



ARTSOCH  
CONTEMPORARY

PRESENTS

# LETTERS TO PAKISTAN

*'AN INTIMATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN A LAND & IT'S INHABITANTS'*

CURATED BY MARIAM HANIF KHAN

ABRAR MUHAMMAD — AMNA MANZOOR — BRISHNA AMIN KHAN  
HIRA BUTT — MANISHA JIANI — MEHREEN ASIF — RAHIM BALOCH  
RAMSAH IMRAN — SABA HAROON — SADQUIEN — SARA ASLAM  
UMELAILA — UMNA LARIAB — YUMNA

# CURATORIAL NOTE

In August, 2021, Pakistan is 74 years old, nurturing us and our ancestors; providing a sense of identity and belonging. A region with history and culture of most primogenital civilization seeks new narratives to reclaim its glorious past . The exhibition 'Letters to Pakistan' looks forward to ponder and explore one's inner feelings as a citizen of this country, a deep down conversation to Self and Nation. Fourteen young artists are presenting an A4 size symbolic letter in style of their individual practice in various genre and form. The letter is further decoded in a small paragraph written in text with each artwork and serve as communication tool to unfold their concerns, memoirs and wishes / vision for their motherland. Through this exhibition we aim to document a dialogue with prevalent apprehensions and intimate conversation between the land and its inhabitants.

I am pleased to see, the overall submissions of the artworks that are spot –on and prevalent to current alarming scenario of the Nation! Indeed the art is most sublet yet pensive way to address the inmost facets of a Society.

**Mariam Hanif**  
**Curator and Co-founder of ArtSoch**

# Abrar Muhammad

## (Sang-e-Meel)



Sang-e-Meel | Oil and Paper on Carved Marble  
| 1.18 ft x 1.15ft

اس زمین کو سیراب جس لہو نے کیا  
اسی لہو کی خوشبو سے زندہ ہے زمانہ

وہ جس کے شوق میں اترا ہے دیدہ افلاک  
اسی شاہد کی ولایت میں ملتا ہے مشہود

یہ خط سنگ مرمر کی ایک سلیٹ پر نقش کیا گیا ہے۔ اس میں جو الفاظ استعمال ہوئے ہیں ان کا تعلق عربی زبان سے ہے۔ یہ وہ عربی زبان ہے جو صرف عربوں تک محدود نہیں بلکہ اس کے اندر تمام کائنات اور اس میں موجود ہر شے سمٹے ہوئے ہے۔

خطاطی کی روح سے اس کام کو دو پہلوؤں میں تقسیم کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ جیسا کہ اس میں دو الفاظ کا تعلق خط کوفی سے جبکہ دو الفاظ کسی بھی روایتی خط سے آزاد ہیں۔ اس میں استعمال ہونے والے رنگ سیاہ سرخ اور سفید ہے، جو اپنی طرز کی بات کو بیان کرتے ہیں۔ اس میں لگانے گئے کاغذ کے چھوٹے ٹکڑے نقطوں کی مانند ہیں جن میں لال رنگ کے نقطے ان شہدا کی عکاسی کرتے ہیں جو حق کی راہ میں شہید ہوئے جبکہ سفید رنگ کے نقطے اولیاء سے منسوب ہیں

# Amna Manzoor

## Inception

The artwork conveys the universal message of self-realization and personal transformation for the youth. The painting shows an inherent rhythm of life — the strands stretching along the horizon symbolize power of realization and reforms of self. To believe that within oneself, you possess everything that is needed to change your life. The power of self, weaving through complexities of life, is beautifully interlacing the threads of realization, to create the underlying magic, an everlasting reform.

As conversed with God in Persian 'you created night (darkness), to counter that I created light', the impact of this reform is portrayed in the threads weaving resilience in the self through all we have been; all we are now; and all we will become.



