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The Art of Barzakh : The Poses, Props and Performances of Masculinity in Pakistani Art

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The Art of *Barzakh*

The Poses, Props and Performances of Masculinity in Pakistani Art

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UNSW Art & Design

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Derived from vernacular and esoteric sources, the research has revealed a series of common visual tropes whose symbolism I unpack through my interdisciplinary art practice as poetic expressions of *jalāl* (majesty) and *jamāl* (beauty), to illustrate how Pakistani artists may construct and critically analyse representations of male bodies and the myths of Islamic masculinity, whether present or inferred. This expands the methods artists can use to construct culturally informed masculinities that engage with social, political and religious factors, providing alternative readings to the hegemonic Western notions of Islamic male identity that are often imposed in studies of the Islamic world.

Responding to how Islamic masculinities and Pakistani Muslim men specifically are perceived around the world, Pakistani artists have addressed these problems, but for complex cultural reasons the potential for misinterpretation has stymied in depth exploration. This means that Islamic masculinity in the Visual Arts continues to rely on mainstream Western neo-Orientalist readings premised on a monolithic Islam emptied of history, diversity and dissent. Furthermore, Western gender models remain inadequate in identifying Islamic models beyond their legalist tradition, corporeality, and 'essentialist' social roles. Through studio-based research, the thesis addresses these issues to develop a more robust model for visualising a Pakistani masculinity that accepts the polymorphous realities of gender dynamics in Islamic visual culture.

As a male Pakistani Muslim artist who has lived most of his adult life in the West, my point of departure is gender theory from within Islam itself: I argue the traditional Islamic gender concepts, *jalāl* (majesty) and *jamāl* (beauty), provide a model for a 'balanced' Islamic masculinity that is fluid and heterogeneous. Furthermore, upon analysis of this model and its application to conceptual and visual practices, I coined the descriptor, 'Art of *Barzakh*' (*Barzakh's* literal translation, 'a veil or partition between two things'), a liminal zone between Islamic tradition and contemporary innovation. I propose this may apply to the art practices of many Pakistani artists, locating the masculine object into a collective schema of *jalāli* and *jamāli* qualities, restoring Islamic masculine balance.

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(Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim)

In the Name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful.[1]

Praise belongs to Allah the Great; His Majesty is part of the manifestation of His Beauty. In His proximity He is the Near, in His loftiness, the Observer. Power, splendour, grandeur, and magnificence are His whose essence is great beyond any resemblance to other essences. His essence is exalted above all motions and stillnesses, all bewilderment and mindfulness. It is too high to be overtaken by any explanation, express or implied, just as it is too great to be limited and described…[2]

(Ibn 'Arabi translated by Rabia Terri Harris)

1 Traditionally writing or calligraphy in Islam begins with the word *Bismillah*. Here is a popular Bismillah motif in decorative Arabic calligraphy design.

2 Muhyidduin Ibn 'Arabi, *The Kitāb Al-Jalāl Wa-l Jamāl*, trans. Rabia Teri Harris "On Majesty and Beauty" (Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society, 1989): 1-2.
PDF: http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articlespdf/jalalwajamal.pdf
Also see: Rabia Terri Harris, "On Majesty and Beauty," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* Volume VIII (1989): 5-32.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

Al-Qaeda	Also (Al-Qaeeda, Al Qaida) - An international terrorist organization founded in late 1980s by Osama Bin Laden and Muhammad Atef.
Alam-e-A'rāf	Also al-Barzakh or Astral Plane or the World of Heights: In Arabic A'rāf is the plural form of the word Arf, which means heights. Commonly described as being a curtain, a high wall or a hill between Hell and Paradise, it is a place where people await their final judgment, much like in Barzakh. In Sufism, Alam-e-A'rāf is where the human soul resides after death and can also visit during sleep (dream state) and meditation.
Al-Barzakh	Barzakh (Also al-Barzaqh in Arabic) literally means a veil or a barrier or an obstacle or a separation that stands between two things, which does not allow the two to meet. In Islamic terminology, it is a word describing the world between the here and the hereafter, or a state between worldly and otherworldly affairs. Ibn al-Arabi defines Barzakh as the intermediate realm or "isthmus" between the world of corporeal bodies and the world of souls. In this sense, it is also a world of imagination. Barzakh is also a halfway point between reward and punishment where souls will be temporarily rewarded or punished. In this sense, the Islamic term Barzakh differs from Purgatory (from the Latin purgare, 'to cleanse' in Roman Catholicism) which is the place after death where those who have died in a state of grace but are not free from imperfection, expiate their remaining sins before entering the visible presence of God and the saints; the damned, on the other hand, go directly to hell. In this sense, Barzakh is closer to the idea of limbo. (For details, see Introduction, Footnote 57, p. 32).
Caliphate	The rulership of Islam. Caliph (kalif) is the spiritual head and temporal ruler of the Islamic state. The caliph (or successor to Muhammad) had temporal and spiritual authority (or successor) to Muhammad, but was not permitted prophetic power. They could not, therefore, exercise authority in matters of religious doctrine.
Fana	Fana (also fanna) is annihilation in Sufism, a mystic tradition of Islam. It can convey the meaning of totally lost in love.
Fatwa	A legal opinion or ruling issued by an Islamic scholar, a Muft or Mufti.
Fiqh	Literally, fiqh means understanding; study of the religious law in Islam.
Hadith	A collection of traditions attributed to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) that include his sayings, acts, and approval or disapproval of things. Hadith is revered by Muslims as a major source of religious law and moral guidance. Because the Qurʾan explicitly mandates Muslim obedience to the Prophet in legal and ritual matters, the hadith became in Islamic law (shariʿa) a source of legislation second only to the Qurʾan.
Hanafi	One of oldest of four established Sunni schools of legal thought in Islam and established by Abu Hanifa who systematically arranged and compiled Islamic law. The other three schools of thought are Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali.
Ibliees	Devil (Shaitian or Satan) in Islam.
Islamist	(from mid-1980s use in English language) an Islamic revivalist movement often characterized by moral conservatism, literalism, and the attempt to implement Islamic values in all spheres of life and animate political activity. Also an orthodox Muslim.
Isthmus	The isthmus is the image of images: it describes the nature of all images, as sign between sign reader and signified. This sense of image describes language, since words always point to beyond themselves; they can thus both protect and veil, to varying degrees. The isthmus is then a bridge between the inner and outer worlds, and also what keeps them apart.

Jihad	An individual's striving for spiritual self-perfection. The word jihad actually means "struggle, strive." The Arabic root of the word is jahada to strive for where as war is called harb in Arabic. Jihad is divided into two types. The lesser type is the struggle against religious or political oppression and the greater is the soul's struggle with evil.
Kab'ba	Means 'cube' and also Baitullah or the House of Allah (God). An Islamic holy site in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. For any reference point on the Earth, the qibla is the direction to the Kab'ba. Muslims face this direction during Salat prayer.
Kamikaze	Term used to describe Japanese pilots who flew suicide bombing raids during the Second World War. Kamikaze means "divine wind," a reference to a typhoon that dispersed a Mongol invasion fleet threatening Japan from the West in 1281.
LT	The Lashkar-e-Tayyiba or (Lashkar-e-Taiba, Lashkar-e-Toiba), literally means 'Army of the Righteous', is the armed wing of the Pakistan-based religious organization, Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI), a Sunni anti-U.S. missionary organization formed in 1989. The LT is led by Abdul Wahid Kashmiri and is one of the three largest and best-trained groups fighting in Kashmir against India. The LT is not connected to a political party.
Nafs	Nafs is an Arabic word meaning self or person or psyche. In Sufi teachings, it means more of false ego. There are seven stages of Nafs or ego (also called as conditions of heart) that must be faced and conquered to attain pure self.
Qalb	Arabic word meaning Heart.
s.a.a.w.	An acronym for 'Sall'Allahu Alayhi Wasalam' means 'may the graces, honours and peace of Allah be upon him'. It is obligatory for Muslims to recite this on mentioning the name of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) because it is instructed in Qur'an (Sura Al-Ahzab, Chapter 33, Verse 56).
Salat	Salat is the formal prayer of Islam. It is one of the obligatory rites of the religion, to be performed five times a day by an obedient Muslim. Muslim men are required to congregate in a mosque for communal Salat.
Sharia	The religious law of Islam based on the Koran. As Islam makes no distinction between religion and life, Islamic law covers not only ritual but many aspects of life. It covers the totality of the religious, political and social, including private life and makes no distinction between sin and law. The Law of Sharia is binding to all believers of Islam (either living in Muslim or secular state) at all time.
Salafi	Means 'predecessors' or 'early generations', is a Sunni Islamic movement that takes the pious ancestors (Salf) of the patristic period of early Islam as exemplary models. Salafis view the first three generations of Muslims, who are Muhammad's companions, and the two succeeding generations after them, as examples of how Islam should be practiced.
Shafi'i	One of the four schools of fiqh, or religious law, within Sunni Islam. Named after its founder, Iman ash-Shaf'i, It emphasizes proper istinbaat (derivation of laws) through the rigorous application of legal principles as opposed to speculation or conjecture. It is considered one of the most conservative of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence.
Sunnah	The way of life prescribed as normative in Islam, based on the teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) and on the exegesis of the Koran. Also called hadith.
Syed	Arabic world literally means "leader" or simply 'mister.' An honorific title which evolved as a 'tradition' to denote the descendants of the Prophet's (s.a.a.w.) family through his grandsons, Imam Hassan and Imam Hussein (r.a). Although commonly used among Shias, Sunnis belonging to India, Pakistan and Afghanistan, users of this title take their lineage or blood line directly from the Prophet (s.a.a.w.).

Taliban	Persian word for students. The group originally consists of Afghan refugees who, during the Soviet invasion (1979-89), had fled their country for Pakistan, where they attended conservative Islamic religious schools. After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and amidst the unrest that ensued, the Taliban rose to prominence. They gained control of the nation region by region, eventually taking the capital Kabul in 1996.
Wajib	In the Hanafi school, this is an obligation which is almost *fard* (a religious duty/obligation), except that there is some margin of uncertainty, which may occur in the form of counter-evidence, which suggests non-obligatory nature of the deed, and the scholars have therefore refrained from pronouncing a decisive verdict of fard on it.
Wahhabism	A member of a Muslim sect founded by Abdul Wahhab (1703–1792), known for its strict observance of the Koran and flourishing mainly in Arabia.
Ummah	Arabic for community or nation. In Islam, it also mean the Diaspora or “Community of the Believers" and thus the entire Muslim World.
Umrah	A pilgrimage to Makkah in Saudi Arabia performed by Muslims that can be undertaken at any time of the year.

Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) said:

"Keep the names of prophets, the most desirable names by Allah are Abdullah and Abdur-Rahmaan..."[3]

"Allah will admit three people into Jannah by one arrow. The first one is the maker who makes it with the intention of reward; the second is the archer and the third is the person who gathers the arrows up (after the shooting)."[4]

3 Narrated by AbuWahb Al-Jushami in *Sunnan Abu Dawud*, Book 41: 4932.

4 Katih Abdullah Effendi and Mustafa Kani, *Sacred Archery: The Forty Prophetic Traditions* (Glastonbury: Himma Press, 2005).

BACKGROUND: A Personal Narrative

Men talking to men about men is common in Pakistan, though while the study of men has recently gained some interest, the examination of masculine representations in Islamic visual culture remains anaemic and stereotypical. Asking why a Muslim male artist is drawn to men or masculinity – a question I have been asked many times – can be problematic. Depending on who is asking, there are varied levels of curiosity marked by an overwhelming predisposition to infer that masculine identity (in this case, my own) is in crisis. My answer is that I am a man; I can only claim to know the male body, its gaze, desires, fears and triumphs, and can only navigate the world through my own body.

Even if my answer satisfies curiosity, it opens heated discussion about topics such as 'Islamist patriarchy', where Muslim masculinity focuses on suppressing the feminine and exerting dominance over Muslim women's bodies, gender inequality in Pakistan and the ways to dismantle it. Such questions lead to topics of imperialist feminism and white gaze, which bypass the fact that the visual representation of Islam is complex, polymorphous and geographically contextual. Furthermore, art criticism in Pakistan today is fascinated with examining the male body as 'hyper-masculine' or 'transgressed Other'. These male bodies, from the Western perspective, primarily equate to the 'Muslim male body'. That discussion concludes with an agreement that the construction of Muslim male identity is not fixed, and is inextricably intertwined in the context of social and cultural change. Similarly in urban Pakistan, the emergence of metrosexual men who are not embarrassed to be called sophisticated, sensitive, groomed and fashionable, claiming their heterosexuality while celebrating their feminine side, function as a counterpoint to hyper masculinities.

Today, the negative perceptions about the 'crisis of masculinity' in Islam are underpinned by familiar narratives about disaffected men who resort to becoming hyper-masculine, terrorists, fundamentalists, dictators and religious fanatics. Although such views stem from a particular reality, they are part of the stereotypical canon of reading Islamic manhood (and in this case Pakistani men) as toxic and misogynist, devoid of compassion, logic and gentleness. In the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre, Islamic masculinity in countries like Pakistani found itself in crisis; boys and men sought to restore historic ideals of pious masculinity, without being truly aware of the teachings of a 'balanced manhood' that is professed by such masculinity. However, it is to be noted that the masculinity subject remains myopic in the East and the West alike, operating on a ruptured scale that tips the balance toward hyper-masculinities that mask, exploit and even ridicule the gentle, compassionate, beautiful, forgiving and poetic notions of masculinity. Gender studies are still

often equated with women's studies. Western feminist tropes of brutal Muslim men who oppress Muslim women determine prevalent perceptions of why men would want to talk about other men and preserve their masculine identity (the fact that it is men talking about other men does not help). Such perceptions create a prism that filters art from Pakistan, limiting the usefulness of analyses of art and artists within the broader understanding of Islamic men and masculinity. This research has its roots in such polarising views, performances and visualisations of traditional and contemporary Islamic masculinities, which I have experienced and observed while living in Pakistan, the Middle East, the USA, and now Australia.

I discovered that other male artists in Pakistan shared many of my questions about masculinity, specifically Muslim masculinity. For example, are Western models for investigating Islamic masculinity adequate, or do they only provide an outsider's view that disregards local sensibilities? Are there existing tropes in Islamic theology, science and arts that can shed light on the current state of masculinity and its representation in contemporary art? And how has the explosion of Islamic masculinities been mythologised? Such questions reflect deeply on my art and my Master of Fine Arts research[5], where my desire to articulate Islamic masculinity beyond its stereotypes led me to Paulo Freire's idea of feminist praxis and the intersessions of reflection, theory and practice.[6] I came to realise that for perception of Islamic masculinity to change beyond its function as a tool of oppression and a subject to be repressed, Muslim men would have to engage with other men, identify gender balance, propagate the passionate and beautiful essence of Muslim men, share experiences, open up emotionally, and let go of the fear of being emasculated in the process. For Freire, the "reality which becomes oppressive results in the contradistinction of men as oppressors and oppressed."[7] The liberation of the oppressed can only succeed with the true solidarity of others who

> *acquire a critical awareness of oppression through the praxis of this struggle… Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.*[8]

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5 Syed Muhammad Iyhab Abdullah, "Buzzing: Post-9/11 Muslim Male Identity, Stereotypes, and Beehive Metaphors" (MFA Thesis, University of New South Wales, 2009).

6 Praxis oriented research involves the community or group in the research process and suggest that besides dialogues to gain knowledge of their social reality, the group must act together to transform their reality through further action and critical reflection. Praxis empower marginalised peoples and help them challenge their oppression.
William G. Tierney and Margaret W. Sallee, "Praxis," In The SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods, ed. Lisa M. Given (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008).

7 Paulo Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (Bloomsbury Academic: 30th Anniversary edition, New York, 2000), 51.

8 Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 51.

For many Pakistani artists, this reflection on the discourses around men, and the action to bring about change in masculinity, is similar to how women are tackling the issues pertinent to them. It is about sharing the gender burden and bringing focus to the balancing act of gender performance. Another important point of this investigation stems from my personal desire to make artworks that go beyond the masculine/feminine binary. To summarise, in order to transform masculinity it must be grounded in ourselves and begin from our own stories, leading me to this research, which weaves such praxes, reflections and stories.

The following reflections on my upbringing as a Muslim male are written to provide some insight into the origin of my art practice and research. Some of these philosophical, written and visual references are argued and even challenged in this research; the surfaces of these pages have been repeatedly drawn upon, contested and erased. From this, a practice as bricolage has emerged, as I mature both as an individual and as an artist.

The images and texts presented here include discussion of my previous self-portraits. Personal experiences do filter into my work, but only as a starting point for a challenging script that I, as an artist, choose to perform. During the course of this research, I have realised that self-performance and the use of my own face and body help me direct the narrative in an organic process. However, in some situations, specifically when the body is portrayed unclothed, the masculine image prescribed by traditional religious teachings has resulted in audiences reading the work under the guise of cultural stereotypes and prejudices. I recognise that this is beyond my control and I must take an account of the image as a visual mode of expression governed by its own signs and symbols, which cannot be overweighed by descriptive text. With such clarity, this research helps me to evolve, not only in my art practice but also the mode of thinking about the male body, its signs, symbols and performances, both in my work and in the work of other Pakistani artists.

I

I was born in 1974 in Karachi, Pakistan, to middle-class Sunni Muslim parents who had migrated from India. They left behind everything except their pride, which was marked with emotional scars and memories of their glorified lifestyle as *zamindar* (aristocracy).[9] They are also Syed (with lineage to the family of the Prophet), marking my family as noble. I later learned that cultural usage of the title Syed belongs to pre-Islamic traditions aimed at creating class distinction. Allah, in Qur'an, upholds equality and encourages piety and righteousness, which come from an individual's heart, mind and intention, not through one's family lineage.

In my family, art was only a subject in its colloquial use: as the proper use of the Urdu language, literature, poetry and an adherence to age-old Islamic and Indian cultural etiquettes, and was upheld as the distinction between man and animal. I was raised under notions of nobility and guidance but pride and ego also seeped in. As I grew older, I became aware of the need to balance one's masculine side with the feminine, and embraced the notion of the metro-sexual male. Such awareness fuelled my interest in art, poetry, literature and fashion, making me more introspective and sophisticated. As an adult acknowledging the past, I kept some notions unique to my family, which remained a positive influence in my life, and I moved away to follow my own path.

II

I was named Abdullah (or Abd-Allah), literally meaning 'servant or follower of Allah'. This name was the first indication of my role in Islamic society. 'Abdullah' is one of the most important given names in Islam, the others being Abdur-Rahman and Muhammad.[10] Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) also named one of his three sons Abd-Allah, who died in infancy.[11] Growing up, I learned to protect my name and to never let anyone shorten it or make fun of it.

III

My parents follow Hanafi ideas of Islam.[12] My father also shows influence of Wahhabi religious thinking and practice from his decade spent living in Saudi Arabia, and my mother has incorporated some concepts of Sufi thought. I came to appreciate both of my parents' religious ways and their value systems, but I find my mother's spiritual ways intriguing. I have never sought the Sufi path, though I believe my art embodies some of its visual and material

9 Zamindar, in the Indian subcontinent

10 "Keep the names of prophets, the most desirable names by Allah are Abdullah and Abdur-Rahmaan." *Sunnan Abu Dawud*, Book 41: 4932.

11 Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) had three sons: Abd-Allah ibn Muhammad, Qasim ibn Muhammad and Ibrahim ibn Muhammad; and four daughters: Ruqayyah bint Muhammad, Umm Kulthum bint Muhammad, Zainab bint Muhammad and Fatima Zahra.

12 A school of thought in Islam.

representation. Along the way, to help me articulate these ideas and visual language, I have been aided by experts and readings in Islamic spirituality and mysticism.

IV

I lived in a modest house in a densely populated area of Karachi, an urban landscape of graffiti, posters and a surfeit of noise. Later, I lived in drastically different surroundings in the flat and idyllic town of Edmond, Oklahoma, in the USA, where public walls are graffiti-free, houses are neatly aligned and freshly-mown grass medians run along organised driving lanes. Living and studying Western art and design history in the USA and later in Australia instilled my sense of grid-like precision, helping me structure my chaotic thinking and intuitive making processes. I see a push and pull in my work, which could be attributed to my state of being.

V

Besides the obligatory religious act of male circumcision after birth, from an early age, I started learning the recitation of the Qur'an. I was encouraged to fast and observe salat.[13] At home, I was given my own *taqiyah* (skull cap or topi) and prayer rug, and started going to the local Masjid (mosque) for *Jumma*.[14] In many ways, similar to other boys around me, I went through all the general training in preparation for *balaghat* (puberty), the reaching of sexual maturity at mosque and home. Because Islam does not specify and encourage a specific coming of age ritual, the preparatory acts work as rites of passages and only a handful are celebrated. For the most part, knowledge about sex and male sexual desires are not fully explained, and the topic is skimmed over by encouragement toward lawful marriage at an early age.

At *da'wa* (post-prayer gatherings) I was introduced to the idea that a practicing Muslim male should emulate the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) in every aspect of his life, both in deed and in appearance, though it is beyond one's capacity to draw or imagine his appearance.[15] I was also taught that whoever recites *Durood* abundantly will be blessed by seeing the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) in his or her dreams. Out of respect, I was not interested in drawing his image, but have profusely recited Durood so I can see him. My deeds met only with halos or strands of swirling light, or in other words, empty spaces. Interestingly, beyond the general rhetoric of this 'obligatory emulation', no in-depth details were shared or taught.

Although Islam professes repetition in learning (*masqh)*, it also encourages dialogue and questioning in every area of life, which to me is the essence of Prophet Muhammad's

13 There is an obligatory fast during the month of Ramadan.

14 Jumma is the seventh day in the Islamic weekly calendar. It is typically considered a day of rest and of assembly. A communal afternoon Jumma sermon and prayer is held in the mosque. Both men and women attend this sermon. Attending the sermon and prayer is obligatory for all adult Muslim men.

15 Some of the examples of Prophet Muhammad's emulation are: wearing a turban or head covering such as skull-cap, growing and grooming a beard, wearing simple clothes, applying perfume and keeping high standards of hygiene.

(s.a.a.w.) teachings. As such, I soon began to find these sittings to be arenas of complacency, and such practices to be without forward vision or creativity. I required more, which pushed me to leave the gatherings. This erasure of uniform ideas and the search for clarity of faith was not an easy process as the mind and heart engaged in constant struggle. Later, becoming an artist also made this problematic, but it revealed the contradictory, stereotyped, uninformed and uncontested knowledge of a culture where Islam is reduced to dogmatic beliefs and the hypocritical explanations of misinterpreted teachings of the 'glorified' Islamic past.

VI

My interest in repetition, patterning and doubling can be traced back to my early experiences of travel. For more than a decade, we lived between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, where my father was stationed working for an airline. I had two of everything: two homes, two wardrobes, even two sets of friends. I was living and dealing in two cultures, a theme that has continued in my life as a Pakistani diaspora in the west subsequently informs my art practice.

VII

During my studies, my admiration of the Prophets and saints, and the sacrifices of national and political figures formed a concept of 'heroes' that remains present today. Ideas of national heroes and soldiers were problematised by the news media, who portrayed them as pious martyrs, including General Zia-ul-Haq (1924–1988)[16], who was killed in a plane crash. We all watched the aftermath of the event on TV and my mother sobbed, not for the 'political tyrant' that Zia is now known as, but for the 'religious Muslim man' who was an affectionate father.

I was not convinced about Zia as a religious leader. He adapted Wahhabism to implement Islamisation in Pakistan. This adaptation was a somewhat mild form of the strict reading of Wahhabi shari'a (religious law), for example, Zia himself never kept a full beard (mandatory under shari'a), nor did he wear Arab religious attire or even a *taqiyah* or Jinnah cap. He did, however, revive the traditional *sharwani* and *shalwar kameez* and Jinnah cap as state leadership attire and as uniform for government schools. I wore such a uniform throughout my school years. Zia didn't enforce the *burqa*, and his wife never appeared in one publicly, but he did support wearing a chador or *dupatta* over the head as a form of veil. Segregation of men and women was implemented in public gatherings and media services were monitored. Those who opposed were jailed or received public corporal punishment. And yet, for many, Zia's era was one of the most stable periods for Pakistan, where the State maintained a semblance of peace, order and economic stability.

16 General Zia-ul-Haq was the sixth President of Pakistan, who seized office in a 1977 coup, imposed marshal law, and executed Prime Minister Bhutto in 1979. He remains a polarising figure in Pakistan's history, credited by some for preventing wider Soviet incursions in the region as well as for economic prosperity, but decried for weakening democratic institutions and passing laws that encouraged Islamist fundamentalism.

With the rise of Benazir Bhutto in 1988 after Zia, the goal of democracy seemed attainable in Pakistan. This positive political scene, however, was soon became a centre of nepotism and political and sectarian zealotry. Furthermore, the emergence of new political parties and their subsequent violent clashes claimed the lives of many innocent young boys and men. Curfews, armed conflicts and gun-firing in the streets of Karachi became rampant. I lost a friend, the fast bowler of our cricket team, who at sixteen was victim to a stray bullet.

VIII

As a teenager in the 1990s I supported a student political party. Despite my mother's disapproval, I participated in a few rallies, displayed the party badge on my chest, sang party songs on election nights and shouted slogans in protest. Increasingly, I developed ethical concerns over the growing politics of fear and violence and stopped participating. Furthermore realising that I am not a macho guy who lets his presence known physically and vocally, I talked my way out of political confrontation and combative situations. I did, however, identify the 'activist' in me with ideas, words and marks. This balancing act of active and passive 'masculine' power is a strategy I employ in this research.

IX

Despite being an admirer of Western rationality and freedom of expression, my father's notion of the ideal man is based on the hegemonic Islamic perception of men. He was concerned about how a man should act and admonished me for my self-absorbed narcissism. On closer inspection, I found my narcissism and somewhat mildly stoic and dry humour to be a reflection of his own. In contrast, my mother is a strong and practical woman who devoted her life and career to raising children and building the household. She is a perfectionist and a master of all crafts. Nowadays, I look and speak like my father with his appreciation of beauty, his vanity and heart, whereas I have the focused analytical mind and artistic passion of my mother.[17] Together, they are *libaas* (clothing) for each other and my initial 'gender performance' ideals.

X

As I grew older, I discovered that in Pakistan, Islam's admonishing of men and women for performing each other's gender roles does not operate in a strict manner.[18] For example, in

17 I was raised with the Islamic idea that both mother and father hold equal standing. For example, the Qur'an says: "Worship God and join not any partners with Him; and be kind to your parents..." (Al Qur'an, Surah an-Nisa Chapter 4, Ayat 36). But I had also been told that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.), who was an orphan, said: "Paradise lies under the feet of your mother." (Nisai). This hadith was etched in my mind as an easy way to go to Paradise. To achieve this, for example, at a young age, I would massage my mother's feet until she fell asleep or until I was exhausted.

18 Narrated Ibn 'Abbas: "The Prophet cursed effeminate men [those men who are in the similitude (deliberately assume the manners of women] and those women who assume the manners of men, and he said, 'Turn them out of your houses.' The Prophet turned out such-and-such man, and 'Umar turned out such-and-such woman." *Sahīh Bukhari*, Volume 7, Book 72, Hadith No. 773.

social and cultural settings there are common transgressions, such as when men who sell women's clothing will wrap it around themselves as a demonstration for sale. Similarly, while dancing and wearing bright colours are acceptable on happy occasions like weddings, their excessive use in everyday situations underlines the effeminate behaviour of a '*hijra*' – the eunuch. The exposure to such occasions constituted my early understanding of how culture influences the performativity of gender. It was fascinating to discover that the warm yellows and reds deeply embedded in Pakistani culture are gender fluid.

XI

In Pakistan, homosexuality and homophobia exist, but are not spoken about or acknowledged. Homosexuality is primarily quoted as the 'act of Sodom' from the story of Prophet Lūt (r.a.) and is occasionally mentioned in sermons as a transgression of masculinity. Although some profanities, slurs and jokes exist in Urdu that would qualify as homophobic, the majority of colloquial jibes refer to a man's relation to women in his family. It all starts in the neighborhood, playground, park, mosque and school when a boy is young. Those boys who demonstrate 'stereotypical' feminine traits and interests are ridiculed with comments that allude to being a wuss, wimp, weakling or girl. During my time at an all-boys government high school, I faced such comments among friends due to the fact that I hit puberty late. I was short, thin, with a squeaky voice, and hardly any facial hair until I turned sixteen. Although I wanted to grow up fast, I never resorted to fighting or profanity to stop the bullying, and brushed off the jokes. I was taught not to fight and use any type of profanity (something I still abide by) and to avoid insulting others based on gender, appearance, caste, colour and race. Furthermore, teachings of tolerance in my family further sheltered me from developing homophobic attitudes that existed in the public sphere but were neither explicitly verbalised nor demonstrated.

It was only on arriving in the USA that I learned that close physical contact like hugging and holding hands with male friends (which is common in Pakistan as camaraderie) was deemed to signify homosexuality. As I was not fluent in the language and unaware of American cultural biases towards gender and religious minorities, I faced ridicule and on a few occasions was pushed to defend my masculinity; it was high school all over again. My general naivety and traditional Islamic views on physical contact with the opposite gender complicated matters, as I was unable to provide evidence to the contrary and validate my masculinity. Unsettled by this reading of my behaviour, homophobic views began to take root. Later when I visited Pakistan, I offended male friends by refusing to hug them and by brushing off their arms from around my shoulders. Subsequently, I had come face to face with the West's compartmentalising of gender performativity, prejudice, and my own cultural beliefs of patriarchy and piety. I checked myself, recognising that there are parts of Islamic faith that I

will neither reject nor defend on a humanistic level, while allowing myself to rise above cultural, political and religious stereotypes. However, such ideal thinking also poses challenges to my own identity, both in the West and in Pakistan, as I objectively argue pre- and post 9/11 Islamic masculinities of orientalism, despotism and fundamentalism through my art.

XII

Soon after I left for the USA and joined art school, I truly come face-to-face with my conservative religious and cultural practices and progressive thinking. One particularly challenging notion was that the artist as idol maker is punishable in orthodox readings of Islam. This reading stems from two primary beliefs: 1. Islam discourages revealing, seeing and drawing nude bodies; and 2. Aniconism in Islam prohibits the representation of living beings, either drawn or as idols. This second point is based on the belief that the creation of living forms is unique to God. I grew up drawing cartoon figures, but when I began to draw portraits

Figure 1: *'Priest King' or Seated male sculpture Mohenjo-daro*. ca.2200–1900 BC. The excavated male sculpture is considered the first male body representation in historical Pakistani art. Photo: Harappa.com

Figure 2: Syed M I, Abdullah. 1996. Working on my first figurative sculpture, a large replica of the Priest King, which I destroyed once completed: Edmond, University of Central Oklahoma. Photo: George Tomic. Image: courtesy the artist.

of people and national heroes, I was reminded through a Hadith (traditions of the Prophet) that an artist who draws or sculpts figures will be challenged to 'breathe life' into their creations and

threatened with punishment on the Day of Judgment. Although I was simply warned when drawing portraits not to fully complete my creations to a point of resemblance, it was for creating sculptures of human and animal forms that I was strictly admonished. I was told the story of Prophet Ibrahim (r.a.) and the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) and how they broke the idols in the Ka'aba. This remained with me when I made a large clay replica of an ancient priest figure [Fig. 1, p. 10] that was excavated in Pakistan[19] as a requirement of a foundation course in my at art school. Once completed, a class fellow asked if it was a Hindu Idol or God [Fig. 2, p. 10], and a sudden fear and guilt overtook me. I took a hammer and shattered my first and last figurative sculpture. I immediately felt pride and accomplishment for a duty that, as a pious youth, I was destined to do. However, my professor saved a piece for the class demonstration. I turned twenty-one that year.

Soon I began to feel loss and knew that my reaction was simplistic, as I had never intended to make that sculpture for idol worship, and in Islam, true intention is the first step of repentance and forgiveness. But I was not ready to let my beliefs go despite my quest for answers, and further refused to draw nudes in life drawing course, substituting them with the 'lesser sin' of portraiture. Such substitutions not only pushed me to explore different drawing traditions, methods and mark making techniques, but also resulted from my earlier quest to understand Islamic art beyond stereotypical views. Looking back now in the light of post-9/11 events, the act of shattering my own creation was one of the most troubled and horrific acts of religious violence I have ever committed. In this act I was no different to Taliban, who destroyed the *Buddha of Bamiyan* sculpture in Afghanistan in 2001, labelling it a protest of US occupation in Afghanistan and a religious decree grounded on Aniconism in Islam.[20]

XIII

I have never specifically considered myself a political artist, however, I believe in a 'poetic activism' or as I coined it in Urdu '*manzoom muzahamat'* in which love, vulnerabilities, and emotions carry much significance in seeking, maintaining and disseminating the truth. This started with the negative post-9/11 state of Islam and Muslim men in America. Once I returned home, my work increasingly inhabited and subverted social, political, cultural, and religious power structures, in an attempt to critique and influence them. I faced criticism for being an 'outsider', since I had studied art in the West and had neither an association with Pakistani art institutions nor did I have a local artist as my master or mentor.

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19 The one identity of Pakistan that is hardy discussed and promoted, especially in the western media is its past culture and identity as the valley of the River Indus and the Indus Valley Civilization (c.2500 BC). Even today, ancient tribes of the River Indus, Mohanas, live on the Indus and use some of the oldest signs and symbols in their daily vernacular.

20 Barbara Crossette, "Taliban Explains Buddha Demolition," *New York Times*, March 19, 2001 (accessed June 10, 2011) http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/19/world/19TALI.html

My first video installation, *Subliminal Voids*, 2004 [Fig. 3], combined sculpture and the human body in video. It stemmed from my early understanding of representing the human body and creating sculptures that are not antithetical to Islamic teachings. Although appreciated for its multi-media installation and video format, this was the second time my work was referred to as a new import of Western language, devoid of hands on craft and 'local' soul. The first was in 2000, when I tried to launch my career as an artist in Pakistan and brought an exhibition from the USA that argued the issues of Muslim Pakistani women that I encountered in the Western media. I was clearly blinded by own my 'white gaze' and 'Imperialistic mindset' when looking at those 'realities' of Islam, which were based on stereotypes and Western obsessions with the veil, hijab, burqa, beard, and turban.

Figure 3: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2004. *The Subliminal Voids*. Performance video: Karachi, V. M. Art Gallery. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Ironically, initial readings of my work in the West were also problematic. Despite the fact that my primary art education was in the West and the work operated under Western, Islamic and Pakistani art canons, my work was generally referred to as an expression of the colonial and exotic. This first became apparent to me in the USA when I won an installation prize for my work *Discourse within Discourse: The Circle*, 2003 [Figs. 4a-b, p. 13].[21] Due to the post-9/11 focus on my identity as a Muslim Pakistani man I felt like an outsider. Upon

21 I used spices and traditional Pakistani zardozi embroidery threads to create an installation. Despite the fact that this work was about fragility, the suspension of belief that unity in diversity defines the USA, and seeks to engage multiple senses of sight, smell and touch, I encountered questions that clearly bypass Imperialism to focus on the use of 'exotic' materials and their 'eastern visual vocabulary' under canons of Colonialism and Post Colonial identity constructs. Comments about the colourful spice circle as 'feminine' and hanging spices as 'masculine' also took me by surprise. I was not fully aware of the context of such reading and labelling and was puzzled.

making myself aware of the context of such labelling, I gradually realised that rather than defending myself, I should acknowledge the fact that my identity is tied to Pakistan.

Figure 4a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *Discourse within Discourse: The Circle. Installation*. 7 spices, spice dyed cheese cloth, gold thread & gold leaf: Oklahoma City, IAO Gallery. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4b: *Discourse within Discourse: The Circle*. Detail.

XIV

This was also the time when I asked myself what draws Pakistani artists – including myself – to the political realm? I recognise that I live in a political environment that I cannot escape; either I let it suffocate me or I can free myself and learn to harness its potential. I further internalised this idea and formulated that instead of the post-modern condition that stipulates 'I' and 'me' and the artist as activist, I should look towards 'us', where collaboration and understanding comes forth. As an artist of diaspora (first in the USA and now in Australia), it is the rupture between cultures that forms my unique identity and allows me to have a voice.

Incidentally, works such as *Born to Be*, 2007 [Fig. 5, p. 14] dealt with issues that were then at the forefront of national and international political discourse.[22] Such projects formed the

22 *Born to Be* (2007) [Fig. 5. p. 14]. I examined nationalism, hybrid identities, and the politics of Muslim male identity in relation to my diasporic identity. I questioned the future impact of General Pervez Musharraf's power and desire to wear both military and civilian uniform. He had taken over the government through a military coup, similar to General Zia, but this time incarcerating the Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on charges of corruption rather than sentencing him to death. General Musharraf, working under the guise of democracy rather than Islamisation, amended the constitution to hold the civilian position of President, while he also retained his military status. His quest to bring democracy and modernisation under his illegitimate mish-mash rule of 'civil-military' provoked a

grounding of this research. For these projects, I specifically kept a beard, grooming and dressing myself under orthodox Islamist views on male appearance.[23] The photographic portrait of General Zia-ul-Haq (Fig. 6) allowed me to resemble a series of political portraits and speak about stereotyping, camouflaging and the politics of identity. It was suggested that I remove this portrait from the exhibition prior to its opening. This reaction was surprising and despite my argument that I was looking objectively at the timeline of Pakistani identity politics, I was left with no choice but to remove it from the show. Upon further analysis, I realised that in doing so they denied themselves and the artist a chance to open a debate about the masculine identity crisis in Pakistan in the twenty-first century.

Figure 5: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2007. *Born to Be series*. Lambda metallic print on aluminum: Karachi: V M Art gallery. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 6: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2006. *Camouflage: I-Con I, Self-portrait as General Zia*. Digital print with camouflage fabric: Karachi: V M Art gallery. Photo: courtesy the artist.

This project led me to expand the narrative to include my position as a Muslim in historical and current Western narratives. I employed the same strategy, undergoing a transformation of religious identities in a global narrative both pre- and post-9/11, resulting in the photographic series *Buzzing,* 2009 [Fig. 7, p. 15].[24] The project met with mixed and diverse

serious discussion of wardi (dress code for his presidency). *Born to Be* received critical acclaim both for its originality of concept, execution, and most importantly my transformation and performance.

23 These teachings are based on Sunnah, the examples of Prophet Muhammad's own practice and teachings.

24 *Buzzing* [Fig. 7, p. 15] focuses on how changes in appearance have been used to stereotype Muslims historically. The research explained myths surrounding Muslim cultural and religious practices in relation to the traditional appearance and performances of Muslim males, specifically focusing on the beard, religious attire and prayer. I investigated the prevailing Orientalist Muslim identity of a despot and the making of a post-9/11 Muslim identity as jihadi, martyr and terrorist, by using the binary nature of beehive metaphors, as well as propaganda about the West's Crusade and Islam's Jihad. This culminated in artworks comprising self-

responses. In Australia, viewers saw the Muslim male body from ‘exotic’, ‘orientalist’ and ‘terrorist’ standpoints, whereas in Pakistan, audiences seemed to identify the images as somewhere between Muslim male stereotyping and masculine performance ambiguity.

Figure 7: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2009. *I am Fun-dada-men-talist – I*. Metallic Lambda on aluminium and acrylic: Karachi, V. M. Art gallery. Photo: Caterina Pacialeo.

Figure 8a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2009. *Untitled*. Metallic Lambda with acrylic: Sydney, Kudos gallery. Photo: Anwar Malik.

Figure 8b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2009. *Self Portrait after Saddeqain - the Holy Sinner*. Metallic Lambda with acrylic: Karachi, Goethe Institute. Photo: Anwar Malik.

Buzzing also brought focus to my unpublished project, *The Vision of The Rose* (2006–present) which focuses on my interest in the process of spiritual transformation in relation to the crisis of Islamic masculinity. The work aims to scrutinise torture, betrayal and the promise of rebirth as strategies of gaining religious and political power.

It was at this time that I became aware of jalāl and jamāl, the Islamic archetypes of balanced masculine identity. I began to reference Qur’anic and Biblical verse in the production of performances, photographs and drawings. I also made reference to Pakistani artist Saddeqain’s self-portrait in a Christ-like pose (Figs. 8a-b), arguing that his works, like my own appropriation, were not gestures of arrogance or blasphemy but a way of spiritual awakening, recognising that Allah created man in His own image and that artistic talent derives from Him. The theoretical and visual elements of this investigation have been reworked in the present research in order to view the continuity of ideas and assess changes in my own art practice.

Besides masculinity and male body representation, the content of my previous research was descriptive. Their outcomes inform aspects of this research, which aims at examining the compounded variables of potential cultural clashes, religious conflicts, and political actions.

portraiture, sculpture, print, drawing and installation. These works express layers of interpretation in the clash of international political entities alongside the cultural contestations and religious belief systems within Muslim culture.

XV

It is now apparent to me that context, audience and location all need to be carefully argued in this research, especially when I choose to focus on representations of Islamic masculinity through performances with my own body. As an artist who lives between cultures, I feel that this thesis refines my ideas in a language that allows sophisticated and poetic entry points through which to engage with the work, constructing various readings. However, I believe that in the end the work speaks with its aesthetic language. Re-contextualisation and appropriation, when combined with editing and refinement, are keys to establishing a strong context by way of communication. I want my audience to see, stop, inspect and engage. In this process, nothing would be better than if my work can connect with global history and sites in some way.

This research also makes reference to my interest and understanding of Western art history: Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades; Sol LeWitt's conceptual mysticism; Eva Hess' humanised minimalism; Malevich's and Mondrian's infinite grids; Josef Albers' coloured squares; Jasper Johns' use of text, layering and the target; John Cage's theatre pieces and compositions; Joseph Beuys' use of organic materials and body performances; Anish Kapoor's sculptures of metaphysical dualities, James Turrel's sublime light installations, and Matthew Barney's self-imposed resistance aesthetics. It also adopts the elegance of Islamic design and calligraphy, and the sensibility of Persian and Mughal miniature paintings, whose story-telling is essential to my art practice. My ongoing research on Pakistani crafts and folk-arts, such as currency garlands, rug weaving, embroidery, hand metal beating, and *chamak patti* sticker work in Truck Art, provides incredible technical and visual recourses for this research.

INTRODUCTION

The first potential archetype for a unified Pakistani masculine identity was portrayed by Pakistan's founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948). Jinnah is one of the most commonly encountered male figures in Pakistan, since his portrait adorns national currency, the walls of government offices and schools, and is replayed in the media. A 'gentle man' and a lawyer with strong political opinions, Jinnah's life has become a focal point for arguments over whether he envisioned Pakistan to be a secular or Islamic state. Jinnah actively participated in directing the Muslim League political party to embrace *pirs* (spiritual teachers) and *ulema* (religious scholars) as a means to mobilise the different ethnic and linguistic groups in Pakistan. His acknowledgment of local sensibilities was made apparent when he replaced his English hat with a *qaraquli topi*, and shed his suit for *sherwani*.[25] Recently, such political correctness was repeated when new currency designs were circulated showing Jinnah wearing sherwani instead of a suit, intending to give him a more 'local' and 'Islamic' appearance. From its inception there have been competing influences in Pakistani identity: Islam and Western liberalism.[26]

Today, in Pakistan the religious practices of masculine identity are increasingly viewed as sacred, and thus not easily contested. The historical masculinity of Islam's prophets, caliphs, imams, Sufi saints and famous martyrs have become prescribed and instructive ideals. In Pakistan, as across the Muslim world, there is a hegemonic version of masculinity, derived through literal, narrow and contrasting reading of the Qur'an, the primary source of Islamic knowledge. This version of masculinity reflects itself in religion, politics and everyday life, shaping how Muslim male identity is to be performed, and impacting on the fine arts and visual culture by determining how it is to be represented. This hegemonic masculinity, however, does not encompass the full reality of what it means to be a Muslim man or the potentialities for performing and representing gender. That potential performance is the subject of this thesis, and my artistic practice.

This research aims to understand the symbolic representation of Islamic masculinity in contemporary Pakistani art, and to promote an expansion of the ways masculine identities are performed. I concurrently explore masculinity through my own art practice and through my study of other artists and traditions of visual culture. The research brings attention to the sharp disconnect between international (primarily Western) perceptions of Pakistani men and their

25 Typically a black body-fitting long coat, similar to Achkan or doublet.
Jane Perlez, "Portrait of Jinnah," *Granta* (2010): 57–67.

26 Syed Muhammad Iyhab Abdullah, "Ruptured Masculinities: Male Body in Popular Poster Art, Intersections and Counterpoints", in *Proceedings of the Impact 7 International Multi-Disciplinary Printmaking Conference*, 27 – 30 September 2011, Monash University (2013), 453–459.

Figs 9a-f: A Day in the Sunday Bazar and the Empress Market in Karachi, Pakistan.

a. A flute maker and a Sindhi Pakistani man, one is performing to sell and the other to pass time and demonstrate his artistic talent.

c. Men holding hands is not a controversial gesture, widely accepted as a gesture of friendship and brotherly bond.

d. Large compartments on public transport are 'Men Only'.

b. The Umbrella Man selling hair oil and *Etar* (perfume), hair loss and beauty product for men.

e. Street Sex Guru, teaching young men about virility and selling homemade remedies for stamina and impotence.

f. Mahzoob on street, self-involved with his own spirituality.

own lived reality. The results therefore have bearing on how Pakistani men see themselves, how Westerners see the 'threat' of Islamic and Pakistani masculinity, and how artists might begin to redefine challenging and somewhat precarious concepts of gender. Politics and religion play important roles in this research. When living in a charged political and religious environment like Pakistan, they are an inescapable daily reality. Pakistan, as a nation, was formed on religious grounds in 1947 after its partition from India. At the core of the new country's ambitions was modernising Islam, but gender theorist Durre S. Ahmed argues that in actuality this has resulted in a "masculinisation" of Islam.[27] From 1978 to 1988, Pakistan was ruled under the dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq. During this period, Pakistan's modernising aims were reconstituted as a desire to historicise masculinity. This period is pivotal in that it drove a wedge between the masculine and the feminine in Pakistan; it instilled in the Muslim male a growing fear of the feminine, and consequently 'Islam's "feminine" dimension has been suppressed.'[28]

The suppression of women and fear of the feminine has produced an absence of female bodies in Pakistan's public spaces. The public realm is instead populated by men performatively asserting their masculinity, whether this is exposure of the body through ritual washing, public protest, celebratory dances, or the flagellation and drawing of blood in Shia mourning. But while masculinity is being performed in the streets, these same bodies, as Christine Bruckbauer notes, have largely been absent from Pakistan's visual arts.[29]

For Muslim artists, the body, when in a religious context, is a contested issue, as I myself have experienced. In my MFA photographic series *Buzzing*[30], I presented a series of images of Muslim men [Figs. 10 -13, p. 20]: an orientalist despot with a naked torso and a rose as a mouth plug and white Muslim scull cap; a young man in prayer, groomed according to Islamic guidelines with a beeswax beard; a terrorist with honey-coated blades for a beard and a rose in the mouth; and a spiritual man with bronze case beard wearing a Sufi whirling dervishes' inspired garb, ready to perform the *Sama* dance.[31] I posed for all the photographs. The rose and honey are used to bring exoticism with reference to Orientalism, whereas the frontal eye level photography allows direct gaze, a way to dilute the passive and active relationship between portrait and viewer. Furthermore, the resulting half-portraits suggests at least the potential of a

27 Durre S. Ahmed, "Spirituality: a psychological view of 'low' fundamentalism," in *Islamic Masculinities*, ed. Lahoucine Ouzgane (London: Palgrave, 2006), 21.

28 Durre S. Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality: a psychological view of 'low' fundamentalism," in Islamic Masculinities, ed. Lahoucine Ouzgane (London: Palgrave, 2006), 18.

29 Christine Bruckbauer, "Body Imaging in Pakistan: Circumnavigating the Obstacles," in *Beyond Borders: Art of Pakistan* (Mumbai: National Gallery of Modern Art: 2005), 40.

30 First presented in Sydney at Kudos Gallery, 2009, and then at V M Art Gallery, Karachi in 2011.

31 Sama means 'listening', while dhikr means 'remembrance'. Originated among Sufis and performed as dhikr by Sufi Dervishes, a Sama ceremony involves whirling (or spinning) and is a form of physically active meditation.

fully nude figure. In Australia, viewers saw the images from an 'exotic' and 'orientalist' standpoint, and wanted to know more about my views as a Muslim male as *Other*.

Figure 10: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2009. *I am not the Lawrence*. Metallic Lambda on aluminium and acrylic. 25.5 x 38 cm: Photo: Caterina Pacialeo and the artist.

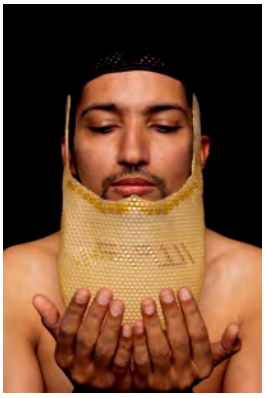

Figure 11: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2009. *I am what Allah wants me to be*. Metallic Lambda on aluminium and acrylic. 25.5 x 38 cm: Photo: Caterina Pacialeo and the artist.

Figure 12: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2009. *I am Fun-dada-mentalist – II*. Metallic Lambda on aluminium and acrylic, 25.5 x 38 cm: Photo: Farah Mahbub and the artist.

Figure 13: Syed M I, Abdullah, 2009. *I am the bee, I am the hive –I*. Metallic Lambda on aluminium and acrylic. 25.5 x 38 cm: Photo: Farah Mahbub and the artist.

Though in Pakistan, the viewer's gaze quickly turned to confusion and even repulsion. The project met with mixed responses. Some commended my approach to comparative study where the semi-nude male body and its grooming create a heightened sense of beauty that makes palatable the serious subject of stereotyping Muslim males as terrorists and suicide bombers. However, the same identifiers became a point of criticism, as many were unable to go beyond the idea that I either glorified terrorists as martyrs, or resurrected a sexualised and submissive rather 'exotic' Orientalist male identity. Furthermore, my Sufi persona was questioned as an assimilation of spiritual practice without true understanding or 'affiliation' with its spiritual teachings. Upon further enquiry to such responses, many Pakistani viewers saw the heavily groomed semi-nude as sexual and the religious overtones (specifically references to pious Muslim masculinities and their representation) as offensive. For some viewers, the framing of my bare chested portraits was suggestive of full nudes. The Pakistani viewers were also unable to separate me from the presented 'orientalist' and post-9/11 artistic personas. Furthermore, my spiritual take on the work was seen as merely a Western tool to counter political extremism and religious fundamentalists. A student observed that because I had chosen to model for the work, it must be a projection of my own personal identity. A fellow photographer commented that this was my greatest mistake and that I should have masked my identity. The gallery received complaints and hence the show remains largely unpublished and critiqued.[32] The only interest was from a young collector who acquired the prints, though he informed me that photographic

32 I did not fully comprehend the severity of the matter until I received a 'hate email' that said "an empty mind is house of devil - your mind is full of garbage," Email received February 2010. [Appendix A. p. 286]

self-portraits, and nude male bodies in general, are challenging to collect in Pakistan; they are hardly for display, and will remain hidden in storage. Another point of departure is that the appointed writer for the catalogue excused herself a few moths prior to the show sighting religious and creative differences without explicitly detailing her response. I also learned from the gallery, and later from my students and fellow artists, that most viewers would not engage with the work, suggesting an identity and gender crisis that they potentially disapproved of and were ashamed to question or discuss. Other male artists in Pakistan have gone though similar experiences and have had to defend their own masculine identity as a result of using a nude male body. Photography and performance appears to be particularly confronting for Pakistani audiences. By comparison, painting, drawing and even sculpture are considered 'illusions' of the real, giving artists greater liberty to transgress through these mediums without backlash.

These reactions are based on the dominant version of Islamic masculinity promoted in Pakistan, a masculinity that is the legacy of Zia's regime. But the matter is further complicated by Islamic religious attitudes towards figurative work. To clarify, Qur'an does not explicitly prohibit depictions of human figures, but it does discourage them in that it explicitly condemns idolatry. I argue that this position has contributed to the development of abstraction in Islamic visual culture, leading artists to see figurative work as exotic, subversive and challenging.

Despite the problematic nature of the figure in Pakistani art, there have always been venues for portraying figures in the decorative arts and visual culture, particularly portrayals of the pious masculinity of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.). Despite Pakistan's doctrinaire policies and fundamentalist regimes, no ordinance has managed to completely succeed in banning the figure from art. Official portraits of government officials remain unchallenged and even celebrated under state patronage, and some figurative artists (including some who draw or paint male nudes such as *Saddeqain*) are even commended for their fine draftsmanship and masterful strokes. Painting nudes is still not an official subject in Pakistan's art schools, however bare skin has always been painted, desired but subjected to censorship.[33] I argue that the problem is not figural representation but that the body has become a contested and uncertain territory. The body has gradually become more politicised, making it problematic and somewhat precarious for artists to approach out of anxiety that their own intentions be misconstrued, as mine were in *Buzzing*. Male bodies of a certain type permeate Pakistani space and visual culture, but in the fine arts they largely remain hidden and unaddressed.

After Zia's regime, Pakistani artists felt an urgency to address the absence of the body.[34] The body emerged as "a site of intellectual, physical, and psychological expression."[35]

33 Salima Hashmi, "You've Come a Long Way," in *Beyond Borders: Art of Pakistan* (Mumbai: National Gallery of Modern Art: 2005), 30-35.

34 Hashmi, "You've Come a Long Way," 32-33.

However, it was primarily a site for demystifying female body taboos (read, the nude female figure). The female body was simultaneously exoticised and challenged through feminist discourse, focusing on its representation under patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. Salima Hashmi called this phase the "battle for the control of the body" in which "male gaze was confronted."[36]

Through the strong feminist voices of women who led both professional and academic art institutions, male body representation was pushed under the spell of women's gaze. The male body, nude or otherwise, remained a subtext, and the art world became more interested in seeing it through phallic props such as missiles, fighter places and swords, which are erected as signs of power. Male and female bodies were once a hallmark of Persian and Mughal art, but today Pakistani artists seem to prefer to witness the male body through external signs, such as the beard, hair, garments like the skull-cap, veil and burqa.[37] The male body has been externalised and captured in objects. Although men continue to perform their masculine dominance in the public realm, the performance of the male body in Pakistani art is largely unexplored. This gap is made all the more important by the post 9/11 wave of suicide bombings, which instils a new form of 'exploding' male bodies that grotesquely inspires artists to investigate them as 'aesthetics of terror'.[38] This opens a space to understand how terror has impacted both their lives and their art.

The end of Zia's regime also prompted calls for a return to policies of modernisation, however Zia's Islamisation had already become a slingshot for Islamist militancy, through fundamentalist organisations such as the Laksrah-e-Tayaba. During this period, the efforts to masculinise Islam were expanded, further rupturing gender identities and producing today's militarised hegemonic masculine culture. This trajectory led to the 2001 destruction of the World Trade Centre in what was a nihilistic, performative act of terrorism by Muslim men, bringing a crisis that had been internal to Islam into direct confrontation with the West.

This confrontation continues and today we are seeing Islam's hegemonic masculinity in conflict with the West over the figurative representation of Islam's primary pious figures. While such portrayals have always been frowned upon, they were still accepted. It was Salman Rushdi's demonic portrayal of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) in *The Satanic Verses* (1988) that arguably changed this in the same year that Zia's rule ended. The entire Rushdi affair soon

35 Nazish Utta-ulah, "Conflicts and Resolution in the Narratives," in *Hanging Fire: Contemporary Art from Pakistan*, ed. Salima Hashmi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 51.

36 Salima Hashmi, "You've Come a Long Way," 33.

37 Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical roots of a Modern Debate* (New York: Yale University Press,1992).

38 Manon Slome and Joshua Simon, eds., *The Aesthetics of Terror* (Milan: Charta, 2009), 38.
Also see: Riazat Butt, "All the Rage – Victim of US Blogger's Cartoon Hits Back," *The Guardian*, July 23, 2007, (accessed March 21, 2013) http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jul/23/india.digitalmedia

become less a dispute of theological blasphemy than an opportunity to exert political leverage by many Islamic states, primarily Iran and Pakistan. A fatwa, first initiated in Iran, was issued against Rushdi, and over time the portrayal of the Prophet has became increasingly viewed as blasphemous, and is marked with execution in several Islamic countries including Pakistan. This matter of representing Islam's ideal figure of masculinity has more recently proven its volatility through cartoons of Muhammad in *Jyllands-Posten* in 2006, and *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015. What these examples show is the escalation of a crisis of Muslim masculinity, its performance, and its representation, where blasphemy is increasingly used by the West as a means to insult and demonise Islam to hold 'Imperial and Colonial supremacy' or by the Islamic States to preserve dominant masculine identity.

In *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, Amanullah De Sondy unpacked the notion of 'masculinity crisis' through the Western masculinity crisis that appeared in the 1990s as a result of feminism, where disregard for the old certainties about masculinity led to men asking what it is to be a *real man*?[39] When viewed in this light, the Islamic masculinity crisis is somewhat an extension of this confusion, produced through internal religious conflicts, Western provocation, or a general insensitivity towards religion that results from capitalism and policies of modernisation. De Sondy identifies that any notion of Muslim or Islamic masculinity is always constructed against a number of 'others' – women, the West and God. In a sense, the discursive ideal of an Islamic masculinity that predominates in many parts of the Muslim world today is largely constructed against the frameworks of stereotyped Western masculinities on the one hand, and femininity on the other. In this regard, blasphemy for Muslims is not theological, but a political insecurity embedded in real-world grievances. Muslims have perceived themselves to be under attack by a West that has devalued their traditional loyalties and weakened their beliefs.[40] I argue that this perception of being under attack, and a feeling of religious obligation to protect sacred beliefs, is directly linked to the crisis of masculine identity in Pakistan.

The hegemonic masculinity that produces this culture is primarily targeted at the youth. It aims at brainwashing them, through misinterpreted and out-of-context readings of the Qur'an and Hadith, and with monetary compensation as a final trigger.[41] Such youths, who have failed to perform their required masculinity as provider for their family (primarily due to economic and social deprivation and the hardships of occupation), enter the illusion that they would

39 Amanullah De Sondy, *Crisis of Islamic Masculinities* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

40 Yaroslav Trofimov, "Blasphemy Divide: Insults to Religion Remain a Capital Crime in Muslim Lands Rest of the World Often Struggles to Comprehend," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 08, 2015, (accessed January 10, 2015) http://www.wsj.com/articles/blasphemy-divide-insults-to-religion-remain-a-capital-crime-in-muslim-lands-1420673864

41 Gunning, "Terrorism, Charities, and Diaspora," 102-103. Also see: Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality,"11-31.

achieve *shahada* (martyrdom) and glory in Paradise, while their families receive compensation, if they would only complete the ultimate form of religious masculinity as suicide bombers.[42]

In visual arts, the performances of suicide attackers have equally impacted both male and female artists as well as those who live in Pakistan or identify themselves as Pakistani diaspora. Since 9/11, artists have slowly begun to explore the male body, feeling compelled to tackle not only the hegemonic idea of masculinity but also other kinds of peripheral masculinities. Some artists draw bodies from everyday life and others draw them from religious ceremonies, political rallies, pop culture or the hyper-masculine hero images on movie billboards. Most recently, they have drawn from the media rage of projecting the blown-up bodies of young suicide bombers. This has not been without conflict.

Reflecting my own experience in Pakistan with *Buzzing*, in 2013 Aasim Akhtar wrote an article, '*Shedding the Fig Leaf',* on male nudes in Pakistani art for *Shobat*, an art journal published by the National College of Arts in Lahore. A first of its kind in both its investigative approach to the controversial topic of male nudity, Akhtar saw the "little explicit male nudity" as an "increased awareness among both the artists and the public about its controversial potential."[43] He recognised recent interest in the male nude as "incidental", and marked it as

> *'[A]lternative art' in Pakistan [as] a complex endeavour…[c]omment on the risk of 'disinsertion' and 'fetisization' applies equally to the definition and location of a trope of homosexuality in the art of Pakistani artist.*[44]

It is interesting to note that despite a focus on homosexual attitudes and their representation, only a handful of the artists presented identify themselves as gay. Even those who are openly gay do not like to discuss this in public, preferring to take an ambivalent position, similar to Asim Butt or Anwar Saeed, one of the case studies in this research. In the article, some of the images were printed without the artist's consent, including two paintings by an emerging artist Muhammad Ali that were claimed to have insulted religious sentiments by mixing images of Muslim clerics with suggestions of forbidden sexual desires [Figs. 14-15, p. 25]. One titled *Time for Namaz* shows a shirtless boy sitting alongside a religious cleric holding rosary beads as he gazes at the boy.[45] And as with my own *Buzzing* work, a literalistic reading took hold. The images of Ali's works were soon labelled "objectionable" and "promoting

42 Jeroen Gunning, "Terrorism, Charities, and Diaspora: Contrasting the Fundraising Practice of Hamas and Al-Qaeda among Muslims in Europe," in *Countering the Financing of Terrorism*, ed. Thomas J. Biersteker, Sue E. Eckert, and Nikos Passas (London: Taylor & Francis, 2007)," 102-103.

43 Aasim Akhtar, "Shedding the Fig Leaf," *Shobat* 3. (2012): 9.

44 Akhtar, "Shedding the Fig Leaf," 10.

45 Conversation with the artist – email correspondence.

homosexuality" and later "blasphemous", inciting public protest.[46] The artist's investigative takes on telling the stories of 'child abuse by religious clergy men' and 'prostitution of young boys and men on Pakistani street' remained largely untold. The author, editors and artist have all been accused of blasphemy and received threats. Shortly after, the college's editorial board

Figure 14 (Above): Ali, Muhammad. 2012. *Untitled (Na woh kissi ka baap hai, aur na woh kissi ka beta)*. Photo: courtesy the artist.
Figure 15 (Left): Ali, Muhammad. 2012. *Time for Namaz.* Photo: courtesy the artist.

was dissolved, two other departments at the school were closed, a court ordered the confiscation of copies of the issue, and the magazine was forced to shut down.[47] Such an incident not only brings forward the less than ethical practices of critical writing and publishing in Pakistan, where artists are not fully aware of the true nature of the article nor asked for consent, but also indicates that such attempts to discuss and subvert cultural norms can easily be politicised on the back of religious zealous and homophobia. Without consideration of the sensitivity of the

Figure 16: Banner Translation: *We protest against the support of homosexuality in Pakistan*. 2012.
A demonstration against the staff and the editorial board of *Sohbat* Art journal at NCA, Lahore.
Protesters claiming that the school is promoting homosexuality and mocked religious values. Photo: PTI.

46 Roselyn D'Mello, "Editorial Board of Pakistan's National College of Arts Dissolved Over Charges of Blasphemy," *Blouin ArtInfo*, July 02, 2012, (accessed July 10, 2012) http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/811810/editorial-board-of-pakistan's-national-college-of-arts-dissolved-over-charges-of-blasphemy#

47 PTI, "Pak College's Editorial Board Dissolved Over Blasphemy Row," *The Times of India*, July 01, 2012, (accessed July 10, 2012) http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/Pak-colleges-editorial-board-dissolved-over-blasphemy-row/articleshow/14554558.cms

subject matter specifically in terms of visual representation, not only the artists and writers lives were put in danger but also an opportunity lost, creating limited opportunities for masculinity to be discussed in public and adding further reason for artists to avoid being part of such a discussion and any rumours about their gender that could stem from it. Furthermore, the world saw the images of 'Pakistani' men and women as religious fanatics protesting against the promotion of blasphemy and homosexuality. However, the reality of such protests can be alarming and one must take caution in declaring Islam a religion of fanatics. The frontline of such activism is made up of people like Shakeel Ahmad Bhat, also known as 'Rage Boy' (Fig. 17), who is paid to be "the face of Muslim fury, protesting against the enemies of Islam."[48] I argue that such demonstrations and protests, whether staged or real, are theatrical and add to the post-9/11 performances that construct Islamic masculinity.

Figure 17: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2009. *Make-Over* series. Silkscreen and hand embossed on 'Newsweek' magazine cover with tagline "The Most Dangerous Nation in the World Isn't Iraq, It's Pakistan." Photo: courtesy the artist.
The bearded figure in the middle with bulging angry eyes looking towards the reader is a professional protester known as the 'Rage Boy'.

While the threat of blasphemy looms for artists representing the male body, especially in religious contexts, it is also the demand for personal explanation that can make the matter difficult for artists. The anxiety of being called effeminate, homosexual or blasphemous has led to a belief that any misinterpretation would lead to dangerous questions about sexual preferences, deviations and transgression. For a heterosexual artist, it is perceived that the figurative representation of male bodies is not desired, and thus if the artist paints nude or semi-

48 Riazat Butt, "All the Rage – Victim of US Blogger's Cartoon Hits Back," *The Guardian*, July 23, 2007, (accessed March 21, 2013) http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jul/23/india.digitalmedia
Also see: Syed Muhammad Iyhab Abdullah, "Buzzing: Post-9/11 Muslim Male Identity, Stereotypes, and Beehive Metaphors" (MFA Thesis, University of New South Wales, 2009), 98–99.

nude bodies then he is embedding them with his own experiences; another instance of the inability to separate representations of bodies from personal desire. This triggers various forms of abuse, such as rumours and jokes, which require the artist to vocally utter and defend his or her orientation, which is itself considered an embarrassing taboo, hence many chose to deflect or ignore such abusive jabs, gaze and enquires and create ambiguities. The result, I argue, is that the performativity of the male body in the fine arts remains neglected. This absence gives rise to a sense of urgency in today's art environment, where many Muslim men struggle with the perceived gap between the ideal 'Islamic man', and the lived experience of 'Muslim men'.

Within this climate, where representation of the male body can be dangerous, and where the performance of male identity veers toward the violent hyper-masculine, it is my contention that we must reconsider Muslim masculinity by attempting to heal the rupture that has been constructed with the feminine, and re-establish a 'balanced' masculinity. Rather than the single-mindedness of the dominant hegemonic masculinity, gender theorists such as Durre S. Ahmed, Maleeha Islam, Saba Mahmood and Amanullah De Sondy and Asma Barlas have dismantled gender hierarchies. They do this through exegesis of the Qur'an and people's experiences, and their criticism frequently invokes the relationship between humans and God, in which there is no place for gendered hierarchies.

Research Questions

This establishes the deep-rooted influences of current constructs of masculinity in the Islamic world, both on society and the artist, and the need to critically engage with this subject. With this in mind, there are three key questions that I aim to address here:

1. Are current Western models for investigating Islamic masculinity, performativity and its representation adequate, or do they only provide an outsider's view that disregards local sensibilities?

and if so,

2. How can an understanding of traditional Islamic gender concepts re-frame the current state of masculinity, its representation, and its performance in Pakistani art?

While I ask these questions, I also seek to identify:

I. The potential strategies and devices that artists employ in Pakistan to represent the male body.

II. If the artist's own gender informs and potentially problematises the use of masculine subjects in the construction of their own artistic and gendered identities in Islamic States like Pakistan.

These two additional topics are necessary in answering the two primary questions and help streamline the scope of this studio-based research.

My focus is on the heterogeneous nature of Islamic masculinity in Pakistan, which I argue can provide alternatives to current modes of representation. The *ulama* (theologians) and scholars of sapiential Islam claim that Allah has no gender and there is no single masculinity or femininity to be found in the Qur'an.[49]

This research is grounded in concepts of Islamic ideals, gender performativity and the view that social behaviour is a performance that, based on preliminary research, exist within ideal Islamic gender concept, which is based on Allah's ninety-nine names and attributes, which are then categorised under jamāl (beauty) and jalāl (majesty).[50]

Approaches to Research

I conduct this research as both an insider and an outsider. I am a Muslim male, raised in Pakistan, who has a deep understanding and respect for the culture. I have lived experience of the factors shaping heteronormative gender roles in Pakistan, yet I am also held at a distance, since I live in diaspora and my art education took place first in the United States and later in Australia. This not only allows me to locate my art practice on Islamic masculinities on a global scale, but also enables me to sieve through the diverse rhetoric and misrepresentations of Islamic masculinities from both Muslim and Western perspectives.

Primarily, though, my investigation is conducted from an Islamic position. This is because Islam is a defining feature of Pakistan's identity, and also because of my own religious identity, a subject that I would like to clarify. As a Sunni[51] Muslim, my interpretation of the

49 Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretation Of The Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 13-15.

50 John T. Little, "Al-Insan al-Kamil: The Perfect Man According to Ibn al-Arabī," *Muslim World* 77.1 (1987): 43-54.

51 The Islamic world is divided into two principle groups, the Sunni and the Shia. Sunni "the people of the Sunnah", which in Arabic means the 'custom and traditions of the prophet.' comprise the majority (approx. 90%) among the Muslim population of the world. Considered as 'Orthodox' Sunnis recognise the validity of the first four religious caliphs, affirm the ultimate authority in Islam rests

Qur'an and Hadith are derived from reading the scholars of the Sunni Hanafi School of reason, mainly through consultation of the Sahīh Bukhari and Sahīh Muslim, from the six canonical Hadith collections of Islam. Elements of Shia do enter my work, such as the symbolism of roses, the colour red (read as blood), and flagellation. While there is conflict between Shia and the Sunni majority, Shia is acknowledged by the Pakistani state and is publicly practiced.

Jalāl and jamāl (Jalāl/jamāl), which plays such an important role in this work, derives from an esoteric understanding of spiritual Islam, *Tasawwuf* or *Sufism* (the translation commonly known and usually preferred in the West), of which I have an understanding through reading but not personal religious practice. This clarification is essential; as a follower of the Sunni Hanifi fiqa of Islam, I do not follow traditional practices associated with Sufism, which requires a *Sheikh* or murshid[52] (master) of the Sufi path. The essence of Sufism is not for public disclosure. It is sacred knowledge and the murid (disciple) can only share experiences privately with his or her murshid. Subsequently, the murid can only know and share about Sufism from experience on the *Path*, and even after enlightenment, a murid must seek permission from his murshid to write anything about Sufism, even its basic history and philosophies. The Sufi path is thus structured through performances of 'sees and knows', and hence the knowledge cannot be properly articulated without a detailed explanation of every step.[53] Although I have observed my mother incorporating some elements of Sufi practices and occasionally attending gatherings, she never practiced it fully under a murshid. We all followed my father's footsteps towards the understanding of a practical application and performance of Islam rather than mystic Islam. My understanding of the philosophical concepts of mystical Islam, including my understanding of Islamic patterns, art, architecture, numerology and now jalāl and jamāl, are developed through readings of scholars such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Kamil Khan Mumtaz, Titus Burckhardth, Sachiko Murata and Shaykh Kamaluddin Ahmed. These texts are for a public readership and do

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with the Ummah, or Islamic community, and deny any unique or special religious or political authority to the physical dependents of Mohammad or Hazart Ali Ibn Abi Talib (r.a.), Prophet's cousin and son in-law. Whereas Shiite or in Arabic Shi'ah, the followers of Hazart Ali (r.a) has roots that go back to Mohammad's death and his choice and appointment of Hazrat Abu-Bakar (r.a.) as the first caliph rather than Ali, who eventually became the fourth caliph. Shiites claim that Ali, as closest relative to Mohammad and husband to the prophet's daughter Fatima, was the rightful successor to Mohammad. Ali eventually became the fourth caliph but was assassinated. His son (and grandson of Muhammad) Imam Husain (r.a.) raised a revolt and was killed at Karbala in 680 CE. Such Islamic masculinities and incidents of massacres later eulogised, giving birth to private and public performances of Mattam (chest beating) during two day Ashura period in the Islamic month of Muharam.

52 "Sufism is an effort to delude you of all your belief systems, of all words. That is why in Sufism the Master is not a teacher. The Master is more like an artisan, an artist, a painter, a carpenter maybe, a wearer. The Master is more like one who knows a certain skill, which cannot be taught through words, which can only be taught through experience. So in Sufism there is no teacher. There are Masters but no teachers. And in Sufism the disciple is not a student, the disciple is an apprentice….who lives in the presence of the Master so… slowly, slowly, he can drink, more of the presence of the Master and can become aware of the knack that he has. It is not an ordinary thing to be transferred because it cannot be put into words."
Osho, "A Lotus Of Emptiness," in *Sufis: The People Of The Path*, vol.1, Ch 9-16, (New Delhi: Diamond Pocket Books,1999),162.

53 William Stoddart, *Sufism: The Mystical Doctrine and Methods of Islam* (Lahore: Sohail Academy, 1981, 1999), 51-62
Also see: Osho, "A Lotus Of Emptiness."

not fully encompass Sufi concepts, however their clarity of ideas provide sufficient grounds for scholars to develop a contemporary theory of Islamic gender.

In emphasising my religious background here, I do acknowledge that Islamic gender roles have developed from a complex mixture of not only religious, but also cultural trends that pre-date Islam. This, of course, places study of Islamic gender in a position to consider a wide variety of public and private influences like socio-economic, historical and cultural factors. Despite the strong religious dimension of this work, my primary concern is the visual culture of gender in patriarchal society, and is not theological in nature. Consequently, Islam and its practices are defined through various lenses including the orthodox, secular and spiritual. Here, Islam is both cultural expression[54] and the creative motivation behind my work. It would be deficient, however, not to refer to the great amount of theological research that has already been conducted on gender roles and gender equality, specifically in terms of women in Islam and in Pakistan. My reading of esoteric religious texts is intended to inform the analysis of the performances, symbolism and visual metaphors employed by Pakistani artists, either consciously or subconsciously, and is a basis for some of my own practice.

The focus of this research is my development of an understanding of Islamic masculinity through my own art practice, but in producing my work I have employed a range of other research methods, including interviewing artists, participating in Islamic displays of masculinity, and analysing aspects of Pakistan's visual culture.

To understand the complex realities of gender performance in contemporary Pakistani art, I have compiled case studies of five Pakistani artists, which I compare with my own experiences. The artists are Meher Afroz, Rashid Rana, Anwar Saeed, Imran Qureshi and Kazim Ali, and they have each been important contributors to Pakistani art over the past three decades. The artists include members of both Sunni and Shia sects, and all live and work between Karachi and Lahore; the selected artists show a range of practices, ages (from 30 to 64), and are both male and female. Their work is underlined by personal and spiritual struggle, being impacted by the ongoing wave of religious terrorism, suicide bombing and the deteriorating conditions of law and order. This filters into their art practice, where they present the male body and masculinity. The works of Rashid Rana and Imran Qureshi have been argued briefly under "exploration of stereotypes of masculinity and femininity."[55] However, it is to be noted that none of the artists work have been explicitly investigated under the notions of male body and masculinity in the contemporary art of Pakistan.

54 J Lemon, "Media and Culture," in *Fouire*, P.J., ed. Media Studies, vol.1 of Institutions, Theories and Issues, (Lansdown: Juta, 2001), 356.

55 Peter Morey, Amina Yaqin, *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation after 9/11* (London: Harvard University Press, 2011), 205.

I have also experimented with various practices of Pakistani material and visual culture in the process of making my work in order to better understand my subject. This allowed me to participate in the performance of present modes of Islamic masculinity. Over the period of two years I learned archery; its Zen-like practices, craft and understanding led me to explore the making of arrows and bows, and then to find local traditions of archery in Pakistan. *Mukkhawal*, Pakistan's own archery tradition is preserved by the Northern Pushtoons, but it is now almost extinct due to the post-9/11 war on terror, drone attacks and internal migration. To support this tradition, I became the sponsor of a local team in Karachi and supported two separate teams in 2011 and 2012. This allowed me to meet and collaborate with a Mukkhawal craftsman, who makes special bows and arrows. This is where I recognised how various traditional Pakistani crafts, such as Mukkhawal and Truck Art, are connected to the same aesthetic traditions as hand-crafted ornament, Islamic patterning and Sufi poetry.

Figure 18: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2014. *Soft Target, Greens Point, New York*. In three parts. C print + DIASEC. 127 x 300 cm and 56 x 125 cm. Photograph taken by Christine Shuraka. Image: courtesy the artist.

In studying the portrayal of masculinity in Pakistan, I also collected a range of visual materials: popular street posters, Truck Art samples, and gallery invitations for the shows of Pakistani artists. These visuals, generated and consumed in Pakistan, are not generally perceived as high culture but a form of mass media. They therefore fall outside the conventional art historical sphere of investigation, and are instead more likely to be studied within anthropology or cultural studies.[56] They are therefore cultural artefacts produced in a religious and political setting. This material is the wider popular culture of Pakistan, and provides valuable demonstration of how populist and dominant masculine identity is represented.

This thesis is therefore structured through a discussion of my own practice, which includes its relation to other contemporary Pakistani artists and my involvement with traditional arts and crafts. All of these are then examined through a framework of jalāl and jamāl, as well as models of gender theory and performativity that relate representations of gender in art to political, cultural and religious contexts. These methods have enriched my own practice by

56 Jurgen Wasim Fembgen, *The Friends of God-Sufi Saints in Islam: Popular Poster Art from Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press 2006), Also see: James J. Elias, *On Wings of Diesel: Trucks, Identity and Culture in Pakistan* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2011).

providing avenues for collaboration and techniques to pursue in my work. Such encounters have not only enabled me to develop a strong bond with the Pakistani art scene but also placed me in a privileged position to engage as an insider with arts and crafts of Pakistan.

Chapter Synopsis

I begin in *Chapter One*, by providing an orientation to Islamic beliefs of gender, including the codes of Sufi chivalry, Islamic concepts of gender performance, and the required practice of physically emulating the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) as the ideal man. This illustrates what may approximately be termed as 'exemplary' Islamic masculinity, which I argue is dependent on expression through ritual acts and public performance. The discussion of diverse interrelations of religious scripture and teachings will bring focus to the current debate over representations of masculinity in Pakistan. The ideal is confronted by politics and the highly-charged notion of blasphemy, which is argued in relation to visual or verbal representations of the spiritual ideal. This leads to the problematised and contested ground that I call today's 'ruptured' masculinities.

In *Chapter Two* I establish the religious thinking that underpins my work and that of other artists, establishing jalāl and jamāl as the primary theoretical model guiding my practice and my interpretation of Islamic masculinity. Jalāl and jamāl offers a balanced approach to Islamic gender, and I trace Kamil Khan Mumtaz's concept of the poetic expression of jalāl and jamāl through examples of traditional (abstract) and secular (figurative) Islamic art. This leads me to propose an original concept and coin a new term, *Amāl-e-Barzakh (also Amāl-e-A'rāf)* or *Art of Barzakh* (*Barzakh's* literal translation, 'a veil or partition between two things').[57] The art

57 Barzakh in Arabic means obstacle, separation, and barrier. Major Scholar, Ibn al-Arabi, defines Barzakh as the intermediate realm or "isthmus". In broader terms it "is anything that separates two things" and "it is mentioned three times in the [Qur'an], twice in the context of an isthmus that keeps the sweet and bitter seas from mixing" (25:53, 55:20). These two seas are frequently interpreted as the corporeal and spiritual worlds; then the isthmus is understood as the world of imagination, which is neither purely corporeal not purely spiritual but combines the attributes of both and keeps the two world separate. *The third Qur'anic mention of the terms (23:100) refers to the experience of the soul after death, and the tradition identifies this barzakh with the grave, which is the isthmus between this life and the resurrection. The author will have more to say about the barzakh in this sense in the sections on the return. Ibn al-Arabi and his followers consider the barzakh after this world as one of the many worlds embraced by the first barzakh.* William C. Chittick, *Faith and Practice of Islam: Three Thirteenth-Century Sufi Text*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1992. 193. See also: Ibn Al-Arabi, Muhyiddin Angela Jaffray, ed. *The Universal Tree and The Four Birds* (Anqa Publishing, 2006), 29n,50n, 59, 64–8, 73, 75–8, 82, 102. Furthermore, The teachings of the Qur'an and the Hadith tell us that Barzakh is an intermediate world (Facsimile World) in which all souls wait after death and before resurrection on Judgment Day. The souls in Barzakh are facsimile bodies which appear like worldly material flesh and bloodied bodies, while simultaneously being elegant, fine and exquisite. To explain this body, scholars compared the Barzakh body with what one sees in a mirror with two differences: First, the said picture is actual (not a mere reflection) and second, it achieves senses and understands things.
Also: Barzakh can also refer to a person. Chronologically between Jesus and Mohammad is the contested Prophet Khalid. Ibn 'Arabi considers this man to be a "Barzakh" or the Perfect Human Being. For Chittick, "the Perfect Human acts as the Barzakh or "isthmus" between God and the world." Ibn 'Arabi's story of Prophet Khalid is a story of Perfect Human being. William C. Chittick, (1979). "The Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of Jāmi." *Studia Islamica*. Maisonneuve & Larose (49): 135–157.

of Barzakh or Barzakhi art resides in a liminal zone between Islamic tradition and contemporary innovation. It is a conceptual corridor that creates mind maps and subverts specificity. As an investigative space it not only allows contemporary artists, like myself, to draw from different readings and modes of Islamic art expressions and popular local visual culture but also to incorporate learned Western modes of expression and presentation into their art practices.

