



Murree Museum  
Artist Residency  
2014+2015+2016

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Courtesy: Trans Artists website



# MURREE MUSEUM ARTIST RESIDENCY

Our Residency aims to give back to the debilitated hill-station while invigorating ourselves from each other's energies.

We keep the spirit of generosity alive, to be able to create, make, inspire, collaborate, discuss think and be curious. To be a space for practitioners, scholars and of tolerance.

The artists' residency in Murree brings together artists of various backgrounds, disciplines and locations as a nucleus for generating ideas, art, cultural practices, and interaction with the public in the area. Due to being in the hills, it is off the beaten path of art-hubs.

Despite a rich past, Murree is currently devoid of channels for intellectual stimulation and has been rampantly pillaged and damaged by growing strains of tourism. Its surviving British Raj architecture and archives continue to wither away. This residency seeks to bring out a center of highly driven, intelligent, imaginative and creative individuals to reflect upon personal concerns and social issues. They may work inspired by the topography, history, and the culture of Murree to recreate a dialogue with the art world as well as with their immediate surroundings. They also contribute to the local community by holding workshops for street (Gujjar), gypsy children and students of St. Deny's Boarding School.

Art residencies are organized all around the world. Most of them are non-profit organizations that are facilitated, managed and funded through donations. In some countries of South Asia there are notable residencies that provide opportunities for artists at the varying stages of their careers/life. However in a much populated Pakistan there has been only one residency, in an urban-center. No other

support-structures from private or government sectors are available to artists, who opt for alternate ways of working and seeking venues/opportunities beyond state controlled institutions and commercial, private galleries. Among several, one of the goals of residency is to formulate an independent, self-organized platform and encourage the creative, liberal and diverse narratives of Pakistani art, culture and intelligentsia.

Our residency initiates opportunities for mid-career and emerging artists who are given time and space to produce their work, away from their regular jobs, daily responsibilities and commercial commitments. It gives them a constructive, and useful working environment to reinvent and rethink their own practice and art in general. The work thereafter is reviewed and promoted through publications in leading newspapers, art journals and magazines. The residency organizers have also participated in two literary festivals, seminars and conferences.

This series of initiatives will consequently enable and sustain an environment where cultural artifacts and heritage spaces are documented, preserved, archived, studied and re-interpreted. The platform may also encourage more artists and anthropologists to develop their research and attract national and international travelers to view the country through an objective point of view. The residency results in evolving and affirming a positive image of Pakistan; since foreign artists are invited to testify the richness, peacefulness and tolerance of our culture and go back to their home countries with a true and positive picture of a society that has been often connected with political unrest and social turmoil by the world media.



















# 2014

3 June - 28 June

Kashmir Point, Murree, Pakistan

## Artists

- . Madyha Leghari
- . Sophia Mairaj
- . Usman Saeed

## Visiting Mentor

- . Afshar Malik
- . Murtaza Jafri

\* A month long exhibition was curated, along with the history of Murree and local artifacts, at the Resource Centre, Murree on 28th July, 2014





# Some Impressions from the Murree Museum Artist Residency

By Madyha Leghari

“NO ENTERY”, declared the misspelt sign, losing authority just as we crept past it to arrive at the residence that would be home to us for the next month. It’s quiet save for wind rattling through trees and the occasional bird call. One can almost hear the sun strike fiercely upon earth, holding it in place lest the towering hotel construction nearby loosens it another time. June is kind to Murree: it eases out its icy wrinkles and conceals its slippery red mud beneath blankets of grass flecked with daisies and dandelions. Sophia Mairaj (artist in residence) is flitting through these, collecting fragile samplings of this and that and pressing them between her books. When she leaves a week later, I am not certain if she carries lesser baggage or more.

*Everything here has a name: mohabbat booti is the one that clings and bicho booti bites. How else would you introduce things to a stranger and Murree is a town chock-full of them, forging temporary liaisons that last only as long as the season allows. You keep wondering if you are one of them. Something makes you queasy about the idea of tourism: its spirit of imperial adventurism even in the face of ecological catastrophes; of wanting to see, in relation to yourself, something that is not yours and then of wanting to tell of it. How fresh can your novel insights possibly be as a result of this dabbling and how much of this export will matter to the town?*

We are to use the Murree Museum and Archives as a studio space. While me and Saba Khan (artist and host) are thus absorbed quietly in our own work, Usman Saeed (artist in residence), hauls the frames from the walls onto a pile on the floor. What follows are two hectic days of aligning our curatorial compasses; of anticipating audiences, their movements and reactions; of arguing over yellowing maps, photographs, documents and other objects;

of towing these from here to there and then back again; and finally of hammering nails and putting up the display all over again in time to catch the weekend rush. The Murree Museum and Archives is now open to public and on its very first day gets at least 80 visitors.

*You find it unsettling that the photos you now carefully hang are mostly taken at a time and place where the colour of your skin would have allowed you to stand neither here nor next to the photographer. Over chai one day, Saba spills that General Dyer, perpetrator of the infamous Jallianwala Bagh tragedy had a summer home in Murree. You imagine him lounging in it, swatting at flies with comparable spite or more likely perhaps, with comparable boredom. Another man claims that Murree was the first to light fires after the partition taking advantage of the circumstances to resolve over matters of land holdings. You do not know how many accounts must be recounted before the tale is finished. You do know where you stop short.*

In the following weeks, we initiate a program inviting children both from schools and the streets to populate and employ the space in away that the ‘publicness’ of the Museum is not simply tied to its physical locale and its accessibility but also to the psychological dimensions of ownership and the contesting claims to it. Sometimes, we read a book or draw. At other times, the children choose to amuse themselves however they please. Soon enough, there is no need to ask them in anymore. A few always stop by as they walk back home from school or from a day at pulling passenger carts across the Mall, selling soap bubbles or daisy crowns. Their work is displayed alongside other artists at the concluding exhibition of the residency.

*Some of the children pick garbage all day. Making chai one day, Usman admits to the same guilt as yours: you cringe sometimes at a whiff and cringe inwardly again at yourself.*





Sophia Mairaj

We keep stumbling into the discreet lives of Murree that will persist beyond the season, like metallic old snow. A man at a hotel on the choked Mall road guards an ancient weight machine that can no longer read. He won't consider encasing it in glass. Upon his roof, invisible to his guests, he tends to an exquisite garden. We talk about everything but our names. 'Come back on the 10th of July', he says, 'most of these plants will be in bloom'. Our calendars don't match.

A library sits atop a monstrous slickly painted sign for a restaurant. Inside the books are all labeled clumsily by hand and carefully locked behind milky glass. You can not casually skim until you expressly demonstrate interest. Poetry is not whispered with reverence here but screamed out loud at ill attended events.

