

# EXPLORING BOUNDARIES



VM ART GALLERY

**Curated by FS Karachiwala**

Aqeel Solangi  
Hadia Moiz  
Huma Mulji  
Jamil Baloch  
Masuma Halai Khwaja  
Sahar Ansari

**Opening :**

May 6th, 2023

5pm to 8pm

Continues till :

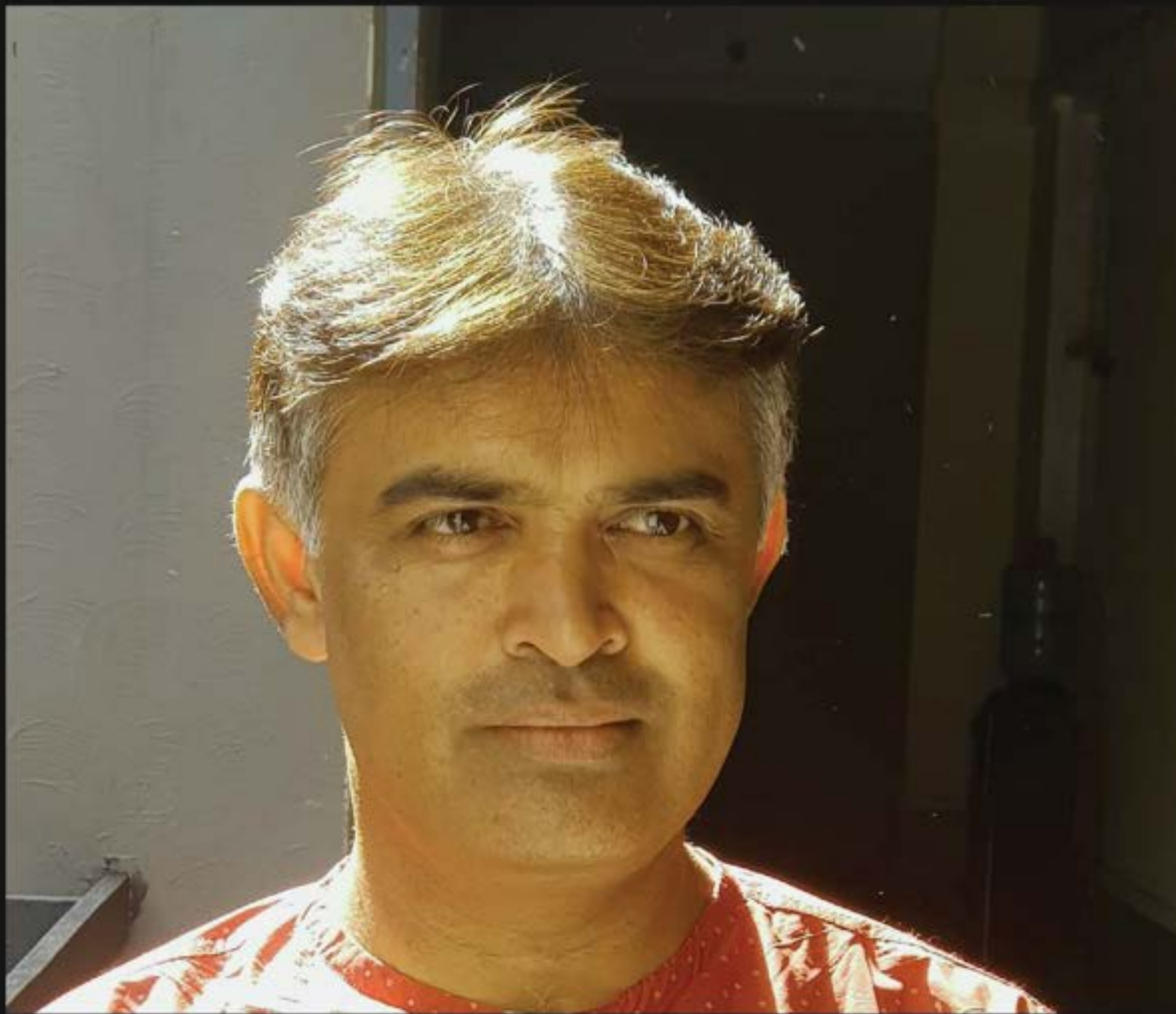
May 22nd, 2023



VM Art Gallery is pleased to announce Exploring Boundaries, a group show curated by FS Karachiwala that features works by Aqeel Solangi, Hadia Moiz, Huma Mulji, Jamil Baloch, Masuma Halai Khwaja, and Sahar Ansari.

