

That... Which Binds Us

A Collateral Event to Lahore Biennale 03

Curated by
Aasim Akhtar

Bazil Habib | Rahman Zada | Huma Iftikhar
Naqsh Raj | Shamir Iqtidar | Yasir Waqas

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4-8 PM

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Since emerging from the furrows of colonialism during the first half of the twentieth century, modern South Asian history has been punctuated by struggles for carving out collective and individual identities. While in the scheme of politics, narratives are written according to the accounts of the triumphant and the defeated, artists have sought to provide greater nuance. Laced with the lyricism of a rich literary heritage, a deep understanding of the potency of visual culture, and the legacy of interlacing civilisations, Pakistani culture has functioned as a vast tableau upon which artists have projected, deconstructed and challenged the shifting peripheries of their surroundings. Although incorporating symbols and imagery that are easily identifiable to the local audience, the six artists in the show also depict the everyday environment that can represent virtually any locale in the world. Utilising the extensive knowledge of international art history that they have acquired while studying abroad or in cities that serve as cosmopolitan crossroads of thought, they rely on a bold mix of influences.

The selected works in '*That...Which Binds Us*' provide an unprecedented look into some of the compelling approaches that artists have adopted in their efforts to address a destabilised reality. Illuminating a distinct thread of contemporary South Asian art, the segment presented in this show exhibits a wide range of aesthetics.

The selection of artists in this show highlights artists who are changing the face of mainstream art. These up-and-coming artists are offering daring new styles that range from geometric abstraction to renewed figuration, presenting subjects and techniques that are expected to have longstanding effects on local trends. They demonstrate a continued commitment to the exploration of their surroundings as they seek to expand aesthetic horizons, making up a contrasting, albeit equally important facet of art in Pakistan. Using cutting-edge techniques, they've produced highly introspective works, many of which focus on existentialist questions and their concurrent manifestations. Accordingly, despite possessing diverging concerns, these artists are also part of a remarkable overhaul.

Although not one subject matter dominates the creative output of these artists, the content of work on show has been heavily influenced by their immediate environment.

Of late, artists have encountered greater schism in their community as they witness the surfacing of pandemic materialism, acute alienation, and standoffs between old-world

traditions and globalised lifestyle, creating a fluctuating reality that they are constantly challenged to navigate.

For many, the most intuitive reaction has been to turn inward, opting to delve into the place of the individual in society through their art. Concurrently, they look at the process of altering 'appearances' in order to conform to a particular type of branding. In the series of works here, the artists have subverted our understanding of beauty through a visual assault on consumerism, illustrating the extreme outcome of subjecting oneself to the endless scrutiny of an image-obsessed culture. A subset of this split from previous traditions is a revitalisation of abstract art among these practitioners. With meditations on uniformity, space, colour and the architectonics alongside precise applications of geometric principles, they renew the basic components with a contemporary appeal.

With the increasing entrance of technology in visual culture, art has transformed by experimentation and the influence of new media. As a growing globalised world has brought the advent of new forms of communication, artists have gained endless opportunities to engage with their peers, bringing greater freedom in representation with the clear influence of popular culture. That this exhibition brings together a diverse group of artists speaks of a lineage of culture that has evolved despite all odds. At the helm of this new history these artists have insisted on charting the intersections of art and society and environment.

Aasim Akhtar



Basil Habib

My work explores the interplay of light and space. These spaces are reinterpretations of places I've experienced. Light plays a pivotal role in shaping the mood and atmosphere of these reimagined spaces. I deconstruct familiar settings to create surreal environments, employing a minimalistic approach to decision-making in my paintings. The repetition of elements such as windows, steps, and light holds spiritual significance in my artistic philosophy, serving as symbolic motifs. Windows offer a glimpse into desired views, while steps represent the dual paths of growth towards light or descent into darkness. Through my art, I aim to initiate a dialogue between the viewer and the work, evoking emotional responses that transcend ordinary reality.



Bazil Habib | Acrylic on Canvas | 36 x 42 inches

Manuscript III



Basil Habib | Acrylic on Canvas | 36 x 42 inches

The Studio Space



Rahman Zada

I would like to place my work in the context of how I arrived here and where I emerged from. I come from a tribal, once remote part of Pakistan, known for its highly patriarchal society steeped in cultures of extreme beliefs and the interventions by the world powers in our societies. My arrival in a sophisticated art school in urban Lahore exposed me to a myriad of possibilities with which to unpack my thoughts, my art practice, and analyses of the collision of worlds, technologies, and the human species as a player. In these years both as a full- professional and as a practicing artist I have tried to make sense of a fast changing world, erratic, exciting- forever in flux. Additionally my work investigates human and the relation with objects. The key notion of my practice is the usage of objects to archive time, as well as, to repurpose obsolete technology, and generate new perspectives and narratives. In my work, the objects work symbolically. I ask audiences to read, absorb and get the ideas it reveals.