*At night, insects throng to your selfishly lit lamps and easily outnumber all the people you are thinking of. 'Deal with it', Saba tells you half amused, the other half, unimpressed. Every morning, the studio is*

*littered with their tiny carcasses. 'Short life spans', explains Saba as you imagine one dropping mid flight. Whoever collects them gets to keep them. On your walks sometimes, skeletal clusters of water pipes emerge from roads and buildings wherever they wear thin. Often leaking, often patched, and always charging forward in vain hopes of battling the scarcity of water. Out run it before you run out.*

*You spot a wild boar that is sniffing at garbage by the side of the road only to leap back into the forest as the first stone hits it from a passerby who then finishes cursing before walking on.*

At the conclusion of the residency, we put up an exhibition that showcased the works produced in this time. The event drew diverse audiences from all over Pakistan, many of which were equally intrigued by the fact of art as the object of it. The Murree Museum and Archives is a serious and yet unintimidating institution that can, in the long run, serve to decolonize knowledge about this town by shifting its production away from the metropolises – the Karachis, Lahores and



Islamabads – to Kashmir Point, Murree. As small participants in this process, we had to be careful to not ‘Columbusize’ it for the rest of the world: to not discover it anew on our terms for the sake of the world beyond

it but to listen and pay good attention. Above all, the residency at the Murree Museum was an exercise in humility.