Chapter Three then focuses on the public and private performance and performativity of masculinity in Pakistan, through examples of state ceremony, personal rituals of piety and popular visual culture. It is concerned with the way men make themselves masculine through their actions, drawing in Western theories of gender, identity and performance from R.W. Connell and Judith Butler through which to understand the different expressions of Islamic male identity. As I am looking here at masculinity in everyday acts, this draws in a discussion of how politics shapes the performances of Pakistani men. Religious fundamentalism and imported secularism rupture the traditional concepts of masculinity, causing the 'crisis' of contemporary Muslim masculinity. I find that the appreciation or rejection of masculinity within Pakistan occurs when Islam is dependent on idealised notions of the masculine, the feminine and the moral, which essentially derive from patriarchal structures. In this chapter I also survey how other Pakistani artists have negotiated various modes of gender performance since Zia's regime. Focusing on the representations and performances of ruptured Muslim masculinities, I frame the proposed Barzakhi art as one in which an artist occupies both Islamic religious spaces (sacred, traditional, devotional, etc.) and a secular art space. Beyond the Islamic codes, local and outsider (Western) influences and ideas permeate Barzakhi art. I argue that in this space the representation of the balancing act of contemporary Islamic masculine gender is achievable through the practicing of jalāl and jamāl.

In *Chapter Four* I look at how gendered gaze in performance and body art – both as a live act and documentation – can be used to investigate the meaning of nude and semi-nude male figures and their associated poses and performances. Here, gaze refers both to the Western theories of gaze and performances of gaze necessitated within Islam, such as the 'lowering the gaze'. Looking at the Islamic masculinity of jalāl and jamāl through the concept of gaze allows me to further analyse my own works and those of other Pakistani artists, under the notion of Barzakhi art. This methodology allows a deeper understanding of how the readers and makers of images and performances can analyse constructions of Muslim Pakistani masculinity in a

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Also: Barzakh (Isthmus) has diverse interpretations in Islam based on different traditions: Person's deeds in life will have an impact on their experience in Barzakh (see Maulana Islam's Al Barzakh – The Realm After Death in Islam); (Islam 2008) Temporary bodies will be given in Barzakh based on deeds and indicated their eventual fate on the day of judgment: bright body (made of light) are destined for Haven and black body (made of darkness) for hell; (Sir Muhammad Khan (December 2011). The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam – Part 12, The Review of Religions.) Sufi masters and interpreted Barzakh (Alam-e-A'rāf) is a place where soul resides after death but also it can visit during spiritual sleep (meditation).

way that critically engages with the political, social and religious identities of male bodies in Pakistan's private and public spheres. This includes figural representations of male bodies, as well as pictures of masculinity in the absence of a literal male body, which are typically constructed through props and symbols.

In each of the chapters, I provide examples from my studio practice, demonstrating how the themes have shaped my work, and how my work has helped to clarify my ideas on the popular representations of masculinity in Pakistan today. The evidentiary works are written as an extended artist's statement that discusses my practice. Using the completed artworks as evidence, exhibitions as a testing ground, and viewers' and critics' responses as feedback, these works tie together the themes of gender, performance, gaze, religion, politics and symbolism to propose how the visual arts provides an 'identity-explaining' function. This has a peculiar relevance to the lives of male artists who might already have been experiencing a certain degree of upheaval in traditional and established notions of their masculinity. The studio offers artists a psychological space in which to explore and re-edit their sense of masculine identity through performance, signs and symbols.

Case Studies: Introduction

My interviews with contemporary Pakistani artists are an important source of information in this research. The artists are known for their extensive training and teaching, their local and international recognition as artists and activists, and their critical acclaim and commercial success. The artists make varied use of traditional and contemporary approaches, including miniature painting, photography, digital collage, video art and appropriation, through which they visualise pertinent questions about religion, politics and gender. Their works have been collected by major museums and organisations across the world.[58] The primary study of these five artists is presented in Chapter Three and Four, but because this data is used to supplement my argument throughout the thesis and thematically analysed at the end of every chapter prior to the demonstration of my primary artworks, the artists are introduced here.

Figure 19: Qureshi, Imran. 2006-5. *Moderate Enlightenment*. Watercolour on wasli paper. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 20: Qureshi. Imran. 2014. *The Roof Garden Commission: The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York. Installation dimensions variable. Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

58 Notably: Museum of Modern Art and Metropolitan Museum, New York; Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Fukuoka, British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Queensland Art Galleries and Museums, USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, Brisbane, Harris Museum, Preston, Sharjah Museum, Sharjah, British Museum, UK; Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi, India, and National Art Gallery, Islamabad.

Born in Lahore in 1972, ***Imran Qureshi*** is one of the most important contemporary artists from the subcontinent and a leading figure in developing the Contemporary Miniature (neo miniature) aesthetic. Qureshi heads the contemporary miniature-painting department at the National College of Arts (NCA), Lahore. His works deal with life, its destruction, and potential rebirth. Qureshi's imagery involves intricately hand-painted ornamental flora and fauna, objects such as ballistic missiles covered in camouflage, isolated male figures, and most recently the red splatter site-specific painting performances [Figs. 19-20, p. 35].[59] In 2011, Qureshi won the Sharjah Biennial Prize and in 2013 was awarded the prestigious Deutsche Bank Artist of the Year. In 2014 he became the first Pakistani artist invited to create an immersive installation on the rooftop of Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

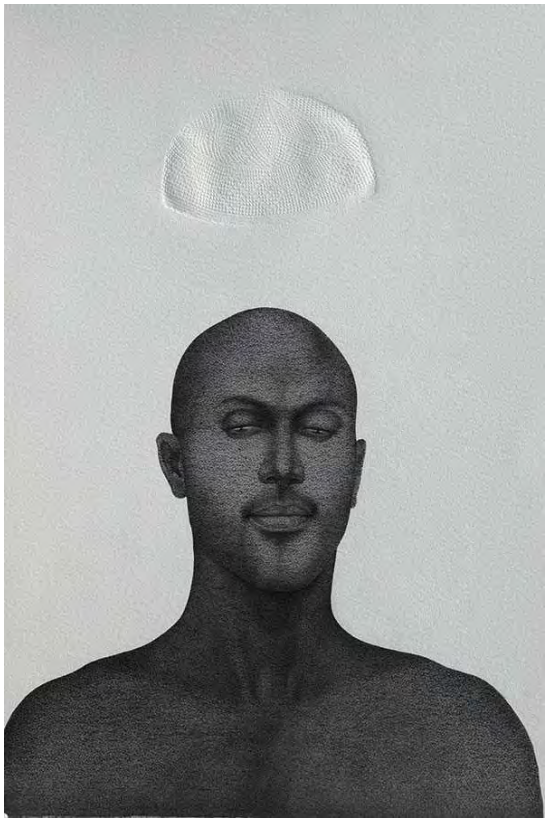

Figure 21: Kazim, Ali. 2006. *Topi Walah I (Man with prayer-cap)*. Watercolour pigments and pressure printing on paper, 75 x 50 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

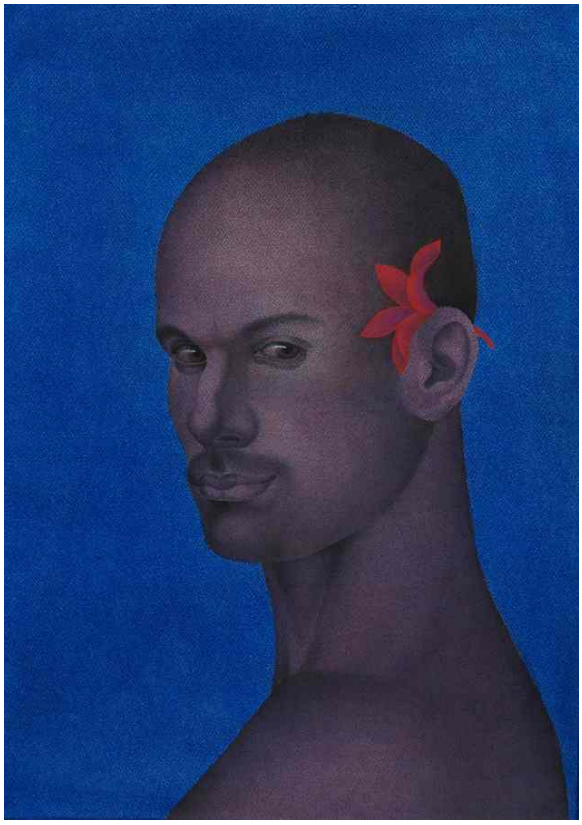

Figure 22: Kazim, Ali. 2006. *Man with Red Flower*. Watercolour pigments on paper, 56 x 79 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Ali Kazim was born in 1979 in Karachi and began his career as a circus billboard painter. His talent in figure drawing was soon noted and he was offered a scholarship to study at the NCA. He received a BFA in 2002 and then competed an MFA at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, in 2011. Upon his return to Pakistan, he became the youngest appointment as the

59 Ian Alteveer, Navina Najat Haidar, Sheena Wagstaff, *Imran Qureshi: The Roof Garden Commission* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013). Video documentation access: http://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2013/imran-qureshi

NCA's head of the fine arts. Kazim gained notoriety for his unique and labour-intensive skills, which he developed from miniature painting. First he draws with *siyah qalam* (literally black pen, a repetitive mark making with a fine brush dipped in black ink), and then builds layers of watercolour in gum Arabic through *pardakht* (the application of paint in small dots), resulting in gauzy, dreamy and jewel-like images, typically of nude or semi-nude men. His true genius lies in his rethinking of male bodies not as the images of heroic mescaline ideals, but as everyday "figures of privacy, tenderness and vulnerability."[60] Kazim has received a number of awards, notably: The Land Securities Studio Award, London, UK; Melvill Nettleship Prize for Figure Composition, UCL, London and Young Painter Award, Lahore Arts Council, Pakistan.

Figure 23: Saeed, Anwar. 2012. *Soul of the Man diving back into his body*. Acrylic on canvas. 5ft x 9ft. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 24: Saeed, Anwar. 2013. *Toys are Us*. Acrylic on canvas. 5ft x 5ft. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Born in Lahore in 1955, ***Anwar Saeed*** graduated from the NCA and completed post-graduate studies at the Royal College of Art in 1985. Since 1986, he has been teaching at the NCA where he is currently Associate Professor. Saeed's initial works incorporated windows, the moon, and birds alongside male figures, as a way to depict the political suppression of General Zia's regime. Autobiographic in nature, his later works focuses on the male body and masculine identity as Other, dealing with issues of tolerance, love and pleasures of the male body that are marked with social values of pride, honour, shame and guilt. The body is the central creative impulse in Saeed's art practice, and his semi nude and nude male figures are linked to taboos associated with sexuality, desire and religion.

60 Hammad Nasar, *Sacred Souls Sacred Lives: Paintings by Ali Kazim* (London: Green Cardamom, 2006), 2.
Also see: Ryan Holmberg, "Ali Kazim Mumbai at Jhaveri Contemporary," *Art in America*. May 29, 2013 (accessed December 15 2013) http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/reviews/ali-kazim/

Figure 25: Afroz, Meher. 2011. *Khud Kalami (Self Address)* series. Silver leaf and acrylic on canvas, 80 x 45 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 26: Afroz, Meher. 2012. *Untitled from Naqsh Burr Aab (Images of Water)* series. Silver leaf and acrylic on canvas, 66 x 45 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Born in Lakhnaow, India in 1951, ***Meher Afroz*** migrated to Karachi, Pakistan after completing her BA in 1971 at the Government College of Art and Craft, Lucknow, India. She witnessed the rise and fall of General Zia, and gained recognition as one of the finest painter and printmaker in Pakistan. Despite not identifying as feminist, she is recognised as one of the first few women artists who wrote and publicly presented a feminist manifesto in Pakistan during the Zia period. She taught at the Pakistan Art Council (now Central Institute of the Arts), and later become senior faculty at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, Karachi, where she is now Emeritus Professor. Afroz's art is founded on devotion as a questioning and reasoning of mankind and its evil practices. Making reference to pious male and female Islamic figures, Arabic calligraphy, poetry and the devotional symbols of her Shia background, Afroz seeks to understand the divine by focusing on the male/female relationship, its struggles, failures and joys. Afroz has won two national awards of fine arts excellence and in 2014 was

conferred with Pakistan's highest civil award for the arts, Tamġa-ē Ḥusn-e Kārkardagī (Pride of Performance), this recognised her contribution to promoting the art and culture of Pakistan.

Figure 27a: Rana, Rashid. 2007. *Red Carpet 1*. Print + DIASEC, 295 x 221 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 27b: *Red Carpet 1*. Detail. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Born in Lahore in 1968, ***Rashid Rana*** is recognised as one of the most important figures amongst the new generation of Pakistani artists.[61] He trained as a painter at the NCA, completed postgraduate studies at the Massachusetts College of Fine Arts in Boston, and studied fashion design in Paris. Rana is founding faculty member, former head of the fine arts department and the current Dean of Beaconhouse National University, Lahore. Rana's work deals with everyday issues ranging from faith and tradition to urbanisation and popular culture. He engages with the contradictions within self and society, which he terms a "perpetual paradox."[62] Rana gained notoriety for his earlier work, which used his own body for performance, documenting them as paintings, photographs and video. His body became presented an internal conflict, translated through mirrored images, symmetry, the grid and the matrix. He later moved to creating large-scale photographic mosaics that can be described as unpacked abstraction. Such works depict his commentary on social and political scenarios, including post-9/11 identity constructs. He won the 2003 Hathor Prize (9th Cairo International Biennale), and was awarded the International Artist of the Year 2002–2003 by SAVAC: South Asian Visual Arts Collective in Toronto, Canada.

61 Quddus Mirza, "Rashid Rana A World Apart," in *Rashid Rana* (Mumbai: Chatterjee & Lal and Chemould Prescott Road, 2010), 8-9.

62 The Nukta Art Team, "Nukta Art in Conversation with Rashid Rana," *Nukta Art*, vol. 3 Issue 2, 2008.

All five artists are prolific, have either studied or practiced art abroad (primarily in the West), and have strong links with Pakistani institutions. They also demonstrate the impact of diaspora on the art scene of Pakistan; Meher Afroz, for example is a migrant to Pakistan from India, and Rashid Rana a dual-citizenship holder. Furthermore, all of these artists lived through decades of martial law, terrorism, political and religious unrest and massacres. They describe verbally and depict visually their reactions to their social environment and gender discourse. Artist, Anwar Saeed, notably paints his queer identity into his work, and speaks about it in metaphors, signs and symbols.

These artists were surprised when contacted for this study. Although they clearly saw how this study relates to their practices and their interest in the male body, and showed excitement at the possibility of how such an enquiry might bring new insight to their art practices, they also remained cautious in articulating their works under the rubric of gender. They pondered on why they had not received specific questioning on this topic or encountered any similar critical enquiry prior to this research. Such reflections are recorded in this research.

A. Case Study Responses: Part I

The case study interviews consisted of 35 open-ended questions (Appendix B, Interview Questionnaire, p. 290), and were scheduled for an hour and a half. To ensure the accuracy of input and to identify visual references, interview sessions were recorded both as an audio and video recording. Responses were recorded in a combination of Urdu, Punjabi and English, which were later transcribed and resent to the participants for any amendments and fact checking. Upon their request, the interview transcripts are not included in this document.

The questions encompassed a wide variety of topics surrounding religion, politics, gender, sexuality, nationalism, and identity, where the underpinning of each question was to investigate the presence of ruptured masculinities and ideal balanced masculinities in the artists' work. Participating artists Rashid Rana, Anwar Saeed and Imran Qureshi agreed to give interviews in their studios in Lahore Pakistan, whereas Meher Afroz's interview was conducted in her studio in Karachi. I travelled to London to meet Ali Kazim, where he was completing his Masters degree. Kazim opted out of video recording his interview, but agreed to fill out the questionnaire. All artists gave me a detailed tour of their studio, allowed me to take photographs of their finished and unfinished work, personal sketch books, and provided the additional written and visual material that they referred to during the interviews.

The responses were varied, ranging from the rejection of hegemonic masculinity as un-Islamic, to how patriarchy in Pakistan is a result of a well-established society structure that has a history longer than Islam itself. Within this structure, the patriarchal view of men's behaviour is defined where a man is characterised by toughness, un-emotionality, physical competence, competiveness and aggression. Quotations of Islamic law and teachings of sapiential Islam indicate a general belief of gender equality, though of varying gender roles where masculinity is defined against femininity and not a separate category. The general interest in Sufi text, poetry and teachings, even among those who identify as secular or non-practicing Muslims, are observed. This demonstrated an awareness of Islamic gender archetypes jalāl and jamāl, which remained unquoted and not explicitly declared. This also indicates that jalāl and jamāl operate as a culturally learned ideal drawn from sapiential Islam, acting as a counter to cultural ideals of hegemonic masculinity.

Four out of five participants (Afroz, Kazim, Rana, Saeed) responded that it is difficult to define masculinity in Pakistan. For them masculinity encompasses many nuances and qualities that derived from religious and cultural influences which are propagated in Pakistan as gender ideals. All participants used *mard* for man (also for men) but struggle to find an exact Urdu word for masculinity; they agreed upon *mardangi* as colloquially used for masculinity. However they also agreed that *mardangi* has diverse uses in Pakistani culture and words such as

gharat (honour), *pride* (ego), *bahaduri* (bravery) are used almost to a point of cliché. Furthermore, the age-old concept for *mard* (man) to be *kamo pooth* (bread winner) and married with children persist as ways for *mard* to perform and confirm his masculinity. For Afroz, *mard* is "an ideal human being with [a] strong character, spiritual belief and who can lead and be an example." For Kazim, *mard* is "strong, independent… and the saviour of a family." He also made an interesting point that *shaheed* (martyr) and *Ghazi* (warrior) are highly celebrated as synonymous to strong masculine identities in Muslim cultures such as Pakistan.

Three participants used physical appearance to illustrate their definitions of masculinity, employing the term mardana-wajahat (male beauty or handsomeness), which associates with a tall and muscular body, deep voice and physical strength. For Afroz, *mardangi* is more about the solid character of a man rather than his physical appearance, and asserts that a masculine man should be "an ideal human being with strong character and spirituality… someone who can lead… [and is] not fixated on physical appearances." She further explained the prevailing term, *mardana-wajahat* within the historical context of *Urdu* language and tradition, where it refers to men who possess

> *khubsoorat badan* (beautiful body), *kasrati jism* (muscular structure), *khara naqsh* (upright facial features), *ba'raoub* (imposing) *burdbar* (humble attitude), *khubsoorat awaz* (beautiful voice) and *guftagoo mein rukh rakhao* (good conversationalists).

However, such youthful and beautiful physical attributes cannot be appreciated in a man if he is not *bahadur* (brave), "self respecting", "open hearted", "forgiving" both in the matter of love and money. She concludes that "being a stingy man or a miser is not a masculine trait and a closed hearted man will never be able to judge a society." In contrast, Saeed speaks of the "voyeuristic and female gaze" in relation to the natural beauty of a man, his body and physical appearance as "the most beautiful side of masculinity", and elaborates that there are certain natural traits that are "embedded with certain psychological aspects" which are manly or very masculine including:

> *gestures, the distinct quality and mannerism: Way of looking, laughing, standing, sitting, there is a natural male presence which is very beautiful to look at or to see… such traits should be there in every male, but one can only wish.*

None of the participants specifically pointed out eye colour, height or facial hair. Topics such as male virility, sexual preferences, the masculine gaze and penis/phallus as the symbol of masculine power appear rarely, and when mentioned are identified as part of 'western gender

discourse'. I argue that this absence is reflective of cultural sensibility where discussions of such topics in public or recorded forum would be considered inappropriate, crossing religious, social and cultural boundaries of decency. Even if some of these topics appear in their art to reflect their own and collective masculine experiences, the artists remained cautious in verbal and written explanation. For example, Initially, on defining the term masculinity, Rashid Rana explained:

> "*I want to reflect [my views] through what I say and what my works are [about] and I don't know if I can extract [any] definition outside my work."*

Rana then continued and noted that the current understanding of *mard* is someone who is "not being fearful of anything" and "somebody who has to be a superlative family man, somebody who can lead the way." For Rana, such are "common traits attributed to a man in any patriarchal society."

All five artists also agreed that such terms are prevailing clichés for men and masculinity. Three out of five (Afroz, Kazim, Rana) defined femininity as something opposite of masculinity: submissive, weak, organised, and one who plays a role of a kin-keeper in a family. For Kazim, femininity is attributed to "good manners, softy-spoken [nature] and organization skills". Both Rana and Afroz assert that a feminine (or womanly) role is stereotypically associated with the idea of taking care of the family and following a man, who is considered the leader of the family. Afroz went further to explain that a woman is largely dependent on the male as

> *the provider for her two [meals]a day… subjected to his legal or illegal actions and if she tries to voice her opinion or go by her own will she becomes targeted and often victimised in the name of honour.*

Meher Afroz further explained that such perceptions are against the teachings of Islam. They are culturally and socially driven and more common in the interior and rural areas, where a woman's position is entirely dictated by an illiterate man, and she is not entitled to voice her thoughts or opinion. She argues that in urban areas, women do have freedom but their freedom is tied to the family, *gharat* (honour), and male *pride* (ego), as part of the overall patriarchal structure of the society.

When asked what they think about the idea of balanced masculinity, Qureshi identified it as a balancing act of opposing qualities such as love/hate and harshness/softness. For Rana the idea of a balanced masculinity has diminished and it is not "macho". He has never been macho

and had never engaged in a physical fight. He recognises his sensitive and feminine side, which he clarifies as attributes of “metro-sexuality”. Rana finds drawing a hard-line in defining masculinity and femininity problematic and considers such efforts a way to restrict gender discourse. Rana and Afroz also noted that art, as a teaching profession, is stereotypically considered best suited for the female gender and equate it with the ideas of femininity.

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter investigates the Islamic construction of masculinity through dual traditions of Islam that religious scholar Sachiko Murata calls the 'legalist' and the 'sapiential'.[63] The legalist tradition refers to the unbending and literal interpretations of Islam in Sharia law, while the sapiential encompasses the more esoteric readings of the Sufi path. Each places a different emphasis on God, where the former is masculine and transcendent, and the latter appears feminine and immanent. In the first part of this chapter I focus on the legalist tradition, providing an introduction to Islamic belief. This reviews traditional Islamic notions of masculinity and chivalry, as well as the diverse scholarly interpretations of Islamic masculinity and how these relate to Islamic feminism today. In the second part of the chapter I consider the sapiential tradition, drawing out the subject of *jalāl* and *jamāl* (also *jalāl/jamāl*). I frame jalāl/jamāl as a mode of poetic expression for representing Islamic masculinity in traditional and contemporary visual and performative art.

63 Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Source Book on Gender Relations in Islamic Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992).

CHAPTER ONE

PART 1: The Legalist Tradition

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.[64]

Today … The dominant idea of a fixed and pure heterosexual masculinity… once so securely grounded in the nuclear family, is, if not in crisis, at least a little hegemonic than it has ever been before.[65]

64 Al Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat Chapter 49, Ayat 13.

65 Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (London: Virgo, 1990), 100.
Quoted from: David Hopkins, *Dada's Boys: Masculinity after Duchamp* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 1.

1.1 Definition of Terms

It is first necessary to clarify some of the terms and concepts in the debate on Islamic masculinity. Distinguishing between the 'Islamic', 'Muslim' and 'Pakistani', for example, can be complex, but attempting such distinctions will assist in understanding the ways in which Pakistani men publicly interact. It will also help to show how cultural differences might construct different perceptions of Pakistani masculinity. Subsequently, this will highlight which aspects of contemporary masculinity are shaped by Pakistan's history and patriarchal culture, and which come from Islam.

1.1.1 Islam, Muslim and Masculinity

Orientalist scholar Edward Said identified that the Western view of a monolithic Islam as fictional, arguing that only a small portion of the Islamic world is defined by the term 'Islam.'[66] The reality is that the Islamic world represents a huge Muslim population made of many different countries, societies and traditions, each of which can lay claim to Islam in some way.[67] For each of these groups, some elements of masculinity are based in the Islamic religion, while others are based in their own cultural traditions. The diverse readings of Islamic masculinity have been demonstrated by postcolonial theorist Lahoucine Ouzgane, who notes that the terms 'Islamic' and 'Muslim' are used inconsistently, adding a further complication, when 'Islam' is used in a Western context it poses the challenge of Orientalist gaze.[68]

Similarly, 'masculinity' is a cultural construct, a gender category that ascribes a role and value in given social contexts. These values vary between societies and between individuals. The consensus of the group will decide which traits are desirable and which are not, but this can also depend on pre-existing cultural beliefs and other identity markers that are used

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66 Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, Reprint ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981). xvi.
The Pakistani architect and scholar Kamil Khan Mumtaz further elaborates that terms such as "'Saracenic' and 'Islamic' are Orientalist inventions used as catch-all phrases to describe the art and architecture of the Muslim world from 'Mughal India' to 'Moorish Spain'."
Kamil Khan Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan* (Singapore: Mimar Book, 1985), 191.
Here the term 'Islam' is used as a way of living, a religion. It one of the three monotheistic Abrahamic faiths (along with Judaism and Christianity). Muslims, the followers of Islam' are required to submit to the will of Allah (God) who is the creator of the universe and all of humanity. Qur'an, the holy book that contains the words of Allah, and the Hadith, the saying about the traditions, methods and practices of the Prophet Mohammad (s.a.a.w.), informs the religious practices. After the death of the Prophet, early Muslim scholars established Sharia (Islamic law) based on interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadith. Muslim nations apply Sharia to their legal systems in varying degrees depending on their own interpretations of the law.

67 Lahoucine Ouzgane, *Islamic Masculinities* (New York, Zed Books, 2006), 2.

68 Ouzgane, *Islamic Masculinities*, 2.

in cultural assessment. In the flux of competing influences and generational change, the definition of masculinity is never a fixed concept.

Fitting these terms together, if we can agree that 'Islamic' pertains to the religion of Islam and 'Muslim' to the people who profess Islam, [69] then 'Islamic masculinity' applies to the performances of gender construction that are inspired by Islamic religious thought. Islamic masculinity intends to serve an Islamic religious purpose, whereas 'Muslim masculinity' would be the more appropriate term for all types of masculinity associated with Muslim people, including those traits of masculinity drawn from their culture and not religion.

This research is not a theological discussion of gender in Islam. My position is that the current state of Islamic masculinity, both secular and orthodox, operates between religious notions and the politics, society and culture of the Muslim world. Of importance here is what is perceived as Islamic. It is necessary to understand religion in order to understand the socio-political contexts of Pakistan, but it is also important not to see this as a direct critique of Islam itself. The question of Islamic masculinity is one of religious interpretations.

1.1.2 Islamic Art

For Kamil Khan Mumtaz, the term 'Islamic art 'refers to art that is inspired by Islamic religious thought and intended to serve a religious purpose.[70] This is the position adopted by Islamic art historian Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who explains that Islamic art is rooted in the Islamic worldview and related to a concept of worship.[71] Nasr argues that Islamic art cannot therefore be reduced to its external socio-political influences, which he calls a "modern and non-Islamic" interpretation.[72] Instead, "the answer must be sought in the Islamic religion itself."[73]

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69 Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan*, 191.

70 Ibid., 191.

71 For Nasr, "the origin of Islamic art and the nature of the forces and principles which brought this art into being… related to the world view of Islam itself, to the Islamic revelation, one of whose radiations is directly the sacred art of Islam and indirectly the whole of Islamic art. The casual relationship between the Islamic revelation and Islamic art, moreover, is borne out of the organic rapport between this art and Islamic worship, between the contemplation of God as recommended in the Quran and the contemplative nature of this art, between the remembrance of God (dhirallāh) which is the final goal of all Islamic workshop, and the role played by Islamic art of both a plastic and sonoral nature in the life of Individual Muslims and the community or al-ummah as a whole. This art could not perform such a spiritual function if it were not related in the most intimate manner to both the form and content of the Islamic revelation."
Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 4-5.

72 Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, 4.

73 Ibid., 4.
Nasr writes that Islamic art is "Emulated by certain Muslims, for it sees the origin of the inward in the outward and reduces sacred art with it interiorizing power to simply external, social and, in the case of Marxist historians, economic conditions. It can be easily rejected from the point of view of Islamic metaphysics and theology which see the origin of all forms in God, for He is the knower of all things, and therefore the essences of forms of all things have their reality in the Divine intellect. Islamic thought does not allow the reduction of the higher to the lower, of the intellectual to the corporal or the sacred to the mundane."

1.1.3 Pakistani Masculinity, Muslim Pakistani and Pakistani Art

While I mostly identify and refer to participants in my study as 'Muslim Pakistani' and their art as 'Pakistani art', no singular label can incorporate all the identities – including the religious – of a people or art form. My use of these terms is therefore pragmatic, and does not intend to signify a consistent emphasis on local and/or national identifications.

Pakistan is an Islamic state based on religious ideology, meaning that the 'Pakistani' identity is closely tied to the concepts of 'Islam'.[74] In the founding of Pakistan, Islam was perceived as the integral tool for consolidating nationhood and unifying disparate cultural and religious identities. Over time, this consolidation has posed major challenges through various interpretive injunctions of Islamic law, becoming a major cause of Pakistan's identity crisis.[75] In 2015, during a three-day anti-terrorism summit in the holy city of Makkah (Mecca) in Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayeb, the grand imam of Cairo's Al-Azhar University, encouraged identification of historical and "bad interpretations" of the Qur'an and Sunnah [the traditions and sayings of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) in order to prevent the spread of Islamist extremism.[76] I started this research with an argument that it is not the revelatory Qur'an and the Sunnah that need revision, but the fallible human interpretations of these. The diverse practices of Muslim countries more often reflect cultural influence rather than the spirit of Sharia. Fortunately there is an emerging trend to improve our understanding of gender equity, which is based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, and not on imported un-Islamic values or the existing oppressive status quo of many parts of the Muslim world.[77]

In relation to Islamic Art, the word 'form' is used throughout this thesis in the traditional sense as employed from by A. K. Coomaraswamy in the numerous studies on traditional art. On the meaning of form see On the meaning of form see:
Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and the Sacred* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1981), 26.
L. P. Kollar, *Form* (Sydney 1980), 17, 5.

74 Mohammad Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1967), 58.
Mujeeb demonstrated that contrary to widespread belief and despite some forced conversions, Islam in the Sub-continent did not spread by the sword and the partition of Pakistan is a prime example of a political and democratic resolution.

75 Apporva, Shah, "The Most Dangerous Place: Pakistan's Past, Pakistan's Future," *World Affairs*, May/June, 2011, (accessed January 15, 2012) http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/most-dangerous-place-pakistan's-past-pakistan's-future

76 Lucy Westcott, "Senior Muslim Cleric Calls For Islamic Teaching Overhaul to Curb Extremism," *The Newsweek World*, February 02, 2015, (accessed Feb 12, 2015) http://www.newsweek.com/senior-muslim-cleric-calls-islamic-teaching-overhaul-curb-extremism-308918

77 Jamal A. Badawi, *Gender Equity in* Islam (American Trust Publications, 1995).

1.2 Real Men in Islam: The Noble and The Chivalrous

1.2.1 Mardangi and Muruwah: Positive and Negative Islamic Masculinity

In Pakistan, the concept of *mardangi* is derived from the Arabic word *muru'a* or *muruwah*, which Western scholars often translate as 'manliness', though it has a far wider significance. Muruwah was a pre-Islamic Arab ideology that fulfilled many of the functions of religion.[78] It helped the Bedouin tribes of the regions of the Hijaz and Najd, who lived in fierce competition for the basic necessities of life, cultivating a communal spirit:

> Muruwah meant courage, patience, endurance; it consisted of a dedicated determination to avenge any wrong done to the group, to protect its weaker members and defy its enemies. To preserve the honour of the tribe, each member had to be ready to leap to the defence of his kinsmen at a moment's notice and to obey his chief [sayyid] without question … Above all, a tribesman had to be generous and share his livestock and food. … A truly noble Bedouin would take no heed for the morrow, showing by his lavish gifts and hospitality that he valued his fellow tribesmen more than his possessions[79]

As brutal as it undoubtedly was, muruwah had many advantages. It encouraged a strong egalitarianism and an indifference to material goods. However by the sixth century, which Muslims call the *Jahiliyyah* (the time of ignorance), there was a growing puritanical restlessness where each tribe had inherited its own rules, many of which led to reckless and extreme behaviour.[80] Muruwah was unable to respond.

Mardangi encapsulates a positive masculinity, which Imam al-Qushayri (r.a.) relates through muruwah to Islamic chivalry.[81] Though there is also a negative mardangi, which equates to a selfish attitude and the unlawful use of strength, bravery and intelligence to fulfil

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78 Arabs worshipped pagan deities and had shrines, but they had not developed a mythology that explained the relevance of these gods and holy places to the life of the spirit. They had no notion of an afterlife but believed instead that 'darh', which can be translated as 'time' or 'fate', was supreme – an attitude that was probably essential in a society where the mortality rate was so high.

79 Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 19.
Also see: Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (New Delhi: Adam Publishes).

80 Armstrong, Muhammad: *A Prophet for Our Time*, 19-20.
Also see: Karen Armstrong, *Islam: a Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2002).

81 *"The root of chivalry is that the servant strives constantly for the sake of others. Chivalry is that you do not see yourself as superior to others. The one who has chivalry is the one who has no enemies. Chivalry is that you be an enemy of your own soul for the sake of your Lord. Chivalry is that you act justly without demanding justice for yourself. Chivalry is [having]… beautiful character."*
Abu 'l-Qasim al- Qushayri, *Principles of Sufism*, trans. B. R. Von Schlegell (Berkeley, Ca.: Mizan, 1990), 192.
Also cited in: Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, 267.

personal desires, to the point where one ultimately becomes disobedient of Allah.[82] Unfortunately, despite desires to revert back to traditional modes of Islamic masculinity, the concept of negative mardangi prevails in Pakistan.

1.2.2 Futuwwah: The Chivalry of the Companions

The word *futuwwah* (*futtuwah; futuwwa*) was not found in the Arabic language at the beginning of Islam. It is derived from the ancient Arabic word *fata*, whose basic meaning is 'young man' or 'handsome and brave youth': one who has reached adulthood, but has not yet arrived at maturity (traditionally achieved at age forty). Fata includes a heroic connotation that has become inseparable from futuwwah.

The prophets are considered the best examples of fata. In the Qur'an, fata was used for Prophet Ibraham (a.s.)[83], owing to his characterisation as a fearless youth whose tribe punished him for destroying their idols by throwing him into the fire. For Imam al-Qushayri (r.a.), this sets an example for the noble youth who breaks the idols (literally) and frees his soul from the commands of evil (nafs al-amara bi al-su').[84] Furthermore, Allah only bestows the title of fata on those who act this way socially and achieve the highest rank of spiritual piety by cleaning their blameworthy soul of selfish impulses. Within Islamic spirituality this is considered the final struggle of achieving piety: where one loves others more than oneself, and loves our Exalted Creator most of all. Following its use in the Holy Book, fata came to signify the ideal of a noble and perfect man who is willing to sacrifice everything for Allah and other followers of Allah. In this sense, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) has been considered the most chivalrous of all men. These ways of fata, or noble manliness, are articulated as futuwwah, or 'chivalry'. Allah made a promise to guide those who seek the path of chivalry, declaring:

> They are chivalrous youths who have faith in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.[85]

According to the Sufis, futuwwah is a code of honourable behaviour that follows the example of the prophets, saints and sages. By adhering to its precepts the student learns detachment from ego. The tenth-century Sufi saint Ibn al-Husayn al-Sulami (r.a.) identified chivalry as the way of the Sufis, arguing in favour of a tradition of *malamati* (self-denial), where the one would give

82 Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, 271-272.

83 Al Qur'an, Surah al-Anbya Chapter 21.

84 Abu 'l-Qasim al- Qushayri, *Principles of Sufism*, trans. by B. R. Von Schlegell (Berkeley, Ca.: Mizan, 1990), 215.

85 Al Qur'an, Surah al-Kahf Chapter 18, Ayat 13.

his life for the sake of a friend and Allah.[86] These teachings reveal the true meaning of compassion, love, friendship, generosity and hospitality, as well as the right actions associated with these virtues. This malamati tradition, I argue is the core of Islamic devotional art.

1.2.3 The Code of Chivalry

In his *Kitab al-Futuwwah*, Imam Sulami (r.a.) laid out the chivalric code of Futuwwah – brotherhood, loyalty, love and honour. From these principles, Caliph al-Nasir al-Din[87] created the first order of spiritual Muslim knights, formally linked to the Sufi orders, they protected the boundaries of the Islamic empire and protected travellers and fought injustice. The following codes are a truncated version of futuwwah, which a young man must exemplify to be recognised as chivalrous. A chivalrous man:

1. *brings joy to the lives of friends and meets their needs.*
2. *responds to cruelty with kindness, and does not punish an error.*
3. *does not find fault with his friends.*
4. *is relaxed and openhearted with his brothers.*
5. *is generous.*
6. *keeps up old friendships.*
7. *looks after his friends and neighbours*
8. *is lenient with his friends except in matters of religion.*
9. *invites guests, offers food and is hospitable.*
10. *respects his friends and shows his respect for them.*
11. *is truthful.*
12. *is satisfied with little for himself and wishes much for others.*
13. *keeps his word and what is entrusted to him.*
14. *understands that what he truly keeps is what he gives away.*
15. *shares in the joy of his brothers.*
16. *is joyful and kind with his brothers.*
17. *thinks little of himself or his good deeds.*
18. *treats people as he would wish to be treated.*
19. *concerns himself with his own affairs.*
20. *seeks the company of the good and avoids the company of the bad.*

86 Akbar Naqvi, *Images and Identity* (Karachi, Oxford, 1998), 343-442.

87 Reigned 576–622/1180–1225

As outlined by eleventh-century Sufi scholar Khwaja ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari (r.a.)[88] in *Manazil al-sa’irin* (*The Stations of the Wayfarers*), there are three degrees of perfection in Futuwwah:

> *to abandon quarrelling, to overlook slips, and to forget wrongs.*
> *to seek nearness to the one that goes far from you, honour the one who wrongs you, and find excuses for the one who offends you.*
> *to travel the path you do not depend upon any proofs, you do not stain your response [to Allah] with [any thought of] recompense, and you do not stop at any designation in your witnessing.*[89]

The codes of futuwwah are timeless, and their essence is part of jalāl/jamāl. Their focus on loyalty and love has potential today to restore balance to Islamic masculinity.

1.3 Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.): The Model of Perfection

Islamic theology clearly holds the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) as an extraordinary man. He was born in a time of *jahiliyyah* (the pre-Islamic period of Ignorance), where violence and explosive arrogance were considered the mark of muruwah.[90] But through his character, chivalry and treatment of others, he managed to form a new united community, or *al Ummah*.[91] For Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) was *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (the perfect human being), whom they must emulate through his Sunnah in every aspect of their earthly lives. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) presents Islam’s ideal masculinity.

Descriptions of the Prophet’s appearance, as well as his likes and dislikes, are available for Muslim men to guide them in grooming, conduct, and matters of the heart, mind and soul. Despite such detailed descriptions, Muslims will not create realistic portraits of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.); this is not just a sign of respect but a core Islamic belief that making images of the Prophet is blasphemous. Such concepts and dualities have divided the scholars of Islam. I will illustrate in Chapter Two that the presence and *shabhi* (image) of Prophets have

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88 Khwaja ‘Abd Allah al-Ansari (d. 481/1088) was a great Persian Sufi and scholar. His most famous work is his Munajat (Intimate Entreaties), written in rhymed Persian prose. His description of the spiritual stations, Manazil al-sa’irin (The Stations of the Wayfarers), in Arabic, was one of the most influential ever written on this subject. See Murata, *The Tao of Islam*.
Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Sulami, *The Book of Sufi Chivalry, Futtuwah*, trans. Sheikh Tosun Bayrak al-Jerrahi al-Halveti (New York, Inner Traditions International), nmusba.wordpress.com
Online access: Online access: https://archive.org/details/chivalry
PDF: https://ia902509.us.archive.org/12/items/chivalry/chivalry.pdf

89 Cited in Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, 267-268, with minor modifications to the translation.

90 Armstrong, Muhammad: *A Prophet for Our Time*, 19-20.

91 Ibid.

been illustrated in both classical painted manuscripts and popular devotional posters and are available today in some part of Iran and Pakistan.

The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) loved beauty and set an example for the importance of cleanliness.[92] He regularly used his favourite scent, musk, frequently cleaned his teeth with *siwaak*,[93] used kohl for eyes, especially *Ithmid* (antimony), saying "it clears the sight and causes the eyelashes to grow."[94] The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) also carried a mirror and comb, oiled his hair and beard, and advised his companions to do the same. He said: "He who has hair should honour it."[95] Regarding the Prophet's beard, his grandson Hassan stated "He had a thick, dense beard."[96] The Prophet liked to wear white,[97] preferring the long shirt (*kurta*), and wearing *taqiyah* (also *kufi* or *topi*; skull cap) and *amama* (turban) which is now translated as *keffiyeh*, a head scarf that symbolises Arab identity and is now popular across the Muslim World. It is said that the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) was polite and forgiving. He laughed when something was funny, however "his laugh was usually no more than a smile" and in intense situations, "his molars could be seen." His weeping was similar to his laugh; just as he did not laugh aloud, he neither sobbed nor raised his voice, "his eyes shed tears and the murmur of his chest could be heard."[98] Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) identified the Islamic norms of masculinity. In the following Hadith, Prophet disclosed the value of such norms in a peaceful and spiritual masculinity:

> *Yahya related to me from Abdullah ibn Abd ar-Rahman ibn Ma'mar Al-Ansari that Ata Ibn Yasar said that the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "Shall I tell you who has the best degree among people? A man who takes the rein of his horse to do Jihad in the way of Allah. Shall I tell you who has the best degree among people after him? A man who lives alone with a few sheep, performs the prayers, pay the zakat, and worship Allah without associating anything with him.*[99]

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92 One account describes the Prophet's attitude to such matters: "The Prophet once intended to go to his companions and so he put on his turban and dressed his hairs...He said: 'Yes, Allah loves the actions of His servant who refines his body in order to meet his friends and brothers."
Imam Ghazali's Ihya Ulum -Id –Din, *The Book of Religious Learning*, vol. III (New Delhi: Islamic Book Centre, 2001).

93 Also miswak, a natural tooth-stick made from a twig of Salvadora perssica tree (Arak in Arabic).

94 Iman Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Healing with the Medicine of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)*, trans. Jalal Abual Rub (Dar-us-Salam Publications 2003), 248.

95 Harun Yahya, "The Outward Appearance of Prophet (Saas)," *The Prophet Muhammd.org*, (accessed December 20, 2011) http://www.theprophetmuhammad.org

96 Yahya, "The Outward Appearance of Prophet (Saas)."

97 The Prophet Muhammad occasionally used of shades of green, earthy tones and black.

98 Admin, "The Prophet's Guidance in Grooming, Dress, Appearance," *Mercyprophet.com*, (accessed January 05, 2012) http://mercyprophet.org/mul/node/1173

99 Iman Malik ibn Ans, *Al-Muwatta of Imam Malik ibn Anas: The First Formulation of Islamic Law* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 173.

The importance of the concepts of 'lowering the gaze' in Islamic for both gender is clearly articulated in Quran and explained by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.). Allah instruct his Prophet:

> *Tell the believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. That is purer for them. Lo! Allah is aware of what they do.*[100]

and

> *And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms...*[101]

The primary message of lowering of one's gaze is to instruct both men and women to behave modestly in their public and private affairs. The lowering one's gaze here not only identified as just the purity of eyes (bring down the intensity of looking), but also purity of the tong (lowering of voice), ears (muffling of sound), thoughts (restraining from desires) and guarding of private parts. Lowering gaze means to bring down the intensity of looking or to use some restraint while looking. Furthermore, contrary to popular belief, 'lower of gaze' in Islam does not mean that men and women are strictly prohibited look one another, but is an act of respect and modesty. Such a concept also becomes a point of contention in the discussion of chastity, primarily leading to the issues of the veiling of women and uncontrollable desires of men. Such concepts of purification and cleanliness of the body and appearances such as cloths, male grooming, and the use of perfume and proper antiquates for Muslim men are argued in my art and provide signs and symbols, identifying and constructing pious Islamic masculinities and current state of ruptured and radical Muslim male.

It is to be noted that there is no strong recommendation of marriage and procreation – topics that are now used to uphold hegemonic masculinity. Idealised masculinity produces an image of each man happily married to a chid-bearing wife, but since this does not often match reality, the myth of an ideal masculinity is shattered.[102] Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) performed domestic chores, an aspect of interior sociality that in patriarchal Islam is associated purely with female space. The Prophet's own actions contradict this reading. The evidence of this is given by Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.a.w.) wife Hazrat A'isha (r.a.), who when asked after the Blessed Prophet's death what he did at home when not at prayer replied "He served his family: he used to sweep the floor, and sew clothes" (Bukhari, Adhan, 44.). On this

100 Al Qur'an, Surah an-Nur Chapter 24, Ayat 30.

101 Al Qur'an, Surah an-Nur Chapter 24, Ayat 31.

102 Amanullah De Sondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities* (London: Bloomsburg, 2014), 10.

basis, jurists of the Shafi'i school of Islam defend the woman's right not to perform housework.[103]

After Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.), the prime examples of true manliness for Muslims are his companions, particularly the four caliphs. While they embody futuwwah, these men are considered only partial reflections of the code in comparison to the Prophet. It was the caliphs' mission to emulate him, as it is ours today. As the first young man to embrace Islam, it was 'Ali (r.a.), the last of the caliphs, cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.), who set the best example of how to emulate his manly perfection. Known for his selflessness, courage, generosity, loyalty, wisdom and honour, Ali (r.a.) was a noble and invincible warrior. However it has been said that it was not his strength that made him great, but his chivalry and purity of intention and heart.[104]

1.4 The Many Interpretations of Islamic Gender: Masculinity in Crisis

Masculinity is constructed upon the notion of having an opposite, assumed to be women. Generally in gender studies, femininity is used as the shield, if not also the foil of masculinity.[105] Such images are prevalent in Islamic tradition, namely through the story of Adam and Hawa (Eve), where 'man' first stood for all of humanity until woman was created form his own ribs to be his companion. Although Islam does not blame woman for the fall of man, the Western Catholic idea of Eve's sin has filtered into mainstream Islamic culture, rendering women as the other, the abject, the foil.

While Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) is *al-Insān al-Kāmil* and should be emulated, Islamic scholars agree that there is no single masculinity even in the Qur'an[106] nor single cohesive viewpoint of Islamic gender roles. This is owing to varied interpretations of the Qur'an, contested weak Hadith, and the influence of different sects and cultural contexts. For example, the Islamic sects of Salafi and Wahhabi are associated with strict literalist and

103 Abdal Hakim Murad, "Islam, Iriguaray, and the Retrieval of Gender," *Masud.co.uk*, April 1999, (accessed 20 January 2012) http://masud.co.uk/ISLAM/ahm/gender.htm

104 To give an example, in one battle, 'Ali (radiya'Llahu 'anhu) had overpowered an enemy warrior and had his dagger at the man's throat when the man spat in his face. Immediately 'Ali (radiya'Llahu 'anhu) got up, sheathed his dagger, and told the man, "Taking your life is unlawful to me. Go away." The man was amazed, "O 'Ali," he asked, "I was helpless, you were about to kill me, I insulted you and you released me. Why?" "When you spat in my face," our master 'Ali (r.a.) answered, "it aroused the anger of my ego. Had I killed you then it would not have been for the sake of Allah, but for the sake of my ego. I would have been a murderer. You are free to go." In the end the enemy refused Ali's offer of mercy and attacked him again, even injuring him, and Ali (r.a.) killed him in self-defence. That does not lessen the deep chivalry and pure intention for the sake of Allah that Ali (r.a.) displayed in battle.

105 De Sondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 11.

106 Sociologist R. W. Connell's full hierarchy of masculinities (hegemonic, subordinate, marginalised and complicit) can be found in the lives of the most important prophets who appear in the Qur'an.

puritanical approaches to Islam.[107] In these groups men are appointed *wali* (guardian) and responsible for women. Conversely, spiritualists see feminine expression as the inner hidden dimension of Islam. Al-Ghazali[108] declared there to be a great sense of equality between men and women in Islam; it is not God but men who made traditions that falsely attributed themselves as core of the Islamic faith, stifling women through domestic service and ultimately degrading the entire Muslim community.[109]

The scholarly focus on gender issues in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia within the last four decades has been almost exclusively on a quest to understand the construction of Muslim femininity, the regulated and oppressed female body, the need for her to cover herself with *Burqa* (covering the entire body and face) and *Niqab* (covering the face and hands) as part of Islamic idea of hijab, and even the practice of female genital mutilation.[110] The handful of contemporary scholarships that are available in the area of Islamic and Pakistani masculinity[111] where as text such as Darsi Bahishti Zewar (Lesson of Heavenly Ornaments for Men) by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (Rehmatullah Alahi) is a recognised Islamic literature for men. It is a male version of Maulana's Bahishti Zewar (translated as Heavenly Ornaments) which was written especially for the education of girls and women in the *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) and describes the Five Pillars of Islam and also highlights more obscure principles. Popular and heavily read and distributed in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent among Hanafi Deobandi Muslims, it is a popular practice to present this volume to a new bride. The motivation behind this gesture is that the young woman is taking up a new identity and new life as a wife and mother-to-be. She should be well versed in the rites, rituals and tradition of Islam. Darsi Bahishti Zewar revisits the same contents but compiled with a male audience in mind.

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107 Lamia Rustum Shehadeh, *The Idea of Women in Fundamentalist Islam* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).
Salafi is literally that which pertains to ancestry whereas Wahhabi originated and is strongly followed in Saudi Arabia, eventually influencing Islamisation in Pakistan under Zia-ul-Haq.

108 Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhamamd Al Ghazali (c.1058–1111) is an eleventh-century theologian and philosopher

109 Yusuf Sidani, "Women, work, and Islam in Arab societies," *Women in Management Review*, no. 7 (2005): 498-512, (accessed January 30, 2014)
http://www.emeraldinsight.com/journals.htm?issn=0964-9425&volume=20&issue=7&articleid=1524037&show=html
Also see: Abu Hamid Muhammad Ibn Muhamamd Al Ghazali, *Al-Haq Al-Murr-The Sour Truth* (Cairo: Shurook Publishing, 1989).

110 Ouzgane, *Islamic Masculinities*, 1.
It is observed that such issues are highlighted in books by Fatna Sabbah's Woman in the Muslim Unconscious (1984), Fatima Mernissi's The Veil and the Male Elite (1987), Fedwa Malti-Douglas's Women's Body, Woman's Word (1991), Marina Lazreg's The Eloquence of Silence (1994), and Leila Ahmed's Women and Gender in Islam (1992) which is marked as the only historical account of the development of Islamic discourse on women and gender from the ancient to the present; and an analysis of gender relations in Algeria from pre-colonial times to the present. In Pakistan, work by Durre S. Ahmed, Gendering the Spirit: Women and Religion and the Post-Colonial Response (2002) is marked as the feminist discourse about the female body in Islam.

111 Durre S. Ahmed's *Masculinity, Rationality and Religion: A Feminist Perspective* (1994), Lahougine Ouzgane's T*he Crisis of Islamic Masculinities* (2008), Maleeha Aslam's, *Gender-Based Explosions: The Nexus between Muslim Masculinities, Jihadist Islamism and Terrorism* (2012) and most recently, Amanullah De Sondy's *Masculinity, Rationality and Religion* (2014). Kamal al-Din Husayn Kashifi's *Royal Book of Spiritual Chivalry* (1999) are often referenced and quoted in the discourse of Islamic masculinity and chivalry.

The Urdu version is prepared specifically for male students and is taught as part of the syllabus in some Madrasas across Pakistan.

Muslim feminists, Fatema Mernissi, Durre S. Ahmed and Ahmed Barlass agree that women's rights are a problem in the Islamic world because they conflict with the interests of a male elite who fear losing power over women. They see men interpreting Islamic texts to create a social order that allows men control of public and economically productive spaces and where a woman brings dishonour if she steps outside of her domestic space.[112] On the other hand, Heba Ra'uf challenges any gender-based separation, demands new interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunnah to reflect the advancement of Muslim women's causes and identifies Muslim veil as an important point for dismantling both Islamic femininity and masculinity.[113] For Ra'uf, wearing a veil is a sign of liberation that "neutralises women's sexuality in the public sphere, making clear that they are citizens – not sexual objects."[114] In contrast, for Nawal El-Saadawi "veiling and nakedness are two sides of the same coin. Both mean women are bodies without mind."[115]

Ironically, the discussion of gender ambiguities such as effeminate men and female masculinities, either queer or straight, which are compellingly addressed by Western scholars, remain behind the veil in Islamic gender discourse or identified under the hegemonic masculinity. The impact of western feminist and gender theorist and their seminal scholarships notably Rowan W. Connell's 'hegemonic' masculinity'[116] and Judith Butler's influential concept of gender as 'fluid' and 'performative'[117] on the reading of Islamic masculinity cannot be denied. Furthermore, such ideas are particularly fitting for this research as the primary concept of jalāl and jamāl gender archetypes dismantles the Islamic gender roles as essentialist.

The sociologist R. W. Connell identifies the importance of the concepts of an opposite 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and argues that without this opposition it is not possible to "talk about the questions of gender ambiguity that have been so important."[118] In *Masculinities* (2009), she identifies male identities in a set, which is neither permanent nor consistent, but a mix of practices that can be clarified and reconstructed. Such a conceptualisation of a

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112 Nawal El-Saadawi, *The Nawal El-Saadawi Reader* (London: Zed books, 1997).

113 Karim El-Gawhary, "It is time to launch a new women's liberation movement – an Islamic one (an interview with Heba Ra'uf)," *Middle East Report*, November-December 1994, 26-7

114 J. Polter, "A place apart", *Sojourners Magazine*, May–June 1997, (accessed July 11, 2013) Available at: www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj9705&article=970521

115 Nawal Sa'dawi, *The Nawal El Saadawi Reader* (New York, Zed Books, 1997), 140.

116 R. W. Connell, *Masculinities,* 2nd ed. (Berkley: University of California Press, 2005), 77.

117 Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). Also: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminisms and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) Judith Butler, 1993. *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London: Routledge, 1993).

118 De Sondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 11.

multiplicity of masculine identities aligned with the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which, in a given society such as Pakistan, is often associated with patriarchal cores of power[119], and lead to crisis of masculinity. Such varied feminist approaches to ideas of 'masculinity', investigative male practices and discourse, allow for wider experiences from male and female viewpoints in gender studies and have informed other areas.[120] Such as in the art experience and criticism that requires the different perceptions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.[121]

The concept that male or female identities are fluid social constructs that vary according to cultural and ideological perceptions in a particular context[122] are drawn from Judith Butler's fluid gender and gender performativity. This fluidity rejects gender as an essential or natural category and Butler declares it as gender performance or gender performativity.[123] She defines performativity as "…reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains."[124] Gender performances and changing practices do not operate on a set of norms, but cause "attitudes to change" and essentialist 'abnormalities' of behaviour as 'alternatives' in a specific culture under specific norms, ethics and the kinds of doctrine circulating in the culture.

In the West, according to De Sondy, responses to feminism and gay liberation have led to some confusion in masculinity. However, identifying it as the crisis and heavily contested area, the Islamic masculinity requires an understanding of the gender issues of sexuality and family in Islam. He demonstrates that the group that misinterprets Qur'an is "mostly like men since it has been the business of men in the past and present to comment on the Quran."[125] De Sondy explores the heterogeneous nature of Pakistani Islamic and Muslim masculinities as dominant or 'hegemonic' masculinity reflected in religious, political and social order. He traces it in the works of Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi[126] and concludes "Mawdudi hardened the conceptions of Islamic masculinity by aggressively interpreting scripture, collapsing it with historical precedent, and presenting his own options and ideas as theology – as tantamount of God's opinions and ideas."[127] Similarly, writings such as Bahishti Zewar (Heavenly Ornaments), a volume of Islamic belief written by Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, further propels

119 Connell, 2005. *Masculinities*, 191-192.

120 Ibid., 14.

121 J. Blackmore, '"In the Shadow of Men': The Historical Construction of Administration as a 'Masculine' Enterprise,'' *In Gender Matters in Education Administration and Policy: A Feminist Introduction*, ed. J. Blackmore and J. Kenway (London: Falmer, 1993), 27–47.

122 Tim Edward, *Cultures and Masculinities* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

123 Linda Skrla, ''The Social Construction of Gender in the Superintendency,'' *Journal of Education Policy* 15 (2000): 293–316.

124 Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

125 De Sondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 68.

126 An influential twentieth-century Pakistani theologian who construct the archetype of man as breadwinner and woman as housewife, with the family as the only basis of social structure, built around sex segregation and traditional gender relations.

127 De Sondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 12.

men's status as provider and head of a family, making him the guardian responsible for women's bodies.

To further elaborate upon Connell's opposites, and man and woman being considered as ideal partners, Riffat Hassan's uses the term *zauj* (mate), which in Qur'an is to describe all men and women in the context of human creation. She further demystifies the Hadith heavily quoted by traditionalists to elevate man's status to God. In this, Prophet Muhammad said that "had it been permitted for a human being to bow to anyone except God, it would be to her husband when he enters into her." She argues

> *A faith rigidly monotheistic as Islam cannot conceivably permit any human being to worship anyone but God, therefore the hypothetical statement, "If it were permitted…" in the above cited hadith, is, ipso facto, as impossibility. But the way this hadith is related makes it appear that if not God's, at least it was the prophet's will or wish to make the wife prostrate herself before her husband, Each word, act or exhortation attributed to the prophet is held to be sacred by most of the Muslims in the world and so this hadith (which in my judgment seeks to legitimizes shirk: associating anyone with God – an unforgivable sin according to the Quran) become binding on the Muslim woman.*[128]

This brings us to the topic of the ideal masculinity in Islam, which as illustrated above fiercely informs the construction of Pakistani male identity as well the representation of male and female bodies in Pakistani art.

1.5 The Unconventional Masculinity: Revisiting Gender Roles in Qur'an and Sunnah

Muslim feminists have challenged the way God and the Prophet's life are used to strengthen the current state of Islamic patriarchy.[129] Such tactics are used by both progressives and conservatives, such as Mawdudi, to lift their own position under a gender paradigm where "to be fully human, a moral agent, and public leader, one must be male."[130] Maleness has become a means to power, but Muslim feminists believe that this power is not complete, urging men to realise that they yield equal power in relation to women and no power in submitting to God.[131] For men, reading a false semblance to God, as argued earlier, has become indistinguishable

128 Quote cited in De Sondy, *Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 87-120.

129 De Sondy (2014), Ahmed (2012, 2009, 2006)

130 De Sondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 68.

131 Ibid., 68.

from God's word itself, the *shahada*: "There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God", which men are required to utter everyday as part of their prayer performances. This indicates that the limited understanding of the Qur'an among Pakistan's general populace stems from the fact that despite being able to recite from the Qur'an, the role of submission and *tawhid* to which both men and women are expected to comply conflict with its principles. Sovereignty and rule are also associated with the male because of the widespread understanding that God is male. Feminists have challenged the common assumptions about God's gender and returning to the scripture itself have found this to be questionable:

> *The Qur'an's tireless and emphatic rejections of God's sexualisation/engenderment – as Father (male) – confirm hat God is not male, or like one. However, if God is not male or like one, there also is no reason to hold that God has any special affinity with males (thus positing of such an affinity allow men to claim God as their own and thus to project onto God sexual partnership.*[132]

De Sondy demonstrated that with the portrayal of prophet's personality and family, specifically his views, situations varied "producing no recognizable singular Qur'anic masculinity, at the very least with respect to social and kinship responsibilities."[133] Compassion, love and forgiveness are examples of his venerable and soft side contradicting the patriarchal construction of manhood as brought to focus by Muslim feminists.[134] Mernissi has argued that the Prophet's heroic qualities are driven from his human vulnerabilities, which inspired his contemporaries and Muslims to this day.[135] Virility is another aspect of Prophet Muhammad's life[136] that increasingly poses challenges for both Western and Islamic scholars. Despite the fact that Prophet himself spoke clearly on the matter of sexual relationship, any description or argument, even in favour, is now marked with blasphemy. The virility of the Prophet as an attribute of his manhood has been noted in all that eight traditions of the Hadith highlight the superior sexual performance of the Prophet.[137] This concern with virility and fertility as markers of manhood is also seen in the common Muslim practice of measuring men by the number of their male offspring. Once again, such form of 'mythical' and 'magical' Islamic masculine

132 De Sondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 118.

133 Ibid., 13.

134 "The Prophet was unconventional by the hyper-masculinist standards not only of traditional Arab culture, but also by modern ones, that disparage tenderness, gentleness, and humility in men." De Sondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 88. Also: Asma Barlas, *Believing Women in Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 122.

135 Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Isla,* (Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1991).

136 Lahoucine Ouzgane suggested that virility emerges as the very essence of masculinity in the novels and stories of some of the Arab region's most imminent writers, both male and female. See: Ouzgane, *Islamic Masculinities*.

137 Ruth Roded, "Alternate images of the Prophet Muhammad's Virility," in *Islamic Masculinities*, ed. Lahoucine Ouzgane (New York, Zed Books, 2006), 57-58.

identity not only limits the scope to understand the Islamic Masculinities, but allow non-Muslim readers to critique Prophet's life. On the street of Pakistan, the presence of *Hakeem* (Vedic) who have cure for every sexual dysfunction, the plethora of 'sex medicine' ads, posters and graffiti on public walls clearly identify male virility is a problematic issue and thereby masculinity rests upon female sexuality.

1.6 Islamic Masculinity and Sexuality: Dominant and Submissive

Muslim masculinity rests firmly in the exchanges and experiences between Muslim men – specifically the fear of emasculation by other men.[138] This brings in sodomy and homosexuality among Muslim men within the context of fear of emasculation, as Frederic Lagrange writes that sexual intercourse, whether heterosexual or homosexual, does not take place among equals and necessarily involves the exercise of power.[139] By this logic, the attraction of one man to the other of same status can only mean a desire to subjugate within the hierarchies of men. This fear of loss also occurs on a political level where the masculine image of territory is invaded or penetrated resulting in shame and loss of masculine status.

These presumptions permeate through the how male Muslim think. Instead of expressing honour, fearlessness and bravery there seems to be insecurity, vagueness and fear. Sexual performance, sodomy, impotence, domination and subjugation all declare an obsession for power.

In Pakistan, besides representing religious 'masculinity', the secular media also reinforces images of the virile man and adds to this the typical societal image of the 'real man', a macho guy. Over the last decade, this has been found in explicit advertising of 'male grooming' and 'sex medicines' in wall-chalking, newspaper ads, as well as flyers and posters distributed across cities.[140] These ads are transformative guides, or "a journey between milieux"[141], therefore "the male may gain an awareness of his own body as a site of desire."[142]

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138 Durre S Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality: A Psychological View of 'Low' Fundamentalism," in *Islamic Masculinities*, ed. Lahoucine Ouzgane (New York, Zed Books, 2006), 14-15.

139 Frederic Lagrange, "Male Homosexuality in Modern Arabic Literature," in *Imagined Masculinities*, ed. Mai Ghoussoub and Emma Sinclair-Wedd (London: Saqi Books, 2000). 169-198
PDF: http://mapage.noos.fr/fredlag/MHMAL.pdf

140 Durre S Ahmed, "Heroes and Zeros," in *Mazaar, Bazaar: Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*, ed. Saima Zaidi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 99-102.

141 Robert W Connell, "A Very Straight Gay: Masculinity, Homosexual Experience and Dynamics of Gender," *American Sociological Review* 57 (2008): 748.

142 Maurice Patterson, Richard Elliott, "Negotiating masculinities: Advertising and the inversion of the male gaze," *Consumption Markets & Culture* 5 (2002): 231–46.
Sighted in Jonathan E Schroeder, Detlev Zwick, "Mirrors of Masculinity: Representation and Identity in Advertising Images," *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 7 (2004): 21- 52.
Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

Gender identity is consumed "with our eyes, bodies, and minds."[143] According to Schroeder and Zwick men use sight to socialise and "rely on the visual sense for arousal."[144] The power of gaze is highlighted in fashion magazines, music videos, films, advertisements and poster art, and materialised as "a collective crisis of masculinity, religion, sexuality and love."[145]

1.7 Codified Image of Islamic Manhood in Pakistan

Islam is hardly homogenous, and Pakistani culture itself is variegated, and both conditions influence gender subjectivity. Despite this, the primary discussions of Islam remain focused on its literal meanings as if they were the hallmarks of every Muslim's practice and every Islamic society. The sapiential traditions, with their intricate layers and nuances of Islamic traditions are often lost in our twenty-first-century desire to understand religion as quickly and neatly as possible. This often leads to bewilderment when one is faced with real Muslims who do not fit the expected mould.

In the political context for example in the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's era of Pakistan (1973–1977), which despite being considered by many as liberal, women were conditioned to accept their role as homemakers looking after men who are required to pursue a career. Such gender construct further narrowed by the partial implementation of the Sharia laws under Zia's Islamisation. The situation only improved in semblance when Bhutto's daughter, Benazir Bhutto, and her party gained power after Zia's death in 1988. As a first female prime minister of Pakistan and of any of the Muslim world, she saw her father and his era as an inspiration for her leadership while acknowledging the accepted norms of patriarchy in Pakistan.

A man's profession also facilitates in constructing this neat picture of the 'typical' Muslim. In Muslim Pakistani society, where art is associated with leisurely, feminine and indoor activity. For a male artist today – despite him practicing Islam – Islam is by default a misfit. He is considered a free thinker, poor, non-productive, an idol maker, an alcohol drinker and womaniser, and if single or fails to declare relationship, potentially homosexual. He is characterised a deviant for not entering a masculine profession. Such simplification of masculine gender is grounded in a simplistic approach to Islamic traditions, and cultivated in the fictions of popular culture.[146] In Pakistan such masculinities are also funnelled through the

143 Susan Willis, *A Primer for Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 1991).

144 Jonathan E Schroeder, Detlev Zwick, "Mirrors of Masculinity: Representation and Identity in Advertising Images," *Consumption, Markets and Culture* 7 (2004): 34.
PDF: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.523.2656&rep=rep1&type=pdf

145 Saima Zaidi "Introduction," in *Mazaar, Bazaar: Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*, ed. Saima Zaidi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009), XV.

146 Graham Dawson: "Masculine identities are lived out in the flesh, but fashioned in the imagination… an imagined identity is something that has been 'made up' in the positive sense of active creation but has real effects in the world of everyday relationships,

trauma of partition, border dispute, sectarian conflict and the harsh political realities of the war on terror, resulting in ruptured masculinities that threaten peaceful Islamic communities.[147] Besides demonstrating familiar male dominance, these new identities also express power in the form of militarism and fundamentalism. Many Pakistani men do not agree with the narrow constructs of manliness or support the hyper-masculinities, but they are then forced to think of themselves as secular.[148] The impact of Western culture, MTV and Hollywood brings the idea of 'metrosexuality' to urban spaces, representing 'hairless', 'shaven' and chiselled men as objects of desire, beauty and sexuality. This is an unexplored territory in Pakistan, largely driven by superficial aspects of popular culture among the urban populace. Such secular men, although Muslims, then find themselves left outside the Ummah, the religious Islamic community.[149]

Thus far, under the lens of legalist traditions, a variety of influences have been seen to bear on Islamic conceptions of masculinity, such as the idea that the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) is the perfect man, and the traditional concepts of manliness and chivalry, muruwah and futuwwah. Masculinity is complicated by geopolitical tensions that call upon identity politics and/or the internalisation of other cultures' versions of masculinity. And lastly, there are the differing readings of Islam, which depending on orientation can either narrow the possibilities for masculinity or encompass wider modes of being. Next, I will look into the sapiential tradition of Islam and how it impacts on the reading of Islamic masculinity.

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which it invests with meaning and make intelligible in specific ways. It organises a form that a masculine self can assume in the world (its bodily appearance and dress, its conduct and mode of relating) as well as its values and aspirations, its tastes and desires." cited in Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, Reprint (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 175.

147 De Sondy (2014), Ahmed (2012, 2006).

148 The term 'moderate' was also introduced by General Pervaz Musharf in 2003 but was later rejected as a politicised Western secular mode of interpreting and performing Islam.

149 De Sondy, *The Crisis of Islamic Masculinities*, 13-14.
Using the example of the nineteenth century poet Mirza Ghalib, De Sondy argues that Ghalib's hedonism was not an interference with his religious beliefs but was problematic with his co-religionists who considered him unislamic.

CHAPTER ONE

PART II: The Sapiential Tradition

There are ninety-nine names of Allah; he who commits them to memory would get into Paradise. Verily, Allah is Odd (He is one and it is an odd number) and He loves odd numbers. And in the narration of Ibn 'Umar [the words are]: "He who enumerated them."[150]

150 Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj Nishapuri, *Sahih Muslim,* Book 35, No. 6457.

As illustrated above, the legalistic Salafi and Wahabi versions of Islam demand a strict and literal interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith. Followers of these strands of Islam refute symbolic and metaphorical interpretations, as well as practices like *bidah* (innovation) and *shirk* (sin of practicing idolatry or polytheism). They adhere to what they believe are the original principles of the religion, a pure Sharia law, which every good Muslim must accept. In Pakistan, since Zia's regime, conservatives have often advocated traditional laws, impacting mainstream Pakistani culture. However, people in many rural areas have avoided the scripturalist and literal religious discourse. Instead, they have more fluid religious boundaries that are rich in symbolic meaning. Such fluid practices of Islam have inspired many Pakistani artists, including myself, as they are not bound to the iconoclastic cannon. They show how Islam is far from monolithic, covering a wide and often contradictory spectrum of practices and beliefs, and provide possibilities to demystify gender and dissolve it within God. Viewing this sapiential tradition will expand on typical discussions of Islam and gender, which rarely venture beyond Islamic patriarchy, the control of women bodies, existing issues of Western 'orientalist' fascination, and the preoccupation of defining of Islam as monolithic, unevolved and fundamentalist.[151]

1.8 From Religious Expression to Symbolic Imagination: Islamic Gender Archetype as Poetic Expression

For Durre S. Ahmed, the moralistic and masculine expression of the legalist tradition is countered by the inward-looking and feminine expression of 'mystic' Islam, which has long existed as the sapiential tradition, *Tasawwuf*, or *Sufism*.[152] The words 'Sufi' (lit. woollen-clothed) and 'Tasawwuf' (lit. the path of the Sufis, the woollen-clothed ones) denote something universal that "belongs properly to the realm of the spirit", and the wearer of woollen clothes "presumes an inner quality which was at one time characteristic of those who wore them."[153]

151 Syed Muhammad Iyhab Abdullah, "Buzzing: Post-9/11 Muslim Male Identity, Stereotypes, and Beehive Metaphors" (MFA Thesis, University of New South Wales, 2009).

152 Sa'diyya Shaikh, "In Search of Al-Insān: Sufism, Islamic Law and Gender," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 77, no. 4 (2009): 781-822.
"Sufism is itself a vast and nebulous arena having a range of styles and expressions. Within its enormous rubric, one dimension emphasizes the cultural/imaginative as music, dance and poetry, which play a major role in ecstatic Sufism all over the Muslim world and has firmly become part of its local culture. From across Africa and the Middle East to Central Asia, South Africa and Indonesia, there are innumerable places where this expression of ecstatic abandonment has a central place and Pakistan is no exception to this form of 'low' or 'folk' Islam. But this abandon is, yet again, just one end of a spectrum in Sufism, at the other pole of which are the extremely sophisticated metaphysics of Sufis such as the Andalusian Ibn al-Arabī and the Persian poet and philosopher Jalaluddin Rumi. Both, incidentally, were accused of heresy and threatened by orthodoxy." Quoted from: Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality,"18-19.

153 Abdal Hakim Murad, "The Meaning of Tasawwuf," *Masud.co.uk*, April 1999, (accessed 30 January 2012) http://masud.co.uk/ISLAM/misc/faridi.htm

Sa'diyya Shaikh has argued that Sufism and legalistic Islamic law have an "organic and dialogical relationship", which remains relatively unexplored yet has "potential to enhance a rethinking of gender ethics."[154] She asserts that particular readings of Sufism allow contemporary Muslims "a resource to develop alternative faith-based ways of approaching gender issues within Islamic law."[155]

Sufism has been marginalised in both academia and everyday religious teaching, being suppressed by orthodox legalist Islam and thus plays an ambivalent role in the Islamic revival.[156] While they once constituted "the matrix of the subcontinent's Muslim identity in South Asia", such mystical trends in Pakistan are opposed by fundamentalist versions of Islam, such as that promoted by Mawdudi and his Islamic party the Jamaāt-e Islami.[157] Mainstream Pakistani orthodoxy marks Sufism as the cult of saints, shrines and *pirs* (the Sufi saints and their much criticised descendants). It was only after Pakistan became embroiled in the war on terror that the deeply embedded Sufism in Pakistan's ethos was revisited and promoted as a "natural symbolic ally of power ... an alternative to counter the 'forces of extremism'."[158] Despite ongoing challenges to Sufi politics in Pakistan, Sufism remains Islam's 'secret backbone',[159] with a large following in Pakistan that focuses on the experiential dimension of the divine, rather than cerebral explanation. This identifies "why its modern academic study reflects the Cartesian split in seeing this area as 'subjective' ('gnosis'), by definition, 'anecdotal' or 'soft' data as opposed to the 'hard' (phallic) facts of scriptural texts and commentaries."[160]

The differentiating Islam as legalist or sapiential does not "suggest the superiority of one over the other", but similar to other monotheistic religions such as Judaism, Islam contains "a divinity of inherently multiple facets – 'masculine' and 'feminine' which are different archetypes, styles of relationship with and of the Divine."[161] She further cautions that these archetypes are far more sophisticated than those generally referred to as the 'goddess', the 'divine feminine', the 'hero' or Jung's sage, the 'wise old man'. Sufism's archetypes can only be articulated when the basis of its broad gender distinctions is established. Most important is that however broadly conceived, these archetypes require due significance in contemporary discussions on Islam. The 'feminine' nature of mysticism aims to psychologically 'de-

154 Shaikh, "In Search of Al-Insān," 782.

155 Ibid., 785.

156 They categorically reject possibly of metaphoric or symbolic interpretation of the Divine Names and Attributes (tawḥid al-asma wa'l sifat), a hallmark of the sects such as the Muʿtazilah and the Ashāʿirah.

157 The Jamaat-e-Islami was founded in Lahore in 1941 by the theologian and socio-political philosopher Abul Ala Mawdudi. It is a social Conservative, and Islamist political party. Although it does not have a popular following at present but it is considered to be quite influential and a major movements of Islam in Pakistan along with Deobandi and Brelvi.

158 Shaikh, "In Search of Al-Insān."

159 Carl Gustav Jung, *Seminar on Dream Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 336.

160 Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality," 17.

161 Ibid.

masculinise' human consciousness, feminising it to the extent that heroic attitudes such as control, action and a narrow material notion of rationality must take a back seat to a more contemplative, passive-receptive attitude.[162] Machoism does not bring us closer to God. In God's eyes the genders are equal or indistinguishable. Despite this, the feminisation of religion is a cross-cultural phenomenon that can be traced from shamanistic religions such as Hinduism, all the way to monotheistic religions such as Judaism and Christianity.[163] The literal and symbolic meaning of Islam as 'submission' or 'surrender' suggests this practice.

Ahmed asserts that gender archetypes,[164] specifically masculinity, from the Indian deity of Brahman to the bi-sexual Shiva, and from the Greek god Zeus to the bi-sexual Dionysus, represent "an attitude, a style or structure of consciousness, uniquely embodied but expressed primarily as symbol(s)."[165] She concludes that in order to study gender dynamics and its cultural influences on behaviour, its relationship to the symbolic must be recognised through a study of culture and the arts.[166]

In archetypical theory, the affective power of symbols is ambiguous; that is, individually unknowable and difficult to explain. Ahmed argues this expression as 'symbolic imagination' such as, death, as 'an ultimate mystery that can only be known in terms of a 'sense of the sacred', which itself is applied to other 'unknown' mysteries such as life itself and forms the basic grounding of religion. Interestingly enough, once death occurs, the body also becomes the ultimate symbol of repulsion; it becomes abject. In Islam, death transforms the body from an object of desire into a reminder that the body was a clay vessel holding a sacred force that has been returned to its creator.[167] Death returns the body to an abject state in creation. In essence, "symbols say that which cannot be said in any other way", which phenomenologically identifies the symbolic as "both a psychological, physical (literal), as well as transcendental/metaphysical reality"[168] because "truth is always poetic in form, not literal but symbolic."[169]

162 Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality," 18.

163 J Hillman *In Search: Psychology and Religion*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1984).

164 Carl Jung introduced the term 'Archetype' in 1919.

165 Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality," 13.

166 Ibid.

167 In Islamic burial tradition, the deceased body deserves the utmost respect, and hence the Islamic jurisprudence of gender separation is extended, where the impure dead body must never be looked upon by the opposite sex. During the burial ritual process a man's body should be washed by men and a woman's body by women.

168 H. Corbin in Durre S Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality," 14.

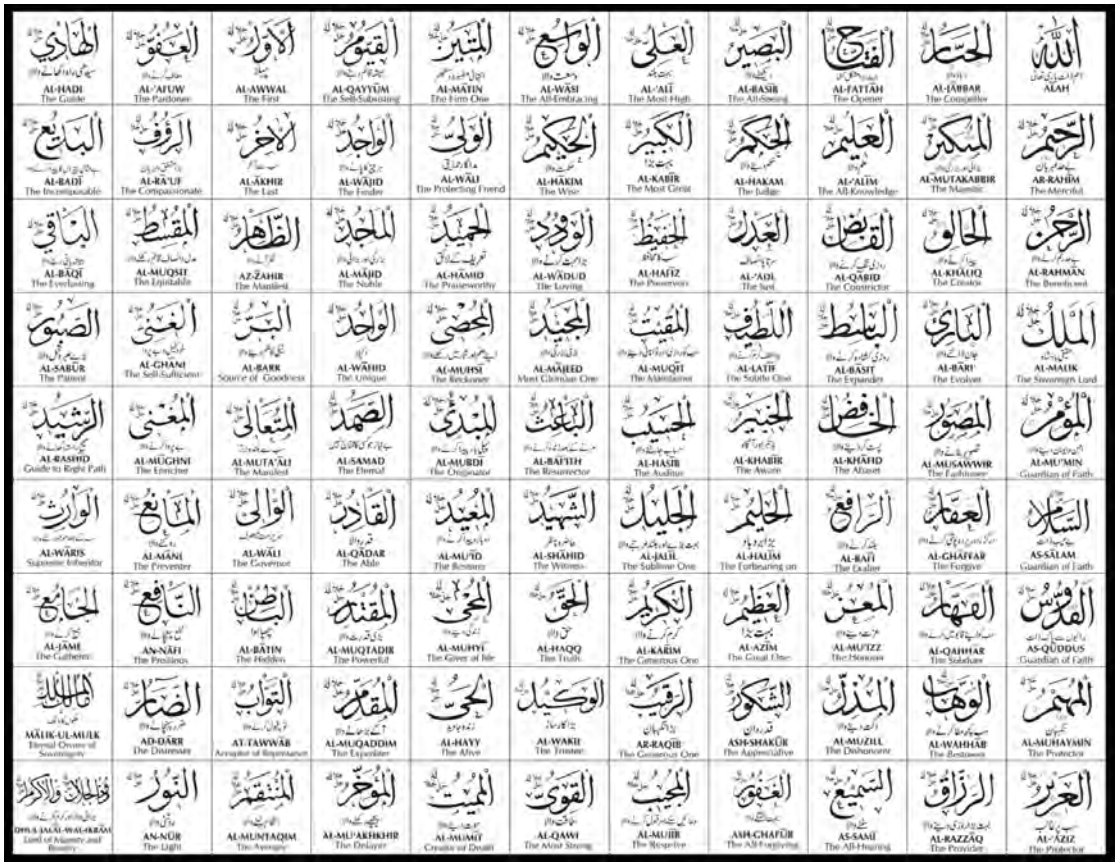
169 Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality," 14.