Rahman Zada | Goauche, Silver Leaf & LCD Sheet on Wasli | 18.7 x 25.7 inches

Evolving with Time



Rahman Zada | Gouache, Collage, Objects & LCD Sheet on Wasli | 26.7 x 27 inches

Hello, Can you Hear Me



Rahman Zada | Gouache, Collage & LCD Sheet on Wasli | 20 x 23.3 inches

Camera Action



Rahman Zada | Gouache, Collage, Objects, Silver Leaf & LCD Sheet on Wasli | 20.7 x 26.7 inches

The Lamp Light III



Rahman Zada | Gouache, Collage & LCD Sheet on Wasli | 12 x 20 inches

With a Different Sound



Rahman Zada | Gouache, Collage & LCD Sheet on Wasli | 20.1 x 25.2 inches

The Ink Pot



Rahman Zada | Gouache, Collage, Objects, LCD Sheet on Wasli | 12.1 x 20.6 inches

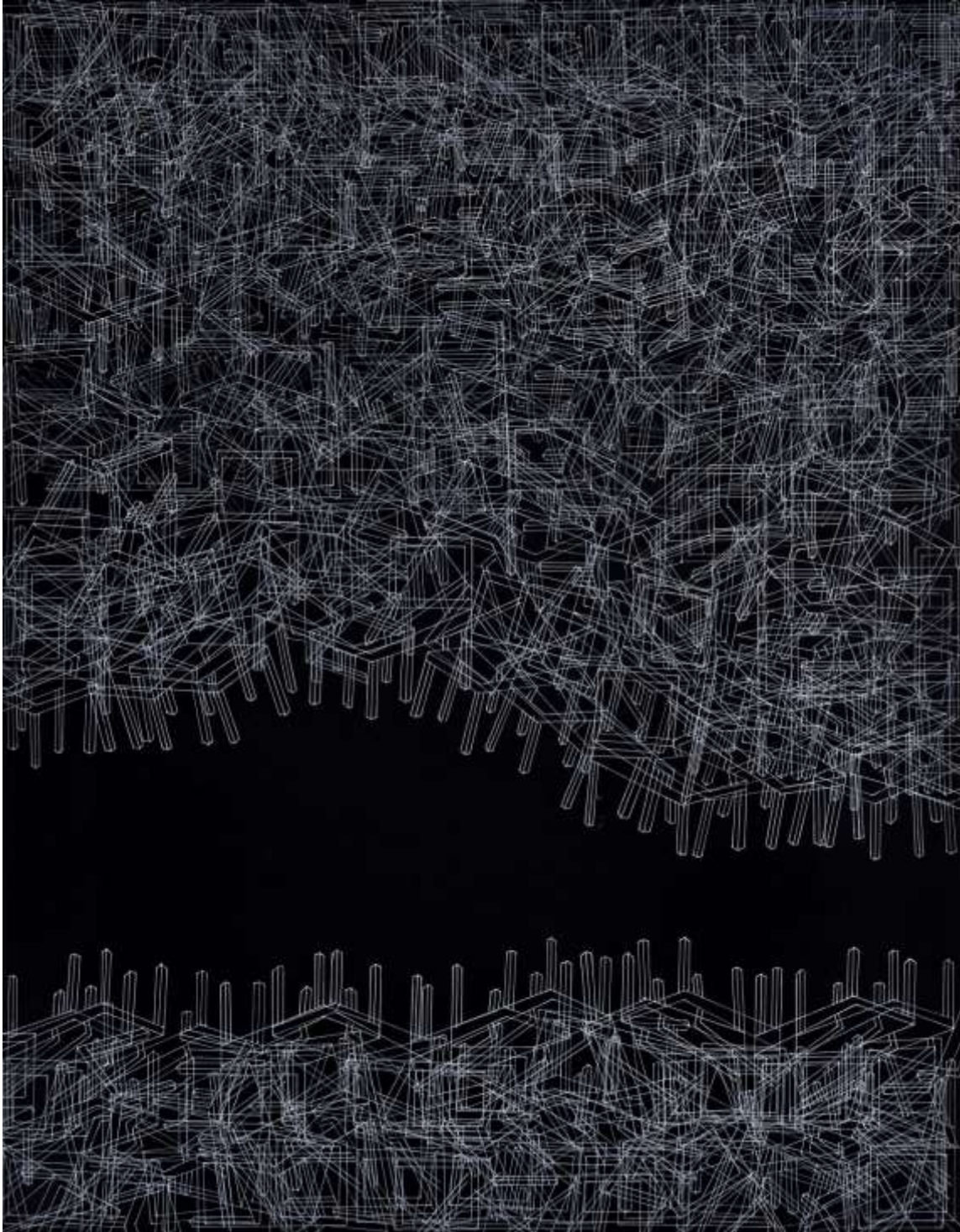
Power in City



Huma Iftikhar

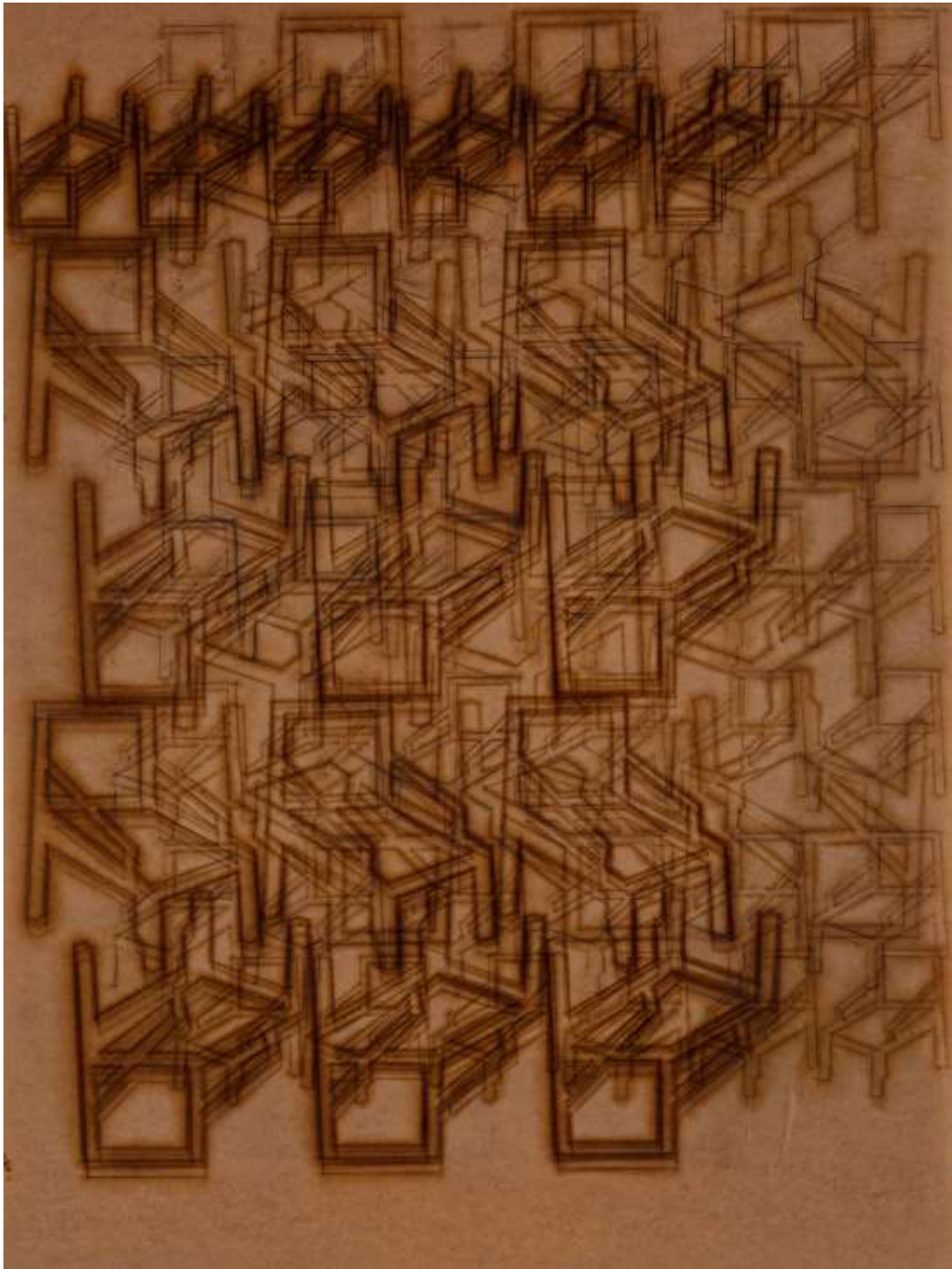
My work delves into the complexities of political power, examining its structures and the impact it has on society. I use the chair as a recurring motif—an emblem of authority and control—to symbolize the often rigid and unchanging nature of power dynamics. By repeating the chair in my compositions, I aim to illustrate how power is cycled, inherited, and reinforced over time. Working primarily with line and color, I draw these chairs in white on black, using graphite on Wasli paper. The contrast between light and dark underscores the tension between power and its absence, while the repetition reflects the constant presence of authority in our lives. My use of Wasli—a traditional surface—also connects my work to a broader historical and cultural narrative, linking past and present systems of power.

