

divvy  
art



PROJECT ART DIVVY | SHAHNAZ GALLERY

Website: <https://artdivvy.org/> | <https://shahnazgallery.com/> | Email: [project@artdivvy.org](mailto:project@artdivvy.org) | [info@shahnazgallery.com](mailto:info@shahnazgallery.com)



Project Art Divvy & Shahnaz Gallery  
present

# Legacies of Crossings

Affan Baghpati | Sophia Balagamwala | Kavan Balasuriya | Samanta Batra Mehta | Amba Sayal Bennet | Palash Bhattecharjee  
Noor Ali Chagani | Akanksha Kamath | Saba Khan | Gunjan Kumar | Natasha Malik | Firi Rahman | Anushka Rustomji

Curated by Zahra Khan

Shahnaz Gallery  
101 Kensington Church Street  
London W8 7LN

info@shahnazgallery.com  
project@artdivvy.org

Private View: Tuesday 21 May 2024, 4-8 p.m.  
21 May - 21 June 2024



## Legacies of Crossings

Legacies of Crossings explores the profound impact of migration upon immigrants and their subsequent generations. This group exhibition, displaying the art of 13 artists from South Asia and its diaspora, delves into the experiences of leaving one's homeland, the challenges and triumphs of arrival, and the enduring connections that transcend borders. In this show, artists explore their own journeys - the joys and traumas of navigating new cultures, the lingering memories of home, and the ways these experiences shape their lives and their art.

South Asia experienced deeply impactful and scarring displacements which are explored in the work of the artists in this exhibition. The reverberations of these migrations have shaped our contemporary landscape and have continued to be felt generations after the initial displacements. **Palash Bhattacharjee**, through his focus upon the Kalurghat bridge in Chittagong, explores his family's movements and relationships through these upheavals. South Asia is continuing to grapple with its colonial legacy and contemporary national narratives, **Sophia Balagamwala** films explore these entanglements. **Akanksha Kamath's** poetry and sound piece delves into her grandmother's experience of India and Pakistan's partition in 1947 and Kamath's own experience of home. Using the imagery of caged birds, **Firi Rahman** also explores the meaning of belonging, for those forced to seek asylum.

The exhibition explores the complexities of displacement and the influences these individuals have on their adopted communities. They carry knowledge from home, and absorb knowledge on their journeys. **Kavan Balasuriya's** work incorporates shared architectural motifs from South Asia into his etchings, highlighting the region's shared experiences. In her art, **Amba Sayal-Bennet's** highlights adoptions and migrations within architecture, as she explores modernist forms and motifs within brutalist architectural practices.

Contemporary conflicts and policies continue to make crossing borders difficult, cruel, and a means of control as highlighted in the work of **Saba Khan**. While **Natasha Malik's** autobiographical work explores the female experience of agency, identity and sexuality in a gendered realm defined by patriarchal structures.

In *Legacies of Crossings*, contemporary artworks are placed alongside objects and artworks that themselves have undergone migration. These antique objects have traveled across continents and through time carrying with them silent narratives. They provide insights to the individuals and cultures to which they belonged, and to those that eventually adopted them. Via historic trade routes and contemporary conflicts, these objects have traversed fascinating routes and absorbed legends and histories. **Affan Baghpati's** use of discarded objects in his art similarly re-contextualizes objects, giving them a new purpose. **Noor Ali Chagani's** sculptures explore the materiality and messaging upon contemporary urban landscapes, where societal dissent, creative expression or observations are represented upon contemporary urban walls and pillars.

This exhibition celebrates the stories encased in visual imagery, oral traditions and materiality from the region, and the cultural dialogues they invoke. **Samanta Batra Mehta's** work often constructs imagined histories from antiquated objects, writings and found materials. Gunjan Kumar, explores the messaging available to us through archaeological excavations, local pigments, and indigenous textiles. **Anushka Rustomji's** work is a similar exploration of the mythological and mystical traditions of the global south and their visual representations. Regional legacies and global histories are continuing to be formed. *Legacies of Crossings* invites you to witness the power of movement and its lasting influence on identity, creativity, and the world we share.

Zahra Khan

curator

## Affan Baghpati

### **Bio:**

Baghpati lives and works in Karachi, Pakistan. Baghpati graduated with a BFA from Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi (2015) and an MA in Art and Design at SVAD, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore (2017). Baghpati collects discarded domestic objects from different cities of Pakistan and re-contextualizes them for reconsideration. The artist is interested in locating the purpose and notion of his collected objects through their design, form and functionality. His work revolves around the ideas of taste and aesthetics. Through his art practice, he aims on bringing his viewers closer to the intimacy of these objects that were once functional in Pakistani households.

### **Statement:**

My studio practice revolves around collected, altered and fabricated objects. These discarded objects, once functional in regional Pakistani household, are either losing or have already lost their value, presence, and function which represents old regional design and material culture. These rare finds are intriguing to me as most of them are no longer in production or domestic use. I am interested in locating the purpose and notional function of these objects through re-interpretation of their design, aesthetics and form.



**Affan Baghpati**

*...in other words*, 2020

Object: *Chabi* (Key)

Copper and brass, hand sawing, casting, soldering

Object: 3.15 x 1.1 x 0.1 in

Outer frame: 10.8 x 8.6, depth 1.3 in





**Affan Baghpati**

*Wherever, 2023*

Found objects, wooden smoking pipe, sculpted head  
(vinyl), synthetic hair, acrylic paints.

5 x 3 x 2 inches



**Affan Baghpati**

*"Because I was found blameless before him" (Daniel 6:22),*

2023

Hand carved, hardwood, MDF, green polymer glass stones

13.6 x 16 x 16 inches



## Sophia Balagamwala

### **Bio:**

Sophia Balagamwala is a multidisciplinary artist and curator based in Karachi. Grounded in archives and museum collections, her practice merges real and fabricated events to explore entanglements between colonial histories, national narratives and personal histories in South Asia.

Balagamwala has a BA from the University of Toronto (2010) and an MFA from Cornell University (2014). She has previously worked as the Lead Curator of the National History Museum in Lahore, and is currently an advisor for the Citizens Archive of Pakistan (CAP).

Balagamwala curates a collection of local artist publications under the Kurachee Reading Room, housed previously at the COMO Museum in Lahore, (2021-2022), and currently at the AAN Ideas LAB (Art Space & Museum) in Karachi. She teaches at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture.

### **Statement:**

Balagamwala's practice explores the intersectional space in which history, fiction and nonsense converge. Her recent works look at gestures grand and small, and explore the legacies of arbitrary decisions made about peoples, lands and objects.





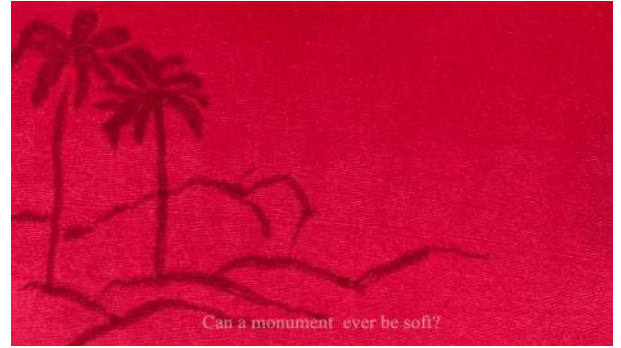
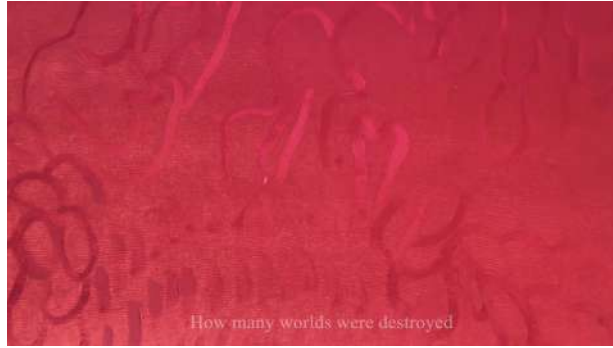
**Sophia Balagamwala**

*Whereabouts Unknown / Ata Pata Maloom Nahin, 2021*

Animation, 2:04 min.

