



FABRIC AS SOCIAL IDENTITY

کون؟ کہاں؟ کیوں؟

Who? Where? Why?

Project Lead: Prof. Kiran Khan - Publisher: Artistic Xploratorium

Womanifesto - WeMend
COMMUNAL FABRIC
Lahore Biennale Foundation 03

LBF 03 | BNU - MDSVAD

A Project For **Lahore Biennale Foundation LBF 03**

Womanifesto - WeMend

Initiated by Womanifesto - International Art Exchange, Thailand

Mariam Dawood School of Visual Arts and Design (MDSVAD)

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FOREWORD

The third edition of the Lahore Biennale, *Of Mountains and Seas*, curated by John Tain, foregrounded collaboration as a central curatorial principle. A key ethos of this edition was to foster connections between artists, institutions, and communities. The Lahore Biennale Foundation worked with nine institutions across Pakistan, forming partnerships that enabled meaningful, process-based, and collective engagement. Within this framework, *WeMend*, a participatory project by Womanifesto, was realised in collaboration with Beaconhouse National University (BNU). Led by Prof. Kiran Khan, co-led by Anam Khurram and their team, the project brought together students, artisans, and community members through a shared practice of textile, using fabric as a site of mark-making, memory, and connection. Each contributor left a personal trace, enriched by ancestral knowledge and lived experience, forming an invisible network of care. It created space for intergenerational knowledge sharing and celebrated textile and fabric as vital forms of artistic expression, rich with indigenous practices.

The Lahore iteration of the project, *WeMend*, took place at the historic YMCA, a space long associated with learning and collective activity. Developed with BNU's Textile, Fashion and Accessories Design Department, Kaarvan Crafts Foundation, and Baazyaft, it fostered intergenerational dialogue and blurred the boundaries between art and craft. Sixty-seven BNU students worked directly on the fabric, while artisans from Kaarvan and Baazyaft brought their expertise in stitching and mending. Over 100 differently-abled students participated with care, and 32 COMSATS students embroidered motifs, initials, and logos, embedding their identities into the work.

WeMend, a textile woven with care, memory, and quiet resilience, has a life of its own. The project was first brought to life in Lahore, where it found depth through the scale and diversity of participation. It was later exhibited at the Sharjah Biennale, continuing to grow with each place it touches, shaped by the hands and stories of those who contribute to it. It stands as a living archive, tender, collective, and ever evolving, embodying the spirit of LB03 and carrying traces of connection across borders.

Qudsia Rahim, Executive Director LBF



PREFACE

WeMend: Stitching Narratives, Repairing Communities

A Collaborative Exploration of Cultural Identity through Artistic Process

In a world increasingly divided by ideological differences, political conflicts, and cultural disconnects, the act of mending, both literal and metaphorical, emerges as a radical gesture. WeMend, a project first initiated by Womanifesto – International Art Exchange (Thailand), embodies this philosophy by inviting participants into a meditative, hands-on engagement with sewing. The act of stitching becomes not just a process of repairing fabric but a profound communal exercise in reconnecting fractured relationships, identities, and memories. In collaboration with the Lahore Biennale Foundation, WeMend extended its reach to Lahore, Pakistan, where it took on a new form through the project Fabric as Social Identity – (Who? Where? Why?).

This collaborative installation was situated at the historic YMCA building, itself a symbol of inclusivity and openness in Lahore’s urban landscape. It served as a backdrop for a project that sought to weave together personal, intergenerational, and political stories into a singular, monumental seventy-foot-long textile narration. The initiative brought together 67 students and faculty from the Mariam Dawood School of Visual Arts and Design (MDSVAD), Beaconhouse National University (BNU), alongside 30 artisans from Kaarvan Crafts Foundation, 15 from Baazyaft, and local craft communities from Tarogil village, 10 differently-abled schools, 32 students from art colleges in Lahore and the public at large visiting the site.

The heart of this collaboration was the creation of a “Communal Fabric”, a large-scale textile that symbolised the interconnectedness of Lahore’s diverse social, cultural, and political identities. The guiding framework for this work-Who? Where? Why?- allowed participants to map their personal experiences onto broader societal narratives. The Who کون؟ component engaged personal stories of empowerment, struggle, and identity. The where کہاں؟ explored intergenerational connections and the legacies passed down through families and communities. The Why کیوں؟ component reflected the broader socio-political contexts influencing individual lives.

The success of this collaboration lies in the intentional structuring of the creative process. Workshops, community sewing sessions, and feedback discussions ensured that everyone—from experienced artisans to young student artists—had an equal voice in the making of the artwork. This was not simply a top-down transmission of knowledge but a reciprocal exchange. Students, often working from conceptual frameworks, learned the intricacies of traditional craft techniques from the artisans, while artisans were exposed to new methods of conceptual storytelling in art.

One of the most compelling aspects of the project was the role played by the artisans. Representing deep-rooted traditions of embroidery, patchwork, and up-cycling, their work brought authenticity to the piece. Every stitch they added was a continuation of a craft heritage that predates contemporary artistic practices by centuries. These contributions transformed the fabric from a surface of embellishment to a repository of history and resistance. The textures, motifs, and stitches were not ornamental; they were declarations of existence and survival.

Of course, the collaboration was not without its challenges. Bridging the divide between contemporary art education and traditional craft practice requires careful facilitation. Differing aesthetic languages occasionally led to friction, and some stories—particularly those dealing with trauma or political histories—needed to be handled with sensitivity and care. However, these very challenges also became learning moments. Through open dialogue, critique sessions, and collective decision-making, these differences were transformed into points of richness, making the final artwork far more layered and meaningful than any individual contribution could have achieved alone.

The significance of the YMCA building as the installation site cannot be overstated. As a longstanding symbol of Lahore’s openness and cultural plurality, it contextualized the textile within a broader historical narrative of the city itself. The fabric installation did not merely adorn the building—it conversed with it, drawing connections between architecture, memory, and identity. This embeddedness in place emphasized the project’s commitment to site-specific storytelling, where art was not separate from the community but deeply enmeshed within it.

The impact of the project resonated far beyond the final installation. For the students involved, it was a profound learning experience in collaborative authorship and socially engaged art practice. For the artisans, it was an affirmation of the ongoing relevance of their craft traditions in contemporary artistic discourse. For the local community, it was an opportunity to see their narratives stitched into the fabric of an internationally recognized art event. The communal making of the work blurred the lines between artist, artisan, and audience, emphasizing that art is not solely the product of individual genius but of collective effort.

Looking forward, *WeMend* sets a compelling precedent for future collaborations between artists, artisans, and communities in Pakistan and beyond. It highlights how process-driven, community-centered artistic practices can serve as both aesthetic endeavors and acts of social repair. The project also resonates with the themes of the Lahore Biennale's third edition, *Of Mountains and Seas*, which emphasizes ecological consciousness and sustainable futures. In its modest yet profound way, *WeMend* echoes these larger global concerns by showing that repair, whether of fabric, relationships, or cultures, is inherently a sustainable act.

For many involved, including myself, *WeMend* was more than just an art project—it was an embodied experience of healing, dialogue, and reimagining connections across divides. It reaffirmed that art, when approached with humility and openness, has the capacity to not only represent the world but to remake it one stitch at a time.

Prof. Kiran Khan
Researcher, HOD TFA BNU, textile designer, fibre artist



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend heartfelt gratitude to all individuals and organizations who contributed to the success of Womanifesto WeMend: Communal Fabric. A special thanks to our team, community members, artisans, volunteers, alumni and faculty of BNU MDSVAD who shared their stories, skills, and time.

We appreciate the contribution and support of dean Prof. Rashid Rana, MDSVAD and of organizations like Baazyaft and Kaarvan, Comsats and differently-abled schools who represented their skills and expertise in this project. Also acknowledge the tireless efforts of consistent team members, whose passion and commitment brought this project to life. To everyone who stitched, shared, and supported, thank you for being part of this vibrant communal fabric.



CONTENT

1. THREAD OF THOUGHTS: Unraveling the Ideas Behind the Project . . . pp. 1-6

2. THEMATIC FRAMEWORK pp. 7-78

- 2a. Who / کون؟ Personal stories
- 2b. Where? کہاں؟ Intergenerational Stories
- 2c. Why ? کیوں؟ Political discourse

3. WEAVING COMMUNITIES: The Role of Women in WeMend pp. 79-82

4. IN THE MAKING pp. 83-126

- 4a. WeMend x Kaarvan: Stitching Identity, Repairing Futures - workshop at BNU and YMCA
- 4b. Baazyaft workshop at YMCA
- 4c. Differently-abled communities at YMCA
- 4d. Comsats at YMCA
- 4e. The way forward (Sharjah Biennale 2025)

5. Collaborators - LBF | Womanifesto | BNU - MDSVAD pp. 127-132

- 5a. Team
- 5b. Artisan Contributors BNU Sewing Contributors and Tarogil Community Artisans



Thread of Thoughts: Unraveling the Ideas Behind the Project

In Dialogue with Kiran Khan: Project Insights by Aatiqa Sheikh

Prof. Kiran Khan is a fibre artist, craft intervention expert, and academician. She has led numerous craft-based projects in collaboration with artisans, including a UNESCO craft capacity-building initiative in 2021. She also runs "Tanka," a brand that celebrates artisanal practices. In 2021, she collaborated with fiber artist Liz Williamson on the Weaving Eucalyptus Project. She served as Executive Director of Design Summit 01, a collaborative event hosted by Beaconhouse National University, Rhode Island School of Design, Punjab Walled City Authority, and other partners in Lahore in March 2024. Most recently, she lead the project Womanifesto: WeMend: a community-based textile installation for Lahore Biennale 03, which also travelled to Sharjah Biennale in February 2025.

I had the pleasure of speaking with her about this remarkable project, which continues to grow globally, inviting communities to stitch and share together.

Aatiqa: Hello Prof. Kiran. First of all, many congratulations on the resounding success of Womanifesto!

Please give us a brief tour of the background of this project.

Prof. Kiran: Hello Aatiqa, thank you! I'll begin with some background. The project was a direct collaboration with Lahore Biennale Foundation as part of LBF Lahore 03, in November 2024. John Tain, the curator, visited the School of Visual Arts & Design and observed the kind of materiality we were working with. He particularly admired students' work and our department's craft intervention, which is the strength of the Textile, Fashion and Accessories Design Department. LBF approached me and dean Rashid Rana, and after several meetings discussing the themes of ecology and the environment, I was invited to lead a project for the Biennale. WeMend emerged from this context, bringing together students, artisans, and faculty to create a shared fabric, literally and metaphorically, where everyone was mending together.

Aatiqa: Mending together sounds fascinating! What was the baseline philosophy behind it?

Prof. Kiran: The idea of WeMend in our local context was about gathering people from diverse communities. Once we began, I brainstormed with my faculty, with advisors Risham Syed and Rohma Khan, identified a core team, and held multiple meetings with senior colleagues. The baseline philosophy was to give new meaning to cloth through stories. Fabrics as they were recycled through the process of making, were given meaning rooted in storytelling. This mending activity healed us individually and collectively. We connected as a group each day with a new story.

Aatiqa: How did you facilitate collaboration between the students, mentors, and artisans? Were there any particular challenges or successes that stood out?

Prof. Kiran: I didn't want to just stitch fabrics randomly. The first step was identifying the display space, the YMCA building on Mall Road. That space shaped the context and framework. We conducted extensive research on its history and surroundings, which informed our structure. We divided the work into three thematic segments: personal narratives, intergenerational stories, and political discourse.

Personal narratives captured stories close to participants' hearts, their joy, struggle, and memories. Intergenerational stories highlighted inherited textiles like *Jamdani*[1], *Zardozi*[2], or maternal heirloom textiles like dupatta's handed down to their daughters. The third theme, political discourse, reflected recent events: Gaza, the Dhaka student uprising, and local political developments affecting us as educators and citizens.

With this framework, we invited alumni from 2007 to 2023. The response was overwhelming. Everyone who wished to participate joined our group, and we logged their ideas into a cohesive framework identifying themselves with a thematic block. The colours followed the themes: reds and maroons for personal stories, beige and gold for intergenerational, and greys, blues, black, and white for political discourse.

1.

Time management was our biggest challenge! The project started in August, and we had very little time to organize the framework, engage the community, and patch it all together. But despite the pressure, my team managed it with a labour of love and care working long hours.

Aatiqa: This surely sounds like a labour of love! Can you walk us through the creative process from concept to output? How did different perspectives influence the work?

Prof. Kiran: It was truly a labour of love. A fabric where each stitch was embedded in love and care. In healing and empathy the YMCA building represents inclusivity, so it was essential to us. Initially, I wanted the work displayed outdoors, hanging from the facade. But the weather was a major concern. The weather, like wind, rain, especially since the piece would be on display for a month. We decided to install it indoors in the grand hall.

The creative process was deeply collaborative. Graduates worked on initial pieces at home, and then we gathered at BNU to start stitching everything together. Local artisans joined us. Particularly, from the *Kaarvan* and *Baazyaft*. During workshops, people brought their fabrics and stories, contributing to the evolving communal textile. Arranging the final piece was very detailed. We stitched two inches at a time, then a foot at a time. The emotional engagement and collective energy shaped every stitch.

Aatiqa: Beautiful! Can you speak about the instructions shared with artisans from *Kaarvan* Craft and *Baazyaft*? How did traditional techniques contribute?

Prof. Kiran: We invited *Kaarvan* artisans for three workshops and shared the three themes. They chose freely. Interestingly, *Kaarvan* mostly worked on the ‘Who’ theme consisting of reds and maroons, aligning with personal stories. *Baazyaft* gravitated toward political discourse, particularly in Gaza. Both groups used a lot of text alongside their embroidery. *Kaarvan* wrote about their dreams; however, *Baazyaft* used symbols of power and greed.

Traditional techniques were woven into the overall vision. The structure of

colour, themes, and framework unified the variety of crafts. I, for instance, used one of my mother’s *Phulkari* [3]shawls overlaid with Urdu text exploring patriarchy in our region. A student added her mother’s bridal dupatta [4] to the intergenerational block. Every piece carried context, a narrative behind it. We also welcomed the intersex community, schoolchildren, and craftswomen into workshops. The joy, sharing, and connection across all these groups were extraordinary.

