



HASHIYA

THE MARGIN



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FOREWORD:

Mamta Singhania

The genesis of this exhibition extends back to a conversation with Kavita Singh on various aspects of miniature paintings. We decided to engage with the concept of ‘Hashiya –the Margin’

Hashiya serves as a compelling and formative aspect of miniature painting – at times it is the background to the foreground, the context to the subject, a decorative embellishment or an addition; often it reveals the artist’s annotations in the margins, expressing perhaps his or her own critique or augmentation of the work. It regularly acts as a foundation or extension of the painting. Borders after all, are invented – they are both necessary and imagined. Hence for an artist, the possibilities of the ‘Hashiya’ are immense.

This project was a wonderful opportunity to work with scholars and artists on a subject as often overlooked as the ‘margin’ in miniature painting. I’m forever indebted to Prof. B.N. Goswamy for his contribution to this publication: an in-depth exploration of the ‘Hashiya’, his advice and invaluable comments along the way. His critique of the participating artists’ works provides a deeper understanding of their response to the concept. The Urdu poetry he weaves into the text is delightful and meaningful.

I’m grateful to Kavita for conceptualizing the exhibition, her brilliant essay which also served as the inspiration for this significant collection of contemporary artworks and her continued guidance.

I’m thankful to Salima Hashmi who kindly consented to be a part of the discussions on Hashiya and for her continued support in bringing together art from India and Pakistan.

The exhibition presents the artistic responses of the participating artists who are inspired by miniature painting in their own unique ways - Gulammohammed Sheikh, Nilima Sheikh, V. Ramesh, Desmond Lazaro, Alexander Gorlizki, Manisha Baswani, Saira Wasim, Nusra Latif Qureshi, Ghulam Mohammad and Yasir Waqas. I’m grateful to each of them for enriching the exhibition and having paved the way for a continued engagement with different aspects of miniature painting.



I'm grateful to Mr. Javed Akhtar for agreeing to grace the exhibition opening. I'm also delighted at Aditi Mangaldas's enthusiastic response to the idea of *Hashiya* in her wonderful Kathak recital on the opening of the exhibition.

I extend my thanks to Priya Pall at Bikaner House for her support. I'm grateful to Reha Sodhi for designing the catalogue, Prima Kurien for designing the exhibition and Shruthi Isaac for editing the catalogue and her overall assistance.

I appreciate the Anant Art team – Pranamita, Ria and Pratiksha for their contribution. I'm grateful to Mr. Govan for his impeccable assistance and completely indebted to Mr. N.K. Sah for his invaluable effort and patience.

I thank my husband Harsh and my sons Chaitanya, Pranav and Shridhar for their encouragement and support and a special thanks to Pranav Singhania. I'm grateful to Manisha Gera Baswani for her invaluable support.

The reward for this effort in putting together this exhibition is twofold – an enquiry and exploration into the Hashiya and its significance at manifold levels and also the somewhat blurring of boundaries between neighbouring nations with shared histories and similar artistic sensibilities. The essays by providing different perspectives and interpretation in the context of the Hashiya, I hope, will serve to encourage more extensive study of miniature paintings extending to a contemporary context.

Mamta Singhania

(Founder Director)
ANANT ART GALLERY

HASHIYA:

Margin / Border / Comment

Prof. B.N.Goswamy

A poet, writing in Urdu, once said, '*alfaaz ki haisiyat phoolon ki si hoti hai*', reminding us of how words are delicate like flowers, and then added, that 'they open their petals, or close them, according to our abilities to use – or explore – them'. *Hashiya*, certainly, is one such word. One knows that the word comes from Persian; and one uses it almost each time to describe a 'margin'. But, if one explores it further, one finds that it can mean – as the dictionary says – 'a margin; edge; border; selvage; hem; facing (of a uniform); a marginal note; scholia; post-script; men of inferior rank; attendants; young camels; ___ *hashiya-i-bagh bandi*: a flower bed; 'a parterre'. In our brief discussion of *hashiya* in the context of pre-modern painting, even if we leave out 'men of inferior rank', 'attendants', 'young camels' – much can be said about them though – , and set aside at least for the time being textile-related meanings – 'selvage', 'hem', 'facing' – there is much to choose from: 'margin', 'edge', 'border', 'marginal note', 'scholia', 'post-script'. Each of them could have a place in our exploration.

In her finely honed concept note on the *hashiya*, Kavita Singh, focussing essentially on 'margins' that we find in a wide range of Mughal paintings, states it succinctly: "It is a frame that conditions us to see something in a particular way. It is a space of adornment, in which the artist embellishes the edges of the page to pay homage to the things that lie at the centre. It is a space of commentary, where one artist comments upon, extends, deepens or subverts the work of another. It is the space of temporal layering, where the artist of the present re-frames and re-presents an already-created work from the past. It is the space in the margin, where a hesitant voice can whisper its own stories about the 'main' image in the

centre. It is a space of contrapuntal meanings, where the whole becomes much more than the sum of its parts.”

Clearly, there are *hashiyas* and *hashiyas*. When, years ago, I was working on Mughal documents – *farmans*, land grants, *yad-dashts*, *parwanas*, and the like – one remained concentrated on the main text of the document, which was called *matn*, and then shifted to the margins where attesting witnesses, each identified by a name, placed their signatures or thumb-impressions: they were ‘*hashiya-gawahs*’. Occasionally, one came upon a document described as ‘*hashiya-dar*’, meaning ‘having marginal notes’; one even encountered an expression, pointing to a person on the outskirts, say of a piece of land, like ‘*hashiya-nashin*’: ‘sitting on the edge’. Margin, edge, border: these clearly then are the broad areas to which things point when we come upon the term *hashiya*, even though between them there are, or can be, distinctions, subtle differences. What is an ‘inner margin’ to be called as opposed to the ‘outer margin’? Does ‘edge’ lie necessarily outside of the ‘margin’, but adjacent to it, on an album page? Is it fair to designate ‘border’ strictly as something that the artist himself conceived and made a part of his painting? Fine distinctions, ambiguities remain. Ordinarily a margin – floral, decorative, at times figurative, – surrounds a painting which is the main object, but this can change. In the Chandigarh Museum, for instance, there are a few folios of a dispersed *Bhagavad-Gita* manuscript, in which the centre is occupied completely by *shlokas* from the sacred text written in local *takri* characters, and the margins, on all four sides, feature what might be called ‘illustrations’, related in one way or another to the text. As I said, things can change.

One needs to look at the matter from different angles and, depending upon how or what we see, diverse statements can be made. In painting, certainly in our pre-modern period, *hashiyas* go back a long time. They could even be seen as a necessity, if 15th century Jain



Folio from a *Bhagavadgita* series:
Pahari, early 18th century.



Folio from a *Kalpasutra* ms; Gujarat, 15th century.



Folio from a *Rasamanjari* series;
Pahari, late 17th century.

or Western Indian manuscript painting – when paper came into common use – were to be taken into account. Since each sheet was meant to be held in the hand while reading the text written on it or looking at an accompanying painting, narrow column-like spaces were left at either end, marked by rules, to enable the reader to hold the sheet with both hands without smudging or destroying the text. Inside these spaces very often would be painted a single large red dot, plain or decorated, in which a thin hole would be made for a string to pass through: a simple but very practical device for holding loose folios together. In addition to one dot at either end, there also could be a third, right in the heart of the text, since three strings would hold the pile of sheets better than two. In the more sumptuously painted manuscripts, there could be pictorial additions: exquisitely drawn, seductively disposed young maidens, unrelated to the text being ‘illustrated’, introduced inside column-like panels: shedding grace, and glancing at the text around them with eyes so long that they seem to be whispering into the ears, as texts sometimes say. Or additions like small panels with floral designs, or battle scenes, or pairs of birds: things that would enrich the page pictorially but not necessarily add meaning or substance to the text. Some things survived as vestiges; others disappeared over time.

Partly in continuation, at least in respect of functionality, in a vast number of paintings grouped under the broad ‘Rajput’ label – whether in Rajasthan or the Pahari regions – one sees broad borders as surrounds on all four sides around the main image, most frequently coloured a plain, rich lac-red. The aesthetics of this apart – the intense red enriches the image as often as it lends it emphasis – it is from these ‘protective’ borders that the painting was held in the hand by the viewer, saving it from damage through frequent handling. Almost certainly the borders were made and coloured by the painter of the image himself, or by a pupil under his eyes, all decisions – providing intervening rules, thick or

thin, in black or white, single or multiple – being taken by him. Almost certainly, again, they were coloured after the main image had been completed – there are instances where the border space has been left blank, waiting to be coloured – leaving the painter the space that was truly his. Nothing can be reduced to a rule, or norm, but the frequency with which one sees broad red borders around the image in Rajput painting is quite remarkable, almost overwhelming.

There were variations of course: taking an aesthetic decision, a painter would sometimes change the colour of the border: the red could yield to a dark green, or blue, even to black. But one needs to remember that it is not often that one sees this. In an extensive Ragamala series, sometimes, where the six principal ragas – each with five wives, the ‘raginis’, thus forming a family – were visualized, a painter would assign to the paintings of one family one colour for its borders and/or the background, and a different one to another, thus establishing clear groups. But one also sees far subtler decisions than these. In that wonderful *Bhagavata Purana* series from the Pahari region that one assigns to the family workshop of Seu-Manaku-Nainsukh and dates to the last quarter of the 18th century, every folio has a light red, almost pink, speckled border. But a small group within the series features an exquisitely painted floral border – narrow, painted in gold and indigo – that jostles the main border, surrounding the main image. Why, one might ask? Because this group consists of the *raasapanchadhyayi*, those five chapters that go into loving detail of Krishna’s enchanting dance with his *gopi*-beloveds on the moonlit banks of the Yamuna, and live in the heart of each devotee. This episode from the *Krishna lila*, soaked in devotion and inwardly experienced, needs to be set apart from the rest, the painter must have decided, and he set about doing it in this fashion. In another painting – showing Shiva and his Family – also the work of a member of the same family, one sees an equally subtle detail. It is a quiet evening



From an *Amarushataka* series; ca. 1700.

that the painter evokes: on the grassy bank of a river that descends from the mountains in the distance, the great god stands, leaning languidly against his *vahana*, the great Nandi bull, gazing at his consort, the goddess Parvati, who, her two children clinging to her side, has gone down to the river to fetch water in a gourd-vessel. A delicately painted domestic scene, one might say, making one almost forget that Shiva is no common householder. Where is his abode, the Kailash mountain; where again are those cedar trees drenched by rushing waters; and where are the *kinaras* and *ganas* who make music for him, one wonders? But then the eye travels to the *hashiya*. A narrow decorative margin surrounds the image, hugging it, but just outside it is another broader margin which appears initially to be extraneous to the painting but in fact features gently moulded, almost understated, mountain peaks, piled one on top of the other, modelled clearly upon those painted much earlier by a forebear in the family, the painter Manaku. Are these the high terrains that Shiva has left, at least temporarily, in favour of the lower hills with their grassy slopes and lush trees in the midst of which his family has set up for the night? Surely, the painter must have wanted our eyes to wander slowly towards this evocative, enclosing detail, and ask ourselves this question.

Of uncommon interest in this context are paintings, in fact whole series, in which the painter defies the rigid limits set for him by a *hashiya*. It is not that he does not recognize those limits defined by rules for what they are, but he remains defiant; refusing, as it were, to submit himself to them. ‘*Kuchh aur chaahiye vus’sat merey bayaan ke liye*’, Mirza Ghalib said once: ‘more space than this I need to say what I have to say’. That wonderful early series, the *Chaura Panchasika*, dateable to the first half of the 16th century, can serve as a case in point. Each folio of the series features a defined space, coarsely drawn rules surrounding the image, beyond which are blank areas. For one thing, the text of the relevant verses is written in bold, very legible characters on the top border

of the page, impinging upon that space. That apart, almost as a matter of routine – as if for the painter this were no matter for concern at all – there are elements, details, that transgress the limits set by the rules. Domes and turrets nudge and cross the lines at the top; trees raise their heads above them; those sharp knife-edge ends of *orhani*-veils that Champavati wears cut and pierce the lines at the bottom; pennants flail and flutter well above the lines at top. One breathes in these folios the same air of freedom as the painter did while turning them out. Much the same happens in the dispersed folios of the great so-called Palam *Bhagavata*. Clouds waft above rules at the top and mountain tops – if they are mountain tops at all – peer down at the populace below; anklets slip past rules and tinkle on borders below while the webbed feet of ducks swish past river banks; finials on spires raise their heads above and horses’ hooves pound the border beneath. In the *Jainesque Sultanate Shahnama* folios, yet again, the painter pays little or no regard to defining rules beyond which the *hashiya* lies, for there too stirrugged shoes tread undefined space and trappings of battle-ready horses negotiate their way past rules. It is not necessarily a matter of the absence of self-consciousness on the part of the painter; it is as if he were stating, boldly, that limits are there to be transgressed and there is nothing sacrosanct about *hashiyas*.

