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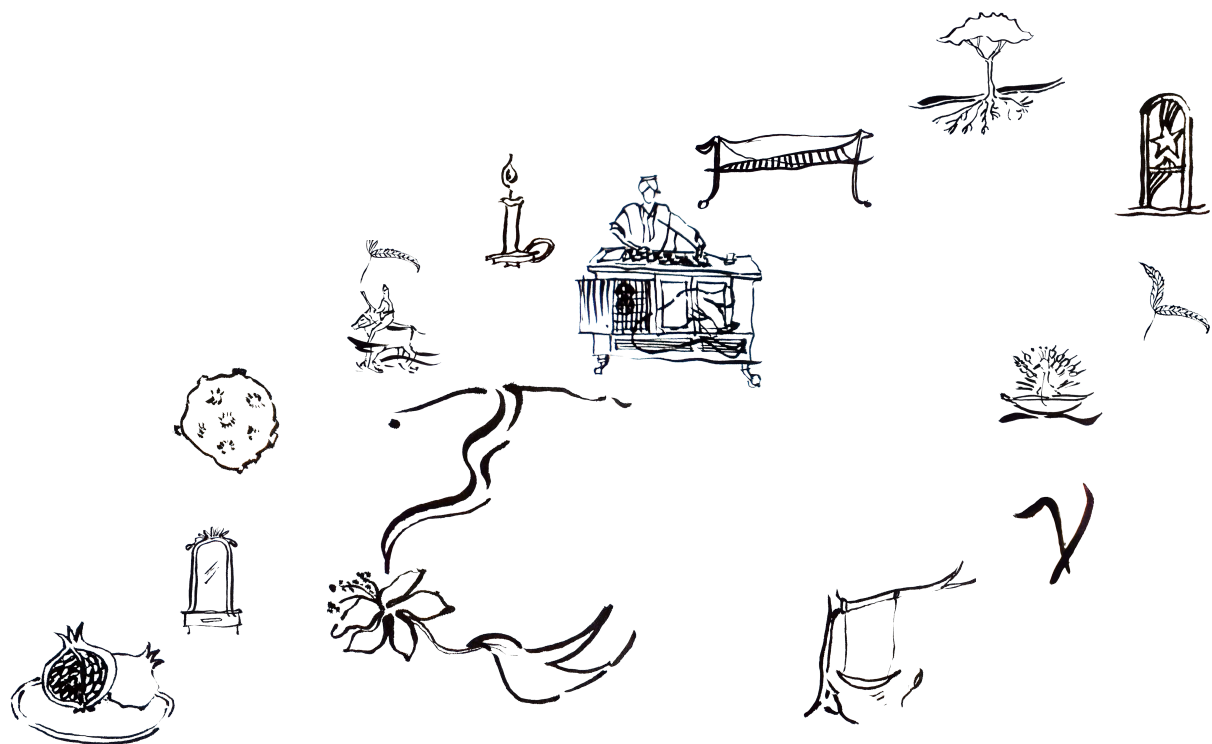
# Anticolonial Maps for Lost Lovers

A COMPANION

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WASAY IJAZ  
YASHFEEN TALPUR  
ZOYA ABBAS







to and from...

a reader  
lovers, lost and found  
the non-homeric peoples  
the diasporic descendants of the displaced  
the synaesthetes who are beyond witness  
to the refugee, the fugitive, the pilgrim  
to place without land  
to home without place  
to home in fugue  
to fugue in song



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#### ANTICOLONIAL MAPS FOR LOST LOVERS: A COMPANION

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# **Anticolonial Maps for Lost Lovers**

A COMPANION

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This project brings together artists from across the global south – understood as a relation and not a geopolitical locus – to actually practise such a relation as something other than the “process” of value production, taking on with relish and a sense of possibility, the unresolved relation between nostos and polis, and not seeking to settle it. Together, we attempt a collaborative archive of “shared knowledge” – by way of maps, phenomenologies, autoethnographies – in motion, composing, assembling, and manifesting ways of reading, being, seeing, sensing, and allow “minor” itineraries of political struggle to become evident, especially where the destinations have been lost or not reached, or appropriated, or looked different than they were expected to. The deterritorial yet located nature of this “mapping,” and the difficulties therein, are not lost on us. Still, we rely on these difficulties to keep alive those epistemic struggles which promise new subjects and institutions and a future beyond capital and colony, especially when many of us feel policed by humanitarian, democratizing, or liberatory projects that also replicate orientalism, eurocentrism, and US exceptionalism, with their purveyors refusing to learn any new lessons.

*Anticolonial Maps for Lost Lovers* proceeds from the perspective, location, and time of “the unrequited” in articulating a politics of “another love” (Abbas, 2018), where political desire and its pursuits might be able to be thought otherwise. What might those “shared knowledges” look like, in which Edouard Glissant (1990) finds our redemption on the open boat – not as exceptions, but as people, as those whom Celine Chuang calls “diasporic descendents of the displaced” (2021). Eschewing platitudes that plague contemporary salvationist discourses on the left and the right – both betrothed to unexamined epistemologies of the wheres of our lifeworlds – this project explores mix of narrative, art, pedagogy, and theory that enacts an ongoing and capacious historical materialist method for a political understanding of location, space, and attachment, that could unlock forms of presence, connection, appearance, motion, and relation to the objects of our desire and commitment that allow the production of knowledge and political action to be something other than acts of occupation, conquest, colonisation.

A curated summer 2022 residency, Jehānuma, organized by GCAS-Jehān and Hic Rosa, with the support of the Bard Centre for Human Rights and the Arts, Bard College at Simon's Rock, and the Open Societies University Network, and Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, laid the groundwork for the production of a digital archive of the process and the artworks alike, as one offering – a Chapter I, if you will – of “shared knowledges.” A launch of this archive, and a series of engagements with it, including physical exhibits where possible, and mini-symposia and panels, through Spring 2023, Summer 2023, and Spring 2024 invited this cooperative archive to grow, stopping in Morocco, thanks to Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, to regroup for a Chapter II, at the Jehānuma Festival of the Arts of Politics, January 2025 edition.

## mapping out territories of affection that defy colonial boundaries

While there may have been many attempts at remapping anticolonial social thought, there have been tendentious, abortive ways to represent the epistemic search for creating knowledge about a new society through a critique of the colonial.

When such an élan has translated into the art world, it has generally produced what various biennales have exemplified. A case in point that represents many others, Roberto Cicutto, president of La Biennale di Venezia, in his statement for the 2024 edition, illustrates the safe distance from the state of the world, as he calls it, that art events often are: "La Biennale's international nature makes it a privileged vantage point from which to observe the state of the world through the transformation and evolution of the arts." Observation of the state of the world, is the closest art happenings seem to want to get to reflect upon anything vaguely rassembling the surpassing disaster that colonialism has been, to adopt Toufics category.

It is worth mentioning that the 2024 Venice Biennale, as a few others before it, has showcased community and Indigenous artists from many postcolonial countries like Australia, Brazil, Peru, New Zealand and the United States, with the overt brief to be a celebration of the foreign, the distant, the outsider, and so on. The result is that the immane tragedies still unfolding as outcome of colonisation, become edulcorated into representations of "legacies of the colonial past transformed into a hopeful sense of the future," as a reviewer interpreted the recent biennale in a prominent art magazine.

The artists and scholars who, with Asma Abbas, have produced *Anticolonial Maps for Lost Lovers*, have wished to embark on a collective reflection and subsequent personal research that chose a cartographic journey through the heart of resistance as a way to reclamation. Traversing landscapes where love and liberation intertwine, mapping out territories of affection that defy colonial boundaries, maps, that have been tools of power, delineating, dividing, and dominating, have here subverted such roles. Here, in fact, maps have transformed into instruments of anticolonial defiance and intimate expression.

Each piece in the installation is a personal testament to the resilience of individuals and communities striving to reclaim land, history, affect from the immane disaster of colonialism. In this installation, as you will discover, maps are not merely geographical, but emotional and relational. There are maps that chart terrains — between individuals, within communities, and towards the land itself. There are cartographies that celebrate the sacred relationship between people and their territories, as well as contemporary artistic interpretations that critique and reimagine colonial maps through personal and collective narratives, merging the political with the poetic. These are maps that can both wound and heal, like love, that in its many forms, is a powerful act of resistance.

*Anticolonial Maps for Lost Lovers* is not just an exhibition; it is a way to re-envision the world, challenging previous imagined cartographies, leading to rediscovery, to reaffirm resilience.

You deterritorialize and reconfigure space, deprovincializing without depersonalizing. It is impossible to acknowledge your entirety without letting the found image interact with the drawn map, the *Manshoor* cover, and the handwriting. Your light suffuses your plates and mediates between other matter—carbon, paper—becoming a medium and a guide.

In some moments, I see your layers but cannot fully make them out.

This incompleteness invites questions: Should one let the blur remain? Should one dig deeper, risking disruption?

Or perhaps approach you from another side, the opposite side, the light source?

You play between map, text, and image, refusing to prioritize one over the others. Your layering affirms that none of these elements solely holds history, memory, or grief. Instead, they interact, carrying representation, violence, and care.

In *Fugue 1*, you reconfigure tools of interpretation, using a music lesson to guide, teach, and reveal your layers.

You remind us that reading and singing are not merely activities of the body but exceed it, becoming acts of relation and effort, shaped by those we sit alongside.

I imagine you as a pilgrim, perhaps on the way to Karbala or weaving other journeys together with scenes of mourning—not as fetishes but as guides for work and relation.

Your friends are those who enjoin truth and patience.

In the here and now, you embody the political subjectivity of the refugee, carrying something rescued

or stolen, placing it in constellations of meaning.

You eat with others, watch *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, and think of the plates that might emerge from its layers. You emote frustration, the kind that asks who removed the thread, who threw it away.

You are a friend to my work, a companion in conversation about journeys and edges, about where one learned to read and mourn.

In your layers, I see lessons I must carry, letting the light pass, the overlapping fugue of time and space.

As a guide, you take me to classrooms and libraries, to moments of queer love and traumatic memory,

to where reading and fasting converged in ways I could not articulate but felt deeply.

You are not only a map but also a question:

How does one return, and how does one carry the past into the present without losing it?

I went looking for how I learnt how to read. The Society *Imambara* was the one place where, when I showed up after 19 years in 2018, I was compelled to address it and say, I

am here, thanks for teaching me how to read, I think you would like what I did with what you taught me. My father passed away during the following Muharram, only my second since since I left in 1999. I was there the day before he passed away, getting a thread from Hazrat Qasim's mehndi, saying I wanted it for my father who was sick in the hospital. The woman told me that I should make sure he is clean before I tie it

around his wrist.

## Karbala, Deterritorial

He died the next day. I couldn't see him because when it was my turn to go in, more people wanted to go in, so the guard kept all of us out. I wish they had let me go, just so I could see if, in his last breaths, he still had the thread on him, who removed it, who threw it somewhere. But, I know where all his *Manshoor* covers were, his lifelong practice of learning and teaching to read. Then came the plates 1-20.

*Fugue 1* splices that history of learning to read with another history of learning to sing - and of a teacher who does so. Both ways of learning what voice actually is, something often forgotten in the contemporary moment of speech—acts alone that forget how to read, recite, or harmonise, with all parts of our body of which we know.

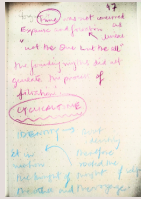




*Jehān'ara*

We are here, day 1 of the residency.

*Rads*



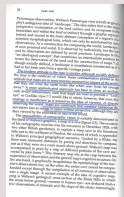
p. 45, 47, Glissant.

*Layl*

Tracing memories of what parts of colonization registered in my family. Parents reference war in 1965 and 1971 (attacks via air) on twin cities of Rohri and Sukkur vs. partition in 1947 (which is often discussed as post). For example, our Hindu neighbors migrated from my mother's hometown after Partition, or after they started being mistreated, or Shia/Sunni violence post-Partition (e.g., Tehri Massacre near my dad's hometown during Ayub's regime).

*Rads*

Edney p.72, taking the underlined forward, I wonder how the visual perception and practice of map-making, personal cartographies, would/should transform.