Through these visual explorations, I encourage the viewer to reflect on their own relationship with power and the structures that shape our world.



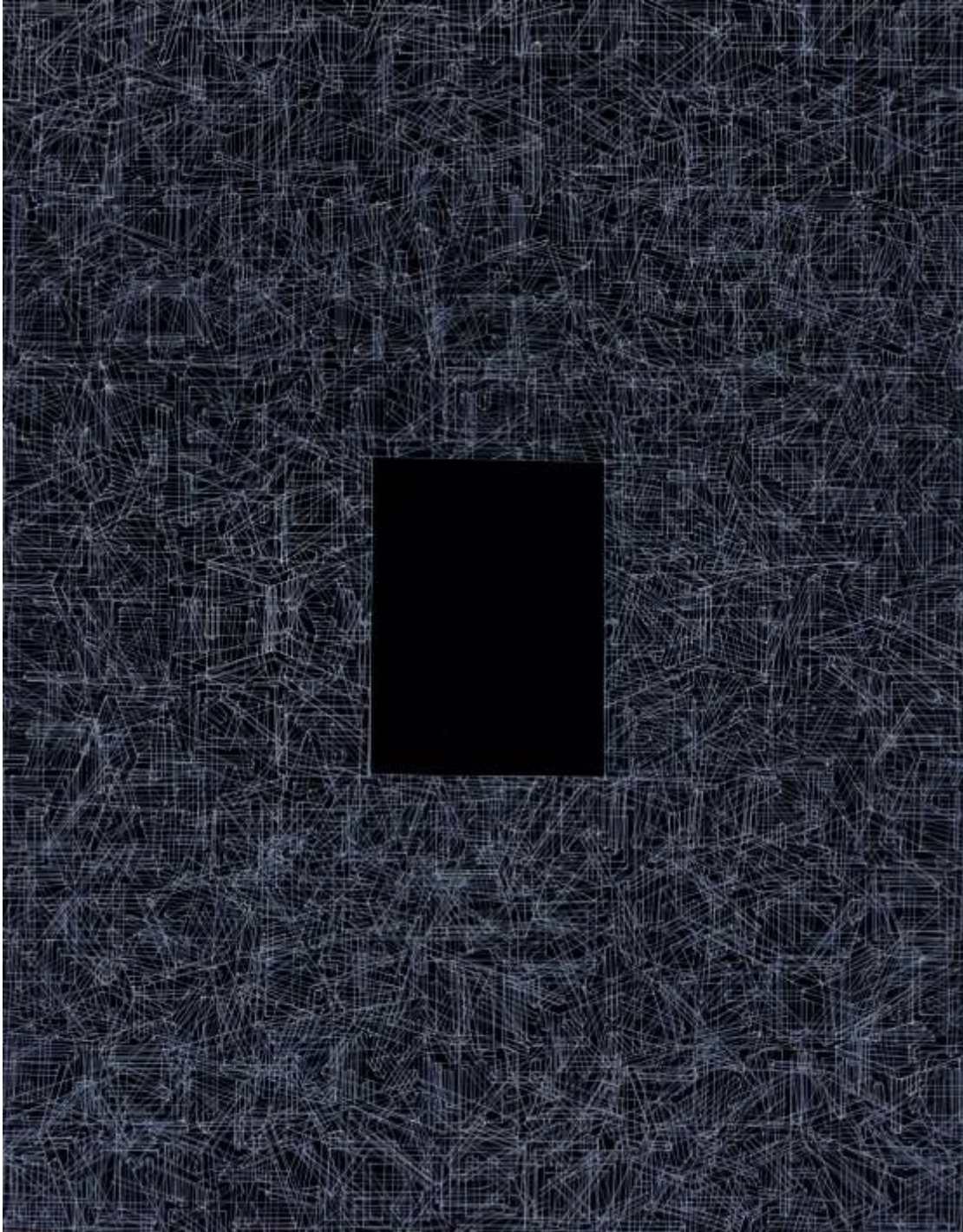
Huma Iftikhar | Rapido on Wasli | 22 x 28 inches

