

# PATTERNS OF THE PAST:

Weaving Heritage in 'Pakistani' Art

11 September – 1 October 2021

ADEELA SULEMAN

BUSHRA WAQAS KHAN

DAVID ALESWORTH

LIAQAT RASUL

RUBY CHISHTI

CANVAS

GALLERY

**Grosvenor**  
**Gallery**

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Curated by Dr Zehra Jumabhoy

In collaboration with Canvas Gallery, Karachi

Grosvenor Gallery

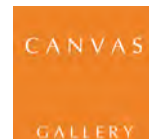
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## THE THREADS OF TIME:

### *Weaving Pasts & Presents in contemporary art from Pakistan*

By Dr Zehra Jumabhoy

*“Textile-makers and other creative individuals have knitted India together over centuries, creating a fabric that reflects a blend of faiths and regions, and many foreign influences.”*

– Navina Nijat Haidar, *The Hindu*, 2015

*Left*  
Grosvenor Gallery

Descending the winding staircase that leads to the basement in collector Taimur Hassan’s London home, I encounter an eerie shimmer on a wall. A headless form emerges, halo-ed by wing-tipped arrows. Like an emissary from another world, it greets me – silvery body glimmering like trapped moonlight. A glowing ghost? A light is switched on and ... Adeela Suleman’s *Mubarizun - No More 2* (2016) stands revealed.

*Figure 1.* Here, a mutilated gent sports the metal garb of ancient soldiers, the elaborately-tooled armour, the filigreed chainmail of the Mughals and Saffavids. It is this enmeshing of fashion with ferocity that is echoed in Suleman’s fabrications – containing “Jamawar and Banarasi cloth appliquéed with hand and machine embroidery” – for Grosvenor’s “Patterns of the Past” exhibition. In Suleman’s *Memory May Be A Paradise 2*, a disguised warrior, wearing purple robes, threatens a prostrate bearded man (dressed in crimson brocade). The bloody scene

GROSVENOR GALLERY

depicted in *Memory May Be A Paradise I*, is based on Manaku of Guler's *The Nightmare Dream of a King: The Fearsome Aftermath of the Battle of Kurukshetra* (ca. 1740). If this elaborately enlarged version of the Rajput miniature is hardly the stuff of convivial fantasy, its tangled, tapestried bodies gesture to South Asia's turbulent past – and the equally chequered history of its fabrics.

After all, the history of South Asian textiles is (metaphorically speaking) dyed in blood. If the fabled Silk Route allowed for syncretic exchanges between the Western world and the various Asias, it is a sad truth that the most prized fabrics in the Subcontinent have been produced in conflict-torn regions. Think of the muslin from the Myanmar-Bengal borderlands, from which countless Rohingya refugees continue to be displaced, or Jamawar shawls from the battleground that is Kashmir. It is this knotty past that 'Patterns' alludes to, as its artists unravel conventional notions of home, heritage and identity.



Figure 1 (right).



Suleman and Ruby Chishti's painstakingly pieced-together wall-works share conceptual terrain with David Alesworth's floral textile prints, embroidered on satin cloth, with Liaqat Rasul's sprightly abstract collages and Bushra Waqas Khan's dainty 'dresses'. The latter are so tiny they could be worn by a well-dressed fairy – one who has, perhaps, a predilection for raiding the V&A's vitrines dedicated to Victorian ball-dresses and Indo-Persian textiles. Their intricate patterns have been gleaned from 'affidavit' paper, also known as 'oath' paper, in Pakistan. Used in official documents, and decorated with national emblems, 'affidavit' paper provides proof of belonging, of ownership – a binding contract between state and citizen. In Khan's costumes, the mini-motifs are printed on silk in a continuous pattern, so that what at first looks like fragile paper begins to resemble coarse leather. The more carefully we look, the more difficult the dresses are to decode. Their exquisite folds take on the confining configurations of tightly-laced corsets. *Figure 2 (left).*