*Yashfeen*

Mapping and imperialism: Creation of maps at large scales aims for more data and accuracy, generating large empty white spaces within graphic representations of the geographical landscape. Thinking about fugue/ entrance/ portals but also whiteness, sterility, absence.

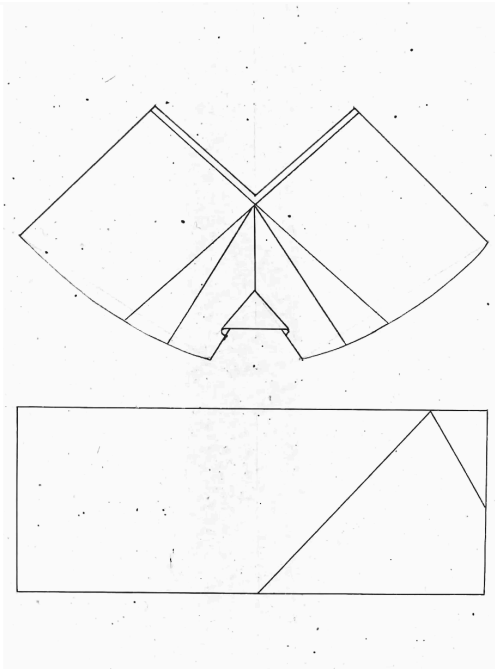
## ASMA ABBAS

Asma is an educator and political theorist who is happiest  
when someone teaches her something.  
She lives between Richmond, Karachi, and Ifrane.  
She hasn't stopped falling through the cracks  
in the lands that were supposed to be ours  
and slipping on the algae  
in the waters where our lovers were supposed to meet and save us.



## Land as Memory, Knowledge, and Promise

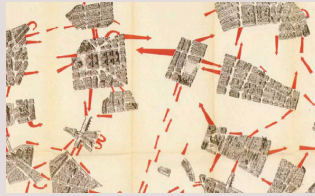
After Ammi, I inherited her personal belongings.  
For years, they remained untouched, folded in muslin as she had left them, creases of the cloth pressed in time.  
On inspection, I discovered a thin crust of dirt where her gharara touched the ground.  
The grime belongs to a different time and space but has continued into this one. Ammi remains no more,  
but the trace of her moving in a particular space and time is physically present in the thin line of dirt on the hem  
that followed her as she moved in this world.  
Land is not stationary, neither is it rigid or dormant (as in a map).  
Earth, mud, clay, soil, sand, dust, dirt, grime – they travel, transform, transpire through space and time.  
In the course of events that may or may not involve human arbitration,  
a mud island takes birth in the middle of the sea,  
Saharan sand blankets the snow in Switzerland,  
clay from a river bed bakes into a pot,  
and a *gharara* is passed down from mother to daughter.  
Land is memory, knowledge, and promise, all entwined.  
It is the past, the present, and the future interwoven.  
Land is also territory bounded by political lines.  
A resource that can be mined.  
A demarcation that can be owned.  
Our modern understanding of land, it seems,  
entails human beings dominating it to measure, contain, or legitimize its being.  
The map in this way could be amongst  
the enduring tools of man to conquer and control land and in turn that what it holds.  
If we are to disregard the colonial and modern methods of containing and quantifying land,  
what other ways are there to perceive it?





### Jehān'ara

If geographers “carve,” “draw,” or “write” the earth, psychogeographers add a zest of soul to the mix, linking earth, mind, and foot.



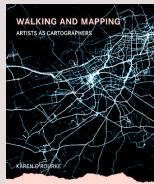
### Layl

...the concept of India had become a real entity for both British imperialists and Indian nationalists alike. Both groups held “India” to be a single, coherent, self-referential geographical entity coincident with the bounds of the South Asian subcontinent and the extent of British power but which nonetheless predated British hegemony. Thus, one historian could state in 1902 that the purpose of his account of the empire was “to set before the ordinary reader the story of the steps by which India came gradually to be painted red on the map.”<sup>18</sup> The triumph of the British empire, from the imperialist perspective, was its replacement of the multitude of political and cultural components of India with a single all-India state coincident with a cartographically defined geographical whole.

An imagined whole, togetherness, tightly packing something. Are we trying to reform the traditional map? Use it as a base? Do we accept the traditional meaning of map as a representation of reality—questioning this and realizing that the first impulse is to look at a map and change or impose something on it.

### Jehān'ara

*Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013. From Guy Debord in the early 1950s to Richard Long, Janet Cardiff, and Esther Polak more recently, contemporary artists have... (shared excerpt)



## MAHREEN ZUBERI

Mahreen is a Karachi-based visual artist and educator. She is an alumna of National College of Arts Lahore and coordinates the Fine Art programme at the Department of Visual Studies, University of Karachi. while completing her M.Phil, from Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, and raising two incredible humans and a cat. Mahreen's studio practice explores non-hierarchical and heterogeneous structures of “making” while investigating forms of knowledge acquisition that do not depend solely on an empirical or empiricist approach. She has exhibited widely and her work is part of prominent art collections including Queensland Art Gallery, Australia, Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan, and Devi Art Foundation, India.

This map (anti-map?) goes beyond pathfinding. It actually doesn't at all tell you which way to go.  
Multiple paths overlaid on one another barely assist navigation.  
All we see is paths converge and come together, become points of contact.  
The map shows multiple narratives coalescing, seeking plurality, finding refuge in intersections.

Perhaps the *simurgh* is not an otherworldly saviour? ?Coming together as individuals, putting  
together the different places and 'selves' we bring, we all become the *simurgh*.

My grandmother, *Nano*, drew flowers, motifs, and patterns in my notebook,  
the ones she used to paint on Saris.  
The process would begin with tracing her drawings, as if footsteps to remember.  
Following a trail of conversation fragments that Nano and I shared when I was younger,  
my earliest drawing lesson was tracing drawings of the roses that she would make.

## Lost Gardens Do Grow Back

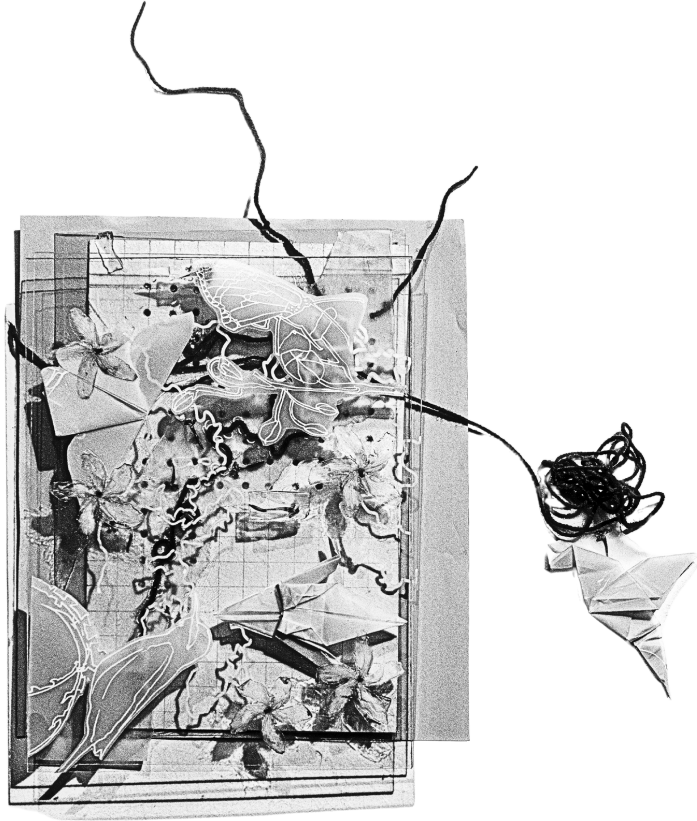
I live in Karachi city by the sea.  
What does it mean to have roots and family near Calcutta,  
and finding home in Lahore near another river.  
Does water have memory?

I asked Nano to draw home, and she drew a boat with a peacock in it.  
I took pictures of the sunbird, who made a woven nest.  
much like the weaver bird from Nano's stories (called the *Baya*).

I thought that maybe home was where the boat was from.  
But, now I am realizing that maybe it meant that she took it home with her,  
for her home was always the voyage.  
A ship with a bird, constant movement and constant migration.  
I wanted to find common ground, any ground.

I wanted her to find her home in me as well when I found it in her.

The map transforms from a multilayered plane into folds lifting up to occupy space,  
to make tangible the shifting understandings of things that remind me of home.





*Mahreen*

Mapping/Cartography are colonial tools. Anti-mapping will not replicate mapping.

*Jehān'ara*

Friends, our homework for tonight is that we each share a paragraph addressing one other person's ideas shared today.

*Zoya*

Bushra, Imagining and thinking on a prayer mat was very relatable for me regarding your exploration. It made me think of my mother always telling me she comes up with the best ideas and designs while on the prayer mat and in prayer. It also reminded me of my nani's (maternal grandmother's) patched-up old prayer mat, which she adored so much she didn't want to let go of it... Maybe because she was very by the book and loved her "things." The idea of seeking and thinking through/with an object like a prayer mat gives a different meaning to connecting with oneself and beyond.

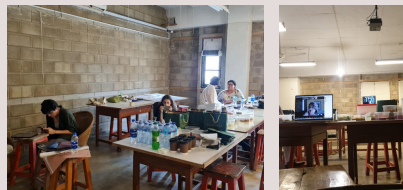
*Bushra*

This is such a lovely story! I do think a lot about memory objects and things that hold tangible memories, especially for seniors because there is this inherent sense of losing things post-Partition. Would love to see this prayer mat.

*Fizza*

Samra, talking about the graveyard that carries graves of people who are unnamed makes me think of how unnamed emotions are buried with loss. How does the association with a marked grave find closure and put an end to the hope of "finding" loss?

*Jehān'ara*



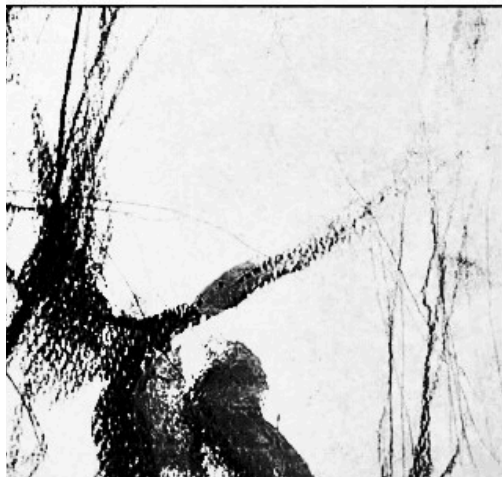
## RADHYA KAREEM

Radhya exists at the intersection of being an architect, urbanist, and a poet. As a student of Historic Preservation at Pratt Institute, her passion lies in understanding the connection between preserving the built environment and conserving ecology. She is a Taconic Fellow at Pratt Institute conducting history and heritage research work for the Jewel Streets Project and is part of the Spatial Analysis Visualization Initiative (SAVI). Her research delves into how preserving the past can help communities envision solutions for the future, particularly in the context of port cities like the city where she is from, Karachi, and her current home New York City. As an aspiring polymath, her undergraduate degree in Architecture continues to shape her academic and professional journey. In Radhya's creative and academic work, she employs a multi-layered cartography approach to understand the cities where she has lived. This method allows her to identify intersections and points of convergence across a diverse range of experiences, in an effort to celebrate diversity and promote pluralism in the built and lived environments. Outside of the studio Radhya can be found capturing the beauty of urban nature through photography and drawing, from the returning birds and butterflies in industrial environments to the changing seasons of foliage in the city in an attempt to celebrate diversity and encourage pluralism.



## **Surrendering Identity**

Couldn't identify who it was,  
as I was completely unaware of the long-term impression  
this meeting would have on my life.  
It propelled me towards a parallel track of life.  
The curvatures of leaves,  
impressions of textures running linear  
on half-century-old Neem trees,  
and the smell of the earth after the first rain  
all translate to something familiar and unknown,  
resonating with the presence of "The Divine."