*All a tourist can ever do with their guilt is to take it back home.*



*Usman Saeed*



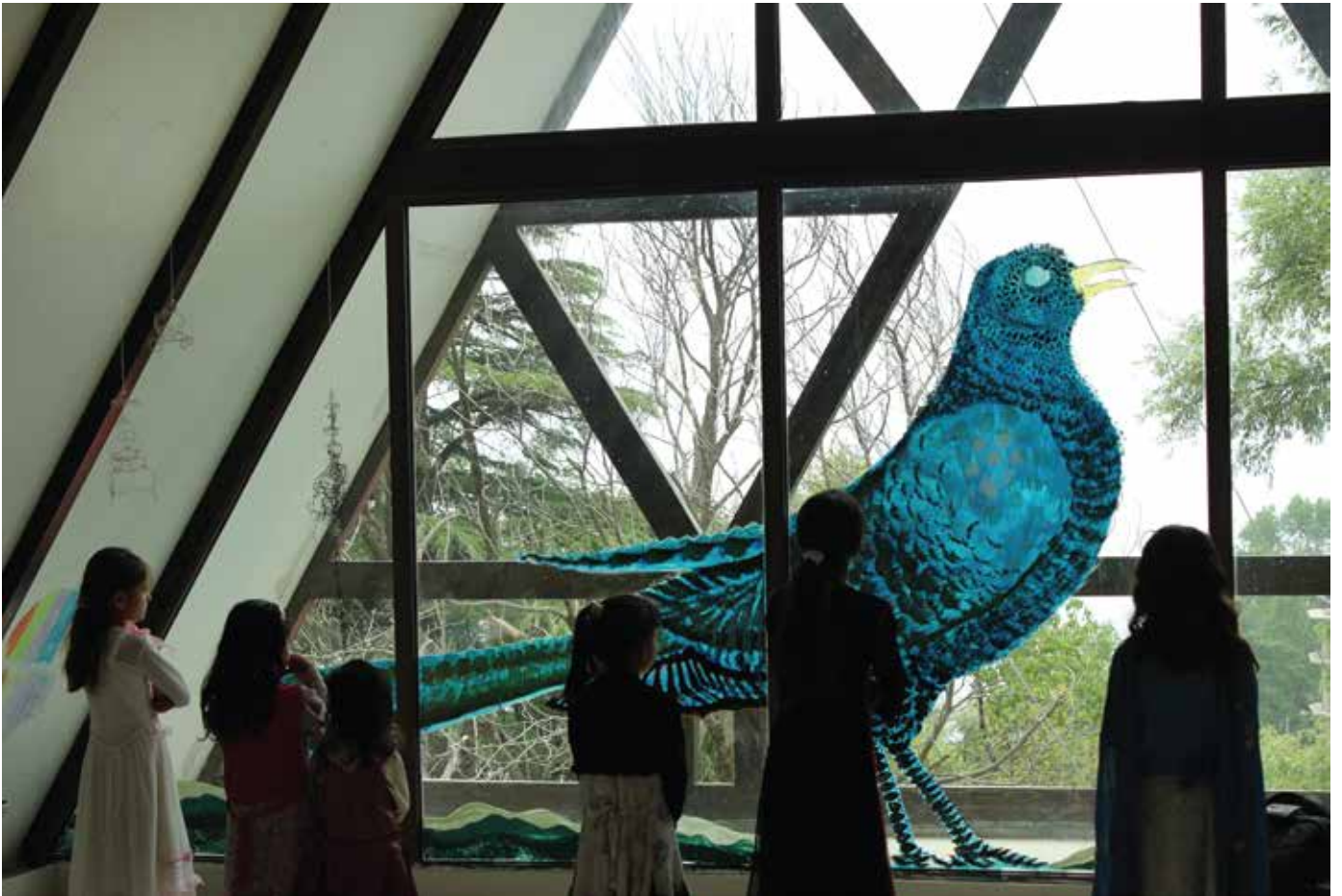
*Madyha Leghari*





*Sophia Mairaj*





*Work by Usman Saeed at the Murree Resource centre*



*Afshar Malik*





*Exhibition opening at the Resource Centre, Murree*



*Exhibition opening at the Resource Centre, Murree*



*Afshar Malik working on his wire drawings*

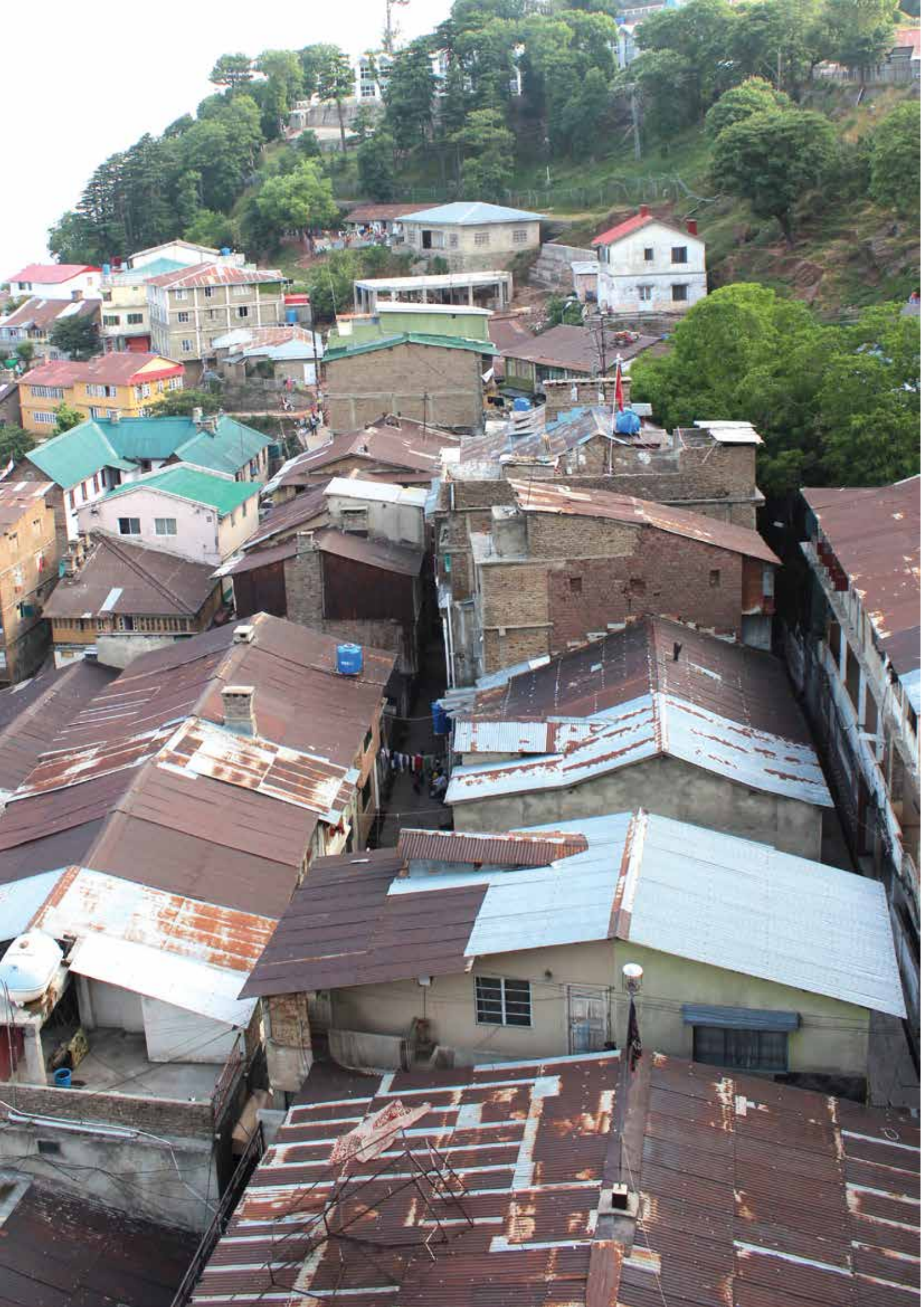


*Principal of National College of Arts, Murtaza Jafri pays a visit*



*St. Deny's School students view the display of the archives at the Resource Centre, Murree*











# 2015

26 July - 17 August

Kashmir Point, Murree, Pakistan

## Artists

- . Shakila Haider
- . Madyha Leghari
- . Hyun Ju Kim
- . Seher Naveed
- . Seema Nusrat
- . Hiroshi Tachibana

## Visiting Mentors

- . Quddus Mirza
- . Aziz Sohail

\* The Residency expanded with the number of artists and accommodation size, also two international artists were invited for the first time.



# Painting the hill-town red

By Seher Naveed

Ideally, as artists, we would always be free to wander off into spaces far removed from reality, spaces filled with imagination. Artists are always looking for material around them for inspiration, but every so often, it becomes difficult to be constantly be influenced or motivated. Enter the artists' residency.

These residencies give artists, writers, curators and others in creative fields an opportunity to get away, even if for a spell, from their everyday environment. Be it a different country or city, a forested area or an isolated situation, residencies allow artists to remove themselves from their routines and create work inspired by their temporary surroundings. Such was our happy lot at the Murree Museum Artist Residency, organised by Saba Khan.

Situated in a quiet, calm corner of Kashmir Point after a few sharp bends in the road is a house that hosted six artists from different cities and countries (Pakistan, Japan, South Korea and Australia): Seema Nusrat, Shakila Haider, Hyun Ju Kim, Hiroshi Tachibana, Mahyha Leghari (the coordinator of the residency) and I. Quddus Mirza, the eminent art critic and head of department at the National College of Arts, also came up for the weekend to hold studio visits and discussions. We made friends with each other during walks to Kashmir Point and Mall Road, sipping hot chocolate and buying the obligatory tourist umbrellas.

Our conversations were vast, familiar, strange and, in the strictest sense of the word, intense. We spoke regularly of the different creepy-crawlies we encountered, the goats, the fog, the food. We stared relentlessly at tourists and they stared back at us, each perhaps thinking of the other as peculiar. Our time in Murree was surreal – for what can be more surreal than a town plastered with tourists, hotels and fog?

Murree, bustling with sightseers and holiday-makers, was warm grey and lush green when the sky was clear. There was much to explore of its rich history. In leaving behind our cities, studios and everyday lives, Murree appeared to us as a non-place: the transient space that lies between reality and fiction. We entered as individuals and without an agenda, leaving art to chance and yet somewhere in our heads lingered a plan to paint the hills red...

Like some residencies, the Murree Museum Artist Residency reflected the idea that art needn't always be objectified, thrust into a frame and hung on a wall – that sometimes experience can hold more prestige than tangibility. The idea here is to let something come naturally rather than constructing it. The five of us consistently explored our surroundings, spent time with children from the nearby gypsy community, involving them in art activities, discovered interesting histories and eventually ventured further into things that inspired us individually. At the day's end, we spoke recklessly of our ideas (or of not having any) and then sat down to watch a film.

With a set of chance operations and material logistics, we set out to note down our thoughts. While Kim, Hiroshi and Shakila spent time jotting down their thoughts on paper and wasli in the beautifully lit studios, Seema and I (working as a collective) took to wandering about in abandoned properties that were imbued with fantastic stories and histories.

The residency was, therefore, not only refreshing in the best sense of the word, but also extremely useful in dispersing one's habitual daily routine – so that if old ways are destroyed, new experiences are revealed. Indeed, the residency is that dramatic love affair involving both the need for reassurance and of discovery and risk.