Aatiqa: What was the biggest challenge?

Prof. Kiran: The biggest concern was achieving colour gradation across such a large textile. Fabric is not paper; you can't simply paint over it. But we managed by being extremely organized. I followed up with contributors. My co-lead, Anam Khurram, and colleagues Samak and Fahreen were instrumental in the execution and documentation.

Aatiqa: Were there any specific cultural or historical references that inspired the project?

Prof. Kiran: The cultural and historical references came from all over the sub-continent. Each intergenerational textile heirloom was deeply rooted in culture, tradition, history and identity. The YMCA, as a symbol of inclusivity, was a major one. And then Lahore, the city of poets and artists and visionaries, holds cultural depth. Textiles themselves are carriers of political and geographical histories. By stitching together personal, generational, and political fabrics, we created a social fabric that reflected our region’s complexity.

Aatiqa: Please elaborate on the three themes in *Womanifesto*.

Prof. Kiran: The First theme was Personal Stories; these are individual narratives of joy, pain, and memory. Second, there were Intergenerational Stories, such as heirlooms and inherited textiles. And third, Political Narratives, events, and movements that have shaped our society in recent years. Each theme fed into a broader ecology of cultural memory.

Aatiqa: What was the most important outcome of this project, predominantly, for the theme and the community?

1.

Prof. Kiran: Bringing together diverse communities was the most important outcome. We cannot have a textile, fashion, and accessories department without local craft communities. We involved not only artisans from Kaarvan and Baazyaft but also differently-abled students from ten schools. There were children on the levels of the spectrum, hearing and vision impaired, and students from NGOs.

We hosted Government Shadab Training Institution for Special Education, Government Secondary Institution for Blind Girls, Lahore, The Government Secondary School for Special Education, Hearing Impaired Boys' School, uh, then Government Secondary School- same category but girls- then Government Secondary School for Physically disabled students, Government Secondary Education, National Town, Government Institute for Slow Learners, The Rising Sun Institute and Kaarvan cluster of artisans from Sheekhupura. We consciously arranged for one group at a time to provide a comfortable space.

It was interesting that some of the participants were bringing in garments as well, and if you look at the fabric, you have somebody's *saree* [5] blouse or somebody's garment or somebody's sweater that their grandmother have knitted for them, hand-woven, and they put in those things as well. For example, I used one of my mother's shirts and a *Sindhi topi* [6] that was gifted to my father and came down to me as a part of an intergenerational dialogue. The Sindhi embroidery cap is usually given to somebody when you want to honour them. It came down to me as part of the heirloom lineage, where *Sindhi* culture and customs are also shared. It was very intriguing how each piece and each narrative explains an entire contextual, cultural story, and the significance of each piece basically drew from different parts of the country. Each item held deep meaning. These stories will now travel internationally. It was powerful to see joy on their faces when they became part of a Biennale exhibition.

Aatiqa: How do you envision the impact of this project on future collaborations?

Prof. Kiran: This project was beyond co-creation. It was transformative. Our curriculum already includes craft intervention, but this showed how deeply healing and meaningful collaboration can be.

It also taught us about the ecological balance within communities. For eg. In 2021 when we did the UNESCO project, some men resisted letting their women attend our capacity building workshops. We addressed it respectfully by separating spaces, which eventually built trust. Hence the message is that you can't empower just women and ignore men in craft communities; it disrupts the ecosystem. One has to handle at both levels of the spectrum. To have an impact one must be sensitive to the socio-cultural structure.

Aatiqa: It's often said that the death of a language is the death of a culture. What are your thoughts on it?

Prof. Kiran: I agree. When a language dies, craft, people, and technique also fade. The death of a language is the death of an entire eco-system. It takes down with it stories of love, of care of intergenerational transfer of indigenous knowledge which includes craft as one of the main forms of storytelling. We must understand the ecology around craft: materials, narratives, and cultural knowledge. Whether it's the Chamba Rumal [7] or Sindhi embroidery, these carry generations of meaning. Our aim must be to support communities in dreaming and help them realize those dreams through meaningful engagement. This project aimed to heal people through mending together.

[1] Jamdani is a fine, muslin-based textile characterized by intricate, handwoven patterns originated in Bengal.

[2] Zardozi is a type of heavy and elaborate metal embroidery on a silk, satin, or velvet fabric base.

[3] Phulkari, meaning "flower work" (phul= flower, kari=work) is a type of embroidery originally made throughout the Punjab, a region now straddling Pakistan and India.

[4] a length of material worn arranged in two folds over the chest and thrown back around the shoulders, typically with a traditional trousers and shirt, by women from South Asia.

[5] a garment consisting of a length of cotton or silk elaborately draped around the body, traditionally worn by women from South Asia.

[6] a lightweight hat worn in tropical countries for protection from the sun

[7] Chamba Rumal is a unique embroidered handicraft that originated in the Chamba region of Himachal Pradesh, India.

2.

Thematic framework

Fabric as Social Identity - کون؟ کہاں؟ کیوں؟ why? Where? Who?

As the textiles of any region represent its roots, history, political significance, and cultural narrative, the geographical placement of a city's buildings holds a particular meaning. Similarly, the YMCA building in Lahore stands as a testament to the identity of the city, as a city of poets, artists, and visionaries. Connecting personal, intergenerational, and political pieces of fabric that are stitched together to form the social fabric of the diverse culture of Lahore. The YMCA has been a standing symbol of Inclusivity. It is a platform that recognizes individuals as Pakistanis, above any race or religion.

As a part of this prestigious project, a communal fabric was developed that brought communities together. Contributors sewed, embroidered, patched, and upcycled fabric together as a marker of Social Identity-کون؟ کہاں؟ کیوں؟. The thematic framework was developed into overarching themes of societal constructs: Who, Where, and Why, which are depicted as below:

- کون Kaun/Who? Personal Stories
- کہاں Kahan/Where? Intergenerational Stories
- کیوں Kyun or Why? Political Stories

3a. Personal Narrative کون Kaun / Who?

Thirteen artists shared their stories under the Personal Narratives category, which were stories stemming from the idea of the self, through accounts of positivity, struggle, joy, and empowerment. Stories of personal joy, of pain, of resilience, of patriarchal discourse and struggle. Yet these stories stitched together became a collective discourse of mending surroundings and healing each other through personal recollections.

3b. Intergenerational Stories کہاں Kahan/Where

Twelve artists bridged gaps between ages and backgrounds in Intergenerational Dialogues, or narratives that have cultural or generational significance. These have been passed down through grandparents, family lineage, etc.

3c. Political Narratives کیوں / why

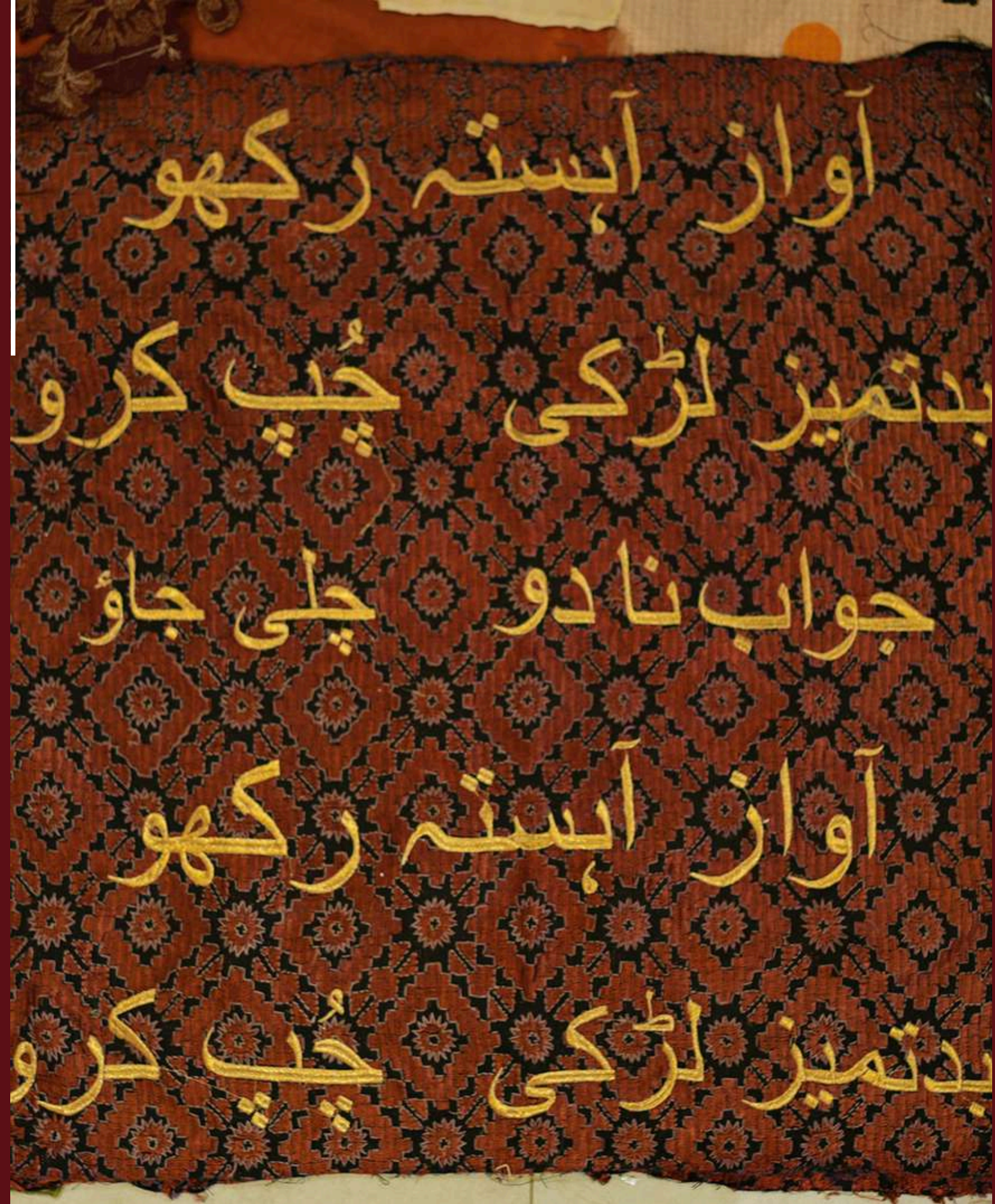
Eleven artists examined Lahore's socio-political context in Political Landscape. The stories of political turmoil show what role political influences play within a society.

2a.

Patriarchal Discourse

Being a woman in South Asia is a journey of tests and patience. From being the little girl who is the apple of her father's eye to the journey after marriage, which transforms her into a controlled doll in a patriarchal setup. This is the story of every woman. Whether high or low in magnitude, the socio-cultural context forces her to give up her dreams and her aspirations. Her identity changes to a magnitude where she forgets who she is. Her role as a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law makes her compromise her true self. She forgets and suppresses her dreams. She gives and gives ... silently bearing the abuse, trauma, and the hardship till the pain is too heavy to bear, even for her body. Eventually, her heart explodes, she vents out under years of turmoil... and yet, she is blamed again. She is the victim and she is the aggressor. Patriarchal discourse is reset yet again.

Prof. Kiran Khan



2a.

The Unseen

This work is an abstract representation of thoughts and frustrations suppressed by women with PCOS. These individuals experience daily fluctuations in hormone levels without understanding the underlying cause, often accompanied by feelings of guilt. The piece explores the complexity of emotions and the strength required to face them, symbolized by the stately cycle of a tree and its intricate roots as disturbance. Broken circles are used to depict the irregularity of cycles. The path is mirrored by the cycles of the tree, paying tribute to old feminine wisdom that views creation, destruction, life, and death as interwoven. Lotus flowers symbolize the fragility and delicate nature of PCOS patients, as these plants thrive in difficult environments.

Samak Hamid



2a.

Joy and Pain

The pieces reflect the pain the women endure because of endometriosis. This work serves as a visualization of the constant discomfort the artist experienced during her lifetime. Due to the nature of the disease, a woman appears put together and enjoying life on the outside, but on the inside, she is in constant pain and fear of a flare-up. Along the same theme, the pieces appear cohesive, held together by color and embellishment; however, on closer inspection, one can see that different fabrics are attached with embroidery to look composed. The fabric flowers represent ovaries, which, although often seen as a source of joy and womanhood, are for her the origin of pain.

Tanzeel Saeed

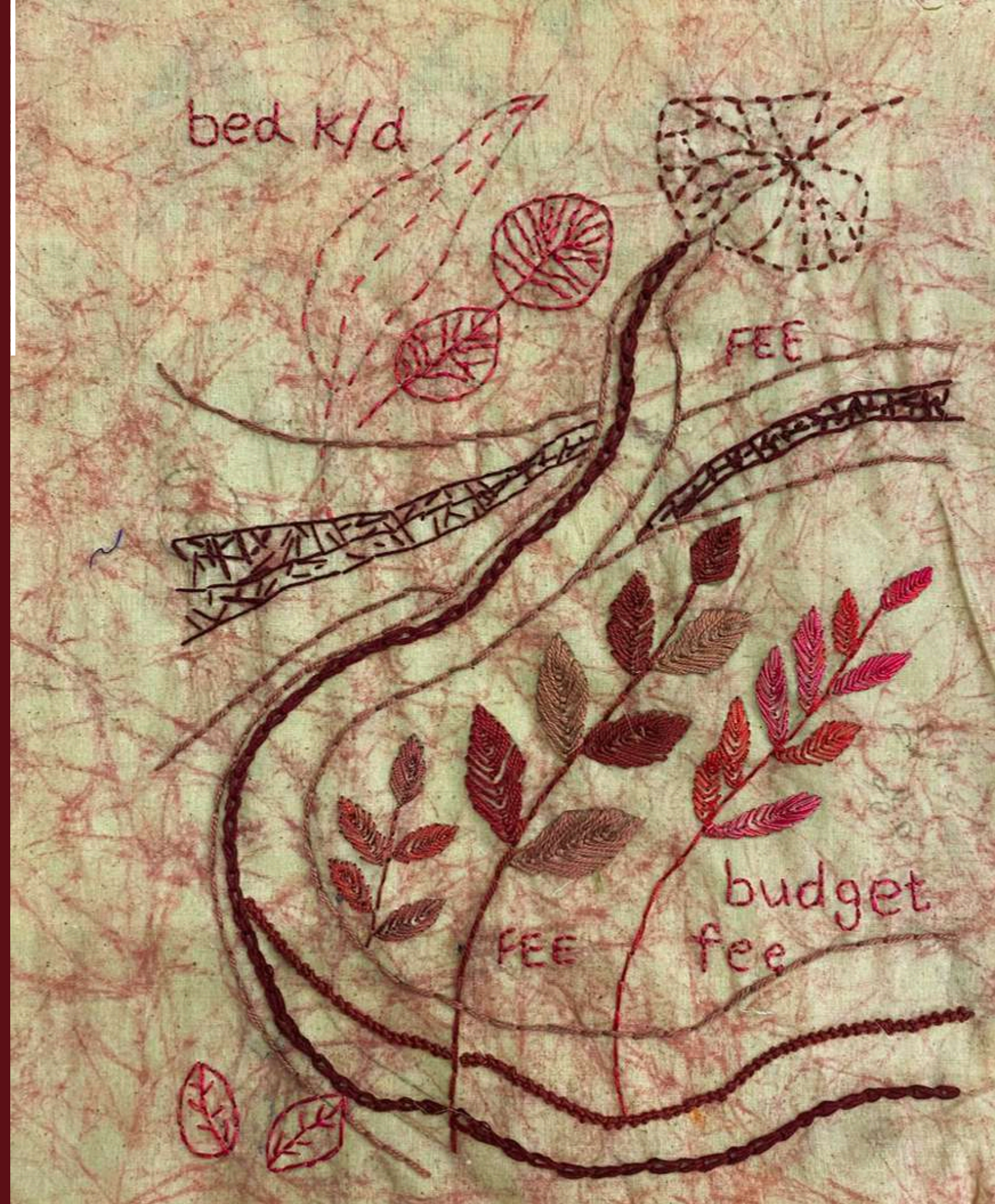


2a.