*Safi*

Bushra, I'm really taken with your idea of the prayer rug as "first map." It really calls forth the idea that it's worth searching for something before cartographies as we've known them (legacies of capital and colony), both at a personal level—to ask someone, "What was your first map?" as you've asked yourself. And a historical one—"How did people map in the premodern world, before modern colonialism as we've come to know it? "Are those questions just searching for a new picture of the world? Because, more than that, this idea of the prayer rug as first map asks even more of mapping than what we do with the map on the page. It's more than a surface to locate this or that place. It locates or orients the worshipper in time and place, within, for example a community, whether that community likes it or not. A queer Muslim does not have to ask permission of anyone to unroll their mat and pray. I'm constantly drawn to questions of queerness in/and Islam, not only in locating the queerness that has always existed in Islamic history, but thinking of worship and belief as acts that are themselves queer. (Not to mention the personal dimension.) I'm even thinking here, Asma, of what you call a "hermeneutics of longing," because it's that recognition of Muslim longing, in poetry and in practice, that was what initially parsed out for me how to even come to terms with my own queerness.

## **BABAR NAEEM SHEIKH**

Babar is a filmmaker, multimedia artist, musician, and educator who graduated from the Department of Communication Design at IVS in 1999, and then again in 2024 with an M.Phil in Art and Design. Among his various research interests, he has been studying the shifts in the urban environment through personal narratives of artists, craft-makers, musicians, photographers, and city dwellers with a keen interest in life's changing patterns. With his exploration and documentation work, he tries to accentuate relationships between people, places, and memories. His film narratives are centered around Sufism-urbanism and its effects on everyday human interaction.

You are co-produced, a dialogue  
in fluidity and relation.  
You blur boundaries, merging land and sea  
just as two singers harmonise with each other.  
Your light and shadow evoke a sensory experience  
of movement and union,  
challenging stasis and solitary creation.  
I see you in the Oshu Forest,  
your essence dappled through light and water,  
but also in the chaotic sea near Karachi,  
a wild force that resists taming.  
You embody the union of opposites,  
where freedom and constraint meet in conversation.  
You are a wayfinding device,  
suggesting that one must first be lost to be found.  
Together, we navigate memory and fluidity,  
seeking to reclaim what has been lost,  
and to embrace what is yet to be discovered.  
Watching you unfold,  
I've learned to embrace the spaces between—  
the meeting points where land and sea  
blur into one another.  
Co-creation has shown me how boundaries can dissolve,  
how collaboration can build  
something greater than the sum of its parts.  
I think of freedom as dappled light through trees,  
the chaos of the sea near Karachi, the places I've been  
and the ones I've only imagined.  
These memories and sensations guide me as I navigate my own work.  
I see my "Lost Gardens do Grow Back," as a counterpoint to you  
—a puzzle attempting to piece together memory, while you flows freely, resisting  
construction.  
Together, they form a conversation about wayfinding.  
One retraces steps; the other gets lost to be found. Both are necessary,  
and I've realized that being lost can be its own kind of freedom.  
You, the collaboration that is you, reminds me of the silences before rain, the negative  
space where transformation happens.

A journey mapped in the form of conversations of openness and sharing space.  
What happens when two strangers, or two entities enter into each other? How do  
they create space for one another? What else is being created during this union.  
The land and sea become witness. A meeting point is formed in the midst of a  
sensory labyrinth, with half-broken, half-built walls,  
new and old territories are explored,  
a space continues to be redefined.  
Making more space for the other,  
for pain, for joy, for love, heartbreak, and dreams.  
You and I intertwine into reimagining spaces;  
our lovers can be the land and sea –  
the two don't need borders to enter into each other  
May I meet you halfway? Here, we might find a place where we can fall in love.  
A place where there are only lovers and no rules.  
This love story between the mind and heart  
composes a reverie and knocks on the door of a stifling existence.  
I reimagine and reinvent a lost love.

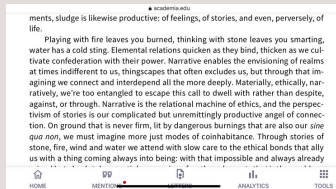
## Notes from a Conversation

Remember we talked about how joy and pain collide?





## Jehān'ara *Elemental Relations* (shared link and excerpts)



### Safi

Skimming this and already can say it's beautifully written will have to take a closer look.

### Bushra

Yes to all that! I got really excited hearing your proposal because it deals with science and art challenging what's acceptable and what isn't. Worship is so personal and collective, and that makes it very political for me—thinking from a lens of queerness and questions of what is sacred or profane.

Mahreen, your work really spoke to me, especially thinking about my mother and her mother. What an absolute treasure it is to have access to these archives within the family.



### Layl

Thinking about Shahana Rajani and Zahra Malkani's current work in *Memorials to Partition* in relation to how we might understand ours.

Rabel, I know we discussed Kashmir and the Holocaust in relation to the similarities in the laws enacted by India and Germany. Another thing that came to mind when listening to you discuss suffering across time and space is Arundhati Roy's essay "A Graveyard Talks Back."

Zoya is a multidisciplinary artist based in Karachi, Pakistan. She is completing her MPhil in Art and Design at the Indus Valley School for Art and Architecture in Karachi. With a degree in communication design from the National College of Arts in Lahore in 2010, she worked in advertising and digital media marketing as a creative consultant and taught 'O' Level art and design. Zoya has also earned online certifications at MOMA, Stanford University, and the University of California, Santa Cruz in fields ranging from modern and contemporary art to abstract painting, photography, and gender and feminist theory. Zoya's current research and studio practice looks at feminist narratives from the Global South and the question of home and belonging..

## ZOYA ABBAS

## FIZZA SALEEM

Fizza is a visual artist and educator. She has studied Painting at the National College of Arts, Lahore, and at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, where she is also completing her M.Phil. in Art and Design. Fizza's work brings attention to places where light and shadow coexist. Empty rooms are filled with light that alters these spaces. Fizza investigates the states of night and day as experienced by the human mind, focusing on how memory engages with these states in a non-linear way, and in no hierarchical order. Like flowing water, it changes place and form every second. Fizza is fascinated by the human mind's capacity to find the extraordinary in the ordinary. Fizza strives to find the sunshine that is hiding in little nooks and corners, often empanelled with a dark shadow.



This is a fantastical dive into the world of storytelling,  
specifically of the stories religions tell.

It draws its essence from the prayer rug as a point of arrival, as a place of  
prayer/wishing/desire/return to god.

## **My Map is a Portal**

What is geography in the realm of religion that, while is for the earthly, but also and because it transcends  
borders,  
horizontal,  
vertical,  
longitudinal,  
latitudinal,  
between the earth and the sky.

This is the story of a child trying to understand religion and connect to the creator without binaries.  
It is made up of visuals inspired by miniature, maps, and scripts.  
It has been given the form of one tapestry with windows unto it.





## Yashfeen

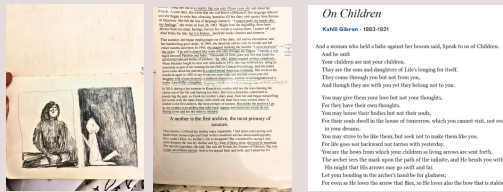
Safi, I was thinking about your work with aniconic depiction and imagery and immediately connected it back to the imagery we came across during the shrine visits, specifically about how common/personal objects were left behind at the place of prayer as an offering, some kind of object to signify a wish/prayer, and perhaps how those objects that stay behind serve as a reminder of what while the worshipper themselves have to leave. It made me think about relations and attachments we create to the objects we use and how they are imbued with spirituality vs those that we inherit not personally but through authoritative institutions of religion and hence seem so much more inaccessible. It also made me think of pieces of work/art that are common, alive and continuous like the one Gloria Anzaldua speaks about in *Borderlands, La Frontera* as opposed to those with finalised meaning and form, with final destinations (museums etc) hence becoming unreachable. I think even Mahreen and Bushra might find this interesting.

### Invoking Art

In the ethno-poetics and performance of the shaman, my people, the Indians, did not split the artistic from the functional, the sacred from the secular, art from everyday life. The religious, social and aesthetic purposes of art were all intertwined. Before the Conquest, poets gathered to play music, dance, sing and read poetry in open-air places around the *Xochitlacahuitl*, *el Arbol Florido*, Tree-in-Flower. (The *Coaxitlacuitl* or morning glory is called the snake plant and its seeds, known as *olotlhuqui*, are hallucinogenic.) The ability of story (prose and poetry) to transform the storyteller and the listener into something or someone else is shamanistic. The writer, as shape-changer, is a *nabual*, a shaman.

## Bushra

Some stuff...



One of my earlier drawings explores suns and splitting lands/waters, inspired by stories in the Quran. This poem by Khalil Gibran and Damien Rice's version of it was really moving back when I was 18? and even now. Safi, you probably know about this, but if not then I think you will enjoy it.

## BUSHRA SALEEM

Bushra is a researcher and illustrator, with a BArch. from Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture and an MA in Design: Spaces and Participation at Goldsmiths, University of London. Their work revolves around the everyday narratives of the city and draws inspiration from feminist and queer literature across the world/universe.

You are a map within a map, fragments connecting to create a whole. Through your evolving nature and interactive layers, you invite us to build connections, drawing meaning from poems sung, spoken, and written. You live in conversations past and future, freeing yourself from temporal and geographic bounds. You create space for coexistence, where my words become yours, and yours mine. You are no lover or enemy but a respected acquaintance—a companion in dialogue. Your presence reminds me of the possibilities of creating shared space, where thoughts and ideas merge into something new.

In your longing to map home, I see a lost lover searching.

You take me to Babel, where understanding comes not from translation but from the form of words as sound. You teach patience with the abstract, showing how form can reveal truths words alone cannot. Space has been on my mind.

The past two years have made me think deeply about how space, whether physical or metaphorical, shapes who we are.

I've been fascinated by the idea of creating space through poetry, of turning something intangible into something material.

Poetry has always been my way of making sense of the world, but you have shown me how materiality—the hem of a *gharara*,

for instance—can carry its own poetics. I see myself in your desire to map a home that doesn't exist in one place or time. I think of Babel, where translations strip away meaning, but where sound itself becomes a home.

This idea of finding belonging not in comprehension but in form resonates with me.

I've been learning to let go of absolutes, to embrace the coexistence of opposites.

This work feels like a lost lover—one trying to find its way back home. It has shown me how to sit with abstraction, to find beauty in the unfamiliar, and to listen to the sounds of foreign words as they shape a new understanding of what home can be.

## Home Yet?

How do you mourn home when its loss is either denied or imperceptible to those who never have to think about the possibility of such a loss?

Who has the right to mourn a home?

What does it mean to love, lose, leave, or return home?

How can mourning also be an act of imagining, making visible, recreating, reconnecting with, and even celebrating home?

How can the mourning of home connect our many homes?





#### *Mahreen*

Yashfeen, Layl, you are phenomenal storytellers. Your account of your journey to each others hometowns was like a safrnama. I was initially thinking of how you will be able to narrow down all the things you have brought in, but when I looked at as a safrnama it automatically folded all the little observations of your journeys.

Bushra, so moved by your project and I wish I was in karachi to talk more...during my asr namaz my mind kept going to you and I had to start the namaz over at least thrice.... I was also thinking about your mother and how unequipped we are as a society to deal with emotions. Your journey is also her journey in a lot of ways. When Renata spoke of how addressing religion is taboo in the art world I could completely relate to because it's something that I have been struggling with too. How to address a contemporary struggle to find God.... I feel sometimes we wrap it in a language or through concerns that are more familiar/accepted in the art/academia. Possibly to fit or for the lack of not knowing how to otherwise..

Safi, the complexity and layers of simply turning towards kaaba was so beautifully explained by you. This orientation moves beyond the time and space that we are conditioned to experience

Rabel, your conversations about the human suffering and violence made me think about this stunning documentary called Nostalgia for the Light by Patricio Guzman about Chile's Atacama Desert where two different groups of people are searching for two different things: astronomers finding answers about the history of cosmos and origins of life and on the other hand there's widows sifting through sand for years to find body parts of their loved ones dumped by Pinochet's regime, his military coup.

Considering how you are thinking about how to place yourself as a Muslim talking about the holocaust and other such catastrophes, the several abstract thoughts permeating this documentary will hopefully help you arrive somewhere in some way.