The exhibition will open at 5 pm on 6th May 2023 and continue till 22nd May 2023, Monday to Saturday, 11 am to 7 pm.

This exhibition looks at varied perceptions of limitations, horizons, and barriers. Boundaries that shape our intelligence, personalities, and worldview can either be seen or remain unseen, can be spoken out loud, or continue to be silent. As an intangible phenomenon, boundaries have the power to shape our behavior towards religion, culture, and society.



# AQEEL SOLANGI

Aqeel Solangi is a Rawalpindi-based artist who works in various mediums including painting, drawing, sculpture, collage, and digital. He graduated with a BFA and MA (Hons) from the National College of Arts, Lahore in 2003 and 2005 respectively. Solangi received his second master's degree in Fine Art from Bath Spa University, UK in 2016.

He was the recipient of the renowned International Charles Wallace Pakistan Trust Visiting Artist Fellowship for the Prince's School of Traditional Arts, London in 2006. Solangi received 'A Vision of the Future-2006' Young Artists Award by the Lahore Arts Council in 2006. His work has been reviewed by renowned critics like Dr. Michele Whiting, Dr. Akbar Naqvi, Marjorie Hussain, Noor Jehan Mecklai and Sally Bennett. Solangi Heads the Painting and Sculptures Department at NCA, Rawalpindi.

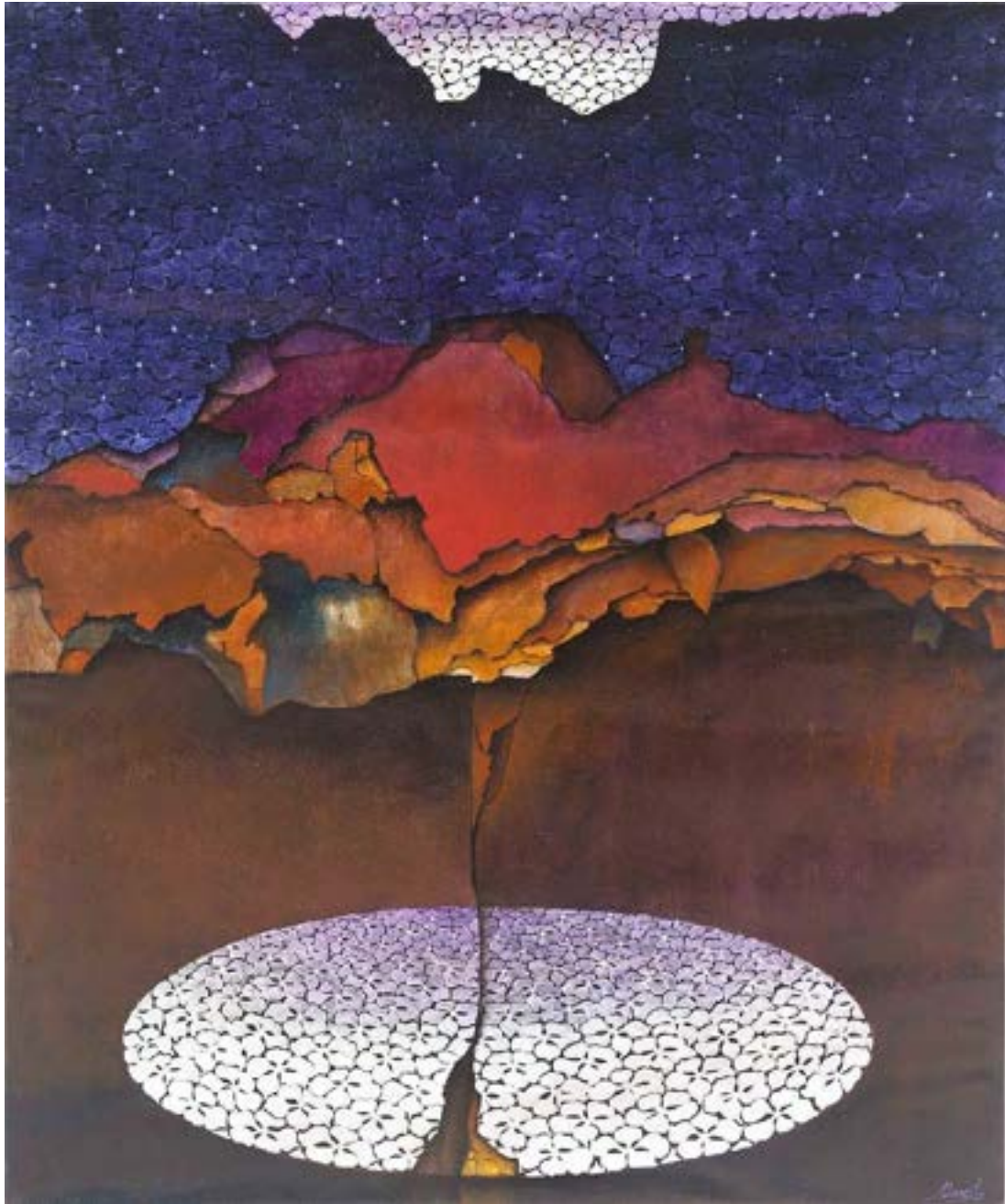
Aqeel Solangi has approached the boundary through an abstract investigation. In urban settings, dwellings are painted with layers of paint; when a wall cracks the layers reveal a process. Slowly broken layers of paint are simultaneous to an invitation, and every slow opening carries suspense. One layer blocks the other in terms of colour, strength, and space. The work hints at the phenomenon of covering and uncovering, the presence and absence of certain elements, and the blurred binary of the inner and the outer. These paintings have no beginning and no end.