A Journey of Healing Through Textile

This abstract artwork explores healing and resilience, using textile techniques like batik and embroidery to reflect the personal journey of a woman from stress to wholeness. Building on themes from the artist's thesis, the work delves into the tension between financial burdens, career, and caregiving, but shifts focus toward empowerment and healing. Using abstract lines and organic forms, the work symbolizes the interconnectedness of life's responsibilities. Each piece is a reflection of the artist's journey to reclaim balance, framed by the struggles that shape her and the empowerment that follows. The abstract lines focus on fluidity and movement, illustrating the cyclical nature of life's challenges, as every burden becomes an opportunity for growth.

Fehreen Mujahid



2a.

Threads of Healing

Threads of Healing focuses on integrating a personal narrative of overcoming self-harm. The work revolves around the turmoil of self-harm and its psychological challenges. Building upon felt pieces created in 2019, the artist rebuilds those felt pieces, which are reminiscent of the process of healing she has gone through. The project embodies a powerful and intimate story of recovery. By weaving these felt pieces into the *WeMend* fabric, the artist contributes not only to a personal narrative but also to a universal message of hope and healing. This approach honours her journey and aligns with the broader theme of personal stories of struggle and empowerment that the *WeMend* project celebrates.

Irum Naeem

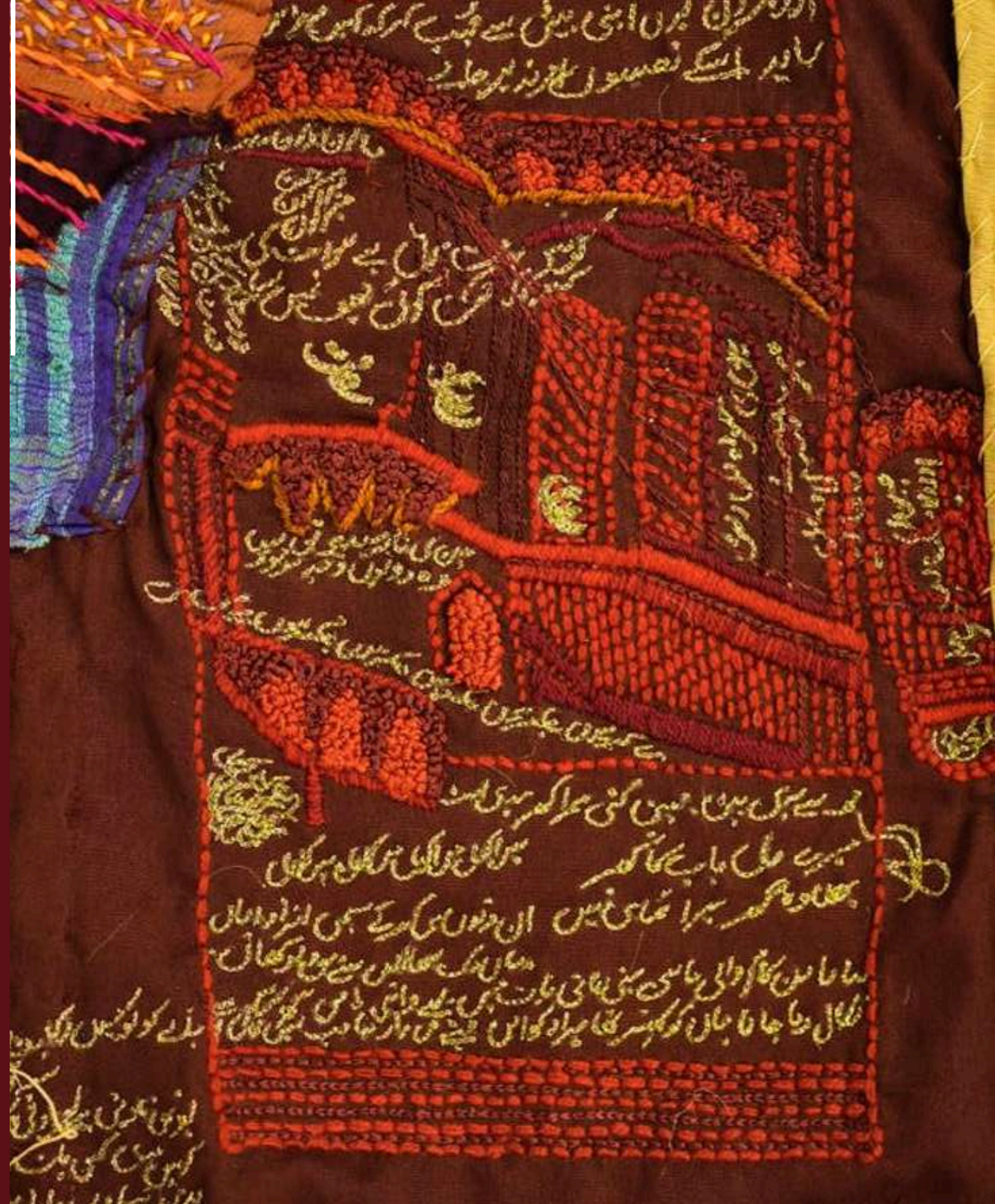


2a.

The Pillars of Resilience

This piece of research enlightens the audience to patriarchal issues around South Asia and depicts how patriarchal setups sabotage women. It highlights the pain of women who want to cut off abusive relationships but are unable to do so because of family pressures. Patriarchy is one of the major ailments in societies. There are great sacrifices women go through and emerge successful, but receive no credit as they live in a gender biased society. Being a resident of Lahore, a city rich in architectural legacy, my work uses architectural grandeur as a metaphor, depicting women in caged buildings reminiscent of architectural splendour surviving within the congestion of the Walled City. The work describes and characterizes women caged in grand architectural houses as they silently and slowly disintegrate, subjected to external erosion.

Samiha Safdar



2a.

Mindscript

This work delves into preservation as a strategy. Childhood thoughts, memories, and vocabulary become scribbles of the mind. Thoughts that cannot be articulated create a sense of confusion, and in this state of uncertainty, the artist uses scribbling to unravel her thought processes. There is a constant scribbling sensation she feels with her thought processes, while her vocals don't match. This state eventually becomes part of her identity.

Hooraeen Qasim

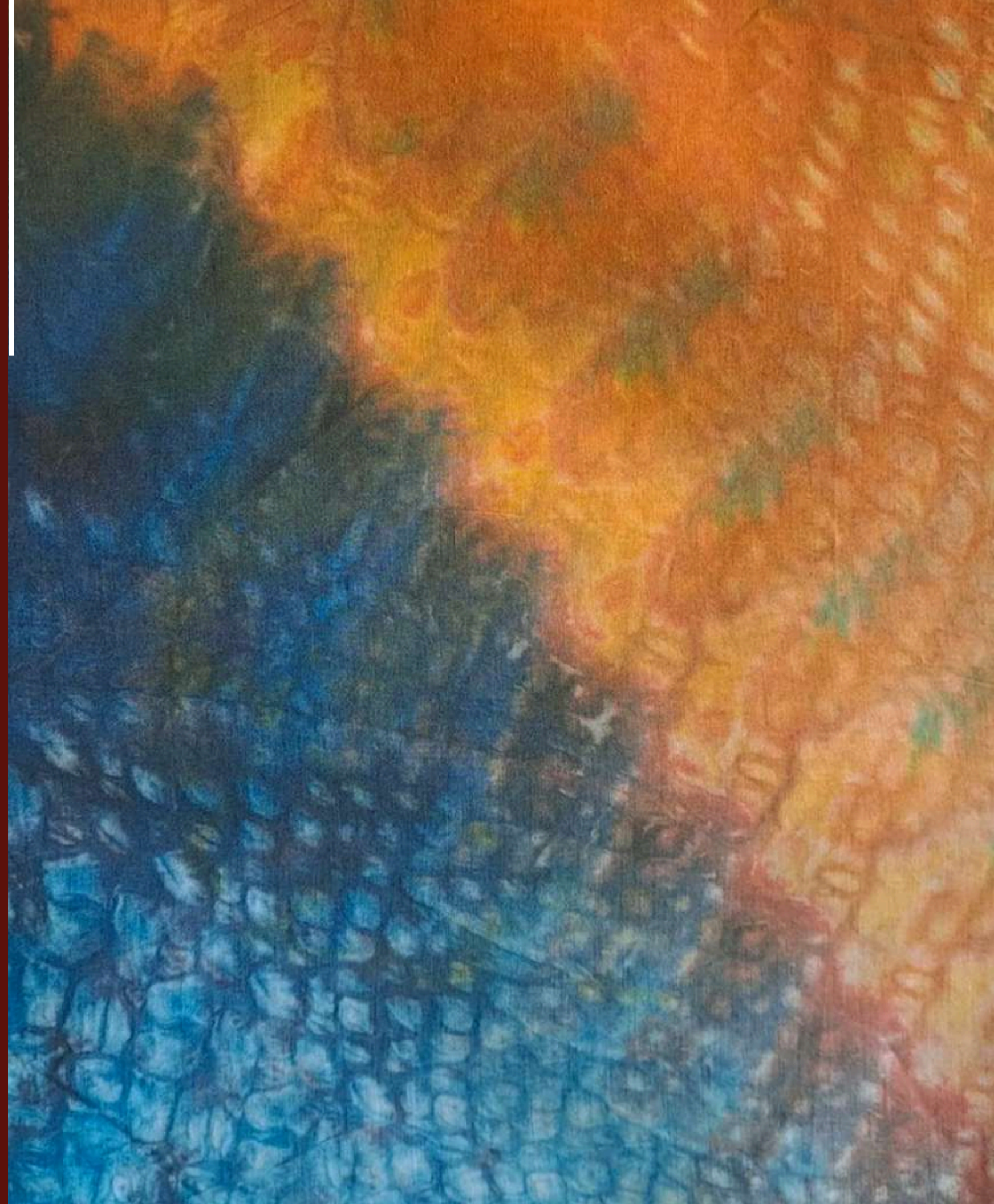


2a.

Threads that Bind

The work explores the significant relationship between comfort and textiles, highlighting how each woven or printed thread has a rich history and creates a sense of belonging. Each item is more than simply fabric; it is a narrative, a tactile representation of stories, traditions, and personal recollections. By incorporating these components into fabrics, the pieces generate not only physical comfort but also emotional resonance, connecting individuals to their common human experience.

Aamna Batool



2a.

The Search Within

The pieces explore a journey of self-discovery, capturing moments of growth and doubt. Through various techniques like embroidery, beadwork, and patchwork, the artist reflects on different aspects of her identity. These pieces start with simpler things, like her relationship with her name, then move to the struggles of finding her place in the world, and finally, the occasional urge to leave everything behind, start anew somewhere, learn new things, and let the Earth consume her and her worries.

Fatima Ali



2a.

From Shards to Wholeness

The work is a reflection of a journey, an exploration of pain, resilience, and transformation. In the wake of deep personal trauma, the artist turns to fibre as her voice, using texture and colour to express the unspeakable. Working with shades of dark maroons, black, and rust, she layers mediums to capture the complexity of emotions that arise from betrayal, abuse, and ultimately, survival. The tactile nature of fibre allows her to physically work through her emotions, weaving her experiences into pieces that speak to the resilience of the human spirit. The work invites the viewer to confront uncomfortable truths, but it is also a declaration of strength. It aims to resonate with those who have suffered in silence, to create a space for dialogue about abuse, and to show that even in the darkest moments, there is the possibility of creating something beautiful. Through the act of creation, the artist stitches together the fragments of her life, and in doing so, finds her way back to herself.

Kainat Wali Khan



2a.

Mystic Crossover: Connecting the Physical and Spiritual Worlds

The project explores spiritual healing and energy flow within auras, impacting overall well-being. A forest of purple trees symbolizes intuition, creativity, and spiritual awakening, enhancing the sense of interconnectedness. Doodling with water-soluble materials captures subtle energies on tangible surfaces. This fusion invites viewers to immerse themselves in the mystical allure of the artwork and contemplate the impact of spiritual healing on human connections. The interplay of light and shadow bridges the gap between the intangible and tangible realms, offering a visual journey into the transformative power of spiritual healing and universal energies.

Fasiha Shahid



2a.