Seher Naveed





*Hyun Ju Kim in her studio during the residency*

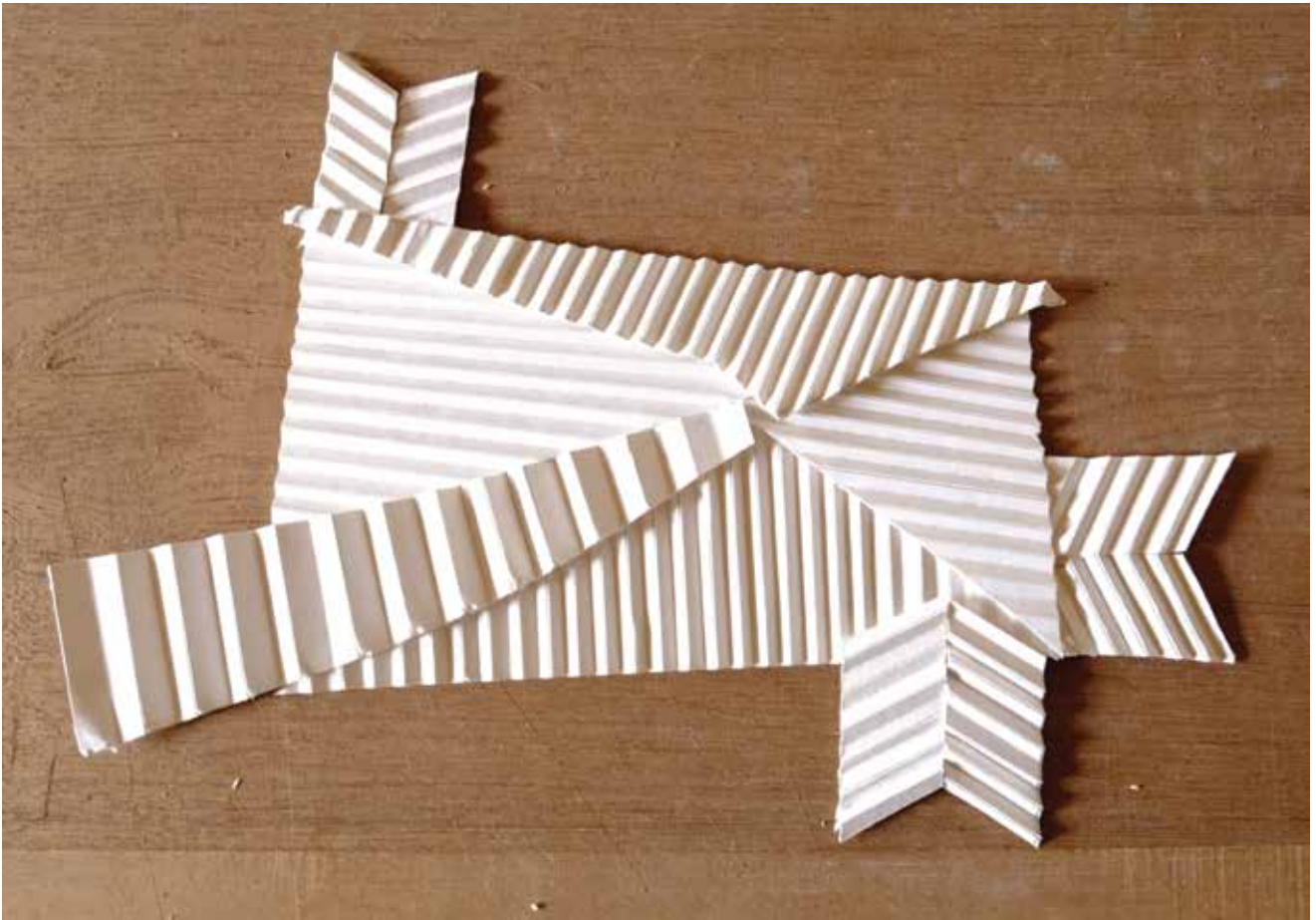


*Artists with Quddus Mirza*

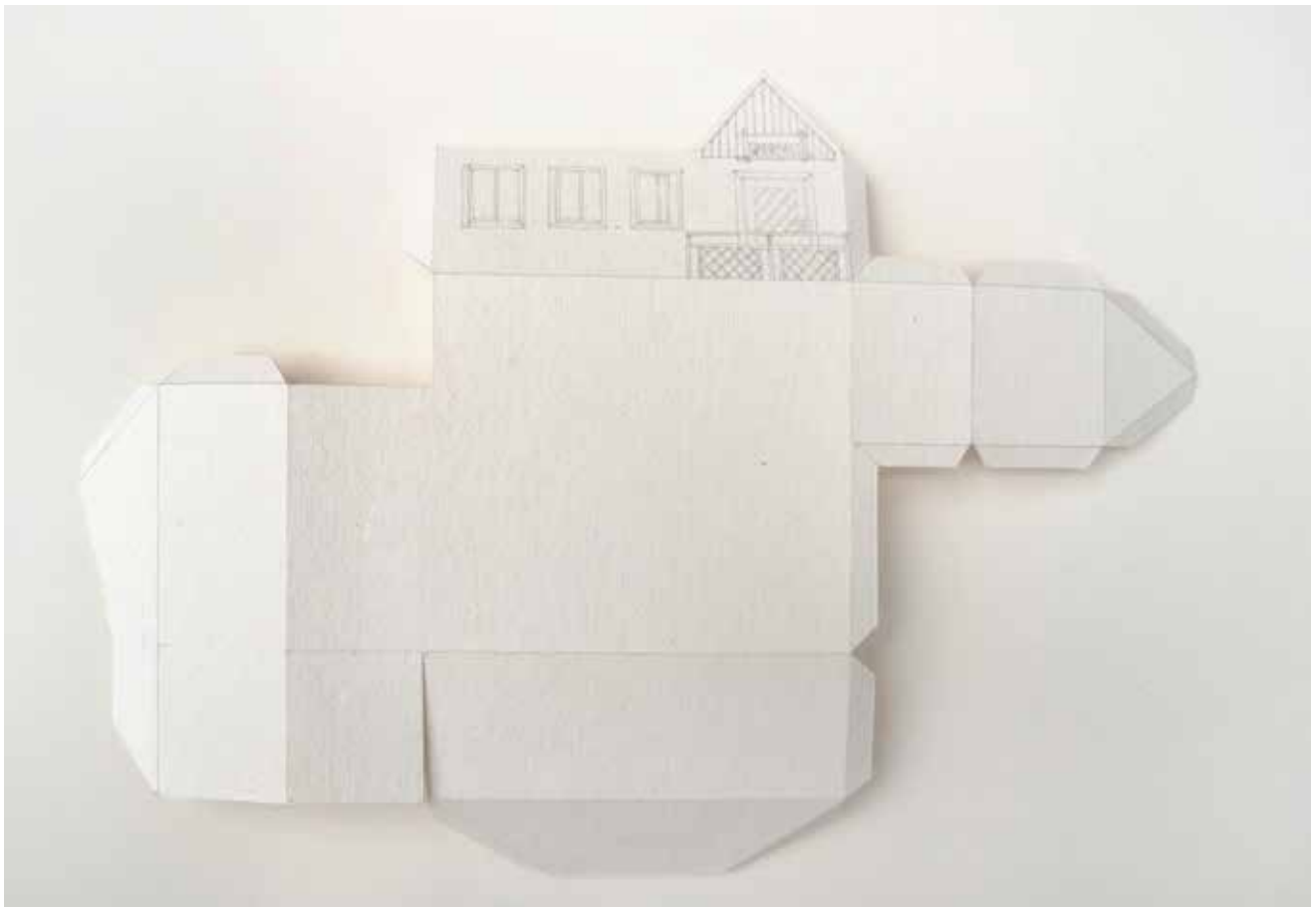




Hiroshi Tachibana

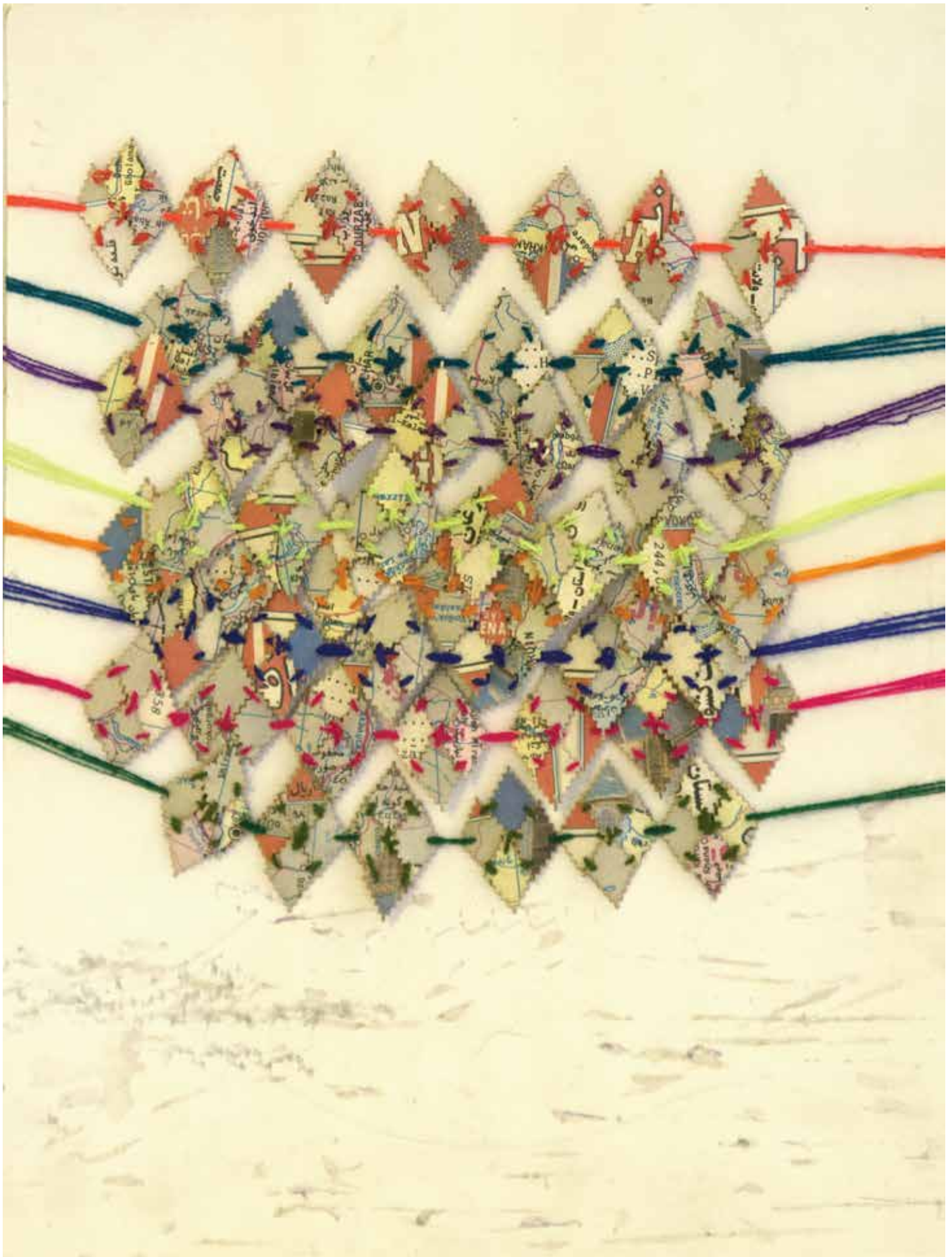


*Seher Naveed and Seema Nusrat*



*Seher Naveed and Seema Nusrat*





Shakila Haider

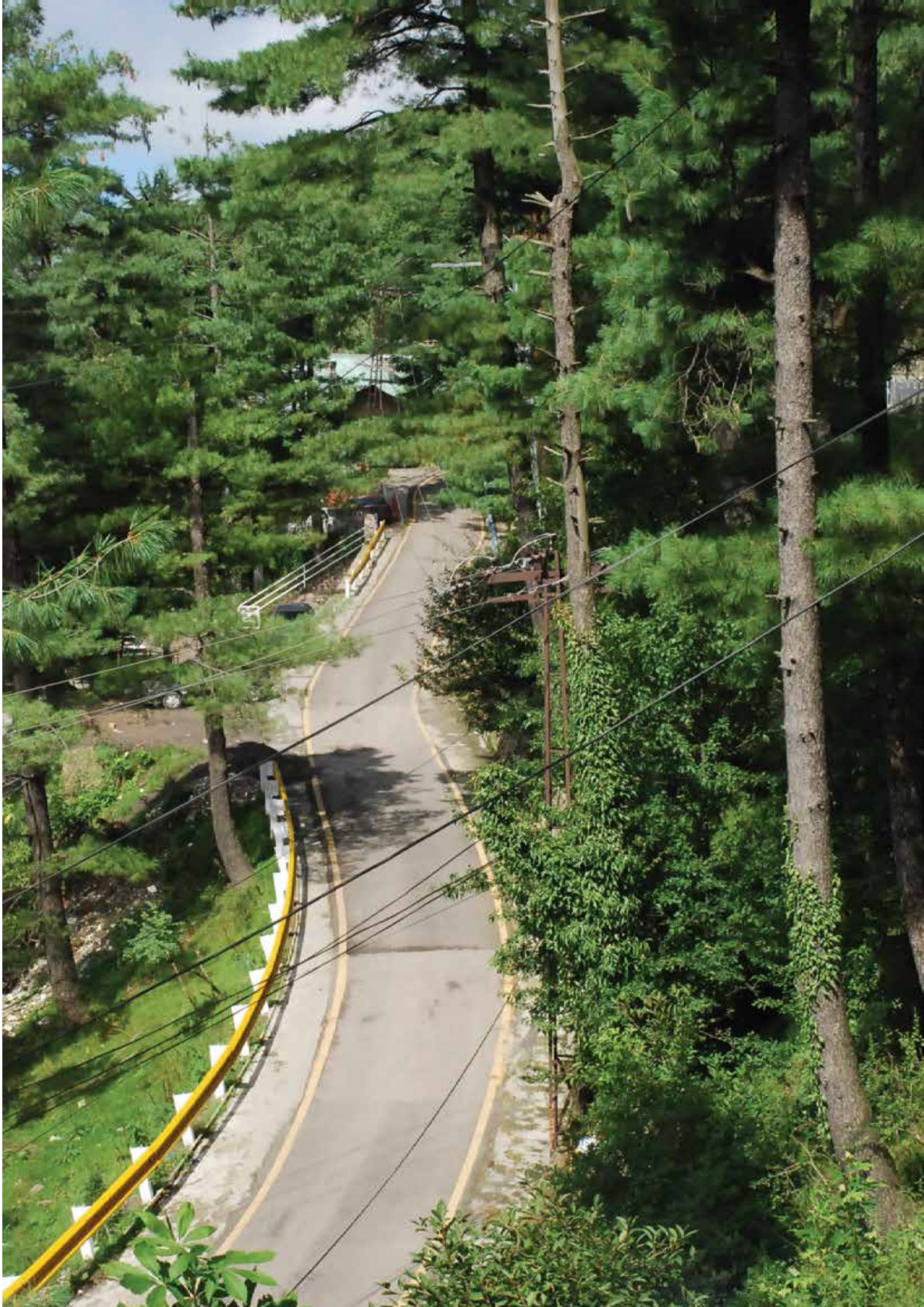


*Seher Naveed and Seema Nusrat*



*Seema with a woman from the Gujjar Community*











# 2016

13 July - 3 August

Kashmir Point, Murree, Pakistan

## Artists

- . Pardeep Thalawatta
- . Saira Ansari ( writer in residence)
- . Suleman Aqeel Khilji
- . Sarah Mumtaz
- . Seher Naveed

## Visiting Mentors

- . Quddus Mirza
- . Sameera Raja

## Visiting Writer

- . Rabeya Jalil

\* Visiting mentors and writer spent one to two days in Murree with the artists. A three day exhibition was curated towards the end of the residency at the Resource Centre, Murree, from 30 July to 1 August, 2016.



## Saira Ansari Excerpt: Untitled – *draft*

1962 – age 7

I heard nani is getting a ticket on the space rocket mission. The one that won't come back. I heard ami speaking about it on the phone. It's not really a ticket, more like a confirmed seat, she said. Mr. Azam from the government had come along with a big, brown official looking envelope and a new suitcase, black and hard like a burnt bullet. It was nicer than the boxy old leather ones that nani had. I didn't really want nani to go, and ami really didn't want nani to go. But she had been selected and it was a moment of national pride, everyone said. Once in a lifetime chance, they chorused.

