

# VAF

VISITING ARTIST FELLOWSHIP

## Magazine



The Lakshmi Mittal and Family  
**SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE**  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



FEATURING THE MITTAL INSTITUTE'S 2020-21 VISITING ARTIST FELLOWS

# VAF

VISITING ARTIST FELLOWSHIP

## Magazine

*Cover Credit:*

**SUNANDA KHAJURIA**

THE COLD MOUNTAIN, 2014

*Acrylic on Canvas, 153 x 125 cm*

This painting is inspired by Hanshan, a figure during the Chinese Tang Dynasty, whose name means "Cold Mountain." Hanshan's collection of poems tell the story of his retreat to Cold Mountain to live a life of hermetic simplicity, seeking Taoist and Zen enlightenment in nature. In this painting, the central figure is a female who finds herself amid nature and shifting landscapes.

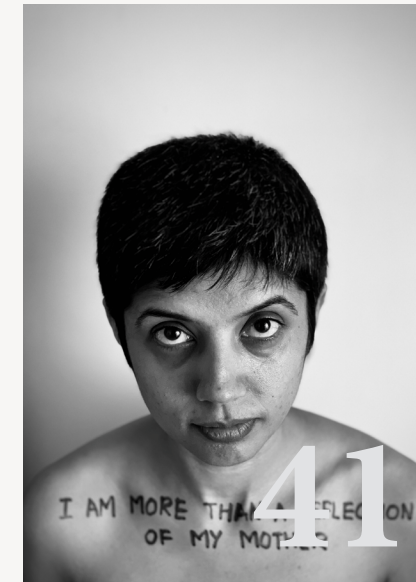
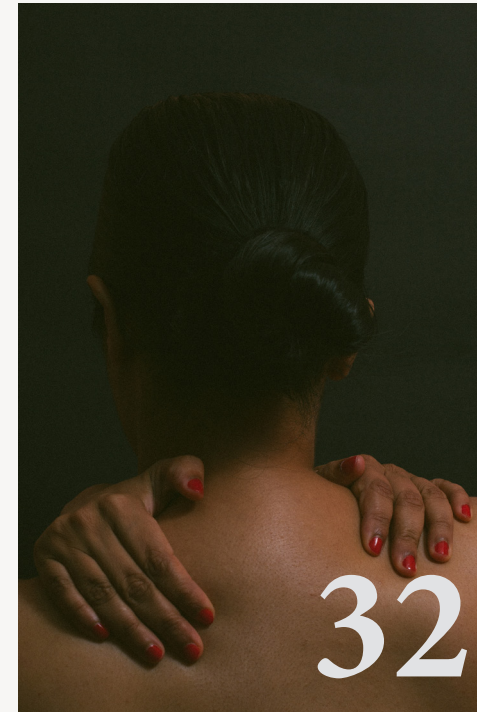


The Lakshmi Mittal and Family

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



About the Fellowships 06

2020-21 Fellows 08

**JAVARIA AHMAD** 10  
*Mixed Media*

**RICHI BHATIA** 14  
*Photography*

**ISHITA CHAKRABORTY** 18  
*Mixed Media*

**SUDIPTA DAS** 22  
*Installation*

**PROMOTESH DAS PULAK** 26  
*Installation*

**BUNU DHUNGANA** 30  
*Photography*

**AMMARA JABBAR** 34  
*Sound Installations*

**PRAGATI DALVI JAIN** 38  
*Photography & Video*

**SUNANDA KHAJURIA** 42  
*Painting*

**INSHA MANZOOR** 46  
*Installation*

**NAJMUN NAHAR KEYA** 50  
*Mixed Media*

**MAHEEN NIAZI** 54  
*Sculpture & Painting*

**PATTABI RAMAN** 58  
*Photography*

# ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIPS

Each year, the Mittal Institute's Arts Program offers Fellowships to four mid-career artists from across South Asia through a competitive process and invites them to Harvard's campus for two months. Artists are given the opportunity to engage with Harvard faculty and students in the classroom and showcase their work through a public talk and exhibition.

Due to the inevitable programmatic changes that came with COVID-19, the 2020-2021 Visiting Artist Fellowship (VAF) cycle was reimagined to take place in the virtual world. The Mittal Institute selected 13 Visiting Artist Fellows, including photographers, sculptors, videographers, and mixed media artists, to attend a series of four online seminars curated for them to support their long-term practice, while simultaneously contributing to thought-provoking discussions among their peers and the faculty facilitating the class.

The selected artists have joined these conversations from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal and will attend classes on art history, creative writing, urban design, and more through the use of Harvard's intellectual and creative resources.

Since the launch of the Visiting Artist Fellowship, the Mittal Institute has welcomed 23 artists from South Asia to campus to conduct independent research that explores critical issues in South Asia through the lens of art and design. At



the Institute, the Fellows receive access to Harvard's physical and digital libraries and archives, Harvard Museums and local museums, the opportunity to attend classes and mentorship from faculty, and a platform to share their work through presentations, exhibits, and the Mittal Institute's website.

The profound and inspirational work of our artists has not stopped despite the COVID-19 pandemic, and we spoke with them to discuss the inspiration behind their career as an artist, what they hope to learn during their time as a Visiting Artist Fellow, and their thoughts and ruminations on the artwork they have each presented in this magazine. In the following pages, you will read the artists' thoughts on these subjects in their own words, and we hope that it will inspire you to enter their world and see their work through their eyes.

## SUNANDA KHAJURIA

### NOSTALGIA, 2014

*Acrylic on Canvas, 153 x 125 cm*

How do you feel when you learn that you will have to depart the place you have been living for a long time and travel to a new one? The painting "Nostalgia" represents a longing for the past and homesickness, and the difficulties in acclimating to a new place or culture with new people.



# 2020-21 FELLOWS

- 1 **JAVARIA AHMAD**  
Pakistan
- 2 **RICHI BHATIA**  
India



- 5 **PROMOTESH DAS PULAK**  
Bangladesh
- 6 **BUNU DHUNGANA**  
Nepal
- 7 **AMMARA JABBAR**  
Pakistan



- 10 **INSHA MANZOOR**  
India
- 11 **NAJMUN NAHAR KEYA**  
Bangladesh



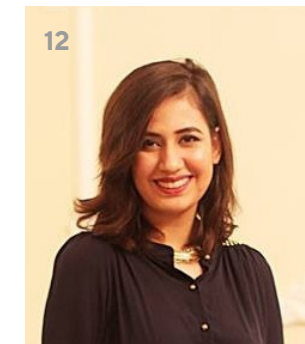
- 3 **ISHITA CHAKRABORTY**  
India
- 4 **SUDIPTA DAS**  
India



- 8 **PRAGATI DALVI JAIN**  
India
- 9 **SUNANDA KHAJURIA**  
India



- 12 **MAHEEN NIAZI**  
Pakistan
- 13 **PATTABI RAMAN**  
India





**FOR YOU, A THOUSAND TIMES OVER...**

*Tea bags and ceramics, 5 x 14 feet, 2016*

This traditional wedding dress made out of used tea bags is a comment upon the match-making tea ceremony tradition. Unfortunately, many girls have to practice this tradition multiple times before finally getting approved for a marriage. Every tea a girl serves that gets rejected becomes demeaning baggage on her personality.

# JAVARIA AHMAD

PAKISTAN

*Mixed Media*

Through her multidisciplinary art practice using ceramics as a major medium of her work, Javaria Ahmad explores the ambivalent relation of everyday utilitarian objects and practices with memories of constricted domesticity and womanhood in a patriarchal society. Storytelling and puns, often layered, pervade her work.

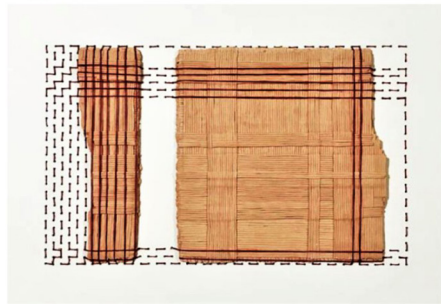
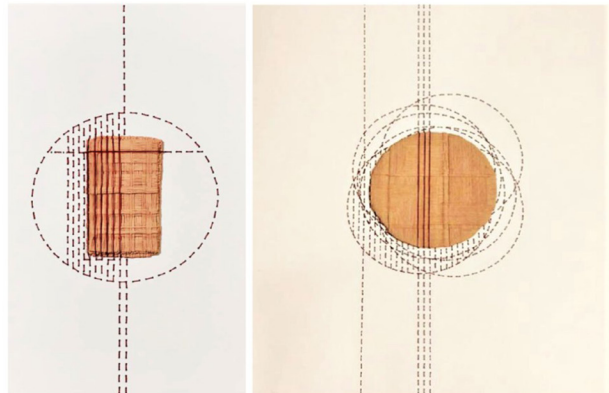
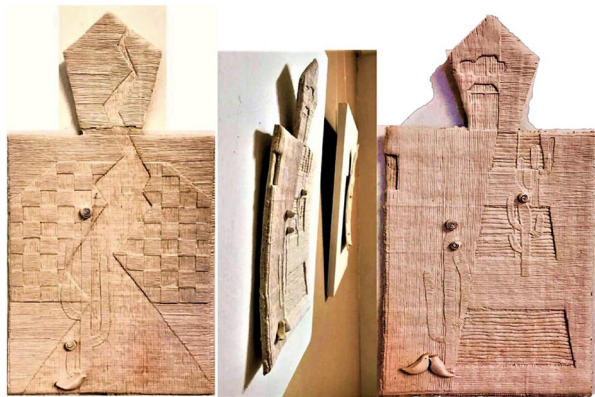
“Despite being attracted to the free-spirited nature of art and eager to pursue it as a career, actually doing so was not an easy task for me. Belonging to a family of doctors and engineers, it felt as though it was decided at my birth that I would one day become a doctor. I had to rebel against all of these prescribed norms and take full responsibility for the consequences of continuing to study art.

At a young age, numerous factors kick-started my interest in art. My very first inspirations were my elder sister’s sketch-books full of colored pencil cartoons and botanical drawings. Unfortunately, I was never allowed to touch them. I remember the feeling of unrelenting bore-

dom in the monotonous school routine where art was the only class I enjoyed, and “playing house” with my cousins — spending entire afternoons making mud pots and engraving our imaginary houses in the earth. I’ll never forget the chalk drawings I used to make on my father’s steel cupboard, which I quickly erased before he entered the house every evening.

Belonging to a village once famous for its pottery, my childhood was spent playing around clay ovens, the excavated terracotta pots of Harappan civilization, and the religious practice of burying in the soil. I can now trace these as the beginnings of my fascination with ceramics. The pliable nature of clay that transforms





## LITTLE BY LITTLE, DAY BY DAY

*White earthenware and thread, 2017 - I, 2019 - II*

This work is about a life journey where every event and every person contributes to form it. The embedded layers of clay coils refer to every single event in life, either remembered or not, that has played its role in shaping our personalities.

into a new entity once fired or glazed has proven irresistible to me, as it carries for me — even after fifteen years of practice — the lure of endless possibilities. Being a female artist whose work revolves around the concept of home, belonging, and traditions, working with media that conceptually scaffold my work and speak of femininity was natural and intuitive. Later, I deliberately adopted this idea of using what I think of as the materials of delicacy: safety pins, fabric, embroidery, tea bags, and crockery. The meticulous and labor-intensive process of my work complements and comments on both “making a home” and “home-making,” both physically and conceptually.