Aqeel Solangi  
*Bits of spring are in the walls, 2023*  
Acrylic and oil on canvas  
42h x 30w in  
Rs. 650,000



Aqeel Solangi  
*Bits of spring are in the walls - II, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas  
36h x 30w in  
Rs. 450,000



Aqeel Solangi  
*Songs from the Silent Wall*, 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
36h x 30w in  
Rs. 450,000



# HADIA MOIZ

Hadia Moiz is a Lahore-based visual artist. She received an MA with Honors in Visual Arts from the National College of Arts, Lahore in 2016 and a BFA in miniature from the Hunerkada College of Visual and Performing Arts in 2005.

She has displayed her work in numerous exhibitions since 2006, both in Pakistan and abroad. She has also exhibited at various art fairs, including Istanbul Contemporary, Scope Miami, and Bastakia Art Fair Dubai. Moiz also participated in the VASL Taza Tareen II Artist Residency, in 2007. Her works have been published in local and international media as well.



Boundaries bring with them rules and limitations.

Post-colonialism resulted in the redrawing of boundaries between identities, cultures, communities, and countries. Miniature painting went through an identity crisis after colonization, when most of the illustrated manuscripts were transported from South Asia to Europe. The precolonial history of miniature painting was written mostly by Westerners from the perspective of Eurocentric 19th-century scholarship, which is very descriptive and less critically assumptive. In Moiz's present practice, she uses miniature painting books as a medium containing images of centuries-old manuscript paintings, mostly in chronological order. She binds the edges of the book and gradually removes the text with a scalpel while leaving the selected images from the illustration in their respective places. Images start to forge new relationships with other images from different schools and periods, cultivate new associations, and originate a new narrative with a three-dimensional appearance.



Hadia Moiz  
*The Bundi Wall-Paintings in Rajasthan, 2023*  
Original Book and Gouache  
12h x 12w in  
Rs. 275,000



Hadia Moiz  
*The Art of Falconry in the Mughal Empire, 2023*  
Original Book, wasli and teawash  
12h x 8.50w in  
Rs. 250,000



Hadia Moiz  
*The Ajanta Caves*, 2022  
Original Book and Gouache  
L: 11.5 inches DIA: 4.5 inches  
Rs. 250,000



