



Images (L to R): Adeela Suleman, Bushra Waqas Khan, David Alesworth, Liaqat Rasul and Ruby Chishti

Patterns of the Past: Weaving Heritage in 'Pakistani' Art

11 September – 1 October 2021

Grosvenor Gallery
35 Bury Street
London, SW1Y 6AU

Grosvenor Gallery is delighted to announce its upcoming exhibition, *'Patterns of the Past: Weaving Heritage in 'Pakistani' Art'*, curated by Dr Zehra Jumabhoy. The artists include: Adeela Suleman, Bushra Waqas Khan, David Alesworth, Liaqat Rasul and Ruby Chishti.

The exhibition will be held in collaboration with Canvas Gallery, Karachi and will open with a private view at Grosvenor Gallery on Friday, 10 September 2021 from 6 - 8pm. There will also be an Online Zoom seminar on Saturday, 18 September 2021 from 1 – 3pm BST. For more details on the seminar and how to register please email: art@grosvenorgallery.com.

The exhibition brings together five contemporary 'Pakistani' artists; each of whom use textiles to unravel conventional notions of art, heritage, nation and identity. While these artists have been defined as 'Pakistani', none of them are easy fits for the term. This show – and the especially 'tailored' works within it – aims to dismantle inter/national stereotypes about 'Pakistani art'.

Directors Conor M Macklin, Charles Moore
Associate Director Kajoli Khanna
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The success of neo-miniature painting from Pakistan has meant that international attention has been narrow-mindedly obsessed with this delicate painterly exhuming of the past; with attention being exclusively lavished on its place of production: the National College of Art in Lahore. This show is an attempt to dismantle the assumption that Pakistani art = neo-miniature = Lahore. After all, contemporary art from Pakistan deals with heritage, tradition and political *traditionalism* in a variety of visual registers. Since each of the selected artists have worked *with* textiles and *via* textiles to create highly conceptual works, the show highlights this aspect of 'heritage' – unpicking its relationship to socio-political concerns.

It is a sad truth that the most precious textiles in the Subcontinent have been produced in what are now conflict-torn regions: for instance, muslin from the Myanmar-Bengal borderlands, from which countless Rohingya refugees continue to be displaced, or Jamawar shawls from the battleground that is Kashmir. And yet, textiles have had another, kinder, history too: the fabled Silk Route allowed for syncretic exchanges between the Western world and the various Asias, even as fabulous hand-woven carpets journeyed along it from Samarkand and ancient Iran. Much more recently, fibre-art and 'weaving' have played a vital role in re-drawing the boundaries between art and craft; used by many an artist to unravel gender biases and cultural pigeonholing. The artists in this show were invited to draw on these variegated legacies; to trace how the history of South Asian textiles is tied to politics, culture, identity – and the British Empire.



Studio shots (L to R): Adeela Suleman, Bushra Waqas Khan, David Alesworth, Liaqat Rasul and Ruby Chishti

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Curator's Bio:

Zehra Jumabhoy is a UK-based art historian, curator and writer specialising in modern and contemporary South Asian art and its diasporas. She is interested in exploring and analysing the socio-political contexts of South Asian art history. She was the Steven and Elena Heinz Scholar at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, where she completed her doctorate and has lectured on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes (2016-2020). She is currently lecturing on the MA in "Asian Art Histories" at Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore. In 2018, she co-curated the landmark exhibition, *The Progressive Revolution: A Modern Art for a New India*, at New York's Asia Society Museum. She is now Curatorial Research Fellow at Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea, a position funded by the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, working on a number of projects including the major exhibition, *Imperial Subjects: (Post)Colonial Conversations between South Asia & Britain*, scheduled for 2022.

Artists' Bio:

Ruby Chishti was born in Jhang, Pakistan (b.1963) but currently lives and works between Bushwick, Brooklyn, and Lake Peekskill in New York. Educated at the National College of Art in Lahore, the Pakistani-American is primarily a representational sculptor, her practice encompassing audio-visual installations and fabric-works made of found garments that evoke personal and communal memories. Over the last 22 years, Ruby's artistic environments – which she describes as "the fibrous architectonics of the unknown" – serve to initiate conversations about the passage of time even as they explore Islamic myths, gender politics, ideas of displacement and loss. Her installations, sculptures, and site-specific works have been exhibited at the Asia Society Museum, New York; Cornell University, Ithaca and New York's Queens Museum. In addition, she has shown *Art Asia Miami*; *Art Hong Kong*, 2008; *ARCOMadrid International Contemporary Art Fair*, 2010; *The India Art Fair* 2013 and *The Armory* in New York, 2014. Her works have been collected by the National Museum of Qatar in Doha, Kiran Nadar Museum in New Delhi, the Harris Museum in Preston, the V & A Museum of Childhood in London and The Whitworth in Manchester, amongst other institutions. Ruby's work has been featured in numerous publications, including *A Companion to Textile Culture*, edited by Jennifer Harris, and *Unveiling the Visible: Lives and Works of Women Artists of Pakistan* by Salima Hashmi.