Laxmi is a theatre-based facilitator and Playback Theatre performer and has been improvising for a decade in and around Bangalore, India. She performs with The Adamant Eves (India's first all-female improv company) and is a co-founder of citylamps Playback Theatre. A graduate in Interdisciplinary Humanities from the Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, she has facilitated spontaneous theatre-based processes and training since 2014.

**LAXMI PRIYA**

#### **SHEETALA BHAT**

Sheetala is a researcher, playwright, and theatre artist from Karnataka, India. She is the author of *Performing Self, Performing Gender*, published by Manipal University Press, as well as several articles. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Ottawa.



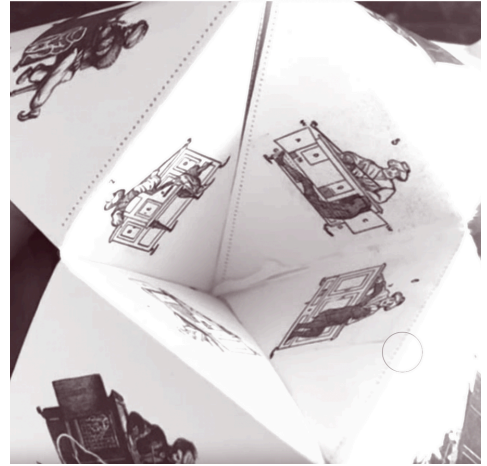
You show what wonder and beauty emerges from relation, and from the comfort of the home called pronunciation. Thank god for what you could pronounce and the languages in which you love and desire. And thank you for the recognition of the turk beneath, so that we can start dealing with our own stuff, finally. In your company, so much else regarding orientalism or the visual or the image seems so vapid, allowing me a strange kind of delight in detaching from the din of the academic banter around our people and our bodies and who looked at them and turned them to stone.

While the scholars drone, I clutch you,  
dear fortune-teller, in my hands,  
hoping someone will say,  
come, come, fight with me.  
But they keep killing us,  
and destroying our homes.  
Are all fortune-tellers  
story-tellers?  
And the other way around?  
Is all memory prayer?  
Hey, is Gaza aniconic?  
Will those who hate us kill us  
because they don't understand  
what we are saying?  
Will we just giggle when they do that?

*A Suite of Aniconic Maps and Manners* is a collection of scenarios, each foregrounding or backgrounding "aniconism," the Islamic ban on the figural image, notably images of the body. The stories illustrate the iconic and aniconic elements of narratives from Islamic philosophy, theology, natural sciences, and politics. The suite is appended by a letter to "aniconism," which has been a sustained interlocutor in my thought and writing for many years—as I continue to ask more questions of it than it provides me clear answers

## A Suite of Aniconic Maps and Matters

The text is accompanied by an image titled "A Story-Teller (After Walter Benjamin and Wolfgang von Kempelen)." Here, these stories are embedded onto a child's paper fortune teller, embellished with images of the famed Mechanic Turk, the chess playing icon created by von Kempelen in 1770. The construction, a re-mapping of the text, toys with Benjamin's emphasis on the Turk's inside an outside (where the outside is historical materialism and the inside is theology), with the concepts of the *zahir* and the *batin* (visible and invisible, apparent and concealed) in Islamic aesthetics, and with notions of the inside and outside of texts. It asks the viewer—the seer, the player—to take a chance with the texts, to perform the act of reading, tangibly, and to explore what's hidden beneath the images we deem iconic.





Jehān'ara

Zineb Sedira

Work, Zineb Sedira

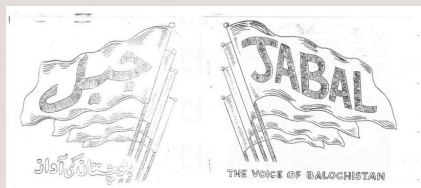


Maybe we can watch this?



Layl

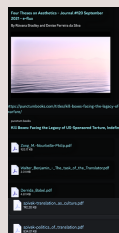
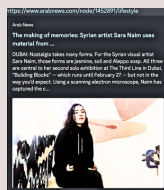
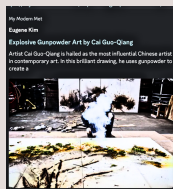
Re: Dr. Asma's *Manshoor*/people's history: Jabal by BPLF



Safi

sharing links from the discussion

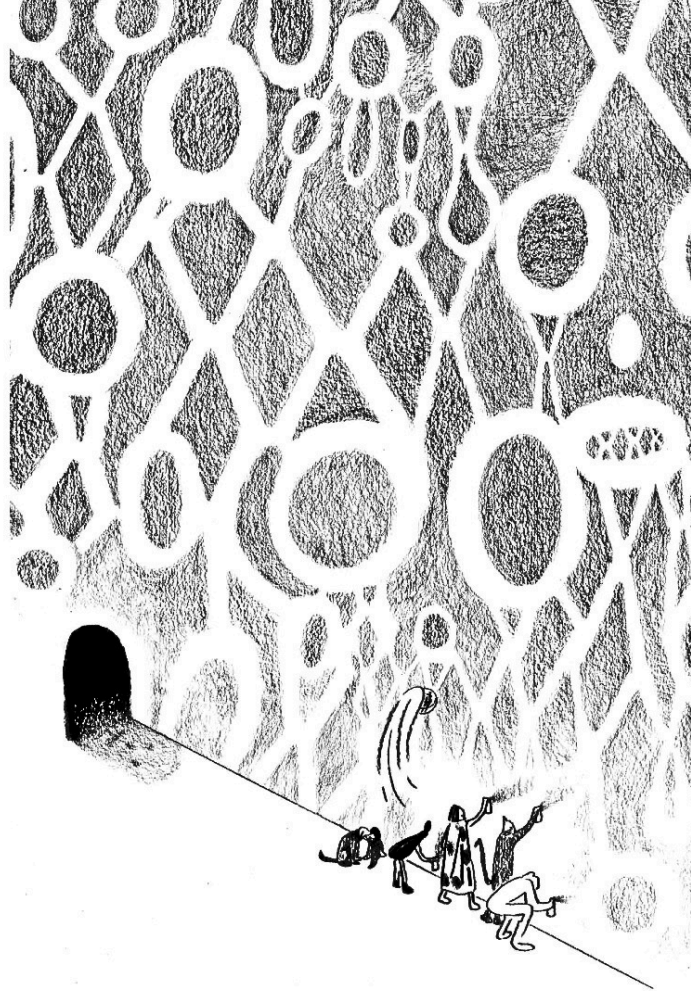
Layl:  
What just got  
mentioned



## SAFI ALSEBAI

Safi is a writer from Little Rock, Arkansas. His concerns lie in materialist inquiries into form, narrative, and image—drawing from traditions as disparate as modern political theory, medieval Islamic thought, contemporary critical theory, medical humanities, and (more recently) southern gothic literature and the New Narrative movement. His previous work has explored aesthetic and legal-political genealogies of anatomical dissection, and the various untimely counter-modernities present within medieval Islamic aniconism across various temporalities. He was an associate editor of *Falsework*, *Smalltalk: Political Education*, *Aesthetic Archives*, and *Recitations of a Future in Common* (Common Tern Works and Folio Books, 2021) and is a member of Hic Rosa Collective. He currently studies medicine at the University of Arkansas for the Medical Sciences and received his B.A. in Politics, Ethics & Aesthetics from Bard College at Simon's Rock.

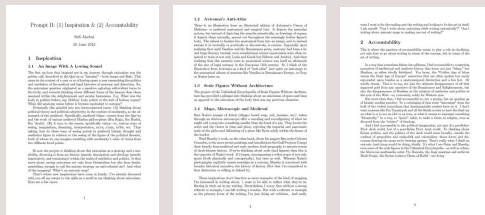
**Crater, Carte, Cartograph**





Safi

My response to today's question was over the character limit for discord, so I'm adding it as an attachment.

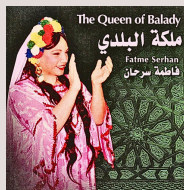


The invoking of lost lovers also reminded me today of some couplets from a poem by the medieval Maghreb poet, contemporary of Ibn Khaldun (and early theorist of plagues and germs), Lisan al-Din ibn Al-Khatib.

My tormentor has come in the fog of dusk, Like a pearly planet on the horizon And I said: "You've enlightened me, good visitor! Weren't you afraid of the watchmen on the road?" And she responded, teary-eyed, before me: "Those who ride the waves do not fear drowning!"

[And of course "tormentor" here means "lover"]

Sung here by Fatme Serhan, a popular Egyptian folk singer.



Bushra



## CRATER INVERTIDO

COOPERATIVA CRATER INVERTIDO (Mexico) is a space of articulations between artistic practices and collective processes to create common imaginaries. They self manage a multidisciplinary house-workshop in Mexico City, inhabited by a risograph printing press and an experimental radio, among other tools for dialogue, encounters, and self-publishing. The co-op is also nourished by a variety of decentralised processes related to care and defence of territories, biodiversity, shared learning, and commonality/ies. Among others, Crater Invertido has participated in the Conundrum of imagination (Vienna 2017), Gwangju Biennale (2016), Sonsbeek '16 (The Netherlands 2016), the 56th Venice Biennale (2015), the Jakarta Biennale (2015), and the recent documenta.



## **Black Girls on Mars**

*Bushra*

In one of her books, bell hooks said that she was too exhausted to fight and not too exhausted to let go. My main drive comes from this need to be audacious. Maps signify a place and I am thinking about a non place, some where transcendent, relying on magical realism? (exaggerations within sufi kalaams, quranic verses, moon splitting into two, river splitting into two, the act of looking/turning towards the sky ibrahim looking at the sun and stars for god, "we are closer to you than your jugular vein" questions everything we know about sacred and profane and which patriarchal organisations decide who gets to believe/love whom) To exist outside of a binary (language, borders, cities etc) and understanding queerness as love and something thats all encompassing. Thinking about words like freaks, dragons (Baldwin) and staying with trouble, sticking to it (Haraway) to better understand my place amongst all these concrete structures.

With a practice that revolves around illustration (with written word sometimes) I feel accountable/responsible to do what I can do best, which is tell stories. Give form to oral histories, cartographies, share the knowledge that finds it way to me and tell what i know. writing/drawing from life, to build kinship by not falling into the western penchant for hyper individualism. Thinking of maps as relational and shared, even if the journeys we are all talking about are different? They still all come together, being tied to the same questions of oppression, hate, love and home. Telling the truth because love can not exist without justice, love as an Al-Haq, "I am Truth," in Mansur Al-Hallaj speaking of a veil separating us from god, again the imagery and symbolism taps into magical realism. This also signifies queerphobia as something that strengthens the Western (colonised) reductive perception of Islam, keeping in mind the studies around *ijtehad*.

Maps as portals/ as altars, places of arriving towards or moving away from depicting the dichotomies we exist within (andar/bahir, unholy/holy, sacred/profane, visible/invisible), ironically enough, maps suggest giving some thing a place/name/coordinates/location but they are also used to brutally erase and anti colonial mapping is a beautiful endeavor to somehow navigate this erasure and plop our own lighthouses wherever we please.

## LESLEY-ANN BROWN

Lesley-Ann has had a deep passion for writing since she was four years old and accidentally typed the word *roti* on her mother's typewriter – a word that means "bread" in her culture, and seemed to underscore how vital this skill would be in her life. Brown's writing career continued in high school when she experienced the feeling of accomplishment bestowed upon a writer when her work was published. Her story, "Take Time to Listen," about a friend who discloses their sexuality to the other, was published in the school paper. Later, she and a host of other high school activists created *Spew*, a zine for the youth chapter of the War Resister's League, further cementing her passion for publishing – a field she would officially enter while in college. Brown went on to work for Welsh Publishing while studying writing at the New School in Manhattan. While at the New School, she studied under Jane Lazarre and Suzanne Lori Parks. At Welsh, she honed her commercial writing. After graduating from college, she assisted Marie D. Brown of Marie Brown Associates – a literary legend– and freelanced for magazines such as *Vibe*, *The Source*, and *One World* magazines. Once she landed in Denmark, she focused on education and continued to publish in anthologies. she also began her critically-acclaimed blog, *Blackgirl on Mars* in 2005. She has two published books, one of which was recently nominated for "The Purple Prize."