The especially 'tailored' works in 'Patterns' set out to challenge Orientalising stereotypes about South Asian identity. Whilst the show's five practitioners have been defined as 'Pakistani', all of them slip dexterously out of this straightjacket. Wrexham-born Rasul lives in London, Chishti was born in Jhang but currently resides between Brooklyn, and Lake Peekskill in New York. Alesworth's claim to 'Pakistani-ness' is one of choice: he was a pivotal member of the 1990s Karachi Pop movement, but he also belongs to the Royal Society of British Sculptors. And, of course, each one of the artists selected enjoys an international reputation. Chishti's fabric-works and installations have been at New York's Asia Society Museum and Queens Museum as well as London's V&A Museum of Childhood. Suleman's multi-media output has received critical acclaim from *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *Artforum International*, while Rasul has been acknowledged in textile historian Rosemary Crill's volume, *British Asian Style*. Meanwhile, Khan's 'outfits' are currently on

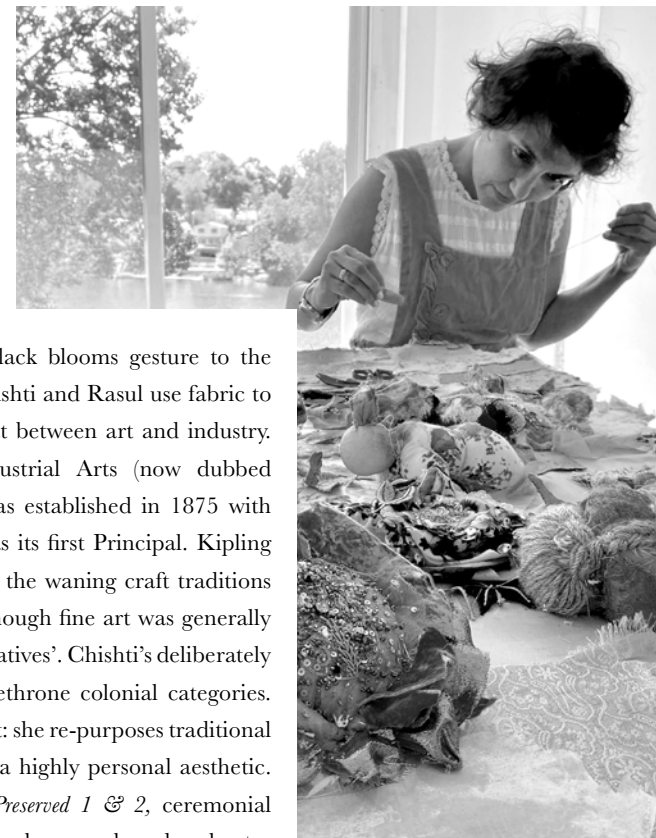


display at the V&A, having been shortlisted for the Jameel Art Prize 2021. Alesworth's practice was similarly honoured in 2016. Together, these artists unpick the assumption that contemporary Pakistani artists are exclusively preoccupied with enshrining the country's Islamic past and its gilt-edged off-shoot: neo-miniature painting.

It is significant that Suleman's appliquéd wall-hanging, *Memory May Be A Paradise 1*, does **not** borrow a leaf out of Mughal manuscripts. Referencing a Pahari painting, it takes its inspiration from a Hindu epic, where brother fights brother. The "Kurukshetra" referenced in Manaku's title is *The Mahabharata's* battleground, where the seminal clash between the Kauravas and Pandavas was staged. Is Suleman's work about the fratricidal conflicts that rip apart the Indian subcontinent today?

If the history of South Asian textiles forms a complicated tapestry, it is one that is tightly bound to Britain's Imperial adventure. Calico, chintz and the quintessentially 'English' patterns of designer William Morris owe their aesthetics to South Asian textiles – and the British Empire's mercantile 'interest' in India. This textured heritage is cleverly alluded to in Alesworth's flowery offerings: his *Dark Rosa* series riff on Raj-era botanical drawings that sought to document, categorise and control the flora and fauna of Britain's Imperial domains. But, they are also threaded through with references to English gardens, Kashmiri shawls, Afghani carpets – and Abrahamic religions' visions of paradise. Alesworth's ominous offerings are formally ambiguous too: from afar they look like prints, from up-close their embroidered forms have a sculptural quality. They foreshadow Khan's printed sculptures of silk and net – *Sub Rosa* (shimmering with Swarovski crystals) and *Black Tulip*. The latter is a nod to Alexandre Dumas' 1850 'historical' novel that revolves around the "tulipmania" that supposedly consumed the Netherlands in the 17th century. The seductive folds of Khan's *Black Tulip*, with its fusion of "colonial sleeves with a *jama* skirt", signpost the aftermaths of Imperial covetousness. *Figure 3 (right)*.