1.9 *al-Asmā al-Husnā* as *Jalāl*, *Jamāl* and *Kamāl*: The Archetypes of Islamic Gender

The importance of the ninety-nine names of Allah (Table 1) was first demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) as *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (الكَامِلْ اَلإِنْسَانِ), 'the perfect being'.[170] Abu Huraira reported the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) as saying:

> There are ninety-nine names of Allah; he who commits them to memory would get into Paradise. Verily, Allah is Odd (He is one and it is an odd number) and He loves odd numbers. And in the narration of Ibn 'Umar [the words are]: *He who enumerated them.*[171]

Table 1: The 99 Names of Allah with English and Urdu translations – Square grid



170 In Persian, Turkish, and Urdu, this is referred to as Insān-a-Kāmil, which is used as an honorific title to describe the Prophet. Also see, Sunni Sirah on Muhammad as al-Insān al-Kāmil by Muhammad Alawi al-Maliki, al-Insān al-Kāmil in Arabic by Al-Jili. Shia and Shia Ismailis see their Imams as perfect man.

171 Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj Nishapuri, *Sahih Muslim*, Book 035, No. 6457.

Within the system of polarities, al-Ghazālī conceived the foundation of Sufi concepts and jurisprudence (fiqh), referring to the names of Allah. However it was Sufi jurist Ibn al-Arabī who in *Fosus al-Hekam*[172] incorporated the divine names (attributes) into his gender concepts under three name groups: 1) *Asmā jalaliyya* or *jalāl* (divine majesty), such as The Avenger, The Destroyer, The Reckoner; 2) *Asmā jamaliyya* or *jamāl* (divine beauty), such as Great Bestower, The Beautiful, The Source of Peace; and 3) *Asmā kamāliyya* (perfection). These name groups demonstrate potential for transforming the self into the divine form of *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (the perfect being).

Metaphorically, Ibn al-Arabī explains this process by discussing the relationship of God's oneness with his creation, whereby a human being is the mirror and God is the object reflecting in this mirror.[173] When God is reflected in countless mirrors this illuminates His essence in the existent human beings. This makes human beings reflections of His Divine light, leaving no separation between the two. This also confirms that without God's light, His creations cannot reflect and would be non-existent,[174] which opens the path of pure self-consciousness and realisation of the true reality and ultimate oneness.[175] Prophets and saints pursue this goal and are prime examples of the perfect being and reflections of the Spirit of the last prophet, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.). This perfect reflection of the Spirit of Muhammad does not mean that the prophet, saint or aspirant house all of God's attributes, rather that there is a perfect manifestation of a single attribute or attributes in name pairing. With both divine and earthly origins, Ibn al-Arabī calls such aspirant 'perfect beings' the *Isthmus* or *Barzakh*.[176] Being the Isthmus between Heaven and Earth fulfils God's desire to be known, and God's presence can be realised through him by others. Additionally through self-manifestation one acquires divine knowledge, which is the primordial Spirit of Muhammad and its perfection.[177]

Many Sufis, jurists and scholars, including Ibn al-Arabī, followed the Prophet Muhammad's instruction and enumerated the ninety-nine names to form an archetypical gender

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172 William C. Chittick, "Ebn al-'Arabi Mohyi-al- Din Abu 'Abd-Allah Mohammad Ta'l Hatemi," in *Encyclopedia Iranica* (1996): Web. April 03 Apr 2011, (accessed June 2012) http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ebn-al-arabi

173 John T. Little, "Al-Insān al-Kāmil: The Perfect Man According to Ibn al-Arabī," *Muslim World* 77.1 (1987): 43-54.

174 Little, "Al-Insān al-Kāmil," 43-54.

175 Ibid.

176 For Ibn al-Arabi, Barzakh as the intermediate realm or "isthmus". It is between the World of Corporeal Bodies and the World of Spirits, and is a means of contact between the two worlds. Without it, there would be no contact between the two and both would cease to exist. It is described as simple and luminous, like the World of Spirits, but also able to take on many different forms just like the World of Corporeal Bodies can. For details see: Ibn al-Muhyiddin, *The Universal Tree and The Four Birds*, ed. Angela Jaffray (Anqa Publishing, 2006). Barzakh can also refer to a person, Quoting Ibn al-Arabi, Chittick explains that the Perfect Human acts as the Barzakh or "isthmus" between God and the world. For details see: William C. Chittick "The Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of Jāmi". *Studia Islamica* (Maisonneuve & Larose) 49 (1979): 135–157. Barzakh in Shia theology has seven checkpoints and belief that it is incomprehensible to cross all check points, to a certain degree, without crossing the physical world. (for details see Sheikh Abbas Qummi's 'Manazelul Akherah' at ziyaraat.net).

177 Little, "Al-Insan al-Kamil," 43-54.

model.[178] In this model, *jalāli* attributes speak of Allah's majesty, grandeur and power, *jamāli* attributes collate Allah's beauty, compassion and graciousness, and *kamāli* attributes are Allah's Perfection, with Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) being the embodiment of this divine balance. Muslims use the Arabic word *Ya* ('O' in English) before each name such as Ya Rahman or O, Merciful, for oral and written *dhikr* (remembrance) for spiritual solace. As illustrated in Table 2, jalāl/jamāl are a synthesis of Divine mercy, beauty, generosity, compassion and all other beneficent qualities. They work in pairs, such as *Ghazab* and *Rahma* (Wrath and Mercy), or *Adl* and *Fadl* (Justice and Bounty).

Table 2: Examples of the 99 names divided into jalāli and jamāli names[179]

Jalāli Name	Jalāli Attributes	Jamāli Name	Jamāli Attribute
اَلْمُتَكَبِّرُ Al-Mutakabbir	The Supreme The Majestic	اَلرَّحْمَـٰنُ Al Rahman	The Beneficent The Gracious
اَلْمَلِكُ Al Malik	The King, Sovereign	اَلرَّحِيمُ Al Raheem	The Merciful
اَلْعَزِيزُ Al-'Azīz	The Mighty, The Strong One	اَلسَّلَامُ As-Salām	The Peaceful One
اَلْجَبَّارُ Al-Jabār	The All Powerful and Irresistible	اَلْمُصَوِّرُ Al-Muṣawwir	The Fashioner

Invoking Allah's mercy is the central theme of Islamic thought and requires a similarity or closeness known as *tashbih*.[180] Divine mercy is the bestowal of the good, and tashbih allows us to connect, understand, love and move closer to Him through gentle and merciful names, which are symbolic of His unity and concern for all life. However, on the other hand, humans cannot compare with jalāli names as they affirms God's Oneness, establish that He is real, and that everything else is created and unreal. This limit demanded by God's incomparability is *tanzih*. He is the majestic King, awe-inspiring, and all-powerful, with which humans cannot compare. The terms *tashbih* and *tanzih* are used in the Qur'an and Hadith to convey proximity

178 Muhyial-Din Ibn Arabi, *Fususal-Hikam (The Bezels of Wisdom)*, trans. R. Austin (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 216.

179 Kamal is constant in all names as "Perfection".

180 In the 13th century, two theological terms were introduced to express the contrast between the perception of God's nearness and mercy and that of his distance and wrath: *tashbih* (similarity, literally means to declare something similar to something else.) and *tanzih* (incomparability, to declare something pure and free of something else). Both affirm that the world is nothing but a manifestation of the Divine.

to and distance from the Divine in relation to human interaction. To be distant from God is to be controlled by the attributes of jalāl and wrath, whereas closeness is controlled by love and mercy; a desirable rank with God. Mercy is God Himself; wrath represents a secondary attribute that comes to the fore when one allows their soul to be dominated by *al-nafs al-ammāra*[181], rendering God-consciousness lost and in darkness. Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) tells us that God says: "My heavens and my earth embrace Me not, but the heart of My gentle, meet, believing servant does embrace me."[182] He also tells us that inscription on God's throne reads: "My Mercy takes precedence over my wrath."[183]

Love, beauty and friendship with God are major themes in Ibn al Arabī's writings. According to him, Insān al-Kāmil is the cultivation and embodiment of a perfect balance between jalāl and jamāl, and is valid equally for male and female aspirants.

However Ibn al-Arabī also prioritises the embodiment of the jamāli qualities of mercy and love. *Tashbih* suggests that humans reflect, unveil beauty and perform the Divine; as Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) said, "Allah is Beautiful and likes Beauty."[184] This does not disregard God's jalāl, but rather the seeker attempts to dissolve their unrefined jalāli instincts in the ocean of God's jamāli attributes of mercy. Shaikh concludes from the reading of Ibn al-Arabī that:

> *Human beings ascend through the grace of God to true vicegerency that entails a total and harmonious assimilation of all the divine qualities. Within this balance between jamāl and jalāl, the predominance of God's Mercy – a jamāli reality – is ever-present and constantly evoked.*[185]

It must be reiterated that these are generalisations regarding a fraction of an elaborate system of cosmology, theology and spiritual psychology vis-à-vis gender. One should keep in view that while the focus has been on performing the tashbih of jamāl as an essential counterpoint to the tanzih of jalāl, it does not imply that the latter is all negative and the former purely positive. In keeping with the principle of polarity, both jamāl and jalāl have their own positive and negative dimensions operating on the principle of balance. For orthodox ulama, Allah's uniqueness lies in His complete transcendence (jalāl) above creation, with likeness to an emperor on a throne who is powerful and removed from his people who regard him with awe. The response of awe is formal and stems from respect, underlining the Sharia-minded orthodox

181 The soul which commands 'evil'

182 *Sahih Bukhari*, Book 04, Hadith No. 367.

183 *Sahih Muslim*, Book 007, Hadith No. 156.

184 *Sahih Muslim*, Book 001, Hadith No. 164.

185 Shaikh, "In Search of Al-Insān," 178.

scholars' teachings, which focus on the formlessness of God, His uniqueness, His non-human and animal biology, and His qualities that cannot be related to any human qualities. However, this process fails to recognise the beauty and complementary aspect of jamāl, which is informal, binds humanity, and brings Allah closer while remaining in His awe. Allah declares this reality in the Qur'an: "We have adorned the lowest heaven with the beauty of the planets."[186] This makes jamāl an essential counterpoint to jalāl, which are equal polarities complimenting each other in harmony, demonstrating balance. An example of this is the significance of the names *al-Rahman* and *al-Rahim* (Table 2, p. 71). Derived from the same root (*rahm*, the Arabic word for 'womb') they suggest different aspects of mercy, graciousness and compassion, where al-Rahman suggests Allah's link with all creation and al-Rahim the link with believers.

1.10 Variations, Critique and Implication of Jalāl and Jamāl Gender Archetypes

There are various interpretations of the jalāl and jamāl gender archetypes that need attention in order to clarify how such interpretations might impact on art and the artist's gender. It is impossible to completely clarify in such a brief summary, but since the main focus is to understand contemporary Islamic masculinity, one can touch upon some of the ideas in terms of broad generalisations and critiques. We should bear in mind that simplifications are inevitable when talking of a sophisticated and vast body of metaphysical thought developed over more than a millennium across different languages and cultures. Later a critique of the diagrams that are used to represent these concepts to demonstrate the possibilities of each idea, which then will help in locating the possible visual expression of this research.

For Hazrat Inayat Khan, jalāl and jamāl are "twin souls", a "question and an answer within every person", whereas kamāl "equates to non action."[187] He explains that one remains "quiet", "meditative" and "silent" in closing their eyes to reach within, realising "one's twin soul within one's own being."[188] However, identifying 'twin' souls where one is performing and the other hidden requires spiritual guidance and an extinguishing of ego. The implication of these twin souls on the cultural, social and political dimension of Islam is visible as sets of binaries in the paradigms of Islamic ideals, such as good and evil, light and dark, punishment and forgiveness. Historically they also form spiritual ideals such as *shariat-haqiqat*, which is binary and seemingly opposite, but operates on a complementary jalāl and jamāl ideal. For many

186 Al, Qur'an, Surrah as-Saffat Chapter 3, Ayat 6.

187 Hazrat Inayat Khan, "The Teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan: Twin Souls," *Psychology*, Vol. II, (accessed December 2012) http://hazrat-inayat-khan.org/php/views.php?h1=38&h2=16

188 Hazrat Inayat Khan, "The Teaching of Hazrat Inayat Khan."

scholars this binarism equates to the creative resolution of seemingly opposing ideals of Islamist orthodoxy: the Sharia, and its counterpoint the tasawwuf.[189]

For Annemarie Shimmel, the polarity of jalāl and jamāl which she also refers to as *jalvat* (revealed/public) and *khalvat* (hidden/private) is revealed as *tremendum* and the *fascinans*, the *Deus absconditus* and the *Deus revelantus*, the two sides of Divine being.[190]

For Hossain Nasr, jalāl and jamāl equates to the masculine and feminine attributes of the Divine. His distinction lies in the concept of a duality in human nature, male and female, which is always in reference to the studies of gender and are applied in the visual and creative arts. For him, this influence "is essential to the meaning of the human state, without with this distinction in any way destroying the significance of the androgenic reality."[191] However, drawing on the identification of *rahma* with the 'womb' and the maternal aspects of the phenomenal Divine and His beauty, the Sufi tradition habitually identifies God's entire creative aspect as feminine and merciful.[192] This feminine identification further highlights the existing anatomical, biological and physical difference between sexes, as well as the implicit spiritual, psychological and mental actions and performances, identifying the male as jalāl (power, ruler and absoluteness) and the female as jamāl (beauty, mercy, and infinity). For Nasr, such distinctions in Islam give rise to the positive aspect of sexuality, where man and woman complement each other and their love is a means to envisage the love of God. However this gender duality, when integrated in Islam's teachings, is argued as sexual purity and performed as a separation of sexes, as male dominance, the veiling of female beauty from strangers, and a division of social and family duties, as just some examples.[193]

Sachiko Murata differentiates the legalistic Islamic tradition as having a slave-like relationship in which Islam is practiced through the outward commands of Allah, whereas sapiential traditions such as Sufism are a way to find nearness of Allah and practice His commands in His immanence.[194] She argues this as pairing, finding similarities between an Islamic spiritual framework of the unity of Allah, and Taoist and Confucian notions of unity of Tai Chi, which are achieved through two fundamental principles of existence: Yin (active/masculine) and Yang (passive/feminine) which forms a Tai Chi symbol of 'the Great Ultimate'. Murata considered jamāl as Yin (feminine) and jalāl as Yang (masculine), arguing that Islamic and Chinese philosophy is based upon complimentary processes of dialectic

189 Hazrat Inayat Khan, "Volume XI - Philosophy, Psychology and Mysticism Part II *Psychology* Chapter XVI Twin Souls," October 8, 2005 (Available at: http://wahiduddin.net/mv2/XI/XI_II_16.htm)

190 Annemarie Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study Into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy, 1989), 106.

191 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Male and Female in the Islamic Perspective," *Studies in Comparative Religion* 14: (1980),1 & 2, Available at: http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/uploads/ArticlePDFs/351.pdf

192 Murad, "Islam, Iriguaray, and the Retrieval of Gender."

193 Nasr, "The Male and Female."

194 Murata, *The Tao of Islam*,15.

principles and a polarity of existence as a means to meditate upon the underlying unity of Allah.[195]

Though simplification is tempting, the distinction between masculine and feminine shifts the focus from the core idea of jalāl and jamāl. Even Ibn al-Arabī, who explains how jamāl and jalāl is exactly the same for male and female aspirants, shows traces of essentialist gender attitude, which for Sa'diya Shaikh is unavoidable. Although the distinction of masculine/male or feminine/female gender categorisations is ideologically challenging, when viewed from Connell's opposites', it constructs a scenario where women are primarily reflecting jamāli attributes in the Divine mirror while men reflect jalāli qualities.[196] This, I argue, subsequently limits the possibilities for both men and women to reflect and embody the full array of divine attributes. Also, attitudes that power is masculine and beauty is feminine[197] elicit "gender complementarity", "reinforces patriarchal stereotypes" and is "theoretically inconsistent with basic Sufi assumptions on the nature of Insān al-Kāmil."[198] Labelling visions of ultimate reality via traditional gender categories has substantial political and social repercussions, reinforcing a view of women as gentle givers and objects of love, and men as powerful leaders who inspire awe. These interpretations veil the importance of jamāli interactions between all human beings as a central spiritual practice.[199]

Returning again to the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) as Insān al-Kāmil, some gender scholars argue that the prophecy of Islamic Prophets is similar to prophecy in the Hebrew Bible, where the Qur'an concludes prophecy to be essentially a masculine project. Here Islamic scholars argue that Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) as Insān-e-Kāmil is not solely a reflection of his divinely guided life (he did not have a divine status), but as a human being who lives in the world just as every other human being does. Like other chosen prophets, he declared that he is only the reflection of God's will and acknowledged His superiority and recognised his limitations. During the *jahiliyyah*, in seventh-century Arabia, when women had hardly any rights in a male-dominated society, he delivered Allah's message: "And women shall have rights, similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable."[200] For Farhat Naz Rahman, "Equality does not mean identicality: it means equity."[201]

Men and women in Islam have complementary roles with a common set of goals and objectives, and these objectives are demonstrated through Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.). When

195 Ibid.,132.

196 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Male and Female in the Islamic Perspective," Studies in Comparative Religion 14: (1980),1-11.

197 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Garden of Truth* (New York: Harper, 2007), 44.

198 Sa'diyya. "In Search of Al-Insān," 35.

199 Ibid., 32.

200 Al Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah Chapter 2, Ayat 228.

201 Farhat Naz, "Gender in Islam", Islamic World Peace Forum, 1.
PDF: http://en.iwpeace.com/sites/en.iwpeace.com/files/field/files/pdf-1409.pdf

it comes to women's spiritual roles and their potential to achieve the same status as men, Shaikh admits that besides jurist Islam, some Sufi interpretations were also subject to the limitations of a contextual or individual perspective, and hence sexist. As such, it is necessary also to subject these to critical inquiry, measuring them against the central principles of Sufism and Islam.[202] For example, jalāli and jamāli qualities are also demonstrated by women. However, in some Sufi discourse, spiritually advanced women are described as being either quintessentially 'male', a man sent in female form or a woman who has attained the status of 'male.' Despite such masculine attributions, Sufi women such as Umm Zaynub Fātima bint Abbas al-Baghdadiyya (d.1314), Ribat al-Baghdadiyya, Fātima of Nishapur, Umm Alī Fātima (d.849), and Rābia al-Adawiyya (d.801)[203] are highly regarded for their own spiritual attainment. Furthermore, Sufi writers have often complimented the strong religious women of Islam, showing examples of women who embody both jalāli and jamāli qualities.[204]

Many scholars have positioned the ninety-nine names of Allah within the philosophy of Islamic art, design and calligraphy.[205] They argue jalāl, jamāl and kamāl as a unity of the Divine in order to frame their inquiries into Islamic art, design, architecture, objects, and even poetry. In this research, although jalāl and jamāl might contextualise and conceptualise Islamic gender, attempting to frame men and masculinity, not only in Islamic art but also in the contemporary art of Pakistan, gender is generally a broader and an unexplored area. For this to be effectively explored the challenge of drawing parallels between tangible art forms and intangible abstract concepts to form a creative expression.

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202 Sa'diyya. "In Search of Al-Insān," 17-18.

203 Rābia al-Adawiyya was possibly among the first Sufis to advocate the doctrine of pure, disinterested love of God for God's own sake, unattached and dis-interested in its outcome.

204 For example, the Sufi poet and biographer Farīd al-Dīn Attār (d.1221), who described Rābia al-Adawiyya, stated that God does not look at the outward form or gender but at the intention of the heart (Attār, 1966: 40), adding that the first person to enter paradise will be Mary, the mother of Jesus. Sa'diyya. "In Search of Al-Insān," 17.

In another example, Ibn Arabī reports that he frequently visited Yasmīnah or "Shams," a woman in her eighties who lived at Marchena of the Olives. Ibn Arabī proudly informs that her spirituality not only reflects the grace and mercy of God's qualities but also reflects qualities of mastery, strength, nobility, fine discrimination, and control of her soul. She reflects a balance of jamāli and jalāli qualities. Among Sufi masters, she is one among equals and in fact supersedes many of her peers. Sa'diyya. "In Search of Al-Insān."

205 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Titus Burckhardt, Sachiko Murata, Annemarie Schimmel and Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka.

B. Case Study Responses: Part II

Inadvertently, three participants defined 'balanced masculinity' in the spirit of jalāl and jamāl ideal without actually knowing or referring to the model. They emphasised that among Pakistani men, jamāl attributes such as love, compassion and forgiveness are either missing or lost and require restoring. Kazim's definition of masculinity as constructive (performative), or something that is not "black and white", came close to the jalāl and jamāl ideal. For him,

> *[A] man can possess qualities that are associated with the opposite gender and like wise a woman. For example, a man can be strong and sensitive at the same time and a woman can be soft spoken yet also a breadwinner for her family.*

When asked what they think about the idea of balanced masculinity, Qureshi identified it as a balancing act of opposing qualities such as love/hate and harshness/softness. For Rana a balanced man is *"not a macho guy."* He considers himself to be a "metro-sexual" man - someone who is aware of his soft and feminine side.

Commenting on the impact of Zia's regime on art and the male figure, Afroz noted that "his regime had left a negative impact on the county… he caused harm to the country… [and this] impact is represented in the works of artist…[when] the male figure is concerned." Also there was a consistent critique of modernity and post-modernism as the underlining problem in the discourse of gender in Pakistan. Modernity and its impacts on Pakistani art is argued in detail by writers such as Akbar Naqvi in *Images and Identity* up until the 1990s and by Iftikhar Dadi who categorically speaks about the intersection of modernism, Pakistani art and the Islamic art in South Asia.[206] However, the effect of modernity on gender development and visual culture post-9/11 remains an unexplored area.

All five artists agreed that patriarchy and stereotyping of masculinity occur and in some instances are celebrated. Anwar Saeed attributed the prevailing patriarchy as a result of "the feudal system" in Pakistan that also placed a "huge sense of responsibility" over the male. A man "has to be the provider… protector and has to prove himself to be a man at all levels, which is quite a burden." He further speaks about the class system and alluded that "in certain strata of the society it is considered 'manly' to consummate marriage with such force that it bleeds a woman." Although such views are stereotypically linked to the Islamic stance of piety; however, such performance and their validity are more culturally driven and have their roots in the Arab and Middle Eastern tradition that is obsessed with female virginity.

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206 Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Also see, Simone Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan: History, Tradition, Place* (India: Routledge 2014).

Diverse attitudes were recorded, ranging from weak to influential, on the impact of feminism in Pakistan and Pakistani artworks. A sense of unease and unfamiliarity with the subject is also recorded. Despite rejecting feminism's impact on his work, Qureshi informed that he touched upon this subject in 1995, only it related to Afghan women under Taliban rule. Rashid Rana asserts that he can claim and contextualise feminism only as a Pakistani version of feminism. He identified artists such as Salima Hashmi, Lala Rukh and Meher Afroz as forerunner of this movement, also known as 'Women's Movement in Pakistan' or Women Action Forum (WAF).[207] This feminist and women's movement yielded a manifesto during Zia's regime. Interestingly, the members of this movements move away from using the term 'feminist' with its obvious connections to the West. Afroz explained the primary reason behind the movement was to raise a voice against the violence against women under prevailing cultural and feudal customs, which to her have no logic. She explains:

> *With the huge disparity and contrast in lifestyle the woman in Pakistan has suffered greatly, facing the brunt of her standing in utter confusion, neither is her position anywhere in the middle nor has she come out of the clutches of extreme illiteracy or settled comfortably with the idea of modernity.*

She also declined to be called a feminist, and later somewhat dissociated herself from the movement suggesting 'Western feminism' sees violence against women in Pakistan as a religious issue, which is not true. For her, Islam provides rights to both men and women, which are undermined today and she is equally passionate about addressing issues that are about gender equality and existence rather than only issues of women.

Criticising feminists to react and approach their cause in a masculine way, not including men, and their desire to gain power similar to what men hold today, Saeed equates feminism with the fighting of genders. He sees it as power politics, and confirms that it has not affected his work, despite articulating his work from queer and gender as other viewpoints.

The analysis of themes such as the artists' use of the male figure, the nude or semi-nude body, male sexuality, influences of public performance, and the use of signs and symbols of masculinity will be used concurrently throughout the following chapters.

All five participants responded positively on the impact of family role and brotherhood love on construction of positive masculinity. For Imran Qureshi and Rashid Rana, growing up they didn't feel succumbed to any gender segregation in their respective families unless assigned tasks that are specific to their gender. For Rana, being the youngest in the family, the

207 Virginia Whiles, *Art and Polemic in Pakistan* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

bonding with his much older bothers, except one brother, was initially challenging but once he had grown up, the age difference was no longer an issue. For Anwar Saeed, growing up in all male child family, having girls is considered precious. For him, it is difficult for his family to understand who he is, what he has been doing and why he finds not having a sister to talk to is the "most painful aspect of [the] taboo [of being gay]." On the other hand, Meher Afroz remarks that girls make the majority in her family, considered as blessing, they thus all had a stronger dominant position, despite the fact that the birth of a girl is generally perceived in Pakistan as 'undesired'.

Upon enquiring about how religion impacts their gender, four out of five responded and agreed that Islam has a moderate to strong influence on their construction of gender identity and art practice. They all learned how to recite the Quran and were taught basic Islamic education either at mosque or at home. Imran Qureshi considers himself as a religious man but does not see himself enforcing his beliefs and ideas on others. Rashid Rana recalls going to the mosque and going through phases from being strongly to mildly religious but never secular during his teens. Such experience shaped his personality specifically in regards to his gender. For Rana "more or less all religions by default are patriarchal and Islam is no exception" and thinks people use religion as a tool for power gain. For him, the art school experience gave him a wider exposure of life and allowed him to think critically, which he considers religious doctrines potentially deny. He concludes that despite growing up as a Muslim male and going through various phases of the exploration of Islamic religious beliefs, he sees his secular school and art training as a larger contributor in the evolution of his masculinity and identity. Afroz sees her religious identity as a result of her upbringing in India where she was surrounded by Hindus, Muslims and Christians, creating an environment of diverse religious beliefs and secularism for her. Being Shia Muslim, her encounters with Sunni Muslims rendered positive where she never felt any difference in sect or religion. Rather for her having been raised in Lucknow, India, the cultural aspects of religious rituals and celebrations such as Muharam and Ashura was inspiring and influential to her identity and personality. She connects her religious identity to such rituals and the event of Karbala. Ali Kazim, despite being born in a Shia family, recalls studying the Qur'an in a Sunni mosque where he also joined in for congressional daily prayers. This made him inquisitive of the Sunni/Shia divide, which growing up, he never understood until he was seventeen-years old. This confusion is filtered into the perception of his own religious identity. The recognition and clarity of this confusion is translated into his earlier works such as *Topi Walah* series, *Red Amulet, Man with Imam Zamin*

as they all speak about the rituals and performances of Shia and Sunni Islam.[208] He also sees themes of purity and cleanliness (vital parts of Islam and a daily part of the lives of Muslims all over the world) infiltrate in his work and inform his early struggle with the religious identity.

On the topic of spirituality, only Meher Afroz's response was recorded. She sees her life and her art as a journey in which physical presence has no relevance. She sees a reminder of death (metaphorical or physical) as an important marker in the beginning of a spiritual journey. She references her *Zindaan* series of paintings where she used roses to suggest the journey of the spirit as a fragrance. She does not see isolation from the work as spiritual and thinks that "finding the will of Allah can very well be done by staying connected with the world and fulfilling one's responsibilities." For her, when someone gains spiritual insight, it lifts them up, making them lighter and transparent, whereas attachment to the world renders the body and mind heavy and opaque.

In the next chapter I investigate the theorisation of jalāl/jamāl/kamāl in Islamic architecture, poetry and music as a 'poetic expression', developing on work by Pakistani architect and scholar Kamil Khan Mumtaz. His thought-provoking work on poetic expression is developed here to form a theoretical framework for discussion of the representations of Islamic masculinity and the male body in Pakistani art.

208 It is to be noted that none of the writers and critics of Ali Kazim's work reviewed in this research spoke about this confusion and duality. Rather, focus remains on Kazim's formal and technical brilliance. His artistic concerns are argued under the rhetoric of patriarchy, the male body and post-9/11 Islam.

CHAPTER TWO

Holy Qur'an *"We have placed constellations in heaven and made them beautiful for those who look."*[209]

This is a reality of 'beauty' for us to unravel, reflect and copy as it is elaborated in the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) who said: *"God likes that whenever any one of you performs any work he should do it in a beautiful manner."*[210]

209 Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Hijr Chapter 15, Ayat 16.

210 Zainul Abedian S, "Islam and the Fine Arts," in *Islamic Thought* 2:1 and 3:6 (1956): 6.

In Chapter Two, the ideas of Islamic gender are extracted from an elaborate system of theology, cosmology, metaphysics and psychology. Durre S. Ahmed reminds us that while the feminine is arguably the most fascinating, it must be considered as an essential and equal counterpoint to the masculine. Both feminine and masculine have their own aesthetic dimensions, working in harmony to keep the Islamic principle of balance and harmony. This chapter overviews the concepts, aesthetics and visual poetics of Islamic art, which informs my studio work. In Islam, the beauty of art remains independent of the individual artist, it may involve subjective expression, but like nature it remains objective and impersonal. References to these broader traditions, either as quotation or parody, are a key methodology employed here in developing a more robust model for navigating masculine imagery in Pakistan.

2.1 The Visual Illustration of Jalāl, Jamāl and Kamāl

The concept underpinning my work in this research is Islamic archetypes jalāl, jamāl and kamāl, and I initially explored ways of diagrammatically representing this model**.** This posed a number of challenges. A key reference point here was the orientalist scholar Sachiko Murata, who presents the Taoist yin/yang as analogous to jalāl/jamāl, suggesting that they are both visually and conceptually compatible.[211] Both signify heaven and earth, intellect and soul, spirit and nature, and man and woman. God equates to the eternal *tao* (way) and kamāl (perfection). As Nasr points out, there are always references to God's absoluteness and infinity and dualisms such as male and female in the study of the Islamic arts and gender studies.[212]

The yin/yang model has been illustrated as a circular diagram, where yin is black, dark and negative, and yang is white, light and positive [Figs. 2.1-2.2, p. 83]. They appear as binaries that counterbalance each other, creating a complete whole. In their fluid movement, each visually contains a piece of their other. The diagram demonstrates how yin/yang can be visually simplified and potentially made measurable. This marks a major shortcoming when compared to the jalāl/jamāl model of gender archetypes, which I argue cannot be illustrated in such a 'measurable' and simplified way. Unlike yin and yang, the ninety-nine names of Allah that manifest in jalāl/jamāl are not fundamentally opposites, but form an indistinguishable whole. They can each be represented as a calligraphic word, which equates to the balanced pairings of the letter *Alif* (أ) as the pen, and the letter *Nun* (ن)[213] as the ink-pot (with a dot that signifies the

211 Sachiko Murata, *The Tao of Islam: A Sourcebook on Gender Relationships in Islamic Thought* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), 6-7.; Also see: Sachiko Murata and William C. Chittick, The Vision of Islam (New York: Paragon House, 1994).

212 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Male and Female in the Islamic Perspective", in *Studies in Comparative Religion,* 14:1–2 (1980): 9. Full access: http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/uploads/ArticlePDFs/351.pdf

droplet of creation).[214] In Sufi symbolism the standing figure is *alif*, which is "an allusion to the Perfect Man… and the Master who is capable of brining others to the perfection."[215] The Islamic ideal of attaining the in-between state of *al-Barzakh* ('Isthmus', barrier, limit),[216] only requires mastery of one or more of these jalāli and jamāli attributes, not all. Therefore the visual principle of yin/yang cannot completely inform and apply to jalāl/jamāl.

Figure 2.1: Huang, Zhang. China. 1623 Ming dynasty. *An example of Taiji ("supreme ultimate") diagrams*. Woodblock printed book, ink on paper. Photo: The University of Chicago Library. http://www.rightreading.com/writing/taoism-and-the-arts-of-china.htm

Figure 2.2: Artist unknown. 2014. *Modern day version of Ying/yang symbol the circle of Tai-Chi Tu*. Photo: http://tiensbarokahgroup.blogspot.com.au/2013/02/yin-yang-wajah-untuk-deteksi-penyakit.html

The twelfth century Sufi philosopher Ibn al-Arabī drew diagrams to illustrate aspects of his mystical doctrines. In *Insha Al-Dawair* (*The Production of Spheres*), believing that the world is spherical and perfect, he used the circle and the sphere in his cosmographical drawings of the

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213 The letter Nūn is the 14th letter of the Arabic and Hebrew alphabets. In Islamic tradition it is considered to represent al- Hūt, the whale and an ink-pot. See R. Guénon, "The Mysteries of the Letter Nūn,"*Studies in Comparative Religion* 14:1–2 (1980): 1-2.

214 The letters Alif and Nūn, when combined, also symbolise the boat, a sign for those who believe, as its form and function symbolises spiritual truths. The different components of the boat structure have different meanings. The mast has the same meaning as the tree, due to its vertical character, which signifies an axial centre that links heaven to the 'lower' waters. The hull's shape conforms to the horizontal surface of the waters, plus being a refuge, and containing a 'centre' at the point where it supports the foot of the mast. Thus the mast clearly symbolises the essential and masculine post of existence, and the hull symbolises the substantial, maternal pole of existence. Also the helmsman (in pen and ink pot, the calligrapher) symbolises a spiritual master. See M. Negus "The Boat and the Helmsman", *Studies in Comparative Religion* 17:1–2 (1985): 1-2.
Full access: http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/uploads/ArticlePDFs/423.pdf

215 Javad Nurbakhsh, *Sufi Symbolism*, trans. Leonard Lewisohn and Terry Graham (London: Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi Publications, 1984), 13.

216 The concept of Barzakh, as an in-between space, links to Islamic teachings of the afterlife. After death, the soul resides in Barzakh while waiting for Judgment Day. In symbolism, Barzakh can mean a certain intermediate state in the posthumous evolution of the human being, or an intermediate place between two seas. This metaphor may be interpreted as the intermediate barrier between two states, such as between fresh drinkable water and salty and bitter water, or between the non-manifested and the manifested. See Titus Burckhardt, "Concerning the 'Barzakh'," *Studies in Comparative Religion* 10:2 (1976): 1-6, Full access: http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/uploads/ArticlePDFs/330.pdf
"The isthmus is the image of images: it describes the nature of all images, as sign between sign reader and signified. This sense of image describes language, since words always point to beyond themselves; they can thus both protect and veil, to varying degrees. The isthmus is then a bridge between the inner and outer worlds, and also what keeps them apart. If we look at it in both these ways, it is longer be a thin strip between two land masses, but is more akin to the line between the yin and yang in the Taijitsu symbol. This, of course, is a theoretical line, defined by the difference between yin and yang." [Fig 2.2, this page]
"Ibn Arabi x 360 full Spectrum," last modified March 20, 2012. Full access: https://ibnarabi360.wordpress.com

creation of the world through divine names. Islamic scholars agree that the circle is one of two primordial shapes in Islamic art (the other is the square). The circle, with no beginning or end, is a symbol of eternity and suggests unity, while reminding us of our limitations in comprehending time and matter.[217] It symbolises completion, but cannot contain and truly encompass divine kamāl that is immeasurable and infinite. Despite al-Arabī's initial claims, his diagrams were drawn for didactic purposes and only refer to the divine names in relational terms. In *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah* (*The Meccan Revelations or Conquests*), al-Arabī drew another cosmographical drawing to show only the "relation between the 'centre' (the Absolute manifesting itself as God) and the spheres surrounding it (genera and species, that are permanent archetypes)"[218] (Figs. 2.3a–b). Given the unavailability of archives it is not possible to conduct an exhaustive study of Islamic cosmographical diagrams, but Ahmet T. Karamustafa concludes that most have been didactic and generalist in nature.[219] And in my own attempts to draw jalāl/jamāl I encountered challenges similar to those that Karamustafa spoke of. Figures 2.4 to 2.8 illustrate my various efforts, but each failed on the principle that jalāl/jamāl first ascribes to Allah's existence that which cannot be visualised, contained or measured.

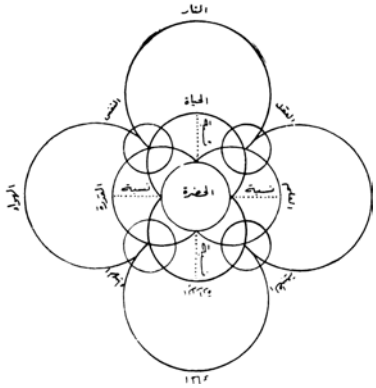

Figure 2.3a: A partial illustration of Ibn al Arabī, showing relations between the "Divine presence" and "permanent archetypes". Original approx. 11 x 11 cm. Ibn al-Arabī, ed. 'Uthman Yahya and Ibrahim Madkur (Cairo: Jumhiiriyah Misr al Arabiyah, Vizarat al Thaqafah, 1972), 4:158 (chap 47).

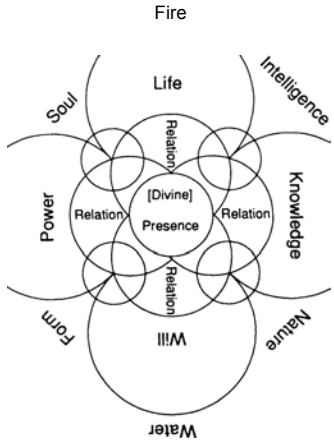

Figure 2.3b: English translation of Ibn al Arabī's illustration.

In attempting to diagram jalāl/jamāl, I first used the circle, a representation of unity, to show a symbolic relationship between jalāl/jamāl as the absolute and the relative [Fig. 2.4-2.5,

217 Keith Critchlow, *Islamic Pattern, An Analytical and Cosmological Approach* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 9.

218 Karamustafa, Ahmet T, *Cosmographical Diagrams: History of Cartography*, vol. 2, Book 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 73-74.

219 "All the figures involved are primarily didactic in nature. They are intended more as general and often arbitrary visual images of certain cosmological ideas than as technically precise and measured representations of space. This is true not only of figures that graphically represent spiritual or sacred space, in which case it would hardly be appropriate to search after technical precision and accuracy, but also of those presented as realistic representations of physical space. Generally speaking, there is no consideration of scale where this could be applicable, and the emphasis is on gross outlines, with little or no attention paid to details." Karamustafa, *Cosmographical Diagrams*, 73–74.

p. 85]. This, however, led to various conundrums of incompleteness or hierarchy. For example, in the construction of jalāl/jamāl as *vesica piscis (i.e. fish-shaped container)*,[220] only part of kamāl can be formed. Also known as 'two-ring diagram' or Venn's diagram to commonly explain the rules of probability, *vesica piscis* roots back to ancient times. It is considered mystical and sacred by many cultures and religions such as Christianity, and appears frequently in Medieval art and architecture. However, in an Islamic context *vesica piscis*, I argue, renders itself as a diagram of exclusion. Similar to Ibn al-Arabī's diagram, *vesica piscis* can fulfil only partial attributes of Allah and can not describe the true connotations of divine perfection, kamāl, or represent *Insān-e-Kamal*. Similarly, placing the circles on top of each other or using colour-coding leads to inadequate results [Figs. 2.6–2.7, p. 86]. Either one category obscures the other or they are artificially separated, eliminating the idea of an indistinguishable whole.

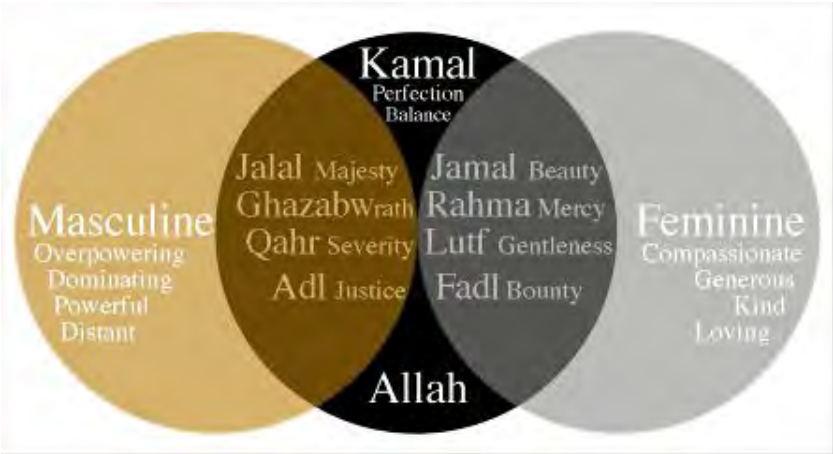

Figure 2.4: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Representation of jalāl/jamāl as vesica piscis*. Photo: Author's illustration.

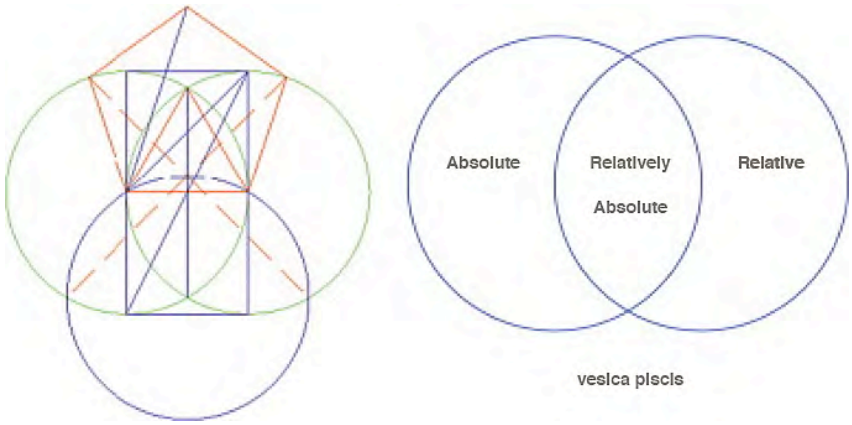

Figure 2.5: Critchlow, Keith. Roots and the golden mean within the vesica piscis. *Islamic Pattern.* 14,150.

220 First recorded in literature 1809, the term vesica piscis in Latin literally means "fish bladder". The Vesica Piscis symbol appears frequently in medieval art and architecture, and the symbol's roots go back further still. The almond-shaped center of the image that is formed when the two circles are linked together from their centre, is called a mandorla (Latin for almond; vesica" or "vesica piscis. The mandorla can easily be seen as a grail or chalice, connecting the symbol to Avalon.
Also see: http://sas.uwaterloo.ca/~rwoldfor/papers/venn/eikosograms/paperpdf.pdf

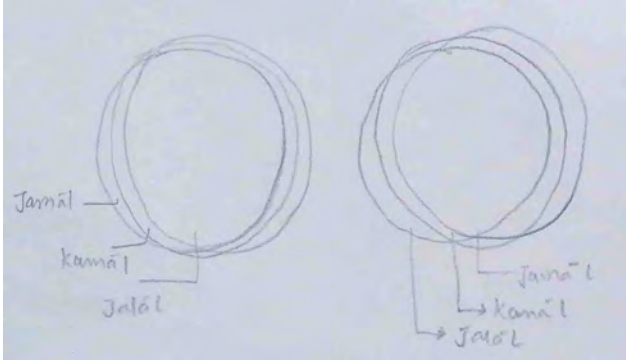

Figure 2.6: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. Rejected jalāl/jamāl diagram using overlapped circles (top view). Photo: Author's drawing.

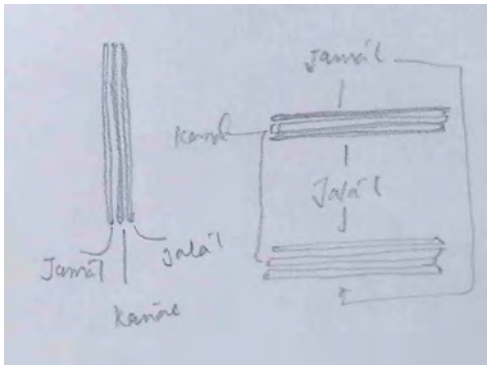

Figure 2.7: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. Rejected jalāl/jamāl diagram using circles (side view). Photo: Author's drawing

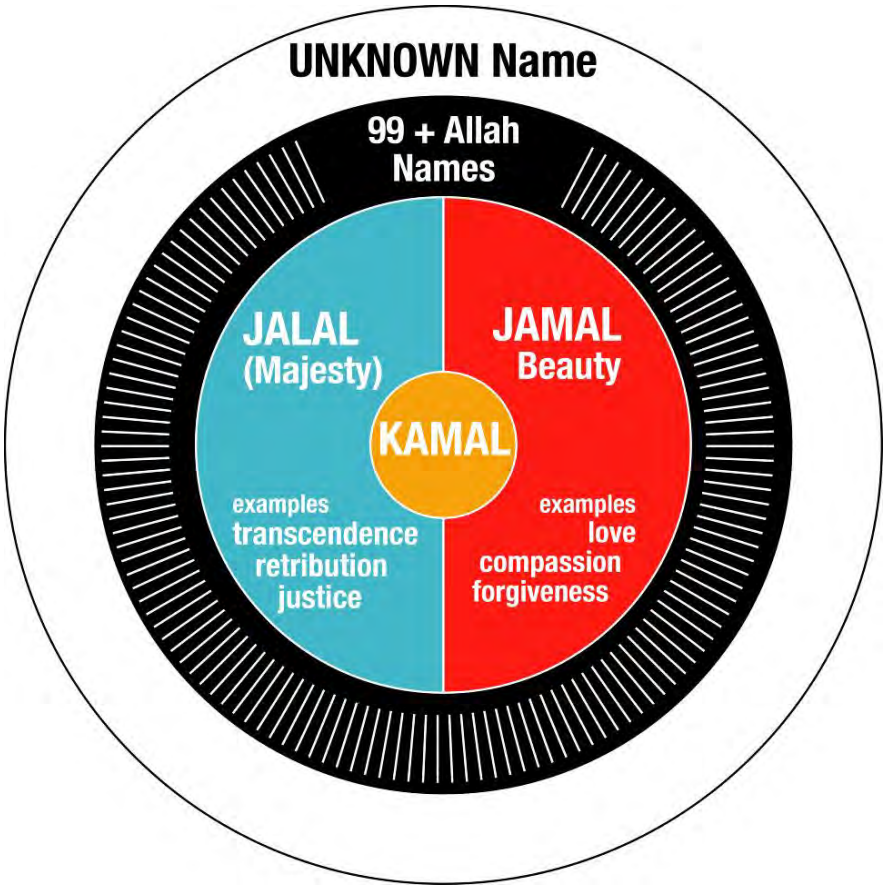

Figure 2.8: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2014. *Halos with 99 Lines and 3 Circles*. A possible contemporary interpretation of halos with 99 lines representing 99 names of Allah. It is based on Ibn al Arabī 's showing relations between the "Divine presence" circles [Figs. 2.3a-b, p. 84] and Taiji ("supreme ultimate") diagrams [Figs. 2.1-2.2, p. 83]. Photo: Author's illustration.

My conclusion was that the Taoist concept of yin/yang may be philosophically compatible with jalāl/jamāl, but diagrammatically it can only result in a generalised visualisation. As opposing fundamental forces, jalāl/jamāl are identical and without fixed characteristics distinguishing one from the other. They are two components of pure essence that are interchangeable, thus maintaining equilibrium. Jalāl/jamāl cannot be visualised as a whole,

but only in parts [Fig. 2.8, p. 86]. Through the experience of such parts, one gains the entry point that leads to our understanding of the gender dynamics of jalāli/jamāli archetypes.

To reach the goal of performing jalāl/jamāl, I have aligned my art practice with al-Arabī's concept of attainting Barzakh, or 'Isthmus', which is a reflection of *al-Insān al-Kāmil* (the perfect being).[221] As Hazrat Inayat Khan outlined, jalāl/jamāl are not explicitly identified with masculine and feminine binaries, which leaves gendered performances open for interpretation. Thus for clarity, instead of feminine/masculine attributes I will refer jalāli/jamāli attributes in the discussion of artworks. Furthermore, when such a discussion of artworks is framed with al-Arabī's understanding of Barzakh as a world of imagination that is neither purely corporeal nor spiritual but draws together attributes of both while keeping them separate,[222] it generates visual signs and symbols that engage with the world of imagination.

2.2 The Poetic Expression of Jalāl and Jamāl

Pakistani architect and scholar Kamil Khan Mumtaz describes jalāl/jamāl/kamāl, along with *hawa* and *ma'ni*, as aesthetic qualities that collectively form a model of 'poetic expression'. His model highlights the literal and symbolic meaning of Islamic art, and equally applies to architecture, poetry and music, suggesting that it can also be extended to other forms of art.[223]

Mumtaz divides his model of poetic expression between 'form' and 'content'.[224] Form contains the qualities of jalāl/jamāl/kamāl, He also defines *hawa*, a "subtle quality" that is impossible to categorise and can only be recognised through experience and the guidance of eyes and heart. Content is *ma'ni*. Mumtaz also describes that light is an agent that binds form and content. Table 3 (p. 88) categorises jalāl/jamāl/kamāl as form and content that are based on Mumtaz's model, which I then explain and elaborate on in terms of visual arts. To further contextualise the importance of such categories in my work, I draw from Western and Islamic approaches to art that resonate with Mumtaz's poetic expression.

221 Salman H. Bashie, *Ibn al-'Arabi's Barzakh: The Concept of the Limit and the Relationship between God and the World*, (New York, 2004). Also see; Ibn Arabī, Muhyial-Din, *Fusus al-Hikam (The Bezels of Wisdom),* trans. R. Austin. (New York: Paulist Press, 1980); Ibn Arabī, Muhyial-Din, 1911a, Ibn al-Arabī, al-Futuhat al-Makkiyah, eds., Uthman Yahya and Ibrahim Madkur (Cairo: Jumhiiriyah Misr al Arabiyah, Vizarat al Thaqafah, 1972), 4:158.

222 William C. Chittick, *Faith and Practice of Islam: Three Thirteenth-Century Sufi Texts* (Sunny Press, 1992), 193.

223 Kamil Khan Mumtaz "The Architecture of Sufi Shrines," in *Sacred Spaces: A Journey with the Sufis of the Indus,* ed. Samina Quraesh (Harvard, Peabody Press, 2010), 41-60. Also: Kamil Khan Mumtaz, "Poetic Expression in Architecture," *Archi Times*, (accessed July 15, 2012) http://archpresspk.com/new-version/poetic-expressions-in-architecture.html
Also see: Kamil Khan Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan* (Singapore: Mimar Book, 1985)

224 *Form* in Arabic is Surah, a term also used for 'Chapters' in the Qur'an. In Urdu, Surah refers to a human face.

Table 3: The Poetic Model of jalāl/jamāl/kamāl as Form and Content (Hawa and Ma'ni)

Medium Expression	**Form of Majesty Jalāli Qualities**	**Form of Beauty Jamāli Qualities**	**Form of Perfection Kamāl**
Music	Structure, as in rhythmic patterns of *taal* cycles; Ascending and descending *arohi* and *awrohi* order in modal system of *raagas*	Melody; The quality of voice *adaigi* (style and presentation) in vocal renditions.	Non-programmatic e.g. Qur'an recitation or chant.
Literature/Poetry	Rhythmic and rhyming sequences (*qafia* and *radif*) in different forms of poetry such as ghazal, ruba'i, quatrains or sonnets.	Lyricism	Words that promote tawhid, eternal love or unity with God.
Architecture	Spatial organization; Angular forms; Floor, pillars, walls; Grids, axes and straight lines; Size, scale and proportion of built forms; Space contained and defined by the built forms.	Curvilinear forms; Arches and domes; Surface embellishments (arabesques, floral); Material qualities, purity, texture, colour; Transitional details between materials, levels, structural and architectonic elements;	Ideal space and structure/Pure abstraction e.g. Kab'ba; Light.
Performing arts, theatre	Order and structure in movement of the body and narrative of the story	Elegance; Refinement; Details;	Ideal movement through repetition e.g. performance of prayers.
Visual Arts	Size, scale and proportion of built forms; Spaces contained and defined by built forms; Repetition of form.	Ornamentation; Refinement; Detailing; Material qualities, purity, texture, colour;	Abstraction; Creation of patterns; Ideal form of body; Geometry, dot, circle, concentric circles, sphere, square, cube; Light; Works of art created and performed with perfection and wisdom with a purpose to contemplate and reflect upon Divine perfection.
Common to all Medium	Qualities of clear order and structure; Logic and order; Mathematical and geometrical relations of symmetry, balance and proportions.	Qualities of subtlety and nuance; Style of expression; Manner of framing and presentation.	Perfection gauged in relation to an objective/goal to reflect and invite others to contemplate the Divine perfection; Copy and practice as means of perfecting technical skills, purifying the soul or acquiring a special blessing.
Form of Hawa: Allows imagination, involves intelligent interpretation, adaptation and application of critical judgment, discernment and understanding of the symbolic at every step.			
Content: Ma'ni is the question of content that provides meaning.			

2.2.1 The Form of Jalāl, Jamāl and Kamāl

Forms of jamāl, or beauty, include lyricism, elegance, subtlety, expression, curvilinear forms, decorations such as the arabesque, and material qualities such as purity, texture and colour. Forms of jalāl, or majesty, include order, structure, rhythm, symmetry, logic, clarity, grids and axes. For Mumtaz, jalāli forms define spaces, while jamāli forms decorate and complete spaces. Forms of kamāl, or perfection, are gauged in terms of excellence, and require a normative standard, a clear goal to reflect divine perfection in the mirror of Insān-e-Kāmil. This gauge is available to the artist through the divinely inspired works of the prophets, saints, sages and great masters, who were both skilled in art and spiritually enlightened. This divine source makes traditional arts and crafts venerated and esteemed.

In a traditional master/apprentice system of training, apprentices use *naqal*, or copying methods, to perfect their making of classical forms and receive blessings during the process, leading them to purify the mind, body and soul. Today, miniature artists still receive training in a traditional studio setting, considering classical ideals and learning techniques from their *ustads* (masters), following the long lineage of master painters. Mumtaz suggests that since in Islamic cosmology all creation is a manifestation of the divine, the recognition of ideal forms is based on transparency (forms allowing the light to pass through) as opposed to opaqueness (forms that only reflect or absorb light, like a mirror or black hole). He continues on to argue that perfect forms are readily recognised as such because they reflect perfect heavenly archetypes.[225] The form of kamāl reveals perfection and wisdom in the creation of an artwork, with a purpose to invite others to contemplation.

2.2.2 The Form of Hawa

In Arabic, *hawa* has varied meanings, from breath, air and wind, to affection, emotion and desire.[226] It is a subtle quality that Mumtaz argues cannot be defined but only guided through

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225 "Qualities such as proportion, harmony, balance, symmetry etc. are more readily recognised in certain mathematical relationships… [which] may strike us as "perfect" because it corresponds with our idea of a "perfect" man, or woman or tree etc. Indeed every earthly object, artifice or act, takes on a symbolic meaning to the extent that it reflects its heavenly archetype." Martin Lings, Book of Poems, qtd. in Mumtaz, "Poetic Expression in Architecture." Mumtaz, "Poetic Expression in Architecture."
The Author maintains that true artistic creativity requires an action of the Spirit. In the Greek tradition this function was called Apollo, the god of light, and the muses were further aspects of the same function. In this context it is truer to say that Apollo is not the god of light but the light of God.

226 In colloquial Urdu, hawa, when combined with a man's dreams of having a better life or being acquainted with his love, translates into the humours axiom of Hawai Mahel, a 'Palace of Winds' or 'Palace of Dreams'. Hawa Mahal is also a palace of façades in Jaipur, India. It is so named because it was essentially a high screen wall built so the women of the royal household could observe street festivities while remaining unseen from the outside.
Samina Quraeshi, *Sacred Spaces: A Journey With the Sufis of the Indus* (Harvard, Peabody Press, 2010), 58.

the artist's eyes and heart. Vague and fluctuating 'religious feeling' or 'strong emotion' can be attributed to the form of hawa as a means to inspire range and depth in Islamic art.

The basis of Islamic art is *Al-aql* (the capacity to perceive the concept of divine unity) as an "intellectual vision" and this "intellect is the faculty in man that gives intuitive knowledge of the Absolute and timeless realities – it is thus on a much higher plane than reason."[227] This intellectual quality pushes artists to exercise their imagination to a point where the pedagogic copying of *naqal* is not enough, and the task of reproduction requires interpretation and critical judgment to achieve perfection.[228] Since, through the concept of Barzakh, mastering a pair of divine qualities may lead to self-actualisation and perfection, an artist is, in this regard, a mirror. They cannot create beauty or claim to be original, but only aspire to reflect 'perfection'. A clear reflection is based on the master's level of experience. Mastery can only be achieved though hawa, which allows the artist to exercise their imagination and discernment of the symbolic.[229]

Hawa is a less well-known concept to the public. It is mostly shared among the 'the discerning elite', a Pakistani literary movement that began in Lahore in 1936, known as *Halqa-e Arabab-e Zauq* (Circle of the Men of Good Taste).[230] Besides writers, poets and philosophers, artists have also been part of this circle and all of them have inspired and supported each other. Today this circle is not reserved for men only, and is also equally inhabited and to some extent governed by a female presence.

In terms of gender, hawa is aligned with emotion or desire. Ibn Rushd sees it as alluding to feminine presence. This connection is further solidified when one realises that *Hawa* is also the name of Eve in Islamic theology.

2.2.3 The Form of Light

As stated above, Mumtaz argued that perfect forms are based on transparency, allowing light to enter them, and thus light is also an important agent. Aligned with beauty, light itself is a form that creates "with its beholder a direct and immediate connection that avoids the interface of reasoning and, therefore, dismisses interpretation."[231] Light is a sculptural form as it conquers darkness, gives meaning to structure, illuminates the divine beauty and asks us to surrender and marvel at the divine kamāl. Light is also hawa (air), occupying every visible space, including

227 Mumtaz, "Poetic Expression in Architecture.", Kamil Khan Mumtaz "The Architecture of Sufi Shrines.

228 Ibid.

229 Ibid.

230 Rafey Habib and M. A. R. Habib (eds.), *An Anthology of Modern Urdu Poetry = Jadīd Urdū shā'irī kā intikhāb, Angrezī tarjame ke sāth.* trans. M.A.R. Habib (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2002). Cited in Mumtaz, "Poetic Expression in Architecture."

231 Teixeira Coelho, "Light, More Light!," *Curitiba International Biennial*, January 2015, (accessed January 20, 2015) http://www.bienaldecuritiba.com.br/luz.php?l=en

our eyes, minds and hearts. In the Qur'an, Allah says in *Surah al Noor* (*The Light*): "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like unto a niche, within it a lamp … Light upon light!"[232] In my studio practice, the expressions of light are explored in *fun-DADA-men-talism* [Fig. 2.9, p. 93], *Aura I* and *II* [Figs 2.81-2.82, p. 142-43], *et tu, Brute* [Fig. 3.21, p. 180] and *Fragrance of the Moon* [Fig 3.58, p. 221].

So far, these have been the forms of Islamic art. They can be compared with formalism in Western art, which analyses works by setting aside context or meaning in favour of a pure engagement with aesthetics. The work of art is viewed through formal qualities like line and colour, which do not have semantic significance. There are then secondary qualities such as composition, balance and movement, which are relational to the primary features. In Islamic art, however, form works as a unit, where each quality is equal to the others. Although styles vary in Islamic art, they all emerge from the same formal prototypes and refer back to divine unity. The denial of meaning in Clement Greenberg's formalism, or Roger Fry's declaration that artworks have no real connection to their creator or cultural location, are useful in marking the differences between Western and Islamic views on form in art.[233]

2.2.4 The Content of Ma'ni

Ma'ni (trust, secure, unconquerable), in a traditional worldview, provides the "layers of meanings and shared values embedded in the complex language of symbolic forms" which are "inseparable from its cultural context."[234] Mumtaz explains this with the architectural example of a tomb, whose building is a devotional act, and which embodies the spiritual presence of the saint.[235] Its primary function is to spread the saint's teachings. For Mumtaz the simple, bright and beautiful appearance of the tomb is to "enable the seeker to gain sight of the light of God, … looks upon it with the eye of meditation and brings the seeker into communion with the Divine."[236] Sacred art requires roots in a spiritual condition. The content of the art has to directly relate to a spiritual context represented according to a clear canonical model. In the West, content is the meaning and essence of the work. It differentiates between what is portrayed and what the artist evokes. Content is the imaginative impulse as well as the viewer's reaction to the artwork. Content is influenced by physical and social contextual conditions. Content is studied in relation to visual languages, iconography, genre and semiotics; Marxist, structuralist and postmodern critiques of contemporary art pervade discussions of form and its relation to

232 Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Noor Chapter 24, Ayat 35.

233 Clement Greenberg, Art and Culture (Boston: Beacon, 1961), 3–21.

234 Mumtaz, "Poetic Expression in Architecture." ; Mumtaz "The Architecture of Sufi Shrines.

235 Ibid.

236 Ibid.

content, or meaning.[237] Roland Barthes suggested a scrupulous examination of an object's materiality as a theoretical act. Through this, materiality becomes structure, an "*interested* simulacrum, since the imitated object makes something appear which remained invisible, or if one prefers, unintelligible, in the natural object."[238]

Dadaists like Marcel Duchamp are mostly quoted as failing to provide the experience of beauty, yet their works remain art.[239] I would argue that Duchamp's readymades, such as *Fountain* (1917), are the secular contemporary *naqalli*' (copying) that Mumtaz speaks of in traditional terms as a method of learning and practice. In Duchamp's case, copying is considered crucial in establishing a relationship between form (the urinal) and content (an abject corporeal fountain); in this process it marks the ideal form as myth and its origin mythical. For some, this myth centres on the relationship between man, being and manifestation, becoming an ideal form to be copied.[240] Such ideas are applied in my work in *Brut for Men* [Chapter Three, p. 216] and *fun-DADA-men-talism* [Fig 2.9, p. 93] which I am referencing here in relation to copying in Islam and how this copying and desire to revert back to the original source when politicising and misinterpretation can have a devastating consequences for Islamic Ummah.

Copying is also relevant to the Islamist fundamentalists ISIS, who are forming the first Muslim caliphate of the modern era, wanting to revert to orthodoxy and destroy Western influences in the Islamic world. As a part of this, they regard all figurative work as anti-Islam. Playfully, when the blueprint of Dada, the radical and fundamentalist avant-garde,[241] is overlapped with the blueprint of ISIS, they match, but as polar opposites. Dada ignored traditional aesthetics completely, intending "to offend the art world" and hoping to "destroy traditional culture."[242] Conversely, ISIS seeks to destroy figurative and secular art, offend anyone who is non-Muslim or does not follow their path, and seeks to re-imagine the past.

The neon work *fun-DADA-mentalism*,[243] with its blinking '*DADA*', has a polarity. When deconstructed, 'DADA' is the bloody motto of the newly formed fundamentalist state, but it

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237 Richard Eldrige, "Form and Content: An Aesthetic Theory of Art", *British Journal of Aesthetics* 25:4 (1985): 303–316. Also see: Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation* (University of California Press, 1991); For Form + Content = Sign See, Barthes, Roland, Camera Lucida; For Myth is Form See, Barthes, Roland, Mythologies Greenberg, *Art and Culture*, 3–21.

238 Roland Barthes, *The Structuralist Activity (Critical Essays)* (Illinois, Northwestern University Press, 1972),1196–1197

239 David Hopkins, *Dada's Boys: Masculinity after Duchamp* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 1-3

240 "When [myth] becomes form, the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it improvised, history evaporates, only the letter remains … the essential point in all this is that the form does not suppress the meaning, it only improvises it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal … the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment." Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Vintage, 2000),117-118.

241 David Bradshaw and Kevin J. H. Dettmar, eds., *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture* (Oxford, Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 165.

242 Hans Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-art* (New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965). 25.

243 *FunDADAmentalism* is Neologism, a newly coined term, word, or phrase that may be in the process of entering common use, but that has not yet been.

also blinks an SOS message for hope. In this work, 'DADA' is never illuminated completely at one time. It is a thought that asks its viewer to reflect on the history of Dada and the current state of Islam. It humorously deflects the stereotypical identification of every Muslim man as a fundamentalist, and implies that every fundamentalist is a Dadaist. The polarity in the work is the Islam devoid of humour that challenges modern civilisation, and the deconstruction of that history. It betrays the goals of terrorism by interjecting a message of anti-fundamentalism that intermittently illuminates the true spirit of Islam by delivering a message of change.[244]

Figure 2.9: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *fun-DADA-men-talism*. Flashing red neon. 76 x 69 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

2.3 The Ideal Form

The myth of an ideal form has inspired both traditional and secular Islamic art – although in different ways – with commonly shared signs and symbols. The principles of ideal forms have inspired artists for many generations, and even today they act as a model for contemporary artistic expression. I argue that there are two perspectives on ideal form in Islamic art. One is the religious interpretation, with its language of geometric abstraction, arabesques and calligraphy.[245] The other is a secular perspective, which views the human body as an ideal form, and is influenced by Western figurative arts. Both perspectives inform this research.

244 Joseph E. B. Lumbard, *Islam, Fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of Tradition: Essays by Western Muslim Scholars*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: World Wisdom Books, 2009).
For a current update and geographical study of Islamic fundamentalism see: Simon Tomlinson, "From Syria to Iraq, Kenya to Malaysia: How new era of Islamic fundamentalism is spreading fear and chaos around the world," *Daily Mail Australia*, 26 June 2014 (accessed August 25, 2014) http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2669427/From-Syria-Iraq-Kenya-Malaysia-How-new-era-Islamic-fundamentalism-spreading-fear-chaos-world.html

245 Loai M. Dabbour, "Geometric Proportions: The Underlying Structure of Design Process for Islamic Geometric Patterns," *Frontiers of Architectural Research* 1:4 (2012): 380–391.

2.3.1 *Calligraphy*

Arabic calligraphy is considered divine because the Qur'an is written in the Arabic language. Decorative Qur'anic manuscripts, or the written tradition of copying the Qur'an, are a true form of Islamic art. Calligraphic expression commonly presents Qur'anic verses about the unity, beauty and mercy of God, *al-Asmā-ul-Husnā* (the names of God), and the names of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.).

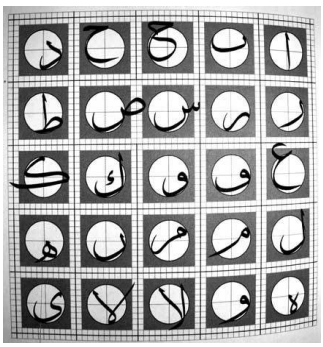

Figure 2.10a: *Nizam al-Dairah*, System of the Circle.

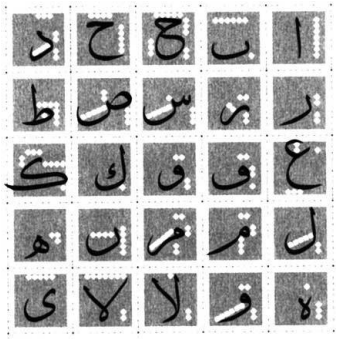

Figure 2.10b: *Nizam al-Nuqat*, System of the Dots. The rhombic dot (use as a rule) depends upon the thickness of the calligraphic pen used. The selection of dot count of each letter is based on the chosen Arabic calligraphic style.

Figure 2.10c: *Nizam al-Tashabuh*, System of Writing.

In Islamic calligraphy, the poetic expression of jalāl/jamāl is achieved through *mashq*, which are the exercises of practicing written/drawn lines. Created by Ibn Muqlah in the ninth century, mashq is carried out under three writing systems: *Nizam al-Dairah* (System of the Circle); *Nizam al-Nuqat* (System of the Dot); and *Nizam al-Tashabuh* (System of Writing).[246] In calligraphy, the circle and grid provide the structure for constructing letters, and the rhombic dot is used as a rule, where the circle's diameter is measured by seven dots (Figs. 2.10a-c). The performance of mashq is a *dhkir* (remembrance) of oral and drawn performance, and therefore the artist who simply uses calligraphy as style does not produce an ideal Islamic 'calligraphic' art but an artistic interpretation. The performance of calligraphic mashq is integral in the traditional training of many other Islamic arts, including miniature painting, and is a primary source of studio art practice for many contemporary artists in Pakistan, both explicitly and conceptually. The forms of calligraphy and typography are explored in my typewriter drawing series *I am* (2013), and sculptures and performance works such as *fun-DADA-men-talism* (2013), *Brut for Men* (2013) and *The Banner of Unity* (2015).

246 Caram Kapp, "The Culture File - Arab Culture as viewed through Typography and Advertising," *Academia.edu*. 56. https://www.academia.edu/9837009/The_Culture_File_Arab_Culture_as_viewed_through_Typography_and_Advertising

2.3.2 Arabesque

An arabesque is a complex ornamental design that tiles a single graphic unit along geometric tessellation principles, commonly employing natural linear motifs. Repeated seamlessly to decorate blank surfaces, it suggests God's unity and infinite presence. The blank spaces between lines themselves become a pattern, unveiling the same truth at every sighting and in every direction, creating a paradox between simplicity and complexity. The arabesque also perfectly reflects the duality of Allah's jalāl and jamāl in the names *al-Zaahir* and *al-Baatin*, 'The Manifest' and 'The Hidden'.[247] Nasr eloquently informs us about the relationship between the arabesque and the void:

> *The arabesque enables the void to enter into the very heart of matter, to remove its opacity and to make it transparent before the Divine Light. Through the use of the arabesque in its many forms, the void enters into the different facets of Islamic art, lifting from material objects their suffocating heaviness and enabling the spirit to breathe and expand.*[248]

Figure 2.11: Exterior view of the dome with white arabesques on an ochre ground, Masjid-i Shaykh Lutfallah. Photo: Archnet.com

Figure 2.12: Interior view of the dome with white and blue arabesques on a red ground, Shah Jehan Masjid, Thatta, Pakistan. Photo: Archnet.com

Figure 2.13: Detail of the interior view of the ceiling of Masjid Wazir Khan, Pakistan. Arabesque, calligraphy and geometric patterning are combined with *Muqarnas,* a unique Islamic invention of the three-dimensional manifestation of two dimensional Islamic geometric design.
Photo: Intricateworks.com

247 Kamil Khan Mumtaz "The Architecture of Sufi Shrines," in *Sacred Spaces: A Journey with the Sufis of the Indus,* ed. Samina Quraesh (Harvard, Peabody Press, 2010) 49.

248 Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 186.

2.3.3 Geometry

Geometry highlights the everyday application of *tawhid* (unity), the central doctrine of Islam. Traditional Islamic art is based on geometry and rhythm, constructing ideals through mathematical ratios, proportions and prime roots that are also called proportions of beauty.[249] As an abstract expression, geometry supports the Islamic arts' visualisation of the intelligible, and it reveals the qualities of jalāl and jamāl because it demonstrates harmony.[250] Using a limited number of shapes, tessellation is created, making every decorative scheme a ground for the contemplation of the divine in perfect balance. It is made up of diverse elements governed by symmetry and proportion, with a unique centre – the origin – to which everything must return. On closer inspection, each element is a microcosmic representation of the larger scheme, within its own frame containing a symmetrical arrangement and a unique centre. But geometry is not merely a mechanical tool for setting out buildings and decorating surfaces, it is profoundly connected to the metaphysics of numbers.[251]

2.3.4 Geometric Ideal Forms: Square, Cube, Circle, and Sphere

The four sides of a square symbolise the elements of nature: "earth, air, fire and water – the solid, liquid, gas and radiation state of energy."[252] The circle is the "circle of man, the conscious animal [and]" the hexagon is the number of perfection and symbolises "the six days of creation, which itself represents perfection."[253] In the physical world, the circle is considered the most common natural shape, whereas the square is human-made. When the world is inscribed within a circle it creates symmetry between universal forces and the physical world. If any of the four sides is removed, the circle spills, deforms and eventually collapses upon itself. The square also symbolises Paradise, *al-Jannah*, or the garden.

The classic *Chahar-bagh* (four gardens) layout is based on Qur'anic description of Paradise: "There will be two gardens… And besides these two there are two other gardens… In each of them will be two springs pouring forth water in continuous abundance", and "between

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249 Critchlow, *Islamic Patterns*, 4, 9.
Also see: Nasr (1978), Burckhardt (1987), Mumtaz (2010).

250 "One of our aims … consists of demonstrating clearly that the whole world is composed in conformity with arithmetical, geometrical, and musical relations. There, we have explained in detail the reality of universal harmony." from *Akhwan al-Safa,* qtd. in Sayyed Hussein Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 45.
In the tenth or eleventh century CE (fourth or fifth century AH), a group of anonymous scholars produced a fifty-two epistle compendium of the arts and sciences, which contained a virtual condensation of all knowledge of the time. They placed the science of numbers of the root of all the sciences, considering it the foundation of wisdom, source of knowledge, and pillar of meaning.

251 Critchlow, *Islamic Patterns*, 35.

252 Ibid., 150.

253 Ibid.

the two bodies of flowing water is a barrier which they do not transgress" (Al-Qur'an 60:46, 62, 66).[254] Scholars identify the garden as a symbol of bliss and delight. The four fountains and canals flow with water, honey, milk and wine that is noting like the wine in this world. These represent four kinds of knowledge: natural, spiritual, intellectual, and sensual. In the chahar bagh design, these four canals are constructed with walkways surrounding a fountain, 'a celestial pool of abundance' that forms the major axes, and a platform where seekers meet God. The merging between celestial and physical is further glorified through alternating pairs of fruit trees such as the date palm, a symbol of eternity, and pomegranate tree, the cycle of life and death, which in the Qur'an are available in pairs.[255]

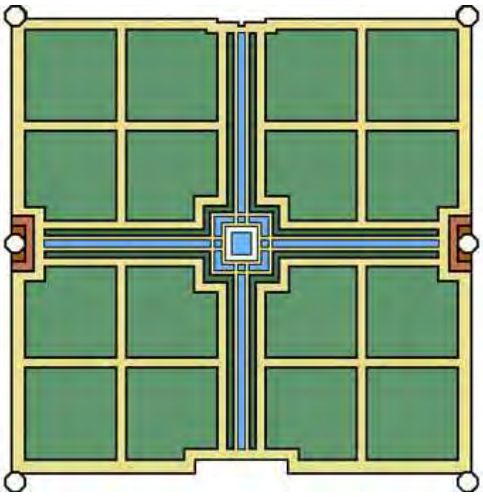


Figure 2.14: *Chahar Bagh* diagram.

Figure 2.15: *Taj Mahal*, the tomb of Shah Jehan in Agra, India, is a prime example of *Chahar Bagh* garden layout.

From the square is derived the cube, or *Kab'ba* (literally 'cube'). The *Ka'aba*, or the House of Allah (*Baitullah*) is a black stone structure in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, and is the most important holy site in Islam[256] [Fig. 2.16, p. 98]. All Muslims direct their prayers toward Ka'aba. Around Kab'ba, Muslims perform *tawaff* (circumambulation), circling the structure seven times. It has been said that a celestial Ka'aba exists directly above the earthly Ka'aba, around which the angels perform tawaff. Ka'aba is symbolically veiled on all sides with *kiswa*, a black cloth embroidered with gold calligraphy.

The circumambulation of Ka'aba is a form of the mathematical challenge of 'squaring the circle', which has inspired many generations of scientists, philosophisers and artists alike. This transition from square to circle is resolved in Islamic architecture where the dome rests

254 In traditional Islamic architecture, primary buildings such as mosques, Sufi shrines or tombs, are constructed around a garden known as maqam, a 'station' (also rawda or rauza). This garden is based on descriptions of gardens of paradise in the Qur'an; chahar bagh is one of the examples. Such a placement suggests that the saint, having attained the station of unity with God, is already in Paradise, or reminds the seeker that a mosque is the house of Allah surrounded by his beauty and creations.

255 Mumtaz, "Poetic Expression in Architecture."

256 First built by Prophet Ibrahim and then reconstructed by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w).

upon a perfect square base, connected through transitional elements like *muqarnas*, which hold a series of tiny niches.[257] Here, arabesques, geometric patterns, muqurnas and light create an artistic representation of *tawaff* of the heavenly Ka'aba. In isometric view, the cube of Ka'aba shows a hexagon, which is the 'necker cube', and which forms the basis of much Islamic geometric patterning[258] (Fig. 2.17). Traditionally both square and circle are used to create geometric patterns. Different designs are generated by using a constant angle of rotation, or joining the intersections of a circle inside a square through straight lines (Figs. 2.18-2.20).

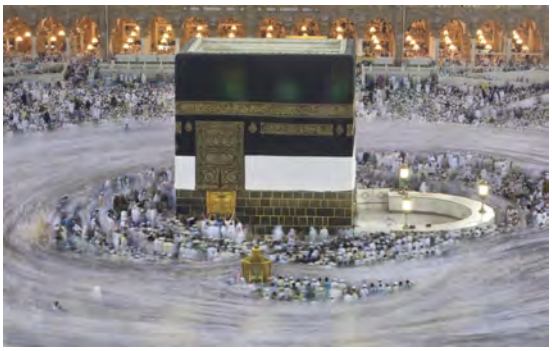
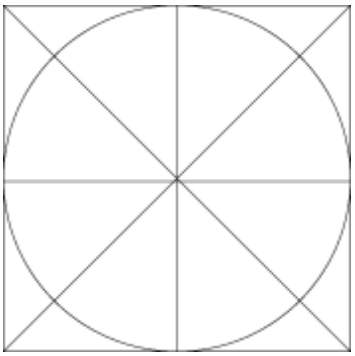
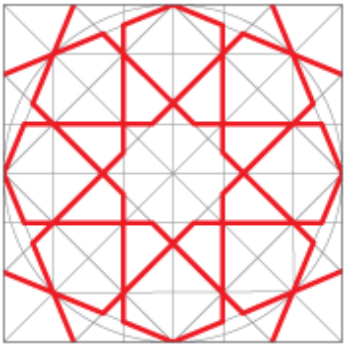


Figure 2.16: Performance of *Tawaff* of Ka'aba, the Cube.

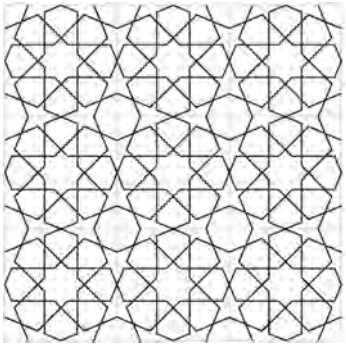
Figure 2.17: Isometric view of Ka'aba, a Necker Cube (Hexagon).



2.18. Draw a circle with diagonal, vertical and horizontal lines. Draw a square that contains the circle.



2.19. This shows the final design. The drawing below shows what appears when this design is repeated in a 3 x 3 format.



2.20. Finished tessellation is a repeating pattern that fills a space without overlapping.

Figures 2.18, 2.19, 2.20: Construction of a geometric tessellation from a circle, with diagonal, square and horizontal lines.

In Islamic arts such as calligraphy, a point or a dot leading to form a circle is used to represent "a unitary focus of conscious awareness in the physical world."[259] The point is the origin of departure for a conscious manifestation.[260] Keith Critchlow demonstrates this through visual guides [Fig. 2.21, p. 99], where the dot is the source of construction, geometrically

257 Kamil Khan Mumraz, *Kamil Khan and Muqarnas: An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture*, 1 August 1(994): 178.

258 Claude Humbert, *Islamic Ornamental Design* (Faber and Faber, 1990).

259 Critchlow, *Islamic Pattern*, 9.

260 "The manifestation of an action, object or thought (if it can be defined) necessitates a point of origin or departure, in relation both to the manifestation itself and to the person who is conscious of its emergence. The point of emergence does not necessarily reveal its causation either in the field of its emergence or in the mind of the viewer… It represents a focal event in a field which was previously uninterrupted." Critchlow, *Islamic Pattern*, 9.

centred and acting as a symbol of unity. This dot is elusive and controls the construction of all forms. As demonstration, the still point of an ink mark (white dot on black ground) or a compass hole visualise this point. When the point departs from its source it can move in any direction and can be measured as the distance between two points; the distance takes precedence over measurement. The distance creates either a line to symbolise the polarity of existence, or an arc that marks expansion and creates a boundary that eventually closes as a circle, achieving unity. The centre dot of this domain is always hidden; the domain, the complete circle, is unity and "the perfect expression of justice – equality in all directions in a finite domain – but also the most beautiful 'parent' of all the polygons, both containing, and underlying them."[261] The circle reflects creation, embodying both its unity and multiplicity, creating a circumference from which everything multiplies and revolves around its fixed centre [Fig. 2.22, p. 100]. It is also the sun and the moon, considered universal signs of divinity.[262] In this regard, the circle demonstrates jalāl/jamāl in relative, not absolute terms. Finally, this divine unity transmits a divine message, transcending time and place to manifest both inner and outer circles of existence, which is most evident in Islamic sacred art.