Untitled



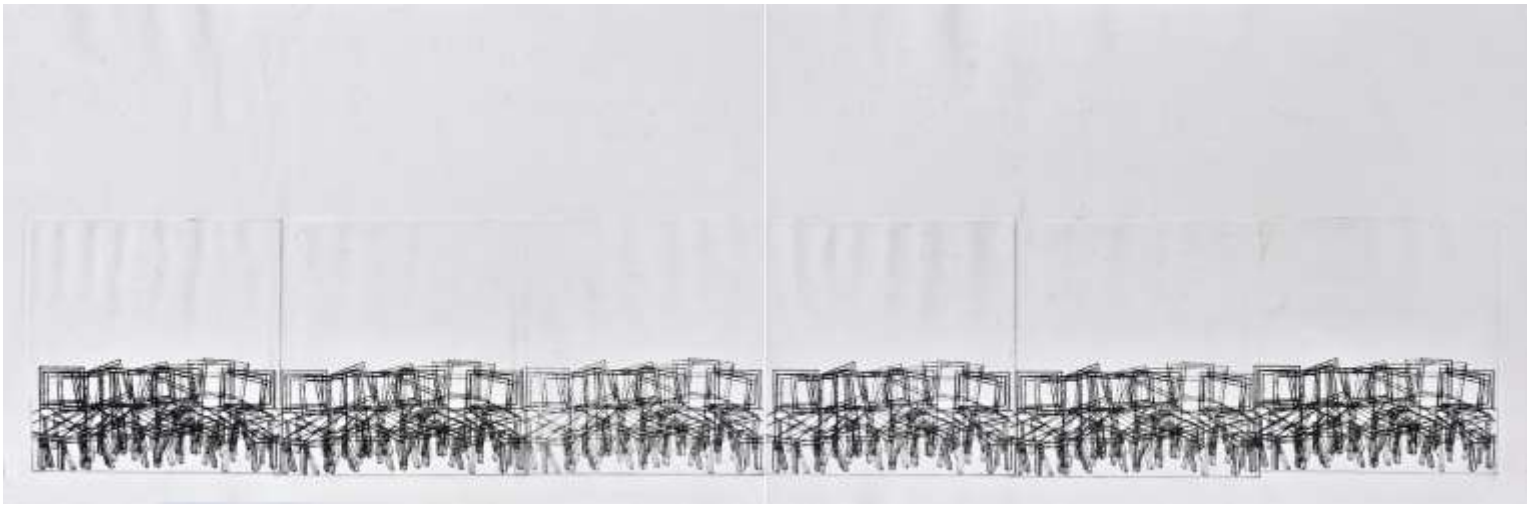
Huma Iftikhar | Laser Impression on Acrylic Sheet | 28 x 32 inches