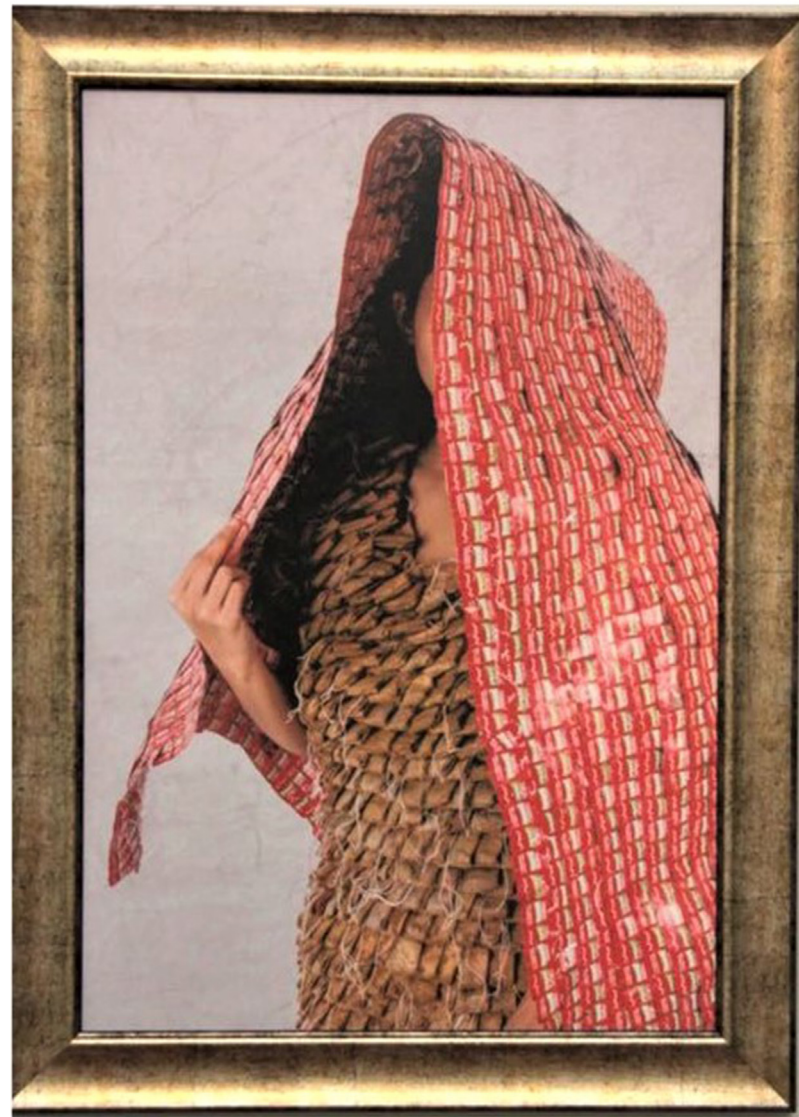
This fellowship will be a great opportunity for me to meet people from diverse cultural, educational, and artistic backgrounds. With slight modifications, I am looking forward to continuing my pro-

I’ll never forget the chalk drawings I used to make on my father’s steel cupboard, which I quickly erased before he entered the house every evening.

posed research by having one-on-one conversations with each of my peers in this cohort. These conversations will give my research a very South Asian color.

I anticipate that these talks will be quite constructive for all of us in finding seemingly minor, yet significant differences in our mundane rituals. Blessed with the fa-

cility of a ceramics studio, I aim to translate the insights I gain into the language of 3D ceramics. Being an educator, I also hope this fellowship will provide insight into a variety of pedagogical methods that I may adapt for my own use.



## YOU ARE MORE THAN A STORY...

*Photograph, 18 x 24 inches, 2016*

The photograph of a girl wearing the wedding dress made of used tea bags comments upon the inglorious journey of a bride. The melancholy of this mirthless journey from match-making tea ceremony to marriage is felt only by the girl who has been through it.



### HAMLET WITHOUT THE PRINCE

*Pen and Ink on Archival Print, 8 x 12 inches, 2016*

The work plays with the interpretations of gender politics and questions the notions and crises that gradually become synonymous to a person's identity at large, for example, "The girl with curly hair" or "The girl with a skin disease." Do these descriptions become the essence of a being?

# RICHI BHATIA

INDIA

*Photography*

Richi Bhatia's work traverses the spectrum of extreme intuitive practices to prolonged processes. She creates an assemblage of metaphoric materials using fish scales, hair, and found laboratory equipment, to name a few, that are partially rooted in an autobiographical context.

“

Integral to the nature of my artistic practice is a multidisciplinary experimentation with both medium and form. My work traverses from extreme intuitive practices to protracted processes that attempt to interrogate identity in its varied surroundings, finding its roots in a very autobiographical context.

I've been inspired by the 1978 article "Illness as a Metaphor" by Susan Sontag in The New York Review, where Sontag eloquently states, "I want to describe not what it's really like to emigrate to the kingdom of the ill and to live there, but the punitive or sentimental fantasies concocted about that situation; not real geography but stereotypes of nation-

al character. My subject is not physical illness itself but the uses of illness as a figure or metaphor." These words construct an identity — identity as a woman's body, as a character, as a psyche, and as an object intervening in personal histories. My process of ideation begins with numerous readings and a collection of objects that serve as an extension of my daily thought process, much like the game of drawing logical inferences by connecting points of information to reveal the picture.

By using semiotics through objects with a post-structuralist ideology, I manipulate them to alter or negate their originality, which tends to create a sense of discomfort. This discomfort is vital in order to



understand the dialects of our immediate surroundings. I am trying to examine the effects of time on nature, humans, and objects, bringing everything under a transient quality. Our memories, though often visible only in fragments, are carried forward, keeping the dynamics of the past active in the future.

My works evolve in their form and approach during the process of making. As I create, I do not visualize in my mind the end result. The process is equally as important as the outcome, since every work evolves through an intuitive spirit deeply invested within my thoughts. My artwork addresses the similar ideas of body, identity, and personal history, and how they exist in a constant flux in relation to their surroundings.

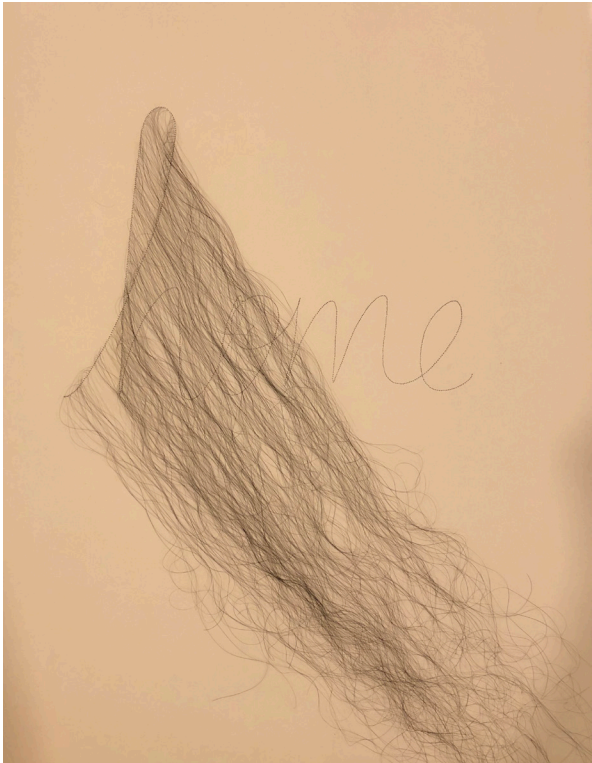
Being a visual artist, my struggle has always been to evaluate the role of my own personal history against the standard notions of the society we live in. I am interested in questioning representation, appropriation, and the media, both past and present.

With this one-of-a-kind fellowship at Mittal Institute, I look forward to seeing a wider view of the history and prevalent art practices in South Asia. I believe it to be not only engaging, but provocative to understand the practices of young artists and how each of us position our-

selves within the global praxis.

This fellowship will enable me to understand the issues and crises that my fellow artists address through their works. Ultimately, this opportunity will help me to create artwork that questions the role

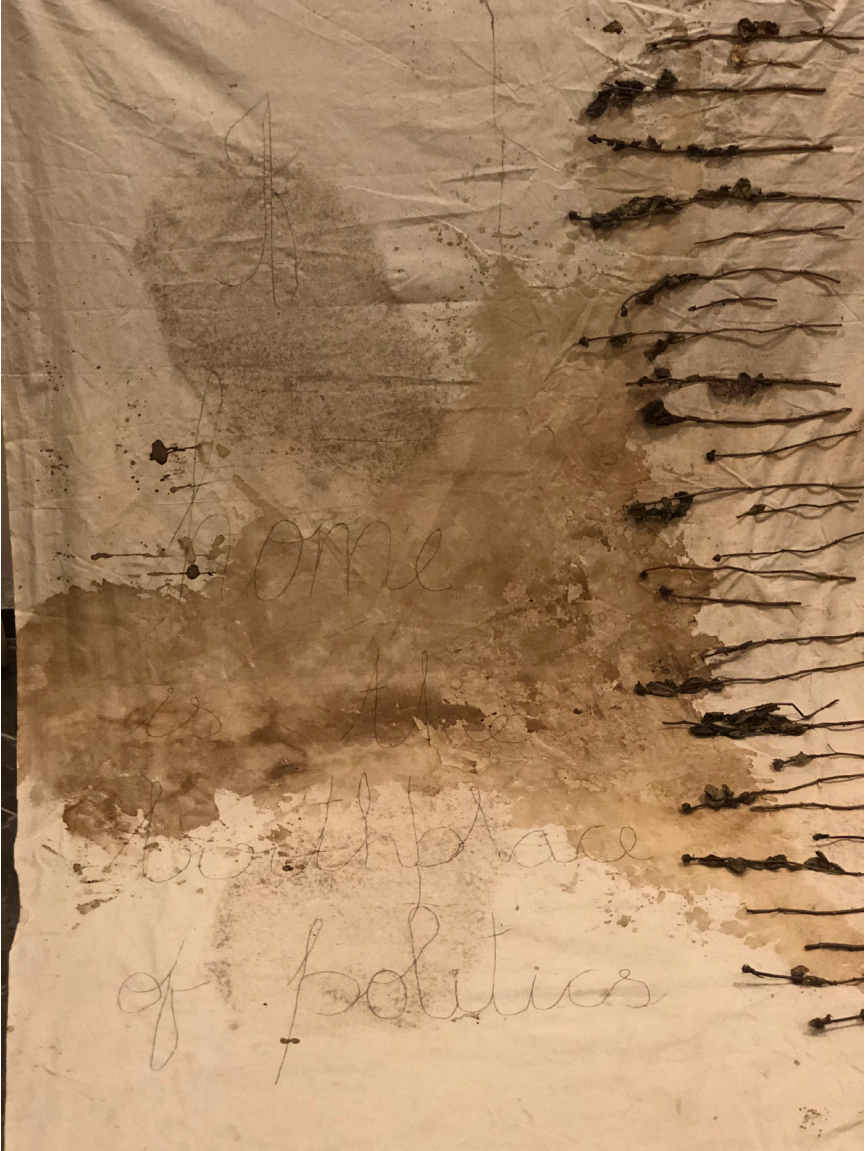
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**SHREDDING HOME**

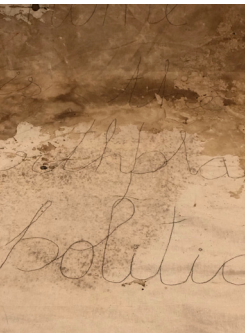
In the digital era, virtual connectivity has become the new world order, and working with paper or stitching — a repetitive act — becomes medicative. In times when the world seems to have stagnated, the act of stitching with my own hair creates a rhythm that turns the wheel of life.

of personal history within those set notions of the society we inhabit in a global context — an integral point of departure within my practice.