GROSVENOR GALLERY



Just as Khan and Alesworth's black blooms gesture to the shadowy histories of Empire, Chishti and Rasul use fabric to cross another Raj-era divide: that between art and industry. Lahore's Mayo School of Industrial Arts (now dubbed the National College of Arts) was established in 1875 with Lockwood Kipling (1837-1911) as its first Principal. Kipling magnanimously strove to 'revive' the waning craft traditions of the Indian subcontinent – although fine art was generally considered beyond the scope of 'natives'. Chishti's deliberately baffling constructions serve to dethrone colonial categories. Her training at the NCA is evident: she re-purposes traditional handicraft techniques to fashion a highly personal aesthetic. In *A Thousand Flowers: Lost and Preserved 1 & 2*, ceremonial clothing, foam, thread, archival glue, wool and polyester coalesce into heavily embellished fabric-works – neither sculpture nor painting, they are lodged somewhere between the two. *Figure 4 (right)*. Squatting within the glittery applique weaves of *A Thousand Flowers 2*, are tiny female figures. Like misshapen dolls, they recall childhood playtimes, until we notice that the squat ladies appear to be sitting amidst what looks like the shards of an architectural ruin. Chishti's hard-looking 'softies' are of a piece with the textile art by women artists who are finally being feted at prestigious international museums: think of Indian Mrinalini Mukherjee's towering fibrous forms, which held sway at New York's Met Breuer in 2019. Like Mukherjee, Chishti's 'textiles' allude to women's bodies, private pasts and the rituals of communal memory. Her conceptual creations – sequins tenderly appliquéd into ugly-lovely floral thickets – stitch over biases about the lowliness of 'women's work'.

Meanwhile, Rasul's contributions bridge the distance between art and fashion. Rasul started his career as textile designer: having studied Fashion at the University of Derby, his graduating collection was snapped up by Liberty in Regent's Street in 1999. This kick-started *Ghulam Sakina*, a womenswear label which fused British and South Asian textile traditions.

*Figure 5 (right).* Rasul's current collages combine vividly coloured cloth – like the rosy *Think Pink* – with the debris of everyday living: tissue paper, cardboard and brown paper packaging are strung together with receipts, invoices and travel tickets. Rasul gleefully points out that the fluorescent yellow *Present's* psychedelic patterning owes its textural quality to the dishcloth nestled at its core. “*I don't make judgments about material. If something is scruffy or rejected I find a home for it in my work,*” explains Rasul. And yet, these found objects do not tell the whole story: buried in the layers of discarded fabric, stickers and wooden coffee stirrers that compose *Camaraderie* is a delicate tracery of embroidery. As the precious rubs shoulders with the grubby, Rasul reminds us that his multi-hued medleys are inspired by the “multicultural” streets of London. Perhaps, *Camaraderie* is a self-portrait of the artist: swinging merrily above our heads from the gallery's white ceiling, the mobile's clown-like visage invites us to join the fun.



#### Images

**Figure 1** Adeela Suleiman, *Mubarizun - No More 2*, 2016. Hand-beaten stainless steel, iron and brass. Image courtesy the artist. From the London collection of Taimur Hassan.

**Figure 2** Bushra Waqas Khan in her studio. Image courtesy the artist.

**Figure 3** David Chalmers Alesworth at his studio.

**Figure 4** Ruby Chishti's work in progress at her studio. Image courtesy the artist.

**Figure 5** Liaqat Rasul's portrait at his studio. Image courtesy the artist.

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ADEELA SULEMAN

*“For me, an entire decade of artistic endeavour has been invested into an analysis of violence and its effect on the country, on people’s minds; the scars it leaves on our memories and our souls. My biggest challenge has always been how to represent the un-representable in a way that respects the victims, but also conveys their experiences to the viewer. The act of applique work is a process of recording history: one builds layer upon layer, embedding experiences, atrocities, violence, love, pleasure and death – to tell a story through an image.”*

### 1. *Memory May Be A Paradise* 2, 2021

Jamawar & banarsi cloth applique work with hand & machine embroidery, border and back in velvet