Did you know that all our biology schoolbooks in primary school featured the hibiscus as the perfect flower to anatomise for the study of plant life and reproduction? I have been thinking a lot about the travel and afterlife of these motifs, the examples in our english-medium textbooks, whether printed in Singapore or in England. The rambutan was another of those specimens. I could always feel the pricks in my throat when I saw a picture of it in the book. But no one spoke of the bougainvillea? Too papery? Too fragile? Not much of an anatomy lesson there. Similarly, I believe that colonisers have used our bodies for anatomy lessons of a different kind, maybe the Mutter Museum in Philadelphia, since it is clear that our medical students don't find the bodies they must treat in the books they must read. Are we the hibiscuses? What plant would we all be? Which flowers on Meghan Markle's wedding gown? Maybe you, dear Hibiscus, you superheroine, you could find a companion there, and in a science fictive or surrealist twist, find a way to liberate them?

Your symbols—the hibiscus, arrow, chain, maize, and Afro hair—construct a powerful narrative of resilience and belonging. The hibiscus speaks of healing and wholeness, uniting masculine and feminine qualities. The arrow reveals the strength of women as warriors, breaking traditional roles to protect their communities. You are bound by a chain that separates and creates illusions of division, much like the colonizers' imposed boundaries. Yet, you persist. Trees offer nurture, standing at the intersection of earth and sky, a quiet counterpoint to your struggles. Even your features, your Afro hair, root you in the land—belonging embodied in your very being.

You rise with the morning dew, leaping and gathering, connected to small friends like ladybirds and butterflies. You sing and look to the horizon, pulling others with you. Together, we could dismantle colonial projects, revealing native truths to a world eager for healing.

Colonialism's chains have shaped so much of what we see around us, but they haven't broken us. These symbols—the hibiscus, the arrow, the Afro hair—remind me that strength comes from within. I've lived in a world where identity is both a shield and a target. The hibiscus, with its merging of feminine and masculine qualities, echoes the balance I've sought within myself. And the arrow? It feels like the determination I've had to muster to resist, to fight for what is mine.

Yet, I also see the chains—the ones that seek to separate, to impose false boundaries on land and on people. These chains remind me of Balochistan, of settlers arriving and taking, and of the erasure of histories and identities that once defined us. I feel the weight of these losses, but I also see hope in the coconuts, the trees, and the land itself—nurturing, offering reconciliation if we are willing to care for it.

I think of this work as a guide, showing me how to navigate colonial scars and uncover native truths. It's a lover—one who knows the land and is trying to return to it, just as I am. Together, we can dismantle these chains, one link at a time.

## Coloniser, Eraser

The Swahili phrase  
"Utawala Unafuta Utabulisho" means "Coloniser  
erases one's identity."

This project shows the Kanga that women wear in  
Zanzibar, constituted with combat print.

Citizens are the real warriors, protecting their  
identity and not allowing the colonisers to erase it.  
The hibiscus symbolises the beauty of a country that  
gives cover to the ruthlessness and cruelty  
of colonisers (skull and snake).

Merely a façade.  
Just like all of the country's wealth stolen,  
leaving us to be seen as bare and worthless to those  
who glance our way.





*Safi*

"And if representation has to do with re-presenting something, what is it we repeat over and over but our sense of home, which may become a very abstract thing indeed. She imagined another sign. It read: Representation—A Home Away from Home." —Lynne Tillman, "Madame Realism Asks: What's Natural About Painting?"

*Layl*

Inspiration; On repeating what has been said, what I know has been said, as being reunited once you meet something from the past ; a song by my fathers cousin, here he sings about interior Sindh/androoni Sindh as 'this inside that you call inside, this insideness stretches all the way from Ketī bandar to kashmor', the beloved, lover, as land, as Sindh is repeated in the song as with many 'nationalistic' songs on Sindh which is repeated, in the name of my fathers hometown pīryaloi, where pīrya is beloved and loi is place. Maroara sangira poet Zahid Shaikh Sing by Sarmad Sindh i

Accountability: Is to hold accountable, to discipline, is to narrate something, to reject the narration of the other? how can accountability happen not against, but with, but without disciplining the self, taming the self and not taming the other, disciplining the other. Thinking about black abolitionists, about abolishing police, prisons, and how one can approach that when one makes art about the filial about hegemonic conceptions of space including mapping and borders. What can that bring in this process of making an anti map? How can an anti map be with? can it?

"this has been said before' but not as an invocation to be quiet but as an invitation to say it again.

## **ADHD BOSSY**

A born Zanzibari, who loves fashion intertwined with art and culture of Zanzibar. Works mostly with digital art. Chose the art route after studying science. Enjoys being creative in fashion and art which helps ADHD and an introvert personality express itself through art. Spends hours doing a project over and over until feeling happy with the result.

## **The Kinetic Weaves into the Static**

Retracing a Kurta, which is a keepsake of my grandfather, led me to the embroidery culture of the Balochistan region. Embroidery is a prominent craft of the Baloch, which has remained an important indicator of its identity. Through this research, I explored the communal relations with this craft at the center.







### *Samra*

Inspiration: understanding of my pain - to detach my emotions and my pain from the violence I experienced indirectly, not to get a rush out of that pain but to understand and use it to inform my process. Accountability: I have been thinking about how to position myself in this process considering my personal experience with violence, but the fact that I am not a direct victim of it can I still call myself a victim? Perhaps I can, but it is not about me. I don't want to assume a position where I own the trauma as something only I can talk about or that it makes me a better person and that's what I feel accountable for. To not let it become about me, but about the direct victims of violence who were failed by the state, the government, the authorities.

### *Mahreen*

Vine Deloria Jr talks about "liberation" through "rearrangement", "reexamination" and "reconstruction" of knowledge. I have used desire to enter my work, at that stage it was a desire for owning land. In order to understand and release myself from it I deconstruct. Time and space and the many ways of experiencing them allows me the liberation Deloria talks about to rearrange, reexamine and reconstruct.

Stephanie Saade "Encounters of the first and last particles of dust" is a map or anti map where she has traced 18 years of her life. The above piece is the carpet from her bedroom that she has embroidered tracing over the stains

### *Layl*

For Safi:



## **ANUM SANAULLAH**

Silence and presence are integral to the universal flow of life and, as a creative practitioner, Anum's journey has been about transmuting the aforementioned lived experiences through her art.

You are a map of hope and memory, each element layered with meaning. Orange peels and handmade toys evoke joy in creation, while napkins—simple yet essential—mark daily rituals. Your stamps locate home, and your presence carries the image of a grandmother beside you, holding space even as she is supported.

I feel your essence in the scent of burnt leaves and the cycle of life they represent. As leaves decay into fungi, they nourish new growth, embodying the symbiosis you offer. You are both friend and traitor, exploring the intricate dance of memory and hope, connection and separation. Through you, I tread on dead leaves, crunching beneath a purple sky. You guide me out of oblivion, into a dark but starry night. You are a hard but necessary companion, revealing joy and grief, and teaching us to find meaning in the spaces between.

Hope and memory have become inseparable for me. In the smell of burnt leaves, the sound of dead leaves crunching underfoot, I've found a symbiosis that feels like a part of me. My memories are often tied to home—to a house in Karachi, with its mango trees, its ever-playing television, and its constant hum of life. These memories ground me but also leave me longing for what was. They are both comfort and grief.

Creating for joy alone is something I've rediscovered recently. The act of making toys, of using orange peels and scraps of napkins, has reminded me that not everything must serve a purpose beyond itself. Joy is its own purpose.

At the same time, I've learned to see memory as a source of hope—one that stands parallel to grief.

Together, they shape my understanding of the world.

If you are my guide, you take me to a purple sky, a space outside a grave that I keep teetering on the edge of. It's a hard place, where the night is both dark and starry, terrifying but necessary. I've learned to walk that space with open eyes, to let myself feel the crunch of leaves, the weight of memory, and the light of hope breaking through.

Remembering my grandmother *Hadji*'s journey  
out of Turkey to find refuge  
I imagine her making toys from branches  
creating hair with orange peels.

## Parallel Journeys

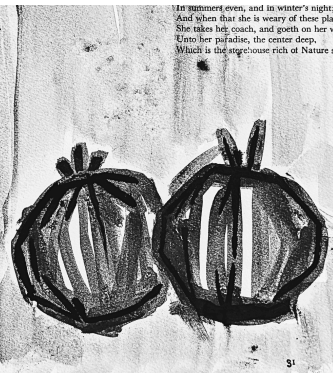
My own journey littered  
with the curse of the mundane and the godless,  
furiously stabbing  
the needle into blue-stained fingers  
with the currents of my shame.

Lulling ourselves into a trance of forgetting.  
Looking for food and nourishment in all places,  
seeking a different survival.  
Looking to the outside to feel/feed the inside.  
Half-alive, eyes closed,  
pockets filled with nuts and patched turmeric  
teabags. Mixing memory and hope,  
reaching back to days of joy,  
juicy apples without end.  
Journey of the undeserving,  
with her by my side.

weaving poetry, nature, memory  
into it out into repetitive circles,  
adds it up by shadows of vain wishes.

different meanings for  
me and my grand mother  
when we shared so  
many spaces as "home"

56



57

In summers even, and in winter's night;  
And when that she is weary of these play  
She takes her coach, and goes on her way  
Unto her paradise, the center deep,  
Which is the storehouse rich of Nature's

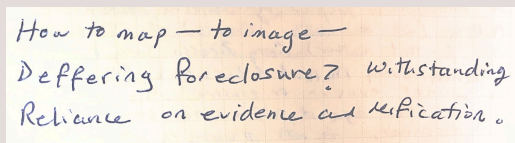
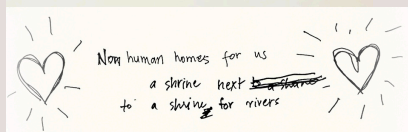
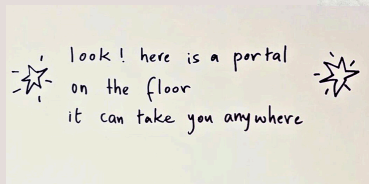
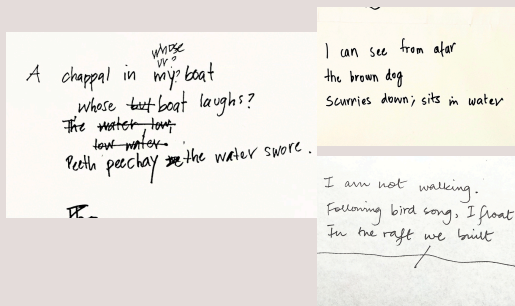


Sheetala  
Was there a prompt? For haiku?

Bushra  
No prompt, just 5,3,5 words on where you are at, in your observations, work direction.

Mahreen  
Would be great see them.. whoever is comfortable in sharing

(and folks shared)



## VALERIE FANARJIAN

My senses are by turns caressed and assaulted by everything around me: tulips, shoes piled in the mud, news reporters' voices droning over floods, snake like mass exits, faces of fear and longing in shadows, in my head. The music of the broken washes over me and I remember a different trauma, one where only endless sweeps of red paint over pages and pages of pledges and apologies begin to erase the madness. The beauty of silence, and its accompanying terror move my hands into prayer. Cleansed of dishonorable thoughts, I fill pages with confessions, accusations, scraps of napkins that once caught the dried seeds of apples, and desperate promises that are unintelligible to anyone but the most self-righteous.

**Repainted**







### *Yashfeen*

Inspiration; During one of our trail-offs, there was a moment at the sukkur barrage when we were sitting at the river bank, drawing, and there were all these bird noises. The noises were something we stepped into, a chasm of trees swaying in the wind, birds chirping, insects buzzing, the soundscape of the bank differentiated so starkly from the soundscapes a few 6-7 feet above it, on the side. Trying to be cautious not to otherize “nature” as some kind of saviour and not a force that we belong with and that which exists with us, sharing space and momentary existence with creatures and beings other than exclusively land and machine; small creatures, wordless creatures, unseeable creatures, creatures living under the mud, under the earth, creatures on the sideline, wandering creatures, stepping in and out of place, brought back the idea of elemental mediation and relation. As someone who has embodied quiet/ness unwittingly since childhood, I’ve experienced language in roundabout ways, ways outside of being in a certain spoken language and exchange. For me there are ways in which language sits and steepens and blips and goes missing and stay missing for days and is rested, and ways in which I feel it is scripted. My inspiration is in thinking about these moments of contact, and of meeting that is not linear.