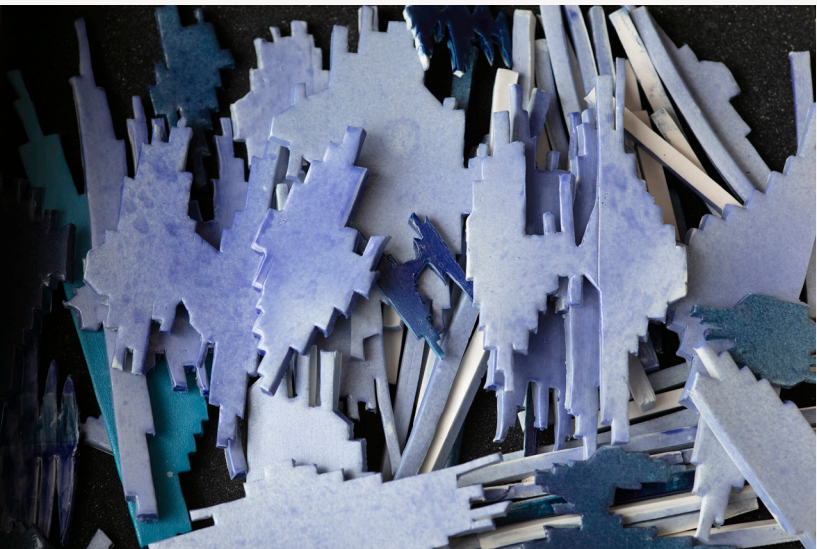
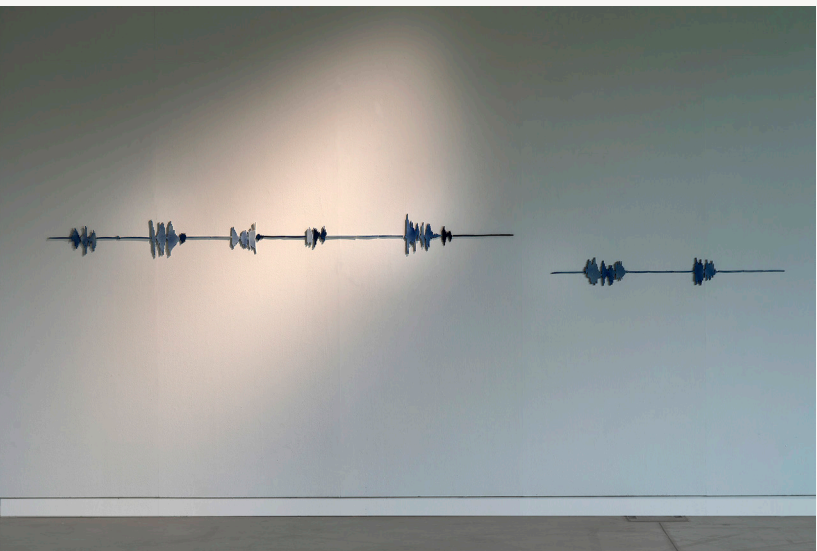


**FATHERLAND**

This series of work highlights the very human desire and urge to look or hunt for home within oneself or in another body. Conversations narrate the story at a micro level – for instance, a conversation between a daughter and a father with varied ideologies in one home, under one roof.







### MUTE TONGUE

*Porcelain, semitransparent, transparent, and matt glazed, special edition color, variable and length approximately 108 inches, 2019-20*

*Picture courtesy: Thomas Kern and artist*

How are the stories of refugees narrated in the news? Who speaks about their plight? Often, the marginalized voices of refugees are unheard or ignored. In this work, I wrote a poem based on two stories I listened to of refugees from Somalia and Sri Lanka, and converted the audio file into an audio graph and cast it in porcelain.

# ISHITA CHAKRABORTY

INDIA

*Mixed Media*

Ishita Chakraborty’s practice reveals itself through inkless drawings, installations, poetry, video, and sounds that echo the traces of migration, the traumas of colonialism, and language and identity in India.

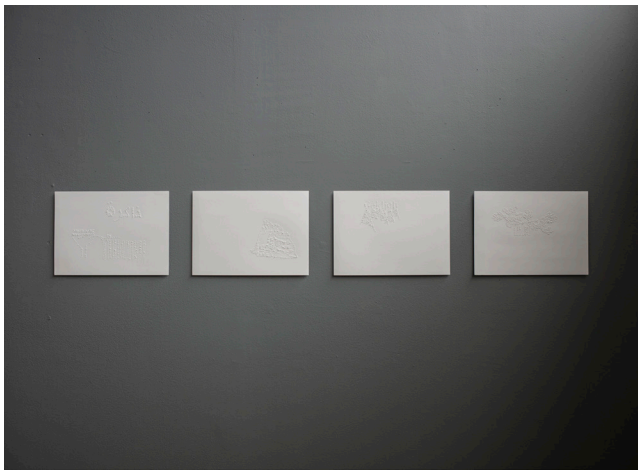
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My grandfather was an actor and lived his life on stage. Listening to him recite and practice his lines and seeing my grandmother’s meticulous embroideries were my early childhood inspirations. I grew up in a patriarchal society, and art became a tool and a language for me to break and question the boundaries. My father worked as a land and land-reforms officer, so I grew up seeing countless maps and land records. Because of the nature of my father’s job, my family moved from place to place, and the uncertainty of home, the question of identity, and changing languages accompanied me throughout my adolescence.

Since 2017, I have been working on a series of white-on-white drawings, titled “Zwischen / Between.” It elucidates a transitory situation deriving from deeply listening to the oral histories of displaced people. It visually articulates those who are often unacknowledged and are made invisible: the refugees and immigrants. My own history of migration and my present living situation in between India and Europe brings me closer to the subject.

Sometimes, in my childhood, I traveled to historical sites with my parents. I remember the names and words engraved by former visitors on walls and pillars. I find this technique of preserving memory interesting and provocative. This





## ZWISCHEN I BETWEEN

*Scratched paper, 8.5" X 11", 2017–ongoing*

*Picture courtesy: Thomas Kern and artist*

The scratched, white-on-white drawings are the silent representations and tangible recordings of voices through written words and comment on the value of each individual within a larger geography. The words I use in my drawings come from the conversations I have had with migrants.

concept helped me to develop my own method of registering other people's voices and memories by scratching on paper. The rigorously hand-scratched drawings depict collected memories of home and exile, communicating floor plans, folktales, poetries, musical scores, maps, landscapes, and transient geographies crossing Asia and Europe.

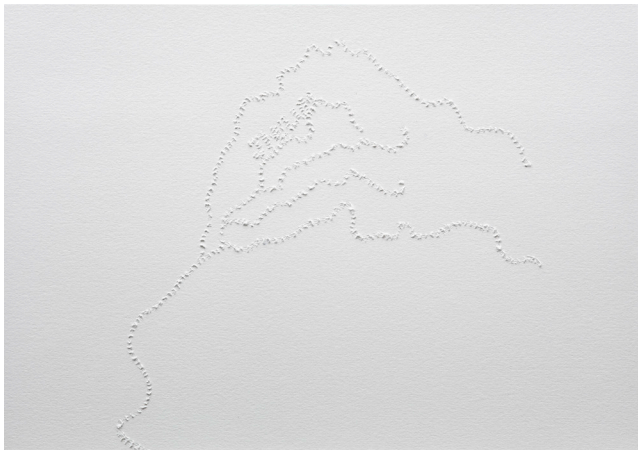
I grew up next to a Bangladeshi refugee neighborhood in West Bengal, and often listened to their stories of territorial conflicts, illegal immigration, forced migration, and the wounds of Partition. My family was not directly affected by the Partition, but I was surrounded by people who were. I felt their loss of cultural identity. The Visiting Artist Fellowship program and its resources are

**I grew up in a patriarchal society, and art became a tool and a language for me to break and question the boundaries.**

the perfect opportunity for me to further develop my artistic research. To this day, the effects of the Partition resonate in life in West Bengal. This opportunity gives me a chance to explore my own history and background in the context of global migration and human movement.

My artistic research has a specific interest in the Mittal Institute's ongoing research in the "Looking Back, Informing the Future: The 1947 Partition of British India"

project. Specifically, I am interested in learning more about the collection and analysis of oral narratives from those who witnessed and experienced the Partition in 1947. I hope to learn and gain from the Institute's resources, archives, and virtual masterclasses, which will act as a bridge and agent to convey the complexities of scientific research into my art and ultimately raise awareness and make these subjects more accessible.



## ZWISCHEN I BETWEEN

*Scratched paper, 8.5" X 11", 2017–ongoing*

*Picture courtesy: Thomas Kern and artist*

In recent times, I met a group of Pakistani and Afghani refugees in Switzerland, and every time we meet we talk about home, common recipes, rivers, and landscapes. I inscribed our exilic longings into the beloved river Jhelum flowing into the paper without any geographic territories and conflicts.



## ZWISCHEN I BETWEEN

*Scratched paper, 8.5" X 11", 2017–ongoing*

*Picture courtesy: Thomas Kern and artist*

('um) means "mother" in Arabic. I met a Syrian national who left his country due to war and took refuge in Europe as an asylum seeker. He can no longer return home. He spoke about his mother and her jasmine flowers. I tried to preserve the scent of his mother's jasmine garden and his homesickness.



## AN IDEA OF A BORDERLESS WORLD

*Comic books, coffee wash, tea wash, wood, and iron. 240 x 240 inches, 2016*

“Where the world has not been broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls.” — Rabindranath Tagore

While writing these lines, Tagore was dreaming of a “universal” space where the barrier of culture, religion, nationality becomes insignificant and only love and brotherhood prevail. When I reached Taiwan, I pondered these lines with great intensity upon seeing the multicultural tension prevalent there. The work consists of page fragments from Taiwanese comic books and novels, which traces the displacement of the identity through the act of tearing off the page and using it on the structure.