Commissioned for the London, Asia, Art, Worlds Conference, 2021.

London, Asia, Art, Worlds was a multi-part programme of online events taking place in May and June 2021 hosted by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. The project was convened by Hammad Nasar, Ming Tiampo, and Sarah Victoria Turner.



**Sophia Balagamwala**

*Can a Monument be Soft*, 2024

Animation, 1:50 min.

## Kavan Balasuriya

### **Bio:**

Kavan Balasuriya (b. 1992, Colombo, Sri Lanka) is an artist working with drawing and engraving. His practice explores light and shadow, surface and depth, and abstraction and realism. Inspired by emergence within complex systems, he composes geometric and gestural abstractions. Here, he makes connections and contentions that challenge visual perception. He etches and engraves the foil, resulting in optical effects and illusions. Balasuriya earned a B.A. in Fine Art (2014) and a Foundation Diploma in Art & Design (2010) from Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, University of the Arts London, UK

### **Statement:**

My family background stems from Sri Lanka to India, Myanmar, and the United Kingdom. These places share colonial histories and migratory routes. With this in mind, I refer to the architectural fabric in Sri Lanka, India, and Myanmar.

In particular, two architectural motifs stand out. These are the split bamboo brise soleil and the corrugated metal roofing sheet. I pair their minimalist geometry with foil's reflectivity to blend abstraction and realism.

My work explores the intersection of art and architecture. Through the practice of drawing and mark-making, I create etchings and engravings.

I use aluminum foil to blend lightness, depth, and motion. Foil is a conduit that channels spatial and emotional qualities. My gestural and geometric abstractions intensify visual perception. They are metaphors that integrate internal and external narratives, processes, and environments.

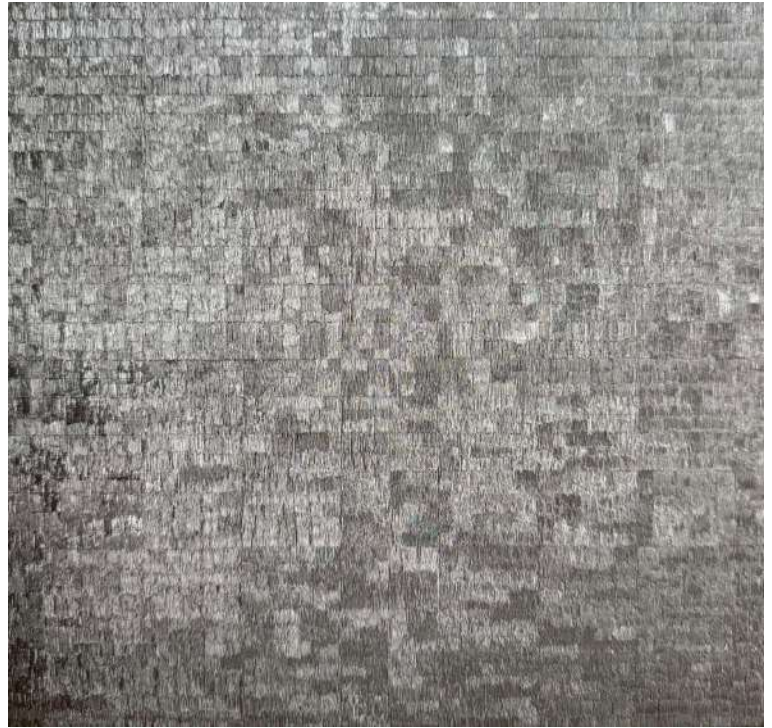


**Kavan Balasuriya**

*Sunbreaker, 2024*

Aluminium foil on foamboard

7.8 x 7.9 in





**Kavan Balasuriya**

*Resonator, 2024*

Aluminium foil on foamboard

7.5 x 7.8 in

**Kavan Balasuriya**

*Transmigration, 2024*

Aluminium foil on foamboard

4.8 x 11.6 in





## Samanta Batra Mehta

### Bio:

Samanta Batra Mehta's work has been exhibited at art galleries and museums in the US and abroad including at the Queens Museum of the Arts, the Hudson River Museum, the Hunterdon Museum, the Taubman Museum of Art in the US, Fotografia Cassa di Risparmio di Modena and Museo d'Arte Orientale in Italy and at 'Reading Room'. Her works are included in various art collections including at Fondazione Fotografia Cassa di Risparmio di Modena in Italy, the RPG Group, India, The Jindal Collection, India, the Birla Art Foundation, India. She has been the recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation's Painters & Sculptors Grant Award, the SqW:Lab Fellowship, the Gradiva Award and others. She holds a Master of Science degree from The London School of Economics, UK. She lives and works in New York.

### Statement:

With intricate mark-making, altered images and found objects, my work explores themes in identity, memory and migration. I examine cultures of temporality and discontinuity in the movement of people, as well as the internal subjectivities of belonging, rootedness and routed-ness.

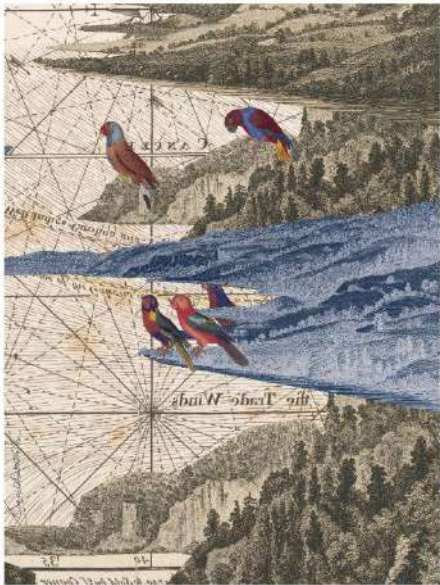
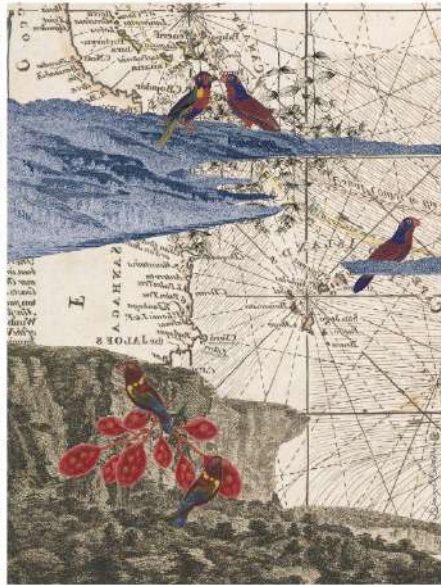
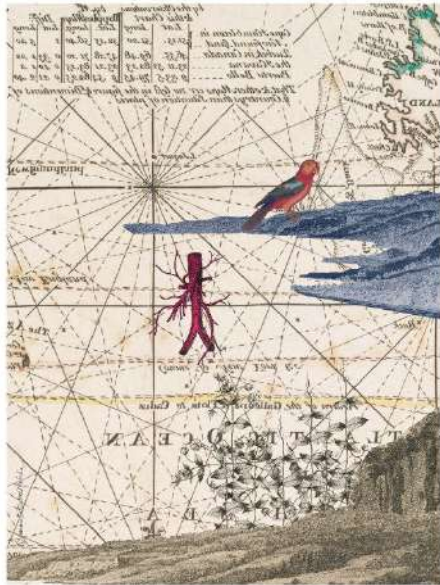
The multi-layered artwork I make is a commentary on the human condition and the environment we inhabit. Themes in identity, personal history, gender constructs, socio-political order and colonial history are depicted and debated in my layered artistic interventions that employ drawing, found objects, text, photo and installation. In a contemporary re-imagining of the 'exquisite corpse' genre, I oftentimes re-purpose collected antiquarian objects, imagery and texts along with my own drawings to render an altered visual engagement in an attempt to construct a reimagined history.