There are paintings, however, in which it is not a small detail that impinges upon the *hashiya*, but a substantive part of a figure: a cow gazing at the face of Krishna, for instance, standing at the edge of the image but the rear half of her body cutting and moving on to the border; a visiting rider’s horse entering a courtyard, but with its hind part still not having left the *hashiya*. One cannot say this with any certainty but is it that, in doing this, the painter is suggesting, conceptually, that all this is a continuation of something; that there is more where it comes from; that everything is a passing element in a continuum? When the painter of a *pichhwai* from Nathdwara surrounds, at least on three sides, the main



Detail from a folio of the Jainesque Sultanate *Shahnama*; 15th century.



Leaf from the *Chaurapanchasika* series; early 16th century.

Leaf from a *Baramasa* series; Pahari, c. 1815.



Detail from a folio of the *Razmnama* ms; sub-imperial Mughal, end 16th century.



A Sufi saint by Farrukh Beg; from an album of paintings; Mughal, ca. 1615.



Detail with seal of Nand Ram Pandit on the margin of the painting of the Sufi saint.

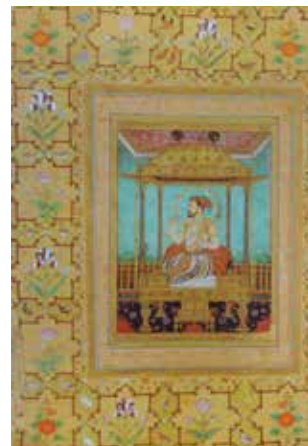


scene – *annakuta*, *saptasvarupa*, *varsha*, and the like – with a border consisting of small panels with painted images showing the *shringaras* appropriate to different *utsavas*, is he creating a devout *hashiya* of his own, completely unlike those that one sees elsewhere?

In Indian painting there of course are *hashiyas*, narrow or broad, roughly demarcated or limned with precision, which were used by different people and at different times as blank spaces open for occupation: to add a verse related to the theme of the main image, for instance; to make a note attributing the work to an artist or add a gist on the theme of the painting; place a seal of ownership; make a note on the price paid or expected; and so on. These notings or seals are of consequence of course, and have been used by art historians to advantage at times, but whether they add anything to the image remains a question. In a very different sense, that of a marginal note or a post-script, some *hashiyas* are of extraordinary value. When a discerning patron, like the Emperor Jahangir, makes a note in his own hand, for instance, on the side of a portrait of the Khankhanan by Hashim, saying that it is a “*shabih-e khub*” – ‘excellent likeness’ – he is providing a comment, doing what could be called *hashiya-aaraayi*. When the Emperor Shah Jahan makes an entry personally on the fly-leaf of an illustrated manuscript, like the *Khamsa* of Nizami, saying something like: “Today, when with God’s Grace, we, lineally descended from the Padshahs Jahangir and Akbar, have ascended the throne, we are inscribing in our own hand on this wonderful manuscript that has been added to the Imperial Library ...”, he is creating a frame, a *hashiya*, within which to see and regard that work.

With Mughal painting, the *hashiya*, as we generally understand it, seems to come into its own. For here one enters the world proper of manuscripts: finely calligraphed, precisely worked out, exquisitely illuminated illustrated, and bound. It is a precious world peopled, at the highest level, with intensively trained

experts: the *warraaq* and the *jadwal-kash*, the *kaatib* and the *khushnawis*, the *musavvir* and the *muzahhib*, the *mujallid* and the *sahhaaf*, in other words page-makers and rule drawers, scribes and calligraphers, painters and gilders, book-binders and keepers. Manuscripts devoted generally to one text and dateable to one time or period, would generally feature uniform *hashiyas* around illustrations and text on which one might occasionally find a note or observation, but the *muraqqa-s* were a different matter. The *muraqqa'* – ‘a book of pictures or drawings, or of specimens of fine penmanship; a portfolio; a scrap-book; an album’, according to the dictionary – was an assembled, bound volume containing a wide range of paintings and calligraphies, even little scraps sometimes, drawn from different times and sometimes from different sources. One knows several: among them, the Jahangir album in Berlin, the *Muraqqa-i Gulshan* now in Tehran, the St Petersburg album, the Late Shah Jahan album, for instance. To put an album together was evidently not an easy task. Milo Beach rightly speaks of the staggering ‘imaginative and technical skills’ needed for combining images from different sources. Once assembled, the leaves – images, scraps or complete folios of calligraphy, illuminated panels – had all to be put in order, sometimes mounted on sheets that conformed to the pre-determined physical size of the album thus leaving room for *hashiyas*, making certain that as far as possible the pages facing each other in the album had *hashiyas* that were mirror images of each other. The works included in an album would often belong to different periods and followed an aesthetic native to them, so to speak, and they were being handled in an altogether different period in which the skills available were of a different level and the aesthetic had changed. There was ‘an evolution at work’ as Beach says. ‘In many ways’, according to him, ‘manuscripts and albums mirror attitude towards architecture in the Mughal world. As earlier buildings were altered or extended to take on the character – and proclaim the ownership – of later inhabitants, so both books and independent illustrations



Shahjahan on the Peacock Throne; Mughal, ca. 1635.



Detail of *hashiya* from the Shahjahan painting.

were often altered or adapted when they came into new hands.’ The St Petersburg Album could be cited as a case in point. The Qajar style floral *hashiyas* around highly refined 17th century Indian paintings, seem out of joint: but there they are.

There are some superbly painted *hashiyas* that one sees: birds of paradise now soaring above and now swooping down, all in brilliant gold against inky blues; floral sprigs so fresh that you can almost smell the fragrance; arabesques and medallions and scrolleries and geometric patterns of the greatest refinement; pairs of little birds that seem to be conversing or watching others with curiosity all on the same peach-coloured, delicately speckled space. Not every *hashiya* enhances the painting to which it relates or around which it is made – at times in fact it can even take something away from the work – but there are some which simply dazzle with the way they support, emphasize, help to interpret, the work. Those of this category, or level, that come most easily to mind, producing immediate resonance, are the *hashiyas* one sees in the Jahangir albums – one in Berlin and the other in Tehran – or in what has come to be called the Late Shah Jahan album. In a number of these, on the broad *hashiyas* that surround the central painting are painted small figures – generally three on the long outer side, and two or three each on the upper and lower sides – in the most refined of hands. These figures, at least early on, were not directly related to the central painting: one might thus chance upon, to one’s delight, small but moving portraits of painters at work in the *Gulshan* album, among them, as it happens, the young Abu’l Hasan, as also Manohar and Daulat and Goverdhan and Bishan Das; or, as on one folio, copies of figures taken from European engravings. The connection between the central painting and the figures on the borders gets much firmer in some of the works in the *Late Shah Jahan album*, all those figures tying in, one way or the other – ‘allusive, narrative, theatrical’, as Kavita says – with what is happening in the centre.

When, in a posthumous portrait, the Emperor Akbar sets out to hunt riding a stallion, on the borders angels hover above him and hunters stand in attendance at the side; when the old Shah Jahan stands at the centre in another leaf, the angels gather again but this time with a *chhatra* and a scroll in their hands; attendants stand at the side holding a flywhisk and victuals; and a pair of lions flank a goat at the bottom. Again, in the Bishan Das leaf from the same album where Shah Abbas of Iran and Khan Alam, Jahangir’s ambassador, meet out in the hunting field, in the margins birds take to wing at the top, different attendants holding falcon and sword and musket stand at the side, and two cooks, at bottom, roast meat, possibly for the same dish that the Shah is offering to the ambassador in the central painting. The connections are evident. These superbly rendered visuals apart, sometimes one is truly moved by the manner in which the painter is able to burrow into the hearts of his characters, regardless of whether they occupy the centre of the painting or find a place in the *hashiya*. On one leaf of the album, an encounter between a recluse and a prince – one a *shah* and the other a *gadaa* – is what we see in the central painting: under a tree out in the countryside the holy man, long hair streaming down to his knees, expression of utter peace on his face, sits listening to music being played on an *ektara* by a disciple, while a young prince sits between the two, waiting for the ascetic to open his eyes, for he has questions to ask, enlightenment to seek. All around at the same time, on the three sides of the *hashiya*, one sees small figures, seated or standing, six of them faqirs or seekers, and one man in a courtly dress, evidently the prince’s attendant. Each of the ‘sadhu’-like men is a brilliant study: each of them is dressed – minimally clothed – differently; each sits or crouches in his own fashion; each of them has his own calabash by his side, evidently his sole earthly possession; each seems to be lost in thought while listening to the music being played in the centre of the painting. One of them, in fact, a young acolyte standing at bottom left, appears to have been on the point of leaving with his



Leaf from the Late Shah Jahan album, c. 1630.



Detail: Courtly figure on the *hashiya* of the Late Shah Jahan album page, above.



Detail: Young sadhu on the *hashiya* of the Late Shah Jahan album page, above.

feet turned in that manner when he seems to have heard the strains of music and turns his head towards it. Calm, like moonlight gently descending downwards, as the poet says – ‘*yoon jaise shab ko chandani, chupke zameen par aa rahey*’ – takes the viewer over.

This is what can happen in a *hashiya*; the margin no longer remains a margin.

Post-script

There is a great deal in Urdu literature around the theme of the *hashiya*, and much of it explores, deepens, looks at, aspects of the term. The famed writer, Sa’adat Hasan Manto, produced a short but superb work which he titled *Siyah Hashiye*, meaning ‘Dark Comments’ (rather than ‘Black Borders’ as it is often translated). All it contained was brief snippets of scenes visited, dialogues heard, in those harrowing times, filled with blood and bereft of heart, in which communal riots had broken out all over the Punjab in the wake of the Partition, and there were untold massacres incited by the deadly mix of religion and politics.

Poets play with the word and explore it ceaselessly. Thus, Parveen Shakir: “*matn mein to jurm saabit hai magar/ hashiya saare ka saara aur hai*” [In the *matn* (main body of the judgement) a crime has been proved beyond doubt, but the *hashiya* says something entirely different!] Zehra Nigah: “*chehrey ki kitaab ke waraq par zakhmon ney jo hashiye likhey hain*” [Look closely at the *hashiyas* of cuts and slashes that you see around the pages of this book which my face is!]. Again, Tariq Na’im: “*main us ki aankh key manzar mein aa to sakta hoon/ woh kam nigaah mujhe hashiye mein rakhey bhi!*” [It is just possible that I may figure somewhere in the sights that her eyes take in, but only if that hard-hearted one were to spare even a glance for the *hashiya* margin!]



Title page of Sadat Hasan Manto’s book: *Siyah Hashiye*.

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“Every epoch acquires different eyes”, Max Friedlander once wrote. The eyes of the modern and contemporary artist are different from those of the pre-modern artist, but he also continues to see in the *hashiya* something “fascinating, tantalising, (even) intimidating”, as Gulam Sheikh puts it.