# SUDIPTA DAS

INDIA

*Installation*

Sudipta Das is a mixed media visual artist who explores poignant narratives through the unconventional use of paper. Her practice focuses on the idea of bearing witness and the importance of intimate socio-political issues, the realities of climate change, and human migration.

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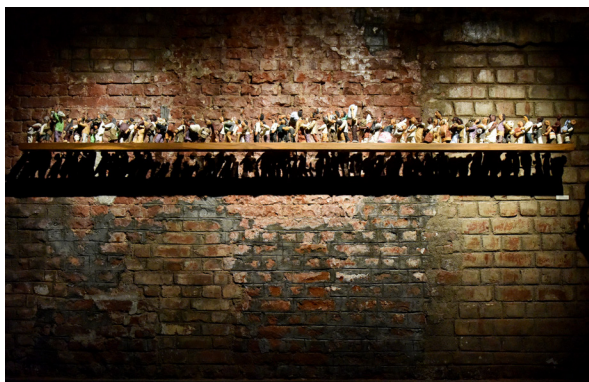
**M**y “re-membling” of visual repositories is inspired by the unending voyages and struggles of dispossessed identities. By symbolically retelling the accounts of Partition from my grandmother and the personal narratives of a fourth-generation migrant family in India from Bangladesh, my artistic process seeks to bring an empathetic understanding of the devastation brought on by migration to all forms of life, culture, and land.

As I piece together used and unused paper, fragments of lost and previous identities are forged into newfound ones. A quest for identity gathers a whirlpool of belongings, feelings, memories, and

expressions into fragile yet resilient paper sculptures. Thus, paper becomes a metaphor for the constant flux of the human spirit. It brings about a sense of belonging that so many people seek, through photographs, certificates, identity papers, archives, documents, and records. What are we, really, without these “paper personalities”? How has paper come to dictate who we are and where we belong?

The process of preparing the materials, my experimentation, treating paper several times, pushing its identity, dyeing with natural colours, enables the material to don new tonality and characteristics with which I can express the many facets and hues of human nature. Using paper





### CROSSING OVER

*Hanji paper, rice paper, coffee, and watercolor wash, metal on board. 118 x 4 x 7 inches, 2019*

Crossing Over shows a large number of people walking in a single file across a bridge or plank. Figures are in diverse attires holding their meagre possessions, walking in line toward an uncertain future where they will begin life anew. One can sense the loss of their homes, land, belongings, and memories.

layer after layer, just as layers of our personality and character, I make up each person's identity. Thus I welcome the uncertainty of paper as it largely resonates the fates of those who begin a process of migration.

I have been exploring the transformation of paper for 10 years now. Even before that, it fascinated me and I would collect and tear old archives, documents, and photographs, pulling apart memories and captured moments, reliving their stories and reconstructing their realities in the present day through my work. Working with stains is also meaningful to my process; using tea, coffee, inks and their washes are an association with "memory."

The finale is the presentation of the work, where its larger form becomes metaphoric for the times and predicaments people find themselves in. I hope observers experience the uncertainty and precariousness of life itself. Yet, even in displacement, people find reasons to celebrate, to smile, to share, and to help one another. The greatest aspiration is the will to survive and the want to find a place and a way to make a living. I

I dream of a "universal" time when barriers become insignificant and people find their refuge in humanity rather than the limited identities of race, religion, gender, and nationality.

I dream of a "universal" time when barriers become insignificant and people find their refuge in humanity rather than the limited identities of race, religion, gender, and nationality.

Through this fellowship, I will explore Partition archives and their artistic interpretation. Interactions with my cohorts and mentors around temporality and permanence will form new ideas and perspectives on a subject that has much been debated. How can we build the identities of migrants by looking at historic images? How do we as artists, researchers, and thinkers help others look above classism and racism to instead associate migration with humanism? Does our art truly respond to the needs of displaced populations?

The fellowship is an opportunity to amass information on manuscripts, pictures, archival records, texts, processes, artifacts, and maps. The collections will allow me to draw parallels between the real and conceptual changes that maps create in human lives and how subjectivities are shaped during a period or an endless loop. With these sources, I can coalesce an imagery of present human identity and changed national identity.

Remote explorations with this group of like-minded artists from within the region will completely transform me in the coming months. It is my constant endeavour to challenge and redefine my artistic process which will undoubtedly refine my approach to historic and humanitarian consequences of migration.



### A SOARING TO NOWHERE

*Hanji paper, rice paper, coffee, watercolor wash, and copper wire. 48 x 48 x 36 inches, 2018*

This installation is an attempt to express the emotional and disoriented state of refugees and stresses the non-existence and displacement of refugees through the figures suspended mid-air. They seek direction, but have nowhere to go.



### "UNTITLED (BEAUTIFUL WAY TO DIE)"

*Brass, copper, graphite on paper*

These works are a part of my ongoing drawing series that began in 2019, "Untitled (Beautiful Way to Die)," which highlights different ancient war weapons. Through these works I explore the duality that exists between the beautiful floral ornamentation in contrast with the deadly sharp structure of copper swords, arrows, daggers, and pistols.

# PROMOTESH DAS PULAK

BANGLADESH

*Installation*

Promotesht Das Pulak was trained as a painter, but his use of diverse material has played a pivotal role in his artistic practice, ranging from sculpture and installation to image manipulation and photography. He is fascinated with the aesthetics of violence and its combination with beauty that reflects socio-political unrest around the world.

“

Art is a special language that can redefine something through a different point of view. It is more than a story or writing on a specific matter. After my study in fine art, I chose the artistic path to express my out-of-the-box thoughts. I continue to be interested in the duality that lies between two contrasting objects and their expressions that betray both innocence and beauty.

My work focuses on reflecting the visibility of socio-political unrest, a common phenomena in the part of the world I live in. I am fascinated with the aesthetics of violence and its combination with beauty. I have tried to question the rising tide of religiosity in Bangladesh, a country

founded on diversity. I have often incorporated various forms of media to convey this symbolism in my art.

I find the embellishments on weapons captivating, yet I am conflicted by the aesthetic of artistic details in combination with the lethality of the weapons. With modernity, the instrument of death has been embellished with designs, signifying a status, power, might, and richness. A lot can be said of the geopolitical and social backdrop of the past by studying the designs and patterns on weapons throughout history. Some of these designs make us see the philosophy of beauty, while others tell us about religious and spiritual influences.





## "UNTITLED (BEAUTIFUL WAY TO DIE)"

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In my ongoing series, "Untitled (Beautiful way to die)," I worked with traditional goldsmiths to create metallic floral patterns combined with graphite drawings on paper. These works reflect the dark play on the conflicting ideologies that define our times.

During my time in this fellowship, I hope to explore the physical and material objectification of tools throughout history that have been used for agitation and provocation, and the socio-political impact of their power.

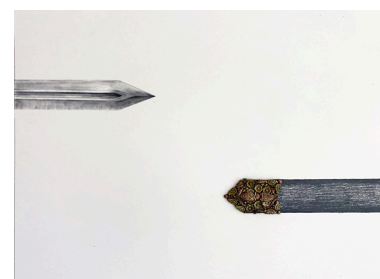
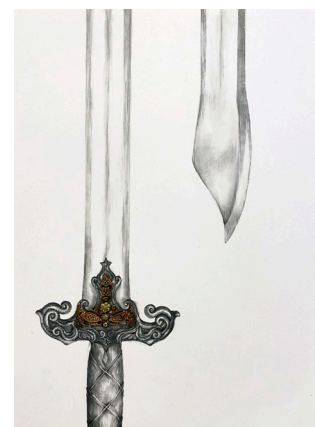
My research intent is to investigate and discover by studying the design, patterns, and ornamental history. Using the collections of the Harvard Art Museums, I am particularly interested in

I find the embellishments on weapons captivating, yet I am conflicted by the aesthetic of artistic details in combination with the lethality of the weapons.

learning about the techniques of smoke pulls, etching, engraving, and Kuftgari on armor of Mughal period from the 19th century. To articulate my research, I would like to utilize the Mittal Institute's online resources to analyze the artifacts and digital data at the Harvard Art Museums, as well as Harvard's libraries and galleries. Through this fellowship, I will receive the support and guidance I need

to find additional pieces of evidence and research opportunities within these institutions.

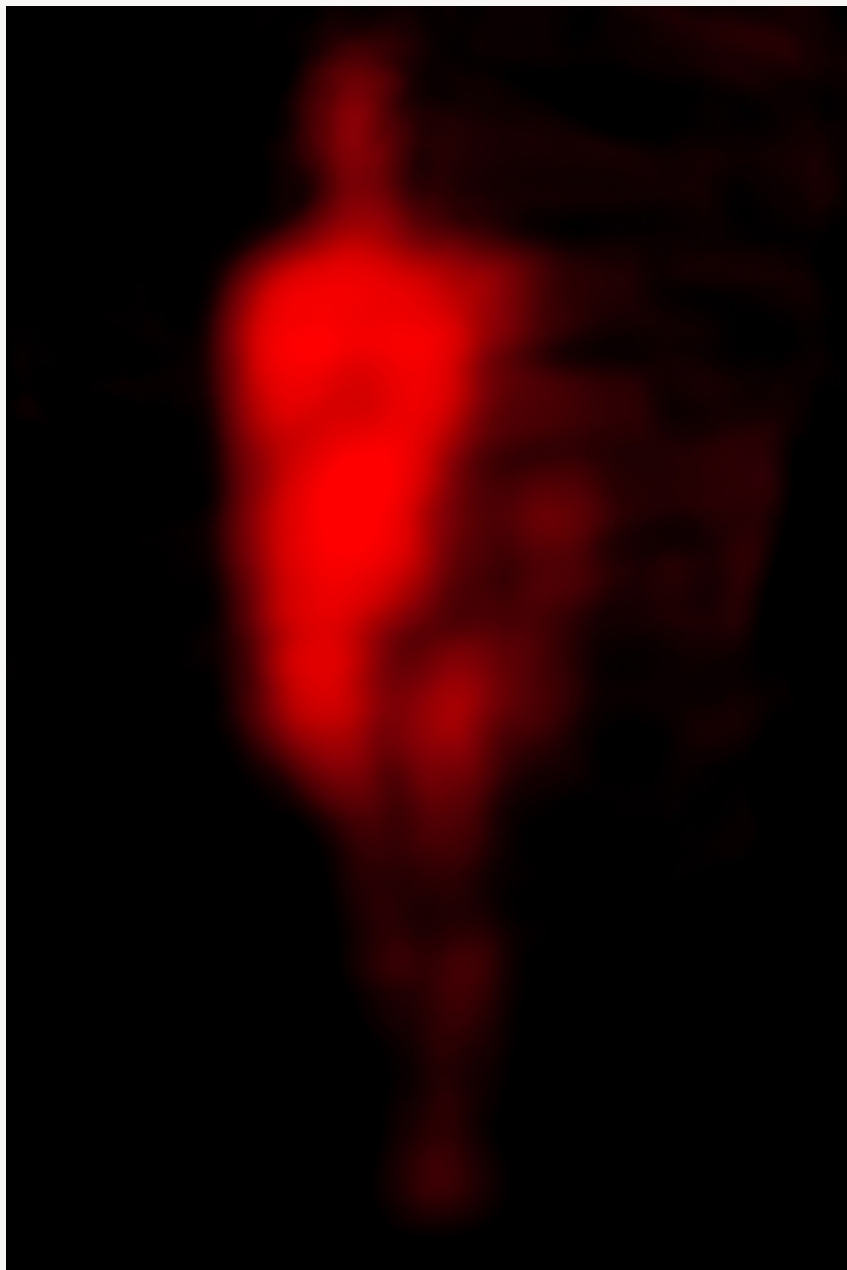
Alongside these goals, I look forward to participating in online lectures and seminars arranged by the Harvard Art Museums and the public art program at the Department of Art, Film, and Visual Studies.