In my visual vocabulary, the human form and anatomical imagery is intertwined with foliage and nature.

Nature/land/landscape is seen as a metaphor for the body (and vice-versa) and as a site for germination, nourishment, degradation, trespass, plunder, colonization and transgression.







**Samanta Batra Mehta**

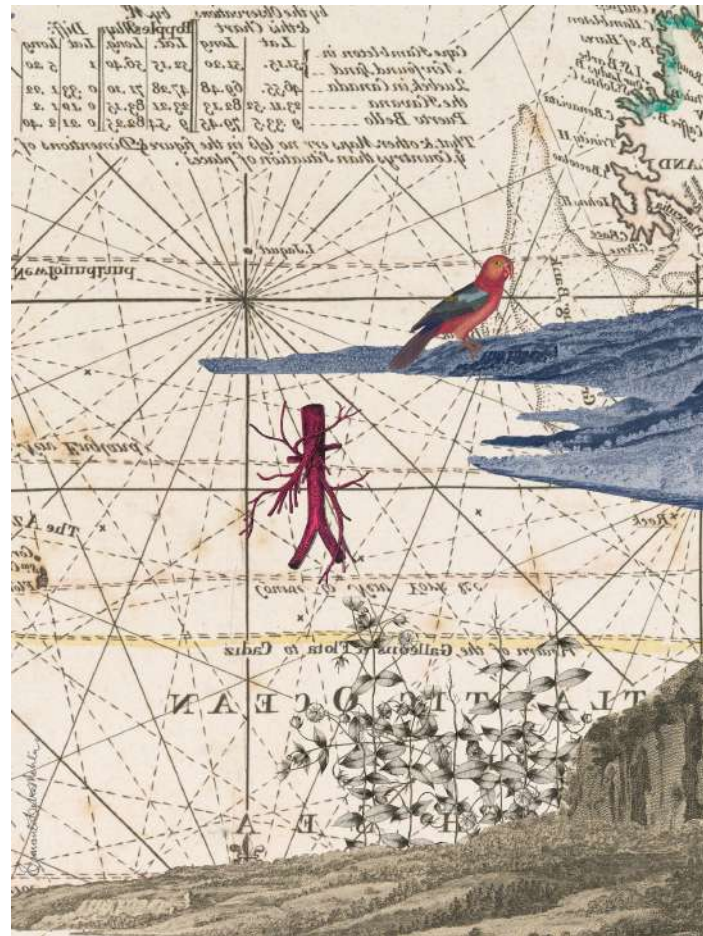
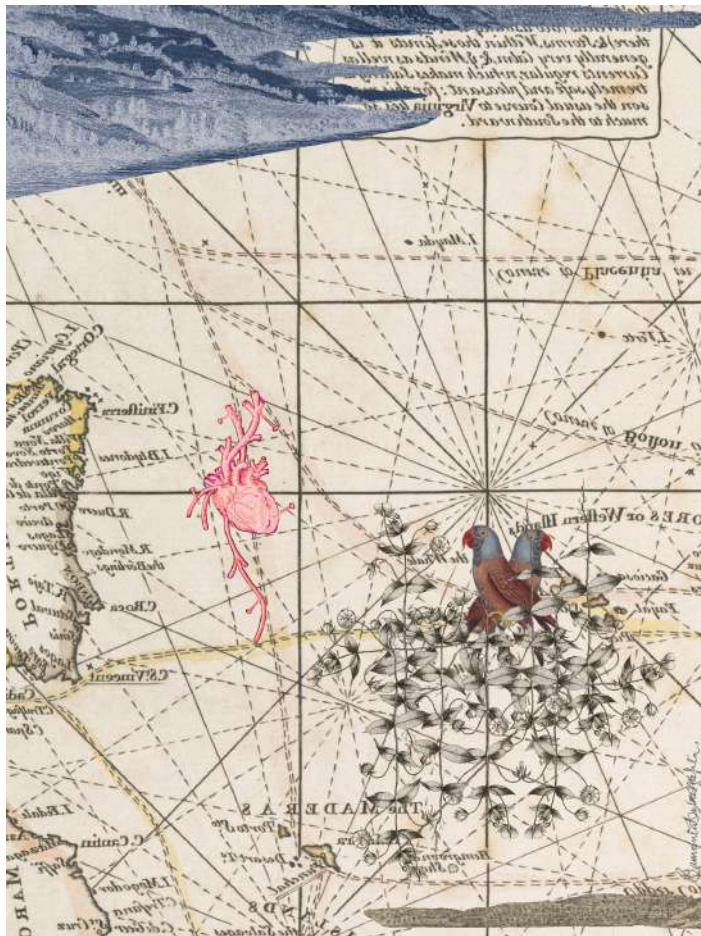
*Terra incognita*, 2024

Archival Giclee Print on Hahnemuehle paper

Set of 4, 9 x 12 in each

Edition: 3 of 10

Detailed Images





## Amba Sayal Bennett

### Bio

Amba Sayal-Bennett lives and works in London. She received her BFA from Oxford University and her MA in Sculpture from the Royal College of Art. She was awarded her PhD in Art Practice and Learning from Goldsmiths and has published her practice-based research with Tate Papers. She is currently an Associate Lecturer at Camberwell College of Arts. Between January and March 2022, she was The Derek Hill Foundation scholar at the British School at Rome in Italy.

Recent exhibitions include Geometries of Difference, Somerset House, London (2022); Horror in the Modernist Block, IKON, Birmingham (2022); My Mother Was a Computer, indigo+madder, London (2022); and Tomorrow, White Cube, London (2021).

### Statement:

Amba Sayal-Bennett is a British-Indian artist working across drawing, projection, and sculptural installation. Her practice explores how methods of abstraction are exclusionary and performative, crafting boundaries between what is present, manifestly absent, and othered. Her recent work focuses on the migration of modernist forms and their role within fascist and brutalist architecture. Using translation as method, she explores the movement of bodies, knowledge and form across different sites, processes inherent to the diasporic experience.



**Amba Sayal Bennett**

*Suture*, 2021

Ink, pro-marker and graphite on paper

8.2 x 11.6 in



**Amba Sayal Bennett**

*Planar CBBB*, 2023

powder coated mild steel

10.2 x 17.3 x 0.9 in



## Palash Bhattacharjee

### Bio:

Palash Bhattacharjee (born 1983), based in Chattogram (Chittagong), Bangladesh, has undergone a notable shift in his artistic journey, transitioning from academically focused printmaking towards multi-media, experimental art practice via a close encounter with performance art activism. Since 2011, his practice has forked into two divergent and also overlapping strands – video and performance. He received his masters (2006) and Bachelor's (2005) degrees from the Department of Fine Arts, Chittagong University. He was awarded the Asia Pacific Fellowship Residency from MMCA Residency Goyang (2011) and received a grant from Seoksu Art Project, South Korea (2010). His works have been widely exhibited in Bangladesh, including at Kalakendra 2023, Chobi Mela 2021, Dhaka Art Summit 2012-2020, Asian Art Biennale 2012, 2016, 2018 and 2022, Dhaka, and internationally, including NOmade Biennale Poland 2023, Warehouse421, Abu Dhabi 2022, Colomboscope 2021, Colombo, and many more.