185.4 x 114.3 cm

73 x 45 in





*2. Memory May be  
A Paradise 1, 2021*

Jamawar & banarsi cloth applique  
work with hand & machine  
embroidery, border and back in velvet

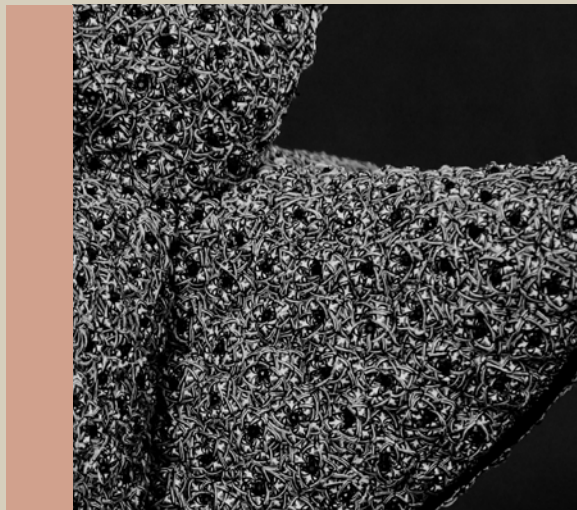
162.6 x 241.3 cm  
64 x 95 in





## PATTERNS OF THE PAST:

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BUSHRA WAQAS KHAN

*"I graduated as a printmaker and have been working with the patterns of 'affidavit' paper from Pakistan, also known as stamp paper or 'oath' paper. This piece of paper resonates with the lives of many in society, as it binds people to a contract, a proof of belonging, perhaps even of 'ownership'. It often depicts national emblems such as the crescent and the star, with other repetitive motifs. Hidden away as a treasure in safekeeping, its value increases with time, often becoming an heirloom. The miniature dresses appear to be carved from this paper yet are actually fabric, constructed by using the patterns from the stamp..."*

### 3. *A Well-Loved Slice of*

#### *Leftovers, 2021*

Silk, Organza, Net and Boning

height 39 cm

height 15 3/8 in

width variable





#### 4. *Black Tulip*, 2021

Silk, Net and Boning

height 49 cm

height 19 1/4 in

width variable

*“Black tulips are seen as symbols of abundance and indulgence. Their mysterious and elegant shade depicts royalty. In this garment the black tulip is constructed and then deconstructed like Dumas’ historical novel, where characters play hide and seek in between Fate, Providence and Misfortune.”*





## 5. *Sub Rosa*, 2021

Organza, Silk and Swarovski Crystal

height 24 cm

height 9 1/2 in

width variable

### ‘Sub Rosa’

*“Roses are often prized as a symbol of achievement, completion and perfection. They are not just considered representative of life, harmony, union and happiness but also secrecy. In many countries it was customary to hang a rose over secret meetings or gatherings which signified that everything that was discussed within them should be kept confidential. There are 554 roses on this 26cm garment which are made with 15-18 petals each. Stitching a Swarovski crystal in the centre of each rose enhances its magical appearance.”*





## 6. *Warp and Weft*, 2021

Silk, Net and Boning

height 50 cm

height 19 3/4 in

width variable



*“You should not separate clothing from fabric since one is the extension of the other. Warp and weft are the two basic components used in weaving and practiced for centuries in manufacturing fabric, they have become metaphores. They describes the basic dichotomies of the world we live in, as in, up/down, in/out, black/white, Sun/Moon..”*

## 7. *Spotted Dove*, 2021

Silk, Organza, Net and Boning

height 46 cm

height 18 1/8 in

width variable





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DAVID ALESWORTH

*“Why are there prints of Pierre-Joseph Redouté engravings in my studio and what is their relationship to the works – to the postcolonial? I don’t have an easy sound-bite, but what brings it all together, from the prints in my mother’s Surrey sitting-room, the 1950s rose named after my horticultural grandfather to my extensive engagement with the popular visual culture of Karachi and Lahore from which these works have emerged, is the autobiographical.”*

*“That crossing, re-examination and transformation of material and text is the trace of my life and its enquiries. After all, Redoute in broad strokes epitomises the Botany of Empire, he adds visual proof to the authority of Linnean taxonomy. The bilingual Latinate namings of the Roses in these works, for me, reinforces the mutability and insubstantiality of their scientific namings, it punctures the idea of Linnaean authority.”*