Folding and Layering in Personalities

The artist's work embodies the intricate differences between evolving personalities over time. This concept leads the artist to scrutinize the complex folds and layers of both their essence and that of their mother. These revelations aren't just about the artist, as each layer of their personalities holds distinct imprints, shaped by their eras, experiences, and beliefs. In this exploration, the artist connects different binding techniques such as crochet and off-loom. The techniques are well known for the continuity of the media and infinity.

Rahynat Khalid

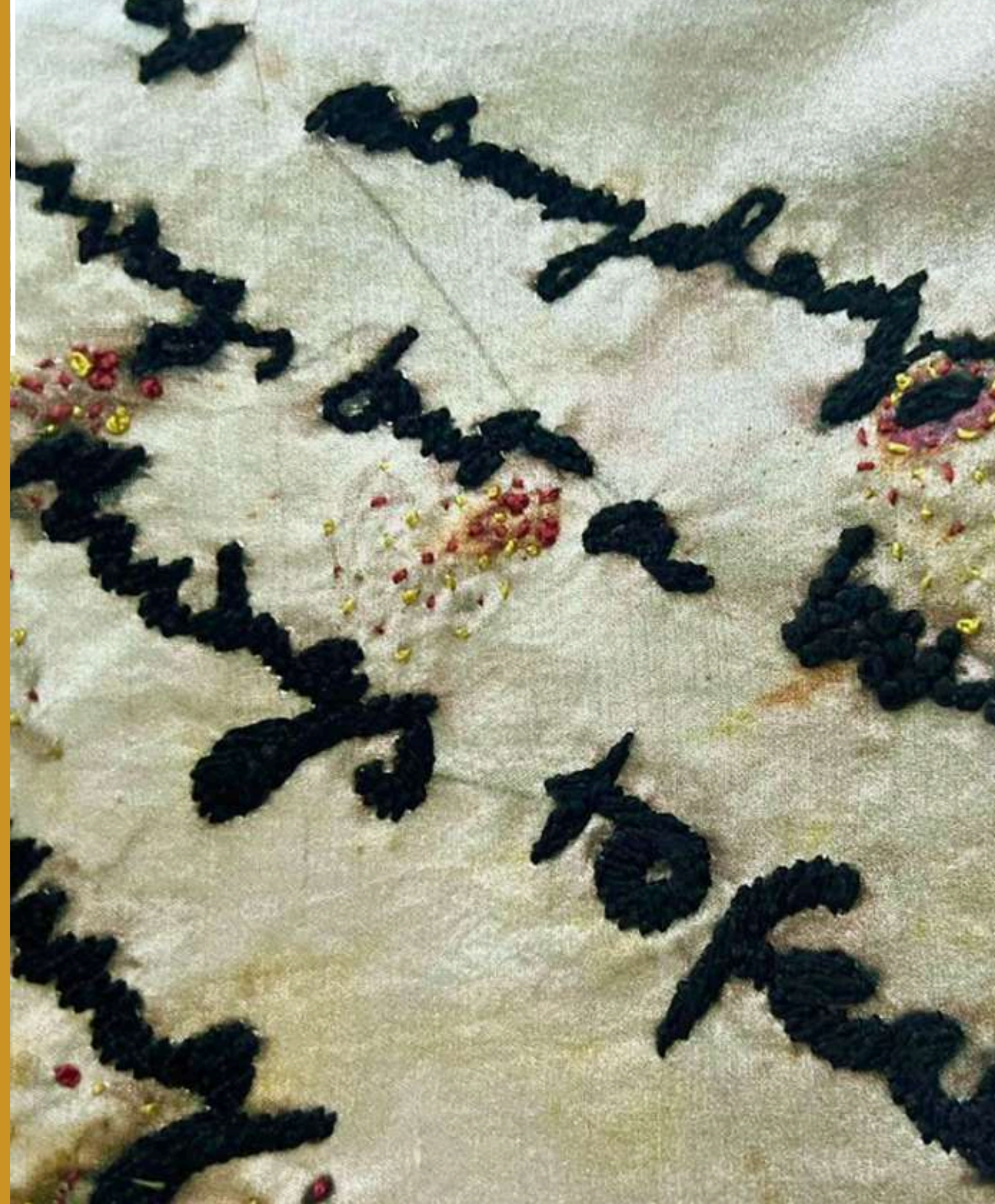


2b.

Fibres of Time / وقت کے دھاگے

The pieces depict the different nuances of time and the associations attached to short-term memories in the moment they are being lived. The work is based on the artist's research in phenomenology. It features images of textures that have captivated her and shaped her perception over time. Each of the techniques and materials—such as hand embroidery, integrating different textures through leather on top of digital printing—as well as the visual vocabulary, depicts the short-term memories that shape perception. The work shows the journey and the triggers that allow self-discovery. It explores the relationship between short-term memories and trauma while engaging in a spiritual conversation with the Creator. The work stresses the significance of self-awareness through which one can reinvent thoughts and lead toward positivity.

Anam Khurram Javed

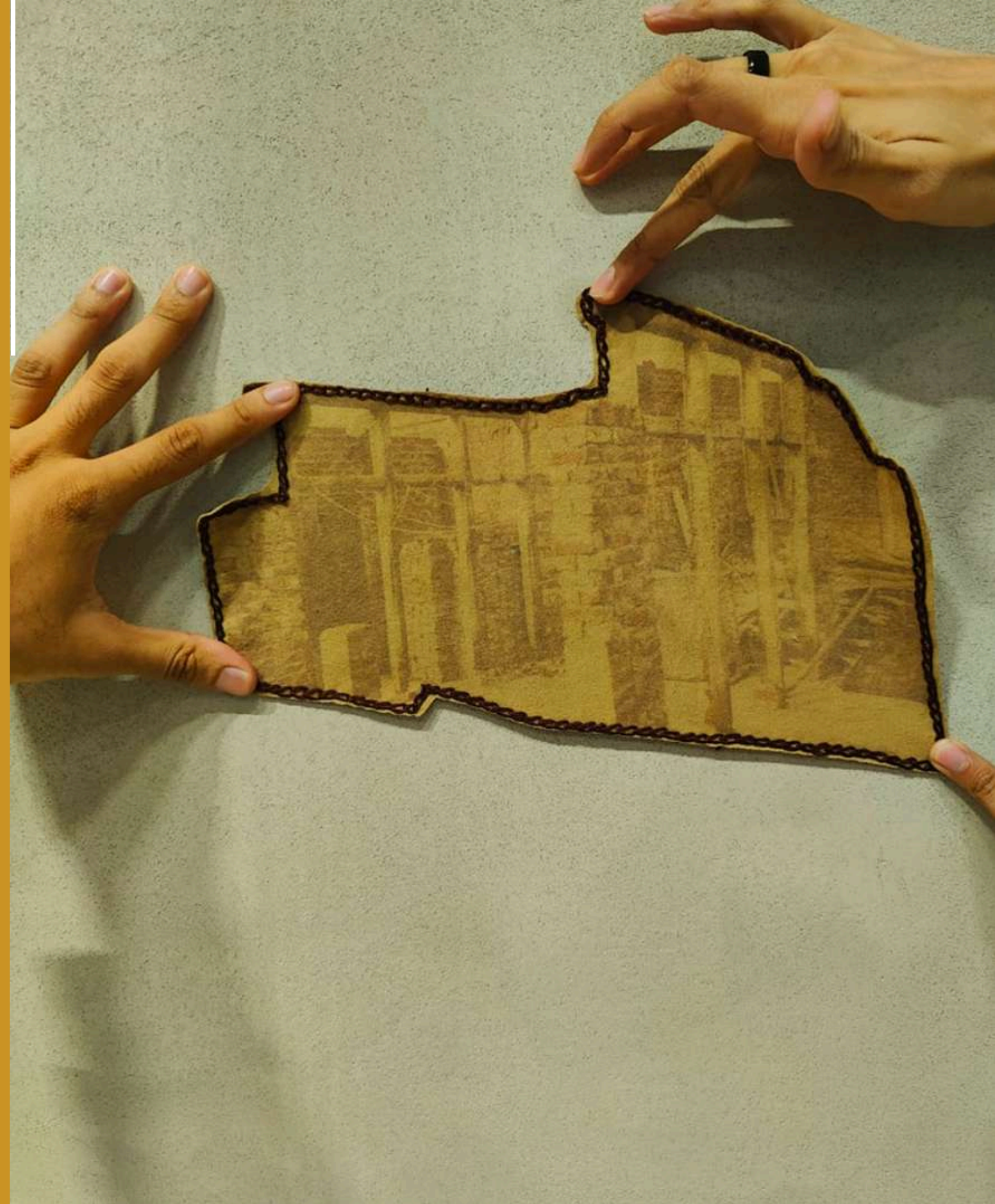


2b.

Reviving Taxali Gate

The artist's fabrication aims to portray a dialogue between the Glorious and contemporary times experienced in Taxali Gate (Tarannum Bazar). In the process, it explores features of personal memories, recollections, and interaction with the architecture, culture, and material of the space that come together to create the identity of who we are today. Our context becomes the strategy of investigation.

Abu Bakar Bashir



2b.

Threads of Legacy: Weaving Stories Across Generations

"Threads of Legacy" is a captivating textile piece that intertwines tradition and storytelling through a delicate mix of feminine fabrics, silks, nets, silk chiffons, and brocades. The design features a poetic patchwork adorned with intricate Mughal-inspired floral and geometric motifs, all brought to life with traditional zardozi embroidery. Metal threads, bullion wire, sequins, Matsuno beads, and French knots come together in a vibrant tapestry, each embellishment echoing tales and wisdom passed down through generations. The forging technique seamlessly binds the elements, symbolizing the continuity of heritage. This piece is not just a textile—it's a living canvas of history, celebrating the art of storytelling through its rich textures and intricate details.

M. Ahsan Nazir



2b.

Threads of Strength: A Tribute to Cholistan's Women

The pieces reflect the resilience and artistry observed in the women of Cholistan. Through their daily lives and work, they skillfully incorporate their surroundings into stunning expressions of creativity. Fabrics and embroidery pieces gathered from these women reflect the incredible craftsmanship passed down through generations. The creations, deeply inspired by their techniques, pay homage to their rich cultural heritage and capture the beauty woven into their daily lives. This collection celebrates their artistry, strength, creativity, and deep-rooted resourcefulness.

Ammara Wahid

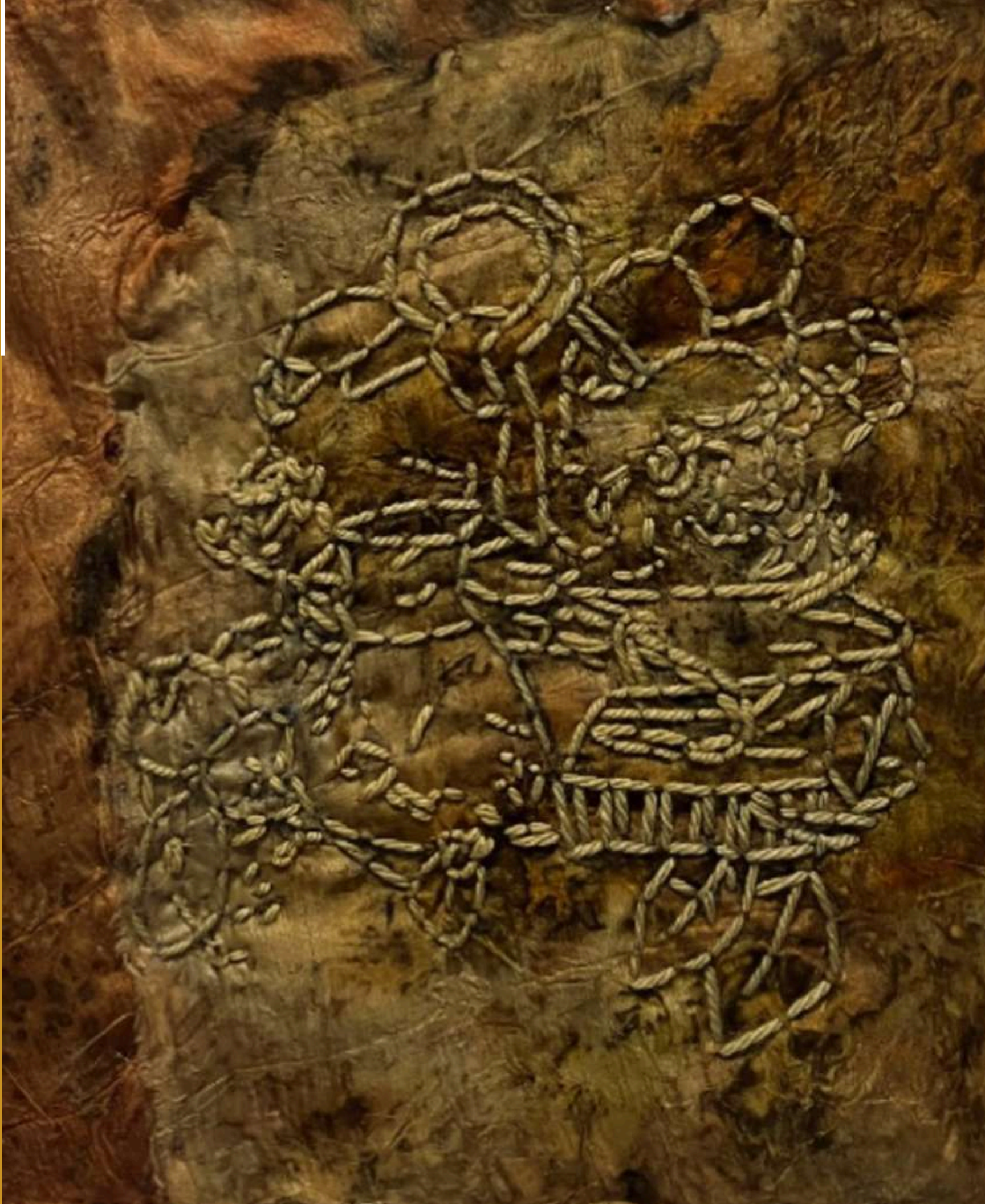


2b.