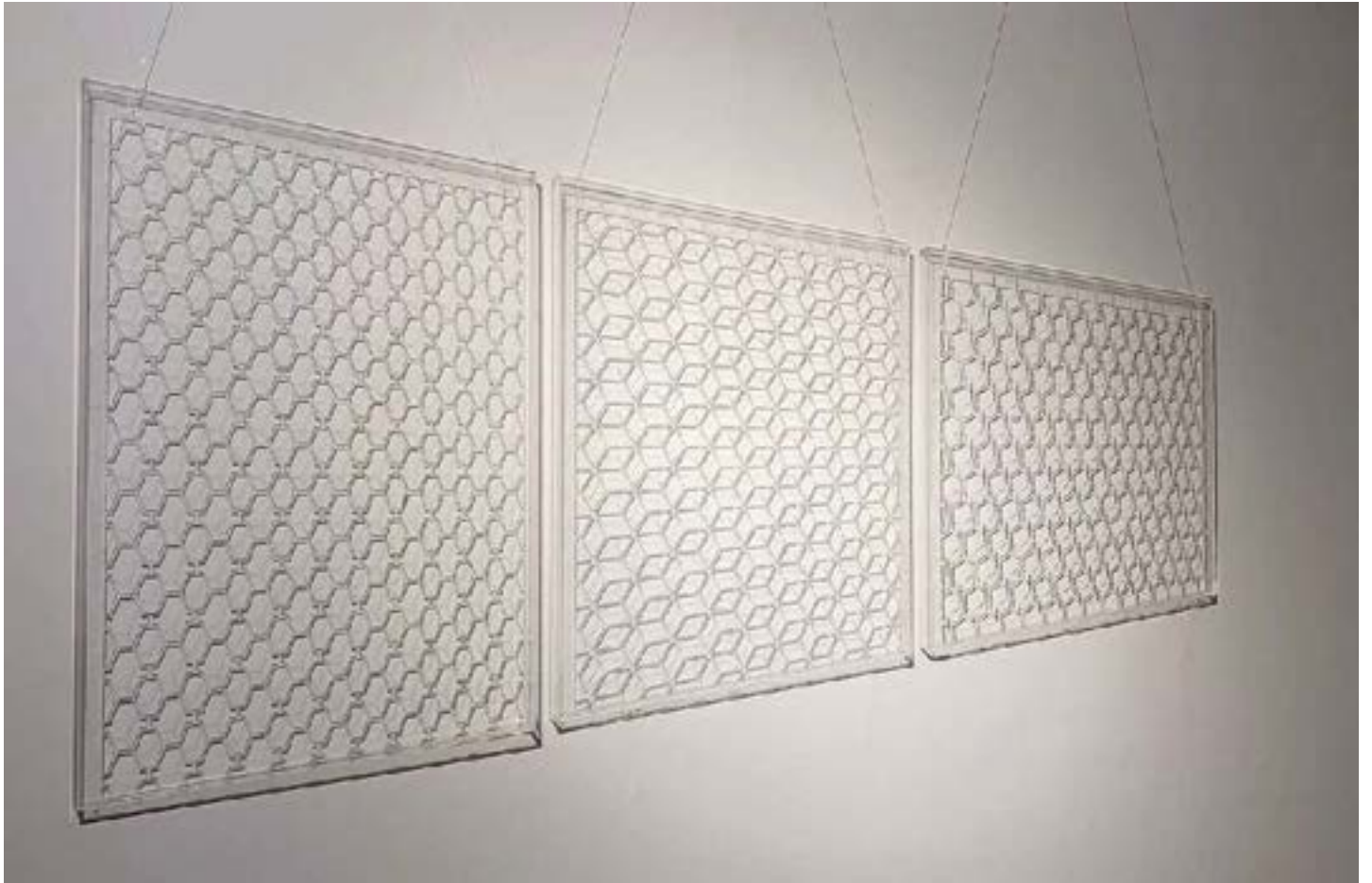
# HUMA MULJI

Huma Mulji is a UK-based artist who teaches at the University of the West of England, Bristol. In 1995, she completed a BFA at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in Karachi, and in 2010, received an MFA from Transart Institute in Berlin, Germany. Mulji's works are in the collections of Saatchi Gallery, London, and the Asia Society Museum. She received the Abraaj Capital Art Prize in 2013.

Mulji's participation in recent exhibitions includes *Your Tongue in My Mouth* (solo), Mirror, Plymouth, *Can you Hear my Voice?* Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, Australia, (2021) *Skyfall*, (solo) Karachi, Pakistan (2020). *The Centre of Gravity*, Bristol, UK, (2020), *In the Open and in Stealth* MACBA, Barcelona, Spain (2018), *Witness*, Karachi Biennale (2017), *welcome to what we took from is the state*, Queens Museum, New York, USA (2017), *The Great Game*, Irani Pavilion, Venice Biennale, (2015) and *Burning Down the House*, 10th Gwangju Biennale, South Korea, (2014). She is represented by Project 88, Mumbai.

Window grilles, a barrier between the private and the public, the safe and the perilous,  
protecting and excluding at once.

*Summer Afternoons: Bedroom, Kitchen, Lounge* was a work produced in 2010, a time when public space in Lahore was never free of risk. *Point of View, Morning, Noon, Night 2023*, looks back at this work, in the months of lockdown, renegotiating the vulnerability of the individual body and the public realm.



