural environment and the spiritual connotations of ecology.

"Experience 'The Other Side of Silence,' where Maaria Waseem and Waseem Ahmed intertwine the historical narratives of Pakistan's North and South. Through their collaborative fusion of photography and miniature painting, they unearth forgotten tales embedded in ancient ruins and cultural motifs. Delve into a visual journey through layers of history, politics, and culture, as the artists invite reflection on the legacies of kings, conquerors, and mythologies. Join us in exploring the rich tapestry of Pakistan's heritage, meticulously captured and reimagined in this captivating exhibition.

Muhammad Atif Khan work has evolved into a fusion of South Asian expressive narrative with Central Asian/Persian aesthetics within the popular visual culture of the region. His works inspiration from and expanding upon a wide range of pictures and symbols spanning hundreds of years of Mughal culture, he incorporates images of daily life and combines elements from painting to local truck art. He has developed a new narrative in contemporary times, playing a crucial role as an artist bridging the gap between the past and the present. He spreads the message of the spiritual and martial world connection of culture and raises awareness of ecology within education for the younger generation.

Muhammad Umer Jamil delves deep into the interplay of nature and humanity, capturing the essence of subjects before painting. Their current focus contrasts human life with the rose's cycle, revealing parallels from birth to death. Through meticulous deconstruction, they mirror the struggles and beauty of both realms, inviting viewers to ponder their profound interconnectedness

Ozma Bhatti profound exploration delves into the intersection of philosophical mysticism and ecology, particularly within the realms of climate action and ecosystem resilience. It reflects on the interconnectedness and oneness of existence, resonating with ecological principles. Through symbolic elements like water, fish, and flowers, the artist beautifully illustrates the essence of life and nature's intricate connections. This convergence emphasizes the imperative of restoring harmony in the natural world, inspiring action towards a sustainable future. The exhibition invites viewers to contemplate the profound insights that emerge from this fusion of philosophy and ecology, connecting us with the cycle of nature and the symphony of existence.

Ozma Bhatti
Dr Wardah Naeem Bukhari

Visual Artists

Dr. Wardah Naeem Bukhari
Faiza Bhatti

Hassnain Awais
Maaria & Waseem Ahmed

Muhammad Atif Khan
Muhammad Umer Jamil

Ozma Bhatti

Wardah Naeem Bukhari

She is a multidisciplinary artist and art educator. Bukhari completed her Doctorate in Art History in 2021 from Punjab University, College of Art and Design, Lahore. In 2013, she acquired her M.A Honors in Visual Art from the National College of Arts, Lahore and received her Bachelor of Graphic Design from Multan College of Arts, Bahauddin Zakariya University in 2010. Currently, teaching as an Assistant Professor in Graphic Design Department at Lahore College for Women University, Lahore 2023. She has travelled extensively and invited for artist talk at South Asian Women Collective, New York in 2016 and selected in International-Artist-In-Residence program in Arthub, Arizona in the following year. She was invited in international conferences in Pendik, Istanbul in 2015. Bukhari was invited as Guest Curator of the first studio BQ Artist-in-Residence program in (2015). Got Top 10 Award- "Young at Art," Alhamra's 13th Annual Exhibition for Young Artists, Alhamra Art Gallery, The Lahore Arts Council (2017).



Bestowed Gold Medal Award by Idara- Farogh-e Taleem at Governor House, Lahore (2020). She contributes two biographies in the Oxford Companion to Pakistani Art and wrote 10 articles in HEC recognized "Y" category journals and one in International journal. Bukhari has done four solo shows in Lahore and participated in 13 International group exhibitions/ Biennale/ Triennial and 35 National Group Exhibitions. Awarded Membership of Museum of Modern Art, New York (2023-2024).

The term "flower work," or phulkari, describes the elaborate floral patterns and designs found in textiles. The rich cultural tapestry of Punjab in the subcontinent, where colorful threads weave narratives of tradition, spirituality, and connectedness to the natural world, is the foundation of Phulkari Baghs' art. The deep ecological significance of Phulkari embroidery is concealed within its beautiful appearance. To depict ecology, the significance of birds and animals in Phulkari embroidery is explored and highlighted in this work. We can understand the ecological knowledge ingrained in this traditional expertise by exploring the significance of birds and animals in Phulkari embroidery. This project intends to promote Phulkari's eco-friendly themes in our culture through Phulkari patterns and appreciate Phulkari's artistic splendor.