**8. *Dark Rosa Inermis*, 2021**

Archival textile print on satin cotton  
with cotton embroidery

53.3 x 40.6 cm

21 x 16 in



**9. *Dark Rosa Indica***

**(*Fragrans*), 2021**

Archival textile print on satin cotton  
with cotton embroidery

53.3 x 40.6 cm

21 x 16 in



**10. *Dark Rosa Indica Sirtulata*  
(Bengal), 2021**

Archival textile print on satin cotton  
with cotton embroidery

53.3 x 40.6 cm

21 x 16 in



**11. *Dark Rosa Cinnamonea*,  
2021**

Archival textile print on satin cotton  
with cotton embroidery

53.3 x 40.6 cm

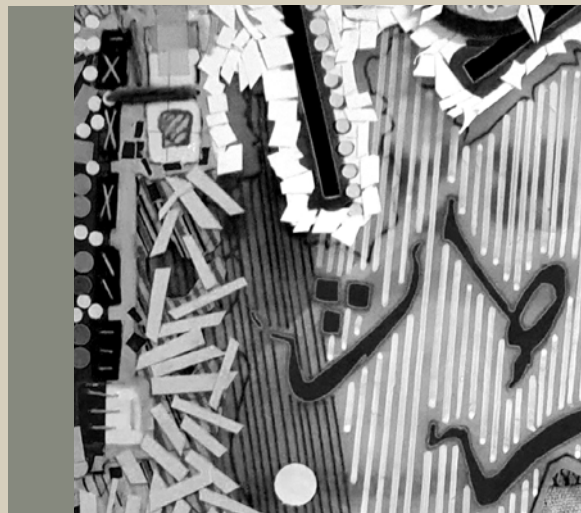
21 x 16 in





## PATTERNS OF THE PAST:

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LIAQAT RASUL

*“My collages are not social or political statements, more abstract and cartographic – buoyant, tatty found papers, energised with strong colour and experiences... Making art is my act of hope, tactile, low-tech, a physical experience-led art. My practice is a portmanteau of a life lived, emerging emotions, timeless techniques and unspoken words of a traveller infatuated by his surroundings, colours, smells, and old (and some rather odd) friendships across boundaries. From then to now, from Karachi to Hackney. It is memories relived, old enmeshed with the new, traditions heightening abstractions and a breath becoming a birdsong.”*

### 12. *Camaraderie*, 2021

Layers of cardboard strips bound together with glue and stitched thread in a variety of colours to create the face outline; Egg boxes, fluorescent card, glitter card, collection of recycled papers, string, cardboard, stickers, bank statements, wooden coffee stirrers

Structure:

75 x 62 x 8 cm

29 1/2 x 24 3/8 x 3 1/8 in



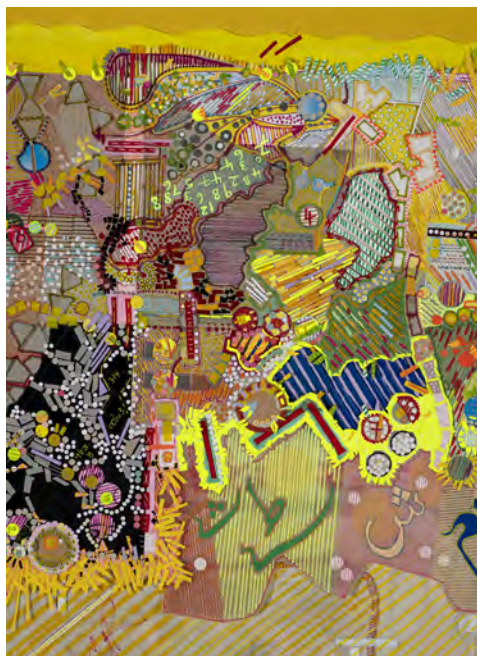


### 13. *Present*, 2021

Wool thread, polyester thread, corrugated cardboard, punched circles from a whole punch, used dish cloth, tissue paper, canvas, plastic packaging bag, leather, graph paper, tickets, swing tickets, sellotape, packing tape, industrial plastic sheeting and fluorescent card

99 x 84 cm

39 x 33 1/8 in





#### 14. *Think - Pink*, 2021

Napkins, tissue paper, cotton poplin, cardboard packaging, brown packaging paper, found papers receipts/invoices/travel tickets, different weights of paper, string, wooden coffee stirrers, fabric, posca, sharpie markers and a biro pen