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Subtly, very subtly, in her work, *Dusk on a Crimson Horizon*, Manisha Baswani creates, conjures into being, a *hashiya* in her own fashion. Of the five panels which make up her work, the outer two, one at either end, are at one level, so to speak, and the central three are raised by nearly two centimeters from them, forming something like a bas-relief of sorts. This in itself sets the outer two apart as borders. But in them, as in the rest of the work, lurk subtle, almost faintly drawn, figures: birds of all description flying around in utter freedom: soaring, dipping, floating. It is as if by simply being at these ends, outside of the main body of the work, they have gained the freedom to take to wing exactly as they like. The *hashiya* thus provides a frame, but it also contains a surprise, for the birds nearly all crowd around in this space. Elsewhere, in the centre, peering through the delicately painted, almost powdery, surfaces, one can barely see them and then there are just a few of them; there, instead, one sees all kinds of shapes, shapes ‘that answer one’s own desire’, as the poet said: craning, questioning necks of creatures, large rounded toes, sun-baked escarpments, sloping heads of outsized mushrooms, drying bodies of water, all bathed in soft shades of pink and crimson. The eye keeps travelling from the centre to the periphery, and back again.

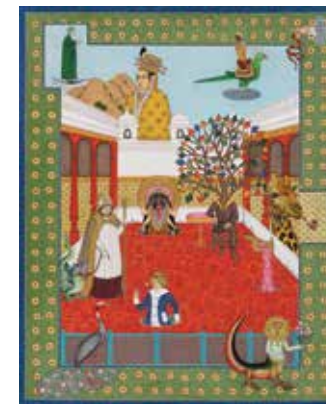
Ghulam Mohammed, for whom the ‘politics of text’ serves often as a visual, the *hashiya* is clearly as important as the ‘text’ occupying the centre, for it can contain whispers, as he says: “whispers from the outside world,



Manisha Gera Baswani
Dusk on a Crimson Horizon, 2018
Watercolour on Shikshi Board
14 x 15 in.



Ghulam Mohammad
Gunjaan II, 2018
Iranian Ink and paper collage on wasli
14 x 12 in. with frame



Alexander Gorlizki
It's All Going On, 2017
Pigment and gold on paper
13.5 x 9.75 in.

(which) travel inwards and echo the main subject in a contextual voice”. When he creates a work like the one on view here, different, remarkably clean-edged areas are retained, making a firm, crisp impression, but they are constantly under threat from things that transgress, superimpose themselves, even challenge. One finds words – more recalcitrant letters in fact than complete words – occupying virtually the entire space, but can one read them? They remain scattered all over the surface – ‘*qissa*’ here, ‘*sakta*’ there; ‘*hukam*’ at one place and ‘*bhag*’ at a safe distance, not in the neighbourhood – and it is left to the viewer to connect if he can, make sense if possible. One notices that in the *hashiyas*, the crowd of letters is more dense and harder to handle than in the ‘text’ in the centre. In any case, the exercise can be exhausting, for even single letters stay broken up, fragmented: ‘entangled letters building a new space’. The result? One senses a dark presence somewhere, a gathering aura of foreboding. Far more is concealed than is revealed. The whispers from the borders keep getting louder and louder as one takes the work in, bit by slow bit.

In Alexander Gorlizki’s rich and colourful world, where the goddess Kali looks on while a giraffe smokes a pipe in one corner, Khwaja Khizr makes his way through space riding a fish, a cardinal quietly leads a pet dragon on a carpeted floor, a man sits idly on a bench while a great flowering tree sprouts from where his head should have been, one can see that it ‘all keeps going on’: simultaneously, without break, without even a glance spared for time or space. Pages seem to be bursting at the seams with images that come from all directions. There are *hashiya*-borders of course, all drawn more or less from those that one sees in Indian or Persian miniatures, which try and contain things, but even they betray the trust placed upon them. Gorlizki begins by believing, furtively and hopefully, that the margins “can be taken as a neutral area between the illusional space of the picture plane and the ‘real world’ inhabited by the viewer”, but the margins on their own

decide to rebel, like aqueducts in a Klee work. There is an incredible range of images – lions, victory towers, rainbow-coloured elephants, demons being boiled in teacups, angels walking shamefacedly out of heavens, mullahs wagging cautionary fingers at giant fish – and an incredible range of settings – windows opening upon placid lakes and hill tops, palatial courtyards, ruled pages, archways made up of bonsai banyans – that keep greeting, seducing, assaulting the eyes. Alice would have enjoyed walking through this wonderland, even though she might have had to puzzle out for herself where the borders end and the body begins, or if they are different one from the other at all.

Two things one needs to familiarize oneself with before entering Desmond Lazaro’s complex and almost defiant work: *Dymaxion Map*, and *Icosahedron*. The latter first: it is a solid figure with 20 faces, 30 edges and 12 vertices. The brilliantly conceived and executed *Dymaxion Map*, also called the ‘Fuller Projection Map’, was devised by Buckminster Fuller as long back as 1943, and is ‘a flat map of the entire surface of the Earth which reveals our planet as one island in one ocean, without any visually obvious distortion of the relative shapes and sizes of the land areas, and without splitting any continents’. He felt the need to come up with this because the maps we still use, as he said, cause humanity to “appear inherently disassociated, remote, self-interestedly preoccupied with political concepts”, and to emphasize borders that separate, cut things and people apart from one another. Lazaro, armed with the rigour of training that miniature painting demands, and inspired by the idea of addressing narratives of ‘identity, home and dislocation, all of which negotiate borders, national, international and personal’, sets out to present these ideas visually. Bringing in diverse, elegantly worked out images of schools – classrooms, prim teachers, idea-controlled students, old-fashioned maps – he conjures up a world that needs to change ‘the very notion of borders’. Above everything hangs a solid, hard-edged, gold-leaf icosahedron mobil, suggestive



Desmond Lazaro
Dymaxion Map I
Pigment paint on handmade Sanganer paper
33 x 25.1 in.



Desmond Lazaro
Icosahedron - The Dymaxion Map
Wood (white ash), cloth, gold gild on gesso,
Diameter: 10.23 in. approximately



Nusra Latif Qureshi
Laud the Three Metamorphoses III, 2018
Acrylic, watercolour and gouache on illustration board
17.7 x 17.7 in.

of the myriad ways in which things exist and can be seen. The *hashiyas* of old paintings keep returning to, and entering, the ken of his vision, for he understands, and responds to, the way a dialogue between periphery and centre is set up in them. Tradition does not smudge his thoughts: it informs and enriches them on the other hand, as one sees in work after work that he turns out.

Nusra Latif knows the field of miniature painting in the sub-continent well, all too well in fact, and has obviously kept in active touch with it from distant Melbourne where she lives now. All those dazzling *hashiyas* in gold on inky blue grounds that adorn and surround paintings, from Iran to India, have stayed in her mind, where they have etched their outlines, delicately contained at one moment, fiercely free at another. But she also knows that they are more than *hashiyas*: they are virtually complete images unto themselves in which one can get lost. That is what seems to have been in her mind when, in her work, *Laud the Three Metamorphoses*, inspired by Nietzsche’s writings, she pulls all those creatures of fancy – fire-breathing dragons, majestic birds of prey, fish that cast about in dangerous waters – away from the margins and places them at the centre of the viewer’s attention, compelling him to look. The “complex layering, fragmentation, erasure and juxtaposition of visual material” which are close to her ways of thinking are all there in these three circular panels. Dragons breathe even more fire than before; birds of prey soar and squeal turning everything around them into a field of angry talons; great fish hunt and spiral around, having just emerged from Hamza’s waters as it were. Most engagingly, however, for all the shrill sounds that one might hear as one pores over these paintings, the dialogue between the past and the present remains remarkably calm, even soothing.

V. Ramesh may not have been a direct disciple of one of the great sages of India, Ramana Maharshi who lived in times that we can almost touch, but his devotion to the sage shines through his work: again and again. The

Maharshi was a man who had the power to communicate *vedantic* truths to seekers often through silences, what were called *mauna-vyakhyanas*: ‘silent discourses’. “Your hands may do the work but your mind can stay still,” he said once: “You are that which never moves.” In this moving portrait of the sage, *The Ordinariness of Any Act*, where we see him, seated nearly bare-bodied in a bare room, reading from a newspaper, there is not much to see except the sheer concentration on his face; but outside, in the broad, expansive *hashiya* that Ramesh surrounds the image with, one begins to look for silent meanings. Faint outlines of trees, throwing out branches, fallen leaves on the ground – suggestive by themselves of a hermitage setting – appear there as possible hints of the spread of ideas, or of ‘a plethora of paths and teachings advocating ways to realize the truth’. But then, also hidden under and between those leaves, one is able to descry fragments of some text that one is invited to read, at least to identify. One can pick up, here and there, some words: ‘hide’, for instance; ‘nurse’, ‘consider’, ‘patience’, ‘breathe’. This *hashiya* is full of subtle messages, one realizes, not easily discernible but there they are: inviting, persuasive.

In his long poem, *Parchhaiyan*, the poet Sahir Ludhianvi, once wrote these words, soaked in bitterness and a sense of despair: “*bahut dinon sey hai yeh mashghala siyaasat ka / keh jab jawaan hon bacche to qatl ho jaayen*” [For long, it has been a pastimes of politics: when children grow up, they should be up for being killed]. It is with the same bitterness and sense of gathering despair that Saira Wasim engages our minds with the two meticulously painted images that one sees here. Her *In Guns We Trust*, triggered by a memory of Leonardo’s searing drawing, *The Battle of Anghiari*, presents a harrowing picture of the culture of guns that seems to have taken America, the land where she lives now, over. Senseless shootings, assaults alike on innocence and our civilization, are becoming almost a daily phenomenon, and as she paints in the centre a diabolical, centaur-like figure under an



V Ramesh
The Ordinariness of any Act: Portrait of a Sage, 2018
Oil on canvas
48 x 84 in.



Saira Wasim
Detail: *In Guns we Trust*, 2018
Paper cut, acrylics and gouache, gold on wasli
20 x 17 in.



Saira Wasim
Detail: *Silent Plea*, 2018
Paper cut, acrylics, gouache, gold on wasli
20 x 17 in.



Gulam Mohammed Sheikh
Majnun in the Margin, 2018
Watercolour on Arches paper
22 x 29.9 in.

archway, armed to the teeth, looking back as if to strike everything and everyone in sight, all around it, on the lavish borders, figures stand or move about, also carrying deadly guns: a policeman, a common man, even a child, walking blind-folded but still carrying a gun. Above the image, impinging upon the *hashiya*, hangs, ironically, the clichéd time-honoured American motto: ‘In God we Trust’, the words of which seem about to be replaced by ‘In Guns we Trust’. The *hashiya* and the *matn*, so to speak, merge in violence. The world around Saira as she sees it is not very different when we regard her other, equally flawlessly painted work, *Silent Plea*, where, while a heavenly figure swoops down from above, the Madonna, under a ‘holy’ arch, stands carrying a child in her arms, but also a balance with an infant in one pan and a gun in the other, the pan with the gun clearly the weightier of the two. Meanwhile, all around there are guns scattered around while a foetus curls upon itself. There is blistering comment here that spares neither *hashiya* nor the centre.

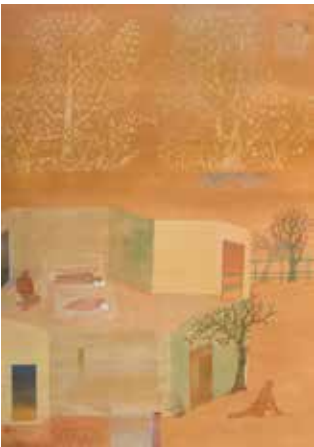
In our lives, at least to the extent that it is possible to live them in these times, there is both room and the need for comment everywhere: just about everywhere. Gulam Sheikh’s work has for long taken cognizance of this, but he does it in the rich, thoughtful manner that is all his own, always casting a keen look over his shoulder at the past while engaging with the reality and the temper of the present. Here, in the dense urban landscape that we see at the heart of his painting, there is not a soul in sight – *bastiyaan jitni bhi theen saari keh veeraan ho gayeen*, to use Ghalib’s words – and nothing moves while buildings keep growing taller, and city lanes seem to lead nowhere in particular. Beyond the hard-bound edges of this space, there is, in the immediate surroundings, a brief burst of colour, and then a wasteland takes over. There, Majnun, the hapless lover of legend for whom the desert has turned into home, and wild beasts his only companions, sits: disconsolate, reduced to a bare skeleton, eyes like a wasteland in themselves, open in eternal wait. What,

Ghulam seems to be asking, has happened to us? What have we got reduced to, or have allowed ourselves to be turned into? Margins? To play with Mir Taqi Mir's words: 'Dasht mein Qais rahey? koh pey Farhaad rahey?' Are we reconciled to the idea that Qais/Majnun should live forever in the desert, and Farhaad keep languishing among the rocks?