This work explores the ways in which animals and birds represent life as a metaphor for the delicate ecosystems associated with waterways, drawing inspiration from the Charbagh or Chahr Bagh, an Islamic and Persian quadrilateral garden design mentioned in the Quran, which represents the Garden of Paradise and the four rivers that flow through it. In this work, I examine the ecological importance of Phulkari embroidered patterns and designs with animal and bird themes in relation to the environment and Punjabi culture.



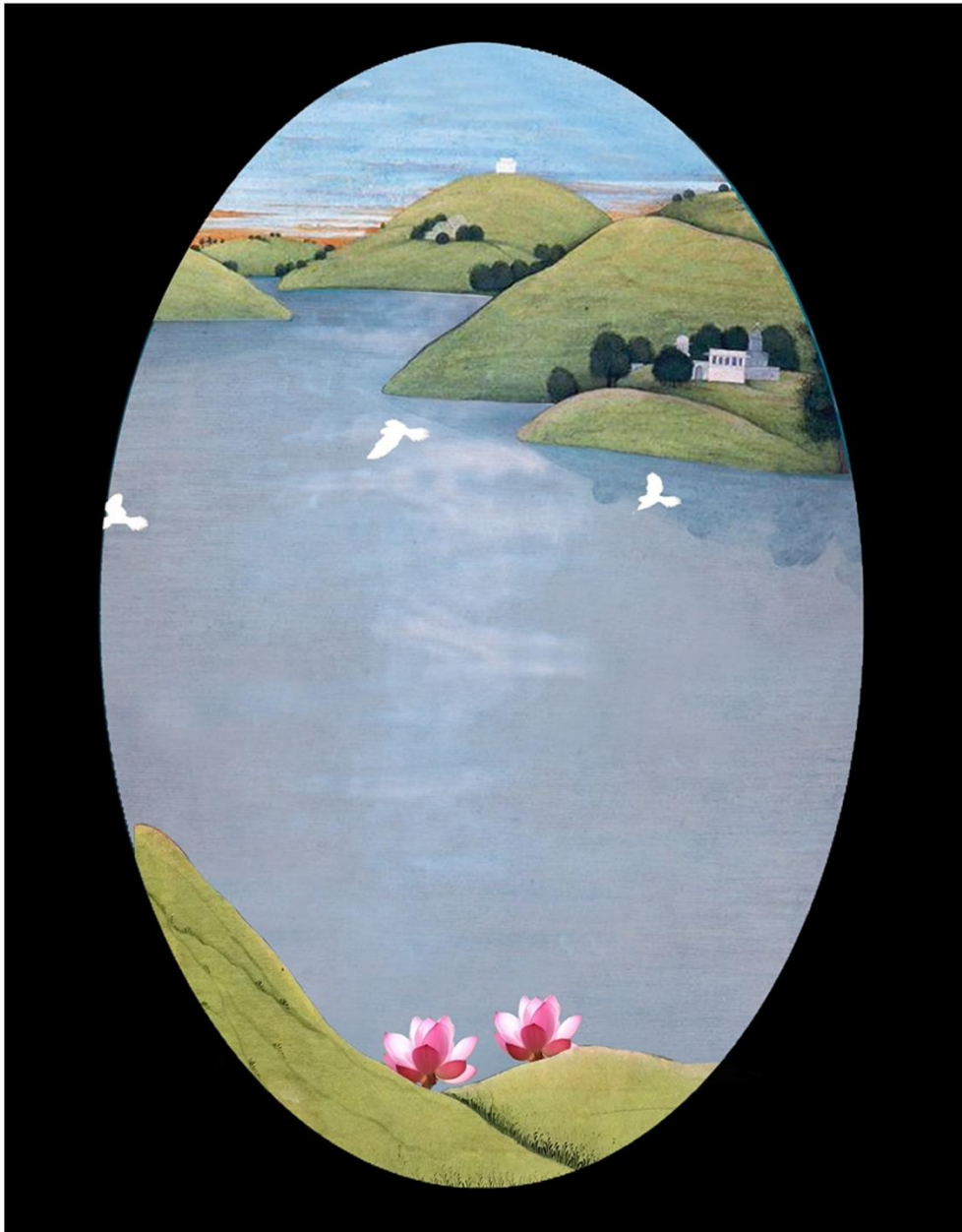
ECO OF LIFE
2024 | Digital Collage | 27 x 76 cm

Faiza Bhatti

She is born in Lahore. She graduated from Beacon House National University Lahore with the Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2015. She worked in Army Museum Lahore as Visual Artist in 2017-2023. She has exhibited group shows in art gallery, including the Color Art Gallery Lahore 2014; Alhamra Art Gallery Lahore 2015, 2017 and 2018; Art Chowk Karachi 2018; Luna Galleria Philippine 2022 and Timeless Elegance Lahore Museum 2023. She lives and work in Lahore.