99 x 84 cm

39 x 33 1/8 in





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## Weaving Heritage in 'Pakistani' Art



RUBY CHISHTI

*“My continuing experimentation in melding the fabric of found garments has led me to engage in conversations about the persistence of the passage of time. The tenacity and fragility of our own existence in comparison with the immensity of time has allowed me to forge an impression of the collective experiences of love, loss, exclusion and being human.”*

*“Over the years, I have developed an iconography based on autobiographical narratives that are intended to question the heroics of colossal masculinity and the confidence of patriarchy; this seems to emanate from the pieces (large or small architectural friezes) that I see hung on museum walls or carefully preserved in glass cases from ‘ancient’ civilizations. Instead, I am fascinated by the elaborate needlework, the embellishments found in women’s fashion in Pakistan.”*

*“There are similarities between the delicately carved stone patterns on pre-Islamic, Islamic as well as Indo-Islamic architectural facades (of foliage, birds, animals) with traditional ceremonial clothing. I refigure women’s ceremonial clothing from my collection with scraps of discarded fashion garments from thrift shops in Brooklyn to create alternative narratives that bring into focus my critique of patriarchy and exclusion.”*



15. *A Thousand Flowers:*

*Lost and Preserved I*, 2021

Recycled ceremonial clothing, foam  
board, thread, archival glue, wool and  
polyester

165 x 97.8 x 13.9 cm

65 x 38 1/2 x 5 1/2 in





*16. A Thousand Flowers:  
Lost and Preserved II, 2021*

Recycled ceremonial clothing, foam board,  
thread, archival glue, wool, polyester

101 x 121 x 8.9 cm

39 3/4 x 47 5/8 x 3 1/2 in



# ADEELA SULEMAN



**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.

# BUSHRA WAQAS KHAN



**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. Her practice marries the textile arts with sophisticated 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 patterns. The silk eventually starts looking like leather because of the printing technique." Khan has most recently shown in *Wearable Variable* at Canvas Gallery, Karachi (2020), *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 2021 Jameel Art Prize, awarded by the V&A Museum, London.



# DAVID ALESWORTH



**DAVID ALESWORTH** is a sculptor, photographer and researcher of garden histories, working between Pakistan and the United Kingdom (b. 1957). 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.

# LIAQAT RASUL



**LIAQAT RASUL** describes himself as "a gay welsh dyslexic Pakistani Male". He was born in 1974 in Wrexham, North Wales, and now lives in London. Liaquat studied Fashion Design, gaining a first-class degree specialising in Textiles at the University of Derby. He spent a year studying textiles at NIFT in New Delhi. Liberty, at Regent Street in London, bought Liaquat'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, Liaquat decided to explore his life choices and visited lots of art exhibitions. In 2017, Liaquat started making collages for friends and he says "thus, a small but vital art practice was initiated". Liaquat 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.



# RUBY CHISHTI



**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 Arts 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 at 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.

# ZEHRA JUMABHOY



**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 co-curating with Katy Freer, Head of Exhibitions at Glynn Vivian, the major show, *Imperial Subjects: (Post) Colonial Conversations between South Asia & Britain*, scheduled for 2022.

CLICK TO REGISTER

**Schedule *Patterns of the Past's* Conference: 18 September 2021**  
Half Day ZOOM Conference, *Textile, Tradition & the Contemporary*  
Saturday, 18 September 2021, **1-3pm BST (British Summer Time)**  
**5pm-8pm Pakistan Time Zone. 5.30pm-8.30pm India Time Zone.**

This programme will pivot around the themes of the show, *Patterns of the Past: Weaving Heritage in Contemporary 'Pakistani' Art*, which includes artists **Ruby Chishti, Adeela Suleman, Liaqat Rasul, David Chalmers Alesworth and Bushra Waqas Khan** (Nominee for the Jameel Art Prize 2021). The exhibition brings together these contemporary artists because each of them explores the politics of memory in their work and have used textiles to unravel conventional notions of art, heritage and identity. They have worked *with* textiles, and *via* textiles, to fabricate complex comments on colonialism, unravelling its relationship to current socio-political concerns in the Subcontinent. Hence, even though these 5 artists have been defined as 'Pakistani', none of them are easy fits for the term. The especially 'tailored' works within the show dismantle inter/national stereotypes about 'Pakistani art' and the Conference has a similar aim. It will pull on certain thematic threads: South Asian heritage and textile history; ideas of British identity; current decolonising agendas with regard to both art history and British museum collections. Speakers will include the exhibiting artists (who will explain their contributions for the

show) as well as Prof. Salima Hashmi, Zohreen Murtaza, Uthra Rajgopal, Roisin Inglesby, Amrita Jhaveri and Prof. Shehnaz Ismail.