Untitled



Huma Iftikhar | Rapido on Wasli | 22 x 28 inches

Untitled



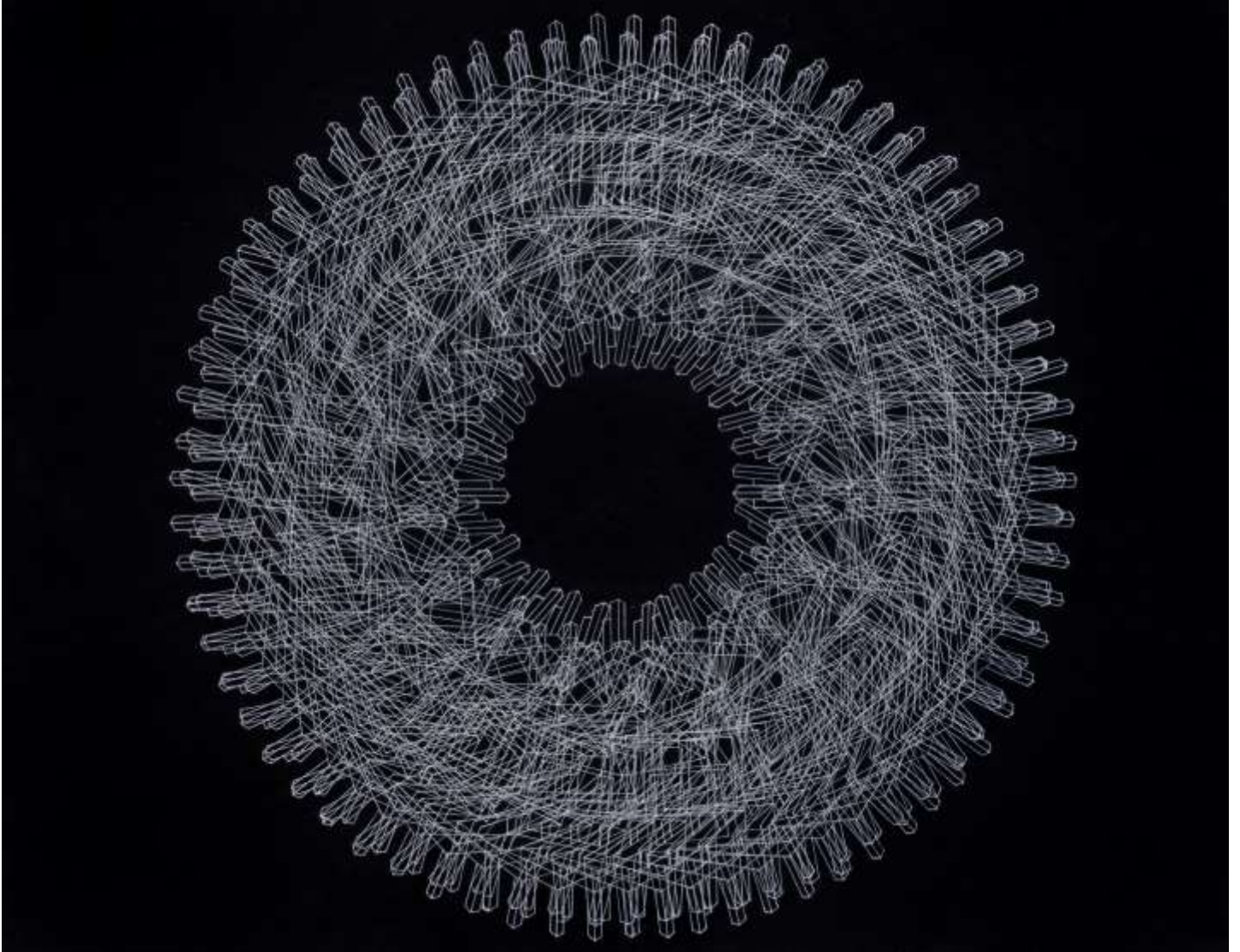
Huma Iftikhar | Ink on Paper | 13 x 19 (Left), 13 x 29 (Right)