Nilima Sheikh has been, for many years now as she says, 'pulling and tugging' at the possibilities that *hashiyas* offer, seeing them, in her work, not as confining or enclosing frames but as extensions of the image. There can be in, and through them, 'multiple viewings, meanderings, shifts of time and space', and the like. Nothing is irrelevant, or peripheral: it all remains one integral whole in which one can read, as one pleases, different but related meanings, enactments, recollections. In the two delicately coloured and executed works of hers that we have here, a quiet sense of drama resides, a feeling of loneliness and simmering discord perhaps. In *Departure*, there are, as it were, two scenes of an Act. Or three perhaps. From the door of an ordinary dwelling, a man emerges and looks around with anxiety, tension travelling down to his very toes as one can see. What, or who, he is looking for is not clear. Lower down, however, surrounded by flowering bushes and stencilled birds, a faintly drawn mother sits, legs crossed on the ground, nursing a baby at her breast, a bowl and a hand-fan by her side. Are these two scenes related, one wonders? And is the Mughal peacock which has just taken off from a roof and is flying away, also related to what is happening? A like air of enigma clings to the other work, *Dream at Daybreak 2*, too, for there, inside a beautifully worked out *aangan*-courtyard, a woman – the same mother as we saw before? – sits, cup in hand, dreaming it seems, while keeping watch on two figures sleeping under mosquito-nets. But outside, close to the outer door of the dwelling, there is another figure: a man, with his back to the house, half crawling, half sitting up, gazing at the distance. Is he leaving in a manner so as not to be noticed? Can he not walk on his



Nilima Sheikh
Departure, 2018
Mixed tempera on Sanganer paper
18.8 x 13.3 in.



Nilima Sheikh
Dream at Daybreak 2, 2018
Mixed tempera on Sanganer paper
18.8 x 13.3 in.



Yasir Waqas
Detail: *If that is what you mean, I am certainly without possessions*, 2018
Gouache, laser cut, gold and silver leaf on printed books
20.4 x 9.8 x 1.9 in.

own? Above, in the broad margin so to speak, stencilled tree forms nearly block the view of another house, far in the distance. Is everything connected? In fact are the two, seemingly independent, paintings also connected in some way? Apparently, Nilima wants the viewer to keep looking, to work things out.

"If that is what you mean, I am certainly without possessions", is the engaging, somewhat baffling, title of Yasir Waqas's work. But then, as he seems to imply, it is not easy, initially, to get it all. One may be completely alien to the other's language; slowly, however, things fall into place. To begin with, when one culture is confronted by another, there is a need to distinguish one from the other, but gradually, ideas, images, languages begin to inform each other and it turns out that factors like 'migration, trade, translocation' lead to processes of coming together, borrowings, mergers. When, in his work, he interlaces, like the fingers of two hands, pages of two dictionaries – one of Persian/Urdu and the other of Sanskrit/Hindi – one begins to see things from another perspective. It is as if, graphically, the languages of the outsider and the native – the 'invader and the invaded' – start approaching each other. Over these pages, those from Persian that treat of words beginning with the letter 'a', or 'aliph', and those from Sanskrit that begin with the first of vowels, 'a', are juxtaposed, and over the two, interlaced as they are, is superimposed, a colourful graph in yellow and green, atop which is a shape – stepped well? aeronautical instrument? – that one has to work hard to make out. But between these two, and obscured by the shape on top, is a bird of prey, its head emerging at one end, and its colourful tail at the other, peering down as if to see things with clarity, bring them into sharp focus. Perspective? Points of reference?"The area along with margin having more in common than the differences", in Yasir's words?

HASHIYA:

a border, a margin, a frame

Prof. Kavita Singh

In the 15th century, a special kind of book began to gain prestige in the Islamicate courts of Persia, Turkey and India. Called *muraqqa*, which literally means “patchwork”, these were scrapbooks or albums designed to hold many different elements between their richly decorated covers.

Scholars have suggested that the *muraqqa* developed as a byproduct of the Islamicate reverence for the art of calligraphy. Calligraphers were greatly celebrated as they were embellishers of the Word of God. Those who invented new calligraphic styles, or extended the capabilities of existing ones, were even revered as holy figures and samples of their work were eagerly sought by princely and scholarly collectors. As a market developed for calligraphic samples, canny dealers began to cut apart the poems written by important calligraphers, to sell each verse separately. Even informal exercise sheets that were never intended to be circulated began to change hands at a high price. Once gathered, these small but precious scraps of paper had to be preserved and the album form was probably developed for this purpose. Here, the gathered calligraphic samples were pasted on relatively large pages that were bound together in the lasting form of the book.

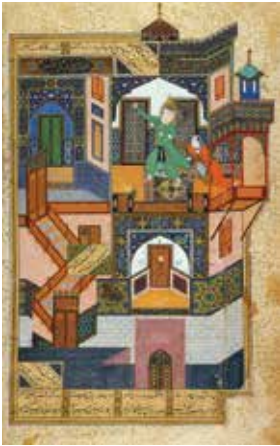
At about the time the album emerged as a prestigious format for books, genres of miniature paintings also underwent a profound change. Earlier, paintings had played a relatively minor role of ornamenting and illustrating a text. Painters would have functioned under the strict control of the manuscript supervisor or the scribe who would have directed the work and ensured it properly reflected the meaning of the words. Artists were treated as menial workers and the value of their



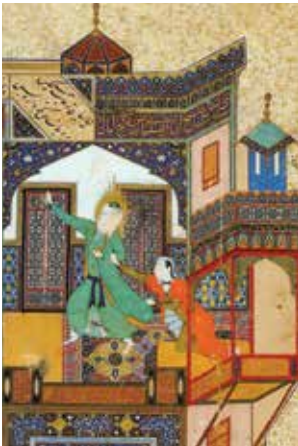
Calligraphy by Mir Ali, Persia, c 1505-45;
album page decorated under Jahangir, c. 1620;
remargined and pasted in the Minto Album under
Shah Jahan, 1640's
Collection: Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

art was always suspect, as something that existed on the edge of heresy. In the middle of the 15th century, artists began to be seen as intellectuals whose images could “speak” as eloquently as words. Now they exercised an unprecedented degree of autonomy and their paintings were seen as visual entities that could be as rich and subtly layered as verbal language. Scholars attribute the growing prestige of visual artists to the path-breaking achievements of the brilliant artist Bihzad, who served the Timurid and Safavid courts at the cusp of the 15th and 16th centuries. Through his profound and resonant works, Bihzad showed how painting, as much as poetry, could be a vehicle of allegorical thought. After Bihzad, not only were artists given more space within manuscripts for illustrations, but miniatures also began to be produced as independent works of art. Portraits, genre scenes, historical records, allegories, fantasies, or interpretations of poetry: whatever the theme, a large number of paintings were now being made that were not subservient to a writer’s words.

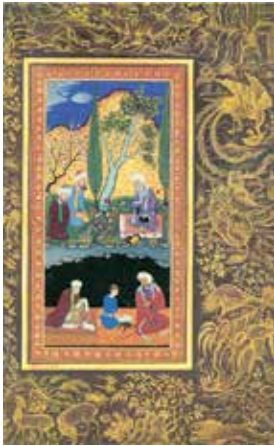
Both calligraphic samples and loose-leaf paintings were in danger of being scattered and lost; to preserve them, they were gathered together into capacious albums or *muraqqas*. As readers turned pages of a *muraqqa* they might see all kinds of wonders – a finely detailed painting; a nimble sketch; calligraphy from the blessed hand of a revered master; a European engraving or a Chinese silk painting laid down on the paper page. While there was great skill and artistry in the individual artworks enclosed within the album, assembling the album was no less an artistic task. Those who arranged the album were often artists or litterateurs and it is clear that they gave careful thought to the work at hand. Paintings on facing pages were arranged to offer meaningful juxtapositions; calligraphic panels spoke to one another across the sheets; and the overall sequence of the album was carefully worked out for cumulative effect. Part archive and part museum, the *muraqqa* was a site that preserved its fragile contents and also curated them by selecting its



Kamaluddin Bihzad, *Yusuf and Zuleykha*.
Illustration to the Bu'stan of Sadi
Herat, 1488
Collection: National Library, Cairo



Kamaluddin Bihzad, *Yusuf and Zuleykha*.
Detail



In the presence of ascetics.
Album page composed of three paintings
from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries
pasted together; border c 1640.
Gulshan Album, folio 134. Collection:
Golestan Palace Library, Tehran.



In the Presence of Ascetics
Detail of border

artifacts and arranging them in meaningful sequences. The album was thus a meta-artwork that massed individual artworks to produce something greater than the sum of its parts.

One of the most alluring and intriguing aspects of the album, however, was the *hashiya* or margin of the album page. While the leaves of the album were of uniform size, the things that were pasted onto them might vary greatly in their dimensions. This meant that there was a margin, narrow or broad, around the items pasted on each page. In illustrated manuscripts, the margin was usually a dead space, a space of no great significance. Artists who were set the task of assembling the albums (which involved the careful cutting, pasting and repairing of older works) began to see the *hashiya* as their own field of play and started embellishing the *hashiya* in myriads of ways. They started by filling it with scrollwork, flowers and arabesques. But soon, they became aware of the narrative possibilities of the *hashiya*, where margins could “speak” to each other across the turn of the page. Thus, as little birds fluttered across the patterned field, the alert reader might see a bird pursue a butterfly on one page, only to catch it in the next. Around a painting of a *mehfil* where poets tried to outdo each other with their fine words, there might be marginal decoration that showed *simurghs* and dragons in furious combat.

One of the greatest Mughal albums ever assembled is the Gulshan Album, begun for Jahangir but probably completed in the reign of Shah Jahan. This exquisite album seems to be an assemblage of family heirlooms, preserving letters by Humayun, paintings by Bihzad, and calligraphic works by famous calligraphers from Timurid times. Facing pages of calligraphy alternate with facing pages of painting, all of whose margins are exquisitely decorated with elaborate works in shades of gold. This colour gave prestige and preciousness to the book, yet did not allow the *hashiyas* to overshadow the bright colours

of the paintings or the bold strokes of the calligraphies that they framed.

In the Gulshan Album, some norms seem already to be in place for border illustration. The borders that framed pages with illustrations in the centre tended to have only gold-pen paintings of flowers, arabesques or other conventional motifs in the border. On pages with calligraphy, on the other hand, the *hashiya* often has drawings of human figures overlaid on the drawings of gold. These assumed particular significance when they were used to add and alter the meanings of the text at the heart of the page. In the example illustrated here, the border illustrations reprise figures taken from the Renaissance and Baroque imagery that was flooding into the Mughal court, to show the Virgin Mary and John the Baptist expressing devotion around a calligraphic page bearing a holy verse.

Later, in albums assembled for Shah Jahan, Mughal artists extended and deepened the use of border images, making them relate to the central image in a range of ways: allusive, narrative, theatrical. In a leaf from the Late Shah Jahan Album, a simple equestrian portrait of Akbar is turned into a hunting narrative, for the border supplies him with the kind of attendants he would need on a hunt, including a gun-bearer and two falconers who seem to follow in the emperor’s wake. Beneath Akbar’s feet, deer and cranes stand at the edge of a pond, suggesting the game that he will soon pursue. But the *hashiya*-maker’s most significant addition is in the upper margin above Akbar’s head, where two angels hover in the air, carrying the orb and the crown that are the symbols of the emperor’s god-given sovereignty. Through his iconographic arrangement, the artist turns the four borders into a microcosm that reflects the three realms over which the divinely-endowed sovereign holds sway: the realm of the beasts; the realm of men; the realm of the heavens.



Tash’eer, holy verses and figurative margin; calligraphy, early 16th century; margins, first quarter of 17th century, Gulshan Album, folio 134. Collection: Golestan Palace Library, Tehran.