## "UNTITLED (BEAUTIFUL WAY TO DIE)"

*Brass, copper, graphite on paper*

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### CONFRONTATIONS

The use of the color red in my artwork has helped me to explore what it means to be a woman in my society. The work has changed from a personal exploration to a commentary on the society I live in, where women are expected to keep their lives under wraps.

# BUNU DHUNGANA

NEPAL

*Photography*

Bunu Dhungana uses photography as a medium to explore and question the world around her. While her personal projects center around gender, she has worked in a wide range of forms — from visual ethnography to commercial work. Dhungana believes that visual stories can engage people in new conversations.

“

I didn't set out to be an artist. It happened by accident — but I am so glad it happened. I have always struggled to express myself through words. Maybe consciously or unconsciously, I was searching for something. After my Masters in Sociology, I worked as a researcher for some years, which took me all over Nepal. During that time, I got a point-and-shoot camera and started taking photos. I really wanted to pursue academics, but failed miserably. Somehow, I jumped into photography without thinking too much.

It took me many years to find myself in the photography medium. One of the things that has inspired my work is the constant societal reminder that I am a

girl or a woman, and that I have to behave in a certain manner. From the way you sit, eat, dress, talk, and laugh — everything is scripted; the dos and don'ts are clearly laid out.

I have always hated this. What happens if women like me don't fit into the story that has already been created for them? I started using photography as a way to express my suffocation under these expectations. My work titled "Confrontations" stems from this feeling of suffocation.

In my work, I have often incorporated the color red, stemming from my realization that red is not simply just a color in my society. Red is auspicious; it is



the color of a Hindu bride and a Hindu married woman. Red is also impure; it is the menstrual blood that Hindu society rejects. Red denotes communism, with which Nepal has had a long, complex history. Red is also entwined with violence.

The color red has helped me consider what it means to be a woman in my society. I never knew a simple color could be this political. The “Confrontations” series is about my experience as an unmarried woman, my experience with menstruation, and my experience with my body and with violence. The work became not just about me, but about the society I live in, where women are supposed to keep their lives under wraps, living in shame and stigma. It rebels against the deeply embedded structures of patriarchy. It’s a fight to be myself.

Currently, I am at a stage where I have many questions. My experiences have taught me that visual stories have the ability to reach out to people, to engage them, and to start conversations. But as visual storytellers, are we challenging visual stereotypes? How do we tell nuanced, complex stories? How do we think critically about our own practice? These questions became more prominent once I began mentoring a younger generation of photographers in Nepal.

This fellowship as a learning space will

surely encourage me to question my way of thinking, not only as a photographer, but also as an individual. Attending the masterclasses with a diverse group of art practitioners from the region will open me up to their experiences, perspectives,

and understandings. I look forward to engaging with my peers and the varied speakers of the masterclasses, and hope to challenge the storyteller in me.

One of the things that has inspired my work is the constant societal reminder that I am a girl or a woman, and that I have to behave in a certain manner.



**CONFRONTATIONS**  
A Nepali woman’s experience of life is shaped by patriarchy. Non-conformity comes at a cost: any defiance of norms raises questions, suspicion, concern, ridicule — some visible, others silent and invisible. I am made aware regularly that I keep crossing many such boundaries.



**CONFRONTATIONS**  
My work attempts to explore my sense of self in relation to society by saying things I’m not supposed to say, by making visible what is meant to stay out of sight.



#### HUM-ZULF

A coin-operated bed installed in the men's section of a public restaurant. This work is a commentary on dowry practices in Southeast Asia and the economy of marriage that reduces a woman's body to a mere commodity.

# AMMARA JABBAR

PAKISTAN

*Sound Installations*

Ammara Jabbar is a multidisciplinary artist from Karachi, Pakistan. Her work explores the domestic and performative as a means to investigate notions of gender and public space in the city, imagining new and radical futures of belonging for all groups.

“

I started my journey as an artist accidentally, as I originally desired invisibility. However, choosing the arts as my career opened my eyes to the fact that an artist and their artwork exists because of their audience — they assume another life because of it.

For a year, my practice was impacted by motives. I questioned whether or not I would be an artist if I lived in a world where art wasn't supported by an institution, or what my genre of expression would be if the contemporary art world didn't exist as it does today. I still remain wary of the term artist. I used to describe myself as a connoisseur of curiosities, but discovered that I want to stray from ambiguity. I want to simply be tied to the

act of creation. I am compelled to create because it is intrinsically tied to existence itself: it empowers me. It is tied to a sincerity I lend with my voice.

My work actively takes on a vernacular aesthetic — an exercise in excess, like the bride who sits ceremonially in ornate grandeur. Locating the kitsch and examining social class and aesthetics, I hope to deviate from the visuals present within Western art and ground my expression within my perception of visual culture in Pakistan.

I also locate the aesthetic object within parallels of ritual theory and contemporary art, and use visual devices present in ceremonial practices within Southeast





### CHOP ME A TUNE, SILLY

This is a performative sculpture that plays the tambourine when the blender is switched on.

Asia. Through a presentation of the intimate as sacred, I hope to establish a relationship between object and ritual, while determining the visual characteristics of “sacred objects” and the role of aesthetics within the sentiments associated with these objects.

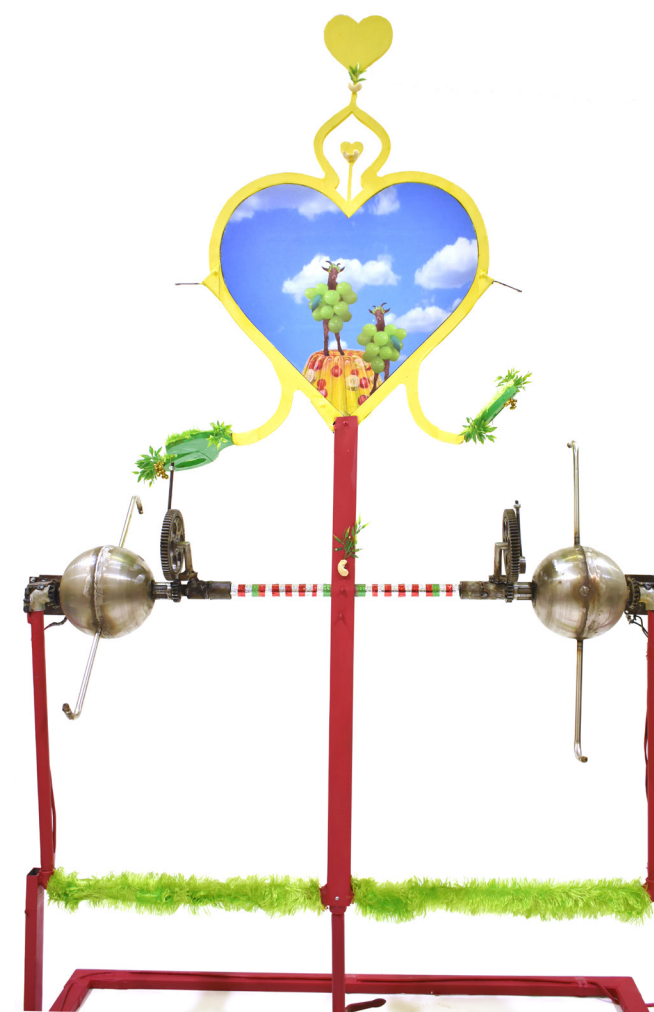
I am extremely excited by the opportunity to learn from esteemed professionals in the field at Harvard University, and hope to critically engage with the ideas presented in the virtual classes throughout the fellowship. I look forward to continuing connecting with professionals and my fellow artists in the cohort and learning about each of their practices and research.



### NOT FOR DRINK

When powered on, the plastic inflatable toy fills up with air, and a viewing hole on the side reveals the mirrored interior with a vibrator that rings the bells attached in the enclosure. It is meant to be an open-ended dialogue on female sexuality and the monitoring of self, in a playful manner.

Locating the kitsch and examining social class and aesthetics, I hope to deviate from the visuals present within Western art and ground my expression within my perception of visual culture in Pakistan.



### SWEETNESS DIED, VIP

The moving mechanism was based on Heron's steam engine, the first instance of steam-powered movement. The pragmatic potential of it wasn't recognized at the time, thus delaying the Industrial Revolution. It was resigned as a theatrical apparatus to entice temple worshippers.



## PARALLEL WORLD

*Myself lying on the footpath, local street, Bengaluru (From the series "Parallel World"), Performance, August 2020*

"Parallel world" comprises you and me, of us, people in different planes, and our deflecting reality that is constantly moving, changing, expanding, adapting, and probably intersecting and contradicting in respect to each other. The work establishes different perspectives as seen by three people—the performer, the strangers reflected in the mirror, and the audience.

# PRAGATI DALVI JAIN

INDIA

*Photography & Video*

Pragati Jain's work draws attention to prevailing conflicts in civilized societies, where each one of us has similar aspirations, struggles, and persistent ideas of equality. In an atmosphere of shared fear, confusion, and hope, she creates art about the likenesses that bind us.

“

As I've aged, my reasons to pursue art and my understanding of art and its potential to create and influence narratives have both changed. I was born and grew up in Indore, a small town in Central India. At the time, I believed art was about aesthetics. It was the beauty in the simple things around me that enticed me to learn to paint, and drove me to pursue academic training at JJ School of Art in Mumbai.

During my six years there, significant changes occurred in my art practices. I was adapting to the newfound freedom of a metropolitan city, but supporting myself to not get lost and to remain safe, as women have to. This challenged me to

find my voice and seek balance. I broke the norms of portraiture and expressed myself through abstract interpretations. Painting as a medium gave me enough time to slow down from the crazy rush of metropolitan life and have conversations with myself.

However, as time passed, I felt less content with the confined space of a canvas. I was also deeply intrigued by the malleability of other mediums like photography, installation, and interactive art. The instant connection with the broader audience and the ability to go beyond studio and gallery spaces were exciting to me.