The last meal we had with nani was under the old tree outside her window. It was almost dark, the twilight lingering slightly longer in the wet summer evening enveloping the gentle giant and his many branches slowly but surely. Nani said she was going to miss him and his jamuns when she left. Where she was going there would be no jamuns. Or any trees at all. She didn't know more detail. The brown envelope had only produced a certificate with curling text trumpeting nani's selection for the space programme, followed by forms upon forms to sign. Nani and ami filled them all, giving away all of nani's closest guarded secrets. Now I know nani doesn't have a uterus, or the left breast, and is 74 and not 69. Now I know nani and I share the same blood type.

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1969 – moon landing

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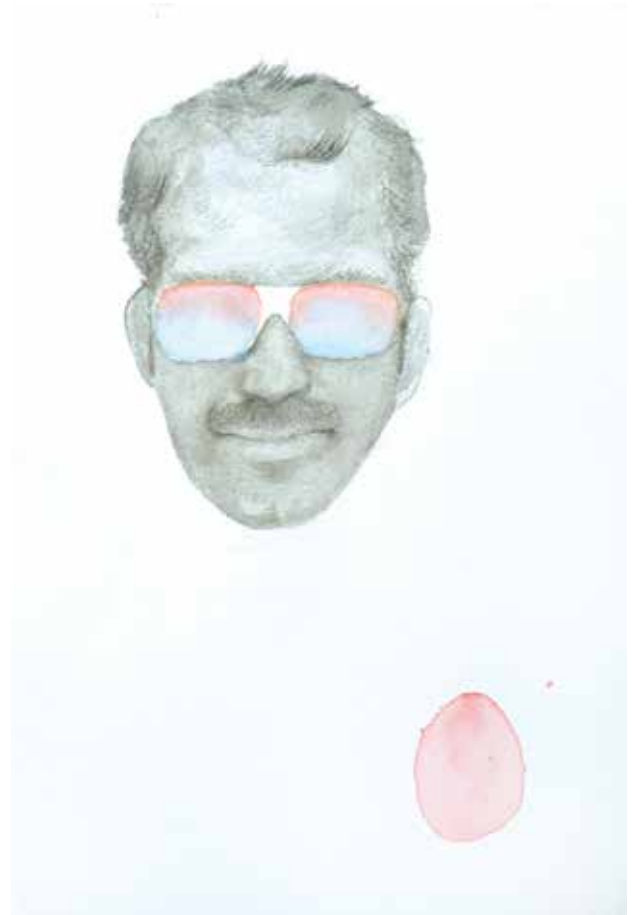
\* At MMAR, Saira Ansari focused on short fiction prose, including continuing work on an ongoing desi science fiction story. An excerpt of the story is shared above.

\* Image taken from the residence at Murree, 2016. Image courtesy of Saira Ansari





Pradeep Thalawatta



Suleman Aqeel Khilji

# A Brief History Of Being Other

By Quddus Mirza

*"The only good thing about borders are the secret crossings" - Manuel Rivas*

Besides being boundaries between two countries, borders are found in other hemispheres too. Limitations and confinements which range from physical to social, psychological, religious, economical as well as cultural. The desire to draw, erect and maintain a line of partition is two folded. To keep outsiders away, and to protect one's self from others.

Boundaries in art connect to practical aspects also. A painter starts with a canvas stretched on a wooden frame that restrains his brush strokes. Sometimes a sculptor works in a narrow space along with materials with their intrinsic limitations. Likewise, an artist has to face other types of restrictions such as market demands, family pressures, and expectations of his colleagues and contemporaries. Then there is the concept/constraints of his signature style along with the trends of his times, and the structure of an art world that shackles him in an indirect and unconscious way.

Yet these frontiers are crossed, mostly producing results, which are unusual and unexpected and exciting both for artists and the art circles. Like the 'Murree Museum Artists Residency', in which artists are invited to stay together, work in a studio space and produce what is different from their usual practices. Actually, not only in this residency, but ideally an artists' residency aims for similar goals and results; offering opportunities to creative personalities who otherwise are unable to avail such possibilities. These an alternate practice becomes important both for the participating artists as well as to Saba Khan, the founder and organizer of the residency.

Each of the four participants in its 3rd edition has individual and separate ideas, concerns, imagery, technique and material, but on the basis of their previous works, one can categorize them into two groups: Artists who are addressing political, social and urban issues and artists concentrating on personal vision and private histories.

In the former group, Pradeep Thalawath and Seher Naveed have been using city and present situation as a means to communicate their concepts. Thalawath, in his works, has been concerned with how the interaction with city can become a metaphor to communicate pain and violence. His home country witnessed the period of political turmoil and terror so he translates its aftermath in the way streets, roads and neighbourhoods are altered/disfigured. In his site-specific pieces, installation and performances, Thalawath locates areas in which one could find the impact of urban and political violence.

In a similar scheme Seher Naveed has focused on the changing scenario of her city, Karachi with its layers of protective devices, i.e., containers, barriers and barricades. Her work, inspired from the rooftops of Murree houses and creating these forms in corrugated paper-like objects of pure formal vocabulary, can be viewed in continuation of her past pieces. Her concerns, which lie in-between aesthetic and the changing conditions of a culture, are evident in the way she evolves her minimal language.

The other two artists, Suleman Khilji and Sarah Mumtaz are more involved with autobiographical or personal interpretation of the outside world. Khilji has captured the characters from his surroundings and converting/combining them with the figures from Mughal miniature, offered a link towards the continuity of history. Mumtaz has weaved a narrative that revolves around her peculiar personality and interaction in/with the world.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of 'Murree Museum Artists Residency', is not only to open up new vistas for artists in their art practices, but to challenge the boundary between high art and low art, or even between art and natural/normal expressions, because the participating artists have interacted with local





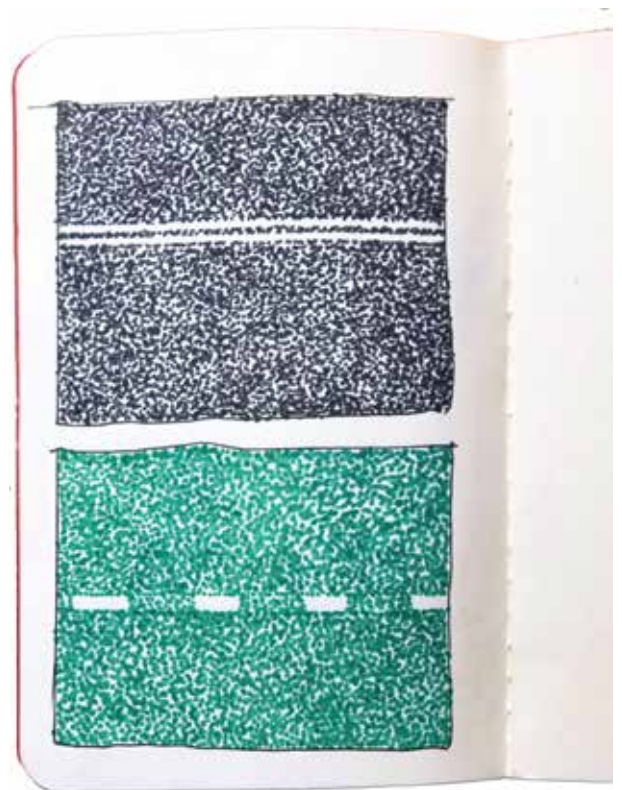
*Sarah Mumtaz*

kids who produced raw, uninhibited and incredible drawings in these workshops conducted by the artists. Drawings which not only inspire a critic visiting from Lahore, a gallery director in Karachi or a collector in Islamabad, but force a bunch of children to knock at the doors of residency cottage and demand/inquire about the next session of

drawing workshop which they can join. One feels that if a small number of children are eager to be part of a drawing project, the Murree Museum Artists Residency served its purpose to create a conversation between artists and general public. A much needed dialogue, but rare in our circumstances.