Majnun in the Wilderness, folio and borders, c. 1640-50, folio 69B, Late Shah Jahan Album. Collection: Chester Beatty Library

In the examples discussed above, we see the many ways in which the *hashiya* does its work upon the album page. It is a frame that conditions us to see something in a particular way. It is a space of adornment, in which the artist embellishes the edges of the page to pay homage to the things that lie at the centre. It is a connective device that forges links between different things that are patched together upon one page. It is a space of commentary, where one artist makes an observation about, or extends, deepens or subverts the work of another. It is the space of temporal layering, where the artist of the present re-frames and re-presents an already-created work from the past. It is the space in the margin, where a hesitant voice can whisper its own stories about the ‘main’ image in the centre. It is a space of contrapuntal meanings, where the whole becomes much more than the sum of its parts.



An Equestrian Portrait of Akbar, folio and borders, c 1650- 58, Late Shah Jahan Album. folio 55A, Collection: Chester Beatty Library

In thinking of this exhibition, we wanted to ask what inspiration we could take, today, from the Mughal artist who bent over the album page four hundred years ago, and added his own ideas, his own comments, his own appreciation and his own dissent, to the images that he was told he must simply decorate. Does the *hashiya*-maker's project offer a metaphor for the way in which artists today relate to art-works – often revered art-works – from the past? For this, it seemed useful to think along three tracks, inspired by the three ways in which we might translate “hashiya” into English – as border, as margin, and as frame.

We might say that every artist today who takes inspiration from or refers to the rich legacy of historical images is working within a *hashiya* of his or her own. For, whatever the physical form their work may take, they do re-frame the art of the past and their own work in turn is reframed by it. But what does it mean to stand on present ground and reframe the art of the past? By invoking, imitating, restating and reworking the art of the past, contemporary artists place themselves in a relation to it, but the nature of this relationship can be a shifting one. What is the past? Is it history or heritage, tradition or inspiration, resource or burden?

Each artist dips into the reservoir of the past in different ways and for different reasons. Even so, it is possible to make some broad generalizations about the way in which miniature paintings have been adopted and adapted by contemporary artists in South Asia because the political, intellectual and institutional histories on the ground do leave their impress upon art practices. Thus, it would be fair to say that most contemporary artists in India who have been inspired by miniatures have treated them as a reservoir of historical imagery and a conduit that grants access to the visualities of the past. In their own practice, these artists have allied themselves with the modernist project through their choice of method, scale and materials. Working on canvas or in watercolours, or on



Gulammohammed Sheikh, *Returning Home After a Long Absence*, 1969-1973, 48 x 48 in, oil on canvas, Collection: Ram and Bharati Sharma, New Delhi.

vastly expanded or altered versions of traditional carriers such as books and scrolls, these artists have re-drawn the imagery of miniature paintings in their own medium. In their works, the imagery drawn from miniatures becomes a citation, a quote, a memory, an intrusion in the current-day world. Moreover, the sheer beauty of the images cited coupled with a sense of their pastness creates an inescapable effect of nostalgia. The past appears beautiful, but bygone. It has vanished, and it is irrecoverable. Reference to miniatures become suffused with melancholy and produce an elegy for the scarred and ugly realities of the present day.

In Pakistan, contemporary artists' engagement with miniature painting has followed a different path. Although some pioneering artists – notably Zahoor ul Akhlaq – did notable work in the modernist/citational mode, the Pakistani contemporary miniatures that have become globally well-known are the result of an engagement with the bodily discipline, tools and materials of traditional practice as taught in the miniature painting department of the National College of Art (NCA) at Lahore. In this department, students sit cross-legged on the ground, balancing their paper on wooden boards laid across their laps; they use handmade paper *waslis*, fine brushes, gum arabic and ground pigment, rendering images in microscopic detail and burnishing each surface to smooth perfection. As scholars have pointed out in another context, this method of artistic production seems bent upon effacing precisely that thing that modernism fetishizes as the visible trace of artistic subjectivity: the individual brushstroke, that sign of the artist's mark-making that calls attention to his presence and authorship through a signal that exceeds the needs of image production *per se*.



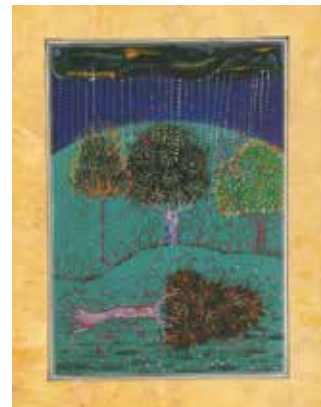
Zahoor ul Akhlaq, *Shah Jahan* Watercolour and graphite on paper, 1981.

The NCA artists' training and choice of materials makes them seem to speak from within a tradition. But the more closely these artists seem to cleave to tradition, the more radically they dismantle it from within. The

contemporary sensibility and political engagement of these works creates a sharply critical spirit that explodes any notion of the past as a “golden age” and shows up the heritage politics used to prop up nationalist mythmaking. Ironically, then, the more contemporary Pakistani miniatures appear to resemble traditional miniatures, the more distanced they are from celebratory narratives about tradition and heritage.

The NCA’s artists, so artisanal in their modes of production, once might have seemed doomed to remain marginal in a modernist world. Their astonishing success is an object-lesson in post-modernism, where voices from the margins have come to the fore. Thus, while their work offers another re-framing of the art of the past, we may also think of them particularly in relation to the *hashiya as margins*. Just as Persian and Mughal artists could use the margins of their pages to shift our perspective on, or alter the meaning of what lay at the centre, these artists have taken a range of marginal conditions (artisanal mode of practice, troubled political history, global Islamophobia) and turned them into a centrally important articulation of major concerns of our times.

These differences in the place of miniature imagery in the contemporary art of India and Pakistan – as historic references in the former, and as embodied practice in the latter – demonstrates (if more demonstration were needed) how our lives and realities are shaped by borders within which we operate. Given this, it is appropriate to recall that the “border” is yet another way to translate the word “*hashiya*”. Yet, despite the differences between the artists discussed so far in India and Pakistan, there is a strong commonality that binds them together. In both countries, most contemporary artists are drawn from the middle class and have entered the world of art through training in formal art academies. What of the miniaturists who might be born into traditional painter families and who learned their art through a childhood apprenticeship rather than an art school? There are many such artists in

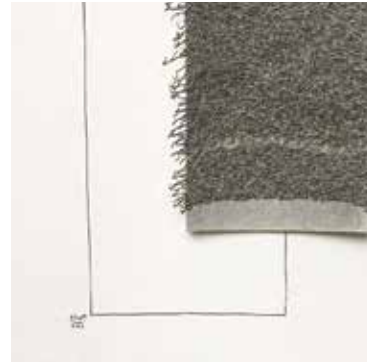


Imran Qureshi, *Rise and Fall*
Opaque watercolour on paper, 2014.

South Asia, but for most of them being “in” a tradition has been a blessing and a curse. Benefitting from long training and an understanding of vocabulary, most of these artists still have been constrained by a perceived need to remain “authentic” or “true to their roots.” Here, the border between the world of the traditional artisan and the contemporary artist turns out to be the least porous line of separation. In this context, it is interesting to think of the collaborations in which a contemporary artist from an urban and cosmopolitan background, has teamed up with an artist trained in the traditional manner. Although they produce works of uncanny beauty, which are often profoundly self-aware, such projects are often accused of re-enacting a colonial relationship, where the urban/Western designer is the ‘head’ that guides the skilled but un-intellectual Indian craftsman’s ‘hand.’ But this is an over-simplification that pays insufficient attention to both the projects’ complexities and delights. Perhaps we need to understand these projects through the lens of other collaborations, such as cinema or theatre where it is neither possible nor necessary to pin down to which one individual the authorship belongs.

★ ★

It turns out then, that the *hashiya* offers a rich set of metaphors to understand the many ways in which the artists of the present have engaged with the past. Today it is particularly valuable to get a sense of the complexities and the contingencies that serve to shape this relationship, for our contemporary re-framings of the past have become so very fraught and so filled with false certitudes about what the past was “really” like and what the “right” way to remember it might be. This exhibition is an invitation to leave the margin, to cross the border, and to step into the frame, in order to reflect on the different ways of remembering, dreaming and imagining our relation today with what has gone before.



MANISHA GERA BASWANI

ALEXANDER GORLIZKI

DESMOND LAZARO

GHULAM MOHAMMAD

NUSRA LATIF QURESHI

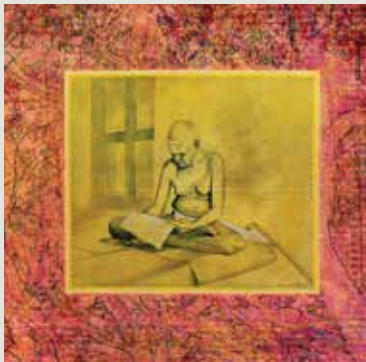
V RAMESH

GULAMMOHAMMED SHEIKH

NILIMA SHEIKH

SAIRA WASIM

YASIR WAQAS



MANISHA GERA BASWANI

Dusk on a Crimson Horizon, 2018
Watercolour on Shikshi Board
14 x 15 in.



MANISHA GERA BASWANI

Desert Meets the River, 2018
Watercolour on Shikshi Board
14 x 15 in.



MANISHA GERA BASWANI

The Tree Exhales, 2018
Watercolour on Shikshi Board
13 x 19 in.



It's All Going On, 2017
Pigment and gold on paper
13.5 x 9.75 in.



ALEXANDER GORLIZKI

A Forgotten Place, 2018
Pigment and gold on paper
16.6 x 12.15 in.



ALEXANDER GORLIZKI

Prodigal Child, 2017
Pigment and gold on paper
11.75 x 8.75 in.





DESMOND LAZARO

Icosahedron - The Dymaxion Map
 Wood (white ash), cloth, gold gild on gesso
 Diameter: 10.23 in. approximately



DESMOND LAZARO

Dymaxion Map I
 Pigment paint on handmade Sanganer paper
 33 x 25.1 in.



DESMOND LAZARO

Dymaxion Map II - The Explorers
 Gold gild on handmade Sanganer paper
 32.8 x 25 in.



DESMOND LAZARO

Dymaxion Map III, Continents
 Gold gild on handmade Sanganer paper
 32.8 x 25 in.



DESMOND LAZARO

Classroom I

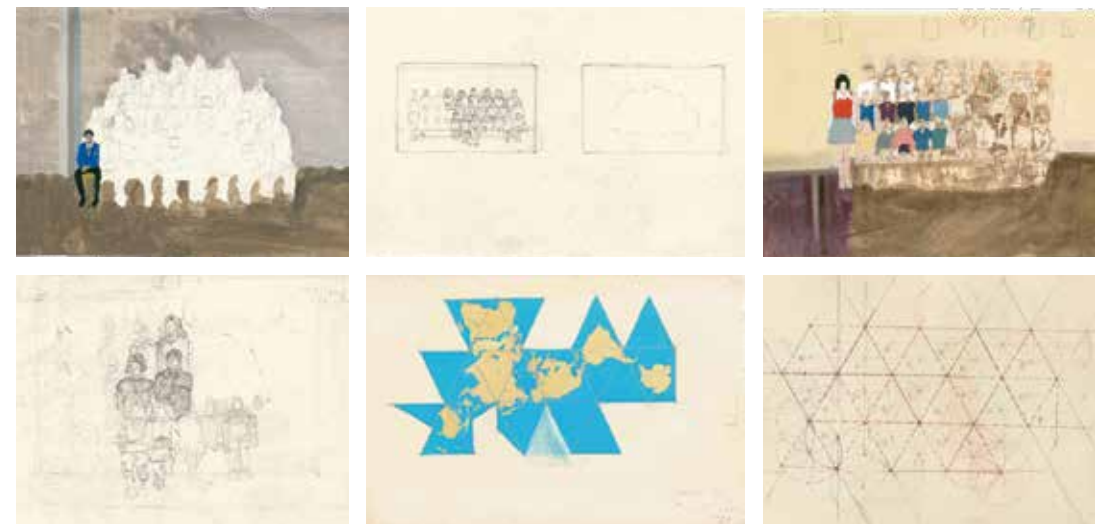
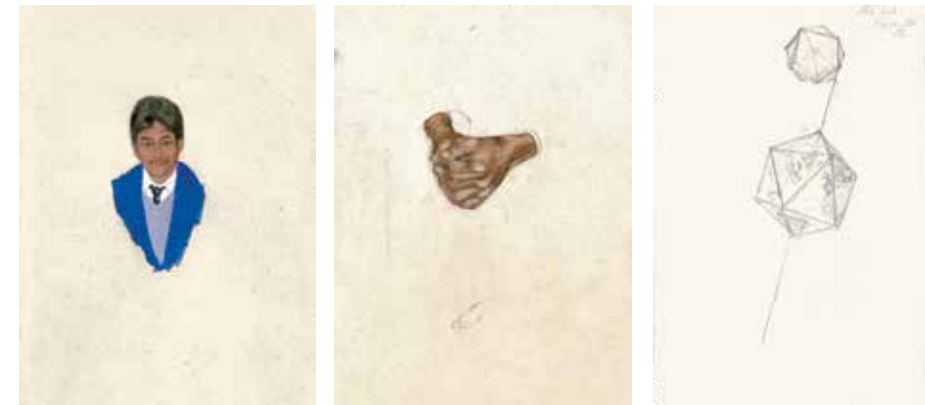
Cotton cloth, pigment paint on board. Back with aluminium frame
29.9 x 48 in.