Alongside my journey as an artist, I





### SAFDIYA

*From the series: I am more than a reflection of my mother  
Photograph print on paper, public art, February 2020*

Safdiya has been living in Bangalore with her friends after the death of both her parents in 2011. She was brought up in liberal environment where her father encouraged her to be self-sufficient and courageous. It's her father's ideology that a girl has the right to freedom of expression, and his faith in her that has always kept Safdiya afloat in this city of madness.

was experiencing the pressure of being an ambitious woman, as an outsider in a civilized society that was still held by conservative axioms. My travels through Indian cities crowded with men made me feel vulnerable. I needed to feel safe and independent. There was a desperate search for identity and a struggle to find my place in society, which came to influence most of my work.

After graduation, I left Mumbai and moved to Bangalore. Now married and a mother of two kids, I see art as a vital ingredient of society that binds its culture and people. A shift has occurred in my objective from "I" to "Us," no longer addressing social issues for personal motivations. I altered my approach to art and started involving the local public as participants. Since then, it has been an interchange between being an artist and an activist. Through my art I am inspired to address unexpressed suffering that we all experience, but can't verbalize.

**Alongside my journey as an artist, I was experiencing the pressure of being an ambitious woman, as an outsider in a civilized society that was still held by conservative axioms.**

**U**nder the current distress of the pandemic, matters that were significant seven months ago have faded. Once pressing questions have now lost their vitality. Now, the narrative has shifted and we are celebrating "solidarity." Has disparity subsided with social distancing?

In lockdown, India has dealt with a forgotten "identity crisis" that begins at home, where an individual is restrained by space and, subsequently, lost in layers of subtle, unclear, compliant roles and customary responsibilities. This is especially true for women who, as moth-

ers, wives, and employees, make the most compromises. There is no way to escape or distract ourselves from the rule of patriarchy but to address it firmly.

Through Harvard's resources and the perspectives of multiple faculty members across disciplines, I would like to use my time in this fellowship to augment my own perspective on this identity crisis. I am invested in Diane Rosenfeld's research on gender violence, especially her work on the evolutionary basis of our behaviors, such as how women unknowingly embrace patriarchy for the sake of protection.



### NAVNEET

*From the series: I am more than a reflection of my mother  
Photograph print on paper, public art, January 2020*

The aspiration to raise her child as an individual beyond her own perceptions, constraints, and inhibitions exists in every mother at various levels. Navneet is a mother herself, and wants her 5-year-old son to grow up without biases. She had to unlearn a lot from her childhood conditioning and the world she grew up in. She wishes for her son to be empathetic, rather than judgmental. "I am more than a reflection of my mother" is ironic and sarcastic, yet a radical conversation between two individuals connected by blood but separated by their subjective thinking.



## BLUE BOX

Acrylic on Canvas, 153 x 125 cm, 2020

In this autobiographical painting, "Blue Box," I tried to capture my thoughts and early memories through a visual narrative. This autobiographical painting deals with numerous delicate emotional issues, life stories, and reminiscences that were not achievable in words. Each part of this painting reflects a segment of my childhood memories.

# SUNANDA KHAJURIA

INDIA

*Painting*

Sunanda Khajuria is a visual artist who is deeply inspired by Chinese traditional painting techniques and draws her imagery from the terrain of ethereal memory and from actual, physical landscapes she has visited.

“

I was born in Panthal, Jammu, India — a city that is surrounded by temples, lakes, mountain peaks, green valleys, and spectacular Mughal-era gardens. But another side of it continues to face disturbances from terrorism, migration, sexism, and violence. From my rural background in Jammu, I had no notion of art or artists, and certainly no idea that I would become one.

After my formal academic study of art as a BFA and MFA, I quickly engaged in international art residencies and projects around the world, landing in Australia, Italy, Russia, and China. With a keen eye on the emotional and psychological states of human nature, I draw inspiration from my experiences in these diverse lo-

cales, which aid in my exploration of the possibilities of visual language.

Subsequently, I participated in an Advanced Research Program at the China Academy of Art in Hangzhou, China, where I started more advanced research on Chinese traditional painting and calligraphy. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate at the Wuhan University of Technology in China, where my studies focus on the present situation, significance of, and challenges faced by female Chinese contemporary artists.

My most recent solo show, "Moving Landscapes," held at Art Heritage Gallery in New Delhi, concluded my experiences with different Chinese traditional



painting philosophies, techniques, mediums, and subjects. The artworks are created with one of the famous techniques of the Han dynasty, known as “Gongbi,” on silk and paper. Many of my works are deeply connected to nature and its mysterious secrets, where nature is regarded as an avenue to knowledge and a repository of wisdom and holds a great deal of mental and spiritual power. In many of my works, the central figure is a female who finds herself amid nature, shifting landscapes, and a multitude of symbols and objects.

I look forward to investigating the medium, technique, process, style, and subject of female Asian contemporary artists. Female artists face challenges due to gender biases in the mainstream art world, and encounter difficulties in traveling, sharing their work, and gaining recognition. Several contemporary female artists of the last two decades have used an interdisciplinary framework to explore concepts and theories of feminism, modernism, and post-colonialism. Despite challenges, these artists found identity in the mediums and contents of their art. Often, certain mediums and styles are associated only with female artists.

My research in this fellowship will focus on the mediums and techniques of female Asian artists and why they choose to work with them. How, when, and where did they develop their formal strategies? What does the work

look like in terms of color, composition, perspective, framing, shape, texture, line, and so on? I will explore formal, visual, or stylistic and psychological analysis methodology for this research. After this investigation, I will create artwork,

a studio exhibition, and a lecture on the outcome of this exploration. This fellowship is extremely valuable to me, as it has allowed me to immerse myself in a city at the epicenter of the contemporary art world.

Many of my works are deeply connected to nature and its mysterious secrets, where nature is regarded as an avenue to knowledge and a repository of wisdom and holds a great deal of mental and spiritual power.



**WHO AM I**  
*Acrylic on Canvas, 153 x 125 cm, 2016*  
This painting examines the question of identity through the Chinese Zodiac signs of animals. The world's great spiritual experiences notify us repeatedly that we are not who we think we are. Here, I realized that identity changes according to time, place, and situation.

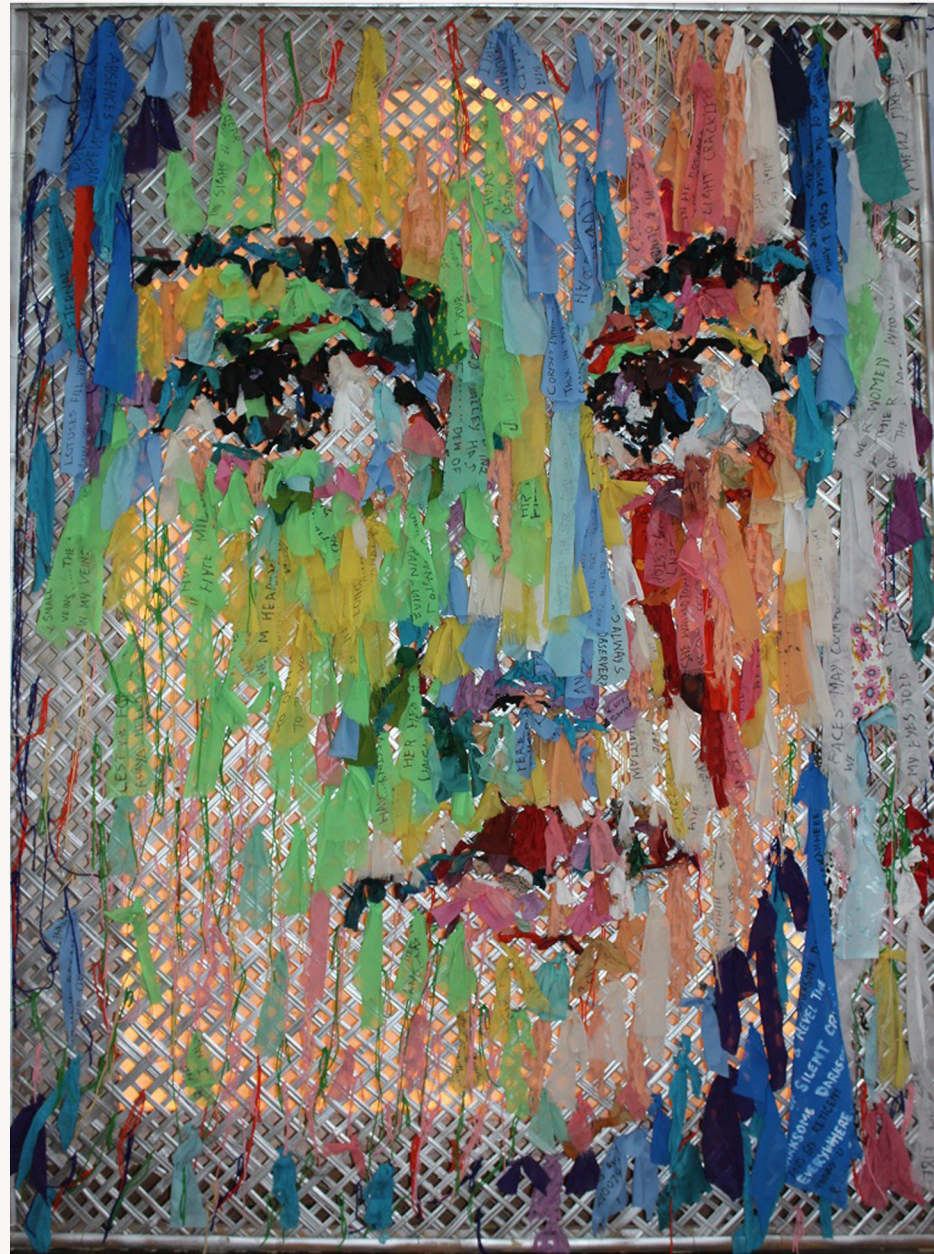


**THE JOURNEY FROM THE EAST**  
*Acrylic on Canvas, 153 x 125 cm, 2017*  
I believe that the journey is more important than the destination. When I reach closer to my destination, the journey gives a sense of loss, or feels empty afterward. Perhaps it is because destinations always transform, and another side of the journey is that it is the real essence of life.



**NOSTALGIA**  
*Acrylic on Canvas, 153 x 125 cm, 2014*  
How do you feel when you learn that you will have to depart the place you have been living for a long time and travel to a new one? The painting “Nostalgia” represents a longing for the past and homesickness, and the difficulties in acclimating to a new place or culture with new people.





### HIDDEN CONNECTION-II

A self-portrait carrying the voice of women and bearing text of the undocumented, the unaddressed victim, the fragmented identities, who screams, who suffers and longs for justice but, here lay our hearts, hanging hopes, dreams, and mysteries.

# INSHA MANZOOR

INDIA

*Installation*

Through performance, video, painting, and textiles, Insha Manzoor informs self-identification as a collective memory and resistance in a country under totalitarianism that experiences gender discrimination, strife, and conflict. Manzoor is interested in exploring how artistic and cultural traditions can be crafted to bridge differences, mediate conflicts, and contribute to peace.