Figure 2.21: Syed M I, Abdullah. Redrawn from Critchlow, *Islamic Patterns*, 11.
Left: Nukta (dot) the source, origin and unity, the beginning; Middle: Line/Arch as direction and distance; Right: Circle/Domain.

In Islamic cosmology, the order of physical and spiritual existence is explained through a series of concentric circles [Figs. 2.23a–b, p. 100].[263] For Nasr, a series of concentric circles are cause and effect, as dynamic as ripples from a stone dropped in water.[264] The revelation of Qur'an and the rhythmic recitation of *al-Asmā-ul-Husnā* ripple out from the centre as *baraka* (blessings) that travel to near and far shores. In *Futuhat*, Ibn al Arabī identifies the human heart as both the

261 Critchlow, *Islamic Pattern*, p. 9.

262 Rene Guenon, *The Reign of Quantity and the Sign of the Times, Sophia Perennis*, (Ghent 1995), 8, 170.

263 John L. Esposito, *The Islamic World: Past and Present* ((OUP, 2004), 116.

264 Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spiritually*, 76-77.

centre and the pebble that forms concentric circles of murmurs. He also imagines the structure of both Hell and Heaven in such formation.[265]

Figure 2.22: Guenon, Rene. 1995. Unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity. The Reign of Quantity and the Sign of the Times, Sophia Perennis, Ghent (1995) p. 8,170

Figure 2.23a: Jabirian Cosmology: One possible combination of the four categories of Quality, Quantity, Time and Space. From Jabir ibn Hayyan Essai sur l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam, vol. 1, Mukhtar rasa) il jabir b. Ifayyan, ed. Paul Kraus (Cairo: Maktabat al- Khanji wa-Malba(atuha, 1935), 447.

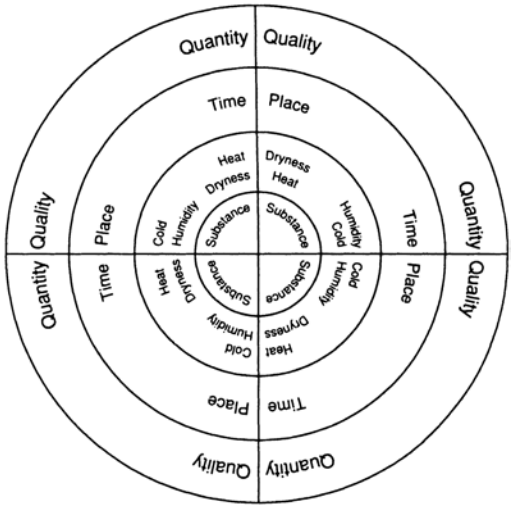


Figure 2.23b: Translation of Jabirian Cosmology. Size of the original: unknown.

In terms of the human body, Mumtaz metaphorically identifies the material (earthly) body with the cube, and the spiritual body with the half circle, or dome, reflecting the heavenly sphere above. He explains that "the body of the lover rises upwards towards the Beloved, and the Spirit descends halfway to meet it…[in] *visaal* (the union)… the ultimate goal of the Sufi."[266] This relationship between cube and dome is also evident in Islamic architecture, where the hemisphere of the dome (the cosmos – the realm of the spirit) is supported by a stable square

265 Miguel Asin Palacios, *Islam and the Divine Comedy* (Goodword Books, 2001)
al Arabī's idea of hell as concentric circles is seemingly inspired by Dante's structure, which forms a figure of concentric circles when seen from above.

266 Mumtaz "The Architecture of Sufi Shrines."

base (the solidity of the Earth – the realm of the physical body). Between them are octagonal muqarnas, representing the planes of being that exist between the material and spiritual realms. During *Miraj*, the ascent to heaven, the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) was shown:

> *a dome made of white mother-of-pearl and resting on the four corners of a square on which was inscribed the four parts of the Bismillah: "In the name of God, the most Merciful, the most Compassionate"; four rivers which flowed from the four sides of the square: a river of water, a river of milk, a river of honey and a river of wine.*[267]

This description rendered the circle, square and dome not only as prototype for every domed building and garden (for example the *Dome of Rock* and *Chahar Bagh*), but also indicates the universal relevance of the symbolism of divine names as an expression of the gender and order of the universe (Fig 2.24).

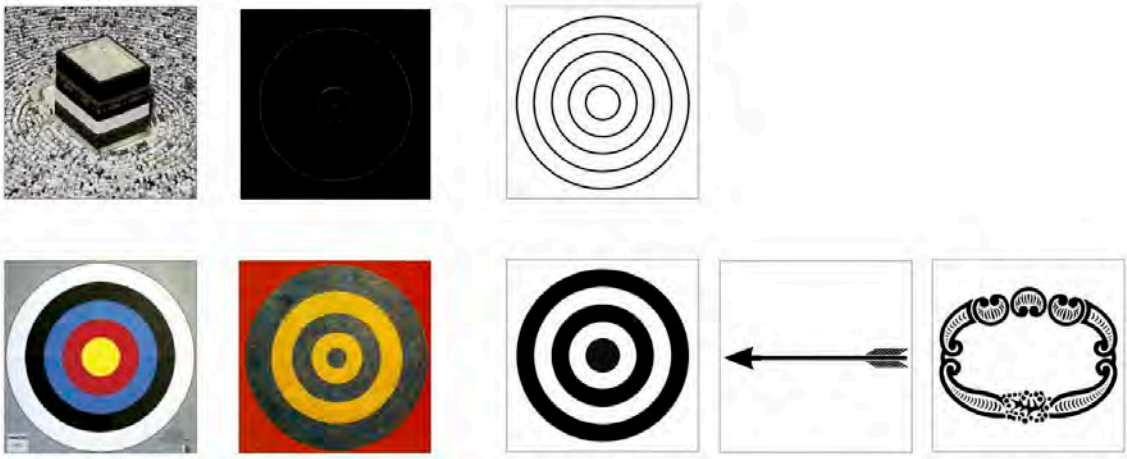


Figure 2.24: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. *Collection of signs and symbols from case studies, and their visual link to various signs and symbols used in my studio practice*. Photo: Author's illustrations and photographs

The squaring of the circle inspires many contemporary artists both in the East and the West. Saudi Arabian artist Ahmed Mater's installation *Magnetism* (2014–15) uses a magnet and iron shavings to investigate the squaring of the circle in the circumambulation of Ka'aba [Fig. 2.25, p. 102]. He forms the centre with a square magnet, a reference to Ka'aba that attracts iron shavings, or pilgrims, who stand up because of the attraction (trance) of the black monolith. Mater considers dualities as harmonious oppositions, which when read in terms of gender create a poetic response of attraction and repulsion. British-Indian artist Anish Kapoor's large-scale installation *Melancholia* (2004), physically transforms a circle into a square trough a semi-transparent membrane, alluding to physical limitations and spiritual transformation [Fig. 2.26. p. 102]. In my etching work *Squaring the Circle* (2013) (Fig 2.27), I explored the forms of magic

267 Mumtaz, "Poetic Expression in Architecture."

squares and the concentric circle that holds the centre, the moon, which is illuminated by its inner light (Fig. 2.27). In this enmeshed relationship the circle is squared, and in this process of hawa, ma'ni is discovered as the viewers find themselves inextricably enmeshed in its centre.

Figure 2.25: Mater, Ahmed. 2014-15. *Magnetism*. Installation. Magnet and iron shavings. Dimensions variable. Photo: Athr Gallery.

Figure 2.26: Kapoor, Anish. 2004. *Melancholia*. Installation. 40 x 6.5 meters. Photo: Lisson gallery.

Figure 2.27: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *Squaring the Circle*. Etching and emboss on paper. 21 x 21 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

2.4 The Cosmic Circle, The Magic Square and The Divine Names

The traditional Islamic art, forms are derived from generic and 'ideal' forms. But a single form can manifest in a variety of scales and details of construction and decoration. Such ideal forms include the *hashtbihisht* (eight paradises) in architecture, which is the magic square (*al-waqf* in Arabic, *Loh-e-Qur'ani* in Urdu). The magic square is essentially a cosmic mandala or *yantra.*[268]

268 The mandala and yantra are cosmic diagrams in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions, which are used in ritual and sacred art and architecture. The hashtbihisht is a three by three 'magic square', with eight squares around the central one, which forms the basis of the plans for many Islamic buildings, including tombs.

The magic square appeared in Islamic cosmology in the tenth century in writings attributed to Jabir ibn Hayyan. It consisted of cells in a 3 x 3 grid, in which the numerals 1 to 9 were arranged.[269] Each row, column and diagonal added up to the same number – this is the *Ilm* (knowledge), or 'magic' of the square. At the centre of the square the numeral 5 was placed, which refers to the five pillars of Islam and the five daily prayers. The central number in any magical square is often considered to represent God in the centre of His creation. In the thirteenth century, Ahmad al-Buni used the ninety-nine names of Allah (*Asma al-Husna*) and the numbers of *Huruf Muqatta'at* in the Qur'an in his magic squares, and presented several of these in his book *Shams al-Ma'arif* (Figs. 2.28-2.29).[270] Because sorcery or any form of magic is not permissible in Islam, orthodox Muslims consider the magic square as *bidah* and *kufar*. Despite such views, the philosophers, inventors and practitioners of magic squares (from Sunni, Shia and Sufi origins) called it *Ilm al-Hikmah* (Knowledge of the Wisdom), *Ilm al-simiyah* (Study of the Divine Names) and *Ruhaniyat* (Spirituality).

Figure 2.28: Construction of Magic Square encased in a circle. A page from *Shams al-Ma'arif* by Sufi Ahmad al-Buni, considered as the leading text of Islamic Occultism, it is about the Secrets of the *Asma al-Husna* and the mysteries of the *Huruf Muqatta'at* and it discusses the influence exercised by the sun, moon and stars at the time of preparing prayer-charts or phylacteries.

Figure 2.29: Construction of Magic Square and triangle pattern. A page from *Shams al-Ma'arif* by Sufi Ahmad al-Buni. The magic square is bisected by the text to form a triangle pattern. A popular way to construct geometric forms, it alludes to the remembrance of the jalāl/jamāl model. Many classical and contemporary artists in Pakistan embrace such a construction of geometric forms.

269 Jabir ibn Hayyan is known in Europe as Geber. The magic square, given as a charm to ease childbirth in the Jabirean corpus, is thought to be of Chinese origin. For more information about the Chinese origins of this square see:
Schuyler Cammann, "Islamic and Indian Magic Squares Part I" in *History of Religions* 8:3 (1969): 181–209.
The numbers were written in the abjad letter-numerals, and because the four corners of this square contained the letters ba', dal, waw [or u], and ha', this particular square became known as the buduh square. For magic squares See Jacqes Sesiano, *Un traité medieval sur les carres magiques: De l'arrangement harmonieux des nombres* (Lausanne: Presses Polytechniques et Universitaires Romandes, 1996); F. Maddison and E. Savage-Smith, Science, *Tools & Magic* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press and Azimuth, 1997), pp. 106–7.

270 Huruf Muqatta'at are enigmatic and unique letter combinations, appearing at the start of 29 chapters of the Qur'an.

The number '5' at the centre of the magic square also refers to the amulet, *the hamsa of Fatima*, which shows the hand (five fingers) of Hazarat Fatima (r.a.), the daughter of the Prophet, and depicts loyalty and resistance. During their battles and expeditions Hazrat Ali (r.a.) and Hazrat Abbas ibn Ali (r.a.) carried an *alam* (flag or sign) with the *hamsa*. For this reason Shias carry alams with hamsa during the Muharram procession of Ashura, and install it in Shia religious sites to mark the battle of Karbala [Chapter Three, Section 3.41, p. 171]. The amulet-like hamsa is considered symbolic of God, holding the universe in order and controlling creation.[271] Among the Shias, a hamsa marks the ideal sign of devotion and is worn with the remembrance of pious male and female sacrifices in Shia Islam.

Figure 2.30: Various Alam with Hamsa during Muharram procession in Karachi, Pakistan. 2011.
Photo: Syed Nasir Kazmi via demotix.com.

Figure 2.31: Punja or Hamsa amulet primarily use as a protective charm against the Evil eye, and a sign of Shia devotion.

Figure 2.32: Shia poster from Iran depicts a picture of Iman Husain (r.a.) and his brother Imam Abbas (r.a.) while Hazrat Fatima (r.a.) holds Imam Husain's six-month infant martyr Ali Al-Asghar in Karbala massacre. The veiling of the female figure is similar to the veiling of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) from the figures in posters (primarily used in Iran) and Persian miniature paintings. In Pakistan, such devotional posters are available through street vendors at Empress Market, *Saddar*, Karachi. Photo: Author's poster collection.

271 For amulets: A. Fodor, Amulets from the Islamic World: Catalogue of the Exhibition held in Budapest in 1988 [The Arabist. Budapest Studies in Arabic, 2] (Budapest, 1990); R. Kriss and H. Kriss-Heinrich, Volksglaube im Bereich des Islam. Band II: Amulette, Zauberformeln und Beschwörungen (Wiesbaden, 1962); and F. Maddison and E. Savage-Smith, *Science, Tools & Magic* [Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, 12] (Oxford: Oxford University Press / London: Azimuth Editions, 1997), 132-147.

The magic square is based on the numeric position of letters in the alphabet and the numeric totals of words in each of the ninety-nine names of Allah. There are 28 standard letters in the Arabic language. For example, *alif* is the first letter of Allah; it is also the number 1 as well as 66, the sum of the name Allah. When written on paper, the letters, names or number sequences, in reference to specific Qur'anic texts, form a *ta'wz* or an amulet.[272] During the era of General Zia-ul-Haq, ta'wz and *Loh-e-Qurani*[273] were acceptable religious practices (though with some caution), and were somewhat propagated by *Darul Uloom Deoband* (the School of Deobandi). Today, the philosophical side of the magic square amulet has become a way to 'supercharge' prayers, or an instrument for fortune-telling.

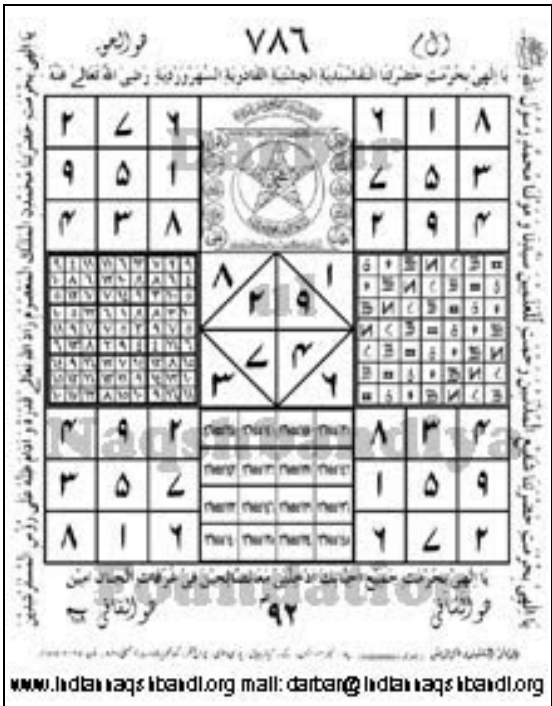


Figure 2.33: A collection of various examples of magic squares (derived from the numerical signs of the 99 names of Allah). Printed as poster or on papers as ta'wz and amulets, they are available through street vendors and bookshops in Pakistan.

Figure 2.34: *Huroof-e-Muqataat*. Embroidered wall hanging. Those who believe in such objects of devotion hang them in homes and shops and glance and touch them for barakah (blessing).

272 Ta'wz is a Qur'anic verse, prayer or name of Allah, typically written in ink or with saffron paste on small paper which is then encased in cloth, leather or silver metal be worn as a locket or an arm band, similar to an amulet. Diverse opinion exists among Islamic ulam on the use of ta'wz, ranging from it being an acceptable act of devotion to an act of polytheism and idolatry. Despite such diverse opinions, ta'wz are popular among Shia, Sunni and Sufis alike.

273 A popular variation of magic square of the ninety-nine names of Allah, the inscribed letters are rumooz (codes), whose meanings are only known to Allah. Used as a ta'wz to protect from troubles and earn an abundant livelihood. A few Islamic sects, notably Deobandi, allow the hanging of Loh-e-Qurani in homes with reverence, or wearing them as lockets or a ring, but it is essential to protect them from desecration. Touching them with hands without ablution is admonished.

My studio works *Flare I and II* (2012), *Aura I and II* light sculptures (2013), *I am* (2013) typed drawings and *The Balancing Act of Celestial Proportions* (2013) are evidence of how geometric ideal forms of the square, cube, circle, sphere and calligraphy are interpreted and referenced in my exploration of absence of Muslim male body and masculinity in contemporary Pakistani art [Chapter Two, Studio Practice, Demos 1, II, III and IV, p. 126].

2.5 Ideal Form and the Human Body

In Islam, human beings are God's central creation. The ideal figure in Islam (both in terms of gender and art) is identified both through the balance of jalāli and jamāli qualities (described in Table 3), as well as inherent balanced proportions.[274] Allah says, "We have indeed created man in best of stature": forms, or proportions.[275] Through jalāl/jamāl archetypes, man possesses the capacity for harmony.[276] Balance is achieved when one does not place one's own image in the centre, but rather, Allah's jalāl, jamāl and his perfection, kamāl. Here Islam banished the ambiguous play of psychological mirrors at an early stage, thus preserving the primordial dignity of humanity.

In Western art, a primary dialogue evolved between man and his image. Its harmony and proportions were translated into the mathematical proportions of the golden mean – the 'ideal human body' as shown in Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* [Fig. 2.37, p. 107]. Originally created by Cesare Cesariano Vitruvius [Fig. 2.36, p. 107], the diagram investigated how the human body's proportions relate to architecture. This ideal human body was male [Figs. 2.35–2.37, p. 107], while the female body was considered imperfect. In art and architecture, Julia Vigo proposes that the centralised figure of a man in the *Vitruvian Man* provides the anthropomorphic grounding to "interrogate the spatial relationship between the constructed skin of man (architecture) and the body."[277] As a canonical body of classical times, the numerical order of the *Vitruvian Man* reflects the dimensions and parts within the whole, where his human body imitates the image of absolute God and draws the ideal body.[278]

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274 Martin Lings, *The Quranic Art of Calligraphy and Illumination* (London: Tajir Trust,1976), 13. and Rene Guenon, *The Great Triad*, (New York: South Asia Books, 1994) 23.

275 Al Qur'an, Surah at-Tin Chapter 95, Ayat 4.

276 We should remember that the ideal of perfection, al -Insān al-Kāmil, or the one who integrates all forms of the divine names (Ibn al Arabī, 1911a, 1: 216), signifies the potential that all humans possess, which is realised in some, but not others. As such, it represents the ideal ethical self and the exemplary standard for human beings to strive toward. Those who realise and embody this archetype in their historical actualities are the prophets and the friends of God.

277 Cited in footnotes, Julian Vigo, *Performative Bodies, Hybrid Tongues: Race, Gender, Sex and Modernity in Latin America and Maghreb* (Hispanic Studies: Culture and Ideas) (Peter Lang AG, 2010), 44.

278 Vigo Julian, *Performative Bodies*, 44.

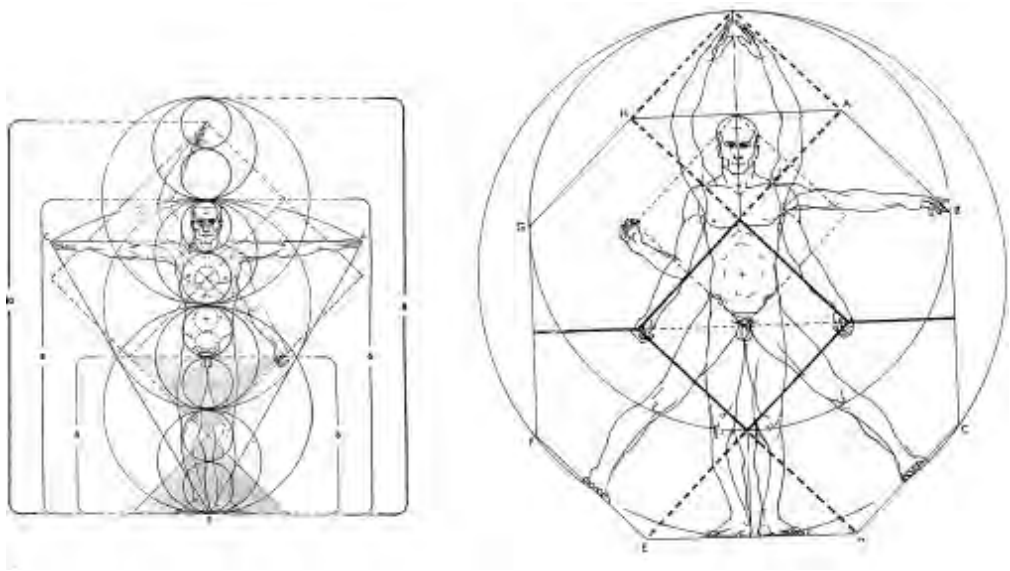

Figure 2.35: *Vitruvian man*, with proportions based on the sacred mean, Image from Critchlow (1976) and Dabbour, Loai M. (2012)

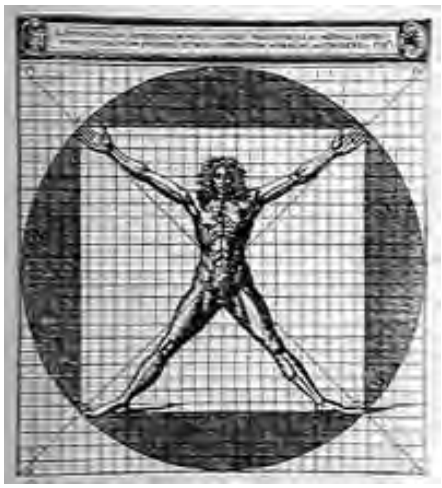

Figure 2.36: Cesariano, Cesare. *Vitruvius*. 1521. Illustration of Vitruvius.. The Ten Books on Architecture, Italian translation. About the illustration Cesariano writes, "And just as the human body yields a circular outline, so too a square figure may be found from it. For if we measure the distance from the soles of the feet to the top of the head, And then apply that measure to the outstretched arms, The breadth will be found to be the same as the height."

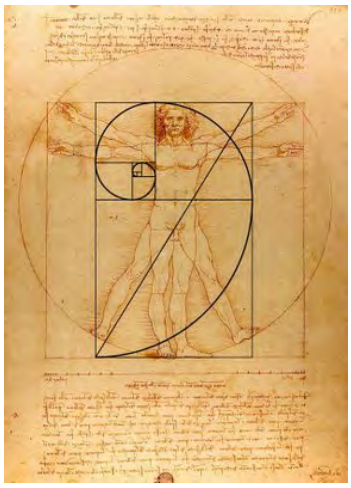

Figure 2.37: da Vinci, Leonardo. *Vitruvian Man.* 1490. The depicts the male body as an ideal form based on the Golden Ratio that embodies both the perfect circle and square. The drawing and text are sometimes called the Canon of Proportions or, less often, Proportions of Man. Leonardo uses this to reinforce the idea that there is a natural symmetry to man and both symmetry and harmony should be employed in art and architecture.

If abstraction and geometric patterns were copied in Islamic art as a means to create ideal forms around the human body that reflect God's infinite presence, then the body, primarily male in Western art, "is the image of the absolute God, of the One that it imitates… an ideal body of which the real bodies are mere shadows – also imitates the perfect."[279] According to Robert Lawlor, "The human body contains in its proportions all the important geometric geodesic measures and functions… the proportions of ideal man are at the centre of a circle of

279 Vigo Julian, *Performative Bodies*, 18.

invariant cosmic relationships."[280] Keith Critchlow has also discussed how the golden ratio of the human body is closely related to the primordial square and circle.[281]

2.6 Figural Representation in Islamic Art: The Veiling of the Male Body and the Artist as *Musawwir*

The previous discussion brings us to the topic of controversial subject of using figural representation under Islam, which has impacted men and their construction of identity. In Pakistan this issue has become the 'exploding masculinities' of murderers and violent attackers, who are protected by the extreme Blasphemy Law implemented by General Zia.[282] The general Islamic view against representational and figurative art stems from a belief that the Qur'an prohibits image and idol making because only God can create living forms. Orthodox readings of religious texts, as well as Prophet Muhammad's act of destroying all 365 idols in Ka'aba upon his arrival in Makkah, concludes idol making as iconoclastic. However, many scholars of Islam and Islamic art, both sacred and secular, state a contrasting view that figurative art is not prohibited in the Qur'an.[283]

Although the Qur'an does not prohibit figurative art, it condemns idolatry, since Allah is *Al-Musawwir* (The Maker of Forms), one of His ninety-nine attributes. The artist, as *musawwir,* copies to create *musawwari* to reflect this divine attribute. This results in tolerance for partial, veiled and stylised figurative art in Islam, or those that do not attempt to create a complete and lifelike representation. The prime example of this is the portrayal of the *shabih* (image) of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.), based on his available physical description [Figs. 2.38-2.40. p. 109]. In miniature painting, specifically Persian, such images were illustrated with

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280 Robert Lawlor, *Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 3, 48, 82, 92.

281 Critchlow, *Islamic Pattern*, 42.

282 Richard Ettinghausen, "Islamic Art," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, (1973) xxxiii , 2 - 52, Nabil F. Safwat, 'Reviews of Terry Allen: Five Essays on Islamic Art,' ix. 131, Sebastopol, CA, 1988, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (BSOAS), (London: University of London, 1990), liii . 134 - 135 [no.1].
Also, according to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Pakistan is now the 'poster child' for the anti-blasphemy campaign gone wild. In March (year?), at least 14 people were on death row there, and 19 were serving life sentences. Add Salam Taseer Case: http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/fareed-zakaria-blasphemy-and-the-law-of fanatics/2015/01/08/b0c14e38-9770-11e4-aabd-d0b93ff613d5_story.html

283 "The proscription of figurative art in Islam is not supported by any Qur'anic injunction, and ignores the multitude of examples of paintings and other arts depicting not only human and animal forms including prophets, birds, horses etc., but also angels, demons, dragons and other mythical beings." Mumtaz, "Art and Islam."
Many Islamic scholars agree that partial pictures are permissible if required, such as passport photography. This tolerance of partial picture-making is based on the idea that the musawwir is only attempting to create the illusion of living beings. And if the image remains incomplete, such as missing limbs or eyes, or only partially drawn such as half portraits, it suggests that the figure will not live or take complete likeness of the 'original' once it is removed from musawwir's picture plane (the mirror) and given a breath of life. Also see; For ideal figurative art in Islam, Critchlow and Nasr,

elegance and respect, and identified with a fiery nimbus or flaming halo (Figs. 2.41-2.42).[284] More plain, round halos appeared in portraits of Mughal Emperors and subsequently Rajput and Sikh rulers in the early seventeenth century. It is to be noted that men and masculinity remain the focus in figurative art.

Figure 2.38: Miniature from Rashid-al-Din Hamadani's Jami al-Tawarikh. c. 1315. Illustrating Muhammad's role in re-setting the Black Stone, (Hajjar-ae-Aswad) in Ka'aba in 605.

Figure 2.39: Isaiah's vision of Jesus riding a donkey and Muhammad riding a camel, al-Biruni, al-Athar al-Baqiyya 'an al-Qurun al-Khaliyya (Chronology of Ancient Nations), Edinburgh University Library.

Figure 2.40: Black ink sketch of the Prophet Muhammad enthroned, Iran, 14th century. Photo: Staatsbibliothek Zu, Berlin.

Figure 2.41: Prophet ascending to Paradise during Miraj. Nizami, from Nizami's Khamsa (Five Poems). Tabriz, Persia, 1539-43. British Library, London. Persian miniature (mid 1500s) depicting the ascent to heaven of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w) on the flying horse Buraq, (popularly illustrated as a winged horse with an androgynous or a woman face), guided by the archangel Gabriel, with an escort of angels. This journey is called the "Miraj," or the Night Journey and inspired many generations of Muslim artists.

Figure 2.42: 6th-century version of a 14th-century original painting showing daughter prophet, Hazrat Fatima (r.a) (foreground), on her way to a wedding party, receiving a parcel of the green cloak brought by the Angel Gabriel from Paradise, in the presence of Prophet Mohammed (s.a.a.w) (on the right), his wife Hazrat Aisha (r.a.) (next to him), and family members. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

284 Christiane Gruber, "Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nur): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting", *Muqarnas* 26 (2009): 1-34. Full access: https://www.academia.edu/456885/_Between_Logos_Kalima_and_Light_Nur_Representations_of_the_Prophet_Muhammad_in_Islamic_Painting_

Later, under orthodox readings, portrayals of the Prophet and other pious men received a white veil, similar to a black *naqab* (face covering) worn by many Muslim women. The veiling of masculine figures was an important introduction in the portrayal of the male body in Islamic art. It symbolically refers to the veiling of the Ka'aba with *Kiswa*,[285] suggesting beauty in modesty for all creations. However, such gestures were reserved for the female, implemented in the social veiling of the feminine, which still persists and is emblematic of the 'oppressed' Muslim woman. Artists fearing religious repercussions employed a veil for the Prophet's face so as to satisfy the primary condition of acceptable 'unfinished' figures in Islam, and to claim not to be actually drawing the Prophet but only his clothes. Thus they could bypass the prohibition against depicting the Prophet. Subsequently, a complete rejection of figurative works (humans and animals alike) was observed.[286]

Such portraits indicate the duality in devotional and secular Islamic art's representations of the body, which I argue begins to rupture with the introduction of such signs and symbols and their diverse interpretation. The signs of rupture began with the diverse handling of figurative artwork between Arab and non-Arab Muslim cultures, eventually leading to the contemporary disappearance of images of the Prophet and the secularisation of the figure. For Ali Aijdan, figurative illustrations were not needed in the Arabian Peninsula, "where verbal reality eclipsed the reality of the visual image," but they were needed "among the Turks, the Persians and the Indians, whose artistic heritage had been rich in pictorial images and whose language is other than Arabic, the Prophet was actually portrayed."[287] For Terry Allen, the contrasting opinions also differentiate pre and post-antique Islamic art, where a shift occurred in the use of figural representation in the secular art of the Islamic world. Non-figurative

285 Now black, but Ka'aba was once veiled with blue and green Kiswa.

286 The visual analysis of the faceless/veiled images of Prophet Muhammad indicates that they have been originally drawn with faces and then scratched out. See: http://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/sociopolitica/esp_sociopol_muslimbrotherhood10b.htm

287 Terrence, McCoy. "How images of the prophet Muhammad became 'forbidden." *The Washington Post*. January 16, 2015 (accessed January 20, 2015) http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/01/16/how-images-of-the-prophet-muhammad-became-forbidden/

For Ali Ajdan: Ali Aijdan in the Proceedings of the 11th International Congress of Turkish Art; For the International analysis in the public news and media also see: Harrison, Emma Graham. "Drawing the prophet: Islam's hidden history of Muhammad images." *The Guardian*. January 11, 2015 (accessed January 20, 2015) http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/10/drawing-prophet-islam-muhammad-images

Gruber, Christiane. "The Koran Does Not Forbid Images of the Prophet." *Newsweek*. January 9, 2015 (accessed February 20, 2015) http://www.newsweek.com/koran-does-not-forbid-images-prophet-298298

Department of Islamic Art. "Figural Representation in Islamic Art", in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), (accessed October 11, 2011). http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/figs/hd_figs.htm

Further Reading: Allen, Terry. *Five Essays on Islamic Art* (Sebastopol: Solipsist Press, 1988), 17–37. Grabar, Oleg. *The Formation of Islamic Art*. Revised ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). Allan, James. "Metalwork Treasures from the Islamic Courts." National Council for Culture. *Art and Heritage* (2004): 1.

structures, such as the Dome of the Rock or the Great Mosque of Damascus, and glorious figurative sculptural and painterly work during Umayyad period provide the evidence.[288]

The argument of artists as the *musawwir* of three-dimensional sculptural form is reflected in the Qur'anic account of the creation of Adam and Eve. Allah made Adam's hollow body from clay, blowing into the empty shell His own breath, the Spirit, and teaching him the secrets of His names. He then made Hawa (Eve) from Adam's rib. The use of clay and rib, as a support to build a hollow structure is embedded in sculptural practice. And while everything in the created universe manifests or reflects some qualities of the Creator, only human beings 'know' the name of every thing.[289]

2.7 Expression of Jalāl and Jamāl in Musawwari: Signs, Symbols and Performances of Divine Light

Referred to as *musawwari*, miniature paintings are exquisite works of art primarily painted to accompany classical texts, such as the tale of Rustam and Sohrab Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* (Compendium of Kings).[290] Miniatures were also used to glorify the historical accounts of emperors, such as Emperor Akbar in *Akbarnama* and Emperor Jhangir in *Jhangirnama*. Fantastic figures and motifs such as Buraq, winged angels, harpies and griffins were appropriated from Qur'anic descriptions as well as pre-Islamic mythology, whereas others were created through the visual manipulation of figural forms by artists.[291] In Islamic art, birds such as nightingales, *hudhud* (hood mocking bird), doves and pigeons are custodians of the Tree of Life in paradisiac gardens.[292] The lion, surmounted with the rising sun and drinking water with sheep, speaks of the emperor's ability to rule the hearts of his people and his enemies alike in peaceful reign. In Islamic cosmology and art, the word shams (sun) is feminine, and qamar (moon) is masculine. Furthermore, the props that an emperor holds in his hand (right) such as a globe, a mirror, compass, flowers (rose, lotus, sun flower) or a cup, while keeping the free hand (left) on his weapon, exemplifies the balancing act of jalāl/jamāl that a ruler is chosen to perform. Here the jamāli qualities are highlighted under the notions of awe and beauty, and an emperor's divine status as an 'embodied sun' is established by a nimbus or solar halo.

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288 Terry Allen, *Five Essays on Islamic Art,* 17–37.
In much of the medieval Islamic world, figural art was not only tolerated but encouraged, generating diverse attitudes towards primary and ornamental images, where ornamental figures, due to their lesser significance in historical and religious accounts, posed less of a challenge.

289 Quraeshi, *Sacred Spaces,* 49.

290 The *Shahnameh* or *Shahnama* is a long epic poem written by the Persian poet Ferdowsi between c. 977 and 1010 CE and is the national epic of Greater Iran. It is a tragic story of two heroes Rustam and Sohrab.

291 Department of Islamic Art. "Figural Representation in Islamic Art."

292 Anna Malecka, "Solar Symbolism of the Mughal Throne, A Preliminary Note," *Arts Asiatiques*, 54 (1999): 56.

Anna Malecka claims that the use of solar symbolism was a piece of Mughal propaganda, used to hold power over a vast empire and bring various religions and minorities under one rule.[293] The emperor's throne is a prime example, where the celestial iconography (sun, moon and stars) are drawn from a wide array of cultural sources and combined with precious stones and images of heavenly animals, creating "the celestial space for the emperor – 'The Sun'"[294] [Fig. 2.44, p. 113]. Every emperor projected this image in a variety of ways. At sunrise, Emperor Akbar performed the *darshan* (look), where his 'divine glory' appears in the *jharoka* (window) of his subjects' eyes[295] [Fig. 2.43, p. 113]. Aura was used to portray Emperor Jahangir both in paintings and gold coins. From Jahangir's time onwards, the use of the aura in Mughal art as radiant nimbuses around the heads of the emperors is attributed to the influence of European prints of Christ and the Apostles, which were brought to India by Jesuits. However Mughals were exposed to the symbol long before through the Persian concept of divine glory, which in the Islamic context became the *nur-e-ilahi* (the divine light). Abu'1-Fazl, a famous chronicler of Akbar's reign explains:

> *[...] Kingship is a light emanating from God, a ray from the sun, the illuminator of the universe, it is the argument of the book of perfection, the receptacle of all virtues. It is communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of anyone, and men in the presence of it bend the forehead of praise towards the ground of submission [...].*[296]

Divine light as a visible aura was not exclusive to men. The favoured wife of Jahangir was called Nur-e-Jahan (The Light of the World), the wife of Emperor Shah Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal was 'The Sun of Modesty', and Princess Jahanara was called 'The Light of the Imperial Chamber'.[297] As mentioned earlier, under Islamic cosmology, the females are al-shams (sun) as they radiate light, which is then reflected by men who are al-qamar (moon). In essence, I argue that a man as al-qamar reflects the light of a woman and this light shines bright the closer they are. Furthermore, a man being the moon, can polish his 'earthy' heart to a state of clean mirror like surface on which a woman, the sun, not only can witness her power and beauty (jalāl/jamāl) but also can gauge and adjust the strength of her bright light.

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293 Anna Malecka, "Solar Symbolism." 24–32.

294 Ibid., 56.

295 Used in a ceremony of the darshan which gave rise to the Darshaniyya, the sect that worshipped the emperor, Jharoka is an overhanging balcony used for jharoka-i darshan, the 'balcony for viewing' and was first used at the fort of Akbar. Every morning he would appear, show his jalwa (face) so his awam, subjects, can see that he was alive and well. This ritual was continued by his successors. See Anna Malecka, "Solar Symbolism. 24-25.

296 Abu'1-Fazl 'Allami, *The 'Ain-i-Akbari*, transl. H. Blochmann, (Calcutta: 1939), 50.

297 Inayat Khan, *The Shah Jahan Nama*, transi, by A.R. Fuller, (New Delhi: Oxford 1990). 5, 71.

Figure 2.43: *Emperor Jahangir at the Jharoka Window at the Red Fort at Agra Agra*, India. ca. 1620 CE. Watercolour, Ink and Gold on Paper Folio from Manuscript of Jahangirnama (Book of Jahangir), Aga Khan Museum.
The Emperor Jahangir appears in a balcony window (jharoka), performing darshan. A chain of bells or 'Chain of Justice' is hanging on the left. Anyone who felt need justice from the emperor could pull the bells. However, in reality, men with sticks are appointed (in purple dress) to chase them away.

Fugure 2.44: Abu'l Hasan, *Jahangir Standing on a Globe Shooting Poverty*. ca.1625 CE. Watercolour, Ink and Gold on Paper, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
Figures of cherubs are a Western influence where as lion and sheep sitting together identify Jahangir's reign as balanced and his portrayal (in profile) as a peaceful emperor and a warrior surrounded by the divine solar halo. A saint riding a fish below the globe indicates Jahangir's affinity towards sapiential Islam. Other court artists made versions of this painting also.

Despite there being Anthropomorphism (recognition of human-like characteristics in animals, plants or non-living things) as well as no restrictions on the depiction of animals and figures, the art of the miniature was long considered mere illustration. It remained at the periphery of Islamic art, which was otherwise dominated by architecture, crafts and traditional calligraphic art. However, under the tutelage of Mughal emperors, miniature painting evolved into a secular art of beauty, refinement, realistic figures, and imaginative worldly storytelling. It adapted other cultures' representations of the divine and gender without loosing its core reflection of God's unity and His divine attributes. This was achieved through Emperor Jahangir's affinity with, for example, Western portrait painting and religious iconography. For the most part, the miniature tradition kept the forms and content of poetic expression that includes attaining perfection by copying ideal forms and four dimensional perspective, where everything is visible under the gaze of God, resulting in stylised and abstracted depictions of figures, despite its later refinement towards more realistic portrayal.

My studio works *The Balancing Act of Royal Proportions* (2013) *and The Balancing Act of Celestial Proportions* (2013) [Chapter Two, Demo IV, p. 150] drawings demonstrate how various forms and content of Islamic and Western culture create a contemporary version of my own identity as a modern interpretation of the peaceful poet and warrior surrounded by the divine solar halo, cherubs and signs and symbols from the Popular poster.

Figure 2.45: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *The Balancing Act of Royal Proportions* and *The Balancing Act of Celestial Proportions. Someother Place* Exhibition, Blacktown Arts Centre, Sydney. Photo: courtesy the artist.

2.8 The Art of Barzakh (*Amāl-e-Barzakh* or *Amāl-e-Arāf*): Between Traditional and Contemporary Pakistani Art

In her critique of contemporary Pakistani artists' strategies for appropriating religious and Sufic texts, the critic Amra Ali has identified two primary strands of thought. First, she uses the term *qibla*[298] to declare that the impact of traditional Islamic art has shifted from East to West through the commodification of traditional signs and symbols under Orientalism. Second, she judges this shift as being from the religious discourse of God to a focus on the artist, who is now at the centre.[299] Ali's way of thinking resonates with Kant's hypothesis of a universal aesthetic judgment, a faculty "for thinking the particular under the universal," but her focus on 'loss' should also be seen as a dismissal of potential gains during the process.[300] Ali's use of qibla in analysing Pakistani art is creative, but its judgment is linear and does not reflect God's centrality. Readings and labelling of Islamic art such as 'devotional', 'sacred', 'traditional',

298 Literally 'direction', and generally symbolic of the direction towards Ka'aba.

299 Amra Ali, "Art Find: Journey to the Market," *Dawn*, March 16, 2014, (accessed Marc 16, 2014) http://www.dawn.com/news/1093448/art-fiend-journey-to-the-market

300 Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Judgment,*. trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987) 179 cited in Laurie Rojas, "Confronting the 'Death' of Art Criticsim," (MArt Thesis, The School of Art Institute of Chicago, 2012), 6. When Judgment plays the determining role, "it subsumes particulars under concepts of universals, which are already given. In the reflecting role, judgment is concerned with 'finding the universal for the given particular.' Aesthetic judgments, in their reflective role, were about a communicable, shareable, i.e. potentially universal, idea about a particular experience of art."

‘secular’ and ‘craft’ do not sufficiently include artists like myself, whose interests and practice lay in the middle of such religious discussions and who also incorporate Western modes of contemporary art practices, thinking and presentations.

Due to an influx of information and international exposure, I argue that many Pakistani masters, modernists and contemporary artists, either deliberately or intuitively include Western modes of art making, diverse cultural practices and readings of Islamic doctrine, laws and spirituality within their work. The resulting challenge for such artists and the writers and critics of their work is how to address such diverse cannons and influences and specifically struggle to grasp the layered nuances of Islamic practices and spiritual thoughts beyond superficial and anecdotal referencing. Through the case studies undertaken in this research, as well as my own experience as an artist, I have also observed a persisting view of Islamic arts as exquisite craft and beautiful, but difficult to critique beyond superficial comments on its ‘derivative’ and ‘unoriginal’ contemporary expression. To reiterate, Islamic art is an elegant merger of “wisdom (*hikma*) and craftsmanship (*fann ir sināah*)”[301] and for the in-depth undertraining and critique of Islamic art, one requires an intimate knowledge of both. Furthermore, the originality of Islamic art lies in its return to the source to seek and copy inspiration. These reference points assure that artists can locate themselves in any time and create unique paths to trace truth and beauty. I further argue that today in art communities like Pakistan’s, the lack of understanding of these critical reference points among critics, writers and collectors, potentially yields a desire among artists who are either inspired or trained in Islamic arts and crafts tradition, to dislodge themselves from labels such as traditionalist or craftsperson in order to avoid exclusion from the contemporary art scene and market. This poses further challenges for artists who either identify with or reject both secular and orthodox Islamist thinking. Furthermore, the perception that contemporary art criticism lacks understanding of the generating principles of art and a preoccupation with finding originality do not help either. Lauire Rojas, quoting art critic Jerry Saltz, notes how this produces “no self-conscious cohesion” among art critics.[302] A lack of critical cohesion in Pakistani arts, especially in the analysis of masculinity, was also identified in my case studies.

Upon analysis, the data reveals dissatisfaction among all five participating artists about the growth of hegemonic Western modes of critique, which disregards cultural sensitivities and is unfamiliar with Islamic gender models and artistic practice. This results in feelings of being “existentially adrift” when creating male gender.[303] But a duality in this scenario places responsibility on both the critic and the artist. For example, to be interviewed and published in

301 Syed Hossein Nasr, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning, Titus Burckhardt*, World of Islam Publishing Company Ltd. p. xvi.

302 Laurie Rojas, “Confronting the ‘Death,’” 6.

303 Jerry Saltz, qtd. in Laurie Rojas, “Confronting the ‘Death,’” 6.

foreign magazines like the *New York Times* acknowledges the artist's career and provides major international exposure, but it can also ask the artist to forgo control over the representation of their art and sometimes their own identity.

Discussing this with artist Anwar Saeed, he reported that during a lengthy and friendly interview with a writer for the *New York Times* he felt compelled to tell his life story, assuming that the writer would be mindful about his delicate position in Islamic society. He assumed the writer would recognise that terms like 'gay' and 'queer' are provocative in Pakistan, whether in terms of personal behaviour or artistic expression, and that homosexual acts are illegal.[304] The article in the *New York Times* labelled Saeed as a Pakistani 'gay artist', describing him as "radical" and superficially comparing his work to Gauguin's.[305] Although this sensational article gained Saeed a new politicised 'gay activist' identity, it ignored the cultural connections, overshadowed the formal qualities in Saeed's work, and undermined his artistic identity. Saeed admits that his work is clearly about masculine desires and the 'pleasures of the male body', but in local publications it is noted that the use of terms like 'gay' and 'queer' to describe his identity were avoided, allowing focus to be on his work as 'Other' and the spiritual connections from which he draws. Saeed himself quotes the tale of Punjabi Sufi poet Shah Hussain, who falls in love with a Hindu boy 'Madho Lal' and forms a single identity as 'Madho Lal Hussain'.[306] Saeed's love for this story seems melancholic, concerned with the spirit of a lost lover who yearns for divine unity in love rather than sexual desire for the male body. Such cases highlight ethical challenges, but also a duality when it comes to the acceptance and reporting of sensitive subjects in Pakistan and their nuanced meaning in Islam.

To further test this hypothesis, I conducted a survey of gallery invitation cards for 155 solo exhibitions and 77 two-person shows, published by Canvas gallery in Karachi over the last 16 years (September 1999 to March 2014)[307] [Appendix A, Descriptive Statistics Table,

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304 Even use of 'queer' as a protest against exclusive sexual categorisation and identity politics is publicly detested in Pakistan. D. Altman, *The End of the Homosexual*, (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press 2013)

305 Jane Perlez, "Pakistani Artists Find a Contemporary Voice," *New York Times*, September 28, 2009, accessed September 29, 2008. Under a large image captions it read, Anwar Saeed in Lahore with some of his gay theme-paintings." The link immediately narrates stories of Gauguin's sexual adventures, from slave girls to boys and presumed relationship with Van Gough, and remind us his most famous quote: "I must confess that I am myself a woman."

306 Anwar Saeed, Case Study Interview (Transcript Anwar Saeed).
Shah Hussain (1538–1599) was a Punjabi Sufi poet who is regarded as a Sufi saint. He was the son of Sheikh Usman, a weaver, and belonged to the Dhudha clan of Rajputs. He was born in Lahore (present-day Pakistan). He is considered a pioneer of the Kafi form of Punjabi poetry. Shah Hussain's love for a Brahmin boy called "Madho" or "Madho Lal" is famous, and they are often referred to as a single person with the composite name of "Madho Lal Hussain". Madho's tomb lies next to Hussain's in the shrine. His tomb and shrine lies in Baghbanpura, adjacent to the Shalimar Gardens. His Urs (annual death anniversary) is celebrated at his shrine every year during the "Mela Chiraghan" ("Festival of Lights").

307 These invitations and distributed twice a month by mail, email and Facebook. Run by a dynamic director, Sameera Raja, Canvas gallery is one of the most established and cutting edge art galleries in Karachi. Canvas invitation design is based on a standard A5 size. Raja has created basic guidelines for the each invitation and artists are encouraged to work with her in selecting an image for the card. On the front, either a detail of a single image or a few full images of works are published, along with a title written in Urdu

Invitations, p. 287]. Words such as 'queer', 'gay' and 'homosexual(ity)' were not used in the exhibition titles, sub-titles or descriptions; neither were any reference to the nude male body or masculine desire. Instead words such as 'other' are commonly used to refer to non-hegemonic gender identities. References to desire, pleasure and ego were primarily argued under the language of religion, Islam and spiritual techniques of Sufism as something of malice that must be extinguished through meditation (*fikr*) and invocation (*dhikr*) for social reform and spiritual salvation.[308] Clearly, the languages surrounding Western and Islamic art are different and their terminologies can result in conflict, requiring deeper scrutiny and perhaps a new identification.

In this regard, I propose the terms *Amāl-e-Barzakh or the Art of Barzakh* [also *Amāl-e-A'rāf* , The Art of Heights], which emerge from the third space *al-Barzakh or Aalām-e A'rāf*, which is the Muslim borderland between Paradise and Hell.[309] For Ibn Kathir, this place is inhabited by those evenly balanced in their sins and witness both the terror of hell and beauty of paradise.[310] Upon referencing literature and art writing available on this, I found that the word 'Barzakh' either used as a tile of artworks, exhibitions or as a concept of a specific project and its critique. In this regard, I conclude that my *Art of Barzakh* model is a unique proposition in locating and analysing the works and art practice of artists who find themselves and their practices in between the histories, languages and the visual world of Islamic art and contemporary art. To summarise, the resulting critique informs current contemporary art from the Muslim world, especially from Pakistan. I would suggest that the practice of Barzakhi art be recognised as a balancing act, and thus never a permanent space. Out of five case studies, only Meher Afroz and Ali Kazim are recognised as maintaining a balance between the Islamic and contemporary (read Western) modes of art making. Although Rashid Rana, Imran Qureshi and Anwar Saeed are recognised as contemporary artists, however, they have a strong affinity to Barzakh, which they have practiced and occupied in different phases of their careers. The art

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and English. If required, a 250-word statement is included on the back. This format yields limited design options and hence the card design itself does not have much impact of the perception of the show - the focus remains on the published image and title. My survey of these invitations was conducted in 2014 when an assistant was hired to work with gallery staff in locating, collecting, copying and cataloguing all the invites. A full record was given to the gallery at the end. (Appendix A. Table Invitation Cards, p. 287).

308 Syed Hossein Nasr, William C. Chittick (ed.), The Essential Syed Hossein Nasr, 2007, Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom p. 8.

309 Salman Bashier, Ibn al-Arabi's Barzakh: The Concept of the Limit and the Relationship between God and the World (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).

310 Mustafeez Ahmad Alvi, "An Exegical Study of Qur'anic Term Al-Araf," access December 21, 2013, http://drmustafeezalvi.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=32&Itemid=20

The word al-a'raf is plural of 'arf or 'urf, which means height, top tower or a peak. The Qur'anic idea of aʿrāf or "heights" is closer to that of Christian purgatory and sometime equates to limbo colloquially.. The Holy Qur'an says: "Between them shall be a veil, and on the heights (al-a'raf) will be men who would know every one by his marks. They will call out to the companions of the Garden, "peace on you". When their eyes shall be turned towards the companions of the Fire, they will say, "Our Lord! Send us not to the company of the wrong doers". The men on heights (ashab al-a`raf) will call to certain men whom hey will know from their marks saying, "Of what profit to you, were your hoard and your arrogant ways?"

This world is divided by 'Barzakh', a veil or a barrier that stands between two things and which does not allow the two to meet Al-Qur'an, Surah al-A'raf /44-49. (Translation by Abd Allah Yusuf Ali, Sh. Muammad Aibak Road, Lahore -1990).

emerging from this balancing act informs distinct modes of conceptualising and understanding Islamic art: traditional or devotional art and secular art. I further argue that if the language of traditional Islamic art is contemplative and abstract such as geometry and calligraphy, then the language of secular Islamic art is figurative and performative through the body. Secondly, the Barzakhi spaces allow the formation of a relational balance of form, content, shared common roots and histories with Western art.

Nicolas Bourriaud has shown that the relationship between the artist and art history is no longer tied to the appropriation of art, creating a culture of freely shared forms, postures, images and objects.[311] I would argue that Pakistani artists who either reside or draw from the third space of Barzakh are creating a net among other artists, allowing them to negotiate the current turmoil of religious, social and cultural chaos and locate new means of expression. Once fully established, these "new forms of sociality" would allow a "true critique of contemporary forms of life involved a different attitude in relation to artistic patrimony, through the production of new relationships to culture in general and to the artwork in particular".[312]

To demonstrate, let's consider the bust and half-length portrait as signs that resulted in a collective ideal, a frame for masculinity in Pakistani art. An invention of fifteenth-century Flemish painting, the bust or half-length portrait uses three-quarter profile as a means to create depth on a flat surface. Encased in an oval frame, an inscription runs across the bottom, which later became a parapet or window ledge on which the hands could rest. Bust portraits become common in Renaissance Europe, appearing on coins, medals and cameos, which then reached the Mughal court.[313] While earlier half-portraits of Emperor Akbar[314] and Shah Jehan appeared on *shasts* [Fig. 2.46, p. 119] and cameos,[315] it was Emperor Jahangir who should be recognised as the first patron of the world of Barzakh. Jahangir was responsible for accepting the foreign

311 "The use of constant activity of signs based on a collective ideal [of] sharing… forms, postures, and images for artists – collective equipment that everyone is in a position to use, not in order to be subjected to their authority but as tools to probe the contemporary world…When artists find material in objects that are already in circulation on the cultural market, the work of art takes on a script-like value: 'when screenplays become form,' in a sense."
Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World* (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002). PDF: http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Bourriaud-Postproduction2.pdf

312 Bourriaud. *Postproduction*, (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002).

313 Although no Mughal cameo is known to have survived from Jahangir's reign, the oval sardonyx cameos of the head of Shah Jahan imitate the type of cameos which Renaissance Europe had sent into Mughal India.

314 Abu'l Fazl, 39, vol. I (1927): 115. For more see "The Carpet at the Window: a European Motif in the Mughal Jharokha Portrait," in *Indian Painting* (Themes: History and Interpretations, 2013), 52-64.
https://www.academia.edu/5017911/The_Carpet_at_the_Window_A_European_Motif_in_the_Mughal_Jharokha_Portrait

315 Abu'l Fazl, 39, vol. I (1927): 115.
Abu'l Fazl tells us in his A'in-i Akbari, written in 1596– 8, that towards the end of his life: "[Akbar] sat for his likeness and also ordered to have the likenesses taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed: those that have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised them." The portrait style of both the Akbari and Jahangiri shasts of 1605 and 1611 shows the bust of the emperor with head and shoulders visible behind a parapet with a cloth of honour over it. These are the earliest known bust portraits from Mughal India. Portraiture in Mughal India it must be remembered was still in its infancy, having begun seriously with the great album that was prepared only in the 1590s.

European portraits as ‘art’; it should be noted that the great court artist Abu’l Fazl painted full-length portraits, and it must have required a great imaginative leap to find a way of visualising the Emperor’s authority and beauty without the traditional poses and props of the whole body. This led to the development of *jharoka* painting [Fig. 2.43, p. 113]. The adaptation of foreign style as ‘fine art’ does suggest that bringing ‘alien’ ideas to Islamic culture potentially separated the arts and crafts of the Islamic world. Furthermore, it also had a progressive influence, as it attempted to flirt with the concept of Barzakh to achieve a more collective means of expression through universally principles.

Figure 2.46: Gold ‘portrait coin’ of Jahangir resting his hand on the parapet covered with a carpet. Dated 1020/1610-11. 23mm. Photo: British Museum.
These portrait-coins or shasts were never meant for circulation as money but intended strictly as presents for the favoured few among the nobility. The window portraits of Jahangir are not in point of fact the earliest bust portraits of the emperor, for they have predecessors in his ‘portrait coins.’ These shasts as they are called issued between 1611 and 1614, and their solitary precursor showing a portrait of Akbar issued in 1605, are well known to Mughal numismatists.

Figure 2.47: François de Valois, Dauphin of France, Thomas de Leu’s engraving overpainted and mounted in a painted Mughal album page. c. 1610-20. Ink and wash on paper. 24.9 x 16.5 cm. Photo: British Museum. The prototype for the bust portrait behind a parapet. Such western paintings were referenced (copied) such as in jharoka painting of darshan of Jahangir with additional iconography.

Fig. 2.48. *Jahangir holding a bust of Akbar*, by Hashim with contributions by Abu’l Hasan. c. 1611-15. Opaque watercolour on paper. Image 18.3 x 11.6 cm. Photo: Musée Guimet
Jahangir, seen in profile and half-length above a parapet, holds in both hands a portrait of his father Akbar, seen in three-quarter view again above parapet, and holding a globe in his left hand.

Half-profile portrait imagery and flying cherubs (replacing the angels of early Persian miniatures) were supplied to Emperor Jahangir [Fig. 2.47 this page; Fig. 2.44, p. 113], and such influences have deeply impacted contemporary art of Pakistan. Miniature painting was taught through a master/apprentice (*ustad*/*shagird*) dynamic, however the knowledge and archives were always available to both traditional and contemporary Pakistani artists as sources of inspiration, and were not limited only to miniaturists. Despite this, the prominent Pakistani artist Zahoor-ul-Akhlaq (1941–1999), who is not a miniaturist, only discovered the true beauty and importance of Mughal miniatures while studying in the West.[316] Already exploring Islamic

316 Studied at the National College of Arts under modernist Shakir Ali, Zahoor taught at NCA and attended the Royal Academy in London, where his interest in miniature painting began. Akhlaq saw a miniature painting collection at the British Museum and was particularly floored by a Mughal painting of Emperor Shah Jahan and his sons on horseback at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

geometric patterns, he was painting grids within a grid, circles within a circle, and squares within a square, similar to the Royal *Firmaan* (decree), Islamic dome architecture, and the courtyard floor in Mughal palaces and mosques. Akhlaq recognised the importance of both forms and created an abstract painterly realm of Barzakh, further exploring the grid and circles of two American artists: Ad Reinhardt and Jasper Johns. Despite not mentioning any association of concentric circles with the halo, Akhlaq's interest clearly lies in divine names and the dialogue between *zahir* (revealed, inner) and *batin* (hidden, inner), which form a delicate equilibrium that results in Barzakhi art.[317]

Akhlaq's exploration of art-making in the sub-continent through Islamic, Mughal and Western traditions was furthered by his students and even inspired his contemporaries, forming the chain of Bourriaud's 'Reproduction'.[318] Quddus Mirza continued Akhlaq's investigation, combining the concentric circles of Jasper Johns's target with *Jharoka* portrait painting, producing a makeover of General Zia as the tyrant with his army medals.[319] Mirza acknowledges the appropriation of Johns's target as the traditional halo, "thus making him [General Zia] a target, both for image making (as if through camera) as well as for his political crime).[320] Mirza's work, made during the rise of Pop in Pakistan, is "about the structure of power and system of repression, and how these were represented through Mughal imagery as well as modern day military signs, signifying the continuing institution of power."[321] Akbar Ali has noted that these new Mughal miniatures, produced through cross-cultural influence, should be recognised as "important landmarks in the history of style and stylistic transplantation."[322] The image then further developed as a photographic mosaic by Rashid Rana, protégée of Akhlaq and Mirza. In *I Love Miniature* (2002) [Fig. 2.52, p. 121] the original image of Jahangir is restored through Akhlaq's square grid, which appears as digitally-tiled images of advertising in urban Lahore. This creates a reference to men occupying the street, navigating "between the poles of tradition and contemporary reality with all its grime and uncontrollable production."[323] The half-bust portrait has also inspired many other artists such as Meher Afroz and Ali Kazim, specifically in their drawing of masculine figures.

Incidentally, neither the critics nor the artists discuss these works under the representation of the male body or masculinity. For Quddus Mirza "gender was not a content,

317 Akhlaq was not the only artist exploring the form and content of squares, circles and grids in creating the Art of Barzakh. This exploration also belongs to Indian-born artist Zarina Hashmi, Anwar Jalal Shemza and Rasheed Arrayen, who have recently been recognised as a pioneer of minimalist sculpture in Britain.

318 Nicolas Bourriaud, Postproduction (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002), 113.

319 Email correspondence with the artist, Quddus Mirza, 12 April, 2012

320 Ibid.

321 Ibid.

322 Naqvi, *Image and Identities*, 627.

323 Adnan Madni, "Thinking Inside the Box: 6 Notes on Rashid Rana," *Rashid Rana*, (Mumbai: Chatterjee & Lal and Chemould Prescott, India. 2010), 14.

neither implicit nor explicit"[324] in any of his works. Rather, the focus remains on political power, pop culture, and the turmoil of the state. Ironically, in none of these works have the artists attempted to significantly alter the male figure. This static portrayal of the male body was the focus in one of my series of performative works, where I replace the emperor as an impostor to deal with the condition of authorities and hegemonic masculinity (Fig. 2.54).

Figure 2.49: *Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad Bakhsh*. c. 1637. 38.7 x 26 cm. Attributed to Balchand. Coll & Photo: British Museum.

Figure 2.50: Akhlaq, Zahoor ul. *The Three Younger Sons Of Shah Jahan*. Photo: Estate of Zahoor ul-Akhlaq. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pmpk/hd_pmpk.htm

Figure 2.51: Mirza, Quddus. 1986. *Portrait of a Shah*. Oil on canvas.

Photo: courtesy the artist.

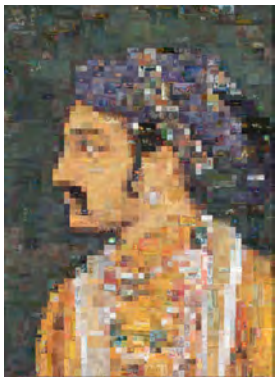


Figure 2.52: Rana, Rashid. 2002. *I Love Miniatures*. C-print, Diasec, gilt frame. 45 x 35cm. Photo: courtesy the artist. At first a conventional portrait of the Shah Jehan, on closer inspection the image reveals itself to be composed of photographs of billboards from the streets of Lahore.

Figure 2.53: Qureshi, Imran. 2009. *Self-portrait* (detail). Gold leaf and opaque watercolour on wasli paper

Photo: courtesy the artist

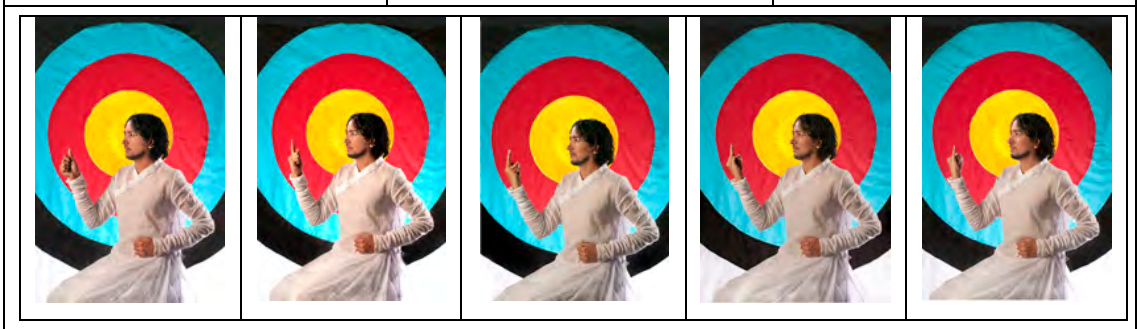


Figure 2.54: Syed M I, Abdullah. *Pluck Yew*. 2012. Set of five digital prints on light-box. 22 x 32cm each. Photo: courtesy the artist.

324 Email conversation with the artist, April 12, 2012

During the 1990s, artists such as Shahzia Sikander, Imran Qureshi, Aisha Khalid, Saira Wasim, Nusra Latif Qureshi, Talha Rathor, Tazeen Qayyum, Sumaira Tazeen and Khadim Ali, to name a few, redefined South Asian miniature art as the neo-miniature art. Despite claims of reinvention, at the core of neo-miniaturist works was a performance of traditional master/apprentice studio practices. This involved learning about handmade paper and various painterly techniques, and most importantly copying the ideal form and structure of old manuscripts, which they later evolved into their own 'neo' language of art.[325]

Imran Qureshi and Khadim Ali were the primary artists who investigated the male body (both young and old) by copying traditional iconography, stories and figurative representations of Islamic masculinity. Qureshi's series *Moderate Enlightenment* (Figs. 2.56a-b) is painted in the traditional fashion of full-length portraits by one of the greatest miniature masters, Abu'l Fazl from the court of Emperor Akbar (Fig. 2.55). Qureshi's sartorial and almost banal portrayal of young men performing the everyday tasks of being men counters the negative image of fundamental Islam with a moderate one. He portrays young Pakistani men with a beard (a sign of pious Muslim men and post-9/11 fundamentalism) in both traditional and modern clothing as a point of departure. This demonstrates the rupture between the image of bearded Muslim men as irrational terrorists in Western media, and the majority of open-minded and harmless Pakistani Muslim men (Figs. 2.56a-b).

Figure 2.55: Sultan Muhammad Dara Shikoh as a boy with bow and arrow set. 1628. The eldest son and heir apparent of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan but was defeated, accused of idolatry and apostasy from Islam, and was condemned to death 1659 in a power struggle for control of Mughal India. His brother Aurangzeb delivered the head of Dara to their father.

Figure 2.56a: Qureshi, Imran. 2005-2010
Moderate Enlightenment.
16 paintings (from a series of 20).
opaque watercolour on wasli paper.
Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.56b: Qureshi, Imran. 2007.
Moderate Enlightenment.
Gouache on wasli.
22.9 x 17.8 cm.
Photo: courtesy the artist.

325 Virginia Whiles, *Art of Polemic* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010), xx.

Similarly, Khadim Ali adapts Firdossi's *Shahnama* (Fig. 2.57), but instead of painting Rustam as a hero, he is made a "fallen demon warrior" in exile, chained with golden shackles (Figs. 2.58a-b). The work is a semi-biographical modern tale of an exiled Afghanistan Hazara man who was born a refuge in Pakistan. His family migrated to Pakistan due to the Taliban's discrimination towards the Hazara, and even faced prejudice in Pakistan and being considered 'demons' based on their beliefs and appearances.

Figure 2.57: *Tale of Rustam and Sohrab*. In old age Rustam's half brother Shaghad plotted his death. He had pits dug and filled them with spears and sharp swords before covering them over. Spurred on by Rustam, Rakhsh and his rider fell into the trap. Rustam's dying wish to the treacherous Shaghad was to be handed his bow with two arrows. Granted, he strung it one final time, killing Shaghad who had taken refuge behind a tree. Photo: British Library

Figure 2.58a: Ali, Khadim. 2007.
Rustam Series – Untitled.
Gouache and gold leaf on wasli.
43.2 x 31.1 cm
Photo: Christie's -
http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/paintings/khadim-ali-rustam-series-untitled-i-5452491-details.aspx

Figure 2.58b: Ali, Khadim. 2007.
Rustam Series – Rustam.
Gouache and gold leaf on wasli paper.
58 x 42.5 cm
Photo: Christie's

From outside the neo-miniature world, painter Meher Afroz is an artist who truly inhabits *Amal-e-Barzakh*, as she clearly divides her practice into abstract and figurative, despite the fact that Shia Islam allows figurative works in sacred and devotional settings. In recent years she has focused more on drawing inspiration from the abstract symbols and patterns of her religious practice and her work is now written about as devotional art. Shia symbolism and pious Muslim identities are shown notably in *Amulet*, *Zindaan*, and *Behisht-i-Gumshuda*. Meher restores true Islamic identities and "depicts the contradictions and conflicts experienced by twentieth-century man as he evolves a new relationship with universal truths and his core values – and drifts out of the protective circle of spirituality."[326] Afroz uses sacred and religious devotional signs, symbols and Islamic geometric patterns (squares and triangles, similar to al-

326 Rumana Husain, "The Prisons Within - Meher Afroz – exploring the subconscious," *Dawn*, January 19, 2002 (accessed October 21, 2013 http://karachiwali.blogspot.com.au/2010/08/prisons-within-meher-afroz-exploring.html

Buni's construction of the ninety-nine name magic square). Her use of the grid creates amulets of devotional *dhikr* (remembrance), and is partly inspired by the Islamic *chahar-bagh* garden and the same mosaics that once inspired Zahoor ul Akhlaq and his protégées. For Afroz, each silver- and gold-leafed square is a systemic order of shining *noor* (light), creating a path of ultimate truth.[327] In Afroz's art practice, abstraction and figuration stems from the same concern and identity, but her articulation of figures persists in referring to pious or 'imaginary' identities. Her decision to create presence through only clothing aligns with my initial observation of veiling portrayals of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.).

2.59: Afroz, Meher. 2005. *Poshak series*. Etching, 24.77 x 17.78 cm. Christie's

2.60: Meher Afroz. 2002. *Zindan* Series review newspaper scan. Photo: Author's scan.

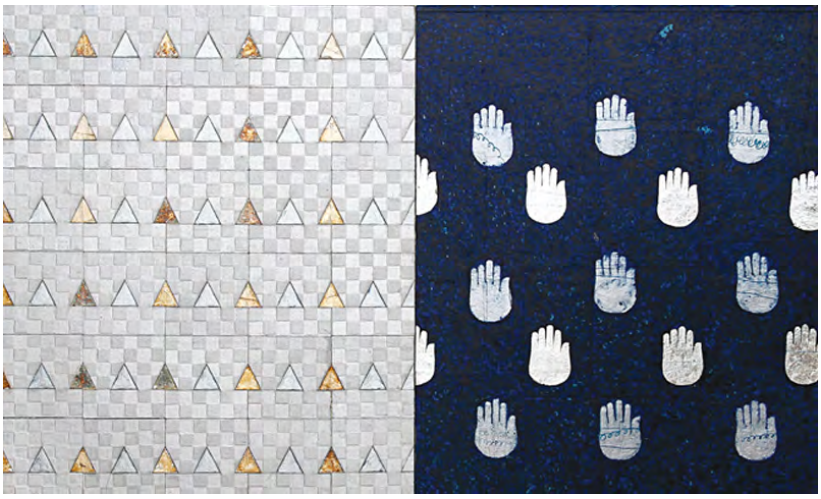


Figure 2.61: Afroz, Meher. 2014. *Behisht-i-Gumshuda (The Lost Paradise) series*. Photo: courtesy the artist.

327 Amna R. Ali, "Ripples of Sublimity," *Newsline*, May 23, 2012, (accessed October 15, 2013) http://www.newslinemagazine.com/2012/05/ripples-of-su

Afroz's work is textured, with layered overlapping patterns interspersed with grids and scripts through which she aims to provide form to the intangible. Islamic iconography features in the series *Gulistan Hamara* (2014), which integrates geometric patterns and uses water as a symbol of purity in the paradise gardens of Islam, as seen in Central Asia, Iran and Mughal India. The text reinforces a constant *dhikr*, a celebration of the divine and a mainstay of Sufi practice, for example in the repetition of pertinent phrases, "*Hum uski tasbih karte hein*." In her fusion of texts and images, the poem by Hafiz promotes a powerful message of humility, which the artist believes will open the door to higher consciousness. She reminds herself and others that if these spaces are not filled with divine *dhikr*, the ego and petty desires will occupy them, transforming the grid into a series of *Zindaan* (cells), which are places of entrapment within us. She uses the *hamsa* to depict loyalty, faith and resistance against difficulty, portraying her memories or the moral decadence around her. She observes the hypocrisy and bankruptcy of the people she comes across [Fig. 2.61, p. 124]. Her technique of overlapping surfaces is accentuated by the scratches of 'ageing' – such emotive lines and dynamically worked textures hardly ever fail to appeal.[328]

328 Husain, "The Prisons Within."

STUDIO PRACTICE

ART DEMOS I, II, III, IV

2.9 STUDIO PRACTICE

My diasporic identity, alongside my conceptual studio practice that draws from Islamic and Western worlds, positions the expression of dualities as a starting point in my work. In approaching this work, I formulated a two-pronged strategy.

First, I investigate dualities of forms and objects (materiality, colour, shape, structure, transparency) that directly link to the religious and secular activities I perform as a Muslim man. For example, the way I wear *taqiyah* (*topi* of scull cap) during prayer at the mosque and at home, yet seldom wear it in public despite it being recommended to all Muslim men, or how I learned archery to gain insight into why a weapon defines a man and how archery teaches a balancing of mind and body.

Second, I let my intuition guide me, performing an idea through the body to see how it reveals the content of the form and subsequently informs the dualities in Islamic masculinity and male body representation. I therefore explore these ideas through trial and error, refining them until arriving at a point where the project takes shape and dictates the medium; only then do I chose drawing, sculpture, photography, video or light projection. I supplement my studio practice with the notion that every failure is a success, and every success is only a reflection of my struggle to achieve perfection. Training my mind for a process of failure is not easy, however I was confident it would lead to different solutions that I could then apply to other problems. In this regard, when failures become solutions, the pressure to create 'art' subsides and the studio reveals itself as a testing ground.

2.9.1 Studio as Karkhana

Prior to this research, I had only a basic experience working in a long-term studio space.[329] I was unfamiliar with a studio set-up beyond the limited spaces of the academic environment, which I felt was not conducive to focus. Upon consultation, I moved outside the academic environment to a private studio in 2011 and outlined my strategies for practice. I needed to define the function of the studio and how it informs research and vice versa. The writing of Daniel Buren provided the clue, where he sees a studio as a physical site that has roots in crafting a place of production.[330] It is a place with a door that can be shut or kept open for visitors, many of whom would be interested in seeing, and collecting artists' creations in the

329 The primary reasons for this were my desire to work collaboratively, interest in local crafts, and the logistics of my itinerate living, which rendered limited options such as makeshift home studios, shared studio, or short residencies.

330 Daniel Buren and Thomas Repensek, "The Function of the Studio," *The MIT Press* (Autumn, 1979). vol. 10: 51-58 URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/778628

form of commercial objects: '… the unspeakable compromise of the portable artwork'.[331] In contrast, Lippard and Chandler argue that working in a studio and making drawings, blue prints or maquettes to send off to be resized and executed by craftspeople will only render a polished end product, again an object. In this process no transference of knowledge, either through observation or communication during the physical transformation of the work of art, would occur.[332] I knew the solution – taking the middle path. I identified Pakistan as the source of my artistic practice and the focus of my research. I am an admirer of *Karkhana* ('workshop' in Urdu),[333] a studio space for calligraphy and miniature painting where disciples are asked to sit on *chandni* (white fabric) covered floors and learn traditional techniques by copying under the watchful eye of the *ustad*, the master.[334] Karkhana also fascinated me for its history, as it was first established in the fourteenth century as a workshop where several artisans would work to produce jewellery, textiles, weaponry, and art in collaboration.

I took these views and formulated a strategy where the studio is a Karkhana, a workshop for production that has strong roots in traditional approaches, but remains in the present as a conceptual site where scholars, artists and craftspeople are invited to discuss problems. Only then can I draw from such experiences, evolve my practice and grow personally from the experience. The studio as a fixed point also allowed me to travel, make work on site and then bring it back to the studio for refinement. For example, I produced *Brut for Men* (2011–2013) in collaboration with truck craftspersons in Pakistan, travelling back and forth to Karachi and inviting the truck art master into my studio via Skype. Similarly for *Soft Target* (2011–2015), I performed on-site in many cities across the world and invited family, friends, acquaintances, and even passers-by to collaborate through photography. At certain locations, I had to find a local guide to help me navigate difficult topology and politically sensitive situations. In this way I engaged with locals, which helped me refine my project further in my studio. I also visited various museums for research, namely The British Museum, The Victoria and Alberta Museum (Islamic Art and Miniature Art), The Lahore Museum, The Pakistan Heritage Centre, The Art Gallery of New South Wales (The Arts of Islam), and The Museum of Modern Art (Collection of Jasper Johns and Eva Hesse). At MOMA, I closely investigated applications of charcoal and paint, the layering of encaustic and graphite, plaster body parts, and the construction and destruction of the grid in Johns' target works. Lastly, I used professional

331 Buren, "The Function of the Studio."

332 L Lippard and J. Chandler, The dematerialization of art (1968), in: Alberro, A., Stimpson, B., eds. *Conceptual art: a critical anthology.* Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (1999): 46.

333 Hammad Nasar, "Karkhana," *The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum/Green Cardamom*, August 15, 2005, (accessed September 22, 2012) http://www.aldrichart.org

334 Whiles, *Art and Polemic*, 48.

exhibitions as a means to test theories and record outcomes through audience responses and critics' catalogue essays, which then fed back into my research.

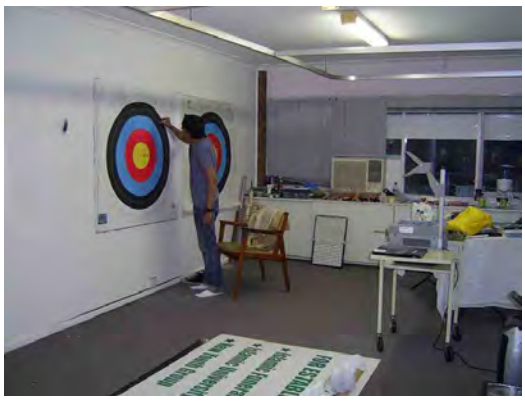


Figure 2.62: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011- 2012. Blacktown Art Centre Studio, Sydney. Photo: Roohi Ahmed.

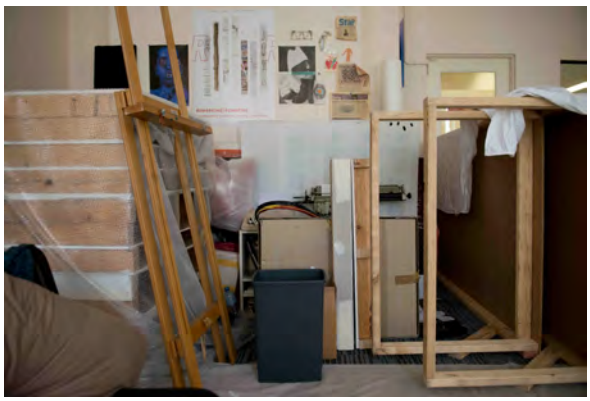


Figure 2.63: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013- 2015. Parramatta Artists Studios, Sydney. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 2.64a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. Truck Art Workshop, Karachi, Pakistan. With Iqbal Bhai, ustad (master) Truck craftsman. Photo: Fahim Rao

Figure 2.64b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. First prototype for Brut for Men sculptures. Prototype failed. Incorrect dimensions and wrong steel gauge rendered an un-satisfactory result. Photo: Fahim Rao.

Figure 2.65: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2014. Site scouting with a local for NYC Soft Target performance and photography. Crossed the fence to access the location. Freezing winds and toxic algae and rubble on the ground. A challenging location and shoot. Photo: Andrew Shia.

2.9.2 New Skills and Experimentation

My first studio response was to let my intuition guide me in finding the thread to unravel the questions I am asking. Identifying skills that I must learn or practice was the first task. Archery was chosen to gain insight into the Prophet's *Sunnah* (practices) of learning archery. I enrolled in the university archery club and learned basic skills under the guidance of a Korean-born archery master. The club felt like Karkhana. I gained insight into the art of archery, which helped me understand what balancing mind and body means. I received multiple bruises and cuts, which my master saw as an imbalance between mind and body, reflecting my impatient nature. I also saw a blue a mark on my body that gradually turned purple, then black, and one day vanished. I slowly began to recognise my faults and see how jalāl (arrow) and jamāl (bow) create perfect balance, the aim resulting in kamāl. Only upon mastering this balancing act and with Allah's will can one hit the target every time. I recognised the potential in archery objects, such as the paper target, arrows and their puncture marks on the wall. Over a period of time, I brought these forms, marks and techniques to my studio for reflection and possible assimilation, copying and repetition. This interest took me to Pakistan where I came across the art of *Mukkhawal*, a local archery tradition that is now at the verge of extinction[335] [Chapter Three, Case Study, *Mukkhawal*]. Despite learning how to make arrows, I focused on using the target as an object, sign, and performance stage. The art of archery becomes the performative means of marking on the body and through my body. My next thread came from the overflow of religious and artistic questions that arose from my MFA exhibition *Buzzing* [Figs. 10-13, p. 20].

Figure 2.66: Syed M I Abdullah. 2011.
Archery training, UNSW Archery Club. Photo: Romeo.

Figure 2.67: Syed M I Abdullah. 2011-2012.
Top: Studio (Karkhana) Attaching thorns and fletching, Below: Studio (Karkhana): Arrow making. Photo: Alex Wisser.

335 I supported two teams, and took part as an owner of the team in their 2011 and 2012 yearly competitions in Karachi Pakistan.

From the slippage of interpretations, I recognised that the appearance of the Muslim male body, specifically my semi-nude body, and the medium of photography as a means to record performance, would require rethinking. Concepts of Islamic modesty and socio-political and religious stereotyping that now define a Muslim male, myself, made me look in the mirror. I saw dualities that could identify me as a secular and pious (read orthodox) man in Islam. Keeping a beard and wearing a *taqiyah* were obvious signs of differentiation. Previously I have explored the symbolic and corporeal meaning of the beard, hence I focused on topi, or taqiyah.