#### **Schedule:**

**1pm-1.30pm BST**

Welcome by Conor Macklin, Grosvenor Gallery and Sameera Raja, Canvas Gallery

#### ***Virtual Tour & Artists' Panel*** (30 minutes):

Zehra Jumabhoy: Curatorial Concept and Explanation  
Virtual tour of show with Kajoli Khanna,  
Grosvenor Gallery  
Adeela Suleman  
Bushra Waqas Khan  
David Alesworth  
Liaqat Rasul  
Ruby Chishti

***Panels: 10-15 Minutes per paper.***

***Moderated by ZJ (unless otherwise stated).***

#### **Speakers & Sessions:**

**1.30pm-2pm BST**

***Weaving Tradition & The Contemporary***

#### **Speakers:**

#### **Professor Salima Hashmi**

on *"I am my own maker"*

Artists who are from cultures with rich lineages in textile have long delighted in celebrating its sensuous profusion: Think of the attire of Mughal princes and the carpets they trod upon. Artists today are not too distanced from the desire to investigate ornament and prod the fissures embedded within. *Threads Dreams Desires*, which Professor Hashmi curated at Harris Museum Preston, UK, in 2002, arose from such contradictions.

#### **Zohreen Murtaza** on *Art and design in Colonial India: A division at odds with itself?*

This presentation will use Lahore's National College of the Arts (NCA) as a case study. Founded in 1875, several names were proposed for the institution: "Mayo Memorial School of Industrial Arts", "Industrial School of Art and Design", "Lahore School of Art" and "Mayo School of Art", amongst them. This indecisiveness about naming reflected the Imperial administration's dilemma: should art be promoted or should design be combined with technical education to cater to Industry? Using documents from the NCA Archives, this talk argues that such confusion continues to bedevil divisions between art, craft and design in post-colonial Pakistan.

**2pm-2.30pm BST**

***Inter-Woven Inheritance: Britain & South Asia***

#### **Speakers:**

#### **Uthra Rajgopal** on *Cut from the Same Cloth:*

*South Asian Textile Collections in Manchester*

This talk will map out the history of how the South Asia textile collections were built in Manchester and why they remain of relevance to contemporary audiences today. And along the way we will see some brilliant highlights of acquisitions of South Asian contemporary textile art, past and present.

#### **Studio Carrom** on *Distant Fellowship:*

*Morris and South Asia*

Whilst lauded as one of Britain's greatest designers, William Morris's global influences are less well known. This talk will highlight some of Morris's connections to South Asia, which underpinned the research for the recent exhibition *Distant Fellowship*, at the William Morris Gallery, curated by **Priya Sundram** and **Nia Thandapani**, of Studio Carrom. The discussion will be framed and contextualised by **Roisin Inglesby**, Curator of the William Morris Gallery.

**2.30pm-3pm BST *Textiles & Traffic:***

***Connecting Pasts and Presents***

#### **Speakers:**

#### **Amrita Jhaveri** on *The Fabric of Modernism*

This talk will focus on the works of three Modern artists from the Indian subcontinent who engage with textile traditions: Anwar Jalal Shemza, Mrinalini Mukherjee & Monica Correa. It will discuss how through research and innovative programming, Jhaveri Contemporary was able to bring these artists to the attention of international museum curators and collectors.

**Professor Shehnaz Ismail** will *Weave to a Conclusion*

As one of the founders of Karachi's Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture and Professor Emeritus of its Textile Department, Mrs Ismail will provide an overview of textiles in Pakistan, focusing on why contemporary artists have chosen it as an effective medium to communicate their ideas.