### Statement:

The work delves into the intertwined narratives of familial relationships drifting apart, with a focus on the Kalurghat bridge spanning the Karnaphuli River in Chittagong, Bangladesh. Built during British colonial rule in 1930, this bridge serves as a vital connection between the north and south of the greater Chittagong district, bisected by the Karnaphuli River. My family ancestry is rooted in south Chittagong, where this bridge historically facilitated communication between regions, bridging the gap from the region of British India. From the belt of my family ancestors, many left the southern part of Chittagong from the British period, particularly the partition period, to the Pakistan period and settled in different parts of this subcontinent. Then, during the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971, some people in Bangladesh-India border areas took shelter for some time and worked in various ways for the freedom of the country. From the post-independence period to the present time, many people from this southern region migrated to other countries outside the subcontinent for different purposes and reasons, including re-settlement in Chittagong City and Dhaka. These familial and local stories are not linear, and there is no relationship or communication as there used to be. There are now only random stories, some blurry, ruined pictures, letters, and this bridge.





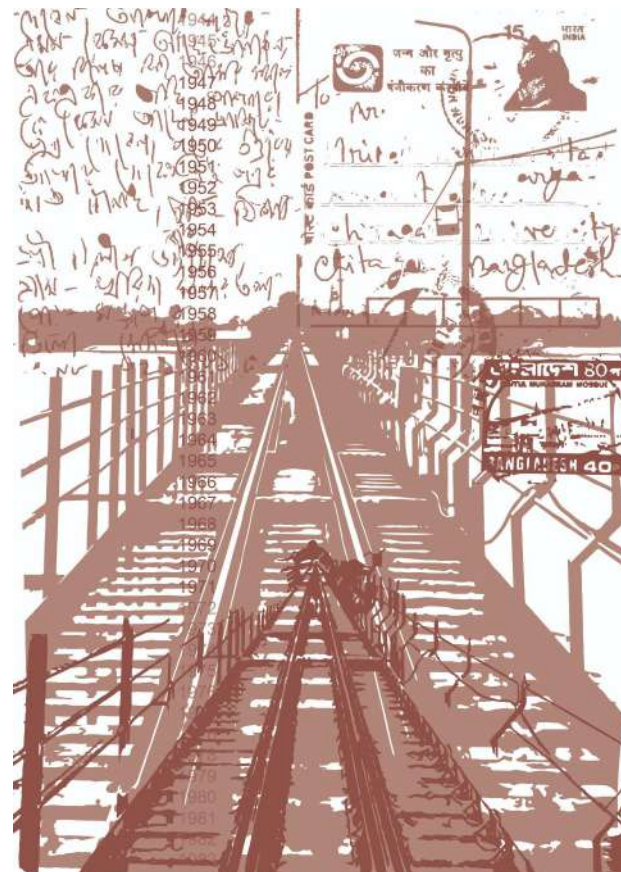
**Palash Bhattacharjee**

*A Bridge and Beyond the Bridge*, 2024

archival print

6.22 x 8.34 in

edition 1/10





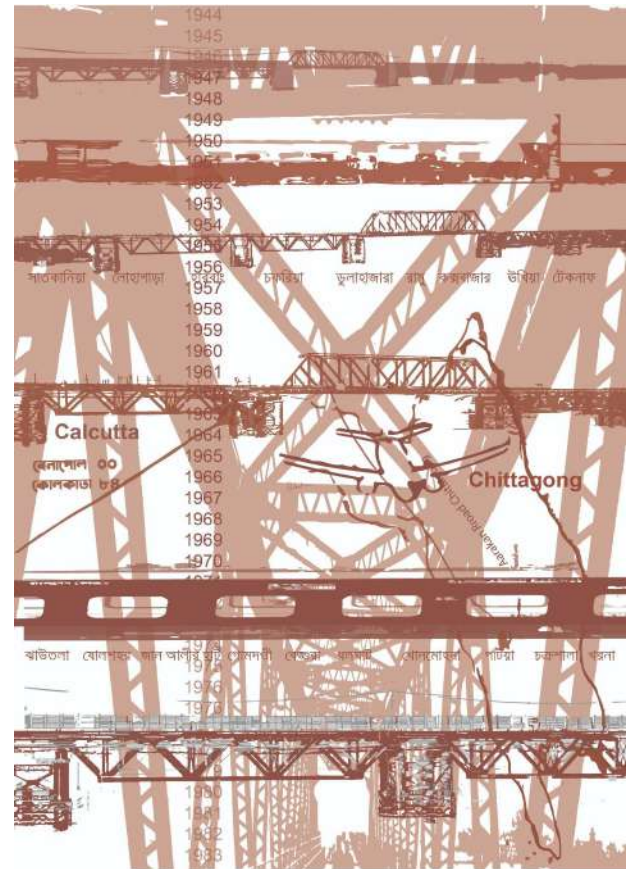
**Palash Bhattacharjee**

*A Bridge and Beyond the Bridge, 2024*

archival print

6.22 x 8.34 in

edition 1/10



**Palash Bhattacharjee**

*A Bridge and Beyond the Bridge*, 2024

archival print

6.22 x 8.34 in

edition 1/10





**Palash Bhattacharjee**

*A Bridge and Beyond the Bridge, 2024*

single channel video, 1080 x 1920

edition 1/10

## Noor Ali Chagani

### Bio:

Noor Ali Chagani (b.1982 Karachi, Pakistan), is a UK-based artist who graduated from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, Pakistan, in 2008.

His recent solo exhibitions include 'The Story of an Outsider' at Wardown Museum, Luton, UK (2023), 'How Little I Understand About Me' at Canvas Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (2021), 'Grey Spaces' at Koel Art Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (2018), and 'House of Bricks' at Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA (2016). Recent group exhibitions include 'Miniature 2.0: Miniature in Contemporary Art' at Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey (2020), 'Self-Portraits in the Age of the SELFIE' at COMO Museum of Art, Pakistan (2019), 'Delhi Contemporary Art Week' at LATITUDE segment, New Delhi, India (2019), 'Cartography of Narratives' at Latitude 28, New Delhi, India (2019), and 'Artissima' Art Fair in Italy (2021).

In addition, he has received several awards, including the Jameel Prize Residency at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (2016). In 2018, Modern Painters Magazine New York featured him in 'Top Emerging Artists to Watch in 2018'. Most recently, Chagani was honored with The Arts Family (TAF) London Emerging Artist Award - South Asia 2024.

### Statement:

Walls, Pillars, Barriers covered in graffiti, posters, political messages and personal notes are essential elements of urban life in metropolitan cities today. The material on them that is pasted, plastered, painted, added, removed or that weathers away with time depicts a tapestry of diverse voices carries the makers' creativity and can be considered a precursor for societal discourse on everything from land ownership, class disparity, crime, desire, anxiety and ethno religious tensions. I perceive them as carriers of such conflicts. To me these wall chalkings are the organic architecture of the city.