### *Mahreen*

I’ve been reading *How Forests Think* by Eduardo Kohn. It delves into relationality and could complement your reflections on visual and textual interplay, Yashfeen.

### *Safi*

There was a conversation today on zoom about archiving conversations. *Falsework*, *Smalltalk* came up.



### *Rads*

Just sharing for posterity.

I heard fragments of what Sheetal said, about putting together the words of different poets which come together as an independent semantic map. I am wondering how early we can digitise the map we made in the workshop and continue it digitally with all of our participants, just to coalesce the conversations on zoom, discord and the physical map in the workshop. Through Miro may be some of its tools are very similar to the tanglemap (mindmap) we can draw, add images, etc

## VLADIMIR SHCHERBAK

Vladimir was born and raised in Yalta, USSR. He received a BFA and Specialist degree in monumental art from M. Boichuk Kiev State Academy of Decorative-Applied Art and Design in Kiev, Ukraine and his MFA in studio art from Michigan State University, East Lansing. His work has been exhibited at venues nationally and internationally, including museums and galleries in the Ukraine, USA, Sweden, Russia, Georgia, and Kuwait. His current art practice examines relationships between memory and space through the genre of the landscape and figurative art. He is an Assistant Professor of Art at Al Akhawayn University. Before coming to Morocco, he lived and taught in the USA and Kuwait

alizeh | we are both taking a walk for a language, in search of a greeting.

yashfeen | we are both lost lovers, and our mothers are our lost lovers.

alizeh | we are negotiating burdens and borders.

yashfeen | there is a round shrine floating in a lake  
named after a woman and many other  
places about the lives and experiences of sindhi women

| noori's shrine | moomal's mari |  
sateen jo astaan.

alizeh | I want to visit my nani's grave, and the place where everyone gathered when I was young.

yashfeen | my mother and father arrived in Karachi,  
so when I was born, the arrival was in  
the past, had only happened,  
and I was to live in its aftermath | going to their hometowns  
was going 'back', when I had never had a back.

alizeh | it's really hot | should we go to the lake? | what does google say? | Are you hungry?

yashfeen | sometimes I think that my mother never arrived |  
she was never in this city,  
but  
always going backwards | this is why she is still looking to arrive |  
this is why we are both prepared for  
flight or refuge  
or flight or refuge  
or flight or refuge

## Putth, Looking Backwards

alizeh | have spent so much time in the car on these roads | always in transit, point A to point B | always  
looked out at the sides of these roads, beyond the fields, out to the sky, and tried to capture them in my  
mind's eye but always failed.

let's stop and draw here.





Layl

<http://ofstruggle.com/>

Of Struggle Pahwaro Jabal is the name of the mountain in the Karachi township of Gadap which once spanned over 3000 acres. The name *Pahwaro* is made of two Sindhi words. *Pah* means *musibat*, (struggle), and *waro* means *wale* (of). When Sassui crossed this mountain in search of Punnu she had to face many difficulties, which is why it came to be called Pahwaro.

<http://gardenamongflames.de/>

Rads

Just jotting this down:

Navigating the physical/digital forms as a labyrinth, allowing multiple readings

Layl

This is the first drawing on the trip where I tried to map the gradation of the shaded tents, the sand, the rocks and then the water on Keenjhar lake, while noting down some text on the rocks there and just the bizarreness of being a girl with a camera 'documenting'. The camera is often used for surveillance and has its own history of coloniality, this is also why I felt more drawn to sketch instead of document and take pictures as a secondary thing (don't know if that changes anything).



Yashfeen

I wrote earlier about inspiration and not accountability, I am kinda slow, and still ruminating on the question of accountability. To myself, of course, the space I exist in and what echoes in and out of it.

Accountable to whatever I'm in conversation with that feels reciprocal/produces reciprocity.

Permissible to carry in my suitcase; decision-making, creating anew even within the old.

Ali is a writer, architect and artist interested in questions related to space, politics, and gender. Ali's work is an attempt to express the psychospatial aspects of the experience of gender and being. From a decolonial and materialist perspective, she seeks to think about how collective memories are made and imagined. Women, memories, monuments, landscapes are recurring motifs in her work. Her pedagogical process focuses on connecting different modalities such as activism, research, art and architecture together. She has been involved in political organizing work related to feminism, housing, and ecology. She was an artist resident at *The Many Headed Hydra's House of Kal Karachi* (District Berlin) in 2021, where she developed her research on gendered parks and neoliberal development in the coastal areas and peripheries of Karachi. Her current work is looking at mapping and cartography with respect to Sindh, migration, gender and public spaces. She graduated with a BA in Architecture from Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in 2019 and was part of the curatorial team for the Karachi Biennale 2022.

**LAYL ALI**

**YASHFEEN TALPUR**

Yashfeen is an architect, visual artist, and writer, whose work attempts to recover and feel through ways of relating that have otherwise been obscured or lost. Tracing her way back and forth along lines of lineages, borders, identities, cities, and ecologies, her techniques revolve around writing in, forging, recovering, and connecting the white, marred spaces of colonial rupture, both on and off paper. In her work she explores the location of identity, family, love, and belonging in the family home, a space marked with a permanent sense of loss and losing, and goes on a journey of walking, discovering, and drawing with a friend to discover new meanings. Based in Karachi, she graduated with a BA in Architecture from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in 2020, and has since been developing her artistic practice along with teaching.

My map is called *Sonance* and it charts the course of the Indus River from the north as it passes down south exploring themes of (a) displacement, (b) loss, (c) conflict and (d) ecological disaster. This work will be added to and what you see here is the first chapter. There are two texts that form the foundation of this work.

First, is a newspaper story that I read a few years ago about women that drowned in the river Indus and the locals alleged that at least one woman was possessed by Djinn which is why she had jumped. The other text is the Indus Water Basin Treaty between India and Pakistan which established the sharing of the Eastern Rivers (for India's predominant use) and the Western Rivers (for Pakistan's predominant use). While Partition is often viewed as dividing Hindus and Muslim and carving the Indian sub-continent, Partition also resulted in the division of the Indus Basin which is an integrated geography and this has had implications for the development of both India and Pakistan and their peoples.

This artwork is aimed at bringing attention to the struggles of rural women along the banks of the mighty river Indus, and challenges the post-colonial senses of belonging that continue to impact these communities. The installation uses the body as a map of embodied experiences of these women, while drawing on the traditional patchwork quilt (*Rilli*) making technique as a powerful symbol of women reclaiming their space and coming together in harmony in a communal effort to resist patriarchal structures.

One of the human figures is made from soft and colourful textured *Rilli*, which has been sewn together.

The other figure is made from metal washers that have been welded together.

Both the processes of making a *Rilli* and welding metal washers to create a body can be considered representative of embodied experiences.

In fact, the patchwork quilt method used to create a *Rilli* is an ode to groups of women in rural Sindh who sit together, telling stories and reliving memories that form the sum of their individual experiences.

The process of welding and joining metal washers together to shape individuals is also a metaphor for how the post-colonial body has been hardened and moulded into shape by the tribulations of colonization.

I also draw inspiration from the ways in which folklore and rumours shape the narratives and identities of women in these communities, and how these stories can, in turn, inspire folklore that is based on the ways women find their identity, freedom, and escape from patriarchal post-colonial structures. In relation to the Indus Water Basin Treaty and its impact on the lives of women in the region (on both sides of the border), I aim to create a space for the voices and experiences of women in these communities to be heard and acknowledged, highlighting their strength, resilience, and resistance.

Through this artwork, I also hope to inspire conversations around post-colonisation and the reclamation of agency and belonging. By using the *Rilli* as a communal symbol of embodied experiences and drawing on the power of folklore, my work seeks to disrupt colonial structures that have traditionally silenced the voices of women in these communities.

## Sonance







Fizza



These are some of the drawings I did today. The idea of accountability comes from owning myself and finding that centre within before I speak on the outside. The process was quite cathartic in a way that from unsettling of things was happening within and I used the medium to simple decant as conversations with coffee.



The map began to disentangle a bit of what I felt was earlier walled and as the whole idea of rupture engaging with memory emerged, i was able to see certain words as both nouns and verbs. I had entered the residency from a place of chaos and a lot sifting and peeling has been happening to un-form, un set and de wall some of the things that I had entered with.. really as a process of decanting.

Since Zoya and I are collaborating we started with a ton of conversations and quite organically ended up sitting silently in front of each other locking eye, forgetting that we had started with inspiration of Abramovic's idea of the Artist is present. We seemed to be quite in sync earliar and thought of our space as the meeting point and were focusing on the intensity of emotion as time and space and realised on day 3 of the residency we decided to quarantine from each other and focus on our individual process.



## RABEL AKHUND

Rabel is a graduate of University College London and an M.Phil. Candidate at the Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture. He is a visual artist with a focus on installation sculptures and is interested in exploring the ecological narratives that affect bodies as part of larger national and transnational collectives. Through his work, he is also interested in looking for meaning in our existence by contemplating the infinite.

## Lost Youth

The class assignment was to paint a figure in an interior. What interior could possibly be mine?

Even though I did not run from bullets and bombs, we still have no home left to which to go back. The interior is not only physical but a place of safety for our psyches. And when home is destroyed and hope of creation stolen, what is left are the remnants of burned down homes remembered scarcely in the blur of escape, and hearts still aching, yearning for belonging. Gas still lighting, orange groves still catching fire, disintegrating. The remembrance of bloodshed overpowering, hiding beauty and vitality of a once so colorful land. When replaced narratives begin their creation and continue for 74 years so that families continue running from scars of the mind. How has so much time passed? What began as a six year old child running for his life after the creation of the Israeli state, waiting to go home, became a life given to his child in a refugee camp upon realizing home no longer existed. At six years old, he begins working for his life, earning his place in a failing economy, until finally, in search of survival, he then gives life to a third child who understands at six years old the gift of a life spent comfortably. And when brought to the land of the free, beauty was no longer hers, yet again defined and remolded by corrupt expectations. The desire for blonde hair and blue eyes, skin not quite so yellow, a body befalling beauty as was described. Three generations later, and more people have been forced into hiding. No longer only running from physical violence, but running trying to find safety of home in the mind.





### Zoya

These are the drawings and maps that I am exploring in conversation with Fizza. I began with thinking about a point of meeting - arrival and departure, a place where the land meets the sea, where we began thinking and how our exchange has progressed from there.



### Yashfeen

Something I started doing today. Repeating phrases from one of our companion poems.



### Zoya

I have also been repeated the words of Fehmida Riaz's poems and making new sentences. This play with words is an interesting commonality.

### Layl

I've been thinking about trying to use Fehmida Riaz's poem "Aqleema" (the sister of Cain and Abel) and connect to Persephone the wanderer!! Especially because it talks about a *naqsh* (mark/map) on a rock.

## DIANA YASEEN

Diana is a multimedia artist, primarily working in the visual arts of painting, drawing, and collaging. She also works with written language, both integrating it into her artwork and writing poetry, short stories, and essays. As a third-culture kid, questions pertaining to sense of home, belonging, and alienation overwhelm much of her artwork. Many other questions influence her work, especially in terms of the conjunction between history and the construction of self and how genocidal violence has morphed through generations

When this residency began, the conversations began with forming a new coherent thought  
about mapping new ways to think about lost lovers and their love.  
It slowly morphed into a space where I could question my own thought process returning to the  
genealogy of the ongoing themes of my work  
Keeping in mind victims of violence, unidentified bodies, and unmarked graves,  
I began to understand the several ways I could make a restorative gesture where personhood was  
denied, brutally, glibly, to the humans in life and in death,  
in presence as in absence.  
When fellow humans, the system, the state, fail us and our lovers and beloved, questions arise.  
What does our memory mean to those who have wronged us?  
How do they remember what they have done?  
Can we send quiet reminders of the destruction they inflicted on so many lives?  
At the same time, the work found its way to this soft reminder for our lovers  
that exist without a body, to fumble through how to talk about them.