DESMOND LAZARO

Classroom II

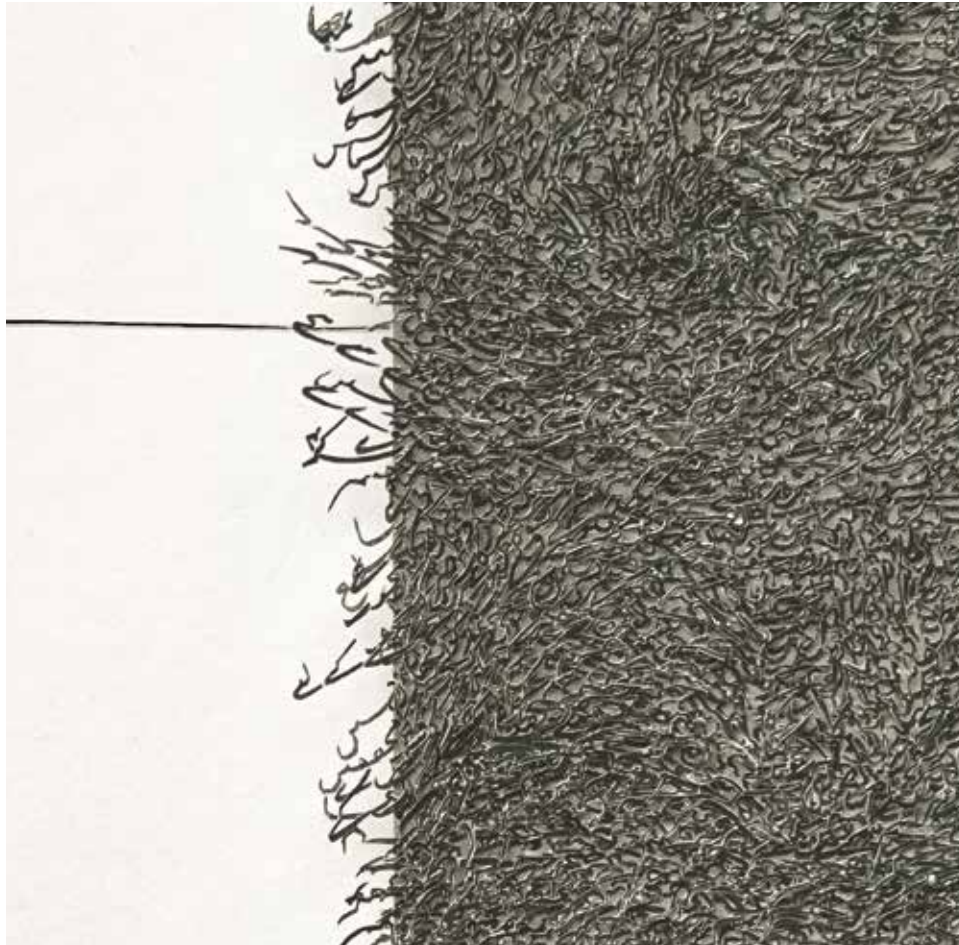
Cotton cloth, pigment paint on board. Back with aluminium frame
29.9 x 48 in.



DESMOND LAZARO

Sketchbook Studies (set of 11)

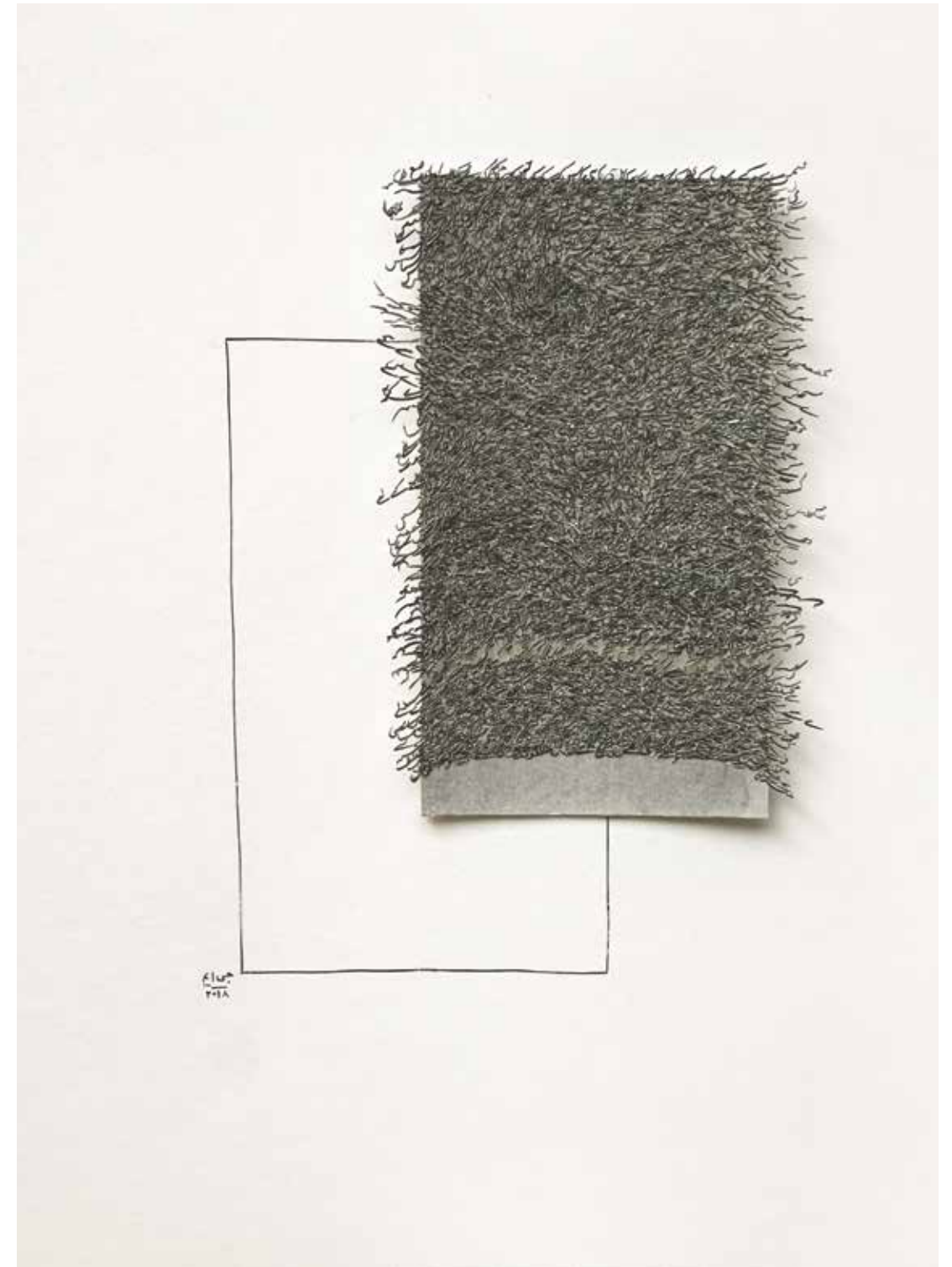
Classroom I Study, Classroom II Study, Classroom I Drawing, Classroom II Drawing, Miss Foster, Dymaxion Map Drawing, Dymaxion Map Study, Geometry of Dymaxion Map Drawing, Classroom I Study with Dymaxion Map, Folded Hands Study - Classroom II, Portrait Study - Classroom II
Mixed media on paper
Dimensions variable (8.2 x 5.1 in. each)