**Noor Ali Chagani**

*Pillars of Pakistan III, 2022*

Concrete, acrylic paint and metal

15.7 H x 2.7 Diameter in

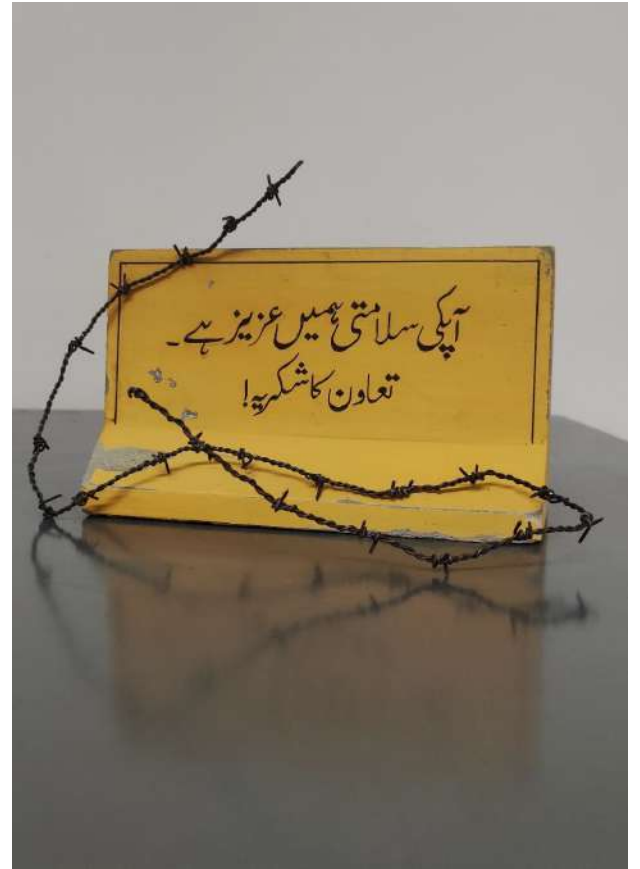


**Noor Ali Chagani**

*Hifazat*, 2022

Concrete, acrylic paint and metal

3.7 H x 6.1 L x 2.5 D in



**Noor Ali Chagani**

*Riast-e-madina*, 2022

Concrete, acrylic paint and metal

4.3 H x 6.2 H x 2.1 D in







**Noor Ali Chagani**

*Imran Khan, 2022*

Concrete, acrylic paint and metal

4.3 H x 6.2 H x 2.1 D in



## Akanksha Kamath

### Bio:

Born in Botswana, growing up in India and now living in London, Akanksha has charted a life in change that comes with a flexible meaning of 'home'. She is an independent writer and journalist contributing to esteemed publications such as The Business of Fashion, Vogue Business, Architectural Digest, Vogue and Harper's Bazaar.

After a Masters in Fashion Journalism from Central Saint Martins, she went on to work with Vogue India, leaving in 2022 as the publication's Fashion Features Director. Her body of work as a journalist connects human stories, craft, luxury of the handmade and championing of emerging design around the world. Her poetry work comes from a personal place and in her private moments - meandering travel writing, community and creating connections.

### Statement:

*'Where Is Home', 'Leaving Home' and 'She Is Home'*, are a series of meditations on home as a tangible concept that is ever-evolving and changing.

The artist draws upon her own tectonic shift in territories, as well as oral histories recorded of her grandmother's journey from Lahore to Ambala during the Partition. These short poems and soundscapes form ancestral links between generations navigating migration and change with courage.

In *'Where is Home'*, the artist navigates the discomfort of occupying space. In her new environments, familiarity comes from community. *'Leaving Home'* questions the tactile nature of the home — the home she learned to draw with four walls and a door. Here, home changes form and shape, never staying in one place.

Finally, *'She Is Home'*, is the artist's homecoming.