**Wajd**







### Layl

For those who don't know, this is a poem by a Pakistani writer, Fehmida Riaz, titled "Aqleema," referring to Cain and Abel's (Habil and Qabil) story of committing the first violence over the sister named Aqleema (by determining who is going to marry Aqleema). Just like in persephone the wanderer, Louise Glück reframes the myth by asking if Persephone has any agency, or situating her as a wanderer, in this poem, Fehmida Riaz wonders where Aqleema's place is in the myth, and if her mind is useful. Aqleema's head seems to be something everyone - Habil, Qabil, and perhaps even the voice of god has glossed over.



### Valerie

My fragmented history of "home" usually includes women sewing—needles, pins, thread, hands, and fabric. My grandmother fled her home in Turkey in 1914, and my mother and aunts grew up in Syria and Beirut. Their labor clothed us and sustained our homes.

### Jehān'ara

Hello, this is Asma. I'm returning to the assignment I was given two Tuesdays ago. I thought I'd work on it during my plane ride, and I'll be doing free writes on this tomorrow. For my artist collaborators, please take a look. (Shares link to Miro board.)

### Bushra:

One of the earlier drawings of suns and splitting lands and waters when I think about stories in the Quran, etc.



Samra can best be described as someone who loves working with paper, but more formally, she is a visual artist and a sculptor. She earned a BFA in sculpture and miniature painting from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture with a distinction in her thesis. Samra's work is influenced by her experience of violence in Karachi at a young age. Karachi is a city that thrives on its monstrous disparities and is fraught with staggering contradictions. She considers the victims of violence and unidentified dead bodies. These people didn't only die, they also lost their identities and were turned into riddles. Her work recognizes them, their absence, and the violence most of them endured while making sense of my own loss.

## SAMRA MANSOOR

Samra aims to visualize the grief, loss, anger, and other psychic scars resulting from armed conflicts or civil violence, simultaneously providing a means for reconciliation with loss and remembering. Samra tries to give form to the said themes with the use of commonplace materials like paper, sand, rose petals, and watercolors. The fine, loose sand, the opacity, and the fragility of the paper and watercolor have unintentionally helped her to achieve what she calls "a quietness and softness in my works." This quality aims to and translates into a restorative practice: offering, if just for a moment, a personhood to those lost, murdered, unidentified and oppressed, encouraging viewers to reflect on the meaning those lives hold.

## Rezoning the Dead

You stand as both witness and subject, capturing the transformations of a shrine and the lineage it carries. Your before-and-after photographs compel us to reckon with the decaying neglect of what once was—a living heritage, unruly and messy, alive. Yet, in your renewal, a bright red paint and a renovated facade, I hear the silent scream you invoke, the building's cry for a history being concealed and ignored.

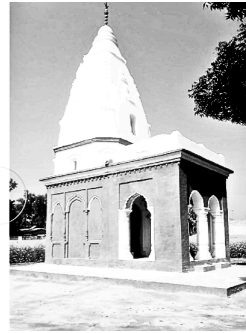
You are not just a shrine but a being, questioning the changes imposed upon you. I imagine you wondering, “What am I now?” You have been renamed, repainted, and reassigned a purpose, while your family—spread across the subcontinent—remains out of reach.

You reflect the cell of a body—small, vital, and connected to something larger. Through you, I am forced to think about the layers of ritual, geography, and transformation. Together, we might explore the complexities of a sacred space—its use, its culture, and its life beyond architecture.

The past two years have taught me that change is a double-edged sword. Watching the shrine transform has made me acutely aware of how heritage can be reshaped, repainted, and almost erased under the guise of renewal. My relationship with sacred spaces has deepened. I sense a loss not just in the architectural changes but in the culture that such transformations leave behind. My fear is often this: I approach shrines romantically, impulsively, and without enough grounding in their histories. And yet, I've come to understand that this romanticism is also a yearning to reconnect—to piece together fragments of an identity lost amidst the decay and the bright red paint.

I have learned to ask questions. How can I engage more deeply, more thoughtfully? Can I reconcile the ahistorical approach I sometimes take with a more rigorous understanding of Sindh, of its rituals and its resonance? My plan now is to study, to reflect, and to create from a place of knowledge rather than assumption. This work, this shrine, feels like a lost lover to me—altered by external forces but still carrying echoes of the bond we once shared. If I could, I would journey to the offices, the hands, and the decisions that transformed it—to understand the forces that drove this change.

کس طرح جاگیردارنہ، مذہبی اور روحانی اشرافیہ کی طاقت کو نئی شکل دی گئی اور کیسے تقویت ملی برطانوی کلونٹیل ازم کو سندھ میں؟۔ میرا کام انہیں نقشوں کی تفتیش ہے۔ یہ نقشے بتاتے ہیں کہ کہ برطانوی کلونٹیل ازم کے بعد ریاست نے کیسے کٹر خیالات کی حمایت کی جہاں معنی فکس ہوگئی، جس کے نتیجے میں کٹر رائے نے زور پکڑا۔ لیکن سندھ کی فقیری شاعری نے ایسی کٹر رائے کو روکے رکھا۔ وہ شاعری ہی ڈھال تھی جس نے عدم برداشت اور تشدد کو عام ہونے سے روکے رکھا۔ میرا کام بھی اس شاعری کا متبادل عکاس ہے جو حکمران، مذہبی اور نام نہاد صوفی روحانی اشرافیہ کے عصری نظریات کو سمجھنے میں مدد فراہم کرتا ہے، جہاں برسوں سے چلتے ہوئے کٹر بیانیے کو سوال میں بدل دیتا ہے۔



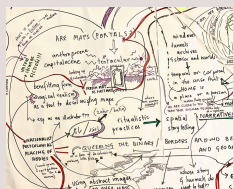


## Bushra

Deciphering *mihrabs*, the circulation or a *tawaaf* around the *kaabah* (walking as subjugation as being one with god/earth). Also, olive branches and other fruits and flowers mentioned in the quran because I am characterising botany and plants in my drawings.



Thinking about prayer as an invitation to an altar, a place, thinking about the body as a location (specifically thinking about an ayah in the Quran where God tells us that they're closer to us than our jugular vein) and placing that sense of longing/and belonging within the body. Coming back to the prayer mat as a first map and mother as the first archive.



Mapping sentient existences/bodies, taking into account an emotional memories provides access to the world experienced through mothers and god, and the gaps that occur in our experience of the imperfect world.

Loving everyone's explorations of lines, maps words combined. So sorry I couldn't be there for the meeting today because of the rain. I'd love to connect with anyone who wants to talk about their work etc/looking for online company while working etc

Also one of the earlier sketches exploring the inner landscape/traveller and a sort of metamorphosis into plant like creatures

## SAFDAR ALI

Born in Tando Jam, Sindh, Pakistan, Safdar received his BFA from the National College of Arts in 2014 with a distinction. He won the ADA Award in 3D Works in 2019, and has participated in numerous exhibitions and residencies, and in solo and group shows. He is also a fervent art educator and brings the arts together with the letters in his work.

## Map in Song

Celine Chuang haunts this project as a fellow-traveller through her words "diasporic descendants of the displaced." She wrote this poem after she and Asma connected.

Asma then asked Ashu and Charlie to make it into a song.

Ashu Rai and Charlie Yates made this track with the lovely poem "Anticolonial Maps for Lost Lovers" and a film project about such lovers close at hand. Charlie originally composed the instrumental for Ashu's thesis film project. They decided it best fit the poem when contacted to submit something for the broader project, so they recorded Ashu reading the poem over the track and tweaked the instrumental some.

abandon the concept of your country

—Demian DinéYazhi'

where are you? where am i?  
what is this place we know by this name,  
and what are all its other names—  
buried or bitten or lost,  
subsumed but not consumed,  
perhaps, still, unfurling?  
before the city, what life assembles,  
and still, like a river, finds ways to follow its course?  
tell me about the migration patterns,  
the hidden hydrologies and waterways  
persisting their memory through, over, under  
dam, concrete, and stone.  
tell me about the salmon run.  
tell me about the plants and wild medicines,  
the *matrix of relationships* &  
*radiating responsibilities* (Leanne Simpson)  
that make the land its own (non-singular) being,  
name the forces that cut-off lifeways  
& bleed them out to die; these *death-dealing*  
*systems* (Mariame Kaba) of walls & borders  
& police & prisons that strangle the flow of qi,  
so that some  
can't breathe  
tell me of the life that pulses anyway,  
the subjugated stories  
that make a neighbourhood,  
the wildflowers seeding lawns with  
their joyous resistance,  
the overlapping assemblages &  
covert networks of care  
all the entangled genealogies  
that rupture the clean  
narrative of history.  
is home a place or a direction,  
simultaneously *facing*  
*away from and towards*,  
*can lostness be a homing device* (Sara Ahmed)?  
can home be you and me, here, asking,  
where are you? where am i?  
where are we?





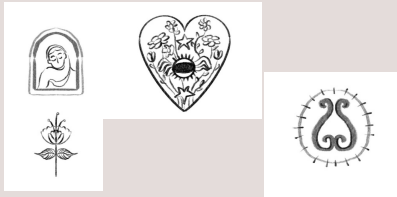
*Layl*

The reason I've been thinking of the question of organising and its form is not to force a structure, but stems from the idea of a desire to relate, just saw this online today. We didn't visit the Karoonjhar mountains in Sindh, but there is a clear relationship with extraction and neglect when it comes to ecology and heritage in Sindh. From Karoonjhar, to Keenjhar Lake, to Manchhar Lake, to Moomal ji Mari, to Kalkaan Devi's Temple. Sometimes the perpetrator is a colonial infrastructure, sometimes its the Sindh Government or a public institution, sometimes its the local body of the town, sometimes its Muslims against non-Muslims, etc. This loss echoes the loss of the feminine, re: memorials of women, which echoes personal losses in visiting private home, private relations.



*Bushra*

Focusing on symbolism, two-dimensional aerial worlds of maps and janamaaz, but using the two dimensional as a tool to have every plane interact with one another.



*Layl*

For some reason, I keep thinking of the Hadith that says a people are like a body. if one part hurts, the other part also hurts. Since Fizza was talking about how home is in the body while she was trying to locate home for herself. I feel compelled to add to this by saying home is in the body but also a place is like a body (the sum of all living and natural forces, presences).

A'ssia is an artist and film-maker. She is a non-binary Muslim individual and finds herself writing poetry, drawing, painting, taking photos, and singing. She was born in New York City, and grew up in Lahore, Cape Town, and London. She is half Pakistani and half Indian.

**A'SSIA RAI**

Céline is an inter/transdisciplinary art-maker, writer, designer, educator, and facilitator whose work engages memory, land, and lineage and seeks to iterate and imagine freer futures. A diasporic Asian settler and child of immigrants, she grew up in Mohkinstsis, Treaty 7 (Calgary, Canada) and now lives on unceded Musqueam, Squamish, & Tsleil-Waututh territories (Vancouver, BC.).

**CÉLINE CHUANG**

**CHARLIE YATES**

Charlie is a musician, a music and tech focused freelance event producer, and a marketing ad cultural consultant in New York City.

*Mahreen*

The drawings are gorgeous. And, I am amazed at how brave and generous each of you has been with sharing your works unfiltered... raw ... really blown away....

*Fizza*

Yes, and perhaps that is the body I want to separate from, the walls are made of concrete. and perhaps could they be removed, be moldable or permeable. In a strange way, Layl, after talking to you felt like you ripped one of the walls away and took it with you.

I have been playing with one of the *kalaam* attributed to Imam Hussain Ibn Ali, have read it and listened to it on repeat like fifty times since yesterday. Zoya, I am wondering if some of Kahlil Gibran's words and Fehmida Riaz's poems link in some way. Itching to add more to our floor map.

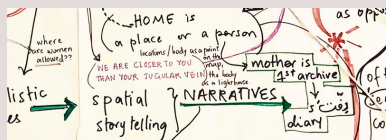
*Layl*

At Keenjhar Lake, we couldn't go to Noori's Shrine because it has been closed to public access since 2020. The reason the local official we were talking to gave was that a few picnickers had drowned in the lake and this led to them barring access to most of Keenjhar Lake including Noori's Shrine. So when we got to Yashfeen's home in Tando, I made this drawing of dreaming of Noori's Shrine and going there in my dreams. lol.