Adeela Suleman (b. 1970), resides and works in Karachi, Pakistan. She has received her Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts (BFA) from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi, in 1999. Prior to that she completed her MA in International Relations from Karachi University in 1995. Currently Suleman is Associate Professor at IVSAA and was the Head of the Department of Fine Arts from 2008 - 2019. She is the Founding Member and Director of Vasl Artists' Association, Karachi, Pakistan. Suleman has various solo exhibitions to her credit, having shown at Gallery 1X1 (2020); Sullivan+ Strumpf, Singapore (2019); Bawwaba Artists, Art Dubai (2019); Canvas Gallery, Karachi (2018), Galleria Davide Gallo, Milan (2017) and Aicon Gallery, New York, USA (2021). She has exhibited in group shows at notable museums and foundations internationally including those in Australia; the UK, Germany, Brussels and Italy. She has participated in the Karachi Biennale (2017 & 2019), the Singapore Biennale (2016), the Asian Art Biennial, Taichung, Taiwan (2013) and the Asia Triennial II, Manchester, UK (2011). Her work has been reviewed to critical acclaim by several magazines, catalogues and newspapers including *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Artforum International* and *Art Asia Pacific* magazine.

Liaqat Rasul describes himself as "a gay welsh dyslexic Pakistani Male". He was born in February 1974 in Wrexham, North Wales, and now lives in London. Liaqat studied Fashion Design, gaining a first-class degree specialising in Textiles at the University of Darby. He spent a year studying textiles at NIFT in New Delhi. Liberty, at Regent Street in London, bought Liaqat's graduating collection in 1999. His *Ghulam Sakina Limited* womenswear brand ran for 10 years creating beautiful textiles and clothing. When *Ghulam Sakina* liquidated in 2009, Liaqat decided to explore his life choices and visited lots of art exhibitions. In 2017, Liaqat started making collages for friends and he says "thus, a small but vital art practice was initiated". Liaqat made a few pieces for commission and in 2019 he held his first stand-alone exhibition of 8 artworks at the Tracey Neuls shop in Coal Drops Yard, London. He says he wants to go bigger and bolder in his collage and fibre art practice, which encompasses wall works and mobiles.

David Alesworth is a sculptor, photographer and researcher of garden histories, working between Pakistan and the United Kingdom. Over the past decade, the garden has been a key metaphor for him, with which to question humanity's culturally specific relationships with the natural world. His work continues to dialogue with an expanded vision of the garden as 'global forest'. His own hybrid identity informs many aspects of his practice and he has an enduring commitment to public art projects. He was a pivotal member of the Karachi Pop movement in the 1990s, a former Head of Sculpture, IVSAA (1989-2003), Karachi, and is a member of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. His work has been featured in publications such as the *Architectural Review* and *British Art Studies*. Recent exhibitions include his solo show, *The Careless Mapping* in 2020 at Canvas Gallery in Karachi as well as inclusions in group shows such as the *Centre of Gravity* in 2020 at Soapworks in Bristol; *Lie of the Land* at Milton Keynes Gallery, 2019; The Lahore Biennale, 2018; The Karachi Biennale 2017; Pera Museum, Istanbul, 2016, and *The Garden of Ideas*, Agha Khan Museum, Toronto, 2015. Alesworth is a Stanley Picker Fellowship Award Winner and was shortlisted for the V&A's Jameel Art Prize in 2016. He is a studio holder at Spike Island ArtSpace, Bristol.

Bushra Waqas Khan (b. 1986) graduated from the National College of Arts, Lahore (2008) with a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts, where she trained as a printmaker. Her current practice incorporates the designs of a state document better known as an Affidavit. Khan manipulates the patterns – positioning them strategically or through repetition. Working with textile students has given her practice an unusual direction, taking it beyond the paper to beautifully crafted dresses on mannequins, making her practice the perfect marriage of the textile arts and printmaking techniques. She says about the work in this show: "My drawings are rendered with motifs from affidavit paper done through collage, then they are deconstructed and printed on silk in continuous pattern. The silk eventually starts looking like leather because of the printing technique." Khan has most recently shown in *Wearable Variable* (2020) at Canvas Gallery, Karachi, *Microcosm 3* at Aan Gandhara Art Space, Karachi (2019) and Box Print at Zahoor Ul Akhlaq Gallery, Lahore (2018). She has been shortlisted for the V&A's Jameel Art Prize 2021.

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Regular opening times:
Weekdays: 10am – 5.30pm
Saturday: By appointment (12 – 4pm)

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