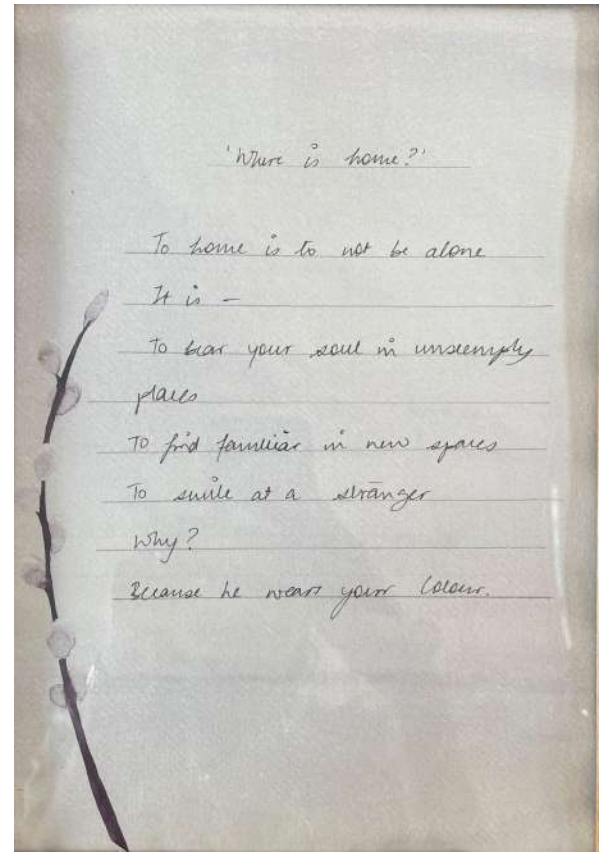
**Akanksha Kamath**

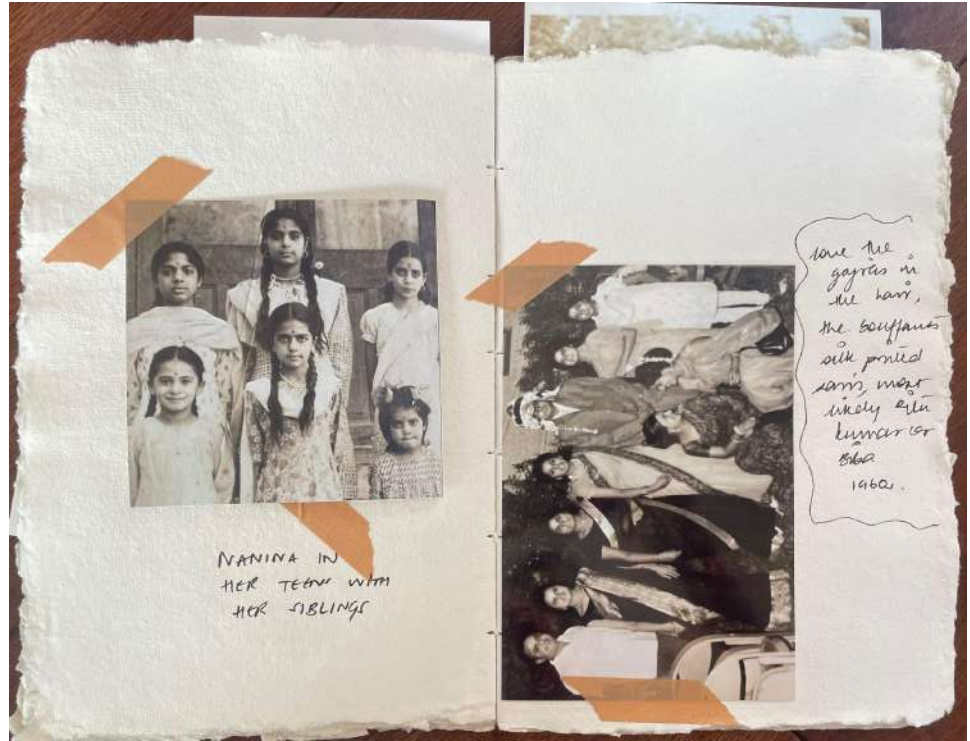
*Where Is Home?*

Poetry

Ink on Printed Khadi Handmade Raw Paper

8.2 x 11.8 Inches





**Akanksha Kamath**

*Partition Stories Diary*

Photograph Prints and Handmade Notes on Handmade Khadi Paper

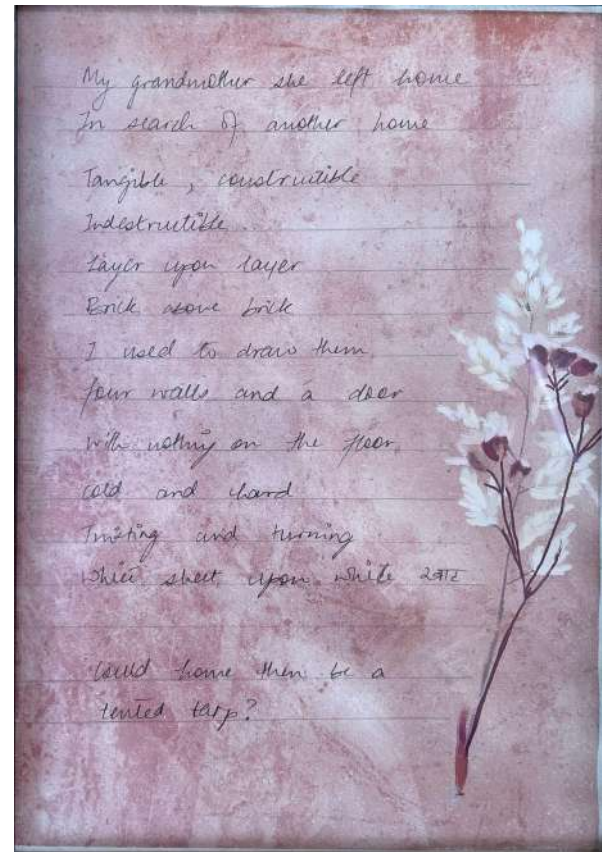
**Akanksha Kamath**

*Leaving Home*

Poetry

Ink on Printed Khadi Handmade Raw Paper

8.2 x 11.8 Inches



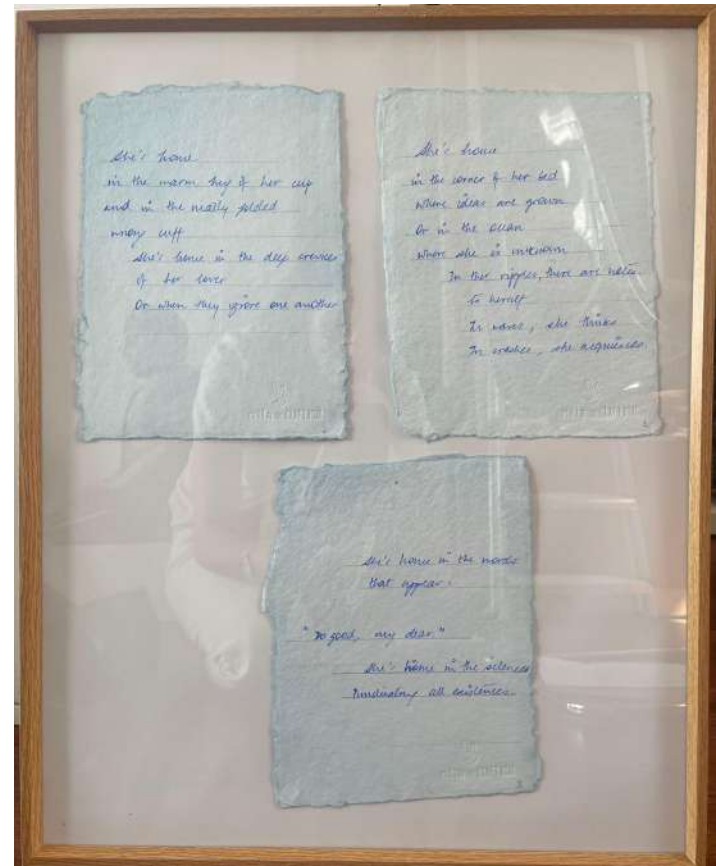
**Akanksha Kamath**

*She's home*

Poetry

Ink on khadi handmade indigo dyed paper

15.7 x 19.6 Inches



## Saba Khan

### Bio:

Saba Khan's multimedia works traffic in the language of memorial, monument and public projects. From miniature dioramas of a bureaucrat's boring office, flashing LED of retro sci-fi machines seen at power stations to indigo textile banners honouring peasant revolts, she balances grandeur, artifice and satire in order to explore the cracks in the structures. Saba lives and works in London, UK.

She founded Murree Museum Artist Residency (2014 – 2020) and a satirical artist collective Pak Khawateen Painting Club (2019) triggered from the commission of Lahore Biennale 02. Shows/residencies include: Delfina Foundation (2023), 421 Abu Dhabi (2023), Sharjah Biennial 15 (2023), Onassis AiR (2022), Jameel Art Centre (2022), Paul Mellon Centre (2021), Lahore Biennial (2020), “ONE” at COMO Lahore (2019), “Zinda-dil-a’an-e-Lahore–Billboard Project” (2020) an initiative of Lahore Biennale Foundation, Karachi Biennale (2018), New York Times (2018). Grants: 421 (2022), Foundation for the Arts Initiative (2018), Sharjah Art Foundation (2020), Graham Foundation (2020), British Council (2020, 2021, 2022). Her work is in the collections of Jameel Art Centre, Sharjah Art Foundation, Ford Foundation, South Asia Art Institute, Servais Collection and has been published in the New York Times, Stir World and Asia Art Pacific.

### Statement:

he first brown bodies to be transported across the oceans to England was of Duleep Singh the king of Lahore who was forever exiled after the defeat from East India Company and Annexation of Punjab 1849. This led to alterations of the river systems of Punjab where the first Canal Colonies were laid out for agriculture production and complex engineering systems were used to divert water. Crossing of oceans, referred to as ‘kala pani’ or black waters, in ancient Indian myth was considered as an act of stripping oneself of their identity and a state of loss of homespace. It was the ultimate punishment imposed by the British Empire to keep dissenters in their place. In recent times when brown bodies opt to cross oceans to land into places of better opportunities, they are blocked and diverted by visa regimes and bureaucratic labyrinths that keep them out. Like the flows of rivers were controlled by gates, another kind of opaque gates of paperwork keep brown bodies out.



**Saba Khan**

*The Immigration Officer, 2024*

Oil and Acrylic on Canvas

72 x 48 in



## Gunjan Kumar

### **Bio:**

Gunjan Kumar was born in Ludhiana, India, in 1980, and moved to the United States in 2011. She currently lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. Gunjan is a materialist and works widely with various pigments and textiles from the around the world. She has spent many years traveling through India and other countries in South Asia observing age-old practices in textiles and indigenous arts.

Her works have been exhibited at the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, Donnelley Foundation, TEDx Chicago, Chicago Artist Coalition, South Institute in Chicago, National College of Arts, Lahore, Art Dubai, India Art Fair, among others. She is currently a resident at the Chicago Art Department and has formerly been a resident fellow at the Edward Albee Foundation, Montauk, NY. Gunjan's works are in the collections of the Kiran Nadar Museum, New Delhi, Currell Collection, London, Edward Albee Foundation, New York, BML Munjal University, New Delhi, and other private collections.

### **Statement:**

At its core, my work is about observing. Observing matter in its elemental form and in relation to self. My interests lie in how materials and processes tell a story of self rooted in place, serving as sensory portraits of the inhibited and the bygone. Materials used in the work such as organic and inorganic earth pigments, muslin, and raw hand woven cotton activate physical and non-physical connections with my immediate and constantly changing relationship with the world.

Process in the works, is the message. Often a medium is selected, preferably in its elemental form. Next, it is intimately prepared and rendered. As the medium travels through the composition, it informs of its place and role through the relationships that it builds. Therefore, an unhurried sense of time is essential in the process. Influence of indigenous practices, particularly prehistoric cave paintings and related schools that I have been visiting for the past many years, play an important role in carving my process and ideology.