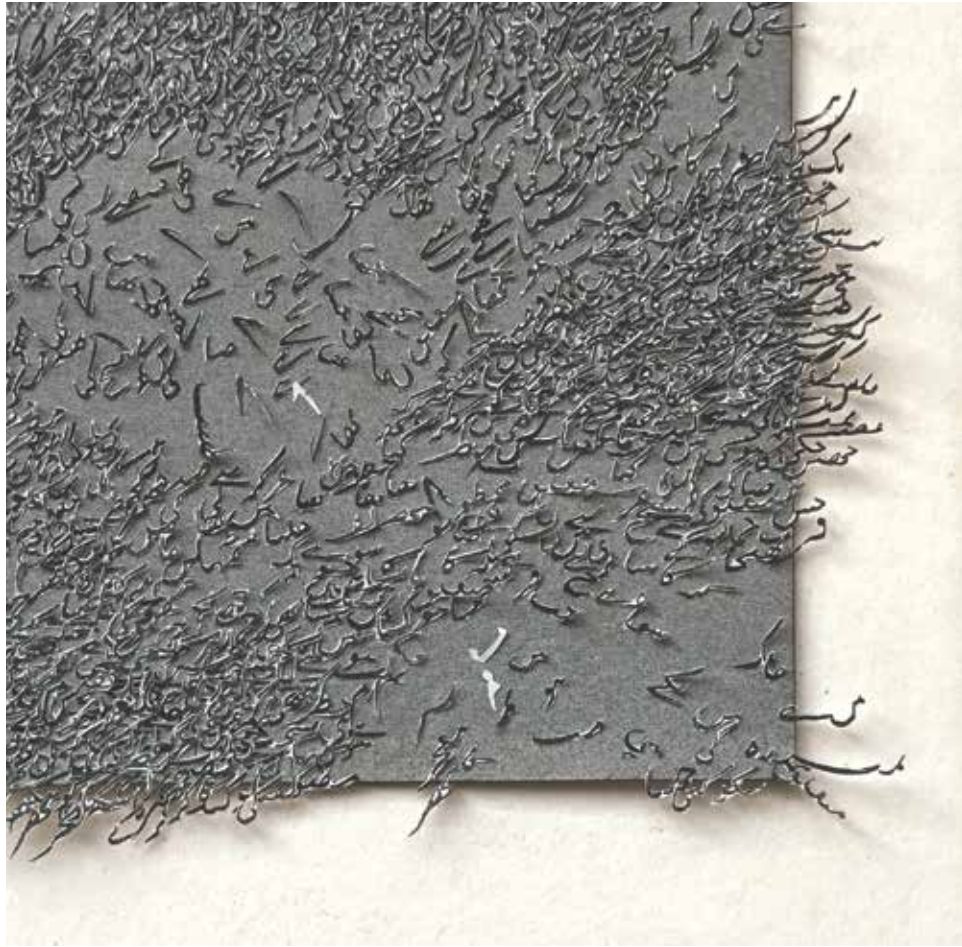


GHULAM MOHAMMAD

Paaband, 2018

Iranian Ink and paper collage on wasli
14 x 12 in. with frame



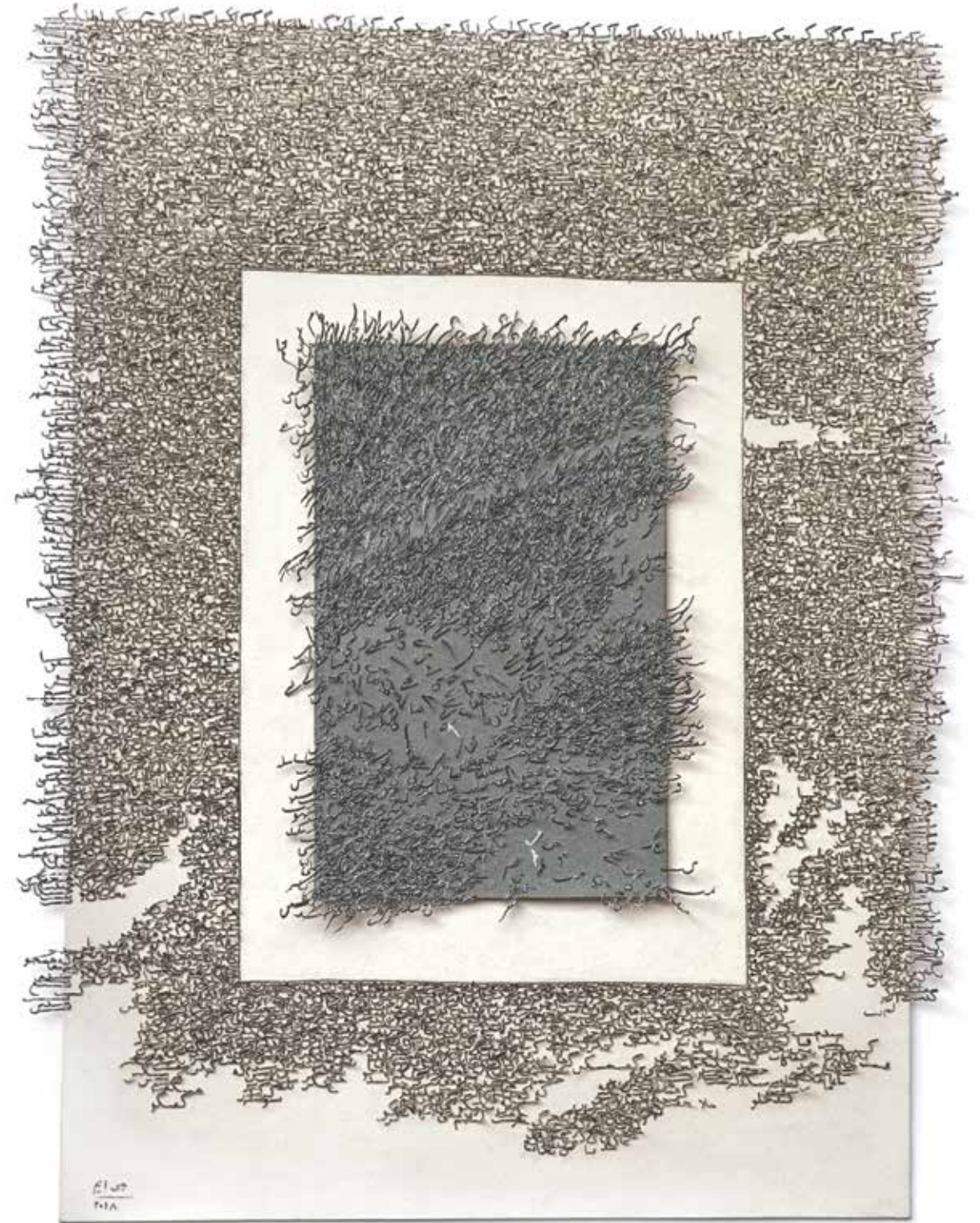


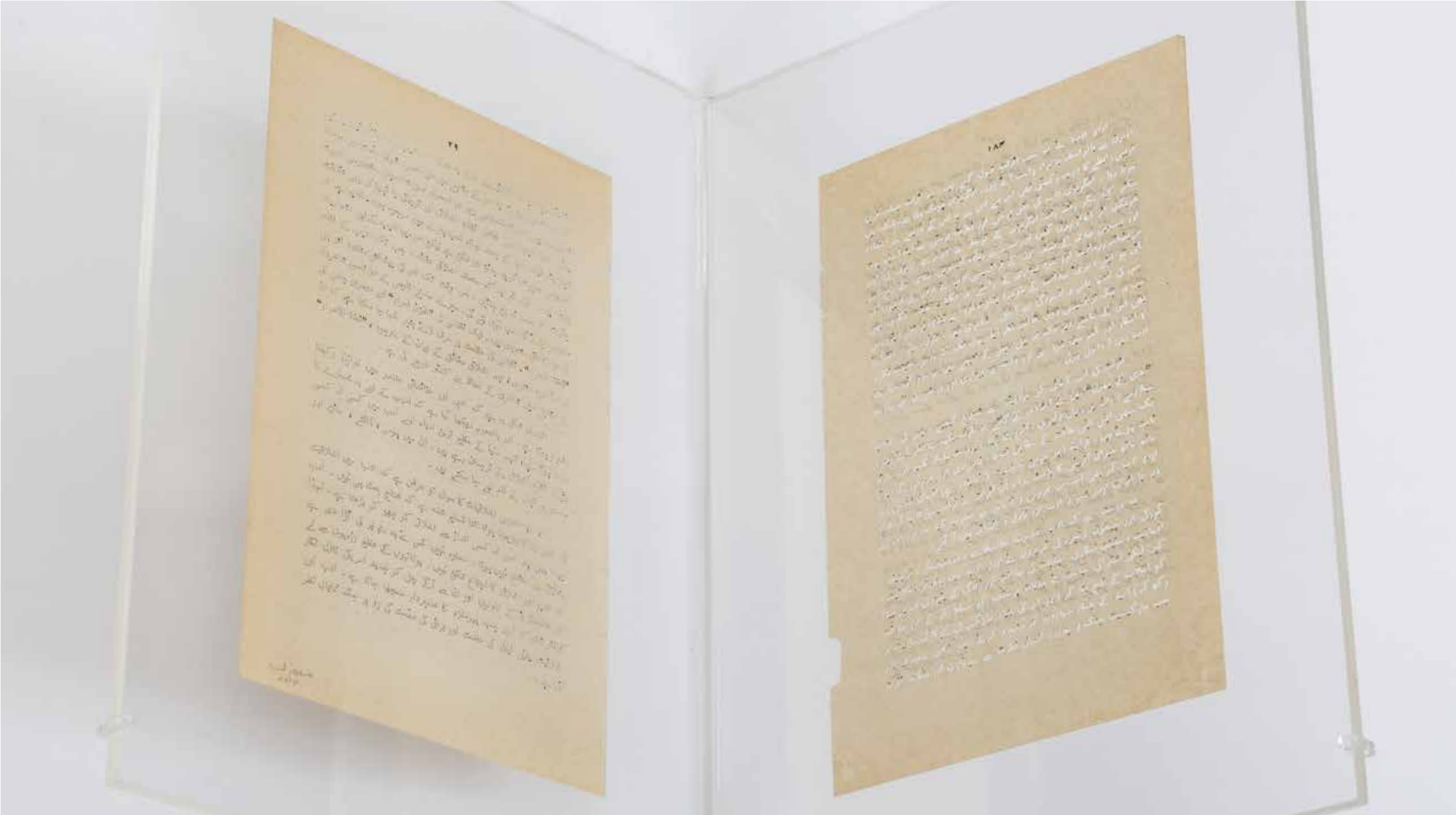
GHULAM MOHAMMAD

Gunjaan II, 2018

Iranian Ink and paper collage on wasli

14 x 12 in. with frame





GHULAM MOHAMMAD

Saraab, 2018
Perforated Pages
12 x 15 in. with frame

NUSRA LATIF QURESHI

Laud the Three Metamorphoses I, 2018

Acrylic, watercolour and gouache on illustration board

17.7 x 17.7 in.





NUSRA LATIF QURESHI

Laud the Three Metamorphoses II, 2018

Acrylic, watercolour and gouache on illustration board

17.7 x 17.7 in.

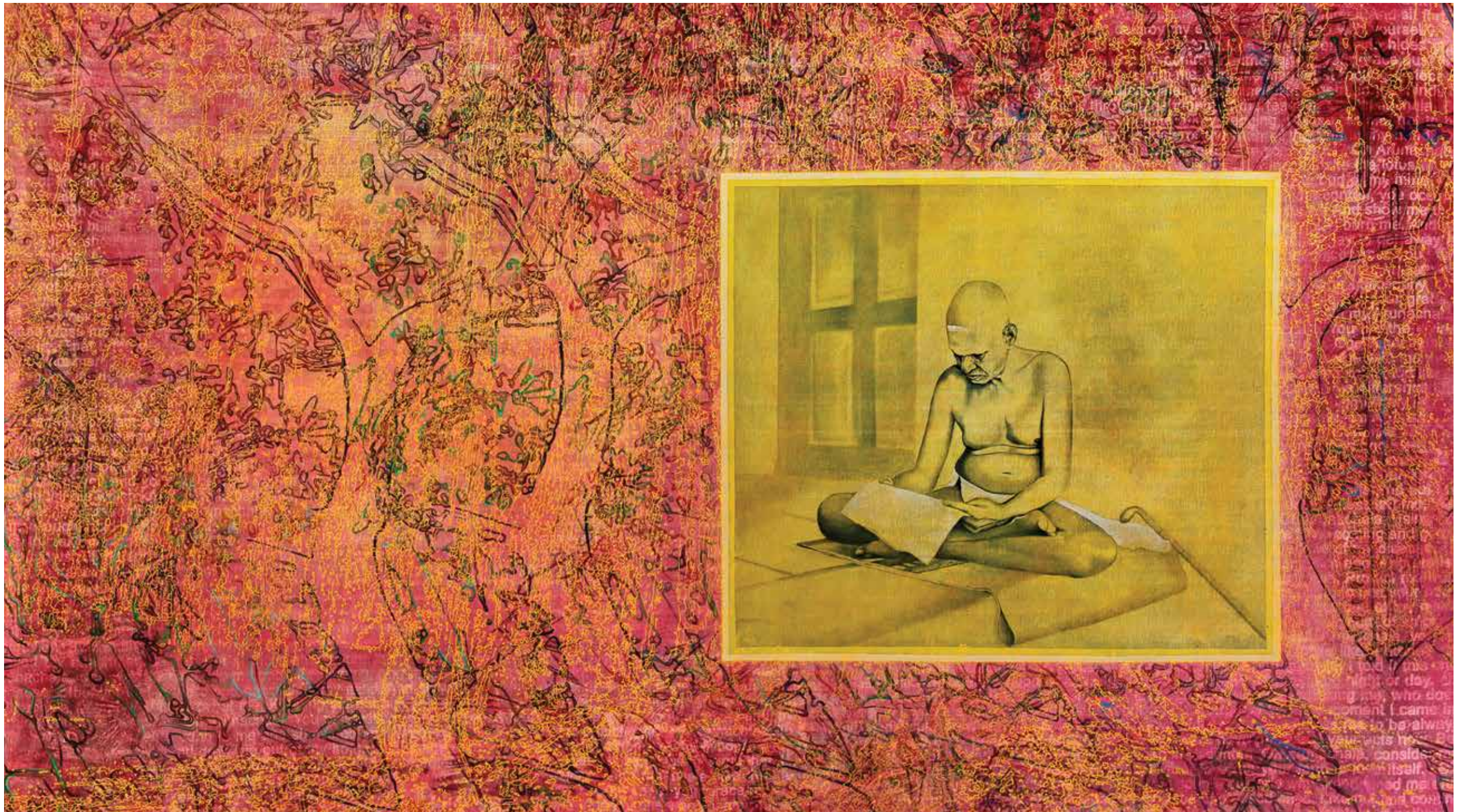


NUSRA LATIF QURESHI

Laud the Three Metamorphoses III, 2018

Acrylic, watercolour and gouache on illustration board

17.7 x 17.7 in.



V RAMESH

The Ordinarity of Any Act: Portrait of a Sage, 2018

Oil on canvas

48 x 84 in.



V RAMESH

This or That - Regarding a Golden Deer, 2018

Oil on canvas

48 x 84 in.

GULAMMOHAMMED SHEIKH

Majnun in the Margin, 2018
Watercolour on Arches paper
22 x 29.9 in.



NILIMA SHEIKH

Departure, 2018
Mixed tempera on Sangner paper
18.8 x 13.3 in.



NILIMA SHEIKH

Dream at Daybreak 2, 2018
Mixed tempera on Sangner paper
18.8 x 13.3 in.



SAIRA WASIM

In Guns We Trust, 2018

Paper cut, acrylics and gouache, gold on wasli
20 x 17.1 in.