*Seher Naveed*



*Saira Ansari*

Saira's project looked at reversing the process of book illustrations, thereby exploring the narrative power of the visual. She asked the residents to make illustrations, reflecting their time and work at Murree, in pre-allocated spots in an empty journal. She will then fill in the text later, with a narrative that will have to correspond to the visuals next to it.





*Exhibition opening at the Resource Centre, Murree*



*Tourists at the Resource Centre, Murree*







# Community Workshops

The Murree Museum Artist Residency has been holding workshops with children from the local communities.

2014- Gujjar community and St.Denys'School.

2015- Gujjar community and St.Denys'School.

2016- Gujjar community.



*Interior of house of the Gujjar Community*



*Outdoor workshop*



*Clay Workshop*



*Drawing Workshop with Gujar children*



*Saba Khan talks to boarders from St. Denys' School*



# Staff at Murree Museum Artist Residency



*From left to right: Ramzan Gujjar, Zarka, Mirza Khan, Zameer Abbasi, Saima Gujjar and Hoori Gujjar*

Resident Artists / Writers  
Visiting Mentors / Critics

2014 + 2015 + 2016



**Usman Saeed (b. 1977), Lahore**  
**2014 artist-in-residence**

Graduated from National College of Arts, Lahore, with a BFA in miniature painting (1999) and MA in Painting from Royal College of Arts (2006). Saeed was commissioned a book 'I'll get my coat' by Book Works (2005) and was awarded Cite' Internationale des Arts, Paris Residency (2005). He co-edited two monographs on his father, Saeed

Akhtar's work (2009, 2011). Awarded residency at Cicada Press COFA UNSW, Sydney. Curated 'Jamila Zaidi: Tribute to a teacher' (2014) at Saeed Akhtar Studio, Lahore. He teaches at Imperial University and Kinnaid College for Women, Lahore.



**Madyha Leghari (b.1991), Lahore**  
**2014 artist-in-residence**  
**2015 project coordinator**

Graduate from National College of Arts, Lahore (2013). She has been actively involved in the arts as an art critic, an educator and a practicing artist. She has displayed at numerous renowned galleries including Taseer Art Gallery, Al Hamra Complex, Saeed Akhtar

Studio, Zahoar ul Akhlaq Gallery (Lahore) and Canvas Gallery, Karachi. Her name has been connected to prominent organizations such as Lahore Biennale Foundation (LBF) and Murree Museum Artist Residency. She has been a visiting lecturer at SVAD, Beaconhouse National University and the National College of Arts. She is pursuing her MFA from Mass. Art, Boston on a Fulbright Scholarship.



**Sophia Mairaj (b.1982), Karachi**  
**2014 artist-in-residence**

Mairaj did her BFA from University of Karachi in 2007 and MA Visual Arts, National College of Arts, Lahore, in 2014. She has taught at University of Karachi and currently teaching at NCA and COMSATS, Lahore, as a visiting lecturer. She has had several group shows in Pakistan and USA, as well as the Philips Collection, Washington DC in 2013.



**Afshar Malik (b. 1955), Lahor**  
**2014 visiting critic/mentor**

Malik's career as a printmaker began after he graduated with a degree in Fine Art from National College of Arts, Lahore, and further studies in Fine Arts at Slade School of Art, London. He went on to lecture in printmaking, drawing and painting at the National College of Arts, Lahore and regularly exhibits in solo and group shows across Asia. He

has three decades of teaching experience at NCA and retired as a Professor in 2015.



**Hyun Ji Kim (b. 1980) Melbourne**  
**2015 artist-in-residence**

Studied MFA at Printmaking Department Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, India and BFA Painting, Dankook University, Korea. Since graduating in 2009, she exhibited in London, Greece, Cairo, Bhopal, Australia and Hong Kong.

Participated in residencies in Egypt, Greece, India, Australia, New Zealand, China, Hong Kong and Pakistan. She has taught at Lalit Kala Academy, Bhubaneswar, India and conducted Serigraphy Workshop at the Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata and Lithography Workshop at National College of Art, Lahore, Pakistan.



**Hiroshi Tachibana (b. 1975), Tokyo/New York**  
**2015 artist-in-residence**

Tachibana earned his MFA from Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, New York and, prior to this, received his BA in Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts, New York. Tachibana has exhibited widely in both Japan and the USA, including recent solo exhibition Emerge at

Sprout Curation, Tokyo (2014), and group shows New Balance 3, curated by Sprout Curation, at XYZ Collective, Tokyo (2015), Correspondence, curated by Steve Clorfeine at Westbeth Gallery, New York (2015), About Space, curated by Jason Stopa and Jordana Zeldin at Art Bridge Drawing Room, New York (2013), and Her Name is Abstra at Daido Warehouse, Kyoto (2012). Tachibana has been the recipient of much press, with articles in ArtForum (2014), Blouin Artinfo (2013) and inclusion in the "30 Artists to Watch" feature in NY Arts Magazine (2012). Tachibana lives and works in Tokyo.



**Shakila Haider (b. 1986), Quetta/Lahore**  
**2015 artist-in-residence**

Haider completed her BFA from the National College of Arts, Lahore, 2013 in Miniature painting. She has participated in group shows at Drawing Room Gallery, Lahore (2012), Mainer Gallery, London (2012), Al-hamra Arts Council, Lahore (2012), Satrang, Islamabad (2013), Taseer

Gallery, Lahore (2013), Amin Gulgee Gallery, Karachi (2013). She had her solo show at Rohtas Gallery, Lahore (2014). She was nominated for Sovereign Art Prize, Singapore (2016) and participated in a travelling show 'Making of Meaning'.



**Seher Naveed (b.1984) Karachi**  
**2015 artist-in-residence**  
**2016 project coordinator**

Naveed completed a BA in Fine Arts from the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in 2007, Karachi, Pakistan and an MA in Fine Arts from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (University of the Arts London) in 2009. She has shown in various local and international shows

and is currently working as a senior lecturer in the department of Fine Arts at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture. She participated in the Vasl Taaza Tareen Artists Residency as a writer in residence in 2014, Start Jordan, Jordan in 2013 as an artist in residence and Sutra residency, Katmandu Nepal in 2008. She is also a member of the advisory board at Vasl Artists' Collective, Karachi.