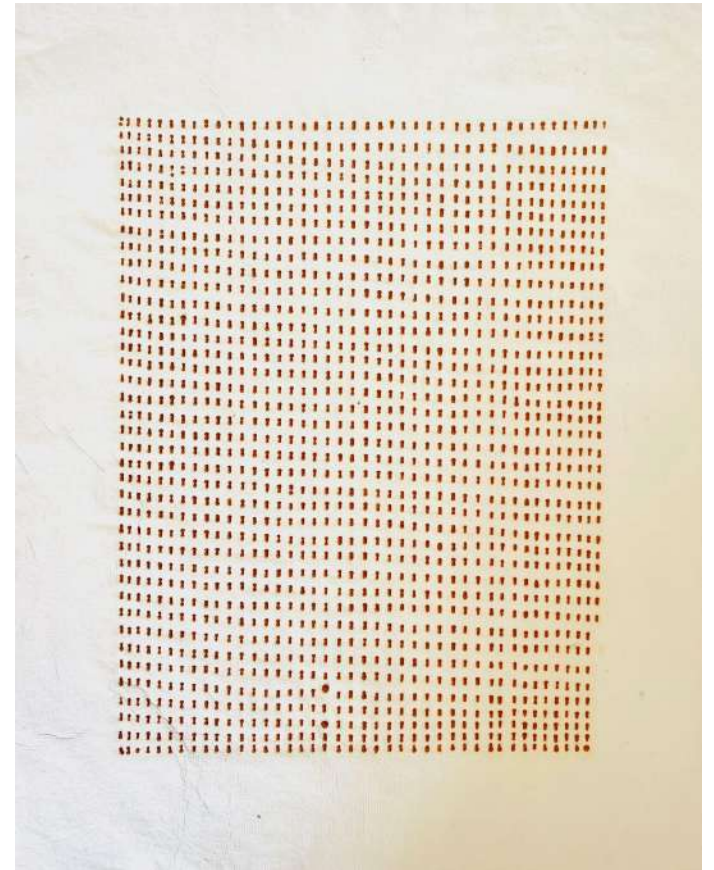


**Gunjan Kumar**

*Age Drawing 1*, 2016

Organic Pigment on Japanese Paper

20 x 16 in

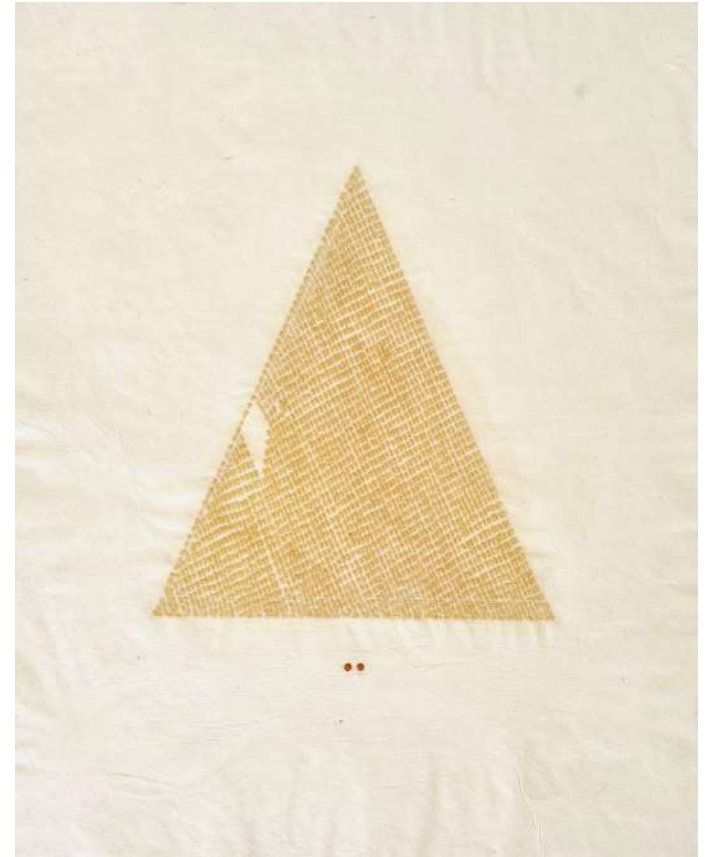


**Gunjan Kumar**

*Age Drawing 2*, 2016

Organic Pigment on Japanese Paper

20 x 16 in



**Gunjan Kumar**

*Age Drawing 3*, 2016

Organic Pigment on Japanese Paper

20 x 16 in



## Natasha Malik

### Bio:

Natasha Malik received her BFA from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore in 2012, and her MFA from the Slade School of Fine Art, London, in 2015. Malik's practice encompasses painting, drawing, installation, film, printmaking, and photography. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. Her solo shows include: a cage elusive as a shadow, Sanat Gallery, Karachi (2016), the soul breathes differently, Satrang Art Gallery, Islamabad (2018), the life of an image, Khaas Art Gallery (2022). She has shown her work at Coningsby Gallery (London), Asia House (London), and COMO Museum of Art (Lahore). She was a participating artist in the Lahore Biennale 2020 as a member of the Pak-Khawateen Painting Club. Under The Creative Process, an artistic platform she founded, Malik curated and co-curated exhibitions including: Of Other Spaces (2017), River in an ocean (2018), Unmaking History (2019) and The Unforgotten Moon: Liberating Art from Guantánamo Bay (2023).

### Statement:

The formative years of Malik's artistic practice focused on specialising in miniature painting, particularly its history and traditional techniques. Her multi-media approach, which is rooted in this tradition, draws from its rich visual vocabulary, whilst addressing contemporary concerns around the female body, sexuality, loss, and memory. She deepens these investigations by challenging the foundation of Indo-Persian miniature painting, in the context of regional history, culture and colonialism.

A dominant thread in her work is the autobiographical, through which she explores female identity and sexuality developed within the constraints of patriarchy. Visceral reactions to tensions and trauma experienced under oppressive patriarchal structures are processed through her imagery, which grounds the female protagonist in landscapes of the psyche. The image becomes a space to confront the frictions between interiority and the predominant systems of patriarchy and capitalism. Within this broad spectrum, she addresses questions around the perception and expectations of the gendered body, by creating intimate psychological landscapes occupied by the solitary, introspective female figure, who is attempting to maintain her agency and sense of self. She examines the relationship between memory, materiality and making, to confront anxieties around the existential, particularly in relation to mortality, grief, alienation, and absurdity.



**Natasha Malik**

*Uprooted*, 2024

Gouache, watercolour and Mother-of-Pearl powder  
on Wasli (layered Paper)

17.1 x 13.9 in



## Firi Rahman

### Bio:

Firi Rahman's (b. 1990, Sri Lanka) work is often concerned with the contentious relationship between humankind and the animal kingdom. Rahman earned a Foundation in Art and Design (2012) from City and Guilds at Manchester College in the United Kingdom. He is a cofounder of We Are From Here, a collective project which highlights a deeply interconnected community in Slave Island whose home-base is increasingly threatened by gentrification for state and corporate interests. His work has been exhibited at the Colombo Art Biennale (2016), Colomboscope and Dhaka Art summit. His works belong to private collections in Sri Lanka, Switzerland, India, United Kingdom, and the USA. He was also selected for the Cité Internationale des Arts residency in France (2023) and state department IVLP Alumni (2023).

### Statement:

Rahman's new body of work is a commentary on experiences of refugees and migrants who exist in an ambiguous & uprooted zone of belonging and non-belonging, as they try to comprehend the meaning of home.

The series draws from the artist's observation of parakeets in the Parisian skies during his residency at Cité des Arts. Introduced along the routes of luxury trade as exotic species, they have come to inhabit the foreign landscapes of Europe. Removed from their natural habitats these creatures are slowly adapting to new environments, but as their populations increase they are being viewed as invasive and a threat to local fauna. They are refugees in a foreign land much like those who have left their loved one and familiar habitat, carrying dreams and hopes for a better life.