Threads of Time: An Intergenerational Journey in Fabric Inspired by Joris van Son

The work explores the intersection of art and craft through an intergenerational lens, drawing inspiration from Joris van Son's paintings. This collection combines intricate handwork and traditional fabric techniques passed down through generations. Featuring a vintage colour palette, it uses embroidery, lacework, and weaving techniques inherited from the past. The designs emphasize light and shadow, much like van Son's chiaroscuro. Tones of old, rusty buildings reflect the natural aging of materials. Each piece tells a story not only of artistic influence but also of familial craftsmanship, preserving traditional techniques while infusing them with modern aesthetics.

Maheen Bilal



2b.

Preserving Family History Through Textiles

The fabric woven on the artist's grandfather's power loom in Kasur encapsulates narratives of the 1965 war, profoundly impacting the family. The artist uses this fabric as a vessel to illuminate the resilience displayed by forebears during those challenging periods. This work pays tribute to their sacrifices, immortalizes their experiences, and safeguards cultural heritage for posterity.

Rameez Husnain



2b.

Patriarchal Culture

The work revolves around the unjust patriarchal fabric of society. Women and men internalize the unbalanced social construct without realizing it, pushing aside their sense of judgment. Women sacrifice their needs as they are expected to honour men who hold positions of socio-economic power. Having experienced the disparity of gender roles in her household, the artist highlights this issue through her work. She portrays the journey and emotions experienced in a household that represents patriarchy. Through various textures and materials, she attempts to unmask the realities of male privilege and document her lived experience.

Afifa Sajid



2b.

Frame of Unity

The pieces of memories are a reflection of unity, weaving together threads of interconnectedness and cherished memories. Each embellishment and fabric texture tells a story of unity, evoking feelings of purity and wisdom. The inclusion of the artist's grandmother's passport and imagery of the Hajj (Pilgrimage) stamp adds a layer of depth, symbolizing unbreakable bonds that transcend generations. Through these elements, the work serves as a powerful reflection of enduring values—unity, purity, and wisdom—encapsulating the essence of shared experiences and familial connections.

Fatima Sarfraz



2b.

Roots Fabrics

Roots Fabrics explores the intergenerational connection with personal narratives embedded in old, handmade fabrics passed down from grandparents. Featuring rich brown and rust shades, these textiles serve as carriers of family history and tradition. Each handcrafted piece offers a window into the lives, values, and experiences of previous generations. The earthy tones symbolize continuity, stability, and the enduring nature of family bonds. The work invites viewers to reflect on their family histories and the significance of heirloom textiles, highlighting how preserving and passing down handmade items connects generations.

Ayesha Akram



2b.

The project highlights the generational craftsmanship of smocking, using fabric passed down from the artist's grandmother. Through this technique, she explores how traditional methods remain relevant today. The work reflects a seamless connection between tradition and modernity, emphasizing the enduring relevance of heritage in contemporary design. The fabric serves as a link between past and present, carrying the essence of cultural and personal history embedded in its threads.

Hadiqa Faisal



2b.

Generation to generation, the art of craftsmanship is passed down, preserved through traditionally revered techniques. Each mended piece of cloth is not just an act of repair, but a pursuit of inner peace and a deep passion for the craft. The artist refines and reinvents traditional techniques, transforming them into her strength. Evolving through the intergenerational process, she recognizes that every individual possesses unique skills that help create meaning and find peace. For her, threads, colours, and textile techniques are a powerful source of healing. The process of crafting is more than labor; it embodies stories woven through time. As a surface designer, she expresses herself, rebuilds strength, and honours the artistic journey across generations.

Saima Abaidullah

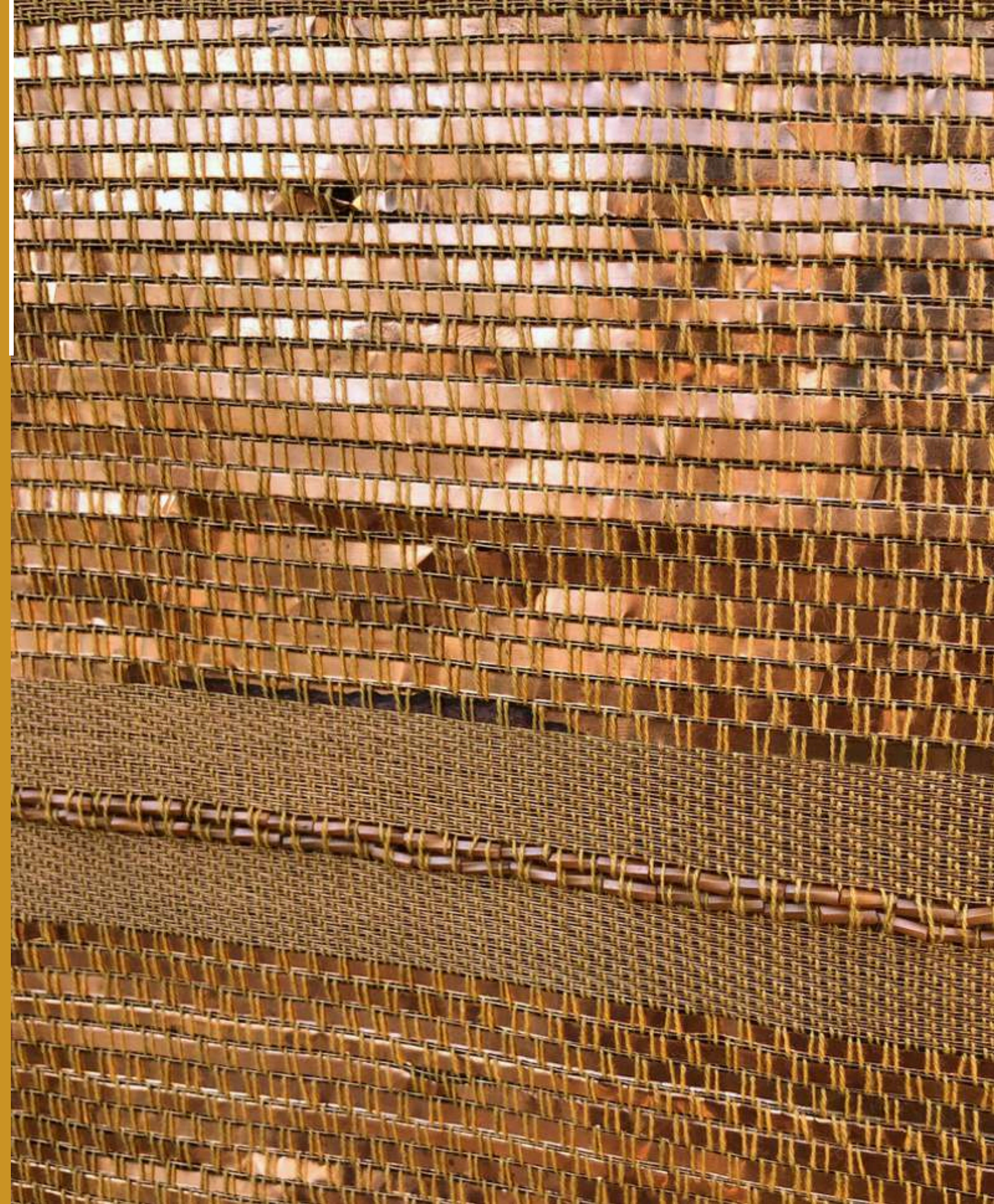


2b.

Interwoven Traditions

The work explores the intricate narrative of intergenerational heritage and craftsmanship through a fusion of textiles and metals, creating a dialogue across generations. The hand-woven fabric, meticulously crafted with copper sheets, tilla, and beads, serves as a tribute to the artist's grandmother's era and the traditions she preserved. Her narratives of using traditional copper pots and utensils, alongside the hand-woven garments she valued, inspired this fabric creation. By integrating copper with fabric, the artist forges a connection between two essential elements of her grandmother's daily life, weaving the craftsmanship into a contemporary framework. The work reflects on the intergenerational links between personal histories and the materials inherited and transformed.

Areeba Aamir



2c.

The Dark Means You Are the Light

The artist's pieces show a perspective of the invisible politics that reside in our homes. Each home follows certain behavioural patterns that govern our lives. While most of the time, these thoughts cause our minds anxiety, the artist's work serves as an attempt to shed light on the energy that each person living in a space generates. Through techniques like bleaching, dyeing, and hand embroidery, integrating the textures formed with different representations of thread, the artist aims to show that we can be the light or the agent of change within any political setup, which can change the narrative we are running through within the society. The writing in dark thread depicts how every human being should accept themselves wholeheartedly, while the aqua embroidery and tilla adda work symbolize the spark each person has inside. The nurturing energy every human being holds can diminish self-doubt, develop resilience, will power, and self-confidence.

Anam Khurram Javed

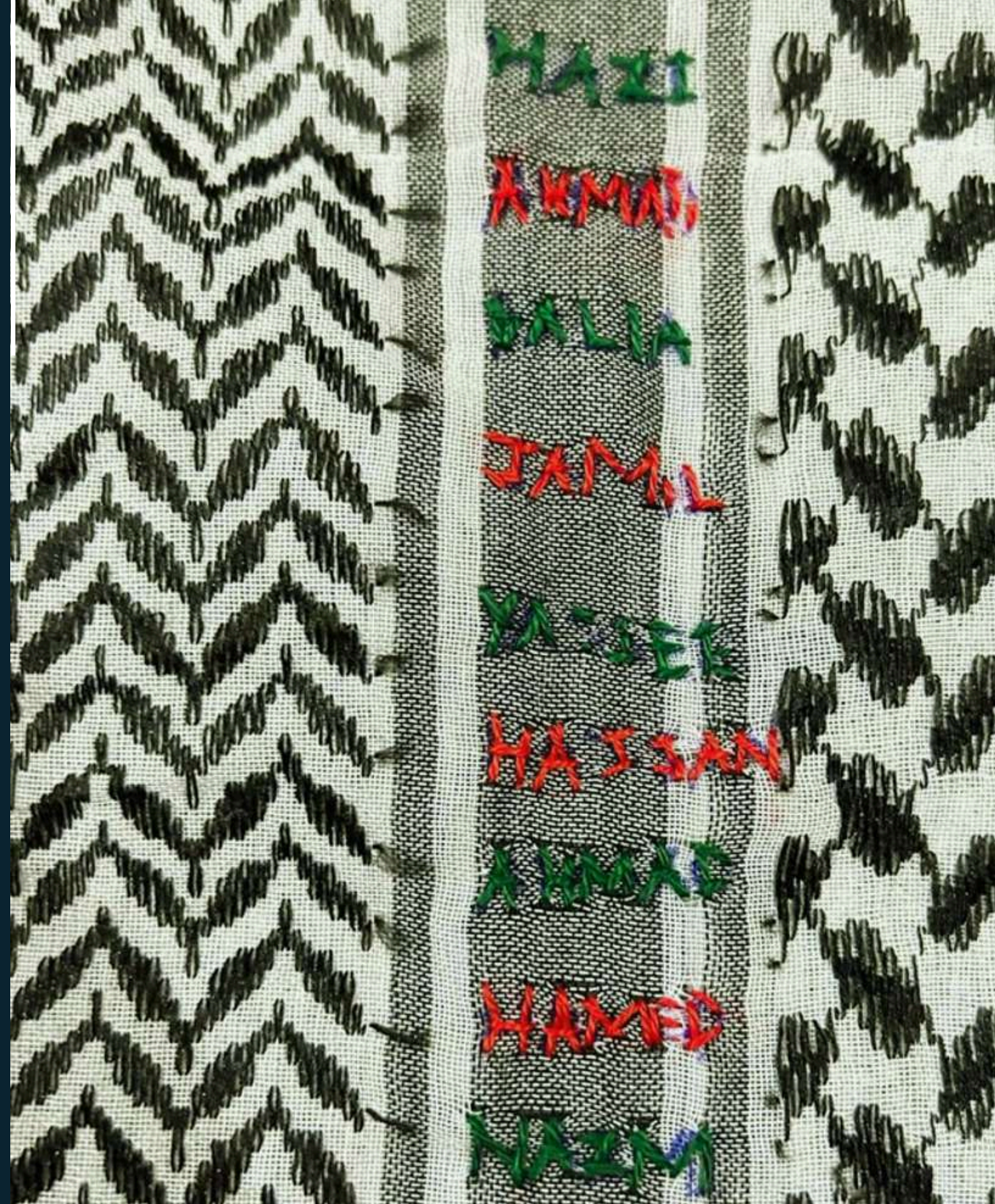


2c.

Tatreez as Witness

The theme of the artist's work is storytelling through textiles, and its objective is to narrate the story of Palestine through the intricate art of Tatreez. The design incorporates the visual language of the recent genocide happening in Palestine. The design language is drawn from the documentation of the land and history, then translated into Tatreez motifs, and then intricately embroidered. As an amalgamation of these elements, a visual representation of the narrative of the struggles and resilience of the Palestinian people is created.