# Brishna Amin Khan

## **Nature's First Green is Gold**

With our absence or assistance, nature will always find a way through the cracks of all that man has made; to grow with its everlasting resilience just as our nation that fights through the tough times and finds a way to survive and flourish.



Nature's First Green is Gold | Gouache on Wasli | 11 x 15 in



Dhe - Rani | Mixed media | 20 x 17 in

## Hira Butt

### **Dhe - Rani**

Letters to Pakistan', was a chance for me to amend my old deepest wounds attached with my childhood memories and my soil. I took this opportunity as a process to heal my relationship with my soil. Suddenly, I was finding myself as an outsider, displaced. However, through writing three letters of resentments and lastly final letter of love, I couldn't be more grateful for my country's rich culture that is saturated in love and spirituality.

Living in England since 2009, I missed my people, culture, food, neighborhood, clothes, language for years but I realized that I maybe out of Pakistan but Pakistan was never out of me. I am Pakistan. The letter presented for this exhibition is an expression of pure love and gratitude that I feel for my home, Pakistan.

# Manisha Jiani

## With All My Love

My work is an open letter to the civilized citizens of my country. Being a female and a member of minority, there are lot of things I would like to share with my country and its people.

I'm very thankful to my country for many reasons but the current rate of increasing rape cases, abductions and forced conversions of little girls is really disturbing. Worst part is that a lot of cases are not reported because the victims and their families are threatened. This place is said to be a safe haven for women but through my work I want to bring up other side of the picture also.



:With All My Love | Mixed media | 20 x 17 in

# Mehreen Asif

## Yearning for the Past, 1964

This work revolves around the idea of historical nostalgia. We unknowingly romanticize the past era therefore we yearn for a past many of us have never seen but only heard about. As a kid I have heard several stories from my grandmother and have seen photographs of how different things were in their times which has left a permanent stain on my heart to romanticize their time period. This artwork displays a scene from winters of 1964 where I have portrayed myself in the place of my grandmother enjoying the evening tea.



Cotton Threads on Jute (Hand Embroidery) | 11 x 15 in

Pakistan has turned 74 years old this August, and massive changes in technology and digital media has affected our lives tremendously but sometimes there is something which makes us crave and nostalgic for the simpler times that are long gone.

# Rahim Baloch

## Naya - Pakistan

My letter speaks about the ever-changing political landscape of Pakistan. Though this region has a fair share of glory and turmoil attached to its historic trajectory the nation still seeks to find its true identity that is lost in the rhetoric's of the authorities in power.

My work "Naya Pakistan " explores and questions these concerns, which are mostly dusted under the rug.



## Ramsah Imran

### Delivered, 2021



Delivered, 2021 | Acrylic on Brass | 9 x 8 in

My work revolves around the manipulation of visual narrative and material where structure made out of brass sheets is transformed into paper. Deception is an essential part of my practice deals with the ignorance of our society towards important issues. Brass being the prime surface is executed in such a way where it loses identity as a material and is depicted as a fragile piece of paper.

In my letter to Pakistan, I have used the visual of the national flag of Pakistan that represents peace and hope. However, the golden part of the surface symbolizes the preciousness and significance of our nation hidden beneath.

## Saba Haroon

### Orenda II



Orenda II | Gold-leaf, Acrylics and Oils on Canvas | 14 x 10 in

"Once all the struggle is grasped, miracles are possible." My work is influenced by a Japanese girl named Sadako, who is inspired by Senbazuru, an ancient Japanese legend that promises anyone who folds a thousand origami cranes will be granted a wish by the God, so she decided to fold 1000 cranes, hoping that her wish to live would come true.

In my compositions I have painted origami cranes as a symbol of hope and resilience in the journey of an individual, from blocked vision to clear sight, through the patience to the point of wish fulfillment. We have undoubtedly achieved Pakistan, and that too without a bloody war, practically peacefully, by moral and intellectual force, and with the power of the pen, which is no less mighty than the sword.