The literal meaning of taqiyah is to be on guard, to defend, to fear, or to be pious. It is an act that can save a believer from the displeasure of Allah. As identified as an object of piety, it is *mustahbb* (commendable) for all men to cover their head as a sign of modesty and emulation of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w). It is required for the five daily prayers of *salat*. In Shia Islam, *taqiya* is a religious act of dissimulation, where legally a Muslim believer can deny his faith under fear or when the life is at risk due to significant persecution.[336] In contrast, in Sunni Islam, the concealment of one's belief is only allowed when the loss of life is immanent.[337] In summary, Islam values life as sacred and precious, which must be protected as one of the greatest blessings of Allah. Generally, either hand-crocheted or machine-made with cotton or nylon thread, taqiyah (from now topi), when worn and viewed at eye level, forms a half circle or dome, making the band of the arabesque or geometric *girth* (knot) pattern that connects the central floral motif visible. This central motif is only visible from the God's eye view, or from the ant's eye view when a wearer performs *sajida* (prostrate) during salat and his head touches the ground. From these two views, the full pattern is revealed as a perfect circle. Furthermore, topi symbolises the divine shield of the mind protecting it from negative influence, fostering modesty and becoming an inverted letter *nun* (this time a light container), which illuminates the mind and soul after every prayer. In Pakistan, the tribal men and landlords prefer a turban (*pugree*), where topi signifies religious piety and is reserved for the Islamic clergy or Iman of the local mosque.

To revel the perfection of the circle and record the light within, I photographed the cap mounted on a light globe. Various levels of halo were formed that later informed my reading of divine nimbus. It was the first evidence that showed me how this studio practice could inform my questions and readings on the subject at hand, and vice versa. It was encouraging. Being aware that time is an important factor in religious performances for both men and women in

336 Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press,1985), 39,183.
Taqiya protects Shi'ites in situations where there is overwhelming danger of loss of life or property and where no danger to religion would occur thereby.

337 R. Strothmann, "Takkiyya," in P. J. Bearman; Th. Bianquis; C. E. Bosworth; E. van Donzel; W. P. Heinrichs. *Encyclopaedia of Islam* 10 (2nd ed.) (Leiden: Bill Publishers 2002), 134–135.

Islam, the lunar and solar symbols are identified.[338] To explore both ends of this light spectrum, I used white and black topis, and white and yellow light to simulate solar and lunar nimbus. Various circular forms, moon, sun, and eclipse (black circle) were recorded (Fig. 2.68a-b). However, the results were unsatisfactory. The basic photography only captured the halo as a mechanical static light that does not allow the light and circle to embody the sublime. Also the formation of the circle did not feel organic and 'body' like. I, as a beholder, did not find a direct link, nor felt any resonating connection with the light or the form. The experiment was recorded as an unsuccessful test and rejected.

Figure 2.68a: Rejected Experiment
Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. Taqiyah Lunar Halo, Digital photography

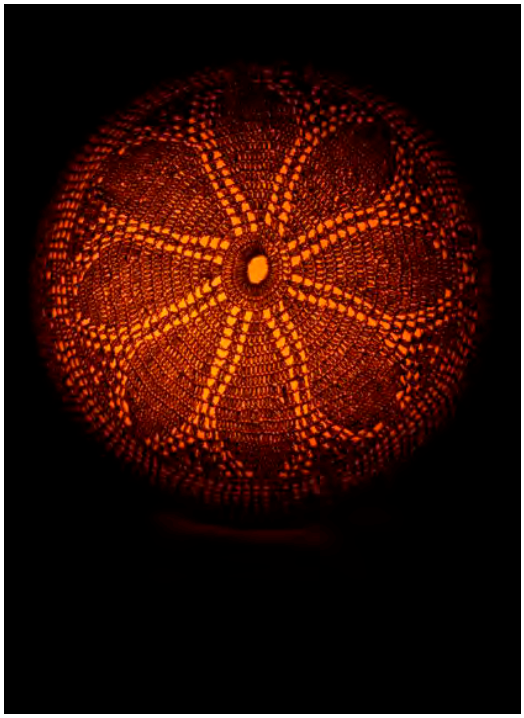


Figure 2.68b: Rejected Experiment
Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. Taqiyah Solar Halo, Digital photography

While experimenting with photography, I also played with the form and content of the topi, its materiality and design through drawings, sculptures and performances. In 2011, the world watched a controversy in Europe as the French government banned the burqa under a new law.[339] In 2010, a xenophobia burqa ban also created a political unrest in Australia and even resulted as a graffiti protest, "say no to burqa", against Islamist fundamentalism.[340] This was

338 For example, the timings of the daily five prayers are based on the sun's movement, whereas the Islamic monthly calendar is based on the moon, which is required to observe fasting.

339 Robyn Carolyn Price, "Banning the Burqa: Behind the Veil of France's New Law," *The Huffington Post*, April 15, 2011 (accessed June 21, 2012) http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robyn-carolyn-price/banning-the-burqa-behind-_b_849937.html

340 Henry Budd and Steven Deeks, "Sydney artist rips the lid off controversial cover-up," *The Daily Telegraphy*, September 24, 2010, (accessed July 21, 2012) http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/nsw/sydney-artist-rips-the-lid-off-controversial-cover-up/story-e6freuzi-1225928601540

defaced and repainted many times, a making and erasure that highlighted differing opinions on the burqa, either as a choice of Muslim women or a sign of patriarchal Islamist fundamentalism. In this discourse, Muslim men are the oppressor and the instigator of burqa as a means to control women's bodies. Such myths of the burqa as 'gendered' are captured by several female and male artists, notably in the Middle East, Iran and Pakistan (Figs. 2.69-2.71).[341]

Figure 2.69: Khalid, Aisha. 2011. *Birth*. Gouache and gold leaf on wasli, 38.3 x 31.3 cm. Photo: Corvi Mora, UK.

Figure 2.70: Neshat, Shirin. 1994. *Rebellious Silence, from Women of Allah series*. 1994-1998. Photo: Gladstone, NYC.

Figure 2.71: Sikander, Shahzia. 1997. *Fleshy Weapons*. Acrylic, dry pigment, watercolour and tea on linen. Photo: Phillips, NYC.

Figure 2.72: Rana, Rashid. 2004. *Veil Series I, II & III*. C prints + DIASEC. 51 x 51 cm each. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Here I will give examples of Pakistan's Rashid Rana and Palestine's Sharif Waked. Both have an affinity for fashion and use irony to explore the misinterpretations of identity based on appearance, attire and the body. Rana's *Veil* series is a comparative study of the burqa, specifically the blue Afghan burqa, and Western attitudes toward female liberation as the nude body. He constructed a mosaic of burqa-clad women from a grid of small photographic images

341 Artist Waseem Ahmed paints the burqa through miniature art as an object of sexual desire, but rather than covering Muslim or Pakistani women he employs Western female figures as exotic and sexually charged bodies for Muslim male gaze. Jameel Balooch has created life-size black burqa-clad women in fibreglass as protesting bodies against the misrepresentation of female identity in Pakistan as male honour.

taken from Western pornography [Fig. 2.72, p. 133]. The paradoxical construction of a Muslim female identity both in the East and the West resulted in identifying male gaze as the controlling factor of women's bodies. In this paradox, either a female body must be completely covered to protect men from the lust of 'sinful female flesh', or revealed completely, negating modesty under the disguise of 'sexual freedom'. In either case, men objectify women's bodies.

In contrast, *Chic Point* (2007*)* (Figs. 2.73a-c) is a seven-minute video by Palestinian artist Sharif Waked that parodies the fashion catwalk as a point of departure to interrogate Muslim Palestine male identity. Creating fashion for Israeli checkpoints, where male clothing is transformed into fashion that hovers between male and female attire, the work documents the moments in which Palestinians are forced to bare themselves in the face of interrogation and humiliation as they attempt to move through the intricate and constantly expanding network of Israeli checkpoints. Waked's work "peels the layer of fabric off the Muslim male and exposes him to viewer's eye in the flesh."[342] In Pakistan, the work reflects the hijacking of the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) by students, who ended up as a human chain with their ankle-high shalwars tied with their own shirts.[343]

Figure 2.73a: Waked, Sharif. 2003-2007. *Chic Point, Fashion for Israeli Checkpoint.* Video still. Photo: sharifwaked.info

Figure 2.73b: Waked, Sharif. Video still.

Figure 2.73c: Waked, Sharif. Video still (prep work).

Perplexed by such attitudes and somewhat didactic and sensational outcomes, I observed that men who speak about the burqa have the gaze of an outsider. Men sometimes use the burqa as an invisibility cloak to hide from the public eye, a common practice among politicians and movie stars that has even been used by a clergyman who disguised himself under a burqa to avoid persecution by the state.[344] For male artists, not having a first hand experience

342 Sharif Waked, "Sharif Waked: Chic Points Fashion for Israeli Checkpoints," *Nafas Art Magazine*, March 2005 (accessed April 21 2009) http://universes-in-universe.org/nafas/articles/2005/waked

343 Lal Mosque incident images available online: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/6265354.stm

344 In 2007, Maulana Abdul Aziz, leader of the pro-Taliban Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad, was discovered by a policewoman as he was hiding under a burka and fleeing from the site where a two-day showdown with the government killed 16 people and wounded 150. Images of burqa-clad women with long sticks on the mosque roof-top were seen all over the world as an image of radical Islam. Later, hundreds of Abdul Aziz's followers surrendered to the Pakistani government. Pakistani artist Hamara Abbas appropriated images of the Lal Masjid burqa-clad women, creating her iconic sculpture of a buxom burqa-clad female superhero. Declan Walsh, "Red Mosque Leader Attempts to Flee in Burka", *The Guardian*, July 5, 2007 (accessed July 12, 2012) http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/jul/04/pakistan.declanwalsh

of living with a burqa can result in being accused of commodifying the burqa as a religious object that perpetuates Western sensationalism. A few female artists are also accused of the same. Rather than wearing a burqa to claim 'utilisation' in my art practice, I saw an underlying humorous satire in transforming topi into a fashion line of *Man-urka* (or *Man-urqa*), 2011.

Figure 2.74: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. Man-urqa (or Man-urka). Hand stitched taqiyah (skullcaps). Photograph documentation from a studio performance, Rejected Experiment. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Man-ruka was a black burqa made of stitched topis, which on wearing hide the male body and present it as female, or more accurately, an androgynous *silhouette* that historically is a two-dimensional representation of the outline of an object.[345] While wearing the Man-ruka I

345 Also from a French term: à la Silhouette attributed to penny-pinching manner of Étienne de Silhouette, a French Treasury Chief under Louis XV and also applied to things perceived as cheap or austere. Later silhouette became a popular art form of simple and inexpensive paper cutting portraits among those who could not afford more expensive portrait painting. Also during Louis the Fifth's reign, the French began to protest on the street while covered in black fabric, shouting "silhouette" to perpetuate the idea that they were invisible to the monarchy.

did a standing performance in front of an archery target in my studio; a mug shot is taken as evidence. Despite its obvious and universal critique of the burqa and my attempt to find a gender balance, the result felt like a gag that lacks poetry. It also does not hold to the model of expression and definition of masculinity. Islam forbids men to imitate women and women to imitate men.[346] Despite being a political and social construct to hide the female body, the burqa form is associated with the feminine and it is offensive and borderline transgression for men to wear a burqa. Hence *Man-urka* failed to argue the jalāl/jamāl model. However, the resulting form with its humorous and somewhat poignant political performance adds a new way to comment on today's burqa affair. The importance of this outcome was recognised and used to its full effect in 2015 on Women's Day, when Afghan men protesting women's rights donned head-to-toe burqas and marched through the streets of Kabul holding a banner that state "Don't tell women what to wear."[347] Here, men wearing the burqa (*Man-urka*) transform transgression into activism. The attire becomes a sign of solidarity and a shield for female empowerment by men and vice versa. Last but not least, through *Man-urka* I noticed the outline of the figure, or more precisely, Kara Walker's silhouette[348] (Fig. 2.75). Although it is not common, the silhouette has sometimes been used to bypass Islam's prohibition of figurative art. Such a strategy, however, is not spoken of in terms of the artist's personal belief in encountering religious prohibition. Instead, exploration of the silhouette is more often framed as an outcome of minimising the ornamental language of miniature painting or quite simply an aesthetic choice. For instance, Nusra Latif Qureshi and Muhammad Zeeshan, who both trained in miniatures, have used such a strategy in a different ways. Sticking to her miniature practice,

Figure 2.75: Walker, Kara. 2013. *Rise Up Ye Mighty Race!.* Installation detail at the Art Institute of Chicago. Photo: Art Tattler.com

Fig 2.76: Qureshi, Nusra. 2005. *Reasonable Acts of Compliance III*. Watercolour on paper. 20.3 x 26.7 cm. Photo: Saffron Art. http://www.saffronart.com/auctions/PostWork.aspx?l=7672

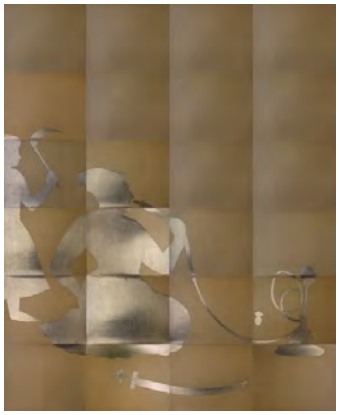


Fig 2.77: Zeeshan, Muhammad. 2008. *Dying Miniature*. Graphite on sandpaper. Photo: Miajan Kowics.

346 Sahih Bukhaari (5885).

347 Radhika Sanghani, "Afghan men wear burqas to campaign for women's rights," *The Telegraph*, March 06, 2015 (accessed March 11, 2015) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11453879/Afghan-men-wear-burqas-to-campaign-for-womens-rights.html

348 Annette, Dixon, ed. *Kara Walker: Pictures From Another Time* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 2002).

Qureshi paints solid silhouette and overlaps outlined figures fugues to create palimpsests of entwined body parts that merge with and dissect each other [Fig. 2.76, p. 136]. She borrows these figures from traditional miniatures paintings, historical documents, and contemporary printed material. Zeeshan also delicately copies figures from miniature painting, but scales them to life size, renders them on sandpaper and finally filling them with graphite. The result is a shimmering ghost-like silhouette, which he presents as evidence that the 'miniature is dying'[349] [Fig. 2.77, p. 136]. Both artists have received wide critical acclaim for these works.

The idea of the male body as a silhouette forming in the extreme illumination of the absence of light is an interesting proposition and a solution that led me back to the veiling of pious male figures in Islam [Figs. 2.38-2.42, p. 109]. I argue that the silhouette is androgynous, popular in fashion, and primarily reveals gender when drawn as female or male through poses and props, such as full figure profile.

Arriving at silhouette figures, and explorations of text and geometry, brought me to revisit some of the artists for whom I have a deep fondness. Mona Hatoum's earlier photographic and calligraphic works have been shifted in deeper suggestions of abstraction, repetition and simplification of form and content. In *Turbulence* (2014) [Fig. 2.79, p. 138] Hatoum's signature inscribed black burqa-clad bodies are melted into a large circle of glass marbles. The precision, denseness, and seemingly transparent qualities suggest a form in levitation, like an ethereal body. Upon closer inspection, the pool of small pebbles reflects the viewer's gaze, and the process continues in repetition. Here, there is unity within the diversity of pebble shapes and sizes, where the large circle alludes to reflection of the cosmic dome [Figs. 2.23a–b, p.100]. Similarly Eva Hesse's sculptural forms draw obsessive circular lines and concentric squares. She uses string and cord to draw lines, which are then transformed, into sculptural form, disrupting the formal language of sculpture and giving anatomy to her lines. Just like Joseph Albers's use of geometric and optical forms, Hesse combines geometry with organic shapes, but often retains the simplicity of circles, cylinders, planes and cubes. *Ishtar* (1965) [Fig. 2.78, p. 138] is Hesse's most recognised obsessive wrapping of the semi-spheres, in which she wrapped string on a convex wood support from which long painted cord hangs out of the centre of each circle. The piece is painted in grey from light (top) to dark (bottom). In *Ishtar*, Jonathan Fineberg sees the repetition of breasts, suggesting "the multi-breasted ancient fetish Diana of Ephesus…for whom Hesse named her work."[350] Tassity Johnson interpreted such breast-forms as testicles, leading *Ishtar* to "a spiral of identifications" and the body

349 Mia Jankowicz, *On Zeeshan Muhammad's 'Dying Miniatu:* Monograph (London: Green Cardamom, 2008). https://miajankowicz.wordpress.com/2008/12/30/my-life-is-hanging-by-a-thread-on-zeeshan-muhammads-dying-miniature/

350 Jonathan Fineberg, *Art since 1940: Strategies of Being* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1995), 313.

"impossibly phantasmic."[351] For Hesse herself, *Ishtar* is a traditional fertility sculpture that acts as a minimalist "erotic abstraction" of femininity.[352] The reading of female/male/female is an interesting proposition if read beyond the limitation of sexual gendering and allowing the forms to reflect each other as they do in nature.

Figure 2.78: Eva Hesse. 1965. *Isthar.*
Photo: Artnet.
http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/features/kuspit/kuspit7-21-06-9.asp

Figure 2.79: Hatoum, Mona. 2014. *Turbulence* (black).
Glass marbles. 3 x 250 cm. (Dia.)
Photo: Everton Ballardin.

Hesse's use of cord to combine the geometric and organic is a solution that opened up possibilities for the topi project, which resulted in a silkscreen works which I now present as the first demo.

351 Tassity Johnson, "We Are All Male-female: Subversion of Sexual Difference in Feminist Art and Discourse An Examination of Louise Bourgeois's Torso/Self-Portrait, Eva Hesse's Ishtar, and Kiki Smith's Uro-Genital System (Male) and Uro-Genital System (Female)", *Eruditio* 28: (2007–2008).
Johnson concludes that "the bisexual form presents an impossibly confused state of gender, wherein specific identifications simply cannot be made; the form instead becomes one of a mystical hermaphroditism, and perhaps in this merging, an image of ultimate fertility. The traditional fertility form, wherein the female body is singularly objectified, is here presented as the full embodiment of not simply fertility, but self-reproduction. A body with both breasts and phallus may nurture and inseminate. However, it must be noted that biologically, the human hermaphrodite is infertile; hence, this form is only one of fantasy, as possible as the multi-breasted Diana of Ephesus."

352 Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. *Eva Hesse: A Memorial Exhibition* (New York: Guggenheim Foundation, 1972), 9.

ART DEMO I

Artworks: *Flare I and II*, 2012, Silkscreen on BFK Rives. 56 x 78 cm each.

Exhibition History: *Semblance of Order* (2013-2014) Sydney, Karachi, New York.

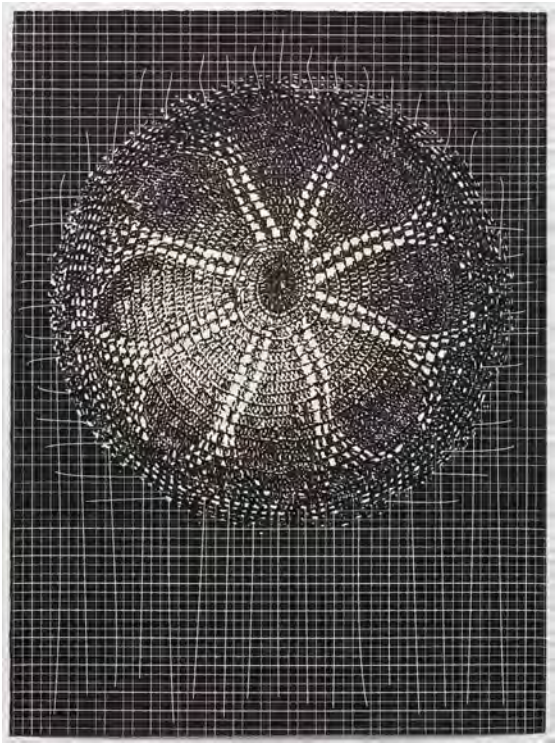


Figure 2.80a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. *Flare I.* Silkscreen on BFK Rives, 56 x 78 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist. DEMO 1

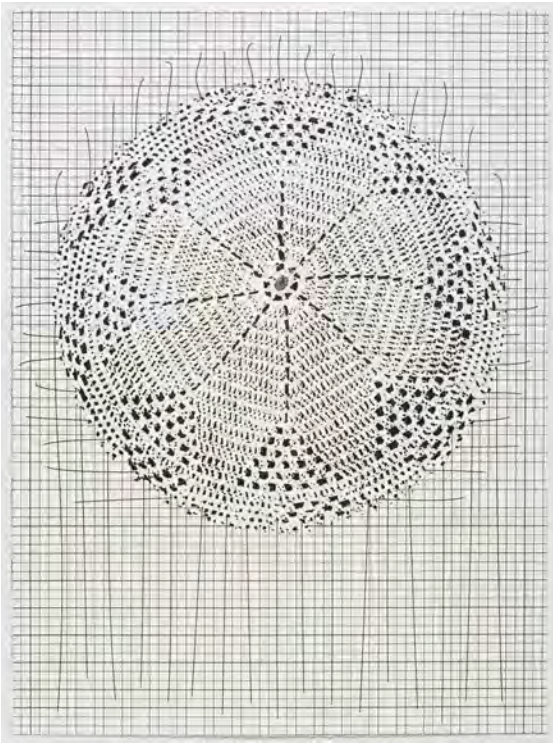


Figure 2.80b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. *Flare II*. Silkscreen on BFK Rives, 56 x 78 cm, 2013. Photo: courtesy the artist. DEMO 1

In *Flare I and II*, I took the earlier photographs and redrew them as silkscreen, a medium for multiple copies. The strings, similar to Hesse, form the grid in which the circular forms merge and break away. In one way, it is an appropriation of an object, topi, but symbolically the two images of light and dark are essentially unknowable: it is like halos in the sky, a life from the depth of the seas, the floating dots that form in my eye after glaring at the sun or moon, the blank spaces that define a pattern, or the punctured holes on a target surface. I prefer not to see these works as a diptych but rather as *duo or a pair*. As a duo, *Flare 1 and II* have pure potential, appearing only when we give them our full concentration. In terms of form and context, the extended lines (threads) of each caps give the prints a resemblance to a woven prayer rug or a gridded mosque floor on which the payer wearer stand shoulder to shoulder in rows and prostrate. Furthermore, the symbolic moon (al-qamar) and the caps woven flower suggest time and diversity, which is a hallmark of Islamic mosque's architecture and its purpose. Men (in some mosque women also) from all ages, background, ethnicities, colours and social strata comes to gather and pray at a designated time and pray towards Kab'ba. In this sense the horizontal grid suggest this unity where as the vertical lines indicated the direction towards Kab'ba. The resolution of *Flare I and II* became the new map, a blueprint that provided insight to the failure of *Man-urka*, and evolving it into *Aura I* and *Aura II* (Demo II).

ART DEMO II

Artworks: *Aura I and II*, 2013, Hand-stitched white taqiyah (skullcaps), Perspex dome and LED light, 108 (Dia.) x 60 cm. and 71 (dia.) x 48 cm.

Exhibition History: *Dubai Art Fair* (2015), Dubai; *Art Stage* (2014) Singapore; *India Art Fair* (2013), New Delhi; *Brut-Nama* (2013), Aicon gallery, New York;

Figure 2.81a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *Aura-I*. Hand-stitched black taqiyah (skull-caps), Perspex dome and LED light, 108 (dia.) x 60cm. and 71 (dia.) x 48 cm 2013. Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO 2

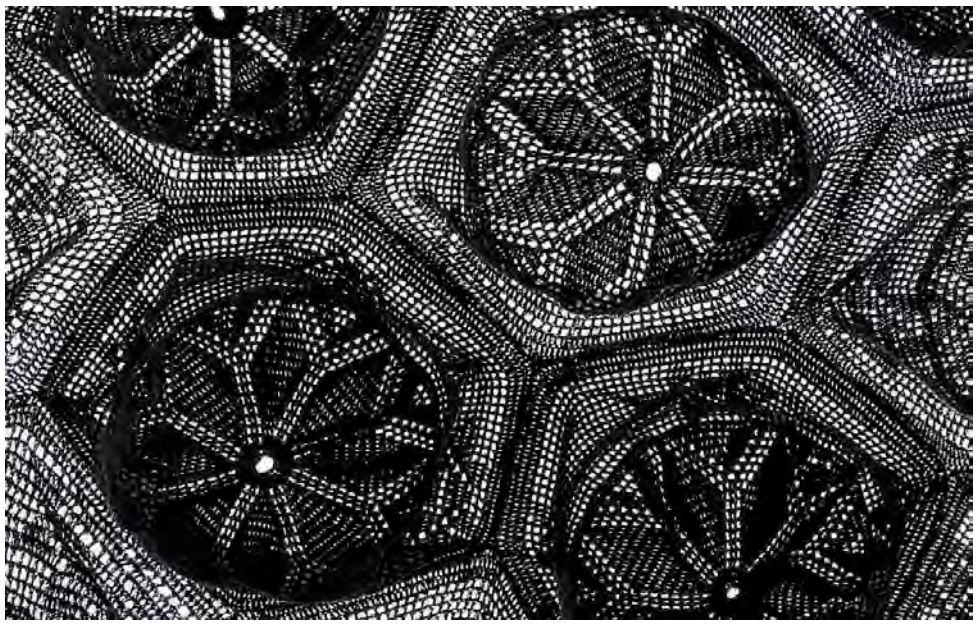


Figure 2.81b: Detail

Figure 2.82a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *Aura-II*. Hand-stitched white taqiyah (skullcaps), Perspex dome and LED light. 108 (dia.) x 60cm. and 71 (dia.) x 48 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO 2

Figure 2.82b: Detail

Aura I and II are hemispheric reliefs, constructed from white and black taqiyah (skullcaps), which are sewn together in a hexagonal pattern to create a large circle. This circular 'hive of caps' is then mounted on white and black acrylic domes. The caps are puffed up, repeating the semi-spherical shape and producing a moon-like surface illuminated from within, creating halo-like effects. The halos are jamāli qualities of awe and beauty inviting viewers to stand in front of the sculpture, contemplate and be surrounded by it. The resulting works are glowing spherical moons, comprised of hundreds of prayer caps emanating light from within.

The patterns on the caps, the formal construction of repeated shapes, and the use of the grid have strong roots in Islamic architecture, especially the dome, lattice and *muqarnas* [see p. 95-98]. It has potential to generate intangible feelings that have direct links to deeper societal patterns. The *arabesque* design of the caps, when tiled following Islamic tessellation principles, is repeated seamlessly like a beehive, suggesting Allah's unity and infinite presence. The constantly changing and interwoven curvilinear arabesque pattern covers the entire surface, while the blank spaces between the lines are illuminated from within to become a pattern themselves. As discussed above under the subject of the arabesque, this type of patterning is a traditional construct that reflects the jalāl and jamāl of Allah's Manifest and Hidden attributes.

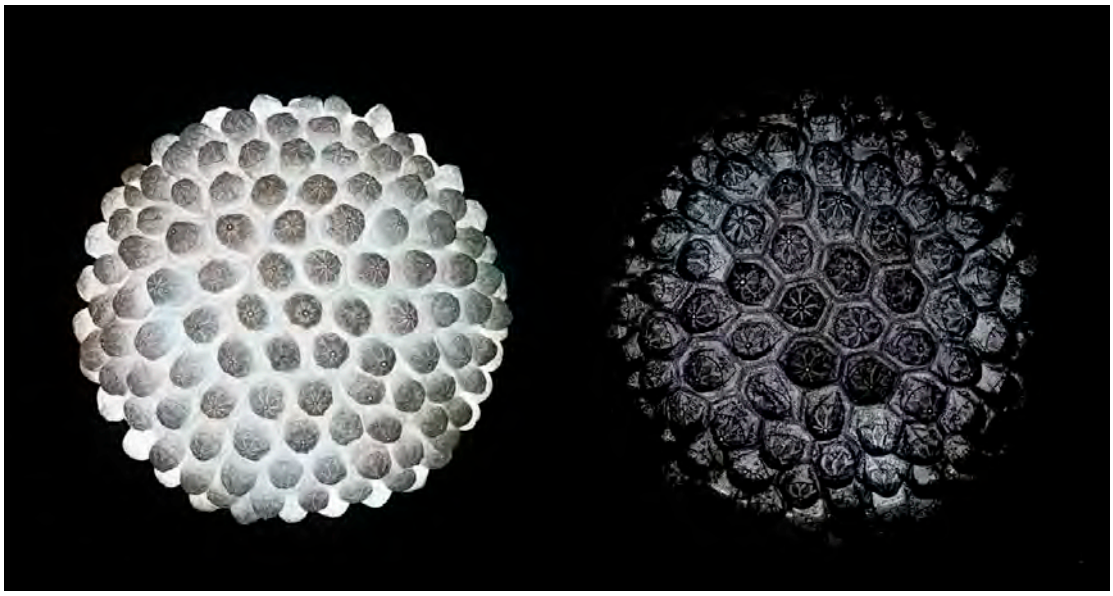


Figure 2.83: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *Aura-II and I*. Hand-stitched white and black taqiyah (skullcaps), Perspex dome and LED light, 108 (dia.) x 60cm. and 71 (dia.) x 48 cm each. Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO 2

On a personal note, the works emerged from my memories and fascination with the full moon, its reflection and my obsession of finding ever more perfect parables, shapes and materials that are praised throughout history for their purity and Divine attributes. The Moon binds us. It is black, white and all colours in between. The sculptures take the ubiquitous subject

of black and white, light and dark, night and day as the basis for exploring representation, experience, and mediation between culture and nature, memory and loss. Islamic calendar is based on lunar movements and shapes whereas the timings of the daily salat prayers are based on solar movements. In Islam, the 'qamar' (moon) is masculine that reflects the light of the 'shams' (sun) the feminine, implying that the realisation of the masculine's true beauty lies in the brilliance of the sun. As celestial objects *Aura I and II* reflect my lifelong pursuit of this transient nature of beauty and perfection, which operates on both a perceptual and conceptual level, affecting the viewer with a very physical experience of a concept that is abstract in nature. At a distance, when a viewer stands still as a solemn whiteness in front of these glowing celestial objects, they are in awe. Upon waling closely to investigate the materiality of the caps, pushing them to question their own materiality. Here the artist's vision and the viewer's gaze reflect themselves, but not as a narcissist act but a system consists of a concise set of shapes, materials, and play of light and dark that presents probing questions and abstract forms, encouraging a contemplative and meditative response. In this sense *Aura I and II* are ritual objects of orthopraxy (correct action or pious activity), illuminating the transformative role of art in mystic Islam. Here *Aura I and II* are not only created to explore beauty, propositions and light, but also to explore the Divine essence that resides in sublime beauty.

In Islamic spiritual discourse, *Aura I and II* speaks of the parable of Allah's light as layer upon layer of transcendental truth about spiritual mysteries, equates to faith and deeds of a person. The arabesque design of the caps, when tiled following Islamic tessellation principles, is repeated seamlessly, suggesting the dhikr (remembrance) of Divine unity. As a light sculpture, it addresses Islamic consciousness using signs of Allah's perfection (kamāl), divine beauty (jamāl) and majesty (jalāl), the different aspects through which Allah relates to humanity. The construction, materiality and pattern forms a glowing, symbolic dome of the sky or the mosque signifying a human consciousness illuminated by divine presence. Each cap is a point in a circle, which in our minds is "a unitary focus of conscious awareness in the physical world."[353] The jamāli qualities of awe and beauty are created as a halo, inviting viewers to stand in front of it, contemplate, be surrounded by it and then reflect in the mirror of his or her heart. The black and white sculptures, when installed together, are the expressions of separating dualities and the pairing and the balancing act of jalāl and jamāl.

In terms of body, *Aura I and II* represents both the celestial body and the human body. They both hover between myth and religion, science and fiction, jouissance (pleasure) and hüzün (melancholia) and individual and collective. The sculpture risen to life in the dark – transforming the visual field around it into a landscape of connected bodies and their memories. In one moment of time, *Aura I and II* are splendid celestial bodies; and in the next, it reveals

353 Critchlow, *Islamic Pattern,* 9.

itself to be fragile, tactile and contemplative: cultural bodies. When installed as an immersive installation, visitors interact in this play, with the jouissance and melancholia more akin to the body than to the intellect. Furthermore, the repetition of the design, the stitching of the caps that Muslim men wear everyday for prayers become forms that nourish the soul that resides in the empty vessel (the body). The subtle changes in the patterns and shapes play on light and dark in a poetic space that merges the creator and the creation.

When viewed from western historical cannon, the systemically arranged caps have a fetishistic quality that pays homage to Claus Oldenburg, Anish Kapoor, and more specifically Eva Hesse's *Ishtar*. Similar to *Ishtar*, *Aura I and II* are physical constructions wrapping my physical practice of obsessive compulsion, where collaboration with male and female craftspeople (who helped in the crocheting and stitching of this work) are also acknowledged and celebrated. Furthermore the formal and corporeal construction of these sculptures evokes the minimalist abstraction of male and female body in parts; thus connecting this work to the earlier *Discourse within Discourse: The Circle* (2003) [Figs. 4a-b, p. 13].

Figure 2.84: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2014. *Aura- II*. Installation process. Puffing of the caps with needles. Photo: Amy Distiller.

ART DEMO III

Artworks: *I am,* 2013, Charcoal, chalk pastel, graphite, colour pencil and typed on Canson paper, set off 10 drawings, 28 x 28 cm each.

Exhibition History: *Brut-Nama* (2013), Aicon gallery, New York.

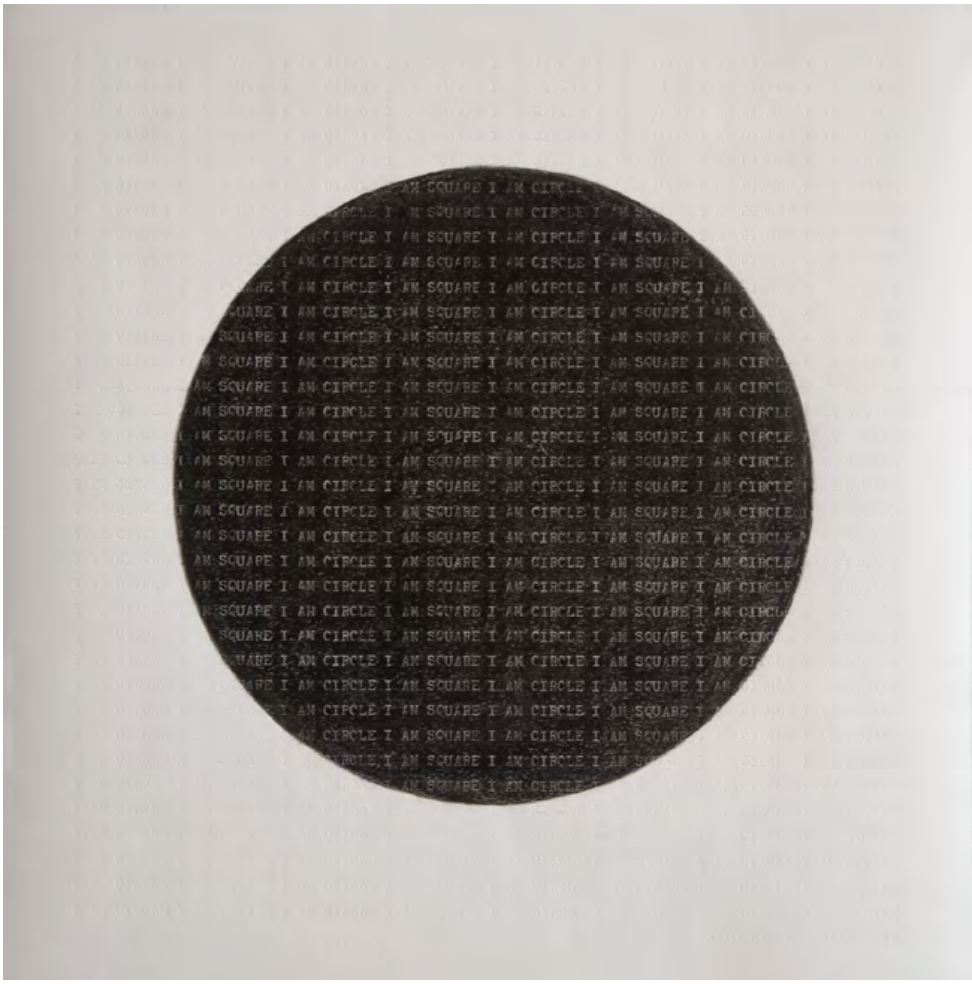


Figure 2.85: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *I am Circle I am Square: A Page from Brut-Nama*. Charcoal and typed on Canson paper. 28 x 28 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist. DEMO 3

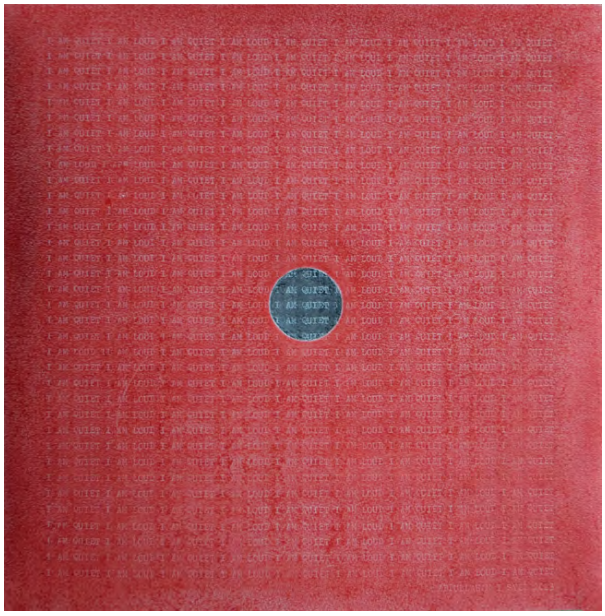


Figure 2.86: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *I am Loud I am Quiet: A Page from Brut-Nama*. Chalk pastel and graphite on Canson paper. 28 x 28 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist. DEMO 3

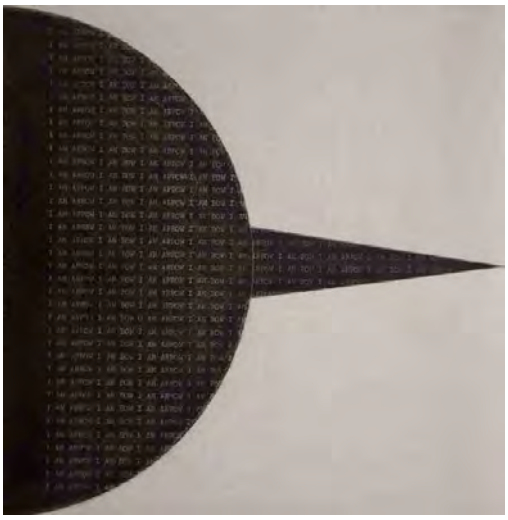


Figure 2.87: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *I am Arrow I am Bow*. Charcoal and typed on Canson paper. 28 x 28 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist. DEMO 3

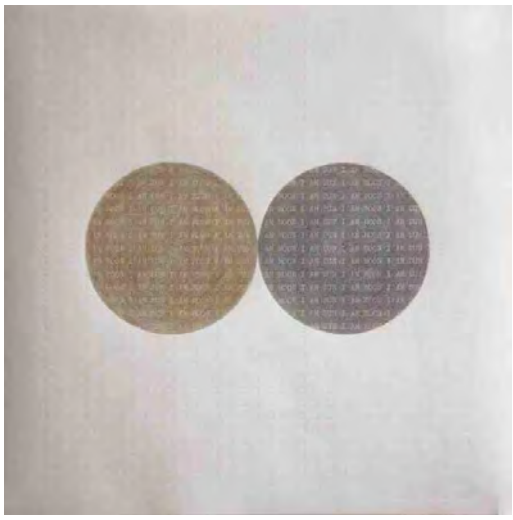


Figure 2.88: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *I am Sun I am Moon*. Gold and silver pencil and typed on Canson paper. 28 x 28 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist. DEMO 3

In Demo III, *I am* series of drawings, my Barzakhi position is demonstrated. Although I have secondary understanding and training in calligraphy, I focused on my primary Western typography training to explore the grid, magic square and text. The pairing of a 'poetic expression' of jalāl and jamāl is translated into pair axioms in typed words as a performative *masqh* (exercise in writing/drawn lines) and applied in my construction of masculine identity. I have been using a typewriter as one of the most basic mechanical reproduction methods of writing, which requires a performance of precision, patience and dexterity.

Taking the performance of calligraphic *masqh* as a staring point, both explicitly and conceptually, I typed paired words such as sun/moon, circle/square, and arrow/bow on white paper without a ribbon to create depressed letters. The typographical columns and rows create a grid of typographic rivers. At one glance, the sans-ink pattern seems to be erased, a memory that is invisible in light. This invisibility is revealed through rubbing charcoal over the page, the back 'veil' of charcoal alluding to the veiling of holy Ka'aba with *kiswa* (cover). In this instance the charcoal, the carbon that is scientifically considered a building block of humanity, becomes sacred. Only when the charcoal 'dots' are removed from the depressed letters does the message reveal itself. A message that I seek when I add the prefix "I am" to each word, which is recited, written and performed as *dhikr*. Upon reading the repeated text (axiom) of "I am Circle I am Square" (Fig. 2.87) or "I am Sun I am Moon" (Fig. 2.88), the viewers take part in this dhikr of divine beauty and majesty where "I am" no longer identifies myself, but reverberates as a universal message that is available to everyone, regardless of gender. As a reverse drawing, in reference to a silhouette, the black or white void-spaces silently create a medium that gives clarity to the message and metaphorically establishes the work as representational. The set of 10 drawings from this series was exhibited in my fist solo exhibition in New York in 2013.

ART DEMO IV

Artworks:

A Balancing Act of Celestial Proportions (Sun/Moon, Red/Blue), 2013, duo, Acrylic ink, graphite, gold and silver leaf, woodblock stamps, needle tool, X-Acto knife, and sandpaper on found target paper, 140 x 140 cm each panel.

A Balancing Act of Royal Proportions (Shagird/Ustad, Poet/Archer), 2013, duo, Acrylic ink, graphite, woodblock stamps, needle tool, X-Acto knife, and sandpaper on found target paper, 140 x 140 cm each panel.

Exhibition History: *Homelands* (2015), Delmar gallery, Sydney; *Site Lines* (2014)*, Cross Arts Project, Sydney; Someother Place* (2012), Blacktown Arts Centre, Sydney.

Figure 2.89a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *A Balancing Act of Celestial Proportions (Red/Sun).* Acrylic ink, graphite, gold leaf, woodblock stamps, needle tool, X-Acto knife, and sandpaper on found target paper, duo. 140 x 140 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO 4

Detail

Figure 2.89b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *A Balancing Act of Celestial Proportions (Blue/Moon)*. Acrylic ink, graphite, silver leaf, woodblock stamps, needle tool, X-Acto knife, and sandpaper on found target paper. duo. 140 x 140 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO 4

Detail

Figure 2.90a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *A Balancing Act of Royal Proportion (Shagird/Poet).* Acrylic ink, graphite, woodblock stamps, needle tool, X-Acto knife, and sandpaper on found target paper. duo. 140 x 140 cm. Photo: Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO 4

Detail

Figure 2.90b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *A Balancing Act of Royal Proportions (Ustad/Archer).* Acrylic ink, graphite, woodblock stamps, needle tool, X-Acto knife, and sandpaper on found target paper. duo. 140 x 140 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO 4

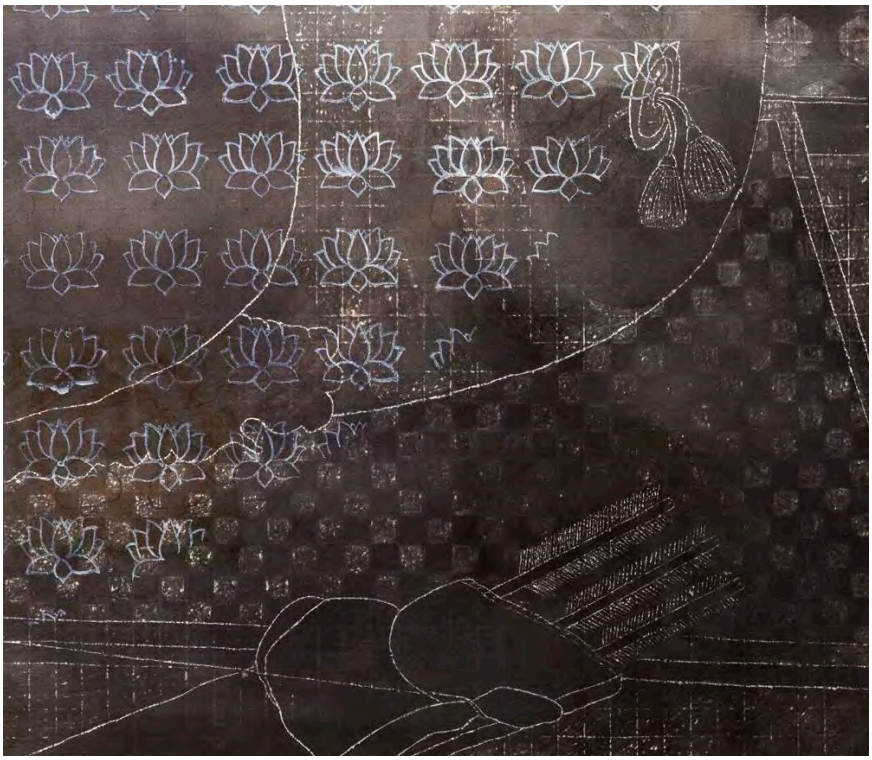
Detail

A Balancing Act of Royal Proportions (2013) and *A Balancing Act of Celestial Proportions* (2013) are two separate 'duo' mixed media works that have been displayed in various configurations. The works take full advantage of archery target paper, which is embedded with a fish wire square grid. The target paper has received multiple arrow punctures, and the grid holds the severed paper pieces intact. If the target is the potential sign of the body then the grid is its shield, performing the chivalrous task of holding the body together even after it is punctured. It reminds the body that the square is sacred and must be protected, since it holds the potential to be filled with the qualities of jalāl and jamāl. The encased concentric circles of yellow, red, blue, black and white are in unity with the square shape of the paper, suggesting a squaring of the circle. Similar to Afroz's work, where each squared is filled with silver- and gold-leaf, the systemic order of jalāl and jamāl appears under the shining *noor* (light). In this regard, the archery target paper is no longer a sign, but a performative body on which I draw, cut, erase, and redraw to test its limits.

All four works are semi-autobiographical, where the formal and pictorial space measures my love for, and proximity to my father and perhaps my brothers. All four are 'reverse drawings', where the image is engraved and sanded back on the borrowed Western form of the target. As a symbol of Jasper Johns' dismembered plaster cast and painted body, the target provides a link to exploding bodies in this research. However here the target must be erased from its dismembered western Pop history and reclaimed as a mandala or nimbus so as to argue for South Asian and Islamic history and aesthetics. The target is then obliterated, with painted solid fields of black, red and blue, and pure silver and gold foil gilding. This solid field is the *dawat* (ink well), covered not with liquid ink for writing but with dried pigment for making traditional paint. Gradually the layer of ink is lifted off the page with sandpaper, revealing the target once again, embodying the tradition of being illuminated from within. Silhouette figures are also revealed during this process, where sandpaper is used similar to the nib of a *qalam*, a pen. All the figures and basic lines are then carved out with the tip of a blade, defining the shape, size and volume of the figures and objects. This construction/destruction/ reconstruction method of drawing evolved from my reverse typewriter drawings, such as *I am* (Demo III, p. 147-149), and they depend on the clarity of the first layer before the other layers can be applied. Finally, rows of roses (love and sorrow) and lotuses (devotion and purity) are stamped onto the skin of the target as a circular veil, transforming the 'target as body' into a 'divine halo'. The finished layers align with the traditional geometric Islamic art of tiling and the secular Islamic art of figurative miniature painting, where each layer reveals a form that lifts the next layer on its shoulder. It is a collaborative performance. In my studio practice, I refer to this performance as 'art chivalry', where the figure, the ego and the idol of the work is

destroyed before it can be reconstructed from the blueprint of memory. In order to draw, one must forget the learned mark to copy what is veiled.

Figures 2.91: Syed M I, Abdullah. *Balancing Act of Royal Proportions*, Archer detail



Figures 2.92: Syed M I, Abdullah. *Balancing Act of Royal Proportions*, Poet detail.

The finished drawings open a heterogamous space where masculinity is balanced between a *shagird,* student, and his *ustad*, teacher, in conversation. Both figures are ready to conquer the wandering sun (al-shams) and moon (al-qamar). They are travellers, their journey is always towards the centre, the inner circle of the mandala or target, and in other words, towards

themselves and each other. The younger man is a poet and either a disciple or son of the mature figure, who is the master (expert archer), warrior and a father. The dynamics of the two figures recalls the glorious yet tragic tale of father and son, Rustam and Sohrab, from the Persian poetry of *Shahnama*, where one contributed to the death of the other, after a separation leading to distrust and misunderstanding, fuelled by ego and power. As the two figures sit in the presence of the moon and sun, the depicted scene depicts a time of peace, learning the lessons of love and courage for the difficult time that lies ahead. They are informed and presented with heavenly gifts delivered by cherubs and birds from Paradise. In the artist's Islamic tradition, a father/teacher should ensure that his son/pupil develops both mind and body, through instruction of practices such as the ancient art of archery.

For the young poet in love, the flower is in his right hand and the weapon lies in the proximity of his left, suggesting the jamāli attributes, the time of peace and love are the permanent state of existence. Sword is only use when it is required and the state of jalāl, power and justice to restore peace is a temporary state. The young poet's state is mirrored in the pose and setting of the warrior archer, who anticipates potential chaos. He has the wisdom and craft that the young poet needs to become a man, or a future leader. Here the scene, poses, props, and performative acts of the two male bodies demonstrate that transference of knowledge and the permanent state of love and peace is the true spirit and understanding of Islamic teachings, which is embedded in the divine names and the hearts of believers. However, the courage to lift the weapon and defend balance is also marked. The heavenly cherubs, birds, flowers, weapons and ornaments, which are re-contextualised from Persian, Mughal, Renaissance and Pop Art traditions, further strengthen such concepts. The grid, the circle, the figures and the target itself allude to personal as well as political and social geographic displacements between here and there, east and west. The painting, sanding, scraping, and mending of archery target paper is a balancing act of creative obsession and traditional craft, producing a space in the concentric circles where communal wounds are shared, ideas are layered, and traditions reinvented.

This chapter has demonstrated how traditional concepts of Islamic art and the philosophical position of jalāl/jamāl act as the grounding for my inquiry into the visual construction of Pakistani masculinity. In Chapter Three I expand jalāl and jamāl into the realm of masculine performance, investigating performances of male piety in Islam, and performances of social and political male identity in Pakistan. This will illustrate the crisis of masculine identity through the explosive performances of Pakistan's public sphere, which are subsequently internalised in the visual and performing arts. The combination of religious rituals and socio-political acts performed by men, primarily in communal settings, informs the discourse of Pakistani performance and body art that I refer to as 'Barzakhi' performance.

CHAPTER THREE

In referring to private rituals and religious performances, this chapter focuses on the public performativity of Islamic masculinity in Pakistan. It is concerned with the way Muslim men can and are religiously instructed to demonstrate the ideals of jalāl and jamāl as a means of achieving an Islamic balanced masculinity. Furthermore, the chapter also sheds light on the prevailing construction of hegemonic, ruptured and marginalised Muslim male identities and how men assert 'male power' through their bodies and actions in public and private spaces in Pakistan. The chapter is grounded in concepts of gender performativity and the view that social behaviour is a performance based on existing models. I take my cue from Western theories of gender, identity and performance of R.W. Connell and Judith Butler, through which I aim to express an understanding of the different expressions of Islamic male identity, as outlined in Chapter Two. This chapter will also identify piety and its various rituals and performances in Islam as one of the primary conditions required for the creation and critiquing of the Art of Barzakh, the other being 'lowering the gaze' which is discussed in Chapter Four.

3.1 The Male Body and The Performance of Masculinities: Balanced and Ruptured Performances in Pakistan

Men populate Pakistan's public spaces. While physical interaction between men is frowned up, men commonly demonstrate brotherly male bonding by holding hands, hugging, and openly showing affection without it being considered objectionable, taboo or homosexual. Male interactions can be witnessed as 'live performances of masculinity' in the streets as well as presented in news, TV and films and even as images in public spaces in popular poster designs. Such performative masculinities relate to the ways male bodies exist in public and private spaces within Pakistan, based on religious and nationalist constructions of masculinity.

As Muslims of a colonial and post-colonial legacy, many Pakistani men "share a collective sentiment of being marginalized in their own countries and in the global society", and this "marginalization is not limited to economic deprivation, but may include social isolation at the interface of politics, race and religion."[354] The resulting masculinities of Islamist suicide bombers or militant-jihadists are a 'gender trouble' that are extremes of Islamism in marginalized communities like Pakistan. The resulting identities deal with performances of either "resentful and revengeful 'aggression' or 'emasculation'", which can be understood as "protest masculinities: practices that appear from protest contexts, and generate more of it."[355] Such marginalisation tactics are also utilised by various government institutions, including the army, to construct a masculinity that performs in a certain way and supports the hegemonic ideal of patriarchy. Armed masculinities, both institutional and fundamentalist, are constructed through a process of humiliating and emasculating newly recruited men. Every taunt and reward for such men is essentially feminine in character. The greatest embarrassment of such men is 'to be equated to women. They constantly struggle to maintain their masculinity and its performativity as an ideal opposed to femininity.

Societies treat gender norms as legitimate expressions and through them they authorise violent masculine practices and performances. Quoting Judith Butler's idea of performativity to argue the politicised dimensions of Pakistani masculinity, Maleeha Aslam concludes that:

> *[P]olitics presupposes a performative subject that has real agency –…agency and action can be both regressive and progressive. Agents can lead to change or they may insist on continuity of certain practices… performativity… [not only]…contributes towards democratic politics, but as [one] of the most critical elements to be considered*

354 Maleeha Aslam, *Gender-based Explosions: The Nexus Between Muslim Masculinities, Jihadist Islamism and Terrorism* (New York: United Nations University Press, 2012), 75.

355 Aslam, *Gender-based Explosions*, 75–76.

for successfully tapering down militant and terrorist tendencies among huge populations of men across the Muslim world… Oppression and occupation of Muslim populations and lands impinge upon the basic dignity of manhood with as much severity as is felt by women victims of violence.[356]

Butler's critique of Foucault's account of such cultural inscription on the body argues that individuals are forced to conform to pre-existing cultural relations:

The act that one performs is, in a sense, an act that has been going on before one arrived on the scene. Hence gender is an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality, once again.[357]

The opposing religious and socio-political ideologies of the General Zia-ul-Haq regime (1978–1988) marked the beginning of current 'explosive masculinities' and their representation in visual culture. Durre Ahmed informs us that this rupture obliterates the ideal of jalāl/jamāl, producing representations of heightened male effeminacy and macho hyper-masculinity under 'high' and 'low' fundamentalism.[358] This rupture has also deeply impacted the representation of male bodies and masculinities in Pakistani art and has a direct link to my art practice. To unpack this rupture, first I will outline how jalāl/jamāl are integral to both religious rituals and secular masculine performances in Pakistan, leading to a discussion of the ruptured performances of 'explosive masculinities'.

3.2 Ritual, Performance and The Art of Barzakh

For performance theorist Richard Schechner, the word 'performance' is behaviour, hence 'performance art' is an act of "restored behaviour" or "twice-behaved behaviour."[359] In such acts, the performer requires rehearsal, repetition, and training.[360] Schechner uses the terms 'enacted', 'self-conscious', 'repeatable', and 'reflexive' to define the actions involved in

356 Maleeha, *Gender-based Explosions*, 75–76.

357 Judith Butler, "Performance Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. Sue Ellen Case (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 277.

358 Ahmed, *Islamic Masculinities*, 1, 30.
For Ahmed "'High' Islamism pertains to those who are well educated by modern standards… and provide inspiration or, frequently, financial and technical support" where as 'Low' fundamentalist are uneducated.

359 Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 36.

360 Schechner, *Between Theatre,* 22.

executing a performance.[361] Erving Goffman further elaborates performance as all "the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants" and in the process producing our "selves": both as participant and audience.[362] Carlson calls this "doubling" in performance, and identifies the actor as performer and the audience as observer. I further argue that silence, pauses and intervals are not only important in every performance, but also play a crucial role in rituals and performances of piety in Islam which directly informs the Art of Barzakh and its successful delivery and effectiveness.

The gendered identity of the performer operates under Judith Butler's notion of gender performance and performativity. For her, gender performance is the action by which one's self is made, in a continual affirmation or subversion of acceptable behaviours and norms.[363] Her theory of gender performativity suggests that gender is in constant flux, which lends affinity to the notion of doubling, bodily slippage, and requires constant repetition to be managed. Such negotiation of gender identity is presented as "stylised acts."[364] These acts are intentional as they confirm or reject taboo and social cohesion. When viewed as stylised acts, embodied Islamic rituals become a primary means of social and political control for Muslim bodies and a way to define religious identities.

In the religious and spiritual context, Emile Durkheim considered that "rites are rules of conduct that prescribe how man must conduct himself with sacred things", which "find ways to deal in thought and action with the fundamental dichotomy of the Sacred and the Profane."[365] To analyse how the poetic expression of jalāl/jamāl is performatively enacted in the Art of Barzakh, Catherine Bell's outline of ritual in three characteristics is useful: formality is an embellishment of ritual power; fixity is the identification of times, place and exact gestures; and repetition is the redundancy of certain ritual acts.[366]

Islamic rituals such as *salat*, *soaum* and *hajj*, when read under Bell's characterisation, clearly depict ritualisation as a "way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities."[367]

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361 The 'repeatability' of behaviour has been questioned by many scholars, arguing it must have quality in differentiating 'theatrical' performance from everyday behaviours and acts. The point of contention is that it is impossible to repeat or standardise behaviour no matter how simple it is, as human begins are simply incapable of using their bodies to repeat an action of a pose perfectly.

362 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 15.

363 Judith Butler, 1993. *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (London: Routledge, 1993).

364 Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 140.

365 Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1912), 38.
The Sacred for Durkheim is something that is "protected and isolated by prohibitions" where as Profane is "something to which the prohibitions are applied and that must keep a distance from what is sacred." *Ibid*.

366 Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 91–92.

367 Bell, *Ritual Theory,* 74.

Such activities are rooted in the social body, which through performance is invested with a sense of ritual to become a 'ritualised body.'[368]

In terms of social and religious power, Bell quotes Foucault and admits that the body is "the place where the minute and local social practices are linked up with the large scale organisation of power."[369] Ritualisation is thus a "central way that power operates; it constitutes a political technology of the body."[370] For example, in Islam, men and women are commanded to maintain hygiene; this could involve trimming or shaving the moustache, armpit hair and pubic parts as a form of *Sunan al-Fitrah* (cleanliness obligations), which falls under performances of piety in Islam (Section 3.3, p. 165). All men learn this at the age of puberty and must comply every 40 days. However, post-9/11 such practices became a humiliating identifier of the American Federal Bureau of Investigation's racial profiling, where during a strip search *Sunan al-Fitrah* was used as evidence in identifying a Muslim man as a potential terrorist who had cleansed his body and "prepared to meet Allah."[371]

This relates to Ali Kazim's artwork, *Shaving Armpits* and *Making a Khath* [Figs. 3.1-3.2, p. 163] where he painted male figures performing Sunan al-Fitrah in a mirror. Despite this intimate act happening behind doors in a private religious ritual, Kazim exposed the male body and the act of piety in a mirror and making himself and the viewer an observer or a voyeur. However, the viewer has a choice to look away. Those who are aware of Sunan al-Fitrah see this act as Kazim's observation of his religious status and obligatory adherence of such practices in Islam. But his use of an open blade, in a Dadaist fashion, playfully tests the viewers who either do not practice such rituals or are unaware of the religious significance, hence missing the cultural use of the open blade. Such blades are commonly used in South Asia by the master *hajjam* (barber) in both private and public settings and signify the importance and acceptance of such religious obligations as cultural practices. For those who are unaware of such practices of masculine piety, the blade potentially signifies 'masculine aggression', 'violence', and even 'pleasure', where the blade and the nude invites the onlooker to the realm of pleasure and pain under their own sexual gaze. Here Kazim successfully combines the form and content of the Islamic ideal to identify the vulnerability in presenting the Muslim male and his masculinity as a subject of art. Yet I argue that the deliberate use of semi-nude or nude male body in the context of Islam has the potential to rupture such Islamic ideals, opening possibilities of misreading the gendered identity. However, this misreading is only perpetuated when the writer

368 Bell, *Ritual Theory,* 98.

369 Ibid., 202.

370 Ibid., 202.

371 Christopher Drew and Ralph Blumenthal, "Arrested Men's Shaved Bodies Drew Suspicion of the F.B.I.," *The New York Times*, October 26, 2001. (accessed March 21, 2013) http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/26/nyregion/26CUTT.html

remains oblivious of Kazim's notion of "ritual mastery", that is required to attain piety.[372] This implies that ritual can exist only in "the specific cultural schemes and strategies for ritualisation (i.e., for the production of 'ritualised' practices) embodied and accepted by persons of specific cultural communities."[373] This sharing of culture, I argue, is another form of copying in Barzakhi art which Mumtaz also laid out as a condition for the poetic expression of jalāl/jamāl.

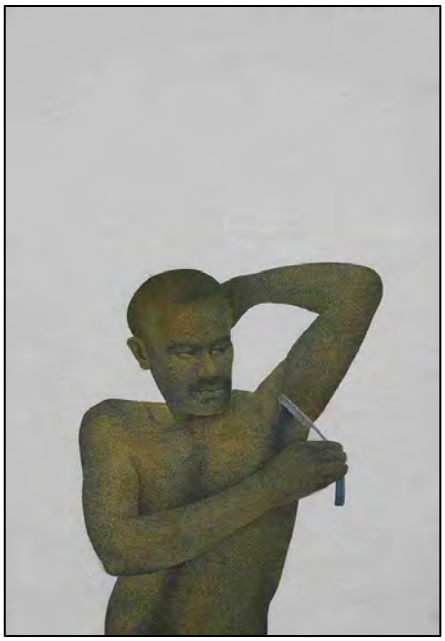

Figure 3.1: Kazim, Ali. 2008. *Shaving Armpits*. Watercolour pigments on wasli paper, 36 x 56 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

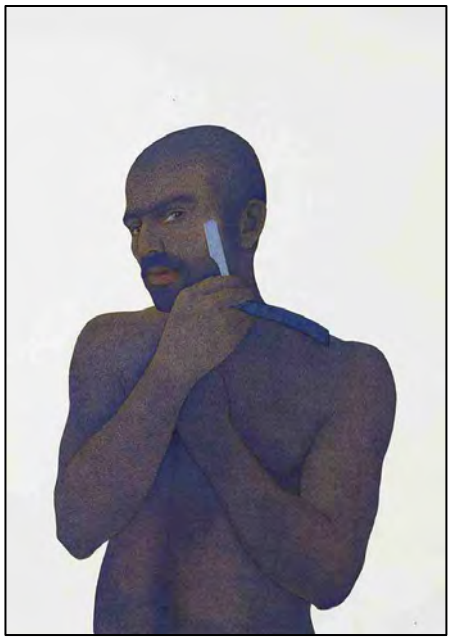

Figure 3.2: Kazim, Ali. 2008. *Making a Khath*. Watercolour pigments on wasli paper, 36 x 56 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

The cultural concept of 'ritual mastery' also leads us to artistic rituals such as those of 'shamanism', which in the West are common to many performance artists, notably Joseph Beuys, Ana Mandieta, Ann Hamilton, Marina Abramovic and Mathew Barney, who have explored the realm of gender identity and differentiation in variety of performative ways. Similar to these Western artists, Pakistani Muslim artists such as Amin Gulgee, Munawar Ali Syed, Saba Khan and Sumaiya Durrani have shown that a formal performance, rituals, prayers, chanting, music, dance or art events hold a mirror up to life becoming its 'double', where the audience do not simply view some other experience, but through the performance look at themselves. Randy Mariti argues that if this doubling of performance produces images of life, then it is possible to study not only certain depictions of the world but also how the world is depicted.[374] This concept aligns with al Arabī's notion of the mirror of jalāl and jamāl.

372 Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 116.

373 Ibid., 107.

374 Randy Martin, "Dance and its Others, Theory, State, Nation, and Socialism" in *On the Presence of the Body*, ed. André Lepecki (Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 47–48.

The live performance depends upon the encounter of action by the actors and 'reflection' through the public act of attendance. Performing bodies make reference to the social, which "amounts to a material amalgamation of thinking and doing as world-making activity."[375] As an act of pure production, art performances are self-production, "an originary body of movement that drives and dies" if it is not "replicating its own activity."[376] For Martin, "art must be repeated because it falls short of the ideal that nonetheless produces an origin, an apparent singularity as its source."[377] This repetition of form and content lies at the core of performance of piety in Barzakhi art, linking the mirror of shamanism and acts of faith to the mirror of secular and contemporary performances. The body in-between forms the glue or ether that holds the resulting marks, signs and inscriptions as cultural memories. But in this process of inscription, Butler also observes that for Foucault the body must exist first as a blank surface before it is inscribed with cultural meanings. She argues that for Foucault the body is the medium "which must be destroyed and transfigured in order for 'culture' to emerge."[378] Anne Marsh notes a division among scholars over Butler's 'culture' as live art and how the presence of the body – or 'being there' – is not a prerequisite to the aesthetic experience, and can be recorded in a variety of ways.[379] This renders the beginning of performance art as an anti-art or anti-aesthetic of Duchampian performativity, where art was to be free and not for sale.[380] For performance theorist Peggy Phelan:

> *Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so it becomes something other than performance.*[381]

In my Barzakhi art practice, performance is not only a "twice-behaved behaviour" or mirror, but also the silence, intervals and paused moments. It is a means to create what Butler means by 'culture' through the destruction and transformation of the body. In Sufi teachings, this equates to *fanna* (complete annihilation of mind and body in the love of Allah), but also as the medium that destroys, rebuilds and collects memories and residuals.

375 Martin, "Dance and its Others," 48.

376 Ibid., 48.

377 Ibid., 47–48.

378 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminisms and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 130.

379 Anne Marsh, *Performance Ritual Document* (Melbourne: Macmillan 2014), 23.

380 Marsh, *Performance Ritual*, 23.

381 Cited in Anne March, *Performance Ritual,* 32.

3.3 Performance of Piety: The Balancing Act of Mind and Body

3.3.1 The Performances and Rituals of Islamic Faith: Islam, Iman and I'hsan

In the performance of Islamic faith there are various mandatory actions for every Muslim to perform. There are three levels of faith attainable through such performances: *Islam* (surrendering to God and a way of living, the outward actions or deeds of the senses), *Iman* (inward actions or the deeds of the heart), and *I'hsan* (to perform good deeds with good intentions, the highest level of faith).[382] In terms of formal practice, there are five pillars of Islam (*arkan al-Islam*; also *arkan al-din*) that Muslims consider to be the framework of their lives: *Sahada, Salat*, *Zakat, Soaum*, and *Hajj*.[383] Saba Mahmood considered rituals and prayers such as salat as performances of piety that are centrally important in the construction of Islamic gendered identity and agency.[384] She writes that while piety was achievable through practices that were both devotional as well as worldly in character, it required more than the simple performance of acts:

> *Piety also entailed the inculcation of entire dispositions through a simultaneous training of the body, emotions, and reason as sites of discipline until the religious virtues required the status of embodied habit.*[385]

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382 Iman and Islam are frequently interchangeable. If Islam is the explicit act of observing the five pillars (arkan), then Iman (considered the second level of faith after *Shahadah*) is verbal and enacted. The heart and tongue confess Iman, while the heart and body perform actions to submit and obey Allah. Muslim scholars interpret Iman as inward and Islam as outward facing. I'hsan is considered the highest level of faith as it is closest to Allah. The word 'I'hsan' is a derivative of the verb "ahsana," which means doing things better with good intentions. Thus the literal linguistic meaning of I'hsan is doing the best, which is doing what Allah commands. There are more than 66 verses in the Qu'ran on this subject. One of the principle Qur'anic teaching is to guide us to I'hsan, to perform good deeds with good intentions. This performance is explicitly quoted from a Hadith; Prophet (s.a.a.w.), says: "(Ihsan is) to worship Allah as you are seeing Him and while you see Him not yet truly He sees you" (Al-Bukhari, Hadith No. 48). The idea is that at every moment of your life, one is worshipping Allah with a belief that while you cannot see Him, He truly sees you. Hence, a Mu'hsen (one who does I'hsan) is aware that every action and everything he or she hears, sees or says is to please Allah. This is the level of righteousness and the level of doing and saying the ultimate good, the level of I'hsan. This 'seeing', 'hearing' and 'saying' marks the ultimate goal for any Muslim to be one of those for whom Allah lifts the veil and allows them to see Him. Hassan A. El-Najjar, "Islam: A Brief Introduction", *Al Jazeera*, 20 May 2007. (Accessed 29 September 2014) http://www.aljazeerah.info/Islamic%20Editorials/2007/May/Islam%20A%20Brief%20Introduction%20By%20Hassan%20A.%20El-Najjar.htm

383 Sahada, the testimony of the faith (Iman) that Allah is omnipotent, one and only; Salat, the five daily prayers; Zakat, payments of alms to the poor; Soaum, fasting from sunrise to sunset during the Islamic month Ramadan; Hajj, pilgrimage to Makkah in Saudi Arabia at least once in a lifetime if affordable. Other practices that are not a part of the five pillars include refraining from intimate relations before marriage, refraining from consuming products made of pork, and avoiding alcohol and gambling.

384 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 123. While some may interpret cultural anthropologist Saba Mahmood's work as an apologist's account for Islamic revivalism, I find it helpful in explaining the practice and cultivation of piety in Muslim societies like Pakistan.

385 Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic revival" in *Cultural Anthropology* 16 (2)(2001): 202.

Iman is inward actions or the deeds of the heart, while Islam is associated with outward actions or deeds of the senses. Some of the actions of the senses including standing, bowing, prostration and sitting before Allah in prayers, *Tawaf* (circumambulation of the Ka'aba), *Jamarah* (stoning of the devil ritual) that marks the end of *Hajj* pilgrimage, and *Jihad* (various level of fighting in the cause of Allah).[386]

Of the five pillars, only three – *Salat*, *Soaum* and *Hajj* – are viewed as the primary embodied Islamic *ibadah* (prayers and rituals) that require both verbal and physical coordination and actions of the body and central means of Muslim identity construction in Islam, specifically under its doctrinal mode of religiosity. Despite being obligatory, not all Muslims perform such ibadah, but they are still considered Muslims. Those who do observe performances of piety, are also encouraged to remind others about observing ibadah. Due to the scope of this research, salat and hajj are explicitly referenced as the embodied rituals and performance of piety in Islam since both have private and public dimensions that inform Islamic masculinity and my art practice.

3.3.2 Salat

Salat (*namaz* in Urdu) literally means *du'a* (invocation) and is the second pillar of Islam. Of central importance in Islam, salat is the obligatory prayers performed five times each day.[387] As an example of 'twice-behaved behaviour', salat must be learned correctly and is obligatory once reaching the age of puberty.[388] Several rituals are performed prior to every salat performance, including *wudu* (ablution), a ritual washing of face, hands and feet, and *adhan* or *azan*, an announcement and calling for prayers. Also wearing clean clothes and covering the head with topi is preferred. Men preferably perform salat in congregation in a mosque whereas women can observe salat at home. At the mosque, all men are strictly asked to make straight rows and stand shoulder to shoulder behind the Imam (priest). They face towards the Ka'aba,[389] an act that is called *Qibla* in Arabic. This alignment forms a grid that connects the Muslim Ummah (nation).

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386 Al-Hajj At-Tamatu, "There are three ways of Performing the Hajj," *Wajibad*, 01 January 2013. (Accessed 13 March 2014) https://wajibad.wordpress.com/2013/01/01/al-hajj-at-tamattu/

387 Mahmood, *Politics of Piety,* 123.
The five daily prayers are: Fajr (dawn), Dhuhr (noon), Asr (afternoon), Maghrib (evening), and Isha' (night). The Fajr prayer is performed before sunrise, Dhuhr is performed at midday after the sun has surpassed its highest point, Asr is the evening prayer before sunset, Maghrib is the evening prayer after sunset, and Isha' is the night prayer.

388 The following elements of salat must be learned and executed correctly: "(a) an intention to dedicate the prayer to God; (b) a prescribed sequence of gestures and words; (c) a physical condition of purity; and (d) proper attire." Children from age 7 begin to learn salat to make sure that when they reach the age can perform correctly. Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 123.

389 In salat, Ka'aba has two primary functions: first to give focus and identify the location of the house of Allah as it is considered the center of the universe and the Islamic Ummah. Second to provide the direction for prayers.

The validity of the prayer is based on the performance of specific recitations from Qur'anic verses, utterances of *du'a* (prayers), body posture, and actions that must be performed as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.). For example, one's eyes must be kept open during the entire prayers, with gaze affixed on the ground where one would place the forehead in the prostration action, while remembering that one is standing in the presence of Allah. As Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) said: "Worship your Lord as if you see Him. If you do not see Him, He sees you."[390] There are then a series of set recitations, positions and actions including: *Niyyat* (Intention), *Qiyam* (standing), Ruku (bowing with hands on knees), *Sajida* (prostrating) and *Tashahhud* (sitting in a special position, not on the heels or the buttocks). Each action has specific form, geometry, purpose and content, meaning that it must be learned, understood and performed repeatedly and correctly in sequence.

In artistic practice, the corporeal actions and postures of prayer performance are reprised under the jalāl/jamāl model of poetic expression while keeping the utmost respect and understanding of their transcendental qualities and spiritual connections. This connection is mentioned in the Qur'an as the remembrance and praise of Allah's beauty (jamāl) and mercy (jalāl), and is not limited to humans as it binds all creations on earth and heaven in unity.[391]

> *Man remains vertical while standing (qiyam) and stays horizontal while bending to his knees (ruku). He puts his head on the ground in a state of prostration. While in this position of prostration man comes closer to Allah at the utmost degree. Prostration enables man to attain a position of the nearest proximity to Allah. The more a human being grows materially smaller, the more he grows and matures spiritually.*[392]

When devotees stand in *qiyam* at the beginning of the prayers and face towards Ka'aba, they show "implicit faith in and devotion to Allah"; when they sit for *Tashahhud* it marks the "assertion of the devotee's complete faith in and love for Allah."[393] Qiyam becomes *Itidal* (straightening up), a translation act where one is obligated to straighten the back before moving to the next position. Symbolically, both are acts of obedience similar to the way nature, trees, mountains and plants seem to stand proud and erect, towering toward the sky to meet the creator, but in reality they are constantly praying and bowing to Allah through their roots, soul and ground in an act of obedience. This connection to the ground is explicated in the funerary *janaza* prayer, the shortest salat, which is preformed standing in front of the dead body wrapped

390 Biharul Anwar, "Book of Flower Garden" vol. 74, 74, in *The Prophet's Preachings*, ch. 4, hadith 3. Makarimul Akhlaq, 459.

391 Al Qur'an, Surah al-Isra Chapter 17, Ayat 44

392 Mehmed Demirci, "Spritual meaning of Prayers," *Namaz Zamani*, (access January 10, 2015) http://www.namazzamani.net/english/MehmetDemirci.htm

393 The Eleven Hijabaat (Veils) of Sufism Shaikh Hakim Chishti

in a white shroud ready to be buried. Here the performer is reminded to hold qiyam, to 'stand up' in prayer as one day they will return to the ground and be raised on the Day of Judgment.

Figure 3.3a: Qiyam (standing) and Itidal (straightening up) in salat. Photo: www.alsunna.org

Figure 3.3b: Tashahhud in salat is sitting between the two Sujuds (prostrations). Photo: www.alsunna.org

When the ritual of salat is explored in art practices through the poetic reprisal of prayer elements, which I argue align with Mumtaz's poetic expression of jalāl/jamāl, this brings attention to the human understanding of non-physical connections. To understand these elements of prayer performances, the structure and meaning of the prayer actions must be considered. For example, standing (*qiyam*) and sitting (*tashahhud*) become sacred positions in salat, whereas they remain casual or profane in the banal social practices of eating, playing or working.[394] I argue that the five daily salat is temporal, as they are based on the movement of the sun, and require 'repetition' hence signifies jalāl. Whereas the act of wadu (ablution), which is performed prior to a salat prayer, is 'formality' or a form of jamāl, since it is an act of cleansing and beautification of the body. Lastly 'fixity' is the beautifully choreographed body positions and movements during the salat that operate under the notion of hawa. However, to reach kamāl, or perfection, in the performance of salat the elements of punctuality and the desire to pray "must be created through a set of disciplinary acts" which are "not the antecedent to, or cause of, moral action, but its product."[395]

In terms of art, the symbolism of *qiyam* (standing) and *tashahhud* (sitting) inspired Mughal court etiquette, where the emperor sits on the throne as representative of the Divine in tashahhud, while his followers stand in front of him. Such meaningful etiquette filtered into the miniature portrait paintings of the Mughal court, where the royals are painted in either a standing or sitting position. Such positions also informed my performance series *Soft Target*,

394 According to Durkheim, "rites are rules of conduct that prescribe how man must conduct himself with sacred things". Rites are particular ways of dealing in thought and action with the fundamental dichotomy of the sacred and profane. The sacred can be understood as something that is protected and isolated by prohibitions. Meanwhile, the profane is something to which the prohibitions are applied and which must keep a distance from what is sacred.
Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929), 38.

395 Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 126.

Demo X (p. 258), and drawing works such as *The Balancing Act of Celestial Proportions* and *The Balancing Act of Royal Proportions,* Demo IV (p. 150).

Figure 3.4: *Shah Jahan seated on the "Peacock Throne"*, from the Padshahnama, Mughal (Shah Jahan's Reign). Watercolor and gold

Figure 3.5: Portrait of Mughal Emperor Jahangir's invocation of a du'a prayer.

Figure 3.6*: Shah Jahan seated on the 'Peacock Throne.'*

3.3.3 Hajj

Hajj is the fifth and final pillar of Islam, which occurs during the last Islamic month of *Dhu al-Hijjah.* It is a pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah and once-in-a-lifetime obligation for every adult Muslim (men and women) who can afford it. Over five days, the pilgrim must be aware that they are in the presence of Allah, and examine their intentions and actions as a means to seek forgiveness and self-improvement. Hajj is performed in remembrance of when Prophet Ibrahim (r.a.) was asked by Allah to sacrifice his son, Prophet Ismaa'eel (r.a.). He told his son about his dream. He agrees to be sacrificed and on their way to fulfil Allah's command, Ibliees (Satan) appeared three times to persuade Prophet Ibrahim (r.a.) to give up his intention. With Allah's instructions, Prophet Ibrahim (r.a.) rebuked Ibliees by casting seven stones at him each time. Three pillars, or *Jamarahs* (today a wall is erected around the pillars) were later erected as markers of the approximate places where Ibliees appeared. The final act of hajj is *Ramī aj-Jamarāt* (The Stoning of Ibliees), which is observed in commemoration of Prophet Ibrahim's (r.a.) struggle. When pilgrims cast pebbles, they rebuke the paths of the devil while proclaiming their firm desire to follow the ways of Allah. Thus, *Rami* is the ultimate repudiation of man's self (literally the 'internal despot', *an-nafs al-'amara*) and the act of casting aside one's low desires and wishes.

Figure 3.7. Ariel Shot of one of Jamarah pillars (before a wall is erected around the tower to widen it as a precautionary measure to protect the pilgrims from hitting each other after many incidents. Photo: TheNewsTribe .

Figure 3.8: Three Jamarah pillars encased in a wall. Photo: TheNewsTribe .

Figure 3.9: Collection of pea-sized stone to pelt the Jamarah as part of the rami ritual/

Figure 3.10: Muslim pilgrims cast stones at a pillar, symbolising the stoning of Satan, in a ritual called "Jamarah," the last rite of the annual Hajj, in Mina near the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

On completion of the ritual performances of hajj, one can become the embodiment of the poetic expression of jamāl/jamāl. For example, during the act of hajj, all Muslims regardless of social, political or religious positions, background or status must wear *Ihram*, a formality which for men consists of two white sheets; thus they perform, recite and abide by the same rules and acts. Ihram in this sense identifies and separates the sacred (here clothing) from the profane. In practice, there are many rituals of hajj that require repetition and fixity of the body: *tawaff* the circumambulation of Ka'aba, *istilam,* the touching of *Hajra Aswad* (Black Stone), *sa'yee*, traveling seven times between Mount Safa and Mount Marwah, and *rami,* the symbolic stoning of the devil in Mina.[396] Salat and hajj performances mark two ends of the Muslim male identity construction and masculine performance – the individual and collective – and have impacted on my own identity construction and art practice as referenced in this research.

