

Breath

Zarah
Hussain



7–29 July 2022

Grosvenor
Gallery



“We live in a world where we are constantly on. There is such a benefit to just slowing down and being quiet. Taking time and focus to look inwards, to sit and breathe quietly, to meditate, to contemplate. There’s a real power in reclaiming time for yourself.”

Breath

Zarah Hussain

7–29 July 2022

Breath is Zarah's first solo-exhibition at the gallery. Another painting from this series is on display at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in London from 21 June – 21 August. Her work was chosen for the prestigious annual exhibition by British artist Grayson Perry CBE RA.

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In these works, Zarah Hussain engages science and spirituality and unites ancient traditions with contemporary technology, guiding the viewer to moments of deep contemplation and stillness. In their pairs, the paintings represent inhalation and exhalation and originate from her own experiences with loss of breath, as well as its therapeutic power.

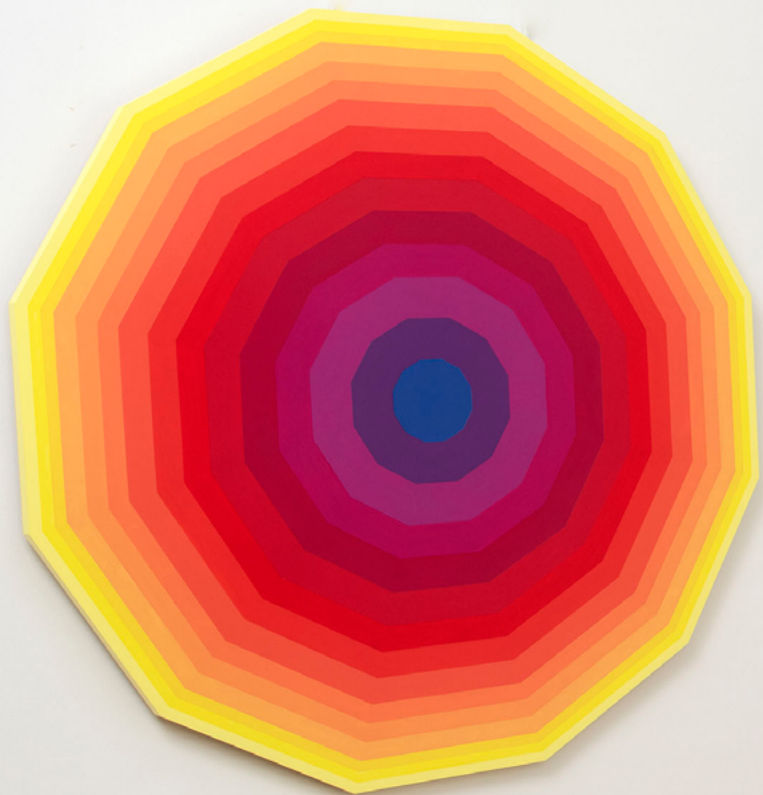
"My training was in Islamic art. My work is in the tradition of Islamic geometric design but I'm changing it. I'm using the same spiritual ideas of contemplation, meditation, of repetition of pattern. The paintings are a symbolic interpretation of breathing, the inhale and the exhale.

"I'm drawn to the geometry in Islamic art because I like maths. Researching these works a number that came up a lot was 5.5 seconds, which is the length of the perfect breath. [Hussain created an animation for the PEM exhibition that employed this timeframe].

"I had an operation to correct my breathing... I had to learn how to breathe again. It felt very relevant at the time. In a way, making the breath paintings, sitting at home and having the time to create this body of work was a really nice thing. It really helped actually. To be able to breathe unincumbered and go about your life is quite a privilege.