Huma Mulji  
*Point of View: Morning, Noon, Night*, 2023  
Acrylic Sheet, Adhesives  
46 x 30 inches  
39.5 x 29 inches  
33 x 30 inches  
Price on Request

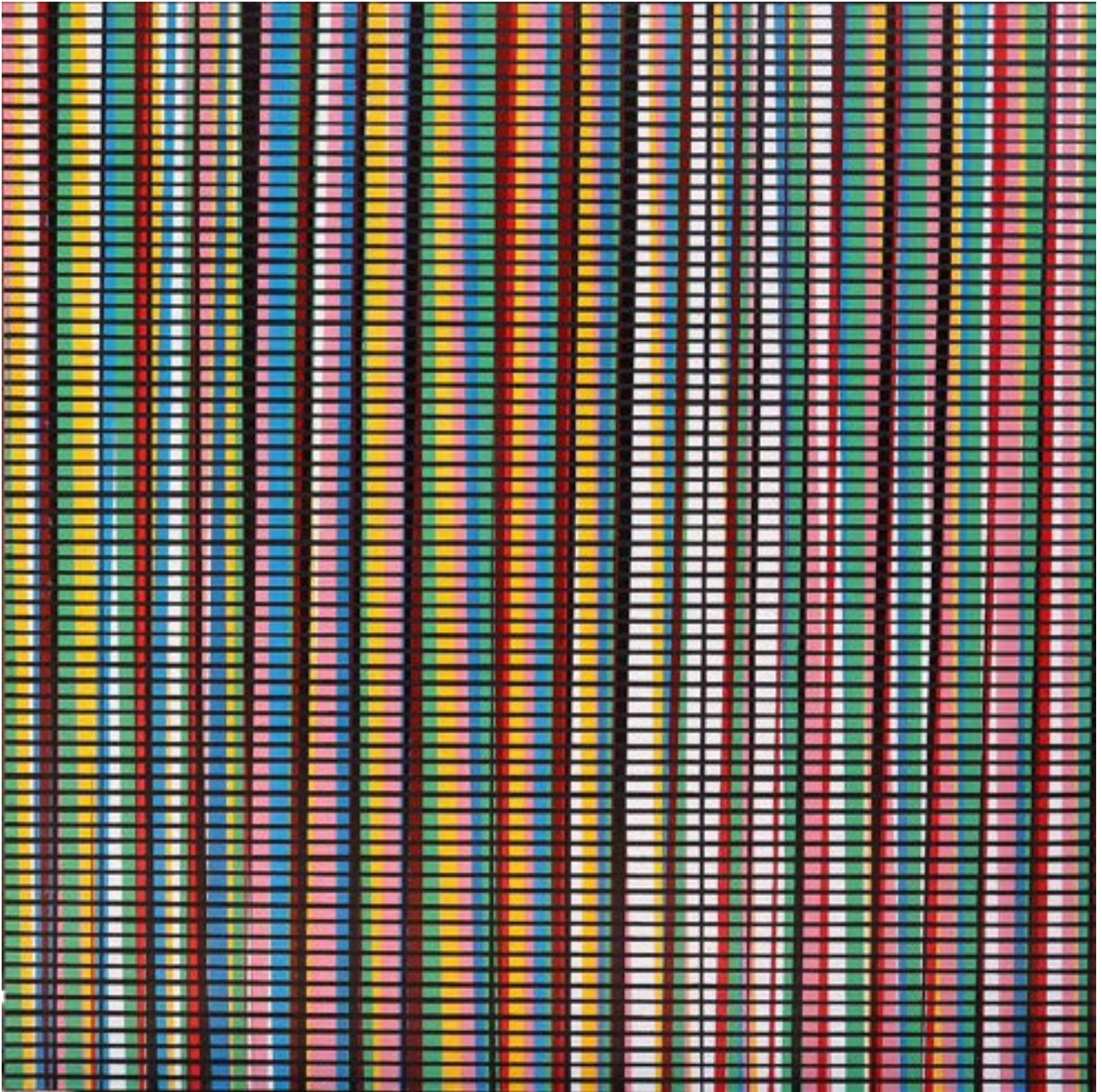


# JAMIL BALOCH

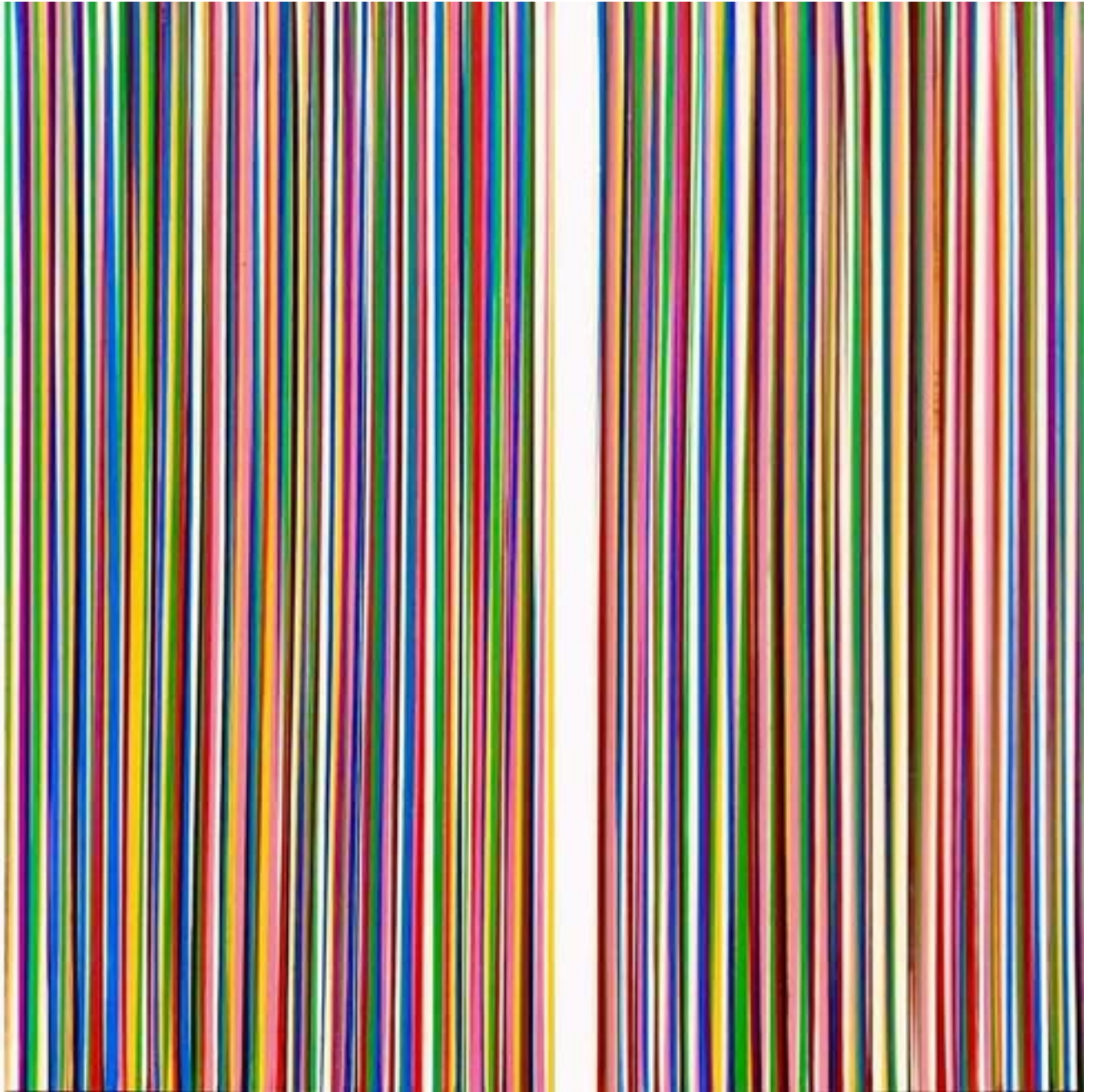
Jamil Baloch is a Lahore-based sculptor and painter. He graduated from the National College of Arts, Lahore in 1997 and now works there as an Assistant Professor. Baloch was an artist in residence at Art Omi - USA in 2015, Vermont Studio Center – USA in 2011, George Keyt Foundation – Srilanka in 2004, Vasl International, Gaddani Pakistan in 2006, and Theertha, Srilanka in 2006. Baloch has also received several awards and achievements in national and international art competitions such as, the First MA Rangoonwala Visual Arts Award, Karachi in 2003, Second Prize at Art Biennale Bangladesh in 2008, Young Artist First Prize, Lahore in 1993, Winsor Newton Competition in 2000, National Exhibition - Lahore in 2003, and First Prize in an international art competition at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in 2007.



*Jamil Baloch's work deals with the abstraction of various political and social phenomena happening in the world. Baloch's inspiration comes from his hometown and its natural environment, which also forms the symbology and vocabulary of his work. While addressing different issues that concern humankind and nature, he refuses to accept any boundaries or limitations in his medium and themes.*



Jamil Baloch  
*Untitled, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas  
48h x 48w in  
Price on Request



Jamil Baloch  
*Untitled, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 48 inches (Diptych)  
Price on Request



Jamil Baloch  
*Untitled, 2023*  
Fiberglass  
11h x 9w x 8d in  
Price on Request