Eisha Yousaf

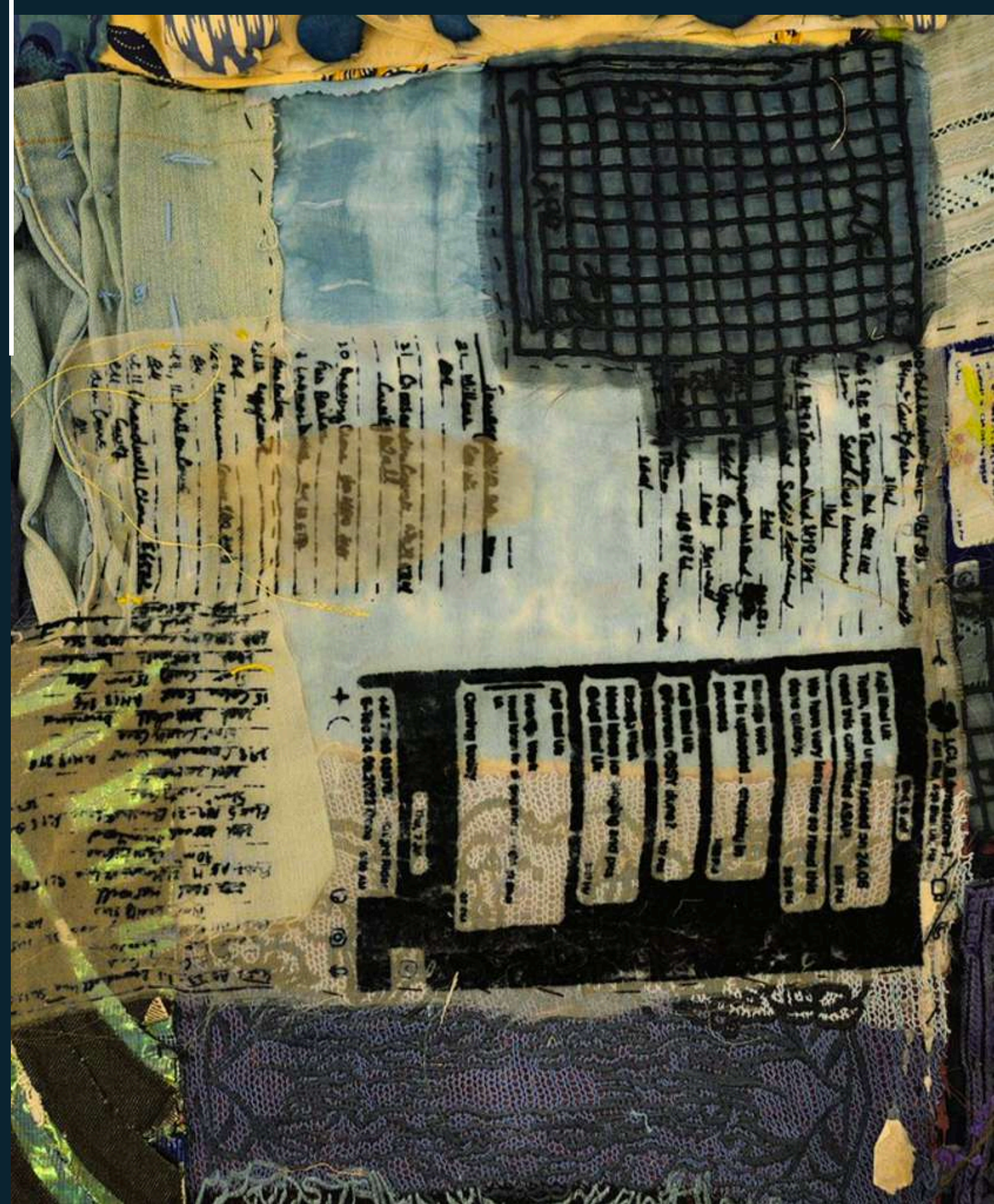


2c.

Layers of Disparity

The artist's work explores the tension between personal experience and political reality, examining the socio-political landscape of housing and economic inequality. Using patchwork techniques, the artist layers floor plans, budget data, and personal communications (such as WhatsApp messages), transforming intimate details into a commentary on the broader housing crisis and financial precarity. The fragmented layers in the work mimic the fragmented lives of those who are caught between the pressures of financial instability and the pursuit of stable housing. Through this textile-based political narrative, the artist aims to draw attention to how personal struggles with housing and finance are part of a much larger system of inequality. This work encourages viewers to question the social structures that shape our basic needs, such as housing and financial security.

Fehreen Mujahid

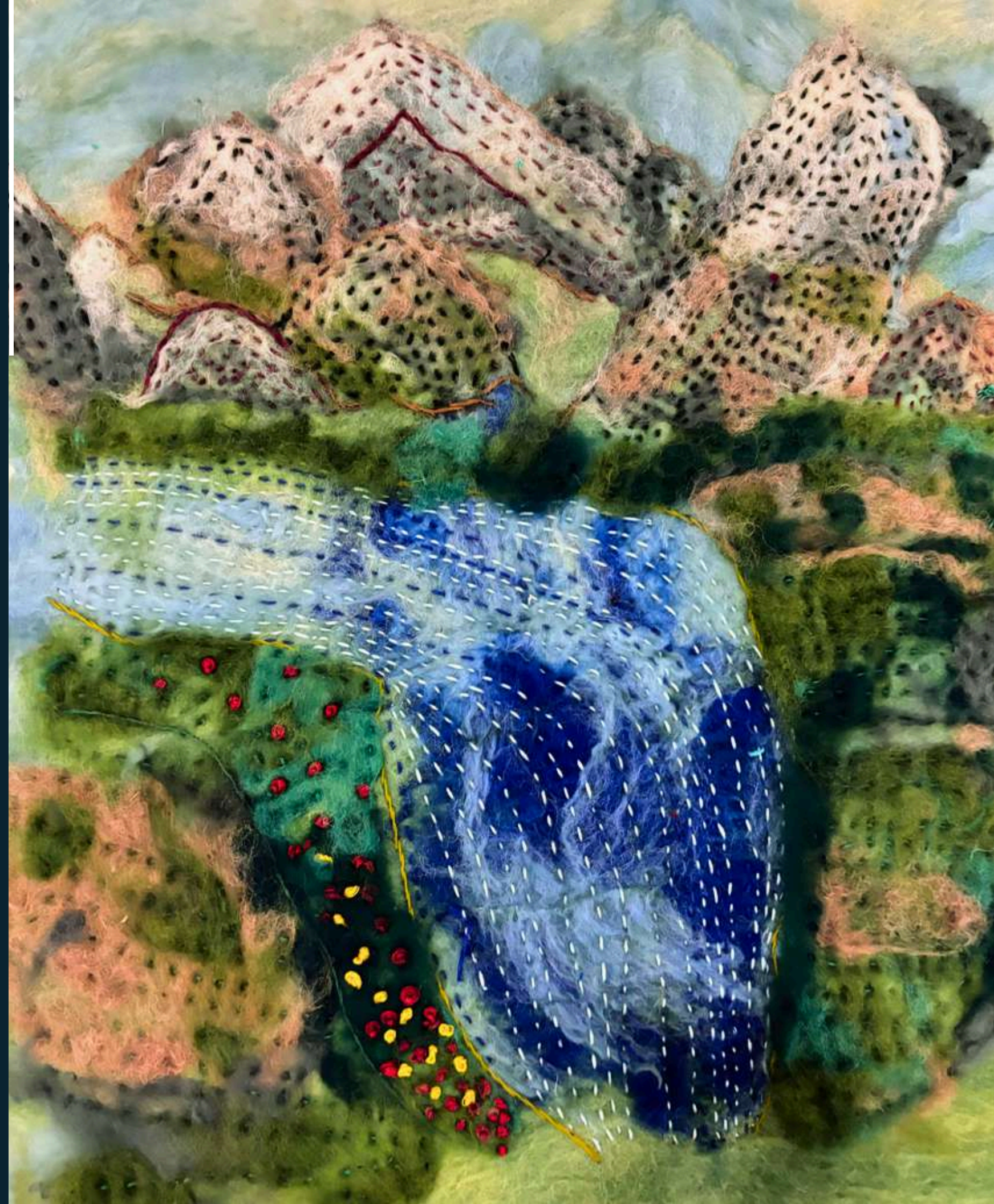


2c.

Earthquake of 2005, Kashmir

This work shows the political side effects of the earthquake of 2005 in Kashmir. How the government of General Musharraf makes vows to rebuild the demolished houses but fails to do so, and the infrastructure remains in shambles. Eventually, the locals rebuild their homes from scratch, but the natural beauty of Kashmir stands the test of time and proves its immense strength despite the natural disasters that occur in the region.

Manahil Fasih

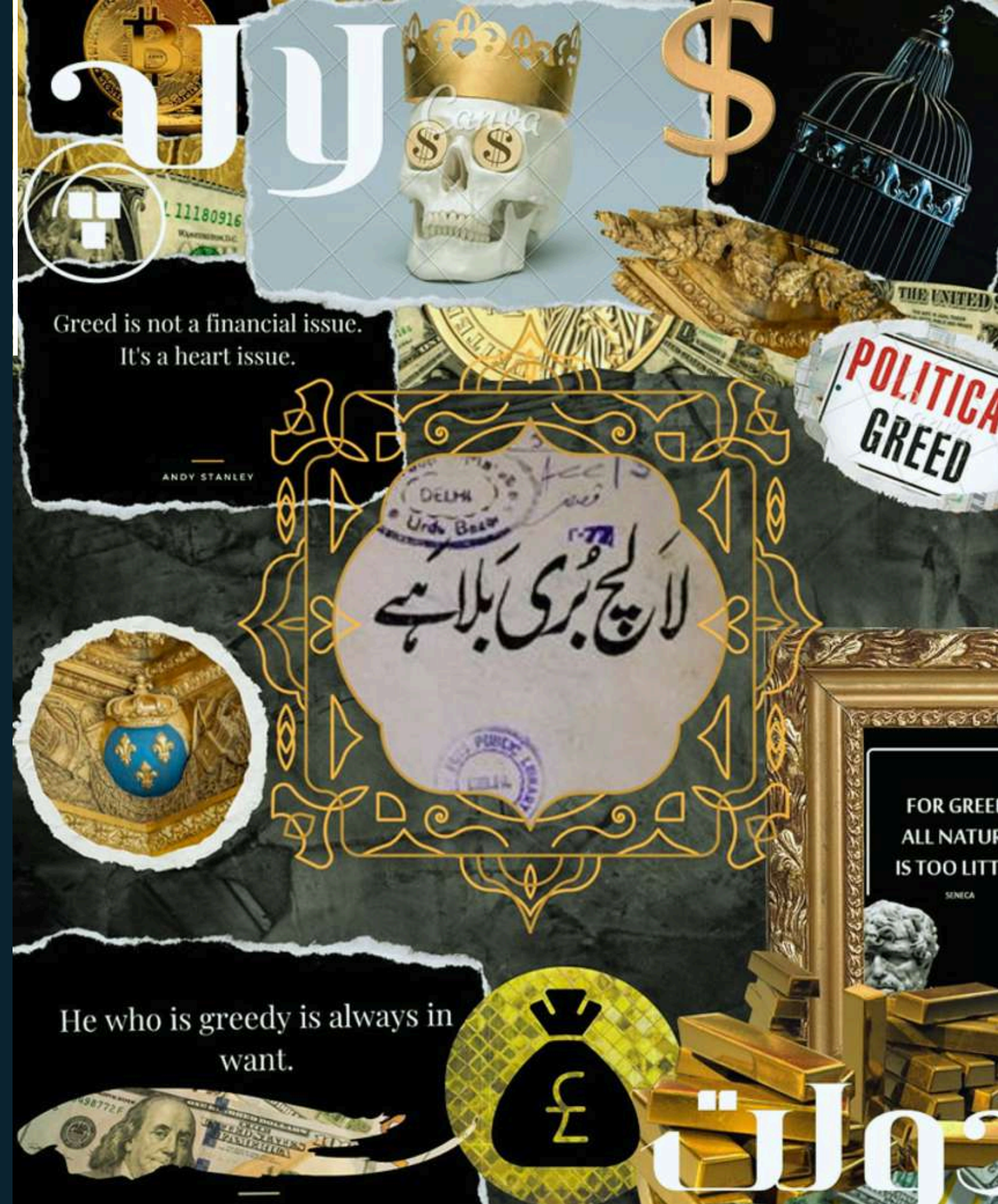


2c.

LALACH / لالچ

A collaborative project by Qurratulain Sonia Kashmiri and Baazyaft, لالچ / LALACH, critically engages with the pervasive greed and systemic corruption in Pakistan's social and political landscapes. This series of works purposefully repurposes textile waste collected over time in the form of scraps, leftover pieces, or deadstock. The outcomes are bold, brash, and unapologetically kitsch statement pieces, taking potential societal neglect, environmental degradation, and turning it into an eye candy critique of political avarice. لالچ / LALACH serves as a call to action, urging viewers to confront the implications of political greed and to reexamine societal values. By intertwining cultural wisdom with social critique, this project invites reflection on the need for reform and the importance of empathy and integrity in addressing societal issues.

Qurratulain Sonia Kashmiri x Baazyaft



2c.

Lotus of Resilience: Weaving Through Chaos

"Lotus of Resilience" is a symbolic representation of both personal and national struggle. The materials used—wires, tire tubes, shopping bags, and seba—reflect the harsh realities of political unrest and societal expectations. The wires, rigid and unyielding, represent the tension and pain of navigating a world that seems unforgiving. Tire tubes, flexible yet strong, capture the essence of survival in challenging times, while shopping bags, once mundane, now symbolize the unexpected beauty found in adversity. The work tells a story of rebirth. The knots and weaves are not just artistic expressions but metaphors; the tighter knots symbolize the constraints of both societal norms and political instability, while the looser knots represent moments of freedom and adaptation.

Zunaira Raza



2c.

The Political Family

The artist's pieces depict the complexity of coming from a family with a political background, a family that has focused on representing the Saraiki ethnic identity in Pakistan. The fabrics illustrate how the artist's family involvement in politics affects their worldview. One piece features a portrait of the artist's grandfather, who is the first politician in the family, whose work and activism on the rights of Saraiki people and areas are worth paying homage to. While the artist makes use of eminent, political fabrics such as the Saraiki blue Ajrak that the grandfather would often wear in political rallies, the artist also uses more "domestic" pieces of clothes like old dupattas and rumaals owned by female family members, such as the grandmother and mother, who are directly affected by this politics. The artist's work focuses on how politics is not a standalone entity, but a multi-layered construct that affects all the lives of those directly or indirectly involved in it.

Suvail Maqsood Langah



2c.

Fungal Fusion: Sustainable Architecture in Pakistani Politics

The artist's work explores the groundbreaking collaboration between architects and mycologists in Islamabad, Pakistan, to revolutionize architecture through mushroom-based materials. The narrative delves into how this innovative approach catches the attention of Pakistani politicians, leading to a governmental push for sustainable construction practices. The fusion of mushroom architecture with political initiatives signifies a transformative shift towards eco-conscious governance and a greener future for Pakistan.

Rameez Husnain



2c.

The Best Way to Look for Something is to Search Where You Were Born
Choosing the artist's birthplace, Muridke, as the theme of the work, denim is used as the main material, and recycled to create the look of the city in a new manner, in order to learn and explore the diversity of this fabric. In this work, the use of patchwork represents unity between communities, how the people of Muridke are connected, and the variation in colour palette shows the types of people. When the artist moved to Lahore for further education, they disassociated completely from their city. However, during the research, they realized that this is the city to which they belong. The artist chose to work with aerial views of Muridke, showing how the city is developing in the present time.

Usama Yaqoob



2c.