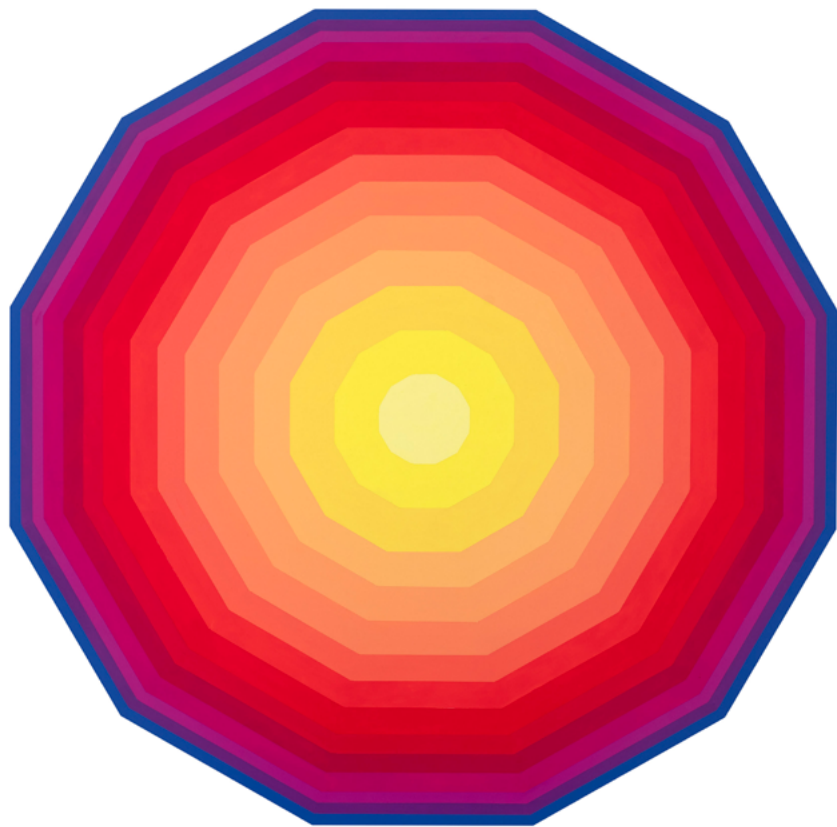
"I hope that when people come to visit the exhibition they'll get a contemplative, meditative, relaxing experience in the gallery."

Zarah Hussain, 2021



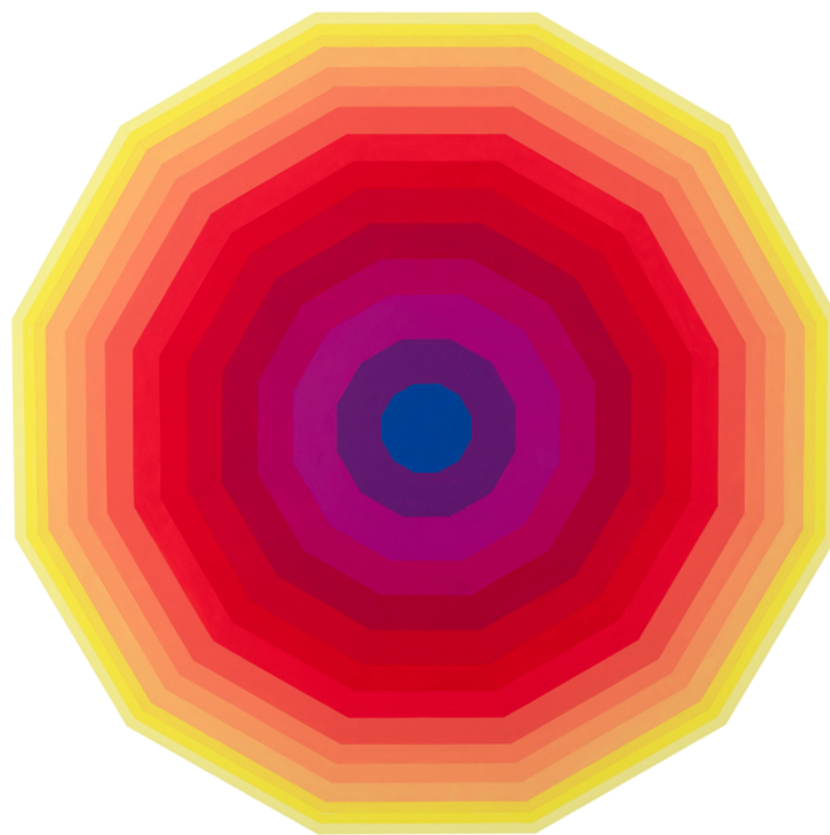
Inhale II
2020
Acrylic and varnish on gessoed panel
106 x 106 cm
41 3/4 x 41 3/4 in