Untitled



Huma Iftikhar | Laser Cut & Gold Leaf on Wasli | 22 x 29 inches

Untitled



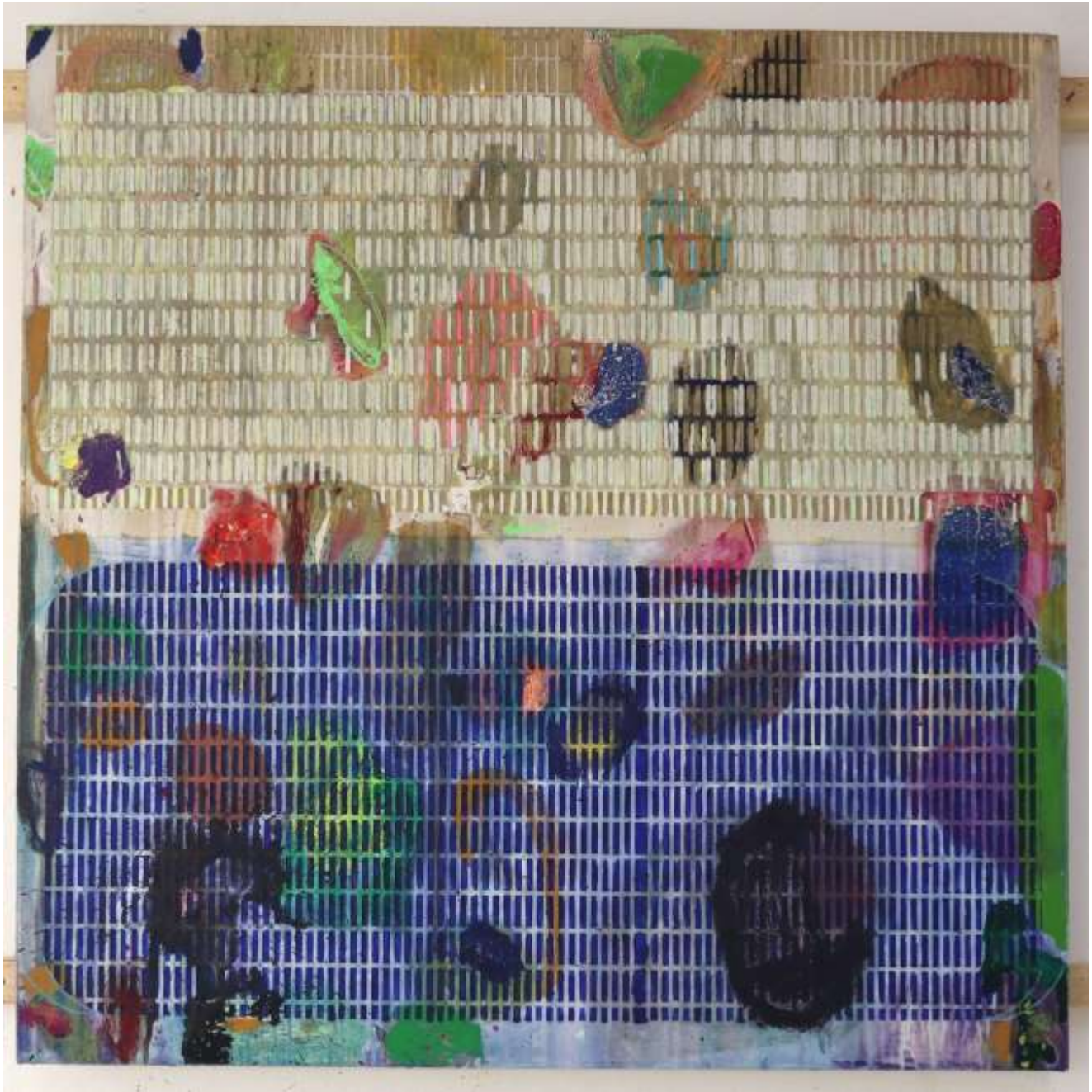
Huma Iftikhar | Rapido on Wasli | 22 x 28 inches

Untitled



Naqsh Raj

Naqsh believes in the strong connection between aesthetics and ethics, which are in a continuous process of reform. Her ongoing work is a union of mechanical and manual methods of painting. She preserves her primitive self from precision and order. Repetitive expression offers comfort, predictability and a sense of control in the work. Within each iteration, the element of surprise emerges through the permutation of colors.



Naqsh Raj | Oil, Ink & Chalk on Canvas | 36 x 36 inches

A Daydream Sky



Naqsh Raj | Oil, Ink & Chalk on Wasli | 36 x 36 inches

Echoes of Rebirth



Naqsh Raj | Oil, Ink & Chalk on Canvas | 59 x 59 inches

Saks, 5th Avenue



Naqsh Raj | Oil, Ink & Chalk on Canvas | 59 x 59 inches

One Last Wish



Shamir Iqtidar

My work sets out to explore the unique set of drawbacks that are introduced by forward advancements in society, and question what it means to live in a modern age where the concerns are directed towards the growth of individuals while losing sight of community, creating a fundamental unhappiness in the individual due to the social indifference harbored. The suffocating architecture of an advanced society opens the capacity for meaningless attachment. If time is what causes heartache, space is where the pain yields and where it stays.



Shamir Iqtidar | Oil on Canvas | 18 x 32 inches

Prayer on the Mind's Eye



Shamir Iqtidar | Oil on Canvas | 24 x 32 inches

Song to the Siren



Shamir Iqtidar | Oil on Canvas | 15 x 30 inches

Mortified Silhouettes

Yasir Waqas

In my distant memories of growing up, learning mechanics of real airplanes and watching the fascinating details of engines was something I fondly did. It triggered my imagination, inspired me to draw them but more than that I was expected to fly them. Being a GPL Pilot and an aircraft mechanic, I felt limited and constrained. Something I wasn't really sure about started a contradictory conflict within me. What lies between is a huge haze of confusion, clash of ideas and flight from certain circumstances but not able to fully shun what has been planted in one's mind.

My work is about compromises and conflicts within a personality, between idea innate and idea implanted, and the damage to the personality and the idea itself. The occurrence of feather and metal in my work continue to build and deceive the viewer because of their very nature, one being the artificially created and the other nature itself. Yet it is a contradiction to their very existence. The battle of opposing a planted idea in my work also explains that it is not always easy to make something you think best for yourself and act according to your will doesn't necessarily makes it your reality. Sometimes it leaves you claustrophobic and again leaves you with a desire to fly to the unknown.