Harmony in Fabric: The Morris Influence and the Politics of Craft

The artist's work is inspired by William Morris, a pioneer of the Arts and Crafts movement, whose approach to handcrafted design is also a political critique of industrialization. Morris emphasizes the value of traditional techniques and natural materials as a way to resist the dehumanizing effects of mass production. In the artist's textiles, they aim to carry forward this philosophy, using artisanal methods that reflect both aesthetic beauty and the dignity of labour. By blending Morris's timeless designs with contemporary elements, the artist seeks to create art that speaks to the need for slower, more ethical production in a consumer-driven world, honoring the craftsmanship Morris championed.

Mariam Zahoor



2c.

The artist's work explores the intricate and ironic circle/journey of cotton, a material that originates in our lands, is exported to European countries, and then returns as second-hand fabric in the Lunda market. This journey reflects the complex global dynamics of trade, colonization, and cultural exchange. This series consists of 10 pieces, each crafted on cotton rumals that the artist has meticulously collected from the Lunda market. Central to this series, the artist has embroidered the motif of the Red Dragon, the first British ship to arrive on the subcontinent, and marked the beginning of colonization. By the use of tilla embroidery, the artist has illustrated ships on these rumals, tracing the movement of cotton and its entanglement in the politics of power, exploitation, and resistance. Through this work, the artist aims to create a dialogue about the politics of cotton and its never-ending impact on our cultural and historical landscape.

Zahra Jokhio



3.

WEAVING COMMUNITIES: The Role of Women in WeMend

In every embroidered line, in every patch sewn with care, was the undeniable truth that women have always mended more than fabric, they mend the world around them.

Throughout history, women have been building connections, nurturing relationships, and holding together the fragile threads of social life. WeMend, as presented within the framework of Womanifesto – International Art Exchange, and reimagined in Lahore with BNU's MDSVAD, is not merely about textile art, it is about relationships, memory, and the labour of care. Through this project, women's role in community-building was not just highlighted; it was centered. The process itself became a living testimony to how women have historically repaired not just fabric, but the very fabric of social life.

In many cultures, sewing, embroidery, and textile processes have been more than just creative or economic practices for women; they have been tools for storytelling, resistance, healing, and above all, community building. This ethos lies at the very heart of WeMend, where the physical act of sewing becomes a metaphor for collective repair, solidarity, and care.

The project brought together female artisans from Kaarvan Crafts Foundation, Baazyaft, and local craft communities in Tarogil village, working alongside students and mentors from BNU. Each woman arrived with her own story: some stories rooted in personal struggle, others shaped by generational memory, and still others defined by broader social and political pressures. In Lahore, these women quite literally stitched their personal and collective histories together, creating a seventy-foot-long textile that functioned as a shared autobiography of women's lived experiences.

What made WeMend particularly powerful was its ability to transform what is traditionally seen as “women's work” into a political act of visibility. The embroidered pieces bore witness to lives shaped not only by systemic inequalities and patriarchal pressures, but also by incredible resilience, creativity, and love. These textile works were not merely decorative; they were archives of struggle and survival, stitched into existence by women who, through generations, have used fabric as a form of both self-expression and protest.



3.

The theme of identity—کون؟ کہاں؟ کیوں؟ (Who? Where? Why?)— intersected deeply with the narratives these women brought forward. Through the lens of *Who?* (کون؟), many women shared deeply personal narratives of navigating womanhood in patriarchal societies—tales of suppressed dreams, lost aspirations, and silent sacrifices. *Where?* (کہاں؟) revealed intergenerational transmissions of resilience—how mothers, grandmothers, and daughters pass down both skills and strength. And *Why?* (کیوں؟) brought to the surface the political dimensions of their lives, where personal choices are often shaped by larger socio-political forces beyond their control.

Projects like *WeMend* demonstrate that community-building has always been women's work, not because of biological determinism, but because women have historically been at the intersections of domestic, social, and cultural spaces; spaces that require care, empathy, and attention to the small, overlooked details of life.

Through *WeMend*, these neglected and often disregarded details of delicate stitches, worn patches, embroidered phrases, were magnified into large-scale artistic statements, celebrating the narrative of women's labour as valuable, visible and central to cultural production.

This collaboration between students, artisans, and mentors demonstrated how different kinds of knowledge; academic, craft-based, and experiential can come together meaningfully. The artisans brought centuries of inherited skill; the students brought fresh ideas shaped by contemporary discourse on identity and politics. Together, they created more than fabric, they created a tapestry of care, rooted in shared stories and mutual respect.

Prof. Salima Hashmi



4.

IN THE MAKING

A series of workshops were organised which aimed to bring people across different communities together by sewing, patching, mending together. Groups of people sharing and bridging socio-cultural gaps through storytelling. Workshops were designed with artisans from Baazyaft and Kaarvan who support craft communities. In addition workshops with students from educational institutes such as Comsats aimed to foster an environment of bonding narratives. Lastly the workshops with differently-abled people had therapeutic value. Stitching their narratives which had a calming, meditative value and boosted their self esteem. Participating in sewing activities brought love and affection and became an outlet for healing.



4a.

WeMend x Kaarvan: Stitching Identity, Repairing Futures

Workshop at BNU and YMCA

As part of the growing #WeMend initiative by Womanifesto Art Exchange, Kiran Khan, Head of the Textile Department at BNU MDSVAD and Project Lead, along with Co-Lead Anam Khurram, invited Kaarvan Crafts Foundation under the leadership of CEO Danish Jabbar Khan to co-create a mending installation and lead a public engagement workshop during Lahore Biennale 03 (LB03). Hosted at the YMCA Lahore, the workshop welcomed visitors and community members to engage in sewing, embroidery, patchwork, and fabric upcycling. Through this hands-on experience, the project sought to revive practices of repair and reuse while nurturing creativity, connection, and a sense of belonging reflective of Lahore's cultural fabric.

The installation explored three interconnected themes, each examining how fabric shapes identity—personally, intergenerationally, and politically. These offered participants a lens through which to consider their relationship with textiles, memory, and place.

Unfolding in two phases, #WeMend Womanifesto began by inviting contributors to mend discarded garments in response to thematic prompts transforming cast-off materials into intimate acts of care and renewal. In its second phase, the space at YMCA Lahore evolved into a living installation, where individuals from all walks of life added their stitches, stories, and sentiments to a growing tapestry of shared expression.

Representing Kaarvan Crafts Foundation, Mashal Khan, Head of Strategic Communications, Learning, Sharing & Innovation, led the onboarding of 10 artisan-entrepreneurs who participated in the first phase. Each woman created ten mended patches under the theme “Kaun/Who? Personal Narratives”—a textured exploration of identity through memory, emotion, and lived experience. These pieces conveyed stories of choice, struggle, joy, and perseverance—deeply personal reflections rendered in shades of red, evoking a collective yearning to be seen, heard, and held.

Among the most resonant visual expressions was ‘Kaarvan’ a patch that, while appearing as a gesture of gratitude, carried profound symbolism. Ghazala Sattari

used leftover gold gota to embroider “Kaarvan” onto upcycled red fabric, transforming a worn textile into a vessel of dignity and shared purpose. In doing so, she honoured not just an organisation, but a larger pursuit of people, a community where women empower one another through craft, care, and collective strength. The celebratory shimmer of gold against a weathered backdrop became a bold statement not only of resilience but of communal uplift, where women stitch futures together and rise as one.

In Umaira Haider's work, material became metaphor. Through intricate embroidery, beads, and stitched words, she narrated transformation through the life cycle of a butterfly—each detail capturing motion, change, and emergence.

Humaira Nasir stitched verses of her poetry into fabric, preserving a difficult chapter in quiet thread, while Rimsha Ijaz embroidered her aspirations and internal dilemmas binding hope and endurance into every fiber. Their pieces, like many others, made the invisible visible, asserting each woman's voice, experience, and right to remembrance.

Throughout Lahore Biennale 03, the public was invited to contribute freely to the evolving installation at YMCA Lahore. In addition, BNU organized five focused workshops, where 20 more artisan-entrepreneurs from Kaarvan collaborated with representatives from academic institutions and government bodies co-creating in an act of shared authorship and social expression.

The #WeMend installation born from discarded garments and stories of care and identity has since traveled beyond Lahore. Now showcased in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, and Thailand, it continues to grow as part of an international dialogue on sustainability, repair, and collective healing.

In a world where garments are discarded too easily and stories too often overlooked, #WeMend offers a quiet but compelling reminder: transformation begins with care for what we wear, how we repair, and who we become in the process. By embracing mindful habits like mending, upcycling, and reimagining the lifespan of our clothes, we resist a culture of disposability. More than a trend or aesthetic, this is a call to collective action a shift toward intentional living where each stitch is an act of resistance, resilience, and renewal.







4a.

Kaarvan Women Artisan-Entrepreneurs x WeMend

Bushra Bibi
Rimsha Ijaz
Iram Imran
Eesha
Aroosa Bibi
Fehmida Bibi
Ruksana Bibi
Javeria Bibi
Sarah Bibi
Shameen Bibi
Saima Mukhtar
Sadaf Sabir
Umaira Haider
Humaira Nasir
Ghazala Sattari
Iram Imran
Touqeer Fatima Bokhari
Sana Usman
Raheela Bibi
Atifa Sagheer Akhtar
Laiqa Bibi
Naima Rao
Iram Naveed
Bushra Tabassum
Meesal Zeeshan
Hina Zahid
Adeeba Bibi
Amna Mughal
Sana Imran
Shazia Ali



4b.

Baazyat workshop at YMCA

Baazyaft was invited by TFA faculty Qurratulain Sonia Kashmiri to collaborate on “LALACH/لالچ” – a thought-provoking textile art series under the Political Narrative segment of WeMend Lahore edition. In a series of workshops, Baazyaft’s team, comprising of intersex community (khawajasiras) and women from underprivileged backgrounds, worked with the artist, transforming textile waste into meaningful, hand-made pieces, narrating stories of desire, ambition, covetousness, and destruction that fuel political greed. The team also participated in WeMend project workshops alongside Karvaan Crafts Foundation, and TFA students, faculty, and artisans. Baazyaft is very proud of their participation in this project, as it aligns with their vision to empower and uplift.

Imagined as an intercommunity project created in the form of a growing communal fabric, and in collaboration with social enterprises such as Baazyaft, the project was situated at the historic YMCA building in Lahore, Pakistan, which echoed the inclusive nature of the project. WeMend Lahore was designed as an interactive space hosting continuous workshops throughout LB03, with participation welcomed from a wide variety of stakeholders and participants.





4b.

Artisan Contributors Baazyaft Team members:

Bushra Ali Khan (CEO)
Nazia Latif (Lead Trainer)
Maya Malik
Chand/Ammad Ali
Aaminah Malik
Kaynat Irfan
Majid Ali
Mudasar Akbar Hussain
Syed Gohar Hussain
Hina bibi
Kishwar bibi
Bisma bibi
Faiza bibi



4c.

Differently-abled communities at YMCA

Participation of the differently-abled community was significant as 10 different schools with students on different levels of autism spectrum, hearing and vision impaired students as well as various NGO's that work for the betterment of the children were included.

The intention behind the collaboration was to celebrate their individual capacities and to make sure that the social fabric that represents our culture can be of true representation. The schools who engaged were as follows:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder Welfare Trust.
- Government Shadab Training Institute of Special Education for Mentally Challenged.
- Government Institute for the Blind Girls.
- Government Secondary School of Special Education for Hearing Impaired (Boys).
- Government Secondary School of Special Education for Hearing Impaired (Girls).
- Government Secondary School for Physically Disabled Children.
- Government Special Education Center.
- Government Institute for Slow Learners.
- Impact for Kids.
- Rising Sun Education and Welfare Society.

The participation of the students from the differently abled community was overwhelming and emotional for the team. They brought with them; hand embroidered pieces of detailed imageries, patchwork as well as emblems of their schools to show their representations.

Their happiness was evident from the enthusiasm with which they participated, they stitched their pieces into the Womanifesto piece with so much dedication that the experience of guiding and watching them left our eyes in tears and our hearts were full of humility. This made us realise the true meaning of diversity, social equity and inclusion.

The boys from the school of hearing impaired as well as the blind girls school, both had an instructor and one manager accompanying them. The hearing impaired did all the embroidery on their own and had a profound sense of autonomy over their work. They embroidered, and stitched the fabric into the main piece by themselves and in a very independent way. The blind girls had a guide/instructor who would tell them to attach different pieces of knitting which they had started developing progressively once they were briefed about the project by our team 2 weeks prior to the workshop. Since the blind girls school frequently held knitting classes and IMPACT school held fabric painting and patchwork activities, they incorporated these techniques within the pieces they brought to attach to the main Womanifesto piece so that their signature as artists also remained distinct and their identity shined as they were also an integral part of the society. They brought 3D elements like lace and a knitted candle, which they stitched on another base fabric which was then attached to our main piece. The people who were from Impact school had done patchwork which was guided by teachers and then added. These schools worked with the students before they came for the workshop and had them work on the fabrics.

Moreover, the Boys school of the hearing impaired brought breathtaking embroidered pieces that were vibrant and colourful. They stitched their pieces with so much enthusiasm and were also choosing the space where they wanted to attach their piece. One of the children; Danish, who was the youngest from the group looked up at the team members and smiled while gesturing to how firmly and beautifully he had stitched the piece.

The students from Rising Sun Institute brought a variety of different textile pieces that had the image of a sun; their logo, and the students from Shadaab school had hand embellished an intricately detailed piece that was added to our communal fabric. What stunned us as human beings at the core, was the love every participant from the differently abled community carried within them for their craft. As well as the confidence with which they participated. This was an experience that left a lasting impact on us as instructors and researchers, as the energy and empathy being practiced in the room was undeniable and made us realise the true meaning of equal representation of identity as an artist within the society.









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GOVT. SECONDARY INSTITUTE
FOR
THE BLIND GIRLS, LAHORE



4d.

Comsats at YMCA

The Womanifesto workshop was a collaborative activity conducted with students of Visual Communication Design from the Department of Art and Design (DoAD), COMSATS University. It brought together 25 first-year students and 7 final-year students, accompanied by Facilitator Huma Maqbool and the Head of Design, Zain ul Abidin.