# Sadquien

## Untitled



Untitled | Metal, Wood, Fabric and Electric Motor  
| 12.5 w x 8 h x 3.5 d

My work is an exploration of the relationship between the body and space, which defines human boundaries through which I seek to question and understand human existence. I study the impact of body and spaces that they have on each other and how they shape a person's perception of his or her reality. I draw inspiration from memory, my own past experiences and observations.

In past few months, the incidents related to body and spaces are quite in discussion and highlighted in news channels and public in general. Through my letter, I also re-question and underline the similar analogies through a kinetic sculpture; which basically demand attention and create a vulnerable or hostile space if one stands in front of them. Confrontational.



Solitude, a Fertile State of Mind | Mixed Media | 15 x 23 in

**Sara Aslam**

## **Solitude, a Fertile State of Mind**

This letter draws upon the changing relationship with surrounding space during self-isolation. While the past year has been challenging, being confined to a space for everything lead to creative adaptations and insights. To share such experience, I found myself reaching for images, compressing emotions into language, and constructing a mind map.



**Ume Laila**

**A Safe Space**



A Safe Space | Oil on Wood | 18 x 11.7 in

In August, it is a common trend for children to show their enthusiasm for the Independence Day of Pakistan by decorating their homes with national flag and green Jhandiyan. I remember that I used to make an origami house using a little Jhandi. Years later, I have realized the significance of that act. A home located in space but it is not necessarily a fixed space since it does not require bricks and mortar. It provides primary care of bodies and gives you ultimate comfort and freedom of whatever you choose to be.

For me, Pakistan gave me my identity, my nationality and it is also the part of my idea of self. In this work I recreate that simple act of my childhood. The shape of home signifies Pakistan as A SAFE PLACE.

# Umna Laraib

## Heartwarming / Wistful

My work is about Color exploration. I am curious about how many tones I can create or can be created from one color.

I believe that Color is not a lifeless thing, but a creature that moves swiftly and nicely from one form to the next. I create lines, squares and other forms, taking inspiration from landscapes, which gives sense of structure to what I want to do with Color. Setting up these compositions as spaces, my intention is to fill tones in them. At first, it's just huge block of color but longer viewing reveals more than one tone. Each line or millimeter square has a tone no other has, and that is painting for me, the non-objective and unintentional strokes and just creation— discoveries.



Heartwarming / Wistful | Gouache on Wasli | 9 x 13 in

## Yumna

**Title:** "Is Mulk Ko Rakhna, Mere Bachun Sambhal Ke"

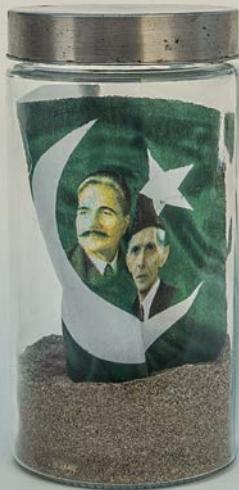
**Medium:** Archival Print on Archival Paper

**Size:** 8.3 x 11.7 inches

### Letter Statement

"Is Mulk ko Rakhna, Mere Bachun Sambhal ke" is a national song I have been listening since my childhood and I have always wondered how I can keep my country safe. My childhood idea of keeping my country's flag safe is actually the reality of today's generation. Who literally aren't doing anything for the betterment of this country but keeping the flag, folded and safe in their closets.

When the poet said "Is Mulk ko Rakhna Mere Bachun Sambhal ke". He meant for us to take our responsibilities as a nation and intended to that we should respect all genders and believe in equality.



"Is Mulk Ko Rakhna, Mere Bachun Sambhal Ke" |  
Archival Print on Archival Paper | 11 x 15 in

## **Thank You!**

To our chief guest, Mr. Gohar Ejaz for inaugurating our exhibition. To all the fabulous 14 artists who exhibited their beautifully thought-provoking artworks to our exhibition - Letters to Pakistan.



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LETTERS TO **PAKISTAN** | 27th August | Lahore | 2021