Yasir Waqas | Gouache, Copper Leaf & Taxidermy Rings on Wasli | 18.5 x 39 inches

Gladly, to the Joy of Fragmented, Dark Overt Menace



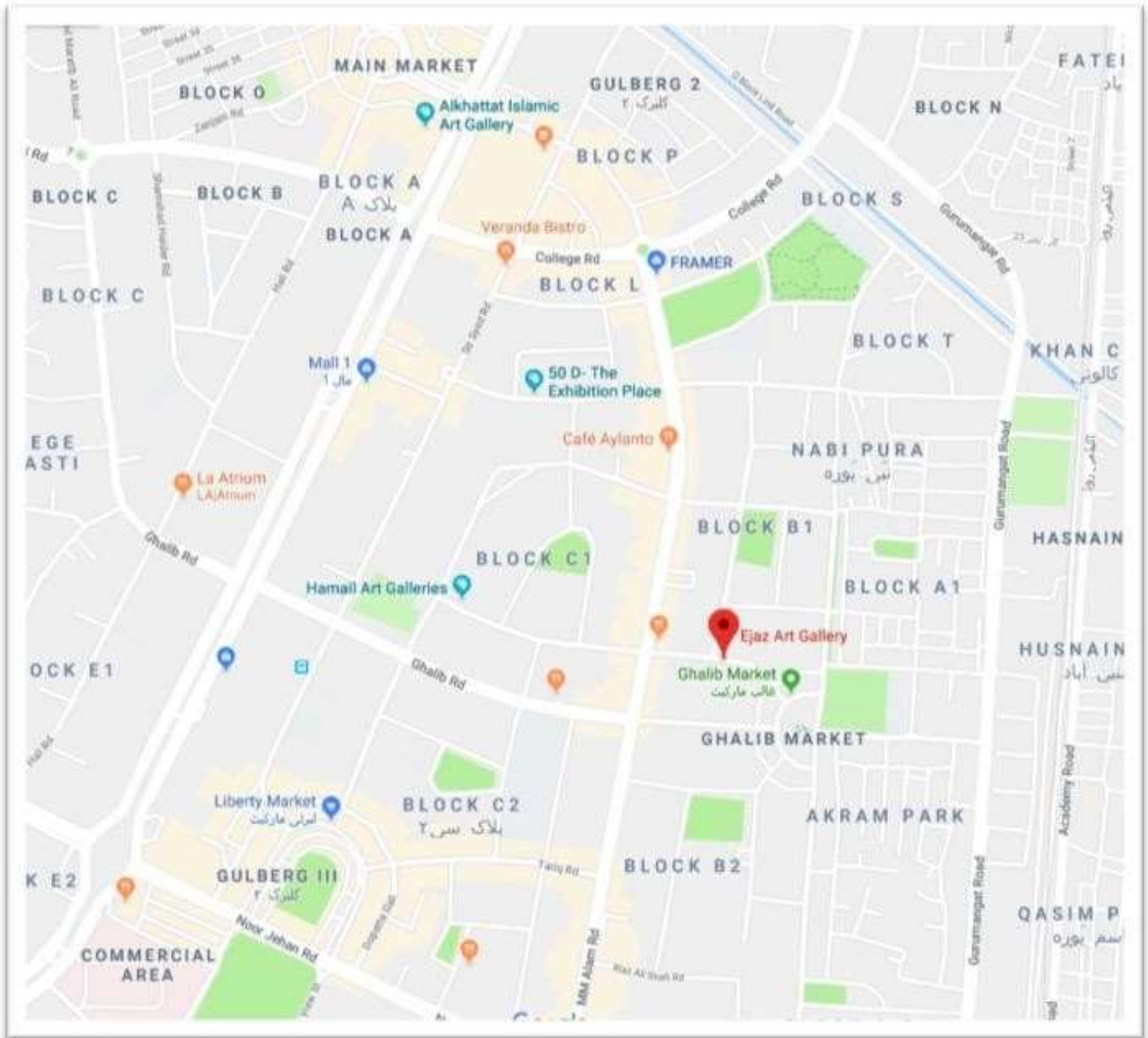
Yasir Waqas | Gouache. Copper Leaf & Taxidermy Wings on Wasli | 18.5 x 39 inches

Gladly, to the Joy of Fragmented, Dark Overt Menace






Yasir Waqas | Gouache, Gold and Silver leaf on 14 Layers of Wasli | 18.5 x 18.5 x 3 inches

He Scrapped the Mirror with Velvet Head



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