396 Medhy Aginta Hidayat, "Ibadat, the Body and Identity: Islamic Rituals and the Construction of Muslim Identity," *Acamedian.edu.* 11-10, https://www.academia.edu/2295009/Ibadat_the_Body_and_Identity_Islamic_Rituals_and_the_Construction_of_Muslim_Identity

3.4 Religious Public Performances of Masculinity in Pakistan

There are many Islamic masculine performances that can be identified as public, ranging from performing a Friday sermon at the mosque to the ritual sacrifice of an animal on the day of Eid-ul-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice).[397] Such acts are a dynamic form of religious practice that primarily enable men to simultaneously display masculine power and humility. During such performances, Muslim men defend sacred Islamic beliefs, compete for public spaces and visibility, show economic prosperity and hierarchy, and display their identity to another community as a united power. But in countries like Pakistan, nothing comes closer to the domination of public space and religious and political ideologies than then the Shia Muharram procession of *Ta'ziya*, performed on the 10th day of the Islamic month of Muharram and known as *Ashura* (*Chelum* in Pakistan).[398]

3.4.1 Case study: The Public Performance of Matam in Ashura

Controversial, yet religiously lawful, ritualistic acts such as beating bear chests (*matam*), or its most spectacular form in self-flagellation with chains (*zanjir-zani* or *zanjir ka matam*)[399], differentiate between Shia and Sunni approaches to mourning the deaths of martyrs of the battle of Karbala which happened on Ashura.[400] Every year, a procession of *Ta'ziya* is organised by the Shia community on the streets of Karachi, Lahore and Hyderabad. *Matam* is also organised in private settings as part of the various rituals, in which both men and women take part. On the other hand, *zanjir-zani* is performed publicly by bare-chested Shia men wearing black or white shalwar and pants, some with green or black headbands bearing the names Iman Hussain (r.a.) and Hazrat Abbas (r.a.), who were pious martyrs of Karbala.[401] The performance draws thousands of onlookers, including women, children and Sunni Muslims, who view the spectacle

397 festival is part of hajj. A ritual sacrifice of an animal is one of the final acts of the pilgrimage. It commemorates Prophet Ibrahim's (a.s.) willingness to sacrifice his beloved son Prophet Ismaa'eel (a.s.) on command from Allah.

398 Knut A. Jacobsen, *South Asian Religions on Display: Religious Processions in South Asia and in the Diaspora*, (New York: Routledge, 2008)

399 Zanjir ka matam (or zanjir zani) as a public ritual appeared in Iran and was introduced in the last decades of the ninetieth century in Lebanon and in Indian Sub-continent.

400 The Battle of Karbalāʾ occurred on 10 October 680, or 10th of Muharram, ah 61. It was a brief military engagement in which a small party led by al Hussain ibn Ali, grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) and son of Hazrat Ali (r.a.), the fourth Caliph, was defeated and massacred by an army sent by the Umayyad Caliph Yazid. The battle helped secure the position of the Umayyad dynasty, but among Shia (followers of al-Ḥussain) the 10th of Muharram (Ashura) became an annual holy day of public mourning. Encyclopedia Britannia, "The Battle of Karbala Islamic History," Updated May 16, 2013, (accessed November 10, 2013) http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/312214/Battle-of-Karbala
Sunnis and Hindus participated in Muharram processions prior to partition, despite being considered a primarily Shia procession and performance. However, Hindus refrain from chest beating and self-flagellation, preferring to fast, make *niaz* (special offerings), and put up *sabeels* (refreshment stands) for the processions.

401 Generally most Iraqi Shias, like Iranians, perform matam fully dressed.

with amusement, reverence, horror and disbelief. Some women and men, who believe in the mythical healing powers of the procession's artefacts, such as the decorated horse that Imam Hussain (r.a.) rode into battle, will press their children against the horse flank and give money to the horse's attendants.[402] During this research, the study of various popular religious posters (collected as archive) revealed that animals such as horses, lions, falcons, pigeons and nightingales are prominently used. Some of these animals appear as powerful intercessors for 'veiled religious bodies'. *Zuljinah,* the noble horse of Hazart Iman Hussain (r.a.) is one of the most popular, as is the mythical *Buraq*, who took Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) to seven havens on the night of miraj.[403]

Figure 3.11: Zuljana covered fabric painted with arrows and blood-stains symbolise the martyrdom of Hazart Imam Hussain (r.a) during the battle.

Figure 3.12: A poster from religious poster archive collected from a street poster vendor in Saddar, Karachi. The poster depicts Zuljinah (left) and Buraq (right) in front of four famous Islamic religious architectures: Ka'aba, Prophet Mosque in Madina, the Dome of Rock and the shrine of Data Darbad in Lahore. Calligraphic names of Allah, Muhammad, roses, lotus, stars and Alm are also used to convey a transcendental message and to evoke the spiritual feelings among the uses/onlookers. Photo/Poster: collection of Syed M I, Abdullah.

During the performance, men mimetically flagellate themselves. They first beat their breasts with bare hands, then forking their backs with metal instruments including *zanjir* (chain) with knives attached, and at the end they scar their foreheads with a knife. This spilling of blood and bodily marking are important theatrics in matam. The resulting site, filled with the signs

402 J Jacobsen and Knut A., ed., *South Asian Religions on Display: Religious Processions in South Asia and in the Diaspora* (New York, Rutledge, 2008).

403 The devotion of Zuljinah, which is peculiar to South Asia, has been strongly criticised by Ayatollah Khomeini.

and smells of agitated flagellators drenched in blood, and the slippery streets with splashes of sanguine, is simultaneously melancholic and grotesque. Put simply, it is beauty in terror. The performance is an ultimate Shia ritual that develops communal identity through public performance in perfect coordination and chaotic harmony. The chanting and the sound of repetitive strokes of matam mesmerise other male believers, encouraging them to join and support the group's solidarity in mourning the symbolic martyrdom. Despite such an invitation, the performance is controlled and guarded by senior members and medical staff, who stop enthusiastic mourners from causing excessive injury to their bodies in the state of frenzy. Every year however, major incisions and heavy bleeding is treated, which mourners show and compare by lifting their shirts and exposing their backs to each other and to onlookers.[404] This act of self-regulated exposition of wounded male body has parallels with Sharif Waked's *'Chic Point'* fashion video work [Figs 2.73a-b-c, p. 134]. If Waked's fashion work that is inspired by the body check and surveillance at check-points allude to a 'political voyeurism' then the act of showcasing bodily wounds during Ashura is 'voyeurism of piety' that Shia men proudly engage under the notion of real *muhibban-e ahl-e bait* (true love of the Prophet's family). In all of this, women remain mute and passive participants, but keep an active gaze from the sidelines looking at bear-chested men demonstrating their courage and devotion, knowing that women are watching. For ulama, this demonstration of nudity and gaze is unacceptable in Islam.

Figure 3.13: Matam on the day of Ashura, Karachi, Pakistan

Figure 3.14: Zanjir-zani

Figure 3.15: Zanjir-zani with metal blades.

Figure 3.16: Stitching of wounds as a result of Zanjir-zani.

404 In Lahore, ten people were hospitalised in 2007 after the Ashura procession, with over 2000 receiving first aid consisting on average of 7–8 stitches; Jacobsen, (ed) *South Asian Religions on Display*, 393.

Video recordings of such processions are now even available online to potentially influence the young male mourner's mind. *Zanjir-zani* as a masculine ritual has become a rite of passage for Shia men and popular among children and teenagers, leaving anti-Shia and even some moderate Shia to question such public penance.[405] According to Jacobsen, for some scholars matam is a violation of Prophet Muhammad's (s.a.a.w.) Sunnah and a "failure of decorum, a loss of self-control."[406] Furthermore such mourning practices have become the target of masculine aggression, violence and religiously motivated suicide attacks. The beginning of such aggression leads back to the era of General Zia's Islamisation project, which encouraged the "Sunnification of Pakistan," and incarcerated 'minorities' such as Shias and radicalised sectarian identities.[407]

It can be concluded that Muslim identity is in fact mainly constructed and upheld through its rituals and performances of piety, which are centralised, efficient, and uniform.[408] It is to be noted that the public ritual of *Ramī al-Jamarāt* (The Stoning of Devil), during hajj is different both in its meaning and execution to the highly contested and mythical public performance of *Rajm* ('stoning' in Arabic), where under strict sharia law, married male or female adulterers are stoned to death. The same punishment is also prescribed for sodomy. In recent years, ISIS has revived this punishment as a way to instil public fear and uphold a strict Sharia law. Stoning has also been a part of the political vernacular and a tactic of protest, where projectiles like stones, bricks, glass bottles and even shoes are used by young men in countries like Pakistan, Syria, Bangladesh and Palestine. Stones are the weapon of choice to fight oppression and alienation. In this regard, Catherine Bell's 'ritual' becomes an action, a means to perform religious conceptual orientations by which "collective beliefs and ideals are simultaneously generated, experienced, and affirmed as real by the community."[409] In this

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405 Jacobsen, (ed) *South Asian Religions on Display*.

406 "Suicide bomb targets Shia Muslims in Karachi," *the Guardian*, 2009, (accessed December 24, 2013) http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/dec/28/karachi-sucide-bomb-attack

407 "Seven dead from blast as Chehlum observed across Pakistan," *The Tribune Express*, December 24, 2013, (accessed December 24, 2013) http://tribune.com.pk/story/649893/chehlum-security-mobile-services-suspended-in-56-cities/
Such attacks are a result of religious intolerance and the counter-polemics between Islamic traditionalists and modernists around the issue of rituals that mark the Shia and Sunni divide.

408 Medhy A. Hidayat, "Ibadat , the Body and Identity: Islamic Rituals and the Construction of Muslim Identity," *Academia.au*, https://www.academia.edu/2295009/Ibadat_the_Body_and_Identity_Islamic_Rituals_and_the_Construction_of_Muslim_Identity

409 Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice,* 20.
Catherine Bell generally regards ritual as action, distinguishing it from the conceptual aspects of religion, such as beliefs, creeds, symbols, and myths. For her, a ritual is the primary means by which individual perception and behaviour are socially appropriated or conditioned. As such, ritualisation becomes a matter of various culturally-specific strategies for distinguishing some activities from others, for creating distinctions between the 'Sacred' and 'Profane,' and for ascribing such distinctions to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors. At a more complex level, it is a way of acting that "specifically establishes a privileged contrast, differentiating itself as more important or powerful." Ibid., 90.

research, the act of stoning for the actor (here myself as an artist), receiver and viewer plays an important part, not only in my art practice but also that of other Pakistani artists.

3.5 Political Public Performances of Masculinity in Pakistan

There is increasing disparity between cultural identities and the founding ideology of Pakistan. The nation was formed on the basis of religion, yet it was intended to be a secular state. This environment has failed "to create a sense of the public in which oppositional voices are not feared, degraded or dismissed, but valued for the instigation to a sensate democracy they occasionally perform."[410] As a deeper account of the gendering of nationalism, I argue that it is imperative to examine the construction of both masculinity and femininity together in the articulation of cultural and national belonging in public and political discourse. Since the 1947 Partition of India, various men have become positive national icons as sacrificed and suffering masculinities of the 'postcolonial public sphere'. However since 1988, with the rise of Islamist fundamentalism, Pakistan has witnessed the complex construction of a masculinity that does not want to 'suffer', and is prepared to be sacrificed in an instant for eternal glory in the afterlife.

The public performances I discuss here are case studies that are either political or have been politicised as a way of shaping the Pakistani masculine identity. Mark-making on the body, either though religious zeal or state punishment, further alludes to the continued rise of spectacular and abject performances of violence and terror, punctuated by the suicide bombings in Pakistan's public sphere. As Memon Jisha argues, the "spectacular and quotidian political performance affectively binds its audience – a word derived from audentia, an assembly of listeners, into publics."[411] The meaning of audentia, as boldness or courage, reflects the essence of the audience's role both as an observer and an active participant, vocally and physically.

3.5.1 Case Study 1: The Public Performance of the Wagah Border Flag-Raising and Retreat Ceremony

First performed in 1959, the routine Flag Raising and Retreat Ceremony at Wagah on the India–Pakistan border is open to the public every morning and evening. The performance is a prime example of the "high politics of the Partition that deployed rhetoric as a strategy to advance political goals."[412] Such visual and auditory performances are experiential, reflecting the sensitivities of the political lives of its spectators. The ceremonial performance reveals state power. It delivers "the desired forms of political subject hood, the basis for social cohesion and

410 Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso 2004), 151.

411 Menon Jisha, *The Performance of Nationalism: India, Pakistan, and the Memory of Partition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 22.

412 Jisha, *The Performance of Nationalism,* 22.

political unity," and social power, which is then "insidiously inscribe[d]… onto the bodies of its spectators."[413] Such politicised binding is primarily a hegemonic masculine act, where performers and active audentia are male and form a unit. Although social power is inscribed on both male and female spectators, the inspiration of the male body remains a public act in Pakistan. Social power on the feminine body is asserted under the gaze of patriarchy. Although, feminine signs, symbols, music, dances and colours accompany the male performance, women perform as passive observers, standing alongside their active male audentia. Reading the Retreat ceremony as a spectacular theatre of nationalism allows a mediatory relationship between aesthetics and political representation. The aesthetic representation of the nation attempts to secure the political relationship between representative and represented. This cross border ritualised event, being performed identically by Indian and Pakistani border guards, which ironically destabilises both accounts of identity within and without of the nation.[414]

In 2012, I observed the evening session, the Retreat ceremony at Wagah, with foreign dignitaries from Australia as part of this research. I was able to record the full experience of the performance, which would now be difficult to achieve. A devastating loss of lives due to the suicide blast at Wagah in 2014 pushed the security of the area to high alert, since making visitor's access to the site difficult.[415] This makes my visit more relevant in my investigation of 'exploding masculinities'. The following account of the routine performance and my own participation as audentia, through video recording and my reflexive account, has since contributed to my performance video work.

On arrival, the border is immediately recognised as a serious 'male-dominant' business site, where vendors operate small stalls serving tea, refreshments and performance souvenirs like postcards, miniature Pakistani flags and badges. After crossing the barbed wire fence and then the Pakistani Baab-e-Azadi (Gate of Freedom)[416], two impressive tiered viewing galleries like those of an amphitheatre appeared on both sides of a wide tar road, confirming the theatricality of the performance and allowing the army to keep the audience organised and restrained. In this theatre, the primary stage is two wrought iron gates separated by a line of control and painted with the countries' respective flag colours and symbols.[417] Pakistan's gate has a large Urdu inscription: "*Pakistan Zindabad*" (Long Live Pakistan). The Indian gate reads: "*Mera Bharat Mahan*" (My India Is Great). These gates are used everyday to regulate the two

413 Ibid., *22.*

414 Ibid., *22.*

415 Ali Usman and Rameez Ahmed, "Suicide blast at Wagah border kills 55, injures 120 other." *The Express Tribune*, November 2, 2014 (accessed December 11, 2014) http://tribune.com.pk/story/784976/cylinder-blasts-kill-3-in-islamabad-injure-2-in-karachi/

416 Pakistan's Baab-e-Azadi (Gate of Freedom) was built in 2001 as a memorial to Muslims killed in 1947 during the Partition.

417 The Pakistani gate side is painted in green and white and adorned with flag symbols of the crescent moon and a star. The Indian side of the gate is adorned with Indian flag colours, saffron, white and green and the Ashoka Chakra symbol.

countries' borders, as Wagah is an important border check post for trade.[418] Also visible are two flag masts on either side of the border and a brass plaque commemorating the Partition. An approximately 5 inches wide white line is drawn on a tar road to signify the Zero Point. It is the only place where one was allowed to cross the border. During the performance, the soldiers use this line as a guide, a visible 'catwalk', for the specially trained army men who demonstrate their salute walk. A walkway leads to an observatory like alley where one could view the Indian side though an approximately eight-foot high barbed wire fence that is always under surveillance by soldiers on each side, who do not engage with the audience. These guards look nonchalantly at the eager and curious faces on the other side, which in itself is a performance. The ground beside the undulating path is decorated with sculptures, dioramas and plaques presenting a history of the site through images of war heroes, sayings of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.), and inspirational quotations of Pakistan's founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The civilian audience is scrupulously body-searched at the gate, with warnings not to incite or hoot at the Indian audience.[419] The unruly behaviour and belligerent patriotism of such men is a clear challenge to state power. For Jisha, such acts of defiance exemplify the "potentially disruptive power of live performances in public spaces and point to the constitutive unknowability that makes up live performance."[420]

The audience primarily consists of young Pakistani Muslim men, many wearing traditional shalwar kameez and topi. There are also couples, families, foreign dignitaries and tourists, who are given the privileged front row seats close to the 'staged' main gate.[421] We were offered the front row seat near the gate. Although the divide between men and women in this environment is not visibly apparent, the gender separation in is palpable. Almost all of the audience at one point cheered, waved hands, shouted or mouthed the words to the songs. Similar actions and gatherings were observed on the Indian side. The total patriotic and nationalistic affect affirms the importance of rising above religious, ethnic, and regional divisions. With all its national zeal, humour and religious tone, the empathy formed between the performer and spectator as they dissolve the affective distance allows each to become one with the live performance. Ironically, this empathic dissolution terminates abruptly the moment "the invented tradition" or "the inadvertent mimetic doubling" of the Retreat ceremony began.[422]

The audience is instructed to follow appointed flag-brandishers, or male 'cheerleaders' who hold flags and vigorously run up to the gates shouting slogans in a show of insolence

418 Political events such the attacks on the Indian Parliament House in December 2001 and the suicide attack at Wagah in 2014 affected the business traffic and number of people crossing the border considerably.

419 During the performance guards immediately admonish those who respond to the Indian insults or shout negative slogans. Any disobedient act is met with a stern warning. The loud youth revert to the sanctioned slogans for a while to appease the guards.

420 Jisha, *The Performance of Nationalism,* 42.

421 Audience groups are organised based on whether they are families or singles.

422 Jisha, *The Performance of Nationalism,* 44

toward India.[423] The flag-brandishing is mirrored in identical moves by Indian counterparts. Punctuated by belligerent cheers, the pre-ceremonial ritual of flag-brandishing acts as a prelude to the real performance. These flag-brandishing performers bring "visual, theatrical, urban, violent, masculine performances" into a new politics of presence.[424] Once seated, the male audience not only begins to cheer and shout, but also a few gather and start dancing the *bahngra*, a formal celebratory dance, to the devotional and popular patriotic music that is played on visible stereos, evoking nostalgic memories and eliciting a particular emotional response from the audience.[425] The religious songs are primarily drawn from the Zia era, while the pop songs are post-Zia.[426]

Specifically selected for their tall and strong build, and trained by the military, the performance is conducted by the Pakistani Rangers (PR) and India's Border Security Force (BSF) as "a ritual that reiterates the militancy and machismo of nationalism."[427] The PR guards wore dark green long military black shalwar kameez with cummerbunds and tasselled black turbans called *kullah*. Almost all the PR guards were either sporting a full beard as per Islamic code or a moustache, a traditional sign of masculinity in Pakistan. Both sides of performers were immaculately dressed, groomed, focused and charged.[428]

The performance ran for almost half an hour and had many moments for both sides to demonstrate their martial prowess. They stomped their feet, glowered at each other and shook their weapons in a highly stylised fashion. They even used styles of pose more familiar to body builders in order to show their strength. Each side belligerently goosestepped toward the other, stopping just a few yards short of the white line separating Pakistan and India. They performed a one-quarter turn in perfect harmony. Both groups now stood at attention, bodies perpendicular to the border, chests distended as they stared piercingly at one another over their shoulders. Soon a request from the respective higher ranked officers at each end to open the gates and lower the flag. Several border guards joined in and the ceremony proceeded with coordinated stamping, wheeling, shouted commands, and saluting. The gates were unlocked and opened with great power. They proceeded to lower their respective flags that were high on poles planted

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423 A self-strapped megaphone is used for slogan shouting, such as "Pakistan Zindabad" in a coordinated theatrical dance.

424 Jisha, *The Performance of Nationalism,* 41

425 The visible stereos provide the sound of religious and devotional music and a few patriotic songs from popular music bands, notably Vital Signs and singers like Shaky. The songs play on the emotions of the audience to sonically reinforce shared cultural memories.

426 As stated by Ravi Vasudevan: "images and sounds do not only course around us, they also reside, affectively, in us. They are layered in the space of memory, where public and personal archives intermesh, where for example, music provides a soundtrack that traverses public history and personal biography. Within the immediacy of audio-visual experiences rest other images and sounds that clamour, contest, and dialogue with their own histories." Jisha, *The Performance of Nationalism,* 38

427 Ibid., 44

428 The BSF soldiers wore khaki pant and shirt uniforms with ornate red, yellow, and black cummerbunds around their waists and vivid, orange turbans with tassels.

at the foot of the gates. Buglers on either side played in unison as both flags were lowered, folded and simultaneously carried away to their stations. The commandants of both sides finally saluted each other, briefly shook hands, and shut their gates with a ferocious crash. It was a breathtaking militarised opera on the edge of conflict and nostalgia.

The excess symbolism of this performance of nationalism and masculine power is evident. The soldiers' gaze in performing the flag raising ceremony at Wagah defines the post-colonial masculine legacy in a South Asia constantly at war; invading or threatening to invade. The Retreat ceremony at Wagah derives its performative idiom from imperial systems of displaying power, which were themselves invented traditions carefully crafted to symbolically assert British authority over India. In this sense, the experience of watching this performance can be read as men engaging in battle in a colosseum, where they cheer, shout and dance in a euphoria that resides in war, using violence and the meeting of masculine egos as public spectacle. The guards' shouting of orders in their high-pitched masculine voices is operatic. When combined with music, flag-brandishing prologue and arena seating, the overall composition of the event frames it as nationalist theatre. The plethora of signs – for example, the iconic representation of the encoded soldiers' bodies as actors, civilians as audience, the corresponding stage settings on either side, the identical use of stage props (including weapons and flags), and finally the significance of the flag coming down as a curtain marking the end of the show – all circulate within a theatrical economy.

Figure 3.17: A Pakistani flag-brandisher during the Wagah border ceremony. Photo: AP/Aman Sharma.

Figure 3.18: Pakistan Ranger and Indian Border Security Force guards marching during the Wagah border ceremony.

Figure 3.19: Pakistan Rangers guards posing during the Wagah border ceremony. Photo: AP/Aman Sharma.

Figure 3.20: Lowering of flag ceremony. Photo: AP/Aman Sharma.

The hyperbolic performance of consummate nationalism is also unsurprisingly the performance of robust masculinity. Both nations appropriate an ideal of martial masculinity and affirm their potency to protect their motherland; the male body of the performing soldier inscribes militarism with patriotism and patriarchy.[429] The identical acts of the guards' performances point to the trope of mimetic doubles that "suffuse the dramas of Partition and… betrayal of mimetic kinship."[430]

The identical movements of the doubles, 'twins', in this case two men, feeds into the Abel and Cain story in the Qur'an: the sons of Adam offer a sacrifice to Allah. Abel's sacrifice of a healthy sheep is accepted. The rejection of Cain's diseased sheep under the influence of Ibliees led to a mimetic rivalry between the two men, in this case brotherly doubles, leading one to kill and mimic a crow to learn how to bury the other.[431] This conflict between two men and the brotherly betrayal is metaphorically summed up in Shakespeare's line from *Julius Caesar*, "et tu, Brute?"[432], which historically materialised as the conflicts of power between rulers of the ancient and modern worlds. The subtext of the conflict remains the difference in religious ideologies and power struggle between men. At Wagah, this conflict is played out in a dramatised antagonism between Pakistan and India.

Figure 3.21: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2003. *et tu Brute*. Green neon. Exhibited in 'Brut-Nama' Aicon gallery, NYC. Photo: courtesy the artist.

429 Jisha, *The Performance of Nationalism,* 45.

430 Ibid.

"This doubling critiques the Two Nation theory proposed by Pakistan's leader Jinnah and India's leader Nehru, and holds them accountable, as doubles, for Partition of the subcontinent on the basis of religious differences."

431 Shaykh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, "Sufism and the Perennial Conflict of Good and Evil," The Islamic Supreme Council of America, http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.org/understanding-islam/spirituality/18-sufism-and-the-perennial-conflict-of-good-and-evil.html?start=1.

The mimetic rivalry between men as translated into the struggle between good (Abel) and evil (Cain) is considered an ongoing conflict between good and evil in Islamic teaching and history.

432 et tu, Brute?, "and you, Brutus?". Said to have been the last words of Julius Caesar to his close friend Marcus Brutus at the moment of death when he learned that Brutus was among the assassins, signifying the ultimate brotherly betrayal by someone who is close. No historical evidence is found for these words, which are popularly attributed to Shakespeare.

The mimetic conflict between Abel and Cain is, symbolically, the first example of a failed 'bromance', which resulted in a ruptured performance of the Islamic archetypes of jalāl/jamāl. Such a performance can be read under the binary of good and evil, but also the binary male and female, where the mute and passive female is accused and marked as the primary cause of this good and evil and is clearly evident in the current ruptured state of masculine performance and female status in the Islamic world.

My experience of Wagah highlighted the observation of the symbolic balancing act of jalāl/jamāl in the performance of Muslim Pakistani guards. At the end, the guards mingled with the audience, smiled and took photographs. At this point the audience came close to their actors, face to face with the stars of the show. Their towering height and strong build only adds to the fact that these guards are outside the norm of the Pakistani masculine physical standards, and perhaps mark the ultimate physical standard for Pakistani men to achieve. The dress code, grooming and mannerism of the guards are prime examples of the traditional Islamic masculinity that professes restraint and orderly performance in public. Their high-kicked army salutes and tapping of the shoes on the tar road in a grid formation not only create a spectacle of power and strength, but also evoke a sense of choreographed dance and theatre that has a high octane beginning and ends with sombre moments of reflection and melancholia. And within this show of strength, power and male pride lies the softness, love and humility of holding the flags of their mother nations: one emblazoned with chakra symbols of eternal life and the other with a crescent moon and star, which marks the direction and beginning of the cycle.

3.5.2 Case Study 2: The Public Performance of Flogging Punishment Under General Zia-ul-Haq's Regime

Public corporal punishment was a hallmark of General Zia-ul Haq's Islamisation project and military regime.[433] Besides rapists, child molesters and sex offenders, there were also those who received punishment for being 'rebels', 'Bhutto's man', or allegedly for "defacing Quaid's mausoleum."[434] Many were politically motivated and not in line with the religious idea of reserving corporal punishment for sexual crimes. In three different cases across Pakistan, large spectacles of public punishment were organised as part of Zia's ultimate goal of Islamisation of the State and Sunnification of Pakistan. These performances were held at large sports grounds, and drew heavily from Greco-Roman gladiatorial games. The stage consisted of an A-frame

433 Eamon Murphy, *The Making of Terrorism in Pakistan: Historical and Social Roots of Extremism* (Routledge, 2012). Zia's public floggings first gained international publicity in March 1978 when a child-rapist received 15 strokes in front of an audience of 100,000 in Rawalpindi.

434 Correspondent, "Journalists Flogged During Zia's Time Say They Were Proud of 'Punishment," *The Express Tribune*, May 15, 2012 (access July 12, 2012) http://tribune.com.pk/story/378820/journalists-flogged-during-zias-time-say-they-were-proud-of-punishment/

contraption that resembled both cross and painting easel. Police were deployed, using large cans in a mimetic fashion to imitate the actual flogging and control the crowd. Crowds swelled to the thousands, overflowing the grounds into neighbouring roads, climbing nearby rooftops, trees and electricity poles to watch the spectacle. The state appointed punisher, a tall and well-built man wearing only a loincloth stood on the centre stage, displayed his strength by rubbing oil on his body, performing push-ups and flexing his muscles to the crowed. Two constables 'escorted' the convict onto the stage, who shook to such an extent that, reportedly, they involuntarily relieved themselves out of fear. The constables and helpers simply strapped the convict onto the frame. The flogging began with an official announcement of the name of the convict and the allegations against him. Depending on the punishment, either the victim's shirt was removed or his pants lowered for flagellation. A leather whip was used to inflict the flagellation. In the case of proven adultery, it was administered either in a succession of whips or in multiple sets. On every stroke, the public shouted with jubilation and religious fervour.[435]

Figure 3.22: Judicial corporal punishment by flogging. Photo: C. Farrell 2000

Figure 3.23: Post flogging check. Photo: C. Farrell 2000

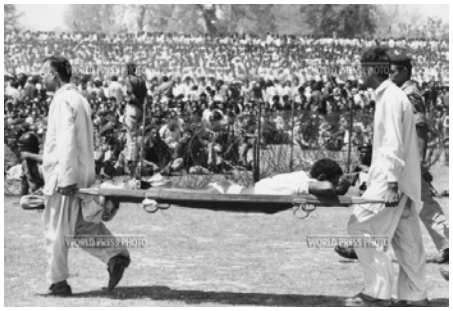


Figure 3.24: Post flogging medical treatment. Photo: C. Farrell 2000

Figure 3.25: Printed photograph of a public flogging in Daily Telegraph, London, 2 March 1978.
The caption reads: "A prison guard welding the cane at a public flogging in Rawalpindi yesterday of a Pakistani convicted of raping a seven year old child. He received 15 lashes as 100.000 people looked on at racecourse." Photo: Corpun.com

435 Anwar Iqbal, Fifteen Lashes, *GRANTA* 63, (Autumn 1998)

Such public performances, although no longer discussed (in private or public), still burn in the memories of those who lived in that era. The idea of public flagellation, or making marks on the body, took another political turn after Zia's regime, with the rise of student political parties who opposed the nepotism of the old system. They staged public protests, during which they used rocks, shoes, and anything else they could find to throw at the government officials brought in to control them. (The use of stones to inflict marks was very popular in the contested area of Kashmir.) Throwing small pebbles is not allowed in Islam, which again shows the disjuncture between Islamic teachings and what is deployed in the political realm of Islam.

3.5.3 Case Study 3: The Cultural Expression of Jalāl and Jamāl in Public Performances of Mukkhawal and Truck Art

The art of *Mukkhawal* (literally 'game') is the traditional archery of Pashtuns, played in the Pakistani province of Khyber-Pashtunkhwa. Little was known about this sport at a national level until US Drone attacks in the northern areas forced many Pashtuns to migrate to Karachi and Lahore, where they continued the tradition. A few articles were published in newspapers during 2010 and 2012, however its impact on the masculine identity of Pashtun men, its various symbols, and its links to other traditional arts in Pakistan remain un-investigated. Due to its popularity in Khyber-Pashtunkhwa, where it is recognised as a positive and healthy sign of masculinity, fans and players have requested it to be officially recognised by the government as a sport so that there can be competitions on a national level.[436] By shedding light on this dying cultural art form, I seek to demonstrate that creative and positive forms of Pakistani masculinities are under serious threat from the ruptured and extremist masculinities.

Figure 3.26a: *Mukkhawal*, local archery in Pakistan.

Figure 3.26b: *Mukkhawal.*

436 Mehwish Hussain, Archery Remain a Popular Sport in Pakistan, BBC News, May 18, 2012 (access June 19, 2012) http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-18122929
Video documentation: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=10152713971368366&id=105812923365

Mukkhawal is played with a *leenda* (long bow) and a *ghashay* (long arrow). The arrow has a metallic saucer-shaped plate, *tubray*, which is attached to the arrow at its distal end. The archers play in teams of two, as brothers, and attempt to hit a small clay or white wooden target called *takai*, which is surrounded by a circular ring called *kwaara*. The target is secured in fresh clay, placed at some height a few meters away from the archer. Each team consists of two men who must work as brotherly 'twins' or 'duo' and trust each to achieve the desired goal. In this game, one archer places the target and the other shoots it. The goal is to get as many takai as possible in a limited time. It is a shared play of power, precision and concentration. The audience, all men, cheer for their teams and the winner brings honour to the owner of the team who pays for training, equipment and the team's entry fee. The leenda and ghashay are made by an expert who collaborates with local artists of 'truck art' (also 'lorry art'), who produce colourful geometric and arabesque sticker works as decoration after consultation with the team.[437] The decoration is identified as the beautification of the weapon, which is beloved to the owners. For me, this was a revelation as how two cultural forms are linked, forming a robust local and unique tradition of art and craft. Durriya Kazi further gives the evidence of this link:

> *One of the claimants for establishing the beginnings of truck decoration was Haji Hussain. Haji Hussain came from a long line of Kamangars (bow and arrow makers) turned court painters in Kutch Bujh, Gujarat. At the Partition of India he brought his skills in painting murals, decorative ceilings, and statuary to Karachi where his father-in-law was already decorating the mansions of Karachi's Rich. Haji Hussain was encouraged to turn to decorating trucks by a local artist, Ghaffar Sindhi, who decorated horse carriages.*[438]

Figure 3.27a: Diverse forms of decorations cover Pakistani trucks. Photo: Sonia Narang, Islamabad.

Figure 3.27b: Interior of a typical Bradford truck in Pakistan. Photo: Pakistan Tourism

437 To see this I visited a local Mukkhawal equipment maker in Saddar, Karachi. Samples were collected and each set costs between 5,000 – 15,000 Pakistani Rupees.

438 Durriya Kazi, "Decorated Trucks of Pakistan," in First International Convention of Asia Scholars, Leeuenhorst Conference Centre, Noordwijkerhout, Netherlands, 1998, 25-

Figure 3.27c: Mehreenkasana and painting work on Trucks, a customized decoration in process. Photo: Lorry.com

Figure 3.28: Kazi, Durriya, David Alesworth and Iftikhar Dadi. *Heart Mahal.* A contemporary art collaboration between three Pakistani artists and the Truck Art craftsperson.

Driven, owned and decorated primarily by men, the decorated Bradford trucks are moving feminine expressions of the masculine, and a common sight on Pakistani streets. They are not just a mode of transportation but a "vehicle through which people's attitudes are expressed" and the culture is celebrated.[439] The symbols, poetry and religious text on each truck is reflective of the owner's taste, his beliefs, and his affection for his beloved, the decorated truck as the feminine counterpart on the road. Truck art has a major influence on local, popular and kitsch art, inspiring many artists who not only collaborate with truck artists, but also assimilate truck art's technical precision and aesthetic fluidity into their contemporary work. The works by Durriya Kazi, David Alesworth, Elizabeth and Ifitkhar Dadi, Rashid Rana and Nahid Raza are prime examples.

In both traditions, the expression of femininity is desired and openly expressed by men. Also the decoration covers every empty space, which reflects the same philosophy as Islamic geometric patterning. I argue that such cultural forms are performative, demonstrating Islamic notions of balanced gender as jalāl and jamāl. If Mukkhawal presents such ideas in a more direct performative manner by men, then Truck Art reflects the ritualised and esoteric understating of jalāl/jamāl. The core ideal of feminine expression in Truck Art and Mukkhawal is argued in Demo VIII (p. 215) and Demo IX (p. 220) in this chapter.

3.5.4 The Explosive Public Performance of Suicide Bombing

The ultimate 'exploding performance' of ruptured Islamic masculinity is that of a suicide bomber, which problematised the very notion of 'ruptured masculinity in public' and literally obliterates both. I argue that such exploding masculinities can be reformed through the teachings of Islamic balanced masculinity *i.e.* jalāl and jamāl.

439 Hira Anwar and Adeela Rehman, *Gender Analysis of Popular Culture: A Case Study of Truck Art in Pakistan* (LAP Lambert Publishing, 2013).

There is sharp contrast in the reporting of suicide and drone attack bombings within Pakistan and the international (read USA) media. When searching under suicide attacks performed by men in Pakistan between 1984 and 2014, *CPOST Suicide Attack Database* in Chicago reveals 236 attacks (aircraft, car and suicide belt) taking 2885 lives and wounding 6936.[440] Whereas a private Pakistani suicide attack database, *Body Count*, reports 432 attacks, 6,181 deaths, and 16,159 wounded between 1995 (first recorded attack) and 2014 (Graph 1). Surprisingly, 325 attacks are not claimed by any of the known terrorist organisations and reported as unknown. Khabir Pakhtoon Khua (KPK) province, which is close to Afghanistan and has the largest population of Afghan *muhajeerens* (migrants) received the most attacks (233), followed by FATA, Punjab and Sindh. Major targets of such attacks are hard targets such as military installations and the police force, followed by soft targets such as civilians and religious sites, including mosques, Shia Iman bargha and Sufi shrines.[441] There is a steep rise in attacks reported since 2007, where 2009 is identified as the "killer" year, where 90 attacks took 3462 lives. In 2014, 22 attacks were reported.[442] One common element in all of theses attacks is

Suicide Bombing by Target

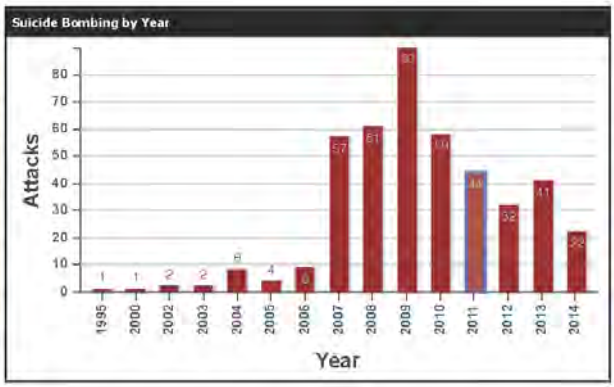
Target	Total Attacks	Killed	Injured
Anti-Militants	26	413	786
Children/Women	1	0	22
civilian	76	1720	4283
Foreigner	17	207	756
Government Off..	49	927	2582
Media	2	6	27
Military	110	1159	2594
Police	108	945	2839
Religious	40	803	2270
Unknown	1	1	0

Graph 1: Suicide Bombing by Target in Pakistan since 1995

Source: http://pakistanbodycount.org [Updated and accessed March 22, 2015]

Suicide Bombing by Year

Year	Total Blasts	Killed	Injured
1995	1	15	60
2000	1	3	3
2002	2	27	91
2003	2	65	115
2004	8	82	399
2005	4	83	230
2006	9	161	230
2007	57	842	2008
2008	61	940	2426
2009	90	1090	3462
2010	58	1153	2954
2011	44	625	1386
2012	32	243	705



Graph 2: Number of Suicide Bombing by year in Pakistan since 1995

Source: http://pakistanbodycount.org [Updated and accessed March 22, 2015]

440 CPOST "Suicide Attack Database, Department of Political Science," *The University of Chicago* (updated accessed on March 22, 2015) http://cpost.uchicago.edu

441 Ahmed, 2012, Maleeha 2012, Ouzgane 2006.

442 CPOST "Suicide Attack Database."

that the suicide bomber did not survive the blast, though body parts, especially heads, feet and hands remained and were later used for identification.

In another database, the primary attackers are identified as young male, as young as age seven.[443] This statistic poses an alarming reality of Islamic masculinity, where Pakistani masculinity is now on the verge of self-destruction for an unknown cause. This is despite the fact that suicide is strictly prohibited in Islam. The idea that certain dress codes, physical appearances and performances ensure 'entry to paradise' and the reward of the proverbial seventy-*two Houris*[444] in Paradise (one of many reasons) undermines the core teachings of Islam and unnecessarily shifts focus from the real meaning of Islam. After the destruction of World Trade Centre in New York in 2001, various incidents of prejudice and stereotyping were reported based on the props, poses and performances associated with the Muslim male body, such as beards, or 'suspicious' acts like reading prayers.[445] In 2006, the live telecast of the hijacking of the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad showed bearded students in Pakistan as a human chain marching out of the mosque.[446] Their covered faces and their tied-up half-naked young bodies suggested a new type of masculine identity that is grounded in shame, alienation and unworthiness.

The situation in recent years has not improved and Rula Jebreal, the Palestinian-Italian journalist, author and foreign policy analyst, notes the West's inability to listen, identifying the power of moderate Muslims voices who are "striving to be heard."[447] For Jebreal, the voices of such moderate Muslims, who constitute the majority of the Islamic population both in the East and the West, "value pluralism, nonviolence and liberal democracy."[448] However, the constant heightening of rhetoric, stoking of fear, and a drift toward embracing a false "clash of civilisations" is, for Jebreal, exactly the narrative terrorists like to explore. It muffles the voice of the moderate Muslim who can help in segregating extremists from the rest of society, rendering them marginal and their influence powerless. She also outlined that in calling every Muslim a 'terrorist' and 'guilty', one excludes a group of people, primarily the youth. They,

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443 Pakistan Body Count, (updated and accessed March 22, 2015) http://pakistanbodycount.org

444 The Houris (hoors/hoor al-Ayn) have variously been described as being "chaste females", "restraining their glances", "modest gaze", "wide and beautiful/lovely eyes", "untouched / with hymen unbroken by sexual intercourse", "like pearls", "virgins", "voluptuous/full-breasted", "with large, non-menstruating and childfree, round breasts which are not inclined to hang", "companions of equal age", "transparent to the marrow of their bones", "eternally young", "hairless", "pure", "beautiful", "white", "re-virginating", "splendid beauty".

445 Syed Muhammad Abdullah Iyhab, "Buzzing: Post-9/11 Muslim Male Identity, Stereotypes, and Beehive Metaphors" (MFA Thesis, University of New South Wales, 2009).

445 In Pictures, "Violence in Islamabad Mosque," BBC, July 3, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/6265354.stm

446 Elias Isquith, "Ignorance is reigning supreme": Rula Jebreal on Charlie Hebdo, Bill Maher & our inane foreign policy." *Salon*, Jan 16, 2015 (access Jan 16, 2015) http://www.salon.com/2015/01/16/ignorance_is_reigning_supreme_rula_jebreal_on_charlie_hebdo_bill_maher_our_inane_foreign_policy/

447 Elias, "Ignorance is reigning supreme."

448 Ibid.

who on one hand despise extremism and can help in fighting terrorists, become "borderline radicalised and with crises of identity", finding themselves "vulnerable targets" for extremist organisations and their promises.[449]

For Pakistani men, this creates a serious identity crisis that potentially goes back to the very formation of Pakistan on the basis of Islamic ideology and its subsequent failure. Pakistan has been plagued by a feudal system of governance, abuse of the law, poor political leadership leading to martial law regimes, and is still governed by the colonial legacy. Such leadership gives birth to incoherent systems of law and order, a 'Western aid' economy, illiteracy, and helplessness in the nation, specifically among men who want to find ways to channel their energies and prove themselves worthy. Many of these Muslim men are deprived *Others* in their own society. In Homi Bhabha's view, such men are facing 'self-othering' where one 'mimics' or 'repeatedly performs' an undisputed authority. Such Islamic masculinities position themselves within the narratives of the past.[450] On the one hand it is "the colonial experience" which Edward Said characterised as a denial of dialogue and self-representation, making the experts (primarily neo-orientalists) on such identities "know more about Islam than Islam knows about itself."[451] For Frantz Fanon, these Muslim men are "individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless – a race of angels" that fell from grace.[452] Robert Pape identifies such fallen masculinities, which are ready to self-destruct on command, as the final category of terrorism, *i.e*. "suicide terrorism."[453] For Pape, prior to the Iraqi Civil War, the primary goal of 90% of attacks was to force occupying armies to withdraw from their territory.[454] This demonstrated "that there is little connection between suicide terrorism and Islamist fundamentalism, or any one of the world's religions" and attributed a common secular and strategic goal "to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from… their homeland."[455] Ironically this strategy remains core to the recruitment rhetoric of Islamist terrorist organisations today, but rather than secular goals, the motivation has become the ideology of Jihad. Further studies indicate that since 2004 the "overwhelming majority of

449 Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity and Difference*, ed. Kathryn Woodward (Sage, 1997): 51–52.

450 Edward Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered," *Cultural Critique 1* (1995): 89–107.

451 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin, 2001),175-177.

452 Robert A. Pape, Dying to win (New York: Random House, 2006), 11–12, 33–37.
Other identified categories are 'demonstrative terrorism' and 'destructive terrorism'. Pape traced the modern history of such terrorism from Chechnya to the West Bank and Sri Lanka to Lebanon, demonstrating with examples of Jewish Zealots, the eleventh and twelfth century Ismaili Assassins, and Japanese kamikazes, before arriving in the Middle East, Iraq and Afghanistan.

453 Pape's tabulation of suicide attacks runs from 1980 to early 2004 in *Dying to win*, 2006.

454 Robert Pape, "Methods and Findings in the Study of Suicide Terrorism," American Political Science Review 102:2 (2008): 275–277.

455 Jeffery William Lewis, A Brief History of Suicide Bombing, *History News Network*, March 25, 2013 (accessed July 14, 2013) http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/151200

bombers have been motivated by the ideology of martyrdom."[456] Furthermore, such self-exploding masculinities are working both for terrorist organisations and independently to fulfil their so-called 'religious obligation'.

Durre Ahmed sees a connection between the common tendency of adolescent males to self-destruct – where young Muslim boys rebel and feel attracted to violence.[457] Young Muslim Pakistani men, who feel inadequate or alienated by society, are approached by terrorist groups that connect them with like-minded people. These groups emphasise manly virtues like courage and sacrifice, and reassure the young men that others, not themselves, are to blame for their problems, convincing them to use their bodies as weapons.[458] Despite the fact that Islam prohibits suicide in any form, these young minds begin to see their bodies as the only 'prop' left for them to perform an act that could give them the eternal glory and a status of martyr against an unknown and unseen enemy. The economic influence cannot be denied in the making and training of the 'exploding bodies'[459], which is supplemented by propaganda available on the Internet.[460] To convey appeal, they reference historic Islamic heroes and ideas of martyrdom, delineating the sanctity of Jihad in Islam.

From Prophetic tales to contemporary Hollywood and Bollywood blockbusters, the hero myth about a young male who, at a young age, separated from his origins with a mission faces a series of obstacles to ultimately return to his origins as victorious, continues to persist. Such a hero's quest is "an archetypal trope signifying discovery and knowledge, not only of the physical world but more so, of the psychological and spiritual."[461] Besides representing religious masculinity as a threat, the secular media also reinforces the image of the hero as a virile man, and the typical societal image of a 'real man', or macho guy. This has been seen over the last decade through explicit advertising of all kinds of 'male grooming' and 'sex medicines', in wall chalking, newspaper ads, flyers distributed across urban spaces, and popular street posters. Ahmed analyses wall chalked advertising cures for impotence and those calling for jihad "a collective crisis of masculinity, religion, sexuality and love'."[462] Such advertisements suggest a slow transformation of gender roles, which is especially visible in the

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456 Ahmed, *Islamic Masculinities*.

457 Ibid.

458 Leo Braudy "Masculinity's Metamorphosis," *Ethnic NewsWatch*, January 7 2007.
Braudy argues that "a renewed warriors masculinity is at the heart of the propaganda of Islamic terrorist in Middle Eastern countries. The enemy is the West and the blurring of traditional gender boundaries that characterizes most modern, secular democracies."

459 Osam Bin Laden's videos can be downloaded from: http://www.metacafe.com/tags/osama_bin_laden/page-3/

460 Durre S. Ahmed, "Heroes and Zeros", in *Mazaar Bazaar: Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*, ed. Saima Zaidi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 9.

461 Saima Zaidi, "Introduction" in Mazaar Bazaar: Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan, ed. Saima Zaidi (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. xv.

462 Syed Muhammad Iyhab Abdullah, Ruptured Masculinities: Male Body in Popular Poster Art, *Intersections and Counterpoints: Proceedings of the Impact 7 International Multi-Disciplinary Printmaking Conference*, 27 September 2011 to 30 September 2011, Monash University Publishing, Clayton Vic Australia 2013): pp. 453-459.

urban Pakistani male, described in contemporary fashion discourse as the rise of metrosexuality in urban Pakistan. Introduced through cinema and then strengthened through television, metrosexuality represents a 'liberalisation' and 'fluidly' of gender identities. Things that once were considered taboos for masculinity have gained acceptance by increasingly larger number of males. Attire once identified as too feminine, or homosexual, has now become mainstream urban male fashion. Fashion magazines, music videos, films and advertisements are continuously pushing these boundaries. A similar observation is made from my study of popular street posters which suggests the diverse masculine images create a clash of identities, where religious, secular and 'ruptured' masculinities are displayed in public, giving visual evidence of how heightened effeminate masculinity has rendered an adverse impact on gendered identity, specifically amongst young Pakistani men.[463]

Figure 3.29: Lollywood 'Punjabi film' hero Sultan Rahi, Printer: SAMS, Lahore. Photo: Author's collection.

Figure 3.30: Bollywood hero John Abraham, Printer: Toni Calenders, Lahore. Photo: Author's collection.

Figure 3.31: Images of Hazrat Hussein bin Ali, the fourth Caliph and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.). Printer: Unknown. Photo: Author's collection.

Figure 3.32: Lollywood hero, Shan, wearing a photoshopped 'suicide belt'. Printer: King Posters. Photo: Author's collection.

463 Ahmed, "Heroes and Zeros," 9.

The rising number of young males (both from rural and urban areas) comprising mass Islamism can be seen as 'the shadow' of the over-inflated heroic ego of modernity.[464] Having more mouths to feed then hands to make, poverty-stricken parents send their young boys to the *madrasah* in the hope of free education, food and less burden. Trapped by globalising modernity, the young mind is exposed to enormous concepts like 'God', martyrdom and paradise.[465] Young suicide bombers see themselves as denied their right of living. Their journey to self-discovery and becoming 'learned' adult men never materialised and ends abruptly in the dismembered pieces of their body. Identified as a 'suicide terrorist' they are once again denied, this time the rites of Islamic burial. The emergence of this 'explosive masculinity', which operates between hatred, fear and melancholia, poses a major threat, giving rise to violence and obliterating the profound meaning of 'jalāl/jamāl' along the way.

Figure 3.33a: 2012. Search for body parts for identification after a suicide bomb attack, Islamabad. Photo: http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-12-21-pakistan-bombing_N.htm

Figure 3.33b: The suicide bomb attacks at the Saint Syed Ali bin Osman Al-Hajvery shrine (Data Ganj Bakhsh), Lahore. July 2, 2010. Photo: AFP/Arif Ali http://photogallery.indiatimes.com/news/photodhamal/suicide-bomb-blast-in-lahore/articleshow/6118001.cms

Figure 3.33c: Clean up effort after a suicide bomb attack. 2013. Photo: http://www.diplomatic-corporate-services.si/news/mosque-bomb-kills-at-least-50-in-pakistan/

Figure 3.33d: Mosque being cleaned after a suicide bomb attack. 2013. Photo: http://www.ibtimes.com/mosque-bomb-blast-toll-hits-51-horrifying-photos-708213

464 Ahmed, "Gender and Islamic Spirituality," 24–25.

C. Case Study Responses: Part III

On the topic of how representations of masculinity are affected by socio-political performances and experiences in Pakistan, all five participants identified the Islamisation and militarisation of the Zia era as having a devastating impact on the construction of gender identities in Pakistan. They also commented strongly about how socio-political issues impact their lives and art practices, feeling deeply affected by patriarchy, political and religious terror, nihilism and the general disregard of law and human values. For them, there is no escape. For Imran Qureshi, Rashid Rana and Ali Kazim, their interest in politics developed at an early age through the media. Rana reflected on a sharp contrast from learning about growing up "in a very liberal times of the '70s, especially in… Punjab" to arriving at Zia's "conservative environment" and the rhetoric of sharia law preached through newly built madrasas and mosques. Meher Afroz sees this as Zia's false propaganda toward Islam, but also remarked that while it was "a depressing phase" for the artists, Zia never forbade artists from painting. Artists continued working from home, but faced challenges exhibiting. For Kazim, Zia presented a "very strict version of Islam… where Mullahs had glorified jihad literally in every mosque." While growing up, Kazim "witnessed young students sign up for such campaigns", which in a way "had an impact on traditional views about masculinity." He also commented that events like 9/11 redefined terms such as 'hero', 'martyr' and 'jihadi'. Anwar Saeed, sees misinterpretation of gender roles as the culprit of the current state of turmoil. Despite seeing a rise in empowered and educated women in Pakistan, he does not see real practical change in gender politics where women would hold power and dominate men, unless she is financially strong. Saeed also considers class divide having a deep impact on this game of gender power, where a wealthy woman is more empowered than an ordinary man on the street. Despite this, the expectation of Pakistan's feudal system has largely operated on different expectations of male and female roles, where "girls should be submissive and boys can do whatever they feel like." Saeed did, however, sense a freedom after Zia, at least for his art practice, as soon after he painted male nudes which were earlier considered taboo.

When asked how nationalism, terrorism and violence have impacted their identities in relation to masculinity, all participants agreed that there is no coherent and singular national Pakistani identity, but many, which are tied under Islamic identity. Through nationalist or religious frameworks, Rana sees his male and artistic identity as a reclaimed global identity. He gives the example of how Western art assimilated other cultures and recognised the importance of their art forms. He sees the appropriation of Islamic art and miniature art as a form of nationalism. He also cites his *ustad* Zahoor-ul-Akhlaq, who looked at miniature painting to investigate the use of grids, flat surfaces, forms and structures, which Western artists like Piet

Mondrian have explored in depth. Rather than borrowing, Akhlaq assimilated the miniature grid to reclaim his colonial identity from the West and to "deal with national identity and tradition."[466] Afroz sees nationalism in the context of prejudice, where Pakistani identity is divided from Sindhi, Punjabi and Pashtoon, but she does not see it having an impact on her work. However, she feels the impact of terrorism and violence against women. Despite being raised in a household where girls were dominant, she followed proper family decorum where she must let elders know about her plans and whereabouts and be "accompanied by a maid or a chaperone." Such restrictions are hardly in place for men. For Afroz, this 'precaution' is based on the general violence against women, and does not reflect a limitation posed by the family.

On the topic of hero-worship, all participants agree that society poses no limits on men as heroes, as he can be warrior, poet, lover and leader. Media, specifically Hollywood and Bollywood film, are seen as main influences. For Rana, exploration of hero-ship and popular culture in his work is about creating a maze of gaze between the "stars" and the "audience" and the viewer". In this context, Rana's analysis of his own work series '*Ommatidia*' about masculine heroic gaze provides a good summary:

> *Somebody did ask why did I not make Aishwarya Rai and Rani Mukerji (Bollywood actresses) and why did I only make Bollywood male heroes? And it did cross my mind too, but I stuck to male heroes…deliberately. If I had done what they suggested then I would have [been] politically correct but that is not the truth. To this day not a single film that has been made in South Asia, has a female lead… as a true hero.*

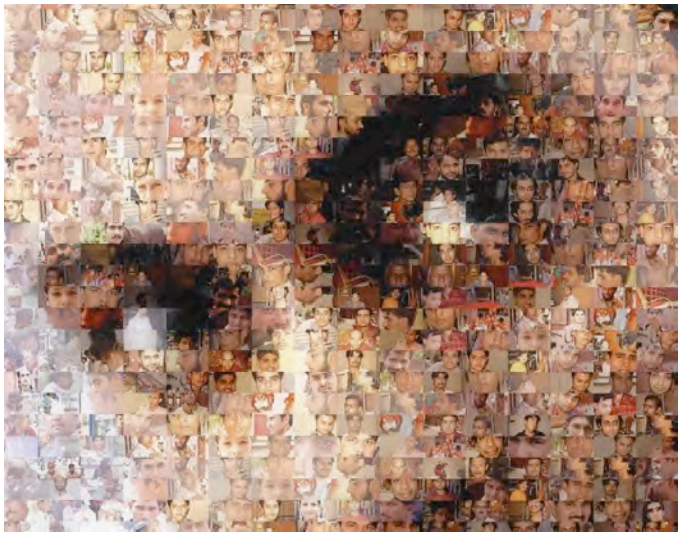


Figure 3.34a-b: Rana, Rashd. 2004. *Ommatidia II (Salman Khan)* with detail.
Photo: courtesy the artist and Christies.

466 In this regard, Rashid's works, such as 'Motia', 'All Eyes Towards Him', 'Wrapping Paper', 'Face to Face', 'Who is Afraid of Red' can be quoted as examples that discus male voice within the broader subject of gender, nationalism, male castration and betrayal.

STUDIO PRACTCIE

ART DEMOS V, VI, VII, VIII, IX

3.6 Studio Practice

In 2011, I was invited by Gandhara Art gallery in Karachi to take part in the group show *Whitewash*, a first of its kind in Pakistan, where temporary drawings are created on wall, floor, celling and any other usable space of the gallery.[467] At the end of the exhibition, the work would be erased, painted over or destroyed. Works were also not for sale and no creative boundaries were set, raising questions of the production and value of contemporary art, and bringing forth the importance of the studio (here a 'white cube'). I looked into drawing as process rather than outcome, and the gallery as a 'live studio' that will open its doors for viewers to see and take part in the process. It was my first live body performance that drew from both public religious rituals and Pakistani political performances. As a practitioner, my research interest lies in the public performance's ability to "draw us out of our secure, individualistic viewing practices into different, sometimes dangerous, spatial configurations of 'contact zones', thereby exposing our vulnerability."[468]

Besides giving an experience to the audience, I wanted to archive the performance and its aftermath to see how my works engaged "with documentation, mediation and the trend of remediation."[469] In summary, as Anne Marsh categorises, I want my work to reach "its audience both in the present (for those who actually see and/or participate in the work), and in the past (for those who see the work through documentation and remediation)."[470] In the last decade, I have seen that performance in the Pakistani art milieu is more often perceived as theatre or mime, rather than a discipline of visual arts. Despite the current wave of exploring performance art,[471] Pakistani art has a lot of catching up to do with global art trends, where performance is accepted and flourishes as an autonomous art genera, giving notoriety to artists such as Marina

467 Whitewash, Gandhra Art, Karachi, 7 May to 27 August 2011, Curated by Sivim Naqvi.

468 Jisa, The Performance of Nationalism, 42–43.

469 The term 'remediation' gained currency when Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin used it in writing about film. Marsh, Performance, Ritual, Document, 9.

470 Ibid., 10.

471 In the last five years there has been a concentrated effort by artists to explore performance and body art, both as live art and through documentation. Amin Gulgee's contribution in this area is undeniable. As a performance artist he has mentored and collaborated with other artists. As a curator, he has organised events of performance art, body art and installation in Karachi. Exhibitions such as One Night Stand (2013) and Dream Scape (2014) with Zarmeene Shah at the Gulgee Museum are prime examples of this effort and new trend. Sumaya Durrani's is also an important contributor. She interweaves the psychological and corporeal langue of contemporary art with the esoteric and transcendental language of Sufic thinking, creating a live performance that is deeply personal and devotional. Also working in this area are artists Munawar Ali Syed, Saba Khan, Basir Mahmood, Tazeen Qayyum, Roohi S. Ahmed, Imran Qureshi and Naiza Khan.
Online access: http://www.artnowpakistan.com/blog_details.php?blog=Dreamscape-at-Amin-Gulgee-Gallery
Online access: http://tribune.com.pk/story/645709/a-journey-through-art-sumaya-durrani-takes-over-11-galleries/ 471
Originally commissioned as 11 Rooms by Manchester International Festival, Ruhrtrienniale 2012–2014, and Manchester Art Gallery. In 2013, 11 Rooms travelled to Australia as Kaldor Public Art project number 27, entitled 13 Rooms. The City of Sydney hosted the project which was curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Co-director of London's Serpentine Gallery, and Klaus Biesenbach, Director of MoMA PS1 in New York.

Abramović with high profile projects such as *11 Rooms* and 13 Rooms.[472] I have long admired performances that have madness, imagination and endurance in works by Joseph Beuys (*I Like America and America Likes Me,* 1974); Ana Mendieta (*Silueta series* and *Tree of Life*, 1977); Yves Klein (*Monotone-Silence Symphony*, ca. 1960 and his 'imaginative' *Leap into the Void,* 2006); John Cage (*4'33", Four thirty-three,* 1952); Marina Abramović (*Relation in Time, With Ulay,* 1977); Ann Hamilton (*Malediction*, 1991); and Matthew Barney (*Cremaster Cycle*, 1994-2002 and Drawing Restraint), to name a few. However my strong interest in performance developed in Australia, where I was exposed to the work of Jill Orr, Ken Unsworth and Mike Parr and during this research discovered Terrance Koh, Waffa Bilal (*3rdi,* 2010), Fracis Alya (*Mountains,* 2002) and Sumaya Durrani (*Bezel of Wisdom,* 2015).

I argue that a performative approach is a creative approach to teach, practice and research traditions and narratives in Pakistani art. I agree with Virginia Whiles when she declares: "[A] performative approach values imagination in the sense of adaptability to context [and] esteems tactical rather than strategic skills."[473] Public performance challenges the conventional notions of art practices in Pakistan, impacting artists' creative impulses and thinking, and is reflective of their everyday reality, which remains largely untapped. The majority of artists in Pakistan, who encounter public performances everyday, recognise their signs and symbols, assimilate them in their artwork,[474] though rarely as live performance. This suggests that the religious and social structures may not validate such public performances as art forms and the art economy is yet to fully recognize the value of performance art in Pakistan.

Upon discussion with the curator of *Whitewash (2011)*, I was particularly interested in breaking the grid of the white cube to see how the private and public interact and where the boundaries lay. In the absence of contemporary art museums or institutions in Pakistan, it is the galleries that play both roles of commercial and museum spaces. In this regard, most galleries are extremely sensitive about the appearance of their walls, where nails are occasionally forbidden to create holes and mark making on walls is not allowed (thou exceptions are made for celebrated and sellable artists). This creates two problems. First, paintings and relief sculptures typically hang from wire, making them tilt forward and look unprofessional. The distortion does not allow the works to be properly illuminated. Second, galleries do not hang

472 Originally commissioned as 11 Rooms by Manchester International Festival, Ruhrtrienniale 2012–2014, and Manchester Art Gallery. In 2013, 11 Rooms travelled to Australia as Kaldor Public Art project number 27, entitled 13 Rooms. The City of Sydney hosted the project which was curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Co-director of London's Serpentine Gallery, and Klaus Biesenbach, Director of MoMA PS1 in New York.
Online access: http://kaldorartprojects.org.au/projects/project-27-13-rooms

473 Whiles, Art and Polemic, 5.

474 For example: prayer at the mosque; animal sacrifice on the streets; celebratory dances like dhmaml at weddings and Sufi shrines; public ma'tum during Ashura; shoe and stone throwing at political rallies; public flogging during General Zia's regime; flag lowering and raising ceremony at Wagha border; political rallies; and now suicide bomb attacks.

fully nude or explicitly sexual works (suggests Barzakhi practices), or works with objectionable content that are either culturally taboo or do not align with state political or religious ideologies.[475] This makes the white gallery space simultaneously contested and sacred. I find this situation pertinent to my investigation of masculinity in Pakistani culture, where the concept of four walls without windows is stereotypically used as a metaphor to contain the female body in which a man enters with a key. Compared with the gallery's 'no nudes' rules, the walls reflected the confinement of gender performance for both women and men, under the notion of centre and margin, where walls must be torn down to create a flat and equal plane. This inspired me to make marks directly upon, and even destroy the pristine gallery wall. Such ideas led into my Barzakhi performance works that I present next as Demos V, VI, and VII.

Extending the notion of *Karkhana*, and to see how collaboration informs my investigation of performance and masculinity, I first considered the gallery a live studio that is open for the public to perform. Students from the local art university were invited to assist, initially not as collaborators but as observers, performers, apprentices and labourers for a wall based installation. They were instructed to speak to visitors (including artists, writers and art critics) and inform them of their role and encourage them to participate in filling the wall with stamped concentric circles. The students would gradually fill these circles with acrylic paint, using a traditional miniature technique, and transforming them into 'targets' that march on the wall like pixels, a graph or timeline.

My early departure from Pakistan left the work unfinished, which in itself highlights the model of Karkhana that I laid out in Chapter Two, Studio Practice (p. 126). The students would email me a photograph of the completed area every three days and wait for my digital 'drawings' for changes and instructions before carrying out the work. Upon review, I noticed their own artistic interpretation of my work filtered in as deviations in colour. Hence, I acknowledge the contributors as 'collaborators' in the final catalogue.

The result was *Blooming* (2011), an experiment. It was my first 'intuitive' investigation of lines, grids and patterns in relation to body and gender, which only later informed my investigation of the forms and content of jalāl/jamāl. The attributes of jalāl/jamāl apply here in the qualities of form, its context, and the intrinsic relationship between drawing and painting, or in other words, its transparency and opacity. The work has infinite mathematical colour combinations for each concentric circle, embellished with yellow, red, blue, black, white and

475 In 2004, I observed V M Art Gallery refuses to hang Rashid Rana's *Veil* series because it consists of pornographic images that are not in-line with gallery protocols of 'decent' art, operating under cultural and religious beliefs and practices. Due to the stature of the artist, and to deflect accusation of censorship, the gallery curator obtained the consent of the artist to place the work in the storage room. The audience was informed and given the choice to view the work at their discretion, which in my view is an example of Barzakhi practice. This made me aware of the underlining dualities of Pakistani art, as well as the entire social structure where certain issues and behaviors are ignored and even accepted only if they remain hidden or if the choice is given to the viewer. Similar incidents of art vandalism due to nude figures and political incorrectness also make the gallery spaces politicised and problematic.

gold leaf. They become the moving targets. The tension between 'veiling' the skin of the wall and the naked marks gradually fading, highlights the problems of hierarchy and division observed in society. It also mirrors the practices of contemporary art in Pakistan, such as the relationship between drawing and painting. Furthermore, the camouflaging of marks also reveals the exotic and elegant 'targeted' undoing of traditional forms (externally and internally) under the rhetoric of modernisation and contemporary art in Pakistan. Filled by many hands, trained and untrained, each target is a unique expression of identity: some are bold and solid, others are pale and fragile, and many more are half-faded and vanishing, a mere suggestion of what they could have been.

The title, *Blooming*, also has a duality. It hovers between beauty and the grotesque (a euphemism for 'bloody'). In his review, Cheree Franco observed this duality and concludes: "[F]rom a distance there is the concept of time passing, of history, of technology. Up close, the targets bring to mind guns and violence."[476] The collective feedback and my own reflection made me feel as though I had missed the target. The collective field of 'bloomed' targets ready to be 'shot' at only eventuated as a statistical graph that reflects today's Pakistan where everything and everyone feels like being a target or perhaps is a target for unknown dangers and onslaught. The work never moved beyond this didactic reality and the risks taken were not enough. I was playing safe and needed to step out of my confront zone and tackle the subject head-on. Although the collective act was encouraging and showed the potential of performance as a means for to investigate this research, the unfinished work left a lot to be desired.

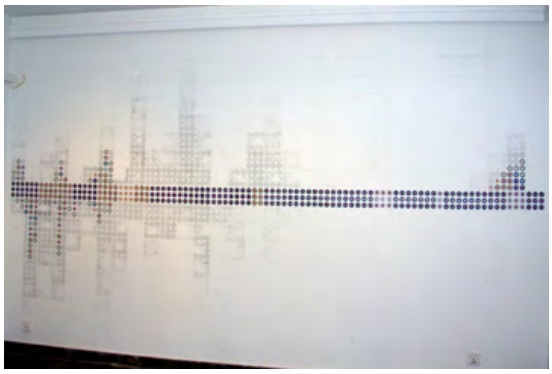


Figure 3.35: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Blooming*. Acrylic, graphite, ink stamping and gold leaf on wall. Installation. Dimensions variable. Gandhara Art Gallery, Karachi. In collaboration with the Fine Arts students from the Department of Visual Studies, University of Karachi. Photo: courtesy the artist

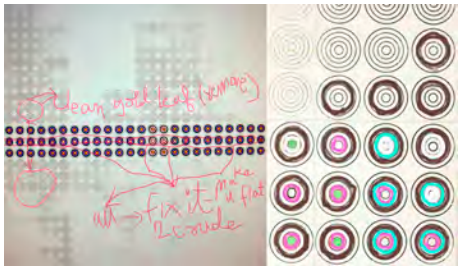


Figure 3.36: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Blooming*, digital sketch – process. Gandhara Art gallery, Karachi. Photo: courtesy the artist

476 Cheree Franco, "An art exhibition where nothing is for sale, all the works will be painted over," *The Express Tribune*, May 9, 2011, (accessed June 2, 2011) http://tribune.com.pk/story/164550/an-art-exhibition-where-nothing-is-for-sale-all-the-works-will-be-painted-over/

Figure 3.37a: *Blooming.*
Stamping process.
Photo: Adnan Miraj

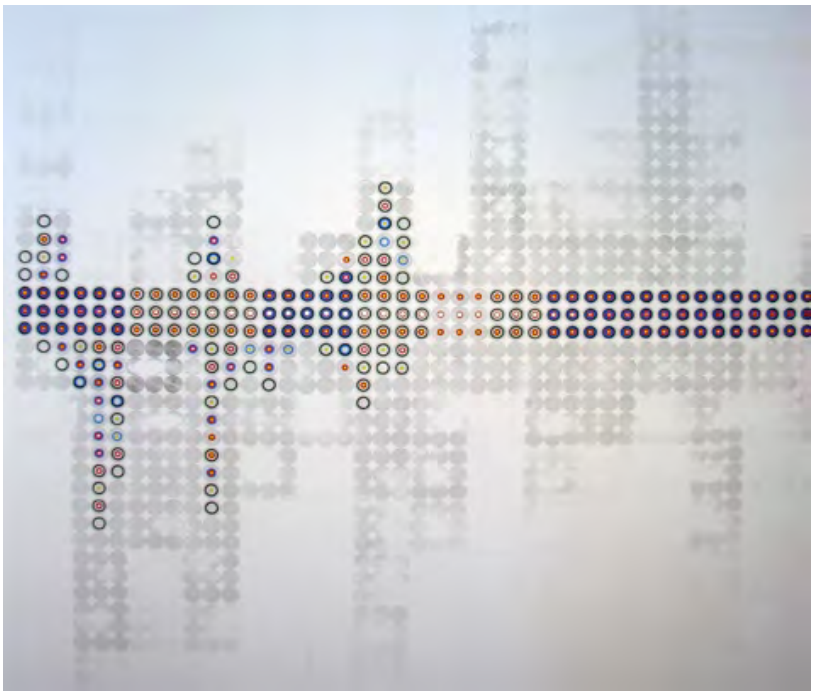
Figure 3.37b: *Blooming.* Painting process.
Left to Right: Shane Rabab, Adnan Mairaj, Sujjal Kayani, Anam Rafiq. Photo: courtesy the artist

Figure 3.37c: *Blooming.*
Painting process (details)
Photo: courtesy the artist

Figure 3.37d: *Blooming.*
Painting process.
Left to Right: Samra Sheik, Sujjal, Abdullah. Anam, Photo: Adnan Miraj

Figure 3.37e: *Blooming.* Painting process.
Left to Right: Anam, Abdullah, Sujjal, Samra. Photo: Adnan Miraj

Figure 3.37f: *Blooming.* Painting process.
Syed M I, Abdullah (Author)
Photo: Adnan Miraj



While later working in my own studio I leaned about various suicide attacks that had taken place in Karachi, including at a Sufi shrine; I felt cold and horrified. When I first went to Pakistan to begin my research, I visited the shrine of famous Sufi saint Hazarat Abdullah Shah Gahzi (r.a.) in Karachi.[477] Growing up, having the same name, I was curious to visit but my traditional understanding of Islam denied me the opportunity. This visit was a result of my reading on the sapiential and transcendental side of Islam. In 2012 the same shrine suffered a 'twin suicide attack', which the Taliban claimed as their doing.[478] I saw the images of the dead bodies and blood-soaked devotees, which affected me. The works I had produced just a year prior at Gandhara gallery show, which is only five minutes away from the shrine felt too close to my mind and heart. It made me think not just about the lost lives and deteriorating cultural and religious tolerance, but also the circumstances, anxieties, rejections and ideologies that push men to commit such heinous acts, and ask, who are these ruptured souls? Do they really know lslam? What truly motivates them to take their own lives? And most importantly did they have any say in choosing life over death? If no, then how can others like them be saved?

The world knows sorrows other than those of love [Figs. 3.40-3.41, p. 201] came out of this experience and questioning for which I have no answers. These drawings speak in layers of colours and symbols that I observed at the shrine and in popular religious posters. Such works directly question the anatomy of ruptured masculinities, specifically the Muslim male youths that target the innocent while also being the victims of a system that fails them, dehumanise them, and eventually denies them the possibility of returning home.

Figure 3.38: Blast site following two bomb explosions at the entrance of the mazar (shrine) to Sufi saint Abdullah Shah Ghazi in Karachi. Photo: AFP

Figure 3.39: Clean up near the blast, inside Abdullah Abdullah Shah Ghazi's mazar in Karachi. Photo: Athar Khan

477 Abdullah Shah Ghazi was the great grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w) from the linage of Hasan Ibne Ali Ibne Abu Talib, making him a member of the Ahl al-Bayt.

478 Popalzai Shaheryar and Ali Syed, Twin suicide attacks at Abdullah Shah Ghazi Shrine, *The Express Tribune*, October 7, 2010, http://tribune.com.pk/story/59617/twin-blasts-in-karachi/

Figure 3.40: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. *The world knows sorrows other than those of love: Singing Nightingales, Lotus and Roses*. Acrylic, acrylic ink, gold gouache, white ink pen, graphite, ink stamps, needle tool and sandpaper on found target paper face. 82 x 82cm. Photo: Alex Wisser and the artist

Figure 3.41: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. *The world knows sorrows other than those of love: Singing Nightingales.*

ART DEMO V

Artwork: *The Banner of Unity,* 2015, Embroidery on pinstriped suit and wood, 100 x 100 cm. Embroidered banner for a performance.

Figure 3.42a: Syed M I Abdullah. 2015. *The Banner of Unity,* Installation view, Sydney. Photo: the author.
DEMO V

Figure 3.42b: Syed M I Abdullah. 2015. *The Banner of Unity*. Embroidery on pinstriped suite fabric and wood. Performance banner.
Photo: the author.

Figure 3.43: *The Black Standard* as used by various Islamist organisations (since the late 1990s) consists of a white-on-black Shadah.

Figure 3.44: The Black Banner or Black Standar (Rayat al-Sawda) also known as the banner of eagle or simply the banner is one of the flags flown by Muhammad in Islamic tradition. It is now the banner/flag of the Islamist State militant ISIS. Still from an ISIS-uploaded video. (YouTube The flag of the former Islamist State of Iraq later the Islamist State of Iraq and the Levant.
Still from:
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/11224222/Italian-police-arrest-North-African-men-after-finding-Isil-flag-and-guns.html

The Banner of Unity presents the words 'jalāl' and 'jamāl' in Arabic *nastaliq* calligraphy, in white, gold and silver thread on a pinstriped suit fabric. Combining with the existing lines of the fabric, fine white line are drawn diagonally to from a 'X' grid on each panel. On the first panel, the calligraphy is filled with embroidered silver and gold thread, whereas on the second panel it

is only outlined. Both pieces are sewn together to form a two-sided banner. Within the enclosed square of the banner is also embroidered a large circle; the circle connect the two fabric pieces and refer to the circumambulation of Ka'aba. The hand drawn 'X' creates a centre mark and divides the circle into four co-ordinances. When displayed as a flag, the finished work embodies the poetic expression of jalāl/jamāl, where calligraphy, the magic square, the grid and the circle are harmoniously combined to form a unity. The overall composition of square, circle and hand drawn 'X' also draws from the figure of Vitruvian Man (Chapter Two, Fig. 2.35-37, p. 107), however, here the figure is replaced with the calligraphy, suggesting a higher order of the Divine perfection.

At another level, as a banner of Islamic unity that combines Allah's beauty and majesty, the work is a poetic response to the black banner of Islamist State, or ISIS [Fig. 3.44, p. 203].[479] It is a critique and rejection of the Islamist extremist and militant wave, which spreads false propaganda on Islam, stripping away the true meaning of *Sahada* (the unity of Allah), so that it is no longer a celebration of humanity. Their flag becomes a black flag of mourning, death, and of negative Islam. In contract, by raising my banner of jalāl/jamāl, I am actively protesting the Islamist State, saying no to their violence, and no to extremists who do not believe in jalāl and jamāl and do not represent Islam.

479 The name ISIS (formerly ISIL – Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) comes from the group's invasion of Syria. ISIS stands for the "Islamic State in Iraq and Syria," or "Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham," an archaic Arabic term for the region. By 2013, militants had taken control of a large territory in Syria. Its leaders no longer considered themselves just a presence in Iraq.

ART DEMO VI

Artwork: *They see neither their heads, nor the stones, nor even the walls!* 2011. A three-day live performance, Sound, digital photographs, pebbles and stones, and alerted wall, Site Specific Installation, Sound: 3min 20 sec (stereo).

Exhibition History: *Whitewash* (2011), Gandhara Art Gallery, Karachi.

Note: Demo VI, *They See Neither Their Heads, Nor The Stones, Nor Even the Walls!* was a live performance at Gandhara art gallery, documented as sound, video photography and wall rubbings. Demo VII *Chahar Bagh* (*They See Neither Their Heads, Nor The Stones, Nor Even the Walls!)* was the second iteration of the performance, which combined *Blooming* and *They See Neither Their Heads* together in 2013 as one performance piece for *Someother Place* exhibition in Sydney. Both projects, *Blooming* and *They See Neither Their Heads,* share the same roots and basic forms, but differ in their use of signs and symbols. Although the resulting works are unique outcomes, they inform the research as a collective note.

Figure 3.45: A cropped polaroid image of myself (the author) at hajj (at the site of Minah) in 1984 wearing Ihram. I was 10 years old then. This is one of the few photographs that I have of this event. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 3.46-3.48: Syed M I Abdullah. 2011. *They see neither their heads, nor the stones, nor even the walls!*

Performance stills. Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO VI

Figure 3.49a-b: Syed M I Abdullah. 2011. *They see neither their heads, nor the stones, nor even the walls!* Photo: courtesy the artist. Details of stone pelted marks on the wall (wall drawing) after the three-day live performance. Also pelted stones were left onto the floor for the viewers to navigate their path through the 'ruins' of the 'white cube' gallery in order to investigate the drawing. DEMO VI

These two performances draw upon personal memories, observations, and experiences of triumph and failure. From picking *kankari* (small pebbles) for *Jamarah* as a child with my father during the annual Hajj pilgrimage, to pelting a few stones on the Karachi streets as a teenage protester, and observing my own fears, failures, scarifies and triumphs as a Muslim man. These works are a way for me to recall such impressions and reflect on my desire to achieve a state of mind that is truly encapsulated by Faiz Ahmed Faiz when he said:

جذب مسافران رہ یار دیکھنا
سر دیکھنا نہ سنگ نہ دیوار دیکھنا

Look at the absorption of the travellers (on) the Beloved's lane!
(They) see neither their heads, nor the stones, nor (even) the walls

They See Neither Their Heads... had only two objects: stones collected from local streets and gardens and the pristine gallery wall. I spent a few hours every day throwing the stones at the wall. Initially my mind was focused on the use of stones in political pelting, which is a common sight in Pakistan during the political clashes, violence and public demonstrations. My actions at the beginning were playful, but soon turned forceful and violent, with no precision and no focus. I was afraid as I was not sure where I was going with this and how it would be received, but my intuition keep pushing me that this is something I must do. When I inspect my 'stoning onslaught' on the wall on the second day, I saw marks that mimicked bullet holes, like remnants of police raids, gang fights and terrorist attacks on public and private spaces including hospitals and schools.[480] Each mark was unique, a wound that I inflicted on the wall. Other artists, writers, and an audience came, some participated in the activity whereas others remained at the periphery. However, they all commented that this is something they also wanted to do and how the marks looked like bullet holes, wounds and were grotesquely beautiful. They also saw serious political implications, violence and a catharsis in my work, finding its tactile sensation and performative action overwhelming. References to Zia era public floggings, the body wounds after zanjir-zani, and the masculine aggression and power of the Flag Raising ceremony at Wagah are visible in the work. I can also see its links to contemporary art, where my pelted cold gallery is in a direct dialogue with the Jimmie Durham's *Stoning the Refrigerator*, 1996 [Figs. 3.52a-b, p. 210]. One of the writers commended that "you can see the action and reaction in it … you can feel what he has done."[481]

480 Iqbal, Amir, Aoun Sahi, Imtiaz Hussain, Ted Thornhill, and Simon Tomlinson, First pictures inside the Pakistan massacre school: Shocking images reveal bombed-out offices of principal who was burnt alive in front of her pupils - just because she was married to a soldier. *Daily Main Online*, UK, updated December 17, 2014 (accessed December 20, 2014) http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2877148/Pictured-teacher-burnt-death-class-children-married-soldier-scale-destruction-inside-Taliban-massacre-school-emerges.html
Also; Baloch Sher and Shameem Khan, "In Karachi, hospitals are as dangerous as its streets," *Dawn*, June 01, 2013 (accessed June 02, 2013) http://www.dawn.com/news/1015399

481 Cheree Franco, "An art exhibition where nothing is for sale, all the works will be painted over." *The Express Tribune*, May 9, 2011, (accessed May 11, 2011) http://tribune.com.pk/story/164550/an-art-exhibition-where-nothing-is-for-sale-all-the-works-will-be-painted-over/

Figure 3.50: A bullet holed wall at Jinnah hospital' – a result of fight broke out between two rival groups who came to the hospital for treatment. Photo: Shameen Khan and Dawn.com

Figure 3.51: Bullet holes on a school wall where one of the most horrific terrorist attacks of recent times is recorded when seven Talibani extremists massacred 132 innocent children and 10 teachers in the Pakistani city of Peshawar.
Photo: Getty Images

Figure 3.52 a-b: Jimmie Durham. 1996. Stoning the Refrigerator.
Photo: Maria Thereza Alves

However, I was not sure if I had done enough. I knew that I must not stop, and try to break the wall to bring its hidden body to light. I also needed to convince myself about its content and context beyond the political observations and anecdotal experiences. I knew that there is something far reaching application and implication in my actions. I looked at the stones I was using; it was neither the stone for ablution in salat, nor the *kankari* that Prophet Ibrahim used to pelt Ibliees. It came from the wall itself. This was a mirror that reflected my aggression, anxiety and ego. I was pelting my twin, my younger self who could be Dante, here a ten-year-old boy who is wearing *Ahram* and has gone for the pilgrimage once [Fig. 3.45, p. 206]. At that moment, my mind became alert and my performance become pious. My posture changed to *qiyam*. I was ready to pelt Ibliees in me to protect my heart and mind.