For many of the young designers, Womanifesto served as an eye-opening experience. At this stage in their academic journey, design sophomores begin to explore the basics of design through observation, participation, making, and reflection. Approaching embroidery and stitching for the first time, students experimented with a variety of stitches, many of which were unique and personal. They began to understand that design can emerge in unexpected ways, especially when we consciously engage with materiality.

Although initially overwhelmed by the scale and curatorial depth of the project, students gradually found their footing through observation and hands-on participation. As they worked with fabric and thread, their tactile senses were activated through touch, sight, smell, and even sound came into play awakening memories, evoking nostalgia, and triggering deeply personal experiences. Many students chose to embroider words that held special meaning for them, using different stitches to add texture and expression. The resulting works communicated powerfully, even without verbal explanation. Through this process, students began to recognize how materials carry cultural and contextual significance, how traditions are passed down, intertwined, and embedded in our social fabric.

The way students handled the fabric carefully and with affection reflected the emotional and personal connections they formed during the workshop. They came to see material not just as a surface, but as a medium through which stories, identities, and memories can be shared. By the end of the session, the students emerged joyful, reflective, and inspired. For many, it was their first encounter with participatory design on such a meaningful scale. It left a lasting impact and an experience they continue to reference as they make new connections in their design practice.





آواز است رکش



4e.

THE WAY FORWARD

Sharjah Biennale

Prof. Kiran Khan, visited the project at Sharjah Biennale's 16th edition "To Carry", housed in the iconic landmark Flying Saucer site in Sharjah, UAE. She was accompanied by TFA faculty member and WeMend contributing artist Qurratulain Sonia Kashmiri, who contributed "LALACH/لالج", a series of textile artworks made in collaboration with artisans of Baazyaft.

Sharjah Biennale 16th Edition (2025): To Carry\

Organised by the Sharjah Art Foundation, and curated by Alia Swastika, Amal Khalaf, Megan Tamati-Quennell, Natasha Ginwala and Zeynep Öz, Sharjah Biennial 16 featured works by more than 190 participants, including over 200 new commissions, which were presented across the Emirate of Sharjah.





الطبق الطائر

في 1970، تم اكتشاف طبق الطائر في منطقة الشرق الأوسط. كان هذا الطبق مصنوعاً من الخشب والبرونز، وكان له شكل يشبه الطائرة. تم اكتشافه في منطقة الشرق الأوسط، وكان له شكل يشبه الطائرة. تم اكتشافه في منطقة الشرق الأوسط، وكان له شكل يشبه الطائرة.

1970s

the flying saucer

The Flying Saucer, also known as the UFO, is a common sight in the desert. It is a small, round, flat object that is often found in the sand. It is made of wood and metal, and it has a shape that is similar to a flying saucer. It is often found in the desert, and it is a common sight in the region.

الطبق يحط

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1980s

the flying saucer lands

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سوبر ماركت
المايا لاند

في 1980، تم اكتشاف سوبر ماركت المايا لاند في منطقة الشرق الأوسط. كان هذا السوبر ماركت مصنوعاً من الخشب والبرونز، وكان له شكل يشبه الطائرة. تم اكتشافه في منطقة الشرق الأوسط، وكان له شكل يشبه الطائرة. تم اكتشافه في منطقة الشرق الأوسط، وكان له شكل يشبه الطائرة.

al maya superm

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ما هان ليه

Never Ignore
You Don't Realize
They Can
I'm already with a
Now Much
You

لاله

5.

COLLABORATORS - BNU - MDSVAD | LBF | Womanifesto

BNU MDSVAD

The Mariam Dawood School of Visual Arts & Design (MDSVAD) at Beaconhouse National University, under Dean Rashid Rana, is a hub of creative excellence, fostering innovative art and design practices that drive social impact. Through its diverse projects, MDSVAD bridges gaps between art, culture, and community, promoting inclusivity, empathy, and cultural preservation. Since the graduation of the first batch in 2007, it has consistently produced young artists, designers, filmmakers, and social change makers who have garnered success in their fields.

From interactive installations like "Communal Fabric" to interdisciplinary collaborations and community engagement initiatives, MDSVAD's work embodies a commitment to social responsibility, cultural exchange, and artistic expression. By nurturing creative talent and encouraging critical thinking, MDSVAD inspires a new generation of artists, designers, and thinkers to shape Pakistan's cultural landscape.

Lahore Biennale Foundation

The Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF) under Qudsia Rahim, Executive Director, announced "Of Mountains and Seas", the third edition of the Biennale, curated by John Tain in Fall 2024. LB03 was built on the success of the inaugural Lahore Biennale in March 2018 and the second edition in early 2020, curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, by showcasing groundbreaking contemporary art from around the world centered on the themes of ecologies and sustainable futures. "Of Mountains and Seas" showcased the convergence of art, environmental awareness, and global collaboration to help imagine alternative futures.

The Biennale invited sixty-some artists representing thirty countries to present an array of site-specific exhibits and immersive installations that drew attention to issues caused by environmental degradation, along with illuminating vernacular and indigenous heritage as transformative resources for future sustainability. It explored these themes from the perspectives of Pakistan and the Global South more broadly.

Womanifesto

Initiated in 1997, under WOMANIFESTO – International Art Exchange it brings together exhibitions, workshops, and artist-in-residence programmes to foster cultural exchanges and strengthen connections with community groups. Its mission is to enhance international cultural relations and engage local communities, thus promoting new and emerging artistic expressions. The initiative focuses on the role of women and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, engaging artisans and exploring traditional materials and lifestyles. Womanifesto's WeMend is an ongoing participatory workshop, begun in 2023 and realised in a dozen places so far, that invites visitors and community groups in different locations to engage in sewing, embroidery, and patchwork. In our fragmented times, WeMend explores the possibilities of convergence, offering time and space to slow down – to commune, converse, and connect. WeMend was first introduced in 2023 at Womanifesto: Flowing Connections exhibition in Bangkok offering a social workshop space inviting individuals and community groups to join in the ongoing activity to sew/embroider/patch/upcycle-of-cut pieces of fabrics gathered locally. Since it has spread in various locations – Thailand, India, Sharjah, Japan, Australia, Switzerland, Germany, UK, USA and Pakistan – the project explores the possibilities of convergence in our current fragmented time. The patched cloth from all locations is combined into one continuous piece bringing together cultural imprints accentuating interrelationship between people, and installed as a shelter-like structure at exhibitions where visitors are invited to continue attaching patches and make the fabric grow.

WeMend is initiated by Womanifesto artists: Nitaya Ueareeworakul, Jamilah Preenun Nana and Varsha Nair.

<https://www.womanifesto.com/wemend/>

WeMend

2023 - 2025

WOMANIFESTO
International Art Exchange, Thailand

Thailand



Womanifesto: Flowing Connections
Bangkok Art and Culture Center (BACC)
Weekend was conceptualized for and launched at the above exhibition where the project was set up as an ongoing workshop in a designated space for the 3-month exhibition period by organizers, Jantikh Prasanna Nana, Nitya Ussawornakul and Yasha Nari.

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Sunset on the bridge, Udon Thani
A community craft market at Nong Pra Jak public park, Udon Thani main town. Led by Nitya Ussawornakul.

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A community craft market at Nong Pra Jak public park, Udon Thani main town. Led by Nitya Ussawornakul.



Japan

Tei Kobayashi's home, Nagura village, Nagano

"For this Weekend project women from nearby villages gathered on the wooden veranda of my farmhouse in the mountain village of Nagura". The profound mountain (fengshui) energetically sits before us... I feel her each morning. Poets, Akemi refers artists, poets, weavers, painters... we shared some days together dreaming, chatting, creating something with all the pieces of ancient ancestral knowings, once so cherished now cast aside and forgotten. "Bers" (moss) mended into felt over pieces of the finest woven silk kimono... all the joy and sorrow of so many mothers and grandmothers speaking through threads of time." Led by Tei Kobayashi.

Tei Kobayashi's home, Nagura village, Nagano
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India



Gazra Café, Shree Maharani Chinnabai Street Udyogpally, Baroda

Komal Mistry's home, Baroda
Founded in 1964 by the Royal Family of Gondwadi, Maharani Chinnabai Street Udyogpally (MCSU) is a self-governing women's charitable and vocational training organization. Gazra Café at MCSU opened in 2023 as part of an initiative to uplift the LGBTQ+ community in Baroda. Participants in Weekend included staff and visitors to Gazra Café, and individuals from the women artists group - Remembering Narver: Gangi Rathi, Komal Mistry, Shreemati Sata and Roshanika. Led by Varsha Nair on Gazra Café and Komal Mistry in her home.

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Australia



UP Studio, Sydney

Weekend was set up in Sue Pottery's studio. Led by Jyoti Lakshmi group: Prashant Sundarshakti, Virginia Hylton, Sue Pottery, Helen Grace.

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Level Up Cowork and Creation Center, Pueblo

Weekend involved the collaboration of local residents including indigenous community members. Set up by Helen Ethercliffe Dunn.



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USA

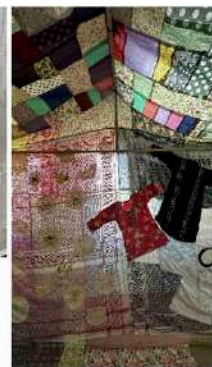
UAE

Al-Madam Art Centre, Sharjah

Led by a local women's group at the art centre.

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Led by a local women's group at the art centre.



Scotland

The Ignorant Art School 51-in-84 | Outside the Circle, Cooper Gallery, University of Dundee

Weekend was a participatory installation presented as part of the exhibition and event programme. The Ignorant Art School 51-in-84 Outside the Circle. Curated by Sophia Tadias Hani; Spatial Design and Install by Rhona Jack; Curatorial Assistant - Peter Amore.

A special event: A Stitching Perspectives Class: Weekend was also delivered as part of the programme. Participants include Cooper Gallery visitors and Dundee Textile Design (Claire Adelle, Heather Glazard, Frances Svensson, Joana Waka and students).



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Germany

Community Garden, Herzfelde

Weekend was held in a small village northeast of Berlin, gathering the local community and visiting artists friends, organized together with the local parish and village club. Led by Maria Schaefer.

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Pakistan

Lahore Biennale 63, YMCA Lahore, Lahore

Curated by Janta Tam. The iteration of Weekend for Lahore has been developed by faculty and students from the Textile, Fabric, and Accessories Design department at BNU SWAD at the invitation of the Lahore Biennale Foundation, working with artisans from Kaarwan Crafts Foundation and Sanyal. Developed under the lead of Kira Khan and co-lead Aamir Khuram, with Risham Syed and Risham Khan as advisors.



Now at
Ceramic House
Sharjah Biennial 16

5a.

TEAM

Kiran Khan

Project lead

Researcher, HOD TFA BNU, textile designer, fibre artist

Kiran Khan is a fibre artist, craft intervention expert, and an academician. Khan is a professor and founding member and head of the Textile, Fashion and Accessories department at BNU. Khan is a fibre artist, craft intervention expert, and academician. Her work revolves around the idea of craft sustainability and capacity building. She is one of the pioneer members of MDSVAD and has been with BNU since its inception 22 years ago. Holding a bachelor's degree in textile design from National College of Arts and an MSc in linguistics from BNU, she believes in the power of language in communication, shaping her focus on the language of textiles. Recognized with the prestigious Percy Brown award for Art History, Kiran has taught at the Pakistan School of Fashion Design and received further training at La Chambre Syndicale De la Couture, France, and Bunka College of Fashion, Tokyo. She was an Artist in Residence at Art Address, Canada, in July 2018. She does craft intervention projects with artisans. She was awarded BNU Excellence in Service Award in 2023 for her 20 year academic commitment to BNU and is the recipient of the Linguistics Alumni Excellence Award in December 2023. She has collaborated with various artisans on craft intervention projects. She led a UNESCO craft capacity building project in 2021 and runs her brand, Tanka: a brand dedicated to celebrating artisans. In 2021, she collaborated with fiber artist Liz Williamson on the Weaving Eucalyptus Project. She served as the Executive Director of Design Summit 01: a collaborative event between Beaconhouse National University, Rhode Island School of Design, Punjab Walled City Authority and various other partners that took place in Lahore in March 2024. She was project lead for Womanisfest : WeMend project for Lahore Biennale 03 years which travelled to Sharjah Biennale in February 2025 . Khan looks at fibre based critical enquiries, investigations that augment our understanding of the context we live in. She feels fibre, the smallest tangible unit, accommodates, molds and stretches and is the most contextually resistant material resonating the capacity to narrate stories & to create dialogue.

Anam Khurram Javed

Co-lead

Anam Khurram is a Textile Designer/Fibre Artist and Educator from Lahore, Pakistan. Her design practice revolves around hand embroidery, fabric manipulation, felting, recycling, sustainability and product development. Her work as a scholar is based on Atkans/Mind-blocks that exist in the textile studios. Her research maps energetic sources that create tangible obstacles within the studio environment. It brings awareness to the importance of hidden curriculum, body language and the spiritual aspects of the classroom.

Fehreen Mujahid

Sewing and Production lead

Fehreen is a Lahore-based Textile Designer and Fibre Artist. Her work explores personal narratives by combining different aspects of life through the use of various materials, including resin, screen printing, and macramé. She uses these techniques to reflect on memory, emotion, and daily experiences. She is the founder of ArtiKraft Studio, a creative venture that focuses on resin art and handcrafted candles. Her practice also includes macramé, where she works on commissioned macramé art projects, incorporating this technique as an expressive element in her broader creative work.

Samak Hamid

Sewing and Production Lead

Samak is a textile designer and fibre artist passionate about preserving traditional crafts while infusing them with modernity. She explores techniques like ecoprinting, block printing, embroidery, and weaving. As a surface developer, Samak transforms traditional carpet narratives into contemporary styles, using carpets as canvas. Her work highlights the often-neglected artisanal communities, advocating for fair recognition and rewards for their skills. Through her work, she bridges the connection between heritage and innovation.

5b.

Artisan Contributors BNU Sewing Contributors:

Amir Ali
Syed Asif Abbas Hamdani
Munir Gill
Amjad Ali
Basit Ali

Tarogil community Artisans:

Arshad Chacha
Saima Bibi
Abid sb
Sana bibi
Fakhra bibi
Riffat bibi
Sufyan sb
Amna Bibi