Ecology plays a harmonious melody, weaving a tapestry of lyrical thoughts and sounds. The beauty of ecology lies in its intricate relationships with humanity and in revealing the hidden rhythms of life. We find the essence of beauty, peace, lyrical connection, and imaginative space in the human mind. The wind creates a sound that whispers secrets of the past, and rivers flow with the memories of our ancestors. I have been developing and recreating moments in water through a collection of references to mountains, sky, birds, and lotus to create a sense of depth in digital video.



THE HARMONY OF NATURE
2024 | Single Channel Video | 00:30 Sec

Hassnain Awais

He is a visual artist currently based in Lahore, Pakistan. He completed his BFA in Visual Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore in 2005 specializing in printmaking and received an Honors for his efforts. He is a printmaker by training and works mostly in mixed media oil paintings. Hassnain has exhibited his work in various galleries locally and internationally, such as at Satrang gallery Islamabad, Artescape gallery Islamabad, Taseer Art Gallery, Lahore; Khass Gallery, Islamabad; Artchowk Gallery, Karachi; Artscene Gallery, Karachi; Rothas 2, Lahore; Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore; NewYork Art Fair, New York; and Basement Art Gallery, Dubai.

He has worked as a faculty member in the printmaking department at the National College Of Arts, Lahore and also at Punjab University's Department of Art & Design, Lahore. Currently, Hassnain is working as a freelance artist and running an independent printmaking studio by the name of Studio Hassnain providing other fellow printmakers a facility to do printmaking, alongside conducting workshops and residencies. He also runs a fashion photography and art direction studio by the name of Gadrang Designs.





NEW EMERGENCE

2023 | Mixed Medium with Printmaking | 88.9 x 60.96 cm

Maria & Waseem Ahmed

Waseem Ahmed graduated with honors in Miniature Painting from the National College of Arts in Lahore in 2000. Ahmed hails from the generation of artists who initiated the movement of the 'contemporary miniature' in Lahore about fifteen years ago. In Pakistan, the traditional miniature has been a starting point for many contemporary artists who have honored the technique as cultural heritage, while reinterpreting and reinventing it in their own way. His rich vocabulary of images often refers to mythology or history, both Eastern and Western. His work bridges our cultural heritage and the turbulence of our time. Waseem has displayed extensively solo and group shows nationally and internationally since year 2000, Pakistan, USA, Switzerland, Germany, London, Belgium, Canada, Greece, Dubai, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Japan, Taiwan, Hongkong, Australia, Turkey, China, Lebanon, Jordan, Italy, France, and Dubai.

Photographer, Maria Waseem, attributes her passion for documenting Pakistan's heritage through photography as a gift from her mother. While growing up in Mangla, Azad Kashmir, Waseem recalls watching her mother develop photographs in a darkroom setup in their house. She graduated in architecture with distinction in 2001 from National College of Arts Lahore and started working in the research and publication department as architectural researcher for the book on Bhai Ram Singh with Ms Sajida Haider Vandal for 6 years. She also travelled to borders of Pakistan with Iran, China, India, Tajikistan and Afghanistan and while travelling towards the borders by road, she witnessed how beautifully one culture transitions into another. She tries to share this experience by making live videos and with music to make viewers have the similar overwhelming experience that she have had. She exhibited her work in Lahore, Karachi, Nepal, India.

The intersections of history for Maaria Waseem and Waseem Ahmed take visual manifestations in their latest duo exhibition "The Other Side of Silence". Waseem belongs to the South, whereas Maaria hails from the North of Pakistan.

The ancient histories nestled in the region are being visually investigated by the artists in the form of collaborative works, combining Maaria's photography and Waseem's miniature painting. The merging of their art practices is a reflective conversation between the two as they explore, travel and collect layers of historical, cultural and political discourse. The images are a striking amalgamation of the heritage motifs seen in abandoned ruins of the old forgotten era, echoing the realms of kings, conquerors and mythological stories.





THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE

2022 | Photograph Print on Archival paper,
Paint on print with Dry Pigment color and silver leaf
| 33.8X50.8 cm

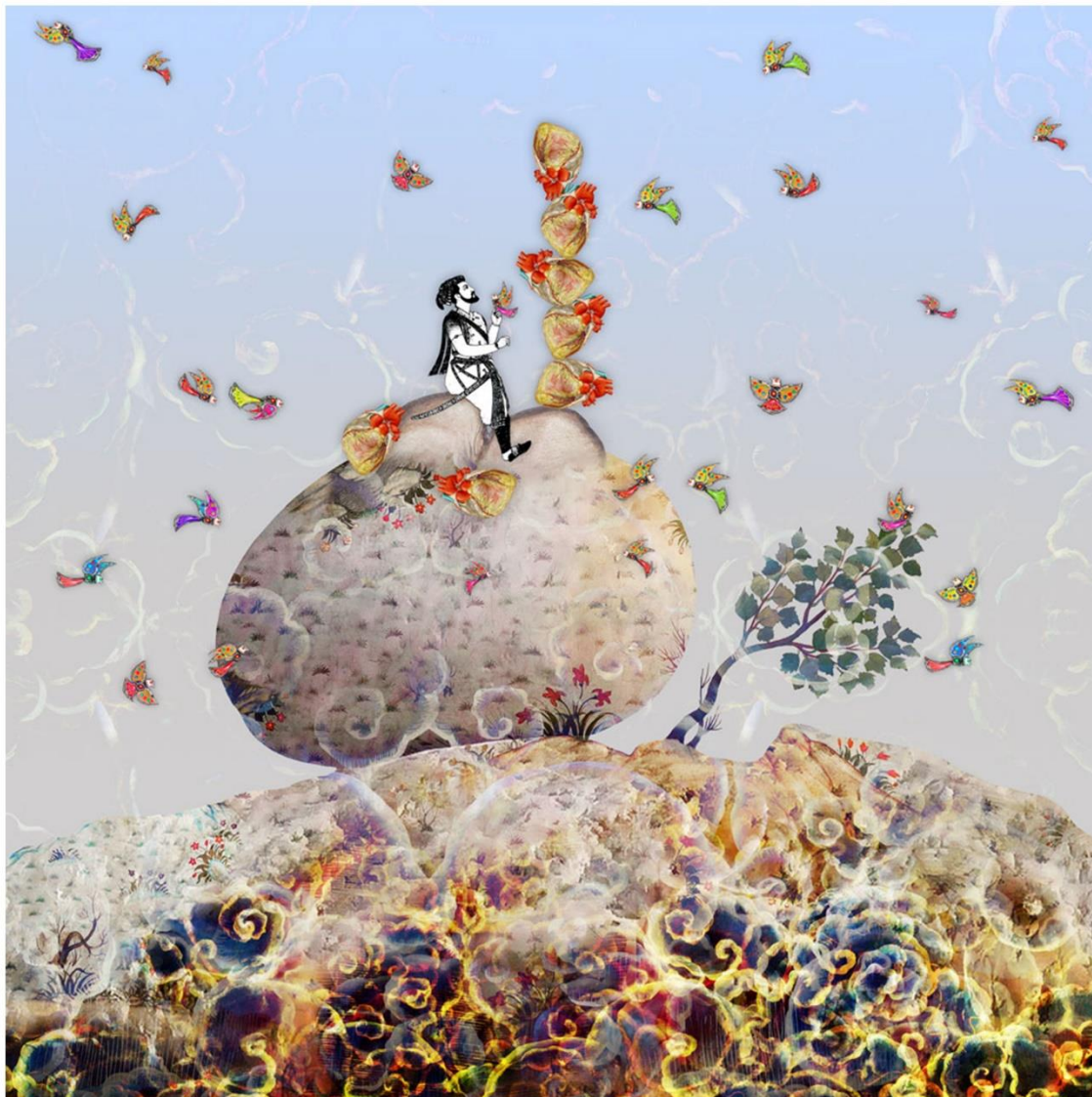
Muhammad Atif Khan

He graduated with distinction in Fine Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore in 1997. With an impressive career spanning 25 years, he has garnered numerous international accolades and actively participated in residencies and workshops. Notable achievements include being awarded the prestigious “UNESCO-Aschberg Bursary for Artists” in 1998 and “Commonwealth Art and Craft Award” in 2008. Khan’s artistic journey has seen him exhibit in renowned museums worldwide, conduct workshops in various countries, and hold 23 solo shows across Pakistan, the UK, Jordan, Switzerland, and India. Noteworthy projects include winning the Lahore Biennale Foundation’s Open Call competition in 2015 and receiving the ADA Awards 2020-21 for Digital Arts.



Khan has also contributed to public art installations for major events like the Karachi Biennale and the Britto Art Project in Bangladesh. Alongside his independent artistic endeavors, he shares his expertise as a teacher in the Department of Fine Art at his alma mater, the National College of Arts in Lahore. .