The catharsis continued to the final day, but with the realisation of what is at stake I felt a change in my perspective. The context was personal. I went back to the time when I performed hajj and my father woke me up in the middle of the night on the grounds of Minnah

and asked me to come with the group of men to collect stones for the performance of *Jamarah*.[482] However I did not remember pelting the stones the next day. The memory of collecting stones with my father and other men became a moment of strength, love and *muruwah* for me. I began pelting again, not at the gallery wall, but at the wall of Jamarah. I was doing the final act of hajj, a performance of piety in the gallery.

On a formal and conceptual level, the pillars of Jamarah are the first sculptures in Islam that relate to 'the body' as well as seemingly the first physical documentation of the performative body of *twice-behaved behaviour*. The duality of Jamarah's form is that it is both sculpture and surface – both pillar and the wall surrounding it, which are connected through performance. The surface of the wall of Jamarah gives prime evidence of process-based mark-making. The pelted marks on the wall are chipping, erasing and slowly destroying the wall, but on the other hand their accumulated aesthetic creates a blueprint for the collective thinking of the Muslim Ummah: to fight against the power, ego and pride that divides the world and segregates gender. This act reflects the message of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.aw): "Hajj wipes out whatever (sins) came before it."[483]

The marks are also have a temporal quality and remind us of the surface of the moon. Made visible through a reflected light, these crater like marks contain collective memory in the making, and in this regard, my work is never finished and always in process. The work is an examination of the behavioural and phenomenological limits of the process-based drawings, pushing the conceptual possibilities of gesture and trace and promoting drawing as *action-based thinking*.[484] The culminating traces on the wall, the dust, the sound of stones, and the blanket of stones on the floor, creates a spatial and temporal drawing that describes the edge of the mass.

In terms of the art discourse of the male body, the work also comments on the public display of 'ruptured' Pakistani masculinity. The 'sacred' and 'pristine' white layers of plaster and white paint act as an armour of the male 'body', which when shot at, deflect the stone in self-preservation. But in this process it disturbs the 'cold aesthetics' of modernity in men, bringing forth their raw and organic nature (animalistic). These blank walls of the white cube, hold a history – a memory that is beautiful, as well as damaging and grotesque. The performance only brings this duality forward, unveiling the hidden anatomy of the wall, bearing its wounds.

482 As discussed earlier, jamrah is the three pillars that mark where Ibliees (Satan) approached Prophet Ibrahim (r.a.) and where Prophet Ibrahim pelted him with stones.

483 Sahi Muslim, 121 Narrated by Amr ibn al-Aas

484 Christine Morrow, *Walk the Line: New Australian Drawing* (Sydney: MCA 2009).

ART DEMO VII

Artwork: *Chārh-bāgh* (Series: They see neither their heads, nor the stones, nor even the walls!). 2013, Live performance, woodblock stamps, graphite, acrylic, gold leaf and stone-pelting on altered plastered wall and sound Site Specific Installation, 3.9 x 2.7 m (Wall in four parts).

Exhibition History: *Someother Place* (2013), Blacktown Arts Centre, Sydney.

Figure 3.53a-b-c-d: Syed M I Abdullah. 2013. *Chahar Bagh* (Series: They see neither their heads, nor the stones, nor even the walls!). Live performance, woodblock stamps, graphite, acrylic, gold leaf and stone-pelting on altered plastered wall and sound. Site Specific Installation. Blacktown Arts Centre, Sydney. 3.9 x 2.7 m (Wall in four parts): Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO VII

Chahar-Bagh performance and installation took the narrative of the earlier pelted wall works further and critiques the politics of power between the East and West. It brings focus to the continued destruction and turmoil in Pakistan, which is directly linked to ruptured Islamic masculinities and highlights Pakistani contemporary art's fascination with terror, bombs and guns. It also reflects on the destruction of various Sufi shrines and tombs in the Middle East,

Saudi Arabia and Pakistan as examples of the intolerance of a legalist and patriarchal Islam that does not want the spiritual expression of Islam to exist. It also provides a commentary on the continued 'war on terror' rhetoric of the West, which projects Islam as dangerous and monolithic. This war has now resulted in fifteen years of destruction in the Islamic world, which has turned major cities into ruins and a whole generation into martyrs and terrorists.

In this live performance installation, the hallmark of the Islamic paradise garden of chahar bagh is destroyed. The five main characters/symbols in these works – the rose, lotus, nightingale, and target – pay homage to miniature and modern painting traditions of the exquisite garden of heavenly delights. Each symbol is stamped on the wall, and the symbols of the central axes are painted with colour sequences that derive from four rivers of chahar bagh (yellow for honey, red for wine, white for milk and blue for water, where black identifies the marble of the floor or the shadows the niche that is illuminated by a lamp).

The stone pelting in *Chahar Bagh* was precise, like a drone attack or a master archer. My posture was in qiyam position and I played the archer as I have had learned and practiced archery for a year since the first pelted performance in Karachi in 2011. Unlike earlier pelting performances, here every throw had aim and every stone that hit the wall was felt. The force and the precision made the stone stick to the wall. Constructed with chip-rock, the *Chahar Bagh* wall was fragile. Soon the wounds started to appear and the four symbolic rivers were dry. The wall was crumbling. It was in ruins. The subsequent installation of the dismantled pelted wall as a floor installation is a prime example of my deep interest in transforming two-dimensional surfaces (drawings) into three-dimensional spatial enquiry (sculptures and installations) and vice versa.

Finally, Demos V, VI and VII identify and argue my identity as a Muslim male in diaspora which defies geographical markers oscillating between East and West. The painting, wounding and destruction of the wall reflect communal injuries. The wall, the grid, the target and the flowers and birds, all allude to personal, political and geographical displacements between here and there, while the sound of stone pelting reverberates back as a reminder from some other place.

ART DEMO VIII

Artwork: *Brut for Men* (All four versions in English and Urdu: Rose, Lotus, Target, Heart). 2015. Chamak patti (hand stickered ornamentation) metal medallion, wood and stainless steel. 150 x 117 x 15 cm each. In collaboration with Pakistani Truck Art

Exhibition History: *Brut-Nama* (2013), Aicon Art Gallery, New York; Art Dubai (2015).

Figure 3.54 a-b-c-d-e: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *Brut for Men (All four versions in English and Urdu: Rose, Lotus, Target, Heart).* In collaboration with Pakistani Truck Art craftspeople. Chamak patti (hand stickered ornamentation) metal medallion, wood and stainless steel. 150 x 117 x 15 cm each. Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO VIII

Brut for Men simultaneously alludes to the immensely popular fragrance among all classes in Pakistan, a blend of spicy wood and citrus designed to a traditional masculine strength of character, and its extreme binary signified by the word 'brute'. I grew up watching men in my family use this fragrance and had a fascination for the design of the bottles, specifically the medallion. Brut was sold under the marketing slogan, "The Essence of Man"; this project is the exploration of the 'essence of every Pakistani man.'

On one hand, these works are part of *Art Brut* (or Outsider Art), in that they are a celebration of the tradition of Pakistani metal and hand-cut sticker crafts in truck art, which aligns itself with the Islamic tradition of *ustad/shagird* (master/student), copying and collaboration. On the other hand, *Brut For Men* presents contemporary Pakistani masculinities as a cultural trope, ranging from the brutish, the raw and unrestrained, to the cultured, gentle,

and atypical. The works explore the very essence of the dichotomy of the word 'brut(e)' through chance, experimentation, narrative and collaboration, imaginatively combining an immediacy of expression with technical excellence. The exuberant colours of the *Brut for Men* medallions complement my earlier quiet and contemplative typed and pastel drawings and light works of poetic nature. *Brut for Men* was made in collaboration with Pakistani truck artists, and over a period of two years I spent of time in their *Karkhana* developing the work.

Figure 3.55: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *Brut for Men*: Target (Yellow). Hand-beaten and chamak patti (hand stickered ornamentation) metal medallion, wood and stainless steel. 150 x 117 x 15 cm each. Photo: courtesy the artist.

DEMO VIII

Figure 3.56: 2012. Group photo of 'Brut for Men' sculpture project team with expert Sharid Bahi at his Truck Art karkhana in Sohrab Goath, Karachi, Pakistan. Photo: Fahim Rao (Project assistant)

Figure 3.57a: Metal beating work

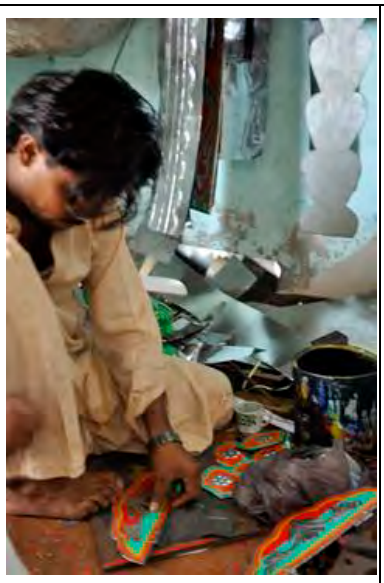


Figure 3.57b: Chamak Patti work

Figure 3.57c: Hand cut sticker work

Made of hand-beaten and hand-crafted stickers (known as *Chmak Patti*), the *Brut for Men* relief sculptures combine strength and power with fragility and beauty. The form and the structure of the large medallions pay homage to the hand-crafted tradition of body (breastplate) and face armour (helmet) in Islam. It also takes inspiration from the elegant and fragile

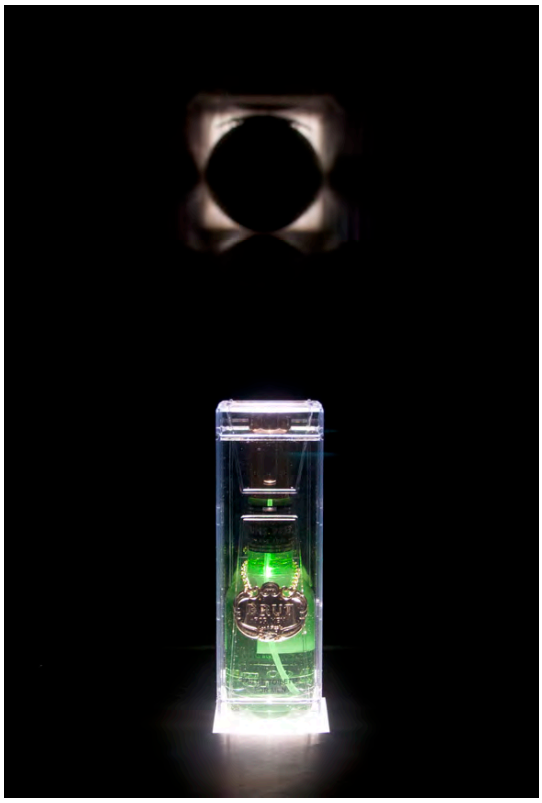
traditional craft of flower garlands, called *Sehra (chaplet)*, a flower headdress worn by the groom and bride to cover their face and popular in countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. Shera also refers to an Urdu poem, sung/read at weddings as a prayer for the groom's future wedded life. When combined with ceremonial armour and weapons, Sehra allude to the idea of a warrior/poet/groom returning home wearing a flowered veil.

The four main characters/symbols – the rose, lotus, heart and target – refer to miniature paintings and the popular symbols of truck art. Similar to how the decorated truck is a feminine counterpart on the road for truck artists, these works are expression of my feminine counterpart. This is reflected in the use of a stainless steel and arabesque Brut for Men medallion, which mimics the decorative crown of the truck. The shield and the crown connect back to the male and female in a balancing act of jalāl/jamāl, since the crown of the truck symbolises feminine presence for the truck owner, who calls his truck, beloved or *shazadi* (lover or princess). Each design reflects my taste, just as the signs, symbols, poetry and religious text on each truck reflect its owner's taste, beliefs and affection for his beloved. However, as a collaborative work, I remained open during the process for *hawa* – the new ideas and learning of new techniques, which led to informed and sophisticated changes in filigree design and colour combinations that strengthen the idea. Surrounded by flowers, birds, animals, weapons and eyes, these colourful decorated medallions are not only a flamboyant expression of Pakistani masculinity, personal expression of religious, spiritual and political beliefs, but also draw the 'fragrance' of the poetic expression of jalāl/jamāl, brining together both qualities in harmony of form and content.

ART DEMO IX

Artwork: *The Fragrance of the Moon,* 2013, Brut for Men bottle, Perspex and transparency projector*,* Installation dimensions variable.

Exhibition History: *Brut-Nama* (2013), Aicon Art Gallery, New York.



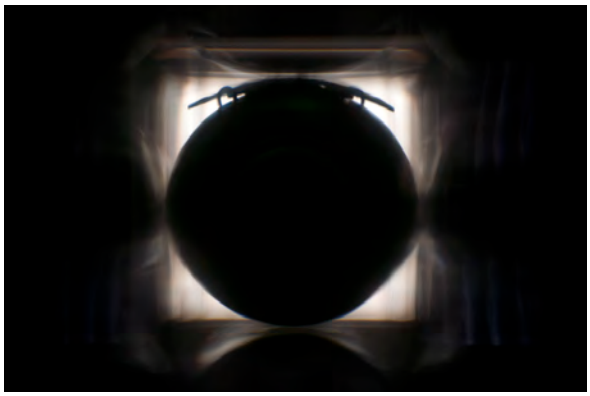


Figure 3.58a-b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *The Fragrance of the Moon*. Brut for Men bottle, Perspex and transparency projector. Installation, dimensions variable.
Photo: courtesy the artist.
DEMO IX.

Extending on *Brut for Men*, the project *The Fragrance of the Moon* (2013) was developed by chance, but it connected many of the ideas in this research. When a Perspex-encased Brut for Men bottle is placed on an overhead projector it reveals a green-tinted halo inside a white (light) square. I argue that this transformation from figurative (object) to an abstract image (square/circle) is the beautiful essence of the Islamic art. The forms of jalāl/jamāl – square, circle and light – are seemingly merged, requiring contemplation and close inspection to unravel their underlying message. The title, *The Fragrance of the Moon*, suggests the hidden softness and beauty in the heart of every man, which when illuminated reveals his true 'balanced' nature. Here the circle is not an eclipse but a veiled moon and the sun. This work is evidence of how the impossible task of squaring the circle, or bringing balance to gender, can be achieve through the illumination of minds and hearts. Beyond its transcendental meaning, the work also comments on various issues that are currently being negotiated by Pakistani men, including economic pressure, identity crisis, and the betrayal of brotherhood, nationalism and racism. I believe there is a paradigm shift underway; works such as *The Fragrance of the Moon*, where a Brut for Men fragrance bottle projects the image of a halo or black moon, reflect this ideal.

Throughout this chapter I have looked at public and private performances of masculine identity and obligation in Pakistan, and traced their influence in my own art practice. This shows the way masculinity depends upon its social enactment, in often carefully constructed ritual and performances such as performance of piety, but also in unscripted vernacular practices. In Chapter Four, I will pick up one final theme that needs to be addressed in the visual construction of Pakistani masculinity and the Art of Barzakh, and which has been only implicit so far in the performances shown. This is the issue of gaze, specifically Islamic notion of *ghadd-al-basr* or lowering the gaze and its impact on the representation of the nude body. I will also demonstrate how the concept of gaze interacts with signs, symbols and performances to play an important role not only in Islamic art and Barzakhi art practices but also in the representation of masculinity in Pakistani art.

CHAPTER FOUR

Surely the narcissus will sprout from my grave to mark one who dies in love![485]

[Lowering the gaze] prevents the poisoned arrows (of the shaytaan), which may lead to his doom, from reaching his heart.[486]

485 Muhammad Hussain Jah, *Hoshruba: Book One-The land and the Tilism*, trans. Musharraf Ali Farooqi. (Urdu Projects, 2009).

486 Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) in *al-Jawaab al-Kaafi*, 125.

In this chapter I identify 'lowering the gaze' (*ghadd al-basr*) as another primary condition of Barzakhi art. Alongside piety, this chapter will draw the meaning and importance of 'lowering the gaze' from Islamic teachings and Pakistani culture. The understanding of such concepts will extend my examination of Islamic masculinity through jalāl and jamāl and performance to further analyse the notion of Barzakhi art. The chapter contains a reading of masculinity and the male body (clothed, nude, semi-nude and naked) as performed and visualised under the notion of gaze, illuminating how men perform their masculinity and piety, how they see, and how they are seen in Pakistani visual arts. As this is a practice-based research project, where visuals are made, experienced and analysed, 'gaze' and 'looking' – both as universal and culturally-specific ideas – provide an important step in understanding the construction and representation of Muslim Pakistani masculinity.

4.1 *Ghadd al-Basr*: Lowering the Gaze and the Social Codes of Looking

Religiously and socially regulated in Islamic society, the act of looking is grounded on Allah's command that we should lower our gaze in certain circumstances. It is to restrain the gaze and not allow it to wander. The command is applicable equally to all Muslim men and women, who must refrain from looking at that which is forbidden (for example, extensive gazing at or lusting over the opposite gender outside of close family, or *mehram*). It requires that we not dwell on worldly things, protecting our chastity and private parts.[487] In Pakistan, the majority of men are familiar with the idea of lowering the gaze as *sharum* (chastity) of the eyes, which protects one from committing *zinā* (adultery) of the eyes.[488] Generally, Pakistani men do not follow this command in public. However, in private the religious command is administered under the codes of looking, which operate in distinct cultural contexts and follow certain types of social and religious taboo.[489] For example I grew up under instruction not to look into the eyes of my parents while talking, not to stare in public, and to avoid looking at nude bodies.

In sapiential Islam, lowering the gaze is a sign of humility that emphasises purification through *dhikr* (remembrance), a performative act that cleans the mirror of the heart. The clean heart reflects divine beauty, but the light also shows the image of the seeker. This act of looking at one's own image in the divine light, if not lowered with gratitude and humility, can turn the heart into Narcissus' pool, where seekers fixate on their own image, obsessed with their

487 Al Qur'an, Surah al-Noor Chapter 24, Ayat 30.

488 Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w) said: "Allah has decreed for every son of Adam his share of Zina, and there is no way to escape from it. The Zina of the eye is a glance, the Zina of the tongue is speaking, and the Zina of the mind is wishing and hoping; then the private part either acts upon this or it does not". Sahih Bukhari, 11/26 and Sahih Muslim, 2046.
Zina, Arabic for immorality.

489 Michael Argyle, *Bodily Communication,* 2nd edn. (London: Methuen, 1975).

greatness, and are drowned in their own attraction and pride. When lowering the gaze is performed, seekers view their image with restraint without being overwhelmed, whereas a wandering gaze brings darkness.[490] The Qur'anic verse which commands lowering the gaze is closely tied with the verse on Allah's light:

> *Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as (if there were) a niche and within it a lamp.*[491]

Reference to the lamp and the niche leads us back to Ibn al Arabī's jalāl/jamāl and its poetic expression, where the form of light illuminates the divine attributes for seekers to see, reflect, and copy in their own lives. For a Muslim artist, this translates into a way of thinking, creating and looking at art, where gaze must be refrained in order to curtail an ego that could potentially lead him to declare himself as the divine status of 'creator'. Before continuing the discussion of ghadd al-basr in the art of Pakistan (and Islam), a survey of existing forms of gaze in visual culture is presented.

4.2 The Gaze

In visual culture, 'gaze' deals with how audiences view the people with whom they are presented. In the last century, figurative art remained under the spell of ideas of glaring, looking, peeking, staring and glimpsing. Scholars agree that there is no all-encompassing theory of gaze through which to see art, leading to diverse theorisation and opening for new ways of interpreting and communicating art.[492] Such theories of gaze have informed both Western and non-Western gaze, and are useful in analysing the male body in art.

For Margaret Olin, the gaze in art is a visual thinking that responds to the political and social dimensions of looking, which will "focus on what is visual about a work of art and yet address the wider issue of social communication."[493] First introduced by Michel Foucault as 'medical gaze', the idea was presented as a model relationship between power and knowledge which manifests as 'controlling' or 'inspecting' gaze, and is shown as surveillance in the

490 Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) in *al-Jawaab al-Kaafi*, 125.

491 Al Qur'an, Surh al-Noor Chapter 24, Ayat 35.

492 Alois Riegl's description of the Dutch group portrait; Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of seeing-as-being-seen; Merleau-Ponty's account of embodied seeing; Jacques Lacan's baroque elaboration of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty; John Berger's influential ideological critique of Kenneth Clark's art history; the rise of feminism in film studies and especially Laura Mulvey's account of gendered seeing in cinema; Svetlana Alpers's description of northern "lookers" in paintings; and Michael Fried's theory of the "painter-beholder." James Elkin, "The End of the Theory of the Gaze," The Visual chapter in *Academia*, (accessed January 02, 2015) https://www.academia.edu/165598/The_Visual_chapter_on_The_End_of_the_Theory_of_the_Gaze_

493 Margaret Olin, "The Gaze," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003), 318–29.

Panopticon, the perfect prison.[494] Jacque Lacan referred to it as the mirror stage, where an infant (here a male), upon looking at himself in the mirror transfers his identity from the 'real' to the 'imaginary', which later becomes a symbol when he acquires language.[495] Fascinated with his image, which situates the ego and a new complex sense of self, he faces an anxiety of identification. The power of his newly acquired gaze dissipates in the realisation that he is also the subject of gaze.[496] This process creates anxiety for men, if not a crisis for masculinity. This is important to art since art is historically male and is 'limited' to looking. Anxiety also powers artworks, specifically nude drawing, painting and photography, which turn the male viewer back on himself. As John Berger observed, "men act and women appear. Men look at women and women watch themselves being looked at."[497] Although Berger cited the prevailing gender norms of his own time, meaning that his idea of gaze is somewhat out-dated and may not be applicable to work today, as male bodies are as objectified as female bodies now, his idea that the cultural codes of looking relegates women to caretakers while placing men in power does clearly reflect the current norms of looking at gender in Pakistan. It also provides clues as to why the command to lower gaze is often ignored, as it is 'difficult' to perform. However, I have observed that when it comes to representing the naked and nude body in Pakistan the command holds its position as the dominant form of gaze.

4.3 The Naked and The Nude

In the European tradition, nakedness is distinguished from nudity: the former is to simply be without clothes, while the latter is a form of artistic representation. For John Berger, "to be nude is to be seen naked by others and yet not recognised for oneself."[498] In the story of Adam and Eve, nakedness (consciousness) as a form of gaze differs from that of Renaissance art; their coverings of fig leaves are to hide shame from a third observer, not from each other. For Berger, only Eve's embarrassment was retained in late secular art for her surrendering to the viewer's gaze for pleasure. For Berger this surrendering is hypocritical, and by using the mirror as an example of women's vanity he demonstrated how the appearance of such vanity in the Western tradition became a contest through the beauty pageant. Berger later clarified that other cultures, such as Islamic culture, do not hold the same attitude towards nudity. The body in Islamic art differs significantly from the nude/naked subject in Western art, where the nude male body is

494 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977).

495 Tamise Van Pelt, *The other Side of Desire: Lacan's Theory of the Registers* (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 2000), 152.

496 This is not to say that the object behaves optically as a mirror, instead it means that the awareness of any object can induce an awareness of also being an object.

497 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972), 45–47.

498 Ibid., 54.

regarded an ideal. In Islam both men and women are equally responsible for their modesty, as neither Adam nor Hawa (Eve) are believed to have committed any 'original sin'. In Islam nakedness is reality, allowed through provisions in certain situations, such as gazing on one's own naked body in a mirror. Yet Islam strictly prohibits any representation of 'nudity'. In Sufism, once must be naked of all beliefs to see reality.

> *[Belief] functions as your clothes, spiritual clothes – yes, that's what they are. And because of those clothes you never come into contact with reality. One has to be naked to come into contact with the sunrays. One has to be naked to be in contact with the wind. One has to be naked if one wants to dance in the rains and feel the rain showering on one's being and body. Exactly so has one to be spiritually naked and nude if one wants to be have any participation with reality as it is.*[499]

In terms of the male naked body, there is the unique tale of a rock and the naked Prophet Musa (r.a.) or Moses, which suggests the acceptance of 'nakedness' against the 'nude' in Islam. After bathing, Prophet Musa (r.a.) chased after the rock that had run away with his cloths, as ordered by Allah, until they reached a public area where Prophet Musa (r.a.) was seen naked and thus acquitted from rumours of bodily defect.[500] The incident echoes Berger's view on nakedness, which is a way of finding out that someone is indeed a man or a woman; such nakedness is reality, unlike the nude, which for Berger is a process, not a state. Such ideas of Islamic modesty are evident in Persian and Mughal art, where nakedness is veiled through muslin garments (which I also use in my performance works). Male and female nudes in figurative Islamic art are rare, and are found in Persian and Mughal paintings under the influence of the mythological *Kama Sutra*, a Hindu and Sikh religious text and visual guide to sex and sexual desire. In Pakistan, male nudes remain peripheral, despite having cultural heritage, as in the nude male torso excavated from Harrapa or the *Kama Sutra*; they exist, yet remain hidden from

Figure 4.1: *Nude Male Torso*. ca. 2000–1900 BCE. Harappa, Pakistan. Photo: www.studyblue.com

499 Osho, "A Lotus Of Emptiness," in *Sufis: The People Of The Path*, vol.1, (New Delhi: Diamond Pocket Books,1999), 162.

500 Sahih Bukhari, Volume 4, Book 55, Hadith No. 616.

the public eye. This paradox of the nude/naked male in public life problematises the male body in contemporary Pakistani art. The 'nude' and the 'naked' will be further discussed later in a studio case study – *Male Chauvinism* [Chapter Four, Studio Practice, p. 252] – which investigates how the nude model in Pakistani academia problematises gaze in life-drawing studios.

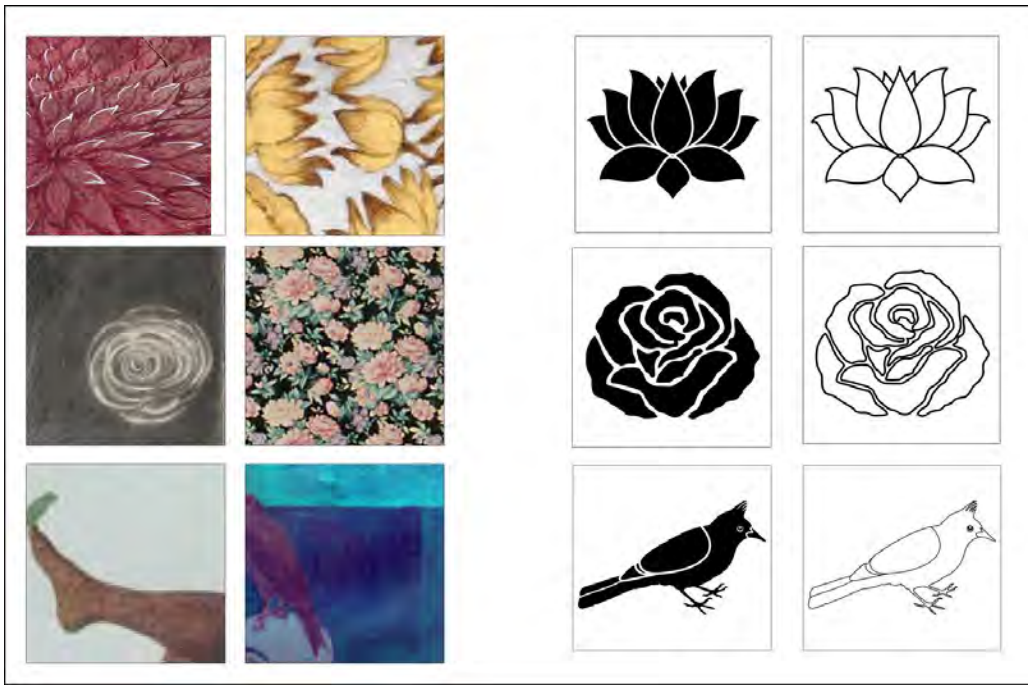
4.4 Lowering the Gaze and the Art of Barzakh: Transition from Body to Sign in the Contemporary Art of Pakistan

My analysis of works conducted as part of my case studies of Pakistani artists has revealed that the career of Barzakhi Pakistani artists begins with a dual exploration of formal and pictorial spaces. Their combined interest in abstract expression and the body forms a poetic language that allows wider readings of Islamic art and its signs and symbols, which subsequently inform the evolution of art in Pakistan. For example, artists initially negotiate lowering the gaze concept by placing the full body at the centre in profile (looking away from the viewer's gaze), surrounded by the decoration of natural scenes and calligraphy. As their career develops, their interests shift toward poetic expression, and the body either moves to the margin or is dismantled. At this point, signs and symbols are created that reflect the artist's understanding of divine gaze as a form of God's mercy and beauty. Although the correspondence between body and social gradations are applied, focus remains on the modest upper parts of the body. For example, "those of high status are known as 'heads' (*ru'us*), 'faces' (*wujaha'*), 'eyes' (*a'yan*), and 'bust' (*sidr*)," and symbolically each body part has its own distinct language, which conveys different meaning for men or women.[501] In this regard, the performative approach of representing the body only in parts or through symbols is attributed to humility and collective thinking. Meher Afroz's work is a prime example, showing a transition from body to symbols, as written words, flowers like the rose and lotus,[502] and objects such as topi, iron nails and *punja,* refer to a spiritual transformation of mind and body beyond its corporeal limits. Many of these symbols, when crossed-referenced with the other artists' works, yield similar ideas, which are also shared in my own studio practice (Table 4, p. 229). Returning to decoration and the dissected body, Imran Qureshi, Rashid Rana, Ali Kazim and Anwar Saeed use these not just as pictorial devices, but also as political statements.

501 Fuad I. Kahuri, *The Body in Islamic Culture* (London: Saqi Books, 2001), 18.

502 The flower that materialises from the drying blood pools is the lotus, as commonly located in Kangra and Basholi miniature paintings.

Table 4: Symbols extracted from the case study artworks (left), rose, lotus and bird, aligned with my own use of the symbols (right) in relation to the male body.



Left: Symbols and signs from the case studies - Left top to bottom: Imran Qureshi, Meher Afroz, Rashid Rana, Ali Kazim, Anwar Saeed, Right: My symbols for the Studio practice

Since 9/11 the madness of suicide bombing and the 'gaze of terror' has reached a point of saturation and desensitising the Pakistani nation. Seen in the media and in everyday life, there is a common confrontation with blood-splattered body parts and bloodstained floors and walls. Such images directly impact Pakistani artists, where some dialectically reflect the body and the carnage, and others translate this through signs and symbols. Most are looking at this as acts of politicised violence instead of religious ritual. This poses contextual issues for the form and content of such works. It also divides local art critics, some of whom support expanding Pakistani art to a broader global language, while others see this as a loss of identity that further propagates the image of Pakistani men as violent, terrorist and monolithic. How this political act translates into diverse opinions about an artist is seen in Imran Qureshi's various floor installations, which use the same technique and imagery at different sites all over the world.

Imran Qureshi's use of a gold leaf halo is borrowed from the divine nimbus of the Mughal emperors. However as the artist revealed in interview, his large oval canvases with a running blood-blossom motif depart from traditional artistry [Fig. 4.2, p. 230]. The shimmering oval halos, with a square grid formed by the gold leaf squares, are splattered with 'sanguine', which is intertwined with elegant hand painted blossoms, providing a paradox between violence and beauty. In this work, death is marked by the absence of the body, but on closer inspection the blooming blossoms form the pool of blood that suggests regeneration and growth. For

Qureshi the pool of red (blood) and the absent body evokes the bloody aftermath of a suicide attacker: a male, collected off the streets after the explosion, or a twenty-three-year-old man stabbed to death during a brawl over a game of cricket at the Bandra-Kurla complex in Lahore.[503] Both of these bodies were in close proximity to the artist's home, and also to his mind and in his heart.

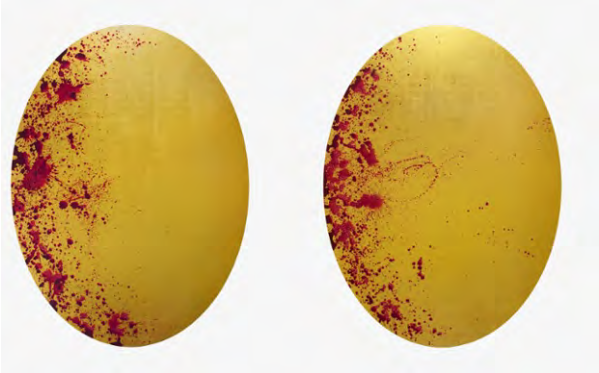


Figure 4.2: Qureshi, Imran. 2003. *Give and Take*. Acrylic on gold leaf. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.3: Qureshi, Imran. 2011. *This Leprous Brightness*. Acrylic on wasli. Photo: courtesy the artist.

During my interview with him, Qureshi revealed that to translate his impression of melancholia and frustration about such deaths, he employed a professional nude male model to enact the part; the model was rubbed with sanguine to create direct bodily impression as the victim's bloody 'silhouette'. The resulting impression failed Qureshi's expectations, as his own desire to experience the disembodiment was unfulfilled. He found himself looking at the impression of body that is neither his own, nor the victim's, but an impression of a nude man. He wanted his gaze to confront his own mortality rather someone else's nudity. For Qureshi the solution was obvious, he needed to enact the part and become the performer. The resulting impressions of his body, both in full and in parts, operate under the Barzakhi art's 'lowering the gaze'. They are self-portraits that are personal, performative, and speak only in partial signs and symbols (Fig. 4.3). Despite clear references to Yves Klein's impressions of body on canvas and the ritual bloodshed of *zargeer-zani* during *Ashura*, Qureshi's work may be the first of its kind in Pakistani art, where a male artist uses his own body as both nude model and performer to create a 'body signature' work of art. Qureshi later edited the work and chose to exhibit one full body alongside hands and feet. This diverted the viewer's gaze from the nude body to the grotesque nude – those body parts that survive a suicide attacker's violent blasts and are later use for identification of the body. The fact that the artist used his own body was also edited out, but revealed during the interview. The reason for that omission, I argue, is that despite the

503 Saurabh Vaktania, "23-year-old Dies in Brawl Over Cricket," *Mid Day*, December 10, 2012, (accessed March 2012) http://www.mid-day.com/articles/23-year-old-dies-in-brawl-over-cricket/192125

camouflaging of the body impression with flower motifs, Qureshi felt 'naked' in front of others. To deflect, impressions of hands and feet were exhibited, letting the viewer's gaze wander off to the severed feet and hands of the suicide bomber. I argue that in this instance, Qureshi operates as Barzakhi artist, who can neither see his own body nor allow others to see it – whether naked or nude. He retains the control of gaze, and does not want to be the target of a voyeuristic gaze.

In today's voyeuristic social media, 'lowering the gaze' gains new use and meaning in the form of the selfie, which undermines its core meaning as deflection of pride and vanity. Performed by the public at large, the selfie is a visual response to public gaze and the image of celebrity. The selfie changes how both men and women see themselves, making 'lowering the gaze' a necessary act where one must look down at the screen to see him or herself and admire or reject his or her own creation of self. Keeping to this way of thinking, as I was out walking in Auckland, New Zealand, I discovered a target above my head (a bungee jump platform), I looked up, and took a selfie by placing the camera next to my body in the *qiyam* standing position. I found my twin looking back and asking me to admire my finding, my creation in him. My inner pride immediately reminded me to lower my gaze. At that moment, beauty was not in the eye of the beholder, but the eye of the camera, because it captured me looking up and seeing myself looking down. The resulting work, *Soft Target: Selfie* (2012) (Fig. 4.4) shows a

Figure 4.4: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. *Soft Target: Selfie under the SkyJump landing platform.* Sky Tower, Victoria Street West, Auckland. From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 127 x 127 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

reflection of my false image as Narcissus. The target is no longer a sign of aim but is more like a pool of water, perhaps Qureshi's pool of running blood-blossom slowly covering with green moss. The target is divided into four equal parts, symbolising the Chahar Bagh of Paradise. In this garden, my reflection dissolves like the mirage of a suicide bomber, aiming to reach heaven, but finding only purgatory, suspended between the living and the dead.

Rashid Rana also explored gaze through twins and doppelgangers in many of his earlier works. In some, he posed semi-nude and played out different types of gaze, locating his art both in the East and West. *The Middle of Nowhere* (2001–2002), a work which Rana revealed in the interview attracted speculative comments about his sexual orientation, Rana borrowed Michelangelo's *Pieta* from the West and made it local. Against a small sepia background, Rana enacted the dramatic pose of *Pieta*, in which the Virgin Mary cradles the crucified body of Jesus, appropriating it from Christian art and playing both roles himself (Fig. 4.5). On the almost-nude body of Rana one can notice the *langooth* (lion cloth), which I argue is an Islamic form of the Renaissance fig leaf.[504] He tenderly holds the dead corpse of himself, his twin, his seed and his reflection. The painted backdrop behind the figures is borrowed from the local visual anthology of Truck Art and popular street posters. It shows the idyllic scenery of the snow-capped mountains of the Swiss Alps. A painted Shell petrol pump punctures the scene. Rana combines several distinct languages of religious and popular art of gender balancing: Christian art that depicts the Virgin Mary cradling the body of Jesus, Shell petro pump for polluted desires and greed and signs from Truck Art. For Rashid, this works is not about gender

Figure 4.5: Rana, Rashid. 2001–2002. *In the Middle of Nowhere*, C print. 40 x 53.25 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

504 A loincloth, also a breechcloth, is a one-piece garment – sometimes kept in place by a belt – which covers the genitals and, at least partially, the buttocks

or gender identity per se, but rather, a "spiritual" expression of the "loss of body and spirit."

In *The Middle of Nowhere,* Rana is the father and the mother; he is also the son and daughter; he is every image of himself in his own mirror. As the figures of *Pieta*, Rana gazes at the face of his own dead body, his own creation, whose dead gaze looks upward beyond the frame of the picture. As noble as the idea is, there are two immediate issues. One is the fact that for local audiences both the scene and its religious concept are unfamiliar; a Muslim Pakistani audience cannot connect with the Catholic interpretation of Christ as God. For them, Christ was a prophet. Ironically, posing as Christ is another reoccurring theme in Pakistani art. Saddeqain even called himself 'The Holy Sinner', which was accepted under the *malamati* tradition and the Islamic idea of lowering one's gaze.[505] Rana's lowering the gaze performance, however, has a narcissistic dimension, leading the viewer to fixate on Rana's nude body. In this regard, we could revisit the story of Abel and Cain, which Rana turns into a tale of lost love and unspoken desire. He subliminally engenders his identity behind a comment, a nod, a glare and a smirk, which renders Rana flirting with a 'subordinate masculinity', introducing peripheral masculinities such as the effeminate. These lie in sharp contrast to hegemonic masculinity, which identifies itself as the dignified mode of male living.[506] This was not the first time Rana played twins or appropriated from Western and local art.

In later works such as *What is so Pakistani About this Painting?* (2000) and *10 Differences* (2003), he questioned how "no one who wishes to situate an artist's work in the present period can escape it."[507] However, his exploration of negatives and silhouettes in his works identify his earlier Barzakhi position. In paintings, such as *What is so Pakistani about this Painting?* (2000) and *Motia* (circa 2000), Rashid Rana painted figures as inverted or more

Figure 4.6: Rana, Rashid. 2000. *What is so Pakistani about this Painting,* Oil, acrylic and printed fabric on canvas. 183 x 399 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.7: Rana, Rashid. 2007–2008. *Desperately Seeking Paradise*, C print + DIASEC and stainless steel, 300 x 300x 300 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

505 Akbar Naqvi, *Images and Identity* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 373-377.

506 R. W. Connell, and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept", *Gender and Society* 19:6 (2005): 832.

507 Salman Toor, "The Idiot's Guide to Rashid Rana," *The Friday Times*, January 24, 2014, accessed March 11, 2014.

precisely as photographic film (also negative or matrix) in hues of blue and black. Such painterly exercise of figures as negatives clearly translates into Rashid's later photomontage (also photomosaic) works such as *I Love Miniature* (2003) and *Ommatidia* series (2003) in which he harness the replicating idea of negatives and uses hundreds or thousands of smaller images to create one large mosaic image. I argue that the lack of details in Rana's earlier painted figures as negatives and his later photomontages where large and small images exist simultaneously on a same picture plane are in fact forms of *silhouette* that historically is a two-dimensional representation of the outline of an object. I further argue that when read within Islamic context of Barzakhi art, negative (inverted) figures and digital photomontaged figures do not present themselves to be real images which only God can create. They are man made *silhouettes*, constantly rendering themselves towards an unattainable perfection. This quest for perfection is evident in Rashid's sculpture practice where he further simplified his figures into abstract bodies. For example, a geometric stainless cube with polished mirrored-liked slats, *Desperately Seeking Paradise* (2007-8) is 'suggestive of the Ka'aba'[508] which I argue is the abstracted *silhouette* body in Islamic art.[509]

If the appropriation of Western ideas creates confusion in reading the text of the Pakistani male body, then the same is true of ideas that gain notoriety within Pakistan and are exported to the West. Imran Qureshi's blood-splattered blossoms installation, *Blessings Upon the Land of My Love* (2011–) (Fig. 4.8, p. 235) is an example of such contextual difficulties. When the work was installed at the Sharja Biennial (2011) in a courtyard surrounded by contemporary and traditional Islamic architecture, the signs and symbols of the site immediately connected the work to the current turmoil of the Islamic world, the ongoing violence of the Pakistani State and local UAE audience including large population of Pakistani expatriates and visitors. When a similar installation was installed at Cockatoo Island during Sydney Biennial (2012) and on the rooftop of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2014), the exotic narrative outweighed the context. Viewers in New York and Sydney found the work 'beautiful' for its iconography and making, but were not fully invested and engaged with the narrative of violence, the context or the ramifications of the work. After all, the everyday terror menace that exists in Pakistan is an 'alien' or perhaps a shielded concept in the Western world. For them Imran Qureshi's absent body is the same as Rashid Rana's *Peita* to a Pakistani audience. In such circumstances, the stereotypical views of the work, terrorism, or Pakistani male identity prevail, and the work primarily becomes an exercise of beauty and formal aesthetics while content leaves a great deal to be desired.

508 Girish Shahane, "Seeing double." *Rashid Rana*. (Mumbai: Chatterjee & Lal and Chemould Prescott, India. 2010), 99.

509 Radhika Sanghani, "Afghan men wear burqas to campaign for women's rights," *The Telegraph*, March 06, 2015 (accessed March 11, 2015) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11453879/Afghan-men-wear-burqas-to-campaign-for-womens-rights.html.

Figure 4.8: Qureshi, Imran. 2011. *Blessing Upon the Land of My Love*. Paint on interlocking brick pavement. Site-specific installation commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation, Installation view. Photo by Alfredo Rubio

Figure 4.9: Qureshi, Imran. 2013. *The Roof Garden Commission: Imran Qureshi.* Photo: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 4.10: Qureshi, Imran. 2014. *The Garden Within*. Paint on concrete. Sites-specific installation commissioned by Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Installation view. Photo: Aga Khan Museum, Toronto and Corvi Mora.

Imran Qureshi's use of a variety of colourful filigree (other than red and sanguine) in his recent installations such as *The Garden Within* (2014) at the Aga Khan Museum, I argue, speak of the ornamentation and decoration traditions in Islamic religious manuscripts, miniature painting and architecture. Such renderings bring our attention to the current turmoil in the Islamic world while reaffirming Western stereotypical judgments of Muslim migrants as

monolithic and their issues peripheral. I also argue that the experience of walking over or looking at a large canvas of colourful splatters from which endless flowers bloom, is a sign of rebirth, rejuvenation and growth. For Imran - an optimist - the blood red that is now part of the Muslim land will germinate flowers, as spring is not that far.

The above discussion and examples illustrate that the strategy of gradual fragmentation of the body indicates that in Pakistani art the body is no longer a passive thing or a tool, but is emerging as an active performer. Myself, Qureshi, Rana have all explored such dimensions and patterns, both as direct political critique and as poetic expression.

4.5 Codes of Piety and the Art of Barzakh: Male Taboos and the Abject in the Contemporary Art of Pakistan

There is a similar construction of contemporary masculinity in Pakistan as in the West, where heteronormative gender relegates other categories of masculinity, like the effeminate, to a subordinate status.[510] However in Pakistan, male and female sexuality is heavily scrutinised via the codes of piety and lowering the gaze, and those who fall outside the dominant gender parameters are immediately labelled taboo, becoming abject bodies.[511] In some regards, the corpse of Rana's twin is the ultimate site for Kristeva's abject.[512] The taboos are socially constructed to define the boundaries of hegemonic control on the social body. The heterosexual artists who explore taboo subjects, abject materials, partial or fully-nude male bodies including self-portraits are not part of Barzakh but reside in liminal space of abjection. Furthermore, the exploration of such subjects creates risk and anxiety among straight artists as it can be stereotypically misinterpreted as 'gender trouble' or gender transgression. In the interview, Rashid Rana shared that his gendered identity has been questioned more than once. In an earlier work, he had used a condom with semen – an abject – to refer to his breakup with his wife. Using a condom drew attention to the male reproductive organs and their sexual functions, leading to an unwarranted questioning of Rana's marriage failure and its potential causes. In another work, Anwar Saeed exhibited the used *langooth* of *pehalwans (also pehlwan)* (local wrestlers portrayed as a positive South Asian masculinity by many male and female artists in Pakistan) [Fig 4.11, p. 237]. He exhibited them as bodies on a gallery wall. His admission of being gay immediately deflected the voyeuristic gaze off his own body and onto the work, which resulted as a repulsive gaze with a touch of sensuous pleasure.

510 John Tosh, "What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain", *History Workshop* 38 (1994): 191.

511 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 1–2.

512 Ibid., 3.

Figure 4.11: Saeed, Anwar. 2011. *Wrestling With An Imaginary Opponent.* Acrylic on paper. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Rashid Rana is not the only artist who has faced questions of gendered identity; other artists who use the nude body and the abject have also faced similar experiences of gaze in Pakistan. For example, there is Ali Kazim's only video performance work, *Ghusal (Bath)*, 2011, [Fig. 4.12] where he bathes a life-size painted figure of himself (wearing shorts), or his sculptural installation *Untitled,* 2011–2015, [Fig. 4.13] which is a long hollow tube made of human hair. These two works provide the evidence of Kazim's fluid position in Barzakh. The detailed craft of Kazim's earlier works connects these two works to historical miniature portrait

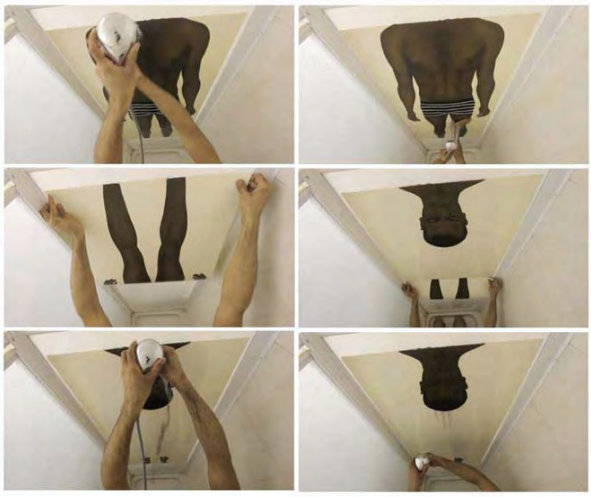


Figure 4.12: Kazim, Ali. 2010. *Ghusal*. Video. 2min, 31sec. Photo: courtesy the artist.

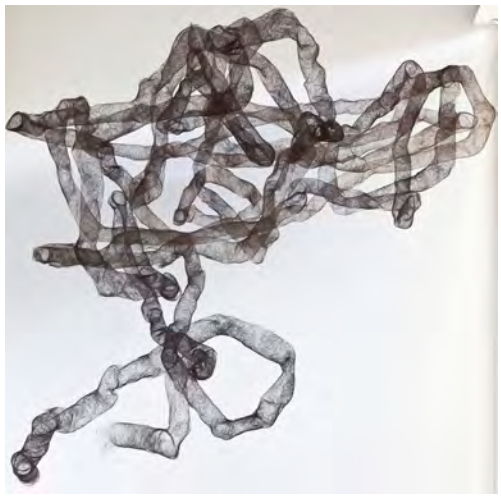


Figure 4.13: Kazim, Ali. 2011–2015. *Untitled.* Human hair, hairspray and invisible thread, Approx. 150 x 240 x 360 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

painting aesthetics, *Ghusal* and *Untitled* are results of his postgraduate studies in the West, which do not have the connection to Islam that Kazim usually draws from. In *Untitled*, he

collects human hair, an abject, to construct objects that resemble inside organs of the human body. Such use of abject material and the sculptural construction is sharp change from the approach of Kazim's earlier drawings and paintings about hair as the *fitrah* as an outward piety of Islam. In Islam, discarded body hair is abject and must be disposed of. This poses a challenge in the critical reading of his work. Although hair and bathing connect to Kazim's primary concern for the piety rituals of Islamic men, *Untitled* is aligned with the dead body than the living, and concerned more with physical cleansing than spiritual piety. Despite the fact that the *Untitled* hairpiece is a remarkable sculpture in its execution and form, its narrative weaves within the confines of a grotesque spectacle of materiality and only demonstrates Kazim's engagement and understanding of Western contemporary art which he must have studied during his postgraduate studies in London where he first created *Untitled*. This work is a sharp departure from Kazim's earlier paintings, which I conclude, draws from the sublime. I further argue that after a single gaze of discarded hair in *Untitled*, the repulsion of the abject remains in the stomach and pushes Kazim's narrative outside of the realm of Barzakh. Although in both *Ghusal* video and *Untitled*, the body seems to operate under a voyeuristic and repulsive gaze, however, there is a redeeming quality in *Ghusal*, which confirms that Kazim does not want to leave Barzakh. In *Ghusal*, he baths himself, more precisely his self-portrait, not completely nude but with modesty. Striped briefs (a modern day fig leaf whose length is close to Islamic prescribe length, *satar*, for male to cover their private parts) cover the genitals and indicate lowering the gaze, where Kazim does not wants to see himself naked.

In Islam *ghusal* (linguistically means, covering the whole body with water) is an act of worship. It is a full ritual bathing of body with water performed by both living and for the dead to purify the body from the ritual impurity *(najasat)*. For example, Muslim men are obligated to perform *ghusal janabat* after every voluntary sexual act that resulted in discharge of seamen. In Islam, such an emission renders the body 'unclean'. Similarly, in Islam the *ghusal mayaat* (washing the dead body) of a Muslim man or a woman before burial is considered as one of the important burial rites. Julia Kristeva links such religious acts with behaviour prohibitions, recognising that they are put in place to avoid defilement (pollution for Mary Douglas).[513] Furthermore in Kazim's work, on one hand the bathing of the painting is a process of deliberate artistic defilement in which he is washing the watercoloured human figure (himself), creating an abstract image of erasure, but on the other, the act draws from the purification of Kazim's gaze, religious practice, body and ultimately soul. I conclude that these two works, which Kazim executed within a few years apart, suggest a rupture in his artistic practice and spiritual identity, where his desire to be an outsider looking in is made obvious. No review of Kazim's work is

513 Julia Kristeva and Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Routledge, 1960), 5.

found that speak of this rupture and Kazim's Barzakhi position, choosing instead to pursue the formal analysis of his techniques and materiality.

4.6 Beyond the Male Gaze: Homosociality

For E. A. Kaplan and Kaja Silverman the gaze does not have to be restricted to 'male gaze', since both men and women adopt gaze, ignoring restricted active-male and passive-female roles and allowing reading "against the grain."[514] Despite heterosexual men being considered the primary holders of gaze, a voyeuristic and erotic gaze between men has also been argued as "queer viewing" or "queer gaze"[515], terms not limited to those who define themselves as queer, lesbian or gay; everyone has their "queer moments."[516] Such queer moments are embedded in the male nudes and figurative works by Pakistani artists that I argue cannot be simply read theoretically and require cultural and religious context to avoid misreading. Case study responses supported this argument as all four male artists agree that they are subjected to such misreading. Over the course of their illustrious career, they have come face to face a situation where they had to defend or deflect questions about their gender identity and have devised strategies such as replacing male figures with signs and symbols to avoid such misreading.

In Imran Qureshi's work phallic looking objects such as missiles and blood splatter replaced masculine figures. Ali Kazim has introduced hair and clouds in his work, where sometime a cloud acts as a veil or the counterpoint to the dominating male imagery to the male body. Some other popular counterpoints to the dominating male imagery are female figure, plants and animals. In contrast, female artists dealing with male bodies show a certain liberty to flirt with 'queer gaze' without raising the same personal questions faced by male artists. Such artworks are then read under 'male gaze', gaining recognition and even wider acceptance as an expression of feminine 'otherness' that propagates under the feminist umbrella. Faiza Butt's tongue-in-cheek works demonstrate the segregations of masculine and feminine in the Islamic world, commenting on gender politics in popular culture. For Nadia Butt, the candy-coloured portraits of two Talibs [Taliban] in *Get Out of My Dreams II* and *Pehalwan IV* [Figs. 4.14 & 4.15, p. 240] are about "playing on the image of a narcissist kissing his own reflection or two

514 E. A. Kaplan, *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera* (New York: Methuen, 1983). Also: Kaja Silverman, "Masochism and Subjectivity", *Framework* 12 (1980): 2–9.

515 Steve Neale, "Masculinity as Spectacle", in *Caughie et al.* (eds.) (1992), op. cit., pp. 277–87; Cohan & Hark (Eds.) (1993), op. cit., pp. 9–20; extract in Hall (Ed.) (1997), op. cit., 331–3.

516 Caroline Evans and Lorraine Gamman, "The Gaze Revisited, or Reviewing Queer Viewing", in A *Queer Romance: Lesbians, Gay Men and Popular Culture*, ed. by Burston and Richardson, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 45.

men in a passionate embrace."[517] Even Butt's work *God's Best* (Fig. 4.16) deflects the narrative from herself to Talibani men. Nadia Butt writes that some of these works were produced:

> *under a direct response to the news about the Taliban forbidding men to shave off their facial hair. By attacking the cloned image of the self they were forcefully promoting, Faiza… handled [the] issues with wit and humour, ultimately raising… questions about them. At the same time, she has wanted to embellish and beautify these images with the power of her paint brush, making them a means of enjoyment and gratification.*[518]

Nadia Butt's comment on Faiza Butt's stippled male bodies as an enjoyment for 'them' implies men, not women. Such a reading poses challenges for male artists. I suspect that if a male artist were to paint a series such as *God's Best*, with two men or even two women kissing, the narratives would lead back to him and as his 'male gaze' as manifestations of personal desire or the artist's gender transgression. I argue that through their lived experience and keen

Figure 4.14: Butt, Faiza. 2008. *Get Out of My Dreams II*. Ink on polyester film. 55.9 x 72.4 cm. Photo: www.rossirossi.com.

Figure 4.15: Butt, Faiza. 2010. *Pehalwan IV*. Ink on polyester film mounted on light box. 51 x 60 cm. Photo: www.grosvenorgallery.com.

Figure 4.16: Butt, Faiza. 2011. *God's Best 2, 3, 4.* Mixed media. 91 x 67 cm (each). Photo: www.rossirossi.com.

517 Nadia Butt, "I Want To Throw Punches," *Friday Times*, vol. XXIV, No. 4, November 23–29, 2012 (Accessed December 13, 2014) http://www.thefridaytimes.com/beta3/tft/article.php?issue=20121123&page=22

518 Ibid.

observations, women artists may be better placed to talk about such issues. I argue that artists like Faiza Butt have a dialectical perspective to masculine discussions and can provide gender studies a way of poetic resistance from economic and cultural determinism prevalent in religious societies.

In my view, the male gaze in Butt's *Pehalwan series,* which turns toward another man through a reflection, is a poetic example of 'homosociality'. In a patriarchal structure, this is where men look at other men via the medium of women (or here the reflective curvy cup), who act as a disguise between the gestures of two men.[519]

The notion of homosociality unpacks the different public and private attitudes to male bonding and affection in Pakistan. It also sheds light on the research question of how and when a male artist faces 'male gaze' or feels anxious and misunderstood. Reporting on Pakistan's social and gender structure, Meghan Davidson Ladly writes that:

> *Homosocial... behaviour is common enough. Pakistani society is sharply segregated on gender lines, with taboos about extramarital sex that make it almost harder to conduct a secret heterosexual romance than a homosexual one. Displays of affection between men in public, like hugging and holding hands, are common. - A guy can be with a guy anytime, anywhere, and no one will raise an eyebrow.*[520]

Growing up in Pakistan, I recognise that despite how masculinity is represented in media and film, Pakistani men are far more homosocial and androgynous. The public displays of affection between men that Ladly observes, I argue, is 'bromance', where women play the medium of Barzakh. Pakistani bromance is an example of a close homosocial yet non-sexual relationship between two men ('womance' is for women). Pakistani bromance culture, also referred to as *Yarana* (and *Behnapa* or *Sahalee* for womance), is a popular theme in the visual realm, primarily film and TV drama, and filters into the visual arts, billboard painting and even Truck Art, either in the form of figures, signs, symbols, or text specifically poetry. For Sedgwick bromance is a triangular structure: women have hardly any power and the men's desire to hold more power pushes them to forge an alliance with each other in order to accumulate further power and influence.[521]

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519 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia, 1985); cf. Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the `Political Economy' of Sex," in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. by Rayna Reiter (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975).

520 Meghan Davidson Ladly, "Gay Pakistanis, Still in Shadows, Seek Acceptance," *The New York Times* November 3, 2012 (Accessed December 12, 2012) http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/world/asia/gays-in-pakistan-move-cautiously-to-gain-acceptance.html

521 For cogent explanations of this theory see: Murray Bowen, Family Therapy in *Clinical Practice* (Northvale: Jason Aronson, 1985); Philip Guerin, Thomas Fogarty, Leo Fay, and Judith Gilbert Kautto, *Working with Relationship Triangles: The One-Two-Three of Psychotherapy* (New York: Guilford, 1996).

As a text under patriarchy, the male body rejects being read by other men, since allowing reading only erases control and power.[522] When compared, Western men see other men as whole and avoid naming another man's body parts that might attract their attention. This is a form of "Averting the Gaze, Refusing to Read", where reading is "to risk making one's self vulnerable."[523] Philip Culbertson asserts that "gazing affects the gazer much more deeply than the one toward whom the gaze is directed", and when a straight man gazes at another man (straight or gay) "it re-positions a straight man as a gay man, thereby shattering his fragile masculinity."[524] In Pakistan, such vulnerability exists, yet there is also a comfort among men in looking at, acknowledging, or rejecting each other in parts. This is partly due to religious and cultural norms (men are prohibited to look at each other naked), the joint family system, and everyday male gatherings in Mosques and in the past the public bath houses (*Hamam*), where men generally feel comfortable sharing their thoughts on each other without being called 'feminine'. This general acceptance could be attributed to religious teachings of brotherhood and chivalry, as well as sharing knowledge of male grooming and hygiene.[525]

I conclude, based on this reading and my studio practice, that the majority of male nudes or semi-nudes in Pakistani art require a bromance reading. Such dichotomies venture beyond the prevailing boundaries of the heteronormative ideals of male nudity and sexuality in Pakistan, which misrepresent the male artist's work, identity and masculine performativity. Susan Bordo points out that male gaze has the power not only to objectify, but also to feminise.[526] Under a patriarchal system, the penis of an unclothed man cues masculinity, so that "the body, the being; disappears and the person becomes a function, the form becomes the essence, the masculinity, the 'doing.'"[527]

Those who identify with 'queer gaze' as a deliberate act of consuming the sexualised queer male body for pleasure, such as in porn, bear the burden of being both 'men' and the 'queer other'. Despite the fact that porn is primarily made for and consumed by men, this consumption can be expanded to pornography made for and by women and queer audiences. A queer othering through pornography is extensively explored by Pakistani artist Anwar Saeed in works such as *I Pierre Seel, Deported Homosexual* (2003-) [Fig 4.17, p. 243]. Saeed is one of a handful of male artists in Pakistan who clearly position themselves as queer artists. He has been

522 Philip Culbertson, "*Designing Men: Reading the Male Body as Text,"* in *Men and Masculinities in Christianity and Judaism: A Critical Reader*, ed. Bjorn Krondorfer, (London: 2009): 113–124.

523 Ibid.

524 Culbertson, "Designing Men". John M. Meckenzie, *Orientalism, History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: University Press 1995).

525 See Chapter One, Part 1: Legalist Tradition, p. 46.

526 Susan Bordo, "Reading the Male Body," in *The Male Body*, ed. L. Goldstein (University of Michigan Press, 1994), 287.

527 Culbertson, "Designing Men."

drawing and painting 'unedited' and 'sans fig leaf' images of "love, pleasure, and decadence", while challenging the norms of patriarchal society.[528]

Figure 4.17: Saeed, Anwar. 2003-. *A page from I Pierre Seel, Deported Homosexual: A Memoir of Nazi Terror* (detail). Mixed media on found book. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.18: Saeed, Anwar. 2012-. *Execution series from Exercises in Imaging the Other.* Digital print on archival paper. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Similar to Rashid Rana, the digital print strategy of using photographic negative films to create silhouette forms has also been employed by Anwar Saeed in exhibitions such as *Man vs Who He Should Be and Exercises in Imagining the Others* (2012) to speak about culturally tabooed subjects of masculine queer desires. Initially Saeed painted his subjects as photographic negatives [Fig. 4.11, p. 237] but in recent exploration, he digitally photographed his semi nude male models in various objects and conversation settings. However, unlike Rashid Rana, Saeed inverts the process where he digitally inverted the positive photographic images and exhibited them as negative (matrix) prints. Here inverted images are used to present the sub-conscious or the soul. When viewed, such images at first glance present themselves as raw, inchoate and floating on a picture plane, however, upon closer inspection, the ambiguous and surreal nature of the semi nude inverted figures pushes the viewer to access his or her cultural and religious perceptions and prejudices, and completes the negative into a fully developed artwork with all its subtext in his or her mind.

528 Salima Hashmi and Naazish Ata-Ullah. *Hanging fire: contemporary art from Pakistan* (New York: Asia Society Museum, 2009), 126. Also see: Syed Muhammad Iyhab Abdullah and Roohi Ahmed, "Lets Draw the Line: The Hidden Pages of Sketchbooks of Pakistani Artists", in *Recto Verso: Redefining the Sketchbook* (Lincoln, UK: University of Lincoln, 2011): 137-150.

D. Case Study Responses: Part IV

When asked what clothes they associated with semi-nude modelling, all four male participants identified *langooth* (loin cloth) and underwear (boxers, briefs or board shorts) as popular attire. They also mentioned the traditional *shalwar*. Rashid Rana identified using langooth to simulate his nude appearance in *The Middle of Nowhere* [Fig. 4.5, p. 232]. Anwar Saeed also identified using such items of clothing to cover his nude male figures, referring to them as the acceptable norms of male nudity in Pakistan, specifically the langooth despite it not adhering to the prescribed Islamic requirement for men, which is to cover the body from navel to knee in public at all times.[529] He considers this a social hypocrisy and argues that such attire is socially accepted and even celebrated as part of the cultural vernacular in traditional and modern sports: the langooth in traditional wresting (*Kusthi*), and shorts in Western wrestling (WWF). For Saeed, a loincloth has a different meaning because it covers the lower part of the body and "a specific portion", which for him directly relates to sexuality. Thus he sees the langooth as "an icon of male sexuality as it may contain droplets of urine, sweat or sperm, soil and oil etc., all of which becomes an aspect of masculinity." In comparison to attitudes on the male nude, all participants identified the female nude as an acceptable norm within the art world.

On the topic of nudity and censorship, all participants identified General Zia's era as the worst for figurative art. Zia's strict censorship policies were the primary cause, which pushed many artists to abandon figures in favour of abstraction. Those who continued exploring nudes kept them hidden from the public eye. Imran Qureshi saw the removal of Anwar Saeed's male nudes and semi-nudes from exhibition as a prime example of this censorship. For Rashid Rana "nudity is not easily accepted by the masses" in Pakistan, and while the majority of artists may not have any issues with nude works, "some small minority may cause problems." In Rana's view, "taboos and self-censorship" exist, and this separates the art of Pakistan from the art of the West. Rana sees nudity as a "comfortable relationship… with the body and its nude portrayal is really a characteristic of the West." He also suggest that Pakistani artists are creatively engaging with the political and religious restrictions in Pakistan and illustrates this with an example of Qureshi's work [Fig. 4.19, p. 245]:

> *"In [Imran] Qureshi's painting… a male figure of a contemporary religious Pakistani man who has a beard and dons a shalwar kamiz, [is depicted] taking his shirt off in a*

529 Sahih al-Muslim, 106.

Abu Dawood (3140) and Ibn Maajah (1460) narrated that 'Ali (s.a.a.w) said: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Do not show your thigh, and do not look at the thigh of anyone, living or dead." (The majority of fuqaha' agreed that a man's 'awrah is from the navel to the knee. See al-Mughni, 2/284)."

way that you can only see the beard against his nude torso. I think it is an amazing expression [that] challenges…restrictions."

Interestingly both Rana (Fig. 4.5) and Saeed have explored a similar theme in their works. However, in Saeed's work (Fig. 4.20), the male nudity is a symbolic representation of 'queer identity' that clearly stems from a point of sexual gaze taking pleasure in the male body.

Figure 4.19: Qureshi, Imran. 2007. *Moderate Enlightenment*. Gouache on wasli (paper), 22 x 17 cm. Photo: courtesy the artist.

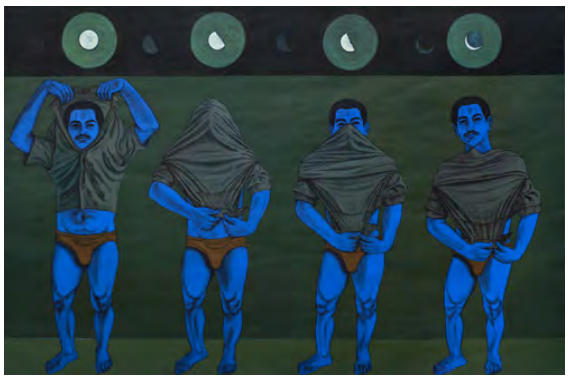


Figure 4.20: Saeed, Anwar. 2011. *Wrestling With An Imaginary Opponent*. Acrylic on paper. Photo: courtesy the artist.

In terms of replacing the male body with signs and symbols, all five artists note recurring themes: the grid; animals such as tigers, horses and *buraq* [the mythical stead on which Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) visited seven havens on the day of Miraj]; flowers such as a rose, tulip and lotus; animals and birds such as a horse, lion, fish, parrot, pigeon and falcon; objects such as missiles, condoms, topi, blades, windows, the moon, the sun; and materials such as leather, blood, semen and hair. Blue, red, orange, black and white are also identified as dominating colours for representing diverse masculinities in Pakistan.

Meher Afroz rarely uses realistic figures and is "inclined more towards symbolic representation." Her display of masculine figures is an "unconscious" effect of seeing "a religious or a leading figure… a male." She then refers to the influence of Western art, identifying how in local art "character[s] are portrayed more than physical presentation", marking religion and ethics as the cause of such portrayal. She mentioned Zahoor-ul-Akhlaq, Ali Azmat and Afshar Malik, all of whom have dealt with such issues in their work, both as figures and metaphors. She sees R. M. Naeem's masculine depictions as "very feminine", which she also identified with Ali Kazim's work. Ali Kazim relates his interest with the male body to the Indus Valley Civilisation's artefacts and his fascination for the King Priest statue [Background, Fig. 1, p.10]. For Kazim, the statue has a "significant historical context, imposing masculinity and the sense of strength it emanates inspired me to explore the male figure."

Kazim has primarily worked with semi-nude (topless) models, though he also uses photographs of men for visual reference.

In terms of employing professional male nude models, performing nude, or creating nude self portraits, all four male artists disclosed that they have employed a professional male model to pose nude or semi-nude, depending on the art project. However all agree that locating a willing nude model in Pakistan is challenging. They also agree that using one's own body, either in performance or as reference, and referring to nudes from Western drawing books, photographs and even men's health and erotic magazines, are practical options for portraying male bodies. All four male artists identified their nude life drawing experiences as Western, which occurred through study or residencies abroad. For example, Ali Kazim identified the Slade School of Fine Art as the place where he drew from nude models:

> *Nude drawing facilities are not at all available in any art school in Pakistan. It is considered unthinkable to have a nude model in a drawing class. It is due to this that art students and practitioners have developed a different, perhaps a negative attitude toward the subject… Male topless torsos are deliberately depicted till the waist and rest of the image is left to the viewer's imagination.*

Anwar Saeed agrees that "topless single figures" require coverage below the torso. He also clarified that although he has drawn and painted full nude figures, however, he painted them with the intention of never exhibiting them: "I just did what I wanted to and never consciously stopped myself."

There was consensus among the artists that drawing or painting male bodies is more a decision of "unconsciousness", that is with the exception of Saeed. For Qureshi, when "male form in my paintings took dominance over the entire process… female figure was felt absent and had to be consciously inserted to avoid another narrative." Ali Kazim further explained:

> *People quite often confuse the artist's choice of subject with his/her sexuality. [For instance,] I have used male figures in my work repeatedly and some people had thought that I am attracted to the men depicted but that is not the case. The work explores far [more] complex issues than [male] sexuality and challenges the cliché understanding of the masculinity.*

On the topic of representation and interpretation of male nudity and sexuality, Anwar Saeed's comments are more psychological; he states that if the "artists are using the figure they

might be exploring the aspect of pleasure or body, they explore personalised aesthetics of the body itself." However, he does not imply that appreciation and pleasure of the male body alone identifies an artist as gay. For some participants being gay and homosexual are two different things. For Saeed, "gay is an American concept, which is a culture. We don't have…gay culture and community" He further explains that a gay culture is "a political entity which is accepted and acknowledged and given a name [in the west] so I don't think people here are gays, they are homosexuals."

There is a difficulty in articulating 'masculine' subjects for all the artists, since they view male body discourse as Western and are reluctant to engage with it due to the potential of encouraging unwarranted comments about their own gendered identity. For Rana, men who talk about non-essentialist masculinity and feminism "are not typical example of a cross section of the society of Pakistan." He further identifies a misconception that "if you deal with male sexuality or masculinity then it is usually a gay artist who would do that." Saeed elaborates on such stereotypical misinterpretations of gender as a result of East/West divide, suggesting:

> *[M]asculinity that is represented in India [Pakistan] and in the Western art in Europe is shown in two ways. One is the intellectual way with a less emotive representation either in terms of the context or by nature of a few artists. The other includes the use of masculine objects such as shaving brushes, safety blades, underwear, vest, etc. to produce art in a very direct way.*

Saeed further explained this directness as the Western 'nude male body' with exposed penis/phallus, citing Robert Mapplethorpe's photographic male bodies as an example. In contrast, South Asian artists choose poses and props to represent the male body, and use less overtly sexual imagery. He also commented that although the nude male exists in the *Kama Sutra* paintings (10-17th Century), it is primarily illustrated in relation to the female body, hence heterosexual.

In retrospect, Anwar Saeed concludes that "the making of the nude is not going to have an impact on the society at large as art making is by far a limited activity." The failing wider acceptance of nudes – male or female – is attributed to collectors, who are "scared of figurative works here, they don't like purchasing pieces or hanging it at their place with nudity in it, whether it is male or female."

STUDIO PRACTICE

STUDIO CASE STUDY AND DEMO X

4.7 Studio Practice

Continuing my earlier discussions of Barzakhi art and performance practice, I will now look into a drawing and photographic series that documents some of my performance projects. Retaining my view of the studio as *Karkhana*, I began looking into the drawing practices in Pakistan's academic studios and conducted a case study. The primary goal of the case study was to investigate the absence of female nudes and the use of only semi-nude men in life drawing classes. I had been following the employment of semi-nude men practice since 2003, both as an examiner and a visiting lecturer at various universities in Pakistan. It highlights the sensitive nature of figurative representation in Pakistani art. The case study led me to reject some of my initial assumptions, abandoned a few artworks about ruptured masculinities and helped me to embark on a ongoing performance work, *Soft Target*, which I began in 2011 and here presenting as an example of my Barzakhi art. The overall experience and visual outcome leads back to my initial primary question of Islamic models of gender (p. 27).

Figure 4.21: Semi-nude male life drawing model weaning shalwar. 2010. Life Drawing Studio, Karachi School of Art, Karachi. Photo: Roohi Ahmed and the author.

Figure 4.22a-b: Fully clothed male life drawing model. 2010. Life Drawing Studio, Saeed Akhtar Studio, Lahore.

Projects began in the early stages of this research, when my focus was on Mulvey's 'male gaze' and the male body in private spaces, specifically within academic drawing practice.[530] My use of various props and poses, and my performance as the 'male model' were further informed by Berger's writing on gaze. My analysis suggests that the Islamic concept of lowering the gaze is present, making semi-nude male models a culturally and politically charged issue. Exposure to diverse representations of gender in Islamic art and Pakistani art, mixed with some unexpected outcomes in the case studies, allowed me to fully embrace live performance in these works. Lastly, similar to how a silence, a pause and a breath are important features in Islamic prayer of piety such as *Salat*, I consider such intermissions and silence as an importance feature in my performance work. Furthermore, I examine preparatory drawings and performance photographs as evidence of stillness in my performance work.

To draw and contextualise my performance practice in Pakistan, first I examined the local art scene and their reaction to my work. Initially locals thought of me as an outsider, looking into an issue that does not directly affect me, as I do not live in Pakistan. This is understandable, though I was born and raised there until the age of 20, however I did not study art in Pakistan and have no art academic association in Pakistan as a student. I travelled back and forth and gained an awareness of Pakistan's slowly transforming art and gender roles, which are especially visible in the urban Pakistani male, under the phenomenon described earlier as metrosexuality. Once I returned home in 2003 and began exhibiting, teaching and participating in the community, I gained access to the local world of art as one of their own, an insider and as a 'metrosexual' man. I recognised that for many, metrosexuality represents a liberalisation of gender identities in art, which operates primarily under notions of 'eccentric' or 'creative' expression. Issues, behaviours, actions and performances that were once considered taboo for masculinity are accepted in the art world, but never publicly declared or written about. While these expressions are slowly being accepted, among the larger number of men they remain undesirable and open to ridicule. A quick glance at men's fashion magazines, music videos, films and advertisements will clearly push the hegemonic boundaries of masculinity and male body representation to metrosexual realm, as they employ groomed models with Greek sculpted bodies who do not represent the average Pakistani man. Simultaneously they will happily portray a stereotypical macho muscularity, as well as a highly metrosexual, erotic, and almost 'Orientalist' masculinity.

In terms of drawing and performance practices in Pakistan, I argue that both are trying to come to terms with using the body, specifically male body, but require deeper critical enquiry

530 Laura Mulvey extended Berger's ideas in visual culture through second-wave feminism. She coined the term 'male gaze' to deal with how heterosexual men look at and objectify women, and subsequently how women look at themselves and each other. Laura Mulvey, "Feminist Cinema and Visual Pain", in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989).

due to the employment (exploitation in some instances) of men from the lower social strata as life drawing models in the public education sector. Such masculinities that bear the onslaught of male and female gaze are contested here. These models are a source of success for many renowned Pakistani artists, who use them to further develop work representing poverty, pop culture, the female figure, dancers, and lately, the 'explosive' masculine bodies of terrorists and suicide bombers.

The use of male models in Pakistani art education system is conditioned by the fact that projecting, displaying and using nude or semi-nude female bodies is a taboo activity that against the Islamic law and can only exists in private studios. Both in government and private art institutes, semi-nude young and elderly men (many are non Muslims) are employed as the anatomy and life drawing models. They either wear long shorts or *shalwar* as per the Islamic standard of male piety. Students, both female and male, are given a choice not to participate in such classes if they observe strict Islamic interpretations on drawing living beings or feel uncomfortable gazing semi-nude male bodies. In some cases, participating students only refuse to draw the entire body and instead concentrate on drawing body parts like the hands, feet and face. From my own learning and teaching experience, I have found that most students have no objection to drawing partially covered male bodies, but feel strongly about the use of female bodies, whether clothed or nude, for any drawing sessions.[531]

531 I also refused to take life-drawing course during my Bachelor of Arts degree in the USA due to my uninformed religious knowledge on the subject. Instead, I was allowed to take Portrait drawing course as a substitute.

STUDIO CASE STUDY

Case study: ***Drawing Chauvinism***

Location: Indus Valley School of Art (IVS), Karachi, Pakistan, 2011

Participants: 10 male and female drawing artists, 3 male life-drawing models

Figure 4.23a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.* Drawing Chauvinism Studio in session, various poses. Photo: courtesy the artist.

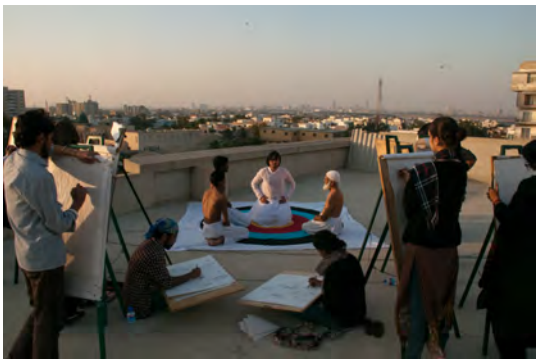


Figure 4.23b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.*

Figure 4.23c: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.*

Figure 4.24: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.* The Archer Pose. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.25: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.* The Poet Pose. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.26a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.* A participant directing the pose. Drawing Chauvinism Studio in Session. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.26b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.* A participant directing the pose. Drawing Chauvinism Studio in Session. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.26c: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.* A participant directing the pose. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.27: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism*. Drawing Chauvinism Studio session with female participants only. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.28a: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.* Blind folded poses. Drawing Chauvinism Studio in session. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.28b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism.* Blind folded and chained with shirts pose. Drawing Chauvinism Studio in session. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Drawing Chauvinism (2011) is a performance-drawing case study that resulted in photographic and drawing archives and artworks, conducted as a life drawing classroom session with local art students focusing on drawing as practice.

To find participants for a life drawing class, I advertised for artists and students at two universities, through drawing teachers, and through friends in Karachi. Ten participants took part, a mix of male and female with diverse religious beliefs that ranged from secular to orthodox Muslims. Consent was administered, outlining that the entire session would be conducted with semi-nude male models, and the entire activity would be photographically recorded. A call like this for a one-time drawing session is not out of ordinary. In Pakistan, individual artists occasionally organise such private drawing sessions at their studio spaces as a means to earning cash as well as sharing and learning about life drawing through collaboration. The session was a self-guided activity; hence no drawing instructions were given. The drawings were returned to the participants after being photographed.