# MASUMA KHWAJA

Masuma Halai Khwaja is a Karachi-based artist, curator, and art educator. She has served as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Public Art Festival in Karachi and is the founder and former Trustee of the Karachi Biennale. In 2018 Khwaja co-authored the book 'Public Art, Thriving in Urban Chaos'. She has held five solo shows in Pakistan. Her work has also been part of curated group shows in Qatar, China, Belgium, Germany, Singapore, and Dubai. Khwaja has exhibited her work at the 9th, 10th, and 11th editions of the Fibre Art Biennale 'From Lausanne To Beijing', The First Art Embroidery Biennial in Chouzhou, and The Dafen Art Biennale in Shenzhen. Moreover, Khwaja curated Aisha Khalid's retrospective exhibitions in Karachi (2021/22) and at the Govett Brewster Gallery in New Plymouth, New Zealand. She won The Excellence award at the 9th and 11th Fiber Art Biennales.

Masuma Halai Khwaja's practice relies on the use of textiles. Revolving around the integration of personal memory, diverse histories, and different cultures, she creates narratives that are isolated from their origins.

Khwaja works with textiles sourced from local flea markets that she has collected over a period of time. These textiles have rich histories and belong to different parts of the world. She pairs them with embroideries usually from culturally rich, rural areas of Pakistan.

*Blurred Boundaries*, which is encased within the confines of an old stained sari border, talks about the paradoxes of proximity and insurmountable distances, unfulfilled promises, artificial borders, and the changing faces of nature that defy and blur man-made lines.

*Casting Nets At The Ebbing Tide* has been created on a tapestry made in Italy. Created by cutting up embroideries from South Asia, this artwork shows a young fisherman casting his net around the image of a rich couple enjoying a gondola ride and tends to bring into discussion the lingering effects of colonization.



Masuma Halai Khwaja  
*Casting Nets At The Ebbing Tide*, 2022  
Textile Collage on Tapestry  
26h x 23w in  
Rs. 200,000



Masuma Halai Khwaja  
*Untitled, 2023*  
Embroidery and textile collage on linen  
24h x 40w in  
Rs. 300,000