By and large, my work is a homage to local popular visual culture, paying tribute to its amalgamation of Central Asian/Persian aesthetics and a local South Asian blend of expressive storytelling. Borrowing from and building on a gamut of images and iconography across hundreds of years of Mughal culture and miniature paintings, to local truck art and a diverse range of visual materials from my everyday life, I create an imaginary universe. Juxtaposing eclectic images in contrasting environments subverts their original contextual meaning and opens windows on new stories that speak of my concerns about spiritual and physical worlds, simultaneously.



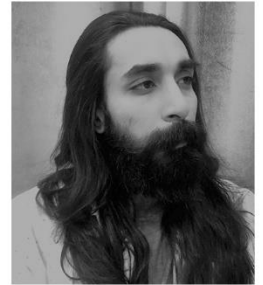
VALLEY OF THE HEART

2021 | Archival inkjet print on Hahnemühle paper | 50.8 x 50.8 cm

Muhammad Umer Jamil

He born in Lahore. He graduated from National College of Arts Rawalpindi in miniature painting 2021. His art works have exhibited The New Odyssey in PNCA 2021, 3rd National Exhibition of Visual Arts in Alhamra Art Gallery 2021. Untitled Show in Rangers Gallery and Karbath 04 Artist Residency 2021, Around the Corner 18th Alhamra young artist's exhibition 2022 and Arriving 19th Alhamra young artist's exhibition in 2023, Lahore Museum a tribute to the eminence Allah Bux Timeless Elegance 2023 and in other various group shows. He currently works in Lahore.

As an artist, i work hard to develop paintings that speak both to me and to others about the beautiful connection of nature with human life. Part of my process before i begin painting is to interact as much as i can with the specific object that i am going to recreate on canvas. Currently my work compares human life with nature. By picking the element from nature, i break down and reconstruct the rose in a way that shows it's likeness to human's life. As we all can observe the life of a rose from its bloom to doom, in my work viewers can experience the glimpse of human struggle from the birth till death.





UNTITLED

2024 | Gouche on wasli paper | 17.78 x 40.64 cm

Ozma Bhatti

She has worked as an Artist and Curator over the past decade on various platforms including the Lahore Museum. In 2009 she graduated in Fine Arts from the National College of Arts Lahore and exhibited her work “Two Shades of Grey”, at the College Arts thesis show. She has also exhibited in various group shows at several art galleries, including the Alhamra Art Gallery Lahore 2010, 2013, 2015, and 2018; the Rohtas Gallery, Islamabad, 2012; The Lahore City Heritage Museum, Lahore 2014; the Ejaz Gallery, Lahore, 2015; Art Scene Gallery, Karachi 2016; Art Chowk, Karachi, 2019; Art Scene, Karachi, 2021; an online, Philippines-based exhibition in 2022 ; Moving Dots in Art Scene Karachi 2023 and Time Elegance in Lahore Museum 2023. Her practice is about spontaneous expressions and is inspired by surrealism, automatism and shallow pictorial space. She explores various states of the human consciousness, enmeshing reality and non-reality. Her works are often monochromatic and intricately detailed.



The connection between philosophical mysticism and ecology, particularly in the context of climate action and ecosystem resilience, is deeply profound. Philosophical mysticism, with its emphasis on interconnectedness and the oneness of existence, finds resonance in ecological principles that underscore the intricate web of life. Climate action and the pursuit of ecosystem resilience demand a fundamental shift in consciousness, alike to the developing by mystics, where in humanity recognizes its integral role within the broader tapestry of nature.

Together, these elements form a symbol of existence, represents a vital role, reflects the beauty of life, revealing hidden truth and mystery of universe and contacting is cycle of nature; we find essence of purity of divine spirit. I developed beautifully links the elements of water, fish, and flowers, illustrating their symbolic significance in reflecting love, purity, and the intricate connections within nature. Water, flowers, and fish use as metaphors representing purity, growth, and richness, mirroring the essential elements and biodiversity within ecosystems. Furthermore, the philosophical exploration of resilience, adaptation, and cyclical existence finds practical application in ecological discourse, guiding strategies to navigate the challenges posed by climate change. Ultimately, the convergence of philosophical mysticism and ecology underscores the imperative of restoring harmony and balance within the natural world, offering profound insights that inspire meaningful action towards a sustainable future and ourselves. Ecology connected with cycle of nature and



SYMPHONY OF NATURE
2024 | Pen on paper | 50.8 x 76.2 cm



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