Rahman's practice reflects a deep empathy for creatures of flight - reading in their interactions with each other the warmth and comfort they seek in the companionship of kin and kith with whom they share their nest. He observes in their mannerisms a forlorn hope - the expressions of loss and grief - mirroring human experiences. It is these observations that Rahman draws from in his exploration of home. The pencil and ink drawings appear as residues left behind after the vibrancy of colour is removed, evoking a contained expression of hope enveloped in the angst of separation, grief that mixes with warm affection.

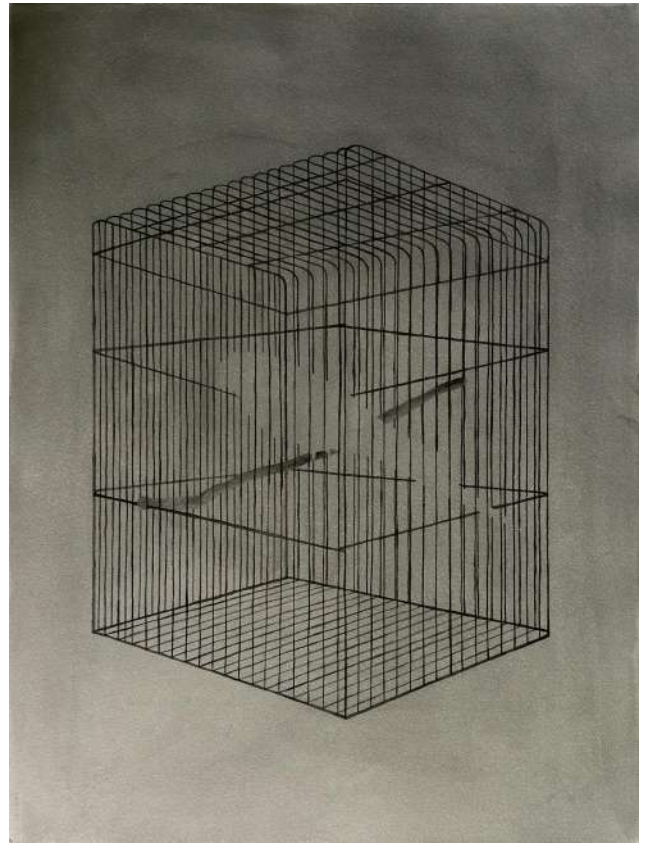


**Firi Rahman**

*Spaces 01*, 2024

acrylic, ink on Paper

22 x 29.9 in



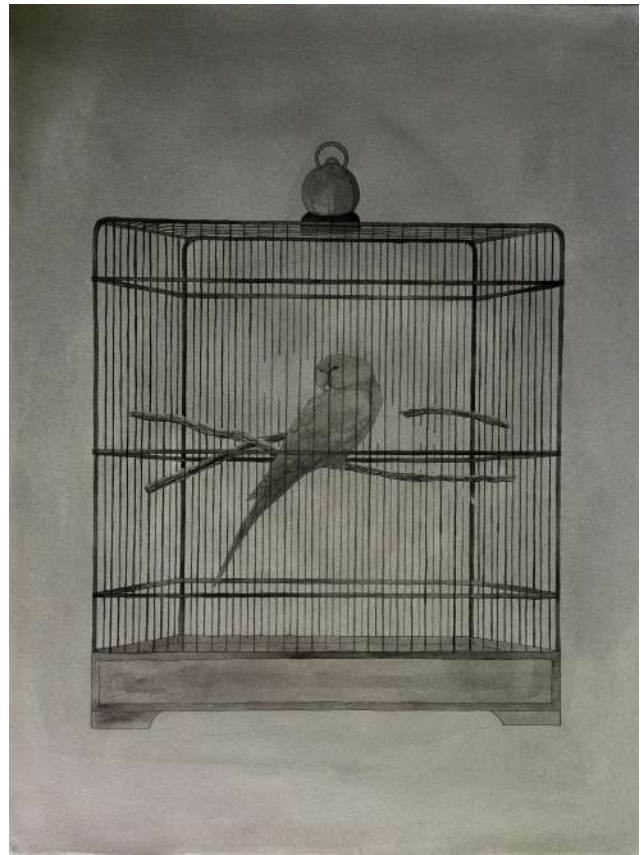


**Firi Rahman**

*Spaces 02, 2024*

acrylic, ink on Paper

22 x 29.9 in



**Firi Rahman**

*Spaces 03, 2024*

acrylic, ink on Paper

22 x 29.9 in



## Anushka Rustomji

### **Bio:**

She is an alumna of the National College of Arts, Lahore (2011) and was a participant in the 2015 Pilotenkueche artist residency (Leipzig, Germany). Rustomji has exhibited her work internationally, including at the recent Colomboscope festival (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2024). Her work has been published in 'Lines in the Sand; Contemporary Art from Pakistan', (Imago Mundi, Luciano Benetton Collection, 2017) and 'Between Quarantine and Quest', (Vasl Artists Association, 2022). She is an MA candidate at the National College of Arts, Lahore and is a faculty member at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi.

### **Statement:**

Anushka Rustomji is a visual artist whose practice examines themes of cultural and historical erasure, duality, and transcendence. Her works are influenced by the visual representations of mythologies and cross-cultural sacred practices and traditions of the Global South.





**Anushka Rustomji**

*Mythological Migration, 2024*

Acrylic, gouache, ink, pencil on paper

91.4 x 8.9 in

### **Project Art Divvy:**

Project Art Divvy is a venture of Foundation Art Divvy. It provides a platform in the UK to the arts and film from South Asia in order to expand South Asian art, culture and narrative's global and local reach. Project Art Divvy partners with UK based galleries and institutions to present exhibitions of South Asian contemporary art and film festivals of independent South Asian films. Project Art Divvy held a series of exhibitions at Rossi & Rossi, London (2017-2019) and is proud to hold an exhibition at Shahnaz Gallery (May 2024). Project Art Divvy will present Divvy Film Festival London, a film festival of independent films from South Asia, at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), London ( 5-7 July).

Foundation Art Divvy provides a platform at an institutional level, locally and internationally to the arts from South Asia. It works in Pakistan and internationally through four active divisions, Art Divvy Exhibitions, Divvy Film Festival, Art Divvy Conversations and Project Art Divvy, and we now are launching Divvy Knowledge Center. Each Art Divvy initiative supports culture, art, film, learning and philosophy.

The most prominent of our Art Divvy Exhibitions has been Naiza Khan: Manora Field Notes, the inaugural Pavilion of Pakistan at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, 2019 which Foundation Art Divvy presented with the Pakistan National Council of the Arts. In 2020, Art Divvy expanded into film by launching Divvy Film Festival, an annual festival hosting independent films by South Asian filmmakers. Foundation Art Divvy has established Art Divvy Conversations in order to encourage more scholarship on and easy access to contemporary South Asian art practices.

### **Shahnaz Gallery:**

Shahnaz Gallery is the successor to Bashir Mohamed Limited with over 60 years of experience in Islamic and Asiatic art. The gallery has garnered a well-deserved reputation for its expertise and rare artworks, standing as a leading authority in its field.

Offering expert guidance to collectors, with a keen eye for exceptional artworks, we facilitate the acquisition of coveted pieces and provide support in building comprehensive and noteworthy collections. This has resulted in contributing to some of the most well known and remarkable collections of Islamic and Asian art worldwide.

The gallery counts museums and institutions globally as clients, contributing to their collections as well as loaning to exhibitions. Artworks previously in our collection can be seen in: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Victoria & Albert Museum, London, The British Museum, London, The Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, The Louvre, Paris & Abu-Dhabi, The David Collection, Denmark, amongst others.

divvy  
art



PROJECT ART DIVVY | SHAHNAZ GALLERY

Website: <https://artdivvy.org/> | <https://shahnazgallery.com/> | Email: [project@artdivvy.org](mailto:project@artdivvy.org) | [info@shahnazgallery.com](mailto:info@shahnazgallery.com)