Three life-drawing models were hired at daily wages, all were above 18 years of age and came recommended from different institutions. Alongside these support models, I became the primary model. As a person from the upper-middle class of Pakistan's social strata, I have been in positions of leadership and considered with modest respect, switching places and becoming the model brings attention to this aspect of masculinity. None of the models, including myself, posed nude. I wore a traditional Mughal emperor's tunic with shalwar and groomed myself according to the prescribed religious practices [Chapter One, Section 1.3, p. 53]. I designed the tunic after seeing and learning more about a design of a Mughal Emperor Tunic displayed at The British Museum. I simplified and altered the design to suite my body type and stitched it in muslin to keep the body veiled but create a semblance of the semi-nudity. The muslin tunic (also called *Mulmal ka Kurta*) is commonly worn in South Asia by men during the summer, and for modesty many men wear a singlet underneath. The other models were provided a pair of white shalwar, which they commonly wear during their professional life drawing sessions.

A brief background interview with the models revealed that they all came from the lower strata of the social system, mainly working as cleaners, peons, helpers or chuffers, and two of them were non-Muslim, coming from an ethnic or religious minority. They become models to earn extra money, and in some instances with no additional incentives from the institution. They are a perfect example of Homi Bhabha's "double othering", where one "sees itself" as other, and "mimics" an undisputed authority. Such self-othering identities "change their conditions of recognition while maintaining their visibility: they introduce a lack that is

then represented as a doubling or mimicry."[532] These male models become objects of gaze, a position that is often imposed on the female other. In Pakistan, art is predominately considered a 'female activity' since female students outweigh the number of male students; the tension between the female artist and male model results in a power role reversal, and that is one of the primary focus of this project.

All models, including myself, stood on a hand stitched large fabric target. The session was held on the IVS rooftop in clear daylight. The backdrop was the cityscape on one side and the sea on the other. Initially, I choreographed the poses after those of the Mughal emperor and prince in miniature paintings, as well as positions from salat prayers, namely *qiyam* and *tashahhud* [Figs. 4.23-4.25, p. 253]. Later I asked participants to come forward and choreograph a pose. Every pose was held for the same time that the model would typically pose in their drawing sessions [Figs. 4.26a-b-c, p.254].

The photo shoot was conduced in two sessions. In the first it was with everyone who participated in the drawings. In the second session, some female participants wore burqa or veils, and male participants were asked to wear skullcaps which were provided. Poses for the second session were based on the emasculation of the male body.[533] This stage argued the male body as an object of desire to bring attention to the politicised identity of women as an object in art. All models were blindfolded so as not to interfere with the female gaze [Fig. 4.27, p. 254]. The resulting drawings were retuned to students as they are hardly used for exhibition, typically considered undesirable and unworthy of critical or aesthetic reception.

I observed that most of the male models hired did not provide an adequate representation of a healthy male body, since many are malnourished and do not have correct posture. Their bodies hardly have any muscle definition. Their poses are archaic and lack imagination and the coverage of the lower body does not offer a complete understanding of male anatomy. They lack a professional understanding of life modelling, however they do take direction well. The older male model generally felt comfortable in poses considered modest, such as standing with arms on hips or sitting with arms on their lap. Young models were enthusiastic, eager to please (specifically to please female artists' gaze), and are occasionally hired by final year thesis students to model poses. Some artists even look for male models that are not masculine looking for projects that requires a female body and ask these men to hold

532 "Mimicry reveals something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an itself that is behind. The effect of mimicry is camouflage.... It is not a question of harmonising with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled – exactly like the technique of camouflage practised in human warfare." Homi K. Babhaha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 85.

533 Ironically, such half-naked bodies of young men with mute posture have been observed in the media representing alienation and shame, like in the 2006 live telecast of the hijacking of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque), which has already been discussed. Their covered faces, their tied up half-naked young bodies suggest a type of masculinity that is grounded in shame, alienation and unworthiness.

traditional feminine pose of chastity, modesty and beauty such as pose of Botticelli's Venus or Ingres' Odalisque. Students use these poses to imagine the female body, which often results in androgynous depiction. It echoes the pre-Renaissance situation where paintings of half-naked women look distinctly male because they were modelled on male figures. In addition, in public spaces like traditional clothing markets, male employees always model female clothes. Sometimes these men are employed just to model saris or dupata for discerning customers. During the session, the female gaze and voyeuristic gaze remained in check under the cultural practice of lowering the gaze.

The resulting photographs were analysed, and some were used to create digital palimpsests (Figs. 4.29a-b) which presented myself as the emperor who with his army of men paying visit to various locations within the Mughal miniature world. The critical assessment of the work rendered the images and the composite works as failures. I found that the photographs are didactic illustrations of media gender biases. They do not go beyond their function as such representations. The composite digital prints though create new idioms for gender, their political commentary is too immediate and yet remained historical. Despite such failures, the intervention of the target at multiple sites caught my attention. On reflection, I considered it to perfectly inform my current state of identity and that of Barzakhi art. I discovered that I had to pack this target and travel in search for *ilm* (knowledge or truth), like the Sufi in search of his beloved. It was clear to me that once more, I must become a traveller.

Figure 4.29a-b: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Drawing Chauvinism*. Digital Palimpsests. Rejected concepts. Photo: Courtesy the artist.

DEMO X

Artworks: *Soft Target*

Performance Locations*:* *UK, Pakistan, UAE, Australia, New Zealand, China and USA*

Exhibitions: *Parrhesia (2011*), IVS Gallery, Karachi; *Some Other Place (2012*), Blacktown Arts Centre, Sydney; *Middlehead (2013)*, Sydney; *Subject to Ruins (2014*), Casula PowerHouse, Sydney; *Homelands (2015),* Delmar Gallery, Sydney.

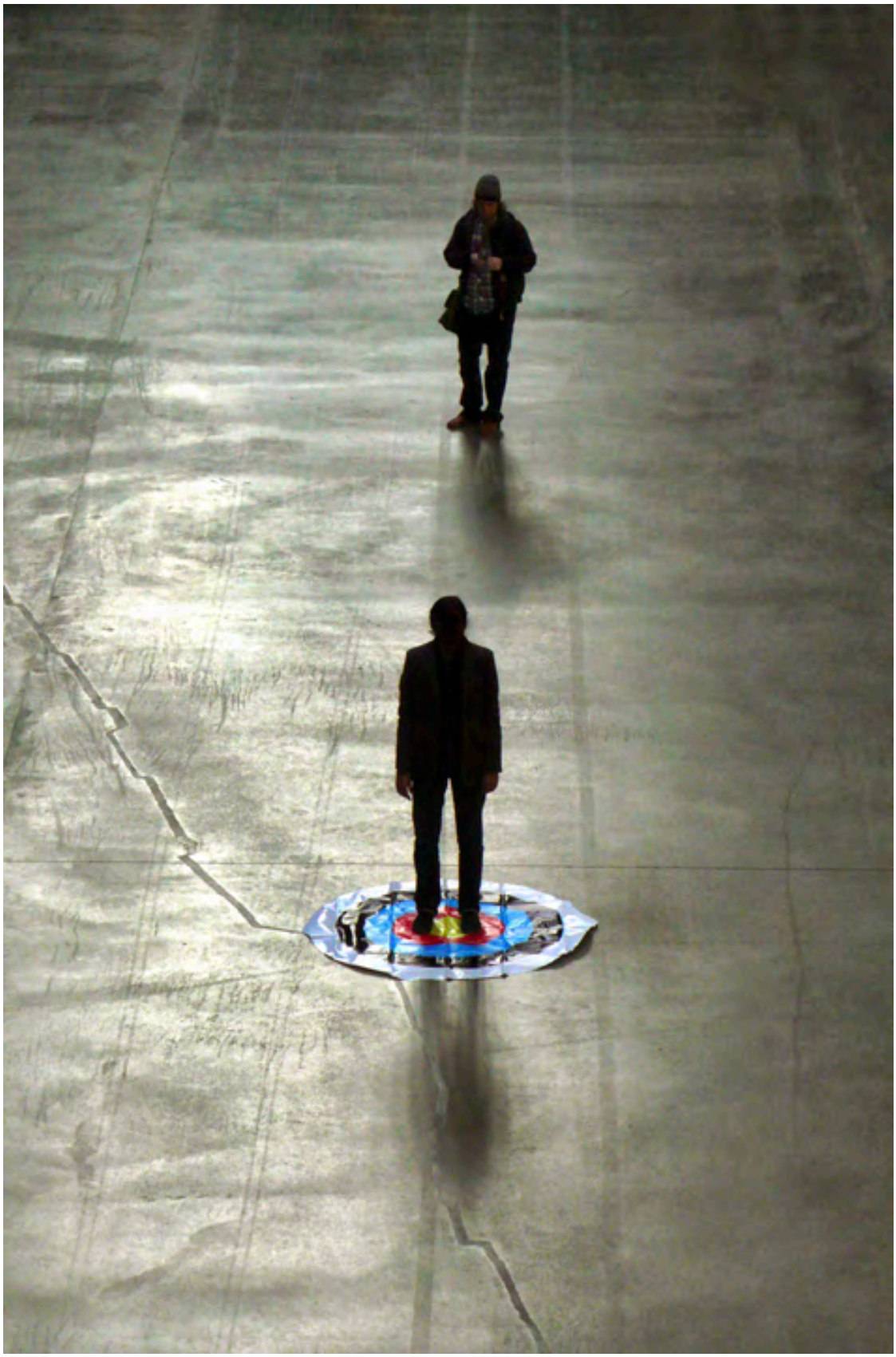


Figure 4.30: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2011. *Soft Target: Doris's Crack 'Shibboleth' in Turbine Hall, Tate Modern*, *London.* From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 83 x 127cm. Photograph taken by Li Wenmin. Image: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.31: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. *Soft Target: Sky Tower, Victoria Street West, Auckland.* From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 51 x 76 cm. Photograph taken by Roohi Ahmed. Image: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.32: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2012. *Soft Target: Burj Al Arab, Jumeriah Beach, Dubai.* From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 51 x 76 cm. Photograph taken by Adeel-uz-Zafar. Image: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.33: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2014. Soft Target: *Tiananmen Square and Forbidden City.* From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 51 x 76 cm. Photograph taken by Zhan Qian (Jane). Image: courtesy the artist.

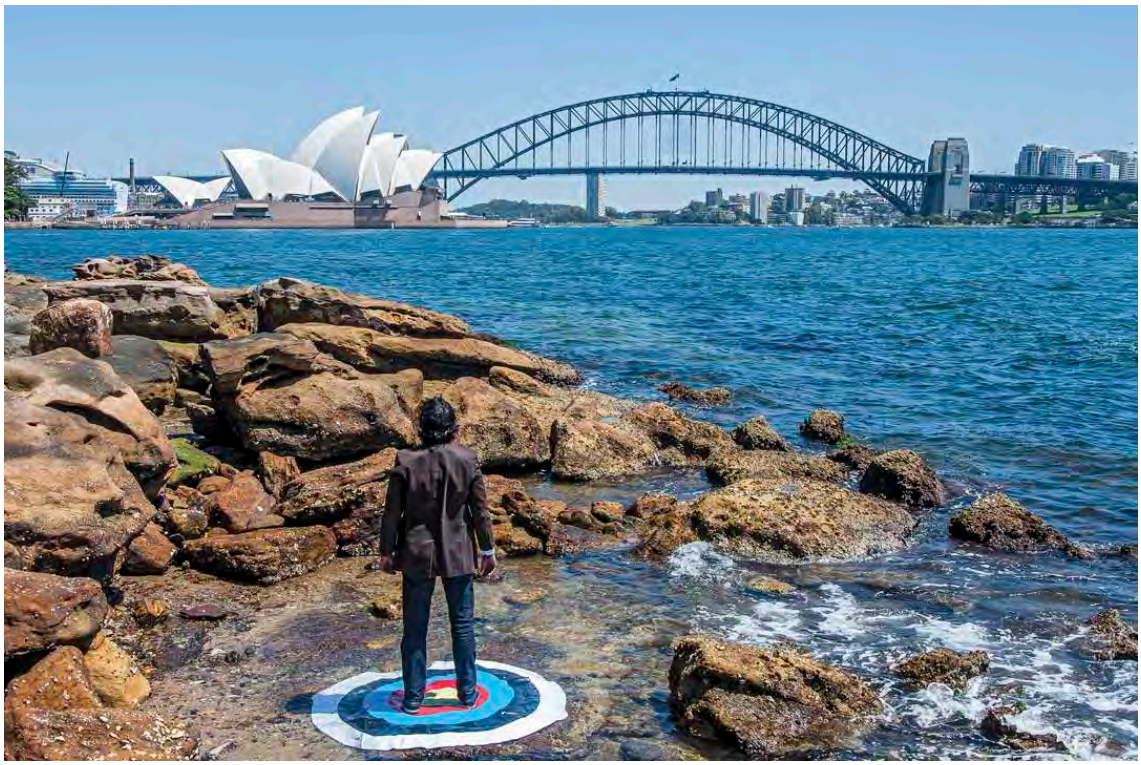


Figure 4.34: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. Soft Target: *Opera House & Sydney Harbour Bridge, Mrs Macquaries Point at Sydney Harbour, Sydney.* From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 76 x 51 cm. Photograph taken by Ben Rak.

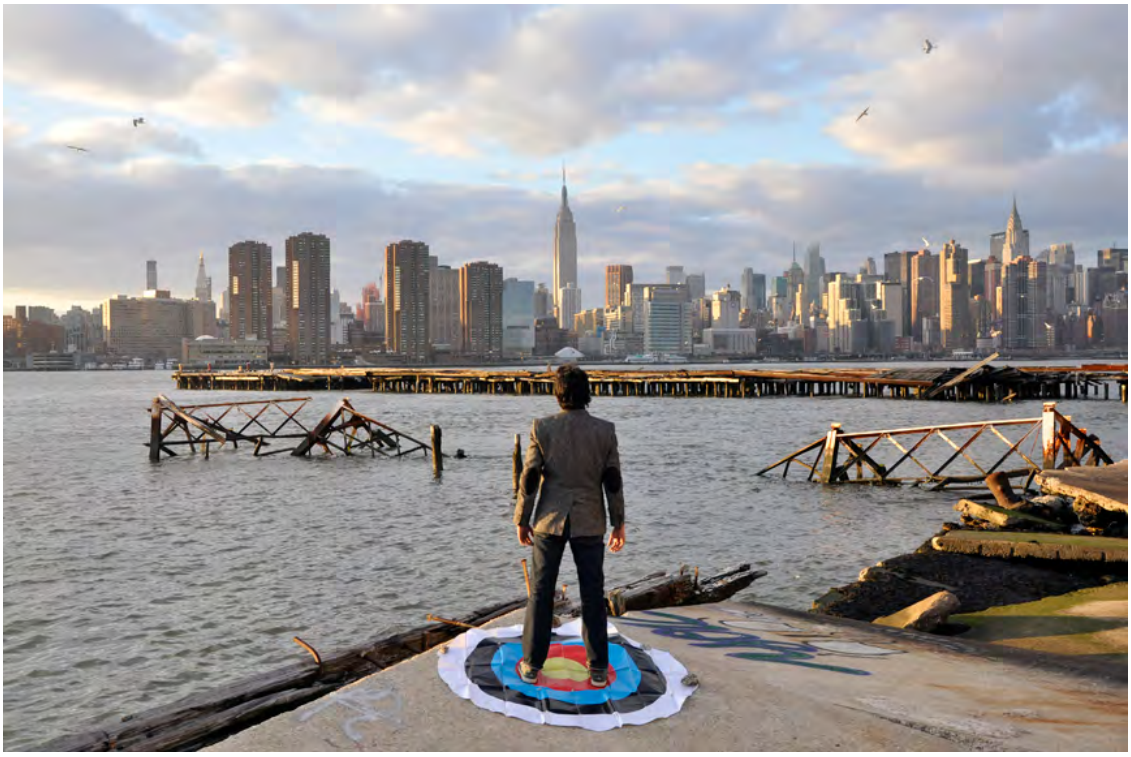
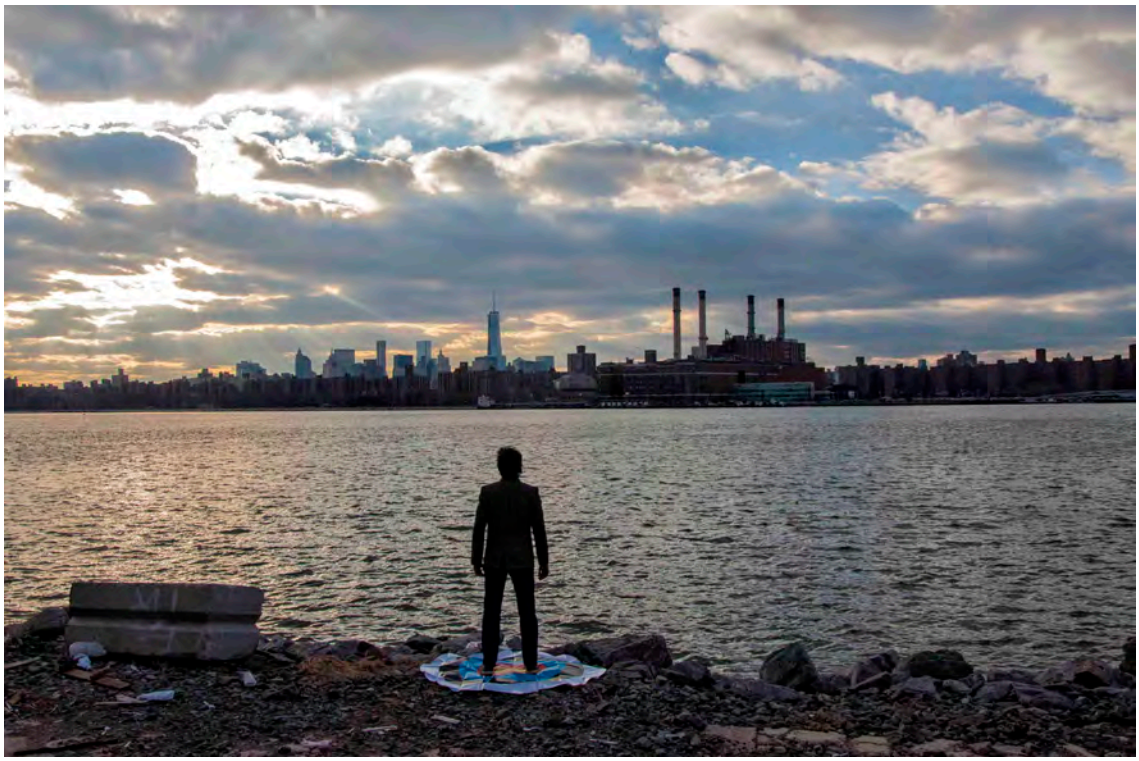


Figure 4.35: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2014. *Soft Target: Empire State from Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York II*. From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 127 x 83 cm. Photograph taken by Christine Shuraka. Image: courtesy the artist.

Fig: 4.36: Figure 4.32: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2014. *Soft Target: New World Trade Centre (Freedom Tower) from Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York.* From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 127 x 400 cm in three parts. Photograph taken by Christine Shuraka. Image: courtesy the artist.



Detail: Soft Target: New World Trade Centre (Freedom Tower) from Greenpoint, Brooklyn, New York.

Fig: 4.37: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2014. *Soft Target: 4th Watchtower, Juyongguan Pass of Great Wall of China, Beijing*. From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 127 x 305 cm in three parts. Photograph taken by Zhan Qian (Jane). Image: courtesy the artist.

Detail: Soft Target: 4th Watchtower, Juyongguan Pass of Great Wall of China, Beijing.

Echoing Susan Sontag's notion that "the camera makes everyone a tourist in other people's reality, and eventually in one's own,"[534] the *Soft Target* photo-performances began in 2011 as an investigation of my position as a young, South Asian Muslim male living in diaspora.[535] Living in America during 9/11, I experienced the subsequent rise in racial and religious profiling. Stemming from such personal experiences, *Soft Target* is an ongoing journey where I am the traveller, the observer, and the one who is being observed from the ground and from above.

In *Soft Target* I appear with my target at various locations around the world, including Sydney, New York, Beijing and Dubai, where my body speaks in John Cage's silence and reverberates in Sufic dhikr (also zikr), a remembrance. Some of the structures shown in the series are popular tourist spots or sites of human achievement and failure. Some stand erect, rising with exposed grids, whereas others kiss the earth covered with arabesque patterns and create their own horizon. Glass, concrete, marble and brick; square, circle and rectangle; line, curve and dot; every material, shape and size is on view, bathing in awe of the shimmering daylight or twinkling under the moon and stars. Since the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11, 2001, they have also been marked as 'soft targets'- a term denotes to a person, a thing or a civilian site relatively easier target to the enemy during a war - and are in constant surveillance. Although images of these sites are familiar iconography in popular global art, their rise and fall in the discourse of cultural identity, specifically Islamic identity, presents decay. This decay implies a particular aesthetic sensibility imbued with mortality, melancholy and nostalgia.

The *Soft Target* photo-performances evolved within a Barthean semiotic system that includes objects (a fold-up target), body language, posture and hand gestures, clothing, etc.[536] In these photographs, the target, which is gradually marked with a square grid of folding creases, simultaneously operates as signifier (the form of an archery target, a divine nimbus, a mandala, an orientalist rug, a prayer mat, or clearly a land target when placed on the floor). It signifies the many concepts it represents: aim, sport, game, ritual, surrender, surveillance or threat. The signs, as Gillian Dyer points out, have meaning in "relation to their structure and their structural relationships with other signs", which here is the architecture, landscape and body and its

534 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Penguin, 2008 [1977]), 75.

535 The *Soft Target* works are 'photo-performances', a term coined by Ann Marsh; they "are presented as a series and document a performance process." For Marsh a photo-performance emerges from the term performative photography which is a "particular genera where the artists him or herself is pictured. These images may be considered in relation to artist's self-portraiture but many of the photographs appear to reference the ephemeral history of performance art and/or draw upon this to produce works in different media." Marsh, *Performance Ritual*, 51.

536 Roland Barthes interpreted Saussure's linguistic system within the social dimension. Semiotics is valuable when looking at art photography as a means of communication. It is the system of signs (for example, a symbol, a written or spoken word, or a myth) that gives meaning by way of language, image and mythology. Roland Barthes, *Mythologies,* trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill & Wang, 1987).

surveillance.[537] A symbolic violence and serenity is also embedded in the body through the mechanical and subjective effects of photography, which can radically alter the experiences of representation and identity. For Roland Barthes this alteration is only part of the "History of Looking."[538] Thus, despite being anchored in the Real, these photographs permit new relations to both the self and the outside world. Drawing on Barthes' conclusion, Soft Target photographs are "the advent of myself as other: a cunning dissociation of consciousness from identity."[539]

Figure 4.38: Beuys, Joseph. 1970. *Felt Suit (Filzanzug).* Photo: www.moma.org.

Figure 4.39: *Joseph Beuys' iconic Felt Suit.* 1970. Photo: http://uk.complex.com/style/2013/10/iconic-looks-art-world/joseph-beuys-felt-suits

Figure 4.40: *Gilbert and George's Suits.* Photo: Getty Images, Photo by Steven A Henry. http://www.complex.com/style/2013/10/iconic-looks-art-world/gilbert-and-georges-suits

The primary signifier in these photographs is the silhouette figure wearing a coat, evoking Joseph Beuys' iconic felt suit/coat, Osama Bin Laden's camouflage jacket, or the Gilbert and George's identical suits. The standing figure with his back to the viewer is a real person, hiding the fact that the artist is the true performer, and inviting doubts that the image may be digitally altered or even completely fabricated. The black hair that varies in length from one image to another indicates the lapsed time between locations; this is also indicated in the occasional colour change in the dress and the layers of water, sand, mud, light and varied shadow lengths on the target. All suggests that the performer and the performance are maturing over time. The performer has matured and these photographs are his *memento mori*.[540]

The performances were neither scripted nor choreographed. On each occasion a point-and-shoot digital camera and simple instructions were given to the photographer. However, there is a careful consideration of 'surveillance gaze' on sites that pose security risks in locations such as Speaker's Corner in London and Tiananmen Square in Beijing.[541] In these

537 Gillian Dyer, *Advertising as Communication* (London: Routledge, 1986), 131.

538 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 12.

539 Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* 13.

540 Sontag, *On Photography*, 15.

541 Because Soft Target is a photo documentation that is exhibited and gazed upon in a gallery setting, James Elkins' ten ways of looking at a figurative art in a gallery is useful for further analysis: cf. James Elkins, *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 38–39.

sites, an art assistant is asked to take photographs. Performance photographs taken from such sites operate under Foucault's *parrhesia* or 'free speech', and referred to all the participating artists as "parrhesiastes… who speak truly, freely and fearlessly."[542] However, due to the transitory and global nature of the work, other forms of gaze are also operative. For example, lowering the gaze operates both in the performer's actions and the viewer's eyes in locations such as Pakistan, where photographs from the UK chapter were first shown in 2011.[543]

Figure 4.41: Soft Target, *A Westminster Abbey guard stopping the performance*. London, UK Chapter. 2011.
Frontal pose (rejected photograph). Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.42: Soft Target. *Hyde Park Speaker's Corner,* London, UK Chapter. 2011. Frontal pose (rejected photograph).
Photo: courtesy the artist.

In *Soft Target* there are two primary positions: front and rear. In almost all of the first set of images, which is the 'UK chapter', the figure faces the camera, drawing attention and rendering the iconic structure secondary. The audience sees the body of an actor and the background as his stage. This aligns itself to a tourist album or the 'documentary rhetoric' of

542 Rida Sakina, "Free speech: For Pakistani Parrhesia, A Greek word to look truth in the eye", *The Express Tribune*, May 10, 2011, (accessed January 12, 2012) http://tribune.com.pk/story/165275/free-speech-for-pakistani-parrhesia-a-greek-word-to-look-truth-in-the-eye/

543 The exhibition *And Nothing But the Truth: The Problem of Parrhesia* was curated by Zarmeené Shah and held at IVS Gallery, Karachi, in 2011. The curator printed ten photographs (20.5 x 25.5 cm each) and displayed them as a photographic installation in white frames. I was present at the opening and the response to work was lukewarm. This was primarily, as the viewers commented, because of the small size of the works, and because they found the frontal figure, the varied angles and undulated grid distracting. Since then, works have been enlarged and exhibited in a row.

working class photographs, where the frontal pose is a "code of social inferiority."[544] The frontal figure in the UK chapter, who directly gazes at the viewer/camera, was registered as "overbearing, intimidating or menacing", whereas photographs in profile with low angles are marked as having "noble or heroic qualities."[545] These portrait poses go back the Persian and Mughal emperors' and noble men's representations of jalāl and jamāl. However, the low-resolution photograph taken at the Tate Modern, when enlarged, renders the figure a silhouette. This was a breakthrough, connected to the earlier resolution of silhouette figures that resulted from the *Man-urka* experiment (Chapter Two, Studio Practice, p. 130).

Figure 4.43: Soft Target, Palace of *Westminster Abbey*. London, UK Chapter. 2011. Frontal pose (rejected photograph). Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.44: Soft Target, Lincoln Cathedral, Lincoln, UK Chapter. 2011. Frontal pose (rejected photograph). Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.45: Soft Target, St. Paul's Cathedral. London, UK Chapter. 2011. Frontal pose (rejected photograph). Photo: courtesy the artist.

In *Soft Target: Doris's Crack 'Shibboleth'* (2011) [Fig. 4.30, p. 259] in the Tate Modern Turbine Hall, the figure stands on the remnants of the scar of *Shibboleth* (2007), a sign of border and segregation by Colombian artist Doris Salcedo.[546] Standing close to this scar, the figure remained under the gaze of the 'third eye' of the surveillance cameras, making him simultaneously threatening and vulnerable: one who expects to be attacked or in some instances mistaken for one who attacks others. The *Soft Target* intervention at the Tate reveals a further play, where the body is rendered a silhouette (the result of a low resolution amateur photography) and has a double gaze: one between the figure and the audience and the other between the unknown photographer and the body. In that moment, the body is vulnerable to assault – visual, verbal or physical – and cannot defend itself. This image pushed the performances to a point where ethnic origin is tuned out, and the viewer is invited to stand in for

544 John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 189, 37.

545 Paul Messaris, *Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising* (London: Sage, 1997), 38.

546 Commissioned for the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern, *Shibboleth* is also known as 'Doris' crack' due to the permanent residual mark it left on the floor.

the body. In that moment, the viewer becomes the performer and the act continues in a gallery setting.

The positive feedback for *Soft Target: Doris's Crack 'Shibboleth'* changed the frontal view to a rear view, where the viewer/camera sees the back of a depicted person, masking the performer's identity and pushing the narrative to a global discourse of masculinity. The rare view of the silhouette "in our real-world interactions with others…implies turning away or exclusion" and echoes the Western painterly tradition where it signifies turning away from the everyday world in order to marvel at the spectacle of nature.[547]

The images also offered a number of other avenues – for example, there are differences in lighting, camera angle, focus, and image resolution (but only a few). From the initial test, it was evident that in order for the circular target to appear round, a higher plane was required for photography. This was challenging to coordinate as either tourists or novices took most of the pictures. High angles (looking down on the figure from above) are generally interpreted as making the subject appear small and insignificant, where the viewer/camera has symbolic power over the performer. In many ways, it is a form of surveillance.[548]

The absurd and fantastical nature, settings, and high colour contrasts of some of the images, though all real and largely unaltered, further questions the general assumption that the camera cannot lie. Usually, photographs – visual images – are assumed not to involve a 'construction' of reality, though in semiotic terms "photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are."[549] This is because they involve a certain selection and framing of content. Furthermore, the positioning of the figure at the edge of the frameless Diasec glass mounting allows seepage of imaginative narratives.[550] It connects the onlookers, repeating forms and content and creating a perspective from the pictorial to the physical space of the gallery. At that moment, the photographs are invitations for others to stand on the target and participate in the performer's "mortality, vulnerability, mutability."[551]

In *Soft Target* there are two distinct modes of standing: a passive pose with palms open and an active erect pose with clinched fists. The passive standing figure with palms open reflects the surrounding trees and mountains and is a prayer before the divine. From this Islamic point of view, *Soft Target* is born from the humble first act of submission, *qiyam*, which literally means to stay and hold. It is the idle standing pose at the beginning of salat, the Muslim prayer. Head bowed with lowered gaze, qiyam suggests a lack of pride and a modesty of heart. In a

547 Messaris, *Visual Persuasion*, 24.

548 Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 1996), 146.

549 Sontag, *On Photography*, 7

550 Ibid., 7.

551 Ibid., 15.

worldlier context, the pose pays homage to the iconic photograph of the unknown protester who stood in front of the tanks at the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 (Fig. 4.47). One more in Foucault's parrhesiastic language, free speech occurs alongside actions of awareness and a need for change. Edward Said reinforces this when he tells us "the role of the intellectual is to say the truth to power, to address the central authority in every society without hypocrisy, and to choose the method, the style, the critique best suited for those purposes."[552] Thus the responsibility of the truth-teller – here the artist – lies not only in speaking the truth and sharing his beliefs freely and fearlessly, but also in being able to see the truth in order to speak it, thereby rendering the invisible visible once again. In this regard, I faced many hurdles during the process of *Soft Target*: I was stopped, searched and asked leave the premises by the guards at Westminster Abbey in London [Fig. 4.41, p. 268]; I was searched and the target was opened and returned with a warning by guards at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing; the intervention was under surveillance at the Tate Modern in London [Fig. 4.30, p. 259]; and my crossing a fence marked 'Do Not Enter' was under the surveillance and watchful eyes of police in Brooklyn, New York. These were not the risks but a test of my religious and artistic beliefs and how they give me courage and creative freedom.

Figure 4.46: Syed M I, Abdullah. 2013. *Blocking the sun at Tiananmen Square*. Soft Targe Experiment. Snapshot by Zhan Qian (Jane)

Figure 4.47: *Tank Man: Tiananmen Square Unknown protester*. June 5, 1989. Photo: Liu Heung-Shing (AP photographer)

The second pose, with legs apart and fists clenched in masculine power and dominance, renders the body an active agent. In *Soft Target: Auckland* (2012) [Fig. 4.31, p. 260] the figure not only has the audacity to block the sun, but he also uses its light to create the eternal nimbus of divine light of masculine power. In some photographs, the target is replaced with this halo. The figure stance in front of iconic structures of power demands equal standing against the Western hegemonic powers. Such a contestation resonates with the acts of Ai Weiwei's mischievous rebel, who gives the finger to icons like the White House, Eiffel Tower, and

552 Edward Said, *Peace and Discontents* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 184–185.

Tiananmen Square, defying old policies and predilections (Fig. 4.48). Likewise, Anselm Kiefer's photographic travelogue *Occupations,* (Fig. 4.49) where he performed the fascist salute around a number of European monuments, unmasks the attempts to repress a shameful national history.

Figure 4.48: Weiwei, Ai. 1995-2003. *Study of Perspective - White House*. Photo: www.moma.org. http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=117097

Figure 4.49: Kiefer, Anselm. 1969. *Occupations* in Interfunktionen magazine (1975). Photo: Artnet.com

To elaborate further on *Soft Target's* Barzakhi status, the performances speak in two languages. In terms of Barzakhi ideal forms, the portable concentric circles (the target mat) act as a measuring scale that can weigh ego, desire, fear and love for the material world. It has potential to declare, as al Arabī identified, the occupying body as transparent and lift it to new heights, or keep the opaque body chained to the ground. The body stands on this target in various poses, relating to both the Western ideal man and the Islamic body postures in the performance of piety. An isolated figure in vast landscapes looking out at the horizon, he is a silhouette due to the solar halo around him. The body contemplates the dissonance and harmonies in his outer voice as a targeted poetic activist, and in his inner dhikr (remembrance) of divine beauty; thus jamāl and jalāl became paramount as a field of inquiry. The tension between time, place and body set the parameters of this field of masculine performance. It also addresses authority, investigating the role of current hegemonic power structures in stereotyping Muslim men, and the politics of free speech by questioning the current rhetoric of consensus in a pluralistic society. This shifting interpretation from site to individual to collective is the essence of *Soft Target*.

In this socio-political context, the target mat has potential to be misinterpreted as an oriental rug that can fly with 1001 knives, or a fixed target on the ground; in either case, a threat to the site. It highlights the fact that misinterpretation can obscure the clear implication that I myself am an easy target. The stereotype of Muslim men as terrorist threats is a possible cause for this misinterpretation, demonstrating how easy it is to suggest Islam as monolithic and

Muslim men as fundamentalist. Such dualities were distilled on the fifth watchtower of the Great Wall, where the figure is in harmony with his surroundings, completely in awe and surrendered. The photograph reflects on the history of the site, its war and its mythical horror and survival. The solitary figure on a target embodies the demise of Franz Kafka's protagonist, who reflects on his life's work overseeing the building of small portions of the Great Wall of China.[553] The figure embodies and performs jalāl and jamāl as one with its surroundings, both natural and man-made. The figure is an archer and the embodiment of the "polar balance of physical and metaphysical" that characterises all traditional cultures.[554] Here, the body is simultaneously the arrow, bow and target. It is neither masculine nor feminine, but only part of the kamāl of Allah. At that moment both the performer and his viewer feel humble, embarking on the journey together.

Figure 4.50: Syed M I, Abdullah. *Soft Target: MiddleHead Embattlement, Sydney*. Soft Target performance on the embattlement. UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 51 x 76 cm. Photograph taken by Jane Burton.

Figure 4.51.a: Soft Target. 2013. *Middle Head, Sydney*. An adult, a boy and a family of five participating in a performance, replacing the artist on the hand painted target and reflecting on the history of the site.

Figure 4.51b: Soft Target. 2013. *Middle Head, Sydney*. Photo: courtesy the artist.

Figure 4.51d: Soft Target. 2013. *Middle Head, Sydney*. Photo: courtesy the artist.

553 Franz Kafka, *The Great Wall of China: Stories and Reflections* (New York: Schocken Books,1946).

554 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "The Symbolism of Archery, Studies" in *Comparative Religion* 15:2 (1971): 1.

Finally, in retrospect, many links to art history were discovered during the development of this project, which allowed diverse readings on the grounds of poetic activism to invite viewers to stand in for the artist and question the very nature of the subject: the male body, its performativity, and its standing in art. This went on to shape the hand-painted target I installed at the old embattlements at Middle Head, Headland Park, Sydney (2013) [Fig. 4.50, p. 273] where the figure faces the incoming ships that symbolically aim at the site. At this moment, the target is not a sign of masculine gender, but a site to connect and reflect on all genders. It is a site occupied by a family, a six month-old baby girl, and the ninety-five year-old mother of a WWII solder who stood at the same embattlement (Figs. 4.51a-b-c), transcending the temporal and physical dimensions of the body to a realm of nostalgia, remembrance and connection.

Figure 4.52: Syed M I, Abdullah. *Soft Target: Middle Head, Sydney.* From the *Soft Target* series (2011-ongoing). UV Inkjet Print + DIASEC. 51 x 76 cm. Photograph taken by Sajid Ali.

CONCLUSION

The representation of Islamic masculine identity and the male body is a timely and complex issue that requires much needed attention. In the case of Pakistani masculine identity this issue owes to a number of combined factors ranging from the uneven development of the Islamic republic historically, the conflicting influences of Westernisation, the diversity of local and cultural attitudes to an Islamisation that is compounded by the postmodern conditions of alienation and identity politics, most recently demonstrated through suicide terrorism.[555] Post-9/11 terrorist acts by 'radical' fundamentalists led the rupture in representations of Pakistani Islamic masculinities. Suicide terrorism is politically driven, coercive, and supposedly a logical military strategy. Despite the fact that a fundamentalist organisation that engages in and promotes suicide attacks under 'martyrdom', Islam strictly prohibits suicide and the very act of suicide bombing is an alien concept to Islam. Suicide bombing renders such ruptured masculinities an anathema, abhorrent and antithetical to Islam.[556]

During this research, starting from my own masculinity, I began to see a far larger problem that plagues boys and men in every culture; it is a problem of masculinity trapped within the confines of labels that manifest from the tropes of manhood and gender normative thinking. The idea that a man must be strong, emotionless, tough, and dominating stems from the structure of the society that is based on a dichotomous relationship between masculinity and femininity. I further discovered that such labels and distinctions are forcing men and boys to feel disingenuous and insecure. As discussed in Chapter Two, masculinity (men) and femininity (women) are two essentialist spheres (Section 2.1, p. 82) that are placed at opposite ends to each other and conditioned never to mingle and integrate. Pakistani culture and socio-political structure is no different where such essentialist and dichotomous gender ideas of strong male and weak female undermines the Islamic concepts of jalāl and jamāl leaving little room for men and women to move beyond the culturally driven antiquated assumptions of what men and women should be and how they should act and perform. The toxic ideas of masculinity such as 'power', 'honor' and 'male-pride' are pushing men and boys to feel isolated, un-empathetic and emotionally stoic. It is found that through their lived experience and keen observations, women artists may be better placed to talk about such issues. I argue that women artists have a dialectical perspective to masculine discussions and can provide gender studies a way of poetic resistance from economic and cultural determinism prevalent in religious societies.

555 (De Sondy 2014, Ahmed 2012, Connell 2005, see the Introduction and Chapter One).

556 This rupture is demonstrated in artworks such as *fun-DADA-men-talism* (Fig 2.9, p. 93), and *The Sorrows Other Than Those of Love* drawing series (Fig 3.40, p. 201).

The investigation of Islamic masculinity in Pakistani art in this research has revealed a series of common visual tropes, whose coded symbolism I have unpacked through my art practice in drawing, sculpture, photography, installation and performance. This has been based on an exploration of the poetic expression of jalāl and jamāl*,* the Islamic gender archetypes, specific to traditional Islamic culture that defines a masculine ideal. The approach has constructed a culturally-informed masculinity that engages with contemporary political, social and religious identities, providing alternative readings to the hegemonic Western notions of Islamic male identity that so often colour studies of the Islamic world.

Currently, there is a prevalent artistic exposition that propagates stereotypes and myths of Islamic masculinity via women's bodies under the veil (read burqa) and violence. On the contrary, for men Islam professes the balancing of mind and body through piety, chivalry and lowering the gaze.[557] Thus the essence of Islamic masculinity not only lies in its appearance and gender performativity but also in symbolic differences, actions and meanings.[558]

I have structured the remaining discussion around my studio practice, which functions as a metaphoric litmus test. I see the studio from Buren's perspective – as a physical place of production and visitation where objects (commercial artworks) are made – and through Lippard's and Chandler's thinking space – where the 'dematerialisation of art' occurs and where projects are conceived and art is drawn but may be executed elsewhere by professional craftsmen.[559] I have framed the studio here as *Karkhana*, a performative workshop where art as project and art as object draw on highly diverse sources. Such art are made according to the current contemporary art vernacular combined with traditional Islamic art and craft practices of master and disciple, a fusion of high production, artistic ritual, and cultural eclecticism.[560] In this regard, I also see myself as a *musawwir,* one who reflects Al-Musawwir (The Fashioner, The Modeller), which is one of the divine attributes of Allah. My studio (Karkhana) practice highlights the fact that, as an artist (musawwir), I seek to generate visual and artistic discourses as experiential tools to create ambiguities in what I define as creative fields of 'poetic activism'.

The research outcomes, the artworks, may generate new debates leading to new ways of thinking and potentially generating dynamic solutions and articulations for traditional and contemporary art. This ambition has led me to evaluate the field that my work informs, and I found the categories of Islamic art as traditional/devotional/abstract and contemporary/secular/figurative to be limiting. One excludes the other, and this is a restriction I can identify personally as an artist in diaspora who employs both contemporary and traditional visual art

557 (al Arabi 1980, Little 1987, De Sond 2013)

558 (Butler 1990, 1993)

559 (Buren 1979) (Lippard and Chandler 1968)

560 (Whiles 2010)

languages. I therefore argue that my practice operates in a third field, a liminal space, which my research has explicated as *Alām-e-Barzakh* (also *Alām-e-Arāf)* or the World of Barzakh.[561] This leads me to propose an original concept and coin a new term, *Amāl-e-Barzakh (also Amāl-e-A'rāf)* or *the Art of Barzakh* (*Barzakh's* literal translation, 'a veil or partition between two things'): which I propose not only locates myself and my art practice, but also many other Pakistani artists who find themselves in a similar predicament, unable to identify their artistic position in the usual fields of contemporary and Islamic art practices.

The new Barzakhi art framework is an original contribution to studies of the contemporary art in Pakistan, which considers formal, stylistic and historical elements alongside contextual and conceptual approaches, allowing a holistic reading and appreciation of works by Pakistani artists. Furthermore, because the World of Barzakh *(Alām-e-Barzakh)* is a liminal space, Barzakhi art is also not fixed but flexible in its approach and application. It is a conceptual corridor that creates mind maps and subverts specificity. As an investigative space it not only allows contemporary artists, like myself, to draw from different readings and modes of Islamic art expressions and popular local visual culture but also to incorporate learned Western modes of expression and presentation into their art practices. The Islamic concept of 'lowering the gaze' (ghadd al-basr) and performance of piety are identified as importance identifiers of the Art of Barzakh. As demonstrated through readings of my own work and that of other Pakistani artists, this has been an insider's account of the cultural, social and political sensibilities of Pakistani art, which are very often disregarded or unknown by outsiders, which can often misrepresent the art and the identity of Pakistani artists.

My initial, intuitive response was to demystify the prevalent myths and stereotypes of Muslim Pakistani men through preliminary studio experiments. Projects such as *Man-urka* (Chapter Two, p. 135), and the case study *Drawing Chauvinism* (Chapter Four, p. 253) resulted in didactic and illustrative responses and hence were rejected. However, this testing did highlight the potential of drawing silhouettes (or form as outline) to comply with traditional Islam's prohibition of creating life-like images, which aligns with the creative application of anthropomorphic calligraphy and flora and fauna in Islamic art and architecture. Similar to Rashid Rana, the digital print strategy of using photographic negative films to create silhouette forms has also been employed by Anwar Saeed where he digitally inverted the positive photographic images and exhibited them as negative (matrix) prints. Such inverted images are used to present the sub-conscious or the soul. When viewed, such images at first glance present themselves as raw, inchoate and floating on a picture plane, however, upon closer inspection, the ambiguous and surreal nature of the semi nude inverted figures pushes the viewer to access

561 The literal use of *Alam-e-Araf* is the duration between a person's death and resurrection on the Day of Judgment. Also used for a veil or barrier that separates two bodies, spaces or things. Limbo, or the liminal, is the equivalent expression in the West.

his or her cultural and religious perceptions and prejudices, and completes the negative into a fully developed artwork with all its subtext in his or her mind. In summary, for Barzakhi artists, like myself, the art of silhouette provide a solution to the representation of the figure in contemporary art practices. The test and its rejection also suggest that my outsider readings of the problem at hand were being inadvertently framed through Western gender paradigms. Although I find Western gender models useful, they remain inadequate in identifying Islamic gender beyond its legalist tradition, corporeality, and 'essentialist' social roles.

This led to the identification of Islam's sapiential tradition, in which the Sufis understand Allah as both transcendent and immanent. When applied to societal norms this brings forward an opposition to legalist tradition and Sharia law (Chapter One, p. 46). Allah, being within the material world and creation, gives value to the equality of the spiritual roles of individuals as well as relational gender balance.[562] Such balancing acts do not appear to translate into gender equality in society, however it reveals a holistic model of human beings as the possessors of divine qualities. The resultant model is based on *Asmā-ul-Husnā*, Allah's ninety-nine names.

The attributes of the ninety-nine names are categorised under *jamāl* (beauty) and *jalāl* (majesty). When combined, or performed in pairs, they produce gender symmetry, which is *kamāl*, or perfection.[563] Such principles are practiced through the fundamental concepts of Islamic masculinities: *muruwah* (manliness); *futuwwah* (Sufi chivalry); the emulation of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.) as *Insān-e-Kāmil* (a perfect man); performance of piety and lowering the gaze. While all Islamic men may not observe such concepts, they remain embedded within discourses of Islamic gender identity, and thus such concepts translate into performative scripts. They provide a way to explore what it means to be an Islamic man, healing the rupture and providing alternative readings to the current, dominant model (Chapter Two). Furthermore, it is illustrated that the understanding of such Islamic concepts allow in-depth and multi-dimensional reading of male body visualisation and discourse in art specifically by Muslim artists and those who reside in the Islamic world and draw from Islamic art and cultural practices.

The illumination of this detailed investigation led me to Pakistani scholar Kamil Khan Mumtaz's model for the poetic expression of jalāl and jamāl, which he proposes can be analysed in Islamic architecture as form and content. I have reconfigured such ideas, refining them for visual arts and performance studies through my studio practice. Forms are understood as the qualities of jalāl, jamāl and *hawa* (as emotions). Form is further understood as the

562 (Murrata 1992)

563 (Ibn al Arabī 1980, Little 1987, Murata 1992, Ahmed 2012)

experience of kamāl (perfection) in artistic expression, and finally the qualities of light as a catalyst and a binding force. Content is then interpreted as the 'mirror' that reflects the infinite divine essences through these forms. Practical and symbolic *masqh* (copying) (Chapter Two) and repetitions in performances of piety such as *salat*, *hajj* and *dhikr* are located as primary codes for studio practice and body performance scripts (Chapter Three). The *Flare I* and *II* prints (Chapter Two, Demo I, p. 139), the *Aura I* and *II* light sculptures (Chapter Two, Demo II, p. 141), the *I am* typewriter drawings (Chapter Two, Demo III, p. 147), and *The Balancing Act of Celestial Proportions and The Balancing Act of Royal Proportions* drawings (Chapter Two, Demo IV, p. 150) emerged as discoveries of the poetic expression of Islamic gender archetypes.

The use of objects, for example *taqiyah* (skullcaps) and the archery target, when copied as divine symbols (squares, circles and grids), repeated as dhikr (either through hand-stitching or mechanical mark making), and finally illuminated with light, express the aesthetic 'seepage' of the balancing act of masculine and feminine bodies that manifest as divine *kamāl*. I demonstrate this mirroring and repetition of jamāli and jalāli forms in *Aura I* and *II* (Demo II, p. 141). In these works, a *taqiyah*, an ordinary object with the dual associations of performing piety and of stereotypical fundamentalist men, is stitched together, repeated as patterns and illuminated with light. This transforms the 'masculine' object into a collective schema of jalāli and jamāli qualities, identifying Islamic gender in harmony and restoring masculine balance. I count such work as demonstrating what I proposed as the Art of Barzakh.

To further contextualise this Barzakhi art, I critically evaluated the current artistic milieu in Pakistan, looking for the aesthetic seepage of jalāl and jamāl. I find similarities and repetitions in form and content between my work and that of other Pakistani artists' works and their gender performances. This assessment of their works, including the signs and symbols used in visually constructing masculinity in Pakistani art, is another important contribution to the study of contemporary art in Pakistan. Besides the influence of western art practices, theories and philosophies, there are two constructs in Islamic art that help to define Pakistani art as Barzakhi: religious or traditional interpretations of divine attributes through geometric abstraction, arabesques and calligraphy, and the secular or figurative perspective in which the human body is considered an ideal form. This figurative practice in Islam is refined under the influence of Western figurative arts. All these perspectives inform this research, and I propose that the Western modes of reading visualisations of the body do inform the performativity and representation of Islamic masculinity and its social and philosophical strength, but that the contribution is limited to the area of secular figurative Islam. Hence Western modes of analysis are useful but ignore the Art of Barzakh's conditions such as lowering the gaze, and remain an outsider's view.

Through my studio practice, ideal abstract forms such as the square, circle, calligraphy, grid (magic square), concentric circles, and geometric and arabesque patterns were identified as representing divine transcendence, extending infinitely in all directions. Forms and the proportion of ideal man were identified from the *Vitruvian Man* and golden ratio, and also from Islamic cosmology, as Ibn al-Arabī's ideal man, which is based on concepts of transparency (the most ideal – light – without ego and attachment to the material world) and opaqueness (the least ideal – heavy – ego and desire for the material world). These proportions are cross-referenced with ideal abstract Islamic patterns (Chapter Two).

Such forms are demonstrated through my works, such as *Aura I* and *II*, *Squaring the Circle*, *I am*, and the object projection *The Fragrance of the Moon* (Chapter Three, Demo IX, p. 220). The combined effect of both ideal forms is applied in the performances of *Soft Target* (Chapter Four, Demo X, p. 258). Here the use of concentric circles (the target) acts as a measuring scale for ego, desire, fear, and love for the material world. It has potential to either liberate and lift the occupying body to new heights, or keep it chained to the ground. The body stands on this target in various poses, relating both to the Western ideal man and the Islamic body postures in the performance of piety. An isolated figure in vast landscapes looking out at the horizon, it is a silhouette due to the solar halo around its body. As a poetic activist, the body contemplates the dissonance and harmonies in the target - his inner dhikr (remembrance) of divine beauty. Thus, jamāl and jalāl became paramount as a field of inquiry. The tension between time, place, and body set the parameters of this field of masculine performance.

Through the analysis of traditional and contemporary art of Pakistan, it is demonstrated that some signs and symbols are particularly popular and are represented repeatedly, often standing in for the absent figure in the arts of the Muslim world. However, not all of the signs and symbols had their origins in Islam. The art of the full figure under the flattened God's eye view was not alien to Persian and Mughal art, but the refinement of figures and profile portraiture came from the West. For example, the emperors' profile portraits show their window appearances for *darshan* (auspicious sight), which was the emperors' performance as the earthly representative of the divine. The celestial halo is Buddhist, and the solar nimbus is Jainist. The lotus flower was borrowed from the Mongols as a symbol of spiritual purity, and cherubs are from the West. The rose remained the most used flower and is associated with piety and the heart of a believer. It is even mythologised as being created from the drop of sweat of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w.), which he lost during his ascension to Paradise, thus began its appearance as a symbol of the Prophet's presence in art after paintings of the Prophet became prohibited. The veiling of masculine figures was also a solution to this prohibition. The status of the figure has remained highly contested in Islamic art due to patriarchal and orthodox readings of

religious texts (Chapter Two and Three). Today such representation symbolically translates as blasphemy, clearly suggesting current Muslim male aggression and a rejection of modernism and the West.

Cross-referencing the last three decades of contemporary Pakistani art, I demonstrate that apart from the solar and lunar halo, the rose, lotus and nightingale, figurative poses like profile portraits in the style of Mughal miniature paintings are popular, and are continually being copied in the representation of the male body and masculinity in the contemporary art of Pakistan (Chapter Two). Furthermore, the analysis of popular street posters and truck art reveals that these same signs, symbols and poses are now part of the cultural vernacular. This is evidence that the Islamic traditional model of *ustad shagird* (master and disciple) – where the copying of ideal forms are assimilated and referenced – is still operational, demonstrating that Islamic secular (figurative) art is plastic (Chapter Three, Case Study 3). *The Balancing Act* drawing series extends such copying traditions, reinterpreted as cultural and religious seepage. I also suspect that increasing numbers of Pakistani artists will explore outlined or filled silhouette as a potential solution for the Islamic issue of figurative drawing, creating new idioms and aesthetics under the notion of Barzakhi art, which is demonstrated in this thesis. A word of caution however: despite such solutions, the drawing or painting of pious Muslim identities is no longer just an issue of artistic discourse, but is now part of global discourses, where political and religious sensitivities have made this topic one of the most visible taboos in today's Islamic world. The emotions run high, and any artistic solution will be challenged and may have serious repercussions for the artist.

I also conclude that Islamic abstract art, miniature painting, and even their expression in popular poster art, have strong influences in shaping the contemporary art of Pakistan. It has remained an immediate source of authentication, fascination, and the glorification of traditions as well as Barzakhi art. These are some of the diverse strategies that Pakistani artists employ to represent the male body, whether in its presence or absence (Chapter Three and Four).

My research into traditional Islamic cultural practices revealed an important discovery that the art of archery is not only a highly regarded art form in Islam, but is a Sunnah, recommended to all men as an exercise to achieve gender balance.[564] The traditional archery of *Mukkhawal* is a cultural expression of 'positive masculinity' in Pakistan, but is an endangered tradition (Chapter Three, p. 183). Such a discovery significantly impacted my studio practice. It directed me to investigate truck art, and to see collaboration as a strategy to understand positive brotherhood and master/disciple relationships. Both cultural expressions, as I demonstrated, not only validates a practical application of jamāl and jalāl, but also acts as a visual and

564 Sunnah refers to the teachings and actions of Prophet Muhammad (s.a.a.w) that all Muslim must emulate to achieve balanced gender identity.

performative gauge. The *Soft Target* photo-performances are evidence of how a cultural expression such as archery may impact the artist through creative associative thinking and studio practice. Such works demonstrate my learned balancing act of mind, body and action, bringing forth an original contribution, understanding, and application of jalāl and jamāl through the body. Rather than a definitive response, I see *Soft Target* as poetic 'activism' that invites the viewer to stand in my place and question the nature of the performative male body and its standing in art.

The case studies of Pakistani performances (Chapter 3) showed that they were about power. The Wagah flag raising ceremony on the Pakistan/India border (p. 175), Shia's *zanjir-zani* religious performances (p.171), and the Zia regime's public flagellations (p.181) are about violence, patriarchy and authoritarianism, which undermine balanced performances of Islamic masculinity in public and private spaces. Such disenchanted conceptions of public masculine performances not only connect to my multi-disciplinary art practice but also hold value for all the five case study artists in this research. Such connections are made through my drawing and performance works, such as *They See Neither Their Heads, Nor the Stones, Nor Even the Walls* (Demo VI, p. 205) and *Chāhar-baāgh*, (Demo VII, p. 212) where public and private performances are combined and mythologised. I have demonstrated that the fear and anxiety that Pakistani artists have in visualising the male body and masculinity also stems from the public performances of ruptured masculinities. Furthermore, the strategy of gradual fragmentation of the body indicates that in Pakistani art, the body is no longer a passive thing or a tool, but is emerging as an active performer. Myself, Qureshi, Rana have all explored such dimensions and patterns, both as direct political critique and as poetic expression.

The original data in the field of Islamic and Pakistani masculinities that I have collected has come from various case studies, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews (Appendix B), as well as the collection of street posters, statistical analysis of gallery invitation cards (Appendix A), discovery of local traditions, and collaborations with Pakistani craft-persons. This research field lacks strong published sources or primary archives, so the case study data, although analysed through the specific themes of this research, also contains many more layers of implication for art practice, and for making artists' strategies evident. I predict it will be fruitful to test at a future date more rigorously the relationship between jalāl and jamāl and Islamic feminism, Islamic gender roles, male/female, female/female and male/male relationships, and the contested areas of jihad and blasphemy for Muslim men.

I can see that the jalāl and jamāl model, in conjunction with Barzakhi art with its two primary conditions, performance of piety (Chapter 3) and lowering the gaze (Chapter Four), discussed and adopted here, could evolve as a research method to discern the affects of aesthetic

and performance judgments in diverse artists' practices and concerns. The data provided in this research has the potential for further testing, both theoretically and through practice, as I experienced a great deficit in resources for this subject during the period of this PhD research.

My reflexive approach to experiencing, recording and articulating the tensions of living in-between cultures as a Muslim man, which I must admit I found challenging yet rewarding, has slowly shaped my own values, goals and aspirations in life and work. Some of the sensitive issues and taboos in Islam were a crucible for my research. The case studies and my own reflexive accounts also confirm that dealing with certain issues of masculinities in Pakistan, even as an outsider, for example creating a male semi nude or nude self portrait, pose a challenge to the artist's own gender identity. I declare that as a researcher, I argued such positioning from an objective view to minimise my own subjectivity and dialogue. At certain places, due to restrictions of time and space, I felt the burden of going beyond the scope of this thesis, hence these ideas are curtailed. I reference them in footnotes, or provide links for further reading (Bibliography). At this point I can clearly state that the Pakistani artists who are drawing knowledge from diverse cultures, histories and time periods are ideal Barzakhi art agents, who can operate in the liminal zone as an insider and outsider, and will take the art of Pakistan to a new critical level without undermining its core Islamic values and aesthetic sensibilities.

The process of this research affected not only my work and thinking but also myself personally. As I stated earlier, despite an interest in the mystical tradition of Islam, I remained sceptical of its potential as a direct creative source for my contemporary practice. This research led me to recognise the value of a different strand of Islam. Exploring such ideas opened my mind to new interpretations and knowledge, and helped me to conceive certain acts and ideas as artistic, which might not have materialised otherwise.[565] Furthermore, the writing process was challenging as it pushed me to come to terms with my own fears and anxieties about shattering myths. As a maker I can see how sometimes my words fail to explain the artwork and demonstrate my position. Hence some works are only briefly mentioned in the thesis, but are exhibited as an open-ended enquiry where viewers will fill the blanks and reverberate the silence.

I also learned through the case studies that I conducted that some of my experiences, fears and anxieties in creating and performing male nudes are shared among other male artists like me. In a way, this research provided the means to identify a support group of men, like me, who embrace both sides of their jamāli and jalāli qualities as a result of our similar upbringings, and religious and cultural experiences. This gives me not only a personal satisfaction but also

565 For instance, *They See Neither Their Heads, Nor the Stones, Nor Even the Walls* (Chapter Three, p. 205), *Chahar Bagh* (Chapter Three, p. 212), and *Soft Target* (Chapter Four, p. 258).

assurance that this research speaks on important issues that remain unspoken for Pakistani Muslim men, owing largely to the patriarchal, hegemonic and macho perceptions of society, and perhaps a misread religious masculinity.

It is my contention that Pakistani culture has lost the gender balance advocated through readings of jalāl and jamāl, but as demonstrated, this balance can be regained on an individual level first, and then collectively. The model of jalāl and jamāl is the cornerstone of this research and my art practice. The result is that gender roles are open to contestation on the basis of relational balance, as an alternative to binary categorisations of gender or sex. Jalāl and jamāl provide a way to explore what it means to be an Islamic man, healing the rupture and providing alternative insights for both Islamic and Western perceptions of the current, dominant model. This research is a small stone that I am throwing in the vast field of knowledge in anticipation that it will create ripples that will merge with others who will modify and evolve it beyond its present scope and challenges.

APPENDIX A

Hate Email: Comment about Abdullah Exhibition

Gmail by Google

Abdullah Syed <abdullahdesign@gmail.com>

Comment on abdullah's exhibition

1 message

Mohd R[redacted] <raja[redacted]@yahoo.com> Fri, Feb 5, 2010 at 6:16 AM

To: abdullahdesign@gmail.com

An empty mind is a house of Devil but your's is full of Garbage.

https://mail.google.com/mail/?ui=2&ik=b0eede6513&view=pt&q=mi...s=true&search=query&th=1269a7c92857a197&siml=1269a7c92857a197 Page 1 of 1

Case Study: Invitation Cards
Canvas Gallery, Karachi

Master Form

Identify the timeline (mark X)	From Sep 1988 to March 2014	From 1999 to March 2014

Exhibiting Artist Gender Statistics:	No of Male Artists =315	No of Female Artists =234

Exhibition Statistics	Solo 155	2person/group 77	Drawing/ Painting 167	Sculpture/ Installation 26	Video/photography 10	Multi-dis 19	Performance

Exhibition Themes (Male) Numbers only	Gender Identity Heterosexual: Homosexual: Transgender:1 Other: prostitute 1	Violence (domestic - in relation to women)	Terrorism	Religious identity	Political National identity	Cultural Identity	Orientalist = Post-colonial=

Visual Statistics Part 1: Representation of Male Body

Variables	Colum 1 Male Body	Colum 2 MB Full Nude frontal/side/back	Colum 3 MB Partial Nude	Colum 4 MB Fully Clothed
Single Male Figure	76	2 Half front 5 front 2 back 3 side	Underwear =8 Waist Towel =1 Shalwar only=4 Pehlwan Lungi= Ahram = Red chador=1 Human Figure=1 Pineapple=1 Jeans=1 Pottery=1	shalwar Kazeez only =10 shalwar Kazeez + Topi =4 shalwar Kazeez + Purgee =1 Sharwani (+ -) Jinnah Cap =3 Mughul costume =6 Arab costume =1 Western costume (Jeans/T-Shirt, suite etc.) =21 Suicide jacket= Full metal Armour = Marching band=1 Military dress=1 Sufi dress=2
Multiple Male Figure (group)				
No of times MB holding/carrying or wearing a prop, Please Identify. **Note** (record the no in the appropriate column, means if the male body is fully nude and holding a flower, then you will record '1' in column 2 - MB Full Nude, under the theme no. Also identity the each element in Column 2, 3 and 4. Then add each element and only record the total Colum 1 MB Body. **Themes (only record number of time each theme appears. Use a separate sheet for identification)** 1. Mustache only 2. Beard (with or without Mustache) 3. flower (identify) 4. weapon (identify) 5. Book (identify eg. Qaida/Quran)	Total only In this column 8 10 7 5 1 5 6 1 4 1 4	White rose Sword=2 Diary Owl Horse=3 Kaffia=3 Horn Apple=2	Water Lily=2 Gun=3 Dove Fish=2 Veil=1 Hand Drum Mixed Fruits	Green Parrot=2, crows=3 Buffalo, cat=2, Zebra

6. Bird (identify) 7. Animal (e.g horse/tiger etc.) 8. Wearing Sehra 9. Wearing Suicide jacket 10. Covering face with Kaffia or veil 11. Other (please count and specify) Covering half lower body with plant	2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1			

Exhibition Themes (Female) Numbers only	Gender Identity Hetro/Homo/Trans Feminist Other:	Violence (domestic - in relation to women)	Terrorism	Religious identity	Political National identity	Cultural Identity	Orientalist = Post-colonial=

Visual Statistics Part 2: Representation of Female Body

Variables	Colum 1 Female Body	Colum 2 FB Full Nude frontal/side/ back	Colum 3 FB Partial Nude	Colum 4 FB Fully Clothed
Single Image	83	15 font 9 back 2 back half fig 1 side	Lingerie= Dupatta/chador =2 Partial veil= Mermaid attile=1 Swimsuit=1	shalwar Kazeez only =8 shalwar Kazeez + Dupata =6 shalwar Kazeez + headscarf =2 Sari =4 Mughul costume =1 Burqa =4 Western costume (Jeans/T-Shirt, skurt etc.) =25 Suicide jacket= Bondage attire= Armour =1 Thair dress=1 Gauze wrapped=2 Drapped in chador=1

APPENDIX B

Case Study Interview: Debriefing/Introductory remarks

Date_____ Place _____ Informant Number _____

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview of a research study on perceptions, symbolism and representations of masculinity and male body in your art practice as a Pakistani Fine Artist. This research is a part of Ph.D. project I am undertaking at COFA, UNSW. I am very grateful that I can draw on your opinions, ideas and expertise.

- To ensure the accuracy of your input, I will be recording this session with your permission, both in a form of an audio and video recording.
- A cameraman will be present during the session and well aware of the nature of the interview and will have signed the confidentiality forms. However, if you wish to give this interview without the presence of a cameraman, then please inform me.
- I have your signed consent for this interview, and I assume that you have read and understand all the aspects this interview that were outlined in the consent form.
- The interview consists of open-ended questions and is scheduled for an hour and half. If more time is required, then the interview can either be extended for another half hour after a short break or can be rescheduled at your convenience.
- Please tell me if at any point during the interview you want me to stop the tape and the recording, otherwise it will run for the duration of the interview.
- I have English and Urdu versions of this interview questionnaire. Please choose a language that you feel most comfortable with in your answers. Response in a combination of two languages is also welcome.
- Please feel free to use examples of your work both from available works in your studio space and, or, in a published material.
- If you choose, at any point, a word or a technical term that I am unaware off, I will request you to explain.
- At any point during the interview, if you feel you need to clarify your already stated point, then please inform me.
- **The College of Fine Arts at the University of New South Wales and the author will store the original audio and video record for seven years.**

Do you have any questions or queries about this interview and its use?

Did you receive the interview questions prior to this interview? Y _ N

Thank you the interview will **now commence and we are switching on the tape and video recorder.**

Case Study Interview Questionnaire

Case Study: Name _____ Code 10 117

Institution: University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
Title of Project: Representation of Masculinity and the Male Body in Contemporary Pakistani Art
Researcher: Abdullah, Syed M. I.

Interview Questionnaire

The interview is divided into 6 sections: section 1 (profile) will be used for identification. Sections 2, 3, 4 and 6 are identical for all participants. Section 5 is based on specific questions that are related to individual art practice and concerns in relation to this research study.

Section 1: Profile - Artist background, art education, current profession

Full Name (Last, Middle, First)
Place of birth:
Nationality:
Permanent Residence (only country and city):
Brief Personal background:
Formal or informal art education:
Current profession? If more then one then please list them:

Section 2: Personal views on masculinity and manhood

Q1. Can you shed light on your upbringing as a male/female child in your family in relation to the boys VS girls paradigm?
Q2. In your opinion, how do you define masculinity?
Q3. Tell me about influences of religious or secular beliefs in the development of your identity.
Q4. In your opinion, what attributes generally define masculine and feminine in Pakistan?

Section 3: This section deals with your artwork and Masculinity, Male body, Symbols and Signs

Q5. What do you think sparked your initial interest in exploring masculinity?
Q6. Do you consider your art practice to be "autobiographical"?
Follow-up: Can you share some incidents, events or memories that are reoccurring themes in your artwork?
Q7. What do you think are the prevalent issues, conflicts and influences on the representation of masculinity and male body in Pakistan art since the end of General Zia's regime in 1988?
Q8. Do you draw, paint, sculpture, photograph, or film male or female figures?

If '**YES**', then ask **Q9 to Q11.** If '**NO'** then move to **Q12.**
Q9. Do you draw (use) full figures, torsos and (or) portraiture (faces)?
Q10. Do you use life nude models and where do you source them from?
Q11. Do you also use semi-nude or fully clothed models?
*Follow-up: If '**YES'** then, what do they wear?*

Q12. As an artists and (or) educator, what are the challenges that you have observed in using a life model in Pakistan? (or drawing the male or female body)
Q13. What are the other means, symbols, props and poses, have you been using in the representation of masculinity and male body in your artworks?
Follow-up: can you give some visual examples

Q14. In what ways do you balance your judgment between what you want to present in your artwork and what you feel is acceptable in public, to determine a final artistic result? Do you think you engage in self- censorship?
Q15. Has any of your artwork or a series of artwork mobilised a discourse about gender issues in Pakistani art?

Section 4: This section deals with your feelings about any challenges or constraints connected with the presentation and articulation of Masculinity and Male body in Pakistan art.

Q15. In your opinion are there particular challenges or taboos connected with articulation of masculinity and male body in art in Pakistan?

Follow-up: What difficulties or challenges have you have faced as an artist?

Q16. Do you take an active role in the articulation of your ideas either in a form of written artist's statements, public presentations and artist talks?

Follow-up: Can you identify and provide, if available, some of the written matter for this research at the end of this interview.

Q17. Can you share your feelings and perceptions on the critical reviews your artwork is receiving internationally as well as in the local Pakistani media?

Q18. There is a debate that masculinity and male body representation in Pakistan is being influenced by Western perceptions of gender and identity, ignoring various 'local" sensibilities about masculinities in Pakistan. What position would you take in this debate?

Q19. Do you think that Feminism has played any role in the way you have represented masculinity and the male body in your art discourse and works?

Q20. How such topics as modernism, globalization, identity and gender politics, pop culture, the incident of 9/11, terrorism, feminism, religious fanaticism, nationalism, and local politics including lingering affect of Zia's regime play a role in your representation of masculinity and male body discourse in your art practice?

Section 5: Specific questions on a specific artworks, art series and experiences

For all the participants:

Q21. Do you have any specific series of works that examine various ideas of masculinity in Pakistani visual culture in conjunction with your experiences in the West?

Only for Rashid, Ali Kazim, Imran Qureshi

Q22. As an artist in Diaspora who has been educated and lived in the West, how do you negotiate your identity as a Pakistani man and does this has any influence in your representation of masculinity in your art practice?

Individual questions

For Meher Afroz

Q1. What was the inspiration behind the Zindan and Poshak series?

Q2. Tell me about the absence and the presence of the body in your work, presumably male body in terms of Sufic and religious discourse?

Q3. As a female artist, how you came about using images, symbols and signs to articulate gender differences?

Q4. Can you please talk about the use of nails, flowers and mask like faces in recent drawing series?

Follow up: but form where this imagery comes from?

Q. 6 Can you lease tell me about the new tapestry works you did for "Who is Afraid of Theory", esp. the small objects such as gun and knife juxtapose with reparative text?

For Ali Kazim

Q1. How do you describe your half nude 'male figures?'

Q2. Can you please talk about the various juxtapositions of your male figures with flowers, animals and inanimate objects such as shaving blades?

Q3. Male facial and body hair and its removal is something you have explored in your work. Do you use this "abjection" as a form of an identity crisis?

For Imran Qureshi

Q1. What does "Missile" suggest in relation to masculinity in your work?

Q2. Can you please talk about juxtapositions of your male figures with flowers, foliage, patterns, and inanimate objects such as weapons?

Q3. Can you please talk about your "Moderate Enlightenment" series in relation to masculinity and male body representation in Pakistani art?

For Rashid Rana

Q1. What was the inspiration behind your 'Ommatidia (2004)' series in which you digitally constructed kaleidoscopic portraits of Bollywood heroes through hundreds of photographs of Pakistani men?

Q2. Tell me about your 'What is so Pakistani about this Painting? (2000)' and 'I Love Miniatures (2002)' series and how you came about using images, symbols and signs from pop culture, Lollywood and miniature paintings to articulate masculinity?
Q3. Can you please talk about your self-portraiture and juxtapositions of yourself with your own figure and (or) with an inanimate object such as mirror?

For Anwar Saeed

Q1. Can you please talk about the various juxtapositions of your male figures with inanimate objects?
Q2. Tell me about your various uses of the colour blue and it relates to your exploration of masculinity and male body.
Q3. Tell me about your magazine series that is currently being exhibited in New York as "hanging fire" which you once said that you would never be able to exhibit in Pakistan? Can you tell me more about this artwork and why has it been problematic?

Section 6: Development as an artists and views on art

Q24. How do you define your art practice in terms of particular qualities, skills and area of investigation?
Q25. Do you have a particular philosophy about creating an artwork?
Q26. Any personalities (mentors, Ustad) that influenced your art practice?
Q27. Any books, stories, events that had a strong influence on your art practice?

That concludes our list of questions.

Misc. Responses

End.

Case Study (Drawing Chauvinism): Selection and Recruitment of Participants
Selection of the Participants and Male Models

Selection Criteria – Participants

- Most of the participants were from a circle of friends in the city of Karachi and are either drawing teachers or artists using drawing as their primary means of investigation. They will be contacted by phone individually with an explanation of the project, detailing that they will be photographed while drawing semi nude male models. The photo shoot will be advertised (phone call only) as a free drawing class with male models. In Pakistan, individual artists at their studio spaces occasionally organize such private drawing classes as a means of sharing and learning life drawing through collaboration. The drawing class will be a self-guided activity; hence no guided drawing instructions will be given.
- They will have to live in the city of Karachi
- Age 18 and above
- Their work must incorporate some relevance to life drawing practice.
- The final deciding factor will be their availability for the drawing session and their willingness to participate.

Selection Criteria – Models

- They will have to live in the city of Karachi.
- Male age 18 and above.
- Some experience in life drawing modelling.
- The final deciding factor will be their availability for the drawing session and their willingness to participate.

Project Timeline: Drawing session will be scheduled in December 2010/January 2011.
Consent
All participants will sign a written consent form. Participants will be fully briefed about the project and asked to sign a consent form at the beginning of the session.
The models will also sign an image release form. They will be compensated for their time and services as per their ongoing service rates. Similarly, the crew, mainly the cameraman, will also sign a waiver form of copyright and a confidentiality form, and will be compensated.
Upon completion, participants will be given a brief verbal description of the study and information with which they could request a summary (email newsletter) or a full report of the study upon completion.

Phone call script for Recruiting Participants
Hello (participant)
After Greetings and pleasantries
I am planning to organise and photograph a life drawing session with four male models. I am organizing this drawing session as part of my PhD in Fine Arts research, which is a study that I am conducting on the construction and representation of Muslim Masculine Identity and the Male Body in the Contemporary Art of Pakistan. The objective of the research is to conceptualise the issues and concerns that surround gender theory and contemporary artists in Pakistan.
I would like to invite you to be part of this drawing class as an artist. It will be a three-hour casual session and I will provide the basic materials, including paper and easel. You are welcome to bring your own materials. Upon completion of the photo shoot, you can take your drawings and sketches with you.
I will email you the information. You will be asked to sign a consent form, which I will administer on the day of the drawing session.
Will let you know about the location soon. Pick and drop service will be provided.
And of course, lunch will be served.
Ok, let me know soon if you want to participate.
Bye.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT FOR **PHOTOGRAPHER**

Institution: University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Title of Project: Representation of Masculinity and the Male Body in Contemporary Pakistani Art

Researcher: Abdullah, Syed M. I.

You (name of the photographer) are hired (volunteer or a paid position) to photograph a drawing class activity of a research study by, Abdullah, Syed M. I. entitled 'Representation of the Masculinity and Male Body in Contemporary Pakistani Art.'

As a photographer, I accept the following conditions:

- I am well informed about the project and its protocols and acknowledge that such information is Confidential.
- I undertake to keep confidential information I have access to while hired as a photographer.
- I agree to still photograph this art activity as a volunteer **or** as a paid professional for a total amount of _____
- I vow not to disclose any information, opinions or details about the project to any person, business or entity unless required by a court of law.
- I will not interrupt or take part in the art making process in any manner, either verbal or physical (unless asked for professional input in terms of light and composition). I will also not elicit my approval or disapproval or any comments made during or after the art activity by the participant in any from, including nodding, waving etc.
- I will not divulge any of the information from the shooting site to anyone outside the research team.
- I promise not to submit any information about the project on blog sites, social networking sites, message boards, newspaper commentaries and reviews, email and/or any internet sources including Facebook.
- I acknowledge and agree that the researcher reserves all right of the titles, images, merchandising, commercial tie-in, publicity rights, privacy rights, trademark rights, and other rights under applicable law.
- I acknowledge that the privacy of the participant and the researcher is highly valued and that all efforts are made to maintain confidentiality. Accordingly, I agree not to disclose any confidential, personal, or private information about the participant and the researcher, or to write or assist in the writing or preparation of articles, news stories, books, or other productions or materials of any nature whatsoever about or referring to the participant and the researcher.
- I acknowledge that my role in the pre and post art activity is only as a still photographer and or photo-editing assistant, and I will be I acknowledged (credit) as such where applicable.
- I will adhere to the same protocol during the editing and post-production work of the photographs.

- I acknowledge that all comments and photographs become the property of the researcher, Abdullah, Syed M. I. who also keeps all the copyrights of the photograph.
- I acknowledge that I will provide the necessary equipment for the interview shoot as per contract.
- I ensure that I will not make any copies of the photographs and will securely hand in all negatives and photographs to the researcher. However, the researcher will only be able to use the images he paid for.
- In case of a digital camera, once the image is securely transferred to a designated data storage device, the recorded information will be destroyed in a manner which is permanent and which ensures confidentiality, e.g. by wiping out the memory of digital device.
-

I agree to abide by the terms outlined in this agreement.

…… …… ……

Signature of Camera Crew Please PRINT name Date

…… …… ……

Signature of Researcher Please PRINT name Date

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT AND CONSENT FORM

Institution: University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Title of Project: Representation of Masculinity and the Male Body in Contemporary Pakistani Art

Researcher: Abdullah, Syed M. I.

I would like to invite you, _____, to participate in a life drawing session with semi nude male models where you will draw the models along side other invitee artists. I will photograph this three-hour session and use it in my research study on the current perceptions, symbolism and representations of masculinity and the male body in Pakistani art. The research also deals with issues and concerns that surround gender theory in the contemporary art of Pakistan.
Your experience as an artist is most suitable for this proposed research.
If you decide to participate, I, Abdullah, Syed M. I., will direct the photo shoot that is based on the following guidelines:

- The photo shoot will be held at a private space. It will be arranged by the photographer. It will be a secure space and will not pose any conflict of interest to any of the participating artist or the model.
- After the briefing, all the participating artists will be asked to sign a waiver from. They can quit at any time before or during the photo shoot with no prejudice towards them.
- If you give me your permission by signing this consent from, **I may identify you and your image in my research** and plan to present this information in a Ph.D. which I am completing at UNSW. I may also present this information at postgraduate seminars that are a required part of gaining a Ph.D., as well as at professional conferences and critical reviews related to my field. I may also identify you and your work in future publications, such as exhibition catalogues or a book and critical reviews.
- It is expected that the photo shoot will take approximately three hours and thirty minutes to complete with two 15 min equipment change and drink breaks.
- There are no specific risks associated with this project. However, the photo shoot could potentially cause some inconvenience to participants in that they have to take time off to come to the shoot. As such I intend to minimize this problem by organizing the session on the weekend, giving the participants the date of the photo shoot in advance. Furthermore, those participants who live far from the photo shoot will be provided a pick up and drop off service (or taxi rent of 350Rs).
- Snacks and drinks will also be provided to all the participants.
- All the participating artists accept that their participation is on a voluntary basis and **any result of the photo shoot will not be a collaborative effort between them and the artist**.
- All the participating artists accept that the concept, icons, props and symbols that are used in this photoshoot remain confidential. The participants will respect that the Artist is sharing his ideas with them as a privilege and with confidence that such information will not be plagiarized in any form.
- The photo shoot will be conducted in two stages.
- Female participating artists may be required to wear Burka for a few images.
- Upon completion of the research, all the participating artists will be given a brief verbal description of the study and information with which they could request a summary (email newsletter) or a full report of the study upon completion.
- We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from this study.
- The College of Fine Arts at the University of New South Wales and the author will store the original photographic data for seven years.
- Complaints may be directed to the Ethics Secretariat, The University of New South Wales, Sydney NSW 2052 Australia (phone +61 2 9385 4234, fax +61 2 9385 6648, email ethics.sec@unsw.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be investigated promptly and you will be informed about the outcome.
- The decision of whether or not to participate will not prejudice the participating artist's future relations with the University of New South Wales. If an artist decides to participate, he or she is free to withdraw his or her consent and to discontinue participation at any time without prejudice.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at (contact info). If you have any additional questions later, my Ph.D. co-supervisor XYZ will be happy to answer them. She can be contacted at:
XYZ Senior Lecturer**,** School of Art History and Art Education, COFA, USNW.

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