**Seema Nusrat (b.1980) Karachi**  
**2015 artist-in-residence**

Received her BFA degree from Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi, Pakistan in 2002 and MFA from Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Nova Scotia, Halifax, Canada in 2012. Working as a visiting faculty at Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture 2009 – 2013. Solo show includes: "items of re-use", Canvas

Gallery, Karachi in 2013, "Resuscitate" Rohtas 2, Lahore in 2008 and "Body without Body", VM art gallery in 2007. Residencies attended, JSW Abhisaran residency, Vijayanagar, India 2014, 'Can Serrat international artist residency programme', El Bruc, Spain, august 2009, '2009 Artist in Residence programme of Fukuoka Asian Art Museum', Fukuoka, Japan, September-November 2009, 'Gasworks International Residency', London July-Sep 2008, '3 island Workshop', Scotland Aug -sep 2008. Workshop at 'Theertha International Artists' Workshop', Sri Lanka, march 2008, VASL Residency "Taaza Tareen", Karachi, Karachi March /April 2007.



**Saira Ansari (b. 1982)**  
**Lahore/Dubai**  
**2016 writer-in-residence**

Saira Ansari is a researcher and an art and culture writer, with a BFA (2004) from the National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan. Ansari has contributed to print and online publications across Pakistan, India, Brazil, USA and UAE. Currently, she is the Director of Communications at

The Third Line, Dubai, and Art Editor for the South Asian literary journal *Papercuts*. She is also the recipient of the Lahore Biennale Foundation Research Fellowship 2016, where she is working with Asia Art Archive towards creating an archive on Pakistani modernist painter Zubeida Agha.



**Suleman Aqeel Khilji (b. 1985)**  
**Quetta/ Lahore**  
**2016 artist-in-residence**

Graduated with a Distinction in painting in 2011 from National College of Arts, (NCA) Lahore. Selected for a student exchange program to Ecole de Beaux Art, Paris in 2009. He has been displaying his work across Pakistan, and has had group shows in France and the UK. Recently, he participated in Vasl

teaching artist residency, 2016, Karachi.



**Sarah Mumtaz (b.1982) Lahore**  
**2016 artist-in-residence**

Completed her BFA in Print Making (2005) and MA (HON) (2011) from National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore, Pakistan. Taught at NCA as a teacher's assistant (2006). Mumtaz has participated in group shows Nairang Art Gallery (2008), Penang International Print Exhibition, Penang, Malaysia (2010), Al-hamra Lahore Arts

Council, Lahore (2010), Zahoor-ul-Ikhlq Gallery, NCA (2011), VM Art gallery, Karachi (2012). Participated in 'Vasl International Artist Collective for Performance, Moving Image and Sound', Karachi (2011), where she performed 'Opposite of beauty is not ugliness its indifference' and 'Sarah learns to walk'. She had her solo show at Taseer art gallery (2014). She teaches at UCAD - University College of Art and Design as an Assistant Professor.



**Pradeep Thalawatta (b.1979)**  
**Colombo**  
**2016 artist-in-residence**

Thalawatta graduate/postgraduate from Beaconhouse National University, Lahore. Lives and works in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He has shown his work nationally in solo shows such as "A Different Road", Lionel Wendt Gallery Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2012. "Red and White", Department of Fine Art

University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, 2011, and "Day 2 Day", Theertha Exhibition Season, Theertha Red Dot Gallery, Sri Lanka 2008. He has also shown his work internationally in group shows such as "South by Southeast", Osage Hong Kong, 2015, Sovereign Asian Art Prize, Christie's, Hong Kong 2015, "Serendipity Revealed" Brunei Gallery, London, 2014, 5th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale Japan 2014 and Theertha@1 Shanthiroad Gallery, Bangalore, India 2010. He also has received Commonwealth Connections International Arts Residencies, at Shanthi Road, Bangalore, India.



**Rabeya Jalil (b.1981) Lahore**  
**2016 visiting writer**

Rabeya Jalil did her undergraduate studies in Fine Arts from the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore in 2005 and completed her Masters in Art and Art Education (Ed.M.) from Columbia University, Teachers College, New York, on a Fulbright Scholarship in 2013. She is an art educator and visual artist who works as an Assistant Professor at the Beaconhouse National

University (BNU) in Lahore. Her art education/ research practice involves working with school art teachers, children with special needs, and individuals from low-income families and culturally diverse populations. She collaborates with children (through Bachon se Tabdeeli, a creative education initiative) to highlight their marginalized experiences of living in a city. Jalil has presented at (Art Education and Printmaking) conferences in Lahore, Islamabad, New York, Fort Worth (Texas), San Diego and St. Louis (Missouri) and has exhibited her work in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, U. A. E., U.S.A, Spain, Portugal and India.



**Quddus Mirza (b.1967)**  
**Lahore/ Sialkot**  
**2015/2016 visiting critic/mentor**

An alumni of the National College of Arts, Lahore and the Royal College of Arts, London, has exhibited extensively, both locally and internationally. Based in Lahore, Quddus Mirza is the Editor of ArtNow Pakistan, the Head of the Fine Art Department at NCA, a curator with exhibitions in

Pakistan and abroad and is a regular art writer for The News on Sunday, Art India and a contributor to various magazines and publications on art.



**Sameera Raja (Karachi)**  
**2016 visiting critic/mentor**

Trained as an architect from the National college of Arts, Lahore in 1991. After some years of architectural practice, she founded Canvas Gallery in Karachi, the premier Art Gallery of Pakistan dealing in modern, miniature and contemporary art. In the short span, Ms. Raja expanded her space, influence and areas of interest and business, hence Canvas Gallery

has come the leading private gallery, representing important artists of the country. Ms. Raja has also collaborated with a number of galleries in USA, UK and Middle East in order to promote temporary art of Pakistan, and is planning to publish a series of books / monographs on Pakistani art and artists.



## FOUNDER OF THE MURREE MUSEUM ARTIST RESIDENCY

Saba Khan (b. 1982, Lahore, Pakistan)

*'Coming back from my Master's degree from Boston, I came to an environment which had few opportunities for emerging and mid-career artists. With a lot of courage and help from my mother, I started a space to immerse, create, contribute, produce, think and tolerate.'*

### Bio data

Khan completed her BFA from National College of Arts, with a Distinction and MFA from Boston University, on a Fulbright Scholarship. She won an award at Al-Hamra Arts Council, Lahore. Khan has attended artists' residencies at Civitella Ranieri Foundation, Italy on UNESCO Aschberg Bursary award; SEHER Foundation, Jaisalmer, India; Indus Valley School: Drawing Documents, Karachi, Pakistan; Vermont Studio Center, USA; 11th Gwangju Biennale International Curator Course, South Korea. Her short film was screened at Monitor 4, SAVAC, Toronto; Kara Film Festival, Karachi. Juror for UNESCO Aschberg Bursary, Civitella Ranieri Foundation. Khan has had solo shows at Canvas Art Gallery, Karachi; Rohtas 2, Lahore; Taseer Gallery, Lahore. Group shows at International Art Festival, Kathmandu, Nepal; Lawrie Shabibi Gallery, Dubai; Bangkok Art and Culture Center, Thailand; Affordable Art Fair, New York; India Art Fair; Aicon Gallery, New York. Shortlisted for The Future Generation Art Prize, Victor Pinchuk Foundation. Her work was published in 'n.paradoxa International Feminist Art Journal', Tran-Asia; 'Sohbet Journal', Pakistan; 'The Eye Still Seeks' by Salima Hashmi. She is an Assistant Prof. at the NCA and founded Murree Museum Artist Residency in 2014, an artist-run-initiative to support artists.







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