“

I was born in a place where patriarchy is the dominant attitude in society. Like every other daughter, sister, mother, and wife, my concerns, will, goals, opinions, and choices were sabotaged before I could even nurture them. But unlike many other women, I was fortunate to have the exception of my hero — my father — who made me stronger and confident. He nurtured me in such a way that I vowed to myself that I would fight this battle for myself and every woman like me.

I come from the state of Kashmir in India, which was once described as heaven on earth. I was born in 1991, when armed conflict was at its peak. I spent my childhood embracing the snow-white lambs

and playing with pebbles on the river-sides — experiences that gave birth to the art of questioning the existence of self and its purpose, while searching for love for oneself and a way of life without conflicts. I concern myself with the issues of life and death; pleasure and pain; revealing and concealing; freedom, desire, and fear. At the age of 13, I left my hometown and became a junior scholar of the Centre of Cultural Resources and Training at the Ministry of Culture in Delhi. There, I started my battle with fragmented identity and decided to take up art as a profession.

My work refers to the ritual of knotting cloths and threads, which is a sacred ritual of my native land when one has a





## THE KNOTTING PROJECT

*Medium: fabric, thread, net, dimensions variable*

The installation consists of thousands of knots representing the conditions of the psyche: outrage, sadness, love, desire, and remembrance. As each visitor enters the space, they cut a colorful thread and offer it to the performer, who continuously knots the pieces together.

wish. In my childhood, we used to visit Ziyarats (sacred places) with our parents, and the colorful knots on the doors and windows stuck in my mind. I think a knot is a legacy for exploration; a metaphor for the individual and their role within the larger cultural identity. My intricate hand-driven knots are meant to help discover the voice of humanity inflicted from the current times and the feeling of being trapped in the relentless cycle of violence.

**T**hrough this fellowship, I hope to utilize Harvard's resources to attend classes, view archives, access online libraries, and explore museum collections to learn how art could be used as an effective tool for communication in situations dominated by a lack of security and the experiences of displacement, trauma, violence, gen-



I think there will be more frequent calls for artists to act as communicators and spectators to bring people from different belief systems together.

der discrimination, and sheer fatigue.

As I meet with mentors and peers, I hope to establish the language that makes artistic interventions understandable, deploying them as effective means of communication and mobilization. In the sphere of memory work, this leads to a focus on evoking and presenting memories of contention and of conflict through affect and its techniques.

I think there will be more frequent calls for artists to act as communicators and spectators to bring people from different belief systems together. By engaging people on the ground about their artistic endeavors, a new understanding can be gleaned — one that illuminates the societies and the aspirations of the people. I am excited for the new connections to be made, the new insights, and the different approaches of my fellow artists in the cohort of this fellowship.



## TRAPPED NOT DEFEATED

An installation inspired by fishermen with a fishing trap on the sea shore of Fort Kochi in South India. The two-sided, open trap is a metaphor for a mental trap, with the boat inside it signifying the journey of life. This work is a sign that whenever we get trapped in our lives, there must be a hope of getting out of it.





## THE SPELL SONG

*Hand-woven Tangail Sari (traditional cloths), cotton, thread and nails, 2019-2020*

This project shows the rhetorical words of wisdom from Bengali proverbs. I have chosen some very common and popular sayings in Bangla, and created the text using Saree, cotton, and threads, enlisting the help of my sisters and women from my hometown.

# NAJMUN NAHAR KEYA

BANGLADESH

*Installation & Mixed Media*

Najmun Nahar Keya, a multidisciplinary artist, bases her work on the entire incidence of her past memories combined with her present feelings within this current society. Keya is also interested in the dichotomy of human behavior and culture and historical phases to create new conceptions.

“

To me, art is more than a way to express creativity — it's a language, love, and uses a sense of magic to create something new. I can reflect my personal expression with wonder and joy no matter what medium I use for my pieces, and I've been passionate about it since I was a child. As I grow older, my desire to be an artist becomes stronger. Art gives me pleasure, though I am still learning to truly see.

My works are a reflection of my life's experiences, the past and present, combined with my imagination and memories. In my earlier works, I tried to blend in my personal emotions with the socio-political events that surround me, portrayed through symbols and motifs

in my self-portraits. My current project is an evolution from my past works, where my memories are compared to my existing circumstances.

I like to explore new ideas and integrate new techniques in my work and have worked with a number of mediums, from painting and drawing to photography, video, and textile. During my studies in Japan, I integrated various Japanese techniques known as "Wabisabi" and "Kintsugi," which enriched my art practice.

For my most recent work, "The Spell Song," I have chosen to use typography on textile with the intent to involve my art with the local community. I wanted to





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blend in the rich history of the Bengali language with the glorious heritage of Tangail Taat, a traditional hand-woven cotton fabric from the Tangail region of Bangladesh that is used for making Saree. The hand-woven Saree is a historic production from the centuries-old handloom industry of Tangail that I use to create text-based art.

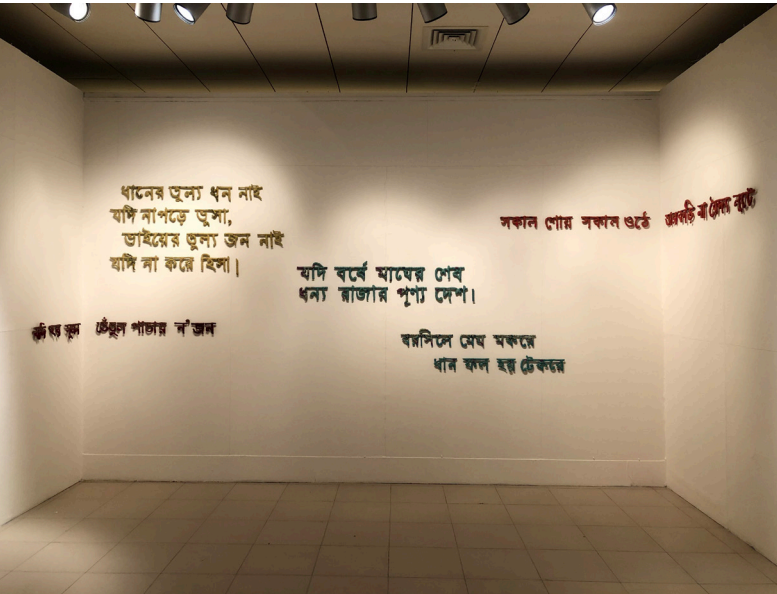
Bangla, my national language, has a glorious history and is rich in literature and historical depth. My artwork is composed of texts from Bengali proverbs, which are an integral part of the rich history of the Bengali language and have been passed down for generations in Bengali folklore. Later, it becomes a collective product, which assumes the traditions, emotions, thoughts, and values of life. It includes different types of epics, dramas, ballads, proverbs, folk tales, poetry, and more. Now in a different form, it holds its existence in the local community. My mother and grandmother also used to use verses in their everyday life.

**My works are a reflection of my life's experiences, the past and present, combined with my imagination and memories.**

This fellowship will be a remarkable opportunity for me to learn, research, and acquire new perspectives to develop my work in the future. I will use this opportunity to study textiles and textile art, and to gain knowledge about the artists who have used the various types and patterns of textiles in their art. I am particularly interested in the works of Otti Berger, Anni Albers, Louise Bourgeois, Doris Salcedo, Eva Hesse, and other female artists who have worked with this medium. I seek inspiration from the textile arts of Berger and Albers, many of which are collected online at the Harvard Art Museums.

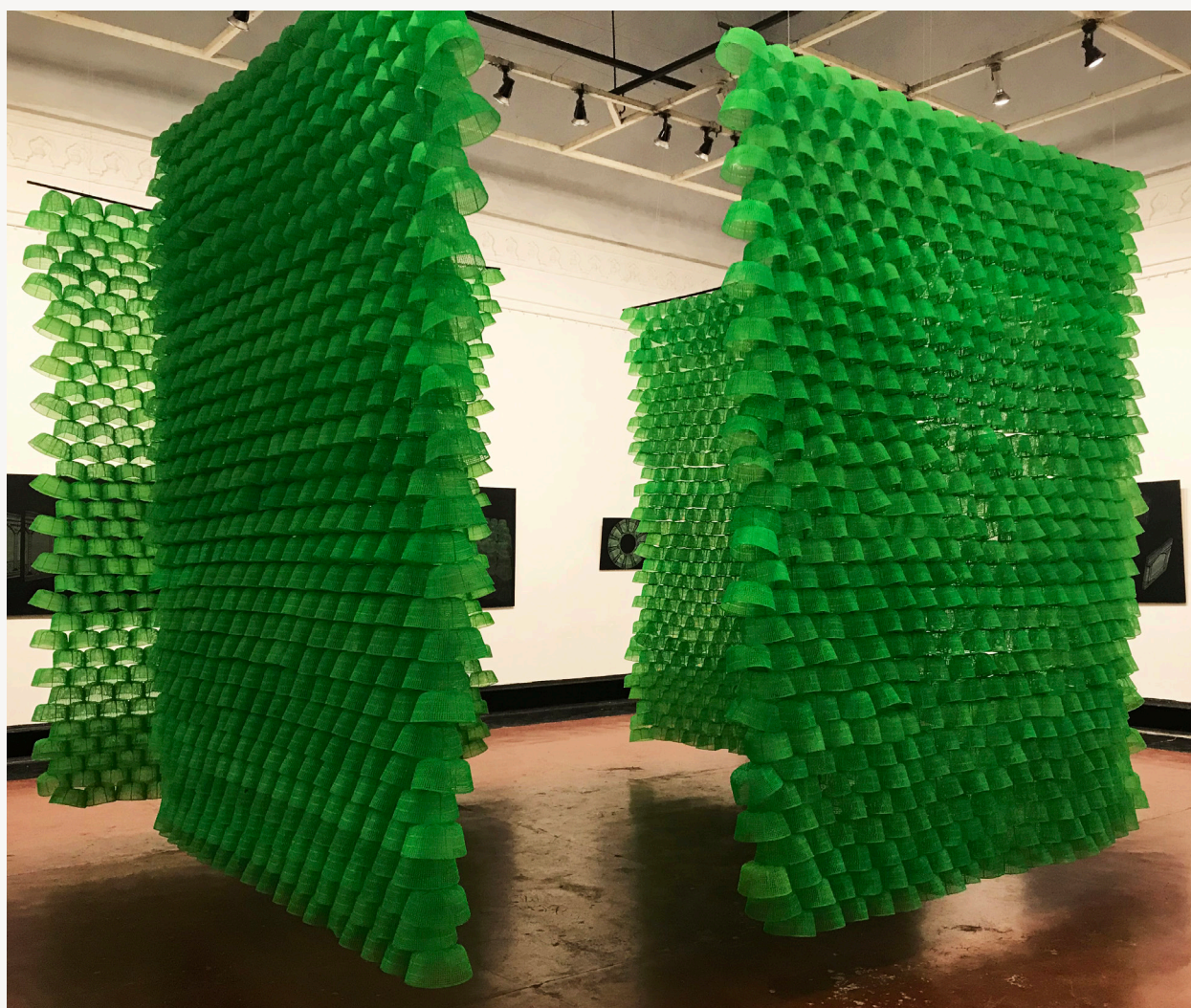
A large portion of my research typically includes visiting museums to investigate the theoretical concept behind the art. Harvard's broad digital library and archives will be a great place to enhance my knowledge during this pandemic period.