Exhibitions
Breath, Zarah Hussain,
Essex Peabody Museum,
Salem MA, USA,
2021 – April 2022



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Acrylic and varnish on gessoed panel
106 x 106 cm
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Exhibitions
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Inhale IV
2020
Acrylic and varnish on gessoed panel
96.5 x 96.5 cm
38 x 38 in

Exhibitions
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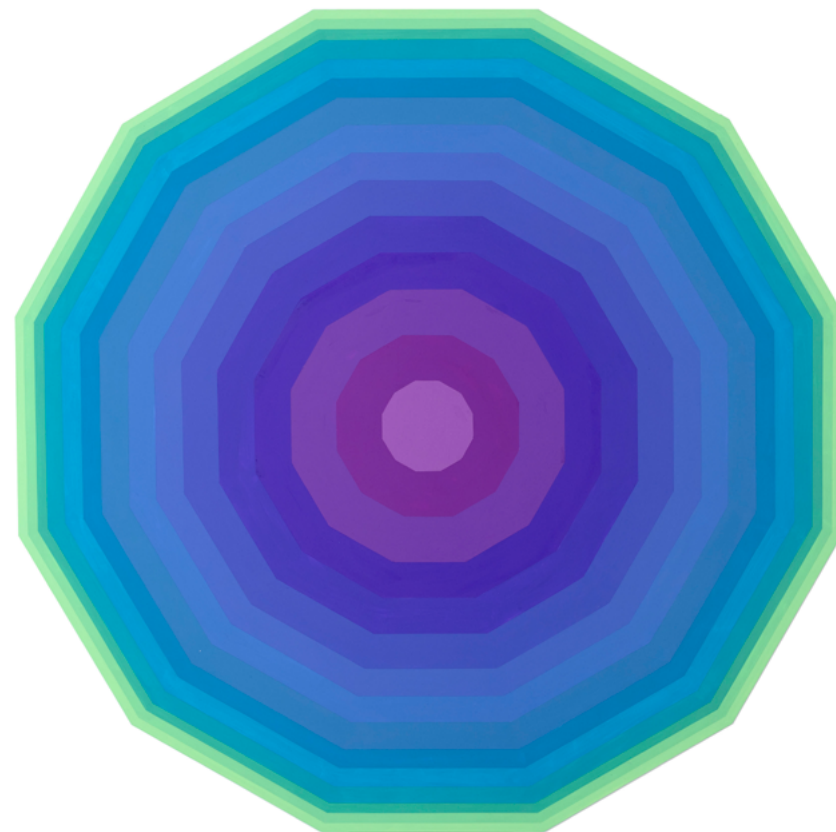
This work has been requested by
The Liang Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne,
for their *Lindisfarne Gospels* exhibition
from the 15 August – 15 November 2022