*Bushra*

When I think about the mother as the first archive and homelessness for those who don't have that archive, in contrast to the Quranic ayahs where Allah tells us that they're closer to us than our jugular vein, I'm drawing parallels between what home can mean then. This is very imagery comes in too. Also looking at plants mentioned in the Quran for my grook-like creatures for the prayer mat.



## RENATA SUMMO O'CONNELL

Renata has studied and worked in Italy, France, Switzerland and Australia for fifteen years in the fields of sociolinguistics and gender studies. In 2007, she launched the Imagined Australia International Research project after having founded the international organization AILAE with cofounders Roberta Trape and Damien J. O'Connell. Her background in aesthetics, sociolinguistics, and gender studies directs her effort to develop new models of transnational research, which, beyond institutional boundaries, may effectively further international debates and engage in creative projects on artistic and cultural levels.

In 2010, Renata started Artegiro Contemporary Art as a think tank on the one hand, and a productive hub on the other: a hub for artists, curators, art writers, and people who wish to investigate artistic expression, who are intrigued by the relationship between art and society, who appreciate the complexity of art in postcolonial countries, who question the current state whereby art markets especially have somewhat confined art and artists. A natural development of her critical and curatorial research, Artegiro is an open proposal, a project rather than a container, which has evolved well beyond Renata's initial program. Artegiro proposes to artists, curators, critics and the wide audience of art lovers to reflect together around issues that are relevant to art in our time, chiefly the relationship between art and society.

In 2016, Renata, with the Artegiro project, in collaboration with AILAE and the city council of Conzano, Italy, started the COCOAA project, gathering an entire community around contemporary art. In the same year, Renata convened the "Decolonize!" international research forum, focusing on artistic, curatorial and critical practices in today's world. In 2018, Artegiro publishing started its publishing activity with its first title, *Decolonize! Art, Curatorial, and Critical practices in Contemporary Times*, an exciting multimedia e-book proposing a different look at art, critical, and curatorial work in postcolonial settings. Besides being responsible for Artegiro as director, Renata works as an art and visual identity consultant for private clients and public institutions. In the last few years, she has worked closely with Murate Art District in Florence, as their curator-in-residence.

Bushra  
Dreaming/locating worlds.



Splitting of the moon and the Nile looking at themes of destruction/rebirth in what we have been taught, as Gibran says life goes forward and we are the children of tomorrow I'm trying to imagine rebirth as a tool for anti mapping.

Mahreen

Love the last image especially.  
I don't think Anum has joined but she has also been looking at the moon cycle.

Layl

Re: our discussion on why we keep going to our family in this mapping project (and in life in general) and it's recurring ness in life.



“ If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton,  
you may as well make it dance.

George Bernard Shaw, *Immaturity*

Zoya

Our mother's body being our first home also makes me think about when my body was a home.... It's a complicated relationship because it comes with fear, Hope, pain and sometimes loss. A loss that stays in the mind and body without physical traces. Muscles remember. Bushra, it's interesting how you said you are imagining rebirth as an anti mapping because I feel I am constantly in the cycle of a rebirth.. And, Layl, because we are so deeply tied with where we come from... we can't escape our families... I was reading this book Dr. Asma recommended which is called *My Father's House: A Series of Paintings* by Will Barnet by Thomas Dumm in which it says something like families can come to be prisons as well. But I like the idea of making the skeletons dance (laugh).

## ASMA ABBAS

Asma is Professor of Political Science, and Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities at Al Akhawayn University of Ifrane, Morocco. She is also Professor of Politics and Philosophy, and Director of Transdisciplinary and Experimental Studies at Bard College at Simon's Rock. She is former Dean of Academics and Professor in the Liberal Arts at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in Karachi, Pakistan, and the Fulbright-Masaryk Distinguished Chair in Social Studies at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. She is senior research fellow at the Global Centre of Advanced Studies

in Dublin where she heads GCAS-Jehān and its new MA in Politics, associate faculty at the Brooklyn Institute for Social Research, and teaches in the M.Phil. in Art and Design at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. She is founding organiser of Hic Rosa Collective (and its international travelling Studio in Materialist and Anticolonial Politics and Aesthetics), the Falsework School for political education, Some Beloved Productions, ACCREW Caucus of the DSA, and the Common Tern Internationalist Co-op of Cultural Workers.

Asma is the author of *Another Love: A Politics of the Unrequited* (2018) and *Liberalism and Human Suffering: Materialist Reflections on Politics, Ethics, and Aesthetics* (2010), and edited *Falsework, Smalltalk: Political Education, Aesthetic Archives, and Recitations of a Future in Common* (2021) with Colin Eubank. Her work has been part of several volumes and anthologies, and her essays have appeared in *Hypatia, Theory and Event, Democratic Theory, Journal of Politics, Politics and Culture*, among others.

Asma is a transdisciplinary political theorist interested in the history of forms of political existence, experience, and knowledge. She was born and raised in Karachi, which still furnishes most of the affective abundances that drive her vocations. Her scholarship and teaching evince a cultivated practice in anticolonial and materialist politics and aesthetics, and a commitment to de-provincializing marginalized ways of thinking, being, and knowing in the service of liberatory anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, antifascist, and anti-nationalist hospitalities, imaginations, and cultivations in practices of knowing, being, and worldmaking. She currently lives between Ifrane, Morocco, Richmond, USA, and Karachi, Pakistan.

Layl

A drawing I made of myself. In Tando, Yashfeen's mother's village, the grilled doors had names on each door which I found very different from the homes in my parents' hometowns. Using the different doors, I was musing on the ethics of a visitor, of a city dweller and how they consume "rural space," and the ease with which when can romanticise rural life or break the privacy and sacredness of a space that perhaps you may not have the right to consume.



Current sketch, playing with the element of door and visitor.

Yashfeen

There was someone here with a note on imitation as a way of beginning to articulate, and a place that one can then delineate from (I hope I am not misremembering). I have been fixating on visual form a lot. When I try to write about the visual (Mahreen, thanks for the awesome tip), I realize that the writing always carries me somewhere else, takes me astray. Just some notes on how the process has been shaping up for me.

Layl

Pirya said to Moomal,  
I am growing a garden here, my own garden  
Moomal said to Pirya, I am making a mound and there will be emptiness inside it so that I can rest in it  
Pirya said to Sassui, can I rest on the top of this mound so that I can see the stars while I fall to sleep?  
Sassui said to Marvi, I don't need a place, I will just be here, this sand is enough  
Marvi said to Noori, this place looks like what I left, I begin to make the same sounds as I did before, this tree looks too familiar  
Noori said to all of them, I will make a boat for all of us to use.

Layl

Phuleli Canal, we sat here on the way and started sketching. A peaceful experience, while drawing I was often thinking of the artist painting rural life. In front of us was a body of water, nature, and women washing their clothes, while doing this me and Yashfeen were discussing our expectations from our drawings, so my focus in the sketch shifted towards us instead of 'the view' or the "painting" that could be made. And, another sketch, while mapping conversations about rural art.



Valerie

Hello, and thank you for letting me into this beautiful space you all have created. I'm feeling so many different things looking at all your art, and poetry.

My own fragmented history of "home" usually includes women and sewing, needles, pins, fabric, thread, hands, and color, are all mixed up into all my earliest memories. All of my aunts were seamstresses. Their labour clothed us, decorated our homes with their handiwork, and put food on the table.

My grandmother was born in Bursa, Turkey and fled her home around 1914. My mother and aunts and uncle were born in Syria and Beirut. And I think about their journeys all the time.

I will share some visuals with you promptly.. Again thank you for letting me into this nourishing and safe space. I look forward to working alongside you all.

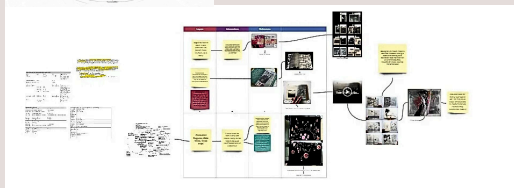
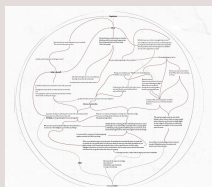
Asma

Sorry, two Tuesdays behind here. This is a re-start, and I will be doing free writes on these tomorrow. for my artist collaborators, please take a look.



*Rads*

Having missed some conversations in between I felt a little out of touch but on the last day of the residency, things seemed a little less foggy. Since then, I have been trying to find a way to explore my "artefact/motifs" a little better and have realised that may be there is no chronological order to this shared story. Sending a "memory map" below. Any thoughts or poetry is appreciated!



Nano's sketch of the boat and peacock when I asked her to draw home when I was probably 5 or 6. The one next was my drawing.



*Fizza*

Over the last two months Zoya and I have shared conversations in the form of letters, visuals, voice notes and silent sitting as part of the Anti maps residency. We spent days in isolation and spent some 48 uninterrupted hours together prior to the isolation and have navigated through this labyrinth of half broken, half built walls of what is right now a work in progress.

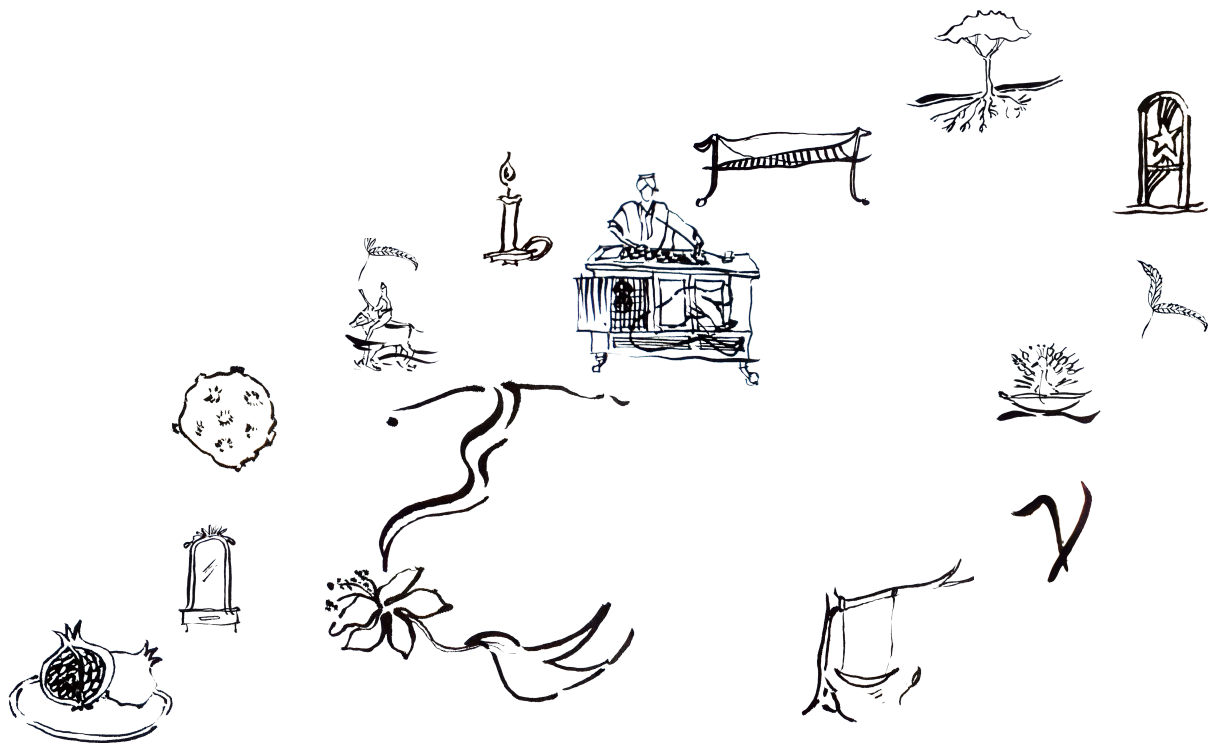


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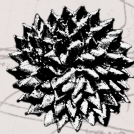












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