The guidance and input from faculty teaching the masterclasses during this fellowship will be essential in advancing my progress through the idea development process. I hope the extended resources and instructive learning process will expand my knowledge and work processes and bring my work to the next level.



### TRANSLATION:

01. A field of paddy and your cattle, Shows your affluence A few golds and silvers The rest are ashes.	but the one roaming in your mind.
02. There is nothing of more value than rice Unless spoiled by soot There is no one of more value than a brother Unless spoiled by jealousy	09. Plentiful mangoes show a high yield of rice, Too many tamarinds, call upon the flood
03-05. With the right people, With their clean hearts, A tiny roof above nine, They'll still work together fine.	07 (These verses about Bengali 12th month portray food, fruits and ritual)  Bitter Gima, in the month of Chaitra Sweet Jute leaves in Baishakh And heavenly fruits in the summer of Jaishtha.
04-2. If it rains, when the sun is in Capricorn It brings prosper, and bountiful rice at home.	During the dull Ashar, chew on Khoi (fried paddy), In Sraban, indulge in plenty of Doi (sweet curd).
04-1. Rainfall at the end of winter The King is happy, for his kingdom will prosper.	Bhadra means delicious Taal-er-Pithha (sweet palm cakes) In Ashwin, cucumbers are sweeter than ever.
06 and 09. Not the tiger of the jungle should ye fear,	In Kartik , Khailsha-er-Jhol (fish curry) you will dine on, And Oli (arums) during Agrahayan.
	Kanchhi in Paush, And Magh is the time for Tel (oil) The month Falgun, enjoy the ripen Bael (woodapple).



### THE HOLLOW LEVITATION

This life-sized installation is an assemblage of mass-produced plastic prayer caps commonly found in mosques. It represents an unsealed cube, which acts as a metaphor to symbolize Kaaba (a holy place for Muslims). This airy, lightweight suspended structure creates a harmony through repetitive patterns that refer to the fragile, baseless, and manmade structure of religion and culture in our society.

# MAHEEN NIAZI

PAKISTAN

*Sculpture & Painting*

Maheen Niazi's work revolves around the blurred boundaries between religion and culture, where there are no strict demarcations. Her corpus of work primarily explores the intersections of religion and culture and highlights the points of fusion where they merge.

“

**M**y work consistently revolves around my personal take on society. In my recent work, I have been continuously using black and green shades, which directly link to religion, but the green color I use is very close to neon. Usually, this color is found in plastic caps made for men to offer prayer. These cheaply produced material caps in a neon color contradict with its original, sacred purpose. I am very fascinated with its material — the repetitive lines in the circle of a cap make me think about the repetition in our society.

I have chosen a masculine object — which, in a way, is not directly linked to me as a female — because I am trying

to comment on the authoritative party of the religion. I am also trying to comment on the preaching of clerics during the sermon. The use of the prayer mat represents the continuity and mindset of the follower, as well as that of the opponent. Composing them in a structure that has no strong base and is hollow from within, with a beautifully composed exterior, is a comment on the culture of practicing our lives in the name of Islam, which we as Muslims are hardly aware of.

Using the caps and prayer mat as symbols in my work is rooted in the idea that both items are manmade and complexly woven by people, just as they have made our lives complex with their representation of Islam. Through different perspec-





### UNBOXING

Multiple transparent layers indicate the continuity of set pattern and void structure in our society. The layers created around the cube investigate the multiple man-made perceptions of religion, communicating the concept of walls around us, within which we have limited our thoughts and concept of religion and culture.

tives in my work, it shows that with just one object, and no matter how hard we try to see our surroundings differently, these surroundings are very much controlled by men. Even the religion itself has become political through representations with this green color, which has become a representation of Islam by a certain group. Although the response I have seen to this subject is that we are so well-trained in keeping a blind eye to religion, I can see that we hardly question our own belief system.

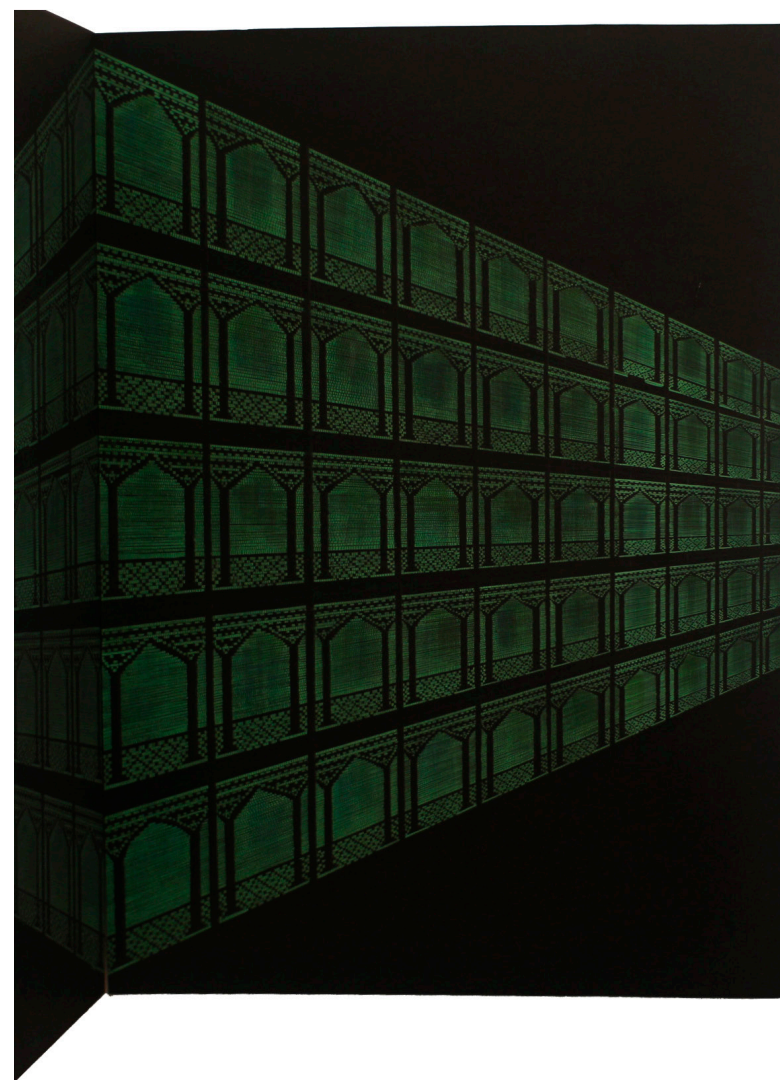
**M**y art focuses on the blurred line between culture and religion and the misuse of religion by men for self-interest and to justify certain cultural practices that reinforce gender inequalities.

During this fellowship, I am keen to dig deeper and research the consequences of such misinterpretation of religion on society today, especially on women in South Asia.

I will also investigate solutions that have the potential to create accountability for

these horrific practices. I want to learn how artists can draw attention to these issues to help raise societal awareness. Ultimately, I hope to discover how my artwork can help younger generations reinterpret religion to enable equal human rights, especially for women in marginalized communities.

Using the caps and prayer mat as symbols in my work is rooted in the idea that both items are manmade and complexly woven by people, just as they have made our lives complex with their representation of Islam.



### DILEMMA

This two-point perspective diptych painting is joined in a way that creates a corner of two walls. With every step by the viewer, it changes its angle. Currently, uneducated clerics manipulate the written text to support deeply embedded cultural practices, blurring the demarcation between culture and religion.





#### STORY: TRANSGENDER BRIDES

My series, "Transgender Brides," presents snippets from the annual Koovagam festival, home to probably the most important and sacred rite of passage for all transgender individuals residing in India. The ritual involves a beauty pageant, a make-believe wedding ceremony, and subsequent widowhood. These images shed light on this age-old custom of self-expression, gender empowerment, and identity politics that gives transwomen a platform to express their sexual identities publicly in an otherwise oppressive society. A transwoman minutes before the beauty pageant (*above*); A transwoman wearing a white Saree symbolizing widowhood (*below*).

# PATTABI RAMAN

INDIA

*Photography*

Pattabi Raman is a photojournalist and documentary photographer who specializes in socio-economic and cultural issues. His long-term projects include the post-war lives of Sri Lankan Tamils, gender identity in Tamil folklore, and the aesthetics of a changing urban India.

“

Inspired by the power of still images, I started photographing our life and culture in India a few years ago. Later, the inspiration of two books, "The Decisive Moment," by Henry Cartier-Bresson, and "Truth Needs No Ally: Inside Photojournalism," by Howard Chapnick, molded me into a visual storyteller, specializing in issues pertaining to the common man.

I work mainly on long-form photo essays. Inspired by the values and philosophy of "concerned photography," I became a socio-economic documentarian and worked to record the human condition. As a documentary photographer, I like to create parallel bodies of work to give a voice to the voiceless and to photograph the celebrations of life.

In contemporary world photography, I keep observing the terms of fragility, agility, perception, resistance, and boundaries — each of which are being visually narrated through multiple experiments. Artists convey their strong feeling about the anti-government stance, their feminist perspective, social isolation, sexual exploitation, and more, in a subtle way. As a conventional photographer, I would like to learn from my mentors at Harvard to understand the different types of narration that explore strong human emotions through photographs.

During my time as a Visiting Artist Fellow, I'd like to undertake research that will deepen my visual literacy. I would like to utilize the resources of the





#### STORY: TAMILS IN POST WAR SRI LANKA

A perplexed woman walks past the ruins of her home in July 2012 on the day she was allowed back to her house in Pudukudirrupu, one of the worst affected places in northern Sri Lanka with a large Tamil population. The house was bombed during the war and was further swindled in the name of demining.

Harvard Art Museums and Harvard's libraries to study three different parameters that will help me to narrate stories through different dimensions.

First, I would like to perform a deep study on South Asian post-war visual narratives. My personal project, "Post-War Sri Lankan Tamils," is ongoing, and this research will help me to explore the other aspects of the Tamil diaspora, which migrated both during and after the conflict.

Secondly, I would like to better under-

As a documentary photographer, I like to create parallel bodies of work to give a voice to the voiceless and to photograph the celebrations of life.

stand the sexuality narration through Harvard's collection of transgender-related photography and demography research.

Third, I would like to perform research into urbanization and cities through the

ongoing work at Harvard that pertains to contemporary cities in Asia, which will help me to bring more Asian context into my "Metromorphosis" for a wider audience.



#### STORY: TAMILS IN POST WAR SRI LANKA

Jesudas, an adolescent who lost his right arm during the war, is seen with his elder sister. His mother lost her right leg, while the same cluster bomb killed his father in front of their shanty at Mullivaikkal in May 2009. This is their first day after the army gave them permission to settle back in their house.



#### STORY: TAMILS IN POST WAR SRI LANKA

Inside an abandoned bungalow at Jaffna district, North Sri Lanka. This photograph portrays life amidst the ruins in a post-war nation.

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