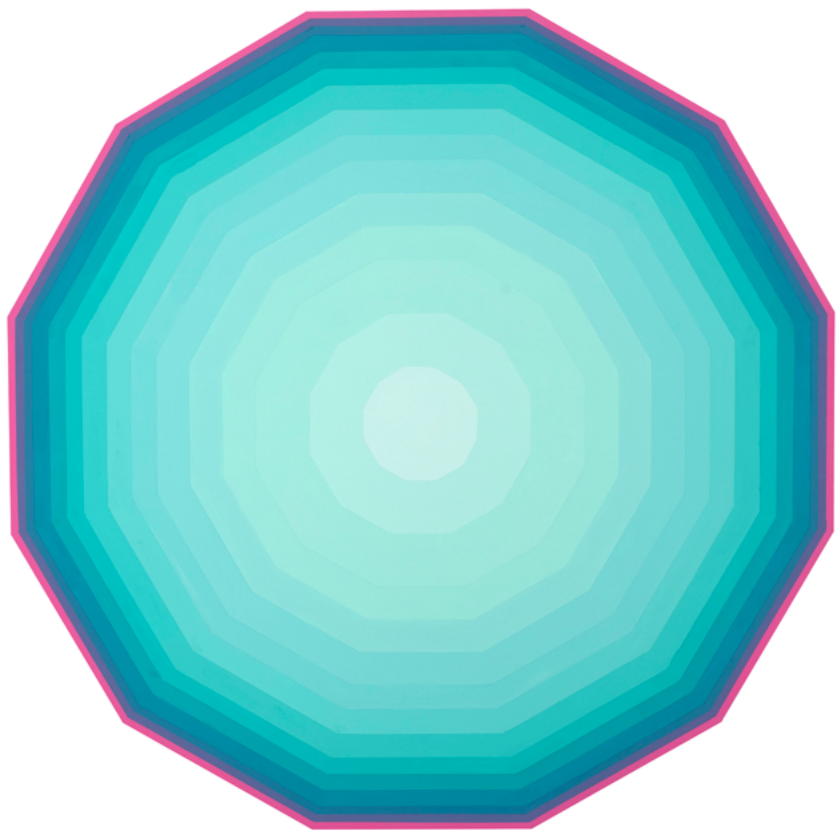
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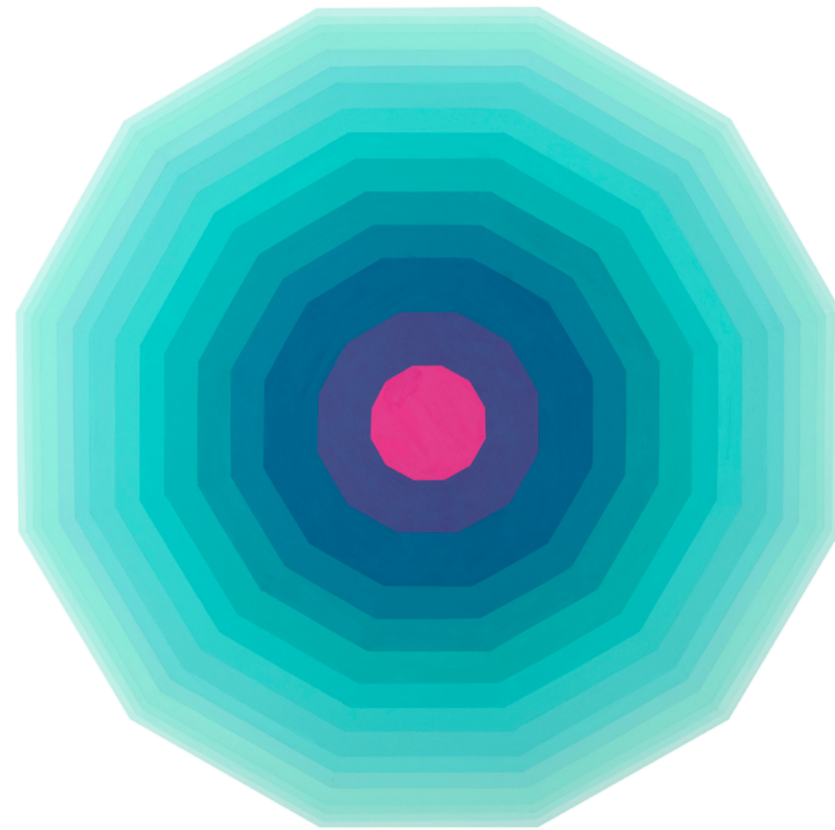
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Inhale VI
2022
Acrylic and varnish on gessoed panel
96.5 x 96.5 cm
38 x 38 in



Exhale VI
2022
Acrylic and varnish on gessoed panel
96.5 x 96.5 cm
38 x 38 in







BIOGRAPHY

Zarah Hussain (b.1980)



SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Light upon Light, at Gallery Oldham, Rugby Art Gallery and the The Atkinson Southport, October 2021–September 2022
Breath, Solo show at Peabody Essex Museum, Massachusetts, USA, December 2020–June 2021
Grids and Sub-Grids, Solo show of sculpture at Hopstreet Gallery, Brussels, October 2018–January 2019
Symmetry in Sculpture, Solo show of sculptural work at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, May 2014–January 2015
Araam: Breathing Space, A touring art exhibition curated by Shisha and Mid-Pennine Arts, Burnley, July–September 2009
The Beauty of Abstraction, Light animation and paintings, touring show commissioned by Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford, West Yorkshire, November 2006–January 2007
Handasah – Unity in Pattern, at the William Morris Gallery, London, February–March 2008 and Stockport City Art Gallery, February–March 2005

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London, 21 June–21 August 2022
Here After, Bridge Projects, Los Angeles, USA, 7 May–30 July 2022
Art Dubai, Grosvenor Gallery, UAE, March 2022
Making Paradise, curated by Esen Kaya, Aga Khan Centre, London, May–September 2021
Possible Architectures, curated by Saturation Point, University of Greenwich, November 2019
Forgotten Enlightenments, Halle 14, Leipzig, Germany, April–August 2019
Prince and Patron, selected by HRH Prince of Wales to exhibit at Buckingham Palace, July–October 2018
AYAH – Digital Art as Collaborative Community practice, London, June–July 2018
Measuring Infinity, Hopstreet Gallery, Brussels, Belgium, March–June 2017
WARP Contemporary Art Platform, Belgium, March–May 2017
Sharjah Islamic Arts Festival, Sharjah Art Museum, UAE, December 2015–January 2016
Royal society of Scottish painters in watercolour, Edinburgh, January 2015
Islamapolitan, Maraya Arts Centre, United Arab Emirates, June–August 2014; Istanbul Design week, Istanbul, Turkey, 5–9 November 2014; Milan Expo Milan, Italy, April 2015
Light Passion, Darkness – South Asian Artists, September–January 2011 (touring show across UK)
Contemporary Pakistani Artists August–September 2009, Laurent DeLaye Gallery, London
Discerning Eye, November 2004, Mall Galleries, London, Selected by Peter Randall-Page

COMMISSIONS

Winter Light, works across the Southbank Centre, London,
November 2021–February 2022

Invisible Threads, a light installation made up of 54 lightboxes, with
moving lights, and sound programmed with a generative algorithm
commissioned by the Barnaby Festival, June–October 2018

Numina, commissioned by the Barbican Centre, London. Numina
maps animated mathematical patterns onto a sculpture composed
of tessellating pyramids arranged on a hexagonal grid,
October 2016–January 2017

Patterns of India, commissioned by the British Council.
The app allows the user to explore geometric patterns like
a musical instrument. November 2016

Sharjah Spectrum, an interactive digital animation created
for the Sharjah Islamic Arts Festival, UAE, January 2016

Transcender, Visual backdrop and animation for Sain Zahoor and
Faiz Ali Faiz at the Barbican Centre, London, 27 September 2015

Southend Colour, An interactive digital animation on the big screen
at Focal Point Gallery, Southend

COLLECTIONS

University of Warwick, UK

Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah, UAE

Paintings in Hospitals, UK

Cartwright Hall Museum and Art Gallery, UK

Rochdale Touchstones Gallery, UK

Expedia

The Prince's Foundation, UK

Leicestershire County Council Artworks Collection, UK

VITAL ARTS – Royal London Hospital, UK

Print Collection, Victoria & Albert Museum, UK

Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, USA

AWARDS

Arts Council Funding for a solo touring show, 2021

Winner of the Lumen Prize for Digital Art, 2017

Artist International Development Award
from the British Council and Arts Council, 2014

Arts Council funding, 2013

Waltham Forest Annual Awards for Art, 2010

Mosaic Award for Arts and Culture, 2008

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Photography
Justin Piperger

Design
CHK Design

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