**Finale:** *Q & A* with the audience.

#### **Speakers:**

**Amrita Jhaveri** is the artistic director of Jhaveri Contemporary, a gallery based in Mumbai. The gallery represents artists, across generations and nationalities, whose work is informed by South Asian connections and traditions. An exhibition maker at heart, Amrita co-curated *Thinking Tantra* at Drawing Room, London (2016 -17) and *South Asian Modernists* 1953-63 at the Whitworth, Manchester (2017-18). Jhaveri sits on the Advisory boards of Khoj (New Delhi), Museum of Art and Photography (Bangalore) and Drawing Room (London).

**Roisin Inglesby** is co-ordinator of the 'Distant Fellowship' project, including an exhibition at the William Morris Gallery, curated by Priya Sundaram and Nia Thandapani which unravels Morris' connection with Indian textiles and design. Inglesby has worked at the V&A, Historic Royal Palaces and Teien Museum, Tokyo, and is currently Curator at the William Morris Gallery where she focusses on Morris's links with international Arts and Crafts movements including the

Bauhaus, Mfoda Polska, and Japanese Mingei.

**Salima Hashmi** is a pioneering artist, curator and contemporary art historian. 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. 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 includes references to many of the artists in this Grosvenor-Canvas show. Hashmi's pioneering exhibition, *Threads Dreams Desires*, at Harris Museum Preston, UK (also in 2002), set the stage for the dialogue on South Asian contemporary artists engagement with the Subcontinent's textile traditions.

**Shehnaz Ismail** was the Head of the Faculty of Textile Design at Karachi's Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, of which she was one of the founders, and is now Professor Emeritus. Her major focus is on education and the revival of the indigenous textile crafts of Pakistan. She has extensively researched weaving and embroidery, covering the mountainous regions of Pakistan and the Potohar Plateau. Her research has been included in magazines, catalogues and a book on Asian embroidery published by the Crafts Council of India in 2004. She is committed to teaching and training craft persons in Baltistan (and in the adjoining valleys of Hunza and Manshera) in natural dyes, weaving and product diversification, and to make craft

revival economically sustainable. It is in this function that she was strongly involved in the interior decoration of the Shigar Fort Residence. Ismail holds Undergraduate and Post Graduate degrees from the National College of Arts and Hornsey College of Art, London, in Textile Design.

**Studio Carrom** is a multidisciplinary design studio based in London and Bangalore founded by Priya Sundram and Nia Thandapani. The Studio works on a variety of scales from designing hand-carved woodblocks to creating large-scale public installations, collaborating with arts, culture and heritage organisations on projects which explore and celebrate cultural diversity through a wide variety of media. Their recent projects include "Distant Fellowship", a group show at the William Morris Gallery in London, which traces Morris' South Asian connections.

**Uthra Rajgopal** is an Independent Curator with a specialist interest in South Asian textiles and dress and works nationally and internationally. In 2019, Uthra won the prestigious Art Fund New Collecting Award to build a collection of contemporary South Asian textile artworks for the Whitworth in Manchester; specifically works made by women artists working in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh and the UK diaspora. She has been a contributing author to *Textile History* and *Authenticity and Replication: The 'Real Thing' in Art History and Conservation* and is a former lecturer at Manchester School of Art. Uthra is a keen advocate of championing artists from

or connected to South Asia and expanding the field of textile arts.

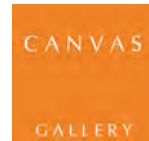
**Zohreen Murtaza** is a Lecturer in the Cultural Studies Department at The National College of Arts, Lahore. She also completed both her BFA and MA (Hons.) Visual Art from NCA. Although trained as a miniature painter and visual artist, since her MA she has branched into teaching and writing extensively on Art. Zohreen has been writing for various art publications and daily newspapers. Her research interests are diverse; as a Lecturer for the subject of *History of South Asian Design*, Zohreen has been delving into craft traditions, the development of South Asian textile and its relationship with Britain. Currently she is looking into the archival/colonial history of her alma mater formerly known as the Mayo School of Industrial Arts. Zohreen is interested in examining the pedagogical discourse of the Industrial school and the debates these colonial era archives generate regarding the ethos of the institution at the time with respect to the bifurcation of art and craft, colonial intervention and the reimagining of these definitions under British rule.

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11 September – 1 October 2021

Curated by Dr Zehra Jumabhoy

In collaboration with Canvas Gallery, Karachi

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