SAIRA WASIM

Silent Plea, 2018
Paper cut, acrylics, gouache, gold on wasli
20 x 17.1 in.



SAIRA WASIM

Rest in History, 2018

Paper cut, acrylic inks, gouache, gold on wasli
20.5 x 17 in.





YASIR WAQAS

If this is what you mean, I am certainly without possessions, 2018
Gouache, Laser cut, gold and silver leaf on printed books
9.8 x 20.4 x 1.9 in.



YASIR WAQAS

Will you take me across!, 2018

Gouache, Laser cut, gold and silver leaf on printed books

10.2 x 17.3 x 2.3 in.

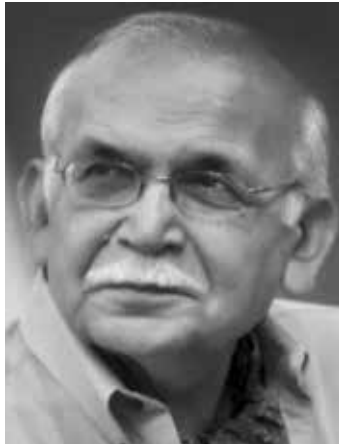
PROF. B.N GOSWAMY distinguished art historian, is Professor Emeritus of Art History at the Panjab University, Chandigarh. He has been the recipient of many honours, including the Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship, the Rietberg Award for Outstanding Research in Art History, the JDR III Fellowship, the Mellon Senior Fellowship, and, from the President of India, the Padma Shri (1998) and the Padma Bhushan (2008).

He is the author of over 25 books on Indian art and culture, including: *Pahari Painting; The Family as the Basis of Style* (Mumbai, 1968); *Painters at the Sikh Court* (Wiesbaden, 1975); *A Place Apart: Paintings from Kutch* (with A.L.Dallapiccola; New Delhi, 1983); *The Essence of Indian Art* (San Francisco, 1986); *Wonders of a Golden Age: Painting at the Courts of the Great Mughals* (with E.Fischer; Zurich, 1987); *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India* (with E. Fischer; Zurich, 1992); *Indian Costumes in the Calico Museum of Textiles* (Ahmedabad, 1993); *Nainsukh of Guler: A great Indian Painter from a small Hill State* (Zurich and New Delhi, 1997); *Domains of Wonder: Selected Masterworks of Indian Painting* (with Caron Smith; San Diego, 2005); *The Spirit of Indian Painting: Close Encounters with 101 Great Works* (New Delhi and London, 2014, 2016); and, more recently, *Manaku of Guler: Another great Painter from a small Hill State* (Zurich and New Delhi, 2017).

Professor Goswamy's most recent work – a volume edited with Vrinda Agrawal – *Oxford Readings in Indian Art*, was published by the Oxford University Press (New Delhi, 2018).

PROF. KAVITA SINGH is Professor at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, where she teaches courses on the history of Indian painting and the history and politics of museums. She has published essays on issues of colonial history, repatriation, secularism and religiosity, fraught national identities, and the memorialization of difficult histories as they relate to museums in South Asia and beyond. She has also published on Indian painting. Her books include the edited and co-edited volumes *New Insights into Sikh Art* (Marg, 2003), *Influx: Contemporary Art in Asia* (Sage, 2013), *No Touching, No Spitting, No Praying: The Museum in South Asia* (Routledge, 2014,) *Nauras: The Many Arts of the Deccan* (National Museum, 2015), *Real Birds in Imagined Gardens: Mughal Painting between Persia and Europe* (Getty, 2016) and *Museum Storage and Meaning: Tales from the Crypt* (Routledge, 2017). She has curated exhibitions at the San Diego Museum of Art, the Devi Art Foundation, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and the National Museum of India.

AUTHORS' BIOGRAPHY



ARTISTS' BIOGRAPHY



MANISHA GERA BASWANI (b. 1967, Delhi, India)

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Fine Arts, Jamia Milia Islamia University, Delhi, India; Master of Fine Arts, Jamia Milia Islamia University, Delhi, India

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: *Postcards from Home*, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art at Lahore Biennale (2018); *Hope is the thing with feathers*, Sanat Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (2015); *Artist through the Lens*, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art at Kochi Muziris Biennale (2014); *Hope is the thing with feathers*, Gallery Espace, New Delhi, India (2012); *Artist through the Lens*, Devi Art Foundation at India Art Fair (2012).

Manisha lives and works in Gurugram (Haryana), India.



Photo credit: Can Turkyilmaz

ALEXANDER GORLIZKI (b. 1967, London, United Kingdom)

EDUCATION: Fine Art, Bristol Polytechnic, London; Master of Fine Arts, Slade School of Fine Arts, London, London.

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: *Pink City Studio*, Kochi, India (2017); *Subtle Bodies*, Saucy Lines, Galerie Kudlek, Cologne, Germany (2016); *Variable Dimensions*, The Crow Collection, Dallas, Texas (2015); *We Are One*, Galerie Eric Mouchet, Paris, France (2014); *For Immediate Release*, Van Doren Waxter, New York (2013); *We Like It Here, We're Not Moving*, Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, India (2012); *Terms and Conditions Apply*, Kudlek van der Grinten, Cologne, Germany (2011); *Pre- Existing Conditions*, John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco, USA (2011); *The First Time I Heard You Blink*, Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, New York (2011); *Appointments & Disappointments*, Kudlek van der Grinten Galerie, Cologne, Germany (2009); *Soft, Succulent, Sublime*, Daniel Weinberg Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2009).

Alexander lives and works in New York and in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

DESMOND LAZARO (b. 1968, Leeds, United Kingdom)

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Fine Arts, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, England; Master of Fine Arts, MS University, Baroda, India; PhD, Prince’s School of Traditional Arts, London

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: Desmond Lazaro: *Recent Works*, Beck & Eggeling International Fine Art, Düsseldorf, Germany (2010 and 2012); *Desmond Lazaro*, UK Ben Brown Fine Art, London; The In-Coming Passengers, Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai, India (2016); *Kochi-Muziris Biennale*, Kochi, India (2016); *India Re-Worlded: Seventy Years of Investigating a Nation*, Gallery Odyssey, Mumbai, India (2017).

Desmond lives and works in Puducherry, India.



GHULAM MOHAMMAD (b. 1979, Baluchistan, Pakistan)

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Fine Arts, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, 2013; Master of Art Education, Beaconhouse National University, Lahore, 2017.

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: Ghulam Mohammad began exhibiting his works at Pakistan’s top art galleries even before he graduated from Beaconhouse National University, Lahore. He has since shown at Satrang Gallery, Islamabad (2014), Canvas Gallery, Karachi (2014, 2015) and Rohtas Gallery, Lahore (2016).

Ghulam lives and works in Baluchistan, Pakistan.



NUSRA LATIF QURESHI (b. 1973, Lahore, Pakistan)

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Fine Arts, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan; Master of Fine Arts, Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, Australia.

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: *The Shape of Time*, Kunst Historisches Museum, Vienna, Austria (2018); *GOMA Turns 10*, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia (2016); *Air Born*, McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, Victoria, Australia (2013); *Nothing to Declare?*, The Academy of Arts, Brandenburger Tor, Berlin (2013); *The Way You Look At Me*, Gallery 4A, Sydney, Australia (2011); *This Reminds Me of Some Place*, Cross Art Projects, Sydney, Australia (2010), *A Garden of Fruit Trees*, Anant Art Gallery, New Delhi, India (2007) and Adelaide Festival Centre, OzAsia Festival, Adelaide, Australia (2009); *Exotic Bodies*, *Heavenly Products*, Nexus Gallery, Adelaide and Fremantle Arts Centre, WA, Australia (2005).

Nusra lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.



V RAMESH (b. 1958, Andhra Pradesh, India)

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda, India Master of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Baroda, India.

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: Threshold Art Gallery, New Delhi (2017), *Remembrances of Voices Past*, National Gallery of Modern Art, Bengaluru (2014) and Katzen Art Center, American University Museum, Washiongton DC (2015); *My Heart Would be Enough*, Gallery Threshold, New Delhi; *Sanctum: A corner for four sisters*, Gallery Threshold, New Delhi; *Painted Hymns*, Gallery Threshold, Delhi (2007); *A Thousand and One Desires*, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai & Gallery Threshold, New Delhi (2005); Nazar Art Gallery, Baroda (2000).

V Ramesh lives and works in Visakhapatnam, India.



GULAMMOHAMMED SHEIKH (b. 1937, Gujarat, India)

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Fine Arts, M.S. University, Vadodara, India; Master of Fine Arts, Royal College of Art, London, U.K.

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: *Ideas of the Sublime*, Vadehra Art Gallery at Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi , India (2013); *City, Kaavad and Other works*, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, India (2011); *Mappings*, The Guild at Museum Gallery, Mumbai, India (2004); *Palimpsest* at Vadehra Gallery, New Delhi and Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai, India (2001); *Kahat Kabir* at Vadehra Gallery, New Delhi, India (1998); *Pathvipath* at CMC Art Gallery, New Delhi (1991); *Returning Home (a retrospective of work from 1968-1985)* at Centre Georges Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France (1985).

Gulammohammed lives and works in Vadodara, Gujarat.



NILIMA SHEIKH (b. 1945, Delhi, India)

EDUCATION: Bachelor of History, Delhi University; Master of Fine Arts, M.S University, Baroda, India

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: *Documenta 14*, Athens and Kassel (2017); *An Atlas of Mirrors*, Singapore Biennale, Singapore (2016); *Diary Entries*, Gallery Espace, New Delhi (2015); *Each Night put Kashmir in your Dreams*, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago (2014) and Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai (2010); *Landscape of Thinking Slow: Contemporary Art from China & India*, National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Seoul, Korea; *Place-Time-Play*, Contemporary Art from West Heavens to Middle Kingdom in Shanghai (2010); *Drawing Trails*, Gallery Espace, New Delhi (2009); *India moderna*, Institut Valencia d'Art Modern at Valencia, (2008).

Nilima lives and works in Gujarat, India.



SAIRA WASIM (b.1975, Lahore, Pakistan)

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Fine Arts from Lahore, Pakistan.

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: Unicorn gallery, Lahore, Pakistan (2016); *Hybridization*, Amir Mohtashemi Gallery, London, UK (2015); *The Great Game, The Iranian Pavilion*, Venice Biennale (2015); *Ethereal*, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA (2014), *To Define is to Limit*, Hong Kong Visual Art Center, Hong Kong (2013); *Epic Miniatures*, Ameringer McEnery Yohe Gallery, New York (2008); *Political Carousel*, South Western University, Texas (2005).

Saira lives and works in California, USA.

YASIR WAQAS (b. 1985, Quetta, Pakistan)

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Fine Arts, National College of Arts, Lahore, Pakistan.

SELECT EXHIBITIONS: India Art Fair, New Delhi (2018); *Flight*, Rohtas 2 Gallery, Lahore , Pakistan (2017); *Open Field- Contemporary Art from Pakistan*, Islamabad, Pakistan (2016); *Tales from the Ateliers*, Main Frame Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan (2016); *In Transit*, Full Circle Gallery, Karachi, Pakistan (2015); *CREATIVE SCRIPTS - The Language of the artists*, Ejaz Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan (2015); *Beyond Borders Art Exhibition*, Experimenter Art Gallery at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India (2013); *Transformation*, Zahoor-ul-Ikhalq Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan (2008).

Yasir lives and works in Lahore, Pakistan.



HASHIYA

The Margin
30th March - 24th April, 2018

30TH MARCH 2018
Inauguration

Chief Guest:
Javed Akhtar (Poet, Lyricist and Screenwriter)

Guests of Honour:
Prof. B.N Goswamy and Prof. Salima Hashmi

Dance Recital by noted Kathak exponent:
Aditi Mangaldas

31ST MARCH 2018
In Conversation:
Prof. Salima Hashmi with Prof. Kavita Singh
Lecture on Hashiya: Margin\Border\Comment:
Prof. B.N. Goswamy

at Bikaner House, New Delhi



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Prima Kurien

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Shruthi Issac

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Reha Sodhi

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Raj Salhotra and Yogesh Salhotra

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Shripal, Raju, Vijay

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