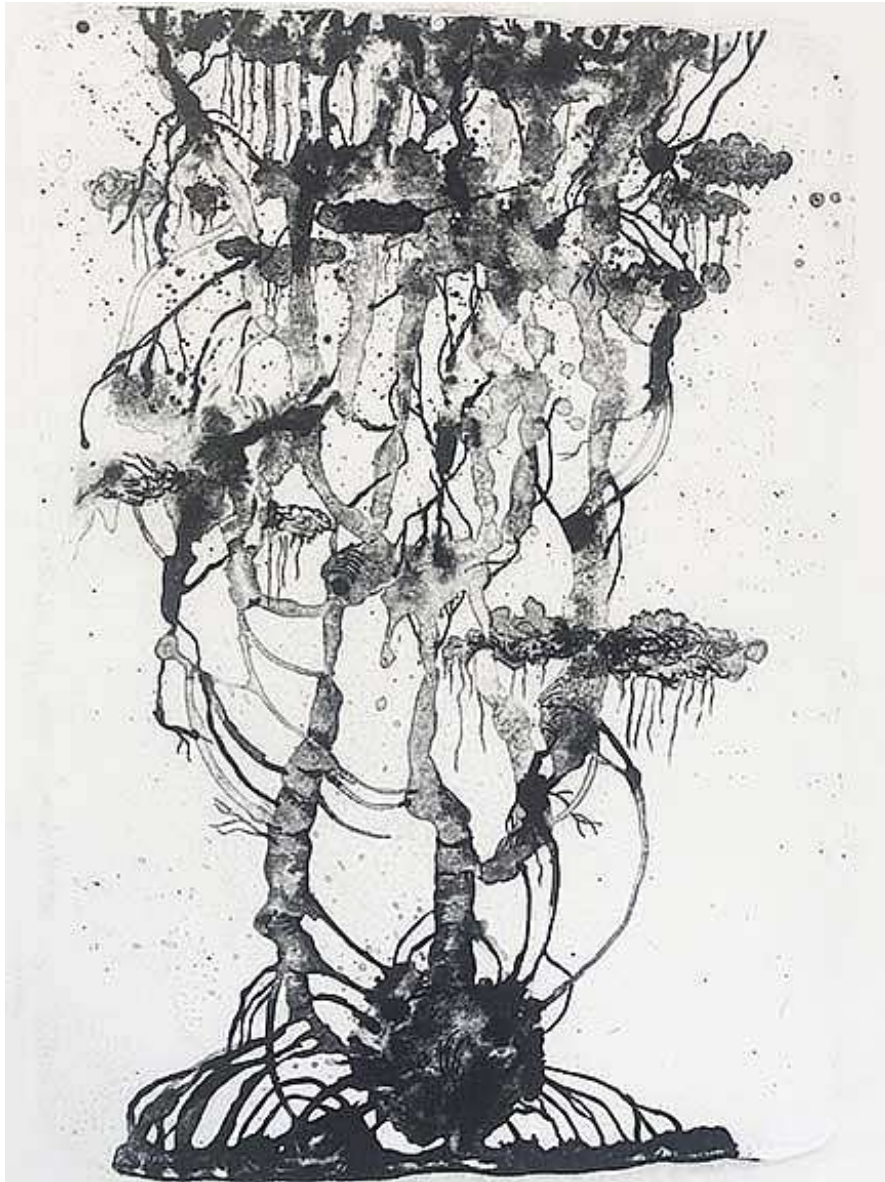


# SAHAR ANSARI

Sahar Ansari was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and was raised in Lahore, Pakistan. She completed her BFA in Printmaking from the National College of Arts, Lahore in 2000. Ansari resumed her practice in 2017 at EAV Parque Lage, Brazil, and continues to work there in Gravuristão, a studio established by her. Her work has been displayed at several South American print fairs and exhibitions in Brazil, the United Kingdom, and Pakistan.

Sahar Ansari's work is about shared limits, neither safe within nor without, but paradoxically creating a safe space together. Boundaries are sinister like that; they encircle the privileged and encage the less privileged.

The Amazonia holds a different narrative for anyone who dares to dream of her. She feels so inaccessible, yet the jungle lives within all of us. A boundary that holds no bounds and shelters 8 countries. She is a mother to all of them; however, her grief is not limited to them, but to the whole world. She has been burnt, poisoned, and exploited beyond imagination. Yet, like a mother, her soothing tears rain down in mists over the forest canopies, collecting into rivulets carving a beautiful geography as they traverse across her lush variegated body, clearing the natural world of the artificial mess we created.



Sahar Ansari  
*Rain Roots (Brain Forest 1)*, 2022  
Stone Lithography  
14.76h x 10.63w in  
1/8  
Rs. 70,000



Sahar Ansari  
*Raizes das Chuvas: The geography of our mother, 2023*  
Stone Lithography  
14.76h x 10.63w in  
1/8  
Rs. 75,000

## ARTICULATING THE BOUNDARY

Boundaries are remarkable entities that can be as vaporous as clouds or as monumental as a seismic rift. Fuzzy or fixed, boundaries are essential in defining our perception of time, space, and non-tangible reality. They facilitate classification and objectification. For instance, we can speak of boundaries between things that are physical such as an apple on a table, or things that are conceptual such as the distinction between poetry and prose. In this ontological manner, boundaries become markers of identity or tools of epistemological investigation. The idea of a boundary is so foundational to our intelligence that one dares say it makes thinking possible. A fuzzy boundary creates its own conundrum such as the diminishing boundary between human versus Artificial Intelligence.

It is often the abstract mystery of boundaries that ignites our thoughts - thoughts that generate a cosmos of infinite complexity. We use boundaries to define meaning out of the chaos of multiplicity. Ghalib, in exquisite metaphysical mode, expresses a boundary as a thread that binds and organizes the universe of scattered forms:

*Nazar mein hai humari jaadah-e-rah-fana Ghalib  
Ke yeh Sheerazah hai aalam ke ajza-e-pareshaan ka*

In our gaze is the path of the road of oblivion, Ghalib  
For this is the thread that binds the scatter of the universe

Artists negotiate the mystery of the boundary between intuitive thinking versus analytical thinking. They construe boundaries with an intuitive understanding of line and form to articulate their observations of reality. In the show *Exploring Boundaries*, we see diverse expressions of how the boundary can be imagined. The hard precision of Huma Mulji's grille patterns contrasts with Aqueel Solangi's interpretation of time through the random patterns created by peeling paint. Nature, for Jamil Baloch, becomes a symbol for the human condition, while Sahar Ansari sees Nature's fecundity as a contrast to the contrived veneer of human civilization. Hadia Moiz literally reconfigures the physical boundaries of text to create new decolonialized narratives, while Masuma Halai Khawaja interrogates the fabric of history to challenge received narratives.

In the work of these artists, we see how the boundary is asserted, challenged, demolished, and recreated to reflect new truths and understanding. Art is not unlike a boundary as its iterations of form, color, and concept are limitless. A group show like *Exploring Boundaries* gives us a nuanced experience of how art becomes a means of knowing, of interpreting, and even of escaping the essential notion of the boundary.

-Nusrat Khawaja

Nusrat Khawaja is an independent researcher and landscaper. She writes on art and literature.